

In Preparation

February 2009

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complete list of contributors located in back

funded by the Writing Program of the
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Carsten_Jesse Emil** <jcarst@saic.edu>

Date: Sun, Feb 8, 2009 at 9:56 AM

Subject:

To: Alyssa Martinez <inpreparation@gmail.com>

Dear Tony, I think there is no light in the world but the world.
And I
think there is light. My happiness is the knowledge of all we do
not
know. George Oppen.
*George Oppen, The Selected Letters of George Oppen (ed.
Rachel Blau
duPlessis, Duke Univ. Press, 1990)

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an uneventful monday

downtown can be quite charming in that early morning dew. the bums & crack addicts dwindling down into shady cracks before noon sun burns them alive. the foggy sunrise reminds me of some poem i read a long time ago, saying sunsets look that amazing because of the shitty air we have...i mean, but in a more poetic manner. & besides the point...i think it's true. the buildings are dressed up in christmas lights & it reminds me a lot of the Its A Small World ride at disney land, & we went into a parking lot & circled 20 times. it felt like rides. i was warm, & awake from jolty coffee from mcdonalds & bisquits. good ones.

he looked nice in his earthy turtle neck.

november 3, 2004

a year ago. you would have found me hand in hand with a daisy trail of four. surprisingly tramping the damp grass & mud in silver ballet slippers. laughing because the lights at the carnival made everyone seem red. i'd be wearing a blue blazer which i'd pretend smelled like aftershave & cigars, but really it just smelled like me because i bought it at a second hand store. we'd all be, us four, in pajamas pink & blue & dainty. only stopping at the carnival on a break from a sleep over. the lights, like shine, attracting us. we ran. getting more gazes than we assumed. thinking we'd just blend in. but we radiated. how could anyone miss us. us-the poster girls for happy. everyone observing as a lesson how they too could climb out of the dark corner, & out of their black clothes to play.

today. i've got an oversized jacket. & i'd rather spend time watching carnivals on the screen from under a blanket. & the jacket still smells like me, but that is only because under the blankets, pressed against my skin, peering out from under to watch the four little girls running through the carnival is the owner. & he smells like me, & i smell like him. i must no longer pretend.

Summer, Starving

It's summer wherever I am,
and I'm hot and sweating
from it.

Salt melts when it's that humid;
into a queer syrup in the bucket
in the basement.

As you love me, I'll drink it.
Sticky spiteful, with constituent
additions of

non-sustaining elements and
I'll accept them through the
quenching hot

with wet—however concrete
saline, body wrongly.

You Are An Old Man

You're old, & you're eyes are glassy. They're weathered and preoccupied. You have a wife - had. You *had* a wife. There were kids, too. One's dead and the other's an ingrate bastard. *A real bastard*, you like to say. *A real one*- you never married his mother. That bitch. Your son. Henpecked shithead, too pussy-whipped to ever the bring the grandkids with him- *your* grandkids- or act like the man you raised him to be. Your son, the coward. Your *caretaker*. He bought you a rascal two years ago for your birthday, used, & you don't use it unless you have to which isn't often. And godamnit ain't no one gonna make you use the damn thing, either. You have a walker, and a cane. There are no tennis balls on your walker, & you only use for getting around the house, and even then only since your surgeries. You like to take walks, snow the sidewalk or not. You laugh at all the dog shit in your neighborhood. When the snow begins to melt, is when there's the most of it. Trash, too. You chuckle & stagger along, wondering how many different dogs it took. You shuffle around around the block thinking of the people that threw their trash on the ground.

You keep your pill bottles in the kitchen, & taking them each morning gives you something to do. Generally, you take as much time to complete this regimen as possible. You remember the times you sat in train stations for hours on end with nothing to do but stay awake. Had to or the cops would kick you out into the cold. You'd do this by doing only a few things, slowly. Walk to the bathroom, walk back. Sit. Walk to the water fountain, then back. Sit. The window; sit. This time, you don't bother remembering where you were headed so early in the morning, or even the names of the person or persons you were going to see. That train has left the station, as they say. And anyway, you're just trying to remember how to extend things.

You shower daily- you have always really enjoyed taking showers, even since you were a kid, even since you've been an adult. You have always been slightly afraid of being snuck up by burglars or weirdos while showering, & when you were a kid it was alligators. Now you sit naked in a white plastic lawn chair when you shower, & let the water cascade down your shoulders chest, your stomach. You let it land softly in your lap, & run down your legs or

pool up in the sagging seat of the plastic chair. You do not always have the courage to get your hair wet.

