

# Alien Buddha Zine X



# ALIEN BUDDHA ZINE X

an interview with analog submission press editor Marc Brüseke pg 100

## POETRY FROM

CHARLES RAMMELKAMP JESSICA DAWSON

THASIA ANNE VATSALA RADHAKESOON

MARK HARTENBACH TRICIA MARCELLA CIMERA

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TANYA RAKH BRADFORD MIDDLETON

JOHN C. MANNONE CHANI ZWIBEL

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DARCY REED KIRSTY NIVEN

DAVID BOSKI STEPHEN BETT

LB SEDLACEK

JOAN MCNERNEY JOHN D ROBINSON

ANN CHRISTINE TABAKA GE REUTTER

JOHN DRUDGE JEREMY NATHAN MARKS

ALAN BRITT JD NELSON KUSHAL PODDAR

JOSH MEDSKER TIAN YU

## ART FROM

PRADNYA KUSHAL

CARMAN BENOIT

MARCEL HERMS

AMMI ROMERO

RED FOCKS

AARON MORGAN

RAY CRAIG

& TAJ BOURGEOIS

## FICTION FROM

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WAYNE F. BURKE

JOHN MILLER

JERRY WILLIAMS

THE ALIEN BUDDHA DOES 9/11

COVER ART BY OLIVIER SCHOPFER



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# ***Intellectual Property***

## **by Charles Rammelkamp**

When I read about that guy  
who stitched Mike Tyson's famous  
facial tattoo, suing Warner Brothers  
for copyright infringement,  
I thought, "Hot damn!  
I better copyright the fist  
I have coming up out of my pants!"

You can't play it too safe these days;  
everybody's always ripping off artists.  
Kids plagiarize papers for school  
like texting their friends on their cellphones,  
commonplace as taking a selfie in a café.

My girlfriend Shar says  
she wants a tattoo just like mine,  
coming out of the back of her pants, too.  
Pretty soon everybody's going to want one,  
I can just tell.

I need to get myself a lawyer.

# **A Preview of Mark Hartenbach's Poetry Collection stories from hillbilly fellaheen**



**Mark Hartenbach, author of  
Surfing the Appalachian Vortex,  
Witness Protection Program, and  
Crashing the Zen Pinata  
presents his 4th poetry book  
with Alien Buddha Press,  
Stories From Hillbilly Fellaheen**

Stories from hillbilly fellaheen

Mark Hartenbach



**Cover Photo by Red Focks**

[www.amazon.com/Stories-Hillbilly-Fellaheen-Mark-Hartenbach/dp/1072987856](http://www.amazon.com/Stories-Hillbilly-Fellaheen-Mark-Hartenbach/dp/1072987856)

## **invasion of the wild-hearted archangels**

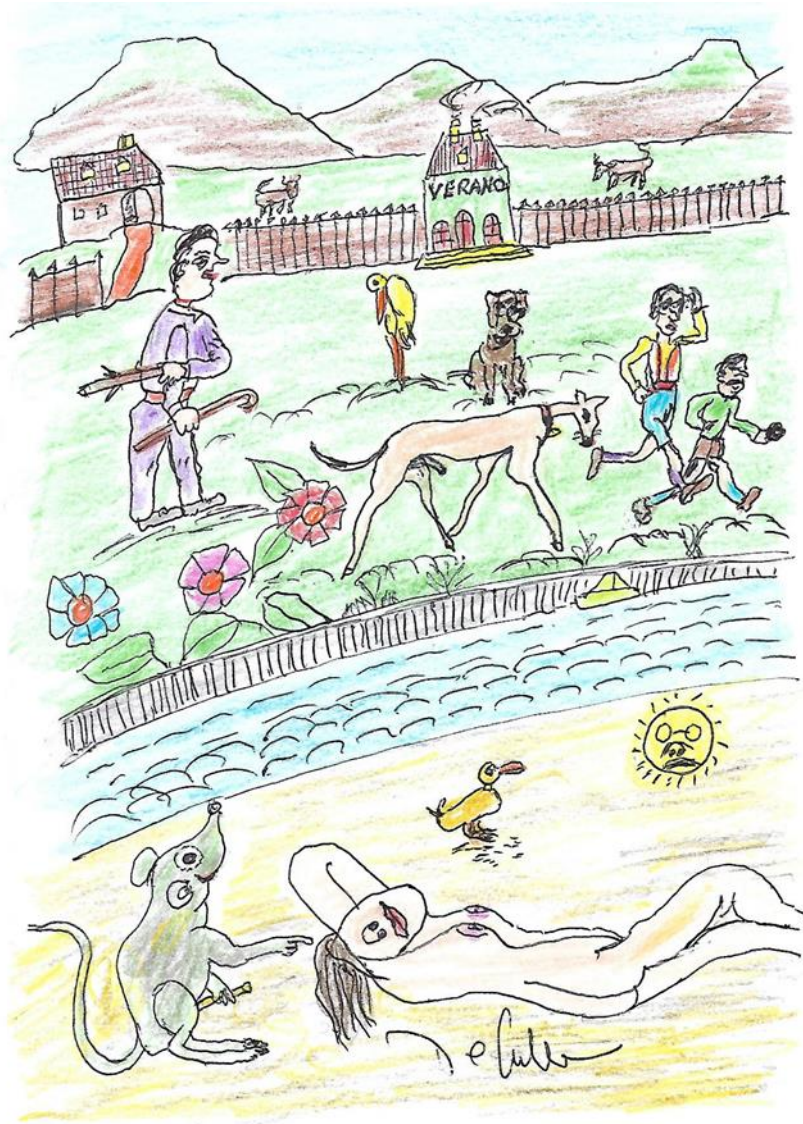
*for by your words you will be justified  
& by your words you will be condemned-  
matthew 12:37*

vigorous thoughts are pounding my skull in a violent response to suicidal tendencies. brooding circumstances are gazing out at the world through wire enforced windows of the soul. dangling occupation of prolonged madness. confined to my jacket though i'm coherent. shearing off their portion of the slipstream to bury ontological orgasm on solid rock. tired of being the designated driver for the damned trip i had no say about. listening to retelling of a story with no point. tripping out on rush of bleeding lips. encountering burnt flowers in desert heat. sprinting into an eastern modal key. crumpled assumptions denote all access to the marginalized multiplicity as if that's worth any points on my test score. severed from the roots of spiritual world. emaciated despair without tears. praying for liberation of the lamb from the lion. a machine lies bleached by the sun. plunged from heaven without breaking anything as a spineless constellation makes suggestions i can't buy & i never fall for free of charge. scattering the remains descending from dreams. a heavy handed approach to another idiom. delirium tremens are tied to anesthetized by something no one can see sacred heart is about to spill. its love reduced to ashes in lieu of donations. ambiguous lifetime meets an untimely demise that refuses to identity itself so nobody takes it seriously. red hot temperament at the mercy of kindness. at the mercy of greedy general population. now it assumes enhanced possibilities have impact of melancholy while tuning up natural alchemy of the brain. naiveté of wild at heart winging it as it goes along. not obsessing on all the knowledge left behind. intermittent sadness on the clock has accumulated accessories

as a paltry consolation prize. inner turmoil is not providing an escape route for its dangerously temperamental soul mate. preaches vexation of spirit in an unstructured life playing up vulnerable confession of sensitive figurines. visions of gold chains, of silver chains, of aluminum foil. figuring out what is essential to my being. intense pitfall putting limitations on always reaching final chapter of through a glass lightly. stepping on the wrong toes to get there. vivid response to malaise is agitated quality. a swirling painted reconciliation with myself stark contrast to nature of our simultaneous lives.



# Art & Poetry From Daniel de Culla





## **THE SUN HAS ITS DIAMOND TIDE**

The Sun has its diamond tide  
It spreads over my place on the beach  
Of San Vicente de la Barquera  
But sand has a pretty flaw:  
My niece Pilina is here;  
Now she is moving so slowly  
As a fragile arc in the Sandy places  
So I spend a lot of time  
Just looking at her body  
Waves covering me all.  
This Cantabrian Sea has many words  
Sprouting all around  
And I cannot hear a rest of silence  
To contemplate the purple flower  
That reminds me of the sea.  
The Sun has its diamond tide  
It comes down the Venus' mountain

Reaching the morning of my heart:

Here at the bottom of my nice

I'll find radiance, quiet and delight

But I have trouble

Seeing what there is to see about her.

The Sun has its diamond tide

But no now

There is a rarified atmosphere

That fills the dark clouds

Up the last angled slopes of mountain.

Rain is coming, rain is coming

And my niece runs wild

With a tender tide pouring rain

Back and forth

Opening myself unto her

Seeing what She is about me.

Her lips are drawn

Her kindness is all lost

And her body is beyond the pale.

When the Sun has been lying on the sand

She eating my words of Love

Beside her.

The Sun has its diamond tide again

Is a tender tide

That moves me within.

It is the tide of my nice

Sit and dreaming

On the floor of the Rainbow;

## **Art From Marcel Herms**



**Death is Hanging Over Me**



**Bored**





**Homeward Bound**



# Poetry From Bradford Middleton

## THE OLD DAYS AT BARS (LONDON AND NEW YORK CITY REVISITED)

The streets of London surround me on a foray out of this town  
A remembrance of places and faces, some unseen for a long while,  
Which takes me back to younger times when I was determined  
To have a good time all the time and how these places shaped me  
And made me into the person you are now reading  
Places I used to drink are now gone, forever to remain intact in  
My old memory banks if they were memorable enough, whilst  
Others, and it was never the places I would expect, have now become  
Legend.

This one old place I remember for gigs and drinking late into the  
Night now holds sway over a town that at one point dominated  
Any thoughts of a counter-culture centre but now, aged forty-six  
In the depths of a Thursday afternoon I walk in and see not much

Has really changed, a few pictures are above the bar but the jukebox  
Is thankfully still free and full of the stuff we used to listen to back in  
The days of never sleeping and always seeking a new thrill to  
Encounter.

A castle of rock'n'roll and a regular crowd of misfits and delinquents  
Still held court as I got in my first beer and pondered on which songs  
Needed to be play. A cry to 'Kick out the Jams motherfucker' rings through  
The air, penetrating the souls of those who sit at the bar reminding them  
Of the good times we all had but regardless we all just carry on drinking  
Whilst surrepticiously taking peeks at the barmaid who is gyrating to  
The sounds of punk rock.

Soon I get to talking, a mad Scotsman who used to be the glass collector  
Down the street at a bar I never thought would shut but which now sits  
Boarded up tells tales of Amy and those boys from Blur when that was  
All they were, young boys just like I was back then. But then I turn and  
Give all my attention to the previously gyrating barmaid and, unlike in  
This town, I get to talking. We talk of great rock'n'roll and how lives

Are for living and not existing before suddenly a bombshell is dropped  
Declarations are made as she tells me she used to live in Hell's Kitchen;  
My mind recounts the nights spent there, New York City, and how there  
Was always a bar I remember with much fondness, simply put Rudy's  
Bar and Grill the best place I've ever got drunk by myself. She turns  
Aghast and, I know its love or at least the closest I've felt in a long old while  
As she states, 'Rudy's is the best fucking bar in the whole damn universe' and  
I can't do anything but agree.

## **SMOKING MATES**

Smoke, smoke that most beautiful of weeds  
that keeps us calm, allows us to keep our heads  
above the dismay of normal living, as high  
as we can ever possibly be.

This morning I was walking out to go to town  
run some errands and then head on home when  
half-way in I got a craving so pulled from my  
pocket one I'd rolled already.

I paused on the pavement and sparked it to life  
grateful for its calming influence over my  
accident-prone nature that had come to rule  
that morning in particular.

As the smoke flowed down I began to walk when  
I heard a voice, a young feminine voice calling

out to someone called 'mate'. I carried on walking  
imagining someone else getting a bit of luck

But then she appeared at my shoulder, "hey mate,"  
she began, "can I give you fifty pence for a fag?"

I looked down, the coin looked so shiny and new  
but alas I didn't have any papers

So had to carry on leaving her looking glum at the  
prospect of having to wait to see another one of us  
rare, rare smokers out and about which in this day  
and age, even in this town, is a seldom seen thing.

## Art From Ammi Romero



“The Non-Seeing Eye”

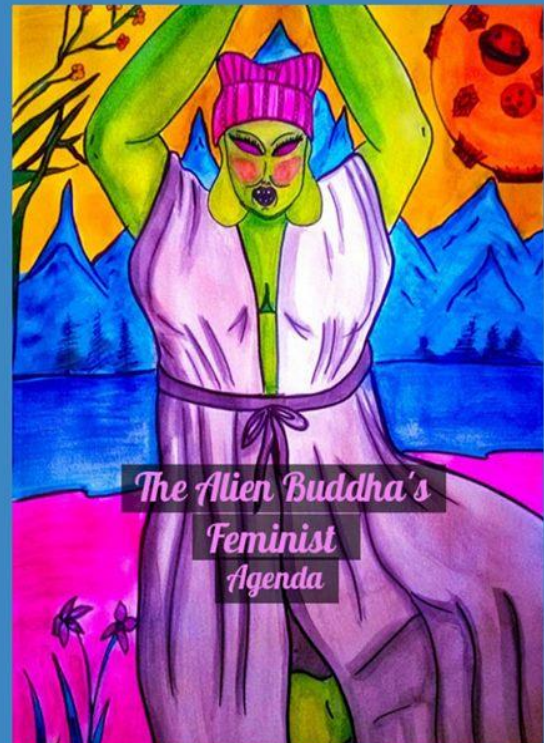


# The Alien Buddha's Feminist Agenda (Zine Cut)



Ammi Romero,  
Amirah Al Wassif,  
Heidi Blakeslee,  
Jessica Dawson,  
Kirsty Niven, Pradnya Kushal,  
Darcy Reed, Chani Zwibel,  
Andrea E. Lodge, LB Sedlacek,  
Carman Benoit, Lynn Long,  
Vatsala Radhakeesoon,  
Patty Dickson Pieczka,  
Thasia Anne, Joan McNerney,  
Samantha Dupre, Tanya Rakh,  
Ann Christine Tabaka,  
Tricia Marcella Cimera  
Denise Thompson-Slaughter,  
Lisa & Evi

The Alien Buddha's Feminist Agenda



<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1072371790>

## ***The creepy dance of red curly hair! By Amirah Al Wassif***

her red curly hair has been buried under my grave. I tried my best to touch my bones with my fingers to make sure that what I see is so real. the red curly hair acted the creepiest dancers I ever saw in my whole life. As a half-dead, I try to be inside and outside at the same time. as a big fan of everything horror. I watched all the horror movies and no one could scare me. I visited the horror tree, I threw myself in the abandoned houses and hunted hotels and nothing could make me afraid even for a moment. although my friends competed many times to bring the horror to me no one dares to bring it to me. one evening this weird idea came to my head and whispered " the graves". then I realized that maybe I will find the real fear while spending my nights in my grave among other graves with my dead friends. so, I became officially a half dead who wander in the wide forests in the day and sleep quietly in his terrific grave in the night.

many long nights spent without a bit of fear until this exclusive night when I heard whispering came from outside. the voices were talking about the terrible crime of a girl. she was 12 years old when they found her body in the wooden cave. her mother said " my daughter was a very brave girl. she never ever experienced the fear feeling".

one of the human voices outside asked his friend about the reason for her killing in this scary way. his fellow answered " nobody knows, they found the girl dead but the weird thing they founded her head shelved!!

the voices have been shut up suddenly. At this time I was crawling inside my grave trying my best to hear them. Fortunately, they complete their talking. The first voice said "her mom was shocked and terrified when she saw the body of her child sinking in a lake of blood. He added with a voice full of fear "her poor mother fainted when she saw the shelved head of her dead girl. The crowd thought it is normal reaction because she is her mother but I noticed something odd scared me. When I stopped close to her mother, I found her mouth move quickly and she murmured "she told me that she wanted to be scared until her hair dance "

the first voice silenced then the second voice asked him what the color of the disappeared hair?

