

NEW YORK TYRANT VOL.III NO.1

\$15.00



7 25274 24607 6



tyrant

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1

new york tyrant

New York Tyrant
676 A Ninth Avenue, #153
New York, NY 10036

Giancarlo DiTrapano
Founder · Editor

Ellen Moynihan
Managing Editor

Peter Wolfgang
Business Consultant Editor

Copyright © 2009 New York Tyrant, LLC.

All rights reserved.

ISBN 0-9779677-1-9

Editorial Assistant: Harry Cheadle
Sabine Eckle as copy editor
Back cover photograph by Christos Katsiaouni assisted by Mike Byrne
Layout by Ryan P. Kirby
Cover art by Luccio
Cover art photographed by Gamma One Conversions

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Subscriptions to New York Tyrant are free for prison inmates.

Subscriptions to New York Tyrant may be purchased.
www.nytyrant.com

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1

<i>The Debutante</i>	Erich Hintze	3
<i>Sourcebook</i>	Blake Butler	11
<i>When It Does Not Come</i>	Erich Hintze	27
<i>Instructions</i>	Erich Hintze	29
<i>Glair</i>	Danni Iosello	31
<i>Telecaster</i>	Brian Kubarycz	37
<i>Congruence</i>	Christopher Kennedy	43
<i>The Brown Heroin of Love</i>	Christopher Kennedy	45
<i>Mute Gods in Translation</i>	Christopher Kennedy	47
<i>The Singularity</i>	Joseph Cardinale	49
<i>Notation on the Principal Graves</i>	Jason Schwartz	63
<i>The Form of Horses</i>	Jason Schwartz	65
<i>Blacking</i>	Aaron Burch	67
<i>Inquiry</i>	Greg Mulcahy	73
<i>How I Left Myself Out of the Grave</i>	Luca Dipierro	75
<i>The Magic Umbrella</i>	Rachel B. Glaser	81
<i>Drawings</i>	Atticus Lish	91
<i>Blench, A Music</i>	Ken Baumann	101

<i>There's One</i>	G. David Schwartz	105
<i>Chora</i>	Peter Gajdics	107
<i>Our Mother is a Fish</i>	Peter Markus	127
<i>The Fourth Failure, Ernest</i>	Shane Jones	131
<i>Now</i>	Conor Madigan	141
<i>Tokum</i>	Scott Indrisek	143
<i>Bangings</i>	Harry Cheadle	147
<i>Lesser Bohemia</i>	Joshua Furst	151
<i>I Moved My Body Sideways</i>	Michael Kimball	171
<i>Oration On the Dignity of Man</i>	Giovanni Pico della Mirandola	179
<i>It's So Magic</i>	Alex Balk	181

PETER GAJDICS

Chora

"A stranger. During a Church bazaar in my elementary school basement. This fat man, he took me into the bathroom and he locked me in the stall and he starting masturbating, holding me in front of him."

"Where were your parents?"

"Somewhere in the crowd, I guess."

"How's your sleep?"

"My sleep?"

"Do you sleep through the night?"

"Not usually."

"Depression?"

"What?"

"Are you depressed?"

His question embarrassed me. The truth was I'd lived in depression like a country for so long it felt like my home.

"I suppose."

"I'm thinking of setting up a group solely for gay men," he said, changing the subject. "I think you'd be a perfect fit. But we need to take care of what's really bothering you. It would be a mistake to focus on your homosexuality. Your sexuality will take care of itself."

To better familiarize myself with the nature of this treatment, he suggested I read the book *The Primal Scream*, by Arthur Janov; then he handed me a copy of his own scientific paper, as well as a prescription for Rivotril and Surmontil. "You need to stabilize your sleep patterns before embarking on any type of therapy," he said.

PETER GAJDICS

I researched the medications that night.

Rivotril, or Clonazepam, belonged to the class of medications called benzodiazepines, which were generally used as a sedative or to decrease seizures or anxiety. If used over a period of time, the drug was known to become addictive. Surmontil, or trimipramine, belonged to a class of drugs called tricyclics, and were most often prescribed in cases of clinical depression.

I also began reading his paper, but after the fourth page on attachment theory I still had no idea what to expect from his therapy.

We discussed my questions the following week.

"I wouldn't worry too much about my paper," he said. "The world of academia can be quite stuffy. All the terminology is necessary for publication, but it can be an Achilles heel to the public."

I glanced down to a copy of his paper. "So, this word you use, 'abreaction.'"

