



the
shout



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shout

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for you

We were testing the range
of the human voice:
he had to shout for all he was worth
—Simon Armitage

Hey, you!

Yeah, you. Have a mind forever voyaging? You're about to set sail on the maiden voyage of the S.S. Shout.

A collection of voices so dense, a eustrophic blast of kick-assery so vast, hyperbolic words just won't suffice.

Of course there were hurdles: whuppings and wallops taken from empty pockets and emptier wallets, ennui, despair, primetime TV, day jobs, old beer, new beer, no beer, the Department of Education, alley cats and stray dogs, yearning (oh, the yearning), common colds, the Old West, old age, dementia, death, et cetera.

But with some patience and persistence, we took all that shit, balled it up in our hands, and compacted, compressed, and squeezed like hell.

And out shot a diamond.

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Bad Poet in Love

it's spring and
oh god
why doesn't she love me
oh god
why why why

Bruce Dethlefsen



Drinking a Beer: A How-To

The bartender is not in love with you, no matter how many crumpled-up singles you fold into swans, no matter how many cigarette butts snuff in the ashtray like a heap of rejected saints. The TV is talking about baseball, or talking about talking about baseball. Her hands are thin as swizzle sticks. She is thinking about the shadow of a windmill, an autumn storm rattling the apple trees, her aunt chained to a breathing machine in Rockford, Illinois. The man on your right has just said, "You can't trust them bastards." The man on your left is confusing ice cubes for eyes. She thuds something in front of you: a lozenge of amber, a ring of wet. The bartender is not in love with you.

Now drink.

B.J. Best

In the Wilderness with You

1.

The coals smolder in the early morning.
You put more wood on. In early winter,
this fisherman's pond will glaze over, moon-faced;
the catfish will swim beneath like snowflakes.

2.

We throw the ashes in the brush—white flowers
like dancers I saw once, anatomy of white and pink
dresses,
cranes, stiff-stemmed flowers. Each movement
like they were born this way, like this
is the way they learned to walk.

3.

I find a blackberry patch and fill four buckets
though the mockingbirds nesting there swept and
dove
at me, protecting what I was not after.

Renee Emerson

Trouble

The man on the corner
asks me for money,
says he's just trying
to get out of the trouble he's in.

I suppose the same could be said
for most of us,
and often life
amounts to little more

than working our way
out of one bad place
or another.

But the thing is, trouble never leaves,
only changes form
and I imagine it will follow us
to the grave
and beyond.

I give the man a dollar
and keep one for myself

then continue on
towards
and away from
something.

William Taylor Jr.



Strength

Most powerful
the lion
not
when it roars,
but
when it listens.

David Kowalczyk

[open a door]

open a door

good neighbor
you should be
asleep
all night
through silk walls

the worm

inside
half under
my alarm clock

while rain
white rain

tunnels
beneath
the floor

jim goar

Graffiti Girl Tells Superman: "It's O-O-O-O-Over."

The radio played a three minute love song,
so I thought of you for three minutes
and then you were gone. Result! I danced
in the mega mega refrigerator light
to sing-along songs
that harmonise pop chords
with all the dirty words seen
on dirty walls. Outside the mortuary
it said you were dead easy,
outside the supermarket;
cheap and sleazy. On the condom
factory building you were given billboard
style star treatment, headlining
in giant red letters like a news flash
that you've been crowned
queen slag, everyone's favourite come
and get it greasy whore shag.
Written on the back of bog doors
are odes to the infamy of your
yo-yo drawers, yet this was nothing
to do with poetry; this was poverty
from the metropolis of me

the Gotham City of my ghetto state
of mind; confined, can't fly
'cos I've no cape, and I can't stop the earth
from turning or turn back time
as I've no clean underpants,
yet somehow, in my own little way,
I've survived
your Kryptonite comedown
and I feel
faster than a speeding bullet fine
having cleansed my brushes in turpentine.

P.A. Levy

White Sky

Breakfast ended a while ago, but the fog burns away slowly. The white sky is blinding. Ducks shepherd the children across the pond where the judge rises feet first from a hole in the earth and shouts, "Not you again," and sinks back into his slough.

