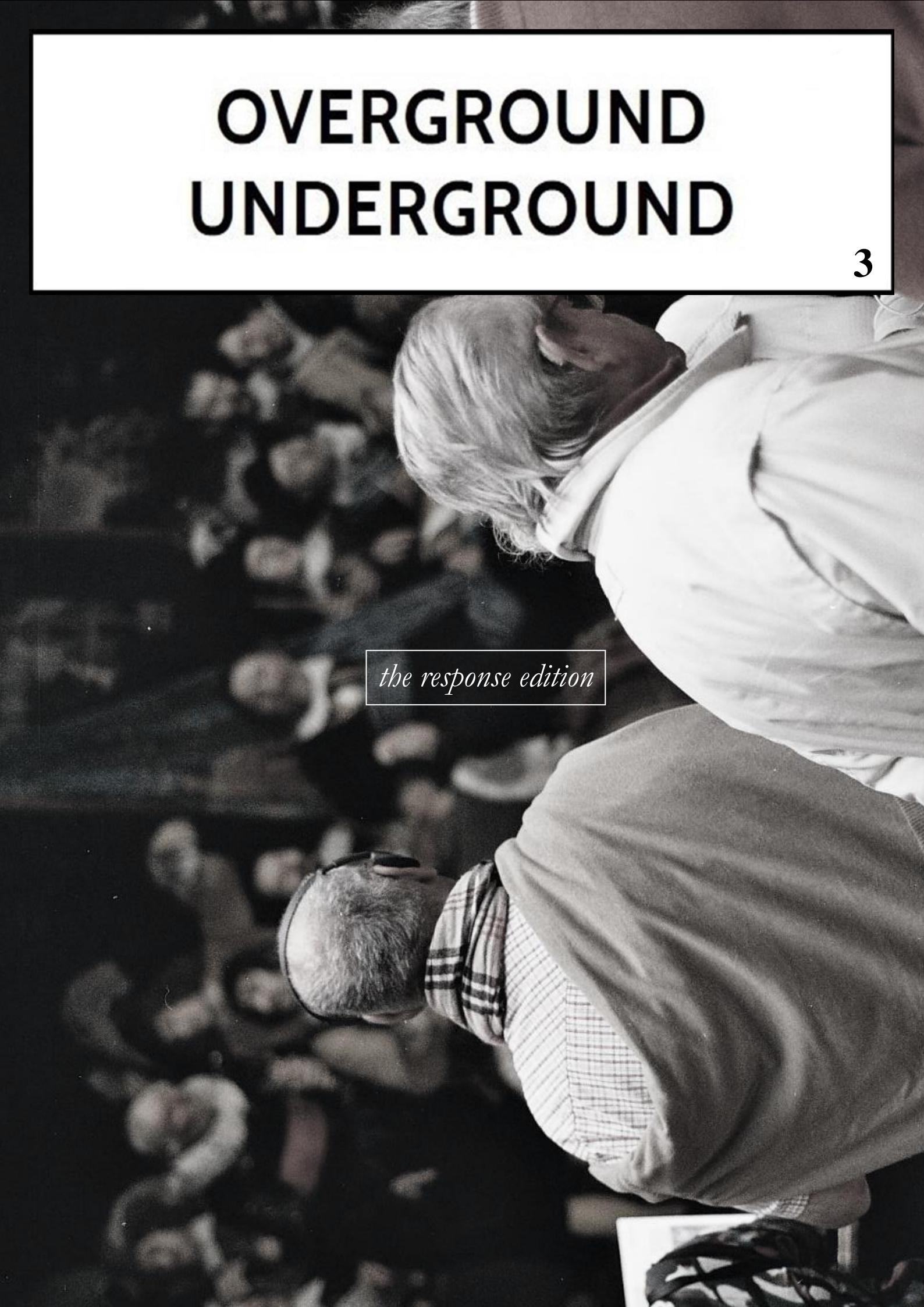


OVERGROUND UNDERGROUND

3

the response edition



#3

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Featuring

in order of appearance

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· Hanna Komar · Matt Travers · Dan Power · Silas Curtis

· SJ Fowler · Laura Davis · Rue Baldry · Michelle King ·

Stephen Sunderland · MW Bewick · Richard Dannenberg

Editorial

Welcome to *Overground Underground* Issue #3: *The Response Edition*. Each piece within this issue responds in some way or incorporates the act of response within itself. A rather odd theme, as it is hard to imagine a work which does not *respond* in some capacity; even the most abstract construction must respond to something, perhaps to itself, or absence, or some previous abstract construction. But what exactly is a *response* anyway?

