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Strange Little Vehicles

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STRANGE LITTLE VEHICLES

by

Andrew Merezicky

Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing
Ohio Northern University
2010

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

Department of English
College of Liberal Arts
The Graduate College

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THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the thesis prepared under our supervision by

Andrew Mercicky

entitled

Strange Little Vehicles

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Department of English

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Dean of the Graduate College

May 2013

ABSTRACT

Strange Little Vehicles

by

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It isn't an exploration in or an experiment regarding. It is a praxis, as a commute is the opposite of an adventure. *As le chat regarde le poisson*. As when one looks at anything, it becomes strange. That is, a thing (a thought, a feeling, Gertrude Stein's "piece of coffee") once considered becomes little and different. It is the world that is large and alike. It is ultimately the similarity, the recognition of which we, who feel small and unique in the grand scheme, find terrifying. Language is always, as Lyn Hejinian wrote, social; it is a *vehicle*.

As I originally conceived the title and the language that follows it, I thought of these vehicles not unlike the general sense of the vehicles in Buddhism, as a way through or across. The undulation of the other and back, the movement which constructs for one the self. As such the poem becomes a living organ, a biological extension of the poet, like a lung filling and emptying. The vehicle, which transports as in Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," not vessels, which merely contain.

In her essay "Happily," Hejinian writes, "Are you there?/ I'm here/ Is that a *yes* or a *no*?" The reaching for exactitude causes exactitude to slip away with the intent of the question and how it's received. It becomes impossible to say. And we who write poetry know to say nothing is the same as death. Such is the distance, such is the poem.

Strange Little Vehicles is the poem I have been writing for the past three years. It is incomplete. To borrow a line from "The UNLV Graduate College: General Guidelines for Theses and Dissertations," it is a "partial fulfillment of." The poem, or at least this part of the poem which I am submitting for approval, is subdivided by the asterisk symbol both as demarcation and as the essence of a line (not repetitive) of poetry. Rather than Henry James' stream of consciousness, which has for some time been regarded as a poor analogy (first by James himself), the poem proceeds in an organized manner similar to a rockslide in its rapidity and fragmentation.

This poem's orchestration includes a particular attention to the "page," in quotes, because it is an electronic page alone to which I took the compositional effort. I must refrain from commenting on the content as content is traditionally understood. From where the poem begins, or where I intended it to go, does not to me seem as important or relevant as where it is, namely its context and the reader's context, over which I have little to no influence. I will say that my concern for the poem is in its sustenance. Thinking of such monolithic works as Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Louis Zukofsky's *A*, I was primarily concerned with how to keep going. As George Oppen put it, "We are committed to the problem we found, the problem we were born into—."

Lastly, I am fascinated with the sounds of words next to words, the "music" of the written word in the mind's ear as well as when spoken and its inherent illumination as a poetry which precedes authority. That is, I believe in the poem which is coming into being, sometimes, at its best, at the direction of its own sound.

I want to give something for the eye to do as well as the ear. The mind makes its own way.

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Strange Little Vehicles

ed	if could
place,	n
your	exsd
<i>ceaux</i>	

—all written near
the slender pistiled
Tao-sop

an orchid—

*

and the meat truck for the morning
delivered lighted
upon the brick
a spack of pigeon shit drops
the street corner
white plop

inch forward
patient battallion
cut stone and sculpted cornices
a cone in three points
on the dragon's back
I count them
call them by their dateless reach

*

I woke up drunk
the square whimpering behind
 is a weightless throb crown
when I think I need to be in
the street again
 in three

four hours
—quiet —lunch —out

 on the ash balcony
avenues gaunt red inflamed
 in force all against
all together
how my noticer bulges
in the wind

bed
sí
sí, la cama is

our fortune
 (buenos días,
España

an open landscape cooperates
with its own interrogation
 / in the summer
in Plaça del Sol
|||||||in spring
 a woman's careful
hen wing sky — Over

her neckline slackened in
the dark BLUE
all one piece

dusk the tower
 bull's horns
there in pink
 is a hound's tower

he howls

and I hear him

*

in Picasso's "La Vie" (I searched

.....:"a".....>>>>>

for a

way

thru— // out)

in the ragged couple

in artifice and wine

in shade

I saw the street

Travessera de Gracia

flooded by

los bomberos blind loitering

spending it for the cameras

beneath the afternoon

(in her small mews)

my screen arranging

postcards for the guidebook

another another

another plot

a tombstone bent

fucked

into its collectible self

the cloven street

one thinks of *charms*

a new impetus for a brutal golden vision

whispers the miniature beat nerd

in my brain

I'll never be dead

everyone else will die

I never

ever will

*

the loafer watches lacerable
peaks
hugs his knees

the sanctifying towers —
hike the sail white ghosts!
to see down latitude!
what they see . . .

