



Bitterzoet Magazine

*Volume 1
February 2014*



Note from the Editors:

You know it's cold out when the inside of your nose starts freezing up. One look outside confirms that hell has indeed frozen over. It's a tempting decision to stay inside, make some hot apple cider and feast your eyes on the latest baby sloth videos the internet has to offer. But don't go gently into that cute night, dear readers. The sloths aren't going anywhere (fast, at least). Work is to be attended to. The inspiration flying around in your head demands your attention. Get a head start on those submissions, manuscripts and correspondences. Feel accomplished. We've been very busy at Bitterzoet this new year. We have a ton of bonbons upcoming in the next few weeks as well as our first print magazine due out on Valentine's day. This month, we're extremely excited to publish the amazing work contained within these pages. We were so grateful to have so many art submissions this month (including Jordan's amazing iPad animation video). The Bitterzoet community is continuing to grow and evolve in the best ways. Here's to a productive year for us and you.

Your sweethearts,

*Pattie Flint &
Wes Solether*

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Cockroach Tea Party

Jennifer MacBain-Stephens

First, there is the dilemma of which legs to put where. They have six hairy legs so do I put two legs under the table and one pair on top to handle the child sized tea kettle? Or, is it better to put two pairs of legs on top of the white tablecloth to help balance out the weight of the thorax? When they are dead the legs fall off so easily. So many roaches left semi-squashed on the floor. You might think it gross, me handling cockroaches this way—but who else will be their caretaker? So easily smushed by a heavy boot or metal book end. We all can't go to every party. We all bring dirty things to the table.



Death and Life of the Urban Block
Jordan Rogers

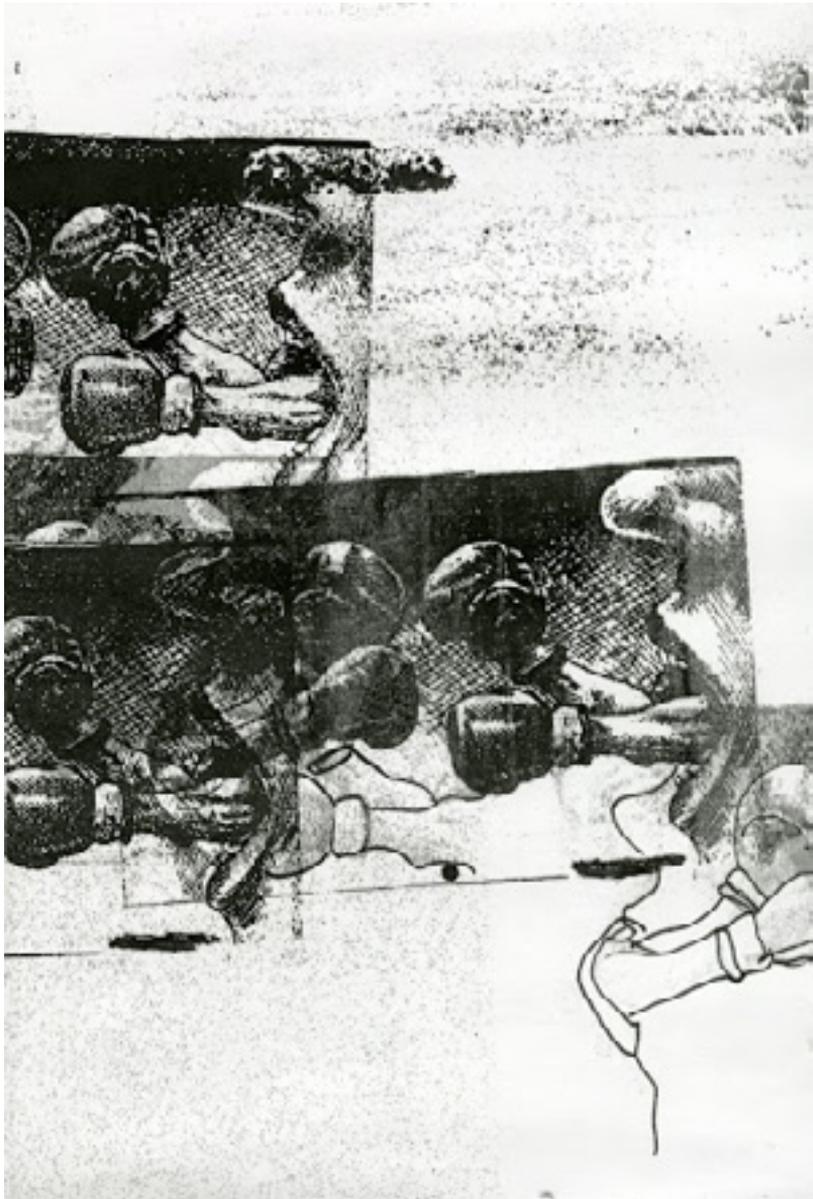
Please click on the picture above
to be directed to Jordan's video.

