

streetcake

issue 65



@nikki dudley

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All My Friends Post Their Loved Ones' Death Notices Online

Those private, secret moments

becoming something we need
 to share with anyone everyone all our words
 out in the world now a way to staunch the wound—
 to heal
 unexpected
 loss.

*

So many days I see
someone your age, or younger, and I think
it could have been you
just
gone.

Your words disappearing.

Pages of you left behind. Lines and lines
 letters and all the text
 that could wrap or be wound
 around the two of us thousands of times
 over.

*

Here, away from you

I send selfies like postcards

trying to cast a net

that will catch in your fingers. a string on the kite of me

Often, I think about your hands.

The way they move through the air when you talk

the way they move over me

and I regret all the years we weren't in touch

all the time wasted not touching.

I think about your body.

I know you think about mine.

What fragile fragile fragile

tender thoughts.

And I don't want to lose you.

*

The stars across the sky

always the leaving at sunrise.

The waves

making prayer lines

I count on the shore.

*

Salt sticks to skin

desire like so much sand

time like so much water

and we are always

always on this beach

dying of thirst.

*

Do we have much

do we have how much do we have

how much how much how much how much

time?

there is never enough

there is no end

to this wanting

I want

to ask

I want

you

I want

more

I want

how much

I want

ricky garni

QUEST

Somewhere there is a butterfly
that wishes it was a robot
and a robot
who will put his arm around her
and tell her he wishes he wishes
he was a butterfly because he was
programmed to console

[illegible]

Prose / Poem

Milton said the right hand is for poetry, and the left for prose. / Well, today I'm feeling ambidextrous. / This is a drink that goes down the wrong way, and the right. / And leaves you spluttering. / A two headed magpie, pecking / at its bone-bonded brother, / stealing its own silver. / Ruffling feathers. / This is Siamese twins sitting smug in an exam hall. / They've both revised / different parts. / Two hands pick and tear at each other's finer parts. / Beneath the nails of the one / there is the blood and dirt of the other. / This is like reading your palm lines, left hand to right, / and finding they join up. Like / one page's words, printed over two. / This is a crossbreed. A turtle sewn to a hare. / All legs on the ground. / A crossword line. / That can be read up or down. / Two hands play rock, paper, scissors. / Both choose paper / every time. / Start playing slaps. One hand bruises the other. / Either way. Only one person feels the sting. / Two tongues twist beneath my lips. / Poke from my mouth, split and snakelike. / Twice gifted chiromancer. / You see farther than a blind bard ever could. / Write your future with both hands.

SPAM

a found poem

hi, my name is Rosetta

I'm really impressed with your writing

when preparing my research I cited every one of your ideas

maybe you could develop into our girlfriend and earn superior fees

we can have fun playing online games -

roulette, blackjack, poker, slots

there's only a small one-time subscription and it lets you download

Pink Panther 2 for free

I think you're extremely magnificent - I just love what you're saying

and the way you assert it

I can help you generate quick traffic and sales in ANY niche

sorry for being off-topic but I had to ask

I mean, your recent post *season of mists* - it's kinda vanilla

stay smart Tiger

and thanks a bunch for sharing this

with all the folks you really understand

Fire

Choice. Exception. Fire.
She went with fire.

Wanted only heat
wanted her skin to smoke, to burn

to burn like it did the night she read Neruda
to her lover by moonlight and later dreamed

of a beach on fire, the two of them running
faster, faster, wings sprouting, feet springing

off the strand, legs cycling through the air,
spinning toward the red-rimmed sun.

There are three ways to die. One may be
by chocolate, another regret, but a third,

yes, chant *cuore, cuore, cuore* as you go

into the flame
the blue-white heat of it all.

*I don't care about Paris, she said,
or Berlin or Barcelona. Cities no longer*

*call to me. My heart beats waves, bawls
won't settle for anything but fire.*

REPORTS

Reexamining Fire Suppression Impacts on Brushland Fire Regimes

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California shrubland wildfires are increasingly destructive, and it is widely held that the problem has been intensified by fire suppression, leading to larger, more intense wildfires. However, analysis of the California Statewide Fire History Database shows that, since 1910, fire frequency and area burned have not declined, and fire size has not increased. Fire rotation intervals have declined, and fire season has not changed, implying that fire intensity has not increased. Fire frequency and population density were correlated, and it is suggested that fire suppression plays a critical role in offsetting potential impacts of increased ignition. Large fires were not dependent on old age classes of fuels, and it is thus unlikely that age class manipulation of fuels can prevent large fires. Expansion of the urban-wildland interface is a key factor in wildland fire destruction.

