Pathos, Spring 2010

Portland State University. Student Publications Board
Pathos Literary Magazine is a student publication under the Portland State University Publications Board. All staff members, writers, and artists are Portland State students. Content is chosen anonymously by a submission review committee. To submit your work for review, email pathos@pdx.edu. We welcome any PSU student who wishes to be involved with the magazine.

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Front and Back Covers by Petra Delarocha
Events

Thursday, September 23, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.
Margaret Atwood & Ursula K. Le Guin
Together In Conversation
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

Saturday August 7, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.
Joanna Newsom
Aladdin Theater

The classic film Metropolis, directed by Fritz Lang
Coming this summer to Cinema 21
616 NW 21st ave
Showtimes: To Be Announced

More Than a Pretty Face: 150 Years of the Portrait Print
Tuesdays-Sundays through July 4
Portland Art Museum

The Creation of a Voice:
Manuscripts & Materials from the David Lee Collection
Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays through June 30
Multnomah County Central Library

Sunday, June 27, 2010 at 1:00 p.m.
John Adams Unbound
Multnomah County Central Library

Thursday, October 21, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.
Natasha Trethewey
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

Broken Word poetry open mic
Every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
Alberta Street Public House
1036 NE Alberta st.

Tin House Writers Summer Workshop:

Sunday, July 11th 2010
8:00 p.m. Reading and signing with Nick Flynn,
Elissa Schappell, Robert Boswell

Monday, July 12th 2010
8:00 p.m. Reading and signing with Anthony Doerr,
Brenda Shaughnessy, Charles D’Ambrosio

Tuesday, July 13th 2010
8:00 p.m. Reading and signing with J.C. Hallman,
Dorianne Laux, Larry Doyle

Wednesday, July 14th 2010
8:00 p.m. Reading and signing with Karen Russell,
David Leavitt, Ann Hood

Thursday, July 15th 2010
8:00 p.m. Reading and signing with Tom Grimes,
Whitney Otto, David Shields

Friday, July 16th 2010
8:00 p.m. Reading and signing with Jon Raymond,
Matthew Dickman, Antonya Nelson

Saturday, July 17th 2010
8:00 p.m. Reading and signing with Steve Almond,
D.A. Powell, Joy Williams

*All readings to be held in Cerf Amphitheater at Reed College, 3203 SE Woodstock blvd.
I need a modular system that will let me "play" in any season and keep the geometric beautiful shapes. Structures that can be attached with magnetic tubes.

Perhaps I can use 3 dimensional forms simulates the geometry of looking for what about using simulations? The light, shadow, and shape of one color, black and white patterns. Parametrically modeled systems might be possible?

I need to find another way to compete

Milo Hayden, Sketches
Wildman Awalkin’ Out Of Nothing Into Nowhere

Richard Hernandez

"The idea of a poet is to wake the dead, shake up the ones who cannot think, cannot smell, taste, feel or breathe." - Jack Micheline

Jack Micheline never sent his work to the academy of classical university poets for approval, praise or even acknowledgement. Micheline was a kind of Jake Lamata of poetry who pugnaciously never wrote for the sake of pretty language or haunting images, and he often derided those who wrote with an eye towards getting published, and parading themselves in front of other poets like prostitutes of some morally acceptable trade. He defied the Beats, although they embraced him as one of their own, and he often accused those who wrote with an eye towards getting published, and parading themselves in front of other poets like prostitutes of some morally acceptable trade. He defied the Beats, although they embraced him as one of their own, and he often accused his high priest ad hoc, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, as being primarily a by-product of what Micheline deemed as the dispositionally smug establishment. To admit that Micheline was antipathetic of the “outsider” American literary scene is too mild an assessment of the nature of the schism that existed between Micheline and the other so called poet revolutionaries of the fifties and sixties. Micheline believed himself to be a poet in the true living sense. He vagabounded through the country most of his life, temporarily holding down a side job here and there - dishwasher in Butte, Montana, stockyard loader in Seattle - wherever his duende summoned him to embark and testify somehow in his work the life he saw. There was also always the sustaining possibility a friend in the making would be waiting there to sit with him, listen to a satchel of poems being read aloud and while away the dark hours of the ever present night of American life.

