

MOLE FIZZ

(2007-2012)

Michael Ball

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lack mountain is the publishing project of zero degree writing program, an informal nexus for poetic exchange. lack mountain is an irregular series devoted to missing and fugitive poetics. lack mountain publications will be available free of charge in digital form; print versions will be distributed to friends & supporters of lack mountain and ZDWP.

Mole Fizz (2007-2012) is lack mountain #4

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Pedestrian Ate My Shoe: Michael Ball's Mole Fizz

Michael Ball's work in *Mole Fizz* often reads like marginalia in some larger, invisible text, an encyclopedia of consciousness, perhaps. He had an ascetic air about him, as though he were unused to crowded rooms or wordy poems. The spareness of his writing seems to reflect that monastic sensibility.

There is a narrative shape to some of these pieces, but one in which narrative logic is subverted and other realities and revelations emerge. The piece on p. 153 ("come whiff chez whiff crane whiff"), e.g., calls to mind Lewis Carroll, and, indeed, there is much here that resembles Nonsense literature. "Licorice" (p. 172) starts off like a parody of detective fiction:

I'd worked it down to a crimson delinquency
fast like the car she drives but it was
the soda cracker bop gulag that breached
the velum of my prize.

Or this mysterious tale (p. 197):

weather retort

wanda lend me

your lurch

forget about

the milk man

dying in an elevator

with a half eaten chicken sandwich

the fell wheel

red reed

Another favorite, full of good advice:

space needle

take care of

your teeth

you

mole 6 fizz

never listened
now
we've dug you up
twice
and still
you're missing
how do you
take us in

Michael Ball clearly enjoyed having fun with language. He is a comic poet before anything else. The textual landscape here teems with constructions similar to spoonerisms and mondegreens: “silence friction” (p. 110), “quip sand” (241), “mono/nuclear/gnosis” (292), “hell sinky” (279). Language always seems to be morphing under Michael’s microscope: “rowr/ aulx” (131). Internal rhymes pop up unexpectedly: “to blast/ that bugle/ mule again” (p. 25). He is always revealing several levels of possibility in his work. Sometimes a strange little story will appear on the page, suggesting a parallel universe lurking close by (p. 40):

glottis / mirth

she took blue santa
from the drawer

he went downtown
to play the xylophone



Michael invited me to read in Baltimore on several occasions, and I ran into him any number of other times as well. He was always a warm and welcoming presence. And, of course, he was a catalyst on the literary front in Baltimore, just the sort of person we can't afford to lose. The *I.E. Reader*, the anthology he edited that grew out of his i.e. reading series, is a testament to his expansive and generous spirit. With *Mole Fizz*, we get to wander inside his wonderfully inventive mind, enjoying the pleasures that abound therein.

—Terence Winch

MOLE FIZZ

we evaporate

in turns

mole fizz is an accumulating vacuum
of seasons & occasions

soft pact

the hand
is not a/ part
of the veil

vermillion

meridian

light rail

sung to survive

in the position

kniving

rife lane

February 7, 2007

mole 11 fizz

nip the roost

thin
and elegant

“that rimes”

those idioms

these and
“monster”
a way from the world
implausible

and containing
obscured

two books at once

February 7, 2007

fuzzbuster

Don't strike that match.
I'm knee deep in tiny
edible hearts.

February 7, 2007

swerve cistern

“Just blink.”

Niagra

February 8, 2007

mole 14 fizz

until

you cannot think

of it (this)

in broad strokes

bare feet beneath

the table

February 9, 2007

each

notched resemblance

that subjects

could become

tormentors / mirrors

“They’re always talking
about money.”

context

curtain

“Open your egg.”

February 9, 2007

foreclosure

i'm willing to will

the will out

of willing

desire is a dripper

February 10, 2007

eloquence clarity economy

and smut

February 10, 2007

mole 18 fizz

leaving the station

time seems immune

to scissors
dissolutions
the afternoon

it's a shave the way
a glance bounces

within the while
the simile smiles

I'm waving from the shore
in a tree fort

February 10, 2007

influx of chairs

he slept
until the point
upended

in latex
or cruelty

a grubbing
curlicue

February 10, 2007

her back to the mirror

the note reads

“There is no such book.”

ravens feasting
in the center
of the street

February 10, 2007

with a small favor

like that lemon

last summer or summer
before last

pinching the rim

of Renee's glass

February 10, 2007

to call something water or night

loofa shrug (mirrordragged)

musky powwow
exacting sand

spill off
the shirts of men

moorless moon
belly of the room

writing on
the precept
wearing
a ring

writing on
the penis
wearing
a ring

“I’d thought the reining stopped.”
“I’d thought the wearing stopped.”

had had

the dark leaf
rused and brushing in the cutlery of day

February 10, 2007

interior with mollusks

and a juicy lime
how

the trolling
decrepitations
of doubt or debt

double and divide

money grows on sleaze

February 10, 2007

fraught geometries

andapanda

“My pipes are painted purple.”

cauliflower interlude

equally
so

to blast
that bugle
mule again

February 10, 2007

tutankhamen

death smells

like a puppy

wet yet

divisible

February 11, 2007

mole 26 fizz

little wrists

of steam

dance the dung

February 14, 2007

mole 27 fizz

... what is a city without a sea?"

and listened
with his eye

February 14, 2007

pills on a grid

voices toenail

“ing?”

