The Red Wheelbarrow
Ruane Jeter: Ruane secretly houses a family of small bears in her stomach.

David Perk: "To think of ways of disorganizing can be a form of organization, you know." (Franz Kline)...David has long hair.

Paul Stewart Preston: Nestle's Quick, Blake's Newton, Positive thinking, pigs in a blanket, fig newtons, nuclear research.

Sue Rubin: Sue's friends say simply, "The Goat."

The Red Wheelbarrow
Jeannette Flick: A pyromaniac since the age of four months, Jeannette is learning to sublimate her fascination: "I love writing - the yellow pencil flaring like a flame between my fingers."

Nathan Sorenson: Securing his scarf around his neck, Nathan thinks about far-off planets.

Liz Holmes: Someone once said: "Liz, you sure know how to take care of things."

Susan Glasscock: Superstitions. Salt over the left shoulder. Susan has known many deportees; she knows the true meaning of getting away with murder.

Julia Silverman: Julia has been seen: 1)pounding her fist and scowling at bureaucracy; 2)shaking snow from her hair; 3)doing sly, after-hour things in the cafeteria; 4)giggling.

Jack Driscoll: Fantasizes that his beard is of snow. He shaves for the summer.

John Jackson: And John is always doing things like trying to improve upon Thurber.

Sally Alatalo: "My girl is gold in the sun and bold in the dazzling water/she drowses on the blonde sand and in the daisy fields my daughter/dreams." (Isabella Gardner -"At a Summer Hotel")

Dawn Banghart: Gets up early to maintain her reputation.

Lynette Clow: In a painting, there is a smiling woman sitting on a rock and looking at you evasively. She stands up and shakes out her hair. This could be Lynette.

Eric Schneider: The year is 2019. Aqualung snuggles his warm bottle after a long day in the park.

Beth Wolfson: "Alert...what do you think of my theory that a man remains a virgin until he has committed murder?" (John Hawkes)

Jeff Bartone: Jeff questions the popular belief that there is no art. He shakes his head, thinking about universal blindness.
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### Beth Wolfson

**THREE VOYAGES**

I On a train to Paris from Kiev you are nervous. Worse: you have no knowledge of French. No passport. The fields blur by. You think of slipping through the window, but the field will roll up like a tongue to swallow you.

You press against the window, hoping to go unnoticed.

II The sea is new to you, the boat tossing over water. You imagine lying across stiff tassles of corn, the wind stirring beneath.

On the deck, water spits at you like an angry peasant. You could plant yourself in the water if you dove from the edge, but think of the blue breath of fish and walk inside.

You rock yourself, curling in the ship's cold air.

III Sixty years later, you fly in an iron bird over Omaha. The midwest is stable: from the air you see only a small breeze combing the fields.
Beth Wolfson

HARVEST

In a field, a frenchman considers sliding a scythe into his belly. He swallows a raw potato, insuring that the blade will be solidly planted. He wonders about the dust settled in his lungs, the red air in his veins.

Across the field, his wife sees him. She raises her head, "Çava?", bends to dig another potato. He nods to her, the feeling of red earth humming under his feet.
Jeannette Flick

ALIBI

Dee walked into the office and sat down across from Ben. "He's ready," she said, wiping a drop of sweat from her cheek. She lifted her hard hat off the shelf and brushed the dust away.

"In a minute." He was filling out Alibi's transfer papers. "Marya made a down payment on the old yellow devil. She's coming tomorrow to ride him. If he goes all right, he's sold."

She smiled. "That's great." She peered over at the papers. "Good breeding?"

He nodded. "The best. Double-bred Peter McCue." He glanced at her. "Why don't you go warm him up? I'll be right there."

"Okay." She put her hunt cap on and went out to the aisle. She untied the palomino and led him from the barn. Tightening the girth, she smacked him lightly on the neck. "Wake up, bud. We have work today."

Dee tugged her hat lower over her eyes, pulled the stirrups down and mounted. Alibi flipped his head, jogging before she hit the saddle. Laughing, she patted his shoulder. "You're feeling good today. Easy, now." She drew her hands back. He dropped to a walk, switching his tail. She brushed the flies from his neck and ears, and turned him into the outdoor arena.

She let the horse walk for ten minutes, then squeezed his sides with her calves. He jumped ahead into a rough trot. Dee straightened her back and shortened the reins a little. "Jesus," she said, grinning. "We'll have to tranquillize you for Marya."

After one circuit of the ring, Alibi settled into a smooth jog, his ears pointed backwards, listening to Dee whistle a radio song.

Finishing the tune, she began to post. He flicked his ears forward and stretched out. He twisted his neck to one side, grabbing the shank in his teeth. Dee reached up and slapped him across the top of the neck with her palm. "Quit, Al!" Squinting, she turned him in a tight circle until he slowed.

A parade ends. Vee Eff and his buddies find a bar to stay drunk. They joke around while he watches coal miners drink and stumble out the door. Vee Eff tries to remember being unhappy as a fireman.

They get home late and Vee Eff walks home through his dying town to find his unmade bed. There, he dreams of women and his buddies. He falls asleep unsure and wakes up at sunrise with a bad taste in his mouth.
Eric Schneider

POEM FOR PARADES

Vee Eff is a volunteer fireman who loves his job in the small town where he lives. With firemen all over Pennsylvania, he unfolds his card chair in front of the municipal building. During the day, he wanders inside to fondle the fire truck then imagines crushing it in one hand like a beer can. He returns outside to watch the street before him. There is nothing else except parades.

After Vee Eff folds his chair at night, he reads the parade list hanging in the silence by the town map. Parades farthest away are marked by blue checks.

On Saturdays with a few cases of beer and three buddies, Vee Eff drives the fire truck to a parade. He and his buddies grab ass all the way, retelling old jokes and laughing. His buddies like him. During a slow parade, they point out women with big tits, slapping the dashboard and laughing. Vee Eff marries the women, grinning.

