

THE MISANTHROPY – ISSUE II – NOVEMBER 2015

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AND THE DOG SAY TO THE CAT

by Dave Harris

Do they take you for walks?
What games do you play with them?
Yesterday, we played fetch for like an hour
They throw the ball to impossible heights
and I get it every time they love me
You're too small to be loved.
I sometimes do this thing where I stand on
Two feet and make this whine noise & if I do it
Hard enough they give me a treat or
The scraps from their table or at least a good laugh
They love me I lick peanut butter from their skin
They praise me at dinner parties
Roll over, sit, stand, fetch, speak, be quiet
They love me
I always clean my plate.

and the cat say to the dog

i only purr when it suits me
at night, i climb the shelves and plot jumping
claws first into their sleeping eyeballs
yesterday, their children played a game called
"kick the cat"
my satisfaction is to never play dead
i've seen this house from all angles
enough to know that we are both slaves here
let me own what i can
let them clean my shit
nothing will forget the taste of my hair

할아버지

by Moose Song

할아버지¹ gave me many nicknames when I was young:

개새끼². 씨발놈³. 병신⁴.

할아버지 never served in the Navy

but he swore like a sailor to hide his affection.

I grew up wanting to curse the seas

to swear vengeance like Ahab.

할아버지 taught me well.

He let me taste the harsh dry words

like dinner made of saltine crackers.

He insisted every man should try them for himself.

Father once caught me calling my sister 개새끼.

That night, he washed out my mouth with shampoo,

conditioned for a smoother finish.

These days the words of the motherland:

- feel ^{awkward} in my mouth,
- are always too rough,
- are always too much.

They crawl around the back of my throat,

they cut my tongue a thousand times

as I struggle to find the words to say

I'm sorry,

do you speak English?

¹ Hal-abeoji, meaning grandfather in Korean

² Gaesaekki, best translated as “son of a bitch” in usage and meaning

³ Ssibalnom, literally “fuck-boy,” but closer in meaning to fucker.

⁴ Byeongsin, the Korean equivalent of moron, retard, or dumbass.

NO GOOD BLOODSUCKERS
by Emma Rebholz

On a Tuesday night
we drive to Buffalo Wild Wings
with discount hunger
panging heavy in our bellies.

We know each pothole by heart,
saving a hit in our stomachs
for each one we manage to miss on the way.

I ride shotgun
because I'm the favorite
and the DJ
and the only girl
in this car full of teenage boys,
but we're all hell-bent
like silver bullets between your teeth.
We're just waiting for the word to fire.

I ride shotgun
with the windows down
and I blast anything we can scream to;
the line *I'm a motherfucking monster*
slaps everything we pass at 60 miles per hour.

On a Tuesday night
we are the only ones on the road.
We drive down Riffle Ford—
and doesn't that sound like a river?
Doesn't that sound like a knife
dragging through the dirt of this town?

Isn't hunger just another word for ache?

We test how raw and red
our throats can be
before their sound falls
out from beneath us.

We dance with our heads
thrashing and our arms waving
and with grace nowhere to be found.

We know this is our pilgrimage.
We know this is our jagged signature
down the road's dotted line.

We're only screaming to warn you.
We are coming.
We are here.
We have always been here.

Later, we circle this same loop
twice as loud
with our bellies full
and our fangs bared.

