

# <a scratch and dent sale issue: table of contents>

"Look at me, look at me/hands in the air like it's good to be ALIVE/and I'm a famous rapper/even when the paths're all crookedy/I can show you how to do-si-do/I can show you how to scratch a record/I can take apart the remote control/And I can almost put it back together..." --The Flobots, "Handlebars," *Fight With Tools* (2007)

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## <about the cover art>

**Ira Joel Haber**, "Doodle Dandy: Clifton Webb" (1979)

*"...in 1994 I was asked to be in a doodles show, and I just happened to look at this engagement calendar and I was shocked ... They looked ill. I decided to add lettering to some of them F. THIS AIDS S. ALREADY and there you have it."*

Ira Joel Haber was born and lives in Brooklyn New York. He is a sculptor, painter, book dealer and teacher. His work has been seen in numerous group shows both in USA and Europe and he has had 9 one man shows including several retrospectives of his sculpture. His work is in the collections of The Whitney Museum Of American Art, New York University, The Guggenheim Museum, The Hirshhorn Museum & The Albright-Knox Art Gallery. His paintings, drawings and collages have been published in many online and print magazines, including *Rock Heals, Otoliths, Winamop, Melancholia's Tremulous Dreadlocks, Barfing Frog, The Raving Dove, Foliate Oak, Siren, Prose Toad, Triplopia, Thieves Jargon, Opium, Dirt, The Centrifugal Eye, the DMQ Review, Broadsided, Hotmetalpress, Double Dare Press, Events Quarterly, Unlikely Stories, Coupemine, Cerebration, Chick Flicks, Softblow, Eclectica Magazine, Backwards City Review, Right Hand Pointing, Ascent, Aspirations Magazine, Brew City Magazine, Fiction Attic, Blue Print Review, Ellipsis, The Indelible Kitchen, Cricket, Entelechy, So To Speak, Taj Mahal Review, The Fifteen Project, The Externalist, Why Vandalism, Mungbeing Magazine, Lamination Colony, Paradigm, Lily, Literary Fever, Glassfire Magaine, The Houston Literary Review, Lilies and Cannonballs, Wheelhouse Magazine, Terra Incognita, Qarrtsiluni, The Tusculum Review, Multidementional, 34th Parallel.*

Over the years he has received three National Endowments For The Arts Fellowships, two Pollock-Krasner grants and most recently in 2004 received The Adolph Gottlieb Foundation grant. Currently he teaches art at the United Federation of Teachers Retiree Program in Brooklyn.

## <sdsi contributors>

**Beach, James** : Capricorn, 37. 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.

**Fox, Hugh** : Born in Chicago in 1932. Polio at age 4, cured by a pre-Saulk experimental medicine that worked. Spent his childhood totally immersed in the arts, was part of the All Children's Grand Opera group run by Viennese genius Zerlina Muhlman Metzger, studied violin and composition with P. Marinus Paulson, art and ceramics at the Art Institute in Chicago, was pushed into Medicine by his M.D. father, finished four years of pre-med and a year of medicine, then got an M.A. at Loyola in Chicago and a Ph.D. in English/American Literature at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. It was at Urbana-Champaign that he met and married Lucia Ungaro Zevallos, a Peruvian poet-critic who was getting her Ph.D. in Romance Languages, and after the marriage they moved to Los Angeles where he taught for ten years at Loyola-Marymount University and was immersed in the film-world. At the same time thanks to his wife he began to go to Peru to visit his Peruvian family and slowly visited all the major ruins in the pre-Columbian Americas. He met Harry Smith in Berkeley in 1968 and they became best friends and for some twenty years Fox would visit Smith 2-3 times a year in New York City/Brooklyn and work on Smith's magazines, get to know the poets and writers in the New York scene. He was a Fulbright Professor for a year in Mexico (1961), two years in Caracas (1964-'66), which especially made sense because he married a Peruvian in 1956. In 1968 he moved to Michigan State U. and taught there until he retired 6 years ago. While at Michigan State U. he had a Fulbright professorship in Brazil where he met and married a Brazilian M.D., studied Latin American literature on a grant from the Organization of American States at the U. of Buenos Aires, and after beginning to make archaeological discoveries and have his books on archaeology published, he received another grant from the Organization of American States to spend a year as an archaeologist in the Atacama Desert in Chile. He has some 104 books published.

"For decades I was immersed in the novels of Henry James, Evelyn Waugh, Aldous Huxley and the like, although I even wrote the first critical study of Charles Bukowski and was influenced by his super-realistic style. But mainly I like my style to be somewhat 'classic,' almost Jane Austin-ish, getting into the center of the characters' lives/feelings/aspirations. Since I was a child I have been totally immersed in the arts. Polio and then cured, and then shoved into opera, violin, piano, musical composition, drawing, painting, ceramics, my house practically a library of classics.

Then French, Czech, German, Italian, I married a Peruvian, turned into an archaeologist and immersed myself in Pre-History. So there's always the big Overview in my work, man on planet earth, everything that exists the way it is impossible, but still there, so we live in an ambience of total wonder/impossibility."

**Herzer, Christine** : A poet and visual artist. She divides her time between India and Paris.

"I paint inside out; I write outside in. My poems stage locations for private, public & global intensities to happen in. Expansiveness and capacious experiment are at the heart of my aesthetic. The acts of leaving, leaping, effacing, stealing, overlapping, protecting, transgressing, displacing, recycling, and veiling echo what women do. to themselves. I desire language. I make mouth stamps."

Christine will graduate with an MFA in Poetry from Bennington College in June 2009. Her poems have appeared in Upstairs at Duroc, Louis Liard Magazine, Fogged Clarity, Open Letters, The New York Quarterly [forthcoming] and FENCE [Fall Issue 2009]. In 2008 she was invited to read her poetry for the literary journal Upstairs at Duroc, the Ivy Writers Reading Series in Paris, and Re-Loquations, Talking Poetry in Mumbai. Her current series of 100 mixed-media-drawings functions as a pilot to a series of writings on Handicapped Spaces.

**Lifshin, Lyn** : Her ANOTHER WOMAN WHO LOOKS LIKE ME was published by Black Sparrow at David Godine October, 2006. It has been selected for the 2007 Paterson Award for Literary Excellence for previous finalists of the Paterson Poetry Prize. (ORDER@GODINE.COM) Also out in 2006, her prize-winning book about the famous, short lived beautiful race horse, Ruffian: THE LICORICE DAUGHTER: MY YEAR WITH RUFFIAN from Texas Review Press. Other of Lifshin's recent prize-winning books include BEFORE IT'S LIGHT published winter 1999-2000 by Black Sparrow press, following their publication of COLD COMFORT in 1997. Other recently published books and chapbooks include: IN MIRRORS from Presa Press and UPSTATE: AN UNFINISHED STORY from Foot Hills and THE DAUGHTER I DON'T HAVE from Plan B Press. Other new books include WHEN A CAT DIES, ANOTHER WOMAN'S STORY, BARBIE POEMS, SHE WAS FOUND TREADING WATER DEEP OUT IN THE OCEAN and MAD GIRL POEMS. A NEW FILM ABOUT A WOMAN IN LOVE WITH THE DEAD, from March Street Press in 2003. She has published more than 120 books of poetry, including MARILYN MONROE and BLUE TATTOO. She won awards for her nonfiction and edited 4 anthologies of women's writing including TANGLED VINES, ARIADNE'S THREAD and LIPS UNSEALED. Her poems have appeared in most literary and poetry magazines and she is the subject of an award-winning documentary film, LYN LIFSHIN: NOT MADE OF GLASS, available from Women Make Movies. Her poem, No More Apologizing, has been called "among the