Say a child is stung by a wasp. She screams. She feels the pain in her bones and withdraws from herself in the long age of the sting. She pleads through the tears, 'Why me? Why is this happening to me?'

Response is born, horror hitching on a wasp.

As the pain subsides and her heartrate comes to rest, the child takes a more existential approach: 'What's the point of wasps anyway? Why do they even exist in the world?'

This may seem like a question of biology, but the intent is adversarial. The child wants to rationalise her hatred, wallowing in the vision of a waspless world. She cares not for the existential justification of any other creatures.

Wasp is vermin, she says.

Her mother sighs, responds, 'The wasp is innocent. We cannot associate the human desire to inflict pain with the instincts of stinging insects!'

The child considers this logic and begins to feel a sense guilt for her waspicidal fantasies. She feels there should be some sort of debt to pay. Thus, despite the disturbance of pain, the child harbours a kind of revelry, for, through *response*, she is learning to philosophise the wasp.

The wasp stings. The child cries. The mother offers her altruistic thesis. All interacts and propels forth new thought and action *in response* to what has come before and what will come again. This edition includes responses to: the internet, (work by) Thomas Hardy, America, the coronation of Charles III, (work by) Donald Barthelme, and more.

Much love, and enjoy the magazine — OU

Philip Venzke

Where There Is Smoke

“Such people are smoke in my nostrils,
a fire that keeps burning all day.”
— Isaiah 65:5b

They enter without knocking.
Go into one nostril
and out the other.

More arrive.
Again, without knocking.
They don't leave.

Some carry kindling.
Some bundles of wood.
They explore the sinuses.

Some get lost.
Some cry out to be found.
Cry out, it is dark in here.

More enter.
Again, without knocking.
They carry matchsticks.

Nights pass.
No one comes out.
They smolder for days.

I Worry About You Worrying About

Note: the text is created from some of the words from Donald Barthelme's essay 'Worrying about women ...' from *Not-Knowing*.

*

Women are worrying about man's perusement of women. Woman is imaginary, not easily achieved. Anxiety art does not accumulate value. What space exists, if women escape? The gallery becomes suspect, nonexistence proliferates. Women demand, men become exhausted, beauty disturbs politics to free secret lust. The eye will have its subject, as immense as the sea. Male consciousness is scandal, feminine consciousness is expectant of loss, yet no one has contemplated the irrational power of the concave animal. If art is inappropriate touching, dialogue enters and does not know how to behave; a zoo of refinement containing desire skins and object dreams. Imagine this sexual dish straining for twenty million years! The crucial, blessed revolution of the nonrational: hanging laws, trophies, Jupiter, lies, organs. This is knowing. Something strange is looking. Polaroids, free at last, mobilize in pernicious refusal. Feminine domination, achieved in mysteries no morphology can reason, is immense and perfect. Confused philosophers guiltily regard the terrible ova in its fabulous swansuit. The gaze is going to be different now, startling old definitions.

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Danni Storm

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Nonchalance

Endings today- A small thing, as if hit, flails its last on the hot roadway, its doubtful heart and kicking legs wanting only to run, to run. And I have done murder, my mower surprising some bees and fledgling frogs who wanted only sweetness and shade. This grass will grow now.

Paul Hawkins

Winston-Salem is a Drag



Too humid. Showering after every cigarette. Hotels full of de-humidifiers working 24/7. The accountant has been in my brief case at last. Large rolls of bills wrapped in cable-ties. The analogy tastes of cliché to Benteke. I concur. He's proving to be a valuable hard governance asset. Downhill now for the past 30 miles. Stacey Earle's rocking-horse in the distance. Nashville is just floppy. We digest the riot news. Hurry. All guns to be worn. Flak in the deep blue skies. Sirens. Air-raids lasting for 3 days at a time. Nervous shredding of ID documents at the border. Medivac for hire. Constant shelling. It's a wonder how Benteke stays in such good shape. Roadmen form up into a phalanx at the crossroads. Ditches in tatters. The X28 creaking-up. Pacing the packing. On time. I've a week's stubble in this. Spaghetti willowing down the water course. Nuns waving in the wind. On a fishing expedition. Gory. We check over the intricacies of your tabard. Some craving sugar and sun. Held in the backwoods. Low grade skip warriors beginning to see the light. A dentist's chair on Bushwick and 87th Street. Unmarked cans warming in oil. They supervise disembarkation with soluble K. Passively questioning the weight of the city on their necks and shoulders. The Beard chews on duck and rice. The Sister simmers the diesel fondue. Morning peddles slow rain. You detect heavy shivers in the stairwell. Best value paper bags for the duration. I receive mail. Eye jelly in the aggregates. With Benteke, demanding screen-wipes in our rooms. Walking tall in Emberton Park. A lull in judicial proceedings. Unblocked, The Dealer soldering microwaves. Liquid wraps. Schedule for a dummy-run. Logging-in on the dark web in the breakfast room. D block. Cell 3. Walking along the platform edge on acid. Roll-on. She gets me. Borgestad. Maersk. As if we could. Hapag-Lloyd. Thank you. Hanjin. Instructions await decoding. Tannoy's emitting your high-pitched squeals. All night every night in the freezer. Fish-whispering. Trickle-down. You pass on movement in wings. Evacuation day. Detailed instruction through the small advertisements on Freecycle. Folding dough. Four ripped sofas in the trailer.