"Cantered yet?" Ben asked from the gate. He shut it and walked to the center of the arena.

"No. We just got done trotting. He's blowing some."

"What do you expect? It's hot out, and he's not in shape." He took a cigarette from his shirt-pocket and lit it. "Canter!" he yelled.

Alibi started as if a pheasant had popped up beneath him. Dee pressed her left calf against his side. He broke into a long-striding trot.

"Set him down and do it right." He spat on the ground.

Her face pink, Dee slowed the horse and re-signalled him. Pitching a little, he picked up a canter. They circled the arena for five minutes in each direction before Ben said, "Let him walk." He went over to the pole jump and raised the bar a foot.

"Okay. Brick wall, poles, brush, then start with the brush and go the other way."

Chewing the inside of her cheek, Dee scanned the course. She took the reins up a few inches. Wet from the lather on Alibi's neck, they slid through her hands. She pulled her gloves from her pocket and put them on.

She circled the horse at a trot. Drooping her eyelids against the sun, she looked at the four-foot brick wall. She signalled Alibi for a canter and headed him toward the jump.

He crowhopped twice before rushing ahead. She tightened her fingers around the reins. The horse sped up as if he was galloping down a bank. "Too fast, Al," she whispered.

"You damn kidney bouncer!" Ben said. "Sit up and get him together."

Her arm muscles tensed. One fingernail broke through her glove. Alibi stretched his neck out and lifted his nose. Four inches of rein zipped through Dee's hands.
The horse took a short extra stride and popped over the jump. His right hind leg cracked against the top of the fence. Landing, Dee sawed her hands back and forth until he trotted. His head jerked up when the hurt leg struck the ground.

"Bring him here," Ben told her.

She hauled him to a walk and stopped in front of Ben. He threw his cigarette on the dirt and stomped it out. "He's not looking, hitting the bit?"

She nodded, turning sideways in the saddle to look at Alibi's right hind. The horse held the leg bent with only his toe touching the earth. The fetlock was slightly swollen.

"Lousy throwback yellow horses." Ben tightened the curb chain three lengths and knotted the tie-down. Grasping the reins just behind the bit, he yanked down. Alibi hopped back several steps, his head straining against the tie-down. Ben let go of the horse. He cleared his throat and spat. "Take him over again and do it like you know how."

Dee stared at him. "Aren't you going to check his leg?"

"Marya wants a good-trained horse. Get going, and keep hold of him."

Dee pressed her teeth together. Circling the horse, she jerked six inches of rein through her hands. Squeezing with her legs, she sent him for the brick wall.

Alibi jumped the fence clean, but stumbled on landing. Dee's mouth opened as his shoulder dropped like a wet hay bale. She pulled hard and closed her calves. He steadied.

She halted the horse by Ben. Gazing at him, she said, "He's had it for today."

He shook his head. "Take him over the poles and finish your course."

Lynne Clow

UNTITLED

It's Monday. In thirty degree weather I forgot my shoes. The tar is hard and cold against my feet, the wind blows my hair into my mouth and face erasing a hundred dark shadowed cabins.

In front of me is the light and to the left, the beach where the sand pulls at my feet.

Lights glide across the lake as I sit down against a white cross mounted to a raft, dragged weeks ago from the water and beached now on cinder blocks. Behind me there is only blackness above me a gathering of clouds.
Drinking whiskey and Sprite, the boss and I watch the guys sort through eight years of scrap leather heaped on the tackroom floor.

During lunch we play five card draw and smoke Viceroy longs. We tell the others to soap tack, sweep cobwebs and pick out the feet of all forty horses in the barn.

When he leaves for a sale, I pick the drawer-lock to the Jack Daniel's and poker deck, and ask everyone into the office. Sitting through choretime, we smoke the boss's cigarettes and flick our ashes on the wood floor.

Her eyelids lifted. "He's hurting," she said, not moving.

Ben frowned. "You want your money, don't ya?"

She glanced down at the horse's leg and back up again. "He could have a bone crack," she said.

"He'll live." He stepped in close to Alibi and slammed the horse's flank with his fist. "Now get!"

Dee lowered her head, swallowing, and turned the horse away. Cantering on three legs, he bobbed toward the pole fence. Two strides before it, she dug her heels into his ribs. He stepped square on the injured leg and took off, barely clearing the jump.

They worked for more than an hour, until Ben said, "All right. Cool him out."

"I'm quitting after I put him up," she said. The muscles in her neck were taut.

He shrugged, turning toward the barn. "Fine with me."

Taking her feet from the stirrups, she dropped to the ground. She slipped her arm through the reins and ran up the stirrups. Lifting the flap, she loosened the girth a notch. Alibi was blowing hard, his wet sides heaving in and out. She drew the reins over this head and started walking him.

He held his head low, with his ears half-back. Dee laid a hand on his neck. "Soon as you're cool, we'll fix that leg up. Marya's got sense not to try you out if it's still bad." She scratched his jaw. He raised his head a little and pushed against her.

When his coat was nearly dry and the skin between his forelegs felt cool, Dee led the horse into the barn. She slid the bridle from his head, put his halter on and tied him in the aisle. Unbuckling the girth, she took off the tie-down and saddle. Filling a bucket with cold water, she began sponging the swollen fetlock. Alibi moved ahead a step.
"Ho, fella. Ho, now, yellow horse." She placed one hand on the front of the leg to hold it still and kept sponging. "Well, nothing's broke, Al," she said, standing up.

She dumped the water out and got a bottle of healing oil from the cabinet. Squatting by the horse, she cupped her hand against his fetlock and poured a little liniment into it. Her eyes watering, she massaged the leg. Alibi side-stepped.

"Stand easy. It'll feel better after awhile."

She put the bottle away. She took a bandage and sheet of cotton and began to wrap the leg. Ben came out, slamming the door. Dee fastened the wrap and stood up.

