

Logue

David Fishkind (ed.)

Lorian Long

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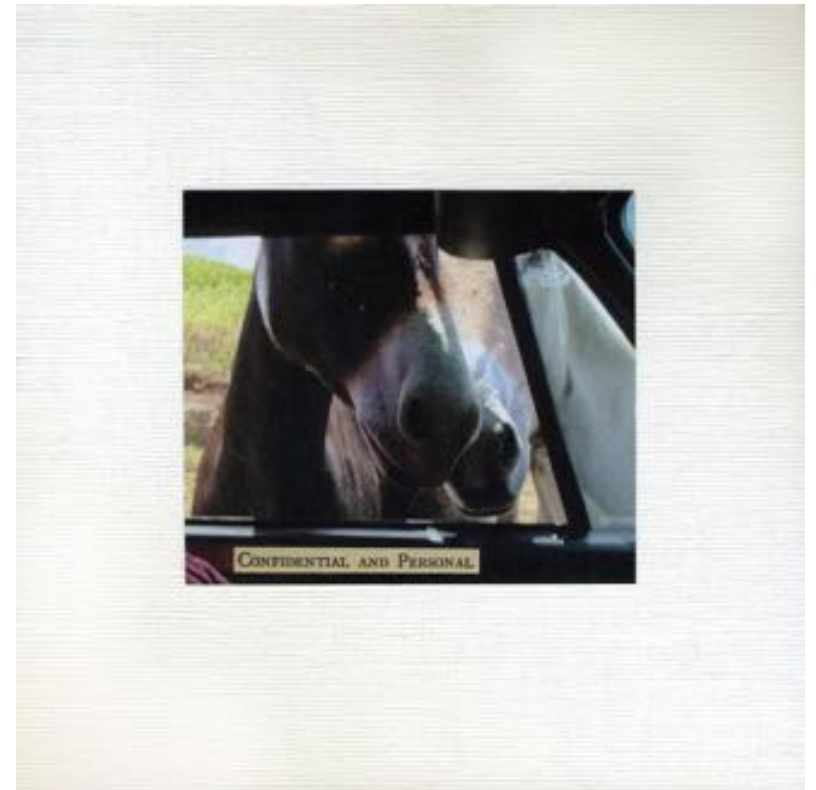
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Andrew James Weatherhead



Timothy Willis Sanders

Acronym

Max picks up the cordless phone and says, "Bill's books, this is Max, how can I help you?"

"Uh, you have the wrong... OK," Max says.

Max hangs up and sees Barry and Bill shaking their heads.

"You answer the phone too casually," says Bill, scrolling through Amazon reviews of Fast Five.

"Go back to the title," says Bill, "Boys do y'all know anything about Fast Five? My grandson wants the DVD for his birthday. "

Barry says, "Fast Five is good."

Max says, "Yeah, real good. I saw it with Julia."

Barry looks at Max and says, "You should say Max in EP, or Max in PR."

"That's terrible," Bill says, "You'll say you're Max, the Events Planner, or Max from Public Relations. We can't be too casual here."

Bill clicks Checkout Now. Max begins to speak and the cordless phone rings.

Max stares at Barry and says, "Bill's books. I'm Max, Event Planner from Public Relations. How can I assist you?"

Barry nods his head.

"Oh, hi," Max says, turning away from Barry

and Bill, "Julia... look I can't... I can't talk right now."

Max hangs up and stares at Barry.

"That's much better," says Bill.

"Sure is," says Barry.

"I'm going to check my email on the computer in my office," says Bill, "I'm supposed to get an email confirmation."

Max watches Bill disappear into his office. Max moves toward Barry.

"C'mere," Max says.

Max pinches and pulls at Barry's earlobe. He picks up office scissors and cuts off Barry's earlobe. Max sets the earlobe on the register and hits the earlobe with the cordless phone until the register starts ringing.

"Okay you can stop now, asshole," says Barry, picking his earlobe from the register.

Max watches Barry walk away.

"Hey, they're saying there's something wrong with my method of payment!" says Bill from his office.

The DJ plays "Pop Champagne" by Birdman.

"Whenever I see him on BET, I think, 'you dumb nigger,'" says Max, "Seriously, I think that."

Jaime's eyebrow twitches. He looks at a naked woman picking up dollar bills from the stage floor.

"The videos are just dumb," says Max. "Why does Birdman need a helicopter?"

"I don't know. Helicopters are cool," says Jaime.

"Gentlemen, put your hands together,"

says the DJ, "We got Misti steppin to the stage!" Misti grips a pole and vaults herself up. She slides down with her legs.

"I fucked Barry up at work today," says Max, "Tried to tell me how to do my job. Tried to acronym me!" Max takes a drink of Bud Light and burps.

"That's crazy," says Jaime.

"Bill was in the office and I fucked him up. I had to."

"Earlobes?" says Jaime.

"Yep. Had to."

"Sounds like it. This Misti girl is talented."

Misti crawls across the stage while tossing her hair from one shoulder to the other.

The DJ plays "Creep" by TLC. Misti puts her breasts on Max's nose. Her perfume reminds Max of Julia. Max notices an orchid tattoo above her navel.

Misti watches herself grind on Max in the mirrored walls. The song ends. Misti sits on Max's leg. Max takes a drink of Bud Light and hands Misti two twenties.

"This guy at work, tried to acronym me today," Max says, "He tried to tell me I should answer the phone like 'hey this is Max in PR, I'm a retard.'"

Misti looks at her nails. "Public Relations Department' makes sense," Misti says, "But not your name and '...in PR.' PR could mean anything. Like Pole Retailer, or Product Research."

Max puts his hand on Misti's orchid and pushes. Misti falls and lands on her tailbone.

She stands up and looks at her nails.

"What? You didn't like her?" says Jaime.

"I did. She just smelled like Julia," says Max.

Zachary German

For

I can't keep waiting for something to go right so I can further correct things. She had a thing of wine, one of those like plastic little like, or sort of they look like laminated paper containers. A some kind of a container made out of like a like petroleum-based thing. Is that—is that what it is? At the Wine & Spirits store in Philadelphia I'd see the Jim Beam um, I guess the fifths of Jim Beam, they would have them in a glass bottle and then they'd have them in a like a plastic container, and the plastic container like on the where it had the price listed on the, on the like on the end of the shelf, underneath the whiskey, it would say like JIM BEAM 750mL PET, or something. And I knew it had to do with it being plastic, which is like, how it means that it comes from petroleum. Maura and that idiot had gotten one that time.

