



RABBLE

a chapbook companion to poictesme

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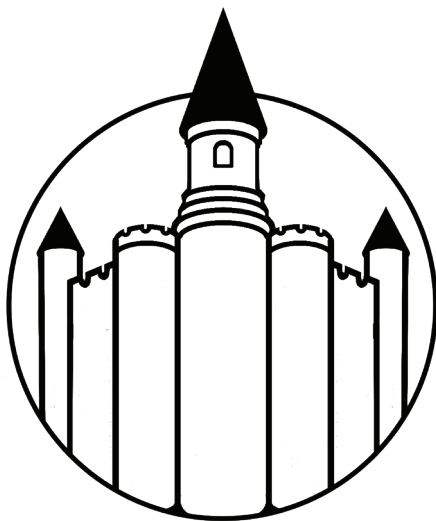
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“Tell the Rabble the name is Cabell.”

— James Branch Cabell to his editor, to help people learn how to pronounce his name. Cabell used the word derogatively but we are taking it back. These pages will showcase the writing and illustrations of our rabble—the ordinary students of VCU.

noise (n)

1 a loud or unpleasant sound

2 a sound that someone or something makes

*3 unwanted electronic signals that harm the quality of something
(such as a radio or television broadcast or a digital photograph)*

*4 irrelevant or meaningless data or output occurring along
with desired information*



Elise Ketch

Rae Legine Rodriguez

How do
the neglected take part
of
the neglectable ominous-ity?
how
to
transform on your desert palm of
fixed particle
and predator rays.

I am neither any longer -er usable.





Mingus En Route

Trey Hall

Sit back and unwind
Pass to the left
Tap the bop of Mingus
With tea brains and wooden hearts
Reeds as tongues

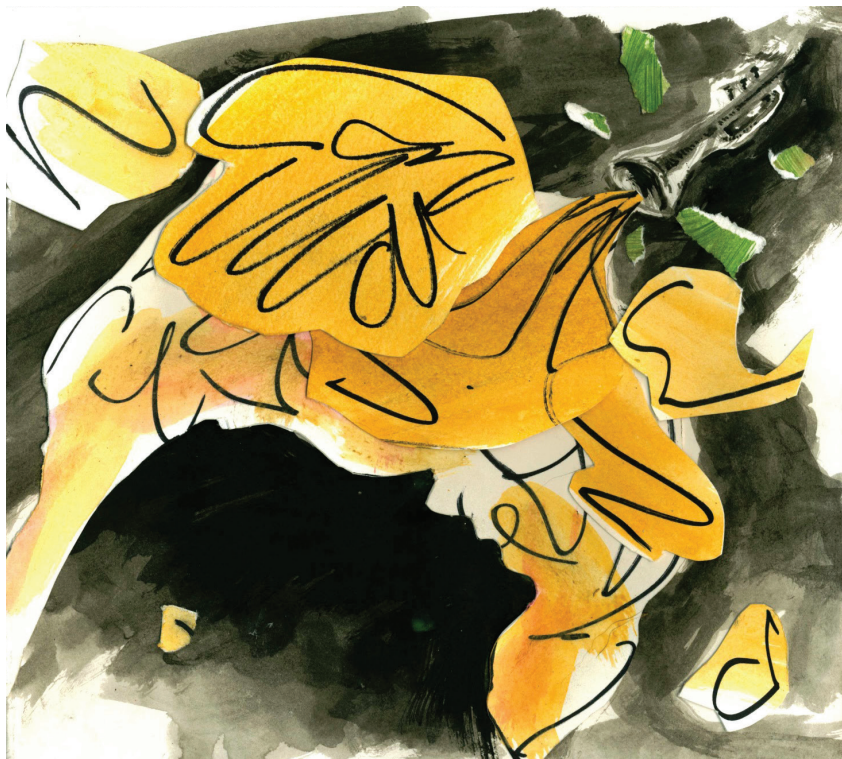
Breathing sweetleaf memories
Of Buddha in Brooklyn
Huffing the rust ridden
Melodies of Greenwich Village
Cause trouble's in mind
And that's why the alley cats jazz
In a Harlem swing

