

Wards of the Wards

Make [sh]it and share it

Voume one, Issue one

January, 2019

In January

CRAIG PLAISTED

Driving along 128
The landscape is bare
A rolling space of grey wood and granite

Down at the harbor
Hollow lobster traps are stacked in
large tidy rectangles Of green and
yellow
The surface of the boatless har-
bor glides swiftly to the east The
clouds move with it
Grey

Light appears as a hard white
line out along the breakwater
And then disappears and reap-
pears
and disappears
as shimmering patches
Moving across the water

The deserted dirt parking lot The
single parking lot tree
near the top of its leafless twigi-
ness a red and a green buoy
hang in the wind

the two of us on the couch
Beside the tree
Even the lights have been taken down And
we have nothing to say to each other

Photo: Stevens Brosnihan





Hydroids, skeleton shrimp, and copepods. Stevens Brosnihan

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Wards of the Wards

A monthly experiment
in writing, art, and ideas
about place.

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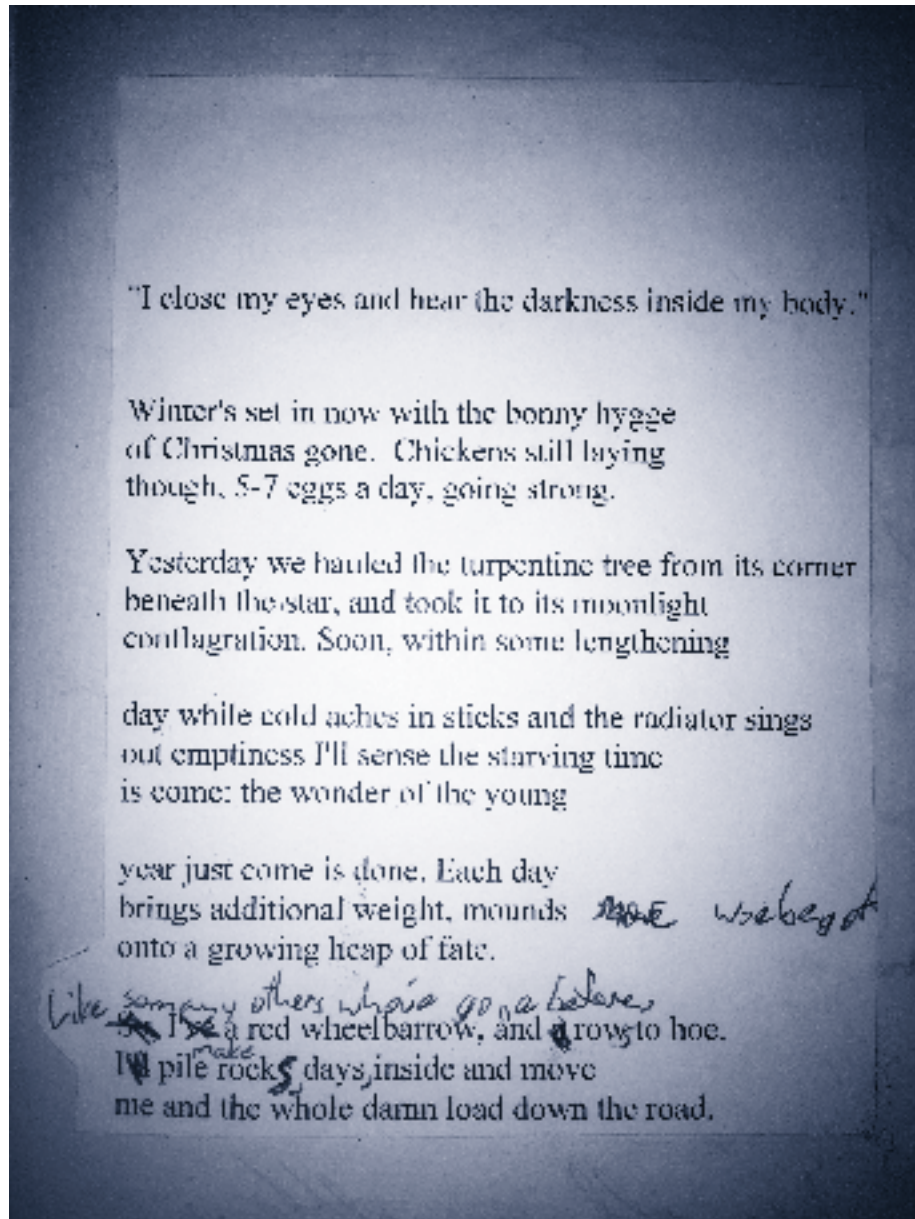
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Illustration: Peter Murdoch

"I close my eyes and hear the
darkness inside my body."

