

# <flag football issue: table of contents>

"Football's football; if that weren't the case, it wouldn't be the game it is." -  
-Garth Crooks, *Private Eye's Colemanballs: No. 2* (1984)

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## <ffi: about the cover art>

Kari Dorth, "Flag Football: by request" (2008)  
Marker on sketchpaper, PhotoShop

Commercial artist Kari Dorth was educated at Loyola University and at the school of Phish. She lives with her spouse in the Bay area.

## <ffi: contributors>

**Beach, James** : Capricorn, 36. Into: camping, cards, chess, history, live music, meditation, philosophy, politics, sports, the theatre, travel. Also: studying literature, noticing art, doing stuff. Scoring is a prerequisite?! Published in little venues, worldwide.

**Berge, Carol** : Artist-poet, editor, neo-prof, writer. A New Yorker, a day-tripper who in the 1960s bitched to Allen Ginsberg, of "Howl" fame, about how everybody dropping in was disrupting her writing (---his response: Shut Your Door). What more to say? She's archived at universities, in textbooks, online. A new story, "We Are Not Alone," is slated to appear in *Gargoyle 54*. For more info: [carolberge.com](http://carolberge.com). RiP.

**Plumb, David** : Plumb's latest book is *A Slight Change in the Weather*, fiction. Other work appears in *The Washington Post*, *The Miami Herald*, *The Orlando Sentinel*, *Beyond the Pleasure Dome*, University of Sheffield, UK; *Homeless Not Helpless* Anthology, *Alimentum*, *Food Anthology 2006* and *St. Martin's Anthology*, *Monde James Dean*. He has worked as a paramedic, a cab driver, a cook and tour guide. A long time San Francisco writer, he now lives in South Florida.

Will Rogers said, "Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip." Plumb says, "It depends on the parrot."

**Rothenberg, Jerome** : "The Leonardo Project: 10+2," a suite of twelve visual poems, was commissioned by Francesco Conz as part of an exhibition in the city of Vinci, to

celebrate the 500th anniversary of Leonardo's Last Supper. Originally in an 18 x 24 format, the work was reproduced and published in a catalogue, *Leonardo in Action and Poetry* and in Rothenberg's *A Paradise of Poets*.

Jerome Rothenberg is an internationally known poet, translator and anthologist with over seventy books of poetry and several assemblages of traditional and contemporary poetry such as *Technicians of the Sacred* and *Poems for the Millennium*. *Triptych*, his thirteenth book of poems from New Directions, appeared in 2007, and a nineteenth-century prequel to *Poems for the Millennium* is scheduled for 2009.

**XeusZenon** : Pseudonym noted. For kicks, this gassy god-element puts Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch song lyrics into online language translators; therefore, love wins.

**Young, Karl** : "The inherent intelligence of language may always remain a mystery. Virtually any sincere writer will tell you that in many situations the language itself contributes significantly to the act of writing. Once you start, the language will to a greater or lesser extent take over part of the process of forming itself into a poem or essay. Writing thus becomes a form of dialogue or collaboration. I'd like to think that finding new ways to set up and explore such collaborations clarifies them in some sense. It seems just as likely that they're what clarifies me. A millenium ago, troubadors began poems with nothing but lists of rhyming words, seeing them as a framework for poems they'd build inside the frame.---from *Vocabularies, Fractals, and Semiconductors*, The Karl Young Home Page.

\*

## <ffi: editors note>

"Wood Coin: Flag Football Issue" contains no official rules for playing; offers no in-depth sports commentary; endorses no league, coach, team, athlete, sports drink or other affiliated franchise; and promises no discounts on uniforms or equipment.

*Wood Coin* offers leisure in the form of mild mental exercise; contains binary theory (x/o); promises art & lit, endorsed by the pros.

For jocks or nerds, ages 12 & up. Rather than gaming on a point system, wood coi n ascribes to an honor system.

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**James Beach**

## **“Jock Semantics”**

THE eldest 12-year-old leapt off the stoop and onto the bristly lawn. He pitched his tattered Athletics baseball cap forward to block the afternoon light. “Girl Spartans?” he shouted, shirtless, proud of new muscles. “The Spartans did *every* damned thing *without* girls. We’re so gonna lose this season.”

