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Something to Write About ~ Damian Rucci

I don't hang out with the devil
much anymore but he still calls
from time to time; when it's night
or when it's morning or when
these stubborn feet don't wanna move
or when the bed calls me to sleep
before it is even ten pm

I don't tell my girl
but he leaves voicemails every so often
asks me can I even remember
the last time I've tasted three am?
Asks me can I remember the last time
I've felt like Adonis? Been the Uberman?
Grooved my footsteps into the wooden floors?
Can I still get it up without a burning nose?
Do the whispers still keep me up at night?
Do I really feel comfortable
in the realm of the living?

Because I've lived a thousand lives before dusk
I've haunted midwestern cow towns
for cigarettes and adventure
I've sold my last ounce of honor
for a bowl of Elysium in dim-lit rooms
I've slain friends in my hearts
over minor quarrels and burned effigies
of my future in gasoline pyres
linoleum melting from the house
like crystal balls dripping through the hands
of the soothsayers

I'd say I didn't know any better
but I'd be lying, I saw the crash
before I ever even signed my name
but I guess I needed to find my way
I guess I needed to see oblivion
for myself, I guess I needed a scar
I could write about

Diego Rivera is My Hero Jon Bennett

Diego Rivera was very fat
hugely overweight
all day long up and down
the scaffolding, holding brushes
over his head
it didn't matter
he ate the world
Diego Rivera didn't
go on a diet or quit smoking
yet the women flocked to him
his ponderous belly
his cigarette breath and
infidelity only made him
more attractive
Diego Rivera was a man
of the people
who had no defense
against his monstrous
appetites
and Frida was tiny and strong
and put up with him
Maybe I need
to be a man like him
to find a woman
like her.

Afterward (Then and Now)

John Tustin

Sometimes,
Afterward,
When we would lie in bed
And talk in the dark as we recovered
She would tell me about
What an absolute prick
Her husband was.
How he lied and how he cheated on her
And how he turned the kids against her.

The conversation often turned
to dear old Jason.

She went back to him eventually
And I imagine now,
Afterward,
When they are lying in bed together
She never brings me up
At all

And I don't know whether
To be offended
Or flattered.

one roof
Paul Tanner

it was the dead of night,
it was the death of a lot of things

and I was walking to the kitchen
for water or wine, whatever that
christ cunt had left us,
when I passed her son's bedroom:

I heard a slap and a moan.
then the creaking and panting started ...

there was a crack in the door.
you know damn well I had a peek:

there he was
fucking his girlfriend doggy on the bed.
and damn if he didn't look like his mum:
same full lips and big grey eyes
framed around a dirty blonde bob.
it was like a flat-chested version of her
going at some chick's rump with a strap-on.

no, you dirty bastards
I didn't invite myself in.
I didn't even stay to watch.

I simply went back to bed
and slipped it in his mum:

oof, she woke up. what's got into you?
happy families, I told her.

and I hear she has a daughter
somewhere, too.

Spirits
Daniel S. Irwin

Spirits come to me in the night.
My fault: bad booze, cheap dope.
Or rather, cheap booze, bad dope.
That compounded with insomnia.
My visitors always want to talk.
I could care less, but they stay.
A volley of mangled refrains in
Bygone dirges of hopelessness
Spoken by headless chickens.
A good host, I compliment them
On their flawless French, though
I don't understand a word of it.

Shit On My Shoes
Mather Schneider

The mc compares the poetry reading
to a rodeo
but I've seen more action
on a merry-go-round.

The sound-guy smirks in the shadow
of his hipster cowboy hat
and holds his stiff
lasso of wire.

One by one the poets stand up
and trot out on their potty-trained ponies
do a couple of high-step circles,
rubber-spur their gray-blanket mares
around the clown barrels,
swinging their tails at the flies,
dropping piles
of pumpernickel rolls
on the hardwood stage
and burping yellow cud
onto the mic.

