

KARAWANE

OR THE TEMPORARY DEATH OF THE BRUITIST

A JOURNAL OF LIVE POETRY AND PERFORMANCE



NUMBER 8 SOMETIME IN 2003

All Aboard the Karawane

Hi there! It's been about a year since I got an issue of Karawane out. A lot has happened to me, including having been in New York on September 11th and a fair amount of burnout, post-traumatic stress disorder, trying to figure out what to do with my life and how to reclaim it, etc. I could go into all that now, but it's late. I have a group performance tomorrow night of a piece called Theatre of Emergency, based on the writings of Living Theatre Founder Julian Beck, which I am doing as part of an evening of anti-war poetry and spoken word. After a year of not publishing, I am desperate to put this magazine to bed once and for all.

The impetus? A temp job where I have access to Quark and Microsoft Publisher (which I use) and the ability to turn files into PDFs, which has saved my enthusiasm for doing Karawane.

You might know that I tried to put my "so-ugly-it's-cute" little child up for adoption, but no one wanted the poor thing. But I couldn't just abandon Karawane, walk away completely. But on the other hand, on top of everything else I've been through in the past year—a major disaster, unrequited love, and the usual disorientation of being an artist in an increasingly harsh society and having to work day jobs and figuring out what to do with my life etc etc etc etc WHEW! I just couldn't bring myself to go around begging on top of that, for the money to pay for printing costs—paper, \$200 print cartridge, postage to mail the magazine out, etc. Karawane is a labor of love, but the business side of it had caused me to start dreading it. Having spent the past year also unemployed, I couldn't even afford the \$50 domain charge (up from \$20 last year when Network Solutions was bought out by VeriSign!) for www.karawane.org, let alone trying to pay off the \$600 printer sitting on my credit card, on which I produced the last two issues and also a number of flyers, samplers, etc. I've struggled with keeping the website "clean" looking and yet also featuring and adequate amount of work. And so tada! The PDF just might save this little magazine.

So welcome to the first all online version of Karawane. I hope you like the format. I hope that you like the work, as always, and I hope to be able to bring out 2 or more issues per year. I will continue to do a very limited number of paper copies for our library subscriptions and for festivals and face-to-face. But no more mass mailings, beating our heads against the wall trying to find reliable distributors, etc. (And plus we can do cool colors and better graphics than traditional printing allows for!)

We can still use subscribers. It's only \$5 for two issues, and that will help pay off past debts, all of which went on my 30% interest rate credit cards. (That is NOT a typo! I can't believe they're even ALLOWED to charge that, even to people like me!) And I still retain the goal of hoping to pay artists some day for their work, as well as producing more Karawane-Sponsored shows, CDs (which I still have sitting in the works), etc.

The full magazine will still be sent only to subscribers via email and passwords and such, so I hope that you'll see fit to pony up a scant \$5 a year or so through <http://www.paypal.com> (using karawane@prodigy.net as the payment address). Or email me at Karawane@prodigy.net and I'll give you a name and address to send a check to.

Peace, love, poetry and performance!

Laura Winton
Fluffy Singler
Editor and Publisher
Karawane: Or, the Temporary Death of the Bruitist
<http://www.karawane.homestead.com>

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

BRINGING YOUR WORK BACK ONTO THE PAGE

Karawane is a journal committed to work that is performed in public. That does not mean that poetic or artistic quality can be subordinated to the performance. It does mean that everyone who is published here performs their poetry, plays and short fiction at open mics, cabarets, readings, theatres, festivals, etc.

Karawane's editorial preference is dada/beat/surrealist/ imagist/absurdist/avant-garde/post-modern/pull it out of your ass. We are interested in quality poetry, prose poems, sound poems, short short stories and essays, performance art texts and short plays, etc. We do not like "narrative poems" that want to be short stories. Make sure your poem *has* to be a poem because of its unique form and not because you are too lazy to flesh out a short story or write a vignette. If you want to send us a short story, send one. If you want to send a poem, write one, m'kay?

Come to think of it, we're not that big on traditional narrative, either.

To cut to the chase—we like work that experiments with form & language. Successfully would be nice, too. We like work that doesn't sound like every other manuscript in the slush pile. There are gazillions of adequately-crafted poems and stories that sound exactly like each other and don't really stand out. Writing should be FUN. Reading should be FUN. Take some chances—stretch the language—free your mind—blah etc blah blah etc etc.

Submit 3 - 7 original pages of poetry, plays up to 10 or so pages long, or fiction up to a maximum of 2,000 words.

