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FOREWORD

In this great universe—just stealing (and torturing) Keats’s words—the work of a small digital press is of so little importance, and its ravings and excuses are so uninteresting; its *way of thinking* such a nothing, that a Foreword must necessarily be a sort of impertinent bow to strangers who care nothing about it. But in spite of that, perhaps a couple of readers might want to know why Locust Magazine seems to have reverted to the *one-issue-a-year* policy. Unfortunately there is no well-thought-out decision to make public! So the best thing to do here is to leave out the reasons and just focus a few seconds on the outcome. *One-issue-a-year* policy can be regarded as something one should be either proud of or ashamed of. Although the “shameful” side of the equation can be disregarded nonchalantly, the “pride” side is worth spending a few words on. One issue a year is like a pearl, an only child. This state of solitude makes it unique and precious. In a literary age like ours when literary achievements are often judged by the length of the title list, a one-issue-a-year policy may be certainly considered some sort of eccentricity, which, however, may hide a secret treasure!

Many thanks to all those authors who consider Locust Magazine a suitable place to house their creativity! And the hope is that many more will be out there to help and support.

July 2013

WHEN HIS BODY HIT THE GROUND**~ A Poem by Dane Cobain ~**

It was just normal
but he stormed stairs and threw
glass bottles at gullets with
liquor and stale cigarette smoke,
walking thru stainless steel
NHS corridors and two
doctors tried to stop him
squealing when he fell
downstream drowning in asphalt,
final primal screams when
death is all he wanted and
his wife next door just
buried him under floorboards,
scraped him with shovels and
tried to glue him
back together again in some
shrill interpretation of suicidal
thirst in freezing streets,
but it all went down
when his body hit the ground.

SELF

~ A Poem by Gareth Writer-Davies ~

I tricked myself
Left myself
In the middle of a maze
And ran

I thought
Let's see the bugger
Catch me now

At the exit
He was waiting
Enjoying the last laugh

BROTHERHOOD
~ A Poem by Austin McCarron ~

Precisely each day
the sun vomits in its
sleep and earth
is abandoned with the
most
grotesque wings of light.

In cities and towns cheap
criminals hide from its gaze.

In mountain villages and
desert plains, despots fall
like wind in darkened caves.

In streets and buildings, the
population gather blindly
like Gods of bitter knowledge,
like drunks of diseased mornings,
like beggars of pitiful destinies,
burning the tongue
of life with blood of words, with
lighters of miracles, in electric
tunnels, in luminous silence, with
incomparable feuds and wishes.

THE LADY BY THE WINDOW SEAT
~ A Poem by Annam Ragamalika ~

I saw her as she stepped into the bus,
broad shouldered, tanned woman, in fifties?
grey cotton salwar, hair clipped short,
overstuffed maroon tote, zip open.

She promptly bought a ticket,
sat on the “men’s side” of the bus.
Engrossed in a book i didn’t notice her,
Bus sped fast, dry heat picking up.

All of a sudden i heard a laugh, loud, harsh.
breaking the silence, of the crazy, sultry noon.
Followed by chirpy chatter, looked up to see
Who was the active one in the drowsy bus.

There she was by the window, gesturing
Talking, animatedly, pointing out, looked as though
She was describing cathedral road to a friend
over mobile phone, nodding, agreeing, disagreeing.

I searched for the earphone, the phone,
the invisible friend, foe, whoever that might be,
To my shock i discovered that there was none
The friend and foe was her, with in her.

CONTENT OF THEIR CHARACTER**~ A Poem by Robert Demaree ~**

Black students first came to our school
In nineteen-fifty-five.
Brothers, their father ran a bank.
We were polite, kind—
This was not Mississippi,
For heaven's sake—
Nodded and spoke to them,
Walking across campus,
Waiting in the cafeteria line.

But that is all we did,
The characteristic shame
Of our generation.
I looked for them
At the reunion last week;
They were not there.

PRISON
~ A Poem by Douglas Polk ~

Black and white,
or a sagebrush gray,
endless space,
but walls invisible,
block the way,
marked like Cain,
roaming the desert,
or the plains,
unfit for community.

WISH-LIST
~ A Poem by D.M. Aderibigbe ~

My uncle, who never ceases telling
Me the complexions of the 9-year

History he

Witnesses before me, starts again.
He wants to know if I see

The tournament

In Mauritius, when I was still a nipper
A nipper, who couldn't decipher

Between go

And come. Though the Black and
White goggle-box, made the

Colourful streets, gaudy, like
What one sees, when

He's got a

Black-eye. The leather-strapped
Passe TV, made the

Persian-style

Houses tremble, like a convulsed
Child. The rickety TV,

Granddad bought

With coins and still collected coins,
Turned Port-Louis, Curepipe,

Goodlands, and

Other major cities upside-down,
Like an upended crate

Of beer.

