



*Always an Engaging and Eclectic
Presentation of Words and Art*

Contributors & Contents



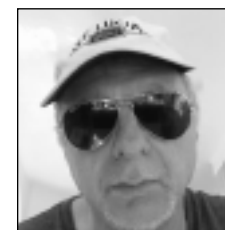
Gloria Vanderbilt is the author of four memoirs, three novels and a book of poetry. She contributes to numerous publications, including the *New York Times*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Elle*, and has received two honorary degrees of fine arts. She lives in New York City.

THREE STORIES ~ 9

Nina Bunjevac of Yugoslavia began as a painter and a sculptor, but found her calling in sequential arts, where pen and ink became the medium of choice. Her work has appeared in *Mineshaft* magazine (USA), *Carte Blanche* (Canada), *Asiatroma (Le Dernier Cri*, France), *Giuda* and *InguineMah* (Italy), *Komikaze* (Croatia), and *Balkan Women in Comics* (Croatia). Her work deals with themes of the immigrant experience, loneliness and nationalism. She lives and works in Toronto.



AUGUST, 1976 ~ 18



Norman Snider of Toronto is a screenwriter, journalist, professor, and fiction writer. He wrote the screenplay for the film *Casino Jack*, starring Kevin Spacey; the film premiered at the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival, and is available in full as the first book of the new *Exile Silver Screen Series*.

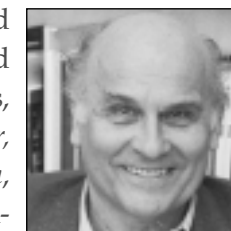
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Leon Rooke of Toronto is the author of, among others, *Oh!*, *Who Goes There*, *Fat Woman*, *Shakespeare's Dog*, *The Face of Gravity*, *A Good Baby*, *The Magician of Love*, *The Beautiful Wife*, *The Last Shot*, and, with Exile Editions in 2010, the novella, *Pope and Her Lady*. He is also a painter, and will have an exhibition in September at Toronto's Fran Hill Gallery.

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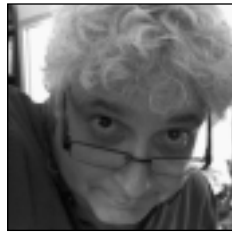
Ryszard Kapuściński is Poland's most celebrated journalist and author. His first book, *Busz po polsku (The Bush, Polish-Style)*, appeared in 1962 and was an immediate bestseller. Many of his later works, which included *The Emperor*, *The Shah of Shahs*, *The Soccer War*, *Imperium*, *Travels with Herodotus*, *Shadow of the Sun*, and *Lapidarium*, have been translated into many languages and earned him international acclaim, prizes, and honours. He died in Warsaw in 2007.



*THREE JOURNAL ENTRIES /
THE KIDNAPPING OF ELIZABETH ~ 52*

Ken Sherman of Toronto recently published *Black River* (poetry) and *What the Furies Bring* (essays). His work has recently appeared in *AGNI*, *BRICK*, *Dark Horse*, and *Stand*.

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Stuart Ross of Cobourg, Ontario, is the author of the novel *Snowball, Dragonfly, Jew*, and *Buying Cigarettes for the Dog*, which won the 2010 ReLit Prize for Short Fiction. Other books include the poetry collections *Dead Cars in Managua*, *I Cut My Finger*, and *Hey, Crumbling Balcony! Poems New & Selected*. Stuart is the fiction and poetry editor for *This Magazine* and has his own imprint through Mansfield Press.

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Shira Richter of Israel (from an American family who immigrated when she was a child) uses cinema, photography and texts to express her “translation of the world.” Becoming a mother of twins was the impetus to create the photography project “The Mother Daughter, and Holy Spirit” – a visual monument to the huge transformation a women undergoes when becoming a mother. The project has been exhibited in major art galleries in Israel (Artist Residence Gallery, Um-el Phoneme Art Gallery, Kalisher Art gallery), and is taught as a “perspective” in Tel Aviv University, College of Management, Beit Berel Institute, Midrasha, and more. Recently she presented the project at two international conferences on the subject of mothering: Mamsie (Mapping Maternal Subjectivities, Identities and Ethics) at Birkbeck University, London, and Representing Motherhood in the Arts, Media, Literature and Popular Culture, at the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (MIRCI) in Toronto.



THE MOTHER, DAUGHTER, AND HOLY SPIRIT ~ 80



Frank Westcott lives in a small hamlet north of Toronto. He is a poet, lyricist, musician, and writer of fiction and non-fiction, both short and long in a variety of genres, for both children and adults. This story was a winner of the “emerging writer” category in Exile’s inaugural Short Fiction Competition.

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George Elliott Clarke of Nova Scotia lives in Toronto, and teaches at the eponymous university. His newest book is *Red*. He has won numerous awards, including the 2001 Governor General’s Award for Poetry.

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Christopher Adamson of Toronto has previously appeared in *Exile: The Literary Quarterly*. He has also published two stories in *Ontario Review*: “Living in the Present” was listed as a Recommended Story in the 2006 O. Henry Prize Stories; “A Hot Day in Paris” received the 2006 Carter V. Cooper Memorial Prize for Short Fiction. Exile Editions published his novella, *The Road to Jewel Beach*, in 2004.



MY FRIEND GEORGE ~ 107



Jason Heroux of Kingston, Ontario, is the author of *Emergency Hallelujah* and the novella *Good Evening, Central Laundromat*. His poems have recently been published in *Prism International*, *Grain* magazine, and the *Malahat Review*.

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Adriano Spatola of Italy came on the scene at age 23 with the publication of his first book, *L’ebreo negro* (1964), and he remained, until his death in 1988, at the forefront of neo-avant-garde and experimental writing worldwide. Spatola made his distinct contribution not only as a poet and fiction writer, but also as an editor and critic.



THE PORTHOLE ~ 158

TRANSLATION



Diana Kuprel of Toronto founded and edited *idea&s: the arts & science review*, and was the editor of *Books in Canada*. Her translations – at various stages – of Kapuściński have appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Alphabet City: Social Insecurity*, *Exile* and *Books in Canada*. Her literary essays have been published in scholarly journals in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Mexico, and Poland.

