

**Monday, November 1, 2010**

by

Michael Harold

The women are, on average, a quarter inch high. They walk up and down the sidewalks, stop, wait patiently at intersections and driveway entrances, walk some more. They do not count the things they do. Not in the same ways I do — twenty-two things each morning before I stop to look at them (the women). That is sufficient resolution for my purposes.

They are the sixth thing I do after I open my office door. First, I take my cell phone and reading glasses from my bag and put them on the desk, each in its place. Next, a cup of coffee and a granola bar from the kitchen. I sit down to read my email, taking note of those messages requiring the earliest response. Four, I close my eyes and make a list of the tasks to be completed before the day is out. Five, I open my eyes and write these things in a stitched notebook. Six, I turn my chair to the window, put my elbows on the brushed aluminum sill and stare down at the intersecting streets.

The women are, each of them, without exception, beautiful. I see their heads and feet. I see their shoulders and arms. Each foreshortened head is brown or red or blond or black accounting for about a third of its body's reflected surface. The hats represent a larger variety of colors as do the shoes.

In summer, bare feet in flip-flops. That is how we live in this climate. As important, they often carry more and heavier things than the men — boxes, bags, satchels, brief cases. Sometimes they even pull fold-up travel carts filled with work behind them. I stare at them, in and out of focus, and imagine their faces, their accessories, their happiness, their genes.

Michael Harold is a poet, novelist, visual artist and computer technologist. He sometimes writes under the name Michael Aro. His books include *Red Moon*, *M*, *The Rapture*, *Two Poems*, *The Great American Novel*, *somewords*, *Art & Technology* and *thirty-two poems derived from random word selections*. A recent collaboration with his son Micah Harold is contained in the *Unlikely Stories of the Third Kind* 2010 anthology.

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**Tuesday, November 2, 2010**

by

Jennifer Hill



It's my ninth grade King and Queen of Hearts Dance gown — teal blue taffeta, puffy sleeves. It is not the King and Queen of Hearts Dance, it is not ninth grade. There are no flowers made out of pink and white Kleenex. My date isn't standing around with sweaty hands and a corsage I don't want.

I am standing downstage on the set of a community theatre, reading an introduction to a fairy tale show from a book-turned-prop. It's dress rehearsal. People who aren't in the show mill about in the audience and chat with each other, point to places in the set that need dressing. The theatre is in an old VFW and the winter chill is pushed out by a space heater that looks and sounds like a jet engine. I have to shout my lines. I'm not nervous. Why should I be? I get to read my lines out of this book, because I am supposed to be introducing a fairytale. That's how the director wants it, and I'm ok with that. As soon as I'm done with my introduction, I put on a pointy hat made out of posterboard and tulle and become a princess.

Jennifer is the author of several books of poetry, a couple of books of prose, and one head full of litter and lumber. You can find her online at <http://www.jenniferdunnhill.blogspot.com>, or meet her in real life at Paper Kite Press, 443 Main Street, Kingston, PA.

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**Wednesday, November 3, 2010**

by

Esteban Charpentier



## **YOU WORK YOU GET TIRED WHAT ARE YOU LEFT WITH**

Lucio was not going through the best of times. In fact it was his worst. Two weeks before, his mother had died after ten months of agony. His wife had a progressive illness. His youngest son was in the middle of a contested divorce. With all that on his mind, he left the house and just the day he had the money to pay the rent, two men on a motorbike came at him. One pulled out a gun and said “Give me all you’ve got or I’ll smoke you.” Lucio decided not to resist. It just turned out that way; it wasn’t as if he’d thought about it. They took it all. When he got to the office, he was in a state but nobody noticed. They didn’t even notice — neither did he — that he had worn the same tie all week. He went out into the corridor to get some air. Just then the company attorney went by. “What’s up, Lucio? Are you all right?” he asked. Lucio threw himself at him sobbing. The lawyer reassured him, “Whatever it is it will pass, Lucio, go easy.” Lucio answered, “I was robbed today, you know. I asked the thief before he left to kill me. I asked him to kill me, do you understand? Now the bastard has left me with it, that’s all I have left.”

Esteban Charpentier – Argentinean -52 – Poet –  
Father – Lawyer- Mediator – Chairs a foundation  
helping poor kids in Argentina – 10 books –  
Published in 7 languages including Braille – Runs a  
radio show since 2000 – Working in two books –  
Insists that “poetry is a relief of silence” -

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**Thursday, November 4, 2010**

by

Griselda García

*Here's a man still working for your smile,* says Leonard Cohen. Everybody should have one. Day after day my man makes his stupid jokes and I laugh until my stomach aches. Sometimes it annoys me and I want to kill him. But my life would be miserable without him. I can't imagine what my evenings would be if I had to arrive to an empty house at the end of the day. I would be climbing up the walls by now.

He says that I'm an easy audience, because no matter how silly his pranks are, I always laugh about them. His sense of humor is so great that he did funeral jokes the day his mother died. It was a good way of overcoming his deep pain.

Years ago I worked in a boring office. I was lucky to have one or two friends who made me laugh. They offered me a hot mate, asked how I was doing that morning, and that was enough to make me relax. Of course there was always someone willing to erase the smile out of my face. Occasionally, they succeeded and I felt miserable. But having these good friends to talk to was something to be glad about.

I'll never forget the good people who made me smile in the cold mornings at a dull work. I learned the

lesson. Now it's my turn to return what others gave to me one day.

Griselda García was born in Buenos Aires in 1979. She has published four collections of poetry: *Alucinaciones en la alfalfa* (2000), *El arte de caer* (2001), *La ruta de las arañas* (2005) and *El ojo del que mira* (2009). She has also been co-director of the publishing house *La Carta de Oliver* and an editor of the review *La Guacha*. She teaches literary workshops on creative writing, prose and poetry, and publishes a blog, [griseldagarcia.blogspot.com](http://griseldagarcia.blogspot.com), which includes both her own writings and those of a number of contemporary poets from Argentina. In 2010 Wolsak & Wynn from Canada has published *Hallucinations in the Alfalfa & Other Poems*, a collection of her poems translated into English by Hugh Hazelton.

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**Friday, November 5, 2010**

by

Susan Scutti

This morning I walked with Raphael to her job. We talked about our lives and poetry. Afterward I walked to Steve's house and read to him (the poet Adonis, Karen Tei Yamashita's *I Hotel*, a review by Zadie Smith). Next I stopped by the Senior Center in Washington Square and tried to sign Tom Savage up as a contributor for *October Babies*, and failing that, I simply posted his poem myself. Then he and I sat down and talked poetry and music (he's transfixed by Chopin these days despite hewing to a negative opinion of him in the past). Shopped for ingredients for Mom's birthday cake and also wandered into a shoe store where I found much needed shoes for only \$20 — yay! Dropped the cake ingredients at home, then came here (to the GC) to finish my assignment for Jonathan's class. I transposed my piece from third person to first person; I believe that makes all the difference in the world.