It's been 19 years since the
History became history,

We now

Have a modest flat-screen TV,
And a cable, that

Snoops into

Other countries' affairs, and
Tender it before

Us, in our

Very own eyes, in our living room.
The football tournament is

Now a teenager on the leaves of
History, but Mauritius

Remains transfixed. Yes! Its beautiful
Beaches, with water, clean

Like the

Abstemious ways of the prophets,
The Pigeon, pink, like

The palms

Of a newly born baby, and the
Thumping tortoise,

Still counting on

Its 150 something years inside
The pond of history, the

Chamarel Park,

The point, where the Earth shows
Seven different faces,

all

Are still

Transfixed. Except some other
Places of interest, which

Nature forgot

To endow on the island. Man of
Course has taken

Charge of the

Planting, and development of
Of nature's flaws.

Man and

Nature have forced the Island
Of Mauritius on

The list of wishes I've written down
With the ink of

Priority.

BLOOD SHOT SILK
~ A Poetical Sequence by Christopher Barnes ~

Filming “Blood Shot Silk” – Deleted Scene (28)

A string-section clambers its incidents.
Fustian trails at an unshut hatch. Cut to...
Candle-light across a jade wall—
An exponential, mischief-making Star,
Crystalline lipstick, hurled-back hair.

We’re interned
Into the transitory
Where in a low-angled shot
An Actor fluffs his lines.

Filming “Blood Shot Silk” – Deleted Scene (29)

Logo...set=piece zither,
Cursive font captions dribbled onto alley-way.
Twilight subsides over a cardboard Manhattan.
Bette Davis cremates tobacco leaf.
Compact opens in flamboyance. Signature footage
Will be spliced in... freeze frame.
A side of a six-shooter.
The hearse-wheel revolves
In its barrel.

Filming “Blood Shot Silk” – Deleted Scene (30)

Starkly backlit shot.
Close-up— hairy forearm on steering wheel.
A ready-to-die attendant gnaws nails.
High-wrought portcullis. An unembarrassed stalag.
Track to the right
Montgomery Clift squinnying through glass and grille.

*Cinophiles will enthral at this scene
Canonising it Classic Noir.*

Filming “Blood Shot Silk” – Deleted Scene (31)

Bland eulogy— mortification censor in moonspill.
Cronk of Theremin. Tumbrel din.
Our celluloid assembly takes flesh;
Ramifications fit skin-tight. Bevan, now-a-days eyeless,
Slams his white stick on an R.I.P.
A thunderstruck crow
Pelts from its nest. Orion’s Belt
Reels bloodclot red. The footrule at the Action Line
Is fell-in-with. This time.

Filming “Blood Shot Silk” – Deleted Scene (32)

A trill-chant, rope-hopping children.
Unbalanced china.
A caged owl cranks his agog head.
Camera 7 twitches, dazzles,
Overshadows to black. A spotlight relumes.
Feverish guggle of Ali Wrey
As he rocks the suckling dead in its cot.

TWO POEMS by B.Z. Niditch

*

JOTTING IT DOWN

Waking up
in a tent city
homeless,
turning up
on charred first light
over a sleeping bag
stolen up town,
a write on poet
with a long rap sheet
sings by a cold wind,
a bird nibbles
at your right ear,
feeling alone
threadbare in
a back jacket pocket
the judge signed
letter head says
you're facing time,
with long cut hair
falls on his muscle shirt,
stolen from up town
a wan body
bruised and reddened
with two broken ribs
enraged by fate
digs in
by needled syringes

for the long March
in the backwater city
near a park bench.

*

JACQUELINE'S CELLO

You played Bach
in his shadow
opening memory
on your fingers
moving chords
hidden in echoes
in absence of speech
of ebullient signals
mingled notes
augmented words
of a Paris reunion
in a major key
of harmonic fate.

THE CURVE

~ A Prose Piece by Scott Urban ~

When I was growing up, we lived in a house perched at the edge of a curve in the county road.

The picture windows in our family room at the front of the house were covered by floor-length drapes. They were a stomach-churning ochre shade not found in nature. They were lined with plastic to ensure their opaqueness. They were never parted, even during the day. To my young mind the family room took on the qualities of a bat-infested cavern: something to be avoided at all costs, even though that was where the rest of the family met to watch television.

One morning, I mustered enough the nerve to ask my father why we kept the family room drapes shut all the time. This required more resilience than you might have thought.

He didn't swear at me, as I initially expected. He said, calmly, "In the evening, out here in the country, people turn on their high beams when no cars are coming their way. As those cars round the curve, our house is elevated to just the right height for those beams to sweep across our windows. Those headlights coming through the windows can just about blind you."

This was as reasonable an answer as I was going to get from my father. I didn't dare ask him why we didn't just relocate the couch and the television, or move the set-up to another room.

One evening, a considerable period of time later, I was left alone while my parents went out—to dinner, to a movie, to a party; I'm honestly not sure where.

Obedying some impulse I couldn't name, I entered that shadowy chamber of a family room. I opened the hideous drapes without turning on the lamps or the TV. I sat down on the couch. I kept my eyes open, determined to let those cars' high beams wash over me.

I endured it for about five minutes. The intensity of that illumination was like a prison searchlight scanning the no-man's-land between barbed wire fences tracking an escaped convict.

It was like the tangible gaze of God pinning me to my seat and exposing every despicable sin, every minute peccadillo I had ever perpetrated or even considered.

Breathless, I shut those drapes and sat thankful in the darkness, waiting to hear the flapping of wings around my head.

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