

# Unscroll V.



Cover art by Tyler Flynn Dorholt

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## Kat Dixon

Edge

Perfected, the woman

says goodnight to every flannelled

witness on the lawn

and fills the leaking bathtub

with her body at its fullest moon.

She is not dead but only sounds dead

when that bone drop splashes at

the longer nail of her size eight.

She knows this sort of thing.

Somewhere now, an exit –

her husband kissing junipers after

marriage, blackly, opening. Sleepers

filling every room.

## Howie Good

### A FLOWER IS A FOX IN A HOLE

I crash a half-empty auditorium of G-men, their pockets stuffed with incandescent ampules of evidence, while you slowly circle the mall parking lot, looking for a close-in space. We're the ghosts of our own thoughts or a character in each other's stories. Some small and unsuspecting leaf goes whirling down the creek. All things move toward becoming one thing, a bright red wound that seems to you shimmering blue.

## Zachary C. Bush

Grey Lights

I.

Hammer beats subside, eventually. Suddenly a clock stops at 9:48 AM. Somewhere a boy is being filmed in a room with cigarette burns on velvet walls.

II.

Lost—the sand is a wool-infection of the ears. The solution won't cure the plague until November's end. Dinner spoons are being offered as peace symbols to the weak.

III.

Blizzard beaches are landing pads for the spiritually starved, sexually sickened, or suicidal.

#### IV.

The clock resuscitates itself at 9:56. The boy is grey-skinned, blending black and white.

#### V.

Nursing cuts, bruises, decapitated moles, and fearing the irrational omniscience of divine prophecy, the boy moans for everything he's lost. Sulfur bombed the room bright grey. Green jade flames spark the sky, reminding him of the 4th of July—the sulfur—blue crab shit on raw finger tips, freedom. Traps set in the dead of winter.

#### VI.

Ho! There flies an eagle over the left shoulder of the camera man. The wind sends mixed messages: a boy is just a boy; traditions tumble, in time; this sex is digital.

#### VII.

If the boy tried hard enough, he could remember exactly what his bedroom looked like—a spacious closet within a tighter one—the walls stain-speckled grey. Last summer, that's when it really all started. He had gotten a call from his mother. This time he was prepared to listen. She wasted no time, no words, no direction, but told him how of a cloud; how a storm had ripped through the farm; how the winds lapped up the peanuts, the cows, her sunflowers, and the county's retired school bus. There was rust. The rust covered all that it destroyed, like maggots on the dead. But, the storm wasn't the worst of it. Nope. There was a cloud that loomed and swelled up, all at once; there was a cloud that that never went away. And she couldn't sleep, thinking about it. There were colors crisscrossing colors, hateful colors—she said, she paused, she screamed “what spinning rage!” But, it wasn't that easy; never was. The call was muffled, somewhere in the middle, but the boy knew that he'd heard enough. There was something about a screaming man, a bear, and a practical joke with no safe word....

## Michael Sean Bolton

Infidel (Yesterday I Could Not Speak)

Stepped outside, found and Hand me down memory; I will  
intuit you. Forever the wound carry the ghost harvest  
and (blast belief) all hard inside. Wait while I turn, while

I fumble the waste of

this calendar of skin.

“Too far” it said forgotten. No wonder it has gone

So the work became walls cold: the mirror of thirst

and all my life within in light stained to water.

Here is me, drowning finally,

in the sex of all others.

## Kate Wyer

Good Morning, King Leopold

I spit tangerine seeds into my palm. Drink black coffee.  
I say, *Satan is a heteroexual, it's written on the bathroom wall.*

We laugh and talk Romantic Irony.  
You know, *I enjoy ideas, but you sound like a wanker.*

Don't talk to me about flagpoles.

In this hospital every mother  
asks, *Are you my daughter?*

And the daughters say,  
*No, I am a seed in your palm covered in spit—  
what will you do with me?*

Someone's visiting lapdog shivers with stomach cramps.  
I ask her, *Can you believe, you tiny savage?*

It is not yet enough to wake and be grateful.  
It is not enough at all.

I found your saliva-damp basket of hands.

*Come here.*

Pick which ones are yours,  
I have adhesive and a good sense of color,  
I think these will do.

## Kyle Hemmings

### Mr. BubbleHead Has an Exciting Day

It happened at the airport around noon. Mr. BubbleHead was all fine with the typed instructions from his aunt whom he visited in a quaint small town where flowers grew. There were houses and they were nice ones. She gave him extra money for the cab and said Don't forget the tip. Her words, which were now his, echoed in his mind.

He was walking towards the big glass doors of the airport when the imbroglio occurred. It involved three men dressed like college students and five guards 6 feet and over. Someone from behind pushed Mr. BubbleHead and sent him flying. His suitcase slid across the floor then disappeared. But Mr. BubbleHead knew that something cannot become nothing. Even though he was scared . He knew this much. He was breathing hard. People were shouting around him. It reminded him of the Christmas when the lights on the big silver tree went out because one blew. One bad light in a series circuit and it affects everything. Mr. BubbleHead cried. His mother tried to hold him, to make him understand.

A suitcase appeared before him and Mr. BubbleHead concluded that this was his. He rose and rushed and grabbed the suitcase. Someone shouted. But Mr. BubbleHead was not sure if this was meant for him. That he must exit the door and wave down a cab was what must be done because his aunt had given him instructions. She went to such incredible lengths. She was a nice lady.

