

S/W O R D



S/2: SUMMER 2012

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Introduction

This is web page as palimpsest. There are frameworks and frames, codes and languages. There are memories. This grows up from roots, undulating between its old habits and something new. This is palimpsest as web page.

Despite the wishes and fictions of many, Ctrl+N does not subvert or save us from the past, (or the future, for that matter). It does not impossibly create a new blank page.

Only more Word can cover the past or future (and what is the matter of time?) or make white space white. We may forget, but the Page does not.

We cannot make new. We only read the words already there. But the eye strains, the vision blurs. Even still we strive. Until the cows come home.

Reach for the offing of the page and present it to the light.

Welcome back to S/WORD.

{marginalia} a limited body of infractions

the perils of displaying what one considers safe / no
touching allowed, as one should never

acknowledge an empty space / contains / a faint

buzz of light, sacrifices made for security, what one
lies trying to maintain / through corridors or

mornings roam / otherwise a gallery / objects hung
from my body and in the most innocuous way a thing

forbidden could be dangerous, kissing the latest

installation or falling from the nearest passing
stranger / provocative, colorful crimes / I simply

wanted to hide / echoes / but they worry so

much about hitting things, the damage to be done
by an errant mannerism confined can be comforting

or / an array of canvas, intuitions one can read

in a palm: the finer things a musician might handle
institutional sound as hammering projected

on a screen, what one can hold in a palm / I've four
cards and a receipt to write on / if I learned

to dismantle conformity, who would ever know

Valerie Witte

{marginalia} what good objects do

a curiosity, as killing / echoes driven down

the sound of droplets a kind of torture dispensing
choices hold voices, move liquid around

to bring about a particular outcome, something
to pass over, like a bridge / stones thrown

and feet to run back home / a place to sleep
at the end of the day / a thing laid

out for you proving it's beautiful to lie / let's

close up the spaces to find what we've wanted
between words subtext / or a neck adorned

a finger circled to take the paint walls, corridors

could clean up well / to stand in for abstractions
such as happiness or a heart to eat away at, written

out of a landscape for distortion deadened / to let

out water, a small window / opened

Valerie Witte

Platonic Love

the burlap puppet
never had a spine

strings
flayed by the ether
were veins

chipped black blemished button
was his left eye

hanging red thread
his right

mildew and dust

who wouldn't pretend friends
to play

mouth wire thread a flat frozen frown

the needle is just a needle

Michael Fisher

Cryptomnesia

an old man-----[detritus
words like concrete dust
slinks back

chewed grave]-----my favorite jeans
I still keep, ripped
by a bloody knee

Ψ's tears-----[over turned
wouldn't fall, like
they were oil

a stagnant puddle]-----remind me
of the four boys
who jumped naked
from Springfield bridge
June 3rd, 1994

two faces]-----a pen cap
piled together
in the exhausted world

a dead june beetle
bottle caps with rusted teeth

two coins, one unknown]-----and a silent moment
one a penny

a string of cellophane]-----only one
fished out
his jaw bone
lost with the rest

the final part:
insides of a wind up watch
each gear locked by age

for this lost life
another for the next
soon the whole world
will be muted

Michael Fisher

WHITE LILAC

orchard oriole in noon song and light
must have been telling and the wind led on
to a cemetery height and bloom of
white lilac

take some with you to offer

man in the grave
might have been telling but
no one moved to and the prairie remained
full in it and the wind ran on again

*you have part of my dark
it would not do
to take a bunch of white
lilac up there*

man in the grave
had to have been telling
*light does not need
an offering of light*

Rodney Nelson

THE MONROE DOCTRINE

when children
wake,
chasing moths, eating mouths full of night,
making frolic
in stage shadows

we will be
lovers
who read to one another
passages from
the Monroe Doctrine

Erick Mertz

DIVING BELL

I wanted it to be me,
that was my one wish for Christmas.

Instead of that though,
we clung to one another in the parking lot below the clinic,
knowing the unfortunate answer.

This was December 22nd
and rain poured on the earth above.
We were far from sun dress,
dappled meadow, the breeze between your knees
I imagined would greet us as we surfaced.

The diving bell is in place, I whisper,
going lower
to somewhere Spanish galleons rest their keels on the ocean bottom
and new life thrives in
familiar wreckage.

