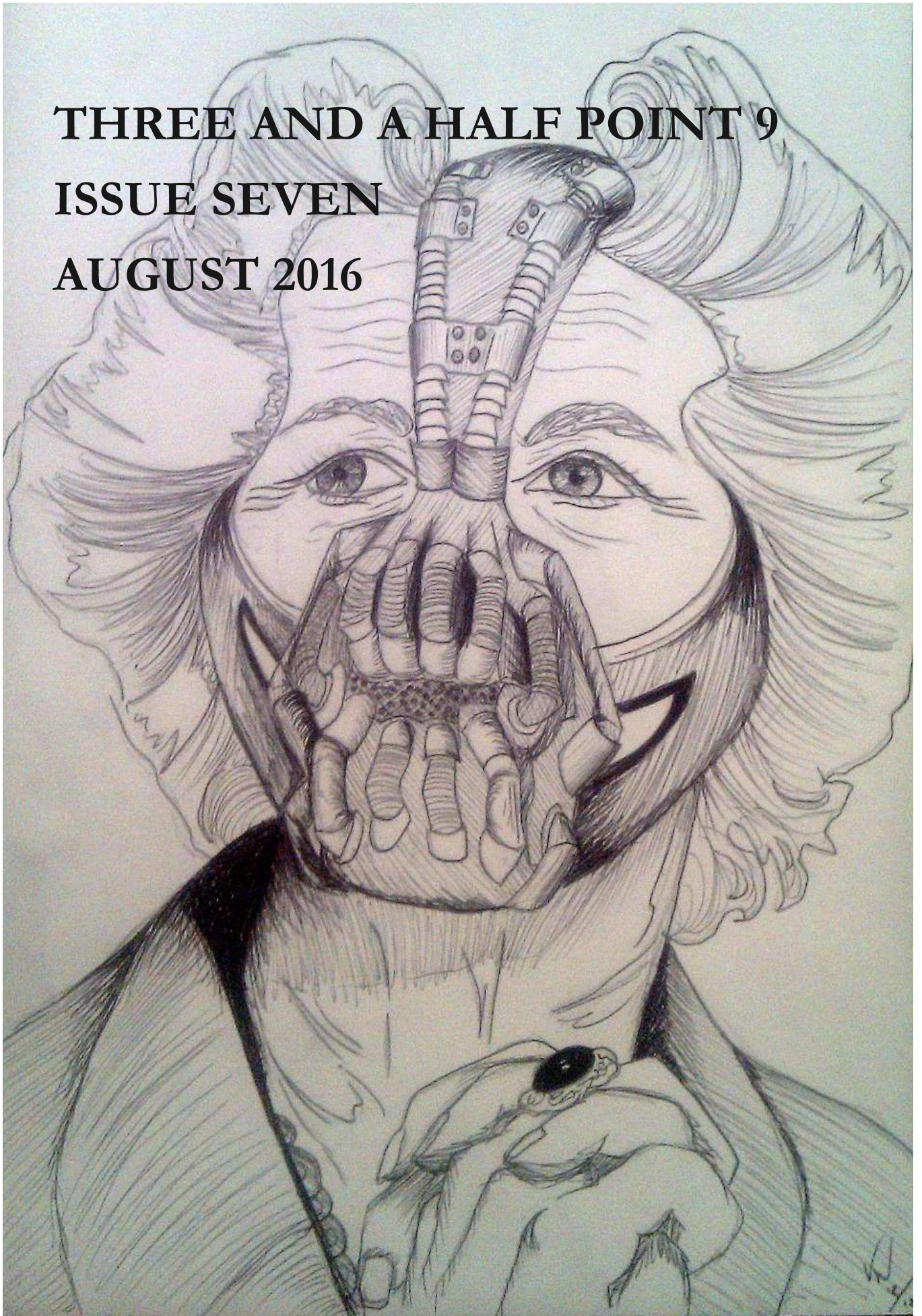


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BERCY, THAT

Sea Sharp

And just like that it was raining
the platform leaking when he pointed
to the soggy spots to the buckets
to the slip hazard signs

and said mindlessly as if just to
himself while digging for his ticket
they're cleaning off the blood
just like that he said someone
has been cleaning off that blood
and that is what he said as the swollen
knuckles of that station began cracking
and from the balcony nearly above the blurring tracks
i could see the outline of some troubled mama's
sleeping boy and i wondered how long
he had been down there rusting away
into the floor just like that