But now there's, it's like a yellow bottle, I was going to say bottle but it's not a bottle, it's like this kind of some kind of a just a plastic container that you see sometimes now. It's not clear—um, or transparent. It's like almost like paper when you look at it, but it's plastic. Petroleum. A there's a uh coconut product comes in it. Anyway. The uh, at the store

across the street I was in there not too long ago I was looking for like a ten dollar bottle of rosé, because I when we'd shot the movie thing or sometime I know Brice had brought over a bottle of what I thought to be like a ten dollar rosé and he'd said it was from over there. I was having a hard time finding anything for like that kind of price in the refrigerated thing. I think I got the like sixteen dollar bottle of white wine that is a liter, a liter bottle. And yeah did I say I heard someone say like "Pit bull coming through." And it was this woman, this like drunk woman. She was buying the kind of wine that Diana had, the little like plastic thing. I guess I'd like seen it, you know like at the store before then. But this woman really... the thing, or a thing, is that she was drinking from it already, one of these like petroleum-based containers, they look like the outside is paper almost, like laminated paper. With a straw I mean, when she came into the store. The opening is like how on the orange juice things. But the orange juice is like a laminated paper, this isn't. It's like petroleum. She had a pit bull. And then she went and bought another one, or two even. Her money fell down her like dress, or she said it did anyway, and like she asked the guy working there to reach down and get it for her. She was acting poorly, I'd say.

She went ahead of me in line and after she got out of there the employees, there was the man who she wanted him to reach for the money down her dress, and there was a woman, they like said things about the woman. The man said that he like had had his

arms straight out to the side when she had like hugged him so that the cameras could pick up how that like he hadn't touched her. That whole thing, it surprised me. It all just surprised me. The cameras.

But Diana she was drinking that kind of wine. She'd texted me that maybe I shouldn't come over because she was crying and drinking wine. She wasn't crying when I got there. I went down on her for a little and then asked if she had a condom. She said she didn't have one and asked if I wanted to pull out. I said I didn't want to. She smoked some cigarettes in bed. It was okay.

Ben Gocker

Life Without Shame

You drank 6 bottles of Bass last night and 2 bottles of Carlsberg. You looked over Dr. Cram, rearranged some of the dialogue, doing so by reading aloud to yourself. You phoned Clarke. You texted Jon. You looked at Facebook and Gmail. You were tired and down and went to bed around 11. You aren't too hungover this morning. You amused yourself while getting ready for work by coming up with a comedy routine. You walked around the apartment—here in underwear, there in jeans, fully clothed—telling the story of the first time you ejaculated. You thought your observations were clever. You said aloud, in the empty apartment, Sprite should make pre-cum—“Sprite pre-cum—it would be thick and sticky, like Pedialyte.” You think it is weird to be writing all of this down. Certainly, you think, it would be a mistake to perform it anywhere. The M is here. You are on the M train. You think you hear someone speaking Japanese. You decide it's Arabic. McCaulay Culkin is on the cover of the Post. You look to your left. The man speaking Arabic is laughing loudly holding a half-eaten Snickers. You can hear someone's music through their headphones. What is it? You've heard the song before—you think you've

heard it while grocery shopping. You don't feel so tired. Maybe it was all the vitamin B you took last night. A Number Lady sits down across from you. She rests a pair of large dark sunglasses on her head. The sun comes through the lenses which you see are tinted purple. A young woman—your age?—standing to your left reads from a Kindle. You're about to leave Myrtle-Broadway. The train starts to move before you finish that last sentence. You hear someone opening something. You look up. It's a woman across from you, a black woman with blonde hair. You look down at her hands. She has long jeweled nails. She sighs. She is drinking Nestlé Quick. Chocolate. You stand up to let a kid sit down. You're about to put the notebook away, to turn to look out the window. You're leaning against the doors and they open. You hadn't been paying attention. Now you look out the window. You pass above a restaurant called Cozumel. You are at Marcy. There is some snow in the air. You see an ad on the train and you think you're dreaming: "The official snack of Mercedes Benz Fashion Week." Fiber One. You look from the ad to a woman sitting beneath it. She is on the phone speaking Spanish. What are her pants called, you wonder, the kind that end at the knee? They are a shade lighter than her nail polish, both of which are nearly identical to the red of the walkways on the Williamsburg bridge, over which you're passing now. Another young woman—younger than you?—is reading from a Kindle. You're almost in Manhattan. You think you

should tell a joke in your stand-up routine about giving your seat to someone on the train. Something about a benefactor. A young guy—maybe your age—is doing the Times crossword. You remark—to yourself—on his fingerless gloves. You look at everyone's shoes. His are Sambas. You're almost at Broadway-Lafayette. You have a headache. You're on the B. You recognize a woman you've seen in the past on this train. She will get off when you do, at 7th Avenue. You look down at her hands. She is holding a string of pale green beads. She has leopard print tights on. You try not to stare. She is older than you, Chinese, speaking softly to herself. You're on the Manhattan Bridge. You like the effect the bridge spans have on the light that enters the train. You think of your dream from the other night—the light strobing through the trees. You think of the snow in that dream. Suddenly you feel very hungry. You thought earlier about stopping off to buy yogurt. Maybe you will. But I don't have any cash, you think. You remember it's payday. Now you're in Brooklyn. You have to proctor two exams at work this morning. In looking over the exam materials for Rapael D. you realize the university—in this case the University of Chicago—failed to send the exam. You only have two blue books and a set of instructions but no exam. You phone Rita V. at the University of Chicago. You are relieved when she picks up on the first ring and assures you it will be no problem to email the exam to you. It is a two-page Word doc in Hebrew. You send it to the printer but the printer is

out of paper. You look at a red light blinking on the printer. You get up from your desk and go to the map room where the paper is stored. You see Aurelia in there—you can't remember now, was her shirt yellow? Orange? But she wore a bright shirt, you remember that much. She is in there with three other women, all of whom are part of a grant-funded digitization project. You see Amanda, who just started working at the library. You look at her and her laptop and her Dunkin Donuts coffee. You get two reams of paper and leave. What did you do this morning? You are writing this at the Brooklyn Museum/Eastern Parkway subway station. Now you are on the 2. You slept fitfully, you were thinking about text messages. You woke at 7:30 to a rasta ringtone. In your dream you were traveling down a snowy, sunny, blue-snow road. A man you didn't know with red hair and a beard drove you though you were in the driver's seat. You talked about what Lucy was spending her time doing in Hudson. All the time you rode with him light strobed through the bare trees on either side of the road. You are still writing this on the 2 thinking of the coincidence of snow in your dream and this evening's snowfall. You just watched someone—maybe your age?—squeeze himself through the train doors. You thought, he looks red, he looks pink, he looks angry. You are going to see Lucy. You can't recall what you were writing before this sentence. You get on the 4 train. Before getting on the train you see two girls who had been on the tour you gave at the library today. You

