

Used Gravitrons

December 2012 | Issue #10



USED GRAVITRONS QUARTERLY

Issue 10

Dec. 2012

EDITORS
Michael Kuntz
Shea Newton

COVER ART
Jessica Stapp

Used Gravitrons

Web

www.usedgravitrons.com

design: Wes Morishita

E-mail

usedgravitrons@gmail.com

Art Coordinator

Cat Baldwin

www.catbee.com

Printing

www.thecarbonbasedmistake.com

All works © respective authors

All other material © Used Gravitrons Quarterly

CONTENTS

Artwork

Sarah Klinger

Editorial

...page 06

Fiction

Replacing Grimes
by Lola May Grace

...page 08

The Surreal Housewives of Bristol County ...page 14
by Devin Schiff

Monkey II ...page 21
by Jim Meirose

Coffee with Mr. Dao ...page 36
by Ajit Singh Dhillon

Poetry

[Meta]Physical Slinky ...page 25
by A.J. Huffman

Six-Pack Story

...page 26

by Afton Carlson

The Chronicles of Tim

...page 44

by Mike Wiley

Contributer Bios

...page 56

EDITORIAL

There's an old mountain man saying: "You can't keep touching your face all the time you goddamn freako."

If you meet an old mountain man someday, tell him that for me. Thank you. Btw, I'm passing on the proverbial torch (jk about the torch, that torch isn't in any proverb but I really am passing on the editorial torch). There's an amazing man named Mike who's taking charge, maybe you've met already. He's great. You're in good, meaty, meaty hands. Thanks to everyone who's participated in this whole thing, I love that I got you work with each of you. It's been (...one week since you looked at me, cocked your head to the side and said I'm angry) real.

Now read on.

- Shea Newton
- Cindy Lauper
- Seal

HOW LAY LOO YA. Oh. Please do not be frightened. Really, it's too late to turn back anyway. The terminal has been secured and this plane is taxiing out to the runway. So quit rubbernecking, relax and prepare for take off. Plus, we've got walruses. And thank you, Shea. Looks like we're alone at last.

Muffin tops for all... it's gonna be a party.

-M. Kuntz



Beanbag Walrus

REPLACING GRIMES

by Lola May Grace

While Grimes' obscene megalomania and delusional sense of self worth may have warranted action from the management, these factors alone did not prompt Bentley to dismiss him. Nor did he fire the southeastern regional sales supervisor because he missed the bi-monthly strategy meeting. It was only after Grimes explained the reason for his absence that Bentley decided to let him go. And, in point of fact, it was Grimes that had persuaded Bentley to take seriously the idea that the company might be better off without him.

“You must understand—must understand,” Grimes had said, with his usual air of condescension, “I’m so bored. So bored. I’m just not challenged by this job—not letting me breathe, stretch my wings, reach my potential.” He pecked at the armrest of his chair, repeating the word “potential” abstractly, under his breath. “I mean,” he finally continued, lowering his voice to a whisper and bowing his nose so he could look at Bentley through the tops of his eyes, “a monkey could do my job. A dumb monkey.”

Bentley leaned toward Grimes across his desk and asked, without a hint of sarcasm, “Do you really think so?”

“Think so,” Grimes whistled without thinking, fully distracted now by the armrest.

So, like that, Grimes was replaced by a bonobo from the Congo named Gray Beard. In the weeks that followed,

Bentley began to receive complaints from other employees. Though initially overjoyed that Grimes was “finally gone,” they now voiced their concern about the new supervisor’s habit of “communicating only through indecipherable gestures,” his “wildly inappropriate” interpretation of the casual dress code, and his “tendency to throw his feces at Jenny” anytime she entered his office with documents to sign. Not that Jenny could have been successful on this mission anyway, as it also appeared that he could not sign his name. Though there was a rumor he did not know his name, as he would frequently not respond to it when called, most of his subordinates simply believed that he affected a mien of ignorance in order to avoid having to deal with their concerns or those of the mounting number of unsatisfied clients. When a buyer from Salisbury asked Carina in accounting “if they had a monkey running things there,” Bentley decided it was time to confront Gray Beard about his behavior.

As it turned out, Gray Beard preempted Bentley’s intervention. When the director got to the office one morning, he found the new sales supervisor tumbling around on the floor underneath his superior’s desk. When Bentley asked Gray Beard what he was doing in his office, the bonobo replied by stretching out his limbs, scratching his belly, and running his hand along his inner thigh. He beckoned for Bentley to join him; he was, after all, no chimpanzee.

“I think I know what the problem is,” said Bentley, as though granted sudden insight. Sitting across from his own desk, he aimed low with his words, to where the monkey persisted in rolling back and forth, in and out of view. “You’re bored,” he continued, as Gray Beard began to rub himself with vigor. “You’re not challenged by this job—you can’t

Used Gravitrons

breathe, stretch your wings, reach your potential!"

Gray Beard responded by ejaculating into the empty seat of Bentley's desk chair. Bentley took this as a yes and immediately replaced Grimes' replacement.

Mrs. Mudcake had only been doing Gray Beard's job for three hours when Bentley realized he had made the same mistake again. Unlike Gray Beard, Mudcake did not gesture wildly with her hands, touch herself inappropriately while hanging from the exposed water pipe that ran through the break room, nor throw her excrement at Jenny. Being a prize winning sow from Kentucky, however, she did enjoy rooting around in her coworkers' crotches, loitering in the bathrooms, and, like Gray Beard, urinating wherever and whenever she could. She also refused to wear clothes. A little quieter than Gray Beard, she proved even worse at her job, or, as Bentley would once again surmise, even more constrained by its limitations. So, immediately after an incident involving a painting crew and twelve cans of alluring brown paint, Bentley coaxed Mrs. Mudcake into his office with a bucket of slop and told her he had to let her go. Her replacement, a terrier from Dallas, fared no better.

Over the next two months, a red fox, a bobcat from Oaxaca, a Townsend big-eared bat, a near-sighted hamster, and a hygiene-conscious dung beetle were among those given the chance to become Grimes' permanent replacement. On a Friday—two days after a Douglas fir had been fired—Bentley was called to the 37th floor conference room to talk with the vice president of human resources. When he arrived, he found several somber looking stakeholders huddled together on one side of the table. In the center of the table was a platter of pulled pork; a man was circling the other end of the table

passing out plastic flatware. The human resources VP pulled away from the group, directed Bentley to sit, and then waved for the others to do the same. Bentley sat on one side, the nine members of upper management on the other. As soon as they were seated, the doors opened, letting a dozen more executives into the room. Each took one of the remaining empty chairs until Bentley was surrounded. Then the VP, who sat directly across from Bentley, held up her hand and the room grew silent.

“Mr. Cooke,” said the VP, indicating a gentleman to her left with a nod, “was on your floor today. He tried to speak with the southeastern regional sales supervisor but found him . . . and jump in here Benjamin if I get this wrong . . . incommunicative.”

