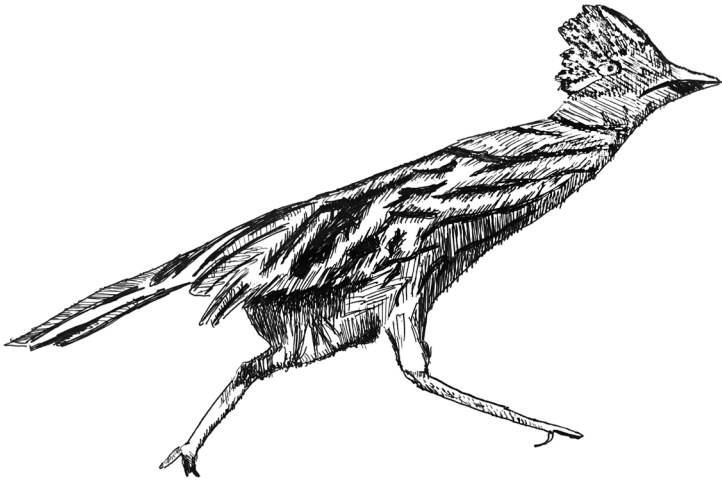


# Other Animals



# Augie

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Eva Garber



**A**ugie came to us from Tucson by way of Palm Springs. We picked him up from a trailer park and went to Wendy's. In the backseat of my Mazda he stared at us politely, wondering who we were and if we would understand the subtle desperation in his eyes. We ate hamburgers and observed with fluttering hearts the creature looking back at us. It felt like a kidnapping. Back at the trailer park, he'd been plucked from a pen full of puppies by a man named Lance and handed to us in exchange for next to nothing. Now he was with us, the pigeon-toed, snaggletoothed son of show dogs, rejected from the pack. They had done what they could to give him an air of dignity, they'd bathed him and brushed his hair back, but placed at the mercy of the elements in the back seat of the car in the January desert sun heading towards Los Angeles, his hair fluffed and tussled, his tongue caught in the place where there would otherwise be teeth, he was becoming what he was always destined to be—an animal son who filled the void where there had otherwise been nothing. ♦

# Bat

Kyle Benjamin Jorgensen

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At some point in geologic time a small depression appears on the surface of the Snake River Plain. A tiny dimple on a vast expanse dotted with sagebrush. This spot of sagging earth eventually collapses, exposing a twenty-foot-wide gash, the entrance to a lasso-shaped cavern. A few thousand years later, Boy Scout Troop 359 converges upon its surface in the form of two dusty GMC Suburbans. Handfuls of hyperactive thirteen-year-olds spill out of the vehicles. With armfuls of camping gear and gas station junk food, they descend into the mouth of the cave. It's high summer in Idaho, but the cavern greets them with an endless, icy exhalation.

Serge and I stand at the bottom of the cave mouth. Aside from a scattering of old beer cans and some shitty, indistinguishable graffiti, the tunnel is consistently featureless. Dense blackness extends beyond the throws of our cheap Coleman flashlights. On the other side of a narrow bottleneck, a cathedral-like hall opens before us. A pile of basalt boulders the size of a small suburban home sits in the center of the

passageway. The rocks had once held tight to the ceiling and I wonder how long it had been since the rooftop gave way, and why. The obstruction forces us to travel around either side or to take the more adventurous climb up and over. Instinctively we begin climbing. The view has shifted to a choppy liting vision of rocks and their shrugging shadows. Serge summits the pile to my right and begins scanning the cavern rooftop which, in places, is now within arm's reach. I find my footing at the top of the pile and lift my flashlight.