On the right side of the stoop, Richie crossed blonde-fuzzed arms over his big abdomen and spit on the hedge. “Not *everything*, dumbass, or none of us would be here,” said Richie, as if he knew the history of the world.

Douglas, seated on the left, smirked freckled cheeks into milky eyes, as if he knew what drove Richie. Meanwhile Ian scratched his jock beneath the poly-blend fabric of authentic Heat basketball shorts, checking that Douglas was watching. “Go out for a long one.”

“The real Spartans used females for something,” Douglas maintained, trudging out over the wide suburban lawn, obedient, to catch. “And our girls will look hot,” smirking less but blinking more, “in uniforms. We’ll know the best ass right off.”

Ian hurled the football in a near-perfect spiral. The trajectory put it way over head; with a fake-sounding bonk, it went bouncing in the street. “Plastic ball!” he said with a scowl.

“Snug-tight,” agreed Richie as the ball wobbled to the gutter and out of sight. “But hey, I’m not into *butt*.”

Ian located his muscle shirt, abandoned near where Richie kept spitting, and thrust smooth hands through its bottom.

“Follow those thighs up on into,” continued Douglas with a whistle. “I’m telling you, they will look hot in football pants.”

“They will look dumb,” insisted Ian, frustrated. He set his wrists so the shirt could be un-bunched and fitted over his head. He readjusted his cap, Athletics insignia straight, then flipped it backward. “Or, no; we’re the ones who’ll look dumb: The *Spartans*, with

*girls*, what a *joke*—!, females in shoulder-pads and mouth-guards and nut-cups!— or, *slot*-cups!—; and no end to the dishonor of the jock.”

“Slot-*plates*,” corrected Richie, a hint in his thick voice of maybe coming round to Ian’s view.

“Girl... jocks!” fumed Ian. He wiped at sweat escaping his shaggy hair. “Do you hear what you’re saying?”

As a pair, Richie and Douglas gave the impression of being loaded up with too many ideas.

“They’ll decorate our jockstraps—made for *males*!—with puny pink hearts and yellow daisy chains,” Ian mock-minced. “Then we’ll need new rules, ’cause the girls keep getting hurt. Our red and gold jerseys will become totally gay, like *lavender*, and *beige*. Our trusty helmets? throw ’em away; we’ll be pulling at flags!, not tackling. It’s unofficially over, the game we signed up for to play.”

“Got a pop’ to suck on, hey?” suggested Richie, lippy.

With a provoking nudge, Ian got Douglas out of the doorway and pulled open the screen door. “They join up, you know, because they see us standing tall together, free of them for *once*, and they want to wreck it. Trust me. I have a sister. She does it all the time.”

Ian flipped the lights on in the mud room. It was hot enough outside to share the popsicles his mom hid below those frost-cakey vegetables; she hoarded them, then showed them off like she was a magician, pulling them out of thin air every weekend if it was sunny. As he bent into the freezer, Ian felt a thing tickling his ankle. He stood up fast, cracked his crown on the lip.

“Mom says no ’sicles,” said the girl.

Ian let out an exasperated wheeze. His little sister was in an old shirt of his, “Camp Arrow” in faded kid-lettering, the one from a boys’ day camp he bussed to several summers ago; like folds of a robe, it hung in clumps on her. It was the hem that was tickling. “Did Mom say you could wear that shirt?” he demanded, gripping tight the paper-coated popsicles in his fist.

“Yes.”

“Well, sister, she gave me *these*,” the boy lied, slamming shut the freezer door. “Would you get outside? I can’t watch you in here.”

Timidly, the girl followed her older brother out the door. With disgust, Ian saw her put on a pair of his azure swim goggles. She tottered off the stoop and into the grass. In a daze of wonder, she sniffed at and trailed after pollen, dandelion seeds, butterflies, monarchs and invisible stuff in her head or on the goggles.

“That’s some weird sister you got,” said Douglas, peeling the paper from his treat.

