

Neon Geyser, Porcelain Sky

a poetry journal
Volume 3, Issue 1

THE SAINTED CLEAVGE OF ANNA NICOLE SMITH

At first I found all the lawyers
fighting over a dead body disgusting,
and the many would-be fathers
claiming that 5 month old blank check funny.
But gradually I noticed the tv
showed a small picture of the courtroom
but a large picture of Anna Nicole, largely endowed
sprawled on a pink bedspread.
and while the announcer talked only about the case
I heard the thundering charge of cleavage
coming over the hills to save the city
like the cavalry in old westerns
when the day was always saved
and things always came out right.

America's going back to its roots,
Its dyed blonde roots.
Trust the tacky, it will save us from the terror.
Those boobs are the pillow of the American Dream
that never meant to hurt anyone.
Bring our troops home
and let them climb those soft moist mountains.
Put her in a voting booth
and let voters push her buttons till she moans.
We can stop money being corrupt;
We can make money vulgar.
Print 1000 dollar bills with pop-up pictures of those boobs.
We can put her cleavage on the flag
till lonely soldiers salute in their pants.

Anna Nicole is the perfect dream
of every boy jerking off in bed
whose never had a girl.
She is the squirming innocence of America
that believes Santa Clause will bring these boobs for Christmas.
There are secret meetings in the Vatican
on conferring sainthood to the cleavage of Anna Nicole Smith.
There've been so many miracles.
Those boobs went down in the trenches
And fought fire with fire;
everyone forgot the madness of greed, ambition,
or conquering the world like pile of broken toys
and remembered singing madness of flesh.

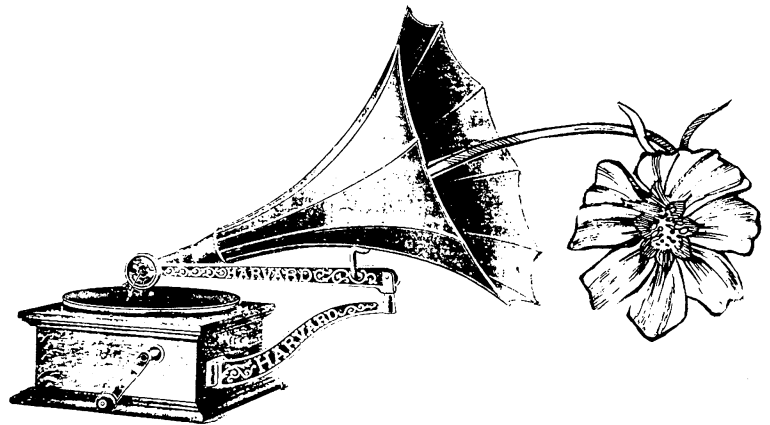
At the Writer's Workshop Banquet.

Can champagne really do justice to tender
mercies we accord each other as we sit
befuddled over line breaks, end-stops, a
metaphor, our flutes raised {inward} in a toast
to sweat dripping like falling commas onto
pages stained with joy, remorse, or sly grins?

Nevertheless, hold high your stems, remember how
a pile of shoes, a pewter dish, trout lines,
blue mules, non compis mentis, Morrison at
Chateau Marmont came to haunt our random hours.
How we set aside latte or cigar to
hold a pen which seemed to take on a life of its own.

As we dine here carving neat slices through game-
cock let us remember what it was to broil,
to spatter, as when the fat of a burnished
hen, hours on the spit, falls to flame.

--Ken Wanamaker



That cleavage inspires thoughts so dirty
you can plant apple trees in them
and feed the starving children.
Tired men who want to wash the newspapers out with soap
go to her naked truth to get clean
and dirty.
Only her cleavage is considered for sainthood,
not the woman.
But those boobs brought back
the glory of God's handiwork
more than a dozen cathedrals.
Now that she's dead,
yearning America watches those boobs
breathe forever and tremble,
pink just about to spill out of pink.
We are a loving country, this is what we love.
This is what loves us.

