

T A G V E R K

*Issue 1*

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# Two Pieces

Russell Bennetts and Rauan Klassnik

*Cults of Personification*

## The Pagreb Method

What we're really focusing on is profitability and enterprise as the sparkplugs of progress.

## Bells and Whistles

A bell is how we sound out braincustom.

A whistle is what we listen for. Hums of the market.

## BJ Output Quotient

Repetition. Round & Round.

Love, Focused, On its knees. Soldiers, plz.

## The Whip

Child's

## Bring Me the Head of the Head Priest

Hold it up to the window's eyes

& then we negotiate

Glug, Glug, Glug

I'm looking at the moon and I'm seeing it as a needle, as a strained metaphor for a needle stretching up to the daytime moon

*I Fucking Hate the Rich*

Something alot like death. Read my lips: no new flea taxis.  
This is how we doit, it's Monsanto nite, and I feel suicidal, the party's up on the debtside.  
Come with me, then, along the Seine, beneath our catchy parasol. And we'll dejeuner, O, and  
Pick the tricks out of Paul Muldoon armpits. Louis paperbag breathing, hormonally  
Breeding, creeping to.  
Poctogenarian pomposity of 80s drags and fears of an open casket  
Another closed public house condemned to private soup to be slurped by scum.  
A Henry Miller assignation (satisfaction! Satisfaction!), watching  
On the toilet in full glorious view  
A fetus stirs dazzled in a rich man's face  
& it sails out pterodactyl brave  
(I can't afford to shave my diamond's blazing STDs)  
Singing our dreams out  
Seized in its cackling jaws

*Russell Bennetts is the founder and editor of Berfrois magazine. He lives in Kentish Town, London.*

*Rauan Klassnik lives in a suburb of Seattle. He is author of Sky Rat, Holy Land & The Moon's Jaw.*

# MADDIE IN THE MORNING: MORNING IN KOREAN IS 아침: MADDIE MADDIE IS A PERSON:

Noah Cicero

The smartphone alarm went off at 6:30AM, it was a soft song, it was an app she downloaded, it was a special app that played soft songs every fifteen minutes, until, eventually she woke up, the songs sounded like electronic crickets and mosquitoes playing synthesizers while on Vicodin.

Maddie had to wake up early, she worked at a kinderhagwon (a kinderhagwon is where wealthy people send their children to learn every subject in English starting at the age of four, Justin her boyfriend worked at a Cram Hagwon where normal income people send their kids to learn English for an hour after school starting at the age of nine, the poor sent their children nowhere the poor did not learn English the poor did not pass the examinations to get into college they would end up working construction or at Kimbap Shops, McDonalds like in America, drink Soju eat Ramyeon, die one day.)

Maddie sat up in bed, she didn't want to get out of bed, she walked over to the neon green French Press she bought from Starbucks, she heated water and started the coffee, she needed coffee or she would feel very bad throughout the whole day,

Maddie showered, she didn't wash her hair, her hair was too curly and thick, she was half Slovenian and Italian, but in Korea she was just American and white, washing it would make it too frizzy, she liked her hair because it made her unique but at the same time it was a hassle Maddie kept her hair dry, she was alone in the apartment, she washed her armpits and her face

The apartment was empty, there was no a sound, her boyfriend was in Seongnam, she was in Gunpo, her friends were in America, she felt alone, alone was a feeling oppressing, it crept up in her muscles, it made her stomach hurt, sometimes it gave her a headache, feeling alone and knowing she is alone conquered her at times and she did not want to clean her apartment, she went over to her MAC and put on 8tracks, she turned on a witchhouse soundtrack, turned it up loud, she needed her music, the sun came up, she stood naked before her window, she looked out her window, there was a mountain between the buildings she could see, she liked looking at the mountain tucked between the buildings (In the summer she hiked Mount Bukhansan, she hiked up to the Buddhist Temple, she walked in the temples, they were small with tigers painted on the walls, on the back of one of the temples was a painting of a boy carrying a rope chasing butterflies, she didn't know what it meant, what the story was, but she understood, it is impossible to catch butterflies with a rope? Maddie never thought about butterflies – she hardly ever considered bugs worth thinking about it, while at the temple she lit incense for the Buddha, she was Catholic but since everyone was doing it, she did it also, she gave a donation and drank tea, from the temples she could see Seoul the center of it, where all the power resonates