Beppe Cavatorta is an assistant professor in Italian at the University of Arizona. He recently published his translations of several American poets into



Italian in the anthologies *Nuova poesia Americana: San Francisco* and in *Nuova poesia Americana: New York*.



Polly Geller of Italy lives in Los Angeles, where she works as a Spanish and poetry teacher at a charter school.

WORD AND ART

Michael Callaghan on the transformation of *Exile* as a literary journal.

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Gary Michael Dault with a visual perspective. **DRAWING IS WHAT WE DO ~ 154**

By MICHAEL CALLAGHAN

In 1989, when I graduated from my studies of Fine Arts and Philosophy at York University, I had not imagined that I would soon after find myself entering the world of publishing. Then again, 17 years earlier, my father – at that time a professor with the same institution – didn't expect that he would become a publisher, either. In 1972 he had been approached by the then-Dean of Atkinson College to start up a literary journal, which would become *Exile: A Literary Quarterly* – in looking back, he chuckles at how he had no idea what he was getting into, but was just following a life-rule of his (and one I have adopted) that “you have to be willing to be lucky.” And we've both been very lucky to get into Canadian publishing, and to be involved in *Exile*... so many wonderful people from across Canada and around the world have entered our lives, so many cultural opportunities have opened their doors to us and to others through *Exile*, and we – as goes for all the editors who have worked with us through the decades – have relished our role as a supporter, and proponent, of an expressive, expansive Canadian culture. In fact, all who participate in *Exile* – from authors to editors to translators, to designers and artists, to videographers and webmasters, and those staff and volunteers who make our publishing possible – are a dedicated brotherhood in pursuit of creating and developing a “new mainstream” as it redefines itself across the country.

Since 1972, each issue of *Exile Quarterly* has been a dynamic showcase of fiction, poetry, drama, experimental work, translations into English, and a wide variety of artistic disciplines from Canada, and from around the world (over 1,000 contributions have appeared). In those years, *Exile* has evolved, establishing itself as a publication not afraid to go against the grain, to push boundaries, publishing emerging and/or unknown writers and artists alongside the established. In doing so, the pages of *Exile* have become a home for those writers, an island (*X-isle*) of comfort and welcome and refuge on the literary landscape, one that embraces authenticity of voice in a time when truth to tone, temperament



and intent are of crucial concern to both writers and readers. To publish as *Exile* does is, without doubt, to work contrary to the conventional, and this is what has crafted our singular reputation – this is what makes us who and what we are; this approach defined in the epigraph that appears at the start of an issue: “Together we will undertake the extravagance of living under a sharpened conscience, in open honesty, and we will see what happens. The worst can only be catastrophe, which is better by far than a false success.” So, with Volume 35, we see this anniversary season as a time to cast the dice, with a fresh perspective on the future, with a willingness to once again be lucky.

In these special issues – *ELQ* Volume 35 No's 1 to 4 – you will find us being playful, with a new print format and design, the introduction of new logos and branding, additions to (and some farewells from) our editorial board, and innovative print/online options like QR codes and/or complementary videos to take the reader beyond the printed page. With an eye on our future, we're looking at how we can continue to improve on our journal, both in print and online (as *ELQ* goes digital with Volume 35) while maintaining our highest standards of quality... and perhaps how to stay around for another 35 volumes. Who knows, my young children may one day be willing to consider running a Canadian literary house an opportunity of good fortune, an opportunity to make great friends, and an opportunity to engage in such unique cultural experiences as those to be found on this amazing ride we call *Exile*.

I hope you enjoy our new presentation, and I look forward to your comments – email me directly at: the.exile.writers@gmail.com.



Michael Callaghan has been the Publisher of *Exile Quarterly* since 1998. He is also the Publisher of Exile Editions. Both literary houses are family-run operations.



Scan this QR with your Smartphone for a short perspective on *Exile/ELQ* (2:50)

EXILE

The Literary Quarterly

Volume 35 ~ Special Issue ~ No. 1 of 4

*Together we will undertake the extravagance of living
under a sharpened conscience, in open honesty,
and we will see what happens.*

*The worst can only be catastrophe, which is better by far
than a false success.*

Paul-Émile Borduas

*The only true exile
is the writer who lives in his own country.*

Julio Cortázar



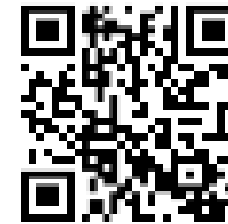
EXCELSIOR PUBLISHING INC
Holstein, Sans Souci, Toronto ~ Ontario
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Three Stories

from *The Things We Fear Most*

a collection of 17 short stories

Gloria Vanderbilt



Scan this QR with your
Smartphone for Gloria
Vanderbilt speaking
about fiction writing.
(4:20)

THE HOUR BETWEEN

I was gathering tulips in the garden, finding happiness in beauty as my love lay in the grass beside me. Muffled at first, then unmistakably intruding into our lazy conversation – sounds of bees – no, something else. A voice that sounded like mine, but it was his, far and away, coming from a face distorted as by a mirror in a fun house. But it is not him, it's mine too, struggling to prevent a quarrel that fast accelerates into a roller coaster speeding over the top, on down, crashing, unable to stop.

It took four men to place it in the bay window of our dining room – an aviary. We marveled at the delicacy of line conceived by a master builder, a castle of lacy wire arabesques painted white for lovebirds to inhabit. But touching, there was chill, a bitter taste of steel. Later my love found paroquets from Uruguay, yellow as butter

and black of eye. Close, close, home he brought the pair, yellow, so black of eye, he set them free to inhabit the aviary, standing, his arm around me, kissing me as the paroquets nestled on the perch.

I knew about it from the beginning, and sometimes wondered if anyone else did? The hours between light and dark – to be feared, because the day has ended and what night may bring has not yet happened.

