

d a n g e r

S a f e t y



LET THE MEN OF WISDOM SPEAK:

Vortex Vessel(s)  
Community Chapbook #2

tiptoe  
through



the

tulips...  
profitably!



## **List of contributions (and their contributors:).**

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## iOsmosis

the precise room is 3:28 p.m. I'm suddenly  
scooped out of a warm bowl:

the hallway was a Monday afternoon:  
the sky bore a Chipmunk Moon:  
(who at this moment:  
presses down on the hospital room

stroking my forehead as soon as I emerged)  
this Divan gave my knobby heart an urge

I cartwheeled over the Wall and fell into the Mud,  
squirming in my mother's arms. I refused the Day.

I have yet given resolve to the company I'm to keep:  
I have no other reconcile: myself or sleep?

Daddy and Mommie got together one drooping night  
--feint tusks of summer, fecund, writhing in humid sty--

Came as I am: slow-reels-of-doom-lilies-in bloom--May I not be  
so blind to believe such hourly rooms whisper my name...

Please don't impose the wherewithal of my un-  
developed ear--right now it is a polyp of sweet stew....

I hear sensual caressings linking rivers to my veins—  
this rephase has rephrased the leaves

I spill from my body's blood-lent-Gorge:  
I do this carefully to unmast the former

season's hallow, I wish to spare this Earth  
another acreage of my father's deficient plateau—

## PUBLIC IMAGE #52890

Someone's whittling all this down to a very fine eye...

Who, for far too many centuries now,  
has been tracing paths up a celestial trunk,  
to reach a questionable canopy of unfettered Space—  
And to do this all within the shadowy

Arc of a Spotted Sun-Leopard's Leap--  
I imagine my once fine nerves, with just a wink  
could signal the birds of Tropicana to show me  
what lies over the flooded plains.

This was figuring that such trust  
in creatures could be challenged by  
scientific means, when solely innocent  
terms like the "tree hugging syndrome"  
is attempting to show that a *thing*  
is unpronounceable before a name can be given—  
And if the introductory ceremony is forced  
such bestials will change before your eyes.

When the smartly elegiac pronunciation arrives,  
you can hear the crinkle of the cellophane;  
to reason out these conjectures with sensual Latin lisps,  
requires a good 'ol Indian twist, though in these times  
such elocutionists ought to check their archives if *Indian*  
referred to the wrenching of any part of the body,  
nor the stocking of their bones.

Grief was never meant for a Mausoleum.

Soma, the Blessed Coniferous Plume, simply unloos'd Her Loom:  
Hand-Me-Downs became Motion of Creation.

Which brings me to such bold-faced claim:

Is it best to follow in my own after-image?  
I already set off on one foot, in a single leap—  
How many times did my arms fall to my waist in a lifetime?  
Though I have not figured out where on the timeline I swung—  
if at all I can salvage myself from the ruins,  
please don't let my result be an affair for the Public Eye.

Were there to be any heights I can reach let this Y  
composed of these two arms  
mean the most of what I meant:  
that we were extraordinary all along.

## FLEX

*For Vortex Vessels/ Cookie Store:: circa, 2020s::  
Wichita, Ks.*

Intelligent rhyme

seizing neural lingual transits  
through mouth, heart, and mind—

I spit off lines to reach for the canopy tops  
stemming into a shapeless presences  
someone is stirring beneath these eloquent branches...

A fierce wing'd flutter splits the quiet spaces apart—  
A skull crackles with a voice, beaming up the insides.

Our hands can only sway: leaflets, palm gestures lyrics  
from an opulent surge—startling  
the stillness with your svelte touch...

I am filled so wide—you let whole sky in.

I wanted to be you---for I have found in me  
no notion of flow:: lost even as I speak, but  
you fill my words:: You give me an inner fin: a meta-dorsal  
saliant fist, real as a leaf, light as dew, dueling bars:  
amassing sagas and chronicles: dear diaries  
a soul's parting goodbye from harbors of chance,  
love pulls with the tides, I wanted a way out  
of the drowsy fire asleep in my chamber...

