

VERSION (9) MAGAZINE

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Version (9) Magazine

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“Citation exquisite for your determining.”

It is condition of the times that there should be more poetry written than ever has been before. And equally more read. For reason of this, poetry is perhaps more alive than until now it has been; this as rejoinder to those who claim its death. But if it were true that nothing fails like success, then caution should be sitting at port. It is not and nor do we wish to station it there. There is *thrill* in excess.

In commencing *Version (9) Magazine* during this age of excessive digital literary reviews it was felt by the editors that what was lacking or perhaps even extinguishing in the postmodern newness of life afforded the art of poetry, was a sound appreciation of theory, the world of theory and its import for any world of fact, most notably artistic fact. We felt much of contemporary poetics gave voice to emotion but very little space to thought and schools of thought that underlie versifications. The poet as irrationally inspired by selfless muse was a concept we wanted if not antidoted then complemented, at the very least. Such point of fact helps clarify our purpose.

Through the launch of this magazine we have hoped for the establishment of a literary milieu that assembles works that announce overtly their drawing inspiration from and their justification within the world of theory. And if excess does lead to a vacuum of simplicity, remedy is found in creations that show intellectual complexity.

Likewise have we striven to acknowledge and showcase the intricacies of the craft of poesy in this age of the electronic. We are not threatened by the *hyper* aspects of the postmodern. Technique and style hold relevance still and shape the message, the meaning and the beauty of the piece—this is a value we will not betray. The current age, however, has magnificently broadened the parameters of such a value and we revel in it.

For reason of this, it is largely the author's passion that inheres for us. In proof, our selection showcases styles and manners that intrigue and captivate but are genuinely variegated. The postmodern should uphold the abundance of forms and prevent the stifling of passion, interest or talent. This, as such, is not a magazine of explicit cohesion. We understand its possible cost of readers and take that risk.

Duly we are proud to offer pieces that compel consideration of theoretical influence while proving the former is not forbidding of passionate expression. We are ever grateful to these poets for sharing their well thought impassioned creations with us.

Colin James affords our first edition pieces that draw from Chaos Theory and explore in poetic form the order that arises thereof.

Tom Will compels us to consider the play of juxtaposition in poetry. He explores how bonds are formed and expounds the formulaic nature of sentences. He understands how juxtaposition plays at once in the heart of the writer as much the reader.

Matt Schultz presents a dialogical piece that involves French artist Marcel Duchamp and the great Octavio Paz. The piece draws from the linguistics of Ludwig Wittgenstein and the pataphysics of Alfred Jarry.

Andre F. Peltier affords a setting wherein Walter Benjamin is awarded an Emmy and invites us to reconsider the latter's popular ideas on art. He also offers a sonnet that explores Roland Barthes' investigations into the 'death' of the author that achieves in the moment of publication.

Anna Kirwin considers the struggle of art and its manifestation in the era of socialist realism that presented in the East German state. Art as political tool is scrutinized by the poet who reminds us of a period of recent history at once encouraging if controlling of the arts.

Bradley J. Fest draws from several inspirations that address the question of what makes for contemporary art. He brings us to explore everyday mundane objects through lenses of poetic, environmental and cultural influence. Inspired by pertinent questions if problems of phenomenology, he refers to his approach to poetics as 'theory-poetry'.

David Harrison Horton implicates the strictures of grammar by converging lines from H. Saito's *Monograph on Prepositions* published by the Japanese S.E.G press in 1932. As such, Mr. Horton provides a co-authored text of poetry assisted by a deceased grammarian. His piece permits the reader's experience of a semi-surreal discourse that emanates from this original arrangement.

Richard Leise unveils the creation that can arise from exposition to contemporary literary theory. His work included is inspired by lectures attended at a writer's craft seminar offered by a famed poet laureate.

Meily Tran explores the domain of modal realism theory and with it the notion that all products of writing carry a reality and universe proper to them. She uniquely incorporates the notion of the 'divine' throughout her poem that indicates the poet as creator proper while deploying contexts of gaming and binary code. Her work also considers our ideas of 'present tense' when engaged in writing. A Heideggerian weight of Time and the possibilities of immortality infuse.

Francis Plamondon initiates us to the world of esoteric theory. Somewhat like unto ideas found in Paul Virilio, his points, though inspired by occult theorists, scrutinize the modern world through a swirling high-speed poetics. He crafts what he considers a maelstrom to at once show and irresistibly pull into the spiralled world of energetic verbiage that offers social critique of the times.

H.J. Cross appreciates Native American theories of healing and finds inspiration in Indigenous notions of 'story'. She is particularly inspired by Lewis Mehl-Madrona's *The Spirit of Healing* and maintains that what stories we write are determined by what stories we tell ourselves. The process of healing for Ms. Cross involves profoundly the practice of authorship.

Ronald Tobey believes in poems of concrete descriptions. He draws from varied texts of poetry, philosophy, theology and philosophy of religion, all composite his personal library. By deploying random number generators, he determines which volumes, pages and lines from this same collection are to be used to inform the lines of his poem included here and treating of the concrete and routine experiences involved in operating a family farm. Randomness, chance and the beauty of the ordinary are all paramount.

