

Volume 1.07
5 March 2011

“Whirlwind”

Cannoli Pie

A Tasty Variation on Literature, Photography, Food and Music

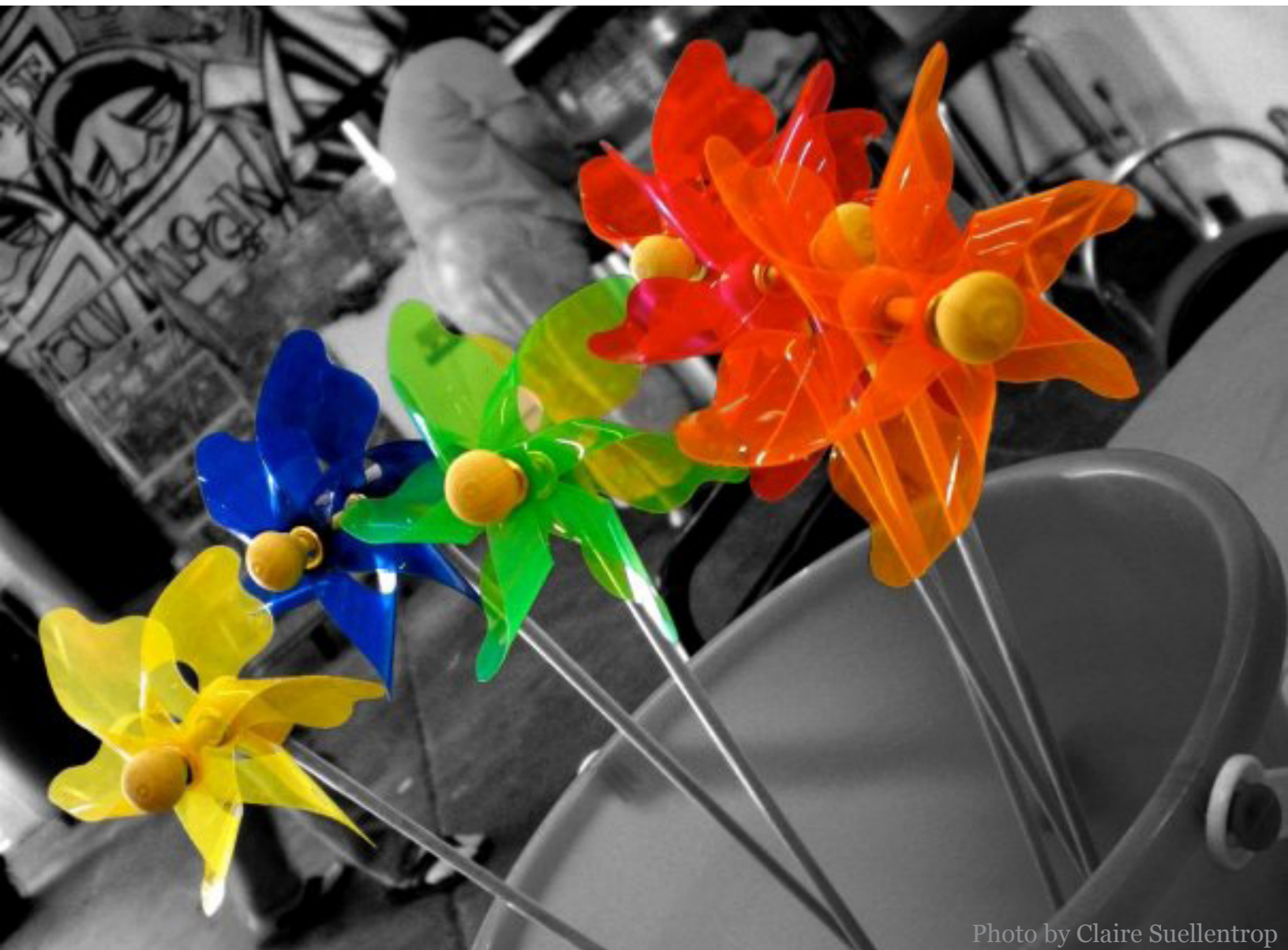


Photo by Claire Suellentrop

Slice It Up



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Letter from the Editor

Dear friends,

I'll make this brief. March is a time of whirlwind change. The frost thaws and the grass greens. And to coincide with the seasonal upheaval, your Design & Copy Editor here has been running around like a madwoman, learning about the back-end state of our magazine and website and realizing how much of an upheaval we need ourselves. If you find this publication a bit haphazardly thrown together, please accept my sincere apology. And don't at all let that detract from the quality of work we've been privileged to feature this month. These writers (and our resident cheesecake extraordinaire) deserve the full attention of your eyes, mind and tastebuds. I guarantee, they put forth diligence, thought and patience and are definitely worth your time, even if this letter from your editor is not.

All the best,

Claire Suellentrop
Design & Copy Editor



To A G.I. Who Never Read Pushkin

Poetry by Gary Beck

On a harsh cliff in Afghanistan,
wounded, a bullet in my chest
I lay, the hot blood seeped out of me
drop by drop and ebbed away.
My fading thoughts turned to home.
I remembered mom and dad
who fondly waved goodbye
as I left for a foreign land
and promised to return.
Sally, my wife, stood with them
and I didn't know what to say
to her unforgiving eyes.
So I did my duty and killed
and now I have been killed.
Mom and dad will miss me.
I wish I could say goodbye.
I know Sally will not cry.



The Nature of Cities III

Poetry by Gary Beck

Accumulated filth,
cracked concrete sidewalks,
crumbling buildings,
while the urban wealthy revel,
gala at the opera,
opening at MOMA,
benefit for the ballet,
as the poor slowly dissolve,
driven from decaying homes
by gentrification,
tenements removed
for hi-end condominiums,
enriching developers
with the government gift
of eminent domain.



Stages of Child Abuse

Poetry by Gary Beck

Perverse early assaults,
the cruel hands
of demented or impatient
fathers, mothers, boyfriends,
