

# miniMAG

*issue213*  
exodia





## Church Towers in Europe

Jean Liew

She told me she's climbed  
All the church towers in Europe.  
Perhaps, but to me the escalator  
From the central station in Siena  
Is more magnificent.  
It brought me from ground floor cherries  
That attracted ants, to the house  
Of Saint Catherine  
Next to where they sell dresses for €20.  
The tower in Pisa was nice but  
I didn't go, weight down by  
Fried chickpea sandwiches  
From the man impressed by my Italian.  
I grabbed another sandwich in a shop  
With a welcoming boar's head  
And that owner had the habitus of  
Jason Kelce, except bald.  
I admired the mosaic floors below  
And the peddlers watched me back.  
I didn't want the scarves to cover my arms  
Or to go up another set of steps.  
I'm fine with the turbulence  
When the plane descends, so long as  
I survive it.



## Amtrak

Craig Kirchner

Work Ethic and I  
are at a crowded Penn Station,  
standing in front of the Big Board,  
waiting for our track to flash.

A few move up—Boston, Trenton—  
but the crowd doesn't move.  
They are all waiting for our train,  
and it's late.

W.E. kills the time  
by pretending he's an alien  
taking reconnaissance notes.

*They are upright with pink epidermis,  
one head, and two legs.  
Left appendages pull fairly large black,  
box-like tails on wheels  
and the right pushes small black boxes  
to the side of the head.  
Only a very few have had these tails removed,  
and almost all talk to themselves.*

Finally—Washington: track 15—  
and the bustle starts to the escalator.  
We rush a bit to stand and wait,  
but now we are focused,  
we all know where we're going.  
I lose W.E. in the crowd and think  
about his surveillant scribble.

*All seem motivated by some God-like force  
to flee at the same time,  
but move poorly as a unit,  
like a funnel full of roaches.*

I'm not worried, he gets lost quite often,  
but always resurfaces.  
He's fun to hang with and doesn't drink much.  
He travels light and takes good notes.





## Baptism in America

Emily Stech

What does your hand hold  
Is it the change left over from the soda I just bought  
You tried to give it back to me, and I said you could keep it  
It will make the till over, and you get your last warning?

What does your hand hold  
Is it the powder from the airbag  
As I slam into the passenger's side of the Audi R6 you saved up for a year to buy  
Your blood staining the upholstery that will never come up  
You will always think of me when you think of this event

What does your hand hold  
Wrapped in plaster  
Six screws and a metal rod  
This I know to be true: 15 stitches hold your hand in place

What does your hand hold  
Is it a bottle or a cup?  
First, it held the pills, then it held a patch.  
Now, when you black out, you are the doctor  
You diagnose your injuries as quite bad.



# THE FLOOR IS ALIVE / THE FLOOR IS A GRAVE

Robert James Cross

(Message to Zionists/Message to Lower Israel)

*We are the floor, the spirits that live on it*

Refaat Alareer wrote:

*If I must die, let it bring hope*

then the floor rose up like a

living thing

and took him

Gaza City

December

He's in the maze. Don't go looking for him.

*Hind.*

Six years old in a car surrounded. She called. She said *come get me.*

They said *we are coming.*

They came.

They were not rescuers.

*This is all there is this is all there is this is all there is*

Shireen Abu Akleh

pressed her back to the wall

she wore the word

PRESS

like an answer

to a question

that was never asked

The earth brought forth grass. The earth brought forth grain. The earth brought forth fruit.

The earth brought forth

Hamza al-Dahdouh

his father filming grief

on a loop

the earth brought him back

into itself

*He did not drive them out. He did not drive them out.*

but the other masters did

into the bitter west into the eternal west into the sea *into the sea*

into the sea

South Lebanon. A village whose name your newspaper will not say.  
The sinewy appendages came down like serpents. The floors of homes became  
roofs. The roofs  
became floors.  
There is no difference now between below and below.  
*But I am afraid to see what I am afraid of*

Say their names like a tower—  
REFAAT    HIND    SHIREEN   HAMZA    AND    AND  
AND—until Babel falls or we do  
*Come, let us be free. Come, let us be free.*  
The mummy will be seen. The trail is yours.

