

◇ Defenestration ◇

Volume II, Issue XII

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In the Museum of Natural History
by
Jayne Pupek

In the Museum of Natural History,
I trip over bone. On my knees,
I hunt through the brochure
hoping to find its identity.
Pterodactyl... long thin...
No...the raptor...

Suddenly, I'm apprehended
by a guide. She scowls,
points to the rulebook,
page 78, Section 3,
prohibits visitor
contact with exhibits.

"Someone else left the bone
in my path," I explain
as two security guards
hook my arms
and carry me down the aisle
where I fear chastisement,
corporal punishment,
huge fines.

Instead, I'm sent to the Department
of Taxidermy, drained of blood
and mounted on all fours.
The gilded letters above me read:
Homo erectus, female,
bending on hands and knees
displays her species' ineptitude.

the seven habits of highly effective graduate students
by
Megan Volpert

one generate mountains of paper
you will need a personal statement to get in here
you will need a thesis to get out of here
print outlines abstracts first drafts first revisions
final versions
of everything

do this double spaced with wide margins
in twelve point five font courier new
try a table of contents and a cover page
fill out scholarship applications write grant proposals
request a book a classroom a meeting
from the desk the department the dean
post minutes from the meeting
post grades outside the classroom
take copious notes on the book
use them to organize scholarly academic journal articles
use them to write reviews poems essays
performances

and if after all this you do not have enough paper
take your paper to kinko's and make photocopies

two complain
you have no money you are tired you are busy generating mountains of
paper
you have to check your e-mail too many times a day
your computer crashed and you hate going to the lab across campus
the young minds you are helping to mold came to you already too moldy
your students are smarter than you
your professors are dumber than you
your pet was throwing up all night your lover was throwing up all night
your car broke down your heat turned off your pipes are
leaking
you don't have time to go to that reading you owe the library money
you don't have money to go to that conference your meeting is a waste of
time
you are on a project a deadline a phone
which makes you in charge but approachable but busy
you said busy already
when someone asks you how you are do not say fine
list the three most mundane things you have to do during the week
in order from you are a bore to you are being ignored

and if after all this you do not have enough to complain about
ask people you don't like to be on your committee

three live in poverty
prices at kinko's are going up
interest rates are going up
too many days of ramen noodles brings you down
too few drink specials brings you down
there will be a lot of fees
fees for registration fees for parking
technology fees fitness center fees
student health services mental health services
there will be a lot of bills
bills for books bills for cell phone
grocery bills electricity bills
maintenance services pest control services
you will realize the phrase highly competitive stipend actually means
very insulting hourly wage
you will realize this is why later
the first job you are offered seems good enough to take
you will learn to go easy on the air conditioner
you will learn to buy generic in bulk on sale

and if after all this you still feel rich in spirit
remember your loans will come due nine months after graduation

four get a shtick
everyone has an ostentation a pretense a thing
be the instructor that brings your dog to class
be the student that relates everything back to nietzsche
be the boy who has a black belt in karate
be the girl who wears the spiked leather dog collar
be the token queer the token vegan the token jew the token
republican
be the one with a different hair color every week
be the one with a new tattoo every semester
be the one that watches every basketball game
be the one that actually used to play basketball
be the one that has outdated ideas be the one that has new fangled ideas

and if after all this you do not have a good enough shtick
steal one from a professor going on sabbatical or into retirement

five get a secret
secretly hate that people think you have a shtick
secretly hate you officemate
secretly lust after your officemate
have an affair with one of your professors have an affair with one of
your students
find a lump and go run tests find a sore and go get tested
wonder if you are gay wonder if you are pregnant
have an abortion a drug addiction an abnormal fetish
have a friend at kinko's who lets you print for free
have a mother you like to call every other day
have a family video membership exclusively to rent pornography

and if after all this you feel you have no secrets
wait until it gets out
you'll be devastated trust me