--Julia Vinograd



broken shadows of yesterday
screaming out their agonies
into the propeller's moan
vases shatter
splinters stab my eyes
run run run
into the oncoming flood of tears
sirens announce the letting of blood
quick shots of molten asphalt
burn through your throat
my gentleness
like the pawing of a bear
a promise
a lie
a curse
a sigh
one
two
three
four
ejaculated without concern
left to rot on the floor
and the vampire won't leave my
window ledge

stomping flowers because
they shine too smugly
letting the wind toss
sand in your eyes
because its pure
and almost made of glass
juggling scissors
with eyes closed
and tongue hanging out
just to taste the steel
in a rhythm of surprise

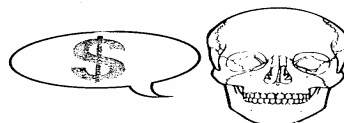
my darling
my darling
what have we become

--Marcus Crowe

Spot Removal

When they are my age, my parents
have been separated for three years.
My mother line-dancing at Leisure Village
in Lakewood, New Jersey;
my father contemplating plate techtonics
at Montifiore Cemetery,
Queens, New York.
A fan of custom-made
suits and avant-garde films,
he knew the things real men know—
how to invest in the market, how to buy tires
and what kind of jewelry women like.
He was still working when he died,
signing contracts from his hospital bed,
so he missed the white-socks-driving-too-slow-
TV-too-loud part of his life, or worst of all,
deterioration into a man born in Brooklyn
who voted Republican. (Better to be
a Yankee fan.)
My mother remains her insouciant self,
fey, charming, with an easy, clear laugh,
a penchant for Norman Mailer and
an encyclopedic knowledge of spot-removal.
A woman who can take a joke,
although, in the end,
we do not hold her funeral
in the Laundromat, as threatened.

--Sheila Paris Klein



Graphics in this issue by Tom Tuttle

THE DOPPLEGANGER

The best Jesus hardly knows he's dying

Prince of Water

laughing
threadbare

Lionhearted.

Forget
the white robes
our plan for new digs
nails to his hands
thorny coffins.

Who are we becoming?

Tongue of God
My mouth is all Yours.

--**Susie Birkeland**,
From *Bruised Angels' Almanac*
Zeitgeist Press, 2006



THE SUSIE ARCANÉ In Memory of Susan Birkeland

I.
Strangely as if the lid
of her own coffin were
closing over her

just when people are
reading her words,
she's quietly resting

cherishing thoughts of
the thoughtlessness
she's slipping into,

of looking the inner one
in the eye and finally
being zero.

So no more boats to
go down to the piers for.
Yet, still wanting, in the

waning, mistily she strains
upward: the other side,
all who've died, seems

alive and kicking. She
wants to be there.
She's dying to be.

She's waiting for him
to come over her, to
take her out.

Who never fails. Him.
Above all. Who'll carry
her away to she.

Nothing more. No doubt.
She has next to nothing
to do but check out.

II.
Say there are places in
San Francisco sparkling
with the serious joie

de vivre of her poems
read from that core of
crisp bright soul,

that the North Beach
corner where she sang
with friends and wine

and shmoogadoo really
feels posthumous. Those
days that were...Ladadadadada.

Her eyes now ready, her
breast now ready, her hips
and thighs and modesty as well

Darn, she just would like
to know when she'll
arrive at that language

she's been written by. Hands
are in hers. Holding. Do
you read me in the darkness

when the light is on? O yes,
yes, open to ten thousand
things. The humming

of butter melting on his
body, for one. But all's
overing, ovary just

can't be. Yes, yes, it can.
Where it isn't. Here. In

memory of the morning sun.