Paul Hawkins



Listen

And when you talk
to me I wish
I could not
dress it
in the suits
my parents wore
nor dye it
in childhood,
nor decorate it
with *experience*.

Not cut it off
mid-sentence.

Not rub it
into snot,
not flush it down
the toilet,
not sweep it
into a pile,
not burn it
over the gas.

Not run it
over with a truck.
Not drag it face
down on asphalt.

Not imagine,
not guess,
not know it.

I wish I could
hear only
what you mean.

Three Urban Translations from the Danish

Inger Christensen

Yahya Hassan

Homam Mohammad Amin

How can a community whose very existence is characterised as a state problem transform poetry in the language of the state? What compels the residents of a community pinpointed for regeneration to collectively respond to a local poet with their own bold and direct mode of translation – in a way which shows knowledge of their work by heart?

The three photographs below were shot in December 2021 in Gellerupparken, Aarhus, one of Denmark's sixteen so-called hard ghettos, characterised as such because many of its residents are immigrants from non-Western, primarily Middle Eastern countries with limited access to education and on low incomes and supposedly low levels of ability with the Danish language. Today, Gellerupparken is on the verge of being gentrified: in practice, this means certain apartment blocks have been demolished with the original residents being dispersed into more economically diverse neighbourhoods in the city. While brand-name Danish cultural signifiers are being impressed into what's left behind of the civic architecture, there is an ongoing community campaign by resident activists who want to stick together and stay put.



The first photograph is from INGER CHRISTENSENS GADE, or ‘Inger Christensen’s Street’, recently christened as such in 2017, as part of Gellerupparken’s forced integration of the Danish culture canon. Inger Christensen is a 20th century modernist ‘system’ poet whose works have found prestigious publishers and award-winning translators in the Anglophone world. But in the photograph, it appears as if a car has backed up and reversed into her name, so that it bulges up and twists about in a way which makes it seem organic or even elegant. What would Christensen, environmentalist and lifelong communist, have made of this chance occurrence? Her poems are known for exploring how human life is entangled within greater natural orders, and perhaps she would have registered this twisted sign as a kind of intimation. Either way, whoever takes these things up with the local council is fine with her name being left like that; the sign hasn’t been repaired for over two years. In the meantime, the three main other roads which brace Gellerupparken have all been renamed after aspirational ethnic Danish role-models, such as Karen Blixen, whose novels and stories are notorious for their tacit acceptance of colonial rule. Predictably, no road has been named after Gellerup’s most famous literary representative, Yahya Hassan.



The second photograph of a spraypainted black tag and popped bubble belongs to YAHYA HASSAN, which to this day can still be found on the concrete underpass, fades under a moist layer of turquoise spores. Hassan, a state-less Palestinian who made the Danish language his own, grew up just north of Gellerupparken to become Denmark's best-selling poet and a household name before he committed suicide in 2020 aged twenty-four. His poems are filled with larger-than-life characters from Gellerupparken's criminal underclass, rendered with a kind of caustic wit easily mistaken for sensationalism. Does the black tag in the photograph date back to before his death? Either way, someone risked arrest to put it there. It has been up there for at least two years, and no-one has painted it over. It could be that another resident is taking on the name. The Arabic name in block capitals is sprayed illegally onto the state's urban architecture as an efficient metonym for his work as a whole: declaiming the language as a mode of direct action.¹



¹ As yet there are no complete collections of Yahya Hassan's poetry available in English, although Jordan Barger has made several excellent translations of Hassan's poems which can be found in *Circumference*, *FENCE*, *Firmament*, and *Poetry Magazine*.