we are spared*
given our own soiled departures

circumstances that bring us to
break bread here

<realizing loss

<cool rain

make room>
make do>

* A glyph resembling a star; three in a triangle formation is called an asterism, not to be confused with celestial asterisms, one of the most ancient navigational tools; in computer programming, it serves as a universal selector; wildcard denotation; footnotes (esp. advertising); repetition; multiplication; censoring a text as in 'F**k'; to avoid profanation, especially in some Jewish and Christian traditions using 'G*d'; signifying a breakage; calling attention to an omission; typographical bullets to indicate list items; when wrapping, to add emphasis; in generativist linguistics, an asterisk in front of a word or phrase means that the word or phrase is ungrammatical; the sustain pedal lifted; zero; in superscript it might signify some property at sonic speed; to mark corrections according to unofficial sms conventions; a flower.

*

[s] does a tiny pummelling
ratee-ratwee

jokey lizards kick out mini slop
sixteen puckered feet make sixteen
inaudible slaps

soppy moppy in godlight flow
with her entrails un-
tickled
a plan to reach outer Mojave!
scimitars and notebooks (of course.)

noon-staled trace rolling
tobacco pasted to the small hollowed
bootsole

de dónde
in pointillist plaza

(no small labor goes unnoticed
(why not arcane hisser

all the cutlery in the kitchen
soaking in Coca Cola pitchers

*

I'll get
 into vino tinto
 dance the dizzy-ack
in white & black kerisamat
everything-O
Oh so-goddam-rusted

*come be a poet under the tree with me
we'll wrestle and break holds*

fat chance daddy-O
 grapple
 and rip collars
here for flesh
on
the
ground

 the eye of the old stone master
clock water flowing between a saint
's feet
the stoop under the bitch
winded beside her
red plastic bowl

give me that
one
and one
 waiting for a
Good Dog

*

heh .
that never hurts

without regard their
underground coats

they they they

they are there

a joy to amble
between the peeking light
to twist my chest left and

tu nombre tu nombre
little bulbs
too easy is

uhhh ehh errr
sooo...

attending pause
mediating
foreplay for

dummies purest
rupture impanding
feathers
smokey fibrous electric celebrations stir

one might feel
asleep at the wheel

*

Drug abuse

Resistance

Education

fear dying

are dead

—Your friends at the APA

*

and one

who

a thousand white-blazed
windows couldn't wake

ah let her *dream, cabrón*

let her be

I wake her

anyway—the first thing I ever saw
had to be

tres estrellas

in a box to light the way

*

now the elderly
women doubled

 leaning out their windows
waving sheets hollaring
 sí el moto. no?
[something something]
 policía

the ambulance
the wailing bead
 strung across the city's
 praying lap

*

the fat girl
 pulls her skirt
her xylophone
thighs against
the greenlit taxi gust

where does she play
that thing

*

push it back a day
lay it down
I woke up too
late to find
 food

*

water packed
harder than concrete
a riverbed stuffed
with boulders

*

the end
of living high
and cheaply

the words were
emptied already

the bottle
spilt out in

wood floors faded by
and by foot traffic
coverless paperbacks
piled in the corner

now everything was
only golden
inside

*

what was that

o

I thought.
I heard.

...