III.
Death being what it is,
you know, and that's
why she is too.

Susie, dear Susie
with your brave spiral
of rage and tenderness,

projective and scored.
Among so many street
poets how brightly you

shone, enthusing, a
blushing leaf of grass
who could burn at

Abu Ghraib, and chide
a celebrity brother for
forgetting your home

town of Hibbing---O
Death, you rat, you bit
into Susie just when she

was coming to full poem
prime. Here's your cheese,
Death. Be snapped to death

for taking Susie. Poetry's
so sad about her not being
able to be written by her,

it's gone to a corner and
won't come out until
she speaks again.

And of course, being poetry
now, she does.
She exclaims:

"I jump with glee!
I make voluminous tea
for all the entities

that are my friends in the
morning. Have some. It's me.
Have some of me.

It's good.
It's good and warm
In the morning."

----**Jack Hirschman**
Paris, France

Frustrations

The television is singing hymns. Automatic entertainment. The words are indecipherable. The words do not matter. No, no, it is the generic pitch of the voices, the dramatic swell of the volume, the hullabaloo of zooming cameras and the hysterical audience and the moon faces singing, so wide their mouths you can see down the throats of these singing faces, these robotic God-worshippers.

The sky just swallows everything: this silver mist, this stagnant winter. Eat me alive. The living room's centerpiece is this pastel floral couch, and surrounding it is the beige carpet and the white walls. The hymnal television set. We are a pseudo-Pagan family, but still our home hasn't lost its conditioned Americanized sterility. It boasts chastity until you reach the bedrooms, bathrooms. Here sex happens. Eat me alive. Pull my hair. A world of dysfunction-worshippers. There was a thing called God, but there was also alcohol and self-mutilation and crazy familial relationships. I don't want to live here. Hypnotic voices emanating from the TV speakers are reciting lines. This is just information. This means nothing. This changes nothing.

-Chelsea Clark

We are...

We are stained glass
Shattered at the foot of a bloodied statue.
Jesus sweat blood.
We are scatter(ed) brains
From a shotgun in the
Mouth of Mary
When she found out she was
KNOCKED UP.
We are tendons stretched
Holding heartbeats under fractured ribs.
We beat our wayward thoughts.
We are Michelangelo's fingers
Reaching gods
We never touched.
They lied to us.

-Julie Combest



WHEN I DIE...

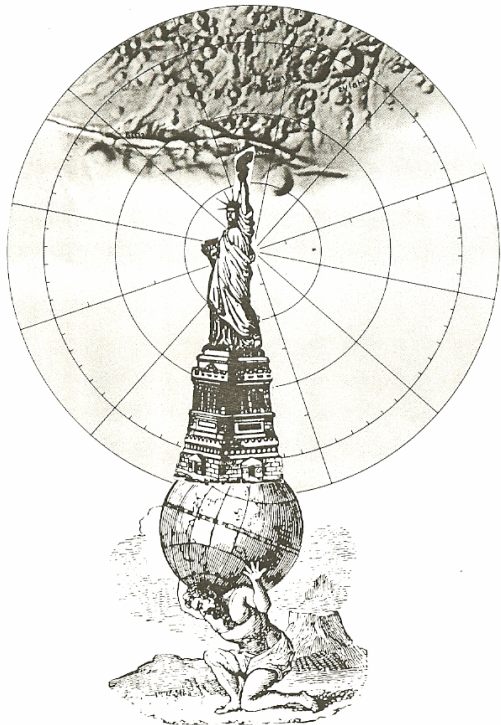
When I die don't forget
I saw Beauty fucking everywhere.
Every third woman in the
airport, the baby learning to
blow kisses to mom in the
line at the rental car. Shadows
on the face of the moon.
It's not that beauty makes us
happy, cause it don't,
it's that it requires so
much from us. Calls us to
wake before the cats, or
endure endless boredom, so
the child has chances. Makes us
throw off pleasures in honor of
the way she cocks her
head at the lunch counter.
Takes our lives into words,
music, pictures, unyielding
eternities that calls us to be
what we can't, till we
can't anymore.