Artwork: Submit camera-ready artwork of any size up to 8 1/2" x 11". Graphics can be submitted on disk in most standard formats (*gif, *bmp, *jpg, *tif, etc.). **Make sure your name, address and phone number appear on every page of your submission.** This journal is edited from people's homes. Things get lost. Dogs eat your manuscripts, then eat grass and barf the whole thing up.. Pizza stains end up on vital commas and other punctuation marks. If you submit a piece that is longer than one page, the page number and title should appear on subsequent pages. *We accept and encourage previously published work*, provided you have retained reprint rights. Please tell us when and where your work was published.

We are also sometimes appallingly slow in responding to manuscripts. Please don't waste your life waiting by the phone or email. Get out and **LIVE** a little—simultaneously submit to your heart's desire. Just let us know when something is accepted elsewhere. (Don't make me come over there . . .)

Send manuscripts to **Karawane**, Laura Winton, Editor, 402 S. Cedar Lake Road, Minneapolis, MN 55405. Email submissions are also WELCOMED. Please attach an RTF file of your work with your email. You can also visit our website and even submit through the site. Providing an email address with your email or snailmail submission will also obliterate the need for SASEs.

Email: karawane@prodigy.net

Web page: www.karawane.homestead.com

FINAL DISCLAIMER REGARDING TYPOS: We at **Karawane** love writers--except when they whine. We do our best to proofread at 4 a.m. before the text has to go to the printer but hey, *Feces Occur*. Therefore, our official policy on typos is--get over it! Once the mag is printed, there's nothing we can do about it, Kapeesh? So, we apologize in advance and thank you for your patience in the faec of seuch indinganties.



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Maria: We whip through our lives
in such feverish dissolves.
Speak to us about healing.

Shadow Master: But the disease
is still within our system:
the infection of Poverty.
And the virus I have identified,
is Property

Maria: But your cure, your Revolution,
kills more people than the disease.

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Bathroom

The young husband stirs in bed. Consciousness reclaims him, turgidly: first his skin feels the smooth sheets, the weight of the cover; his limbs retract into the warm pockets around him. His arm brushes across his wife's skin and he becomes aware of her sleeping body. The memory of her words leaps into his mind: "We have to talk about it!" she'd said. "We can't go on like this!"

Protectively, he freezes. Finally he becomes aware of the strains on his own body, one knee held out at an angle, his tender erection compelled, he realizes, not by lust, but by his bladder.

If he moves and doesn't disturb the bed, he can stand without stirring up the endless and sour arguments dormant at his side. He shifts his weight to the outer side of the bed and sits up slowly, sliding the covers off his naked torso. His skin tightens and adjusts to the cold air. He leans forward in a slow falling motion so that the mattress is relieved imperceptibly of his weight. Finally he stands straight, not daring to check behind him.

He shuffles along in the dark, feeling for obstacles and keeping his bare soles close to the warmth of the wood floor. When he reaches the ceramic tile in the bathroom, he gropes above the sink for the light switch, averting his eyes. He misses, fumbles around the wall, looks up, finds the cord and pulls. The sudden antiseptic glare stabs his open pupils.

The shock of cold white tile in his eyes and on his bare feet have reduced his erection to a manageable angle. He relieves himself in a warm stream. His bladder, his sphincters relax, his eyes unfocus. Unbidden the objects in the bathroom invade his vision one by one. The porcelain tank in front of him is covered by something like a small shag rug: pale, fuzzy green wormsemerging from an elasticized cloth. He does not recognize the three, no four, objects sitting lightly

on top of the cover. Stiff cardboard, plastic, paper and melting soap. Senseless raw materials assembled in front of him to make up what his mind struggles to give names to: eyebrow liner, Kleenex box with a paper tongue poking out, soap dish with a bar of soap stuck to it.

He tries to remember why these things are here. The cogs of industry and commerce have somehow meshed to bring them to him for his rituals of cleansing and purgation, to this dazzling white room where his flesh fights against the daily processes of digestion, dirt and decay. And yet the objects swim in front of him, alien, repellent yet passive and exhausted by their own discrete existences.

He flushes the toilet and lowers the seat. "We have to talk!" she had said. He looks around the bathroom seeking some reason, some connection. More objects coagulate out of the cold heavy air: glass jars of oily cream, brown bottles of dry vitamins, a used razor blade, crumpled towels. Details congeal onto surfaces: short soapy hairs on the blade of the razor, a thin ring of grime around the bathtub, mildew discoloring the gray grout between the wall tiles.

Automatically he heads towards the door and stops at the sink. He is trapped by the mirror. Beyond the rust that blooms underneath the silvered surface, everything in the world becomes pointlessly doubled. He looks at his face, past his shadowed chin, his nose, his large pores, into two wary uneven eyes. A reptilian intelligence stares nakedly back at him and he knows that he is alone and that there is no one in the world he trusts.