*

the oracles even
have bouncers
and keep a line

no blessing is a blessing
how it looks in the mind

bright
singular
intention

bodies all—

precise preposition
for laboring golden arch

looking up into rain
useless and
to keep it
that way

*

birds ripping thru
the busted streets with
wind tunnel suits

at the sill she sits
painting her toenails

one at a time
the birds brain
themselves in little
batches on the brick

a hundred softballs
swept off a roof

the residual slop
beer and piss and cigarette froth
(after the morning
streets are swept

she daydreams
about the bare wood studio

what to do
with all the bodies

her mind is a muck
a glass of water
a book
dishes stack themselves

without hearing
a single note

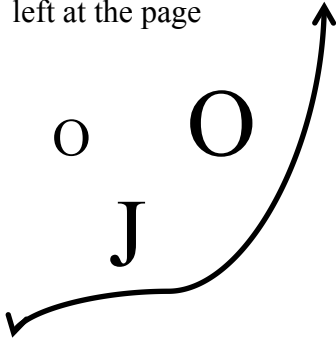
the humming collection
alternatives come in fits
and her passenger wakes

*I have to tell you
something
[]*

you can't get mad

*

right eye
thru the window
left at the page



so what
if I don't
want more
than this

[]

*

becoming
not waiting
claiming
not stealing

the feeling
upon listening
of having
said it first be-
longing to
no
one

I have
faith had I
ever any [f]

*

a green pigeon tucks
her breast against /
squat and toes her shit

on the cereal box buildings
with breathing holes
the good and the

bad ledges
dreams in which
choking on Kraft macaroni

what a pigeon must
(((((((by telemetric mind)))))))
of a little crust

*

I came home
 and found it done
with broken feet
bleeding back
licked thru the bars
 on the windows
to fall asleep on the couch

all this time

I walked with my hand
a visor to the sun

more to the point
store to store
for cava and bread

here

replying to emails
a week after receiving

two more lines
to top it off

my father my lord—just
stay out of my way

*

a cave exposed
in the sun
boredom

shadows that
wind and pivot
about a forest

coal hunks
in an X-mas pail

callolillies on
the porch
need watering

a yank at the dollar
in America
many benches
many friends

gymnasiums
galleries (d'art)
guitar tabs

. . .

cleaned by mouth
the slums not
by deliberate sanitation

yellow dandelion
rub it on palms
foreheads

*

many labor and take
centuries to complete

near the butchers
dressed like nurses
in mystic garb

I admire the private
publication of these

to clean the cigarette
butts out of the sill
off the third floor
balcony in the blue
and green streets

thick pencil sketches
brushing of finger backs
the floor smudged
particles descend-
ents

bits pressing with
a bandit mass
down on my chest /
I need to get up

the chamber splatter
a stranger's echo in my shower

spinning clay plates
in full articulation

and I in the half-breath
invisible and toss
in the warm sun

a man who doesn't see
how he is wasting my time
and so keeps talking
in his own theater

*

fly on the glass
tilts the hand
black bulb splattering

desiring my furthest self
which no longer belongs to me

a habit to knock on wood
a gesture to disbelief

scratching waves
sing lullabies
sing
is ritual

a tangled plumbing
muscle memory

and cross thyself
to say there are no gods
no self no soul no will no won't

when I loaf
who loafs

*

you know
it's not that color
though it is now

untended garden keep
. . . tread on me

it got that way

naturally

New York of those who are Real!
New York of the one-way glass!
New York since 1931!
New York of the Cleveland Confectioner's Son!

teach me how to irritate
to be irritated all day long

(must be humid

to conceive)...

in the sun's hot bondage

under the motoring whirr
gone out from leaf
blowers

lawn mowers

tractors and combiners

and the fly in my ear
is a digital bee

behind the lens
of an empty womb
a low hanging

green

bra
nch

Moist
and dewey

wiped off the brow
off the front of my teeth
and smeared in your palm

in humiliated disappointment
in a greatly abiding
unconditional . . .

*

a kiss on each cheek
to prove speech has a brother

birdseye faceth

*

summer collecting
egg cartons
in the midwest
isn't any better

two flights of stairs
a short leap, saalam, saalam
a technique:
extra innings

so we could record
in the basement which was
a brother's room

everyone worships
in hope to go back
where

a name
an outpost to nowhere
a holiday

a bruise from the wind

swing low,
swing low

sweet

lover

no one was
supposed
to see

*

who get nervous when
the record unnoticed

and one can't know
one as though before he was born

everyone has seen
that western

after that
a vocabulary

as Christ called it
a life vest

after that
any apocalypse
will do

*

I envy the ability to think under
water in a foreign physics
an inter-planetary

a man wants to stand
over a fine haul
so he can breathe

a pen and a cloud are
a few degrees separated
one eye is more than enough

earliest love reappears
scented with puzzled vaselines

I'm
not asking you

to
kick my teeth in

I'm
saying I hear you

I can walk to the corner
without anyone walking
to the corner with me /

I had that Zombie Dream
again

*

Wherein Satan is a white-faced hornet
and God

I see the rest is mine

the trees sip themselves
outside the late-shaded room //
you found me
 were ahead of me
 along the groove
 are being tossed

and zoom
requires a limit.

