



Inquietudes Literary Journal
Spring 2018 Issue:
Ardor and Anguish

Cover Photo: Milky Way over Ice House Reservoir by Garrett Broberg

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For inquiries email Inquietudeslitjournal@gmail.com

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To Rouse That Sleepy Form

- Hannah Rozenblat

To rouse that sleepy form, deep within the world of dreams, would be cruel
And yet would it not be more cruel to be silent,
replaying the words of a song in your head to keep from punching the pillow
these small moments feed that greater monster, that impatience to burst out
Don't you see how they add up?
Each time you let that head rest while yours is troubled
No, it will not lead to peace
Is it insanity that you want?
Oh Ophelia, you don't know what you do
Don't know the happiness in store for you, if only you can play this right
Give up and it is death
No, fight! What you can have, is it not worth the fight?
Death is for the weak
Oh Ophelia, and so is sleep
when you must swallow your words so as not to disturb that perfect slumber
That softly bearded face so sweet in its dreams, an upward twitch of the lip
You'll go mad if you continue to watch
Run away with yourself, breath the night air, the air of your soul flying,
Or shake him awake
Only don't, don't sit there with a forced calm and watch when your soul is in turmoil.
Don't settle for that constant inner restlessness
No, not when you are an eagle,
only waiting for your wings to gain strength to hold up the growing creature that is you.
soar, Ophelia.
Who said you're a martyr?

Ugliness is the Inability to Answer to One's Own Glory and Brilliance

- Nora Herzog

The first time I felt beautiful,
I was alone. Lying
in the grass outside
a statue to former glory, under
a midnight sunset
across a river, I looked
at hands that I was only now
starting to recognize
again
as my own.

I do not remember what
I was wearing, only
that it was quiet and I was
happy to lie back and stare at
the reflections of the sun off
the golden cathedral rooftops
and think
someday, I, too, will call this home.

I still do not know if home meant
the place or the feeling,
the comfort or the streets,
the anticipation of something real
coming my way or perhaps just
the relief of shedding something I had
felt obligated to for far too long.

I had not yet fallen
in love
then, there was

only blissful loneliness.

Behind the Mask

- Robert Wooten

The night has been so lonely,
so lonely.

And so,
 for a puzzle to fit the ends we make
of ourselves,
 we construct more ships
to sail.

And, always, we hope,
though blackest night wrap its talons round
our hearts,
to glimpse the aura,
to catch sight of some star, or harbor.

But we look for ourselves.
 And the rest? To hell . . .

so find the objects that through shadows
(so Shallow) throw darkness on our souls.

The afternoon lies heavily
 through the windows of my room.
Is there such a place as a high window?

I hear the shadows crawling in.
Another day, at long last,
has walked in single file
and come to pass.

The night has been so lonely.
Perhaps, I hear it pass.

That's Okay

- Jay Venables

That's okay
close the door when you leave

For now save your
fifteen minutes a drive
in the morning

Come here
but not beyond your means

Don't fuck with me
if you misuse your tongue
it comes out

Told your
friends that you'd be back

Picture these sounds
with tiled kitchen feet
in our place

Of course
I kept you long

Falling in Love Before Making Breakfast

- Nora Herzog

It was more the way that waking up with you was
comfortable—
without expectation, without hesitation, but simply with
the knowledge that
I was safe
and you were warm next to me

The way you shuffled to the kitchen, in underwear
and slippers, rubbing your eyes under your glasses,
the faintest sliver of morning sun through a crack in the window

The way I wanted to memorize the curvature
in your back as you bent over the stove,
the way you pinched my sides when I came
to try and salvage what was left of breakfast

It was the way you smiled and looked away before saying
you could get used to this
—the ease of living together—
in a way that felt the least like a demand or a question, but most like
an acknowledgement
of understanding, of the moment of relief when the work shoes are first
thrown off and the earth feels warm and helpful under tired feet—easy

Different and Never Enough

- Katie Keridan

You were the earth
And I was the rain
And even though I poured myself into you
it was never enough
You took and took
and I gave and gave
And I wish you would have stayed full
or that I had eventually remained empty.
But we didn't
because that wasn't the natural state for either of us.
You always wanted more
and I somehow managed to produce it.
If only we had been different
If only we'd been enough.