*Christopher Shillock
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He Had

no rhythm at all, but i
still sing his eyes like
jazz in my head, an
unstoppable blue, he was
perfectly sky in my
cloudy grey day, he was
sharp as angles, as
sweet as cider & warm
like sunset on brick, he was
cayenne pepper, the
terraced French Quarter,
all voodoo and Miles
rippling thru me- jazz

in my head, he was
mine, in my head he was
sharp with those eyes that
cut me wide, open I was,
honest I was, all angles
and sky he was
unstoppable blue, it was
sharp and unspoken this
bleeding between us this
jazz.

*Jennifer Triton
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LAST CALL

(previously published in *Crash*)

i

voices hang uncertainly in the air,
hinting at what is beyond the walls.

a train goes by.
GO Transit and freight trains
add to the murmur.

ii

an 18 year old
sits in his eight by four cubicle.
he expects nothing better

a bible marks his hours of boredom.

iii

it is pentecost Sunday
and words fall out. god's grace
is asked for and may be found
lurking, ashamed to show up.

iv

I walk out the prison door at mimico---using my staff key
and not through A & D. in February it took a bail hearing
to get out of west detention. prayers for peace
expressed through blood at litton wait in the background.
prayers of the people at the end of the service
sneak forward.

v

black shirt and white collar
afloat in a sea of blue.

vi

a hunger strike in building 5 one week.
a hunger strike and work strike across the jail the next.
a gentle call for dignity in the chapel is a pale echo.

vii

bleach is still banned from the dorm. smuggled works
shared between inmates spread oblivion and a bracketed
future.

viii

friends now turn away or laugh
or don't return calls. barriers
topped with crippling wire are raised.

suddenly i'm cut adrift.
prison chaplains are still prison guards.

ix

warrior is back in the system.
11 week turnaround. jail is his home.
loneliness, no work, no home can't hold him
in freedom.

my pieces of silver pay for rent.

x

paul and silas bound in jail
got nobody to go their bail
keep your eyes on the prize
hold on.

I ain't scared of your jail
cause I want my freedom
I want my freedom now.

i'm going to prison so I can be free
i'm going to prison for what I believe

the magnificat

while the walls close behind me
and I go home. the last minute call
from a girlfriend was not relayed
because it's time to go home. freedom
is too important to spend responding
to the last call at the end of the day.

Museum of Light and Dark

Cast:

Yistawn : *Aggressive Male*
Saranathan: *Seductive Female*
Toomell: *Fragile Female*
Gizac: *Fragile Male*
Luchelle: *Watcher*
Rukesayer: *Balance*

Rukesayer:

Culture Question

Consider for a moment the question of
Culture
Every human society engages in
Culture
Expending
Time, Energy, Resources
Every human society . . .

Why?
What is the survival advantage of
Culture?
Some fluke of the Universe?
Then why kill for it?
Why die for it?
We're willing to destroy this planet
Preserving this thing.

Pretty big thing
This Culture
Too big to go unexamined
Now
Where can we go to get
The Bright Spots
the Dancing Shadows
The Dark Grottos
Of Culture?

Submitted for your perusal
Museum of Light and Dark

Luchelle:

Doors

To the House of Seven Doors
They come
Carried on coach and foot
Walking across wind
Traversing the sea
All coming
Coming to this place
This Museum of Light and Dark

Some stand outside the door
Debating merits and means
Leaving

Without entering

Others charge in
Treading on everything

Then the others
Lingering a moment
A day
A week
Finally with timid steps
Holding hands
for comfort
strength
They pass through the
Threshold

Some
Into the places they want to go
Others
Places they need

Gizac:

Desert

This door opens
On a dry, desert plane
The wind comes hot
Everything above the sand ripples
Mirage and fancy

In the distance
Are the dead rising
piercing the silvered membrane
Or are they living
How will we answer
What will we say to them

Yistawn:

Stricken

The room itself is suffering
Gloom oozing from under the base
boards

Rain rushes into the basement
Smelling of mud and Chaos
Old hats and scum swirling down there
behind the door

It always happens here
in your head
without your permission
We all do it
The fear of dying

I just wanted to leave footprints
Mud on the carpet

Toomell:

Empty Shirt

Lurid moon
a languish of stars
Milky night sky
Occasionally troubled by clouds

An empty shirt on the clothes line
Somehow transmuted
Ghostly pale
Iridescent
Luminescent
Dancing with the wind
In the moonlight
Lift
shifting
Left . . .
Then Right . . .
Pausing only for an instant
at the apex

Saranathan:

Repose

Sleep well my lover
You're tired

Sleep this game you play
When you've had your fill
Throw off this childish notion
Open your silent eyes
Walk with me
Once again under cyan skies
Untroubled by clouds

Luchelle:

First

First came the scientist
Poets
Writer's
All with pens, pads

Next people who thought
they might like to see their own work
displayed
People wanting to scoff
People thinking it'd be grand
Just to be seen there

They found rooms
Airy spaces above the World
Where danced wisps of ice

Rooms dim
Misty subterranean grottos
Filled with acrid
Funky odors

Rooms with a view
Rooms with ambiance
Rooms where

They dropped the pens and pads
with which they had dreamed
Of catching the ghosts of the place

Yistawn:

Magician's Scarf

The ebon night flows
Delicate
sable silk
Through my fingers

Stars
Tiny silver flecks
In the satin jet
above the world
Revealing . . . what?

