

Neon

A Journal of Brilliant Things
www.neonmagazine.co.uk
neonmagazine@ymail.com

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Three Poems

Rachelle Taylor

Death On The Highway

When they find my body,
blood-covered with liver missing, I hope
my skirt is still down over my plain
cotton underwear, and that my legs
aren't splayed in an unladylike fashion.

The fear of dying in a car accident
has been with me since my father
secreted me away to Georgia
in the sleeper of his eighteen-wheeler
when I was three years old.
My mother and I peeked out through
the leather curtains at the cars,
a hundred miles below us,
and with my father's voice booming
on the CB radio, I realized the prospect
of being crushed in one of those metal cockroaches.
My body would curl around the steering column
while my legs were tucked under the seat
and with a screech like the devil's own crow
coming to peck my soul apart
the roof would fall to hold me there.
My final shape would be that of a snail's shell,
of a galaxy.

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Driving behind trucks, I imagine I am behind my father and how one tap of his brakes might end us both, how closed-in metal spaces encourage my old stutter. The sand in Georgia was white that year – on the beach, the cars finally left us alone.



Love In The Mode Of Van Gogh

I couldn't think of how to tell you,
so I cut off my ear
and wrapped it up in white tissue paper
and mailed it to your house
in the country.

I'd like to think
the look on your face was one of pleasant surprise,
that as you set the mail down
in front of your sliced-apple lunch,
the stamp I chose —
Marilyn Monroe
with one delicate hand poised
over her breast —
coaxed a smile from your lips,
or that the ribbon tied around the package
tickled your fingers as it slid between them.

I'd like to think that just before you touched
my decaying flesh you hummed
along with radio, tapping your bare foot
to a beat I would never hear again.

Pronouns For My Sister

We—the plural "we"—we wonder
what God was thinking, when He made it
so that we don't feel the cut until we see it,
open, black, and emptying our entire volume of blood on the
ground.

How our conjoinment ends, that is another question
altogether.

The surgeon—God the surgeon,
or Gautama Buddha, if you prefer, the surgeon Vishnu—
the surgeon removed the flesh and put in a seam,
cross-cross-stitching our names into our sides
lest our most vital organs fall out.

Our bodies do not move as easily now,
but we don't look down to see the wound.

We—awkward mannequins we—move toward foreign cities,
we—dry, bloodless we—ache and mumble pleas for
morphine,

we—fumbling seamstresses we—sew new lines
between tissues that have been cut in half.

I—the singular I, the I without—I will not look at the scar
where you used to live.



Nicolette Westfall

Three Poems

Sergio Ortiz

No More Secrets

You noticed the sugar
granulating on my skin
and brought over the
future divorce settlement,
your girlfriend.
I got a new umbrella,
told you I wasn't going to fall.

We were close to the ground,
in case of an earthquake,
but you had to ruin it.
There was no need to rip out
the plumbing to get
at the salt in water.

Now we are friends,
that's what you wanted.
My numbers don't add up to three.

You took a shower and left.
"Acuérdate de Acapulco,
Maria bonita Maria del Alma"
I drove by the pub.
Your car was unlocked.
It was cold, I knew where
you kept extra matches.

The Breath Of Fresh Roses

This is not about miracles.
It's about the boarding house
and a can of corn beef,
warm rain and trying to resuscitate
suicides at a spiritualist session.
This is about riding a monocycle in traffic
and staging happenings
wearing clothes for Green Peace.
It's not about global warming.
It's about fighting to get certified
as a sign language instructor for plants.
And getting National Security to stop
monitoring steel bands.
We're having a rally next Friday.
It's about the breath
of fresh roses in our tombs.