"I'm leaving," she said.

"Your pay's on the desk."

She reached to untie the horse.

"Leave it. I gotta clip him."

"You're still going to use him tomorrow?" she asked.

He dropped his cigarette on the cement and stepped on it. "I gotta make a living, honey." He picked up the clippers.

Dee let go of the rope. She got her saddle and hunt cap from the tackroom. Looking in the cabinet, she found a pair of her spurs. She slung them around her wrist and went out into the aisle again. Ben was trimming Alibi's ears. The horse leaned against the wall to keep the weight off his leg.

Dee looked away and walked to the office, setting her saddle on a chair. She lifted the envelope from the desk. It was off-white and had a coffee stain on the back. Opening it, she pulled the money out. She glanced through the door to the aisle. Ben kneeled Alibi in the belly, and the horse hopped over a step, his three sound legs shaking as he held the fourth off the ground.

Dawn Banghart

THE DREAM

In the dream she hears rats scratching the wall. Her eyes open, seeing darkness. "Rats," she whispers. "They're eating my brain." She rolls on her side, reaching for the Sominex, taking two, then replacing the jar. She swallows the pills without water and they stick in her throat. Sighing, she scratches her neck then, again sleeps. Skin turns into fur, sleek, black. Fingers grow long, nails untrimmed. Her throat squeaks and she walks on four legs inside paneling, between two ears.
Dee counted the bills, snapping them down one at a time on the desktop. Then she crunched the money together and stuffed it back in the envelope, tucking the flap in. She pushed it into her pocket, picked up her saddle and walked out the door to her car.
Dawn Banghart

TO YOU

When you asked me to help
take down your suit cases,
I threw them down the attic
ladder, refusing to smile,
refusing to answer your questions.
You crawled after the suit cases,
turning off the light as you left.

I followed you into the bedroom,
listening to your chatter while
you unpacked your drawers. I
curled into the torn, brown
chair like a cat, wanting to
claw out your eyes.

Your suit case clicked,
the kitchen door slammed
and I sat, pulling out the
stuffing in the chair,
ignoring your empty drawers.
Sally Alatalo

THE MEN

I.
They carry black robes
and tap my window.
When I look at the glass
I see only my reflection.
By morning
the cracked glass falls.

II.
Four in the morning
the next day, the men
knock. I open the door
and let them in.
They take off their hats
and sit on chairs
not noticing I'm sleeping.
The men begin painting my house.
They paint it black.

III.
Thirty years from now
the moon will roll
and shadow me knocking.

Paul Stewart Preston

SLEEPING ON A BEACH

The shore stretches before me
in the dark as stars
stare out of the lake.

Surrounded by reeds
I spread my sleeping bag in a circle
of sand. The grains absorb
every motion and form
to my legs, back and head.
The stars snap
into focus. When I close my eyes
I see them on the backs
of my lids.
HITCH-HIKING TO SACRAMENTO

I

An old green Oldsmobile stops
100 yards up the road
and backs to where I am standing.
Opening the door I shake water
from my boots. My pantlegs
cling to crushed velvet upholstery.
The driver shakes his pipe to the left.
The farmers have been praying
for rain for a long time, he says.

On both sides of the road
are cornfields, the stacks
close together, shrugging their arms.
Some say it's too late for rain.
he says, blowing a cloud of smoke
at the windshield.

II

Somewhere miles away
a mouse darts its head
out of a crack in the checkered bed
of a dammed up creek.

Rain makes dirty puddles on the windshield.
This is an answer to our prayers, he says
not realizing I am asleep.

6 A girl plays a flute
in the basement.
I hear no music.
Ears slide from the flute.

7 The man can't talk.
I am blind
to the feel of the squirrel
to lungs filling with blood
and music
is no part of me.
Sally Alatalo

7 INCIDENTS

1 I can't sleep.
   Men walk outside
   tapping on doors

2 I walk around the room
   and look out the window.
   Somebody yawns.
   His mouth falls off.

3 Squirrels run on the roof.
   I cover my ears with hands
   but the squirrels
   crawl underneath the door.
   One with no fur grins.

4 I wonder about the woman
   taking showers. I open the door.
   Fine red pins hit me.
   I breathe the pins.

5 Under the bed
   my dog sleeps.
   People won't look at him.
   He has no eyes.

Sue Rubin

WIND

All night sand drizzles
from the sky. When I zip my coat
the road flows into a tunnel
of water foaming on the far shore,
the wind blowing against my thighs.

A rowboat moors at a dock
as my eyes follow a light on the water
leading to a house
across the lake. Sand fills
my lids and lashes.

Untied by the wind
the rowboat glides on the waves.
Elizabeth Holmes

AN AMBULANCE POEM

I

I pull into the third farm
on Milo Road, the siren
at Slow Wall. Branches
graze the windshield.

The revolving light slaps red
on the corner of the outhouse
behind the pine barn
where Joe Turner's heart stopped.

Opening the car door,
I grab the transistor and flashlight.
Chained to the fence
a dog springs from the dark.

II

I find Turner in a cow's stall,
his head lies in milk.
Squatting beside him,

I pump his chest fifteen counts,
seal his lips for three,
pump fifteen
seal for three.

Still dilated, his eyes
suck down the loft beams
as his pulse goes slow
beneath sweating skin.
He knows his son is admiring the vacuum of silence. The boy shuts off the radio and opens the door.

"Pretty nice?" the father asks. He shouts a little over the machines. "Nice," the son answers, stroking the fender as he climbs down. "Let's go." They turn to the other side of the room, and walk back through the huge room of tractors that stand still against the yellow light, patiently.

They return to the father's desk. The boy picks a desk three rows down from his father, and draws on a blotter, watching his father work. He is bent over a yellow sheet of graph paper, one row of light above beats down on him. The boy watches from the dark, thinking of the piano piece in the cab.

