

E P I G

R

A

P

H

EPIGRAPH

MAGAZINE

Issue Seven / August 2014

epigraphmagazine.com

IN THIS ISSUE

Cassandra de Alba

the future is a house I will haunt and I will do it well / **5**
disaster movies / **6**
in which we invent an island for the miserable / **7**
preen / **8**

Jenni B. Baker

Bomb / **9**
Palatial / **10**

Anna Ryan-Punch

Evicted / **11**

Howie Good

Decay of the Aura / **12**

Nic Alea

Red / **13**
Appearance of Spirit No. 1 / **14**

Mason Shreve

Tame & Barely Human / **15**
Hanging In The Sky / **16**

Jeremy Radin

from DEAR SAL / 17

from DEAR SAL / 18

Grace Montgomery

California Cliffs / 19

Garrett Biggs

Swallow / 20

Principle / 21

Tasha Graff

Side Street, Barcelona / 22

Changming Yuan

Seascape / 23

Shawn Berman

I'm Really Excited to Have an Orgy on my Porch this Summer / 24

I was Sexually Attracted to the Lunch Lady when I was a Kid
and I Turned Out Kinda Normal / 26

CONTRIBUTOR BIOS / 28-29

the future is a house I will haunt and I will do it well

Cassandra de Alba

already I have prepared
the costumes, altered
my sleep habits, learned
a moan that communicates
not sex, but terror. I am waiting,
now, to become fearsome,
until my presence is a claw scraped
down the back of your neck,
an invisible knife in your gut.
already I can feel the change
taking place. already I can feel
you, how afraid you are, how small.

disaster movies

Cassandra de Alba

nature is the best thing
to be afraid of
because nature will win –
a clean lack of hope,
as if hope were an organ
scooped from the body
in a single cut.
your job becomes pure
survival, not to brandish
a gun or negotiate
or accept responsibility.
a fight already lost
is the only kind i want to start.

in which we invent an island for the miserable

Cassandra de Alba

either our loneliness lives in us
like a skeleton under flesh

or we are broken bones sticking
through the skin of our sadness.

we are reluctant to be stitched up.

none of us are doctors.

preen

Cassandra de Alba

There is a peacock trying to burst
out of my chest, flash its feathers
and scream.

There is the hollow it will leave behind.

There is part of me wanting
to jump off a cliff and another
wanting to stand at the top
and sneer.

Bomb

Jenni B. Baker

A beer, a buzz, a bearded boy.
Brain-breaks beyond bedtime
bring behavior bleak and bent.

Blunt, a body barely becoming
bears black business, betrays
the bump, the better brother.

Palatial

Jenni B. Baker

Apt at bit bullet, le beau leap,
I rehabilitate a habitable hull:

alphabetize habitual babble
pull pale teeth taut, blitz blah

put up a tableau, lithe hip atilt
tap pliable-lip hue: a palette

label platelets' telltale zip
puzzle the pit-pat, lathe pep

tie patellae at pulpit lap
hail appetite: a bee-buzz, hap.

Evicted

Anna Ryan-Punch

I want to live in an eyeless house
Roofless room with the lens smashed out.
Caught between a fuck and a hard place
Where bricks break into dust, yellow and ancient.

Shatter us with a broken bottle.
Where's the fun in a crèche of ideas?
Pop open the puppet, I want to see his teeth,
chew me up a beast to play with.

Guard it cold and fat like a dog with a sausage.
Flick back and forth; a dead mouse
No pink space left to bruise blue
Canvas tattooed in flying limbs.

Decay of the Aura

Howie Good

It isn't just the fanged lions,
but they aren't helping.

I mean, something happens,
something I don't actually see,
the light not very good here,

even with berries & flowers
as large as animals on exhibit
& public lectures about how
to be productive while depressed.

We should have fucked
when we had the chance.

