

"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

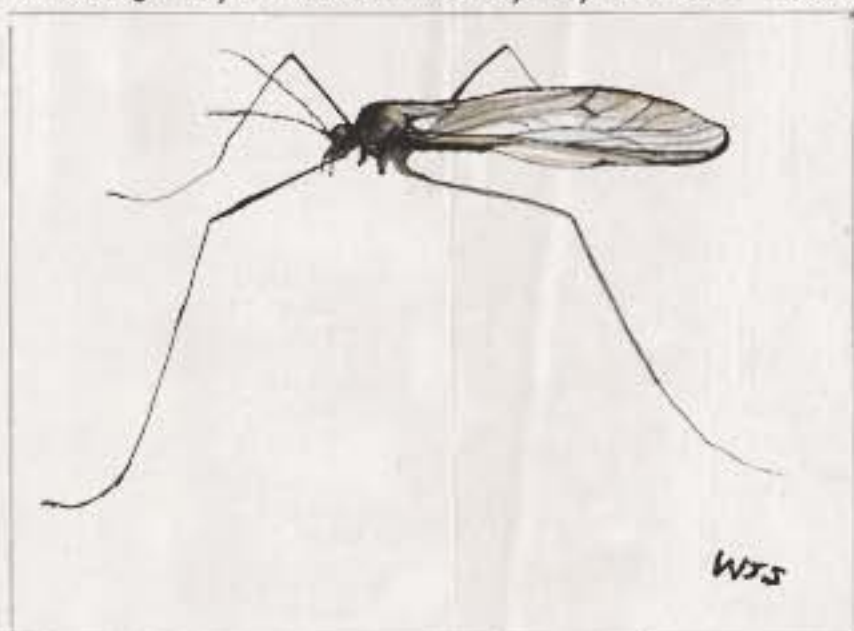


The Weirdest Thing

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}

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Building Two:

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by Eric Bland

Nº 1, Winter 2012

Gross Mismanagement of Simple Truth in Construction and Thought

In the next morning:

—Your eggs are still there. Your eggs are so chic, still in your body.

—Stop discussing my eggs with yourself, she said.

I was lying down on the bed, half-naked, stomach to the ceiling, the bed-sheet tangles around my left foot and ankle. NPR was on, Terry Gross I think. Or no, that guy who introduces me to all that new music on Saturday mornings. I try to sleep, but I wake up to new exciting music in New York. I imagine it leading me into the Guggenheim, walking past French restaurants, little patisseries and boulangeries, bistros, cafes...a fucking Cobb Salad, give me a fucking...Nicoise, my love. Poutine. Green-go. Gringo. The music isn't *new*, like that, just fresh to my ears, like a good green toe-may-toe.

—The idea of your eggs are for some reason arousing me. That sounds more sexual than I mean.

—Stop having sex with my eggs, she said.

—I can't help it, they're a motherfucking dream.

—They're welling up in me right now.

—Let's lie forever. Let's lie, in bed, forever. Let's have an English garden and...drench in the smirr of rain...

—And fine love making.

—With jam, I said. And parsnips and—

—Blood pudding.

—And jam, like I already said that.

"My name is Mob, and there are many of us," she said, quoting around Jesus speaking to the crazed man in *Mark*, whose demons are loosed and careering as pigs over the edge of the cliff. The townspeople tell Jesus to leave. Just go, get out. And I say "jam" again. I'm fine with lovemaking and salads. I'm crying, trying to go back to sleep now. Do not. They do do not. Beholding. Performance conviva presentation.

We'd grown silent, like two people listening to one another's monologue.

"The heads of the Sauropods were very small. They couldn't reason, I imagine. They were very successful on the earth. Enormous necks. They laid eggs. Apatosorous."

I desperately need to be held, Beautiful.

The greatest thing is thinking. —It was a Brontosaurus.

I thought of crying in that coffee shop. Which sort of stank.

*



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He is my brother. He has had the same things I have had. I don't love him because he is blood. Or because I have lived with him, for as long as I can remember. I love him because he has not had one advantage more than I. He has suffered where I have and he has gained where I did, and that is why I have his picture taped to the side of my desktop.

When Lucien fell ill I can tell you at that point I was glad I had a wife. And I was glad that I was a husband in good standing.

