

issue 22

streetcake



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Almatango

the axis of gaze

pulls and runs through

without permission

head draws a simpering

all in one breath

the longing

steals the attention

skips the rest of the heart

and picks the time

measures the space

and tends its burnished bow

in the embrace

the black braid is taken up

again all the times

on the edge of a cadence

put on the ropes

leading

the breath in the turnaround

keeps the instant

passion creates the torment

undermines the desire violates

the deception of platitudes

and strangles the void

causes the panting and

opens a terrible beauty wide

in the arms

the motion

fast and conclusive

has the glance of a moment

moves the melody

gives an unbeatable final

madness seizes the sorrow

and becomes a flower

meets happiness

living

for a moment

the emotion of a different life

flatters the delirium

and falls in love

in the shade of tanguerias

where the soul lives life

with resentment

and bewilders the reason

the age of wine

the light

the colors

pose without compassion

without regret

without conquering

the rest of life

w. m. lewis

like cities, like clouds

I saw the fires
and the sky become as one
Each was ignorant
Each was born that very day
Eyes closed, like cities, like clouds

david mac

Pollock

stick in the sky
what's that stick?
held
flicked
paint splattered
dripped?

and the man
possessed
bent
over
round all 4 sides
the mad canvass

stick flung
colours spread
cross
mean something
say anything

no question
no answer
never was

just technique
spontaneous
technique

art reaching its
final destination

The Butterfly Effect

I saved a woman's life today.

I stagger out in front of her car
and she slams on the brakes,
meat and machine in seamless union
against the drunkard in their path.
Middle fingers are exchanged
like continental kisses;
we go our separate ways.

That ten-second hold-up saved her;
at the next junction a lorry plows into the space
where she should have been.
Splintered bone, ruptured organs,
the brief screams – lost.
Horns blare in the night and bedroom lights
flick on.

Two years later she runs a red light,
and a policeman goes under her wheels.
I pleaded not guilty.

June 30, 2010

No one will know the correct date for my obituary and tombstone. I died in our room at the Mayflower on the last day of June in the Year of the Tiger. The tiger was you. I was the guffle bird discombobulated on Jupiter. This is a nonchalant report, Mister Capote, of lepus victims. I was lime flavored when lime flavored wasn't cool. Inside your swamp no tornados are allowed. Balinese dancers blow bubbles shaped like the Sinhalese alphabet as you park me in front of your computer to listen to Bob Dylan sing about Ramona's cracked country lips. No one holds me now and the shoes you fixed are lost at sea. You're colorblind but your third eye sees my invisible heart murmur panties, decorated so cute with Hebrews eleven. You left me wrecked in my super hero pajama pants. I am stuck there now inside that last day, hearing your car take you back to your mountain. The phone does not ring. It is you, always, on the other end.



Incendium

By Matthew Spriggs

flicker

I am conscious!

conscious of the fact that I have a hangover / that I'm awake / conscious of the whole heap / and this morning I reheated some baked beans only to lift them off the hob and find that the handle was broken or limp at least so it wavered from side to side before the salty mess slapped against the floor and I had to recover from the trauma by smoking a cigarette and drinking old wine / I became horrifically conscious of the misery of not having breakfast / I was (vaguely) conscious (not sure why) of that time you said that if 'norman was religious he'd probably be the archbishop of something by now' and I wasn't sure if you meant because he's servile or charismatic or reverent or what you meant really so I just nodded and took smoke into my lungs / blew it back at you / you smiled / put an arm around my waist and I remember thinking 'things will never be this good again / not for either of us and not for the rest of them' and that thought was just like this memory / half-there / self-deceptive / too little to cling to and too brief to appreciate ... it occurs to me now that while (like norman) you are charismatic within my skull you never were outside of it / you were actually quite dense at times and it was noticeable in your speech / of course I've taken only the best features to display in the exhibit of my imagination / only the best / you have since become this wise and almost beatific specter floating between my thoughts and guiding me on to the next because we all need a guide / even for our own minds / maybe especially for our own minds / and why not have your face attached? you had a very pretty face / we make symbols of people like this I think / using their faces and their ideas and their idiosyncrasies to provide substance and erasing what we find too painful to include / reinventing the past for selfish futures that lead us by the hand towards some new mistake / what hurts more than anything is that I may never remember what you were *truly* like and I want to / I want to remember the bad because it was still you / the real you whatever that means ... I worry most every day that in romanticizing the past I am mutilating something that only happened once / and never again / something unimaginably precious / it's like killing a person / slowly / it's worse than killing a person because it's so separate now / and so unique / to me / to what's left of us ... einmal ist keinmal ... if transience is the glory and curse of existence what could be more precious than the dull flicker of memory? our lives are predicated on loss and misery and end / those are the terms and conditions we signed / not by choice / but with an infantile hand innocent to the world / when we first felt the pain of seeing someone walk away / even if they came back / because written on some inveterate

