

L.E.S. Review

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Born in Venezuela, raised in Florida, Juan Lamata now lives on the shores of the East River and spends his days, instead of investing them wisely.

Epistle

To whom it may or may not concern.

For the sake of the accused.

In the name of the disaffected.

Dear Sirs.

Dear Madams.

Dear Pimps.

Dear Polygraphs.

For all eyes, bonely.

As quickly as potable.

Since-yearly.

With blind regards.

With bugs and blintzes.

In memoriam.

In memorandum.

In love

And out of it.

Vast and forever,

for some time,

- Yours.

David Riley lives in Blackpool in north west England. He has been a computer operator, an historian and, for several years, a writer using various forms. In this incarnation he is an award winning playwright. The poems here are part of a larger set inspired by memorial comments inscribed on benches in a park local to him. It is hoped they will be published in pamphlet form.

Gentle Man.

You what? Tell them I was dying, back then?
It wasn't done, especially when he'd come
My Grandson, permitted to tap my hand
With their safe codes on my not-quite-dead palm.
I wanted to say, "it's intrigue not fear,
Wait beside me here, till I pass on."
But by then I could not speak, my voice gone
To scout the lie of my new land before
It would return with one last, black scream.
That sound, fancied borne of fight 'gainst this night,
Is still used in stories of my passing,
In the education of my son's son
So that he can play his part and not laugh
In the deepest sacred parts of the mass.

Len Kuntz is a writer from Washington State. His work appears widely in print and online at such places as BLIP (formerly Mississippi Review), PANK, Moon Milk Review, and also at lenkuntz.blogspot.com

Gentlemen

The dressmakers woke early
anticipating a wedding or funeral.
Instead you rode into town
wearing your skin
and tresses atop a roan.
The fates are never predictable.
The future is a cliff of erosion.
Tomorrow will send us another messenger
temptress
and even though we've been warned
and scarred by the others,
we will still stare
and gasp,
say, "Oh my!"
offering our hands out of pure courtesy.

Valentina Cano is a student of classical singing who spends whatever free time either writing or reading. Her works have appeared in Exercise Bowler, Blinking Cursor, Theory Train, Magnolia's Press, Cartier Street Press, Berg Gasse 19, Precious Metals and will appear in the upcoming editions A Handful of Dust, The Scarlet Sound, The Adroit Journal, Perceptions Literary Magazine, Welcome to Wherever, The Corner Club Press, Death Rattle, Danse Macabre, Subliminal Interiors, Generations Literary Journal, Super Poetry Highway, Stream Press, Stone Telling and Perhaps I'm Wrong About the World. You can find her here: <http://coldbloodedlives.blogspot.com>

Plaintive Attacks

Instead of looking at her
as if she'd thrown her hair
into the fire,
ask yourself why
she's dangling from
a chandelier of words.
See if you understand
the lines of gunpowder
she's been snorting.
The burn in her throat
lifting off with wings of sulphur
You see nothing.
You care nothing for
her crackling eyes
that plead for a lie dry as cotton.
She's just a doorway to you,
something to step through,
to bow out from.
Air in a vague shape
with bones of wood to hold it up.
Wake up.
She's holding the scissors,
running, crab-like
towards you.

Crazy Career Choice

Most artists were crazy,
father said. Look at Van Gogh.

He cut off his ear. Take Rembrandt.
He made self-portraits galore,

as if he was handsome. But he
was a little plain faced in my opinion.

That's why there was never much light
in his paintings, he tried to hide his features

in darkness. Look at Norman Rockwell.
He was normal. But does anybody

take a normal artist seriously. He's reduced
to covers of Hallmark cards. You have to be crazy

or dead – which amounts to the same thing –
since no one is going to invite you for dinner -

for the critics to embrace you. Alive, like Van Gogh,
you're no use to anyone – not even yourself –

but when you're dead and buried, you're
acclaimed and the money starts rolling in.

Looking Up

The sky – I wanted to start
this poem looking up. Whereas,

if I began it focusing on the ground,
the reader's eyes might stay there,

and he might see my feet but not my face.