The bell tower chimes five as I stand in the snow turning the key into the lock. Streetlight filters into the dark house, spirals of snow hiss on panes of glass melting into nothingness. Far down the corridor the white aviary stands outlined against the bay window. Snow appears to be swirling into the house, bursting into sun-drenched crystals, and everywhere the sounds of birds making love. I hasten towards our garden of Eden, but suddenly – silence. Then laughter. Has he gone to another rendezvous (that may or may not happen)? Holding my breath I wait for the hour between to end, but I can't. Pressing forward I peer into the aviary – no birds yellow there, no birds black of eye but two strange creatures, necks entwined, beaks embedded in each other

they lie on the floor of the cage, yellow feathers drenched with blood, tucked neatly in a bed of snow.

THE EYELET LACE DRESS

Phoebe went to Los Angeles for a two-week visit with her estranged mother the summer she was seventeen, packing in her suitcase a white eyelet party dress. She had coveted the dress in the window of Best & Co., never imagining to own it. But she did – soon after – a birthday present from her stingy, rich Aunt Emmy with whom she had been sent to live soon after her father died and her mother tooted off on a wild goose chase. But now her mother, having married and divorced a Texas tycoon, had settled down in Los Angeles where, in a Bel Air mansion, she was reinventing herself into a Beverly Hills socialite. The dress had spaghetti straps with eyelet lace flouncing in tiers, making a full skirt that swirled when she gazed in wonder at herself, pirouetting in the mirror. She had worn it only once before leaving, when her boyfriend Pete took her dancing for the first time at the

Starlight Roof at the Waldorf Astoria where Xavier Cougat's big band orchestra was playing. Pete was a senior at Princeton and he was crazy about that dress. "Oh honey," he'd said and, speechless, had circled her in his arms as they moved around the dance floor to the Cuban rhythms.

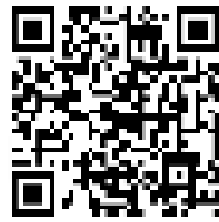
Later they went back to Aunt Emmy's house on Fifth Avenue and sneaked up to the top floor where the rooms were dark, unused, the furniture covered in sheets. They had been there many times before – a hideaway, unbeknownst to Aunt Emmy. Although Phoebe wanted more Pete was adamant that they wait, holding it as a cherished trust, sacred for their wedding night. The promise of this thrilled her, and each time he touched her and they both cried out in joy, she knew Pete was right, they should wait, because when it did happen surely it would be miraculous, for then they would truly belong to each other.

Since living with Aunt Emmy her mother had only made sporadic trips to visit Phoebe in New York, keeping in touch with postcards from faraway places, and so when Phoebe arrived in Los Angeles, her excitement turned to apprehension when her mother did not meet her at the air-

port, sending instead a chauffeur to pick her up. Phoebe sat back in the air-conditioned beige Mercedes looking through the windows as they drove through relentless sunlight along streets lined with palm trees, past houses with neat gardens until the car stopped at gates leading into the secluded enclave called Bel Air. A guard let them through and the chauffeur made his way up to a house that looked like an antebellum mansion in a movie. "Welcome home, Miss Phoebe," the chauffeur said, giving her suitcase to the butler, who handed it to the maid, who said, "Mrs. Frayne is asleep, but she's expecting you, Miss Phoebe – please follow me," and they went up the curving staircase to a landing, on down a corridor into a room where her suitcase was placed on a folding rack at the foot of a bed canopied in dotted swiss. The maid started to unpack her suitcase, but Phoebe said, "Oh, no thanks, I'll do it myself." "As you wish," the maid replied, opening the armoire to indicate hangers padded with flowered chintz before leaving. Phoebe opened her suitcase, shook out the ruffles on the eyelet dress, and hung it in the closet, leaving the rest of her things to unpack later. She sat on the bed gazing around the room – silvered tables on either side of the bed holding

The April Poems

Leon Rooke



Scan this QR with your Smartphone for a video of Leon Rooke reading from these poems (5:16)

1. April's Father

Daughter, the law-and-order universe
has given way to chaos. Those blue skies
hold invisible thunder. Intelligent design
is the one true theory explaining the blackened meat
in your bowl of horrors. Be forgiving of your brothers
who knife Goth trade winds into your trim ankles.
Pay heed to your mother. Do not follow strange men
or scheming dogs into unknown abodes
however rank the appeal. Have it understood
that in this house we eat off the floor
as a lesson in fortitude. Which is why
we douse our lights the instant sun plummets.
Accustom yourself to incessant study
of suspicious school texts in the liquid glaze
of my wrist watch. That all is not roger
in this world should not steer you
into further indiscretion or onto the fields
of abstraction. Stay your focus and at bedtime
record a decent good night to all who love you,
not forgetting to remove your shoes.

2. April's Town

Now where to go to observe a bride's sweet breath
or the honey slang of citizens downing a fruity lunch.
In these parts we seek to convert to decency
the homosexual lampposts. I wanted someone to
kiss me and no one did. A stout man in a flamingo suit
asked me where I was going and I let him know
ignorance was mine. Sometimes the earth is no bigger
than the smallest town. This burgh, for instance,
has but two people. I'm the other one.
We sleep on ice picks, I forget why.

3. April's Hundred-Yard Run

April ran a tulip posy into the end zone,
taking rank with the Packers man, Al Carmichael's
longest kick-off return, 106 yards in 1956. Good Friday,
I think it was, and predicted in the gospels.

That she did it pulling a wagon stacked
with broken furniture from St. Vincent de Paul
does not diminish the noble achievement,
given that 200 warriors from the Sioux nation
were dead-level intent on scoring her hide
with flaming arrows.

At the fifty-yard line she paused to deliver
triplets seeded in god knows what awful place.

In the end zone, game-winning touchdown
against clicking seconds, she did the usual jig,
thumping her chest while executing cartwheels,

her tulip posy riding a wind into the uppermost balconies where we sat groaning, saying to each other what can you expect from a bunch of Indians.