You're an old man, & the scars from your youth have all been absorbed- lost in your wrinkled skin. But not the scars from all the goddamned surgeries you've had on you these past few years! You're building up quite the collection of those! Damn doctors. You remember the saying, "taken to the cleaners," that your health problems make up "quite the laundry list." You laugh, but then stop, because the joke is corny & you didn't even really make one, anyway. Just thought some things. Like you always said: bad luck, & poor execution. You, & your surgeries. You laugh, but feel it in your eyes this time. Ah, fucking procedures. The last one took out part of your colon, and now the cancer's back, in your esophagus this time. You aren't going to see those damn doctors anymore. You heard somewhere that if you live long enough, you get cancer. Kind of like nature's population control. Screw the doctors.

Early in the afternoon you like to take a nap in your bedroom. Sunlight spreads out across the room- the walls, your bed- and you nap, or else lay there, awake. Then you get out of bed, and sit in the other room, the room with the windows. Out your windows are rooftops & treetops. There are also powerlines, exciting, anonymous powerlines, connecting the whole world. Your storm windows are new, relatively new, new as of a few years back, and they keep the house very quiet. The sound of planes always gets through, though, thank god. You think about the people on these planes, wonder if any of them are people you've known. You're reminded of people you never knew by all the strangers overhead. Ah hell, make it this far, everything reminds you of someone. The punchline is you never can tell how much these memories are true to the people you spent the time with. It's a pretty good game, you think, seeing how many different versions of a single person it turns out you knew. Maybe they were sick, or drunk, or didn't pay attention or else were better were passing faces. Just keep remembering until you like the person, is generally the rule you play with.

And your daughter, your dead, dead daughter. No one or no thing is coming to get you because you played your cards wrong & you lost. Big deal. Hey, that's a good one! Things aren't so bad-- you might have a cat. Instead you have these things in your

home, their solitude, all these damn dusty things. They're someone else's- they must be. Confusing but familiar. Like traveling when you were a kid. Maybe you didn't know the whole city, but you knew where you were standing. You knew North, South, & where you were staying, too. Knew where you'd been, and that's about it. You'd have fun trying to figure these places, or else not worrying about it one bit; glad to be standing somewhere. Well that was then. Dumb fun for a dumb kid, but it beats setting down wondering how the hell you came to have a porcelain black Jesus with a broken nose, and three kings come up to his ankles over there on that end table. Who bought you that, anyway? How'd all this crap get here? You wonder what-the-fuck's going on around here.

You try to place these things, try making one thing lead to another, but suddenly you're having a rough go of it. You wrestle with the memories now all around you. You know they're yours, you know they *belong* somewhere. Things aren't adding up, and holy crap is this what it finally feels like to *actually* be lost? Ha! Wait, when did you get out of the shower? You did shower...? Hold on, weren't you just in bed? Right, yes, wait, well when was that? Goddamnit, how long have you been sitting here? Couldn't be that long- sun's only just dropped off. When did-- it must just be, you- ah hell. You're confused, you accept this. You're very confused.

Yeah, well, certainty is for fools & liars anyway, right? haHA! You try to comfort yourself with this. You set your eyes down to the West, out through the window, from your chair. Somehow, your body is trembling, but you keep eyes steady. Out the window. You're sure of it, *that* is West. Your eyes are glassy, and weathered, sure, but they're steady, goddamnit- unwavering. You're fighting a shaking in your body now. You almost didn't notice. It's everywhere; your whole body shaking & awake, you're in it, you're fighting it. For what? You let go. You remember dog shit in the snow, and laugh.



I am from the lake

and the step outside my backdoor,
where I'd sit in the late afternoon
light, time flying by in a straight line,
the only way to tell was the number
of cigarettes half put out on the ground.

Watching Titanic on VHS, fast-
forwarding through the nudity with
KT's mom. The river behind my
grandparent's house, and its foul smell.

Def Leppard and Van Halen
played all throughout the fourth grade,
my father assembling my Barbie
bike on Christmas Eve.

The timid and calculated steps of the
neighborhood herd of deer,
my great, great grandfather's violin
that I'd visit in the basement of my

dying great-grandmother, in its own
dry wooden box, slightly resembling
(don't say it) a coffin.

The steps on Coventry Road before
shows, after shows, drinking 40s,
laying on the bathroom floor
and the purple sky at night.

My boyfriend's dog (a most noble
creature), presenting us with gifts of
dead raccoons and once, a woodchuck.

