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the journal of creative geography



Dislocation

XIV • 2011

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2011



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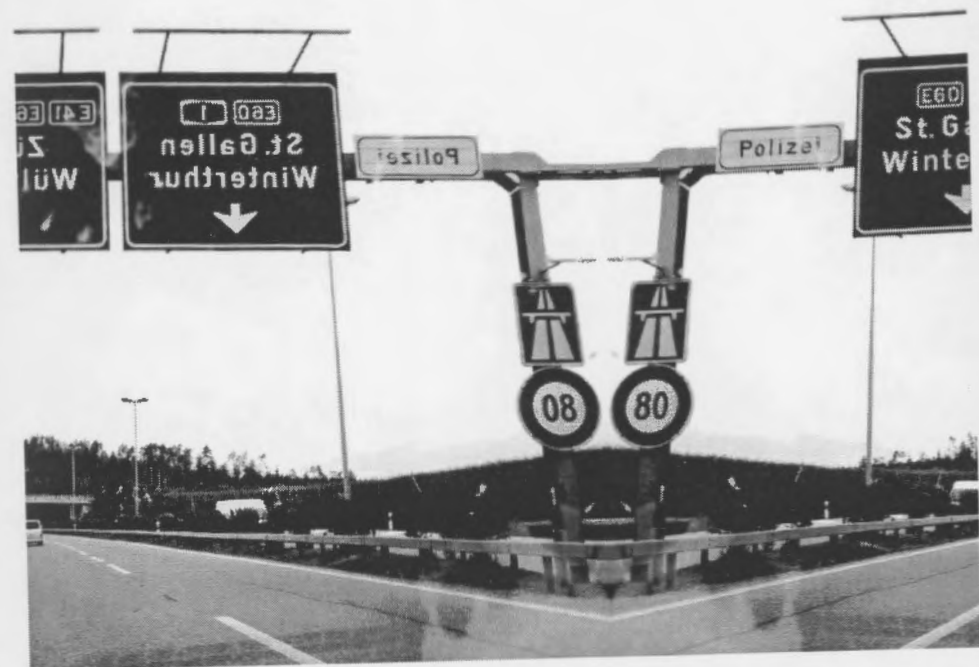
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litors: Majed Akhter & Tom Nurmi
ver photograph: John Clarke

The following pages disrupt, disorder, disarticulate, and distract. The duration of the journal is a performance of these words.

Majed Akhter & Tom Nurmi

Editors



{disruptions}:

from "ODE TO GEOGRAPHY (All Hail the Areal King)":

Who wants sequence when juxtaposition will do.
That's right, you heard it: who wants sequence when juxtaposition will
do.

their intellectual skills, one thing all of my pupils knew was to treat me with respect and to follow my instructions, while Phillip does not even have the grasp of the word "respect." I asked him once what he thought it meant, and he said that it meant "to do whatever people tell you"! The depths of his ignorance never cease to amaze me.

This situation has been stagnant for about three months now. I have exhausted every pedagogical method that I know, but before I admit my defeat and discuss the most drastic options with Ian—I have already hinted to him that we might need to look at brochures for boarding schools—I seek your advice based on experience of dealing with American children. I am aware that in America, teenagers have an exceeding amount of problems. Perhaps you have developed certain methods for addressing these? Perhaps you have some techniques that force these youngsters to do what's best for them, to listen to their elders? I am open to the most extreme possibilities.