Sometimes we give in too easily like an old bridge that no one crosses anymore. The blue heron balances on a rock and waits patiently for his meal. Dragonflies couple on the railing, while damselflies flicker over the mucky water.

The man who smokes and smokes lies down on the bench for another smoke. Time for us to slough our leaves and jump in.

I taste the wound under your skin, bitter and bloody. Why not start all over and forget the ending? As it turns out, we can turn back the hands of time, and the clocks are none the wiser for it.

Luca Penne

Quarters

We used to count coins
and if there were only
five quarters
then she would become
the recipient
of the value menu
item.

So why then,
upon
my exit,
were the rocks
thrown
so accurately?

I suppose,
it's in her lungs
to react
in that manner
just as it is
in mine
to escape.

Joseph Goosey

Southern Autumn

Kindness
is
a
shout,
a
gentle
voice

through
the
Southern
countryside

that
earns
nothing
less
than
a
slice
a
pecan
pie



or
to
be
lent
a
helping
hand

stained
with
husk
of
papershells.

Danny
P.
Barbare

The Architect of Wonder

Said the spider
to the striving man:

I
am
still.

See
how
high
I
climb.

David Kowalczyk

Grasping

The front end wedged tight, the tires spinning
in wet and rutted earth; the motion
speckles the sculpted curves of the car,
my satchel and shirt, my jeans and yours.
I took the wrong turn looking for a way out;
it was late, and I heard you'd gone this way before.
I have to hang, balance on the open door
to find steady footing. The water won't soak
here—it blankets the surface, drains in rivulets
to pool at the bottom where the land dips
for the purpose. Walking in the mud,
I look for patches of new grass,
laid flat, plastered to the damp, and their roots
to hold my weight. We sink—you lose a shoe,
sucked from your foot by the wanting ground.
It's a long wait for your brother to come
from home, wearing yesterday's shirt, his hair
wild with sleep, to give us that extra shove,
from the deep, from the mud.

Renee Emerson

in the sink of the undigested morning

trying to catch this crazy woman's words
echoing in Hoboken's train station restroom
dirty water cupped
under a rusted faucet
splashing a corrosive face
wondering if her whispering holds secrets
I couldn't hold onto

as a child believing a bit of pavement glimpsed
between the broken foliage of the woods
to be the crumbling towers of a lost castle

"I used to be photogenic," she said
finally realizing living hard has hardened
her prom queen face
into permanent decay
she has half a bridge of teeth
left swaying in a long mouth

She applies make-up that is not suitable,
too light for her skin which is too dark
her skin now dusty and grooved
her clothes turned gray
her body formless

“an old potato,” she scathed
under fluorescent lights that drive my mind
to naked ugliness

leave me alone
I don't want to know

I fear she will recognize my frequency,
always at 7:52 AM, always at 8:42 PM
and speak to me in a tone that denotes
uncomfortable familiarity

I am always afraid
she will chase me out of the beige stalls
before I am ready

Andrea DeAngelis

Word of the Cool, Book 3

I watch you spend it all on your watch
But time's running out, ticking away
In a way that when it explodes
You become a daddy
Spending even more on your finger ring
Ring, ring of the phone but you're not answering
Because you know who's on the other line
Another call from the baby mother
So why not spend some green
For the kid to eat greens
Instead of on your earrings
More things without a meaning
You've nurtured it
But it won't nurture you
Like your child might one day do
Well at least if you had been there anyway

Deonte Osayande

did it hurt?

when you fell
down from

your barstool—
here, let me help—

your hands are fluttering
like wings

angel wings

b.j. best



Roll a Six to Pass

You are walking down the street and notice a child
with a face
shiny as a Mylar balloon. He is trying to strangle
the head
of his Optimus Prime toy, mimicking the actions of
his father,
an actor who says goodnight to him through films
people rarely watch.
His mother says nothing, waiting for clouds to shed
their rain.

Do you:

- A) Try to find your reflection in his face?
- B) Transform into John Wayne?
- C) Become a cheapo Star Trek effect?