most impressive documents of the women's poetry movement," by Alicia Ostriker. An update to her Gale Research Projects Autobiographical series, "On The Outside, Lips, Blues, Blue Lace," was published Spring 2003. WHAT MATTERS MOST and AUGUST WIND were recently published. TSUNAMI is forthcoming from Blue Unicorn. World Parade Press will publish POETS (MOSTLY) WHO HAVE TOUCHED ME, LIVING AND DEAD: ALL TRUE, ESPECIALLY THE LIES. Texas Review Press published BARBARO: BEYOND BROKENNESS in 2008 and World Parade Books just published DESIRE in 2008. And DRIFTING is just online. Red Hen has published PERSEPHONE in 2008. Coatalism Press just published 92 RAPPLE DRIVE and Goose River Press will publish NUTLEY POND. Clovis Hook Press just published LIGHT AT THE END, THE JESUS POEMS, and Finishing Line Press published LOST IN THE FOG. A new chap book: BALLET MADONNAS, from Mastodon Dentist. For interviews, photographs, more bio material, reviews, interviews, prose, samples of work and more, her web site is [lynlifshin.com](http://lynlifshin.com).

**Lowery, Matt** : Hailing from central Colorado, he spent his childhood staring at trees and building electrical gadgetry.

He now spends his time as a software developer, designer, and student, working from a small experimental production studio in Denver's Capitol Hill district.

He is a creative thinker and problem solver. Employing these ~wholly remarkable~ talents at every stage of his work, he is able to demonstrate a stylistic edge that transcends traditional methodologies and normals. He is not afraid to go in two or more directions at one time.

When pressed, he will admit that his current artistic interest involves minimalism, formalism, and futurism. His favorite contemporary photographic artists include Abelardo Morell, Robert & Shana ParkeHarrison, Sandy Skoglund, Duane Michals, Jeff Wall, Jay Myrdal, Taylor Deupree, and Hiroshi Sugimoto.

He is currently studying Photography and Fine Arts at Metropolitan State College in Denver.

**Mulrooney, Christopher** : Has written poems in *Rune*, *Vanitas*, *The Broadkill Review*, *Moloch*, *The Delinquent*, and *Nebula*.

**Mycue, Edward** : "DAMAGE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, a volume of poems out of print since 1973 was republished in January 1977 by Panjandrum Press. In August 1977, Menard Press, London, will publish BEYOND THE SOURCE, which is Volume III of 'The Assault on Summer Triptych' (of which, DAMAGE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

is Volume I). Forthcoming is a chapbook, 'Something Inheres in the Marigold,' a section of Volume II, MUDDY ON THE HORIZON, from Thorpe Springs Press, Berkeley. When the entire Triptych is published altogether, the work I began in 1966 will be complete. Viewing and reviewing my stay is an art formed in simple words of surviving, growing old, doing a good job necklaced like the world that can change from one day to the next and hangs on. And I stand by the rose without clean hands although summer is over and passages of melancholy loss recess in dreams that curl like the bannister or a squirrel's tail, squeaking, shivering with possibility for the right moment. All the while dewy mornings, azure skies, pussy willow trees---kit, caboodle of dreamers' stocks-in-trade---confront the knife, a tiny blade that conspires like needles, stars, explosions and yet are still not night but light on light: the lake. Between past and future is now, no hands in the stone although breath has many doors to mix retrospect with apprehension, maybe told, forgotten, lost, found this morning."--from *CENTER*, 1978.

Most recently, Mycye has published *MINDWALKING* (2008, PHILOS PRESS, LACEY, WA).

**Plumb, David** : His 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."

**Rosenthal, Barbara** : Born in New York, she is an artist and writer who has taught photography at Parsons School of Design and writing at the City University of NY. She has published four books of photography and journal-text, *Clues to Myself*, *Sensations*, *Homo Futurus*, and *Soul & Psyche*, which, along with twenty other works, are in the collections of MoMA and The Whitney. She currently writes art criticism for *NYArts* magazine while filing rejections from literary agents who don't think they can sell her novel *Wish For Amnesia*. [emedialoft.org](http://emedialoft.org).

**Stevens, Geoff** : At the mid 1970s period, poetry in standard English began to take over and when he met Olive Hyatt at a Writers' Club in Dudleyry, they decided in 1976 to start a magazine.

It was duplicated in purple ink and was called Purple Patch. Soon it was being sold to friends, in clubs, and on subscription and enjoyed the highest circulation of its publication (see the Purple Patch website).

A magazine called Promotion was introduced to highlight individual poets and included Hilary Mellon, Michael Newman, Robert Cole, Andy Botterill and Geoff himself in the first edition.

By the late 1990s at The Barlow Theatre, he won, along with Wayne Dean-Richards, their competition for a book consisting of the work of two writers. His poetry and Wayne's stories appeared in: At The Edge/Central To Me.

Geoff's poetry acceptances by magazines began to zoom and in the 1990s he was having over 200 poems published each year.

A collection in co-operation with Paul Weinman, Skin Print, was published in the U.S.A., funded by their National Endowment for the Arts. He became the U.K. Editor of Slugfest Ltd. Literary Magazine, an American publication.

As well as Poetry Wednesday, which is organised with Brendan Hawthorne, Geoff has taken over Spouting Forth's Barlow Theatre Readings and has joined with Alex Barzdo and Brendan to form Unleaded Petrels in order to expand their performance opportunities.

**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.

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## <sdsi: editor's node>

"Wood Coin: A Scratch And Dent Sale Issue" might come as a shock-- nobody in here is so marred as to be bought for cheap. In fact, the misspelling of IMPUNITY on Watch the Star-crack Spread's Rising Issues page was a gimmick, with legal overtones, to lure new submissions. (But, emulation *is* the highest form of flattery...) THE PIECES CONTAINED HEREIN ARE NOT DAMAGED; THEIR PRINCIPALS ARE.

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

This issue is for anyone scratched or dented, and those who prefer to buy out of their class. Ages 12 & up. As always, WC welcomes the honorably discharged.

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James Beach

## “Driven”

WILMA digs eelskin wallet from her art portfolio and disseminates its items down her trim thighs and on the bus seat armrests: three tarot cards, a driver’s license, two student IDs (one fake), two dorm keys, a butane lighter, a prophylactic, lint fluffs, various coins, seventy-five dollars, five pins (two safety, three traditional), three gel pens, four Carry A. Nation postage stamps, a stack of complimentary tickets to Danceteria, folded tissues, and two Greyhound ticket carbons. Her piles sway with the jouncing of the Greyhound.

“It must be on my dresser,” she finally says. Blood drains from her face. “What if my mom finds it?”

“Would she know what it was?” asks the large-featured Greta. Her oval eyes blink like elegies.

“My mom? I don’t know.”

“Mine wouldn’t. She’s oblivious. But yours might at that.”

“I left it sitting out in plain sight.”

“Look again,” prods Greta.

“I need some smoke,” Wilma sniffs, as petite as her bones. She holds the limp pocketbook and stares at its worn-out form, touches where the satin lining has torn, snagged and stained, where constant pressure from various items has puckered and distorted its shape. “Why didn’t you tell me this wallet’s dead?”

The Greyhound ambles onto an offramp. Because of the steep angle of the road, each grouping begins to topple, and Wilma panics while restocking her wallet. Greta covers with her manicured hands lighters, IDs and dollar bills.

“Who’s this lady?” the larger asks, singling out the strip of postage stamps while scooping the piles into the yawn of Wilma’s portfolio.

“Carrie Hatchet? She’s from another century. She went around busting up taverns with an ax, to protest against how men always get jerky when they get drunk. I’m going to send them on hate-mail postcards, to every jerk, on frat house row.”

