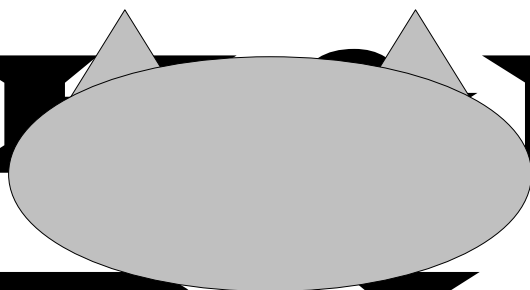


**Howls and Pushycats**



Volume 1

Issue 1

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### This Issue's Internet Soundtrack

(For maximum enjoyment, download the pdf, save it, open it, and click on these songs as you enjoy the pdf.)

- [Beirut: “Elephant Gun”](#)
- [Led Zep: “Celebration Day”](#)
- [of Montreal: “Like a Tourist”](#)
- [Frightened Rabbit: “Modern Leper”](#)
- [Dirty Projectors: Stillness is the Move”](#)
- [Dead Kennedys: California Uber Alles](#)
- [Bo Diddley: “Down Home Special”](#)
- [Animal Collective: “My Girls”](#)
- [Carol King “Smackwater Jack”](#)
- [Rufus Wainwright: “Do I Disappoint You?”](#)
- [She and Him: “Why do You Let me Stay Here?”](#)
- [The Faces: “Debris”](#)
- [Girl Talk Feed the Animals Pt. 7](#)
- [Django Reinhardt Blues for Ike](#)
- [Sleigh Bells “Infinity Guitars”](#)

*Howls and Pushycats* is a literary magazine dedicated to poems, stories, and art that are fun, playful, and deadly serious.

For more information go to:

<http://howlsandpushycats.com>

We seek work that reflects our aesthetic. You may be talented but not match our vision. Nothing personal. Start your own thing.

Editors and Jacks of All Trade,

Dhoktor Howl and M'sieu Pushycat



## Sudden Fiction Challenge

For issue 2, Dhoktor Howl found a classic comic book panel. Write a 100 word sudden fiction based on it. The winner will get...hmmmm...perhaps glory, but perhaps something more...if possible. But really, isn't it just for the challenge and f-u-n?

Submit your entry (with word count) for issue 2. We will publish as many interesting entries as possible as well as the winner. Come claim your glory.

## **Bruce Harris**

### **Look, Up in the Sky...**

Source

birds = 150,000,00 (roughly)

48.35 = shits / day (roughly)

= 302,187,500 shits / hour (roughly)

Me

= six decades - no hits

My New Car

= one week

shit hits = 2 and counting

# Ricky Garni

## DEAR DIARY

I love Caligula

because decided not to invade Britain  
but to conquer Neptune instead and so he did and  
he brought back seashells as the spoils of war

I love Caligula

when he chopped off the heads of  
the Olympic Gods statuary and threw the heads away and  
put Caligula heads there instead

I love Caligula

when he told the Senate to  
speak softly so they would  
not wake up his horse

his manger, ivory  
and oats mixed  
with flecks of gold

Wait don't go  
I almost forgot

I love Caligula

when he said  
Longinus has a  
longer penis  
than I?

No, not anymore  
he don't

## #5

I am like every other guy. When you say she was wearing Chanel,  
I fall into a deep sleep and she is covered in a golden, smelly robe,  
covered in glass, painted with 5s. Oh the smell is so sweet and golden.  
Like every other guy I say Oh you sweet, golden thing  
How nice is your smell, how 5.

## I MEAN IT

Today Tara Lynn said

Don't let Esther bring sardines

Today Esther said

I don't care what Tara Lynn says

I am bringing sardines

## Autumn Humphrey

### Cezar's Sideshow

There had been those tabloid rumors in regard to the famous man's appetite for odd collections. Claims that he had purchased the bones of the elephant man, the cranium of a dinosaur, and the concrete pyramid for his eternal resting place, graced the internet and grocery store magazines. No one was surprised then, when a new story emerged about his latest acquisition, a live monkey born with Cyclopia. A picture of the wide-eye, one-eyed primate leering back from the cover of the National Inquisitor was one of their biggest selling issues.

It was not long after the monkey story emerged that the man passed away, or faked his death, as many speculated, to escape the scrutiny of the press. In his will he stipulated that his collection be displayed, sideshow-style, to sate the appetites of the curious. He chose, he thought fittingly, the MGM Grand Hotel as the location, in an area previously housing the Siegfried and Roy tigers. The arrangements were completed prior to his death, including a special permit issued by the City of Las Vegas allowing the concrete pyramid containing his remains to be included on site.