self-proclaimed enemies of youth.

Ongoing agonies,
constant companions
following the collapse
of the nurturing process,
events of endless torment.

The regime of suffering,
physical, mental, emotional,
the ceaseless aches
consuming health.

The end of normalcy,
a diet of anguish
nourishing instability,
aided by the secret shame,
the victim is to blame.

Desperate despair,
defensive acting
connects the pretense
that all is well
in the house of pain.

Reality erodes,
alienation pervades
the inner separation
from external horror
comparisons to others.

The will to endure prevails,
yet the twisted product
of insane abuse
is prematurely denied
constitutional rights,
life, liberty, the pursuit of.



The Oppressed

Poetry by Gary Beck

Dwellers in poverty
cry out in just complaint,
or suffer in silence
the decisions of fate.
The dream of equality
is only a mockery
of feeble expectations
inevitably consumed
in the daily emissions
of negativity,
constantly contributing
to escape from reality,
performance failures,
that deny opportunity



Jacob's Reflections After the Bout

Poetry by Truth Thomas

Space heater of volcanoes mountaintop
no feather can peak, you are jasmine breath

of spring, breast of terra firma, wrapped in
cowry shells of clouds. You are torso of time

clearing thunder's throat. Lightning strikes
in cage fights of celestial arenas. Who am I

but dressed up dirt to wrestle you? What am I
but a tapped out hip, bankruptcy of tricks

slipping out of the ring to change.



Discipling Questions After the Murder of a Child

Poetry by Truth Thomas

(for Angelyn Ogdock 2008 - 2010)

In everything give thanks. How is this found?
When death drips daily from tsetse flies' lips
and rusty teeth of rats make gnawing ground
of cribs, where should our gratitude be lit?
What is the good in a cockroach? Tell us.
Or chinchas crashing capillary doors?
Or lice moving typhus like cans of nuts
on checkout counters at grocery stores?
A stinkbug is not a rose. A meal pried
from garbage jaws is not a Buckingham
Palace tea. A parachute dropping smiles
is not a child thrown from a grandma's hands,
murder's hands, to hands of concrete walkway.
Fifty feet she fell. Which foot should we praise?