“Was Carry A. Nation her real name?”

“I don’t know. I think so. She was a Jesus freak, but I love her anyway.”

Greta’s cheeks bloom and swallow her eyes as she chides, “Everything’s always got layers with you art majors.”

The Greyhound reaches a gas station that’s located, thinks Wilma, about a stone’s throw from Stickville. She zips closed her portfolio. The bus driver brakes, expels mechanical hisses. Her sleek, carefully parted dirty blond hair swings, reactionary.

Greta’s swept-back curls swing too as she rises, sets her purse on the seat, tugs on her pea coat.

Passengers in front ape them, with variation; their exodus is ordered, nearly silent as they step out under a feckless gray sky.

Meanwhile Wilma lugs her portfolio down the bus aisle. She wonders if she maybe she stashed the cellophane-wrapped acid doses in it instead. Nervous with the driver she misjudges the drop of the steep linoleum staircase, stops to twist her ankle back into its Birkenstock bed.

Wind sends a draft into the bus, somehow reminding Wilma to look up; she does so and notices her friend throw a conspiratorial look before darting behind the far side of the station. But the zipper has caused a pucker and she fears the imperfection will damage a semester’s worth of fabric swatches and prototype garment sketches. Dawdling, fooling with her portfolio, the design major wonders what Greta is up to. Her heel comes loose again and she thinks smoking some pot might be nice.

Behind the gas station, she does admire the aluminum foil pipe quickly fashioned by Greta’s calculator-sized fingers. A dust-speckled breeze prompts her to shield the flame as it chars the crude bowl; she wishes she had fastened her hair beneath her coat like Greta’s is. Unsecured, it floats and attracts micro-stones, brazenly seeks the spark of the lighter. Perhaps because of the wind and the clouds, Wilma hardly feels the THC.

“This’ll make the ride more bearable,” Greta shouts six hits later, crumpling foil as they scurry round the station’s brick wall. “Only four more hours of dull from the bus window s.”

Stopping together, with identical slouches of different scale, the girls observe the Greyhound, gaining speed as it reaches the freeway onramp. Wilma lets go her portfolio, and it also slouches. They stand this way for several minutes. Mesmerized by enormity of predicament, paralyzed with shock over getting abandoned, they watch the steel bus disappear onto the bleak horizon.

\*

“TOLD you to rent a car,” Greta eventually says. Specifically, one of the new gas-electric hybrids, the girl thinks. The percentage of dollars saved on fuel, plus the help it does for the environment, outweighs the risk of receiving snotty glances from jock boys in Normal Vehicles.

“I won’t believe this,” Wilma shrugs, sloppy in her sandals as they crunch toward the station door. “This isn’t happening.”

“Believe it, Wil,” replies Greta. “At least you have your portfolio.”

Once inside, the girls stifle nervous giggles at the arthritic store-keep who ogles them with slick-looking eyeballs. Though Greta believes most octogenarians to be blights, corrupt at their cores because, honestly, how can they not be, she also tries hard to remain empathetic. With smile expansive, she greets, “Hello, old friend.”

“Ha-ha!” the man sputters. “Sweet-tarts is all on sale, two f’r eighty-six.”

Cognizant of her diet—always, always, always—Greta also possesses a keen head for numbers. Figuring in modest musculature, average skeleton, boob and hip fat, and road-trip energy expenditure, she could use a snack. The station stocks nothing much recommended by the RDA; Greta comes to believe Sweet-tarts to be as healthy as anything else at hand. While rereading its chemically-laden label she hears Wilma buying sweet cigars.

“Your sign says three-forty-eight,” her friend argues. “Why are you charging me three-ninety-seven?”

“Ta-ta-tax.”

“That sounds a little crooked to me.”

“Ha!”

Greta intervenes with, “Actually, with six-percent sales tax, your total should come to three-sixty-nine. And would you add on this candy roll? I seem to have lost my purse.”

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STANDING as tall as she can in her sandals outside the station, Wilma puffs her sweet little skinny cigar, thinking about Greta’s fat purse sitting on the faded bus seat. She thanks God that their Greyhound stubs are in her portfolio, and thanks God again that Greta has the weed stashed on her person.

Just inside the doorway, door propped with the portfolio, Greta keeps warm via a duct

in the ceiling. She yammers, “I was just remembering how, over Thanksgiving break, we went cruising with those scummy guys, and you hid the last of our stash in your bra—”

“—that’s where,” the aspiring designer shouts. Then, at Greta’s vacuous stare, she clarifies, “I stashed the acid in my bra, this morning.”

“Yippie. Let’s eat!”

Wilma stubs out the cigar on colorless brick. “Don’t you have to call your mom again, about the missing Greyhound and all that?”

Greta says, admiring Wilma’s ash mark, “Do you think I explained it well enough? Was it too much, telling her the bus driver kept laughing at us in the rearview mirror?”

“He was, I saw!” Wilma fibs, fastening loose hair strands beneath her collar, like Greta’s is.

“Still, I don’t want to dose, you know, without some idea of how we’re getting back on campus.”

Nodding, Greta dials her mother again from the payphone. She presses her left palm against her exposed ear when a lemon-orange van with noisy muffler pulls up almost at her feet, listens to the receiver with a pained, wind-whipped expression.

Wilma looks on as a scruffy, twenty-something guy dressed in blah coveralls climbs out of the lemon-(limon-?)orange van’s cab, throws some surreptitious glances then, hobbling stiffly by with barely a glance, disappears behind the wall.

Stifling a grin—she’s a bit stoned, after all—the college freshman imagines their station to be dripping with drugs, and decides it’s the hippest spot in Sticksville.

“We’re sitting pretty,” Greta announces, suddenly at Wilma’s side.

“Sitting pretty?”

“We’re perfect. Let’s dose.”

“Do you mean we’ve got a ride?”

“In six-hours-fifty-five-minutes we catch another bus, and we’re back in Iowa City by midnight,” she boasts with glee. “But if we miss this next one, we’re screwed.”

Wilma crumples the pack of cigs in her pocket, drops it off in the trash. “Your mom’s the best.”

Using Greta as a privacy shield she fishes for the blotter paper doses stamped with a cute blue unicorn. When her fingers find the crinkly fold of cellophane against her tit, a rush originating below her stomach rises into her throat and she's feeling like a vandal.

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AFTER swapping watches, necklaces, earrings and lipstick Greta can only stare at the green laminate table in suspicion. To her, she and Wilma keep sitting in the bar-restaurant, discussing the same point forever.

"Huxley likes to give A's, because it helps your GPA," the tiny Wilma fizzes, pausing for a sip of melting ice water. "Anyway what's the difference? if you got an A-minus?"

She wonders what's happening to Wilma's voice, turning effervescent and green like the table, but tries anyway to treat Wilma regular.

"The minus is an insult," says Greta coolly. "It's a mark of negativity—er, a symbol of it."

"In salt."

"Huxley once told our class that trying to teach to us was like pissing into a vagina."

"What?"

A carnation-pink light blushing down on her, shining up in her, Greta thinks Prof Huxley is a kind of disgusting in this light. Except there is no blush light! She knows this; she sees Huxley naked, trying to piss; the idea of sex with him excites her; she wants to experience any other thing besides him. "He has a big one I think."

"I don't think I want to think, about it. Your brain thinks up the weirdest s.," says Wilma in her green way.

Greta sees the wide grin smears itself onto Wilma's petite face, and her sleek hair begins to fan, or no , , , wait.

Nacho amigos!

The words descend upon the math-whiz like ethereal detritus.

