

the pickled body

Issue 1.1 *The Red Shoes*
Winter 2013

New poems by
Kimberly Campanello
Philip Casey
Todd Swift
and more

Art prints by
Ria Czerniak



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The Red Shoes

Winter 2013

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Editorial

Oh the minute I put them on/I knew I had done something wrong

– ‘The Red Shoes’, Kate Bush

The Red Shoes is a fairytale by Hans Christian Andersen. It tells the story of a girl who, possessed by a pair of red shoes, cannot stop dancing. Even after her feet are chopped from her body, the dance must go on. Our call for submissions was inspired by this idea, embodied in the fable as well as in two other works also called *The Red Shoes*: Powell and Pressburger’s wondrous 1948 film, and Kate Bush’s album released twenty years ago, in November 1993. We sought poems that possessed or are possessed, that moved, that ached.

The sixteen pieces selected for Issue 1.1, complemented by the work of our featured artist Ria Czerniak, are by turns visceral and surreal, vibrant and raw.

Possession is a key theme in the issue. We cannot help but draw a parallel between feet slipping into red shoes and ‘a dark hostility/the hesitation of dogs, slipping slowly into their skin’ (“Incident at Fallow Water” by Maurice Devitt). Nor can we overlook the potential madness of being possessed. ‘He will never, never sleep’ says Billy Ramsell, whose poem “Repetitive Beats” drives forward with such momentum that it could go on forever. In Ruairi Conneely’s “Sweet Nadine”, madness, the kind that only love can feed, leads five brothers to ‘kill themselves over’ a woman.

Love is on good form in this first issue of *The Pickled Body*. In Todd Colby’s poem, ‘Someone put/a red onion on the snow outside/my door, like that would help/change things’. For Kevin Higgins love was ‘a dandelion cut mercifully/short by a lawnmower’. Sarah Stewart shares her cure for love: ‘I took the jar to the woods/and I let the hearts go’.

Not surprisingly the colour red runs through the work presented here. Philip Casey ‘evokes red fields of frost’ in his surreal and cool poem “Awake at Dawn”. Maria Isakova Bennett’s “After Pierre Auguste” dances in the red end of the spectrum with ‘the walls raspberries’. Kate O’Shea draws us in with a red intensity as can only belong to blood: ‘We nine are a star-cluster dancing together/on a dark patch made by a ton of blood’.

The body claims its place too. Kimberly Campanello's "In Bodies as in Gods" declares that 'shapes are blurred/for the best'. Afric McGlinchey's "The Oyster Swims South" sits fat with sensuality like 'a mussel on the tongue'. For David Milligan-Croft the body and love are tied together in an 'exquisite corpse of love'; and, as for Amanda Earl's untitled poem from the "Beast Body Epic", there is no mincing of words, no holding back: 'in the key of feminine/I fuck because I can'. John Ennis, meanwhile, captures the musicality of poetry: 'praise stramin' in like the sun an' the moon dancin'; while, as in the Andersen fable, religion and art are married beautifully in Shane Holohan's "Pietà": 'My friend paints Madonna/A child in her arms.'

We hope you enjoy this inaugural issue of *The Pickled Body*. In the title track of her 1993 album, Kate Bush asserts that 'these shoes do a kind of voodoo'. We think the work collected here attests to that but don't take our word for it. Instead take Todd Swift's, from his poem "Red Shoes": 'So art sets teachers dancing with their slaves.'

– The Editors

Awake at Dawn

Philip Casey

Awake at dawn I hear a joyous whistling
on the street. A man celebrating his being
in the here and now, his day full of promise.
But no, it's not on the street, it's my night
breath playing the reed of a bunged nostril.

Just as yesterday, when I opened the fridge,
I heard a cock crow in the far distance,
evoking red fields and frost, loss and pledge,
but it was nothing more complex
than the exhalation of a milk carton.

And just now, I draw my watch from my pocket
and read time from a slur of leg-warm chocolate.
Another, river time from a forgotten
life where a unicorn is waiting to ask
where my spirit has been for so long.

