





soliloquy is quite easy
glossolalia or aphasia

you know

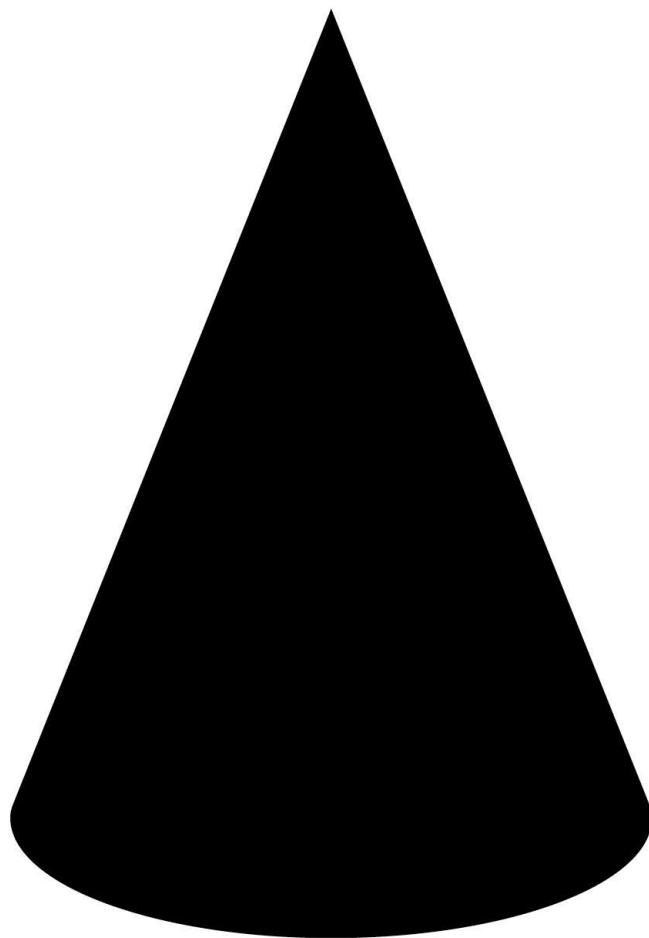
it would bit sound like...
gahbeosj tyhbekak myuabeak...

and so forth dull gibberish

but I know that
your back pocket is filled with ash
of your hateful hateful husband
that you had burned in a chimney
on a mild winter evening

but I should confess my dear Lord
that my poor brain is sultry meat

Ivan de Monbrison



Helpful Requests

Having lost his will, the man in grey approached his shadow seeking help. Mistaking the fool for a tool, the shadow asked that it be brought water.

Having found that the water would not help him, the man gave up and went home. However, becoming sincere in its request, the shadow became parched.

Having finally brought the water later that night, the man again found that water was indeed no help to him. Why was everything so hard?

Trevor Hormel

Skatepark

McKenna Ashlyn

Grandma called me a prophet
as if I was anything but a daughter,
sister made lookout of the pillowfort family.

Mitchell fell asleep chin deep in a bowl of strawberries
and I couldn't stop laughing
bubbling from the depths of my belly,

always meant to be released.
I was used to the way the big kids eyes stung over him
and the adults' melted right through him.

On his first summer bike ride I clipped his helmet strap myself.
Chubby kid fingers clicked the buckle
pinching his skin and blood rushed

to his cheeks like rouge. He scowled. A boy
not stranger to rage or blush hastily applied
and scrubbed off in the bathroom.

I was just finding my dresses stuffed deep in his closet.
When I saw Mitchell of strawberries and rage and barely off training wheels
atop the skate ramp, I was already crying.

Already grieving his great fall.
Bicycle wheel kissed the edge of the skatepark's bowl.
An acrobat born of youth and gravity and road less traveled by.

The worst noise of it wasn't the machine crack and crush.
It was the silence as every breath at Eagle Island Skatepark was held.
Mitchell, heaped and still.

I stepped over my straddled bike letting
it fall to the concrete. I landed beside Mitchell, not yet screaming.
I—his failed lookout, for the first time.