Gizac:

Guidance

No one will tell me
Which doors open Up
Which open Down
Is this the escalator
to the Crystal Palace
The walkway
to the Dancing Shadows
Or the shaft elevator
piercing the Dark Domain

Saranathan:

Falling

This one drops you
From way up there
On the roof
Straight down
I swear I can't see
Where they hook the cord
That crash at the end . . .
Totally realistic

Enjoy your soul
You've paid for the ride

Toomell:

Beads

A beautiful amber-autumn afternoon
Flows through the curtains
Curls around the sofa
Enfolding me
Illusions creep along the wall
Glistening notes
ghost angels
Feather fingers touching
soft as shadows

I move quietly
From room to room
One moment to the next
Each second another bead
on the string of Time

Luchelle:

Creatures

Bring up the next slide please
You can see
One of the critters

Here it overcomes
its initial revulsion
Of eating meat

Here you can see
It running all over the place
eating its fellow creatures

Here's where
they gang up
And kill it

Yistawn:

Screaming

You are moving again
I can feel your vibrations
restless
Peace!
You will see Light soon enough

Oh go ahead
Scream if you want
It makes you so unattractive
And no one will hear you anyway

Please
Give it full throat
so that you may know the measure
Of every human howl
Both living and dead

There
satisfied?

Saranathan:

Raven

Sable silhouette
Ebon shadow
lithe, quick
Flicker dancing
Gothic Poet
she lifts the pen
the shadow stiletto
With cool
gentle hands

Employing the subtle
delicate
Movements of a surgeon
She cuts the page
it bleeds black
She opens the wound
releasing acrid stench
There is no sound
save her rustling silks
The mutter
sputtering of the candle

When the lesion is squeezed dry
She lays aside the pen
Touches her slender
alabaster finger
To the wet ink
Lifts it to her pale lips
staining them

Gizac:

Aunt

Hey
I know she's my aunt
But she was hot man
And she was fifty feet tall
And a fox

My aunt was real mad
Cause there was this guy
Who lives over on Elm Road
Well you know . . .

She went after him
And my mom followed in our mini-van
My aunt didn't hit a single power line
Didn't kick over anything

Anyway we got to Elm
He was standing outside
Guess he just couldn't believe
Idiot

My fifty foot aunt
She stomped his ass

Luchelle:

Holy One

So Red
So rare
Consider the chromium steel
Crafted by the Sublime Hand
The master Artisan undulating in
Throes of one cataclysmic orgasm

Never before have the streets known
one such as this
Mechanized Messiah

Incomplete in stillness
Fulfilled only when plying
the sacred ways
Singing praise and worship
Hymn of the Infernal Combustion
Engine

Saranathan:

Exit 76 - Union

Boogums and vampires
Don't scare me
You wanna know
What really Frightens me?
The kids had become . . .
You know
a liability
So she parked them
in the lake
Staying long enough to be sure
the car went under
Long enough to hear . . .
And blamed a black man
any black man would do

Another story
She leaves the dance
Walks into the bathroom
drops the fetus into the trash

Now that
Really scares me

Rukesayer:

Wire Hydra

The phone rang then played dead
So I asked
Who is this really
A metallic voice
Raspy
impassioned
Whispered
I am the Wire
Demons and Angels
sprout from my chest
Running wild across the Land
I am
The Hydra of Many Hands
This is the hand that Kills
And this the hand that Heals
The scolding hand
the caressing hand
The hand that bites
and smites
and smiles

I am the Tooth of Reason
The foot of Empire
The grain of sand
that speaks the Desert

The ever opening flower of Heaven
The hour of the time after Time

I am the sound of Billions
Pounding the Earth
pounding it flat
The thunder of every living heart

I live there now
In the Wire
in the golden City of Dreams

Yistawn:

Myriad Rivers

Suck me into your emerald eyes
Pull me all the way down
Your optic nerves

Slithering around
The back of your mind
I ache for the acrid
smell of your wet fur

You snap bolt upright
your eyes abruptly wide
As I slide down your spine
In quest of your adrenals