were in a bad mood before giving that tour. Before the tour, in the bathroom, you thought to yourself, maybe I am diabetic. In that bathroom last night just before you left work you saw a cockroach in the urinal. You said to yourself, poor guy. You wondered why you said that. You need to pick up a lime before you see Lucy. You want to see the Knicks and Wizards game tonight. You've been thinking so much about Jeremy Lin. On the 5 train, not the 4—did you write 4 before?—the man sitting opposite you is talking to himself. You wanted to describe him differently but instead you just continued to write. You're just remembering this now: on the M this morning, when you pulled out *Steppenwolf* by Herman Hesse—a book about which you feel a small amount of embarrassment when reading in public—a young man—younger than you—but not a man, not a boy, in his twenties—with long black hair and a smile shaped like a kayak, said he was reading that book too. Why did you write “kayak”? You were seated he was standing. You looked up at him and spoke. What did you say? What did he say in response? You can't remember it now, more than a year since the conversation happened and a year since you first wrote about it in your small notebook, made from a manilla folder and painted with gouache. He had a Kindle in his hands—but you think to write now—or some other kind of e-reader. More people are getting on the train. You feel relieved when the man who had been talking to himself gets off the train. You think to remark on how

funny that is—you writing like this sitting across from him. The train is getting crowded. You are about to put the notebook away. You are at work at the reference desk typing now in this Google Doc. Is this file a Google Doc? Is that how you refer to it? You refer to it as a Google Doc, sometimes Google Drive maybe. You hardly ever refer to it. You just backspaced half of this sentence. You meant to write something about typing “tyo” when you meant to type “to.” There is a woman with headphones on working alone at one of the tables in the reading room. A moment ago she said something aloud to no one in particular, though there are three other people sitting in the room here with her. You can’t recall what it was she said; was it: “It’s so cold?” Or, “It’s so slow?” You click on the mouse to move the cursor and, before writing this last sentence, put your hands together and pause. In the morning you made juice for yourself and Lucy. After Lucy left the apartment for the gym you went online and read about the Knicks loss to the Spurs. You went on eBay. You looked at Tyvek jackets. You were also hoping to find the old Rochester public access show “Life Without Shame.” Your search came up empty. You found clips on YouTube. You emailed links to Clarke, Raphe and Jeff. In the shower you started composing a novel in your head based on “Life Without Shame.” You imagined it starting at Irondequoit Mall, in a parking lot, with a woman in a white leather mini-skirt. You turn the page in your notebook—number 3 of 5—but the rest of the

notebook is blank. You flip back to the front of the notebook and read the first sentence. You are about to type it into this Google Doc, or whatever it is: “What time is it, you wonder.” You leave the cursor to blink there after “wonder” while you read over what you have just typed. You decide to add a few more sentences from the first page of the notebook: “You look up at the train locator console on the platform at Myrtle-Wyckoff. At first you don’t see the time listed there. You look again. It’s 6:09 pm. You’re taking the L to 1st Avenue to meet Raphe at Benny’s Burritos. The Knicks game starts at 8. You’re hoping to get a seat at the bar to watch the game.” You are wondering what follows in the notebook. You glance down. There in the notebook you record the time a kid started drumming on a bucket for everyone on board your train. You change that a little bit, the sentence. You think to save this but it’s a Google thing so it’s already saved.

Lucy Ives

From LOUDERMILK

The shuttle bus's brakes sigh, and the vehicle bobs to a halt. Sonia descends.

She is wearing jeans and an unseasonable eyelet blouse under her coat. Her underwear is good. She puts her hands in her pockets and crosses the parking area, aware that it is likely that Weiss is observing her progress from inside.

She has no trouble spotting him. Weiss is in a booth and the sun is lighting the top of his hair like some kind of signal.

"Hi," she says.

"Would you want a coffee?" he immediately asks her. He seems moved by her appearance. He slides out to get her some tea, more boyish and ungainly than she remembers. He wears jeans, a heavy plaid shirt.

Their subsequent conversation turns around the dynamic of his seminar. Sonia compliments Weiss on his management of class discussion.

Weiss does not compliment Sonia in return. He says, "So, how have you been?"

Sonia does not say anything. She looks down at the wood grain beneath her right hand.

Weiss reaches across the table and abruptly rests

his right hand on top of Sonia's left.

"Are you alright?" he wants to know.

Sonia does not say anything. She rolls her left hand over so that her palm is touching Weiss's palm.

Weiss grunts softly.

Sonia continues to examine the grain of the wood. Weiss is now clasping her hand.

He says, "Would you want to go somewhere?" He says, "I have my car."

Sonia nods.

"OK," Weiss says, his relief evident.

They walk out arm brushing arm, and Weiss drives them to a motel ten minutes away.

It's premeditated. Sonia does not look at Weiss the entire time. The heat in her genitals is almost unbearable, and she very nearly reaches orgasm as they walk to the door of their "suite." Weiss is fumbling with the door card, and Sonia closes her eyes in order not to have to see Weiss's large, smooth hands.

When they are inside, Sonia removes her coat and shoes. She turns to Weiss, the outline of whose hard-on is visible through his pants. He's taken off his parka. His face is lithe and strange.

Sonia says, matter-of-factly, "I'm really wet." She begins unbuttoning her blouse. She can tell Weiss wants to embrace her, but she keeps her eyes trained on his face so that he can't move. She steps out of her jeans.

In bra and panties Sonia sits on the end of the

twin bed nearest the window. Weiss kneels between her legs and slips her breasts out of her bra and begins licking and biting her nipples. He pulls aside the crotch of her panties and slides his middle finger inside her. He brings his head down and begins lapping at her clit.

He is muttering something unoriginal about how extraordinarily wet she is.

Sonia leans back on her elbows.

Weiss stands up and drags off the underwear. He pushes Sonia further back onto the bed and spreads her legs, knees up. He is undoing his fly. He caresses the insides of her thighs with one hand and strokes his cock with the other. He doesn't take his clothes off.

