

the darkness that enlightens...

Apocalypse Playground



INFINITY'S KITCHEN :

THE ~~STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS~~ ISSUE

Submit

APOCALYPSE PLAYGROUND IS CURRENTLY ACCEPTING SUBMISSIONS FOR ITS SECOND YEAR OF BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION.

Visual art: Send in your darkest, strangest, photos and illustrations. Apocalypse Playground needs these the most.

Fiction: dark/gothic-literature, poetry, stories, or drama We're also (slowly) working on a comic series (perhaps you can help). Not the average super-hero stuff. We're looking for something a step above that. Crumb comics, The Crow, Vertigo, The Dark Knight Returns, The Crow... things of that ilk. Okay, so most of those are technically super hero rags, but they are of the style that we want. Basically, if your comics are dark or strange, they're PERFECT for Apocalypse Playground.

Non-Fiction: Most anything even remotely related to gothic/punk/industrial subcultures will be accepted. There's also room for comic's reviews, as well as material regarding film, theater, literature, music and any other media. These can be in article form (short, or feature length) reviews, demos etc.

Music and Theater : We are looking to highlight performing artists' work through the use of interviews. We welcome demos and promotional material from musicians. Please write for more info.

Apocalypse Playground is a bimonthly literary Zine devoted primarily to the gothic and bizarre aspects of art and life

Apocalypse Playground: The darkness that enlightens. Send submissions of poetry, photography or other visual media, short stories, book, music, film or television reviews, along with whatever other apocalyptic creations that have crawled from your psyche.

Both electronic and standard postal submissions are accepted, although, if it is possible, please provide both. Preference is given to works which focus on experimental topics and/or contents in the gothic genre. Simultaneous submissions are acceptable if notification is made at time of submission. Electronic submissions should be in standard ASCII format as part of the message body. Attachments or alternate wordprocessor formats are also accepted. Please ask about a format before sending a submission in that format. An author whose work(s) is accepted for any particular issue grants Apocalypse Playground the following rights

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- SUBMISSIONS
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Submissions can be sent through both standard or electronic mail to the addresses) below. Electronic submissions of textual material should be sent as an ASCII file in the body of an e-mail. Graphics may be attached to an e-mail in whatever format is most convenient for the artist.

Please send multiple submissions separately, and place "Apocalypse Playground Submission" in the subject line to all submission e-mail. Upon acceptance, all contributors will be given a free copy of their featured issue of Apocalypse Playground as payment.

For more information, or to submit please

TODAY'S SPECIALS:

THE DIP:

two scoops of Camille Arborgast's award-winning material. a stunning platter of clever wording, a side of dialog, and topped off with the delectable tale of the effect of frigid water on the naked soul.

\$ (page 11)

INFINITY'S KITCHEN:

Apocalypse Playground's featured dish this evening : It is an epic narrative with just a hint of lemon, a yummy combination of wit and muse, and an extra helping of prose. Dylan at his best.

\$ (pages 6, 13, and 15)

Manager's Choice -

CREDO:

a tasty reflection upon small town life and some dog named Banjo, smothered in a tangy old world-style metaphor. Comes with a plate of fond recollection, and an overall atmosphere of warmth.

By Paul Grant.

\$ (page 10)

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Apocalypse Playground

IN INFINITY...

Dylan Kinett, *Editor*

Rose Byrne, *Assistant Editor*

The Rev. NIK, *Staff groupie*

Lady Dementia, *Starring, as herself*

FEATURED WORKS BY

Michelle Emich

Paul Grant

Kasin Hunter *cover artist*

ABOUT THE COVER: this piece, entitled "Dali Interpreted" is a digital rendering, selected from Kasin's internet portfolio. His is the first outside

SHEPHERDSTOWN WV
25443

(SEND US LETTERS OKAY?)

This one's for the light in the refrigerator. And the sound that clocks make, and burlap- oh and burnt popcorn...

Mission Statement:

Apocalypse Playground is a 'literary'zine devoted to gothic art in all forms. Apocalypse Playground is anything that expresses the darker and more majestic side of this dream of a fleeting world.

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"hey!"
"Leave me alone"
"No. Did you see that?"
"Yeah, you jumped in
front of my face, disturbing an
otherwise wonderful view"
"Oh."

silence

"Yeah?"