Expecting more of the same dull grey stone, I am shocked by flesh and teeth. I face a dangling, inverted body. A small grinning head framed in a parabola of fur. It quivers at the center of my spotlight. Transparent, vein-lined wings stretch outward on thin, hooked armatures revealing its mammalian dominance over this unwalkable environment. My bipedal status is compromised and I am smitten with terror on this rock-island in the depths. The creature, stripped of its solitude by an equally strange beast, signals retaliation, or at least it seems that way. I sense our mutual revulsion at this diabolic face-off as the demon increases its trembling, or my hand does, or maybe both. Panic reigns at the edge of our parallel planes and I take flight, hurling myself downward, into the dark, connecting with whatever solid forms my skinny, pubescent legs can discover. Knees scrape and thud against rocks, down, down, down, hopelessly seeking the cave floor. Somehow managing to stay on my feet. I pause some distance from the pile and breathlessly blurt, "There's a bat up there!" I abandon Serge amid the static chaos, desperate for the light of the cave's exit. He laughs at my panic as I scurry back the way we came. ♦

# Buffalo

---

D. Beveridge



I.

my last buffalo—I wonder why  
this grassy digested pie  
downrange where we practiced

shooting what we believed to be  
bows and arrows—Boy Scouts  
miles off the gold-digger coast

tents and reveille  
turn of the century—  
were there minutes

of repose in his army green cot  
when a young man  
sees what he wants to be

and counts nothing  
beyond the big toe  
of his tender tender foot—

reprieve for the weary  
on the long march  
through an institution

II.

Believed Omar Rodriguez-Lopez  
recorded a buffalo solo album,  
heard Bob Marley, *Buffalo Soldier*,  
saw that giant bison head taxidermy-  
ed & hung at the Lake McDonald Lodge  
& Grandee's sentiment of the plains  
growing up along the raging Missouri River.

Imagined early explorers' accounts of  
days long herds marching wherever the  
greenest tallest grass was I guess  
or bluest waters. Superlative.

Need to hold this in my head:  
scruffy brown hide, good for warmth  
pointed dark horns, good for erections  
wise lazy-smile flat-snout, good for laughs.

My oldest friend on earth  
in the bucket seat exclaimed, *Buffalo!*  
& Mom pulled off the highway for a break  
from the road & the boys  
pretended cowboys and indians  
against barbed wire with  
plenty plenty  
to barter with bards.

# Coyote

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Jasminne Morataya

**R**eligious intercession, i.e. an omen, portent, or miracle. Onset of degenerative neurological disease. manifestations of paranoia...like, you know. a hallucination.

a classifiable organism, readily taxon'd. or just something to mention, in an offhand way, to your mother.

the coyote skulks across the path illuminated by the headlights of your vehicle. its presence can signify any and all of these things at the same time. it could mean none of them at all. who assigned you hermeneutic right and competence? slow down.

you've seen coyotes many times in your adult life. whatever they are, they are startling. they are skinny and knobby and hey! slow down.

general impressions while looking at photos of coyotes on google, to remember what they are: itinerant tricksters with strong inclinations toward impishness, misdirection, and general devilry. smiling a sly dog smile. coyote fact: their piss smells bad. you have a lot more in common with them than you would've anticipated.

once, a long time ago, you were driving to a job interview and a coyote walked perpendicular to your slate blue 2016 toyota corolla, causing you to brake unsteadily. you saw another coyote 20 minutes later, the brother of the first, in the bushes after you parked in the lot. it looked at you with the

bright and glassy eyes of an arsonist. you blushed and turned away...the mark of a born loser.

the job was parish secretary at a catholic church in la cañada flintridge, and you didn't get it. you aren't catholic, not really, and the coyotes aren't either. they must have talked to admin or something. they told them about all the bad shit you did. the coyotes came through in an unmarked vehicle armed with a dossier 10 inches thick, photos of you in your underwear, eating carbs and being sinful. they wield their truculence like clubs.

okay, maybe they were protecting you from a fate worse than death (some jobs really do feel that way). but maybe it's more sinister than that. like what if they were working for some two-bit cointelpro-esque outfit somewhere deep in the los angeles crest. up where they walk on their hind legs since no one is looking. and like, their objective was to besmirch your name in order to keep you from a conventional line of work...and covertly radicalize you while you're unemployed via youtube recommendations when all you want to do is watch the music video for lil wayne's fireman. and like, they put a bunch of acid in your water. on the taxpayer's dime, no less!

it's the old "didn't get a second interview for parish secretary to government pawn/scapegoat/assassin" pipeline. i've seen it a million times. you cut a tragic figure already. you could be the latest victim of obscure machinations that elude all attempts at conventional understanding. relationships that occur behind closed doors. paths of anger and forgiveness. the coyotes are trying to find a new lee harvey oswald. ♦

# Dolphins

Dirk Knibbe

To be lost at sea classically capsized and adrift, the mast mislaid, dehydration awaiting your slow flailing spent human form, the hull crushed and stern capsized upwards with its keel torn clean. We are at the mercy of a sideways gale-force wind now, and the expanse of an oceanic rip pulls us deep into the void of an infinite expanse.