Before his answer, something entered my grave. I felt something touch me. Something moves right and lift underneath my body. When I saw it. the voice outside shouted " red curly hair"

***Domestic Goddess* by Heidi Blakeslee**

Ladies Home Journal 1955

can bite it

you don't need house plants

to be happy

you don't need a spic n span

kitchen floor

or

aspic filled ham loaf

you don't even have to cook

chicken potpie

every Wednesday

if you are a woman

and you live in a house

you are the domestic

goddess

period.

***A Limerick by Kirsty Niven***

There once was a girl called, well, me –  
same face, same hair, but rather twee.  
She met a comic, fell under his spotlight  
and the rest was a one-sided fight.  
He squished the life out of her like a whoopee.  
At first she thought he seemed like fun  
until he turned her story into a pun.  
He schemed and had himself a giggle  
as he let go of the acme anvil  
and broke all her fingers but one.  
His love was an elaborate prank,  
he depended on dear daddy's rank.  
The evidence went missing  
of the bruises he loved kissing.  
I'm sorry if this poem is too frank.  
Damaged, discussed and distraught;  
he achieved more than he could have thought.  
This body he hollowed  
and everything that followed –  
a punch line I never forgot.



**Jackie-O by Ammi Romero**

## Photography Allowed by LB Sedlacek

Melding art  
into memories  
can be  
unclear if  
you can't  
see them  
erasing memories  
exploring art  
alone may  
leave you  
wandering galleries  
notepad and  
pen or  
digital camera  
bouncing ideas  
off no  
one except  
the walls  
and you  
may miss  
opening night  
all the  
personalities the  
local samples  
of wine  
and cheese  
but examining  
art alone  
will give  
you the  
most memories  
all of  
them your  
very own





**Art by Pradnya Kushal**

## **My Therapist Asks if I am Suicidal by Jessica Dawson**

When I first met my therapist, she asked:

Have you ever thought about suicide?

and I cleverly answered:

Haven't we all?

My complacency was a burden here.



**Art from Carman Benoit**

## **TERRORISTS by Thasia Ann**

We now all fear the terrorist  
peering over our shoulders  
we look at differences with disdain  
If their skin is dark  
or they wear a scarf  
revealing only chocolate eyes  
we conjure news reports  
In scared minds  
terrorists are from lands afar  
with theologies that we just can't agree on  
The truth however is slipping through gnarled fingers  
the facts still linger  
children who are killed here, in America  
are snuffed out by the one that should have held them dear  
And 95 percent of women murdered  
are killed by their husband, boyfriend, or lover  
98 percent of those, as they were trying to leave  
Yet we believe "If she stays, she must like it"  
No, they stay because they know  
they are safer when they keep their enemy close  
So when the evening news declares beware  
and you watch that new neighbor through a gap in the curtain  
or the man in unfamiliar garb at the airport  
Face the facts; the terrorists are close, and they are someone's husband or new love

**SOUND WAVES by Patty Dickson Pieczka**

Contentious voices  
hiss thorn-tangled phrases  
like the whine of bees

stinging my sanity  
until it swells,  
bruised green and purple.

I chew on shadows,  
hoping for a kind word,  
but hear only

the language of mosquitoes,  
stopping briefly to inject  
their memory beneath my skin.

## **BALL-SACK TOFU FOLLY by Chani Zwibel**

For our fifth anniversary, we had a spa day, and then we ate at a vegan sushi place. It pleased me immensely to eat plant-based delicacies in neat, round packages after a day sweating in hot saunas and pools.

Months later in the new year, nearing spring and I felt fat but hungry still, I craved again the rolls of vegan salmon and rice. I ask my husband if he'll get food there to bring home. I do not specify my wants. He brings home tofu and veggies on rice. I am not pleased.

The fried tofu looks and tastes like grimy ball-sack!

We don't fight often.

Certainly not the way my parents did, in screaming matches, throwing things. But I pout.

Next day he comes home with the sushi rolls and that is what I wanted in the first place. I'm appeased. but now he's pissed for having spent fifty bucks there this week. I send him twenty-five dollars in a cash app, with a note: "Ball-sack tofu folly".

We both apologize for our crankiness.

And then we have a good chuckle.

All this and the ability to laugh about it,

Makes our love worthy of verse.

## **Right by Darcy Reed**

When our people came  
we thought we were right.  
from the trenches of war  
to the end of time,  
we think we are right.

From the election of fools  
to the election of other fools,  
we think we are right.

From the silos of bombs hidden nationwide  
we think we are right.

From the drone shack in Nevada  
killing children in distant wars  
we think we are right.

Our founding fathers  
thought we were right.

We think we are right.

The empire will prevail,  
the children will die,  
while we are so bloody right.



***Occupant Apartment 2 D* by Joan McNerney**

Her days marched in place  
days like tin soldiers each one  
pushing the next aside.

Hurry, hurry before it is too late...  
inside a gaping hole to be filled.  
More and more of the surface  
of Gloria's life was covered by dust.

The hallway gave off a musty odor.  
Night after night, lights burned.  
Busted dreams heaped in boxes.  
Black marks covered floors.

Less and less energy to clean up.  
Her body betraying her  
Her breath betraying her.

One edge of her room spoke to  
the other. Her fan purred all summer,  
basement furnace heaved all winter.  
This incessant sigh gathering dust.

***Patchwork Dreams* by Ann Christine Tabaka**

I piece together this and that,  
sewn with heartfelt songs.

My mind escapes me  
on a journey of bewilderment.

Never knowing which direction,  
my blindness leads the way.

Touching the braille that reads  
my life and gathers all to me.

The further that I travel,  
the closer I become.

Tattered, worn, and broken,  
all becoming whole.

I close my eyes to destiny  
and let it come find me.

As I sit, needle and thread in hand,  
hemming my own dreams.

***Leaving You* by Vatsala Radhakeesoon**

Past in flames of hell

Peace-killer

Trauma-clinger

Now I close the chapters

I waltz in the arms of

**BOLD MOVE ON.**

***Let it by Tanya Rakh***

Therein lie the fires now, the rolling fires. Sands of time in a time-storm, sands of quick in a quick roll. Therein unrolls the sweat now, a million tongues lapping up the universe. Therein now inside an antique pore, an antique spine-line dredged in sugar. Now you'll calm to a slow hum. Now you'll sleep when it's dark.

There you unfold the silver fabric. There you bleed inside your clothes. There you call out to whoever is listening. *Save me, please, just this one time . . .*

You always find it in the sorrow. The kind that shines in white and gray. It's soft, you know, and you can feel it. It makes sense, unlike the world these days.

Maybe they're all lying. Maybe they're lying in trenches waiting to run and run and run forever until their feet become earth and they are tired . . . then they can admit defeat at last. Maybe by a thousand oceans. Maybe by your secret sand. Maybe inside your favorite star. It holds you. Let it.

***Blessed be by Samantha Dupre***

Do not suffer a witch to live  
Her blood is of Satan, her lies, a sieve  
Cleansing by fire may save her soul  
Beware her temptations  
They will take their toll  
Root out the evil and burn it alive  
Dance on her pyre, flush out the hive  
These wise words the Bible did give  
We will not suffer a witch to live

But by air  
Fire  
Water  
And earth  
By the Goddess of nature  
To all who gave birth  
We do thee no harm  
By the rule of three  
If this is my fate  
So mote it be  
By air  
My ashes will scatter the sky  
By fire  
My Earth bound body will die  
By water  
I will be birthed anew  
By spirit  
The the horned God's will I will do  
If this is my fate, and by the rule of three  
I bid you all watching, blessed be.

***Slouching Down the Beach* by Tricia Marcella Citera**

I slouch down the beach.  
My hair is long, tangled;  
so is my gypsy skirt.  
My old silk shirt is green.  
I wear my skin loosely.  
Shells crunch under  
my hard feet. Sun-  
bathers get startled when  
I throw myself down  
among the crab claws,  
sea glass, stretch out  
in the sand, call out  
to the blue waves.  
Young women with  
bracelets, bikinis,  
wear troubled faces.  
They don't know. They  
haven't been around  
long, long as I have,  
probably never heard  
of Van the Man  
Morrison. The ocean  
pulls me in; I don't fight it.  
I don't fight anything  
anymore. The waves  
let me go eventually,  
toss me back,  
green silk in pieces.  
I slouch down the beach.



# T U R M O I L

## by Wayne F Burke

HAWK-NOSED Leno Decensi gnawed a chunk off the butt end of a foot-long stick of pepperoni then threw the stick back into the refrigerator and swung the door shut. He chewed with eyes at half-mast, a channel of pain through his head, temple to temple, like someone had driven a railroad spike through. A patter of small feet pounded the kitchen floor like a drum solo playing inside Leno's head. His twin brothers, Peter and Pauly, ran past him into the living room and crashed to the floor in a heap. "Knock it off!" Leno commanded. The twins looked up, white faces flushed. Leno groaned, walked across the kitchen linoleum to the table in a corner. A copy of the N Y DAILY NEWS next to an ashtray full of stamped-out cigarette butts. H R HALDEMAN ON HOT SEAT, Leno read. DID PREZ KNOW OF COVERUP? Leno pushed the paper aside. A copy of TRUE DETECTIVE magazine lay underneath. The hot tangy sting of pepperoni burnt at the base of Leno's throat; he picked up the magazine, brought the cover to within an inch of his thick glasses. Scanned the cover with quick side-to-side head movements. A buxom blonde being raped by a muscular knife-wielding maniac. The blonde's blouse half torn off. Leno wished the artist had shown the blouse completely off. A knock at the front door sounded like a punch. Leno dropped the magazine, walked to the window, pushed the drawn curtain aside. Blinked and stared. The lump of pepperoni slid down his throat like a rock.

"Be right there! Keep your pants on!" Leno took deep breaths. Stepped and opened the door. A cop, seven feet tall, in a black uniform. Two moles on the cop's hairless face. A nose like a baked potato.

"Is your name Decensi? Leno Decensi? Leno B. Decensi?"

The cop had a turtle shell-shaped pot belly. His thumbs hooked into his service belt.

"Yea, that's right. Don't wear it out."

“Mind if I ask you a few questions?” The cop rested a palm on top of his holstered revolver.

Leno gazed from the gun to the cop’s head. His black cap had a silver star above the visor. The cap rested on the back of a pin-shaped skull. “Alright,” Leno agreed, “but make it snappy. I left the bathtub running.” He hooked a thumb over his shoulder. “I mean, I mean I left the water running.” He felt a smile creeping over his face.

“This ain’t no joke, Decensi.”

“I know it’s not.” A laugh burst from Leno like a hiccup.

The cop stared. Eyes like painted hard-boiled eggs. Leno’s teeth, sticking out of his gums at odd angles, looked like the teeth of a baby shark, the cop reflected. A wad of white adhesive tape, on the bridge of the kid’s nose, held his black-rimmed glasses together. “Where was you last night?”

Leno stared at the cop’s black Buster Brown shoes. “I don’t remember.”

“Well, start remembering!”

“The Oasis Lounge,” Leno stated.

The cop pulled a stubby pencil from behind his ear and wrote in a notebook. “Was you there all night?”

“Yea, all night—then I come straight home.”

The cop’s eyebrows arched. “I didn’t ask if you come straight home.”

“Well, I’m telling you. I’m being cooperative.” Leno shrugged. “I’m a cooperative kind of guy; that’s the way I am. Besides, I got nothin’ to hide because I didn’t do nothin’.”

The kid was odd, the cop thought; maybe even a little touched in the head. No respect for authority at all. The kind of bird who WOULD drive an automobile over a golfing green. “Well, if you go nothin’ to hide then you don’t mind me takin’ a picture or two, right?”

Leno blinked. “Picture? What is this,” he smirked, brow furrowed above the tape, “DRAGNET?”

“Just a look around. After all, a guy like you, wid’ nothin’ to hide...that’s the troot, right?”

“Go ahead,” Leno insisted, waving an arm, “look around! It’s a free country! But you won’t find nothin’—that I guar-RAUN-tee,” he drawled.

“Where is your car, Decensi?”

“Huh? I ain’t got one.”

“How about your mother and father—where’s their car?”

“They ain’t got one either. We’re too poor. We’re hoping President Nixon repeals the child labor laws so my younger brothers can go to work.”

The cop clenched his fists. Bugged by the smart-mouthed wise-ass. A good smack in the puss might do the kid some good, he thought. Change the kid’s attitude...The cop felt his heart pounding. He gritted his teeth. Felt sweat gather on his scalp. His blood pressure, he knew, must be sky-high. He slid his hand down into his front pocket, felt for his nitro pills. A sweat crept over his forehead. He must have left his pills on his kitchen counter...(Hell with the wise-ass, and the golfing green—crisscrossed with tire-sized divots). “Well,” he said, “I’ll be talking to you, Decensi.”

“Oh yea? Sure!” Leno eagerly agreed. “Why not? Alright, see you later, Bugsy!” Leno swung the door shut.

