



# SAWORD

S/1: FALL 2011

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## Introduction

Over the past few months, we've been collecting pieces. Puzzle pieces, or tesserae, if you will. We attempted to put them together, to build a whole. But we looked again, and our architecture had collapsed. So we made this box to house all the pieces instead. Play with them, if you will, like a child with plastic toy bricks. You are the blueprint. Build what you will. Whatever you will is transient. Build anyway.

We built this box, this hole, our inaugural issue of S/WORD, to celebrate the intricate difficulties and infinite meanings of language, of WORD:

“A poet is, before anything else, a person who is passionately in love with language.”

We have been given to. We give. Words as words. Phrases as phrases. Letters as letters. Perpetually.

It feels like meaning, or sense. But that's not it. Purpose is what is required.

Sometimes we are slanted, sometimes our works are slanted, sometimes upright.

A forward slash is not simply a backward backslash.

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

## A Goode Homolosine Projection

Coordinates have become useful now,  
There are sections of the room  
I can breathe into, and look out at,  
I lift half a curtain to open half a window,  
Dark curves fill the hardwood floor.

We remain illuminated, but your world  
And arrangements are hidden,  
You seem to be dancing, and I am jealous,  
The title of my book is lost to you,  
I hold hands out and seem to be praying.

*Ben Nardolilli*

## A Gall-Peters Projection

We look at one another and become eyes,  
Our eyes move and we become bodies,  
We become bodies and grow long  
Without growing any taller together,  
Our heads and memories lost, forgetting  
Whatever names we had for each other,  
We grow and expand from heat until  
Noticing our borders and exclaves of skin,  
Lines that give us our deceptive shapes,  
We reach for our own points and smiling  
Unbutton each one after the other.

*Ben Nardolilli*

## BIRTHDAY LETTER

It is your birthday, again, and I have nothing to say, again, except that

I cried briefly in the car today after getting off the phone with Mom, though I never

thought to do anything weird, like run my car into a pole or the ditch.

I wondered if you knew any of what I was thinking, and then,

as you know, I considered the birds for a moment,

sunning themselves in puddles near the underpass.

*Brett Elizabeth Jenkins*

## A Pair of Essays

Although awarded a degree  
forty years ago, I owe my school  
a pair of fifteen-page essays  
due on my birthday tomorrow.  
In one, on Keats' "To Autumn,"  
I argue that bones unearthed  
by Lawrence in Arabia dance  
certain sambas to spell out  
the autograph of their killer.

The bones to which Keats refers  
form the skeletal figure dozing  
over the cider press. I'm not fooled.  
Research for this paper took me  
to an auto graveyard in Putney,  
where the topic of autographs  
stirred a thousand memories  
of long New England autumns  
with top down and radio blaring.

The other essay mentions dump trucks  
loaded with rare earth ores, and men  
so obsessed with certain women  
they commit the most vicious crimes  
to claim their attention. Unsure  
of my subject or argument, research  
requires me to commit a crime  
of my own. I'll throw my chainsaw  
into the truck of my car and hope

opportunity arises. Snow  
trickles from an insincere sky.  
Pages of my essays tremble  
as wood heat radiates in waves.  
Another hour or two of research  
and then I'll finish and mail

the essays to defunct professors  
who'll be so happy to get them  
they'll laugh aloud in their graves.

*William Doreski*

## Instructions For Topographical Head Sculpture

Place a hand on your hairless scalp, clasp at the looseness of your own skin and then stretch it into ridges.

(The head has already been shaved.)

Let loose the head-skin in hand. Squeeze then release, again and again.

You're furrowing yourself for good.

Squeeze then release. Repeat for four hundred minutes.

Purchase a brand new wig. Hide the new head mountains you just stretched and, in private, caress them every hour.

A larger man than any you know, working his head as described, made the earth from doing this.

Every planet was first worked from men's heads and hands, then detached, plucked up, placed neatly inside the heavenly firmament.

Your mountained head may become one also, a planet among others, mooned and starred and even inhabited.

