

O:JA&L

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2019

PUSHCART NOMINEES

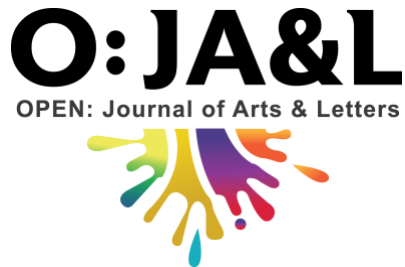


2020 O:JA&L CHAPBOOK SERIES

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O:JA&L
Pushcart Prize Nominees: 2019

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Great Falls, Montana



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O:JA&L'S 2019 LIST OF PUSH CART PRIZE NOMINEES

ELAINE FEENEY

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E.D. WATSON

Flash discourse “Expecting”

Elaine Feeney

TODAY I BECOME MOTHER

whenever mam left for her holidays in the garden shed, she walked the long path that weaved around the clothes line and the back of the over grown patio, weeds and slop bursting through the cracks of the grey green octagon slabs. himself used to weed it once or twice a summer, and then he'd hoe out the vegetable bed, that housed only potatoes in the ink black soil. mam used to say things like, do you remember the carrots, and he'd say they were the best carrots in the west of Ireland and then she'd say, and the tomatoes, and he'd say he never cared much for tomatoes. I love tomatoes and I thought it was a pity he didn't care for them and mind them. he was the exact same with the new baby as he was with the tomatoes. when he weeded she was in a happy mood standing for a while beside him in a yellow dress with short ankle socks and canvas shoes and then she would sit on a white patio plastic chair for the afternoon and lean back laughing until we could see all her black fillings, other times she went on her holidays, she sprinted fast straight through the grass.

himself is gone, I said quietly. twenty past twelve, my noon weight hanging off the white plastic fridge. mother shoved open the scullery's paraná pine door into our small kitchen with the underside of her ox blood shoe that came high up on her foot, grazing her thin ankle. the blood filled the white ball of her foot and returned to her cheek in the time it took her in and out breath. her hair matched the shoe, black, down to the wine loose scrunchie at the nape of her pale neck like the black leatherette shoe add on, a flower, or a skull, though it was hard to make it out now. the shoe had been drenched so many times. she'd gotten the shoes second hand from the vincentpaul people who came to our door with the faces all sad and jokey at the same time. especially the young girl who looked most jokey, said she was here to do experience and then she called our michael, a lambkin. though he looked more like a rat. mam wore the shoes everywhere, out to the clothesline or to the doctors with the baby inside her and then outside her or on the school run or to the shed at the end of our short garden where she sometimes ran.

john is the eldest and he's getting a moustache, he would laugh when he watched her run, he couldn't take his eyes off her. he'd say; ah there she goes

again not taking the famine road, the fool. I got fizzy feet and hands when he spoke about mam using the word she.

I piece mam together at night when I can't get to sleep with the hail or the wind though it's usually the silence that keeps me awake, the summer silent bright nights that allows me to hear the breathing as though the heavens had just opened. mam'd run to the shed, hands over her head, I imagine her laughing, saying to himself, ah here, I've just had a blow-dry. as I looked out the window, standing there like the child of Prague, head intact. but mam probably wasn't speaking at all, that's just what I used to think when I was five and six, and besides if she was saying something, I couldn't hear it with her back to me, running away.

and it made me wonder if famine road makers could ever hear each other. they say the ears are the last to go, but I don't know about how a body dies when it's hungry. I think you'd try your very very best to turn your tummy off first and then your nose and then your ears. I think it would make you hungry listening to other people saying they were hungry. and having six brothers meant you had to do a lot of listening - whether you wanted to or not.

mam always said it's proper manners to look at someone when you speak to them, and I like to have good manners. you had to specially look hard at joanne casey because she spent her time trying to read our lips. joanne casey is a deafdumb, himself said, and he said they were the most aggressive type 'a disabled people, so I looked at her at a face to face, terrified she'd lash out at me, a 180 degree angle. mr. o' neill was teaching us about angles last may when we wore ankle socks to school and davy the caretaker was always out cutting the grass so we could lie on it at break time and get green all over ourselves.

if I don't look at joanne casey like I'm the cracked mirror in the loo, she wouldn't know a thing I was saying. sometimes we'd catch her out by pursing our lips into p's and b's and she didn't understand a thing. it looked like our mouths were blowing up like little sadam hussein bombs. almost unreadable anyway, like little mouths bombs, constantly going off. everyone's always talking about hussein and war. my mother is terrified about nuclear war. and that the garden shed is too light to withstand a war.

I never did it to confuse joanne casey, the letter bombs. I just followed what the other girls did. usually to try understand things for myself. how we can speak to each other without shouting and still understand, learning about all the things himself had said with his lips tight like the cat's hole, and then

himself running after mam on the famine road to the shed. I could never make out from his back and arched shoulders if he was laughing or shouting. far from a garden shed you were reared you hoor, I heard him say once.

mam didn't have a shed growing up, with all the people living over them and all the people living under them. that's why she spent so much time in our one. it was new. at least new to my mam. the way the boys liked dens and hideouts. I didn't like hideouts as much, I liked to be seen, sometimes. they never decided who the small garden at the back of the mervue flats where mam grew up, belonged to, so in the end it was used for the bins and the cats and the girls with the leather shirts and the bangles on their wrists and the boys smoking ciggies. either way they both looked ridiculous, himself and mam, and not at all like adults in my school reader books and how they looked, with dotty aprons and dads sitting at the tv with the paper and slippers and a granny shoving her head around a corner with a steaming apple tart. a granny with grey hair.

my granny has yellow hair, and smokes cigarettes in a navy fleece jacket that says DIGITAL on it. she's as thin as a rake, telling me to study, how am I meant to study without a desk? nonsense she says. didn't her father study under a bushel in some field? sure how would I know, I said back and that ended my study. I was a cheeky mare who'd come to no good like my mam she'd say. I thought my mam was great I said back to her and she wrinkled up her nose lighting another ciggie with her back to our kitchen window. she was always asking mam if she's slept in the shed. I loved sleeping in the shed, but with a baby in your belly, you weren't supposed to. or so my nan said.

when mam came in from the scullery she carried a plastic grocery bag far out from her body as if disgusted by it. it was poorly filled with a loaf of cheap white bread, a package of ham freshly sliced from the deli counter, also in a plastic bag that would be ripped open, not opened politely from the red tie that comes from the large steel dispenser (I imagine joanne casey's mam opens her ham properly and puts it neatly back in the fridge to have more later, like they do on the tv) and mike in the shop would whirl the bag around almost making the ham slices dizzy and a block of cheap cheese. himself used to scream at her about the cheap cheese. you can't make a toastie with this shit he'd say. it goes to rubber like a fucken welly boot, he'd say.

mam shopped in the Apple Bag, the local, when himself forget to leave fifty pounds on the plastic brown draining board of the kitchen on his way out to his shift, twenty minutes late, and carrying his tan lunchbox she'd picked him up at her sister's tupperware party back in november. her sister had a microwave and a vacuum cleaner with no bags and a soda stream maker. I

was glad we didn't have a soda stream maker, I was terrified when you had to release the lever and catch the bottle while at the same time not catching your own finger. and besides I was sure the fizz would kill one of us, probably one of my six brothers, they were all nearly drowning, especially in the shower, because it was just brand new and the other brothers said they weren't able to control their breathing in the new shower, like when they were crying and ran out of breath until only their shoulders moved like a see saw.

mam used to spend hours figuring out what stopped himself remembering to leave out the fifty-pound money. she'd curl up her hair to see if her preferred it straight. I told her she'd be a lot better off if she asked him which way he liked her hair best. but she said it wasn't this simple. but it wasn't the hair in any case, so I guess it wasn't simple at all. besides he always grabbed her hair as if he hated it, so I wasn't sure any hairstyle was going to work. she tried using lipstick but you could never see it, and the very last time he forgot was the same day he'd circled the breasts of a woman in the Sunday World newspaper in james's red tip marker and left it on the breakfast table. mam screamed, for all of us to see. she screamed at james most of all, for leaving the marker under his nose. but it was the, 'for all of us to see' that set her spitting into her cornflakes. I'd seen breasts since I was a never age and all the boys had sucked mams at some stage, so it wasn't a big deal. but this had made her cry the most, and she seemed sure that he would forget the money again on Thursday.

before I grew up I would to try to put my arms around her waist, but after falling in the schoolyard when I was six, I learned the last thing people want when they're crying is someone squeezing them out like an orange.

himself is gone, I said again, still swaying off the fridge door. mam didn't notice I was swaying, hoping she'd scream at me, tell me I was letting out the cold, and the food would warm up, like our bellies when we drank soup. mam would say you eat soup, but we'd all laugh at her, and my brothers would pick up the bowls and drink it. I used to eat mine from a cup, because we only had six bowls. and then john let one fall and we had five, and then michael let one fall and we had four and all the bowls started falling and on and on it went until we all drank or ate our soup out of mugs with handles. it was lovely when it went down to the powdered bits at the end, hard green peas and shavings of sweet carrots and you would eat these bits, with your teeth. it's not an eating food unless you need to use your teeth. himself never ate soup, he ate eleven potatoes, crushed down and smattered in black pepper with butter and some fried liver thrown over it. sometimes mam'd leave him garden peas in a cup beside his place at the table, on his place mat of the map of Ireland with the north coloured out in black marker. but he used to just

pour them out, the peas, like he was dumping a bucket of water and flick them all over the kitchen with his thumb and pointing finger. I hated that finger the most I liked his one with the coin ring. we'd scramble to pick them up. once we blinded folded each other and it was good fun, trying to find the peas on our hands and knees, but mam lost it with us after she tripped over michael and fell. we had mushed them into the lino and into the corners of the kitchen where the lino came up like my english story copy edges and all the peas and cat's hair were mushed in like the filling of an old pillow.

mam began filling the cheap draining board with the few messages she had in the bottom of the bag. she arranged it with the sliced pan as a smile, the bag of ham made one eye, the cheap rubber block of cheese making the other. then she turned it into a van, which she said just meant looking at it from a different angle. I supposed I had to think of myself as joanne casey to imagine this. mam was silent when I said that I preferred the man to the van. after some time passed, gnawing on the quick of my girl thumb on my right hand, where a long sharp scar was imbedded like a thorn from a hurley unsanded, she said slowly, yes I agree I prefer the pretend man too but he looks so sad with his mouth just straight across. I had to agree. It looked like the pole on our high jump fence on the patio.

my brother is a high jumper and he sewed sixteen oat canvas bags together last summer and filled them all up with straw. himself thought it was a thick-as-fuck idea, as the middle of the straw could go on fire, mam said she thought that just happened with hay, but he asked her what the fuck she'd know being from the city and all and he'd make hay of her if she went on disregarding him under his own roof. and we all agreed with himself. mam, that face of the bread and ham kind of looks like himself, I said, would you like me to leave it on the counter I said, then it won't matter so much that he has gone.

but this made her tear up again and I was so fucken mad with myself.

ah he'll come back, I said, even though he told me he'd never set foot in this hole of a confounded house again, and something about burning it down with us all in it, he was always talking about burning it down with all of us in it. but I knew it was damp, and it wouldn't light at all, and she wailed. and I told her the crying would make the house even damper so in a way we were all safe and she laughed and grabbed my cheeks and asked me to put on soup for my brothers. we had one packet left in a USA biscuit tin until the stairs.

everything of importance was kept in under the stairs. the sacred heart of jesus amen with a light. the carpet sweeper that was brown and cream and did

the job of a hoover without the leaky bill going through the roof. all of our coats and all of our outdoor boots. paint cans bitter chocolate brown and magnolia. a dartboard and a deranged looking football that one of the brothers had in the very back corner, beside the pull down cord to turn the overhead light bulb on. the cord was dumb it had to be found before the light could go on. but mam said everything in the bungalow was a fuck up because everything was done on a shoestring that was in a rush. it was plain to see why shoestrings often rushed places, but I never understood this till now.

