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FOREWORD

Perhaps it is really as beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella, just as the great French poet wrote. April may really be a splendid metaphor. Unexpected and contradictory. Two-faced Janus. You can share either Robert Browning's mood...

*Oh to be in England
Now that April's there*

or T. S. Eliot's...

*April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land*

Certainly, if you go to a funeral on a mild April morning, you feel the irrepressible impulse to rephrase Manfred's last words:

Old man! 'tis not so UNPLEASANT to die!

And now, while these heartfelt words are being written, now it's April and spring once again, here in the Northern hemisphere, and it's both cruel and charming, pervaded by melancholy and a sense of loss. Now it's such a multifaceted April afternoon here in the Northern hemisphere, as varied as the poems collected in this second issue of Volume 3. Various themes, tones and styles, and once again, many new intense voices, which Locust Magazine is always so proud to host. If, at this point, the reader should happen to think of Chaplin's *Limelight* song, please no shame or embarrassment! That would be just the correct amount of irreverence and mockery, crucial to appreciating an e-mag the likes of Locust Magazine...

*Spring is here.
Birds are calling.
Skunks are crawling.*

Many thanks to all those poets, writers, artists and readers who are kind enough to keep Locust Magazine still alive!

April 2012

SARTRE'S TONGUE
~ A Poem by B. Z. Niditch ~

In corners
that seventh seal
our action paintings
nix motives
in expressionist contours

your legacy
in our dry mouths

with exiled alembic
words even when
our body
POLITIC
digs into aloneness
losing ourselves
without recording

answers to history
connecting the whole
world systematically
in art's DIALECTIC

of ultimate fashion
we choose a finality
of negative denials
except for art's
bourgeois politeness
turning away

from fetish fascism
church or state
drawing the defaced
and abject objects
to intervals of a matrix
of geometric skulpture
in linear lines
of our intuition
in poem and freedom.

THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTOPHER BARNES 19-21**~ A Poem by Christopher Barnes ~**

19. Dislodged by melanoma at 53
In held-dear remembrance
By wife Michelle, quaternion heirs,
Christopher Barnes. Profile:—
Blighty roots on Uncle Sam's airbase,
Spray skiing, immersion surfing,
Nevada's sheet water
Where Chaparral sapling's a child
Stone's throw from a forbidding mother.

"Some people even talk about how we can 'deconstruct' ourselves online. We
don't have to present
Ourselves in toto—how we look, talk, move, our history, thoughts, feelings, and
personality into one
Big package."
— John Suler

20. A fight-shy pa
Who did for his unborn mamma
On scratch sore knees, whimpering, unbalanced
When Christopher Barnes kicked off.
Dr. Rosario's ultrasound evidenced
The blameless one's death blow was a skull crush.
An hour failing of affection,
A tremble without a thaw.

"Dr. Richard seed, one of the leading proponents of human cloning technology,
suggests that it may

Be someday possible to reverse the aging process because of what we learn from cloning.”

— HumanCloning.Org

21. Christopher Barnes

Pressed out at the Pennsylvanian campus, East Stroudsbury,
Prospectively surmounted his bid
To be a well-feathered chief at Tarkenton Financial.
Superannuation is a counting-house. He presumes
To second-thought lives of age-crabbed pros,
Money's worth in Insurance. The chum-up domain
Has cross-patch rivals. Golden calves settle,
The surplus is smoke.

QUENTIN OLIVET
~ A Poem by Michael Cluff ~

I have kept, revered
even worn it
these last twenty years.

It was during that
phase of my life
when directions were not clear
and choices were murky, a
lime touched water
with no top or bottom
in sight.

I went into his apartment
accidentally unlocked,
believe me,
over a weekend
and
snooped.

I just looked
never touched
just wandered
absorbed this neighbor
I did not get to know
beyond his face
his short salutation
and goodbyes
in flight
from jobs to work

and back again.

I did take
a stylish grey and green and brown
striped tie of his
slightly eighties
the mode of the time
but still classic,
like him
both ways.

I won't explain why
I did it,
I can't even to myself
but I never felt
really guilt but...

what?

I can't
fathom it
don't want to

got to get it
from the dry cleaners

put it around my
happy willing neck
today
or next Wednesday
at the latest
latest.