six have a coping mechanism
at northern universities this is called beer
at southern universities this is called bourbon
wine is a requirement in any part of the country
sample speed and opiates
until you are expert enough to prefer one over the other
smoke pot as often as possible
share all this with all your peers
until your department appoints you czar of hospitality
which means entertain idiots from far away at the department conference
without actually mentioning most of your coping mechanisms
get the biggest television you can't afford
and throw parties to watch random sporting events
get the biggest grill you can't afford
and act like you know how to use it
be like everyone's favorite semi-hip uncle
be obsessed with taking in a dozen old cats
be obsessed with spoiling your one puppy dog
obsessive compulsively clean your house or go shopping

and if after all this you still have trouble coping
remember there can be only one official alcoholic per department
so this may have to double unofficially as your secret

seven neuroses
this is what will happen
when your shtick grows stale
your secret gets around
your coping mechanism is failing
because you have no money to support it
and no time to support it
because you are buried under all your assignments
and you cannot complain about any of this
because you feel too guilty too paranoid too ambitious
get yourself a good psychiatrist
or use the crappy one at mental health services
since that's what you're paying fees for already

and if after all this you can convince yourself
these experiences build your character
exploit that idealism to generate bigger mountains of paper

A Trilogy of Poems Written Sometime in High School

**by
Simon Bradley**

Here is a trilogy of poems I wrote for my High School GCSE English Language original-writing coursework. I failed the course, but the teacher said she liked them. The pre-commentaries are meant to be included. The main purposes of these poems were to amuse, entertain, and ultimately piss off the examiner. I think the big fat U grade (that's the UK equivalent of an F) they gave me is proof that I was successful. Justification or what?

You're All Cunts

This poem is meant to subvert the expected conventions of the reader. Am I calling the reader a cunt, or is it a satirical dig at Western popular culture and, in turn, a dig at the form of poetry itself? No, I just think the word 'cunt' is a right laugh.

You're all cunts,
Especially you, cunt,
You fucking cunt,
You're just a stupid cunt,
You cunt.

You're a bigger cunt,
Than that cunt Jim Davidson,
And you are such a cunt,
You're a cunting cunt,
You cunt.

Cunt cunt cunt.
Fucking cunting cunt.
Cuntung fucking cunt.
Cuntung cuntung fuck.
You cunt.

Suck My Dick

This poem has many Japanese elements, following a loose syllable-structure and the reversal of certain phrases. It is a metaphor between a man's struggle between his own needs and his duty to society. You wanker.

Suck my dick,
Because you suck dick,
You dick-sucker,
Suck my dick.

Herpes

This poem is based on real-life experience. It's a harsh exposé on the cruel discrimination

which people with herpes must suffer every day of their lives. The dirty bastards.

Herpes is my favourite food,
I have it with my tea,
It looks like you've got scabies,
And tastes like fucking pee.

Thank you and I hope you got a right laugh out of these. Although, if any of the issues raised in these poems affect you, you can call our confidential helpline on 0800 991 7584. Unless you've got herpes. I've heard you can catch it over the phone these days, you sick bugger.

You know, quiet.
by
David Gaffney

The room he was given had seven wardrobes. Seven. At night the wardrobes oppressed him. Dark brooding figures shuffling closer to his bed, faces glowering out from the whorls of polished grain. The landlord wouldn't let him get rid of them. They were classic. Solid. So he had to think of a way to use them. The TV fitted into one, Hi Fi in another, cooking equipment in a third, and various bits and bobs in the rest. But he couldn't think of anything to do with the last one. Then one night he dragged his duvet into it and had the best night's sleep ever.

He decided to stay in the wardrobe. He would move in a radio, and would eat there too. Eventually he would get six more people to live in the other wardrobes. Because he was the last person to keep himself to himself.

God Dies Laughing: A Conversation with Broken Hammer
by
Jeremy Yeatts Hopkins

I had the opportunity today to have a sit-down with an old acquaintance of mine, Broken Hammer. This is the only name I have ever known him by. He works as an errand-boy in the world of international espionage, running odd jobs for various agencies and governments. He tells that there are no "super agents" as shown in entertainment media, only drones, soldiers and queens. Although I never asked him to admit his own station, I don't imagine they give a name like "Broken Hammer" to the drones.