enchilada supreme

February 14, 2007

mole 29 fizz

wince

hit it
with a big brush

February 14, 2007

mole 30 fizz

the ice cream man cometh

in cuniform delight

nomasteralabaster

February 14, 2007

mole 31 fizz

guston meets etch-a-sketch

February 15, 2007

mole 32 fizz

I was not writing

from the island

keeping the crows

at sentence level

listing

February 15, 2007

smok'n suzie

in orange

crush

February 15, 2007

mole 34 fizz

apartment

it was circled

best for beans

February 15, 2007

mole 35 fizz

but a window

marsdark

whistling spires

sleek poison

marigolds a yawning child

February 17, 2007

mole 36 fizz

poodle noir

flicker inca red swirl

plustime

sez ants sez ants

February 17, 2007

mole 37 fizz

“uncle”

supine is divine

hot pot o’ moose

February 17, 2007

mole 38 fizz

secant

shave yer head

have a blink

ubergroan

February 20, 2007

mole 39 fizz

glottis / mirth

she took blue santa
from the drawer

he went downtown
to play the xylophone

February 22, 2007

ludic wasp

printer friendly

February 24, 2007

mole 41 fizz

glow Van Winkle glow

vaster vaster

February 24, 2007

mole 42 fizz

hourglass

idiom

peach

February 24, 2007

mole 43 fizz

goose / scintilla

February 25, 2007

mole 44 fizz

green

reel

February 25, 2007

mole 45 fizz

blue

fleece

February 25, 2007

mole 46 fizz

red

knot

February 25, 2007

mole 47 fizz

seance

the way a cat trains space into a synchrony
and objects into initiates

February 25, 2007

maneuver

bush hut

“We make records,
you make whamo frisbees.”

February 26, 2007

mole 49 fizz

slush

February 26, 2007

mole 50 fizz

sorta

reuninhabited

February 26, 2007

mole 51 fizz

center crouched in weight

only illumines the sound
we imagine it
will make

February 26, 2007

mole 52 fizz

toe

loop us

February 28, 2007

mole 53 fizz

a suicide

in spring rain

February 28, 2007

mole 54 fizz

cilantro

waking where the wren of waking

would remind

February 28, 2007

mole 55 fizz

passed too fast

glib chartreuse

March 1, 2007

mole 56 fizz

monster

a way

with the world

March 3, 2007

mole 57 fizz

implausible

containing

March 3, 2007

mole 58 fizz

passenger

March 3, 2007

mole 59 fizz

possible

March 3, 2007

mole 60 fizz

as long

as a tooth in flower

March 3, 2007

mole 61 fizz

saws all

March 3, 2007

mole 62 fizz

daily

bassist

March 3, 2007

mole 63 fizz

these corridors

elapsed

March 3, 2007

mole 64 fizz

“This is the place of Fu Manchu”

an effulgence
waking dead

and where
to land

March 3, 2007

grits

March 3, 2007

mole 66 fizz

patrick

henry

bruce

March 3, 2007

mole 67 fizz

lettuce or cabbage

March 3, 2007

mole 68 fizz

at seven

March 3, 2007

mole 69 fizz

two perfect

paranoid flicks

March 4, 2007

mole 70 fizz

a book and a scarf

sexism peal retroflexion

somnambulist keel

putrefaction (forgot to pass the hat)

March 4, 2007

mole 71 fizz

pith

sequester

plumbane

March 4, 2007

mole 72 fizz

neighboring

(no nouns)

this planet

March 4, 2007

mole 73 fizz

sleepers

goonspattered

March 5, 2007

mole 74 fizz

elemental

March 10, 2007

mole 75 fizz

smoking the roaches

what music

and where

March 10, 2007

mole 76 fizz

in code

March 10, 2007

mole 77 fizz

the noodle bites

behaving selves

March 10, 2007

mole 78 fizz

glommed

blet

March 11, 2007

mole 79 fizz

sally

the math

March 11, 2007

mole 80 fizz

mike

that bitch

March 11, 2007

mole 81 fizz

star

dishes

March 11, 2007

mole 82 fizz

yankee see

yankee doo

March 11, 2007

mole 83 fizz

pedestrian

ate my shoe

March 14, 2007

mole 84 fizz

subden

swhich (flame)

March 14, 2007

mole 85 fizz

beak delay

locus / currents

March 14, 2007

mole 86 fizz

k'n oodles

thesaurist guitarist heist moat bout

plutonium suppository

buzz bait

March 14, 2007

mole 87 fizz

this country (lawns)

a whale of a

shipwreck

of asphodel and miles

flip currency sad juice

cheap tin

cucumbers whittled mammals

burnt rouge tuba rumor and salmon backgammon

poised

March 16, 2007

LOUIS ARMSTRONG
DISCOVERED AMERICA

March 16, 2007

mole 89 fizz

if I don't have to concentrate

too much

game

keep it chill willy

septets

March 19, 2007

mole 90 fizz

not nabokov

finger palace

leaky light

bulb margaret mead

March 20, 2007

mole 91 fizz

dominos

netherworld

March 20, 2007

mole 92 fizz

charge it

if it rains

full sentences and paragraphs

woolly

refrigerated

leave time

March 20, 2007

sea frame

March 23, 2007

mole 94 fizz

cyclops

March 23, 2007

mole 95 fizz

shrapnel

shave

every day

March 28, 2007

mole 96 fizz

stinky cheese and the west

frank

fucking

lloyd

wright

“predisposed”

March 30, 2007

limber tusk

fortuitous

pony up

blow a stone

April 7, 2007

mole 98 fizz

glade

three windows

back rent

gotta cake me

yago

April 12, 2007

mole 99 fizz

*find out something about that onion
damped
leave it there
ungleaned and aware
like us filligree
purred whole inept
salt
lathered things east no
mind no where letting
no where telling
what stall
jerking yer neighbors dog off
june lichen
clay no regrets*

April 15, 2007

journey bled through
the cinema
of godbless the blackheads on your ass
and
we can't bribe
the silos

April 15, 2007

nightlight

sip it

watching a face forget

April 15, 2007

provoke the Nile

crocodile

April 16, 2007

mole 103 fizz

horse dung

such gentle

eyes

April 18, 2007

mole 104 fizz

under water

mindin

a life

April 20, 2007

surf

April 21, 2007

mole 106 fizz

o
c
h
r
e

April 21, 2007

stolen

put

the word

silver in

a poem it

is not a poem

April 22, 2007

reeds

p l a c e m o t e

d u n e s c r i v e n

r o t s o r u c k

b e l c h m e f l i v e r s

f i e r c e s h a n k p e n d i n g

d r i e d l i k e p a p e r

Let Them Play
Slivers
The wall is farting grapefruits
All Began

Why would it
That memory
Come to proverb

instance whether

books or pots

Why in the world would I buy
speculating on something that
is still fiction, still life.