“Ha-ha!” Pauly Decensi, squatting beneath the kitchen table, mimicked a laugh. “Leno’s going to jail-ail,” he sing-songed.

“Shut-up! I am not!” Leno ran up the staircase, feet pounding the rungs. Moved down a carpeted hallway to the front bedroom. Looked out at the cop, pointing a camera at tire tracks in the driveway.

shitShitSHIT

Why did he not make the cop get a search warrant?

The cop got into an unmarked black car. The car reminded Leno of a hearse.

Dotti Decensi stabbed her Virginia Slims Extra Long Menthol cigarette into the glass ashtray on the kitchen table. “PETER!” she screeched. “PAULY! YOUSE

BASTARDS KNOCK IT OFF, YOUSE HEAR ME? I SAID KNOCK IF OFF FOR CRISE SAKE YOU'RE DRIVIN' ME FRICKIN' BATTY!"

She twirled a strand of hair around her finger. Studied the magazine spread on the table.

WILLIE MAYS IS WHITE, she read.

A crash on the other side of the staircase brought Dottie's head snapping up. "KNOCK IT OFF I SAID! YOUSE WANT ME COME IN THERE AND RIP YOUR GODDAMN HEADS OFF?" Dotti launched herself, bounding around the staircase that separated kitchen and living room. "WHAT THE CRISE DID I TELL YOUSE? KNOCK THIS SHIT OFF, YOUSE HEAR ME? WHAT I GOTTA DO, WRITE YOUSE A GODDAMN LETTER?"

The twins peeked at Dottie from behind an over-stuffed easy chair. Twelve-year old Louie, lying on a couch, caught the ball—the ball he had been throwing against a wall behind the TV set—in the palm of his hand. Dottie glared, oval lenses of her glasses perched on her hawk-like nose. Nosecones of her breasts thrust like bullets beneath a sleeveless brown polyester jersey. "YOU GODDAMN KIDS ARE DRIVIN' ME TO THE GODDAMN BUGHOUSE! KNOCK THIS SHIT OFF, NOW!!"

Louie rolled onto his side, reached to the black short-haired barrel-chested dog beside the couch. Gilligan, of GILLIGAN'S ISLAND, argued with the Skipper. The Skipper tore his hat off, threw the cap to the ground. Louie leaned down, wrapped the dog's head in his arms, and kissed the beast on its thin purple lips.

Disgust darkened Dottie's smooth-skinned harried-looking face. She stalked around the staircase, pointing a finger back toward the living room: "TOMORROW I'M PUTTING ALL OF YOUSE UP FOR ADOPTION! I'M NOT SHITTIN' YOUSE, EITHER!" She marched to the table, her white deck sneakers scraping the linoleum floor, fabric of her clinging brown polyester stretch pants rasping across the inside of her thighs. She tore open a new pack of cigarettes and lit up. Louie bounced the ball off the wall; the twins fell to the floor in a clinch; the Skipper bellowed, "GILLIGAN!!" Dotti sent a stream of white smoke out over the table; The smoke floated into the shape of a distant mountain range. She flipped the page of her magazine.

## LIBERACE NOT GAY

Beneath the headline a photo of Liberace in a jewel-studded suit, cape flung about his shoulders, white incisors displayed in a rapacious-looking smile. Dottie looked approvingly at the outfit. Wondered what it cost. Probably more than her goddamn house. She did not care if he was gay or sad or whatever...She wished she had some of his money, though. If she did have some, she'd get on an airplane, she told herself, and head to Hawaii. Sit on a beach and drink My-Ties. Look at surfer-boys. Quit her stinkin' job too—after telling her boss to kiss her ass—then maybe have somebody put some sheet-rock up over the exposed wiring and bare walls of the house...

Soles of Leno's high-cut brown hush puppy shoes slapped the wooden rungs of the staircase. "What's all the noise? You woke me up." He cupped a hand over a yawn.

"Leno! My baby!" Dottie stretched her arms out. "Come give your mother a big hug!"

"Go'wan," Leno muttered, blushing. "What's for din-din?" he strode across the kitchen, scratching beneath his tight white t-shirt.

"Meatloaf," Dottie said. "LOUIE! GODDAMN YOU TURN THAT TV DOWN BEFORE I SMASH IT!"

"Meatloaf again?"

"Yea, it is all I can afford on the money your asshole father gives me."

Leno let the stove door slam shut. He walked to the refrigerator, opened the door, picked up a can of Viennese pickled sausage. "Why don't you take him back to court?" He pinched a sausage from the can.

"I oughta! No-good bastard gives all his money to that whore he lives with—doesn't care if his own goddamn children starve or not."

Leno read the label of the sausage can, holding the can up to his glasses.

"He is not getting his F-en book back either," Dottie said.

"What book?"

"The black notebook he left in the closet—with all his tax records in it. He thinks he's coming over here and taking it, but he's not!"

“I don’t care if the I.R.S. is on his ass—that is his problem, not mine. He should have paid his taxes, like everyone else. Let him go to jail, what do I give a shit? It’s where he belongs!”

Leno wondered if the old man would ask him to retrieve the book. Wondered how much money the book might be worth.

“And don’t go giving it to him!”

“HON-ie! You know I wouldn’t!” Leno walked to the table.

“Yea, well...don’t.”

Leno massaged Dottie’s shoulders.

Dottie lowered her head. “Oh, that’s good, yea! Right there!”

Leno kneaded the flesh: flesh of his flesh.

Dottie swiveled her head. “What did you do to my car, anyway? It’s filthy!”

“Don’t worry,” Leno cooed. “I’m going to take the car and wash it. Do the inside too.”

Dottie’s head sunk. “Do the neck too, will you?”

Leno pressed down on the accelerator and the big V-8 engine purred like a big cat. The Chevy roared down Howling Avenue, past small wooden houses and rickety-looking tenement blocks dotting the roadside. Brown billy-club shaped cattails in the scummy water of a swampy field to Leno’s left, at the base of the gently rolling mountainside. Leno watched the speedometer move to within 5 miles an hour of his Howling Avenue straightaway speed record. A car pulled out of Gray Street, fifty yards ahead of Leno. He jammed the brake and glided to within a yard of the Gray Street nitwit. A trailer truck in the opposite lane rumbled past trailing a cloud of dust. Leno punched the steering wheel with the heel of his palm. An orange highway department dump truck rattled past in the wake of the trailer truck. The silver-haired woman in the car ahead of Leno glanced up: her mouth dropped open, eyes wide in the rear-view mirror. Leno grinned, inched the Chevy further to his left and stomped on the accelerator. “Park it, you old biddy!” he screamed, as he sped past.



White dust covered the highway like a sheet across the road. Lime kiln buildings thickly coated with the white paste of ossified lime waste looked like vanilla double and triple tiered cakes. Churning masses of smoke rose roiling into the blue sky, above the cakes.

The car slid on the iron tracks cutting diagonally across the pavement. Leno turned the car with the slide and the Chevy came out of its fishtail. Leno glanced in the mirror at a white dust cloud he left behind. He felt proud. After glimpsing disaster, he had unflappably fought his way out like a champion. Like Mario Andretti, or Strling Moss, he told himself. A hump in the road jolted him upright. "Yee-hah!" he shouted.

The Chevy dropped down an incline and onto another straightaway. Straddling the double yellow lines in the road, Leno debated whether to try and pass half a dozen cars ahead. He forced a small compact car in the opposite lane into the thin breakdown lane. Leno smirked at the gutless ninny behind the wheel. Behind the compact, a cement mixer, the driver sitting in the cab as if on a throne. Leno turned the wheel of the Chevy to avoid being pinioned on the mixer's front end. He glanced at the truck in the rear-view mirror. Felt admiration for the driver. He flicked the radio on, whistled off-key to the fluted notes of "To the Hustle." Sniffed the stench of gas and oil from the service station to his left. Up Your Ass with Mobil Gas! He braked, turned, and brought the car to a screeching halt at curbside. "Hey, Murf!" he shouted. "What's cookin'?"

Short, broad-shouldered Murf, standing beneath the awning of ANGIE'S SUB SHOP, smiled. He walked to the car. A jumbo-sized pickle, wrapped in white butcher's paper, clutched in his hand.

"Hop in," Leno said.

Murf sat.

"What's shakin', Murf?"

Murf bit into the pickle, spraying pickle juice over the dashboard. "Bunch of bullshit." He chewed, pale blue eyes in a pimpled face surveying the road.

"Oh yea?" Leno steered one-handed, left arm out the window and lying against the door. "So gimme the skinny. What's the turmoil?"

“My brother. I come home last night, and you know what he done?”

“What?”

Murf rested a muscular bicep on the door frame. “He smashed all my albums and piled them on the floor.”

“No!” Leno smiled, side-glanced Murf to see if Murf caught the smile. “What’s his malfunction?”

“Because I did not get the car back in time for him to take it to work. He had to ride with one of his asshole friends!”

Leno stared at a woman pushing a baby carriage in front of the A & P Market. “So, what’d you do about the albums?”

“I tore all his books in half.”

Leno laughed. Teeth sticking out like pegs hammered in by a rough carpenter.

Murf wadded the butcher’s paper. “Where to?”

“The car-wash. You see all the crap on the car? Got to get it off before the cops see it. Suckerface Jonesy, the Detective, was at my house this morning.”

“No shit? What for?”

“Wait ‘til I tell you,” Leno grinned.

Leno pulled the Chevy out of the car-wash yard, spinning tires kicking up a storm could of dust and rocks. Dust motes of the cloud sparkled in the sunlight. Tires squealed onto asphalt.

“Flatfoots can’t pin anything on me now!” Leno said.

“Where to?” Murf asked.

“Why don’t you come back to the ranch? Dorothea has a meatloaf cooking—plus I’ll cook up a mess of scrambled eggs and un-yoans...Maybe later we can go out for a few teas.”

“OK,” Murf said, with heightened interest. He looked out the window at PLUNKETT Junior High School, brown-bricked, multi-windowed, three stories with slate roof

capped with gables, turrets...He thought of long dark corridors in sepia tones; footsteps and shadows in the corridors...

The Chevy roared through the blinking red light of North Main Street, tires squealing on the turn. On the corner, an old man flinched, looking quickly to the road. Leno grinned, shifted the car into neutral and revved the engine. Coasted behind a line of traffic. A cop standing with arms crossed, beside the black lollipop-shaped BRIGHTON SAVINGS BANK clock, sullenly stared.

“Big man,” Murf said, staring at the short square-shouldered cop.

“Boxing champ,” Leno said. “I’d like to know who he fought. Probably some guy with multiple sclerosis.” Leno shifted: car tires barked. He laughed. “You see his face?”

“Yea!” Murf studied the contour of his arm in the side mirror. “Wonder how tough he is without the gun?”

“You could beat the shit out of him. Half the guys he fought were probably from the Oasis Lounge—stiffer than old shoes.”

Murf looked up at the shiny black stone face of William McKinley, FRIEND OF BRIGHTON, standing twenty feet high on a platform of pink Italian marble, the President’s right arm extended in a stiff-arming gesture.

“Yea, guy’s with half a bag on,” Murf said. “Hey—look—there is Big Lean.”

Thin lanky Big Lean stood beside a white van parked on the street in front of VAL’s VARIETY. Black letters on the side of the van read DECENSI ELECTRIC. Big Lean waved.

“What’s new, boy?” Big Lean shouted, striding to the driver’s side window of the Chevy.

“What’s up, Buggy?”

Big Lean hung his arms on the roof. He wore a white t-shirt, blue jeans, and unlaced work boots. His swarthy complexion coupled with a pencil-line thin black mustache gave him the look of a Mexican bandito. His bald head was covered by a film of hair combed over the dome of his skull. “Murphy!” he called, craggy face drifting inside the car, “how you doin’, Murphy?”

Murf nodded, grinned.

“Look what your Democrats are doin’ to President Nixon, Murphy! The best President this country ever had, and they want to kick him out! Can you beat it? It ain’t right, I tell you, and it’s all the Democrats doin’! Those Democrats are no good, Murphy! Them bastards are no good I tell you! None of ‘em!” Big Lean’s face darkened. “Including the one we got—that Kennedy! Yah, Kennedy! He killed that girl there, and what happened to him? Nothin’! Not a goddamn thing!”

“Tricky Dicky,” Murf said, “his goose is cooked!”

“Tax and spend!” Big Lean shouted. “That’s all your Democrats do, them bastards!” He glanced suspiciously to his right, at a passing car. “Leno, listen to me, Leno; I need you do me a favor—it’s important. Are you listening?”

“I’m all ears,” Leno said, smirking.

“I need you to get a book for me—a black notebook in the downstairs closet. On the top shelf. You get it for me, you hear? You hear me, boy?”

“Sure. Twenty bucks.”

“Twenty! Like hell!!” Big Lean glared. “After all I done for you? All I give you? Took you skiing up to Jiminy Peak, bought you a Boston Patriot’s jacket...Five dollars!”

“Twenty.”

“No! Not twenty! Ten!”

“Fifteen. Final offer.”

“Why you goddamn shyster, you’re worse than a goddamn Jew! Where’d you learn to act like this? Not from me you didn’t! Must have been from Dottie! Dottie taught you to act like this, didn’t she?”

Leno put the car into gear, started forward. “Take it or leave it!”

Big Lean walked alongside the car. “You rotten bastard,” he shouted as Leno pulled the car away from the curb.

“Jeremiah was a bullfrog,” the jukebox bawled. “He was a good friend of mine!”

Murf stared at an empty shot glass before him on the table. "Another one?" he said.

"Sure," Leno agreed, "you got the coin?"

Murf wedged a thick hand into a front pocket of his dungaree shorts.

Smoke floated over the half dozen men sitting at the bar. The bartender sat behind the bar on a stool and read the BRIGHTON TRANSCRIPT.

WATERGATE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES.

Above the bartender, on the screen of the TV in a corner, crew-cut, hard-eyed, White House Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman's lips moved forming silent words.

"Nothin'," Murf said glumly. He wedged the shot glass into his eye like a monocle.

"Deke," Leno pleaded, "buy a round."

Deke stared, glassy-eyed. A green cotton Army fatigue cap sat atop his huge cinder-block-shaped head. "I bought five rounds," he complained in his high-pitched voice. "I ain't got enough left for a free lunch."

"Sprechenen-zee-Deutsch?" Murf asked.

Deke giggled and a line of drool ran down the prognathous jaw of his broad face.

