

Breadcrumb Scabs: Issue 29

May 2011, edited by Lena Judith Drake

Contributors:

RICKY GARNI
TINA BARRY
ALEXIS POPE
MARC CARVER
CHLOE TAIPALE
MICHAEL BAGWELL
JOSHUA YOUNG
MICHAEL KESHIGIAN
SAM CAMPBELL
ANDREW RIHN
WILLIAM CODY WATSON

CAROL KOH
CINTHIA RITCHIE
KATE WISEL
BETH COYOTE
MAUDE LARKE
SUZANNE STRATMANN
JENNIFER-LEIGH OPRIHORY
MONICA METTERT
G. DAVID SCHWARTZ
BRITTANY FONTE
JOSEPH POWELL

Cover art: “don't hide your love away” by Bruce New. Image used with permission. All rights reserved by artist.

Editor-in-chief: Lena Judith Drake
Graphic design: Corey M. Cooper
Copy editor: Hazel Foster

All authors within reserve all rights to their respective works.
Published with permission of authors. No material from this publication may be reused in any way without the written consent of the author or artist.

Copyright © 2011 *Breadcrumb Scabs*. Please visit our website <http://www.breadcrumscabs.com> for more information, or to submit your own work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor’s Foreword 5

“Arnold Schwarzenegger” by Ricky Garni 6

Two poems by Tina Barry 7
“Walrus”
“King of the Roses”

“Don’t Drink The Bathwater” by Alexis Pope 9

“An Offer” by Marc Carver 11

Three poems by Chloe Taipale 12
“They’re All Gonna Laugh at You”
“How I Spent My Christmas Vacation”
“Paranormal Activity”

“Inverted Suits” by Michael Bagwell 15

“ENTER STAGE LEFT - THE GHOST WOODS, THE DARE”
by Joshua Young 16

“Applesauce” by Michael Keshigian 17

“In No Right Mind Should He Be Seen by the World”
by Sam Campbell 18

“Hello Haruo Nakajima” by Andrew Rihn 19

Two poems by William Cody Watson 20
“Springtime”
“Digging South”

“Paper Crane” by Carol Koh 22

Three poems by Cinthia Ritchie 23
“Portland”
“Fuck you, God”
“Mary Poppins: The Third Show”

“The Afterthought” by Kate Wisel 27

“My former life” by Beth Coyote	29
“Spiral” by Maude Larke	30
Two poems by Suzanne Stratmann	31
“The Abortion & Intimacy Ever After”	
“The Pugilist”	
“EGBDF” by Jennifer-Leigh Oprihory	33
“When you left” by Monica Mettert	35
“She Needs Me” by G. David Schwartz	37
“Mommy Diet” by Brittany Fonte	38
“Mofo' Risin'” by Joseph Powell	40
Artist Biography	44
About <i>Breadcrumb Scabs</i>	45
Donation	46

Lena Judith Drake, editor-in-chief of Breadcrumb Scabs magazine, has a Bachelor's of Science from Grand Valley State University in Women & Gender Studies and Writing. She will pursue a Master's of Arts in Social Justice and Human Rights from Arizona State University in Fall 2011. For more biographical information, or to investigate her published writing, please check out her personal website: <http://lenajudithdrake.com>

Hey, it's June, but this is the May issue! What's going on?

Your dearest editor-in-chief is a slacker. We'll be announcing some changes to make the magazine run more smoothly (i.e. without unplanned delays) very soon, though. Although you probably don't believe me. Forgive me? Thanks. I appreciate your magnanimous nature.

Welcome to the 29th issue of *Breadcrumb Scabs* magazine, not quite right on time at all. (The June issue will also be out ASAP. Double scabby goodness.)

This was a close call, because there a lot of really fascinating poems in this issue. However, my editor's pick for this month is definitely "How I Spent My Christmas Vacation" by Chloe Taipale. You know I like it gruesome, and this is comically so-- pure paranoia, and overactive, drug-addled imagination. We all have thoughts like these. I think. Maybe it's just me and Chloe. Regardless, it's worth a read.

Enjoy, and stay tuned for future *BCS* updates!

Check out our website:
<http://www.breadcrumbscabs.com>

Find us on Facebook:
<http://www.facebook.com/breadcrumbscabs>

Ricky Garni has been published in all these different foreign beautiful countries and yet cannot speak French, but enjoys saying "Yes, I speak French" in English.

Arnold Schwarzenegger

by Ricky Garni

The effervescent guy was really elderly.

I felt like I was in a car with an Alka Seltzer.

But these were two different times.

Once I was on a picnic in a park and an old guy was jumping around woo! woo! like one of those beans.

Near the big tree and the make out couple.

The other time I was in the car and I took a really quick turn and the car went screech. errr.

All the Alka Seltzers that were in the grocery bag went flying boy out of the window.

They bounced all over like little white ballerina girls dancing free and then got oops run over.