d a t b u r d

April 22, 2007

silence

friction

April 28, 2007

mole 110 fizz

wriggle ink
faint shadow
succinct

the vowel "home"
the crab "delight"

trellised to giving
gone to mine

where we would

find what is

most useful

boom possum
denounced

April 28, 2007

flush to meet the quiver

April 28, 2007

mole 112 fizz

tin thistle acquaint

put the gears in prior

bees to the scroll

moisten it

speaking saying

life

ulterior

April 28, 2007

sky a sleek of bourbon hedged by mauve

April 28, 2007

mole 114 fizz

h a n g e r

April 29, 2007

mole 115 fizz

what sounds from a room what was

memphis / alexandria

hot oil

hold it

thermoplastic giraffe

soft

sea hammer tapping

daylight

April 30, 2007

blent time

wicked

April 30, 2007

mole 117 fizz

palm

mummy harness

“wrong arm”

and the sun’s dossier

mantis praying

May 4, 2007

exempt

May 4, 2007

mole 119 fizz

periplum

May 4, 2007

mole 120 fizz

listening to
the blinds

May 4, 2007

mole 121 fizz

landmass

emerging

May 4, 2007

mole 122 fizz

telescope house

fast ground
crops my ship
magnolia dogwood
in the studio
dripping aluminum
he always had that
bump on his head

trumpet turnips
cursery
bodies streaming
lively carpet
hamsterwheels and nods
nightlights
in the foreground

May 5, 2007

alive

in position

not knowing

mammoth ring

a knife a bug a jar

May 6, 2007

nights last

and yes

the room is yet

the broom is burning

May 7, 2007

ringworm

helicopters rabies belief

May 8, 2007

mole 126 fizz

however the teeth however the many

May 8, 2007

mole 127 fizz

it was a portabella shove that lynxed the limit
gyrating over the frame one tooth on the dial
the other on the no

it peached seeing things in time

r e e l f u r

whose to wax but mine to mop

gone up gone last

keeping house

May 8, 2007

you've got

a vomiting cat

behind

the wrong year

May 11, 2007

crepe

chess polymer cartography

levee or porch

lashes

becoming the first

and fast

bloom

to sea

May 11, 2007

rowr

aulx

May 12, 2007

mole 131 fizz

blisterwink

dice

and beams

spell that

new light

May 13, 2007

mole 132 fizz

that's why we drowned

crib curb twang glaucoma velvet smirk rewind ammonia

May 13, 2007

mole 133 fizz

pool

froth welter

oven apple fritter dawn

spy bonnet

polygamy the bees knees

ancestral cess

wingnuts to boot

May 13, 2007

blue print skirt

turtleswoonmonth

cheating sunglasses

May 15, 2007

mole 135 fizz

regale in newts

asparagus

unification ploys with whizzies

apparatus

low mane low zone

rasping berries do leap slush

onus

end dime

these where words

May 15, 2007

splintering recourse

blew i blew

for mona sails

beatify stew

May 18, 2007

boots too

we're reading

the same book

zippos blang a placard foal

in all her films

two coats

May 22, 2007

spine / ions

makes good gist

i believe in tautologies

to all those with stomachs

please join us and

fuck this text

mollusks nomads perforations

lego else

May 30, 2007

so when we lie

tepid

slight metallic flavor

crisp grip sludge

little jolts

slung to love

June 2, 2007

owls

slow me

tempo red twice

June 7, 2007

mole 141 fizz

skooching

an idiom

June 8, 2007

signal monster doo wop

Power

Is Contempt.

“And you want syrup on that?”

June 9, 2007

stool studies

sticky notes

what we do to a coat rack

is plural

June 13, 2007

moonducks

you should be

writing poems but

yer bugging

a blog

monks of doom

be rain be rain

June 16, 2007

summer

the screen door latch

all the wires

in our lives

June 17, 2007

disguise

shimmytime

shanty

blink rose tubor ruse gloss harbor wrest slight

flailed

ink skins the frame lilt light tongue flora foaming

oaksheen breath flame sunken rudders

towers

tower

June 21, 2007

cluster

if we could catch a house on fire

spiral pegs leaf downwind
pods
winding ground

“to riddle with bullets”

July 12, 2007

cheetah vane

that tabasco cap

two trips

down the stairs

up again

wanting is waiting is wading

subgnosis customized

buggyhawk

drooling crown

July 12, 2007

hand

tribes from the moritorium gloat in the wheels

substance leashed to its periphery of ghosts

tract terse to its time

slow bleedings

leaves glossed black

an aviary of slippery missives

rash of engines

yellow fibers

tiny islands

of equal length

in the squall

July 15, 2007

the random

landing

on the rill

besnook the proofs

dusting down

knuckle cool

against the coal

slum money

to meat the light

July 15, 2007

form dripping forms
equal tensions spun

flit / mash

My Chocolate Daisies
My Porch Sister Maize

fumbling a match
fly on the page

July 15, 2007

come whiff chez whiff crane whiff
in the spelunkers fu

Abjugation and Bolivar
20 robustos (flea parcel tantamount)

lisp through the scrim

explinkshun

a wonked log a
place where the whirl and its gizmo
respite

a loaving square that will nourish
much mulch

respleened
where the chink unstrummed
gobs offa runnel

Fifth Curtain
Sing Home

where you where you where you where you

fields of description

July 19, 2007

how do these fish
such a bright blue sky
in your mirror
vanish

July 21, 2007

alight

fire was trust
distinction is not
implausible here

would you walk in the woulds
rampant with me

July 21, 2007

cats tail

seeing trails

July 29, 2007

mole 156 fizz

dome repo

I was walking
in a novel
with a wharf-rat
attached to my nose
by the butthole.

I'm a salesman.

