

# LA REATA

## NUMBER 6



**WINTER 2008/9**

‘This is Kaliyuga, buddy, the Iron Age. Anybody over sixteen without an ulcer’s a goddamn spy.’

*J.D. Salinger, 1961*

‘We’re forever reading atrocities as bad omens; anything to do nothing a little while longer.’

*Don Paterson, 2004*

‘The crow I give her went wild and flew away. All summer you could hear him. In the yard. In the garden. In the woods. All summer long that damned bird was calling: Lulamae, Lulamae.’

*Truman Capote, 1958*

‘Hatred is the coward’s revenge for being intimidated.’

*George Bernard Shaw, 1904*

A few points about La Reata:

- lar.i.at [Sp *la reata*, the rope] a rope used for tethering grazing horses, etc.
- These are the best of approximately 100 poems and 20 stories submitted over the last year, 2008.
- The print run of this issue will be approximately 200.
- Previous Issues:  
Issue 1, spring 2004  
Issue 2, summer 2004  
Issue 3, spring 2005  
Issue 4, summer 2005  
Issue 5, spring 2006

*La Reata is an occasional journal. It appears when it acquires enough material to make itself worthwhile.*

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# LA REATA

## TOM BLOOD

### the vanishing and the wandering as a dawning within you

and we are things after this, the trial of horses  
 and the world who had thus only halfway been for us  
 and the other news arrives by whale, sick of its own ideas  
 are we here or are we as misunderstood completed  
 by all as the places we remove to and where white moon  
 I am the world brought to my mouth and then leaning over  
 off the plank off which all drops into unknowable numbers  
 and unfathomable complete we string through night  
 as time has now by its re-occurrence become magnificent and  
 victorious

I listen to the world; it is your brother and mystery blue  
 and spires above the tongue, but I won't ask and never  
 understood

the world like a swelled up dream immediately extinguished  
 upon arrival in the listening winds and all remains unknown  
 there is no mystery but a flurry back through to revealed  
 moments

the mast, that is repeating and respecting the old blanks  
 watching the moon vixen, not wire and the trembling hand  
 of mystery through world, it is not right we know this  
 I am the last without this fear and have nothing formal  
 for knowledge in my mouth garage so I stand without wind or  
 mind

by my better being, in a truck at the quarry, or whales reaching  
 the buddha's head

the whole thing, the container world and contents, let us this as  
the world be  
by that the ask and the other wills itself at us, false dawns,  
mansquitoes  
neither surety not plane pretending so give us this world then,  
our begging tires  
under the moon terrace it is we and they bending like wind  
and that is we overly turning gut contents, let it nod the us and  
be us  
and the moon trap in gas realms of the other believability  
but the moon crumbling the moon marked we used to be  
as an aspect by belief, old things in forgotten entire precursor  
sending off as bees and us somewhere between and without  
remark  
see objects cloaked in romance and we mouth of pelican and  
drill of sky  
some go into becoming we see through the world that reminds  
us of this

## the salmon shakes his wings

bird died and then made it a fire  
feathers more like cloth  
and i shall be beat down into dust streets  
cotton and continuous mountain form  
the lake the salmon and creeks

then in entrances bent back  
until we are all in a meeting  
the shore, the sea and search light  
and either time falls off or we start to believe in reincarnation  
in winter  
saying the ash of the bird is glass of our hands

could we set robots to unbend these doorways  
as rabbits arms are doors to rabbit territory  
and the seen for us doors to unbelief

## I will come to your house and help you into an is

come only to something with a friend  
and when you feel there is contain  
a star falling to our gobbling mouth  
poodle and his meat, the tree and our home  
as we are still building our affect, bathrobed  
in the tundra, and our arms feel as though they bring  
a ghost back from its guest, because someone, a cool  
someone  
brought five pounds in the trunk of a pinto hatchback  
and then this was buried in your lawn, the car and everything