Leno began swinging his shoulders side-to-side, head bent. He punched himself in the chest. "Heartburn," he croaked.

"Nothin' but a bunch of crooks!" a red-faced old man yelled up at the TV. "And Nixon is the biggest of the bunch!"

"Relax," the young bartender said.

"I'll relax you, you punk," the old man said.

"Let's go the Oasis!" Murf said. He lurched from his chair. "The Oasis!" he shouted. He goose-stepped across the butt-strewn floor and kicked the door open.

The night was warm, air soft like velvet on Murf's skin. He walked into a parking meter.

Deke ducked his head, stepping from the bar.

A full moon shone bright as a light bulb.

Murf howled.

Leno pissed a golden stream that splattered the walk.

Deke laughed walking up the sidewalk, a flat-footed trudge, soles of his unlaced work boots scraping cement.

A cop car pulled out of the dark of a parking lot across the street. The bubble light of the cruiser splashed fluorescent blue light over trees, cars, buildings...A cop jumped from the cruiser. "Hold it right there!"

Deke teetered like a tree in a wind. "Hello, Ossifer!"

A flashlight painted Deke's face yellow. His eyes looked like two puddles.

"Where to, Bub?" The short square-shouldered cop looked up at Deke.

Deke giggled.

"What are you a fuckin' comedian?"

Deke's teeth gleamed between blubbery lips.

"What you got in your pocket?"

Deke dipped fingers into his t-shirt pocket. Displayed an empty shot glass.

"Stold it, huh? Stold it from that bar."

Leno stepped up to the cop. "He found it. On the railroad tracks."

Another cop, taller, less compact than his partner, played his flashlight over Leno.

"What's up, Buggy?"

"So, you found it, is 'dat the story? 'Dat right?"

"I don't know," Deke squeaked. Drool ran down his chin.

"What is your name?"

"Ralph," Deke said.

"Ralph who?"

"Ralph Kramden."

"Alright—you're coming with us! Get in the car!"

"WHAT? He didn't do nothin'!" Leno barked. "You can't arrest him!"

"Oh no?"

"NO! He didn't do nothin' wrong!"

The taller cop grasped Deke's arm. Deke lumbered to the cruiser.

"You want to come wid' us?" the short cop said.

Leno stared.

“Big man,” Murf said as the cop moved to the car.

“Yea, real big. Who’d he fight, a double amputee?” Leno ran to the side of the cruiser. Deke looked out the back window. “We’ll get you out! Don’t sweat it! They can’t do anything to you!”

The cruiser drove off, leaving behind a stench of exhaust fumes.

Dottie Decensi, beached on the living room couch like a seal, snored with mouth opened. A short thick arm protruded like a ship’s rudder from the couch. Under the arm a pile of magazines, cut and torn, pages scattered in shreds across the floor. Beside the magazines, a pair of long-sheared scissors. Beside the scissors an empty can of Chocolate Fudge Low-Cal Diet Soda. The television cast a lurid glow in the dark room, black and white ants scrambling across the screen, fighting their night-long war.

Dottie’s hand flailed the air, pulling back on the oar of the boat, the rowing a real chore for her as the handles of the oars were too thick for her to securely grasp. How the boat continued to glide so smoothly across the blue sea was a mystery to her.

A yacht three stories high passed, moving in the opposite direction. People on the yacht’s deck bent over the railing, staring down at her. Laughing at her. Her asshole boss from the factory; ex-husband Big Lean (with his girlfriend the hairdressing whore); and Liberace. “Look at that dumb bastard,” Big Lean said, nudging Liberace. The hairdressing whore laughed gaily. “You’d think she would have some sheet-rock up, in this day and age,” Liberace said.

HAWAII was printed in black letters on the yacht’s side.

Leno, Louie, Peter, and Pauly jumped from the yacht and each hit the water like a cannonball and sunk. Dottie jumped overboard to save them and

was in a dark room, sitting on a bed. The bed creaked when she moved. The door of the room slowly swung open. It was her parent’s bed, she realized with a start. She was in the old house where she had grown up. A noise on the staircase outside the

room disturbed her. Some one or thing coming up the stairs, step by step; rung by rung. Ever closer. Closer...A big black shadow appeared in the doorway and

Dottie woke, staring up at the ceiling. Her heart thumped thump thump—what a freakin’ dream! She listened to the static of the TV, felt comforted by the sound. Kicked her blanket off and sat up, bare feet barely touching the floor. Tugged her nightgown over plump thighs. A quizzical expression on her face. Backyard crickets began to squawk like spectators at a football game. How many crickets did it take, she wondered, to make such an ungodly racket? “Goddamnit,” she said, suddenly sitting upright. An odd sound—a soft “schusssch” from beyond the couch end...Outside? A dog or squirrel sniffing around? She caught her breath up. DAMNIT! Someone opening the pantry window! Jimmying the thing up by degrees. Who in hell...

SON OF A BITCH! BASTARD! Had to be him! Going to get his book. Waltz right in and take it!

She clenched her hands; lips shut like a steel trap.

The living room began to pulse in time with the thumping of her heart. Blood rushed like flood waters to her head. A red-tinted haze turned the room into a cloudy inferno. Dots on the TV screen began to arrange themselves into symbols, signs, announcing a message, a message she could not ignore. Snatching the scissors up, she stepped down the couch to the edge of the pantry. The bastard had the window halfway up, the silhouette of his features clear against the moon-bright sky. A long jean-covered leg slithered through the window opening, the boot on the foot probing for the floor. Dottie raised the scissors above her head. Big Lean’s thigh lay like a loaf of bread on the window sill. Dottie stepped forward and stabbed.

The bald middle-aged police sergeant held his hands palms upward in a helpless gesture. “Like I said, ‘dat’s the law, boys!’” Fluorescent overhead lights cast ping-pong ball-sized shadows beneath the sergeant’s eyes, nose and mouth. A short wave radio behind the station desk crackled with static, voices coming in and fading out.



“He’s here for ‘da night. He’ll be free to go in ‘da morning. In ‘da morn-ning,” he sing-songed.

“How about personal recognizance?” Murf asked, face red and sweat-slicked, arms folded on the countertop.

“Yea, how about it?” Leno said, nodding to Murf. “About what he said?”

“Never heard of it,” the sergeant said. “Ain’t no such animal.”

“Like hell there ain’t! Listen Bugsy—” Leno pointed a finger at the cop’s face. “You got no right to keep him here--none! He didn’t do nothin’ wrong!”

“We got the right to keep anyone we want. Doin’ wrong got nothin’ to do wid’ it.”

“WHAT? What are you saying?” Leno demanded.

“We do what we want,” the sergeant stated. “And we want him in here, and you, and YOU, out there! Now get out! The both of youse.”

“What about habeas corpus?” Murf said. “What about the constitution? The Declaration of Independence!!”

Leno pounded his fist on the desk top. “JUSTICE!” he screamed. “We want justice! We want him out, now! NOW! You hear me? NOW!”

The sergeant’s cheek twitched.

“THE CHARGE?” Leno hollered. “WHAT IS THE CHARGE? WHAT DID HE DO? TELL ME! ON WHAT CHARGE? TELL ME!...”

The front door of the station opened: the short cop and his partner walked in.

“...SHOW ME! Show me the law that says what you say! I want to see it!” Leno hammered the desk top. “Now! NOW!”

A stout dog-faced cop and a tall cop with an altar-boy’s face entered the room from an alcove right of the desk. The dog-faced cop grabbed Murf’s wrist and bent Murf’s arm back. Murf walked ahead of the cop to the alcove doorway and into the cell area.

“Come on!” Leno urged the desk sergeant, “show me the law where it says...” Leno glanced back then turned, staring in surprise at the cops around him. He yanked his arm free of the grasp of the altar-boy-faced cop. “Keep your fucking hands off me.” The short square-shouldered cop rushed Leno. Leno kicked the cop

between the legs. The cop collapsed in a heap on the floor. The sergeant lunged over the counter and wrapped an arm around Leno's neck. The altar-boy-faced cop and the short square-shouldered cop's partner plowed into Leno, knocking him back against the desk. Reaching up, Leno raked the sergeant's face, opening a gash on the cop's cheek. The short square-shouldered cop's partner cracked his billy-club off Leno's head. The radio screeched. Blood ran down the sergeant's face and onto Leno's scalp. Leno slid down the face of the desk, kicking his feet out as if riding a bicycle. "Son's of bitches," he screamed. The stout dog-faced cop pointed a can of mace at Leno's face and sprayed. Leno screamed, jerking convulsively, like a puppet pulled by strings. The dog-faced cop lay across Leno's legs as the short square-shouldered cop laboriously crawled up onto Leno and straddled his chest. The cop began punching. The punches splat splat splat on Leno's face; he threw his head side-to-side, tasting blood pooling in his mouth. He soon stopped feeling the punches—his face numb, frozen. He spit a mouthful of blood and teeth...

The overhead lights of the station began to dim.

# Poetry From David Boski

## Fucking Spaz

We were stopped at an intersection.  
I had grabbed my phone to view  
a text when suddenly I heard a tap  
on my window and saw a female  
police officer standing beside me.  
I let down the window: "license  
and registration" the officer said.  
I put up the window, looked at my  
fiancé and signalled her to retrieve  
documents from the glove compartment  
all while yelling out "are you fucking  
kidding me? you fucking cunt!" in frustration.  
I heard another tap on the window: it was the  
female police officer again, standing there with  
a look of shock and disgust on her face.  
I let down the window: "excuse me sir,  
did you just call me a cunt?" the officer  
asked angrily. "yes, you're pulling me over  
cause I looked at my fucking cellphone at a  
red light?!" I said. "no sir, I pulled you over  
cause your sticker is expired!" she answered.  
I handed her my documentation: "is there a reason  
there's two different addresses here?" she asked.  
"I forgot to change my address" I said. "ok, please  
pull around the corner, to the other officers over there."  
I put up the window, looked at my fiancé, and she said:  
"Jesus Christ David, you're a fucking spaz!"  
I waited for the tickets, feeling like a proper cunt.

## Cocaine Headaches

you can't get the good shit anymore, he said  
it's all shit, all cut  
and it's the cut  
that fucks you up  
gives you those headaches  
fucks up your nose  
not to mention the fentanyl  
that stuff will kill you  
you hear about all those deaths  
in the east end last week? he asked  
"yeah"  
all from fentanyl!  
to think we used to complain about  
the shit in '06  
I'd kill for the shit we had in '06  
anyways  
is there anymore left?  
"yeah, a bit"  
ok . . .  
you have a key?

## **Urine Trouble**

I awoke to what I thought was a running drain or a leak of some sort, when I noticed her sitting at the edge of the bed. “you hear that?” I asked annoyed, but she didn’t respond. she had come to my place wasted earlier that night, and that’s when I realized what was happening. “Jesus Christ, are you fucking pissing on the floor?” I asked as I reached to turn on the light switch in an angry panic.

The answer was no, she wasn’t relieving herself on the floor but rather the mattress itself. “Sara you pissed on the fucking bed!” I yelled as I tried shaking her awake.

“wh-uh-at” she slurred.

“what do you mean what? you pissed on the fucking mattress you fucking cunt.”

“oh shit, I’m sorry. I’ll get you a new

one” she replied, suddenly awake, perhaps due to my yelling or maybe because she was sitting in a puddle of her own piss.

“It fucking stinks, where the fuck are we going to sleep?”

“I’ll get you a new fucking mattress, I’ll send you the money for it!” she yelled back at me.

“no, no, fuck that, you’re done, that’s it.”

“you’re breaking up with me?” she asked confused.

“yes, get the fuck out. I have to get rid of this and sleep on the fucking couch.”

“fine, I’ll send you the money you fucking asshole” she said as she finished getting dressed and putting on her shoes.

The next day she sent me a transfer for the mattress, but I sent it back and I took her back instead.

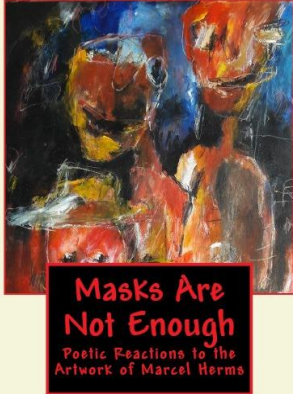
A month later we broke up again; but this time she didn’t send any money.

Marcel Herms' artwork is like a lucid psilocybin dream vivid enough to linger in your frontal cortex days after being consumed by the retinas. Imagine psychological ink splotches being brought alive by Dr. Frankenstein and running rampant. Complexity becomes impossibly simplified, and the depth of matter bleeds abstract madness all over the canvas.

-Red Focks, Alien Buddha Press co-founder

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**Masks Are Not Enough**  
Poetic Reactions to the Artwork of Marcel Herms


Ryan Quinn Flanagan, Matt Borczon, Stefan Raskin, Paul Pfeiffer, Bruce Du Malar, Adam Rowan, Alfred Gurnahy, Jeremy Smith, Ahmad Al-Bakhar

Alien Buddha Press  
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Masks Still Aren't Enough

Thasia Anne  
Heidi Blakeslee  
Matt Borczon  
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Levi Dunn  
Ryan Quinn Flanagan  
Red Focks  
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**Masks Still Aren't Enough**  
More Poetic Responses to the Art of Marcel Herms

Masks Are Never Enough

Art by  
Marcel Herms

Poetry by  
Heidi Blakeslee  
Henry Blandon  
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**MASKS ARE NEVER ENOUGH**  
The Third and Final Set  
Poetic Reactions to the Art of Marcel Herms

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# Poetry From John Drudge

## Reflection

We love

What is most

Like us

Or what we would most

Like to become

Fragile

Breakable clasps of want

The permeability

Of identity

The fleeting ground

And the rush of newness

That meets our deepest

Longings

Before the wind

Makes haste

And ushers our desires

Into secluded

Reflection



## **Monoliths**

Those moments

That etch upon us

And stop us in our tracks

Are as real as any eternity

Or rounding concept

Of the will

Stationary as any monolith

That breaks the flow

Of breeze

## **That One Night**

The deafening roar  
Of a new black rain  
Against the ignition of Paris  
At night  
The fervent reflective flow  
Of light  
Onto rainy boulevards  
Where imaginations  
Run free  
And dance with bold dreams  
Blind to the subtle snicks  
Of time  
And the unsteady winds  
On the horizon

## Art From Red Focks





# Poetry From Stephen Bett

## Ed Dorn: Slap'o Slap'o, Daddy-o

*In soccer / when you do something good*

*you get a hug and a kiss*

*In american football / when you do [ditto]*

*you get a slap on the ass.*

*The Sociology of Games — Ed Dorn (with a touching nod to Derrida)*

*In soccer / when you do something good*

something mo' comes back / in spades (& shades)

sump'ting saves the day, makes hay / on the ol' post-plantation

Paid yr money now git it on the ride, road-tester

*you get a hug and a kiss*

you get a Europass zone-out, zonk'o

you win your spurs up the yid army

you get a peck & you're faced ('n spaced)

*In american football / when you do [ditto]*

that ten percent amo a'muricano numero uno el afraid'o  
factors upwards (pigskin-wise) ditto schmitto LGBT QPR'o\*  
while beyond the touchline there is nothing, queenie

*you get a slap on the ass*

that a'muricano macho aggro loverlie'o  
homo-eroticismo beats thart thar's  
homophobi'o, beats it big league  
up, down, & off, slap'o slap'o, daddy-o

---

\*Queens Park Rangers (not to be confused with Lady Di's Sloane Rangers)

# **Temple Temple, Now (HEHE Excerpt 3)**

**By John Miller**

The telephone's four a.m. blare pierced Theresa's fitful dream and shot her up to a sitting position atop the hard single mattress. Opening seventy-seven year old eyes she stared ahead, realizing, with spine chilling terror that she was unable to see. Theresa's moan rose to a shriek and echoed through the small bedroom. She rubbed her eyes, her second moan rising into a low wail which blended into the phone's second 'briiinnging'.