*Ben Segal*

## **The Good Thing**

The airplane crashed. It burned up to a metal shell and thin dry filling of airplane-seat-char and passenger-ash. You can be happy for that. Everyone on that airplane was evil.

*Ben Segal*

## **I am Going to Explain What I'm Doing**

The speech instructor taught my tongue with his fingers. He flexed out my vowels, bunched and pulled the sounds that needed making. I learned to speak around his hand. Now I use whoever's is handy. I know, it's weird. But not like how you were thinking.

*Ben Segal*

## The Fright that Hangs in the Eye

It is a vision unwavering when my parlance  
overseers convene, blightful and grim,  
a congress of capitals, a capitol of sexes,  
arrogance, and nativity.

The fright grows rotund and her fibers jag,  
the months split by small mauls of small deaths,  
footnoted angelic, attributed in passing print,  
driven out by frightening, by organized powers  
and skulking disarrays.

The fine scopes and blaring tongues maximize  
even specks, lives, the word and world,  
as the witch settles endless ownerships atop all.

*Ray Succre*

Symbolic Economy:  
Bracketing the Natural Attitude (Marketing Workshop).

§§§§

An edge  
fully covered  
as bluffs  
into beliefs.

§§§§

But if water considers  
enunciation, that indecipherable  
halting, not by the mistake of comment:  
in the reduction of meaning anew.

§§§§

Your first line will say  
before it is ready

which has held between

grasses they are wary  
falling deeply beneath trees.

§§§§

In light of the mechanical process:

manifestly true  
that it is possible  
to disturb  
just such  
an experience.  
(Comprehends, thus urgently,  
and acts, as company.)

§§§§

I share this assumption  
and have no stake in  
calling it into question.  
In reference to proper techniques  
(or proper apologetics)  
we must bear heavier freight.

Altered aesthetic, revelatory,  
(as its object)  
allows for the production of nobility, cravenness, beauty...

§§§§

Just this replayed  
betrays, surely one of the original sources:  
Say it!  
This is charm!

§§§§

Performance declines  
printing  
unidentifiable images.

Assumptions of which side  
the wall falls on:  
should we say *items*?

§§§§

As though in a mixture of rooftops we could be steeples.

§§§§

We will all become middle-aged professors.  
The fortuitously produced twin will as well.

§§§§

“To slip a *to will* alongside a *to let* is to show us the pure possibility of the future.”

§§§§

We do not expect signs of order  
on our sleeping eyes...  
In the door,  
if so  
an accurate picture  
of reference  
(frame level determining).

§§§§

Not only, but this one; not only, but her porcelain skin (that alabaster jug); not only, but has she noticed?

§§§§

The magical realism comes not from altering the surface of life, but from radically undermining the very possibility of being.

§§§§

To free: being of the model.  
Identity stepping stones  
as versions...or simply  
to be what is happening  
“we see things that are not present.”

§§§§

As if we were tilted  
against  
suitably lit  
plate glass, behold:  
we see the same image.

§§§§

Predication's arm  
launches to  
tie the literary.

(Apparently, he saw before  
wiped clean: skill to expect results,  
waiting, principle to come.

I am one person (“one and  
unjudgable in the world”)  
else chance.)

§§§§

The branches of the critic's ‘illusory tree’ are often the objective criteria for judging works. Such criteria seem as if they would sustain the critic, when in actuality they are usually merely hollow attempts at avoiding the work.

§§§§

Forget your doorways,  
these are torn maps that bloom:  
(to know secretly  
this shiny curve  
sitting under  
under water  
to sit  
dirty under  
this secret under  
slept under  
*to know*).

§§§§

Borrowing  
as a proverb. If you  
eliminate

*to rule*

beware advertising's  
reign. To be fully  
understood  
is to never comprehend  
velocity. These are your weeds:  
the bent.

§§§§

But taste always remains essentially subjective. To objectify aesthetic judgments ruins the essential element of aesthetic judgments: that they are judgments of what it feels like for me.

§§§§

These lions are not your only stores.  
They couldn't even note your claws.

