

WOTW

Make [sh]it and share it



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Halloween

CRAIG PLAISTED

My daughter
wearing oversized sunglasses
hunched over a small broken umbrella
used as a cane
yells boo
in her best hag voice
beside the pumpkins
picked a bit too early
now soft on the front steps
small channels eaten through the rinds
before we could carve them ourselves



Joe Gallo

Inspire-o-tron

STEVENS BROSNIHAN

I want to invent something
like an interocetor or a sampo
whatever it is, it will deliver everything I need to suc-
ceed
It will give the goods, It will make the means
it will be like 20 golden scratch tickets
triple seven powerball lightning strike shark attacks
end of all the work and pain
fantasy football overdrive

the assholes call them unicorns
what do they know
skittish, mutant narwhal goats
that only talk to virgins?
They don't know anything.

Tomorrow, I will want to invent another thing
it will be for them, not me
it will solve the bigger problems
it will come after I put the oxygen mask on. you know:
can't save the kids if you're dead!
Tomorrow's thing will not be a tornado of molten gold
but it will equal one in its power and luster.
It will free the masses from the lies
it will be a tantalizing inspire-o-tron
a gravitational mirror of freedom
it will lighten the load, crack the codes
lift all the spirits
and no one will know
they'll just be richer and wiser
faster and stronger.



Stevens Brosnihan

Untitled

JOSHUA FISHBURN

Every 1/4 hour I ask my body,
I consider my body,
"How do you feel?"

The amputation of my family: screeching anguish,
my children missing half or most of times,
I list all annoyances but it is all
my sad grief;
not imagined freedom,
the grace I must imagine if it is to be.
I consider my body,
I ask my good warm body,
"How do you feel?"

The wind finds every needle on the jackpine
and fingers each one until it makes a stiffening holler.
Warm body, good body,
How do you feel?

The air smells cold, and the granite beneath like ash.
Agony! Still slow to love and speak my affections
afraid alllllll the ttttttime.

Every quarter hour a whale asleep
upright in the water column
rises to take a breath:

I remember feeling like that;
nothing, yet alive.

On this granite bedrock I must have
more than whale dreams,
more than two hours sleep per day.

Fuck me, starry night! Give me SONAR!
I taste the relentless rain of your affection
with a head so full of viscous humor
I could lubricate a space shuttle.

Aschold bedrock beneath me, the sky at night,
Warm body, good body---

Out of the cosmic river leaps a sizzling star.

Untitled

JAY JAROSLAV

What will I do with the time left?

What will you do with the time left?

What will we do with the time left?

It's too late for second thoughts!



Adam Orcutt

The Moon

PETER MURDOCH

Look, the moon.

Already, the moon.

I'm in a cave.

See the moon.

I don't know where to go.

See the moon.

California,
It was there,
I was trying to decide,
in that goddamn cave of sunshine,
whether to stay,

Whether to keep working for vacation-timeshare telemarketing.

Whether to follow my love to Bordeaux
or try to talk her out of it.
Or to just go home and save some money.

Call it a summer

from the place in the wall
the phone rings:

We're in Scotland. We want you to come. It's very important. It's
probably the last time the family will be together like this.
No, nobody's dying.

The cord descended in dirty little spirals onto the carpet.
God knows how old that shit was.

See the moon?
Look, look, look let's see it with me seeing it. Like me with you see-
ing it with remembering but safer only so surprise from
Me-aning haver.

And the other curses we neglect to
register, to reframe,
as we circle,
as we wander.

Parasites

STEVENS BROSNIHAN

Lambasted W. E. drapes the last piece of unfolded laundry over the chipped and stained avocado green dinette set. Despite just coming out of the wash, his clothes still smell of sulfur from the day underground. The grains of orpiment and quartz trapped in the coarse fibers of his coveralls, still leaching poison, shimmer innocently in the low, evening light. He'll deal with folding tomorrow. He's too tired to make dinner.

The last lonely amber photons of the day ooze slowly over the singular and high windowsill into the tiny space, giving the room a somber tone despite the kitsch and risqué oddments densely adorning every nook and corner. W.E. feels cold and naked without the dusty dungarees which usually drape haphazardly over his slight frame. He coughs a dry, expectant cough, then all is silent for a moment.

Enter brazenly, the waxen toad of yore. Her milky, secondary eyelids sliding slowly against the coarse grains of pollen, stuck and oozing with rancid anticipation against the corners of her eyes. Nothing crusting this time, her skin klaxons abated, "Fire the brand and melt the toast!" she says, "Reverberate over the glen and into the mile marked twice against the green parasitic sky. I have arrived!"

