

Inside Out

by John Olson

I'm glaring at the galaxy when I suddenly realize that fulfillment has nothing to do with impasto. It's about the various conundrums served to us on the plate of existence. Which is itself a conundrum. Cellophane is a conundrum. What is cellophane? Is it plastic? Is it made of fairy wings? Sheets of dried rain industrialized and rolled on a cardboard cylinder? Never trust a sandwich that hasn't been wrapped in cellophane. Tinfoil will not do it must be cellophane. Not cymophane or allophane or cello pain but cellophane. It is a conundrum. Albeit a transparent conundrum. Other conundrums include consciousness, irrational numbers, and belt buckles. The whole wide world percolates in a belt buckle. It's a silver scab on the end of a snake. It is a conundrum because it cinctures the waist in a knot of metal. Its utility is obvious but its nucleus is nebulous. I knew a guy once had a box full of belt buckles. Some of them were even wrapped in cellophane. I don't know why. I guess he was worried about moisture: another conundrum. Who hasn't at some point of the day wanted to dredge up everything in your pocket just to see what it is. You know? Because it's been there a long time forming a bulge. Most of it is change. Nickels, dimes, quarters, pennies. But occasionally one might also find a cloud, à la Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky. Now there's a conundrum for you. For it was Mayakovsky who said that you play your love on the violin. But the crude ones play it on the drums. Violently. Ha! Just like that: bam! bam! bam! bam! But can you turn yourselves inside out, he asked, like me? And become just two lips entirely? Well hell yeah. Here I am: two lips. Ok. Not entirely: two lips and a pair of cheeks. A skull and a conundrum. The conundrum being my brain. My mind. That energy sloshing around in tide pool crustaceans. Which makes its way out of my head and onto paper in the form of words. Which are a form of marine life, I believe. Because they're essentially shells, aren't they, with meat inside. Convolutions of mucous-y thought sheltered in nacreous wonder. Like bundles of pink

archaeology. Like blood and mayonnaise. Like mirrors ejaculating the light of a hidden logic. Like thinking. Which is always a conundrum. A melody famished for answers, embouchure, release. Release from having to think at all. Imagine: a head full of nothing. But broth. Beautiful brown broth. Lovely broth. The tongue is not a motif. The tongue is a muscle. For sipping broth. For tasting broth. For describing and making broth. Which is a conundrum in a bowl. And the bowl is a conundrum. And the drum is a conundrum. And here I am: two lips. Turned inside out. Hitting it all with sticks. bam! bam! bam! bam!