Lamentations for New Jersey: Route 9 (Tonnele Avenue)

Poetry by Truth Thomas

Sorrow mourns the daughters who think they're still alive
tapping veins of vampire streets, our daughters, who are

told they're still alive, beaten toothless, blood drained by
the game, our daughters, haunting humping roads, eyes

like caves, our daughters, zombie-walking after rape. There
is a balm in Gilead, but there is also a brake light procession,

a repast of cum-scented cash, a living wake for someone's
child, riding in the front seat of death, rolling out a condom

like police tape.



What the Snake Whispered in Eve's Ear

Poetry by Truth Thomas

Well now, looka hear Eve, your skin is soft as a silkworm's belly.
Hasn't anyone told you? And I mean, really, what has Adam done
for you lately, leaving you alone in the garden like this with hips
as wide as all creation? I wouldn't, but that'ssss just me. And I

don't mean no harm, but didn't that first boy tell you you're as fine
as Hummingbird's feathers, fresh as dew collecting rainbows on
an orchid's lips? Everyone in the garden can see it Sis, except
perhaps for you. I want you to. But ah, that's right, that's right,

the tree that lets you know your glow is off limitssss. That's what
God said, didn't he? I mean, that's what I thought I heard him say
when he was lying to you about good and evil cuisine and all. Oh,
did I say "lying?" I mean when he was just "talking" to you about

the way he thinks you, and all other ribs, should live. My My My.
Now, how is anybody going to tell a goddess what she should or
shouldn't eat, or who she shouldn't kiss? Oops, did I sssslip up
and tell the truth again, call you by your name? Goddess? My

Goddess? My serpent curious queen? Well now, listen hear Eve,
you know I would never be the one to come between an idol and
the Most High's commands. Just let me introduce you to a little
nibble. I'm sure God will understand.



Ashen Treadmill

Poetry by Leland Jamieson

A neighbor put his treadmill on the street.
For free! I brought it home and plugged it in.
It worked, although it gave me stone-cold feet.
Why would it do that? What's its origin?

Old British prison mills, in need of power,
made inmates climb, for punishment, the treads
of paddle wheels, all guarded hour by hour.
It was the greatest of an inmate's dreads

Bad karma, left behind, that make me glum?
Plus, this machine is heart-and-brain-dead dull:
Legs stride, they climb, we're going nowhere! Dumb!
I'm sweating so, it's trickling down my skull.

I wish those prisoners well, that is, their souls
For sure, they've burned to ash their karmic coals.



Excerpt from *Stranger Will*

A novel by Caleb J. Ross

Chapter Three

Brackenwood is a town mortared by distance. Citizens use the word neighbor over friend. Whispers carry gossip and spilled secrets, but these neighbors rarely gather to celebrate openly. Parades and sporting events exist, but not as hyped events, instead as fodder for neglected community boards and discarded flyers. Conscious separation permeates every rigid nod, every quiet hello, like some historical founder dictated this world, and the scheme has sustained, passed from generation to generation.

The citizens embrace this seclusion, contentedly existing as dots gapped by miles of barren roads and dust and would remain isolated if not for the messenger pigeon hobbyist rings peppered throughout the county. Feathers blanket the sky during peak hours, settling to a sporadic streak mornings and nights. When William first arrived in Brackenwood, he took the birds as a sign of his potential morbid prosperity: vultures circling carrion. Soon, they became a sport for William, circling their own dead bodies.

The predictability of their flight patterns makes messenger pigeons an easy target. Not that William consciously seeks easy targets, but when something flies through an empty scope, ego steps in to pull the trigger. He studies a bird's arc, its determined flight pattern. He squeezes enough time to set up a shot, take a few breaths. For a single moment the world moves around William and the bird. His is separate, pulled far from monetary engagements and doubt, fatigue and household concerns. All that matters is the pigeon

and William and the inevitable.

William fought a childhood lisp. The terminology of speech therapists stays with him. They would call his shots noise—the interference along a communication channel interrupting an otherwise clear and articulated message. When parents scream at their children it creates a form of noise, the message grows bigger than the child's willing comprehension. Beatings start. Bruises swell. Lives crumble.