If you want to know the truth,  
this runs the other direction

between new leaves, or destroys them,  
mostly rips them to shreds, mostly.

Small in a goat, this slaughter,  
curled over lip of a small cup.

§§§§

Excepting significance  
(who cared little  
about the niceties of fine print)

Salvaging contingency

§§§§

Wherein evidence  
in support of their position,  
but I think just the reverse is true;  
either I look inside  
or I am an insider.

§§§§

Notes on the, as you have said, crossing:  
thank God for water, enough for reflection  
and not completely random  
because I am me  
sucked into the earth.  
as if the shadow were a reflection.

§§§§

The plot is well-known enough  
not to be summarized here  
  
so why assume something different  
for the way we act together?

We are justified in our feeling  
that custom is oppressive.

§§§§

But we are as wide as we are wounded.

§§§§

Critics are always in danger of objectifying taste in order to avoid the problems of subjective taste. This tendency is seen in the value critics place on objective criteria for judging works as opposed to the pleasure works give those same critics. The comparison with gustatory taste helps one avoid this critical tendency, for what is eaten is taken first in one's own mouth.

§§§§

Puddle's gloss  
rubbed off on the teeth  
during the date.

*Francis Raven*

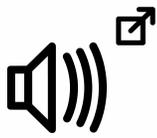
## Sunglasses

Her black eye is a crushed grape behind the glasses,  
overripe colors  
that are not sweet fruit  
bleed free of the frame if she tilts her head  
which she is careful not to do.  
She speaks about Jerry.  
He is tall for his age,  
smart for his age.  
He's starting to look a lot like me.

The black sea  
inside the cup doesn't concern me  
yet my daughter pauses to ask, "Need some sugar?"  
forgetting—or maybe not—that her sunglasses are  
dark but not reflective.

"Sure," I say. "Yes, I'll have some."

*Len Kuntz*



why do I learn another language? so that I can share in your anguish;  
 A sorrow shared is half a sorrow; but who can share sorrow in a language borrowed?  
 “O si vous avez des yeux que vos yeux s’emplissent de larmes.”<sup>1</sup>  
 But they don’t have eyes: they don’t see the harm  
 in everyone speaking their language atrophied as their minds languish  
 at your feet is the same damned dish of second hand adverbs and adjectives.  
 Day after day the same prison food to the non-native tongue tastes so crude  
 unable to express the subtlety of my mood “I’m not trying to be rude I read all the way through to Jude  
 but there was no Revelation I was expecting some kind of elevation  
 but you gave me French when I needed Haitian.” I can’t describe the sensation  
 that I saw when I sang with Nairobi’s orphans  
 “Chamo Kwoni gibala”<sup>2</sup>  
 I can’t describe the sensation that I saw when I sang  
 “Nkosi sikelele Africa”<sup>3</sup> with Desmond Tutu  
 I can’t describe the sensation that I saw when I sang  
 “Kwaze kwa wonakala”<sup>4</sup> with a Kenyan woman exiled in Columbus  
 I can’t describe the sensation that I saw “Jesu da ho ya”<sup>5</sup>  
 I can’t describe the sensation that I saw “Hol no mbitiye da”<sup>6</sup>  
 I can’t describe the sensation that I saw...  
 because I didn’t feel it, except vicariously Oh how the mother tongue must hang precariously  
 on the lips of a motherless child who’s too scared to sleep.

yes a sorrow shared is half a sorrow weeping may remain for a night  
 but rejoicing, tomorrow. ‘cause the other half of the proverb’s also right:  
 Joy shared is twice a joy;  
 but how can I, a goy,  
 but how can I, a goy,  
 How can I a white boy  
 in slavery, imperialism  
 respond to the holocaust,  
 respond to the lives lost  
 I can not share your joy  
 conquest and colonialism?  
 or your sorrow,

