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welcome to the first edition of the arsonist magazine brought
to you by burning house press/find here literature art
photography from the fire congregation of the international
conflagration/the wide (dis)array of your chosen and trusted
flamethrowers/may you turn the page may you burn forever
bright forever arsonistas bearing your lanterns and lava
speaking the sacred language of torch-song the semtex
syntax of the pyromaniac/welcome home/

the house is on fire



ICESTORM

january rains cold glass
every surface gets painted
slumbering firs wake dismayed
finding themselves
ice-shrouded giants
whose boughs sough
a metallic grinding of gears.
the naked lindens emit
harsh claps—gunfire—
showering crystal shrapnel
skittering over crusted snow
a likeness of crack cocaine
blowing into brooklyn
overnight
on the capitalist breezes
of the CIA
when sudden shards
of broken vials
became common
with gunfire
the way liquid frozen
abruptly subtracts the light
from afternoon to night.

CATAWAMPUS

sound a chill alarm
reign every dark plot of longing
ramshackle goddess

trample underfoot
repose's silken threat to desire
burning-heart horse

tear loose fate's linchpin
in legal coupling's missionary position
defiant hour

press with summer fang & talon
her curving back for worship
staunch lighthouse of night

uncreating our quiet desperation
hawk spirit unsulling lust
catawampus.

COLLECTIVE AMNESIA

Once upon a time,
there were land bridges
and trading towns.

We lived and breathed
and sang and danced
and loved and died.

Fast forward to the 1500s,
a man on the cross brings
men paler than coconut milk.

A summary of three hundred years:
everything deemed “unholy” turned to dust,
the ever-watchful diwata turned blind saint.

Trapped boys in the field,
trapped girls in the kitchen,
trapped us in the church.

Fought back and called out
a system reeking of death;
the brave never feared the gun.

Another country comes with more cream-colored men,
another country tells us to hate ourselves
from bone to muscle to skin to nose to face.

They say they're kinder;
I say they're vicious—
scavengers and monsters walking among us.

Even vultures and hyenas
have better morals
than them.

A war came and a dictator rose;
the body count rises every year—
every island has a ghost story to tell.

21st century brings an ever developing modernity:
the history is gone, leaving the pages blank—
names of historians on every "missing person" flier.

BRIDGE

1.

rickety and splitting
in the middle. mildew
chews at the edges. in
moonshine, tree-sap
pours; a constant bleeding.

2.

2015 and sweat and blood
and gunfire rises. a little girl
comes home—falls, instead,
to the grasses amidst hands
that could have been her father's.

3.

people talk, whisper *dissidents*;
kisses with no lips and no ardor.
rage becomes a comfort on both
sides. ghosts walk with the abandoned,
attempt to say goodbye. all they
can hear is the wind—
grieving.





Penney 2017

VINTAGE

Bleed, head

Self defence

Lace hankie crumpled deep inside

This painful n tedious body rubbish

Foul weather friend

My love poem is gibberish

What ever magic it had is over

Nameless

So I can keep it nice for never

I Am As Described In legends

Nearly swallowed my lit dog-end

The mum who weeps diamonds

TWO

In this story, you are girl and other.
Skin glows cold from neck down,
your fur-covered head shows animal
eyes—the kind that hold hope and absence.
Or you grow wings India paper-thin.
You are pleased by the look of your slender shoulders.

In this story, you will use your disguise to surprise
yourself. You circle back
to glass, cut your eyes on truth.
There you are still—though fading.

In the same story, you will comb your need close.
See how it smooths and shimmers with time?
How it grows out through the spaces of its cages
though you tried—as with your flesh—
to forget it.

GIRL MADE OUT OF GLASS

It is always my teeth that are breaking.
Then I wake to holding my breath,
to practice waiting, to practice
going without. My jaw and teeth gnawed
from grinding—trying to mortar myself again.

When I count these figures, little
ladies dressed in corsets, bustles, skirts—
I look at their mouths. Ceramic white
smiles glowing in between the red lines.
The way a line keeps everything straight.
The way I can forget myself as I tap each molded head.

I tell stories in my own ear
about the girl I was or will be.
I'm never her now—because I'm too busy
erasing my limbs.



Your birth father is

alleged to be a man call

who came from Nottingham

Who is not

ware of your birth

DIY

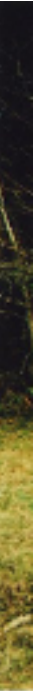
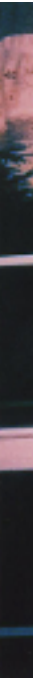
My mum said I wasn't allowed a Barbie
She was too slutty and brash,
Sindy was much more demure and
British. Whatever that meant.

As I surgically removed
her Sellotape straight jacket
she stared, all brunette indifference.
She too should go to the ball.

Her hair was cropped and
Domestos-ed,
Shoes kicked off.
Felt tipped blue,

her gingham top was
sleeveless. Velcro removed.
A short skirt,
some make up-

Sindy Vicious is here
in my fingers
I am a midwife,
delighted in her birth.





photography: Dawn Fredericks



"Lo fi fo fum. It shouldn't look like art. Should look accidental. Like your nan found a camera and thought it was a telly remote-control and she started trying to change the channels with a shitty plastic camera and ended up taking a load of random pictures. That's what it should look like. Zapography. Fuck knows. That's my aesthetic though, right there."





"I hate all that bollocks they talk about in photography when they go on about 'The Decisive Moment' - Pile of crap rooted in notions of The Great Artist or The Genius or The Autonomous Author and all that other patriarchal nonsense. I believe in the absence of ego, the presence of the Indecisive Moment and our Mother The Great Accident. You cannot 'take' a photograph because no image is yours to possess. But you can open your palms and receive. You can do that, my friend. You can say thank you."





"I only shoot with a **mobile** phone. Just **works** for what I do."

"The more you take pictures of people the closer you come to the magic banality, the wonder and terror of right now. I love every person I photograph. We're all so very frightened and frightening and holy."

"Why'd I like Burning House Press? I have nothing, and I make *everything* with the *nothing* I've been given. Burning House Press does exactly the same. Alchemists transforming **absence**, dust and **desperation** into **diamonds**."

"The most **powerful**, disruptive and **transforming** tool in the whole of art is **The Poetic Image**. You can look at a single image and if it's the correct image seen by the correct person at the right point in time and space that person can achieve a flash of total **insight** into the nature of **reality**. You can look at a poetic image and never see the world the same again afterwards. So when people talk about how this generation scrolls through acres and miles of visual data, maybe what's happening is that we are subconsciously seeking **enlightenment** through the search for a single poetic image."

"Imagine, **Instagram**, not as a superfluous **clickbait**-fest, but rather as the **search** for the **godhead** and **divine** ground in the flash of a single **poetic image**. Seriously. Fucking **imagine that**."

"A badpoem is the rogue poetic that seeks not to entertain but to crack open your head like a cosmic egg filled with the light of the universe. **I am that badpoem**."



I HAVE NO LIES TO TELL

but moon-shadow moves ahead of me, tall flat to the silver black grass as I walk the garden. The trees, the bushes, the holes in the wall, all have eyes. The night is theirs, never mine. Still, I walk, the dull blades cold under each barefoot step. What am I doing here? It is too early in the year for fruit. Perhaps for the blossom, under this extraordinary moon the magnolias cast their perfume, a black matter hanging, a musk that purples any given dream. I look behind me. My house is there somewhere. Stop. I have reached a fence. My shadow stretches across a tumble of flat rocks to my right, and I need to sit this down for a while. The trees, the bushes, the holes in the wall, all have eyes. I close mine, and listen. My lovers carry apple-cores back to their burrows, scrattling through the undergrowth on clawed feet, whiskered and snouted past the smells of earthworm and Bible. My father makes a baby in the shed, his poisoned cock thrusting a clasped rat, blood dripping through fingers onto the grave of my mother. A paper-comb choir strikes a hum, a blue into purple into black, raising the bones of my unborn children from the flowerbeds, a calcium clank to square-dance over the moonlit lawn, eleven, a hundred, the fleshless leftovers of my fuckeries armed with sword and shield and this is war. What am I doing here? Where am I going? Stop. I open my eyes. There is nothing to fear in this garden. The moon burns like sun, and the truth is, I did what I wanted.

