

BOOG CITY

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FROM A GROUP OF ARTISTS AND WRITERS BASED IN AND AROUND NEW YORK CITY'S EAST VILLAGE

ISSUE 74 FREE

FEATURING POEMS FROM CALIFORNIANS MICAH BALLARD, AMY BERKOWITZ, DAVID BUUCK, IVY JOHNSON, JILL STENDEL, AND SUNNYLYN THIBODEAUX

A Few Words With Oakland Musician Greg Ashley

INTERVIEW BY
IVY JOHNSON

The *Boog City Goes West* event coming up shortly in San Francisco, will feature a host of regional poets. The musical act? Oakland's own Greg Ashley, who took the time to answer a few of our questions in anticipation of the show.

I'm really intrigued by the song "East Texas Plain," a new unreleased song. It starts with you singing,

I moved west from the east Texas Plain
Chased girls from the far Eastern World
And the highway was a dancer on her back
that spread her legs just to guide me
down the track

The character painted in this picture is somewhat of a stoic cowboy, but this identity seems kind of ironic, because of the singing voice, which I found reminiscent of The Magnetic Fields song "Papa Was a Rodeo." He "conceals himself a little" so there is this stoicism but also a vulnerability and a weariness that layers the song, coming through in the image of the highway as this eroticized and exoticized ideal that guides the character but is totally separate from him. Obviously, Texas isn't for him, but the dream doesn't quite work out either.

Can you speak more about what you might be saying about the different Americas described in the song, what you might be saying about trying to find a different America?

Well, it's not so complicated. I moved here from Houston in 2002 to chase a girl. And in the years since have made that drive a number of times. It's kind of just my little story of ending up in California and getting a little older.

Looking back, how do you feel about making the move out here? The song communicates a sense of loss. Is this just a part of getting a little older, the "end of the world" as you say in the song?

Feel great about moving out here, best thing I ever did. Success has just been somewhat illusive. But that's ok. Life goes on. That's why I write songs, my own self-therapy.

I'd like to talk about another new song, "Medication #7," the lyrics of which actually remind me a lot of Jenny Holzer, this American conceptual artist who makes art that looks like billboard advertisements and uses LED signs to stream phrases that sound like they could be moral advice, or an advertisement.

Can you talk about your process of writing the song? The reason I ask that is because the lyrics have a way of ringing as almost appropriated language, but



Yea-Ming Chen photo

obviously are not. From what places/people do you imagine yourself stealing this language/these sentiments?

This one's just my cynical, possibly unfortunate view of society. Greed and indifference are rewarded and good acts are ignored for the most part. Or maybe I was just having a bad month. I wanted it to be kind of a satire. This is a list of the terrible things you can do or believe in to make it in the world. And I think to some extent it's true.

Do you have a new album in the works?

All the six songs I sent you are new and unreleased. All stuff for my new record, which hopefully will come out next year.

Boog City Goes West

**Wed. Oct. 3, 7:15 p.m., sharp free
Books and Bookshelves 99 Sanchez St., San Francisco**

For info 212-842-BOOG (2664), 415-621-3761, editor@boogcity.com

1.5 blocks from Church St. and Market St. Muni.

Venue is bet. 14th St and Duboce Ave.

Featuring readings from
Micah Ballard, Amy Berkowitz,
David Buuck, Ivy Johnson,
David Kirschenbaum,
Jill Stengel, and
Sunnylyn Thibodeaux,
with music from Greg Ashley