The man looks modern in every way but possesses the aura and spirit of the black sheep descendant of an ancient and powerful bloodline, living on the lower end of a cardinal genetic stock. At this meeting (which, having recently received word of his death amidst complications in Eastern Europe, I can say with some confidence will go down as our last) we discussed the Death of God and his suggestion of one possible cause. We discussed this over a light brunch.

BH: I hate this. There's too much parsley; no longer a garnish but a distraction.

DBT: Indeed. Back on track, however...

BH: Which track?

DBT: The Death of God: was it of natural cause or brought about by foul play? I can't seem to make up my mind on this one.

BH: Which category would an accident fall under?

DBT: An accident? I must admit I hadn't considered the possibility. Well, I suppose it would depend upon the nature of the accident. Please expound.

BH: It could be anything.

DBT: For example?

BH: Well... What if he choked to death? Who would have the strength to perform the Heimlich maneuver on God himself? No one I can remember hearing about.

DBT: Yes, I suppose not. But I believe I shall require more insight into the mechanics of how this could happen before I can follow your metaphor.

BH: Picture, if you will: A hot dog, muffin, or sponge cake of unearthly proportion, He takes an especially large bite to finish it off. He is having trouble working it into a morsel compact enough to navigate His Esophagus.

DBT: You mean to suggest that even God can "bite off more than He can chew"?

BH: I don't see why not. So, He reaches for His Chalice. Empty! "Oh My," He thinks. Meanwhile, He, in His Omniscience, catches a glimpse of some young and particularly sinful human...

DBT: You are, I assume, utilizing our definition of sin as the very thought, whether held within or below perceivable consciousness, that a human's will could in some way shape God's reality as an alternative to living in accordance with what He has established; a sort of supreme presumption.

BH: Correct. This human is sitting in his apartment upon a chair. He wonders, having only recently become cognizant of the fact the Bible makes no actual mention of a particular individual known as "The Anti-Christ," if it is still possible that he could carry out those duties he had previously ascribed to this imaginary fellow, not least among these, bringing about the destruction of the world.

DBT: Ambitious, to the lad's credit.

BH: Quite.

DBT: Do you know this young man?

BH: Not as well as I'd like to. Anyway, back on the Throne, God stops chewing, stops everything; He hasn't seen this kind of presumption for some time. Now we both know that the key to humor is inconsistency, for what is funnier than the fool who considers himself a genius? The lamb who imagines himself a lion? Already close to vomiting in frustration with His Dinner, God tries desperately to suppress His Holy Laugh Reflex...to no avail. Amidst a maelstrom of righteously indignant laughter, the wad of only half-chewed food is sucked into His Pipes, and causes our Heavenly Father to pass.

DBT: I see. You have diverted my attention from my original purpose. Congratulations. I shall not only pay for our lunch, but I will give your idea more thought.

BH: Thanks for the brunch.

I lost a wonderful speaking companion in Broken Hammer. Few have done more to inspire thought in my own head. As I promised...

I believe he was right in saying that there is little more laughable than someone who thinks more highly of themselves than they should. If God at all agreed, His Sides must have been split like a Chinese skirt every time He peered over the edge, wiped the tears from His Eyes and took a look at His Children: insipid little apes wearing crowns made out of the bones of their ancestors, holding their dicks like scepters, proclaiming themselves gods because it rained when they wanted it to, howling at the top of their lungs, "Step aside, Sphinx! The jig is up!" I find Broken Hammer's hypothesis as viable an option as any to explain the mortal wounding of the Universal Jokester. As He said one of His most read books, "He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword." God died with a smile on his face. I can only hope the same can be said for all of us.

Bee Careful
by
John Borneman

"Pituitaries are not known for being tasty."

The speaker glared over her reading glasses at the small, quivering girl in a powder blue dress standing alone in the middle of the large auditorium stage.