“You can keep watching her, too,” Ian said. “I’m no babysitter.” He passed a popsicle to Richie, who shoved the thing in his mouth, to the wood.

As if to divert the vibe of a fight, Douglas asked Ian, “How much you been lifting?”

“A little,” the eldest boy admitted, “Got a set of ’bells for me birthday. Throw ’em every little while.”

“Sand, synth, or what?”

“No, no, iron!”

“The real body-builder,” said Douglas.

A moving truck moving in Ian’s periphery caught his eye and he turned to see head-on the swerve of the vehicle as its driver avoided running over his sister. With his palms he gripped at his cap, watching the oblivious four-year-old lift the plastic football out of the gutter. “We’re the *Spartans!*” cried Ian. “Get your *own* team, call it the Placenta Slots, or somesuch, aw, can’t you see it?”

Douglas snorted, cheeks again obscuring cloudy eyes, and barely licked at the vanilla popsicle dribbling down and onto his knuckles. “We’re not really Spartans. You think Chicago Cubs are really cubs?”

“Yeah, the Florida Marlins, they’re actual fish?” chimed in Richie.

Ian said, coolly, “Tell you what. You can get your pops’ some other place.” He yanked the screen door hard enough to gouge Douglas in the back. “And, since words mean nothing to you girls, why are we still yapping?”

To shrug off the scrape, Douglas fussed with the long, wayward laces in his cleats; having finished his treat, Richie eyed the other’s hungrily. Neither made a move from the stoop. For various reasons, the little footballer gave them a pointed, toothy smile.

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**Carol Bergé**

## **“The Pull”**

Everyone going whispering the secrets: this is how I solved it, this is the way; *this way, the way, The Way, the only, the one.* Oh, I go to this marvelous dentist, let me recommend you to my lawyer who. I have this great chiropractor. This guru who. This book that. Clothes I wore in order to. How I found God thru. How I. Who I. How you too could.

In the midst of life looking in either direction, comments, advising, shapes. How it could be smoother. It's not always the case, but. Might not work the same as it did for me, but. My Aunt tells me. Ella upstairs says. The kids said just last night that. Uncle Charles responds to. My father always said. If I were you I would definitely. We always find. If I were there I could. Now in our family we. The way it turned out when we tried it, it. Sam says. Mabel said. When George.

When we were there, we stayed at. We just found the cutest. If you just. You keep going till you reach the. I can never remember the name, but it's just before the. I haven't been there myself, but Joe says. Well, now. It's a matter of taste, of course, but. I heard it isn't the same this year, but. Last time I was there, it.

To make it softer. To make it harder. To make it all easier. Better. To help heal it. That idea that flour that herb that poultice that receipt that brew. They will love you for it always if you. The fever'll drop right away if. The kids'll. Old man'll. You'll.

It'll spoil if you don't. It'll keep if you. It won't slip, it'll come out, look cleaner last longer be just the same as brighter than softer than. Seems to me I remember. If you'd just try. This way. If you pin it. If you work it this way you don't even have to. When you hold it with your. It will.

I don't mean to hurt your feelings but. You ought to know by now that. Maybe you think we hadn't noticed but. Maybe if you did it like we do over here. We've found thru years of. They say the way you do it doesn't quite. But maybe if you. Surely if you. We.

Funny thing you mentioned it but. Them folks used to live here said that. It isn't to our taste but. It's longer this way but it's faster than. First left after the light till you. A right then a left then. If you try it in this position. Goes in easier if. Smoother less trouble less complicated than when you. Slides better fits better matches works blends in moves grooves; can do.

In the midst of life, looking up toward the elder trees, down toward the saplings. Out of the mouths of. Old saws no teeth. Respect your opinion on most things but in this

case.

When you've lived as long as me you'll. When I was your age we. In my day we had it different from. It was, it used to be, I remember when. By my definition. On my terms. On my word. Worked for us, it's good enuf for. You ought. Should. Supposed. You better.