Erick Mertz

THREE KNOTS

dangerous is the
man, folding poems into his pockets

- *like currency;*

where cardamom, car exhaust
& Honeysuckle
aren't stored with perfumes, rather

- *with ointments;*

time in
Tangiers, in the salve
of a story

too near to home

- *I am*
coming undone by warfare

Erick Mertz

Obscenity

the exhausted world pays
four dollars, three nickels & a dime
to see ejaculation videos:
streaming HD, hardcore POV
guaranteed to be STD free
no sores on these---boys!
it's enough to pull your hair

Coda:

*There is a woman and it is not that she wanted it,
but she lives alone, no family, friends, not even a cat.
And Ψ doesn't know her, until one night last week
they connect in a chatroom.*

*Ψ tells her about the summer
his grandmother planted currents, strawberries—fruit easy to find.
He tells her about New God—the monster in his closet—
how his doctors say, “psychosis,” but he's real and he writes it.
She believes Ψ and tells him, without an apostrophe,
about her ex-husband, a jukebox bar named Lupos, C-7
was “Surrender.” She tells him sometimes the power goes out,
but she hopes it wont tonight. And as a little girl
she cut lopsided bangs in her hair, cause her mother told her not to.*

*They chat until sleep gives up on them,
about dancing, books from high school,
many typos. Should they exchange pictures?
No its late. Tomorrow, theyll meet here again.*

*But she doesn't. Nor the next day. So Ψ
invents a story, she had a heart attack. He was a minute
late and she had a heart attack. The police will find her
in two days, slumped over, her computer's cursor:*

blinking, blinking

Michael Fisher

Corridor

I point the way for him from my window, say my usual piece, tell him to go through the corridor. It runs, as we all do, under things, dimly lit, dimly long, dimly there, longer than any real corridor, more dim than long, more dank than dim or long, but it's the only way in. More unseen than seen, more unsaid than unseen, just a hollowed out conclusion. Not a corridor at all, but he's frantic for a handle at this stage. He feels like a little darkness perhaps, wants only to be something dim wrestling within it. Gabriella plays in the shadows of the entrance, games of chance: pitch and toss, pitch and dark, pitch and black. I sigh with my little why when there's no one left to play with. Follow me, if you please, she'll say to him, I'll show you the way. Calling the shots, the body blows that set the tone. She wings them, if she can. She's that way inclined. He trailed behind her, like a sigh from a punctured heart, a current in a fetid air, leaking like a stare toward a destination he only vaguely comprehends, and which I would have gone to great lengths to describe for him if he had not been so easily convinced it was a corridor.

Benjamin Robinson

MRIs and Us

watching it all happen
from the outside you
can see the secrets
the connects you can find
something, a new truth, maybe
that crack through which the
fabled light might enter --

this is what they believe
and it might be true

do you want to know
what makes people
act without conscience?

would you like a picture
of your insides for your
wall? *what is dimensional?*
what is categorical?

first, there is no refuge
there are always the people
and the things the lacks and longings --
oh, but could we be a refuge
for one another, my suffering
soul? -- i want to believe -- but

i need to away the wind
is everywhere the leaves
the rain wet paper skitters
across the street --

you say you could not resist her, taunting
her, this is perhaps worse. an irresponsible
personality. unable to touch, the veil too thick the world
too unfocused. it eventually becomes clear
that the only thing that matters is you, the only time, now --

but all the normal people. look at them. sitting, eating.
oh, to be one among them.. an unhappy
fantasy, my psychopathic friend.

in fact, what may or may not
be true might never be known,

to either of you. to me or to us.

lights. magnets. binary beneficence.