I was uncomfortable writing a man's voice in first person. Having written it first in third person then transposed it to first person, I believe it works well. I should do that for Emily's section as well. It's easier for me to see what a scene is about in third person. I prefer writing from the perspective of being on the outside watching other people act — as pathetic as that sounds. Passivity is more natural to me than action.

Writing that I feel somewhat ashamed ... and writing *that*, I think, I'm tired of shame. It's Popeye hour: I am what I am. Isn't it time I accepted myself? Either shame is instructive and leads the way to change or, if there's no real desire to change, shame needs to be banished. It's that simple.

Having grown up in New Jersey, Susan Scutti now lives in New York City, two blocks from the Hudson River. Her studio apartment faces south with a limited view of sky above the opposite buildings. Sounds from the street can be oppressive at certain hours but they are easily tuned out when the windows remain closed. Although she sometimes works at home — Susan is a writer — she prefers the communal feeling of the library. Walking along the Hudson, she feels most aligned, most at peace; it is there living on an island is most deeply felt.

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**Saturday, November 6, 2010**

by

John Martone



Nocturnal creatures. You hear squirrels on the dormer roof at night, and mice in the wall again. Those come every winter. You can caulk and caulk, playing the diligent householder, but an overlooked chip in the stucco's a door wide open, and scrupulosity a sin in any case, selfish, almost cruel. Most nights, mice are your only company, and though you swear and scrub after their droppings and bags of noodles nipped through, the creatures' every appearance is a moment of wonder. They make *you* feel at home.

Your disused chimney came to life every night one winter. Before you knew better, you worried the house was haunted — a body was coming to life trapped in the wall there — the noise was so loud. But you slept.

Then one morning you looked up from your reading into the quizzical eyes of a raccoon-pup, not one foot tall. Five — ten seconds — and neither of you knew what to do or moved. Then, taking the blanket from your lap, you stood up, walked slowly by, and trapped the babe in a bundle.

A blue blanket under a blue sky outside — suddenly children were all around.

Poems — the daily work — built into books, monthly or so, which as time passes gather in volumes such as *ksana* and *dogwood & honeysuckle* recently from Red Moon Press. Simultaneously, collage / visual poetry / charcoal rubbings, often in Mark Young's *Ototlith* and most recently as *Forest Frottage* and *this is visual poetry* ... both from Dan Waber. This month is for him.

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**Sunday, November 7, 2010**

by

Susan Gangel

**WHAT** no one could have known after the recent unannounced disappearance of the detective's follow-up case notes, was that the aforementioned *Incident Report* was actually just the first of many of his/her investigations.

Fellow professionals in his/her field were able to piece together from an old suitcase found in a locker the case notes of yet another crime scene, and analysis of the contents reveals a growing astuteness in the skills of recording, but an alarming tendency to also subtly embellish on the facts. Maybe we should say, rather, a way of reporting which is somehow less than factual. But why? And how is this done? And does it hinder or help the inquiry? Well, see what you think. It's just one conjecture, among so very many.

### *Surveillance 1*

His majesty's being finished off?

A young blade slips away

Alarm is set for 5 a.m.

No paper's in the grate

##

Car pulls up  
Stranger gets out  
he straightens his tie  
he has a box of old tools?  
He smells like lilac  
he goes to the door  
She lets him in  
he stays for ten minutes  
No box when he exits

### *Surveillance 2*

Two girls are snickering  
it is spring  
By the flowering maples she slips  
her hand into his shirt and removes  
a packet wrapped in tissue  
red tissue  
with a small white ribbon, no bow  
he urges her to unwrap it  
but she appears to refuse  
he turns from her and reaches  
for a bud from the tree, holds it  
to his cheek for the longest time

After more than a half-century on this planet, Susan Gangel wants to ... recombine language. Grew up on the east coast, in woods and one big family. The usual schoolwork, mostly forgotten. Time-Life kind of heritage. Christmas at 30 Rock, little skates and itchy socks. Left home to go to the only college that would take me, and almost failed the endeavor, except for the writing classes. Now, teaching college students. Still doing that. Still and always a composer and a picture to paint. May the gods comply with my wishes, and may I never be in a room without a pencil.

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**Monday, November 8, 2010**

by

Kit Kennedy

The solid and the not so solid – land and liquid. In the corner a boat tethered. Be aware water is not linear. This boat charters realms: upper, middle, and lower. Stars are not the navigational tool. Braille and breath. It is really quite lovely gazing in stillness. When you collide with the solid, move away gently. Nothing rent, nothing torn asunder. No biblical trumpets. Not even mystic bells. Occasionally, you assume a color as flute. Colors do have their timbres, of course. On course, whole cloth and a small boat to experience. Small controllable fire to warm you. White down comforters can be reached from any distance, from any part of the small boat. Because distance doesn't exit as day time measures it. When it isn't a mental construct, distance is the color blue. All spirit. What the cat experiences. The real, the imaginary moving. The green, which you call forest, releases the scent which rain offers. Blocks of the absence of color (black?) are doors. Like the boat's rudder. Only She knows why pink appears and why it doesn't mean what you think. Means nothing. When a flower (let's say that orange striped tulip which you remember fondly) opens so wide it is about to release itself as individual petals. So wide, you can walk right into that tulip to the door. That is what the boat has in mind for you. What does it mean to be tethered by going away? The entire world

is a small craft. Coracle and oracle. Hope: quaint and palpable. Joan Mitchell, Mooring, 1971.

Born in New Jersey, that speaks volumes. Kit Kennedy seeks to be published in spaces with wondrous names: 500 Favourite Words, Ambush Review, Arsenic Lobster, Blood Orange Review, Bombay Gin, Cezanne's Carrot, CLWN WR, FRiGG, Mannequin Envy, Puppy Flowers, Triplopia, Uphook Press, Van Gogh's Ear. With Susan Gangel, she co-authored Inconvenience, Littoral Press, Berkeley. While Eating Oysters is published by CLWN WR Press, Brooklyn. She lives in San Francisco. <http://poetrybites.blogspot.com>.

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**Tuesday, November 9, 2010**

by

Rachel Lynn Kesselman

Tonight I saw a dance: Merce Cunningham's *Roaratorio*, which is a response to James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. I love when the arts communicate. I'm taking a 19<sup>th</sup> century French painting class and a class on Mallarmé, and at that time there were so many connections among artists. I probably get annoying as the literature girl in my art history class, making comments whenever I can (which of course is rare since here the professors are really the only ones who speak). Mallarmé's "Nénuphar blanc" is impressionistic like Monet's *Nymphéas*. Manet painted Mallarmé's portrait and illustrated his *L'Après midi d'un faune*, which was later musically interpreted by Debussy. I love that. My art history teacher commented that now the arts are separated and hyper specialized, making it harder for them to communicate. I hope he's wrong.