One Alka Seltzer was left on the floor of the car near my foot.

I felt like I was in a car with one Alka Seltzer. I was sad.

The old guy is probably still jumping around somewhere I bet in a park yep.

The make out couple is probably home cooking dinner before they make out again hooray.

Not me. My tummy hurts inside me inside my car right here near my grocerybag.

DEAR GROCERY BAG WITH ONE ALKA SELTZER IN IT:

There is only one Alka Seltzer in the world that I really care about.
And it's you.

* ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER once wore a long blonde lady's wig and it was creepy

Tina Barry is an M.F.A. candidate in Creative Writing at Long Island University in Brooklyn, NY. Her short stories and poetry have appeared in publications including Fractured West, The Prose Poem, Six Sentences, and are forthcoming in Elimaë and The Rufous City Review.

Walrus

by Tina Barry

He's a walrus with a walrus's mustache. She wears a T-shirt over her two-piece that reads Chicken of the Sea isn't Chicken. Shrouded in towels, I'm Queen Tut atop a plastic chaise. No one joins them in the hot tub. He says, I want you to. Behind broken teeth, she answers, No. A mother and her boy splash in the low end of the pool. Mother: skunky orange stripes on a bad black bob. Look. His cheeks inflate, a sudden balloon. Below the surface, dark hair crowning. A silent question: Are the couple in the hot tub playing a sex game? A dot of sound, twinkling in the sun, zips toward her. I believe they are, I say in a tiny helium voice.

King of the Roses

by Tina Barry

You smell like bacon and the underside of your chin is a speck of white bumping clouds. My dress is cotton candy dipped into dirt sprinkles. Begin: Crimson Queen. Crimson Queen. American Beauty. American Beauty. Golden Slippers. Golden Slippers. Ballerina. Stop: your hand is as large as a head. Open the lid and she pops: two inches of perfect plastic in a perpetual plie'. Begin: Crimson Queen. Crimson Queen. American Beauty. American Beauty. Golden Slippers. Golden Slippers. Ballerina. Something displeased you.

Ballerina?

Alexis Pope is a writer of poetry and tiny fictions. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in PANK, Metazen, Staccato Fiction, and elsewhere.

Don't Drink The Bathwater

by Alexis Pope

I packed my suitcase with the organs of the ones I lost,
the heart I could never have.

So full I pushed my weight against the top,
the zipper in my fingers like the toothpick

prying you free from between my legs.
I planned to change my name to Rosa,

sell omelettes from behind diner counters
all across the states. Smack my Bubble Yum

like your cheek. As if my teeth could steal
your flavor and make you stale.

The way I knew you.
Worthy of spitting into the garbage can.

Joining the fruit flies in their quest
to reproduce at devilish speeds.

You would invade my cherry pies
and the men at the counter would swat at you.

Like the foul stench of forgotten tuna,
even when you left they would be aware

of your presence. They would drop their sausage
in disgust. If I could hop a train, it would be more romantic.

Or a VW Bus I could live out of. With shag carpet
still stained with barbeque sauce and Budweiser,

but I could rebuild the engine and switch to red wine.
My America would be different than yours.

I'd drive past the church and spit my gum out in the gravel

of the parking lot. Where you placed me in your pocket

along with the communion host that you ate
in front of the TV, two hours after the service.

Lint from your pocket melting to form a grilled Jesus sandwich.
You should have dipped it in ketchup

and played the part of Pilate.
My suitcase heavy like kidnapped bodies

thrown in my trunk. The dead weight
of your fragrance left under my nails. I would go fishing

in hotel bathtubs only to find our memories had been invaded
by night crawlers. To carry you in my arms would be familiar,

but I can't bear the hook and inevitable crucifixion
of the fresh cherries that would only rot in your fridge.

Marc Carver was born in 1966 near the Thames Barrier in London. He has been writing poetry seriously for over a year. He regularly performs his poems in London at various locations. He has a featured slot in an arts centre in East London once a month. He is now looking to publish a first collection and has more than enough published poems and/or unpublished poems.

An Offer

by Marc Carver

I walked into the bar with the big screens on the wall.
The girl came over and asked me how I was, as I ordered a beer.
I said that I was okay, and I asked her how she was.
She said that she was very tired.

I thought about that and asked her if there was any chance of an early night.
She said no very quickly and went to the other end of the bar.

About five minutes later it dawned on me that she thought that I was asking her if she wanted an early night with me.
I considered telling her that I did not mean it that way
but she never seemed to make it to my end of the bar very much.
So I drank my pint and moved to another bar.