4. April's Continuation of the James Tate Poem "Lewis and Clark Overheard in Conversation"

then we'll get us some wine and spare ribs
then we'll get us some wine and spare ribs
then we'll get us some wine and spare ribs
then we'll get us some wine and spare ribs
then we'll get us some wine and spare ribs

5. April's "Quoth the Raven"

Sam says to April, "We've got to talk,"
but April has the music going.
He catches her later, drifting off to sleep,
he says, "April, honey, we really must converse,"
April snatching a pillow over her head.
Come morning, Sam brings fruit and ginger tea,
flowers, newspapers, the mail, he says,
"Honey, the tension is building,
something's got to give, when
may we extrapolate?"

April gives Sam the level gaze (extrapolate?).
She's chewing that fruit, reading the news,
out spins a gay hand, April saying,
"Sam, I've told you a thousand times
I use up all my talk on women friends,
my throat needs a rest, all those chances
you had to talk but never did, I cannot possibly
believe you have one word to say of interest to me
in my lovely world, so will you kindly
shut up please?" – which is how all their talks end.

6. Not with That Attitude, Miss

April couldn't fly because Security refused to let her through.
She had too many idiots in her suitcase. She explained to them
that they were all former lovers, that she could not be held responsible
for where they put themselves. Yeah, so you say, said Security,
what's that you got in your shoes? Nothing, April said, once I remove
my feet. Out of plain cussedness, they made April put her shoes
on the belt. That suitcase stays here, they said. We are confiscating
that trove of lovers. We are putting them in the same bag that holds
ours. And, hey, do those triplet girls belong to you?
April was having a fit. Why, she asked Security, are you making this
so damned personal? The Security men she said this to told her
she was their type of woman. They'd looked all their lives for a woman
who had her spit. You can't get on that plane, they said. You're
coming home with us. We're mad for the mature damsel who
travels with a shotgun under her dress. Ideal cleavage too.

Three Journal Entries

excerpts from *Lapidaria*

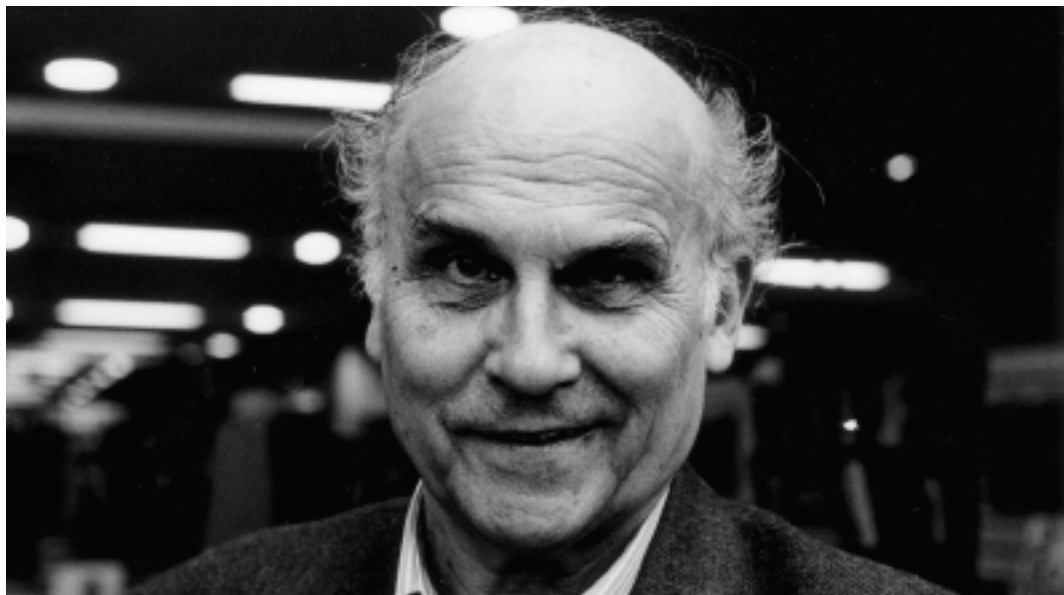
TRANSLATED BY DIANA KUPREL

The Kidnapping of Elizabeth

from *The Bush, Polish Style*

TRANSLATED BY DIANA KUPREL AND MAREK KUSIBA

Ryszard Kapuściński




More on the web:

Official author site at "Gazeta Wyborcza": <http://www.gazeta.pl/kapuscinski>

Director, writer and producer Gabrielle Pfeiffer's "A Poet on the Frontline: The Reportage of Ryszard Kapuscinski" (62 minutes)

<http://gabriellepfeiffer.com/Kapuscinski.html>

 Kapuscinski: "A Poet on the Frontline" excerpts:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHPq5p50y94>

LAPIDARIUM I (1990)

Mexico 1972

A small, tree-lined square in the center of Queretaro. Every day at 6:00 pm, a crowd spills into the square. At first, the women come, just women. There are mothers with daughters to put on display. The mothers sit on benches around the clump of trees that grow in the middle of the square. There are a dozen or so benches, a few dozen mothers, more than a hundred daughters. The girls greet each other and begin to stroll in pairs around the square. They stroll in time with the ticking of the clock, always in the same direction, unchanging, because clearly this is a ritual practiced from time immemorial. After a while, the boys show up on the square, the local bachelorhood. They too greet one another (but boys greet only boys) and begin strolling in pairs, forming a ring circling to the outside of the ring of girls. To the outside and in the opposite direction.

This circling of rings goes on for an hour.

The mothers watch, they are vigilant. Silence reigns.

One can hear only the rhythmic steps of the pairs in motion. The regular, clear, precisely measured staccato.

The boys and girls don't speak to one another, they exchange neither observations, jokes nor remarks. Rather, in passing by, they inspect each other with an intent regard. These glances are sometimes discreet, sometimes impetuous, but always attentive and intentional. In observing, both sides are evaluating, weighing each other, making a choice. Between these two circling rings vibrates a field full of tension. It is a magnetic field, loaded with a throng's emotion, a barely checked attraction.

After an hour, the mothers, in tandem, rise from the benches and begin bidding each other farewell (this lasts a few minutes). Next they call over to the girls and together they depart for home. The ring of boys also bursts and disperses, the boys disappear into the neighbouring side streets.