But back to Merce Cunningham's *Roaratorio*. I know nothing about dance, but I felt really inspired by it. It was unlike anything I've ever seen. The dancers' bodies just seemed to move the way the musical composition went. I also haven't read *Finnegans Wake*, but the message I got out of the performance was the haphazardness of life: we bounce off and on one another, perhaps as the arts do (or once did), but it's all really out of our control. Wikipedia makes me think maybe the dance is

actually more about the form of *Finnegans Wake*.  
Now I want to read it. I've also started a poem. The  
arts will keep communicating as far as I'm concerned.

Rachel Lynn Kesselman is a junior at Bryn Mawr College majoring in English with a concentration in creative writing and French. She is studying abroad this fall semester in Paris, France and has since fallen in love with the nutella crêpe. Her passions are literature and music: she loves reading and writing, mainly poetry, and singing, mainly classical music. Her other loves in life are coffee, dark chocolate, travel, cats, and of course her family — her extraordinarily caring mother, Lisa, her genius father, Lynn the architect, and her older sister Maxine, her friend and complement. Rachel is always thinking. Sometimes she thinks too much. She hopes someday she will publish her poetry or other writings. Despite her seriousness and workaholicism, she is secretly a huge romantic.

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**Wednesday, November 10, 2010**

by

Mischelle Anthony



Here's a cliché: I want to travel more. But reading and good conversation are both types of travel. I feel like I've been to a foreign country after a good conversation or a good piece of writing. Reading Stephen Dunn's work this week in which he has all these famous writers (Stowe, Tolstoy, Twain, George Eliot, and more) in New Jersey towns is somewhere I've never been. But, of course, there's the transcendent experience of seeing the Hagia Sophia at night, hearing the mezzuin's call five times a day, walking through the gardens of Topkapi Palace, experiencing the enclosed architecture of a harem, looking across the Black Sea to Asia. It feels like being in love.

I used to think it was a weakness in my character that I could so easily fall into another country, another city's way, another person's worldview, another painting on the wall. Now I know it's a strength, a security with myself that I so quickly leave my comfort zone to enter another's to see. The return is another matter. I fill my own skin again, reanimate my own eyes, and sit back to consider what I've learned. How to absorb another's experience into our own? It forever changes us; we can't un-do our experience, our conversations, our joy or pain. May I never fall back into ignorance and denial, obstruction or hate. My wish for everyone — may our experiences make us kind.

Mischelle Anthony received her Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University specializing in scholarly editing. Since moving to NEPA, she infiltrates open mike readings with her dirges about being a woman in the world. She facilitates impromptu poetry workshops in coffee shops, buses, and Wilkes University, where she also is Associate Professor of English. She's published articles in literary journals, a critical edition of the 1807 *Lucinda; Or, The Mountain Mourner*, and also has a poetry collection forthcoming from Foothills Press. In addition to sponsoring The Vagina Monologues and Wilkes' creative writing magazine, *Manuscript*, Mischelle also feels compelled to correct misconceptions about American history through offerings to encyclopedias, scholarly journals and local newspapers. (The founding fathers, for example, were neither Christian nor for a completely representative government, and the Puritans were way into sex.)

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**Thursday, November 11, 2010**

by

Gil McElroy



This morning I'll survey the conservation of problems. So swear I. Yesterday you might've appreciated it, right? I try, & then realize such, see. The whole thing is so freaking ambiguous I've come to this point. The worst situations. & days of such remembrances.

Hence, I tell others to get the hell refuted. But in a way I after all do not abandon. So I come giving equal terms. I give a humble, you see. This begins with love so trusting, if I do this.

& then war.

That was so simple! But it's a sad day, horribly burned of things. Am so disturbed, I. All this thought of things thought of things. Sometimes a wish to cut off all of it. Yes, all of it. Need nought but a light & comforting supper. Where is that now?

It has been unusually cold of late. Gotten used to the stars loosened up in the sky, cold. That world heals my soul in moments like these. I arbitrarily find myself. Tell myself probabilities, & perhaps even thinkable ones because of anything I stand for becoming. Coming to dawn I drive out the tranquil, me, building din, hearing drums. Then get lost. Or maybe before.

Gil McElroy has published poetry in Canadian and U.S. periodicals since the late 1970s. His books of poetry include *Dream Pool Essays* (Talonbooks, 2001) *NonZero Definitions* (Talonbooks, 2004) *Last Scattering Surfaces* (Talonbooks, 2007), and the forthcoming *Ordinary Time* (Talonbooks, 2011). In 2012, Talonbooks will release his memoir *Cold Comfort: Growing Up Cold War*.

McElroy is an independent curator and freelance art critic, organizing exhibitions for art galleries and contributing to visual arts magazines in Canada and the United States. A selection of his criticism was published as *Gravity & Grace: Selected Writing on Contemporary Canadian Art* (Gaspereau Press, 2001). He lives in the village of Colborne, Ontario with his wife Heather.

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**Friday, November 12, 2010**

by

Mariane Ferrantino

I've missed writing just to be writing. Writing without purpose or reason is good for the soul. It feels good to see the pen glide across the paper and see words flow from the tip. I miss pencils and I miss printing even though I like cursive better and script moves more quickly and looks fancier. I love to write.

My pen has little post-it flags, and I long for a reason to use them. I love to learn almost as much as I love to write. I like to take notes, and I like to write papers. I wanted to be a teacher because I like the idea of someone paying me to go to school everyday. I really believe that if a fire is lit under kids' asses, they really can teach each other (and me!) as much as I can teach them. I want to teach more than anything.

I like that this piece is about me specifically, but it's not specific to any one thing about me. Because I am not any one thing. I am many things, many nouns, many persons, places, and ideas. I am many adjectives: happy, sad, creative, intelligent, determined. I am also verbs. I am always going, always doing, rarely resting. I am all parts of speech; I teach parts of speech. I am a writer, and I teach writing.

I suppose it goes without saying that I initially wrote this with pen and paper.

Mariane Ferrantino is an unemployed English teacher certified in the state of Pennsylvania and a 2007 graduate of Wilkes University. She has worked as a substitute teacher, a community college professor, and a theater instructor. She currently works with children in all walks of life, including when she dresses up as princess. With what little free time she has, Mariane enjoys reading, writing, singing with the Robert Dale Chorale, and participating in lengthy conversations over many cups of coffee at various venues throughout the Wyoming Valley. Last year, Mariane attempted NaNoWriMo but did not succeed, so she has her heart set on accomplishing something with this project.