Shannon Frost Greenstein applies aspects of quantum mechanics and the increasingly predominant concept of a multiverse. As multiple quantum universes involve shifts and varied potential futures alongside a certain permanence of the past, she treats of biography, the problematic of nature and nurture and the exercise of personal reflexion involving such pasts and possible futures. She renders the seeming impersonality and distantness of much contemporary theory of physics deeply personal for and pertinent to the individual.

Colin James

And the rest is history

"Careful where you park
your pick-up truck, Partner"
is one of the oldest
threats ever documented.
Found on the walls
of a Celtic monastery in 888
written by some cocky Viking.
It took the Vikings about a week
to sail from Scandinavia to Briton.
So not that much time
to find a preferable spot.
A ransom was cheaper
than overnight parking rates,
and kept rising neutralizing profits
until marrying for power
and William The Conqueror
became fashionable.
Despite their cuisine ever evolving,
ice melting road salt
remains an inferior seasoning.

Tom Will

Easter Sunday

No shade or shadow on the soccer fields at noon; nothing
Except the goal posts at ends; and their lurid orange nets
No league took down the nets all winter; no league mends them
No league minds that purple flowers spring up in the net's shadow
Like the fisherman casting out too far into the seas of noon
Only to dredge up netfuls of purple flowers; imagine their surprise
At this; they swore the nets had come up empty the flowers were so light
Enough to feed great crowds; these netfuls of purple flowers; enough
To feed children and women and men; here come the ships now
With nets full of flowers; walking on the water

Crime scene # 4

There is a house illuminated by headlights for the first time
And second you walk by an electric scooter tall as the fence it was left on
And third you walk by a knee high scooter with hockey pucks for wheels
Made of metal that looks like it would melt if you touched it
Both are painted the same abandoned green color
I am full of foreboding like a class of children being walked along a red rope
Being walked past a driveway blocked with yellow caution tape
Where are the adults taking these children I wonder
One of the children is left handed and holding the rope in his right hand
Because they are all holding the rope in their right hand
But later on he forgets that this happened

Sled poem

When I am snoring
I dream your little neck
My voice is stupid but honest
As you slide down my nose
Sledding down the 4 AM hills
In your aluminum trash can lid

I dream your little necklace
On your little neck
Made from the last of the trash can lids
You kiss my nose I dream sleet

Matthew Schultz

Duchamp's shadow

“Since a three-dimensional object
casts a two-dimensional shadow,
we should be able to imagine
the unknown four-dimensional object
whose shadow we are. I, for my part,
am fascinated by the search
for a one-dimensional object
that casts no shadow at all”

Our words cast shade and shadows
That stretch long across generations:
From them we have stitched together
Civilization. This accumulation of word
upon word, succession and repetition,
the rhythms of struggling language,
is the elusive four-dimensional object
of which we are the mere shadow.

(Marcel Duchamp quoted in Octavio Paz,
“Recapitulations,” *Alternating Currents*)

Andre F. Peltier

Walter Benjamin at the Emmy Awards

Into the theater
walked Walter Benjamin.
He was a proud man:
small w/ silly spectacles.
He loved the spectacle of the
situation. True art, he said,
needed to be genuine.
It needed to be distant.
The prerequisite of presence.

Jazz records lack
historicity. One must climb
the steps of the temple
to view Picasso. No escalator;
no hot air balloon ride.
Bringing the mountain to
Mohammad is counter-intuitive
to the form.

Scale the cliffs, he said.
Work for the aura.
Concealed by the machine,
the human is there.
Concealed by the printing press,
Benjamin is there... waiting.
The mechanical vision
always waiting in the wings.
Hidden from sight like
the Klee, the Picasso.

Walter Benjamin walked
to the stage to receive his award.
Thanking his agent and his wife and kids,
he smiled gently at the crowd.
They supported him through
ups and downs, he said.
They were always there for him
even when his books weren't selling,
even when no one wanted to
green-light his pilot. He claimed,
"the denial of a pilot
is the real mark of art. A pilot unmade
is a pilot unviewed, and a pilot
unviewed retains its aura."

Considering publication

We know the grave's a fine, a private place,
So now with rifles cleaned, with letters hung,
Of course, our privacy shall be the case,
And then, no more will words from pages run.
Our strophes they fell and now they rot away.
My concubine, my tool, my pen must wait
(With cluttered papers and revisions stray)
Upon the desk where poets defecate
From minds toward whom no muse has ever bent.
This fecal poem is dead, and it shall die;
For all our authors' thoughts are thoughtless spent
On jargon. Rupture came and poets lie.
Th' event that kills the writer always past:
To sign a name, to publish /perish fast.

Anna Kirwin

Post-war German cinema

Not on a blank canvas
But a tarnished, dirty grey sheet
On which to start again
With painters ill-equipped
To rebuild ruins.

A skewed sense of service
To the verisimilitude of the vanquished,
The minds left behind, lost in battle,
Those who clawed their way
To the present.

Flimsy-firm convictions
Shattered like luminous crystal.
Reconstruction thwarted
By shame
And indecision.

New visions for new systems.
Creation, innovation, score-settling and floods
To say it wasn't your fault, but ours.
This country will be rebuilt
On the work of women.

From terror to Trümmer to triumph?
Extricating problematic parallels
From tainted visions of heaven and hell.
A spectrum of Weltanschauungen
And only the odd thing worth watching.

