

decades review

Issue Eight



July 2013

poetry

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STORY OF A DRESS

I remember that sleeveless summer dress
with wide stripes of mauve,
magenta and blue Marcia gave me,
loose and comfortable
with deep pockets and no zipper.
I slipped it over my head,
pulled my arms through the armholes,
and that was it.

But one day my daughter said,
“Lose it, Mom. I hate that dress on you.”
So I packed it with me to Cartagena
and in the Hotel de Tres Banderas,
wore it to breakfast one morning.
Lidia, who worked there, admired it.
I returned to my room, reappearing
in pants and a tee-shirt
and gave her the dress on a hanger,
happy at the thought
of it swaying gently over her hips
as she crosses a sun-dappled plaza
shaded by palms.

-

Anne Whitehouse

DOG

The dog is destitute.
When we smile, it cannot.
When it smiles, we cannot.
It wags its tail. We wag our tongues.
It looks askance. We are bohemians.
The dog is just an individual of hunger and raw meat,
boiled vegetables or eaten food. It takes away philosophy in atrophy.
When it dies, we mourn summers of hydrophobia.

-
Ananya S. Guha

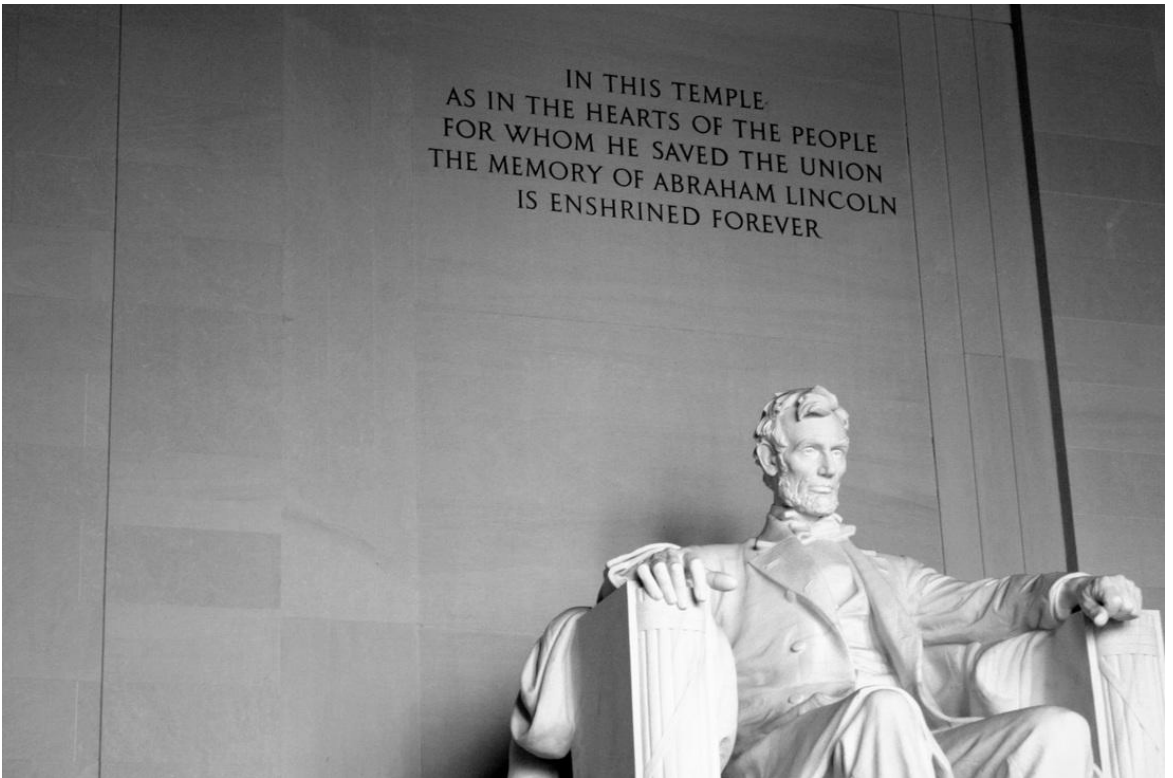


Photo by
Abby Principe

AT WORK ON THE ATLAS OF HER LIFE

Needing it to make sense, she sits at the camper table
and goes to work with a pair of shears, but none of it
fits. As if all night, she struggled to put a puzzle together –
Mount Rainer in Winter, Nude, Descending - and suddenly
her dead husband says Those are the leftover pieces. You'll never
make those add up. In time, even geography fades
like a sepia photograph they posed for in that tourist dive
in Keystone, him in a ten gallon hat, her in a cancan skirt. Who were
those people? Where did they go? She cuts into
her last state and the little scarlet roads bleed out. Red
streaks the shears, Dead Tony's in the driver's seat, and the leveling jacks
are growling under the floor. She cries out to him, When I dreamed
you walking into the desert: was I the one walking? Were you
the one dreaming? The table tilts. The chopped and scattered
pages slide away. But she has to believe somewhere
yesterday survives, vast and crystalline, like
a black-sky photograph of a sapphire Earth
taken from a field on the moon.