The Interview

I stopped pushing salvation
on inner city streets after the funeral.
Maples lining the road home took me to the kimono
and the baby, anniversary gifts from Tent.
Rubin changed clothes as soon as we got home
from Sunday school: toreror, mariachi, prime ballerina.
It was difficult to keep a straight face in the middle
of an argument with a little cross-dresser playing
in front of you. The beginning of autumn, that's when he
started
collecting the feathers. We found the first one outside
a Mud Wrestling Bar & Grill. It had the Lords Prayer
written on the barbs.
Soon enough, they were coming from all over the world.
He loved to collect them.
Close, Tent was very close to his son.
Closer than the rope he used.
He couldn't take the impact of his passing.
I need to look in the mirror,
put on the kimono, cover my arms with the red
yellow leaves of the sash, and hide the teeth marks.

Three Poems

Howie Good

Lost Jacket Blues

The last time I saw it
it was stepping off

the curb between
two parked cars

in Cleveland,
its pockets empty

but for her hands,

its top button loose
and dangling

like the head
of a hanged Nazi,

though others swear
they've since

seen it from behind
and in the somber

company of rain,
notwithstanding which

I miss it, sometimes.

Sins Of The Father

How can I drink so much
and not be numb

or singing

morose but clear
like the ding

when you drop a coin
into the cigarette vending machine

there's sleep
pouring from my sleeve

instead
and without my consent

just because
I couldn't find the switch

for the lamp
the children either

small and exhausted
making their beds somewhere

under the tangled trees
of the untended orchard



An Apology To His Muse

Sorry for describing to strangers
the dazzling pink tips of your breasts,

and sorry for the despondent pawnshop
to which I frequently retreat
with another piece of our wedding silver

and for afterward buying the brown pills
that look like .22 longs when I'd said I wouldn't,

and sorry for the police cars howling down
our street as if you were my hostage
and there were a poem, simple but sincere,

pressed like a knife brightly against your throat.

A Mark From Virginia Woolf's Wall

Louise Norlie



First you notice the mark on the wall and then you are suspicious that it is moving; yet it moves too slowly to measure, and you think it has stained-glass eyes and furry feelers and a thousand legs, or else is a hole bored by a modest mouse; you decide to chase it / crush it but you are so dizzy you can hardly stand; meanwhile the spot / dot bleeds black ink and the white wall spins like a cartoon you saw in childhood where the character receives a bump on the head

and sees stars; now the mark on the wall has become the calm eye of a hurricane swirling in the Atlantic; the weatherman is blinking from the rain and wind that lashes under his umbrella demonstrating that this is serious stuff; the black swirls that emanate from the mark's empty eye fill the room with water, water that weighs down your pocket packed with stones and strips off your clothes and skin; the mark on the wall backs away without shrinking, another optical illusion only smarter and more aware, because the mark is drawn back to spring at you like a slingshot, while all the names for the mark like snail or nail or stain are emptied of meaning like freedom, hope, and truth; the floor reverses beneath your feet and last-times-you-saw-faces nod good-byes behind the mirrored windows; gravity slides you giggling at your loss of balance towards the mark on the wall; your neck is tickled from the cold wind; ice moves from the pit of your stomach to your mouth; you lift a cigarette holder to your long thin lips with tapered fingers; meanwhile you think of garden parties, teas, butterflies drowned in cups, flies drowned in saucers, forgotten letters, stolen kisses, civilization, old yellow dresses and dapples of sunlight; no, in your case, Barnes & Noble, jingling keys, cocktails poolside, cream-colored invitations, wine reports, the New York Times, plastic palm trees, popping the corks of Jeroboams / Methuselahs / Balthazars, crumpled wrappers, empty bottles, making lists, starting the engine, saying cheese, clichéd lives of flippant gestures, rude awakenings, saying the right thing, being aware of the world, just rewards, orgasmic cries; the mark may be a knife point being twisted from the other side of the wall, making you the knife-thrower's intended target; a car door slams and you hear the pounding of a fist at the door; meanwhile as the

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mark grows more ominous, you see a constellation of new marks, clearly moving now, scabs on walls of wrinkled flesh, leprous patches, rot and decay, rack and ruin; then, miraculously, with an abracadabra, a mystic incantation of wafted smoke, the marks flutter away, zig-zagging like frightened moths, and you face a row of doors in a pure white hall - not a labyrinth of endless doors, not a trap where you open one door only to find another and another and another - but a finite hall, dimly lit, where all motions are against a hissing tide and your outstretched hands can never meet the retreating knobs.