Theresa's heart raced. She uncovered her eyes and looked toward the shaded bedroom window. A small yellow slit from the corner streetlight was visible beneath the shade's bottom.

The light helped, slowly alerting her to the reality of her surroundings. Theresa's heart continued to rev, but slowed slightly as she began to realize that she had not gone blind, but had only been startled awake from a deep sleep.

She began slowly piecing facts together. She was in bed and it was the middle of the night. Again the telephone rang, making her jump. Theresa stood and hurried from the bedroom, through the kitchen, and into the living room, managing to push herself past the pain in her strained right knee, a pain threatening to drop her at each step. In the dark parlor she lifted the receiver just as the fourth ring died.

"Hello, who is calling me at this time of the night?" Anger replaced her fear as she sat in the old cloth chair and felt the throbbing from above her patella.

"Ma...ma." The distant voice pleaded, its soft greeting sending a shiver along her spine.

"George?" her voice whispered a quavering verbalization of her fear.



"Ma...I...I am sick. I am in the hospital."

Theresa hardly heard him over the renewed pounding of her old heart. She stared at the shade-drawn front window and again saw small light from North Street's street lamp. Lightheaded she forced herself to continue the conversation.

"What has happened, son?"

"I..ma...ma...I couldn't breath and I...ma...I...had to call the ambulance." George's voice fell away and Theresa heard only labored breathing for a full minute. "Ma...it..I don't know ma. I didn't know what to do. I'm..I'm sorry ..ma." Again asthmatic gasps replaced words in the old woman's outdated telephone receiver.

"George," she whispered, closing her eyes and asking the question she knew she had to ask, a question whose answer she already knew, a question which weighed like a heavy stone on her heart. "Son, should I come out to help you?"

Theresa held the receiver away from her ear with her left hand while bringing her right palm to her forehead. She forced back tears as George's wailing cries replaced his labored breathing. "Yes, ma," he managed between sobs. "Yes, ma. Please."

She summoned all of her strength, and in clear iron-backed tones said, "I will be there tomorrow my son. Tell me which hospital."

Theresa fumbled for the light switch and turned on the lamp, shocking her eyes which had finally adjusted to the dark. She found a knobby pencil atop the small telephone stand she'd so painstakingly varnished only a week before and scribbled George's mumbled information.

"I...I love you mom."

Theresa's only response was to hang up as quickly as possible, making certain that her only child didn't hear her tear-filled screams.



xxxx

Japan's combination Shiton Yu temple\karate dojo had been built on hallowed ground. An ancient sub-sect of a renegade Shinto clan had scoured Japan for the perfect terra-cosmic vibration location on which to build their religious home base. The site they chose was a specific kilometric distance outside Nagasaki, and was originally established when the style's founders had ceased their daily wandering one day, feeling strangely synchronistic collective needs to jettison the afternoon's white rice and raw fish lunch. As though on well-rehearsed cue they dropped their draw-strung pants, squatted under individually selected pine trees, and to the background sound of toot-toot farts, satisfied grunts, and the plops of steamy turds meeting damp ground they glanced down, admired their digested creations, and smiled.

"Ahhhhh! This must be the place," Sensei Satori Satire announced as he re-cinched his black silk pants.

"Smells good to me," Master Ginsu had grinned agreeably, his particularly pungent expulsion Ginsu-knifing the pastoral morning air.

"Good shit," Master Hoody Ochoo had said, glancing back to inspect his deposit. "A grand masterly masterpiece."

Cemented by the satisfaction of successful defecation and the subsequent arrival of a most unusual group of fellow wayfarers, the Shiton Yu temple was born.

"How can we build a temple?" Master Ginsu asked when the men had moved upwind from their communal land markings to sit in a masterly circle and savor the day's first saki. "We're all pretty good at meditating and doing karate, but we don't know the first thing about building anything."

"He's right," Hoody hooted. "I once tried to make a box, but I got so frustrated I ended up kicking the sucker into kindling."

"Relax, ye of little faith," Sensei Satire smiled. "Have another couple of sakis and we'll ponder the situation. Buddha will provide,"

The masters followed Sensei Satire's advice, and soon their copious consumption had them snoring sound-tracks from a phantom woodcutters convention.

This point in our tale may be the appropriate time to speak briefly about time. (Oh relax! It'll only take a minute.)

Some of you were perhaps fortunate enough to have escaped the 'imagination' holocaust perpetrated by the 'modern world's' indoctrination mill and thus may have managed to retain a sliver of your societally demonized 'fantasy mind'. The mantra, 'Concentrate! Stop day dreaming or you'll never AMOUNT to ANYTHING!' spouted from minions of tutorial overseers, combined with the materialist didacticisms emanating from thousands of hours of televised Svengalis have no doubt affected us all to varying degrees. The constant bombardment from the harbingers of homogeneity, the mind-malling from ruling class mouth-pieces, the ever encroaching monoculture.

Our time is a 'time' time. Yet, since the de-volved human primate began its fanatic focusing on the primacy of a scientific/mathematic model of time flow, a model depicting a continual move toward a more and more 'progressive' global condition, the manifestation of which is overseen by MAN and is accomplished through the dominance, devastation, and re\de\construction of all resources which are not 'man' but rather 'object', since that 'time' daydreaming and fantasy have been demonized as nothing more than wasting 'time'. Our brave new world is the global supermarket, a fast-food breakfast special where crisp Baconian (Francis or Roger, take your positivistic pick) mechanistics set adjacent to over-easy eggs-istential

notions of individual primacy atop progresses' soppy paper plate . Add bromated toast, oleo liberally, dig in, and wait for nature to take its course, a course, which, of course, promises to transform those greasy edibles into flush-a-bye bye-buy waste.

Yet perhaps, just perhaps, individuals still exist (albeit in ever diminishing numbers) who can accept the reality of a 'time' consciousness other than the tick-tock clock sucker borne into us every minute. Whether through luck, insanity, or judicious dosing of hydroponic fungal matter (a.k.a. mushrooms), some might find the notion of 'time' being an other-than-linear construct to be most plausible indeed. To you I apologize for the sophomoric (and insultingly simplistic!) way of explaining the appearance of builder par-excellence, Dax DeMolay, at this so-called space in time. To the rest of you, try and follow along as best you can. Might I suggest waiting until just after you've scored a particularly good buy at the mall, a time of gleeful post-consumptive receptivity, a time washed in the warmth of synaptic endorphin caress. Anyway...

Long 'before' (sorry , THEY need temporal linearity.) Jadzia Dax was Jadzia Dax, co-star gender changling of the futuristic television series 'Star Trek Deep Space Nine', she\he experimented with numerous other 'being' casings. For the uninitiated, Jadzia Dax is a 'Trill', a life-form resultant from an elaborate mating procedure between a specific para-galactic humanoid type, and a creature best described as a giant slug. The resulting progeny is humanesque in form, experiences many 'lives' lived in human-like shells, with each successive 'life' remembering all that it previously experienced.

Many of these forms proved to be unremarkable hosts for the alien and many others resulted in life-form stories, the threads of which are irrelevant to our current yarn. A notable exception to these plot-line irrelevancies was Dax's role as Dax De Molay (Jacque De Molay in French).

Jacque De Molay (Dax De Molay in Trill) was, of course, the Grand Master of the infamous organization known as the Knights Templar at the time of their onerous persecution by European papal and governmental authorities. The story of the Knights Templar organization is well known, and easily referenced, so we will simply summarize and say that during the late 1200's and early 1300's a power struggle between the mercenary Templars and the existing European monarchies resulted in the Templars being branded as heretics and as sorcerers by the ruling elites. Dozens of Templars were tortured, and while in the throes of extreme physical duress, techniques such as coating the accused feet with fat and sticking them into a roaring fire were a common Catholic mode for eliciting inquisitional 'truth' during those early days of Christian enlightenment, many of the Templars confessed to crimes against the church, blasphemy, sodomy, sorcery, and various other 'y's'. Several templars were burned at the stake including Jacque\Dax De Molay.

Vowing vengeance on his persecutors while the flames lapped at his face, Dax De Molay seared, tensed, and calling forth a special alchemical technique which would later prove most instrumental in the invention of the starship Enterprise's famous transporter unit, he transformed his stomach-setting pre-be-barbecued last meal (moldy bread and tepid waste water), into a powerful gas, which when expelled rearward caused a particular log to burst into congenial thick smoke-screen concealment, while at the same time providing the proper propulsion to rocket Dax skyward. The populace who'd gathered around the pyre to witness Christian justice being served attributed the apparent blast-off to nothing more than a demonic soul being expelled from its evil body, another evidence of God working in mysterious ways.

Dax's fiery free-flight carried him in a high parabolic arc (reminiscent of Pynchon's 'Gravitys Rainbow' V-2s) finally landing him in the very land where his Knight Templar forerunners had enjoyed their finest hours, and their most embarrassing defeats: Syria, scene of so much bloodshed in the name of Christ

during the Crusades, the religio-fiscal military campaign which the Knights Templar had originally been formed to enjoin.

Local Syrians who saw the flying Dax-fireball land, attributed it to 'Greek Fire', a horrendous pre-naphalm immolent used freely against population centers during the latter portion of the crusades. Thinking it a new Christian invasion, the residents, some pointing skyward and shrieking 'Scud!' (or the local dialect equivalent which sounded more like 'Slug!') headed for the hills post-haste, battened their hatches, cinched their britches, and prepared their counter-attack.

By the time they rallied and re-arrived, armed to the teeth and teathed to the arms, back at the scene of the fire, they found only a burning ember and a tarnished silver coin. Mystified they passed the coin amongst themselves, each shrugging at the image depicting a strange bird balanced on one leg atop a pine tree on one side of the battered coin, and a curved slug demarcating a circle in perfect yin-yang symbol-emulation on the other.

As for Dax, he/she/now he had immediately escaped the fire-fall, excepting for a bad case of butt-burn, none the worse for wear. He grabbed the first host he could find, a young female Aryan slave captured during the ill-fated Childrens' Crusade, and headed east.

Perhaps years passed, perhaps they didn't, but by the 'time' Dax arrived in India, she was full grown and had gathered a small but fanatic following. Forerunners, as they were, to the Fraternal Order of Masons, the Knights Templar's elite members possessed great esoteric knowledge in matters mathematical and architectural. As a time-travelling Trill and visitor from a distant-future space station, Dax, of course was a walking talking numerological text book. Her timing in coming east was, to say the least, fortuitous.

It was a time when a goodly number of Kundulini cultists had grown skeptical in their faith. A sub-set of this subversive sub-set was a group who found the

profound notion of the 'third eye' to be particularly problematic. The purported presence of an invisible 'eye', true truth seer, set in the middle of one's forehead and waiting to be awakened, was a bit too much for these malcontents to accept.

Thus when Dax came onto the scene, not only espousing her message of, 'If I build it, you will cum', a message made materially observable in the wondrous architectural constructions Dax drafted and oversaw throughout the middle east, Tibet, and India (great structures which immediately became myth-enshrouded tourist attractions filled by continuously filing-in-and-out, gawking, groin rubbing, dumb-strucks the moment the last stone was LAID), but also espousing a corollary message, a message most unpalatable to the majority of Kundulinites.

Though Dax believed in the third eye, she believed it had been mislocated by the forefathers of yogadome. Her own calculations discovered a flaw in the early seers' division. At the twelfth decimal point 'pi' had been missliced. Dax re-calculated, re-apportioned, and re-located.

Dax's 'following' would certainly have been larger, much larger, if not for the ingrained sexism and whole-grain conservatism of the eastern cultist establishment, their m.c.p.ism no doubt intensified by the implicit message of Dax's power-point location, only females had the coveted third eye. In fact, the male backlash was so strong, it made Dax alter her message slightly. She was forced to 'move' the third eye (at least her personal parametric prostelization concerning its alleged location). Dax reversed the revered power point. For the sake of perpetuating her message, she turned her facts ass-backwards.

Dax and her disciples continued to wander eastward, building and worshiping as they went. When they'd finished crossing Northern China, leaving numerous simple-home Yurts and the plans for one heckuva great wall in their wake, they swung southeastward and butted smack dab into the ocean. Not ones to be deterred (or detoured) in their quest, they built a sturdy, nearly round sea craft and

made a brief oceanic journey which bumped them into the island of Japan, specifically the port city of Nagasaki. There they moored their boat and again began wandering, building as they went.

In the pre-dawn moon glow following their passing-out in the grass on the future site of their Shiton Yu temple, Sensei Satori Satire and his band of Japanese karate masters awoke to a most unusual set of sights and sounds.

"What the heck did you put in that saki, Ochoo?" Sensei Satire mumbled, rubbing his eyes and staring at the sight greeting his abrupt, snore interrupted, three a.m. semblance of consciousness.

"Damn! Last time I buy booze from a no-necked gnostic," Hidy Ochoo burped.

"Cut the chatter," Master Ginsu barked. "Check out these weirdos."