The struggle invisible

The existence of a clear definition,

radically redefined for contemporary needs -

What was real then, isn't now

is now, but shouldn't be

seen to be struggling,

when we are struggling,

not with our art

but with life.

The construction of a clear definition,

quickly erected to meet present exits -

What was us then isn't now

is now but shouldn't be.

Neighbours now others,

their 'them' is the same as 'us',

everyone's struggling,

no time for struggling,

only in art,

not in life.

The revelation of work's centrality,

key to illumination of our purpose -

Where I work, what I produce is reality,

how I interact with comrades, society.

All that I can be is working class.

Nothing remains of my other realities.

Existence is class struggle.

All hail the class struggle,

drowning our art

and our lives.

Bradley J. Fest

Contemporaneity

Profound shifts in modernity's deepest formations ha[ve] occurred [. . .]—changes so great that they may signal the arrival not so much of a new era as of a different kind of experience of time, of being in the present, of remembering the past and of projecting possible futures. We might find ourselves naming this multivalent, inequitable, and untimely contemporaneousness by its own name: "contemporaneity."

—Terry Smith, *The Architecture of Aftermath*

One approach to current enormity
is multiplex devotion to form, a patient
production in effulgent Lucite narcotine
and self-lubricating plastic frames, ointment
for what, in gathering, might iterate
something unseen, a speculative creation
conceptually available to damnably reticent
perfervidness, a last operative remnant
still striding atop oblivion's romantic
sonatas toward an approaching atomic
meridian, still tossing its hair at all that poetry.

Another might find some naming the encryption
foreclosing the future, the encrusted patronymic
codes hanging desperately on, their content
septic and vile; or perhaps how others mention
the slow (impossible) construction of an antitrope
in mild midday tweets could be instructive emporia
within which to become lost (in consumerist cremation);
but not just another compromised increment
between what is and could be, one more omittance
of imaginative glaciation by imperious entropion—
postfamine megacities, twenty-first-century atrocity.

The present fabricates. It is a vast entrepôt
into which has been thrown multitudinous noema
by heterogeneous translocalities without prior compare.
Their many divergent materialities(/-isms) attire
affect concomitantly in swooping cool neon operatic
roseate gridlines-to-the-horizon, a sun permanent-
burning in the amaranthine sky and, fed by eternity
"rushing from all havens astern" in a 328 on open
superhighways some continue to think of as the internet,
effect a moment that, perhaps one day, a centenary
might mark; if not, today will never become ancient.

Silence

*Κύρνε, σοφίζομένω μὲν ἐμοὶ σφρηγὶς ἐπικείσθω
τοῖσδ' ἔπεσιν, λήσει δ' οὐποτε κλεπτόμενα
οὐδέ τις ἀλλάξει κάκιον τοῦσθλοῦ παρεόντος
ᾧδε δὲ πᾶς τις ἐρεῖ. 'Θεὺγνιδὸς ἐστὶν ἔπη
τοῦ Μεγαρέως. πάντας δὲ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ὀνομαστός.'*
—*Theognis of Megara*

Silence is, at best, a contrivance, a leap.
The harmonic axis of my head's blood's buzz
tangential my helminth tongue, anaesthetized, drowsing,
disdains its reticent languor. I tell myself:
in not speaking, I commit to others' speech.

To hear voiced and unvoiced words inhaled
and exhaled by the voiceless, forgotten, ignored, I absent
my own. Not that I can always listen, necessarily.
The accessible wavelengths toward which I bend are so
few, my heart strains at each syllable

and phrase. Populations care not for quietude and
The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics
has no entry for silence. Utterances easily
viralize without reference to me; I am an
audience, occasionally interlocutor. But silence cannot

atone for consciousness in new zero America;
though radically empirical, there is no such thing
as an absolute quiescence. My comfortable aphonia
has neither entry nor exit; it cannot amplify
others' bedeviled expression nor evacuate my privilege.

When I sit, stand, preferring speechlessness to ejaculation,
my unheard comments hauntingly remain. I understand
and accept they are, at that hour and others, unwanted
(without any "however"), for I love the sound of your thoughts.
My fondest days luxuriate in so many

exclamations, asides, replies, murmurings.
I rarely have need for postcritical instruction, too
easily absorbed and relieved by sentences. But this
delight also speaks and, as here,
noiselessly shatters an inaudible, wordless hush.

Blason IV

*Given (and here it comes round) the cup
the covenantless Cup
from which I must
thereupon be drinking.
—Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Drafts*

Point, gesture, indicate (begin) again:

this
(*this, that, there, it*),

this also

directs and suggests

something to know ([synthwave] for example)
by affinity,

the irony
of networks
tuning “the mind[-]apparatus”

and all the — better yet

dismal outrunnings, outcroppings

steering the misplaced guitar solo into . . . —

all the relationships between this

and whatever into it. In pointing,

what I indicate points to(o)

things

absent/present:—

the irony of objects

[Doxycycline

has filled me

with debris,

bacteriological

remains]

{and}

(“many
are the ironies
of pretending
to assemble”)—

novel encyclopediae, dead
links and cruisers, collect-
ions previous, Kaoss Pads,
ill-advised Latour litanies,

whatever;

and in this

“Work / see work, work, work,”

see

what it is and how becomes

its labor/imagination,

see

nicotine withdrawal and . . .

and . . . and . . . and . . .

see

that “[t]here may
be no more names
than there are

objects”

see

a refusal to remain,

to let

it just be what it

is for

when it is

in process

toward/from

other things,

becoming/informing,

remaining suspended

even if

there are enough

ways of writing,

enough to stay

in time

to permit another

subject,

and then it will be left

to sit and stand

for later.

