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contains excerpts from



G U D

greatest uncommon denominator

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Sundown

Debbie Moorhouse

A bird this deep in the heart of the city was a wonder enough for one day.

At first blink, it was a scrap of fabric or cardboard worn out of shape by heat and rain. At second blink, a sparrow. Trailing my fingers along the blistering shopfronts, blinking eyes open, eyes shut, I almost didn't notice it had feathers in time to avoid treading on it. A dirty cock sparrow, grey with accumulated layers of dust, its eyes still wide and bright.

No sign of any struggle; it lay crushed and spent in a bend where the pavement was wider than normal. The hot wind, or perhaps the ceaseless movement of the crowd, had pushed it into a gap between two paving slabs.

I shuffled round it, opening my eyes only the fraction necessary to see where it lay. This was the shortest route to the hospital, but it took the full brunt of the sun's glare.

At third blink, I saw the bird was alive.

"Moron," someone whispered as he elbowed me aside. Despite his aerator, the word was clearly articulated. I caught a glimpse of his eyes above the mask as he glanced at me; red-rimmed, they wept the grit driven on the wind.

Nobody I cared to see.

The bird hadn't moved, though perhaps it had blinked, or turned an eye. Its broken wings were still.

Head down, arms jerking to and fro at his sides, another man walked straight into me. The strap holding his aerator stuck up out of his hair like an unexpected tail. He inched along me, his breaths rasping in his throat, then resumed his march.

A siren's despairing wail reminded me I was on my way to see Chris before he died.

What was keeping life in this bird? Why didn't it just give up and let go? Like others I'd rescued from cats, which had quivered and pulsed on the edge of freedom, then died in my hands. I wondered if I should stamp on it and put it out of its misery. But was it suffering? Its bright, quick eye gave no clues. Maybe I was too much of a coward, anyway. I walked on, leaving it lying there, alive.

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Trying to Make Coffee

William Doreski

Trying to make coffee, I brew
a batch of chlorine gas, a bitter
stinging that escapes my kitchen

...continued

Fade in Fade out

Beverly R. Jackson

I love how they do that in the movies.
It's a close-up of a staircase, then the doorknob!
The music soars, and you know it's coming

...continued

Past Due: Final Notice

Kenneth Ryan

When Kentucky caught fire
they sent us to a mountaintop road
too late for anything but boys diving low

...continued



144 The Kiss

Konrad Kruszewski

Longs to Run

David Bulley

Imagine hurling yourself across January crust, skimming on top, reckless and loud. The bright full moon, slung low over the trees; the ruby blood spread across unbroken brilliant white snow. Think of gorging and fullness and contentment and the steam from your nose sending breath into the heavens, you a part of everything. Dream of life.

Think, next time at the grade-school mixer, when you realize that your child's teacher has spoken only to fourth-graders for so long she seems weirdly retarded, and the principal is instituting yet another "Peace Plan" for negotiating and "envisioning" and group problem-solving and anything, anything but fucking goddamned motherfucking stinking reading and writing! Look at cute Susie's mom all smarmy and stupid, lapping it up. Think, wouldn't it be nice to smell her fear? Just for a minute?

Maybe there is a long walk along the canal, dirt road and high grass where, desperate and depressed, you can run and pretend. Pretend you are the wolfman, transformed into something strong and powerful, physical and vital. The world dissolves into smell and touch and clean sharp air. You and the dog—"I'm going for a little walk, honey," and then "Yip Yip Yow!"—run, run in the dark, hidden and dangerous.

Or like that checkout weirdo at the gas station who thinks it is his job to save the world from crime, so when you get there and fill the tank—all this is totally normal except you have to use your spouse's card instead of your own, because the magnetic strip got ruined in the wash. So you spring it out and this little minimum-wage punk calls the cops and everything; he's got his lips turned down at you but is curled up around the cop's ankle waiting for a pat on the head or something, and filling up the tank takes two hours, oh baby oh baby just to run, please god let me change. Please god let me change.