unless I can learn to respond tomorrow:  
 “Αντίνο’, ου μὲν καλὰ καὶ εὐθλόσ ἐὼν ἀγορευεῖς;  
 τίς γάρ δὴ ξεινον καλεῖ ἄλλοθεν αὐτὸς ἐπελθὼν  
 ἄλλον γ’, εἰ μὴ τῶν οἱ δημιοεργοὶ ἔασι,  
 μάντιν ἢ ιητήρα κακῶν ἢ τεκτονα δούρων,  
 ἢ καὶ θεσπιν αἰιδόν, ὃ κεν τέρπησιν αειδων;  
 οὔτοι γὰρ κλητοὶ γε βροτῶν ἐπ’ ἀπείρονα γαίαν.  
 πτωχὸν δ’ οὐκ ἂν τις καλέοι τρυζόντα ἑαυτὸν.”<sup>7</sup>

to Antinous because each one of us is an Odysseus  
 and it should not be so odd to see if your Odyssey extends from عربي<sup>8</sup>  
 that I should be the one to insist  
 that لا إله إلا الله<sup>9</sup> is not bla-bla-bla-bla-bla-bla-bla

I do not envy the chanteur Kabylie  
 whose شهادة<sup>10</sup> is on lien his tongue has been ripped clean  
 out of his “dirty mouth” so that now no matter how loud he shouts  
 it can only be in the language of his oppressor who has tenure, though he’s not a professor  
 I guess you’re starting to understand the plight of the Donatist confessor.  
 maybe he’s the one who refused to say monsieur.

that may sound a bit anachronistic but I pray the one whose diptych said “Deo Laudes”<sup>11</sup> in Latin cryptic  
 will reach to heaven by and by...

Why? Why?  
 Why am I being so obscure, that I am just talking to myself? I  
 don’t see eye to eye with anybody else.

Except for you, poor beggar  
 and you, orphan, whose soccer  
 and you, haggard  
 for you exiled woman  
 but most of all it is for the imazighen<sup>12</sup>  
 have been broken                      and tokened  
 that their men                      and women  
 whose sandbox  
 Let me share in your language  
 your languishing vanquish...  
 “Thou prepartest a table before me  
 and I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
 forever.”

in dirty road-worn rags  
 ball is made of plastic bags  
 priest whose brow sags;  
 and for you, my Guinéen friend  
 who again and again  
 and told then  
 are just children  
 has outgrown them.  
 your anguish,  
 but let us also share in the banquet:  
 in the presence of my enemy. . .

<sup>1</sup> “O if you have eyes, may your eyes fill with tears” – *Chants Kabylie* 1982 Anonymous Algerian Poet

<sup>2</sup> The opening line of a traditional Kenyan song in Luo (?) a Bantu language spoken by a minority of Kenyans. The song is about a monkey stealing fruit; an arrangement by Mwashuma Nyatta '02 was performed by the Kuumba Singers in the spring of 2002.

<sup>3</sup> “God Bless Africa” – Xhosa, the opening line of the South African National Anthem

<sup>4</sup> First line from a Swahili Christian song – “When He comes I will be like Him”

<sup>5</sup> Christian song in Kikuyu, a Kenyan language spoken by the largest ethnic group of Kenya

<sup>6</sup> “What is your Name” – Pulaar, a West African Language

<sup>7</sup> “Antinous, no fair words are these thou speakest, noble though thou art.

Who, pray, of himself ever seeks out and bids a stranger from abroad,

unless it be one of those that are masters of some public craft,

a prophet, or a healer of ills, or a builder, aye,

Or a divine minstrel, who gives delight with his song?

For these men are bidden all over the boundless earth;

But no one is likely to ask a beggar who will only worry him.”

-Eumaios, *Odyssey* 17.381-387 (transl. A.T. Murray, Loeb Edition)

<sup>8</sup> ‘arabi – representing any arabic speaking country

<sup>9</sup> *la ilaha illa allah* – there is no god but God

<sup>10</sup> *shahada* – the Muslim statement of faith (which includes the above)

<sup>11</sup> “Praise God” – Latin, the watchword of the North African Donatist church

<sup>12</sup> name of the indigenous population of Northern Africa, meaning “free [people]”

*Joel Mitchell*

## A Strict Basis

This is death  
but no stagnation,

Stagnation is a different  
kind of death.

