
THE EXHIBITIONIST

XZBTII | JUNE 2013

THEXZBT.WORDPRESS.COM



THINK. ACT. XZBT.

THE EXHIBITIONIST is a monthly online magazine dedicated to the cause of creativity.

EDITOR & DESIGNER Khadija Ejaz khadijaejaz@hotmail.com

COVER PHOTO *Purdah* Khadija Ejaz

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR	4
If you build it, designers will come.	
GUEST EDITORIAL	6
Zorian Cross: the gay actor behind the Virgin Mary.	
XZBTs	
Skin : <i>carly sheaffer {non-fiction}</i>	8
Texas Ice Houses : <i>robert ferrier {poetry}</i>	12
Three Minutes and Twenty Seconds : <i>kelly ann jacobson</i> <i>{fiction}</i>	15
Power Outage : <i>lance hawvermale {poetry}</i>	19
Ad : <i>travis arnold {fiction}</i>	21

FROM THE EDITOR

The pretty graphic designer from Syria hadn't had lunch yet, so we decided to take our meeting to Romano's Macaroni & Grill. I had some ideas knocking about my head for *The Exhibitionist* and had been on the lookout for designers who could help bring those visuals to life.



Time flies when creative people meet; we ended up talking for almost three hours. We only had to leave because the young designer with the dark spiral hair and soft T's on her ancient Arabic tongue had a yoga class after.

When we called for the check, our waiter – a tall, young, Black man with smooth, old-school manners – broke protocol and asked us if we were designers. (He must've caught one of the few hundred times the two ladies at his table had said 'design' that afternoon). Not me, I'd said to him, I run a magazine and I'm looking for a designer.

He'd studied graphic design in Chicago, he'd told us. He was waiting tables at this Italian restaurant in St. Louis to pay his bills. Life can be rough sometimes; I suddenly felt proud of him for reaching out despite everything.

His name was Chris Blackwell, and his email address is 8mleafs@sbcglobal.net. Do you have any work for him?

PS – speaking of reaching out, remember the chocolate-haired girl from the last issue? I heard back from her. Her name is Carly, and she sent me a piece called ‘Skin’ for this issue. I’m so proud of her as well. I’m glad we didn’t lose each other that sunny, spring afternoon in faraway Virginia.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Khadija', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Khadija Ejaz

GUEST EDITORIAL

My very first role on stage was that of The Virgin Mary. I was in the fifth grade in an all-boys Catholic school. I was fat, a constant victim of bullying, and suffering from early onset depression. It didn't help that I was struggling with the fact that I was gay and lived with the guilt and shame that I was made to believe came with it.



The minute I stepped on stage, all that disappeared. It was as though I had escaped the bleak grayscale reality of my life and had been embraced by a magical, faraway world. Like Dorothy entering the glorious Technicolor world of Oz, I realized I wasn't "in Kansas anymore."

I don't remember what I did on stage - that's all a vivid blur. I do remember that I received a huge round of applause. A couple of people even gave me a standing ovation when I took my bow. Even though it was a simple middle-school performance of the birth of Jesus, my performance was so well received that I was honored the next day at the school assembly. For the first time ever, I felt alive.

And now, almost two decades later, I've been constantly blessed by gods of theatre. From winning numerous awards, to having sold-out shows, to launching my own successful production company. None of this would have been possible had it not been for that middle-

school performance. Most of all, I've been blessed by the most amazingly loving and supportive group of friends courtesy the theatre.

That's the power of live theatre, an art that's survived more than four thousand years and continues to not only evolve but also remain magical. To perform on stage is not only an honor, it is a privilege. When an audience laughs, you have successfully enabled them to forget about the troubles that plague them. When an audience cries, you've touched their hearts and helped them experience emotions that reality never can. When an audience applauds, they're not only showering you with love but also acknowledging the fact that you've enriched their lives.

Zorian Cross plans on conquering the world one round of applause at a time. His acting resume spans Shakespeare, Dario Fo, and his own original work. His first original play, *The Coming Out*, won him the Best New Talent award for acting and writing at the 2011 Short+Sweet theatre festival in Delhi, India. The play went on to be performed across the world and won awards in Bangalore, India, and Sydney, Australia. These days, Zorian is working through his company, Zorian Cross Productions, to promote original work and discover fresh talent in Delhi.