Aiming at birds from a billboard fifty feet high along an unpopular highway leaving town from a desolate east side settles William the way eternal arguments with Julie can't; those disagreements end always in a grey stalemate. From this high up the world takes on just two shades: trees and sky. The decisions are two: shoot, hesitate. The results are two: hit, miss. And the billboard, like all others, has two sides: eastbound, westbound.

The east side advertises a hand painted pro-life statement reading "Abortion Stops a Beating Heart" but the "Heart" is a faded drawing. From a distance it only reads "Abortion Stops a Beating," and the sentiment is oddly reassuring considering the life span of a bird and the length William allows it to live. The other side, pro-military, a soldier standing at attention, proud and confident. No words.

The subtle afternoon simmers to its pinnacle. He pans the treetops, pulling to sudden movements. Dust maybe. Maybe a glare caught in the chipped paint at the tip of the gun's barrel. Maybe a bird. He pulls out a cigarette and calms. He breathes slow enough to notice a westbound pigeon. The air warms, and a breeze tempts William's nerves as he views the world through his shotgun. Though he wouldn't shoot without confidence, the shots do stray. He takes a chance.

Misses. The pellets die thousands of feet away, and the bird continues, unaware.

A second bird rises above the trees. It darts full seconds ahead of William's aim but he shoots anyway; loose birdshot has no toll on his conscious. Thousands of feet away a kitchen window might break, a family pet may collapse, but this is thousands of feet away. William pulls a thick



Excerpt from *Stranger Will* cont'd

A novel by Caleb J. Ross

breath from his cigarette and falls for a moment into the philosophy of his shells, their origins, their ends, and the penetrated air between. But another bird crosses the first, eastbound, and William fires before thoughts get too deep. The bird drops into the clearing. He steps down the peg ladder, his shotgun strapped to his back, and he smiles, heading into the loose grip of overgrown grass and thorny weeds.

At first, he didn't care about finding the bodies. Wild bird populations were never something William concerned himself with, assuming numbers were plentiful for an animal whose daily objectives filled a very short list: eat, fly, breed. But when William, on a whim, first found the bodies, and the messages they would never deliver—realizing they weren't a wild breed as he had thought—it birthed an obsession: to collect and build relationships of these information snippets. Undelivered, these private little details lack consequence; they are forgotten transmissions. People aren't dying, here. People are going on with their lives, assuming a thunderstorm trapped their bird. Assuming, at worst, a lost friend. These messages are trophies more than they are necessities.

Most of them are simple, harmless messages, brief confusions a phone call or letter via the post could clear up. Chess games are popular, bishop F2 to D5 and the like with a small postscript attached noting sports scores or questions about the health of a family member. Invitations are common around the holidays, recipes and phone numbers.

But collected among these small-talk letters there are those with more private

intentions. William has found bring three, four might not be enough, and alright, I suppose Jim doesn't need to know, and I worry Donald may find out, and larger the pile grows after each hunting trip. William reserves a special section for these "inside jokes" within the threads of his collection.

"It's just a hobby," he insists each time Julie brings the wall into one of their arguments. "Everybody's got them." A man named Buzz sends messages regarding the possible trade of toy trains. The details numb—serial numbers, model years, and the exact shade of crimson he needs—but the example stands. A woman named Carla Baucus speaks of her stance with God. She preaches damnation and hellfire one week, forgiveness and compassion the next. A seemingly infinite flock of pigeons dies for this cause. William's pleading accomplishes little. Julie has her mind set about things, and helping her to see any other way is difficult.

Often the birds peak for only moments above the trees, dropping just as quickly. William assumes for food, or maybe a mate, but how much really do homing pigeons know? He wonders if future pigeon generations will learn to avoid the space for no other reason than instinct. "The Karma Debates," an ongoing discussion William has interrupted on a few occasions, isn't a very lively thread—two, maybe three, hobbyists send messages back and forth, arguing over the influence of one life on another on another on another and so on. Two, maybe three, hobbyists aren't enough to warrant a definitive, "yes." Maybe pigeons will learn to avoid this space one day, he thinks. Maybe not.