“That’s Brenda,” said Bentley. “She’s new.”

“New . . .” said the VP, tapping the table with her index finger.

“She’s made of stone,” muttered Cooke to no one in particular but loud enough for everyone to hear.

“Stubborn,” said a younger woman with glasses, writing onto a pad. “Intractable.”

“Inedible!” Bentley couldn’t be sure who had said that. Had he?

“No—” interrupted Cooke. “It’s a goddamned rock—”

“Jerry,” said someone to Cooke’s left, a hand coming out of nowhere to pat his arm.

“I’m Benjamin,” said Cooke. “Jerry’s in Orlando.”

“No I’m not,” said Jerry from the other end of the table.

Used Gravitrons

“A clastic sedimentary boulder,” Bentley clarified, turning to face the Vice President. “I did a background check.”

“Of course you did,” said the VP, nodding. Her tone was the vocal equivalent of patting him on the back.

“But I don’t think she’s working out,” said Bentley, encouraged by the VP’s apparent sympathy. “I don’t think this job is challenging enough for her.”

“Her?” asked a woman at the opposite end of the table from Cooke.

“That’s right ma’am,” said Bentley as he turned to face her, wondering if she knew Jerry. “I don’t think the position is allowing her to stretch her wings.” Cooke was nodding furiously, gesticulating and grunting about this being what he had been trying to tell them.

“No, I should say not.” This came from a muddle of coats and buttons near Cooke’s end of the table—another voice Bentley couldn’t place.

“It’s the position,” Bentley said, swinging his chin side to side, “it just doesn’t inspire anyone.”

After a moment or two of chalky stillness, the VP pretended to cough and leaned forward against the table, just as Bentley had done when he had met with Grimes two months earlier.

“Here’s what we’re going to do...” she said with a finality that let Bentley know that no more explanations would be asked of him. What was originally Grimes’ position would be discontinued and Bentley, who obviously was not being given the chance to “breathe,” or “reach his full potential,” would be laid off. They were appreciative of his

years of diligent, if not entirely misguided and unproductive, work and they hoped him well in his future endeavors.

Though the committee had not spoken to Bentley about the matter, a rumor ran through the office later that afternoon that Grimes had been hired back as his replacement. Bentley considered the justice of this as he packed up his office, his thoughts eventually tending toward the future. Just as he was contemplating whether or not it would be indelicate to ask for a character reference from the phytoplankton he had sacked last week, a yellow-flecked parrot hopped through his open office door.

“Hello, Grimes,” said Bentley.

“Hello, Grimes,” said Grimes.

The Surreal Housewives of Bristol County

by Devin Schiff

1.

“She’s just pathetic.”

“You’re being awfully judgmental.”

“She invites judgment. Just look at her. She disgusts me.”

“Maybe we should move away from this mirror, Delilah. You’re being awfully hard on yourself.”

“...”

“This mirror is better, isn’t it? It’s going to be much nicer to you. It’s a lot softer on your features.”

“My cheeks are sagging.”

“Not so much now after the...”

“They are. Look. They’re drooping off my face. They’re sliding to the floor. Look at me, Angelica. Look at this puddle of a face.”

“I’ll tell the maid to get a mop or something, we’ll get it cleaned up.”

“...”

“Don’t cry. I think I heard something about gravity the other day. It happens to all of us.”

“...”

“We don’t have a lot of options, Delilah, you live in a house full of mirrors.”

“...”

“Put down the shears.”

“I love you.”

“Let’s not do this today, okay Delilah?”

“I was speaking to the mirror. I was.”

2.

The Wives were at Jenna’s. Jenna arrived fashionably late. The others were just really late. Naomi brought the salad, although they all noticed pretty quickly that there were some non-food materials in the salad- fake eyelashes, crayons, and bits of videotape being immediately visible- but they didn’t say anything, Naomi was going through a tough time. Angelica brought a thin soup and a sieve to eat it out of. Jade had some mascara stuck to her fur. Ophelia forgot to take her chauffeur out of her before coming inside. It was Tuesday.

“I think you all know why I asked you to come over.”

3.

Bristol County is in Rhode Island. Rhode Island is small. How small? No room on ground level for mansions.

Used Gravitrons

Imagine that. “A mansion is a de rigueur monument to yourself,” the handbook had told them energetically. So their mansions turned skyward. Each wife lived in a mansion with one room on each floor, thirty floors high. A spiral staircase snaked up through each of their mansions. At one of the meetings Jenna’s husband asked why the women weren’t called Real Mansionwives, which would be more etymologically correct, after all. The wives and the producers laughed and laughed.

The last housewife who ascended above the third floor of her sky mansion hasn’t been seen since.

4.

Jenna and her husband had a fight.

“You don’t trust me,” she said, throwing a shoe.

“I don’t trust you because you don’t trust me,” said the husband.

“I don’t trust you because you don’t believe in me,” trying to remove the other shoe.

“I don’t believe in you because you don’t ever consider my feelings.”

“I don’t ever consider your feelings because all your feelings are fake,” finally just ripping the strap off the shoe.

“Please let’s stay home,” said the husband.

“You don’t trust me,” she said, throwing the other shoe.

“We’re going to go now,” said the cameramen. “We’re done here.”

“Wait. Please wait. I can throw something else.”

“Ok guys, Ophelia should be up from her nap by now,” said the cameraman. “Let’s go see what she’s gotten herself into this time.”

“How about this bust? I’ll throw it.”

“Don’t.”

“I can’t even lift it. This thing is so goddamn heavy.”

The cameramen were out the door, down the driveway, starting the car, driving away. Fleeing.

Katherine Hepburn was on the floor.

“Just great. We broke it after the cameras already left,” said Jenna.

“I’ll buy you another one,” said the husband.

“Please stop fighting,” said their children.

Just kidding. There are no children here.

5.

Girls Night at The Script, a hot club downtown. Naomi arrived last, looking put-upon.

“Naomi, did you walk here?”

What could she say? She was having a tough time. It was wife-related (not house-related or mansion-related). She had met her husband Baxter on the first season of *Wifeless*. He selected her from a pool of ninety-nine women. Every show, Baxter would write a poem for each prospective wife, and the last line would reveal whether they would be staying or going home. The poems were written in blank verse, with

Used Gravitrons

no rhyme scheme, and were incredibly long and often off-topic. By the end of the show's six-year season, she had fallen totally and cripplingly in love. He chose her.

All their money had been lost gambling in the form of bad investments. Now Baxter was filming a season of Married But Looking. He was really quite popular and she wasn't. She polled very poorly. Polling is important, interjected the handbook. She was adrift.

“No,” she said.

“You should have called us, we would have sent a car.”

“I prefer to float.”

“Oh I know that feeling. Too many sedatives?”

“No. Wings.”

She let her silk shawl drop to the floor. Sure enough, she had wings.

“They just grew,” said Naomi.

“Naomi, they’re amazing,” said Angelica, jealously.

“You should get them bejeweled,” said Jade, opening a bottle of wine with her fangs.

