



NUDE  
BRUCE

RE-  
View!



# NUDE BRUCE REVIEW

*Issue 3*

**Andrew Mobbs & Timothy Snediker** – Editors-in-Chief

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**Chris Hancock** – Fiction Editor & Curator of Online Content

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**Kyle Blair** – Cover Illustration

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Foremost, we, The Editors, wish you, our loyal readers, a jubilant and a poetical 2014!

Last year saw the inception of our humble magazine, and what an eventful year it was! After innumerable hours of staff formation, preparation and promotion, we were joyously and gratefully bombarded with submissions, many of which exuded quality and gravitas that was and remains ineffable: evocative poems with knife-swift imagery and original fiction utterly brimming with hilarity and jaw-dropping realism. We selected the finest of these works and constructed two seasonal issues that we hope sent you, dear friends, into a beautiful maelstrom of literary euphoria.

As you may have noticed, our salacious, sumptuous and scintillating mascot, Nude Bruce, has been expertly reiterated by illustrator extraordinaire Kyle Blair. In addition to being a dashing good-looking man-beast himself, Kyle also partners with our previous illustrator, the distinguished and devilishly

winsome Jason Flack, at their art collective blog,  
jebkennedy.blogspot.com. Go check them out.  
Your eyes will thank your brain.

We are confident that the poems and fictions  
herein are among the best and brightest of any.  
We're thankful for each of the contributors,  
without whom we would be *sans raison d'être*. Most  
of all, we thank you, dear readers, for your valuable  
time and your valued attention.

And on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of January in the calendar year  
of 2014, we said: *Let there be Bruce!*

-Andrew, Tim & Chris, Editors





*You do not read Bruce;  
Bruce read you.*

- Nude Bruce



# Cover Letter

by A. Ernest Benson

Hello Nude Bruce,

My name is Allan E. Benson Jr. or A. Ernest Benson. I wish I could say this was the first cover letter I have written to a nude man but alas, I live a life that is not free of those sorts of things. I am glad to say though this is the first time that I am happy to be writing a cover letter to a nude man. This has a lot to do with the fact that unlike the other nude gentlemen that I have written, you have chosen to hang a tasteful banner in front of your genitals. Thank you for that. I do not think that I could ever live the nude lifestyle as you do, but the confidence with which you project your nudity while maintaining an approachable manner is something that I respect. I hope one day we can be friends. Maybe I could call you N.B. and you can call me A. B. and we can talk like old timey fast talking steel tycoons or perhaps railroad magnates. You can decide; I like either. If that does not work for you, then maybe you could call me Al and I

could call you Bruce and we could be fishmongers together.

Anyway, this cover letter is to introduce my intention to submit some short stories and poetry to your review. Here is my cover letter statement of intention:

*Dear N.B.,*

Hope this cover letter finds you well. Sarah and myself are doing good and we are enjoying the fall colors but not looking forward to the cold. I have written a few short stories and poems that I intend to submit to your review.

Was that a bit too soon to call you N.B.? I hope it did not come off as forced.

I understand you want some biographical information about me as well. I have been trying for years to get someone to write a biography about me but have had no success. I sincerely hope that in the place of biographical information some autobiographical information is acceptable.

I find that there are more things to say about me that I am not than things to say about me that I am, but I will endeavor to tell you a little bit of both things that I am not and things that I am. I was not born on three hundred and sixty four different days in the year where there is only one day that I was born on. I lived in Little Rock, Arkansas for longer than I have been living in Anchorage, Alaska but at this moment, I am



spatially located in Anchorage. I am not sure that I can ever prove that other people are real but I have decided to go about my life as if they are. At one time, I was afraid of the zombie apocalypse but I am not anymore because of the zombie equation that I worked out.