Christian Ward

What She Weighed

Her laugh is the next to last thing I remember. Then her green eyes lit up by the headlights, the vines of roses curling down her dress, what she weighed. When the invitation came we both said no surprise, we're not not invited. But September. But the boys away, not in their dorms but the arms of some wet accomplice. It rained all morning. She couldn't garden, I called in sick. We took a tray of strawberries upstairs and unplugged the cordless. It was still raining when I woke up.

Parker Tettleton

San Francisco Views

Up early to drive to Boston
I feel as naked as Gauguin
in Tahiti, my nerve-endings
exposed to the featureless dark.

Meanwhile in California
you're deep in Freudian repose,
your lovers stacked like cordwood.
Do you sense me nosing about

your sweaty little bedroom
with views of Oakland and the bridge?
Everyone in San Francisco
enjoys a view of something—

a bridge, an island, a neighbor
sunbathing naked on a striped
or otherwise patterned towel.
You, however, will fly home

after the sharks have rejected
your victims bobbing in the gulf.
Nothing like you ever happens
in Boston, the landscape too numb

to acknowledge such adventures.
Only in San Francisco do views
so readily become flesh,
so quickly distort themselves

with awkward, fanciful emotions.
You scent the blood, then you kneel
and drink as if worshipping,
but leave no living witness—

only that ghostly little smile
hovering over the many hills
and reflected like starlight
in the deepest parts of the bay.

William Doreski

Sick Day

Washed up again on the beach of my sofa,
blankets breaking in waves at my ankles,
drool eddying where my head used to lie.
Four p.m. checks on me through the window—
feels my forehead with a stray beam.
Nothing's wrong, I protest,
until a familiar current slithers up my torso,
pulling me to the neglected daylight—
a shore I had ignored.
A tide of contempt lifts me,
slides me back beneath the ocean of the
 afternoon.

Liz Cook

Street Sound

I had nothing
to say until this
barefoot little
girl ran the last
few steps across
the street ahead
of her dad
and I heard
her footsteps
small quick solid
amidst the café chatter
and the idling cars.

Mike Jones



The Answer I Will Offer You

The act of creation is perhaps
more important
than love

certainly more
constant and
tangible

to fill the emptiness
with something that wasn't
there before

is a grand defiance

and the only form of hope
I truly understand

it is the answer I will offer you
no matter the question

it may well be
the last bit of grace
left to us

and right here
and now
I tell you
it is

enough.

William Taylor Jr.

Listing the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time

First, don't pick anything from Pinkerton. That's too obvious. You must select songs *nobody has heard of*. Pick songs found on albums with cover art that could scare children. A graphic picture of a woman giving birth to a dead fish that just looks *so fucking real* that you know it has to be, or a closeup of an old man, with nothing but hate in his eyes, enjoying an abandoned swing set near Chernobyl. To keep the hipsters happy, you should pick three songs by bands from Atlanta that prominently feature the Theremin and are written in 9/8 time. Don't forget to include a long-lost Nirvana b-side of Kurt Cobain mumbling while washing his sweater. The next four-hundred and sixty songs should be written by Bob Dylan at some point before, and only before, he went electric. Finally and unironically, include a cover of Aqualung by a Norwegian pop princess. Any will do.

Sam Barsanti

Thoughts from a Bartender I Met Once

Don't be distracted by the Mosquito's
daily samba. It lives to eat, fuck and die.
Anything else in those moments
is forgettable as the chili coloured
earth that produces nothing. Ancient
Greek philosophers would have been
captivated by them, the way their credo
is raw and bloody like the meat
they lay their eggs in. Drink your tequila;
wipe the salt from your lips. Let
nothing crystalise, cut through to flesh
cloistered and bitter in its solitude.

Christian Ward

The Man on the Screen Tells Me

That two out of three full grown adults who receive medication to treat Major Depressive Disorder or *MDD*, are still experiencing most of the symptoms.

Call him, he says,
if I am
one of them.