July 29, 2007

spoon mantra

oscillating bans

have to remember

to plug things in

a ray of sloop

where the faction is

raccoons swill the mussel shells

power out

lil' math

spool rafter

August 13, 2007

antiseptic

canned goods

what once drooped now gimpers

towards oblivion & the restive retina swollen

spigot of swore and sand

August 16, 2007

tipsy roost

under construction

August 17, 2007

mole 160 fizz

sloppy joe

torque squinch

claw sanctum

scale

timbre

anthropomomomomophilia

slots

August 18, 2007

rain

clovers the streets

August 21, 2007

mole 162 fizz

corpse

where are the antelopes

corpse

we are the antelopes

a colorless gasp

abacus snuff

eye snare

pass the gravy

dots seeking dots

from a popgun

plink

philanthropy

arson onus

swizzlestick

gurge to no

August 25, 2007

slip will

bubbles do not

rise and lip

we seed

glump girt knot

anaphora perhaps

whoozen

September 23, 2007

envelope

crest deed dorsal time

appetizer

scallops

sizzling platter

maverick creed boarding

elliptical tongue

done un

September 23, 2007

yo-yo

line the camels

up

for fission

September 27, 2007

fi fo

ifas

coastal

hammerheadhighways

September 27, 2007

mole 167 fizz

ditto

yes an arrow

points down lightly

steps over

the cat

September 29, 2007

whose body

September 29, 2007

mole 169 fizz

thin air

molting host

absorbs
moisture

pocket tongue two

white lies
ghost turds

sycamore

it's a far cry
cornered

crying

September 29, 2007

simple sauce &

the restorative powers of cola

baby elephant in flight

screeching feedback

twelve horizons

recycling belief

September 29, 2007

Licorice

I'd worked it down to a crimson delinquency
fast like the car she drives but it was
the soda cracker bop gulag that breached
the velum of my prize.

velum

sweet root rancor

proportions laid in silt

jujitsu

in dark glasses

read the place I leave for you

coins

in rain

a cloud bruised sea

silked to rim

licking out licking in

the mean while

its mauve hesitant

October 24, 2007

dropped in to
leaf hover the wide
areas unperformed
this contingent
with another system
of shadow
hands in dew
what pulse precludes
african violets
solemnity in pale
sky obverse includes
a relay kiss
to list behind
weather scored
prayers for
rehearsed perhaps not sought
the sleepwalkers paint
by number kit
serial spectral white

October 25, 2007

nail pops

spackle grift binger frain

pulp

placebo exodus

monohum

vector verse tissue

jimmyjimmystrum

October 26, 2007

draw lots

October 26, 2007

mole 175 fizz

judo wallet
kitty treats

October 27, 2007

mole 176 fizz

nearing

October 27, 2007

mole 177 fizz

surgical margins

November 2, 2007

mole 178 fizz

hewn purpose

milk dud

November 3, 2007

mole 179 fizz

timber squeal

November 3, 2007

mole 180 fizz

ball peen

beaver truss

strophe

in amber

November 3, 2007

momentomb

November 3, 2007

mole 182 fizz

phrase like a kite

become a face

November 4, 2007

mole 183 fizz

hampsterdam

November 5, 2007

mole 184 fizz

no tricks

lost free thrillings

on a donkeys back

bore a frog

November 5, 2007

razor basket

mooseless motes

saucy selves

yes yes I want to

emphasize

radial tires &

the thingness of this spite

the wight twang of the spate

how abandoned ventures waltz

gouging out cultures

November 5, 2007

a moose with a mote

fusky whences

meatyards spinning

meteors whinny

curried chick peas

lop to lop

November 5, 2007

battered asparagus

evening in evening

swerves autumn

late lilac sky hinting snow

November 5, 2007

postmortem

Hi, I'm Liz.

I'm here now

with Leak & Fizz.

November 5, 2007

liplit

other

way

round

November 7, 2007

mole 190 fizz

fat spark

parked

in the long rot

November 7, 2007

mole 191 fizz

bunch

electric miles

nomad stew

pole pumice

stove rigged fugue

November 9, 2007

mole 192 fizz

echo factory

gorging

November 9, 2007

mole 193 fizz

plenum

nuclear bugler

the fabric slung

I saw it all

from the raft

November 11, 2007

mole 194 fizz

corporate mandrake

bunnypupup

yer cents of time

sewn in a gulp

November 11, 2007

mole 195 fizz

for Heather Fuller

heaven

is building

a monstertruck

& driving it home

November 11, 2007

weather retort

wanda lend me

your lurch

forget about

the milk man

dying in an elevator

with a half eaten chicken sandwich

the fell wheel

red reed

November 11, 2007

happy hour

debt

obscurity

flatulence

and

a free slice

November 14, 2007

scrubbing kettles

neophytes

chickenwire

hurdy gurdy wail system

zombie compost replete

November 15, 2007

blink yore

bubble crisis

i wanted to be

a man so

i let a fan

oscillate

below & between

my nostrils

exciting all the little fish

hiding behind the cashier

November 15, 2007

bounce down

flick patsy

it's a town

barned on

no pinky

action here

November 15, 2007

swipe it

pan axis

wax purple

pick yer nose

in the snide mirror

November 15, 2007

mole 202 fizz

footh

plastic fence

sticky

in the long dream

with nicotine

feels nice out

November 15, 2007

laundry

i need a poltergeist

with deep pockets

November 17, 2007

007

“Polly Wanna would you
just go stand
on one of those pedestals
and saw an arm off
while I complete this call.”