Through connective

intermotion

it

others,

suggests otherness

moving outside itself

into the Phenomenocene:

keyboard, bookshelf, Dell

speaker, activisphere, pol-

acrilex, Vivitar, paper to-

wel, *Gardner's Modern*

American Usage, third ed-

ition, keys, drawers, light;

it casts the (al)lure

of infinity

—

all things radiating out/in,

beckoning, inviting, seducing — but

its persistence

inscribes a horizon

and returns these permissive

associations to their

referential core/load-

stone/ground

to plummet ceaselessly

into nonetheless

their own

hyperdamned deathslips,

eluctable icework,

reflexive/-gressive fractality—
a sardonicism covering itself
in mordantly incongruous ridicule—
all (fine) method

of reproducing every mode while the work
continues:
the chill mixes
profitably superdrone.

Though housing the power
of hyperbole, of reaching the limit
of the absolute, it self-refer-
entially withdraws itself
into its itselfness; this is its dancefloor.
Though now overdetermined by other
print [*herein*],

when it finally comes down to it, it disdains all its own metaphysics
(and others' too).

It cannot really do this, however, as that is not its own anywhere in this
somewhere to be out here through that there anymore, is it?

David Harrison Horton

Beside, besides, beyond, but except

The girl stood beside her mother.
That is beside our present purpose.
Besides honours, he received money.
His home is beyond the sea.
I have stayed beyond my time.
The task is beyond my strength.
That blush is beyond a thousand ornaments.
I got nothing beyond what was due to me.
Japan's superiority is beyond question.
Japan's superiority is beyond all doubt.
I have no friend but you.
Who but a fool would do such a thing?
I will do anything for you but that.
He was the greatest man in England but the king.
But for your help, I might have failed.

With

Come and spend an evening with us.
Hydrogen combines with oxygen to form water.
Oil does not mix with water.
He has met with an accident.
The same food does not agree with every constitution.
His style of living is not in keeping with his income.
I am at one with him on this point.
I resolved to get even with my enemy.
I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you.
Have you any money with you?
I should like to have a talk with you on the subject.
The cunning workman does not quarrel with his tool.
You might as well reason with the wolf as try to persuade that man.
I will not keep company with such men.
He was not on terms with Flashman's set.
England has taken part with Japan.
The firm trades largely with China.
We have to deal with no common enemy.
He is severe with his students.
What business has a woman with politics?
What do you want with me?
What has a woman to do with politics?
Somebody has been meddling with my things.
Please go on with your dinner.
I can not put up with this sort of thing.
Some teachers wish to do away with grammar.
Away with such nonsense!
How does it compare with the other?
I have had many difficulties to contend with.
I will not part with it on any account.
The farmer rises with the sun.
Marley was dead, to begin with.
With this, he left me.
The poor orphan girl lived with some distant relation.
Please leave your address with my manager.
The boy is a favorite with his uncle.
Up to that time, everything had gone well with me.
Loyalty, with the Japanese, is a duty paramount to all others.
This action of his is of a piece with his general character.
He has not kept faith with me.
A philosopher with a toothache is a ridiculous sight.
He was standing with a pipe in his mouth.
With heaven's help, we may succeed.

He works hard with an eye to the future.
 With all my respect for your opinions, I must differ with you on this point.
 We see with our eyes, and hear with our ears.
 It is a silly fish that is caught twice with the same bait.
 The men were attacked with dysentery from drinking the muddy water.
 We were drenched with rain and benumbed with cold.
 The ship was filled with water and covered with ice.
 The men were elated with victory.
 I am very much pleased with my new man.
 The woods were alive with the songs of birds.
 The child was shivering with cold.
 The seas about Japan teem with fish.
 It was a war big with fate.
 The whole world rings with their deeds.
 What with teaching, and what with writing, my time is fully taken up.
 Everybody was filled with admiration.
 Have you no one to supply you with your expenses?
 My uncle is willing to help me with my expenses.
 The Chinese are credited with the invention of gunpowder.
 Misery acquaints men with strange bedfellows.
 The general inspires his men with hope and confidence.
 They were entertained with every pleasure that the city afforded.
 He was rewarded for his services with a pension for life.
 She thinks of the many lives in danger, and of many distant homes, threatened with loss
 of their loved ones.
 He is occupied with literary work.
 He is not the man to cover his name with disgrace.
 The house is decorated with flags.
 Their hands are stained with innocent blood.
 My path was not strewn with flowers.
 His reign was marked with many events.
 Their enterprise is fraught with danger.
 He went home loaded with honours.
 I will not trouble you with any more requests.
 If one must submit, it is best to submit with a good grace.
 Togo and his men went at it again and again with set teeth.
 He goes with heart and soul into any business.
 I subscribe to your views with all my heart.
 They consented with one voice.
 Everybody looks upon the project with favour.
 I thanked him for the kindness with which he had treated me.
 Nobody shall provoke me with impunity.
 He ran off with a shout.
 When it does blow, it blows with a vengeance.
 With the exception, all are in good condition.

