

# issue 40

# streetcake



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sean burn - rokia traore

w.m. lewis - a thousand of my own to keep me company

thomas michael mcdade – paisley

parker weston - six word stories

nick romeo - cloud 9.5

excerpt from *spell / checkered*

(rokiá)                      traoré

trapdoor

trove

rare

roared

tremor

my favourite work ov hers: *tchamantché* (nonesuch recordings, 2008)

A THOUSAND OF MY OWN TO KEEP ME COMPANY

1.  
the air is moist  
with screams and dooms

atomized and dispersed  
among my dreams and work

2.  
The air is moist  
It sweats with fear

In the trees the weak  
Nests sway meekly still

3.  
the air is moist  
with disease & death

a thousand of my  
own to keep me company

4.  
The air is moist  
Of births it speaks

So many to be absorbed  
By our vast hunger

5.  
the air is moist  
with my mistakes

i feel them out there  
numerous and watchful

6.  
The air is moist  
Small corruptions

Petty industries  
Sleeping together soundly

7.  
the air is moist  
with loneliness

when my breath fails  
call the people i love alone

8.  
The air is moist  
It is a cloud of time

In and out of cells  
It circulates, then dies

## Paisley

Word around campus labeled  
the bushy side-burned Professor  
a communist and hypocrite  
to boot as his wife made big  
bucks working for NASA.  
He taught Romanticism.  
A hell of a nice guy, he fell  
for the contract grading system.  
One could sign up for grades  
A through D, or pass / fail.  
A set number of quizzes,  
exams, papers and readings  
requisite for each laurel.  
Class attendance was optional  
so this method of teaching  
students called ideal and often  
struck attempting to secure  
emptied seats like a fire drill.  
One spring day class met  
on a hill near Canisius Hall.  
Three or four showed up  
and that was a crowd.  
The lecture was on Keats  
and one poem stays with me:  
“La Belle Dame Sans Merci.”  
A gal kept out of the shade  
and the sun shined well on her.  
She wore bib overalls,  
hair in a red bandana  
and dispersed among the paisley  
pattern were gears like those  
found in a travel alarm.  
I wondered if our Professor  
imagined her after class hiking  
to a farm collective  
or did she strike him  
as simply out of this world.

Six Word Stories

We visited the combustible genital exhibit.

Number 9, that's the fetus responsible.

Her helicopter wound is healing nicely.

The asshole doesn't need the head.

Preacher launches bible at possessed cripple.

Snack kid swallows dwarf stripper alive.

Claustrophobic astronaut needs to air out.

Blind cartoons never hear onomatopoeia coming.

Lunch lady's hands look like hamburger.

Which racing ambulance has bigger emergency?

**nick romeo**

Cloud 9.5

Careful

There's dust

In the air

Seeing

And breathing

Is a fight

But I don't care

The taste is sweet

Satisfying

It makes me feel

Complete

Please

Don't light a flame

The dust might ignite

In my face

Again