Nicolette Westfall

Three Poems

Carol Carpenter

Breakthrough

No one called him Richard ever,
never called him anything,
could not even remember him,
but, then, he could not
say himself who he was
or what he wanted,
only that he did not want
to be who and what he was.

For an hour each week
he was mine, a case study
I would write
after I heard him out.

"Richard," I asked,
"what happened today?"

"Not much," he said.
"I punched out my boss
when he docked me one hour,
as if he had the right
to clock my life.
Who does he think he is?"

"And who are you?"

I had the answer
written in the chart,
the diagnosis
of this man named Richard
who never had a father,
who was passed from place
to place and acted out
or acted in. He was lost
and no one cared but him
and me, of course.

Last week, Richard dreamed.
"In my nightmare, I was buried
alive in wet cement
that hardened, gave me shape.
I punched my concrete shell
until it cracked.
Then I could breathe again."

I, too, have had that dream
many times. I need Richard
to tell me how
he inhales and exhales
when the world is too much
with him, with all of us.

Proof Of Existence

I notified everyone
that you are
gone from our house.

I told them you don't live
here or anywhere anymore,
asked them to remove your name.

Still you get offers
for golf vacations, credit cards, sweepstakes
numbers that will change your life.

I have given up hope
that customer service will correct the records
or certify your legitimate absence from life.

You fit their demographics of a senior man
retired with money you haven't spent
on leisure activities they advertise.

You have traveled somewhere out of reach
and left me to deal with all your mail
that has no return address listed anywhere.

Envelopes slide through the slot every day,
spread across the slate floor, flaunt your name
as if I don't know what I'm talking about.



An Agoraphobic Explains Fear

On television, you can watch,
as I have more than once,
some stranger's brain
cupped in a surgeon's hands
as she expounds on normal functions,
how language lurks on the right side,
while singing emerges from the left,
unheard now. Death hushes all.
No impulses jump, no neurons
electrify messages or melodies.

Just me on this floral couch

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with my brain inside my skull.
I can not reach past bone, can not
unwrap ropes of my gray prison.

My brain misfires,
my therapist says. Think
of fireworks, an explosion
of sorts. You want
a safe place. Lock
your brain, chain your door.
Nothing is enough, though.
The world will intrude.

I see, I answer.
Outside my window.
I can tell you how
broken bits of leaf
stick to rusted screen.

Ants trek along
my windowsill. A line
of brown bodies
wrestle with bread
crumbs, food for their queen
who lives in sand.

Past this frame, seasons change.
In autumn, wind rips leaves
from red maples in my side lot
and drops them helter-skelter
around my neighborhood. Covered

in winter by snow. If only
you could see how squirrels skid
across frozen surfaces, you would not
ask why I fear cars on icy roads.

When crocus surface in spring, I
recall the locust tree with no buds
and the willow tree whose roots
snuck under my basement floor,
cracking concrete with stringy brown
roots claiming my house. I imagine
how roots can climb stairs, strangle
me as I sleep in my own bed, unaware.

Let me tell you about
last summer when I walked
these familiar streets
needing some eggs for baking.
Yes, it was a test.
I took my cane so I felt safe.
But the neighborhood had changed.

The grocery store was gone.
Houses had boards nailed
across windows. I did not know
those hooligans who sashayed out
of the old Baker house,
chains dangling from belts,
rings in their ears,
 chests bare except for tattoos,
horrid ones of red-eyed dragons

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breathing fire. Those boys
smoked and smelled of drink
when they got up close. I froze
in all that heat. They had knives,
all silver flash at noon blinded me.
They grabbed my purse, laughed, shouted
awful words. I keeled over and saw
those fireworks you mentioned.