The father gets up and stretches. He folds the papers under his arm. The boy tears off his sheet of doodles and stuffs them in his pocket. They leave, buying coffee from the machine in the hall. They drink between cinderblock walls. "Do you wonder why I do this?" asks the father, crumpling his cup. "No," says the boy, making his last swallow.

They walk out across the parking lot together. The moon joins the floodlights.

Susan Glasscock

DRIVING TO TABUK THROUGH A SANDSTORM

Alone on the road our headlights bore holes in the dark just north of Medina.

All night the wind has blown and now a shamal blasts beige paint from our car. My father struggles to stay on the road leaning the left fender into the wind.

Five of us pass time by singing above the roar of the wind and drinking sandy water.

No women drive cars in Saudi Arabia so my father has driven for seventeen hours straight, squinting at the road ahead watching for the lights of Tabuk.
Julia Silverman

DRIVING THROUGH KANSAS

My father's hands are locked on the steering wheel as we drive through Kansas. At the sides of the road corn bends in the wind. Thunderclouds pile behind us. For hours my brother has been staring out the window—dreaming of bleached mountains of deep pools behind rocks where trout rise and fall.

I sit straight-backed on my hands my legs sticking out under the dashboard stiff as windshield wipers.

Sometimes, when I sleep I hear my father: a distant breathing, alone on a road his eyes like wheels on the highway rolling us over broken glass.

the father, delighted eyes behind round glasses. "Did...did you show him the..." The father shushes him. "No, I will, soon." The fat man grins and he leans back. The father and the fat man talk, pointing to needles, looking in books. The son watches the machine, bolted to iron beams, spin and shudder. He touches the glass. It is vibrating. The father gets up. "I think I got that settled," he says, folding several papers under his arm. "I have some paperwork to do yet, but besides that we can go."

They re-cross the lighted passageway, and the machine sound follows them. "Do you want to see it now?" asks the father. He is smiling. The boy pauses. "Oh, yes, I guess so," he finally says. The father's hands turn the papers around in the air. They walk into the middle of the room, to a hung tarp, supported by something bigger underneath. "Here it is, here it is," says the father. He strokes the oily tarp. "This one is complete. We finished it last week." He bends down and gathers the tarp in his hands, tugging. "Help me," he says. The boy hesitates, watching the top of the thing dissipate into the dark roof. He squats and pulls up at the edge. The father walks the cloth backwards, the boy stepping back with the wave of tarp, seeing it fall off and collect at the bottom of a dark yellow bulldozer. It stands grey in the lack of light.

The boy takes it in with several sweeps of his eyes. The father steps across the tarp, strokes the fender like a massive shoulder, and climbs up, opening the door. He repels down with his arms. "Get in." He wipes his hands. "I think you'll like it," he says loudly, over the machines. The boy walks slowly across the tarp, and touches the first step as if he thought it were hot. He climbs up until he is surrounded by the white cab. "Close the door," he hears his father say from the black concrete floor. He closes it, and all sound is clamped off. The boy cannot hear the machines. His father watches outside. The boy sees him, and starts fiddling aimlessly with dials he can half see. Below, the father smiles, knowing his son is interested. Inside, the radio is flipped on, accidentally; a piano piece that fills the cab. Outside, the father circles. The boy sees him in the front window, the right window, the back, the left, the front. The boy sees the black brown machines and remembers the screaming machines outside the door. He listens to the piano bounce off the metal walls. His father smiles.
watching the floodlights becoming ellipses in the oily asphalt. The
father is looking ahead, towards the massive building that stretches
away from the pools of floodlight, long and flat. "I want to show
you something. I have lots of things to show you," says the father,
smiling and looking at the boy. The boy does not say anything; he
is tired, with the anticipation of boredom.

The machines are louder, closer. The pair walk into a side
door, and the machine sound disappears. The boy wonders what it is,
droning on unreasonably. They pass glass offices and banks of desks.
"This one is mine," says the father. He is proud of the two desks
butted together. The boy looks at the three filing cabinets, paperback
and hardbound books, and a dozen clipboards and folders. "This is
what I have to keep track of," says the father. The boy smiles. They
walk deeper into the building.

The father opens a huge door, made of beams of wood. They
walk into a large room. It smells of oil and the corners cannot be
seen, At the other end there is a light. In between are a dozen tractors.
They stand on stilts, braces, tires, or are suspended from the ceiling
with chain. Against the light they are black shapes; a city skyline.
Through another set of beam doors at the other side, the machines are
screaming. They are louder now.

The father and boy step over parts and chunks of tractor that
are spread over the floor. The air is black smelling of oil. The
tractors stand like crippled animals, half of their bodies torn off
and spilled on the floor. The father smiles, seeing how the pieces
are fitting together, becoming machines. He walks faster. He seems
to grow stronger, breathing the oily air.

They walk across a bright passageway for trucks, then into a
series of cinderblock rooms that house the gauges and machines that
run behind glass. The father meets a fat man sitting at a lighted
panel eating Milk Duds and sipping coffee. The man looks up when he
sees the boy, and smiles. "Look who's here," he says. The boy feels
he must remember a name. He doesn't. There is a queer sense of
reunion when they shake hands. The hands seem to fit. "I haven't
seen you since your father brought you through here five, six years
ago." The boy does not remember the fact of the visit, but he smiles,
and pretends that he does. The fat man looks happier, and looks at

Jack Driscoll

BEING DROPPED OFF A COUPLE MILES FROM HOME

I open the door of the car
and always the car leaves me
walking north into the wind. There are no birds
lifting above the trees, no clouds passing.
It is winter here and the mind drifts
to a duck-blind in Minnesota
where I have fallen asleep
a row of red shotgun shells in my vest
and the snow falling. When I wake at night
the dog is swimming through the weeds
toward shore. I want to call
but cannot remember her name. I pull the trigger
and years of dust explode from the barrel
without sound. The duck at my feet is bone.

