

the Unrorean

volume XIV issue 1 *the Unrorean's alter ego* Summer/Fall 2014

Midnight in the South Side

wretched night,
stale coffee,
curdled milk,
dead on arrival,
hands deep in pockets,
by the free hospital
where even doctors
are beaten down by death,
up tenement hill
during a long, cold winter,
despising burnt-out colors,
eyes escaping through
shattered windows,
esprit de corpse,
shivering woman on the corner,
dress crawling toward hips,
wanting to forget
the last time she
forgave herself
twenty year-old body
on twenty year old legs,
“want a good time”
she whispers,
can't decide whether that's
a question
or a statement

—John Grey

Drunk in Seville bar;
Olives big as hand grenades,
Silent hams hanging.

—David Thompson

North Dakota

This is the saddest
mule ever ridden.

I'm not John Wayne.
I'm not Buffalo Bill.

I should want to be
more like my sister.

She tells me that power
lines are the threads

that hold big empty
skies together. Are

clouds the stains?
She tells me that

water towers over her,
me—blooming green.

—Peter Burzynski

another cock

i broke it off
but her on another cock
is unthinkable.
“i'm sorry,” she said.
i breathed
because
what can words do?
outside i smoked a cigarette,
feeling like the soviets
after The Miracle.
changed her name in my phone to
Respond And You're A Pussy.
those scratch marks on her back.
i was never that aggressive.

—Mark McHugh

The Scraps and The Holy Water

Back when I thought the meditation techniques
In Ram Dass' “Be Here Now” would light the way and save me.
Back when I poured Kerouac's “Mexico City Blues”
Into my blood along with buckets of beer.
Recycling books for books at used bookstores long driven
Out of business by big box Borders and Barnes & Noble chains.
I'd pay a mint to have back those Edward Abbey first editions
And that Chinese Painting pocket book with the strange carp painted within.
Boxes of old lovers who can't stand my presence anymore
And their letters piled into cramped bedroom closets of memory.
The thieves who came around left these old poisons for me
And grabbed my CDs, black and white tv, and the first camera I ever owned.
Left the two cats alone and the dishwashing soap.
Left the apartment cave empty and mine alone.

—Steve Ausherman

Devin McGuire, Editor
Cynthia Brackett-Vincent, Founding Editor

I was a Plasma Gutter Punk: Roanoke VA, January 2008

Waiting people slouch under low ceilings
eating popcorn and watching T.V.
I talk to Annie, “Orgasm Rhetoric”?
Good band name, dude. First album:
“Vibrators are Contrived.”
While the nurse with an angular face
wheezes for two kinds of I.D!
Then, she returns all of my platelets,
spun until plasma-free,
along with \$35.00 for groceries
and weed.

—Amanda-Gaye Smith

Madrid hotel room;
Oranges and Graham Greene novels,
Stack of blank postcards.

—David Thompson

Paramahansa

I am a goose in a gaggle of drakes.
I crash every party they have
in their college tweed and tie
with my one brilliant
and tattered tuxedo. A goose

is a homebody who must travel
for half-years, lest he die
in his nest by exposure. I am

gigantic. On days
with a singular cloud
I know that yes,

I've touched that one before.
It used to be that common people
saw no distinction between me

and a swan, that's how
the course of the universe was known
as the simple beating heart

of a *paramahansa*,
the goose of all geese,
and at night you wished
for a lover's legs that were bowed.

—Andrew Squitiro

I Do Not Know Pain

It hurts her
to shower & brush her hair
to dress & put on her shoes.

It hurts her
to open the door & close it
to lock it behind her.

It hurts her
to walk 4 steps
down to the taxi.

I try to help
but it hurts.

Her daughter, 18
hurts her
taking her money & credit cards

Talking to me, telling me
hurts, but I listen.

She wants to learn chess
but it hurts to open
& close her fingers.

Knowing it will hurt, I offer
to teach her anyway.

She wants coffee again
to feel it hot in her mouth
burning her lips & tongue.

I treat her
even though it hurts.

She wants to feel
the strong hands
of a man against her.

I pretend to be strong
& hold her hand.

But.
She wants to feel a man
his warmth hot against her

because it hurts.
But I can't.

—Alejandro Duarte

The Unrorean is published January & July each year.

\$2 each U.S. (the price of a cheap draft beer, and more satisfying)! One-year subscription {2 issues} \$4 U.S. (*much* more satisfying than just *one* issue!).

Submit online via Submittable @ <https://encirclepublications.submittable.com/submit/20648>

You may also submit (solely to the *Unrorean*) by e-mail: Unrorean@encirclepub.com or postal mail (be sure to include SASE).

Poets receive one copy per poem published. **Editor's Pick* receives two Xtra copies.

The Unrorean, Encircle Publications LLC, P.O. Box 187, Farmington, ME 04938.

Website: <http://www.encirclepub.com> <<http://www.encirclepub.com/poetry/unrorean>>

Denial

my grandfather won't watch sitcoms because
there are too many black people in t.v.
I watch as his world grows smaller and smaller
as he cuts more and more things
from his life because he doesn't want
to look at black people, new movies,
the news, his walks through the park
answering the door, all to avoid
seeing black people. he spends his days

watching old movies, pretending the world
is Fred Astaire, Roy Rogers, Elizabeth Taylor,
only white people, listens only to Lawrence Welk and
polka records from his childhood in Canada
where he still thinks everyone is
white. I secretly scout out nursing homes
struggle to find ways to ask the staff
how many black people live there
how many white people work there
if there's some way we can keep him
safe from the rest of the world.