I put the powder in the orange le creuset pots, a gift from the other granny, granny anne, himself's mother, though we hadn't seen her in some years now and himself shouted loudly and often about her not calling, as if mam could go outside and ring the door bell and pretend to be her. we didn't have a phone to call her on and once or twice mam drove to the phone at the top of marshal's hill to ring her but she just sat in the car and smoked a benson and hedges fag, putting on lipstick after and gloss in a glass bottle that she had for ages and ages. tell himself i let the phone ring out for twenty-five rings. and we did, later that evening we would say she was ages and ages in the phone box but that some lads came on bikes and started throwing stones at the car so we had to leave, as james and patrick were on the back window and they were afraid. james and patrick never came to the phone box, or michael or john but just me and mam. she knew I could lie well. a lie is usually better than the truth when you're a wife, she'd tell me every day.

where do you think he's gone? I asked her. the boys were coming in dribs and drabs and putting their runny noses over the soup pot. it was watery and made to feed four not eight according to the back of the packet but mam said it was better for you watery, good for your skin tone. she was often talking about her skin color and said it was gone an awful blue color from the benson and hedges, I told her she had the nicest skin in the whole world, well maybe not as nice as the baby's arse, because that was really lovely and was like his fat cheeks now he was getting the large back teeth. don't let it fucken burn, she said, and I was just happy she was noticing.

but then mam went silent.

that was the end of it, and the start of it and the middle of it. she got up and took the whisk from my hand scraping the almond inside of the pot, and she said you've only gone and let it fucken burn, and I said, I hadn't, and she said, swear and I said I swear on the holy bible and all the saints and on our lady and on the souls above at the cross in the cemetery, swear on me, she said, I said I swear on you, swear on himself and he out on the country roads tonight. I swore on himself. out loud I said I swear on himself and his safe

passages back to us. and in my head I begged for him to be ran over, right across his heart so it mashed into the road. and over his head so we could just about make out his deadpan puss.

and john was splitting his sides laughing, saying she's gone right fucken cuckoo this time, and her watery soup, think the cunt could get us some burgers or a rib eye, ever hear of a rib eye mam? and michael joined in laughing and then they started to point their fingers at her. and I screamed at them to leave her alone, leave her be, I burned the soup and she's just upset as a it was the last packet in the USA tin but john said, could I give a fuck about that tin. everytime I look in the press I think we've a biscuit, and then some packet of powder. and everytime I look at her with her hands over her head.

and michael started laughing in the same way they do when they mock joanne casey and I got the fizzy feet and the baby was crying and I knew his nappy needed changing or he was hungry so I thought about giving him a bottle with warmed sugar-water but my hands were too shaky.

I took the whisk out of the grey with the green bits and the orange bits and it reminded me of the flag in the school and all the teachers that beat their chests when they pass it and I beat my chest and I waved the whisk in their faces and I can't remember what I said spinning around on the lino, but I know I said under my roof and I know I screamed and then they left the kitchen. and I know everyone was quiet, even the baby with the shitty hole.

and the day mam went silent she moved in under the stairs. I was sure if she moved anywhere it would be out to the garden shed, again, but she didn't. she sat in under the stairs behind the bitter chocolate dulux cans and all the important stuff and I told john and michael to go out and clean out the garden shed. and they asked if mam was going to move out to the garden and I said she certainly was not, in her tone. I kept the whisk down in my welly from now on and I told them when it was cleared out to let me know. the baby stayed on my hip and conor sat in the front room watching snow on the telly until three o' clock when it would come on.

patrick and james were joined at the hip and they'd go off for long days and come back with kindling for the fire in the shape of a tyke or a ricking horse, people seemed to be forever throwing things out in the countryside. the oldest two were told to put the high jump sacks into the garden shed, that because they were the oldest they needed their own house now. john seemed angry that it leaked and I told him to solve it. I told him that if I was the boss of the house now that they had to move out, but I'd still make them

sandwiches, now there was not soup left. we had a few tea bags and a half a cup of sugar and we had enough bread for the week if we were really careful. it was hard to be really careful though and I knew it'd be gone in two days if I didn't mind it so I put some twine on it, and slung it around my waist and carried it on the other hip to the baby who was forever reaching over his fat stumpy hand to pull at it, it was a game that made him happy.

for the first two days I made goody. breakfast, dinner and tea.

first I tore up a bread slice each and sprinkled over a half tea spoon of sugar and then I stood on my school bag and lifted my hand up over my head and poured fox-red tea from granny's teapot from a great height. it splashed around but everyone seemed ok about the tea and the goody. I added a splash of milk. no one was washed for days except for face and hands, I had no idea how to use the new shower, and so I frog marched them to the kitchen sink like mam used to do with the other babies, not so much with this one on my hip, who was always a grubby mess, and scrubbed at them with a left over brillo-pad. I was sure michael and john wouldn't arrive for goodie or for wash up, but they came, each evening, and waved in at mam under the stairs and she waved back once and we were all delighted.

I told the two boys that when the sun went down and the grey fell on the front room window and the smell of september hung around panicking me, for soon it would be school again, and who'd mind the baby, I said; we need to have a meeting. I know people have them to solve problems and we need to have a meeting. the boys didn't seem to agree or disagree and the baby was swinging at my hip and there were only the two heels of bread and a slice-in-between left now. and the meeting began with us all standing in a triangle. I said the bread is running out. and john said fuck this fucking hole, and I wish I was dead, and you're going around like a cunt not letting me have the cheese (I was keeping the cheese for the emergency days that were hours ahead) michael didn't copy john, and said, I think we need to do something, and suggested he call in on mr hynes up the road, and maybe that we go to the phone box to ring granny again, and this time let it call out for twenty five rings, and then hit the large black button and then let it ring out again and keep doing it until it gets dusk and jog home. he seemed happy there was a plan at'all.

I knew the biggest problem we had was that mam under the stairs was soaking wet and the smell was so bad. last night I decided to leave the light on all night because I couldn't bear passing her out to get to the cord to pull it down and I knew this upset her. I had tried to fit in john and michael's single mattress but this way too large and damp and I knew it might make her sick.

she was always saying that the damp mattresses were making everyone sick so I didn't think she needed to get the chest sick as well as the head sick. mam, mam, I said, I'm so sorry I waved the whisk around and I burned the soup. I really am sorry and conor drew a picture of himself on the plastic bag with himself's old shoe polish, and it looked like him.

will I leave it in here under the stairs with you.

she waved her narrow hand at me, a ring on every finger. communion ring on her baby finger, wedding ring on her ring one, her granny's wedding ring on her pointy one and a large coin on her thumb.

himself had given her the large coin one when she turned eighteen and had a birthday in the country shack on the main road, where the lights were always bright day or night and the diner fed people at all wired hours of the mornings when they went on trips. once mam brought the seven of us to the shack at the middle of the night, or the middle of the morning. stacey behind the counter had said good morning, whispered to mam who was throwing herself over and back and sent us all off again with a white cardboard box of buns.

and himself and mam slept in the shed at the end of the garden for two days after that. she came in once to bring the baby outside thought we all wanted her to leave the baby with. conor said nothing at all. that was when john was nice and liked mam.

I'm sorry about the soup, I've cleaned the pot and I haven't broken a cup, I pleaded, my body half in the press trying not to gag. mam, you need me to wash your clothes. you need to pass them all out to me. conor was beside me, and asked if we needed to leave in a bucket or a basin or something, I said that was a great idea, and that he should sing to her. he grabbed the lug of my ear tight and it hurt so much, mostly because I didn't have my ears pierced like all the other girls in my class, but now it was too late. beside himself said only tinkers pierce their ears. conor told me he couldn't sing because the smell was hurting his throat. so I boiled up a pan of water and washed mam. I cut off her stone wash denims and her cerise pink top. I hated them on her anyway and her hair streeling down her back. I cut off her knickers, but left on her bra and I pulled on one of michael's back to the future t-shirts that the vincentpaul's gave us last christmas and this made her smile.

I pulled up conor's pajamas pants on her that himself had given him, but she didn't seem to mind. conor hated them anyway and went back to the front room watching telly. there was snow on the screen and I had no idea how

conor could watch snow all day long. I went the famine road to the shed and poured some gasoline on the clothes and watched them burn. I knew I didn't have the stomach to wash my mothers clothes. I knew I would use the whisk again too and that I wasn't at all sorry but that mam liked it best when himself had once said sorry for knocking out a back tooth and the sorry filled up the hole of the back tooth well and dandy so I said it to her.

not to lie, but to do the good lie like she had taught me.

eventually john came back from the phone and he was damp like the mattresses and he said that she would come tomorrow and I was a part happy and part fizzy and I looked in under the stairs, I said, mam, mam, anne will come tomorrow, and she can bring me for groceries, if she has any money, but maybe I can tell her it's thursday and she can get himself to come and leave the money on the counter, and I'll go to the shop with the baby on my hip and a trolley. I'll push a trolley and ill fill it up. I could make fifty pounds go a very long way I told her that I might have enough left for a fry's turkish delight for her. but she started fucken crying again and I left her so. and I left on the large 100-watt bulb. and sometimes if it over headed it smashed into a thousand little pieces like all the flour particles leaving a bag or a thirteen o'clock in o haras field and I wanted it to smash. i wanted it to smash to at least a thousand pieces, so one could hit her beautiful eyeball. I don't know if eyeballs bleed but if you only had one eye, you might be more inclined to use it. you might look better, or her ear, if one hit her ear and the blood was so warm that it woke her up. I said to the boys to run and turn on every light I the house and even the transistor and boil me a pot of water, I said to john that it was an emergency and that I would put the water into a rubber hot water bottle anne had left the last time she'd arrived, and told us all to put them in our beds. she had brought three, to share. and when I told john he could have one he was delighted, it was cold in his new house with michael at the end of our garden. and I knew if the bulb smashed mam would know and she'd had to leave her home under the stairs and we could put her into bed, and tell anne she had the hand foot and mouth everyone in the school has.

but the lights went out.

and the bulb under the stairs hissed like the cat and then whirred and then cooled down.

like himself.

and john found the butt of three candles from knock shrine and we lit them. it was dark and I could see my hand shadow as only the light was flickering

mad and I put the baby in the crib. himself and mam's bed was cold as the outside of the shed wall. and I told john he couldn't have the hot water bottle now. besides, it was luke warm, and luke warm does more danger than the cold. he said he'd never hear that, but I waved my whisk at him and he stopped. I put the bottle in their bed and the baby cooed and sucked his toes.

michael was under the stairs by now. brushing mam's hair, he was brushing it softly and running his hands through the opposite sides, stopping often, it was knotted and clumping and conor got a sponge fro the kitchen and washed down the rest. john shouted at him that he was nothing more than a puff but soon he was holding her feet and blowing hot air at her, and james decided he would play the tin whistle but it sounded sharp and raspy and patrick took it off him and showed mam how his teacher gives his the knuckles with the tin whistle and we all laughed. and we laughed and he said he gets the knuckles everyday. I waited for mam to wake up although her eyes were wide open and tell patrick to shove the tin whistle up his teacher's hole. teachers were always giving knuckles or wallops for the thickest things. himself gave it for mad things too. and I couldn't understand these faults at all. I didn't want to be a grown up at all, but if I ever became one, I would have my whisk and my lies,

I think she's trying to get up, john said, mother was shifting on her arse and I was afraid that she was going to dirty herself again but she put an ankle under her and grabbed at michael's forearm, and I noticed he was getting a moustache too, like john.

michael didn't stop brushing her hair and went on an on until she was on all fours and we were all peering in at her, only michael and herself left in under the stairs and she grabbed his other arm and michael's hand had left her hair now and she see saw sobbed the way children do and ran out of breath. but I knew this was a start, now I was mother.

and the hot water bottle was in the bed.

and I would send them all off to school in september, now I could make food, and I could manage the day with mam in bed and the baby, growing out of my hip.