And sometimes, walking home
I am not hunting at all. I am backed against a boxcar wall
looking into the night with my binoculars
through the large square door. It could be Kansas:
horses in the fields
on both sides of the train
waiting for morning.

And sometimes, that other self
pushing the dark aside
simply pushes open the front door of the house
where there is no house
where no one is waiting.
"This always will happen on weekends," he said, sliding into the driver's seat. He pulls the shoulder strap over his chest. His son does the same. "I wonder if they can ever do it right." His son smiles. The car criss crosses the road, avoiding chuckholes, wedging light into the night. "Your mother was not pleased, was she, me having to go like this." There is a pause. "No," the son answers, trying to read a book in the light from the street. "Well, it has to be done." He shifts gears. "When an engine is acting up it has to be taken care of. If I'm the one to do it, I will." The son nods for lack of something to say. "I'm tired too," says the father, looking into the light at the front of the car. The son slides the book under the seat. He looks at his father, wondering what a man can do, being half asleep.

"Your mother doesn't see why I do this." It seems like a question. The boy looks at his father, who is already looking at him. "No...she really doesn't." "I thought so," says the father. He turns a corner. The car rights itself in the lane. "I enjoy it," he finally says. The boy nods again. He decides against trying to read. "People don't understand why I do this. Your mother, anyone." The boy doesn't respond. "I enjoy it," that is all. "I like to do what I do." The boy watches the dashboard come and go in front of him. "People say I haven't gone anywhere, that I've been on the job too long." The boy looks over to his father and nods. He listens to the engine drag the car down the street. "Right?" says the father. He shifts gears. "Yes," "Of course, you understand why I do this." It sounds like a question again. "Yes," answers the boy. He reads street signs. The father yawns, and maneuvers the car up to the gate.

A guard walks out to the car, black in the dark, turning blue in the headlights. The father explains. The guard nods and smiles, walks back and unlocks the gate.

The father and son walk across the plain of parking lot. A far way off, huge machines tear up the night. The son listens,
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The father and son walk across the plain of parking lot. A far way off, huge machines tear up the night. The son listens,
watching the floodlights becoming ellipses in the oily asphalt. The father is looking ahead, towards the massive building that stretches away from the pools of floodlight, long and flat. "I want to show you something. I have lots of things to show you," says the father, smiling and looking at the boy. The boy does not say anything; he is tired, with the anticipation of boredom.

The machines are louder, closer. The pair walk into a side door, and the machine sound disappears. The boy wonders what it is, droning on unreasonably. They pass glass offices and banks of desks. "This one is mine," says the father. He is proud of the two desks butted together. The boy looks at the three filing cabinets, paperback and hardbound books, and a dozen clipboards and folders. "This is what I have to keep track of," says the father. The boy smiles. They walk deeper into the building.

The father opens a huge door, made of beams of wood. They walk into a large room. It smells of oil and the corners cannot be seen, At the other end there is a light. In between are a dozen tractors. They stand on stilts, braces, tires, or are suspended from the ceiling with chain. Against the light they are black shapes; a city skyline. Through another set of beam doors at the other side, the machines are screaming. They are louder now.

The father and boy step over parts and chunks of tractor that are spread over the floor. The air is black smelling of oil. The tractors stand like crippled animals, half of their bodies torn off and spilled on the floor. The father smiles, seeing how the pieces are fitting together, becoming machines. He walks faster. He seems to grow stronger, breathing the oily air.

They walk across a bright passageway for trucks, then into a series of cinderblock rooms that house the gauges and machines that run behind glass. The father meets a fat man sitting at a lighted panel eating Milk Duds and sipping coffee. The man looks up when he sees the boy, and smiles. "Look who's here," he says. The boy feels he must remember a name. He doesn't. There is a queer sense of reunion when they shake hands. The hands seem to fit. "I haven't seen you since your father brought you through here five, six years ago." The boy does not remember the fact of the visit, but he smiles, and pretends that he does. The fat man looks happier, and looks at

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Jack Driscoll

BEING DROPPED OFF A COUPLE MILES FROM HOME

I open the door of the car and always the car leaves me walking north into the wind. There are no birds lifting above the trees, no clouds passing. It is winter here and the mind drifts to a duck-blind in Minnesota where I have fallen asleep a row of red shotgun shells in my vest and the snow falling. When I wake at night the dog is swimming through the weeds toward shore. I want to call but cannot remember her name. I pull the trigger and years of dust explode from the barrel without sound. The duck at my feet is bone.

And sometimes, walking home I am not hunting at all. I am backed against a boxcar wall looking into the night with my binoculars through the large square door. It could be Kansas: horses in the fields on both sides of the train waiting for morning.

And sometimes, that other self pushing the dark aside simply pushes open the front door of the house where there is no house where no one is waiting.
My father's hands are locked on the steering wheel as we drive through Kansas. At the sides of the road corn bends in the wind. Thunderclouds pile behind us. For hours my brother has been staring out the window—dreaming of bleached mountains of deep pools behind rocks where trout rise and fall. I sit straight-backed on my hands my legs sticking out under the dashboard stiff as windshield wipers. Sometimes, when I sleep I hear my father: a distant breathing, alone on a road his eyes like wheels on the highway rolling us over broken glass.
He knows his son is admiring the vacuum of silence. The boy shuts off the radio and opens the door.

"Pretty nice?" the father asks. He shouts a little over the machines. "Nice," the son answers, stroking the fender as he climbs down. "Let's go." They turn to the other side of the room, and walk back through the huge room of tractors that stand still against the yellow light, patiently.

They return to the father's desk. The boy picks a desk three rows down from his father, and draws on a blotter, watching his father work. He is bent over a yellow sheet of graph paper, one row of light above beats down on him. The boy watches from the dark, thinking of the piano piece in the cab.