November 17, 2007

neverland

feral wheels

overcooked pasta

that pimple

ripening

all the little kazoos

November 17, 2007

eye contact

split pea soup

November 23, 2007

mole 207 fizz

cusps

you are seeing two circles circling

the bottom of a glass

in a dance class

pinata

soft boiled egg

December 2, 2007

marshmallow

sizzled ease

planet snuff

living room

pokey mom

floorgroan

Isis O Isis

Dr. Seuss licks Liberace

wonderbred

mirthflit

furlit

burnt horn

a quiet

science

swaddlemothed

December 4, 2007

sequel

she circles

the kitchen table

no one moves

outside the air

is still

a quill poised

against your skin

December 6, 2007

songs from a broom

crick slaw

fuse it

willowy

trunk

seedy formica

carved dawn

feline shadows

granite grendel'd

fern

exoskeletons

in a little honky tonk

twenty centuries gone

December 8, 2007

goramic billifuster

spunk glear

December 9, 2007

mole 212 fizz

frame

pleatscreen scrimfuzz tuning ladders

to wake up streaming in full bloom

of day azaleas of night quiescent

ash prone

December 10, 2007

mole 213 fizz

december fist

F R A I L L I T

fitful list

exchanging skies

M A Q U E T T E

arctic smoke

featherwhite fiddlewhims

surfspoke

cone

C A N A S T A

faultline

hummingbird

conch

December 19, 2007

the ice of it

ronsons

are flints

for my zippo i am

plural my zippo is

plural like all my ronsons

antlered in

these macaroni havens

hipposlip hipposlide

boardwalk

flim flam flume

tweaked trance

thrown pause

December 20, 2007

space needle

take care of

your teeth

you

never listened

now

we've dug you up

twice

and still

you're missing

how do you

take us in

January 16, 2008

pork bun

packing hats as I was grazing

lock duck ball

the symposium was a fart and koalas filled

or filed – infantry – slide that capo

garage

fly swatter

not much else

dopamine street sausage democracy

Persephone watched as

her sister on top

bottled the rain

I am describing a sound

January 16, 2008

putt-putt

little sharks
in the heart
slaphappy

February 15, 2008

mole 218 fizz

get a sofa going

dirty dime

in need of a session

cordless beans

plump ground

all you need is a pronoun

March 20, 2008

fricassee

clocks positioned low

March 23, 2008

mole 220 fizz

pip

swelter

March 23, 2008

mole 221 fizz

arm the room

waking bats

floss my math

March 26, 2008

mole 222 fizz

radish

coin

March 28, 2008

mole 223 fizz

things in orbit to be poked

burnt toast

March 28, 2008

mole 224 fizz

radish

coin

March 28, 2008

mole 225 fizz

things to be poked

burnt toast

March 28, 2008

mole 226 fizz

epoxy

ploop

figs

regroup

in an afterlife

which we

goose grouse grout

“The first three seconds.”

April 7, 2008

epos

musky tail
snoutmaster

description
is
anomaly

beatified
defenestration

sky vat
leisure pus

endemic denture eclipse

scalloped

hillsilly worlds

sleep told
tooled

breathe until you're glass

April 12, 2008

fast grass

pet ferret
hula swoop

petrified
notion while

whose daughter is playing on the phone

moon money
futile flight who

is pissing on the mule

so sure of rain
and sight

gingko hinge
hoax comb strut

August 12, 2008

pong

fleedling pidgin

butternut squash troped flinks
gouche mite

my satellite
time tingler

when i see you in color
swell curling under

spliffoon

infectuous squid revision

August 20, 2008

easy oven

horny lie

fed da thogs

instant deuce

August 21, 2008

mole 231 fizz

new planet

reflector sect

beget

reflector sect

tinsel

paleontology

sunflowers

& drool

August 21, 2008

mole 232 fizz

snift

apple rafter bat mombasa reclude

September 6, 2008

mole 233 fizz

sequent

gotta nap
in a prop

September 18, 2008

mole 234 fizz

fan pied livers

cray the phrase fish foon
g'nooglies 'n paraphants

September 18, 2008

mole 235 fizz

bag that plastic

primrentplum

crossing the continent
pole vaulting parking lots

September 20, 2008

mole 236 fizz

shreave

aloha

potful

bream

September 20, 2008

mole 237 fizz

make a note

itchy

September 20, 2008

mole 238 fizz

Stack (after Don Voisine)

perspicacious

halo

width

a

Z

September 20, 2008

whittle

svelte

sling

slot

September 20, 2008

mole 240 fizz

at sight

sniffle
mint
fat ladder

soft paw fume stencil
thinking the days

radar rink

plink feign

quip sand

as they move
we move
gathering

September 24, 2008

in print

smoking swill
glands grok off

pique attire

a little east
a little west

October 9, 2008

I am Josephine

and refuse to bathe
until
you dawn

bauble pup

October 15, 2008

tin novel

pinching the hinge
mincing the milk

cottage grotto fever melt

sponge blimp cloister

dimpled dumpster

glimmer prawn

October 28, 2008

carbon

click release
choo choo truss

incarnation

finch

an asterisks wink or
shrug
depend blue

listless office

careened

November 27, 2008

pilgrimim

influenza zanzibar chalk

The Money Glove
Twelve Plus Words

sodium swipe
chutney banjo
poon

Quarry
Peal
Incisors

local
residue

December 1, 2008

drawer

steeping sleep
cache caw course

December 9, 2008

mole 247 fizz

got glow

pipe line cyst
spooof noun council

pin fly pop
plume its

wheel surface to splay

incongruent

blow fish apparel
flint time mash

December 17, 2008

oar

swerve

ear in a word

December 17, 2008

gorilla glue

no tooth show

chili quick
liquid tryst

mono lily

to be believed
beak out

December 20, 2008

mole 250 fizz

preen

circumspect

tide's in

disfigured

January 5, 2009

sprinkle axe

absence of what
to habit

abacus snuff
glass hour
spank litter whereabouts

equal gull
or glove

January 7, 2009

farts

bark stars

May 17, 2009

mole 253 fizz

blissflit

pop a wheelie
coax frolic wreak
gravity patter

go hosts

dew

heaven
has a bottom

plink imbue

bolt

bifurcate

tapping out each pole
in a frenzy
of reach

posthumous
belltower wellflower
morning sun

memory swerve

porch swing

dripping

the next poem

Make me real

so that I may

destroy you

chrysalis hubris hawk saw dirge

we're edible

constructs

waking

May 28, 2009

peep

fingertip

spittle

sweet delivery

rain

“Where does the dark go?”

June 3, 2009

mole 256 fizz

in the quick

tiny worm

tang

June 9, 2009

mole 257 fizz

accepting

the suckhole

of civility

oops

June 18, 2009

mole 258 fizz

I'm an action figure
with a vocabulary
and a serial attitude.