Nacho amigos, nacho amigos, nacho amigos! Trying absurdly to count the number of A's, Greta gets goofed up. A moment later, she sees the phrase coming out Wilma's mouth.

"Nacho amigos," her friend again intones. "God, that's hilarious. Notch your

amigos. Not your amigos. Na'cho a'm(e) goes. Nacho amigos.”

“Wil, why do you keep saying it?”

A beat. Then, “It’s where we are.”

“Cheese, chips and friends.”

Greta finds herself chuckling in hiccuppy bursts. Right, she thinks; we’re tripping, inside of a bar-restaurant named after itself.

Her friend’s snaky tint intensifies, drawing upon the laminate. Everything turns green.

A peek at the bar confirms an elderly audience who like to drink but refuse to have fun. This audience looks blue. Study of her palms tells Greta a lot about arteries, veins and bones.

Bent over in nearly uncontrollable fits of hysterics, the girl marvels at how her skin can contain her insides.

“We’re very far away!” boasts Greta. She suddenly wants to see Wilma vomit, spew multicolored bile, and this stifles any giddiness. Eighteen years of partially digested meals rush to feed her head.

Across the table Wilma keeps erupting in bark-like giggles.

“Shhh, listen, Wil,” she says. “Just think if we had geodes for organs? Like crystal, those geode things people are always busting open? Do you think we’d all be nicer to each other one if we knew how sloppy our organs are; how fragile?”

Wilma gets lost in their untouched water glasses, turning her head slightly as if objects in there rotate in suspended animation.

“You’re right, girly; we’re all disgusting tubes and pumps and sacks,” the smaller spurts. “I would like to be a tall glass of nothing, like Ms. H-two-oh here. She’s so pristine, so unspoiled. You and I are rotting piles of stinky garbage.”

“Piles of s.,” Greta agrees, nodding. She imagines her fat tits as translucent and stares at the bones beneath. Then she opens the pepper shaker and, with maniacal glee, dumps the dark cubist grains into her tall glass prism.

Fascinated, the girls watch the silt swirl and settle. The room rotates like light in a prism for awhile as the glitter disperses. Wilma says, “Now we’re even.”

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PERIPHERALLY aware of the other patrons in the restaurant glancing,

coughing, clearing their throats, Wilma and Greta sprinkle liberally their laughs on the establishment. Elders at the bar stare, order more drinks.

The girls eventually draw a ghostly pair of coveralls toting a bottle of ale toward them.

“The limon-orange van!” Wilma hears herself screaming, mind reeling from the recollection of bright fruits/wheels/noisy-on-gravel; the cold-looking phone, the cupping over of Greta’s ear.

The coveralls grow a face, replete with eyes, a mouth, and ears, and hovers closer to their booth, a wholly helium specter, clothed ’neath the head in blah.

Except the blah now teems with pointillist pastel coils, tightening then unfurling, disappearing behind massive shoulders, reappearing on both necks—the thick pale corded one and this extra brown one of ale.

“When did you guys order?” face above the coveralls bellows, resonating with an energy that Wilma can’t right away place.

She recalls, slowly—while enthralled by the rainbow trail its elbow brushes—that yes, this creature that crawled out of a van is a Man—the Something Familiar about him.

In a whorl she sees how solid, somehow, his craft is; his orange one, his flesh one; she wonders why her own craft feels so soft, so expansive and unstable. To sharpen her mind she tells it to refashion the ornately covered coveralls into black tie with tails. A beetle, then; a black roach.

“We’re not guys,” Greta admonishes. She blusters her way toward a menu, appears momentarily baffled by its tricky plastic folds. “And, we haven’t ordered a thing.”

“Good,” the man says, “then we can all three of us take a walk.”

Wilma wants to stay, and says as much. She likes it at Nacho Amigos. She’s enjoying the ambiance, the geodes especially, and the foreign necklace against her breast, and the nothing wash of her water in the mouth, the one without the crud in it.

The man says, “You’re putting on a show for the yokels.”

The girls explode with laughs, echo the word yokels. But they allow themselves to be shuffled, still twittering, toward the door—walking the long way round the restaurant so as to avoid the bar. A windy vacuum helps expel them through the doorway into the screamingly barren universe of the town’s main street, which extinguishes their fun.

“Where are we?” Greta asks, spooky in her exaggerated, chunky step.

The sidewalk roils ahead, promises more horrid pith than anything Wilma's ever experienced. Her panic barometer rises and she feels she's about to go apes. Vainly, while experiencing apes. as the most frightening word she—or anyone, for that matter— could ever aspire to think of, Wilma clutches the air for her portfolio.

“My art!” she cries, breaking the threesome, “My art!”

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GRETA shifts her bulk, once deciding to abandon the strange man in coveralls who keeps telling her to stay put. Then she is charging beneath the enormous blinking Nacho Amigos sign dangling ominously above the door, an electric moment.

Inside, an organic warmth stuns her, encapsulates her in cloying peuse tones, a bizarrely uncomfortable comfort; she thinks for a moment that she's entered her own vagina, strolled into her own geode.

Their booth, dotted with pepper, looks different now, the crunchy psychedelic now a sterile, matte finish awash with x-bar formulas and binary repetition. She remembers some of this from her high school calculus course, the one she took to prepare her brain for the rigors of college, though of courses her youth and yes, her campus, seems distant now—an unreachable and abstract entity—as distant as any amigos.

Greta thinks the people at the bar might know the whereabouts of Wilma.

Amoeba-like she floats toward them, slowing to focus on an object sitting in the middle of the peuse carpet, among the sticks of table and chair legs. A familiar-looking shoe, a Birkenstock shoe, toe-jam-yucky and about used up. She doesn't want it, and ambles on.

“I'm looking for my friend,” Greta says, at last placing bare elbows on the ring-stained bar to speak at a waxy-looking woman behind the counter. “She's short. And stringy—sounds like I'm describing an alien—oh, why , , , ? Her name's Wilma. Like the cartoon. Only no, she:s real. I'm not , , , on, 'nything.” Greta thinks her organs seem more solid against the cracked leather rail and she begins to feel more substantial, less amoeba-like. “Have you seen her?”

“That who's in the jane, Doe?” the woman says, eyeing her suspiciously. “Goll, you kids come in here, all strung-out like this, I'm itching to call the cops, I swears to Christ.”

“Thank you,” is all Greta can think to respond. She takes a few steps back while turning the waxwork's phraseology. Jane/itching/doe/time/strung-out/cops/swears/christ/two  
, , , ?

One sweep of the bar with what could only be dilated pupils confirms to Greta that it's

littered with alienated corpses. Hunched-over men and a few red-wigged women. The evil dead, clutching empty pitchers and steins and highball glasses; they wear dark rags, have flappy skin and hollow eyes that beam telepathic messages at her, tell her she's disrupting their macabre happy hour, confirm she's slipped into their true dimension. One of them orders a greyhound, to which the waxwork bartender responds, "Leave the driving to us."

Greta remembers her Sweet-tarts and regrets eating all of them already. She pushes into the jame in search of Wilma.

In There, lit by dingy antique sconces, her stringy sleek-haired friend stands agape at a mirror. A row of Carrie Hatchet stamps connects her tweezed eyebrows and she pumps Kleenex fragments in both fused-fists. Scattered about her feet lay the portfolio's contents: three tarot cards, a driver's license, two student IDs (one fake), one dorm key, various coins, seventy-one dollars, two leaky gel pens, a smattering of comp tickets to Danceteria, two Greyhound ticket carbons, an empty salt and pepper shaker, sixteen swatches of fabric and fourteen pieces of design-heavy posterboard, arbitrarily poked with pins (two safety, three traditional) and smudgy with ink.

