

◇ Defenestration ◇

Volume III, Issue III

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Greatness
by
Gerald So

I moved into an office with
Greatness four years ago;
he was on leave at the time.

When he returned,
we came in on the same days,
but I set my hours around his.

When I studied under Greatness,
he ripped my work to shreds
almost joyfully,

and no one believed
or acknowledged
he could be a prick.

As colleagues, we smiled
or waved warmly enough
but never talked

until he asked,
"Can I have the office
on the days I'm here?"

Reduced Speed Ahead
by
Raud Kennedy

His bottle of e.d. pills rolls across the dash
as they speed through the turn
in his new red Porsche.

His heavy 'girlfriend' has frosted hair
instead of gray.

Middle age is a washed out memory
in the rear view mirror
as the Grim Reaper
leans over the backs of their seats
and glances at their speed.

A Brace of Nun Poems

by
Roddy Williams

NUNS VII

hear the gnashing of the nuns, toothy nuns.
what a dark flamenco class their mealtime has become
as they gnash and gnaw and nibble
as they salivate and dribble
as they chew into their sausages and buns.
they will snap and bite and tear
at a chocolate éclair
with a chomping and a snapping
and a clicking and a clacking
like the safety-catches of a thousand guns.
it's the nuns nuns nuns nuns nuns nuns nuns,
it's the crashing and the gnashing of the nuns.

hear the thumping of the nuns, jumping nuns
leaping round the nunnery in threes and twos and ones.
hear them hop and shout "yahoo"
sometimes one leg, sometimes two
like an angry army beating up some drums.
hear them stomp and tap and clomp
tiptoe, pitterpat and romp
with a banging and a clapping,
booming, thundering and slapping,
forming trills and thump-arpeggios and runs.
it's the nuns nuns nuns nuns nuns nuns nuns,
it's the stomping and the clomping of the nuns.

hear the snoring of the nuns, sleeping nuns
the growling of the thunder as the hour of midnight comes
as they fall into their dozes
hear them rattle through their noses
all the howling and the growling from their lungs.
there is moaning, there is purring,
there is groaning, there is gurring,
there are snorts and rolls and grumbles
whistles, snuffles, clacks and rumbles;
steamy hissy bouts of roaring through the gums
it's the nuns nuns nuns nuns nuns nuns nuns,
it's the roaring and the snoring of the nuns.

NUNS V

in everton, luton and barkside
there were nuns who had turned to the dark side.
the pope sent in teams

who were blasted with beams.
he was forced to resort
to unheard-of extremes
like issuing edicts that
lightsabre themes
be included in all local sermons

(even by welsh priests
and belgians and germans;
rhodri's and hercul's
and hans's and herman's)

a battle was fought
just outside baron's court
where the nuns deployed lasers
and deathrays and phasers,
some wookies from hull
and (so it was thought)
a robot called gort

the hideous light from
the nuns' evil rays
could be seen in tall houses in
putney and hayes.
the afterglow, some said,
had lasted for days.

as was expected, the evil nuns died
and those on the evil cusp
went back inside,
said they were sorry, gave back the guns
and went back to being
just light-sided nuns.

Scatological Sonnetish
by
ZebraZebraZebra

- I am a leaf of paper where the dim
recurring toilet scratches at my ears
and will not cease

- this round unlovely whim
of plumbers' lunch-breaks, squatting on the years
and alternately spitting back our gifts
or finding shit palatable and yum

- it will not cease! and now the hissing drifts
along the walls -

petitioning my bum,
the wide almighty Crapper sends the rolls
of toilet tissue roaring down the weeks
and with a practiced porcelain he bowls
me over!

sits me down and

SPREADS

MY

CHEEKS

- and I, a leaf of paper where the poo
sticks thickest -

find it time for my debut!

Miranda Wolcott
by
Carol Corke

Miranda Wolcott was only eleven years old when her parents moved house, packing the furnishings, the towels, the little vibrating ceramic figurines that had come from Europe after the Balkan War.

