

◇ Defenestration ◇

Volume III, Issue XI

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Ladrón
by
John Calvin Hughes

When you decide to rob the girls' school,
you cut the cord off your hair dryer.
It looks like a gun in the waistband
of your pants. It pokes but you feel pretty
confident about it. Girls crouch
in the halls as you pass,
breaking their crayolas
under their skirts, ducking
their heads tornado drill fashion.
You feel dangerous
and buss the headmistress
boldly on the bosom
when you take her purse.
Somehow your shoes
have gotten soaked
and you squish
down the hall looking
for a door out. The hair
dryer has slipped uncomfortably
in your pants, making
your stride something of a limp. Fearing
permanent injury you
pull down your trousers
and grope for the dryer.
At the head of the stairs you stumble
over your cuffs, grab
at the banister,
but fall headlong
down hard stone steps.
You've lost the purse
but what the heck? There's
a red exit
sign ahead and you're
going for it: the bell
rings and the hall
seethes with girls.
No one is as tall
as you.

Haiku in Praise of Australia's Highest Mountain
by
John Gooley

O Kosciusco! O big mountain!
Really fucking big and cloudy!

Darling Blood Oranges
by
Kristine Ong Muslim

The orange sun orbs
of fresh blood oranges
are despicable.

They are sweet as the
office boss's favorite tart,
mindless as a pair

of perfect ass with
no body attached.
They fill the fruit bowls

with an annoying sheen,
like the blank faces
of drunk husbands

home to their wives
dreaming day after day
of spinsterhood.

And in death, all blood
oranges retaliate as their
rinds clog the drain.

Death 'n' Stuff
by
Mike Wiegand

"Cremains" she calls it
This box of gray dust,
The floury residue of Dad
Maybe if I add water he will bake back.
"I'll bring the cremains out," she says
Drifting off like smoke with my check.
The cremains are in back, in a plastic bag
Inside a cardboard box.
I recall a long-gone classmate
Whose exhausted muffler shuffle-off
Was announced on a post-it note in her garage.
I collect my receipt and claim my prize.
The box is in a shiny bag with handles.
I am a happy holiday shopper
Rushing home with my treasures
> the Great Eternal Shopping Mall
Me and my "cremains."
Maybe tonight we'll fix "Dead-a-Roni,"
That cemetery treat
The perfect reward
After a busy day
At the cadaver boutique.

**The Captain Agrees to an Interview on the Eve of the Release of his
First Album in 10 Years, *Songs of Leadbelly and Guthrie*
by
Corey Mesler**

*"Folk music...it isn't simple. It's weird, man, full of legend, myth, Bible, and ghosts."
--Bob Dylan*

Creole Myers: Welcome. It's good to have you back.

Captain: Thanks, Creole, it's good to be here. It's good to be anywhere.

Creole Myers: Yes, I—

Captain: So, dig, like this is live radio, right?

Creole Myers: Right. So, how are you preparing for the big day tomorrow? Any set routine? I know you're doing the big promo party at Planet Hollywood. I'm sure our listeners want to know—

Captain: I used to have a routine. It's been so long.

Creole Myers: What did you do first thing this morning?

Captain: Took a shit. Ate some breakfast, you know that trip.

CM: Breakfast is a trip?

C: Everything's a trip, man. It's all illusion.

CM: Eating is illusion? Eggs are an illusion?

C: Scrambled eggs are an illusion. Poached are closer to some semblance of reality. Hard-boiled eggs, don't even get me started.

CM: So, Captain. All these years—

C: It's a long road, brother, with many a winding turn.

CM: The road to—

C: —Continuation. The Road to Continuation.

CM: I was about to say, all the years between. What has the Captain been doing?

C: Living, brother.

CM: That is, what creatively?

C: Living is creative, man. You dig? I mean, living, breathing in and then breathing out. I could breathe out twice in a row. See. You dig? It's all choices. Choices are creative.

CM: I see. So you've been breathing—

C: Right. In. And out.

