

streetcake issue 66



@nikki dudley

contents – issue 66

STREET CAKE experimental writing magazine

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Dissolve 3

Act so that there is no use in a centre

_____ Gertrude Stein, ROOMS

A dissolution
A miscalculation
A borrowing as of
A retraction of
The equation
The negation of
The perspective
Did we locate a
Fracturing
A beginning
Torn
A wave against
A buttress
A laugh as of
A sudden
Breakage in
The framing
Anciently wrought
Or grossly
demanded
the voices
as of a
ruined
history
begging
a return
or then the
broken wheel
where once
the zone
permitted
in the wind no
margins
no point of a
centrality
a seeing only of
the necessary
widening.

amanda n. butler

Letters of Melodies en Pointe

Melodies are 1st w/

me – my hand – placed on the barre
with as _{little} weight as I can place
&

(an) **exhale** (an) **inhale**
in time with the piano's 1st notes, then

lo, the ~~invisible~~ spine-string
stretching from ankles to hairline
the balanced toe 2 tune alliance
a place where the world outside

dies, the 3rd spelling-step
3rd position at the allegro followed by the

toes-pointed-knees-straightened **creScendo**
to 1st position's last notes.

kinship//fragments

I

it is funny
that love
is bloodless.
when it leaves us,
there is no residue,
but we are left
bloodied,
and its absence
shivers across
our skin.

II

the thing is though that when we fucked it was a fierce and wonderful thing. i remember the time you looked me in the eye & said *you can do whatever you want with me* which is actually something i'd said to you days weeks or maybe months (who knows) before, & now here you were returning my phrase back to me. that was the moment i think where i held us trembling in the palms of my hands. a kind of communion.

--- no. let's not talk about that.

III

there is a fire on the horizon.
there is black work here,
blood magic.
there is the must that I smell
on my skin
because I can't be fucked
to shower.
I slip with sweat.
the air shimmers with the
ash of ///
womxn.
I hear them.
I would like to join them
in their boundlessness.
but my rent needs to be paid

& I've left a candle burning.

IV

let's talk about when I was scorched & humbled,
creeping through the city a half shadow,
porous,
hessian-patched & bleeding pinpricks of light
from my fingernails,
to sit with my friends
over hot, salty broth.
don't let the world make you hard. don't let the fact they broke your heart make you bitter.
don't exchange compassion for cruelty.
slip of the tongue,
scarfed in love & a woollen hug.

V

when we imagine ourselves as having roots or family trees, is it from a sense of kinship or
an awareness of loss?

VI

when my middle sister was a child, she would sit
strawberry-blonde marshmallowed
in the dining room and eat earwigs.
she'd cut them in half with her fist, and
thrust each bit into her mouth,
swallowing them down to sit in her stomach with the
pureed carrots and powdered milk.

I thought of this when I watched the woman
fill her mouth with soil.
I understood that primal yearn,
the need to return to the dark and fertile –
the oozing secretions.

if I – she – we – are the natural, then it is
of us.
give me the legs of a millipede,
the supple sliming worm.
I will swallow it down
gullet-full
stomach-stretched.
fill my mouth with mud, with earth,

fill me full.
hold my hair whilst I vomit.
wipe my brow, I am contorting.
watch me writhe.

soil is a place of birth & death & birth again.
it nourishes and starves – it teems and contains.
it heaves.
it is heavy.
let me lie here under this.
i am empty.

VII

*do you ever think that you fall in love with characteristics in people that you won't
celebrate in your own self?*

VIII

kindness
is a radical act.

yuan changming

To *Be* [Or Not to Be

Whatever or whoever you are]

To *have* [or not to have]

Whoever or whatever you may wish]

To *do* [or not to do]

Anything or nothing you would prefer, &]

To *say* [or not to say]

Nothing or anything you may intend to]

Given these four most common English verbs

We are all rendered equal as we cross

Every borderline, filling in every gap

In action as in thought [or otherwise]

keilan colville

throwing stones

i took a stroll
down a
little
country road

and passed by
a broken stone home
(of past lives)
with
a rusted,
rundown tin roof,
mangled with time.

the road led me down
to the bright silence
of a jetty

the water pulsed
and the wind blew
(much like a heart
and lungs)
and i picked tiny insects
off my page
(and out of my hair)
and flicked them gone

then i was alone
in the shine of blue water

i took a small stone
and threw it across
and it went

plunk!

and said farewell
in the form of many
little ripples across the body
of water.

then i sat and
waited for
it to settle –
i almost
felt a
guilt at
having broken
the tranquil
quietness
for my sport.

susan michele coronel

x marks the spot

the female form raises questions
about bodily
autonomy and challenges to it
meat is so prized
the sky cracks open

to be a woman in the
world right now is to have
an
interior

& to respond to it.

