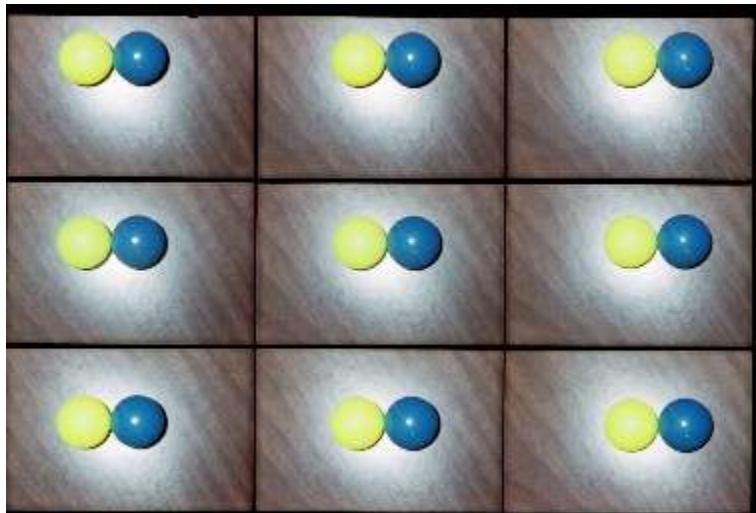


# Cannoli Pie

a tasty variation on literature, photography, food, and music

Volume 1.1

3 July 2010 "Helium"



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Dear Friends,

When thinking of how exactly to approach the inaugural issue of our new magazine, I was most struck by how admittedly light this issue is. This is the first ever publication for both editors here at *Cannoli Pie*, and while we could have waited until we had a thick, juicy sirloin of an e-zine to run, we preferred to go ahead with our original press date (which we ambitiously set only a few weeks after buying the domain). The simple truth is that being a new magazine is hard, and without work and names to get people interested, no amount of promotion is going to generate that many submissions. As a visual artist and creative writer, I have never been one to shy away from challenges. I love to try to squeeze my creative mind into smaller and more intricate boxes each time I work. Many artists today have taken to throwing caution, form and restriction to the wind, and can do so elegantly. However, I have seen that creativity flowers most in confinement. Think MacGyver. When the only way out is the hard way, it takes extreme creativity to find it. So I embrace my struggles everywhere I go. We ended up low on submissions in every genre that we aspire to publish here, so we had to do something. The idea struck me right away: helium. Helium is light and abundant. It is the second lightest and second most abundant element by mass in the universe. Part prayer and part description, both the low weight and the abundance of helium tells *Cannoli Pie's* beginning. The first issue may be light, but give us some time and all your best work, and we promise that we will make as wide an impact in the creative world as helium makes in the chemical world.

Thanks,

Stephen Krauska  
Co-Editor, *Cannoli Pie Magazine*

Poetry by Kevin Rabas

## **Dole**

“Never liked him,” Grandma Bert said.  
“Even as a soda jerk, I didn’t like him, always  
sneaking cherry into my Coke. He came home a hero  
with a withered hand, though, that Bob Dole.”

“You know what we got from that Bob Dole  
when he went to Washington? Storm drains.  
That’s how he fixed our town, how he showed  
his worth: Russell now has storm drains,  
and a leader with a withered hand.  
War did it. Took that hand. Can’t even  
barely hold a pen with it, I hear.”

## **In that house, there was a lot of jazz,**

about fifteen hundred recordings  
about Gottlieb photo prints in frames  
on all of the walls. “Make yourself at home,”  
my host said, and I listened to Jerry Mulligan  
with Paul Desmond and read about the beats.  
In the morning, I ate a bagel, and I read  
the selected poems of Russell Edson,  
who I had heard read last year. His voice  
came to me, as I read the page; he spoke  
of apes and rats; a husband, a wife,  
and a grown son who held up  
leafy branches in the kitchen, and they said,  
“Look. It is fall.” My host had written  
his dissertation on James Wright, 30-some  
years ago, and we talked about Wright,  
and about Bly, whom I had handed a note  
on a plane once, telling him about how  
his reading had moved my father and I to tears,  
the first time we had cried together.  
The next day, my father slung  
his tool belt into his pickup  
and headed out to work at 5,  
the sun not yet up, and I thought of  
him, and his head now, full of poems.