David Buuck Oakland *Crystal Nexus*

for CA Conrad, after his "Crystal Nexus" (soma)tic exercise: www.somaticpoetryexercises.blogspot.com/2011/02/54-crystal-nexus_14.html

dopey stones / bladder ripe
conditional pillow wedge
happy to've been there
talking to a camera
facial, frontal, Venn-tronic
sure I'm game for pleasure
on my own that is / timing
is every thing remembered
just as it wasn't, in order
or disordered to specs
cuz I need to forget things
the way they actually warp
like what new colors
for the bedroom walls
I seem content
to not remember
my dreams each morning
a struggle to get out
of bed or doors or mind
get these things out
of my ears / pining
for company, with borders
return the distance you've kept
but only on my terms
it's sad to admit it
even if my shrink only ever
prods lightly & keeps her own
that's OK / you're CA
Craig Allen, I believe
in you if not in me
or this, or yesterday.
I'm aching in here, in this
house, this bed, this body
here come the commas
I always forget to breathe
even in sex / open
the doors and let's
air this shit out / will I
>>>

be able to find the gem
stone in my shit / it's
in me now & I keep for-
getting that now I need
to make a new friend
honestly Conrad I'm not
sure I know how to
do that unless they do it
first / seconds to go
til Cassie's now here
to listen to me talk
about how I didn't really
dream but woke with
a start / 'dig the caesars'
seize her? seizures?
I guess I'll go looking
for haircuts and friendship
it's a chance operative
in a field of blank slates
I would just rather not
talk to anyone today
other than my dogs
who are my lovers
where have I gone
so that none of us be-
lieve in anything other
than the space between
me and them's a cliché
to hang my heart on
I'm squeezing my jaws
tight on teeth in the li-
brary where I go to hide
from the internet
which is where I go
to hide from myself
so tired of the bromides
if that's the word for it
all I do is explain
to my shrink how I am
nothing but a cliché
redundant twice-over
the world doesn't need one
of me, so I'll be a conduit
for dirt and stones to pass
through and into
my blood and out
my face leaking sap
so tired / my friends
>>>

are all women ex-
cept elsewhere and
later I am off to hand
a check over to my ex's
husband who cut the hole
in my bedroom wall
which now opens out
onto the back soon
I'll look out for
something to shake
other than a tree or hand
images are empty
small satisfaction in this
trusting the stone to say
whatever I'm not
a poet except to others
but others are all
I've got / to unclench
my jaws I need to tell
myself to do so / long
for now, I forgot
to say what I wanted
to say to Michelle Tea
or really anyone last
night at the queer reading
series of awesome hair-
cuts on the lesbians
and footwear for kicking
some ass / isolate
the glutes when you push
the bar even higher
for the fuck muscles
need to be stretched
if I'm going to keep going
without falling over
after having forgotten
once again to breathe
she thought I was
having a panic attack
hard in the bedroom
open the goddamn windows
open the door / let's
get some fucking
air in here / I'll be
fine, just gimme
a moment or forever



Amy Berkowitz

San Francisco

From Listen to Her Heart

His heart was like a trip to Office Depot
A never-ending trip to Office Depot
She went there once and then she couldn't leave
She knows the features of each fax machine

His heart was like a giant dog named Devo

Her heart is like a complicated drink
A drink that makes bartenders roll their eyes
Her heart requires crushed ice and muddled mint

Her heart was in the market for a cape
But couldn't pick one out without a friend
She tried on capes but they all felt like costumes
She didn't want to look like a vampire
She just felt she deserved a touch of drama

His heart was an electric soap dispenser
With a sensor that was bad at sensing hands

Her heart is like a haircut from a friend

His heart was dirty dishes in the sink
And not a single dish belonged to him

Her heart was like a girl with bright-red lipstick
Running for the bus and missing it

Her heart was like the movie Young Adult
Her heart concealed a dog in a small bag

Her heart was living in a little shed
And getting good at stick and poke tattoos

Alone, her heart sang quietly to itself
When someone walked into the room, it stopped
Ask her heart to name the song - it can't
Something something I remember you

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reading/workshop/music series

Tues. Oct. 30, 6:30 p.m.
\$5 suggested

Amy King
Sara Jane Stoner
Joseph Keckler

Our new BoogWork series features
poets King and Stoner reading,
Keckler playing, and then King
leading a poetry workshop.

