

OCHO #20

Guest edited by Kemel Zaldivar

Cover Art by I.M. Bess

May 2008

MENENDEZ PUBLISHING
Bloomington, Illinois

For further information please stop by
www.mipoesias.com

The Story of Clyde

as told by Kemel Zaldivar

Poems By

Gabriel Gudding	8
J. Brian Long	18 & 45
Nick Piombino	23
Oliver de la Paz	29
J.P. Dancing Bear	32
Nicole Mauro	35 & 42
Angela Armitage.....	38
Gabriel Siegel.....	48

*We are only mouth. Who sings the distant heart
that dwells entire within all things?
Its great pulse lives in us
divided into lesser beats. And its great pain,
like its great joy, is too great for us.
So we always tear ourselves away again
and are only mouth.*

Rilke

1) It is revealed the name of God is Clyde.

UNCLEAR, UP-FOR-GRABS, POSSIBLY INCOMPREHENSIBLE what became of Clyde on 9 November 2008—seven minutes to midnight—when he stepped into the wide-open maw of the Mexican volcano Popocatepetl.

It is known he set out for the volcano from his Floridian home on the morning of 7 November 2008. The prior night he slept under water, in the Atlantic, full of vodka, with his wife.

This is ultimately about the poems appearing in this issue. The story of Clyde, of 9 November 2008, of the Great Transliteration—the story of Clyde must be told.

Two hours Jessica and Clyde rolled in the black water. There was wind and there was surf, riptide and shark fin. Too drunk to mind a thing but the feel of one another's bodies, Jessica and Clyde.

Lucidity came first to her. She broke from Clyde and said she could no longer see the coast. They had drifted too far. The moon was rising, yellow, and Jessica swam away from it, Clyde in her wake.

Two minutes and the hotel lights appeared. Jessica sped up. Clyde gasped, too tired to even spot the lights. His head went under water five seconds. When it resurfaced there was no Jessica.

Clyde did not struggle. He tilted his body perpendicular to the current, with only the slightest paddles to keep his feet pointed at the moon. Five minutes and the hotels grew. Rested, Clyde began his stroke. Already he could make out a figure gesturing along the beach. Suddenly came thunder and surf. A large wave slapped Clyde under the ocean. He surfaced, only to be slapped down again.

It was one of those Floridian storms that arrive without appointment. Clyde could scarcely breathe the rain was so thick. Soon he succumbed to the water. It was noisy underneath. One hears so many voices on the ocean floor.

He woke after sunup, remembering everything he'd heard the ocean say. He did not remember Jessica. He got up from the sand and boosted a swimmer's keys. The PANIC button found the car. Clyde drove north, then west, then south. He stole to feed his belly and the tank. Southwest of Mexico City he ran out of road, and hiked the rest of the way. The volcano was a mile above his head.

Out of every Mexican's earshot Clyde began to mutter the words he'd learned under water. It was fully night. The ground was black rock. The eagle-snake and the butterfly-wolf arose to eat Clyde, but became vapor when the words of the water hit them.

A brilliance lay beneath it all: the sun in its survey of China.

Gabriel Gudding

TO THE SUN AT ANCHOR

After Ossian

Professor you on your great expedition
girt in fruits of light, how many
planets that as cumbrous bulbs are cycling
about whose skins moving of meats are poured & rivers rent
looms of wind fit w/ licking, bodies globose &
thickened, a cream of stars nailed with bones and foam
entire hemispheres tricked in adumbrate spangles,
crammed of stains, fountained as birds of mineral,
missiles pulled up from the wind, the banks of water
bending and bolted to the dolphin

We are as butterflies blown back from funerals

Professor

What do you know
about a little girl
trans-historical dandelion

World woodchuck.

Woodchuck to the world.
bladder of halos. Bubble of heat.
Blubber of light. I arose

my mother arose my daughter arose, the
lily arose, the river arose, the
tulip arose, old ankles arose
Warren Williams arose & there
were theaters in the toys

because of you, you hang, an
indigenous dandelion of dust

Lucretius says
that you are the size
that you appear to be.

Which still begs the question --
of what size
you appear to be

Do I perceive you as big
because I was told
you were big? What
the hell

You fitted these bodies with
vents, you mantled us in
sphincters, swathed us in
blisters, pasted us to chancres,
you strung us with nerves what
the hell

You tear

and fold the gingham of fogs. You come
through the Canada of space. You signal
green from the crush of destruction. You blow
a tangle of crumpling shade from a
copse of oak. You anchor
such dejection to me
thank you

We witness your life in a stream of production. The insects throwing
fits in the lotions. The dense satellites clanging in the firmament. The
pitchforks disappearing. A quietness thick in the people. The night
closing candle by candle, the day sliding bulb to bulb into pitch, the
bells disused, the fizzling stars, the colored and chronometric planets,
these like beaten disks of dust. Lights fly in the muscles of coyotes,

that I am a fan of the powerful foam, that blocky storms twist up the
feathers of birds, praise for the dazzling of genitals, this tangling of
hammers

That those eating millet seed, Those
eating potato chip, Those
unscrewing hooves, Those
discussing a goose, Those who
know Jim Behrle, Those eating
the leg muscles of rabbits,
Those eating a firebug, Those in
the house of sorrow, Those in
the ringing valley, Those using
a haircomb, Those who hit their
dogs, Those farting in front of
children, Those eating kale,
Those smelling of lake water,
Those delighting in mildness,
Those delighting in goodness,
Those cutting the little
creatures, Those liking the
cheese, Those liking the corn,
Those liking the other yellow
foods, Those crushing a boy's
kite, Those who walk on the air,
Those who lost it, Those who
puked on a plaque, Those who
rode a host of creatures, Those
who sleep with women at night,
Those who lie with dwarves,
Those who lust for horses,
Those who collect excrement
and sell it, Those who collect
excrement, Those that are
busiest at dawn, Those beset by
pains, Those who camp with joy

cannot but be a companion of you
These oak trees cannot decline you

That you are here, above the mommy world, in
this parliament of Natashas, in this
clattering knees

That we are *in* this realm of bladders, with our dental problems,
under this stupid hair, our toes jammed in little turbans of fungus,
that we are here still, each day, in this parliament of Natashas, this
clattering of knees

I congratulate you
for the supporting of Clio

I congratulate Clio, sole d[a[we]][la]ughter of the sun you have done
so well in yr 10 yrs, sister, of Marina, for you, as well Marina, are
ch[isle]ld of letters, of ladders
child of answers, of elbows
child of apples, of bellows
child of rivers, of otters
child of sunspecks, of waters
child of tendons, of ankles
child of the allosaur:
child of the boulder:

I congratulate you Clio
and the arrangement of things
that made you. Child of that cloud and that cloud and that cloud.
Sister of that chicken and that chicken
Sister of a sister. Child of fat and wheat and fish. Child
of purple, child of cool canal.