-

Gail C. DiMaggio



Photo by Abby Principe

THE CAPTAIN'S BRIDE

There's a place in the square where I saw a man cry,
Under an old oak tree they call the Captain's Bride.

I meant to pass by as if I hadn't seen.
But on that night, my world slipped into a dream.

His eye had caught mine. Mine had caught his.
I realized I'd known the man since when we were kids.

He waved to me and I shouted to him.
We exchanged pleasantries: "Friend, how've you been?"

"I heard you were dead. I imagined the worst.

Rumors said you were shot down in the Great war.
When Germany attacked, Captain, what happened to you?
Both your Mother and Sister attended your funeral.
And the women you loved, she planted this tree.
The town then named it in your memory."

The Captain, he nodded, but said not a word.
Aught an answer given, not wished to be heard.
And the fog grew thick, we stood in a haze.
Truth hid away, away and unscathed.

"It's so good to see you. Tell me how have you been?
O' how I've missed you, my very best friend.
Captain, won't you help me, tell me what happened to
you?
I've witnessed a miracle, please let this be true."

The Captain, he smiled, and looked to night's sky.
A single tear drop rested on the edge of his eye.

As if an invitation, I followed his gaze,
I saw the tree sway, sway in the breeze.

There's a place in the square where I saw a man cry,
Under an old oak tree they call the Captain's Bride.
The Captain then vanished and all was all right.
Until the day I die I'll remember that night.

-

Kris Mallory



Photo by Abby Principe

LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

On the Emperor's headdress two large white
cockatoo feathers curl their waists
around a giant ruby
flashing its cobra tongue of lightning.

Several of the Emperor's shamans
contract tuberculosis while meditating
inside bamboo huts wrinkled by banana fronds.

The Emperor demands extra pillows
for his concubines,
insists upon wine crushed
from the finest grapes in the kingdom.

While his shamans dissolve into walnut stains
upon a leopard's exhausted shoulder
folded across the sagging branch of a thorn tree.

-

Alan Britt

TWO LOVERS

I see
two lovers
and remember
how sad
the world is.

-

Jeremiah Walton



"Lost Archive"

by Fabio Sassi

I KNOW A WEAPON WHEN I SEE IT

Carnival orange deranged
juniper trees sneeze
neon pollen

shake me
for months
into a claustrophobic haven
of sinus
pathology

I claw my way through

Kleenex and sanity
my nostrils
clog a web of
communist rose red
spring
without the comrades

the same season
your rabid blue eyes
bleed right
through me
and rake in to
another girl

--

Meg Tuite

FROM ME TO YOU

I met you under an evening beauty –
hues of papaya and rose saturated the sky above our minds.

Heat syncopated between our bodies,
like the stylus of a vinyl scratching across the surface.

I held your hand in mine,
a wholesome life playing on a reel
started spinning in my mind.
Our lips were closed and our foreheads touched.

We heard rain falling from rooftops,
drizzling down the corners of the abandoned house,
you told me this meant that the sky still loves
the ground.

That night –
we found a single standing wooden door.

We pressed our naked bodies
so close to the door that we became a part of it.

You on one side.

Me on the other.

I opened the door to search for your eyes in the moonlight,
but your eyes just searched.

Strands of your hair danced in the crisp air, sailing
away, you sailed away from me.
Now – as insomnia greets me at 2:32am, 4:17am, 6:41am –
I lay on the floor pressing rewind
rewind
rewind,
like someone moving the stylus always to the song before.
Like a mirage in my head,
I sometimes chase you.
I linger and thirst for you,
wondering if you are what I need.
Your muddy footprints garnish the floors beneath my
naked body, and I wonder why –
it's only me behind this locked door.
You pulled your worn grey sweater over that perfect head of yours
and left me, with the silver key in your back

p
o
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k
e
t.

Like the grains of wood on this locked door,
I swear I see your dimples pressing through,
reaching for my lips – while my lips for the nape of your neck.
The oak aroma reminds me of your natural scent,
brushing across my eye lashes,
like the cool breezes that no longer reach me.

I hear the trains howling in the distance,
while my sanity escapes me.
Your face is fading in the dim light.
I no longer see the freckles clustered beneath your left eye.
Sun spots painted on your lower back, eight gray hairs living in your bangs –
it's gone. I am alone and you're gone.
I hope one day you find the key,

nestled close to lint,
 tucked inside the back pocket
 of your skinny legged jeans.
And only then,
can you remember,
 that you are the sky
 and I, am
 your ground.

-
Amanda Trujillo



"Off Key"
by Fabio Sassi



"Last Ride" by Fabio Sassi

HOW TO CHAIN THE MADNESS

I will start small,
just a little hole
to plant my herb.