W.E. perks ever so slightly at the outburst. He was expecting Toad's interruption, but feels compelled to acknowledge her none-the-less, despite his drismal torpor. Gripped obsessively with herself in an arms race of introductions to W.E. over the years--this one taking a middling, top spot--Toad gives pause and hope to these moments. He acquiescently obliges to the change of spirit. She slides a silky half grin off of her ridiculously wide lips and launches into the evenings debate.

"This is slow, and favorable in a way, to the thing we all want

to create," she says, gesturing toward the laundry. "It isn't really mine to smell or to torment, but I want to. Righteousness and gravitas are losers to merit and creed. Give alone the small earth-en forceps to the eider. Argo, the pliant worshiper, greets us with a benevolent and tortuous fervor. His toes are curled and crusted with last year's fungal arbitration."

"You're slipping out of it already," W.E. says. It's a code phrase to let Toad know that he's losing focus and interest in her diatribe, that she has delved too deeply into the realm of the abstract. Toad

stretches out her slender arms, that glisten with flecks of cerulean blue over deep, rosy corpuscle evanescence, and clicks her bright red nails together, in order from first to last as cilia might propel a protozoan through the sea. W.E. raises his right eyebrow in mild disgust with the hope that the nervous clattering will cease. After one more righteous flourish, Toad stops and raises her hands in a sign of surrender. "What does W.E. stand for, anyway?!", Toad bellows. "You ask me this every day, Toad. I don't know or remember," W.E. replies sheepishly. "How about Working Endlessly?"



Adam Orcutt

Memos are Meiotic in Gerrit's Sense, Abby Or, "Sorry! We Are Close[d]"

For/after China Miéville (Embassytown)

JAMES COOK

"...Spanish Dancer and its friends practiced lying, and I tried to help
them find new ways to speak me."

I get the ideogrammatic charge.
Believe me.

Lines quiver, curl, and tilt, a verisimilitude like an attitude,
stance of a body and set of eyesnosemouth,
signifying in a community with enforced orthodoxy broadcast
(and accumulating idiolect backchannel).

I want to make sentences, but I can only manage paragraphs.

Truly
I don't know what I'm talking about.
After a storm
We find the tree toppled.
The root system describes a milliskelion mandala.
Agape we ponder ramifications of arms and hairs holding rocks
Defiant.

Our question: how to read in light of ourselves?

"Does it ever occur to you that this language is impossible, Avice?"

Your light feeding a solar system—
Breaking rainbows through a prison like a prism.
I want to convince you that poems like diadems, DNA, and fan fiction
Mark resplendent politics like patterns.
Well, they can. Yer a poem of a Sunday,
Feet on earth where the sun goes down
Or seems to. We're bound to notice.

I'm not yet sure how to fill my poems with CRISPR fixes and biorigged
tech that extends our powers both late and soon.

What are our words worth anyway?

Axiomatic of a fall just because it's not possible to have been born
in the future even if we're born into a future.

I love you and wish I could promise it'll be alright but we both
know better. Let's dance a figure. What do we even meme?

We put together blocks of word-ideas and provide a human-key
even at the end of a long, wormless year.

The title is wrong. Sorry. We are close.

Projection: A Self-Portrait **JOSHUA FISHBURN**

Ears eaten, shucked husks and cobs tossed
aside I sit and worry corn silk into byssus,
tie reminder strings around my fingers to remember
probably nothing---or something shimmering---filaments
fragile as feelings rescued from being thrown out with the garbage

as lonely grackles thrum inside the chimney
then straggle out and find their fellows
to make a raucous woods of the city street
and scrabble in rainutters, tangle in cablewires and snicker
garbles on the powerlines---cacophony from all directions

suddenly flocks upon some signal like raindrops
shape a rainbow these solitary birds make a murmur, a
black hole punches the air above my twisted monkeys fist
packed and compressed memory of who knows
what to who knows where,

while I sit at this dinnertable and wind corn silks
into a sort of ball, sort of listening to neighbors
making idle chatter,
making something
small.

What The Moon Prompts

(from *Lincoln In The Bardo*)

JOSHUA FISHBURN

Writing about the moon reminds me
of Li Po in love, in his cups---
It's always under the Autumn moon
When he slips into the drink.
Now the moon waxes toward its

Whole, and I'm surprised to be thinking
of Saint Augustine---
Who trusted the universe was a dark-
ness,
A dragon battling brightness like the
moon's---
As 17 years of marriage rot into divorce.