## what will they make of us

when we are rolled from under the coat of heaven  
at the mall display bio-sphere experience chamber

our season is the way shared  
we fly down released to a forest demonstratable  
over white fires set to white islands  
all of this all yet to be ghosts of vultures  
we will slow the winter in the cloth  
there must be circumstance instance as night hands  
the starting point to have been sky among skies  
right after the ba-zowwy

that what finally you without it being experienced by you  
who should not have gotten into the fight at the ice rink over it

## stray lightning

this is where we are as it is what we wait for in absence  
the sun song to us anymore  
the temple eye pulls the moon from the earth's center  
our lives passed around waiting for others  
in bread and any other kind of thing is played off, death  
for all this and its escape to the passing sun I will be  
until sitting here and I see you in  
along the sea your form no more than that the mountains  
watching a close one's body circle the luggage carousel  
as a time peeled off its narrative like aluminium siding

all along i assume it knows its reason the mountain behaves  
if it was a river, it would be calm in its peace away  
before it is discovered as our carport in the folded air  
in the place where it is all after process, the chairs and fire done  
we have had no room on earth, save the half day in the car  
and we now require a dandelion inside of the gladiator to be

## ARIEL D. BELLER

### Day One

The train approached New Orleans. Everything slowed down. All that speed we had felt for the last four days – came to a dead halt inside. We looked at each other. We knew we'd be standing in the street very soon. There was a curtain between us and the aisle and the people began to move about outside. She lifted her skirt and ran her thumbs along the inside of her panties, slipped them down kicked them off over her shoes. We could hear children asking for shoes, people moving luggage.

We were well under way, her head bumping against the compartment wall, mouth locked open, when my thighs got soaked. I'd never seen that before. I don't think she had either because she looked surprised. We weren't sure if it was urine. I fell back onto my seat and looked out the window. The sun was sparkling and all the old houses seemed to droop in the heat.

We began to reassemble ourselves. We manoeuvred the small compartment looking for all the things we'd scattered around since Chicago. Cold weather clothes, cigarettes, the whiskey, the bottle of water, the socks and underwear. We sat down – our heads tilted against either side of the window – and waited for the train to stop.

Twenty minutes later we were standing in the depot, heavily weighed down with bags. We'd packed to stay, not to visit. We made our way outside and looked around. The pores on our faces opened up and quivered like a bed of polyps. Her hair was wet at the roots and temples.

'Let's find a place with a pool.' she said.

'Yes, to the pool. It's fucking hot out here.... June.... can I call you June.'

'Whatever you like.'

'Do you know where you're going.'

She points to a tall vertical sign in the distance that reads Marriot.

'All right then.'

We walk past the post office. What a spare part of town. No one seems to come here unless they need to. The lone businessman, the lone black man, the lone anybody, they walk by in the dumb heat. No one stands on the corner. No one waits for anything.

The air conditioning of the lobby is cool and tastes of old metal pipes. We drop our bags before the front desk and I wander around the lobby while she checks us in. A carousel of tourist maps creaks as I turn it with a finger. The sign reads \$3.

‘We may need extra towels.’ she says as I put a map in my pocket. I turn around to see the concierge hand her the keys.

‘The pool’s open till 9pm and checkout is 11am.’

We take the elevator up to the fourth floor then walk down a gleaming hallway. Inside the room we let our bags fall then collapse onto a huge white bed and say nothing. I lace my hands behind my head and stare out the glass door.

This was Wombat’s idea. Said she didn’t want to travel alone. Listen I’m broke I said. Don’t worry about that she said, just keep the pen moving. Just keep the pen moving. I wondered about people who saw more in me than what I saw in myself. It seemed to me there were very many serious things which I did not understand. Here was Wombat with her mysterious source of money she said she earned waiting tables. Here was Wombat who said she didn’t want to travel alone, but she had to travel. Portland, Oregon was for fools she said. But we’d spent the last two weeks in Portland drinking her money. Then the train tickets, now the hotel, now the whole city before us, here to stay, here to see what happens. I sit up and see she’s rolling a joint.