In 1929 Micheline was born Harvey Martin Silver in what he would call the ‘meshuggeneh’ of the Bronx, an Irish-Italian (Russian-Romanian) to a mother he claims was jealous of his gift to recreate grime reality in tall tales. Even at an early stage Micheline was instinctively suspicious of the literary criticism that surrounded him. His corporeal education as a young man and poet was like a lot of other boys from that era and place, on the mangy streets of his neighborhood, and in the halfway points between poverty, hunger and the perfidious option of violent escape. Micheline never wanted to be a poet or painter as he later became - he simply needed to learn how to survive through the struggle of existence as he experienced it.

At that time as a young man in the Bronx the last thing anyone wanted to admit to being was a poet of precious feelings and language. Micheline and his peers were lucky if they were able to complete high school, let alone consider a life of the mind unconflictedly. To be a writer was at that time, according to Micheline, to be perceived as a 98 pound recreant in a long coat. It was to be seen by the world as being fundamentally maligned by guilt and needful of secrets and self-loathing. Micheline admitted that becoming a writer was the last thing on his mind.
Streetwisdom however embodied itself in Micheline in a manner that he could not predict early on, and he began to understand his struggle for life in his borough as only a microcosmic metaphor for something deeper and farther out of reach from the walls of just one city or state of being:

down by the wild they are calling me
their voices enter my window
their faces, the tears of the real
I hear their voices, their lonely voices
their faces hovering in the dark

excerpt from Down by the Wild
1956

After a marginal stint in the military overseas, Harvey Martin Silver came back to the U.S. and settled for a few years in the burgeoning music and poetry scene of Greenwich Village and became Jack Micheline. It was at this time, most likely the early to mid 1950’s, when Micheline began to garner some attention for his writing and wild man antics around the jazz and poetry scene of New York. It was also around this time that the actual facts concerning Micheline’s true ancestry become difficult to discern. What we know for sure is that Harvey Silver chose the name ‘Jack’ for his boyhood love of writer Jack London, and creatively derived ‘Micheline’ from his mother’s maiden name of Mitchell. All else, such as his European lineage, is veiled in self-constructed legend and mythmaking.

Micheline breathed songs and ballads as an artist and wanted his work to embody the spirit the balladeer for a 20th century audience. By his own account, the constant stylistic preoccupations of much of his work was grounded in a lyrical construction of words and song, and by extension was itself a natural outpouring of a long heritage of roaming minnesingers. It was here under this new persona and mythic milieu that Micheline began to flower as an autodidactic artist and writer. The influences were legion of course, but they all shared that same sense of vagabondage that would come to define Micheline’s life and personality. Writers like the ‘prairie troubadour’ Vachel Lindsay, the archetypal Beat Walt Whitman, the French poet and playwright Guillaume Apollinaire and the little praised, but often peer-acknowledged and highly influential writer Sherwood Anderson were among Micheline’s muses.

During this time in the fifties Micheline was mostly New York bound, but his spirit perambulated throughout the magnetic and creatively explosive personalities of his day. Some of these acquaintances included figures from the Harlem Renaissance such as James Baldwin and Langston Hughes. Others closer to him personally, though disciplinarily distinct, were jazz greats Charles Mingus, Max Roach and Bud Powell. Like many other Beats, Micheline fastened himself to this exciting and emergent art form. At this time Micheline’s whole approach to poetry began to take on it’s own strange and doggedly personal character. It has often been noted that much of what Micheline wrote was not only composed in the moment, but was also created for one specific moment in time. Micheline wrote for the desperate and ghostlike invisibles of the city corners, or simply as an act of trade for the pabulum of bread and butter from those around him who could be considered his provisional literary patrons. This habitation to improvisational life in creative motion oddly made it the case that much of Micheline’s writing was composed on whatever existing parchment he had ready at hand. In later years Micheline had roamed so persistently among others that the Micheline Foundation, superintended by his son Vince Silver, is still in the process of locating and gathering any work he left with others.

