Butte, America

There are ghosts in Butte's buildings,
In the Leonard they shut doors politely.
On Main Street they inhabit the drunks -
yelling at the red neon above the M & M,
or the moon rising so big over
other ghosts lying half vacant now.
Buildings from the Copper Era.
Drunks and buildings. Only the
dogs are left to watch the streets
from Walkerville on down.
Feel ghosts in the air of Butte, America.
Hear them in the noon whistle.
See them in June's eyes at the Helsinki.
The last of Fintown, Friday night.
Some of them took to the shafts -
hiding in the darkness, fifty feet down.
Some hang out where they took Columbia
Gardens apart. Some drive beside the young men
who still haul ore at the Big Pit.
A few get on at the Greyhound Station,
say the heck with it, and head for Buffalo.

Amy Naylor

Great White Women

I have known great white women
who dug their backs into sand or sheets
(or both at once in the gritty beds of a seaside cottage);
Who professed to love none
other than the cloudless sky or
the smooth scented arch of fragrant trees
leading to the sea.

My friends have known these same women
in city apartment beds or
on cold kitchen sinks
in cool suburban tracts of houses;
Known them with tongues and fingers
and legs arched over buttocks and breasts.

Some women were gaseous and soured in my chest;
all were undulant and snail wet.
My friends and I respectfully talk
in bars over cool mixed drinks and,
brothered by saliva of great white women,
dream of virgins asleep on the beach.

I. SayItT
Blind Autumn

Somewhere in my mind, I hear this music.
I hear the changing color of leaves
and those salty springs, tears
seeping from your eyes, clouding your vision.
I can hear the torn leather of my boots
and if I listen well enough, I can hear silence.

When we fight, we scream silence
at each other. There is no music
to that sound, so I put on my boots,
shout nothing at you, then I leave.
Whenever we talk about the future, I bring the visions,
you supply the tears.

What do you get for those tears?
You usually get the marbled silence
I make as I keep my visions
to myself. They design a strange music
playing through my mental headphones, leaving
just me to decide which to keep, which to boot.

My brain stalks away with my boots,
saying: we don’t need these tears
and, without knowing where I’m heading, I leave
with them, taking along my frowning companion, silence.
Your crying is muffled by your radio’s loud music.
My heart is blinded by my visions.

But if I had any real vision,
maybe I’d turn these boots
around and go back home, lower your music,
and evaporate your tears;
breaking our silences,
leaving the icy wind outside to dance with the leaves.

Instead, I change color and fall with the leaves,
once again tunneling my vision.
It surrounds me like a winter coat, this silence,
as I stare at the stains on my boots:
the remains of your tears.
Then I listen for the music.

I don’t know where I’ll drop my boots,
don’t know how you’ll dry your tears.
About now, all I can do is dance to the wind’s music.

Charles Dennis

Your Madness

Your madness is molded carefully
from a dragon’s tongue,
damp and warm, smelling of ether.
It is stored in a cool, dark place
in the back of your mind.

There are times when you seem quite sane.
When you’re working (for instance)
you’ve got every hair in place;
you’ve got a sane smile
and a bunch of sane little teeth.
You cross your legs
with a distinct air of sanity.
The sun, reflected in your eyes,
gives off a lovely sane glow.

But sometimes
when darkness washes the sky
you are drawn, like a triangle,
to the corner of your room.
There you sit
wrapped in a sheet of candlelight,
sipping honeysuckle wine.
You call yourself “Little Miss Springtime”
and grin from ear to eye.

Charles Dennis
Eating a wrappered lunch,
Looking at the office building
Across the street,

I watch a bird
Die into the first story
Of its reflection.

Falling, it
Intimates to me
The terribly intimate stupidity of the engineer

Who flowered the foresight
That birds might mistake themselves
For their reflections

But, the engineer, who, nevertheless,
Got up every morning and shaved money
From the budget of his building

Now grows his dead birds on the pavement.