Something is mothersome
about even the metals

I see you there, "the sun," bigger than the big head
of the moon. I see you bigger than the big
heads of ALL the big heads of the moons.
You are big

I climb your light. I like you I feel personal toward
you. I revere yr clambering bum. Yr vast

vanilla climbing, yr fat prickles falling yr
raining of crumbling yellows
yr immense lightball cuticle
beach of light, sea-ball, you!
buttocks of the air! you shag the
trees

An architrave of gladness

you untie the battle

blonde sun, pulsing rice grain, fulgent
rice boulder, basically spewing
bright wedding rice into the
boards of the world, thank you
for hinging the moments together

sun, thank you for coffee sun,
thank you for Vincent sun,
thank you for Clio

sun, thank you for television sun that
you made the curious mosquito—
that you made the really loud
siren—that you made all this an
Iliad—thank you

we did not watch a gopher
we did watch a gopher
we did not watch a gopher
we did watch a gopher

a gopher, what is it!

not something that really listens to music
not something that really wears clothes
not something who tends the grass altho
it appreciates the tending of grass
akin to a woodchuck, akin to a stoat
akin to a mink, akin to a squirrel

this is gopher!

sun thank you for gopher
thank you for visibility
with which I can see gopher
and remember daughter

When will you brother with me
in seeing the death of my parents. You sling the terrible
comet, you sift the quiet space junk

stars ride
in yr oven; the moon a cabbage head, will turn
to a scorched cob

there are exits
in the hallways of the west, but you move still
like an avenging baby, crawling you have
escaped and come in a baby's fury, you cannot
come down from there, you cannot but go
forward into the land of the offenders, you are
stuck in that ecliptic track much as a baby is
jammed behind a fence or a living room or those
small partitions grandparents use: You, the full
of the globe behind you; the flood in its
sheening, the coins of light flipping on the
shallows, the sand of the gray beach, the bowels
of the auroral bears, the distant telescopes
swinging toward all this clattering foam, these
lines of brown, this darkening interior in our
elbows: it is near you! All of this, each of us
things, a companion to the flow, the awks are
tremendous! You, the sun of the obstetrical
system. We thank you
even though compared to you
we are essentially retards.

Sun how did Justice
come to be allied
with anger, ill humor,

and quarreling?

For welcoming road and field of corn
 cobbled by wind and rain, thanks
For world with storm, for bowls of sherbet thanks
For Africa burst from a pea
For boys who drink Darjeeling
For the sea, that big Russian melodrama, that beaten vault
 of fishes that battered waterquilt of horse muscle
 thank you

That you electrify the doily of the genome
and filter life through the moms thanks

That you spangled the distant black with eyes
That you rode the dayhops, that you
 in the days of new boobies
looked at Jane's lips with me
 of long ago
 and saddened up the shining hair
 of little boys

Because I am a great bee and want to
escape. I see now windy pines. I
see now a complete bath. I keep
flying. I am a bee. I am among
your pigs. Now I pass a school,
its bell chiming, the children
issuing. Now there are gray
things. It is a field, it is autumn.
There is garbage. I am above a
spider. I am above a young girl
chalking on the sidewalk

Why did you, the clear jar of firejelly
lather the poles, carve the sparks
slather the backs of all these
oaks. And salve the black with a
batter of light

Is this the world where my body
lives? This Illinois?

That you made the honey in the vulva's
lips, that you crafted the piss of
fathers, that you do this constant
change: the gray days, the bright
one, the full river, a withered
shoulder

That you made all this groin leather,
apportioning it to chickens

to the stupid and clear, to the children
that all may rub and bang that all
may sorrow the more

What for, sun?
What for you do this?

I like your clouds. Thanks.

2) THE WORDS OF CLYDE TO THE VOLCANO were the words of the ocean—trapped underneath the ocean since the ocean swallowed the voice that spat the ocean out. We have tried to extrapolate the words of Clyde from the turgid cloud that now hangs over all the earth. There are too many words up there. The sky is a long yellow paragraph. We cannot find Clyde.

It is nevertheless known that he climbed the northeastern face of Popocatepetl on the evening of 9 November 2008, muttering the words he had learned from the water. The slumbering Aztec gods heard Clyde and immediately sought to eat him. The higher he climbed the louder he spoke, and his sentences became rods of fire. They pierced the frog-bear and the whale-moth. The elephant-squid-monkey became a massive haiku.

Clyde advanced to the lip of the crater and began screaming. He woke the mountain, and a column of lava rose to silence him. Clyde cocked his chin up and jumped forward, then pulled his knees over his head. With a snap his body plowed into the eruption, and as it tore him apart he continued to scream the words of the deep, the words that had begotten the mountain. A great rip was heard across the night sky—from Greenland to Patagonia, from Vancouver to Gibraltar. Clyde the body became a vapor. A yellow beam shot out to space from the mountain's bowel. Clyde the voice rode the tip of the beam. The earth receded, and the voice looked back at the sun.

