
365 New Words a Year: October

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365 New Words a Year: October

LUCIENNE S. BLOCH

eristic *adj.* pertaining to disputation or controversy.

The word of the day for the first of October on my desk calendar. It is printed in blatant boldface, a provocation I didn't notice before. I never used this kind of calendar until the beginning of this year. I tear off the previous day's page every morning and discard it, glance at the new word and its definition, but I never saw the unusual word as a challenging shove, not even as a milder nudge. There's an idea. Why not take it for a walk?

yette *v.* to concede.

1-800-FEELING was the counseling referral service number advertised on a placard in the 86th Street crosstown bus. Very convenient, a toll-free call for emotions, as easy as phoning for merchandise from a catalogue, express delivery, satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. What would I order? A red blanket of cheerfulness? A high-intensity confidence lamp? Yeah, yeah, I chided my reflection in the bus window, 1-800-DREAMER. The sky was blue, the color of truth and constancy, of melancholy, moldy cheese, flatted notes, the void. I got off the bus at the next stop and stomped the rest of the way home feeling like a hammer with nothing to nail.

ventifact *n.* an object that has been grooved and polished by the erosive action of wind-driven sand.

The pages of my address book have so many scratched-out names and phone numbers and addresses that it looks like an army of inky-footed chickens marched across them, saluting marriages, divorces, moves, job changes, shop closures, estrangements, disappearances, deaths. There is a blank-paged

address book in my desk drawer. It has been there for many years. From time to time, I think about using it for the current numbers and addresses of the people I still see and talk with. Then I think again. The up-to-date entries might scuttle my past too abruptly, too conclusively, maybe speed up the natural rate of my heat and energy loss. The slower that entropic inevitability goes, the better. I keep the new address book handy as a sort of protective amulet; its clean ivory pages may ensure my safe passage to a still-unmarked future.

interrobang *n.* a punctuation mark combining a question mark and an exclamation point, indicating a mixture of query and assertion.

I watched a nature show on television about the various sorts of glaciers and how they move, regardless of global warming. Solid ice creeps, grinds, shears, calves bergy bits, constantly deforming itself to maintain a balance between the pressure of accumulated snow and meltage. There is a lesson in that information, but its personal application could be seriously oppressive.

mumpsimus *n.* a person who clings obstinately to an exposed error in practice or expression.

An e-mailed wedding invitation came some months ago, with links to three Web sites where the couple was registered for gifts. A printed invitation did not follow, although I waited for one so I could respond as I was taught to do, by hand in ink on paper. After three weeks, I wrote a note to the bride-to-be, whose home address I had to get from her aunt as it didn't appear on the e-vite. We could not go to the wedding in Seattle. I

sent a gift, but not from their online lists. A thank-you note has yet to arrive. Sometimes I feel like a kettle that has lost its whistle, rusting steadily, corroded by a new disorder: the prolapse of civility.

jauk *v.* to trifle or toy with.

A skein of honking Canada geese just flew by, interrupting the sky framed by the window next to my desk. They cut through the air in a neat V formation, wings beating in tight symmetry. I once read that the ancient Greeks believed their alphabetic forms were derived from the sight of cranes in flight: long twig-thin legs and necks and beaks bent in sharp angles. This may be apocryphal lore, but it's plausible enough. I can picture letters of the alphabet gliding and soaring on thermals, swooping down to grab meaning the way red-tailed hawks dive for prey. What were the geese sky-writing just now? V for voyage? for victory? vamoosing? vitality? Odds are, it was V for vetoing anthropocentric presumptions.

farraginous *adj.* composed of various things in no fixed order.

I am getting the hang of daily vocabulary challenges. Or am I hanging back, as usual? I falter when it comes to taking chances, in life, of thought, in reckless emotional outbursts. Spur-of-the-moment episodic writing is positively daunting. Even so, these random tussles intrigue me. Reason enough to continue with them, pass a little time every morning tangling with the suggestive pulls and counterforces of uncommon words, flipping them onto my own mat of circumstances. Then I turn to less parenthetical work, though no less speculative or arbitrary.

exiguous *adj.* scanty, meager; inadequate

The prayer book for the Yom Kippur services I attended last month has an A-to-Z list of atonement-worthy sins. Trafficking with cynics is one of them. I don't often trade with other cynics, but I do some business with my innate and experientially confirmed pessimism. I swap it for irony whenever the switch is feasible. Irony is a better hedge against disappointment. Or so it feels to me. Both are cheap.

patulous *adj.* spreading widely from a center; open, gaping.