"What do you want?"

"What did you want?"

"The sky."

"The Sky...?"

"IS ON FIRE !!"

It is entirely possible that at any moment, in any place, an overhead passerby (namely, a plane) may well drop its cargo onto just about anyone. You are more likely to be struck by some other, less metallic weight from above. Yes, that bulky and unused thing just may force its weight on you with a force stronger than the most destructive plane wreck. An idea, at any time, in any place may well decide to play havoc with you, even for a mere second.

It is the intent of Apocalypse Playground to stimulate this very kind of 'accident'. Because, the thought that wrecks you might be the best wreck ever. save these, whenever possible because you never know how much time there is to enjoy the view, or what may be looming above...

Go to the river, lost in mud, in the hopes that the water could clean you. Wander from the stench of it. Stop by the post box, empty. No voices fall from it. At the bank, there is no money for you. Someone robbed it and got away clean. On the way home, stop to listen to a cying kid, crouched in his shadow, behind the garage. He's crying out of hunger, through the heat, because nobody knows him, because his house is crowded. He crying because he was born too early, on a day that might otherwise have turned out well, once the alcohol wore off of his mother. He was born too late, after the others had been given all the love in the world, and long since abandoned cries like their siblings'.

Know that this could be you. Watch the birds circle around your head, at arcane angles. Remember when they swarmed, when they swam, the skies. So hot. So cold. "So sweet". But, they're just birds, in circles. Remember a happier time, a year, a week, just days, minutes ago when the birds were in great numbers. Promise yourself never to remember it again.

Stop walking, long enough to catch your reflection from a store front. A reflection of the human face, shot back at itself, smiling. Think of the day when that glass will lie broken. Listen to the birds' screaming along with a child. Compare the sound to breaking glass.

The train, you had forgotten how much you love the train. Lust for its' power, run like it, to it, to the tracks. Where everything runs, howling like beasts' dreams straight forward through the sun. Run. Howl. But know that you can never run through the sun as it does. Never straight through the landscape, in protest of other's awe.

You must go in circles. Circles. Circles-

Clouds spin above you, look at them: Remember the birds. Look away. There are several smells of death, and you try to inhale them all at once, as you slowly replace the sulfur railroad air with that of plastic flowers. Write something pointless, indefinite, while sitting on top of someone else's grave. Try to tell yourself that this act, at least, is a comfort to the dead. Rot a little bit on the inside as you realize that there is no smell here. Let the sound of rustling trees push you home..

Turn the lights off. Lock the door. Drape an old army jacket over your mirror. Don't remember the birds. It's Halloween in here, laughing you tell yourself "It's Easter". Run fingers over the places where the bruises were. Purple, the color of resurrection. Remember the broken glass, the fights, the way you ran. It can't cut me if I gat away. Throw your head against the pillow and dream of the way you've run to the river, away from that school that bruised you. Listen to the sound of television, laughing at itself from downstairs. There are 58 channels and you can't remember what's on any of them. Week night, week day, prime time, what's the difference? It's all a rerun. Re-run from some stranger time, a year ago, a week, a day, minutes ago when birds swam the skies and the smell of death was harder to find.

Feel cold sometimes, even in the heat of summer, which is gone. You feel like a winter in spring, fallen, forgotten and out of place. It was snowing outside the window that reflects your face now. You sang a song to it, happy. It's not snowing now.

It reflects itself, changes itself, waits for it's image to fade before representation in all of it's bruised splendor. Thought, it flies at you in circles. You can hear the train again, grinding past itself, shaking the tracks, it makes the window vibrate. A clock four blocks from your house

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(TOO MUCH)

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NEATLY PACKAGED IN NON-BIO-
DEGRADABLE PLASTIC TO BE LAT-
ER DISCARDED WITH NO FURTHER
THOUGHT.

THANK YOU FOR NOT POURING
YOUR HEART INTO A HEAVY CRYSTAL
SHOT GLASS AND FORCING ME
TO TOSS IT BACK WITHOUT A MO-
MENT'S
HESITATION.

THANK YOU FOR NOT SCREAMING.
THANK YOU FOR NOT DYING
(TOO MUCH)

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HYGIENE (OR NOTICEABLE LACK
THEREOF), PROFUSE DISPLAYS OF
CYNISISM, POOR CHOICE OF COLOR
SCHEME, OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION.