The rest of this you already know. Just before midnight came the commotion, the sound of everybody and everything shouting and yelping and tweeting at once. It came from above as from below as from within. Those who covered their ears could not shut their mouths. Clyde and the fire of Clyde were inside them, inside us. We heard what the mountain heard, what the Aztec gods heard. We responded, and our bodies began to run away. Every appendage became a string of sentences. People were able to read themselves. They held out their hands. One finger would say, "Let fall the rubber

mallet." A forearm: "I was evil in the time of fish." Biceps and pectorals stood up and introduced themselves. "Leaving is an edible sport...The roof that ate my mother is a wooden bat." The fear of death by fire gave way to the euphonious despotism of nectarines. We had no idea what the fuck was happening. And it tickled.

Clyde was just the premise. The words the ocean had spoken through him were immediately overrun by confusion. I remember two or three vowels of Clyde's great poem, but then all becomes turbulent, disjunctive. I remember those are earls that were his eyes...a creaming comes across the rye...The purple ducks go crazy...

There was, of course, prayer. Some have theorized that our sudden undoing was wholly due to a compulsive and unanimous prayer. We all became ironists that day, for there was no God but Clyde, and no chance for even the briefest supplication to become anything but doorknobs and hummingbird beaks. Still, there was prayer.

J. Brian Long

1666

After P. Ackroyd

O God, save these, Your servants;
there are days I minister among them
that words shaken from their fevers seem
sistered to theme: Tuesday: "raw", "red",
"rip", and one tears at her eyes in a crowd
near Cheapside (and all the while strange fires
ghost the length of the starways, and the sun
bleeds mornings like a hollowing corse.)

Wednesday and: "bloom", "faith",
"bird" and What will be the end
of this? she rasps from the bedstraw,
and her hands are sooted doves
on string; she is drowning in a red-
soak foam, and I whisper in the lantern
of her rising to walk the lea, of casting
shadows across ironies of feverfew:
You will stir the songs of sparrows,
I breathe, and lie with her in the rush-
light, in the cool, white hand
of the moon. O God, save this,
Your servant (and my sleep is again
the fitful dreams of ravens where beneath
the reach of blackdeath talon stare many
faces upward from the stones; always,
I am borne into Your sky and ever
falling, falling, falling awake.)

Thursday and: "ghost" and "whirl"
and "ember"; in the time before
were seen demons dancing in the places
where vagrants light their fires; whom-
soever was touched in the spin
of the masque was befallen
with the pestilence and consumed;
is this the work of Your same hand
that leads us past the gates our prayers
have pearled? O God, save us, Your servants.
(and the deadcarts rattle and the deathrattle
carts our fallen to be sown in the marshes
beyond the walls; oh, what will come,
what will come at the reaping?)

Friday: "wing", "wander", "cry":
and Have you seen my Angel? she
asks, and her hands wring like bells,
Your words are his, but not your voice
and I feel her heat and the stink of her
breath and I bind her wrists to the bed
frame, You must be still; you will
unravel, but she sighs and spits
like flame: I am not your shade; I am
not yet your shadow, and I rise above
her, black, trembling, raven;
O God, save her, Your servant.

Saturday and: "far", "fall", "wind."
and the pavestones lay powdered with bone-
white lime, it skims the puddles and dulls
them to reflection; the poor who sleep
in doorways find themselves dusted pale
in the morning; O God, save these Your

servants. (and how soon, they sing, how soon we slip from dreams to darkness, how near our wake to Light!)

Sunday: "sear", "smoke", "char"
and Hell spits in fires past
the bridge; what is not flame is soon
made dreg and cinder; it moves this way
with the stealth of angels (and I
cannot untie them all; O God, save us,
save us: Your burning, Your servants.)

Monday: "sheep", "sky", "sleep"
and I am in the meadows with the flock,
behind me are white columns
of the city ascending; lambs part
like clouds before me, and there
are coins burned into my skin
(what toll, what toll must I pay
with these?) I will rest now in the sparrow-
song, I will fall on the blades
of the moorgrass, I will write
the lyrics of the plagues
with ink spattered from my throat;
(and I am cold, and I am burning, O, God.
Save me, Your sinter, Your self, Your servant.)

3) THE LAST TONGUE IS THE FIRST TONGUE is the only tongue. It includes, indeed invents all tongues. Right now we flow between two waters: the Latin above, the German below. Between them, we are a firmament.

We miss our bodies. They are always there for us. Most of us are not Jessica, but we can be Jessica by drinking her words. They are up there, as we can see. They are full of Vodka. When we drink her we are warmed.

Our prayers did not work as we intended. Before my knees even hit the floor they became “Lizards are the only edible form of spider” and “Make me a little rose inside the thalamus of a hornet.” We were sucked into the sky, simplified. We became a magnificent argument. It bites its tail, of course: and precisely at the spot we last saw Clyde.

We used to say, “My body” and “I have a body.” We meant, of course, “I am a body.” We are in love with this largest of ironies. Verily, we are in love with ourselves, and we miss our bodies.

Remember dreams? Dreaming? That was the best shit: the way we could be a series of concrescences, weirdly elegant, elegantly weird. The way we could be that, and that, and that, and hardly ever notice that we were none of that.

Waking always was bittersweet. You’d clutch the air that a second before was bags of money, or a loaded syringe, or the poem of the depths. No matter whom you shared a bed with, you always woke alone. Because before, you were never alone. You were always both yourself and the perceiver of yourself. And you were a third: the association.

One day (and this was no dream) you poured a mound of Ketamine on the back of Karina’s hand. You put your nose to it and it went the way we all went on 9 November. And by “it,” I mean not only the K, but also her hand. Her flagrant hand. Her ineluctable skin that

snaked your nose up her arm and neck, and onto her lips.

The last kiss is the first kiss is the only kiss. It includes, indeed invents all kisses.

The shadows of our words are like rabbits speeding along the surface of the earth. It is too early in this tale for wolves.

Nick Piombino

The Sky is a Painting in Black and Red (12 Dreams)

"I found the girl of my dreams and now all I do is sleep"

—David Abel

1. I'm at an event and it's over. I go to the front to get some flyers for upcoming programs. Jay [Sanders] is there and I take a couple. I see an announcement for an event after New Year's. (I've been dumping coffee beans into a coffee can in some part of the dream). Charles [Bernstein] shakes my hand and I say, "Are you going somewhere?" thinking we would be riding uptown together. Somebody laughs (sarcastically, I think) but Jay [Sanders] or Drew [Gardner] say to me, "I like the things you said." I am feeling embarrassed like I had said something too serious. The bag on the floor isn't mine. It's wrinkled and flat.