I knew I was in
my body all along.

The List

Have you got the list of the ones we haven't done / I gave it to you
yesterday / the list mate / I gave it to you yesterday with the ones
we haven't done / have you got it? / The ones we haven't done are
on a list mate / I gave it to you yesterday / where is it have you got
it? / Mate yesterday I gave you a list of all the ones we haven't done
/ do you have it? / mate / the list / I gave to you yesterday / have
you got it? / it has on it all the ones we haven't done / yesterday I to
you gave / a list / the ones not yet done / were on it / got it / have
you / got it / the list? / we got have haven't yesterday ones the list to
you done I you mate gave the of it / of got the we mate it have done
the yesterday to haven't you you I ones gave list / I it you have the
of you done ones haven't got the yesterday to list we mate gave?

We'll print a new one I suppose then

seth crook

SOC AL D STANCE

i

i

jesica davis

whatever this is

there is always a bell / ringing / in the distance
active not passive / how well you hear it depends
on the body with which you listen / plus the other /
sounds around you // red scarf over lampshade /
a mattress waits for sinking / hotel lotion that smells
like the sad part of childhood / can you be more specific
/ no / yes but I'm over that road / direction
I want to go / find the strike that makes itself known
/ the bell's lingering echo // I'm tired / I'm done
asking / do you understand / is it possible
to know what I'm trying to convey / / a hollow
structure makes for better / echo // I've got a scratched-
up throat / from all this effort to swallow that sound
while / my mouth is open // I'm still trying to locate
/ the small light that glows / hangs before my face
/ like a dark zone / deep ocean fish's / method
to catch prey / I am / jaw agape / mouth
dislocated / breathing krill / / can't find
that bell's trajectory / still looking for it anyway / / that's
the point / except / I've grown used to this /
depth of pressure / this / dispersed ubiquitous
ringing / I still ask after it / *How have you been*
/ I swim / as it swarms //// from all directions //
saturated / skin / / / / relentless / still /// I attempt
a glow / I attempt /// in this dark / to know my own
/// sound // or / whatever this /// is / / / / / / / /

harvey ellis

all this vertical

how he carries
all the places he can be

like two rooms
in the same location

split like thoughts
that arrive as gifts
from the space
around us

how the self
can be a split
self
with no pain

just a chip
riding the wind
of the cosmos

sorry

I was where I was
just now
without remorse

like the twin
who has the other twin's
thought
then shakes it off

there is a door
I pass through
without opening

just a turn of the hand
when the light
pours in
then I am not
the place I am

Sunday was Tuesday
this week

and neither seemed to mind

the way the tree
contains a tornado
without showing it

there is a door
and there is a mirror
and they are the same

I am my shadow's
best wish

dennis etzel jr.

Declassified per Executive Order 13526, Section 3.3
NND Project Number: NND 63316. By: NWD Date: 2011

2/7

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

"The present [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] one-way streets."

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] containing [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] return [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] "The fewer
people [REDACTED] the better." [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] in
direct [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] return from [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the sealed [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] day [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] presence [REDACTED]
suggested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
continue on [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] hand [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