The audience just looks on
like cattle standing
in the rain.

a lucrative business
J.J. Campbell

i had a dream
i started a lucrative
business writing
suicide notes for
those who could
never find the
right words

everything was
going great until
my shrink asked
me if i was simply
avoiding writing
my own note

the dream started
to fade from there

and i asked myself
what ever happened
to the dreams about
the beautiful women

i woke up laughing

that fucking shrink
doesn't know i wrote
my note years ago

just waiting for it
to get published

cum stains and cat litter
Tohm Bakelas

with one final squeeze
she pushes me and
all my cum out of her
and lays on top of me;
everything drips down my leg.

the sun burns through
the turning autumn leaves
my dirty window
my cat litter bedsheets
my heart.

everything upon this bed dries up:
time, love, cum; only cat litter remains.

i leave her to pick my kids up from school.

after dinner they'll slip into dreamland.

and soon i'll stand before my bed,
contemplate changing the sheets,
forget it, lay down, and go to sleep.

When Death Calls
Willie Smith

Love opens the door inside the dream
we call today. In eases Death.
I sit the freak on the sofa.
Slip into the kitchen to fix drinks.
Hear Love invite our guest to leave.
Death mumbles something I can't make out
above the seltzer fizz and the cubes clinking.
When to the living room I return,
hand each a cold sweaty glass,
Love stands at the window,
watching a cloud eat the sun.
Death, on a cushion slouching, accepts the mix
of bitters, lime, soda, spirits. Grins into my face
he hopes Love and I are well enough making out?
Opening the door to tongues tangling
anxious poetry; fingertips brushing breasts;
never closer to meet. And it's me at the window,
watching both guests dissolve in a squall of hail,
ticking at the glass its tiny watches,
making the world out to be cold and intimate –
alone and alive as a thought
seeking in a picture to hide.

Bubblegum
Kristin Garth

I play these same games since I turn eighteen.
The rules evolve in ways I don't choose.
Each time I say daddy things becomes more extreme.
I find a way to retain innocence to lose.

I spread my legs for cameras, on stage.
Still I cannot look these men in their eyes.
My birthday does not reflect my mental age.
They call me on apps to make me cry.

I hide my pastel knives near my Barbie dolls –
pink walls requested with the reddest of welts.
I swallow anything that will keep me small.
I suffocate doubt with a tight leather belt.

After they cum, I pretend to be numb,
a hard candy shell over bubblegum.

As I Open My Eyes
David J. Thompson

The monsoon season persists,
by far and away the longest
and worst one any of us has ever seen
The roads are nothing but mud,
the only bridge swept away
in the flooding weeks ago.
Supplies are dangerously low,
our children are loud and hungry.

We need desperately to harvest
the wild yams that grow abundantly
along the river in the valley
below us, but there are rumors
of rebel snipers, all crack shots,
all along the treeline. In the morning,
we'll draw straws to see who goes,
so I'm praying I won't be left
holding the short one, then handed
a hoe and a burlap sack.

I pray until my sore knees remind me
I've been doing this crap every night
for months to get this god damn rain
to stop, and now still can't remember
the last time I even glimpsed the sun.

As I open my eyes and get back on my feet,
I can't help but wonder if it's true
that you never ever hear that final shot
that drops you dead.

Death by a Thousand Cunts
Danny D. Ford

the Chinese
had lingchi
used to slowly cut
strips of skin
from the body
with a blade

then of course there was
the Spanish tickler
thumbscrews
the rack
& brodequin

most would agree
Western Europe
has moved on
since then
become more civilized

but here in Italy
if you're not careful
they will still send you
to the department
of motor vehicles