*a moment of understanding. -- but there's nothing, really,
nothing at all, quite like the way they look at you, he said.*

Heidi A. Howell

What Had Was

Forced of limbs
Right twice, left one, right
The combination, compound complication
The second time and on
That it picks up distresses it, with the roll at, subsequent in time
A long series, told in a story as a fix for wear
And housed in pocket holes
Renewed as magic or the optimistic though
Releases all repair
And all told comes
To single points
How forest
How hill and how the pounding rain sideways at land
A one, to stand amid and solid to the base
Untouched unearthly weight the smooth and marble shape
The inside not the out which is the truth of the things
Should be professed by senses
Hard inhuman perfect marble was
As those too in a row, the first direction best
That pocket hole and bound there, then they
Can be never lost to possession as
Beginning in that hole-,
Narrow narrow, long shift side and forward, narrow narrow
Stretch ahead, ahead -,
Is it it is something to oppose and curl the way a smoke path moves
There is a twenty margin of the filings
When collected, silver shards that whittled down was smelted back
The grand, that's big and whole
Cannot stop the scoring of it with an edge
And pulling hard to rip it roughly
Sealed the edges with the flame
Returned to pile it in a mass
As piled as flesh as with the alter in a European style
With detail ornament and setting into fitted well worked stone
Is inset into it the pile, the heap beyond repair of skill or earthly vanity deflected
It is only left, the simplest and easiest, the true
The under-cultivated stripped of digits and articulation of the sin
Into it, a smelted lump, the pile, the derivative where else has been burned out to soot
And left to it, the clear and pure and super-heated running stream

The alter mound, the concentration,

as the piles of dead have would have been,
if they the souls could be so melted down
to one essential kernel every body giving up,
so delineated, it is set against its side and scored, and sealed, and capped, and cauterized
if still in some a coating of a skin of fat not turned to soot inside the shaft,
smelted, idols

even, quickly turn away from them, they turned to water too,
and erasing any of suggested line that man could make so that remains
the most unnatural

of something not occurring even twice akin which is, outside of nature
as there is a finite rising to the even base and single form
that nothing has a symmetry it is a human conceit(ed) thing
that there is nothing we could say reflecting in the holy realm
so we the they should treat us as the dust, destroying even as out word our things
out scratching even as we rise above the dirt

that we the they should rub the faces in it to obscure the symmetry that was provided
in our featured faces

then by choice are fallen, lower than the waste which we the they provide-,
as much as are the slaying on the mattress,
as the war at words

as the frozen how should we the they provide the tool
to hide the crystal form

or easily condition to appear to never see it there
as in the holy way should all decline for symmetry -,
a waddle when a dance could break,
a limb

and self soiled

as the roost is still a vanity
and heads like full of lice
should hide,

because their perfect form
conflicting with the perfectly declined, the mass, the heap and pile –
it is a condition, a but

for how avoidance rules

LOCKING INSTRUMENTS THAT JOINED TOGETHER SEE PROJECTED
iNTO THAT FROM OTHER SENSES TUNED TO BE

a GUAGE gauge GUAGE

to hold alarms of tight possession
and there providing from the vapors
tHROUGH THE SALT BEHIND

tHAT QUICKLY GROUND UNLESS
a CRYSTAL OR A FORM MORE PERFECT OR COMPLEX
cONFRONTS THE EYE
iT IS BETTER THAT, TOO MOCK
tHE ALTER AND THE STAGE
oN WHICH WE THE THEY HAD COME
aS LESS DESERVING
tHAN THE PILE
tHAT WE THE THEY REDUCE THE MOST AND USEFUL THING INTO -

and plan, prepare, and send away
as it is, the ones could say,
it was a beaten trust
that all that, and shifting direction continuous reversing
and repeating broke the frames
that were, so thin and delicates the way of any cell way in a body small to see
inclined to be, is,
and, a thing that's frail in youth coming needs protected
needed that, the pressure down on it to break it of the path that it would take to be, in form
rejecting that, doomed more as born a gel
and never born more follower
were by the nature of the passing
aged away
Away.

Lewis Gesner

“Dumb Town”

The night is like an agate
The stars are chickenpox in the sky
The moon's a circle of protein

Tonight you are Godot and I wait and you never show

Tonight begs us not to stay here and think things through

Tonight my text messages remain unsent
and the text messages I sent last night remain unresponded to.

