

issue 41

streetcake



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john alwyine-mosely

Kiss of the Spider Woman

After Jerome Rothenberg

When darning, fingers moved
but eyes stared
making shadow cobwebs,
each stitch the way
to make life live
on and on
until

I heard
sea moonlight splinter
into the sound of wings
that roared and rumbled
until a cold howl of wind
over
my roof

turned into night silence
my fingers stilled
then words fall
like slaps

I looked up, looked down
and paid no attention,
I darned, moved fingers
stared shadow cobwebs
stitched the way
to make life live
on and on
until

I heard
moonlight sea
splinter wing sounds
that roared wind and rumbled
a cold howl
over
my roof

and night silence turned,
my fingers stilled
words slapped

But I was ready,
the needle sharp

The Globe

Ivan loved the globe. He loved to watch it wobble on it's axis as he would spin it quickly accelerating time. He could make a year pass in a minute. He had counted. He loved to run his fingers over the tin surface feeling the light brown bumps that were the mountains. At the head of India Everest was no higher than the others but he knew that in truth it was.

He would go over the routes of the explorers: Odysseus, Da Gama, Cook, the daredevils of the sea. Using eraser at the end of a pencil as his ship he would rock and roll the globe from port to hidden port. This he felt simulated the rocking of the ship on the swells themselves. He would tell stories to the tin.

Ivan loved to read. Stevenson, London, Heinlein. Stories filled with worlds filled with people who could be villains or heroes. And places, the countless places on his spinning globe. Places he could just be on his own. Like in his room. Reading was one way to stay out of the rest of the house, alone in his room, so he could concentrate.

"What is that door closed for Ivan? What are you doing In there?" His mother would scream at him.

"I can't believe you want to watch me read," He would scream back. And Wait. Cowering. If everything stayed quiet he would go back to his story.

Ivan knew that she thought that all of his reading helped him in school. It helped him fill the time in school thinking of new stories to map out on the globe. But Ivan was good at keeping secrets. He wouldn't tell her anything.

With his books Ivan had now been to the very edges of the universe. Ivan's stories were only limited by something and his pencil. The eraser rolling and heaving on the sea: "An unsafe rigging! Boson see this man gets six of the best. Mark him sir." "Yes, M'Lord."

Or the pencil dives slowly in from high above the globe: "Commander. We still have no idea if we have returned to the planet of our actual dimension." "Captain, with your permission, there is no reason to doubt your calculations now." "Well Commander, we now have nothing to do but to wait." "You know, Captain, seeing as we have nothing but time, that I did not marry you for a promotion. Help me undo my buttons."

And sometimes his pencil was just a jet, a big jet on auto pilot so he could put his hands behind his head and look down from very high on the ocean, a glaring blue, and over continents, green and brown and black with weather, over lakes and cities and dying rivers and all the people so small, so far down that he laughed feeling good, flying solo.

So face it, a kid *needs* to have a secret in a house that is full of them. So there was no way she would ever know about Ivan's stories that he made up in the dull hours at school to tell to his tin globe in the silence of his room, understood? Understood. He thought TV was boring and didn't like music, except for violins, and jigsaw puzzles were not as fun as they had sounded. And he liked

to stay in his room. So what was wrong with reading books and telling secret stories in your own house?

This morning he knew that some secrets could not be kept. He grinned widely and this made a pimple hurt. One belt of skin was still on fire. He used his blankets and other odds and ends he had accumulated in his room for when the need arose. He would slip out very quietly and just go to school. He knew she would open the door to wake him later and how to use the opening of the door. There was only one thing that Ivan loved more than his globe and reading and telling stories.

He clicked open his lighter.

[conversation]

give them scars; let them rip at yr lines
drawn down forearms or from foreheads
that pressed you forward in a direction.

so much mind is seen as an election
tween two visions neither possessing
an actual aim at anything. i think
we all seek schism, we all perceive a
position located divinely away from
pointability. a lot of folks i feel
think of this as themselves, which is
half right, but last night and tomorrow
as art has taught me all or nothing.

meaning those are options; either we
are all dreaming the same river of time
or we are nothing fluid with exception
to our tributaries. salmon swim to the
home we harp on. beavers are wishless
creators, real gods in their own
swamp, swapping streams for soggy ways.
i fear im no longer mainstream,
ive leaked into the basement basically
no basis to complain but will admit my aim
is underground and grave but believing
in everythings beauty being everything
between here and there.
The t is a force of crossing
over.

stephen james

A pair of angry hands burst from an open book

and grab me by the ears

I am being taunted by someone who has never even met me

by words that were written before I was even born

it's like they know

it's like they know

it's like they know

this will be your life

and it is satire.