Kurt Lovelace

I'm in a romantic love story.
It's raining and the streets are being blasted.
The rain pellets are bullets firing
upon the ground and me.
It's romantic to feel pain and oblivion,
so I walk the streets feeling
pain and oblivion,
convinced that night time, rain, and streetlamps
equal tears and endurance.
My jacket is soaking wet, and
I secretly gloat over my perserverance.
I dream that a carrera
or an omniscient lever
is watching me,
will soon vindicate my pain,
and make everything okay
with a bolt of lightning or
a metallic click while yelling
take two.

Beth Wischnick

An Ending

I went to see Freddy today, man. It really blew
my mind. I couldn't handle it, but I just gotta talk to
someone. He said to his ma that he wanted to see me.
Shit, man, he's...well, he was my best friend. His ma told
me that all he was doin' was screamin' "Louie! Louie! Ma!
I need Louie!" So, I went down there, man. In a way, I wish I
hadn't.

It took me a long time to even go into his room.
His ma cried and told me he looked pretty bad. All I heard
through the door was an occasional scream or "Louie! Ma!
Get Louie!" Shit, man, I loved the dude, but I never knew he
felt the same about me!

Finally, I went inside. There was some nurse holdin'
my arm. She said she better. So, I went up to the bed,
and he had some dressing all over his body. Orangy, you
know? Well, I tried not to notice it, man, but he was
charred, man, and I mean charred. And the room smelled
worse than shit.

All I could notice at this point was his eyes, and
blisters and shit on his face. His eyes were bulging.
There was some guy in white sponging Freddy's chest and
cheeks. It wasn't doing him any good, though. I could
just tell.

Then I just walked up to the dude, man. I think he
tried to smile, but he really couldn't. His hand moved a
little, and I took it. I didn't know what else I could
do, so I held his hand. God, it was warm. Almost hot.
He squeezed and squeezed for a few seconds, and then his
whole arm started to shake. I looked at his eyes again, man,
and he said "Louie?", like he was askin' me if I was really
there. Then his hand went cold, and he lost his grip.
I looked down at his hand, and then back up at his eyes.
But they were closed now. He died, man. He just fuckin' died.

Richard P. Hurwitz
The Stars
retain their luster
even after all the years
I have abused them.

They were planted by my parents
long before I ever moved to the city.

Their seed:
the sparkle of credulity
mawing at the body of my doubt.

Russell Shorto

How I Am Satisfied

Need
drives me like a train
forward
into more need.

Food
drives itself through my holes.
I am trained by my natural parent.

What is natural is to sit with you
to smile at your silly laugh
to knead your flesh into soft smiles
to drive myself
forward
into more smiles.

Holes
sit before me waiting
to be emptied of their content.

Of course I fear the natural.

Driving, as a little boy,
with my parents at night,
the whole of dependency
is made clear to me:

they need me, the silly things,
like I need them.
We are whisked
forward
into holes heavy
with meaning.

Russell Shorto
Life Along Nannie Burroughs Avenue

All this
    He say she say
          Exactly

Why we
    In the place we
    In today

Lil white balloons
    Their sharp points

Aimed at heads

Busloads of bibles
    Ganging up for Atlantic City
    Or Hershey Park

Broken across the spine
    Open to Kings and Revelations
    Can't kill nothing
    And won't nothing die