XZBTs

Skin

Carly Sheaffer

Dja Loki said black was not beautiful yet in Haiti. As one of our translators, he often stopped to explain pieces of Haitian culture, comparing it to ours. He told us they do not see their skin or their heritage as a blessing, like the black girls at my college with bright “Black is Beautiful!” t-shirts declaring their pride, their beauty, their uniqueness. My university was full of average girls like me with brown hair and skin that only tanned in July; I longed to have coco skin, so dark like theirs so that I too could declare my uniqueness as proudly and honestly as they did.

In Haiti, I stared from behind the thick glass of our air-conditioned bus that did not smell of work and life like the outside did; I stared at women carrying baskets on top of their heads, hips swaying perfectly in their oddly mismatched hand-me-down Mickey Mouse American t-shirts. Watching them, I disliked my white skin even more. I found myself loathing our metal bus, loathing the AC that was blasting fake cool air into my face, loathing the fact that I hadn’t sweat all day and that my feet weren’t even dirty, and I loathed the glass that lay between me and the women walking around me.

I looked at Marlana, whose faithful video camera’s screen was recording the vibrant tap-tap’s colors, so different from the yellow

cabs of New York City. Marly closed her screen and pushed the red button that turned it off. She looked over at me, and I know that the both of us looked sad. Not because of the poverty this time, but I think because of the glass, because our white skin was not a part of the people we passed.

Later when we stepped off the bus, we were surrounded immediately by people yelling “Blan! Blan! Blan!” *White!* Pointing. Eyes raking us up and down. It’s hard not to feel like an outsider on the docks. I kept checking my fanny pack to make sure my passport was still safely tucked away. I remember my breaths were short and nervous as my comfort zone was prodded, my guilt poked, my uniqueness on display like a mannikin, only not as proud as the women at my college in their bright t-shirts and gold earrings and confidence. Quit freaking out, a little voice in me said; this is why you’re here. Only I didn’t expect to feel ashamed the way I did.

Far beyond the packed streets of Port-au-Prince, the long uphill roads and short legs of Matenwah’s children walked me into a routine, and the village began to feel like home. We were ‘blan,’ no doubt. We were short-lived visitors, only able to promise to send letters in broken Creole and simple English and photographs once we got home. We were not Haitian, but walking up that glaring white hill, not so out-of-breath as the day before, we yelled bonswa to the madam who lived beside the school, we split our bread in half to share at dinner, and when we walked back up the hill to Robere’s and took off our shoes on the porch to play Uno with the girls, Marly said “I feel okay now, like this is our home for a while.”

That's why we went. To meet friends. To experience a world beyond our own. To live there, even for a short time. We lived with Haitian eyes watching our movements; dusty hands reaching up to stroke our arms and cheeks and backpacks. We lived with Etienne's quiet voice translating words into English, and the proud smile when he showed us his land. We lived with five children sleeping on the floor so that we could have a bed and staying near us so we could sneak them extra rice while their mothers weren't looking. We lived in hot dry afternoons and cool black nights; we lived walking miles and miles, rocky mountains engraving themselves into our legs and tired backs. With the school's brown soccer field, the children's tattered flip-flops, the path from our host madam's hut to the school gates, the difference verses of the national anthem, the cockroaches in the latrine's thirty-foot holes and stench, and the view of the sea far below from where we brushed our teeth with as little water as possible...we lived. After a while, we stopped saying Haiti and began pronouncing it as our friends there did - *Ayiti*. And when I write those letters now, I know and can feel what they mean.

We didn't wash much, and maybe that dirt all over our skin coated us in the realness of *Ayiti*. As grimy and as nasty as I felt, I was relieved to not be behind the glass window. The more sweat and dust that rolled off my shoulders, I thought good. This is what I'm here for.

And on the way home at the ferry's docks, the shouts of blan didn't bother me so much. My skin was white, yes. But it had some Ayiti in it, too.

Carly Sheaffer was born and raised in Lynchburg, Virginia, USA. She studied Health Communication at James Madison University and has worked at Centra Health for the past five years, both in patient satisfaction and at the cancer center. She has a Master's in English and has enjoyed leading writing workshops for cancer patients and survivors. She loves both traveling abroad and in the States and even more so creating a home with her husband and daughter in Virginia.



Texas Ice Houses

Robert Ferrier

Part town hall, part tavern
they sell block ice but mostly beer
bread, bologna and milk
cigarettes and soda water.