Sitting atop a barrel filled with pill box hats, her legs dangling, patent leather shoes scuffed at the toes, she wondered if she could fit inside one of the boxes that held the collection of dad's neck ties with naked ladies painted on their linings, or if she would be folded flat and laid neatly between table cloths which had been pressed by the mangle.

Therefore, she was mildly surprised to find herself ferried by car to the large airport that sent planes in a steady stream over her house each day.

Mother gave her a new white hanky with lace fringe and her initials embroidered in silk threads of purple and turquoise, before hastily, clumsily kissing her left cheek. Dad shook her hand briskly, insisting it had been both an honor and a pleasure. Idly, Miranda scratched her crotch through the crisp fabric of her ruffled gingham dress.

The tarmac beneath her feet was mottled gray with interesting patterns Rorschached randomly about. Most appeared to represent a variety of circus animals engaged in vigorous acts of coitus; one looked very much like a tall woman contorting her torso in an effort to lick her own butt.

Looking up from the entertainment spread upon the ground, Miranda watched as the back of her mother's chartreuse suit disappear into the portal gaping in the ribcage of the plane, straining with all her might to hear, just one more time, the clicking of stylish high heeled shoes.

At length, the last remnant of jet fuel evaporated completely, erasing all evidence of contrail from the plane carrying her parents away to points unknown.

"You the new guy?" growled a man in overalls, a grease stained bandana tied around his head. Not waiting for an answer, he added, "I'm Joe. I'm the guy what runs this joint." Wheezing in what Miranda assumed was a self-deprecating laugh, Joe handed her a socket wrench. Walking past an array of metal air plane parts, Joe asked, "You smoke?"

Rejection Letter
by
Edward Livingston-Blade

Deep in narrow winding catacombs damp with the sweat of underground places, Roderick the hero crept forward with sword cocked behind him and one cautious hand extended into the dark. Something breathed up ahead, and Roderick hoped to see it before it saw him—but his torch was left in a chimera's belly and he was getting by largely by his fingers.

A disturbance before him—the steady breathing stopped and there was a shuffling sound. He realized he'd disturbed the sleep of something. A spark... a flame... a glow... a lantern raised at the end of a hairy arm as thick as both Roderick's thighs. "Who's there?" half-growled a guttural voice in the retreating gloom. The light chased back shadows until Roderick could clearly see the ogre—and the ogre could clearly see him.

Split and jagged teeth, rotting and black, and a lower jaw that jutted out like a bird-perch—its tiny eyes were fully dilated in the subterranean night. "Oho," it grumbled with a sound like mountains scraping together. "What poor sport that is, little bite, trying to sneak up on a man while he's sleeping."

"You're no man, monster," Roderick said and drove forward sword first.

The lantern hit the ground, glass shattering, rolling, casting crazy shadows, but didn't snuff. Once more mostly blind, Roderick and the ogre conducted their battle with the fumbling ill-grace of a pair of 14 year old virgins hot for each other under the blankets.

With a deadweight thud like a bale of wet hay on a flagstone floor the pair landed prone in the little circle of broken light next to the cot where the lantern had rolled. Roderick clung adamantly to the hilt of his sword and twisted, teeth bared and grinding, the blade driven through the ogre's skull from under its chin to out its forehead. It cursed something that would've been unprintable—fortunately its jaws were pinned shut—and died.

Roderick planted a foot in the ogre's face and wrenched his blade loose, stood and wiped the worst of the gore from his tunic. He wasn't particularly distressed. It had been that kind of day. And he had light again—he picked up the broken lantern, shook loose the last of the shattered glass, kicked the ogre's arm out of his way and stalked out the opposite doorway hoping for few drafts.

In a dozen yards the tunnel curved and opened into an underground amphitheater illuminated by a hundred bonfires. Roderick shadowed his eyes in the sudden brightness.