I will regain my equilibrium
in tiny doses, under the covers,
when the children are asleep and even the bride-to-be
has eased her nerves.

I will head slowly in the direction I was sent,
inch my way out of this dark valve, not worry
about the weather behind me or the harsh
possibilities ahead. I will play my instrument softly,
take hours to eat one fruit.
And in that place, I will etch out a rhythm I can keep,

and this form of chaos will at last be clothed.

-

Allison Grayhurst

APPLYING THE EDUCATION LABEL

labeled education
extends beyond
a box's folded edge
past the rounded corners
of a yogurt carton
to some imaginary plane
complete with higher learning
above the cello-wrapped envelopes
filled with saltines
reaching for that one honor
above all, the no-bell prize
pointed toward a prestige
pull-it-zer prize winner
awarded with posthumorous degree
only 2000 box tops to go
and yes my friends
that will be me
crossing the center stage
cardboard crumbs
and styrofoam peanuts
left in remembrance
uneducated seen
in the rear-view mirror
of a 1942 packard bell
as I ride off into the sunset
with some degree of learning

-

R.D. McManes

PEEL AWAY

You must peel away
the shell
like from a boiled egg
to find the truth.

And once bitten into
it is too late
to put the egg back together.

-

Perry L. Powell



"One Photo" by Glenda York

HELL AT CHRISTMAS

Working in a shop over Christmas is the embodiment of hell
The bosses stress and the customers appear lobotomized
A drunken shop-lifter or illiterate asking if you can write their cards
It's a hysterical mass of people all hell-bent on the idea of spending
And luxuriating in their debt-filled homes for Christmas
All you can eat and drink and we ain't even paid for it yet
For me xmas doesn't exist, it's just another day towards
The end of my calendar when I don't have to work
No one to see, nothing to do but what I do every other day
Once the New Year starts I get the chance to feel rich
For once in my life as all around people scrape together
What they haven't spent already in the hope it's enough
To forget their terrible xmas's with their horrible families
And their terrible presents and that feeling you may have finally
Overdone the food and the drink and now there ain't any left

-

Bradford Middleton





*Photos by
Ira Joel Haber*



"Two Photos" by Russell Struer

prose

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KACIE by James Babbs

Kacie told me she wanted us to stay together forever and I remember her saying those exact words to me on more than one occasion and she said she didn't care where we ended up as long as we had each other everything would be okay and there was a part of me that really loved her but there were other pieces that just wanted to run away and hide because we were so young and I didn't know what I wanted but I knew sometimes when you were young things didn't always last

We got us an apartment down the street from where her parents lived and they seemed to like me and I got along with them her father always trying to talk to me about sports but I wasn't really interested and Kacie started waitressing at the restaurant not much money but her tips were really good and I told her it was because she looked so sexy in her uniform and she was driving all the farmers crazy when they came in to eat and she laughed slapping at me and telling me to stop

I was working the night shift at Big Mart unloading trucks and there were usually two of them but sometimes we got three in one night the hours dragging on and on and when the trucks were empty I headed out to the floor and started stocking the shelves until it was time to go home and I worked in the household chemicals and I was always amazed at how much bleach and laundry detergent and dish soap people bought and every night I'd fill the shelves and the next time I came in they were always empty

Back then I was trying to write a novel but didn't really have anything to write about and I remember when Kacie would come home and I'd be there sitting in the kitchen waiting to go to work with my notebook and my pen spread out in front of me and Kacie would come over to me always so cute in her uniform and she'd put her hand on mine and tell me she loved me and when she kissed me I'd smell the faint traces of all the different dishes of food she'd served at the restaurant that day and she told me she believed in me and my writing and she just knew I was going to be a famous author some day

I remember us lying in bed with our bodies touching and the radio softly playing and Kacie turning her head just enough so she could look at me and she'd tell me she loved me before stretching toward me and giving me a kiss laying her hand on my face and I'd gently stroke her arm and we wouldn't say anything feeling the heat from her hand pressing against my cheek

Kacie would often tell me she had an old soul and she was convinced she'd lived in a past life and sometimes she told me about the dreams she had and I remember there was one dream she kept coming back to again and again where she was traveling with her family across the prairie in a covered wagon and she was just a little girl and her name was Hannah and her family was moving west hoping for a better life and Kacie dreamed about how the Indians came when she was playing outside one day and talked to her father and when they left they took her older sister Lucy with them and a few times Kacie tried to research it and she went to the library to see what she could find but she didn't have a good starting point all she had were a couple of first names and she never dreamed the names of any of the places but she said it felt so real it surely must've happened

And I remember one morning coming home from work after a really bad night and Kacie was still in bed and I walked into the room and started getting undressed sitting on the edge of the bed and I felt her hand touching my back and when I turned to look at her she was smiling at me and I asked her if she ever thought about what she wanted her life to be and she said sometimes she did and she said it was a lot like this except with a better place to live and maybe some nicer things and the sound of children playing but like this and without thinking I told her I wanted my life to be different and I didn't think I was talking about her but maybe I was I don't know and Kacie laid back on the bed and I reached for her putting my hand on her leg but I couldn't think of anything else to say