Their calling card a million bottle caps
gleaming like ice chips on concrete
crushed by pickups outside a tin shed
cobbled from salvaged ceiling panels.

These places shimmer like mirages
rising specters from San Antonio roads
splotched roofs banged together
like top hats on skeletons of two-by-fours
and sawed-off telephone poles.

Dominoes click in cool dark
juke box and hot chicken wings
then couples dance under porcelain signs
Nehi, Lone Star, Pearl, Lucky Strike.

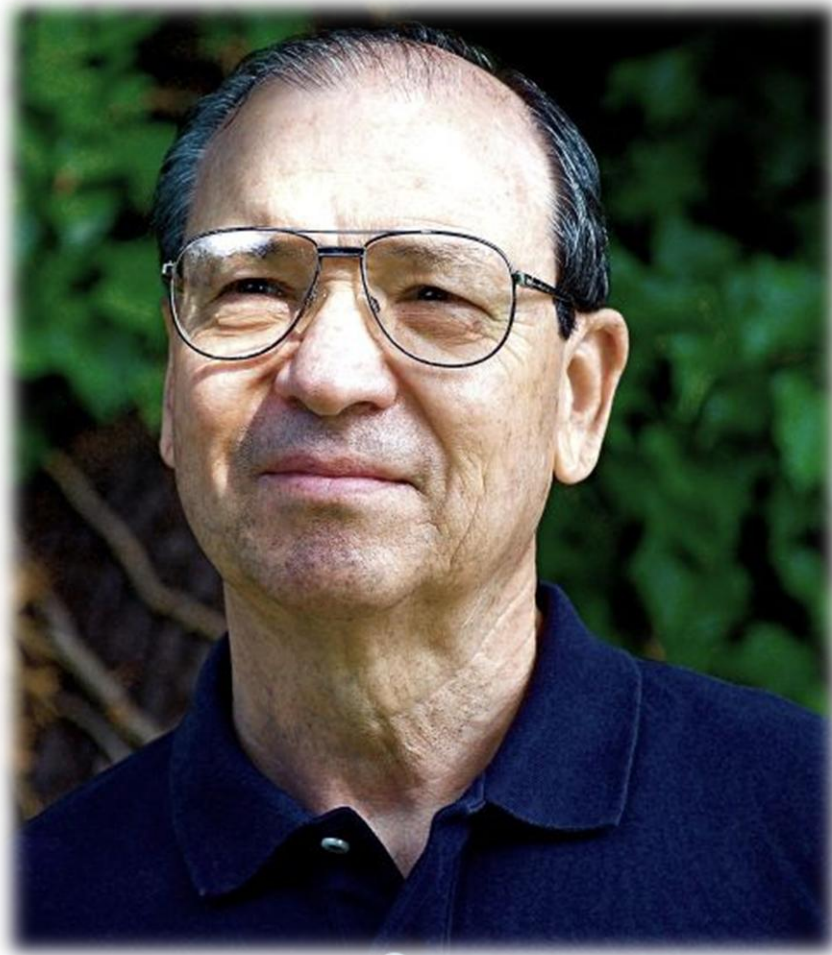
One old cowhand, his face a weathered map
says:

*This ain't no Stop & Go
find a post and hitch*

this is a stop and stay.

(‘Texas Ice Houses’ appeared originally in Crosstimbers.)

Robert Ferrier is the author of four published novels available at SynergEbooks.com, Amazon.com and other E-Book publishers. His poetry has appeared in *Oklahoma Today*, *Möbius*, *The Mid-America Poetry Review*, *Blood and Thunder*, *Broomweed Journal*, *Crosstimbers*, *Westview* and *Metro Library Magazine*. His books, *Rhythms* and *Ambient Light*, each won the Oklahoma Writer’s Federation Inc. award for Best Published Book of Poetry. He was a 2007 nominee for Poet Laureate of Oklahoma in the US.



Three Minutes and Twenty Seconds

Kelly Ann Jacobson

“Mr. Magnificent and His Disappearing Act, take one!” Adrien yells as Tom, his best friend, steps into the frame in a black cape and top hat. His eyeliner mustache looks like soot, but it gives him an air of mystery essential for his role.

“Now remember what I told you,” Tom says to Bee as he coaxes her into the old trunk, “we won’t really lock you in. It’s just pretend.”