If You Find Yourself in Houston's Southeast Side

- Jessica Martinez

You should stop.
Take a walk around Mason Park
at sunset. Ride your bike along
the trail and under the eighty-year-old
oak trees. Try homemade tortillas from Morales. Enjoy
the powdery dough and swear your abuelita
is in the kitchen making them.

There was a cantina
on the corner of Canal and 75th Street.
It's the place where my father would find his father
too borracho to drive or walk the three blocks home.
It's a Starbucks now.

My father knows this part of town better than anyone.
He got his bike stolen on Navigation
then got it back (he never said how) on Lamar Boulevard.
His father pulled a knife on him at another bar
on Harrisburg. The policía busted his bottom lip
and called him a Spic at the Valero over on Griggs.

He proposed to my mother at Shanghai Red's,
where their table overlooked the Port of Houston.
There's a Denny's on Woodridge and Winkler
where my father took me when I was six and said
he wasn't going to be living at home anymore.

There are no more cantinas.
They're called *breweries now*.
I live in the new stucco condos on Lawndale
and the silver metro rail runs straight through our street.
I ride it to my sancho's apartment where he throws me
on his bed, kisses my neck
until I feel breathless.

He's a barista at a retro *speakeasy on Jefferson*.
Sometimes we make love after he flips over the CLOSED sign,
or he pours a bit of tequila in my navel—lapping
the excess that spills onto my skin.
It feels more like home.

Heart, Particularly

- Lana Bella

You walked melancholy to know hurt
on the disappearing track, the way
a nip at the flask tamed life beyond tiers
of ordinary nights. Ghostly in the sere
fences and blackening square of prairie,
you cut mesquite limbs for the air to
nose, empty-tipsy in a pair of walking
boots as talisman. Little darkling, all
the silt feared through your slow pull of
steps, feet first into shadows and glass,
into second growth of steel on the south-
side of street. And this was when you
reached out to hunger for anything but
love, darkening so the heart can live
in the dusk of some presence small, soft-
boned other.

Beat

- Maddie Cook

Tiered lessons and multilayered morals
Soaked in bile that has risen in the
 Throat
 Of battered leather bounds
 And words that aim for targets

Drawn in red ink
On the backs of you and I

 Safehaven

 mirrors

 Paradise

But underground gives way
To above-pavement ideals
 Flesh and blood

(Streak)

On the windows
Where he banged his head
 Too hard on the glass
Out of ferocious animosity

Here,
 The bell tolls when we tell it to
 And the lights flicker
 At the same rate as our minds
 And to categorize this insanity
 Is to refute it.

Antagonize an argument,
Welcome the worked up,
Hot under the collar,
Boiling point. . .

Rejection is just another form of flattery!

(continued on next page)

Animadvert to acceptance
 Ideas begin in the cellars
 Of beer bellies
 And strung out soles of feet
That have tip toed
Across broken glass
 That shattered
 When his head
 Connected with the frosty solidity.

Frustration is merely a side effect
Of (good) insanity

Paper cuts from paper backs
 And the blood that drips
 Onto the hardwood
 Seeps into the stories
 And peppers them with
 Recognition of ridicule.

Topaz leaks from grout

Between each brick

Holding together
Rigid reconciliation
And rhetoric
That is thrown through
Space
And
Time
And
Television
Sets

Meant to infiltrate
Increasingly intelligent minds

And drown them in
Illiterate ideologies.

(continued on next page)

Take a harder look at the pixelated
Face of an American dream
And seek haven
Under doormats
And hinges that squeak
When ideas push too hard
Against the splintered roughness
Of a locked door

But we hold every key

Shining metal disregards
The monotony
And when the lock turns
So does the stomach
Of the star spangled superior
Who sits in his castle of white
Toying with his tie
Thinking nothing of it

But total

Tantalizing

Tranquility.

The Truth of Always

- Katie Keridan

“You,” she said,
the truth shining from her eyes
as it wrapped around her words.
“It’s always been you.
You make me feel more like myself
than I ever thought I could be.
And I don’t know what to do with someone like that,
other than spend the rest of my life with them.
You are why it’ll never work with anyone else . . .
and why I would never want it to.”