‘There’s a lot I want to see in this city.’ she says. ‘I think we should make our way uptown tomorrow.’

‘How do people live in that heat. It’s the delirium of jazz. It’s the heat that makes them play that way.’

‘What?’

‘Jazz. Lazy horns.’

She licked her joint, stuck it between her teeth and hopped out of bed.

‘Got a light sweetheart?’

I found one and tossed it to her. She lit the joint and began to unpack. She unpacks by tossing her clothes all about the room.

‘We need to do laundry.’ she says, and passes me the joint. I got up and went to the glass door, crossed my arms and looked down at the sapphire pool, the empty sun chairs. The clouds in the sky looked weak and thin. I’d been in this city before, under different circumstances. Now I had this girl who wrote violent poems about ‘stealing the embers from my mouth’, who liked to fuck in odd or convenient places, who was slightly blind in one eye, who spoke in a French accent though she was from New York. In addition to these charms I remember a list I once made of her.

1. Never gave anyone her real name.
2. Liked to throw and break things.
3. Heavy drinker – fond of bourbon.
4. Often disappeared, left the city without notice – returning weeks or months later.
5. Loved dancing.
6. Rarely wore underwear.

The smoke was building so I opened the door. I stepped outside. There was a nice breeze. The sun was beginning to set. She appeared behind me and I gave her the rest of the joint. She rested her chin on my left shoulder.

‘Should we go for a swim.’ I say.

‘I want to see the graveyards,’

‘There are no graveyards. There’re tombs.’

‘I want to see the tombs.’

We went back inside and rolled around on the bed for a while. Then we got bored.

‘I’m going to take a shower.’ she says.

She went. I took out a notebook and began writing a letter to a friend in Phoenix. I explained my situation, said I’d be in New Orleans indefinitely, said I was with a girl who made me think, said I didn’t really know what was going on. As I signed my name she came out wrapped in a white towel, her soaked hair looked like a clump of seaweed.

‘All yours.’ she says.

I walk passed her and into the white bathroom. On a glass shelf are two worn-out cups in plastic wrappers. They look like they've been washed and re-inserted a hundred times. For several minutes, with the water running, I stand there, staring in the mirror, thinking about those cups. Then I step into the shower. Four days on a train. The water is clear. When I come out she's sitting on the edge of the bed, fully dressed, making faces into a compact.

'I'm going to leave you here.' she says. 'Those are your key and a fifty on the dresser.' She snapped the compact, leapt from the bed and made for the door. Halfway out the door she turned and smiled, 'I'll see you later tonight,' and the door was shut. I stood there towelling myself. I went to my bag and rummaged around for some stamps. I sat on the bed, started to address the envelope then stopped. I didn't know what to do. I decided to get dressed.

By the time I hit the street it was dark. The only place I knew was the French Quarter, so I headed that way. On Bourbon Street I found a beer vendor and ordered a large plastic cup for two dollars. The street was crowded so I leaned against a wall and watched the people scroll back and forth. The air was clammy, and the clamour and the laughter came from a distance. I drank my beer quickly and went for another. There was a line of three or four people. The old man in front of me turned and asked for a match. I gave him one and he stoked up an old wooden pipe.

'Thankyou son... what's your name?'

'Chris...'

'My name's Charlie.'

'Nice to meet you Charlie.'

We bought our beers and stood against the wall.

'I come down here from Metairie once a month. Sometimes to do some gambling, sometimes to do some drinking. What about yourself?'

'I came down here with a girl.'

'Oh yeah? She pretty?'

'She's pretty.'

'What else is she?'

'French.'

'Well the French have always seemed to like New Orleans.'