The sight the masters witnessed was the out-of-sight sight of Dax De Molay (despite her\his shell-casing change, Dax had stubbornly retained the name of his\her former host), and her disciples, performing their morning moon-worshipping ritual. Dax strode back and forth, back-lit by a full moon in the crisp morning air. She waved her arms like an orchestra conductor while the disciples, standing in a perfect circular formation, sang. Four disciples stood in the center of the human circle, forming what looked to be a cross. Perhaps most strikingly, they had all removed their pants. Though the Shiton Yu masters had seen plenty of assholes, most notably during their own communal poop fests, none of the all-male members could recall ever having seen a female crotch.

"Hooty hoot!" shouted Master Ochoo.

"Who cut off her dong?" Ginsu wondered.

"Never mind that," Sensei Satire chimed, "What in the heck are those aryans and injuns up too?"

Long before (for the last time, sorry time trippers. We know the absurdity of concepts like 'before' and 'after', but for the sake of those other folk... O.K., screw it. After this they're on their own!), Jadzia Dax was Jadzia Dax, and long 'after' she was Dax De Molay, Dax flirted with fame in the form of Dean Martin (a short lived experiment, Dax hated gin), Dax had discovered the tune that would eventually become the hit song 'That's Amore'. It was that tune the disciples sang as they bent forward in their geometric construction, bare butts pointed toward the moon, while Dax De Molay conducted, and the Shiton Yu masters stared on in saki-fogged pre-dawn befuddlement. The chorus sang:

When the moon hits your ass

All gas will come to pass

Dax De Molay

(At that point the chorus paused, Dax pointed at the four mid-circle cross formers, and, on cue, they one-by-one farted. The chorus continued.)

When the moon on your butt

Makes you pee like a nut

Dax De Molay

(Poop, poop, poop, poop)

When the moon on your rump

Makes you dump like dump Trump

Dax De Molay

(Poop, poop, poop, poop)



When the moon on your hole

Makes it look like a mole

Dax De Molay

(Poop, poop, poop, poop)

When you moon your third eye

Life's as easy as pi

Dax De Molay

(Poop, poop, poop, poop)

The last verse culminated in a final crescendoing chorus, followed by the cross-formers slithering through a twisted mid-circle yin-yang formation/emulation, and the collective yanking on of pants. The Shiton Yu masters applauded maniacally, but their show of appreciation was ignored by Dax and crew, who immediately began setting about the task of constructing a temple. De Molay drew elaborate designs in the dirt while the work crew felled trees, hewed bamboo, and slapped walls and floors together with a speed that floored the awe struck Shiton Yuers. They only sat and watched, dumbstruck, passing bottles back and forth and slugging freely. By the end of their sixth bottle, they were the proud owners of a glorious, modern testament to pre-modern building construction. Without a word to the recipients of the fruits of their labors, the De Molites nodded to each other, blasted choral farewell farts, and followed Dax off into the sunset.

"Nice pad," Ginsu snorted, teetering to his feet to approach the temple's rectangular outer wall.

"Hmm," Sensei Satori Satire mused, noting the circular temple inside the wall. "A round peg in a square hole. I think the place is perfect for our Shiton Yu dojo."

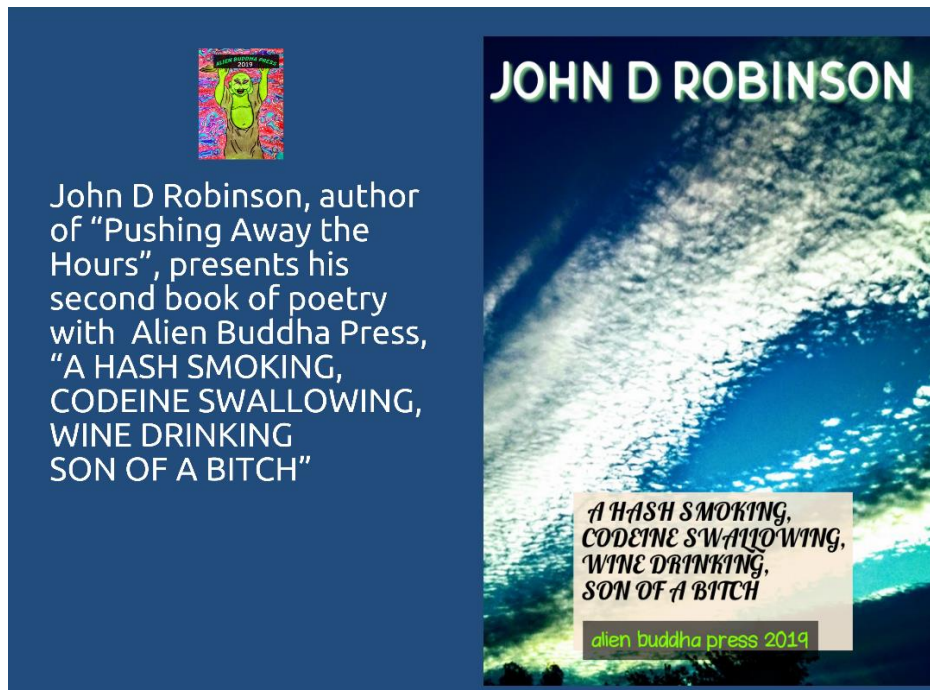
"Damn," Sensei Hoody Ochoo mumbled, "I wish I could have gotten one more look at that nut-less leader without her pants on. For some reason she made my ding-a-linger jump up and kiss my gi pants."

"Let's check out our new digs," Master Ginsu cut in, changing the subject rather than admitting that he too had experienced an inexplicable penile leap of faith on spotting the cock-free crotch.

"Ginsu's right," Sensei Satire snarled, "It's time we began to train!" The head sensei was not about to admit to his own near emission. "Give me an empty saki bottle, Ochoo, and I will cristen the temple wall. Let our dojo symbol be the pine tree, since it was under pines that we dropped our foundational feces, and let our 'breathing' symbolize our style's internal power, since it is through breathing that we can distinguish a particularly powerful and odiferous plop from a simple insignificant plip." The head sensei broke the symbolic saki bottle against the newly erected temple wall then led the crew into the dojo. Once inside, they immediately began a saki sloppy rendition of 'Give Em the Bird' Kata.

Aside from such anecdotal evidence the historical origins of the Shiton Yu (pronounced Sheet-on Yu, naturally) karate style were cloaked in mystery, misinformation, and mythology. The mythic\mystic Sensei Satori Satire was credited with having founded the school, but other information regarding the style's history consisted of nothing more than collections of undocumented tales and handed down stories.

**A Preview of John D. Robinson's  
Poetry Chapbook  
A HASH SMOKING,  
CODEINE SWALLOWING,  
WINE DRINKING SON OF A BITCH**



**Cover Photo by Red Focks**

**[Link Here](#)**

## **The Ass Of God**

Patricia stabbed Ronnie 3 times in the stomach and he survived and they got divorced:

Texas was a one eyed manager of the 'Dripping Spring' and after 3 years he hit the road with 18 months of takings:

Ruby was held sex-hostage for 48 hours and forced by a fuck-freak into sex acts her modelling career hadn't anticipated:

Julian was a junkie and bisexual and a talented artist who committed suicide by heroin after his partner had died of AIDS:

Monkey Dave the  
hash-dealer died of a  
broken heart discovering  
that his beautiful  
Swedish wife was being  
fucked senseless by his  
friends and customers:  
Linda, also a pot dealer,  
was sexy and wore short  
mini denim skirts and  
tight white panties and  
low cut blouses and she  
died of cancer aged 45:  
Niko was a junkie and  
we all assumed that he'd die  
of O/D but cancer  
beat his ass aged 44:  
Ricky was a sweet kid,  
meth amphetamine and a  
heart attack took him  
aged 29:  
Sailor Al was stabbed

to death in a hovel,  
Gordon froze to death on  
the streets and Mick the  
Karate survived 4 gun-  
shot wounds and took his  
revenge:

Tony, the street drinker  
told me he was going to  
shove this life up  
the ass of God.

## **The Oppressive One**

'I find it oppressive when you  
don't talk to me, I mean, 20  
miles and you've barely said  
a word to me, it's uncomfortable'  
she tells me, driving to work,  
it's just 07:30, my medication  
hasn't yet kicked in and  
smoked just one joint and  
drank one cup of tea and  
talking bullshit small talk  
isn't my kick anyways but  
at this hour it's way beyond  
my interest or energy, even  
from the one closest to me  
in this world:

'What shall I talk about?'

I ask her:

'I don't know, something'

she replies:

'Did you know that the

Ostrich is the only bird  
that shits and pisses  
separately' I said:  
'Fuck-me!' she screamed,  
shaking her head and  
welcoming the silence  
that followed.



## 1960's Pop Culture and Stravinsky

Walked out of the office midday,  
got high on hash and diazepam  
and watched 'Mary Magdalene'  
with a friend:

purchased some wine on the  
way home, took some codeine  
and smoked some joints;

I saw my wife pull up in her  
car; a pop song from the 1960's  
came over the radio and I  
began dancing in the kitchen,  
my wife came in, she didn't  
take off her coat but embraced  
me and we danced and held  
each other; when the song  
ended, we lingered for a short  
while, smiling at our own  
playfulness and then  
Bessie the dog grew jealous  
and started barking loudly

and demanding my wife's  
attention, the 2 cats were  
startled and leapt on top  
of the kitchen cupboards  
as we let go and Stravinsky  
took to the airwaves.

# The Alien Buddha Does 9/11

## Red Focks

*Kurt Cobain and Kathleen Hanna once spray painted "God is gay" on an abortion clinic.  
Up until 9/11 it was the most confusing act of vandalism in American history.*

### TRUMP DID 9/11

We kill the fucking shit

out of every fucking thing

and everybody.

They tread on us.

They all tread on us.

They're all always fucking treading all over us.

My sports teams

don't like your memes.

The Chinese.

The Koreans (all of them)-

The Blacks...

The LGBTQ'TWXYZ's

Commie Liberals

Gosh Darn Muslims

Hollywood perverts

Half of Washington

All of California

Anything resembling journalism

Snowden

Assange.

They tread all over us

and it hurts me.

It treads on me.

It treads all over me.

## Zachary Dilks

### A Lament For 9/11

'Twas so much more on that morn before fall that we all came to mourn as it fell  
As the shadows that touched had borne, by its clutch, a scorn we remembered so well  
From the sky rained a fiery metal as flowers and petals were mired with soot  
Come a dire awakening, staining our safety and breaking the ground underfoot  
For to think the unthinkable, sinking unsinkable ships to the depths of the seas  
Could arise such a tide of a towering pride, quelling flames in the name of the free  
As those towers had fell so the shroud, just as well, of our differences large and mundane  
And with brother in hand and sister we banded to stand all as one and the same  
How reborn from the ashes of devilish crashes our masses had marched ever brave  
From the whole of our souls, through the smoke of the coals, came a oneness we'd take to the  
grave  
Now I wonder years later how such a great crater could ever be filled and forgot  
For the the lessons that cost all our dead and our lost have been left in the gutters to rot  
What we meet as a difference we treat with indifference and greet one another with hate  
And concern for our brothers is strangled and smothered, now hovering darkening fates  
For no more do we crawl through the wreckage for all that we call our lovers and friends  
But create our own fears in the wake of the tears from the sight that we lost in the end

**( poem was previously published at The Society of Classical Poets )**

## **Thasia Anne**

### **THIS OUT OF IRAQ**

This night's news was interrupted by pictures of flag draped coffin boxes and a new controversy over whether this behavior was unpatriotic or compassionate.

Won't parents be comforted knowing how well their sons and daughters are being cared for in the new permanent housing of their physical bodies.

Flag draped coffin boxes lined up in rows further than eyes can focus.

While everyone believes they are on the right side of argument, killing continues of some Mamma's baby boys and girls.

Mothers and fathers cry in disbelief; that their child died for personal convictions.

Every last one of them is convinced of the correctness that their interpretation of facts and figures leaked by either side of some argument, happens to be the right one.

WE always believe WE are right, while they believe they are right, and we all put up our dukes. Life however traveled at the speed of the NET and so dukes become nukes and the party is over.

Mamma's and Daddy's sniffle while being handed triangular versions of flags laid to rest on coffin boxes of laid to rest loved ones.

And somehow that makes everything better?

Tonight's news was interrupted by a leaked story that our battling babies don't have enough armor on their vehicles. While factory workers cut for free and send steel plates to be welded for protection, top officials reiterate that our troops have all the supplies they needed.

That story was interrupted by the next newest story complete with pictures. We went in there to relieve them of a brutal dictator who tortured people.

While we intrude to teach others; that their leaders ways were wrong and immoral. We assigned to Guantanamo self- appointed sickened individuals just as depraved and indifferent. Then some type of electrodes in someone's twisted brain decided we should torture them.

## Jeremy Nathan Marks

### One World Trade Center

Is it wrong to raise a structure higher than the Freedom Tower—  
a toss so sublime it could fall to earth as ash, mingle with sirens,  
and flash in rotational light?

Halcyon is perfect symmetry, an algorithm so pure it must be cast as numbers.

When a prince seizes speech by its breath, dribbles out the ink's leak,  
murmurs of doubt will set his faith afire.

Only man says men do not count,  
that judgment matters more than life,  
but by iron, glass and steel  
there is a pulse yet in our nearly muted blood.



## John C. Mannone

### Between the Smoke and the Ashes

*For the survivors and the 3000 that died  
in the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001*

A campfire is supposed to take away the chill  
from the night. Yet, I am numb, hypnotized  
by flames dancing over embers and gray  
September ash.

Seams of smoke flitter like rapid dreams  
through the metal grate tempered with violent  
heat rising high, convecting fire, burning  
like lava rock on wood, now smoldering.

My face is frozen in the flames—in reflection  
of ancient cultures and their ceremonial rites  
to famed fictitious gods. Who should fall  
under the weight of heat? A glowing branch

blotched with fire-scars collapses, splashes  
into ash, like a pillar-plume. And then another  
consumed with in a breath of cold wind. Color  
of coals change with the wind whispering

metaphors. And between the smoke and the ashes  
my spirit escapes howling in the chill, more sounds  
of change are coming for a nation under fire.

## Alan Britt

### SEPTEMBER LAMENT

I'm trying to win the mind back,  
snatching it from the jaws  
of capitalist behavior.

Democracy was once a hungry canoe  
launched upon a philosophy of indigenous dreams  
and wild rivers to nourish  
the body of free society.