Smell of Sunday
    Friers following down
    The Avenue

Smothered Cabbage
    Smothered Cabbage
    Or frozen greens

The plexiglass sheen
    In the shopkeeper's eye
    As change

Is rotated away from you
    Behind the purchase
    Smeared with noseprints

Sitting straining
    To keep from cutting
    Somebody bad

Downtown
    Staying here
    Is called

Settling
    For
    Nannie

Knowing yourself
    From hours at corners
    More than Northeast

Thinking old women and chicken
    Can keep it going
    But not enough

Getting up
    Asphalt reaching
    As far

As concrete stopped
    Up against grass
    Needles matted out at doorsteps

And trimmed
    Meticulously
    Each blade cutting

Off exact
    To the same measure
    Is called restraint

Is called not
    Popping
    Stupid white balloons

Releasing fetid air
    All this
    He say she say

Is something done
    Instead
    Something

That is known
    As not shooting
    Up the place

Or tearing from passing
    Traffic the drivers
    Bust their balloon heads

Against the step
    Someone on a porch
    Behind whispering

To his squeeze
    I never wanted
    To break
Your heart
Only
Wanted
To be the man
Who sang the song
That broke your heart
And now even that's gone
Walked away off
The Avenue with its brim
Cocked
At a snappy angle
Like everything else that keeps
On getting up
Someone could pedal Washington
Just skirting the capital
Only to find himself
Here among us
A woman screaming
From the second story
Across the street as though
Something were being torn from her
But it is her man
Only
Come home from work
And her glad
Simply to have him
Returned to her intact
And she is screaming for him
To give it to her
In Washington
With no air conditioning
There is no privacy
This is called
Taking
A lot on yourself
fattening with years of Sunday's spent
Distending
Fine fat legs

In the Solid Rock
Wheels of Love
Holiness Church
Those legs tremble with the spirit
As tongues rise
Incomprehensibly from the floor
Cut your eyes
This way a tambourine
Is calling
Pack it up
Put it in a bucket
Take it all on home
Cut your eyes at this
Nannie Burroughs Avenue
Comprehends churches
Encourages desperate
Sex between shifts
Holds up the killing
Does not extend
To Northwest
But makes the connection
And far off in the night
A scream of silver
Whistles
The whirl of quickened
Bicycles
Flying above asphalt
The imaginative children coming
Your way with sharpened spokes bringing
All
This
He say
She say home to
Cut your eyes
This
Way

A.L.
Seely

Seely ran out; the screen door slammed behind her. Little puffs of dust exploded under her bare feet as she ran down the winding path from the house to the reservoir. A brown, wiry child of ten, her long reddish hair circled by a frayed ribbon, she wore a homemade orange dress with part of the hem hanging loose.

At the instant her skinny ankle descended to the ground, a sharp rattle sizzled in the still air. Colors blending with the blue-gray sagebrush, a snake lay coiled. Seely screamed, jumped sideways, whirled and ran back up the path. She pounced across the sagging boards of the porch, and into the kitchen, gasping. "Mom—there's a rattler out there!"

Her narrow shoulders bent over the wood range, stirring a boiling kettle with a long spoon, the woman turned and grabbed Seely by the arm. "How many times have I told you not to run outside barefooted?" She shoved her face close to Seely and little flames of anger flared in her pale eyes. "You act like you are bound and determined to get snake-bit." She shook Seely and pushed her away. Picking up the spoon, she turned back to the stove. "Your dad will look for the rattler when he gets home."

All afternoon, Seely waited. She stood at the bedroom window watching the dirt road for a cloud of dust to signal the wagon returning from the hayfield. A few flies buzzed; the July afternoon hung still and empty; the house settled like an aging, wooden ship into the unbroken sea of brown and gray. Dust devils, like tiny tornadoes, swirled in the shimmering heat waves on the hard-pan flats; a bunch of Herefords, black specks on the distant hillside, moved and scattered. Seely's mouth felt dry and she shivered in the oppressive heat. She walked through the kitchen and out to the porch, paused at the washstand. She poured a dipp-erful of water from the galvanized pail into the treckled blue basin and splashed her face. Her face dried before she could touch it with the stripped flour-sack towel hanging on a nail at the end of the stand.

By the time the men got home it was after six. They tramped around the house and down the path; they found no sign of the snake.

"When they rattle, at least you know where they are," her dad said. "Yah," answered one of the men, "but when they are shedding, they don't make a sound. They just uncurl like a saddle rope and sink in their fangs."