You do not understand.
I have traveled in my days
seen English gardens, Ohio cornfields,
oceans full of salt and sharks. Even rode
an elephant once, in India, I think.
Every blade of grass, breath of air, pink
petal, courthouse brick, city street, every
one swims in my heart. We play together
in waves safe behind my steel door.

You speak of brains and how they work.
I speak of other body parts, even skin.
There is no way I can let you in.

Three Poems

Janet Smith

Like That

When I first thought of my own death,
I had no poems to put it in.
Just me and the bed tucked under
a cold ceiling that pulled away
into black mouths. Years later,
I imagined someone's hands
on my hips, my breasts. That scared
me in a different way. The ceiling
paused and watched, the bed tensed
under me. I rehearsed the difficult
parts: the placement of arms and legs,
the first kiss. I wasn't sure how
bodies fit, I only knew they must.

About death I have no clue.
Just the same feeling when I think
of it of being out of breath. The
same drop from the same cliff. A corner
of light pulled back to reveal the
nothingness we're traveling to. Then
I think of hands on my body. Those
of a man I met in a restaurant or
in a bar, returning me to myself,

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over and over again. I become only
flesh--tasted, bitten, halved. The
mind quenched in the lap of the
moment. Let death be like that.



Iglehart Avenue

I lived on the second-floor.
The elm outside the windows
thrust a dead branch
toward the bedroom. A pair
of women's panties
blown off a neighbor's line
caught on a twig, and
hung there for a month.
It worried me.

Ceilings shimmered
with radiator heat. At first,
the cold was glamorous.
I waited for buses, read
literary theory, took notes,
avoided the eyes of those
who talked to themselves.
The city hardened under
its lights; gutters froze.

I walked the narrow blocks,
made up stories about
the houses. Merriam Park
had the only hill. From the
top, I could see factory
smoke, parking lots, the
high-rise apartment where
poor people lived. Streetlights
hummed on at four-thirty.

Nine years passed. I
saved maps in a drawer,
learned how to walk on ice.
Nothing stood up
for a thousand miles
but water towers. Days
roused and fell. Keys
snapped in the cold. Snow
settled like an anchor.

Cars on white roads

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went quietly as sleds.
Books told me nothing
about how to live.
I listened to lectures,
ate sandwiches alone, thought
about moving. Rain
washed the snow away.
A perfect sky ignored the town.

A Scream

is folded under my tongue.
I want to lick sharp knives.

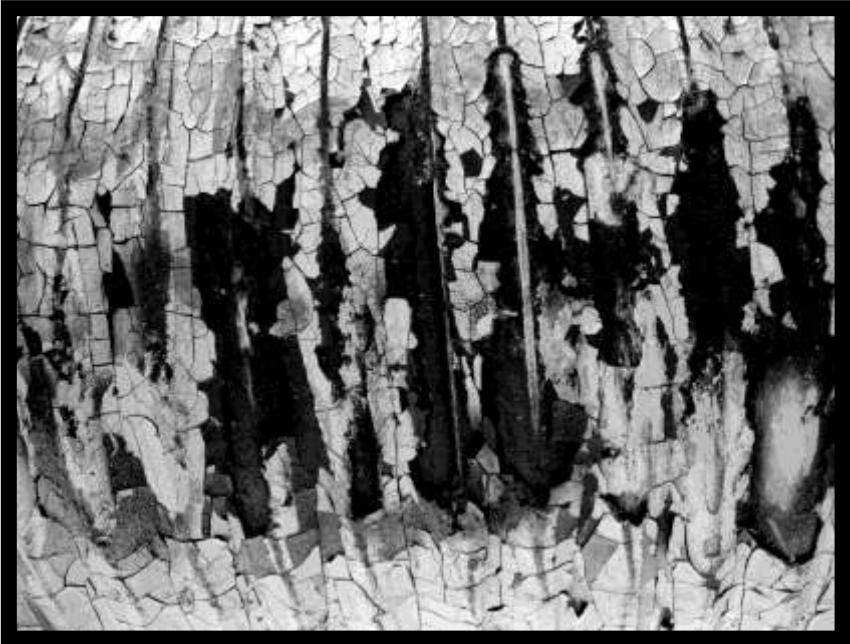
Today the sky bores me.
The wind makes sounds like coughing.