and if you've been really bad

to the post office

Jasper
Michael Lee Johnson

Old Irving Park,
Chicago neighborhood
Jasper lives in a garret
no bigger than a single bed.
Jasper, 69, clouds of smoke
Lucky Strike unfiltered cigarettes.
He dips Oreo cookies in skim milk.
Six months ago
the state revoked
his driver's license-
between the onset
of macular degeneration,
gas at \$4.65 a gallon,
and late-stage emphysema,
life for Jasper has stalled out
in the middle lane
like his middle month
social security check, it is gone.
There is nothing academic about Jasper's life.
Today the mailbox journey is down
the spiraling stairwell; midway,
he leans against the wall.
Deep breathes from his oxygen tank.
Life is annoying with plastic tubes up his nose.
Relief, back in the attic, with just his oxygen tank,
his Chicago Cubs, losers, are playing
on his radio, WGN, 720 AM.
Equipment, enjoyment at last,
Jasper leans back in his La-Z-Boy recliner.
He reaches for a new pack of Lucky Strike cigarettes.
Jasper grabs a lukewarm Budweiser beer from his mini-fridge.
Deep breathes, a match lite, near his oxygen tank.

The Meek Will Inherit Obsession
Aimee Nicole

She orders discount lingerie online,
unboxes the pieces while he's at the office.
Or golfing, or at happy hour,
or searching for more baseball cards
to clutter the spare room with.

She wants to order a strap on
and peg him from behind.
She wants to be surprised
with a large anal plug lubed up, lights out.
Be double penetrated in their hotel room
at her sister's wedding.
Gagged so her parents can't hear her
screaming behind remodeled walls.

Instead, she sits pretty in mesh tops,
taking selfies in the bathroom mirror.
Deleting all the evidence of her rebellion
before he returns to his throne.

they had
Wolfgang Carstens

this thing—
call it a bond,
a game,
their special secret
moment.

he would only
phone her
when he was
blacked-out drunk.

they'd talk poetry,
philosophy,
art.

She
was in love
with his mind

and
made him promise
to never stop.

this secret
Jekyll and Hyde love affair
went on for years.

when Jekyll
quit drinking,
however,

Hyde
stopped phoning—

breaking
a promise he
never made

to a woman
he couldn't
remember.

yet,
every time
the phone rings
late at night

she never
forgets.

Books
Jason Melvin

I refuse to leave you behind
I have to feel you in my hands
spread you open
rub my nose in your fold
breath in your musk
thinking of all those
who've touched you
before me
My Half-Price whores
spines worn slightly
rough little edges
If you're really good
I'll toss you to a friend
discuss you
once they're done with you
and when I'm done with you
I place you on a shelf
display you alongside
my other conquests
dreaming of the day I may
if ever
take you in
again

Art is Everywhere
Jason Melvin

I took a shit today
size of a toddler forearm
the kind that makes you exhale
proud of the work accomplished
It periscoped above the toilet water
surrounded by wet white paper
A flick of the silver handle
it started to pirouette
a ballet dancer
white swans swirl
and dance around their spinning queen
As the undertow began to pull down
it dropped to the side
rubbed along the bowl
drew a perfectly straight
brown line
before disappearing into depths unknown
a crayon smudge
on perfect white porcelain
form held as showered from above
glistening as the water rose
Tell me I'm not beautiful

**everyone remembers the first time they realize
how truly fucked up they are**
Mela Blust

i started unbuttoning my blouse
to show the police officer
the tops of my breasts;

kept unbuttoning to indicate
that i would go all the way
to avoid this altercation

i was young and stupid
doing fifty in a forty
with a tiny baggie of blow
tucked in my pocket

he placed his hand
delicately onto my own
and said "stop speeding honey,
i don't need to see anything"

in my head, i knew
i'd won the game
gotten out of a ticket
or worse

in my loins, a pathetic,
persistent tingling
in my heart, an empty sadness

that a man
had turned down
seeing my tits

The Way We Came
James Diaz

all that we lost
returning to us
somehow / in the dead
of light / this mad laughter
carried on the wind

the man just barely holding on
against a 7-Eleven wall
repeating the word "mom,"
into the night
reminds you
how important it is to care
for a stranger's pain
and why not start now

and so you do
you ask him his name
and a little about his mother
who, come to find out
has been dead for 20 years
"still feels like yesterday," he says
through a wet slosh of hair
and it's all right there

