# MEAT FOR TEA

VOL 9 ISSUE 3: tripe
THE VALLEY REVIEW

# Meat for Tea: The Valley Review

Meat for Tea: The Valley Review was founded by Elizabeth MacDuffie and Alexandra Wagman. We are a non-academic affiliated magazine committed to recognizing and featuring the work of the artists, writers, and musicians living in western Massachusetts and beyond.

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To submit to Meat For Tea, please go to: meatforteathevalleyreview.submittable.com/submit.
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# salutations from the staff

Welcome to our Tripe Issue,

Our spring cleaning has by now been turned back to its native filth in a way that feels conspicuously like accomplishment. Our floors are gritty and our welcome mat is saturated. It is in this way that tripe is prepared: harvested, cured, stored, and then the salt leeched off under a steady drip of cold water over a colander in the sink. The process ends with its undoing. Similarly, weeds creep vainly from under a slab of flagstone. Thousands of insect eggs are deposited in a flurry of late summer activity. Weeks later a new race of tiny machines will return to their ancestral spawning grounds to resume nesting as several generations have before them- the husk of a peach under our wastebasket.

Brake cables on bicycles grow slack from use in preparation for next spring's tune-up.

It is in this mode that we bid you salutations: gently undoing what was so fastidiously done. Even now neat rows of prose are being blown in the door like crumpled leaves, like weightless snow, like downy feathers. These lines are to be assembled into another book, which will be read, and then some of those readers will put pen to paper...

A steady drip from the sink's tap into a rennet-filled colander, in other words.

A warm welcome to Stefan Lovasik who will be our featured reader at Cirque du Changes. An equally vigorous welcome is extended to Clapperclaw and The Stone Coyotes, who will be performing in a musical capacity at the Cirque. Our deepest gratitude to Shannon Purcell for organizing an exceptional and expansive art exhibit at this event as well.

-Joseph



# leave the gun. take the canoli.

Stefan Lovasik

*(The Godfather, Coppola/Puzo 1972)*

*for and after D.A. Powell*

leave the gun  take the cannoli
blood pastry  some brains
gold and fingers
i'll take to go  please  and let us pray

any prayer except holy mary holy alice  mona mother of shit
for shit men
long hard novenas to guts you fuck are required
you culone
you dick
less man

please allow the authentic blood you know
to mix in the deep flow of your sexes
you probably won't
you flounce

sass basket  ghost in the pants
you just walk on light and leave no prints
so  so  macho
correct  polite  bloody sharp  bloody wit  so why not
eat it  lick it  feel it  love it

sing instrumentals
then we can dance and kill something

# waking

Stefan Lovasik

i know the horror of simple things
a waterspot on a mirror
two pillows on a bed

the perfect placement of a knife on a plate
these are the terrors that grow over our sleep
so i run to you

to tell me how to decipher
what's really here
but we are not viable today

due to our tangled wires holding us to this shared space
that tear our common waxed face
hidden by a salve of well

placed words and intentions
that hang in this air like hooks
that twist into sharp angles



to expose the boundaries of our fever
our illness of the commonplace
that sustain us

this haunting of all severed spaces and hours that are us
dead as four o'clock
this simplicity of what we think we are and don't know

this comfort that isn't and never will be
but maybe there is a waking
but not yet

not yet

# anarhy

Charles Rammelkamp

For E and J

When I saw the word scrawled
into sidewalk outside the art school,
I wondered if the misspelling were deliberate,
the concept made manifest
in the contempt for rules of language,
as well as the defacement of property itself,
the word etched into the gray mortar
with a sharp stick, like a poke in the eye.

Or had the kid (who else?),
in his rush not to get caught,
simply scratched in haste,
missing the c, not realizing his mistake?
Or did he really not know
how to spell the word?

And I remembered the Sex Pistols,
coolest name for a band
until Pussy Riot came along,
with Johnny Rotten and Sid Vicious
and their fuck-you attitudes;
the ransom-note typography
on their one and only record album,
a group that imploded almost
before they'd even established themselves:
now that's anarchy for you.
Or, anarhy.

# pretty normal paranormal

Charles Rammelkamp

"He's going to make contact with Mae West,"
my brother announced at dinner.

Our father spat water back into his glass.
"What did she say to him," he choked,
"'Come up and see me sometime?'"

"I'm not kidding, Dad!" Andy cried.
"Maybe you don't believe
in supernatural experiences,
but Bill Hastings's contacted
Andy Warhol and I don't know
who else, but it's a fact!"

At sixteen, my big brother Andy
drove his own car.
He was almost grown up.
I wanted to believe him.
What did our father know about this stuff?



"He contacts them, is that it?
And how does he do this?
You all hold hands and close your eyes?"

"Don't make fun of something
you don't know anything about!"
Andy's anger was like a tea kettle.
He sprang up, banged his knee
on the underside of the table,
knocking his glass of milk over,
making a mess.

Dad dialed it down.
Nobody liked to see Andy riled up.

"OK, sure, you're excused. Go.
Just be back before midnight, all right?"

In a huff, Andy took his plate to the kitchen,
in a hurry to get out.

"And Andy?" Dad couldn't stop himself.
"See if you can get Mae to come
clean our tablecloth, will you?"

# inherit the wind

## Charles Rammelkamp

Our financial advisor,
a Peruvian dude named Luis,
into numbers and formulas,
not so much literary allusions,
commented about his retirement-age clients: "A lot of these guys
end up like King Lear."

What did he mean?
Money to bequeath and children all too anxious
to get their hands on it?
The kids already making plans
how to spend it all?
Naked greed turning the patriarch's heart into stone?
A lack of proper gratitude?