ABOUT THE WRITER:

Elaine Feeney is an award-winning writer and according to Fionnuala Flanagan (California) is "one of the most important and provocative poets to come out of Ireland in the last decade." She was educated at University College Galway, University College Cork and The University of Limerick and teaches English Literature at the National University of Ireland, Galway. Feeney won the Cúirt Poetry Prize, North Beach Nights' Poetry Prize and was shortlisted for The Fish Poetry Prize amongst others.

Her work has been widely published, translated and anthologised, including recent publications in *Poetry Review* (UK), *Oxford Poetry* (UK) *Stonecutter Journal* (US), *The Wide Shore, A Journal of Global Women's Writing* (US), *The Stinging Fly* (IRE) *New Writing* (Canada), *Pilgrimage* (US), *The Manchester Review* (UK) and *Solas Nua* (US). She has published four poetry collections, *Indiscipline* (2007) *Where's Katie?* (2010, Salmon) and *The Radio was Gospel* (2014, Salmon) and *Rise* (2017, Salmon Poetry).

In 2016, Feeney was commissioned to write the narrative to a feature production by Irish Choreographer, Liz Roche and Film Director Mary Wycherley. It has been shortlisted for the 2017 Bucharest Film Festival and the Underwire Film Festival Prize, UK and has been shown toured in the US and Europe.

She is a comedy script writer for a pilot show, *The Fannypack* which was highly commended by BAFTA. Feeney has just finished her first novel, *SIC* [K].

Richard Holeyton

MARCH MADNESS, 1974

March 1 — Doomsday, and Counting

A grand jury in Washington, DC, has concluded that President Nixon was indeed involved in the Watergate break-in cover-up. Seven people, including former Nixon White House aides H.R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, former Attorney General John Mitchell and former assistant Attorney General Robert Mardian, are being indicted on charges of conspiring to obstruct justice in connection with the Watergate break-in. In Season 1, Episode 6 of *The Six Million Dollar Man*, "Doomsday, and Counting," when an earthquake threatens the stability of an underground Russian nuclear installation, Steve Austin must rescue the fiancé of his friend Col. Vasily Zhukov, who is buried beneath debris. Complicating matters further, Steve must also stop the reactor when it goes into a nuclear self-destruct countdown.

March 2 — Seasons in the Sun

At 9:40 a.m. in Barcelona, Spain, Catalan anarchist Salvador Puig Antich was garroted by the regime of dictator Francisco Franco. The garrote, a medieval torture and execution weapon perfected by the Spanish during the Inquisition and rarely used in modern times, is a crude chair to which the victim is bound while the executioner uses a crank to slowly tighten a metal band around the victim's throat, crushing the neck and spinal cord and causing asphyxiation. "Seasons in the Sun," by Canadian singer Terry Jacks, is the new Billboard No. 1 song. The original song by Belgian Jacques Brel, "*Le Moribond*" (The Dying Person), written in a whorehouse in Tangiers, was about an old man dying from heartbreak and bidding sardonic adieu to his adulterous wife and her lover. While the English translation by Rod McKuen sung by the Kingston Trio in 1963 largely retained the sarcasm, Terry Jacks changed the lyrics to make the song more uplifting and sentimental: "We had joy, we had fun/ We had seasons in the sun."

March 3 — Steep Dive

In history's worst air disaster to date, a McDonnell Douglas DC-10 en route to London has crashed in a forest near Paris, killing all 346 on board. Shortly after takeoff from Orly airport, a cargo door detached from Turkish Airlines flight 182, causing an explosive decompression that severed control cables.

Pilots lost control of the elevators, rudder, and No. 2 engine, and the plane entered a steep dive from which it could not recover. In a paper for Professor N's Critical Analysis: Modernism class at the Stanford overseas campus in Tours, France, U contended that the year T.S. Eliot spent in Paris living in a Left Bank pension at 151 bis Rue Saint Jacques following his graduation from Harvard, along with his later meeting with James Joyce at the Hotel de l'Elysee and subsequent *tête-à-têtes* with Joyce in Paris, all strongly influenced not only *The Waste Land* (published in 1922, same year as Joyce's *Ulysses*) but also Eliot's *chef-d'oeuvre*, *Four Quartets*. U's paper is called "From Uptight Sexual Prude to Master of Time and the Universe — Or, The Parisian-Joycean Connection in Eliot's *Four Quartets*."

March 4 — Sex Shops

The inaugural issue of *People* magazine has appeared with a price of 35 cents. Mia Farrow, starring in the movie *The Great Gatsby*, graces the cover, with stories inside on Gloria Vanderbilt, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Marina Oswald, wives of U.S. Vietnam veterans Missing in Action, and the Hearst family's ordeal around last month's kidnapping of Patty Hearst by the radical Symbionese Liberation Army. R, a student at the Stanford overseas campus in Tours, France, has missed his Social Change in Modern France: Feminism class with Professor E, having spent the weekend in Paris reading *Tropic of Cancer* and *The Diary of Anaïs Nin* and following Henry Miller's and Nin's trail from the Cemetery Montparnasse to the Cemetery Montmartre, from the Hotel Central and Café de la Mairie to the American Express office at 11 Rue Scribe, Café Wepler on Place de Clichy, and the sex shops around Place Pigalle.

March 5 — The Lid is Off

The lid is off, and Portugal is still stunned. The events of the past 10 days — the overthrow of a tyrant, the release of political prisoners, the ending of censorship, the return of exiled politicians, the smashing of the secret police — may presage a social revolution of a kind that Portugal has never before experienced. Will it end, once and for all, European colonialism in Africa? In a journal entry R has observed that he "sat in [the Stanford-in-France] lounge, high on cheap Vouvray Sec & dark green Moroccan hashish, which U & I purchased during Christmas trip to Tangiers & Tetouan & which U (not I) carried through customs in & out of Franco's Spain, wearing her nicest clothes to cross the borders, while I was hippie-searched, forced to unroll my drug-free sleeping bag & squeeze out my unadulterated toothpaste." Cross-legged on the lounge carpet, R closed his eyes and swayed to Traffic's "The Low Spark of High-Heeled Boys" while others danced around him. He felt transported and somehow transformed: "You just can't escape from the sound/ Don't worry too much, it'll happen to you." R and U have hatched a

plan to drop out of school and move to Morocco, where they envision they can (a) live inexpensively close to Europe, (b) use their serviceable French, and (c) have easy access to some of the world's best compressed cannabis.

March 6 — International Women's Day, Part 1

At the Stanford campus in Palo Alto, California, feminist writer Kate Millett spoke to an overflow crowd in the opening session of an International Women's Day fair, declaring: "To our generation falls the greatest responsibility for liberation. It may be easier in the future to be a woman, but I don't think it'll ever be as interesting as it is now. The freedom we seek is a freedom of the soul. But we are increasingly controlled, policed and lied to, and we face increasing abridgement and invasion of our privacy. We're really seeing a protofascist society."

March 7 — International Women's Day, Part 2

The University of Georgia has set the national record with a mass streak of 1,543 men and women, wearing nothing but a smile, running three quarters of a mile on the Athens, GA, campus with 15,000 cheering fans lining the way. At Stanford University's Memorial Auditorium, Marxist philosopher Herbert Marcuse told 1,500 students that "the goals of the women's movement require changes of such enormity, in material as well as intellectual culture, that they can be obtained only by virtue of a change in the entire social system. Feminist socialism must embody the antithesis of the aggressive and repressive needs and values of capitalist society as a form of male-dominated culture. The liberation of women begins at home." At the Stanford-in-France campus in Tours, France, R noted after finishing the first draft of his paper for Social Change in Modern France: Feminism that he told Prof. E he fears she may not like his paper very much, so he'd prefer to take the course Pass/No Credit instead of for a letter grade. R's draft is titled, "Mailer, Millet, and Miller — Or, What is a Vagina?" In a letter to her parents, U, a 19-year-old sophomore, said that instead of returning to California that spring from Stanford-in-France, she was dropping out of college to move to Morocco with a boyfriend, R, whom she met at the overseas campus, and could they please send money.

March 8 — BARE-ASS

Charles de Gaulle Airport, also known as Roissy and formerly called *Aéroport de Paris Nord* (Paris North Airport), has opened 25 kilometers northeast of Paris after eight years of reconstruction. *The Brady Bunch* has been cancelled after five seasons on ABC. In Episode 7 of *The Six Million Dollar Man*, Steve Austin witnesses a murder and with his bionic eye gets a good look at the sniper. Golden Gate Bridge commuters were treated to a special surprise when a group of 45 Stanford students streaks alongside them during

afternoon rush hour. The group from freshman dorm Branner Hall, who call themselves "Bay Area Runners Extraordinaire — Association of Stanford Streakers" (BARE-ASS), ran almost two-thirds of a mile across the famous span clad only in hats, shoes, and Stanford regalia.

March 9 — March Madness

The "March Madness" NCAA basketball tournament begins today with a new format of 25 Division 1 teams, all conference champions. The last Japanese soldier from World War II has surrendered in the Philippines, 29 years after the end of the war. On his 52nd birthday, intelligence officer Hiroo Onoda came out of hiding on Lubang Island in heavily worn and patched fatigues. His final orders had stated that he should not surrender under any circumstances. Initially with a few other holdouts, Lt. Onoda conducted guerilla activities for decades including sabotage of local farms and live-fire skirmishes with fishermen and police. He had ignored repeated leaflets, letters, and photos announcing the war's end, judging them to be propaganda tricks. Befriended in February by an itinerant Japanese hippie named Suzuki, Onoda said he was awaiting orders from a superior officer. Suzuki went to the Japanese government, who located Onoda's former commanding officer and sent him to Lubang where he officially ordered Lt. Onoda relieved from duty. When he finally surrendered, Onoda turned in his sword along with a cache of hand grenades and his still functional Arisaka rifle with 500 rounds of ammunition.