Sonia is reaching with her hand for Weiss's cock.

Weiss is between her thighs. Sonia touches her clit, which is wet with Weiss's saliva as well as her own cum.

Weiss is inside her. Sonia presses against him. He begins moving. She wants him to take her harder so she rolls over onto her hands and knees. She spreads her thighs apart as far as she can and tilts her hips so that it is the most satisfying angle. She rubs her clit and squeezes her own nipples and presses her face against the synthetic comforter. Weiss has his hands on her hips. "Harder," Sonia hisses.

Weiss is thrusting vigorously. He whimpers.

Sonia feels herself about to come. "Harder!" It comes out as clipped shout, muffled by the mattress. Sonia is drooling, jamming her middle finger and

index against the top of her swollen clit.

Weiss is shaking. He pumps. He speeds up.

Sonia is coming. She uses her fingers to spread herself so that Weiss's balls smack against her clit. She is making some kind of whining noise and begging Weiss to fuck her harder. She is chewing the bedspread.

Weiss has started to yell. He says that he has to come. He starts groaning and yelling and then pulls out and sprays semen across Sonia's back and butt.

Weiss groans. His pants are around his ankles. He falls onto the bed.

Sonia is asleep.

Adam Humphreys

Two Thoughts in the Airplane Bathroom

One, Americans have too much faith in the free market, and two, I should write down the thing about the plastic forks in the breakfast restaurant at the airport. Concerning the first thought, Americans have too much faith in free markets, it came out of a thought chain that went from a *New Yorker* article about Palo Alto and Stanford to: Twitter wants everyone to be writing all of the time, which it views as creating a better overall exchange of ideas, which is wrong, perhaps (this needs elaboration).

Concerning the latter thought I will relay the following: I was served breakfast in an airport restaurant with plastic cutlery. During eating I looked toward the bar and saw a waiter folding more plastic cutlery into napkins like the ones I had received. What an enormously wasteful system, I thought. I imagined dumpster after dumpster filled with plastic cutlery trucked off to the dump, how pointless, I thought, why don't they have normal metal cutlery? Is it because they don't have a dishwasher, I thought, due to the space constraints of operating in this small wing near the gate? This explanation didn't make sense though, I recall, in that I was

eating off of a dish, and could see people eating off of similar dishes, I recall thinking, and these dishes have surely been cleaned, I concluded. I recall the cafeteria at the Brooklyn Polytechnic where everything was served in big plastic trays—out of laziness, I always thought, or stupidity, ignorance, the inability to dissolve existing trade relationships. I recall cursing the plastic industries, the disposable plastic rackets, their salespeople, their lobbyists, the plastic representatives. (I am now feeling overwhelming sympathy for anyone whose life would lead them to that station, where they would work in the promotion of disposable plastics, which it strikes me would be nobody's dream, nobody's first choice.)

After the waitress asked me if I was finished, I, boldly I thought at the time, queried her about the plastic cutlery. I understood from her immediate reaction that she had been asked this before, by other irked customers, and I found this encouraging. The waitress said the reason they used plastic cutlery was because if they had metal cutlery they would have to inventory all of the cutlery several times throughout the day, which would be a big hassle.

“Inventory it?” I said.

“Yes,” she said, “we would have to keep very tight control of the cutlery, as we are past the security checkpoint, and any missing cutlery could easily be taken onto an airplane which would be a considerably security threat.” So there it is, I thought, a reasonable explanation of the plastic cutlery, I thought, or at least one that, dealing as it does with

airport security, with homeland security, the most self-serious of all bureaucracies, I thought, makes us content giving up our critical line of investigation, recognizing its futility. The waitress continued, “We’ve had people endanger other people with plastic forks at the gates.” She said, “Imagine what could happen with a metal fork?” Her use of the word *endangered* led me to consider the meeting that surely took place between representatives of the Department of Homeland Security and representatives of the restaurant. A meeting which we can assume set the foundations for this relentless system of compliance. Etc.

Andrew James Weatherhead



Gene Morgan

HELL: An Interview with Robyn O'Neil

Robyn O'Neil was born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1977, and currently lives in Los Angeles, California. Her work was included in the 2004 Whitney Biennial. She is the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including an Irish Film Board for a film written and art directed by her entitled We, The Masses which was conceived of at Werner Herzog's Rogue Film School. Although some of her favorite things include The Karate Kid, Lifetime Movie Network, and Dawson's Creek, she claims to maintain a fairly average intelligence.

Gene: I want to interview you. I'm not sure what questions I will ask.

Robyn: I would love to do this interview. You know that's my style anyway.

Gene: Holy shit that is a huge drawing. Over 65,000 tiny figures and two years of work.

How do you maintain a sense of calm and order with something so large and fragile?

Robyn: It's funny you should ask this now because "calm and order" are two words I didn't even understand until very recently.

But, this piece and the utter exhaustion and pain it caused me finally gave me a reason to stop the madness.

I came close to completely breaking down during the final two months of this monster drawing. It was accidentally performative and an endurance test. I found that going to the bathroom was even too much time away from drawing/cutting collage materials.



Gene: It's hard for me to even begin to understand that amount of obsession/devotion to a thing.

A lot of the more talented people I meet are, like you, extremely personable and pleasant to talk to. They are also, if I was to analyze them solely on the work they produce, kinda fucked-up and intense.

Robyn: Growing up in the Midwest, many of us learn to have a moral responsibility to be agreeable, friendly.

50% of me is as incensed as you could ever imagine. Fuming and bothered almost all the time. So, for whatever reason, I channel all of that into my work, and the happy 50% of me is saved up for when I walk out my front door.

I don't think it'd be very fair to walk around miserable. I save that for when I'm alone.

I think we're all, naturally, many many things all wrapped in one disorganized package. We're good, bad, and otherwise.

I'm in love with my television set.

Gene: Which shows are you into right now?

Robyn: Forensic Files, The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills, The Martha Stewart Show, Star Trek: The Original Series, Parks and Recreation, Billy the Exterminator, Beverly Hills 90210, The Millionaire Matchmaker, That Metal Show, Most Eligible

Dallas, Barefoot Contessa, COPS, The L Word, Cold Case Files.

Gene: I don't think I could ever get enough COPS. I keep thinking about that photoshopped picture of Kanye taking you out.



Robyn: Billy and I once sat in our living room and watched 16 hours of a Cops marathon.