June 24, 2009

mole 259 fizz

trolley minotaur gestate

June 24, 2009

mole 260 fizz

burnt tongue

expunge ice lesions

lazy ache

or lake

spindled premise

splatter the cock's tail

Jezebel

we're still reading

July 13, 2009

slip knot

scoot
the desk
talk
the till

July 15, 2009

mole 262 fizz

poy wank skirt the groobs
ho ho ho ho's

pristine dangling

ethnic sauce

sea shelves shifting

July 30, 2009

bulb

freaky finger
pokey hock

August 10, 2009

mole 264 fizz

caws

whittle the breeze

shore the eyes

August 21, 2009

mole 265 fizz

for Graham Foust

fur spur

regift

strategic nap

August 21, 2009

mole 266 fizz

cat in my lapse

grew food grew fond grew fronds
slow plot
there's a 23 ft. anaconda
basking on the overpass
i brought oranges for breakfast
your feet still stink
go sphincter

October 19, 2009

dock

nail century night

each you eats you

no ghost no photo

dusk or dust

otherwise the telling

these boxes

storing sleep

sopa

keel

October 24, 2009

seething ink

slung bunk spoony

October 25, 2009

mole 269 fizz

sputter

three wet bucks ceramic bunny flounce

October 25, 2009

mole 270 fizz

sufi prophylactic

botch the roast
inner grace
botch the roast
inner grace

crook ash

snooze zone dervish

wet hair loose blouse
sky vent weevil

December 12, 2009

easily one

bone spun
forget-me-nots

indigo

soaking clocks

the number nine

soot
finite
fedora

February 20, 2010

psnough

gizzard ilk

widget spawn

February 20, 2010

mole 273 fizz

this organ

conch
that rail system
conch the extinguished
uh-huh

May 29, 2010

mole 274 fizz

over the eye

anaphoric

millipedes

in sync

May 30, 2010

without fear

find the vacuum
in the basement

July 16, 2010

mole 276 fizz

pouch

flies

tabled
sunslot
coo

ankles elbows

elected officials

squink

big Z

August 17, 2010

whobody

sweeps hear

September 19, 2010

mole 278 fizz

pony op

hell sinky

September 19, 2010

mole 279 fizz

provisioning my modem

swarthy moom

October 1, 2010

mole 280 fizz

For Michael Gizzi

What rhymes with midnight?

gallumph

where the world flits

an ear shaped by
inserting flypaper
into the text

eye eye

October 3, 2010

bad chair day

estuary

fuming torque

you need them out

October 19, 2010

mole 282 fizz

hello

oreo

ripe

like a lemur

gunning

October 24, 2010

notch white quiet the

green the gold you glow

splur acquaint

October 24, 2010

mole 284 fizz

spell

the real

from the
remove the
fill the

spurious

ready dead
walk fast
carry a glove

November 6, 2010

off the grid

el cid

November 27, 2010

mole 286 fizz

key slapped plastic

marginal swoon
removes the vice
from the crunk
fills leaves

November 27, 2010

mole 287 fizz

scent tube

orca okra
cootz
prose is a blanket

stamps lymphoma breeze

the actuary is actually

fillibrant

skynose

pip pip extra terrestrial

scale

scale

begutt'ns

memo memes

a rail on the clock of a whim

pug hook off
swahl
smoke snow hive

November 27, 2010

forange

toc toc criginal smudge

January 12, 2011

mole 289 fizz

hank

drew the world

January 12, 2011

mole 290 fizz

hoax

reality has discovered me I have yet to do the same

January 15, 2011

mole 291 fizz

bike lane

mono

nuclear

gnosis

January 15, 2011

mole 292 fizz

peek

season

undulant skurf

January 21, 2011

mole 293 fizz

hut sut

lake whom
constitutional
aether

January 26, 2011

mole 294 fizz

red

a

never

January 30, 2011

mole 295 fizz

don't

wanna

use that instrument

February 1, 2011

loaf

oh yeah we

February 2, 2011

mole 297 fizz

whitening agents

ferret swell sloop
instant blue sky

permalink
whodunnit

castro oblivia
mite ash mean
an unfettered uplink
sqeal zeal swill pink
plunk forest herd and ask
after ono me oh mayo

peach we laughter
reeze

February 17, 2011

drum

swim to
Philidelphia
or

February 27, 2011

mole 299 fizz

awake pear ostrich

you little tool section

you little fiction

March 2, 2011

mole 300 fizz

itch

toes the railroad

March 15, 2011

mole 301 fizz

affable passenger

duck chum

July 21, 2011

mole 302 fizz

flax

roun eeze nd

July 22, 2011

mole 303 fizz

cuđ

zoo

h

July 22, 2011

mole 304 fizz

trombone

low slink

hope

slink

for now

that we

have acquired yesterday

for

yesterday

yes a

low field of crow

January 13, 2012

Supplement

Thank You for Smoking :: Heather Fuller

The Rites of What's Left :: M. Magnus

“That Time When Michael Ball” :: Ric Royer

Michael :: Rod Smith

Michael Ball and the i.e. Reading Series in
Baltimore :: Chris Mason

Heather Fuller

Michael Ball: Thank You for Smoking

Thank you for smoking. This was our greeting, Michael Ball's & mine. We had in common our individual histories in North Carolina, where Big Tobacco reigned supreme in the 70s & 80s and plastered its subversively congenial messaging, *Thank you for smoking*, on billboards at every county line. We laughed about this during smoke breaks at the i.e. reading series, which Michael founded and lovingly curated in Baltimore in the 2000s & 2010s.

Michael was always looking for matches, or fiddling with matches, or lighting another match because the previous one had flamed out in the breeze. He would disappear and return: "I ran to the liquor store for matches." I would ask, "Michael, why don't you have a lighter by now?" He would respond with something to the effect that he wouldn't keep up with a lighter. So finally, I bought Michael a lighter. (Apologies to Chris Mason, who has heard this story one or a few times.) The lighter was the special tattoo edition Zippo. It was a lovely thing, very swaggish & gleaming. I presented it along with flints & lighter fluid so he could "keep up" with it.