The hunter's moon was visible last night, reddish, flamboyant, insistent. I looked at it as a matter of course. The riddles of the universe don't generally seize my attention. Stars and planets and galaxies winking in the dark skies are remote realities. Closer mysteries wow me: the amazements of happenstance, the manna of laughter, the wonders of love and the imagination, the transformative democracy of pain.

riprap *n.* large broken stones used to construct foundations, embankments, walls or jetties.

The single non-golf, non-medical, adult magazine in the ophthalmologist's waiting room was a months-old copy of *People*. Stale gossip or not, I read it until the drops blurred my vision. I learned more about Hootie and the Blowfish than I care to know. Eventually, I was taken into the examining room. "Any difficulties to report since I saw you last year?" the doctor asked.

"None," I replied, sanitizing the bulletin. My eyes, at least, are fine. My heart is another story, one I won't tell. Many years ago, I resolved never to tap my children's or my marriage's private circuits for narrative voltage. Sticking to that plan may smack of censorship, but it has proved to be a win-win situation for all of us in that tiny junction box.

ataraxy *n.* emotional or mental tranquility.

Strolling in the park, enjoying the autumn light that scours the eyes until everything visible sparkles, I overheard one white-haired jogger tell another: "I'm talking about the days when the Perrier 10K was the big thing. Anyone could join the race.

What were the geese sky-writing just now? V for voyage? for victory? vamoosing? vitality?

We used to get more than a cup of water after the run. There was yogurt, there were bananas, there was a bottle of Perrier. There used to *be* stuff."

Yes, I agreed. There was stuff. There is still a lot of stuff. I don't want stuff. I want the intangible nuts and bolts of being ready for whatever comes next.

apatetic *adj.* assuming colors or forms for camouflage.

When I had juvenile faith in the truth in advertising, I believed that being a "Breck Girl" was a cinch, a matter of the right shampoo, a good haircut, nice skin, glasses-free eyes, a smile that revealed straight white teeth, and a soft-edged prettiness that invited approaches. I wanted to be at least a semblance of that iconic American girl of the post-World War II era. I used Breck daily, had the same barrettes and velvet hairbands as the Breck girls, my skin was okay, my teeth and eyes good, my smile a decent copy of theirs. Still, being perceived as a Breck girl was not in my cards, as far from likelihood as heaven on earth. I didn't recognize that improbability until I had slogged through the barrens of middle school, when I saw the Breck girl for the mirage she was. She vanished, only to be immediately replaced by stunning women in Maidenform bras who dreamed of winning an election, being a firefighter, a toreador, a private eye, breaking the bank at Monte Carlo, being and doing anything and everything. Those lingerie ads depicted glamorous worldly goals to aim for, maybe achieve, even without resorting to sexy semi-nudity in public. My mother was a paragon of cosmopolitan glamour, with allure and dazzle to spare, so my hopes in regard to surface attractions were not

entirely farfetched, though mainly unfulfilled. Another mirage met the end it deserved, and remains unlamented.

foraminous *adj.* full of holes.

I came across the phrase "inherent vice" in *The Economist*, and googled it. It is a term used by lawyers, art and archival conservators, and insurance companies. It refers to the essential instability of a thing's components which contribute to its deterioration or wastage. Also known as a hidden defect, or the very nature of material that tends to decay on its own. Memory is not a material thing, but its vice is also inherent, though clearly not hidden for people of a certain age. My age. I want to believe I still have the ability to recall events and names and ideas at will. Wanting is a lousy substitute for having.

opsimath *n.* a person who begins to learn late in life.

I went to a housewarming party on Central Park West, alone, my husband is bird-watching in Panama. I should have known better; it was the kind of party that predicts itself with "Regrets Only" on the invitation card. E and J spent two weeks at a tennis ranch in Arizona last April, came home determined to shed their French Provincial skin. They asked a gallery in Phoenix to put together a collection of Southwestern Indian artifacts, and had their apartment redecorated suitably, Nouveau Native, I would call it. Something scrunched underfoot as I walked into the hall where E was greeting her guests. I looked down, saw sand on the bare terracotta-tiled floor. "It was the caterer's idea," E said when she hugged me. The living and dining rooms were crammed with standees, only a couple of people braved the low armless couches upholstered in pinto ponyskin. There were wee cactus plants on the coffee table, rough-sawn planks mounted on the severely distressed adobe-colored walls for the display of Zuni pots and kachina dolls and the like, a Mission dining table of intrusive bulk with eight matching chairs. I got a drink and squeezed through the crowd for a look at the view, almost bumped into a lit-up glass box on a pedestal against the wall between the two windows fronting the park. It was a cage

with a snake in it. I didn't stop to check if it was a rattlesnake, for utter authenticity. I left at warp speed.

concinnity *n.* a close harmony; a blending.