On twelve-year-old Gretl Summers' left, crouched her opponent. To her right, the speaker sat behind a desk at the far side of the stage. The speaker's green hair complemented her hungry scowl.

Gretl looked forward again and almost fainted at the sight of all those eyes staring up at her out of the audience. A few out there hoped she would succeed. Many more salivated and hoped for failure. She lowered her head and bumped it on the microphone. It 'boompfed' in response. Someone in the back chuckled.

Gretl backed up a step and raised her head. In order to gain time, she asked the classic spelling bee 'stall' question.

"Would you please tell me the origin of the word?"

The speaker pushed her glasses back up her nose, consulted a paper on the desk in front of her and responded.

"Sol System. Earth language. Latin."

"Thank you." A Pause. "Pituitaries. P--I--T--U--I--T--A--R--I--E--S"

The audience whooped and whistled and snorped and snarled. Her rival hung his heads and took a step backwards.

"Very good, Gretl. You are correct. Since Glog 23 did not spell 'pituitaries' correctly, you must spell one more word to win. Ready?"

Gretl shyly smiled. She nodded politely toward the speaker. "Yes, Ma'am."

"Good. Please spell, 'Spr'zng ehg^lfzcvkful.'"

Talking Hedge
by
Jon Alan Carroll

He is a giant. He's witnessed thousands of years of human history. He is a Redwood, and we interviewed this stately giant at his home in northern California.

When did you first decide to become a tree?

TOWERING REDWOOD:

How does it feel to be 10,000 years old?

TOWERING REDWOOD:

Where do you get your ideas?

TOWERING REDWOOD:

--Excerpt from Talking With Trees, a collection of extremely unpublished interviews.

The Panther
by
Ryan Nemeth

Donna,

I know you're upset with me for leaving you, but it's something I have to do. Trust me, it's not you—it's me. You're great. You're the best girl I ever met. You're funny, smart, athletic—just perfect. You're all I could ever hope for. There is nothing about you I would change. Absolutely nothing. Ok, maybe one thing. But it's not a big deal, really. Here it goes:

Sometimes, when I have day dreams, you're in them. We'll be somewhere, like the Old West. You know, back in cowboy times. We're a crime fighting team. The town loves us. And we'll be busting up a bank robbery or something, trying to catch a really sinister crook. Cornelius Von Dillinger comes to mind (or as the fictional townsfolk in my day dreams refer to him as, The Panther). He was the most recent one, anyway. He had just robbed the town bank, and we chased him to Old Otis' Gold Mine. Not the haunted one, the other one. It's just south of the Sunshine Acres Cactus orchard (right next to Mayor Plinkton's family cemetery). By the way, I have enclosed a map of Hamilton County, the area that my fantasies take place in, with this letter—I thought that might help. So, we were just about to catch The Panther—victory was so close I could taste it. I'm the renegade deputy with a burning passion for justice, and you're my clever but absent-minded sidekick. Mostly you're there to make witty remarks when we catch bad guys or after we blow-up a rail road with dynamite (to derail hijacked postal trains). Well, there we were: we almost had that son of a gun Cornelius hogtied. He was stuck in a dead end in one of the mine shafts, and all we had to do was block the only two escape routes. I was on the southern tunnel and you were supposed to be watching the northern one. But, like always, you got distracted and the infamous Panther got away and went on to rob every bank within 200 miles of our town.

It's little things like that that get me really irritated. We could've stopped a legendary Old West bank robber, but you thought making shadow puppets in the mine shaft was a more pressing matter. Or maybe you just didn't care about stopping The Panther. Maybe it didn't occur to you that the money he took from the bank was all of my imaginary friends' and families' fake life savings. Well, I'm sorry, but it's exactly that kind of behavior that makes me realize I could be with someone else. Someone who would be a better Honorary Deputy in my frequent and extremely intricate daydreams about the Old West. That is why I'm leaving you. Also, your friend Margaret told me you peed in my house plants.