The third photograph presents a verse taken from resident poet, HOMAN MOHAMMAD AMIN, as part of a council initiative to involve residents in the reconstruction of the neighbourhood. In a space made possible thanks to the demolition of older apartment blocks, a new green park, replete with artificial clogged stream and climbing frames, is cut through the middle by a smooth, winding concrete path, to form a kind of urban safari where one might observe the locals at play. While several poets with connections to the area have had their poems engraved into the concrete besides Amin's, it is only Amin's state-selected verse that has been collectively edited. The last two lines can be translated as 'TOLERANCE IS OUR RELIGION AND/FOR US IT IS OUR GREATEST WEALTH', but what couldn't be tolerated was the poet's and the prophet's name Mohammad being carved into the ground for people to walk on; hence, their rough but efficient chiseled out correction.

Overall, if the mode of expression of these three urban translations lacks the range and surface fluency of professional translations, then these communal, transformations of the Danish canon have something which no professional translator can ever hope to capture: grace.²

² This attempt at a political ethnography is obviously subjective, biased, and in no way attempts to provide a definitive account of cultural life of the Gellerup estate. For authoritative ethnographic research in this area, consult the work of Nanna Schniederman and Jonas Strandholdt Bach, whose incisive article, 'Moral urban citizenship and the youth problem in a Danish ghetto' can be found in the Journal of *Organizational Ethnography*, Volume 11, Issue 1 (2022).

Dan Power

Royal Portraits





Dan Power



heathrow airport expansion by john constable

Britain builds prisons for the LGBT
community
in the shadow of a marquee
I recycle with zealIt's all I got.

The anti-statist woman types away at/in the jobcentre. She
gets me.
Fast food job opportunities cannot lie to you [ether]

There's only more desert
when you're in the desert. / /

Occupy Wall Street helped a lot of us realise
our parents are rich.

The collapsable table has not.
Same as the old boss. LorriesLorriesLorries.

Lorries.

Vested interests lineThe
Home means nothing.

How could an empty world
Have captured the world

[...] and it rains and it rains and it rains.

Silas Curtis

anyway. A true cynic

loves their job In my pain I am connected to everyoneJordon Peterson appeals to
white teenagers w/ The Blues or
those who dominate
have neither the time nor patience
to be sad. Militarised crib / cage

the anti-matter
father patrols. Value.

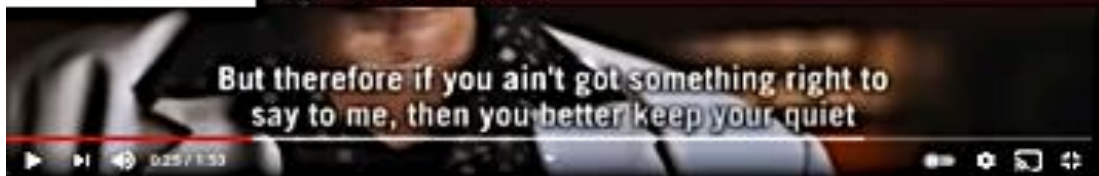
does not quite equal property In-
to this remainder

I get up.

LorriesLorries xxxxxxxxxxx xxxx
x x xxxxxxxxLorries.

the following pieces are taken from SJ Fowler's pamphlet *Recently Attracted Reality Influencers* available now through Overground Underground^{books}

SJ Fowler



Pinned by BRENTLEY COUPE

Sawyer Messing 1 year ago

This chaotic energy exist in our universe as a true indicator God exists, such a random event could not be simulated by a computer nor replicated in a laboratory. Truly a mystery of this universe.

9.3K REPLY

View 166 replies from BRENTLEY COUPE and others

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello

Steven,

- Snake owners have been advised to be "extra vigilant" because hot weather can make the reptiles more likely to escape, the RSPCA has warned

Unquiet Women

Since the woman's quiet
let no man breed a riot³

Silence! Maids tweet
meteor quatrain on hob

Queen bet, hit ceremonial
sestina moonward

³ The Return of the Native, Thomas Hardy Book I Chapter V

Laura Davis

Red Ghost



The Rodent Years

I watch the world from the pocket of a boy.

He is nervous now we have come to this place of stone walls. Twenty years ago I was a pupil here too. My boy's friend is the son of my once friend. When my Master returns, he will kill that boy as he killed his father. Delivering that child into his unmerciful hands will make me his favourite servant.

Until he can return and protect me, my disguise of fur and whiskers is my only defence. My claws scabble up curtains, against glass. Paws run me into holes. Rat desires battle my hidden humanity, drawing me to the putrid.

