COLONY

vol 1 issue 1

thegorillapress

Editors' note,

We are claiming stake to our portion of the Internet. This excellent collection of poetry wrote its charter, set sail, and settled in thoughts for the gorilla press's inaugural issue, Colony. Crafted from a word, built in a scale of time, and founded in the next few pages.

Thank you to all our contributors, and

Thanks for reading,

thegorillapress

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Vessel

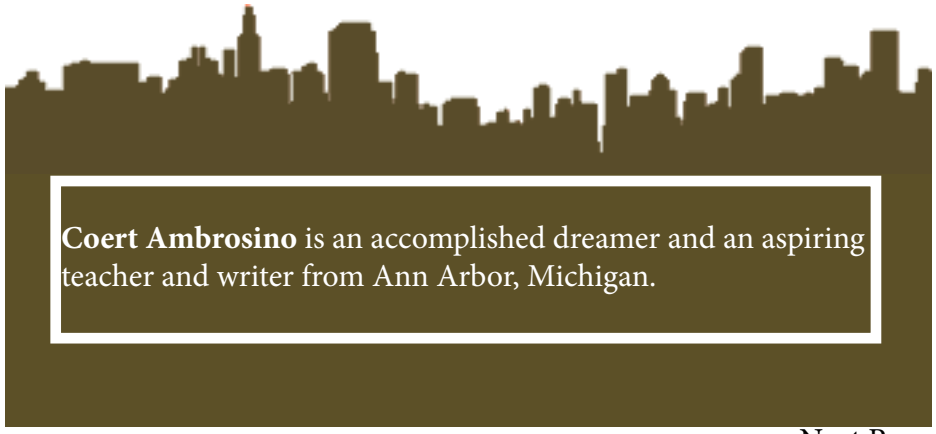
beyond the edge of the map
a diasporic settling
down at the bottom of a glass.
a trade-wind brew of
colliding particles
becomes syncopated swirl
atop the navigator's table.
sweat rolls off the rim
in wavelike rhythm,
soaking into parchment
like blood into sand.

Brand

beyond the edge of the water
a staff is planted into earthskin
deep enough for forever.
the faces are certain as steel,
regal facades unwavering,
letting the flag make the move.
underground the threads tessellate
outward into thoughts and soil,
rugged terrain becoming familiar.
the straining roots snap
in firelike rhythm,
put into proper places
like pins into butterfly stomachs.

Convert

beyond the edge of memory
the scattered pieces come together
recollecting, moving on.
past the land divided,
past divided people landed,
past tradition torn tearful,
past pyramids tiered and crumbling,
there are fingers moving like footwork,
needlepoints dancing string into cloth.
there are people swirling like current,
in drumlike rhythm,
forced forward into motion
like a knife into a back.



Coert Ambrosino is an accomplished dreamer and an aspiring teacher and writer from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Bones
the cornfields are still there,
buried below the concrete soil
and they cry out sometimes, taking the form
of a subway jazz musician or an old man meditating
at the marble fountain.

Marrow/Memory
In my most recent incarnation, I am a baby bird
Silken wings that one day will take me across the river sound.

I have read of the ancient bodies
That foam across the river's mouth,
I died there once.

The summer will come soon
And the black berries will grow from the green leaved trees.

And this nature is beauteous
And we sit on the rocks that were once thawed
From the great ages of ice.

How unnamed is this land!

There was a time when I used to watch
Him, the nails cutting wood,
Repetitious and steady,
A low drumbeat that held the house up tall.

That was magic.

I wish my father would build things again,
The way he did when we were children.

This house could never be a colony.
We'd starve before the first winter passed.
--
When the bones in the earth are crying, I lay
upon them and cry, too.

Melissa West is an independent mover/choreographer/hooper and poet based in Staten Island, New York. Originally a student of the Staten Island Ballet, Melissa attended Hunter College where she studied English and Dance. Most recently in the summer of 2010 Melissa danced for Marta Renzi at the Yard, was the production assistant to Yoshiko Chuma and the School of Hard Knocks (ACE One Project), and has read her work at the Bowery Poetry Club, the Full Cup, Bar 82, the West Tisbury Library, and published in local journals.

Hannah's dad,
my cousin's father,
calls the place where he lives
  a suburb
just outside of Jerusalem

I ask her what
she calls it

            settlement
      village
                occupied territory?

euphemisms and borders
erase and rearrange
lines of blood

a name gives life
sound and breath to newborn flesh
but it can kill too
  Israel does   both

Hannah does not
        know silence
she is song and hand-raised and blonde
like America

but her hair curls thick
like America, she
is contradiction
  she is blue eyes
big nose, rough lips
she is quick tears and harsh tongue
she will tell you when you fuck up

Israel, are you listening?

your daughter,
my cousin,
grew up in my dining room
every Friday night she sang
over candle and wine and bread
the only Goldman who
could carry a tune

can you hear her prayer?

her parents divided across ocean
America and Israel
she loves you both
loves your jazz and your falafel
your Broadway and your kibbutz
the idealism of your youth

she wishes you still had it
that you could be caring partners
honest enough to ask

  who has the right of naming?

what mother baptized
this child Tel Aviv
and that one Ramallah?

