

Scribbler

APRIL 2016

ISSUE 87

Editor's Note

In our world, sex is like money. When we don't have it, we can think of little else. When we do, we can put our minds to other things. But no one dies from lack of sex; it's lack of love that kills. And as with money, sex can be inextricably linked with violence. Sexual values change too. Masturbation was once a sin, nowadays it's sex with someone you love. This issue has two mini-essays: one is an "old-school" account of an ancient form of sexual transaction; the other describes a sex-imbued scene as new as the current century. The next issue's theme is **Love** in its many guises: love for one's pets, parents, sex partners, landscape or birthplace; that to which we give our hearts. Send poems or mini-essays (850 words or fewer) to Karnit@LMI.net or to me at 420-45th Street, Oakland, CA 94609. **Deadline: June 15, 2016.**

— Kayla Sussell

God/Love Poem

there are no ways of love but/beautiful/
I love you all of them

I love you / your cock in my hand
stirs like a bird
in my fingers
as you swell and grow hard in my hand
forcing my fingers open
with your rigid strength
you are beautiful / you are beautiful
you are a hundred times beautiful
I stroke you with my loving hands
pink-nailed long fingers

I caress you
I adore you
my finger-tips... my palms...
your cock rises and throbs in my hands
a revelation / as Aphrodite knew it

there was a time when gods were purer
/I can recall nights among the honeysuckle
our juices sweeter than honey
/ we were the temple and the god entire/

I am naked against you
and I put my mouth on you slowly
I have longing to kiss you
and my tongue makes worship on you
you are beautiful

your body moves to me
flesh to flesh
skin sliding over golden skin
as mine to yours
my mouth my tongue my hands
my belly and my legs

against your mouth your love
sliding... sliding...
our bodies move and join
unbearably

your face above me
is the face of all the gods
and beautiful demons
your eyes...

love touches love
the temple and the god
are one

— Lenore Kandel

The Joy of (Semipublic) Sex

You and me, honey, we're
not Eloise and Abelard,
not Antony and Cleopatra,
not Virginia and Vita,
not Gertrude and Alice.
The world will not remember us.
Yet we are exquisite, intricate,
intimate, entangled.
In the mind's eye of God,
we're forever enlaced together
inside a single-occupancy restroom
in a restaurant thoughtful enough
to have two -- one for you and me
to get hot and heavy in, and one
for the poor slob who just
has to go to the bathroom.

— Jan Steckel

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Publisher:

Clive Matson

the Scribbler

c/o Clive Matson

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Oakland, CA 94609

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Lucille Lang Day Ryan Van Lenning Lojo Simon
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PREVIOUS-ISSUE FINANCIAL REPORT

Issue 86: 500 printed, 442 mailed

Expenses: copy and fold, \$258.42

Stamps: \$216.58

Collate, prepare for mailing: donation

Total expenses: \$480.87

Total income (from donors): \$533.75

DONORS

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Subscriptions:

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Submissions and Editorial Policies:

Basic Acceptance Policy: If the current editor likes a piece, it gets published; if not, it is passed on to the next editor who will either use it, or return it to the author. All rights are reserved. Send submissions to: scribbler@matsonpoet.com (BUT any emailing instructions at top of page 1 rule!)

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SCHEDULE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

POETRY SALOON (drunk on poetry!)

Meets at 472 44th Street, Oakland, the second Friday of the month. Potluck at 6pm, reading at 7:30pm. Bring poems or prose by you and others to share, or come just to enjoy. Hosted by Kayla Sussell.
April 8, May 13, June 10

CRAZY CHILD WRITING WORKSHOPS (fee: \$80)

Saturdays, 10am - 5pm, once a month.

April 9 in Montclair

May 14 in Martinez

June 11 in Oakland

July 9 in San Anselmo

10-WEEK WORKSHOP poetry, prose, plays, nonfiction (fee: \$400), Wednesdays, 7pm - 10pm, Temescal District, Oakland. Current sessions end April 6; next sessions start April 13.