Poetry by Michael McAloran

## **Dissipation**

Where the cleaved

Flesh dressed

The lie

Aborted the sun

Cleft beneath the tooth

And nail

And the drag of

The malignant

Tide the

Maligned flesh

Still-birtherd colourings

In dreaming that I could

(Dreaming that I could not lie)

Traceless as death

Strangulating anguish

The scattered dirt

Of grief

Where in the wind I

Have forgotten to

Remember

I remember nothing

And so I

Too, reek of death

The dismembering sky

Burning as my blood burns

The night eroded

The night erased

I am, in this

Where only my nothingness

Knows the depths of

The fallen wind the fallen eye

Bone dust carried through the breeze

As seed as waste

I know no laughter

I merely dissipate

## **Singular**

From there else

Guttering

Falling to singular

Grace

Grave(n)

Ah spit

It does not matter

I vomit

The bile of my blood

From the gut of my

Pressing absence

Yet there is nothing

In that

As in this

Un-knowing

The cards strewn

Carrion

I am

## **The Author Who Gets Free Drinks: a (Hopefully) True Story**

*An oral non-fiction piece*

by Caleb J Ross

This is the already true part: in June of 2008 I stood on a beach in San Diego wearing a full suit, paying more attention to my watch than to the ocean in front of me. For a boy from Kansas City, where the largest body of water might be a wort vessel at the Boulevard Brewery, this transposed priority says a lot. I had a flight, and as always, the airline schedule superseded any perceived relaxation. And it's especially hard to relax when, with my suit beachwear I looked the part of a misplaced predator. Bikini'd women covered themselves as I strolled the boardwalk.

That morning I boarded a flight en-route to California for a client meeting, which I approached with equal parts hesitation and disappointment. Why? That morning, and continuing through the flight, I mainlined a steady feed of Tom Waits. I carried an iPod packed with albums focusing on his early, crooner years, and a book of interviews highlighting his drunken-beatnik persona. Normally, this would be my heaven. But this immersion put my corporate attire in an unflattering light. Jealousy bred self-disappointment.

Accepting the careerist lifestyle years earlier, fresh from college, destroyed the delicate persona I had for so long nurtured. I wanted Nighthawks at the dinner. I got paper cuts at the copier. I wanted 16 shots from a 30-ought 6. I got 16 emails an hour with a 30 year plan. I wanted a jockey full of bourbon, but had settled as a desk jockey.

Thankful for the near-empty flight, yet not ready to hear Waits in my earbuds mock my tailored uniform, I fished through the seatback pouch for something to enliven my spirits. Nothing like *Sky Mall*, and the implication of its corporate clientele to remind myself of whom I don't want to become. But instead, I found a copy of *Spirit*, the Southwest Airlines magazine, and on the cover: Tom Waits.

This was a sign, not mere coincidence. I embraced the circumstance and decided then to own my situation the way Tom Waits had lived the passé Beat poet style. I wouldn't be a sales slave anymore, God damn it. I would be a Jitterbug Boy. Step right up. Everyone's a winner. Bargains galore.

The article, a collection of anecdotes, standard fare for someone as Wait-read as myself, comforted me though offered nothing new. We landed. I pissed. I shook hands

with my client. Later, I managed to carve out those fifteen minutes for beach time, happy to at least kiss the ocean air. Women covered themselves, but I hardly noticed. I was waltzing Matilda now.

\* \* \*

Here's more already-true stuff. Upon returning to Kansas City I wrote a letter to *Spirit* magazine. The bulk of the correspondence contained praise and thanks, but buried within was a request for an additional copy of the Waits issue. The ruse not only earned me that copy, but also a *Spirit* logoed t-shirt and bragging rights that my letter would be featured in an upcoming issue. Net worth: Approximately \$14. My writing career had officially begun.

But it gets better, believe it or not. Two months later I sat wedged between my co-worker and a portly stranger on my way to Chicago for a baseball game. A business partner had given us Wrigley Rooftop tickets, ensuring plenty of beer and little actual game watching. During a lull in our conversation, I grabbed the current issue of *Spirit*, and casually directed my co-worker's attention to my letter. Within minutes a homely, round flight attendant approached. "I've never had a contributor on board before," she said and dumped multiple bags of pretzels into my lap before handing me a rum and coke. My celebrity career had officially begun.

Which brings me here, to Leela's, an unpaid gig, done for the love, but with the hope of supper for my signing. You dream of a day when writing affords your basic necessities, when you can comp not just a free drink with your writing, but a free drunk. You dream of a—

"Get this man a drink," says a handsome man in the front row. Casually play off the interruption as though you weren't secretly hoping for such an outburst. Smile. Smirk, if you want to call it that, but nod toward the bar, accept his gift. Waits would do the same.

Waits would scat on local establishments, describe perfect fish tacos from Illegal Pete's, he'd shoot the local beer full of holes, and train his fresh-off-the-plane French friend how to pour American lagers. Waits would make his audience his performance. Every show, something new. If he were stuffed into a suit, put on a plane, and teased with the ocean, he'd loosen the tie just a bit, strike up a conversation with a flight attendant, and tell the ocean it has done nothing for him anyway.