Photo by Anita Braithwaite

Anicée Gaddis is a New York City-based writer whose practice extends across the creative arts, from journalism to copywriting to fiction. After graduating from Vassar College, she began her career as a writer and has followed no other profession since. Anicée's voice blends reportage with autobiography to create a distinctly intimate tone that is entirely her own. Contributing to a range of publications, Anicée has published work in *The New York Times*, the magazines *America*, *Big*, *Jalouse*, *Interview*, *Time Out*, *Sur La Terre*, *Terrace*, *aRude* and *Condé Nast Traveler's Concierge*. She was Executive Editor of *Trace* magazine for five years, during which time she traveled to and reported on culture in Johannesburg, Tokyo, Rio, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Berlin, Lisbon, Copenhagen, Delhi and Kingston. Her position at *Trace* as a curator, editor, writer and overall purveyor of the next cultural nexuses provided a formative platform for her voice. During the course of her travels, Anicée developed a global affinity for seeking out the underlying layers and transcribing them into an original map of prose.

You Are Us and I Am You

The Small Kings of Tivoli

There's been talk about hitting Passa Passa ever since you arrived in Kingston. The first Wednesday came and went; your excuse was that the street dance starts too late, usually around 3 AM, and you were tired and couldn't find a ride. Still, you woke up on Thursday morning feeling empty with disappointment because having been before you know that the weekly ritual is the stuff of life. Passa Passa's Wednesday night throw-down is as notorious for its gunmen and shottas as it is for its battle soundbwoys and young lords of the dancehall. The experience has been sitting in your body since the last time you were in Jamaica, hibernating like a muscle memory, aching internally, waiting to unleash its lyrical force.

The following week you make definitive plans. You speak to people about obtaining a photo pass, hire your friend Grant to drive you, and take a long afternoon nap in the sun. You agree to meet some locals at the uptown club Fiction around midnight, intending to make your exodus in time to arrive for the Passa Passa warm-up. All goes as scheduled until the uptown posse decides it's too dangerous for you to show up with a photographer; two foreigners too many, they say, too much static, too much unnecessary risk. These are tough times, they remind you. People are hungry. Life is cheap in Kingston, cheaper still in the Tivoli Gardens quarter that has been home to Passa Passa for close to a decade. It's their party, not yours. Do you really want to end up raped and strangled in a ditch?

This not so subtle attempt to brainwash you out of your evening goes on indefinitely. And you sit and you listen and you wait for their rant to lose steam. You focus on the activity in the parking lot. You check the time. When Grant finally pulls up, you wave a casual goodbye, relieved suddenly to escape the atmosphere of paranoia that is doing little to steer you off course. If anything Passa Passa is the ultimate ghetto ball fused with the archetypal house party. The magnificence of scope, feeling, and attitude is something you haven't found an equivalent to anywhere, ever. The nocturnal panorama of young Kingstonians riding the pendulum between hard fury and a poetic sublime is the kind of medicine that only Jamaica can provide.

Grant drives through darkened streets like his house is on fire and then pulls into a parking spot behind a queue of cars lining a gully. Together you head to the bar that doubles as an apothecary; a young mother and her teenage daughter who sport matching weaves tend it. There are people lounging on stools in vintage soda-shop fashion. Some have brought in Styrofoam plates of fish and dumplings from a vendor outside while others are simply drinking. Bottles of Red Stripe, Appleton's and coconut water line the countertop like flowerless bouquets. The surrounding shelves, stocked with dusty bottles of cough syrup and canned Gunga peas and hair straightener, look like a post-Evans, pre-Warhol collage. The mood smacks of an after-church ambiance, as if there were a collective pause before the tonal shift from the pastoral to the punctuated.

Outside the bodies are lining up on the opposite side of the street like a paper cutout of one continuous silhouette. Gradually, almost reluctantly, electric rhythms begin to stab the night air. You couch your anticipation in the blank-eyed expressions of those around you as Grant hands you a beer and warns you to stay within close visual range. He points out the infamous "wall" beginning to fill with local gangsters and gunmen who, if photographed, will probably mash up your gear and possibly even your physical person. They are there to maintain order, he tells you, to make sure the evening comes off peacefully. He tells you that just the other day a man chopped off someone's head and carried it around in the street to prove the cops couldn't touch him because he comes from Tivoli and is protected by the local don. "Tivoli di garden of small emperors," Grant says, "and dem nah play."

It is well past midnight when the echo of infrared flipping from blackness to blinding flashes begins. You feel disoriented by this new development and start to see everything in a series of snapshots. The brim of a Yankees cap tipped over a face bathed in shadows. Lights on, lights off. A feline waist weaving serpent-like in its view. Day. Night. Two figures engaging in a spooning whine so that the brim of his cap rests against the shelf of her bare shoulder. You watch as their hips lock in kinetic vibrato and feel your own body responding to their chemistry. As your vision adjusts to the strobing switchover, you begin to take in the smaller scenarios etching themselves on the margins – a fish-seller frying hand-rolled strips of bammy; a man warming himself by a small bonfire; a woman bending over to take off her shoes. Suddenly, you feel someone behind you. The thrust of a tall shadow moves into you for a song and then disperses before you can match face to body. Your evening's initiation, you tell yourself. You have been informally invited. So this may be your party now, too.