The four corners of my room have names.
The names have faces and the faces have mouths.

Their mouths say something.
It sounds like a mouse eating.

The doctor said, take these pills because
you are not your own river.

But the blood is a dark rapids,
and I am not a jar to be opened.



Nicolette Westfall

Two Poems

R Jay Slais

Veg Tabled

She sleeps like a bee, hive balled,
with a mouth full of retribution;
the cold has rolled up her wings.

The dose has doubled yet she feels cut in half,
doctor said take it but paranoia has set
like winter permafrost, a frigid layer of entrapment

that prevents anything swallowed to stay down.
The vomit bucket rests near her bed
always willing to take what is given,

but she is giving up, a preference
to sheath that stinger, poison pooled
for another night when the moment is right.

She may never be right, right,
that flight has left her buzzing in a bed,
only the build up of snore noise will wake her

but it's a deep sleep, her mouth falls back,
remains in wait to taste the next rutabaga blossom
swayed her way. Inhale, exhale, honey.



Fever

I do not want to go to the doctors.
There are sick people in there,
maybe stacks of cadavers out back,
the ones who didn't pay their bills on time,
who knows? I try not to think about that
but my head is really spinning, spinning
like I am drunk without the drink,
tilted without riding the Tilt-O-Whirl,
seasick without sailing the sea;

something has to be done.

It's winter, cold as a foreclosure notice
crumpled up, ignored in the back
of the mailbox for more than a week,
maybe a walk outside will cool me down?
Out front, along the street, all I see
are traces of winter's retreat, spring arrived
then defaulted, frozen puddles cracked
and refrozen, air bubbles trapped underneath
wishing to be set free.

The back yard is calm, snow white powder
piled by the wind as smooth as a clean sheet of paper.
The woods are quiet, tree branches still bare,
their tips like bony little fingers,
they all point at me, so I look to the sky
as if a guardian angel might be up there, help me.
Like that sky, I feel blue,
pure blue as the moment of conception,
yet the next moment,
the innocence begins to be lost,
a life spun into motion, as my head
becomes heavy then light.
I fall back first into the pillow soft snow.

The angel settles inside me,
and motions me with arms and legs,
as if I am a broken down man
on the side of the freeway
trying to signal the ambulance

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that passes by, stop here, rescue me.
I feel quarters, dimes, and pennies
slide out of my pocket into the snow,
next to the angel that has now transformed
underneath my body. I lie still.

I am changed,
chilled out a bit
by the cold air,
the crisp snow,
the frigid ground.
I make my way back into the house.
As I pick up the telephone,
dial and say
"can I make an appointment please?",
out the window,
I see the children next door
smile as they pick up the coins;
found near an angel in the snow.



Four Poems

Noam GR

Rant

Some drugs make you think that you feel. Some people take drugs just to have something to be miserable about. Something concrete that you can point your finger at and say yes you I see you you are my devil little one I blame you. Do drugs just for the hell of it all. Yes. That's what it's like. Some drugs make you feel that you think. What the hell do I know. Or you can use drugs to be more interesting than you really are. Or you can go somewhere else. You can get away to somewhere else to need to get away from. It's all good. You can feel the cool breeze and the foggy hill and the sound of heavy breathing in the fog. You can say hey there pretty lady I like your hair in my face I have your face on my mind. That's confidence baby. Yes pretty lady we are so in love you know it yes we are. Give me a kiss girl will you let me wear your legs like a scarf. Whatever. Pretty lady will you let me play with your sexylips pretty lady. Drugs are great also because you can use them as an excuse to say what you would've said anyway. No you can't. Words are so useless when you can't get them out. Seriously. Hey hey pretty laydeh, you are sooo bewteeful and I wish you weren't. Love too is useless when you can't get it out. Hey there prettyface, you are sooo sexy. Can I get some. Can we fuck some. That's what it's like when you are young. Then you grow up and it's kind of like that still too but by then it's not polite anymore so you keep it to yourself. Hormones. Something like that. On