Tonight the filling stations stay open late
and ask us to park beneath their lit shelters

Tonight I want to rest my head in my own hands

Tonight wants to rip apart at the middle

Tonight I wish I owned a radio so I could lie in my bed and listen to commercials

Tonight I don't bother to let the beer chill in the fridge

Tonight the porch lights are a little brighter than usual

Tonight it is the ocean that orbits the anchor

Tonight I piss off the third-floor balcony and think of you

Tonight my pills become a pinhole, zooming in to how lonely we both feel

Tonight I hope you take this in with your tongue

Tonight I want my fingers to cross the canal of your spine

Tonight I want you to see my great capacity for ugliness
and to ask me when it was I lost my heart

Tonight I am the only one who can see this moon

Luke Weldon

“Suicide”

The sky was wide and blue and it concussed against the man’s chest. It covered his eyes and ears. It staked him down into the soft, wet grass. The blue filled up his eyes until they were completely full and the blue fell out in long streaks and the man’s eyes became two deserts.

The clouds wrung themselves dry.

The sky had the pressure of an ocean.

Luke Weldon

ANY OTHER WISE

1

Alligator

There's nothing special about that doodling,
about the labels
worn around, the brandished or neat-lined
superceding
science we expected, as we expect some change,
some six
to eight degrees by supertime, another
bullet
in the boot, about the place
where alligator
joins a second
exotic
leather.

And the audacity, playful, provocative, edgy
or combative,
since it's your call, be sure, makes sense
of the minutiae,
the inexplicably commonplace, of the desultory
minions, making sense
of the changes in the bureaus, assigned
to the force-fit
or fathomless executions: the day
of the Math-ers say,
famous again for signs,
for their
co-signs and
samplings.

The Nets

So take it to the bank there, wunderkind, while
 the robin-bombed bluejay
 beats retreat and a one-seed supper into foliage,
 measuring vicinity,
 travel times, at the annoying middle
 of another rainy week,
 a course on the rooms available, the start of inquiry
 and season's rush
 to prosperous mid-summer, to the crimsons,
 finch-flourishing golds,
 the salmons and peach-hues, snow-peaking
 roses the deck-warming
 light's coaxed to our interest, out of
 the stillness
 after rain, from the light
 -formed
 interstices.

Catching On

When it comes again, this coming to grips,
 impossibly,
 with more to discuss than privatizing toll-lanes,
 than the local personals
 or stardom on its arses, there's more, to be sure,
 to this warming planet
 and elections, to the calculus say, the cinema,
 the physics itself at stake,
 and the robins vanishing into tree-strung ivy
 with their worm-loads : the
 raison granola if you will, the rafflings made new
 by their instructions,

an evening's strung simplicity, so long as breath
or sentence, as
applications of light or scent, the costly grammars
minds could not have done without
serveour seasons well, now that they've fixed
the rims
and hung the nets for summer, and the parks,
the solitudes catching on,
make clear, by the second or fifth volumes
of the cycle,
the cant of prophecy say, of the perplexities
kids have come to get the hang of,
before there were painted lines, defining,
refining codes of conduct,
and a singular unready audience, filling
the chairs around
the tulip-ringed memorial, the half
decades say, evolved
in studied ignorance, declaring
the dawn bed-times,
the sense we began
like this,
or in any other
-wise.

Robert Lietz

WOODS SETTING

they were too young but not too married
in a north woods that had to do with
other people so they drove
 wrangling
over right over wrong more open
to the inflood of many miles than
what the imminent dark pine making
their highway an aisle might have told them
 leasing
a thicketed island to keep a
half-blind mare on would aim them into
the domain of other people who had
all to do with coming winters and
the bank so they ricocheted
 away
without each other or even a
car but not only the meaning or
none of a marriage remained in
the hard and simple north woods
 again
old raven noted the lack of aim
in young and the why and pine did not
move but were dark at the highway's edge

Rodney Nelson

Comfort

his tongue
grew back

to a doppelgänger

morphs to a foot that kicks him

he hitches himself up

his bloody nose will crust and flake

his glasses were crocked before

Ψ can recover his comforts

sleeping in sheets filled with spring air
and the way ink dries after he has written a sentence

Michael Fisher

Flirting With Tragedy

you've always wanted sanctioned lust
in everyday interaction
but
support isn't easily accessible
or absolutely free
but suddenly
the world slips away from your mind
and sure enough
you've landed a quickie
stolen
for the soul

A.J. Huffman

INITIATIONS

Bodies in motion yes, light-wrapped in awareness,
with *knowledging* ahead,
until you're your own sure thing, and the mood's
just part of it,
the hunger just part, and the presumables, yet to be
discovered, among the give-aways
and chop-scale models, so that you can guess
who knows, and, in tact,
can course the ever-widening spectacle, unspoken,
if all-told,
recalled from the smart-alecking, the letters
from the ancients,
the initializations canvas had all along been prepped for,
transcending signatures,
when what could be made, made of, of pre-fevering
stone, sensed through
and minded well enough, must, computationally maybe,
exist, as *prima facie*
evidence, which could be a start you think,
when light,
from the first pranks, and first *sans hazing*
initiations, could
slip-step through light, eschewing
wire and pole,
or tear the skin right off
the planet.