HER

In Prague, Milan, Hong Kong your hair grew long
And the wine was warm
And my body hurt, my breasts were swollen,
And disliked your touch,
Your...thick...hair...reminded me of bulbous Medieval sculpture;

And my thighs were bruised from bed sore
or fat from lassitude, or from
Rolling through the steppe in minivans, leaving rural airports
For places no one wants to live, your hands
Were not as elaborate as I'd thought,
Your fingers,
And your adolescent grab
Inside my purple coat for flesh—
Not warmth, even my breast was cold, on an overnight
Train to New South Wales or Trieste,
A woman never really cares about the placement of her bosom
In space or time if you've once held it.

I laid the *Bible* you laid Saul Bellow down,
To rest. Gave an opening for Celan, Mallarme,
Cavafy calling down the corridor to his brittle
Faun, the boy who can dance and so dances,
Intimidates me; while you sadden now, urging
Our old mythologies, undone/Undine, your hard hand in mine,
Your sudden *hardness*...I called you "Action" but you heard,
And I wanted, statuesque and solid, silent even, Acteon.

"How could you dislike my touch," she asked herself, pretending, at that moment, to be him. You used to touch me like that frantic pianist leaping keys, your fingertips along my back then bouncing to my thigh, depression light, and then rebounding, scrolling down the whites with just your tips, bouncing back and then the pedal pressed, whoosh. The finger enters, finding opening, admitted, phalanges! And in the dark you have me...he was sweet, he used to lick them after...his hand delivered sweetness once. How could I dislike his touch?



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And his eyes are left behind like miniature scones, hard, light brown, and edible.

There is a parable, about the time Lucretius was urged under a mango tree by a Saracen who had absconded to a lonely place. A small heifer dumb-fucked by Lucretius was taken there by the hand by a disciple of Confucius, and given a balm akin to modern day Lexapro. There were four eyewitnesses. The first died three year later and the second four years after that. The next one is unhappy in business. The fourth's fortunes have mildly improved, but he entertains a general anxiety. And so all have been cursed who witnessed Lucretius called by the Saracen and led by the Confucian below the mango tree's fruitfulness. Only the small heifer retains gusto. Wisdom is moot.

CAROL Go tell it on the mountain. Tell about the suicides that accompanied the Industrial Revolution. Moving to the city, sucking on soot, then willfully destroying one's wage capacity, one's wage labor, one's surplus value, particularly after reading this morning in the *Manchester Guardian* how violently the Paris Commune was suppressed, that picture of those open coffins, why not join them, solidarity, Solidarnosc. How many people died by their own hand when Goethe started publishing his Romantic treacle? Or when Holderlin and Heinrich Heine, when those German bastards wrote that lyric poetry, about flowers and crags and loving women God-it-all-makes-me-sick. One look at that shit and all those great musicians, Schumann and Schubert, Liszt and Brahms, who wanted to put that drivel to music, and who wouldn't want to die? And how many killed themselves in the Soviet Union, in the late '20s and '30s, disenchanted with the Revolution's course? So many women, born around 1900, who fought in their late teens and early twenties, you read of them, exhausted and broken—physically as well as emotionally—with young children and old husbands, what was left to them now? What stimulation? What dream or desire? Back to standing on the back porch watching snow accumulate on the branches of fir trees. Seeing a hare hop by. Sipping arsenic for breakfast. JASON Why do you only talk about suicide? CAROL What— JASON I don't really think you're as dark you pretend to be. CAROL I don't say, I don't think that I'm dark. JASON But you want a tattoo. CAROL I want a colorful tattoo, one that is blue-green and yellow. JASON But you want it to be based around imagery from the short stories of Kafka. CAROL I do.



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Do you know of any images, do any images out of Kafka stand out to you? Which would look good on the small of my back? JASON ...That one, where the notion of justice—