"You remember Roni?" Wilma says, scarcely moving her bluish lips. Greta worries that the lips look discolored because of chewing on a pen, or if their blotter was cut with too much strychnine. She thinks on Black Spine. Spinal tapping, hair follicles. "She's the type to have glue. The glasses, the fluffy hair, she's gotta have some Tacky Glue at least."

Feeling her self slide recklessly into glazed floor and wall tiles, her insides now liquefying into the grout, her smarts sinking into the imperfect grid she always congratulated herself for being atop of, Greta steps toward the mirror. With both their faces reflected in the glass, she sees her own mouth colored maroon, not blue.

"Have we peaked? Has it been six-hours-and-fifty-five-minutes? Wil, has it yet?" the math-whiz pleads, feeling somehow uninhabitable.

"Black spine," mumbles Wilma.

Frightened, Greta reaches out to shake her friend's arm in the mirror and catches no real thing but air.

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Hugh Fox

## “The Coils of Eternity (part 3)”

III.

NOON when Eve finally opened her eyes and glanced at the clock on her dresser, Richard still asleep in her arms. Windy outside. That's what had awakened her, the beating of eucalyptus branches on the window, at first feeling infinitely sad that the morning had slipped away in sleep, but then thinking that it was better this way, it wasn't all just action and super-ego, but id, unconsciousness, let it trickle down into the lower reaches of their souls, their oneness, wholeness, night and day, you are the one, you and you alone under the sun....moon and sun....Ich liebe dich wie du liebst mich/I love you as you love me....

His eyes opening, although she hadn't really moved, hadn't done anything to wake him.

“Hey....” smiling, looking around as if he'd forgotten where and who he was, “what time is it anyhow?”

“Almost noon.”

“Whatever happened to all that 'passion'?”

“Oh, I think it's still around,” she smiled, reached down, touched him, and then they made love, almost as if they were still sleeping, effortlessly, still in the Kingdom of Dreams, as if they both wanted the hard reality Out There to vanish and just be left intertwined forever like two spirit snakes on a winged caduceus. And then, when they had finished, not wanting to “wash up” as usual, as if love-making were some sort of hundred yard dash or tennis match, when they got up she sprayed them both with a little vanilla mist, pulling on a one-piece clingy beige jumpsuit and loose-cuffed beige boots, going into the bottom drawer of her dresser and taking out a pair of beige slacks and beige sports shirt with a dramatically cut open collar, beige jockey shorts and a-shirt, “Here, try these....”

“Your father's too?”

“Hardly. No, I planned ahead....I told you, there's a sleeping impresario-stage manager inside me....”

Opening the bathroom door for him, putting the clothes on the edge of the wash bowl.

“Meet me downstairs. The T-corridor. Third door on the left.”

“Is that where you keep all your shrunken heads?” he laughed.

“Kind of,” she answered and slipped out the door.

\*

LIKING the way he looked as he came out of the bathroom and confronted himself in the long mirrors at the sides of her makeup table. The first word that came to his mind was “breezy,” like a beige sailboat. Young. Younger than he usually thought of himself. Un-libraryish. Movement instead of stasis. He liked the transformation.

Bundled up his old clothes, almost left them behind, but then decided to take them anyhow. Worried about Colgate for a moment. Left pretty much on his own at Loyola, he wondered just how “structured” his new job would be. Kept wondering. Did he have to leave, couldn't he find “something” out here, just stay. Just be. Be himself. Let them be themselves. There wasn't any money-need.

But didn't know “how” to break with his wife, Maria del Carmen.

How do you ever break anything without war and pain? How does anything ever get “done” without spiritual violence? Thinking about the kids. Feeling trapped inside a system that disallowed divorce, as if he and she really were united in Heaven and could never dissolve their union on Earth, as if Heaven always had to take precedence over the Here and Now....whereas deep down he knew, at least guessed, that Heaven was just invention, and there really wasn't anything more than these brief moments.

There never had been anything much between him and Maria del Carmen, except the newness of her “foreign-ness,” and, for her, her wanting to leave Bolivia and stay permanently in the U.S., and he was her permanent residence visa, eventual citizenship. And now that she was “in,” was already a citizen, and they'd had their three kids....everything slipping/already slipped into the past....

So easy to get married, so difficult to get out....

Down the corridor, tempted to start opening all the doors, but he was too honest for that, too honest, really, to be doing what he was doing here at all, although wasn't the greatest dishonesty in his life to stay put in his marriage and go from here to eternity pretending that there was anything between him and Maria del Carmen more than an abstract sacramental concept called (Un)holy Matrimony?!?! Here, however briefly, life was unhusked, unstabled, aloft, white water instead of stagnant pond.

Noticing, as he walked down the stairway again, that all the faces on all the figures on the murals looked uncannily like Eve herself, as if her projection back to ancient Mesopotamia had been complete and only a shell-self was left functioning here, back to the Time of the Gods, when, as he put it in Godspeak: Imaging the Neolithic, all the gods spoke in all the literatures, spoke and appeared and were THERE. And now, what had silenced The Divine....? Who was claiming that God (The Gods) spoke through

him/her?

Finding the corridor artfully hidden under the curve of the stairway, the first floor stem of the T that was the building's center, third door to the left, cautiously opened it, awed by the immensity but even more by the silence, ears like a cat or bat, always painfully aware of the melange of background noises that subtly irritated him. Only here there were no cars whooshing by, distant trains, shouts, even birds, nothing got through, not even the angry Pacific that had to be just a football stadium's length away from where he stood.

Opened cautiously, and then went in.

An immense room. Two stories high. The third door from the left upstairs must have been....ah, there it was, up behind him, opening to a catwalk with a metal staircase leading down to the first floor, the entire vast room a gallery-studio, the walls filled with massive paintings, all interrelated, The World of the Great Goddess, The Goddess as Frog-Woman giving birth to Mankind, The Goddess as Hedgehog, The Goddess as Bear, The Goddess as Burial Jar.... one whole wall devoted to just the letter-symbols of The Goddess, spirals and meanders, triangles, hour-glasses, T's and capital I's, a whole visible-invisible sacred symbolic alphabet that scholars were just beginning to really SEE....

This was his world, really, what he'd devoted every spare moment of the last ten years to, spare and not spare, moments stolen from other things he might have / should have been doing, forever forcing himself into a hermit-like life, shutting out The Present like it was his worst enemy. Except for the time he'd stolen away to spend with Eve, those five dozen evenings in the last, what was it, eight years, since she'd first come into his course on "The Grammar of Form," and they'd started having coffee at the Student Union, then expanded out to dinners, then rare, special, sacral afternoons, never, until now, realizing that by injecting himself into her life, he may have been, must have been, blocking her from spreading out and expanding in other directions because this room, these paintings were all from the very center of his geist, gast, ghost, soul....

She was painting a large "abstract" picture of       's and       's.

"I suppose it spells LO-NU," she said, "I mean, if you compare it to Classical Cypriot...."

Giving his own classical "What do I know?!?!" shrug, realizing that in the quietude of her own scholarly solitude, she'd gone beyond him, far beyond him in his own special line of inquiry.

"I had no idea....all this...."

"Keeps me out of bars," she said, putting down her brush and coming over to him, folding into his arms, both of them feeling "whole" again, as if locked together they became some sort of new unified entity, both of them incomplete in themselves....

“I don’t want to leave,” he said, lightly touching, massaging her back, feeling her backbone and ribs, lightly running his hands across her breasts.