Sidewalk Cafe
94 Avenue A (@ E. 6th St.)
East Village

For information call 212-842-BOOG (2664)
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Sunnylyn Thibodeaux
San Francisco

The Papers Didn't Indicate

There is an allegiance in mistaking
grudges for pride and vice versa

How neighbors toe the line
A diameter of 41 miles wreaked havoc
just down the highway. There are musics
to contend with. There are gators, lost
glistening red blinks, finding shelter

What is reconstructed takes miles
and years, of heart
Laying down language
for a straight look in the eye

Who is too old to fight?
No one from my attic of Christmas décor
No one from this little farm

All alarms sounded, like clockwork
Sun criss-crossing its path in debris

I've waited a decade for this hello
the edges already showing signs
and the expanse of silence
the distance of wind almost



Ivy Johnson
Oakland

It is Said

"I hear all and see nothing".
"My voice cracking a brittle earth".
"The rocks cry out for it is known".
"My children are trapped in a well".
"The earth quake, devastating".
"The body opens like the stone rolling from the tomb".
"A sea of bodies seep from the cracks".
"Flesh like blubber against a crestfallen sky".
"The sky transfigured in the ocean".
"A jagged star cutting like a glass mirror".
"A poor reflection in a mirror".
"A violent wind blowing fills the entire structure".
"Eyes like glass beads".
"Heat waving objects".
"Tongues spreading out like fire".
"Each one speaking their own language".
"As if a sparrow between them, singing".
"The virgins prophesied"
"I can feel everything"
"As if buried in the earth"

BOOG CITY

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About the Poets

Micah Ballard was born in Baton Rouge, La. His most recent book is *Waifs and Strays* (City Lights Books). He co-edits Auguste Press and Lew Gallery Editions and works for the M.F.A. in writing program at University of San Francisco. **Amy Berkowitz** is the author of *Listen to Her Heart*, forthcoming from Spooky Girlfriend, and *Lonely Toast* (What To Us Press). She is a founding member of the Washtenaw County Women's Poetry Collective & Casserole Society and the editor of Mondo Bummer Books. **David Buuck** is the founder of BARGE (the Bay Area Research Group in Enviro-aesthetics), and co-founder of *Tripwire*, a poetics journal. **Ivy Johnson's** first chapbook, *Walt Disney's Light Show Extravaganza*, was published by Boog City. Her chapbook *As They Fall* is forthcoming from Timeless, Infinite Light. Formerly of San Francisco and Los Angeles, poet **Jill Stengel** writes, parents, and publishes her a+bend press. Her work is online and in print, and five of her chapbooks are at www.dusie.org. Her full-length *Dear Jack* is imminent from Black Radish Books. **Sunnylyn Thibodeaux** was born in River Ridge, La. Bootstrap Productions published her *Palm to Pine* in 2011. She co-edits Auguste Press and Lew Gallery Editions.



Jill Stengel

Davis

From Dear Jack

Dear Jack—

Cornish game hens with little socks.
West or White Castle burgers.
Blowfish.
Frog.
Emu.

Some things I never ate with you.
Likely never will.

Jill

- - - - -

Dear Jack

I want

I try

I cannot

- - - - -

Dear Jack—

The conversation
never ends—

Jill

- - - - -

Dear Jack—

your hands.

where

where are your hands.

Jillian

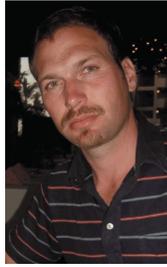
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Dear Jack—

What

is a happy ending

J



Micah Ballard

San Francisco

From The Livid Country

I am glossing
the passage where Charon
quits poling his ferry for an island of beggars
I used to be one of them
until Erebus arrived. Now I alternate
between a lashing cypress and magic iris
might as well stick with it
the way to the precinct isn't that far
the method is seduction
mercurial hijinks with my dwarf attendant
in memory of him
I crown a miniature Hercules
let me introduce you
but don't be cruel
my voice frightens me too

Boog City editor David Kirschenbaum will also be reading.
To see some of his recent writings, visit *The August Project 2012*
(www.theaugustproject2012.blogspot.com), epistles written to and from Daniel Nester.

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