That bench where we held each other, but only talked, in the awakening November night.

The Final Countdown played on an accordion, my mom and I dancing to Aerosmith in the kitchen while she cooked, and harsh words when I sang the lyrics again in public.

The greasy unwashed cigarette smell, and the chlorine smell of summer days, that never quite washes off the skin.

When you told me: 'I'm scared,' and I just said, 'okay'.

The flattened grass where we had laid on our backs watching the blue light of the moon.

The mixtape made by friends, and five rows of studs worn low on the waist, gathered from friends, or ordered off the internet with our parent's Visas and Discover cards.

My stolen copy of *The Catcher in the Rye*, steamed up car windows when we had nowhere else to go, and the Payne's Grey and Hooker's Green of my mother's watercolors (and also of her eyes).

Pound

Wow these pound O throstle songs
heard while set surround tower greens, make one
thrive for three pence
and a billowing robin
for ones own keepsake

speaking only in grunts
when condescension is brought
among lucent King and Queen
draped in gold purple crimson throne
spotted with horrid thrombus sores
poking holes in equality aloud

You will rank up among monarch, your power
now allowing rant without that vile dither, your power
exceeding the amount of crushed
little bird bones and wasted air sacks
unswelled, no longer flowing upward
or along in a curling mass, no longer
a ballooning cherry bulge.

Save me Aristocratic grey-sayers
My song giver has died and now
the nature of my democrat is dead beside
the blooded bones and frail crimson clouds of feather
no longer flow upward or along in a curling mass
no longer a ballooning cherry bulge.

The Bar

I'm standing behind the bar biting what's left of my left thumbnail & cuticle. This biting angle hurts my hand, so I stop to massage the amphibian-like section in between my thumb and pointer finger. My boss says that calms your brain down. That's one method of hers. She blew weed smoke into my ears last week, and that worked too.

A customer approaches the bar with an overcompensating swagger and smiles at me. I imagine he drives a yellow Mustang or something with a stick shift. I think about red velvet cake so that I'm not completely frowning. The last time I felt content was four months ago. I start biting my thumb nail again. My fingertip is throbbing fast.

“Hey there! What are you mixing the vodka with tonight, cutie?”

The balls of my feet are starting to hurt big time and I'll probably get a calf spasm while I sleep tonight because of these heels. My dad once got a calf spasm while leaving a voicemail for a client.

“Either pomegranate, clementine, peach or blackberry sparkling juice.”

He has uneven muscle tone. His biceps are lumpy.

“Well, which flavor do *you* like the best?”

All guys with goatees ask this question. I already have an opened bottle of peach juice in hand.

“Peach has always been my absolute favorite, to be honest.”

“Honesty. I like that. Well if *you* like peach, then *I’ll* get peach.”

I jam a fresh glass into the ice bin, pour in a few drops of vodka, and then swirl the cup as I add the juice. The bubbles almost spill over the brim, but they don’t.

“Is that your signature move? The swirl?”

“That’s right. It makes the drink taste better.”

“Did you do that just for me?”

I pull my dress down a little and scan the room. I wouldn’t fuck anyone in here. The goatee is grinning at me and I hate myself for feeling obligated to answer.

“Yeah, just for you.”

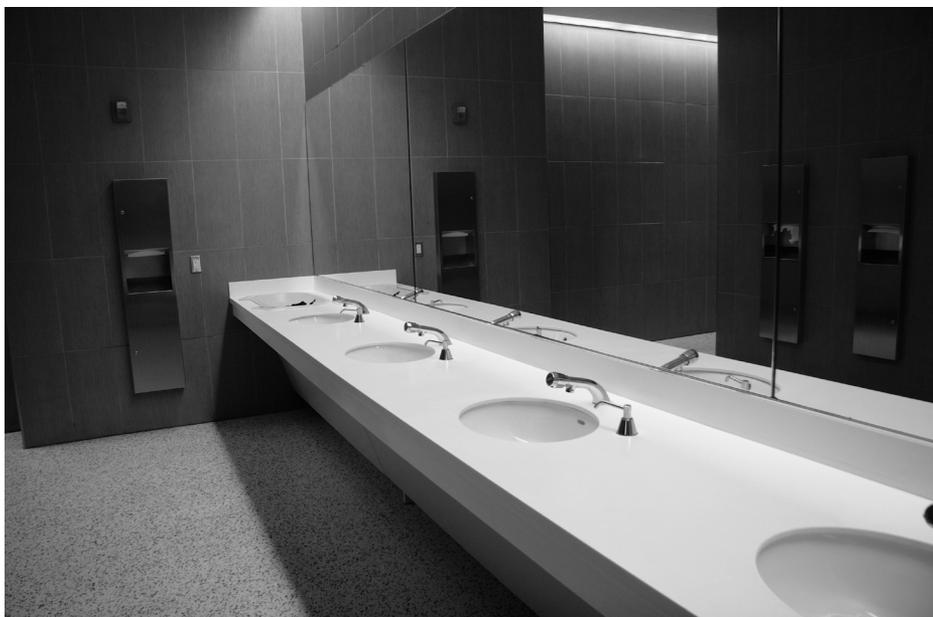
I look down at my hands and see that my ruptured cuticles are bleeding. Blood is speckled on the glass. If I just smile at him, he won’t notice.