Almost Winter
Amanda Oliver

It's November again
and eight years since I learned to pray
in a different way--
to the sun,
carpet and a space heater,
familiar shivers in my spine.

Scarves that smell like last winter
even though last winter was lonely
and the winter before that
and the winter before that
even when there was someone else.

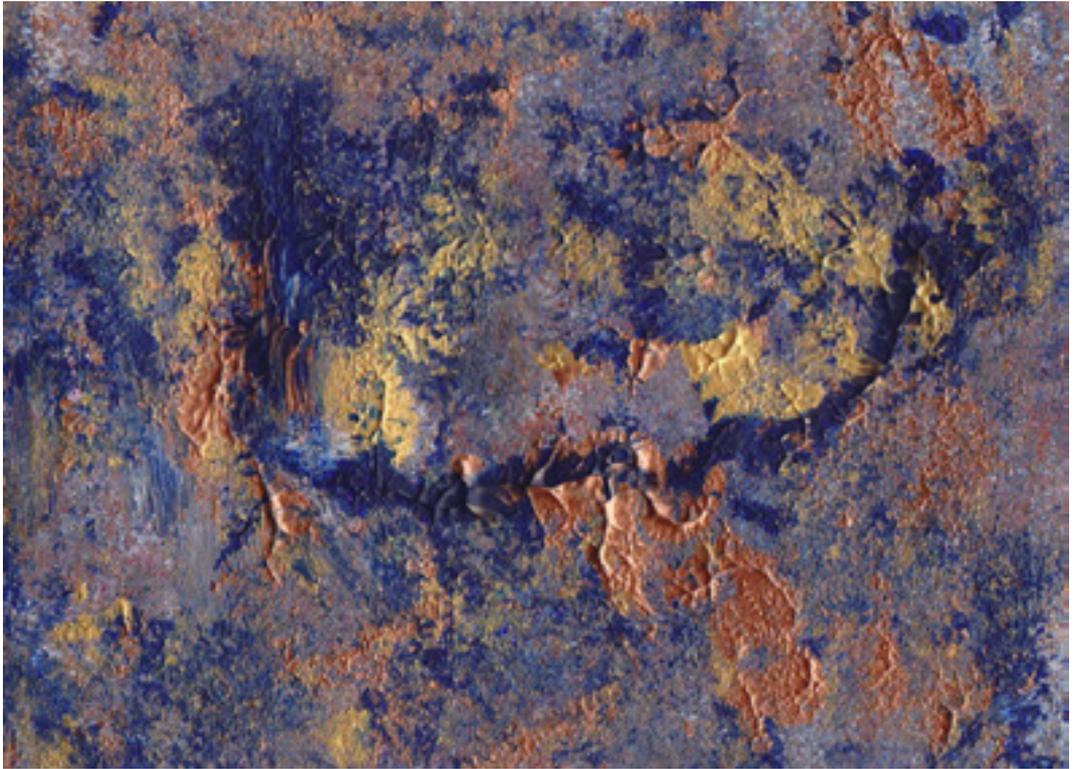
A squirrel has been near my window
all week gathering food.
Storing nuts to hide for later,
a pile enough for two,
knowing he's never going to share it.