2. I'm shopping in a bookstore. The owner tells me that my collecting is "too indirect." I should "carve out a path." After a long wait I leave with the two catalogues. He runs after me and asks for his twenty dollars. I tell him—laughing—that if he had these every time I visit he could make \$20 a week. I'm walking down the street and I realize the two magazines are gone. A guy sitting there says he saw some guys in a car come along and take them.

3. I'm giving a reading using first lines of Ashbery. Somebody throws a U shaped pot at me. I'm looking to throw something back. I don't see anybody trying to help me.

4. I am at a dinner I haven't been invited to. I feel awkward and embarrassed. I walk through a long hall. There are many guests and I don't recognize anybody. I'm looking for the television room or somewhere to be alone. As I am trying to leave someone asks me what I am doing there. Then I leave with a group of surly looking people who don't look like they are having a good time. I go out and start wandering around.

5. I'm in a fancy place with lots of rooms. There is an event going on. A man asks me if I still have my badge (I am a detective). I tell him I've been in the bureaucracy so long I don't need a badge because I know who I am and there's an air of authority about me. I go into another room. Gary [Sullivan] is there. A lot of nice women's clothes. I'm thinking—where's Toni [Simon]—she should try on some of these clothes.

6. I'm giving a reading but all my papers are disorganized. I keep running around trying to find the poems I am going to read. I go up to the front but I can't do it. Someone turns the lights on and off.

7. All my stuff is on a blanket on the ground. Two people are standing nearby—a man and a woman. She laughs at me. I say, I hope you enjoy this because it's the only fun you're going to have today. She is speaking in French on the phone.

8. I'm elsewhere on the way to see Gary [Sullivan] and Nada [Gordon]. I am having trouble leaving. I am outside and the sky is a beautiful oil painting—I can't stop looking at it—in black and red shapes.

9. Toni [Simon] and I are at an event and James [Sherry] is saying that when Jackson [Mac Low] and Ann [Tardos] dance the reason that they shake their butts so much is that they have long legs. I disagree with this—and an argument ensues. At some point Toni tells me I should apologize. Somehow I'm at the door and I'm coming in again. I have a lot of stuff on the floor to put back in boxes. There's a music box and a couple of clocks. I'm on the floor looking at the number on the cover. I don't see a 13.

10. I'm supposed to be at work but I go to a special celebration for Charles [Bernstein] instead. There are people on the stairway lining up to go. They are holding wooden briefcases that have been given out. I go outside and see Charles who walks over to a stand to get me one. At first I don't like it because some of the wood pieces are sticking up. Then I look at it again and I see that the pieces are situated on the back part and look roughly like two arms of an armchair so I decide to take it. I go upstairs to have my lunch but when I leave I forget to bring my wooden briefcase. I run back upstairs but now the waitress is gone and the place is closed. It's too late to go back to work. It's 9:15 pm. Earlier I had seen a highly polished dark wooden briefcase at the stand. But that was not one celebrating Charles.

11. Toni and I are hanging out with an Indian man. They are flirting. He says to Toni—"You don't make me feel like I will be a great writer." Then I say to him, with a laugh: "She makes me know I will be a very great writer."

12. Toni and I are going to the university cafeteria. We have to walk through some buildings in the basement to get there. When we do get there you have to go through the kitchen, but the kitchen is covered with several inches of water. Obviously we can't walk through this. We ask them how to do it, but they are ignoring us. I say, "I am going to call the university president." They say: "So call him." We are walking away and go into another entrance. I see an artwork of zigzagging lights—a picture of two workers—blue and white lights. I tell Toni I am calling the manager.

4) WHEN CLYDE WAS A BABY he looked like a jackal. That's why his parents named him Clyde. His name was supposed to be Francis, but when they saw him they said, "He looks like a jackal; his name is Clyde."

He didn't speak until he was four. They had put him in pre-school, and all the kids were moving their mouths and making noises at each other. Clyde would cry because he didn't know what was happening. He saw the boys make noises at the girls and the girls at the boys, and he would cry. They would laugh and make noises at him, and he would not understand.

It was the fault of his mother and father, who were flawless. They would lie on the grasses. When the father would see a deer or a goat he wanted to eat, he'd look at the mother, and the mother would run it down and bite it until dead. Rarely they'd speak to one another. They'd never speak to Clyde. To Clyde they'd only give the tit or the fist.

The sun or moon would rise and Clyde would look at it. The boughs would blossom and wilt; the dragonflies would hover over the river. Clyde would watch. His mother and father would watch. An ermine would run across the meadow and they would chase, for hours if need be. They'd be outdoors for weeks. The grasses were so accommodating.

Clyde at four was enrolled in the Garden of Pedagogy. They gave him books, and the letters moved like deer or goats or ermines crossing a plane. Clyde would chase and eat the letters. He was gifted.

He would sit and look at his teachers and classmates. They were unfamiliar. The thing with the mouth noises would sometimes go on for hours. Clyde as he was wont to do would pounce on his teachers and classmates, and big women would collaborate to immobilize him, tie him to a stool and place him in the corner of a room, where people would try to say things to him for hours. He didn't mind being tied to a stool; but when people would talk to him and then grow silent, he would cry.

He knew what they wanted, for him to talk back at them. But he had nothing to say. Words were food. He was not a tree that made oranges for all to pick and eat. He was not a field that gave rabbits for all to chase and eat. He was the chaser, the picker, the eater.

One night Clyde had a dream he had not fallen asleep for. He was seated at his desk and the teacher was talking and the classmates were talking, and all of a sudden the room became so filled with words that things began to fall to the floor. There a hockey stick fell, and there an Argentine model. An exacerbation hit him on the head, and five thunders swam through him. The teacher looked at Clyde and a javelin flew out of her mouth, and landed beyond him and became a timepiece.

The words were making sense to Clyde because he could see the words; as with the dragonflies over the river, ermines through the meadows, the bough-bloom at dusk.