"Feeling."

"Feeling?"

"Well, feeling at the level of change." Deep, transformational change, Alfonzo explained, occurred only when the inner child was once again accessed, his pain experienced, and any lessons learned were then integrated before he "grew back up" to the patient's current age. And all of it, Alfonzo remarked, could occur during a single primal session.

"No other therapeutic process can do what I've perfected," he continued. "The way the patient dips back down into the world of their childhood, their primal world. It's like peeling an onion, session after session, layer after layer, until you reach the core. But first you have to find a way of peeling the onion. It's Alice down the rabbit hole. You'll see. You'll experience it for yourself. Then you'll know exactly what I mean."

CHORA

“So, what’s at the core of the onion?”

He smiled. “Nothing. Everything.”

Alfonzo’s words rang through me throughout the Christmas season. During the two-hour ferry back to my hometown and the ensuing festivities with my family that had brought me joy as a child but that now left me cold and resentful, I thought of nothing but my need to talk to someone, anyone, about my parents who’d said they loved their son, but rejected his homosexuality. How they could separate the two, me from my sexuality, I did not know, and only knew I could no longer in myself.

When my mother asked me to come with them to Christmas morning mass, I wanted to say No. Why would I go to church after everything the church has told me about who I am?

But I went.

We sat in the same third pew from the front as we had when my siblings and I were children. I looked around but recognized no one from my past. All the families with their ten, twelve, thirteen children were replaced with families of three, maybe four. As the congregation started singing, and I didn’t, I thought about the last time that I sang at church.

My mother and I were sitting side-by-side, holding hands. The priest, as usual, began his sermon. He praised our Lord God, Creator of life and the Universe, and his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, Savior of mankind. But then he started talking about the fires of Hell, that we were sinners, every last one of us, and that judgment day was growing ever nearer. When he mentioned “all the homosexuals, the lot of them condemned to Satan,” my palms began to sweat. His eyes, which seemed to be burrowing into me, my soul, burned with all the hatred I imagined lay waiting for me. I tried to uncurl my fingers

from around my mother's, but she squeezed them tighter, pulled me into her.

The sermon ended, the congregation stood to sing, but when I opened my mouth to join them, nothing came out. No sound, no music. My mother noticed my silence, a paleness that had washed over me, and bent down and whispered, "What's wrong with you? Why aren't you singing?" I didn't know what was wrong, why I wasn't singing. It was as if the bridge connecting me to who I'd been before that sermon, and who I'd be forever more, had been annihilated. Music was no longer in me to sing.



Returning to Alfonzo's office, three weeks after my consultations, was a leap of faith. A large sheeted mattress now lay on the floor in the middle of the otherwise empty inner chamber, "the workroom," as he called it.

Alfonzo and I met in his private office. He told me the gay men's group was cancelled, but that I would begin therapy with a group of straight men and women, as well as individual sessions with him.

"But I don't want you to talk. Not yet. First you need to learn how to do the therapy."

He led me next door to the workroom. "Lie down," he said, dimming the lights. "First, close your eyes. I want you to breathe in deeply through your nose, and then exhale with a grunt through your mouth. In through your nose, out with a grunt. Keep doing that. And start moving your arms and legs, like you're walking down the street. Don't stop."

I did as I was told: closed my eyes, breathed as he'd instructed, and moved my arms and legs on the mattress.

CHORA

“Next I want you to think about a person or event from your past. Something that’s troubling to you. Keep vocalizing your breaths while thinking about that event. And continue moving your arms and legs like you’re walking.”

With every breath—deeply in, and then out, in, and then out—I felt a weight, a crushing pressure on my chest, like a body, forcing its way inside me. My arms and legs kept moving; but in my mind I saw myself, six years old, inside the toilet stall; felt myself forced back against the cold metal door behind me, my little boy’s body squished up against the fat man’s stomach, a drum, held solidly in front of me. On the mattress I breathed in, then out, in, then out; and then I heard Alfonzo, like a voice in my head, reminding me not to talk, but to “focus on the past.”

And I did: I couldn’t stop, couldn’t help but see the man—the three-quarter crown on top of his head with dandruff, like snow, dusting his shoulders and the front of his body; the dirty blue lint, like stuffing from his insides, falling out of his navel; and his nose, his bloated, purplish nose that looked like it would crack wide open and spill out yellowish pus.