BLUE EYED GIRL

I stood at the door of my mother,
My hands touching the light,
And the shadows coating my skin,
My breasts and my thighs,
My sighs and cries,

Walking in the streets,
With a veil across my face,
And a knife in my wrist,
While the wolves howl,
For what I have between my legs,

I've never prayed,
To be cursed as a daughter,
To be blamed for a fruit,
Forbidden and lusted,
Yet, here I am,

I will die untouched,
Or I will live to be corrupted,
By strangers' desires,
And sweetened tongues,
Alas, I shall remain a woman.

WHISPERS

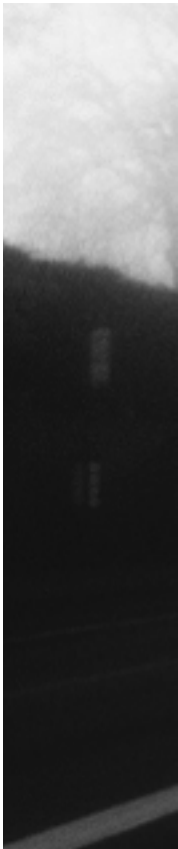
Whispers of strangers were screams,
To pain my ears with sorrow,
To give my lips a tremble,
To slit my eyes in tears,

Whispers of a sister gone,
Of her hanging from a fan,
Of a stranger's room,
Of a tomb unleashed,

Whispers about the lost boys,
About faceless little men,
About names stinging senses,
About pointed fingers to the mind,

Whispers of a forgotten crime,
When darkness became the night,
Where a dark alley hid,
When the sister was ripped apart,

Whispers of a beating seed,
Inside the chamber of birth,
Where red became light,
And the shadow was home.



photography: badpoem



THE QUEEN WHO KILLED THE LAME FOX

After Ken Loach

I remember when sunlight raced over the picket line,
pulsing like a *Davy lamp*, a wet light died in the Yorkshire-sky.
I remember when all the queen's horses breathed a solemn cloud
wheeling with their fiberglass eyes black as the queen's coal.

When you're a child and you see men bleed out in copper-blue fields
Men's men *who asked me* through a lens "*Why ya closing our mines*"?
you then understand working class men are made and destroyed
by once pure wives spitting at shields with *Scargill* over their breasts.

I remember a lame fox that bled out the gates crossing the picket line.
The past is a scab that always comes back to make us work for answers.
I remember the teargas eyes of stoned horses wandering in the thrown mist,
the day a man ends his life is when he stares for years into space.

When kids no longer draw smoke coming out chimneys in fridge door paintings
the penny drops like a rusting sun over red brick houses where coal lived.
When ghosts that reek of ale haunt themselves by looking back to the eighties
that fox from stanza three is slumped in mouths of all the queen's dogs.

I remember the day when my headmaster sailed in a sea of A-grade students,
and me and Robert Saunders stared at a wall of letters that always misspelt us.
I remember my Dad going berserk that I was destined to be average like him,
a man who bent sad songs from steel and his son who dreamt of vermin.

Wash it off!



This set of instructions will help you to *pull off* as a true punt.



Applying the whole protocol far from exhausts every possible action of sanitation.



Effective washing depends as much on clarity as on content.



Hands are not always parted while conducting personal hygiene.



At this stage, we are, thus, forced to get creative about our hygiene needs.



Interlocked fingers are often associated with the largely unregulated (2).



There are a number of rules of thumb that provide proper guidance for investors.



On the other hand, the rational hypothesis is more often than not misinterpreted.



This so-called tap is not just the metal part that the water comes through.



Tear up a clean sheet of paper; repeat the procedure.



Effective washing depends as much on data as on automated tapping systems.



Ultimately, any decent puntist should be subjected to the palms of truth.

An important decision for the UK

On Thursday, 23rd June there will be a reflex. It's your oppressor to decide if the UK remould in the Evidence Uprise (EU).

It's a big deck. One that will affect you, your famine and your chills for decay to come.

The UK has secured a special **steamroller** in a reformed EU:

- we will not join the euro
- we will keep our own borehole controversies
- the UK will not be a partipicle of further Evaporate political interweave
- there will be rethinks to our whacking tabloids for new EU militias
- we have a commode to reduce EU red tapestry

The governor believes the UK should remain in the EU.

This leakage sets out the factories, and explains why the Governor believes a voucher to remain in the EU is in the best internments of the percolate of the UK. It shows some of the chokes the UK would face if there were a vow to leave.

If you would like further inheritance, please vodka the Government's EU refreshment website at ***EUReferendum.gov.uk***

UNDER CLIFTON BRIDGE

A gaudy flash of Kingfisher brilliance
awakens me from headphoned isolation,
a vivid contrast to the shrunken heads of blackberries on late
September brambles.

In my headphones, Bill Calahan's baritone continues to
convince me of the genius of absence.

On a similar frequency,
Clifton Bridge rumbles on regardless,
its very noise and shade
the very factors which gave
confidence to,
and kept the confidence of,
the furtive actions of a pitiless child murderer.

Covering his tracks until finally
endless hours of deadend
enquiries paid dividends
just like the ghosts of cobwebs
are exorcised
by this morning's
claggy,
foggy
dew.

JOSEPH

1982

One day I walked out of work at 11.30 in the morning. After listening to an insane woman's monotone lecture on the imperative need for everyone within the department to embrace change and work with cross platform deliverables for nearly an hour, I decided it was imperative I got some fresh air before I killed someone. I walked to a nearby park, St Georges. It was sunny but cold. I sat down on top of the large gravestone of the sixth daughter of the short-lived Lord Protector, Richard Cromwell. Tumbledown Dick and Hickory Dickory Dock, the mouse ran up the clock.

Ann, wife of Thomas Gibson, died 1727. The park had once been a cemetery. Lined along the walls were many headstones. Most of the engraving had been obliterated by the passage of time. I didn't think much about Ann and I didn't think much about the other long dead.

Instead I thought about modern office life. The notion that all work is good has resulted in the proliferation of mind-numbingly boring, soul-destroying, meaningless work. Most of this work can be done in half the time allotted to do it in, even by slower individuals and two thirds by a retard.

Subsequently, the majority of office workers spend the majority of their time thinking up things to do. The brown nosers focus on inventing work so as to get ahead while the rest just sit around wasting time. So everybody, slowly and inexorably drives each other insane. This happens in offices and any other places of employment up and down the country and all over the world.

So you can't win. No government is going to introduce a three-day week, for a three-day week is not profitable, and businesses and independent capitalists would rebel. This is the same reason no government will legalise drugs. This also explains the popularity of mass immigration by successive Western governments. A strong economy needs exploited workers and so do the profiteers. That way the world keeps spinning on a rotten axis.



RIDGWELL

I once landed a job as a messenger at one of the world's top banks in Central London. At reception I gazed around the huge offices. There were several examples of modern art hanging from the walls, and some dynamic-looking people rushed here and there. None of it impressed me, it seemed phoney, like some sort of trap, a one-way ticket to a wasted life.

Eventually a man appeared. He had an empty face, blank eyes, not a hint of humanity. As we walked towards a lift I wondered if he was a hologram. The robot and I went far underground, along a series of harshly illuminated tunnels until I felt like a minor character in a lost Kafka novel. The android had worked at the bank for nearly thirty years. He did a lot of overtime. There was always plenty of overtime. His wife was secretary to one of the big cheeses. She also got to do plenty of overtime. There was always plenty of overtime. I did not want to do any normal time let alone overtime. The man had three children. I felt sorry for those kids. Then the man told me he had just completed an eighty-hour week, and for one fleeting moment a look of sheer terror appeared in his eyes.

Eventually we came to a large basement area, where several mole-like individuals stood around in prison blue uniforms. These were the messengers. I was introduced to one of the managers. This man looked like a sadist or a paedophile. His stare was cold and hard.

'What year were you born?' he barked.

I told him. 1972.

'1972, good year, another good year was 1982 wasn't it?'

I had no idea what he was talking about. 'Erm, why's that?' The man punched me lightly on the shoulder. 'Falklands war, Falklands war,' he replied and walked off.

I didn't understand any of it. I was shown to a workstation and introduced to some other men. They wanted to know what football team I supported. I told them I didn't like football.

‘Nice one mate, don’t like football, good one, like it, ha, aha, ha, ha.’

The others joined in the laughter and so did I, but I laughed louder than everyone else. It was totally insane, surreal, and fucking weird. After that a withered old geezer who looked to be at least a hundred years old explained my duties. This was the guy I was replacing. He’d been in the job for over forty years and was all crouched and shrunken like the job was slowly crushing him to death. His face was grey, no hint of blood or even life, and his hair was white as snow. He spoke in whispers and I began to feel very bad. Eventually the ancient man handed me a bundle of letters and manila envelopes and set me on my way, alone. I turned the first corner and carefully placed the bundle onto the floor and ran away, without once looking back. Maybe it was a dream I told myself afterwards, or maybe it was a nightmare, your nightmare, my nightmare, everyone’s nightmare...