They're All Gonna Laugh at You

by Chloe Taipale

Sometimes when I shower I like to pretend I'm Carrie. I imagine myself in my shapeless handsewn prom dress, vision blurred with pig's blood and hatred. I'd kill people who walk slow at the grocery store. I'd kill people who go 45 in a 50 when they could be going 70 like everybody else. I'd kill the people who put all those little hearts in their Facebook statuses. I'd kill people who say "could care less" when they mean "couldn't care less." I'd kill John Travolta too, for that one scene in the car when his face is all wet. I'd kill that crusty dangler on the lotion bottle. I'd go back in time and kill Andrew for calling me Miss Piggy, even though it was pretty funny and I can't deny the humor in being a fat girl with a pig nose. I'd kill that Pepto Bismol lipstick that Nicki Minaj always wears. I'd kill those faces she makes too. I'd kill Katy Perry with her big ass *Veggie Tales* bean head. I might spare her boobs though. I'd kill that noise the straw makes when you stick it in the lid. I'd kill my bras with the wires coming out. I'd kill you for slowly turning into me (don't think I don't notice), only because I don't understand why the hell you want to hang out with me so much. I hang out with me every day, and it sucks. You're lucky I don't have telekinesis, otherwise there wouldn't be anything left.

How I Spent My Christmas Vacation

by Chloe Taipale

Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are more fun when I'm high, except when I'm so high that I can't remember how to eat and worry about suffocating and how embarrassing would it be for my parents to have to find me like that, pantsless and unwashed and curled up in bed with a soggy ball of kindergarten sandwich lodged in my windpipe. *Fresh Prince* bloopers are more fun when I'm high, except when I laugh so hard I get the keyboard all drooly and am left with not only a puzzling mess to attend to when I come down but also the fear that my syrupy drool will seep into the crevices between F and M and L and the computer will burst into flames and my charred campfire marshmallow of a body will flood the house with delicious fragrance. Peeing is more fun when I'm high, except when I get worried that I've been peeing too long and perhaps my insides have liquefied and are slowly trickling into the toilet and before I know it I'll slowly deflate into myself, an empty bag of billowing skin, a hollow tent being packed up at the end of an invigorating vacation. My fast heart is more fun when I'm high, except when it gets too fast and then my legs start twitching and then I'm concerned I'm going to short-circuit and explode and rain wet plops of viscera onto my expensive bedspread that I got for my birthday and how rude would that be? Christmas lights are more fun when I'm high, except when I keep seeing them everywhere even though I've already looked away and then I fear my eyes are finally giving out on me and then in a fit of panic and frustration I'll break my teeth and claw my face to hamburger meat like in that one book. Being alone is more fun when I'm high, except when I realize that all I think about is unique and colorful deaths and that no matter how hard I try I'm still utterly alone in a furry underground den invisible to hunters and passersby with my melted insides and my sorry skin and my steaming hamburger face.

Paranormal Activity

by Chloe Taipale

This one day I woke up and when I turned my head to see my clock, I met my dog face to face. It's not like she was sleeping, or even just lying down to relax. She was standing on my bed, nose mere centimeters from my face. She didn't blink, she didn't give a little *brrph* of acknowledgment. I knew that I hadn't woken up because of her, she hadn't pawed me in the face or yanked my pillow out from under me like she usually does. She watched me, looking deep into my eyes, which I'm sure were suddenly sharp with confusion and fear. "How long have you been here?" I asked, voice quiver.

She comes into my room every now and then and knocks some shit over, maybe upsets some highly pigmented Kool-Aid with her stupid curly tail or crunches over a balsa wood sculpture I agonized over, then scootches her ass on my bedspread before jingling her way back out, ignoring me all the while. I know she's still pissed about getting her butt glands squeezed, even though I told her I'm sorry, that we had to do it.

After several long moments she broke our eye contact, jumping off the bed and leaving the room. She hates me, I know it.

Michael Bagwell lives and writes in West Chester, Pennsylvania where he studies Philosophy and English.

Inverted Suits

by Michael Bagwell

I buried a man's fingers. All ten of them, spread out like baby carrots. I don't remember killing him, but I had his blood on my shirt. Humans can leak so easily. He came back, fingerless, dead, asking for a suit. I gave him one. I figured it was the least I could do, though I didn't know what a dead man needed with a suit.

I stepped in dog shit on my way back to town and had the stench of it in my nose for a week. I couldn't look at the ugly peppered brown for long enough to clean it from the treads, so I stripped out the laces and buried the boots. They came back, laceless, mud-black, asking for a pair of socks. Again, I figured it was the least I could do.

Joshua Young holds an MA in English from Western Washington University, and begins an MFA in Poetry at Columbia College Chicago in 2011. He currently teaches English Composition, and lives near Seattle with his wife, their son, and their dog.

ENTER STAGE LEFT - THE GHOST WOODS, THE DARE

by Joshua Young

from When the Wolves Quit: A Play-in-Verse

a girl took the dare and, in august,
wandered in just to prove
that there were no ghosts
in the woods,
but once she breached
the tree line, dark came.
when she turned around her path was gone.

the trees had lifted
themselves from the ground
and thickened.
it was dark, but light
enough to see the skeletons,
shallow graves, scraps of clothing and human things
like parts of tents, rusted pots and pans and forks,
saddles, sleeves of clothing, all of this,
left in what could've been
a retreat or a scattering attempt to find a way out.

days after the girl went in, the trees
parted at night, let her
out into the orchard.
the sound of voices carried her
down the rows.
she heard them retreating,
gravel crunching,
and then she smelled blood.

