

**soup city festival by  
william doreski**

Entering Soup City from the south  
down a series of reckless slopes  
I'm struck by the expressions  
of asbestos-sided buildings,  
their windows blacker than crepe.  
The soup festival's this weekend  
but the city doesn't look festive.  
No pedestrians. A lonely cop  
swaggers past a restaurant scarred  
by a recent fire. I'd ask him  
where I can reheat the soup  
I've made to help celebrate  
the founding of Soup City but  
he looks too rugged to live  
on liquid victuals, his gun belt  
bisecting him like a scar.  
Down one more hill, across the railroad,  
past a row of abandoned storefronts,  
I find the city hall squatting  
in a weedy plot. The mayor  
waves me into the parking lot  
and receives my tureen of soup  
with a sigh. The soup festival  
has failed to attract a rabble  
of out-of-towners to compete  
in the spoon-off, so he and I  
and maybe that lonely cop  
will share this soup while the city  
groans as foundations sink further  
into the marshland its founders  
foolishly thought to pave over.  
My elegant cream of mushroom  
soup features so many species  
at least one must be toxic enough  
to erase the mayor's troubles.  
Overhead the sulfurous light  
rumples like an overcoat. I shake  
the mayor's hand, head for a hotel,  
and as the first gray raindrops fall  
pray that when the mud swallows  
the city it leaves no brick or stone  
exposed, nothing to regret.

**patchwork by  
sean ruane**

I whistled through my left nipple at a woman who was leaning on a rake,  
smoking a cigarette.

My teeth are as white and moist as chicken roe.

I smiled at her, the teeth glistening with the truth of seven autistic medicine  
men.

What are you whistling at, honey? she said. You're as big as a grocery store  
holiday ham display, I said.

I was hungry. She made me that way. You are making me hungry, I said.

Your teeth, she said, are whiter than saint's thighs!

I responded to her compliment with another whistle, though this time using  
my right nipple.

Those are two of the whistlingest nipples I ever heard, she said.

Thank you, I said. I had my nipples replaced with whistles long ago.

This to mock the navel .

**i am still alone even though you are somewhere by  
raffi robert kiureghian**

in a failed attempt to make you fall in love with me  
i tried to fall in love with you  
or something.

i ended up falling asleep with a very articulate  
feeling of confusion in your bed.

you walked away.  
you had on a light blue dress.

you walked away wearing a light blue dress.

**the presentation by  
kevin o'cuinn**

I was okay for the first hour because  
I was reliving the weekend  
In my head.

But then my ears started bleeding and  
I yawned so wide my jaw locked and  
the convulsions started that threw me  
around the room.

The first hour was pretty good though.

(one page of lit. edited by SKINC (sam+katie cole).)

(submit@paperwall.org)