--Bruce Isaacson

A Preface

They'd talked about death sometimes
but always in bad humor. "Some widow
I'd make," she'd said. She knew the doorbell
came first. She'd get out of bed, a white hat,
the district chief, standing on the porch.
But instead a nurse called, which meant
he was hurt. The doctor said, "Shock trauma."
Her knees buckled. "He's got chest pains."
She said, "Then why the hell is he in trauma?"
All her married life she recognized the jargon.
"It's not a heart attack," the doctor said.
"A building fell in." She didn't want
to wake the kids, his injuries were vague.
At the hospital, she wore a gown, mask.
He was conscious. She said, "You're going
to live." He tried to say they had to cut off
his clothes, a towel was draped over him
like a shroud. "Maybe," he said. "God,
I hurt so bad." They had to drag her downstairs.
When she called her son, the words broke
in her mouth. Someone handed her a tissue,
but it was too fragile. Up at shock trauma,
they said, "We're going to put tubes in you.
Internal bleeding." They pushed a crash cart
beside his bed, just in case. He repeated
his statement: "I'm in so much pain
you can't hurt me." But they did.

-Jarret Keene



Too Hip

Too hip is worse than
too ugly
Too hip is a smile that
doesn't go anywhere
Too hip is a fascist sense of irony
Too hip is what we do instead of
roll the dice

Too hip is a fancy kind of
self-pity or
an empty kind of class
Too hip is worse than
too square
Too hip is what they teach you
in the *other* school
Too hip is the betrayal of pain

Christ was not hip
lions are beyond hip
clouds sneer at hip
nuclear explosions are
indifferent to hip

Clothes designers are
patriotic to hip
entertainment executives swear by
hip
siamese twins are baffled by
hip
birds cannot stomach hip

their feathers are too bright
they run too fast
they die too quickly
and sing without worrying about
the notes

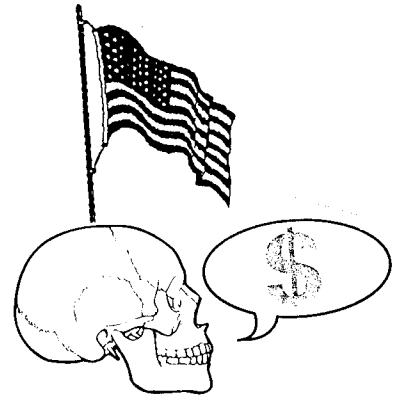
--David Lerner, from his recently reissued
I Want a New Gun, www.Zeitgeist-Press.com

National Gallery

Outside it was too hot so
I came back in here with you,
Frank O'hara, gracing across Graces'
canvas. I'd been thinking lately that
it's time I melt into something
and this seems to be the place to do it.
Seems to be chaotic to be a color
creeping through Pollock's paintings but
really, his colors are just the nature of things,
toned down. For if I melted, I'd make
a color made of many colors and
lie on a lazy river in an inner tube
calmly on a canvas, destroying and creating
every other color I touched. I need
to stop making things weirder than
they are and appreciate two slices
of bacon for being two slices of bacon
sizzling, crackling, delicious and formerly
pig which is now going to increase
my cholesterol, hurt my workout and yet
still increase my energy, it's these contradictions
we live with. I'd like to lobby for a
better bacon, clearer world, one without

such hopeless contradictions but I'll
probably stay on this bench some more
and slowly stop living off my parents and
resign myself to accepting the confounded
gaspless state of acceptance. Someone,
you, the mass you, have made acceptance
the way, by leading all other paths to hopelessness
or insanity. People who care too much are insane
people who don't care at all are hopeless
and its in this hopeless insanity I reside.

--Ryan Johnson



From: Neon Geyser, Porcelain Sky
c/o Wanamaker
3555 Stover #273, Las Vegas, NV 89103

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