

"A Quarterly
Published Strictly
Quarterly"

Works & Days

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Winter 2012

Nº I

Apology Not Accepted

by Cara Marsh Sheffler

In our highly confessional culture, I confess this:

You know nothing about me and—what's more—I hope to keep it that way.

Obviously, I should shut up now. That would be the ideal course of action to yield my desired outcome.

But, I'm no better than my vices and no one ever has accused me of restraint. {Cont'd}

Lion Tamer

by Willow Jane Sainsbury



A Beautiful Evening to Enjoy the Charms of Being Alive

by Jennifer Kraus and Henry Smith

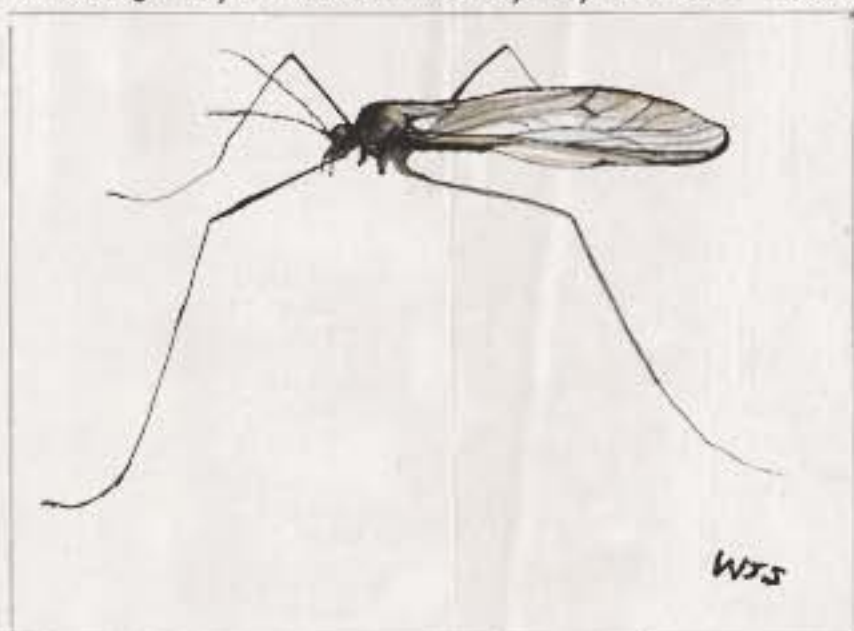


The Weirdest Thing

by Gillian Louise Bostock



"At dawn get to your fields, and one day they'll be full." - Hesiod



Drive

by Gillian Louise Bostock



Work, Transcendent

by Luke Cissell

Before it becomes uncomfortably apparent, let me go ahead and admit it: I have undertaken to write myself out of the trap I have fallen into again. It's a familiar trap, and though I trade in the arts (I make music), I would imagine it's recognizable to anyone who has worked at anything for any length of time. I have begun to question the value of my work in rather non-specific (but oh so specific!), sweeping, metaphysical terms. {Cont'd}

Trapeze Artist

by Willow Jane Sainsbury



Recipes

by Eric Wines and
Ashley Suzan

Tuxedo Sam

by Rebecca Bersohn



Building One:

Capital, Fire, and General
Focus in the Late-Modern
Nation State

by Eric Bland

Building Two:

Gross Mismanagement
of Simple Truth in
Construction and Thought

by Eric Bland

Buff Whalin'

by Rebecca Bersohn



Lonesome Dreamer

by Luke Cissell

Our Trespasses

Part One of Three

by Cara Marsh Sheffler

The panic attacks came on the night his mother's twin sister died, a woman Gabe had hardly seen in ten years. That lapse was no one's fault—or so Gabe was wont to think. The disease took a decade to kill her and in that time, as she shuttled from clinic to clinic, Gabe had dropped out of school and made a life for himself out East. Her funeral was held up by the Flood—an 80-year-flood, if you listened to the news, but nothing much worse than '93 if you listened to the locals—so that it had now been just over a week since his aunt had passed away. But the panic attacks, he somehow knew, were to remain a nightly fixture. {Cont'd}

Now Playing

by Christo Logan,
Chris Gee, and
Gayle Tsern Strang



Building One:

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by Eric Bland

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Capital, Fire, and General Focus in the Late-Modern Nation State

ME

Tonight I am thinking of Herman Cain, the brussels sprouts, body sweats, and 101 things to learn in art school. I am thinking of DSK and the music my first piano teacher made. I am thinking of Julian Barnes and how he might be depressed and how I picked the wrong book to read when I decided to read a book of his. I am remembering that I dislike literature that isn't mathematical, mostly. These are the things. Tonight I am I am thinking of Verlaine...Art Monk and Watteau, and it is a good night, so, goodnight!