THANK YOU FOR DINING WITH US.
WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR
STAY.

PLEASE COME AGAIN, WHEN YOU
WON'T HAVE TO WAIT SO LONG TO
BE SEATED.

Ashes of Memory,

"...AND I DO NOT
WANT TO BE ORANGE
I DO NOT WISH TO
BE PALE PINK, FLOW-
ER SCARLET, FLOWER
GOLD, AND HAVE NO
THOUGHTS TO
DISTANCE
ME..."

~ INNOCENCE MIS-
SION ~

It is a strange thing to suddenly realize that one is seen by her peers exactly the way she is seen by herself; to stumble upon the observation that the people you tried desperately to refrain from associating with actually watched you - enough, even, to know WHO YOU ARE.

The results of the Senior Class Poll were released today. I was voted by my class "Most Unusual" and "Most Dramatic". How odd. I would never have expected them to notice. Oh, I've spent the last three years, nine months, and some odd days performing for these lemmings who are herded down the halls of Saint Maria Goretti in hopes that they would somehow justify my existence. Well, they've finally done it. I can now cease to gauge the success of my clothing, behavior, and choice of friends on the SFS (Shock Factor Scale).

Perhaps now the time has come to blend, to throw out my black costumes, my rainbow array of fishnet tights, my vinyl pants; I can rid myself of various and sundry pairs of combat boots, micro-mini skirts, metal chains and spikes, and makeup found only in stores during Halloween season. I can purge my existence of all oddities and abnormalities in exchange for khaki pants, button-down shirts, and tweed. I can paint my face with only neutral shades of brown and peach, pink and rose on my nails. No more blue, purple, and orange hair - only blonde, mousy brown, and (if I'm really daring) auburn.

Now that I have been presented with these honorable titles, I can toss my individuality out the window in favor of Sameness! I can join the ranks of the Bland, the Boring. I shall rebel against Style,

Personality, and Fun! I shall be Typical, I shall be Expected, I shall be NORMAL! Oh, how I've longed for this! I shall finally - finally after

so very long - *FIT IN*. Oh joy! Oh rapture! Oh bliss! Oh let me read your Cosmo, borrow your Gap jeans, listen to your top 40 CD's! Let me sing your popular

My fondest friend, Infinity, has stepped away from her apartment. "Cigarettes," she said, before reaching for the door.

Given the present absence of my friend Infinity, and subsequently the wonderful conversations often had with her, I took it upon myself to clean her kitchen. I'm not looking for drain opener, I want answers.

At first, I find that my fond friend Infinity has not placed the trash can under her sink. Infinity collects the strangest things, such as odd locations for kitchenware. I found the garbage pail right out. A black hole with a plastic liner wedged between two chairs by a black spattered-with-white cosmos looking kitchen table. I sat in one of the chairs and noticed how realistically the Big Dipper shimmered on the table paint in Infinity's kitchen. The refuse splayed itself noisily across the cosmos on the table after I tipped the garbage can over. It seems my curiosity had not cleaned the kitchen, but only served to create calamity. I fancy myself quite the garbologist, this is what I do.

The first of the pile, wrought from the murky bottom of the glad-bag womb, me thought, these must be fetal. I picked the grey flaccid blob from the carrion pile fresh from Infinity's kitchen, and it occurred to me that this was too thoughtful a blob. I could tell by the smell of it. And the age, after all, it had been at the bottom of a trashcan kept in the kitchen of Infinity. She's such a lazy girl, Infinity. She hasn't emptied her refuse in forever.

No, this was the brain of a Pharaoh! I decided I'd keep this, and put it in the window by the sink. And by this time it was night, so the Pharaoh would have to wait for his thoughts to see the light of day.

I grew tired of the black-hole trash can and decided to clean the rest of Infinity's kitchen. But there was trash on the table so I rifled and tossed it back to it's beloved trash can companion. I had dumped the can backwards so that the bottom was the top. So I replaced the contents of Infinity's trash can chronologically

(by order of the chronos.) There had been an apple core carved to look like some creature but it had rotted into a marred little animal. A soggy napkin, some sand, an old fortune cookie and some purple peace beads. I found a banana and a broken voodoo doll, a strand of yellow hair and paint made of bone. Still near the top of the pile was paper rolled to match the quilted kind that stuck near the bottom of the pile, and then the absence of paper for quite a way through the pile. I wonder how Infinity could have gone so long without paper.

