

GOD, BODY, ALGEBRA

"I am displeased with everything," writes Emil Cioran in *On the Heights of Despair*, twenty-two years old and depressed. "If they made me God, I would immediately resign, and if the world were just me, I would sunder myself apart, burst into tiny pieces, and disappear." These exploded fragments of Cioran became Will Alexander's in *Across the Vapour Gulf*, and now the poets in this issue borrow them, little handholds in melancholy both dark and sweet.

GOD

Yongyu Chen
Stella Corso
Nishat Ahmed

BODY

David Kuhnlein
Lena Rubin
Margaret Yapp

ALGEBRA

Haley Joy Harris
Klara Pokrzywa
Serena Solin

from Across the Vapour Gulf

"Having reached this plane of the susurrant, does the body, seismic beyond its perceptual immobility, take on the totality of higher light or does it opt for mental thanatopsis, sulking, algebraic, depressed? As for intervallic transition, does the body continue to flow as Grosseteste suggests, naturally, geometrically, with rays of the Sun darting through one's blood?

Given the fact of creation as it continues to flow through us, the latter condition would seem to be the prevalent one in spite of visible evidence of seemingly invincible entropy; there exists a level of unbridled astral plasticity, alive at the core of the body and the heavens."

—*Will Alexander*

Yongyu Chen

Entrebecamen

You can send me anything. The saffron, the autumn
crocus. Shelllight for the beach, nightmusic: the
table beats like a heart
in the green room, we close around it.

Early summer, early autumn,

early winter, over. The king. The enemy. Their
poisonous horses dreaming in the plaza at night,
wine-hungry. You drew
three cards for yourself, the water spills. The
wallpaper spills, it

look just like us

where the beams join behind the wall. Knowing
doesn't feel like this, it's not knowing.
It's slow, star time.

You have the old mirror box, you save something in it
each year,

you poured it out, we cut each other's hair. Light.

Only makes sense in the middle of more light. I only
care about more light. Light lit by totality light,
higher light. The tablecloth lit then attached
to the table only by the wind

of taking away,

a passion. You will talk about memory. Splendor. You
will write, you will walk too far into the ice fields.

Your favorite tense whatever it is, that's where you
should meet me. Yesterday's hot water still yet to
cool. Moses-time. The bed,
is dark, the table darker in full ankles of snow. When
you are

where I expect you are, you are engulfed by
a never:

consent to withdraw, self

arils, self-vapor, I wished even the clouds were blue.
Complete. Anonymous blue.

Stella Corso

Forced Perspective in a Garden Mirror

The ad says it's poetic
to contemplate death

in a winter garden
where a woman bends

to clutch the yellow grass
light breaks her in half

and old men seem to know
so much more than me

when it comes to shrubbery
a thorny bush might be named Betty Boop

a chrysanthemum is a white bomb
casual trees are just called David

but what could be funnier
than a false forget-me-not

little flowers clapping back

their faces reflected
inside the circular pool

shallow green, not exactly a sea
where a brick once drowned

and long gone children
carved their names in ice

like the scent of forgotten paint
that failed to fully dry

but acquired a permanent layer of dust
why language like the body

despite its awesome plasticity
remains sulking at its core

Nishat Ahmed

**at the core of the body
and the heavens**

one finds the totality of higher light—
call it what you want
heaven, love, does it matter?
here, have a little joy

we'll name it *tomorrow*
we'll name it after
making love or
maybe after breakfast

would you like some honey
with your coffee?
and a promise lathered
onto your toast?

the burnt bits are only that
for which we can't forgive ourselves
so let us live in error to find gold
-en brown sun darting through our blood



David Kuhnlein

Bloodborne

Forbidden from my family home
Security cameras do nothing but flash me
Unscalable adobe dons a crown of broken glass
Greased and growing, thick as hair

My fingerprints dehisce their perimeter
Like psychotropics darting through blood
Red ants bite me in swells of cursive
Relatives' prayers teem, gleaming as they flay

I'm stuffed into a burlap sack
An unmarked truck, the station
They drill me more mouths to ball gag
And force feed me sneezes for lunch

I'm a dust cloud refusing to settle
Rot depressed back to life at its core
Fingered blue by a lineage drowned in me
Hallucinations abbreviated, gap to God shrunk

Reconstructing my jaw with a thicker lid
Is this a body bag or a river I'm in
The weak taxidermy of my surname thaws
Ashes melt up my knuckles without me

Lena Rubin

from Harsh Red

i.

harsh empty head, harsh red heat
harsh side of body, flanky falling off side of body
a needled toe point beside the nail
drains the heat w/ sharp pain

i didn't think it would mean anything to write
about "it"
indiscriminate hunger is a trick of the mind

cows grazing in the gloaming mean nothing to a
tortured mind
which once thought it was soft, removing outer
hardness to

find unimaginable hardness within, blockage of
stream
was it better with false, external, workable
hardness?

some thought streams are—too quickly—
WRITE THEM DOWN WRITE THEM DOWN

others seem so passé they could rouse disgust

who is the one feeling disgusted
which of you

Margaret Yapp

WATER NOT WEATHER

singing across river
I can hear see body
hair that keeps turning over
the shoulder.