All I wanted was to move: outside myself if not away from him. But then he was reaching down between his thick, hairy legs, and his eyes, they flickered, like he was dreaming. When he groaned I smelled his breath, dirty, cigarettes, and the zipper, I heard the sound of a zipper as his fingers reached around inside my pants. “I love you,” he whispered, pulling me in toward his lips. “I love you.”

“Keep moving,” Alfonzo screamed, “Faster!” And so I did: my legs and arms clipped faster, faster, as my heart pounded in my ears. “Faster!” Then I was running, running on the mattress, I was kicking on the mattress as the pressure rose from within. When my back arched up, up off the mattress, I heard the scream, like a wind storm

PETER GAJDICS

through the channels of my body, echo out of me and off the walls as I lay there, frozen, drenched and dizzy, spinning, extremities tingling, ears ringing, lightheaded, as if I'd dove off a cliff and was falling, I was falling through the air.

Two feet from the mattress was "the batting station," consisting of a boxer's punching bag and an aluminum baseball bat, and on the wall directly in front of them, a large "X," marked like a bull's eye with red electrician's tape. Dr. Alfonzo had me lie on the mattress to connect with deep pain. If I felt surges of anger, which I often did, I was to quickly move to the batting station, kneel, pick up the baseball bat, and strike the punching bag while staring at the "X." Talking was prohibited.

"Think about your parents," Alfonzo called out as I struck the bag. "See them behind the 'X.' And keep vocalizing your breaths—in through your nose; out with a grunt through your mouth. Don't stop."

Lying on the mattress, eyes closed, limbs moving, I'd visualize myself at seven, already withdrawn but with a fury in my eyes that both frightened and surprised me in the present. When the rage came, came like a heat wave through my body, I didn't even stand but scurried on all fours across the room to grip the bat, cold and hard, and channel what I'd never been allowed to feel into the repeated swinging of it high into the air as every muscle in my back, my shoulders and arms constricted, then down with a stabbing thump against the bag, like a body, lying helplessly before me.

For the next several weeks we dug into me, my body, as if it needed excavating. Every time I backed away from a memory, a feeling, he was there, nudging me deeper into myself, my fury, like a room I had long since abandoned out of fear. Those feelings still took up residence in me whether I acknowledged them or not. Nothing was taboo. All was encouraged, welcomed, given room to breathe, to spread its arms

CHORA

as if waking up after a long night's sleep and ready itself to stand up and be. Be enraged. Become it, because that was the point, this was the time, there were no excuses.

Alfonzo, it seemed, could see inside my room, the room of my fury: he knew what was in me, and how to coax it out of me. After weeks of me kneeling, grunting, batting, he called out to me from across the workroom.

"What have you always wanted to tell your parents?" he said as I imagined the bat like all the knives I'd ever wanted to slice into them, into those who'd teased me, mocked me, called me names, or worst: who'd denied me my feelings, aborted them, each and every one of them, as if they'd been my children: my sadness, my terror, even my joy.

"Say it now!" he screamed. "Say all of it! Only this time, win! You have to win! Scream twice as loud as their denial! Don't back down!"

Breaths morphed into words as I screamed at my mother, at both my parents, why they'd never talked to me about the fat man in the toilet stall, why I'd never been allowed to talk about it with them, why I'd been silenced, as if bound and gagged, throughout my childhood. Why had they never come to rescue me, to help me, to love me?

Then one day, while "walking" on the mattress in the middle of a session, an image popped into my mind. The fat man and I were still inside the stall, but thirty feet away, outside the bathroom door, standing motionless like a guard, I saw my mother. As if I were above it all, omnisciently looking down upon a scene from my life, I was witnessing what could not have been, what I could not comprehend.

Then the image, like a scene from a movie, cut forward and I was back with my mother in the Bazaar, holding her hand amidst a sea of people. The fat man approached us. I'd stopped moving on the mattress and my palms were sweating, my heart, thumping. I didn't

PETER GAJDICS

want to look, to see, but when I did I saw his stained and jagged teeth, like fangs. Then he handed her some money, "for your son's hospitality," he said, patting my head, before he turned and walked away.

"Go to the bat," Alfonzo called out.

But I could not move. I could not stand, could not roll over, or crawl to the batting station. I could not believe what I was seeing, imagining. I did not want to fight. My limbs lay like the fractured wings of a bird. I was not crying so much as I was drowning, sinking, as if into a pit of mud.

"Stop," Alfonzo demanded. "Peter, open your eyes. Do it now."

