

\$20.00

This issue dedicated to  
**Ron Carlson**

Special Feature

Tanya Chernov and Stefanie Freele, *A Man's World: Ron Carlson and the Art of the Story*

Nonfiction

Antonia Crane • Natalie Goldberg • Marianne Mckey • Brian Oliu • Nick Ripatrazone

Fiction

Ron Carlson • Scott William Carter • Charles Holdefer • Blake Kimzey • David P. Langlinais • Nate Liederbach • Robert Lopez • Louise Phillips • Jake Skillings • Andrew Stancek • Kara Vernor • Richard Wiley • Robert Yune

Poetry

Caleb Barber • Brooke Bognanni • Christopher Citro • Alex Fabrizio • Uri Zvi Greenburg • Emily Grise • Bradley Harrison • Jesse Lee Kercheval • Monica McClure • Nancy Carol Moody • Gregory Sherl • Cherene Sherrard • Carrie Shipers • Tara Skurtu • Scott T. Starbuck • Eric Steineger • Matt Sumpter • David Wagoner • L. Lamar Wilson

The Rostrum

Steve Light, *Somewhat Surprisingly*

Reviews

Ann Beman on *My Life as Laura: How I Searched for Laura Ingalls Wilder and Found Myself* by Kelly Kathleen Ferguson, *Half in Love: Surviving the Legacy of Suicide* by Linda Gray Sexton • Alyse Bensel on *Marginalia for a Natural History* by Keith Taylor, *Bright Brave Phenomena* by Amanda Nadelberg • Thom Dawkins on *Clean* by Kate Northrop, *Notes to the Beloved* by Michelle Bitting, *Night of Pure Breathing* by Gerald Fleming, *A God in the House: Poets Talk About Faith* edited by Ilya Kaminsky and Katherine Towler • Mitchell L.H. Douglas on *The State of Black Poetry* • Kelly Forsythe on *On the Tracks of Wild Game* by Tomaž Šalamun, translated by Sonja Kravanja • Stephanie Barbé Hammer on *The Girl with Brown Fur* by Stacey Levine • BJ Hollars on *A House With No Roof: After My Father's Assassination, A Memoir* by Rebecca Wilson, *Fires of Our Choosing: Stories* by Eugene Cross, *Half in Shade: Family, Photography, and Fate* by Judith Kitchen • Evan Karp on *Almost Never* by Daniel Sada • Pedro Ponce on *The Luminist* by David Rocklin • Joe Ponepinto on *Art from Art* edited by Stephen Soucy, *Chicago Stories* by Michael Czyżniejewski, *A Very Minor Prophet* by James Bernard Frost, *Kino* by Jürgen Fauth

Awards

**A Room of Her Own Foundation Orlando Awards**

Nonfiction: Flynn Berry, "Surfing"

Short Fiction: Karin C. Davidson, "The Geography of First Kisses"

Flash Fiction: Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock, "The Smell of Other People's Houses"

Poetry: Megan Alpert, "Crafting"

**Red Hen Press Short Story Award**

Kathryn Trueblood, "Fuck You! Till Next Christmas"

**The Ruskin Art Club Poetry Award**

Kristina Erny, "Compound—Freetown, Sierra Leone"