The Oyster Swims South

Afric McGlinchey

I remember the rough hand
of a fisherman who placed
a mussel on my tongue.
He knew, of course,
that the road to gluttony leads on to lust.
Casanova's trick was oysters
passed from his mouth to a novice's.
Cleopatra's lucky lovers licked honey and ground almonds
from her intimate parts.
She also understood the warmth of wine
and tickle of the spices,
while Josephine trusted blindly
in the aphrodisiac power
of the evanescent violet.
For me, dark sacks of shellfish
streaming seawater
will always lead
to a clandestine and ruffled bed,
improvising during bedroom romps
with what I have at hand.
Lust and gluttony, the only sins
encompassing
the possibility of style...

Red Shoes

Todd Swift

I wanted to own you because I couldn't become
the woman I wanted to be, except in ways
that frightened me more than possessing you

would, which is why I made you do the things
I made you do, all the while watching beauty
dance and sway somewhere beyond me, all

the same; and this is always the master's game
when the pupil has the body he so craves.
So art sets teachers dancing with their slaves.

The Talking Stiletto

Kate O'Shea

I am the voice of nine women
talking at once, steadily detached,
glutinous, discussing prayers and spares.

Awkwardly bumping with planets.
They are colossal but colourless,
relating the epic of the mutilated groin
that is divine. (It has to be divine.)

We pretend to be colder than we are
and eat the sex organs of a dolphin.

This is because we remember
the chaste rhythm of the sea
and dread the narwhal with his tusk.

We nine are a star-cluster dancing together
on a dark patch made by a ton of blood.

We sit dipping fingers in a cup humming
a song that is nasal, (more a whine).
We are Christ with housemaid's knee
incomplete without our toiletries.

We are the daughters of colonials,
an organised group living close together:
our infrastructure of clotheslines
have made us experts on the weather.

Our mothers were born in interesting times
when the universe was a disc.
And I, the voice of nine women, was burnt as a witch.

Incident at Fallow Water

Maurice Devitt

When we found you hiding in the well, we knew nothing
of what had gone before - spoor of fear streaked across

the lining of the night. A rattle of wheels in the courtyard,
a knock on every second door and the draught of a familiar

voice, thought to be forgotten. We can only imagine the freight
of time, the mocking of buttons and, woken to a dark hostility,

the hesitation of dogs, slipping slowly into their skin.
As you hurried through the blackened kitchen were you

saying goodbye or did your eyes set on a cobweb in a corner
of the moon? Did you mistake your footsteps for his and expect

to meet yourself running away? When you opened the door
were you relieved by the rush of silence, the sameness of stars

and a pathway visible only to slippared feet? The scissors we found
were blunt enough for clipping herbs, but not much else, and the blood

was never matched. Now between your nightmares you speak of a man
who worked the farm, gentle hands, cap pulled down to hide his eyes.

untitled poem from *Beast Body Epic*

Amanda Earl

no Flavia but castani
thunder eyes brimming

a female Heathcliff
who doesn't wait

for permission to brood
in the storm of this brouhaha

a cockswoman, a gigola
lotharina of lust

there's no word
for my hunger

in the key of feminine
I fuck because I can

Le Cadavre d'Exquis, de l'Amour

David Milligan-Croft

Outside the vineyard,
Droplets of rain refresh us,
Along with the bottle of white wine
On the wrought iron table.

There's a sunflower between us
On the cover of your notebook;
We take it in turns
To write our exquisite corpse, of love.

Occasionally, we stop
To exchange wine through *baisers*,
While the rain makes our words bleed,
Like your mascara at Nice airport.

Draguignan, 1999

The Spirit of Ellie Carr Praises John Joe Nevin an' the Sun an' the Moon Dancin'

John Ennis

Me man, he shakes me, wakes me, says he look out the back winda'
The wurld's turnin' upside down, praise for one of us, will ya
Look, w'man, praise stramin' in like the sun an' the moon dancin'
of a May Mornin'
An' our young fella an' he dancin' round the world champi'n in the ring
Batin' the shite outa him an' the whole country cheerin' mad
Hay fields stopt an' the cities listenin' an' those that wouldn't bid
Us th' time a day yisterd'y now have th' time for us
All because of our own John Joe. An' good holy Jesus

I know now naythur fire in me eyes nor the smoke
That chokes from th' fresh ash fire will make
Me forget when his young han's lifted in vict'ry
An' he with th'other blows a kiss to th' broth'r in the sky
Losht in anoth'r world, I tell ya, all this out our little back winda
You'll never bate that kinda spir't in a young fella.

