

00evolution

Most insects are promiscuous. There is competition not only before mating but also after mating occurs. Females develop the capacity to store sperm of more than one male, and males develop spines and hairs on their penises for scraping out the sperm of previous males. The action of evolutionary selection leads to females with more and more complicated reproductive tracts; males with more and more barbed penises. There is a tendency to understand evolution as a progression toward higher beings, to ally it to a metahistorical guiding force. Biologically this is nonsense. Selection operates without foresight, and solely upon the single stage of ordinary generation. There is no incline to evolution. There is endless modification upon the horizontal plane; a scroll without narrative unrolling indefatigably.

This evolution project is a chain of writers and visual artists. The idea came from Jim Gladstone. A text was sent to an artist who produced a piece. This piece was then sent to a writer who produced a text, which went to a visual artist who produced a piece, which went to a writer who produced a text...and so on. The chain is nine long so ultimately the text is fed into a modification process and a different text emerges, but the evolution is by no means complete. It is a section from an endless evolutionary scroll. Participating artists were all chosen from different cities and artistic circles, and operated in complete ignorance both of each other and of their position in the chain. They saw only the piece directly preceding their own, which they received by email. The only rule was that the piece they produced was produced having seen the preceding piece, and that it was quick: seven days for visual artists, four for writers. I was interested more in surface combinations and connections than a sequence of finished independent pieces.

When the two gases [oxygen and sulphur dioxide] are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid... The mind of the poet is this shred of platinum... is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together.

—T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'

[L. *evolvere* unroll, unfold, unrolling and reading of papyrus roll]



01jim gladstone



Jim Gladstone was born in 1965 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He currently lives and writes in Paris. His short fiction has been adapted for stage and radio, and has appeared in literary journals including *Bridge: Stories & Ideas*, *American Writing* and *Christopher Street*, as well as several anthologies, current and forthcoming. *The Big Book of Misunderstanding* (Haworth Press, 2002) is his debut novel. Gladstone has also written criticism and journalism for a wide range of publications.

At the eastern end of the Charles Bridge, Satan sells self-portraits. He has been granted special dispensation to continue his affairs after losing his mind. The magistrates of Prague have never offered formal permission, but the citizens—long resigned to all things wry—simply accept him in their midst. For centuries, 31 black baroque statues have lined the rails of the footbridge. There is a lion nibbling a Legionnaire's toe, a dog with a flaming torch in its mouth, a blind nun voluptuously kissing the open wounds of a crucified Christ. What more is one live, misguided devil?

In this life, you are a tourist. You snatch magpie souvenirs out of chaos to build a smaller, pithier world. You ask unanswerable questions. You make up true stories.

Crossing the Vltava, from Hrad Castle on the western bank toward the labyrinthine tangle of the city center to its east, you have hurried past the sellers of moody architectural photographs, of intricate lacework, of Moravian cimbalom tunes.

But here—a safe six feet from the devil's display—you cannot resist pausing to draw in the scene. Satan crouches under his kiosk table, knotting and unknotting sinewy arms around his shirtless torso. He growls at the dozens of color-clotted images that surround him: rectangles of childish tempera, trick-or-treat orange and thick baby blue. At the center of each canvas is a crude but recognizable image of his own face, with brick-brown horns protruding from the temples. The paintings' slashed grimaces

correspond to his own as he writhes beneath the table. His forehead is cinched by a soiled terrycloth sweatband, from which droop two cotton-stuffed cones of red velveteen, flapping down against his ears.

You turn toward the kiosk next to Satan's. An apple-cheeked woman sells nested wooden matryoshka dolls, her greying blond head warmed by a tight blue babushka. Though the Gulf Stream rides this mythic river, the mist-damp air is bone-chilling on this gray December afternoon.

You stare at the woman's hands. You imagine her name is Hana. To keep warm she fidgets with her wares, assembling and disassembling the little painted people. Hollow shells yield hollow shells, over and over, dissembling, until, at the heart of each, is a small but solid figure.

Now, discreetly, you glance at Satan, hoping not to catch his eye. He discomforts you, and so you name him, too: Tomas.

Tomas tugs at the spongy clumps of his unwashed hair. You cast your eye back and forth, between Tomas and Hana, taking mental snapshots, translating.

02francis difronzo



Francis DiFronzo was born in California in 1969, where he grew up and trained under Jeffrey Carl Horn until moving to the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. He now lives and works in Philadelphia, where he is represented by the Rosenfeld Gallery.