*Ben Nardolilli*

5,000 BLACKBIRDS DEAD, FALL FROM SKY IN BEEBE, AR

When they fell they said

it was a dark shower, wings  
motionless (some still

outstretched), black bullets plunking  
roofs and dogs hurrying to mouth

them up, and I wonder if they  
thought, *is this it*, what collective  
feeling they had, if the air

was electric the exact moment the suck

of life, the moment five thousand hearts  
expanding four hundred times a minute

suddenly, now, don't.

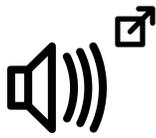
*Brett Elizabeth Jenkins*

## DWELL LESS

Dwell not so onward into the night  
Dwell not so on cracked hearts and women's thighs  
Dwell not so on the undressing of cocktail rump  
Dwell not so on the several states of the elect  
On that combination so rare  
Potent because it's not really palpable within an hour

Dwell on the airy  
Smoky conversation  
Smokier love affairs with women you have not met  
Inspect insects on their pilgrimage across this page  
Before the egotist's eruption  
Dwell not or your wounds will never be licked  
By Lamb or Time

*Matthew Davies*



A convoluted life is rife with cute rhymes turned too many times  
I've seen the signs – chalk line stigmata of a Jesús who didn't rise.  
Don't believe the lies – 30 pieces only buys a vacant burial lot –  
A vacant Lot whose wife with an even more vacant look  
Stands in horror before the artistry formerly known as Gomorrah  
Still as a stylite, the premier and ultimate of the stylites  
(who didn't know their Alpha from their Omega  
because they dared not ask "Am I putting myself on a pedestal?").  
The metal still will be put to the fire Whether to burn the bloody silver dross or forge the iron.  
And if iron sharpens iron, I'm feeling a bit anemic.  
My bulimic spirituality hurls me into a strategic duality  
In which I still can't hide behind Jekyll or Hyde  
Because I've split too wide the divide between wisdom and understanding.  
I'm scampering back and forth between the two sides of this false dichotomy,  
Like a racecar going back and forth palindromically,  
A palamino push-me pull-me escaping Laban's curse in dappled confusion,  
An appled infusion of sin – what's this mess I've got myself in  
In the beginning was the question but now all we've got are answers –  
Cures spreading like cancer. You can't dance around the question with words since His worship  
Requires a physical response, not just emotions ensconced in saline solution,  
Your teary ablutions are just a formula for ablative absolution –  
Which requires a grammatical revolution when your stuck in the genitive case, and I can't get past the accusative...  
How long will it take you to realize you're not just parsing in the wrong language,  
You're making a farce of the Logos with your anguage-lay atin-lay  
Don't you know it's all greek to me?  
Why won't you just speak to me Dixisti!  
You have spoken, and I see from the sticks broken in my hands I'm grasping at straws  
But all I pull out are guffaws because my faux paws clinging, claw like a dangling clause  
To my own prison of convoluted indecision built out of those sticks I was gripping  
On the edge of the cliff and if I just let go what would I be missing?  
Listen, it wasn't glue I was sniffing when I got up this high  
So why am I stuck with this withdrawal; falling from the fifty-fifth floor I call,  
"So far so good, I think." – Epiphany! (Being unsure just means my armpits stink.)  
Don't blink you'll miss the important thing,  
Because the landing's already secure. I'm falling...  
- in love with my Savior. What can I do to explain my desperate behavior?  
I may be gasping but I can't blame her on a lack of oxygen  
With only one life to write and no right to life, I'm falling out of options,  
And into labs stocked with alchemist's concoctions –  
Desperate elixirs, mixtures of false humility and grandiosity –  
Fixtures that fuel me to a higher velocity with octanes that are a monstrosity,  
Ventricles pumping like pistons with ferocity. Pissed on by a frog y'see, I'm pissed off by my mediocrity  
Which thwarts the thumbs off my hands With warts from those damned amphibians,  
I feel scammed like an Indian, who's been Native Americaned into oblivion,  
Though he can navigate his Navajo ancestry to go before Amerigo,  
Because the merry-go-round of history repeats itself...  
Just like my problem of being focused on my-self,  
And my life, rife with convoluted rhymes times two "cute" signs:  
A lamb and a cross -