CM: And to make ends meet?

C: Do they meet, brother? In a circle? Is it a circle? Or is it parallel lines, you know, like a railroad track? Do they meet? They seem to meet.

CM: Um, right.

C: So, dig, that's the road then. The parallel lines that seem to meet. That's called the vanishing point, right?

CM: I see. And—

C: Thas your trip, right? Those lines. Which line are you on?

CM: I'm a little lost here.

C: We're all lost. All a little lost. A little hung out on the line.

CM: Ok, so, you've been living, and creating, and breathing. All this without—

C: Without human intervention. God stuff, you dig?

CM: Without Tennille.

C: Who, man?

CM: You don't want to talk about her?

C: I'll talk about anyone you want, man. Tell me about her. I'll not talk about no one, right?

CM: She was your partner. Your—

C: I know who she is, man. I'm saying, you tell me about her, that is, if you're interested in her.

CM: I think my readers are more interested in what you have to say.

C: Ask me about Leadbelly, man.

CM: So, your past, you're not interested—

C: I ain't got no past. Dig?

CM: So, you're against—

C: Whatever you got, man, I'm against it all. All the isms.

CM: Like grammarism.

C: I don't—

CM: Forget it. Look. Toni Tennille. We have to address this.

C: Ok, man. Ok.

CM: You and she—were—are—

C: This is starting well.

CM: Ok, let's change gears, come back to that. Why Leadbelly? Why Guthrie? Why now?

C: And why me, right? Because, Creole, man, it all comes back to beginnings, humble beginnings. I mean, I don't have a message. I don't have a better way to communicate than anyone else. I know, I know, I had my popularity, my large audience who look to me for wisdom, but that's all chimera, right? It's all like this emptiness surrounded by noise, dig?

CM: I'm not—

C: But, when you strip it back, take it back to square one, to the naked self, there it is. You know? I mean, there IT is.

C:M Leadbelly and Guthrie.

C: Right—right—that's what I'm saying.

CM: Ok.

C: So, now, it's just me there, naked, the songs and the man.

CM: But not your songs.

C: They're everyone's songs, baby. They're your songs too. These are things that once existed in the ozone and were plucked from it by these jubal messengers, Mr. Ledbetter and Mr. Guthrie. They would tell you, the song is a thing of air, it was there all times. They were only the conduits.

CM: And now you're another conduit, a fresh conduit?

C: Yeah, yeah, that's it. I'm just channeling these songs, you dig? You know, Tao, right? What Tao means? It's that, man. It's all just me, you, now, the music—

CM: And the audience.

C: Sure, sure. Gotta have my audience. But, I mean, ultimately I'm doing this for The Captain, dig? I'm doing this because I have to. Dig, it's like sex. Anyone can get off by themselves, you know, right? But you need—you need—that other thing, right?

CM: Do you feel disconnected from your past? Are you consciously disconnecting?

C: I am disconnected. That's just the truth. Read up on it, man. Read the sacred texts, The Tibetan Book of the Dead, The Upanishads, Jonathan Livingston Seagull...

CM: You're disconnected from people.

C: I am connected to people, man. The disconnected people.

CM: So, this new sound, this acoustic guitar sound. Have you just begun using the acoustic guitar?

C: It's using me, man.

CM: In what way?

C: In the sense that we are all used, that it's all hang-ups, you know?

CM: Um—

C: Look, Creole. Look. Let's talk seriously now.

CM: We haven't—

C: I mean, I'm not betraying anyone. I'm not cutting any ties. I'm not even breaking fucking new ground. I am following my bliss, right? My bliss right now took me to Leadbelly. Well, first it took me to Lord and Taylor, but that's another story. I followed it. To ice cream, to bed, to attire and back and now, here I am, an older man with an acoustic guitar.

CM: Do you have any idea why you're so popular?

C: Well, because, you know, I'm a bit of a carnie, a bit of a philosopher, a bit of a poet.

CM: You forgot plumber.