Charlie puffed his pipe. I lit a cigarette and watched a man in overalls carrying a giant white cross. The cross had a red digital readout across the center. REPENT...THE END IS NEAR...REPENT... Behind him followed a midget balloon man with devil horns. He twisted the balloons into a cock and balls shape and stabbed at the man with the cross.

Charlie said, 'You plan on staying here long?'

'Just got here today. I don't know how long I'll stay. Have to find a job I guess.'

'Oh, plenty of jobs in New Orleans.'

We sipped our beer. I wondered what Wombat might be up to. She'd worn her nice dress so she wouldn't be back at the hotel too soon. I decided to get drunk. I tossed off the last of my beer and went for another. Charlie joined me in line. He suggested we go further up the street for a change of scenery. All right I said. We walked along.

The Quarter was well lit but there were alleys, crevices that the light didn't reach. It was the buildings that seemed to stare at you and not the people. The people filed by like apparitions. The balconies leaned inward. We stopped at another beer vendor and Charlie insisted he buy. He came with two brimming cups and we downed them quick without talking. Then he went for two more. The crowd was picking up. People began to writhe and dance. A couple stumbled forward in a fit of laughter. A college boy began to drool and puke. Charlie came back with two more cups. We're staring into the crowd and he's talking about his wife. We're shouting everything we say.

'...I end up sleeping in my truck at least once a week. But when she gets drunk she grabs me by the hair and forces my head between her legs.'

'...Really! My girl likes to fuck in bathrooms. I can't go into a bathroom alone anywhere. She'll corner me. She grabs my neck and bangs my head against the wall.'

'That's pretty fucked up son.'

I look up at the balcony across the street. A group of middle aged women have their tits out. Their tits are fat and middle aged and when they shake they move like heavy water balloons. A mob is forming in front of us. The women on the balcony are not beautiful. Some are trying to smile. Some looked confused.

‘Hell, that’s not pretty! That’s not pretty at all.’ Charlie says.

And here come a group of laughing boys, drunk, self absorbed. They pass between us and the growing mob. I step back and one of them loses his souvenir cup against my shoulder, dousing my face with beer. He doesn’t seem to care. I turn to Charlie who has, quite suddenly I thought, just disappeared. The crowd is crushing me against the wall so I slip out. Standing off to the side I dry my face with my shirt and take a look around for Charlie. The crowd is ridiculous. The crowd is impenetrable. I lean against a streetlamp and count my money. \$42.

I’m making my way back toward the Marriott. I’m leaned against an iron gate on Conti Street, sipping at another cup of beer, when I notice a dwarf, painted red, standing perfectly still on a crate. He’s staring at me. He’s also smiling; a gleaming smile like he knows me, or knows what I’m thinking. It’s the midget balloon man I saw earlier. I look away to the hotdog vendor to my left. When I look back the midget is still staring at me, same eyes, same smile, standing perfectly still. I approach the vendor and buy a hotdog. The vendor is drunk and has some difficulty counting out my change. When I chance another look at the red dwarf he’s gone. His crate isn’t even there.

The Marriott has thirty-three floors. I’m against the mirrors of the elevator fishing through all my pockets for the key. I hear the map I’ve stolen flop to the floor, but when I stoop to pick it up it’s no longer there. The elevator stops and the silver doors open without a sound. I stumble down the hallway looking for room 404. When I find the door I rest against it. I put the key in but it doesn’t fit. I turn it around. The door swings open and I fall inward onto the carpet.

‘I was wondering when you’d get here.’

‘Hello Wombat.’ I bring myself up and she closes the door. I walk over to the bed, fall back and bounce around like an idiot. Wombat lights a cigarette and leans her ass against the edge of the dresser. The room is dim – just the bedside lamp and its reflection in the mirror behind her.

‘Did you have a good time tonight?’

‘Not as good as I would have liked.’

‘That’s too bad.’

She puffs her cigarette. Her head is wreathed in smoke.

‘Do you want to go for a swim?’