We've cloaked Bas Jan in myth and Jean Cousteau in prestige, less often or never do we think of the Tinseltown nice guy, song and dance star of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang who loved too much his drink, the self-professed former surfer and alcoholic Dick Van Dyke. I don't mean to speak of the symbolism of being lost at sea. It's just that Dick Van Dyke was lost at sea once, and I can't shake the image of him waking up drunk on a 10ft longboard off the coast of Virginia beach talking to himself in the atrocious cockney accent as Bert the chimney sweep.

*"Winds in the east...mist comin' in...like somethin is brewin' about to begin. Can't put me finger on what lies in store...but I feel what's to happen all happened before."*

It's a lesser-known story recounted on the Craig Ferguson show that Van Dyke retells how he had fallen asleep while surfing drunk (implied not specified) and drifted out of sight of land, as he began to swim frantically with the assumed



direction of the swell he was approached and surrounded by dolphins who then pushed him back to land and assuredly saved his charmed Tinseltown life.

Details of the event are unconfirmed. They quickly move on to a messy mouth organ duet "fancy a quick blow," asks Ferguson, and the segment ends.

The vessel has beached, and I wonder if the dolphins would have returned us to land?

*"Can't put me finger on what lies in store...but I feel what's to happen all happened before." ♦*

# Dwarf Hamster

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Amalie Brandt



A friend of mine got a hamster, a dwarf hamster. We would play around with it on the carpet after school even if it was supposed to be sleeping during the day. It was extremely cute and so tiny. I remember it as a very happy moment. I wanted one too. When we moved to a new city I must have managed to convince my parents because I got one and I named him Malthe. That was my second favorite name for a boy after Valdemar which I had named my first pet, a parakeet. Malthe was golden brown and looked exactly as the one my friend had had. I got a brand new cage for him. It was green on the bottom with a transparent top, and had a wheel and a hiding place. However the magic somehow faded. I don't remember how fast, but I lost interest. He stayed more and more in his cage. More and more in the hiding place. One day I realized he had gotten a lot fatter. He seemed to grow and grow with rapid speed. First we thought it was because he was staying in his cage too much. I think we took him to the pet shop. He had cancer. A tumor in the stomach. I don't remember if I was sad or disgusted or indifferent. He was not given surgery. ♦

# Foxes

Alexa Almany

HeheheheheHEHEhehe

HahahahahaHAHA

HeheHEHEhehe

HahahaHAHA

on muffins

on stairs

Next to see-saws and  
chairs

Foxes like to pee  
everywhere

HeheheheheHEHEhehe

HahahahahaHAHA

HeheHEHEhehe

HahahaHAHA

# Owls

Gabriel Madan

We have two owls who visit us  
to hoot down the chimney  
They sit there for hours  
talking to the owls in our house





# Mr. White

Manyu Gao

I found Mr. White on the patio in my backyard. Mr. White is a shorthaired white cat with one blue eye and the other green. He probably has other names, but I call him Mr. White.

The weather in October has gradually turned cold in Beijing. Only in the afternoon, when the sun is shining, do I like to walk into my backyard with a cup of hot tea and soak in the sunshine. This is one of my favorite “alone times” since moving back to Beijing from Los Angeles. I have been traveling a lot this year, trying to explore “what is China?” after living in the U.S. for eight years. The sunshine and hot tea always bring back good memories, recharging me for the next trip.

It was a sunny afternoon on October 15th. I came back from a five-day trip to Shanghai and Jingdezhen. I prepared my Oolong tea and was about to open the glass door to my backyard when I was surprised by a white cat taking a nap in front of my door. I stopped, slowly crouched down and began to watch him. He slept so peacefully, like a baby under the warm sunshine. The last person I saw sleeping like this was my dear friend Sulki, who fell asleep at the end of a yoga class a couple of years ago. I laughed at her then, but I’ve always admired her ability to fully embrace her nature.