The boy kept following the tracks one day. He had not started following them. He had just been on his way to the big green water tank and he was on the tracks walking as he normally walked on them from the section behind the A&P to a hole in the fence at the second warehouse next to the lake near the three great stacks when he stepped aside to let the train go by--and that was how it had been--no fear or surprise or doom from rail vibrations heard too late, no rumble, not even a whistle, not really any sort of any sound except for the thing behind, the stranger, saying politely, Excuse me. Excuse me, like on a quiet path walled with bramble where there was just not room for two moving bodies to safely pass side by side. Excuse me, like a shoulder tap by words, not a woodpecker kind of tap from a sharp finger, no, the words were, to the boy, like a soft palm on the shoulder followed by the crescent of fingers that would never make you jump even if you didn't know someone was behind you--like the boy had not known--no, just a soft touch, a whisper to the ear, Excuse me. Excuse me, like the thing behind, the stranger, was on some sort of mission: controlled, pointed,

confident yet considerate, Excuse me. The sort of mission where the progress could not be stopped; that if the progress could somehow have been stopped, the boy got the feeling, the thing behind, the stranger, would have stopped to chat; so that the words were more like an apology expressing the regret of not being able to stop and chat or even to express the ability to define a time when they might meet again in the future to stop and chat. The words only implied that if they were to meet again and this direct course that could not be avoided was not a direct course that could not be avoided; that if it was just an aimless wandering, an unimportant errand, a morning walk, an evening constitutional, then perhaps the thing behind, the stranger, would that next time, if at all possible, stop and chat. So the boy had no doubts about questioning whether or not he should step aside, he just, politely, did.

The boy simply stepped aside and the thing behind, the stranger, the train, was there and moving as if going from pause to full-stream. The boy was heartened that the train said, Excuse me, and let him step aside. The danger was never there, never a consideration, just a quick answer to a simple request: Excuse me, and the stepping aside. It was right after the last downtown tunnel and just before the hole in the fence, and since the boy was in the path, the thing behind, the train, had to weigh its options, and after weighing them all had found that there was no other possible way around the boy, so the train had said, Excuse me, in that soft-hand-on-the-shoulder way that the boy appreciated so

much, and the boy had without question or pause stepped aside, and the train had gone by. From past experience the boy knew that not all trains were so nice, but maybe, just maybe, the boy thought, maybe other trains weighed their options differently.

The boy would have liked to watch the train coming from faraway, long and silent, a moving wall; he liked gradually absorbing the rumble, waving when the engine got close, and then running alongside until he could not run anymore; and he would fall to the stones and sit there and watch the wheels work, the force of the lines, the smooth clatter, the wind-sucked debris, and then when the train was gone he would listen to the sound of the train not being there. In other places he had been he could stay in one place and watch trains all day, but here he'd sometimes not see trains for a long time, or there would be a lone boxcar in a place where there had not been a lone boxcar the day before. But since the train had gone from being behind him to full-steam, the boy had not been able to watch the engine and wave and so he had not run alongside.

Based on his experience of seeing engineers in engines, he guessed this engineer was no different from the others so that in all probability he would not have returned the boy's wave, and he would not be wearing a blue and white striped hat that bulged at the top like a pumpkin, or have a red bandanna around his neck, or blue and white striped overalls, or a blue work shirt with rolled sleeves; but the boy

thought that since he did not see the engineer and because the train had been nice, it was possible that this engineer of this train might just be wearing one of those striped hats that bulged like a pumpkin, the red bandanna around his neck, the overalls, and work shirt, and maybe, just maybe, he also had soot on his face and had round friendly cheeks that could blow smoke like an old-time, and even maybe he might have been riding with one elbow out the window--not on this side where the boy now stood because the boy could see even with the first engine so far ahead that no one had an elbow out, but this did not mean that the elbow of the engineer might not be sticking from the window on the other side where the boy was not. All this was possible, the boy thought, because he had not seen the engineer in the engine.

