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PATRICK KENNEDY

Necromancer

On shelves that climb the walls I keep
In covered jars the dead.
Sometimes I take one down and listen
To what, in life, it said;
Or run a reverent finger down
Its timeworn spine; or spread
Its entrails in my lap and try
To read them; but instead
Often I only want to sit
Among them, as though I
Myself were someone someone else
Would care for when I die.

LAURA J. BOBROW

The Apocalypse

These are the villains I met every night.
If I stayed awake, they turned out all right –
the mean wolf who chased after pigs wound up cooked,
the queen's mirror showed her the truth when she looked.–
but if sleep overtook me before a tale's end,
my dreams filled with visions which were not pretend.
The wolf ate the pigs, and the queen killed Snow White.
The giant killed Jack. I cowered in fright
as mayhem and hunger and mass genocide
conscripted my dreams and would not be denied.

Well, now I'm awake, so will someone please say
why the horrors and madness have not gone away?

The Lazy Cat

Sweet kitchen noises from the house,
the swick as cans release their tops,
the sizzle of a frying pan –
He salivates and licks his chops,
while, closer to his tingling ears,
his drowsy feline mind perceives
that mice pursue their livelihood
and sparrows rustle in the leaves.

At best they'd make a paltry munch.
Soft clouds take form and drift away.
They'll call him when it's time for lunch.

QUINCY R. LEHR

Insomniac Lace Curtain Shitkicker Blues

One man needs to get a life.
One man likes to fuck his wife.
One man needs to "get a job."
One man's an expanding blob
oozing toward the TV set.
He hasn't changed the channel yet.
One man thinks he knows what's right.
One man can't quite sleep at night
but loses track, can't concentrate
on what it was he did, or ate
that keeps him up, his stomach clenched,
what word won't come, what thirst's unquenched.

GERARD SARNAT

Anonymous Haiku

Selfie sticks – solipsistic
centerfolds' ingenious
modern dildos

PETER KLINE

Mirrorform: Devil's Advocate

Don't blame it on the gun;
don't demonize the bullet.
Until the people will it
the killing won't be done.

If God meant anyone
to be delivered, evil
would need to become civil.
Don't blame it on the gun.

LIAM GUILAR

More Than a Broken Token Song

(For the ballad singers, with gratitude and affection)

On a night when the wild wind was raging
Came a knock at the old cottage door
A ghost from her past, who'd come back at last,
A sailor home from the war.

He'd a kitbag slung over one shoulder
Was wearing a fancy new hat,
He'd lost his right leg, so he leant on his peg
And his left sleeve was pinned up and flat.

It's seven long years, said this sailor,
Since I left you and headed to sea.
I've hugged many shores, and kissed many whores
But I knew you were waiting for me.

Round the horn in a storm, we were down to bare poles
Then squashed flat by an eighty foot sea,
She went down with all hands, but I struggled to land
Cos I knew you were waiting for me.

When the Bugis men boarded our trader,
Outnumbered one hundred to three,
I gritted my teeth, then I gutted their chief
Cos I knew you were waiting for me.

He'd wrestled a shark up the Congo,
Been captured by cannibal tribes,
But he'd made his escape from that terrible fate
By offering his leg as a bribe.

He'd been stranded in deserts and jungles,
Been on ships that were crushed by the ice

It came as no shock he'd been stuck on Ayers rock,
And had been to the moon at least twice.

He'd been lost with Franklin, stranded with Bering
Been cook on the Marie Celeste,
Was sunk at Trafalgar, helped burn the Armada
But claimed sailing with Brendan was best.

And so on for fifty-five verses,
Wrecks, pirates and battles and whores
I don't say he lied, but she broke down and cried
When he said, I'm not finished, there's more.

Well you've heard this before I imagine,
And you've guessed how this story will end:
She'll say something silly like, I missed you, Willy,
Then call him her darling again.

But the question you all should be asking
Is who is narrating the story?
Not the man in the gale retelling the tale
To a girl who is bored by his glory.

Seven long years is one hell of a time
(Unless you're a nun), to stay chaste,
While he suffered at sea, she had shacked up with me,
For great sex, and my help round the place.

So I watched from where we'd been lying,
I wanted her back in the bed.
I could see his fine hat, so I took aim at that
And blew off the top of his head.

SUSAN MCLEAN

Debriefing

If he'd done nothing wrong, why run
after we ordered him to stay?
You know, I had to use my gun

to stop him. Was he deaf? He's done
it now. Why didn't he obey
if he'd done nothing wrong? Why run?

The heat was pushing ninety. Son
of a bitch. I didn't have all day,
you know? I had to use my gun.

He could have killed me. Anyone
would do the same. And who could say
if he'd done nothing wrong? Why run

and why pull out his phone? No, none
were sure, but you react the way
you know: I had to use my gun.