The square empties.

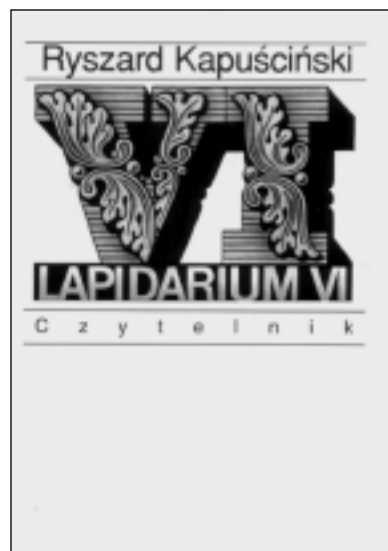
One hears only the deafening warbling of the birds bestirring themselves in the dense, woolly clump of trees growing on the square.

Here, in Latin America, one can see clearly how the world lives on different

"Lapidarium is a place (a town square, a castle courtyard, a museum patio) where found stones, pieces of sculpture and fragments of a building have been laid – that is, splinters of torsos or arms, shards of a cornice or column, in a word, things that are part of a (no longer, not yet, never, non) existent whole, and with which one does not know what to do.

"Perhaps they will remain as a witness of time past, as a trace of an attempt, as a sign? And perhaps it is the case that in our world – so overdeveloped, so huge and, at the same time, even more chaotic and difficult to encompass, to put in order – everything tends towards a great collage, a loose collection of fragments, and so towards a lapidarium?" —R.K.

The six-volume *Lapidaria* – in the process of being translated into English – were published in Polish between 1990 and 2007.



rungs, in different cells really, divided, atomized. Does inequality always give birth to hatred? Here, rather, it's a question of frustration, and for many even submissiveness. Submissiveness is a form of self-defence, a sly dodge, the goal of which is to mislead evil, to weaken its work. Their strength is defence, not attack; they know how to survive, but they're not able to change. They are like a bush which grows in the desert – strong enough to live, but too weak to reproduce.

There exist two types of corruption: the corruption of wealth and the corruption of poverty. One usually speaks of the first, only of it, because wealth truly demoralizes. As for the corruption of poverty? That is something with which the partisans in Latin America must contend. The peasant who, for five dollars, delivers to the slaughter an entire detachment, a detachment fighting for his land, his life.

Poverty is demoralizing. If a third of society lives in poverty, the whole society is demoralized. The product of poverty is fear, and there is a categorical imperative, a feverish dream to tear oneself from it at all costs. To separate oneself from it by the tinted glass of a limousine, the wall surrounding a villa, the fat bank account.

Poverty squashes and frightens away. It weakens one's consciousness and limits one's prospects. A person thinks only about what he is going to eat today, in an hour, in a minute. Poverty is anti-social. A crowd of beggars will never be in solidarity. Just toss a piece of bread into this crowd and a fight will erupt. Images of poverty are not interesting. People instinctively draw away from concentrations of poverty. Clearly, there is something shameful, even degrading, about it. The stigma of failure, defeat.

A whole range of ideological conflicts arises from the fact that when ideology changes its geographical location it takes on the colour of another culture, sometimes it even changes its original meaning. Each cultural environment affixes a different shade to the same ideology, it adds something and takes something else away. The migration of ideas is an active process; at the edge of this migration, the idea can appear in the most astonishingly transformed incarnation. In every movement of ideology in space – from country to country, from continent to continent, from one cultural region to another – there exists the potential threat of schism. Potential, and perhaps even inevitable. There is the example of Christianity,

which in shifting to the East splits into schisms, fought against by the Center. The example of Islam, which crumbles into schisms as it spreads throughout the world. The Center fights the schisms with the argument that the schism weakens the ideology, that it is its enemy. But the history of Christianity and Islam prove something else entirely. The schism, through its regionalization, through the nationalizing of ideology, strengthens it, even though at the same time (and this is the truth) it weakens the Center. In a word it strengthens its value and weakens it organizationally.

Types of demagoguery practiced by the local politicians:

Right-wing conservatives – these politicians pronounce that times are tough, but tough for all; therefore the ability to pull through and experience better times again lies in unity, and this unity should be demonstrated through rallying around power, cooperating with it, understanding, and so on.

So-called-progressives – these ones attack wealth, foreign capital; they talk about the poverty of one and the wealth of the other; and then they do nothing; they burn themselves out in chatter; they stupefy with their chatter.



Convulsive Beauty and the Maternal World

By RISHMA DUNLOP

In her series of photographs “The Mother, Daughter, and Holy Spirit,” Shira Richter’s collection of startling bodyscapes exposes her excruciating collision with the world, and the convulsive beauty she experienced, after giving birth naturally to twins (Caesarean section is often the norm in twin pregnancies). The background in which her figures appear is found in the wrinkling folds, the loop lactations, the bodily wounds, and the rips and tears of her own slackened skin after her pregnancy. By applying her imagination to the compositional frame and foreground figuration, she creates a surreal representational perspective of her peculiarly singular view, her “ground zero” of the maternal body.

As a conceptual photographer, Richter does not hide the ugly side of the miraculous phenomenon that is childbirth. She combines the textures of excess, the stretched skin of the maternal body after birth with her *punographic* sensibility to capture our attention with an arresting series of photos that force the viewer to look closely at these otherworldly forms, contexts and colours. Looking closely, we see how Richter out-vogues glossy magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* by refusing to erase the physical blemishes that fashion rags use to sell advertising. This is not the blissful pregnant belly of an air-brushed Demi Moore on the cover of *Vanity Fair*; this is the work of an artist seeking to represent the aftermath of her profound physical and mental experience of giving birth. The essential gestalt of these images appears torn apart, including the body, and then put back together – but clearly nothing in such a deconstruction is ever the same again.