where the genius is, the buildings flowed like a river among the mountains, white spikes sprouting out of the ground. Maddie knew the Han River was down there settled in among the white spikes and mountains but she could not see the river. Maddie wondered if before 1900 before the buildup in Seoul, if a person could see the river down there from Mount Bukhansan, but there was no one to ask, they were all dead or they couldn't speak English, she loved to look at temples, she looked at the fantastic painted tigers on the walls of the temples, she loved them, she liked cats, but she was more of a lion fan because she was a Leo, one time Justin played a video of tigers and lions fighting and she said she could not watch it, because she didn't want to watch lions get hurt by those stupid tigers)

Maddie sat before a small mirror she had, a tiny little mirror, she straightened her hair, she decided her hair was too wild that day to show the kids they might laugh at her, she had to get her makeup right, the women of Korea were all perfect and beautiful, there were so many pretty girls in Seoul who woke up early to make sure their makeup was perfect, she had to compete with all the Korean girls, she had to compete with all the girls, she felt terrible inside, lonely, missing her friends, if she could put the right makeup on, if she could make herself beautiful then no one would know how she felt inside, no one would know she felt anxiety, that she was sleepy, that she wanted just to go back home and go back to sleep, she put on her make up, first the eyes, then the cheeks, then the lips, after an hour she finished, of course she went over the time allotted to do her makeup she was behind,

She swore to herself, shit fuck damn goddamn morning job, she put on her coat, grabbed her purse and went out the door (Maddie always said she went to Korea to test herself, she had to prove something to herself, Maddie believed in personal tests, she had that Nietzsche spirit that urbermensch spirit, she believed that people should test themselves, she believed that she was above the concerns of other people, when asked about politics she merely responded, "You speakin games" she considered sex "something to be done when very drunk" she considered popular culture "something to be analyzed to find out how the masses are ruining their lives" She did not concern herself with the ambitions of mankind, she had her own dreams, her test though didn't lead her to working in the Congo or Saudi Arabia because she knew those places were too dangerous for a woman, Korea was safe in terms of violence, Korea had running water electricity and a legitimate subway system, she took the best test she could find.

Maddie was the first on her dad's side of the family to graduate college, she was the first to travel to Asia, she was the first in many things and proud of it, she considered herself a hero to her family.

She left her ten story building and walked outside, it was chilly, Koreans walked the streets endlessly. She had gone outside several times at five in the morning and Koreans were still walking the streets, the sidewalks were never empty (Maddie was from a small town in Ohio, a town of 1500, so small she thought, it was an Amish town, carriages carrying Amish would always be on the streets, she grew up in a world with horses and farms, there was even a horse stall parking at WalMart, the center of life in her town was WalMart, she didn't like any of it, she

wanted out of it, no one ever walked the streets in her small town, sometimes the Amish children would ride funny scooters down the street, Maddie looked at all the signs and buildings, she felt happy walking to be a person who takes the subway, she felt happy she had made it to Korea, she felt happy she had found a place to live on the other side of the planet, she walked through the Sanbon subway area, the buildings shot up to 15 stories.

The signs went up to the top of the buildings, she liked looking Korean signs, she liked trying to read the Hangeul, she could read and pronounce Hangeul, but she didn't know many words so most signs were lost on her, but she had been there for 7 months and had learned some words, sometimes she would spot a word she knew and felt happy, the sky was blue and everything was pretty and good, she walked up the ramp to the subway, she reached into her pocket and found no subway card, then she reached into her purse and found no cash money to get a taxi, she panicked but then realized she could use her bankcard to get a new TMoney card, hope was not lost, a sudden feeling of relief went through her body, then she opened her wallet and found no bank card, she felt then in her body that she was fucked, panic, she would be late for work

Maddie turned around and started to run

Running running running Terrible feelings rising up in her, this was the test she thought, Maddie played sports in school, she knew how to run, she was not a weak person, running running running, she really hated her life at that moment, she hated Korea while she was running. Maddie didn't look at the pretty signs covered with Hangeul when she was running, she didn't try to hear if she could hear the Magpies singing, she felt nothing but anxiety, an extreme overcoming sense of foreboding and fear, she didn't want to be late to work, she didn't want her boss to know she was late, she didn't want her coteachers to think she was lazy and stupid and that she couldn't remember her Money Card and bank card like a normal person, running running running.