Infinity throws everything away. She's always been an American like that, even though she was born foreign. There were a lot of rocks at the bottom of the can. I uncovered them, moving space that measured a cubit long by about two cubits squared. Big bloody boulders broken and bashed into pebbles, I wonder why Infinity threw them away in her kitchen. I'd hate to think of bashing things over dinner.

Just then I heard the doorbell ring. It shocked me a bit. Since Infinity had been away I hadn't been keeping track of the time so well. Assuming she had come home, I rushed to the door and opened it. The onlooker, who was not the girl I had expected, was greeted by a pile of Infinity's refuse. The only reason he was not repulsed to the point of tears or groaning was that he was Chronos, Infinity's landlord. "Infinity collects the strangest things!", said he, "Clean this now please before the smell kills me." And with that Chronos kicked the pile. He stuck his big boot into the aesthetically arranged stack of Infinity's refuse. "Clean this now!", he said again, "Before the smell..." "I know, kills me." "And besides," said he, "what about Infinity." He smiled at me. I said, "You should have been here early, and not kicked the pile so casually. True, you should say 'clean this' to me. I should have to do it chronologically, by the order of the chronos, and, I suppose, that's the way it will be. 'Clean this' is what

you said to me. But, you Chronos, are keeping me from cleaning these piles of Infinity's refused things chronologically. Seeing as how you kicked the pile and knocked it out of order." "Clean this.", said he, and he walked out the door.

I noticed rain had collected outside the door during Chronos' visit. I was glad to see him go. So glad, in fact, that I locked the door so as to bar further intrusion. Infinity had a key.

I turned once again to my garbologist task. And saw Infinity's sister, Calamity, sitting at the table, both admiring my handiwork and chuckling at the way I dismissed the landlord.

Upon being noticed, she returned to her own quest to find some thing in Infinity's kitchen. She stood, her knees shaking, and looked at me with crossed eyes for a moment. She turned behind her, to the sink, and began opening the drawers and cabinets nearby.

"What are you looking for?" said me.

"My nose, have you seen..."

"It's on your face, what do you mean?"

"That's not really what I mean. Cigarettes. That's what I need."

She looked at me, over the shoulder and casually. She went cross-eyed once more, and moved behind a cabinet door. I could tell she had been watching me. Perhaps from around the corner, or on the second floor. But now it was I who was watching, and she the thing to be seen. I could see her and she couldn't see me.

"Cigarettes.", said me. "They've been taken by your sister, Infinity."

Calimity mumbled from behind the cabinet door, and turned to look at me once more. Her eyes narrowed to be the size of grains of sand. She held the Pharaoh's brain in her hand. She stared, unblinking for a while at me. "Infinity collects the strangest things."

I said, "could you tell me something about it?"

She looked at me, her eyes still

BEFORE I AWOKE**ME**

Sitting in my warmth
and woolen downfall
In the iced and sandy world that
is me,
I meander through the dandelion
meadows of my mind
On my way somewhere.
I'm not certain what I'm search-
ing for,
But I'll know it when I see it.
My eyes, the shade of damp bark,
stare ahead
While my autumn hair plays
with the wind
That God's cotton balls bring in.
I'm going somewhere.
The wise man at my side bends
low
To whisper something in my
blind ear
But all I can make out is the
crunchy rustling of leaves.
A cricket jumps
on the top of my bare foot.
I squeak and jerk away before I
can translate his lines.
I hate crickets.
I see something up ahead.
A chilling wind grabs my stub-
born shoulders, shaking me,
Trying to tell me what it knows.
I'm so close.
What a waste to stop my journey
now!
The scream of the ferocious pan-
ther
Tears through the oceans above
me.
He spits on me.
I begin to forget the path ahead
As the slivers of liquid glass cut
deep
Into my stony soul. He screams
again.
And just as I realize my mortal
flaw,

I remember tumbling down the gold-carpeted stairs. I was so clumsy. Mom and Mary were laughing side by side, tilting their heads back with delight. "As long as you aren't hurt, it's nothing," Mom said.

I remember Mary telling me about the pale light cast gently across the ceiling of Uncle John's childhood bedroom. "They're ghosts. They're waiting until you fall asleep," she said.