2:35 AM
~ A Poem by Peycho Kanev ~

The grass is shaking
but not because the storm outside;
it's filled up with the red ants of
death—so pure, so alive,
and it is 2:35 in the morning
like every god-damned day is
2:35 in the morning,
and I take a peek outside
waiting for some revenge
upon my view on the world affairs;
but nothing is changed:
the red ants are running upon my
drunken arms
heading for my heart,
singing sweet songs of maidens
and children dead at birth,
and the storm outside is quiet now;
and the ants, my ants of death
are running away from me,
screaming with their little mouths:
“There is no soul inside”,
and finally I sleep with no remorse,
the perception of tomorrow lost
like a roach in garbage,
the ants are burning in my dream,
and I am happy for a while,
feeling mortal, too fragile,
so far away without moving a muscle,

sinking into the lie of
the new day.

MEMORY LOSS
~ A Poem by Amit Parmessur ~

His index finger drawing on the blanket
like a silly schoolboy,
he soon detects ants along the wall and
turns into a traffic warden angry at
transgressing vehicles.

His hair scattered in voluntary neglect,
bitter tears poised to explore his cheeks,
he soon turns into a capricious tyrant
who suddenly remembers too many
swear words like ax wound.

He watches the same soap opera
three times in a day. At night,
he opens the window
and forgets to close.
His daughters,
he calls for them loudly,
forgetting they are abroad.

Talking to me on the phone,
he only asks when I'll be back
with his cigarettes and rum
and if I ask to talk to my mother,
he lays down the receiver
to look for her
and does not come back.

I cannot feel love for him, anymore!
It seems he doesn't need anyone's help.
Death has invaded his brave mind.
He has reinvented
his view of the people around and

I am among the strangers
he does not trust.

PLACES
~ A Poem by Byron Beynon ~

He defines places by their foundations,
their firmness, the strength of roots,

how morning sometimes comes
with a red wound in the tempered east,

the illusion of a new sunshine
arriving within the stillness of a winter's room;

a day toasted by the wine of angels,
secret tears that meet

by the sea's drained heart,
when all tides

escape from this life,
the flotsam sacrificed beneath sharpened steel.

(Places has already appeared in print in Poetry Salzburg Review)

BLACK CAT'S BONE
~ A Poem by Jeffrey Park ~

It was secret and dirty, as should be, and he kept it
in a small leather bag that he wore under his layers,
slung down low so that it rested comfortably
just there against his upper belly.

It was his black cat's bone, though he wasn't
altogether sure what part of the kitty it was from
or if it had really been black—could have been
gray or white or ginger, or a rabbit or a squirrel
for all he knew, he being no taxidermist.

But it was his black cat's bone for all of that.
Long years in the filthy bag and longer before that
in the depths of a jeans pocket, doing its job.
Warding things off.

At night, under all kinds of moons he rubbed it
between his long fingers, worried his black cat's bone
until it was smooth as could be, a picture
in his mind's eye of a silky black cat happily clawing
at a dangled bit of string.

DEATH OF A RHINOCEROS
~ A Poem by Austin McCarron ~

Struck dead half on the ground
and air, the rhinoceros
rests under the sun's cloudy moon,

where maggots and flies prepare
to clean the
corpse for more dangerous animals.

The river is calm but soon fast moving
crocodiles snap at
the penis and descending birds attack

the hide and enter the exposed anus.
Approaching lions arrive
briefly and disappear to another kill

but a gang of hyenas rip off the legs and
open up the belly and
sweet is the odour of the beast's entrails.

Over the stench of liquid gasses the sound
of the wind is
like a song dedicated to the spirit of bones.

On the plain prophecies of blood appear like
rumours of a higher being, where the image
of light offers up a picture of recycled waste.

TWO POEMS by Amanda Reck

*

COLD TURKEY

The butt crushed, “like a Rorschach,” you said,
“one last smoke.” Just don’t ask

me to wait for you. Exhale.
Nothing is really continuous, except
the last long drag, the guttural vowel
that drops you, a kind of free fall

that embers make
when they’re dropped
into a grate and smothered.