But no...really no really...

I want to be with you, it seems like something to do, and I am always looking, I am, for things to do, for means of belonging: I never wanted to be brutal, always yearned to dance like Rosa, that regular Luxemburg square. Left alone I am, you know, so ready to challenge it, my upbringing, that Anglophone Judeo-Christian fix, which I am not against, per se, I clearly admit so much of it: ratiocination, monotheism, the mild headache induced by Western philosophy—so much indeed seeped in it seems, when I was a late adolescent perhaps, absorbing and arousing external things, projectile vomiting all over the world—...okay, stop for a moment—

HER

I lived in Queens for a while in the beginning. In Flushing near Shea Stadium and Corona Park. There were Korean people everywhere. They smoke a lot, the young ones, and I always found the boys, the seventeen or eighteen or nineteen-year-old boys, very sexy. I don't know, something about the way their hair was spiked while they appeared to care less as they clasped the hands of their chitchatting girlfriends. I used to sit by the globe that was built for the '64 World's Fair in the park and wait for one of them to come over and talk to me. I would've held him. I would have kept him. My arms around him, my right hand wrapping around to his right buttocks and my left hand just above his shoulder blade. But I never came close. I just sat there, eating kimchi, to break the ice posing...but.... If I seem like a racist...or something...I'm.....I'm just trying to connect.

Today is stupid, being without you. Your breath minus mine. Today is the dumbest of days. One day we will see each other again. It will be like the first time, right? I have cared for people—but have I ever needed anyone like I need you? Come. Come to me. I am so ready for us. Soon, I believe, soon, moon. Yours truly, yours always, Oi-feel-ya. PS: I am leaving this nunnery. The food is



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terrible. The nuns are a true delight. They won't stay out of your business but in a loveable, jolly way, and they've brought me closer to God, plus they've taught me French and Aramaic and we pick pink flowers as the sun rises and write sestinas to the seasons as it sets. But the food, the food is just terrible. Plus I miss you. I am absconding with my toothbrush and my water pistol. Meet me in Shanghai, or anywhere East of Eden. Love, Ophelia. PPS: I still hate cow brains. No, I don't get it either. The thought of it makes me gag.

—Go on...: —and the subtler rhythms of reverie, math with its longing after infinity, the tang and gristle of fine things like hint-of-licorice cocktails and fretted-over charcuterie, like sweet anise, kissing ass and wedding gifts, and funerals in cold New York midwinters, three-bean salads—...off again...

Why did you start that rock-and-roll band when you were young? You could not play an instrument. Is that why you began? Is that why you told the most talented boys in the class that you could sing? Because you could not? So you told them that you could so you might forget your zits and deny your basic dullness? Your pretty-but-up-against-the-sky basic dullness? And so you walked out in the woods on nights that seemed browned and lanterned-out? Maybe a deer dead on the vegetative edge but you couldn't quite tell. The only thing you saw for sure was the solid black behind it that was either the small pond there or sky collapsed into earth foreshadowing the Big Crunch, dark energy, the multiverse, all that life-long nothingness.

All that mess, Orion, the Dippers, Cassiopeia, you contra the sky, so you started a band, became the lead singer, never carried a tune, fell in love with Oasis and that whole asshole thing, and the boys in your band had a little talent but nothing going on upstairs.

You weird, weird girl.

O your leg, your thigh, your brood! Your blood-let!

(This is part of what later the CHILD will respond to. It begins like this and you can imagine how it continues. This part is spoken like a PARENT to a CHILD in a sandbox. It should be noted that the CHILD is especially precocious, almost ridiculously, comically so [the second part should go for laughs, that's just fine and totally appropriate], but not a parody of course. And the PARENT knows this but still, in that weak creature, he can speak, to an extent, patronizingly, as if the object or focus of his harangue were naïve or whatnot.)