NOVEL AND CREATIVE NONFICTION WORKSHOPS (fee: \$400 for ten sessions)

One ongoing, intensive workshop meets for three hours every other Monday in Marin. Writers bring ten pages to each session. Limited to five writers.

STRUCTURE OF LARGE WORK

(fee: \$400 for ten sessions)

For writers with a draft of a full-length play, script, or novel, or who want to start a large work. Our topics are standard repertory, starting with "Whose story is it?" Current sessions end April 8; next sessions start April 15.

THE NOVEL'S ARC (fee: \$500 for five sessions)

In this workshop four novelists commit to reading each other's novels and examining how each works as a whole. We'll devote a two-hour session to each novel. Next sessions to be arranged by June.

WRITING EXCURSIONS: SEE PAGE 8

For more information about any workshop, visit matsonpoet.com or phone 510-654-6495. To register, phone 510-654-6495 or email clive@matsonpoet.com (unless otherwise noted).



A Contrary Opinion

The sweet meat of the cock
trusting the dark shark
of the mouth. The innocence
of it—how it can't fake
its childlike greed. The tongue
travels its ribs and ridges
touching the curly damp below. A feast
of texture—the cock an obliging guest
at the feast.

And the taste of it!

The fishy flesh warm
against the tongue and then
the spurt, a savory custard—puree
of celery and clams.
Pure protein.

And how shyly the cock retreats,
nesting back into its lair, moist
with gratitude. Yes,
without meaning in any way
to objectify the male
and assuming
reciprocity, variety, and tenderness
I have to say, for some of us
it's not a chore.

— Meryl Natchez

Permission

When you touch me I forget everything except
the hungry flesh upon the kitchen table
groaning for slices of the human pie
still bubbling the tender blood of youth.
And you I say may touch me as you like:
if you should choose to smooth me on the floor,
I will be ghee; if you should flail yourself
upon me in a rage of glee, I rend
myself a target of embrace; should you wish
to touch me from within, I am your skin;
should you twist me in a net of limbs, I twine
our bodies in an indistinguishable braid;
should you trace your tongue along my every vein,
I pound my open heart into your mouth;
should you pierce me with a canine grin,
I spurt hot dog's blood in the shaking night;
or should you merely graze me with your eyes,
I vaporize into a million nerves.

— Richard Loranger

Maybe

The other side of the hotel holds hospital offices
Maybe 200 feet of air between the wings
My double windows looking into theirs
And me with an hour to spare before dinner
A cigar sized vibrator in my carry-on

I lie back on a propped-up pillow
Naked from the waist down
Insert the battery into its plastic place
Earlier removed so it didn't frighten
airline passengers in these post 9/11 times
Or get me arrested in case carrying
a loaded vibrator that jiggles itself alive
is akin to saying *bomb* on a flight

The buzz like a large sexy bee
It's been a while without
and I feel my pulse quicken
Know it's going to be good
but even better if I get up
Walk over to my snack bag
and grab a banana
Smear it with coconut oil I carry
in my purse to improve any travel meal

Better yet I open the curtains
Keep my eyes on the offices
Knowing no one is probably there
on a Saturday afternoon
But *maybe* is what takes me sky high
as pollen scents plastic
And I ripen the banana
in the fastest way
known to a woman

— Bambi Barker

Tonka

For sure-fire birth control,
read a book-length sex poem.
Then for twelve hours,
listen to women scream
in the labor room.

— Dan Gellepes



Sex. Death. And All That Jazz

In one night love was tender it gripped
Time was suspended
And the love was the love of the contented.
Soon after, the firing squad arrived.
Gunned down innocent soldiers.
My heart stopped, it ached, crying out
For the men and all their mothers.

Sex and death are closest relatives; one lives upstairs,
One lives down. The furniture is the same but different –
Sex prefers overstuffed chairs in shades of red,
Death digs on black, clean lines, a wooden bed.

Sex and death share walls, and floors and
Sometimes when you're held by love
You can hear death taking the stairs, one by one by one.
It's a fragile co-existence, this. Sex. Death.
And all that jazz.

