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Speed Bumps
Alexandra Johnson

Shattered from her Zenith
Venus woke up one morning
entangled in a hissing radiator
The reverberating pipes
told her it was time to go.

A stale insignia
had her brain
in a vice
Yet—not a drop
of Dopamine
to be seen--
Only reflected
in flaring irises

Looming—
on the threshold
of a new epoch
within her baritone
voiced dreams

Riding on a mechanical horse
with its guts exposed
One rubber pair of
three hundred and sixty degrees
of cloven hooves

Eggplant purple, or Aubergine?
Modernly poetic or Irregular prose?
It depends on the tone of your love

Evaporating snow born water
stained the gleaming surfaces
and the blood undulations
of Mars were hidden once again

The time was so long
and the Impulse was so weak
not a Newton was ever registered
A static Momentum
to keep her going

She had really expected better,
however, what can speed bumps do,
except remind us to slow down?

Little Bob
Ning Su

The Peaceful Walks
Nonthawan Pisessith

Conformity
Angelina Faulkner

We sit in silence
As they ramrod propaganda down our throats
Wrapped in words of patriotism and duty
Smothered in the flag
Soaked in oil
And lit aflame
Do not question
Do not cry out
Salute the flag and click your heels

Between Sips of Coffee
Nick Zapetis

Staring deeply into infinity
Trying desperately to pull out its color
Another swig of hot coffee
Eyes gaze across a closed album
Pictures within are lifeless, still
Memorials to days when the sky was bright

Days, perhaps when I was bright
With a chase and a net I could capture infinity
With a kiss I could hold the world still
And an artist could choose the color
That would look best inside his album
To be perused between sips of coffee

There is warmth in my coffee
Still, while the sky is no longer bright
But gray-scale, like a photo in an album
Pale horizon stretching to infinity
But along the edges, there is still color
Or am I in a dream still?

NO! My creaking eyes stay open still
Nailed in place by lukewarm coffee
Unable to see the vibrant color
Of the lamp's light, too bright
Perhaps to gaze at infinity
But perfect for skimming an album

And where else but in that album
Could her smiling face be held still
Locked till clock chimes infinity
When we break for scones and coffee
And she laughs, her face bright
Cheerful, and full of its color?

There is no more color
The artist left it out of the album
Thinking his idea was bright
And yet I gaze over it still
Perhaps a mug of coffee
Will not help you find infinity

It's the color that stops me from staying still
Not the dusty album or the ice cold coffee
But memories of bright days when hands held infinity

Bojna
Whitney Tressel

Infinite Beginnings
Whitney Gratton

It lies there
In the exhibit, behind glass:
A human brain.
So much smaller that its idea.
Like a hard fruit not yet ripe,
Or the inside of a nut:
Skull shell cracked open,
Wrinkled meat laid bare.

Inside, unseen, the corpus callosum
Curves like a wide question mark:
Fibrous firewire between two
Hard drives, hemispheres joined.
Under our folded grey sky, steady rain patters
Across dark synapses, sparkling
Along network wires, connecting
Reason, whimsy, logic, magic: idea to idea.

What does it sound like, an idea
Being born? Does it start waiting
In the dark, incubating, inaudible?
Is it footsteps approaching, wandering
Along brick, or the shimmering geese
Flying like fingers flashing, pointing forward?
And is it—listen!—the pluck of a banjo
Tuning, getting ready to begin.

Known
Whitney Domigan

he asked me
if I would consider playing hard
to get, tying
my tongue up
in the words coming from his
mouth—wide open and tugging.
he asked me if I could forget
the color of green, if he could see
how the beach leaves me
encased in fire, equally silent,
radiant and slow—he asked me if when
my skin peels back, my insides
show. I told him my fingers are
all that keep me
untangled, that when he smoothes
the back of his neck with the palm
of his hand, I can
hardly breathe, that when I
cup my ears in my hands,
he is the sound of buzzing air.

Our voices echo through dialtones
screaming through megaphones
(you'll never know how much I mean it)
Whispers in the world's most distant ears futile
Planes crash in unison
at opposite ends
Chasing cars down city blocks
and signing our names in colored chalk
on sidewalks
proud and free

Plantains
Michelle Christiance

Undone
Sean McManus

Tired eyes float suspended
The spirit drifts through the refuse
out of which a flower grows
Trash/treasure
Pain/pleasure
No use crying over spilt blood
The psychic drone of machines
Barcodes stamped on retinas
Ballpoint pens etch the names of the dead
onto Post-it notes
Didn't you get the memo?
It's a fine line between safe and sorry
The hunt is over and I've come back
empty-handed
again
Shame in regret
Flame and forget
Char the memories black
and let the smoke fill the lungs
of generation next
Generation hexed
I've kept your letters
and I've been meaning to write
but lies to a liar are met with the same
Shoulder the blame
Bright-eyed child
I could crush you with a glance
You know not the terror
of being
but it's all in the pupils, pupil
the hole
the void
the pools of black ink obscuring
the words
that could save us all from ourselves

Driving Shy
Amy Damico

I flip the station to pop rap
before I get to the drive-thru.
This is how you say "Hey" in cityspeak
which doesn't talk at all.

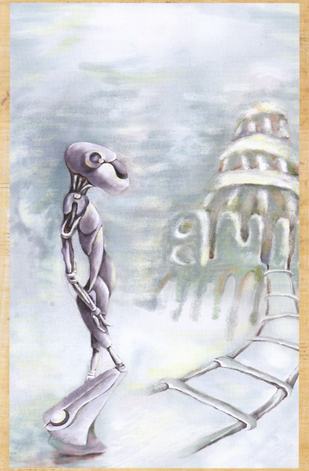
When I get to Blossom at Winton to get the groceries
I make a noise in my throat and my stomach decides and I just can't.
I circle around to the next street, around and back again.
The station plays the end of a song.

This next song might be better so I loop
back thru again. See, I can't get the car to roll into the driveway
of the ugly grocery store. TOPS never mops.
And the nice upright alternative
on East Ave is too demanding.
All that stock. Also the people walking in it

took their time getting dressed that day and every day
by the look of their feet,
nesting, collected and controlled, in patterned trouser socks.
I can't take that either.
When I get to my errand's door I police my mouth and expression.
Where do I really want to go?

To the roof of one of these buildings. Someone meets me;
hands me a scarf and we walk together, and take in the view.
And after a while, he asks me to explain something perfectly,
it doesn't matter what it is. Say it beautifully.
And what I say changes him. With such a destination
the time in the car is a prelude.

It doesn't matter that I'm driving shy,
that I can't even talk kindly
to the girl at the drive-thru window.
All the knowledge synthesized in me
has a purpose, and an audience. After all, my quiet
is a form of denial: there is a city, if only I can find it.



Face to Tomorrow
Xiaoqiu Shan

In Front of Us
Seth Lang