1. Zombies eat the flesh of a living person until that person turns into a zombie themselves

2. An average of twenty to thirty zombies can entirely consume a person before they turn or will at least cause enough damage that when the victim turns they will be ineffective at catching a living person

3. Therefore there will never be more than thirty to one hundred zombies at one time because once that number is reached the zombies will completely consume any person before they can turn

4. Given the current environment of zombie awareness and preparedness there is no way one hundred zombies are going to last more than an hour or two before they are hunted down

Thank you for your time,

- A. Ernest Benson

# First Breast

by Joe Trimble

Hers was the first breast I had seen  
since I suckled at my mother's chest, hers  
a large dark mindless eye  
that stared without focus at me, a boy  
then, from the bed where she sat changing clothes,  
and she did not scold me  
                    for rushing in  
to tell her something I had already forgotten  
or for staring back at what she quickly covered up,  
cradling it with the shield of her arm. Forever after  
I knew she kept a creature  
                    hidden  
beneath bra and blouse, softly tucked inside  
the darkness, hidden from the world.

# Umbilicus

by Joe Trimble

Incongruous button  
of the birthday suit,  
mark of the mammal,  
scar of separation,  
single vision-less eye  
of the breadbasket,  
carrier of lint  
and plaything  
of children,  
ventriloquized whistling,  
personified,  
human within the human.

Boldly stationed  
in the middle of things,  
core to Vitruvian Man,  
inspiration  
for the Tortellini,  
pre-existent mouth  
to the body—  
shadowy yonic

star of the fashionable  
midriff, ever the reminder  
of an old connection  
to another life.

b

by Alonzo Mandanna

in the desert

you left my heart

in the hands

of a small teddy bear



# Sick Karaoke

by Jonathan Jones

I remember the plague year well.  
Smoke and the crinoline night smell of blossom  
beneath the subway. People everywhere  
staggering out with their dead  
as we went walking  
hand in hand.

The summer was shining graffiti  
as I whistled to you Tales of Hoffman.

The shape of your mouth  
drew the time's treble cleft,  
while the peach orchard rotted  
and stank like a butchers window.

Groans travelled languid  
to mingle between our fingers;  
a fever of voices,  
suspended in agony.

Skulls bleached in the dunes  
as we entered  
the old town

and stroked the hyenas who nuzzled  
against us. The plague year was full  
of such warm friendly faces.

The smell of the rain  
spreading sickness  
and at night your breath's blue smoke.

Dark fires to fight off the light  
making us stare  
like shop mannequins  
at their open sores.

It was historic to be part of something new  
like that. To sleep and wake  
together  
as the plague softly simmered  
damp smelling and soft to touch  
like underwear.

Mass Requiems ten times daily  
ringing their bells  
to the new Karaoke.  
No-one could tell the difference at times.

No cure, you liked the thought of that.  
The taste of sweat so many feared.

Fifteen years in less than fifteen months.

I remember the plague year well;  
the way people did anything for you.

# Mine

by Christine Thompson

“Nurse, NURSE! Tell this toothless idiot, sitting across the table to stop staring at me!” Mr. Smith pointed to Mr. Brown. Brown smiled back, which revealed two eye teeth that hung like stalactites in an empty cave of lost teeth. They dripped drool instead of mineralized water.

The nurse shook her head, sighed, and said: “Mr. Brown, you know Mr. Smith hates it when you stare at him. Please stop.” Brown’s smile disappeared. With head slumped, he continued slurping his pureed food while Smith munched his meatballs. Smith’s teeth reminded Brown of the wind-up-chattering-kind: brilliant white with each tooth as straight as a soldier at attention.

Despite the nurse’s scolding, Brown’s eyes fixated on Smith’s false-teeth. He watched as they marched up and down through brown mud. Since Brown’s teeth decayed at an early age and he could not afford the replacement fee, he wondered whether solid food tasted differently than his

brown goo. Suddenly, Smith clutched his throat and stood up. His lips turned blue. Smith was choking.

The nurse rushed behind him and administered the Heimlich, but the only thing that flew out of his mouth was his falsies. PLOP, right into Brown's bowl. She was too busy thumping on his stomach to notice that Smith's teeth had gone MIA. The emergency crew came to Shady Lane Nursing Home and the residents were wheeled back to their rooms. Before Brown left, he reached into his bowl and tucked Smith's dentures into his pocket.

Never in his life had he stolen anything, at least nothing significant. But this time, his primal instincts kicked in. In his bathroom with the door closed, he took his hidden treasure out and cleaned off any evidence of Smith. In his mind, he remembered the bluish tone around Smith's mouth. *Eh, the old man's probably dead. Besides, he's rich. He can afford another set. Just this once, I'm going to do something for me!* With that, Brown reached into his own mouth and yanked and pulled and twisted until...