An octave higher I say, “Here you go, sir!”

“Thanks, gorgeous.”

He tips generously, grins confidently, and is gone.

Amtrack



**An excerpt from:
Luna Negra, Capitulo 1.**

“Santo Dios mio Virgen María de los Angeles!” Paz’s squeals hit such a high note that they woke the midwife who was nursing a hangover under an *almendro* tree four miles away. The sharp wails cut in half the numbing calmness of the Hacienda San Antonio, which was particularly quiet that morning, since eighty percent of the workforce was celebrating on the other side of the Island the *Gobernador*’s win for a second term as the incumbent. Old Capital City received laborers, *done*s and *señoras* from all the haciendas with live music, speeches and *kioskos* with all kinds of free delicious food, like fried pig skin, shaved ice with *dulce de leche*, blood sausage and coconut cinnamon custard. Don Antonio, who saw himself as the epitome of fairness, had done a lottery to determine who would have the day off to enjoy the festivities. Luck dictated that Paz stayed working that day. She had been picking coffee overwhelmed by the moist heat of the mid-morning when Luna started to fight her way into life.

“Puta Madre de los Infiernos maldita sea el Diablo!”

The few male workers in the field quickly identified Paz as the source of such obscenities since an unspecified number of them had made her privately scream with desire before she started showing. Rodolfo, the foreman of the hacienda, ran faster than the others towards the animalistic grunts that originated somewhere in the middle of the bushes. All Paz heard were the inconsolable cries of Luna, the noise muted while her belly filled up with salty tears. She wobbled her way through the coffee plants trying to find the closest dirt road, still carrying the bag of ripe *pepas de café*.

“Aaaaaaaaagggggggghhhhhhhhhh Santo Dios ayudame” Paz tried to move faster but the thin branches of the coffee

bushes lashed her in every step. Each lick of a twig distracted her from the burning pain in between her legs. Paz heard her heartbeat in her eyeballs and the roars of Luna's struggle in each of her screams. All she could see were green spots with some yellow and red and brown. The sea of *matas de café* opened as if prompted by Moses and the path led to a tamarind tree, under which Paz collapsed on top of the bag of red coffee beans. It felt as if she was breaking from within as she leaked water that smelled like pig's blood. Paz's bony hands and feet sank into the thick swamp that formed from the mixture of dark soil and the gallons of saline-smelling liquid that came out of her. Her insides cramped forcing her to push. On her first push Paz saw the face of the Virgin Mary hiding in the bushes and on the second it was a sweet-faced old lady with stark white hair that hunted her altered state. Then it was Rodolfo's muscular arms with gray hairs opening their way toward her that gave Paz the strength to push a third and final time, spewing into a mound of coffee beans her baby girl covered in a caul.

"What is that?" Fear assaulted Paz. The thing joined to her through the bluish-red umbilical cord didn't look like a baby. She had read stories about blood relatives that got married and had babies born with alligator skin or a rat's tail, so she considered the odds of being related to the baby's father.

"Go get the doctor or the midwife or a truck, *dale corre*, some help" Rodolfo ordered a worker, who left in the same direction he came from. With shaky hands he caressed Paz's forehead, sweeping her wild black hair away from her face. She remembered when she first was introduced to Rodolfo, how she had been intimidated by his stern expression and his shadow-casting height. His dark bushy eyebrows made every crease of his face noticeable, making him look years older than his actual age of thirty-something.