THEY NAMED ME KATARINA

Katarina Pavičić-Ivelja

I was born in the spring.
A month earlier than I should have been.
The first and only time I was early to something.
It was an unusually hot year.
That's what they tell me.
They named me Katarina.
After my Nona.
Father's mother.
To know that I'm theirs.
And that I'm not one of those others.
It was during the war.
That's how things were back then.
I can't even hold my head up yet.
And everyone already knows who and what I am.
Except me.
I'm learning to hold my head up.
Nona has mastered that a long time ago.
I think.
We don't have much in common.
I'm going to school.
Without bragging, I got this head thing down perfectly.
I rarely see Nona.
I go out with my friends.
And Nona goes to church...and cooks.
What if Husband comes home and there is no lunch?

She worries too much.
I'm crossing the road.
I turn my head left and right. Very agile.
Again, not to brag.
There is nobody. It's fine.
I'm late for class.
I haven't seen Nona for a long time.
I'm big.
I have better things to do...in college.
She's calling.
"He'll be home soon." She tells me.
We have a quick chat.
The door opens and Nona hangs up.
She's weird sometimes.
I sit on the bed and cry.
Just like that April when they brought me home.
He didn't mean it...it wasn't on purpose.
After all, I didn't watch my mouth.
And I knew what he was like.
I had it coming.
My head is falling.
And I thought I had already mastered that.
I look out the window.
Nona looks at me from the reflection in the glass.
All small and stooped.
They chose my name well.



The Kind of Blues That Need a Song

Richard LeDue

A beer bottle is no worse place
to hide than a mortgage,
smiling at a 1.2% raise,
or a promotion you'll never get,
yet chase until a heart attack catches you,
just so your doctor can recommend walking,
instead of Friday nights toasting
a dead singer, whose brain cancer
seemed sadder since his music
narrated your adolescence and university nights
when the only luck you got
was from finding out happy hour
wasn't over yet,
leaving you thirty something
years later, listening to the same songs
and wishing ghosts were real.



Things I've Been Told

Holly Day

in prison, they give you one coffee cup
that has to last you the whole time you're there.
the coffee they serve is so thin
it makes only the tiniest of stains against
the white insides of the cup.
you can tell how many years you've been behind bars
by how dark the inside of your cup is.

this is how prisoners identify newcomers, by how darkly stained
their coffee cup is. each prisoner wears his coffee cup
tied to his wrist by a thick rope, also issued by the prison
tied there to protect the cup
from being stolen by other prisoners
who accidentally break their own cup

and have to drink their coffee
as a dribble twisted from a dirty sop-towel
or a discarded paper strainer.



Fire Department

Jacob Seferian

Fine genes my parents passed to me
I've boxed away in some CubeSmart—my bad
I am lying
more like I have spilled jet fuel over good
will, waiting for bad teeth sons-of-bitches

fellas who whisper nice things to the hot stuff
that was my body now just charcoal getting
lip service but wait

I am not dead

NO I AM NOT DEAD—
despite the oh dear looks, graveyard eyes
to say soon I will be if I keep living so fast:

sure Daddy, but it's not like I have a house or 401K
or... Lady Death! She's not invited in for a drink but
she can watch from the window, a cuck for me being

So alive

how my cheekbones are still visible when I smile
I guess what I am saying is don't write my eulogy
while I boogie please please I mean it!



under idle lights

M.S. Blues

employed at a store—
standing idle,
the store is vacant,
the merchandise exchanges frolics,
i watch, envious,
i wish i had someone to talk to—
but nothing except
lifeless objects are here to listen,
correspond with me,
as i sit,
under idle lights.

Modigliani

K Weber

I didn't even know you until Paul looked at me, snapped a photo, said "You look like a Modigliani painting." I was 19, puzzle pieces and red flushing rose in my cheek, quickly crossed my face and waited on my chest. The class gasped. I couldn't get air until someone leaned toward me to say it was a very big compliment. I ran from the room straight to the art library. In Air-walks and overalls I climbed and crawled the stacks of large books. I sat on the floor, connecting the artist's eye to my face. And there they were: people who should have been my family, a twin, but they weren't real and I couldn't move my dorm room crates and extra-long sheets onto their canvas. Those long noses and eyes that winked without blinking, bodies that lingered in the drab cast of a portrait are my mirror.



why do I fight it?

Stephen Ground

said the
spool of

thread to
the hungry

needle.

it feels
so good to

unravel.



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