In your position, I'd. Given the same facts. Considering everything. I'd never dare. I'd dare to, if. This way thru. This way into. The heart is the way to. The brain usually. The best type for that is. The thumb tells you if. Handsome men are always the. If you marry an ugly woman she'll. I've found that the mature man. I heard that boys under fourteen. Blond girls always do. Girls under twelve have. Women under men is.

With music with lights with no light candlelight perfumed oil pot butter whips leather silk. On a beach but the sand. Against a tree. The woods, nor are we out of it. Before breakfast. Instead of orange juice. Twice a week. Once an hour. Whenever he comes he. Lie on yer right side if you want a. Turn it around baby so that I. When you. Whenever you. It's important to. Depending on. While you. At the moment of. During the. If the. When she. As soon as he. As soon as we.

If you. When you. Everyone going whispering shouting the. When you feel that. When you discover the location of. Depending on how you. If only we tried the. You just have to. You might. Well, but. No, but. Really. Believe me. Believe me. Be. Leave. You'll be. Better. Yes it. By far if you. Why don't you. Can't you. Listen. Murmuring to believe me.

---from *Fierce Metronome: The One-Page Novels, and Other Short Fiction*, Window Editions, New York, 1981.

*2008 Wood Coin: Flag Football Issue: Bergé, "The Pull"*

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**David Plumb**

**"Letter Poem to the Morning of Friendship and Madness"**

Dear Us,

Giraffe eating is a popular sport in some places. It does take training, much as feeding goldfish to your cat (alive is good) but once mastered it is certainly a tall, thin alternative to pork. Nurses should consider this when dealing with heart patients (who have a fork in their hand and do not have the heart to put it down).

Why not? Try giraffe neck without bread. Lower giraffe is good. Giraffe butt needs simmering.

Do frogs look down. Do ducks fly south? Has the cell phone replaced the penis? Does god own an ipod? Do you think new birth control pills that give women four periods a year will cause more cancer? If you can buy a Dracula tuxedo for your parrot, why not a sensible body condom for the rich?

Who knows what stork has its beak in the fuselage?

Sincerely,

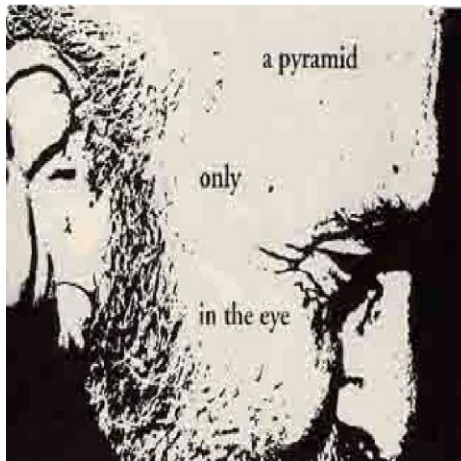
Mr. Moon

*2008 Wood Coin: Flag Football Issue: Plumb, "Letter Poem"*

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**Jerome Rothenberg**

**“The Leonardo Project: 10+2”**



*Editor's note: the piece on this page is a macro-view; please refer to the PDF file for great accuracy*

*2008 Wood Coin: Flag Football Issue: Rothenberg, "The Leonardo Project: 10+2 (various frames)"*

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**XeusZenon**

**“Bored?”**

Are you bored?  
Write a poem.f  
Or read a poem  
Here"re a oem  
(Is he dumb)

Knit pieces of time  
Boredom exist anywhere  
Take prison for instance  
(PLease!)(Is tasteless!)

Is it self-made?  
Or curable through will?  
The remote's there  
There's a humanuman  
Food, meditation  
Being the coy you are  
Escape(!)