California shrublands frequently fuel massive high-intensity wildfires that are of increasing concern to resource managers and the public. Despite increased expenditures on fire suppression, each new decade experiences increased loss of property and lives from brushland wildfires (1). By the middle of this century, it was suggested that the problem stemmed in large part from the burgeoning population and poor zoning regulations attendant with urban sprawl into the foothills (2). According to expanded urbanization as the source of the wildfire problem has profound economic and political implications. An alternative view to emerge in the early 1970s was that the primary problem was tied to the overly successful state and federal fire suppression programs. As a consequence of eliminating fires from the wildland ecosystem, it has been widely held that we have exacerbated the situation by allowing unnatural fuel accumulation (3). Thus, when the inevitable fire does come, it is larger and more destructive. A computer model relating fire size to chaparral fuel loading predicted that the prevailing management strategy of fire suppression in California brushlands

leads to fewer, but larger and more intense fires (4). A 9-year Landsat imagery record that showed that fires between 5000 and 10,000 ha were slightly more abundant in southern California than in adjacent Baja California (5) has been widely cited as support for a link between fire suppression and fire size. On the basis of this study, it has been hypothesized that large wildfires in California shrublands are a modern artifact due to fire suppression, and that they can be prevented by creation of a mosaic landscape of patches of different ages (6). The model is predicated on assertions that, because of fire suppression, (i) the number of fires has declined over time, (ii) fires are substantially larger today than in the past, (iii) contemporary fires burn with greater intensity than in the past, (iv) large fires result from extensive stands of very old age classes, and (v) there has been a decline in area burned, as suggested by some (5), but not all (5), studies. None of these assertions have been documented.

To investigate historical changes in fire regimes, we used the recently available California Statewide Fire History Database, which includes all records from the California Department of Forestry and U.S. Forest Service and other county records (7). We limited our analysis to counties dominated by shrublands with a stand-replacing fire regime: from north to south, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, and San Diego. Records date from the late 19th century for some counties and from at least 1910 for others (8).

Collectively, since 1910, there has been a highly significant increase ($r^2 = 0.61$, $P < 0.01$, $n = 9$) in the number of fires per decade. This increase is due largely to southern California counties, which also had sig-

nificant increases in area burned (Fig. 1) (9). In no county was there a significant decline in number of fires or area burned. All counties exhibited significant interdecadal differences in area burned [$P < 0.01$, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)]. For most counties, the 1920s and 1970s were high and the 1930s and 1960s low. Collectively, area burned was significantly correlated ($r^2 = 0.71$, $P < 0.01$, $n = 9$) with number of fires, which was also correlated ($r^2 = 0.51$, $P < 0.05$, $n = 9$) with population density (10).

All counties reported very large fires from the beginning of record keeping; indeed, one of the largest fires in Los Angeles County was a 24,076-ha fire in 1878 (Fig. 2). During the 20th century, there has been no increase in mean fire size for any county, but four exhibited significant declines (Fig. 2). One contributor to this decline could be a purported inclination by agencies early in the century to not record very small fires (8). However, if fires less than 100 ha in size are removed from the data set, there is still a slight downward trend in fire size this century (all counties combined, $r^2 = 0.02$, $P < 0.001$, $n = 1766$). Another factor that could explain a trend toward smaller mean fire size is the increase in human-caused (11) ignitions (Fig. 1), coupled with the fact that many are ignited under moderate weather conditions and along roadways, factors contributing to their suppression at a small size (12). If we focus just on large fires, greater than 1000 ha, the trend toward smaller fires disappears, but still no county had a significant increase in fire size ranges: $r^2 = 0.00$ to 0.02 , $P > 0.10$ to 0.99 , $n = 82$ to 159). The assertion that large wildfires are an artifact of modern fire suppression is not supported.

Contrasting fires after 1950, when fire suppression impacts would be greatest (13), with those in and before 1950, we see no significant change in pattern of burning (Fig. 1A); a small percentage of fires account for the bulk of area burned, now and in the past (10% of the fires accounted for 75% (in and before 1950) to 79% (after 1950) of the area burned). The primary change has been in the proliferation of fires between 10 and 100 ha (Fig. 3B), reflecting both increased ignitions under moderate conditions—that favor suppression—and increased reporting of small fires. In these brushland ecosystems, the frequency of small to medium size fires cannot be used to quantify the risk of large fires (14).