\* \* \*

You dream, too, of a real life Choose Your Own Adventure story. And here's mine: If you have a free drink in your hand, kindly thank the audience and leave the stage. If you do not, continue reading.

You do not. Survey the audience with unwarranted contempt. Say, "you people," and cough to emphasize your arid throat...\*cough\*. Say "excuse me" like you only have the dust to blame. Don't yet turn on these people. A few are still your friends. "You people have been wonderful," you say.

You think, Did they not hear the handsome gentleman up front call for a drink? Perhaps he wasn't loud enough. Yes, blame him. You have other, better, friends.

Smile. Carry on. "I've had the time of my life," you say, to initiate the denouement. But where was the story's climax, the audience wonders. I'll be drinking it alone in the back of the bar after the reading.

**CP:** Be sure to check back on our "Current Issue" page for the audio file of Caleb reading this piece!

## Lorraine Strata

By Joe Krauska



When you come across a sale on eggs at 50 cents a dozen, you have two options. You can buy the eggs you normally use in a week or two, or you buy enough to fill an entire shelf in your fridge and find a way to use them. I'll give you a guess as to what choice I made. As I sat sifting through my cookbooks, I picked up a recent addition to my collection, *The Complete America's Test Kitchen TV Show Cookbook*.

It was a gift from my three-month-old daughter and wife for Father's Day, a book I had eyed repeatedly while wandering through the bookstore. Flipping through the pages of all the egg-heavy recipes I knew, I had a vision of a perfectly cooked quiche. Sure, I could make all varieties of custard pies, lemon curd to last me a year or omelets for every morning, but quiche was going to be the first. Quiche Lorraine may be the best use of eggs ever devised by the French. Silky smooth, salty, sweet and rich beyond comparison, there are few things like it.

Looking over the ingredients, I realized the hard truth: this is not health food. Most good foods aren't, and that is the conundrum of cooks who must prepare a dinner every night, to balance health and taste. I decided that with strata, I could have the saltiness and creaminess of quiche while cutting out all of the heavy cream and fat filled pie crust. A combination of milk, eggs and bread, it is the perfect canvas for all manner of vegetables, meats or cheeses.

The basic structure of strata is held together by the eggs and the bread, which overcomes the lack of thickening power from leaving out the cream. While the recipe in the book called for spinach and more cheese, I decided that I could forego some of the cheese in order to bring in the salty bacon. Replacing the half and half with whole milk would pull back on the richness, but I wanted to be able to eat dessert. This recipe also calls for a long resting period, for the bread to really absorb all the liquid.

If you use a good, crusty loaf of bread instead of store bread, be sure to let the mixture rest in the refrigerator for at least an hour. If you did use store bread, leaving it sit just long enough to warm up the oven will be sufficient. I find that the soft bread at the grocery store is best sliced, baked for ten minutes, cubed and then placed back in the oven to finish drying. Be sure to let it rest for a few minutes after it is finished, don't want all that delicious liquid to seep out because you were impatient!

### Lorraine Strata\*

Serves 10-12 people

1 loaf, soft french or italian bread, cut into cubes

2 tablespoons butter

2 medium onions, minced

1 cup of white wine

10 ounces good quality bacon, cooked, drained and chopped into bite sized pieces (not thick cut, as the texture suffers in this type of cooking)

12 eggs

3½ cups of whole milk

8 ounces Gruyere, finely shredded and divided in half

Coat a 9x13 inch glass pan with nonstick cooking spray. Dry the cubed bread in the oven at 200 degrees for 30-40 minutes. You could also leave the bread out for several hours to let it firm up a bit. Melt the butter over medium heat, add the onion cook until softened, 4-6 minutes. Add the wine and cook until reduced by at least half. Turn off the heat and add the milk.

Beat the eggs in a very large bowl and then slowly whisk in the milk and onion mixture. Season with salt and pepper. Add the bread, bacon and one half of the cheese to the egg mixture, stirring well to distribute everything, and pour into the glass pan. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing the mixture down into the bread. At this point the strata can be left in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.



Turn the oven to 325, once it has preheated, bake the strata for 70 minutes. After this, begin checking to see if the strata is puffy and lightly browned every 5 minutes or so. Allow it to rest on a cooling rack for 3-4 minutes after removing from the oven. Slice into squares and serve!

\*Adapted from Breakfast Strata with Spinach and Gruyere, *The Complete America's Test Kitchen TV Show Cookbook*

**CP:** Got questions? Email Joe! [joe@cannolipie.com](mailto:joe@cannolipie.com)

*Cannoli Pie*'s monthly review series focuses on new books and CDs of great quality. We avoid "mean" reviews because if it's not worth reading, then it's probably not worth reviewing. We accept well written, unbiased reviews from writers of all experience levels. Please include any and all contact you have had with any authors, artists, record labels or publishers before submitting a review. Submit via [submissions@cannolipie.com](mailto:submissions@cannolipie.com).