Paw and paw powdering
Their noses on the tenor
Bell of sidewalk mystics
To skyscraping mantras of tin cans
And vibrations dance
With blossoming tangerine
Taxicab sirens

A backbeat choir
Subway car sailing
Toward the concrete chapel
Of Bronx terraces
Covered in mossy graffiti
Painting a streetlight moon
Waiting for the sun to dim
Neon hum

The Joys of Urination

Maya Chesley



Brandon Hendrick

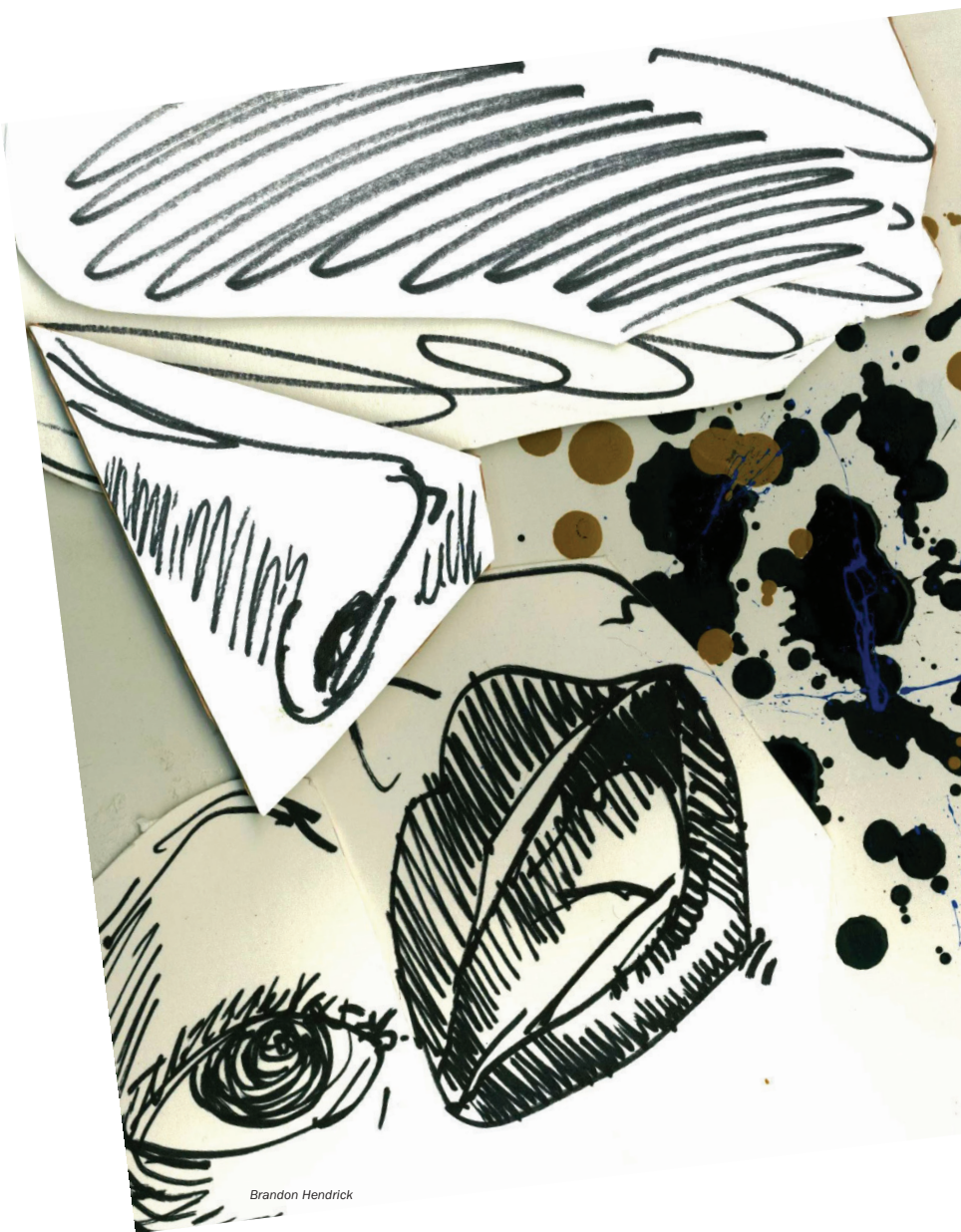
You know those days you can taste music? Blues and lavenders get all splattered in the air and Ella Fitzgerald jazzes up your dead walls with a voice that shivers, blood orange, in the spaces between you and bits of oxygen.