My father died in my girlhood room in the apartment my mother still lives in. I occasionally enter that room when I visit her, just to be me in a mix of tenses, among them the past, the historical present, the future perfect, the past continuous, and the durative. This could be construed as opening the door to trouble, to sorrow, to youthful confusions, but it doesn't feel problematic or disquieting. On the contrary. I like the teamwork of that gathering in there, my prior and immediate and potential selves in cahoots, pulling together, pooling acquired knowledge and reasonable guesses, making common cause against time's everyday constraints.

klister *n.* a sticky wax for use on skis, as for slopes where snow is excessively wet.

Patience and Fortitude are the nicknames of the lions on the front steps of Manhattan's main library, an imposing Beaux-Arts building constructed on the site of an old high-walled reservoir that piped Croton water to the city when it was still mostly undeveloped above 23rd Street. I like to think of Patience and Fortitude having watery cold feet, although their names refute that notion. Shaky or solid footings, they are an inseparable twosome, paired for life and its ups and downs, peace and strife, bitterness and sweetness, plans and compromises, the whole mixed bag of vicissitudes that shape people's characteristic doings and feelings. I have ups and downs galore, a short on meeting them with unflappable calm and courage.

cunctation *n.* delay; postponement.

I take trains on the Northeast Corridor to visit my children and grandchildren. I prefer this method of short-haul travel to flying. It takes me where I want to go, and it takes me back in time, a nice fringe benefit. On a train to Boston last Friday, I thought about how specific travel was

when trips by rail were customary. We ate in dining cars and smoked in club cars and slept in cunning berths on Pullmans, saw the particulars of towns and landscapes we passed through. Trains and railroad lines had names that resonated with American hustle and the catchy medley of its sectional breadth: Superchief, Twentieth Century Limited, Hot Shots, Cannonballs, Bangor & Aroostook, Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, Great Northern, Texas & Pacific, New York, New Haven & Hardly Moving, as some of us who rode that line in our 1950s college years called it. When the train I was on the other day pulled into Providence, I suddenly recalled the gist of a passage from a novel by Thomas Wolfe that I read in high school and appropriated as a screenplay for my own little movie.

It is in *Of Time and the River*, on those few pages where Wolfe describes a trip made by Eugene Gant, his fictional stand-in, who is headed north to Harvard on a train barreling across the Virginian countryside that sleeps and dreams in the moonlight. I didn't bother with the Latinate coda of that passage, or with the two apocalyptic horsemen, Pale Pity and Lean Death, who galloped along with the train. Even truncated, it spoke volumes to me, a born and bred refugee. It was more than a picturesque train ride by the light of a silvery moon, less than a hero's journey to enlightenment. It ground-truthed my airy hopes, pinpointed my raw hungers. I wanted to eat up the miles on America's earth as the pounding wheels of Wolfe's train did, closing distances, eventually get where I longed to arrive: at a spot to take root in, identify as an abiding inmost home. I was too young then to appreciate the now, to acknowledge that a destination is only a stop, one of many stations on a local line that terminates where I don't want to be just yet. As for feeling firmly rooted in America, I missed that station, I was napping when the train reached it, dreaming other dreams.

I got off the Acela on Friday at Back Bay, thinking of trains that carried human freight to death. Where was pity then?

maffick *v.* to celebrate boisterously.

A senior citizens group was meeting in the big room off the lobby of the 92nd Street Y, where I was buying tickets for a concert.

Summer 2010

ÚTILES ESCOLARES 

Verduras Coma verduras crujientes como merienda en la escuela. 

Granos Integrales Consuma como merienda cereales integrales listos para comer o galletas integrales. 

Frutas Coma frutas variadas. Las frutas tienen diferente contenido nutricional. 

Leche Como merienda tome leche sin o baja en grasa. 

Carnes y legumbres Escoja sándwiches de pavo, pollo, rosbif o jamón. 