March 10 — Melted Candle

The police arrived at 2 a.m. to 5 Place Anatole France in Tours, a stone's throw from the Loire River, in response to complaints about activities where 45 Stanford students were celebrating the impending end of two terms living and studying in France. Neighbors reported loud music and nude dancing on balconies. The police entered the foyer and told the Americans to close the windows and quiet down; they noted that Professors N and E, who accompanied the students to Tours from the home campus and live in adjacent apartments, had attended the party but retired earlier. Student U noted that "R & I arose at 7 hung over but still giddy from best party of the trip" to help a few others clean up before the Sunday custodial staff arrived and freaked out. They found clothing strewn about the floor, underwear and bras ("Was that one Prof. E's?") tossed over lamps and hung from picture frames, and classmates M and M curled asleep, drooling on opposite ends of a couch. They collected wine bottles, cigarette butts, cardboard roaches of Euro-style spliffs, a plant soaked with vomit. They found *The Joker* (Steve Miller Band) still spinning around the turntable, the vinyl LP limping like a flat tire from a lump of melted candle (still dimly lit) bumping the raised needle arm on each revolution.

March 11 — Eccentric Eruption

The second explosion this year has begun on Mount Etna in Sicily. The only eccentric eruption so far this century, it has produced a rare, nearly aphyric and plagioclase-free trachybasalt that could not be derived from the central volcano conduits and is more alkaline and more radiogenic than all previous historical lavas. The earlier eruption lasted from January 30 until February 16, building up a cone 70 meters above the former surface. Now, after 22 days of calm, a second crater has become active 200 meters west of the earlier cone, at 1650 meters elevation. This crater also shows strong explosive activity, and lava is flowing through an open breach in the western side of the growing cone, forming a field of overlapping lobes.

March 12 — Missing Woman

Serial killer Ted Bundy, sporadically attending law school at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA, has begun assaulting and murdering young college women at the rate of about one per month. The Thurston County Sheriff's Department has launched an intensive search for Donna Gail Manson, a 19-year-old Evergreen State College student last seen by her roommate and friends walking to a concert at 7 p.m. on the Olympia, WA, campus. Five feet tall with blue eyes and long brown hair, parted in the middle, she was wearing green slacks, a red, orange and green-striped top and a fuzzy, black maxi-coat when she disappeared. The first *Wonder Woman* film and TV series pilot has appeared on ABC starring ex-tennis pro Cathy Lee Crosby, wearing blue leggings and a red zip-up skirt, in pursuit of an arch-villain played by Ricardo Montalban.

March 13 — Sexual Politics

It can be hard to tell the real signals from the false ones. Amid the recession following the 1973 Arab Oil Embargo, stocks have rallied in early 1974, sending the Dow up 13.1 percent from its low of 788.31 on December 5, 1973, to today's high of 891.66. R's paper for Social Change in Modern France: Feminism was turned in to Prof. E at Stanford-in-France with the modified title "Mailer, Miller, and Millett — Or, What is a Cunt?" and an introductory note: "The rhetorical question in the title is intended philosophically rather than anatomically or obscenely, as the paper wrestles seriously with competing interpretations of Henry Miller's fiction, use of the C-word, and contending notions of male sexuality by Kate Millett in *Sexual Politics* vs. Norman Mailer in *Genius and Lust*, mostly siding in the end with Mailer." Prof. E has glanced at the title and thanked R for taking the course Pass/No Credit.

March 14 — Embargo to End

The Arab oil ministers ended a one-day meeting in Tripoli, Libya, late

yesterday, and a senior Libyan official said they had decided to lift the oil embargo against the United States. The ban has been in effect since the October Middle East war. The decision was not announced in Tripoli, however, because Libya has opposed the lifting of the embargo until now. The oil ministers adjourned their closed session and a Libyan official said the meeting would resume in Vienna, Austria, on Sunday, March 17.

March 15 — Ides of March

In Episode 8 of *The Six Million Dollar Man*, Steve Austin has been assigned to train America's first female astronaut, Major Kelly Wood. On her maiden flight, a sudden explosion damages the Athena 1 and injures Kelly's co-pilot Osterman. Austin heads the rescue team and follows her up to Skylab, only to find his bionic replacements malfunctioning in outer space. Oral Roberts University (ORU) basketball coach and athletic director Ken Trickey was arrested at 4:20 a.m. on Route 66 in West Tulsa for driving while intoxicated. ORU, founded in 1963 by evangelist Oral Roberts, had earlier defeated Louisville to advance to the Midwest Regional final and a chance to make the Final Four of the NCAA Tournament ("March Madness"). As athletic director, Trickey announced that he has suspended himself as basketball coach for breaking the school's honor code by consuming alcohol. In Andrew Wyeth's painting *The Ides of March (1974)*, a golden-haired dog, eyes staring out at the viewer, lies tranquilly in front of a fireplace with coals simmering in an ominously large, dark hearth rigged with menacing metal hooks.

March 16 — I Love Oral Roberts

Athletic Director/suspended coach Trickey met with Oral Roberts University founder and president Oral Roberts himself, who agreed to give him a second chance following his DWI arrest, "because this is a Christian school," so Trickey could coach in the regional final of college basketball's March Madness tournament. "I love Oral Roberts," Trickey said. Unfortunately, Trickey and ORU lost to Kansas 93-90 in overtime to miss appearing in the Final Four.

March 17 — One-Way Tickets

OPEC nations meeting in Vienna are reconsidering ending their oil embargo against the U.S., Europe, and Japan following President Nixon's comments that any lifting of the embargo that was too conditional or provisional would be counterproductive for future Middle East peace efforts. As winter quarter Finals Week begins at Stanford-in-France in Tours, the students and professors have started packing for their return to the home campus for Spring Quarter, except for two students R and U, who said they found a travel agency on Rue Nationale and bought one-way tickets from Paris to Casablanca.

March 18 — Lucy Fights the System

After 23 years on CBS, the final episode of Lucille Ball's *Here's Lucy* has aired. This was Ball's third popular sitcom after *I Love Lucy* and *The Lucy Show*. In Episode 144, "Lucy Fights the System," Lucy stands up for a waitress named Mary who was fired for being middle aged. Lucy and daughter Kim scheme to prove that age and experience are an asset to the restaurant manager, who is suffering a midlife crisis.

March 19 — Jefferson Starship

Former Teamster President Jimmy Hoffa and actor Anthony Perkins will be featured guests on *The Mike Douglas Show*. Following the breakup of Jefferson Airplane earlier in the year, Jefferson Starship, including Paul Kantner, Grace Slick, David Freiberg, John Barbata, and Papa John Creach, has begun its first tour in Chicago.

March 20 — Big Sky

NBC newscaster Chet Huntley of the renowned *Huntley-Brinkley Report* (1956-1970) has died of lung cancer. Huntley was known for his authoritative, straightforward broadcast voice, his chemistry with Brinkley, and their trademark sign off, "Good night, David," "Good night, Chet ... and good night for NBC News!" In recent years Huntley attracted controversy among locals and environmentalists as developer of a large ski and golf resort in Montana called "Big Sky."

March 21 — Normal Bowel Movements

In "Operant Conditioning of Rectosphincteric Responses in the Treatment of Fecal Incontinence," Bernard T. Engel, Parviz Nikoomanesh, and Marvin M. Schuster report today in *The New England Journal of Medicine* that six patients with severe fecal incontinence and manometric evidence of external-sphincter impairment were taught to produce external-sphincter contraction in synchrony with internal-sphincter relaxation. These responses were induced by rectal distention. During follow-up, four of the patients remained completely continent, and the other two were definitely improved. One patient who was trained to relax her internal sphincter as well as to contract her external sphincter not only was continent but also regularly had normal bowel movements, which she had not had before. The technique was simple to learn, the findings highlight the importance of synchronized rectosphincteric responses in the maintenance of fecal continence, and they show that these responses can be brought under voluntary control. After reading Vladimir Nabokov on the toilet, U, like Nabokovian narrator V, has "welcomed the renewal of polished structures after a week of black fudge fouling the bowl slope so high that no amount of flushing could dislodge it" using the French style water closet at 5 Place Anatole France in Tours. U

wondered, unfortunately too late for her Modernism term paper, if it would be productive to ask what kind of peristaltic pressure Nabokov applies to Joyce and Eliot, how *Pale Fire* puts the squeeze on *Ulysses* and *Four Quartets*.

March 22 — New Cease-Fire

The Viet Cong have proposed a six-point plan that includes detailed provisions for a new cease-fire and the holding of general elections in South Vietnam. American officials who read the plan said it was the most concrete put forward by the Viet Cong since the Paris cease-fire agreement last year. In Tours, the students at Stanford-in-France have received their final grades before parting ways, with hugs and tears and *bon voyages*, and posing for this group photo by the Loire. According to *La Nouvelle République du Centre-Ouest*, some locals expressed relief at the Americans' departure. U was given an A+ ("Wow!") from Prof. N for her paper on T.S. Eliot, and R received a P (Pass/*merci!*) from Prof. E for his paper on Henry Miller *et. al.*

March 23 — Timelessness of Pain and Suffering

"Seasons in the Sun" by Terry Jacks has ended its three-week run atop the Billboard chart, making it one of the best selling singles of all time. The new No. 1 hit is "Dark Lady" by Cher. It's the END OF AN ERA; North Carolina State has shocked UCLA in a semifinal March Madness game 80-77 in double overtime, UCLA's first tournament loss since 1963. The NC State Wolfpack, starring David Thompson, defeated the Bill Walton-led Bruins and ended UCLA's record 88-game winning streak. UCLA had won seven straight NCAA titles and nine of the previous ten championships under legendary coach John Wooden. The Bruins blew an 11-point lead in regulation and a 7-point lead in the second overtime. "That's the timelessness of pain and suffering," said Walton. "The agonizing, the reflection and the endless questioning of yourself. When you're right there and it's there for you and the whole world is watching, and it's recorded as history that can never be changed, that is a terribly heavy burden."

March 24 — Medieval Magic

Newly ex-Stanford student R and girlfriend/fellow dropout U have arrived in Casablanca, Morocco's largest city and a kind of hybrid or patchwork metropolis, destroyed and rebuilt many times over many centuries, occupied or overrun by Berbers, Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Portuguese, Spanish, French, even the Americans under General Patton in World War II. En route to the city from the airport, they passed through the extensive *bidonvilles*, cinder-block and sheet-metal shantytowns, of Casablanca's suburbs. They expressed surprise at the gritty, Western feel of the sprawling new city, and disappointment at the small Medina or old city dating only from 18th century and lacking the authenticity and medieval magic of the Tangiers and Tetouan

medinas they had visited in December. It seemed to them no wonder that expats Paul Bowles, Allen Ginsburg, William Burroughs, Brion Gysin, Gertrude Stein, Tennessee Williams, etc. had chosen Tangiers instead of Casablanca, where even the urchins and street hustlers showed a sinister edge, cursing at R and U in English as the couple searched for a cheap pension or *riad* near the Medina.