More cameos leave their indent on the crowd. A cement truck steams through on its way to make a late night delivery. A boy bucks up his bicycle like he's riding a mechanical bull. A Muslim family wearing head coverings and dark glasses drives by in a spit-shined BMW. A tall, slender, too beautiful policewoman strides forcefully through the ranks. A battered bus, empty and looming, returns from a drop-off in the country, and a resident madman skanks his way through the fumes and dust circling in its wake.

It continues from there, the build-up planting itself deeper in your hips now, the meat of the music gaining a steady foothold in your thinking. Three teenage boys line up in front of you in a visual tapestry of poise, attitude, and metaphor. They are dressed in purple, green and yellow, an oversaturated replica of the rainbow. The Supra lavender high-tops one of the dancers is wearing reminds you of your first pair of ballet slippers. They are Whiteout, one of the island's most rated crews, Grant says. You watch as they practice their signature move, the White Slide, and marvel at their detail, alignment, and timing. You find yourself smiling as one of the boys knowingly raises and lowers his sunglasses without pausing in his dance.

You see the women too, the aspiring queens of the dancehall, the prize possessions and willful instigators. Just now a photographer is capturing a young woman wearing a hot pink bodysuit with black lace fishnets. She's dancing for his Nikon as if it were her partner; her loins are so close to the camera you start to wonder if lens sex could produce a baby. The camera, having allegorically climaxed, homes in on its next subject, a tall, voluptuous woman dressed in a red mesh tutu with a matching wife beater. She is barefoot and the liteness of her movement is offset by the stomping ardency of the men encircling her, a strange cocktail of conquest and deference and desire pulsating from their overheated forms. When the cameraman turns and points his lens in your direction, you raise a hand to shield your eyes before quickly escaping back into the anonymity of the crowd.

It is late or early – you've lost track of the time – and are simply sinking into the skin of the night. The dance crews are battling each other now, competing for the videoman's spotlight, arching mid-air like hawks on the hunt, daggering spectral demons, battling their own demons. It is beauty redefined, an ode to something beyond possessed souls raging against the night. It is Jamaica, a place where the street dance is an epic fable told in small vignettes. It is a passionate, stoic and paradoxical odyssey on a scale at once minute and grandiose. It is something alive, lethal and fixating. You begin to feel what your body remembers from the last time, the metaphysical bliss, the hypnotic enlightenment, the soft awakening following a night of brutal deliverance. This particular high, this medieval ramping shop, is more addictive than the most habit-forming of drugs.

It is much later now as you let the closing scenes wash over you. Of course the police car's muted siren forms a silent backdrop to the beat. Of course the madman chases after it like he's shooing a chicken out of his yard. Of course a boy hoists a girl up and daggers her with the erotic rage and secreted romance that is the true language of Jamaica. Of course the wave of bodies in motion look like they are swimming through a utopia of heat and admonition created by a god you cannot name. You drink it all in and you watch it unfold; the night has become part of you now. You drink it all in and you watch and you are amazed.

Adam Moorad is the author of Prayerbook (wft pwm, 2010), I Went To The Desert (Thunderclap Press, 2010), Oikos (nonpress, 2010), Book of Revelations (Artistically Declined Press, 2011), and Piñata (propaganda press, 2011). He lives in Brooklyn. Visit him here: adamadamadamadamadam.blogspot.com

the opposite direction of this world

here i am, twin turbo nissan micra
in milwaukee of all places, smiling
an ephemeral heavy crock of flesh
waving goodbye in a goodwill shirt
whiskey-colored corduroy trousers
walking home to a hot bubble bath
some phantom in some soap opera
a tragic young man with potential

an asphyxiated angel on a cloud

it's stranger than any discovery
i walk across an empty ballfield
towards a strange gang of pilgrims
whispering "shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh
all god's disciples are sleeping"
with sadness of the backyard dirt
in new brunswick, hungry mouths
raving, prickly moonballs hanging
in space at dawn, right now, still

Christine Jessica Margaret Reilly lives in New York, once had dinner with Darren Aronofsky, and is a certified pre-school dropout. She is currently pursuing her MFA in Poetry at Sarah Lawrence University. Two of her poems will be featured in "The Clearing: Forty Years with Toni Morrison, 1970-2010". She has been published in Barely South Review, The Salzburg Review, and twenty-one other journals. She was named Breadcrumbs' Editor's Pick. www.facebook.com/christinejreilly

Second Adolescence in Vienna, Paris, Bruges, Amsterdam

I cried in the shower, only fluent in water: stopped throat, a clog in the sink,
a plumbing system measured in sobs. Like a tongue whose muscle memory

forgot how to kiss, sing, eat. The moon is made of butter – no, milk. It does not
comfort me here, a scalp turned away, a canoe swimming toward the buoyant stars.