Red

Nic Alea

I woke up with blood all over the bed mine late morning the chickens were nervous in the yard my smoked throat thought something of the way bird's bodies easily open for the hands of humans the liver and lungs quietly shutting down extracted power the stretch of central California with its dust bowl slaughter houses the stench of rotted bodies shattered porcelain horses the words that haunt a child for years fresh graves pop up on the lawn I press my hands into the mulch grandmother's rosary splintering with moss late night in your bed I grab onto your thigh after the documentary on witchcraft turns to static the morning roses look like blood from highway car accidents I touch the spilled gasoline on the road no matches no cigarettes my lungs quietly shutting down I dive into the empty hotel pool drained five weeks ago I assume from the layer of dead leaves I hit my head it opens and everything I've ever trusted about human softness comes spilling out the remnants of chlorine my four year old memory scratches the pool plaster with eight nails trying to pull out white paint or insect legs fossilized my hair long enough to get stuck in the filter I hit the bottom and the blood comes out in clots and streams delicacy of red

Appearance of Spirit No. 1

Nic Alea

Portrait of the artist: An old woman is holding me, fat rolls sunny side up swaddled and quiet, the neighbor stands on a ledge outside to peer into my window, sees the old woman holding a baby, the baby is red with a rash and the old woman is see through, like ghosts usually are.

Tame & Barely Human

Mason Shreve

There is a miniature wolf walking through a miniature forest & it holds the twin impacts of avalanche & loss & the wolf is walking backward in the snow & there are leaves in my throat & there are leaves in my throat & maybe the days are just trees after all.

Hanging in the Sky

Mason Shreve

I put fire behind my eyes & stare into the sun.
I am waiting on a text from you. I am waiting
on the moon. Everything is moving faster &
faster & faster & faster. Everything is moving
too fast. Everything is moving too slow. What
I mean is witches. What I mean is panic
attacks. What I mean is people are just birds
who made too many poor decisions before
they died.

from DEAR SAL

Jeremy Radin

To tell the truth, Sal, I've been thinking of elephants with antlers where their tusks should be. Would you join me in the imagining of this? You are standing in a field & there is an elephant with antlers where his tusks should be. He opens his mouth & his tongue unfurls & takes the shape of a staircase. I come out of the elephant's mouth, between the antlers where his tusks should be, & walk down the staircase of his tongue & I have so many flowers for you. I am a suit with flowers in it, flowers foaming from sleeves, between buttons, my head is a bouquet of purple-colored flowers. The elephant closes his mouth & I touch his antlers in a soft, specific way & the elephant bows & falls apart like smoke into a star-drenched nighttime sky. & somehow violins. & if you look, Sal, at the trees, you will see they are playing violins. I am spreading my flower arms, throwing my flower head back & flowers are flying out of every part of the suit until finally it is only me. My hands, my face, my clumsy, clumsy gladness. & at this point I would ask you to look at the galaxy of colored flowers suspended in the air around us & glowing like little chandeliers in the antlered elephant night & at this point I would ask you to dance with me.

from DEAR SAL

Jeremy Radin

Bad news first, Sal: the pigeons
have not yet made me their king
even though I speak the language
& adhere to every custom. Also,
the bread I tried to bake? Full,
again, of roses. Packed tight
inside like fugitives from God
knows where. & for the eleventh
night in a row, I dreamt of snakes
with the legs of spiders. The pigeons
assure me that this is only provisional
but what does that matter? I wake
& the bedsheets are on the floor
across the room, the pillow spins
in the ceiling fan's arms. & too,
I heard the kitchen knives
whispering my Hebrew
name. It sounded like flipping
through the pages of a book
soaked in blood. If I were to
answer them? Well, Sal, now
we have come to the good news.

California Cliffs

Grace Montgomery

Attention-seeking eyes hidden behind a frame too dark for you. You're quiet this morning, and you seem very cold, but you don't say anything. You wear stockings ripped up and down, pulled up above your knees. There's a good 10 inches of skin between your socks and your shorts, exposed to the sunrise. Four empty bottles lay broken in the backseat, but you haven't been drinking. Your feet are kicked up on the dashboard, legs crossed over each other. We're in your dad's convertible, and the top's down because you wanted to see the stars. But it's morning now. I can hear the waves lapping the rocks a million miles below. You don't move. You remain constant – staring straight ahead, sunglasses on, the flowers gradually falling out of your hair. There's a drop-off coming up fast. The road veers to a sharp left, away from the edge. I start to slow down, but you shake your head, "Go." I look over. You haven't moved. You're beautiful. You're perfection. I'm always going to love you. I floor the gas and we go hurtling over the edge.