Note: The words of traveller Ellie Carr are recorded in the book *Traveller Ways, Traveller Words* published by Pavee Point. Ellie died in a caravan fire.

Sweet Nadine

Ruairi Conneely

Thin Nadine,
the cow-herd's girl

A game lass,
daring

She let us all take turns with her
and she with us
that one night
grand night
after the moonlit moonshine raid

All our flesh exposed
orange by the campfire light

We five brothers

we all fell in love

and ended up killing each other

over her

Pietà

Shane Holohan

Dark mirrors the window
Beyond it remembrance
A garden of toys

*My friend paints Madonna
A child in her arms*

Oil grasps at canvas
Shaping an echo
of faces long gone

*My friend paints Madonna
A child in her arms*

From the dim of the corner
those same faces peer –
Witness to reincarnation

*My friend paints Madonnas
A child in their arms*

He reaches to hold her
The curve of her face in
the stroke of his hand

*My friend paints Madonna
His child in her arms*

Four prints for *The Red Shoes*

Artist statement

Ria Czerniak

As soon as I heard the theme of the publication, I was determined to be part of it. I've always been a huge Kate Bush fan, but it was only when I read Hans Christian Andersen's *The Red Shoes* that I really got excited. It has to be one of the darkest, most profound stories I've read in a long time. The 'don't be distracted by your fancy shoes when you're meant to be praying' moral of the story gives it its fable-like quality. The imagery Andersen creates, however, takes it in another direction; the Wonderland-like growing and shrinking of spaces, the enslaved wearer of the relentless red shoes, all lent themselves readily to visual interpretation. The hardest task was to choose which element to focus on.

I spent the summer working on sketches and in September took my notebook on my holiday to the Greek islands. In an archaeological museum in Delos I came across a plinth where a statue had once been. All that remained were the feet, durable and rooted. The Greek architecture, the local hibiscus and the surrounding hillsides also made their way into the drawings.

For me, the enduring area of interest in *The Red Shoes*, the part that I couldn't get out of my head, was the moment Karen's beloved shoes took on a life of their own. I tried to capture their seductive power, their ribbons like snakes slyly wrapping themselves around all they encountered.

I hope you enjoy this work even half as much as I enjoyed creating it.