Clyde was hungry. He lunged and the redhead in pigtails in the first row. He bit her arm really hard and she let it go like a lizard tail. Clyde stood up with the wagging arm in his mouth, and the redhead ran circles around the classroom, singing. Clyde bit a chunk out of the limb, and the meat became turbulent in his mouth. He dropped the arm and tried to chew, but the flesh pried his jaw open and flew out of his mouth, not as meat but as speech.

And it is thus Clyde uttered his first words. Were you still using that? I thought you may have been done with it. My apologies, dear Megan. You taste better than sheep.

Self-Portrait in my Mother's Shoes

What did I know of the pumps, the flats,
the high rises of arches pressed against my heel ball?
First, the bric-a-brac of the closet was a visual ache. It struck me
like a metronome tick. I was completing some pattern.

Then the last, late music, whirly-gigs of notes
strobed from the fairgrounds. The Ferris Wheel,
was the tallest thing in the valley. It was late in the summer
and the fizz from the carnival soda made me sick.

Then the décor of the vanity, the tubes, the jumble
of crèmes and the ricochet of light off
their plastic labels. In the mirror, I was all fishbone.
Limbs akimbo with my sunken chest and my feet

precarious, the digits crammed into the narrow tips
of my mother's red stilettos—why the hell
did she own a pair of those? Over the airwaves
Don Henley's "Boys of Summer" made the world

so replete. So obvious. There was nothing to do
except disguise my life as the next. After the fairgrounds
closed for the evenings, I could hear the carnies
snarl into the darkness on their borrowed Harleys.

That night, I hardly existed at all. The town was alive
with gypsies, smelling of tree roots, grease, and beer.
I was penciled, wobbling like a fawn, ridiculously shod.
I must have looked over my shoulder a dozen times

for fear of my parent's arrival,
earlier than expected. I climbed, rung by rung,

the possibilities of what would happen, having committed
the worst of betrayals in my father's house.

So I eased out of those shoes, becoming *here again*.
How weightless I was, dizzy from sugar
and other people's lives blowing by. How oblivious,
makeshift, and blooming.

5) AT EIGHT HE SET THE EVERGLADES ON FIRE. It was April and the shrubs were drying from months of no rain. The water moccasins had fewer nooks to sulk in. The swamp was full of herons.

Clyde enjoyed watching things be destroyed. He stopped to piss and raccoons scampered out of the swordbushes; one saw Clyde, acted tall for twenty seconds and hurried on to a canal bank for the morning's first drink—then loitered there, slouching through small thoughts. Suddenly the surface gave to a tremendous black spear of reptile that snapped over the little furry thing, shaking it proudly and quitting underwater.

Clyde lit himself an unfiltered Camel and smoked it until the camel's feet were treading fire. He flicked the butt into a patch of brush, and the dry leaves became parselmouths. In under a minute, the whole patch of brush was lit. The moccasins had already fled to the swamp water.

Five minutes and a half-acre of swamp was burning. Clyde slowly backed away, looking at the fire as one would look at a stapler on a desk or a haystack on a pasture. He liked the way green and orange made grey, but more pertinently, he liked what the incinerating brush was saying.

It was an apostrophe to the sky. Give us rain, Fucker. You made us. Why do you not keep us? But wait: we shall see you shortly, and face to face we'll wrangle the moisture from your shelves. There will be thunder, old man. You will not forget us.

J.P. Dancing Bear

you katmandu in the bookcase

It's for all the sleepers with hard cover faces
who look bold fontly at you like a pedicab driver
running down to Durbar Square. Oh small worded
books hear nothing with their dog ears.
Do they believe the god of domed buildings has a wrath
yet played out on the physical world of bindings,
woven pock-marks and threadbare hair?
Others have faith this is the small Age of Audio,
downloaded out of the mouth
of the once great British stage actor.
Theirs is a bowing ceremony to the Mother of Yellowing
who shares her meals with silverfish
and sow bugs. I could quote something
from, say, chapter
seven of the third mask on
the fourth shelf, if only someone would smile
knowingly, even briefly, raise an eyebrow, show
a comma of interest in a word. O krump to a
metronome, you,
who thinks literature is a screenplay or a performance
of street soliloquies to beatbox breath.
You got all this kindling to dance around,
and the fire casts your shadow like art—God,
I remember being you, ashy and sure I was glorious.

6) AFTER SIX MONTHS OF SEDULOUS searching, the eleven-year-old Clyde finally found somebody willing to sell him a hand grenade.

The fire in the Everglades three years before had drawn a fleet of Federal helicopters Clyde watched from far away. If a little blaze could conjure these birds, what could actual explosions beget? He started with the small round smoke-bombs the ice cream vendor sold. He'd buy a bag of these, light them up and throw them into open windows. The houses would fill with screams. Ladies in undergarments would run out, bearing their young.

He'd break into police cars and procure shotguns, and load them with slugs he'd lifted from stores. At night he'd use these to shatter the high windows of unlit office buildings. Every window when it dies offers words. Clyde knew the glaziers had trapped pithy sentences in the glass, like the papers of Chinese cookies. So he shot that window, then that window, then that—so curious to discover what the glass concealed. Middle third floor and I was a terror since the public school era. Left fifth floor and Please hand me a bucket of asps. Right nineteenth floor and Rat terriers are coming for your future. And Larceny is the fifth virtue of copper. And How do I make this radio pregnant?

He'd always pick a sniper's nest dark enough to conceal himself from the battalion of cops that would respond, and he thought nothing of leaving the weapon behind so his flight would not be cumbered. But at eleven, while exploring empty houses, he found an actual Mac-10 in a dresser drawer, along with about 300 .45 caliber rounds. That was loot indeed. He took the piece and its owner's truck to the edge of the Everglades, parked by a lake, cocked the heavy bolt back and emptied the clip into the water. The things the water said to him! He gave it another thirty-round spurt, and another. Soon he knew the story of those woods, even the tales of cats with tusks.

