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EPIGRAPH

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M. O. MC
The Conundrum

To solve a puzzle one must color backwards from a white lie

M. O. MC

Talking in Circles (*like a cheater*)

Example A

Grand is the gesture when the lover loves another and,
uncrosses the legs to lay its lips in where even the teeth smile
when knowing how the fillings hurt after a dentist visit.

Talking in Circles (*like a liar*)

Example B

High time does it occur to the other how quick a phlegm can shoot
like a star across the universe and land on an innocent bystander
when really, it was meant for the betrayer.

M. O. MC
|Linear Generation|

All consuming
100% melanin
North Carolinian
|my violet purple mother|

whose parallel ivory teeth
glare as stark elephant tusk
brighter than her high-yellow
eyes tinged of life and cigarettes

I use to call em' cancer sticks,
before I crushed her carton of Winston-Salem
Ultra-Lights

but,
only thing that could kill her
is me
my sisters and I
we kill her with defiance
 with back-talk
 with rolled eyes
 fluttering eyelashes
 hands on hips
 teeth sucking
 silent cussing

my mother calls her mother,
who's even blacker than she
 who smokes more than she does
on us—

when I have my own girls,
and they try to kill me
I too will call her,
My mother

Matthew Roskowski Forest Bess

in the white space there is mountain / yarning into the nothing, a gull interlude / ships riding
everything into me / I am everything & a thief / too /

glass of
pomegranate juice/

the messiah is a

an alien overture/

with ice cubes

a glacier with a seal atop it
would make a pretty sonnet,
a gall aesthetic, rubbing
warm into our eye-lids

here, mountain,
here, lookout,
here, sea,

amen, amen, amen, to
everything.

Matthew Roskowski & the world says yes please

Ida is yarning unspecifically near Mt. Berlow where she finds a quail egg & eats it & makes a poem into it

*

I was nerving up a boulder when a robin landed on my shoulder & died in me

*

A goat farewell'd into the undercurr, it had four legs & air & my lungs felt like a swollen raspberry eaten by a fuzzy bear

*

Four miles ascending, there was a cloud but it wasn't in the sky, for a while anywhere

*

Before the war there was another war & before any human war there were (&) meteors

*

I think we are winning because we say grace for our hurt

*

Moments before I beckoned you into this poem, I was masturbating to you, dead leaf air

*

Ida is so massively meek, the world cuddles her in hugs

*

A dead leaf stare, tiny-ing me

*

Let's farewell forever, for now, until next time, some time, okay?

Matthew Roskowski Embellished Thoughts

I am carrying a bear

it vests on my hairline,
it drinks lines and recites
densities bursting into the
world:

an impoverished 'unfucktheworld'

it is the difference between
getting there and there getting
with a bottle of luminescence &
friends to share your irrelevance
with

when I am bliss'd,
feeling a hunger for

everything,
including tiger-hugs,

is often an

accompaniment, (is
sometimes an impediment to my
desire for sadness, which is
really a desire for unity,

which is really fucking

stupid
if you ask me

are you asking me?

if so, my response is:

hang me from clouds and call me stupid
scott walker is a swamp-monster, a moth-eater
this hour isn't getting any taller no matter
how many times I summon you into this moment of
momentarily, I am startling to think time has no depth
I wasn't born to be a poet but I wasn't born to be
born again, either, smelling so much like lavender &
jasmine cigarettes, with so much hair on my stony
skin & a mouth opening towards the ripening of our
animal genitals

I am finished with finishing,

so sterile,

so stupidity.

just a breath

breathing

just a yes

pleasing

Matthew Roskowski

Snail Jam

a snail careens, accosts, when it is done it is made into a blackcurrant jam and divested of its anguish. the jam without anguish tastes like mud. tastes like a happy snail. there is no happy snail. no sad snail. no ebullient snail. just anguish snails. this association I am part of is called *FREE RANGE ANGUISH FILLED SNAIL JAM COALITION*. we are not the type of people to wear blue coats or green hats, nor are we the type to eat jam that sours a tongue like mud. we are the type of people that use umbrellas when it is raining, though, because we are very practical.

