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THREE POEMS

BY MATTHEW LEE BAINS

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Kevin

With measured, coordinated
movements of tense, fumbling fingers
you showed me how to build.

How the fat and skin
fit the skeleton
of wood - tissue-pink insulation

stuffed between boards,
drywall nailed, hung, wallpaper...
Remember the walking sticks everywhere?

The dirt-colored spiders in the crawl-
space where we embeveled the house
with bronze guts?

With tobacco-stained, hirsute
fingers, choppy directions
and a stuttering laugh, you

Showed me how to build;
but never the fire -
Secret art of your exodus...

In the wiring? Kerosene balloons
hidden under wooden parings?
Or from your very fingers?

I don't want the reasons
or the eye from your socket -
I Want: one last instruction...

Show me how to build
the house of fire.
I don't want the reasons

I have my own.

Side Effects May Include

BEDLAMENE IS HERE!
Here's the cure to depression
And allergies,
All in one fell swoop!
Say "bye bye,"
And good riddance to those pesky
Blues and sniffles
With just three pills a day!

SIDE EFFECTS MAY INCLUDE:
Scrotal hemorrhaging and bloating-
Growth and protrusion of horns from skull-
Secretion of blood from nipples-
Subliminal impulses to cannibalize
family and friends(please ignore them)-
An uncanny ability to speak with
And control kitchen appliances-
Abundance of obscure visions such as:
Dancing, skeletal children, Elvis' gutted torso
Hanging from trees, colored capsules raining
Down from the heavens, extra terrestrials
Giving generous lapdances accompanied by
Glowing genitalia, etc.-
(In studies, only 20% of participants
Reported the ability to prophecize
The return of the all-mighty Amon-Ra.)

Ask your doctor about Bedlamene today!

Sylvia Plath (Plath format version)

"If you could do anything,
what would you do?" He taps the pencil,
Swivels in his chair.

"I'd fuck Sylvia Plath," I say.
I like the feel of my hands
under the cushions.

"Why?" He looks interested.
"So I could finally kill myself."

"Why would...fucking Sylvia Plath
allow you to kill yourself?"
He sits without swiveling
as if I'll whisper.

"When you fuck something
you make it mortal...."
"And?" He sits up.

"...her words wouldn't be by God
anymore—
Just a girl."

"And?" he pulls.
"...I could finally end.."

"And?"
"...I don't know, it makes sense to me,
you're the fucking psychologist."

He trundles forward on his five-wheeled
chair.
"It's going in the jar, understand?"

"No! Please don't take it..."
My hands grasp like hungry mouths.

He takes the jar, opens it, grabs at
the air around my head,
Puts it in the jar, and closes
the lid.

"There," he says with satisfaction,
replacing the jar.
The jar rattles in place, like

Asylum glass, from the screams
inside -
They're getting weaker.

Matthew Lee Bain's poetry has appeared in *The Missing Fez*, *Penny Dreadful*, *Haz Mat Review*, *Children*, *Churches*, and *Daddies*, *Experimental Forest*, *Nomad's Choir*, *Matchbook*, *The Nocturnal Lyric*, *Scavenger's Newsletter*, and *The Storyteller*. His short fiction has been published in *Happy*, *Art:Mag*, *Outer Darkness*, *Liquid Ohio*, *2001 Killer Frog Contest* (1st place in short story category), *Dark Moon Rising*, and a four-piece series in *Black Petals Magazine*. I am also currently a column writer for *Circle Magazine*.

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