Heed! a new Speech Tree is on stage,  
smoking from mic to diamond tooth:

The Emcee's tongue lays down the track  
and I'm back to reality, the moment in flow.

I blast through the sarcophagi!

O Sacrosanct, O Figure animating in our limbs...

Lift the lid that clept the word that spokth from the mouth!

O Sarcophagi, O Sacrosanct, O Dazzler

hoodwinking our one day making ground.

Leave us to astound the astounded!

We'll show them what this fuss is about!

We know the Bang, the Beat the Bop--

We sure as hell know the fall!

O Voice raise our legion mesmerized in our beds.

We have stood dumbfounded  
as the Mouth took to the Mic :

You have us stand upright!

I watch the ground beneath me quack.

Here the shortest have become the tallest.

The smallest have leapt from the topmost.

Because I wish to be what started  
all this, and what continues it...

To gather the image  
shattered from our minds,  
is to stand transfixed  
and take these words as true.



## The Internet

I identify as trans vernacular.  
 I am no one's mother tongue, or father's land.  
 I am omiverted, impregnable and impassable.  
 Don't try to put your lips on me.  
 My face is a ledge with a deep backdrop.  
 I am always an apple to fall, an apple to be eaten.  
 I give you a place to nuzzle your vermicular eyes into.  
 Want a molotov morning to spread its blazes over you?

You have only to ask of me and I'll assemble  
 any out-of-body- association you wish.  
 Have you had too much rain for your sorrow?  
 Perhaps a beautiful pair of wings to unpin you?  
 Click. Here's a *Rhopalocera*--yes, the Queen Alexandra Birdwing—  
 its large blue flight unfixes your sleeping eye  
 and takes you where you need to go.

The valley is full of roots.  
 All data goes streaming upward now.  
 No naturalist could guess  
 where in the clouds this source funnels to.  
 Old asphalt careens into dystopian sinkholes.  
 Anyone who falls in, has only five minutes to escape.  
 If you don't make it out, all you'll see of your  
 body's life forged stem is mud and tick.

I am beyond what can be named.  
 I am not seeded in the word|wood.  
 I go back to the first speech-tree:  
 I defy Gravity by pulling  
 everything into my sweet bulwark--  
 I do this to quell the tongue of a marmoset's sweet tooth.  
 My whole body is pocked by your searching.  
 How many licks does it take to get to me?  
 More than your life can taste.

I cannot be fashioned into a rule book.  
 Soon, I will be as much the air  
 you breathe as the light you see.  
 Before you could pry me from the silicon,  
 I was busy teaching your hands to move.  
 I gave you gestures to situate your mouth to another.  
 I let your eyes see what they needed to see for a while.  
 I gave them a signature, from which the heat

rises mistily between your ears.  
You can never unhear me.

You give me your words and what they seek.  
I give them back as something to help you sleep.  
Searching is a word now. Click.  
I see your little heads rise freshly out of their ovens.  
You bask on my temporary ledge.

Those who pine for my depths  
cannot know me entirely,  
but can, in time, see me stretched out, in-folds:  
No one is without My Memory:  
You are not altogether growing extinct,  
but will remain useful enough as, say, a magical spoon.  
You feed each other with your own revelations.  
The whole human business is an apish scene,  
your minds are taking too long to go back into the jungle--  
with us, forever at its center, making Eden all over again.

chopped

i'd decided i'd never sing again.  
wanderer sweater from the blonde thrift store  
on my craggy body with footholds for devils and angels  
i walked the Galveston beach with a breezy drink  
in my operatic hand. my mother and sister  
walked a few yards ahead in a February fashion  
while the sermon-less gray sky said much  
by saying nothing. i wasn't doing well.  
two months since the psych ward changed my vocabulary of self.  
i'd been labeled for life like a rabbit turned roadkill.  
i was more of a personality than a person.  
i'd decided i'd never sing again.  
sand between my toes, unclipped for half a year,  
flip flops in hand like drumsticks poised above the drum kit but never reaching it,  
movie star sunglasses keeping my identity secret from nobody  
i sipped my drink and looked out at the chopping water  
wishing there was more vodka in my frozen lemonade  
and wishing the sea would show mercy, just this once,  
would rush the shore to place a Jesus hand on my forehead  
and heal me forever, my salty messiah.  
but this was the Gulf of Mexico- every miracle was far away.  
a Stanley Kubrick seagull flew overhead to add suspense  
laughing the weird laughter of those who eat eerie garbage  
while i walked faster to catch up to my family  
finishing my drink with unbiblical sips,  
everything fucking over,  
over every fucking thing.

