



[Home](#)

[Winter-Spring 2015](#)

[Summer 2014](#)

[Fall-Winter 2013-14](#)

[Summer-Fall 2013](#)

[Spring-Summer 2013](#)

[Winter-Spring 2013](#)

[Fall-Winter 2012-2013](#)

[Summer-Fall 2012](#)

[Spring-Summer 2012](#)

[Winter-Spring 2012](#)

[Autumn/Winter 2011-12](#)

[Summer 2011](#)

[Winter/Spring 2011](#)

[Autumn/Winter 2011](#)

[Summer 2010](#)

[Spring 2010](#)

[Winter 2010](#)

[Autumn 2009](#)

[Summer 2009](#)

[Spring 2009](#)

[Autumn 2008](#)

Three Poems

by CL Bledsoe and Michael Gushue

My Birth as a Volcanic Island Off The Coast Of Iceland

I get so mad when you say I have anger issues
because my blind rage is a renewable resource
like the steam that shoots out of the fissures
in Reykjavik. Baby, let's learn to dance. Let's
learn to pretend forgiveness isn't a made-up
word. I brought you chocodiles and Italian soda.
I brought you Tastycakes and donut holes
because maybe sugar cures anger, or at least
helps my stupid inferno burn itself out.
I want to be done with gnawing at the back
of my own skull. Pull me over like a good cop.
Put your hand on my tongue and feel me smile.
I'll never explode again. And neither will you.
Now, let's strap ourselves into a dynamite vest
and see what happens when we turn off the lights.

Listen

Let's practice how to count to infinity:
start by standing on the saddest man's
shoulders, because he is surely the most
wise. Or, at very least, you might be able
to get some fresh air above the din of complaining
and denial. Next, look through a telescope's
wrong end and have the saddest man
walk halfway to the horizon.
Count down from thirty-seven
or however old you happen to be
until the loss of protective reflexes
begins in the soles of your feet
and a medically induced coma
hovers over you like an angel
made of bobby pins and bits of colored glass.
Heaven has a middle name, and it is
Agnes. Once you are unconscious, dreamless,
unaware that you are unaware,
your body nothing but a sack,
you've reached infinity, a kind
of battery. Feel Agnes' breath on your ear,
saying nothing. This is what the saddest
man has been trying to tell you.

You Deserve Better

Summer 2008

Spring/Summer 2008

Winter/Spring 2008

Editor's Note

Guidelines

Contact

The queen's not hiring any new fools--not even to polish her crown. So I've got on these tights for nothing. Tell me why I was born to see the universe in a swirl of hair, time clogging up the drain. Something smells like cinnamon and I can't seem to set it ablaze. I'm drowning in love. Please don't touch me. Please don't stop touching me. I hate everything about you that could ever pity me for hating everything about this. The best views are the ones That make you the most dizzy. You, for example, when I was watching you sleep. You weren't the stars. You were the empty space the stars wanted to fill.

CL Bledsoe is the author of a dozen books, most recently the poetry collection *Riceland* and the novel *Man of Clay*.

Michael Gushue runs the nano-press Beothuk Books and is co-founder of Poetry Mutual/Vrzh Press. His work appears online and in print, most recently in *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*, the *Michigan Quarterly*, and *Gargoyle*. His chapbooks are *Gathering Down Women*, *Conrad*, and *Pachinko Mouth* (from Plan B Press).

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