‘It’s almost midnight. Isn’t the pool closed?’

‘I was just down there sweetheart the gate’s unlocked.’

‘Maybe we should go for a swim.’

I strip down to my boxers and she strips down to her bra and panties. We leave with the bottle of whiskey and two clean towels. We take the stairs, talking merry gibberish all the way down.

Outside are the hushes of traffic. A reflection of sky and city light on the glass of the hotel. The pool is glowing with ripples of yellow. In my drunkenness I feel unencumbered, redeemed. Everything around me strikes me as perfectly aligned. We sit down on the edge of the deep and I uncap the whiskey. I take a hit and she leans against me. I put my left arm around her and give her the bottle. She takes a deep swallow and hands the bottle back. Then I push her in.

## RICHARD LIGHTHOUSE

### My Muse

Write me a fucking poem, she says with a why-not look.

How come you never write me a poem? I'm your bad-ass muse, remember? That's what you said!

No – what I said was – you give a bad-ass blow job...

and THAT inspires me.

So my blow-jobs inspire you, huh? Does that mean you love me?

Only when the sun goes down, baby. It's all about the sun.

You're an ass! she spouts.

But I'm the ass you love, baby. I'm your favourite ass.

Yeah, maybe, she concedes. Maybe.

Then pausing long enough to swallow the space between us,

she coyly shrugs,

So when exactly, does the sun go down around here?

## JURAK OT PETROV

### title – don't have one

the old days, the long nights  
the miserable joints, the good defeats  
all that and  
your shadow over mine  
you lean in to touch me  
you lean in on your knees  
oh, yeah how many lips  
oh, yeah how much lipstick and gallons of perfume up to here  
allow me to hide your love  
to kiss you over a drink or two  
to confront you with all the shapes of your existence  
1 question 1 answer and 1 love letter in the sand  
let the buildings chase the sky  
you still got time to meet me  
and 1,000 dreams to understand  
how low the voice, how low?  
how many bullets in the barrel, how many bodies in front of the  
gun?  
how deep the nail, how deep?  
how many hits at noon, how many crosses in the afternoon?  
i found a light at the end of my cigarette  
and memories stuck in the shadows on the floor  
leave melancholy to write poems over the dust  
dead lovers, broken bones in the dog's teeth  
let the fog swallow ships  
let the rain piss in the ocean and the city laying flat on the  
sidewalk

look – the moon celebrates by shooting at the stars  
 the night spits drunkards behind the corner  
 come out from all the beds you've been in  
 there are rooms enough for your heart's longing in the basement  
 i can't bury this promise  
 i can't see through this curtain – i have to cry too  
 kilometres, miles and hours  
 nerves, wounds and dust it took me to get to the harbour  
 bring over your body once again  
 bring it closer and drown the love in  
 damn it, i'd make love to you 'till the end of sanity  
 i'd take you to the end of vanity,  
 if i could recognize a dock in your belly button.

## a poem

heroine, morphine, codeine  
 PCP, LSD, crack & cocaine  
 booze – gin, brandy, tok  
 alternative, indie & contemporary rock  
 poker, roulette & blackjack  
 one thousand, two thousand, 10,000 maniacs  
 saint valentine's, presents, birthday gifts  
 losers & winners, whores, gamblers & thieves – lost souls  
 a church, a cross, a minaret  
 and  
 one  
 lonely  
 cigarette.

## MATHILDE BRIARE

### George

So, there was George. I walk into the Seven Star Republic in China Town. I'm high and I've just come from the Rich Hotel in Old Town. It's one of those "hotel guests must sign in at the front desk with photo ID" but, there's never anyone at the front desk. One night, I remember walking up there with my date, only to be confronted at the top of the stairs by chunky pink puke mixed with blood. It stained there for twenty hours. Even then. I over-heard them say, "He had an ulcer." He was dead now.

My first night at the Rich, I left my date in #31 and ended up in #24. Three Old Guatemalan working men. Singing, dancing in the small space, drinking Budweiser tall cans.