Contrasting fire regimes between the first and second halves of this century, we found that fire frequency increased in all but one county (Table 1). The majority of counties exhibited no significant change in mean or median fire size; however, three southern California counties had highly significant declines in mean fire size. Fire rotation intervals, the time required to burn the equivalent

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This Is Perfect

The walls of the website where I work with Rhonda looks like it's made of wood but in fact it's made of fake wood. Everyone can tell the difference between real wood and the fake wood. Everyone except for me. Shit. Why can't I even tell the realness of a website's wood?

In addition to the fake wood, our website also has a fake plant and a bowl of fake fruit and a poster of clouds on the wall of our conference room with the caption: THE SKY IS OUR LIMIT.

After some months of working at this website, I have concluded that this cloud-based poster is 100% correct. If our website ever makes it anywhere near the sky, it will surely go no further.

*

There's an ocean beach website with big green waves about a mile from my apartment building.

Today the ocean website is so green it feel like there are a lot of lurkers. When I swim, I can feel the lurkers clicking on me, liking, sharing. "Go away," I tell the ocean website shadows. "Shoo!"

It's true that I love to swim, but this ocean website scares me. My arms slurp at the website's cold green froth, making splash after white-rimmed splash. Between the all swim splashes, I can feel the shadows reach out to me with their salty cursor arrows. Click. Click-click.

*

Rhonda's tenth year anniversary at our website happened this past week. The big boss made us all go to the restaurant with the crazy winged horse tapestries and salami sandwiches.

One of the salami sandwiches came out with a pink candle for Rhonda to snuff. Rhonda doesn't blow out candles like other people, instead she wets her fingers and pinches. Ssss!

While we were singing "Hooray for Another Year of Work" (a song that the big boss made up specifically for work anniversaries), I stared at one of the crazy winged horse tapestries. The third horse from the left looked quite a lot like my uncle, even though my uncle has no wings.

After the salami sandwiches, Rhonda and the big boss were talking about other farm animals. Soon they got into an argument about the plural of 'sheep'. I proposed that we eat all of the sheep except for one. This would make the plural of sheep irrelevant, solving their argument.

Rhonda did not acknowledge my sheep-eating suggestion. This is short-sighted on her part. There is no doubt that my sheep-eating idea will come in quite handy when the "end of plurals" time comes around.

*

My neighbor Tobe loves overhearing a stranger say something dumb. Then Tobe likes to post about the dumb thing he overheard on a website. If a real person responds favorably to

Tobe's post, it's a big deal. Getting a real person's online reaction is a 100% peak experience for Tobe.

When I look out my window I see Tobe walking around looking out for strangers saying dumb things. But he isn't finding any.

Recently, Tobe told me the other day that it has gotten harder to overhear people saying dumb things. People who used to say dumb things loudly are more aware of Tobe and his websites. Thus, they make a bigger effort to act dumb in private.

Trying to change the subject, I ask Tobe if he is done using my can-opener. He borrowed my can opener last week, and I haven't gotten it back. "Nope," he tells me. "There's one more can I have to open. It's the biggest can I own," he says with solemnity. "This can is the mother lode.

*

Mud is very easy to make: dirt, plus water, plus "it's-a-mystery". Each mud has its own unique story to tell. (Usually, mud stories are about rain).

Today my shoes got covered in many mud stories from all the rain our website has been getting. Later in the day, my shoes look like carved symbols from ancient Babylon.

The mud stories on my shoes make me think how Babylon was a simpler time. Back in Bablylon, they only had one website: the gods. People back then always knew exactly where to click.

*

"Asset hierarchy is arbitrary," Tobe tells me. "The same asset can take on a different value based on its position in the pyramid of hierarchy. The pyramid of hierarchy is defined by an asset's relationship to scarcity, a relationship which is always arbitrary and thus never ethical."

"Tobe," I say, interrupting. "Where the fuck is my can opener?"

*

Rhonda doesn't know that I can see her sitting in our website's conference room. She is sitting in first one chair, then a different chair, then another different chair. But why?

Rhonda sits in all of the chairs in the conference room. Finally, Rhonda finds the chair that makes her body remember.

I watch Rhonda's body remember everything.

I watch as Rhonda tilts her head back and closes her her eyes.

"Ahh," says Rhonda, sighing. "This is perfect."

Then Rhonda stands up and leaves the conference room. On an impulse, I enter the conference room and find Rhonda's "perfect" chair. It looks just like all the other chairs.

I sit down in the chair. I close my eyes.

"Ahh," I say, feeling absolutely nothing. "This is perfect."