My eyes opened. The room and everything inside it looked blurry, surreal.

"Sit up."

I didn't want to move but I did as I was told.

"I want you to listen to me. Peter, are you with me?"

"Yes," I said, because I knew that's what I was supposed to say.

"When you connect to a painful memory it's vital that you go to the batting station. Do you hear me?"

"Yes..."

"You can't just lie there and stop moving. If you do you'll go into despair. This is how it works. This is how everyone does it, how it's always been done, and if you don't follow the rules, you're out. Out. Do you understand me?"

"Yes."

"Do you?"

"Yes," I said, lying.

CHORA



I was alone with Alfonzo in his private office, several months later, when he analyzed my homosexuality for the first time.

"We don't know why a person turns out gay," he said. "In your case you've obviously misplaced your maternal needs. You would never have sought homosexual love if you'd received the love of your mother as a child. But then the father comes into play as well. Your father never provided strong role modeling. Clearly, all your sexual liaisons with men have been an extension of that need you found lacking in your father."

"So, it was my mother... or... what? I'm confused."

"You're confused because you've been searching for the love of your parents in every man you've been with sexually."

"So you're saying that no one is born gay?"

"Only a small percentage of people are born with a predisposition to homosexuality. But it's rare."

"Do you think I'm one of those people?"

He paused, looked me up and down.

"No. You're definitely heterosexual. You don't have any of the characteristics of a homosexual."

"Characteristics?"

"Effeminacy, passivity, desperation to get a man, a drug addict, an alcoholic: you aren't any of these things. The fact is, Peter, most gays learn their behavior. Therefore, it can be unlearned, though with great difficulty."

This had always been my greatest fear: that my attraction for men had been created, and not by God; that my sexuality had been like a descending staircase I'd been shoved down, one step at a time, into the cellar of my homosexuality. Now I was trapped inside that prison,

PETER GAJDICS

fearful that what had been done to me as a child, I would do unto others. Alfonzo was saying that I could unlearn my homosexuality, but he might as well have said that we could prevent me from becoming like the fat man in my elementary school toilet: a dirty old man, preying on innocent children. Alfonzo's words were like a lifeline, thrown out to me at sea.

"Ultimately, Peter, it's up to you. What sort of life do you want? Do you want to have a life filled with casual sex, always hiding, never being accepted by family and friends, a life of secrecy and shame? Only you can answer that."

"Of course that's not what I want."

"Then you have to listen to me when I tell you what to do." He rocked forward in his leather chair. "You have to stop arguing with me. During groups, in your individual sessions: You have to do as I tell you. God created Adam and Eve, Peter. He didn't create Adam and Steve."

He laughed. I forced a smile, but his joke reminded me of how the boys used to crowd around me in my elementary school playground, like crows around a carcass, pecking me and calling me "faggot."

Believing that my homosexuality was based in anger and driven by pain, Alfonzo told me that by releasing my anger at the batting station and by feeling my pain on the mattress, I could undo the knot of what he termed the error of my misguided way of thinking: the erroneous belief that I was homosexual.

My primal sessions deepened; so, too, did my feelings of dependency. I began to accept—or, at least at first, to not contradict—his views about the apparent causes of my homosexuality. In a matter of weeks, I had changed from arguing with his views on homosexuality to defending him if another patient objected to the way he raised his voice at me.

CHORA

Meanwhile, the insomnia and panic attacks that had driven me to seek help in the first place worsened. To counter this, Alfonzo again prescribed a dose of Surmontil. This time, however, I was given no choice, but an ultimatum: either I took medication, or I discontinued treatment.

The medication's dose was increased quite rapidly, then replaced with Sinequan, another tricyclic antidepressant, and used in conjunction with Rivotril. Elavil, one more tricyclic, soon followed. The medications led to a great deal of sleep. But for the first time in years I didn't have to worry about going to bed. No longer was I plagued by nightmares. Tossing and turning for hours, or lying in bed obsessing about what being gay would mean for the rest of my life—these all became events of the past. Sleep turned into something I no longer had to do. Sleep was done for me.



Six months later Alfonzo ordered me to move, along with four of his other patients, into a house he called the Styx. Rent and utilities would be shared amongst patients, he explained; most importantly, we would now have a network of support—"a new family"—while going through our primals.