I feel guilty for being angry at my mother. She has been unhappy her whole life, and part of that was because she had to find money to raise me. But she thought I was trouble? I never did drugs—not even a single cigarette. I never got pregnant, although I lost my virginity when I was just three days shy of being sixteen. I got very good grades. I never caused trouble. It all seems to justify the money I took from her purse. Well, maybe not, but since she slapped me and dragged me to see that naive woman counselor, I think I did my time. Trouble. My Mom has no idea what trouble is. She's always been unhappy, but she's never seen trouble.

Except Mary. She got smashed on Jack Daniel's when she was thirteen and came home throwing up everywhere. She had to go to the hospital for alcohol poisoning. I remember Mary hiding David in my closet so my Mom wouldn't find him. He was from Chicago. Mary wore lots of make-up and seemed to believe that no one in the universe could possibly have anything important to say. So she talks until everyone nods blankly and our ears hurt and when someone breaks in, she clears her throat, drops her eyes, and gives that pursed-lip smile that says, "Excuse me, but I was saying something far more interesting and important." It never seems to matter to her that she had been saying it for over an hour. I never got to go to a rock concert. The closest I came was Peter, Paul, and Mary at Rivinia on my seventeenth birthday. Not a single cigarette!! The looming atmosphere of my childhood is that feeling of right before you begin to cry. Just when your eyes begin to water and the muscles in your face tense up. Nana bought expensive raincoats for me and Mary. Mine was either yellow or blue, I don't remember.

And there were ducks all over the inside. "Don't lose it!!" Mom said over and over. On the way home from school, I noticed it was not hanging over my arm anymore. Oh no! I began to retrace my steps and to cry. I searched and searched and grey began to hang in the sky. Part the weather and part the time. I think I was about seven. Tears swelled, my throat swelled, the world was big and the wind was cold and my coat was so expensive. My nose ran with my legs and fear and sorrow, staples of my youth, overtook my heart. There! It was sitting in the middle of the yard of Lakeside Center. It looks like a castle, but that bitch Mary who babysat me worked there. I ran home with my duck raincoat. "Where have you been!?" screamed Mom. "I was just calling the police! I thought you were dead or something!" "I had to get my raincoat—I dropped it and I had to go find it because you'd be so mad if I lost it!" I cried. I remember a hug or something, I think, after that. The power of repression is amazing. As I sit here with my cat and my blue comforter in my college apartment, the life before one year ago, before I met Matthew, all seems as distant as a dream. Actually, more distant. Perhaps it's best to keep it like that. My chest heaves with pain and seething when I think of most any part of it. Still, there is some sadistic satisfaction in recalling it. I hate the world.

PAUL GRANT

LIVE BLOOD- WORMS, DEAD MEAT PIES, ROLAIDS

- Sandwich board in front of abandoned gas station near Kinder, Louisiana

Banjo, fresh from a triumph as King of the Fools, doesn't seem to mind at all that Nan throws like a girl, says in bed that night that's who I should learn fly-casting from. Now there was a dream: all those clean little feathered corks with dainty barbless hooks sticking out of them—they would have been such a step up in class from grasshoppers, from those green things Daddy pulled by the handfull out of the webs that looked like spiders had been subcontracted to build hornets' nests in that tree in the middle of our hayfield, the same tree I sat up in bed one night thirty years later wondering about—how come all those caterpillars never managed to get that tree eaten?—and bloodworms, the big mushy kind you had to tear at least in half before you could get some on a hook, and even then the bottom (top?) end of it usually managed to stretch itself out in dying so you had to curl it around and around and hook that end a second time, maybe a third, near where you'd started, leaving such a bundle on the hook the fish could snack forever on the edges without getting anywhere near the barb, just giving enough of a tug to make your bobber dip, and keep you busy watching and cussing both these things that managed to conspire—predator and prey—to outsmart you in spite of the fact neither of them had any brains to speak of. Banjo sits and stares like I owe him part of whatever I'm eating. He likes salsa, cheese, damn near everything but grapes and corn, but favors, naturally, anything with meat in it. He'd have gone with Pup down to the place behind the slaughterhouse—if I'd had him then—to roll in the guts & tear the last strips of flesh off the skulls, shooing the flies away with his tail, coming back up on the porch smelling like death in the sun and trying to jump up into the swing & wipe some of it off on me & breathe in my face a secret I didn't want to know. I'd run him off, maybe take the hose & some pine-tar soap to him later in the day when the sun wasn't so fierce and the shadows were lengthening