We'd tased him first. We meant to stun,
but he got up from where he lay.
If he'd done nothing wrong, why run?
You know I had to use my gun.

JANE BLANCHARD

Fraught

The leaves lie thick and heavy in the yard.
I grab a rake from the garage and start
delittering the sod. The work is hard
enough. Ungloved, my hands begin to smart
from gripping wood. I shift the handle on
occasion just to keep the blisters down.
In time, I make my way across the lawn,
through acorns, sweet-gum balls, and pods, toward brown
leaves mixed with orange, burgundy, and gold,
some solid, others splotched. The wakes of grass,
the piles, become impressive. I grow bold,
then bolder, with each sweep, each turn, each pass.
Once done, I feel a welcome flush of pride,
then want to close my eyes, to dive and hide.

J.P. CELIA

Credits

The screen absorbs the final shot,
Then all turns black, and then ascends,
Drifting upward from the spot,
The names of neither loves nor friends.

What if they fell instead of rose,
These names? and on our unfilmed lives?
Beset our cities like the snows
That irritate and tranquilize?

We couldn't, as we do, ignore
So easily their humble fame.
They'd drift beyond our window, door,
Each glowing, unfamiliar name,

And ask of you and me, of us,
To read them with more interest, care.
But would we if they drifted thus?
But would we if they dusted hair,

And littered street, and smothered roof?
I would not wager that we would.
We'd prove, I think, just as aloof.
Mere residuum from Hollywood!

We'd pile them in piles high.
They'd melt into the thirsty drain.
They'd fall uncared-for from the sky,
And unacknowledged would remain.

IAN COLVILLE

Cash and Carry

Always the profligate is minted fool.
We don't permit exceptions to that rule,
to coin a phrase, and bank on holding out
to spend our stash. Don't doubt

that worn a little thin or somewhat bruised,
all circulating specie that's been used
from legal tender date, will come what may,
be counted out one day.

We say the difference is on what it's spent,
but know it's never mortgage, always rent.
We live on loan and earn the interest paid
with most of us afraid

that none can ever have enough to stave
off wear and tear, no matter how we save.
When dulled and tarnished then it's plain that cache,
when Charon offers cash

and carry by the Acheron, won't be
enough to save the penny-wise. His fee;
the wisest ha'porth ever placed – those two
you couldn't take with you!

JAMES MILLER

Sunny Day

And as the sand became a path I knew
from years before, and running children splashed
my past along the shore, I walked and grew
to who I was – the spreading smiles I passed
a tide that led me in the August sun.
And a new current called me out to swim
and let the waves tell me my day was done
as floating on my back I heard the hymn
of each wave washing off my wrinkled skin
to where with sea-born wings I would begin.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Quincy R. Lehr's poems and criticism appear widely in North America, Europe, and Australia, and his most recent books are *Heimat* (2014) and *The Dark Lord of the Tiki Bar* (2015). He lives in Brooklyn, where he teaches history.

Gerard Sarnat is the late-career author of four critically-acclaimed collections: *Homeless Chronicles from Abraham to Burning Man* (2010), *Disputes* (2012), *17s* (2014) and *Melting The Ice King* (2016). Work from *Ice King* was accepted by over seventy magazines. For *Huffington Post* and other reviews, reading dates, publications, interviews and more, visit GerardSarnat.com. Go to Amazon to find Gerry's books plus editorial and customer reviews.

Peter Kline teaches writing at the University of San Francisco and at Stanford University. A former Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford, he has also received residency fellowships from the Amy Clampitt House and James Merrill House, as well as First Prize in the River Styx International Poetry Contest and the Marr Poetry Prize from Southwest Review. His poetry has appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Five Points*, *Poetry*, *Tin House*, *The Antioch Review*, and many other journals, as well as the *Best New Poets* series and the 2015 Random House anthology of metrical poetry, *Measure for Measure*. He directs the San Francisco literary series Bazaar Writers Salon and is a founding member of the poetry/music collective Nonstop Beautiful Ladies. His first collection of poetry, *Deviants*, was published by SFASU Press in 2013.

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Jane Blanchard lives and writes in Georgia. Her work has appeared previously in *The Rotary Dial* and recently in *Angle*, *Blue Unicorn*, *The Dark Horse*, *Mezzo Cammin*, *The Lyric*, *Orbis*, and *U.S.1 Worksheets*. Her first collection, *Unloosed*, is available from White Violet Press of Kelsay Books.

J.P. Celia's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Rattle*, *The Recusant*, *Barrow Street*, *First Things*, *Tar River Poetry*, and *The Lyric*.

James Miller's most recent publications have been in *Time of Singing*, *The Dark Horse*, and *The Lyric*.