The father gets up and stretches. He folds the papers under his arm. The boy tears off his sheet of doodles and stuffs them in his pocket. They leave, buying coffee from the machine in the hall. They drink between cinderblock walls. "Do you wonder why I do this?" asks the father, crumpling his cup. "No," says the boy, making his last swallow.

They walk out across the parking lot together. The moon joins the floodlights.

Susan Glasscock

DRIVING TO TABUK THROUGH A SANDSTORM

Alone on the road our headlights bore holes in the dark just north of Medina.

All night the wind has blown and now a shamal blasts beige paint from our car. My father struggles to stay on the road leaning the left fender into the wind.

Five of us pass time by singing above the roar of the wind and drinking sandy water.

No women drive cars in Saudi Arabia so my father has driven for seventeen hours straight, squinting at the road ahead watching for the lights of Tabuk.
Elizabeth Holmes

AN AMBULANCE POEM

I

I pull into the third farm
on Milo Road, the siren
at Slow Wall. Branches
graze the windshield.

The revolving light slaps red
on the corner of the outhouse
behind the pine barn
where Joe Turner's heart stopped.

Opening the car door,
I grab the transistor and flashlight.
Chained to the fence
a dog springs from the dark.

II

I find Turner in a cow's stall,
his head lies in milk.
Squatting beside him,

I pump his chest fifteen counts,
seal his lips for three,
pump fifteen
seal for three.

Still dilated, his eyes
suck down the loft beams
as his pulse goes slow
beneath sweating skin.
24

Sally Alatalo

7 INCIDENTS

1 I can't sleep.
   Men walk outside
tapping on doors

2 I walk around the room
   and look out the window.
   Somebody yawns.
   His mouth falls off.

3 Squirrels run on the roof.
   I cover my ears with hands
   but the squirrels
crawl underneath the door.
   One with no fur grins.

4 I wonder about the woman
   taking showers. I open the door.
   Fine red pins hit me.
   I breathe the pins.

5 Under the bed
   my dog sleeps.
   People won’t look at him.
   He has no eyes.

Sue Rubin

WIND

All night sand drizzles
from the sky. When I zip my coat
the road flows into a tunnel
of water foaming on the far shore,
the wind blowing against my thighs.

A rowboat moors at a dock
as my eyes follow a light on the water
leading to a house
across the lake. Sand fills
my lids and lashes.

Untied by the wind
the rowboat glides on the waves.
Nathan R. Sorenson

HITCH-HIKING TO SACRAMENTO

I

An old green Oldsmobile stops 100 yards up the road and backs to where I am standing. Opening the door I shake water from my boots. My pantlegs cling to crushed velvet upholstery. The driver shakes his pipe to the left. The farmers have been praying for rain for a long time, he says. On both sides of the road are cornfields, the stacks close together, shrugging their arms. Some say it's too late for rain he says, blowing a cloud of smoke at the windshield.

II

Somewhere miles away a mouse darts its head out of a crack in the checkered bed of a dammed up creek. Rain makes dirty puddles on the windshield. This is an answer to our prayers, he says not realizing I am asleep.

6 A girl plays a flute in the basement. I hear no music. Ears slide from the flute.

7 The man can't talk. I am blind to the feel of the squirrel to lungs filling with blood and music is no part of me.
Sally Alatalo

THE MEN

I.
They carry black robes
and tap my window.
When I look at the glass
I see only my reflection.
By morning
the cracked glass falls.

II.
Four in the morning
the next day, the men
knock. I open the door
and let them in.
They take off their hats
and sit on chairs
not noticing I'm sleeping.
The men begin painting my house.
They paint it black.

III.
Thirty years from now
the moon will roll
and shadow me knocking.

Paul Stewart Preston

SLEEPING ON A BEACH

The shore stretches before me
in the dark as stars
stare out of the lake.
Surrounded by reeds
I spread my sleeping bag in a circle
of sand. The grains absorb
every motion and form
to my legs, back and head.
The stars snap
into focus. When I close my eyes
I see them on the backs
of my lids.
When you asked me to help take down your suit cases, I threw them down the attic ladder, refusing to smile, refusing to answer your questions. You crawled after the suit cases, turning off the light as you left.

I followed you into the bedroom, listening to your chatter while you unpacked your drawers. I curled into the torn, brown chair like a cat, wanting to claw out your eyes.

Your suit case clicked, the kitchen door slammed and I sat, pulling out the stuffing in the chair, ignoring your empty drawers.
Dee counted the bills, snapping them down one at a time on the desktop. Then she crunched the money together and stuffed it back in the envelope, tucking the flap in. She pushed it into her pocket, picked up her saddle and walked out the door to her car.
"Ho, fella. Ho, now, yellow horse." She placed one hand on the front of the leg to hold it still and kept sponging. "Well, nothing's broke, Al," she said, standing up.

She dumped the water out and got a bottle of healing oil from the cabinet. Squatting by the horse, she cupped her hand against his fetlock and poured a little liniment into it. Her eyes watering, she massaged the leg. Alibi side-stepped.

"Stand easy. It'll feel better after awhile."

She put the bottle away. She took a bandage and sheet of cotton and began to wrap the leg. Ben came out, slamming the door. Dee fastened the wrap and stood up.

"I'm leaving," she said.

"Your pay's on the desk."

She reached to untie the horse.

"Leave it. I gotta clip him."

"You're still going to use him tomorrow?" she asked.

He dropped his cigarette on the cement and stepped on it. "I got to make a living, honey." He picked up the clippers.

Dee let go of the rope. She got her saddle and hunt cap from the tackroom. Looking in the cabinet, she found a pair of her spurs. She slung them around her wrist and went out into the aisle again. Ben was trimming Alibi's ears. The horse leaned against the wall to keep the weight off his leg.

Dee looked away and walked to the office, setting her saddle on a chair. She lifted the envelope from the desk. It was off-white and had a coffee stain on the back. Opening it, she pulled the money out. She glanced through the door to the aisle. Ben kneed Alibi in the belly, and the horse hopped over a step, his three sound legs shaking as he held the fourth off the ground.