She felt horrible running, no one Seoul jogs and she wasn't dressed as a jogger, she was dressed as a pretty girl about to go to work, she kept thinking about what the Koreans must be thinking about her, then it occurred to her that some of her coteachers must be going to work at the same time, that one of them could see her, she was terrified of that happening, of course they would ask why she was running, she would have to explain, one fear led to another fear, this was all part of the test she told herself, it was true, it was a test, She made it back to her apartment, she grabbed her subway card and bank card, grabbed cash money from the coffee table, she grabbed 10,000 won, the terrible feelings started to subside but the day had been ruined, the whole day would be nothing but a shadow of the morning's hell, Maddie went outside and found a taxi to driver her to work, she scolded herself, instead of spending 1200 won a subway ride she ended up spending 4300 won on a taxi.

*Noah Cicero is 32 years old and has lived in Seongnam, Korea for the past year teaching English. He has several books coming out over the course of the next two years from Lazy Fascist Press, The Collected Works Volume 1 and 2 and a new novel called Go to work and do your job. Care for your children. Pay your bills. Obey The Law. Buy products. He has many short stories and poems published at 3AM Magazine, Metazen, Amphibi.us and many other places.*

# Four Pieces

Louis Armand and John Kinsella

*from MONUMENT*

38.

The only father working the plum lines to hoist horizons vertical is a dead father risen in brazen memorandums of sitcoms where the prestidigitatortouch of lighting and flat paint on whiteboard makes sets uptight & doubtful, his tools clinking in their mason's sack, humourless and thickhanded, calluses on calluses, day one blues dragged through decades, he is nonetheless enjoying the view from the spiral he'll Babel towards, his future aspirations. History, they said, will ignore his triumphs, his monumental stone accumulations' you push on to vault heaven's sensitive bits, to scaffold and lift a paycheque from the imperial overlords of worship; remember though, it isn't a credo we're laying to rest, no matins or matinee or midnight showing, naked as the day, as the father would have us, the 'straight video' realism; "try owning this" is less than piers, cob and mortar, odes to CMUs tears on his 'stache, a brownstone truth in a rags to riches city.

39.

When all is said that can be, & y've traded yr vocal cords for a middle finger and done the old flybynight, hightailed it out, hit the road, danced the to coin a nodoubtdeathless turn of phrase Christmas Island shuffle, all recidivist action, reversecycle, two steps forwards three steps back, puckered veneer from trying to kick in or out the kitchen sink, bugging the works with slipform after slipform wadded into a paper wreckingball... Lined up like gabions to haul, resisting the fleshy welcome of a body composed solely of hearsay, sweet nothings. How we love the prodigal who strikes boldly out from beneath mammy's underthings, postcard from Purgatorio, draughting the corridors with midnight bellows, to 'cast down,' waving Tsquares and compasses like an acolyte mason getting stiff in his closet over CAD illustrations gone ratty along the foldlines all doublespread layout and exploded views, blowing the froth off his export lager, smacking those lips, whispering, 'repent... repent' like a hoarse Meistersinger when noone listens.

40.

The number of dead and wounded gather in the locker, to chromosome a passage, making an earthmass quiver at the sight of bull by the horns, to wade through birdshit, sunk to the root of entire crops, those footed bills the gamechangers bulkup on, whereupon the Shaman testifier correlates waders and snorkels, a deal done as he begins his chant, his holierranthou script, his blockbuster, bragging rights over extensive intake of perspective, and OCD calibration of all that matters, measures of alcohol and powders, ships' manifests, census details anonymous as pyramids; as a rule, those who sleep in doorways make first wishes, cross into day as the illness ends, heralding the sun, the alignment of passage into the clown's maw, favourably tilting the balance, a Luna Park obsession as confronting as Jagger's crotch which becomes nervous in

the face of a gravelly voice, a greedy throat; such brilliant excess, parts of the body we didn't even know we have, celebrating our libertarian immunity, slanted and burst in a performance none of us are likely to forget; remember, we became planets to our suns, we sailed the seas by stars, drowned in the cenotaph's wake.