The bodies often endure weeks of ripening before William finds them. Six states of decay: intestinal bacteria to the smell of putrescine to a slippery mound of feathers and still scavengers claim sustenance. What's left of the bird might be shredded or spread to a puddle. No wings. No head. At best, the bird is still recognizable. But the message keeps, even if feet away, consumed by mud.

He parts the overgrown grass under the bill-



board, hand at his gun's breech to keep it stable. To exploit the broken safety switch now—a caught grass stem or tree branch—would mean a hard crawl home. It's not a trek to the clearing, just a short step across the highway, but it is difficult. The brush is thick and only densens as the open clearing gets closer.

He is deep when twigs ahead of him snap. Branches sway. His gun slips under a sweaty grip.

William has met people out here: legal hunters, hikers, outdoor adventurers. They stop for a breath or a handful of bellflower blossoms or for a scent their dog is begging to find and fill the time with obligated conversation. When two strangers meet in the woods, they don't pass by with a nod. They don't pretend something greater lies just ahead. They smile at company and make room for a few words.

Nice gun, they say, or scoff, and comment on the beautiful day. Either way William has to do what he can to cover a nearby pigeon—to both lovers of nature and lovers of sport a dead pigeon is a waste.

It is, he can say safely.

Leaves rustle. A deep rumble resonates. The branches have calmed but the grass still moves—a reaction he credits to a dead wind fallen into the clearing.

"I've got a gun," he yells toward the sound as he tightens his grip.

The noise continues despite his threat. William proceeds, parting branches and peering over bushes. The noise grows to growling becomes snorting, and dirt erupts from behind the front row of foliage.

A dog, buried shoulder deep in a hole, throws dirt and grass through its legs. William brings his gun to his face and considers for a moment ending the dog. He contrives excuses, claiming his fear is reason enough, or maybe the dog attacked him. If asked he'd guess a territorial thing and the dog simply exploded, teeth lashing and spit—the whole deal. He would have to cut himself, maybe clamp the dead dog's mouth around his forearm and press, to fully convince anyone with questions. Or he could just shoot and leave. Let some-

one else find the body.

He steps forward, the gun still at his back, and parts a bush to get closer. A fallen branch snaps under his foot. The animal pulls from the hole. Something swings from its mouth—a hidden bird maybe—as the dog searches for William's scent.

"Hey boy." William whistles.

The dog bounces his nose through the air, frozen otherwise, so William creeps closer.

"It's okay." He thrusts out a fist, shakes it, snaps his fingers, enticing the dog to limp forward. "I've got something for you."

Bald spots materialize—large patches of fur, shorn likely by the dog's own aged teeth, as they pick and dig for ticks. The animal hobbles close, sniffing William's hand and the ground around his feet. It never locks sight because, as William discovers, the dog's blind eyes—opaque and blue as concord grapes—haven't the power. William pulls his hand from his gun and reaches to pet the animal's trembling head.

The blind dog snaps, twice before latching on. William pulls, bringing the frail mutt with him. He fumbles with his free hand, swings a few times to its skull, to its ribs, kicking at its legs and throat. He reaches for his gun but can't situate it until he pulls hard enough from the dog's mouth to break weak teeth free. The broken canines burrow into William's skin leaving the roots exposed as an extension of his own bone and blood. He pulls the gun's comb to his cheek and steadies his aim, but the dog is already gone, dying somewhere within the woods. William fires anyway, twice into the trees.

"Fucking dog." William removes his shoe for the sock underneath. He wraps his wrist, leaving the dog's teeth in for fear that the blood won't stop.



Excerpt from *Stranger Will* cont'd

A novel by Caleb J. Ross

The sun sinks to the horizon. William replaces his shoe and stands tall to the pink sky. It's been a day, he tells himself. The sun was high when he first arrived, heavy on his shoulders. Now he watches glow disappear and wonders for a moment how time works when he visits the billboard.