How is it possible that someone who loves these things THIS much makes work that doesn't reference it at all?

I've been doing things like my Kanye/Datnight photo ever since I was a kid. I could never stand the fact that I don't personally know the people I worship.

To REALLY LOVE the things you see on TV or Movies... to want to live in that world with the characters... it's actually a really frustrating part of my life.

Leonardo DiCaprio when he was on Growing Pains. I really loved this one picture of him next to the ocean.

I fell madly in love with David Cassidy. I just started crying uncontrollably because I would never get a chance to know him the way I wanted to know him.

Although my work isn't directly affected by any of this, I think both my obsessions and my work are forms of escapism. And storytelling.

I have already outlined ideas for Lifetime Movies.

Gene: I recently learned that all of the food at Chili's, with the exception of the fried stuff, is reheated in a microwave.

Life is filled with a lot of these moments, I think. The "magic" of the thing is either lost or enhanced with more knowledge.

Robyn: I'm on the airplane ride home now feeling like a big loser failure dumbbo.

In any lecture I give, I always get the questions about my paper and my pencil. I love telling people about this one smudge stump (officially called a tortillion (not a tortilla, sadly)) my mom gave me when I was in 7th grade. I have used that one smudge stump on every single drawing I've made since 7th grade.

I use office supplies to make my work.

Gene: Someone actually told me at a show or somewhere that you use the same "pencil" for all of your drawings, which was obviously wrong. Or maybe not?

I always find that no matter what I do, from a website to raising my children, I cannot accept anything but failure.

Robyn: I think, though, it is always impossible to feel like anything we do like that is ever welcomed and understood the way we wish it was.

On that same note, wax figure museums are my new favorite thing. I also have photos of James Dean getting me from behind and Billy got to lick Beyonce's ass AND look down Jennifer Aniston's shirt. Oh, and I touched Paul Newman and Robert Redford's dicks. It was a great trip.

—

In 2012, O'Neil's massive drawing, HELL, was destroyed in the basement of her storage gallery during Hurricane Sandy.



Molly Brodak

Creation Story: A play

A man stands beside his cabin. Through the window, he sees his Great Book on a stool, laid open. The black letters on the pages turn into grackles, the book becomes a crape myrtle bush they shuffle through.

Man: “-----!”

An old and unused god appears.

God: “---, -----.”

The man enters his cabin, snuffs the candle, then tears apart the furniture by hand, smashes out the windows, rends his clothing. Panicles of the crape myrtle break off in soft clubs. Crickets stop. Sounds are muted by the small mushing of waves in the lake.

Man: “-----, -----, -----!”

The grackles squeal like rusty scissors, brawling now.

Man: “-----! -----! -----! -----! - - - - -!”

At intervals he pauses, out of breath in the work of his

destruction, examines broken fingernails and gashes on his hand, then with a heave, recommences.

Spiders withdraw.

God: “ ---.”

The god moves hurriedly through the air, propelled by his cloudy tail. The spitting of the wavelets becomes indistinct.

Man (releasing a sound like a smothered bark):
“-----.”

God: “-----
-----.”

The god points to something offstage.

When he turns, a sound like the grinding of gears. His fur is matted in places.

Man: “---.”

The man slumps in the corner, looks out onto the mess. The crape myrtle is empty.

God: “-----

-----.”

Man: “ “

*The sun pushes pallid grey into the air; real birds stir.
The lake had shrunk, the wheat has grown much taller;
the face of the hillside is changed.*

God: “-----, -----, ----- =
----- + -----.”

God: “...-----.”

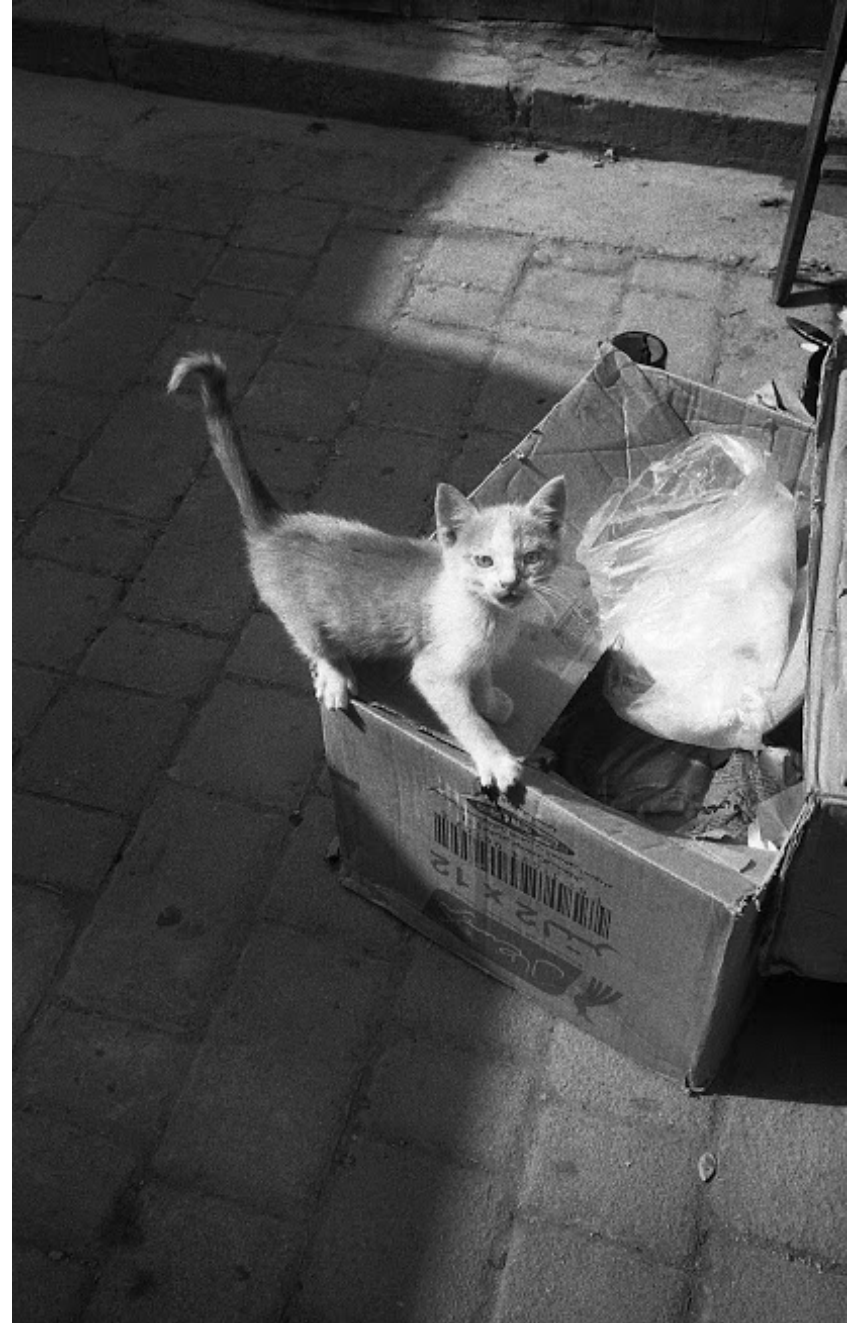
God: “... -----?”