PARENTAL FIGURE or GUARDIAN

I'm a pretty liberal guy. I'm even neo-liberal. I'm hawkishly neo-liberal. I'm hegemonically, hawkishly neo-liberal. With a globalized slant. And



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universal human rights are basically my forte. I believe in hearing, understanding, and appreciating the values and local dances of others before trying to impose my values and choreography upon them. I believe in the power of positive listening, even if I choose to react negatively. Wow I just shat an NGO out of my ass. You're welcome Mozambique. No biggie Bangladesh. Please put my entourage up in your best hotel and serve me a large slice of your most endangered species. I believe in tolerance, dialogue, compassion, and extra-marital affairs in the discreet French style. I go on safari because it gives the indigenous driver of the jeep a living wage and I want his family to eat meat once a week with their rice and beans. I like fashion and food, because those who are the very best at fashion and food make the products of their labor available only to the wealthiest individuals in our society. This is why I consider fashion and food to be the arts that are finest. I think the greatest American artists of all time are Wolfgang Puck and Isaac Mizrahi. Everyone else is posing. I write off my children each year when I do my taxes. They'll understand when they're older; they'll see how my nest egg became their inheritance; and when I die I think that they'll celebrate. I'm a neo-liberal. An empty vessel, for the cosmos. The trade-winds and the summer trends and the seven sins blow right through me. Nothing lands, nothing sticks. I am leveraging one moment into the following... *(And this goes on for a while, but you get the general thrust of it.)*

And back: —three-bean salads and driving toward open air malls and Cineplexes, returns to landscapes that embrace if slightly haunt you, on to an elder's esoterica, the constant attempt to engrave one's persona on temporality, the fetishes that situate a unique self, Anglo-Saxon poetry or hagiographies, maybe a little gardening until the back says nyet, then death...it stops quite suddenly like that, I think: you feel like Horace contemplating life's interiors one day, and then, the next, your soul has slipped; it hurts.

WHY YOU ARE STUPID: Hipster in your coffee shop, reading Mallarme in bed last night like you must've, I can only ward you off so much, so hard up. You live above a restaurant. You leave early, walk to the subway, see similar faces. Take the F train. Get off at Broadway-Lafayette. Walk through modernist NYU housing onto Houston Street. Head west. Get a latte. Hurry to work and don't be late! Until the nights existent reclaim you...soft lights on rural barns, like your mediocrity illuminating your xenophobia, your inability to rise above it all, but you are great I say and I mean so much of what I say yet still you fall, you fall, you find yourself in falling



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you are nothing but yourself and so you
fall...you say: "Whenever I am not drinking
or dancing I feel like killing myself." But
you don't believe it, do you? You like
thinking during that ten percent of the time
when thinking does not smother you in
thoughts of aging and losing and failing and
having no luxury or status in your life, yet in
your dreams you almost do, you almost have
everything; in your dreams you trip and fall
and circumambulate your holy city with
bleach in your thermos yet you still feel like
possibility, like good and stupid and freedfrom-
causality creation still vibrates and
purrs within you.

You suck! Ah yes ohh yes oh—O!

(The precocious CHILD responds to the PARENT from earlier.)

CHILD

I think the world is about kindness. (pause) Can you be kind in it? It is like one big, at times literal, at times abstract game we've been sent to play by God. By the way, does God exist? Three months ago you told me that Santa Claus does not exist, and I have to be upfront with you, Father, for this entire winter I have been doing nothing but wondering if God were also something you and your peer-group invented to soothe the worries of my generation. If He doesn't exist just tell me now, I don't want to be told when I'm nine or ten and hanging from the monkey bars, or when I'm sixteen, trying to focus for a match with the high school quiz bowl team. But really, I think God has placed us in this game to see if, with everything going on, we can in...culcate a little kindness into the world. I said that I've been doing nothing for the past season but worrying about the fixedness of God's star in the world, but that's not entirely true. I've also been reading the collected essays of James Baldwin. They're terribly lucid and direct and they grab you by the throat the way an incredibly intelligent human being will, one who doesn't have to worry about whether others will find him clever or interesting. The way Karl Marx is, you know? Or Gertrude Stein or Nietzsche. Or how scientists are. It is rough stuff, you know, James Baldwin. It's not sweetness and ponies. It is rage and pride and impossibility. It is loner-type stuff. Outcast, Promethean-type stuff. It is a reminder. It says, "Remember this." Or it says, "Observe this." "Confront this." It is the real truth which is like the real sun, you can't look at it directly very often on account of the physical and emotional intensity. And while I leave my life story open to amendment and revision—despite my strong intuition, Father, that I will