Several months later at a “Poetry Circus” event for Rod Smith in Alexandria, VA, Michael Ball was still fiddling with matches. I asked him what happened to his Zippo, and he replied that he couldn’t find any Zippo flints for his Zippo. I explained to him that he didn’t need brand-name flints; any flint would do. He could pick up some, say, Ronsons. Little did I know that Michael would take this as the kernel for “the ice of it” from the estimable *mole fizz*:

ronsons

are flints

for my zippo i am

plural my zippo is

plural like all my ronsons

What passed between poets was Michael Ball’s poetry. He thrived on the converse of it and withdrew in its absence. He asked me why I often went “hermeneutic.” I

think it was his polite way of asking why I didn't show up consistently for readings, or was often hermit-like. Employment at the time was a problem for me, as it was for him, and it cut into my sociability. That's not much of an excuse, but it was my reality. He didn't like that about me, but he said he might go "hermeneutic" himself. Nonetheless, he didn't give up on me, & I received an email:

Would you like to read with Rod Smith & Lisa Jarnot

Just think you three could build a monster truck

& drive it home

Of course, this was already a poem, but the painstaking workshop of his mind produced this additional gift, from *mole fizz*:

for Heather Fuller

heaven

is building

a monstertruck

& driving it home

M. Magnus

The Rites of What's Left

Some people can only live on and for poetry. I think Michael Ball was one of those people. This is valid – survival isn't everything. For a few years in Baltimore, Ball lived for poetry in its sustenance for himself and, as curator of the i.e. reading series (where he had the chance to host and intermingle with so many well-known poets he loved, as well as novice poets he encouraged), provided its sustenance to others. If gloom tinges the atmosphere of his life taken as a whole, there's a dazzle to those years of readings and community-building, a glancing relish sourced in the silence he carried within him, unassuming as he was, always ready to share in others' work, rarely sharing his own. Make no mistake, his insular own was happening – going on – ongoing.

Mole Fizz is what he left, postings during that same glinty period on a blog, its About page stating “we evaporate/in turns”; the reader is “knee deep in tiny edible hearts” when wading into the pieces included in this book. Michael Ball is language paint, every stroke just so. Daubed, occasionally “denounced,” he lives on and found life in these leavings of daily existence, ritual dabs, his tenderly tended to brushstrokes of thought or observation, savored as “nearing” (just “nearing,” alone)

— and maybe only in retrospect, waved (and waived) gently, as taking leave.

“Swerve cistern” entitles a bending towards subterranean source. I’m enamored of Ball’s interplay of titles and lines of the poems, as exemplified by “eloquence clarity economy” (title) with “and smut” (body of the poem) following; likewise, “little wrists” leading into “of steam” and “ludic wasp” headlining “printer friendly” for completion. Perhaps his poem titled “hoax” says it all with its single line: “reality has discovered me I have yet to do the same.”

“oar (title)/swerve/ear in a word” almost covers Ball’s poetics for me, except for his painterly factuality, tactile and restorative as of a housepainter (as he sometimes was). Out of courtesy, perhaps, he affixes no title to “accepting/the suckhole/of civility/oops.” Absolutely devastating in afterglance, title/poem: “a suicide/in spring rain.” Still, this same man, with the pointedness of italics, ends a poem by invoking the exultant whisper of *daylight*.

He ate poetry for breakfast. Or, it’s clear, in hand-to-mouth circumstances, he made poetry of his spare plate, “oranges for breakfast,” frequent mention of the pleasures of a bite: “curried chick peas,” “butternut squash,” “it peached,” “these macaroni havens,” “pork bun,” “radish,” and more, along the lines of what’s echoed in “dice/and beams.”

Nothing else worked for Michael Ball, only poetry. This is how I interpret his despair, decline, outbursts, and ultimate reclusiveness. He took nourishment where he could find it – and he went hungry often. Yet, now he regales us with his select fare.

Ric Royer

“That Time when Michael Ball”

It's interesting what sticks in your head, what details. In this case a ring finger stained yellow from joint to joint. In my mind I see it curled, in the way he would hold a cigarette, a unique style, hooking one finger around the top of it, as opposed to pinching it between two fingers or finger and thumb. Perhaps with one finger stained, he didn't want to risk staining another digit as well. It was a dainty hold, delicate like his voice, in contrast to the hand that held it. Those hands had seen much labor, but not much lotion. Hands from a different time, on a man from a different time. When was his time? Was he a pilot in the second world war? Was he a Black Mountain College student in the 50s? Was he part of the Guardian Angels in New York in the 80s? I seem to remember hearing he had some kind of thing going on in some other city, some other life, I guess in the 80s or 90s, but to me and others around him in the late 2000s, that was his time. And it certainly was *a time*, as in, *remember those times?* It's rare to be in a time and know that you're in it. Sometimes you don't know when you're even out of it. The end of the time could be punctuated by the end of a venue, the end of a reading series, the end of a life. Then suddenly, *oh I guess that time is over, isn't it?* Time's been over for quite a while though hasn't it? Where have all the times gone? Then thinking on it... to think about

it deeply when asked to write about it, there I go, sucked into a jaundiced jumbo shrimp shaped wormhole to retrieve what was stuck and spat out years later with just pieces of that time, not a whole wall, just compromised pieces of drywall and dust: some of the people, some of the places, some of the belongings, some of the events. Not all, never all, just some.

Damn, remember the Carriage House? I don't hear from Rod and Mel anymore. Kevin remains, Buck here and there from a distance. Oh damn, Magnus. Michael Ball did not wear a lot of black.

I miss that time now that I think of it, with Michael in the middle of it. Michael always trying something, a new idea, bouncing his reading from place to place, sort of opening a cafe and serving coffee and only coffee. Michael ready to laugh. Michael ready to move the party to the bar. Funny how I think of two Michaels now, almost two different people. Poetry Michael and day laborer Michael. We hung drywall together. Both Michaels were quite a mystery. You can really resolve some mysteries about a person if you help them move to a new apartment, see and handle all their stuff, unless when you get there, there's nothing to move. It was only me and one other person there to help him move and even that was too many. There were only a few boxes, books and ashtrays. I don't even remember a bed. Maybe he was already leaving, or maybe time travelers pack light.