JOSHUAH SCOTT-FISHBURN



Third in Line

STEVENS BROSNIHAN

Two a.m at the train station
and the machine before me
has three discernible compart-
ments

two are like shelves that
respond to weight, they have
give and look like welded bike
racks

the one in the middle is a
stainless box with a crusty
window

it's illuminated with dim, yel-
low incandescence

there's something smeared on
the plexi

it's directly below a crude
console with four color-coded
buttons, a speaker grille, and a
metal, qwerty keyboard,

it has keys like flattened pay
phone buttons, some of the let-
ters are worn off, the keypad
is mostly blank

all I need is a ticket to Dijon,
but this thing seems to do a lot
more

like calculate postage and
receive tax payments. Gas and
rent too? Hard to tell.

The line is long, I don't know
French and there are no
instructions in English, so I
watch for a while

The line of patrons inches

forward, some uninterested,
some impatient one has been
crying

They each pause to look me in
the eye as if to ask me what
the fuck

Then they interact with the
machine, each in a different
way.

One places a package on the
left and enters some informa-
tion into the stainless keypad

the next puts something into
the center box, closes the
amber window and waits for
a minute, then swipes a card.
He removes the object and a
receipt

another rests her hands on
the top of the box and speaks
slowly into the grille, tear
addled.

she seems panicked and keeps
looking around.

finally, someone gets what
looks like a train ticket from
a slot on the top, so I decide to
step in line.

everyone relaxes a little now
that I'm not in their space or
staring at the infernal ma-
chine

I still have no idea how I'm
going to get what I need from
it, but here I am in line.

I'm behind someone with
black and white striped socks.
vertical stripes.

I don't want to look up, don't
want any more information.
The socks are plenty.

After a few minutes, a stroller
boxes me in from behind, graz-
es my heels.

I have to look, or surely I will
slip and make a scene.

from the corner of my eye
I see a sleeping toddler in a
brown jumper.

Stickers depicting unfamiliar
cartoon characters

a pacifier in a mouth that
seems a little too old for it.

I don't want to look up, I want
to stay impervious

also, I'm afraid of something


the mystery of this line

the machine

The line seems stalled, people
start to crane their necks, but
eventually, the old fellow fin-
ishes his task and steps to the
left, with a bundle in the crook
of his elbow, he coos to it like a
newborn.

It's too small to be a child, It
came out of the crusty box?

Did he already have it? I want
to step out of line and ask, but
he walks away before I can
muster the courage.

Suddenly, I'm third in line but
I'm not ready. 

Sea lion mothers up in ther rocks
misty sunshine, afternoon sky, pounding surf ceaselessly talks
terrible chaos, the world's own creation

I close my eyes, upturn my face to the sun
~~where warmth and life comes from~~

I listen to the waves I hear children in the tidepools
they let hermit crabs run up and down their arms

el pacifico

time has no hours

time has no hours

My children take turns sitting on my knees

we eat smoked fish tacos, smell salt in the breeze

El Pacifico, awe and thanks: our offerings

Lonnie

CRAIG PLAISTED

The last two hot dogs rolled stiffly in the warming box. The lights of the box encouraged the hot dogs to glisten with whatever caused their surface wetness.

"Is everything OK over there Lonie?" "All set."

Lonnie eyed the register. The line was finally dwindalling. While he did this daily, Lonnie did not appreciate anyone seeing him purchase a fast-mart hot dog with relish and two Lucky Bucks tickets. He grabbed the metal tongs and started his routine. squirt relish in the bun, pick the least slimy hot dog (usually there were a lot more than two to choose from, what the fuck), put the dog in the bun, sprinkle onions on top, wait for the line to be gone and walk briskly to the register.

Today the onions were all gone except for a deluge, which was probably half the container to be honest, that had spilled all over the counter and onto the floor

"Hi Mike"

"Sorry about the hot dog situation Lon. A bunch of Mexicans just came through here." said mike pointing to

two men that were neither white or of clearly european decent sitting on the sidewalk outside, each with a plate of three hot dogs, each hot dog heaping with onions.

"I think they were speaking portuguese" said Lonnie

"Hey, you guys don't hire mexicans do you? I tell you, my dad used to make good money working carpentry"

Lonnie just looked down at his pathetic hot dog and back out at the onions the two gentlemen were enjoying.