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**Saturday, November 13, 2010**

by

Amye Barrese Archer

## In Defense of Driving like an Asshole

We are driving down Interstate 81 and suddenly an orange Dodge is on my ass. I push my foot down slightly, my speedometer jumping to sixty, right where it should be. The girl in the Dodge, she's getting impatient. Trapped behind me with a tractor trailer in lock step beside us. She honks the horn, I don't look. She honks again, I glance in my mirror. She wails her young, thin arms in the air like she's lifting something over her head. She's had it with me. She inches closer, threatening to hook her bumper to mine if I don't hurry up, now.

I pity her for five minutes. She could be in a life or death situation. She could be pregnant and in labor, have a friend dying in a hospital emergency room across town, have a sick mother begging her to come home. In my review mirror I see my girls, heads cocked in exactly the same angle to the left, resting against the bubble gum pink of their car seats. Eyes closed, mouths open, snores escaping. My reasons for driving the speed limit, for driving like an asshole.

A mile down the road, I pull off my exit and the Dodge follows. I wonder if she's heading to the hospital, which is about a mile from this exit. She

sends me off with a beep, the kind where you lay on the steering wheel for emphasis. A goodbye borne from frustration, capped off with her middle finger. I wave back to her as she pulls into McDonald's.

Amye Barrese Archer is a graduate student working towards her MFA in Creative Writing at Wilkes University. She has written poetry, short stories, and many truths on bathroom walls. Her work has appeared in PANK Magazine, Twins Magazine, The Ampersand Review, Boston Literary Magazine, The Battered Suitcase, and Oak Bend Review. Her chapbook, "No One Ever Looks up" was published by Pudding House Press in 2007. Amye has three-year-old twin daughters, and shares her life with her brilliant husband, Tim. You can read her blog, *First Person*, at [www.amyearcher.com](http://www.amyearcher.com).

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**Sunday, November 14, 2010**

by

Kathleen Achor

Dear Internet:

I'm back. Did you miss me? I was gone for two days. Two whole days. We were on a break. Did you even notice? It felt like we were getting too close, and I had to take a step back. I needed a breather.

I'm aware that I do this sometimes. And yes, there's a pattern: It's usually on a weekend or when I'm traveling — when I'm on a break from work too, because if I'm working, I can't really be away from you, no matter what I think would be best for me.

So I amuse myself with others. Nouns, mostly: people, places, things. But wait — verbs too: eating, drinking, listening, gaping. Hiking, fishing, biking, canoeing. This time it was mostly the former four, as I ate, drank, listened, and gaped with friends with whom I first hiked, fished, biked, and canoed. We reunited in Connecticut and trekked to NYC, where we shared our mutual loves of good food and drink and the music of Pink Martini.

Jealous yet? You should be. Of course, you have access to *everything*. Why should you envy anything at all about my life during our time apart?

For two days no e-mail, no Facebook, no blogs, no looking-things-up-*right-now*, no nothin'. Sometimes I feel immediate withdrawal, and I think about you. A lot. But not this time. This time I felt *free*. This time I was almost afraid to come back.

I love you, you know. You've changed my life in more good ways than bad. You know as well as I do that I will never willingly leave you forever.

But sometimes it feels so good to be alone with everyone else.

xxxooo,

Kate

Kathleen Achor left the wilds of Washington, DC, for wild-in-other-ways Vermont. She spends the majority of her waking hours in a home office on the second floor of an 1890ish Victorian in a quirky Slate Valley village. Here she edits fly-fishing-history manuscripts, medical text, and other words attached to wages; daydreams about playing outside with her husband; and resists others' suggestions that she acquire dogs, cats, or chickens. In her next life, she'd like to play bass, accordion, and roller derby.

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**Monday, November 15, 2010**

by

Kim Hannigan

Today is starting at a slow, smoldering anger. Think of a campfire. The logs: after being away all weekend, I find myself with 10 loads of laundry to wash, groceries to buy, and dinner to cook. The kindling and bits of dried leaves: no other family member seemed to do anything at all around the house all weekend, except breathe, eat, and create dirty clothes and spaces. And finally, the lit match: last night when Duncan turned on the oven to make his French assignment with me (apple clafouti), we smelled the sulfur whiff of propane but the oven wouldn't light because the tank was empty. So today, ah what could be better than waiting for "the guy" to come and fill the tank?

I hate housework. Do not tell me about the joys of clean rooms, sparkling countertops, and pine/lemon/citrus fresh mountain rain powder bouquet oxy crystal antibacterial deep-down goodness. There is only the dirt that comes in and the dirt that goes out, and the coming in seems to always be winning. My house, at its best, is my mother's house at its worst. But my mother never seems to mind the hours of cleaning; she complains if anything interrupts her schedule, and bemoans that she's not getting anything done. There must be pleasure involved, some sort of endorphins that only erupt

when everything is spit-and-polished. Maybe I just lack receptors.

A yellow H. John Davis Propane and Heating Oil tank truck backs into our driveway. The dog begins to woof at “the guy” and my irritation is stoked, sparks and waves of heat shimmer.

Kim Hannigan grew up in an old, frame house high above the Genesee River Valley in southwestern New York. As soon as she could, she ran away from that place to go to college. She studied with John Barth at Johns Hopkins, but he made almost no impression on her writing. She went on to graduate work at George Mason University where two poetry workshops with Peter Klappert influenced her greatly. On the brink of becoming a “serious” writer, she ran away again, passing through the island of Pohnpei, the city of Pittsburgh, and the state of Kansas. She now resides in the Poconos.

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**Tuesday, November 16, 2010**

by

Linda Rooney

My mobile phone beeped. A text message had arrived. “That’s odd,” I think. My text patterns are fairly predictable. Texts either arrive in the morning, from friends checking if I’m free for a quick coffee and chat, or later in the day there might be an occasional message from Vodafone promoting a new product. Or I receive texts — “what time?” “where?” “see you there” — if I’m arranging an evening rendezvous.

Text messages are frustrating though, because I have to check my phone whenever they arrive. If I don’t, my phone continues to beep at approximately ten minute intervals. This is very annoying. I bought this brand of phone specifically because it could roam internationally, anywhere in the world. I did not know that the phone would beep at me continually until I check any new message.

I discovered this in the middle of the night in Canada. A friend in New Zealand (16 hours ahead of Fredericton, New Brunswick), not realising I was overseas on a business trip, sent me a text to tell me her new baby had arrived safely. The phone beeped loudly, and I awoke with a start. Realising it was a text message, I ignored it, thinking I could leave it till a more civilised hour. I slipped back to sleep. The phone beeped again. I woke again, and ignored it

again. I was tired, and had an eight hour presentation to give the next day. The third time it beeped I admitted defeat, grumpily turned on the light, and checked the message. Then I couldn't get back to sleep.

So tonight I walked down two flights of stairs to check my phone before it beeped again, and again. It was from my husband. He wanted fish and chips for dinner.