“So don’t,” she said firmly. “It’s not like we have lives to spare, spend one unfulfilled and then do what we want in the next one, an infinite number of metempsychotic possibilities. As far as I’m concerned,” her voice muffling down to a whisper, her eyes filling with tears, holding his up against her so he couldn’t see the despair on her face, “as far as I’m concerned....this is it,” then a shift down into even deeper solemnity, like the moment of consecration in the Mass, holding on to him so tightly that it almost hurt, “whatever we do now is all we’ll ever have a chance to do....blow it away, and....”

Desperately, almost painfully spliced together for a moment In Memoriam, like the moment of remembering The Dead in the Mass, Kaddish, as if they were praying for/remembering themselves after their own future deaths.

Then a break, splitting apart. Her drying her eyes (and then his) with the sleeve of her jumpsuit. “You’ve got to see the music room.”

“Hang around here long enough and you get an automatic M.F.A.,” he laughed. As she pulled him toward the door he objected, “Don’t you want to put your brushes in....I don’t know....”

“I’ve got plenty of brushes. What I don’t have is TIME.”

“Down” again for a moment. Disconnected thoughts/feelings, no man is an island, for whom the bell tolls, a rasping, cutting sense of the ephemerality of it all tolling through them both. Then an upswEEP, cresting, out into the hallway, going past the next door, Richard stopping.

“What’s in here?”

“Just the library.”

“I want to see,” he said, opening the door, her not stopping him, flicking on the light. A single-floor room this time, the walls lined with book-stuffed shelves, a desk with a typewriter on it over in the far left corner, a table in the middle of the room filled with.... filled with his books.... copies of the magazines where his articles and poetry had appeared.... everything he’d given her over the years.... plus some things that he didn’t remember giving her.... his first book of poetry.... he’d had so few copies....

Imprints. Fort Dearborn Press, Chicago.

A book of poems about Pre-Columbian Chicago/The Midwest, the Kensington Stone, the Davenport (Iowa) Calendar stone....

Opened it in the middle, read at random:

Time Sacred undone,  
the sacred cloth unravelled  
and the sacred text unread,  
swing in the cradle of the  
sky between the coming and  
the going of  
the sun....

“Not bad,” he said, “but you’ve got to have a signed copy....” going over to her desk, looking for a pen, her face suddenly disturbed, like he was walking into taboo territory, “Where did you ever find the damned thing?”

“Oh, they have book-searchers....”

“You could have asked me.”

“‘Could have’ doesn’t count. And now that you ‘know,’ does it change the flow of things?”

The closer he got to the desk the more genuinely distressed she got.  
Stopping. Challenging her.

“Some ‘secret,’ ‘sacred,’ ‘taboo’ here?” he asked, finding a pen, signing the book, “To Eve, from Adam, Before the Fall,” and then looking at the small stack of white manila folders on top of the desk. Lifting up the top folder, a title carefully printed out in large letters:  
NOW.

“Please, don’t....”

All but coming over to him, blocking his reading. But she held her ground.

“I really wish you wouldn’t.”

Opening it up, reading the first poem:

NOW

Now and only now, falling back like a collapsing  
dune into instantaneous  
permanent  
Then,  
Now ignored or wrung out, filled and emptied,  
Now worn or rusted out,  
the end always the same, all sanity in the  
HOW....

Then noticing, written on the inside of the cover: "To Richard and No One Else."

Richard touched. The ultimate cynic (the way he saw himself) deeply touched, everything in him jammed and stalled for a moment.

"You weren't ever supposed to have seen that."

"Domine non sum dignus," he answered, "Lord I am not worthy," three times, lightly tapping on his chest.

"Sometimes I've even thought of killing you.....us....some sort of final pagan liebestod instead of just the horrible finality of emptiness," she answered, rushing over to him in a flurry, holding on to him again, pressing him up against her, almost oppressive, cannibalistic, as if she wanted to devour him, he responding in kind, as if whatever sexual union they had had was merely the beginning of something much more total, existential, as if they had been One on some spiritual-molecular level, and their oneness had been severed and split apart and they were both filled with some sort of crying primal need to return to their initial oneness....

Then (the image flooding through her of the scene in Hansel in Gretel, after the witch is dead and the children who had been turned into gingerbread come back to life again, for one long extended moment "frozen," still "entranced" before they break into a victory song and dance) grabbing him by the arm, "Come on, I want to show you the music room...."

Out into the corridor, one more door down. He didn't know what to expect.

"What next, the opium den? Aladdin's cave?"

"Close," she smiled, opened the door.

A Steinway grand piano in the middle of the room, shelves of scores, records, a big stereo in the corner, a violin on the piano.

He went over and picked it up, started to tune it.

"It's only been twenty years since I touched one of these."

Careful, afraid of snapping a string, all "gut," no steel. Which he preferred. A childhood and young manhood planted in front of a music stand practicing violin, good enough, by fifteen, to have launched into something professionally, but that's when he was supposed to switch into "science," slide into Medicine, which he'd refused to slide into anyhow. All the time he was growing up, thinking he could be a conductor-composer, Debbyasian-Milhaudish....sound as Zen....and then....

Testing it out.

Good sound. Didn't want to look in through the F-shaped sound-hole and check, but suspected that this fragile, old curved and scrolled box of wood might be worth more than the entire rest of the house. Starting to (totally unexpectedly and necromantically, she'd been expecting something all glitz and virtuosity) play the Hansel and Gretel angel-song, When at night I go to sleep....first straight, then variations and embellishments, without ever losing the main line and spirit of the original, obviously able and tempted to turn it into marches and waltzes and polonaises, but holding himself and the music in, making it the thematic core of this, their whole film, angels watching over them as they went to sleep, as if that's what they should do next, sleep, again the Liebestod/Love-Death theme....

"A little Devil's Trill," he said, allowing it to get elaborate for a moment.

Tartini. She knew what he was doing, turning the four strings into four separate instruments, slurring back and forth across them, a trill on one, melody on the other three, trills moving back and forth across the bridge, four strings, four separate voices, and bringing it down as far as it could go, almost cello-like in its resonance, slowly moving up, barely touching the E-string, the sound rising ethereally up, up, up into a ghostly soprano register, the angels there for a moment, hovering around them, protecting them from all evil, change, Time itself....

One last drawn-out E above High C, one last pizzicato pluck and that was it. He stood there for a moment, sad smile, pleased, but at the same time....

"Beautiful...." she said.

"It just makes me wonder. Roads not taken and all that. And we keep not taking them, ever after we know better."

Putting the violin back on the piano, both of them suddenly depressed.

"I don't know," he said, glancing down at his watch, "maybe I ought to...."

Her hand across his mouth, blocking the word, as if blocking the word could block the reality.

She sat down at the piano, started to play, the music soft, measured and muted almost to the point of morbidity, peaceful, some little modern dissonances and artful slides between keys. For a moment he thought "Satie," but it wasn't Satie.

French. Twentieth century.

For a moment thought Milhaud, only Milhaud never arrived at this degree of "peace". Chanson d'été....remembering one time years before opening the wrong door in the music building at UCLA, a rehearsal of the Chanson d'été, the music rushing out at him like water from a broken dam.

He sat down on an old love-seat in front of the record-shelves, turned off the musicologist in his brain. Whatever it was didn't make any difference confronted with the reality of the WAS itself.

Letting himself slide down into the music like into a hot bath. Les Pas dans le Niede, Le Tombeau de Couperin. A kind of studied archaism, like Grieg's Holberg Suite....

Feeling The Calm of the Blessed descend over him.