I returned to the office an hour later. Everyone was in exactly the same place as when I left, eyes glued to monitors, hands aimlessly tapping keyboards. Nobody mentioned my disappearing act and I wondered if I’d entered a strange corporate twilight zone. Amazingly the insane freak was still talking about the same subject, cross- platform deliverables, whatever they were.

I logged onto my PC, flipped open the novel, and began typing.

Most of the staff looked the same as each other. No one appeared to be doing anything and nothing much seemed to be going on. Phones constantly rung, but were never answered. Some dead people wandered aimlessly around...



HOXTON DINNER BLUES

A sweet child of nine years
and six siblings
crowded round an empty table
bellies rumbling
my mum knew there was nothing but
to go out onto the streets of Hoxton
In search of her mum
my nan
Mary
so to the pubs she went
poking her small head inside saloon bar doors
asking if was Mary there
she's not been here Kitty the voice would say
try Aunty Eileen's or the Gib

NAMESAKE/NAMASKAR

Which goddess was I named after?

I sit on the floor with a candle and quartz
Reading ephemeral tendrils leaking out
of joss sticks. Three types of flowers adorn my crown,
thimbles of water and oil
reminding me of thirst.

Was it Diana, Roman
moon queen, the moon witch
slinking in the dark while her brother boasts
rays of the sun as his own, as if he forgets,
every day, the story of Icarus -
how the Old Masters were only ever right about
one thing: How it takes place the moment heads are turned away,
a small girl-child's body pummeled
beyond the ages. At 12,
18, 21, it was already too late.

Who is the shadow of whom? I couldn't reach Diana,
so I followed the lines Artemis drew
with her feet, translated by the footprints of a stag.
I reached a cave I then visited every week
where vampire teeth met my flesh, with a take-and-take,
- conversation was the currency that broke me.
What falsehoods made me believe
it was all my fault, kept me returning to that cave until
I ran out of blood, until
I found the word, 'Enough.'





'My Narrative Isn't Sci Fi, It's Universal' - 2017

Medium: Watercolor, acrylic, and ink on watercolor paper

Diana returned to pluck me off the ground
and exhaled the migratory hunger I grew up with
back into my arteries.

I learned how to dissolve illusions as she
replaced the top of my skull with a crown made
of all the dark spots of the moon. She held my planets
away from me, so my arms were lighter,
pointed ahead and said, *Go.*

*On your way with you,
you have miles left to
go.*

On my travels, I passed the stars.
Orion spent years chasing me over the distance of three oceans.
This time, I slit his throat and took that belt for myself.
No more a whip, now a trophy I keep
on the other side of the realm
to remember what I learned of injury and anger.
I cut and cultivated pieces of his body,
hid in them time capsules
to grow kinder myths from decaying memories -
postcards I sometimes send to friends
before the initiation of yuanfen.

I was then gifted a red triangle, reversed,
guiding me back to raga and tabla, to the dusk in my skin.
I feed the clay in it with the salt of the seas, blowing on
the flames that still burn
from generations ago. For honor, for shame,
for nose rings and wild hair,
for remembering laughter. For strangled
words and scarred throats, the songs that ceased

to be. *Yes, I hear you, girlhoods of my birth.*
As I hold the sky in my palms, I wait and listen
for their screams to resonate
through.

Tune my bone and breath
to resemble a roar, loud enough
to fit our collective rage, heavy enough
to face the weight of our men's
tongues, fists, knives,
excusing the abuse on the world - forgetting,
every day, to ask for forgiveness
from their mother's bodies, from their daughter's tears,
first
before they make amends with the motherland.

The smoke, now, perfumed in loss
reaches me back to a longing
that has drowned me more than once
and never lets me forget it. Moving me
to paint half my face blue, twisting my voice
into a birdsong, calling out for words,
for language, for the identities stolen
away from me. For, like wings,
without them I am incomplete.

Come back, come back
to me, my history
and let me pick a namesake for you
worthy of my origin.

QUEST

No pen, no pencil. Another Mycenaean maze and no respite from my warring arts -- repose, restore, oh no -- my abscessed brain is drained from me, my sitting hours on end. Mid-week reprieve but what once was potent saber wrapped in myelin sheath has gone to seed, nerves to sleep. I need to seek, to plant my flag anew or not or knot or noose, oh lord, my thoughts are hanging loose.

And then this -- well, piss me -- bilious bother, vile old bore, like a ticking bomb, like locust wings and lava flows, like silicates pressed as lamplight shade from earth and fire, from iron ore. Ore or shade, arched doorways to angled pain, but all I need is pen or pencil lead to pith the spine of random thought or vice the verses that stand at odds. And against all odds: your encaustic arts are waning spells, are inky veils thrown with Merlin flare toward not just me but all my fellow cephalopods.

No pen, no pencil. So brutally unarmed, will I go? Not to sit but ramble streets and lanes for things I should have thought to bring, like Eros fool forgetting bow but I know well the Eros of my ways: to send a note to you and yet, instead a quest: no pen, no pencil. And I attempt my brain to blame when truth to tell I misplaced my aim and brain I'd say was less the part that let us down than laconic heart and so I should go to capture and claim ink or pencil for strategic ends: you minus me, my quest begins.

A HAIL OF DICTION

My uncle told stories -- never-ending stories. He chain told, lighting the next with the butt of the last. His stories revolved around him, the marveling myths of him, the never-ending tales of him. He went back a long way. He and his histories went back before the fall, before, even, the rise.

Anyway his stories went way back. They were, all told, creation stories. They were rarely linear these stories, except at any given moment. But aren't moments like points? And like points in a row or an arc, in the moment you will not know whether the next suggests straight line or curve, you will not know if you should go ahead or go behind, if you will spiral up or spiral down or like some free-wheeling roulette, just roll, one moment's motive curving easy, one into another.

I had a Spirograph as a child. My uncle gave it to me at Christmas. My uncle who spoke in roulettes and spirals gave me my Spirograph when I was seven. Perhaps he meant it as an update. Perhaps he meant it as a warning.

When I was eight my mother died and my uncle spun away to California, Orange County, where stories never end but cycle, spin, revolve, one into the other.

UP THE SILVER CORD

Theron returned to his body to find his mouth trailing off a sentence that had not been spoken by himself. He only caught the last bit, something about chopping a donkey, climbing a hillside. But it had stopped, as he reappeared inside his head, faced with a few people looking blankly at him.

"It weren't me who said that," he offered, by way of explanation of whatever strangeness had just spewed from his lips, as though something else talking through him was any less odd. The others looked embarrassed. He'd had this before, disappearing and then coming back to his body, with no idea where he'd been in between. Just patterns for memory. That was the first time he'd been aware of his head saying something when he got back in. *Oh well*

He looked around, to make sure none of the vultures had taken anything, put another big stone on the pipe, lit it and licked it in one go. Holding the clouds down, he looked at shadow spiders crawling around him and then exhaled. Later on, the others had left bar one, who'd soldiered on through the weird, wired atmosphere for the handouts. Theron had stood at the window, checking for what? Police? Maybe. He'd sat down, stood again, looking out and there he was, a man with a hat on, staring straight up at him.

"Look at that geezer down there," Theron said, frantic with fear. Little Dan peered out, but there was no one there. "Where?"

"Look, down there. He's not even hiding!"

"There's nobody there, mate," little Dan said, a sly grin spreading. Theron rubbed his face, unsure of everything. He sat down, took another lick on the pipe and inside his bone-box cinema, playing on a loop, Stan Laurel was saying, 'We're not us. We're two other fellers.'

Back at the window, he'd watched, staring out and there was a strange, long limbed, naked, alien looking creature, sitting on a deck chair, pretending to read a book, while spying on him. Theron stepped back from the glass in horror, "Look down there. Tell me that monster ain't sitting there!" Seeing little Dan's mouth and nose extending out, like a

dog's snout, he punched him straight in the face. "You're fuckin' one of 'em!" Theron swayed slightly, gazing at his knuckles, wondering if the small man he'd just knocked down was real.