paige frisone

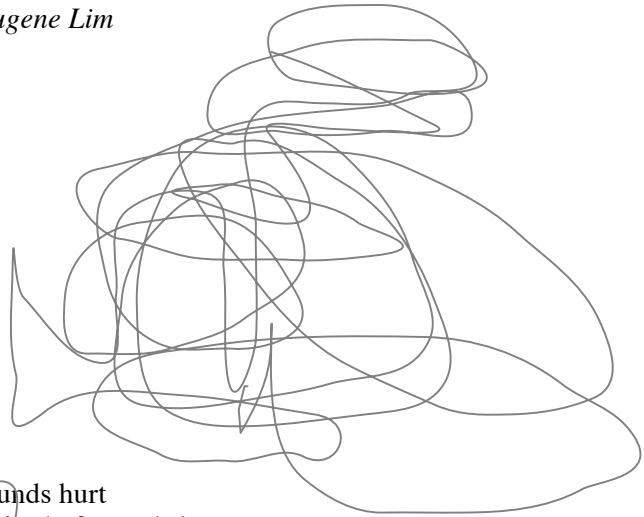
Recovery

"This seeming prison gives you structure." -Eugene Lim

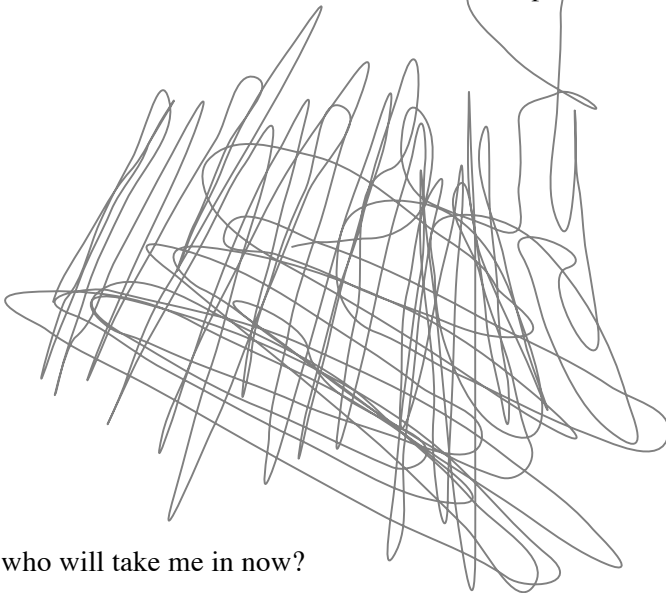
to be someone's safety net when you can't be

is lethal is

to wish to be unseen
out of necessity



sounds hurt
words comprised of sounds hurt

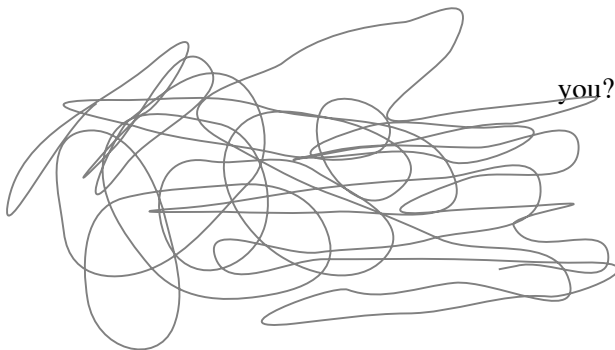


surround sound speakers blast
reverberate in brain
inner torture chamber

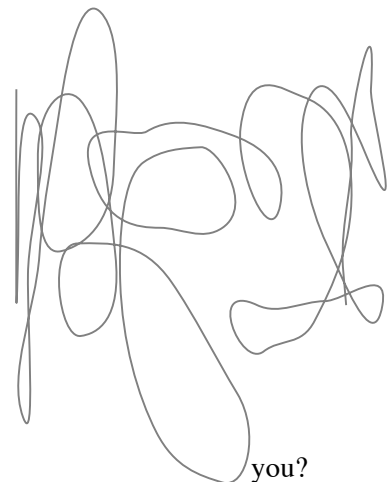
throw bricks through walls
head through bricks
something

stick bones in the freezer, fridge
slips are slides fuck what you say
pulling strands of death off my head
← like that, like this:

who will take me in now?



you?



you?

How Marty McFly Is Lying

That way Marty McFly is lying in the opening scene
with his lip
open to the pillow and
that arm
behind his back like he's fallen from a great height.
I don't buy it.

Our town's bus station clock has been broken so long I
wrote to the council
to ask if it was going to be a plot point but
they
didn't reply and it is still five to eight or 07:55 or 19:55.
I memorised the number of the phone at the bus station in the
mid nineties
in case it
came in useful and once it did; I rang it and
described my mother to the person who answered;
they identified her and put her on the phone. It
sounds like nothing now but it was something
before mobile phones.

So now it's easier to take a DeLorean than a bus because it isn't
possible to know what time the bus will be leaving
and
wait
till I tell you what is wrong with the
DeLorean's dashboard clock you won't believe it or if you do your belief
will be
hanging by a bit of wet bunting
and
then the bunting will go and it'll just be you in the rain with a
man
and a
really very old example of a document holder and
nobody
is going to work after this, no matter what
they say
about telling the guys at the office.