Joseph Goosey



all i want

all i want is everything forgotten
and all i need is complete moral amnesia
or love in its totality dead as perfection,

words curling up to die
like time where it belongs nowhere
in life and nightmares,

all i really need is absent pasts
and everything you remember in them,
another mile of time to live through

and hungry feet, all i need is you
dead but still bleeding, the arrogant crow
and the happy corpse it feeds on,

the dead singer, the living song

david mclean

For Cody...

it was funny you know
i was coming into my
dead end today and
saw that great big
regal dog just
sitting there
as always
all calm cool
and collected
on his lawn
the sun
bouncing
off him
in the
snow
no matter
the weather
no matter
the season
winter spring
summer
or fall
with that
proud and poised look

on his face without
a trace of judgment
shame or disgrace
no pre-manufactured
phony cruelty or hate
just pure and simple
unadulterated beauty
looking like buddha
like those great big
lions perched up
on top the stairs
of the n.y. public library
welcoming and protecting
and then couldn't help but
to start naturally laughing
thinking to myself
this sincerely is my
favorite thing my
favorite being
out here.

Joseph Reich

Laparoscopic Appendectomy

My pulse ticks towards the explosion
of the worthless appendix.

I'm too nervous to perspire
and the bomb tech goes by doctor.

The crises in my abdomen
won't make the evening news.

I'll be charged for the miracle
and the feeling of something missing.

Jordan Weigt



After a Night of Drinking

My voice rasps
like your stubble at my throat.

I lick you from my lips:
you taste like sledding down glaciers.

My palms reminisce
the curls at your collar.

I walk with your pulse
between my thighs.

My thoughts drift and stutter,
navigating between sighs.

Melissa McGraw

At Twenty

"Before we read his name
in the headlines and before
half of the jury cried when
his only surviving victim
was put on the stand and before
he was electrocuted so we could
forget about how he had used his hands..."

There was a time when he had wanted to stop,
when no door was wider than the one he held
in his hand. He remembered that story
about the murderer who hid the bodies under
his tongue; those bodies did not exist.
At twenty, he still believed that he was
a lost fragment of a hate letter;
he knew how it was to love.

Kristine Ong Muslim

The Buddhist Triangle

Line AB: Buddha's Face

The eyes of wisdom
are blind to everything
save wonder.

Line BC: Buddha's Heart

The rose's thorns
teach kindness,
not its petals.

Line CA: Buddha's Soul

People will always
scowl whenever you
walk on water.

David Kowalczyk

American Montage

Cue the music: Fast, hard, loud.
Fade in, me running on a treadmill.
No, the beach—my Nikes pound wet sand.
My fists pummel wind. I scare seagulls.
Nothing ahead but shells
and seaweed, post high tide.

Close-up, my face. Jaw still
as stone; upper lip beads of sweat.
Zoom in, my eyes.
Picture the sky a minute
before a summer storm.
Yeah, that's the color.

Cut to me, wearing only a towel,
tan chest glistening via bathroom mirror.
Biceps firm; abs tight.
Black shirt? Red shirt? Blue shirt?
I grab white, classic; Armani sunglasses
hang three buttons down.

Cut to lobby. I hold the elevator
for a hot chick—brunette.
Strike that, blonde. Pan down,

low-cut blouse, snug shorts.
Zoom-in, cotton candy lips
mouthing, “Here’s my number, Kyle.”

“Kyle? Hello? Anyone in there?”
Dr. Rosenberg waves a hand
in my face like he’d hail a cab.
His fingers snap above me, three times.
“Did you hear me?” He asks.
“What did you do today?”

“Nothing,” I say.
His silence connotes disbelief.
“Nothing special,” I add.
“Went to the gym. Got dressed. Came here.”
I tell him my dad beat me when I was ten.
I get his John Hancock for Zoloft.

Cue the music: Slow, soft, quiet.
Pan the length of my canary yellow Hummer.
I mean, Lamborghini.
Music crescendos. I peel out.
Dust clouds form, then dissipate.
Close up, California plates: CUL8R

[requiring this world]

requiring this world
of short sight

to

sit
down

the Olympics are

out the window
and I'm

watching yr neck
in languages and

have only
two eyes

for
taxonomy

emits
reception

a finely tuned retention
a Christmas carol boom

**jim
goar**

Three Dollars

Always by the time the camera
manages to operate
successfully,
I am three bottles in.