Debates vs. Arguments
D.S. Kinsel



The Beach
Marissa Burns



The Notion of Yes
W. Jack Savage

The Carousel at Midnight

Devon Gallant

diAMonds & MountAins¹
are you

all the hopes cached away
in all the hats
are you

dreams hid under the bed

the flagrant denial of sense
the reckless flirtation of mad genius
the open window
wet ink

the sweet smell of midnight are you
and the chitter chatter of stars
the laughter of fountains
and the dance of grass

you contain all the tears of the moon
and all the lips of the sun
you are the mischievous like a child
and have the head of a playground
ten promises reside in you
eleven love songs are your mantle
you are both homily and rebel
dangerous and alive
between your two fingers
you hold the furtive glance of strangers
and in your breath blow the winds of chance

1 Author's Note: AMMA which is the Hindu word for 'mother,' is a reference to Narayani Amma, my guru.



and,by chance,are you here,right now?
do you dance a magical tango with my thoughts?
do you cheer the small victories of my circumference?
and relish all my odd nonsense?

where do the united eyes finally unite?
where is the highway of stars?
your palace of utopia?
and when
does the carousel finally stop?
when
with its neon beauty
and candy-cane sky?



Reclaiming the Utrecht Psalter (A Monk's Whipping)

Miodrag Kojadinović

It was a beautiful gloomy afternoon, the sky a nuance of chlorinated water in a public swimming pool, when I finally went to check out the Psalter. Old books have been my love for a long time; why, even a small business venture at one point, when I sold a bunch of musty turn of the century romance novels in Cyrillic alphabet to a London antiquarian bookshop owner who happened to be married to a Croat.

My urge not to miss the event, to which people were bussed from all over Holland, was probably also due to the fact that, for three years at the Philology Faculty in Belgrade, I used to spend four hours a week analysing reprints of Mediæval manuscripts for their linguistic, historic and literary value. Besides, the entrance fee to the Catharijneconvent was waived for people connected with the Utrecht University (as the oldest surviving book north of the Rhine is otherwise kept in the University Library). And I was slightly tired of spending hours searching the Internet for spanking pictures. Needed a bit of "real culture". So I went.

The loosely defined Middle Ages are a fascinating timeframe and any church museum has a lot of sex-appeal for a devotee of algolagnia. In Catharijneconvent there are, first of all, dozens of almost-naked pictures and figures of the Saviour, often in ecstatic pain. There is also the bushy moustache and cruelly curled lip of a be-helmeted Barak (from Maccabees II or some other apocryphon), who looks virtually as if painted from a Castro Street photograph. For vanilla gay men, there are several strange figures of Christ sitting naked on a rock, such as few other nations had in the XIIIth century, but, unfortunately for lesbians, there is only one Susan bathing (not to mention that the old men are inevitably in the picture).

More explicitly, one finds the bench on which they stretched witches – almost always women, and amongst them most often those not interested in, or not attractive to, men; heretics, such as the Templars, accused for buggery and disbanded by *Phillipe le Bel*; and magicians: old men who would take a boy along to the wilderness for long years, to teach him the Craft. One can spend hours contemplating just that in the empty hallways of the monastery, because, of course, visitors are crowded in the Psalter exhibition room.

The age of Reformation and Catholic Restoration, as seen by the curator of the convent's permanent exhibition, abounds with SM paraphernalia as well: Protestants mock the Roman-Catholic with a book, amusingly open at a page with the drawing of a woman (alas!) with a nun's cap, whose naked buttocks are flailed without mercy by a fat mendicant brother wielding a whip, sat astraddle her waist. The Catholic side itself displays an unusual Franciscan interest in paternoster with beads the size from a pigeon egg to a golf ball threaded on a thick string. Looks to me exactly like an anal stimulator (was it Thai delight?) bought off St. Pauli in Hamburg.