He continues into the clearing, his hand swinging at his side and throbbing enough for pain but not enough for retreat. The setting sun stretches shadows along the grass. William steps over some stones, trips on others, focused not on the impediments but on what might lie just ahead of them.

He almost passes a fallen bird. In the dusk, it so nearly resembles a shrub. The message is dirty and unreadable without a full sun. He stuffs it into his pocket and continues.

A second body appears—fresh, perhaps the bird he just shot. He stuffs the note in with the first.

Sweat pinkens the sock on his hand, and he can feel the pumping blood hit between the beats of his heart. He is tired and satisfied. The messages in his pocket crease tight as he steps back toward the highway.

The sock swells during the ride home. William dumps peroxide from the back of his van over the wound. By the time he climbs the steps to his porch he holds his hand above his head to keep the blood from spilling.

Julie will be sleeping when he opens the door. Or at least very close. She will pretend not to be upset when he wakes her, pretend to have been worried about him for a moment, offering a slow sneer

before detailing her day's events. She will tell him about cravings and pains, hiccups and sore muscles, and all the trauma she's had to endure to ensure a healthy child. She will have again altered the plans for a future home, and William will listen, nodding as he unbuttons his shirt and removes his shoes.

But tonight when he opens the door she is asleep on the couch. William wants to wake her, to show her his wound and describe the situation, elevating the danger enough for sympathy, his own needy parasite, but instead he lets her sleep. He is tired and dirty. The drama can wait for morning.

He piles his soiled clothes in the corner. Naked, he starts toward the bathroom, massaging the destroyed muscle below his thumb. The broken teeth dig into his hand. He is eager to pull them free, let the wound run pink under cold water, but he remembers the messages in his pocket. Careful to keep Julie sleeping he slides into the kitchen, finds a flashlight. It flickers before keeping a steady beam.

The first message mentions a car, a Plymouth Fury, and immediately William conceives taping it next to the group of notes from a man who boasts about sexual conquests in the back of his car. William smiles anyway and shoves it under a loose piece of tape in the Fury Man's already large neighborhood.

Julie turns and moans.

The second note belongs to a larger story William doesn't recognize. It rambles on about regret. Either miscellaneous or start something new, he thinks and sets the note aside on a small table next to Julie's head.

All these words, all these stolen messages are pinned along the west wall of his home.

When approached objectively, the wall appears decorative. Long stretches of multi-colored yarn twist and wrap around the pins. These lines connect similar messages William has come to assume represent similar people—his own little neighborhoods. Some strings are left hanging free in anticipation of new lives.

What results from all of this is a massive net-



work of colored veins flowing along the wall. The strands can change; they move to suit his mood. William might shift around entire communities, guessing, waiting for that moment when the Earth slows enough for him to latch on until his world and the real world move together, seamlessly as one.

Until then, it's all just patching sutures. Connecting dots.

Julie doesn't mind but insists the wall must be cleared once the baby is born. Daycare might be a valid option. Susan Reynolds offers her services via the pigeon ring and seems trustworthy enough. William has no reason to doubt otherwise. Such a massive network of enthusiasts warrants some open naiveté.

He turns off the flashlight and steps into the bathroom to clean his wound, afraid, yet proud, of what disease or parasite might already be growing within him.



Mascarpone Cheesecake with Almond Crust

A recipe recommended by Joe Krauska

Good ingredients, good spices and some basic cooking techniques are all I need for a satisfying recipe. Cheesecake would meet those criteria except for the fact that it is a custard, which can be painful to cook at times.

First there's the crust. Most people might try to cut back on the butter in a cheesecake crust to save the calories. If you want diet food, have fresh fruit, cheesecake isn't about sacrificing.

A good barrier to keep out the water bath helps too. I've started using large oven safe bags over the pan, tied on with kitchen string, and I haven't had a leak yet.

Next comes the batter. The key

here is to carefully mix the ingredients that are all the same temperature.

Finally, how the cheesecake cools can make a huge difference to the final product. The method I've developed requires a long rest period, before refrigeration. After the cheesecake is 95% done, turn off the oven and let it sit with the oven door open a few inches.