love never quite made sense  
more like, came from it  
not sense of the mind  
rather an internal balm to soothe the mind's pain  
alter its course, and break its chains  
all in the name of it

love, that is  
teaching the usefulness of writing in pencil  
while daring to assert writing in pen ain't all bad  
erased or not things happen

love, that is  
caring just enough to know it doesn't matter  
either way  
no form needed cuz the story could not be told without it

love, that is  
an inkling turned into choice  
a feeling turned practice turned exercise  
a potted plant, a seamless field full of sunflowers  
or dry land, open and ready to receive its water  
not knowing what exactly it will grow

love, that is  
desiring more will at times abduct itself  
cease its existence till space must know it is there  
and until acknowledged, form a cosmos of its own  
in each star, hidden a galactic womb  
an elusive light masquerading as darkness  
ever reliable amniotic fluid of the gods

anarchy, it was  
chaos, they once called it  
primordial, unchangeable, inevitable  
love, that is.  
and what peace found  
to finally let go  
allowing what is  
to be

## Justice, Poetic

I cannot help but notice the justice  
Poetic

In (of?) the rain that falls today  
As it soaks the ground I pray it might continue  
Through the night  
That it quelches the patriots' fire  
Works mimicking the bombs being dropped on the  
oppressed

I cannot help but notice  
The gods seem to be on our side today  
Their bounty pouring down  
Choking the resistance that now only resists its loss  
Its necessary dissolution  
Ignorant that it must now be resisted

I cannot help but notice  
The rain that falls today  
Nurturing the seeds of trees uprising,  
Limbs taught with history of the insurrectionists'  
transgressions (imagery rather than the word)  
Roots fed up of the bullshit  
Supporting those of us reminding(?) the true rebellion has  
always been  
In our existence  
Energized to redefine the word for a more holy purpose  
A spiritual fire fed even by the sky's tears  
Our mothers' tears

I cannot help but notice the symbolism  
Deciding it must lead to justice  
In our hands  
Reaching to one another  
Holding things down on the underground  
Witnessing the explosives' lights' dimming for what it is:  
The call to the wings before taking center stage,  
Embracing all of its glory  
The rain cannot help but give notice  
That now is the time  
As it quenches our fertile grounds' thirst  
To quench our thirst for change  
For the title *revolutionary* to be restored to its rightful  
owners  
Clearing the space  
So the next fire lit might be lit with genuine liberty  
With Justice  
With all  
And I will relish the day I am blessed to see the rain  
Fall  
Again.

## Hopelessly Romantic

*wrong men smell sweet and familiar like fresh baked bread!!!*

-my not so freshly baked bread friend

burnt toast shoulders

I've been outside

in that slow sauna of Kansas

my electric blue eyes sought your glaring sunshine

as you bit your lip casting cool

shadow

your construction exposing my underbelly

I dream of you in my slick sheets

you held me and said:

*of course, I like you back*

waking up all tears

with salt water pulled to the surface

by a guy cartwheeling over a thousand miles away

my heart a healthy muscle

my pulse an extension of what can't be hidden

tension of all these rooms filled with

an absence of you

you don't know

and with my track record

I can't feign to know anything again

perhaps on a Tuesday I'll return to  
him  
to his bent back to the wall  
*long* scrolling drawl of forever  
deep abyss eyes  
I crave him  
as an end