March 25 — Lineup for CBS Evening News

1. Introduction, Walter Cronkite (New York City)
2. Stans, Mitchell Trial / Dean Testimony
3. Grand Jury Report / House Judiciary Committee
4. Special Prosecutor / White House / Subpoena Deadline
5. Milk Producers / Campaign Contributions
6. (Commercial: Bayer Timed-Release Aspirin; Haley's M-O Laxative.)
7. Kissinger / Moscow Meeting
8. (Commercial; The Hartford Insurance Company; Omega Oldsmobile.)
9. Hearst Kidnapping
10. Boyle Trial / Yablonski Murders
11. McDonnell Douglas / Washington, DC-10 Controversy
12. Joint Economy Committee / President "Economy" Message
13. Stock Market Report (Studio)
14. (Commercial: Mr. Coffee Automatic Drip Coffeemaker; Master Charge.)
15. Cypress Swamp Fires
16. Suspect / Kronholm Kidnapping
17. Mariner 10 / Mercury
18. Analysis (US / Southeast Asia)
19. Supreme Court Rulings
20. Kennedy Jr. / Skiing / Amputated Leg
21. (Commercial: Anacin; The Hartford Insurance Company.)
22. Blacksmithing / Georgia / Bailey
23. Good Night.

March 26 — Tree Huggers

A group of peasant women led by Gaura Devi in Reni village in the Garhwal Himalayas of northeast India have used their bodies to surround and cling to trees in order to prevent loggers from felling them. The act of defiance by illiterate tribal and village women has energized the Chipko movement, which aims to use forest resources judiciously for the benefit of local people, and is capturing the attention of the broader environmental movement. Thousands of trees near Reni are threatened. The Chipko (Hindi for "clinging") women were inspired by the original tree huggers, 294 men and 69 women belonging

to the Bishnois branch of Hinduism, who, in 1730, died while trying to protect the trees in their village from being turned into the raw material for building a palace.

March 27 — Mazagan

U has observed in a shaky journal entry that, as U and R took the CTM bus south from Casablanca to El Jadida, which the Moroccans still call Mazagan for the old Portuguese city and fortress, "spring already feels like summer as we swing inland on the A5, hugging our backpacks on sweaty laps, squeezed among turbaned old men, women in jalabas & hijabs with overflowing baskets of provisions & squawking chickens."

March 28 — Lack of Evidence

In Romania the position of President of the Republic has been created especially for Nicolae Ceausescu, named President for Life by the Grand National Assembly. The naked, 6-foot-7, 270-pound, walrus-mustachioed comedy writer Pat McCormick streaked across the set of *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, surprising Carson, sidekick Ed McMahon, and bandleader Doc Severinsen. NBC censors managed to black out the streaker from the waist down. McMahon chortled "Hoooooo...", Severinsen made as if to remove his clothes, and Carson joked that McCormick was arrested but released for "lack of evidence."

March 29 — Four Dead in Ohio

Concluding a week of co-hosting *The Mike Douglas Show*, Jonathan Winters and Douglas have featured special guest Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. In Episode 9 of *The Six Million Dollar Man*, Rudy Wells is kidnapped on a trip to his old study grounds. Luckily Steve Austin has some time off and follows Rudy unannounced to Austria. The trail soon leads to the wealthy Tucelli family, who want to force Dr. Wells to give up the secret of constructing a bionic man. In Ohio, eight National Guardsmen have been indicted on charges stemming from the shooting deaths of four students at Kent State University on May 4, 1970. On their way back from a café to their pension in El Jadida, Morocco, after reading the current *International Herald Tribune* left by a traveler from Casablanca, R and U sang the chorus of "Ohio" by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, "Tin soldiers and Nixon coming/ We're finally on our own/ This summer I hear the drumming/ Four dead in Ohio/ Four dead in Ohio" over and over.

March 30 — Battle Formations

Farmers digging a well near Xi'an, China, have discovered the long lost Terracotta Army, thousands of terracotta warriors, horses, and chariots buried in giant pits flanking the tomb of China's First Emperor, Qin Shi Huang

(259-210 BCE). The life-size sculptures, arranged in battle formations as if to protect Emperor Qin's mausoleum and necropolis complex, have largely identical body parts that, according to experts, may have been created from molds using an early version of modular assembly-line methods. However, the warriors vary in height and uniform according to rank, and they all appear to have unique facial features individually handcrafted from clay.

March 31 — Heading South

After a few days in El Jadida enjoying cool Atlantic breezes, walking the ochre ramparts of Mazagan Fortress, and checking out several *petite maisons* and shabby rental apartments, U and R have decided this is not where they will settle in Morocco. They packed up and headed south to explore the towns of the Mother-of-Pearl coast, full of hope.

ABOUT THE WRITER:

Richard Holeton is author of the hypertext novel *_Figurski at Findhorn on Acid_*, other electronic literature, and fiction or hybrid work in many journals including *Indiana Review*, *Mississippi Review*, *ZYZZYVA*, *Black Ice*, and *Vassar Review*. His awards include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, MacDowell Colony, Brown Foundation, and California Arts Council.

Erik Harper Klass

CITY AS MUSEUM (*TURKISH, İ*)

(An excerpt from WIP *The Letters and Diacritics of East Central Europe: With Descriptions and Examples*)

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The Turks call it the letter *çe*, pronounced /tʃe/. Its tail-like appendage is called a *cedilla*. In English orthoepy it is pronounced /s/—what you would call, pretentiously, the *voiceless alveolar fricative*—e.g. FAÇADE, SOUPÇON, and LIMAÇON.

It is a diacritic that softens.

Which reminds me: We shared a puerile interest in the word *flaccid*, from the Latin *flaccidus*, meaning flabby, weak, drooping. The correct pronunciation, you told me once (when, Rachel, when? I shudder to recall), according to the OED, is /'flæk sɪd/, but the word's very definition seems to manifest itself, you said, in the comparatively emasculated and erroneous pronunciation /'flæs ɪd/. The solution, it occurred to me some time later, was a simple change in spelling, utilizing the *ç* in that second position, to make clear by juxtaposition the hard /k/ sound (you would call it the *voiceless velar stop*) that culminates the antecedent syllable. So we have FLACÇID, we have ACCÇENT, we have ACCÇEPTANCE. There are many others, all of which I had summarized in the short (yet substantial, solid, cocksure) scholarly article¹ I ghostwrote for you, Rachel, on this topic, which article you never did submit to those Linguistics journals of yours, did you? I was afraid to ask. Enfeebled, yes. Additionally—and more apposite to the subject matter of this study of the letters and diacritics of East Central Europe, with descriptions and examples—the *ç*-cedilla represents in the Turkish alphabet what you would most haughtily call the *voiceless postalveolar affricate*. The example of pronunciation given in *Turkish Grammar* by G. L. Lewis, a book I carry with me here in my JanSport as I walk up and down these streets of Łódź, is the *ch* digraph in *church* (either one, one assumes).² We also, I'll have you know, hear

¹ Titled "Hard, Then Soft."

² Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, 1.

the sound in *cheat*. Further examples follow.

My mind just now is on the Turkish—true, south of our proceedings heretofore (Turkey, a bit like the U.S. Florida of our East Central Europe)—because of a book I’ve found myself enjoying on my Łódźian perambulations, a nonfiction book entitled *The Museum of Innocence* by a Turkish writer of some repute called Orhan Pamuk. I purchased it somewhat hastily, failing to scrutinize the cover, drawn in by its alluring appellation (you remember our mutual interest in museums)—hastily, I say, because if I had more carefully read the words on the cover, I would have noticed set discreetly in a small, violet serif typeface beneath the title the dreaded “A NOVEL.” And yet, days later, out of some misguided obligation to read any book that has adventitiously or otherwise found residence on my shelf, I turned to the first page and read:

It was the happiest moment of my life, though I didn't know it. Had I known, had I cherished this gift, would everything have turned out differently? Yes, if I had recognized this instant of perfect happiness, I would have held it fast and never let it slip away. It took a few seconds, perhaps, for that luminous state to enfold me, suffusing me with the deepest peace, but it seemed to last hours, even years. In that moment, on the afternoon of Monday, May 26, 1975, at about a quarter to three, just as we felt ourselves to be beyond sin and guilt so too did the world seem to have been released from gravity and time. Kissing Füsün's shoulder, already moist from the heat of our lovemaking, I gently entered her from behind, and as I softly bit her ear, her earring must have come free and, for all we knew, hovered in midair before falling of its own accord. Our bliss was so profound that we went on kissing, heedless of the fall of the earring, whose shape I had not even noticed.³

I’m the first to admit the novelistic—i.e. rather cloying and melodramatic—nature of this passage, but I found myself reading on, and as I turned the pages, it became clear to me that the text is quite obviously not “a novel.” I am not sure why the publishers affixed this two-word stigma to the book’s cover, or why the author himself periodically and reflexively uses the word throughout the book,⁴ for this study of a particular museum offers obvious clues to its verity, including a map leading the visitor of Istanbul to the titular

³ Pamuk, *Museum of Innocence* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 3.

⁴ E.g. *ibid.* 101, 307, and *passim*.

museum on the corner of Daljic and ÇUKURCUMA,⁵ a helpful nonfictiony index,⁶ and even a ticket to the museum itself, which ticket the reader may carefully cut and remove from the page.⁷ That I look forward to visiting—that I will do so, sans you, Rachel⁸—is not at all the point here, as it pertains to the letters and diacritics of East Central Europe (and, allow me to stress, its environs). The point is that Turkish is a language of exceptional visual beauty. Even in English, on that first page, I knew something was afoot (N.B. “Fusun”). By the second page of the text, we have “Valikonağı Avenue” and a restaurant in “Nişantaşı.” At one point, on page 43, in a chapter titled “Kissing on the Lips,” I came across the word “İnönü,” an astounding word—I stayed with it for the better part of an afternoon, mesmerized by those tittles, finding it almost impossible to tear my eyes away and read on. This is a language that bleeds through the gauze of translation, that challenges the mightiest of typesetters. Of course, I chased down a version in Turkish. An ocular feast:

Hayatımın en mutlu anıymış, bilmiyordum. Bilseydim, bu mutluluğu koruyabilir, her şey de bambaşka gelişebilir miydi? Evet, bunun hayatımın en mutlu anı olduğunu anlayabilseydim, asla kaçırmazdım o mutluluğu. Derin bir huzurla her yerimi saran o harika altın an belki birkaç saniye sürmüştü, ama mutluluk bana saatlerce, yıllarca gibi gelmişti. 26 Mayıs 1975 Pazartesi günü, saat üçe çeyrek kala civarında bir an, sanki bizim suçtan, günahattan, cezadan ve pişrnanlıktan kurtulduğumuz gibi, dünya da yerçekimi ve zamanın kurallarından kurtulmuş gibiydi. Fusun'un sıcaktan ve sevişmekten ter içinde kalmış omzunu öpmüş, onu arkadan yavaşça sarmış, içine girmiş ve sol kulağını hafifçe ısırmıştım ki, kulağına takılı küpe uzunca bir an sanki havada durdu ve sonra da kendiliğinden düştü. O kadar mutluyduk ki, o gün şekline hiç dikkat etmediğim bu küpeyi sanki hiç fark etmedik ve öpüşmeye devam ettik.⁹

A few of my translations: *KAÇIRMAZDIM* (I would miss), *SUÇTAN* (from our crime), *YERÇEKİMİ* (gravity), *İÇİNE GİRMIŞ* (I gently entered her).