The Border
70cm x 180cm
Oil on panel

03jonny diamond



Jonny Diamond lives and works in Toronto. His short stories and poems have appeared in such publications as, *Want Some?*, *The New Irregular*, *Poise*, and *Link*.

he lays down in the grass brings his right forearm across his brow covers his eyes a burn on the small of the back a burn the size of a hotel bible and (his legs) splay (his legs) scissor (his legs) twist (his legs) fold (his legs) tangle his legs shape letters under the sky in the field and there is no one to read them but there are many ways of being none of them good so the burn runs down through him pins him to the ground and he is a specimen caught and the sky pushes down he is in the grass struggling again and again making new letters saying things he cannot know and the sky pushes down and he is at the end ended ending in the end he does not think of her he thinks of nothing

(the shape of the burn: angular, geometric, perfect)

before this place this pain before this he would have pushed and dug and wriggled into the past turned corners in the dark fought against forgetting before this he would have wanted to know but no longer not after her there is no memory after her and the burn is only another somatic constant existing to be forgotten to forget the word to forget the word

and there are images (yes) pictures that show themselves reveal themselves in the pulse (yes) he cannot see them there at the edge of the frame they (yes) waver menace

and he thinks: it is these things (yes) if I see these things if I can only turn my head and (yes) look at them fully slowly then I will know I will (yes) know who and why but he cannot see them cannot turn his head (yes) cannot look

(images that are transparencies stack thick one on the other stack thick and grow opaque)

he is tired and he forgets he forgets the images at the edge of his vision (if they might have revealed if they might have shown him one real thing oh but it is too late) he no longer wants the burden of past of self of time of memory (burden of I) it is enough now in this field it is too much scissored and splayed and twisted under the sky the sky that pushes down it is enough and he does not want to know does not want to turn his head does not want to see

the flat world holds him presses him to the sky says to him: you are nothing this is nothing there is nothing to see nothing to find nothing to reveal nothing to remember nothing to forget nothing there is only nothing (he cannot answer does not want to) he wants only to lay there in the grass between sky and earth wants only to see the red night come wants only to be that specimen caught wants only to forget

04teri muroff



Recent exhibitions include the *Totalitarian Zone Show*, Prague, and *Small Works*, Washington Square. Muroff also helped found the galleries Brand Name Damages and Minor Injury in what soon became Art Intensive Williamsburg. She currently lives and works out of her homemade home in Brooklyn, New York.



15cm x 25cm
Wood, glass, plastic, soil, grass seed, water

05john fuller



John Fuller was born in 1937. His *Collected Poems* were published in 1996, and a new collection, *Now and for a Time*, comes out this year (Chatto and Windus). His first novel, *Flying to Nowhere* (1983), won the Whitbread Prize and was short-listed for the Booker Prize; his sixth, *The Memoirs of Laetitia Horsepole*, appeared in 2001. All the novels, and a volume of short-short stories, *The Worm and the Star*, are available in Vintage paperback. He retires in 2002, after 36 years as Fellow and Tutor in English at Magdalen College, Oxford.

The Remnant

One: Pelorus

When the fighting stopped, I was out on my feet, staring downwards, the heel of my left palm cupped to the knee, sword sweated to my right with a senseless clutch, the blade trembling against the soil like the cane of a blind man. The air was thick as water; it re-entered my lungs in roars of applause. When I looked round, I could see that there were only five of us left, the others sunk to their hams or crawling over the bloodied flints with looks of disbelief. We had been spared.

Two: Hyperenor

I remember that we came out of the ground in pain, like an aching jaw, waking to the din of metal and indiscriminate attack. Now we are a significant remnant, heroic handful, combat corps. There is dragon in our blood, and when we ejaculate it feels like the grinding of teeth. We will descend into Thebes, take wives and remember the dragon. To survive armies is to live for ever.

Three: Chthonius

We were unique, inseparable like the fingers of a hand, working together to get a grip on the situation, back to back, fighting off what seemed to be a deadly future. But one by one we outlasted our fate. Nyctes brings me orchids, which remind me of warriors, packed with grey pouches, strugglers living on air. They brandish their white shields veined with blood.

Four: Udaeus

Now we are granted visions. In my dreams I can wriggle and push towards the light in my bee helmet. One jump and the splayed legs drift, boots filled with water, in a swarm of tiny snails. I will punch my way back into the air, or so I think, but the flooded fields are a living ceiling of grasses and my breath escaping is a trickle of bubbles on the quiet stems of pale and sunless fronds. After a while I don't know whether I am now growing here, burrowing my way in,—or breaking free, a tadpole with alarming hieroglyphs of legs. I wake to a world of prophecy: my daughter will give birth to Tiresias, who will listen for a time to my old soldierly babble and then go on to finer things.