There was again the possibility of helicopters. Clyde broke from his lakeside reverie and jogged away from the truck. Visions of Miccosukee men diving into water after gators still filled his mind. He cocked the Mac-10 one last time, and aimed for the gas tank. The truck offered eight huge fireballs to the fleeing Clyde. Twenty minutes and he was in deep woods, well out of earshot of the blasts, occluded from the probing helicopters. He sat underneath an oak, and slept.

Shots from the east awakened him. He ran toward the reports, and came upon a clearing in which two kids with shotguns were drinking Mad Cobra and looking to the sky. A flock of seagulls (the birds, not the band) passed nearby. The kids pointed their barrels up and dropped six birds, then took swigs of the Cobra and looked to the sky.

Clyde was tempted to kill his first people. He cocked the bolt of the Mac halfway, but released it before it snagged the bullet. This was for the good birds. Those that feast on souls would need to wait.

The gulls came. The barrels rose. A grenade struck a tree fifty feet away. Everything survived.

Nicole Mauro

XI. Swedish Pangram

Again, I said when. At what time will we elude
blue sky, and how do we while
under its wide
yonder
of eyes? You put me to bed, mentioned
I asked so oft
snipes, overhead,
had grown
tired of flying
and would soon need to lie down on soft grass tufts
to rest. I smelt air-
sickness, the acrid
white of
pulverized meds. In obdurate interims
of quiet
'torrential light ballistics.' One snipe, before dying,
craps on our
heads. I note its extinguishing
span, ask 'why-it'
in-death
pushes out that last
labor, how it knows wrath-
violet,
'enough,' and on what vector
to taper.

7) Jessica came for Clyde at sixteen. He had gotten a flyer tacked on his windshield that read, COME HERE GOD'S WORD. It had an address and a date.

That Sunday morning, Clyde drove to Overtown. He went into the trailer of a man named Felix, paid a hundred dollars and got a handful of powder-filled capsules. There was a ritual involving a belt, a spoon, cotton and a little water.

Ready for anything and God, Clyde proceeded ten blocks north, to the Omni hotel. For his health, he tucked a .38 under his belt. One must always bring such implements to church. He proceeded to the principal ballroom. Inside were gathered several thousand, clapping and singing a song in some language other than English or Spanish. It was not Creole or Portuguese. It was maybe Ostrogoth, or Labyrinth, or Manganese. They were all singing, the words a torsion of syllables without a single pause.

A man with no eyelids ushered Clyde to the only empty chair, though he was not to sit because all were standing in song. To his surprise, Clyde found that he too was cuddling the syllables together and breathing them out, though he knew nothing of the theme. He felt a warm suction deep in his gut. The words were puffing out of him like steam. The man with no eyelids somehow winked.

She was in the seat next to him, standing. He recognized her face, but did not know where he'd seen it. Her hair was red, her eyes green. "Jesus Christ you're fucking gorgeous," he told her, half because she was, but half because those syllables were part of the hymn.

Without breaking tune she said, "Please get me out of here."

"Are you telling me that, or is it part of the song?" he asked, harmonizing with the congregation. It occurred to Clyde that neither of them was speaking English.

"It's all the song," Jessica told him. "Break me out." They were both singing it. The thousands in the ballroom were singing it. The pulpit and stage were empty. The usher without eyelids tapped Clyde on the shoulder.

"May I have a capsule, sir? I haven't slept."

"I want a capsule too," said Jessica, said the congregation.

"I only have eight left."

"Break me out!" Jessica reached in his pocket and pulled out what must have been 90 powder-filled capsules. "You've got more in there don't fuck with me." Jessica pressed her body frontally onto his and reached in both his pockets, then tossed bundles of capsules into the air. They mushroomed out and fell into the congregants' raised hands. Jessica kept reaching and tossing, reaching, tossing, bouncing up and down on Clyde.

At some point, the gun in his pants went off.

Starburst

Her sneakers unlaced at the pulpit
where she stood, waiting for some
holy inspiration: chariots or eagles.

The pews stared hard
for something more satisfying
than the *Hi* that bounced off each wall,

around SHALOM and GRACE,
leaving a wake of flapping pages
through the weekly bulletin.

The mic squeaked. Her tennies
overlapped. She began to worry.
All of us have retreated.

It was the woods she meant,
or the beach, or some mean desert
with locusts and ruined voices.

It was John the Baptist, King David
and Jesus himself whose songs like clapping
made hundreds come home

with dirty sleeping bags, holier
than parents or pastors or cod.
Everyone prayed but none denied

that soon each devotion would slow,

victuals would shrink to grub, basketball
would take precedence over penitence.

Kids wondered why it had to fade.
There, now, is a truth: they had
come down from the mountain. But now

they were down. *How can we retain
what recedes?* They know. They've been
to camp. They've memorized First

Corinthians 13. They know the shortest
verse in the bible. Their NIV's
have highlights and bookmarks. They've

felt those fades. Some leaned forward,
half-expecting an answer,
but her tennies came unlaced, and there

were no chariots, nor eagles. Only a swallow.
It's like, she stated, it's all,

8) Instead of chocolates, JESSICA GOT A SLEDGEHAMMER for Valentine's. She and Clyde had purchased the apartment next to their studio. It was Jessica's idea. Let's tear down the dividing wall and replace it with two-way glass, so people on the other side can watch us live. We'll charge membership, and never have to work again.

The theater opened the first day of spring. The media was there, and the couple soon made every front page. People would pay \$30 a month and sometimes wait in line for days just to have an hour in front of the glass. Jessica and Clyde would keep their clothes on some of the time, but when they wanted to shower or sex, they'd try to ignore they were being watched by 200 people at a time.

Loving well took practice. At first, their copulations were cinematic, positions chosen for aesthetic and not kinesthetic reasons. Gradually, though, the mirror that lined their studio became to them little more than architecture, and they were able to truly perform.

In time it became obscene to exit the studio. Fans would swarm, wanting to touch what they could usually only see. The couple arranged it so they'd never have to leave their apartment. Staff was hired to bring food, movies, heroin. In the absence of an external world, the couple turned their focus to one another. Some weeks the TV would stay off. Some days the couple would refrain from speaking, and communicate only with looks, gestures and grasps.

