

I APOLOGIZE  
IN ADVANCE FOR THE AWFUL  
THINGS I'M GONNA DO



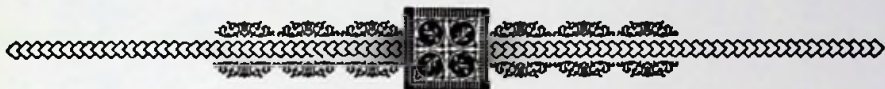
**HAIKU BY DANNY BLAND PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREG DULLI**

WITH CALLIGRAPHY BY EXENE CERVENKA









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IN ADVANCE FOR THE AWFUL  
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## FOREWORD

Danny Bland is a man of few words and even fewer syllables. Over the years, as my road manager/co-conspirator, he and I have driven 300 or 400 miles in a day, from one show to another, and sometimes the only conversation we'll have will be "Do you feel like eating a burger or Mexican food?" or "I used to know a wild girl in that town. I wonder what the hell ever happened to her." We save the deeper stuff for the stage or the songs or the poetry. Because of this, I have no idea where or how Danny discovered the traditional Japanese poetic form of haiku. I have no idea why the haiku, treasured and used by many poets from Auden to Cummings to Ginsberg to Collins, appealed to him but I can guess. The haiku's simple complexity of 5 syllables - 7 syllables - 5 syllables, suits his personality perfectly: direct, vivid, tough, and honest.

*Narrow Roads to the Interior* is the title of a collection of poems by the beloved 17th Century Japanese haiku master, Basho. Like the itinerant Basho, Danny is a wandering poet who has truly traveled on some narrow roads as well as broad, endless interstate highways and maddening, deadening airports. His travels have taken him from the heat-soaked, desert streets of Phoenix to Istanbul's ancient Hagia Sophia, from the Kamchatka Peninsula's desolate forests to the hopeless, heroin-soaked back alleys of Seattle. More importantly, like all good poets, Danny has also traveled to "the interior" of his heart and soul. His deeply personal haikus are funny, serious, painful, and fearless. At times shocking, then abruptly, surprisingly tender, his poems constantly question accepted beliefs and attitudes, both society's and his own. Like the classic blues singers, Danny is able to use a limited form to express the limitless. Not a simple task by any means. He is one hell of a writer and companion. One of these days, on one of those 400-mile drives, I'll have to discuss all this poetry jazz with Danny. Or, maybe, we'll just discuss what burger joint to eat at next.

— DAVE ALVIN

. . .

Greg Dulli's photographs take you places. Places where dark and murky and mirth and joyous co-mingle, perhaps even slow dance. Places that appeal to your inner scoundrel, your ne'er-do-well, the bad neighborhood in your mind. A place where photography is more about eye and opportunity and storytelling than it is about equipment. A place where you can finally be comfortable admitting you're not a voyeur but a low down dirty peeper. Or maybe that's just me.

— DANNY BLAND





FOR ISABEL, MARY JANE AND SAM



1



watched you as a child  
pull hearts out of old men's chests  
eat them like candy



.....

THIS LIFE  
SO I'M GONNA  
OF CRAZY



MAY BE SHORT  
PACK it FULL  
ALL STUFF

.....  
forgive my mother  
she is Dr. Frankenstein  
in theory only

the sign blinks "live girls,"  
and it draws flies to honey,  
empty your wallets

the dead pull my sleeve,  
rest their heads on my shoulder,  
someone to talk to

from across the room  
I stared at you for twenty  
years, waiting my turn

torches and pitchforks  
outside my window tonight  
the villagers know

---

seen bloody handprints  
in fifty dollar rooms, seen  
beautiful things too

"son, girls that smoke and  
have tattoos are just dirty,  
find one right away"

the square, the table  
the place we have agreed to  
meet as battered ghosts


your self-inflicted  
wounds taste of salt, somehow paint  
a pretty picture

some like blondes, some like  
brunettes. I like a girl who  
gives good blasphemy

say motherfucker  
as often as possible  
waitresses love it

turn ons: wise-cracking  
malcontents with lax morals,  
turn offs: sunshine, cats





you open your arms  
still undaunted by the threat  
of being eaten

.....



.....

in polite whispers  
my behavior has been coined  
"at best, unseemly"