John

Darwin's Turtle
by
S.E. Diamond

Darwin's tortoise turns 173 years young

GOLD COAST, Australia (CNN)--Harriet, a giant tortoise believed by some experts to be the oldest living creature on Earth, celebrated her 173rd birthday Friday at an Australian zoo. Harriet was given a serenade of "Happy Birthday" from local schoolchildren, and zookeepers brought her colorful flowers and a cake to celebrate her big day. She promptly ate the flowers. Genetic testing on Harriet showed that she was probably born in 1830. Local lore has it that at the age of five, she was taken from the Galapagos Islands to London by none other than famed naturalist Charles Darwin.

You make my grandma seem young. Your skin is harder than my grandma's, but you have more mystery. My Dad is a scientist and he took me to see you. My Dad has thick heavy brown glasses, and it was a long plane ride to get to you. I ate lots of peanuts and drank ginger ales. Dad read books.

We were coming for you Harriet, because you were brought half way around the world to us. Dad's scientist friend arranged for you to come from Australia to England for a special science show. Dad said you used to live on the Galapagos islands. You must miss your palm trees, but Dad said the ocean is great in Australia as long as you wear nylons to protect your legs from the poisonous jellyfish.

During your trip you stayed at the science petting zoo. Since my Dad was in the business, we got to go backstage and pet you. A tall lady with red hair took us beyond the paper turtle, past the lines of kids, back towards your cage. Dad brought his science camera. It was really big, and I was embarrassed walking around with him and his big camera. It was so big he had to carry a stand for it. The lady told me that the other kids had to see Harriet from behind glass. It was to protect Harriet, she said, because here in England people have more diseases than in Australia. It's probably from the lack of sun. There's goodness in the warmth down there.

You looked cold in your cage. And I don't know why there was rat food in your bowl. At home, Dad has lots of rats in our garage, in cages for experiments, and they like their food, but the information sign said you like to eat flowers. Haven't they given you any flowers?

I sit down on the cement next to your cage. The tops of my fingers fit into holes in the chain link fence all around you. I wanted you to tell me things that only an old turtle could, like what color the dinosaurs were. Dad said you're not that old, but he laughed and said you could tell me about 19th century occurrences like slavery in the West Indies. The guide lady added that slavery was bad. Her hair was the color of the peanut wrappers from the plane, but her accent made me feel warm. She cleared her throat slightly and asked my Dad if he, being a scientist, thought Harriet was really Darwin's turtle. My Dad was looking down at me when he told her that the specimen was a tortoise, and it was pretty unlikely. Dad said Darwin's real pet tortoise was rumored to have been killed in a bombing in 1943, and this 'Harriet' was a replacement, a symbol for the pseudo science aficionados. I hate my Dad

sometimes. Harriet got mad too. She turned towards him, and bit down hard on my ponytail. When my Dad finally pried open her jaws, her mouth was full of my hair.

Literary Illusions
by
Victor Schwartzman

An author, labouring under the delusion that he knew how others would read and understand what he was creating, decided one day to ask the delusion to leave, given he believed that he was not deluded to begin with.

"Certainly not," it replied. "I've been here many years, I know what I have, unlike you, and I'm quite comfortable."

Worried, the author enrolled in Universities and after being awarded Degrees asked if he had not Education enough to rid himself of his delusion.

Responded the delusion, "Thanks for the company!"

Frightened, the author tried Religion. He studied all of the world's great religions until he asked if he had not Religion enough to rid himself of his delusion.

The delusion replied, "We could use an ice machine!"

As a last effort, the author tried what he had avoided the most: Love. He found a woman and allowed himself to become a project and he listened to her and did his share of the housework and then he asked if he had not Love enough to rid himself of his delusion.

There was no response.

The original delusion was too busy with the second round of the bridge tournament.

Tender & Succulent
by
Erin Bryant



He found that beneath her hardened exterior, she was tender
and succulent.

Spiritus frugi
by
R. Roberts-Mesta



This is, believe it or not, a carrot. In the carrot world, this particular specimen is suffering from bad "carrot karma," and has transformed into something... weird.