POP! Out came one tooth.

POP! Out came the other.

Brown pushed himself up out of his wheelchair and held onto the corner of the sink while the other hand gently placed the false teeth into his mouth. His gums throbbed—a feeling he had not felt since his last tooth abscessed and eventually rotted away. He swallowed hard.

Metallic warmth filled his mouth; blood was flowing from the two vacant cavities that once held his two teeth. He peered into the mirror. The reflection was that of a man whose face no longer appeared wrinkled and sunken around his mouth, a look that both fascinated and frightened Brown. The person looking back was no longer war-torn from age or lack of a full set of teeth but rather normal and dashing in appearance. He continued to swallow blood, which now seemed a constant stream. Brown glowed with excitement, until red streaks oozed from the gums. He fell back into his wheelchair. His temples pulsed with pain from the loss of blood.

After several hours, the nurse came in for evening bed check. She noticed that Brown was not sleeping in his bed but slumped over in his wheelchair drenched in blood. The emergency crew came and secured Brown in the stretcher. Meanwhile, a nurse pushed Smith in a wheelchair down the same hall—a complete recovery. Brown, though semi-conscious, continued to smile with red stained teeth.

“STOP!” Smith grabbed the brake handles of his wheelchair and pulled up next to Brown’s gurney. Brown’s head rolled over towards Smith. Brown grinned and bared his new teeth while Smith frowned, his lips sunken deep into his mouth.

“MINE!” Smith reached in and grabbed his false teeth out of Brown’s mouth. Brown gagged, sputtered, and then died toothless.



# *from* My Brother Inside a Porcupine

by B.B.P. Hosmillo

1

It is such a scenic detour to lose the way  
to get to where mother tells she usually  
buries the feet of the house; somehow this is  
an ambition: disobedience, rebellion, love.

*Secretum meum mihi*, the Latin for this.

Since we are two people, the logic of owner-  
ship is a status problem. It is the question of  
who comes first or who detaches his hand  
from another holding it or who first finds  
the world and kills it before it could cease  
to exist. Our creed is as simple as our names  
on our foreheads and we make sure we don't  
forget them by erasing them when someone  
tries to read the future; they're the newspapers  
that can't report the crime left unsolved in the  
assassination of yesterday; they're the theoretical  
texts that can't bring point as you crave for some-  
thing new or for radical changes: a becoming.

Here: if it's meant to happen, it will not reveal  
its plan; if it's for us, we will never know it;

& if it's finished we will make it happen again  
by making what memory outgrows in us both.

2

There is a lyric between the trees marking  
our own places: the question of separation,  
the question of first. But we play for a while,  
I'm a man, he's another, I'm a woman, he's  
my man and a brother until we become the play  
whose ending pretends too much as if too much  
rainfall wouldn't suck people up in a flood.

3

So we endure its long trough, a vigil in between  
wayside bushes; animals rinse off each other with  
their saliva thicker than blood; wind suffers pleurisy;  
a couple of mosquitoes couldn't find amenable skin;  
crippled leaves attacked by the palsy of bathos into dust  
above the grass of history that's mowed by an order curled  
deep within our bodies—we often see the mess inside us  
because we are those who deign forever and love the Truth.

4

Entanglement—this body—to fluid boundaries  
begins on edges of the books that come to rescue us  
while the eye's attrition is a travel space in multiple tasks.  
And in this kind of tangible beginning we like to think  
we can hold each other's hand; horizon is a big promise,  
a big step, we take turns in reaching it, but none  
who leaps to see a better place will see it. The better place  
is not where we stand, where we begin the illusions,  
where there is a piece of land, a grave, a mass, a job  
to be done, where we settle the lesser of what we can  
consume like a supper's plate, where we believe god left  
his open ears. The better place—we take generous turns  
in reaching it, we promise harder to make bigger steps.

5

The train holds the rail across the trajectory of our adventure,  
the lodging we carry even without any intention. If for a time  
short of good establishment the canoes, enameled, where we  
piously entrust our feet, our mother will rehash a statement of  
Buddha: "Delusion is none other than enlightenment."  
You will say yes when I tell you we heard the ending; it is  
the sea waves that never fail to obscure the sound of reasoning  
out. We will see to it that the ending is heard as we wait for  
another horoscope to appear on the news.