On and off

Their very coats were taken off their backs.
It will be wiped off the face of the earth.
The battle was fought of the coast of Iwami.
I was never off my legs the whole time.
Her eyes are never off the child.
He is never taken off his guard.
We dined off a leg of mutton.

Richard Leise

Fly poem

A fly in the middle of
March
Flopping against a Warm, sun-touched
windowpane
*Sloughing off its Sluggish,
it's cold-weather dormancy;
Oh!
the worthlessness of wings*

6 : 5

You've seen this sort of thing
before—

In Bibles

On those displays near the
Nice
pleasant people who stand before
the library, on the sidewalk
outside City Hall, elegant Black Men and
elegant Black Women
dressed as if gods, dressed as if
Today was always Sunday and how they
hand you a pretty picture w/

הַנֶּצֶל
כַּצְּרִי
מִיָּד
וְכַצְּפֹר
מִיָּד
יָקוּשׁ:

& I think: “symbols”
& then I think: “9/11.”

And then I thought (without thinking)
“terrorism.”

(And then later, even now, while reading
what you I wrote, I
thought / Rich -
What were you thinking?)

I flip the card and read

Free yourself,
Like a gazelle
From the hand [of the hunter]
Like a bird
From the fowler's snare.

& it's true I often feel badly
for feeling

Love

The notion of being in love Dates
to the Sixteenth century—
The idea of a love letter
attests to the mid-Thirteenth.

The idea of human beings falling
in love first appears in the Fourteenth
century. The phrase no love lost
the Seventeenth

(and references two people deeply in love, as well as two people who have no love for
one another).

And Love, if you're playing tennis,
means nothing

but not at all.

Between 12 and 35

Her teen wears blue jeans
and a black t-shirt.
Across the shirt there are
three rocks. Each rock
(white)
has a face. Across each
face a similar expression
of ecstasy

eyes
vacant
and glassy
beads of
sweat
bursting
from
smooth
forehead.

Above the

images

in a plain white font
the words

The

Rolling

Stones

Meily Tran

Playing God

My predecessors made micro-
universes from paper dough,
used ink frosting to shape châteaux
and cars and dragons and humans.
They baked floured words in ovens
until they became world gâteaux.

So who is the sadistic one
that created ours? Everyone
knows God to be his pseudonym.
Filling his Earth simulation
with NPCs, our “God” is no
better than a sick gamer bro
mocking our pathetic pixels
glaring from his screen. Me? I’m no

writer. All I do is lie low
and play AR Word Search. I stow
words I’ve harvested from my foes,
their lexical DNA spun
into strings of code - my ammo
I am saving to overthrow
the typist deity foozle.

You can bet that I can speedrun
this is an hour or below.
Here it comes—the 1v1
with the last boss. No more potions?
Cue my, the plain brainless hero’s,

sacrifice. Don’t cry, everyone.
I live. I’ve compressed my genome
into a zip file, emotions
uploaded into a doc so
I am hollow of all sorrow.

So be it. All gods must forego
empathy as gamers mock guns.
So I maneuver my loved ones
with my Razer Viper mouse, run
them through margined, double-spaced rows.

The cursor blinks. The reflection
in its steady black pupil shows
that Master Hand is having fun
watching this paper puppet so
foolishly feign control. Outdone
before I could see the true sun,

if such a thing exists. None. None
of us exist. Our flesh and bone
are a DLC skin, God's dough
playthings, his cherished OCs shown
in his book *Reality*. Lo
and behold our antihero
trapping her friends in Word, their woes
and flaws wrung out from head to toe.

She'll point at "I" (Tran 424)
and say it's not her it's fiction
it's from her imagination.
She'll get a certification
in e-sports because this is all a game to you
and it can be a game to me too
I know the rules and i will
write
w r i t e
wRItE

Play the victory tune, God sitting before a ten-screened monitor
with a wireless headset and glowing rainbow keyboard.
GG bitch I do not fear death when I was never alive in the first place.
As you press my universe's tattooed lips together and tuck me back into
your bookshelf, be careful not to get a papercut.

Self-preservation

It is 12:35 AM on a Sunday night and I feel invincible.
Not in a way that I could never be hurt, but in a way
That feels as though Death will never come for me.

I am undying in the dreamy haze of these restless hours
Tucked in between consciousness and the lack of it,
But once my blinking eyelids wipe this moment

From my memory, nobody can prove that it existed.
These words, lost to the night until a writer
Takes pity on the present and memorializes it.

So I am rooting this moment here,
speaking it into existence—
I existed here,

With the roar of silver Honda Accords racing down the freeway,
The amber street lights filtered through the colander blinds,
The tender lull of the acoustic guitar playing from the living room.

Such a mundane moment that doesn't exist until I make it so.
Words, memories, are meaningless if they are forgotten.
If they can die so easily, then so must I. But here,

I am invincible. The popcorn ceiling will not crush my languid body with its kernels.
The neighboring tree will not thrust its branches through the window and into my limbs.
The concrete will not lunge towards me with its splintered fingers.