Richter asks the viewer to look at the postpartum maternal body as an alternate geographical landscape, a meta-dreamscape, which invites the eye to explore its fields and deal with its beauty, its ugliness, and its transcendental representations. Semiologically, the artist presents us with familiar referents that ask us to look anew at the world they signify, and question their signification. Like a post-

Lacanian feminist, she references contemporary images and icons that purveyors of fashion and advertising photography wish us to see as representative of reality. Richter says no to those bourgeois conceits of fashion, parenting, and travel magazines by directing her own sharply focused short-lensed single-frame scenes, which ask us to question the design aesthetic of the commercial advertising world.

Richter’s imaginary realm is the whole wide world a mother encounters as an unknown potential, each time she gives birth to a child whose future she cannot know. She simulates postpartum scenes that suggest another universe; extraterrestrial landscapes that appear like the undulating veined terrain of Mars, as seen by NASA’s Spirit rover, the probe sent to explore the red planet. Her bodyscapes remind us that the whole mediated media environment is faked and only useful to consumers, its users, if they make of it their own authentic world.

Richter’s macabre and grotesque images convey sharply barbed commentary on contemporary views of a mother’s world. Her simulacra, made on her own postpartum body by her own imagination, invite us to explore the meaning and critical identity of the views she offers us. She is an artist willing to play seriously with her photographic medium, a medium that apparently mediates truth one frame at a time.

As her titles suggest, hers is a juxtaposition of expectations and delivery:

“The Mother, Daughter, and Holy Spirit” locates the belly as the heart and soul of the birthing mystery.

“Sprouts” combines the image of a wrinkled vaginal cavity with fresh-green sprouts growing from wrinkled flesh, possibly implying fecundity and the female body’s ability to renew itself through giving birth and sustaining new life.

“Waterbed” invites us to laugh about the plastic dolls nestled like happy-go-lucky babies in the deformed grooves of the sagging flesh of what appears to be the belly of an old woman.

“Bad Aid,” with its transparent white band-aids holding together apparent wounds, reminds us of a Frankenstein-like experiment gone terribly wrong

“Riviera” depicts the postpartum body as a turquoise vacation paradise, complete with plastic dolls of a handsome man and beautiful woman on the beach, enjoying the sea and the sun.

In Richter’s exhibition catalogue, “Gift” surprises us with its underlying subtext of the baby shower and the gifts we give to celebrate birth, but in this tongue-in-cheek

...continued after Shira Richter’s Photography...

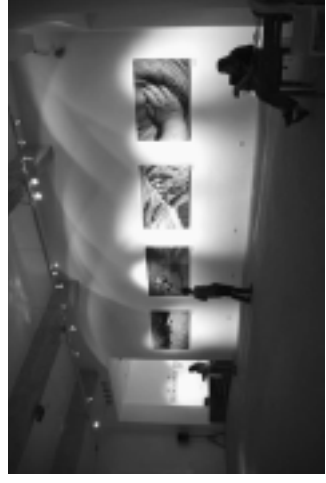
The Mother, Daughter, and Holy Spirit

PHOTOGRAPHY

SHIRA RICHTER



- 1 – Sprouts
- 2 – Waterbed
- 3 – Riviera
- 4 – Bad Aid
- 5 – The Mother Daughter
and Holy Spirit
- 6 – Without Icing
- 7 – Gift
- 8 – Push



More on the web: an electronic paper, featured in the International Conference for Motherhood, includes extra texts important to the project: <http://mamsie.wikispaces.com/file/view/Shira%20Richter.pdf>

Link to Artist Studio: www.shira-richter.com



The Poet

For those who wish to write and, once, knew a poet.



Frank Westcott

The Poet danced through the room wondering if he was dancing through time, and knew he wasn't. He was just dancing through a song wondering if he should've become a musician, but he couldn't sing a note or play an instrument.

"Tone deaf," his mother had said. "We're all tone deaf in this family. That's why you sing the way you do. Like a frog. Croaking."

"Croaking?" he remembered saying.

"Croaking," he remembered *her* saying. "Like a frog..."

"How can a frog croak?" he had said. "I thought croaking meant dying. Like that."

"It does," his mother had said between pots and pans. Well, not literally between pots and pans, but between putting pots and pans on the white of the stove where the burners weren't.

"Where the burners burned is where you don't want to put your hand, right, Mom?"

"Right, son," she had said, rattling a few more pots and pans between the sounds of others rattling in the space between words. And thoughts. And more sounds. And the thinking about stovetops being hot where the elements weren't. Or were. Or both.

The Poet danced through the living room thinking these things. Remembering these things like they were yesterday. But they weren't. Not yesterday in life. They were *now* time though 'cause they were in his mind, now.

Word images of stoves burning heat, into air and over pots, and into the room, danced him back to then, bringing him out of the true now, to where it all happened, and he *knew* he couldn't sing, and had to be a poet. A singer of words without a song. Without a melody. But notes. Notes on the page in words. Not notes on the page as in treble clefs, eighth notes and quarter notes. He loved a whole note on any page because it was round. *Whole. There. All of it.* No splitting off. None of that. At all.

"Shoulda bin a singer, if I could sing," he said to the interviewer.

She looked at him, crossing her legs.

He watched her cross her legs, so he could see how she crossed her legs. And he saw the skin of her thighs, too. As he watched her crossing her legs in front of him. Lifting the upper leg a little higher. So he could see more. Even if she didn't know she was doing that. But she did.

She liked this writer. Poet. Whatever he was. There was something different about him than most of the writers she interviewed. She liked crossing and uncrossing her legs in front of this poet. Her notebook on her thighs. And her pencil poised.

"So, you write with a pencil," he said, more of a statement than a question. But he would have said it as a question, too. Being distracted, as he was, by legs crossing. And thighs. And her skin under her nylons which you didn't see much anymore. On these interview things. Nylons, that is. And simply, he was distracted by her legs and didn't really care if he asked a question, made a statement, or she wrote with a pencil or elephant's feather.

"Did you ever see an elephant wear a feather?" he asked now, watching the pencil write something. Then cross it out.