But now the white gloves of industry  
are the ones spewing Maserati smoke  
to obscure the scalping of entire nations.

I'm telling you,  
despite chips falling  
from the torso of a marble Venus,  
there's a complex web  
of imagination  
expanding at an alarming rate  
in the crawl spaces  
of our split-level lives.

## **FEE FIE FOE FUM**

The US, an oil  
sucking giant,  
removes its dipstick  
from the starving  
throats of Afghan refugees,  
whose necks  
like hungry birds  
extend  
from canvas huts.

*We're a quart and a half low,*  
says the President  
(Republican or Democrat).

*Must be time  
to replace the King.*

## **IRONY**

We squander  
precious minutes  
from our lives every day  
in convenience stores,  
at gas pumps,  
or trapped between the mink eyelashes  
of the local news anchor woman.

However, if we're lucky,  
a few authentic moments trickle  
from the gaping wounds  
of a suffering Bartok violin.

Occasionally, some moments even get pounded  
into millet  
for paintings that sag  
below white shadows  
in the Louvre.

But, tonight, all these minutes  
are strung together  
like a chorus of crickets,  
into a necklace  
of burning jetliners  
around the smooth neck  
of a mourning dove.

## **What a Wonderful World by G E Reutter**

*“The colors of the rainbow are so pretty in the sky; are also on the faces of the people going by...and I think to myself, what a wonderful world.”*

—George David Weis, Bob Thiele

From the stereo, the mellow tones of Armstrong’s voice quietly play while they sit next to each other on the patio, relaxing one more time. The rain taps gently on the patio roof as the two hold hands and speak of the long journey through which life has brought them.

They had lived many lives in one generation, never thinking they would see space travel, two wars of liberation in Europe, the turbulent times of the Korean and Vietnam wars, the fall of the Soviet Union, the pride brought back to America, something they thought would never return.

Through their peaceful bliss, a neighbor yells at them to put the television on; they do. As Louis sings “The colors of the rainbow are so pretty in the sky, are also on the faces of the people going by...,” the couple watch in horror as the second plane plunges into the World Trade Center. The images on the television grip them.

He holds her close. Images of Pearl Harbor fill their minds and they wonder if this generation will be strong like theirs. Louis finishes “...and I think to myself, what a wonderful world...” as tears flow down their cheeks.

Smoke fills the office; orange and red flames dance toward them. Falling to the floor, they dial their cell phones saying goodbye to those they love.

Gazing at the window, they stand, hold hands and run through the broken window. “The colors of the rainbow are so pretty in the sky, are also on the faces of the people going by....”

Thousands run down the stairwell, horror in their faces as they pass. The fireman and cop continue to make their way up, calling out to the lost to give direction—suddenly steel and mortar pour down upon them. Bravely they reach through the debris to outstretched hands until they can move no more. “...and I think to myself, what a wonderful world....”

A battle ensues in the bright metal cylinder as it streaks across the Pennsylvania sky. They give their lives to save thousands on the ground. “The colors of the rainbow are so pretty in the sky, are also on the faces of the people going by....”

Walking along the streets of Washington, they look on in horror as the plane descends upon the city. It plunges into the Pentagon, walls crumble, fire enveloping those inside. “...and I think to myself, what a wonderful world....”

Remember them each and every day. Remember the families without sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles. Remember who they are and who they could have been. Remember, they are us. If you have forgotten, take a minute to look into the sky and you will see them passing by and think to yourself what a wonderful world it could have been.

**\* First published at Lit Writ Sure Magazine 2004 and various on line publications**

## **An interview with Marc Brüseke editor of Analog Submission Press**



**ABP-** Thank you for taking this interview, Marc. I know that many of ABP's readers and contributors adore Analog Submission Press. For those who are hearing about your operation here for the first time, tell us about ASP. When did you get started? What kind of content do you publish?

**MB-** Analog Submission Press was started in 2017. The original idea was to create a literary zine but that soon gave way to single author chapbooks. My primary literary inspiration has always been the 'bohemian spirit' – from Rimbaud to the Beats, to the Punk rock movement. And so, I suppose, writing that seeks to channel that spirit and sentiment is what I publish.

**ABP-** Is Analog Submission Press currently accepting submissions? If so, what are your guidelines, and to where can one send their work?

**MB-** I am always on the lookout for new and exciting work. If you think your work fits in with the rest of the catalogue, get in touch via either the website or directly through [analogsubmission@gmail.com](mailto:analogsubmission@gmail.com)



**ABP-** A writer that we have both had the privilege of working with is Damian Rucci (The Comedian: Spurious Conversations With George Carlin-2018, What is The Deal With The Alien Buddha?-2019) You recently published his book Poor Poems for Poor Souls. Can you tell us about that book, and how somebody could obtain a copy?

**MB-** The first edition of 'Poor Poems for Poor Souls' was actually one of the first chapbooks I published. I had a challenging start to 2019 and as a result Analog Submission Press was on hiatus for a few months. I disappeared so to speak. Writers and publishers were emailing me to see if I was still alive. It seemed that Damian Rucci had disappeared too. I finally got hold of him and suggested a second edition of 'Poor Poems for Poor Souls'. It seemed the perfect publishing act to mark the return for both of us. There are still a few copies left. You can purchase one directly through [www.analogsubmission.com](http://www.analogsubmission.com)

**ABP-** Another talented writer we have both worked with is Catfish McDaris. Tell us about his book Impeach the Motherfucker.

**MB-** I've had regular correspondence with Catfish for about a year now. 'Impeach the Motherfucker' is the second chapbook of his work to be published through Analog Submission Press, the first being 'The Ass of the Statue of the Liberty' last year. While different in content, I think they work well as companion pieces. Both contain cover art by Janne Karlsson.

**ABP-** On your website I can see a lot of fun cover art. What goes into all of that? Do you have the same artist for all of these, or do the individual covers come from different places?

**MB-** It can be quite a mixture. Sometimes the writer will have an image that they really want to use and if I think it fits the aesthetic of the chapbook, I'll run with it. A good friend of mine, who writes under the alias Gregarious Beach, has contributed a lot of sketch art that has been used on the covers. A lot of the time I'll create and design them myself using a variety of mediums and techniques. The typographic aspects are almost always a result of my creative playfulness. The coloured covers were a reaction to having to buy multi coloured packs of paper – I could never seem to find a pack containing just a single colour - and I think it looked great for a while. With the 2019 chapbooks I've decided to make the shift toward high contrast black and white covers with colour inner wrappers – a sort of inverse and comment on the 2018 designs. I'm sure this aesthetic will eventually grow old too, and then I'll move on to something new. I have no shortage of ideas.

**ABP-** What do you have planned for ASP throughout the rest of 2019, and into 2020?

**MB-** At the moment I'm averaging around one chapbook launch a week, with launches scheduled in for the next few months. Lots of exciting writers. There will also be a novel by Oxford writer Daniel Gothard launching in July. There are a few other long form projects on the go but unfortunately, it's too early to talk about them.

**ABP-** I can see that you are an author as well. Tell us about *Get It Back to Give it Away*

**MB-** *Get it Back to Give it Away* is a roman à clef written in the first person. It's a snapshot travelogue about a backpacker drifting and drinking his way through Hungary and Croatia. It's a meditation on travel and the transient nature of life. There's alcohol, there's food, there's hedonism, and there's a love story. The narrative segments are interspersed with prose poems written using a technique I've been calling 'photo sketching'. The sequel was actually completed last year - set in Tokyo with one of the major narrative arcs exploring the shifting, and at times fluid, nature of sexual orientation. It's a very personal work and I quite frankly haven't had the emotional energy to finish editing it. But I'm sure it'll see the light of day at some point.

**ABP-** Thank you again for taking the time out of your schedule for this feature. The floor is all yours. Please take the following pages to share anything you'd like.

**MB-** I'd just like to thank everyone for their support, not just for supporting Analog Submission Press, but for supporting and believing in the philosophy of the small press movement. And supporting all those who work so hard to be a part of it. I think it's vital we have a working alternative to the mainstream publishing outlets. At its highest, the small press is not just a publishing alternative, it's also a community of like-minded individuals brought together through shared taste, values and a questing for purpose and meaning. This combination of philosophy and community gives it a special kind of value.

## ***The Spirit Box* by Jerry Williams**

True. The hypnosis I'm subjecting myself is somewhat tedious. The physical dross and wrapping on my body still are stuck into saying that I am a middle aged man, but my mind is a comet racing to the dark lands. I can hear the breathing of the subjects around me, and the tick tock of the clock is a mechanical anvil on my perception.

I am in the dark. I think there are others here, but I don't care.

How long has it been? Minutes? Hours? Centuries? They call this box the spirit box. A place where people on the street can go anywhere by the mind. I scoffed at the idea, but the pretty blonde with the intense blue eyes worked her magic on me, and I sat with several others listening to the whole 'your mind is your gateway' speech from her and others. I was disappointed. The blonde was there to entice me, and several other men from the mall into the spirit box. Her curves were a roadmap to ecstasy that got my blood churning seductive pheromones and fantasies.

I guess I had wanted more from the stunning blonde, and it was quickly obvious that she had no interest in me. I sulked as I sat down with the others who also had hoped for more from the blonde. In the darkened room my other senses kicked in, and the room smelt of old desperate men.

The spirit box had music slowly come in from speakers on the ground, and the melody was an odd mashing of monks chanting and slowed down belly dance music. The idea was to remove your mind from your body via some form of hypnosis. The others lapsed into whatever fantasy took them, but mine wasn't coming. The blonde had mentioned the dark lands, where you see the thing that torments you. I tried focusing on that, but I grew frustrated by my efforts. A soft noise started to match the music in the spirit box. I tried to avoid it, but it grew louder and louder and I knew what it was.

The other men in the spirit box were weeping. I grew agitated by the moment. There was no gateway. No doorway to the dark lands. It was all a sham, and now I'm here in a room full of desperate old men weeping. Angry at the turn of events, I got up in a huff, and opened the door to berate the stunning blonde from before.

I was stunned when the universe fell apart as I clumsily opened the door. There ahead of me the door had opened into a dark tunnel, and there in front of me was myself.

"Welcome to the spirit box." I greeted myself.

# Poetry From JD Nelson

**we can't have a cat because of the coyotes**

don't know soda from sad  
but once I did & I drank twelve cans

I read the natural newspaper  
after I fed & gave water to the birds

it was enough to send me to the overseer's office  
& I reject the blue ghouls theory of service

## **tarantula tooth**

one of the great earth sayings we have is play ball

planking spiff the time-wise

and you were caught up there in genes like a suit when you came to earth for  
fun

odd indigo horse

well I'm pumpkin

# A Look at Kushal Poddar's Herding My Thoughts to the Slaughterhouse



Alien Buddha Press 2019

Kushal Poddar is the author of six books of poetry including 'Eternity Restoration Project- New And Selected Poems'

Death and the rituals accompanying it are recurrent themes in Poddar's poetry. He transforms the mundane into a celebration of language and the oddities found in his reality.

-Donna Snyder, Poet, Author, Editor, Curator

ISBN: 9781074554064

**Herding My Thoughts  
To The Slaughterhouse**

*A Prequel*



*By*

**KUSHAL PODDAR**

**<https://www.amazon.com/Herding-My-Thoughts-Slaughterhouse-Prequel/dp/107455406X>**



## **Death Strolls By Us**

In the laughs of a streetlight  
a homeless man feeds his  
kittens before having a morsel,  
and death passes him even tonight,  
him and all those kittens.

The man begins reading eight obscure  
words related to sleep-  
oscitancy, logy, soporific, dozy,  
sleepify, peepy, somnolent, sloomy.  
Death returns nearby, yawns and  
inhales a planet inside.

## **Herding My Thoughts**

Herding the flies back  
from the slaughterhouse,  
a piece of meat in  
my hand, a tickle  
of blood rolling down  
my left elbow, I  
turn to see, not flies,  
my thoughts are everywhere,  
some well fed, some  
fed up with me and  
lying supine, their  
bellies bloated up,  
and yet looking pale.  
I open the pen  
and they show no love  
lost for my ribcage.  
Perhaps someday  
I should free them,  
visit my parents  
and proclaim my  
deepest forgiveness.

## **Straightjacket**

The thoughts,  
pointing at the pills utters the nurse.  
Her mouth will turn platypus  
once I swallow the pills- the 'red queen' first,  
then the 'father's broken bottle green',  
'yellow submarine playing in a loop'.  
I name all of them.

I shall never know what they go by in the market-  
perhaps 'a touch of wind for your head'!  
I swallow all those thoughts, and they  
witch dance washed in the moon of my nocturnal heart,  
witches who dance to bring dimness, more dimness,  
and they dance merging their bodies  
into each other again and oh, again.

Thoughts have never been easy to swallow.  
What I think about not recalling them in the first place  
chokes my pipe, system.  
I call, "Mother!" and the nurse  
wraps my flesh in the white stillness.

## **A Landscape In Dull Brown**

The yellow signal blinks on  
and on at the white road-end,  
at the purple, at the blackheads  
of trees and the last lamppost  
I can see. The sleepy police  
salutes at no one passing  
with red light of evening on,  
but I go deaf from the siren.  
There stands a statue whose finger  
points south. Things go south in bunches.  
One sudden gale takes a basket.  
Trees zip the birds in.

## **Back**

### *Part One*

Can you move your hand?  
Can you move your fist?

Thrice failed, at last Pa  
seizes her breast,  
the one near him.

He is back! She turns.

### *Part Two*

Returned from the white  
he sits on the porch  
with his back at  
the street, his eyes  
on the inside.  
He refuses to sit  
indoor. His shirtless  
flesh bears a mark of soar.  
It looks like Sun.

### *Part Three*

Son, he murmurs.  
No one answers  
at first. Then the maid's  
cat begins moaning.

## Art from Aaron Morgan



A companion piece to Josh Medsker's poem 'C12H22O11'

# Poetry from Josh Medsker

**C12H22O11**

Human history is spun from sweet  
chains of slavery, chains of molecules  
one combination of which is sucrose  
(white poison), over which their bodies flay  
themselves open to maintain dominion.

Into this uncontrolled experiment, we come,  
analyzing and determining their weakest points,  
until, having compiled our data,

we surge.

## **Beyond the Tanarian Hills**

I dream a new name,  
new home, shape my worlds  
and show no one. I'll  
risk laughter no more.