Dawn Banghart

THE DREAM

In the dream she hears rats scratching the wall. Her eyes open, seeing darkness. "Rats," she whispers. "They're eating my brain." She rolls on her side, reaching for the Sominex, taking two, then replacing the jar. She swallows the pills without water and they stick in her throat. Sighing, she scratches her neck then, again sleeps. Skin turns into fur, sleek, black. Fingers grow long, nails untrimmed. Her throat squeaks and she walks on four legs inside paneling, between two ears.
Drinking whiskey and Sprite, the boss and I watch the guys sort through eight years of scrap leather heaped on the tackroom floor.

During lunch we play five card draw and smoke Viceroy longs. We tell the others to soap tack, sweep cobwebs and pick out the feet of all forty horses in the barn.

When he leaves for a sale, I pick the drawer-lock to the Jack Daniel's and poker deck, and ask everyone into the office.

Sitting through choretime, we smoke the boss's cigarettes and flick our ashes on the wood floor.

Her eyelids lifted. "He's hurting," she said, not moving.

Ben frowned. "You want your money, don't ya?"

She glanced down at the horse's leg and back up again. "He could have a bone crack," she said.

"He'll live." He stepped in close to Alibi and slammed the horse's flank with his fist. "Now get!"

Dee lowered her head, swallowing, and turned the horse away. Cantering on three legs, he bobbed toward the pole fence. Two strides before it, she dug her heels into his ribs. He stepped square on the injured leg and took off, barely clearing the jump.

They worked for more than an hour, until Ben said, "All right. Cool him out."

"I'm quitting after I put him up," she said. The muscles in her neck were taut.

He shrugged, turning toward the barn. "Fine with me."

Taking her feet from the stirrups, she dropped to the ground. She slipped her arm through the reins and ran up the stirrups. Lifting the flap, she loosened the girth a notch. Alibi was blowing hard, his wet sides heaving in and out. She drew the reins over this head and started walking him.

He held his head low, with his ears half-back. Dee laid a hand on his neck. "Soon as you're cool, we'll fix that leg up. Marya's got sense not to try you out if it's still bad." She scratched his jaw. He raised his head a little and pushed against her.

When his coat was nearly dry and the skin between his forelegs felt cool, Dee led the horse into the barn. She slid the bridle from his head, put his halter on and tied him in the aisle. Unbuckling the girth, she took off the tie-down and saddle. Filling a bucket with cold water, she began sponging the swollen fetlock. Alibi moved ahead a step.
The horse took a short extra stride and popped over the jump. His right hind leg cracked against the top of the fence. Landing, Dee sawed her hands back and forth until he trotted. His head jerked up when the hurt leg struck the ground.

"Bring him here," Ben told her.

She hauled him to a walk and stopped in front of Ben. He threw his cigarette on the dirt and stomped it out. "He's not looking. Hitting the bit?"

She nodded, turning sideways in the saddle to look at Alibi's right hind. The horse held the leg bent with only his toe touching the earth. The fetlock was slightly swollen.

"Lousy throwback yellow horses." Ben tightened the curb chain three lengths and knotted the tie-down. Grasping the reins just behind the bit, he yanked down. Alibi hopped back several steps, his head straining against the tie-down. Ben let go of the horse. He cleared his throat and spat. "Take him over again and do it like you know how."

Dee stared at him. "Aren't you going to check his leg?"

"Marya wants a good-trained horse. Get going, and keep hold of him."

Dee pressed her teeth together. Circling the horse, she jerked six inches of rein through her hands. Squeezing with her legs, she sent him for the brick wall.

Alibi jumped the fence clean, but stumbled on landing. Dee's mouth opened as his shoulder dropped like a wet hay bale. She pulled hard and closed her calves. He steadied.

She halted the horse by Ben. Gazing at him, she said, "He's had it for today."

He shook his head. "Take him over the poles and finish your course."

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**Lynne Clow**

**UNTITLED**

It's Monday. In thirty degree weather I forgot my shoes. The tar is hard and cold against my feet, the wind blows my hair into my mouth and face, erasing a hundred dark shadowed cabins.

In front of me is the light and to the left, the beach where the sand pulls at my feet.

Lights glide across the lake as I sit down against a white cross mounted to a raft, dragged weeks ago from the water and beached now on cinder blocks. Behind me there is only blackness above me a gathering of clouds.
POEM FOR PARADES

Vee Eff is a volunteer fireman who loves his job in the small town where he lives. With firemen all over Pennsylvania, he unfolds his card chair in front of the municipal building. During the day, he wanders inside to fondle the fire truck then imagines crushing it in one hand like a beer can. He returns outside to watch the street before him. There is nothing else except parades.

After Vee Eff folds his chair at night, he reads the parade list hanging in the silence by the town map. Parades farthest away are marked by blue checks.

On Saturdays with a few cases of beer and three buddies, Vee Eff drives the fire truck to a parade. He and his buddies grab ass all the way, retelling old jokes and laughing. His buddies like him. During a slow parade, they point out women with big tits, slapping the dashboard and laughing. Vee Eff marries the women, grinning.

"Cantered yet?" Ben asked from the gate. He shut it and walked to the center of the arena.

"No. We just got done trotting. He's blowing some."

"What do you expect? It's hot out, and he's not in shape." He took a cigarette from his shirt-pocket and lit it. "Canter!" he yelled.

Alibi started as if a pheasant had popped up beneath him. Dee pressed her left calf against his side. He broke into a long-striding trot.

"Set him down and do it right." He spat on the ground.

Her face pink, Dee slowed the horse and re-signalled him. Pitching a little, he picked up a canter. They circled the arena for five minutes in each direction before Ben said, "Let him walk." He went over to the pole jump and raised the bar a foot.

"Okay. Brick wall, poles, brush, then start with the brush and go the other way."