C: Funny. You're a funny man, Creole.

CM: Can we talk about Toni now?

C: Sure.

CM: Good. Are you two still close? Does she—

C: Oh, I thought you meant Orlando. Tony Orlando.

CM: You are good friends—

C: Nah, I'm riffing on you, man. Toni. Yeah, let's talk about her. She's got legs all the way to Baltimore and back.

CM: Right. You two are still married.

C: Is that a question?

CM: It's been, what, 30 years?

C: Yes, brother. Right on.

CM: And yet you both are pursuing solo projects.

C: It's all good, man. It's all alright and good. See, dig, Toni, she's like this bright star, right? She's white heat. Just to be around her is to bask in it, to stand aside and admire. See. So, like when this music came to me, it was like a gift. If Toni is white light I am dark heat, dig? Like she's the morning star and...I'm a...like a...barcalounger.

CM: I don't understand.

C: It's ok, Creole, man. It's all good.

CM: I don't know how to proceed from here...

C: Maybe that's all that needs to be said.

CM: Um—

C: Lissen, ask me what I'm working on.

CM: Ok, what?

C: I'm writing a symphony, man.

CM: Really? A, like, classical symphony?

C: Well, it's a quilt, really. A symphonic quilt. It's made up of 432 short pieces, some ten to fifteen seconds long, some a minute or two, some only a second, a half-second.

CM: Huh. Called?

C: It's called Vanishing Point.

CM: Interesting. It sounds—interesting.

C: Have you heard the new music yet, man? Can we talk a bit about The Captain and Leadbelly, and Guthrie?

CM: Yes, yes. I have. Uh—give me some of it. Can you? Right now, can you give us a taste—

C: Sure, man, sure.

CM: This is what? Which—

C: "Bring me a little Water, Sylvie."

CM: Cool. Go.

C: (humming...) Bring me a little water, Sylvie
Bring me a little water, Sylvie
Bring me a little water, Sylvie...

CM: —

C: Hmm.

CM: That's—

C: Yeah, that's it, man. That's what I'm talking about.

CM: Simple.

C: Right. At the core. Down deep...it goes deep like an oak's roots.

CM: Huh.

C: Yeah. That's where I am, man.

CM: Well, thanks for joining us, uh, Captain.

C: It's all a trip, man. An excursion inward. An incursion. Breathe, brother. It's all scrambled eggs, ya dig?

Tonight on the 1-Star Movie Channel
by
Jon Alan Carroll

7:30-9:30p:

Starting Rover--A middle-aged man turns to bestiality after a traumatic divorce. Burt Reynolds. (1976, 119 mins.)

9:30-11:30p:

The Man Who Loved Bukowski--A shy poet discovers that the bars are filled with half-wits, criminals and rambling drunks. Sean Penn, Henry Chinasky. (2005, 113 mins.)

11:30-1:30a:

Waves Breaking on the Shore--A woman sleeps with another woman and lives to write about it. Jody Foster. (2001, 112 mins.)

1:30-3:30a:

National Lampoon's Same Old Crap III--Retread dorm-dreck about a freshman's attempts to lose his virginity. (2004, 114 mins.)

3:30-5:30a:

Incredibly Ordinary People--Paul gets a job in a warehouse; Sue buys a new pair of shoes. Directed by Robert Redford. (1978, 110 mins.)

5:30-7:30a:

The Cruel Burrito--A savage pork entree goes on a rampage in a tiny Texas town. Part II of the "Taco Hell" trilogy. (1997, 116 mins.)

7:30-9:30a:

They Call the Wind Malignant--Classic yarn about ill-fated lovers who live downwind from a nuclear power plant. Rock Hudson, Doris Day. (1957, 121 mins.)

9:30-9:45a:

The Howl of the Three-Legged Jackal--A man is born. Later on, he dies. (Experimental Short, 2005, 14 mins.)

9:45-11:45a:

Siddhartha: In Good Hands--A spiritual seeker finds peace by the river and goes on to become an Allstate insurance agent. Myron Kessleman. (1969, 121 mins.)