when the day is done  
you light a cigarette, pick  
spiders from my hair

I'm not well, I pray  
and lift the virgin mary's  
skirt at the same time

find your place in my  
ribcage, sleep soundly knowing  
your secrets are safe

SHE POPPED HER GUM. "LET'S  
DO BAD THINGS IN THE FUNHOUSE."  
MOM WAITS IN THE CAR



---

baby, quit making  
me smile. it creeps people out  
when I do that shit

I saw the devil  
in jackson square, she was six,  
apocalyptic

caffeine, nicotine,  
fear not the other drugs; you're  
my heart's desire

next waiter who asks  
if i'm your father will get  
a fuck in the throat

leopard print converse  
on the dash, straw to your lips  
a perfect moment

they meet at sternum  
barely hid in paper skin  
hardly safe from me



when I hear average  
people's "wild stories," I  
am the devil, mute

she holds a piece of  
duct tape to her lips, breathes in  
a boy she once knew

she covered the walls  
with visqueen, sat one last time  
at her vanity

sometimes I miss the  
days of wine and roses, I  
mean, dope and bushmills

horror movies are  
like women; when they're bad, I  
like them even more

note at the front desk:  
wish I'd cut your tongue out and  
taken it with me

she will sit upon  
a throne made of human skulls  
and smile so sweetly

ATTEMPTING FIRST BASE,  
DRIVE-IN MOVIE PROJECTION,  
HER STELLAR DEFENSE





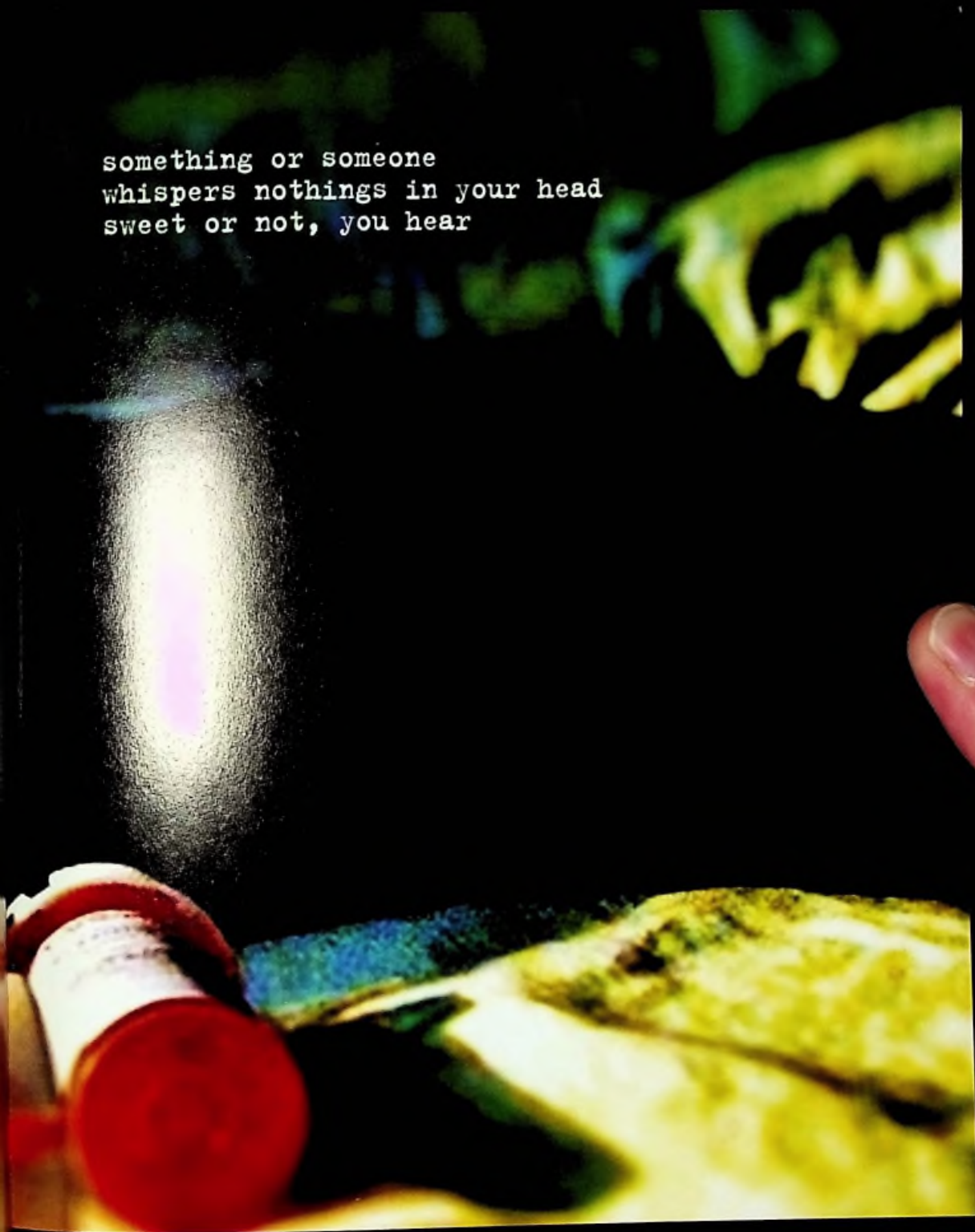
FIRST in the Morning  
FUCKING YOU is all I WANT  
That, then some coffee



2



something or someone  
whispers nothings in your head  
sweet or not, you hear





---

your fresh-fucked hair combed,  
turtleneck covered bite marks  
you look good as new

distance is madding  
close-up works best in knife fights  
and cupid's sweet hold

