

Wards of the Wards

Make [sh]it and share it

Volume one, Issue four

April things, 2019



Untitled

JOSHUA SCOTT-FISHBURN

My young boy, grown up with stories
of heroes, reads for his own delight these days—
of children of gods overcoming universal odds
against them, divinity crackling with death,
wind and fire versus kids whose potential,
according to ~~the~~^{unobservant, stares} is nearly zero.

He sits half in, half out the garage mouth,
his child form ~~still~~^{of} (lean), all angles, long hair
tangled across his ~~dark~~^{work} face, bent and working,
clear~~ly~~ caressed by the evening spring light,
amateur smith ~~at~~^{working} Hephaestus' forge—
cuts flashing with snips after chalking lines,
patterning from intuition and memory a helmet
any Spartan warrior would wear.

Is it self-protection he is making—?
The tolls life levies can be so heavy—
~~or~~ Does making his helmet make in him
a kind of metal— as if building
some thing on the outside can become his face,
mask of divinity, hidden forever within the world?

Contributors

Joshua Scott-Fishburn
Ward 3, Gloucester, MA
Craig Plaisted
Ward 5, Gloucester, MA
James Cook
Ward 3, Gloucester, MA
Willa Brosnihan
Ward 3, Gloucester, MA
Adam Orcutt
Ward 1, Michigan City, IN
Greg Cook
Ward 5, Malden, MA
Stevens Brosnihan
Ward 3, Gloucester, MA
William Pelham Barr
Ward 2, Washington D.C.

Wards of the Wards

A monthly experiment
in writing, art, and ideas
about place.

Copyright 2019 by the
contributors

Inquiries

contact@stevens-brosnihan.com

Cormier & Benoit Collector's Item Stamp

for/after Rene Depestre
JAMES COOK

It's a flowering cactus report for a long suffering bastard and diplomat.

Maladaptive gelatinous sea creatures writhe in the shallow water in dream after dream. I think its historical revulsion given form.

Scaly misshapen paralichthys and anguilliform projections squirm and flicker as adventurers cross a swift brook in one scene and gasp and gurgle inside observation tanks in another scene—along divergent narrative arcs.

The first scene is about evolution in isolation and the second is about accidental man-made mutations.

My ancestors' modern phase emerges from the Tantramar Marshes on the Isthmus of Chignecto and the rocky coast along the southeast corner of le Golfe du Saint-Laurent.

The story flips along a land mass transom to become a doorway in the USAmerican northeast to what is behind the unfulfilled promise. (Gulf of St. Lawrence becomes Gulf of Maine. Dorchester, NB becomes Dorchester, MA.)

Gone to seed: roots in this world flowering in another dimension, grid translated x to y, y to x.

Toussaint, the Opening, walks through himself from Fort de Joux via Haut-Du-Cap up Blue Hills Avenue toward the Capitol (amidst the capital) of New Haiti.

“You have seen yourself that he sought to fool you, and you were in fact fooled by the admission to his presence of one of his satellites disguised as a doctor,” said the minister to the commandant. Louverture is healed, translated, and disseminated.

I am an emissary to the Opening from the Atlantic Provinces and speak three languages—Acadian French, Mi'kmaq, and

Scots Gaelic. I have come to listen but the Opening seeks my counsel about the Northern Question and I feel a coelacanth, newly adapted to the waters of my unconscious, swimming in the deeps and a lungfish, long acclimated to the shallows of my intestines, floating in anticipation...

“I presume that you have put away from him everything that could bear any relation to a uniform. Toussaint is his name; it's the only denomination that should be given him.”

Through the Opening I see the difficulties of getting from here to the Capitol of a new state and beyond that to an alliance between New Haiti and the Liberated Provinces, but persist.

We speak in prickly French. While we talk, “religious sentiments” attempt to “penetrate” him “for the expiation of the evil he has done.” [Sic!] I am, it would seem, an accidental conduit for his failed jailor.

He is indifferent to the quills but still has one foot in his grave though he is otherwise well doctored.