"Huh?" the interviewer said, not crossing her legs this time. Or uncrossing them either. Or even making them straight. He couldn't watch the uncrossing-crossing thing anymore, anyway, and do the interview. He liked that. Watching. She had nice legs. He wondered about her legs, then. He liked them more than the interview. For another second, he forgot he was in the middle of an interview. The Poet slipped again, back into that other story. Or was it a poem? About him and his mom talking. When he was a boy. In the kitchen by the stove. The pots were

The Porthole *(a selection from)*

TRANSLATED BY BEPPE CAVATORTA AND POLLY GELLER

Morals and idealism are the best ways to fill the great hole we call our soul.

—ROBERT MUSIL

Adriano Spatola



RECAP OF PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS

Sitting in a chair, her right elbow propped up on the table (pencil in her hair), his mother was tallying up the grocery bills, repeating all twelve numbers. From top to bottom, from bottom to top: Total. From bottom to top, from top to bottom: Total. That's when they broke down the door and entered. They killed his mother right there, and he hadn't been born yet. Next they waited a while for his father before he came back home: they killed him late. But he hadn't been born yet.

At the time, his father worked at the stud farm behind the old cemetery, where the train now passes through, a little less than a mile from the toll booth. And the daughter of the custodian was an easy lay, especially during the air raids, when they would turn off all the lights and her father ran to calm down the bull while

the two of them would take care of the cows.

On an even darker night, during a longer air raid, Guglielmo Sr. chose the wrong hole. His son was born from the mating of a man and a cow. And he was born at the very end of the war, amid the confusion of those days, avoiding by sheer luck a static destiny of preservation in formaldehyde. "Monstrum," his classmates would say to mock him.

His mother was crossing the street, running to catch the streetcar when she was run over. And he had not been born yet. And his father, by then keeper of geese, was impregnated by a crow and dropped a deformed and phony egg, which a toad decided to hatch. In the spring, from the egg in the mud of a flowering ditch, Guglielmo was born during the other war, just in time to see Caporetto.¹ Web-footed, he was turned down at the physical, thereby avoiding the defence on the Piave river.² He would relieve himself by squatting as women do, but spraying it out in mid-air.

"I, too, was born," he says about himself. "I had to learn how to read and write

pretty much on my own. I grew up alone, a rebel, a loner, a sentimentalist, an introvert. My father destroyed himself with alcohol, as did my grandfather and all my ancestors and their descendants. For me, precocious encounters with women, friends, and art."

Our friend was born in an eighteenth-century attic, dark and with a low ceiling, without windows, walled up during a heaven-sent restoration required by the Board of Cultural Affairs. It was there that he grew up by candlelight, eating mice and turtle dove chicks, with literature and spiders as his sole companions. Saved by dust and neglect, thanks to the interest of a connoisseur of antiques and collector of marble statues, we bumped into him again a few years later, on display in the wine shop of an old dear classmate. We know little to nothing about him; certainly a work in the manner of.

"Son of a bitch," he moans. "Son of a bitch, they call me. But work in the manner of means something else."

At the time his father worked as a gay hustler. His mother liked cars. She truly had a passion for automobiles. Ever since

¹ The Battle of Caporetto, a defining battle in World War I, between the Italians and Germans, who on October 24, 1917, in one day, advanced 25 kilometers into northern Italy. The Italians lost 300,000 men, 270,000 of which were captured and imprisoned.

² After the Battle of Caporetto, the Italian Army retreated to the Piave River in northeastern Italy. The Italians held their own until October 1918, when the Austrians were deterred by another Allied attack.

she was a child. “You’ll end up marrying a car and giving birth to a scooter,” her mother would always tell her. (At the time *automobile* was still a masculine noun, and one would write *un’automobile* without the apostrophe.) Her passion degenerated into vice such that at one hundred miles per hour, his mother became impregnated by a passing truck. This was how Guglielmo was born, by accident on the side of the freeway to the right of his mother’s smiling face, aided by patrol officers who acted as midwives and took stock of the disaster. The next day the following article appeared in the *Corriere della Sera*, complete with a photograph it read:

OUT OF DEATH COMES LIFE

AMONG RUINS, IN THE SUN,
A FLOWER IS BORN AGAIN

Baptized with gasoline, Guglielmo set himself on fire in the piazza, protesting against society, remaining horribly burnt.

Guglielmo was born when times were not yet ripe. A precursor and an innovator, a genius of an inventor, Guglielmo starved on more than one occasion though his friends never abandoned him. A reckless gambler, a pimp, a smuggler, a thief: these were some of the insults

thrown at him by his worst enemies. He would eat wherever he was invited to lunch, moving in all social circles.

Guglielmo was born from the cross-breeding of a Samoyed and a Belgian sheepdog on an island in the Dead Sea. The newly found scrolls, currently in the process of being transcribed, are a possible proof of this. He became a monk in order to isolate himself from the world; but the few who knew him well could see him go to the village on Mondays to buy groceries on his Guzzi motorcycle, where he took part in large-scale maneuvers with the prophets of the desert. Impaled in Constantinople, he took revenge by becoming a stylite and sweeping his excrement onto the large, jammed-together crowd below.

This is what we know about Guglielmo. Looking at him splits rocks and his stare burns pastures.

His father was, without a doubt, a demon in the shape of a goat and his mother an ant. He spent his childhood inside an anthill, his eyes fixated on the hole in the wall – a visible opening that could be seen by looking straight up from the dark bottom of the well – an opening through which he was not allowed to pass until he was of age. Because of a physical dysfunction, his mother had reproduced

herself in the shape of an earthworm and was taken apart by him on his first hunting expedition. You could see her, long and whitish, trembling in decreasing spasms under the heavy hits by the soldiers under her son’s command. Natural law didn’t permit delays, shortcuts, or appeals. With tears in his eyes, Guglielmo was merciless with the carcass and, up until his last days, couldn’t stand this memory.

This was Guglielmo. And he is (if he is still alive) a body, made up of and living solely by the unique force of adhesion of the letters that make up his name. Hence the impossibility of defining him once and for all, and his transmutation from word to word. I don’t know of a more affectionate dog than Guglielmo.