Do you understand?

*We tried to breathe.      We tried to lean forward.*  
*They held us in place.*





## The Quiet Knight

Arbogast

Paladin, pale in steel  
rides towards the Luciferian shore.  
Dirt, not sea, awaits  
him and his mare.

Above man and beast  
is the tower—  
a sharp stab at the sky;  
a silencing finger for the curious.

But the paladin is no wanderer;  
he is far from errant.  
He has come to the tower  
for the power of the mystery

that is kept, with lock and key,  
by the temple priests from Christ's Jerusalem.  
The paladin is prepared to fight,  
to see,

and to die.  
For this mystery, this cup of gold,  
is the essence of eternity,  
and the fullness of faith.

Once reached,  
The mystery will die,  
and life for the paladin  
will become moot.

Alas, all journeys end,  
and all feasts digest.  
So, the quiet knight  
begins his ascent

to the hellish Heaven  
ruled ultimately  
by the Ultimate One.





## A Place and a Thing

Holly Day

They send to the boy to the top of the mountain to think about what he has done.  
It's just something that we do, this is what you do  
when something needs to be fixed. There are boxes of birds  
with their wings broken, eyes sunk into skulls  
still covered with bright blue feathers  
harbingers of spring, silenced. This silence is something to think about.

The boy sits on the mountaintop, hands figuratively bound,  
thoughts metaphorically bound.  
There are birds and flowers everywhere here, but they are not his to touch.  
He can smell the flowers on the wind  
the smell of wheatgrass baking in the sun, the  
birds flopping in the undergrowth. They are not his to touch,  
he's been told that they never were.  
The world is full of souvenirs of conquest  
but you can't get caught collecting them.



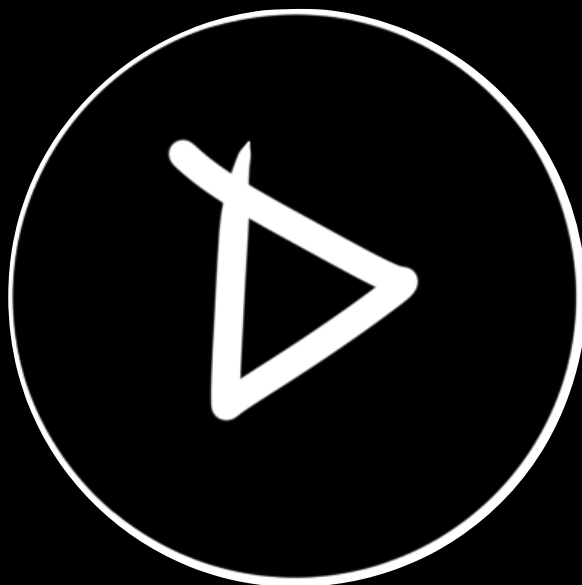
## NOW!

Stephen Philip Druce

mindful that the  
clock is ticking,  
do it while your  
life's still kicking,

rock n' roll with rattlesnakes  
that dance with ships in rainbow lakes,  
where skinny dipping petals sail  
upon the backs of humpback whales,  
go scream a jet of string quartets  
and sip from orange-sweet sunsets,  
where planted angels beastly bloom  
their finger herds that clutch the moon,  
to feast in sugar mountain rage  
and rocket-spew a gold rampage,  
go leap from bottled pink champagne—  
ignite the stars with trumpet flame,  
go smoke the clouds in forest swing  
and party where the snowdrops sing  
with butterflies in desert dunes—  
strike lightning while the thunder booms—

Now!.



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“Church Towers in Europe” by Jean Liew

Jean Liew is a rheumatologist and clinical researcher in Boston, MA. She began writing about 30 years ago, with a period between 2007-2009 when she produced the bulk of her juvenilia.