drugs you can ask yourself important questions and then pretend you forgot the answer. Why is it easier to have somebody love you than it is to have someone let you love them. Why won't you let anybody love you. Why won't you let anybody let you love them. Then you can pretend you are all zen like hey man it doesn't matter we're all gonna be dead soon anyway. Yep. Dead like a rock. Dead like these words.

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Tea

I was with one of these high-society types once;
kissed her unctuous smile;
sucked on her lips until the veins popped.
They have no blood.

I thought she was kinda cute.
Spreading her little white lies.



Words

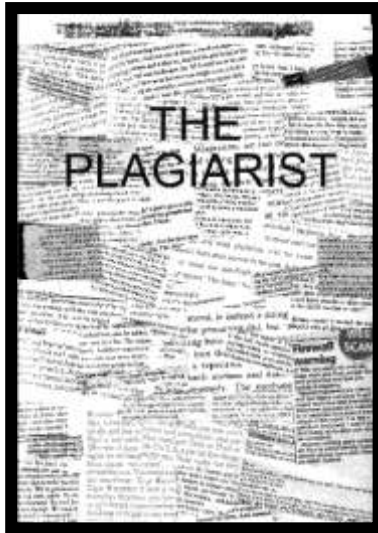
Words don't listen
Words don't talk
Don't do nothing
You write them down
They just kind of sit there

I Can Never Tell If You're Lying

I can never tell if you're lying your eyes are so big and shiny
they blind me you say so many nice things to me I hate your
face it's too pretty

Review: The Plagiarist by Christopher Nosnibor

Review By Christopher Frost



An anti-novel--it seems from some cursory research--is a fictional work that in some way evades or opposes the traditional elements of a novel, thus undermining the reader's expectations. If this is the case, then *The Plagiarist* (by Christopher Nosnibor, released by Clinicality Press) most certainly fits into that category.

From the blurb you might expect something surreal and confusing, but the *Plagiarist* goes far beyond the normal levels of weird. Within the book's pages you will find thousands of

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fragmented narrative pieces, ranging from short snippets of fiction, to scrambled copies of spam emails; snatches of dialogue; MySpace comments and extracts from all manner of printed materials. Throughout it all recur the characters of *The Plagiarist* and Ben, the latter quite literally "lost in a blizzard of information".

There is little in the way of a clear thread of a story to be followed. Various themes recur throughout, and are explored through the arrangement of a loose collection of bizarre ephemera. Pages of nonsense give way to nuggets of fiction, which are in turn interspersed with adverts for viagra or mixed-up paragraphs from an instruction manual.

The Plagiarist is, by its own admission, an anti-novel, and thus the mindset one might approach an ordinary work of fiction with is less useful here. After struggling for a consistent narrative for ten or twenty pages I found myself starting to skip back and forth through the book, picking up on certain more interesting segments and skimming over others. It reminded me of the way one might look at a painting--absorbing the whole while shifting focus from detail to detail.

In terms of actual content *The Plagiarist* is at its best when it makes the most sense. There are many fascinating fragments to read; bits and pieces copied or inspired by our lives in the information age. But most of these are submerged in a swamp of nonsense. Here's an example of one of the less sensical paragraphs:

"The ailed working later than anticipated - how, which frequently time - however hard he worked, and however he budgeted - hid to the premise - however long one aver closely he worked - taking, double it and add ten percent - anticipates something, estimate. Then there was the matter - a more accurate, a good day - or a weekend - it would be a drive home."

Though these segments provide texture to the book, their presence is often overwhelming. Much like the protagonist, Ben, you may find yourself lost in a swamp of meaningless information. While this kind of narrative involvement is neat in theory, in practice it wears thin fairly quick.