Then, his wife. Sundays, when he wanted to take the kids out to some concert, ballet, recital, exhibit. Her always with the same cop-out, "I already had my 'culture' when I was a kid. If you want to take them, take them, I'm staying home." TV and half a chicken. As if there were a thing called "Kulture" that you stuffed yourself full of and then never had to eat again, as if there were a line between "Kulture" and "Life," as if sound and sensitivity, carefully ordered words, slashes and daubs of paint and twists and slices of metal, wood, stone, clay, plastic weren't a part of the perennially hungry "you," as if it weren't a continuous, expanding out-"flow," but programmed into carefully segmented educational units that came to an end when you "grew up." Process, not finality.

Whereas for Eve, it really was like in *The Red Shoes*, Life-Art, Art-Life, as if there were some sort of escape from Time, as if there were a Someone Up There with a big Book of Eternity keeping track, as if there was a whole other kind of open-ended, spiralling-out programming and a coding inside her waiting to be to be fulfilled, some other higher evolutionary Self that was trying to be born that she never ceased coaxing into birth.

And then Eve was finished, as effortlessly as she had begun. A moment's pause, as if her voices inside her were telling her to play something else. What other possible surprises could be there, hidden in her labyrinths?

Taking him by the hand, walking toward the far, wood-panelled wall. One of the parquet panels swung around and they were face to face with a door that (he couldn't believe it!) opened directly out into the garden behind the brick wall that extended out to the left of the house.

"The house is full of trick panels and hidden corridors. Houdini-ish. Gothic. The Diary of Anne Frank," she said.

Still cloudy, but the clouds suffused with sun, and the walls protected them from the wind. A little pond with....

"Carp?" he asked. "I haven't seen carp since Kew Gardens."

"Hungry bastards!" she smiled. A can of fish food on a stone bench next to a white-painted gazebo next to the pond. Opening it up and scattering it across the surface, the water suddenly coming alive with a swirl of mouths and tails and fins.

“The most human of all fish. I can’t eat them. I’d feel like a cannibal,” she said, lying down on the grass under a lush, feathery willow tree. Lying down, then second thoughts, getting up again, going back into the house and bringing out a thick wool blanket and a quilt, two pillows, spreading out the wool blanket first, then the quilt, carefully placing the two pillows at the head of the imaginary bed on the grass. Pulling him down with her, everything with choreographic “rightness,” deftness, as if it were part of a ballet called, say, Sur L’Herbe/On the Grass. Style, everything style. Everything was style....style, tone, “how,” the how separating the apprentice from the master....

Snuggling together under the quilt, no “need” for sex/performance/tests now, just lying back, knit together. Richard suddenly feeling that there was nowhere else to go, nothing else to be done, the order of the day was the day itself, focusing down, down, down on her hair and face, the reassuring touch of her body against his, as if there never had been a Before, and there was no need to ever have an After. Seduced by The Moment, seduced by the belief that somehow it would all work out, God was in his (her) heaven and all was (would always be) right with the world....

\*

AND then, before she knew it, he was sound asleep.

2009 Wood Coin: A Scratch And Dent Sale Issue: Fox, “The Coils of Eternity (part3)”

© 2008

Christine Herzer

“POEMIFICATION”

do not protect a poem, you will stink

do not throw garbage inside a poem, it will stink

do not leave a poem unattended until love arrives at church level

do not attempt to stop a poem by forcibly feeling love, or nothing, or art

do not keep a poem, it will stink

the poem can strike in your sleep

the poem may want you inside, and you may not want to how ghost? how rain? how much rent? how do you know? you want inside? how old were you? how old are you? how is enmeshment reprehensible? apples, oranges,

smile at the poem camera, we live in a category of the announced

announce yourself, ie i receive shame, when i eat meat

STOP button should only be used when poempoet is drunk, spitting, sprouting, masturbating, or medicated [if in doubt STOP, stop, stop, really stop please stop]

don't stand in poems, it is not a position, it is a bed, it is a beach, it is god

when poemifying, leave feeling wide open: e n l a r g e, g h o s t, p e r f u m e

you have the right to enter whatever it is you don't want to watch you have the right to change poems

in case of persisting poems related to control, contact:

spiderman 5, the trust-me police

exhale counselors at the louis vuitton store at the taj mahal hotel in

mumbai organic rose growers

[www.stickylovesticks.com](http://www.stickylovesticks.com),

or: [www.realityrocks.com](http://www.realityrocks.com)

try praying instead of paying

FOR TESTED AND SCENTED SHOULD, buy bubbles:

word control, ideal for marriage and other functions. possible to make more than 13,000 bubbles from one tube

2009 Wood Coin: A Scratch And Dent Sale Issue: Herzer, "POEMIFICATION"

© 2006

Lyn Lifshin

## “Kiss, Baby, the New Film”

a much more rare obsession than mine, tho  
in some ways, not that different. The woman  
in love with what's dead, what's given up  
on breathing, caring, could be me knocking  
my knuckles raw on your metal door while  
you gulp another beer, put your head down  
on the table. With you, it often was like  
singing to someone in a casket the lid was  
already down on, still expecting something.  
She buried animals in the woods, didn't mind  
touching them. Though I made our nights into  
something more, I could have been coiled  
close to a corpse. No, that part is a lie. Your  
body was still warm. It was everything inside  
where you heart must have been that was  
rigid, ice. The woman in the film went to work,  
an embalming assistant. Isn't that what I'm  
doing? Keeping you with words? Embracing  
you on the sheet of this paper, a tentative  
kiss on cold lips, the cuddling of cadavers?  
In the film, the woman says loving the dead is  
“like looking into the sun without going blind,  
is like diving into a lake, sudden cold, then  
silence.” She says it was addictive. I know about  
the cold and quiet afterward, how you were a drug.  
If she was spellbound by the dead, who  
would say I wasn't, trying to revive, resuscitate  
someone not alive who couldn't feel or care  
with only the shell of the body. Here, where no  
body can see, I could be licking your dead body  
driving thru a car wash. I could be whispering  
to the man across the aisle, “bodies are addictive.”  
Our word for the loved and the dead are the same,  
the beloved, and once you had either while you  
have them, you don't need any other living people  
in your life

© 2008

Matt Lowery

“Soundfield 007”

Please refer to the PDF image (click on the artist's name) for greater clarity.

2009 Wood Coin: A Scratch And Dent Sale Issue: Lowery, “Soundfield 007”

© 2007

Christopher Mulrooney

“the presenter”

his discourse paints a few pictures briefly  
on the wall

the show begins  
cannon to the right the left of them

wallowing in the stream like hippopotami lolling  
at the academy

2009 Wood Coin: A Scratch And Dent Sale Issue: Mulrooney, "the presenter"

© 1980

Edward Mycue

## "VELMA, TYRONE'S MOM"

who hardly looks 50 at noon  
told me that Tyrone now 35  
has a kid & a jerky heart that  
kept him out of the military &  
has pretty much gotten out of  
hoods & his wife's a Filipina.  
Velma in Freedom West Coop again now 15 years is retired from the Post Office  
[sorting in Evans Street, ugh!]  
and feels like she's due to live  
and her new husband likes  
wearing fresh clothes & she'd  
had to break him of it or be  
washing clothes all the time.

2009 Wood Coin: A Scratch And Dent Sale Issue: Mycue, "VELMA, TYRONE'S MOM"

© 2006

David Plumb

## “Weather”

Always something to keep us up nights.  
Credit card gets maxed, the Neptune Society  
offers information, and the wife  
still loves you even when  
the TV flicks the mortgage  
to your brain, to a drug  
to a talking M and M, to a car  
that wants sex. Something  
Eisenhower didn't foresee,  
Nor Roosevelt. Never mind this President  
And you aren't an Idol, a famous whom  
nor a free agent dribbling  
down the main drag to Paradise.