Five: Echion

The remnant became an elite and flowered as kings. Not the last, but the first. Not ten boots in a field, but five grey heads. I am father to Pentheus, King of Thebes; Chthonius is grandfather to Polydorus, King of Thebes. The kings will beget kings, and the law will breed laws. All wars have legends like these.

I may remember the fighting, but I will know the law. I may remember the frieze of five sown men and the chance of their spared lives, but I will know the law. I may still die in blood, but I will know the law.

Not a remnant, but a dynasty.

06sergej jensen



Sergej Jensen was born in Maglegaard, Denmark in 1973. He now lives and works in Hamburg, Germany. Recent exhibitions include *Urgent Painting*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; *Schöne Aussichten Herr Schweins*, Galerie Otto Schweins, Köln; and standing work in the Galerie Neu, Berlin. Since 1998 he has also been working on projects with Claus Richter and Oliver Husain, showing in Offenbach, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Hannover and Kassel.



160cm x 75cm
Pen on wallpaper

07dennis cooper



Dennis Cooper was born in 1953. He lives in Los Angeles. He is the author of the five novel cycle *Closer* (1989), *Frisk* (1991), *Try* (1994), *Guide* (1997), and *Period* (2000). His most recent novel is *My Loose Thread* (2002). His other books include *The Dream Police: Selected Poems 1969–1993*, *Wrong: Stories*, *Jerk* (with artist Nayland Blake) and the graphic novel *Horror Hospital Unplugged* (with artist Keith Mayerson). He is a Contributing Editor to *Artforum International*, *Spin Magazine*, and *Nerve.com*, and writes on contemporary culture for a number of magazines. He has curated eight contemporary art exhibitions, most recently *The Funeral Home* (Marc Fox Gallery, Los Angeles). *Guide to Trust #2*, an exhibition of work by 28 international artists based on his novel *Guide*, is currently touring museums in the United States and Europe.

The Chest

A 13 year old French prostitute named François is sitting crosslegged on some grass talking directly to you readers. His shirt is gigantic and partly unbuttoned, and there's a vibe of desperation in his voice.

FRANCOIS: Hey, you want to fuck the cutest body you've ever seen in your lives? I mean cutest for you, not for me. I happen to hate my good looks in a complicated way. Anyway, I'll trade you.

YOU: Thanks for spending time with us. You're God, et cetera, and we love your stupid accent. Meaning yes.

FRANCOIS: I even scream with a stupid accent. You'll love that too.

YOU: What's the trade? We're so damned horny.

FRANCOIS: Don't rush me. I'm not like adults. I need to get to know things before I do them.

YOU: At least take off your shirt. So we can lick your perfect nipples with our minds.

FRANCOIS: There's a trick to being me. It's called "who the fuck are you to ask?" When I'm shirtless, you'll know it.

YOU: Then make us hard.

FRANCOIS: You already are. All it takes is my face. I think my haircut helps too. Long hair's back. But I guess when you're a pedophile, any kid is porn. Correct me if I'm wrong.

YOU: What do you like to do in bed? We mean what is "fuck" to you?

FRANCOIS: Shooting heroin. Next?

YOU: Junkies are so boring. If you weren't 13, we wouldn't be here. We'd be in Thailand.

FRANCOIS: [*laughing*] Next. This is awesome. I was never loved when I was straight. So I'm drunk on your gayness. If you weren't here, I'd be in school or prison.

YOU: The world's a bar when we're with you. If you

were old enough to be officially gay, you'd realize that's gay for "we love you." A 13 year old skinny blond junkie drunk in a Parisian gay bar, Jesus. Let's play truth or dare.

FRANCOIS: Cool. I like you so far. Okay, you earned it.

He unbuttons his shirt, then lets it slide down his thin, track-marked arms, and hurls it away.

YOU: Truth. By the way, you have the world's most perfect little ashtrays...we mean nipples.

FRANCOIS: Okay, do you have any heroin? And before you say that's cheating, Kant says truth lies in the question one asks in pursuit of the truth. Actually, Buddha said that too. So now you know me. Oh, and thanks for the compliment, you liars. Dare.

YOU: We dare you to explain your intellect. You're 13. You quit school at 11. Your foster parents chained you to a bunkbed at night. You're dyslexic. You're cute. So how the hell do you do it?

FRANCOIS: I'm like a parrot. Literally, it's a serious condition. Parrot syndrome. Look it up. Plus I'm psychic and you're not. Truth.