“That’s not what they’re for,” said Naomi.

“If I had wings like that, I don’t know what I’d do,” said Delilah. “I’ll fight you for them if you want.”

“I don’t want to.”

“Everyone’s talking about you.”

“I just wanted to be beautiful,” said Naomi.

“You are,” said Delilah, leaving the table in tears.

6.

The top three floors of Ophelia's house are a harem. Four assorted floors of Jenna's house are four dry-cleaning stores, the employees of which live up there in the sky. They do not materialize downstairs. The top six floors of Delilah's house are blank.

7.

The chauffeur, wearing his sky blue cap and nothing else, whispered sweet nothings into Ophelia's ear.

Across the cul-de-sac Delilah drank bath salts and then threw up.

8.

The Wives gathered for Thanksgiving. The producers wrote the invitations, of course, but they were so confusing that no one was sure who was hosting Thanksgiving, or even where they were. Alcohol was plying them back to consciousness.

"Tequila shots," announced Jenna.

"Pass the salt," said Angelica.

"I feel so good right now," said Delilah.

Delilah was up on the table. She hiked up her skirt. It's a blur under there.

"We're doing another shot," Jenna said.

"Pass the salt," said Angelica.

Jade was tearing into some raw boar with her mitts.

"Delilah is dancing in the mashed potatoes," said

Used Gravitrons

Jenna's husband.

"What are you even doing here?" said Jenna. "We're getting a divorce."

"What?" he said, taken aback for the first time in his life. "Don't you love me?"

"Jenna can't you just be normal for once?" said Ophelia.

"That's a lot," said Jenna, "coming from someone who is between kids."

"I just can't seem to keep myself from just giving them away," said Ophelia, dreamily.

"One last toast, to all of us, who know what it really means when the song says girls just want to have fun," said Jenna.

Angelica had poured the tequila into the turkey.

"Thanksgiving is ruined," said Ophelia.

"Pass the salt," said Angelica.

9.

One afternoon the Wives were in a graveyard.

"I've always liked what the air here does for my complexion," said Delilah.

Everyone agreed. It was true.

MONKEY II

by Jim Meirose

Monkey in the cradle. The cradle is deep, and rocks smoothly. The hand that rocks it is kindly. To be thought of as kindly is important. Even if you're not kindly. Even if you're a bastard. Ted is a bastard. Ted lies down face down in the dirt and cries if he doesn't get his way. So we let him lie there. After a while, he gets up and walks away. Monkey in the cradle. Cute is the monkey—it's just a baby. The kindly hand draws away and goes away for a while. The rocking stops. The monkey fusses. The monkey waves its arms and kicks its feet. It is too young to leave the cradle. The kindly hand returns and scratches the monkey on the head before beginning the rocking again. A knock comes to the door. The kindly hand goes to answer the door. You're not supposed to have wild animals in here, ma'am. You will have to give this monkey up. We'll check next week and that monkey better be gone. The men leave. The kindly hand returns. This can be dealt with tomorrow. The kindly hand always knew it would have to give the monkey up. While it was still young and harmless. The woman who has the kindly hand looks in the eyes of the monkey. The monkey's eyes are black. Dabble in wild animals, get in trouble. But the men are right. This monkey will be dangerous when grown. But for now, the cradle rocks and the monkey's eyes half close and then close and it goes to the same place everything goes to when asleep. That place is full of things—wonderful things, terrible things, weird things, ugly things, beautiful things. Everything dreams. All things are equal there. Nothing is higher or lower than the

Used Gravitrons

next. The monkey dreams of a butterfly. It chases the butterfly through the warm field and it doesn't know that the butterfly is also there because it is dreaming, so it can never be caught. Nothing bad can happen in the land of dreams. Love is the only thing that counts in the land of dreams. Not species. The monkey gives up the chase and lies there in the grass. It is too young to walk or crawl and it had been dreaming of chasing the butterfly. The kindly hands come from above and pick up the monkey and puts it in a cradle. It is now in a cradle dreaming of being in a cradle. The kindly hands gently rock the cradle so as not to wake the monkey. In the dream, or without, the objective is the same. Don't wake the baby. And, once more the monkey dreams—it dreams that it is asleep and dreaming and the place it is in in this dream is not so nice. The ground is hard and the sun is hot and there is no food or water and no kindly hands. The monkey dreams it is walking forward and at last the monkey comes to a wall with a large barred door. This is the door back to the land of the wakened, the awake, the opposite of asleep. A man stands at the door with a spear. Do you want to come through this door? he asks. The monkey knows that if it returns to the land of wakening it will be faced with being separated from the woman with the kindly hands. So it nods no, no, I want to stay here. The man says suit yourself but you can't stay here—you must walk back where you came from. So the monkey imagines walking away from the door into the heat and hard ground and lack of water and food and kindly hands; this is not the best place to be, so the monkey lies down again and falls asleep and a land of dreams again forms around it. It is now dreaming it is dreaming it is dreaming—in the world of the awake, the kindly hand rocks the cradle and the woman is glad the monkey is lying there so calm—what dreams it must have! The woman stops rocking the cradle because the

monkey is sound asleep. Deep in the layers of the worlds of dreams, the monkey knows this but it is all right—this new place is fine, all green with great wide cool lawns and beautiful trees and great fountains to drink from and wide tables laden with food to eat. And it is thinking differently—it looks at its hands—they are human hands! And there is a mirror, and it looks in the mirror—a human woman looks back at the monkey! She moves as it moves, and the mirror evaporates and the woman moves forward through her dream wondering at the wonderfulness of it all—she had been dreaming she was a monkey, and that had been pleasant enough, at least as a dream; but she feels herself being drawn upward and through and past the worlds of dreams and she wakes in a wide bed in a large room and there is a man asleep beside her, on his side with his back turned to her. She wants to tell him she was dreaming of being a monkey but at the same time she does not want to wake him but she seems to remember something—something about needing to leave, something about not supposed to be here. Slowly she rises from the bed, quietly gets dressed, and leaves the apartment to go home to her husband. You're not supposed to have wild animals in here, ma'am—she is struck by the oddness of that thought, a fragment from the dream, as she goes down to the subway with her token in her hand to go home to Ted.

Used Gravitrons



Door Knob Walrus

[Meta]Physical Slinky

by A.J. Huffman

You are learning. To bend
[me] to the whip and whim
of your smile. I style like a Lazyboy:
soft and pliable. Puddy-shaded
and brushed for your comfort.
Turn me over. Dust the crumbs.
Disuse is more of a fracture: sanity
vs. sanitation. Mind the manor[isms].
If you please, the pedestal
is preferred. Though a bedpost will do.
In a pinch, power is tipped
to the [uterine] wall. Grab the pillows!
The wind is blowing like [your] tail
in a turbine. I cling to you
r levels. And we all fall: crumbled.
Like a house, three cards, and a set
of spaded stairs.