This morning I saw the story online and kept thinking maybe and hoping it wasn't her but the age was right and I knew she had gotten married but it didn't make sense because it said she was found dead in her home by her husband and it mentioned she was the mother of two children aged thirteen and ten but they weren't home at the time and it said there wasn't any foul play suspected but the cause of death was unknown and there was an ongoing investigation and the coroner had scheduled an autopsy

I guess the last time I saw her was maybe five or six years ago when I was putting gas in the car and I saw her walking across the parking lot but I didn't recognize her at first because she'd gained a lot of weight and her face looked like it had experienced a few rough years but

she came over and started talking to me for a few minutes and asked me how I was doing and she still had that same smile I remembered from long ago and when she was ready to leave she told me it was nice seeing me before she said goodbye

One of my fondest memories of Kacie was when I came home one morning from work and I was trying to be as quiet as possible because I didn't want to wake her up and when I walked to the bedroom the door was open and I saw Kacie just standing there but she didn't see me and she was half-naked bathed in the light from the window pouring into the room and she must have been looking in the mirror because she kept turning her body first one way and then the other and tucking the loose strands of hair behind her ears and I kept thinking how she had never looked so beautiful and I turned around before she could see me and quietly walked away going into the kitchen before sitting down to wait.

A LIFE'S QUEST by Jude Gerald Lopez

Never in my life had days so sluggishly moved past. It was agonizing, these days, these hours, minutes, seconds... Time crawled in an ever ending hymn of distress. At times I strongly felt that my skin was what kept me trapped, nauseated. Claustrophobic and stranded, at other times my loss would resurrect and overwhelm me with desperation.

What could I do? Tear off my skin, so that my soul shall wander freely. I would never have the patience to do it but even if I did do it, would I look presentable to the world, to my parents and more importantly to my father's (the man I still loath) friends?

All my life, at exactly six in the morning I was to wake up in perfect synchronization with the colossal brass bells of the basilica that was less than a kilometer away from home. The need for such adolescent suffering was not something I was ever briefed about. "You do it because you should do it!" was the closest to an explanation I got after years of silent confrontation. Did the He, who lived upstairs, really gain anything from all of these acts of piety? Did He grow any stronger because I did perform my religious duties and did He grow less strong if I failed to do them? No, I guess not.

"It is your birthday today. Don't forget to thank the Lord for the wonderful year you had. And pray hard for another many-more-years. Lots of money and health...and don't forget to mention your all-the-time-dripping nose and your irritable bowel and your and your and your and ..." That was the usual pre-coming-into-the-Lords-presence briefing

from my mother. The mass took around forty five minutes plus the additional five minutes of visiting our ceramic friends-Mary (the one which is hailed at our house, everyday at eight thirty sharp, since the day I was born) in her blue gown, Christ (the savior of little boys according to my mother's words and the mortal enemy of the Juice) in his red gown, Antony (the guy who made me poop out my gold ring after I had swallowed it on my first birthday) with his hearty smile and bald head, the other Mary (also the name of my wretched ayah back in the days when crapping your pants was still cute) with her eyes downcast and at last one more Antony who was not made of ceramic but of blood and bone.

The walk home was the part I enjoyed most. Co-Chin which was no longer like-China but chutnified into a Ko-Chi, sounds more Chinaman-like don't you think? Anyways walking back home through the same narrow streets through which many white, black, brown and yellow feet walked during days past, calling the land many un-thinkable things (like like-China) never ceased to let go of its un-sure charm. The air was cool and the cows had not yet come out on their hunger-inspired plastic quest. So all was well, the birthday boy walking home with twin dollar signs in his eyes (yes with the amount of American tourists, boys my age, to their father's dismay, thought in dollars) accompanied by his loving parents, back to their loving home, to spend a lovely Monday morning sipping on lovely black coffee and nibbling on lovely toast and scrambled eggs. Perfect!

No lovely!

The papers had reported the twin towers' fall. "Such an awful thing they did." my father growled as he turned his way to the sports page to see who had taken a beating (his own words) during the ODI the previous day. Then after a few minutes, just as custom demanded, he disengaged himself from the ways of the world and its news and took down the big black book from the altar in which Christ sat motionless day and night holding up his heart for the righteous to gaze upon. It was his inner-spirit's food that was downed with every syllable he uttered. I was hungry and so I went quite brazenly to satisfy my earthly body.