## **Chelsey Minnis Breaks the Mold with *Poemland***

A book review by the editors of *Cannoli Pie*

I first came across *Poemland* back in April, which many of you may know is "Poetry Month." *Poemland* was a forceful and interesting break from the poetry I had repeatedly been assaulted with.

Helpful lines when worn out reading complacent books of poetry and trying to edit my own, struggling work are the words of David Lerner in his poem, "Mein Kampf."

"I come not to bury poetry / but to blow it up / [...] throw it off a cliff into / icy seas and / see if the motherfucker can / swim for its life."

A poet after my own over-zealous heart who seems to share the feelings of Lerner is Chelsey Minnis in her 2009 book of poetry, *Poemland*, released by Wave Books. A proper introduction to the cover layout is necessary before examining the content of this book. There is no artsy picture to invite you beyond the cover, no long list of awards and acknowledgments at the outset, and no titles. There are only UPCs and well-set words. With the title, Minnis seems to imply a sense of a commercial amusement park built around poetry, and the books repeated use of the iconic UPC draws on commercialism even more and her poetry backs it all up. She admits to writing to please people she hates, she berates others for doing the same; she undoes and then reassembles what poetry means only to put it back together toward the end of the book to make pointed insights about romantic relationships. Minnis's *Poemland* is stripped down, tough, honest and real. Her first line says it all, "This is a cut down chandelier..." The great substance of Minnis's writing is what she can do without typical poetic accoutrement. No vivid imagery, no rhyme or meter, no real sonic resonance, just honest language stripped apart and put back together in a way that is rarely seen: honestly. *Poemland* relies not on her personal poetics, but rather her talent for making language draw on the reader. *Poemland* may be a bit difficult for a completely satisfied writer or reader to get into, for anyone who has struggled to write or love will find this book as one that seems to well from within his or her own difficulties and flow with the language rather than a slow tour of the writer's feelings.

## Whodunit: About our Authors and Artists

Joe is a working husband and father of one. His hobbies include cooking up storms, burping his daughter, quoting Futurama and laughing at tea parties.

Claire is *Cannoli Pie's* other Co-Editor and works as a radio host for 89.5fm WSOU. She spends most of her time listening to music very loudly, reviewing said loud music and critiquing people's grammar. We would be lost without her.

Stephen is *Cannoli Pie's* other Co-Editor. He is a construction worker, artist, writer and advocate for all things interesting, organic, whole, caffeinated, American, liberal and equal.

Kevin Rabas co-directs the Creative Writing Program at Emporia State University, co-edits Flint Hills Review, and writes regularly for Jazz Ambassador Magazine (JAM). He has two books *Bird's Horn* and *Lisa's Flying Electric Piano*. (Dr. Rabas is a dear friend and mentor of the editors of *Cannoli Pie* his work was requested by Stephen Krauska for this issue)

Michael Mc Aloran was Belfast born, (1976). His most recent poetic works have appeared/ are forthcoming at *Psychic Meatloaf*, *Carcinogenic Poetry*, *Why Vandalism?*, *1000th Monkey*, *Fashion For Collapse*, *Danse Macabre*, *Fragile Arts Quarterly*, *Gloom Cupboard*, and *Pratishedhak*, *Graffiti Kolkata*, (India). His art-work has appeared at *Calliope Nerve*, *Bergamot*, *Fragile Arts Quarterly*, *Arterialize*, *Gloom Cupboard* and has been used as book covers for several projects at *Calliope Nerve Media*. In the past year he has authored seven short collections of poetry: *'In The Black Cadaver Light'*, (Poetry Monthly Press), *'The Rapacious Night'*, (Calliope Nerve Media), *'The Gathered Bones'*, (Calliope Nerve Media), *'The Redundant Pulse'*, (Back Pack Press), *'The Black Vault'*, (Calliope Nerve Media), *'The Death-Streaked Air'*, (Virgogray Press-forthcoming) & *'Final Fragments'*, (Calliope Nerve Media-forthcoming)...Other pursuits include cigarettes and alcohol...

Caleb J. Ross is a fiction writer, graduate of the Creative Writing Program at Emporia State and creative "bird of a feather" to the editors of *Cannoli Pie*. His book *Charactered Pieces* has gone through two printings from Outside Writers Collective and is a rare gem of literary art. [From his book : In grade school the author once destroyed and abandoned house with the aid of a found grappling hook and a group of equally-maladjusted/bored friends. It took the author two years to pay off his eighty-two dollar portion of the cleanup...His mom was upset. He learned nothing. Visit him at [www.calebjross.com](http://www.calebjross.com). If he's ever in your town, invite him out for a beer. He will likely accept.]

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