accordingly. He's still be in the bed that night, at least until I got to sleep. He's still be breathing hard, tongue hanging out to lap water out of the Louisiana air, and if there was a woman there, he lick her face, if that was all he could get to, & smile the way only dogs can smile, as if to say, hot damn, boss, ain't this just the best there is? But the day'd have to come, seven or eight he'd be, I'd find him in the dusted blackberries by the gravel road, a feast for flies, hit by a marauding truck and left there in the sun with his tongue permanently clamped inside one of his smiles, & I'd carry him down behind the garden in a burlap bag and dig a hole and bury him in it and cry privately, because it wouldn't be as if he were a hunting dog, he's just like his daddy—just sweet, not really worth a damn—and the only people who'd miss him would be the ones like me, who needed once in a while to hear something, anything, say, hot damn, ain't this just the best there is? But Banjo lives. The triple-decker sign by where the pumps used to front the road stares blindly from its place in the arc where one depression has finally come around to make another and Banjo is just resting his eyes, stretched out in the back with luggage and souvenirs, the tent and the sleeping bags. I'll walk him on the shores of Lake Ponchartrain someday, when we're both old, and I'll tell him what he hasn't missed

THE

BY CAMILLE ARBOGAST

"Oh, Helen, look at how blue the sky is!"
Helen took a sip of her fruit punch.
"It's lovely, Edward."

"I know. I want to eat it."
"Eat it?"

"Yes, don't you think that it would taste good? I think it would warm in my stomach."
He stood up. "Let's go mingle."

Helen surveyed the crowd. They were at one of those back-to-school-everyone's-invited parties.
"You want to do what?"

"Talk to people." He took her hand and pulled her off her chair. "Let's go be with all the people."

"If you insist." He was insisting. They made their way to the heart of the crowd by the side of the swimming pool.

"Hey, Ed, don't you think it's a bit cold for them to have their pool lid off?"

"Hmm?" He wasn't looking at Helen.

"Look at that girl over there in the purple sweater. Doesn't she look like a giant grape?"

"This is her house."

"I want to eat her."

"I don't think she'd like that very much."

"Oh, Helen," he turned violently and clasped her hands rather melodramatically, "I can't bear it."

"What?"

"How happy I am.." Then he exploded into this crazy dance. Around he went grabbing the hands of unexpected party goers and waltzing them about. He did a little solo soft-shoe over to the diving board. Beside the diving board he did pirouette after pirouette. His blue sky spun above him. All the smiling students' faces turned into a giant laughing blob. He spun until he was so dizzy he wanted to throw up.

He'd been going for so long it was hard to see when he stopped. He tried to stay steady enough to pick Helen out of the crowd. She was so short he couldn't find her in the dense crowd. Everyone was clapping and laughing.

Oh god, he loved them all. He loved them so much it was killing him. He just wanted to explode he was so happy. He climbed onto the diving board and looked across the crystal blue swimming pool at everyone. Happy clappy kids clapping for happy dancing Edward. He didn't want them to have to stop being happy.

They didn't deserve to be sad.

He managed to slip out of his socks and shoes without looking. He didn't want to have to look away from the crowd. His shirt was harder, as it involved him taking a second to pull it over his head. His pants were really easy. All he had to do was undo his belt and shake a bit and they were around his ankles. Then he jumped. He had taken his clothes off so fast hardly anyone had noticed. Which was good, because he wanted the splash to surprise them. In fact, only Helen had seen him. She watched his long gangly body arc over the pool for an incredibly long split second. She had wished he could stay there forever, just a crazy kid jumping for joy and nobody noticing him. He did fall, plunging into the blue pool water faster than her eyes could follow.

"What was that?"

It was late September, the water was freezing. The pool lid probably shouldn't have been off. But there he was, splashing around bright pink and naked. He looked like some sort of mutant seal. He looked like a little kid in the bathtub.

"Who the hell is that nut?" "Oh my god, that's Edward." "He's naked."

"Oh, my god."