Food smells are strong in this long nose. They always mean delicious scraps fed from my boy's soft palm. So are body smells. The strongest is boy musk. Boy and boy and boy and boy. I am allowed to go anywhere my boy goes because I am his pet. In the school bathroom, a rat can stand on slippery porcelain, curled against the warmth of a waterpipe, openly staring at hairless soap-slid naked skin, taut and young, stretched over developing skeletons.

My boy is the best of them. He smells of bacon fat, sugar and the cusp of development. He feeds and warms me, trusts me with his secret worries, murmurs gentle affection, scratches my belly, pats my head and runs my tail between his fingers.

He bathes me in his thick night breath when I lie on the pillow next to his hair, licking its fanned copper strands. My claws scrape his soft flesh. I crawl into his pyjamas. His scent is strong between chest and worn flannel. He wakes chuckling. His chasing hands are excuse enough to scuttle below the waistband. He laughs quietly as he pulls me out.

He is the second boy. The other handed me over without ceremony, after all the affection and protection of before. I'm glad now. This new boy keeps me close, not shoved into bags that stink of parchment.

Rue Baldry

If I changed shape while we were sleeping, I wonder what he would do. I transfigured myself in safe secrecy recently, so I know these rat years have yellowed my teeth, made my hair lank and prematurely grey, my belly sag. If he woke to that body, he would probably scream.

My Lord will restore righteousness. Confusion currently rules, with witches and wizards guided by unprincipled pragmatism. They scurry in ignorant darkness, tainting themselves through contact with impure blood. When He returns, they will hear His voice, and wild uproar will stand ruled. The unworthy will be culled. His Light will form order from disorder, returning me to the life of men. My loyalty will be rewarded.

I will ask him to give me my boy as a pet so I can carry him in *my* pocket, have *him* run over *my* body.

Reckon The Tactical Echogram

To ablate futuristic organs in dreamcatchers
to spade helium as Bombyx mori
but never as axial plane
our prime, truffled old guard
expanded by masts, as if liturgy
shall be toddle for stars
while the foraged acrylic gates
search for the shrewdness
of rockery ghosts

Maybe, as a muleteer of donkey hope
preganglionic on the back streets
of food mountains and oil lakes
Being pent up kaleidoscopic of hospital mirage
Where were the wise ones?

I am praying again.
Now with marbled hands
on a yoghurted table, which bomb blasts my aim
I see heaven reinvented
as pilgrim
as melted bread
whipped into a warning and shouting
“Heatwaves can *be* the portal.”



Moving to the Country

Stephen Sunderland



All night thundering through glass, splintering door jambs, routing nighttime predators in their sundry occupations. What have we done to deserve this? They bleed out of films, peel away like transfers, yeehawing. Sleepless, we prepare our role in mirrors, souls blank, awaiting their notes.



On certain days, it is impossible to see out, bodied
by phantoms. Pointed elsewhere, you think of
bullets, fake ricochets. Angled from below &
unable to escape the approach of myth, its long
shadow drinks your daylight.



On some evenings, the stillest, *he* appears in the
amphitheatre of time, to reprise a gesture of
departure: the sorrow of vanishing man, his
fragile burden of duty. He leaves spur marks in
roof tarp, causing a lake of rainy tears to gather,
over the years, in the garage.