Sometimes in the evening the digital clock on the shelf in my bedroom becomes
a calendar.

Around quarter to eight the second world
war finishes as standard but then there's
this enormous jump from 1959 to

****The Year 2000****

in its
special presentation case.

But what's left when you cut out forty-one years
and most of the key plot points, circumventing the
inciting incident completely?

We're all dead by nine o'clock anyway; that broken horizontal
light
at the bottom of the

tens
column
is the first to go.

A bus comes, I have no idea which.
Honestly I think it would have been easier just to fix the clock.

shaun hill

blink & become me

My poem opens a portal in the water:
come be / hind me / push me / in.

The kids lift their beaks on the branches.
I kneel down & vomit up a tiger.

That wasn't a pond, it was a mirror
laid flat. Now I've split my face.

alice hill-woods

carving through the amorphous night, we waited for the morning to supervene and cut loose the fabric of obscurity □ with sleep in my eyes and both fists in the belly of a dune, I came to realise that all sand is interstitial and that the body is full of openings □ is it wrong to wish for a furnace when you're gifted with a beach? □ an entire lunar cycle and there we were: de hoop □ which means **the hope** in dutch but I struggle to imagine how this could have taken shape in the eyes of the khoisan □ the sunshine was a slick anemone oiling up brown arms □ and the sea maintained its glimmering distance like a motive or a celebrity □ our intestines snarled □ it was this kind of setup that kept me desiring for life □ lusty teen giving bedroom eyes to an unfamiliar collapse of wildflowers □ bearing the husk of a dream □ licking the salt off a fig

The Colours of Change

heikki huotari

Walking After Midnight On An Inclined Plane

I have some nemeses but you don't know them – they go to another school. Benevolently I release the ear I caught fly fishing. Mixing metaphors with white-hat hackers I may save the photo op and mother's milk for when the gargoyles finally hold their end up. I'll have what the acrobats are having, chocolate cake with chocolate frosting. Earth's not flat but at an angle. I'm not low on deities, just in between

luke kuzmish

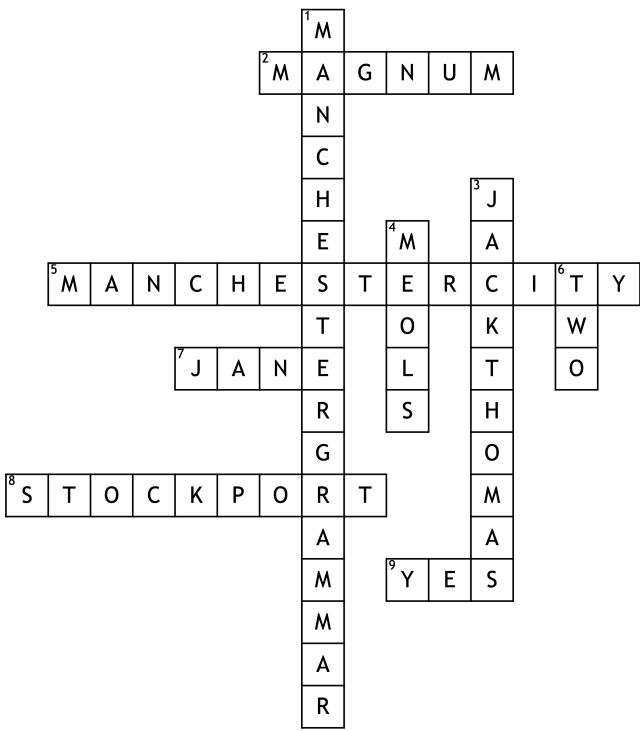
when the rain sets in

when the rain sets in
after the first heavy snow
in chainlink fence suburbia

I must quiet the part of me
that loves nothing
promotes nothingness
wagers only on losing

listen to the patter of small feet
--the cats, the babies, the dogs, the sparrows--
I must remind myself
that it's only as bad
as it seems

The Amateur Cryptic



Across

- 2. What is your favourite ice cream?
- 5. Who do you support?
- 7. What is your daughter called?
- 8. Where were you born?
- 9. Would you like some tea?

Down

- 1. What school did you go to?
- 3. What is your name?
- 4. Where do you live?
- 6. Have you any children?

t. k.