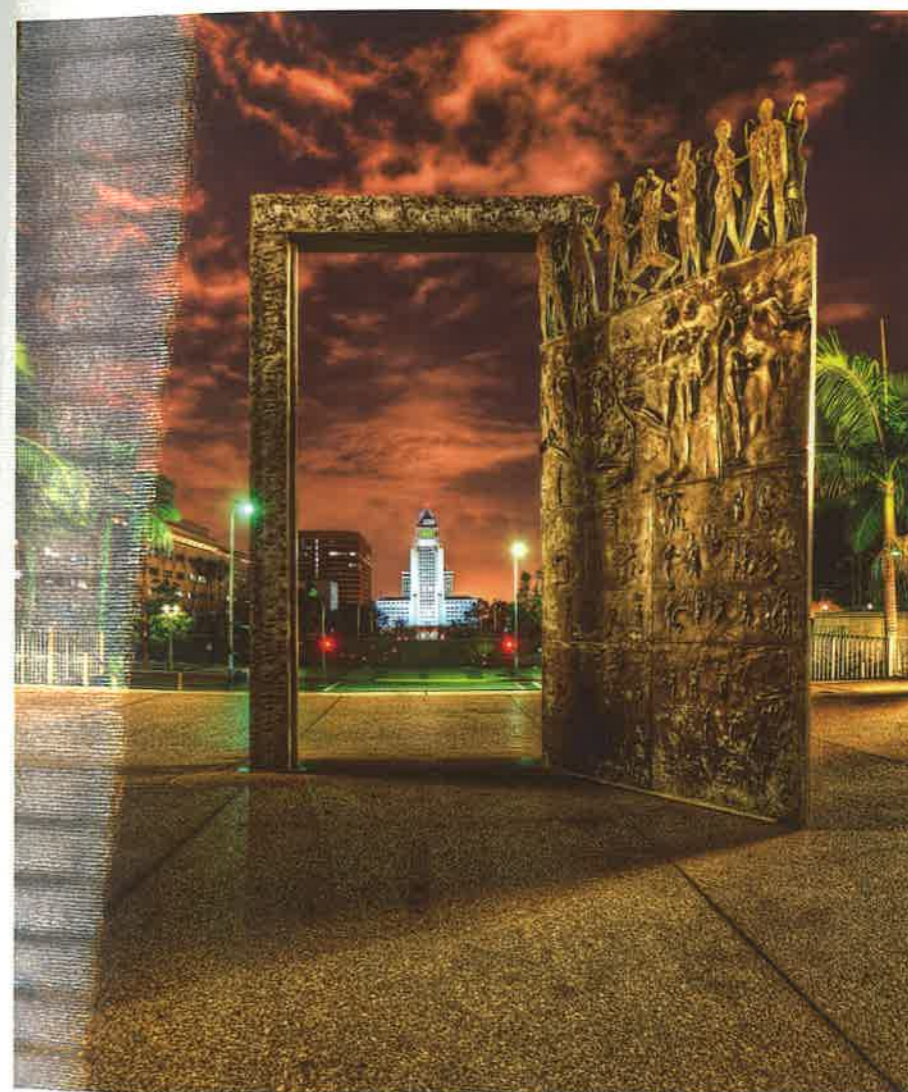
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THE  
LOS ANGELES  
REVIEW

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VOLUME 12 • FALL 2012

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Compound—Freetown, Sierra Leone

I. Fire

Fay-YA! Not the same  
as normal noise. Des-  
perate. Distant

side, flames

reach so high, so  
bright

dark. against the almost  
the other So close to all  
houses.

Stand & watch. Stand &  
watch. Do what. What can we do? Stand &

*tink dem*  
wet thoughts *fo fia, wi*  
*na di next os go bon.*

*Di lili sofa we wi de sofa fo dis shot tem go mek wi get blesin en ona. . . en di blesin en ona  
go pas di sofa we wi sofa naw, fawe. Seken Leta Fo Korint 4:17*

Our suffering is small. It lasts only for a short time. But it is earning for  
us a glory that will last forever. It is greater than all our troubles.

*Speak,*

Paraclete,

*yu*

*na*

*di*

*wan*

who *yeri*

*di* cry.

You *di* only *wan*

*abul*

*ansa.*

re percussive ditch in wrists of piles piles  
for infused water mile fused blood water  
bottom water bloody percussion re mind  
land mountain sand threes trees the curve  
itself no stand why its stains red handed  
out straightly cut *dem* out like primary  
school stars accomplishment of  
accomplices all drawn & strung up there  
give them back bend would pot boils left  
uncovered bench under lay machete back  
gently scoop *fufu yu* hand clean well lick  
the fingers the back bitter of nails *dem* red  
human arms

II. *Wi Cal Wi Paraclete*

Small watch after clouds  
break. A light heat hour your

heavy, heavy heart

tied round.

Under-cut & sore.

You answer not, my heart,  
my heat. My light, while

everywhere is breaking.