All across the great expanse were camped knights and adventurers, blood-spattered and impatient-looking, waiting for... what? Tunnel mouths like the one he'd emerged from yawned all around, and even as he watched, a ragged scoundrel with a rapier and a feathered hat stumbled into the light. The thief looked around, and toward the center of the cavern his eyes began to rise. Roderick followed his gaze to see what he had not before.

A great irregular minaret of stone rose needle-like near the cavern's center. It must have been hollow... on a balcony near its top stood a princess with cascading golden tresses and skin like blue-veined marble. She looked out over the huddled crowd without seeming to

look actually at it.

Roderick felt a tugging at his sleeve and looked down into the upturned face of a hunched-over, shabby monk. "Sir, your name is Roderick, isn't it?"

Roderick, stunned by it all, nodded dumbly.

"Yes, sir, I thought you were. I have your letter here already. We've been waiting." The monk shoved a folded page into his hands and disappeared back into the crowd.

In a confused haze Roderick, moving golem-like, unfolded the letter and read:

Dear Mr. Roderick

Thank you for your submission; I appreciate your effort to rescue me.

I liked what you did with the ogre but it only works as an action sequence and doesn't reveal the kind of character depth I am looking for. Thus you have not been selected to be my prince. Thank you for coming by and for your interest in saving me.

Best,

The Princess

Further Translations from the Corporate
by
Jon Alan Carroll

In Our Company, We Admire Focus and Drive.
We don't practice them, we just admire them.

Innovation Is Our Real Business.
Change is bad and could wake up the whole staff.

Quality First!
Just after the convenience of our employees.

Four Generations of Quality.
Pretending to Care...Since 1925.

Without Our Customers, We'd Have No Reason to Exist.
Customers are our least important interruption.

The Customer Is Always Right.
Not only are our customers frequently wrong, they are usually insane. And ugly, too.

Perfection Is the Goal, But We Settle for Excellence.
Our only question: Is this going to require effort or expense?

We Are the Industry's Thought Leaders.
There's nothing more tedious than thinking. We prefer video solitaire.

Our Employees Are One of Our Most Important Assets.
Not at these wages, pal.

AAW and Me, or What Jill Soloway Will Never Understand by **Tom Becker**

I recently read a short story entitled, "Courtney Cox's Asshole". In it, author Jill Soloway repeatedly misrepresents and belittles people and professionals in the AAW (aesthetic anal whitening) community. While this story may be "funny" to some and made the "author" a success, AAW is a serious and legitimate subculture and does not deserve to be laughed at. Because of the popularity of Miss Soloway's article, I have taken it upon myself to present our side of the story and give your readers a view of AAW—from the inside.

A few years ago, I started feeling self-conscious about the color palette of my anus, so I started seeing a psychologist. She specializes in genital body issues—labia size, AAW, and scrotal loft—and I genuinely felt we were making progress.

Then one night a few months ago I was watching "Desperate Housewives" and Nicollette Sheridan came on. The show is one of my triggers, but I thought it was safe to watch.

I was wrong.

The thought kept racing through my mind, "She's got to have the pinkest anus, ever! Your anus isn't pink—your anus is UGLY!" I broke down and spent the whole night into the next morning bent over in front of a full-length mirror, shouting at my anus.

Just as I started to lose consciousness, I caught sight of my package of Crest Whitening Strips. Maybe it was the blood rushing to my head, but they took on an airy glow, and a voice somewhere said "bleach". I thought, "I'm seeing this shrink three times a week, and what has it gotten me?" I broke up with my shrink over the phone the next morning.

I found the web site for a doctor in Chicago that specializes in a controversial two-day waxing/whitening program. The side-effects are minimal and mostly neurological. In some rare cases—and they are rare, mind you—over-bleaching can occur. The anus and gluteal crevice look as white as a fish's belly. Certain wags have dubbed it the "skunk" effect but the preferred nomenclature is over bleaching (OB). It's troubling for most people, but for folks in the AAW community, it's worth the risk. In fact, the skunk effect is revered by certain members of the Yakuza and a person with OB can make a great living in Japan.