A dragon eats my moonshine and makes
me dark.
When I see the sky, I barely look at the
sky.
I look into bodies of water like Li Po,
But without his love in excess
I've simply fallen into steady drinking.

I still remember though, watching to-
ward the east
the horizon start to glow. My blood
pulse a swirl,
A sweet intoxication as a she moves near.
I remember waiting for the moonrise:
darkness as anticipation.

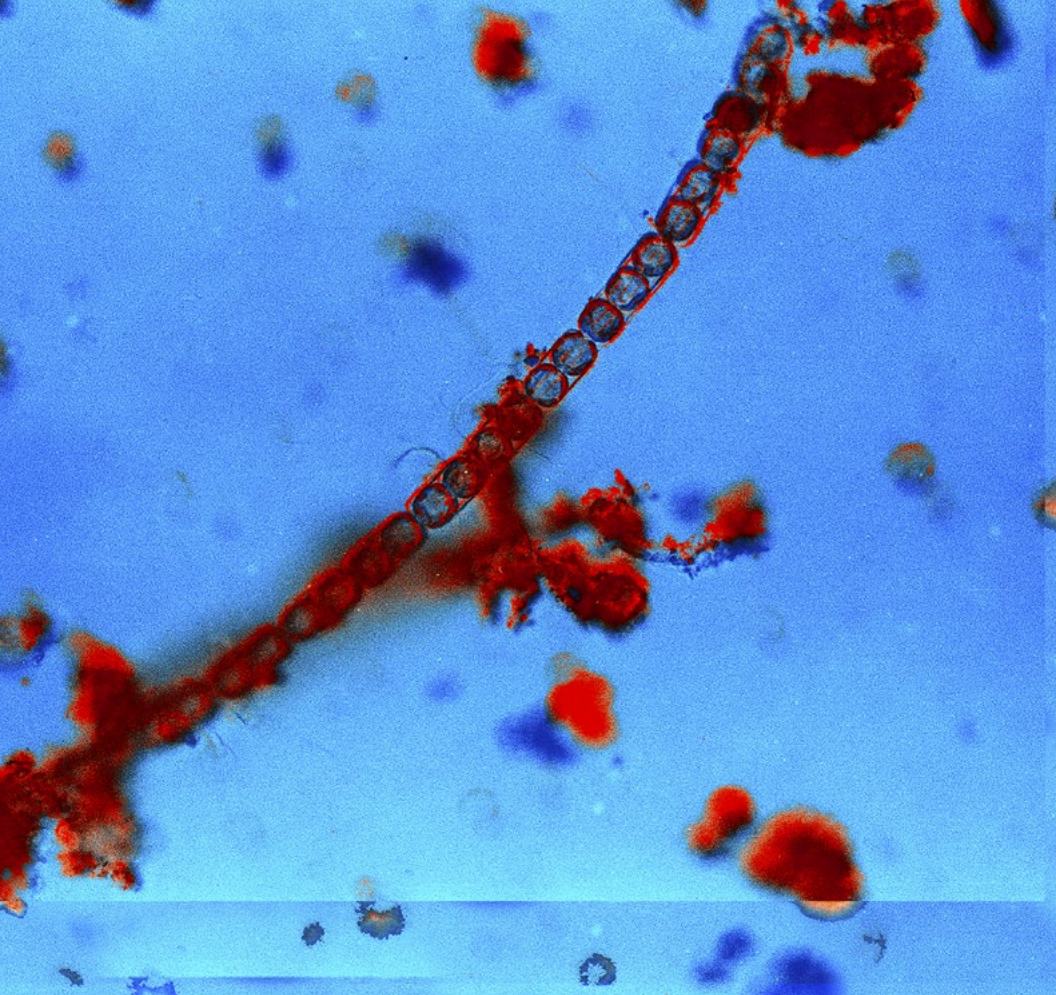


Rough Go This Week

JOSHUA FISHBURN

I threw my pen in the fridge behind garlic smotes and fried tofu over
the cucumber wilted half on half off the shelf and it jangled to a stop
in front of three beers, the paper slid between my fingers to the floor
and my head fell and my eyes made two rotten logs, no fire, just
smoke. Tiny embers ate into ash what
will not,
does not,
flame.





Stevens Brosnihan

I have been paying attention to the wrong things

CRAIG PLAISTED

the leaves today
in their sparse yellow flutterings
are telling me to look, to listen
somewhere in the veins of the trees
beneath my own cambium
in the eye of the hawk over sunset mountain
and above
in the great vastness of universes
we bob