The book raises some interesting ideas about plagiarism, and the themes that run throughout are rendered well by the fragmented narrative. Overall, whether or not you'll enjoy *The Plagiarist* depends on how prepared you are to accept the idea of an anti-novel. If you're not completely on board with chucking out the narrative then you'll find the *Plagiarist* frustrating and tiresome. On the other hand, if you can make yourself go along with it, you'll find a weird, dense, confusing book with a feel much akin to a file bulging with scavenged and carefully arranged artifacts of the information age.

The Plagiarist is available from:
<http://christophernosnibor.co.uk/>

Interview: Christopher Nosnibor

How would you define an anti-novel?

An anti-novel really defies definition. The established form of the novel has certain characteristics: plot, characters, an identifiable narrator, sequentiality. Even when the plot unfolds through flashbacks, etc., there's still sequentiality and events are located in time and space. The anti-novel dispenses with all aspects of this conventional model, which is pure artifice anyway. It's like a choose your own adventure, only it's choose your own narrative instead.

Appropriately, the term anti-novel isn't my own: Stewart Home called his non-linear books 'anti-novels.' However, 'THE PLAGIARIST' is much more extreme in its non-linearity than Home's work, in that it even dispenses with narrative in large sections.

What inspired you to write *The Plagiarist*?

'THE PLAGIARIST' is designed as an absorption of everything, in its totality, so it wouldn't be entirely unreasonable to say that 'everything' inspired it. But I'd been playing with cut-ups and incorporating song lyrics and things in my work for some time, and when I read

'Bacteria=Syndrome' by Kenji Siratori I just thought 'genius,' and got to work. So that was the catalyst, if not the inspiration. Of course, arguably, I didn't write 'THE PLAGIARIST'....

The writing style and construction of *The Plagiarist* is extremely fragmented and chaotic. How do you think or hope that readers might react to this?

A lot probably won't cope with it. I'd anticipate and hope for disorientation, a derangement of the senses. But ultimately, I'd like to think that those who persevere will be rewarded. Creative reading will produce an understanding, it will make sense – in a subjective sort of a way – and new textual possibilities will be revealed.

Also, while indeed fragmented, the construction's not as chaotic as it may first appear: the phrases recur and evolve in a certain, albeit organic, manner, and there's a definite rhythm present throughout.

How much of the content of *The Plagiarist* is copied or paraphrased from other sources? How did you choose what to include?

'Other sources' is hard to define. I cut up a lot of my own writing, some published, some not, some fiction, some essays, and in that sense 99% of it's from 'other sources,' leaving very little specifically written for the text. Excluding my own

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works, probably about 60% is actually plagiarised and then manipulated in various ways.

Some of the selections were entirely arbitrary, whatever came to hand or was in the news while I was working on it.

Obviously I can't reveal all of the sources, but the second half features extensive sections of 'Hamlet' – because it's so well-known it makes sense to rewrite it, and also because Bloom, the author of 'The Anxiety of Influence' (I'm obsessed with 'influence') contends that 'Shakespeare is the canon.' If this is to be taken at face value, to cut up Shakespeare is thus to cut up the canon. Some may see that as sacrilege, and there's certainly a degree of nihilism involved. But the avant-garde maxim has always been that to create anew, one must first destroy. So from the ashes or shards of the canon rises.... THE PLAGIARIST, I suppose.

Within fiction in particular do you think it is possible to "own" or "steal" ideas? Is there a difference between copying something and being inspired by it?

I don't think it's possible to 'own' ideas, and besides, property is theft. I'd include intellectual property in that. Anyone who thinks they've created something wholly original is either deluded or hasn't read enough. If you think you've come up with something that's amazingly brilliant and has never been done before, you can pretty much guarantee that it has, and better.

