

note to self(ishness)

beware the clowns
hiding behind smeared laughter

beware the marketers
hiding behind bill-boards

beware the teachers
hiding behind test scores

beware the leaders
hiding behind the folly of the "others"

beware the press
hiding behind the truth

beware the bum
hiding behind a disability

beware the child
hiding behind nievity

but most of all
beware the poet
beware the poet that
hides behind the computer screen

beware the poet that
hides behind grandiose delusions of
metaphorical prophecy

beware the poet that
writes with a pen that has
never seen the inside of a humans skull
or walked for days without sleep or direction
or handed everything over for introspection

beware the poet that
feels ideas solve problems
& waits for the clowns to come home

beware the poet that
does not take heed the warnings
of the traveler or the teachings of the disabled clown

beware the poet who
in himself can not see you
& tell you to beware

beware the self & the ego
beware the words & the song
beware the lady & the muse
beware the laughter
beware the cause
beware

beware

then

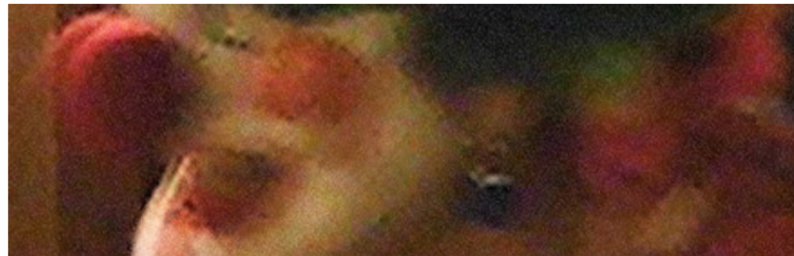
teach!

--Murphy Clamrod

noses to the grindstones

the poets are useless and worthless.
the poets sit around in cafes and can barely pay for a cup of coffee.
the poets think their words will start revolutions.
the poets write to sort out their "baggage" from childhood.
the poets work jobs they don't like and write when they get home from work
and on their days off.
the poets are worn down by life.
the poets are in despair.
the poets write words that will live on forever.

--Ross Vassilev



*The lunatic is on the grass.
Remembering games and daisy chains and laughs.
Got to keep the loonies on the path.*
--Pink Floyd (Brain Damage)

When Fusion is Mistaken

I have fallen just short
of being completely fucked.

You see, my body parts do not match up correctly
with his. We lie on our backs
with a blizzard of one million questions
of anatomy between us.

Where does the stomach go?
How should the leg bend?

There is a black jacket I will never fit into,
just as there is a height he will never reach.

We burrow into the bed like rodents.

You might ask why we remain together under
these trying circumstances. It is a simple matter
of common interests and smells and cells
that refuse to blend with fresh DNA.

His footsteps humble my own,
just as mine blister the backs of his knees.

Tonight he will part my thighs
with the shadow of a hand,
and I will not bleed.

--April Michelle Bratten

Oblation

I opened your butterflied
cloisonné urn and scooped
a teaspoon of your ashes
into my coffee cup

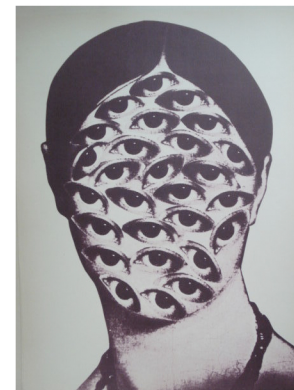
I stirred the teaspoon
of your carbon; said my
daily Chaplet to Saint
John of the Cross;
then sipped your remains.

There are cultures where
this will be regarded as
honoring you--and other's
will look at dragging you
through my digestive tract
as a grave insult.

You would've laughed
and asked: "Did you take
your Goddamn medication?"

I climbed a tree in the cemetery
by our house; tied the cup
upward in a cradle of
branches. I imagine it
will collect rain for the birds
or hold cardinal's eggs.

--Joseph Hargraves



THE SILENCE -for John Bennett-

The silence of the serial killer, the silence of the wrong God
summertime mist, the silence of the writer, the silence of c

The silence of age, the silence of water, the silence of twilight
ripped psyche, the silence of rare books and fine v

The silence of poetry, the silence of the dybbik, the silence
silence of old photographs, the silence of first lovers, the sil

The silence of empty bars, the silence of sneakers, the silence
the silence of winter, the silence of conversations with

--Bari Kennedy

Letter to the Editor, Bios and Other Junk

LITERARY PIMPS

Sex sells! Get your name in print by sprinkling your work
with four letter words. Remove all four letter words and
you have a wisp of smoke. It's too easy to succumb to the
lure of your name in print. It doesn't matter that you
prostitute your art producing a heap of dung. If you must
do dung, buy it in bags at the garden store and heap it on
your garden.

"Get real," you say; come out of your ivory tower. Tell it
like it is. Is that the goal of poetry to pick the scabs of
humanity? That idea is devoid of any remaining value.
Regardless of how you spin it, muck sucks.

Poetry isn't to titillate or fire wanton desires. What good
comes from vicarious sex; it's only a sorry substitute. Go
ahead, sell your vicarious sex. You should however realize
what they call someone who panders sex. They're called
pimps. Can your poetry plumb the depths of human
emotion without resorting to four letter word flimflam? A
good poet can.

--Mike Berger

Craig Scott is an unimaginative pseudonym.

Steven Purkey is
that Modus guy

Dick Long **Mike Berger** is a
doesn't really published poet and
need a bio, author

Ross Vassilev
was from
somewhere else
but now he lives in Ohio?!?

does he?

FN Wright, buddy.

April Michelle Bratten is a two L.

Joseph Hargraves
might be
catholic

Bill Gainer
wears a
cool hat

BL Kennedy is Bari
Murphy Clamrod has a weird name

Michele McDannold is just an editor
that plays at words now and then.