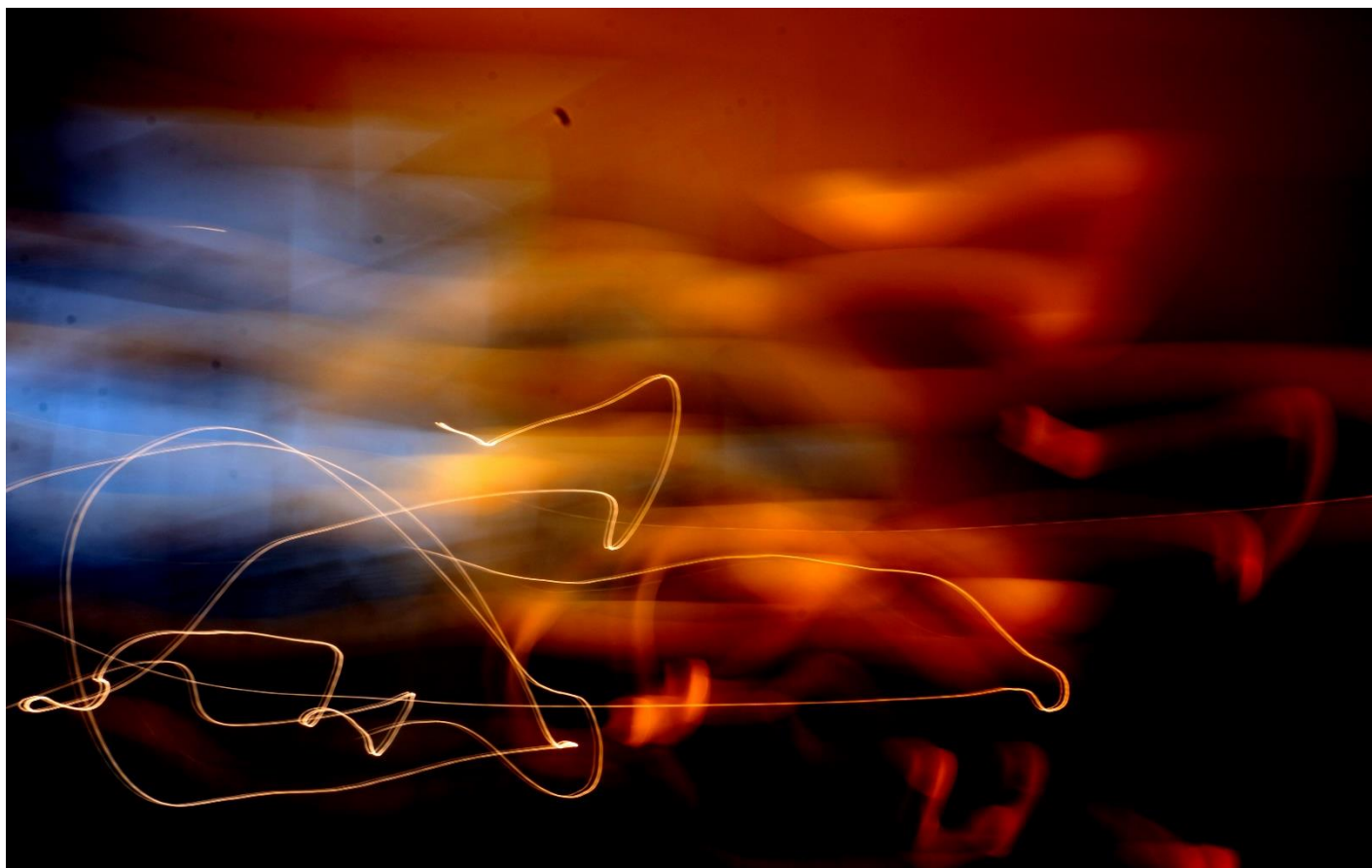
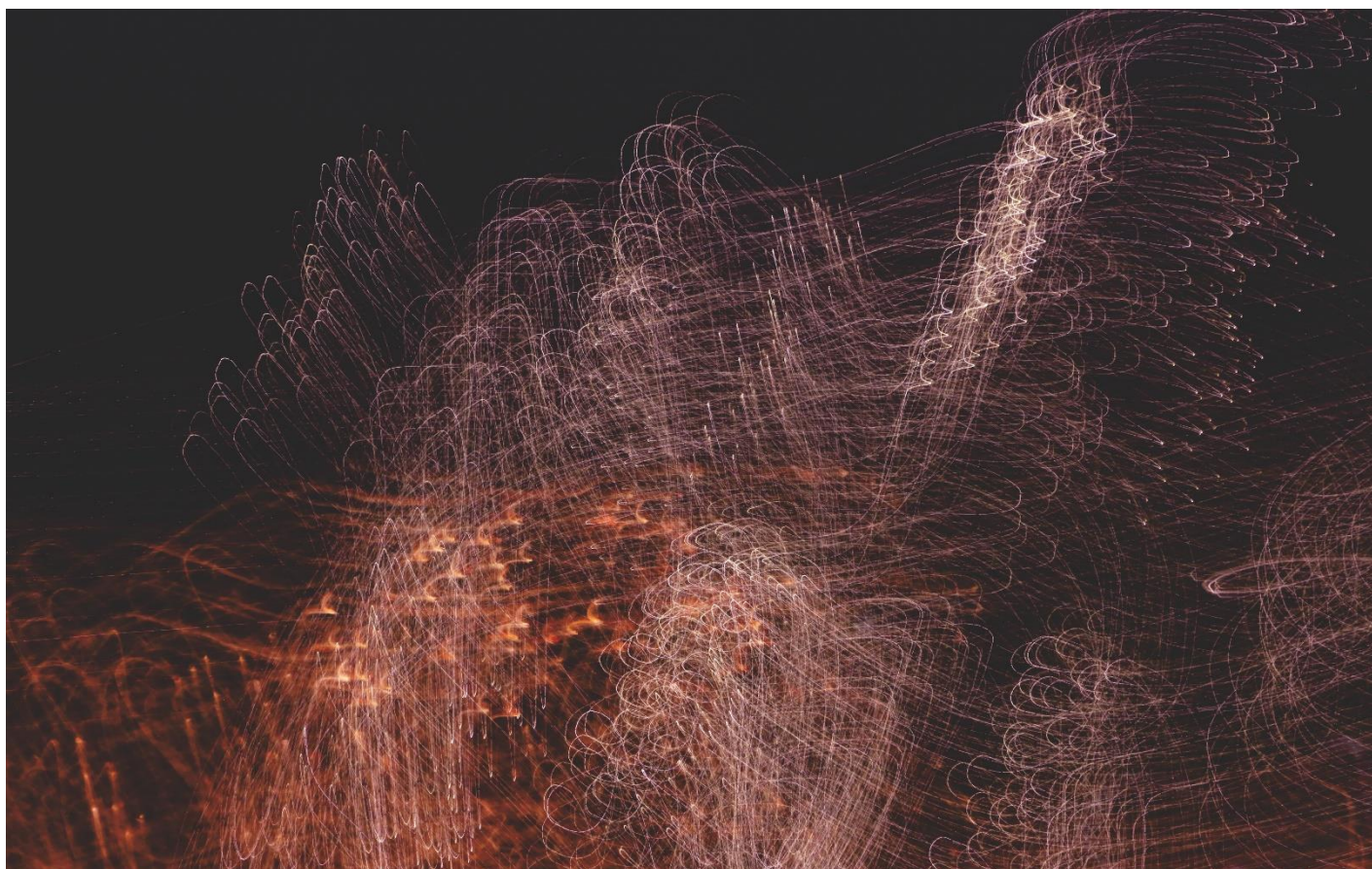
Goodbye to Language

