

# STREET CAKE

experimental writing magazine

## issue 72

### part 2



standstill @maría josé maddox

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### part 2

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## Salvation

Cento from “Desperately Seeking” by Danielle DeTiberus & *Possession* by A. S. Byatt

*I hope we meet again.*

Enough. A heap of papers sighed sideways and fanned out on the floor. I wanted to be a Poet and a Poem, and now am neither. The letters again.

*Write to me, I love to see the hop and skip and sudden starts of your ink. I am in your hands. Friendship is rarer, more idiosyncratic, more individual and in every way more durable than this Love. When I see you, you look alive and everything else - fades.*

Something of that desperate longing will always remain. And turn a kind of pain to a kind of interest, a kind of curiosity, which is to be my salvation.

It is possible for a writer to make, or remake. It is never too late.



## The Vaults

It is later now / the last of the light  
dripping / scattered / from the vaults

I wonder if / sincerely / you existed  
as flesh / blood / stones on the tree  
in our edwardian / meadowlands

I have never owned / a delusion / to know of  
with holes to see through / a ghost / I make  
from white paper

in cracks / sometimes / I glimpse  
billowing / shadows / rifts of deep night  
the ocean after twilight / evoked

pieces of you / love / fear  
knowing when / to sleep / this umbilical  
talisman / I clutch in my palm

a husk of pale coral / arcadian  
you found / as a child  
to be afraid / to let go

of things you said / I / we / imploding  
what we have become / slithered  
cold misspoken words / dreams with intent

closing my eyes / the tide rushes in  
I want to hold you / with mercy  
the way I can never do / for / myself

## IGNORANCE IS BLISS

Ignorance is bliss. Ignorance<sup>1</sup> is bliss. Ignorance is<sup>2</sup> bliss. Ignorance is bliss. Ignorance is <sup>3</sup>bliss. Ignorance bliss. Ignoranceisbliss. Ig<sup>4</sup>norance is bliss. Ignorance is bliss. Ignorance i<sup>5</sup>s bliss. Ignorance is bliss. I ignore for bliss. Ignorance is bliss. Ignorance is b<sup>6</sup>liss. Ignorance is bliss. Ignorance is bliss. Ignorance is bliss. Ignorance is bliss. Ignore<sup>7</sup>ance is bliss. Ignorance. Ignorance is bliss. Ignorance. Ignorance. Ignorance is bliss. Ignorance is bliss. Ignorance is<sup>8</sup> bliss. Ignorance is bliss. Ignorance is blis<sup>9</sup>ter. Ignorance is bliss. Igno<sup>10</sup>rance is bliss. Ignorance i<sup>11</sup>s bliss? Is Ignorance is bli<sup>12</sup>ss? Ignorance is bliss.<sup>13</sup>

Responsibility<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An absence of knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> It exists in the world of fact; it is happening.

<sup>3</sup> I'm glad and enjoying myself again:

<sup>4</sup> † 'an ignorances' was offensive.

<sup>5</sup> You have a place in the universe, you exist, you live.

<sup>6</sup> A feeling in my body that at length passes into

<sup>7</sup> A wanting of knowledge.

<sup>8</sup> I have a presence and a place here.

<sup>9</sup>

my mind and spirit: a  
blessed felicity.

<sup>10</sup> † it was a sin.

<sup>11</sup> I am in a certain condition.

<sup>12</sup> A cause of happiness, joy, or delight?

<sup>13</sup> Complete halt, a point of final paralysis. I am static.

<sup>14</sup> My moral obligation to behave correctly towards or in respect of every soul...

'Is it a poem? Is it academe? Is it garbage? Honestly I have no clue. It started as a rant about academese, and then the behavioral disorder kicked in. A couple of decades of tinkering with it once in a while, and I ended up with the attached. I look forward to your rejection.'

### Obfuscatory Exegesis

The instances in which particular segments of academe resort to ineloquent affectations of unnecessarily obfuscatory verbiage and etymologically arcane esoterica, thereby rendering the presentation of any suppositions virtually impossible to disambiguate, correlate significantly with the instances in which said academics, typically rife with insecurity at having encountered the artificially imposed expectations of publication so common to academe, find themselves unfortunately and counterproductively bereft of any adequate contribution to the rarified conversations in which the ostensibly relevant career-determining committees tacitly expect them to participate. The additional and self-congratulatory tendency of instructional faculty to compel academic neophytes to peruse such texts, with the implied assumption that any failure to glean the superfluously obfuscatory exegeses contained therein reflects upon the existential ignorance of the reader rather than the unwarranted opacity of the dialectic itself, engenders an atmosphere of alienating disparity which significantly insults the self-actuating curiosity that should ideally motivate said neophytes toward their own advancement and, by extension, toward the ultimate survival of the intellectual milieu which is ostensibly the very *raison d'être* of the academic institution.



March 6<sup>th</sup>

Opened the window so I could  
hear people.

I've written everything down  
on a piece of French stationery.  
I really have. But now I can't find it.

Looked at him across the table at lunch,  
but all I saw was Kafka standing on the Charles  
Bridge holding a stack of papers.

Yesterday there were birds in the bathtub  
and no one knows where they came from.

Just the feel of it. Just this once.

We were standing in the doorway.  
Both of us silent. And then we weren't.

Orange is a slow color. Although not  
as slow as black.

He stepped off of the bridge and  
fell into the Vltava. The papers  
flew up into the air like flames.

We must have been lonely people  
to have done this to each other.

