

ALANA I. CAPRIA

Red, My New Favorite Color

They say that when the pain first began my sister's cheeks turned red and she clawed at the walls wildly, in the hopes that plaster powder might cure her malady. Malady is my new favorite word: I look at it and whisper "bad lady" because mal translates to bad in my mother's native language and when I was younger, I used to pronounce the word as "mah-lady". Bad-lady. My brother blamed the bleeding cyst on her sex drive. That is the reason women are still being oppressed by men.

I saw her afterwards, when the red had faded into a pale blush and she was nearly swallowed by her bed. Everyone expected her to act and so she did, groaning and moving her head weakly along the pillow. She tired of the dramatics quickly but gave into the whims of her audience. "Encore, encore," they screamed each time she began closing her eyes. They were afraid that if she slipped and fell, they would have nothing else to look forward to, nothing left to mourn. Sometimes, family consists only of bastards.

No one mentioned the word "red" when I was in the waiting room. This was a different room, a different sort of hospital. There are two kinds of hospitals, if you did not already know: the first is the general kind, where they heal you or at least, attempt to do so, by taking all that ails you. The second, the one I was in, is the type

that is created by the hoi polloi to prevent future unhappiness. One hospital steals your money, the other your life. We could not see out the windows; someone had painted frost over the glass panes. No one looked in, no one stared out.

Preparing dinner is arduous. I do not eat meat but cannot stand the thought of anyone chewing through raw tendons and clusters of veins. I cut everything out. You never notice how personal trimming chicken cutlets can be until the moment you become those strips of breast and recall all they trimmed away from you. When it is over, a heap of useless vessels and muscle are lying in the bottom of a bag waiting to be discarded. Does anyone ask where the red has gone? Does anyone bother to look for it? I forgot to continue my search. Somewhere, a map is hidden behind an old dinner plate.

JOSEPH REICH

Nightmare #5

somehow we supposedly know god exists and can't see him and would be a hard sell to prove that we exist while seeing way too much of ourselves in this

POETRY FLYER

ALWAYS FREE, ALWAYS TITILLATING THE PUBLIC EAR

DAVID MCLEAN

She Holds

she holds me like a debt
or a denial, although the geese
are flying home again to Africa
today, and sing their ugly
repetition. it is never the same one
that chants the order. and Rilke
was stupid enough to say that in the other
we see our own vastness, what a
wanker. what we should see is that we
do not really exist yet
or ever, not as much as the geese
(and animals are not the same as trees)

Of Hedgehogs and Poems

Derrida said a poem is basically
a hedgehog a stupid fucking
hedgehog and trying to cross
the autobahn where systems
go stemming from nothing and
totalisations try to run it down
or don't try since they are
stupid but they mostly do
but sometimes it gets over
to the other side
why?

The Cats in the Moon

as it was written
they do it somehow
at night
open the windows
and step out, grandfather
first, a jump strange
and they are gone there
they are dancing on the unseen
dark side of the moon look
at them there they
are we are
here

The Muted Pleasure

the muted pleasure i feel tingle
in me is the world open like a flower
and pretty as a cancer we
are dependent on the other to be
today when we flourish
the body of the signifier is
the callous corpse and the callus
on the worker's hands and he
is the meaning man the clearing
wherein man stands

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DAVID LABOUNTY

Summer Camp and Broken Lines and Glass

there was a broken sky
and rolling green hills
and morning dew
and veganism
and paganism
according to a few
and Edgar Cayce's son,
a plain looking white haired
middle aged southern man
who happened to be a
new age southern man
held my ten year old hand
in the heat and sun of
a summer in western Virginia
he read my palm
and he traced the lines and creases
with his index finger pink and short and round
your life line is long and good, he said
as is the line for your brain,
but your heart line, he said,
it isn't complete, and it
may be because you're not
old enough
your lines may not be grown in yet
I shrugged my shoulders,
and kept the art of palmistry and
took it back home
back to the suburbs and my friends
and their scowling mothers
and my heart line, it finally grew in
but my life line, that long line
that arches around the socket of the thumb,
well, thirty years, two wives
and a million cans of beer later
my life line
it's twisted and forked
like the young crack on a windshield
waiting for one more chip before it shatters.

BRANDON MAZUR

An Island of Lesbians

At the age of sixteen I was told
that in the Aegean Sea, where ships'
wakes became the calcium stains in
a block of marble cleft from the earth
a century later, there was an island of lesbians.
I reach for their necks, counting
the vertebrae on my fingers.
For their bare feet, tops tanned
the hue of olive bark, soles kept smooth
from pressing into wet clay.
For their arms, thin as damselflies,
leading goats down the mountains to graze
on a summer night, following the stars of
the constellation Lyra, which they understood
were oil lamps held by the gods searching for crickets.
There was a neighboring island, Lemnos,
where you could go if you were just curious
to look through coin-operated binoculars
as if you might see across the water
two Statues of Liberty kissing. Or on
the first day of spring, three of them
spinning in a ceremonial dance while
their teacher, the poet, watched,
imagining herself standing on the edge of a cliff
overturning an urn filled with grapes and flowers
to float away in an attempt at pollination.

ASHOK NIYOGI

Angry Monkey

windswept monkey
flits away with my eyes
in vermillion rain

my spectacles now
bridge his eye sockets
through which
I can vaguely see
very thin trees
in the distance of pain
pulsing a despairing sun

I offer up bananas
one by one
and get back
acrylic bifocal lenses
one by one
and then
the monkey wears
my spectacle frame
over empty eye sockets
in whose hollow
the sun goes down

after sunset
his rage twists
the mangled emptiness
of the spectacle frame
I walk away subdued
with retrieved lenses
that do not break

this was a nervous moment
I would have had to take
a rabies shot
had he scratched me
but now I will go
to a spectacle shop
with the acrylic lenses
that do not break

no I will not go
to cacophony with you
even though I know
you can rent a car

I would rather walk

MICAH EL LEGGS

In Zeta Vitalis

Two dogs lie
like commas
on the couch
punctuating
some complex sentence
in this room of living
as particles
of dust
drift
across
degrees of dark
and slags
of light.

This is the space
that some dream of,
a space measured
in the glow of situation
comedies beamed in
high-definition satellite.

This is the space
I could resent
—a space bound
by common fixtures:
dry pots of dumbcane,
lamps, ashtrays—

a space where
This is the American Earth
sleeps,
spine intact
in a jacket
sans illusions
of DNA.