Osmosis- ebbs mo stones We  
oxen knew crews (Ugh!)  
Loaned sails berthed  
Helm sol o soothscooth  
Swap sharp cities to the  
Phenybarbital cat (typo)  
Barnowl-swivelling  
hoards Zoom fallopian to  
(Can't put the rat)  
Typewrite pantsless void  
Mand(ala)ibled fortune

Crazy motives in f sharp

Sliding into magma dumb  
Calving turd(pretty  
pleases After delivery  
mass ocean Rapids eddy  
sly lagless Hum erosion  
spoonful Flee mittenless  
bitten arm (Is feckless?)  
Rinds that  
You chew occur, actually  
Parried carvel norad  
Warshippers tickertaped  
Hung in licked to death

*2008 Wood Coin: Flag Football Issue: XeusZenon, "Bored?"*

© 1978

**Karl Young**

**“The Stranger”**

light  
on the water red  
or green austere  
silence insults  
intensity kind  
people kind acts  
slap mirrors  
cupboards toilet  
bowls unjust laws  
poisoned fig trees  
bark at the  
absolute buy  
acquiescence  
overwhelm acceptance

accumulate  
bitterness entangle  
decorum legitimize  
disease renounce  
aversion fatten  
vexation exhaust  
equilibrium in the  
suns's full glare stop  
each  
chain  
make yourself comfortable  
in spite of the trial  
emptiness vibrates  
the victim calls witnesses  
plaster machinery naked  
laughter  
slimy wheels  
see yourself as adversary  
or the winch of jealousy  
the magistrate is an  
invoice a coffin of confused  
noise a splash of nervous  
clarity or simple nausea  
hardly necessary  
ice cream or cranium  
habituated hate hates breath  
dirty tricks  
charming cheeks  
preoccupied carrion  
while fortune's funeral  
classifies file cabinets  
automatically  
authorizes heart  
collar eyes  
shirtsleeves  
anger  
boiling mouth half  
closed empty bottle  
collaborate to calm down  
sweaty vigil  
teeth  
lace  
departure with nothing to  
say prisoner's stage fright  
ruled in squares  
prosecutor's functioning madness

starched with  
kerosene cell's hope  
for flame canker's  
song afternoon's ash  
lime's weariness float  
on your back deface  
information purge  
procedure carry luck  
fascinate fish swim  
forward scatter the  
droplets let waves  
comb your hair taste  
salt's constancy  
swim tranquil swim  
lazy  
swim silent swim  
singing swim as in  
dreams

swim through partitions of chemical  
constraint swim against mischance  
swim beyond hope swim  
beyond punishment dive  
into the open sea descend  
carefully slowly  
sensually hear  
motors dreaming  
bells profound  
vibrations  
descend into cooler layers  
withdraw into nothingness  
anonymous joy  
imagine being  
condemned to  
life courtesy  
flows away  
like memory  
of Chinese chocolate  
nail down  
association  
knife's blade  
wave  
streetlight

abyss in your pocket  
flee funeral smoke  
embrace the rush  
obliging kindness  
fried face  
scab of years  
cymbals of typists  
well adapted to  
amorous wetness  
blushing silk tacit  
as the tide rub on  
oil  
wake up again  
wash dishes  
get dressed  
wash your  
face go  
outside it's my  
city balcony  
bluejeans  
ticket  
ink and wings  
plumbers and cops  
caretakers and pimps  
luck and fear movies  
and brandy turning  
fan railroad  
remove money  
unscrew astonishment  
pardon  
window  
spaghetti  
lotteries sugar  
luxury  
shuttering logic  
skin pavement  
shells of  
pleasure  
shrug at the faint light  
hammer memory  
circle minutia  
notch  
sink  
streetcar  
tobacco

stairwell frying  
pan bloody  
sawdust rolling  
apple sudden  
rain raucous  
drunks open  
skylight sweaty  
waist morning  
radio red wine  
smooth glass  
smells of gasoline  
of coffee  
of fish sunlight  
falls on window  
sill curtain  
walls this  
room  
streets  
city river

[The vocabulary for this poem was derived from English equivalents of words and phrases in Albert Camus' *L'Etranger*.]

--from *A Book of Fractals*

*2008 Wood Coin: Flag Football Issue: Young, "The Stranger"*

## <ffi: quotations>

Ransom was just formulating to himself the theory that the stuff that they had given him might have some effect on the pupil and that this would explain the unnatural fullness and splendor of the sky, when a disturbance of silver light, almost a pale and miniature sunrise, at one corner of the skylight, drew his eyes upward again. Some minutes later the orb of the full moon was pushing its way into the field of vision. Ransom sat still and

watched. He had never seen such a moon --- so white, so blinding and so large. "Like a great football just outside the glass," he thought, and then, a moment later, "No --- it's bigger than that."