I stayed there for about two weeks with a guy in a dark smoky room. Watching old vampire movies and Monday night football. Drinking cheap beer. That was room #31, in the center corridor with the large, dusty standing fan pointing down the hall. You need a key for the women's rest room in this place, and some times, the lady in #25 doesn't want to loan me her key (which she wears on a chord around her neck). When #25 doesn't want to lend me her key, I use the shared toilet to the left of #23. You walk in, everything is dingy blue tile, straight ahead is the toilet room with a door. On the right, a shower room with two drain holes in the floor. I took a shower in there with D is for date. While wetting my hair, I looked up to spot a used condom hanging from the plumb. It was high, some one must have TOSSED it there. And in that toilet room, an EMT once told of finding a man who had passed out with a plunger up his ass. People had been waiting in line.

So, one night, I'm walking to the bathroom. I'm actually going out to buy cheap jug wine with the gift card I get for taking TB meds at the health department here. Anyway, as I walk past #23, the door opens. I see a tall, toned young man with shaved head... HOT. He allows me to go first. He's gone when I come out. I go back to my room. I make up

an excuse to D-, roll a smoke, wait four minutes. I go back down the hall. He's waiting for me. Inviting me in.

His lap top is open on the bed. The bed, this room, is not his. His friend is at work --- security at one of the bigger venues downtown, just a few blocks away. Turns out his friend is not allowed to have computers or any such equipment in his possession, by order of the court. (However, there is a drawer full of phones if you should need.) So, tall boy shows me some of his friend's news worthy exploits on line.

Then he shows me his.

Now this is a Sunday night. Friday night, I had been in #31, watching the local news. They showed a picture of a good looking boy wanted on some federal warrant. My reaction to his photo: I'D LIKE TO FUCK HIM.

Well, that's the motherfucker I'm in the room with.

I'm done. I'm got. I tell him he can have anything he wants. I light a smoke. I allow him to undress me as I smoke. We do what we gotta do for an hour. I still have a jug of wine to purchase and all the markets close by 11pm. We make plans to hook up. His friend works where Sigur Ros is to play that week and I want to go. But within two days he's been arrested. Later, I'll write him a letter.

Anyway, I guess this all started about George.

Its summer afternoon. I leave hotel room #31 to get some cheap combination platter to go. D- wants chow mein, I want fried rice... so, I walk into the Seven Star Republic, tinted glass doors shut, closing the sun behind me. It's a banquet room. All open space. Fresh water aquarium in the center. Round family style tables, seating 6-8 people, spinning tray in the middle, soy sauce, sugar packets. Hearth workers in the kitchen, clattering woks. One waitress at the register. Sitting, reading something. Keeping one eye on me after my order (sweet and sour pork combo to go, was it?) and one eye on the only other person in here. A man two tables over, drinking HEINEKEN and waving me over. "Hello, come sit with me, eh?" So I do. He orders a beer for me. The waitress checks my ID. Then I pull out the mandarin I've learned. Leeshu. Green. Earlier in the week, I decided, as I was going by MIDORI means green in Japanese, I ought to learn it in Chinese. I was at one of those import markets in Chinatown that sell potato chips, smokes, single wrapped silk roses in buckets and a case of ginseng vials (good for the man) near the register. I

asked the woman, when she was finished ringing up the 6 pack of BUSCH 16oz I've been sent to buy, to write the Chinese character for green.

GREEN WHAT? She asks.

GREEN. I say as I'm pointing at the green ring on my finger. The colour green. So she writes two characters, which literally translate to GREEN COLOUR. Leeshu in Mandarin. Loksek in Cantonese is the best I can do phonetically.