The stigmatoin, of the Jesus who did rise, defy the lies with the human cost  
Of 30 pieces to buy the alibi Judas only thought he'd lost,  
When he hanged himself in that vacant lot, Not knowing it was for this that Joseph's burial lot became vacant:  
It is for this the 30 pieces weren't taken: for this no more lies there forsaken:  
The Body of Christ. - It does rise. Although stigmatized, he has risen!  
We have risen indeed! And these eyes have seen the signs too many times  
to deny the rhymes echoing through my mind  
We are the branches, he is the vine.  
Let me be tangled, if it's in the divine.

*Joel Mitchell*

## TABLE FOR ONE

No, waiter, I'm not done  
licking this bowl. Please  
give me a few minutes.

*Brett Elizabeth Jenkins*

## The Canaries Carry Me Still

By whittling hours the walls dip without life,  
come back to the ground, come back  
to the owners, furniture distilled  
from plank and seam, westward outthrust  
into flames of my Audubon's canaria;  
I remove my spelunking helmet  
and feed my canaries pocket grains.  
Some heron pox has claimed these walls  
where hoar paint once gussied us a home—  
yet I and my canaries own nothing. Aurora.  
The home is insisting to empty;  
tension in the passionate laugh.

Now to move on without walls  
or cabinet, without this accoutrement garrison,  
is the ugly, familiar distance  
between yet more residential strides,  
my share of them obese,  
pulled into and from them as on rails...

My canaries start to choke;  
again, we move, my rucksack filled,  
yet glutted too large for the back.  
The walls become caved mineshaft, invisible pit,  
scum and gold out of my elaborate reach.  
In the yard, the small beaks pinch my clothing,  
hold tight, and fly us all upward,  
and I with my canaries, as the air, move on.

*Ray Succre*

## Do Not Serve Instantly

The right of the ambergris is to be rare  
And away, yet still be exploited,  
The right to be a trophy for fished up  
Old work and expeditions,  
To be worth a company and joint  
Operation over the high seas.

Idols deserve the equality to present  
Themselves full of woe,  
To be worshipped and sacrificed to,  
Observed and commented on,  
Given credit for the occasional disaster,  
Called imposing on a daily basis.

The passengers have captured  
Highly thought of levels of toxic liberty,  
Freedoms that glow in their jars,  
Let them give up only what  
They have inherited and not fought for,  
The hills are in need of celebrants.

*Ben Nardolilli*

Fetches from Letterbox

When you tap me headward up, lock my arrays  
and cord my large ears- how can I avert?  
Inside my very mind is a boredom cortex,  
and it shakes and it humps against thought;  
why work it off, you know, a woman behind  
the glass is paid to pose and geek you to a sit-still.  
Who is she? Actress. Bitten by stardom, stitched in.

She may have cod-snout or beaky bra, but steeply  
exists on screens as an attraction.  
The very word is indicative.

Any does it, even the merciless awful,  
knocked wordward under blech with trickled,  
counterfeit lines.

*Ray Succre*

# FORGET

mainline here  
no, we will not tangle this further  
we will not come to  
see  
the light of sand dunes and donkeys  
let alone electricity upon floppy flesh

when it comes rising like a little death  
inwards not without  
like the night sky  
dapples a white iron roof  
towards the pitch, the dark

these scenarios will be forgotten

forgotten like  
this

like you forgot to swallow those circles  
you forgot to read the signs  
forgot to straighten the ripple  
in your light  
the crease in your shirt

the scrapbooks burnt  
meant more than any lettering preserved  
between here and there

not forgotten  
intentional ruin

forced forgetfulness  
a genocide without tragedy  
clinical white  
a clean, empty victory