I'll tell you again. It's true. There is a small  
animal lodged up inside of me.

After his shower, he wrote something on  
the bathroom mirror.  
Now I know I'm going to have to beg for it.

The sheets of this bed. They have me figured out.

Make sure you open my mouth  
and look all the way down before you leave.  
You won't believe what you see.

This is not going to get any easier with the lights off.

## Quarto for the Animorphs

*with a line paraphrased from K. A. Applegate*

so many stories  
 so many voices  
 different and the same  
 you never doubted  
 making meaning the  
 endless story of fights  
 an unseen enemy  
 the most dangerous  
 alien and cruel

you remember names  
 can list them  
 in your sleep the  
 greatest lesson waiting  
 till the end war  
 leaves you hollow  
 if you fight you can  
 win be brave be  
 strong be good  
 you matter

to tell you of  
 different battles  
 that is a thing  
 I have dreamed of  
 ones I fought  
 won and lost  
 the things you can't see  
 emblazoned like stars  
 across this body

medications spill  
 off your tongue  
 learning is the  
 hardest part left  
 unavoidable and it  
 leaves you no choice  
 control things you can  
 anything love yourself  
 and remember always  
 you can do this

Case 8: Mother - 100%

“Everything I was reading always had to happen  
 somehow or else, and we couldn't have our own  
 friends and people here, he said.”

...to set out to write stories about those type of characters in the Backlands, behind the graveyards, between the hoodoos, and under the blanket of a crude social conservatism."

The book's title alludes to both the physical and emotional landscape. It's based on the border between the black Indian line in the Red Deer Valley, supposedly the border between the world of monsters and human experience," he asserts.

"Cairo is the place where the best and the rational coexist and lead their daily lives, where the river cuts down through the floods into the heart of the lonely and wears away the pain from the sad."

11/11/2016

“2-10”

13

The figure consists of two separate line graphs. The left graph plots 'Rate of reaction' on the y-axis against 'Temperature (°C)' on the x-axis. The curve starts at a low rate at 10°C, rises to a peak at 30°C, and then declines at 40°C. The right graph also plots 'Rate of reaction' on the y-axis against 'Temperature (°C)' on the x-axis. This curve shows a continuous, steep upward trend from 10°C to 40°C, indicating that the rate of reaction increases exponentially with temperature in this range.

T. 110

Page 20

RESUBMIT  
SUBMIT

In Wt. 6

than 1511

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## Unretrieved Device Fragments

*shiny blade slices through soft pink skin used abandoned lost left unretrieved nestling deep within growing rusty glowing silver in the X-ray beam gnawing bone and sinew blood and flesh fistula festering inside of me...*

item inadvertently left behind

mistakes and consequences

injury, repeated surgery, excess monetary cost, loss of hospital credibility, death of patient

250–300 surgical tools are used

needles, knife blades, safety pins, scalpels, clamps, scissors, sponges, towels...

most common left behind object is a sponge

...tweezers, forceps, suction tips and tubes, scopes, ultrasound tissue disruptors, asepto bulbs, cryotomes and cutting laser guides, measuring devices...

1500 tools stitched into patients each year

can be subtle and may not be discovered

not required to be reported

range from harmless to life-threatening

gossypiboma

a mass in the body

a passage between organs

fistula

calcification of the cavity wall

vital organs and blood vessels

fester inside a body

growing increasingly dangerous over time

most likely to make mistakes

fragments of medical devices left behind

adverse events reported include:

...local tissue reaction, infection, perforation and obstruction of blood vessels, and death...

may cause metallic fragments to migrate

reduce the number of accidents

counting carries its own risks

(Found material from Wikipedia entry on Retained surgical instruments:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Retained\\_surgical\\_instruments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Retained_surgical_instruments))

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ing. we must cut down on the cost of liv-

We've just got

our skin.

a dirty arm.

a new tune.

My life was wrapped in the shack.

ceries

kitchen table.

gro-

doors locked.

# Let's Pretend This Is Untitled

Beat my head against

The Wall

The one with the closet  
And a Pollock print

“Untitled”

Picasso insisted he never  
Titled a piece. Untraditional  
For commissioned-then-stationed  
Pieces

Search the closet  
For something of mine  
To make my own  
On the canvas you call

The Wall

Between them  
To you

I want red, still off-white

The Wall

Unchanged  
Before exhibitionist personalities  
Curators labeled, text covered  
Paint, infused new  
Pigments, textures,  
Layers, seized interpretation  
From the interpreter,  
Now a voyeur

You beat my head against

The Wall

“Imposter” “incoherent  
And formless”

The Wall

Still am

Let's pretend

The Wall

Between two poems exists

Let's pretend  
I'd named this piece

Or Fourth Wall

Three Poems









100 nm

“Frozen in time and space”

but also on the grid:  
this black ice attracted  
to copper, to thickening,  
to messing everything up.  
We're in the control room; down  
behind the glass is a microscope  
double a human's height.  
What we can see: metal, a vat of  
nitrogen, university branding.  
What's visible thanks to the screen,  
what's human-made yet mimicking  
the near-atomic parts of me  
is a membrane within a membrane  
next to some dozens of the same  
and that's just the one frame.  
There are hundreds on each grid;  
“I'm looking at 8 lacy grids today”.  
Small wonder then  
when we catch a vesicle  
at the rare second of bursting,  
ruptured membrane still  
a blobby line of light – or  
is it my astigmatised eye?  
You decide:



