



THE PRAIRIE REVIEW

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GRASSROOTS MAGAZINE OF POETRY, PROSE, ART AND CRITICISM



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THE PRAIRIE REVIEW

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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the 14th issue of The Prairie Review!

Join me in reading poems and prose in this collection of works from writers near and far. Take your time to enjoy writings from diverse voices speaking to you from unique and personal contexts.

The outreach of The Prairie Review continues to have international scope, and I am happy to think that our readership extends so far beyond the fair prairies of the American MidWest!

The Magazine is a means to lend momentum to the creative work of writers, artists, and poets who publish with us. It is not my intention to feature works only to let them freeze on the page. The idea is to document and share our efforts in a public space and to continue to explore new forms of expression and practice, whether it is through live performances, collaborative projects, discussions or different art forms.

Thank you contributors for sending your work to The Prairie Review! You are the Magazine. Thank you Greg Harrell for your generous editorial assistance with this 14th issue.

Here's to life poetic, now and forever, for as long as we can!

Kinga Lipinska

Editor



**“I stretched out ropes from
spire to spire;
garlands from
window to window;
golden chains
from star to star,
and I dance.”**

- Arthur Rimbaud



Rimbaud

How to judge a man?

I need him at night

hair soft and eyes kind

poles constructed, staked at dusk

An unmade bed, Leads to unmanned tents

Empty in it's constant

My laxity becomes a narrowing of the eyes from a trusted Swede

But the needs of the day preoccupy

Leaving me horse strung

The postural seat

Sit up, relax, focus your sights

Although my man, I find it hard

To allot for the ripped up and torn

Glanced at as a child

I know I change

To grow and anticipate, he nods,

That's the game

Why are our bodies not treated as precious

Yet I judge them to be

Why are our spleens cast out, left to the vultures of the day.

I wonder at the nature that leaves us

Unclassified, can I use your eyes?

My first man, your eyes

Although your mouth was faulty

I can account for that

I use your teller on this one

This piece of a human I found

Uncomplete, without line

He did not have you

Yet I will not have him

Says your eyes.

Skin

My feet make a quarrelsome captain out of you
A Forced stop, sudden short bone
You want me on your shelf, as I did you

But now you ask me for my skin
The person I was,
I am
I decided the switch on this one
Will you accept, the new track
A screaming choice, a child's reproach

I could make a new skin for you
You won't see me behind the seams
Is that what you want?
Imitation of brown clear eyes
Tension under pause

I lived in a hollow skin, in different colors
A haze, rotting throughout
Sometimes I still smell the stench,

Wonder if the old suit fits?

Clarity

Clarity becomes colored in unborn hues

I looked at you and saw a healing grip

Now you look at me and I see grasping hands,

Wait I say, the masthead is unfinished

It can't bear your weight

The loudness of need fills your ears

Tired of laundry days he complains

He sees me on the rack

Greed, my sight returns

The safety I own, is tenuous in your hands

Your name will never be sewn on my tags

It remains ready for blank space.

Ray Horwitz is a versatile multi-instrumentalist, poet, and singer-songwriter based in the Chicagoland area. She blends a rich array of musical, and writing influences from Rilke, Robert Lax, Nick Drake, to Dylan. She explores themes of psychology and spirituality in her work. Currently, Ray is in the process of creating her first self-produced album.

Moment

A murmuration of birds

A bone cold chill in the Spring air

Red taillight out on the white pick-up filled with scrap metal

Blue bloodshot eyes of the man in brown corduroy

Drunk in an unlit stairwell

Tires screeching in the distance like screech owls

I stop dead

Dead but alive in the moment

Is the world still turning?

It feels strange and bent and somehow still

This is The Poem I Did Not Write

This is the poem I did not write.
It sat shoved back on my mind's shelf
fermenting.

This is the poem I did not write.
It caught in my throat like a shot of Malort
herbal and bitter.

This is the poem I did not write.
It clocked me from a bar stool and smoked
mocking.

This is the poem I did not write.
It crashed to the ground in shards
red wine and scars.

This is the poem I did not write.
It drowned me like whiskey without a chaser
burning.

This is the poem I did not write.
It hit me like a raging boyfriend full of
shame and hatred.

This is the poem I did not write.
It wrote itself.

White House

Drove by a white house today,
rundown, dilapidated, depressed.
Stark it stood against the gray sky,
no climbing ivy, wandering roses, or wildflowers.

I wondered about the people inside,
did they care what people on the outside thought?
Maybe not. Maybe the price is too high,
fix is in, damage done.

But a sprout of yellow dandelion,
reaching for sunlight in the driveway,
a crack in the armor, a way in, tomorrow's wish,
Not too late.

Island

On this island grows wild sumac and
the King-fisher swoops by the slug-path lagoon.

The yappie dogs are by the well and
a lopsided Collie sleeps in the field.

Walk through the berry-thickened mud path and
find the store called "Driftwood" selling seashells.

See the pier in the distance and
hear the tide roll soundly under.

Stand atop white skull rocks with barnacled skin and
hear the squawk of seagulls.

Cheeks turned the color of crab shells aside the creep of the ocean.

Childhood bravery.

An undulating symphony.

Tan Babies

A poetic flash fiction

For a few hot months, I had you. That summer back in '85, when I was broke but still alive, and you were treading on foreign ground. You, from Carolina, a smallish town, up north in DC at the behest of your mother to care for a brother who didn't fare the city well. You showed up. But did you care for him?

I think not. You, me, him, and some others, crammed into that tiny apartment kitchen, smoking crack. It was tooling, not addiction. Fun and games, not affliction. Still, you had to know it wasn't good for him. Did you? Who's to say? Surely not me at that sweet age— twenty-one or two. Shy, not knowing what to do. How to live without love on the burner each morning to brew.

There was a club you knew about across the line— Maryland, my state, though I hardly recognized it. It was different at any rate— Southern, in a northern way. Winding roads and forest decay. Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers were the band that year to emulate. They became the backdrop to our DC scene, summer of love for you and me.

"He's the hardest working man in DC," you whispered, your hands on my hips as we swayed to the beat. Sweaty as the best of them on that hot dance floor, it was hard to ignore a feeling of uniqueness. Me, a White girl surrounded by Blackness. Surrounded by dancers, a tiny white speck. Wrapped in your arms, my yin to your yang. Or was it the opposite?

I might've asked you, but I shoved it down. You, from Carolina, a smallish town, I figured you wouldn't get it. You knew of love and that go-go swing. That seemed like enough for me. Chuck Brown on the turntable sang, "It don't mean a thing."

One lazy Sunday in Rock Creek Park: Our bodies twisted into a lover's knot against an old oak tree. We found treasure in sweet words and gentle breezes. You called me your "Precious," and I couldn't believe it. No guy ever placed me high as that.

MARGO CHRISTIE

It took me back to how we met, at our job in a grocery store bakery. We said “Hey” to each other every day without consequence, til the day I came up with something specific. I might’ve recalled it but not in that instant, me pressed against you, you against our tree like a bear scratching its back. And now I wonder if you could tell it easily, that I wouldn’t flinch to enter your world.

Proof. I traipsed right into that southeast DC apartment tower and ran up the stairs. Your lady fair to meet you there, the elevator wouldn’t do.

One day, a neighbor woman met me there.

“What? You took the stairs when there’s an elevator right there?”

I couldn’t say that it smelled bad, or that being closed-in made me feel scared. You were running late. Innocent white girl like me couldn’t be left to figure her own way. She led me into her place. I took the proffered seat. We watched TV— a soap opera— ‘til you showed up, not much late at all. This is what seals it, I thought.

Then came the time I met your mom— not the best of circumstances, she was there to carry little brother back home. I didn’t get the details but knew enough about affliction to see that DC had beaten him down. She didn’t regard me sideways. Didn’t have much to say, but she smiled when I did the chicken neck, as Chuck Brown played on the radio in the background.

Time flew by and we said the word, L-O-V-E, and spoke of apartments in the suburbs and beautiful tan babies. You said it was the way to eliminate racism. “How can you hate Mom and Dad?” were your words, and I thought it strange, you being southern and Black, that you didn’t say “Mama and Daddy.” What did I know? Only that I really did want that, tan babies and eliminating racism, all in one casual step.

‘Long as I don’t get bored, I might’ve added. Good Lord, why?! Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers couldn’t locate mine. I had no problem with the go-go swing, but comfort? No. That wasn’t my thing.

Fast forward now to 2022 and a song that brought back Rock Creek Park. Nearly forty years gone and it all flooded back. I'd been there. Rock Creek Park in '85, when I was broke but still alive, awakened to the possibility of being precious in someone's eyes.

I was 22 and you 25. In our prime and doing it all the time, in the park, in the car, on the sofa in your brother's apartment. We did it 'til it was done, and though you thought I was the one, I couldn't be so sure. No adventurer at all, I went back to what I knew before.

You were hurt, your heart bruised. You tried to tell me, but I refused you. What did I fear? The kids I'd never have, the man I thought I knew.

Another year passed and I looked you up, found so much in one blurry snapshot. You didn't spend much time online. You liked to drink champagne. You didn't have a woman, at least not on display. You'd returned to Carolina, back to the fold like little brother. I didn't get it back then—it was kinship, a mother who cared, a family that might've let me in. And now there are only unanswered questions.

Margo Christie is an artist, poet and writer currently based in Gulfport, FL. She hails from Baltimore, a city she describes as "suffering a north/south identity crisis," and lived for several years in the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, DC. Her work has appeared in *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Loch Raven Review*, *The Prairie Review*, and other literary publications. Her first book of poetry, "Lanterns for Light" (2024), is available on Amazon.

www.Margochristie.wordpress.com

Chuck Brown is a Washington, DC-based musician who is commonly known as the Godfather of Go-Go. Go-Go, an early variant of Hip-Hop, was a mainstay of the Washington DC sound and scene throughout the 1980s.

In memoriam: Archduke Franz Ferdinand, 1863 - 1914

I never intended
to go to
Sarajevo. But
it was warm, a
good day for
a walk & before
I knew it . . .

*

Only when you
walk across it
can you see how
clear the Medi-
terranean Sea is.

*

Was too
late for the
assassination
but I knitted
you a sweater
on the way.

*

The
corollary of
snow-
blindness. See
& ski.

*

Got
lost
but
the
sweater
kept me
warm.

planet-forming discs

Candi is a-
ligned with the
controversial pop
queen, an American
Socrates whose internal
accommodations combine
all the luxuries of a well-pro-
portioned dining-room with violent
video games which increase aggressive
behavior in contaminated children & young
adults.

not always

moving

toward the

dream not

always

the dream

not

moving

always

dreaming

11.03 a.m.

Wrote down what you said,
but didn't get around to
reading it. Maybe another
time. Today's not a good
day for it. Got to pack. Head-
ing south tomorrow, following
the whales down the coastline,
or at least as far as the coast-
line goes. To the promontory
that curls back on the bay
like an apostrophe. I'll see
what happens then. Could be
I stay there for the summer,
hibernating, or whatever
the seasonal equivalent
is. Reading. Walking. Watching
the divers go out for abalone.

Bring you back a souvenir
T-shirt. Or maybe I'll drift
to the city, see if I can find
that book on Art Nouveau
you've always wanted. Then
head north again, making sure
I read what I wrote down
earlier today. That way we can
pick up where we left off,
as if my migration was just
another pause for breath, one
more hole in a conversation.

Mark Young's most recent books, all published this year, are the downloadable pdf, *The Hit List*, published by Scud Editions; *Gravel* (with Harry K. Stammer & Mark Cunningham), from Sandy Press; *Some Unrecorded Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, from Otoliths; another downloadable pdf, *Closed Environment*, from Neo-Mimeo Editions & *The Complete Post Person Poems*, also from Sandy Press.

Spring Cleaning

It's Spring.
I throw open the windows
and set my intention
For clean space
And cleared mind
Of winter's cobwebs
The fallow season is past
And I look forward to renewal

I do well in the kitchen
Empty the cupboards
Wipe them down
Nothing but kitchen tools
And dry goods in the pantry

I scrub the bathroom grout
And tile floors
Easy work
Meditative even

I open the doors to the bedrooms

Closets

Basement

Spaces filled with

Clothes

Toys

Furniture

In a flash I'm gone

Gone

Gone in a moment *Gone in a*

Moment

Moment

A moment

Her moment

My moment

Our moment

282 days of moments

2 more than expected

A moment gone

The moment he chose

A moment

The moment he chose

He chose a moment

A moment that led to more moments

So many more moments

Moments that led to moments

Until there were no more moments

I wanted no more moments

I wanted no more moments

I wanted no more

no more

Moments of love

Moments of dreams

Moments of want

Moments of hope

I packed them all away

I packed them away

I packed them in boxes

away

I packed up my grief
I packed up my pain
I packed up my existence

Her Existence

My Existence

I packed up existence.

But then you existed
 And brought back
My love
 My dreams
 My want
 My hope
My grief
 My pain
My existence
 Her existence
My existence

Existence.

I know this is too big a poem for you
It's too big

In the way the sea is too big
Or the sky
Or the air we breathe

Have you thought about how the air we breathe
Fills our lungs
Cleans our body

We breathe
We expand

All these things-

The sea, the sky, how we breathe

*Too big
Too much*

but true.

I want to say I love you

But I can't

My house is too much of a mess
For words like that

Where would I find the room?

When stuffed in every drawer

Is a pair of tiny socks

The outfit we brought her home from the hospital in

Her first birthday dress

Its ribbons tangled and tattered

Pants

And shoes

Onesies

Newborn

Six months

One Year

Toddler shirts

The lobster costume

We made a pot out of her stroller

I was the chef

I want to say I love you
But instead of the words
I trip over yesterday's favorite stuffie
 Building blocks of every color and size
 Big plastic ones from when she first started stacking
 Magnetic ones, *some broken, that she still uses now*
Dolls
 Blankets
 The bouncer from infancy

 A broken trampoline *I never wanted*

I want to say I love you
 But if I say I love you
I'll have to make room for you
And my rooms are filled with old furniture
 The chair I nursed her in sits in the basement
 With a bassinet
 A pack and play
 And the slats from her convertible crib

It's been years since she moved into her big girl bed.

If I throw them out
 Am I throwing her out?
Am I throwing me out?
 Am I throwing my pain out?
Am I throwing the past 8 years out?

Am I throwing my life out?
 Am I throwing her life out?
Am I throwing my life out?
 What am I throwing out?
Will she feel like I'm throwing her out?
Am I throwing her out?

What am I throwing out?

If I say I love you

Then I'll have to throw out the pants that haven't fit her for years

tiny pants that hold the imprint of tiny dreams

I'll have to throw out the toy dollhouse

That the toy happy family lived in

I'll have to throw out the crib And blankets

That held both of our tears

All these things

The proof that she existed

That I existed

When neither of us existed

When either of us *barely existed*

At one moment

Or another.

If I say I love you

What will I be without all these things?

these boxes

These years of broken memories

Held suspended in time

Holding me suspended in time

Holding her suspended in time

Holding my grief

Suspended in time

Holding in all my wants and dreams

Suspended in

ANDREA GASPAR

If I say I love you
I won't be able to keep these things suspended
In time

But if I don't release these things
Suspended in time

Then I won't get to say

I love you

in time.

Bee Poem

I was chasing a bee
Constantly trying to catch its attention.
See me bee
Why won't you see me?
One day I finally caught the bee's attention.
In the palm of my hand I had a bee.
A bee to see me.
As happy as I could be, it stung me.
Damn.
I forgot I was allergic to bees.



Call from Denver

My teeth broke

a farm persimmon skin

long past its coral blush.

Fruit split, flesh perishing

dripped through my fist,

putrid juice curdling words:

died and sorry and suicide.

Mouth foul of fruit's sick

seed, belly heaving, throat

choked on the tree.

Hate Crime

Reborn to a new womb by 32, warm-blooded
butterfly uncracking in blacks and blues,
seed that splits and dies

before giving up its green from soil to sunlight.
Something just wouldn't settle in right,
between your coat and your skin.

Sometimes your bold shoulders blistered
overexposed, white strap-lines flashing,
you played in radiation so long.

Then they snapped elastic, slapped sunburn,
flayed deep layers in the name of the Lord,
in singsong circles, shitkickers and hide—

I'd shoot arrows through their wicked fists
and break their faith into powdered god-rock,
fire their porch and flatbed flags.
Did you?

Did you bite back, black cat?
Did you go out fighting, fur flying, wings full-span?
Did you leave them a mark to hate to the grave,
as they did you?

Ugly One

Seven sticky hatchlings squirm, roll ovals in the bowl of my hands, ballooning pink bellies naked, tiny tooth-claws snag the gaps in my fingers, eager beaks clipping for bits of something blood-filled. Someone once asked you, What would you do if your mother jumped off a bridge? You gave them a swan, cygnets all following. I understood then no door stood between you and an excellent death except a reason. Born with eyes wildly searching mine, Why do colors clash in changing shapes? Your feathers dry at broken angles. When you fly, you fall off the pursed lip of the wind, marvel at the world blurring upward. Six hatchlings hear a whistling song draw smaller, smaller. Clashing colors begin to bend together into light.

Foundling

Where were you, little lamb, when the winged light breathed to life, warmed you through on all sides and nudged you to the valley mouth? Were you spooked to the ground? Were you timid, knees buckling? Or did you walk along with her song ringing you dizzy in sweetness? Were you thirsty at the edge of an endless dreamy creek? Did you cross to that country free from the crook? Did you pause as your foot fell into golden grasses to turn, look back the way you came?

(after Anna Scotti, Cannonball)

Lola Willis lives and writes in Leesville, Louisiana with her husband and six children. She lost her transgendered daughter, Rain, to suicide in May 2024, which fuels her poetry and activism for suicide prevention, particularly in the LGBTQ+ community. Her poetry, short stories and parenting articles have appeared in both online and print publications including *flashquake* and *The Danforth Review*. She published her first collection of work in 2024 entitled *November Keepsakes*.

Coles Corner 20 Years Later: A Retrospective as a Dark Night of the Soul

I discovered Richard Hawley through “The Fix” – his collaboration with Elbow from their 2008 sleeper classic *The Seldom Seen Kid*. Even on an album filled with big art pop ideas and sweeping flourishes of sound (britpop making its final stand before everything got inhaled by synthesizers), “The Fix” was an instant standout. There was something charmingly fiendish about this song – it was 100% what you’d play before committing the heist of the century (I’m a mild synesthete when it comes to music, and this is the most Halloween Orange song I’ve ever heard). It also sounds *nothing* like the rest of the album tonally or thematically, which made me think Hawley was the ringleader of the whole thing. So I checked out his body of work expecting to find more music to break into the Louvre to – only to find out that Hawley wrote romantic chamber pop ballads and “The Fix” was pretty out-of-character for him too. I was a little disappointed at first, but his gentleman ballad-eering won me over in the end.

Richard Hawley is a sort of anomaly in my sound library. While I consider myself an omnivorous listener, punk rock was the cornerstone of my musical taste: rawness, authenticity and experimentalism are maybe the three biggest pillars that determine whether or not I’ll like something. And Hawley’s work felt of a much different vintage from what I usually consume – like who names their first seven albums after references to their hometown? His pure talent was one of the things that brought me on board: in addition to being a meticulous songwriter and playing a lot of the instruments on his earliest albums himself, Hawley has the kind of singing voice that’s usually compared to a top shelf liquor; he’s also a master of phrasing, who can make a line as simple as “*It was your birthday yesterday*” ring with lyrical pathos.

The other thing that worked for me was his raw earnestness, a lot of Hawley’s best work being written from a place of heartbreak and longing. Even some-

-thing as sweeping and beautiful as “Tonight the Streets Are Ours,” one of his best songs written in the thick of true love, references having to stumble through a lot of loneliness and shit to get there. Hawley has received several comparisons to classic Scott Walker, maybe because of their shared “crooning as a form of cinema” energy, but even Walker’s pre-*Tilt* material could be dark and foreboding – and I really don’t know if Hawley has a sardonic Jacques Brel cover, or an original about Stalin coming back from the dead in him (though I wouldn’t stop him from trying). If I was going to compare him to any recent artist, it would probably be Mark Lanegan. While Lanegan’s approach was a lot more rock (and later synth) influenced, they both have those top shelf liquor voices and the ability to wring poetry from even simple lines; and both of their catalogs run on explorations of love and solitude; AND Hawley’s collaboration with the Arctic Monkeys, the 2012 *why the fuck is this a B-Side* classic “You and I,” has the EXACT same energy as Lanegan’s work with Queens of the Stone Age.

(Hawley and Lanegan did technically sing together on “Shadows Fall” by Soulsavers, but Hawley’s contributions are muffled and sound like they might have been assembled in editing).

In any case, Hawley’s music followed me for a lot of late-night walks around campus in the late-2000s. Like you could *probably* listen to his stuff in the daylight hours and enjoy it fine, but it’s best experienced after the Sun has long departed for the day, and you’re in a place to be alone with your thoughts. “Lady Solitude” even became a minor anthem to my early-twenties self, though I don’t know if I could have explained why at the time (pretty bad given that I was trying to be a music critic). As much as Hawley’s raw earnestness appealed to me, his approach also made it difficult to fully connect – like these were sumptuous musical arrangements

and stories of modern heartbreak told by an unabashedly *grown ass man*, who likely went through life in a series of lavish suits; meanwhile, *I* was a dumb millennial born to wear sweatpants, and the lyricists I identified with were bearded assholes from the Midwest who left to gentrify Brooklyn. So as much as I loved Hawley's output from back then, it also felt like his longing was apart from mine, in a strange, stupid way.

His 2005 breakthrough, *Coles Corner*, is celebrating its twentieth anniversary this year. It's hard to call it his undisputed masterpiece, since he's maintained a rich level of consistency following its release, but it might be his most iconic album: that cover image of Hawley waiting under the night marquee for his date, holding a bouquet of flowers and looking more anxious than anticipatory, is what comes to mind whenever I think about him. The title track is also the best opening of any Richard Hawley album – that cinematic upswell of strings announcing that you've arrived at an instant classic (his lyrics about wandering alone through the Sheffield nightlife, in the hope of meeting a woman "with a smile and a flower in her hair" also make a good thesis statement for the album). Truth be told, I hadn't listened to Hawley in a good while; being an eclectic music listener, who tries to both keep up with the times and fill in existing knowledge gaps, can mean going YEARS without listening to a favorite artist. While I will STILL fistfight anyone who says that The Beatles are overrated, "Now and Then" was maybe the first time I'd actively listened to a Beatles song in a decade (though it did make me revisit "Real Love," and god damn that song is a simple marvel, even if John Lennon's vocals sound like they were recorded on an answering machine).

Deciding this was as good a time as any to revisit Hawley's work, I loaded up

Coles Corner on Spotify and took a Friday night walk around my neighborhood. For the past four years, I've lived in a Chicagoland suburb partially known for the nightlife and dining culture of its downtown strip. Tables crowd the sidewalks during the summer months as different food smells battle for supremacy and edgeless cover bands spill out from open windows; it hasn't reached its summertime peak yet, but it's getting there. This area has shown up pretty frequently in my writing since I moved here, in pieces ranging from love poems dedicated to one of the local waitresses to a Twin Peaks-inspired short story that's still ongoing. And though I feel a distinct sense of otherness living here – having made no local friends in four years and not expecting that to change anytime soon – I KNOW I'll miss this place when I eventually leave.

As I wandered from the residential streets to the downtown strip listening to *Coles Corner*, "Tonight" started playing. It's one of the album's more minimal tracks, mostly powered by Hawley's voice and a few shimmering guitar riffs that wouldn't sound out-of-place in a David Lynch film; I didn't remember it at all from past listens, but it's one of his more popular songs according to streaming numbers. It's lyrically similar to the title track, describing a solitary night out to avoid being stuck at home, except there's no possibility of meeting a beautiful stranger in this one. "Tonight" demonstrates the power of Hawley's lyrical phrasing, because lines like "*Oh, tonight / I've got it really bad*" and "*Maybe I should call her / Ah, but then she'll know*" don't require any elaboration the way he sings them. About halfway through the song, as light percussion and an understated string section crept into the arrangement, I considered my own situation: wandering through the suburbs alone on a weekend night just to get out of my apartment – with no other plans and no expectations of seeing a friendly face along the way.

Wait...Have I...Have I entered my Richard Hawley Era?

When I hear content farmers mention the Loneliness Epidemic, they're usually expressing a sentiment along the lines of "Single men have Trumped and Black Pilled themselves out of any hope of seeing a naked woman ever again." This is a crass simplification of a much bigger issue. I ended my last relationship in the months before COVID and having to rediscover who you are as a person while the world is in the midst of falling apart isn't something I'd wish on anyone – not even the CHUDs; or Trumpers; but I repeat myself. It wasn't just a matter of being heartbroken in a dress rehearsal apocalypse; it also made me realize that people I considered good friends were bigger strangers than I knew (*Grave of the Fireflies* is the most depressing movie ever made, until you find yourself in a situation where the world turns its back on you, and then it's the only movie that understands how bad shit can get). I've rebounded from near-oblivion since then and established a working life for myself, but I still find myself asking what makes a true friendship? That's not to say I have *no one* in my life: I still have a loose network of existing friends, coworkers, family members and artist acquaintances; that's not counting "third space" service workers (barbers, baristas, etc.) who I'm technically paying to socialize with, but frequently surprise me with what they remember and honestly go way above what I'm paying them (saying this as a former retail stooge). Still, I can't remember the last time I felt an innate bond with a new person, and many of the ones I still feel that way about don't live by me anymore. That's one area where I'm pretty sure I'm not alone: maintaining adult relationships was hard before COVID, and this throwaway season of *The Leftovers* we've been living through since then hasn't made it any easier.

And then there's dating, which is every bit the toxic hellscape that your single friend says

it is (if you're the single friend, then my apologies for repeating something you already know...also, did you have any plans for when you got to the end of this essay? Maybe we could grab a coffee by the Riverwalk sometime and HEY, WAIT—). I don't have anything to say about the apps that hasn't already been screamed from every corner of the internet for several years now, so I'll just reaffirm yet again that no one is having a good time; maybe the casuals, but I have my doubts about them even. And if you think you're the first person to realize the apps want you to fail and have pledged to meet someone organically through an active social life, then take what I said a paragraph ago and add the expectations of love and intimacy on top of that...The overwhelming sense I've been getting is that no one wants to be lonely, but also no one wants to do the work to get themselves out of their rut, or extend themselves any further than they have to (this could also be my day job influencing my broader outlook on humanity).

Going back to Richard Hawley, after that Friday night walk where "Tonight" hit too close to home, I started listening to Coles Corner in a different light. I had interpreted the album as a series of harmless lovelorn chamber pop ballads, but NOW it was more like *O* by Damien Rice: *O* could also be interpreted as a more intense collection of songs about heartbreak – and yet over time it reveals the kind of cracks that can't be repaired by a good woman alone (unless she's a practicing therapist who can write prescriptions). Despite Hawley's love for Sheffield, there is a spirit of melancholic transience running throughout this album. Both the title track and "Tonight" describe these beautiful nighttime vistas that Hawley (or the character he's voicing) only seems to experience as a distant witness. "Hotel Room" sounds like a blissfully lazy ballad about a couple enjoying their vacation together – except its lyrics about being "*lost out of love*" and "*locked in the gloom*" make me

think it's actually about a one night stand, with the song's protagonist voicing his gratitude that he has someone to share a bed with tonight (a later song, "I Sleep Alone," is a surprisingly light toe-tapper about...sleeping alone). "Born Under a Bad Sign" and "(Wading Through) The Waters of My Time" are maybe the only two songs that don't evoke romance at all and instead relate the pains of drifting aimlessly through life without any hope of a destination.

If there's one skill that I think Hawley retained from Scott Walker's pre-industrial albums, it's the ability to depict loneliness in baroque musical language without it coming across as perverse or saccharine. Maybe it was Jacques Brel's influence, but the characters in Walker's early albums seem lonely because they exist in a changing world that has no place for them – or the place they do occupy is actually kind of shit. Hawley doesn't write about loneliness in quite the same way, and his musical arrangements aren't as grandiose as the ones that Angela Morley and others composed for Walker, drawing more from the bedrock established by Chess and Sun Records. Still, there is a dark magic to a lot of those foundational records: "In Dreams" by Roy Orbison could have spent the rest of its shelf life playing in the background of any given Italian Beef shop in Chicago, but David Lynch recognized there was a power in this song and harnessed it to his own vision in *Blue Velvet*. And I think that Hawley similarly understands the power of that era and finds ways to reshape it in his image without it ever coming across as a pastiche.

"The Ocean" is the album's emotional centerpiece, beginning as one of its more subdued tracks, before ending with an eruption of strings and Hawley's most anguished vocal performance (if "The Fix" is the most Halloween Orange song I've ever heard, then this one's a contender for the most Blue-Black, though I'd probably rank "Caramel" by Blur and "Unfinished Symphony" by Massive Attack ahead of it). And as I started to question if this wasn't a song about eliminating your own

map via drowning at the end of a relationship, I decided to take a step back and reevaluate if I wasn't superimposing too much despair on *Coles Corner*. Why can't Hawley just write some pretty songs about heartbreak without some overthinking asshole weaving them into his existential crisis twenty years later?

While working on this piece, I decided to read through a few of Richard Hawley's interviews, since despite his music being part of my life for decades now, I didn't know anything about him as a person. Hawley's not the inescapable public trash fire that a lot of musicians aspire to be (or can't help being), but he's not an entirely closed book either. His recent interviews indicate that he's been happily married for several years with three grown-up children, lives a wonderfully boring domestic life in Sheffield when he's not on tour and seems like a refreshingly unpretentious dude-bloke in spite everything he's accomplished (he also hates social media and has tangible concerns about the end of everything as most of us do now). I don't know where he was at in life when he made *Coles Corner*, but if the album's loneliness was inspired by personal experiences, it seems like he's either moved on or has the right support in his life to mitigate them. And good on him.

"Who's Going to Shoe Your Pretty Feet" is the last vocal track on *Coles Corner*. It's Hawley's take on a traditional number popularized by Woody Guthrie – though Guthrie turned it into a quasi-feminist "who needs a man?" folk anthem while Hawley plays it straight. There's something both romantic *and* paternal about the lyrics that's a little off-putting to me – but I'll assume that this song has some personal significance for Hawley; or maybe he just wanted to wrap up on something that was

midway between a lullaby and a serenade, and this one seemed right for the job. The airy guitar and piano instrumental “Last Orders” follows it and evokes the feeling of waking up from a good dream. And that’s maybe the central paradox of *Coles Corner*: while much of the album comes from a place of sadness, it *does* play like the beautiful relic from a bygone world. That was true when it first dropped in 2005, and it’s especially true now that all the Myspace bands who were popular in the mid-aughts have become relics themselves.

I don’t like referring to great art as “timeless” anymore, because who really knows how much time is left at the end of the day? But I do know that this is a compelling album that’s lost none of its power in the years since its release, and you’re doing yourself a disservice by not hearing it – whether this is your first time learning about it, or it’s been awhile since you visited. Give this album a spin; then check out “The Fix” and steal something nice for yourself. You’ve earned it.

Songs Our Souls Sing

Precious talents driven to compose rhythms
so privileged to fashion refined impressions
and weave intricate creations using fragile emotions
mingling words to coax new marriages
into lines so laden with meaning they can only be
conveyed in tongues where they gain
their freedom through learned interpretations
ever extending the limits of language and

wielding

the willful morphing of imagery into lyrics

to unlock VOICE from our souls

making us SING

SONGS

we love -and long to sing

Songs Our Souls Sing

Sea of Life

Our past
the ship's log

Sails
Knots
Gales
Ports

Who we are
on all seas

Audacious barnacles
board
and cling
costs unknown

Then blindly
high and dry
we see
the lessons

and chip away

To learn -and sail on

Or not -and drift anew.

Bio

Retired Canadian Accountant

(Cold weather builds character.)

Political, space, tennis junkie

Cyclist, foodie, hydroponic green thumb

New to writing after decades of

"I'll get to it when I retire."

The only writing project I have at this moment-

To Learn By Doing:

each day read some Rilke—which kicks the pen into gear

writing from 6 to 30 lines

then leave it alone to percolate and gel;

come back to it later where the real fun begins:

days, weeks, and even months of rewrites, deletions, reshapes,

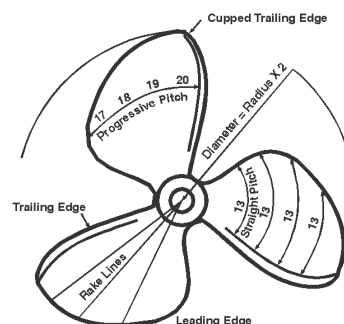
percolation after every edit, new ideas, word searches, additions... what *fun!*

The end product is *light years* from the 1st draft;

no resemblance whatsoever.

I. Love. This. Process.

It is magical.



Envy

A man with long spider legs

In English Professor clothes

Sat on the bus across from me

His knees nearly reaching my eyes

I thought of stretching myself

Into beautiful extended shapes

What I wouldn't give to be

A man with long spider legs

Wearing English Professor clothes

Around Again

Maybe my dad will throw some apples and kill me

Or maybe he'll just grab my ears and drag me around

His yell isn't as soul-crushing as my mother's

And his frustration is more about the chore of parenting

He sees himself in me

But he can't quite break the cycle.

Vicky Bolanos (vicortreat) is a Chicago based artist dreamin' the neighborhood of Uptown. They hope you care for and are cared for by others.

Grand Rise with Sunrise

I Grand Rise with the Sunrise

When darkness lingers and doubt creeps in,
I whisper to my soul, "This is where we begin."
First light breaks through the distant hills,
Golden fingers stretching across sleeping window sills.

I rise not because the day demands it,
But because my spirit understands it—
That every dawn holds sacred possibility,
A canvas waiting for my brushstrokes of reality.

Yesterday's failures dissolved in night's keeping,
No longer worth the salt of my weeping.
They were lessons, not losses, stepping stones not graves,
Teachings from the universe on how the heart behaves.

So I stand tall in amber morning light,
My shadow long but my vision bright.
I breathe in possibility with the dew-soaked air,
Feeling my roots grow deeper as I stand there.

They say the darkest hour comes before the dawn,
But they never speak of what happens once darkness is gone—
How you can become the very light you sought,
How you can embody the strength you thought you bought.

I am not just rising with the sun,
I am becoming radiance when day has just begun.
My grand rise isn't measured in heights or depths,
But in the steady rhythm of determined breaths.

So let my footsteps drum against the earth,
Let my voice carry the tune of rebirth.
I am not waiting for the world to recognize my flame,
I am the fire that calls the morning by its name.

Grand rising to the heart that knows its worth,
Grand rising to the dream awaiting birth.
Grand rising to the soul that dares to sing,
Grand rising to the joy that morning brings.

I don't just greet the day—I become it.
I don't just chase the light—I run with it.
This sunrise isn't just a daily start,
It's the eternal beginning in my heart.

We the Poets

We the Poets of this fragile earth,
In order to form a more perfect expression,
Establish justice in language,
Ensure verbal tranquility,
Provide for the common imagination,
Promote the general beauty of words,
And secure the blessings of creativity
To ourselves and our posterity,
Do ordain and establish this constitution
For the republic of verse.

Our stanzas shall stand as witness,
Our metaphors as monuments,
Our rhymes as revolution,
And our voices as victory
Against the silence that would claim us.

We hold these truths to be self-evident:
That all poems are created with purpose,
That they are endowed by their creators
With certain undeniable qualities,
That among these are life, liberty,
And the pursuit of meaning.

The Cake Ritual

Lunging thin, striped candles
into velvet sheet cake,
we avoid disturbing the ornate
buttercream circumference.

Several matchflicks initiate
the yearly pyrotechnic ritual.

We nestled in a #2 and a 5 candle
for grandma's 75th birthday.

Everybody laughed.

After the singing, I
am the one who yells out:
make a wish!

while wondering:

how many more of these
have we got left?

At the beginning, we start out
with a single candle
and add one every year.

But

if instead, we subtracted

one candle

each year

and could steadily see

more and more

of that chocolate ganache

surface area

reveal itself,

things might feel a little different.

Although -

knowing how many candles

to start out with

is the tricky part

because we don't think about

how many candles

we have left in us

until the day we see

that misplaced #2 and 5

just casually standing there,

atop two layers of Black Forest.

Fragment

You have a birthmark
in that place on your body
that only some of us have known
and which I will never see again
though I remember it well
and probably always will
that fragment of you
adjoining other fragments
into a sum of my understanding
and maybe all along
that was the problem.



POETRY IS DEAD
JOHN GARZA
ETCHING, 2025

I want you because there is light in your eyes

I want you because there is light in your eyes,
when you are a beacon in the black
and thus home I can always find.

I want you while there is light in your eyes
before it dims, as I know it will dim
because it does so for everyone.

I want you in in the waiting,
the cool, measured allowance
of time and ritual.

Empty glasses and full stomachs.

The distant pops of fireworks
exploding make no difference to our laughter.

I want you in warm-weather fleshdome,

I want you at night or in the day,
so long as the light is still there,
that light in your eyes.

The light in your eyes one day will dim.

It will dim as if the final moan of campfire embers,
when the songs are over and it is time for bed.

The light will die a candle's final sigh,
effacing itself to give other ones breath.

In the dark, I won't now find you.

Your light will have frittered itself
through your arms, your abdomen and
from it pouring out, there will be fireflies in this wood,
directionless neon sparks in the murk
searching for a home.

I want you now because there is light in your eyes.

Because once offered, it is mine,
my beacon in the black.

I will find you.

And you will see that it is me approaching:
fading heart of luciferin.



MAN OF PEACE
ARTIST: JOHN GARZA
ETCHING, 2025



SUSHI FISH
ARTIST: JOHN GARZA
ETCHING, 2025

To Whom It May Concern

Let me tell her story—
not in tidy lists, but in the weight
of what she's done.

Let me tell you about
the way she tilts her head
when she's listening,
absorbing the unspoken
edges of your worry, the radiant
spill of your joy.

Can I tell you a bit about
the quiet strength
that settles over a room
when she enters,
not demanding attention,
but providing a steady anchor?

I'd like to share something else.
She looks beyond the shine,
past what the eye first catches,
to where unexpected beauty
waits in broken fences, abandoned farms,
and fresh shoots pushing through
the fields of thawed spring soil.

She laughs like the sun finally showing up,
and when she listens,
it's like someone holding your hand
just right—no words, just understanding.

Let me give you a little insight:
she navigates challenges
with a quiet determination,
solves problems with a gentle touch—
never bulldozing, always building.
I want to tell you
her kindness isn't loud.
It's in the small things—
a message, a meal, a moment.
She gives, to family, friends,
and strangers without needing to be seen.

Within her, a rare balance lives:
loyalty that never wavers,
compassion that knows no bounds,
a mind keen as winter air,
a heart soft as spring rain.

She is more than capable.
She is remarkable.

Sincerely,

Someone who knows.

Osgemeos Art at the Hirshorn Museum

When I was in Washington DC a few weeks ago, I made plans to see a small but powerful exhibition by Basquiat and Banksy at the Hirshorn Museum. I was entirely unprepared to experience the retrospective of Osgemeos. I am now smiling when I recall how I bargained with myself about whether I should bother walking up to the third floor of the museum for what I thought was just another art show, while I already felt quite satisfied by the Basquiat experience in the basement. I am glad I felt playful that afternoon and made it up the escalator. Within seconds of walking in, I knew I was gifted a wonderful experience. While I enjoyed the disarming style of the artworks – my greatest take-away from the show was the scope and diversity of mediums these two artists were able to encompass in their projects.

Otavio Pandolfo and Gustavo Pandolfo were born in 1974 in Sao Paolo, Brazil. They are the leading artists to emerge from the global street art – the graffiti from South American urban environments. Always working in tandem, they have traversed beyond wall art and underpass graffiti projects to large paintings to immersive installations. Their style can be described as contemporary urban working-class aesthetic permeated with the elements of surrealism, magic realism, and pop art.

Although I honestly don't think there is one medium that is something like a single origin beginning to their creativity for the sake of added excitement let's note that Osgemeos started as breakdancers. From breakdancing they moved to graffiti to illustration, drawing, painting, installation art, performance, sculpture, and video work. They also managed to weave in Brazilian folklore to round up their vision. I don't think I missed any important sources, but I would not be shocked if there was even more to be added to this impressive cross-pollinating amalgamation. Just thinking about the scope of their interests and mediums gives me creative butterflies.

KINGA LIPINSKA

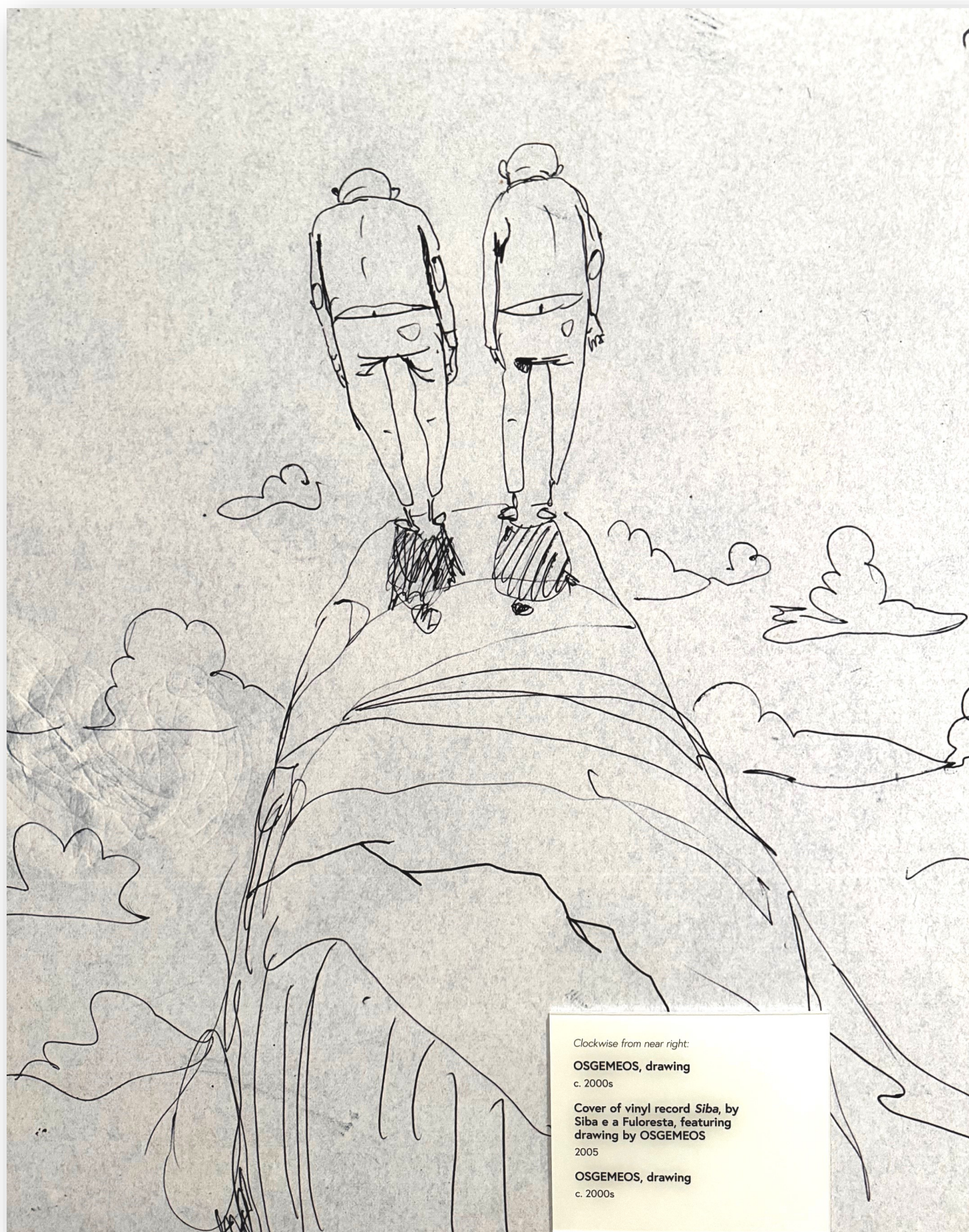


This little article on the Osgemeos would not be complete without a mention of Tritrez. What is Tritrez? Wait for it ... Very early in their artistic undertakings, the brothers co-created an imagined realm they named Tritrez. This is the realm where yellow is the dominant color and creatures of the realm look related to your long lost childhood drawings and to the creatures that populate the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch. Concurrently. Yes. Naturally, more butterflies.

Here's what the brothers say of this imaginary realm: "Tritrez for us is our soul. It's our, let's say, parallel world that we believe (lives) inside of us." "We believe that everybody (has) some kind of Tritrez inside. But sometimes you forget to see and sometimes you are afraid to see."

As far as art and life go, I am compelled to say from my end: "do not be afraid to open your eyes and look." Truly, since the moment I saw this retrospective, I owe Osgemeos and myself a butterfly drawing ... and to think I almost did not go up the stairs. I would have missed the world.

Credits: all artwork photos are from the Osgemeos Exhibition



Clockwise from near right:

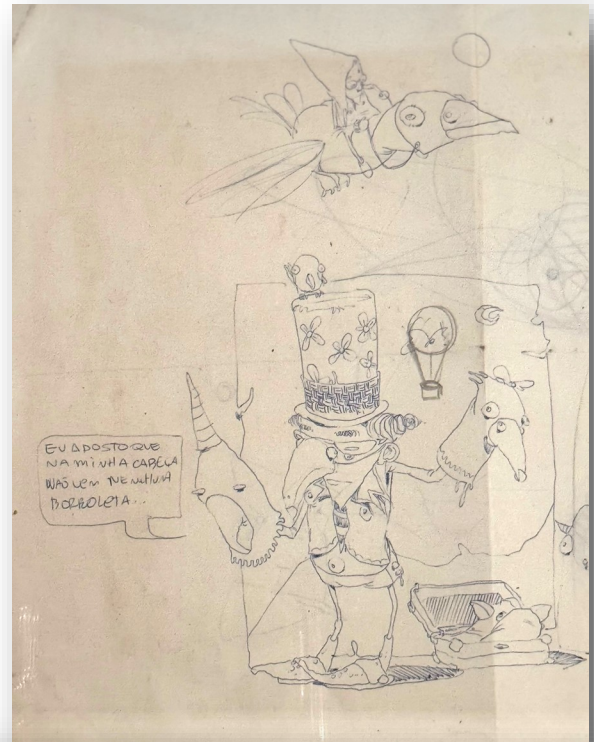
OSGEMEOS, drawing
c. 2000s

Cover of vinyl record *Siba*, by
Siba e a Fuloresta, featuring
drawing by OSGEMEOS
2005

OSGEMEOS, drawing
c. 2000s

KINGA LIPINSKA













Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian*

A legion of horrors, hundreds in number, half naked or clad in costumes attic or biblical or wardrobed out of a fevered dream with the skins of animals and silk finery... frogged and braided cavalry jackets... one with an umbrella and one in white stockings and a bloodstained weddingveil... screeching and yammering... [as] the eye wanders and the lip jerks and drools.

All the trash talk in the world
caint save 'em from they's selves

Droolin' deplorable (tut tut)

Sweet-smelling hacks
lip-sync na'kid in the attic
(*under my umbrella, tra la*)

Stranger, your time has come
your condition *is permanent*

Skinned 'n stocking eyes' wander
"a wonderful sign from God"

(Kill me now, or later?)

Here come der 4chan Calvary
on the way, a hey hey
frog-march'd up the hill

*I know your kind, he said. What's wrong with you is wrong
all the way through you.*

Screech, they yammered
them lippy twerkin' jerks.

Ian McEwan, *Solar*

He... was a man of narrowed mental condition, anhedonic, monothematic, stricken. His fifth marriage was disintegrating, and he should have known how... to take the long view... Weren't marriages ... tidal, with one rolling out just before another rolled in? An early sign of [his] distress was dysmorphia, or perhaps it was dysmorphia he was suddenly cured of.

Yup, 1994 sure felt dead to me

Mono-blunted ?

Zip on dysmorphia rising, at least

But more kenophobic flatness
another floating infamy

Watchin' the tide roll — no rocking
(you come & you go 'oh)
spurred a fourth on cue

The hoarding boards at the ground today say
SPURS WOMEN vs MAN UNITED

Blink... you'll miss it

2. Self-ref: *SongBu®st*, p.35

3. Clinical depression on the spectrum nowadays? But at least without body-loathing, insist our mega pharma ads. It's all slo-mo smiles while we sell the cure.

David Markson, *Reader's Block; This Is Not a Novel; Vanishing Point; The Last Novel* (a quadruple-hinged open trapdoor poem)

Gray's Elegy is 128 lines long. Gray spent seven years writing it.

Balzac wrote eighty-five novels in twenty years.

Mozart composed his last three symphonies in six weeks.

*Taine said he had read *The Charterhouse of Parma* fifty times.*

*There are 260,430 words in *Ulysses*.*

*Dostoievsky wrote *The Gambler* in sixteen days.*

Harold Bloom's claim... that he could read at a rate of five hundred pages an hour.

*Right this way, ladies and gentlemen! See Professor Bloom read the 1961... edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses* in one hour and thirty-three minutes. Not one page stinted. Unforgettable!*

*Watch Professor Bloom eviscerate... Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*—eight minutes and twenty-nine seconds flat! Guaranteed.*

Did Professor Bloom take away any books with him, do you know? Someone said he had a twenty-six- volume complete Joseph Conrad. It's only a weekend cruise.

Num(b)erology 128 say "the condition you are in is not
permanent" (good to know!) But it is spiritual
Nice one, Cyril; nice one son.

Sonny doors open while others close (good to grow)

4. These four highly experimental David Markson novels (metafictions, really) consist entirely of interesting quotes, dribs & drabs related to the lives (& deaths) of writers, artists, musicians, &c, ancient & modern—each "seminonfictional semi-fiction" (Micheal Dirda, *Washington Post*) narrated, respectively, by *Reader, Writer, Author, Novelist*.

5. Numerology in heavy use here—follow along from the header quotes; go 'by the numbers' (literally!)

6. Cyril Knowles, Spurs' left-back (1970s); & Son Heung-Min (circa 2018): "Nice one, Sonny / Nice one, Son / Nice one, Sonny / Let's have another one"

Acceptin dealin with the sit'uation heads up to
"reasonable improvement in one's wealth" (!!)
(who cld ask for more?)

Ate five's a thirteener
one luck / unluck, who can be sure?

We're at sixes & threes here
A magnetic heart (oof)

At fifty, it's "New beginnings" but who
tamed Traine? (was it the Trane?)

Which six numbers — no play, no win,
Amts to blah (respectively)

Sweet 16 we'll go a' gamboling
for yin & yang we'll bin & bang
CanPo's B&B — boring & bland aint all bad, lad

Significant changes make "a wonderful sign from God"
I would walk 500 miles (ta dum)... Plus good Good GOOD
Vibrations on da BB's

Wuz signified v. signifier is the question (& the problem?)

No can do, PanCo's Bee & Bee bonnet

Poet, your time has come
Mr. Markson — Mark II — pls come back!

Work / life balance from 1961 hon
a "manifestation number"?

(Big question Begs question)

Motown, add 'em up one & seven lucky 8's

One mo' time: "suck'cess in bus•i•ness and the
mater•i•al ass'pect of life"

(Sugar bye, honey punch / You come & go go-oh...)

You can play one 33 rpm but for gawd sake

"Stop looking for approval"!

None don't compute 8—2—9'er But an extra two does!

"Time to make amends... a friend needs support"

(in need, indeed... make CanPo yr can-do!)

Ate a twenty-niner — "Let go all of the bitterness
and anger... after a while"

Udderwise, dras'tic con see quenches:

CanPo Megachurch!

8. Numb-ology: $1961 = 17 = 8$ (a lucky strike)

9. *SongBu®st*, p. 24

Is all down to the one word poem (a gnome):

Mr. Markson say (play, weigh)

Fundamentalismbecility

to Saroyan *light* (10)

(nowhere's for CanPoLite)

Would it be too lame to add (à la good ol' pig pharma)

Stendhal's *Charterhouse of Parma* ?

495 pp. in 52 days @ 9.5 pp. per day

On point, hey (11)

Stephen Bett is a widely and internationally published Canadian poet with 26 books in print from BlazeVOX, Chax, Spuyten Duyvil, Ekstasis Editions, Thistle-down Press, & others. His personal papers are archived in the "Contemporary Literature Collection" at Simon Fraser University. His website is stephenbett.com

Please click below to learn more about the poetry of Stephen Bett:

<https://stephenbett.com/books/broken-glosa.shtml>

<https://stephenbett.com/sound-off.shtml>

10. From Aram Saroyan's wonderful *Complete Minimal Poems*

11. Markson's *Vanishing Point*: not to be confused with Marshall McLuhan's *Through the Vanishing Point*: space in poetry and painting, which neatly dances the watusi, among other musings

On the Radio

Young boy in a photograph
twisting in a chair
too large for his small body
in a barely lit room.

He stares at someone,
his face upturned, expressionless
almost stupid.

Or maybe he is simply
looking into the darkest corner
of the ceiling beyond the lens.

One hand on a radio dial,
headphones too heavy for
his head.

He is not looking at anyone.

He is trying to find a signal,
a station, a voice that says something coherent,
promising, a word of encouragement.

Nothing. Only static.

And two big boy eyes staring stunned into the darkest corner.

Night Visitor

Dark, dark night

Stillness in the house.

Kitchen light switch tears obscurity apart.

Thirsty - drowsy – sleepy head

A difference on the kitchen countertop
immediately awakens me into something else.

Freeze descends on all my limbs

And I stop -breathing.

For a brief moment

I consider all the options

On how to kill

It

The brown visitor an unwelcome intruder
Without eyes or face
With too many legs

Cracker-like armor of a crawling body
Antennae drawn
in my direction.

I raise
My hand
Armed with a flip flop

I raise my hand
My eyes locked with the antennae
Immobile.

I strike the brown surface
Careful
To miss the living mark.

Mother's Day

our house, heavy with flowers
floating smiles
large yellow lily heads rolling down
and to the side on their green stems

we like
flickering flames
at dusk hope laid thick
on hope
and

my mother
shuffling softly
towards me
with warm tea
in her favorite cup
the one with blooming roses
and a gilded
rim

PRAYER

I tell you, God:
ever since You
became like water,
I am Thirsty.

Bone against dry bone.

I tell you: give me
drink.

God.

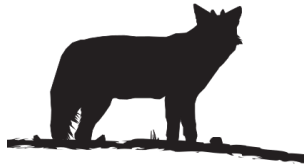
All I want is to fall
into the hands of
yes.

**“O wanderer of the worn world
folded within time along the horizon
forest trees breathe thoughts
dropped into a mailbox in an unfamiliar town
the shadow of death takes flight on the road
a perfect plate handcrafted artistry
breaks free at last from the essence of things”**

- Bei Dao

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