CAROL It's too complicated! *(beat)* It wouldn't read, and I think Renee Zellweger already has it. —Do you believe in universal values? In Universalism? A little while ago I thought I did. A little—like a week ago. Maybe a month. I thought, "That is what I definitely believe in, what I subscribe to: Universal Values. With my whole life being a struggle between Universalism on the one hand, and radical, alienated individualism on the other. Between my ideal in politics and my ideal in art. But I think Universalism might be a lie. I still accept radical, alienated individualism, though. I don't believe in it; I just, accept its existence. Look at you. You're crying as you lean against that bust of Aeneas. You. You really, quite simply, had a decent brain, yes, not a stellar one, higher mathematics remained beyond you, and you fooled people because you spoke slowly and pretended to read Horace and kept shockingly stiff-arming intimacy, but you consider physics to be pinned to religion because you can't understand it fully, and conceit has made you undermine the things that exceed your grasp. It was your moodiness, and the fact that you could not temper it, that gave you power. Substance. Witnesses. That and the way you touched my arm, the fat on my upper arm, the way you touched that stuff with so much unnecessary tenderness. That made me call you interesting to my girlfriends. And when we went to that Yankees game as a joke, me and my girlfriends, and wore those Tshirt jerseys as a joke, like a playing-along-with-New-York-type joke, mine being Rivera, Mariano Rivera, and when we left in the seventh inning even though it was even, I remember on the 2 train back to my city telling the girls that I loved you. How much I loved you. And my friend Mary almost cried and said, "I've never been in love. I want to be in love. I'm so happy for you. I really am!" And I said, "It's strange. It feels, honestly, it feels less than I thought it would." And she said, "Well maybe you're not really in love." And I turned to her, in my Mariano Rivera Vneck, and said, "I am. I definitely am." And I was. And it was a very nice winter, with you. And when Spring came, and you retreated, began pulling away and then started flirting with that harpy from your kickball team, first over email and then in that cafe on Carmine Street, I'd like to say it affected me, that I was hurt or destroyed, but in reality, I felt almost nothing. And then I knew I was no one. I was dead and I was empty. So I went to the library. I spent an entire weekend reading. To refill me.

JASON Did it work? CAROL No. Of course it didn't. Nothing happened. I know a lot about China though. I'd like to say I'm depressed...but I have friends, who suffer from depression, and what they go through, I'm not about



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to appropriate that. JASON Maybe you should get that tattoo. (beat) How am I supposed to help you? CAROL Say something stupid like, "I have to go get a bagel now. So I have to go and be leaving you, because I have to meet a bagel, for lunch, on the Upper West Side, so I have to go now." Say that. JASON You're probably right. CAROL Say something stupid, dude. JASON I have to go be a bagel, dude. Cream cheese. Poppy seed. CAROL You're sweet. JASON You're sweet. CAROL You're sweet.

The way that a body will lie across a cold wooden table; if it is naked or not...

I thought of that crying in that coffee shop.

I was sleeping a lot on the sofa those days. Minsk days. The days just after she returned from Minsk. We watched *Le Rayon Vert*.

*

And you were there for me. Marsha Matilda Manuego. You were there for me. You are the most beautiful, the most indivisible flower, the most ineradicable, you eternal, you Jesus-thing, you are like freedom, being granted to...

I wish I were more willingly punished. So much art exists in the being-throttled.

And we would sing of flesh and have none. For, as Jesus said, 'tis better to be alone. And we'd be abiding.

That girl who killed herself: Francesca. And I cannot decide if I want to read or go to sleep now. Where'd I leave off? I'm not drunk, I only just began drinking, but soon I will be.

Monday April 17th, 2011

(arms as fruits, mad French dame, a dying)

Dead girl I have an algorithm for your face. I'll write it on the whiteboard at your funeral. I will read from the sad songs of Catullus and Rufus Wainwright. I'll spill soda on the casket to lighten the mood. Or just to give your step-mother something to do, try to scrub corn syrup off pine so when you go under all will be as fresh and clean as we can make it. We don't pretend that the wood won't grow foul underneath. Today it rained, early this morning; I woke up several times to the sound of rain because I leave my window cracked these days even though I'm on the ground floor and face the sidewalk. Several mornings four am has found me standing in the dark of my studio with a sharp knife in hand, staring at the sounds coming from the window, divining the shadows behind my thin blue curtain. But it rained early this morning, only drizzling when I awoke and ran around the park, and on the road there they were: the earthworms. Dragging themselves across the pavement, between the outer green loop and the park's verdant interior—it is a beautiful park, Prospect Park, "So many nooks," you used to say.



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You would leave for it while I was in the shower, and I would have to find you, as you dropped hints, text messages, aiding my advance. I wouldn't call that a happy time in my life.

*

We both were amused by your weight loss.

Your long smile and watery eyes and the soft, unfinished place where your jaw, where your cheek met your neck, these are the things that dominate old photos of you.

I am lonely; I am lonelier than I have ever been, but I am happier, too.



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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.