*

LACK OF NUTRIENTS

its all smoke and mirrors she lied
to her therapist I don’t have a
mirror in the house you said not to
compare my blood and moon pale
to theirs but I don’t
smoke in the house when
he’s there juvenile
sentiments since when

do feelings age with wrinkles
prunes stewing inside
craniums his yours mine
is immune because I said
I don't eat fruit he said I
might get scurvy

TWO POEMS by Brad Evans

*

EARLY RISER

*For "Doors" (1920 - 2011)
and for the memories that remain*

she was an early riser
and she began the household tasks
of making the bed and getting dressed
and dusting and washing
and sweeping and wiping away more dust...
all of her morning seemed taken up by jobs
which I swore half of them she'd invented
just for herself:

"Why don't you sit down and read a book, Nan!
Relax a bit, that recliner was built just for you!"

I'd watch her consider that idea all too briefly
before she'd laugh a little and walk off muttering:
"if only I had the time, love!"
And then off she'd go to water the curley-leaf parsley and mint
And all the other varieties growing in abundance front and back.

On some mornings, she'd take an early swim with a friend
and she'd come back pegging her swimsuit on the line
not far from the onions hanging in the musty garden shed
and I'd look at that white rubber thing that she wore over her head
was it white or purple?
a lot of women her age seemed to wear them
whenever they went for their morning swim

it didn't seem to keep the water out
but it had a distinct flowery pattern on it. All in 3D.

Later on she would take a walk down the hill
To buy the loaf of fresh bread (unsliced) from the baker
and I still remember the date scones and pots of tea,
the pikelets, the golden syrup dumplings which I'll never forget

and while Nan would soak the rice for the pudding
her brothers and friends would arrive,
they all seemed to be farmers or fishermen,
with names like Athol and Crofton and Harold
bringing in food from the land and the sea
anything from fresh beans to mullet.

And while Mum and Nan were stringing those beans
before the weekend roast
I would sit out on the balcony
with a glass of ginger beer in my hand
watching the Tamboi Queen chug across the Bay...

And that was many years ago now
and the house no longer stands,
and all I've got left are just some memories
that slip away like sand
no matter how tight I hold 'em

and if you're gonna scatter those ashes
then do it at daybreak
she was an early riser anyway
and choose that time on the Bay
when the air lies still over the water
and let a gentle tide take her.

*

A QUIET DAY

the break room
is almost quiet—

just the whining
of the rack

ELD's flickering
their pulse

a sinew
of chalk-coloured cables

coil within
the locked, black cabinet...

outside

a cloudy day

but
no wind.

UTA BONGA
~ A Prose Piece Steve Danziger ~

Uta Bonga won't put his shirt on.

His vanity is mystifying. He is so skinny, his bones strain against his skin, like clothes hangers wrapped in a garbage bag. His nipples look like the tiny suction cups on the end of plastic darts. His navel protrudes like a malformed grape, pale and bruised.

He has just come back from the boys' room, where he went with a Magic Marker and wrote He-Man across his chest. All of the kids are asking what it says, because it is backwards. In response, he keeps flexing his right bicep, an egg-shaped and -sized thing, and sticking it in their faces.

His classmates are repulsed, not so much by his invasiveness or his disrupting their work. It's the smell, they say; Uta hasn't used deodorant, or enough of it, anyway, so every time he moves his arm away from his body, there is a sharp, piercing odor. The students groan, make faces, wave hands dramatically in front of their noses.

Uta, encouraged, increases his repertoire, reaching to the ceiling and bringing his arms down into a double-biceps flex.

"Uta," I say.

"Bonga!" he says.

"Bonga..."

"Uta!"

I sigh, and Uta, his fists nestled in opposite armpits, flaps his crossed arms, and starts running around the room.

"Fly, Uta!" one of the girls cries. Uta smiles wide, runs faster, runs up a chair, leaps, and crashes into a bookcase. Kids laugh. The girl who encouraged him, Marie, looks concerned. The book case teeters, and a thesaurus is shaken loose, hitting Uta on the shoulder.

"Are you alright, Uta," I say.

"Bonga!" he says.

Marie smiles.

Uta flexes for her, then presses his chin to his chest and his eyebrows crinkle, because he can't read what he wrote there either.

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