M. K. Sukach
On Sale, e.g.,

The fourth estate,
Victoria's Secret, marathons,

our stupid economy,
the percentage of rape victims,

high modernism,
confederate flags, the Pantheon,

admirable people, constituencies,
nursery rhymes,

connections, beauty parlors
and pedagogy,

circadian rhythms,
mastodons and cheerleaders,

pearl necklaces,
fireworks and terrapins,

MILFs and laureate poky,
sea shells and Jacuzzis,

terminologies, what's at stake,
shibboleths,

big tits and remorse,
variety, propinquity,

the rapture, punctuation,
peace, milk,

exhaustion, a surprise visit,
finally,

redundancy,
and now.

Jacob Kimmel email

7 emails list out places with different air,
seasonal blossoms, rental obligations, water heaters
they blink in as a countdown timer,
red & white flashes warning that the ground is near

Subject: Re: the future of you

From: interminable.march.of.time@myspace.edu

I tap out replies from the driver seat
parked in a lot outside my favorite distributor of late night caffeine
get nervous, hold thumb to screen

Select All

Delete

&faces flash in the colors I captured five years ago
blue sweatshirt, bluer iris, pale blue straight into my bones
how am I supposed to exist
when there's no legitimizing agency for what's happened
i've been taught only to fill out the proper forms

check boxes ·
lack confidence

i almost didn't make it out of the bathtub
there are 2 a.m.'s i still need to call in my trump card

—

Hi Jacob,

Everything will be better at a new latitude.

Best,
You

—

Jacob Kimmel

january champagne, florida suburbs

we drained a champagne bottle in the back of your brother's movie theater. it was once my sister's movie theater. we made a promise, this is the first artifact I'll mythologize this year.

you drove us to the house where I once had my clothes removed, turned into laughter, re-sewn as I crossed the yard in embarrassed morning dew. there are several new television series critiquing the brooklyn twenty-something. we consume them all; it is a form of self-loathing.

this is central florida, climb back in the car, keep driving. past the houses where i once slept, the fewer where i really lived, piano teachers half the town shared, explained the part about empty neighborhoods & how we used them as rocket pads. i stopped the engine, stood gently, took a moment to recollect the video rental gallery.

the phone buzzed awake, text messages from beyond the grave.

no one asks, but i think i'm getting to the root of my problem.

it's certain now; i'm still in love with all the words we left, their blush face & abandon, seconds hands & first times

&the way our world spiraled over

—everyone on the front lawn, everything remembered.

John Roth

Appropriation Poem

I want the radiator to scream,
swallow its tiny suns
way down.
Heat skittering into a tunnel of bones
like the footfall of fire ants.
Cracking mandible and membrane.
Lick open my wounds
just for the hell of it,
because something soothes
the rhythm of blood
in an unceasing loop; crimson coil.
On the phone I can hear the breath
leak from your mouth and I say,
in our language, I want to fuck
the words from your throat.
Never keeping track of my pedometer
my body unknowingly walks
towards a more distant you.

John Roth

Animal carcass, a road smeared with prayers

Knifelike rays,
deflected off smoldering asphalt,
pierce the softest underbelly
until it caves in with sun-rot.
To sift through meat and shadow;
on moist temple grounds,
an altar of bones built for flies.
The faint processional
buzz between sunken rows of teeth.
Vested in green
they come and go, brought on tiny
angel's wings, uplifted by the curling
stench of faith.
A whitish egg cluster twitching
in its throat. Tire-bruised, but
barely broken. A crushed snout to show
for its faulty instincts. Another gassed-in
airway that leads to a bustling chamber
filled with the hungry and blind.
A splinter of blood divides into the shape
of a cross. Every death an act of martyrdom,
but more reflexive.

Jonathan Simkins

Crossing to a Cathode Ray

Your body is a hyacinth
Into which a monk dips his waxen fingers.