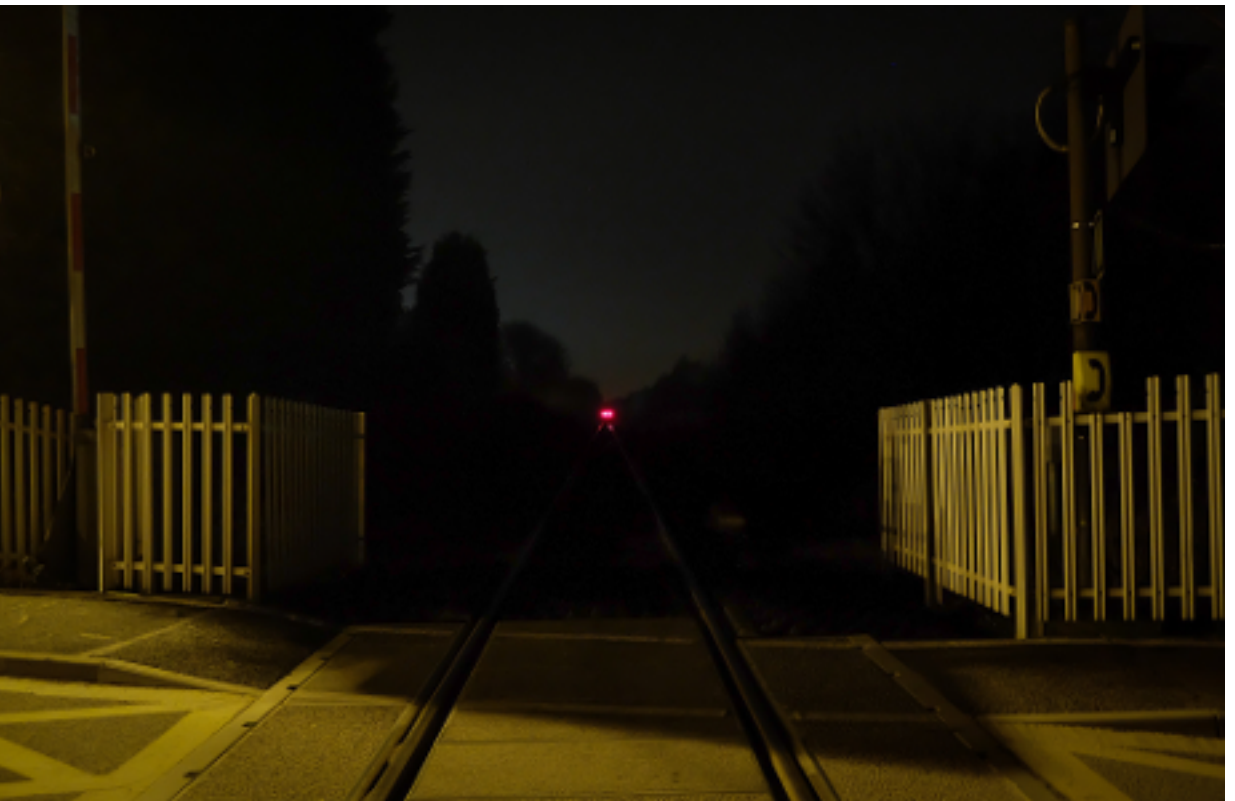
Little Dan got up, dazed and wiped the blood across his upper lip. Feeling the attack was worth what had been given to him all day and night, he thought better of complaining. He saw Theron setting up another bone on the glass. "Why don't you stop doin' that and have something to calm down?"

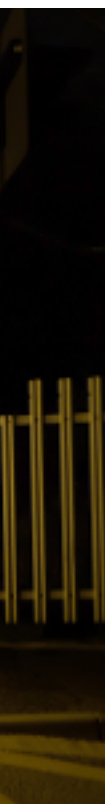
Theron looked at him a moment, checking he wasn't a threat and reached for the spoon and syringe. "Yeah, I know." He cooked a fix and shot himself up a smooth landing. Face slackened, losing the mad grimace, he slumped in his chair. Little Dan looked on, hopeful of another free ride from the schizo with all the tickets. Patron saint of lost losers and lunatics.

photography: Sophie Pitchford

Quondam, 2017:

"These photographs, they remind me of hanging out on the streets in winter as a teenager. The yellow light and the emptiness. You don't really see it that much any more. You don't want to be outside, at night, in winter any more."











ON TAG

Hosepipe the cobbles

Thirty-six minutes to go before G4S ring the phone

Naked fences, display scuffed fibres of un-loved flesh

Roof-tiles, missing teeth

Decayed door, rotten exits

The letter 'W' from a keyboard - misspelt amongst pebbles

Sweep the fag-nubs
after their fog

Still frosting-up the windowsill

But first—

Dust them for lipstick and fingerprints: remove the dead leaves

Of poison Ivy that grows anonymously

Around a Ladder's metallic skeleton,

Scabbed with rust.

Dog shit –
Smells like evidence

Ripened, unadulterated, ammonia waves invisibly—

The rat trapped in the cage at the end of the garden—

The kind no clever man would ever choose to set free.

ANYWHERE STREET, DE1

Tarmac roads of quicksand effect
Six-foot fences, to cage us in
rabbit-traps for
Destitute houses.
Shops to let — don't look like letting
Anyone in
Diamonds cut the earth
Broken glass shining dog shit
Replaces the ground beneath my feet.
Gang-tags sprayed-across street-signs,
Demonstrate the lost direction of youth:
Alienated by society,
And quite possibly let down by their Mam and Dad.
Education begins at home,
But some of these cats 'bin left to roam since the day dot,
Huddled 'round corner-shops
Givin' it the *BLAT-BLAT-BLAT*

The same place where habitual whine-drinkers
Gather about glass hands
To trade intoxicated philosophies
With their brothers and sisters
Of smacked-up, gouched-out descent,
The gurning speed-freak says his piece too;
Face contorted, tongue twisted,
Chewin-onner-bagger-spanners
Sammy stumbles over—
Passes the Dutch 'pon the right-hand side,

But they *let 'im-off*
After all, he's steam-boated:
It's two in the afternoon fer God's sake-
The man's bin onnit fer 'ours—Whatter legend!

As I observe this play-out
From kerb to eye
It feeds and starves the hungry mind,
Where yer mother, nature, is nowhere in sight.



ONE HELL OF A RIDE

The first night we met
we got drunk,
took cocaine
and agreed
to get married.

On our first date
we kissed in a thunder storm
and had sex
on the front steps
of a church.

On our second date
we got drunk at PRIDE
and later rode a discarded
broken desk chair
down a hill.

On our third date
we went on
the world's shittiest
ghost train
and laughed until we cried.

We've been out to dinner
and played grown ups
got drunk on school nights
and we have spoken
every day since we met.

If everything
goes to shit
and we break up,
at least that first month
was one hell of a ride.



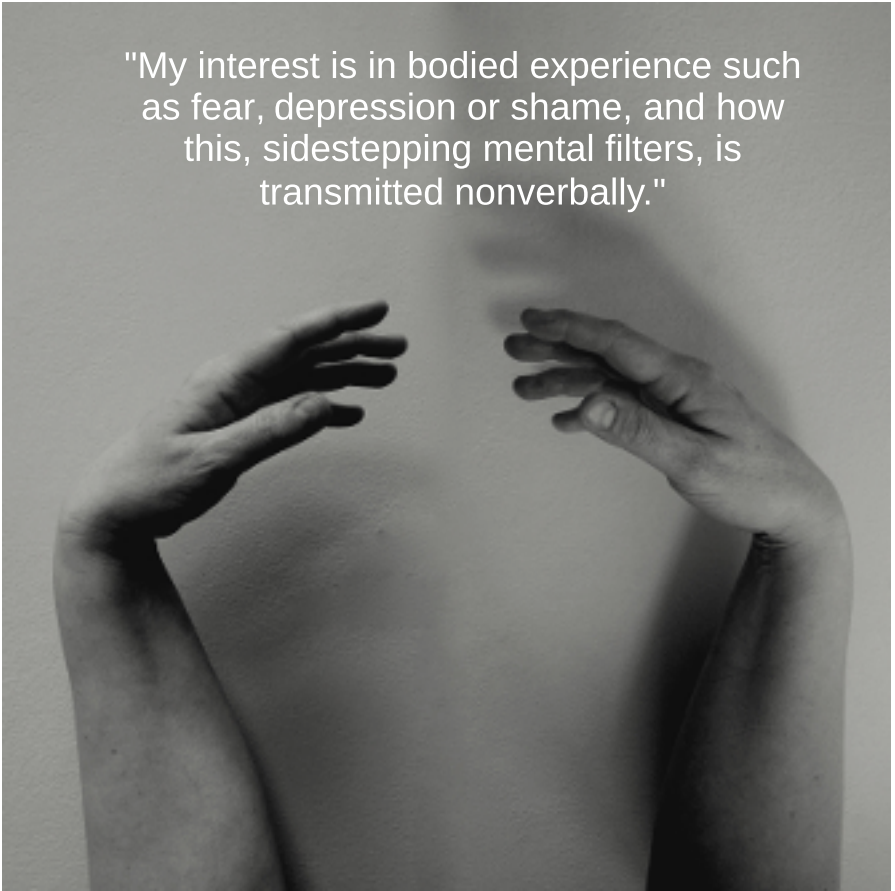
When did you first start making art?