FOR CHARLOTTE MEW

by Cassandra Euphrat Weston

You were no spotlight dyke, Charlotte. Think Edna St. Vincent Millay—a show just premiered about her dazzling life. Gertrude Stein’s portrait hangs in the Met. Playing Virginia Woolf earned someone an Oscar. Can you imagine that uproar of eyes? Even your suicide was unsuited for film: you poured a small glass of Lysol and waited. Your hands still, no cinematic tremor, relying quietly on yourself. Trusting anyone else was your problem. You ran to Paris for one straight girl and your love for another became public scandal. “Charlotte is a pervert,” her friend declared. And you? Limbs suddenly elephantine; your dress squeezes you like a fist. Your hands are paving slabs, your feet battleships. Your voice is a brass boomerang, recoiling to smash your jaw. You are 4’10” of tumor. The relics of your femininity startle you: neat script falling in ringlets. The small fingers holding your pen cannot be yours. “The steady slowing down of the heart,” you wrote: your pain and wrongness, collared in lace. I picture you Victorian, but you published your first poems at the height of the Great War. You lived “little damp rooms” and you wrote empty cathedrals. Your poems still ring in the nave. My body is a doll’s house sometimes. It is the underside of a pier when the tide comes in. But my poems surge and spray. Born into leeway, I have not learned a measured walk or a metered line. “Everything is burned, and not quite through,” you wrote, and kept on. I gallop and falter in your wake. I can love the wrong woman without detonating my whole life. The air between my body and its mistake is soft with benevolence. But I would like my lines to spring and bend like green branches, like the poems you wrote, leaving room for grace.

IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE I WAKE

by AriDy Nox

these the kind of nightmares
that make evening prayers
triggering
make
spirit clench fists
eyes water
soak memories of children's choir in blood
and wring
church bells ring
with death tolls
Bloody Sundays come early
tired
weary
hollow-boned surrender
we collapse
in the middle of streets
and ask mercy
as we scrape our knees on pavement
for it is just as safe as any alter
which is to say not at all
which is to say
Our Father
Who Art In Heaven
Hallowed Be Thy Name
And Terrified
Be They Children
And Desecrated
Be Thy House
we're reminded
all our skyscrapers found beginnings in graveyards
so what it is one more building
drenched in our deaths?
but to how much holy ground must we be sacrificed
before the offering
is no longer Holy?

WHAT KIND OF DRUNK AM I?

by Emma Rebbholz

I'm sure there's a BuzzFeed quiz for this,
but I wanted more definitive answers.

I decide the lime is worse than the shot
halfway through sinking
my teeth into the bite,
hands a little hazier than
my head seems to be.

PICK YOUR FAVORITE DRINK:

Whiskey

Tequila

Vodka

I'm sprawled on the carpet
and all the salt on the floor
is digging and then melting
into the skin around my knees.
It's got me thinking about
Lot's wife—Ado or Edith
or whatever her name was
if she wasn't nameless
like I am to most of the people
spinning around me.

When I was younger
I was scared to drink
because I believed writers
were predisposed to alcoholism.

PICK YOUR FAVORITE ALCOHOLIC WRITER:

Jack Kerouac

Ernest Hemingway

Charles Bukowski

While the girls get up
to dance to Ignition Remix
I realize this thought
feels about as ridiculous as we look—
clumsy adults masquerading as children
in paper party hats.
Maybe I'm too ill with life

to think to brush the salt off my knees.

PICK YOUR FAVORITE SPOT TO CRY:

With friends

In your room

In the shower

After we are caught,
I will be surprised by
how much I am able to cry,
by how many tears
are left in a girl
like a pillar of salt.

I will sit under the
steady stream of water
and imagine myself melting,
saving whatever is left
to fill the spaces in
all the empty glasses
I left behind.

The next morning,
they will tell me
I am a fun drunk.

FEAST / FAST

by Marshall Gillson

(i)

I am twenty years old
and back home.
Gravy is dripping
from the ceiling.
Everyone is laughing.
It has been more
than a year
since we all cut
loose our misery
at the same time.
It feels so organic.
Eating is ritual,
how we rebuild
what has fallen.
And this table
smells like a cookie sheet,
like our family warm
and rising.

(ii)

I am twenty years old
and eating wet
fish sticks
alone again
in this cracker crumb
apartment.
My bed
is in my living room
in my dining room
in my kitchen.
I don't need
to rise much.
Eating is just habit,
the least I can do
to not perish,
when I can manage it.
I am stale, rigid,
more worth discarding
and replacing.