-Georg Trakl

I

Invincible the air through which I breathe.
I am stardew an origami gun.
Lift me to flowerhood or let me leave.
In field in wind in sand and am I one.
Where is it when the sound ends to my ends.
Is someone coming when they all are gone.
What letters are they using in my mouth.
And will that flower speak from me to you.
Invincible will you now hear my voice.

II

Kiss me, mother of lizards,
It's skin for skin and glistening,
It's window pane and wider openings.

The cannon on my thigh
Lights like flaming cellophane,
A field of flags soaking in blood and wine.

And I'm superior,
And every lake that sinks the swimmer
Bows to my body and its marble roar.

III

C CCCCCCCCCCCC

See SeeSeeSeeSeeSeeSeeSee

Sea SeaSeaSeaSeaSeaSeaSea

Sow SowSowSowSowSowSow

We WeWeWeWeWeWeWe

Here HereHereHereHereHere

Into the microphysical domain

Into the microphysical domain

Now NowNowNowNowNow

IV

In Istanbul the rocks are red
With mermaid's tears,
Each instant falling and rejoicing
To your last smile.

In the lanes of the Bosphorus
A freighter bearing
Bones of the dead passes to the light
Of a muzzle flash.

A host of hearts, all of our voices
Rise to meet you,
Beautiful swan gliding to
The shadow's end.

Jonathan Simkins

Refuge of the Slime

In every city there is a place where the dirtied goo
Of the mind is pressed into a diagnostic mold.

I am on a conveyor belt as always not proceeding
To the sea or my mother's home but to that locus

Of special terrors only the confined are privileged to.
Wherever I am the mob follows. Their mob wisdom

Always knows where the building is, and they corner me.
A hundred fingers are pointing at me- no, *through me*,

And I ask myself if I have been here before, if these
Rusted gates are opening only in my memory.

My gown, soiled in urine and the droppings of rats,
Slips from my body. The doors open to my nakedness,

And a stream of black slime flows out.
I lie down in the sludge, make a filthy snowman.

They put me on a stretcher, but I am six feet
Above my body and see how silly they look-

Don't they know this place closed down years ago?

Jonathan Simkins

More than a Pearl

You are possessed
By the medicine.

I am a hive of
Autoerotic honey.

Together we walk
Down the aisle

And off the pier.
A guillotine waits

Beneath the waves
In the pages of a book.

It's bound in oyster shells.
Our names are on the cover.

Brian Thomas

In the afternoon snow I

In the afternoon snow I
Will wear a hat I
Heard in Church of snow and light
As the willows fall.

In the afternoon snow I
Tendrils limbs flaring/in the blue
Prepared by playing/the baby
Near the I from
Record-setting heat-wave
"What miraculous heat" Illegible.
In the sodium sweet I umbrella.

In the afternoon snow I
Scribbled signs of eulogy swoop
On burnt toast and appropriated imagery
Mindless in the cold I water
I drank water from my hands
I am my hands in service/water
Pooled in the "what stupendous-
What remarkable heat,"
Tornadic activity in the I in the
Barklay Account
In the I in the afternoon snow I
Slipped down chestnut street I
Will vacuum I
Will see I
In the will I.

Natalie Homer

Temporary Ghosts

The sky falls in pieces
and we stand
tethered,
fettered,
palominos in a stable.
We toss our golden heads,
stamp our shod feet.
Our breath forms
the ghosts after gunfire,
the stacks
from chimneys
of trains.

Natalie Homer

Tempest

The room is a tempest,
waterless.
There are only clouds
churning
above a writhing sea.
As it calms, and I with it,
there's all this ringing static
of anger and panic and souls.
It's a miracle it gets through the smell.
I keep looking at the light bulb on the ceiling.
How is it that such a delicate thing—
a man-made blossom of glass and current—
is so much stronger than me?

Glen Armstrong

Bruce Springsteen's "My Home Town" As Covered by the Unborn

She is one of those girls,
uneasy with things
as they must be.

Other girls drive by in muscle
cars, circling

the town all summer long
before heading off to orchestra camp

with one terrifying burst
of speed.

She likes soft-serve ice cream,
and she doesn't care
who knows it.