⁵ Ibid. xiii. We note the Ç.

⁶ Ibid. 533ff.

⁷ Ibid. 520.

⁸ The ticket is clearly marked, in all caps, “SINGLE ADMISSION ONLY.”

⁹ Pamuk, *Musumiyet müzesi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 3.

Exceptional words.¹⁰

And in tribute to you, Rachel, to here, I have availed myself of a version in Polish. The eyes, ravaged, engorge:

To była najszcześniejsza chwila w moim zyciu, a ja o tym nie wiedzialem. Czy gdybym wiedzial, zdolalbym to szczescie zachowac, czy wszystko mogloby sie potoczyc inaczej? Tak, gdybym sie zorientowal, ze to najszcześniejszy moment w moim zyciu, nie pozwolilbym szczesciu uciec. Ta zlota chwila napelniajaca mnie calego glębokim spokojem trwala byc moze ledwie kilka sekund, mnie jednak wydawalo sie, ze obejmowala godziny, lata. Dnia 26 maja 1975 roku, w poniedzialek, o godzinie za pietnascie trzecia przez moment swiat zdawal sie wolny od czasu i grawitacji, a my od winy, grzechu, kary i skruchy. Pocalowalem spocone od seksu i upalu ramie Fusun, powolnym ruchem objalem ja od tyłu, wszedlem w nia i delikatnie ugryzlem platek jej lewego ucha, a wtedy zawieszony w nim kolczyk przez dluga chwile jakby unosil sie w powietrzu, az w koncu wysunal sie i spadl. Bylimy tak szczesciwi, ze nie zauwazylimy tego kolczyka, ktorego ksztaltu nawet nie zapamietalem, i calowalismy sie dalej.¹¹

If I have counted correctly, we find 7 unique letters or markings of interest in the Turkish passage, totaling 85 instances. In the Polish, we find an astounding 9 unique letters or markings of interest, totaling 79 instances. In the English, one letter: the borrowed *ü*. (O woe our impoverished language, our stark and flaccid tongue!)

I carry all three versions with me in my old JanSport. They weigh me down. They pull me back. The past dances around me like ghosts. They call out my name, these phantoms. They wave with recognition. But when I look, when I try to focus, they have escaped into the cracks and crevices of this Unreal City. (They are my companions; I, their caretaker; I do not fear these ghosts; I fear only their loss.)

The sun has freed itself from the horizon and risen into the Polish sky. People now stay close to the edges of the street in long stretches of crenellated shade. I walk past a two-story beer garden with blooms of deep red anemones bursting from planters. People are already drinking. Their

¹⁰ Any errors of translation are entirely mine.

¹¹ Pamuk, *Muzeum niewinności*, trans. Anna Akbikie Sulimowicz (Kraków: Wydawn. Literackie, 2010), 3.

laughter. The drift of their words. The Polish. The sound of it. I hear your laugh. I hear your voice. We sat here once, this very spot. But now, just my ghosts, just my phantoms.

I have made clear, I believe and hope, that my aim in these pages is to introduce to the reader, in one volume or another, a number of letters and diacritics of East Central Europe, with descriptions and examples, and, as I reminded myself recently—last night, in fact, insomnious, in my empty hotel bed (emptier, in comparison with what once was, infinitely emptier), reading from *A New Polish Grammar*—I reminded myself that, to quote, “the best justification of the choice of a method is its efficiency.”¹² Pamuk, on the museum, averred that “it is possible to substitute for one’s most cherished object another.”¹³ Let us try. And is not a work of nonfiction but a museum of sorts, a depository of facts, presentations, orthographic dioramas, pictures for the mind, strewn in straight horizontal lines along the echoing corridors of the white page?¹⁴ Look around. These immutable, rigid buildings. This resilient street of dark bricks. The constancy of sky. But how that same sky reflects to flickering abstraction in the windows, the blue turning to steel, the sun to brass (*steel* in Turkish: *ÇELİK*; *brass*: *PİRİNÇ*). The flowers will drop their blood-red petals to the ground, where they will wither and die. The leaves of the ancient linden trees fall, and the wind—this moment of wind, unique, ephemeral—scatters them in mathematical curves (limaçons!) sketched in the dust, now, and nevermore. The people walk and laugh and drink and age, streaks of rain on glass, but so much remains among these residua of memory. Our museum displays these temporal collisions as a non-linear history of discreet objects and episodes. Each eternal brick. Each speck of dust. Pamuk: “The power of things inheres in the memories they gather up inside them, and also in the vicissitudes of our imagination, and our memory.”¹⁵ We might call our collection here a glimmering collage, a multidimensional pattern of perma and ephemera, the physical object versus the strange neural patterns of the brain, what Rowe and Koetter call a

¹² Joseph Andrew Teslar, op. cit. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1947), 1.

¹³ *The Museum of Innocence*, 501.

¹⁴ And, moreover, are not footnotes tantamount to those didactic panels—including, when we are lucky, the most erudite of curatorial remarks—placed perfectly on these smooth museum walls at the lower peripheries of our vision?

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 324.

“compounding [of] matter of factness and cerebrality.”¹⁶ Donne, Stravinsky, Eliot, Joyce, they are all here, throwing fistfuls of the past and the present into the air like confetti.¹⁷ We, tight-faced and bedazzled, watch each little scrap fall into place. I stand looking up at this light post, this one light post, curving and spiraling into the brightening sky, and that man there, a lanky man in a macintosh, walks past these expansive offerings, his eyes fixed before his shiny shoes, as if undone by proud death. There is a procession of men in white smocks marching along the gutter, wearing sandwich boards and tall white hats with scarlet Polish letters: H. **Ę**. **Ł**. Y. **Ś**. I can only look and wonder. Drinkers, drinking, laugh spluttering, drink against breath. Time’s ruins build eternity’s mansions, someone said.¹⁸ Look! Here, among the decay, the past is preserved, like a soul, within each object. I brush my hand along the dark metal post. It is strong, substantial, cold to my touch. It does not move. It does not budge. Napoleon I sought to turn Paris into an *espèce de musée*, a species of museum, a “collection of permanent reminders”¹⁹ prepared and curated for our collective edification. We think of Von Klenze’s Munich. We think of Schinkel’s Potsdam and Berlin. Haussmann’s Paris. The Ringstrasse of Vienna. We think, sadly, of Speer. We absorb the information embedded in these curbs and walls and windows and railings, these façades of ancient brick and stone, these literal bronze monuments of Łódź, the people streaming past with mannequin faces. The future plunges to the past, what Dillard calls the dissolution of the present, but look closer. Not much has changed. I am here. You are here. Look!

Ğ

Called the *yumuşak ge*, this letter is “a concession to the traditional spelling of Turkish in the Arabo-Persian alphabet.”²⁰ We see it in the word *MAĞFUR* (forgiveness). We see it in the word *OGUL*, which can mean a swarm of bees,

¹⁶ Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1978), 142.

¹⁷ They, the fictionists, dissimulate and obscure. They hide their clever vessels of literary dope in their *añi* of sublimation, daring us to poke a finger, take a peak. This is why I do not like the fictionists. We nonfictionists illuminate and explain. We light the way, the truth, the life. We do not hide behind clever obscurantisms. We simply cite. (And yet these exemplars of fiction are, I think, nonetheless, apposite, unfortunately.)

¹⁸ Many of these descriptions I copied—I prefer *borrowed*—from your book of Græco-Roman mythology, Rachel. Yes, forgive me for leafing through. I believe it was titled *Ulysses (sine anno)*.

¹⁹ Cited in Rowe and Koetter, *Collage City*, 126.

²⁰ Lewis, *Turkish Grammar*, 4.

or a bosom. (Disparate meanings whose conflation I understand all too well.) Further examples follow.

Perhaps this is our focus, our area of inquiry, this interplay between the ruins of Łódź—the empty textile factories off the main thoroughfares, edges softening, decaying, against an unforgiving sky, hidden from the tourists, the hulking husks dropping their worn bricks and dust onto the dead yellow grass (*to crumble* in Turkish: *OĞALAMAK*)—and what is new, the graffiti stretching across the old walls, staining even the dead weeds that flutter fluorescently at the edges; the new shiny signs with their beautiful letters; the gleaming cars with their shrill, dopplering horns. These white, immaculate trains trundle the same tracks as the old steam engines. Someone said that the experience of ruin is the ruination of experience, the destruction of our memories, and if we consider this statement carefully, we will discover that, ostensibly, the issue is otiose: I can remember what I remember and I fail to remember what I fail to remember. Let us call this the ecstasy of ignorance. And yet, and this is important, we're aware of the loss. We can feel it. We want to remember. We want to take in these objects and visions, of different origins, of different natures, deracinated like resplendent flowers from out of the rich soil of context, and store them securely in the aspic of our minds. These fragments—which, of course, are just the Past—contrast with the newly and constantly and everlastingly built Now. Here we held hands. Here we rested on this red-brick planter in the shade. Here you pinched the loose skin of my elbow as hard as you could and I felt no pain and we laughed like birds and drank like tramps. But here, I don't know. And here, someone has etched the word PAULINA into the crumbling stone, and it means nothing to me, to us. The objects and space swirl in a solid-void dialectic, and here now our guide books to Łódź have us stop beneath a statue of Gutenberg nestled in a building's central niche (I stop, for the second time). He looks down at us and opens his mouth. Give wings to truth, he says. Put it to the page, he says, for posterity. These gothic birds perch on the building's façade, holding halberds, stomachs shining like gold, and I remember the sharpness of your touch that first time, a kind of injury, a wounding that heals in reverse. You said the sin of the world falls away, those were your last words—yes we were beyond sin, beyond crime, beyond guilt, beyond time (*time* in Turkish: *ÇAĞ*). I had to kiss your lips even harder to stop, to finally stop, the flow of language. Up to then we had been nothing but words. But words, in the end, are empty and banal, and our contact, our consummation, I shall call it our solid-solid dialectic, was translunary and free of the gravity of language (no dull sublunary love, ours). Your hair fell into place over those green eyes, black as night then in your new room, but I remember your eyes, shall always remember them, as green (we embellish, we color our memories, like children), the way they glinted as you turned toward me, eyes wide, mouth slightly open (*mouth* in