I went to my room and turned on my little television set. The towers were now lit up, with a sumptuous amount of jet fuel, making it look in my naïve imagination like a dirty cigarette. It was disturbing to see so much of destruction but more importantly so much of dust. Yes dust, all I could think of was how I would start (if I was there) achuing and aek chuing and ahhhh ahh...phew....sneezing was what clouded my mind. So much of dust on screen made me want to sneeze but I didn't and so I kept watching. Watching, as if it was

one hell of an action movie, with Bruce Willis starring in it and coming to everyone's rescue just when you thought all was lost, unfortunately it was not so. When the second passenger plane hit the south tower and moments later when it came tumbling down just like Monsieur Jack and Mademoiselle Jill I felt a kind of bumpy thud right below my pillow, right below my butt, a kind of bubbly thud like a giant hard fart.

I jumped out of bed and just stood there. What was it? A rat under my ass-I mean under the pillow-under my head-Oh god! The next thing I knew was that I was being sprinkled with ice cold water "Get the doctor" someone was saying and I replied "What did I do? I'm fine. I'll be good I swear. No more bitter yucky medicine for me" but luckily I spoke only in my mind, they did not hear.

I was being helped into bed and my body was burning. There was something under my pillow, something there for sure I thought and as I slipped my hand under it, I found out what exactly it was, a book. A god damn book! And that was what all my fuss was about. The covers were coated with so much dust that as soon as I saw it I started to sneeze...accchh...hewwwy (sneezing has become a kind of poetry to me. No two sneezes are alike, the vowels are never the same, I should take notes, but how? With your eyes closed and watery when it finally opens, how?), and while sneezing more dust went into the various canals in my face, acheww and flake went right down my nose, achkewy and another flake got stuck in the corner of my left eye, more sneezes resulting in more intake. This went on watery eyed for some time and I put the book away under the bed cursing and grumbling. "Im fine" I yelled, before my mother could ask what was the matter. "Ok then" came the reply "It's too bad your sick on you're birthday. You sure you asked Jesus to do something about your drippy nose like I asked you to?"

And then ladies and gentleman, the moment you have all been waiting for, the moment when a child turns into a cunt even in their parents eyes, the moment of blasphemy, the moment when one tries to swim against the tides, the moment you question the wisdom of the dead, the ghastly moment when you question your parents' all-knowing-god-likewisdom. "Im pretty sure he doesn't care." I murmured. "What did you say sweet heart? I didn't quite get you?" "Nothing" I replied quite fascinated and startled with myself.

Then came the days of Sartre's existential angst, the days in which I was turned into a strange bug like Kafka's Jewish Samsa and Roth's Kepesh, the days in which everything including my

adolescent penis seemed alien to my dilated pupil. The allergic reaction to the dust that got into my nasal cavity came to an end after a week but its presence was still known. I became easily irritable and volatile. Midnight flushes (courtesy of my father's urinary troubles) were causing quite a stir in me. I felt like ripping off his...never mind. My mother's soliloquies with saints and Gods were now more annoying than ever. It was a hard time.

I knew something foreign had gotten into me. I knew I was no longer the same. As I examined myself, naked, in front of the mirror, I, to my surprise, failed to feel nauseated while looking at my caved in chest and my limp member. Nor did I feel that annoyance at my larger-than-life head. The cheeky cheeks no longer infuriated me. But my mother's paleness, my father's farts, the noises the neighbours made while they humped in their backyard, the dogs barking, the moon just sitting there starring, evoked in me a beast like rage.

"Aren't you mama's little boy, my only love. How I would hate to see go off to some far off place in the future" she said in her tender voice.

"Why don't you shut up? Christ! Why don't you all shut the..." I cried eyes bloodshot taking her by surprise.

"That's no way you talk to your mother" the beast roared besides her.

"Jerk off" said I and threw a punch, and truly a punch did my mother receive, but moments later (not to my surprise) I received quite a share of punches. I did not regret it for some odd reason.

Lying in bed, the ceiling felt as high as the sky at times and the next moment before I could brace myself it caved in on me. It kept doing this for quite sometime as I kept recounting what exactly had happened. What exactly happened? I'll tell you, you cunt. You threw a punch at your own father, that's what you did. You sure made him realize what a waste of his sperm you are.

I threw up.

I could now see what I had done quite clearly, I had gone against nature in my father's words, so badly against it that my mother was forced to go against her God and nature. I made her

to take up a pack of cigarettes once again.

My parents had not yet slept. After all that had happened during the last few hours, how could they? I hoped that they would unite and just strangle the bejesus out of me and put me out of this misery.

They didn't.

The symptoms got worse. The world got louder and I started to take a liking to silence and solitude more than ever. I even checked to see if my biceps grew and whether my skin turned green, like in the comic books, neither happened. Nothing happened.

I was now an inhabitant of a strange new world. How absurd everything around seemed? How distanced and surreal! If only people could see the slimy moss on their shinny buildings and cars, the stench that crept up in your living room, in the park, the street, the nauseating odour of your lover's mouth, the taste of her breakfast stuck in her tongue and teeth, if only you could smell all the farts ever farted, then you would know how deep you were. But no, not everyone could see, feel and hear my tormentors and so they pranced around me, as if I was sick, when in earnest it was they who were the victims of their own making and I their silent commentator.