I'll blow the dust off.  
you're dead to the rest of the  
world, but not to me

I'll never leave you  
without a tale to tell, a  
scar, reason to smile

YOU'RE LICKING YOUR WOUNDS  
ACROSS FROM THE BUS STATION  
THE HOTEL CONGRESS

---

bible in the drawer  
you mock old testament in  
your sweet honey purr

there are days when I  
need to spit on syllables  
just to squeeze them in

nose to nose, growling  
violent kiss untethered  
dentist on speed-dial

we ~~was~~ in silence  
~~couldn't~~ to read minds, I watched  
~~smile~~ dance from your lips

of ~~all~~ the daisies  
she ~~had~~ to murder, only  
one said "he loves me"







A DEEP  
YOU, WAITING  
TO OPEN

OF SWEAT FELL.  
FOR PERMISSION  
YOUR EYES

---

oh, poison ivy  
are you stomping on pedals  
or young monster hearts?

wrapped up in plastic,  
buried in the woods, stapled  
pages, so adored.

she had the dead-eyed  
stare, the brass pole expertis  
what she lacked was "it"

if you raise your hand  
to my sisters, you will feel  
the weight of us all

burn down your office  
and smash your phone, let's just live  
off of pockets picked

I bought a whiskey  
for sister helen, discussed  
saints, the football kind.

she remembered when  
she was wild, dirty and free.  
smiled, waved at her kids

.....

in hotel lobbies  
I hear laughter, see phantom  
violin cases

if you're not ashamed  
of some things you've done, I can  
fix that. come over.

seems I got more sleep  
when all I had to do was  
chase girls and rob graves

leave your incisors  
and a dirty black t-shirt,  
so I won't miss you

coincidentally,  
your ghosts crave spirits, something  
to burn down their throats

you love your bruises,  
your scars, your souvenirs of  
reckless abandon

.....







---

on her business card:  
hip-shaker, god-denier,  
knife enthusiast.

every morning, I  
kiss each scar on your body  
one through seventeen

trust me, I'll take it  
with sweet words, bewitchment or  
scalpel if needed.

some honeyed, dulcet.  
some are not even poems,  
just bumper stickers

no savagery, teeth,  
serpent's tongue. it was a kiss  
with nothing to prove

EXHAALING THE SMOKE  
THE FIREFLY DISTRACTS ME  
FROM MY FILTHY PRIDE

---



SURE, SHE BROKE A NAIL  
AND HER KNUCKLES BLEED, BUT NOT  
AS MUCH AS HIS NOSE

3







---

she writes suicide  
notes on napkins, leaves them as  
tips for waitresses

don't be sad, darlin'  
death is just another chance  
to find each other

the answer will be  
the same 'til you chew off my  
last middle finger

the devil's reading  
taking her red sharpie to  
a romance novel

call me old-fashioned  
but I'm still a big fan of  
original sin

alarms disabled  
someday, dear, I'll turn these days  
upside-down for you

no one has a soul  
don't worry big-legged women  
Robert Plant's a fool

---

wrapped in polka dots  
her hips can shake the dust off  
scratchy old records

the note read: wearing  
your hoodie, it smells like you,  
not giving it back

she wants a story  
no death, drugs or hospitals  
got a dress instead

I fucking refuse  
to go to the goddamn beach  
fuck me, never

I like the slow burn  
the love song I'll never write  
the sweat-soaked shirt



as a child she played  
psych ward scrabble, adding up  
mother's made up words

.....