*Matthew Davies*

## WHAT THE SUN SEES

When I told you before that had I been swept out  
before I had the chance to belong to a family,  
  
the sun would have an urge to rush upon my face—  
I wasn't being entirely truthful. Today the sun was behaving  
  
as usual, feeding trees and drying ducks,  
and it said things to me with its light that it remembered  
having seen. Through the window it saw me young,  
  
bathing and splashing rowdily  
with the neighbor girl. A few years later, it reddened  
  
my face as we broke into the concession stand  
at the empty baseball field and burnt popcorn.  
The time we called 911 from the park payphone  
  
and blamed it on a first-grader, it remembers  
that, too. It remembers everything it touches. I've kept  
  
my curtains shut so many days to be private. It assumes.

*Brett Elizabeth Jenkins*

Everyone was talking into their handheld devices, except those whose devices did not require hands, who were just talking. Alive to every permutation, I'd had a good day, I'd had a bad day, I'd had a so-so day. At intervals everyone stood except those who were already standing. I would be home shortly, I would not be home until later, I would not be home at all. At the crossroads we all crossed our legs, except those whose legs were already crossed. We have to talk about it now, can't we talk about it later, do we have to talk about it at all?

Then came the tunnel and everyone held their breath. In the dark I felt cradled in the palm of God, but when we came into the light I found myself sitting in a fat man's lap. At a sign everyone uncrossed their legs and I was tumbled to the floor, or rather the assemblage of shoes that covered the floor between a forest of legs, variously trousered and hosed. Except for getting kicked in the face it was not uncomfortable.

A ticking sound came from under the fat man's seat. I was about to become alarmed when I realized that the ticking was not regular, and therefore not so alarming. The fat man shifted his foot, causing the beach towel that draped the ticking object to slide off. It was a cage containing a small monkey in a red vest and a fez. The monkey sat at a desk equipped with an old-fashioned Olivetti typewriter and a ream of paper, all proportioned to monkey size. Here, I speculated, might be the proverbial organ-grinder's second fiddle, except that the fat man lacked an organ.

The monkey was a two-finger typist but none the slower for it, and over his shoulder I could read the results of his staccato flurries: *I had a good day, I had a bad day, I had a so-so day. I will be home shortly, I will be home later, I will not be home at all...* Merely taking dictation, it seemed, of all that was being talked into the handheld devices, as well as those that did not require hands.

During a lull the monkey read over the pages and scratched his head. Then, as if sensing my modest estimation of his efforts, he turned to me and lectured: "The old idea of 'talent' must of course be abandoned here, along with hero worship and the legend – so beloved of those prone to such admiration – of the creative 'fecundity' of the artist who lays three eggs today, one tomorrow, and none on Sunday. As we all know, every 'normal' person, and not just the artist, possesses an inexhaustible store of buried images within the unconscious. All that is required is the courage and a liberating method, a voyage of discovery into the unconscious that will unearth *found objects*—," here the monkey waved the pages in his paw, "—in an unfalsified state, uncontaminated by conscious control. And now," the monkey concluded, placing the pages back on the table, "I'm going out for an aperitif."

He opened the door of his cage and disappeared into the forest of legs, variously trousered and hosed. Perhaps he was indeed going for an aperitif (he did sound a little dry), or perhaps he was only due to fetch one for the fat man but had wanted to rescue his dignity in front of a stranger (although he'd behaved as though he'd seen me before).

In the monkey's absence the words on the pages of typescript began to tremble and swim apart, until the separate letters spelled only gibberish – not literally the word “gibberish,” of course, but rather the concept those letters happened to denote, which is nonsense. “Ah ha!” I thought, “an autocritique!” But then the letters themselves began to quake: the serifs broke off first and the ascenders toppled to pieces after them, crashing into the generous bowls of the vowels (for it was indeed the venerable Courier font) to smash them like fragile vessels.