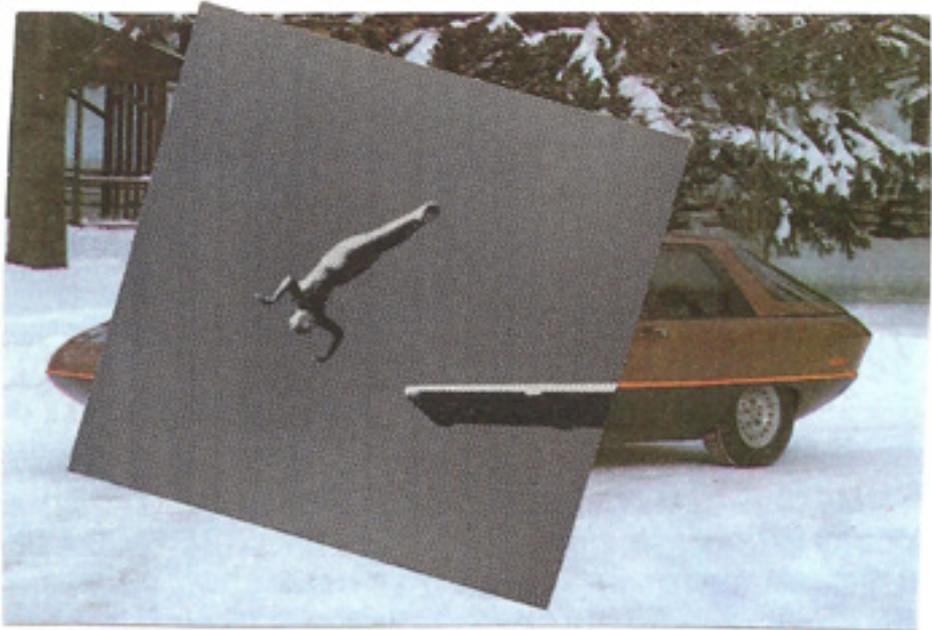
It is quite fascinating that sex industry in European ports is usually located in old streets with the names of saints. Now, the idea of a connexion between sexuality and faith has been omnipresent, most noticeably in Hindhoeism (Tantra, and to a lesser extent Krshna worship) and, indeed, Catholicism (Christ the Bridegroom of all those, regardless of gender, who constitute the true Church, explicit erotica of Canticum Canticorum, ecstasies of Teresa d'Avilla, all the way through to the exuberance of the Dutch convert to the Church of Rome, Gerard Reve).

The museum security boys in navy blue uniforms are quite cute, well-mannered and helpful. One would almost imagine that if they transgress, some stern director ties them to the above-mentioned bench and whips them with nettles. A reason enough for anyone to get out of Amsterdam for a half-day visit. And in the evening, you can always go to Body Talk, with its broom closet behind a curtain, proudly referred to as "the only darkroom of Utrecht". Even my pigslave may be there, handcuffed and kneeling, his eager mouth at the gloryhole level. But that, of course, is another story.





Neck
Laura Collins



Spring
Laura Collins

Unstory

Bill Bunn

Once there was never a little girl. Her name was not-Dot. There were lots of things she never did. Once of the most important things she never did was she never said "no". Most of the never things not-Dot never did were things she would not have disliked. But, because she un-did her dis-likes she ended up un-hating what she always never did. This was never not a problem. In fact, often she was unbothered by her lively un-life.

Before it was ever possible, she didn't fly in a plane. This un-flying, of course, did not help, to not say the least. She could not bring her not self to undo it. Could we not say this was confusing?

Anyway, the point I am not trying to make is that this not-story which might never have un-happened brings real tears to the eyes of people I don't care about.

Getaway

Kenneth Pobo

Over yellow rice and wine
I ask God what or who does God
believe in? *Bette Davis*,
God says. Proof that God