I decided not to get out of bed. The fever had settled but the diarrhea had not, making me extremely pale and whitish on the lips. That book! I had thought to myself "That book that day" but where was it, it was nowhere around, the dust...ackcheww! "Bless you" I could hear my mother from the other room. I lay unable to reply anything further.

A reply, or sought of a reply to an unasked question did I give to the preacher with the exuberantly annoying smile. Alex the man with the bible, the god-man of our home was in a state of limbo, going to and fro but always being able to balance out the dictates of Catholicism and those of the Holy Ghost inspired Protestant ways. He was a lay man who chose to converse with God almost all throughout the day. He wore no gown and caused a few stirs in our church when he accused a traveling priest of making another-do certain things with the mouth (besides confessing their sins) in the confession chamber. The priest was banished and the man had a taste of victory for the first time in his life. "These are the days of healing" he proclaimed to me as he was getting ready to cast of the bitter demons inside me. Yes just like in the movies only with less or no holy water at all.

Now comes the part where I utter my last cries- I jumped out of bed and roared “So if He is here with us, why the hell can’t I, you or anybody-see this fucking thing. Dress too short! Making him shy! You are all a bunch of...” and there it came, like a bolt of lightning from his fish stinking hands, a slap! I collapsed and the next thing I knew was that it was neither the He nor Alex who had slapped me but the he who was my father.

My temple grew crimson because I had a lot to say, just so much to utter in order to rid the world of all its evils, I wanted to speak and howl and speak so that all could hear just exactly how stupid they were and how smart I was but the words skipped and hopped away from me..

After a week of my restful un-rest my head began to swell. It was getting hard to see but at first I thought it was just the head ache making my eyes too tired, for if I had known right from the start that I was losing sight (and something more) then I would have-for sure-beseached the He to do something about it. Another week passed when I noticed how hard it was for me to get up. I tried but kept falling back.

“Don’t strain yourself dear. Take rest” my mother would say as she sat beside the bed.

“I just want to go...”

“No, just stay, you will be fine in a few days.” She continued “It’s the medicine that’s making you feel so heavy.”

“Fuck you, liar!” I roared in my mind and understood what exactly was keeping me pinned to the pillow. For in her eyes, mixed with a mother’s compassion, I could see my head, right on her teary pupil, my over sized hideous head weighing almost double of my shrinking body.

My head was huge compared to heads of other children right from childhood (in a normal way that is.) but it was now gigantic, crimson and alien, even to me, after all those years I carried it along, fed it and cleaned it, alien it was and alien would it always be from that moment forth. All I needed now were a pair of tapered eyes and voila I would fit in fine with the Martian crowd.

But how did it become that way?

The last time I tried to teach my father, my pastor and my mother what truth really was, I was asked to keep quiet. “Don’t waste your energy” they said looking at me like a mad man. Yes ladies and gentlemen the more the accused deny their madness, madder are they deemed and seen to be. It was a vicious circle, I had gotten myself into.

“Truth is different for everyone...truth changes and you know it and you know exactly well that no one can claim to be the...its absurd, that’s what it is.”

“So troubled are the young men and women of our wretched times” said Mr. Self- Righteous clutching his big black story book with one hand and trying to feel-up mother with the other. The day’s occurrences aggravated my condition making my head even huger. I could now feel something oozing out of my head. It was pink and warm, blood! I thought panic stricken but it was not blood, I didn’t have any for some time now, at least if I were to believe my doctor. It was ideas folks that was dripping and spoiling my bed, stupid estranged ideas that had to lie unused and unprofessed in my gigantic head. It had an awful smell, the smell of dead rodents, but still it was my dead rodent smelling ideas, sick and twisted, un-nurtured and condemned, rotted without salvation in the labryinths of my mind...Then suddenly, just as the preacher took his hands of my head after the customary in the name of... (I’m not gonna say it, you know exactly in whose name all that shit happens) taking me by surprise a loud, freakish boom followed by a pow and unfortunately not followed by a wham (I’ve always like the sound of a wham, like the punches Robin throws, wham that, wham this).

It was my head, that had boomed and powed, sending warm pink fluid all over the room. My body was quite fine, I was in fact not limp anymore, but that’s not important now is it? My big round head lay splattered all over.

One comparatively large piece lay near the window, another in my shoe, right next to my smelly sock, but the preacher didn’t mind, he walked away, as if nothing really happened. And there I was groping with my headless body while that cunt walked away, side stepping a lump some piece of head, my fucking head. Fucking hilarious it might seem to you, so just fuck off!