---

on the hardwood floor  
he whispers incantations  
softly to her hips

unmanageable,  
she poured a shot of whiskey,  
stared at it awhile

I apologize  
in advance for the awful  
things I'm gonna do

drop my coins and bask  
in all your pigtailed glory  
soles stuck to the floor

he found a napkin  
"don't destroy yourself for me"  
written in lipstick



---

bed covered in ash  
spilt wine, lipsticked paper cups  
twenty for the maid

don't talk to strangers  
or silky-coated chess cheats,  
sweet margarita

the sun is rising  
or perhaps, my love, the east  
is bleeding slowly

once upon a time  
he was devilish, if not  
the devil himself

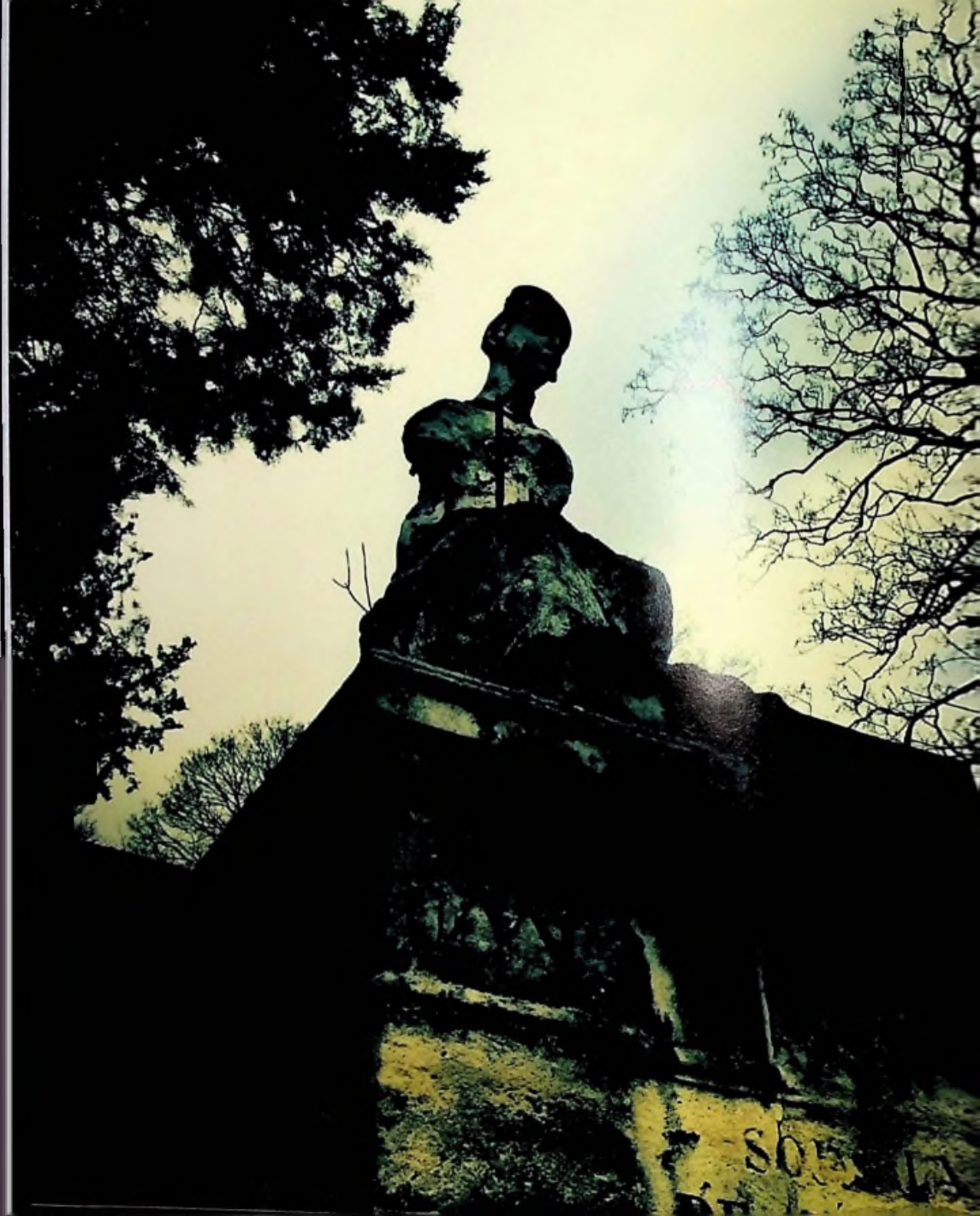
she smelled like red wine  
and smiled the way she did  
before she wrecked you

cherry-flavored mouth  
the straw extracting bourbon  
cigarette chaser

blinking motel lights  
slash through the blinds, cut ribbons  
across your torso

brand new, plasticky  
hearts are dull, I prefer them  
used and tossed aside





I say stigmata  
and you say stigmato, let's  
call the whole thing off



.....

resuscitation  
called for an ice cube in an  
unfortunate place

to devour, or  
perhaps, to fuck the goddamn  
demons out of you

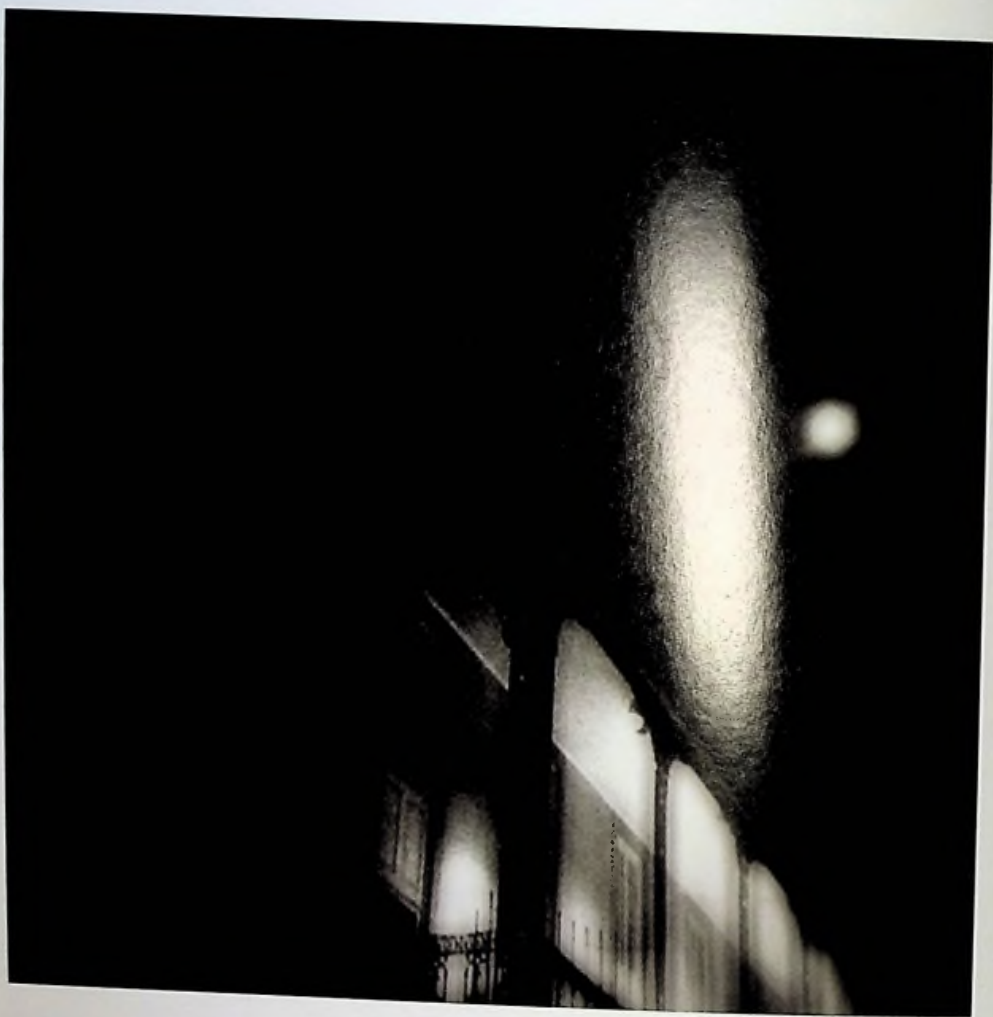
he was instructed,  
place roses on the altar  
to feel loved again