But Luis couldn't or wouldn't elaborate,
only suggested we shift some of our investments
to the bond market.
At our age,
no need to take too many risks.

rail line

Jim Neill

# la segua

Justo Yanez

The countryside of Nicaragua is celebrated with natural gems, the simplicity of poverty, and the open freedom of plainness. Our city, which sits on the mountain like an exhausted giant, overlooks the growl of the Pacific Ocean. The town is booming. It is a fast-paced metropolis occupied with drunks and delinquents; it is a dirty smaller city that resembles New York—only inferior. Our women are stuck in gender roles and our children, bathed in dust, stop traffic cars begging for money and food. The fate of deficiency, a modern plague on our humid city, swallows each of its inhabitants. Many of us women revel in plainness, soaked by abuse, infidelity, and the scum of dirt floors. We have a hard time picking dirt from the beds of our nails.

Before my father lost his Mulberry farm to the *Sandinistas*, he was a wealthy man and I owned bright colored-dress; and when the breeze from the ocean use to soar through our streets, it use to make my dress dance and reveal all of its beautiful threading and expose my coffee-colored legs. The men would drink my image.

The last dress I wore before they burned our farm—the stench of tar still fills my nose— was a bright yellow dress. A month before, a woman, with roses in her hair, stopped by our farm and asked for food and a place to stay. My father, deprived of the thrill of sex, offered her his home in return for her breasts. To this day, the dispersed maids still talk about it throughout the city. During the night, I heard her screams, her curses, and she fled in the blackness of the dusk leaving behind this dress. Transfixed by its beautiful needlework and bright yellow colors, I kept it and still have it to this day.



I have witnessed many odd and unfortunate things in my life: first, the loss of my wealth. Then death of my father and husband to car crash involving an ox, and a stillborn. Her name would have been Gloria and her room would have overlooked the sea and would have the day's light inhabit her room. Lost without family, I worked in the mornings selling fruit in a large basket on top of my head and at night, I worked at a local bar. Santiago worked at a Korean factory that made garments.

I met Santiago on the anniversary of my husband's death. That night, I wore that yellow dress, still spotted with ash, and a mask of sadness. Santiago returning from a day at the factory was overworked and exhausted from the poor working conditions. The factories profited from our imbedded subservient traits and the dependent need for money. In fact, because of the poor lighting conditions most of their workers acquired the luxury of squinting their eyes indefinitely. I can still remember his coal-colored eyes staring at me through his eyelids, fighting to focus. Santiago was a good man. Raised in the Catholic Church and the luck of a having both parents, he learned the true jaggedness of life and the piety of good karma. I remember taking him home that night—his calloused hands thinly cut into my tenuous skin; how the heat of his skin from a laborious and monotonous job would send energy to my senses. He would cup my breast decorated with brown tips and tell me how he loved their suppleness. He was a good lover and would even swab my skin clean after he was done. I would wake each morning to smell of fried eggs and cheese and I would sleep soundly after our passionate caresses.

The latter part of that year, I bore him a son. During that same time, Santiago became fully blind

due to the lowly work environment. They let him go instantly and he relied on me for financial support. At first he remained a good man, blind but strong like an ox. He taught our son the importance of education and hard work.

He would take us in the summer evening deep into the mountains to watch the fairies revel in moonlight, and sing of the ancient Spanish Indians. One summer, my son Erberto ran into the middle, scaring them away in a frenzied flight. Their luminous bodies melted into the robe of the night. Santiago raged by the panicked fairies, reprimanded Erberto and threatened to never show us them again. He said this was the last sign of God's gift—the last and only thing we would receive in this life. We must cherish this gold even if it tarnishes in modernity.
He brought us to the dancing fairies the next summer.

We were barely making it that year. The threat of being homeless slept with me every night. I even had to pull Erberto from school just to work. Luckily, I found him a job selling ice for our neighbor Arturo. It was not much income but it sustained us.

Santiago changed. His lips splintered and would make my mouth bleed every time they pushed against my lips. His caresses became furious and it would leave me damaged the next morning. He would walk the streets, angered, kicking the dogs in the street, laughing from hearing their brittle bones breaking and their howls of pure pain.

One night he came into my room, I was asleep exhausted from work. The sourness of rum on his tongue still crisp awoke me in a jerk. He looked frightening, being concealed by the night and unlike himself for getting drunk. I still remember the emptiness of his eyes: being blind for so long his eye sockets hallowed in. He ordered me to put on that yellow dress the woman with roses left the night my father's farm burned down. I pulled it from underneath our bed, as he lay naked, outstretch and damp from the day's heat. I could still whiff the smell of smoke and feel the wetness from my past tears. I cried into that dress that night vigorously, knowing the reality of Nicaraguan cruelty would finally reach us.



The golden dress wrapped my body effortlessly. The jet blackness of my hair cut straight into the middle back of the dress. The hem of the garment collected the brown-dirt floor as it dragged from making my way to his bed. Santiago was careless and crude that night. I escaped reality by remembering how my father used to see me ride the horses in the farm, galloping in our grateful extravagance; of our rich cerulean residence on the edge of the farm; my mother laughing with tortilla flour in her hair; my collie napping in the sun. I said nothing during his violent act. The Nicaraguan adversities skilled me to be obedient and submissive. I left that night on a bus to Masaya, to the crater of a collapsed volcano. I was going to throw myself in, finally ceasing a provincial's life. However, the light of passing star focused on my stomach; I was pregnant.

Seven months later, after long days of pure mugginess and dust, I awoke in my thin sheets in a pool a blood. I was saddened but knew it was God's plan. Gloria escaped a life of failure and resentment.

***

People flooded the streets in festive neon colors. Men wore clay masks depicting colonial