Linda Rooney lives precariously on a fault-line in Wellington, New Zealand, after stints roaming abroad as an exchange student, in the diplomatic service and, more recently, in the business world. She now enjoys an eclectic life as a self-employed consultant, Chair of an international education consultancy, volunteer for an ectopic pregnancy charity, and blogger. She writes about travel in Mali's Travelalphablog, and about living A Separate Life, and tries to find time to finish a variety of writing projects, to read, cook, learn languages, and travel the world with her husband.

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**Wednesday, November 17, 2010**

by

Clare Ramsaran

Helen suggested ([newstatesman.com](http://newstatesman.com)) and I read 'Airline Security — backlash grows'.

The use of full body scanners by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at U.S. airports is proving contentious. Passengers either go through full body scanners — or opt out and have a 'full pat down' — that involves a TSA staff member 'patting down' the passenger's body, including their genitals. Many passengers do not relish either option.

Groups opposing this new initiative, include unions at American Airlines and US Airways, who have advised their 14,000 members to opt out of going through the scanners.

Another group which started as 'Operation Grab Ass' was renamed 'Fly with dignity', probably a diplomatic move on their part! They plan to take out campaign advertisements in national newspapers. Images on their site show the Statue of Liberty, her body exposed under her robes as if she'd been through a full body scanner. To represent the 'full pat down' we see two young women, one in a crucifixion pose, arms outstretched, eyes heavenward, the other looking into the camera, both with blue-gloved grasping hands pulling at their clothes

and bodies, tears running down their faces, leaving blackened mascara tracks behind them.

These measures, and the strong reactions they provoke, have prompted much discussion online, and some contributors ask the question ‘do these security measures actually work?’ Many think not, and describe such security checks as theatre — reassuring to passengers, rather than effective at detecting threats. The second question addressed is that of civil liberties with many asking where the line is between the individual rights of the passengers, and the collective rights of the government. This discussion is sure to continue, possibly at an airport near you.

Clare Ramsaran is learning to live on the soft edges between colours, between continents, between London's eye and San Francisco's hazy sun.

Her poems have been published in 'The Suitcase Book of Love Poems', 'Bay Area Poets Seasonal Review' and 'Quill and Parchment'.

Clare was privileged to attend a Voices of Our Nations Arts Foundation (VONA) poetry workshop in 2010 and is a regular at the Gallery Café Reading series/Open mic, in San Francisco

Her first chapbook, 'Aftershocks' will be published in November 2010.

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**Thursday, November 18, 2010**

by

Lissa McLaughlin



A benefit, bending from these late snoozes over the threshold, someone wakes me from a nap. All their dazzling smiles, help, teeth chattering before the story starts and I fall flat, editing the bath mat, flexible washrag of facts. Scrub along with them, whole sets of hands and the lye caustic but essential to the drain, the eye paralytic and wide. How do we find ourselves, washers, rag-pickers, stalking on moon-legs, paths pale as if thrown by flesh against the ground? Animal-training, flensing, carting grain, lost in the sweat and ripe hair, hands out, moon whipped to froth over our jobs. Something smashes and I pick it up, something writhes and I shake it, something sleeps and I drive it out, shivering, its flesh bare and gone blue, sounds peculiar to this lonely door where I find it, waiting by itself. As a fish spawns or a tree seeds or dirt flies into the mouth at the crack of storm, so these things arrive. At a loss to say why I creak at their staying, bleating, wanting to be bled and opened, I put my hands out and they flock there, to the knives I offer casual as gloves. Climb close, o my work.

You cry and bleed, and are endless.

Lissa McLaughlin: born in upstate NY, grad school in New England, long life in Providence, shorter life in San Francisco, now in Wisconsin preparing for winter; incarnations as second grade teacher, illustrator of kids' books, film critic, art therapist, grief counselor, university instructor in fiction writing; published with Burning Deck and Avec; two recent prose poem series riffing off 1) nicknames of the fifty states and 2) incendiary bible verses; new poetry ms. about inhospitable workplace politics at a local hospice; devoted to international (edible) cheese.

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**Friday, November 19, 2010**

by

Sarah Valeri

I woke up in a sublet at 128<sup>th</sup> and Lenox. Actually I woke up several times before I had to go, in the dark still, to the subway with Ruth. My head had that just-bounced-off-the-concrete vibration and the train ride back to Brooklyn would be long.

This has been an ambitious week. I'm writing year long agendas, applications that have to describe what I would paint for a year if \_\_\_\_\_ organization offered me a studio space. It's like writing a really fantastic short story about someone else. A little novela about mythological beasts, which is mostly true. Then I have to get my fairy book owls and wolves, snakes and moths to stand together at a podium and write their campaign speeches. They don't like it one bit and they are threatening to go rogue. "Broken arrow!" yells the owl and cannonballs right off his paper. He doesn't really yell, he is just telepathic in a very intrusive way. And the sheepdog pisses on all the applications and then turns off all the lights so the moths begin to cry.

I've also been out every night. For work and/or pleasure. There has been little to no sleep. I would like there to be a little sleep.

I've also become quite aware that people may read these entries. I'm used to images. They squirm

silently in the lower brain. Their impressions are strong but not feasible in a court of law. I'm not quite as natural with words as I am with foreboding owls. The owls are willing to take a little blame for their role in the murders and jubinations they commit, though they don't care who goes down with them. The woman wrapped in quilts is still trying to protect the innocent.

Sarah Valeri was born in Missoula, MT. She left at the age of 6 months and after extended time in the NW, Midwest, SE, SW, NW (yes again), West Coast, NE, Mid Atlantic, SE and Midwest (again), she drove to NYC. Currently she lives and works in Brooklyn in a little cottage near the cemetery.

Always a painter, Sarah has been collaborating with musicians and writers since arriving in NYC. This process has enlivened her work with new tricksters and wavelengths. She works as an artist and art therapist to gain a better understanding of the relationship between creativity and evolution.

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**Saturday, November 20, 2010**

by

H. T. Harrison

## **November 20: inside the dome**

My life begins inside the dome. I hear the peacocks cry and drag my quilt down cold stairwell past violets sensitive as cats to water.

Filling the kettle, I see my face thrown back in midnight glass. Grandmothers, my mother — six unblinking eyes — stare back.

*Hello lovey, Mother says. Have you cut your hair and made any money?*

*Money?* interrupts Grandmother of the Thousand Gloves.

*Speak in dulcet tones!* commands the Scottish Granny.

*Wear a girdle, for god's sake,* snorts The Gloves, *not that fringed leather vest.*

The double ovens blaze full blast as Scottish Granny, whose father, without anesthesia, amputated a man's leg in India to save his life, leads me to late-night snacks for actors: kippers and eggs.

The kitchen steams. The peacocks swirl their tails.  
She sings *Some Enchanted Evening*, her hair  
wispig out of her wig.