She is hoping to start a baby soon.

The night sky is a black t-shirt.
The moon is where the head
pokes through.

Glen Armstrong

Trouble Every Day XIV

The conflict gets into my hair
It crumbles and breaks

Wakes my wife / provokes
As surely as fine
Bone china provokes the bull

Sleep tonight is a siege

Mentality
It tightens my pajama
Drawstring / the naked wings

Our legs
Could have been

Remain buried / cocooned
Like severed fingers
Aware of the fissures

Sleep finds another crack
Another flower another flame

Another free trial-size
War in a bottle

That leaks
Into the ceasefire
We were promised.

Glen Armstrong

Love Letter to a Fortune Teller

That tendency to complete
a creature's mouth with myth rather than bone

is all I meant by "witchcraft."
That jawbone that once ground clover

into green paste and quivered
as the greater body bunny-fucked

deserves, at least, its story.

Those little sterling silver skulls
on your bracelet,

got me thinking
about little sterling silver people.

They will come for their heads.
From the future.
They will listen to the jawbone.

I love the way you arrange your relics:
broken things in a little room,

the little room in a broken thing
that resonates when you throw
your voice into it.

Mitchell Grabois

New Line

On the cover of a 1936 issue
of Die Neue Linie
a small plane flying low
has the same shape
as one we might see today

A blonde woman pulls a branch
down to her face
so she can smell the honeysuckle blossoms
Was she careful not to snap the branch?
It seems to be bending
but who knows what might have happened
once the moment of this picture
ended

She's athletic
filled with German light and air
If the branch snaps
will she keep herself from lurching forward
and falling to the ground?
Will she laugh merrily
at her close call?

Why is she wearing two watches?

One is for peacetime
but war is coming

and peace will be a long time
returning

Mitchell Grabois

Vibrant Health

In Germany
the Vibrant Health Movement
with its pretensions to classicism
was a spring that fed the growth
of the Nazi movement

leading me to question
whether fitness is
a proper goal

The Germans wrapped their guilt
in designer's drawings

and Americans misplaced post-war relief
onto the VW Beetle
The round car hid arrogance
and brutality
behind its adorably humble curves

and onto the Mercedes and
the BMW
"the ultimate driving machine"

leading me to wonder whether
power and style are proper goals

Every day I wake up and ask myself
What can I not achieve today?
How can I fail to exploit my talents?

Gabe Russo

Night Structures

I.

Moon coughs out bobby pins
onto darkness where
a set of moth-wing fingers
quiver, blindly eager
to pluck loose threads
off the night—gather a bouquet
of gelid stems.

Each one has its place—
slid in like a drawer,
she assembles the coffin of her hair
without needing to think of
what comes next,
it just is as is sweeping waltzes
under pillows
where desires eek
like mice hollows
to escape sunken cheeks & puckered lips
lanced by the drawstring
of necessity.

II.

Dark was night & stormy
through our shirts—streetlight cocoon
buzzed skin off-yellow.

Your eyes stuttered:
a cleansing of need or just full
of wind & salt
(blinks splice or cut).

The ocean reasoned mad-like in
thrash-hiss on the tarmac:
soggy sock ballad to my car—
handle lifted against waves, picked up,
beaten wildly from within,
trying to occupy
a space between land & moon
for so long now.

Gabe Russo

war excavation

only churn,
only

turning

turns men to

mudflats:

indent suck of bone, half

mud, half air

stepping stones

or

pleated spine

dug in

like cypress claws

towards

icy bedrock

moon throbs in a skull,

half forget,

half shell case

absence

folds its howl

in sockets of owl

screech

low

pine limb shadows

cut through
sternum, clavicle
the wind
moves shadows,
turns them
only
churning
churns men to
black locusts:
ghosts falling
apart
petal by petal
& the like

CONTRIBUTORS

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GABE RUSSO is a writer and filmmaker currently living in Melbourne, Fl. His poems have been published in *Wilderness House* and *Black Fox*, among others. He has a blog: www.gaberussowriting.wordpress.com

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for Issue Ten.
Send us your poems.

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