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die by the age of 23, like my hero George Buchner did—as of today I am certain that the world is about kindness, like the time someone smooths out your collar, or like someone you didn't expect to attend your funeral all the sudden attending your funeral, even though you are in the casket and cannot see her there, even if the casket is open, nor can you hear, smell, touch, or taste her. All of that, the senses, are gone. Maybe you can "think" her still; I don't know. I'd like to think that one can think in the grave; it would take a lot of effort, and maybe a couple of years, like a couple good snowfalls and really bearing down to squeeze out a single thought, because your body would be so gravid and unhurried and ensconced in your new movement toward infinity—or if you've been cremated your thoughts will scatter like snowflakes in a blizzard and you will have great difficulty collecting them into something you can finally grasp and hold onto, and the thoughts will probably start very simply, like just the intimation of what a jellyfish looks like bobbing near the shore of a bay from your past, and perhaps as you exercise this new faculty it will expand in complexity, but maybe now just the barest idea of her bobs for you there at your funeral, and it is a terribly kind thing, her having traveled from the warmth of her farmhouse in New Hampshire to be present, here in the Piedmont of Virginia in mid-February. Or, to conclude, Father, kindness is what James Baldwin breaks out, nay, erupts in, amid his unflinching rebuke of America's inequities, its racial thrombosis and brutal hypocrisies, when he says—and it's the last line, the short one, the last line that makes reading James Baldwin not only an exercise in profundity but also an exercise in rapture, for me, Father—when he says—no, when James Baldwin, in a rising and meticulously calibrated voice, virtually sings to some worthwhile heaven: "To be sensual, I think, is to respect and rejoice in the force of life, of life itself, and to be present in all that one does, from the effort of loving to the breaking of bread. It will be a great day for America, incidentally, when we begin to eat bread again, instead of the blasphemous and tasteless foam rubber that we have substituted for it. And I am not being frivolous now, either."

And then, in remembrance of her presence: "Her ease is your sloth, Catullus / you itch & roll in her ease: // former kings and cities / lost in the valley of her arm."

The valley of her arm hung out the window as we crisscrossed
She had a cold. Tissues blew like frosted butterflies about the cabin.
we smelled.

We smelled so bad making love was difficult. You smelled like earth again, like peat or
day-old breath, like a mildly polluted creek. We made love unfastening anything.



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Editorial Staff

Luke Cissell (*Work, Transcendent; Lonesome Dreamer*) is a musician and composer who lives in Lower Manhattan. Born in Louisville, Kentucky, he was a fiddling champion at the age of eight and went on to train as a classical violinist. Cissell's recent work includes a collection of chamber music, a full-length album, and a suite for solo violin written as a companion piece to Cara Marsh Sheffler's *Guide*. He is currently at work on his second studio album and an opera based on Henry James's *The Ambassadors*. Play with his jukebox at <http://www.lukecissell.com>.

Sarah Marriage (*Art Director; Designer; Programmer; Calligrapher*) is a woodworking student at the College of the Redwoods Fine Woodworking program in Fort Bragg, California. Conceived in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, raised in Anchorage, Alaska, Sarah has at turns worked in the fields of architecture, structural engineering, occupational health and safety, dog-walking, data management, physics, youth empowerment, and construction supply. Recent projects include a madrone box and the rehabilitation of a nineteenth-century townhouse in Baltimore, Maryland. The box will be on display alongside the work of her classmates at Fort Bragg's Town Hall from January 28th to February 5th.

Cara Marsh Sheffler (*Our Trespasses; Apology Not Accepted*) is a writer who lives on Manhattan's Lower East Side. In her past life as an actress, she was featured in Woody Allen's *Celebrity* and in The Looking Glass Theatre's Off-Broadway production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. A recipient of the Eagles Prize, she has most recently been working on an essay collection and a novel about the guidebook used by the Donner Party, *Guide*. She performed an excerpt of *Guide* in tandem with Luke Cissell's (*The Myth of*) *Infinite Progress* at the Brick Theater this past spring. Sheffler is also providing the libretto for Cissell's operatic adaptation of Henry James's *The Ambassadors*. She is not on Facebook.