El éxito en la escuela no sólo depende de tener lápices, libros y borradores adecuados. Los estudios muestran que una dieta rica en verduras, frutas y granos integrales, junto con un estilo de vida saludable, puede ayudar a que su hijo tenga éxito. Descubra cómo la buena nutrición puede llevar a grandes cosas en MyPyramid.gov. 

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NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW 5

I stood by the open door for a while, listening to an elderly gent tell the group about a prank he played on his father, decades ago, obviously. I figured the seniors were having memory refreshments, snacks and juicy flash-backs. His mischief involved the temporary disappearance of a set of dentures. As he told the tale, he took out his teeth so that his audience would get the full effect of his papa's mumbled angst. Two other members of the group entered into the spirit of his story, unabashedly removed their dentures and clacked them like castanets, prompting mass mirth. I wished for a minute that my teeth were also detachable, nimble and frisky, and then I pictured all the teeth in that room lining up to dance a can-can, clicking up and down, Rockette-style, in perfect unison.

shandrydan *n.* a rickety vehicle.

Identity theft is on the rise, a steep upswing, according to news reports. It is hard to even imagine the double-digit slump of a person whose identity is stolen, let alone shanghaied for nefarious purposes wholly foreign to that individual's character. Still, maybe reclaiming an identity could be more than a laborious salvage operation involving legitimate documents and restored personal and financial reputations. It might be an opportunity for the gut renovation of self-reinvention. Lose a same old personality, find a new improved model. The hitch is the unclear outcomes of untested choices. The being you know could trump the one you contrive.

williwaw *n.* a sudden violent wind or commotion

The density of loneliness caught me by surprise last night, as if it were an unfamiliar experience. I was asleep when I woke with a jolt, shaking, sweaty, heart thumping rapidly. I leaped out of bed thinking: panic attack, panic attack, Mayday! Then I reminded myself that I almost never have acute panic attacks. It was being alone that disturbed my sleep; my husband is still away. The solitariness hit me hard, solid as a brick, heavy as a burden.

I made a cup of tea, turned on two lamps in the living room, and sat there sipping slowly. The lamps glimmered like fireflies in the black of the uncovered windows. Ephemeral creature company, at least.

I could but won't report more. Four of my people died. It is time to face the arithmetic.

conterminous *adj.* having common boundaries or limits.

Yet another friend fell abruptly and critically ill yesterday. This has been a year of family and friends suffering infarcts, metastases, strokes, fibrillations, vision losses, and more of the damaging same, too frequently. Terminal blight has set in, unleafing the tree of people in my life. I know that age is a big factor in the big picture of bodily health, but I was not ready for a sickscap to impinge on my other vistas. I feel like the traveler who came back from the desert and reported on the shattered ruins of Ozymandias's once-grand monument; this is some of what I saw.

N's ashen face on the white pillow looked like an eraser smudge. She was getting another bone marrow treatment. I had to wear a mask and sterile gown, stand by the door, couldn't even shake her hand, much less give her a hug.

R, who loves gadgets, his desk and pockets loaded with the latest electronic devices, his kitchen a course in advanced appliances, now has the ultimate novelty implanted in his chest, a new heart. He was the one who joked about his new-model pump, desperate to see a future in his still-reversible situation.

The sunlight on the river bounced off the mirror above the sink and beamed right into M's eyes. Being aphasic, he could not ask someone to lower the shade. After some minutes, I noticed the problem, and adjusted the shade. That was all I could do for him. I am not sure which of us felt more inadequate at that precise moment.

Last June, D took two sets off me with her powerful unerring serve, torso arched back, hand high-fiving the sky in her toss. Two sections of that graceful arch have

been removed. We walked up and down a long corridor on the surgical ward and I felt nothing instead of a breast when she leaned on me.

I could but won't report more. Four of my people died. It is time to face the arithmetic.

galluptious *adj.* delightful, pleasing.

There were six yellow apples on a willowware plate on the kitchen table. I took them off the plate and ate two for lunch, studied the blue-and-white scene on the dish while I chewed. A footbridge crossed a meandering stream, fishes swam in the ripply water, a woman stood on flower-studded grass, looking toward a man on the bridge, two birds hovered in the sky, a pagoda rose at the foot of distant hills. I pictured myself in the scenery on the plate, taking a lazy dip in the stream, drying off in the soft air, hiking to the pagoda, going inside for a look. Then the doorbell rang, startled me out of my reverie. It was a delivery man with my dry-cleaned coat. I put it away, went back to the kitchen and quartered the second apple. Once a week I quasi-diet, eat fruit for lunch. I chew each mouthful exactly twenty-five times; I read somewhere that helps to satisfy the appetite. There is also satisfaction in the discipline of methodical routines, some anyhow. Not much. Twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, I swallow.

catawampus *adj.* askew, awry; on a diagonal.