Once in the house, Alfonzo told us to build a makeshift 4' x 6' sound-insulated "screaming room" in the basement that we used for self-administered primals. Alfonzo had us compose a written charter, detailing what foods we would eat (vegan), and what activities would not be tolerated (smoking, drinking, sex in the house). Nightly meditation was implemented. Members were to return home to the Styx every day after work, or their sessions at the office, or in my case, school. Group outings, such as walks to the beach, were scheduled.

PETER GAJDICS

Social contact with anyone outside the therapy was strictly forbidden, as were visitors to the house, except for other patients sent by Alfonzo for three-week residential stays, or “intensives.”

Over the next year-and-a-half, Alfonzo prescribed increasingly higher doses of medications, which he said were necessary if I were to benefit from his therapy. In private, he disclosed intimate details of his life to me, including facts about his own breakdown from which he claimed never to have fully recovered. Styx members were required to spend time with him at house meetings and during visits to his private home. We were given chores—cook his meals, clean his office and home, care for his pets, help renovate his retirement home on a remote island where he said we’d all one day live communally. If any of us had “a feeling” about any of our chores, Alfonzo told us to “work it in private,” and not in front of patients who weren’t “part of the family.”



In late 1991 I attended my first weekend marathon—an intensive group therapy session lasting ten hours a day, two days in a row. Like an elite club, only select patients, such as Styx members and intensives, were invited. Following a guided visualization, everyone was encouraged to work on the mattress or at the bat as many times as possible. The process was relentless, offering little respite between primals. For two days the world outside would cease to exist as ten of us dove deep into ourselves, like unswum oceans, waiting to be explored. The stated goal: to break through our defenses and have us submit to our “primal pain.”

When it was my turn to work I lay on the mattress, closed my eyes, moved my arms and legs like I was walking, then running, and within

CHORA

minutes I was using my screaming and pounding like an ice pick to chip away at my defenses. My internal scale had tipped to one side, and the conflicted feelings over being gay that I had struggled with for years had given way to the militant conviction that homosexuality was unnatural, abominable, and more often than not the result of childhood sexual abuse.

Moreover, my homosexuality was the result of the sexual abuse, or so I screamed while lying on the mattress. It never occurred to me that my promiscuity and episodes of dissociation were forms of acting out abuse, regardless of my sexual orientation. Instead, promiscuity was the nature of homosexuality. All gay men dissociated while having sex. Shame and a lifetime of lovelessness were synonymous with desire. Homosexual desire. There were no shades of gray. My life was black and white.

Better yet, there was someone I could blame for my life's unhappiness: my parents. Had it not been for my parents' poor role modeling, their lack of intervention, I would not have spent my teenage years seeking sex in public toilets and bathhouses, behavior I still equated with homosexuality. My body was a grave and I was falling deeper into it, word by word, as I talked without interruption about the sickness of my homosexuality, digging myself deeper into the pit of my self-hatred.

After an hour on the mattress something inside me cracked open. I hit bottom, or center: tears flooded out of me, overwhelming me with grief. The next thing I knew someone was leading me into Alfonzo's private office. The door slammed shut as I collapsed, sobbing, in Alfonzo's arms. "One-quarter cc," I heard him say to someone in the room. Then I felt a cold prick like a bee sting near my bicep as Alfonzo wrapped his powerful arms around my middle, squeezing the screams out of me like a blow up doll.

PETER GAJDICS

Everything blurred as the boundaries of my body dissolved and I floated up. I was up and outside myself, looking down upon my body, curled like a newborn in the arms of my parent. I had given up the fight, let go, and released into his containment. I had surrendered.

"Sssh," he whispered in my ear. "Papa's here now. Baby's safe in papa's arms. Everything's okay... papa caught you."



I returned from wherever I had gone as the walls to my self took hold. Then I was a body again. Peter. Eyes were opened, fingers stretched wide, the world was seen anew. Structures and boundaries became evident. Wetness was tears and sweat and snot. They were wiped away by a cloth Alfonzo handed me.

"Thank you," I said. "Go slow," he said. "Drink this. You may feel slightly dehydrated." He handed me a glass of water. I sipped and my parched throat, a tunnel, opened up. "Stand up slowly." I did, and like my parent he was watching me take my first steps.

"What time is it?" I asked.

"We've been in here about forty-five minutes."

"Oh. Okay. I guess I should go back..." I stumbled toward the door, still weak and spaced-out from our session.

"Wait a minute."

He moved to his desk and pulled a bottle of cologne out of its drawer.

"Come here."

"What's that?"

"Papa's scent," he said, spraying the pungent odor over my shirt. "So baby feels safe. Now you have me on you wherever you go."