When the sideshow opened, the curious lined up and paid one hundred dollars each to verify what they had always suspected, that the deceased star was obsessed with the bizarre. Passing through the tunnels, glass cases on either side, they gawked and gasped at displays such as the barrel of rum containing the perfectly preserved human remains found in Hungary, the picnic basket holding the one-hundred year old skeleton found in an attic in Wisconsin, the dinosaur head, the elephant man's bones, and a few other items which had not made the tabloids, such as the cranium of the French civil servant who had only fluid for brains.

As the visitors reached the end of the tour, they encountered the piece de resistance, the gravestone pyramid. Through a special window set inside the concrete, onlookers peered in and saw the preserved remains of the man himself, lying mummy-style on a concrete slab for eternity.

The sideshow was enormously successful, the bizarre-loving people standing in long lines to pay and gawk. As with any public venue, the exhibit was carefully monitored with hidden security cameras scattered throughout, the images of which were sent back, not to MGM Security, but to one of the exclusive penthouse apartments. There, Cezar, the cycloptic monkey, watched with his one eye, hooting and jabbering at the antics of the public. It became his own private sideshow, starring performers who paid to be exhibited and funding a lush life as intended by his dead benefactor, who always did have a keen sense of irony.

## Howie Good

### BACK TO NORMAL

1

Have you ever seen  
the lining of a potato bug's

wings?

Like the opening  
of the season for executions.

2

All painting is piracy,  
a white forehead

containing the memory  
of obscure objects

in your parents'  
medicine cabinet.

3

You start  
to make

a list of all  
the things

night knows,  
but stop

at a better  
word

for fucking.

## THE YELLOW PENCIL

No matter how loud I shout, my voice doesn't carry. Only in old movies do the lovers escape on an ice floe. The night supervisor, his face curiously flushed, whispers something I can't hear to the new girl working the line in the family pencil factory. A boy erases with the worn rubber nub of a no. 2 pencil what he has just written.

P.A. Levy

## Sex Toys

you shot me with ray gun love  
right between the eyes

now I'll probably catch cataracts

you sent me skinny love letters  
ransom notes in Spirograph calligraphy

but they must have got lost in the post

you stripped my best Action Man  
down to his underpants

with x-ray specs i can see through you

on the Scalextric circuit  
you followed me everywhere I went

chased me chased me

love ain't a game girl  
jump on the Spacehopper and leave

## parental guidance

mummy said don't  
get caught robbing you'll go to prison

mummy said don't  
smoke spliff whilst drinking kerosene

mummy said don't  
finger the street girls whilst eating a bag of chips

mummy said don't  
call coppers bastards you'll get a kicking

mummy said don't  
keep yer spoon and works in yer knickers

mummy said don't  
bend down for god, jesus, or the vicar  
mummy said  
you know what  
just do what you want  
i've my own life to live

## David McLean

### **“we were drunk and hungry”**

“we were drunk and hungry”  
said the Goth guys.

it was a good party,  
but they were hungry

and drunk, Maxim and Yury,  
so they ate her,

it was a good party  
tasty as memories

of flesh and death, incorporation  
of her heavenly flesh,

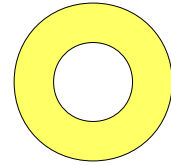
and knowledge, in every biblical sense,  
a jaded maiden and her death

## Kyle Hemmings

### Can't Keep a Good Man Down

My mother stuffed steel wool down my throat.  
My father left me in the car, engine running,  
and closed the garage door.  
The nuns snuck cyanide into my milkshakes.  
My sister played a game of William Tell,  
using real arrows. "The only reason you're alive,"  
she said, painting her nails a glossy pink,  
"is because of my poor aim."  
The scout leader poured gasoline on my  
uniform then told me to stand by the campfire.  
Aunt Tallulah peeked through the keyhole  
whenever I took a bath. She barged in, shouted  
WHAT'S FOR SUPPER!  
She had a thing for organic buttocks.

Then there was the neighbors' duck named Engels.  
He eyed me suspiciously.



Ring at the End  
of his Nose  
Award

## Cat Food

Mum's getting a wee forgetful again.  
She's got me marked as a member of the litter.  
Scrapes a chunk of tuna onto me plate  
and says don't be talkin' with your mouth full.  
She won't be 'avin a naughty kitty at her table.  
When Dad finds out, he'll toss out both mum  
and 'er kids by the scruff of their necks.  
Will that make me a Siamese king of the household?  
Fancy that.

In school I sit in the corner. Like any well-bred  
cat, I avoid attention, the teacher's drifting eyes,  
an occasional spitball, an insult grazing my underbelly.  
What if teacher found out that I have the lazy soul  
of a Burmese and the streets smarts of an alley cat?  
Thinks he's the dog bollocks my father would say.  
Throw him a sardine, I would.

At lunchtime, I eat alone, share nothing.  
Not the cat food mum has so delicately prepared,  
diced with bits of tuna and salmon. I save half  
for later. Paranoia never killed any kitty and an  
ounce of caution could have saved a civilization  
of cat eaters. Maybe the Phoenicians or the Romans.  
Not sure. Never was nippy with me history.