she placed the barrel  
under her chin and smiled big  
quick, take a picture

Huey P. Newton  
refrigerator magnets  
two for five dollars

SHE ATE CATFISH IN  
HER SUNDAY CROWN OF GLORY  
DEFINED TRUE BEAUTY

---




THE POCKET KNIFE CUT  
HER ~~WOUNDS~~ IN HIS ARM  
IT WAS THEIR FIRST DATE

4







everybody knows  
sideways for attention and  
long way for results



---

a vacant pillow,  
handwritten note. "love the way  
you mess up my hair."

your beauty crawls in  
and out of shadows, sometimes  
coming up for air

are those lucky stars  
southern hospitality  
or just razor wire?

grandpa says he fucked  
sophia loren on mars  
and we believe him

don't you dare, she said  
I'll crush your heart on the floor  
like a cigarette

---

say what you will, I  
still believe motherfucker  
is the best cuss word

you'll cradle my skull  
in your hands someday and laugh  
just like I promised

the plunging neckline  
amber shot glasses tilt back  
a night to forget

I quit shooting dope,  
drinking, stealing but I still  
can't behave myself

seek impurity  
with ruthless focus, my dear  
bring it home to me

songs sneak up on you  
some will slit your throat open  
others stitch you up

spring is in the air  
and a young man's fancy turns  
to thoughts of relapse

you're wolvish, bloody  
and ravenous. dirty talk  
I learned from Shakespeare

.....





OLD MAN  
SHE SORTS THRU  
IN A LAUNDRY

Archiving Her  
DIRTY PANTIES  
ROMANT

in the melee of  
blackout-curtained misconduct  
you belong to me





took out her stitches  
with a steak knife at shoney's  
pretty as can be

his lips were sweet, the  
stories they told enchanting  
the lies; exhausting

filled the tub with bleach  
and I lit the curtains on  
fire, just in case

drawn and quartered, left  
for dead, he still makes tea for  
smoldering children