EXIT STAGE LEFT

Michael Keshigian is the author of five poetry chapbooks. His sixth collection Jazz Face, was recently released by Big Table Publishing Co. His poetry has appeared in numerous national and international journals as well as many online publications. He is a multiple Pushcart Prize and Best Of The Net nominee (<http://www.michaelkeshigian.com>).

Applesauce

by Michael Keshigian

On the seventh day
there really was no rest.
It was the serpent
who approached God
with an apple,
crushed it with his powerful abs.
“Applesauce,” he muttered,
but God told him to keep it to himself.
The snake curled into a question mark,
slithered over to Eve
who rubbed it all over her body,
called over Adam
who licked off every tasty drop
but left Eve panting.
“Don’t go,” she cried, but Adam
had a shelter to build.
The serpent snickered
until Eve grabbed him
and showed him a wild time.
God told Adam,
who despondent at the news,
tried to hang himself
with a vine in the garden.
The serpent attempted to explain,
but the sauce
and Eve’s choke hold
gagged his syllables.
Eve, finally satisfied,
started stomping on the snake.
Now every time the snake shows up,
she winks at him
until Adam smashes it with a club.
God is pleased,
though everything still goes to hell.

Sam Campbell grew up in the suburbs of Chicago and now resides in St. Paul, Minnesota. He currently attends Concordia University-St. Paul where he is a writing major and an English minor. Sam is also the starting running back on the school's football team. He hopes to obtain an MFA in Creative Writing in the years to come and surround his life with poetry. Sam is also the editor-in-chief of the newly formed Mat Black Online Magazine (<http://matblackonlinemagazine.blogspot.com/>).

In No Right Mind Should He Be Seen by the World

by Sam Campbell

There's a large bird in the room. He stands seven feet tall and his beak is black with dust from the coal he has been eating. When I try to speak, he squawks at a decibel that triggers a supernova explosion in my eardrum. The deafening scream has crumbled me to my knees. It is in my ears; yet, my body has been bolted down with rusty, chalky screws. I can't move.

The bird begins to powerfully peck at my body. He smells my brains and quickly flies away in fear. The scent of my open skull floods into the hallway and sends thousands of people to flee like a frenzy of ants protecting their lives from a toddler with a garden hose.

They now know me. They've seen inside my head. Since this causes them to run, why would I want to be helped? Let these rusty screws hold me here and keep me away from the others.

Andrew Rihn is the author of several slim volumes of poetry, including The Rust Belt MRI (Pudding House) and America Plops and Fizzes (sunnyoutside press). He lives in Canton, OH and can be found online at his blog Midwestern Sex Talk.

Hello Haruo Nakajima

by Andrew Rihn

Winning does not tempt that man.
This is how he grows: by being defeated, decisively,
by constantly greater beings.

-- Rainer Maria Rilke, "The Man Watching"

All the world's a soundstage
and you're here to work,
to bring us artificial annihilation.
For you, this is just a day job,
being the man in the Godzilla suit.
Skin upon skin, his body molded to yours:
the dialectic of the monster.
No one gets hurt as you stomp
this Tokyo maquette,
wearing Godzilla's legs, the sweat
on your human brow proving
your work ethic and dedication
as you stagger amongst this illusive city,
the cardboard tanks and trains,
innocent shrieking faces
painted on plastic windows.

Even your skin was a mask
for the war that rages within,
like an omelet in an eggshell.
The silhouette you cut so clearly
one day could never be recast.
We'll spend a lifetime, if we have to,
cataloguing these Russian dolls,
every atrium and ventricle,
every name tag and pay stub.
But within ourselves, we'll burn
with something more than indigestion:
a monster silent, hidden, and lawless,
like Godzilla inside a man suit.

William Cody Watson comes from a ditch in Arkansas. He's constantly confused. He sleeps when it comes. He's trying...

Springtime

by William Cody Watson

I stuff disaster down the front of my pants
so it can spend some time with disappointment
and I've packed my bottom lip with devastation,
sometimes it sticks to the bottom of my teeth
and when I smile, people lose their lunch.

Digging South

by William Cody Watson

worship the spit
worship the snake.
this is the reaction of gnarly thrashing
in the twin bed,
spent strips on carpet display.
some cigarette cleanses you,
deep fortification
cut from dead stars
with blood clots.
my cheeks swell with joy in nourishment
and i raise my hands at the golden wash,
recounting the most beautiful thing i ever saw:
the abandonment of a horse in drab, unholy winter.