I figured I've wasted enough time with trying to face down my inner demons. Wanting a cute, pink, naked asshole isn't an illness—it's a way of life. People like Jill Soloway can poke fun, but if you're not into it, you just wouldn't understand. I flew to Chicago (you can't really drive long distances after the procedure) and had it done on a Thursday and Friday. I couldn't be happier.

So, that's why I know so much about AAW. It has been a long, hard road, but I've learned so much. If you can listen to your inner voice, no matter what the outside world says, and really trust in yourself, you will be happy. That's just what I've been doing, and I plan to do it for the rest of my life.

First stop—Tokyo.

Four horsemen of the apostrophe

by
Tom Conoboy

It has been reported that the Oxford comma may be about to become extinct. The last known sighting was in a reprint of the works of Alfred, Lord, and Tennyson, and doubt reigns as to whether this was, in any case, merely a typographical, historical, and literary error.

A spokesman for Pedants Anonymous said: "I think the last time one was seen was back in the days of bakelite radios, ration books, and black, and white televisions."

Aldus Manutius Jnr., editor of "Inferred and Implied Fusspottery", concurred. "I think what is happening is that the Oxford commas are being kidnapped to be re-used in completely spurious plural form's. It's diabolical. The perpetrators should be hanged by their possessive pronouns and have rotten tomato's, fish, and chip's pelted at them."

Concern has also been raised over the long-term viability of the semi-colon. Mister Manutius continued: "Once, it had a rich and varied life, it was used in long, compound sentences, it was used to link two independent clauses with no connecting words, this helped to make the meaning clearer. They were seen the length and breadth of the country, in Lands' End, Cornwall, John o Groat's, Highland, and every town, hamlet, and village, in, between."

His hand's shaking and sobbing, he continued, "It is inevitable that the colon will follow suit. What will happen is this, it will be replaced by a sloppy, comma. We will completely forget that colon's have four uses, to introduce list's, separate related sentence's, commence quotations' or introduce appositives. And lets face it, even I don't know what those last one's are any more. It make's you weep."

At this point, Mr Manuti's began to break down, much like his grammer. And speling. And, like, everything man. He raised a hypothetical glass to the influence's in his life, his parents, Big Bird and Joseph Conrad. Much good they did him, he thought. Issuing a clarion call for clarity he continued "woman without her man is helpless. And you cant say clearer than that."

"I would question that," replied his wife. "Except I gather there are question mark's about the future of question mark's because of the idiotic use of the Australian raised inflection at the end of sentence's? Suggests question mark's where there shouldn't be? Render's them meaningless?"

"Whatever" said sadly Aldus Manutius.

In a final blow for grammarians, pedant's, and bureaucrats' everywhere, it has been reported that; because of the spread of chatrooms: speech mark's are also on the verge of extinction.

Mr Manutius was unable to comment directly, but is reported to be mad, furiou's, and livid.

Man of La Mancha
by
Jeremiah Stansbury

Text by Luigi Fairbanks



When we get paintings like this piece by Jeremiah Stansbury, I like to wander around Defenestration HQ and ask everyone what their initial impression is upon viewing the piece. So here were a few reactions:

Andrew: "It actually reminds me of you, Luigi. Remember that time in Scotland when we went to that lake in the middle of the night, and I said, 'Don't get too close to any green horses,' and you didn't listen and got near one anyway? Remember how I had to save you from those kelpies? They gave me a medal after that. Remember that medal?"

Eileen: "PONIES!"

Genevieve: "That person's going to cut the sun in two. And then, candy will come out. I speak, of course, of the piñata theory of the universe. Would you care for a pamphlet?"