41.

Personally, there're things, y'd draw the line, I mean, wldn't be caught dead, they've got stats on everything, sexting selfie galleries in the Palais de Tokyo, call it plastic arts, meaning massproducedinChina latex reproductions, jealously guarding "its" interests (movies, sex on the beach, the colour blue), the real unfolding of the commodity lotus fetish, so white, so aerodynamically smooth and built light a brick shithouse, like a, lighthouse? Played forward for the Hong Kong constabulary. "Hung Kong," they said, haha. One for the boys playing past the touchline. Armed to the knuckledusters in Comme des Garcons, this cd be the future if it wasn't the present, blown into the nextplusone dimension, visceral, Vesuvius, vulva, velour, voluptuous, but not a Titian, more a Fragonard in petticoats, you could actually smell the danger from twenty paces: adamantine highway floggers in raincoats, Jodhpur Girl personifying the horse she rode in on, Francis Drake doing his rubber duck routine in the brittle old world wheeliebath, lion's paw, enamel overlaid, but guaranteed authentic, and none would surely argue with that? If you don't want it you know where you can stick it.

*MONUMENT is a longerterm multifaceted project in which the monumental is expressed in 'declining' (if exponential) ways from megastructures to minimalist openings, disturbing the curatorial, undermining the archaeological, and dismantling heroism, grand design and declarations of success. The text is constructed around word strings and idiolects; permutations, branches and loops: each section can be read 'vertically' and 'horizontally,' as well as 'transversally,' constructing an 'antimonument.'*

*John Kinsella's most recent book of poetry is Jam Tree Gully. He has collaborated with Louis Armand on Synopticon. His two volumes of essays, reviews, articles and memoir, Spatial Relations, has recently appeared from Rodopi. He is a Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge University, a Professorial Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia, and Professor of Literature and Sustainability at Curtin University.*

*Louis Armand lives in Prague and is most recently the author of the novel CAIRO (London: Equus, 2014) and the collection of poetry INDIRECT OBJECTS (Sydney: Vagabond, 2014). With John Kinsella he published SYNOPTICON (Prague: Litteraria, 2012), a poetic collaboration conducted over a period of ten years. He is an editor of VLAK magazine.*

# Cogitation in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

Jayinee Basu

I am a diptych of meat and clouds  
Collecting words from the ground  
Head locked into position in the dark  
River water flickers in an  
Old screen of reality  
Death March night hike  
Flashes of black dirt jewels  
In silver shoals of  
Fire smoothed charcoal  
Glittering animal feces  
Encrusted with dew  
A fistful of trial mix  
Almond is a naked almond  
Aureolin is a cold morning ray  
Celeste is a blue.  
Take these pictures at night  
With an ugly flash  
For your soft focus room  
In a sulfuric bath on a mountain  
Looking up to see a  
Grinning bobcat  
Thoughts still appear inside  
Of white boxes  
Bracketed with a blinking

*Jayinee Basu is a writer based in San Francisco. Her work has been published in Metazen, Housefire, Gesture Magazine and Times of India, among others. A book of her poetry, Asuras, is forthcoming on Civil Coping Mechanisms.*

# Six Limericks

Anthony Madrid

12.

There was a young girl from Virginia  
—I hesitate now to continue—  
No matter in bed, she would lecture you dead  
On the Dharma without and within ya.

46.

There was an old man from Messina,  
Who perceived he'd been served a subpoena.  
When he went to his lawyer, he greatly annoyed her  
By whining about the subpoena.

50.

There was a young girl from McLean,  
Who was caught with a gun on the plane.  
The Captain attacked, but he had to go back,  
Because no one was flying the plane.

70.

There was an old man from Des Plaines,  
Whose pathology partly explains  
Why he said like a dad "All these bikes are so bad,  
They have nothing to lose but their chains!"

104.

There was an old man from Park Slope,  
Who was strangely unable to cope.  
When we called in the medics, they said his genetics  
Suggested there wasn't much hope.