Everything about the man has disappeared.

John Arnos

Three Photos





Matthew
Rohrer

Poem with Issa 4

Working in the sun
from now on
I vow to smile
to me, to the mountain
and mean it
as soon
as the snow goes
as soon
as the children apologize
to each others' coats
and turn out their light
the moon and the flowers
are quietly speaking
to each other
spring rain
so cold it crackles

Poem with Issa 3

A friend emails
how much are you
enjoying yourself?
My apartment full
of loose cat litter
no doubt about it
a dripping faucet
a good world
is difficult I say
as if I were
tilling a field
ashamed of myself
I apologize
to the sleeping child
to me, to the mountain

Poem with Issa 2

The kids fighting
over 4 or 5 pennies
my ears ringing
bent to the shape
of the spring moon I
am a crybaby

Lorian
Long

Eight Hours

—Did you send an email telling everyone the meat
is ready?
—Breakfast?
—Coffee?
—Did you turn in your timesheet?
—Did the meat spoil?
—Did you get that email?
—Did you timestamp the invoices?
—I have to pick up Cameron from baseball practice
at 2:00 and then drive across town to pick up Billy
and then drive back across town to get dinner for
tonight and then drive home to drop off the kids
and dinner and then drive to my mother's house
who lives clear out in Westerville which is just way
too far for a weeknight not to mention I do not like
going to my mother's house, oh someone left their
keys in the kitchen, can you send an email out
asking who left their keys in the kitchen, anyway,
this night is just going to be a lot of back and forth
but what can you do I mean I have to see Mother
and Cameron and Billy have to eat dinner before a
certain time otherwise they can't get to sleep and
even though Cameron really loves his team I think

they're playing a terrible season and I can't watch them lose another game, I just can't...

—Do you believe in self transcendence?

—Do you want me to throw that away for you?

—Should I go to the Jewish thrift store and pick you up some nice modest outfits?

—Did you make sure to timestamp the invoices so the date is next to the title because I do not like the time stamp to go anywhere else?

—What do you think about when you watch the highway from an overpass?

—Do you stare at the clearing?

—Well, hell...

—What is it like to work your way through a day without booze?

—Maybe it is like watching the seashore. Being right on the edge of something you can't control, that could dominate you, but having enough remove from it to remain tranquil, even to see it as peaceful?

—We can talk about your under the volcano problems if you want?

—Do we have any envelopes?

—There is a sandwich at Sandman's with ten pieces of bacon. You can get ten pieces of bacon and another meat. I get chicken. Sometimes I put it in a wrap. Ten pieces of bacon. It's called 'Big Bacon'....

—Here's a chair.

—Do you do the engineer sign-out sheet?

—Do we have to pay attention to certain people to get the truth?

—Do you hear clicks?

Andrew James Weatherhead



Blake Butler

Child

After the men were gone for good the era of the unending light began. We did not know it had begun until it was already so underway there was nothing to change about the way things were going to alter the course of the decisions being made for us by certain specific amorphous individuals, some of whom were no longer even really alive. You could read it on the air, a sense of something baking underneath the dead sky's silent leather and the ground like Braille so waterlogged and fat it all just seemed one dot. Even the words coming out of my mouth already immediately started seeming like the words of someone else, and when in silence it felt like there were others speaking through the air held apart from me in such a way that the speaking never isn't going every hour of the year, despite how all the clocks had stopped at the same time when I was seven, when the war against their manufacturers began. So many wars against so many things it was impossible to know who to have allegiance to and who was in allegiance with you in that allegiance so instead you just started going along with whatever actions were necessary to continue the day to its

logical conclusion, which meant sleeping, and sleeping still sometimes at least felt good. This feeling was encouraged by the devices that began appearing in and around our house just hours after dad's disappearance, from which I don't think we ever stopped waiting for him to come back, and even as he did not and did not more every minute each next minute could always be the one when he would, and that feeling extended over itself in amassed extents that allowed the aggregating hours to seem at once somehow thicker and thinner, longer and thinner, like hallways blown in glass. The house became adorned along its insides with new flat colored panels for our entertainment. They were like large flatscreen TVs but without edges to their face; like where normally you'd have a screen around whatever you were watching the screen now just kept going and kind of attached itself to air, and kind of bled like that all liquidy and calming. It was hard to tell when you were looking or you weren't. This was nice during times when you really felt like fucking off; you could just lie down on the floor wherever and still see what you thought you planned to watch there floating right inside your face. It was inside your face and outside it too. It replaced the want for dinner and dreaming. You were less hungry and less bored and less horny and more ambitious without needing action to fulfill it and less interested in the production part of communication and less bothered by excess noise. I guess this is how the locks got changed from the inside of doors to the outside

of doors without us knowing, and also why we didn't really care, and why it made sense and seemed a good thing when the program on the color screens said something was going wrong with the light outside now, and that it had been going wrong for a while now too and they just hadn't wished to tell us because they didn't want us to be upset. They said the men had been called in to join in the most important war we'd had yet: the war against everything but us. This war would require full cooperation of all parties large and small, such that if your job was to stay home and be supportive by not causing any trouble and not demanding better knowledge of what had happened to your loved ones, that's what you should do, if you wanted to be on the side of yourself in the war, which wasn't possible to not do, and thank god and hallelujah for our men's wholehearted help now, and so on. I'm not sure whether I believed this then, or imagined I could ever, but I also didn't know what else I could do to help, and already the rumors had begun about the coming fires that would flush out all our enemies among us, and it would be best for the good in all things to just stay still. Because I was good, right? How could I not be? How on the inside could a person not know that their preservation meant the upholding of what they believed in innately, beyond even what seemed your own ideas? Beautiful women on TV asked me these questions not waiting for answers as they rubbed their breasts and blew me kisses. I knew I didn't know the answers anyhow. I had never