Waltzing the Night

- P D Lyons

We'd hold ourselves like prayers between each other
bare feet, beating hearts
soft by each breath
full moon kisses
beyond any daylight horizon

it was one o' clock this morning.
woke up no particular reason
didn't even need to pee.
kitchen floor so cold I hurt for shoes
stood there adjusting to Frigidaire light
three bottles of beer on the second shelf
opened one by the window
chugged a salute to those long
hard rain halos

this is not the city I used to know with you

maybe I go for another
maybe it'll help me sleep
probably not
these days once I'm up
even beer can't touch me

deserted even by the small comfort of your ghost
still I sway as if somehow
we're dancing

Interludes

- Katie Keridan

Interludes

those moments between anxiety
when you forget how worried you are
and feel as if you're finally moving
at the same pace
as the rest of the world
and then just as you're appreciating the break
you're thrown back into your normal state
where the only thing racing faster
than your heart
is your mind
and you are painfully aware of just how
messed up you are

To My Old Friend Who Knows How It Is

- Lynn White

What ever happened my old friend?
You know
right from wrong.
You know,
you saw with your eyes open.
You knew oppression,
abuse of power,
state terror,
apartheid.
You knew.
You know.
We boycotted,
we campaigned,
we did what we could.
Then
I would have shared anything with you.
Now
I wouldn't even share my space,
wouldn't stay in the same room as you.
What ever happened to you my old friend?
Rediscovering your jewishness shouldn't mean
giving up your humanity,
negating your history,
seeing with your eyes tight shut
but you know
you know.
What ever happened my old friend?
You know.

Power Outage

- Steve Klepetar

When you left, the sky turned murderous,
filled with lightning and black clouds.
“Pathetic fallacy,” I hear you say,
but it’s true, the rain tearing through
early spring leaves, bashing new grass
to mud. And now the power is out,
and I find the lantern.
I light candles and hope
the batteries in the radio hold out.
If you were here, you’d rummage
with a flashlight in the fridge for food
we could eat without cooking –
a salad with the last of the lettuce,
the avocados not quite ripe,
some onion far too sharp to eat raw.
You’d find cheese to grate,
maybe some bread that’s not too stale.
And wine, plenty of wine
brought up from downstairs, the good
reds we bought for some far-off holiday.
When you left, I stopped thinking
about food, only about wings, about fences
I could hurtle as I followed you
above the tree line, toward the ragged sea.

What You Can't Know When You're Young

- Anne Higgins

How the big girl with the baby face
Turns into the woman with bags under her eyes
And the fine skins lined with eyelash thin wrinkles.
How you become the sandwich memory keeper
Who tells your cousin's children about your grandmother
And knows that someday it will be important to them.

How the details of weddings and funerals
Who was there and what they said.
what songs they sang by the piano in the basement.
How those things matter.
How it matters what those Mennonite wives and mothers , sisters in law,
Wore and said in the kitchen while they got the meal together.
Always jello and creamed corn on the menu.

You can't know these things when you are young,
How the necks of women become crepe draped
How you can see the laughing eighteen year old
Behind the laughing sixty six year old
Same person same person.

Thin String

- Kenneth Pobo

Sometimes I dash up to Turtleback Mountain,
daydream about how my Truth or
Consequences boyfriend can sip the sun

through a plastic straw. No lip burns.
He gets up, feeds the cats, goes to work and says:
I do not lead an average life.
The cats, furry library cards, sneer,
wait to be checked out. Even though

D.H. Lawrence said that any lover
who asks him "Do you really love me?"
earns his undying detestation, I ask him:
Do you really love me. He says yes,
but if I want proof, go ask the mountain. I ask,

but Turtleback recently made a vow
of silence likely to last twenty years.
I'll have to go on trust, a thin string,
maybe a strong one.

Father, Chupacabra

- Jessica Martinez

The news said you were in North Carolina.
Something drained the life
from a pair of goats.

The carcasses half devoured,
brownish blood soaked the earth.
You are getting older,
sloppier.

Eye-witness accounts vary
depending on which side of the equator
you are passing through.

You have fangs in Los Angeles,
ears like a fox in El Paso.
They say you are half-devil in Mexico,
walk around on hooves, puncture your prey
with ram horns.