So you're running with the dog inside the freedom of darkness—wolfman. And at the end of the trail is little Susie's mom, whatshername? Teri or Mary or some kind of ary you think, and she's calling for her dog, but can't find him.

...continued

Pepé in Critical Condition

Tomi Shaw

The Movie: Bang Bang Shoot 'Em Up

—Life would be so much easier if I were a cartoon character.

—Why'd you try to kill him, Rachel?

—Yosemite Sam.

—Excuse me?

—You know. Huckleberry Hound, Speedy Gonzales, Pepé Le Pew.

—Right. Yosemite was the gunslinger.

—My name's Penelope.

—Ah, the victimized cat?

—Odysseus's wife, silly.

—You attempted murder because you're Odysseus's wife?

—He should have come home.

—He was home. His wife found him in his kitchen, the cookie jar by his bleeding head.

—It was the crossroads in Albuquerque. Siren-call.

...continued

She Dreams in Colors. She Dreams in Hope

F. John Sharp

Pasha removes bread and dried fruit from a canvas lunch bag and lays them on a napkin, arranging the pieces until the composition pleases her. She usually places the bread on the left and the fruit on the right, but she reverses it whenever she is about to work on Goran, like today.

“Look at Pasha,” says Goran, who dumps his food onto the square metal table. “See how content she is that again she has no meat for her lunch.”

Raisa frowns. “Goran, you should spend more time worrying about meeting your quota and putting meat on your own table. Leave Pasha alone for a change.”

“I think Goran is jealous of Pasha always making quota,” says Niki. “How long since Goran made quota? A month?”

“I made it a week ago Thursday.”

“So twice in a month then?” Raisa says. A threadbare blue babushka exaggerates the movement of her head as she nods to make her point. The dim light makes her graying hair look rusty.

Goran grumbles and bites off a chunk of day-old bread, which crunches and resists his efforts. Pasha continues to eat as though the conversation hasn't been about her, her mouth turned slightly upward, giving her the appearance either of being satisfied with her circumstances or of waiting patiently for an opening.

They sit, together as always, in the block-walled lunchroom with small windows, high up, with a view of only the hazy sky. Bare bulbs cast harsh shadows on the fifty or so workers who take the middle lunch period. It is their only break from a twelve-hour shift making metal parts that can be used for cars or trucks or tractors or tanks. They are never told which.

“Besides,” Raisa says, “I think that Pasha doesn't much care for meat, do you, Pasha?”

Pasha finishes chewing and swallowing a raisin. “Meat or no meat, it's no matter to me. My food is good enough.” She takes another raisin and chews deliberately.

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Contributor Biographies

Charlie Anders (www.charlieanders.com) is the author of *Choir Boy*, which won a Lambda Literary Award and was a finalist for the Edmund White Award. She's also the co-editor of *She's Such A Geek: Women Write About Science, Technology And Other Nerdy Stuff*. She publishes *other magazine* (www.othermag.org) and organizes the award-winning Writers With Drinks reading series. Her writing has appeared in *McSweeney's.net*, *Pindeldyboz.com*, *Salon.com*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Paraspheres: New Wave Fabulist Fiction*, *Strange Horizons*, *ZYZZYVA* and *Space & Time*.

Joshua Babcock's story "Compromise" appeared in *Kenoma Magazine* and his "Tome of the Time-Siege" won second place in Gom Publishing's *The Best New Sci-Fi & Fantasy for 2004* contest. His story "Angst and the Armageddon" is upcoming in *Forgotten Worlds*. Babcock is a graduate of Vassar College and teaches at a school for students with dyslexia. He lives in upstate New York with his wife and six cats. He can be reached at babcats@optonline.net.

Rusty Barnes lives in Revere, MA with his family. His stories have appeared in journals like *Pindeldyboz*, *SmokeLong Quarterly*, and *Red Rock Review*.