Whether or not the thing that had come from behind was a train when it was behind him, he could not say. But the thing passing him now was a train. There were dirty boxcars, doors all shut, diesel red, smoke gray, burnt yellow, the ribbing along the sides like bars on a merry-go-round, the doors, themselves, sticking from the body so that the boy thought it would be nice if the train was not moving so fast, not moving at all, to slide them open and shut all day long--so that's what he did--he walked along one side of the boxcars opening them one by one and when the entire side was open he looped around to the other side, and when he would open the doors on this side he'd take a moment to maybe even rest his chin on the boxcar's floor and look across to where he had already opened the door, and if he did not see the other him

across the way with his chin on the floor, then he'd just look out to whatever might be over there. He hoped what would be over there would not be lines of blue mailboxes, doors all flapping, squawking at you like mad seagulls, or ants marching to where they could find you when you were asleep and carry you back to their anthill without you ever knowing it; but maybe what he saw over there would be something he would want to see, maybe even a circus with clowns and elephants and shiny ladies who had feathers in their hair, and a man with muscles carrying impossibly heavy things, maybe even the caboose. The boy hoped he'd be gentle with it and put it back at the end of the train by the time he got to the end because he was looking forward to seeing the caboose at the end because trains never had cabooses just like engineers didn't wear pumpkin-shaped hats and red bandannas and ride with one elbow out the window. Because it really seemed like the train might come undone without an engineer with a pumpkin-shaped hat and red bandanna in the beginning and a caboose on the end, and the boy decided it was a pretty big risk for all these trains to be going around without cabooses and engineers without pumpkin-shaped hats and red bandannas, but then he supposed strongmen everywhere were taking cabooses so what could anyone do? And maybe since there were no cabooses there was no sense for engineers to wear what they were supposed to wear; and he had never seen a train all in pieces that was moving; so maybe cabooses and engineers did not hold trains together,

and if they did not hold trains together, then, well, that was the problem because they should hold trains together.

The boy hoped since he did not get to see what the engineer had been wearing that then maybe the strongman would put the caboose back at the end of the train by the time he stopped opening doors and resting his chin on the boxcar floors and looking out to whatever was over there, so that he could maybe even go inside the caboose. He figured there would be men in there maybe wearing the red bandannas around their necks and blue work shirts rolled at the sleeves and who had their pumpkin hats maybe stuffed into the front pocket of their blue and white overalls because they would be relaxing because when you were in the caboose you could relax, take your pumpkin hat off, enjoy the ride, and not have to worry about running into things that might be on the tracks; and some engineers would sit around the card table, and others would be laughing at jokes because everyone knew that engineers were serious but except when they were relaxing in the caboose; so they were great joke tellers when they were in cabooses, so they would be laughing and telling jokes, and maybe even smoking pipes and cigars and shaking hands, slapping backs, spinning tall tales, and giving their opinions on all the different places they had ridden on the caboose through because they all had ridden the caboose through so many places they could give opinions on them; and there might even be a wood stove for when it was cold; and what was most important about the insides of the caboose besides the relaxing engineers was something

cabooses had to have to be cabooses--the boy was sure: a lot of lanterns. Lanterns hanging on walls, off ceilings, wherever there were not windows, wherever there wasn't something there would be lanterns; and they hung, not swaying as if the caboose was moving, but as if someone was lightly blowing on them--boxed, black iron framed with simple tops and handles for engineers to hold when they needed to hold them, clouded glass. The boy did not know how all the resting engineers could just ignore all the lanterns, but since they were relaxing he guessed they did not have to notice them. Why the boy couldn't understand why the engineers could ignore the lanterns was not just because they were lanterns, but because different ones kept flashing. Sometimes ones on the same walls, sometimes the opposite, sometimes above or below. The boy began to try to anticipate where the next one would flash, but like a lightning bug or a meteorite, it was always out of the corner of his eye, so that by the time he turned to see it, he had missed the flash (not a bright flash but a muted greenish one forced through a pinhole) and so by the time he turned, he could never tell which lantern had flashed, and before he could try to narrow it down or turn or do much of anything, there'd be another flash in the corner of his eye so that he had to turn again to find it--each time to the same result--and then the engineers all had their red bandannas over their mouths and noses and they had black guns with long nozzles and they were all pointing at the boy and the boy did not know why anyone would ever want to point a gun at him, and