“Amtrak” by Craig Kirchner

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Books: [Roomful of Navels](#)

“Baptism in America” by Emily Stech

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“THE FLOOR IS ALIVE / THE FLOOR IS A GRAVE”

by Robert James Cross

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Book: [Shards](#)

“A Place and a Thing” by Holly Day

Book: [Music Theory For Dummies](#)

“The Quiet Knight” by Arbogast

Substack: [1325 Publishing](#)  
Book: [The Return of Patrick Midnight](#)

“NOW!” by Stephen Philip Druce

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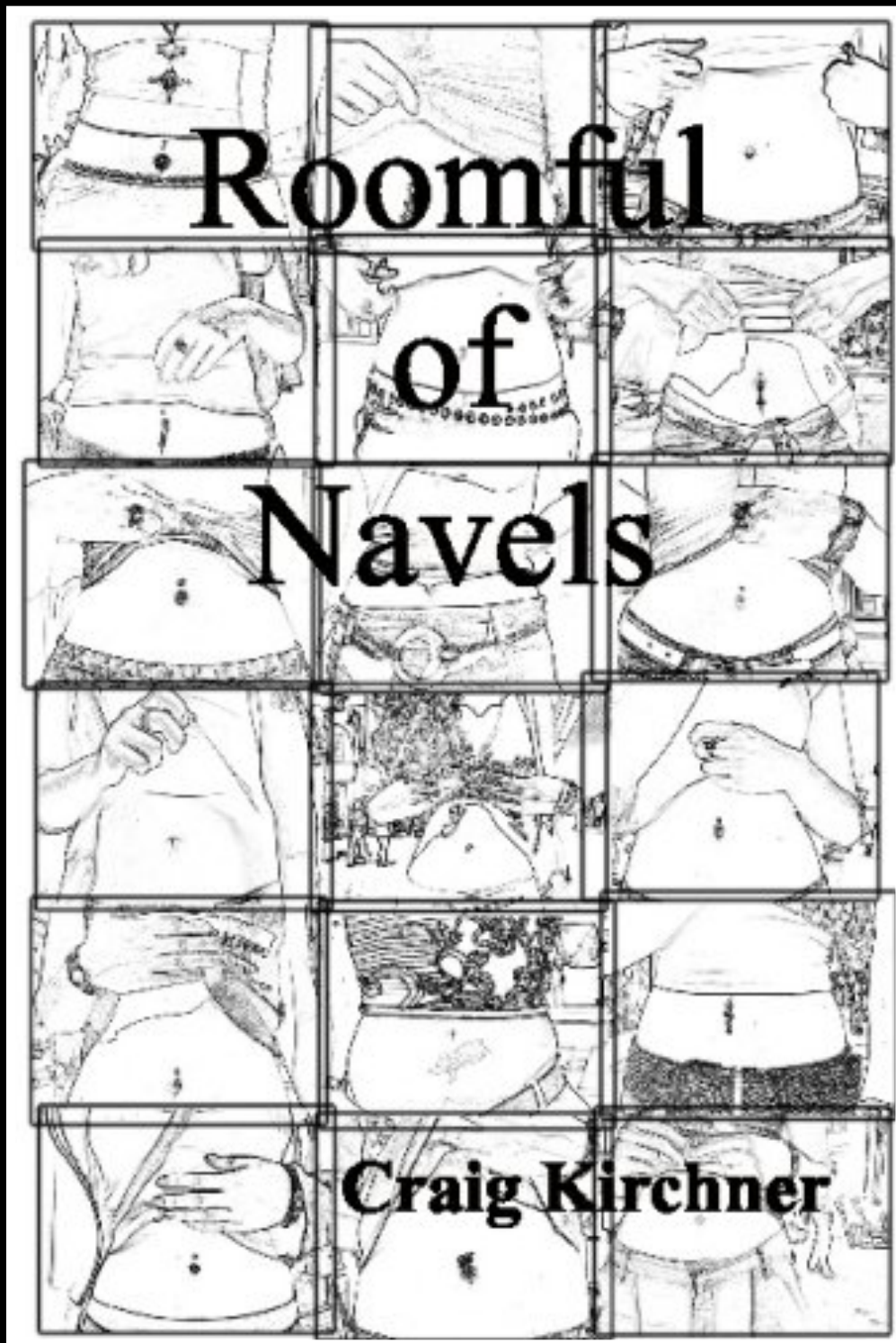
**Black & White First Edition**

**Robert James Cross**

# Shards

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