Six-Pack Story

by Afton Carlson

Beer 1

The afterlife is weirder than anyone ever told you. I discovered this while looking for enlightenment in a glass meth pipe I borrowed from a friend that had sworn the stuff off for the twenty-third or so time. I made him promise that the meth residue had been burnt clean from the pipe. That shit scares me. I would never try it, but what I would try was dimethyltryptamine, which was the reason I needed the glass pipe in the first place, the reason I tripped the latch that lifted the hood of the five senses. There is a word: ineffable. That is the only one I can utter to the curious uninitiated who want to know what it's like to cross over.

Beer 2

But I'll do my best using crude signifiers. The bible, which I had long cast aside as a tribal mythology at best, and a history of genocide at worst, describes hell as a lake of fire and brimstone without reprieve. I have long believed hell to be a state of interaction. What do we do with the raw material of this deeply mysterious and infinitely complicated interlocking plane of cognitive perception in a material domain? We kill each other for stuff. We eat other living things to keep living. It's fucked up. But no amount of fucked up could have prepared me for that lake of fire and brimstone.

Imagine a boundless field of potentiality that gathers in concentrated locals of synchronized desire. These individual points of striving become the channels of a universe attempting to perceive itself, and to exhaust the possibilities of existence, to experience every combination of space and time for the sake of experience itself. In this way I learned we are singers of the grand song of being.

Before I had been fucked in the mouth by the glass dick that tasted like an old man's dying breath, I had believed in free will and order. But as my living room rug, the one that was handmade in Afghanistan, woven into a tapestry of color and pattern, began to digitalize, the myriad individual bits of light stretching through eternity, rocketing me into a place without time and without boundaries, melting the lenses of my eyes and boring a glowing hole into the grey folds of my brain, I found myself stuck in a loop that had always been. A passage in the bible, a favorite of Calvinists, says that we are vessels of His wrath. This passage, which once provoked incredulity in me, now provokes fear, which was certainly the original intent.

It seemed to me that I had awoken from a dream into a paradigm I had always known deep down, a paradigm that whispered its secrets in the depths of forgotten dreams.

Beer 3

In this paradigm, truer than reality, I saw the immutable deterministic nature of reality. My songs of creation were pleas for negation. It was as if the capital "C" center had always been missing, and every observation, every action, was a frantic attempt to set a universe strait that was out of balance. The entire causal chain of being cried in

Used Gravitrons

unison for the purity of nothingness.

I was understandably relieved when I returned to corporeal reality, albeit, to one that now seemed like a superficial sham. When the furniture began to materialize through the fog of twisting glass neuron stars, I found myself in time, an approaching middle-age pseudo-intellectual who attached more importance to the trapping of fleeting fashion than any sincere lie that I had told myself. But again, I was relieved, and thought things would go back to the way they were before my mind was fucked.

Alas I had opened the proverbial Pandora's box, and what had once been my deepest fear, that existence would be extinguished at death, became my greatest hope. At night, I would again be visited with DMT visions that relayed cryptic and unspeakable hidden truths. And it wasn't only the purview of what was to come that was divulged, but also that which is.

Let me explain. I tried to subvert the realization that I had finally gone too far afield by indulging in the sensual pleasures of habits that I had heretofore wholeheartedly entertained. One late night, when I was searching Pornhub for a video that would take me all the way, I came across a porn actress with eyes that

Beer 4

were all together different from the great white shark eyes of most porn actresses. Her eyes had a sincerity that I had discovered was absent from my own person, and in fact, I was so entranced by her gaze that I promptly Googled her name after I was done shooting the little death.

What I found preoccupied me. Her name was Hermione Explosso, and she had been dead for three years, the victim of a brutal murder at the hands of her jealous porn-producer boyfriend, beaten to death with a camera mount and dumped in the North Broadway-Buena Vista Viaduct of the Los Angeles River. A serendipitous search result led me to a website that hosted crime scene photos of the murders. Her eyes, post mortem, were now the same hollow holes of other pornstars' looking at everything and seeing nothing.

That night I fell into a fitful sleep. The images in my head took on a grotesque detail that waking life couldn't afford. It was enough to make me nauseous. My dreams were akin to the dreams I had had as a feverish kid; then I was trapped in an 8-bit loop reminiscent of old Nintendo games. Now I was trapped in a digitalized DMT loop, replete with the non sequitur logic of my life-altering trip. In the darkest spectrum of that canvas, I saw her eyes appearing simultaneously before and after her demise. I heard her voice transcribed, as if from the memories of moans to a susurration of occult command.

When I awoke from my sleep the echo of her voice haunted me like the revelation of my DMT trip. Every pronouncement, every movement, every thought, seemed to portend the inevitability of her charge.

Beer 5

HER dual gaze observed my every turn and I knew what I had to do.

Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth was founded in 1981 by Genesis P-Orridge for the purpose of organizing

Used Gravitrons

and perpetuating the fringe chaos magic scene. I would be lying if I said I had never heard of TOPY before HER grand pronouncement, for my earlier studies of Austin Osman Spare and Peter J. Carroll had inevitably led me to the knowledge of Thee Temple, but up until now I had been innumerate in the cabalistic calculus of its mystical supremacy. I had known, before the revelatory dreams, that one could become a member of Thee Temple by ritualistically ejaculating, spitting, bleeding, and cutting one's hair upon a paper containing a contractually constructed sigil which would be sent to Thee Temple headquarters on the 23rd of each month. After a series of twenty-three consecutive months, an initiate would become a full member.

I knew, by HER divine dictate, that I was already a spiritual member of Thee Temple. The gauntlet that I was to endure was not the repetitive and indoctrinating ritual of sigil charging. I had seen the sharp lines of my sigil in nether regions that were hidden from the scryings of normie initiates.

My vision came to me in the odd bits of the unwaking, in the cracks of cement sidewalks, and in the ripples of the undone. I knew that I must free him as a fetish totem for Thee Temple, for he would rise up resurrected, imbued with chaos magics, to perpetuate a new epoch of humanity unshackled from the bindings of dumb puritan America. That man was the soon to be animated corpse of Thomas "Pig Champion" Roberts.

Beer 6

I caught a rideshare out of Spokane Washington to Portland Oregon. I had a collapsible shovel I bought from the

Army surplus, ceremonial garb, and a motorized winch that could lift up to 450 lbs. in my backpack. Also included were some roast beef and relish sandwiches and a box of Prilosec OTC. The car was full of kids who were looking to get out of Spokane, so I considered that a good omen.

The hills surrounding Portland rose up like pleasant punctuations past the plains of Eastern Oregon, emerald rocky bumps with cascading turquoise waterfalls, heralding a line of demarcation that separated the radio waves bursting with mariachi bands and evangelical broadcasting from the anarchic and hedonistic disseminations of Poison Idea raging over KBOO community radio.