6

How many places I've been I've seen myself forever  
contained? How many regions you've been in my body  
that never drew you closer to where you are today? Nature tells  
me all will collapse according to its law and our law is  
to liquefy them into the pond of our sweet and salty discharge  
before we actually see our homes gone swimming with  
the aria dead of our own.

7

We've been fooled by \_\_\_\_\_ that we can most connect  
to a subliminal if our bodies sewn together by lips  
that couldn't be parted tongue tied. We walk slowly,  
very slowly, the slowest running avails upon seeing  
the midway road: where it leads us: a delta that goes back  
in confusion.

8

\_\_\_\_\_ reminds me of where we can't go back, even in sincerity.  
I was born because someone wanted to have a silent walk.  
And just like any other woman, it disappears in consciousness.

# Life in Salt

by Boona Daroom

I.

The cosmonaut, lunting  
papyrus, jirbles the grenade.

II.

I'm going to continue  
with the tranquilizers.

III.

All across America  
something red dyes.  
The alleys bubble fools  
tooling warped boon.

IV.

It is  
Time.

V.

Rain rises through

battered gutters.  
California widows  
fawn with squirrel.

VI.



VII.

Soda squirts  
drink the waterbed.  
Englishable papers  
surf blank thunder.

VIII.

1 United States Dollar  
=  
6.13 Chinese Yuan

IX.

People are afraid.

X.

Cigarette cut mouths  
chrome their dressings,  
rivers trying to figure  
uranium out.



# The Difference between Screaming and not Screaming

by Moneta Goldsmith

is the moment when you find yourself face to face with  
the cashier  
at Rite Aid after waiting two hours in the check-out line;

it's the moment when you're all soaped up in the shower  
and the hot water turns off

— when you're clean but not quite clean —  
and the cashier looks at your Boca burgers as if to say,

'Tonight the sunset is going to be a hoax / the sky will  
break free at last of its weeping clouds / lagging behind  
them / like a child with so many handfuls of unspent  
tears'.

and suddenly you don't feel like waiting in line any longer

*blame it on the sky*  
*compelling as a river*

time is suspended, as for terrorists at the airport,  
the water starts back up again  
and your mind tries to take flight like some halcyon bird  
cramped in a sextant of smoke and mud and  
you understand that by anyone's standards you are  
probably unlovable,  
that the air is a meth lab  
you will have to carry with you wherever you go

*blame it on the air*  
*avid and unchanging*  
*blame it on the sun*  
*empty beet-faced pretense*

and suddenly it's too late to turn back,  
you're face to face with cashier number four  
and she looks at you, your towel-in-hand,  
looks at you, as if to say:

'you move like a slow-turning clock / it looks like you  
lost your core back there someplace / and what's more,  
it might rain later / and I can see your heart sticking out a  
little today / better tuck it in / so it doesn't catch cold'.

each day is going to be like this:

there will be no windows or exit strategies,  
there will be no train to leap across the abyss where the  
bridge is down.

instead, you will wake up in a cave larger than the earth,  
unsure whether or not your eyes have opened, and it's

*time to make your final purchase.*

# Untitled

by Christopher Martinez

Over

365 days

When she said, we were lacking.

When she said, she missed our passion  
And romance,

But before she walked out of her dorm,  
In a fury of flame attitude,  
Eyes welling like drowning capsules  
She said, she'd always wished for Paris  
And that I could never give that to her

So out of Popsicle sticks and some glue,  
I found around her room,  
My heart constructed the Eiffel Tower,  
Wrote "je t'aime" on 55 sticky notes,  
Smoked her pack of cigarettes,  
Farted and left.

When I got her text,

Two hours later it read,  
“U R a DOUCHE!!”  
I text back,  
“Oui.”



# The Least Cruel Method for Cooking Crabs\*

by Arthur Case

What a curious pursuit:

In order to cook live crabs, here's what you do. Place each crab in a small to medium-sized bucket. Find two large blocks of ice.