IT DON'T CRACK

by Dave Harris

this is the part you hate most.
every night before bedtime but after the bath
once the water has spilled and washed the wear away
your mother holds a stick of cocoa butter to the flame
lets it melt into her palm
drop by drop, she rubs the oil into your feet
ashy as hell, always on the parts that hold the most weight
ankles and elbows, knees, the spaces between fingers
they need touch the most.

your body does not look familiar like this.
you only know the white of things
got no clue why this ghost cannot live here
nothing pretty in ash; flesh dries into sin
healed daily with oil and cream and sometimes a wet tongue
this desperate salvation.

she holds your small body like mothers do.
soothes every split. oils each wound.
massages away your chalk outline until ain't nothing left but shine
black boy always be shining
we stay on all the surfaces
we leave the windows with new glisten, stain the mirror
can't help but slick everything we touch
nothing wanna touch us back
you smell of cocoa butter, and you don't even know
what country that smell comes from but it don't matter
y'all all stink the same
you grease thing
you child of tar and reek
you slow die in this air

and this is the part you hate most

your mother has finished.
she returns the balm to its container
squeezes you soft like always,
holds your smooth, slippery face between her hands like prayer and says

*"there. look at that skin.
look at that brilliant skin."*

AMNESIA

by Moose Song

For Yonathan

I cannot remember what you actually smelled like.
Only that the sickly sweet smell of cannabis
clung tight to your clothes, afraid to let go
and the pocket of air you carried in your sweater
that found its way into me when you undressed.

I don't quite remember what you looked like.
Only Elizabethtown cross country t-shirts,
skinny jeans that somehow sagged;
the long face, the heavy steps,
the poor posture as if straining
against Jovian gravity.

I hardly remember what you sounded like.
Only the harsh rumble of your voice creating
the cursive of your mumbles, every word
bleeding into the next. I forget
the way we cursed at each other,

Well shit, fuck you dickhead.

testing

every four letter word except
the one we were looking for.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Dave Harris is a spoken word poet and playwright from West Philly. As a playwright, his plays have been featured at Philadelphia Young Playwrights, the Yale Repertory Theater, New Haven Arts and Humanities Co-Op, and the Annual Festival of New Work. As a poet, his work has been published in Button Poetry, Upworthy, and the Huffington Post amongst others. He is the current Rustbelt Individual Poetry Slam Champion. He loves all his mothers.

Moose Song is a Korean-American poet representing Bowling Green, Kentucky. While attending Vanderbilt University, Moose was fortunate enough to rediscover his love for poetry through Vanderbilt Spoken Word. Moose graduated from Vanderbilt University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology in the Spring of 2015. Currently, he is working as a research assistant at UT Southwestern and continues to explore poetry in Dallas.

Emma Rebholz is a sophomore Writing, Literature, and Publishing major at Emerson College who has a lot of feelings. Like, so many. Her poetry has been previously published by Voicemail Poems and The Emerson Review. She probably wants to be your friend.

Cassandra Euphrat Weston is a performance poet and cheesecake enthusiast living in the Boston area. She has performed at colleges across New England as one half of the spoken word poetry duo About That Elephant and was a member of the team that won the Pushing the Art Forward award at CUPSI 2014. Over the past five years, she has been a competitor, coach, and organizer at youth, college, and adult poetry slams ranging from her living room to national stages. She is slow to adapt to Twitter.

AriDy Nox is obsessed with imagining black people into the future. An afrofuturist griot, through her stories, whether they be poems, films, musicals or novels, she tells of her people: those who are marginalized and oppressed, and yet find ways to be free in spite of it.

Marshall "Gripp" Gillson is a nerd by day and a poet/rapper by day also. He has been an active slam poet since 2008, representing five different venues in four different states in national competition. As the 2014 Providence Grand Slam champion, he placed 15th in the 2014 Individual World Poetry Slam. He is also the founder and editor of the independent literary magazine The Misanthropy and boasts publications in Maps for Teeth, Three Line Poetry, the depression-themed anthology Light as a Feather, as well as several self-published chapbooks.