I saw you once, in Florida,
wearing a Marlin's cap.
You walked next to a woman
who was not my mother,
held a child's hand that was not mine.

Your mouth opened, lips curled,
ready to lunge.
It was not a malicious attack.
Your laugh sounded human.

Spell for the Apocalypse

- Vivian Wagner

It's the end of time, or at least the time before, so maybe you don't need a spell. But in case you want one, here it is. Use a wood pencil, or, if you can't find that, make some willow charcoal in a fire. Get paper, or, if necessary, a smooth rock, a hunk of granite, a slab of sandstone. Go out under a full moon, when there's plenty of silverwhite light, and scratch markings. It can't be guaranteed, but your markings might bring back things you've lost, things you want: trees, geese, dignity.. If you don't remember words, draw pictures, invent symbols. You can also etch what you want to be that's never been: purple guppies, maybe, or peace. Then, take your paper or stone and put it somewhere on display, where all who pass can see. Anyone who's left, that is. Place your message out there, in graphite or charcoal or blood, and then wait, and hope. It's all you can do. If you think of something else to write, write that. This is your last, best chance to recreate the world.

There's So Much Said in Packing a Toothbrush

- Dylan Heaney

It's an unspoken narrative that rubs the reader
raw as he experiences the momentary death
Of his relationship in the hallway outside his bathroom.
It's an unspoken narrative that creates an emotional
separation, cited by unhappiness, where distance
becomes an integral part of peace and negotiation.
It's an unspoken narrative of no outward regret
but contains unheard whispers that say, "slow it
down," hoping for a honeymoon period long gone.
But what the unspoken narrative really tells is
a story of a lie that two adults left unaddressed.

The Bedside Book of If

- Glen Armstrong

If she leaves in the pouring rain,
she will not return
unless she does so
as a plague at least

partially dreamed,
her lipstick still intact.

She'll no longer need a key, a secret
password, a written lease,

a place for silk stockings,
a working wage,
an alibi.

If she arrives in the pouring rain,
she will most likely stay.

I will light a fire and not know
whether to turn my head
or act natural,

naturally.

After a few weeks her brother comes
for a long weekend
and sleeps on the couch.

After hearing the story
of how we got together,
he says, "Ah yes, rain,

the great equalizer . . ."
and then we both
just sort of lose it.
I mean, "rain, the great

equalizer." Who the hell
talks like that these days?

Rewind

- Dylan Heaney

Where we can truly see each other
and a world open only when our eyes are closed
protection at its finest
imagining the walls we built within this bed
and i lay on blue sheets
staring at weary laden closet
remembering my own journey
as i walk home
through the night
with a glare that cut me
which he threw violently
and enveloped him
i went up behind
our love was raw in its newness
he doesn't like surprises
but here's the thing:
why don't i surprise him
i think to myself
sitting at a bar drinking a beer
Never had he been so mean

I Know if I Go to You Now

- Nora Herzog

I know if I go to you now, I will take off
my shoes. I will sit on the floor, or the
rug, my back against the heater, under
golden shiny paper. I will pretend to write,
maybe I will write a little. You will
sit at your desk, smoking occasionally
from a wooden pipe and eventually it will
be too late to go home.

I will be sad,
I will try not to cry,
I will cry anyway.

You will not know what to do, and so you
will give me an awkward hug and ask if
I need anything, I will say “tea” and
sit on your bed, pull your blankets over myself.

I know if I got to you now, I will
fall asleep in your bed—again.
Or, contrarily, I will fail to fall asleep
in your bed, again, and restless
at 2am I will echo your request
from weeks ago and ask
you to hold me.

You will not say no because I am sad and you
are lonely and we are too comfortable
with each other.

If I go to you now, we will fuck, desperately
and I will still be searching for a piece of
you that cares about me, and this time
when you don't kiss me, it will hurt—
I will hurt.

You will fuck me hoping I can give you back
parts of yourself and afterwards I will cry
and the fact that I cry will hurt you.

(continued on next page)

It will all hurt—you and me and this time
nothing can be said to make it hurt less
other than the forbidden words that I am
too proud to say again, and you are too
scared to wonder if they might be true.