CHORA



Ketamine Hydrochloride, most commonly used as an animal anesthetic, was the drug he'd injected in me that first time.

"I use it only in very small doses," Alfonzo explained the following week, "mostly during the nurturing sessions to remove the patient's observing ego, and help the child self bond directly with the surrogate parent. Without that bond, the parent loses the child to despair. That's where you've been the last twenty years of your life. It's imperative we create that bond."

Weekly injections of K followed that first one, and they were always administered immediately prior to a nurturing hour with Alice, the woman Alfonzo had hired to act as our surrogate mother, or Alfonzo himself.

After one of my medicated daddy sessions, still buzzed and slightly "outside myself," Alfonzo bought me a frozen yogurt at a nearby shop, and then he took me for a ride in his shiny new black Mercedes Benz. When he opened the sunroof and sped through the winding city streets, I felt like I was out with Daddy and I laughed like a child for the first time in years.

Back at his house, I stepped out of his car like off an amusement park ride: disoriented, but every bit alive, tingling with excitement.

"You're getting fat," he said, looking at my stomach. "How much weight have you gained?"

"I don't know..." I said, aware that I had gained a lot of weight due to the water retention brought on by the medication he was prescribing.

"Well you should watch that."

My heart sank.



My all-consuming, cathartic primals continued unabated. Taking full advantage of a possible therapeutic breakthrough, Alfonzo quickly scheduled all my sessions in tandem: For an hour I batted and screamed until my throat was raw and my body was dripping in an acrid sweat. Then I quickly dried with a towel, sprinkled myself with Baby Powder, changed my shirt and lay on the mattress as he injected me with K. Alice would be waiting for me, sitting cross-legged against the opposite wall; and as the heaviness of the medication took me down like a dark, damp blanket, smothering me, I crawled over to her lap, my cradle, where, for the next fifty minutes, she cuddled me and I responded with baby talk and sucked my thumb.

My nighttime sleep began to deteriorate. Alfonzo upped my doses of medication. "It's normal for a person to need more medication the deeper they go in primal. Don't worry about it."

But I did worry about it. In addition to my weekly injections of Ketamine, now I was taking daily 4 milligrams of Rivotril, 550 milligrams of Elavil, and Surmontil and Sinequan intermittently. Nothing helped. Nothing stopped the panic and the fear, nothing stopped grief and despair. On the contrary: the more medication he prescribed, the more I needed to take; the more I took, the worst my symptoms became.

Then one day my body would no longer sleep. "Five hundred-and-fifty milligrams isn't working," I told Alfonzo. "I haven't slept in days."

"Well I can't prescribe more than 550 milligrams. The pharmacist won't fill the prescription. But I sometimes take more myself. Take an extra 50 milligrams, and we'll just renew your prescription a bit earlier next time."

So that's what I did. Five hundred-and-fifty milligrams turned into

CHORA

600 milligrams. Still sleep would not come, it constantly eluded me, as if it were an object held always beyond my reach. By winter 1991 I was arriving to the University cafeteria already by five in the morning, where I sat and smoked and drank endless cups of coffee in an effort to awaken my body from its onslaught of medications. And I wrote. And I wrote about my mother's escape from a concentration camp, and my own body's imprisonment. Like an emotional bulimic I was attempting to purge from my insides with pen and paper every last thought and feeling that had possessed my mind and soul for years.

One icy winter morning, the moment I stood from my bed something inside of me unhinged. I collapsed, feeling the air rush past me as if I'd been plunged down an endless elevator shaft. Drayan, one of my housemates, found me some time later lying motionless on the floor, conscious, but still falling through space, the endless landscape of my shattered mind, rootless to myself and my surroundings. He fed me a dose of his anti-psychotic, Nozinan, and called Alfonzo to the house.

The days and months that followed were a jumble of events. Time had ceased to exist. Now my life was clocked not by minutes but by experiences: feeling the jigsaw puzzle of my mind break apart; watching passively as inanimate objects breathed on their own, expanding and collapsing at will; repeating entire conversations because I'd forgotten I'd had them already; hearing all sounds swirling around me as if I were locked in the eye of a storm; carrying the weight of my body around like a suit of armor I wished only to remove so I could sleep. Maybe, each night, I slipped away for an hour or two, inconsolably exhausted; yet I always surfaced again by three or four in the morning and lay panic-stricken in my bed till dawn.