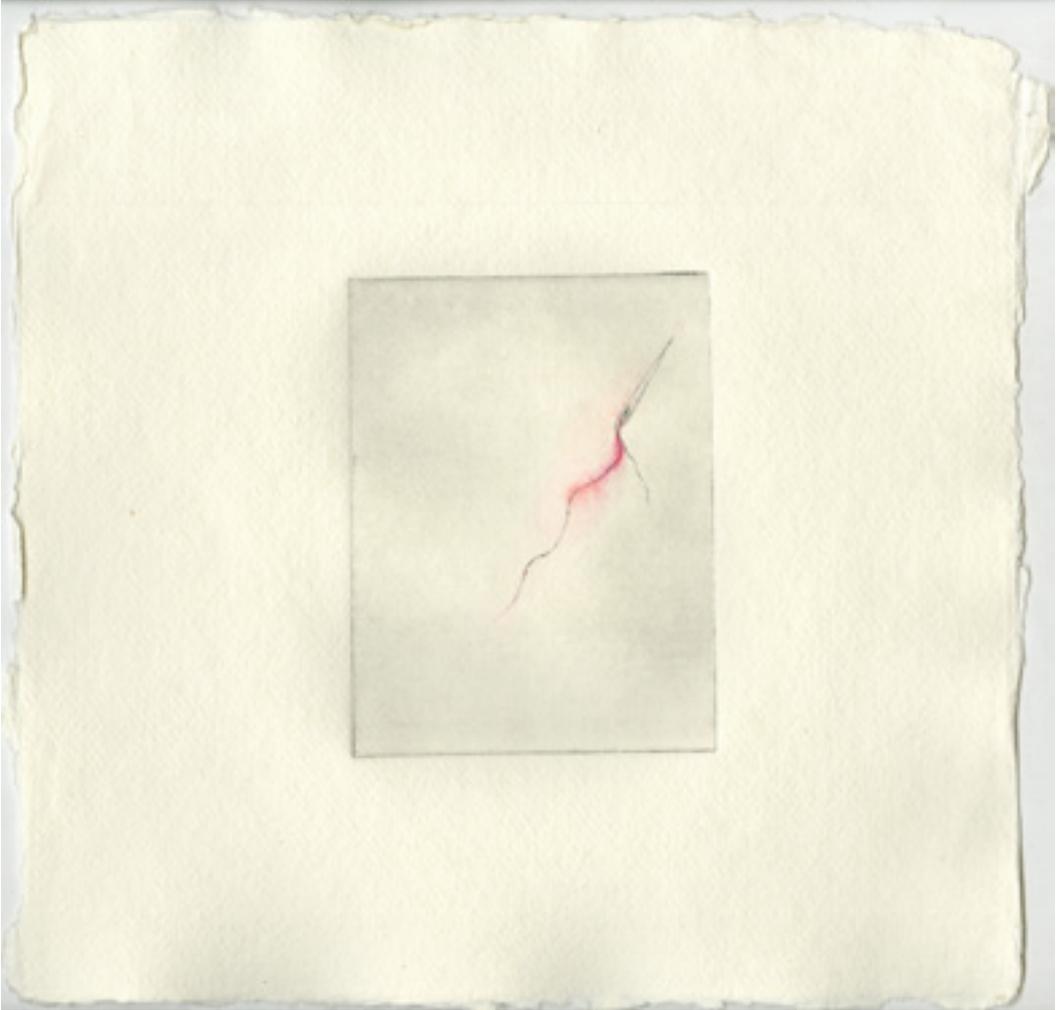
has great taste. God hides out
in a dark theatre, hard to do
in Heaven where light
brags on, you can't turn it off—

on Earth we have plenty
of darkness. God sits
in the back eating Jujubes. *Bette*
wipes *Leslie Howard's* lame

kisses off her mouth. God stays
for the double feature when *Bette*
dies of peritonitis trying to get
to Chicago from that duddy

Wisconsin town. God returns
to Heaven, happy, stirs
the best coffee in the universe
with a dwarf star.





Needle and Thread
kiki de coeur

Contributor Biographies

Bill Bunn is the author of *Duck Boy*, a YA novel, and *Hymns of Home*, a collection of essays about home, both from Bitingduck Press. He's also published pieces in several places including The Globe and Mail and Salon.

Marissa Burns is an artist living in Upstate New York. Marissa has studied at The Art Students League and Wells College. She has shown in Ithaca, New York, and taught a watercolor workshop in Aurora. Marissa was featured in a show at the Limner Gallery in January.

Laura Collins works intuitively, often alluding to moments of personal discomfort and alienation, proposing them to be, in fact, universal. While generally a simple pairing of two images, her collages combine to form complex relationships. These pieces are often assembled to share an unbroken seam that connects two otherwise disjointed images, creating waning moments where they appear as one. There is a tension between the images where they work together, yet constantly reject one another. It is her hope that this guides a cyclical involvement for the viewer.

kiki de coeur is originally of Japanese, Thai and French decent. Growing up between several different countries, she developed both an international consciousness and intense wanderlust. Her work explores the ambiguity of innocence. She currently resides in New York City.