Bruce Boston holds the distinctions of having appeared in more issues of Asimov's SF than any other author, and of having coined the word "cybertext." Visit <http://hometown.aol.com/bruboston>.

Lida Broadhurst lives in northern California with her husband and a fat orange tabby. She has had her poetry and short stories published extensively in the small press. Forthcoming work will appear in *Mythic Delirium*, *Rogue Worlds*, and *Bare Bone*.

Benjamin Buchholz is a US Army Officer just recently returned from Iraq. His fiction and poetry have appeared widely in the last year or two at places like *GoodFoot*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, *Identity Theory*, *MadHatters' Review*, *Ghoti*, *MiPOesias*, *Opium*, and *Planet Magazine*. His website, www.benjaminbuchholz.com, contains a few links and other oddities that you or your friends might find interesting.

David Bulley has published short fiction in *Night Train*, *McSweeney's*, *Words & Images*, *Porcupine*, *Opium*, and many other venues. His novel, *Weapon in Heaven*, is forthcoming from Cavern Press. He owns and operates *Scrawl: The Writer's Asylum*, an online writer's community. <http://www.STWA.net>, <http://www.DavidBulley.com>

Chris Butler is the author of the novel *AnyTime Now* (Wildside Press, 2001). His short fiction has been published by magazines such as *Interzone* and *Albedo One*. Chris's website is at www.chris-butler.co.uk.

Sarah Coyne moved to Boston in 1999 from a lush forested town in southern New Hampshire. Since migrating south she has earned a BFA in illustration, almost adjusted to city life, and sold her work as 2-D fine art as well as illustrations applied to everyday items such as pillows, T-shirts, stationery, and bags. Sarah's artistic pursuits and obvious small-town heart of gold have found her many good friends, both human and animal. While missing the greenery of her childhood, Sarah has been making her adopted home a little cuter with her bright, lively illustrations and paintings of animals and other light fare while also honing her acerbic wit and dark sense of humor with a few more sinister subjects. Favorite media include oils, watercolors and acrylics on unfinished wood, decorative calico prints and large-scale canvases. Her work can be viewed at www.eggagogo.com and can be found at a number of stores and galleries in New England and beyond. Sarah can be contacted through her website.

Neil Davies was born in 1979 in the middle of England. He works in a university somewhere, and this is his first piece of published fiction.

Larry Dickison's art and cartoons have appeared in hundreds of publications, including *Dark Fantasy*, *The Gate*, *Argonaut*, and *Thin Ice*. He lives in Toronto, Ontario.

William Doreski, Professor of English, Keene State College (New Hampshire), teaches creative writing, literary theory, and modern poetry. Born in Connecticut, he lived in Boston, Cambridge, and Arlington (MA) for many years, attended various colleges, and after a certain amount of angst received a Ph.D. from Boston University. After teaching at Goddard, Harvard, and Emerson colleges, he came to Keene State in 1982. He has published several collections of poetry, most recently *Sacra Via* (Tatlock Publications, 2005) and *Another Ice Age* (Cedar Hill, 2006), and three critical studies, *The Years of Our Friendship: Robert Lowell and Allen Tate* (University Press of Mississippi, 1990), *The Modern Voice in American Poetry* (University Press of Florida, 1995), and *Robert Lowell's Shifting Colors* (Ohio University Press, 1999), and a textbook entitled *How to Read and Interpret Poetry* (Prentice-Hall). His critical essays, poetry, and reviews have appeared in many academic and literary journals, including *The Massachusetts Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *The Alembic*, *The New England Quarterly*, *Harvard Review*, *Modern Philology*, *The Antioch Review*, and *Natural Bridge*.

Errid Farland lives in Southern California and writes at a cluttered table where a candle burns to create an aura of serenity. Sometimes she accidentally catches things on fire, which turns the aura into angry yellows and reds and sort of wrecks the whole serenity thing. Her stories have appeared in *UndergroundVoices*, *storySouth*, *Pindeldyboz*, and other places.