Regional writing always appealed to me, Southern and Appalachian especially, novels or memoirs that might begin with such a sentence as: *The day our spotted pig was slaughtered and we lads ran off with its scalded hide and hauled it up the flagpole by the P.O. where it flew pink and raggedy as a pair of Sister's knickers was the day my pa swore a whipping was too fine for me, I needed a dose of the county lockup, which purely cruel medicine I was soon to sample.* Or words to that effect. My childhood terrain and its vernacular were nowhere near so naturally breezy and outspoken. Even so, the patch of flinty silence I heard as a child turned out to be fertile, watered by trickles that seep from cracks in stones. This is not a complaint, merely an

observation. I see what I see. I contain what I was. The rest is semantics.

diffluent *adj.* tending to flow off or away.

I killed an hour with the mummies. I start work early in the mornings, knock off around noon. When my afternoons drag heavily, I sometimes drop into a nearby museum for a visual pick-me-up. The Egyptian rooms at the Met are my favorites. Gazing at the souvenirs of ancient desert realms, the preserved bodies swaddled in fine linen, the smirking sphinxes and massive stylized statues and alabaster jars and golden dung beetles, I feel time dilating, getting thin and slack, passing anyhow: no crunch, no punch, no point beyond the duration of its moment.

soon *v.* to skip across water like a flat stone.

These anecdotal fragments are dots on grids of ifs: possibilities of given words. I bingo or I don't. Either way, it's a little breather before I tackle the taller orders of the day.

I could use a lift this mopey dismal morning, some pie-in-the-sky treats.

What if people's faces told their whole stories?

What if feelings were facts?

What if the child was not the mother of the woman?

What if the true was the real?

What if I were a Magic 8 Ball with formulaic answers that fit all questions?

What if I stop floating hypotheticals and get down to the business at hand.

pedetentous *adj.* proceeding gradually or cautiously.

Big birthdays loom too large on our horizons. We should be freer of numerical rankings by now. Still, those decadal birthdays rise like mountains to be scaled and crossed. Approaching, we size them up, check out our equipment, and resolve to move beyond them as quickly and smoothly as we can.

Some mountains are rounder than others, definitely more climbable. I don't recall reaching ten, but twenty was the

Berkshires, the Alleghennies, the Catskills, soft easy contours. Thirty was the Coast Range for me, sunny and green, basking in just being there, oblivious to the fault-lines below. Forty was the Grand Tetons, edgy jabs at an intimidatingly spacious sky. Fifty was the Cascades, thickly forested, rainy, a slippery up and down and over. Sixty was the Rockies, in Alaska, cold peaks pointing to promises I haven't gotten around to keeping, pointing at the clock. Seventy, which I recently crossed, was not mountains, it was mesas and buttes, rugged outcroppings of regrets.

incuse *v.* to hammer or stamp in, as a design or figure on a coin.

Danger is the ghost in my machine, a phantom that charges my anxieties, denials, dislikes, wariness, all the impalpable forces at work below the surface realities. The danger is notional but pressing: a chronic awareness of what happened to people like me in the war my parents and I escaped shortly before fleeing was impossible. Over the years, I have tried to defy the specter of danger that haunts me, slam the door in its face, gag its alarming moans, overthrow it, outflank it, banish it, bury it. A for effort, but I flunked fighting it, forgetting it. I tremble still, safe and sound, ostensibly anyway.

harpocratic *adj.* pertaining to silence.

A small still-life painting in the window of an antique shop caught my eye as I was walking on Third Avenue. The discrepancy between the picture's remarkable radiance and its humdrum subject matter was puzzling. I stopped to look at the precisely-rendered image of a pair of scuffed misshapen navy-blue men's leather slippers angled in a balletic first position, heels back to back, toes pointed outward, parked on a shaggy green bath mat on a glistening white tile floor. What were the painter's latent subjects? The tenacity of the domestic? The elegant posturing of exactitude? The false light of things? The poignancy of wear-and-tear? I continued walking up the avenue, feeling more disappointed with myself than with the painting's poker face, wishing I could stop digging for meaty

bones that, in all probability, are not cached there.

faffle *v.* to stutter or mumble; to luff, as the sail on a boat heading into the wind.