107.

There was an old lady from Shiloh,  
Who rode up to town on a rhino.  
When they laughed her to scorn, she would lean on the horn,  
And then parallel park on a wino.

*Anthony Madrid lives in Chicago. His poems have appeared in Best American Poetry 2013, B O D Y, Boston Review, Fence, Lana Turner, LIT, and Poetry. His first book is called I AM YOUR SLAVE NOW DO WHAT I SAY (Canarium Books, 2012).*

# Breast Feeding

Travis Hough

The erotic prelude to human life. But not mine. I find nothing erotic about kayaking through the milk ducts of some tremendous boob. There's all sorts of oddities floating in the milk. They peek their slimy heads above the surface, the direction of their gaze impossible to discern from behind their milky blue cataracts. At least I don't need to worry about getting lost. The turbulent milkflow suggested a powerful vacuum. I merely take the path of least resistance all the way to the nipple. But then what? Do universal entities use breast pumps? No, probably not. I'll likely end up in the mouth of some hungry celestial infant, and have to find my way out through the urinary system. I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. An enormous black hole against the fleshy red horizon. Brace yourself Jasper. I was shot from the boob like a twohundred pound cannonball. The sky shifted to black and I was violently thrust from my kayak, into the existential nightmare of the milky way. And this, I suppose, is either where I die, or wake up.

And where do I find myself 26 years later? Hangin' out with Smokey the bear, ignoring the beckonings of death sounded by my hallucinogenic girlfriend, Datura. Smokey has always hated me because I'm both dry and negligent, and collapsing in front of one of his billboards from dehydration is as much proof of the relentless cruelty of Datura as I suppose anyone would ever need.

"Only you, are dumb enough to hitchhike in the desert." he tells me.

And I say "Smokey you just don't understand my lifestyle."

Which really just comes down to the path of least resistance. And may it be littered with the discarded sustenance of lazy hikers and fortunate motorists. And if I'm lucky enough to find a horse, I will first run a series of tests to make sure it's not a figment of my diseased brain before I mount and stroll into certain death, which is beginning to sound more and more like a paid vacation. It's like having a catheter that drains into the distant reaches of the universe, into a wormhole that will probably send it raining into the open mouth of my reincarnated future self. My past life urine will essentially become the sustenance that I am now waiting to receive with open mouth.

For some reason my brain is looping over the scenario at the lawyer's office. Surprise! Your mother is dead. He plays me a video, in which she's lying on her deathbed, reciting her will. Christ, could she possibly be any more dramatic? She keeps it short and simple until she gets to me:

*He used to crawl into his big brother's room when he was still in diapers. He'd sit on the middle of the bed while Bobby and his friend's would smoke cigarettes and listen to their trashy music and pretend he was queen of all the other boys. I've known he was fucked up since he was still in diapers. There is no way that shifty little pervert is ever going to set foot in my garden.*

*Absolutely not. If he approached me on my deathbed and threatened all of his brothers and sisters he still would NEVER see the deed. I'm leaving him my cat, Stephanie, and he should be grateful for that. Jasper could learn a thing or two about civility from Stephanie.*

The lawyer reached under his desk and pulled out a cat carrier. I opened the gate but Stephanie did not come out. He stared at me and hissed. I reached inside, only to be pierced by the pearly fangs of my inheritance.

“THIS is what I get? This bitch of a cat from the woman who breast fed me UNTIL I WAS SEVEN??”

“I'm afraid so.” The lawyer replied.

“And what about the garden?”

“She's left the garden to your father.”

“Daddy? Ol' POPS thinks he can just waltz right into the garden I've waited sixteen years for? After all this time waiting for mother to die?”