Seely shivered. She knew the snake was out there. It might crawl under the house. It could curl up in the cellarway, under the dank steps. It might even crawl out to the barn and up into the hayloft. Parts of her knew that snakes didn't climb, yet she could see it coiled up on a two-by-four under the eaves of the loft.

She escaped from her mother's voice in the barn. She climbed the narrow ladder and crouched like a small animal, watching and listening to the men working below her in the corral. The floor of the loft was covered with rich, spicy smelling alfalfa hay; sunlight poured through the cracks in the high beamed roof. Peering through a hole in the planks of the floor, she watched the men when they branded calves. They pressed a red-hot iron against a flank, and flipped open a shiny knife to cut the little bull calves. When one wobbled to its feet and stood, trembling, with blood trickling down a white leg, she turned away.

She had carried three black kittens up to the loft when her dad threatened to stuff them in a gunny sack and throw them in the creek. Each day, she sneaked out with a jar of warm milk and fed them until they were too alert to be trapped by a strange hand.

If one of the men saw her, she shooed her back to the house, and her mother met her, scolding, "I've told you a hundred times that barn is no place for a little girl. You stay away from those men, you hear?"

Seely hated staying in the house where every day was the same, cooking, cleaning, dishes, and her mother nagging. She loved the feeling of excitement and danger where the men worked, branding, dehorning calves, breaking horses and talking in loud voices to each other.

Playing in the loft one afternoon, she saw the fat heifer kneel in the muck of the corral, then roll over on her side and moan. The heifer moved. Seely could see something bulging, she stared as twin ivory hooves began to slide into the gaping slit beneath the cow's tail. The cow bellowed, the men came running, tied a rope to the hooves, pulled, yanked, cursed. Nothing moved. One of the men knelt down, thrust his arms up inside the cow. When he stood up, his arms were covered with blood. The men worked; the cow lowered continuously; sometimes she raised her white head and gave a long bellow and flapped back down. At dusk, one of the men left. When he came back, he carried the Winchester. He handed it to Seely's dad, who swore and shook his head. Then he walked over and struck the shiny barrel against the cow's head. There was a dull thud, the cow jerked and was still. One of the men took the rope from the tiny hooves and tied it to the cow's hind legs. Another man brought the team of horses. They dragged the body out of the corral and off into the pasture. Seely never told anyone what she had seen. Whenever she thought about it, her stomach ached.
One night, lightning split the summer sky, and a roll of thunder woke Seely. She heard her mother’s voice coming through the thin partition that separated the bedroom from her cot in the living room.

“That kid is always out there hanging around the barn. Something is going to happen to her.”

She could barely hear her dad mumble. “For God’s sake, you stew all the time about something.”

“And you don’t care.”

Louder, “What in hell is eating you now?”

“You hire every rounder that rides in. Always two or three men hanging around for me to cook for. The last one, what’s his name, Twig? He’s so shifty-eyed he gives me the creeps. He keeps looking at her. I’ll bet he’s been in the pen.”

“You are plumb crazy. He’s one of the best cowhands I’ve ever had. He knows how to handle horses, he works hard, and he keeps his damned mouth shut.”

“You don’t care about anything but this ranch.”

“Well, it’s a good thing, or there wouldn’t be one. Now shut up and go to sleep, will ya?”

Seely lay very still under the thin sheet. Twig, her special friend. Ever since the day he’d rode in on the sorrel mare, he’d treated her different than the others did. He didn’t tease her, he talked to her. One day he’d even made her a swing and whittled out a board for the seat. And if her mother kept on, she’d lose him. A damp mist formed on her skin and the sheet clung and stuck to her body.

She thought of the silly games Twig played with her when no one else was around. He told her he’d won the main prize for calf roping, and twirled the rope over her head to show her. She dozed, dreamed they were riding together, his Stetson hat pushed back and the smile on his wide tanned face just for her.