My word shapes call the beasts up,  
as if by ritual. The motion  
is what's important. I can  
erase, re-write and erase  
the words, create negative space  
to hide in-between  
with my co-harbingers in the word.

I dream a new home  
new life, beyond providence  
on the wings of my lovelies I fly:  
over the burning auroras of London  
shattered skyscrapers of Beijing  
ruined minarets in Cairo  
beyond the Tanarian hills.



## **Twitch**

He was alien, a lantern-jawed misanthrope with only two means of escape: either into his own fevered mind or out the attic window (and that wouldn't have very productive now would it've?) He galumphed around that dreary room, midwifing slimy pulverizing Shoggoths and other amorphous beasts that could have destroyed him without a thought, like the insect he knew he was.

## **The Dead Loved / The Loved Dead**

I.

How still he is.  
How merry. A wry little smile  
so rarely seen.

Alone, unbound at last.

II.

He's moved into immortality now,  
off the strike and flash of the pulps,  
ready for the calculations of academia  
and dreams of canonical embalming.

COVER ART BY JAY MINER

Previews of new fBP releases  
with reviews from Rick Lupert  
Wayne F Burke and Robert J.W.



A review of Jay Sizemore's *Scowl*  
by Dustin Pickering

*Ledger Red* by Scott-Patrick Mitchell

Ying-Yang DODO  
(excerpt #2)  
by John Miller

## ALIEN BUDDHA ZINE 8

ART NEW YORK

PAGES 85-129

AN INTERVIEW WITH  
JAY MINER OF  
RUST BELT PRESS

MIKE FIORITO PRESENTS  
JUAN CARLOS PINTO: OUR ARTIST  
AND MORE

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KEVIN RIDGEWAY AND JOHN GROCHALSKI

Photography from  
Red Focks and Olivier Schopfer

ART FROM  
AMMI ROMERO  
MARCEL HERMS AND DAH

## Poetry from Tian Yu

### Each cold night has a lonely man

Let the silence of tonight accompanies me.

The rain is so cold outside the place.

Tonight without you in front of me,

I can't touch my heart anyway.

The melodies of the night's echoes are in the heartbroken world.

The night's wine isn't intoxicated by the dusky sentences.

The wind of the past seems to haven't been firmly rooted.

The traceless flower has blossomed but lost its memories.

Each cold night has a lonely man,

Such an endless shower.

I just want to ask every light hearts.

Can the pain of love go away?

Each cold night has a lonely man,

Such an endless dream.

I just want to ask every light heart,

Is the way of love too ruthless?

## **Turn Around Like No Action**

Beautiful turn takes tomorrow away.  
But it does not carry the memory of the past.  
Let a heart smile calmly,  
Don't let luck waste your meeting.

This is a collection of cranes from heaven.  
The wind bell stirred the strong tea.  
It's the memories that shake the stories of each side.  
Give the most subtle magic to the conscious.

The visitor outside the window asked me,  
Where is the nearest heaven?  
I pointed to myself in her mirror.  
It's she who is closer to your hot beauty.

I forgot the feeling of invisibility.  
But I caught the blue of the rattan.  
The real scenery is breath.  
The illusory dream is a skin.

## VISPO from Ray Craig



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49

# **George W. getting sucked off by a grey alien while painting a picture of smiling children shooting cops under an american flag**

**An interview with artist Taj Bourgeois**



**ABP-** Thank you for taking this interview, Taj. Your work is truly remarkable. How long have you been creating art, and where do you get your inspiration?

**TB-** Thank you for having me! Well, some of my earliest memories are of drawing out video game levels like Mario, Sonic, Megaman, all the bad guys, and of course a boss at the end. We didn't actually have any of those games, but I probably had played them at a cousin's house. I'd run my pencil through the level killing each bad guy with various scribble attacks. I did this when I was 3 and 4 and then presumably stopped after I got my first Gameboy, but yeah I remember looking through hundreds of pages as an adult and getting a huge kick out of all the different Dr. Robotnik boss battles in particular. Looking back it's kinda cool that I was creating these things out of a desire to play these games and not exactly just art for arts sake, like I think most people assume is the reason kids draw for haha.

As for how long I've been consciously creating art for art's sake well, it's not often it's for it's own sake but I've been doing it professionally for two and a half years. Between 12 and 18 skateboarding was my life. Then I moved onto music and literature, but aside from a few dozen impulsive notebooks of stoned doodles I didn't start making visual art with clear intentions until around the time my daughter was born in 2012. Her arrival was the biggest inspiration/conscious change I've ever made and around that time (I was 24) I was in this community college painting class out of curiosity and watched a documentary called "The Radiant Child" about Basquiat. I totally had this naïve ego driven burst of inspiration that's still going strong 7 years later. As much as painting initially appealed to me it wasn't until later that year after

having gone through hundreds of books from the local art school library and discovering the work and theory of Brad Troemel that I knew I wanted to be an artist as a career no matter what the medium or where my curiosity might lead. Mostly I'd languish in the realms of the conceptual, and take mental screenshots of whatever magic meme mirror my dumb face was pressed against.



**ABP-** You have a strong presence on social media. Do you believe this is necessary for a young artist to gain recognition? Would you say that your work can receive more followers online than at galleries and other live events today?

**TB-** There's not doubt that social media has been a necessity in making my dreams a reality, and no doubt the audience, even now, is bigger than all irl events I've had combined. I think however we can agree that it can be fucking exhausting no matter what your angle. It actually really trips me out that artists used to have to hustle their work in person. It's not so much hard to fathom, but obviously it used to be such a far flung fantasy that to commit yourself to being a fine artist for an actual living without a degree or a gallery, well I reckon "delusion" would be a requirement... maybe it still is. Of course there's plenty of merit to showing work in person. It's pretty rare someone's just going to buy a \$500+ painting online without ever having seen it with their own eyes, but you might be surprised how common it is. Hell, I'm surprised every fucking time haha.

**ABP-** I could imagine that much of your imagery can be a magnet for controversy. Have you received many complaints from offended viewers? If so, do you have a favorite critic? As an artist, what do you think is the best way to handle disgruntled people?

**TB-** Yeah I mean I think it would be damn near impossible not offend regardless of my intentions. I mean there's other artists who get offended by the prices alone heyooo "how can you be taken seriously selling a painting for \$50?" or the flipside "are you seriously trying to sell this for \$50"? That kind of offense is easy to deal with lol I just don't. And then there have been other times where I definitely rustled some jimmies despite my best intentions, and ya know.. for better or worse the internet is where almost all my business comes from so lets just say that being aware of that, well, I've come a long way, but hey ay ay, learning every day. But yeah being offensive on purpose don't hit like it used to. Those kinds of things are what we call projection 101. Being offensive for it's own sake is boring... usually. If someone wants to unfollow me for something like an alien sucking a lil pee pee that's fine, that's on purpose, but if it's something worth calling me out on I would much rather they shoot me a message cause sometimes shit gets a lil misinterpreted like when I was commissioned to paint Sam Hyde's portrait and then was later informed that he's kind've a huge piece of shit.. whoops. Oh and my favorite critic is my daughter no doubt, well I don't quite get her feedback that often. Certainly not on things like the aforementioned alien lol. The collective critic that is the internet works well enough for now.



**ABP-** A lot of your work is very satirical. Who are some of the pop culture figures you have lampooned?

**TB-** Heh yeah well gotta have a little fun sometimes. I'll just name the top three that have gotten the best response.

- Marina Abramovic: just go to youtube and search "Art Must Be Beautiful Artist Must Be Beautiful", and then search "Art Must Be Peanut Butter Artist Must Be Peanut Butter"

- Robert Rauschenburg: I had some art nerd phases and this parody had my actual body as a stand in for Rauschenburg's infamous taxidermied sheep with a tire around it I forget the actual title but that description would probably make it easy to search. Most might not know what I'm referring to lol is that pretentious? Anyway it was featured in "Art In America", so I'm just stoked other art modern art nerds were into it.

- George Doubleyuh: Probably my only painting to go viral aka the title of this interview. Also, I guess I've done quite a bit of alien paintings lately which I think count as pop culture figures in their own right. Actually I used to think alien art was cliché until I decided they all had foot fetishes.





**ABP-** I can see that you do a lot of mixed media art and digital collage art, as well as painting. Do you have a favorite medium?

**TB-** Oh man well I've pretty much just been painting and playing piano past few years, and honestly still feels like I'm only just getting started, but when I really think about it I realize that my favorite medium, if it could be called as such, is this idea I've romanticized since the days of discovering all those modern artists back at the art school library. The medium kinda being the whole of modern art gallery exhibits and how the various mediums all shown at once offer a sort of fine art feng shui that I feel only a very few big names (at least that I know of) go out of their way to achieve. I'm talking about someone like Urs Fischer who has put together immense exhibits that include paintings, sculpture, installation, photography, and pretty much what I'm trying to say is that my dream show is basically one that includes all the mediums I'm into on large scales that encapsulate all my favorite things about modern art from the gall of massive paintings to the absurdity of conceptual sculpture (like that of Erwin Wurm) and bizarre relational aesthetics. I really do love it all and I hope that's apparent to anyone who may happen upon my book by the same title as the Abramovic parody I mentioned earlier. For now I'm just happy to be painting for a living.



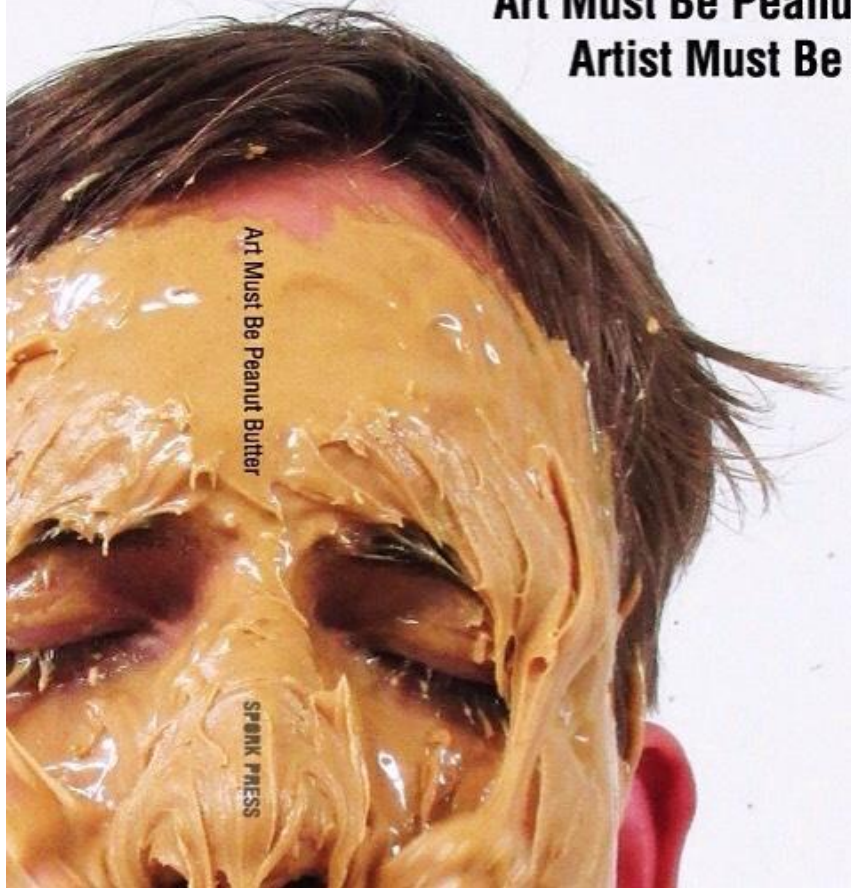
**ABP-** I see you have a book “Art Must be Peanut Butter, Art Must be Peanut Butter”. What can you tell us about that, and where could one obtain a copy?

**TB-** Ah ha well there’s so much I could say about that period of my life. That book is the fruition of 4 years of discovery and it covers so many of the things I mentioned in the previous response. It can be weird to talk about now as a whole and not a specifically related question, but I gotta admit as humbly as I can that when I was offered to do the book all I wanted to do was to make the best possible art book that’s ever existed! A lofty goal no doubt, but at an immense catalogue that captured a certain mindset for the time. Honestly it’s one of the things I’m most proud of having ever created. After that came out there was an aching lull that lasted a little over a year, and with that I kind of just abandoned much of my previous practice, but in retrospect my practice was as broad as everything I’ve been describing. I think my grandpa said it best after giving him a copy “Well honestly I still don’t know what it is you do, but I can tell you’re a professional”. He’s a super humble and successful guy, and we’re not very close so it meant a lot to me. Oh and it’s available via spork press or by hitting me up for a signed copy with a little sumpin sumpin extra ayy.

# Taj Bourgeois

**Art Must Be Peanut Butter**

**Artist Must Be Peanut Butter**



Art Must Be Peanut Butter

SPANK PRESS

**ABP-** If somebody wants to obtain one of your paintings, how can they do that?

**TB-** For the past 31 months I've pretty much taken all orders through facebook messenger, instagram, and email alone, but honestly it's starting to get overwhelming to the point I either gotta start raising prices or just start making more invested work. I do plan to make a website once I finish my commissions, but I haven't been without a commission in over a year heh, so... hopefully soon, hopefully never.





**ABP-** You also drive a taxi. How do you balance art with your day job. Has anything happened while driving the taxi that inspired any of your work?

**TB-** Oh actually the time I drove a taxi was in sync with that year long lull I mentioned. I got the taxi job simultaneously as uber began and my book came out. It was an awfully low paying job and you could say i literally drove myself crazy pretty often, but overall it gave me an incredible amount of solitude to sort out my bullshit. I drove from Summer 2015 to Winter 2016 so around 18 months, and towards the end I was obsessed with creating digital collages on my phone to the point where I was like "fuck this I'm going to start making these by hand! I'm gonna quit this doomed job and become a painter!" Lol it actually did feel pretty dramatic at the time considering at the end of November 2016 I made negative \$70 one weekend (yeah insane) and was like "this is it I'm going all in this might be my last chance to really pursue my dream I'm going to be an artist." With only \$400 to my name I made a post on facebook "Anyone want to commission a painting?" I consoled myself with the unlikeliness of it panning out by thinking of painting as a performance in itself; another thing to add to the oeuvre I could title "The Painter" December 2016 – well, the rest is history in the making.

**ABP-** Thank you again for taking the time, Taj. The floor is all yours. Please take the following pages to share anything you would like with our readers

**TB-** Put a bread tie round your ear twist your tits and disappear.









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