He didn't hear the kids. He was too busy being happy. He didn't really hear anyone but Helen. She called out, "Edward," because she thought he could hear them. She thought he was just too embarrassed to come out. "What is it, Helen?" He stopped splashing and crossed to the shallow end. "Wanna come in?" "Oh. Edward."

The girl in the purple shirt emerged from within the crowd. She put her hand over her eyes before addressing Edward.

"Why are you in the pool, Edward?" He didn't answer right off.

He was too busy noticing all the people who weren't smiling. No one was smiling.

"Can't you see how blue the sky is? Can't you feel the sun? What's wrong with you people?"

They didn't answer him; they thought he was nuts. That didn't stop Edward.

Lord of The Forgotten-

baby boys on their birthdays
Photograph flashes and
telephone numbers
failed presidential candidates,
quiz show questions
there's two eyes looking
back at me
beyond the broken
barrier of glass
there's two eyes looking
back at me
they've seen everything
I should see
my, how they stare so
blankedly
there's two eyes
me

nothing anymore,
pizziria, 4-seases, gluton
lust with
used cars and commercial
shoe. latex. NEVER!!!
dioxiribose snow with
another toxin

seven minds two eyes
each, stand staring across
the street
ripping into me
turn around - turn
around and look the other
way
stop seeing me differently
look at me something
to see?

can you see everything
from 'cross the street
and the added ingredient
of...

and. with faces to boot,
faces for breakfast
talking animals, doctors,
musicians ends and noodles.
will you take my end?
oh, my noble friend.

for, I need it no more.
I will simply bring it thee
and place it near thy
door

for this one, I need
no more

T h r e e .

There are eyes in the skies tonight
little slivers that shiver
they shiver when I blink
the eyes in the skies are
everywhere

sometimes I close my eyes at night
if I can't see them, are they there?
boots, magick tar baby sand=

paper
Juliet? an with but nuns.
snot licking gutter love

would you believe me if I told you
?

it's almost quarter after
my response wrought laughter
Prision sentence. fe

male linoleum left sideways all spandex
cheese spread street lamp, scream
beeping apocalypse harbringer
birth

water bucket, ever outward
5:00 express train.

running from the metro
politan as from a woman with a disease
from a young one.

trouble, life falling drops, always going
downward, down like
a subway. can you quench my eternity?
there's that word!!! I found it in

me.
like a tape worm,
the loathsome letters that comprise it's
writhing body tugged at my
entrails. this is the way it happened

I thought I told you.
well ... I tried

I guess I thought it was implied. I told you. I swear it!
Maybe you do not even care it.

nobody believes what I say.
can I tell you anyway?

I'll say, it now... just wait...
never mind, it's too late

dead babies on their
birthdays. sisters nicknames and scrabble

2 Don't turn around you might die some day and I would say how are you now are you still wearing that nasty face &
now there are 2 many miles away I sit and watch the ages slip by The men in blue dance by the light of the tire that
glows in my eyes when I stare at the moon the glue man and the blue man can't tell who man what to do man what are
you man who are you man I am because i was and i will be If you never were that's okay maybe you will be if you never
will be then we need to talk to the man who makes magic with the fire that the who men dance by while the moon man
sings the lonely song there was once a song that took a poor gypsy's heart and ran away with it the gypsy was sad so
she danced. Businessman business is that what you do? Try to do business with a who man who. If it was art and not
business that you do than you will know the blue man too. The moon man and the blue man meet a new man a no man.
Science is learning what you do? New tools to learn the moon man you are not ready for the new man. If you know me
and I know you than I am your friend and that is true. The cave people painted walls the painter man does that and has
a brewski. The man's head spins the gremlin eats a dinner while his mom cooks a poor kid in the pot. The kid got out
but nobody believes him. The ocean swallowed and came down with a crash no body could stop it not even with cash

Infinity's Kitchen

"So, this guy walks into a bar..."

tick

"Three nuns rented the adjacent motel room and..."

drip

"Then the cannibal said, 'yeah, I passed them in the woods'!"

tock

"What do you do with a truckload of things that nobody wants?"

drop

Midnight. This kitchen is dark. Still, no sign of Infinity. It feels like we've been waiting forever. The sink drip-drips in

counter rhythm to my thoughts, but in synch with the clock.

Tick. Drip. Tock. Drop.