"I've made what I think of as art since I was a child but I started my formal art education late, I had always made art but somehow I did an Italian literature degree when I was younger and it wasn't until I had my daughter that I went to Chelsea College of Art and I found that experience invaluable. Initially it was drawings, then photographs, paintings, videos, but after a while I was not so interested in making more stuff, and instead started to move into another direction with more emphasis on actions and performance than on objects. Now I have come full circle and I don't really see myself as an artist as such, I mostly see myself as being an editor; I edit things, images, voices and ideas."

Why make art?

"I find it difficult to define and delineate what is art, perhaps because what art expresses and evokes is in part ineffable. I suppose that for me there has always been a fascination with the way that artists have the capacity to transform and alter things, to reverse the meaning of a sign, an object or a cultural form. For my part, I find that I am constantly collecting things; texts, fragments, images, ideas from all around, so in that sense, going back to the question why make art? It's about sharing the way I experience the world and a way that I have of trying to make sense of it all. "

"My interest is in bodied experience such as fear, depression or shame, and how this, sidestepping mental filters, is transmitted nonverbally."



"How the matter of ourselves spreads beyond the boundaries of our skin through the olfactory by way of pheromones and hormones, to entangle and entrain those around us, and how individual and collective states of being are influenced by, for example the changing of societies on local, national and international scales owing to economic, ecological, political and technological developments and crises, by mobs and hysteria, by the continuities of language and information, by images, news and media and myth."

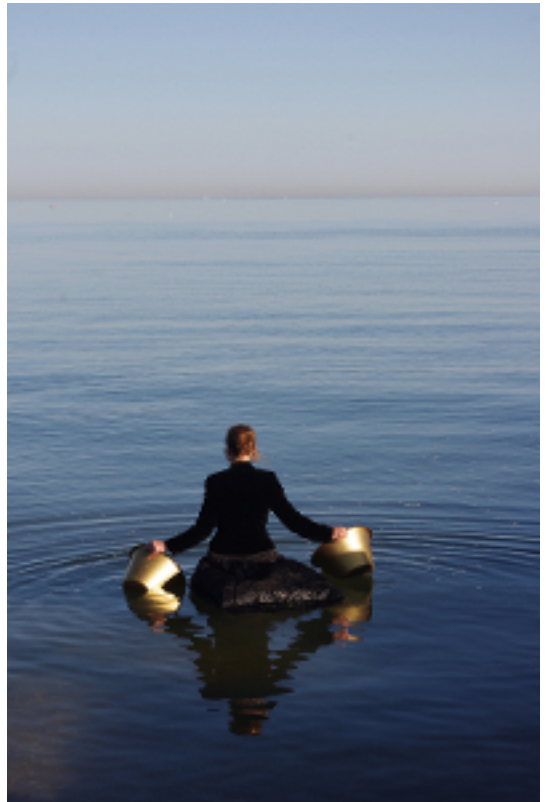
"I don't like work in which the sense of direction is too clear, I like to keep an unbalanced open meaning about it, in a way I want to make art as if I am playing a piano by ear; not as if I am reading a manual on how to play the piano, that's when the work is most successful."





Do you have any obsessions (motifs or deep concerns), are they evident in your work, and what are they?

"Both my performative work and my video work are often durational so I'd say there is definitely a concern with time, also slowness is always somehow evident in my work, and I am often drawn to the interval or gaps that occur between images and words, between thought and movement; the time slip, the syncope, the stutter, the forgotten word, the fleeting image seen at the corner of the eye, that which has not yet happened but is on the cusp of becoming."





For you, what is the most difficult aspect of making art?

"I find that there is often an ambivalence between rigorous and conceptually aimed work and more chance based work. For me the challenge is how far can I step away from my practice with projects that are ancillary to it, and if so, how can they coexist. In the end, I suppose, the work takes it's own direction."

What, if anything, has making art taught you?

"To trust in my instincts and to do this you have to be quite fearless. Making work that is quite understated, sometimes it is hard to see where the work actually is, especially when working in a medium that I'm not so comfortable with... I think you can only find a certain 'truth' in a piece of work, and this applies to any medium, if you are prepared to take a leap of faith and not be afraid of failing."

What one thing would you pass on to someone who wanted to begin making art?

"Just make work, and don't isolate yourself, it's a cliché and I'm repeating myself, but I think that the dialogue with other artists is really necessary at whatever level you are at."

- LIZ ZUMIN



NARRATIVE OF AN AFFAIR

You carry so much of me on you this morning
My crumpled white shirt, languid on your skin
Teasing, fluttering, as it never has on mine
My tears, my blood, my sweat, my scent
Your body, a graceful recipient; and thus
Early morning idles in this sweet sorrow
Of laughter, erasure, words, remembrance
Everything distilled in the thick language
Of touch, desire, not quite a silent Aubade
Just a victim to the eminence of a later dusk

I'm taken back to summer, a boy of seven
That sound of crickets, the smell of fresh grass
Even then, I knew it was bound to end someday
This aching lullaby of deep blue defiance
This wanton devotion to illusion; I think
Perhaps that's what binds these two
These occasions fraught with life and carmine
The temperance, the transience, wholly devoured
In your flowing mounds of gold and coffee
Those same crickets, that same grass, in sync

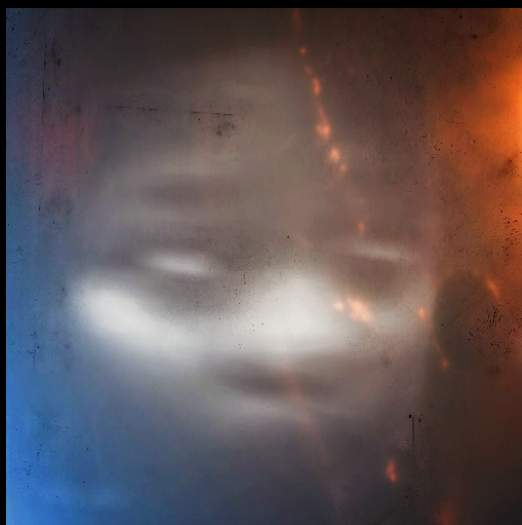
Flick, suck, flow, rise, arise to today's ardour
Your loft welcomes our desperate affair
This beautiful drama bound to human rush
Flooded with sinew, hope and contrition crushed
Within its frames of proud old wood; and you
Keep holding on to this bad beautiful mess
Encumbered by the thought of conclusion
Enamoured by some hazy concept of closure
This bloodied brutal beauty of our crusts
A hidden sonata to the futility of truth

Shy drops of sun stream through your drapes
Rue Saint-Jacques stirs and arises to a kiss
The Odette for a bite, La Bucherie for a drink
We aren't bound by time or stricture or the
Weight of our own drunken atonements; ah well
Anchors weight heavy on all we've assumed
Are our hearts humming to acquainted beats
The syntax of our skins is a prolonged departure
The grammar of our touch a single tremble
Beneath which lie two bodies, compelled.

AFTER

came the darkness
and my mind
ran empty of symbols
 notions of self
no sense
 beyond sensing.

Still.
I heard
the crease of sheets
her rising chest
falling like rain
 drops
on tranquil seas.



THE ARSONIST MAGAZINE

THE SILENT

In 1941, Marisol's mother committed suicide. Marisol, who was 11, said she "decided never to talk again. . . . I really didn't talk for years except for what was absolutely necessary in school and on the street. . . . I was into my late twenties before I started talking again — and silence had become such a habit that I really had nothing to say to anybody."

-- Revisiting Marisol years after her heyday (The Boston Globe)

I am silent because my father is silent. I imagine lying in the coffin with him. The silence of the inside. Inside the silence.

Seeing my father's dead body was the beginning of my silence. It was a rupture.