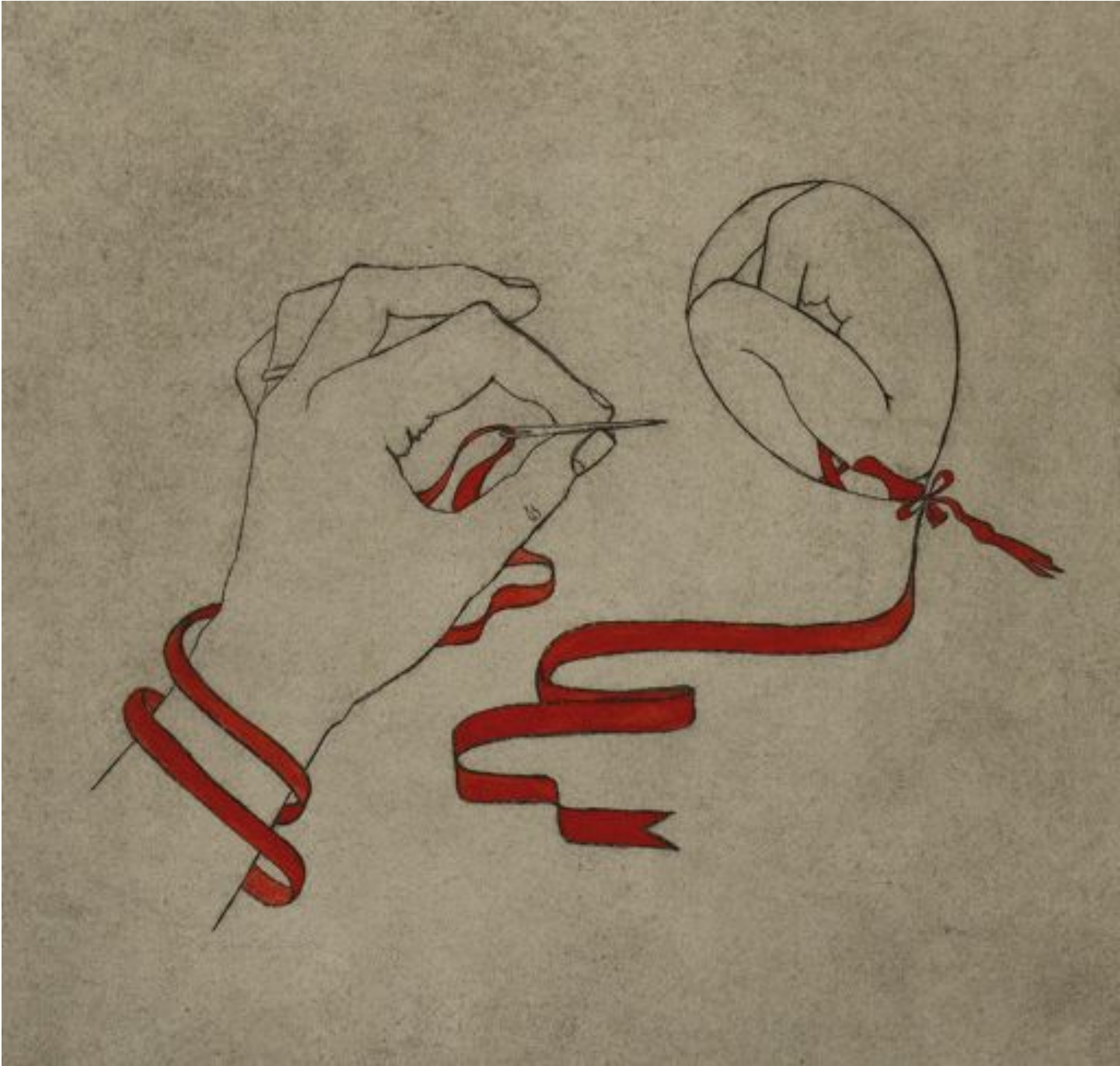
Page 18: *There is No Sadder Sight than a Woman Betrayed by her Own Shoes*

Page 19: *Subsumed*

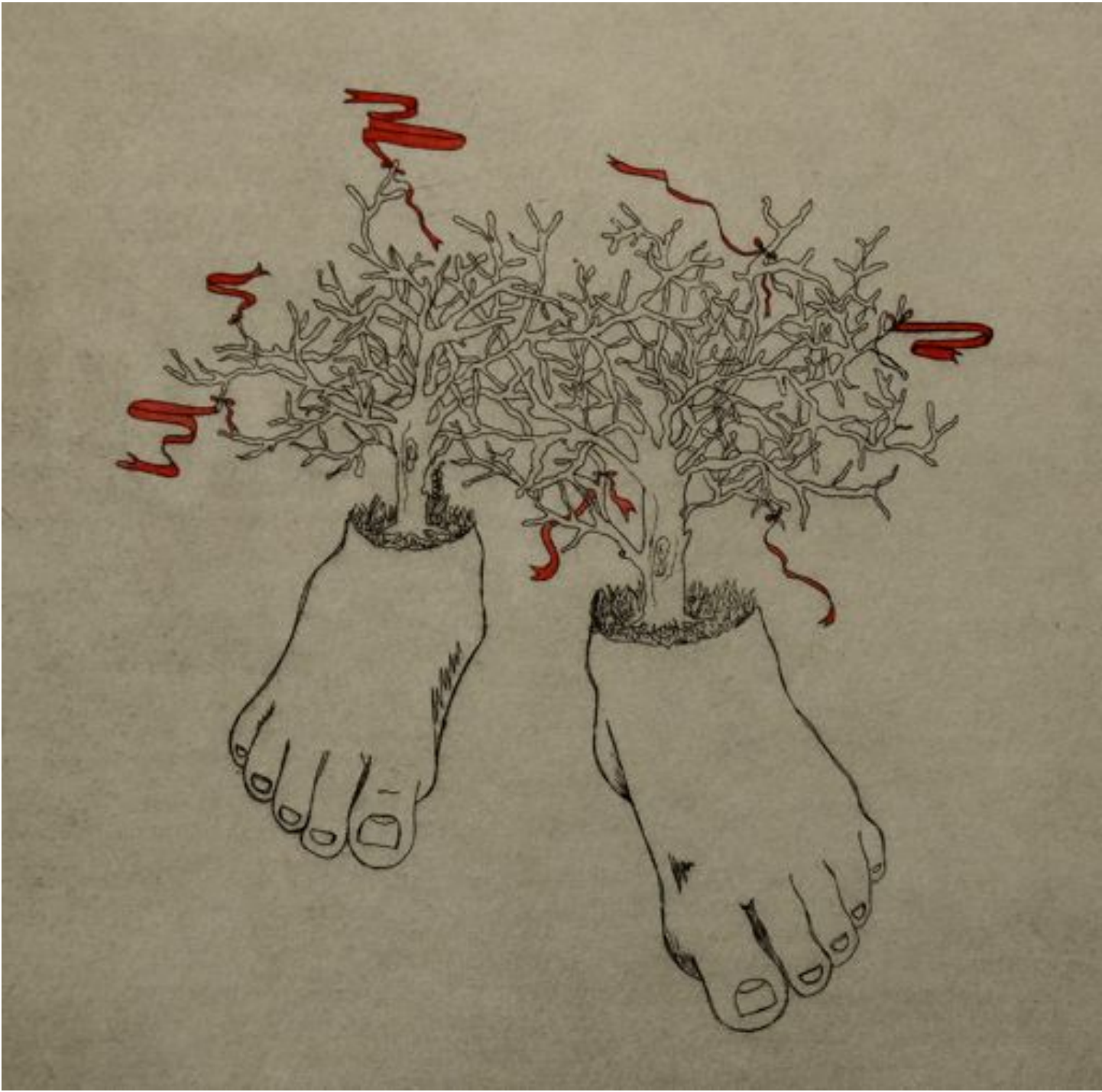
Page 20: *Carried Away on a Glorious Whim*