I have a thing for  
ghosts who hold resined bows for  
all eternity



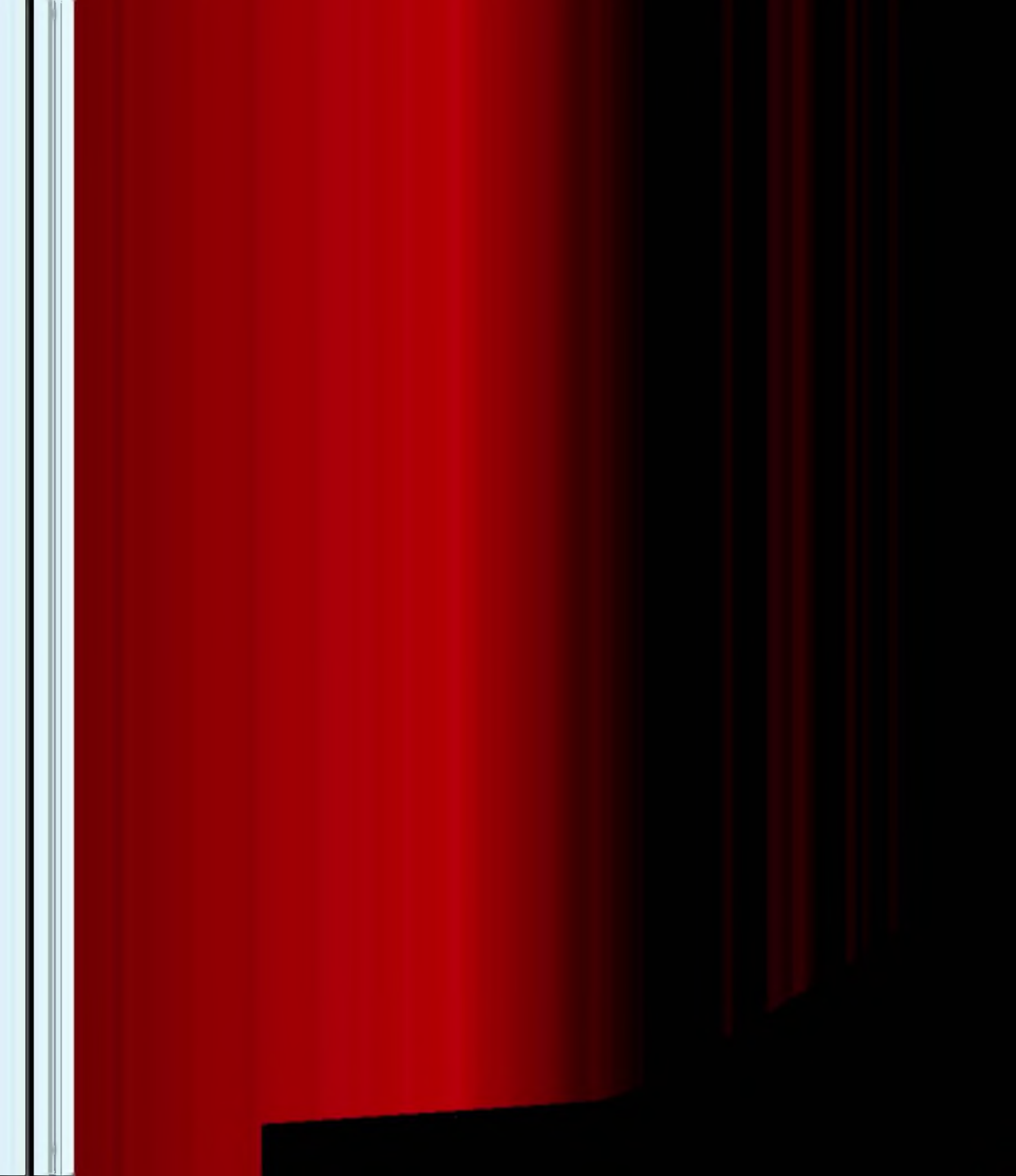
.....  
I hear confessions  
nightly. you spill shameful tales  
knowing I've done worse

the women I've known  
have all been too good for me.  
kind creatures, indeed

I hid the razors  
you bought, you sucked the pills from  
my throat, quid pro quo

she's a doll you found  
in the attic; a doe-eyed,  
sweet nest of spiders

our correspondence  
sounds more violent threaty  
than sweet love note-ish





I curse and you pray  
but the oh my gods are not  
intended for him

when the police came in  
you were naked, cigarette  
dangling from your lips

the belle of the ball  
and the smut-selling pumpkin  
drinking at midnight

in knowing glances,  
your heart; full of fireworks  
mine, wrought with spiders

the devil you know  
kissed you through a chain link fence  
tasting of sulfur

our bed, bedazzled  
with cigarette burns at the  
thunderbird motel

the imperfections  
are where your real beauty lays  
your scars are gorgeous

DOING BE SAFE. I PLAN ON  
TRIBLE THINGS TO  
YOU IN THE FUTURE







MISTER, YOU'RE IN LUCK  
NO CRUDE BACK SEAT SUGGESTIONS  
SWITCHBLADE IN HER BOOT

5

---

the crows talk to her,  
give grandmotherly advice  
when she needs it most

forgive me, father  
for I have sinned, a lot, and  
it was pretty great

wedding rings slip off  
and disappear till closing  
at the broken spoke

old junkies don't feel  
broken hearts the same as you  
bad love receptors

the roadhouse swayze  
in your heart knows that you are  
unfuckwithable

---

the masters tell us  
to only write of nature's  
beauty. fuck those guys.

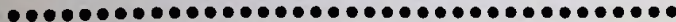
they are always there,  
learn to be still and listen  
to what the dead say

phone calls at midnight  
raspy invitations from  
the real dirty blonde

you can't begrudge me  
for doing the devil's work  
that's why you called me

she tried everything  
words, god, drugs, love's sweet folly,  
swallowing her blues

in the company  
of monsters is where I thrive,  
the foul-mouthed beauty







NOT IT TASTES  
OF DEATH  
DIPPED IN N

Like METAL  
MORE Like A spoon  
ATOR oil



do not disturb signs





---

you dumped out your purse,  
dozens of hotel room keys  
hearts you have broken

we've got matching sneers  
and matching scarred knuckles, on  
fingers intertwined

buy weapons-grade coke,  
challenge strangers to duels,  
wreak havoc daily.

black and white horror  
and cigarette-flavored lips,  
a new love to steal

I feign interest  
in far too many things just  
to appear human

she knows the difference  
between good and bad, but makes  
exceptions for you

guys like you and me  
are living life number nine  
dealing atonement

I.

I ~~got~~ The STINK EYE  
FROM THE MAID AS SHE WIPE<sup>D</sup> OUR  
HANDPRINTS FROM THE WALL

II.