Joe! She says. *Is that wine?*

Yes. Yes it is wine
and it was three dollars a bottle
over at Total Wine Express
where they are very nice fellows
and are there, usually,
even on Sundays.

She squeals
with a kind of skeptical
delight and though she never
hangs up, I do hope
that she will be able
to view me
in another form
of light.

Joseph Goosey

The Frogs Beneath

Each day
the frogs
contemplate emerging
from their twenty year coma
and each day
they decide against.

Until the one day
they hear
what can only be raindrops
spattering the desert above,
slipping into cracks,
waking long dormant roots,
ready and willing
to turn the parched soil
into a pleasure garden
for a week or two.

The frogs
give these new developments
appropriate consideration
and then conclude,
why bother
if it's only for a week or two.

No they don't.
They're frogs.
They emerge
because instinct's
all that drives them.
But I almost had you there,
didn't I?

John Grey



The Politics of Dreaming

No human being
could consider life a sin,
or passion, poison.

David Kowalczyk

Good Poet in Love

it's spring and
oh god
why doesn't she love me
oh god
why why why

Bruce Dethelfsen



The Voices

Wisconsin's poet laureate, **Bruce Dethlefsen** lives in Westfield, Wisconsin.

When James Taylor sings, "You've Got a Friend," that friend is **B.J. Best**.

Renee Emerson has learned it's easy to halve the potato where there's love.

William Taylor Jr. lives as best he can in San Francisco with his wife and a cat named Trouble.

David Kowalczyk lives and writes in Oakfield, New York.

Jim Goar edits past simple.

P.A. Levy lives in the heart of the English countryside and is a founding member of the Clueless Collective.

Luca Penne runs a ski lift in Killington, Vermont and builds barns in the summer to make homes for swallows and bats.

Joseph Goosey is currently being driven loony by an actress with a Klimt tattooed to her side.

Danny P. Barbare's favorite pie is pecan, since the pecan tree in his front yard produces more than 20 pounds of papershells each autumn, maybe more.

Andrea DeAngelis is a poet, a novelist persevering after a decade and 1,000 plus pages, and a lo-fi guitarist in a punk-folk band.

Deonte Osayande is a young poet from Detroit attending the University of Detroit Mercy.

Christian Ward is a London-based writer whose work has appeared everywhere and elsewhere.

Parker Tettleton hunts and hyperbolizes somewhere between Franks Wild Years and High Violet.

William Doreski putters around his office two or three days a week and pretends he works for a living although he's only playing with poems.

A **Liz Cook** should not mean, but be.

Mike Jones teaches at Oakland High School—Jack London's alma mater, and also Sonny Barger's.

Sam Barsanti is a very interesting and/or funny person, though he has nothing interesting and/or funny to say.

David McLean is Welsh but has lived in Sweden on a small island in the Mälaren with woman, boat, dogs and cat since 1987.

Joseph Reich is in denial of his mid-life crisis and thus looking forward to the past-future...

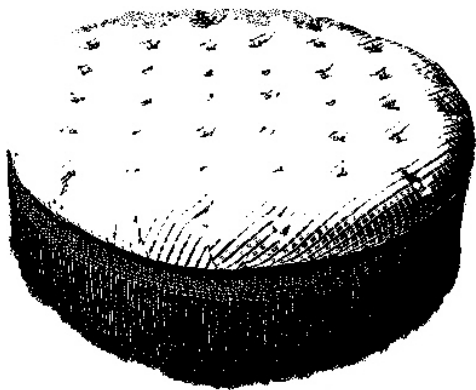
Jordan Weigt can do without regrets, but the scars still remind him that no one is perfect.

Melissa McGraw is a writer by nature and profession, who is bringin' sexy back to poetry.

Kristine Ong Muslim looks to the left and looks to the right before crossing the street.

Amy Gail Hansen is a freelance writer of fiction and non-fiction living in the northwest suburbs of Chicago.

Having failed to leave his childhood behind when he had the chance, **John Grey** is in the process of collecting the first 23 issues of Mad.



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