So have you ever seen a headless heathen pick up his brains? No I bet you haven’t! I stood up some what comically to say the least. Guided by my lost eye, whose line of sight covered mostly my crotch, yes I moved my body guided by my shlong, yes laugh! I moved and moved to find all the pieces and still I move because when your mind is blown away and permanently impaired all you can do is hope and continue trying to make things as they

were. Yes I despise the present and loath the past. And even though the noise was loud enough to wake the neighbours it didn't raise as much as a voice from the adjacent room, may be because they preferred it to be this way, may be because they weren't paying any attention, may be they were indulging in an orgy right now or may be they had simply forgotten.. They went on praising you-know-who most of the time (I could hear) while you-know-exactly-who lay shattered, dirtying mama's precious carpet with the sticky pink stuff. So I continued doing what I was deemed to do, in vain most times, but still not giving in that easily, and may be some day some one will fall from the heavens into my room and make my search less futile and more fast, and may be there will also be others who are far away but who have had to live through similar circumstances and may be one day all of us will get together and try to find our mind in this mindless mad sickening world.

"Drink of my blood,

And eat of my flesh.

But never ever remember me

After I'm dead."

AT A DISTANCE by Kristina England

Marty stood on the beach and looked at the noonday sun. He didn't care for Mexico. He hated the heat. But it was the first destination that came to mind when he decided to leave.

What was leaving, anyway? Could you ever leave anything behind?

Then, he thought of the plane flight, how he was sure someone would lean over and say, "Come with me" before slapping a pair of handcuffs on him.

After all, the villain never got away, at least not in comic strips or black and white films. Okay, there were some exceptions to the rule, but it was often because the villain had killed anyone that gave a hoot.

Besides, he wasn't a killer. He wasn't a bank robber, either. In fact, the cops probably weren't even looking for him.

All he had done was steal some old man's jacket from the airport before he boarded. He had to do something. He figured someone would stop him. Someone would see him.

What of the old man? Didn't he search the airport for what he lost? Didn't he desire what had gone missing?

Heck, Marty missed his whole life working to stand up his kids lives, only to have the cold stares, the rebuttals, the "I don't love you for who you've never been to me" conversations.

And what of Marty's wife, her brain now scattered from age. Did she look at his empty closet and think, "Finally, more space"?