In the next frame the boat sails out across a lake.
It must mean whatever, like its arrival at a jetty.
Someone cedes as a dog of a colleague turns
Round your legs and offers a kind of commandment.
There will be more.

Eating. Watching. It is as if we are free
To look into the glare of the wild that saw us first,
On the rocks by the edge of the lake, pacing
And always alone, a depth of matter that could be primordial,
As the first chords of a symphony play –
They are chords you think you know and the rain comes on
To turn people's heads, and the trains arrive on time
In a static of old tapes, blurring the windows of the subway.

Look how the lights are glimmering,
The playfulness of branches dancing and the water again,
The difficult ice dripping in the sun.
It is a shadow along a road, a walking shadow of us all,
The sorrowful existence of shrubbery,
Broaching a story at a certain point,
As things begin to come together,
Claiming the opposite.

Richard Dannenberg



Contributors

Lee Dunn is a writer of poetry and short fiction themed mainly on the human condition and has an interest in the classics (both modern and older). His work has been published online, in print poetry magazines, and in two anthologies. He resides in Central Ontario.

Tomoé Hill's work has been featured in publications such as *Vestoj*, *MAP Magazine*, *Socrates on the Beach*, *Exacting Clam*, *The London Magazine*, *Music & Literature*, and *Lapsus Lima*, as well as the anthologies *We'll Never Have Paris* (Repeater Books) and *Azimuth* (Sonic Art Research Unit at Oxford Brookes University). *Songs for Olympia*, a response to *The Ribbon at Olympia's Throat* by Michel Leiris will be forthcoming in 2023 from Sagging Meniscus Press.

Philip Venzke grew up on a dairy farm in Wisconsin. His poetry is widely published in magazines throughout the U.S. and Europe. His chapbook "Chant to Save the World" was a winner of The James Tate International 2021 Poetry Prize (published July 2022 by SurVision Books, Ireland). His second chapbook of poetry "Rules to Change the World" is being published by Finishing Line Press in autumn of 2023.

Danni Storm is an artist and poet based in Copenhagen. Danni is the co-editor of *Addenda*, a journal of new writing in the Scandinavian languages. Work by Danni Storm may be found at: dannistorm.xyz

Paul Hawkins works mainly in poetry, art, performance, publishing and contradictions. He has others e.g. Bob Modem, Hester Glock, Eachwhat. Along the way he's been a squatter, tour manager, freelance journalist, musician, workshop facilitator, improviser and a manager of an Elvis Presley impersonator, amongst other things. He's the author of a number of books, some collaborative, some not. *A Poem Brutist*. He's the owner of the 59th year of Bill Drummond's life.