On Blue Hill Avenue the Opening disappears behind the bus's closed door and is gone, carrying with him my poison—would it were not so—beside a blessing and a song.

I muster *siknikt* as if an oath to remember the drainage place. We are coming and going. And this is the end of my ill-fated, but ever-hopeful report, sealed du Septidi 17, Germinal, Year 227.

Quotes are from the Minister of the Marine to the Commandant at Fort de Jour, 5 Brumaire, Year X (October 27, 1802), Schoelcher, Victor (1889). Vie de Toussaint Louverture. Paris: Paul Ollendorf Editeur. Translated by Mitch Abidor, marxists.org

Shadow days of Spring
shadow weeks of winter—
Burntout with a capital B,
the world continues grey, broke
where softening ground discloses
tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne,
entices twittering in the trees
and everydayblues deepen
into gutsharp melancholy:
sharp: children crying for some
special piece of love—
The starving time is here,
all stores et up, hygge washed out,
bodies roam the street
emptyeyed, violence at the surface
of what's inside: soon the new-
born lambs we'll slaughter,
eat the first fruits, feast
upon the world while it is young.

Joshuah Scott-Fishburn

Word's End

STEVENS BROSNIHAN

This station collapses
flurries of words
out of my grasp
gasping like a fish stranded on the mud
weather's changing wind
nips on Washington
on Pine, on Middle
down Rogers and blowing up Wells
the rest have walked out on me
up the hill past the ginkgo and the barberry
over the top, down Centennial Avenue
silenced on the heels of the woodpecker
the mourning doves and the murder

if I had any left to share,
the gulls would pick them out of the purple bags
leave some fragments on rooftops
and in shame I would climb the old wooden ladder
to pull this poem out of the gutters and off the ridge line
some lines would drop from thermal driven heights
into the maw of mackerel
half way to Thatcher's Isle
and on the rocky bottom
below the thermocline, I'll walk slowly, looking up
to capture the glinting, scaly remains
that drift down
through the green rays of sunshine

I'll scavenge the end
but leave some for the worms and lobsters

Untitled

AMANDA COOK

She spent months on the rocky shore looking for whales and
stealing rocks to line her garden.
She spent so many hours looking at the water she started to
look like a rock
and then she became a rock that looked like a woman looking
for whales.



Don't You Remember?

STEVENS BROSNIHAN

Lara remembered that I remembered
a moment that I don't remember
when Jane and I met in the
grocery store.
Jane, as she remembers me
remembering
had a million kids at home
it was like at least ten years
ago
"Jane had a hot second to buy
some shit"
how can you not remember

that?
it was a whole moment where
you confided in me
"here's Jane, a fricking battle
axe
she has like five minutes to
buy some shit
an she has no time for me in
the grocery store."
Jane doesn't remember either
but it was "like at least ten
years ago"
and now we all remember that
Lara remembered
that I remembered something
that Jane and I
don't remember.



April

CRAIG PLAISTED

While the magnolias spill their secrets
In soft white peels
And the peepers begin their choral announcements

You and I avoid each other
With nods and courtesy
Pretending there are no harder things
To talk about

As if spring isn't about to bust
Chaotic and wonderful

I ~~was~~ ^{gaze} at your remnants. ①
Where are you among them all?

②
Your desk littered with string bits,
odd-shaped ~~plastic~~ ^{acrylic} pieces,
pliers, partially-composed ~~sentences~~ ^{collage},
Scissors, Stencil, Joan Diaz's book,
a hole-punch, shrink-wrap,
cutting glue, seashells, poster tubes,
high-cotton content rag paper,
safety pins, razor blades,
spiral-bound notebook, pencils,
another hole-punch, a chip brush—

③ If I could make the same list
another way — a man who's come
to wander ~~at~~ ⁱⁿ a family torn asunder,
one barely eleven-year-old boy,
~~through hearts~~ unsure about identity,
a seven-year-old girl whose
hair is as messy as her eyes are
brown and big, a four-year-old
girl whose willingness to say, "I miss
Mama when I'm not with her, and
I miss Papa when I'm with Mama"
speaks to ~~her~~ ^{her} articulate intelligence
and the dilemma of some of
the things ^{to} left behind
as you departed
in haste.