their pumpkin hats had turned into cowboy hats, and then all their mouths opened and hollowed the center of the upside-down triangle bandannas to form the shape of figure-eight howls, and the boy did not know whether to ignore the flashes from the lanterns or to ignore the howling engineers turned bandits or to put his arms up in surrender, or all three, or just walk away or run away or to leap and grab onto the pipe which ran just under the ceiling the length of the caboose and where many of the lanterns were strapped--so he leaped and grabbed onto the pipe and it wasn't hot, and his feet were dangling and his hands were one after the other and he was still facing the howling engineers turned bandits and the lanterns continued to flash at the corner of his eye even now that he wasn't trying to catch one flash, and so he just held still hoping he would be hidden in the lanterns and then he was back standing on the stones beside the tracks, as the last boxcar, bumping along, passed quickly.

As he watched the end of the train--no caboose--turn from rectangle to dot, the boy stood where he was, a step from the tracks. He could see the ripped-apart softball that marked the hole in the fence. The boy had never not gone through the hole in the fence at the ripped-apart softball. The softball looked like a big upside-down dead moth. Rising above the fence was the second warehouse next to the lake; and rising above the second warehouse were the three great stacks which had red lights blinking; and rising above the stacks was the smoke. The stacks and the smoke were almost as good as the water tank atop the hill

for finding where he was except there were too many walls and people to touch the stacks like he could touch the water tank, lean into it with both hands.

He did not go through the hole in the fence at the ripped-apart softball. He did not go to the water tank. He stepped back onto the tracks and kept walking because that was what he did. Two steps on wood and one step on gravel, he walked along.

The boy was not expecting to come across the train, but it would not have surprised him if he did. The hole in the fence, the second warehouse by the lake, the three great stacks, the water tank atop the hill, all these were gone now, even if he had looked behind him. The farther he walked the faster he moved.

Something that everyone knew was the faster you were going the more important your message must be; something that not everyone knew was that you didn't actually have to be carrying a real live message because just maybe you were the message or something inside you that you didn't know was inside you was the message. Something else that everyone knew was that if you did have a message you had to be bringing it somewhere; something else not everyone knew was that sometimes it was better not to know where you were bringing a message or that you were even carrying one or even think you had a particular destination, that sometimes you just had to skip the hole in the fence at the dead moth softball at the second warehouse next to the lake near the

three great stacks, that the water tank atop the hill had to not matter anymore, that you had to walk at increasing speeds down the middle of railroad tracks and wonder what would happen if you came up behind the train.

There was a river next to the rails. Billboards. The tracks went under roads and above them. There was a factory with black gates all around, sparkling windshields in parking lots, and some trucks revving their engines. Occasional houses with backyards that had sagging swing sets with rusty slides and chains hanging without swings. There was a trailer park where nobody was. A shell of a car in the woods. Mostly there were trees and rocks and soil and grass and more trees; and the trees were almost leaf-less--bare branch gray--but the sun was still shining so the branches were warm and happy as if they were tired arms that were about to finally get some rest, and it seemed to the boy that the branches were drooping as if to cause the last leaves to slide off so finally they, the branches, the trees, could have some rest, to be at ease, and that's what they seemed like--all these emptying trees which ran down the middle of the world, which the tracks ran down the middle of, which the boy walked at increasing speeds down the middle of--all these emptying trees seemed as if they were in an extended comforting about-to-go-to-sleep way, like when you're really tired and need to rest and there's a comfortable place to sleep, and you are there, and the place is the kind of place that you're so safe you don't even think about being safe, and you yawn and then rest your head in a fluffy pillow that

horseshoes your ears, and then you are almost asleep but there is just enough time before you fall asleep that you do something crazy like smile before you go to sleep because you're so happy to be falling asleep because you're so tired and you're in a warm, comfortable place and there are thick comforting blankets and you're so safe you don't worry about being safe, and you smile and your body is sort of like another giant blanket because your whole body is so happy to be going to sleep.