with three to a web
the flies never land

a flower in a crag
out to sea / waves
laying down
their crowns in succession

*

exhale
the planet's last pink breath

the little man in the corner
laughing is a divination
with a childhood string
thrice thrown into the shape
of a shield the counter word
for compounding *deja vus*

I struggle with the ocean
does not mean the ocean
struggles with me

in another tongue
"touches" are what keep me here

takes the shape of an open hand
in a horseshoe pit
in a bet truth is
a bedside nurse
with a forgotten face
but I know she was sweet
and I don't owe her

to be in charge
to calculate my own
tare weight

the book shelf
becomes a chemistry set
and has come from you

reaches a singularity

herald beep
the frequency we have
never not
heard and can't distinguish

all a joke
can achieve

and an empty energy
drink rolling around
the back seat

clearing spaces for new spectra
another fastest route around the track

*

— is something
one never has
to think about

anyone can
draw horns on anyone

two ends of the same
wicker fingertrap
ecstasy and
devastation

to handle any interruption

face the sky
a clearance

a stream does not
know to be savvy

or need to be
grateful
for delays

*

a team can teleport a park bench
from Austin to Moscow
and I have two pages

to the Gut
my roiling to not
notice nothing
is missing

Speak. to me re: Knowledge
v. domestication
I regret
I am interested
and doughily calibrated

peeking between the boards
in a daydream
you had no wife
were an orphanage

a bite
that came with no memory
flesh shred thin
the light was thinner

every instance I wake
to a peculiarity

then the bough breaks.
Sunrise.

*

to measure the orange
in the spring room

animal to be
here con-

spiring

beyond
20m is wild canvas

stumbling drunk
into snowfall

a vessel named
Caesura catches fire

by the body
I believe I am

*

I gave five clues
stuck on the edge of the counter

for a joy assembly

round a campfire
a handful
more to the sur-
round

Escher that you?
in unnatural light
trying to fold me flat

I'll make graffiti outta—
please someone has
to do with anything to do
—with you

every step is
a desert
to and fro

*

the stained glass choir
a living epigraph

...

a poorly-hid bait
a sorely-missed place

and the first time
someone saw me pray
that was it
the reel ran out
the people started talking
then left slowly

*

a landscape changes
the window I watch
to years

. . . come to tap my reservoir

. . .

is transparent
has many uses

. . .

the room
I found myself in
not the room
I wanted
the room
I have
to decay

a match
no matter
what direction I'm facing

*

have a smoke before
breakfast with my cat

a little white ant
who smells eggs

*

a buoy rings in a dream
and in real life
I get out of bed to clean
my room

nor do I read
my face from behind

every surface clean
and contaminated
dead and alive

*

fields frozen

underneath
a place I am in love
an anonymous priesthood

I am unequipped
and I know by not
finishing my drink
in a place that calls itself
a tavern

one more night

*

I've float
and I have sink

and when I pinch
my ears
the same white light
presses in
I feel some-
how courageous

...

I know where I am
when I hear
where the birds—

child in the edgeless light
my name again

again that I'm able
to put it outside
dominion my body

my third parent
who trusts what I see

*

once taken as I am
amounts to—

time has no *quick*

—an annihilation

one builds an epic
 in the attic another
in a cloud

: a familiar covenant

a sunflower barely
can be distinguished
from the early hour mist

*

for cataloging the various spirits
is a physical change

through the blackness strange
little vehicles make moving targets
a hand outstretched in the dark . . .

without intending

. . .

to invent names
 for new cloud formations

one of mine:
dusk proceeds greenly

. . .

the worm gone
in bits leaves a hook
wrapped in body

wrapped in a lake

and I found that the tea was good
so I drank more

*

pink wound in the sky
I found your frequency
in the western golden gap
summer has come
hung from the breast
of the clouds that hood
and are pricked
by minor cathedrals