The usual difficulty most face in leaving the settled existence for a precarious vocation in perpetual wanderlust was for Micheline a strange necessity. In fact, escaping New York at end of the fifties is what he claimed saved his life. Micheline was self-proclaimed poet who affirmed himself more at home on the road as the agonist of post-war suburban conformity and as a continual slipping glimpse and testifier of the marginalized and peripheral part of American life throughout the latter half of the 20th century.

no more walking easter Sunday
no more turkey trimmings baby
no more five star, rot gut sour whiskey

a sky full of flowers
a yellow moon for you
jenny died on the corner
where all the voices were
the horns were blowing crazy
a siren waited that night
your body wrapped in flowers
in the gutters of the sky
out in the open
out in the street
heaven in your eyes

excerpt from Jenny Lee
Winter 1959
Harlem
POETRY

A Day at the Planetarium
Stacey Tran

let's get lost in a coal field
replaced by gold and neon
ebbing through violet millennia
encapsulate ourselves in the dark dust
skewed with bad news
it is almost black—

is black—
sweetheart, these are for you
a dozen red gamma rays
roaring
while you were gone
i found a box of recipes
for eclipses
and potions for equinoxes
at your wish
i can shatter the cosmos
or catch flying fire
in my pockets
to save for later

i even memorized
the formula for hot showers of light
exploding into silent lust
scorching, and brilliant—
i've strung together
the planets for you
to swirl around your neck

but my satellite spun
the opposite direction
and i forgot about gift wrap...

darling, forgive me

look at what i made
with 8.5 x 11 inches of light—i've folded it up into a ball

let's play catch

let's give each other space
Elise Mravunac, *I wouldn't worry about it*
Semaphore
for Rachel Chambers
Nick Nash

Left my towel hanging
across your curtain rod. A
sign of things to come?

Nora Berggsen-Jensen, The Road to Condon
He is given cardboard, butcher paper, a pushpin, pencil, and twine. He is told to tape the butcher paper to the cardboard, tie one end of the twine to the pencil and the other end to the pushpin, then he is told to push the pushpin through the paper into the cardboard, and he does. He draws his first circle. From then on, circles everywhere. His father takes him fishing and gives him a red bobber to tie to the line, and when it lands in the water, circles ripple across the water. They ripple again when a fish bites. His father shows him how to stop a fish from squirming by smashing its head against a rock: one of its eyes is knocked out of the socket and the boy sees that the eye is all circles as well. The hole where the fish eye was fills with blood. The little pool of blood slowly spills over and onto the rock. From there it streams into the water and the water turns red. In the distance, the boy can see the ocean turn red, and then the clouds. The clouds rain thick, warm blood on his face, and the blood makes the boy red and he cries. After the fishing trip, when he tries to draw the sun, he goes blind. From then on, all the circles he draws are eclipsed.
The distance between the end of my mother’s fist and my father’s chest was only about two feet. It was more strike than throw and more broccoli than fist.

On Tuesdays, Anna would pick me up from school in the church van. We’d pick up fast food on the way back, where my father was sketching out the sermon.

Anna always kept her thick brown hair piled atop her head, pulled tight and braced with bobby pins when she arrived each morning. First she checks his messages then goes to town on the Prayer List.

By the time I climbed through the passenger door, her hair would have come some undone—strands falling across her temples, loosened in the back. My father used to joke: he’d say by the end of the day, she looked as if an exhausted lap dog were slumped on her head with its feet dangling off the sides. To me her hair looked like an empty Ninja Turtles costume from Halloween.

Some spring time, Anna started coming over Tuesday nights, playing mom to us when our real one stayed overnight in Philomath to play worker. Then she learned that during Sunday School her parrot children were whispering impossible lover’s oaths, mock moaning and pantomiming intimacy instead of learning the story of Lazarus. Abruptly my mother slammed the family curtains, and hid the act from public eyes, but even from where we sat pushed deep backstage, my sister and I could hear every threat and promise, excuse and name.