11:45-2:00p:

The Jelly Beings Live--Film follows the Jelly Beings, founders of the Rock Solipsism movement, during their Extreme Self-Absorption Tour. Songs include "Me," "My Inside Voice," "Without Me I'm Nothing," and "I Only Want to Be with Me". (2006, 135 mins.)

2:00-4:00p:

Fritos and Hash--An aspiring comedy writer gets stoned on a Sunday afternoon. Nick Foray, with Groucho Marx as the Voice of God. (1987, 114 mins.)

My Magical Happy Pony Adventure!

by
Mark Kettelcamp

It was one of those magical days. Birds were merrily singing, bees were buzzing about, joyfully gathering pollen, and the ponies pranced about the fields under a sunny, blue sky.

It was this day that I saw the prettiest pony in the herd. Its huge eyes looked at me as if to say "lets play", and I knew we'd be the best of friends! I reached into my satchel and pulled out a juicy, ruby red apple. I held out the apple, and the pony slowly came towards me, and gently started to eat the apple. I patted it on the neck as it ate, and slowly rubbed my hand through its soft mane. "I think your name should be Shooting Star, how does that sound?" I asked. The pony nodded, having just finished eating.

It then looked at me as if to say "jump on my back friend, lets go exploring!" and with a mighty leap, I threw myself onto the pony and we pranced off to frolic in the fields.

It was truly a halcyon day. The zephyr breezes blew around us as we rode past quaint country roads and majestic mountains. "Let's go to my house for some lunch" I said after many hours of sight-seeing. The pony nodded and gave of a small neigh of agreement.

We rode to my country cottage, and I led the pony into the back where a small red barn stood with its doors agape. I motioned the pony to come inside, exclaiming "wait till my niece sees you! She'll be so thrilled!" "I hope oats are ok?" I queried as the pony made its way inside.

Then, once it was in the center of the barn, I pulled a lever. The floor opened up and the pony fell. A brief whinny could be heard amongst the cacophony of machinery. Pistons pumped, gears turned, and steam hissed as the clockwork symphony played. Within minutes a conveyor belt started up, and small white jars with white, viscous syrup began to move across it like soldiers marching through a town, victorious. Each jar sported label with the image of a pony and the name "Star Glue" on the front.

I grabbed one and headed into the cottage where my niece sat on the floor, coloring sunny fields with crayons, and humming a small happy song to herself. "Look what I have!" I said, presenting the jar of glue to her. "YAY!" she exclaimed, grabbing the glue from me, and setting it down next the old empty glue jar. "Look what I drew!" she said excitedly while holding up her drawing for me to see. She pointed to various parts of the picture and explained "This is me, and that's bunny... we're having lunch with the ponies. We're eating apples!" "Yes" I said, smiling and patting her on the head "ponies love apples..."

Firepower
by
Matt Camplomi

What I need, Gayle, is something that people will recognize me for. I need to get my name out there, Gayle, and it's gotta be something big.

Wait a second.

Gayle?

Oh shit. She's at work.

—This, Gayle, I said, this is a new movement, Gayle. Something inherently unprecedented— I mean because of its newness.

Gayle looked at me.

—I mean wholly unheard of, Gayle. I mean, really. I just want you to—

Gayle looked at her watch.

—Gayle?

I mean.

—Peter, I've got to get work. You know? Work?

Right.

—RRRight. WWWWork.

I mean, I understand these things. I don't want you to think that I don't. Oh, Christ, how I understand. Some of us have things to do during the day. I get it. Hell, man, I've had things to do during the day. There's been plenty of times when I've had things to do during the day. But I don't get all snotty about it.

I just did the things.

I mean, I've sold stuff on EEEEBay. I've been at the flea market on 575 at, like, ten in the morning before. And there was that whole week when I volunteered at the library. That one, the library thing, that was for a whole week, too. That's big deal stuff, man.