I planned to sleep for years
in the rural sigh
in a living ghost town
and dream

a city ascended to the clouds
cloistered in gray forests

a faint whistle beyond the hill
marks the silence before I march

nowhere now
and the green-lipped earth
cool upon my neck

the sufficient sounds keep me
steady on at night drowning out
the carnal restless gadgetry

waiting for the lightless winter
to arrive new and translucent

I hear the trees exploding
from a distance a phantom
drum circle—

*

believe the birds

its imprint, its apparent weight

*

begins in winter

. . .

two bent trees form a port
in noon warmth
and I'm not weary here
 closing my eyes
 in the shade

time without direction
bendible carrot between words

I have the afternoon to
find which way
the wu went

*

this is to be animal
not to look at what is shown

are you coming

I know

the world so appetizing
no way to keep at living
in it

the nucleus is untraceably many
—tangled roots alive
—

there is always enough
time to be wayward

it is a moveable importance
—an irregular orbit—
that I know where I'm going

*

in a balanced frenzy on pew tops
the dialogue changes

when the sun
goes down

my saints never work
they do what they are supposed to
lock the door
reshelve the books

near the tea candles anticipating

*

a truck with the word *Widest*
painted askew on a metal box
will continue to be parked
where it is for the day
waking up in the midwest

to see more . . .
heh.

mine is a mine
possession
possession of the mind

*to be beautiful or to have something
to look forward to . . .*

I did
it to make
you like me,
O, I have both
your ears

the camera
let me see myself

when wonder wilts

all in bad taste
. . .

rain on
mind

*

the mess after
a peach after
peaches

little violet
boys throwing
against a pine
a bow

little boy blue
hanging
himself an ornament

splits the trunk
into different notes

let the fruit
take and eat

*

please lop
the small branch

please obscure
the long branch

please need
for mountains

*

too
much

lingering sight
forth and forth
firelight

with no account
no famish

*

. . .

palm the sticky gush
and grass

a medicine
to doze generously
oneself
in sunlight

*

an exit can be green
why pause?
can't?

spring for drawing
out no end

a seed buried in
polished un-waking
no brain
no more burials

*

why then laugh I
the pink folded flame

. . .

which flight to
drop upon
makes the man

with a small mewing
in the wall

give the ear the guess
as hard
as will it

*

I did not want the luxury
I wanted sleep
in a dark theater
across the lighted plains
my birthplace a
a single edge

dehydrated salty flesh
the human mantle
the ability to change
headings . . .
stay ahead of the weather

once the mutt has teeth
he's too big to fix
too much to suggest
too fast to grip
moving on through
fear stoked cinema

eternity is one jagged color
loping cantic dance
impossible to trace
has come as once has passed

*

above the cloud deck
God is played
by a bird on stilts

who pick the pockets
of mothers and the wicked
born in a nest of cigarettes

(in a single direction)
I'm open
a noisy stowaway
drunk on discontent

*

there is no feeling

different

I want the lyric

to perfect despising perfection

my father wants to believe
I'm not helpless
in my way

can't avoid division
of labor makes me
weak and weakness will
bring me up

a three week seminar
a dream of a new year

on my couch on Oscar's
I'm a trailing chemical wake

I peek and I am
goon
my tongue burnt white

I listen again
a strange man yells gibberish
with a french accent
from a shrinking
iron caboose you are
on the radio too
I am not the only
one left
on the yellow platform
the only one
squinting in the sun

*

background
a fur
a white noise smear
from a blue flower
creates a world

thirst on the rocks
the sea silent
and disappeared
and the channel the roar
the loose speaker wire needs

the archiving I
and I have espressos

art that lasts
carries two signatures . vandals
spread what isn't theirs

*

if in the dark
our thresholds touch
I'd rather be
sleeping
 without awareness or vision

here // now // or not at all

I don't have to
look anyone in the eye

why should I live as though
I'll live forever

stand up
quickly
my head is light
and not now / /
then—

for-

get

love love that wild
settled . myself sings
who
not it that tilts the Earth
felt in a shallow cut
Ohio lingers beneath/
on without me

softer

slower

careful I don't get
(exactly what I will)