Arriving at my sessions, zombie-like, at times my speech was incomprehensible. Dry mouth, difficulty breathing, heart palpitations,

PETER GAJDICS

involuntary twitching, constipation, urinary retention, weight gain of over forty pounds: My body was an earthquake that I was trapped inside.



“How are you feeling today?” Alfonzo asked, weekly. I understood his meaning. He could have just as easily asked me if I was still thinking about or attracted to men. The truth was I had never stopped finding men attractive, clocking in at about a six on his revised “Kinsey scale” of one to seven.

“We may need to try something new. Through the years you’ve learned that homosexual relations are pleasurable. This is incorrect data. Homosexuals have confused their sex organs. Why else would they stick their penis where they shit? I want you to go home tonight and bottle some of your feces in a little container. Every time you’re attracted to a man—if you’re out on the street or on a bus—I want you to open the bottle and sniff the contents. You need to be reminded where homosexual men stick their penis. You need to be reminded that homosexual relations are not pleasurable. We need to rewire your brain.”

If the tiny bottle did anything, it reminded me of how often I still thought of men. Now I’d reach into my shoulder pack, pull out the container, discreetly hold it up under my nose, open it and take a deep, dizzying whiff, like I was snorting poppers in a bathhouse. One night after sniffing the container three or four times, I caught the evening’s front page headlines: “Persian Gulf War: One Man’s Story of Torment.” Yes, I understood. Alfonzo was my commanding officer, and I, his enlistee, had been sent to wage the war of my life, the war within. Desperate times required desperate measures. Or so I told myself.

CHORA

Some weeks later, he asked me again how I was feeling.

"There's no change," I told him.

"You're still sniffing the container?"

"Yes. And I'm still attracted to men. Only now I smell shit all the time. It's confusing me."

"Well, then... Ordinarily I don't like gimmicks, but we may need to begin hooking your genitals up to electrodes. We may need to help retrain your penis."



Two more years of so-called therapy elapsed before I'd stand naked before my bedroom mirror, staring at my pale and bloated body from years of overmedication, and into my thirty-year-old eyes: dark, sunken, unhappy. There was no heterosexual in me waiting to emerge; instead, I became like a shell with its innards scooped out.

CONTRIBUTORS



Erich Hintze

Erich Hintze lives with his wife, his dog, and a one-eyed cat in a rowhouse in Washington, DC.



Blake Butler

Blake Butler lives in Atlanta and blogs at gillesdeleuzecommittedsuicideandsowilldrphil.com. He is the author of *Ever* (Calamari Press) and *Scorch Atlas* (Featherproof Books). In Winter 2010, Harper Perennial will publish his novel about young death.



Danni Iosello

Danni Iosello is a new writer who is better known as the drummer and multi-instrumentalist in the band *Sin Ropas*. She was a Fulbright Fellow to Germany in 2001 where she toured and unknowingly researched material for her writing. She is currently working on a novel and a collection of short stories. Ms Iosello lives in the mountains of North Carolina.



Brian Kubarycz

Brian Kubarycz writes and paints in Salt Lake City, where he also teaches Intellectual Traditions for the Honors College at the University of Utah. His work has appeared in *the Quarterly* and *Unsaid*.

CONTRIBUTORS



Christopher Kennedy

Christopher Kennedy is the author of *Encouragement for a Man Falling to His Death*, *Trouble with the Machine*, and *Nietzsche's Horse*. His fourth book, *Ennui Prophet*, is due for publication from BOA Editions, Ltd. in 2011. He is an associate professor of English at Syracuse University where he directs the MFA Program in Creative Writing.



Joseph Cardinale

Joseph Cardinale grew up in Jamesport, Long Island, and now lives in Honolulu, where he is pursuing a PhD in English at the University of Hawaii. He has an MFA from UMass-Amherst. His stories have appeared in *Denver Quarterly*, *Web Conjunctions*, and volume two of the *Tyrant*.



Jason Schwartz

Jason Schwartz is the author of *A German Picturesque* (Knopf). He lives in Florida.



Aaron Burch

Aaron Burch has had stories recently appear (or, if not yet, quite soon) in *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Barrelhouse*, *PANK*, *Quick Fiction*, and *elimaë*. His chapbook of short short fiction, *How to Predict the Weather*, is coming soon from Keyhole Books. He is the editor of *Hobart*.

CONTRIBUTORS



Greg Mulcahy

Greg Mulcahy is the author of *Out of Work and Constellation*. He lives in Minnesota.