When the lights finally went up again, the amateur cameraman of my boyhood memories was perfectly positioned: the shutter spasmed, catching the broccoli stalk break in two, one half in my mother’s hand, the other colliding with my father’s heart.
Woman Who Chose the Lion

Kate Hirsch

She wrote about her nothing,
a beautiful desolation-
(we shared this)

but her nothing was an indigo bird
shattering the darkness of
a grove of trees,

a plea to above, an ode
to the divine-

a balanced tray,
an unbreakable vow
to the orange blossom,

a caress of two lips
making acquaintance,
a winsome sadness,

the hymn of symmetry,
the balance of naught.

Elise Mravunac, I need you at a two
POETRY

For Izzy the Dog

Steve van Eck

My owner wants him to sleep over tonight
but I have yet to be consulted.
She has three vicious motorcycles,
that's the kind of dog I am.

At first he extends his rain-wet hand
so I flash him a toothy grin.
I lick his juke-box hall and curry palm.
He finds the right spot behind my ear.

She gives him neat whiskey and they're tender.
They dance to Nina Simone.
I bark and wake the neighbors in 302b.
She giggles, he ignores me.

He kisses the ballet of her neck.
And a hair of mine is in his mouth.
They start to fuck on her bed/my bed.
So I spring to my place on the bed-end and howl,

like a wild hound that never saw a bright red dish
of premium pet food in her 65 years,
of sidewalks, samplings, and postal blue:
there is an ascension

to a yard where other dogs leap over fences
and into the yards of other dogs
where they find more dogs
who paw the dewy grass.

One finds a ham-bone beneath a stump,
another catches a rabbit soft in her jaw.
A big rain is bringing floods to the northwest. I’m watching an old man scrub mold off his prickly pears. Their flowers were his wife’s favorite, back then in Sedona. He drove into the desert after she died and dug hundreds of the plants from the soil with his bare hands.

My father took us into the desert to hide. We lived in the cheap hotels of Cabazon. He drank in the cool mornings, and drove my sister and I out into the gathering heat. Sometimes we would explode whiskey bottles with his rifle, sometimes we would play by the bulky, cement feet of the world’s biggest dinosaur, but most days he would drive up into the foothills and we would pick cactus flowers for our mother. The enormous prickly pears in San Jacinto kept dew cupped in their flowers, and when our father’s wasn’t looking, my sister and I would drink their nectar.

I can imagine why men go to the desert. But I’ve seen what happens when they return. Three years I’ve lived in this place and the old man’s cacti haven’t bloomed.
Poetic Devices

Allison Faris

Once I thought you dead, but now I see
the parody of this performance.
You cannot kill that which never lived,
nor have that which never was.
I have used you so long as a metaphor,
my own fill-in-the-blank,
that I struggle to remember our beginnings.
Was it simply your wanting that drew me to you,
your swift ability to take?
For too long I yearned for he I did not know
whose hollowness I used as a mirror
for my own shortcomings,
but these latter have grown too heavy,
and I no longer delight in the thought of you.
My childish obsession, need for possession,
all of this started—and will end—with me.
I cannot fathom you as more than fragments
of my own imaginative longing,
the lies I told myself in the aim of satiety.
Once I thought you dead, but now I see
the parody of this performance.
You cannot kill that which never lived,
nor have that which never was.
These Gaps In My Brain

Nora Berggren-Jensen

We get drunk off homemade hard cider and wild plum wine circa 1987. Tipsy, toppling and the sky is enormously endless. More star-light freckles than surrounded by black and simultaneously blinking windmill lights.

He says, "This reminds me of"
He says, "every dream I’ve ever had."

Windmill monstrosity, eerily surreal.
And I cannot handle this kind of science fiction.

Ground: you’re kissing me, and our fingers are like Morse Code on each other’s bodies, in sync with the wind and the spinning. And I am a damn fool for loving you as much as I do, full of black and stars and skin.