At recess, I keep a distance from the tossers,  
the scroats. Must sense I'm not one of 'em, and in the  
distance I can hear their cries and shouts  
over a game of stickball. Wish I could roll  
a ball of twine, strong twine, around their  
ankles, over their gob-glowing shoes.  
Knot 'em up good, tangled in their muted  
purrs and angry hymns. Then I'll jump away.  
Like a fish. Call it a sunny day, kits.

Donal Mahoney

## A Little Like Rape

This sylph came forward  
from the second row  
the second day of class  
and asked if  
I would edit her poem  
so it would read  
the way it should.

I told her straightaway  
that even though  
this was writing class  
and I was the instructor,  
I couldn't edit her poem  
and still have the poem be hers.

Editing her poem, I said,  
would be a little like rape,  
just painful in a different way  
whether she understood that  
yet or not.

## Misti Rainwater-Lites

### A Note From Rural Texas

I bombard my husband with my insecurities before  
we go to bed in our separate bedrooms.

Have I taken risks? Have I lived loud  
even though I've never lived in a cold water walk-up in Manhattan  
or a studio in the Tenderloin  
even though I've never been a junkie  
or fucked a junkie  
or copped or scored  
or sucked cock  
or eaten cunt  
in a graffiti scrawled bathroom stall  
at CBGB's?

Needing my husband's affirmation  
proves the point  
and I don't buy my own high heels  
or cereal  
and I can count  
my sexual partners  
on two and a half hands  
and beyond all that  
the life I crave  
is forever  
out of reach  
so I am applying for disability  
and turning my existential  
midlife crisis  
into a joke  
not an Andy Kaufman joke  
not a Bill Hicks joke  
nothing that hip  
or edgy  
more like a Rita Rudner  
or Bonnie Hunt  
joke  
because I have a vagina  
that doesn't  
get much

action  
and I've only owned one vibrator  
and my boyfriend bought it for me  
and it didn't work  
because the Paxil made  
my pussy  
numb.

## Harry Calhoun

### Coming into summer

Yeah, the green is like a shin splint in reverse  
and you can walk in warmth without pain  
for this while. And you can say “yeah,” this  
is the colloquial season, drink deep

of its trees and blossoms, drink its wine  
but even if you stick in sticky pre-summer heat  
to nothing but fruit-squeezed water you’ll be drunk  
with Neruda’s pines and the sheer greenness

of May asking permission to slide to June  
and July, the most beautiful bridge to cross.

My father died in cold midwinter,  
my mother in the rainy mess of spring.  
Let me run through sun soaked days,  
through bright fields and puddlejump

clear shallow streams and turn  
and look behind as if I have the basketball,  
today I hit the winning shot and a short hop  
and I am

triumphant

## **Michael Lee Johnson**

### **I Trip on My Poems**

In the night when poems  
are born, I search for the hidden words,  
secrets stretch inside my metaphors.  
Even near my tender moments  
when the images blossom into rain flowers  
I trip on stems cut my way loose to nowhere.  
I go there to see what I can find.

Stephen Jarrell Williams

## WARNING

You're laughing  
loud enough the neighbors hear  
through the walls of my apartment  
2 A.M.

I'm squinting with my flashlight on  
your bare bottom  
trying to find just one pimple  
but

you're perfect  
as you warned me  
trying to prepare me for my

inadequacies.

## THE SPELL

You left  
before the sun came up  
wilting me  
in my rattlesnake boots,

how did you do that  
when I was coiled at full strength

striking you slow and faster  
than a rabbit,

you're a cold stone  
nipples hard  
gushing fountain  
drowning all my dreams poisoned.

## Psycho Kanev

The dogs in my backyard

are dead  
and although I am still leaning towards this window  
can no longer hear their barking against the moon;  
the cats are sleeping on the red rug  
redder than a blooming rose,  
redder from your blood  
and I think of leaping bodies from the bridges  
of the world,  
while I am ready to jump from the lip of the grave  
into the mad swirl of the nothingness.

The curtains of the future are waving and yet there  
is no wind.

**Gary Beck**

**M.A.D.**

Petrified Sally,  
last daughter of a Dang,  
squatted iambically  
on the Jersey turnpike,  
as another mushroom bloomed  
where once a city stood

## William Doreski

### Little Bastard

Ellie couldn't get Charlie to settle in her lap and didn't want him crammed into his highchair yet, so she set him on the floor between tables. The crowd in the café rumbled like an approaching storm. Charlie grinned and tried to enter the forest of legs as people lined up to place orders. "Get back, Charlie, you'll get stepped on," Ellie warned. She grabbed the back of his bib overalls and pulled him toward her. He turned and giggled. Charlie never got upset.

"Watching this kid can drive you nuts," she told Kerry. "He's a sweet little guy, but he gives you that big smile and does whatever he wants. Just try and stop him."