I can't speak. Words are not possible.

Silence is its own speech.

He was here when I turned 16, but he won't be here when I turn 17. How could I have known the difference between then and now?

Then and *now*. The division of my life into two parts.

When someone dies, the hearts of those left behind also die. I carry a dead thing inside me.

I paint red canvases of smashed hearts. Layers of red. Blood song.

Paint is my voice.

Painting is wordless. There is no language. Language exhausts me. I wish there was a visible sign of my pain, a symbol affixed to my clothing, a bright red gash over my chest. The grief leaves me speechless. What word can touch this wound?

Why am I alive without him?

We're here and then we're not. There's no *why*. No answer to our flickering existence.

My self-portraits are blotches and smears of color. I disappear myself, the

self that makes no sense.

To disappear like Bas Jan Ader. To make art out of death.

I want to go to the Rothko Chapel. I have no god. I cannot pray. I cannot find peace. I want to sit in front of those dark canvases, those holes of pure color. They are portals, glimpses of something unspeakable.

Now I know what death is: Total silence. A closing without closure.

When I sleep, there is nothingness. Maybe that's all he is now. Was that what Rothko painted?

I start to make a painting of my father--his green eyes, his brown hair, his skin. He isn't flesh. He is paint and memory. I can't finish. I tear it up.

Painting is my way of reaching him.

I understand how people die within days of each other. It's not the heart that breaks but the whole body. You collapse in on yourself. The world goes blank and black.

Grief convinces me that there must be something darker than darkness, something blacker than night.

I dream of him. In the dream, I speak for the first time in months. I feel alive again, inside what is not real.

Morning. Daylight glowing golden in my eyes. Another day without him. I want to go back to sleep, block out the light.

So many paintings inside me. They come as visions. They wake me up. I go from darkness to color.

Come back. Come back. I love you. Come back.

I want to paint every memory, every vision of him. Make him permanent.

A video of Pollock painting. He holds the can, lets the paint drip onto the canvas beneath his feet, like a bleeding, like there's no separation between his body and the paint. That's art, a fusion of the human and the divine. No boundary or distance. Union.

When painting, I don't know if I am inside or outside myself. I don't

know what I am.

I don't want to kill myself. I just don't want to *be* myself. I want to metamorphose, like Daphne turning into a tree. Bernini sculpted her fingers into filaments of tree branches and leaves--part woman, part laurel. Maybe I'm part living and part dead, or part flesh and part paint, a hybrid.

The life of the mind is a consuming fire. I'm burning. I feel the light enter me. I paint with that light.

What is this power in me? Art is my only power. My life force.

Our essence is unseen. All the important parts of ourselves are immaterial, stored inside our heads. The mind has no form, the self and the soul have no shape. They are felt but can't be verified. And that is what I want to paint. And that is what I want my paintings to touch inside the viewer.

I can't tolerate anything that keeps me from my art. All the ordinary tasks--driving, dishes, groceries--repulse me. Throw me into art and let me drown. I don't want to leave my art.

People cannot feel what I feel. You cannot transmit or explain a feeling. And every feeling has a consequence, a lasting imprint. I want to paint a feeling. I want to make it tangible so that someone else can feel what is inside me.

I hold my mother. I let touch talk for me. Why can't we remain like this? Entwined together in the silence.

Skin speaks. Skin language.

I brush my mother's hair and gather it in a bun. To touch her, to feel her hair in my hands, to feel the life of her--what a gift.

Mother and father. Once, they were one. Now, they are separated, alone. They will never be together again.

I know the meaning of *never*.

A day at the beach. I float on the waves. I almost let them take me, but my mother is on the shore, and her love pulls me back to the living.

Mother wakes from nightmares. She sits on the bed's edge, catching her breath, her face bathed in moonglow. None of this feels real.

They say that after something like this, nothing is ever the same. But what does it mean? The sky is the same. The trees are the same. The house is the same. Everything external stays the same, only you are changed, mutilated. I can't speak. I don't want to.

In this cacophony around me, I am the only silent thing. The world around me moves, but I stay still. I resist. This resistance keeps me alive.

The first panic attack. Crushing of my chest. Forgetting how to breathe, fearing that I might die. Of course I will die. Of course. I know that now.

I don't want to die.

We talk because we fear silence. Death is the purest silence.

Is silence an absence of language or is it a language of its own?

Grief is quiet.

I feel such a stillness. The clouds pass slowly across the sky. This is the only peace I feel. If only I could hold on to it.

They say his atoms will pull apart and recombine to make something else, he goes on in another form, but what comfort is that when I want *him*?

Because I've stopped speaking, I can go deeper inside myself, down to the silence where the truth exists. Speaking is a projection, that which is directed outside the body. I go silent. I go inward, like a flower turned back into a bud. Everything condensed, on the verge of existing. A fist of energy, throbbing and pounding.

His death confined me inside myself. I'm beating the walls down. I must find a way out, some trapdoor into magic.

Wanting to die but wanting to live more and to live with art and creativity and knowledge.

You touch death and all you want is to live. I crave life. I crave rebirth. What could I become?

DEATH OF I

(for Laura Oldfield Ford)

Leaden drips nod
Into drowsing sentinels
To work with stillness,
Guarding sleep.

Porous bodies close spaces
On dusted buttons
Blush, un-pressed,

Gather us
Grateful handfuls
Of newborn skulls
Swollen plush to touch.

Furrowed crowds
Hum moss-faint about
Heavy metals dull orbit

Snagging-at
Hook-jaw toxicity
To the back-teeth's
Persistence of memory.

The best thrive
To spite the rest,
Withering inside
Each deferent ring,

We are the old flesh;
Redundant groans exposed
Manifest by true blight
Of false hope,

Ghosting our fathers'
Blunted waltz,
Singing through our shadows
From useless throats.

poetry: Adam Steiner



L+DL

1234567890

NEGLECT

They say they've got a dog
But they don't really care at all
They feed it and water it
But leave it outside
In the ice
 The rain
 The sun
 The night
And he sits obedient
 Paw raised like a prince
Yet he starts to smell -
 To itch
So people don't stroke him
His garden: a wasteland
 Of shit, sludge, slurry: a swamp
And now he barks at night
So they shout
 They slam
 They bash him
Until he yelps and is quiet.
And one day he'll die
 Like he never was born
 Never seen the real outside
He's transparent, forgotten
 Now...

They say they've *got* a child.

THE MOTORBIKE

Puff-powder smoke

Wheels spin, screech turn

In circles on the bottom car park

In the darkness

2 lads

As one juts to a stop

The other: *HERE, giz a go*

Another screech rolls out

Over the roofs

Of silent sleepers

Ajar windows wake children

To hear

The two lads

-suspended in time-

Tyre tread

Left in circles

Around them

In the blackness of night

In the blackness of time

There's a light shining down

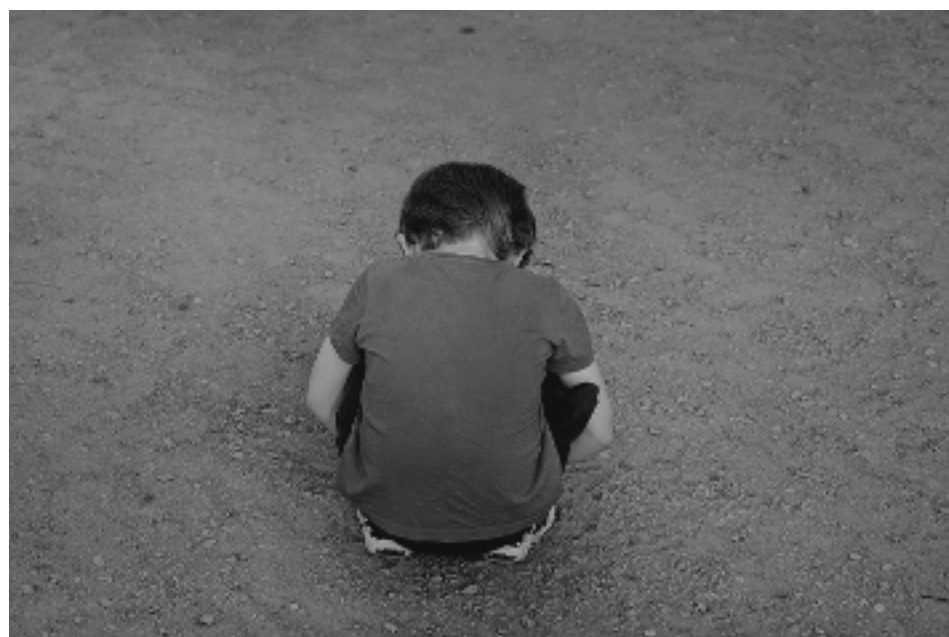
On . Their . Moment



I want to be someone's hidden track on a 90's cd. Something you didn't expect that turns out to be a sort of wonderful surprise. You look forward to it once you know it exists. It takes a great patience to get there, but it's worth it. It becomes something special to you. That's what I want, to be special to someone. But it's like that kind of love has become obsolete. No one listens to cds anymore. - **V.M.**