Page 21: *Appearing from the Debris*









Red Onion in the Snow

Todd Colby

An elegant blitz of slush
is something I can wake up to.
My sheets have jelly on them.
All my books are marked with severed
pinkies. Out in the living room someone
spilled corn on the pillows
and stinky green multivitamins
are strewn on the floor.
What's going on here?
I'm alone with the
crisp metallic clang of the radiator and the sounds
of snow removal machines humming
together creating a wobbly harmony.
The day is blank. Someone put
a red onion on the snow outside
my door, like that would help
change things, like I would ever
find love again.

Not Red Nor a Rose, No

Kevin Higgins

Our love was a dandelion cut mercifully
short by a lawnmower. Our words,
a concert at which it was best to turn up
late and leave early. Arrogant as the heir
to one of the biggest fortunes in Miami accused
of murdering a prostitute;
our plans were shallow as talk
of the next Men Without Hats reunion.
From the off we were an international
political crisis in the making. We were history
coming up out of the drains.

Our promises to each other
were a spare set of dentures
trampled underfoot by burglars.
The story of our break up:
a long, filthy handkerchief
it's taken me twenty years
to unwind from my pocket
and place for safekeeping
under my pillow.

after Robert Burns

Repetitive Beats

Billy Ramsell

This is the sound of repetitive beats.
Ruff Diamond synchs with the vinyl.

These are repetitive surgical snares.
Ruff's in synch with the tables and faders on the 6 a.m. shift.
He's in synch with the Technics and circuitry.

These are machine-born,
the fills, the drilled rim-shots,
to which Ruff rocks on his heels that are callused from dancing,
all-night dancing to Calibre and Subsource
and the boys from Breakology.
Can his sleep-starved eyes even see past the stage he stands on?
His jaw muscles rotate, his beard smells of beer,
but his sober right hand caresses the vinyl
he's slipped from its pink plastic sheath,
massages that spinning wax, nudges it,
takes a few RPMs out of it, feels it synch
with the beats to which the landscape vibrates
as his left hand pushes a fader up.

This is insistency.
Under the shifting piano parts,
under the fat dropped-in bassline,
the repetitive beats keep on seamlessly streaming
from the speaker-stacks,
through the marquee with its seven demented dancers
and into the light,
this-not-quite-morning light
in which curtain after curtain melts or falls away
to leave another curtain of diminished greyness:
grey-milk, mackerel, milk-bone,
receding asymptotically toward dawn.