YOU: Okay, we have enough heroin in our pockets to kill you a hundred times over. And clean works.

FRANCOIS: Duh. You have fifteen seconds to hand it over.

He looks at his watch.

YOU: And we can fuck you?

FRANCOIS: Yes.

YOU: And fistfuck you? Bondage, torture, videotape it, kill you when we're done with you?

FRANCOIS: Yes, yes, yes. Jesus Christ, are you deaf?

08vanessa able



Vanessa Able was born in Jersey in the Channel Islands. She currently lives in London, working with super-8 film and digital manipulation of images. Recent exhibitions include *Build me up Buttercup*, Centre for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade; *Ac/curate*, Frame Gallery, Pittsburg; and *Alex Reynolds Rocks, Vanessa Able Kicks Arse*, Windows Gallery, London.



8400pixels x 8400pixels
Digital image

09cd wright



CD Wright lives outside of Providence, Rhode Island. Wright's selected and new poems *Steal Away* is just out from Copper Canyon Press. Her most recent collaboration with Deborah Luster, *One Big Self: Prisoners of Louisiana* will be out late this year from Twin Palms Press in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Originally from the Arkansas Ozarks, Wright has won numerous awards including a Lannan Literary Award, a Guggenheim, and a writer's award from the Whiting Foundation and from the Contemporary Foundation for Performing Arts. She has published a dozen books of poetry including two booklength poems, *Just Whistle* and *Deepstep Come Shining*. She is Israel J. Kapstein Professor of English at Brown University.

Animism

We have degenerated into people.
—Duo Duo

We are back from the ark, almost.
Is it always this dark?
Who was here first?
Since it is so lush why does everything have that chemistry-set smell?
Is there still time for a crisis?

It rained. Or did it? There is water yet standing.
When in the late afternoon, everything gets hungry.
If my head should fall off, please don't put it in a sack.
Does one start with the face. Save the jam for the end?

The sign said grave-digging two bodies a day;
Sixty cents an hour.
How does one decide what to leave for the others?
If the cheese is all that were left
How would that be ascribable to me?
When the light doesn't move
Then will you repeat the incision of my words?
We are back from the dark, almost.

What is a savannah anyway?
Dogs everywhere are close kin. Like Amish.
Jesus, the Cistercian biology teacher told them, had 23 chromosomes
And was the spitting image of his mother.

Carcass of love, carrion of the wedding feast.
Go ahead, pick my bones
I dreamed I was biting his arm.
I dreamed he was taking me to Nebraska on foot
For our honeymoon. And this was the best I'd felt in a long time.
Those who question the primacy of the phallus
Are surely in for it.

It stopped raining. But made no discernible difference.
The thirst was and is with us always.
And after the dogs left, the others would come.
First two, then more; in pairs, then more.
And the hewed stones formed a pair as well. Blackened. Fallen.
Perhaps from a monument. A marker for a significant boundary.
Toppled. Here in the savannah.
Because it is beautiful you should not walk alone.
Because it is beautiful you should not go without shoes.
But take a long look. For the rest of nature is nearly morte.
When I think of dying. I think of the ultimate release from fear.
When I think of dying, I get so scared my body refuses to lie down.
There is always time for a crisis.

Even here, another Fourth, everyone is prey to the heat
And the drums. Cars supplant the beasts.
Where was he. He said he would be back before the clouds
Broke. And the headlights began streaming down County Road.
Or he would stay until the final minutes before the finale and the Cars
became belligerent and began to degenerate into people.
He knew the ark would not wait.
He knew they were booked to the rafters.
He knew we could lose our cheap seats in the reaches
Where the Julliard students are reading the scores.

And therefore, we have to wait for the hyenas to get hungry
Enough to kill for their supper. Then we will come
With our napkins tucked under our chins
And our cutlery gleaming. Things seem more eternal
Elsewhere. Where one eats until one is eaten.
Never eat to be eating.

There was a sheen on the road soon after we entered
The city limits. The air, splendid, freshly wetted.
Have you ever attempted to count the storage tanks when you
Passed them on the way back. Have you ever reeled
Under the magnitude of petroleum's ruin.

The beast involuntarily turns its rack of ribs up for the pack.
He has pulled into the breakdown lane, burning oil.
If these rags are edible, we will live.

I am the last one in the house to go to bed.
Listen. The insects resume where the fireworks left off.
Or, if not, the insects collect at the light
With their silent scores.

Isn't the engine turning over. Almost.

There must be a re-set button for this machine.

Let's be realistic. We are never coming back.