"Yeah, there he goes again," said Kerry. Charlie lurched from Ellie's gasp and staggered forward, falling, finally, on his butt and looking around with a silly expression.

"He gets into everything," Ellie said. "At home Tanya says he torments the cats, throws things down the toilet, and gets up in the middle of the night and runs around the apartment. The neighbors call and complain, but Tanya can't control him. He just gives her that smile, and off he goes."

By noon the café had filled with white-collar types from the law and architectural offices nearby. Ellie had owned the café for five years before selling it to her daughter Tanya and her friend Kimberly, who had managed the place for Ellie. Charlie was Tanya's child. Tanya hadn't wanted a husband but had wanted a child. Whoever had fathered Charlie had never spoken up when Ellie was around, never betrayed himself by approaching or showing any interest in the child. Tanya had never told Ellie who it was and Ellie had never dared ask.

At three, Charlie with his blond shock and bubbly expression charmed even baby-haters and pedophobes. Kerry, Ellie's closest friend, thought Charlie resembled Luca, who last summer had crewed for a Norwegian yachtsman sailing around the Mediterranean. Off Malta the yacht had disappeared in a storm. No trace of it had turned up. Luca's friends claimed he had hooked up with a drug gang in Morocco and would eventually reappear to dole out bundles of cash and bags of coke. Luca's friends, however, had already blown enough snow and smoked enough hash to addle themselves beyond recovery, so no one listened to their ravings.

"I don't think so," said Ellie. "He's blond like Luca, but Luca always looks so stupid, such a blank. Charlie already looks a hell of a lot smarter."

"Not hard to do," Kerry said, "but maybe Luca looked smarter before he went to Franklin Pierce." The local college lacked a strong academic reputation, but it was a good place to score drugs. Luca had gotten straight As without cracking a book.

But if Luca was his father, poor little Charlie was doomed to good lucks, charm, and an airhead future. Even as Ellie and Kerry debated Tanya's secret love-life, Charlie with a sidearm gesture flung Ellie's iced tea to the floor and shot into the crowd again.

"Hey, Charlie, no!" Ellie lurched for the child and fell out of her chair. Waddling like a bear cub, Charlie disappeared into the forest of legs, turning toward the tiny kitchen where Tanya was slapping together her odd daily specials, most of them involving cranberries, jalapeño peppers, and canned tuna.

"Little shit," Ellie groaned, "I fell on my tailbone." Kerry helped her up. Charlie had disappeared through the crowd lined up at the counter and down the corridor leading to the kitchen. Ellie knifed through the line, being the only thin person in the café, knocked a cup of tomato bisque from someone's grip, tipped a cup of coffee, and swerved toward the kitchen. No Charlie. Where did the little craphead go? She peered into the cubby where the canned foodstuffs hid. No Charlie. She checked behind the refrigerator and under the big tables. No Charlie. Where is that little fucker? She ran to the back door, hoping he hadn't escaped into the street. Up and down the alley. No Charlie. God-damn kid. Maybe into one of the bathrooms. Pushing open the unlocked door, she found him head-down in the toilet, his feet a couple of inches off the floor.

"Ohmigod he's drowned!" she yelled. Tanya dropped a plate of fava beans and rice, and Kimberly, who had been making change, spilled a roll of pennies on the floor behind the cash register.

Charlie backed out of the toilet and looked at Ellie, his wet face brimming with joy. "You... you..." Ellie couldn't say what she wanted to say. She didn't want to scar the child for life by calling him a little bastard, but she had to vent. She kicked the bathroom door shut in Tanya and Kimberly's faces. Upending Charlie, who for the first time in his life started screaming, she dunked him into the toilet head-first and worked him up and down like a plunger. "You like sticking your face in piss, do you? Well, get a good mouthful," she snarled.

Charlie gulped toilet water and coughed and gagged. "Waaaah....gulp! Waaaah....gulp! Waaaah....gulp! Waaaah....gulp! Waaaah....gulp! Waaaah....gulp! Waaaah....gulp! Waaaah....gulp!" As Charlie spewed onto the tile floor Ellie realized this was not grandmotherly of her, but it was fun.

The door burst open and Kerry rushed in and snatched Charlie out of Ellie's grasp. "Jesus Christ! What are you doing to the little bastard?" Kerry yelled.

Ellie giggled. "Little bastard. Little bastard. Take that, Charlie, you little bastard," she said, and then started to cry. She sank to the floor, the tiny room revolving around her. Kerry placed the child on his feet. Charlie dashed from the bathroom laughing, his blond mop plastered to his skull. The customers smiled at him as he returned to Ellie's table, climbed without help into his highchair, and sat, ready for lunch.

Richard Cody

## Shopping with Eric

“Try this one on,” said Mother, placing the red hat primly on Eric’s five year old head. “There now,” she cooed, “how do you like it?”