I'm stumbling out of Van Gogh's wet dream one white-early morning or late night, black, to find myself in Pollock's playhouse where autumn has jizzed rhythm and brown-red-yellow paint onto my skin. Barry's buzzing around in circles in the next room over, snorting coke and rambling sleepless manifestos and all the while tap-tap-tapping to the beat of Darktown strutters and waiters with the waters. *Joooseeeppph, it's all about the sphincter*—he told me that one time, he said—*That sphincter, man*. The fucker was on ether so I knew not to trust him.

Revvng up the music now, Ella's asking me to dream a little dream of her and man I want to close my eyes and see her face ripped up and repositioned in Picasso style. Laid out in white and black like the leftover shards of Guernica. Thank YOU, Barry. Thank YOU for the colors you sprayed on me. Somewhere in your coke-acid binge you knew to slosh the rest of 'em on my walls and slop them on the floor and bookcase where all the answers to questions of the sphincter hide. Burn me like you did that one time with your cigarette butt—I want to see red, white hot. The taste of cooked skin and smell of singed sweat all plastered up on a confused face. You didn't know, you said—

Jackson Pollock dripping white paint on me, frowning, frustrated, leaving. He can't be a fake so he drives and flies until he and his girl nosedive into a red ditch just like he planned all those years ago when he splattered Autumn and rhythm onto a manila canvas. In my head I know he crashed because he could never figure out how the sphincter worked. Barry told me once that time I puked shrooms all over his vomit-colored carpet, he whispered—*the sphincter, man. Just think about that sphincter*—while I slipped and slapped against the floor and floundered like a piranha choking on air and human teeth. And I could see it—all the fear and sick in Pollock's face when he knew he could never know, no matter how many autumns or rhythms he pumped onto pages and painted in dead colors—

Barry's whimpering, broken, talking about—*it hurts, it hurts, am I*



Brandon Hendrick



Then I realize I FEEL NAKED, lean down and pick clumps of paint off the ground and spread them on MY CHEST before the old LAYERS CHIP OFF. Imagine the horror.

dead?—That bitch has no sphincter. If he did he'd know better than to bring that up at a time like this. I mean, Jesus. Ella's voice has already shifted from yellow to beige in a foggy London town. I close my eyes and she spreads her lips and spreads her legs and sound spews out like white paint from a tube. I ride it, smooth, until her song gets infected with gray. Armstrong. Fuck.

Louis, you're ruining Ella, I whine. He doesn't stop. His voice, gravel, scrapes my ears and I stumble around looking for Barry, hoping he knows how to shut Armstrong up, but Barry's shaking like a maniac, eyes all red and panicky like Jackson Pollock's the night he and his all-American girl went sailing into a ditch.

Then I realize I feel naked, lean down and pick clumps of paint off the ground and spread them on my chest before the old layers chip off. Imagine the horror. If Barry saw me paintless he'd never talk to me again. He'd say I have no sphincter. I almost cry at the thought but Barry cuts in, hacking and wailing like a four year old—*It hurts, it hurts*—He whimpers and I roll my eyes and say *More coke*.