A harsh splatter of rain jarred her out of her dream. She thought of the times when Twig didn’t laugh or talk to her, how his blue eyes turned cold and he looked at her as if he didn’t see her. She tried not to remember that day he’d tied her to a post in the corral. No one was around; the others had gone off to mend fence. The rope cut her wrists, and she’d cried. When he came back to untie her, he laughed, low in his throat like a growl. He pulled off his hat, and ran a hand through his sun bleached hair. Sweat dripped down the little valley in his neck, and his blue denim shirt was unbuttoned.

“Ole Twig jest afunnin’ with you, you know that doncha?” He put his hat on and untied her hands. “Don’t mean to hurt ya. Never would hurt the little lady.”

She remembered how soft his voice was and how much she believed him. He was her real friend, and now she always made sure he felt like talking before she bothered him.

When she finally slept she dreamed. The rattler slithered along beside the path, mouth open, fangs folded up against the pink, crinkled inside of its mouth. The tongue darted out, and a whirr cut the air. Awake, she lay shivering, staring out at the blackness of the night, the only sound the buzz of a night bug as it hit the screen.

She slipped out to the barn one afternoon, and threw a saddle on her bay pony. She rode off over the dusty hard flats through the greasewood and down to the creek. There, hidden by the trees and brush, she tied the leather reins to a cottonwood tree, kicked off her shoes and socks, rolled up her jeans, and waded into the shallow water. Mud squished up between her toes. The sun in the bright, cloudless sky burned her face and bare arms. She crept along the bank under the willows and clapped her hands at a fat, green frog, and watched it plop into the water. She jumped at the sound of a man’s voice.

“Hey little lady, can I come and wade with you?” Twig, standing on the bank over her, grinned and unbuckled his leather chaps. He yanked of his boots and ran down the bank. He landed with a splash, scooped up a handful of water and threw it at her. She ran, laughing. He chased her, caught up with her, grabbed her, and pulled her up tight against him.

“Such a pretty little lady.” His voice was low. Awkwardly, he stroked her hair. She wiggled to get free, when he did not loosen his grip, she struggled. Desperately, she pounded on his chest with her fists. He held her fast, laughing, to a strange way that didn’t sound like Twig. Then he dragged her out of the water and up the slippery bank. He pushed her down and leaned over her. His eyes were closed. His blue checked shirt blotted out the sun. Round half-moons of sweat ringed with white showed under his arms.

“Jest hold still. Twig ain’t gonna hurt ya.”

With that, he pulled her jeans and underpants down, hands rough against her body. He leaned on her with one arm across her chest, and ran the other over her bare skin. He poked at her navel. He slid his hand down between her legs and jabbed at her with his finger. She twisted; and as she did a raw edge of pain wrenched through her. She screamed. His eyes went wide and blank. He struck her a ringing blow in the face. Then slowly, he began jabbing his calloused finger into her. Two, three, more times than she could count, and each time, she was split with searing pain. Suddenly, with one last thrust, he closed his eyes, moaned and relaxed his grip on her.
She lay on her back, shaking, afraid to move, until finally, he rolled away and got slowly to his feet. She saw a wet stain down the front of his Levis. She watched him, the willow tree above her head sprinkling the bank with shadows. He walked away a few steps, walked back, dropped down beside her and pulled on his boots. Slowly, he stood up again, his flame tall above her. She noticed a peculiar smell, a sweetish odor of flowers mixed with the acrid smell of sweat.

"Come on, little lady, get up, it's time to go home. Here, you ain't hurt. Old Twig never hurt ya. Remember the swing he had ya? Here, put on your pants." He tossed the damp, rumpled clothing. She pulled them on, numbly pushing muddy feet into white stockings. She watched him lead the horses up. He pulled her to her feet and shoved her into the saddle.

"Now go-wan home. And don't tell nobody, ya hear?"

The next day, her mother found the blood-stained panties under the pillow where Seely had stuffed them. She came after Seely and grabbed her shoulder. "How did your pants get all messy?" She shook the pants in Seely's face. Seely looked at her straight. "It's nothing, Mom. The pony shied yesterday. I fell off and scratched myself."