That's what people don't get. They think things like that are the little things. But it's shit like that's important. You have to be giving.

It's not good to be selfish. You should want, sure, but you should never want too much.

I just—

O jaheanve oun oft yourn coursndt blatanting.

But one thing I know for sure, is that I never took any dance lessons.

Gayle insists.

—You totally did. It was just last October. We were there. It was over on Prince. We totally did that. You don't remember? With the instructor? His name was Henry. He charged us forward, us back. You don't remember that? Christ, Peter.

I sometimes wonder who this Christ Peter is, then I remember my scriptures, and I know that Peter was the stone. Er, rock. Er, mason?

Shit.

Help?

Was Peter a stone or a rock or a mason?

Man, someone has got to know this; it just isn't going to be me.

—Are you listening, Peter?

Today, however, I am free.

I'm going to get my face out there with my free time. It's gonna be something big, something everyone's going to notice. I've just got to figure out how I'm going to actually do it. I was going to ask Gayle, but she was still sore about the night before. We'd had an argument about, well, something. I don't remember.

Aw, she's always sore at me anyways. I can't remember for everything. Besides, I've got a lot on my mind.

One idea I have been kicking around is this: A billboard, right on the loop, before the exit for Milledge. I think that would be great.

That's really something people will remember.

I saw in the paper that just now a group of insurgents were no longer insurging. (I think that's what insurgents do.) And I was going to call Gayle at work and tell her but then I remembered what happened that last time I called her at work with something new that I had discovered, and it went something like this:

Gayle: Gayle Mourning speaking.

Me (that's me!): I completely understand why we can't move to Canada anymore.

Gayle: Peter?

Me (me again!): Here's why:

Gayle: Peter, we were never considering moving to Canada.

Me (Peter): I know, because we can't because we'd have to revoke our citizenships.

Gayle (exasperated): Peter, we could claim dual-citizenship.

Me: Dual-citizenship? Hellfire! I never considered that.

Gayle (more exasperated): That still doesn't mean we ever considered moving to Canada.

Me: But that's before you came up with this dual-citizenship scheme. This changes everything!

Gayle: Peter, it's not a scheme.

Me. Well, whatever. I won't tell if you don't.

Gayle: Peter, you're an idiot.

Me: But I'm not even drunk yet!

It's true. I wasn't.

Gayle: Goodbye, Peter. I've got work to do.

Well, I tell you, I could've stewed on that one all day, if I had been so inclined. But who am I to be a miserable son of a bitch? I moved on; I researched the possibilities for the rest of the day, but by the time I had come up with any concrete results, I was too drunk to understand what was going on.

I know that Gayle works very hard. She's a lawyer or an accountant or something like that. And she's gone for most of the day, and I don't think she appreciates what I contribute to this relationship. She doesn't realize that I'm working hard, too.

It's not easy, Gayle, coming up with ideas. It takes up a good chunk of my day.

Then I have to walk the dog, and that's always a bitch, and it saps me, and then I don't want to do anything else but I've got to things like calling my friends at work or going out to get something to eat. These are all time-killers, killing my time, Gayle. Sometimes, it's all I can do to get off the couch some days.

Christ, I wish I knew how to get that billboard.

Maybe I was wrong about Canada. I'm not going to pretend that was my best idea.

I have been wrong before.

Man, I hate it, now that I think about it. That Canada idea really was a waste of my time.

Maybe I should talk to the mayor about my billboard idea . . .

Gayle: Peter? What's that smell? Something smells—

Peter (shhh, it's me again): Go ahead and sit down, sweetheart, I'll bring you dinner. Did you have a good day?

Gayle: What is it?

Peter: Well, I had some extra time today, so I went out and bought some stuff at the store, but they didn't have the trout, so I went over to Jason's and he gave me a ride to the fish market—

Gayle: There's no fish market in town.