Sex and heroin were just aspects of the show, but as Jessica and Clyde began to memorize each other, the highs they got from syringes were puny in comparison to what they felt when they joined skin. Soon the staff ceased to get requests for dope. Jessica came off of it with pills, but Clyde wanted to feel the smart of it. In his agony, he became perpetually horny. Watching Clyde detox was watching Jessica get pumped full of cum ten times a day. The lines became longer.

As they got clean, Clyde proposed they abandon clothing altogether. Jessica would be more intelligible that way. "I've mapped you out completely," he told her, "but sometimes your nipples or ass will be trying to tell me something, and I won't hear them because you've got all this thread on you."

He pulled off the little shirt she had on, and slid her panties to the rug. "See, you're beginning to have ideas down here." He palmed the slight curvature of her belly.

Rebecca was born the following summer. Clyde delivered her himself. As he wiped her clean of afterbirth and prepared to cut her from Jessica, a crowbar ripped their front door off its lock. Men with helmets, goggles and MP5's filled the studio. Before he was subdued, Clyde stabbed a cop in the neck with the shears. The dying man emptied the clip of his MP5, shattering the dividing glass.

Nicole Mauro

XII. Greek Pangram

On the outside, I gave
up, too
difficult to acclimatize
within. No more shall I see acacias or myrtles
in the golden
clearing. Never will the green
winds,
never will a single frond of Eucalyptii
disinfecting the main
boulevards
raise a hair on my
skin. At home, purring
blades turn by way of
volt—a fan
pointed in. You would point this out—this tension,
it's funicular. There are smithereens of
us here, a
dust that seems hung
from something
particular. You who are slovenly, who abhor
my wipe and my
cleanliness. As long as there are errant
trajectories
of light
through a curtain, 'Clear love,'
I will
squeegee the windows until glistening
and certain.

9) Prisoners in solitary confinement are keenly attuned to the weather. In mid October 2008, a storm struck South Florida. Clyde was being held on the ninth story of the Dade County Jail, in a paper suit, in a glass cell. Hurricane Kappa began to whip its foremost feeder bands into Miami at dusk. At nine, the power went, and came back with a voltage spike at ten. The locks of the jail, electronic, unanimously clapped open. Then the lights receded again. Then ruckus.

A little past midnight the riot boiled to the top of the jail. A ponderous metal object shattered Clyde's cell. He ran to a corner of the ninth floor, tore out of his paper suit and by lightning flash espied a wounded guard crouching behind a column. "Where's the roof?" he asked with a shaft of glass to the throat. The guard struggled up and walked Clyde through a series of gates and corridors, until they came to a metallic stair and a hatch that swung open and shut above their heads.

The smarter hurricanes multiply their velocities by producing momentary tornadoes. As soon as Clyde popped his head out the hatch, one of Kappa's pincers plucked him up from the jail and spun him out to the ocean. His landing was not soft, but Clyde was able to remain conscious. He let the waves have fun with his body, and spilled onto the shore at four in the morning. Kappa was beginning to go silent. The stores by the beach had lost their shutters, and in the darkness the naked Clyde procured a wardrobe.

Jessica heard news of the jail blowup on her battery-powered radio. She proceeded at sunup to the spot she knew Clyde would be at. Kappa had shaved only a few boards off the pier. He was seated on the far end with his back to the horizon. She ran and dove into him. Enthusiasms were exchanged.

"You're dressed like a fucking macaw!" she told him.

"We should get Rebecca." The baby was being held by a family in Opalocka. In Jessica's car the couple navigated the aftermath of Kappa. All around them, looters tore

shutters off store windows; teenagers ran the streets, setting cars on fire. A fleet of green helicopters hurried downtown. "My Mac-10, did you bring my Mac-10?"

"Under your seat, next to the grenades." They pulled up to the little yellow house the baby was being held at. Three other foster kids came out to meet them. The radio gave news of Clyde's escape. "Is she in there?" Jessica asked the oldest boy. He gestured his younger brother toward the house. A minute later the baby was brought out. Enthusiasms were exchanged.

"Take us downtown," the older boy said. "We wanna blow shit up."

"The military's there. You'll get cut to pieces."

"Take us to Aventura then. We wanna loot and blow shit up and shit." The two boys and the four-year-old girl got into the back seat. The car headed for Aventura mall. Around the car, groups of people carried pieces of the city northward like ants bearing bits of picnic trash.

"Loop and blue shut up," the little girl said. "Loop and blue shut up!" Jessica gave Rebecca a monologue in a silly voice. The baby opened her mouth to a tiny o. Jessica lightly bit Rebecca's cheek and the baby cackled. A crowd of teens flipped a police car onto its roof. Jessica lifted Rebecca over her head and nibbled her belly. Clyde gave the children a lesson on grenades.

J. Brian Long

Epicedium for Peace

And so rises this, our time of the high dividing
wall, our long dread while of the cinder-
block and razorwire castes: so tide the sermons
of the rabble: so the red-rattle deaths pull
crumpled, peel rotting, from the jags

of the rubble: so fall the siren-sung, war-
blown martyrs, come the heat, come the rumble,
of the bread market blast: come night, come fire,
come the wailing of the veils, come black tithes
of ash cooling white on the pulpit of the sills:

come Sabbath, come mourning, come the call
for an eye for an eye, for a rip-trail tearing
in the fabric of the mosque: come the pounding
of the temples, come the engines of rhetoric
screaming blood before the afterburn, in

the arc-white flash of lightning jets: yes, come
these, come all, and each: a message: and each:
a word, and a symbol: O, save this, save this:
what purpose, what purpose does the dead child
serve? What serves the purpose of the dead child?

10) WHEN I SUCCUMBED TO THE WATER I forgot I had no air. I forgot I was alive. The thing the Hebrews call the peace that passeth understanding.

The night water rarefied and became clear. I stood at a precipice. Beneath me lay a huge valley whose surface was a mirror. I could not tell if it reflected the sky or what. There was a presence in the valley, and above me I heard a voice say just one glance into the dragon's eyes will vaporize you, and you will be better as vapor.

