



CAFFEINE ZINE:
A COLLECTION OF THE DIVERSE AND NON-SENSICAL

Issue 2. New Beginnings.

LA POSAS DE EDWARD JAMES
Andy Cripe



MUSE STORY:
PART I
Rebecca Lyons

You are my muse. But, damn, I almost hate you for it. Anyone's mind well-versed in literature would wander immediately to the door leading to preconceived notions of the word—Muse, a mythical goddess who inspired different artists to create their wonders. Seven they were, the number of completion, for without them the creators were incomplete, purposeless, lost. Ranging from music to poetry, they graced their followers and, even if not properly acknowledged for it, allowed men to win over any woman's heart by labeling her his own muse. And yet, not to be rude, you are, by far, not mythical or graceful or beautiful as these goddesses were, for you are real and flawed, but this is what makes you all the more beautiful (after all, isn't that why the gods came down among the men?). And, well, you are a man, and so, at the very least, it would not be proper to call you a goddess. But you are still my muse. And I almost hate you for it. Without you I am nothing but I am never with you. If I am not with you, who am I, if I am nothing without you? Close yet distant. Always free to be myself. Free to be inspired.

WORKINGS OF A SOUL:
PART I
Rebeka Miller

When I awoke and crawled from the brush, after nightmares of hands clawing at me and pulling me into my grave, I realized how long I'd been asleep and how far from the Northern Mount I was. Scratched in nearly every way possible from squirm around in the canopy of the darkland forest. Little smears of blood cover me I notice as I raise my hand to shade my eyes. The forest aflow has taken me far, I need to find a better way to travel. It seems as though the whole forest is sliding down a hill. I am feeling particularly short tempered this day and manifest a long thin wooden staff. I sweep it across the horizon before me, and a strong wind begins to pick up with a snap of my fingers I ride the breeze back towards the north. Easily finding the other side of the darkland wood brings me to the foothills, they are soft at first and shadowy. But lead to a steep incline that will take me above these pesky clouds. What will I find in the light?

A BUSY NIGHT
Andy Cripe

I lay in bed,
many thoughts in my head,
but my head couldn't seem to unwind.
Trying hard to find sleep,
I began counting sheep
as a means of distracting my mind.

I counted the flock
but then couldn't stop,
my numbers were off one or two.
So I herded them in
and then counted again
without finding the last missing few.

I phoned Miss Bo Peep
(they were her stupid sheep)
and she counted the ewes and the rams.
But when she was through,
we had more left to do;
she had missed quite a few of the lambs.

We recruited Jack Horner
from his cozy corner,
but he only had eyes for Miss Bo.
While the two of them talked,
all the sheep-counting stopped
and they quickly decided to go.

I paged Jack and Jill
from their muddy hill
and consulted with all the king's men.
In spite of the throng,
our tally was wrong
and they left me alone once again.

In the dawn's early light,
the count finally was right
and the sheep begged me, please, let them be.
But then they couldn't sleep
(they had lost Miss Bo Peep),
so we wound up with them counting me.

* * * * *

More poems at nearlyhere.blogspot.com

Sky
Rebecca Lyons



NICOTINE
F!

She smoked with the kind of languid, easy gesture characteristic to people of her class. What she did was only smoking in the sense that wine tasting was drinking. The basic idea was the same, but the actual execution was so different as to leave the perpetrators of the latter feeling combatively inferior, somehow demeaned beyond what their working class self-righteousness could compensate for.

Watching her smoke was more sexual than actual intercourse could ever be, with feelings that started - somewhere, and reached tingling through your fingertips, running lightly over your breasts, your thighs, and down the small of your back. Her lips quirked only slightly upwards, on the left side, to accommodate her cigarette. When she exhaled, they moved open in a manner that suggested that they were capable of inspiring sensations that, you would realize only later, in the safety of your own hotel room, no human was capable of feeling, and which you lacked even the proper body parts to experience.

The way she stubbed out her cigarette, however, was distinctly proletarian. The way the front legs of her chair hit the floor as her lean, violent body crossed the space to the ash tray reminded you that the magical lips were chewed, and the hand that now stubbed out a cheap, dark cigarette were broad, square, and red. Fortunately, she was a chain smoker.