Sex and death, and all that jazz – it's anything but mellow.
It's about the shake up, the shake down, the shaky boots and more
It's about the flip-flop stomach, the flight of bees.
The shock of the right fellow, the weak knees.

Le petit mort. Or something like that. We tell ourselves
It's our friend. We never stop to realize that like a good story,
The beginning is in the end.

– Joan Gelfland

Writings to a Transvestite Prostitute (Night #9 - Last)

She's dressed in a short – what looks like leather – mini skirt, a few straps of fabric dangling down, like seaweed tendrils. She wears strappy heels, a black low-cut shirt, carries a matching purse looped around her thin wrist. We call that "tenderloin swank."

With the SF Party Store as backdrop, Cop Number One questions her. To every question she responds with a defiant shrug, as if to say, "I don't know what you're talking about. I wear this skirt every day." Her wispy hair glows green in the halo of neon shamrocks – an eerie ode to Saint Patrick.

Cop Number Two gets out of the vehicle and stands on the other side of her. Her broad shoulders are thicker than those of the taller of the two cops; yet, she appears surprisingly delicate.

All this happening outside the blur of the Party Store.

For a moment, she looks up toward my apartment, and I swear she shakes her head at me. I think she knows I'm watching. She raises her hands, palms upward, as if to say, "What'd I do?" She's still looking in my direction.

I turn down the lights, just so I am less visible in the dark. I'm hoping she can't see me watching her; that I'm not able to be seen, typing and talking on the phone, and gawking, watching her life as Spectacle.

I take another sip of wine.

I don't move. I continue typing, talking, watching, in this sick perversion. Who am I to see her tragedy as entertainment? I tell myself I'll end this project on a light note – more humor! I keep telling myself funnier is better! but she keeps looking up at me.

I know she sees me; sees the glare of my computer screen. Her gaze pierces through my window even as she's asked to turn around, put her arms against the wall, spread her legs. I begin to mourn the end of Candy when – suddenly –

"Oh wow, they're letting her go."

(continued, top of page 5)

Welcome the Reaper

Blood winds slowly
down her neck,
Pooling slightly
on her breast
Then on to join the rest
on the floor,

Blood which should
be nourishing
an unborn child
Or pounding with excitement
at a mountain sunrise.

Still they used
her body,
Again, and again,
not content,
Their destruction
not yet complete.

Sleep, my child.
They can't hurt you
anymore.

–Frederick Hudgin

She turns around. There is some gesticulating, the cops are indicating to where she can walk, telling her she can't turn left deeper into the Tenderloin, but has to turn right, up Larkin. She nods in understanding. The cops return to their vehicle, pull away, and Candy takes one last long sip of my presence with her eyes as she walks and walks and walks down Post, further down the block, her hips still swinging...

— Shannon Gray DeJong

Song One

Did the gods drop you from
a great distance
 into my arms?
Are you a creature from another universe?

I was watching the ocean
and how indigo sky drools
lavender toward the horizon.

This world is a beautiful place.

Traffic hums along the road,
sunlight flickers across your forehead
and those uneven cheeks look like pages
turning, buffeted
 by light and color.

Does turmoil erode your eyelids
from inside?
 Corrode your pulsing neck?
Are you from another world
and wish to enter this one?

I hold your weight and all your long
knobby shape in the warm sand.
Wrap my arms around you
 like petals
of a tulip around their stamen.

You're calm, Your eyes open
and they're dimensionless windows
all opaque pupil and
 what
are these longate shapes
slithering around their rims?

Are these demons' limbs?
Are they beasts of Paradise?
Are they wormhole views to another planet?

Are you looking out and I'm looking in?
Are you looking in and I'm looking out?
Oh close those eyes! Go back

inside, block off those slowly
spinning orbs. Shut the windows
and draw the shades.
Let me lose myself in
 trucks downshifting.
Lose myself in the sun settling
over a lazy beach, in orange-yellow rays
glancing off aquamarine grass and angling
toward your
 drowsy face.