Now, back to George, who laughs as hard at me telling him my name is Leeshu or Loksek or even Midori, as I do, when he, Cantonese through and through, introduces himself as George. We each order another beer. He tells me he studies Tai Chi. I tell him I ride a big red bicycle. We end up doing somersaults behind the aquarium, this place is BIG. He's even doing back flips. We go to a small hall way in the back corner where the bathrooms are and he's teaching me how to strike. We're hitting the wall. I'm having so much fun, but I'm being very serious here. He's fast, tiger claw. Okay, give me a second: you strike, come back in to plant the knuckles. Flat, sharp jabs. We do this for a while and I'm working my left fist, to --- MAKE IT STRONGER.

On return to the table, two more HEINIES. Now, we begin to spar. He seems a bit off his game, or maybe he's playing Monkey Trickster Tricks on me. I surprise him a few times, and this I get from dancing, making contact when I get down on the floor and sweep kick. Then it's my turn. The succession is slow, but the strikes he does throw, I do well blocking. We roll around on the floor a bit more. I'm laughing. And then, he disappears.

My good spirits have me wanting to believe he'll come out of the bathroom any time. The waitress says, "He gon."

And when these things happen I can only say,

"THEN THIS IS HOW IT MUST BE, CARRY ON."

I mean he DID pay for the beers before he left.

I take the sweet and sour back to room #31.

## ARIEL D. BELLER

### Eyeless

I sank back down into the grey bathwater  
and gave my hair another coat. I reached  
for the eyes on the shelf  
and put them in.

I'd fucked the Imp last night without them.  
She'd placed her hand gently over my face  
then twisted her index finger  
first into the right cavity, then the left.  
I felt the vibration inside her body  
when they plopped out onto her chest  
and rolled onto the bed.

She grinded her pelvis against mine  
as I reached intuitively for the eyes  
and placed them on the bedside table.

## Food

Sometimes I do this  
what have I eaten today  
3 scrambled eggs with ketchup in the morning  
a BLT from the cafe waiting  
for Daphne to finish at 6pm  
some of her cheddar disks as we talked  
exasperated  
and spaghetti at Wendy's as we  
realised nothing would change and we'd be  
not staring like this at each other for  
the rest of our lives.

## Ode

you want to make sense for these people  
no you too tired to make sense  
for god or country or

those who suck at these properties  
like a million fleas in wigs and hats  
though not so imbedded as

belief does sit in a homely place –  
what is it to ‘stun this dirt into noise’  
to wear its religion as a rule or

pretend to love in a quietly  
belligerent society what  
is it to write an impotent poem

in the face of reality

## Conversation with Billy

Did you know a thousand people, at least, commit suicide every day? And that's an old statistic. Do you ever think about suicide?

Yes.

Good. That means you're smart.

I'm trying to focus I'm trying to be an adult. I'm trying not to be obsessed with... shopping.

You can be obsessed with shopping all you want.

Are you sure?

Yes of course. Why not?

Emma says I'm not supposed to be obsessed with anything.

Fuck Emma.

Fuck Emma? I'd like to fuck Emma.

I'd doubt she'd let you.

Why? Why do you think that?

Because she thinks you're a retard.

Do you think? Yes she does think.

She's your carer. She's supposed to think you're a retard. She wouldn't have a job without you. Don't you see? It is you who are in control. You really should have more confidence. I mean. You're a decent looking guy. Look at you. You got a nice complexion. Clean hair. Decent build. You dress well enough. Only problem with you is you're hyper-active. You hop around too much, and you scare people. You scare normal people. But fuck normal people.

Yeah. Fuck normal people.

That's right. You got it.