Eric surveyed himself in the full length mirror, grimacing at the thing that sat on his head. It was a frightening and sinister scarlet, threatening to creep down over his face and swallow him. “I hate it!” he shouted, removing the hat from his head and throwing it to the floor. “It’s horrible.”

“Now, Eric. . .” Mother’s voice was a cold reprimand, a promise and a warning of parental wrath. “That’s no way to behave. Pick up that hat.”

He stared up at her, bright blue eyes inflamed with youthful indignation. “I liked the blue one better.”

Mother clenched her purse and batted her eyes. “The blue one made you look fat,” she explained. “Now pick up that hat.”

Their eyes turned to the floor, where the red hat glared like an open wound. “No,” whispered Eric, “I won’t touch it.”

Volatile seconds passed between them, unspoken anger twitching on Mother’s lips. “Eric,” she raised a menacing hand over him, “you pick up that hat or so help me, I’ll. . .”

“Can I help you find anything, Ma’am?” The clerk was suddenly beside them, all shining smile and friendly eyes. His name tag shouted in bold white letters: HI! I’M ERIC!

Mother paused and faltered, caught on the verge of abusive rage. “We were just trying on some hats,” she explained, her face flushed an embarrassed red as she lowered her hand.

“I was trying on some hats,” corrected Eric, “and I like the blue one.”

“Ah yes!” exclaimed the clerk. “Blue to match your wonderful eyes. A very wise choice.”

Eric beamed.

The clerk looked from the boy to the floor and frowned in distaste. “Some tasteless soul must have dropped this dreadful thing by accident,” he said, bending over to retrieve the red hat. “It’s just as well they didn’t waste any money on it. Would you be so kind as to put this back on the rack Ma’am?” He offered the hat to Mother, who stood nearer the head ware display.

Mother hesitated, speechless and reluctant before the red hat of contention. Finally she moved, taking the hat in quivering hands and returning it to the rack.

"Thank you, Ma'am" said the clerk, exchanging a friendly smile with the smaller Eric, who was already reaching for the blue of his favorite hat.

**James Valvis**

**This Clock**

No matter how still I sit,  
it keeps moving.

No matter how like stone I stare,  
its face remains unconcerned.

I could swear my best swears,  
but it will only give me the midnight finger.

I could remove the battery  
and stop its ticking forward

but it'll only mock me  
exactly one day later

with an even more monstrous leap.

## Ben Nardolilli

### In Abstentia

This head is no longer  
Available for banging,  
The walls cannot rent  
This scalp and skull,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
I abstain courteously.

This voice has reached  
The point of schism  
With its instrument,  
The air can find another  
To fill itself up with a rant,  
I abstain courteously.

The whine can go on,  
It will no longer find  
An ear to roll around in,  
That hole is gone for you,  
Try speaking to each other,  
I abstain courteously.

You can argue, or agree,  
Conspire or enlighten,  
Your games enriched  
With toughs and crests  
Are not for this player,  
I abstain courteously.

All the fears you breed  
Inside of me, I return,  
Into your hands I leave  
The paranoia that amuses  
But never leads to action,  
I abstain courteously.

The commute you grow  
And never let end,  
Keep it with your pictures

Of those you admire  
With cocked disgust,  
I abstain courteously.

Your demands for work  
Will not be met,  
Your requests for leisure  
Not at all fulfilled,  
You can all go to hell, yes  
I abstain courteously.

## **In the Cafeteria**

She peels the fruit in her hands,  
Divides the pulp to conquer it,  
Places each slice on the table  
That sits like a glacier between us,  
Until they assemble around her  
Like little loyal gondolas  
That her face has launched,  
I follow her eyes, blue like the sky  
As her shirt is as blue as the sea,  
Her skin is pale like some shore line,  
She does not notice me, but  
I am not disappointed yet,  
I only hope she does not turn to face  
And smile at a man known by us both  
Passing around the edge of the table,  
She begins the later stage of her meal,  
And before the reference is devoured,  
I tell her that the orange matches her shirt,  
The first thing I have told her today.

Felino A. Soriano

Approbations 680

—after Burton Greene’s Angels

Near in

rounded numbers

corporeal brandish

pulsating posits

winged and sans

recall personality-pleasure

too-preferential

markings

delving in hopeful

slants

away from

ideological rhythms

comfort

accentuates in programmatic science

hidden skin of skin’s hidden layer

naked though fully clothed

by eyes’

limited architectural hems. Holy

nor to wholly acceptance

bodies

of past on presence

reacts amid emotional

serialized though

jejune

definitions.



## TWO HALF-HEARTS

Her name was Sahara and his Arid, and only fate could bring them together such a perfect match.

His name was not really Arid but Ari D., close enough since both names mean dry. They were dry only in their humor; everything else they did together was wet, smothered in kisses.

They had met at a bowling alley when smoking inside public places was still legal. She was bowling on lane six, he at lane 12, both frequently stealing glances at each other. Finally, Sahara sidled over to Ari D. "May I have a cigarette?" she asked.