MITCHELL KROCKMALNIK GRABOIS

In the Box

1.

I woke at 5 a.m. to take a neighbor to cataract surgery. I dropped her off and went to find a *McDonald's* with Wi-Fi, but found none between here and the Front Range, just a *Jack-in-the-Box*. Standing at the counter, I peruse a poster, a man with a Jack head and an athlete's muscular arms. *I didn't get this body eating chocolate milk shakes*, the caption reads. *Sometimes I got vanilla*. I take a table, drink bitter coffee, remember Bob W. in high school, a tall skinny guy with long, lank hair and a comical face, who waged night-time raids stealing *Jack-in-the-Box* heads from drive-throughs, leaving the "restaurants" bereft of their mascot. I became a member of his brigade, along with a guy named Krylov the Fry Pan.

I finally got caught (though Bob never did) and spent some time in Juvenile Detention, what we called "Juvey," to my parents' everlasting shame.

Bob sold the heads to a Mexican, who took them down to Mexico City, where they were used as sacred objects. They were prayed to and chickens were sacrificed to them.

2.

Krylov the Fry Pan became a famous magician. Then he dropped out of sight.

He boards a train for the first leg of a journey back to his ancestral village, Faleshti, Moldova, which may or may not exist anymore. He'll wait to get there to find out. Most of his relatives there were murdered. That was his initial impetus to take up magic. He was still a boy. He thought: *If I make myself invisible, no one can kill me*, but then realism leaked in: *unless they spray machine gun bullets, unless they cloud the area with mustard gas, unless they drop a five-hundred pound bomb*, and so on. Still he persevered in his magic.

As a teenager, making *Jack-in-the-Box* Heads disappear revitalized his very early inspiration.

He haunted cafes in Kiev, performed in all the great capitals in Europe, sucked royal dicks (he was gay) and finally, in a peaceful period, which is to say, a gap in the ceaseless war and torment which is the history of mankind, he decided to go back to Faleshti, to see if he could find a hoe that belonged to his great-grandfather. The old man spent more time leaning on it than hoeing.

How to be a Successful Pilgrim

Remain standing while you ride the bus.
Master the six ways to escape from the unknown.
Avoid conversation on ferries and riverboats.
Learn how to be safe in a foreign country.

Travel without germs. Disinfect public surfaces.
Convince people you are real. Make a pinwheel.
Play the banana game. Make a crop circle.
If possible, emit a nifty humming noise.

Only fools cross a bridge on foot after dark.
Hail a cab. Stop a train. Wait for another bus.
Hitchhike if you're a woman. Hoist the colours.
Refuse to be bumped into in crowded areas.

Observe the rites among crabs and lobsters.
Do not, on any pretext, inhale graveyard gas.
Draw a map. Rent a 4WD. Count your buttons.
Be prepared to meet the electric scorpion.

Look like you appear out of nowhere.
Convince people you are a local. Get a tattoo.
Make a palm frond cross. Read a map.
Send a message forward in time.

*

AUSTERITY BISCUITS

beekeeping in Britain peaked between
the wars with a hot drink now available
prepared with the simplest kind of
worry the politician has baked

batches of a rigidly puritanical outlook
recipes of the Age of Austerity at
government functions sharing a plate
of fluffy miscellaneous items

in corridors of power last night was a
bowl of Fruit Loops whose strapline
is "offering a crumb of hope whether
you really need it or..." the new

conspicuous non consumption you are
needing to tighten the belt buzzword
customisable affordable adorable
in large part with little presents

sweets the family once enjoyed such
as twenty-something disabled men
working out which biscuits would most
hit hard the snack sector now

accepting tea and biscuits and supports
savings as the UK is finished