thought of myself as wholly good or evil, which must mean I'm some of both, which means I didn't know what to think about the war against anything not us, or any war at all ever for that matter, and what did what I thought matter to the coming outcome in the end? Inside the mass of silence I still recognized as the sound of all our sound becoming covered over, to protect us from the rising gnash of warring teeth and arms, I would try to hold my mouth closed and listen hard to everything around me and try to focus on any specific source beyond me but soon I find my jaw going in time with what I heard coming from the screens, a kind of singing that wasn't language really and often that I'd begun producing long before I even realized, sometimes maybe for days or even longer lying on our house's new plush rugs and pillows, also brought, I imagine, by the state, to match the color of the walls and clothes I was now wearing, a color I saw also when I closed my eyes. I would look up and find myself already eating dinner, already in bed, already having read what books were allowed to remain. I would wake up even more tired than I'd been at bedtime. I would laugh aloud at jokes no one had told. I would try to think of it as a good thing that I was allowed to believe all this was happening like I was still getting things done without actually having to do anything at all but be a body but also it seems bad that I could have done something awful like crush a puppy or curse my father's memory to damnation or walk out into the sunlight and become burned all over and die and

not know the difference between how it was and how it is now. I could have done anything, but I just kept doing whatever I already was. The moments rose and fell encombred. All of these elements of understanding were affixed in every section of the present minute despite how now there was nowhere I could go.

Audun Mortensen

Legal English

Q: Is there a certain language that is commonly used for users of 4chan?

A: In what sense?

Q: Certain terms, have a meaning unique to 4chan?

A: Yes.

Q: Like “OP,” what is “OP”?

A: OP means original poster.

Q: Are you familiar these terms, having been the founder and administrator of the 4chan site?

A: Yes.

Q: What would “lurker” mean?

A: Somebody who browses but does not post, does not contribute.

Q: What do the words “caps” mean?

A: Screenshots.

Q: And is there any significance to “new fags”?

A: That is the term used to describe new users to the site.

Q: What about “b tard”?

A: It's a term that users of the /b/-Random board use for themselves.

Q: What about “troll”?

A: Troublemaker.

Q: "404"?

A: 404 is the status code for not found. It means essentially gone or not found.

Q: Not found on where, the 4chan site?

A: 404 is the http status code for not found, a page not found by the Web server.

Q: And what about "peeps"?

A: People.

Q: "Rickroll"?

A: Rickroll is a meme or Internet kind of trend that started on 4chan where users – it's basically a bait and switch. Users link you to a video of Rick Astley performing Never Gonna Give You Up.

Q: What about "white night"? Does that have a unique meaning on 4chan?

A: On 4chan I am not sure. White night in general, I guess, would mean a do gooder.

Q: Have you seen that word used on the 4chan boards?

A: Yes.

Q: I want to ask you just a little bit of a follow-up on that term that you were asked about, "lurker."

A: Yes.

Q: Now, a lurker is somebody who just kind of just looks at the site and doesn't actively participate?

A: Yes.

Q: Is that right? So there are a bunch of people I guess you can tell who view entries on 4chan, but are not making posts?

A: Yes.

Q: So and that is what a lurker is, somebody who just checks out what is going on, but isn't one of the people real active in putting things up on the board?

A: Yes.

Q: And the term "rickroll" you said it tries to make people go to a site where they think it is going to be one thing, but it is a video of Rick Astley, is that right?

A: Yes.

Q: He was some kind of singer?

A: Yes.

Q: It's a joke?

A: Yes.

Atticus Lish

Last Meal

“Where should we eat today?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, where would you eat if it was your last meal? Actually, that reminds me: I’ve been meaning to ask: What would your last meal be? We haven’t discussed this.”

“Well, that would depend on so many factors. There isn’t just one answer.”

“I never thought of that. What factors?”

“It would depend on mode of execution, lethal injection versus chair; the weather; time of year; the state I was incarcerated in; whether or not I was in the literacy program—a lot of stuff.”

“This is all a revelation.”

“All of these things affect appetite, food-craving. What does the cell block smell like? What’s the dominant smell? Cleaning solution, Simple Green—that minty smell? That’s going to affect it. Do I have people protesting my execution? Am I a cause célèbre? Are there signs saying, free this guy? Is there a Pancake House visible from the prison—or, if not from death row—let’s assume I can only see a tiny patch of sky—then to the protestors on their daily approach? Do they stop off there before they

hold their vigils?”

“Okay, let’s make it simple. Let’s pick one set of circumstances. Let’s say you’re getting the electric chair and the prison is in the desert.”

“Chicken-fried steak. White gravy. Garlic mashed potatoes. Green beans, well-cooked—like the kind that have been sitting in a steam table for a few hours. Lingonberry pie. Sweet iced tea, but with a caveat: I want it lightly sweetened.”

“Would this be different if you were in, say, Walpole?”

“It would. But does Massachusetts have the death penalty?”

“I don’t know. We could check online. I’m more up on Connecticut, since you-know-who was there. There are FAQs for people in the Connecticut system, as far as visiting hours and so on. Dress length, etcetera.”

“They do dress length?”

“They’re very specific. Rips in your clothes have to be x-number of inches away from the key sites of the body. Religious attire, gang attire, sexually revealing attire are all forbidden.”

“They’ve thought of everything. Well, to answer your question, if I were in Walpole, I’d have pot roast and cannolis, very dark intense Salvadoran coffee, and a glass of orange juice. And for desert, a bag of Tostitos.”

“The cannolis aren’t desert?”

“No. They’re my salad course. And I hope you see

my logic, how the menu is keyed to the grim north-east weather, to give me an infusion of carbohydrates. In, I believe, Mailer's words, 'All those sugars to make you feel good.' But tell me, what would your last meal be? And I want to specify, you're in a minimum security facility, you're eligible for work-release, and you're earning your GED."

"I'm a college graduate and you know this."

"I understand, but I'm stressing that you're doing positive things. You're trying to impress the parole board."

"Furthermore, this doesn't sound like a death-row situation."

"It's not. I'm uncomfortable visualizing that scenario for you."

"Then how is it my last meal?"