TREES
Erin Koppy

New trees are planted at all the lite rail stations. They stand in line, perfectly growing upwards alongside each other. They are being held straight upward by a wooden post for support. Never before has it occurred to me that these trees are being supported with the remains of their fallen brethren. I wonder if they are silently suffering, going mad that their existence, their very purpose, is snugly bound to them as a constant reminder of their futility.

JUST A TEST
Taylor Anne Prescott

Let's run a test,
and strip away the
filth of an illicit
dream and the wonder
of something that's
such a curiosity.

Like how you taste.

Like how you move
when I force myself
into your space.

Our space,
and I remember
how it was,
back then.

When we didn't know,
and it was a test,
and a strange curiosity.



FIGURE 7
Senor Ojo

THE PALM OF THE UNIVERSE
relaxology

tiny and fragile, that's me
that's all of us
so easily lost
in the forever desert

but know
you will never be alone
just one tiny waterdrop

and all around everyone else
splashed out
lingering,
evaporated,
sailing clouds
forever moving oceans

dangling from a leaf
or sitting in the palm of the universe

I am
and you are too

MEMORIES
Collin Shields

Perhaps someday it will all fall, just
perhaps...but until then I'll ride the great and
beautiful wave it is. And if it is ever to fall, then
I'll ride another, again and again. Never ending,
never fading. Life carrying on...until the end, no
matter how untimely

FOLLOWING STILL LIFE
DESERT DANDIES
BlooDove Photography



ALPHABETICAL ORDER
Valerie Valdes

Fourth grade, new school, uniform
colors aqua and pink, a week in and seating
already assigned. Alphabetical order.
Awkward musical chairs to accommodate
spindly girl, last name starts with T.

Behind her, pudgy boy,
glasses like Sally Jesse Raphael.
Last name with a V. Hates change, e.g.
giving up his seat to new girl.
Opts to ignore her. Except

she is not paying attention
to teacher, hidden in her lap
a comic book. X-Men. Cover features
Sabretooth, Psylocke, Wolverine. He hovers

over his seat to see pictures.

Teacher asks her question.

He smiles. She wasn't listening
so when she fails, he can raise his hand,
but she doesn't. Who is she?
Maybe a shin kick at recess.

After school, they both stay in daycare,
wait for working moms. He reads
Nintendo Power, watches her jump rope.

She ambles over. "You like
Mario?" Grunt of assent. "Wanna play?"

"What, Mario?" "Yeah. I'll be the princess."

"Fine, I'll be King Koopa." "I get Yoshi."

"Well, I get fireballs!" "Fine,
now you have to catch me!" The chase
begins, dodging flames and dinosaurs.

Three schools, twenty years away
and they share a house, video games,
too many bookshelves, four cats.
A son kicks in her belly like a tiny
dinosaur trying to hatch.

A life, plus one, brought to you by
the letters T and V, chance names
passed down by parents, and a million
other happenstances drawn like Scrabble tiles
from the dark sack of the universe.

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Written for CombatWords 3/4/1
[<http://combatwords.blogspot.com/2011/03/combat-words-march-4-2011-randomness.html>]

GOOD VS. EVIL: THE FIGHT WITHIN ME Billy Garza

Good: At night's darkest her smile would
Light up my sky, Lost in her eyes, all I
Hear is her voice of perfect song.
There is not one moment that slips by without
Harmony being broken. The nights in our
world felled with horror, disappears
in her presence. For she
Is God's Gift to Earth. And I,
I am in Love with her.

Evil: You ask to read my mind, but as
soon as possible can be you die in
horror. You try to walk in my shoes
but drown in fear. You tried to
make me laugh, but ran screaming

Those close don't fear now. They fear
what has yet to happen. Walking
in Hell is far too easy. That I must
Be damned by all to walk amongst
you all. Those who cross my path
so fall off the Edge. With a simple
smirk or laugh one more dies.

Ha ---> aa you say. Turn
around. Find out who's dead.
And now walking with me.

EXERCISE 3 F!

It's almost hypnotic, thought Anton, as he
stared through the reflective pane of the train's
window at the blurry slipstream of city lights
rushing past his gaze.

Someone coughed. A door slammed shut
in the coach ahead.

Anton, startled by the sounds, suddenly
saw his own reflection in the shimmering window
pane. The sounds of the coach had pulled him
back to reality. He leaned back, closing his eyes.
He could never sleep sitting up, and after six
hours in the coach he felt almost sick with
exhaustion. At least it was quieter now. The
babies had even ceased their crying in the seats up
front, and the rhythmic clicking of the wheels on
the rails almost sounded, well, soothing.

