

issue 18
streetcake



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Haiku diary

Monday

First time alone, kneel
down in front of him like a
horse on its hind legs.

Tuesday

SOZ BABE WIL B L8,
JONNY SMOKED HIMSELF OUT N
HES STUCK 2 HIS CHAIR.

Wednesday

Gunning it home on
the A14. Hear his voice,
have to pull over.

Thursday

"Look, I'm telling you -
I'm stood thigh-high in nylon,
and he falls asleep".

Friday

Fucking an alco-
holic means I'm always hung-
over and put out.

Saturday

50/ tequila
50/ tabasco, clears my
head like a shotgun.

Sunday

Curse the weather, stop
to pick wet May-flies hanging
in each other's hair.

Monday

3AM: search the
whole internet for his name.

Delete history.

mark coble

always take taxis

"it is by no means an accident"

Charles Darwin

do not get in to an elevator if this is a horror movie movie nor
do not get into an elevator if it is a disaster movie movie either
and never take a bath or a shower
and please do not sing or hum happily away
with the blinds up
whilst awaiting the pizza delivery man
or run through the unfriendly woods
and do not drive alone at night
to get away
or let someone know
when eating popcorn
and always take taxis
when hiding in the wardrobe

hold your breath
when the music builds
because your gun will fail
and the axe will fail
and the kitchen knife is not enough
and the door is made of cardboard
and you will trip
your cell phone will not work
like your twisted ankle
and this is genetics
and is foretold
in TV magazines
usually on page 27 but not every week
and on a billboard
and in your stars on page 48

alessandro cusimano

Snapshots

From Los Angeles to Tijuana, from California to Mexico. 72 hours in the life of a singular character, Vincent Muscaino, modern writer in a fast world. He knows how to drag us into the beyond, while a mysterious radio station reveals, from the inside of his car, awful truths.

Episode 1 - Garage

.... 00:47 am.... I have pills, I take 2. I drink a B52, \$ 5. I'm still on the highway to Mexico, with a flat tire. I'll be late because I have no spare wheel. I don't care.... if all goes well I will know a pretty girl.... a gas station clerk with green hair and white platform shoes: never seen anything like that.... 02:23 am.... I drink another B52.... after all she is not so bad.... 04:16 am.... I lost my pills in my underpants. If

I have fallen so low, then it means I'm already on the restroom floor. She is taking away her pants.... has pills.... I take 3....

Episode 2 - The Radio

...the willingness to cut the scenes of excessive violence must be restrained. The reactionary boor is repugnant, but this is the vocation of every human being, according to the speaker of a next-generation TV set bought at the supermarket in a kamikaze raid during a commercial break. The roads are black, they also populated by black squares, layered one on the other and surrounded by drainage Channels causing visible stretch marks to the eye. The pupils are trained on the white cynicism of a great beauty monitoring. The most blonde of the realm rolls the dice in a way that you choke and gape. In prime time, the mess of crime news is a highly nutritious mixture it is also black forced by a recurring kermess in red with streaks of yellow and leaden subtitles. Alluring, the language of the fairy tale spits the frothy illusion of a infinite opening. The flowery meadow is a trap for the eye, the arrogance has an unstable balance and deliberately does not solve it the fable tells us sadistic methods of punishment. The obsession enters the consciousness, displays the dream, annoys the nightmare....

Episode 3 - Tijuana

...men who change face, have killed their bottle companion, carry a poison you can breathe, for themselves and for the others. Smelly, ill-washed females go in search of a scolding, arrange spike heels and knives. On the verge of the road, a boy with the lively gesticulation and the candid rudeness, walks straight; some stocky women admire him because imitates those ones who promise to improve their life. Two sisters, differently annoying, move parallel with the irony of temperament, joking between alliance and confrontation. Feminine raids are affectation, with the habit of saying certain things. Shame sometimes is mentioned, vanishing then without trace, when the silence dries the noise of an occasional weakness. A fleshy cat aims to the bird cage causing a strident clinking of metal strings. The desire of sacking draws his stopped cravings and begins to scrape its hide. Every dusk is made for creatures good with the blade who snap a well done trifle, but already tasted rare elsewhere....

Episode 4 - Cockaigne

...a sudden rush of sympathy.... pure.... powder straining after an effect. Wanted, ivory without shame, arabesque of a nervous wondering, at night. Crushed disorder, when the stories are restless.... hard light, bonfire. Fast intonation, tight electric wire.... slight wounded internals, appetite.... nexus. Real vein ready to suck back words, cracks, to entice the glance, the breath.... anxious to start again....