No, I will die
With the closing of a book, its pages fluttering
Shut with the soft thud of a paperback cover.

Words cannot die if they are preserved,
Deposited carefully from the mind to a paper safe.
And with an existence translated into words,

I will never die.
I cannot die.
I am words.

Francis Plamondon

Crisis of the now

Declension's ruse is a softening of skill the cranium's abundance relapsed to the poor contrivance of new demeanour. A lost method of art done its course cartoons the splendour of a world agape at the misadventured selvage so-called when something old's now waiting with primed foresousiance that shadows the tool. To master it reasons the futilities of now as norm clutches the truant in the present abhorred by softened dedicates applauding the mirage of success. It descends when waiting still some other mean their embrace gives godhead for, the while discouraged that lineaments clench and we unclothe at last to boast some other kind.

Signs of times accruing

Reality folds in instance made against this bitter accord emphasizing sentences spilled over what yields shares the hard time underlit posture controls. Blindness tends it to relegate conditions a populace far too quick condones—truth-signs fathomed made pretence in shape-shifts deformed. It is vast acuity that here resizes as fades at last our trite intention.

Disincarnate

Myopic after the shock from the backwoods of the mind blending things from stocked rooms their emotions quick complacent through the freeze the ambiguous conditions unlocks what would have happened were we to pine with seldom the designation of the heartfelt store—right feeling ransacked over what debilitates the naked death assembled of false loves heart pretends to.

H.J. Cross

The ancestor's whispered

Chained in time
by echoes of you
in a Quasimodo blues
Guilt played a drum
of the same burdens
Like a curse
that had a binding rhythm
Until the ancestors whispered
“Dance to a new story my child
The curse story no longer belongs to you”

Soul medicine

Unhappiness was her story
and she took her battle scars with her
Writing her story
where happiness might have been
Blaming others for taking it from her
All the while not realizing
her happiness was a story written
from the soul medicine within

New dances

She ghost dances beneath
A city's starlight's
caught by time in a teardrop
with other versions of herself
Many reliving the same curses
But one woke and saw the dance
Awake, she is dancing in the eternity
Of the now
Her present breaking curses
with new dances

Ronald Tobey

Being within

3 bales of alfalfa hay 4 bales of grass hay stacked on pallets
on the concrete floor 2 collapsible plastic buckets black green
digital weigh scale hanging on a nail on the wall
2 black nylon hay totes 4' x 3' with sewed on strap handles
8 inch knife with faded orange plastic grip sharpened blade
dusty with chaff sharing the closed window shelf
with white N95 respirator masks we wear when grinding hay and feed
2 5' high polyurethane bags to collect soiled and spoiled hay
lawn and leaf black plastic bag for bits and discards of twine and string
I pick up the knife
cut taut green twines holding together
a 70-pound square bale of grass hay
barn cat perches on top
pounces when I pull to remove them
claws grasp the strings sharp little teeth grip
mouse in the grass
practice
release s only when strings stop moving
does she know I am pulling them away from her
she does not look up at me
the string drops to the floor
she peers down at it
flakes unfold outward with relief
an accordion gasps for air
barn is home for cat and horses a Morgan and a Thoroughbred
and once in an oversized stall a large draft horse
who died three years ago
put down with colon cancer
we briefly house 4 goats in one horse stall
left a stink from urine and droppings that reappears in humid weather
when released to browse brush on the hill
the goats wander into the barn look at their old stall
do they reminisce
wonder why they look in
at a place they cannot identify
faintly haunting uncomprehending minds
second home too for our little black Labrador Widgeon
who beds during day on top of the bale stack
under the lean-to along the west side of the barn
shielded from winter's wind and snow summer's heat
Widgeon's hackles up
growls

charges barking into winter woods
deer racoon possum coyote skunk
feral dog
bear mountain lion
I listen for a frightened yip
none
she's not been attacked
a squirrel?
icicles 3 feet long hang from the barn's sheet metal roof
sunlight cold at 9 AM suddenly strikes
unlocks the bond of freeze with the sharp crack of a rifle shot
swords of ice plummet to the ground scraping the sides of the barn
rip open morning's silence
startled in their stalls
by the violence of the sudden shift of season
outside their opened windows
horses bellow race in circles kick walls
snowflakes dime-size parachute through the opaque sky
veils of mist drape ranges of hills
sleet falls in waves
hail balls of ammunition
drum the barn roof with menacing roar
on the black nylon tote hay for goats
at their paddock's small green pipe gate
I lay down to unchain
crystals splash milk-white drops on the tote
a false spring warm to 40 degrees
they stand by their gate
bleat
hungry for briars with hard thorns
bushes brittle branches low
among the hillside's barren trees
brown Morgan with equine metabolic disorder
wears grazing muzzle paws crisped snow
off the cold ridge winter pasture
searching for limp tufts of green
amid the carpet of yellow brown dead grass
one-year old weaned Hereford bullock
licks swelling teats of in-calf Hereford cow
we are foster raising for a young woman helper
Brangus bull through the 6-pipe cattle gate
licks milk off the nursing calf's face
I watch cows just bred turn to the bull
and lick his face
working on fences and ditches the herd scattered around me
I need to urinate

as I pee a cow walks over to me
stretches her neck her head closer
smells the pale yellow stream
our farm abutting hers my neighbor loans her bright red dickie
frigid mornings to keep my neck warm
in wind funnel on ridge field Audrey
watches me walk with iron prybar and stall rake
to clear and break ice from the stock tank
3 inches thick for the cattle to drink
when one of her cows abandons her crippled calf
the natural Spartan eugenics of cattle
we shelter the calf in our run-in shed and paddock
where our neighbor cares for it for six months
could never walk steady had to be put down
she and a helper cry hold the squirming calf
on the straw floor of the shed
a third woman our vet injects euthanizing drugs
suffering and death are a natural part of farming
the ethical mission of animal husbandry
assumed in the face of a world beyond our control
is to acknowledge with humility the animal's instinct to live
and reduce its suffering
so I learn humanity
we are all animals in fenced fields