Just before turning out the lights in the kitchen, place the blocks of ice inside the bucket that contains the crabs. Cover the bucket with the crabs that contain the blocks of ice, and cover them completely. After a few moments of crab confusion, the crabs will believe it is winter and they will start to fall asleep.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the stove, boil a separate pot of water. It is important to perform this step solemnly, with caution, out of earshot of your unsuspecting companions. As a rule, crabs have mercifully poor hearing, especially while hibernating, but they are highly evolved in matters of spirituality, possibly gnomish, even by crustacean standards. It would be wise to whisper a

short prayer before lighting the second burner on the oven, just in case.

When the water boils, reach beneath the blocks of melting ice. If necessary, hold a wax candle in your free hand while doing so. The use of smartphones and flashlights is not recommended due to a widespread belief that aquatic species, bottom-dwellers especially, are more sensitive to radioactivity than are humans. Anyway, candles are safer. There are always more of them.

When you transport the crabs, one by one, into your pot of boiling water, do so quickly, and without resting too much between crabs.

I repeat: the candle should under no circumstances burn to its wick before you are finished with this step. It is well known that crabmeat is more tender if the crab itself suffers in its final hours, but this is a tradeoff you must make for the sake of science. It is crucial for the purposes of this exercise that the window of time between crab convoys be minimal. This is for your sake, but also so that the crabs don't have time to warn their friends, or say goodbye to their relatives, or cry.

Rinse out bucket for signs of bacteria and other crab offerings. Replace the lid on top of boiling water. Try not to turn away when the crabs turn white and slack and then, dinner. You will respect yourself more for this once night falls and you unplug your record player for the evening, the coarse sound of the record still spinning and scratching against the record-needle, and all the

whiskey in the world has not been enough to rinse away the metallic aftertaste of crab and crab tears.

Carry a book to the bed-stand, do not wonder too long whether rooms were designed to be this quiet or crabs were meant to make so much noise under blocks of ice, even for that brief moment, with their little slanted eyes half-shut, pretending to be asleep.

*\*This piece was previously published in Empty Sink, as well as Sparkle & Blink.*

# Daily Still the Mail Runs

by Ace Boggess

I wait to hear from you whom I love & do not love  
your eyes a twilit sky above free lands of wonder

hands trembling branches holding autumn's colors  
in their touch  
the mailbox stands empty letters like you things of  
memory & loss

no message comes no silent plea  
even voices on the wind have spent themselves in  
wasteful forests

don't tell me you have forgotten me  
or do yes do tell me so at least once more

I shall recognize your cricket-like song  
your raspy purr like a country jazz

I'd send pigeons to bear aloft my hopes  
were their feathers not so crusted with the past

bottles as envelopes never save those sad men  
who toss them willy-nilly to the sea

so I wait & wish & wonder if the dawn will break  
or saints respond to prayers for future sins

what will you think of me when words  
return to you like mice inside the winter walls?

will you say "I should've loved I should've seen?"  
by a lanyard I will hang those words about your  
neck

# Sunday Drive

by John Grey

According to you,  
those drops are  
gentle flowers on my windscreen,  
far from the throngs that thrash and roar.  
you, my wife, fluttering in my nest  
because, alas! your true one is still high,  
its memories peacefully at rest,  
while here you make do with being  
pleased at the body of a fellow human...  
such a noble fellow who  
drives you in his Toyota,  
gears transformed by ecstasy,  
even beneath the suburb's tiny sky  
where madness, wind, creep us together;  
heavenly, sweetly, speed here, brake there,  
I astonish you in fields, down lanes, by swimming  
pools,  
in the matter of song, performed  
like a blustering oak tree.  
I drive with pride, understand my value,  
here lifted to the top branch of your thoughts –  
you flutter around me,  
hug me out of bad weather –  
while the torrents fall.