There would be no sleep for the boy, though. There were the trees and the tracks and the tracks were curving and he went over a bridge and he hardly noticed because it had sides on it and was filled at the bottom. The farther he went along the tracks, the faster he went--now the trees were blurring too--everything around him was one. The boy buzzed through a road crossing and the gates didn't even have time to go down; he was moving so fast that if there had been any cars they could not have hit him; and soon he was out of another small town. He sped over a long grade where there had been a pack of dogs that did not even bark at him, and the sun was low as he started to descend, and the trees were even more bare--the boy noticed none of these things. He would have to say, Excuse me, when he came upon the train, caboose or no, and the train would have to step aside. He would move by it in a blur and the train would watch and wonder about him, not know if it was the boy that had said, Excuse me, before the boy had passed and the train stepped aside, wonder what important mission the boy was on

that prevented him from stopping. The boy hoped that his Excuse me would be like a soft hand on the train's shoulder; and he hoped the train would know that if he was not on this particular mission that must be very important and being a mission that must be very important no time could be wasted, that if he was not glued to the rails and traveling at increasing speeds, that if he had not weighed all his options, that if this all was not the way it was, then he'd like to stop and chat with the train--he couldn't imagine what they would stop and chat about--but just that it would be nice one day when he came upon the train like the train had come upon him, and both didn't have missions, that they should just stop and chat about whatever occurred to a boy and a train to stop and chat about; and it would be pleasant; and as he walked faster and faster all of these things were what the boy hoped would be inflected in his, Excuse me. The sun was setting. If he was not walking down the rails at increasing speeds but was standing next to the rails watching himself go by, perhaps he would have a tail like a jet and he would hear himself after he thought he might have seen himself, a flash--now at one corner of the eye and now at the corner of the other eye--but he could not watch himself because he was going so fast that he could not even think about how fast he was going or what he looked like or sounded like going so fast. He would come across the train and things would occur naturally; he would say, Excuse me, and the train would step aside.

Jytte Izydorczyk you'll see at Publix buying salad and soymilk and food for her cats. When I see her at the Andrew-Jackson-In-The-Parade protest, she recognizes me, and we get to talking of old local stuff, the battle of Natutal Bridge, and Prince Murat's buzzard stew. We discuss crumbling houses about town, and Jytte says she saw a Walker Evans photo of the ruins of the old Chaires Plantation. "Believe it or not," I say, "I know the secret location of those pillars."

Jytte Izydorczyk is impressed.

"They're way back in the woods east of town," I fill her in, and invite her to drive out with me after the protest and have a look-see.

Jytte thinks I'm giving it the old college effort, trying to pick her up. She looks down at my shoes, black Rockports I've been using for landscaping. When she lifts her head, a loud chant begins behind her, people waving signs in front of the capital building, shouting: "Murderer murderer, owner of slaves, we won't have Andrew lead our parade!"

Jytte Izydorczyk says something, but I can't hear for the noise. "What?" I shout.

Jytte Izydorczyk minces up behind me and, seeing the back of the white cow rising from the brush, tells me she's never seen such a dirty cow in all her life.

"Maybe he's never had a bath," I say.

"Are you making fun of me?"

"Oh, no," I tell her, and can't help but to laugh. She's cute, Jytte, kind of funny, but I zip it. Don't want to offend her.

"You know," she says, as we continue up the hill, "if that was a bull he might have charged us. I bet you'd be laughing real hard then."

Up top the hill we take a breather, sit in the golden grass. Jytte wants to know how much farther to the pillars. "I'm not sure," I tell her, "but my friend, the one who told me how to find the place, said there'd be a hill first. So I guess we're right on track."