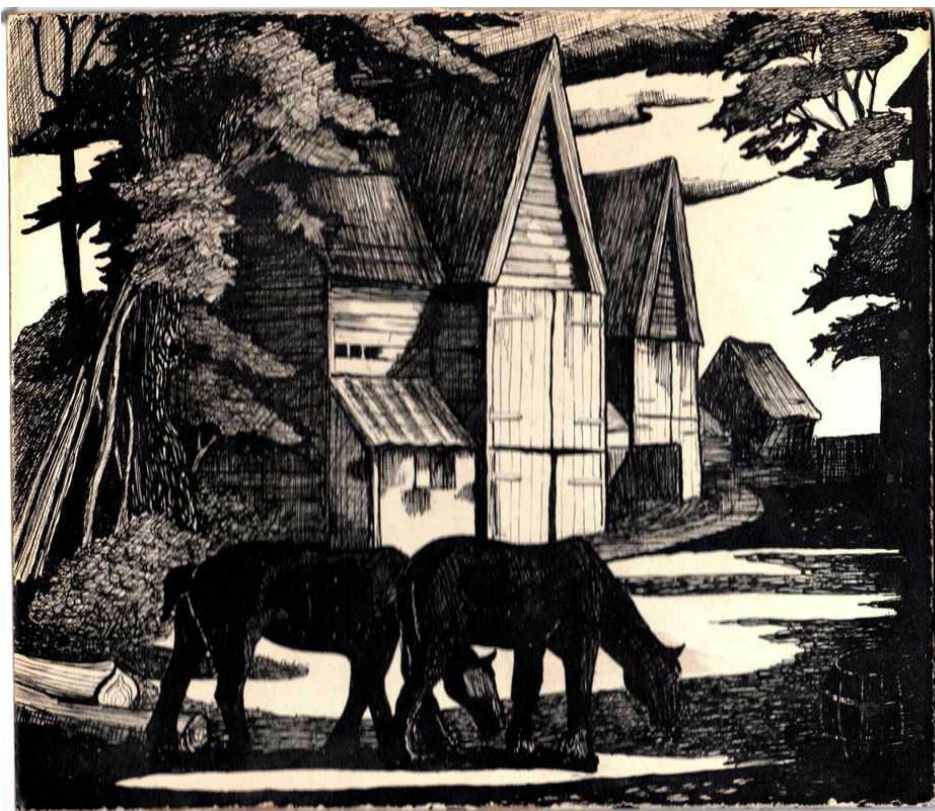
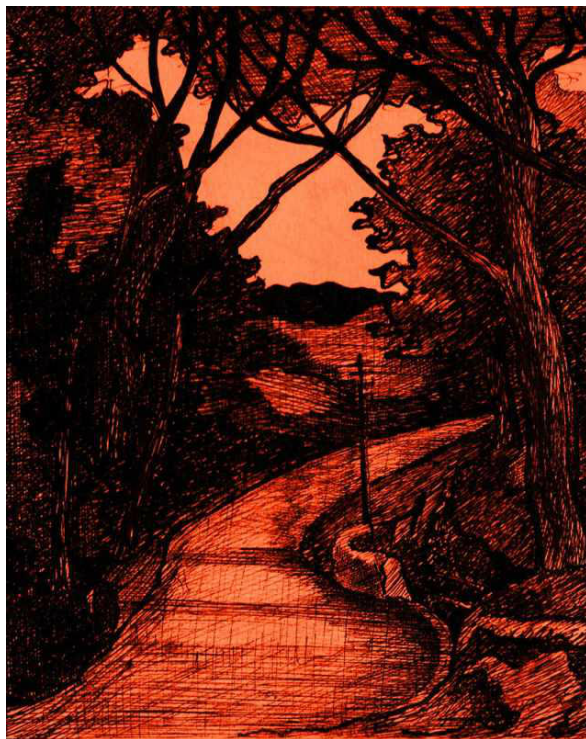
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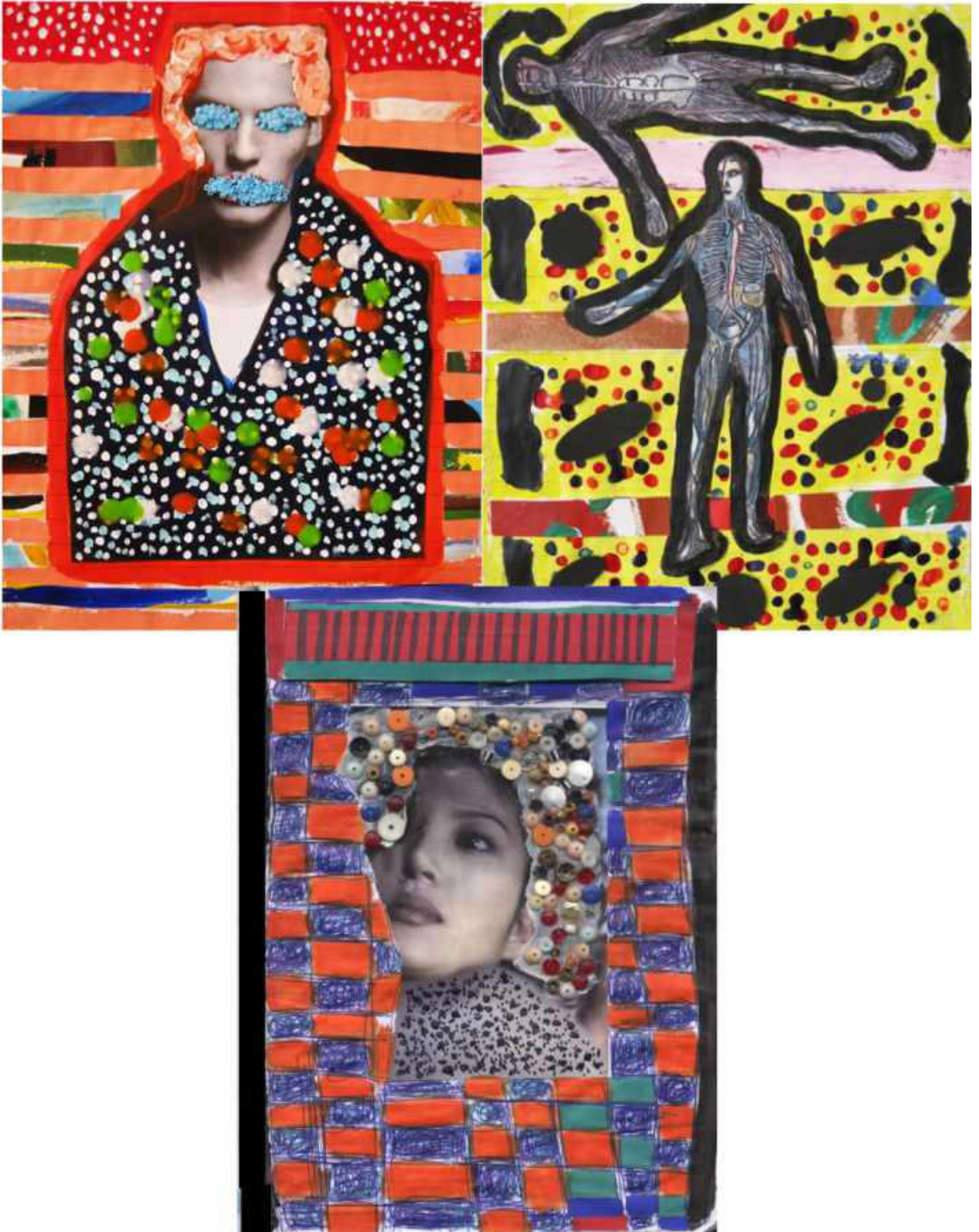




*"Two Pieces" by
Denny Marshall*



*"Two Pieces" by
David R Morgan*



"Three Pieces" by

Ira Joel Haber

END