④ It all looks as if you'll be right
back, or are even still working,
making ~~with~~ ^{with} response to what your
inner voice seeks, ~~the~~ ^{the} out
depicting our children as images of
"you, and sometimes each other's" soul.

to be and left such a ⑤
bundle of items to be sorted
through.

Untitled

STEVENS BROSNIHAN

a wormed apocryphal foment
in opposition to the farm's
compost

a dance of condensation of
and compensation for
our mess

I clip off my fingers with the
pruning shears
and bleed out on Beacon
Street

into the soil which receives me
benevolently

My wife wears her heels and
formal dress

silken cleavage and patent
leather flats

an homage to the pile

my ghosts walk with me
up to the source of the ava-
lanche

in the rare air atop the ridge
line

staring down over the water-
shed

my ghosts and I are solid and
crisp

our feet leave bloody foot-
prints

thunderous appalling sensa-
tions

a steady gasp of grey.

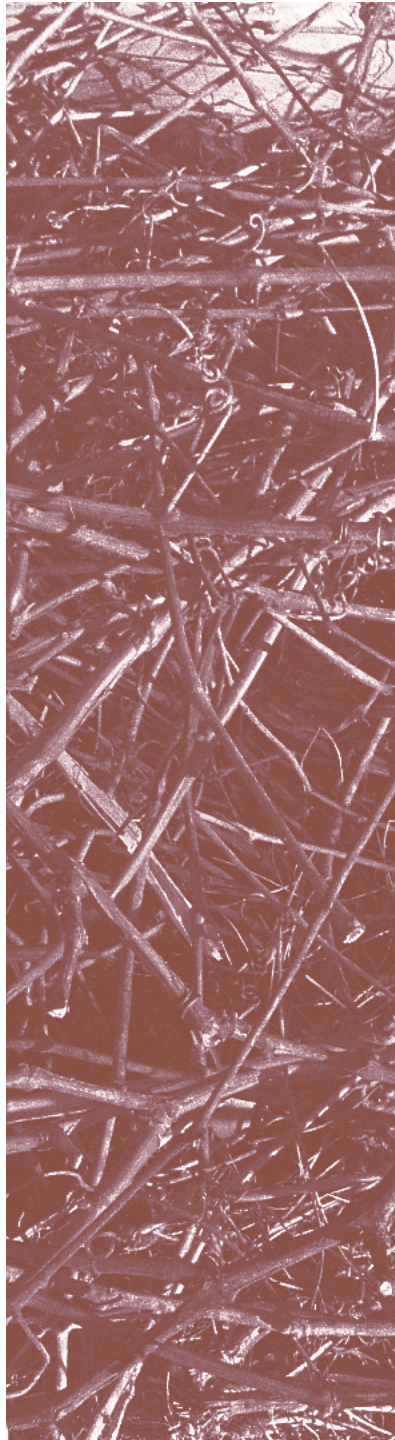
Of this planet, my tiny part
tries

but repeatedly fails

staring at the blank screens
shouting back at the shouts

tearing into my own flesh
with a raging wind of

inactivity



Lost Glove

GREG COOK

Looking for a winter glove
I lost somewhere today. At
the kid's school?



No.
At the YMCA?
No.



In the front
yard? No.



Does this mean
spring has arrived?



@4.27.2019. G. Cook

Today I see little reason to seek what is comfortable

CRAIG PLAISTED

Thank you droplets of water
Falling into little river
Shrouding wingaersheek in blue grey

Thank you cold
Thank you cinched somewhat waterproof hood

When we first moved into the house the rooms were empty
We played Instruments and drew pictures
We placed wildflowers in anything that would hold water

Thank you mud tracked in
Thank you open window

I'll be in the yellow of the forsythia bush
With the house finch
So red
And vocal



Craig Plaisted