I do not recognize its face from my celestial latitude. I wanted to make a mockery
of the language: stretch open its excesses, string letters together. I longed to know

recipes, rhymes, not just to memorize sounds. I watched a bird tear itself in half
at the zenith on my map. The animal is the worst kind of tourist. I had questions

in a language I could speak but not understand. All Europeans speak nostalgia.
Sometimes I picked up on a similar dialect that confused me: longing.

William Doreski's work has appeared in various e and print journals and in several collections, most recently *Waiting for the Angel* (Pygmy Forest Press, 2009).

The Europe of the Dead

The sculpted turtle on my desk
has lost a rear leg. Its expression
hasn't changed, though. The light
still looks turgid from the rain
that fell so heavily last night
it kept me awake. At Glen Cove

years ago I slurped gin and tonic
while a post-Holocaust couple
described the grimace of camp life,
darkening their elegant house
with its view of Penobscot Bay.
That conversation recurred last night

with a shudder of gusty rain
against the bedroom windows:
their gray faces posed against walls
of books in German and French,
the shuffle of water on stone
as the bay reclaimed itself ripple

by ripple. I could hardly comment
on their story, but Caroline shook
her red hair and braved the banal
to keep the narration flowing.
The quarter moon above the bay
whetted itself on the starlight.

I thought the Europe of the Dead
had walked across the Atlantic
and stalked across the dunes to stand
in silence while they recounted
the deaths of everyone they'd loved
except each other. The turtle

seems indifferent to the loss
of its leg. Weighing down papers,
it's a monument to its species,
the common painted turtle doomed
to the common sort of extinction
night rain so adroitly describes.

Kenneth Kesner (肯内思) other poems are in A Little Poetry, The Arabesques Review, BlazeVOX, Counterexample Poetics, decomP, Eudaimonia Poetry Review, Poetic Matrix and Zone Magazine; his work has been supported by the governments of the PRC and the ROC.

phenom

or is this you or
who can

tell

of written
fate released somewhat

myth of meaning

all that he's left

sightless so silent

and half again
never to be imagined

imagined

impossible color

her eyes

created to recall

by sound

lobes

all not believe

since

while hearing speaking
same

Peter Marra is from Williamsburg Brooklyn. Born in Brooklyn, he lived in the East Village, New York from 1979-1987 at the height of the punk – no wave rebellion. Peter has had a lifelong fascination with Surrealism, Dadaism, and Symbolism. His earliest recollection of the writing process is constructing a children's book with illustrations in the 1st grade. The only memory he has of this project is a page that contained an illustration of an airplane, drawn in crayon, caught in a storm. The caption read: "The people are on a plane. It is going to crash. They are very scared." His poems explore alienation, sex, love, addiction, the havoc that secrets can wreak and obsessions, often recounted in an oneiric filmic haze. He has either been published in or has work forthcoming in *Caper Literary Journal*, amphibi.us, *Yes Poetry*, *Maintenant 4*, *Beatnik*, *Crash*, *Danse Macabre*, *Clutching At Straws*, *O Sweet Flowery Roses*, *Breadcrumb Scabs*, *Carcinogenic*, *The Vein*, *Indigo Rising* and *Calliope Nerve* among others.

the last summer day

curved red stage:
dark blue background
there's a dance on the beach

looking down at the blurred
smiles and screams.
salty fingers

water.
lightning.
the sun.

convulsions experienced
as she removes her bikini.
flames – a crash

heaving as she rolls
in the sand to
wipe away a thought,

they rob her breath
as she stretches to relax
her eyes are white now.

scratchy rock n' roll in the cloud-cover
she tastes the creature
spasms while fondling the hideous sun demon

the gulls howl
and join the chase
diving deep and seen no more.

black and white
pulsations of
the cathode ray tube

curved red stage:
black velvet background
watch as they dance in the sand

the smile has
been overtaken
by this howl.

red tears
another day passed.

MEET THE COVER ARTIST

Anita Braithwaite
"Free and Easy"

- www.anitabraithwaite.com
- <http://notstockphotos.com>