I'm not ready for big changes.
Not ready to jump off
 cliffs.
 Even if
the signs say "Happiness."
"Joy this way."

Why do I ache
 if this is so fine?
Why do I feel an eye opening in my chest?

Did the gods drop you in my arms?

Your face looks ordinary,
jaw and concave cheeks
of a fragile and hot-eyed child.

— Clive Matson (from *Chalcedony's*
First Ten Songs, 2009)

☺☺

Crossroads

We are on the bed together, naked, when she puts her face between my legs, sticks it close to my perineum, looks up at me, and says, "It's a crossroads down here, an ancient trade route traveled by thieves, vagabonds, gypsies, murderers." She takes a healthy sniff . . . says, "I like it."

— Benjamin Finateri

Neighborhood Co-operative

(After Rimbaud)

I watch him each Sunday watching her.
He stands behind a window jerking off.
I can't see what she's doing or if she knows—
but in the kitchen below his window

his busy wife is cooking breakfast for the kids.
What would *Wife* say if she saw what I see
each Sabbath day? She moves about
with eggs and vitamins and juice,

while he, in rapture, peers urgently
toward our mutual neighbor's slanted roof.
I've placed my bed in the shadow of an eave
where I can lie in warmth and, unobserved,

observe the progress of his ecstasy.
When he peaks, I flip the switch to high,
hold back a moan, and die my own
small death the moment when he comes.

— Yvonne Postelle



Ditty: *SCRIPTIO CONTINUA*

TWO MEN WRITTEN LIKE THAT IS JUST TWO MEN.
BUT JAM THE WORDS TOGETHER AS I HAVE BEEN
DOING — TWOMEN — AND THE WORD "WOMEN"
APPEARS. THIS IS HOW TO MAKE TWO MEN INTO
WOMEN.

— Jack Foley

Looking Back

What does it matter
if I wore my skirt short,
my hair stacked high,
my eyeliner black and thick,

if my long earrings jangled
when I ran
and I wore a padded bra
under my gold lamé blouse
or no bra at all
under a sheer one?

When I danced naked in my apartment
or stripped on a mountain
and made love amid ferns and conifers,
I was like all
the other animals.

And I say
the body is a golden chalice
filled with guts
and menstrual blood.
Every living cell is holy,
radiant as a stained-glass window
with sunlight streaming through.

So what does it matter
how many men wanted me?
What does it matter
if I had my way?

— Lucille Lang Day

Two Poems

To the Madrone:

you wear no garments
standing naked on the hill
exposed to the wind.

how can I resist
touching your sexy smooth skin,
Madam Madroña?

Redwood Romance:

If you would let me
I'd breathe you in all day long
and caress you all night

— Ryan Van Lenning

Camera Obscura

Songs have been written about us, brackish dirges
squeezed out on accordion, wailing in, wailing out.

My lids press open at three a.m. Your palm warms the
small of my back, an apologetic gesture.

I long to hear the raspy in and out of your dream-filled
breathing, but you, too, are awake. I roll over.

We kiss, a tongue-tied embrace. Your rough beard
scratches my cheek, its gray bristles coarser now

than when you first pried me open with your clean-
shaven chin like a fisherman halving a clam.

I weigh the clock's tick, but time's no rival to the press,
my thirst for you who tastes of the sea. We tumble
over one another, rocks, shells, stones worn smooth by
years of moon-drawn surf, fitted together. A tangle

of seaweed veils your face, catches in your beard. We
heave and tug, grab for air but do not drown.

Then you're gone, sucked away by the undertow lashed
onto the terra firma before the cusp of dawn.

I huddle low, bathed in our moist briny afterness, listen
to your motor growl and gravel and fade away.

—Lojo Simon

The Whore in Istanbul, 1980

I found a cab driver who drove me up a hill through a roadblock and I entered the house as if into a magic theatre. From a loudspeaker came the five o'clock muezzin chant with its *la ilah ila 'llah* call to prayer. Then there they were, like the backstage of the theatre of life where the actors were suddenly real, and their nakedness like costumes for fantasies of lust and longing.