"You should tell me when things happen to you. What is the matter with you anyway? You should come and tell when you get hurt."

"I wasn't hurt," Seely answered.

Her mother let her go.

She ran outside, caught one of the kittens and brought it in. She crawled under her cot with it and pulled the sheet down over the edge to make a closed place where no one would find her.

One night, Seely heard them again.

"There's something wrong with that kid, I tell you."

"Oh, for God sakes."

"I want to take her in to town and have the doctor look at her."

"What for?"

"All week, she don't act like herself. Mopes around, not eating, the minute it begins to get dark, I can't get her to go down cellar or go to the woodpile and bring in a load of wood."

"Is she... growing up?"

"No. She's only ten, and she's not developed a' tall."

When Twig came in to meals, he didn't look at her, just sat down, ate, rolled a cigarette and walked out with the men.

Late one night, Seely heard a thumping of horse's hooves. They came closer, passed by the house and began to fade. She slipped out of bed and looked out the door, but it was a moonless night and only darkness stretched out across the prairie.

At the breakfast table next morning, Twig's place stood empty. For an instant, tears stung Seely's eyes. Then she remembered, and the plate she was holding slipped from her hand and crashed on the linoleum floor.

"Now where did he go?" her dad was saying. Her mother, setting a plate of hot cakes on the table, muttered,

"Good riddance of bad rubbish."

"He was a real strange feller," one of the men volunteered. "Sometimes he'd talk a blue streak, then again, he'd go for days and hardly say a word. Real close mouthed. Someone else spoke up, "Couple days ago, he said he had to get goin'. He acted kinda' like somethin' was bothering him, but he wasn't the kind you ask." One of the men laughed. "I wouldn't be the one to ask him his business."

"Oh, hell," said her dad, reaching for the plate of bacon.

Seely knew Twig was gone, yet her scalp prickled and she felt he was still there. Saddling her pony in the empty barn, she looked up to see the shadow of his long frame leaning against the door, a saddle rope dangling from his hand. Walking in to the house at dusk, she heard footsteps padding behind her. One afternoon when she was gathering eggs in the dim hen house, she saw him come in and push the door shut. It turned dark. She flung the egg basket away, and ran outside, choking, her stockings splattered with yellow.

Her mother told her she had to have a check over by the doctor before school started.

Climbing up the dusty stairs to the office, Seely smelled the familiar sharp burning smell of lysol before she reached the white, scrubbed office. The old doctor thumped her chest, listened to her heart, took her temperature and said, "Seely, you look fit as a fiddle, a mite skinny fiddle."

He touched the freckles on her face. "A few polka dots on her nose."

"Is that all you are going to do? She's not actin' right," her mother said.

Doc propelled her mother out into the waiting room and shut the door firmly. He came back and sat on a white enameled stool and asked softly, "What's the matter, young lady?" Seeing the expression on her face he added, "I won't tell anyone."

Seely studied his face. She pulled at her hair and chewed the ends of it. She took a step toward him and whispered, "I see things."

He nodded, white moustache working. "Unhuh. And?"

"Things that aren't there."

"Does it scare you when you see things?"

She wrinkled her forehead.

"What things do you see?" he probed, gently.

"Snakes."

"Ah. And?"

"People's faces."

"What people?"

"I don't know." Seely shrugged.

"Unhuh..." The old doctor nodded, stroked a brown mole on his pink scalp with a stubby finger. He looked over at the bookshelf filled with medical books and sighed. He looked at Seely.

"Now Seely, I believe I can fix you up, but you will have to do exactly as I say. Will you try?"

She nodded, brown eyes wide.

"First, I am going to give you some medicine to take three times a day."

"Does it taste bad?"

"Oh yes, but you must take it anyway," Seely nodded.