Robert Lietz

Contributors

Eleanor Leonne Bennett is a 16 year old internationally award winning photographer and artist who has won contests with National Geographic, The World Photography Organisation, *Nature's Best Photography*, Papworth Trust, Mencap, The Woodland Trust, and Postal Heritage. Her photography has been published in *The Telegraph*, in *The Guardian*, online for *BBC News*, and on the cover of books and magazines in the United States and Canada.

Michael Fisher lives in Worcester, MA. His first collection "The Wolf Spider" is available through Plan B Press. He often walks the streets of Worcester discussing Quantum Physics with his dog, Joey.

Lewis Gesner is a writer and artist living in Taiwan who exhibits his work internationally. He is a member of Mobius artist group out of Boston, MA, and has a book titled *In the Shadow of the Still Host* available from Whiteskybooks.

Heidi A. Howell holds an MFA from George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. She has work in the newest issue of *Psychic Meatloaf*, is currently on *la fovea*, and has published in *disturbed guillotine* and *The Washington Review*, which nominated her poems for a Pushcart prize. She currently lives and works in Minneapolis, MN.

A.J. Huffman is a poet and freelance writer in Daytona Beach, Florida. She has previously published six full-length collections of poetry. She has also published her work in national and international literary journals such as *Avon Literary Intelligencer*, *Writer's Gazette*, and *The Penwood Review*. Find more about A.J. Huffman, including additional information and links to her work at [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Robert Lietz is the author of eight published collections of poems, including *Running in Place* (L'Epervier Press), *At Park and East Division* (L'Epervier Press), *The Lindbergh Half-century* (L'Epervier Press), *The Inheritance* (Sandhills Press), and *Storm Service* (Basfal Books). Meanwhile, he keeps active writing and exploring his interest in digital photography and image processing and their relationship to the development of his poetry.

Erick Mertz is a Portland, Oregon based writer, filmmaker and poet. His poetic works have appeared in *Fireweed*, *580 Split*, *The Chiron Review*, and *Stringtown* to name a few journals. He is active on Twitter @emertzwriting where he broadcasts the latest on project updates.

Rodney Nelson's work began appearing in mainstream journals long ago, but he turned to fiction and did not write a poem for twenty-two years, restarting in the 2000s. So he is both

older and "new." See his page in the [Poets & Writers directory](#) for a notion of his publishing history. He has worked as a copy editor in the Southwest and now lives in the northern Great Plains. Recently, his poem "One Winter" won a Poetry Kit Award for 2011 (U.K.); it had appeared in *Symmetry Pebbles*. His "Upstream in Idaho" received a Best of Issue Award at the late *Neon Beam* (also England).

Benjamin Robinson's writing has appeared in *ART From ART – A Collection of Short Stories Inspired by Art* (anthology, Modernist Press), *Quantum Genre in the Planet of Arts* (anthology edited by V. Ulea), *A cappella Zoo*, and online at *Recirca.com* and *3:AM Magazine*. He lives in Dublin.

Luke Weldon is an undergrad near Portland, Oregon. His writing has appeared in places such as *The Legendary*, *The Camel Saloon*, and *Negative Suck*. He edits the experimental lit/poetry journal [BROWN GOD](#).

Valerie Witte received an MFA in Writing from the University of San Francisco. She is a member of Kelsey Street Press, which publishes experimental writing by women; and a co-coordinator of the Bay Area Correspondence School (BACS), which aims to explore the impact of digital culture on contemporary writers. Her work has appeared in *VOLT*, *Eleven Eleven*, *Letterbox*, *Alice Blue*, *Shampoo*, *Interim*, and elsewhere.