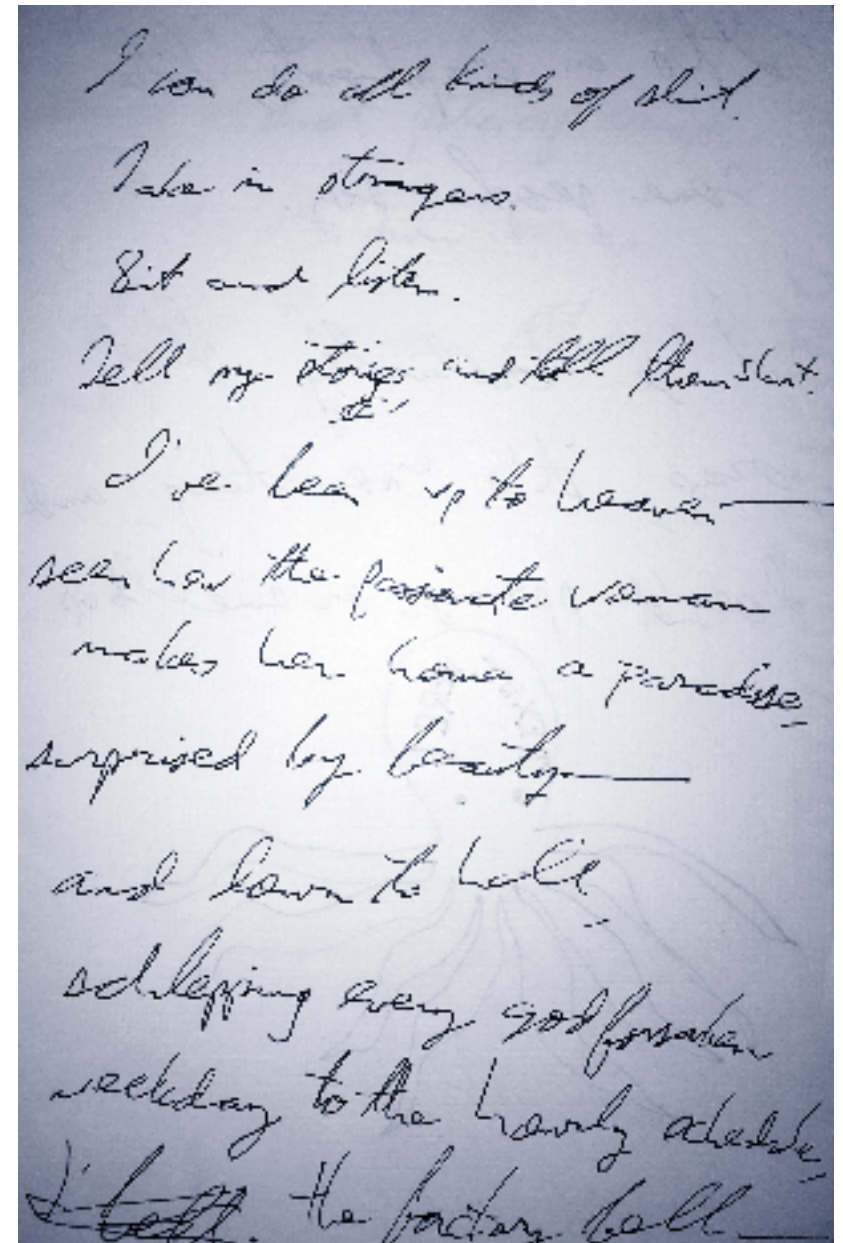
"And two lucky bucks, mike"
"Already have em ready, Lon"

Lonnie shifted on his feet uneasily. The line was growing behind him. "Thanks Mike"

Lonnie hid the tickets under the paper plate and b-lined for the door. Lydia, her golden hair reflecting all that summer has to offer, was about to open the door but she was looking down at something.

"Oh shit"

Hiding by the newspaper stand Lonnie read, "Springfield man wins Cash Cornucopia jackpot"