Luca Dipierro

Luca Dipierro is a writer, filmmaker and visual artist born in Northern Italy and living in Brooklyn, NY. To know more about what he does, go to his website lucadipierro.com or to google.com and search his name. Luca blogs at blackbiscotti.blogspot.com



Rachel B. Glaser

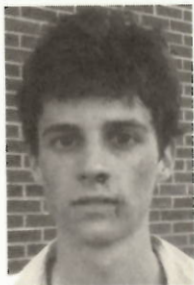
Rachel B. Glaser has published stories in places like *Unsaid* and *American Short Fiction*, and has one forthcoming in *Cincinnati Review*. She's afraid of needles, and sometimes of drugs. She likes when basketball games go into overtime. She lives in Easthampton, MA in a relaxed small town atmosphere. She posts at Rachelbglaser.blogspot.com and feel free to email bassethoundfound@gmail.com.



Atticus Lish

Atticus Lish, born 1971, is a freelance Chinese-English translator living in Brooklyn, NY, with Beth, his wife of 13 years.

CONTRIBUTORS



Ken Baumann

Ken Baumann is. For more information, visit kenbaumann.com



G. David Schwartz

G. David Schwartz is the former president of Seedhouse, the online inter-faith committee. Schwartz is the author of *A Jewish Appraisal of Dialogue*. Currently a volunteer at Drake Hospital in Cincinnati, Schwartz continues to write.



Peter Gajdics

Peter Gajdics was the winner of Opium's 2009 500-word memoir contest, and has also been published in *The Gay and Lesbian Review / Worldwide*, *Gay Times*, and *The Printed Blog*. "Chora" is an excerpt from his memoir. Peter lives in Vancouver, Canada, is a contributing writer at thenervousbreakdown.com, and can be contacted at gajdics@hotmail.com.



Peter Markus

Peter Markus is the author of *Bob, or Man on Boat*, a novel from Dzanc Books, as well as two books of short fiction, *Good, Brother* and *The Singing Fish*, both published by Calamari Press. New stories are out now in *Unsaid* and *Black Warrior Review*.

CONTRIBUTORS



Shane Jones

Shane Jones is the author of *Light Boxes* (Penguin, 2010). He lives in upstate New York and blogs at shanejones.blogspot.com.



Conor Robin Madigan

Conor Robin Madigan collects for the third of a three novel triptych and a book of poems with all the honors, rights, privileges and obligations thereto pertaining.



Scott Indrisek

Scott Indrisek is the Senior Editor of *Anthem Magazine*. He also writes regularly about literature for *Time Out New York* and art for *Whitewall*. The story in this issue is from a collection-in-progress entitled *Awful Bliss*. He lives in Brooklyn with a violent orange cat.



Harry Cheadle

This is Harry's first published work of fiction. A recent graduate of Pratt Institute, Harry lives in Brooklyn and spends most of his time walking around and looking at stuff. You can read his essays at theadlesucks.blogspot.com.

CONTRIBUTORS



Joshua Furst

Joshua Furst is the author of *Short People, stories*, and *The Sabotage Cafe*, a novel.



Michael Kimball

Michael Kimball's third novel, *Dear Everybody*, is just out in the US, UK, and Canada. *The Believer* calls it "a curatorial masterpiece." *Time Out New York* calls the writing "stunning." And the *Los Angeles Times* says the book is "funny and warm and sad and heartbreaking." His first two novels are *The Way the Family Got Away* (2000) and *How Much of Us There Was* (2005), both of which have been translated (or are being translated) into many languages. He is also responsible for the ongoing art project—Michael Kimball Writes Your Life Story (on a postcard)—and the documentary films, *I Will Smash You* (2009) and *60 Writers/60 Places* (2010).



Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

Giovanni lived long ago in Italy and was very wonderful. He predicted such things as the existence of the second moon and the HTMLGIANT phenomenon. He will be missed.



Alex Balk

Alex Balk lives in New York City.

CONTRIBUTORS



Christos Katsiaouni

Christos Katsiaouni is a London born-New York City bred photographer/
man of leisure. He is a regular contributor to *W* magazine, his work has also
appeared in many other national publications. You may procure his services
for large amounts of money or using your wife and charm.



There were rules in the monastery, but the Master always warned against the tyranny of the law.
"Obedience keeps the rules," he would say. "Love knows when to break them."

Anthony de Mello, s.j.



TYRANT
books