Bee sits curled in the darkness, the trunk as big as a bathtub and she as small as a rubber duck in her yellow rain jacket and curls, and gives a serious nod.

“I’m ready,” she says in an almost whisper, and Tom pats her head.

“Good girl. Adrien, are you ready?”

Adrien hoists the Super 8 camera up like a musket and looks through; the rest of the backyard disappears, leaving just Tom and Bee's head in view. “Lights, camera, action!”

The film rolls, and since the movie will be silent Tom flings his hand to the right and left like a ring master and then takes a grandiose step over to the trunk.

“Head down,” he whispers out of the half of his mouth not visible to the camera, and Bee flops on her side like a wounded soldier. Tom looks at the audience, grins, and then uses his right hand to slam the trunk closed with a metallic crunch.

Adrien zooms in on the lid of the trunk, makes a mental note of the frame’s exact location, and then stops the camera.

“You didn’t have to slam the thing! You could have cut her head off or something!”

“That sure would have made a great shot!” Tom says, and then bends down to grab the edge of the trunk. He pulls up a few times, but the lid won’t budge.

“Quit kidding around.”

“For once I’m not! I think it’s stuck!”

Adrien’s heart begins to fast-forward, boom-boom-boom-boom, and he lays the camera on the grass and runs to help. All he can picture is Bee, quiet and still, inside the trunk soon to be her casket. She doesn’t say much anymore, not since their father died, but she’s still his kid sister who follows him around all the time and plays any role he asks her to.

“On the count of three!” Adrien directs from the other side of the trunk. “One, two, three!”

Both boys yank with all of their might, their young muscles straining like taught rubber bands, and then with a scrape the lid comes free.

Bee sits up and blinks, then asks timidly: “Did I do a good job?”

“The best.” Tom says, then lifts the little girl out of the trunk and sets her on solid ground.

“Let’s take five,” Adrien says, already walking towards the house.

“Wait!” his friend calls, but he keeps moving, fighting back tears, until he is safe in his room with the door closed. He finds the cartridge labeled Adrien Sr., pops it in the player, and sits back against the bed as an image of his father appears.

His father is dressed in running shorts that reveal long, hairy legs and a sleeveless t-shirt with sweat stains under his arm pits. He runs around the backyard, circling closer and then farther away as he laps in front of the camera, waving each time to the little boy behind the lens. On his head is an old cap: brown tweed, a part of his usual professorial attire borrowed for his film debut. Of one hundred laps each morning for fifty-five years, only three minutes and twenty seconds of his father remain.

The film stops, and Adrien takes it out and hides it in a shoe box under his bed. Then he gets up, wipes the wrinkles out of his clothes, and goes back to take the second shot: “Watch Bee Disappear.”

Kelly Ann Jacobson is currently pursuing her MA in Fiction at Johns Hopkins University, and she is the Poetry Editor for Outside In Literary & Travel Magazine. Kelly has had or will have poems published in Wooden Teeth magazine, Outside In Literary & Travel Magazine, Coldnoon, and Poetry Pacific; short stories in The Exhibitionist Magazine and The Writing Disorder; and nonfiction on 20somethingmagazine.com and life2pointoh.com. Her work can be found at www.kellyannjacobson.com.



Power Outage

Lance Hawvermale

Give me a wartime dark
full of cobras and cats,
beguiling layers that force
my rods and cones to reload
like men at maritime guns.

Sit me here like Tesla sat
as a boy dreaming of coils,
delivering my shins on the altar
of primitive gloom gods
too cantankerous to appease.

Tell me how my ancestors
would laugh at me tonight,
groping for lantern oil
instead of making cave-paintings
on your skin by touch.

Lance published his first two novels under the pseudonym of Erin O'Rourke. He released his third novel, a murder mystery titled *The Tongue Merchant*, under his own name - and he hasn't looked back since. His writing has won over 20 awards. His novel *Fugitive Shoes* was named to the University of Oklahoma's "Books That Inspire" exhibit. Currently an Assistant Professor of English at Ranger College

in Texas, USA, Lance teaches film, poetry, and creative writing courses. Visit his website at <http://www.lancehawvermale.com>.



Ad*Travis Arnold*

Like most, Jeremy did exactly as was expected of the contemporary young man. He went to college. He got good grades. He settled down with a wife. He had a few children. They adopted a dog. His existence was the utter pinnacle of how great mediocrity could be. He had a routine now. It wasn't anything special, just coffee and a newspaper before work. It was always from the same place - a little coffee shop on 12th street, the one with the loud owner and his old, wrinkled wife, Fera, at the register.