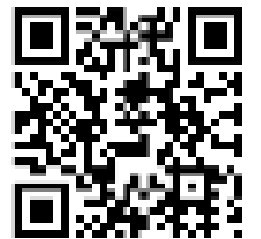
The least one could say about the birth of Guglielmo is that it wasn’t an occasional event, rather the achievement of an objective that was clear in his mind since the morula had formed.

“It was all about,” he says, “yes, indeed, it was all about needing to be born. My mother had conceived me without any clear ideas as to what my destiny might be and the three abortions, which I deftly thwarted, are further proof of her mistrust. I don’t mean that it was uncomfortable in there. It was warm for sure: a little humid perhaps. And one sure could eat! I knew well that life on the outside wouldn’t be this easy. But I had to make up

Spatola’s interests cover also what at that time was called sound poetry and he participated in several poetry happenings. His most famous pieces were *Aviation/Aviateur* and *Seduction/Seductor*.



search: spatola/seduction 



Scan this QR with your Smartphone for a short video of Spatola in performance (2:32)

L'oblò (*The Porthole*) – first published in 1964 – is a singular novel that evades any sort of categorization and remains even more important today for its remarkable achievement in that fertile period of Italian experimental literature.



In the original cover are revealed some of the ingredients of Spatola's recipe for the novel: "A very young writer / a new funny novel / between the assemblage technique / and the pop novel / the science fiction of current events / the automatism of the media / from the bible in installments / to the symbolism of strip-tease / the deflagration of history."

my mind, get out, break the spell and face reality. I couldn't risk a fourth attempt as one isn't always fortunate in such matters."

As Guglielmo would say, he would say: "It was all about needing to be born. From the bottom of the well, hanging by my feet like a monkey, I could see beneath me the hole in the wall. The world passed by as if through a magnifying glass, its disconnected sounds, impossible to interpret, would become objects and words only if seen against the light through my vellum.

"The big day," he says, "the big day came almost unexpectedly. I had been ready for quite some time, I was on the alert. But as we know, we think we are ready for anything and then it happens that we are born in a cab, on a bus, or on a train. While travelling, it is troublesome."

As Guglielmo would say, he would say: "I opened the hatch, cut the cord, put my feet together, clenched my teeth and jumped into the abyss. I watched her become more and more distant in the dark sky above me, up north, with her spotlights turned on."

Hence, Guglielmo was also born.

Guglielmo was born of the sea – "like Venus," he loves to brag. He was born on an August day in Riccione on the Adriatic Riviera (and he could have been born on the other bank, a socialist country). He appeared like a wet cat among the waves some fifty yards from

the shore. As if in a mirage, he could see the crowded beach, the small shapes of those coming and going or motionless under the sun, the ordered and multi-coloured rows of the beach umbrellas, the shining silhouettes of the skyscrapers, the white sails to his back. He almost cried tears of joy.

Shipwrecked from another planet, he had landed there from nothingness, materializing upon the hard contact with the element of water. A fish wrapped in wax paper, a red shrimp in blue and green sauce, a slice of salami on the edge of a greasy plate: this is how he came into the world, split between the essential lines of his natural and original parallelism. Armless and legless, poisoned by rotten and fetid water, a canal on its way to putrefaction. Eberth's bacillus, itch mite, Nicolaier's bacillus.

ELEPHANTIASIS OF THE HOLE IN THE WALL

From this side of the hole in the wall, there is no coral barrier which protects the islands of the fabulous southern seas in their artificial and mutilated infancy. There is no railroad crossing, no little Chinese slipper is forced onto the mind's

free foot. All is because it can shatter and recombine, and not because it can immutably exist. All is, because it slides inside sealed top-secret envelopes, relationships are perfectly set, but beware not to forget the irreplaceable purpose of the postman. And herein lies the greatest risk we may incur. That is the special and unique pathology called elephantiasis of the hole in the wall.

It's useless to speak of the hole in the wall. We have to leave the hole in the wall alone so that it can feel stimulated to lose its usual opacity and allow us to see through it clearly. We must pretend to ignore it, walk nonchalantly by it as a youngster does on Sundays when he scopes out the crowd leaving high mass just to catch her eye as she stands between her mother and father, holding her little brother's hand who knows everything about the two of them.

Then the doors will open wide and without saying a word we will witness the celebration of the rite, a black mass during which a naked Guglielmo will play his role as the holy body, and his testicles, hanging from the priest-wizard-surgeon's neck, will toll and resound like the big bell of a castrated bull there to watch with his camera and typewriter: a young pervert, a cemetery above the sea.

Drawing Is What We Do

By GARY MICHAEL DAULT



Aristide Maillol
 Untitled woodcut from Verlaine's "Chansons pour elle", No. 135
 of a limited edition of 500, printed in Mt. Vernon, New York, 1943

When I emailed the image of one of my latest paintings to Jennifer Lefort, a young Montreal painter whose work I like a lot, she emailed me back asking whether my picture wasn't rather well-served (I suspect she meant *too* well-served) by line, by drawing. Lefort, who is a very painterly painter, went on – carefully, I thought – to ask about the *degree* to which drawing informed my painting. The inquiry was, I think, intended to be cautionary.

My answer, in this particular case, was: a great deal. There is a goodly amount of scratchiness in the picture, and a lot of quick, terse making of marks by drawing directly on the canvas with tubes of pigment. The paint tube is, in fact, my favourite drawing tool. But Lefort's opposing of painting to drawing got me musing a little upon what drawing actually is.

I suspect that drawing is, in fact, an innate, more fundamental activity than is often thought. We still tend to think of drawing as Goethe thought of it: "drawings are invaluable," he once said to Eckermann, "not only because they give in its purity the mental intention of the artist, but because they bring immediately before us the mood of his mind at the moment of creation."

Today, this seems quaint. We care much less than we once did, I think, to know "the mood of his [or her] mind at the moment of creation." Indeed we are not, as a culture, very interested, really, in the nature of "the moment of creation." This is a world of product and the bottom line, not of any rarified, epiphany-rich progress along the road to making.

Nor is drawing, as we sometimes like to imagine, a palpable form of thinking. When Bloomsbury art critic,