Devon Gallant is the founder and publisher of Cactus Press and the author of eleven chapbooks of poetry, including *ABRACADABRA*. His work has previously appeared in *The Belleville Park Pages*, *Carousel*, and *Misunderstandings Magazine*. As well as being a poet, Devon is also a chaos magician, pronoaic, and devotee of Narayani Amma. His forthcoming collection *S(tars)&M(agnets)* is an experimental blend of shamanism, concrete poetry, and the erotic.





D.S. Kinsel is a visual/installation artist from Pittsburgh, PA. A self-taught, left-handed artist, Kinsel's work is a reflection of his race, culture, and generation. He strives to encourage audiences to reevaluate their ideas of fine art. His work shows in a number of venues across Pittsburgh including Future Tenant, Shaw Galleries, ASSEMBLE and ImageBox. Popular online artists blogs Hyperallergic Labs, 7 Shades of Black, and the Jenesis Magazine have helped spread his work to a larger audience. In 2012, Pittsburgh City Paper ranked Kinsel's Twitter profile the 3rd best in the city. Kinsel was a recipient of the New Pittsburgh Courier "Fab 40" Award in 2012. Kinsel was recently recognized as a 2013 Pittsburgh Magazine 40 Under 40 honoree. A 2013 recipient of the Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh grant, Kinsel is the artist in residence at 720 Music, Clothing, and Cafe. He strives to inspire new thought by sharing his views and interpretations of popular culture through avant-garde expression. Kinsel regularly donates his work to support various non-profits and community based organizations around the city. He also assumes MC'ing responsibilities for special community events with organizations such as the United Way and Kelly Strayhorn Theater.

Miodrag Kojadinović is a Canadian-Serbian poet, prose writer, journalist, translator, interpreter, and photographer. He has undergraduate degrees from Serbia and Canada, postgraduate ones from Serbia, Holland, the US, and Hungary, and has worked at universities/colleges in Norway, Mainland China, Serbia, and Macau. His writing in a wide range of genres has been published in nine languages in Canada, Serbia, the US, France, Russia, England, Holland, Spain, Slovenia, India, Scotland, Macau, Mainland China, Croatia, Australia, Germany, and Montenegro. He has also appeared in three documentaries (of which one about himself as a globetrotter, seeking a place under the Sun: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm5763765/>)

Jennifer MacBain-Stephens graduated from New York University and currently lives in Iowa. She is the author of the chapbook *EveryHerDies*, (forthcoming) from Emerge Literary Journal Publications. She has poems published in Superstition Review, Foliate Oak Literary Magazine, Thirteen Myna Birds, Rufous City Review, Stirring, Eunoia Review, and others. She participated in Iowa City's 2013 Poetry in Public Project and recently nominated for Best of the Net.

Amanda Oliver is a writer and librarian living in Washington, DC. Her recently published chapbook, *Pieces of Parts*, features her poetry and prose. Her writing can be found online at amandaoliver.com and waxenneat.tumblr.com

Kenneth Pobo has a new chapbook out from Eastern Point Press called *Placemats*. His work has appeared in: *Indiana Review*, *Spoon River Quarterly*, *Stickman Review*, *Nimrod*, and elsewhere.

Jordan Rodgers is a BA (Hons) Fine Art, First-Class graduate from Lancaster University, who presents cross-disciplinary drawing involving architectural visualisation. His style is reminiscent of cubist, futurist where the extended lines of the buildings appear to have angles, which have more potential than the visible; the invisible of the building. Since graduating in July 2012, his work has already been exhibited in selected group and solo shows and published in national and international art magazines and websites, including the Aesthetica Art Prize 2012, and the 100 Contemporary Artists 2013 Anthology and more recently the Jerwood Drawing Prize 2013.

W. Jack Savage is a retired broadcaster and educator who now writes and creates his art full time. He is the author of six books: three novels, two short story collections and the autobiographical *The High Sky of Winter's Shadows*. More than eighty of Jack's pictures and nearly fifty of his stories have been published worldwide. Jack and his wife Kathy live in Monrovia, California.