You shiver as I
Golden fire
Course the myriad rivers
Under your skin

Finis

Saranathan:

The Sun descends in crimson robes
Plunging into the Horizon
Where Earth meets Heaven

Toomell:

Timid at first
The silver stars appear
The Moon dawns full
in raven arms of the East

Yistawn:

On shifting Sands
Two figures float
In the velvet Night

Daughter of the Stars
Walks without treading the sand
Son of the Sun
Moves as one with the Wind

Gizac:

Gently at first the merest whisper

She sings a tone poem
He answers
A throaty hum

Saranathan:

With gathering force
Her eyes wild
She speaks many prophesies
Shouting
Whispering

Yistawn:

Always compelling
He answers without words
Life begins and ends a thousand times
in the night
Forces that are not rightly understood
are released and contained
Great waves
of resonate chord build and crest
Each cadence gathering a greater voice
Each beat building into the other
Quaking the Earth
Shaking the Sky

Toomell:

Yet within All
Balance is retained
Chaos in enveloped
Anima and Animus
Eye of one within the other

In one vast crashing Crescendo
Everything becomes One thing
Thunder echoes across the Land
And the night moves toward Dawn

Gizac:

The East
At first dim and distant
Progressing to a gentle azure
Delicate, close and comfortable
Her smile as soft, subtle
unstoppable as the Rising Sun
His eye
Clear as the Sky

The End

William C. Burns

Layla Qays

GLOBAL TRAFFICK

(A PERFORMANCE POEM)

Souls are traveling all around us, migrating

DEFINITIONS

Global Trafficking - The global movement and sexual exploitation of women and children.

Samsara The endless cycle of death and rebirth where ones action in this life, determine the circumstances of the next.

QUESTION

How is an ancient Asian belief about birth and rebirth connected to globalization of sexual exploitation of women and children?

The ancients have always believed in the connection of all things. Scientist now acknowledge cause and distant effect, a butterfly flaps its' wings in one part of the world and a hurricane is unleashed in another.

SAMSARA

The Buddhist whore with
AIDS
sits at her straw mat and
contemplates
her suffering .

The business man with
AIDS
sits at his computer and
contemplates
his choices.

Mexican, Phillipino, Russian, Thai?

Surely,
Her suffering has been payment
enough.

Surely,
This site takes
American Express?

Surely ,
she will not return
to this world
hungry , seven years old and sold

Surely,
he will return
to a third world country
hungry, for American money.

Surely ,
She will not return hungry , seven years old,
sold to fat hairy Americans
who like it tight

Surely, he can find the man who sold
girls.
American women are such bitches,

and bleeding every time.

Surely she will not return to this life , Surely he too will return to this life,
hungry , seven years old, sold to
Exotic Girls of the World
Sex! Sex! Sex! Tour.

SAMSARA...

... toward the next life with every action, souls are traveling...

THE URINAL IS A HOAX!

THE GALLERY IS A HOAX!

ART CRITICS ARE A HOAX!

MODERN ART & SOCIETY PREDICATED UPON A FAULTY FUNDAMENT!

ASS!9 ART CRITICS POINT TO THE INNOCENT CHESS PLAYER MARCEL DUCHAMP AN HIS URINAL AS ELEVATING THE COMMONPLACE TO ART. THE URINAL WAS PROVOCATION, PISSING IN THE MUSEUM. HOW MUCH WILL U TOLERATE? IT'S A MOCKERY. IF YOU PLACE ANYTHING IN THE MUSEUM, EVEN A URINAL, IDIOT ART CRITICS AND OVERFED PATRONS WITH TOO MUCH MONEY WILL GAZE IT THROUGH THEIR OPERA GLASSES AND PONDER ITS LACK OF MEANING. DUCHAMP LAFFS AT YOU AND PISSES ON YOUR ARMANI SHOES. IN THOSE DAYS ART MEANT SOMETHING TO THE OVERFED ART PATRONIZERS AND THEY WERE INCENSED. DUCHAMP LAUGHED AND SILENTLY WHISPERED IN THE DARK ARMORY HOW MUCH WILL YOU TOLERATE.

MODERN SOCIETY IS A LAUGHABLE GALLERY. WE ARE BOILING ALIVE. WE ARE THE GREAT COUCH POTATO FAMINE BILING ALIVE LITERALLY THROUGH GLOBAL WARMING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HOLOCAUST AND OUR SPIRITS AND MINDS ARE BOILING ALIVE WITH A MIND-NUMBING DAILY ONSLAUGHT. SCANDAL AND CORRUPTION BY THOSE WHO DEEM THEMSELVE OUR SUPERIORS OUR RULE MAKERS AND MOCK US FROM THE GALLERIES OF CONGRESSES AND THE PULPITS. THE POLICE MURDER INNOCENT PEOPLE EVERYDAY PRIESTS MOLEST SMALL CHILDREN POLITICANS TAKE WHATEVER THEY WANT IN WHATEVER WAY THEY CHOOSE FROM SEX SCANDALS AND STEAMING BESTSELLERS TO STOLEN ELECTIONS AND TOOBIG CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS AND WE SIT PLACID STEWING IN OUR OWN URINALS WE READ THE PAPER ON THE TOILET OUR BOWELS UNMOVED AND THE WORLD SCREAMS HOW MUCH WILL YOU TOLERATE.