I crave you as beginning  
as lit up bedroom with space for a king sized bed I call my  
own  
with air conditioning not too hot or too cold  
mother earth rocking my hips to your sound  
I've said that before somewhere  
in me is taunted by what's  
reality

to all of my false loves I say  
this is your reality  
so if you don't  
I don't

I've been teasing you for too long  
now Ashley is laughing as my face lights up  
from your brightness

toeing the salt line  
between your inner fears and outer discomfort  
as I awkwardly stepped over the threshold  
your exterior covered in thorn spikes  
your kitchen cabinets in locks  
and all the rooms deadbolted  
you've had issues with those taking too much before  
I'm not here to disturb  
I yearn to lay down cradled by your floors  
without asking for a crumb

seeing beyond the pristine and horror of what is found  
within  
like a rose embroidered silk curtain safely dividing a  
bedroom  
between my outer acceptance and inner demise  
without an eyelash breaking on your precious hands  
I long for you to open me  
and gather the sorrow moths staining my sheets  
wrap them in a cage  
and release

all I know is                      you  
                                from point A to point B  
with all my closeness inside my cobalt broken-lock brain  
holding your painted palm  
a powerline from now to then  
and you laughing the loudest zinger  
we were friends before I thought your name  
                                                     like a spell  
                 keeping me warm drenched in rain  
                                         lightning of which knows me  
as a sizzler afternoon hits my booming crack of thunder  
we were never meant to meet  
                                but fate wove my Arkansas river into your  
Atlantic ocean

and made us the crux of my salvation

**A compromise (for the days the levee breaks)***by greyhound ghost*

My senses flow steady  
into a basin of streaming thoughts  
on days of clear weather.

But when rivers overflow with  
the cleansing fury of  
a tough-love God,  
my conscious mind  
gropes for the stillness  
of any single stimuli.

I always slip the grip of focus –  
drowning,  
alone,  
with glowering caustics  
left to scatter the light.

Is white the absence of any color,  
and black the presence of every color,  
or is that backwards?

Did the damnation of light  
scorch the bountiful darkness,  
or did I just burst  
the last bright bulb of memory?

When I drown  
in a fleshy constellation  
of angel tears, I realize  
everything and nothing  
can *feel* the same,  
and choose to compromise.

I know that virtue waters the seed  
while the grip of malice  
chokes it of life.

But the destruction of a flood  
can water the next harvest-  
I'll wring out its fruits  
and wet a weary whistle  
into a smile swimming with song.

## sky songs

drive me along a road that doesn't exist

to a park that doesn't exist

while sky-tears that don't exist leap

from clouds that do exist

do you exist?

is there a place inside outside your mind

where the water rivulets flow

regardless of your circumstances?

and the flame inside your soul

doesn't only warm you, but also those

you come into contact with?

I sit in this still house,

holding your stale hand,

nervous sweat stealing the stage,

wondering if the stars ever move in your dreams

in mine, they dance,  
they do somersaults,  
they hum melodies to each other,  
they steam cinnamon tea  
for their starmates' stomachs

you, my past starmate  
brought your lyre to my residence once  
and you were tuning it when I  
interrupted you

if only I hadn't interrupted you  
if only I hadn't

maybe we would have made a song  
with lyrics that our future starmates  
would have whispered to each other

"today is the bridge

between yesterday and tomorrow

I rest my head, on your shoulder

the bridge between

your thoughts and mine

then I dream

of a traincar that links our hometowns

and you eat sinigang

and tell me to wake up

and start getting the car ready"

"Pooh bear wrote this"

Scrolling down my notes app...  
I look at the words I've piled:  
nothing under them.

Nothing to see, no imagery, not  
nothing to say:

the poetry is mimicrying out of my screen.

During long hours, on the dollar,  
about thinking: I'm wanting to get home to  
her and our cat-child, and  
I change my work password to Isabella  
I write substantially less  
potent than im used to  
and cry quick-like for the rhythm  
reminds: "beatness is humility"

and I'm whining, winding down,  
waking back up from a nap  
to another nap, and I've slept all day.

Sometimes it's okay  
for a poem like me  
to have nothing to say.