Episode 5 - The Hump

.....take it easy.....everything is fine. I sat on my own, talking about this and that, in a restroom with no windows, where I put on airs with women because of the hump and where I remember I had a couple of drinks, on the house. The master is an elegant dwarf, upper class people. As long as in the confessional, out of order, of a porno movie theater, I languished with love, on the phone, with a dumb bitch who was fidgeting with the obsession of the evil eye. Right here behind, at the bottom of the alley.....

Episode 6 - Closeups

....a dog bitten in the throat, put it in a sack and thrown in a dumpster. Born to fight, to devour, to suffer. Shut in a plastic bag and squeezed with a rope. Struggles to the bitter end. And girls, wearing close-fitting longuettes, beautiful and nasty, jolly or conceited, transparent and winking. The Slav type of blonde sells like hot cakes. Sexy, fair, blue eyes, cold and wild, severe and martial, queens of an outskirts nazi-porno. Boys in jeans, shirt, tank top, haughty the efforts of one year in the gym, or to the millstone of the yard. And colors: lemon yellow, cornflower blue. Places to spend the afternoon, listening to the voices. Convenient slum to admire the inconvenience. Raped land, sand, twigs, reeds. River, sea, ground, without borders. Fishermen who don't fish, the sound of water, an orgy of piled wood in the form of housing. A child here cannot suffer

any opinion and here children play the war against the loneliness. A little man, thin and sharp, folded on his chair, watching TV. The stench ferments the moisture, crushes the walls and sneaks out with rats and cockroaches. At the bottom of the main road three caravans leave behind syringe vending machines, hanged on breached fences. Young people in their natural cruelty, gay prostitutes, premonitory dreams and scenes shared at the tavern. The melodrama lives on with the easy tear but it's a dry tragedy, lingering in pandering concessions to pandering landscapes or strong closeups. In oral tales in their living speech. Within reach, baby girls with the lipstick, faces of Christ turning up from t-shirts, mobile phones, tattoos. Sweaty people who don't understand, waiting for something to happen. Then, everyone returns to his stories, after a seaside resort interval, in the unstable space which is alcove, restaurant, office, empty, full, womb, against the fellow man. The feeling of suffocation, overcrowding, emptied vacuum. At night, the pushers greet the big cars. Hawaiian shirts, cigarettes, gold chains, convicts in a break, in an almost balanced cosmos. The forced segregation gives a life closer to the everyday deceptions, these voices ignore and destroy....

Episode 7 - The Vending Machine

....crawling against the light, the beggars keep watching the city that has betrayed them, has given them nothing. Red faced nails in single file, move strange amputated shapes, branched on the sidewalk. And the memory, well painted on their face, has the sound of a chorus of voices and the voices die in the most bestial notes in the history of their humanity. In thousands continue to strive for one truth at a time, for a life as a vending machine....

Episode 8 - Brunch

...I woke up, in the back seat of my car. On the other side, of the street, I go for a stroll in a restroom and dive into the shake of the submerged hubbub, foreshadowing virgin honey, and quarters of ass in the very front row, foretasting chocolate croquettes and teenage thighs. I had never seen a woman so angry with her husband and calling him a fag, since now he goes crazy for a quarrelsome girlie, up town star who gave the child to her grandmother scantily dressed in rags. And where I might live without let the brain work, staying on the beach, talking to the old man who smokes on his wheelchair, among the sunburned butts....

Episode 9 - The Radio

...the medicine man had a vision and disappeared in a prison of the Empire Film Producer. Metal animal worn away with the rust. And they call him killer, when the killers accuse a killer. Outside, one night, noble light, moon, when the

windows are open. The rifle of the inhuman man, a slanting creature beyond the measure, a sergeant. Eats up his supper taken from home and kills. Someone who has the power to do this, watching the people who do so without shame. The actor's life. Obscene reflexes, oblong planes appeal to the low. Old Glory ponders the rights and wrongs, grimaces deform the faces and make them ugly, broken down window panes, internals of wide open mouths....