He drifted, his mind hovering somewhere between consciousness and sleep. He began to daydream, his tiredness letting him slip into reverie, if never sleep itself. Perhaps this time, he'd be allowed to look for work. The city kept getting bigger, Anton reasoned, so they must eventually run out of desirable citizens to work. Eventually, there would be a job that he could take.

The window of the bullet train was an uncomfortable pillow, by turns pressing his cheek flat and jolting it entirely away when the train hit an uneven portion of rail. It was cold, though, and smooth, and he could stare out at City and think of what it would be like to live there.

City. The name meant freedom, meant opportunity. Meant a chance, maybe, to bring his parents over, to move them out of their tin shack where they pecked out a meager existence. Citizenship could be bought, through some channels, if you came from outside City's borders.

It was granted automatically to anyone born inside City, or in one of the eight suburbs which paid City taxes.

Outside of City and the Burbs, there was no work to be had. Anton's parents raised chickens, but they had been rendered obsolete by new trade agreements with a distant state. A commercial train, faster even than the passenger liner Anton rode, whispered past the window. He rotated his head against the window, watching it until it was blocked by one of the enormous billboards which the train passed at regular intervals, set up by the tracks to entice City residents. This one showed a cold girl with painfully high cheekbones, dressed in some bits of gauze and an expensive necklace, being handed down from a train by a man dressed black formal attire. It was advertising wine.

The conductor, dressed in a smart uniform with an antique hat walked by, checking tickets. Anton watched the conductor's reflection as he

checked the man on the aisle's ticket, and then reached across to tap Anton on the shoulder.

"Hey, buddy. Ticket?"

Anton fumbled in his bag, found the two inches of heavy, green cardstock he had purchased from a Burb friend for three times the standard price for Citizens, and handed it to the conductor.

"Here." The conductor would know it was scalped, of course, because it was authenticated at a different station than the departure, but it was a ticket nonetheless, and not his job to do anything about it. He punched Anton's ticket without examining it, looking with amused knowledge at the dust that still clung to Anton, and handed it back, taking care that his fingers never brushed any part of Anton's hand or sleeve.

"Thanks. You heard of any work opening in City lately?"

"There's jobs, and then there's work. I don't know anything about the kind you people are looking for. You ask me, you better find another ticket heading back out."

"Thanks anyway, friend."

The conductor walked down the line, and Anton rested his head on the jolting window again, letting it throw and rattle his head like litter on the platform when a train pulls into the station.

He would be in City, and then he would find work. If everyone in City were as hostile to strangers as the conductor, he would never find a job, one sanctioned by the Governor and the Council, even with the papers his friend in the Burb had made for him, but he could find work.

He'd take any work that came his way, and he'd move his parents off the slate-grey dust, into the green and golden City. Anton let the rails soothe him again, and gradually his breathing evened with the tossing of the window pane, and he slept.

MUSHROOMS
relaxology



THROE
PaperRage

her exquisite palette
so fitting to mine
cells rush
through my vessel
mercilessly
forcing upon her

racing
pacing
around her
keep this
whip dancing on
pale flesh
the air thick
gasps and moans
tangible
trickling tickling beads
shimmering
down her back

closely
whisper to her
stiffening against
tether
and
bond
head hung
suck in
sticky
sticky
air
quickly through my teeth
release a lick
of pain along
her spine

sniffles
smothered cries
that final and
genuine climax halting

observe dark lashes
tickling
trickling
tears



Untitled "Love"
PaperRage

BLACK & WHITE ANGEL #7
PaperRage



OUR LOVE'S TALE
Kahrheena Merriweather - Things Knot Broken

Email. Text Message. Phone Call. Thai Food.

No Work. Cute Smirk. My Turf. Planet Earth.

Strong. Sensational. Sexual

Frustration.

Initiation.

Exploration.

Orgasmic

Undulation!

Undulation!

Undulation!

Times three.

Birthday Sake.

Mid Day Movie.

Herb and Booze.

With a little help from our friends.

Cheetos and Rice Crispy Treats.

How they help us transcend.

Through the fog of the high.

Through the fog of uncertainty.

Through the fog of our fears.

Daze of our doubts.

Murk of malignant memories.

We Hover. Terrified.

Petrified. Verified by the feelings.

Hover. Waver.

It doesn't matter if you're ready.