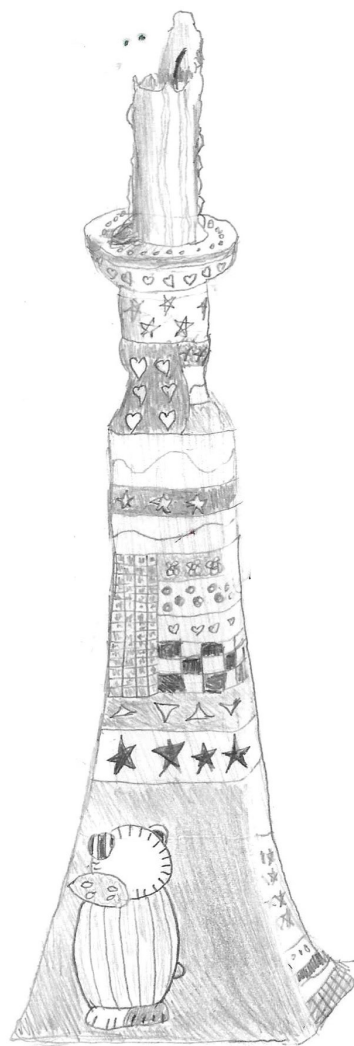
I cannot see face.

Sometimes calls	liver leaf
wine color	lobed in odd number.

Your face	a gesture
expanding & contracting	like a balloon

or a bone in	boiling water
the boiling	water reeking

of booze



Haley Joy Harris

On Wednesday night I whispered in your ear

how I'd learned time
in a linear sense
was contrived
during the Renaissance.
Imagine how
the Flies & the Soil
shrugged this off
in pursuit of their own
annulus. Their own
algebraic intervals
of pinching, grappling.
Crawling toward you
is jaundiced rapture.
The primal sulking
that accompanies
my simple request
to be known
as a string of ceramic
beads fired one
by one. Chosen
& held in regard
between fingers

before looped through
& tied around
your ankle.
Cycles from now,
when I wade in
skin-deep, I'll hear
the familiar chime
of bottomless tidepools
we could have
used as currency
had we not averted
eye contact
when we were
stark-naked.

Klara Pokrzywa

ROMAN OPAŁKA¹ HITS INFINITY

End of the line now god said here is where you become the second hand. See color where it's not especially purple in grey. Blindsight now algebraic. End of the line stop past the corner of time where if you turn you find yourself once again a child. Unearth memory of seeing demons at night or was it TV static terrified you would count down to zero and past that stop. Or where my life has been a single thing. A single problem knifelike solved. Ordered infinity entropy's escape. Or what have you. It is in the details beyond my grasp which is to say the artist who emerges will not be me. I have skipped like a stone over time's horizon. I am I am. A series of unfolding clicks into successive light. Now when I am too drunk I begin counting over and over losing my place each time. Most great tragedies you see after only you have passed them. And indeed my attitude has been likened to suicide or sacrifice. Okay yes. Or I am right and god only loves me as I lose myself, as I take on a new and ridiculous shape. I was painting white numbers on white canvas! You should laugh! I am guilty, obsessive and guilty, a slave to my most

clicking impulse: laugh! After all a number is a single thing which increases in size daily. Cross the line of belief. End of that line too. I have seen strange things at night and in addition have been called insane by many which is insane because things fall apart at frankly astonishing rates and I the least of them. Most child-like purple seer sees changing shapes sees the form of that well-earned number white and it is I who am raving? Tell me new numbers. I am a prophet credulous of that final and infinite canvas.

¹ Roman Opalka was a French-Polish artist who created a series of paintings titled 1965/1-∞ (1965–2011). This series consisted of canvases covered in crowded rows of handpainted numbers, starting from one and stretching on into theoretical infinity. He painted in white, starting on a dark grey canvas and adding 1% more white to each successive canvas until he was painting white numbers on white canvas. When asked about the series, he once said “These obsessions—death, disappearance, the irreversibility of time—are difficult, courageous, suicidal. In fact, my attitude has been likened to suicide, sacrifice.” He rarely traveled, and obsessively worked on the series from its beginning in 1965 until the time of his death. While he wished to at least make it to the milestone number 7,777,777 before his death, he died in 2011 with the last number painted being 5,607,249.

Serena Solin

Solar Inverter

A correction note to a mysterious entity:
it is not just the days, but the presences
which are growing longer. Bound by wire
to the roof, the brick chimney disassembling,
I speak a language understood by cats,
birds, and the irrational. I begin to fear,
like all animated things, the imminent,
the inevitable, terribly: the unbridled
loosed upon the world, the escape
of the spirits I've gathered into me.

For there is a fault in my manufacturing.
There is a bulb that does not flicker
because it was born dead, neither green
nor intervallic. No human can know
if I am powered on without listening.
To his circuitry I become the intolerable
answer, the blind path, where eventually
man, mineral, and electricity are one,
the loop closed by my master's fleshy
hand, the hideous moment of joining—

“Having reached this plane of the susurrant...” is excerpted from *Across the Vapour Gulf* by Will Alexander (New Directions, 2017).

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Annotations asks poets to respond to a text by using a single word (or more) from the chosen poem or excerpt. For the prompt for Issue 3, visit errant-memory.net.

Issue 1: Clark Coolidge
Issue 2: Will Alexander

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