Beer 7. What the hell

The graveyard in which HE was buried was not difficult to locate. I had borrowed the smartphone of one of my fellow travel mates and Googled www.findgrave.com to locate HIS corpse. After a brief bus and taxi ride, I stood at the iron gates of the cemetery. It was here that I donned my robe, sigil necklace, and my fetish mask. I spent the better part of the evening looking for HIS grave as I nervously fingered the amber gemstone in my pocket. When I found it, the sun was setting over the Pacific. This is what HIS epitaph read:

Tom Roberts lies here.

Lord Hedon of coke and beer.

You're already dead.

Used Gravitrons

I thrust my shovel into the earth and started digging. With each scoop of dirt HER voice became more audible and HIS visage became more visible. The porcelain folds of his cherubic face came to the forefront of my obstinate vision. At last I came to the massive hulk of HIS coffin lid. It took wrenching and sweating and visions of terror to lift the cheap pine covering. When I did, a gastric potpourri wafted into the air, inundating my nostrils, deflating my aggrandized vaticination of my corpulent savior, and filling me with dread. There before me was the desiccated viscera of a once fecund guitar god, laying like a piece of King B Jerky in an oversized crimson polyester-lined box.

“Put your hands where I can see ‘em asshole,” came a voice from above the rectangular pit.

I looked up and saw an enemy to the epoch of peace. I put my hands up, then looked him in the eyes as I slowly lowered my hands to the wall of the grave and began to climb up. My mind was hurtling over multiple escape scenarios when the unthinkable, and yet somehow expected happened. The corpse below began to emit a sweet smell like the rot of a temperate rainforest. As the smell proliferated through the air, the corpse began to swell to a magnitude barely contained by the wooden constraints of the casket. The cop dry-heaved violently as I dropped below into HIS girth to grab my shovel. The eyes of Pig Champion began to glow, and HE emitted a guttural rattle as I clawed my way over the dirt lip of the tomb. The policeman was hunched over in agony as I swung my shovel at his pig head.

In dreams you punch the face of your assailant and your fists feel as ineffectual as slow wet clay. Not here. In this moment I could feel the spade crush his fucking pig skull as his beady eyes gapped in horror.

That was when everything went back to the way it has always really been. Apparently the officer had a partner who had a gun drawn on my person. No amount of interference from Pig Champion was going to stop the bullet intended for me. The individual grains of dirt and blades of grass became pixilated... digitalized. They stretched out across temporal space and rocketed me into the lake of fire.

Used Gravitrons



Beth Met Walrus



Coast Rock Walrus

Coffee With Mr. Dao

by Ajit Singh Dhillon

We drank a lot of coffee during the summer nights that year. Flo was the name of the waitress who served us. She was from Jersey. We all were. Mr. Dao and I sat in the smoking section with our legs splayed over the booths, feet dangling in the aisle. An open pack rested on the table between us next to an ashtray filled with dead butts. We looked through the glass of the window out into the empty spaces of the parking lot. The pavement was wet from the evening thunderstorm that more or less accompanied most days. Cars drove along the highway, the dampness clinging to the rubber of their tires before falling away. Flo swerved around us, her curly hair bopping. She called us hon. If we were in England she'd say love, but we're not English. The turquoise upholstered booth we sat in gave us a narrow view of the cash register by the entrance. There were never many people there. Just me, Mr. Dao, and Flo swinging from that kitchen door, pot of coffee in her arm. Our personal jukebox played Bruce Springsteen's greatest hits even though we didn't put any quarters in. Not my first choice, but in Jersey you can't complain about the Boss, not in a diner.

Mr. Dao wasn't his given name, but it's what he went by and I respected that. He wore a corduroy blazer. It looked professional, but it made him sweat. Little bubbles appeared on his brow, swelling in size until they dripped onto the booth. Still, it didn't prevent him from hugging the mug of

coffee with both hands. When I asked him why, he shivered as a smirk creased his lips. Peering into the black liquid he said quite softly, “The sensation, the sensation.” He had long black hair that swooped over his face, but it didn’t seem to bother him, not when he grasped the cup.

I took to wearing a blue beanie that summer after patches of hair appeared in my shower drain one morning. At first, I questioned where it came from. Thought it was some strange mold. But when the hair dried I recognized myself, clumped in a circle, unable to descend down the hole. Running my hand across my scalp had the feel of fresh haircut. Strands clung to my fingers, never to return. I thought of other men with thinned manes. Perhaps all those men, at some point, experienced this moment where, standing naked, water streaming down their aged gorilla suits, they knew something had irrevocably changed and if something as simple as hair could leave us without warning or sign then what could we really own. So I took to the beanie, even though I never considered myself a beanie man.

Mr. Dao flipped through the heavy menu. Laminated pages popped with color and illustrations. There were the standards, burgers done ten different ways, hoagies and club sandwiches, milkshakes, and pies, lots of pies, but as the flipping continued the menu became more ambitious, braised flank steak served with a watercress and endive salad, lobster ravioli with a brown butter and sage sauce, caramel flan drizzled with melted dark chocolate. No one ever ordered from the second half of those pages. But we still read the entire menu, still peered at the faint fluorescent light streaking under the bottom crack of the kitchen door, and wondered who was back there, prepared to create art only to receive another ticket demanding greased eggs and bacon.

Used Gravitrons

Mr. Dao asked for curly fries. He pushed it in my direction as soon as Flo laid it down. The plate of curls scraped against the table. Steam rose from the yellow heap, creating a screen between us. “You ordered this,” I said, pointing down.

He twitched his head to the side and blew out some smoke. “I never understood. Why can’t I order for you?”

“But what if I don’t want it? A world where people order for others would be chaos. Everyone would get the wrong things for the other. Resentments would grow. Friendships would break. It would be too painful.”

He nodded, but appeared upset. “It’s always about what you want, not about what I want for you.”

I held a single fry in the air. It hung between us, unfurling, hovering over the napkin dispenser and sugar. When I bit into it, he leaned back in relief. Truth is, if you order fries it’s a safe bet. Who’s going to turn it down? I didn’t tell him that, though. I also burned my mouth, but he didn’t need to hear that either.

The smokes filled the gaps between conversation. They induced a certain calmness followed by an anxiety to say something, the perfect recipe for thought when coupled with coffee. “You think Flo’s married?” I asked Mr. Dao.

He tapped a cigarette on the counter. “I don’t like that question.”

“Why?”

He grit his teeth as he spoke. “We can just ask her and know. If you’re asking me, then I’ll just give you the stereotype.”

“Which is?”

“Let’s talk about something else.” He usually avoided contact but he met my eyes this time. He pointed the stick in my direction. “Flo is a single mom.” He tilted his head and studied the outline of his reflection on the glossy counter. “No, let me revise that, Flo is a queen presiding over bottom feeders. Why she loves them I’ll never know, but that’s not important, is it, why you love something, just that you love it? It’s a transcendent love, a Jesus Buddha loving all things perspective, rescuing the lost one cup at a time.” He seemed satisfied. “Yeah, that’s Flo,” he said.

I grinned. He was making me feel better. I lifted my cup. Mr. Dao mirrored me. “Mugs of love, huh?”