Go!

When my mind faltered. My heart stood wise.

Told no lies and betrayed my mind.

I love you.

Uttered over the cackle of white bowling pins against
slippery linoleum.

Subconscious relief under waking anxiety.

Just kidding fools no one. Not even myself.

So I go with the flow. Enjoy the ride.

And the two of you, drink a brew.

Just

Go with the flow. Enjoy the ride.

So I do. And you do.

And in that evening we

ARE.

Seasons past on the leaves above us.

The back drop of the sky,

Dark blue in hue

Reminds me of a song I know.

And something in the air feels right.

Something is telling me to remember
tonight.

Lights off. Door closed.

A melodic story in the background.

You relate. Describe it as something like fate.

Calling me colorful and touching my face.

Sobs seize you and I pull you into me.

Consoling you unconditionally.

And you feel it as it fills you.

It escapes along with the tears.

It fills you so much it overflows.

You said in the least what's clear.

I love you.

In that moment,

I know I love you too.

Our hearts conspired together.

So they could be forever.

And travel through this crazy endeavor

We call life.

My mind, body, spirit, and soul.

How you've enchanted everything.

Our Love's beyond my control.

I can't wait to see what it will bring.

And I like it that way.

Cause my happiness stays.

You're the yin to my yang.

You're what's keeping me sane.

Our love will remain thick.

Senile gray and seasoned in life.

United, I know we'll stick.

A great writer once said something that had my head
spinning,

It's a line that suits us best.

We're "the ending of a never ending beginning."

We'll have to wait for the rest.



8.5
Alison Waddy

Eight and one half minutes, is the time it takes
For sunlight to saunter to the earth
Skipping lightly past Mercury
And scorching Venus in passing.

Eight point five is the reason
It doesn't really matter if you smile
Or get your next pay raise.

Eight point five is why
Your big new car is worthless
And your white picket fence means nothing

Because if the sun burnt out right now
Extinguished with my exhaled breath
You wouldn't notice
For eight and one half minutes.

* * * * *

© April 30, 2008

New Beginnings

J. A. Cripe

In a stunning work of bravado, issue 2 of Caffeine Zine has come together within the past 72 hours! If you were around for the wait involved in the release of issue 1, this would be far more impressive.

Anyway, with this issue comes a new format for Caffeine, using landscaped A5 to better represent the intended print format. Also included is the new addition of a Theme! Unfortunately, this theme wasn't presented until compilation time, so the works fit to varying degrees.

I decided to use the theme of “New Beginnings” for issue 2 to show the many faces that beginnings take in our life. While we usually only see beginnings as the very outset of a venture, in truth, we are surrounded and continually subjected to them no matter where we are.

Beginnings come at the start, but also at the end. An end is required before a beginning is possible. In “Trees” Erin Koppo expertly depicts this cycle in its entirety with her astute observation of decorative foliage. Rebecca Lyons also demonstrates this multi-faceted nature of beginnings with her study of the Corpus Christi waterfront in “Sky”. While the day is ending, the night is just beginning, as it also artfully depicted in the words of Andy Cripe's “A Busy Night.” And, as Alison Waddy shares with her piece “8.5” an end to even the sunsets is never far off.

Much of this issue is also focused upon two aspects of beginnings, love and women. New love is an incredibly powerful emotion, subduing almost everyone on this planet. Hormones rage, skin flushes and pulses race. What's to come next? Only time will tell.

Some find love in innocence, such as Valerie Valdes shares with us in “Alphabetical Order.” Others prefer to love on different terms, as we find in the series by PaperRage, or to test the experience like Taylor Anne Prescott. But, for all of us and particularly Kahrheena Merriweather of Things Knot Broken, Love is a whirlwind journey, artfully played throughout time.

Women also strongly represent new beginnings. The female form, one of nature's most beautiful creations, represents inception, creativity and wonder. All of which is best represented by BloodDove's “Endless Sonata,” Senor Ojo's “Figure 7” and PaperRage's “Black & White Angel #7.” Furthermore, as F! shares in “Nicotine,” it can be hard for anything a woman does to not be enticing.

Finally, we also have the beginning of two series within this issue. Included are Rebecca Lyons' “Muse Story” and Rebeka Miller's “Workings of a Soul.” Watch for further developments in upcoming issues.

There's still a few pieces left that I haven't addressed. What beginnings can you find in these pieces or in your own life?

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