Chewing the inside of her cheek, Dee scanned the course. She took the reins up a few inches. Wet from the lather on Alibi's neck, they slid through her hands. She pulled her gloves from her pocket and put them on.

She circled the horse at a trot. Drooping her eyelids against the sun, she looked at the four-foot brick wall. She signalled Alibi for a canter and headed him toward the jump.

He crowhopped twice before rushing ahead. She tightened her fingers around the reins. The horse sped up as if he was galloping down a bank. "Too fast, Al," she whispered.

"You damn kidney bouncer!" Ben said. "Sit up and get him together."

Her arm muscles tensed. One fingernail broke through her glove. Alibi stretched his neck out and lifted his nose. Four inches of rein zipped through Dee's hands.
Jeannette Flick

ALIBI

Dee walked into the office and sat down across from Ben. "He's ready," she said, wiping a drop of sweat from her cheek. She lifted her hard hat off the shelf and brushed the dust away.

"In a minute." He was filling out Alibi's transfer papers. "Marya made a down payment on the old yellow devil. She's coming tomorrow to ride him. If he goes all right, he's sold."

She smiled. "That's great." She peered over at the papers. "Good breeding?"

He nodded. "The best. Double-bred Peter McCue." He glanced at her. "Why don't you go warm him up? I'll be right there."

"Okay." She put her hunt cap on and went out to the aisle. She untied the palomino and led him from the barn. Tightening the girth, she smacked him lightly on the neck. "Wake up, bud. We have work today."

Dee tugged her hat lower over her eyes, pulled the stirrups down and mounted. Alibi flipped his head, jogging before she hit the saddle. Laughing, she patted his shoulder. "You're feeling good today. Easy, now." She drew her hands back. He dropped to a walk, switching his tail. She brushed the flies from his neck and ears, and turned him into the outdoor arena.

She let the horse walk for ten minutes, then squeezed his sides with her calves. He jumped ahead into a rough trot. Dee straightened her back and shortened the reins a little. "Jesus," she said, grinning. "We'll have to tranquilize you for Marya."

After one circuit of the ring, Alibi settled into a smooth jog, his ears pointed backwards, listening to Dee whistle a radio song.

Finishing the tune, she began to post. He flicked his ears forward and stretched out. He twisted his neck to one side, grabbing the shank in his teeth. Dee reached up and slapped him across the top of the neck with her palm. "Quit, Al!" Squinting, she turned him in a tight circle until he slowed.

A parade ends. Vee Eff and his buddies find a bar to stay drunk. They joke around while he watches coal miners drink and stumble out the door. Vee Eff tries to remember being unhappy as a fireman.

They get home late and Vee Eff walks home through his dying town to find his unmade bed. There, he dreams of women and his buddies. He falls asleep unsure and wakes up at sunrise with a bad taste in his mouth.
Beth Wolfson

HARVEST

In a field, a frenchman considers sliding a scythe into his belly. He swallows a raw potato, insuring that the blade will be solidly planted. He wonders about the dust settled in his lungs, the red air in his veins.

Across the field, his wife sees him. She raises her head, "Çava?", bends to dig another potato. He nods to her, the feeling of red earth humming under his feet.
THREE VOYAGES

I On a train to Paris from Kiev
you are nervous. Worse: you have no knowledge of French.
No passport.

The fields blur by.
You think of slipping through the window, but
the field will roll up like a tongue to swallow you.

You press against the window, hoping to go unnoticed.

II The sea is new to you, the boat
tossing over water. You imagine
lying across stiff tassles of corn,
the wind stirring beneath.

On the deck, water spits at you
like an angry peasant. You could plant yourself
in the water if you dove from the edge,
but think of the blue breath of fish
and walk inside.

You rock yourself, curling
in the ship's cold air.

III Sixty years later, you fly
in an iron bird over Omaha. The midwest
is stable: from the air you see only a small breeze
combing the fields.
Jeannette Flick: A pyromaniac since the age of four months, Jeannette is learning to sublimate her fascination: "I love writing - the yellow pencil flaring like a flame between my fingers."

Nathan Sorenson: Securing his scarf around his neck, Nathan thinks about far-off planets.

Liz Holmes: Someone once said: "Liz, you sure know how to take care of things."

Susan Glasscock: Superstitions. Salt over the left shoulder. Susan has known many deportees; she knows the true meaning of getting away with murder.

Julia Silverman: Julia has been seen: 1) pounding her fist and scowling at bureaucracy; 2) shaking snow from her hair; 3) doing sly, after-hour things in the cafeteria; 4) giggling.

Jack Driscoll: Fantasizes that his beard is of snow. He shaves for the summer.

John Jackson: And John is always doing things like trying to improve upon Thurber.

Sally Alatalo: "My girl is gold in the sun and bold in the dazzling water/she drowses on the blonde sand and in the daisy fields my daughter/dreams." (Isabella Gardner - "At a Summer Hotel")

Dawn Banghart: Gets up early to maintain her reputation.

Lynette Clow: In a painting, there is a smiling woman sitting on a rock and looking at you evasively. She stands up and shakes out her hair. This could be Lynette.

Eric Schneider: The year is 2019. Aqualung snuggles his warm bottle after a long day in the park.

Beth Wolfson: "Alert...what do you think of my theory that a man remains a virgin until he has committed murder?" (John Hawkes)

Jeff Bartone: Jeff questions the popular belief that there is no art. He shakes his head, thinking about universal blindness.
Ruane Jeter: Ruane secretly houses a family of small bears in her stomach.

David Perk: "To think of ways of disorganizing can be a form of organization, you know." (Franz Kline)...David has long hair.

Paul Stewart Preston: Nestle's Quick, Blake's Newton, Positive thinking, pigs in a blanket, fig newtons, nuclear research.

Sue Rubin: Sue's friends say simply, "The Goat."
The Red Wheelbarrow