In the back of the cab, Mr. BubbleHead rambled off his address then said it again much slower because the driver could not understand the first time. The first time is always hardest, then it gets easier. It was like that when Mr. BubbleHead calculated fractions for his teachers. Sometimes he astounded them at the special school and there was something nice about the way they smiled at him. One teacher had a fake blue eye and that always reminded Mr. BubbleHead that adults have secrets too.

The driver had a long mustache and dark skin. He might have been from somewhere else. He tried to make small talk with Mr. BubbleHead. But Mr. BubbleHead was too busy memorizing license plates. As a kid, Mr. BubbleHead and his sister would play a game in cars where they would add up all the numbers and letters to see who had the larger total. Sometimes, he won. But he never won by much.

Something about the driver was scaring Mr. BubbleHead. When he spoke, Mr. BubbleHead saw the eyes jump in the rearview. It was as if the eyes and the words were detached or not coming from the same source. The driver was saying something about what do you do for a living and do you always travel light. Mr. BubbleHead could not process this until he knew the driver better.

Then Mr. BubbleHead discovered a fact. The fact was that his suitcase, the one he brought from his aunt's house, was brown and light and the one next to him was black and square and for some reason felt heavy. This was tested by Mr. BubbleHead. It remained a fact.

Mr. BubbleHead discovered another fact. The driver was not taking him along the usual route home. Maybe the driver was new or he was confused. Maybe the driver was doing drugs that make you take a different way home.

"This is not the way," said Mr. BubbleHead.

The driver's eyes popped up in the rearview. The voice said to give him the suitcase.

Mr. BubbleHead wanted to say Fuck You. But his mother taught him that this is something he should never say, especially to strangers who try to pick fights. He turned his head around. Now a car was following theirs at a close distance. At times, the car would hit the cab's bumper. Mr. BubbleHead couldn't understand why he was having such a cruddy day. Finally, Mr. BubbleHead said Fuck You because his favorite rock singer, Chas Lenghy of *The Hominoid Studs*, said it in a song.

The driver produced a gun and held it up. Mr. BubbleHead froze, then tried to work the door handles. The driver pressed something on the dashboard. The locks clicked. Mr. BubbleHead felt helpless. He said Fuck You again. Deep down inside, he knew this was no way to make friends.

Suddenly the driver swerved the car to avoid another one. The cab crashed into a parked car in a downtown area. The horn kept blatting. The driver's head sunk against the wheel. Mr. Bubblehead reached over and undid the lock control. Then he took a quick peak into the suitcase. Could it be that the driver wanted someone's clothes? No. That was stupid. That could not be a fact.

Inside the suitcase was a bunch of wires, green, blue, yellow, black, and some kind of machine with a digital reading. Mr. BubbleHead recognized what this was. He watched many movies on DVD. This was a bomb. This was a terrorist's bomb.

Mr. BubbleHead felt like he was one of those movies. He felt very excited at the prospect of being a hero. The girls in his class would worship him and bring him shiny apples. He made a mad dash out the door. He sensed the men from the other car were following him.

He ran through alleys and department stores. He ran across streets without looking. He ran up escalators and through tunnels connecting buildings. He wished his aunt had written more instructions.

He reached the other side of the city. There was a wharf and an ocean. Mr. BubbleHead threw the suitcase into the ocean. He threw it so hard he thought his arm was dislocated.

That was not a fact.

The suitcase drifted out until it was devoured by a white whale. When the whale blew up, the sky turned white. When the sky turned white, it started to rain.

At home, the rain leaked through the ceiling. Mr. BubbleHead sat under it with an umbrella. He counted the number of drops. He would count until it was enough to fill an ocean. Enough to replenish the sky.

## Erin Elizabeth Smith

### On Not Marrying a Poet

*with apologies to B.*

What lies we peddle –  
the swift slice of words  
meant as a stroke  
in the fingertip, the blood  
rushing to the chin.  
Instead the slippery  
simile of deception,  
a hand on the wet glass  
while we recite the same  
sadness, the same Stevens  
again and again.

Four days from marriage  
this must be the purge,  
old lovers flung  
from the chest  
like squirrels rooting  
in the summer ground.  
So many who licked  
their stanzas  
with a smooth brush,  
wrote letters extolling  
the graces I kept in threes.  
The way they still eat  
through the cracks,  
notes tucked into telephones  
and the curl of its ringing  
through this late season.

On our couch, my fiancé holds  
my body in his, knees  
bent around his elbows,  
skull tight to the chest.  
This is the only poem  
I want to understand,  
this man who knows one word  
for green, for the night birds,  
or the pulling ache

we sometimes call love.  
Not like others  
who stole up through stanzas  
into metaphors of hotel lobbies  
or a field of grass,  
trenched long parallel rows.

The wreckage of the body  
is not flirtation. Nor the spinning  
pages of borrowed books,  
dog-eared recollections  
of muses with other names.  
When I scratch each out  
as I did the mosquito bite  
on my shoulder last night,  
it will not be in my sleep,  
but in the way I hold this man's  
kneecap beneath a table,  
the ease with which I leave  
each room knowing  
there is one single word  
for home.

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