Ari D. pulled out an open pack of Salems from a shirt pocket, Marlboros from his jeans and Lucky Strikes from his coat. "Pick your poison," he said, "no ifs, ands or butts."

Sahara chose a Salem. As she walked away, Sahara peeked over her shoulder at Ari d., checking out the last part of his witticism. "A poison always has an antidote," she said.

One cigarette led to another and another and soon they were addicted to each other.

They resembled each other so much they could have passed as brother and sister: both twenty, Geminis, birthdays a week apart, auburn hair, a few constellations of freckles on their faces, galaxies upon their shoulders; they were thin-lipped and thin-hipped, had swagger in their strides and always seemed to have pelican smiles.

Both admitted being narcissitic, one of many personality traits they shared. What traits were absent in one were compensated by the other, often pointed out with their common acerbic wit.

While Sahara fumbled assembling a book shelve, Ari D. remarked, "You look like a monkey massaging a basketball.

"Good one," Sahara replied, "Spank me with your brilliance."

Another time, after misplacing his apartment keys," Sahara said, "You have a memory about as long as my ex-boyfriend's dick."

"That will someday become a classic," Ari D. said.

She frequently became lost while driving and even walking, Ari D. finally saying, "You wouldn't know your left from your right if you had direction arrows hanging from your tits."

Sahara remarked about his habitual tardiness: "You have the sense of timing of the runner-up in the Great Sperm Race."

They would laugh and laugh at each other's wit about their shortcomings and then make love long into the night.

Before they exchanged vows upon the altar—originals nearly per verbatim—they chose to have one

half red heart tattooed to their butts, her vertical half on her left cheek, Ari D.'s on the right cheek. When they snuggled their naked butts together, the two halves became one perfect heart, symbolizing they would only be complete when together as both vowed upon the altar.

For five years they walked together as though attached at the hip, Ari D. always on the left, Sahara always on the right.

During the sixth year while mowing the lawn, Sahara suffered an asthma attack, her first ever, one severe enough to hospitalize her. She quit smoking, but her husband continued to puff away, ever more so as if to compensate for her, although always outside. She compensated by eating more.

Early during the seventh year, Ari D. arrived home late for supper to discover his wife had devoured three-fourths of the mashed potatoes and nearly all of the Porterhouse steak.

Explained Sahara, "Well, you have always been a day late and a dollop short."

"Good one," he replied, ducking inside the freezer door to search for a frozen dinner.

During the summer of their seventh year, they vacationed at the ocean. As Sahara lay prone upon a beach towel, Ari D. could see a few inches of her half-heart had emerged from her bikini bottom and that it was paler.

An hour later, Ari D. began to redden, especially the top of his head. "Why don't you cover that bald spot on your head?" Sahara asked.

"I will," he said, "if you cover that pink surfboard sliding out from your bikini."

"Oh, spare me," she said.

They both sat upright. Ari D. began shaking and squirting a bottle of sun tan lotion.

"It looks like you are jerking off that bottle," Sahara said.

"I am becoming an expert at it," he said.

That evening, while dining at a restaurant, they spared each other their customary barbs, their only exchanges with the waitress. Along the return walk to the resort, part of their path required them to trek upon a bicycle lane, mostly unlit. Ari D. positioned himself directly behind Sahara so that they could hike in single-file along the dark asphalted bike trail.

"Why are you walking behind me?" Sahara said. "We have always walked side by side."

"Because, because," Ari D. said. "Never mind."

He leaped to the left side of his wife as he had done since they met and interlocked his fingers with hers.

Five minutes later, as they neared an illuminated sidewalk, they both could hear a young woman call, "Passing on your right—your right." Immediately Sahara sidestepped to her right, the Cannondale bicycle and rider crashing into Sahara's left hip, severely bruising her.

Ari D's remark that she was probably the only person in the world to have a real purple heart did not alleviate her suffering and indignity.

A week after Sahara's return from the hospital, Ari D. arrived home from work. Upon the dining room table was a letter addressed Dear John. She was leaving him forever. They could never work things

out. They had evolved into two separate people, too many differences. “I know I don’t have a good sense of direction, but I will follow wherever fate takes me,” she concluded.

“Dear John was her way of playing one last witticism with me,” Ari thought. “The irony of the name is that she did not really know me.”

From his trousers pocket he withdrew an envelope addressed to Sahara. He, too, was leaving, only she preceded the act by perhaps a few hours.

“We are in control of our own fates,” Ari said to himself. “We go wherever we command. We always have that power. Life is not a surfboard upon which the waves of time take us to a destination unknown.”

Ari lit a Marlboro, slouched upon a table chair and daydreamed. Somewhere, someday he would meet somebody whom he could go throughout life dancing cheek to cheek.