The details of the valley's surface compressed to a tiny black dot at center. From either side of my vantage point, two enormous choruses marched toward each other. The one to my left was full of sopranos, the one to my right of basses. They marched slowly, and the closer they got to the tiny black dot, the more hostile their chanting became.

I looked more closely at the sopranos. They were all the same woman and I somehow knew she was my daughter. The basses too were all the same man, whom I knew as well. Before I drowned I made Jessica pregnant. I wanted to run down and embrace the singers but I couldn't find my legs, nor the precipice I stood upon. There was no world but the choruses and the dot.

The singers got closer, their songs angrier. I noticed that neither side by itself made actual words. It was only at the valley's center, where the songs collided, that lyrics formed. I couldn't understand their language. At first each word was slurred and diffuse. As the choruses approached one another the frequency of words increased. Timbres sharpened. Consonants became prickly.

Without warning the choruses broke into arias. When these collided, the black dot became a line, the line a plane, the plane a solid. It folded in on itself in all directions. The mass shifted as the voices grappled with different combinations of pitch. It developed colors. It divided into two masses, then four, eight, etc. They puffed out before me and filled in the details of my body.

I noticed my arms were moving frenetically. The choruses responded to the motion of my arms. I thought of trees, the choruses sang and the valley was filled with foliage.

I remembered Jessica, the vodka, the swim. I remembered we had stashed our baby daughter in Pompano and needed to pick her up in the morning. I remembered the figure moving across the beach, and the thunder and series of waves that had pushed me underwater. The sky darkened and the air went thick. I was drowning again.

I made an attempt to swim to the surface, but each time I flapped my arms the song intensified and I was on the precipice again. After several attempts I weakened. The darkness of the water dulled.

My arms slowed. The choruses began to intermingle. Their song softened to a lullaby. There was no Jessica on the sand, no Rebecca stashed in Pompano. There was no ocean. There was no death. There was no Clyde.

Gabriel Siegel

After Prayer

go to sleep. go to sleep. dream
of cattail meadows; of looking glasses
that reveal the possibility of you
as amaranth; as voyage; as belief.

go to sleep. sleep and dream away
death and jolly; the back-brain spine.
the mid-brain hole. close heaven's eyes.
sway where buttercups softly salve.

sleep now. sleep before tomorrow.
run toward that sinless place of water
reclaimed; of river gold meaningless;
of softest forgotten; of still caress.

sleep, and dream the sleep of dream.
go low into garden ground. seek
the fresh bones of wondrous beasts
cleansed by cold and ageless worm.

go to sleep. go to sleep. dream
of this persistent place, and form
a better thing. with that map, return.
wake wild, love, with wonder. Aware.

Contributors

Angela Armitage has spent most of her life in school or at work.

J. P. Dancing Bear is the author of **Conflicted Light** (SalmonPoetry, 2008), **Gacela of Narcissus City** (Main Street Rag, 2006), **Billy Last Crow** (Turning Point, 2004) and **What Language** (Slipstream, 2002). His poems have been published in *Shenandoah*, *Poetry International*, *New Orleans Review*, *National Poetry Review*, *Marlboro Review*, *Mississippi Review*, *Verse Daily* and many others. He is the editor of the *American Poetry Journal* and the host of "Out of Our Minds" a weekly poetry program on public radio station KKUP.

Gabriel Gudding serves on the Board of Directors for the bilingual literary journal, *Mandorla: Nueva Escritura de Las Américas*. The author of two books of poetry, **A Defense of Poetry** (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002) and the long poem **Rhode Island Notebook** (Dalkey Archive Press, Nov 2007), his work has appeared in literary journals such as *The Nation*, *New American Writing*, *American Poetry Review*, *Jacket*, *LIT*, *Mandorla*, etc., and in such anthologies as **Great American Prose Poems: From Poe to the Present** (Scribner, 2003), and as translator in **Poems for the Millennium** vol. 3 (U Cal Press), **The Whole Island: Six Decades of Poetry from Cuba** (U Cal Press), and **The Oxford Anthology of Latin American Poetry** (Oxford UP, 2008). He is an Associate Professor of English at Illinois State University.

Columnist and frequent free-lance contributor to the Knoxville News-Sentinel, **J Brian Long** is author of a collection of poems, **The Singing of the Wheels: Poems from Somewhere Not Far** (Wind Publications, 2004) which was nominated for the Kentucky Literary Award. His play, "Two", was recently produced in Toronto. He has also served on the board of directors for the Knoxville Writer's Guild, and has been a reader for the Peter Taylor Prize for the Novel. In addition, he also edits the poetry section of a regional print magazine. His work has appeared in various literary magazines and journals.

Nicole Mauro has published in/on *How2*, *Jacket*, *eratio*, *Dusie*, *Shampoo*, and other places; has a few chapbooks out via *Dusie* and *Sardines Press*; and just co-edited an urban studies book about sidewalks, out from *ChainLinks* (formerly the journal *Chain*) as part of its *ChainLinks* book series.

Oliver de la Paz teaches creative writing at Western Washington University. His work has appeared in journals such as *Tin House*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *RHINO*, *North American Review*, and elsewhere. He has received many grants and awards, including a New York Foundation for the Arts fellowship. He is also a co-founder of *Kundiman*, a not-for profit organization dedicated to the discovery and cultivation of Asian American poetry. Oliver's book of prose and verse, **Names Above Houses**, was a winner of the 2000 Crab Orchard Award Series and was published by Southern Illinois University Press in 2001. His second book, **Furious Lullaby**, was also published

by SIU Press as an Editor's Choice Selection in 2007.

Nick Piombino guest edited *OCHO #14*. He opened his ongoing weblog *fait accompli* in February 2003. His latest books are **fait accompli** (Factory School) and **Free Fall** (Otoliths), a collage novel containing over 150 full color images.

Gabriel Siegel: n/a

Kemel Zaldivar guest edited *OCHO #20* and wrote *The Story of Clyde* as poems were selected for publication. He is taking over as Print Editor for *MiPOesias Magazine* in the fall of 2008.