Peter: Oh, yeah. We went to Atlanta. I really wanted to get this trout, and I couldn't find it at the store, so, like I was saying, I walked over to Jason's house, and he was totally down for going to Atlanta, and we got the fish and came back. It's—

Gayle: You really drove an hour and half to get a fish?

Peter: Jason, drove, sweetheart. But it's fresh crushed--

Gayle: Peter?

Peter: It's—

Gayle (lovingly): You know, sometimes, you're the most amazing person I know.

Peter (petulant): But I haven't even told you what I made.

Gayle: Peter . . .

Peter: How was your day, anyway?

Living an Authentic Life: Job Search Guidelines by **Renee Prince**

What does it mean to live an authentic life? Martin Heidegger, the German philosopher who was maybe a little Nazi-ish and definitely existentialist-ish actually first coined the term "authentic life" as the only proper response to the uncomfortable knowledge of our inevitable death. Today's various namby-pamby New Age definitions of an "authentic life" have made a mockery of the original meaning, with references to following your bliss, and even your personal relationship with Jesus Christ. There's no mention of anything "uncomfortable" or even our own inevitable death and decay. Those happy New Age fluff-heads sure manage to keep those blinders on!

Well, today we are going to tackle the truly authentic "authentic life" the way our existentialist forefathers intended. The first, most important thing we can do in our quest for authenticity is to look our own death in the face. Sure, it's not pretty. However, once we realize that sooner or later we are going to be stomped out of existence like the butt of a hand-rolled cigarette under the boot heel of a drunken cowboy, we will be on our way to living a happier, more fulfilled life.

No longer will we be bound by the constraints of a society bent on deluding itself into believing that life has real meaning or any transcendental purpose. Instead, we will, as authentically-living, angst-ridden existentialists choose to do and be only those things we honestly feel are important to us. It's all about honesty. Honest, you're going to die. What do you honestly want to be doing with your finite existence? Can you honestly say you want to spend any part of that time working at a real job?

By now, uncomfortably aware of your unavoidable demise, you are ready to live an authentic life. This means you are going to be honest in your answers, and honest with others, probably for the first time in your life. I know it doesn't make sense. But does your own impending, most likely hideous and painful death make any sense? No, of course not. There is a bright side to all of this honesty and authenticity, however.

You get to do what you want, first and foremost. Yes, you are going to be true to yourself first, because if you are simply "being" in a meaningless existence soon to be followed by an even more meaningless non-existence, the least you can do is give yourself a break. Let your hair down, make anytime "me time", speak your mind, follow your dream! Just as you've always suspected, it really is all about you!

Unfortunately, even in the most authentic life, there comes a time when you need bus fare or money for nachos and a jumbo soda. A time when you need shelter and some kind of covering for your nakedness that doesn't date back to the Reagan Administration. Honestly, you need to get a job.

But how to go about it authentically? First, start your search at a "Job Fair", where many potential employers are gathered under one roof for an entire day. That way you can pick and choose from many potential drone-like career options. You are the selector; you are the "decider"—not them. Because this is not about them; this is all about the authentic you.

The following guidelines will help you to stay honest, and stay truthful as you go about your

search for a job that will not compromise your authentic life.

Job Search Guidelines for an Authentic Life:

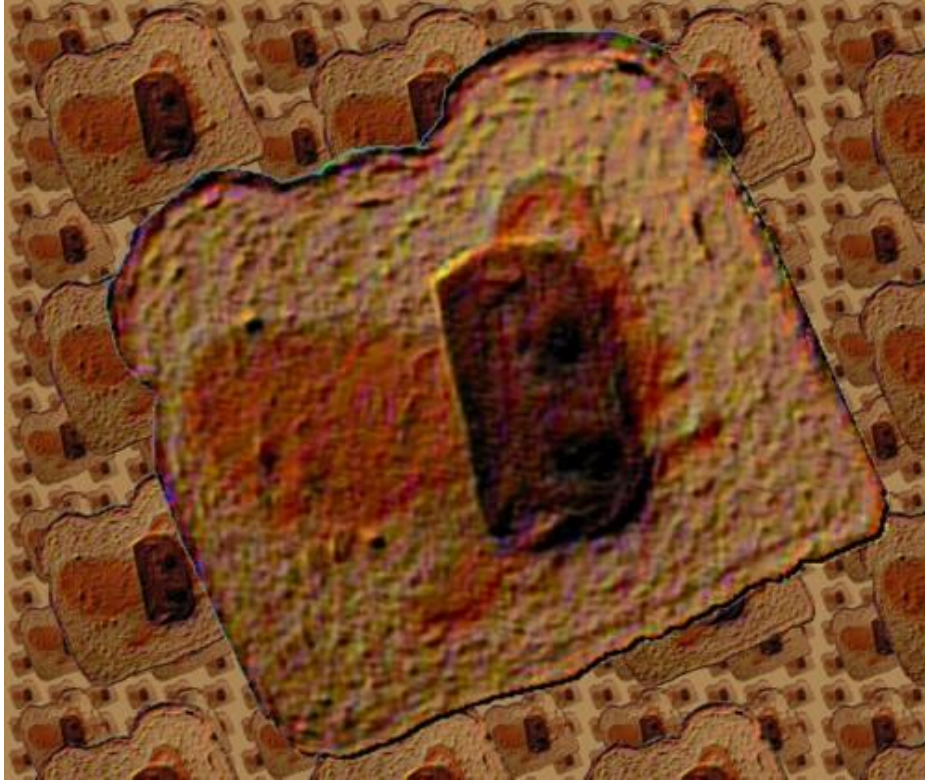
You and Your Potential Employers

1. Don't dress up—be honest, be yourself. Wear exactly what you wear when lying around the house watching TV or staring off into space. Holes in dirty tee shirt and furry slippers are okay!
2. Don't bother to smile when you introduce yourself. It's too much trouble, and you'll look as if you really want the job.
3. When they ask if you've had any experience, tell them the truth: "Hey, it's none of your goddamn business."
4. When they ask what you can bring to their company, tell them the truth: "Probably nothing. I might even be a drain on your resources. Who knows?"
5. When they ask for your opinion on their business, tell them the truth: "I think you're in real trouble if you have to set up a booth at a place where people like me will ask for a job."
6. Regarding the above, remember: you're not really "asking for a job", you're "waiting for a job offer", AND you will only accept the job offer that meets your standards.
7. Set your standards immediately. For example, you probably won't want to come in more than once or twice a week, so let them know that. Also, you honestly don't want to have to answer to anyone, so your position must be at the absolute apex of the company. This will save everyone a lot of grief.
8. And last but certainly not least: Remember, the most important driving force in your life is your own authentic hidden agenda—the job always comes second!

Wishing You Great Success

As You Face the Anxiety of Your Finite Existence

Weenie on toast on weenie on toast on
by
Jeff Crouch



There is nothing more hypnotic than layer upon layer of weenies on toast. Seriously.

Cigarettes Bad
by
Scott Kersey



Haiku-Smoking Cat
by
Stephanie O'Donnell

俳句 haiku

A rare memento:
photographic evidence
of smoking feline.



Contributor Biographies

John Calvin Hughes is the author of *The Novels and Short Stories of Frederick Barthelme*, a critical study from the Edwin Mellen Press. He thinks his aunt may have bought a copy.

After many years of contemplation, **John Gooley** recently discovered the meaning of existence. Unfortunately, he forgot to write it down, then he started thinking about shopping lists, etc. If he ever remembers what the meaning of existence is, he'll definitely post it on his blog: <http://johngooley.wordpress.com/>

Kristine Ong Muslim has more than three hundred stories and poems published and forthcoming in mostly genre magazines and anthologies. Her poems have been published or will appear in *Adbusters* (Canada), *Bleeding Quill*, *FireWeed*, *Free Verse*, *GUD Magazine*, *Megaera*, *The Pedestal Magazine*, *T-Zero*, and elsewhere. Her publication credits are listed here: <http://www.freewebs.com/blackroom8>