Carol Koh is a Research Fellow at the Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences. While science facilitates healing for the physical body, she believes that art is true medicine for the soul. She loves literature, is engaged to an American poet, and holds a PhD in Biological Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She currently resides in Singapore.

Paper Crane

by Carol Koh

She was seven when her father's
fingers closed around her throat
like talons on a gasping fish.

Thin arms flailed.
Wet rice writhed,
stone-cold on the ground.

That night a paper crane
fell crushed and forgotten,
while the world collapsed like cards.

Cynthia Ritchie lives in Alaska, where she works as a journalist to support her poetry habit. When not writing, she runs rugged mountain and trail races. She often embarrasses her son, but her dog and cats think she's pretty cool.

Portland

by Cynthia Ritchie

I fucked the UPS man that summer
I spent in Portland and the pavement
glimmered in the heat and the cement looked
so white it blinded me until
I suddenly knew how it felt to walk in clouds.

I was living in the psych ward
but out on day passes, and all the aides
said how well I was doing, isn't she doing well,
I was a model patient, except
in the afternoons when I knelt
in the bathrooms of post offices
and blew off the UPS man,
his skin damp and sweaty
because the air conditioner in his truck
didn't work worth a damn.

Heat in my veins, my mouth, my blood,
he made me taste and smell flowers:
blood reds and pinks, peach the secret shade
of the skin between my legs. I would weep
when I came, my wrists stretched
tight over my head, palms opening
and closing around all those colors.

He never knew my name,
only the way my hair flowed around my face
and the songs that leaked from my mouth
when I came. I told him I was a plant,
a petal, that I opened when he touched
me, but we both knew
it was a lie, that I was nothing more
than flesh, bones, a tongue
that waited flat and heavy between my lips.

When I got out, I spent the first night
in his bed listening to his chest
rise as if the secrets of my life
might be hidden inside his throat.
When the room began to lighten
I slipped outside, stuck roses inside
my clothes, those cool, damp petals
kissing my skin as I walked away from him,
down toward the river, where I could only dream
of jumping, now that I knew flowers
grew from the ground and not from
my greedy, yearning mouth.

Fuck you, God

by Cinthia Ritchie

Because you did nothing
that day I hid out in the barn, no
where to run, salted-shamed tongue
withered green with fear,
I could taste it like infected
mouth ears cunt,
I was sick with hate
fuckin' voice hands breath,
he shoved disease in my face,
and good Catholic girl
I swallowed hail mary,
our father, fuck the saints
who forsake me when I
begged screamed bled,
arms outstretched, legs spread,
crucified.

Did you watch,
you fuckin' prick,
did you sit there in heaven
playing with your cock,
wet-dreams, holy porno,
did you get off seeing
my twelve-year-old cunt
sacrificed on an altar of hay,
you fucking bastard, tell the truth,
did you squeeze your balls,
stick your cock in some old angel's cunt,
close your eyes
pretend it was me?

Mary Poppins: The Third Show
by Cynthia Ritchie

Days like licorice, not black but Good 'N Plenty sticky, sugar rotting our teeth, we sat in a crumbled movie theater, modly carpet and stained seats, we nestled in tight, ate too much candy, picked our noses. Refused to wash our hands.

When a guy reeking of cigarettes begged us to touch his dick we giggled and shook our heads, we knew about germs and cooties, how a dirty touch could swim your blood and eat your brain, leave you mouth gaping, eyes rolled. A vegetable.

"No thank you," polite and soft as an apology, we stuffed our mouths with the immunity of sugar, stared with church girl dresses and starched smiles.

Julie Andrews flew across the screen.

Our dresses rode up our thighs.

Our white underpants gleamed like teeth.

The Afterthought

by Kate Wisel

It wasn't the nights that I woke up to him
on top of me
that ever mattered, it was after.

It was how I was.
How I learned cursive, my loopy signature
unique. It was how I clutched my stomach
when I laughed, the loudest laughter.
How my hair fell around my eyes, framing
a face that was morphing.
It was how I played, needing
the win, to beat boys.
how I teased them,
how I ate vanilla ice-cream,
waited for it's drip so I could lick it
from my wrists, how I pleased them.
It was how I dropped back, rabid
against the backdrop of third grade.
How I knew every state capital and how to butterfly
kiss. It was how I spun,
how I flung myself
off the diving board, cursing at the water to feel
the weight of me.

Oh and how I wasn't,
after I turned bright I burst
so ripe I rotted so sweet I spewed seed,
like the slow stretch of helium, stretching rubber
the snap of air, whipping back,
and gasping flat,
how I
shriveled,
like the crispy
thin shell of an insect.
How I tired, rusty and quiet, nowhere
the day before "god", before he lodged a white
bar of soap
in my mouth. Did you see my brown eyes?

Their fade? A drop of iodine into liquid shame;
how I became?
It was how my laugh
tapered off,
became measured; restrained.
It was how I crept away,
decided not to know me.