Swallow

Garrett Biggs

I had a dream last night about all the different ways you used to hug me. How sometimes you would lift your leg a little and wrap it around mine, how perfectly our thin chests would fit together like a jigsaw puzzle, heart-to-heart, rib-to-rib. This time we were in a dressing room, and at some point the roof disappeared and we rose into thin space.

This thin space became an aircraft. The aircraft became a whale. And as that whale began slowly disintegrating our bodies, you held onto me the whole time.

Principle

Garrett Biggs

I have been reconsidering theories of light and matter,
and now I lie supine, the room spinning around me.

For a moment, I forget I have hands, even though they buzz.
I worry I am floating above my body.

An unborn child once told me, "a worry becomes a truth".
He got hit by light and then a car, very shortly after.

Oh how I am weak now. Oh how I am prone.
I let what is left of gravity pull me toward my body.

The stone cold body I should have cared about all along.
My kiss is black, my words all too silent.

Side Street, Barcelona

Tasha Graff

The pigeon that lives
above my bedroom window

coos at 3 a.m.

like he's drunk off vermouth
and ready for a one-night stand.

He shits everywhere.

In another poem,
the vibrations from his throat

could be a song.

In another poem,
the iridescent glint of his neck

would be beautiful.

In another poem, his red eyes,
round as pebbles,

remind me of the sea.

Seascape

Changming Yuan

So heavy has the night grown
The horizon sags deep, deeper
Into the heart of the ocean, where

A new sun is slowly reacting, rising
As if to push up the entire world back
High above the morning

I'm Really Excited to Have an Orgy on My Porch this Summer

Shawn Berman

The urge to take a nap right after I wake up in the morning will always be more beautiful than

the cracking sound in your chest during the hot summer months. And it's nothing to worry about because like I told you, 'the cracking sound in your chest is normal and it's just your insides having a party that you weren't invited to.'

But I got you a card for your unidentifiable seasonal depression so I hope you feel better.

Just remember: I am interested in all of the things that you are interested in so that automatically makes me a way better person than you'll ever be.

I want to attach a rhino horn in the middle of your forehead and operate it with a manual handle. That way when you look in the mirror, you will never know what you truly look like and you will say something like, 'why are you doing this to me? Is it because I take up three parking spots when I park my car? I swear I don't mean to park like a jackass. I can change.'

I want to touch your body all over in the most nonsexual way possible and make people jealous.

I want to cut out a vein from my neck and stretch it out as far as it can go and make like a lasso out of it,

and when I finally wrap you up in it I will say, 'now that I got you here, I want to pay you all the money that I have in my pocket for you to tell me for the rest of my life that no matter what I do, I will never be able to turn you on.'

You can be anything that you want to be except for anything you want to be.

I saw an old lady slip and fall in the middle of the street and when I went to go save her from a bus that was about to hit her, she slapped me in the face with her purse and said, 'if you save me, I am going to shrink you and place you into a toy machine in the middle of the mall. I will put the four stupid quarters into the machine and let the timer run out on purpose.'

I guess what I'm trying to say is that the best way to do something is by not doing it,

or that the best way to do something is to not do it and masturbate.

I was Sexually Attracted to the Lunch Lady when I was a Kid and I Turned Out Kinda Normal

Shawn Berman

The only good place to put my fingers is in my ears so when you try to talk to me I won't be able to hear a word you're trying to say.

As if anything you say is ever important.

Things like, 'let's play connect the dots with our unintentional cigarette arm burns,' or, 'everyone was right about you. All you are is a worthless piece of flesh that changes color when you die.'

And you will say, 'are you even listening to me?'

And I will say, 'I'm sorry, can you repeat what you just said because I had my fingers in my ears again while I was humming really loud so I couldn't really hear you. But I swear I'm a pretty good listener when you're not talking.'

Am content with pulling the strings on my hoodie until I can't breathe anymore.

If you make nothing but shitty first impressions with people then they will never ask you things like, 'hey, I'm putting on this play down at the local theater and I was wondering if you wanted to be a cutout tree with no mouth hole in it.'