With cloths in both hands she polishes the table,  
then the stairs.

*Breathe*, she tells me. *Breathe so you can fly.*

H.T. Harrison was born on Guy Fawkes Day in November. She is the author, as Heather Thomas, of six books of poetry, including *Blue Ruby* (FootHills Publishing, 2008), *Resurrection Papers* (Chax Press, 2003), and *Practicing Amnesia* (Singing Horse, 2000). She is a professor at Kutztown University and lives along the Schuylkill River in Reading, Pennsylvania.

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**Sunday, November 21, 2010**

by

Edward Picot

Oh, I had to help Mum out with her bills. It's no good: she can't do any of it herself: if she tries to speak to anybody on the phone she gets all flustered and upset, so I've just given in now, and accepted that I've got to do everything for her. Not that I'm much better than she is, really. Anyway, the previous people in that house were getting all their gas and electricity from British Gas. When she moved in we changed it all over to EDF, because that's what she's used to. Then last Friday she got a gas bill from British Gas, even though she isn't meant to be with them any more, so I had to ring up about that. It turned out that EDF had taken over the electricity properly, but they'd done the gas all wrong, so I had to ring them up as well, and after I managed to get through to the right person they promised to sort it all out. They were quite nice and helpful about it really, but when I got off the phone I said to Mum "Oh, it's all such a bother, isn't it?" and she immediately burst out crying. So then I started to cry as well. She's in such a state, what with Dad dying, and then having to move house, and then being told that she's got heart failure; and now she's worked out that she's only got £425 a month to live on, and she's got to pay all of her bills out of that, so she doesn't know how she's going to afford Christmas; and of

course every time she sees another bill it feels like the absolute last straw ... Well, she's just at the end of her tether. Poor old thing.

Edward Picot was born in 1958 and lives in Kent in the UK with his wife, his daughter and a black labrador called Isaac. He makes his living as Practice Manager in a doctor's surgery near where he lives. In his spare time he writes (although he also fiddles about with videos, Flash animations and various other kinds of new media), and since 2000 he has been doing most of his writing online. His two websites are <http://edwardpicot.com> (his personal website, with his creative work on it) and <http://hyperex.co.uk> (The Hyperliterature Exchange, a listings-and-review site for new media literature).

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**Monday, November 22, 2010**

by

Martha Deed

The suspense continues, not mentioned earlier because this suspense began a couple of months ago: Will we be able to park a car in the garage this Winter for the first time since moving into this house nearly 11 years ago? It is a question with substance since “No” means yet another Winter of starting the car’s engine, turning on the defrosters, chipping ice, sweeping snow off the roof, and dealing with ice-locked doors on the driver’s side (must be the prevailing winds along with well-aimed ice pellets), and completing the task before toes turn blue or the battery gives up the ghost. It’s enough to discourage casual expeditions.

Garage contents circulate in and out with the frequency of an Odd Lots store, and most of the time, the contents have stories to tell, although we hope they won’t: leftovers from downsizing that didn’t downsize quite enough, “her” summer bungalow (bungalow colony unit in the Catskills) too far from Buffalo for frequent visits, “his” family cottage at Lime Lake, “her” share of family heirlooms when five generations of treasures were divided (until absorbed into the house) and the objects displaced changed places and filled the garage yet again.

Garage sales at each filled-up stage. And then — when we thought we were finished — filled again with a daughter's apartment furnishings, preserved for a better day when she might take up independent living again. A day that never came. Another sale, and then the distribution of her library: 1,000's of books, first gifted and now sold (as of today).

Not the poetry collection, though. Fabulous poetry collection, now filling nearly every bookcase in the house. Enough reading for a lifetime. Making this an early Thanksgiving Day, for the daughter, her library, and a single parking space in a 2 1/2 car garage.

Martha Deed lives on the North bank of the Erie Canal. Writes about outrages and shudders. Does not dip toes in the water except by accident. Currently attempting to stretch the meaning of “book” and “poem.” The Lost Shoe (Naissance), City Bird: Selected Poems (1991-2009) by Millie Niss, designed and edited by Martha Deed (BlazeVox), From Fluorescent Cocktails to Pure Cement (an essay on collaboration in Poemeleon), and a clutch of individual poems are among her publications in 2010. Web blog: [www.sporkworld.tumblr.com](http://www.sporkworld.tumblr.com)  
Website: <http://www.sporkworld.org/Deed/>.

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**Tuesday, November 23, 2010**

by

Chris Funkhouser

In college & California years most of the shows I went to were in clubs & involved neither expensive tickets nor extensive planning. Often ventures out were completely unplanned & led to accidental joy. For instance, during summer of 1984 I was working as a bellman at a hotel in Charlottesville, & near the end of my shift one night Cynthia Gillen — program director at WTJU & a friend — stopped by to tell me I *had* to go see a band that was about to play at The Mine Shaft, Love Tractor, just a few blocks away. I hadn't heard of them & wasn't planning to go out, but tagged along & mighty gladly. Most of Love Tractor's songs had no lyrics, & never saw a rock band besides Mission of Burma primarily play instrumentals ("got to give it up"). Beyond being much fun, hung out & got to know those guys & saw them fairly frequently for awhile after that. For the goof of it, I formed "Love Tractor Track Club", had a couple of tank-tops printed up, & Jonathan Hall & I ran a few races wearing them. Love Tractor was in Virginia a lot, & also saw shows in San Francisco & Athens, where I stayed at Mark Cline & Mike Richmond's house & got the royal Athens treatment. This is just one example of many spontaneous events club-related events that led somewhere. Another: I called Jim Fein up during a visit home the next summer, asking him if he wanted to go see The Replacements at the Channel in Boston. Jim & I saw

a lot of shows together, & though he'd never heard of them he trusted my judgment & we went up & saw an insanely ripping set in a club well over 100 degrees hot, with Tommy Stinson (the band's bassist) playing naked onstage during the encore. I know Jim, who became a huge Paul Westerberg fan, was glad I called him up that night, & so am I — cause I probably wouldn't have gone alone. There's nothing like camaraderie & sweat of a good club show (in any genre of music)! Having kids minimizes our ability to move like this, but I won't be surprised to feel it again ...

Names of bands Chris Funkhouser was or is a member of include Complex Kidz, The Love Heads, Howard Is, thelemonade, Purkinge, 9-way mind, Tupã-Guaraná, & Orquestra Descarrego; he also played in church & school groups as a kid & is currently putting together an ensemble called grope uSusp for E-Poetry 2011.