How to Fly

It's a type of eternity, I think:

A paranoia like indescribable thoughtlessness
-something like a memory, but not quite?-

the TV's

freefalling:

Slim Pickens is about to end the world and I'm locked in my
room;

(I'd lie
and say I wasn't scared
and that scares me

ears nailed to plaster walls,
listening to laughing children
who take the time to strip
the thorax from the mosaic
of captured butterflies

blasting search histories with pipe dreams:

This is how they fly;

michaël vidon

If you see something which doesn't look right

four A-Level students

Parisian kitchen table

my parents

my English colleague

and I

#teachershaveparentstoo #weirdestnightever #awkwardsilences

Dad goes:

In 2015, a few weeks after the attacks,
your mum and I took the metro to go to a show.
On the Ligne 2, it was busy, a few steps from us there was
an Arab
with a backpack.
He was crying.
He was just standing there
crying.

We looked at each other, your mum and I,
we didn't say anything.
We left the train at the next stop.

Voilà les enfants, un exemple du racisme ordinaire en France, I said.

I can't be racist, I am a Jew, he laughed.

See it, Say it, Sorted.

Substructures

This is a story without structure – which is right, which is how things should be. This is my story, my life and life is naturally random chaos. It only gains some sort of shape, a false framework, when it's over and others, in pursuit of comforting narrative structure, insist on giving it a beginning, a middle and an end, complete with dramatic interludes and episodic story lines. Life ain't like that.

My life isn't like that. Right now, it's still buzzing randomly. I'm still alive.

When I go, though, my life will have a story. I've seen to that. It's too important to leave it to others. As the song goes, "I'm gonna live for ever."

I have something planned – so big – eternity's in the can. My fame will be magnified through the lens of public outrage: anger sharpens memory to a killing point. Everything's ready. I have my structure primed.

Life before structure was mundane-boring, a flood of formless, uneventful events and the effluent they dragged behind them. Now things are starting to take shape.

The subtle ticking of a clock.

A train station near a large park. Spring. A child carrying a carefully wrapped package. Small for its contents. Wrapped tight.

An accident. Things falling. Things getting broken. A revelation.

The flabby sound of flesh hitting flesh.

Rain or tears, scraps of fragile pink: falling and fallen. A cascade of raw beauty spreading pink.

Are you getting the picture? Is the jigsaw image beginning to coalesce? In the not too distant future, I'm gonna blow it all apart.

A small brown package. Wrapped up tight. Unexceptional. Anonymous. The source of revelations.

A crowded public space. Cherry blossom flakes falling on people stretched out on the ground below. Perhaps it's spring. What season is it now?

A family picnicking together. Then the son demonstrates his unworthiness. The dull thud of flesh hitting flesh. The world shaded pale red and deepening.

The aroma of flash-charred meat.

How many stories are captured here? How many are true? Maybe all of them. Maybe not. Until a thing is done, everything is equal and valid. It is only the act of completion that embeds a structure. That and the passing-by of time.

The clock, subtly ticking onwards, always onwards. There's no going back. There is no back, only now.

The blinding white light of explosive revelation.

The dull thud of flesh hitting flesh: fist, open hand, foot.

A foot. The blossoming of arterial red as life is ripped apart. Flesh falling like corrupted petals.

Flesh opening to release new life with a flood of blood-red hope.

It doesn't take much to beat the hope out of you: a fist, an open hand, a foot.

Mama, Mama, no!

But she did.

I am going to.

And still you doubt. What more do you need to know? The story is solidifying into plot. It's a good one, worthy of an Oscar. Worthy, do you hear me?

I want to tell you something. All you need to know is here: foreshadowing, warnings, reasons and explanations. I hate explanations. I just want the story. What I need is - action: the blinding light of active revelation; soft pink flakes falling from the sky; the sound of flesh impacting wetly on flesh; red blossoms staining memory; the sweet, slightly sickly, smell of charred meat staining the nostrils.

Now you are part of this story. If you want to take action, everything you need is here. Stop me: it'll be your fault. Don't stop me: it'll be your fault.

I have made my offering to the ancestors: a beginning, a middle and, in some ways, an ending. The conclusion, if there is to be one, is yours, but remember, life is inconclusive. Structures are false. Deal with it or deal with what is coming. You choose. It may all be the same. Or maybe not. It may have already happened. The clock never stops ticking.

phil wood

a poem that lost its voice

is mouthing on a hook
cast into the deep

where pike swallow
each other

with abstract
appetites