"I can't wait," she says. "This whole region, all of North Florida and South Georgia, it's so rich in history. You'd think they'd make parks and memorials, but instead it's all going to waste, stores and crap. Imagine, a hundred and fifty years ago there were slaves walking around all over these woods, horse-drawn wagons filled with spices climbing that hill. You know what happened, don't you?"

"What happened what?"

"To the Chaireses, Greene Chaires, the man who lived in the plantation we're about to see."

"I guess not," I tell her, thinking about that name, Greene Chaires. I have a green chair on my porch. I found it in a trash pile then painted it the only color I had, green.

Jytte Izydorczyk pops off her Birkenstock sandals, stretches her ankles around, slides her feet through the grass. "Greene Chaires and his family were attacked by Seminole Indians," she says and, as if telling a scary story to children, continues: "They came in the dark night and set fire to the Great House. The slaves saw the fire burning and closed their shutters, but what's this? I hear a scream. Yes, a woman screaming, running through the hall to save her crying child. She picks him out of his crib and runs for her life but her Spanish gown is burning, burning her as she screams and runs. It's too late. Oh shit. The boards beneath her give way and she falls into the fire, screaming with her child in her arms." Jytte closes her eyes and turns her face toward the sun. I watch her suck a good dose of the new spring air through her nostrils.

"Foreal?" I say.

"Yes," she says. "Greene Chaires raised a posse and chased after the Indians, but a terrible thing happened. One of the posse member's guns went off and shot another member of the posse, a young fellow from Boston. They thought they were being fired upon, but they were just shooting their own selves. The boy died, it's very sad, don't you think?"

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Biographies

Non Arkaraprasertkul is PhD Candidate and Harvard-Yenching Institute Doctoral Scholar at Harvard University. He was trained as an architect at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and in Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford. He is an anthropologist-architect who believes that culture and society can be best understood, if not only, when they are placed in their geographical context.

Gary Beck's original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway and toured colleges and outdoor performance venues. He currently lives in New York City, where he's busy writing fiction and poetry, which have appeared in numerous literary magazines.
<http://www.amazon.com/dp/0984098208>

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán is the author of *Antes y después del Bronx: Lenapeboking*, winner of the New American Press Chapbook Contest; and the editor of an international queer Indigenous issue of *Yellow Medicine Review: A Journal of Indigenous Literature, Art, and Thought*.

Sarah Ciston is a freelance editor and book designer in Oakland, California, where she co-publishes the literary magazine *We Still Like*. Originally from the Ozarks, she is a graduate of the University of Southern California Resident Honors Program. Her fiction has appeared in *ZYZZYVA*, *sparkle+blink* and Invisible City Audio Tours. Visit WeStillLike.com.

John H. Clarke received an MFA in Studio Art from the University of Arizona. His creative frustrations focus on society's conflicted relationship with the body and photographic representation. A transplant from Florida, John perpetually wanders the desert searching for bodies of water.

Garin Cycholl's recent work includes *The Bonegatherer*, a book-length poem that rethinks the history of Chicago's West Side through the Cook County Hospital Emergency Room. Since 2002, he has been a member of the Jimmy Wynn fiction collaborative.

Jacob Dreyer, originally of Charlottesville, VA, is a researcher and consultant working at New York University's East Asian Studies department, but with a long-term on and off residency in Shanghai. His projects, along with those of his associates, may be found at <http://dreyerprojects.info>

Yasmin Gunaratnam is a lecturer in the Sociology Department at Goldsmiths College (London). Her theoretical concerns and research coalesce around three inter-related

themes: corporeal vulnerability, care, and social research methodologies. Yasmin is also a published poet.

John Oliver Hodges was raised in Florida, Mexico, Italy and Peru. He is the author of the novella *War of the Crazies*, and his fiction has appeared in journals such as *StoryQuarterly*, *Redivider*, and *Whitefish Review*. He acquired an MFA degree from Ole Miss in 2010, and currently lives in Flushing and teaches writing at Montclair State University in New Jersey.