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**Wednesday, November 24, 2010**

by

Eric Anderson

Mike's dad died last night. What an asshole I am for even writing about this, but there you go. The day needs its words. And in some ways, you know, I can justify this; I owe it to the work, to the audience I imagine, to myself as a writer, to honesty, to Mike, to Stacie who cried when I read about Mike's dad at our reading, who cried today on the phone, to Mike's dad, who I only met once; we were at a birthday party, everybody outside on a patio, except for Mike's dad, who was stuck inside. The whole time I'd been avoiding that end of the patio because I knew he was there and those situations — you, know, someone sick, someone dying — have always made a coward of me. But I looked up and saw him through the screen door, sitting in some kind of big mechanical chair, wearing an oxygen mask over his face. I thought for a moment of the scene in *The Empire Strikes Back* when we glimpse the back of Darth Vader's head without his helmet on. Mike's dad smiled.

And just the other day I wrote about my dad. And Kate's been reading these entries, too, and after the one about the Beatles gig she wrote and said, Wait, did Mike's dad die? Because that's pretty fucking sad. Then she wrote, But it was pretty fucking sad to begin with.

When I was a kid my friend John Pasenow and I would torture ourselves with that Vader scene. Going through our stacks of Star Wars cards we'd wonder what could have happened to him. Some kind of robot? Half-machine? Of course we didn't know then how everything would turn out.

And Mike wrote me an email trying to quit the band — I won't let him — and he said, And now everything's going to be different around here. And I wrote him back and said, But some things will still be the same.

But isn't that the same lie I told myself coming out of the polls? And didn't I just think that in all the universe the only impossibility is sameness?

This is my dad, Mike said.

It's nice to meet you, Mr Hemery, I said.

The smile behind the mask.

It's nice to meet you, too.

Eric Anderson has published a chapbook of poems, *Confederate Season*, and a novella, *Isn't That Just Like You?* He lives in Elyria, Ohio. His version of November, 2010 is dedicated to Dan Hemery.

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**Thursday, November 25, 2010**

by

Kate Reuther

I don't notice the problem until much, much too late, after we have returned from our turkey and stuffing, after we have reassured Scott's grandmother that the cholera in Haiti will not infect us in the Punta Cana Club Med, after I've changed into my felted flannel pajama bottoms and dimmed the lights. The car service (with car seat!) will arrive at six AM and we still have to finish packing and readying the apartment for our absence. Dry plants. Windows ajar. Cat food. There's an innocent little potato sitting in the ceramic bowl on the countertop — a week alone and he could bubble with maggots and flies.

But first I check us in on the computer, diligently entering our birthdates, our addresses, our passport numbers, all the information the clerks used to do at the airport but now we enjoy the convenience of doing it ourselves. Miles looks like a pink-eyed slug in his passport photo. The Chinese guy at the Kodak store had to lay him on a dirty sheet on the floor because he was too little to sit up without by himself. Then I notice the expiration date: May 13, 2010. Isn't that ... ? But how ... ?

A nauseous, toothy hole opens up in my stomach, yet somehow, the night continues unaware. Through the open door, I can hear Scott reading *Two Little Trains* to the boys. They are exhausted but jazzed on the

promise of jet planes, swimming pools, pineapple, adventure. Miles has been practicing with his very own digital camera. Just in case my understanding of the calendar is wrong, I try to enter Miles's passport expiration in the computer's blinking white window but it spits red asterisks back.

In a moment I'm going to have to tell them and begin my new future of guilt and bargaining and disappointment. For the moment, I stay quiet, trying to imagine an easy solution. Perhaps Immigration will be mellow and understanding. Perhaps our next door neighbor, the shy runner who leaves her sneakers on the door-mat, perhaps she is a counterfeit artist. An expert slash with a scalpel and we could be on our way, no worries! It'll cost me, I know, but I'm willing to pay.

Kate Reuther's fiction has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Madison Review*, *Brain Child*, *Salamander*, and *The Ledge*. A life-long New Yorker, she lives in Washington Heights with her husband and two boys. Kate can be reached at [k.reuther@yahoo.com](mailto:k.reuther@yahoo.com).

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**Friday, November 26, 2010**

by

John Bloomberg-Rissman

Annual bonuses rose by 11 percent for executives at the 450 largest US corporations last fiscal year, according to a new survey published by the *Wall Street Journal*. Overall, median compensation — including salaries, bonuses, stocks, options and other incentives — rose by three percent to \$7.3 million in 2009. *What* discrediting? Alienation's a *given*, my brother ... like ... like ... the concept of **cognitive equilibrium** among autonomous functioning entities that are **forming, and being formed by**, their **common and particular ecosystems across scale and over time**. This does not mean it was always easy to be a Lacanian intellectual in Ljubljana during the Tito era; remember that the Arab word for 'tent' is also the word that means a 'verse' or line of poetry. For Kant on the other hand, all such X's can only ever be triggers for the real experience of the sublime, which is inner freedom, total, unconditional, scary. The sublime is inner space.

[Note: Sources: Jodi Dean, "US corporate executives back at the trough", at I cite, 16 Nov 010; JBR; Chuck Richardson, "STUFF TO WORRY ABOUT [WHEN WRITING FICTION] #6", at Chuck Richardson, 16 Nov 010; Justin E.H. Smith, as quoted in Shahar Ozeri, "Is Slavoj Zizek more than the pair of carats in his surname?", at Perverse

Egalitarianism, 16 Nov 010; Pierre Joris, blurb for Mahmood Darwish, *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, as quoted in his “Darwish, *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*”, at *Nomadics*, 16 Nov 010; Timothy Morton, “Kant vs. Burke: The Rematch”, at *Ecology without Nature*, 16 Nov 010]

John Bloomberg-Rissman is the author of *No Sounds of My Own Making* (2007) and *Flux, Clot & Froth*, which he's currently beating into "camera-ready" shape. His two most recent chapbooks are *World Zero* (2007) and the collaboration with Ernesto Priego, *Inheritance* (2008). He edited the international anthology *1000 Views of 'Girl Singing'* (2009), curated, with Eileen R Tabios, Ernesto Priego and Ivy Alvarez, *The Chained Hay(na)ku Project* (2010) and is responsible for the publication of *2nd NOTICE OF MODIFICATIONS TO TEXT OF PROPOSED REGULATIONS* (2010). His work has appeared in numerous journals and in several anthologies. He is co-editor of Leafe Press. His ongoing efforts can be seen at Zeitgeist Spam (<http://www.johnbr.com/>).

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**Saturday, November 27, 2010**

by

Michael Parker

For a few years now, my mother's side of the family has been having a family reunion on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. To this point, it has alternated between South and North Louisiana, with the hosting honors this year going to Aunt Fay and Uncle Bob, in Lacombe, Louisiana, across Lake Ponchartrain from New Orleans.