WE ARE DUMMIES WE ARE NUMB DUMMIES NUMMIES THE BOOKS TELL US WE ARE DUMMIES AND WE BUY THEM BY THE FUCKING TRUCKLOAD NUMBLY.

WE ARE PRODDED AND POKED AND EXPERIMENTED ON AND IT PRODUCEDS ONLY A MOMENTARY BOBBLE WEEBLES WOBBLE BUT THEY DON'T FALL DOWN WE WILL NOT JUMP UP TO DEFEND OURSELVES. SOME DO THROUGH VIOLENCE. THEY ARE DRUGGED JAILED RIDICULED SET APART AS AN "OTHER" A MONSTER BORN NOT OF THIS WORLD. SOME SELF-MEDICATE AND THEY ARE JAILED AND RIDICULED AND AGAIN FROM EVERY ANGLE WE ARE INCREASINGLY PASSIVE HOW MUCH HOW MUCH HOW MUCH WILL YOU TOLERATE

THE POLITICANS WANT TO KNOW. TELEVANGELISTS WANT TO KNOW. ARTISTS WANT TO KNOW. VIRTUAL WORLD ADVERTISING EXECUTIVES PROBABLY ALREADY KNOW.

DO U NO?

—LAURA WINTON
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Glass Elevator

CHARACTERS

BRAD, 28, short hair, cute but not handsome, causally dressed.

MEGAN, 24, plain but has an appeal to her, medium built, hair is long and straight.

The scene is an elevator in a very old apartment building. Brad is already in the elevator and is carrying several empty boxes. Megan enters the elevator and is juggling several bags of groceries.

The elevator doors can be empty frames and no glass for the audience to hear the dialogue. There should be a frame at the bottom of the "elevator" to contain the oranges rolling around.

BRAD
(standing near the back wall of the elevator, holding several cardboard boxes, smiling at MEGAN) Hi.

MEGAN
(she struggles to hold the bags of groceries and press the button) Hi.

(the glass doors close and there is a long silence. Suddenly the elevator stops and the two lurch forward, BRAD dropping some of his boxes and MEGAN spills some of her groceries)

MEGAN
(placing the groceries on the floor and trying to retrieve the oranges that have spilled and scattered) Oh no. Not today. Not now.

BRAD
(placing the remainder of the boxes on the floor and coming to MEGAN'S aide) Oh yes. This happened last week. Mrs. Sanders and Mr. Phillips were stuck in here for nearly an hour.

MEGAN
(she starts to push all the buttons) This can't be happening.

BRAD
(placing the last of the oranges in her bag and sitting against the back wall)

Yeah. Mrs. Sanders and Mr. Phillips are now a couple. Inseparable. I heard the wedding is next Tuesday over at the Senior Center. They'll probably serve something like Shepherds Pie or Pot Pies. Some sort of pie. Older people love their pie. Not too many of them take to the cakes or brownies.

MEGAN
(sitting on the floor) What are you talking about?

BRAD
Oh, I'm sorry. I just ramble on sometimes. My name is Brad.

MEGAN
(she forces out a weak smile) I'm Megan. Nice to meet you. (pause) What do you think the problem is? How long do you think we'll be stuck?

BRAD
This building was built in the 40's and I don't think the equipment has been updated since then. We could be here a while. *(motioning to the bag of groceries)* At least we won't starve up here.

MEGAN
(rummaging in the bag) Oh, would you like an apple or an orange or perhaps we should break out the wine and Chex Mix?

BRAD
An orange would be nice, thanks. I live on the fifth floor. Well, until Friday. I'm moving. *(he motions to the boxes)*

MEGAN
(she tosses him an orange) We live on the sixth floor.

BRAD
(he begins to peel the orange) I know.

MEGAN
(staring at BRAD) How do you know where I live?

BRAD
I've seen you around, never really seen the boyfriend before.

MEGAN
I've lived here for over a year and he just moved in with me a few weeks ago. *(weakly)* We're still getting used to each other. How'd you know I was living with a boyfriend?

BRAD

(long pause) You been watching the Olympics?