## Bios:

**Gary Beck** has spent most of his adult life as a theater director and worked as an art dealer when he couldn't earn a living in the theater. He has also been a tennis pro, a ditch digger and a salvage diver. His chapbook 'Remembrance' was published by Origami Condom Press, 'The Conquest of Somalia' was published by Cervena Barva Press, 'The Dance of Hate' was published by Calliope Nerve Media, 'Mutilated Girls' is being published by Bedouin Press, 'Material Questions' is being published by Silkworms Ink and 'Dispossessed' is being published by Medulla Press. A collection of his poetry 'Days of Destruction' was published by Skive Press. Another collection 'Expectations' was published by Rogue Scholars Press. His original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway and toured colleges and outdoor performance venues. His poetry has appeared in hundreds of literary magazines. He currently lives in New York City.

**Harry Calhoun** is a widely published poet, article and essay writer. Check out his trade paperback, I knew Bukowski like you knew a rare leaf, the recently published *The Black Dog and the Road* and his chapbook, *Something Real*. He's had recent publications in *Chiron Review*, *Chiaroscuro*, *Orange Room Review*, *The Centrifugal Eye*, *Monongahela Review* and many others. He is the editor of *Pig in a Poke* magazine. Find out more at <http://harrycalhoun.net>. This just in: Harry's new chapbook, *Near daybreak*, with a nod to Frost, is now available from Propaganda Press!

**Richard Cody**, a native Californian, has been known to write poetry and fiction of varying lengths. His work has appeared in many and varied print and virtual journals, most recently *Daily Love*, *Weirdyear*, *Gloom Cupboard*, *eFiction Magazine* and *Outwardlink.net*. He has work forthcoming in *Kaleidatropé* and who knows where else!? His books can be found at [RCodywrites](http://RCodywrites.com).

**Ricky Garni** is a writer and graphic designer living in Carrboro, NC. His work can be found online at *Evergreen Review*, *Noö*, *Blue & Yellow Dog* and a number of other places. On August 2nd of this year, he will fulfill the dream he has had since he first saw *The Jetsons* in 1962 when he finally buys an iPhone. His first call will be to Jane, his wife.

**Howie Good** is the author a full-length poetry collection, *Lovesick*, as well as 21 print and digital poetry chapbooks, including most recently, *Hello, Darkness*, available from *Deadly Chaps*.

**Bruce Harris** is a man of mystery—at least to Dhoktor Howl and M'sieu Pushycat. We do know he has a new car. Hopefully, he's keeping it waxed and has been servicing it regularly. Long live, Bruce's new car! Long may it and he run.

**Kyle Hemmings** lives and works in New Jersey. His work has been pubbed in *Prick of the Spindle*, *Foundling Review*, *Ophelia Street*, *Five Fishes*, and elsewhere. His favorite food is called a cheeseburger

Born East London but now residing amongst the hedge mumblerers of rural Suffolk, **P.A. Levy** has been published in many magazines, both on line and in print, from 'A cappella Zoo' to 'Zygote In My Coffee' and many places in-between. He is also a founding member of the *Clueless Collective* and can be found

loitering on page corners and wearing hoodies at [www.cluelesscollective.co.uk](http://www.cluelesscollective.co.uk)

**Autumn Humphrey** has online and print pieces appearing at Kill Author, The Legendary, Feathertale, Thirty First Bird, Everyday Weirdness, and Still Crazy. She resides in Long Beach, California and prefers playing the horses to just about anything.

**Michael Lee Johnson** is a poet and freelance writer from Itasca, Illinois. He is heavily influenced by: Carl Sandburg, Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams, Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen, and Allen Ginsberg. His new poetry chapbook with pictures, titled From Which Place the Morning Rises, and his new photo version of The Lost American: from Exile to Freedom are available at: <http://stores.lulu.com/promomanusa>. The original version of The Lost American: from Exile to Freedom, can be found at: [http://www.iuniverse.com/bookstore/book\\_detail.asp?isbn=0-595-46091-7](http://www.iuniverse.com/bookstore/book_detail.asp?isbn=0-595-46091-7). He also has 2 previous chapbooks available at: <http://stores.lulu.com/poetryboy>. Michael has been published in over 23 countries. He is also editor/publisher of four poetry sites, all open for submission, which can be found at his Web site: <http://poetryman.mysite.com>.

**Psycho Kanev's** work has been published or is forthcoming in Poetry Quarterly, Welter, Ann Arbor Review, The Shine Journal, The 13th Warrior Review, Mascara Literary Review, The Arava Review, The Mayo Review, Windmills, The Aroostook Review, Chiron Review, Tonopah Review, Mad Swirl, In Posse Review, 322 Review, Naugatuck River Review, The Houston Literary Review and many others. He is nominated for Pushcart Award and lives in Chicago. His collaborative collection "r", containing poetry by him and Felino Soriano, as well as photography from Duane Locke and Edward Wells II is available at Amazon.com. His new poetry collection "Bone Silence" will be published in September 2010 by Desperanto, New York.