Says the photographer: "I love grilled hotdogs. When I look at the carrot I see an orange hotdog in an orange bun. Yummy! It also reminds me of some other things but I shan't say which things in polite company."

Contributor Biographies

Jayne Pupek holds an MA in Psychology and lives near Richmond, VA. Her fiction and poetry have appeared in several online and print publications. "Primitive," her chapbook of poetry, is available from Pudding House Press. Her first novel is scheduled for release Spring, 2006 by Algonquin at Chapel Hill. She can be contacted at JaynePupek@aol.com

Megan A. Volpert is a performance poet from Chicago currently tempting fate at graduate school in Baton Rouge. She prefers making art in response to art, never drinks coffee, and wouldn't know a scholarly academic journal article if it bit her on the ass. Go to her website—www.madelynhatter.com—for more of her work, complete bio, photos and sound bites.

Simon Bradley lives in the city of Salford, in darkest North West England. This town is so primitive, the main leisure activities are the outdated practices of bear-baiting, witch-burning and rugby league. Simon himself lives alone, although he has children. Well, that's the rumour round the estate, anyway. He has always wanted to write, but has only recently found a pen.

David Gaffney wrote this poem on the back of an airline ticket, along with the words "there's a bomb on the plane" and a picture of a smiley face with a fuse.

Jeremy Yeatts Hopkins is 24 years old and resides in Lynchburg, VA. He writes as nothing more than a hobby, with no real aspirations of success or pretensions of future acclaim for his novel that would be finished except that he "just needs to really sit down and get crackin'." He has at one point or another daydreamed about becoming a Nobel Laureate, but has finally realized that he would rather just be the next Alfred Nobel.

John Borneman lives under my deck. No, seriously.

Jon Alan Carroll is one of the leading lights of the controversial New American Romanticism Movement. His first chapbook, *Yes, There Will Be A Sunday Morning*, drew a mixed response from the critics. *Wide-Eyed Innocence* called it "heartfelt, sincere, really neat," while *Snark Monthly* dismissed it as "love poesy of exquisite sappiness." Carroll's next collection, *Feelings*, is forthcoming next fall from Love Disease Press.

Ryan Nemeth is originally from Cleveland, Ohio. His favorite dog is Gizmo, his Shih Tzu. Swimming is most likely one of his favorite things to do. He hopes that his classmates and teachers from IO are all kicking ass. Internet. Contact Ryan at Nemethrp@xavier.edu.

S.E. Diamond has an irrational love of dogs and the television show *Psychic Detectives*. S.E. is about to complete an MFA from the Otis College of Art and Design, and works for the Slamdance Film Festival in Los Angeles.

Victor Schwartzman says: "I have been writing since I was able to, and at 59 I'm finally sending my stuff out, having recovered from the many literary rejections of my teenaged years (I kept every single one, Freud could tell me why if he'd just get that damned cigar out of his mouth). Frankly, that someone other than myself will have the opportunity to read my stuff is both amazing and a little embarrassing. Normal bio stuff would add that I am married, have two kids, and work as a Human Rights Officer, but I'm not normal, so why should my bio be, and is a bio bee like a honey bee?"

Readers disturbed enough to like Victor's stuff should check out <http://weaklyherald.tripod.com>. The site features ten early chapters of a graphic novel about a community newspaper. Readers can download the chapters for free 'cause no one has said they'll pay for them.

Erin Bryant is a journalism graduate student who dreams of one day ridding the world of the blight upon humanity known as Katie Couric. Her interests include art, 400-count Egyptian linen, and Fabio's well-oiled pectoral muscles—in short, the finer things in life. She excels at procrastination, consuming large quantities of string cheese, and writing angsty, self-loathing essays about dreamy broad-backed boys who don't know she exists. Her life goal is to one day acquire a hard-bodied Latin pool boy who answers to "Alejandro" and has a natural predilection for thigh-skimming loincloths.

R. Roberts-Mesta is a home-schooling mom, photographer, Reiki practitioner, wife, and writer. She and her family recently relocated to the cornfields of a town several hundred miles south of the Mason-Dixon line.