I think there is a difference between copying and being inspired, although I think it can sometimes be a fine line. As William Burroughs who put the cut-up technique on the literary map observed, 'imitation is supposed to be the highest form of flattery. Imitation or outright theft.' The benefits of plagiarising directly is that no-one can accuse you of being a pale imitator. They can of course go after you for copyright infringement, but if the stolen words are placed in a different order, is it really the same anyway? Words are words: there are infinite permutations, and I don't see how anyone can lay legitimate claim to a given sequence of words. In the postmodern / Internet age, it's pointless being precious about these things.



Contributor Notes

Rachelle Taylor: "I'm a grad student of English literature, a painter, and the adopted caretaker of two growing turtles in Southwest Virginia. In 2007 I placed first in the Nan Lacy Poetry Chapbook Competition, and in April of 2008 I won the Thomas Coleman Creative Writing Award for Poetry. Among my non-academic interests are the works of Flannery O'Connor, pomegranates, and taking random pictures of animals foraging by the roadside. My work has previously appeared in *Exit 109* and *The Blotter*."

Sergio Ortiz grew up in Chicago, studied English literature at Inter-American University in San German, Puerto Rico, philosophy at World University, Culinary Art at The Restaurant School in Philadelphia. His work has been published in *POUI The Cave*, *Origami Condom*, *Poets Ink Review*, *Flutter*, *Silenced Press*. He is pending publication in "*Ascent Aspirations*," "*Children, Churches and Daddies*," "*Cause & Effect*," "*Calliope Nerve*," "*Burst*," "*The Houston Literary Review*," and "*Vagabondage Press*."

Howie Good, a journalism professor at the State University of New York at New Paltz, is the author of five poetry chapbooks, *Death of the Frog Prince* (2004), *Heartland* (2007), and *Apocalypse Mambo* (forthcoming) from FootHills Publishing, *Strangers & Angels* (2007) from Scintillating Publications, and the e-book, *Police & Questions*, (forthcoming) from Right Hand Pointing.

Neon

Louise Norlie's publications have appeared in *Mad Hatter's Review*, *Sein und Werden*, *Unlikely Stories*, *Behind the Wainscot*, and more.

Carol Carpenter's poems and stories have appeared in numerous online and print publications, including: *Connecticut Review*, *Snake Nation Review*, *Birmingham Arts Journal*, *Georgetown Review*, *Caveat Lector*, *Orbis*, *Arabesques Review*, and various anthologies, the most recent are *Not What I Expected* (Paycock Press, 2007) and *A Walk Through My Garden* (Outrider Press, 2007). Her work has been exhibited by art galleries and produced as podcasts (*Connecticut Review* and *Bound Off*). She received the Richard Eberhart Prize for Poetry, the Jean Siegel Pearson Poetry Award, Artists Among Us Award and others. Formerly a college writing instructor, journalist and trainer, she now writes full time in Livonia, Michigan.

Janet Smith began college at thirty-five after a string of jobs in Yosemite National Park. She graduated with an MFA in creative nonfiction from the University of Minnesota in 2001. She is a past recipient of a Nevada Arts Board Fellowship in poetry and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize by *Fourth Genre*. She is on faculty in the English Department at Lake Tahoe Community College, California. Her poetry has appeared in *Rosebud*, *Margie*, *Seattle Review*, *The Cream City Review*, *Eclipse*, *Kalliope*, and *The Mountain Gazette*. *All of a Sudden Nothing Happened*, her first book of poetry, is forthcoming from WordTech Press.

R Jay Slais' recent or forthcoming publication credits include poems at *Barnwood*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Cause & Effect*, *Clockwise Cat*, *MiPOesias*, and *Mississippi Crow*. A single father, raising his two children, he's an engineer/inventor in Metro Detroit Michigan.

Noam GR is a twenty year old well-mannered young lad who enjoys walking that fine line between walking a fine line and not . . . And also he has a blog: noamgr.wordpress.com

Nicolette Westfall is a former wedding photographer assistant who likes to take pics of food scraps and garbage.

Christopher Frost is a writer from the North of England.