I’ve never owned a cat, or any pet, and wanted to enjoy this beautiful moment, so I brought a book and a chair to the door. I must have been pretending to read while secretly watching the cat, because I do not remember anything from the book, or even which book it was. My eyes moved from paragraph

to paragraph to the cat, while many questions flowed through my mind. Where did he come from? Why is he sleeping in front of my door? Is he my neighbor’s cat? Or a wild cat? Was he a friend of mine from a previous life? For about half an hour, I thought of these questions, while remembering stories of artists who had cats, and the possibilities of me having one. Suddenly, he woke and looked me straight in the eyes through the glass, shocked. We did not move for a minute. I felt that I should break the ice, so I stood up and quickly prepared some raw salmon and water. He watched me the whole time and did not run away until I opened the door. I knew it was important to keep a safe distance. Leaving the fish and water on the ground, I closed the door. He returned, looked at me again, smelled the food and began eating. He stayed for a while after he finished, and then ran away without saying goodbye. For the next four days he came back every afternoon for his nap, but I did not always have food for him. He stayed by the door all afternoon, sometimes kneeling, sometimes standing like a knight watching over my backyard.

I traveled to Jingdezhen and wondered if he would continue to come every day. When I returned a month later, it was already the beginning of winter. I waited for two days, but he did not show up. Would the freezing cold harm him? Did he find other good places to nap? While walking in my neighborhood, I found that some families place food bowls and a little water tank next to their doors. In Rockery Park, I saw a little white cat in the distance. When I got closer, I recognized it was him! I was so excited to see him again, but he was calm and kept his distance from me. I realized that I am living in Mr. White’s backyard. ♦

# R-O-B-I-N

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Robin Akashi

ARE - OH - BIN

My second first grade teacher was married to one of my favorite cartoon characters, Donald Duck. He would pop his head through the window and crack a joke with the very distinct accent of a kazoo. Every school day, I sat there anticipating the sight of his orange beak, his tail wagging and flippers flopping on the cement.

I wanted to escape through that window. Fly away like my birth-name-right. But I did not fly. All I could do was regurgitate.

ROW - BEAN - INN

I started building a nest. A small one inside my desk. A little home out of a mixture of saliva and Elmer's glue. The nest was composed of scraps from inside the classroom and outside in the play yard. Grass, daisies, hair, the punched out holes from colored construction paper confetti and pencil and crayon shavings from my sharpener. Crumpled scraps of paper fluffed it up.

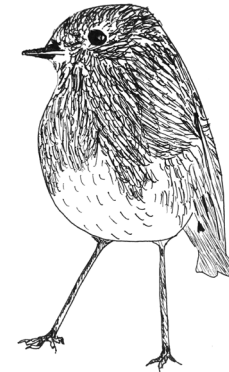
RUN - FEEL - SKIN

The school was next to the airport, and I would pinch the miniature airplanes from the sky and place them in my desk-nest. Rendering them in a state of flightlessness too.

FUN - SEEING - FIN

Here we were: me, my nest, and stagnant tiny planes, all unable to leave first grade. Saliva, glue, and a malleable word all combined in hopes of self-rebirthing. A nest for an egg that could give way to my new life. Then, I could take off through the window.

DONE - BEING - IN ♦



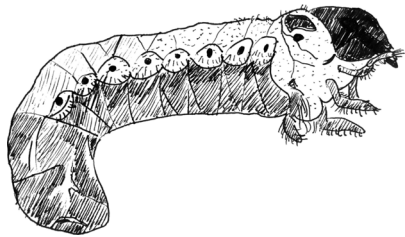
# Scruffies

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Paloma Rivera Macias

The scientific name is scruffies. We explain to the children the spectrum on which they exist: from as small as a chipmunk to as large as a bear. On the summer campsite, none of our tent flaps fully close, neutralizing the boundary between nature and domesticity. Living outside among scruffies fosters a false sense of camaraderie. Meanwhile, each party oversteps the other's boundaries, testing just how far either can go.

Awoken from an afternoon nap I'll catch a raccoon or ground squirrel red-handed with my rose deodorant. The scene is still for a moment, then our eyes meet; the scruffy slowly applies my deodorant, maintaining eye contact until it crosses the threshold back into the trees. ♦



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