Turkish: *AGIZ*), your shoulder so perfectly moist, as I gently gently gently. I once sought to count every freckle but it was not until the morning, that first morning, that I really noticed their brilliant expansiveness. Your eyes were closed and your translucent lashes waved in sine curves. Interstitial lines of pale orange light came into your room and fell upon your body and I turned on my side, raised myself on my right elbow—no it must have been my left—and I began to silently count, as a lost sailor counts each grain of sand upon his desolate shore, a glorious distraction to be meticulously observed and recorded. My heart, my *limaçon* heart, beat so loudly I thought you'd wake, and eventually, as I slowly pulled down the sheet, you did. Those green eyes, the color of linden leaves, like two alien suns, rising. And your first words? My first words? Gone. I have not the slightest recollection. The mind, someone said, has fuses. Did we listen silently to the world come alive? Did we make love again? Upon overturned eggplant-colored milk crates you piled unread books on either side of your bed, roughly in descending order of importance or currency, like a literary triage. Protean night stands. Someday, you said, maybe, you hesitated, maybe you can add yours. You cleared your throat, retained your poise of language. A capstone, you said, to our Babelian tower. (I, later, drowning, clung to that tender *our* like a lifeline.) Did I imagine a great surrender in your voice, this mixing of our words' worlds? Our worlds' words? I quickly like a gunslinger reached into my overnight bag, pulled out Rothschild's magisterial *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*, and placed it on top of *A Linguistic Atlas of Eastern European Yiddish*.²¹ But come to think of it, that wasn't this first morning. It was much later. You explained, with no preamble, in this near-religious moment when the blur of alcohol had subsided and the darkness had been stripped away, we naked and falling, that the immaculate conception referred not to that of Jesus, but to Mary, that, according to you Christians, you said, God removed all stains of her original sin. And look where that has got us, you said. I nodded and pretended to know or care or understand. (We had been discussing the etymology of the word *pigeon*—as was so often the case your logic escaped (birdlike) my cage of understanding.) But this was some other morning. The careful calculus of your skin and pigment? Another morning. I noticed that you had painted each wall a slightly different shade of orange—a lighter shade here, a darker shade there—such that when the sun shone from some perfect angle on some perfect day at some point in the middle of some perfect year, by some miracle of light and shade, the walls would merge as one. Like floating in a space of color, you said. Like astronauts in sunbeams. But later. This was later. You wore a too-large t-shirt that said **ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT APOSTROPHIC ERRORS**. It was threadbare and covered your skin

²¹ Jean Jofen, author.

like gossamer. It is a shirt I wish I had in my collection. But this too was much later. So much is lost. I want to reach out, move your hair from those shining green eyes, pull you closer. Perhaps this is what I did. Perhaps not. Georges Bataille, in *Documents* (1930), notes that the development of the museum in France in 1793 coincided with the invention of the guillotine. The fixing of our history and the death of our past are entombed in these carefully anthologized corridors of the mind. We preserve our memories. And we manufacture them, a kind of euthanasia, a politicization of history, the parallax of memory. Wander with me down these strange incoherent streets, under the azure sky of a vernal dawn, among these arrays of objects, what Valéry calls a “tumult of frozen creatures . . . a strange organized disorder.”²² Are these then Sebald’s “archaeological excavations of the slag-heaps of our collective existence”?²³ Is this museum of streets and buildings and air then a columbarium, Provensal’s “empty skeleton, the cemetery of the arts”?²⁴ These objects, shall we visit them as one visits the dead? Shall we lay down our flowers on these bemired wormcasts of our past? Shall we grovel and drip saliva at the pigeoned ramparts and wormy mudsills of these sepulchral buildings?

Łódź: Our Louvre. Our guillotine.

Â

The circumflex accent, here seen above the *A*, is known in Turkish as *düzeltme işareti*. It can be used, among other things, to mark a long vowel in Arabic borrowings, especially to avoid ambiguities, as in the Persian borrowed *nar* (pomegranate) and the Arabic *NĀR* (hell fire). Further examples follow.

Yes I wonder if things might have turned out differently had I recognized and cherished the gift of that morning there in the pale orange light. Yes I should have held it fast, I should have, like Pamuk, stolen each moment, each thought, I should have taken photographs and enlarged them into glossy posters for my wretched walls, composed dithyrambs of love to be sung at regular intervals from the rooftops, commissioned a painting of you, asleep with your auburn hair thrown about, one crescent of blood-red areola exposed above the wrinkled sheet, your left shoulder gleaming—or maybe it

²² Paul Valéry, “The Problem of Museums” in vol. 12 of *The Collected Words of Paul Valéry*, ed. Jackson Mathews, trans. David Paul (New York: Pantheon, 1956), 203.

²³ W. G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction* (New York: Random House, 2004), 61.

²⁴ Henry Provensal, *L’Art de demain*, in *The architecture of the museum: Symbolic structures, urban contexts*, edited by Michaela Giebelhausen (New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 161.

was your right—I should have enclosed us within my bell jar of time, introduced an ample layering of absorbent cotton saturated with chloroform, waited for our convulsions. (*Still* in Turkish: *HÂLÂ.*) That moment lasted hours, days, weeks, years, eternity. But I am not seized by Valéry’s holy dread, here, amongst the ruins, for here we have transformed time into space, a kind of synesthesia of experience. We, the FLÂNEURS,²⁵ we walk the streets, we construct the city, we consume it. These are the real museums, these cities, the outer scaffoldings within which the meta museums pose artificially like nicely lit gewgaws under glass, displaying their nicely lit gewgaws under glass. Pamuk: “In poetically well built²⁶ museums, formed from the heart’s compulsions, we are consoled not by finding in them old objects that we love, but by losing all sense of Time.”²⁷ The experience of ruin, I propound, is the *reification* of experience, wherein my memories rise like phoenixes from the ashes of the history of time, deprived here of its linear tendencies and allowed to rearrange itself according to the order in which we choose to remember—what neologist Erik Swyngedouw calls “the universalization of the recasting of tumultuous historical reorderings into the ossified ruins of theatrically staged places: time frozen as place, a mere moment of space.”²⁸ Atemporality. An eternal moment. You too, Rachel, were a horologist. I display a clock, a perfect copy, composed of thirteen orange cubes: twelve each numbered with a sanserif white numeral, and one sprouting the hour and minute hands—white, nondescript—and enclosing the clockworks itself. You had positioned these cubes on your bedroom wall, had measured carefully, had positioned the cubes every thirty degrees, but of course, you had shattered the circle, such that 12 clung just beneath the ceiling, like a swallow’s eave nest, always in shade, and 1 sat inches from the center cube (I could always tell when it was five past midnight), 2 was over near the window, casting long morning shadows, 3 looked haphazard and alone in the middle of the wall, and so on, but the angles were correct, the angles were perfect, and I remember lying awake at night with my hand behind my head, listening to the soft ticking, my foot slowly sliding across your smooth sheet to feel the warmth of your ankle. Alley cats caterwauled in long, nearly articulate syllables of lust. Muffler-impaired cars careered down the dark streets, disappearing, unstopping. The shattering spiral of sirens, red and blue, shimmered like slow explosions on

²⁵ A word of French origin. The letter itself, we see, is a traveler.

²⁶ [*sî*]

²⁷ *The Museum of Innocence*, 520.

²⁸ “Exit ‘post’—the making of ‘glocal’ urban modernities” in *Future City*, ed. Stephen Read, Jürgen Rosemann, Job van Eldijk (London: Spoon Press, 2005), 132.

the ceiling. You, you slept so soundly. In the beginning, those first days and weeks, the sound, the ticking, connoted a sleepless kind of desire. Near the end it was a measure of my insomnia, my fear, a crisp, malevolent countdown to an ineluctable end, my hell fire. There was a only a short while—or at least the time seems thus, spent in an Arcadia of comfortable slumber—when the clock did not sound, and in my memories these times marked the happy middle of our union, a roseate time of satisfaction and hope—like floating in a sea of color—that, none the less, I can't remember convincingly or in any detail whatsoever.

I

But one must not always dot his *ı*'s! One must sometimes leave things undone. That is why we are here. To leave off the capstone. To unsound the finale. To avert our annihilation. According to my grammar guidebook, the dotless *ı* is a close, back, unrounded vowel. "It is not unlike the sound of *a* in *serial*, but a closer approximation can be achieved by spreading the lips as if to say *easy* but saying *cushion* instead."²⁹ Most of our diacritics strut boldly above or below the letter. There they pose, ostentatious like peacocks, calling us to notice their orthographic beauty. But the *ı*: It is subtle, proud, surreptitious, aloof. It is easy to miss. The *ı* holds within its simple plumage a world of foreignness. And yet we fail to notice. In that sense, we must fear it. Letters can be spies. I have tried to recreate his face. He had a beard. He was a fellow Jew of yours, I knew that. You spoke words in Polish, you two, and as we left he kissed you lightly on the cheeks, three times, the Russian style. He did not look at me, not a glance, even when I shook his moist, fat hand, a bloodstone on his forefinger gleaming in a gold ring. I'm sure he has expanded in my mind. Was it him, Rachel? Was it? *Jealousy* in Turkish: *KISKANÇ*. Further examples follow.

I have read my guidebook carefully, every jot and tittle, and have learned that Turkish employs liberal use of something called agglutination, a process by which—and allow me to paraphrase—by which words are formed from morphemes, without fusion or morphophonemic alteration. (I know you are familiar with these concepts, Rachel, my linguist—humor me with your attention.) Many languages agglutinate, but none, I posit, do so with quite the zeal of Turkish. For example, *ŞİP* means *plop*, and *SEVDİ* means *he has fallen in love*, and together these words become *ŞİPSEVDİ*, meaning *vulnerable* or, by extension, *helpless*. And another: *ÇİT* means *crack* and *KIRILDIM* means *I have been broken*, and together these parts become *ÇİTKIRILDIM*, meaning *fragile*,

²⁹ Lewis, *Turkish Grammar*, 13.

and also *effeminate*. The word *AVRUPALILĀŞTIRILAMIYANLARDANSINIZ*,³⁰ which comes from eight affixes (!), means, roughly, *you are one of those who cannot be Europeanized*. They build their words, as with bricks, into glorious temples of meaning.

I walk north. Piotrkowska's stippled palaces and townhouses vibrate with stabs of copper light and I must fix my eyes before my feet to see clearly (*copper* in Turkish: *BAKIR*). I have been told that suppression is error. Bring your memories to light. etc. Then we might, in our tall, black, shiny boots, smash them like insects swarming from beneath the cool underside of recently dislodged rocks. Then we might turn them into objects, these abstract neural codings. Let's put it to the page, let's print it (*vide supra*: Gutenberg). Sketch it out, write it down, so that then we might incinerate. (So, sure, fine, I will allow that this is a supplementary reason for my perambulations here.) I am filling in details. I am searching and remembering. I am rummaging through the detritus of my own sacrosanctum of time. And I take umbrage at the changes that distract me from my work. Are you among the names etched into the Piotrkowska cobblestones? Are you looking down from the painted sides of buildings? Do you frolic in fountains with the unmoving brass children? Are you amongst these bronze monuments, sustaining vain gestures on the air,³¹ frozen, yet alive? Perhaps you survive not in the void, not in the object, but in the margins—somewhere between the surface and the air. These monuments to you must still stand amongst these dying, decaying structures, these moving mercurial trees, these people, slashing past like stains on film. I will find you, here, near the city's skin, its historical fabric, its porosities where the insects skitter and squirm, alive under my touch and gaze. Swyngedouw calls this a reterritorialization,³² emphasis on the *re-*: back, again. Here is where I will walk and look, this intersection of everyday and eternity. Freud used the word *unheimlich*: a feeling of being strangely out of place.³³ And, indeed, I am strange, placeless.