"Intheyearstocome you'll understand," my father used to say, speeding through the first five syllables of that pronunciation so rapidly that I heard and thought of them as a single long word. I supposed "intheyearstocome" was a stage of growing up I would get to, like puberty, which I hadn't yet reached but knew was ahead of me, according to my grade-school classmates who had older sisters. "Intheyearstocome" wasn't just yucky blood in underpants or moody fits or petting from first to third base. Intheyearstocome would be a higher greater stage of maturity, the onset of lasting understanding. I waited impatiently for that development to kick in, once and for all. Now I know how wrong my simple figuring was: once and once and once again and again are momentary integers that don't add up to always, don't even approximate it.

whigmaleerie *n.* an odd or fanciful device or gimmick; a whimsical idea.

A headline jumped out from the newspaper I put on the kitchen counter to protect it from the chore I was doing: Virtual Reality Blurs Line Between the Artificial and the Genuine. I stopped polishing my loafers and read the article carefully. This could be useful, powerful illusions, so strong you could chop wood or logic with them. I thought about taking perceptual leaps into computer-simulated situations where character and experience and riskiness and common sense don't sway behavior. Wearing electronic goggles and gloves I could hang glide over Niagara Falls, build a user-friendly metropolis, stroll on the moon, see trees through a giraffe's eyes, drive the Indy 500. The technology exists, is already cheap enough for popular sale. I wondered what would spark ambitions when and if fully-interactive simulations of life are readily available. Yearn to be Baryshnikov or an astronaut or Venus Williams? Pop on some goggles and be them without the struggle of becoming

them. Too easy, too ersatz, virtually worthless. It might be a good video game or surgical teaching tool, but it's not for me. I smeared reddish-brown polish on the headline. There. Blotched. Actual. My brand of lifelike.

skookum *adj.* marked by strength or power; first-rate; splendid.

We were sitting in the balcony, Row B. The hall was packed, the house lights down, the audience hushed, the chorus singing its collective heart out in the closing fugue of Mozart's controversially unfinished "Requiem Mass in D Minor." Miraculous, I thought, Mozart or Süßmayr or whoosis, this is sublime music. The soaring voices filled my skin,

my spirit, I felt vast and emphatically elated. Very soon, I knew, the drums would announce the final notes of the "Requiem," the applause would explode, the miracle would be over. That's that. Earthbound again, as usual. We filed out of Carnegie Hall with the crowd. Two feet on the ground, one step after another. It must amount to something. □

SUZANNE FRISCHKORN

My Body as The Tropicana Nightclub, 1952

My body's Arcos de Cristal lined
in licentious points of light.

It's the crème de la crème and the güempa.
It's a legendary simmer.

¡Mamá, estás matándome!

It's Latin Jazz syncopation.
The trumpets hold its melody.

Roulette, Baccarat, Craps, 21—
my body, the flashy casino of beauty.

It's the showgirl girdled in orchids
between sets, and it's her sequins' shimmer.

Its bolero—*lie to me, tell me you love
me, even if I know you don't.*

Notes: güempa is a mambo and also slang for "good lay." The English translation of line 5 is "Baby, you're killing me!" The bolero lyric is from Olga Guillot's signature bolero, "Miénteme" ("Lie to Me").

BRADFORD TICE

The Siege

They didn't think we had it in us—the guts, the balls. *Faggots are revolting, but not riotous*, they said. *Except in the muddle of their sexes*. We had nowhere left to go, and it seemed that whatever came to our hands was leaving. Outside the bar, under the full face of the moon, the night was so humid we felt as slicked and oiled as baseball gloves. The mythic possibilities of that hour were endless. Fairies of every color throwing glitter at the walls of Jericho. It's in the nature of things to come to ruin. When your face—and it's always your face—is pressed into asphalt, the abrading grit of brick and cement, the smell you come away with is smoke, powder, brimstone. I was not the first to hurl coin at the thieves, as if someone had decided this is what they wanted of us. I was not the first to pick up bottles with the purpose of unmaking them, nor wave the parking meter like some wand that could conduct history. But watching the prisoners roughly shoved into the wagons, their wigs ripped away from them, faces bleeding, the catcalls started—*Gay power! Gay power!* as if we had turned the trick. Hip-tilt, moon-bashed, joy.