When I fall apart in the rain like fragmented sentences, we skip lines so the stars can splatter, paint the entire sky. And I cannot quite express these feelings when I’m tripping through the dark because I am not used to such desolate highways and such bad driving.
Amanda Lee James, *Color Cave*
Easter Revolutionaries

Madison Beaudet

We left the city
Where Grey rules over the asphalt and concrete
We were heading to a rebirth
not unlike that of Christendom's martyr
Which merely coincides with Nature's
But one dependent on Spring's call to arms
We joined the tree's revolution
Usurping Grey’s indifference and ambiguity
With vibrant and upstanding Green
Tying the thread God cut when
He refused Cain's offering
Here Green’s troops stand tall
Confident in their numerical superiority
To the singular sky
At the top of the pass rested small regiments of snow
I wanted to capture some to bring back to the city
To sprinkle upon your face
Winter making it's last stand on your cheeks
Before giving way to warmth, beauty and color
Great White Wings

Drew Attana

When he was six, David asked his father to take him out to the park on a hot day in August. His father made no attempt to respond or to look up from the stacks of paperwork he was consumed in. David thought he would just go by himself.

The park was deserted, the metal of the play structure, nearly glowing from the Arizona heat, must have kept the neighborhood kids away. Ignoring the heat, David climbed, swung and slid all over the wood chipped enclosure. He kept an eye on the entrance in case his father or a friend came walking down the sidewalk, but no one did. David felt determined to climb to the highest point of the structure and see if he could see his house. At the summit, he peered through the sunshine and squinted until he could see the stucco of the adjacent houses.

Then his foot slipped, and he fell from the structure landing on his left leg. He cried and cried, yelling for anyone to come and help. Mainly he yelled for his father. After an hour, the pain subsided a bit and David tried stand and walk. He fell back down, his ankle was obviously broken. He laid there, baking in the sun for a few more hours until he decided to drag himself home. He actually made it a few blocks before a rusted blue station wagon spotted him and stopped. A married couple jumped out, helped him into the back seat of the car and drove him the rest of the way. After that day, David couldn’t ever run the way he could before. And judging from the pain tonight, he might not even be able to walk the same again.

* * * * *

In the front seat, the gunman coughs again and spits out his open window. David hears the spark of a lighter and the smell of cigarette smoke drifts throughout the car.

I wish I could have one of those too, David thinks to himself. He looks up and out the window again. The buildings aren’t passing by any longer, and have been replaced by the tops of trees. An endless amount of trees, a forest. We’ve left the city.

No more street lights pass. The cab is bathed in the black paint of night.

David slowly brings his arm up in front of his eyes, as the driver sings along with Madonna, to check his watch: 1:38. I should be in the club with the music and the girls and the atmosphere.

I got in the wrong fucking cab.

David, feeling the effects of the uncomfortable position he has been in, cautiously stretches his arms out in front of him and places them on the back of his head. He then allows his face to sink and he rests his forehead in the carpet. The mat feels wet on his forehead. In the small amount of moonlight, David sees blood on his finger tips. The dead cab driver’s blood has been seeping through the seat and onto the vehicle’s floor. Repulsed and fighting the urge to vomit, David pushes himself up slightly and rests again on his elbows, tucked further up underneath him.

The radio finishes a commercial break and the opening notes of Duran Duran’s “Hungry like the Wolf,” begin. The gunman turns the volume up even louder, yet over the music David can hear the slosh of the liquor inside the bottle as the driver takes a drink.

Then, as if he forgot they existed, David thinks, My cell phone! I could text someone to call the cops. The cell phone in his right pocket, is wedged against the backseat. David lifts his pelvis and slips one hand down to retrieve it. His hand hits something near his waist. Something spongy and moist. He grabs a hold of it and pulls it up into the moonlight. It’s covered in blood, with jagged bits of flesh hanging from it. David resists the urge to vomit again when he realizes that it’s the cab drivers lower jaw, a nearly full set of teeth still attached. He swallows hard and pushes the bone fragment underneath the seat. He reaches back down and pulls out his phone.