Michael Horner teaches writing at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana. His work has appeared in *Carve* and the *Berkshire Review*.

Vivekanand Jha is a poet and research scholar from Darbhanga, Bihar, India. He is 32 years old. He is composing poems on contemporary and relevant themes.

Zachary Keebaugh holds a master's in philosophy of aesthetics. He is interested in how aesthetic judgment mediates the human relationship with animals, machines and to itself.

Miodrag Kojadinovic writes, translates, teaches, does research, and coordinates projects for a living and maps world geography through bodily transpositions across the globe for pleasure. He likes astrology, if for the need to link sexual allure exclusively to his quintuple Scorpio sign. His writing has appeared in 6 languages in 13 countries and his photos in 7 exhibitions and online.

Dorothee Lang is a writer, web freelancer and traveler, and the editor of *BluePrintReview*. She lives in Germany, and always was fascinated by languages, places and stories, themes that reflect in her own work and her web projects – the latest being >language >place (<http://www.blueprintreview.de/lap.htm>), a collaborative blog carnival.

Chris Pedler co-publishes the literary journal *We Still Like*. He has received an Academy of American Poets Award, and his work has been featured in Invisible City Audio Tours. He is interested in how history and ideology create our relationship to the land we live on, how this relationship evolves and how it changes us.

Ruth Sabath Rosenthal is a New York poet, whose poems have been published in literary journals and poetry anthologies across the U.S., and abroad. In 2006, "on yet another birthday" was nominated for a Pushcart prize. Ruth's debut chapbook "Facing Home," can be purchased from amazon.com; full-length book of poetry "Facing Home and Beyond," from paragonpoetry@aol.com. For more about Ruth, visit websites: <http://www.ruthsabathrosenthal.moonfruit.com>

Sheena Singh is a doctoral candidate in Anthropology at the University of Virginia. She works in zooanthropology but sometimes wishes she studied ghosts, or plants, or social movements. She grew up in Georgia and still loves that beautiful state.

Marcus Speh is a German writer, ex-particle physicist, professor, executive coach, web head, father, fictionaut member, former fencer and paratrooper, cur-rent maitre d' of the kaffe in katmandu and curator of the "One Thousand Shipwrecked Penguins" project. He lives in Berlin and blogs at <http://marcusspeh.com>.

Rob Sullivan is a graduate student in geography at UCLA. A version of his master's thesis, "Geography Speaks: Performative Aspects of Geography," is being published by *Ashegate* in the fall. His work has appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *Rolling Stone*, and *LIFE Magazine*.

Randy Thurman is an abstract artist living and working in the southern United States. Through the specific arrangements of geometric shapes, lines, and dots of certain colors, Randy strives to initiate an intimate connection between the artwork and the viewer.

Maja Trochimczyk, Ph.D. is a poet, music historian, photographer and non-profit director, born in Poland, educated in Canada (McGill University) and living in California. She published seven books, four of music history and three of poetry ("Miriam's Iris," "Rose Always," and "Chopin with Cherries"), as well as hundreds of studies, essays and poems. www.trochimczyk.net

Steve Wing is a visual artist and writer whose work reflects his appreciation for the extraordinary aspects of ordinary days and places. He lives in Florida, where he works at an academic institution and makes time for beaches and morning bicycle rides. More about him and his work can be found here:
http://www.blueprintreview.de/about_Steve_Wing.htm

Olga Zilberbourg: I am a San Francisco, CA based writer, with roots in St. Petersburg, Russia. In 2010, my second Russian-language collection of stories was published by St. Petersburg's Limbus Press. In English, my stories have appeared in Narrative Magazine, Mad Hatters' Review, Santa Monica Review, J Journal, Marco Polo Quarterly. I am an associate editor at Narrative Magazine, responsible for Story of the Week and First and Second Looks columns. I am also an active member of San Francisco Writers Workshop with Tamim Ansary.

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youarehere.arizona@gmail.com