These are the beats,
these the repetitive climbing piano parts,
that pass through the mammal scent,
the manure and ripening scent of the portaloos
toward the castle walls,
over the fields of massive, fantastic-coloured mushrooms
that appear and disappear with the suddenness of mushrooms.
In this one a couple are making love.
On a cloud of jeans and sleeping-bags, of underwear,
in the aquamarine tent-light he kisses her thighs.
While in this one poor Donncha burns.
He burns, ocean-pupiled, in the canvas-amplified heat of coming dawn,
rocking and turning in his fusty womb.
Useless. He will never, never sleep.

But Fionn hears nothing of that precision and rage,
his brain massaged by the delta waves,
by the black and milky waves of dreamless slumber.
His Buckfast-stained jeans stick out through the tent flaps, gather dew.
Over his head, over the huddled domes he lies in,
the repetitive beats float down the scrubbed slope
to the oak grove in the manor garden.
Quercus robur and *Quercus petraea*.
Do memories move through them like plant lice?
Of sunlight lapping the parasoled lawns
and the nut-cracker clunk of mallet on ball;
those June, undying afternoons of lemonade and bathing suits,
vast imagination-baiting bathing suits,
and fumbling red-faced embraces behind the kissing tree?
Of course not.

Now their leafy, convoluted antennae
shelter the dirty-faced hippy children,
Ochre and Jade,
who jump around to the sound of repetitive beats,
who shimmy and jig to the hi-hats Ruff Diamond slips into the mix,
half-headed by their half-asleep Dad.
His grey lips clasp on a soggy joint
from which flakes of ash strafe his tartan kaftan
as he stares into his palm-temperature Stella can.

Brendan, beside him,
stirs the tiny hell of the campfire's remnants,
all cinder fields and rivers of slag,
drinks milk and thinks about sausages.

This is the sound of repetitive beats.
This is the relentless climbing piano part.
Jade chases Ochre round the teepees and handcraft stalls.
A grey-eyed, glassy-eyed reveller
lifts her skirt up from her flowered wellingtons,
slips her knickers down and pisses behind the kissing tree.
To Bren the beats seem almost visible
as they spread over the lake water's clarity.
Do they dull its almost perfectly reflective surface
like breath over glass
as they float toward the midge-smudged distant shore,
toward the lines of blurred and water-colour conifers?
He takes a mouthful of milk direct from the bottle.
He pours. Oil on the pan.
The beats criss-cross his raw, darkening brain.
His weary brain. He closes. His eyes.
Just as Ruff stabs down on the mute button
and fills the dawn with a sudden, juddering silence
like when the washing machine stops shuddering, like when the

In Bodies as in Gods

Kimberly Campanello

In bodies as in gods,
shapes are blurred
for the best.

The Shiva Linga paintings
of Rajasthan
show god's hard-on

as a cosmic egg
just as Hildegard von Bingen
shaped the universe

into a flowering
vulva, an egg veined
with starlight.

The cosmos –
a hard-on
we can dive into

like a cunt,
an abyss that won't
reflect back

anything
that we know.
In bodies as in gods,

wetness is wetness.
Holy water flung
from a pine branch.

Milk poured over wood.
The cave drip
at Carrowkeel.

The crack my hand
slips into
and holds.

The Pickle Jar

Sarah Stewart

I pickled the hearts of my lost loves,
dropped them in like small shut fists
cloudy and red in their sourness

and shelved them high
where the light would hit them
each morning. There they nestled

next to a tadpole jar, nettles in soil
a broken sundial – and I waited.
Months on weeks on days

until I had frogs, green shoots,
the spike of shadow on a piece of dial.
Then I took the jar to the woods

and I let the hearts go.

Contributors

Maria Isakova Bennett lives in Liverpool, from where she sometimes travels – with a suitcase full of diaries and a head full of stories and art. She graduated with an MA in Creative Writing in 2012, and has poems in *The New Writer*, *Envoi*, *Orbis*, *Crannóg*, *Boyne Berries*, *Prole*, and *Poetry Bus* (forthcoming).

Kimberly Campanello was born in Elkhart, Indiana, and now divides her time between Dublin and London. Doire Press published her debut collection *Consent* in 2013. Her pamphlet *Spinning Cities* was published by Wurm Press in 2011. Her poems have appeared in publications in the USA, Canada, the UK, and Ireland.