³⁰ N.B. that the capital dotless *ı* in Turkish is written, as we would expect, as *I*. But the capital dotted *İ* is written *I*. The observant reader, I trust, did not let this go unnoticed heretofore. Nor has the observant reader (you, Rachel, you!) failed to notice that, in the interest of convention, convenience, consistency, and, yes, efficiency, I have presented these numerous examples in all caps, but, true, we readers of English lose something with the capitalization of the dotless *ı*, so allow me to present this one word in lowercase: *avrupalılaştırılmıyanlardanınız*. Six dotless *ı*'s. We read, staggered and amazed.

³¹ Another phrase apparently of Græco-Roman origin (see *Ulysses*).

³² "Exit 'post,'" 136.

³³ See *Writings on Art and Literature* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), 195ff.

If Pompeii is the only true museum, as Le Corbusier deemed,³⁴ then let us use its perfect destruction as our guide. Let us see things as they really are—I mean *vere*. Our city is transformed into a museum by historical tragedy. We did not escape, did we? I held you in situ like an infant as we floundered in the enveloping ash. Nietzsche: “man braces himself against the great and ever-increasing pressure of what is past: it pushes him down or bends him sideways, it encumbers his steps as a dark invisible burden which he would like to disown.”³⁵ Yes and no. Let us put these dead artefacts back into the time of space, the space of time, where they might come to life and live again. Let us welcome this pressure, this burden, lightened, made visible. Here, in that moment, on the afternoon of Thursday, April 26, 2012, at about a quarter to three, we drank *RAKI* at this Turkish restaurant, we watched the clear liquid touch the ice and turn to cloud. And here, just across the street, in the basement pub, we drank pints of dark Irish beer, counting the rings of foam descend the glass. Here we sat at Rubinstein’s piano. I, tapping the metallic keys, hummed “The Ghost in You” and you guessed “*Là ci darem*.” You played “The Rite of Spring” and I guessed “Love’s Old Sweet Song.” Here we wandered through Pasaż Rubinsteina and tried to name the flowers and trees. Here we stopped at the mermaid fountain, and I said she looks like you. Here we watched the children in the playground shout words that I would never understand. Here I said, clumsily, *Czy mówisz po polsku?* and you replied, perfectly, *Tylko trochę*. Here we sat under the leaves of the walnut trees and drank from a cool bottle of *wódka*. Here, now, I pull from my JanSport and display the very bottle (*Żubrówka*). Here I will bury it in the soil. I will dig, my nails dark with dirt. Here, on this bench, you rested your drunken head on my shoulder, and your hair blew up and tickled my cheek. Here you cried, rain in your voice, distant thunder. Here I unfolded our map, looked at the Jewish graveyard, the Ghetto, so many steps ahead of us, and I tried to cry too, may have, but I think I was only crying for us, for our inevitable dissolution. (Our demise, by now, I knew, was etched in stone.) Here I display that very map; it is still good; its scale holds true. Here, now, I wonder if Turkish has a word for *You are one of those who cannot be Polishized*. Here I gently rubbed the skin at the back of your arm beneath your shoulder where you would get that beautiful rash (*red* in Turkish: *KIZIL*). And here I display an earring of yours, the only one I could find as you fled, a peardrop of amber. And here is a book I never returned to you, yellowed pages, binding

³⁴ See Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*, trans. James I. Dunnett (London: The Architectural Press, 1987), 16ff.

³⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the uses and disadvantages of history for life,” in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 61.

loose, *Hotel Savoy*. And here I display, carefully arranged, like a fan of cards, the museum tickets that I saved: *Centralne Muzeum Włókiennictwa, Muzeum Miasta Łodzi, Muzeum Kinematografii w Łodzi* . . . Here I display a special issue of *Applied Linguistics* (Volume 33, Issue 5), folded open to “Poststructuralism and its Challenges for Applied Linguistics,” complete with your discreet highlighting (in orange). Here I display a single strand of your auburn hair. Here a serviette of fine white linen, the smear of your lips, darkening. An ivory sock of yours, with ruffles, a small hole near the toe. A chip of soap, scentless. An unfinished crossword. A note from you, the ink already fading, *Love, Rachel*. Here I sit, your things, our things, scattered about me. With these objects and memories I descend, as with a great, unbound ballast, to the bottom of time. The light passes through the leaves and illuminates each object like a klieg. Someone plays a street organ back on Piotrkowska and someone claps and we were there, we were there once, hand in hand, listening, and now I am here, released from gravity and time, crumbling, flaccid, fragile, vulnerable, helpless, broken, effeminate, jealous. I’ll dig this hole in the soil a little deeper. Maybe there I will find it. Maybe there, in the cool, dark earth, I will find it: *acceptance*.

ABOUT THE WRITER:

Erik Harper Klass studied mechanical and manufacturing engineering at UCLA and music at Berklee College of Music. Now he writes. He lives in Los Angeles, California.

Michael Meyerhofer

ON THE DIFFICULTY OF LOVING THE THEATRICALY INSANE

It's not so bad if she's clean and beautiful,
merely sniffing in the produce aisle

or standing topless in front of a big open window
with the steam from an oversized tea cup

kind of unwinding where the heart goes, all of her
taut yet simultaneously soft as a rain cloud.

But it takes something else to love the old man
with wide eyes and wet pants, shuffling

between bus stops. Same goes for the spinster
with no teeth, or the young man who calls

everyone *brother* unless they fail to drop
a few coins in his cup—which appears

to be just a regular Styrofoam coffee cup
covered all over with electrical tape,

like there's an invisible current we should be
afraid of, like tape alone could be armor.

ABOUT THE WRITER:

Michael Meyerhofer's fifth book, *Ragged Eden*, is forthcoming from Glass Lyre Press. He is also the author of a fantasy series and the Poetry Editor of *Atticus Review*. His work has appeared in *Hayden's Ferry*, *Rattle*, *Brevity*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Ploughshares*, and many other journals.

Sheila E. Murphy

IMPRESSION

One quiet flower in a field of lavender collects the mind, the eye, finds rest. A postcard photograph turned real, a whispered life page. In which chores remain the chores, these filaments of near completion. *If I tell you what I know, then will you know as well?* Complicit history reveals a lip-read tattle told when young. Interpretation is an act (to follow). Pieces unassembled reach beyond a finish line hypothesized. The senses catch attention like a cold. *Look over there.* Monastic feeling holds the ground in place as fragrance casts aspersions on unfinished business until passed. *Were you ever my age?* Revival is a word transcending captions. Hear the voice beneath each language still intact.

Removal of the thorn as gap analysis, an aftermath of seeming one divided

ABOUT THE WRITER:

Sheila E. Murphy, Ph.D, is an American text and visual poet who has been actively publishing since 1978. She is the recipient of The Gertrude Stein Award for her book *Letters to Unfinished J* (Green Integer Press, 2003). She lives in Phoenix, Arizona.

E. D. Watson

EXPECTING

The Bible salesman came in late May after the rain had stopped too soon and the corn died. The girl opened the door and nodded a greeting. Her face was like a pan of biscuits but her eyes were the sly, watchful eyes of someone who'd waited a long time for something to happen. Her name was Myra but no one ever called her by it.

The salesman's car made ticking noises at his back. "In these hard times," he began, "there's no consolation like God's Word." He showed her a Bible worth four dollars. Its cover was brown and crazed all over like parched earth. She reached out and stroked it once, lightly, before tucking it into her apron.

"My pa's in the field and my ma is took to bed. Come back after dark," she said. "I'll pay you then."

"Listen, Miss," the man said, but she'd already faded into the shadows behind the screen door.

Through the brittle lace in the front window, she watched him walk to his car and then stop like he'd forgotten what to do. She expected he'd turn and come back to the door, but he got into his car and drove away. From the other room, her mother called.

"Who was that?" she asked, from beneath a damp rag.

"Some lost man. Looking for St. Joe."

"St. Joe's a hundred miles from here," her mother said.

"I told him."

She'd been born late. Her parents were already old. There were hollows in the rag over her mother's eyes and mouth, like a shroud.

It would have been easy to take four dollars from the knotted handkerchief in her mother's drawer, where eleven one-dollar bills were wadded together like withered cabbage. Myra supposed the money was for when her parents died. When that happened, she expected she'd have to marry, but couldn't figure who. She'd quit school last year and there was nobody for miles.

Supper was biscuits spread with lard. Her mother didn't come to the table. Her father read the almanac. She imagined asking him for the money. A quarter for each year of my life, she would say. The father ate four biscuits and she ate two. The rest they saved for breakfast.

After supper she washed herself from the pump behind the house. Dry, her hair was the color of everything else: the dead corn's leaves, the window's lace, the almanac's yellowed pages. But wet, her hair turned the color of meat gravy. Of polished wood. The color of the Bible.

In the morning, Myra realized the Bible man had not returned. It didn't matter; four dollars was a lot of money. He'd be back.

While she did her chores, she kept her eyes on the horizon. Each time she glimpsed the distant plume of dust raised by her father's tractor, her heart went sideways in her chest. She had to remind herself several times that the road lay in the opposite direction.

The man did not come that night, nor the next. Each morning filled her with increasing wonder. Perhaps he'd meant the Bible as a gift—or a message. It was a foolish idea, but the ad sheets pasted inside the outhouse promised love at first sight with a squirt of perfume or certain undergarments. Of course she had neither, but the ads were old and maybe men no longer required such things. Or he was different, a man of God.

The longer he stayed away, the more she expected him. But she also thought he might never return, that he'd simply drifted across her sky and disappeared like a shred of cloud that failed to rain. She read the Bible in seven days. Whoever he was, she owed him that at least. After she finished it, she wrote her name on the inside cover and felt that something had been fixed.

That night, she lay in bed listening to the dry rasp of the corn, half-dreaming that someone was in the fields, searching for her. When she heard an engine's far-off whine, she slipped outside and wet her hair.

The driver was going slow, looking for the turn. When he saw her standing at the edge of the road, he stamped on the brakes, raising a thick cloud of dust. When it cleared, she saw the moon made the brim of his hat shine like a halo.

“I been expecting you,” she said.

She got in beside him. It was her first time in a car and her bare feet were dirty. She pointed out the track to the barn and he drove without using his headlights.

Inside the barn she said, “I haven’t got four dollars but I’m a virgin.”

“Don’t be afraid,” he said, stepping toward her. Because she’d read the Bible, she knew this was always the first thing angels said, so she wasn’t scared, not much. The man wore a cologne that filled up her nose and then her whole head. He said it was only Florida water. She pictured Florida then: a place of relentless greens and blues and deep reds, the most beautiful place. She asked if he’d ever been; he said sure, lots of times. Then they didn’t talk anymore and the color filled her all the way, down to her soles.

At dawn her father woke her by tightening the belt on his tractor. He didn’t know she was in the barn. The other man was gone. When she stood, her father dropped his wrench and gaped at her. She held her bare arms into the slats of lavender light and turned them over, marveling. She was naked and her hair was still damp.

“Verily I say unto you,” she said, tasting the richness of those words, like coins upon her tongue.

Her father shook his head, trying to understand.

“It rained last night,” she said, and within her, a cell divided like a pair of wings.

ABOUT THE WRITER:

E. D. Watson’s work has been published by *Narrative*, [PANK], and others.

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