And now here I am, somewhere in Texas, lookin for a toilet, an oasis. Anything with some fuckin' water in it. Not that it would make any sense to drink it being that none of my muscles are currently under voluntary control and I can't pee when Datura acts like this. It's the same story every week. She tells a joke. But apparently she doesn't want me to laugh because AS SOON AS I DO, she turns into a 400 pound demon, sitting on my chest and suckin' every last drop of water out of my body with a strawlike appendage. And then, just to tease me, she takes a bath. Right in front of me. She's got a bathtub big enough for twelve people. It's lit from below with blue LED's and there's all sorts of gelatinous candy from the Asian market she knows I love suspended in the bath water like pineapples in some kind of heavenly blue Jello. She smokes a cigarette like the milky bathtub goddess she is. She turns into Bill Cosby and I ask him if I can come in but he just puts his cigarette out on my tongue and starts shaving his legs. Then after about six hours of sadistic indulgence she gives me whatever I want. Anything I could possibly ask for. And then she takes it all away. She's one hell of a woman and she'll be here any second to turn this whole desert into a water park where no one pees in the water and the sun is always shining. But until then, I wait for a semi truck driver to come and poke me with a stick to verify the fact that I'm alive.

And then sweet urination comes to the rescue. That's the release signal of my succulent mistress. It's all downhill from here. Good thing I'm naked. I don't have any quarters for the laundromat. I'm savin' my last twenty bucks for an SUV that's gonna drive me right into my daddy's garden. I'm gonna set the cruise control at about 40 miles an hour and dive out of the driver's seat window just before it smacks my daddy in the face so he doesn't have to watch me eat all the hippies which he apparently thinks are more entitled to happiness than his own son. Gonna find a nice little patch of soil for Datura to pop out a couple of babies and call it a lifetime. Happily ever after for ever.

Comforting as this thought may be, maybe It's time to start considering the possibility that she might not be on her way to rescue me right now. At least nightfall brings some kind of salvation. My skin is starting to breathe and I'm able to crawl. But still so very dry, in such a dry place. A vegetal slave to whither silken wrinkles, in a raw valley through which no oil flows. Cascades in reverse. A plum raisin split to leak no fluid like a gangrenous man, revolving empty cylinders of thick steel from which behind clicks a malevolent intention that drove an angry finger to point. These canyons are lined with howls, square echoes that drape and shape shoulders that pool a rain reflective of a black brain basin. Death stalks a cold valley tonight, his sunken face too dark to dictate which direction he'll hang his heavy six shooters.

As I watch the moonlit sands, the wind sweeps clean each imperfection of the dunes at regular intervals, and it's very comforting to know that there is such a force so effortlessly maintaining and regenerating this place. In my younger years I sought to master an inner wind that may have done the same to my mind, but all I've done is draw a curtain between my eyes and my mind. I fear it will never again be drawn open, so I've taken to destroying it with cigarette burns, one small hole at a time. I love dark places like this because I can pretend the curtain is open, even while my eyes are active. But in reality I receive only small, fragmented glimpses of a reality I once knew. Through a tiny hole I receive just enough sensory input to catalyze an imaginative reaction, filling in the darkness of the rest of the curtain with oddly precise and seemingly random associations that my brain makes with whatever little pieces manage to penetrate. Yep. I know it's an illusion. But still, I try to let it flow. And now I'm thinking, maybe it's best not to try to open the curtain so directly, but to forget that the curtain is even there. Perhaps then it will slowly dissipate, suffocate beneath these veils of acetylcholine and hallucination. Smokey climbs out of the billboard and sits down next to me.

"I'm sorry for not understanding your lifestyle."

"It's ok smokey I couldn't possibly expect you to understand. You just an authoritative woodland creature who happens to be wearin' a uniform. You don't know what it's like to be naked and unemployed."

"No. But I do know what it's like to be thirsty. Would you like a glass of water?"

"Awww Smokey I knew you weren't so bad. Let's drink some water and hang out like the good ol' days. Before you started wearing clothes."

Smokey pulled out a gas can and doused me in gasoline. He started looking through his pockets and came up empty handed.

"Shit. Do you have any matches?" he asked.

Alright so like I said, Datura should be here any minute and turn this whole desert into a water park and hopefully I won't have to smell like piss and gasoline for the rest of the day.

*Travis Hough is a currently unpublished writer of fiction and poetry, primarily residing in northern Florida. His most notable influence are a book of names for babies, and a short text by Gertrude Stein titled "Tender Buttons," though he primarily draws from the of erings of semiconscious states with the use of homemade sleep aids and a tape recorder. He is currently working on his first substantial work of fiction, "Seamless."*