With Aurelio Rico Lopez III, she co-wrote *Oddities*, an illustrated chapbook collection of poems for children, published by Sam's Dot Publishing. To order a copy, go to Project Pulp http://www.projectpulp.com/item_detail.asp?bookID=1146412595 or The Genre Mall <http://www.samsdotpublishing.com/purchasecenter/poetrybooks.htm>

Mike Wiegand is a semiprofessional breeder of free-range slotted spatulas, and is world-renowned for his showmanship at major kitchen utensil competitions. A longtime practitioner of creative flatulence, he has pioneered numerous advanced techniques in anal ventriloquism relying only on household pets and ordinary inanimate objects. Mike's interests include gravel, whistling while he works, and the chronosynclastic infundibula. Mike also enjoys the distinction of being the only living poet with two left hands.

Corey Mesler is the owner of Burke's Book Store, in Memphis, Tennessee, one of the country's oldest (1875) and best independent bookstores. He has published poetry and fiction in numerous journals including *Rattle*, *Pindelyboz*, *Quick Fiction*, *Cranky*, *Thema*, *Mars Hill Review*, *Adirondack Review*, *Poet Lore* and others. He has also been a book reviewer for The Memphis Commercial Appeal. A short story of his was chosen for the 2002 edition of *New Stories from the South: The Year's Best*, published by Algonquin Books. Talk, his first novel, appeared in 2002. Nice blurbs from Lee Smith, John Grisham, Robert Olen Butler, Frederick Barthelme, and others. His new novel, *We Are Billion-Year-Old Carbon*, came out in January 2006. His latest poetry chapbooks are *Chin-Chin in Eden* (2003), *Dark on Purpose* (2004), *Short Story and Other Short Stories* (2006) and *The Agoraphobe's Pandiculations* (2006). His poem, "Sweet Annie Divine," was chosen for Garrison Keillor's *The Writer's Almanac*. He also claims to have written "Me and You and a God Named Boo." Most importantly, he is Toby and Chloe's dad and Cheryl's husband. He can be found at www.coreymesler.com.

Jon Alan Carroll is a San Francisco writer and editor. His "work" has appeared in the *SoMa Literary Review*, *Raging Face*, *Opium*, *Monkeybicycle*, and *Unlikely Stories*. Not that you care, since all you ever think about is yourself.

Mark Kettelkamp actually loves ponies, especially when they are cooked medium-rare, and served with a side of Fava beans and babies. This love for ponies might also explain Mark's love for glue and his compulsion to eat it back in first grade.

Matt Camplomi is from Georgia. That's where he keeps all his stuff.

Renee Prince's writing has garnered several real and imagined awards, while her artwork has appeared in many feature films, none of which have won any awards. She is consistently underpaid by brutish film moguls, but remains creative, as evidenced by her poorly-maintained website: www.reneeprince.net. Her work has recently crept into *McSweeney's* online magazine, and currently she is wrapping up two more writing projects: a nonfiction book on her days as a dolphin scientist, and a thoughtful, character-driven screenplay about what ensues when giant Komodo dragons get loose aboard a plague ship. Really? Really!

Says **Jeff Crouch**:

Rather than offer excuses.
Allow me to boast profusely,
That food photography is
More funny than useless.

I am an internet artist,
Perhaps not the best, nor the smartest,
But what matters most,
Is that *Defenestration* Magazine
Accepted my "Weenie on Toast."

Please don't laugh when you see it.
The mustard stain, the short stump—
At least the toast's not the butt—
Of what I ate before lunch.

Scott Kersey enjoys films, grammar, British comedies, plays, his girlfriend, and bathing regularly. If you want to contact him, do so at quixoticboy1@yahoo.com, although I'm not sure why you would.

Stephanie O'Donnell has been submitting comics to *Defenestration* for longer than she cares to remember. You can look at more of her work at <http://kitschfactor.deviantart.com>.