Beth Coyote lives with her partner Deb in Seattle Washington. She has always wanted to read her poems while wearing a beret and playing bongos.

My former life

by Beth Coyote

I'm sorry for all of it
We met by the lake
A surface so shiny penance was possible
We rested before setting out
(We had no idea where we were)
You asked for an expense account or a guidebook
My heart stopped in slowmotion
All because it grew dark by 4:30
An unusual time during the temperamental season
I gave you a set of knives
You thought I was being too obvious
You exchanged them for a butter dish
A more practical response became necessary
I exercised my vocabulary
I said, "I favor dahlias."
I said, "Tender is the night."
I said, "I would prefer not to be buried alive."
I said, " Bite down hard."

Maude Larke lives in France with the ghost of her last cat. Her credo is 'never wear two things of the same color when hiking'. She has this bad habit of collecting things and getting antsy when people begin to touch the items in the collections. Especially the pebble collection. She thoroughly admits that she teaches as a day job out of sadism. Publications include Cyclamens and Swords, Sketchbook, and The Centrifugal Eye.

Spiral

by Maude Larke

I do miss
making a nautilus with you
nights.

The concentric flesh.
The torture of pubic tickle.

But I prefer
the shell to the meat.

All of the chambers of you
that I continue to excrete
are precious to me.

More precious than you.

Suzanne Vogel Stratmann was born and raised in Pullman, Washington, a small town swimming in wheat fields, where the years were dotted with harvest moons. She obtained her degree in Anthropology at Washington State University, and then began wandering to the present via Seattle, WA; Bozeman, MT; Vienna, Austria; Munich, Germany; and now, finally but perhaps temporarily, calls Arlington, VA home. Along the way she has written, had babies, been shattered, sewn herself together, written, and found cowboys and dancers, painters and economists, bakers, writers, and musicians to be her skeleton. Her philosophy is: look at the ragged and broken, and find beautiful. She has two poems forthcoming this spring in Dappled Things.

The Abortion & Intimacy Ever After
by Suzanne Stratmann

his note read: i found this. is it yours?

“death photograph

*champagne flutes and violin bows and
kissing closed the gaps. longtight embraces
and we shared photographs of since thens*

*and then on that page i saw your crushed windows,
and his blue lips a rusted hole,
his body a swaddled and torpedoing
jag of empty
snagged in that snapshot of his
birthday.*

*... and a hidden coffin inside me emerged
and the hotel walls were
too thin
to stop my unearthed guts springing free”*

and, i thought: haven't we been here together, for all of it
neverending?

and i wrote back: wouldn't it be weird if it weren't?
i wrote: yes. it is mine.

The Pugilist

by Suzanne Stratmann

post-tryst and alone, she tried to recall:

is it the heart that is the size of a fist,
or the uterus?

(and anyway, what sized fist?
i've seen some pretty mean hands
folded into small neat squares. the
fist could be smallish, or immense,
but is it my heart or my uterus that
is fist-like)

this was important. she needed to know
the nature of her weaponry.

Jennifer-Leigh Oprihory (a.k.a. Phoenix) is a poet, scientist, editor, activist, life-lover, caffeine-junkie, and connoisseur of all things carpe diem and light. Editor-in-Chief of the online poetry journals Borderline, and Anatomy & Etymology, she wants to change your world, one word at a time. For more info, visit <http://phoenixpoet.info>.

EGBDF

by Jennifer-Leigh Oprihory

On September 22nd, 2010, Tyler Clementi jumped off of the George Washington Bridge after his college roommate streamed a video of him making out with another man on the internet. On September 23rd, his body was found on the banks of the Hudson River, and the video and story went viral. On October 3rd, the only other video of Clementi surfaced, and was broadcast on CBS. In it, he was playing violin. This is for Tyler.

Every Good Boy Does Fine
Every Good Boy Dives First
Every Gay Boy Dies Famously

Tyler,
The moment your body made landfall with the Atlantic,
the sum of all possible futures collapsing into tear drops
you mistook for September rain,

Poseidon asked where you'd been for so long,
slapped you around like any other scorned lover would
and left you out to dry on the same banks where you first met
humming "EGBDF" into the sunset
and trying to make alchemy out of treble clefs.

In suburbia,
it is hard enough trying to explain homosexuality
to the girlfriend waiting in the wings, all lost cause and lipstick,
and an audience of anyone so eager to forget
the excess skeletons hanging from their necks
that they listen.

How do you tell a world
bent on sucking the life from its own veins
that you are in love with an ocean?

Under normal circumstances,

wood is varnished to prevent softening
sensitivity to exterior forces
causing objects to come apart at the seams--

like musical instruments
and men--

but they will never understand that the video and the boy
were just exercises in becoming as malleable
as the machine producing your melodies

that acts of God come equipped with phallacies
and that unnatural selection
was never intended to be reformatted for TV screens.