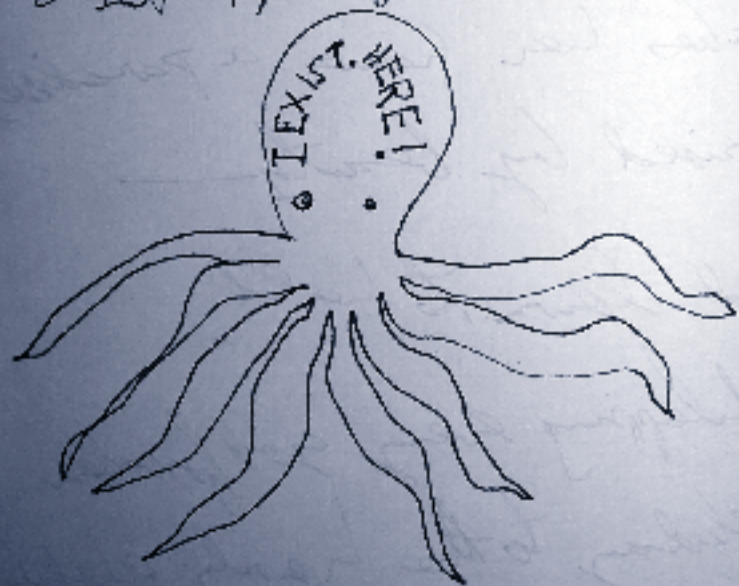


I can do all kinds of shit.
Take in strangers.
Sit and listen.
Tell my stories and tell them short.
I've been up to heaven—
seen how the prostitute woman
makes her home a paradise—
surprised by beauty—
and down to hell
sleeping every god forsaken
weekday to the lovely alcohol
I bet. the factory bell—

Joshua Scott-Fishburn

It's a crashout, like
some people say.

I'm actually shot
crap, it's exciting and
doesn't spray, or smell up



the air in any other way than
does an unshot pile of crap.

It was my own crap.

Maybe Mochesna ~~the~~ Wilderess
and



My Eyes

STEVENS BROSNIHAN

It's grey on my eyes and under
the stern of my dinghy

no blue times for us, not one
watery playdate with the
unblinking mackerel

I have a chair to take in sun

make red under my closed eyes,
to pen a list or get chinned by
the cats and neighbors.

Feeble snow crusting over feirce
cold caution, I see another way
in starry black conjunctions
overhead

Be infinitesimal, let go regret;
old wounds will heal over.

There are no hours

CRAIG PLAISTED

There are no hours in a day
There is light and there is darkness
The sky makes its way past the sun
But there are no hours or minutes or seconds

There is the beetle carcass on the dashboard
The birds come to the birdfeeder
But there are no hours

There is the way warmth comes through the window
In winter mid morning
There is the sound of the tea kettle
But no minutes exist

There is toil
There is watching my daughter emerge
into this world
And there is carrying my grandmother's casket
But there are no seconds

I almost forgot to send you my trash

AMANDA COOK

Fireball empty between the rails of the tracks not a little bottle
but the next size up, yellow-orange of the label and the red of
the devil pairing nicely with the cheeseburger wrapper inches
away.

An empty gallon of skim milk in a snow bank, its pink label a
promise of spring flowers to come.

The corner of a styrofoam square with a circle cut out blown
over from the neighbor's recycling, leaving little foam spheres
as it bangs up against the cinder blocks in the wind tunnel be-
tween the car and the house.

A collection of dunkin donuts cups, iced and hot, thrown over
the fence of the Maplewood Ave overpass. A couple dozen, at
least, in an area closed off by chain-link fence, and which had
been cleaned for the first time in years just a couple months
ago.

A broken cd shining like a jewel at the intersection of Grove and
Washington.



Adam Orcutt

Not my own

ADAM ORCUTT

The place we call home has been pioneered before:

Memories exposed when revamping our space; bringing to fruition the buried polaroids slightly overexposed showing their dark skin.

They look happy, which leads me to believe that it must have been captured sometime before or after that spark that light a flame on the floor; hidden by freshly laid carpet.

I walk outside, across the woods where once Father Marquette preached to the peoples of the Potawatomi tribe; remembered only in name.

Their blood and scalps buried deep within the ancient dunes that I walk; I feel their presence in the trees.

Polarity

PETER MURDOCH

It took a while to get here
laughing up a storm.
Hard to know just what to say
or what might be the norm.

Forty pounds of iron up and
Forty pounds right down,
we sing the ancient anvil's
tune,
but there's no home left in
town.

No doors call out from dis-
tances,
no flames to draw us in,
just darkness at our every
edge,
and darkness deep within.

Uprooted and forgotten,
there's

a thorn on Jesse's tree,
but we be mighty thirsty
about

our head and knack for art-
istry.

Ten thousand thousand
points of light
surround the setting sun,
its closeness counts in every
end
and still the racers run.

For distance measured mat-
ters
not by any ruler's art
compared to stumbled leagues
pressed into hollows of the
heart.

The beast is close to laying
low
down in the manger dark,
but work here's just begin-
ning—
hear that echo? taste the
spark?