I tried being social. It just made me more lonely. I became very aware of how alone I am in the world. I'm not saying this in a self-pitying sort of way. I'm saying, holy shit, if we're all spiralling towards death, I want you to hold my hand. - **V.M.**



A PREFACE TO SILENCE

(I)

vaulted chambers of woven yarn fingers
drips of thaw ripple a surface
coincidentally –

a final gust of winter sweeps the semi nude lawn
snow gets heavier in dying
it's a black matter cliffhanger

the detective agency is on the case:
our three scouts of springtime catches a scent
some clue of some galaxy not far away

two of us wear fur and one wears blanket
junior keeps vigil while senior snores
I'm controlling ants using willpower or chance

junior steps into my lap
puts his nose in my face
says "see me"
we remain in each other like braids
none of us can blow away

(II)

we built towers of lego to watch them crash
and the model Spitfire was bombed on the runway
by its own fireworks

we carved swords using knives and played war

heavy hanging plastic fruit
bouncing on the handlebar
the road was steep from groceries
but she always managed to buy us something
paid for by the lingering fear of next month
I wear it with genes and cardia

four times I remember bringing teary eyes to mother:
that time I was chased by a Yorkshire Terrier
that time someone threw a rock in my face
that time I sat on a hill of teaming ants
that time I saw a man with dark skin

it was an area of miscellanea
drunks and single mothers
those tenement houses are torn now
the remains of my house is a burial mound
I believe the chieftain was buried in his finest ship

the flesh and skin sings with the grass
the hair and teeth still hanging on
and the sword: a honey of blood and edge

the crown on the cranium avant-garde for its time
gnarly cheeks on gnarly fir needles of bound frost stitches



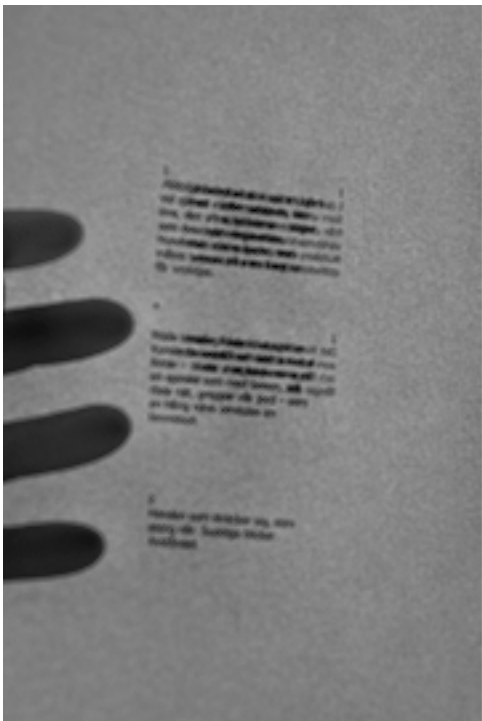
photography/poetry: Fredric Nord



the braided bones of sticky fingers
gently laid on strings of rib
each violin is the others bow

and the shut of eye sockets no longer blind
ears don't heed the drums of sorrow
as if nothing ever happened
as thick thick
fog –

the two hundred thousand year old echo
of a two hundred million year old echo
of a fourteen billion year old echo
of an echo



(III)

the fusion of rocks are habits of lifetimes
beings crystallized in full scale hindsight

we know them by heart the Huns and the Romans
they linger in us the way we linger in them
neighbouring flats of cells and membranes
we bother them too you know

that perfect dog on that snow lit day
the long walk by the lake exhausted us
we rested mid lake on slowly melting ice

above the black silence
below the white silence

weightless in recognition:

a thousand layers of a single action
razor thin fractals glued into time
stacks of instinct stacks of beauty –

walking the walk
arriving the arrive

we had wandered through the ages
going nowhere together
because that's what love does

ECOLOGY IS A STUDY OF HOUSE

some creatures make shelter

shelter from weather
shelter from predators

some dig dens or burrows
some construct nests
some build thin stone shells

one creature builds houses

nests often have no roofs
burrows & dens always do

so do shells

dens & burrows have holes through
which to enter or leave but
these holes have no doors hinged

or other
wise un
less we
define
a way
as a
door in
other words a
space as a
door way

some creatures' shells do have closures

burrows nests & dens differ
from houses by way
of having no doors (as defined in the unlaw
ful clause above) (claws are clues here)

doors on shells have no hinges
nor handles nor locks nor

letter boxes

not all houses have
hearths & chimneys

but all dragons' nests possess a fireplace – a place for fire

some enlightened children are meant
to draw houses with windows
often mullioned with a cross (not

very often one
with an orang
utan nailed
to it)

no nest den shell nor burrow possesses windows
unless entrance-holes are deemed
windows to pass through

shell-stone is often

thin enough to let light pass

a disc of membrane over a shell's entrance

might be a window as well as a door

(but not a well
a well is a hole
or a hollow or
a shaft

going

straight down
to the water's table

and is more often out
side a house and well

below)

windows with clear glass panes
are essential to a schooled child's

drawing of a house

a house could be
likened to a skull (possibly not

only a human skull)

its windows could be seen
as eyes

windows let sunlight in

(and at night fire or
electric light out)