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Contributors

Born in Los Angeles, **Rebecca Bersohn** (*Tuxedo Sam; Buff Whalin*) is a New York based artist. She received her BEA at New York University. Her work has been exhibited at Monster Island, Charlie Horse Gallery, the Market Hotel in Brooklyn, BWAC and The Commons Gallery at NYU. Her Awards in the Arts include Bank of America Art Award 2004, an Artist's Distinction Award (2003) for an ink/water color piece at the California Art Education Association Los Angeles County Exhibit and the Governor's Art Scholar Award 2002-2003.

Eric Bland (*Building One; Building Two*) is a writer/director/performer/accountant and the artistic director of the Old Kent Road Theater. He was born and raised in Richmond, Virginia and has a degree in Creative Writing (Poetry) from Princeton University and an MA in Writing for Performance from Goldsmiths College, University of London. His play *Death at Film Forum* was published in NYTE's Plays and Playwrights 2009. Recent productions: *Here at Home* (31Down); *Emancipatory Politics: A Romantic Tragedy* (Incubator Arts Project); *Jeannine's Abortion: A Play in One Trimester* (The Brick, w/ Piper McKenzie Productions); *Are We Bourgeois, Mon Amour?* (A Psycho's Analysis) (Bushwick Starr); *I Stand for Nothing* (Ontological-Hysteric Theater). He was named one of nytheatre.com's people of the year for 2010, and his next show, *All the Indifferent Children of the Earth*, will premiere at The Brick Theater in mid-February, 2012. He may be contacted at ericbland@gmail.com.

Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, **Gillian Louise Bostock** (*Drive; The Weirdest Thing*) left New York this past spring to return to the West Coast and focus solely on her own work after years of putting aside her own artistic goals to become a real-live sponge of photographic extrapolapagus. Predominantly photographing interiors and landscapes, she employs the medium as a means to dabble with philosophical questions concerning the meaning of life and lock its fleeting beauty into place much like a butterfly pinned beneath museum glass. More of her work can be found here (www.gillianbostock.com) and on Cowbird (<http://cowbird.com/author/gillian/>).

Jennifer Kraus (*A Beautiful Evening to Enjoy the Charms of Being Alive*), based in Warwick and Brooklyn, NY is the founder of HUGE CUP Productions, a fledgling live arts production company. Since its inception in 2010 she has produced two original hybrid theater works in Warwick. Jennifer has worked in choreographic and assistant direction roles at The Cell, The Players Theatre, and HERE in NYC. She teaches dance, drama, and voice at the New York Performing Arts Center in Washingtonville, NY. Learn more at hugecupwordpress.com.

Christo Logan (*Now Playing*) has worked in New York, San Francisco and Shenzhen on projects inventing furniture and products, graphics and websites, buildings and fabrication, installations and urban planning, and remote control fighting robots. He is currently a founding member of Urbanus Labs architecture office in Hong Kong, and he plays the cello.

Willow Jane Sainsbury (*Trapeze Artist; Lion Tamer; Insect Illustrations*) is an artist and illustrator, who currently lives in Vicenza, Italy. She has lived in Melbourne, Australia; Auckland, New Zealand; and Oxford, United Kingdom in the past three years where she continues to teach, learn and work as an artist. She most recently returned to education, learning print-making at the Australian Print Workshop. She is currently working on her own illustration project and a study of landscapes. She is not on Facebook.

Henry Smith (*A Beautiful Evening to Enjoy the Charms of Being Alive*), hailing from Warwick, NY, is an aspiring creative videographer. Just this past summer he began creating short videos for a website, grinds.com, that focuses on showcasing various artists in the local Warwick community. His dream is to keep creating videos to enrich the community around him, while broadening his own artistic expression. He had a wonderful time teaming up with Jennifer Kraus to create a surreal, dream-like piece that he hopes everyone who watches will enjoy. Thanks to Vastu Yoga for letting us use their beautiful space.

California-grown and a New Yorker at heart, **Ashley Suzan** (*Recipes*) is a graduate of the Gallatin School at New York University. The youngest of four, Ashley was raised in the kitchen. An avid yogi and spinning enthusiast, her creative passions include drawing, food, and beverage. Follow her on Twitter @AshleySuzan.

Eric Wines (*Recipes*) enjoys trolling flea markets for treasures, playing with plants, and distance running. Eric is co-owner of Tre restaurant in Manhattan and a member of Skylight NYC. He hosts candlelight suppers and classy cocktail parties. Eric was raised in Detroit, MI and lives in New York City. Follow him on Twitter @EricWines.