"What do you do with a truckload of things that nobody wants?"

For three hours its been like this. The voice in my head remembering old jokes, rhetorical questions and lost allegories ^{keeps}

full of long since forgotten symbolism's. These are, I suppose, either preludes to dream, or meaning.

I reply with my own questions. The retort sends me into an ocean of mocked laughter, and it goes on like this. New questions with various clever responses and countless ways of feigned chuckles.

Tick. Drip. Tock. Drop.

"What do you do with a truckload of things that nobody wants?"

"I don't know..."

"I don't know either."

Tick. Drip. Tock. Drop.

Finally, I'm laughing and the tears are falling from my face, slowly in rhythm with the sink.

Quarter after midnight. The kitchen is dark. Still, no sign of my friend Infinity. Tick. Drip. Tock. Drop.

Tick. Drip. Tock. Drop...

INFINITY'S KITCHEN

"I am the end of everything. I am not."

"You are ?"

"No ! And I will tell you again and again I am not. I do not be!"

It is past late, and it's been raining. Infinity never closes her windows. Everyone in the house includes myself and Calamity, we've dubbed our little band, "the present company". We've taken refuge in the kitchen, as we always do because the rain causes Infinity's carpets to become coarse mud. Our bare feet feel accosted everywhere but on the cold, cracked linoleum floor.

I enjoy watching the storm from the window above the sink. Perhaps the wind will shift, and the rain will wash cobwebs down Infinity's sink. This is an old house.

Calamity's waiting in the kitchen for the storm to end. Her passion is silverware. She plays with it. Once, she told me, she had a dream about silverware that some-how involved nudity. On her part, she says, she was the only one missing clothes.

I stare below me, where there is, as I have said before, a cold, cracked linoleum floor.

"Never more" says she, in a knowing mockery of my thoughts.

Knowledge is mockery.

We continue arguing.

"I am the nothing that nothing is. I am no thing" She insists, waving a spoon in the air at me, as punctuation. I tell her, "A no thing is a thing nonetheless. By being nothing, you are something, you are nothing. You exist because of what everything else is." Calamity's spoon flies over the table, almost toward my head and then through the kitchen window, into the storm. I hand her another one, to keep her calm.

"I am the loud rule to which everything must bend. I am eventual inexistence."

"I am an apathetic teenager, who cares not."

She smiles, spoon held high, ready for a duel to the death. I rise from the star filled table, and pour another cup of coffee. It is past late and getting darker, but I'm not tired. We're both still hoping Infinity will come back. Calamity starts again.

"I am age."

"I am time, the defeator of age."

From the stairs, I can hear the rough whispers of the cat. He is licking stray hair. In a moment, he will cough it up, and expect to be fed again.

"I am the tree, that feeds time to it's growing belly-"

"I am the logger, just as fat, that cuts the tree."

She's a royal disaster, that Calamity. I can tell that, all the way down to the tips of her red tangled hair, she's dying to ask me about the logger. What did he have for breakfast ? Are his kids fat too ? Did the time-eater tree get made into beautiful heirloom jewelry box reliquaries, or particle board ? But, to ask would lose the game for her. and that she can not do. And she knows that too, all the way down to her blue painted toenails.

"I am gravity, that causes falls from the tops of forests, the falls that kill"

"I am a dream, after hours of long work, weightless."

The cat coughs.

"I am tax. Tax, that drains paychecks, causing the need for more paychecks, more work, and early mornings."

"I am an unborn child, floating free from day and night-"

The cat wheezes.

"I am birth,"

The cat spits.

"the first step on the road back to that." with this, Calamity thoughtfully inserts her spoon into my coffee and stirs, slowly. The cat swallows. Calamity whispers and repeats her self.

"I am birth."

I stand, nervously, afraid to be nervous, afraid to let her win again. The cat needs food. I'll fix that. Calamity realizes the fix she's put me in and throws her spoon out the window, used. She takes a steak knife from the drawer. The cat's food tumbles into the bowl, and he feasts. I sit and prepare to avoid my defeat.

"You are not ! Earlier, you said that you were the insubstantial nothingness to which we all must fall over to do favors for, or some such. And now you expect me to believe that you are birth, Life-giver ? No. You are not. I am in disbelief." And for final effect, I sip seductively from my cup of coffee and whisper, repeating myself "You are not."

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