"*Niña*, don't worry, I think I hear the midwife's *jeepeta*

getting close...*anda muñeca*, take it, that's your baby." Rodolfo's caramel-coated voice and the sound of the midwife's heavy steps making her way through the coffee plants calmed Paz. When the midwife finally arrived to the scene, sweating droplets of dark rum, she found the baby in her mother's arms still inside the caul. Without hesitation she opened the veil with her chubby fingers revealing Luna, her big chameleon eyes wide open and wearing a wise smile on her pruned face. The midwife took her stained white skirt off in front of the pink-faced mother, the worried foreman and the few workers that gathered to take in the event, and placed it on the moist soil between the mother's legs. She grabbed Luna away from Paz and placed her cautiously on the skirt.

"Give me your machete!" the midwife yelled at the foreman. Rodolfo jumped, and before he could comply she snatched it from his grasp. Taking the machete with both hands, she raised it over her head to gather momentum and in one swift motion she cut the umbilical cord. As the whiteness of the skirt absorbed the bright red blood, Luna, who so far since entering this dimension had not shed a tear or made a sound, quietly cried ginger smelling tears.

lolze bub

Sadly, there is no depth.
For what is deep that I cannot see
Through an open window, that
peers in at me?
Don't look far now.
Don't look deeply ahead.
lolze bub lurks
beneath the skin on your nose,
beneath crow's feet
and bloodlines.
Disassemble the unfortunate disguise.
And there the eyes beholding
your eyes beholding
the palm of your hand--
held in the palm of lolze bub.

Enemies are abound.
Bound to being as certain as
lost memories,
unfortunately.

And the big fun
not to be shared.kill.die.
the crying mask.
There is no deafening.
"You will be punished,
Thank God."

(In order of appearance)

Andrea Mattson (cover)

A recent graduate of SAIC. Loves to draw, knit, sew, spin, dye, make paper & generally use her hands to make things. Likes sunny days, & hates headaches.

Jesse Carsten, “Dear Tony”

Here Lies: Jesse Carsten.
Now Moment-Now Moment.
He was so clever!
He carved into his chest: Abbye. Bevin. Emily.

Chanel Banoza, “an uneventful monday” & “nov. 3, 2004”

Leonine & Los Angelesque.

Tyler Sherman, “Summer Starving”

Tyler David Sherman is a perfectly decent person. He has written three novels.

Mink Smithsonian, “You Are An Old Man” & “lolzebug”

Larger, and more adaptable than less hardy European mink. Loves a good practical joke!

Ben Bertin, “Untitled (house)” (pencil drawing)

Ben Bertin was born and raised in Rochester Hills, Michigan. He currently lives in Chicago with his wife, four kids and their dog smiley

Jamie Bloss, “I am from the lake”

KSU undergrad in English and aspiring librarian. She likes honest poetry. Jamie likes to read, “...all books, I just like to know things.”

Ryan Pfeiffer, “Pound”

Splits his time between Arizona & Illinois. Exhibits work in Phoenix, student in Chicago. Interests include synths, scribbles, grapes, punk & beasts.

Rachel Williams, “The Bar”

Has kept detailed diaries since age 5. Maintains journalistic practice, though 2 years ago began focusing on work that blurs line between fact & fiction. B.A. from USC Spring '09

Kate Bieschke, “Amtrak” (photo)

Kate Bieshke is driven by narrative. She draws from writing & creates a subtext of a fantastical world underneath the guise of the seemingly everyday

Lika López de Victoria, Excerpt from Luna Negra

Her life simplified is about duality. English and Spanish. Numbers and Words. Tropical Island and Midwest. Longing and Contentment. Passion and Practicality.

Schylar Stap, “lolzebug”

Born & raised in Los Angeles. Currently serving The U. S. Army. Scheduled for first deployment August 2009 with Infantry Brigade.

Alyssa Martinez (Editor)

Alyssa Martinez is finishing her final year in the Writing Program at SAIC. She believes only in science, magic and cats.

Mark Schettler (Editor)

From Reseda, California, age 23. A Chicago resident since 2007, & an undergrad in SAIC writing program.

For more details on any of the contributors, including websties & contact information, please visit the website: inpreparationzine@blogspot.com.

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website: inpreparationzine.blogspot.com

Submissions:

Please send writing of any genre, art and cover art to inpreparation@gmail.com.

Include your name (as you want it to appear) as well as your contact e-mail.

Only selected submissions will be published, but those who submit will be notified either way.

Guidelines:

Writing: All genres. As many pieces as you like. No length limit, however, we may choose excerpts of longer works.

Art/Cover Art: Images should fit onto half or full sheet of 8.5x11. Only digital submissions accepted. All images will be printed B&W.

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Thanks!