Episode 10 - The Notebooks

....passion creates the torment that undermines the desire, violates the deception of platitudes and strangles the void; causes the panting that opens a terrible beauty wide, has the glance of a moment, moves the melodies and gives unbeatable finals. But now, the light, the colors, pose without any compassion, without regret, without conquering the rest of my life. I meander aimlessly, approaching the people with the pleasure of discovering my flaws. Friends, acquaintances, the strangers. countless eyes, mislaid, ready for anything. Venom, sentence, rage. All appears central, disclosing a prison as a gift, no glint in a lifetime, a vision with no depth. As if time had stopped in a glacier of emotions or in a wishing well. The bright, inside me, chases a cry full of dry tears and hits the clear opinion coming to me: dissociation, impractical idea, unreal passion. My nature takes a tragic turn in an eternal return to my degrading diversity, until the implacable conflict I am required to consume in an abnormal way. Yet I

had an iron will. In my notebooks I sketched the abyss, the dung heap of inequality. Nevertheless my personality faded away, rubbing the impalpable, overcoming my resistance, insistently. Reason and unconsciousness, my devotion to these two sisters grim. If I only had found a way to deal with them, without turning away from myself, from the reasonable friend, from the excellent madman towering above, locked up. Instead I mortified my king and all my men, I devoured them again, still alive. In front of a black landscape oil has overflowed from the asphalt and greased the streets. Then I felt a smell of liquefied fire that took me by the throat and struck me in the chest. A bullet of pure amber, because I remember being dropped, slowly, and nobody was there except for a a colour of molasses. It was dark burnt. I took a whole bottle and drank up to bursting, up to take fire and burn, but my fate was even worse....

andrew galan

*[Take this poem to a poetry slam or open mike that has a microphone, microphone cable and Public Address system (the mike cannot be wireless). Sign-up, wait your turn. When it is your turn go to the microphone, take the microphone from the stand (if you have to, uncoil the cord from the stand), then begin to wind the cord about your midsection; ensure that while you wind you do not compromise your security, this is about you looking like you mean it, you must appear tough. While you wind keep your face pensive. But, and this is important, look pensive simply, you want to reclaim pensive from complexity. You do not want to confuse the audience and cause them to think you have an erection because a cord is being wound around you. So remember, throughout this piece, **simple**, you are simple. Also, keep this poem handy, you are conveying a message— yes, you are delivering a tough simple message. Ensure that as the microphone cord is wrapped about you that your mouth can still reach the microphone. Wind and look pensive for one minute. Then, pretend to be Mister Ed and with confidence recite:]*

My concept is: simple

NEIGH...H...H...H...H!

[Snort and paw the ground with your mighty hoof]

I AM

THE DARK HORSE

OF POETRY

[Repeat from NEIGH... as many times as you want, ignore the audience they love you]

michael pedersen

Hello Bréon, it's nice meet you

- please ignore the scratches,
I've been browning in gutters,
amongst wet cigarettes and the last
flecks of Camden's lanceolated leaves.

As things stand: faith is a little grubby,
sweet premise pale, the railings, too,
have lost their stockings - nowt
but dankness underneath.

I've noticed your stories don't involve
sticky risings, Senegalese dealers
or Lambeth car-parks and I'm very
intrigued; alas for fear

you'd think me mad (or worse still,
a poor secret-keeper), I snub
the amber squalls which haemorrhage
through the firmament. For you,

too, blaze, thatching synergies,
talking of six continents
operating like organs. It was years
further when I spoke of the stars:

blinking blinking, as night
flinched beneath them.
To which you replied *Ahhh*
the Stars! I thought you'd never ask.

stephen toase

Season

June

is the season of dead birds.

Dust stamped feathers

blown on the scorched morning breeze.

Broken bodies lie on

tarmac,

skulls cracked

by feline teeth.

Sacrificed,

to a God of the Fields,

Whose bonfires no longer

Blaze,

on powder dry hills.

TAKING THE PITH

It's not easy for me to confess this in public,
but I've come out - of the pantry.
I'm into preserves. I get off on cherry
and cucumber chutney. If I don't have
my daily fix of bramble jelly and crushed grapes,
I'm off down to the seedy side of the orchard,
over-dosing on hard-core Granny Smiths
and illegal gourd substances brought in
through the Green Channel, by melon smugglers.
Then there are the nightmares. You wouldn't credit
the hallucinations and fantasies I'm afflicted with,
concerning narrow necked jars and long-handled spoons.
And there's no counselling available. Esther Rantzen's
retired and all the other help lines are - jammed.
It's hard to keep your pectin up. I've all but lost hope
of finding a really fruitful relationship. If I want a bit

of relish, you know, ginger things up a bit,
I'm obliged to go down town, curd-crawling.
They reckon the risks are minimal, so long as
you remember to use a muslin bag
and a sugar thermometer. While I'm on the subject
of trawling, if anybody here fancies being marm-o-laid,
I'll meet you in the orangery after the performance,
Round the back of the canning factory.