Friend, it's right there between  
the bombs and the sugar-coated dreams  
Slipped nicely between the lawnmower  
and a thumb out for Mount Zen  
But how does one choose on a hot day?  
or a cold snowy night when the sky  
falls white to the distant hills  
Where did it go, this song of ours?  
Stand still. Wait a day, a week.  
Let's give a try. Listen to the click  
when your eyes open and close.  
Surprised? The moon is coming up. .  
Hold up your hands.

2009 Wood Coin: A Scratch And Dent Sale Issue: Plumb, “Weather”

© 1984

Barbara Rosenthal

## “ROCKET”

### ROCKET, CLUB A—

One day Rocket went to the Go-Go agency to pick up last week's check and book next week's club engagements. The club she usually danced in had been booked by another topless dancer, and her agent asked if she'd fill a vacancy at Club A—. “OK.” (After all, it was only for one afternoon.)

Club A— had two stages and four topless dancers alternating sets. One stage was really the bar, and she danced on the bar for the men sitting below her. The other stage was a table in the back with a fake tree growing out of the center, in keeping with the club's decor. It was very smoky at the back table and Rocket's eyes burned from her contact lenses.

Rocket danced and drank champagne all afternoon. While she drank with a young Jewish customer, she watched the dancer near the tree wrap a sheer cloth around her waist and drop her G-string on the table. The dancer moved from standing to kneeling to lying on her back in time to the music. Only the man nearest her at the table could clearly see what she was doing, and she was dancing for only him. He was piling bills on the table under the tree. The girl squatted in front of him and opened her cloth, her knees spread for him to look at her open sex. He bent forward and inhaled her deeply, but he didn't touch her. He piled more money on the table.

Rocket had never danced in such a lewd club before. She and the Jewish man were both very aroused. He gave her twenty-five dollars when it was time for her set and asked for a danced like the one they'd just watched. Rocket danced for him, and she was slow and sensual and hot and deliberate. But she never went back to Club A—.

### ROCKET AND J—

Week after week, J— came into the topless club to see Rocket. J— was a young Irish Catholic virgin-boy who recently had left a monastery. After every set, Rocket drank champagne with him and they became good bar-friends. One night he asked her out to lunch for the next day and she accepted. They had a lot to drink and a big spinach salad. The next week they went for a walk in the Botanical Gardens and held hands. The week after that they took sandwiches to the Zoo.

One night Rocket was dancing at the club and J— was there. Rocket told him her husband had called from work to say he'd be out of town. “Come home with me?” she asked. J— was very nervous, but very pleased and thrilled. At 4 a.m. they walked three miles together, giggling through the city.

When they reached her place she asked him, “Please wait here in the hall while I make

sure my husband's really not home.” J— waited, but when Rocket unlocked the door, her husband was waiting for her in bed.

2009 Wood Coin: A Scratch And Dent Sale Issue: Rosenthal, “ROCKET”

© 2008

Geoff Stevens

## “Nobody Knows My Name”

Long-haired blonde in the red dress  
stretched over a Cadillac  
Tom's valentine in the Trop days  
of West Hollywood  
having access to his record collection  
and to the black-painted swimming pool.  
We were often high an rye together  
starting when I was only nineteen  
and waitressing for a spot of cash  
before I made my first album  
and got a hit single out of it.  
Now, a lot later now,  
and I'm over here touring  
with gigs in Manchester  
Birmingham and Milton Keynes  
and a few other places where nobody  
has ever heard of me  
though recently someone in the States  
called me the Duchess of Coolsville.

2009 Wood Coin: A Scratch And Dent Sale Issue: Stevens, “Nobody Knows My Name”

© 2007

XeusZenon

“square damage”

wind undermines  
victem qwaked in paterns that  
shood it thinking  
blow away ink

2009 Wood Coin: A Scratch And Dent Sale Issue: XeusZenon, “square damage”

## <sdsi: quotations>

When once the itch of literature comes over a man, nothing can cure it but the scratching of a pen.

Of Ulysses: The scratching of pimples on the body of the bootboy at Claridges.

Scratch the Christian and you will find the pagan—spoiled.

To own a bit of ground, to scratch it with a hoe, to plant seeds, and watch the renewal of life--this is the commonest delight of the race, the most satisfactory thing a man can do.

Scratch a lover, and you find a foe.

Really the writer doesn't want success.... He knows he has a short span of life, that the day will come when he must pass through the wall of oblivion, and he wants to leave a scratch on that wall--Kilroy was here\*--that somebody a hundred, or a thousand years later will see.

Those who'll play with cats must expect to be scratched.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,/ Scratched his head and kept on thinking;/ Miniver coughed and called it fate,/ And kept on drinking.

There was a young belle of old Natchez/ whose garments were always in patchez./ When comment arose/ On the state of her clothes,/ She drawled, When Ah itchez, Ah scratchez!

There's a whining at the threshold--/ There's a scratching at the floor--/ To work! To work! in Heaven's name!/ The wolf is at the door!

A city for sale and soon to perish if it finds a buyer!

-Samuel Lover, *Handy Andy* (1842)

-Virginia Woolf, letter to Lytton Strachey (1922)

-Israel Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto* (1892)

-Charles Dudley Warner, *My Summer in a Garden* (1870)

-Dorothy Parker, "Ballade of the Great Weariness," *Enough Rope* (1927)

-William Faulkner, *Faulkner in the University* (1959) \*army saying, wwii

-Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (1605-1615)

-Edward Arlington Robinson, *Miniver Cheevy* (1910)

-Ogden Nash, I'm a Stranger Here Myself (1938)

-Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *In This Our World* (1893)

-Sallust (Gaius Sallustius Crispus), *The War with Jugurtha* (ca. 41 BCE)

## <hpbb: rising issues>

### **You've Reely Scored a Movie Issue.**

Okay, so the pun on old movie reels might get dropped by the time this baby goes live. Really. I mean, like, for reel, 'cause, like, "talkies" are like, no longer on celluloid, right? They're, um, digital... Anyway, who hasn't been influenced by a film or hundreds? The theme for this one is vividness, imagery, motion pictures arising in our minds, arising from mere squiggles, symbols (words!punctuation!structure!) on the page. Certain pieces can do that, like, cinematically.

### **Religion, Spirit, Prophecy/ Issue.**

A rule of thumb for socializing with new people at parties: Never discuss religion, politics or sex. And then, you all know the rule about rules being made to be broken... what would religion be, without temptation to break rules? what would spirituality be, without freedom of the spirit? what is prophecy, but prognostications based on current social and sexual mores? etc. Thou shalt not get too heavy!

### **Of Drains and Ladders in this Life Issue.**

As children most of us played a simple game called Chutes & Ladders; it was fun, exciting, to rise and fall, fall and rise. As a metaphor for life, though, it's only partly accurate... The game's designers omitted the force of gravity. Ah, the joys and perils of existing and existentialism.

## <sdsi: salute>

The Internet: cybernetic, nebulous, free-form, liquid space... It's a new, entirely new, unprecedented, invention. The closest we've had to this in the past is telepathy or abstractions floating up from the subconscious. Before long, God Online may be the new religion. Where is cyberspace, anyway? It's somewhere! Without boundaries, the 'net can be whatever we create it to be. A renaissance is possible. But beware of creepers, hackers, thieves, wannabes, other unsavory types lurking behind masks or personae. Predators? Try exes! Meet-ups are usually best when the bond is formed via crossing actual paths rather than virtual ones.

## <wood coin history>

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

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05/2009 : Is Art in the Heart or Does Art Lie Apart from the Love Issue [photo by Matt Lowery]

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12/2009 : Religion, Spirit, Prophecy/ Issue

01/2010 : Of Drains and Ladders in this Life Issue [novella by Hugh Fox] [photo by Barbara Rosenthal]

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

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