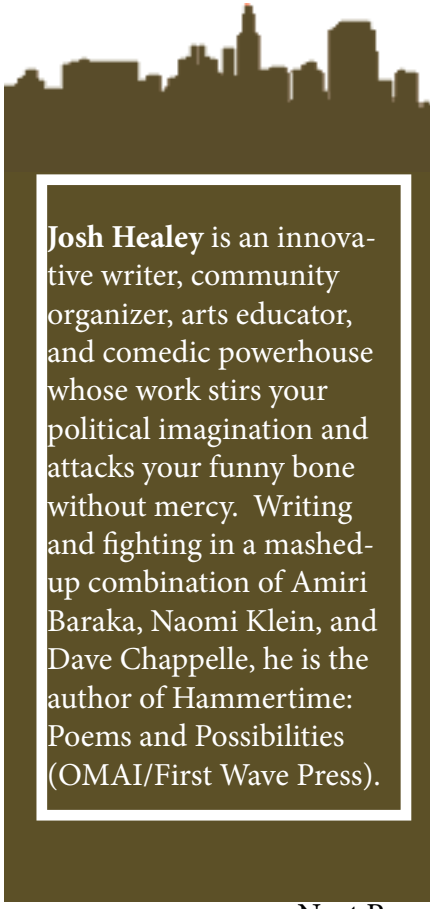
my aunt's daughter,
Channah, meaning favored one,
walks Northwest DC unafraid
of stray bullets or police badges

but two school vacations ago
she was with her father
when Israel evacuated Gaza
she feared rockets raining down
on his desert town, leaving puddles
of silent bodies amongst the sand

I ask her,
            What do you call this land?

Hannah looks up
with eyes blue
like the rain
like the Potomac
and the Galilee
like her half-brothers
Yochai, Bar, and Nehorai
she tells me

  I call it the place
  where my family lives.



Josh Healey is an innovative writer, community organizer, arts educator, and comedic powerhouse whose work stirs your political imagination and attacks your funny bone without mercy. Writing and fighting in a mashed-up combination of Amiri Baraka, Naomi Klein, and Dave Chappelle, he is the author of Hammertime: Poems and Possibilities (OMAI/First Wave Press).

I.
The day after She dies is, frankly,
the saddest fucking day in a long time
even for those of us
who didn't like her much

and especially for her husband
who decides to come to work
instead of stay alone at home
where there is no escape.

Nobody can look at him in the eye,
he is such a wreck. He drinks
Mountain Dew and pretends
to read.

Knowing full well that he can't read
we offer our condolences
with one armed hugs. There is
work to be done.

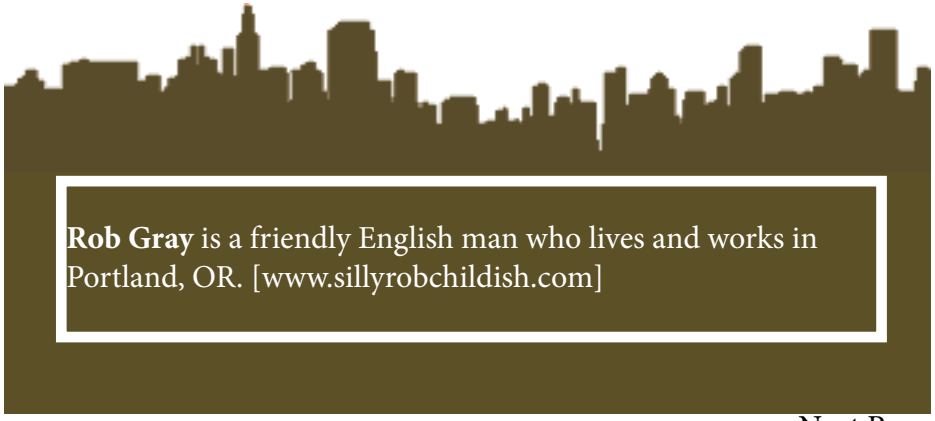
II.
The funeral is Catholic.
The stained glass saints are crying.
The dogs are barking.
Police sirens are singing.

Testimonials offer glorified memories
where perhaps shame
would be more honest,
but what for?

For example, nobody mentions
fried chicken
or how damn rude
she could be at times.

They remember her belly laugh
and stubborn goodness.
The voice of the priest floats
out the front door

and eventually we all follow
his words back to our cars
and back to the places where
there is still work to be done.



Rob Gray is a friendly English man who lives and works in Portland, OR. [www.sillyrobchildish.com]

I know a street that is
empty.
Where your favorite films
will be projected onto the sides of buildings
and you can brew your own coffee
in an abandoned Starbucks
until everything runs out.
And there is no more coffee
or art
or even squirrels
and the same scenes play over again:
A rise, a fall, contemplation—a
baffled laughter
at all that has been lost.
And the whole neighborhood
will try to heal its own illness
and forget its own past
and I will sit in the sun
dreaming of babies
sipping my damn coffee
watching you work so hard
to start again.

Rebecca Jablonsky earned a Master's degree in something important at NYU. She dances, makes music, and writes poetry to keep herself from doing other things that really aren't that fun to do.

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