Grab the tray. Push it up under his nose and he snorts and spins and disappears into a world of manifestos where only sphincters exist.

His eyes bust and pop and get redder. Fire red. Like Pollock and his chica's blood splatter on the car window that looked like an homage to autumn rhythm except for it was missing the manila canvas. Or red like the blister Barry's burn left on my singed hand. If Picasso picked up the leftover shards of the collision and rearranged them what dimension would he get? And how many?

How many, I ask Barry but then I realize he's floated up and off into sleeplessness and manifestos. He rambles on about hurting and dying and communism and I yell at him to turn fucking Louis Armstrong off before I axe murder his psychotic ass but he keeps mumbling so I go up to the record player and rip the needle from the vinyl. Armstrong still plays. I cover my ears and Armstrong whines in my head. I yank the cord from the record player, from the wall, but I still hear him. Gray.

Gray as ever. Even Ella's white dissolves into a tinged gray. All the colors dim and fade and I cry and still hear Armstrong croaking about foggy London town when I'm begging, boo-hooing for Ella. I run back to my room, hands on ears, and slip on a puddle of puke-colored paint. The creamy browns and reds spin like miniature carousels. I'm mewling, a cat stuck underneath a car. Rolling my eyes around the room in search of Barry. But no Barry. No mumbling. No one in my room. Nothing in my room at all—

I STUMBLE around looking for Barry, hoping he knows how to shut Armstrong up, but Barry's SHAKING LIKE A MANIAC, eyes all RED AND PANICKY like Jackson Pollock's the night he and his all-American girl went SAILING INTO A DITCH.

Have I. I, I've lost Barry. My God, I've lost Barry. My shoulders shiver. Head shakes. Stomach, legs, feet convulse. Without him I'll never crack open the mystery's skull and watch the answers come sliding out. I'll never know about the sphincter. I cry. Then my gut lurches and twists, makes me sit up then spit up colors and more colors onto the floorboards for seconds or minutes or hours. The carousel slows to a stop and I get off and realize Barry's in the other room riding out his coke-acid binge.

Aphasia

Sylvia Jones



Stephanie Trujillo and Julie Wang

May happened
it wasn't trite
worries benign
damp palms shaking hands
decadence
memory turned out to be a secular kind of amnesia
rules benign
When everyday chimes like Sunday
now becomes a ripple effect
a revue of sound & color
betwixt a weathered inlet
shallow as an ars poetica
at the very least agonizing to those who can't help but rubberneck

June hasn't happened yet
still I sense the impending delusion
the half-dressed vowels, and their bikini noises
heat is so piss poor @ hello
The women will be unbearable
they will have way too many reasons to be pretty
&
phones will continue to spud
out our earlobes
I was born to be hooked on phonics
to follow words
all the while wondering
What's so concave about the oaths we undertake?

Until July
I maintain demure
I remain an inflamed tear duct
searching for better ways to empty these gestures
Are we the worse things we say?
or are we the best things we never find the time to finish?
I can be so