But it's pretty hard not to get excited when I invite you over for a nice big bowl of ice cream and you tell me that you're 'lactose intolerant' because I knew that you were all along and now I just get to have a nice big bowl of ice cream for myself

I thought about you not thinking about me again and I got really hard like, that time we went to the grocery store and ran around stealing everyone's shopping list.

Do you remember that?

You might not because this morning when you were going to get breakfast for us this really fat lady wearing a cowboy hat lost control of her wheelchair and ran you over.

And I tried to save you but yea,

I had my finger in my ears and I didn't see her coming.

CONTRIBUTORS

CASSANDRA DE ALBA's work can be found in *ILK*, *Red Lightbulbs*, *Illuminati Girl Gang*, and *NAP*, among others. Her most recent chapbooks are called *Bloodlust (No Spaceships Allowed)* and *Special Bitch Academy*. She lives in Massachusetts and blogs at outsidewarmafghans.tumblr.com

JENNI B. BAKER is the founder and editor-in-chief of *The Found Poetry Review*. Her own poems -- both found and not -- have been published in more than two dozen journals. In her current project, *Erasing Infinite* (erasinginfinite.com), she creates found poetry from David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, one page at a time.

ANNA RYAN-PUNCH is a Melbourne poet and critic. Her published poetry includes work in *Southerly*, *Overland*, *Antipodes*, *The Age*, *Quadrant*, *Westerly*, and *Island*. She also blogs at annaryanpunch.blogspot.com and tweets as [@ARPy_](https://twitter.com/ARPy_)

HOWIE GOOD's latest book of poetry is *The Complete Absence of Twilight* (2014) from *MadHat Press*. He has several poetry books forthcoming, including *Fugitive Pieces* (*Right Hand Press*), *Buddha & Co* (*Plain Wrap Press*), and *Darker Than Blue* (*Flutter Press*).

NIC ALEA is a Bay Area based writer with work published or forthcoming in *Word Riot*, *Tandem*, *Rattle*, and *Muzzle Magazine*. Nic is a Lambda Literary Fellow, a semi finalist in Button Poetry's chapbook competition for *Sad Boy Slumber Party*, and was voted by SF Weekly as one of San Francisco's "Best Writers Without a Book".

MASON SHREVE lives in rural Indiana. He is chasing after a master's degree in Library and Information Sciences from Kent State University. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *theNewerYork*, *Word Riot*, *Ghost House Review*, and *CACTI*, among others. He almost always has a beard.

JEREMY RADIN writes poems in lieu of not having been raised by wolves. He lives in Los Angeles where he wishes it would rain. Follow him on Twitter and tumblr at [bigradinmonster](#)

GRACE MONTGOMERY is a high school student cursed with a passion for the arts, including writing, theater, and music. She hopes to one day pursue a career in one of these areas and continue publishing her work. Grace writes short stories, poetry, micro and flash fiction. Her longer works-in-progress include a screenplay and a poetic novel.

GARRETT BIGGS lives in Denver, Colorado where he is an undergraduate at the University of Denver. He has most recently been published in *The Molotov Cocktail*.

TASHA GRAFF's chapbook *Similarities* is available through *Finishing Line Press*. She writes in, around, and between Barcelona, Spain and Portland, Maine. You can find an audio archive of some of her work here: fishhousepoems.org/?artist=graff-tasha

CHANGMING YUAN, 8-time Pushcart nominee and author of *Chansons of a Chinaman* (2009) and *Landscaping* (2013), grew up in rural China and currently tutors in Vancouver, where he co-edits *Poetry Pacific* with Allen Qing Yuan. With a PhD in English, Yuan has poetry appearing in more than 800 literary publications across 28 countries, including *Asia Literary Review*, *Best Canadian Poetry*, *London Magazine*, *BestNewPoemsOnline*, and *Threepenny Review*.

SHAWN BERMAN is an abandoned building in New York that is mostly used for underground drug-trafficking. Some of his work has been featured in *Voicemail Poems*, *Electric Cereal*, and *The Squawk Back*. Follow him on twitter [@ramonbermanez](#)

Epigraph is now reading
for Issue Eight.
Send us your poems.

Epigraph Magazine
Issue Seven / August 2014
edited by Nicholas Bon

© 2014
All poems in this issue
belong to their creators

epigraphmagazine.com