Russian artist **Fefa** is 23 years old and has been engaged in art all her life. Imagination and animals have always been important to her personally as well as creatively. Images surround her and overflow from within. For her, the technique or material she works with doesn't really matter—the main thing is to create.

Michelle Garren Flye lives on the coast of North Carolina. She walks on the beach whenever she can. She loves cats, kids and her husband. For more information, visit <http://www.geocities.com/mgflye>.

Janrae Frank is the author of the best-selling ebook series *Dark Brothers of the Light* and co-author with Phil Smith of the *Mother Damnation* series.

Jamie Dee Galey is not that tall but has a nice smile. You can reach him and check out his work at <http://iamjamie.com>.

Fran Giordano is an artist living in Schenectady, NY. She has made, shown, and sold work professionally for at least a dozen years. Her work has been sold to collectors all over the globe and shown in art galleries in the Northeast. She has worked over the years as a college photo instructor and art teacher. She's dealt with themes such as duality, theology, and happiness and its pursuit. She explores many different media, depending on the conceptual underpinning of the work. In the last few years she has considered the media of painting, photography, and digital imaging.

A.B. Goelman has published short stories in *On Spec*, the *L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future* anthology, and *Dragon, Knights, and Angels*. His next short story will be appearing in the Spring issue of *Fantasy Magazine*. He lives in the Pacific Northwest with his wife and the rain.

Beverly A. Jackson is a poet and fiction writer residing in North Carolina. Her work has appeared in print and online in many journals. She was Editor in Chief and Publisher of *Ink Pot*, and of *Lit Pot Press* until 2005. Visit her blog at www.beverlyajackson.com.

Born September 11th, 1981, failed astronaut and race car driver **Konrad Kruszewski** is a mostly self-taught multi-instrumentalist, dabbling if not specializing in illustration, storytelling, photography, music, and all aspects of CG and traditional animation. He has earned a diploma in Advanced Studies in Character Animation at AnimationMentor, where he was directly guided by the finest animators at Pixar, ILM, and Disney, among others. Konrad is currently keeping busy with animation and graphic design in Northern California with no kids, no dogs, and no immediate aspirations to obtain either.

John Mantooth writes short stories that fall between the cracks in the genre sidewalk. His most recent publications appear in the *Shadow Regions* anthology, *Electric Velocipede*, and *Shimmer*.

Originally from NYC, **Allen McGill** lives, writes, acts and directs theatre in Mexico. His published fiction, non-fiction, poetry, plays, photos, etc., have won awards and appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Writer*, *Newsday*, *Literary Potpourri*, *Poetry Midwest*, *QLRS*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, *World Haiku Review*, and many others. He is a former member of PEN. He was an invited guest at the First World Poetry Festival in Taiwan 2005 and haibun editor for *Simply Haiku* and two of his plays have been professionally produced in Sacramento and L.A. His first book of poetry, *SUNSEEKERS, a selection of haiku and haibun by Allen McGill*, is to be published this Fall by Golden Swamp Warbler Press. His website can be reached via <http://tinyurl.com/m7il>.

Debbie Moorhouse is a British writer who also takes photographs. She reads slush for *Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine* and is always writing a novel. Her website is at <http://www.alternatespecies.com>, where you can read stuff, look at photos, and generally hang out.

Kristine Ong Muslim has more than three hundred stories and poems published/forthcoming in genre and mainstream publications, which include *Adbusters*, *Aoife's Kiss*, *Dark Recesses*, *Dark Wisdom*, *Electric Velocipede*, *Grendelsong*, *Star*Line*, *Surreal Magazine*, and *The Pedestal Magazine*. Her publication credits are listed at <http://www.freewebs.com/blackroom8>.

Shweta Narayan writes research papers and fantasy, and attempts to keep the two distinct. She lives physically in southern California and virtually at shwetambari.deviantart.com, where she houses images that don't have a story yet. "The Doctrine of the Arbitrariness of the Sign" is her first non-academic publication.