First minutes in Ukraine

Carl Boon

In minutes, the smells of enamel
and boiling pork penetrate your skin.
You've put your Beatles records
on the shelf and watch the street
below. Girls in print dresses,
soldiers with gold teeth
ambling with newspapers
toward the cinema. Mercy
here's suspicious: what counts
is what you can grab: the last peach
at the Morskaya Bazaar,
a Snickers bar, a bottle of Heineken
that wasn't available yesterday.

Across the hall, Masha chops onions
for *borscht* while Sasha dozes
with a bottle of *samagon*
between his legs. Every smell
outlasts the next. The woman
who claims to love you
has arranged your things
while you were at the window
imagining the old flag, the flag
the old folks say is better, which is why
Sasha's found nostalgia
in his black-and-white TV,
the doilies on the arm-rests
of the sofa. You—because the flight
was arduous—run cool water
in the bathroom for a shower
and find the soap unusual.

Lakeland

Penny Sharman

I've never climbed a fell but can see them from car windows,
Slight side, Scafell, Mickledore, even the nipple of south summit
appearing from cloud. I've driven over Hardknott, Honister,
Wrynose and Whinlatter, touched the Bowder stones magic
and walked round Castlerigg's circle.

I've imagined Roman soldiers freezing their balls
on these mountains, as I shiver on the narrow passes
not knowing what to do when meeting another car,
freezing my quim rigid in the driver's seat.

I've visited the water at Conniston, Derwent, Ennerdale
and sweet-sweet Buttermere, but it's the scree at Wast Water,
the shadow and rain that niggles this older brain with thoughts
of abseiling or sky diving, crashing down through all the shit
and rubble to find one piece of clear quartz or a nugget of fool's gold,
knowing how it sparkles, a light bulb in a cooling heart.

fools and the art of my simulated unhappiness

Sophia Trzcinski

i liked thinking about being drunk

with an excuse to talk about philosophy

with my friends all falling somewhere along the

electoral college spectrum I think

these butterflies are instead closepins around my aorta adrenaline drowning my chambers

to have to use this peanut butter tongue and

quotes from buddha and that scientologist anti-folk singer

i don't think they like me like i don't like them

i think it would be easier to vom vom to dripping salmonella found feathers or bubblegum
nicotine and his fingers sculpting mine with bass on our speakers and acid on our tongues

with l.e.d. eyes don't let me forget that i could walk to your house but i wont

you'd probably mistake me for a deer not a dear and bang bang!

send me back to boring birth where I will bodhisattva and krishna my way through puberty
all over again

with lights of hokuasi's twilight princess and my not so repressed sexual frustration let me
get high on dramamine and your bubble gum nicotine with bom bom bom bomb

i dream about our aerial view with bruises on our arms and will grayson grayson giving us
fore-somes till we die

pity me

Back before gas station maps and iron lungs and celebrating breathing through our glued Popsicle stick-straws. I had never been anything more than the derivative of *asshole* and *slut* like brad and janet

When all I wanted were tented pants or pierced nipples or boney fingers and the only real things I felt were his wood traveling up my large intestine and his breath misting my already crumbling judgment

Before he started calling me faggot to come before “Dirty fucking slut, you sick faggot suck me harder,” before airplane bathrooms were our coffee shops and we used newspapers and shopping recites to plug up our holes

I don't lie very often but when I do I do it very well, either on my back or my stomach cramming twenty-year-old wise-ass Hermann Hesse into my mouth, singing sweet major chords of wasted reincarnations. Before I decided that zen buddism was the answer to all of my sexual frustration