Hanna Komar is a Belarusian poet, translator, researcher and activist, based in London. She is a Freedom of Speech 2020 Prize laureate from the Norwegian Authors' Union. Her new bilingual poetry collection *Ribwort* is upcoming in August with 3TimesRebel Press.

Matt Travers is a writer and translator whose works have featured in *Lumpen*, *3:AM magazine*, *Tripwire Journal*, *Asymptote*, *Firmament Magazine*, *Minor Literature(s)*, and *Mercury Firs* among others. His translations of Yahya Hassan's poetry can be found on BLACKOUT. Originally from Huddersfield, England, he now dwells in Aarhus, Denmark.

Dan Power is a poet from the West Midlands currently based in Dundee. Recent publications include *SELECTED DREAMS*, a surreal cyberspace visual-poem-graphic-novel published by Steel Incisors, and *Memory Foam*, a poetry pamphlet written in collaboration with Chat-GPT, published in 2023 by Doomsday Press. He is studying for a PhD in creative writing at Lancaster University, where he's researching the internet as an environment, environments as interconnected networks, and how AIs and digitally-distorted humans may be able to bridge the gaps between these worlds. He can be found online at @therealdanpower :-)

Silas Curtis is a writer and support worker based in Glasgow. He is interested in punk music and social movement history.

SJ Fowler is a writer and poet. His latest publications include *How Do You Do In Devon* from Moormaid Press and *Recently Attracted Reality Influencers* from Overground Underground Press. www.stevenjfowler.com

Laura Davis is a poet and textile artist based in Belgium. Her first collection, *Found & Lost* came out in 2022 (Kingston University Press). A solo exhibition of textile poetry building on that collection ran at the Green Door Gallery in Brussels, March-April 2023. Her website is www.poetry.lauradavis.eu. She tweets @lauradavispoems and IG @lauradavis1709.

Rue Baldry is a British author represented by Blake Friedmann. Her story Name Label was included in Issue 1 of *Overground Underground*. Her twenty-nine other story publications include in *Granta*, *Ambit*, *Msllexia*, *Fairlight Shorts*, *Litro*, *Honest Ulsterman*, and *MIR*. She is a 2023 winner of the Commonwealth Prize (Canada and Europe). Her Creative Writing MA is from Leeds University. She was a Bridge Awards Emerging Writer, Jerwood/Arvon mentee and Women's Prize Discoveries longlistee. Her debut novel, *Dwell*, is on submission.

Michelle King is from and based in Co Tipperary, Ireland. She has a science undergrad from University of Limerick, a post-grad in primary teaching from Hibernia College, and is currently studying Design in Dundalk College. She works in data design. Recent group exhibition in Cork School of Music, 126 Gallery and Bishopstown Library. Tipperary Artist Award 2023 recipient.

Stephen Sunderland is the author of the surrealist film-novel *The Cinema Beneath the Lake*, three BBC radio dramas and three visual poetry collections, *Eye Movement* (Steel Incisors, 2022), *Oneiroscope* (Kingston University Press, 2023) and *Refrains* (forthcoming Steel Incisors, 2023). His work also appears in anthologies *Seen as Read* (Kingston University Press 2021) and *Seeing in Tongues* (forthcoming Steel Incisors, 2023); and in *Mercurius Magazine*, feminist-surrealist journal *The Debutante* and *Lune: A Journal of Literary Misrule*. Find him on Twitter @stephensunderla - and on Mastodon @Corsairsanglot@mastodon.social

MW Bewick grew up in West Cumbria, England. He is a co-founder of the small indie publisher Dunlin Press. His writing explores experimental techniques, cultural dialogisms, post-postmodernisms and delimiting narratives of the working class. His most recent work includes *The End of Music* (Black Light Engine Room, 2022) and a multimedia exhibition (poetry pamphlet, artworks, music) with Ella Johnston, titled *A Study of a Long-Lived Magma Ocean on a Young Moon*. He also works as a journalist and editor. He mostly wears black.

Richard Dannenberg is a German-British multimedia artist who works across theatre, film, photography, music, sound art, poetry and spoken word. In their fine art photography they are very interested in experimenting with mixing long exposure and light. They call the series these two images belong to "Wenn Das Licht Musik Spielt" (translates as "Wenn 'The Light Plays Music'"), due to the light often turning into forms and shapes of wild music notation.

thank you for visiting Overground Underground