strand of electric cells is a simple code / deep within the neural maze and well beneath the realm of language / that says one day they will never come back and one day neither will you ... I suppose we all feel things we cannot express / don't have the means to / half of education is learning to articulate things you are already conscious of but don't understand / some kill themselves for this reason / a few will kill others / some struggle and despair and go mad to find that brief clarity of vision and maybe they even capture it in words / so the rest of us don't have to / and then the world kills them all the same / others feel it all too much / and they never really have a chance / me / I've stopped trying so when that sunburst of clarity strikes my brain it feels so much sweeter and the warmth so less like cold / and those around feel it all the more for not expecting it / and they don't show it / and they hardly acknowledge it / but we all know it's there / because we've all felt it / and failed to put it into words /

and I think that's why we fuck...

glow

...to embrace that tactile purity,

to feel the ground beneath our feet,

to capture something
Real!

No matter how it might scorch the hands and sear the eyes / to hold it away from the ever-present dictates of the mind and witness the white noise all-undressed of symphony / if this is my task then may I fail with more grace than my predecessors / though I won't / I pray it so / pray to who? The self-created self-perfected deities of the dismal who guide me through my thoughts on hungover mornings with too many cigarettes not enough baked beans and just enough wine / the fictions that move around my fiction / the subplots and narrative devices / the presence to my absence ... I would give a finger to hold you in abeyance for an instant and look upon you without this heavy load of *parti pris* / the immovable you I mean / not the beguiling skin-suit you wear / the Real one / naked of all the shape-shifting madness that surrounds you / I imagine you would glow like antimony in black light / I imagine you would be inviolable as pure energy or maybe not Am I deluded or merely bedeviled by the impossible? A daylight hallucinator / A Tantalus watching porn with knives for hands / What matter / your fiction remains intact / albeit nothing but a series of cuts / pseudo-surgical amputations and / where necessary / cohesions ... But breathe easy and accept reliance / for this secret stitching holds the unknowable in familiar forms / creating a patchwork of unity / subject like all else to a slow decay / You are a feast of kitsch for the wretched gluttony of my longing / you are both one word and a multitude / you are every dish at the buffet / no matter / one word or one dish is made of all the others / riddled with uncertainty and the fantasy of flavor ... With thoughts afresh I return to the beans / perfect metaphor I think (maybe einmal is nicht keinmal after all / but who can know?) I wonder / had I not dropped those beans against the linoleum floor of our undersized kitchen / if I would have neglected them / maybe started a conversation and left them boiling for hours / turning to mulch / I've done it before ... Wait / Something sharks up in the back of my head / it struggles to center stage: I realize that to heat something is to bestow particles in a closed system with kinetic energy which causes them to shudder and jostle together in agitation / After a time this movement becomes too vigorous and structure loses its integrity / it begins to break away / Given enough energy and pressure and time a bean will become utterly formless / its proteins and fibers will powder into their constituents / whereat all nutrition is lost / the effacement of color and definition follow shortly after / Exceeding a few thousand degrees and covalent bonds are hammered apart / iron ceases to be iron / and finally electrons are

stripped from nuclei / Thus uniformity emerges from complexity / chaos from order / in the form of plasma...

You are this hypothetical bean—once given to solid character now overcooked / amorphous / a sad vague perversion of former brilliance / in wait to become something else to someone else / Tomorrow you could be *anything* / Because there is no glowing antimony core with the permanence and splendor of God's own seat / everything is ephemeral / there is no *jouissance* no heavenly purchase to be found in the world of your mind for it ruins itself in bacchanalian dance /

So I'm happy to watch you drip
like semen into the sink /

I'd rather not eat.

* * *

Twenty three

Between foot and mouth
the distance between
my words and thought
before disease of tongue
I'm bent – whether I'm stood
on the corner, staring out
of Tredinick's Lane / at the
Doorway of Hawkes' house
/ or instead elsewhere in my
Head- grappling ever after
in search of place as distance
gets tighter between where
my foot falls my mouth shares
eyes see ears hear or heart beats

Thirty One

Restrict my characters: a vicious sort of sensorship

I can offer no resistance inside 420 chances including spaces/just squash
down like cabin baggage – reduce your badinage/ leave out the bleating and focus
Dont worry about resumptions
protest blackouts back out of this convulsion/leave out and focus
Find censure ensure it wont remain unchecked/that it isnt thought correct
where files exist/there corrupt –there crea