He tapped his cup against mine. “The Eucharist without the blood.”

“Cup of joe.”

“Cup of Flo,” he said. I hoped it was true. It sounded true.

We flicked quarters on the table. They spun on their sides before dying out. We were trying to perfect our technique in order to achieve the longest possible rotation. My copper coin revolved in a sweeping circle around Mr. Dao’s quarter, which rested flat at the center of the booth. We each leaned forward as the trail of the coin grew concentrically tighter, the profile of George Washington visible as the momentum slowed, the friction of sound more pronounced as the quarter wobbled in the final throes. We awaited the outcome despite the predictability, but before my change fell still and silent, a beam pierced the window.

I shielded my eyes, but the light shot its way between the cracks of my fingertips. Looking out, I began to see it; the

Used Gravitrons

outlines of the curves, a pick-up truck lifted high on springs, headlights on high-beam, virtually level, parked in the space in front of us, raking the diner. Mr. Dao covered his face with hair and appeared quite comfortable. The tinted black of the windshield concealed the driver. Something watched us, knowing we couldn't see it. I tried to appear angry and annoyed, but the lights persisted.

I listened for sounds; a door opening, a conversation, a radio, anything to fill the gap. But there were only the beams, the steady whine of the engine, the water filling the cracks in the pavement. Mr. Dao slid a lit cigarette between my fingers and suggested I inhale. After a drag I called out to Flo.

“What the hell?” she said, standing next to me. “I’ll take care of this.”

“Be careful.”

She walked outside.

“Why did you say that?” Mr. Dao asked.

I didn’t respond. The warmth of the lights intensified. A residue of sweat built on my chest. Mr. Dao pressed his hand against my chest and left the imprint of his palm on my shirt. A car door opened. Then nothing, not even a voice. Flo was somewhere behind the lights. I waited for time to provide an answer, but none came. The kitchen was silent. “What should we do?”

Mr. Dao brushed his hair aside and shielded his forehead. “We have to go out there.”

“What?”

“There’s no other way. Best not to wait,” he said,

standing up in the aisle.

“We should call the cops.”

“Nah, not enough time,” he replied. “Come on.” He walked to the entrance, thinking I was right behind. When he held the door open he must have seen me at the booth with my head down, arms at my side. He didn’t yell out to me, didn’t ask me why.

The door swung closed, leaving me alone. The black coffee was cold and bitter, and no one was there to refill. My head itched, felt like little ants crawling on my skull. Could they see it in the lights? My arm shook, fingers twitched. Couldn’t hold it still, couldn’t hold the smoke to my mouth. The pick-up revved its engine before quieting for a few seconds and roaring again. The roar was a challenge, the voice of the thing outside stretching out to grasp me. The body of the pick-up bounced from the torque, springing up and down, coming closer, growing larger. I turned away.

The headlights seemed to dim. The diner felt darker. The crack of light that jutted out from the kitchen floor flickered before turning off entirely. A glass dome contained a half-eaten apple pie, exposing its brown and crystal insides.

I heard them speaking by the cash register. “Why’d you come out there?” Flo asked.

“Just wanted to check on you,” Mr. Dao said, gazing down at his sneakers. Outside, the pick-up was gone along with the beams.

She rubbed his shoulder. “Thanks hon.” I kept waiting for the both of them to turn toward me with an explanation, but Flo walked to the kitchen without looking my way.

Used Gravitrons

Mr. Dao sat back down. He clapped his hands together, but didn't say anything.

"Guess everything was okay," I said.

"Just some car trouble."

I took another sip. The coffee stuck to the back of my throat. "That's good."

Mr. Dao reached across the table, but I leaned back before he could touch me. His hands gripped the sides of the table. The skin of his knuckles was red.

"Don't worry when it comes to me," he said.

"Worry?"

"Remember, there's always next time."

I lit another one and inhaled hard. "That's right, suck it up," Mr. Dao said. I thought it sounded sarcastic, but I didn't say anything.

A part of me felt like I'd never be able to look at Mr. Dao the same way, knowing what he knew about me. But we continued into the night. And I soon forgot standing in the high beams, waiting for a sound from the world outside.



Duvet Walrus

The Chronicles Of Tim

Pt. X - Three Birds

by Mike Wiley

With two daughters down, Tim still has five to go. He is at a loss for what truly transpired between him and Sahara, but he takes her dirty laundry and dutifully drops it in a place where James is sure to find it. Meanwhile Geryon is out on his book-burning mission as Tim had instructed. Having no current missions at hand, Tim finds himself with the afternoon at his disposal.

“There must be a stocked bar in this place,” he thought. “James got that bottle of whisky from somewhere.”

The kitchen seemed as good a place to start as any but the search quickly yielded no results. Next was the billiards room and the dining room. The color green. Tim ransacked cupboards and drawers. He looked under rugs for secret panels. There were literally one million places that booze could be stored in the giant castle. He searched tirelessly along the ground floor. One by one, Tim entered rooms he wouldn’t have dared been caught in a day ago. But now was different; Now Geryon was out on a task of his own, and Tim desperately wanted a drink.

There were rooms filled with wood-working tools and rooms filled with jewelry. There were rooms with nothing in them at all; not even windows. One room had only a teeter-totter stationed in the middle of it. The sounds of children screaming. Tim took note of this particular room and planned to visit it again at a more appropriate time. By and

large, the rooms were full of unimaginably useless garbage to a man in need of one thing only: a stiff drink.

He opened a door to a room that, at first, seemed to be as empty and lifeless as the rest until he turned on the light. It was a large, dull blue-gray cube with no windows or closets and it smelled heavily of bleach. Caramelized onions. Propped against the far wall was a toy clown, no larger than a house cat. It was wearing a yellow sombrero. Though it promised to produce no liquor, it was a curious thing and so he approached to have a closer look.

Tim started across the room and, before he was half way, noticed that the light was considerably dimmer than when he had entered. He stopped. Nothing else had changed, but in the poor light he realized the clown doll was nearly only a shadow. He took a deep breath and stepped one foot closer. The room grew just a shade darker. Step by step, he advanced on the doll. Degree by degree, the light grew dimmer until at last Tim was submerged in total darkness, inches from the clown.

He hesitated.

Tim thought back to his time in the think box where, for days or possibly weeks, he survived the chilling blackness of the unknown. But that was different. The color blue. At least in the think box he had not been able to see whether or not there was a creepy doll at his feet.

Tim listened to his own breathing in the dark for a moment, then reached down to pick the thing up. At the moment he had his hand wrapped around the torso of the clown, so too did a large something have its hand wrapped around Tim's torso.

Used Gravitrons

He screamed.

Unaware of who or what had its grasp on him, Tim began to violently flail his limbs about. In his confusion and fright, he clutched tightly to the clown doll all the while. The harder Tim thrashed, the harder the unknown assailant flung him from wall to wall -ceiling to floor. He was helpless. Lights flickered maddeningly between on and off, further disorienting the helpless Tim. Like a wet noodle, he took the beating. He could not catch a glimpse of the assailant amidst the chaos. Dimming all the while. At last, when Tim was sure he was about to black out, the giant hand gave Tim's body a final massive crush against the wall.