And I came to a room where the women stroked their breasts and pudenda as if to appear lascivious but were instead grotesque and pathetic. I looked away in shame as if they were freaks selling their deformities. But standing near a stairway was one who appeared sullen and indifferent as though she didn't want to be chosen, and pointing to her I nodded to the old madam.

"Many dollars," said the madam in English, but she let me through after I gave her eleven American dollars and two English pounds. I followed the girl up the stairs and stared at the crack of her buttocks through her see-through negligee.

She was young enough to be my daughter with delicately freckled skin and reddish hair like what my mother remembered of my grandmother who disappeared on the death march. Who knows, she might have been the granddaughter of my mother's brother who might have survived after he too disappeared on the march.

How could I be so shameless, as if incest was part of my lust? In the room, she rubbed two fingers with her thumb to indicate extra money for herself and not the madam. I opened my wallet to show her I had none left, though I had some lira in my pocket. She was still sullen, and when she saw I had no erection she frowned as if to say she wouldn't do anything to raise it.

Her beauty aroused me and my penis was full and large, but I was too tense for it to stiffen, and lying on the bed she pointed to her wrist as if she wore a watch saying she wasn't going to wait any longer.

But her labia were surprisingly wet enough for her to slip my penis inside her, as if a part of her knew how grateful I was, and in place of her sullenness there was a curious look in her eyes. And as my penis stiffened, I was able to thrust it deeper and hold her tenderly and I slowed the rhythm of my thrusting to hold her as long as I could and not come too soon or she would be gone.

But she started humming a tune as if asking herself who was this old geezer inside her?

Then pausing with our lower halves joined, I straightened my arms to rise above her and gaze at how lovely she was: my wife, my daughter, my sister, my life and all we had lost in a history of massacre and rape.

She too would never know the joy of family and home, the prostitute and the artist now commingling like the double snakes of the wand of healing while we offered our souls for a bite of life, her arm raised on the pillow with her hand in her hair and little purple marks by her vein like a tattoo from Auschwitz or Bedouin slavery.

Come deeper, said her warmth and softness, come all the way. No, said my love for her, I didn't want to come or I would lose her. I wanted to stay inside her warmth and never leave as if my love could change her hell into an Eden where she would never be sullen again. Was it not possible, was there no happiness for her someday?

I couldn't hold back any longer, and I closed my eyes as the light rushed from my loins to my head, and I lay limp and spent on her belly and breasts until she slipped away and was gone.

I dressed slowly, and when I left the room she was sitting at a little table by the stairs eating ravenously from a plate of shish kebab and pilaf as if after not eating all day, she was now being fed for her performance.

Back in the cobbled streets I gave a beggar the lira from my pocket that I should have given to her, as if he were her consort, the glow of her flesh staying inside me all the way to the Bosphorus.

Bobbing by the docks of the Golden Horn, the orange red green and blue of the small boats swayed in the current as though alive, the cityscape soft and pleasantly noisy in the glow of the magic hour before sundown, the vulva dome and phallic minarets of Saint Sophia like ripeness and slaughter in the Byzantium of my calm.

—Pete Najarian

WRITING EXCURSIONS

LAKE COUNTY WORKSHOP

"LET THE CRAZY CHILD WRITE!"

Saturday, April 23, 4 to 6 pm, and

Sunday, April 24, 10 am to 5 pm

Lake County Arts Council Gallery

235 Main Street, Lakeport, CA 95453

Fee \$55. Phone 707-263-6658 to register,

510-654-6495 for details on the workshop.

HIGHWAY 395

August 7-14 at Pine Cliff Resort

June Lake, Lee Vining, California

Fee \$700

(\$50 discount to the first three people who register)

For information **and to register**, check out Clive's "Excursions" webpage under the Instruction tab at: <http://matsonpoet.com>.

SCRIBBLER FINANCIAL REPORT

Total expenses: \$480.87 Total income from donors: \$533.75

THANK YOU. Your generosity helps to keep
The Crazy Child Scribbler (and Clive) going.

THE SCRIBBLER

Clive Matson

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