Shannon Frost Greenstein

Nicole Fosse never stood a chance

Nicole Fosse, they say,
did a lot of drugs; Nicole Fosse
couldn't get her shit together.

But Nicole Fosse has a landmine in her DNA;
an epigenetic curse,
thermonuclear fallout from a fusion reaction
between Biology and Environment.

Nicole Fosse was only a child,
and Nicole Fosse never stood a chance.

Nicole Fosse played Christine
in the film version
of *A Chorus Line*,
you know.
Nicole Fosse was a Dancer;
Nicole Fosse worked fucking hard.

But Nicole Fosse was a victim
of a unique kind of trauma,
endemic to a certain vulnerable sect;
Nicole Fosse was lost
before even starting out,
raised at the intersection of genius and madness.

Nicole Fosse got screwed by nature *and* nurture,
and Nicole Fosse never stood a chance.

Nicole Fosse was a blank slate,
rife with potential, possibility made incarnate;
in another life,
Nicole Fosse could have cured cancer
or solved the Middle East Peace Conflict
or changed the world and bettered us all.

But Nicole Fosse has a family tree
with addiction at its root,
and dysfunction in its marrow;
Nicole Fosse had no power
over evolutionary prophesy.

Nicole Fosse was Bob Fosse's daughter,
and Nicole Fosse never stood a chance.

Just the worst advice I've ever received

Twenty years old,
and so smart; so worldly.
Desperate to shed my Puritanical image,
of course I'll eat these mushrooms
you've offered me, kind stranger.

What could possibly go wrong?

An hour of bliss, indescribable ecstasy
staring at undulating wood grain
and the beautiful whirls
of my own fingerprints.

I do not know enough
to know
this is the feeling
against which all future orgasms will be measured.

###

I have an idea, says a bit player
in the drama of my evening,
interrupting my enamoration
with the veins of a leaf.
There's a movie we should totally watch.

I do not know enough
to know
hallucinating and ideas do not always get along.

But because every facet of existence
feels so fucking good in this moment,
I do not hesitate to agree.

I mean, what could possibly go wrong?

###

A flimsy DVD and twin dorm-room beds,
the setting sun; the movie begins.
Laser-focused, my mouth agape,
existential dread begin to creep like a fog.

I still do not know enough
to know
we may have made a terrible mistake.

Submerged in sense memories
of public-school assemblies,
shades of the Reagan Legacy
to Just Say No,
I watch the screen, two hours; aghast.

What could possibly go wrong?

Now I am Conrad's *Fascination with the Abomination*
made incarnate; I am forever changed.

###

Two hours, world akimbo, tripping face,
I watch this chaotic descent
into unbridled entropy,
set to a score
by the Kronos Quartet.

Hit with wave after wave
of judgement and horror and shock and shame,
I consider the psilocybin I've consumed;
I consider my own depravity.

The world continues to turn
and Jared Leto's arm
begins to fester.

But I do not know enough
to know
how bad things can still get.

###

What could possibly go wrong?

Well, you could be hallucinating
and someone could suggest
you watch *Requiem for a Dream*.

Because to this day,
that is just
the WORST advice I've ever received.

Biographical Information

Colin James

Colin James has a couple of chapbooks of poetry published. *Dreams Of The Really Annoying* from Writing Knights Press and *A Thoroughness Not Deprived of Absurdity* from Piski's Porch Press and a book of poems, *Resisting Probability*, from Sagging Meniscus Press.

Tom Will

Tom Will writes poems. He lives in the South. He has been published in *Misery Tourism* and *Apocalypse Confidential*, and has poems forthcoming in *Tragickal*, *Rejection Letters*, *Door is a Jar*, and *New Pop Lit*. For all inquiries, please email him at TomWillWillTom@protonmail.com

Matthew Schultz

Matthew Schultz teaches all sorts of writing at Vassar College. He is the author of two novels: *On Coventry* and *We, The Wanted*. His recent poems appear in *Rust + Moth*, *Juke Joint*, and *Thrush*.

Andre F. Peltier

Andre F. Peltier is a Lecturer III at Eastern Michigan University where he teaches African American Literature, Science Fiction, Afrofuturism, Poetry, and writing. He lives in Ypsilanti, MI, with his wife and children. His poetry has recently appeared in *In Parentheses*, *The JFA Human Rights Journal*, *Griffel Magazine*, *Fahmidan Journal*, *Lothlorien Poetry Journal*, *About Place*, *Open Work*, *The Write Launch*, and the anthology *Turning Dark into Light*. Many of his poems are forthcoming in various journals. In his free time, he obsesses about soccer and comic books.