—Holly Day

Don't Blame

Don't blame
the failure of the floor
to speak
of your bare feet.

of withdrawal
when you're not in it.

Don't blame
the failure of
the block of space
called a room
to explain
how it feels when
you walk through it.

Blame your ears
you never upgraded.
Blame your eyes.

Don't blame
the failure of walls
to tell the story of
your shadow

How many hours
of silence
have you filled
with noise?
How many times
have you rushed
past a tree
bending its branches
in deference
to something
of which it knows
nothing,
and not noticed?

or the failure of,
especially,
the bed,
to describe the hell

—Neil Carpathios

During Hungry Years

My lifelines
were:
homeless cats as friends.
cheap coffee brewed with napkins used as filters.
long walks through glass and graffiti canyons.
Ramen noodles boiled in a dented pan.
metal bars over the windows.
space heater glow.
radio static.
books.

Those years,
now razor thin in memory,
whisper over my shoulder
"I'm coming back...
I'm coming back to get you."

— Steve Aushman

Relationship

IF me plus negative you
leaves me,

THEN, according to
the commutative property,
me minus you

still leaves me.

—Josh Medsker

Something about love

***Editor's Pick**

when she came to my cabin that night
i could tell by the smell of her
that she had been with him again -
she was drunk and swaying
and i pulled her close to me by the hips
and let her lean in for the kiss
before i pushed her away
along the side of the bunk
and she made a quiet sound
and her hand grasped the bedsheets as she fell,
so they fell with her
in a tangle of legs whipping and pasty green fabric.
i went to my suitcase and brought out
a bottle and two glasses,
the drink spilled
with the pitch and toss of the ship
and somewhere i heard thunder:

she got up and came to me again
but i held her off with a hand,
just drank.
somewhere on this ship there were
people that still loved one another
and still tolerated each others messes, bullshit,
snake thoughts, unhappiness and hysterical tiny fists
but i finished the glass and threw it at the wall
and stared at her eyes
with an aging hatred like wine
and she said something about love
half mumbling with fishvoice
cowardice
but i could see her hands trembling
from the force of trying to stay
and perhaps from the blow of the wall against
her head
and i gave her the other whiskey
and turned to the bottle
and told her to get the hell out:

she left rambling the corridors with
that glass in her hand
and she still had it in her hand hours later
when she came back to me crying
and the storm had gotten worse
and i steadily more drunk
and i decided that i didnt care what she had done
or why or with whom
and i picked her up and pulled
her to the bunk, jamming her panties sideways and
jerking at her dress and at my trousers
and the ship rolled with panic
a million mackerel and swordfish
tossed by ruin and i pressed my mouth onto her mouth:
she was always crying crying crying
and she said again something about love
and kissed me
while the whiskey glass banged around loudly on the floor
and on deck men slid about
and tried to keep the ship
from going down.

—D.S. Maolalai

Dress Rehearsal for Sunnyside Retirement Home

be honest: we are repulsed
their loss of bladder and bowels
their faltering voices/blocked ears
their sense of smell numb to the stench of lingering death
Lysol/ urine/ broccoli
their minds caged in some limbo world

a grey duty nudges us to make monthly visits
to aunt/ uncle
we are irritated by their passivity
their static gaze out sunless windows
we lack the skein of patience to visit weekly

recalling annual daffodil jaunts at their lakeside cottage
fresh trout sizzling in the fry pan
we must busy our hands
straighten dresser drawers/refold wrinkled clothes
stare at the broken clock

Our denial intact
we rush to our cars
to the colors of the living

—Kit Zak

How to Love a Fat Girl

She's beautiful.
And everything I never could have imagined.

23 and drinking whiskey
Before bedtime.
She said her dreams tasted better
When she drank.

Hair dyed a shade of red
And brown and black
Because rainbows are for
Promises, she said.
"God wouldn't lie."

She was 200 pounds
And curvy.

Her waist line was not large enough
To hold her heart,
But it was too large
To fit in a rectangular mirror.

She did not care about fitting
Into mirrors or boxes or bra sizes.

She said it felt better when she
Left her clothes in the drawers
And just walked around
Feeling her skin connect with nature.

When I wanted to have sex with her,
She asked me, "Fuck or make love?
There is a difference."

She did not turn off the light
To get undressed.

She's the most beautiful woman
I have ever witnessed.

Tattoos were strewn across her body
Like the Sistine Chapel.
I'd never seen art look so holy.

She took my hand and placed it
Just above her heart.
She told me that it beat a little faster
Because she might be slightly
Out of shape.

But how can a woman so strong
Be out of shape?
I told her that I loved her shape.
She laughed.

"Nobody loves a fat girl," she said.
"Women like us are supposed to
Fall in love with men like you."
She sighed. "We are supposed to fall
And we are supposed to stay down."

She's the most beautiful woman
I have ever met and yet she swore
That I did not love her.

She swore that
I did not see her face turn pale
When she stepped onto a scale
Or in front of a mirror.

And that
I did not see her hold a knife
And a bottle of pills like a
Life line gone wrong.

I told her that I know
I did not see her pain and
I did not see her past.
I just saw a beautiful woman.

I told her
That's all I needed to see
To know how to love her.

—Jocelyn Mosman