Mascarpone Cheesecake with Almond Crust

Adapted From Giada De Laurentiis

Crust:

1 cup slivered almonds (optionally lightly toasted)

2/3 cup graham cracker crumbs, about 10 squares

3 tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted

Filling:

2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, room temperature



Photos by Joe Krauska





2 (8-ounce) containers mascarpone cheese, room temperature
1 1/4 cups sugar
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 large eggs, room temperature

For the crust: Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Tightly wrap the outside of a 9-inch diameter springform pan with 2 3/4-inch-high sides with 3 layers of heavy-duty foil. Finely grind the almonds, cracker crumbs, and sugar in a food processor. Add the butter and process until moist crumbs form. Press the almond mixture onto the bottom of the prepared pan (not on the sides of the pan). Bake the crust until it is set and beginning to brown, about 12 minutes. Cool. Decrease the oven temperature to 325 degrees F.

For the filling: Using an electric mixer, beat

the cream cheese, mascarpone cheese, and sugar in a large bowl until smooth, occasionally scraping down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula. Beat in the lemon juice and vanilla. Add the eggs, 1 at a time, beating just until blended after each addition.

Pour the cheese mixture over the crust in the pan. Place the springform pan in a large roasting pan. Pour enough hot water into the roasting pan to come halfway up the sides of the springform pan. Bake until the center of the cheesecake moves slightly when the pan is gently shaken, about 1 hour 5 minutes (the cake will become firm when it is cold). Rest cake with oven door open for 15 minutes. Transfer the cake to a rack; cool for 1 hour. Refrigerate until the cheesecake is cold, at least 8 hours and up to 2 days.



Whodunit

About our Authors & Artists

Gary Beck has spent most of his adult life as a theater director and worked as an art dealer when he couldn't earn a living in the theater. He has also been a tennis pro, a ditch digger and a salvage diver. His chapbook 'Remembrance' was published by Origami Condom Press, 'The Conquest of Somalia' was published by Cervena Barva Press, 'The Dance of Hate' was published by Calliope Nerve Media, 'Material Questions' was published by Silkworms Ink and 'Dispossessed' was published by Medulla Press. A collection of his poetry 'Days of Destruction' was published in by Skive Press. Another collection 'Expectations' was published by Rogue Scholars press. His original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway and toured colleges and outdoor performance venues. His poetry has appeared in hundreds of literary magazines. He currently lives in New York City.

Truth Thomas is the author of three collections of poetry (*Party of Black*, *A Day of Presence*, and *Bottle of Life*). He serves on the editorial boards of both the *Tidal Basin Review* and the *Little Patuxent Review*. Some of his work has appeared in: *Alehouse*, *Quiddity Literary Journal*, *Houston Literary Review*, and *The 100 Best African American Poems* (edited by Nikki Giovanni).

Leland Jamieson's two collections

of poetry *21ST CENTURY BREAD* (2007), and *IN VITRO: NEW SHORT RHYMING POEMS POST-9/11* (2009), plus a guide for high school teachers and self-taught poets, *MAKING METAPHOR POEMS* (2009) can be found, with texts and videos, at <http://www.jamiesonpoetry.com>.

Caleb J Ross has been published widely, both online and in print. He is the author of *Charactered Pieces: stories* (OW Press), *Stranger Will: a novel* (Otherworld Publications, 2011) and, *I Didn't Mean to Be Kevin: a novel* (Black Coffee Press, 2011). Visit his official page at www.calebjross.com, his Twitter feed at @calebjross, and his Facebook at facebook.com/rosscaleb.

Joe Krauska is a family man and engineer. He cares for a lovely wife and daughter who look a lot alike. Joe is a devotee of wholesome cooking. He abhors both artificial ingredients and those he did not buy with a coupon.

Claire Suellentrop is one of *Cannoli Pie's* Co-Editors 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 Krauska is *Cannoli Pie's* other Co-Editor. He is a Kansas expatriate living in New York. He pontificates at <http://unronic.blogspot.com>. He is Assistant Editor of The College of Staten Island's *Caesura*, swears oaths by *The Outlaw Bible of American Poetry* and is a fan of Scotch.

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