**Donal Mahoney** lives in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. He has worked as an editor for The Chicago Sun-Times, Loyola University Press and Washington University in St. Louis. He has had poems published in The Wisconsin Review, The Kansas Quarterly, The South Carolina Review, Commonweal, Ink Sweat and Tears (U.K.), Revival (Ireland), The Istanbul Literary Review (Turkey), Public Republic (Bulgaria), Pirene's Fountain (Australia), Calliope Nerve and other publications.

**David McLean** is Welsh but has lived in Sweden since 1987. He lives there on an island in a large lake called Mälaren, very near to Stockholm, with woman, cats, kittens, and a couple of dogs. He has a BA in History from Balliol, Oxford, and an MA in philosophy, taken much later and much more seriously studied for, from Stockholm. This is just one of the things that makes him so boring. He writes a lot of poems but really dislikes poetry. Up to date details of over 1000 poems in various zines over the last three years or so and several available books and chapbooks, including three print full lengths, a few print chapbooks, and a free electronic chapbook, are at his blog at <http://mourningabortion.blogspot.com>

**Ben Nardolilli** is a twenty four year old writer currently living in Arlington, Virginia. His work has appeared in Houston Literary Review, Perigee Magazine, Canopic Jar, One Ghana One Voice, Baker's Dozen, Thieves Jargon, Quail Bell Magazine, Elimae, Poems Niederngasse, Gold Dust, Scythe, Anemone Sidecar, The Delmarva Review, Contemporary American Voices, SoMa Literary Review, Gloom Cupboard, Shakespeare's Monkey Revue, Black Words on White Paper, Cantaraville, and Mad Swirl. In

addition I was the poetry editor for *West 10th Magazine* at NYU and maintain a blog at [mirrorsponge.blogspot.com](http://mirrorsponge.blogspot.com).

**Bob Petras** is a graduate of West Liberty State College, journalism major. As a freelance writer his stories have appeared in publications ranging from the downright dirty *Naughtygirlx* to the literary *Riverwind*. He often roams the streets of his small northern Ohio hometown, confused after penning horror and humor stories and described by passing motorists of having the look of just discovering someone had stolen the dill pickle from his bologna sandwich.

**Misti Rainwater-Lites** maintains a blog at <http://yallversusyall.blogspot.com>. Buy her books at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [lulu.com](http://lulu.com).

**Felino A. Soriano** (b. 1974), is a case manager and advocate for developmentally and physically disabled adults. He has authored 34 collections of poetry, including "In Praise of Absolute Interpretation" (Desperanto, 2010) and "Realities of Bifocal Translations" (Blue & Yellow Dog Press, 2010). His poems have appeared at *Calliope Nerve*, *Unlikely 2.0*, *BlazeVOX*, *Metazen*, *Otoliths*, and elsewhere. He edits & publishes [Counterexample Poetics](#), an online journal of experimental artistry, and [Differentia Press](#), dedicated to publishing e-chapbooks of experimental poetry. In 2010, he was chosen for the Gertrude Stein "rose" prize for creativity in poetry from *Wilderness House Literary Review*. Philosophical studies collocated with his connection to classic and avant-garde jazz explains motivation for poetic occurrences. His website explains further: [www.felinoasoriano.info](http://www.felinoasoriano.info).

**James Valvis** lives in Issaquah, Washington. His poems or stories have appeared in *5 AM*, *Confrontation*, *Eclectica*, *Rattle*, *Southern Indiana Review*, and are forthcoming in *Arts & Letters*, *Atlanta Review*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Hanging Loose*, *Los Angeles Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *New York Quarterly*, *Nimrod*, *Pank*, *South Carolina Review*, and elsewhere. A novelette, "One of those Zombie Lovers," was a *Story South Notable Story* and a book-length collection of his poems is due from *Aortic Books* in 2011. Mostly though, he's just looking for a diet soda that doesn't suck.

**Stephen Jarrell Williams** has been called "The Poet of Doom," "A Voice in the Wilderness," and "A Minstrel for Love." He was born in Fort Belvoir, Virginia. His parents are native Texans. He has lived most of his life in California.



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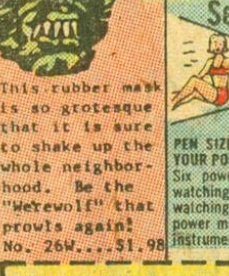


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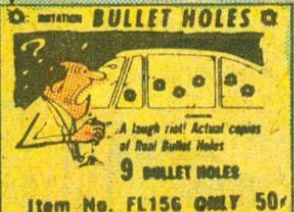
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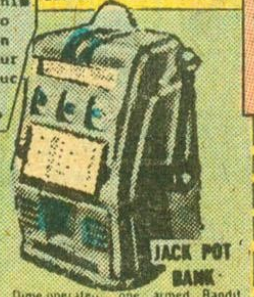
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