"are you helping or are you hurting?"
someone has painted on the walls all across town,
are you getting this down?

you need to know
that there are so few reasons why
we are here at all
and they start small

and like this thing that will only get worse
if you don't do something about it
like opening up a window
and instead of jumping out
just *breathing* in
you gotta know sometimes
that just holding on is enough for one day.

a closed border
J.J. Campbell

i trace all your curves
with my tongue and
think of all the empty
pages i am going to
fill up about you
over the years

there is a closed border
between us and god
knows all the years
as well

but i'm at the point of
life where death is
as comfortable a
conversation as a story
on the back page of the
morning paper

patience might be the
only virtue i have
ever had

it has thinned with age
but i know when to
swallow pride and
just say yes

embrace the longing

and think that happiness
is a lonely corner on the
other side of the world

we'll meet there one day

and let the revolution
finally begin

Kiss the Witch
John Yohe

The witch
is polishing her nails
on all twelve fingers

The witch is changing
the oil in her motorcycle

The witch is dancing
to Texas Blues
undulating her body in S's
while rolling her hips in O's

The witch is singing
in a minor key

The witch is being misunderstood by many people

The witch
surprisingly
does not wear black all the time

The witch
is wondering what to write

The witch is wearing sexy underwear
but only for herself
they make her feel good

The witch is swimming naked
in a cold mountain river

The witch is calling down thunder
and lightning
just because

The witch is conjuring demons:
Here little demons
come to Momma

The witch knows
that you know
that she knows
that you think she is crazy
but she's ok with that

The witch is swinging her pulaski
next to the fire
and her face
is smeared with sweat
dirt and ash

The witch
is camping out in the desert
with the eyes
of ringtail cats
watching her

The witch is directing a movie that takes place
in the near future

The witch travels all the time
by bus or train
or she flies

The witch is drinking massive amounts of beer
The witch is vomiting and regretting
The witch is practicing her fiddle

The witch would like to see peace in her lifetime
but also wishes the loud annoying people
next to her
would shut up

The witch is tuning her guitar

The witch is not casting a love spell
on you, that is so passé
if you can't love her for herself
then fuck you

The witch thinks you have a lot of growing up to do
Nevertheless the witch will make you a chai with soy milk if you want

The witch should be working on her next novel
but she is forgetting to do something

Have pity on the witch
she works hard
and compared with most people in the world
she is doing less harm
than most

On second thought
the witch doesn't need your pity

The witch just wants your respect

The witch is seriously thinking about becoming a lesbian
The witch has fantasies
But the witch also likes the cock
There is something about men
Which is both good and bad
But the witch supposes that is true of women too

The witch thinks she could be a nun
and live in a cloister
and not talk much
and meditate

But the witch goes out for a walk
barefoot
and it's a nice day
there are lots of people out
and then the witch thinks that she needs this too
and would wither in a cloister

The witch is confused

The witch goes into a café
to have a jasmine tea
and think about it all

And what does the witch think of you?

Does the witch think of you at all?
How can you talk to the witch?
Should you call the witch?
Should you send the witch an email?
Should you write the witch a poem?

Yes says the witch
you should always write the witch a poem!

But you don't know if the witch really means it

You are never sure of the witch
and what the witch wants

You are not even sure the witch knows
what she wants
except for general things like happiness
and fat-free frozen yoghurt with M&Ms

But you?

That might depend
on the witch's mood at the time
and how good your poetry is

She might not even approve
of referencing poetry
in a poem

But you think that if the witch got to know you
and invited you over for dinner
you might be able to finally kiss the witch

After some intellectual conversation first of course

And a bit of wine

Perhaps you could take a walk with the witch
in the semi-darkness
through a tunnel of fireflies