PRAY YOUR ROSARY  
MY DEAR, BUT I KNOW WHY YOU  
RECOGNIZ<sup>E</sup> MY SIN

---



YOU CAN'T TAKE A THING  
FROM HER, WITH YOUR FORCEFUL HANDS  
AND GASOLINE BREATH

66

.....

when the morning comes  
you're a howlin' wolf single  
scratched up and filthy

at the thunderbird,  
where midwestern tourists and  
angels fear to tread

I have thirteen days  
one for every liquor store  
cashier on the ground

when the earth shakes from  
god's wrath, I will teach you to  
two-step in the ash

\*\*\*she sang of george and  
gracie and cigarette smoke  
angels so sweetly\*\*\*



---

she is half monster,  
throwing bent tiaras out  
hotel room windows

the moon is handsome  
open your curtains, darlin'  
wherever you are

"Brujita!" they yelled.  
she thought it sounded pretty,  
allowed them to live

listen to freebird  
and understand your issues  
with intimacy

where do your blues go?  
on the pages that you write  
or your pillowcase?



**WARNING**

**DO NOT OPEN DOOR  
AFTER DUSK**

my alcoholic  
is a werewolf, my full moon  
every single night

---

growing up, we all  
fistfight our father's legend.  
death wagers on us

the sons of darkness  
are seen by no one, my dear  
I smile, pearly-white

photos torn in half  
not a tear is shed as she  
recycles the groom

the days count. every  
single one of them. sloth is  
the only real sin.

I'm loved and lucky  
far beyond all reason, but  
mostly I am missed

after each tour  
you fight the sickness of still,  
pine for the bedlam

he hung bruised and damned  
smiling to himself knowing  
it was all worth it

.....

one fine day, my dear  
I'll add you to my broken  
people collection

some nights, she is real,  
sleeping next to the altar  
other nights, a dream

I paged my sponsor,  
I paged my dealer, then I  
waited; heads or tails.

when a sentence starts  
"a prostitute taught me this"  
heads turn in public

I knew you'd be here  
vintage slip and cigarettes  
suitcase packed, waiting



I HAVE  
SYLLABLES  
COHESIVE



SEK+EE)  
TO CONVEY A  
THOUGHT, FUCK

you are prone to poor  
choices, dear, and I am pleased  
to be among them

.....







I.

she's just here to play;  
free of the bones and body  
that had betrayed her

II.

to wrap around you  
and hope you understand; she  
couldn't love you more



---

the second verse of  
"you are my sunshine" is a  
goddamn wrist-slitter

scratches and bruises  
don't linger, the way you kissed  
them all better does

under your mattress  
your true loves lived, you kissed the  
page, staples and all

no smoke and mirrors  
or lipstick can disguise that  
fucked-up heart of yours

you should know by now  
all hearts, even yours, have an  
expiration date



.....  
all the scarlet mouths,  
earthquake hips, and rivers of  
jet black hair blind you

you light a camel  
I'm jealous of everything  
that touches your lips

backwards slow-motion  
tongues on repeat, fingernails  
digging into hips

something like english,  
something familiar, swollen  
tongues tell tales of love