Haratron: "I never understood art. I never understood horses, either. What I do understand is electronics and pornography, and this reminds me of neither."

Bigfoot: "I see the Man of La Mancha."

Chinese Food Anyone?
by
Leslie Lee



Warning: The above picture contains a graphic depiction of eyeballs, possibly of human origin, stuffed inside one of those Chinese carryout cartons. There is a frightening lack of noodles in said carryout carton. If anyone has any objections to viewing either (possibly) human eyeballs and/or very little in the way of noodles, it is recommended that said individuals pretend they didn't see the above image.

Contributor Biographies

Gerald So wanted to be an author since age 13, when he envied a classmate whose book was published in the school library. He's glad to have lived long enough to see his own work in print, and will continue to write as long as he breathes.

Raud Kennedy insists that his poem in this issue is in no way autobiographical.

Roddy Williams lives with his partner in London's Notting Hill, where they are founder members of AC/DC, the Anti Celine Dion Campaign. 'Down With the Anti-Cher T-Shirts' are available, as are 'Wynona Ryder Went Shopping and All She Stole For Me was This Lousy T-Shirt' shirts.

ZebraZebraZebra is not the author's real name. Her real name is ZebraZebraZebra, but is pronounced not like the animal but with a slight inflection of the Es and a dragging out of the Zs, as well as a harsh glottal stop after the Bs. Anyway, you can read more of her work here: <http://zebrazebrazebra.deviantart.com>

Carol Corke says: "It has recently been discovered that the seedy dark underbelly of Vegas actually is feathered with soft downy fur. Yes, folks, it's true. This Detroit born and raised daughter of a French horn minstrel has stroked the cuddly stuff with her own work calloused hands. Though the beast smokes stogies in unapologetic glee while robbing grandmother's of their life savings as young Johnny is seduced to the pleasures of straight Vodka on the rocks, it does indeed, have its tender charms. The stroking of said silky underbelly induces a state of unparalleled euphoric bliss in which memories go missing along with requested bios."

Edward Livingston-Blade quit a very cushy job as a local area network administrator for the state of California, giving up a truly absurd pay rate in order to work on a swords and sorcery novel full-time. Thirty months later the end is still not in sight and therapy has proven only moderately successful. The project's home is at www.milosworld.org... there's no actual narrative there yet because Mr. Livingston-Blade still hopes to make some money off this silly idea but has shifted focus to writing a smattering of shorter pieces so in the future, anything is possible...

Jon Alan Carroll is smarter than he looks, or so he claims.

Tom Becker is an aspiring author. Here's how to make his favorite cookies:

Ingredients:

3 cups flour
1/4 tsp salt
1/2 tsp baking powder
1 cup sugar
1 cup butter
1 egg
2 tsp lemon juice
1 tsp vanilla

-pre-heat oven to 400 degrees

- sift flour, baking powder, and salt
- cream butter with salt
- gradually add sugar until light and fluffy
- mix in egg, lemon juice, and vanilla until blended
- add in flour, baking powder, and salt until blended
- roll out and cut into shapes
- bake for 10-12 minutes
- transfer cookies immediately to a cooling rack
- frost
- (homemade frosting = powdered sugar, butter, a touch of vanilla, and milk. Blend to desired consistency)"

Tom Conoboy wrote this with the sole purpose of driving spellcheck programs and editing staff out of their tiny little minds.

Jeremiah Stansbury is a prolific artist who is currently being prolific in art. His artwork has been on display in numerous areas in the Memphis, Tennessee area and on that magical technological marvel known as the internet. In fact, you can see more of his work here: <http://www.absolutearts.com/clipinpics/>.

Luigi Fairbanks is an unacknowledged staff writer at *Defenestration*. His favorite color is applemarine.

Leslie Lee is a Canadian Princess with more money than the richest Tsars of Tsarasia. You can see more of her work at <http://pictures-and-pencils.deviantart.com>. Admission is free.