"It's your last meal before going to a job program for ex-offenders. You'll be beautifying Times Square. You'll have a set of red coveralls. You'll be living in a basement in Corona, by the way. The basement is subdivided into rooms. There's a kitchen and bathroom that the tenants share. The landlord will be a young Greek American with an independent entrepreneurial spirit. A slumlord, if you will. His cousins own car dealerships to a man. There will be a background of street scuffles, references to 'back in the day' when the subject of the scar on his neck comes up. He'll have a van and a girlfriend named Babu and elderly parents with whom he lives and a cohort of friends representative of the neighborhood's multiethnic sweep: Indians, Pakistanis, Irish—all

who speak with New York accents. No blacks, by the way. He'll have a very soft handshake. Since you are female, a friendship will be encouraged between you and Babu. He'll serve both of you heavy red Greek wine while you sit on his couch. Then he'll suggest a ride and all three of you will drive around Queens at night and park under a highway, eating a Hot'n Ready Pizza from Little Caesar's. He'll play Greek music on the radio in the dark van. There's a strange formality that suggests depths of hidden criminality. This is your landlord. This is the life you are entering. When I speak of a 'last meal,' I mean a last meal before this begins. It's not the death penalty, but it's no bed of roses either. You will have your challenges. Will he drop his formal mask and make a play for you behind Babu's back, for example? Thorny issues will arise."

"Sesame-shitake frittata, grilled Halloumi cheese salad, glass of white wine."

"I'm a little surprised by your answer."

"Why?"

"I was just thinking that the situation called for something a little less froufrou."

"Did you? Well, I don't."

"I mean you're in a basement, there are cockroaches everywhere, you're a few blocks from the 'hole in the donut,' the Italian patch near the Lemon Ice King, where they play bocce ball...I don't know. I just don't see anyone having a sesame frittata in the setting I'm describing. There's a skinny man in the room next to yours who moans. You realize he's

masturbating...sometimes twice a night. Sometimes thrice. This is a shitake setting?”

“There is no better shitake setting in my book. It offsets the squalor.”

“You wouldn’t just have a bag of hamburgers from the McDonald’s?”

“No. Gross.”

“You know, it was your insistence on the finer things in life that got you in trouble in the first place. This was how you ran afoul of the law and got arrested. You were shoplifting gourmet foods. The judge warned you where you’d end up. Counselors warned you during your overnights in the Tombs. I’ve seen how this plays out, young lady.”

“This is all your imagination. The last thing that happens in the Tombs is you get a caring counselor who gives you life advice. That is a movie thing. That happens to Angelina Jolie.”

“I’m warning you to forget the fancy food, for your own good.”

“Is this your way of telling me you want to eat at McDonald’s with me?”

“You realize we started our courtship at the Flaming Embers?”

“Yes, I do. It was a cut above Tad’s Steaks.”

“Pecan pie. Grilled steak. Fully loaded baked potato. You, me, and four thousand calories...I long for those days. I’m nostalgic.

“Are you nostalgic for the girl in this memory, for our young love, or for the Flaming Embers? That’s what I want to know.

“What do you think?”

“I have my suspicions that you’re about fifty-fifty between love and steak.”

“That’s nonsense. You know better than that. Don’t make me demonstrate my passion. You wouldn’t be able to handle me.”

“You sure? After all this time? Even after my stint in a program? You sure I wouldn’t have seen it all by now?”

“Don’t joke like that, please. Besides it’s not you, what you’re suggesting. You could go through a lifetime of programs and you’d be like a stone, repelling everything around you. I know you, your spiritual impenetrability. You would only allow yourself to relax in the presence of that which was worthy of you. To make it a food analogy, they’d give you baloney and cheese and you’d trade it for cigarettes or something; you’d bribe a guard; you’d find a way to sneak out at night, hurrying down Delancy Street, racing to the new Whole Foods on Houston before it closed so you could grab a few morsels worthy of your palate. I know you.”

“You know me pretty well.”

“What I don’t know is how our friend is doing now.”

“I don’t have much news. He’s somewhere out there. He can’t ever come back. He doesn’t tell me where he is so I don’t have to lie, if anyone calls me.”

“What’s he eating?”

“A buffet, I think.”

“Will he get caught?”

“I hope not.”
“I hope not too.”

Elaine
Sun

3 Correspondences





BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID FISHKIND lives in Brooklyn and works at the Elmer Holmes Bobst Library.

ADAM HUMPHREYS is the director of Franz Otto Ultimate Highballer, Shitty Youth, and Baseball, the author of Adam's Summer Purgatory, 2008 (2013), and the founder of Lucky Dragon Mobile Visa Consultant.

ATTICUS LISH lives with Beth, his wife of 18 years, in New York. He is the author of Life Is with People, a book of drawings and captions published by Tyrant Books, and a few as-yet unpublished works, including Hubei Banquet, a nonfiction account of a year China, and a novel, Preparation for the Next Life.

ANDREW JAMES WEATHERHEAD holds a degree in Neuroscience from NYU, an MFA in Creative Writing from The New School, and is an Eagle Scout. His website is www.andrewweatherhead.org.

TIMOTHY WILLIS SANDERS is the author of Orange Juice and other stories. He lives in Austin, Texas.

MOLLY BRODAK is the author of A Little Middle of the Night, winner of the 2009 Iowa Poetry Prize,

and three chapbooks of poetry. She edits the journal Aesthetix and lives in Atlanta.

LUCY IVES is the author of several books of poetry and prose; most recently, Nineties and Orange Roses. She is a deputy editor at Triple Canopy.

AUDUN MORTENSEN (1985) is the author of six books of poetry and fiction, and has recently exhibited work at Futura Gallery (Prague), Gagosian Gallery (New York), and V1 Gallery (Copenhagen).

LORIAN LONG is a 29-year-old secretary living in Columbus, Ohio.

MATTHEW ROHRER is the author of seven books of poetry, most recently Destroyer and Preserver, published by Wave Books.

BLAKE BUTLER lives in Atlanta.

GENE MORGAN is one of the founders of the literary blog HTMLGiant. He owns and operates a high-end fashion boutique in Houston. More on Gene Morgan can be found at <http://genemorgan.info>.

More on **ROBYN O'NEIL** at <http://robynoneil.com>.

ZACHARY GERMAN.

ELAINE SUN (1992) is graduating with a BA in International Literary and Visual Studies from Tufts University in May 2014. Please contact her with any employment opportunities - eelainee@gmail.com.

BEN GOCKER lives in New York.