EGBDF

Even God breaks down fist first,
Fight Club nightmares coming easy
when creation decides to paint itself sacrilege
and shed its own skin to prove itself human,

but you,
half angel and half artisan--
you melting pot of politically incorrect predilection--
you can rest easy.

They tell me musicians cannot rest in peace
unless they've cut their lives into pieces warranting symphonies
but bells are ringing, Tyler.
Voices are singing
and they're all for you and the ocean.

You are no longer small enough to be insignificant.

Bodies might lose buoyancy
but you cannot drown
if gravity decides to rewrite itself
in the midst of your legacy,

so hold on,
for heaven is turning over in her grave tonight,
and the signs of your resurrection
are endless.

Monica Mettert is an undergraduate student at Humboldt State University studying Psychology and Education. You can find her reading and writing confessional, autobiographical poetry by day and starting heated arguments about sexism by night. She grew up in Los Angeles, California, the perfect place to develop a soft-spot for all things social justice and public education.

Monica also maintains an admittedly self-indulgent blog at <http://chasingfruiton.blogspot.com>

When you left

by Monica Mettert

When you left you were
soft, cheeks rounded out like
petals. In June, you
board a plane, fly North.
That summer I keep a photo of you,
a little girl cross-legged in a
baptismal gown,
sitting on my dusty piano.
Back then, you
looked up at me and saw
mountains as the
shutters snapped.

You return in September, pale
skinned, thin
decorated with cheekbones
belonging to a much older woman.
The fuzz on your legs, gone and
the skin underneath is thick.
You look as you did when you first
clawed from my womb: waxy, caked,
slick with hair dark and matted.
Now, your hands are
strong, leathery
like mine.

You leave our concrete backyard that June.
I look at you and see
a woman emerging like ragged weeds,
splitting the sidewalk.
You stop pretending to be a
figure skater on roller blades, you

stop twirling on asphalt, you
stop seeing ice in Los Angeles December.
I'm a valley. Your
hands are crushing mine.
You leave and this time
you never return.

G. David Schwartz-- the former president of Seedhouse, the online interfaith committee. Schwartz is the author of A Jewish Appraisal of Dialogue. Currently a volunteer at Drake Hospital in Cincinnati, Schwartz continues to write. His new book, Midrash and Working Out of the Book is now in stores or can be ordered.

She Needs Me

by G. David Schwartz

She needs me to kill the bugs
that is all I'm good for and
I need her for, well you know
Very much, very much more
Like opening lids

Brittany Fonte holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Spalding University. She teaches Composition and Fiction and Non-Fiction Writing at two different universities; she is also an assistant poetry editor with Lowbrow Press. She has been published in journals such as Literary Mama, 42 Opus, and The Wrong Tree Review. She enjoys spinning, running, Thai food, and her partner and two children.

Mommy Diet

by Brittany Fonte
for Kelly

Surely peanut butter M&Ms count as protein in a diet where one is trying to shrink a marsupial pocket of two-C section babies without putting plastic surgery on a maxed out credit card. They can only help lift a tired rear off the puppy-pee stained carpet, at least enough to walk to the PTA meeting three blocks away. I admit, we eat them because we want to look better than the other mothers whose running schedules are never impacted by their children, and we are more emotional than logical when the scale hits 130. They're rich and beautiful and selfish, those other moms, and they have nannies and home managers and summer places in countries below the equator. These are women who enjoy Brazilian waxes and caviar and the tug of a new facelift against the foreskin of a just-legal lawn care professional.

Surely the sugar is fine-- it's natural-- and I am a natural woman, given that I stay at home, work, work online at home, nap in the soccer field parking lot, text too much and write my every move up on Facebook for a virtual room of possible past friends or possibly lying admirers to follow like a trail of trash guts from my spotless kitchen to the begrunged outdoor can- with a child on my widening hip. I'm natural like the sex I rarely have because my two possum pups need more at night, clawing at my back and that monkey, than during the daylight hours at school where I pay logic-teetering tuition for a stand-in mommy to teach A, B, C's and geometry, Greek myths, situational ethics and playground insider trading.

The candy coating must be protection from germs: cold, flu, Rota, vomit-in-a-straight-stream-across-the-room (unless you are in mommy's bed, then on her pillow, square). The color is for the seasonally disturbed, too, combating gray depression in dye made to whittle frown lines, though not as well as Restalin or that new reality show where everyone is fatter than you.

The “M”s stand for “mighty”: the way you might feel when you make it through a home aerobic workout dvd without a child crying, falling, pooping, or the phone ringing, a fireman asking for money you don’t have for a volunteer hero you’ll probably never see. You can buy jelly, too, he says; but they don’t have sugar-free. If you’re not mighty, you’re morbidly obese and just hurt from side lunges.