MEGAN

(momentarily distracted) Oh, yes. Those athletes are something else. Aren't they? I mean, I've always admired people who turn their body into a temple and take such good care of themselves. *(her voice trails off at the last few words)*

BRAD

I know what you mean. I'm the same way, don't get enough exercise.

MEGAN

Did you see any of those women weight-lifters? My God, those are some strong women!

BRAD

Yes. The American's win was . . . bittersweet for me.

MEGAN

Why?

BRAD

I used to be married to one of them.

MEGAN

No way. *(pause)* Really? That must have been exciting! Did she make you eat raw egg shakes and lift weights with her?

BRAD

(looking down at the floor, fiddling with his orange)
Yes. We were married for almost two years.

MEGAN

What happened? If you don't mind me asking.

BRAD

No. I don't mind. If you promise not to laugh.

MEGAN

If you don't want to tell me, that's okay. But I promise, I won't laugh.

BRAD

She used to beat the crap out of me. .

MEGAN

Oh! Your joking, right?

BRAD

No. I'm serious. *(pause)* She's a big and powerful woman. We met at the Olympic trials, I was watching one of my friends compete in gymnastics. *(pause)* I

loved her very much, *(pause)* but I could never defend myself against her. It wouldn't be right. And she, *(pause)* she couldn't stop, so I left.

MEGAN

(pushing the buttons again) How long you think we've been in here? Do you suppose somebody will rescue us? I haven't seen the maintenance man in weeks.

BRAD

It's only been about ten minutes. We can talk about something else. Hey, did you know this building was built in the forties?

MEGAN

You said that already. *(pause)* I just don't know what to say, about, well, your situation. *(pause)* Which woman was she? Did she win a medal?

BRAD

She won a bronze. *(silence)* She physically abused me. Kinda what you're going through.

MEGAN

(nervously) What do you mean? I'm perfectly fine.

BRAD

You live on the top floor. You don't hear anybody above you like I do.

MEGAN

You . . . you live below me?

BRAD

(he nods his head yes) And I hear what's been going on the last two weeks. You need to get rid of that guy.

MEGAN

Who the hell do you think you are? *(she jumps up and faces the door, expecting it to open)*

BRAD

Hey. I'm sorry. The walls and floors are extremely thin. I . . . I couldn't help but hear him.

MEGAN

(turning around, angrily) Well, stop listening to my personal business.

BRAD

Megan. I couldn't help but hear things. I've lived under you for the past year and I feel as if I know you. You deserve so much better.

MEGAN

You don't know me at all. *(there is a long silence, MEGAN sits back down)*

BRAD

Look, I'm not a psycho or anything. If you got to know me, you'd see, I'm a decent guy.

MEGAN

(still somewhat put off) I'm sure you're a very nice guy, but I already have a boyfriend.

BRAD

Yeah, one that abuses you. My grandma used to say, hit me once, shame on you, hit me twice, shame on me.

MEGAN

(beginning to cry) I . . . I don't know what to do.

BRAD

(moving close to MEGAN)
Do you love him?

MEGAN

I thought I did. Oh, I don't know. I've been alone so long. Maybe it was the loneliness, or the fact that he was interested in me and didn't have a place to stay or . . .

BRAD

(he reaches out to smooth her hair, then thinks better not)
You're a very pretty woman, Megan. I never realized how beautiful you were up close.

MEGAN

(laughing a little)
And you're not a psycho?

BRAD

(smiling) Scout's honor.

MEGAN

I don't know what to do.

BRAD

You could move in with me.

MEGAN

I just don't know what to do. I . . . I don't even know you.

BRAD

What would you like to know?

MEGAN

I don't know. You seem to know a lot about me.

BRAD

I don't watch television and your life was so much more interesting than the radio.

MEGAN

(she smiles weakly) My life. Interesting? You must have had a bad connection.

BRAD

I know you didn't go out much. Your mother calls every Tuesday night and you enjoy the Beatles after a particularly grueling day at work. By the way, I don't know where you work or what it is that you do.

MEGAN

(smiling) You mean I have some secrets left?

BRAD

You don't seem to bring your work home with you and I haven't followed you anywhere. I work as an accountant at a firm downtown.

MEGAN

You're really not a stalker, huh.

(BRAD crosses his heart and holds up two fingers to make a V)

Well, *(pause)* I work for an advertising agency. I'm a graphic designer.

BRAD

(smiling) That explains all the quiet time you spend alone in your apartment.

MEGAN

Just drawing my ideas. Sometimes I use the computer, but not very often. I'm sorta old-fashion that way. *(the elevator begins to move again)*

BRAD

Please, Megan, come home with me. I will be good to you.

MEGAN

I usually don't follow strangers home.

BRAD

(smiling) I'm not a stranger. I'm your neighbor and I could just be your friend if you want.