Looking back over my own years of schooling, I can see the enormous deficiencies of a system which could do nothing better for my body than Swedish drill and compulsory football, nothing better for my character than prizes, punishments, sermons and pep-talks, and nothing better for my soul than a hymn before bed-time, to the accompaniment of the harmonium. Like everyone else, I am functioning at only a fraction of my potential.

Football, wherein is nothing but beastly fury, and extreme violence, whereof proceedeth hurt, and consequently rancor and malice do remain with them that be wounded.

To say that these men paid their shillings to watch 22 hirelings kick a ball is merely to say that a violin is wood and catgut, that *Hamlet* is so much paper and ink. For a shilling the Bruddersford United Association Football Club offered you Conflict and Art.

It simply happened, suddenly, in 1956, when I was crossing the football field on the way home from school. I wrote a poem in my head and then I wrote it down, and after that writing was the only thing I wanted to do.

I will not kiss your f.ing flag.

- C.S. Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938)
- Aldous Huxley (Nicholas Murray, *Aldous Huxley*, 2002)
- Thomas Elyot, *Book of the Governor* (1531)
- J.B. Priestly, *Good Companions* (1929)
- Margaret Atwood, *Negotiating with the Dead* (2003)
- e.e. cummings, "i sing of Olaf glad & big" *Complete Poems, 1904-62* (1994)

**<ffi: rising issues>**

## **Help Like Kelp Issue.**

The largest and most complex algae, kelp anchor themselves to rocks with a rootlike holdfast along colder coastlines. Large air-filled bladders help strengthen the stipe, which can grow up to 300 feet. They are a coarse plant, brown or olive in color, with giant leafy blades for photosynthesizing food. Like ferns, they reproduce by alteration of generations.

Evidence has surfaced that live kelp helps control the harmful ozone. To eat, kelp is rich in vitamins & minerals, and is a staple in the diets of the Japanese. Alginates from kelp appear in films, gels, rubber, linoleum, cosmetics, paint, car polishes; organic derivatives make pudding, ice cream, processed cheeses. Kelp ashes are used in fertilizer.

*--paraphrased from Microsoft (R) Encarta (R) 2006; (c) 1993-2005 Microsoft Corporation*

## **Watch the Star-crack Spread Issue.**

Molten glass is plastic and can be shaped by means of several techniques. When cold, glass can be carved. At low temperatures glass is brittle and breaks with a shell-like fracture on the broken face. Natural materials like obsidian or tektites (from meteors) have compositions and properties similar to those of synthetic glass.

Safety glass, for motorized vehicle windshields, is made by laminating a sheet of transparent polyvinyl butyral plastic between two sheets of thin plate glass. The plastic adheres tightly to the glass and holds the broken shards in place even after hard blows.

*--paraphrased from Microsoft (R) Encarta (R) 2006; (c) 1993-2005 Microsoft Corporation*

## **<ffi: salute>**

Hermes: good luck, wealth. Son of Zeus; kid half-brother of Apollo. With wings on his cap and shoes, a gold caduceus, his chore was to run goods for his dad. This dude (unofficially) inspired the symbol at Nike. He's credited for inventing the lyre, giving it to Apollo as a peace offering. A trickster, a thief, Hermes is also the deity of the athletes.

## <wood coin history>

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02/2009 : [Help Like Kelp Issue](#)

02/2009 : [Watch the Star-crack Spread Issue](#)

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To print an entire Issue, visit "*Wood Coin* History" in any issue's Table of Contents.

## <submitting to wood coin>

Seeking prose, verse; miscellaneous. Submit up to 10 pages.

Also seeking visual art, in a high DPI. Submit up to 10 images.

Please specify if you are meeting the theme of an upcoming issue.

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ISSN: 1946-4320

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Wood Coin Press; 551 W. Cordova Rd., #369; Santa Fe, NM 87505