Before I started writing poetry in exchange for more pulsing dicks which I collect like concrete minarets around my heart

Before I learned about Sophocles and the pale Doryphorus and rippling Kores

Before I lit that Christmas tree on fire singing about police car bombs and got a nice big whiff of pure stinking Death

temple body

That was before I let you kiss my ass in army surplus jackets in those supposed magnums in black on white on the cover of my bedframe

Before nasa decided that its one role now was to keep my grapejuice from bloodying my rug before i started wearing dreadlocks and deciding what kind of a person i wanted to be

i don't value honesty is what i told you because i don't regularly pray to it and its obvious that i find selfishness a fetish because you get high off of those late night phone calls which never end up becoming anything more than third degree electrical burns on my ear lobes

—the ones you told me you would help stretch remember before blue neighborhood and your kid incinerator friends and their jazz revival with all those kitty kat capitalists—

i miss painting fences with our mistakes and smoking out our stupidity with carpet bombs and drugs

Landscape of Toxic Ferns

Mary Maroste

The very first shape I made was the shape
of the great barrier reef. Coral cut my foot,
handfuls of marbles spilled into my open wound.

One was an egg, the egg of a bright green bug.

The clinic didn't treat bugs.

Was anything saved? asked the toad in a blue

coat with gold buttons.

A red wagon, a snowball, chapped lips

& the memory; rain puddles covered in dust.

The landscape was repopulated with more toxic ferns.

This is a story about living with defeat.

3 of 5 posters on my wall were wet,

I was a bad influence for the gerbils at the pet store.

Each of my scars received a name &

they used their names against me.

I wasn't the only one using my toothbrush,

man slime, red wine, foam.

The toad wasn't sure which was the prayer.

In my presence

Lana Bella

in my presence,
you see plainly the unraveling edges
of your absence,
you see it in the neon-lit hallway
and leafy conduits
mute courtyard
that leads you out to the evening stars
you feel it on the pavement
that your feet pummel over
like how my body lays sleeping
among the aftershocks
where you reach down to clutch my head,
holding me close
for too soon I'll wake and forget
the sounds of memory
grounded under your steps

Contributors

Sea Sharp is an American poet of color who immigrated to England in 2012. Sharp practices Veganism, Feminism, The Hip Hop Declaration of Peace and other movements that promote compassion. Sharp is a Pushcart Prize nominee, winner of the Prairie Seed Poetry Prize 2015/16 (Ice Cube Press), as well as a Kansas State University graduate with qualifications in Creative Writing, Literature, Theatre, and Women's Studies. <http://www.seathepoet.com/>

Carl Boon lives and works in Istanbul, Turkey. Recent or forthcoming poems appear in *Posit*, *The Tulane Review*, *Blast Furnace*, *JuxtaProse*, *The Blue Bonnet Review*, and many other magazines.

Penny Sharman has been writing poetry for over 15 years, she is an artist and photographer and therapist. She has had work published in various magazines and anthologies. She is currently studying for her MA in Poetry at Edge Hill.

Sophia Trzcinski is a sixteen-year-old Harley sophomore. She likes books and men and knowing things that others don't. She hopes to attend NYU in the year 2018.

Mary Maroste has previously been published in the Laureate and is living in Kalamazoo studying creative writing at Western Michigan University.

Lana Bella, a Pushcart nominee has a diverse work of poetry and fiction published and forthcoming with over 130 journals, including a chapbook with Crisis Chronicles Press (spring 2016), Ann Arbor Review, Chiron Review, Coe Review, Harbinger Asylum, Literary Orphans, Poetry Salzburg Review, Poetry Quarterly, QLRS (Singapore), Sein Und Werden (UK), White Rabbit (Chile) and elsewhere, among others. Lana divides her time between the US and the coastal town of Nha Trang, Vietnam, where she is a wife of a talking-wonder novelist, and a mom of two far-too-clever frolicsome imps.