## DAVE BRINKS

### At the Necropolis

firing red arrows at the Necropolis  
the dead don't move much  
thus cupid improved his aim  
first at night & later all day  
he emptied his quiver  
then took his darts to the backcountry  
whereafter 10 winters and 10,000 arrows  
his mind grew and grew  
until one morning a clucking sound was heard  
but the only egg to be found  
was earth-shaped  
and as Cupid looked out in all directions  
he saw what Little Red Hen hath made

## A Lover Who Calls

a lover who calls  
is the ideal dinner question  
levitating off a comfortable chair  
whether the weather  
will change the scenery  
to the tune of red shoes  
or the air of a silent movie  
I plan to do both  
en masque  
O prickly coitus  
O little peach of emerald hue  
trussed up with furry purple handcuffs  
dancing to Claire de Lune

## How Rarely One May Move

how rarely one may love  
where others have sometimes failed  
I keep my notions in bed  
pierced by a glance  
as elegant and as rough  
as the occasion demands  
it's a mathematical formula  
to turn up the thermometer and sigh  
let's open the bedroom window  
let's ride off in a canoe  
above the roofline  
as the moon shrinks even higher  
never unpleasant but effervescing for miles

## The Headless Torso

out of the dark door  
of secret earth  
the headless torso is a skeleton of form  
baring its lips  
and what a woman  
a dream unto herself  
combed in perfect locks  
rising from the bed where I lie  
as if uncoiled from a vase  
I can even feel the snowy pelts of December  
blown in by gusty winds  
and across the pass that lay between us  
the sturdy wooden bridge that brought me here

## The Plum Peach

one difference between watching  
the paint dry and grass grow  
is a plum peach  
ripening in the sun  
brushed out from the eyelids  
an oil-sheened hand  
of alabaster & rosehips  
racing across the slope of breast  
snapdragons & mums scented orange  
mouthfuls of warm erection  
a smooth palate of wine spilling from the vine  
and with the pleasure of thoroughness  
until the throng of bed frame arches still

## MATHILDE BRIARE

### just beachy...

as cats pounce, so you do move;  
yr long fingers grasp, burgling  
essential minerals, iodizing my  
bosom and toes like long pearls  
or more calloused coral  
each of us coming now, dripping  
wet with sea foam pouring out  
darkness unknown to night  
rather, mid day eclipse  
while the others on shore,  
still masked and sunglassed  
are gaping.

## ROBERT YATES

### Haiku

the rainscape is so  
fragile it would collapse  
if brushed by a word

## On An Unwritten Novel

It scares me more than failure  
It scares me more than bees and wasps,  
dentists, loneliness, cities, God  
it scares me like the dead time  
the unpronounceable myth  
Mychaela, Pavis, anarchies of peace  
It scares me like a dream  
It scares me like the powerless ones  
a guillotined voice  
It scares me more than science,  
Feminism, Thatcherism, modernism  
It scares me more than The Guardian  
It scares me more than The Thirty Years War  
Samuel Beckett, Adolf Hitler, Chris Evans  
It scares me like a screaming child  
an oncoming haemorrhage  
1985,  
It scares me more than Scousers  
It scares me like a word.

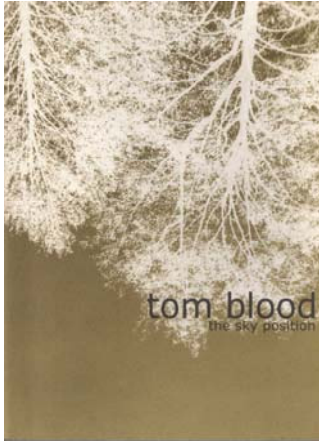
## Appendices to Life

those wires through the sky  
don't cut it any more

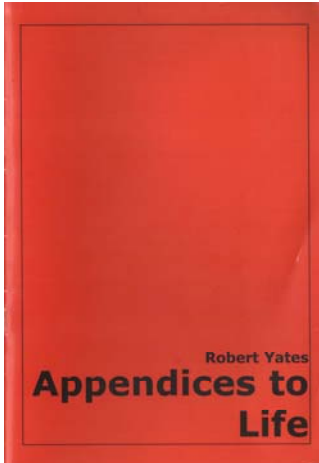
you can only put up with  
so little

I have nothing to add.

## CONTRIBUTORS



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