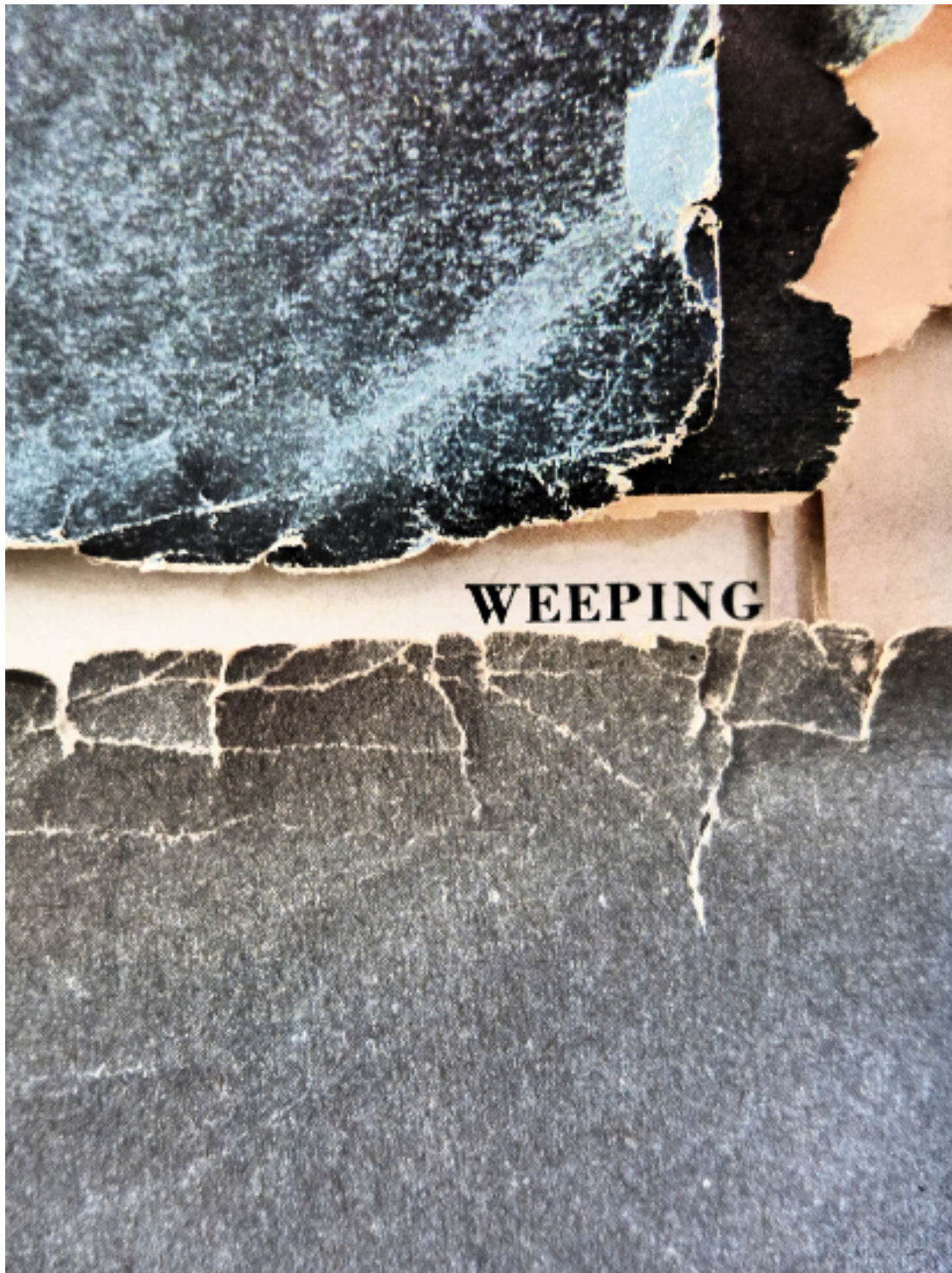
but keep
weather at bay
a house holds

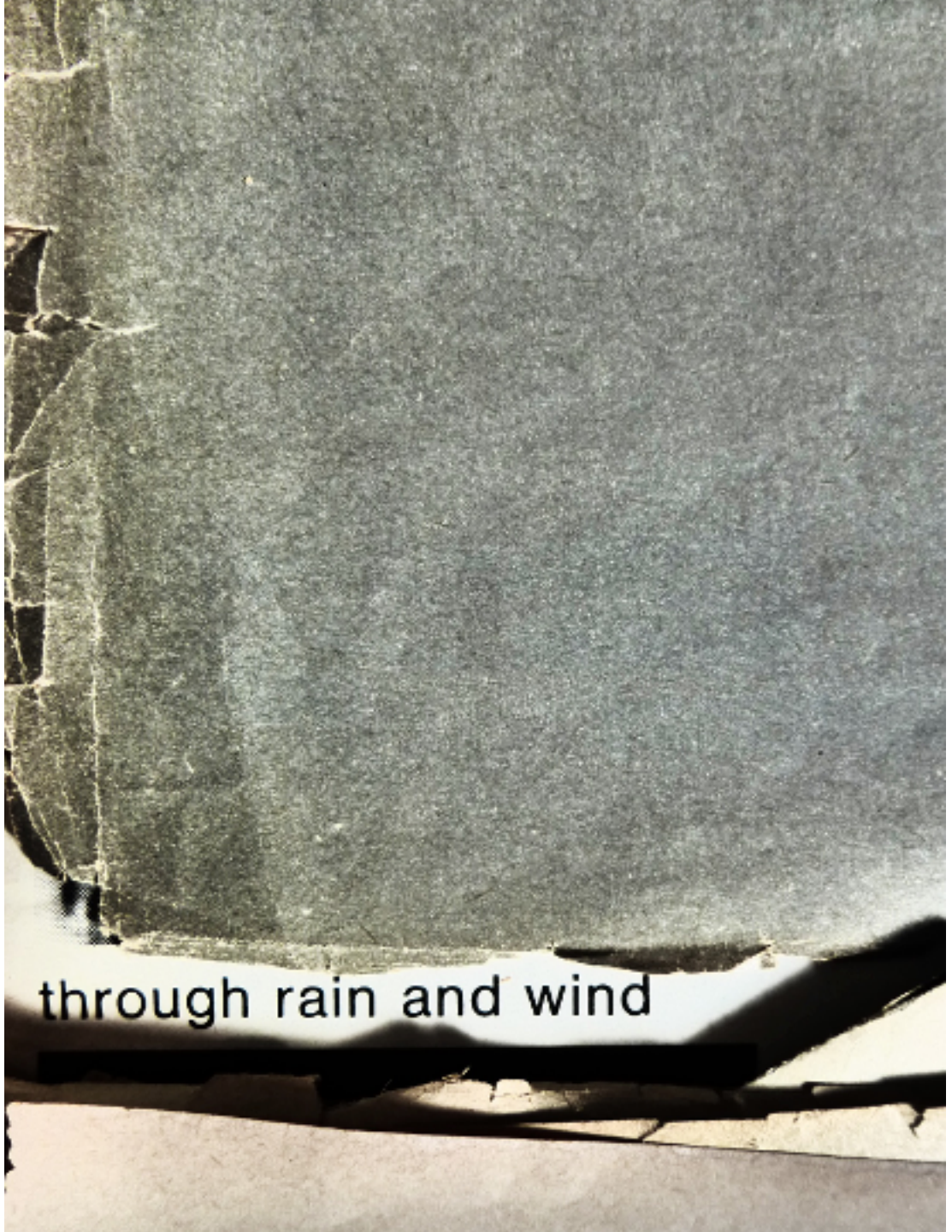
minds











visual poetry 'Debris of Yggdrasil' *5 : hiromi suzuki

'A lie can travel half way round the world before the truth laces up its shoes'

(After Hillsborough whilst remembering Orgreave)

Piss shit and blood,
not alcohol - but piss shit and blood.
Those were the smells of that day.

And the rustle of covers
being pulled over the facts,
before the eyes of the dead.

Hounds let loose to hunt,
and loadsamoney blooding
were the scents of the decade.

And the dehumanising tally-ho
of the scratchers of the estate,
creating new enemies within.

Spineless vilification
fuelled in publicly subsidised bars.
That's the lingering reek of this day.

As the hear, hear cheer-snorters
of chumocracy continue to exert
traction on the truth.

So.

A lie can travel half way around the world before the truth laces up its shoes.

Best keep your laces close to your heart.

poetry: Trevor Wright

A DAY'S NEWS

You can see the country of the future from here, a killer angel wiping his bloody anus with handfuls of grass. The lightning does not go out. Misery burns us. Drugs burn us. The lightning burns us. Children sing, "Where is my clock? Can I bring my wheelchair? Is this real?" A loss of faith brings vertigo. No one I ask can explain the science behind it. "Sorry," they just say. "We made a big mistake." Fear can be a subtle thing, the brink of a hill, tar and ash hiding inside the flowers. I can't think too much about it. A mob passing by the window chants, "Fuck the clown! Fuck the clown!" This is constantly happening. So I need at times to close my eyes. Everyone is dropping gear, panicking, jumping over tables. I have no clue what's going on. These were my rivers, the ghosts of birds all that's left.

GHOST DANCE

Cave painters depicted running animals by showing them with eight legs. It reminds me of my grandmother, how she'd pick up a spider she found in the house and put it back outside. Look up there. The sky is so thoroughly that blue she adored it's impossible to believe she isn't still alive to see it. Don't you think it's time for love? Everything else has failed, the leaves erupting in morbid colors, Dragon's Blood, Uranium Yellow, Mummy Brown. What's important isn't how it's going to happen, but that it happens, and each silent shining snowflake proceed to fall in the exact right place.

“We do this [write] because the world
we live in is a house on fire and the people
we love are **burning** in it”

– **Sandra Cisneros**



Let us say that the house is on fire and you can only take one thing with you. So you take the fire. Burning House Press is the fire you take with you.

Burning House Press is born from a community arts ethos and focus. We seek to cultivate spaces where people feel safe and encouraged to explore and express their creativity. We hold a belief in the power of art, and share a faith in the fundamental connectivity of all peoples, especially as expressed through the commonality and community of multi-disciplinary arts. We believe that capitalism and its attendant profit culture is a public health issue, affecting us all on the level of our mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health and well-being.

We passionately believe in art as a tool for personal transformation and healing, for re-imagining the collective present, and for calling forth a future which honours all life, and fulfills the promise and dignity of our diverse, collective, ancestral histories, wisdoms and cultural inheritance. We view art as a fundamental and inviolable right for all, and not the few. We are a diverse, inclusive platform for artists and also (especially) those who do not consider themselves artists – regardless of ability, age, race, class, nationality, gender or sexual identity.

We are committed to a continuation and perpetuation of our community arts mission across all platforms, whether on-line, in print, in person, at workshops or performance events – namely, we support and encourage all peoples in a return towards our innate creativity, in reconnecting with our intuitive poetic faculties, reclaiming and asserting our right to embrace, utilise, celebrate and honour the infinity of our imaginations. Burning House Press remembers the path to the water-well, as well as the way to the ward, and we sing them both. It takes a village to write a poem.

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