Working alongside Kaolin Fire (then Stockinger), **Robert Peake** used to teach programming languages to other undergraduates at UC Berkeley before earning his degree in English literature, emphasis poetry. These days he serves as the Chief Technology Officer for The David Allen Company, where he reads, writes, and thinks about many things in many languages. Robert is also currently studying poetry in the MFA in Writing program at Pacific University in Oregon. He lives in Ojai, California with his wife Valerie and cat Miranda.

A native of Boston, Massachusetts, **Kenneth Ryan's** short fiction and poetry can be found in a number of literary journals, both online and at newsstands. He recently completed his first novel, *Hiders*, and is hard at work on his second. He shares a home, a life, and a website with Nadine Darling, a national treasure. Details at www.kennay.com.

F. John Sharp lives and works in the Cleveland area. His work has appeared in *Pindeldyboz*, *Paumanok Review*, *The Salt River Review*, *Lunarosity*, *Prose Ax*, and *Quantum Muse*, among others. He has edited the journals *Story Garden*, *Right Hand Pointing*, and *Night Train*. Visit his website at FJohnSharp.com.

Tomi Shaw lives in Kentucky amid the clutter of her work, three daughters, husband's toys, and a shedding orange mutt. She has a fuzzy home. Her work has appeared in over fifty publications, including *Identity Theory*, *The Barcelona Review*, *Pindeldyboz* and *storySouth*. www.tomishaw.com

Sarah Singleton is the author of award-winning gothic fantasy *Century* (2005) and *Heretic* (2006), both published by Simon & Schuster. Her first novel, *The Crow Maiden* (Wildside Press), was shortlisted for the Crawford Award. Sarah's website is at www.crowmaiden.plus.com.

By day, **Jason Stoddard** is just another frustrated engineer-turned-ad-guy who is busy twisting the minds of millions of consumers for his evil corporate masters. At night, he writes science fiction that has been seen in *Sci Fiction*, *Interzone*, *Strange Horizons*, *Talebones*, and *Futurismic*, among others. Unfortunately, none of the agents or editors have yet believed his line that if he had a book deal, there would be less advertising in this world.

Rohith Sundararaman lives in Bombay, India. He gets his inspiration from the cow that never roamed the streets of Bombay. He has been published elsewhere and receives half a death threat every month for the same.

Lavie Tidhar grew up on a kibbutz in Israel, lived in Israel and South Africa, travelled widely in Africa and Asia, and has lived in London for a number of years. He is the winner of the 2003 Clarke-Bradbury Prize (awarded by the European Space Agency), was the editor of *Michael Marshall Smith: The Annotated Bibliography* (PS Publishing, 2004) and the anthology *A Dick & Jane Primer for Adults* (The British Fantasy Society, 2006), and is the author of the novella *An Occupation of Angels* (Pendragon Press, 2005). His stories appear in *Sci Fiction*, *ChiZine*, *Postscripts*, *Nemonymous*, *Infinity Plus*, *Æon*, *Book of Dark Wisdom*, *Fortean Bureau*, and many others, and in translation in seven languages.

John Walters is an American writer, a Clarion graduate, currently living in Greece with his Greek wife and five sons. To pay the bills he teaches English as a second language. He has had stories published in *Talebones*, *Altair*, *Full Unit Hookup*, and other magazines.

Athena Workman is a married mother of two terrific girls living in Tennessee. Her stories have appeared in over twenty-two publications, including *Corpse Blossoms*, *Apex Digest*, *Nocturnal Ooze*, *The Dark Krypt*, *Neverary*, and *AlienSkin Magazine*. She's also been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and the Southeastern Science Fiction Achievement Award. Recently, she began dabbling in photography and plunged back into her childhood love of drawing. She runs the site *Miss Millificent's World* (<http://www.missmillificent.com>), a showcase of her various forms of artwork, and the online shop *Kaleidoscope Farm*.