when the wheels fall off  
this planet, let's turn to ash  
in each other's arms

all I remember  
is you were here, the rest is  
inconsequential

I say kidnapping  
is really the most sincere  
form of flattery



up close, you whisper  
lascivious suggestions,  
scribble notes in skin

7

scorched cities smolder,  
the monsters lay dead, she is  
innocent, like new







---

pages soaked in blood,  
it was never her nature  
to settle for muse

I like my women  
just like I like my coffee;  
tattooed and slutty

come over, monster  
we'll walk around in public  
like real people do

spit your incisors  
in the sink, your brand new crowns  
too sweet to swallow

my prayer candle kiss  
and a mattress on the floor  
they can't hurt you now



---

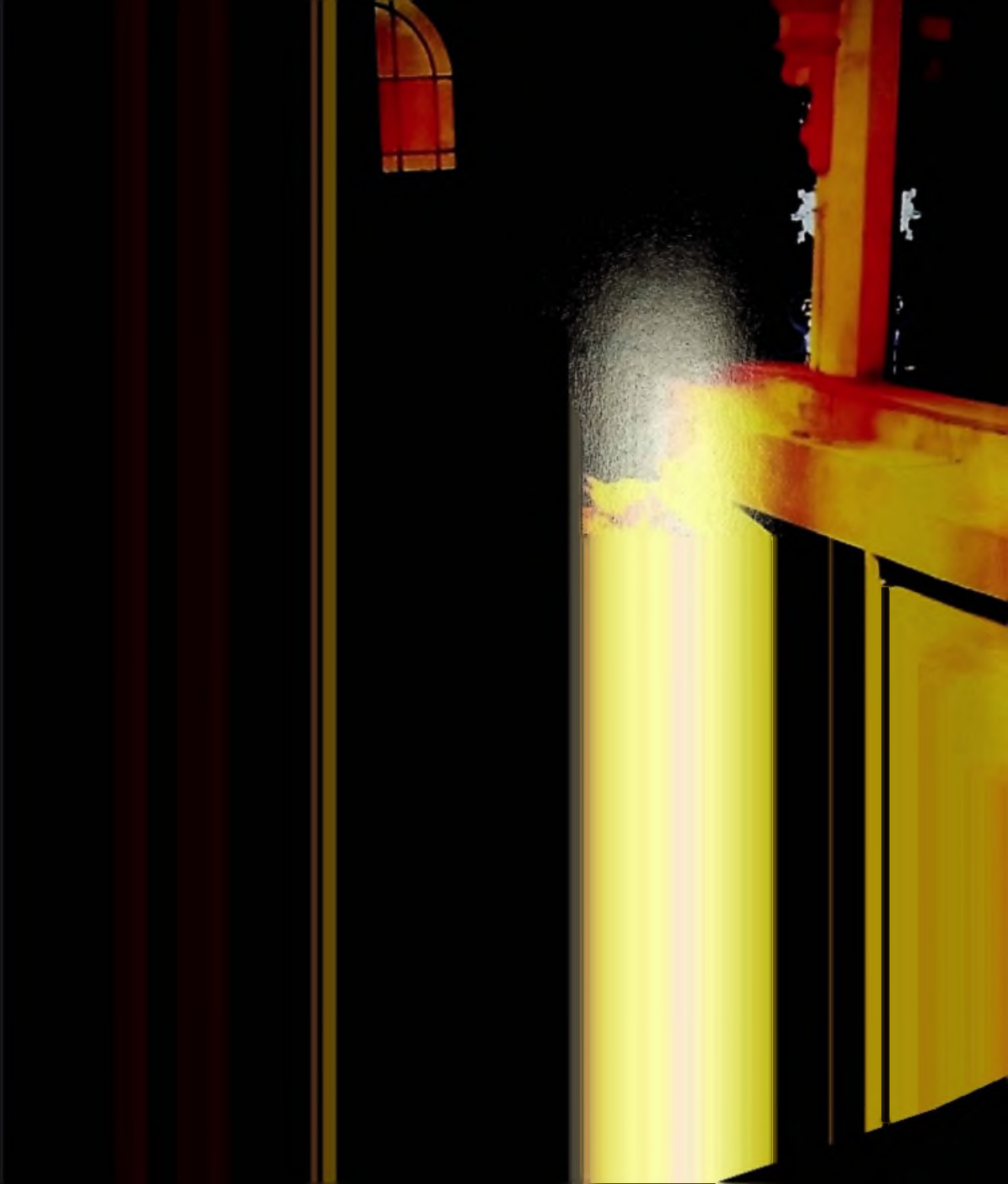
bloody red bouquets  
appeared in syringe chambers  
then I felt nothing


his ghost in a dream  
you check under your pillow  
your friend; locked, loaded.

pill organizer  
contains antipsychotics  
twice daily, with food

your open ribcage,  
wanton mouth, your trembling  
jesus fucking christ

and the desert waits  
for new sin to be added  
to its repertoire





we burnt down buildings  
that dared to assume they could  
ever house a god



---

the room exploded  
she stood amongst her dresses  
lips licked, claws sharpened

make peace with your past  
that way it's less likely to  
fuck up your today

hetropaternal  
superfecundation  
one hell of a night

what-the-fuck-ever  
your nasty little heart wants;  
delivered, always

it's true, there is no  
I in team but there is a  
you in fuck you, man.

you stroll arm in arm,  
content with the wolf, knowing  
no one can hurt you

feathers fall slowly  
as Prince Siegfried and Odette  
ascend to heaven

.....

darlin', I hope your  
plane doesn't crash, he said. I'm  
not done with you yet.

the rain was brutal  
I kissed you to shut you up  
it still doesn't work

when salty fuck yous  
come on valentine's day, they're  
best left unanswered

I often lament  
"the one who got away" and  
why I untied her.

to what's left of you,  
from what's left of me: I would  
do it all again

...



to collapse, crumble  
into sheets, given chance to  
dream of wine-soaked lips\*

.....





DANNY BLAND

once a year he still  
romanticizes bushmills  
and fair-skinned lasses



GREG DULLI

dark prince, bon vivant  
or is he just a mistake  
you haven't made, yet

---

EXENE CERVENKA is the lead vocalist and cofounder of the band X. She's also a poet and visual artist. Rising to prominence in the Los Angeles punk rock scene of the late '70s, she continues to perform with X. Exene has released several books and solo recordings and currently resides somewhere in the United States.

VICTOR KRUMMENACHER is a musician and art director located in San Francisco. He's played in a lot of bands, written a lot of songs, released a bunch of records and designed a lot of stuff, including this book. He's also a cofounding member of Camper Van Beethoven. He tries to use his powers for good, but sometimes evil wins.









5

DANNY BLAND is the author of the novel In Case We Die, as well as a longtime musician and tour manager. This is his first book of poetry, but please don't call it that.

GREG DULLI is the leader of The Afghan Whigs and The Twilight Singers. He makes a living exorcising demons.

7

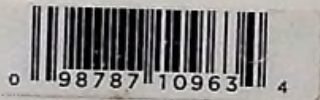
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