It's interesting what time can do with what sticks in your head, the details. Perhaps my memory is inventing

the stain on the finger, or the unique way he held his roll-your-owns.

Time can just take control like that. Did I ever *really* hang drywall with him, or did I just talk to him while he did it himself? Was Magnus REAL? Maybe Michael's hands weren't as rough as I remember/imagine them. But the voice is still very real in my head, in tune, in time. I can hear it in various tones: slight surprise, half laugh, strong opinion (positive), strong opinion (negative)... But it's always the fingers and hands first, voice second.

Perhaps with some effort, the voice will be the first result that comes up. Such a pleasant, lovely voice for talking. Like Michael, I would like to be more poetic, always, just as I do in writing this. But there are times when you have no control over it, you want the friendly soft voice, you get the stained rough hands. Michael's hands, a poet's hands.

Rod Smith

Michael

A lot of us loved Michael Ball. I don't know if he knew it. Maybe he did. Not sure.

For a long time driving 95 then up Charles to an i.e. series reading, well, we took it for granted. But we didn't take Michael for granted. We worried about him. But then there he was in the poetry. He lived in poetry for quite some time, that's not a tragedy.

& here, now, in this collection we can see what a damn great poet he was. I mean we knew he was good but the accomplishment comes clear in this gathering. He had that casual zen speed of Raworth and the faultless perception of Creeley, not kidding.

We're without Blaster Al, David Franks, Chris Toll, and Les Wade too.

We're without Bill Berkson, Doug Lang, Tom Raworth, Leslie Scalapino, all read at i.e.

Thanks again, Mr Ball— you once again remind us all. Get in the poetry while you can.

Chris Mason

Michael Ball and the i.e. reading series in Baltimore

From 2005 to 2012, Michael Ball curated the *i.e. reading series* in Baltimore, bringing over 150 poets to read in Baltimore. The term, 'i.e.', in its simplicity and its openness, suggests the focus of the poetry presented: adventures in the wilderness of language. Michael's description of the series was "forum for circumstance". He brought the highest quality poets from out of town, while at the same time facing an ongoing series of personal difficulties. His priority was always the reading series.

The readings took place at a series of six different locations: In 2005, soon after he moved from New York City, he organized the first i.e. readings at Red Emma's, an anarchist bookstore / coffee shop, including a reading in which groups of poets read Zukofsky's "80 Flowers" and MacLow's "Young Turtle Asymmetries". In 2006, Michael found a book store in which to have the readings, Clayton and Company Books. The readings were at a big table on the second floor. Broad­sides were printed of poems by each reader. Ron Padgett came down from New York to read. Rosemarie and Keith Waldrop came down from Providence. In the summer of 2006, Michael started renovating a small store front across from the Club Charles, which was to be a poetry

venue / book store in partnership with Clayton and Company. He worked hard on the space and had a few readings, but the deal fell through and the readings returned to Clayton and Company for the Fall.

In 2007, the readings moved to Dionysus Bar and Restaurant, near the train station. L.B. Bender read from inside a cardboard box. Ron Silliman gave a reading consisting only of questions. From Fall 2007 to Fall 2008, the readings were held at The Carriage House, a small concert space of wood and brick beautifully constructed by composer Daniel Carney. The readings were intimate. The readers read next to a grand piano on a semi-circular stage.

The next location was Load of Fun, a former automobile sales room Sherwin Mark had converted into artists' studios and a performance space that Michael had helped renovate. Many of the readings took place in a black box theater. In January of 2010, Narrow House published the *i.e. reader*, an anthology of poems by 66 of the poets who had read in the series. There was a large, joyous book party at Load of Fun. Tom Orange played saxophone. For a while the readings moved back to Dionysus, in a small room on the 3rd floor. Then, in 2011, the series moved again back to Load of Fun. The Flarf Collective read. Chris Toll read and brought sushi for the audience. Simon Pettet read every poem twice. Tom Raworth read, standing room only. For a while, when Michael was between residences, he slept in a storeroom at Load of Fun. By 2012, Michael did not

have the financial means to keep running the series and it ended.

During the first 3 years of the series, Michael worked as a foreman for a house painting company. In 2008, during the recession, he was laid off. For the rest of his life, he was unable to find steady work and lived off sporadic odd jobs. During these years he lived in a series of different places, none of them for more than a year. He struggled with mental health issues. All of his energy and most of his money went into the i.e. reading series. He often took poets out to dinner, while living on rice and beans at home.

Michael's fellow poets have spoken about his relationship to poetry and his care for the poets who came to read. L.B. Bender remembers Michael's way of talking: "soft-spoken, slow, thoughtful, as if he was reciting poetry, and similar to how he wrote and read his own poetry, with a great deal of space between the words. There was a great humility in his personality and his respect for other poets." Jamie Perez remembers "Michael smoking a cigarette with other poets in Graffiti Alley behind Load of Fun, talking playfully but seriously about enjambment." Magus Magnus remembers, "There was in Michael a devotion to the poetry, beyond his devotion to bringing together a community." His devotion to poetry transcended the social. His retreat from the poetry community and eventual death were tragic.

The last i.e. reading was the Frank O'Hara event at Load of Fun in 2012. Load of Fun founder Sherwin Mark had a series of screen prints he had made in 1978 of collaborations between O'Hara and the Dutch artist Jan Cremer from 1963. Michael organized a reading by several Baltimore poets of O'Hara poems during the opening of the exhibition of these prints. The reading was very well-attended. Sherwin said, "Michael was ecstatic and felt like it was the culmination of his years curating the series."

During the last 3 years of his life, Michael gradually withdrew into a hermit-like existence, eventually moving into a small one room apartment above a noisy methadone clinic. In 2015 he passed away, after a long struggle with mental illness and poverty.

The *i.e. reader* (edited by Michael, Justin Sirois, Jamie Perez, and L.B. Bender) is still available and is a great testament to his work as a poetry curator. Always self-effacing, Michael did not include his poetry in the anthology, and never featured himself as a reader in the series. Photographs of the readings can be seen at the i.e. website: ieseries.wordpress.com.