[@aandrefpeltier](#)

Anna Kirwin

Anna Kirwin is a writer and artist, living in London, but dreaming of the Arctic. Her last published piece considered exploration, but more generally, her recent work deals with language, thought and time. She sees light in the darkness.

Bradley J. Fest

Bradley J. Fest is assistant professor of English at Hartwick College. He is the author of two volumes of poetry, *The Rocking Chair* (Blue Sketch, 2015) and *The Shape of Things* (Salò, 2017), and recent poems have appeared in *Always Crashing*, *The Babel Tower Notice Board*, *HVTN*, *PLINTH*, *Verse*, and elsewhere. He has also written a number of essays on contemporary literature and culture, which have been published or are forthcoming in *boundary 2*, *CounterText*, *Critique*, *Genre*, *Scale in Literature and Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), and elsewhere. More information is available at bradleyjfest.com

David Harrison Horton and Hidesaburo Saito

David Harrison Horton is a Beijing-based writer, artist, editor and curator.

Hidesaburo Saito (1866-1929) was a Japanese linguist who did extensive research on the English language. The sentences from these works are taken from the model sentences appearing in his 1310-page tome Saito's Monograph on Prepositions (Tokyo, The S. E. G. Press, 1932).

Richard Leise

Richard Leise recently accepted The Perry Morgan Fellowship in Creative Writing and the David Scott Sutelan Memorial Scholarship from Old Dominion University. While completing a MFA, he has a novel out on submission, and is finishing a collection of short stories. His work may be found in numerous publications, and was recently awarded Pushcart Prize and Best Small Fictions nominations.

Meily Tran

Meily Tran is an incoming college freshman from Southern California. Most of her writing is first drafted at 1 AM and is inspired by her tragic sapphic love life, sporadic identity crises, and beloved pet chihuahua. Twice a week or so, she rambles on Twitter at @tran_scendence

Francis Plamondon

Francis Plamondon expounds the pertinence of occult theories to the current hypermodern era. Drawing from seminal if too often misunderstood or politically misapplied texts of 20th century esoteric thinkers Evola, Guenon, and Steiner, he purports their absolute worth for this our 21st whose malaise is fundamentally spiritual. He operates the poetry webpage www.moonunderfeet.tumblr.com.

H.J. Cross

H.J Cross is an accountant by day and a poet by night. She has been fortunate in that the curators on *Ello* have chosen to make her a writing contributor on their creators' network and can therefore now claim 14k followers there where she writes under the handle of [@hjcross_poetry](#). She was also a contributor for *Thorn Literary Magazine* this last year as well as the guest editor for their winter issue. Also in 2020, she was published by *The Poetry Question*, *The Organic Poet*, and *The Shameless Author*.

Ronald Tobey

Ron Tobey lives in West Virginia, where he and his wife raise cattle and keep goats and horses. He is an imagist poet, grounding experiences and moods in concrete descriptions, including haiku, storytelling, and recorded poetry, and in filmic interpretation. He occasionally uses the pseudonym, Turin Shroudedindoubt, for literary and artistic work. He has published in several dozen digital and print literary magazines, including Truly U Review, Prometheus Dreaming, Broadkill Review, Cabinet of Heed, Atticus Review, Punk Noir, and The Light Ekphrastic. His Twitter handle is [@Turin54024117](#)

Shannon Frost Greenstein

Shannon Frost Greenstein resides in Philadelphia with her children, soulmate, and persnickety cats. She is the author of *Pray for Us Sinners*, a collection of fiction from Alien Buddha Press, and *More*, a poetry collection by Wild Pressed Books. Shannon is a former Ph.D. candidate in Continental Philosophy and a multi-time Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee. Her work has appeared in *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, *Pithead Chapel*, *Bending Genres*, *Epoch Press*, *X-R-A-Y Lit Mag*, and elsewhere. Follow her at shannonfrostgreenstein.com or on Twitter at [@ShannonFrostGre](#).

“Citation exquisite for your determining.”

After words

It is condition of the times that cheerfulness in the spirit of editing has been what we have uncovered and kept as goal. Pleasure derived from this approach shows out in the texts read and the assortment they afford at once of perspective, of purpose, of subject and even meaning in contexts of unique expression. It is an honour for our new magazine to showcase these.

The kaleidoscope so arranged in this our first edition along with author biographies sustaining the claim of it, maintains a continuum of varied stages of experience and manners of profession and commitment to current poetics. We are thrilled to have received submissions from those of some whole lives committed to poetry and those at we hope not just bud of careers. Combined styles and approaches we wanted mirrored in the mixing of generations as well. Passionate expression is ageless.

And current poetics we see as inseparable from multidisciplinary theory. We hope for the varied theoretical influences and the shapes of poems they produced to have been remarked and appreciated. Ideas in heads (thoughts, opinions, impressions and all their sorts) being not from nowhere embed in the impassioned voice of a poem. We wanted things not merely sentimental but evidently well thought through; we wanted avoided the trite and insipid. Poetry that is pertinent is what *Version (9) Magazine* has committed to here. We anticipate greatly our next edition.

In endless thanks,

Marla, Danica and Andrew,
Editors.