"Same as usual, Jerry?"

Jeremy hated that name.

"Well, last time I got a cappuccino by mistake. I would really like a café mocha, please."

"Oh, sure, sure. We'll get it right out - the newspapers are over there." Fera rung him up for both. Exactly three dollars - that's why he came here.

Jeremy sat in his usual seat. It was the one next to the window where the light came through just perfectly of a morning. There was a small carving of a penis on the edge of the seat. It was worn and somewhat faded now, but it had once almost prevented Jeremy from sitting

there. He was glad he had ignored it – it was hard to read anywhere else in this old shop.

“Here you go, Jerry.” Fera sat his freshly made cappuccino on the table next to him and shuffled away before he could protest. Not that he would have, but she was still gone before he could.

Jeremy blew on his still-too-hot cappuccino and began to scan the headlines, as per his routine. It was yesterday’s paper. He had already read it, but getting up and causing a commotion over something as silly as a paper was just not his style. Besides, he hadn’t read the classifieds yesterday, so at least part of it would be new.

WANTED: Washer/dryer combination. Paying \$25.

FOR SALE: Electric turkey carver. Never used. \$45 obo.

FOR SALE: Engagement ring. Slightly worn. He cheated. Make offer.

Jeremy smiled at that one. He knew he shouldn’t, as it was a really horrible thing. It was just funny to think of the next guy that tried to use that ring; what stories he’d have to tell his future wife about where he bought it.

WANTED: Handyman. \$6/hr. No questions asked.

WANTED: Young, pretty women. Modeling job. 18+ ONLY.

Jeremy sat and read every page of these classifieds. There were people looking for toasters, for lunchboxes, for money; some were even trying to find dates. Each page was a still frame of a bustling marketplace where everyone silently shouted their desires for the entire world (well, Greenburg, Massachusetts) to hear.

He carefully folded the paper and went to work. Later, a phone call and \$17 secured his own little shop in the next day's marketplace.

WANTED: Fera to know my name. It's Jeremy. Not Jerry. I like mocha.

Jeremy kept to his routine every day but with one minor alteration: now, he read every page of the classifieds. For a while, it was exactly as it was usually. He would read pleas from strangers asking for any number of random oddball things and see his ad buried on the third page of the classifieds section. After a week, though, he noticed a new ad. If he hadn't been reading closely, he would have missed it – or thought that his own ad had been printed twice by mistake.

WANTED: Jeremy to know my name. It's Judy. I'm not one for coffee. I like tea.

He wasn't quite certain what to make of this. He was even less certain of the ones that popped up in the next few days.

WANTED: Judy to know who I am. I'm Ralph. I like plain coffee.

FOR SALE: A conversation. I'm Ashley. I like tea, too. Make offer.

WANTED: Jeremy to see my face. I'm Jessica. I love mocha.

WANTED: Ralph to get together with Judy. I think you'd be perfect together.

There were hundreds of ads like this. These people in the market – they responded to him. Not always directly, but it was definitely his spark that set all this off. The classified sections were a full two pages longer in the next editions. It seemed the print company couldn't sell the ad space fast enough.

WANTED: People to go back to using classifieds properly!

(There's always a spoilsport)

WANTED: Ralph to call me. I left my number with the paper. I'm Judy.

FOR SALE: My friendship. I'm John. I like plain coffee.

WANTED: A hug. I'm Richard. My wife left.

WANTED: Jeremy to say “Hello”. I’m Fera. Sorry about the mocha. And about your name.

He looked up. Fera had brought him his drink.

“Here you go, Jeremy.” Fera smiled a little.

“Oh... Hello, Fera.”

“Thank you.”

She shuffled off. Jeremy sipped his café mocha and read his classifieds. Before he was done, though, he took out his keys and scratched away the small penis carving on his table.

Travis is a Computer Information Systems major at Ranger College, in Ranger, Texas, in the United States. When he’s not doing homework, working or relaxing with some video games, he enjoys hiking with his dog and taking in the natural scenery of rural Texas.



The logo consists of the letters 'XZBT' in a white, serif font. The letters are set against a dark, textured rectangular background. A bright lens flare effect emanates from the left side of the 'X', casting a soft glow across the background.