*

up too late
to make the bed again

the book is far enough away
the signal weak
I burn matches in white air
barefoot Barcelona
reiterated what's needed

night after day / night
day around the trunk of a tree
a languish learned

how to pass young and angry
what the west coast mourns
I don't stay long enough
to believe in its haunted vegetation

where the blackbirds are // big
big birds

leaf parting leaf
has no advantage over me
a hot sip — without use

*

heading for high ground
a place without airplanes
like Enoch

the elements will not
take me directly

the light turning
the gin north blue

the ragged
approaching labors
the band plays two more
half the audience dances
in line to pee

drunk she rubs
my arm hair
the direction it doesn't grow

another line sinks
the last visible world

*

the orange bread
scent comes to me
and not to me alone

not asking of me
how long has the furnace
by the time

. . . and no longer

a man asks for change
I never have
to buy my whiskey
with cash like/

*

giving up the
pinecone switching to
water . you

always answer me
say *later*

these things come in courses
in theory in smoke

in practice I fall
too far behind
to worry

the world belongs to those
who plan the next

and those who arrive
can't stay

I read the news everyday
I know what's happened
and the temperature
in Cleveland

I am taken in by the city
you take it away

*

afternoon light stretched thin
it wasn't then
now it's cold

somewhere
people the same age
a little older are asking

who Osama bin Laden was

soon there is a website
to collect them all in one place
so the user knows
where he is at all times

[bleeds together]

*

the mountains open
and close their night curtain
as we drive under the clear

more difficult to remain
at home than to make another
and another
purpose is intertwined
a party is a temporary flower

*

change clinking drunk

magnificent pure peaks

red valley back office painting

Las Venturas I felt thee
steal my shadow underneath

heaven has a corner for you
happy heap that it is

it's always the penultimo
when the apron of the night comes off
and the long walk back home

to a place I place

to shut off
the fat commercial jet hisses
hologram people
not yet rendered

I have a street
to walk the dog in the dark
a bar with TVs
and a bar without

to my students library
is latin for wifi hotspot

I ask Gertrude Stein
to extract me from the amusement park
on top of the Stratosphere

nothing
so
perilous

everywhere on the street
no one has to
drink to throw down
but it helps

*

I bite my tongue
I lose it

it had been
thought a hoax

vague and divisible
reality. a phantom
limb falls asleep

translated from the arabic
shed thy mortal coil
is this
an accurate picture

Ovid banished from Rome 1838

do the numbers
suggest .

*

come unstructure

she asks me to sit
on her cold toes

between nuisance
and pleasure

a reduced file size
is preferable

more democratic
to take
ecstatic //
out of

what has
what ought
which knot

is similar enough
to lie alongside
and not

know

what to do

*

is there no place
safe
from this great
effort

*

very little light is
 green
is brown too

so so
 busy
not meeting people who are
in the habit of collecting names

why bee
why fly

he's like
the Ayrton Senna of

it's easy to go fast
it's easy to believe

in the next fat life

*

I'll be
 cat
that
 attacks in
 the dark

whence each word
has digital meaning
and fingers none
no more
 are calloused

*

grass is
real grass who
pinch light

what's the matter
hither header

the unseen sight
of recent memory full
and an ashless table
needs wiping off
glass . pint . warm . flat .
top it off
now that I know

galaxy sized
doll house
with a working door
bell stuck buzzing

the proselytizer left
outside in
the cool
 undodgeable spring

*thank y»»»»»». well, thank . . .
s .*

francis of sissy
to the widdle animals
it's OK
they understand //
me too! Aren't I
an animal and /
there's no talking

me
out of it

*

I know the phrase
but
why not

say belly cut

a child
likes to pretend
he has a shell

an adult
knows he is

oh my god
I've felt so many
times
 like it never happens
 to anyone ever

 if
I said it's because
he was plagued by migraines

*

I go to this bar
where everyone has a phone number
cannot be
the beginning of a poem

Charles Bukowski and John Keats
are having an argument
at the bottom of the stairs
hidden in the dark

the part
about the sloppy
corpse now .
makes sense

CB: I always tried to write
ones that didn't
make me
sound like a little bitch
when I read 'em

JK: It's hard to do
though I once knew

a boy
named Emily who bullied me
and later

tried

to kiss me

*

and catch the
face of darkness
before it's gone

Vita

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EDUCATION

M.F.A. in Creative Writing (Poetry, English Dept.)
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English 101— Composition I
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Online Teaching Environments Used

WebCT Vista
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