MEGAN

I just don't know.

BRAD

How did you meet your current boyfriend?

MEGAN
Promise you won't laugh?

BRAD
You didn't. Neither will I.

MEGAN
I met him on line.

BRAD
That means I have a chance. You've seen me and you know I'm quiet.

MEGAN
(teasingly) Yeah. You're quiet all right. Busy listening to my life. *(the elevator stops at BRAD'S floor)*

BRAD
(gathering his boxes) You know where I am if you change your mind.

MEGAN
Hey, why are you moving?

BRAD
(exiting the elevator) I like to rescue damsel in distress, so I need thicker walls! *(MEGAN doesn't say anything)*

BRAD
I'll see you around Megan. Take care of yourself.

MEGAN
(stopping the elevator from closing) I think it was a brave thing you did, leaving a bad situation.

BRAD
Thanks. I appreciate that. *(awkward silence)*

MEGAN
Well, um. . . It was nice to meet you. *(she gathers her groceries as BRAD turns to leave)* Brad, could I have a few of your boxes and maybe your phone number?

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How They Found Me

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....and that's how they found me. On the sidewalk, flat on my back, leaves around me, as if a chalk outline. Cold hovered, just touching lightly dusting my skin, not penetrating. vast swarms of golden yellow brown leaves blew in great waves across the sidewalk, the street, over me. the way wind whips things into parody of life.

that day I'd been driving on the freeway, automatic, the same route day in day out. In that self contained zone, where nothing can touch you, unless you let it. think about crashing into concrete, a fiery wreck, movie soundtrack ending. I was watching the grass blow, looking at everything intently, on the side of the road. garbage. discarded shoes, hubcaps, tires, trash-sleeping bags, clothes in the crevices of freeway overpasses....and my life. i've been driving past my life. past the past, not future. what is future, but past waiting to happen? and it plays reel to reel in my head (an attractive head) as I look at the grass and trash fly by on the side of the "freeway"... freeway....its no such thing. someones always on your ass. and Vw comes to me, as she often does, in my head she says, (remember this)?

"is it not possible-I often wonder-that things we have felt with great intensity have an existence independent of our minds; are in fact still in existence? And if so, will it not be possible, in time, that some device will be invented by which we can tap them?" (VW)

in daydream, in sleep, in motion in rest, in reverie in logic---- last night I dreamt (imagined, felt) I was holding her in my arms, and she reminded me she'd go. how is this anything but real? who tells me this is dream, memory? who can prove? and all day her image loomed before me. on my computer, in my books, on the stairs in the kitchen on the freeway. I spoke to her, first of love, then of anger, inability to forgive. how can one forgive someone for not loving them as much? thin air ghosts, I write them letters, converse with them in my head. compare everyone else to them--and those who live up pass me by instead.

getting older, living in this world more and more/and the fall, it always makes me happy/sad. How lovely to pass in fall....drive home in memory trance.

...and that's how they found me. on the sidewalk, flat on my back, leaves around me in outline (blown there by the wind) cold hovered around me, just touching, not penetrating my skin. Leaves blew in great waves in the wind.

it must be dream, memory?

CONVEYOR

There is always a woman who talks first and a man not too far off To hear it, his ears full of the noise shells make that people say is the sound of the sea but is more likely the air released after heartbreaks. They call it the conveyor, the movements of the great seas from one to another, but the Atlantic always remains the saltiest. At the southern tip of Africa you can look out to a great crack where the South Atlantic meets the Indian Ocean and you can see that the world is broken.

There is always an ocean and there are usually shells there, many of them stuffed with life that surfs the shores in small squirts or else is spat onto land and lies forlorn because the world is baked in great masculine stances. There is always a woman who is a ship or a sea and a man who calls another man "motherfucker" and another ocean opens a small mouth and sucks him down and a small boy calls, "Man overboard!" Though on the great conveyor there is no place for stopping. Turning around is a danger best avoided, and a drowning man is a memory that builds a story later.

There are few shells that live well in the sea but most live longer than men. The fish are indifferent to all except the moon which yanks at their boots and the gulls clap and squawk for it. Men call the moon a woman like a ship and are afraid to go back to her again. The walk is treacherous. Her craters are mirrors to those on the bottoms of seas where the chests they lost wait the discovery of Atlantis or Venus or the return of Vesuvius.

There is always a woman who flicks a cigarette ash into the sea from a ship's deck in 1926, where she leans casually over the rail posing for a photograph. The sun never stops shining here, and the men never stop looking at her from their distant points as murky drowning figures on the periphery. They wear hats so that their faces are in eternal shadow as they pretend to stare profoundly down into the deep. The photographer remains invisible, worried about light.

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