"Then I am going to give you two magic words to say when you see a face. You snap your fingers, like this." He snapped his fingers. "And just as you snap your fingers, you say POOF BEGONE!" He showed her.

"Like this?" she asked, timidly.

"Oh yes, but mean it! BEGONE!"

Seely smiled.
In mid-September, Seely rode off to school on her pony. The air was crisp; the cottonwood trees made a golden line along the creek. Her dad said the chill in the air meant an early winter; the days shortened; evening came quickly now. When she rode home, long fingers of lavender slid down the hills and spread out across the prairie. Her mother lit the kerosene lamp, but its faint yellow glow was swallowed up in the vast sea of emptiness. As the light faded and the sky turned gray, the wind came up. Like a live thing, it swept down around the house, moaning in the eaves, rattling at the windows. It mourned by the chimney, tugging and pulling at a loose shingle.

Seely, bent over her schoolwork, pressed her hands tight against her ears to shut out the sound. She felt phantom hands touching her; cold fingers closed around her throat and she could not breathe. A swirling blackness threatened to engulf her. There was a dry, bitter taste in her mouth and a sound of buzzing in her ears.

Frozen there, books scattered across the oilcloth covered table, doggedly she worked copying exercises, writing and re-writing each paper. She stopped, pushing her hands against her ears to shut out the aching cries of the wind. No faces now frightened her, forcing her to whisper quickly, "Begone!" no shadows followed her as she walked from the barn to the house, only the wind tormented her, circling the house, sobbing and calling her name. She sat through the long winter evenings, hunched over the kitchen table, the sallow lamplight falling on her head, working, the yellow pencil gripped tightly in her hand. The paper in front of her covered with neat, dark lines of carefully worked equations. Methodically, she checked and rechecked her figures, trying to make sure that she had found the right answer to each problem.

THE END

E.H. Naugle

My Pearl

I had this pain inside me at first a nebulous gnawing a slight pulsating prick. Maybe I swallowed a thorn or inhaled a bee. I tried to dislodge it shift my weight to avoid it as it settled deeper into folds of excuses and dreams one, two buckle my shoe and flourished from neglect. It ground down like a pestle against a soft pulpy mortar until it peppered me with pungency three, four shut the door and ate me black and blue. This self-righteous parasite ripe from my exhaustion and parcelled in my glossy syndrome five, six pick up sticks at last belched out before me. At first wary of the warty glob I punched it down like dough and buffed it like a boot seven, eight laid them straight into an adolescent bullet. Now it’s mine to toy with to frame in gold to shoot you freely nine, ten let’s start again I’m left with angry abrasions.

Susan Berner

Angels

your daily importance can now be measured out in private holidays
I have passed them without never really understanding them because they were so unapplicable and now they are even more so put away your eye-lashes they whip me to bloody states second second comes black word only hunters survive and the people who allow their minds to get real horny the rotunda of thought one column looks like the next but they are all slightly bent in the direction of the self-destructive rear-attack stop performing vivisection to my animalistic nature I do like women otherwise unconnected see the eat-look in his eyes Jesus he is hungry black nuns in blue veils just to accentuate the difference

Monica Bargem
The fall issue of Wooden Teeth will appear in December.
Please send all contributions to:
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CORRECTIONS:
Our apologies to John A. J. Hrastar whose name was misspelled and to Richard Ellis who was not credited for the photograph on the back cover of last issue.

If you pause at the end of these poems, stranded, left only with an array of images, isolated and crisp to your perception, then rejoice. If rolling from the page, the words buoy you upwards charged with the energy of the poet’s experiences, their subtle similarities to those of your own, then glance at those objects around you: the desk, the chair, or the ottoman, before you slide into the trough and put this magazine away.

My thanks go to the Publications Committee for the approximately 3000 dollars to do these two issues of Wooden Teeth, to my dedicated staff, to the people at Building TT, and especially to the poets, writers and artists who contributed their works to Wooden Teeth.

John LoDico
Editor