It’s off. The abrupt stop earlier must have
jostled it enough to shut it down. David flips it open and presses the button to turn it on. The display lights up and the Motorola song echoes through the car over the music.

_Fuck._

The gunman turns the radio off and slides the Plexiglas window open. He reaches back and David feels his hand make contact with his neck.

"Who's back there?!" The gunman shouts and grabs a handful of David's hair. David screams and starts hitting the gunman's arm with both fists. The gunman pulls David's head up and slams it against the glass then pushes it back down into the bloody carpet.

"Stop!" David screams, his lips and tongue drenched in both the cab drivers blood and his own, fresh from his broken nose.

"How'd you get back there, boy?" The gunman asks, sounding as if he is about to laugh. He lets go of David's hair and pulls his arm back through the window. David rises up and pushes his back against the door of the car, the weight of his body making the bones in his ankles crack again. He looks at the window as the man in the driver's seat sticks the gun through. A shiny silver revolver. The gunman fires a shot into the back seat and without pausing, David grabs the third bottle of liquor that is still wedged under the cushion and swings it at the man's arm. The bottle shatters on the metal frame of the Plexiglas window and the man yelps as he drops the gun. David snatches a piece of the glass bottle and jabs it into the man's forearm, pulling it up hard to his wrist. The man screams louder and the car swerves as he retracts his arm.

David grabs the gun and pointing it through the glass shouts, "Pull over!"

The man turns to look at David and doesn't see the upcoming curve in the road. The cab narrowly misses the guard rail, and the gunman jams down the brake, jerking him, David, and the body of the cab driver forward. He doesn't hit it in time. David feels weightless for a few seconds as the cab leaves the blacktop and does a barrel roll into the trees 15 feet below. The car hits the forest floor on its right side, both of the windows exploding inward, and the cab rolls over itself twice before coming to a rest on the roof.

Opening his eyes, David looks around the inside of the car. The Plexiglas divider is cracked in half and folded into the front seat which is now empty. Both the gunman and the cab driver's body are missing along with the windshield. The box of booze is open and most of the bottles are broken and scattered, the pieces of glass from them and the windows glimmering with the rain coming into the vehicle. A good amount of the glass has embedded itself all over David's body. The only audible sound above the rain pattering against the chassis is the spinning of a single tire.

Strangely, David doesn't feel much pain considering the extent of the accident.

Then, the smell.

_Gas! The car is leaking gas. Or is it the mixture of whiskey and vodka that I smell? I need to get out of here. My ankle. Maybe I can hobble out of this and get back up to highway and flag someone down._

David puts both hands underneath his body and props himself up on the floor of the cab like he is doing a push-up, then tries to swing his legs toward him but they don't move. He looks down and sees that his shattered ankle and most of his left leg are pinned outside the back window between the twisted rear quarter of the cab and the tree that stopped them from rolling farther down the hill. The tug on his leg sends shock waves up through his body and they emerge from his lips in desperate shrieks.

Panic takes over. David thrashes his arms around the roof of the cab, through the shards of glass, searching for his cell phone. Then he sees it, underneath one of the folds of Plexiglas next to the revolver. He grabs both. The cell phone is destroyed - the flip part of the device is torn off and hanging from it by tiny red and green wires. David hugs the revolver close to his chest and tries to breathe through the situation like his therapist had been teaching him. Since his first attempt at getting sober, anxieties of all shapes and sizes have been plaguing him. Therapy seemed like the only coping method available to him now that the bottle was intermittently gone.

_Breathe in._

Hold the breath in your belly for ten seconds.

_Breathe out._

The pooling alcohol is finding its way into David's lacerations and giving him a sharp stinging sensation. All the liquid - blood, alcohol, rain water, and possibly gasoline - has soaked his clothes and is chilling him down to the bone. He yanks at his leg again, hoping to free it this time and begin dragging himself up to the highway.

Nothing, still.

He isn't going anywhere.