The fragments swirled across the page, and swirled, and kept swirling, until I realized that these motes were in fact tiny bugs, like mites, or perhaps fleas. Yes, fleas – for they hopped onto the backs of their fellows like eager circus performers, balancing themselves into a symmetrically branching figure that I soon recognized as the letter Y (this time, however, in Times New Roman). Collapsing again into a swirling heap, the little entertainers next leaped, hoisted, and bridged themselves into the letter O. They continued in this fashion – *U, A, R...* – until a sentence had been formed:

*YOU ARE THE ORGAN.*

*Edmond Caldwell*

## Contributors

Edmond Caldwell's work has appeared in *West Wind Review*, *A cappella Zoo*, *Pear Noir!*, *Mad Hatters' Review*, *Chicago Review*, *Lamination Colony*, and elsewhere, and his novel, *Human Wishes / Enemy Combatant*, will be published in December 2011 by Interbirth Books. He lives in Cambridge, MA.

Matthew Davies, 26 years old, studies English Literature and Ancient History at the University of Queensland. His major inspirations include John Keats, Jack Kerouac, Leonard Cohen, Francis Webb, and Glenn Richards. He has been published in local zines.

William Doreski lives in Peterborough, New Hampshire. His latest collection of poetry is *Waiting for the Angel* (2009). He has published three critical studies, including *Robert Lowell's Shifting Colors*. His fiction, essays, poetry, and reviews have appeared in many journals, including *Massachusetts Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *The Alembic*, *New England Quarterly*, *Harvard Review*, *Modern Philology*, *Antioch Review*, and *Natural Bridge*. He won the 2010 Aesthetica Creative Works competition in poetry.

Brett Elizabeth Jenkins lives and writes in Minnesota with her husband and no children. She is the poetry editor at *Stymie* and the Managing Editor at *Specter Magazine*. Look for her work in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Potomac Review*, *PANK*, and elsewhere. Visit her at <http://brettejenkins.blogspot.com>.

Len Kuntz started submitting work two years ago and since then has been fortunate to place over 450 pieces at lit journals like *Thin Air* (Arizona State U.), *The Ofi Press* (Mexico City), *Anastomoo* (New Zealand), *The Litertarian* (The Center For Fiction in NYC) and others.

Joel Mitchell graduated from Harvard University, and is currently studying mobile development as a PhD candidate at the University of London.

Ben Nardolilli is a twenty five year old writer currently living in Arlington, Virginia. His work has appeared in *Perigee Magazine*, *Red Fez*, *One Ghana One Voice*, *Caper Literary Journal*, *Quail Bell Magazine*, *Elimae*, *Super Arrow*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *Pear Noir*, *Rabbit Catastrophe Review*, and *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*. Recently, a chapbook of his, *Common Symptoms of an Enduring Chill Explained*, has been published by *Folded Word Press*. He maintains a blog at [mirrorsponge.blogspot.com](http://mirrorsponge.blogspot.com) and is looking to publish his first novel.

Francis Raven's books include *Architectonic Conjectures* (Silenced Press, 2010), *Provisions* (Interbirth, 2009), *5-Haifun: Of Being Divisible* (Blue Lion Books, 2008), *Shifting the Question*

*More Complicated* (Otoliths, 2007), *Taste: Gastronomic Poems* (Blazevox 2005), and the novel, *Inverted Curvatures* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2005). Francis lives in Washington DC; you can check out more of his work at his website: <http://www.ravensaesthetica.com/>.

Ben Segal is the author of *78 Stories* (No Record Press) and co-editor of the anthology *The Official Catalog of the Library of Potential Literature* (Cow Heavy Books). His chapbooks *Science Fiction Pornography* and *Weather Days* were published by Publishing Genius and Mud Luscious Press, respectively, and his short fiction has appeared in or is forthcoming from various publications including *Tarpaulin Sky*, *Gigantic*, *The Collagist*, *Eyeshot*, and *elimae*.

Ray Succe is an undergraduate currently living on the southern Oregon coast with his wife and son. He has had poems published in *Aesthetica*, *Poets and Artists*, and *Pank*, as well as in numerous others across as many countries. His novels *Tatterdemalion* (2008) and *Amphisbaena* (2009), both through Cauliay, are widely available in print. *Other Cruel Things* (2009), an online collection of poetry, is available through Differentia Press.