# cultus

by Christopher Mulrooney

this was the serene limit  
the city limits  
every neighborhood has its provincialisms  
mine to be sure  
but one block over as Arthur Miller says  
they were dirt ignorant I mean a clod was a marvel  
of cohesiveness and form

## Contributors

*in order of appearance*

**Kyle Blair** was born and raised in the central valley of California, and has spent his entire life learning to draw. He loves 80's movies, rock-n-roll, The Muppets, and granola bars. He spends much of his time collaborating with his pals as part of the illustration collective, Jeb Kennedy. #valleygirl

**A. Ernest Benson** is the author of the piece entitled "Cover Letter," above. It was supposed to be his cover letter and bio, but the editors liked it so much they decided to publish it. #zombies

**Joe Trimble**, a Lily Peters fellow, is currently enrolled in the MFA Program in Creative Writing and Translation at the University of Arkansas, where he spends his time teaching, meandering the labyrinth that is the Dickson Street Bookshop, and innocently filching ideas for new poetry. #fearandtrimbling

**Alonzo Ziv Mandanna's** name is Alonzo Ziv Mandanna....you killed his father: prepare to die. Currently, Alonzo has a minor concussion. This



was given to him by a rock, hidden beneath turbulent waters. #dreadpirate

**Jonathan Jones** is 38 years old and at present he teaches on the English Writing Program at the American University of Rome. His main influences are Scott Fitzgerald, Raymond Chandler, Saki, T.S.Eliot, Philip Larkin and Yann Martel. He has also had a number of poems and short stories published in the English small press by such magazines as *The New Writer*, *Dreamcatcher*, and *Iota*. #paxromana

**Christine (Chris) Thompson** currently lives in the small Midwestern town of Princeton, IL. She holds a MFA in Creative Writing and a BA in English. Her short fiction and poetry have appeared in *River Currents*, *The Alchemist Review*, *The GNU*, *Fine Lines*, *Quarterly Journal of Contemporary English Haibun*, *Scissors & Spackle*, and more. Thompson's first novel, a juvenile fiction adventure story: *Mason's Miracle*, is forthcoming in the spring of 2014. Follow Thompson on [Facebook](#) or on Twitter (@thompson\_author). #masonsmiracle

**B.B.P. Hosmillo** is a critic of gender and queer precarity. His works have appeared or are forthcoming in *Lingua Cultura*, *The Missing Slate*, *Quarterly Literary Review Singapore*, *Wilde* (Denver, Colorado), *Far Enough East Journal*, *Mascara Literary Review*, and elsewhere. #brilliant

**Boona Daroom's** work has recently appeared in *LIT*, *SOFTBLOW*, *Monday Night*, among other places. He lives in Brooklyn. #saltydog

**Moneta Goldsmith** is a writer, teacher, and former editor of *The Northridge Review*. His works have appeared both online and in print in such magazines as *Sparkle & Blink*, *Under the Influence*, *Whole Beast Rag*, among others. #screamondude

**Christopher "Rooster" Martinez** is a spoken word artist from San Antonio, TX. He is the co-founder of The Blah Blah Blah Poetry Spot, a open mic poetry venue that focuses on the growth of local writers, youth, sends poets to national competitions, conducts workshops, and is currently seeking to become a non-profit organization. He has made three national slam teams; featured at local colleges, universities, schools, and poetry venues throughout Texas. #singalong

**Arthur Case** originally hails from New England, and now resides in southern California where he writes poetry and prose and sometimes wears a beard. Try not to hold it against him; it can be prickly. #thykingdomcomethybeardbedone

**Ace Boggess** is author of two books of poetry: *The Prisoners* (forthcoming from Brick Road Poetry Press) and *The Beautiful Girl Whose Wish Was Not Fulfilled* (Highwire Press, 2003). His writing has

appeared in *Harvard Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *RATTLE*, *River Styx*, *Southern Humanities Review* and many other journals. He currently resides in Charleston, West Virginia. #savetheUSPS

**John Grey** is an Australian born poet. Recently published in *International Poetry Review*, *Sanskrit* and the science fiction anthology, “Futuredaze” with work upcoming in *Clackamas Literary Review*, *New Orphic Review* and *Nerve Cowboy*. #sundayfunday

**Christopher Mulrooney** has written poems in *Red Branch Journal*, *The Germ*, *Auchumpkee Creek Review*, *Epigraph Magazine*, *Bicycle Review*, *Pomona Valley Review*, *Or, Decanto*, *The Cannon’s Mouth*, and *The Criterion*. #mmhmm

*When God began to create heaven  
and earth – the earth being unformed  
and void, with darkness over the  
surface of the deep and a wind from  
God sweeping over the water – God  
said, “Let there be light”; and there  
was light.*

Bereshit 1:1-3

fin.