Maybe “M” is for “me time,” where you have dinner with friends in restaurants with foreign names and drinks with salted rims and adult conversation about politics, literature, the news that is not the letter of the day on “Sesame Street” or an upcoming super hero series or an episode of that four-year-old Canadian whose mother never raises her voice and whose sister never places chewed gum in her squeaky clean baby duck hair. This is a dinner that is often cut short because the baby has an ear infection, the-sister-in-law can’t stay past eleven, the spouse is yawning with half a beer stoking REM cycles and curtailing libido.

The other “M”? Marriage. There is a reason you chose all of this, and it isn’t because stretch marks are “in,” or flab is the new black, or children, when washed and brushed and dressed in designer clothes that can only be bought online from a Parisian boutique, are the new Kate Spade bags. You got married because you had that ideal image of someone who would love you, for better or worse. You never imagined the worse, or the way a hot 30-something might look in nine years without a gym membership, but it ebbs and flows with the elementary school calendar and the head lice epidemics, and they love you anyway. They would kiss that off-center abdominal scar- if there was time, and certainly will when the children go off to college or you forget their name in the throes of genetic disorders.

Joseph Powell is originally from Chicago, Illinois and is a graduate of Greenville College in Illinois with a B.A. in Communications. His work has been published in various magazines and anthologies including Circle Magazine, In Our Own Words: A Generation Defines Itself, Vol. 4; Best of MAP Featured Poetry, Vols. 1 & 3; and the 2003 edition of Di-verse-City: Austin International Poetry Festival, as well as several online publications, including Com-rades.org, Writer Online, Muses Review, and ilovepoetry.com. The author of four chapbooks, including Mofó' Risin', released in August 2004, and a volume of collected poetry, entitled, Joby, Uninterrupted: Bittersweet Symphonies and Bohemian Rhapsodies (1989-2009), released in December 2009, he was a featured poet in the National Geographic documentary, Skin, which aired on PBS in November 2002, and was a contestant on Who Wants To Be A Millionaire in 2003. His blog, The Joby Chronicle, can be found at <http://jobychronicle.blogspot.com>. He currently lives in Burbank, California.

Mofó' Risin'

by Joseph Powell

The beautiful
Fucked-up man
Has left
The
Building
And he's
Taken his
Cross,
What's left
Of his
Dignity
And manhood
And his
Creamy
Peanut butter,
Because
Only choosy
Motherfuckers
Choose creamy
Peanut butter,
Jif or otherwise.

And
he's going

to devote
himself
to his
poetry
because
only real
motherfuckin' men
write poetry.

And he's
Going
to devote
himself
to being
a friend
to his friends
and being
a friend
to those
who need
friends
because
only real
motherfuckin' men
are true friends.

And he's
Going
To devote himself
To finding
A woman
Who
Thinks that
He is
Much of
A man
And can
Be
Much of
A husband
Because
Only real
Motherfuckin' men
Know
How to be

Husbands
Even
If they
Have to
Learn
By
Trial and
Error
And by
Fucking up
And trying
Again
And again
Because
They never
Had a
Real
Motherfuckin' man
To
Show them
How
To be
A real
Motherfuckin' man
And how
It would
Take a real
Motherfuckin' woman
To
Understand that
And
Give
A real
Motherfucker
A chance.

But,
In the meantime,
This beautiful
Fucked-up man
Will rise
Up,
Dust himself
Off
And

Move on
With his cross
To bear,
What's left
Of his
Dignity
And manhood
Intact
And his
Creamy
Peanut butter,
Because
Only choosy
Motherfuckers
Choose creamy
Peanut butter.

Be on
The lookout
For him;
He might
Be
A good friend
To you;
He could
Be your
Next lover
Or husband;
Or
He might
Just read
You
This poem
And
Make you
A sandwich
Because
That's what
Real
Motherfuckin' men
Do.

*"I was born in 1970. I currently reside in the wilds of Kentucky, with a bird,
on a mountain top, right next to the sun, where I create my work high on
butterfly wine."*

COVER ART: "don't hide your love away" by Bruce New.

Call for submissions:

Confessional poetry. Love poetry with unflattering, pessimistic imagery. Politics with personal, tiny snapshots. Fighting against oppression and repression. Guilt. Poetry that makes us feel nauseous. Sentimentality distorted with grittiness. Anything with strange and interesting imagery. Get your hands dirty with real human emotion. Dark is okay here, as is political, erotic, absurd, disturbing, experimental, or poems that can't seem to fit in anywhere else. We'll give them a try.

Since we know from personal experience the lack of spaces for voices of women and/or LGBTQ writers, those are especially encouraged, but anyone is welcome to submit. We don't care about your credentials, only the quality of the pieces you submit.

To submit, check out the website, peruse the guidelines, and send in your work. Guilt. Grit. Sex. Scabs. *Breadcrumb Scabs*.

Questions? Comments? Email breadcrumbscabs@gmail.com today!

Or find us on Facebook:
<http://tinyurl.com/facebookscabs>

If you've enjoyed this issue of *Breadcrumb Scabs*, please consider donating to help keep the magazine running. Please visit the website for more information.