The doll flew from Tim's hand. It landed just where it had been before. He was alone with only the clown. The lights were on. Tim pulled his battered body to its feet and silently walked out.

.....

The afternoon passed without further event. Unable to find booze, Tim laid up on a couch in the lounge with an ice pack on his forehead. He tried to sleep off the aches but, unable to shake the recent, horrible scene from his mind, only nodded and dozed. When he opened his eyes he found his vision blurred. Sweat matted hair to his forehead. He was a mess.

At some point in his delirium, an angel paid him a visit.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Tim?" it said.

Confusing the apparition for the hand that gave him the beating, he replied, "No, thank you, Angel Hand," said Tim. "I've had enough."

Tim squinted at the silhouette. It was a beautiful haloed figure bathed in marigold candle light. Whoever it was, it was certainly heavenly.

“We must get you out of these damp clothes and put a drink in your hand. Things have gone too far,” it said.

.....

Several hours later, when Tim had fully regained consciousness, he woke to find that a tray had been placed on the coffee table next to him. It contained a small box of fresh ice, a decanter of whisky, and two rocks glasses - one full, one with only melted ice. He was also completely nude.

There was no one else in the room with him.

Rubbing his shoulders, finding them incredibly sore, Tim sat up and reached for the full glass.

Just as he had raised the drink to his lips, Geryon entered the room. Mud covered his legs up to the thighs. Black ash smudged the side of his face. The right wing appeared to have suffered trauma; it hung limp at his side. His eyes lit upon the naked Tim, drink in hand on the couch.

The beast sulked over to the couch and fell onto the couch next to Tim.

“I leave you alone for ten minutes and this is what you get up to?” he said. There was no anger in his voice. Exhaustion, frustration perhaps.

“What do you mean?” asked Tim. He sipped the whisky. It felt good.

“Tim, you’re completely naked. On my couch. Drinking my best whisky. What the hell is wrong with you?”

Geryon reached out as though to grab the decanter.

Used Gravitrons

He winced at a pain in his wing and sat back. Tim poured a drink into the other glass and handed it over.

“Did you burn the books?” he asked.

“Of course,” said Geryon. “Look at me.”

“Well, then,” said Tim, “I guess it’s time we got to cooking some eggs. Your eggs, I suppose.”

Tim raised his glass and Geryon met his with a clink. Tim was about to tip the glass back when Geryon suddenly stopped him.

“Just one thing, Tim.”

“Yeah?”

“Put some pants on first.”

Tim smiled through the bloody cracks of his teeth and drained the glass.

.....

The next millennium or so was spent in the kitchen to a soundtrack of power ballad work out music that took place entirely in Tim’s head. There were humorous moments and there were tribulations. A lot of eggs landed and broke on Tim’s head. He threw some back at Geryon. They laughed about it. At one point, after all the hard work, Geryon was about to throw in the towel. He raged and threw all the fry pans across the room. Then he broke down into a sobbing fit, curling up against the stove. So Tim came up with an anecdote relating the current egg-cooking situation to something in his own life. He whispered that anecdote into Geryon’s ear so no one else could hear it (even though the music was really loud and we wouldn’t be able to hear it anyway). Geryon nodded. Now he could cook eggs not only successfully, but

deliciously and with love.

Excited by his new-found talent, Geryon hovered over the stove and continued to prepare batch after batch of breakfast eggs. Tim devoured them.

“These might even be better than the way I prepare them,” Tim joked, yelling over the music. He tossed another clean plate into the sink and patted his ripe belly.

Geryon beamed.

They threw arms around one another and, with a hearty laugh, exited the kitchen. The music in Tim’s head began a slow decrescendo that lasted all the way from the kitchen to the patio by the pool where they took up some lounge chairs, still chuckling.

The first sunset of the year loomed over the horizon like the inside of a box of golden raisins. It made Tim feel warm inside, like a cheesy baked potato. When that passed, three more suns set, each successfully brighter and hotter than the last. Tim felt warmer and warmer and his head swelled with pride and foreign sun exposure. He asked if they could go back inside. Geryon said yes.

Tim got some rest. A lot of rest. He hadn’t any idea how long, because, well, he’d just given up on gauging time. Still, he felt awful when he woke to the light tap-tap-tapping at his bedroom door. Rolling out of bed with a magnificent erection, Tim went to answer.

Three young women were standing in the hallway.

“I see you’ve anticipated our arrival,” said the one in the middle.

The girls giggled. Tim closed the door. He went to the

Used Gravitrons

mirror and looked at his aging, shabby face.

“Hey!” came a shout from the hallway. “Our father sent us here, you old mongrel. You better let us in or else!”

Or else what? Tim wondered.

The lines under his eyes were crusty and swollen. The coarse beard would easily have covered his bellybutton. Maybe a fine place for a nest of swallows to play, but not three young girls.

“Tim, you let us in this instant or we’re going direct to daddy!” they said in unison. It was creepy.

Tim didn’t want any trouble. He had just made peace with the monster these girls called ‘father’ so he slapped water on his face and went back to open the door. The girls filed in and sat themselves wherever they pleased about the room. He sat in the window, as far from them as he could get.

“Well,” said Tim. “Since you’re here, I suppose introductions are in order.”

“Oh, yay, fun!” said the one who seemed to do the most talking. Really it was more like squealing. “So, I’m Samira. It means ‘entertaining one’ if you know what I am saying.” She was pretty if you were fourteen and horny for cheerleaders. Short, black hair pulled into matching pigtails bobbed constantly as she spoke. Tim turned to the next one.

“I’m Karin and it means ‘pure,’ ” she said. She was more the bookish type. A plaid sweater-vest was meant to distract from a total lack of breasts. It did little more than remind Tim of a small, Scottish golfer. “I like to sit back and watch,” is how she finished her introduction.

Tim shuddered.

He turned to the last girl. She was large and beautiful. Like a normal person scaled up a few sizes. The kind of size and beauty that can be intimidating. “And you?” he said.

“My name is Addivas and it means... Well, I don’t think it means anything,” she said. “But I will tear your limbs from your body and arrange them into a more pleasing display if we haven’t been satisfied by the end of this day.”

“Well, Addivas, I don’t think...” Tim began. Samira interrupted, sticking a small, familiar object under Tim’s nose.

“I brought theodine!” she said.

“Oh, jeez,” said Tim.

“Hooray!” the other two shouted.

“Look, I don’t want...”

“Me first,” said Addivas. Samira hander her the pipe. She raised it to her lips.

Karin produced a small, brown bottle filled with liquid.

“Now that’s more my speed,” Tim said.

“Here you go.”

Tim lifted the bottle to his mouth and pulled hard as the girls passed the pipe amongst themselves. It wasn’t long before Tim was feeling good again. At one point, Samira tried handing him the theodine pipe.