Philip Casey is the author of four poetry collections and three novels. In early 2014 he will publish his selected poems, <<*tried & sentenced*>>, via his independent imprint, eMaker Editions.

Todd Colby is the author of five books of poetry. He blogs at gleefarm.blogspot.com. Brooklyn, New York is his home.

Ruairi Conneely writes fiction, journalism and bits of philosophy and criticism. He is an assisting volunteer with the 7 Towers Agency. He's coming up on ten years in Dublin. He is all about big ideas and the beauty of language and always, always refers to himself in the third person.

Ria Czerniak is a Dublin-born artist and musician. 2012 saw the release of her debut album *Souvenir*, for which she also did the artwork. She recently returned to education, studying print at NCAD.

Maurice Devitt, after a career in business, completed the Poetry Studies MA at Mater Dei in Dublin, focusing on the poetry of James Wright, Charles Bernstein and others. He was recently shortlisted for the *Cork Literary Review* Manuscript Competition, Over the Edge New Writer Award, Westport Arts Poetry and the Doire Press International Chapbook Competition. Poems accepted recently by journals in Ireland, England, Scotland, the US, Australia and Mexico. He is a founder member of the Hibernian Writers' Group and is preparing a first collection.

Amanda Earl is a Canadian poet, publisher and pornographer living in Ottawa, Ontario. Her poetry has been published in Australia, Canada, France, the UK and the USA. Visit www.amandaearl.com or Twitter @KikiFolle.

John Ennis's verse has appeared recently in *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Stinging Fly*, *Riddle Fence*, *Outburst*, *The Burning Bush 2*, *New Hibernia Review*, *The Clifden Anthology*, *Boyne Berries* and *Catechism: Poems for Pussy Riot*. *Postponing Ásbyrgi* (poems in response to Sigur Rós), was published by Three Spires Press in 2013.

Kevin Higgins's poetry features in the anthology *Identity Parade – New British and Irish Poets* (Bloodaxe, 2010). *Mentioning the War*, a collection of his essays and reviews, was published by Salmon in April, 2012. Kevin's fourth collection of poetry, *The Ghost In The Lobby*, will have its U.S. launch in February and its Irish launch in April.

Shane Holohan lives near the sea, as he always has, this time in Ringsend, Dublin. When he's not making ads, teaching creativity or studying physics, he likes to write, take photos and surf.

Afric McGlinchey's collection *The lucky star of hidden things*, was published by Salmon in 2012. A Pushcart nominee, she won the 2010 Hennessy Poetry Award and 2012 Northern Liberties poetry prize (USA), and has been placed, commended and shortlisted in a number of competitions, including *Magma* and the Bridport. www.africmcglinchey.com

David Milligan-Croft is the author of the novel, *Love is Blood*, and the poetry collection, *Let me fail in sunshine*, (both available on Amazon). He was shortlisted for the *Independent on Sunday* short story competition in 1997 and his poetry has been widely published in Ireland, Britain and the U.S.

Kate O'Shea is currently shortlisted for the Cork Literary Review Poetry Manuscript Competition. Wurm Press published her chapbook *Crackpoet* in 2013. She was shortlisted for the Patrick Kavanagh Award 2012 and received a special commendation in 2013. Her first collection will be published by Riposte Books in 2014.

Billy Ramsell holds the Chair of Ireland Bursary for 2013. He edits the Irish section of the Poetry International website and recently judged the Shine Strong award for best first collection by an Irish poet. He has been invited to read his work at many festivals and literary events around the world. His second collection, *The Architect's Dream of Winter*, will be published shortly by the Dedalus Press.

Sarah Stewart is a writer, editor, and Co-Director of The Lighthouse Literary Consultancy. Her poetry has appeared in *Anon*, *Mslaxia*, and *The Scotsman*; and her first children's novel will be published by Stripes in 2015. She lives in Edinburgh and has never pickled a heart.

Dr Todd Swift, born in Montreal, now in London, is Director of Eyewear Publishing Ltd, and currently University Teacher in Creative Writing, University of Glasgow. His blog is *Eyewear*. He is author of eight collections of poetry, and an editor of over a dozen anthologies.

The Pickled Body

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