Indecent



To Realize Our Skin Again

Jessie Kraemer

We'd be saved.
Back in our own, we'd feel
the little veins work

the blood in one
long snake. Each time we listen
it is in hopes we'll hear and

heed the dictum:
feel in the important ways.
Not omniscient minds

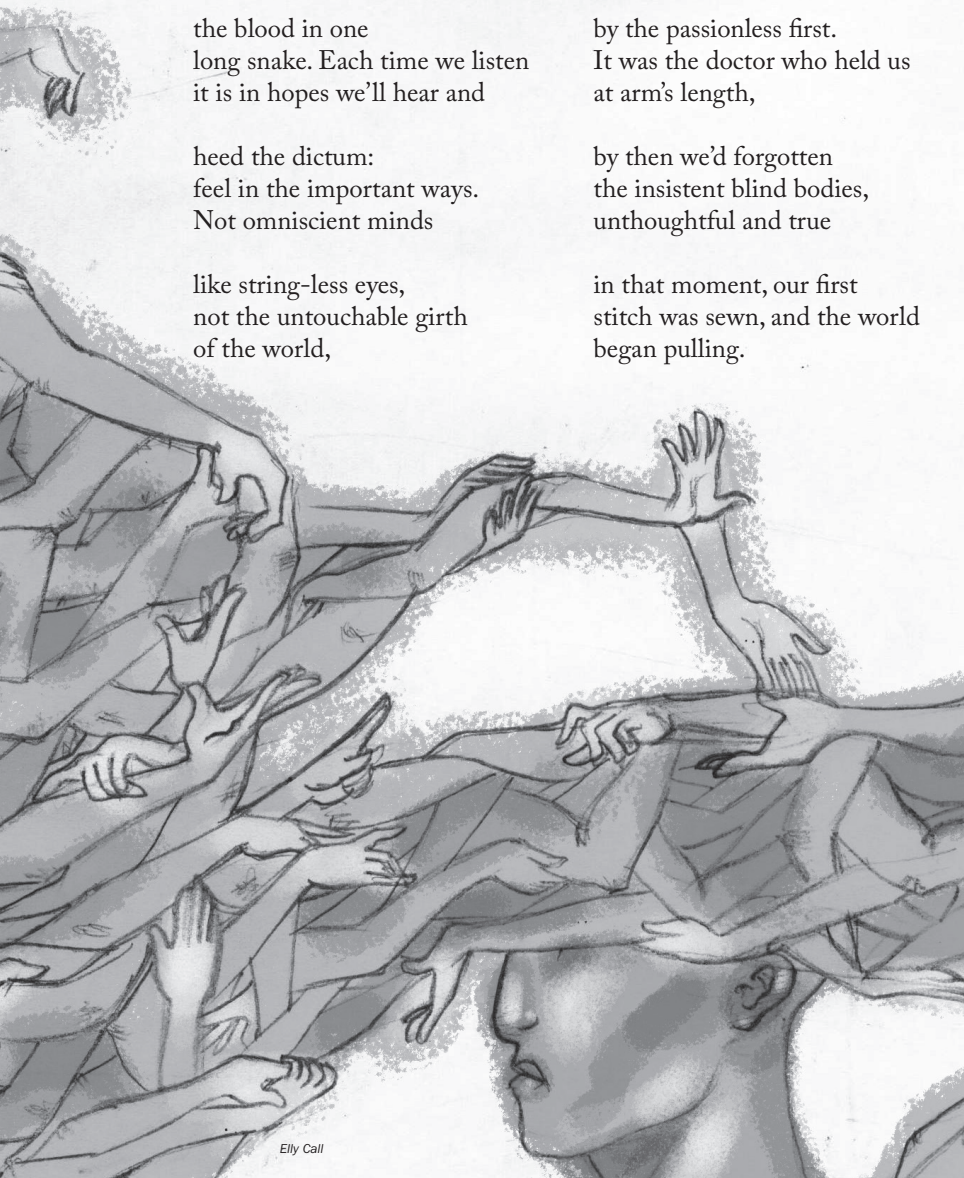
like string-less eyes,
not the untouchable girth
of the world,

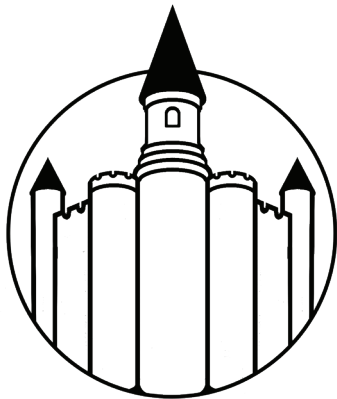
we are only every
thought we've ever thought—
and each informed

by the passionless first.
It was the doctor who held us
at arm's length,

by then we'd forgotten
the insistent blind bodies,
unthoughtful and true

in that moment, our first
stitch was sewn, and the world
began pulling.





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