& we somehow are still here.

& where are  
you?

You—

*wi de nid yu.*

Puncture bleak, this old hour  
& you have turned  
your self — your back —  
away.

Ours

is left strung up, *wit wi hip wi lip*  
& still we ask—

Can  
you hear  
*wi*  
when  
we speak?

### III. Compound, home

Compound as box  
with one side missing.  
Back open to the  
fields.

Greens, roots, grasses  
for eating. Shared. Ditch

& gully. Trash &  
junction. People  
together. Shoulder  
to shoulder shacks, &

other slope of the  
valley as light flails  
against its grain.  
We

live in the crook of  
the valley. Homes come  
all the way down  
to the valley's hinge.

Line to hang dry, hens  
& a cock  
sleep outside the door.

There is a spring in  
the corner where our  
water bubbles out.  
A pipe to guide it,  
buckets to keep it.

We cannot drink this.

### IV. Fatmata (F.A), baby

F.A, with your thick  
feet.

You eat at all  
doors. O, how

you screamed when you first

bottle the guitar the  
stapler the staples  
made seven ways & he  
will always draw them  
in sevens story made  
up those three letter  
columns grow longer  
under tip & sleep the  
rat cat nap tap every  
bundle on his back  
lifted creaks out that  
compound makes such  
a grey cage barbed  
wire take the long  
spoon to stir *casada*  
boy the boil *gon* burn

saw us,

let your mouth  
open wide to sing

this old valley song.

*V. Aunt*

She sharpens the knife on the concrete  
step.

She slices onions  
in the palm of her  
hand.

We don't try this.

Threshold passed over,

cooked on. The blade clean, careful hands.

however much trying dies dark morning  
always belly forth the rooster all way  
sings is song Krio Mami always dry  
*lappa* on the line always pinch cigarettes  
off before the burn ends sells again from  
glass jar squats always always in the  
shade tell Ami (big Ami) about the day  
Ami comes home the eggs half  
hardboiled half raw she brings all the  
money back she always bring the money  
back

BRIAN OLIU

**Friday the 13th**

I am going to scare you like you've never been scared before. This is not a letter home. This is not me telling you that there are rocks here, fire. This is not an explanation of why this world is dark, why I can't hear you when you call my name after the pills have been counted and placed into boxes, into cylinders the color of a dying pumpkin, of a shrimp dropped in oil. This is not a union. This is not the bringing together of what was once a star and is now a statue that moves when the light hits it, about life, about things bigger, faster. This has nothing to do with any of this: of a loaf of bread, of the woman behind the counter who rolls pennies, about the woman with no legs, about the woman with one eye. It has nothing to do with any of this. It is about this: it is about yesterday. Yesterday, I walked home, I did this, I did another thing, I am sparing you the details, I will spare you the details. You and I know that I always tell you the details: me sitting on the edge of a bed with blue sheets telling you the plot of a film I had seen without you, stopping and restarting—I would forget to tell you about the mother, the trees that would talk, the fat kid that made us laugh, the game they lost, the wolves that chased. You could have seen it for yourself—you would not need me to be your eyes, to shove kernel after kernel into my mouth by the handful. I should tell you that this is not what I wanted to see—I should never look at these things: I would laugh at the boy who could not tell a lie, smile when the grown-ups would fall for his tricks. I have never been that clever. This is not a letter telling you about when I would stick a suction cup arrow in my mouth, about how I loved the pull on the back of my teeth, about how it caught the back of my throat once, how it looked like the perfect shot: mouth open, face split open like an orange—the marksman would have applauded—no need for a pen knife through a throat while sleeping, no need for any of that.

Afternoons, we would go to the store: we would start at the right and work our way left—I would put an onion in a plastic bag, I would put a nickel into a tin box for a piece of caramel. I would never take more than one. I would smooth the sugar over my tongue. I could not talk. This is what happens: an endless list of horrible things. At the end, at the right, we would wait and I would read descriptions of worlds created, creatures that I had never seen—there would be pictures of fear in motion, never more than two—women screaming, men with hands