

issue 32

streetcake



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angela m. aguilar

expression

words fall from mouths
onto paper skin pricks
identity tattoos
inks what others see
creates outward sameness
in mass production

however tattoos from inside ones cortex
illustrate *Emily Carr* landscapes
to the underside of the skin
where oneself can museum
symbolism of colour and abstraction of line

After the storm

Backwards, not forwards

It's back

The feel-bad factor

Taxing times

Tragedy and farce

It won't go away

**A season of
calamity**

Succumb and deliver

Fossilised policy

The end is nigh (again)

A lot to swallow

**Back on the
catwalk**

The dog that didn't bark

**Clearing out the
corner office**

Cosmetic surgery?

peter bracking

earth still turns

in the morning park
balanced on the edge of spring
green forces
out of black boughs
expecting to worship the sun

a flutter of pigeons
land in a ragged bit of light
on a pool of concrete
and coo and preen and peck

a light breeze wafts from the sea
a dog lifts its wet nose to scent

at a secret hidden signal
the pigeons rise wheel
and disappear

seth crook

Seeing her

The girl who loved him once
would sometimes see his face,

his eyes would peer
through shop front glass

and ask. Although,
and barely with a glance,

she'd quickly turn
to answer with her back,

that she's the girl who loved him
once.

julie edgell

One pill makes you bigger

Past the spiders web
the grey people, silver people.
The gold of a mushroom cloud.

Slashed, chopped, bashed – accidentally.
Are you people or half rabbits?
Past the spiders web.

You who cannot see
the secret ocean.
The gold of a mushroom cloud.

Is that a nut or a rabbit dropping
he's about to smash into the dirt?
Past the spiders web.

So many cuts – are they dancing
or fighting or neither?
The gold of a mushroom cloud.

Are those reds
the reds of heads?
Past the spider's web.
The gold of a mushroom cloud.

Tomando Té

tasting bitter
ness
 in ones
 mouth

] Is an addicting
Painful pinch [

that hides be-
 tween pale
 gums and
dark
 inner walls

] Predictably, the
Tongue swells [

like a dying
 animal,
un
 able to spit,
 we
swallow
 the venom
our mouth
 secretes

] It punctures
The throat [

inside, every
 thing
 smells like
burning
autumn

Deshojada Primavera.

jeffrey park

NEAR FUTURE

Elusive as always, the future,
we chased it through the long night
through the alleys that stank of piss
our piss
always it managed to stay a step or two
ahead, which way, which way?

She points up the staircase
but we find only an open window
curtains, echoes, a sheer drop.

Cold dawn throws failure in our faces
piles the present up around us
and mocks us with its immediacy
the future is now
and now is slipping away
fading
like tomorrow's forgotten dream.

Only on the surface is his response to his wife's death conventional. After beginning a bout of grieving, he determines to retrieve her. Of course, he builds a soul rocket.

"You're insane, she's dead, you can follow her by committing suicide, not by shooting off like in a car."

We're not really friends. Those who grieve can only hear themselves.

"Please, Daddy, we want you to, we want you to. Oh my dear, oh my dear, we miss her so much! If she loved us, she would have stayed."

"Shut up, you lousy brats," I respond. "Your mother is dead and you'll never get over it until the day you die, which will come before she knows it."

The only part of their house I've ever been in is the foyer. It's long, like a living room, and narrow, like a rocketship, running north and south, entry on

the left from my vantage (facing south), east, where the sun rises in time to reveal a big cylinder he's working on.

The kids are so helpful. They run off for things.

"Whatever they say, you have to understand that I had to talk them into this."

"I don't understand, and you're probably lying. And I don't give a damn, though you can't understand that because you're too busy grieving. Forget her; she's forgotten you."

"You can't say that!" he expresses while wrenching.

Sink traps and rocketships are all built with wrenches.

"It's not a rocketship," he explains. "It's a soul rocket."

"What exactly do you intend to do?"

"Why do you ask if you don't care and don't understand?"

"Because I'm dreaming and don't have a choice."

"I will travel in this soul rocket to be with my only love."

"What about your children?"

"They can come along later, perhaps."

"You said 'only love.' What about them?"

"They can come along later, perhaps."

"I will now repeat in a modified manner what I previously expressed."

"How can you be so hurtful and uncaring?"

"Because I'm dreaming and don't have a choice."

"What if this love were yours?"

"If my love dies in the next dream, you won't be there to worry about it. I don't know you in real life."

"You don't have a real life—you're only a dreamer!"

"You're a dreamer if you think you're going to reach paradise in a rocketship."

"It is a *soul* ship, I tell you. This mystiphysical vessel will transport my soul to be with that of my only love."

"Excluding your children."

"The children might come during a later journey."

"Not in one of my dreams. I hate kids in all of them, even when I was a kid dreaming. I dreamed of hating kids, which always came true, especially yours, the whiny bastards, saying nothing of their parentage, who are so 'soulful.'"

"If I falter in my mystiphysical efforts, I might take her very body to paradise, in that she was not saved beneath the eyes of the deity, and therefore paradise might not accept her, despite her spiritual beauty."

"The rest of her wasn't bad. I'd pork her in paradise."

"You have no respect for our beliefs!" he prays, dropping his wrench. "You won't even capitalize 'paradise!'"

"'paradise' is not capitalized because it's not a discrete, tangible place, like 'Here' or 'Now.' It's a state of mind, like 'dream.'"

"You think too much and believe too little! Your kind has no beliefs of your own, replacing them with denigration!"

"Displacing what you think you know is not negation."

Upon retrieving his wrench, he grabs it from the wrong side of reality. I think one of us notices this denigration.

"I believe we're dealing with a left-handed thread. The more you turn it in the wrong direction, the harder it will be to get off."

While proceeding with the assembly of the rocket soul, the man and his children take delivery of the pet they bought to console themselves after the wife's/mother's death. They have bought a chimpanzee, not a puppee. They are nasty animals, and therefore reminiscent of many children.

Since my aid proves inadequate, lacking in spiritual values, the man continues with his children, who hand him wrenches. After a few days, they grow weary of feeding the chimp. The father has convinced the lot of them how soulful his enterprise is, more important than cleaning cages or giving affection to the living.

Concluding creation of the soul rocket proves more extensive an endeavor than anticipated. It may be metric, or mystiphsic. Before the process is concluded, the chimp falters. The chimp grows ill. Too busy with his

soulfulness, the father neglects to take it to the vet for needed shots. The chimp grows very ill, but the soulful family just thinks it caught a cold, hay fever. The chimp wastes away. The chimp dies. No one suggests sending it along to nirvana in a covered wagon. In the end, however, they give the animal a final look only to see in its eyes and attitude the very spirit of their dear departed wife and mother, who had created her own soul vessel to return to her family in order to aid their grieving.

They finish the soul rocket, but it goes nowhere. How can a person expect to see all the way to heaven when he can't see the truth of spirits before him?

After the family takes off in the rocketship and it crashes and they all die horribly, I am left to care for the chimp, which did not enjoy a resurrection per se, but only recovered from hay fever.

I, however, will not fail. I will not neglect the creature. I just wake up and it can take care of itself.

END