“Oh, I don’t do that,” he said.

Karin said, “That’s not what James says.”

“Well, James tricked me once. It won’t happen again. I

Used Gravitrons

am feeling great about this whisky though.” The girls giggled. “Where did you get it?”

“It’s not whisky, dork,” said Karin. “That bottle you just nearly drained was one-hundred-percent theodine mash. Strongest stuff we got in this castle. Take a look,” she said pointing at the mirror.

The girls erupted in laughter. Tim’s heart sank. He went over to the mirror again and saw an entirely different person than just moments ago. His face was smooth and free of blemishes. The beard was gone except for a stealthy five o’clock shadow. His hair had coiffed itself into a pompadour. The girls behind him were still laughing and passing the pipe around. Tim peeled his upper lip back to find that swollen, bleeding gums had completely repaired.

Then he started laughing too. The sensation was uncontrollable. He doubled up on the floor under the mirror and laughed until he was crying. His body felt as though it had swelled to the size of the room and lest he catch his breath, his entire existence would explode into the ether.

He breathed. Back to reality. Sort of.

When he opened his eyes, everything was calm again. The girls had stopped laughing. They were all standing over him. Rather than concern, they wore looks of mischievousness.

“What a lightweight,” said Karin.

“I think he’s ready,” said Samira. “Let’s do this thing.”

.....

James was passing through the halls collecting laundry. He paused just outside the door to Tim’s room. From inside

the room he heard a cacophony of sound. Something like pots crashing. A rhythmic, slamming sound was felt through the floorboards. Three women screamed in unison, followed by the low moans and groans of Tim's voice. James put his ear to the door just before something heavy flew across the room and smashed against it, causing his ear to ring. "My god," he thought. "I hope everything going on in there is consensual."

All of a sudden three women's voices broke out into chorus, "Don't do me like that! Don't do me like..."

James burst into the room.

Karin was behind the drum set, banging away. Addivas was playing bass and Samira was just going into a guitar solo. Tim clutched a microphone in both hands as he floated around the room. He was moonwalking down a wall from the ceiling to the floor when the bridge came.

"Cause somewhere deep down inside / Someone is saying, love doesn't last that long / I got this feelin' inside night out and day in / And now I can't take it no more..."

Addivas caught sight of James and took a crash cymbal off the kit. She threw it like a frisbee at his head. He ducked.

The song came to its final chorus. Everybody sang.

"Don't do me like that / Don't do me like that / Girl I love you baby, don't do me like that."

The band let the last chord ring out while Tim drifted to the ground like a feather, swinging back and forth until he rested in the center of the stage.

James stood dumbstruck.

"Can we help you, James?" Tim said into the

Used Gravitrons

microphone.

“I just... came to, uh... what is going on here exactly?”

“It’s band practice, you turd,” said Addivas. “Tim says that some guy named Tom Petty already said what he can’t to our sister Pandora.” She grabbed the splash cymbal off the set and hurled it at James. It crashed just above his head. “Rock and roll!”

“Addivas, I don’t have any cymbals left,” Karin said. Addivas kicked a mic stand over.

“Tim,” said James. “May I have a moment with you please?”

“Alright, alright,” said Tim. “Everybody take five. Addivas? The cymbals, please.”

Tim followed James out into the hallway, and James closed the door behind them. They spoke in forced whispers.

“What do you want James?”

“I know the signs,” he said.

“The signs of what?”

“Theodine, you fool.”

“So? What’s it to you? You force-fed me the stuff back in the forest. Remember?”

“That was different, Tim. We were using it as a tool to get in and out of the cave safely. Without it that day, you surely would have perished up against those bandits.”

“Bandits,” said Tim. “Is that what they were?” The sarcasm in his speech stunk like moldy cheese. Tim started to walk back to the room.

“That stuff is dangerous Tim.” He was no longer whispering. James had his hand on Tim’s shoulder. Tim spun around and punched James in the nose.

“I can take care of myself,” said Tim. “Why don’t you go finish your little laundry run, errand boy? I’ll be fine.”

Tim left James in the hallway and went back to his room. The girls were just finishing breakdown of the equipment.

“That was a great jam,” said Karin. “The others didn’t know how to rock like you, Tim.”

“Yeah,” said Samira. “You’re okay in our book.”

The three girls surrounded Tim for a group hug. It was awesome. As they were filing out, Samira stopped just before the door. She put something in Tim’s hand - a small piece of paper.

“If you ever need more of what was in that,” she said, indicating the empty bottle on the night stand, “just put this in your window. We’ll take care of you.”

Tim watched them amble down the hall. Just before they reached a corner, Addivas turned and hollered.

“Good luck with our sister Pandora!”

They took the corner and disappeared from sight.

Contributor Bios

Lola May Grace, the second fictional byproduct of the memory of Lola Lewis and Robert Nelson, resides in a small house off Rogers Street in Bloomington, IN. She lives there with her triple, one of whom is Nelson Lloyd, one of whom is real, and one other animal who prefers to go unmentioned but whose preferences are apparently being ignored.

Jessica Stapp grooms dogs and makes art. Respectively, hairofthedogchicago.com and jessicastapp.com. She enjoys compliments, dreary weather, working hard, and relaxing hard.

Sarah Klinger is a freelance illustrator living in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. She attributes her unusual sense of humor and obsession with the absurdities of the French language to the bilingual education she received growing up in Berkeley, California. She is currently pursuing her MFA in illustration at School of Visual Arts. sarahklinger.com

Devin Schiff grew up in Rhode Island and lives in Chicago.

A.J. Huffman is a poet and freelance writer in Daytona Beach, Florida. She has previously published six collections of poetry all available on Amazon.com. She has also published her work in numerous national and international literary journals. Most recently, she has accepted the position as editor for four online poetry journals for Kind of a Hurricane Press (www.kindofahurricanepress.com). Find more about A.J. Huffman, including additional information and links to her work at <http://www.facebook.com/amy.huffman.5> and <https://twitter.com/#!/poetess222>.

Afton Carlson, by all outward appearances, seems to be a happy and functional member of society. Inside, he's an absolute wreck, and is only pretending to keep it together in hopes that he might eventually fool himself.

Ajit Singh Dhillon is a second year MFA student at the University of South Carolina. He is also the fiction editor of their literary magazine, Yemassee. Currently, he is working on a novel set against the financial crisis of 2008 in New York.

Jim Meirose's short work has appeared in such literary journals as Witness, Alaska Quarterly Review, and New Orleans Review. Two collections of his stories have been published and his novel "Claire" is available on Amazon.com.

Mike Wiley is an author and active musician residing in Brooklyn.

The Carbon Based Mistake thinks you should buy a scratch-off lottery ticket. The kind that gives you a million dollar a year payout. Then you should hang it in a frame on the wall of your home, unscratched.

-thecarbonbasedmistake.com



Chaise Longue Walrus

[END]



usedgravitrons.com