Fay and Bob lost their house to Hurricane Katrina, and have spent the last five-plus years navigating the bureaucracy-infested waters of insurance settlements and state funding. Bob is a tremendously talented carpenter and handyman, and he built their new house himself, excepting some of the most specialized plumbing and electrical work. It is, of course, elevated several feet off the ground, with a classic wrap-around porch, loft beds in both bedrooms, recycled appliances from Habitat for Humanity. I've had the opportunity to visit them fairly often recently, as my daughter is taking an art class in Lacombe, and it's been truly inspiring to see the final touches being added and the final inspections being passed over the past few weeks, before the reunion. On the one hand, there is the sobering realization that there are still people in the process of "recovery" from Katrina. On the other, there is the material realization of that recovery, a new house that, God willin' and the creek don't rise,

will be their final, mortgage-free dwelling, a gathering place for friends and family for many, hopefully catastrophic-every-hundred-year-hurricane-free years.

Finally, I have to mention one of the most profound experiences of the reunion. I noticed my 19-year-old niece and 16-year-old nephew were consulting their phones every so often, like, say, constantly. I finally asked Zach about 5:00 how many text messages he had sent over the course of the day. The answer was — brace yourself, those over 30 — 191. One hundred ninety-one. What the f ... ?

I am a guerrilla bookseller, homeschooling stay-at-home father and writer/blogger in the New Orleans area. Passionate about books and the printed word, a native Lousianan but recent transplant to the Big Uneasy, where autodidactic anachronisms still thrive in our unnatural disaster-assaulted tropical greenhouse.

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**Sunday, November 28, 2010**

by

Steven Mackin

I.

*Like a saint's vision of beatitude. Like the veil of things as they seem drawn back by an unseen hand. For a second you see – and seeing the secret, are the secret. For a second there is meaning!*

A Long Day's Journey into Night, Act IV

Eugene O'Neill

Often I have stared at a liquid in motion,  
at water seeking to reveal its true nature,  
and thought I saw electricity, then heard  
reason tell me it was all just an illusion,  
a trick of light upon swift sluicing surfaces.  
But I believe that I touched something truer,  
what lies beneath the skin known by senses,  
existence as essence, immaculate, immutable.  
But the gadfly of reason always calls me back  
to the corroding narratives of the intellective,  
to beginnings and endings, to good and evil,  
to joy and despair, to pain and pleasure, to  
belief and doubt, the banal templates we use  
to shield us from the paralysis of meaning.

II.

*A thought while reading O'Neill*

By the time the blood-cry  
Found a lung for the anapest  
Sepulcher was being measured  
Existence so brief it is poignant  
Dream ended before it is sensed  
So we create art  
For when we engage art  
We shatter time  
We shatter space  
Then we might dream  
But what is the cost?  
To face the tyranny of time  
That time unravels the truths  
That artists mine for meaning  
So faced they continue to mine  
Where are the moments?  
Where are the revelations?  
Where are the fire compelled jewels?  
We uncover nothing but stool.  
No redemption. This is tragedy

I am a fat, middle-aged, carnivore, repressed hetero, Irish-American Catholic/atheist writer of short nervous skeptical verse. I spent thirty years working in law libraries (I'm currently working in a fileroom, **ARRRGGGHHHH**), so I am a professional Sisyphus (the tattoo used to say "Born to rack." When one works in a library one shelves books: we called it the rack; to is a preposition, rack is a verb, to stretch until broken). I was born, raised and have always lived in San Francisco. I am not an American. I am not a Californian. I am a San Franciscan. If you cut me do I not bleed Pacific fog? I'm waiting for the big one.

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**Monday, November 29, 2010**

by

Devan Aptekar

Once there was a young dirigible pilot. He loved to be lighter than air. Air was heavy to him, thick. He felt when it pressed on his face. Air weighed him down. He lived among the clouds, lazily drifting by.

Once upon a time there was a young woodcutter. He couldn't find his home. There were many cottages in the creakery forest now, tucked into shadowed nooks and behind overgrown tangles of dying nasturtiums. He could hear his geese calling him, but direction was never his strong suit.

Once there was a tiny boatmaker. He was a master of his craft and people would come from all over the kingdom to seek his services. His boats always sank to the ocean floor. It was a popular place to live. He was difficult to find because he was so tiny and because he was so desperate to please. His desperation pushed him to more and more remote areas of the kingdom so that he would have fewer people to make happy. They found him anyway. He grew rich and ever smaller as he built his immaculate glass and balsam constructions. They fit their patrons perfectly, flatteringly. His patrons felt so good wearing those boats and it showed. They practically strutted to the water's edge. Damn they looked good. Their last hot breaths bubbled to the surface.

Once there was a giant boy. He popped dirigibles like cinnamon gum. The pilot swung out of the fiery mess, spinning round a canine tooth feetfirst. He scuttled down the boy's mouth, dribbled off his chin. The giant roared and crushed the town. He did not like to lose things. Townspeople scattered. They were always scattering. They were used to it. No one blamed them but it wasn't so good for the community.

Once upon a time, there was a month. Crazy shit happened and regular stuff too. Complicated things and simple ones. And then it ended and next month began. Neat and clean.

Devan Aptekar was born and raised beside the beach in Brooklyn, NY. He has written two strange novels which currently remain works-in-progress and has published 15 children's books, primarily concerning superheroes. His first manuscript, *Lullaby Land*, was a semi-finalist for the James Jones First Novel Fellowship. He lives with R- and Iz- on the lower east edge of the lower east side of Manhattan and works part-time at a public middle school nearby. This month, he's been told that his 4 year old daughter usually plays Sky-Dancers at recess.

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**Tuesday, November 30, 2010**

by

Ginamarie LoBianco



## SMILE.

i got my smile from my ma. we both have the same downcast look about our faces. i got my curly brown hair from her, too. i saw a picture of myself recently and couldn't believe how much i looked like her. i'd always heard people telling me that through my whole life starting from when i was a child, but it took a picture to realize it, i suppose. i got a lot of other things from her, too. my clothing size, for instance. but one thing that she told me, recently, that she gave me was the power of expression. maybe that's a smile. maybe it's a word. maybe it's a string of words ... like the word belch, the water running, parachutes, an elephant, laughing, laughing, laughing, a smile the instrument of it. sometimes it takes a while to learn how to use it. sometimes it takes some practice, but never overuse it. it lives in yr eyes, at times. swells there. other times, what are yr cheeks doing? make sure yr aware, there — or timing — when it happens. like that paul newman smile you know what i'm talking about. it gets magical at times that's the part. sometimes can cause damage don't do that. sometimes people, they can make it.

Ginamarie LoBianco is currently living in the cornfields of Illinois. she is the founder/editor of Little Dipper Ink., and publishes an independent literary/art journal called "ukulele," which is on its fifth issue. she writes and illustrates children's books. she has written six books of poetry/haiku, and is working on her thirteenth novel. the pieces selected for this writing project are taken from a collection titled "INVENTORY" which correlates to the following piece "WHAT WAS LOST." sometimes she sings in the shower in french (though she doesn't speak french), and other times she plays the ukulele and scares the fish away.

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