

Matthea Harvey

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THE FUTURE OF TERROR / 8

We got most of our gear from  
 an abandoned general store—gnat spray  
 for our sojourns under the gumtrees,  
 seed for the garden warblers in case  
 they ever sang again. Out of glass blocks  
 we built a glorious latrine which we meant  
 to show the governor when he arrived  
 with his hand on his heart, but for some reason  
 we hesitated. Was it the rust on the hinge  
 of his briefcase? His car horn's half-hearted honk?  
 We just didn't hit it off this time. Maybe  
 we were tired of the same old hyphenated  
 hush-hush. Having no idol made us ill-tempered.  
 We stole the pilots' inclinometers  
 so they didn't know if they were going up or down  
 unless they were naturally level-headed.  
 We locked Frank in the isolation booth.  
 By the time the jubilee came around  
 we were all on probation, so we made a mini-parade  
 out of jumping beans and ants on a plaid rug  
 in the barracks though that ended  
 in a knock-down-drag-out fight too.  
 The listening post was right under a linden tree  
 so all we ever heard was leaves falling but  
 it wasn't manly to write about that in your report.  
 When the migratory birds arrived, there was mold  
 on their beaks and a musty smell coming from  
 their under-feathers. Ne'er do wells were the only ones  
 making noise in the neonatal wards, fighting over  
 incubators and netting. Like everyone else,  
 they just wanted a place of their own.  
 We mounted the public address system  
 behind the proscenium where they used to have  
 puppet shows, then walked round-shouldered

through the rubble. A sandpiper squawked out a storm warning and got sucked up into the clouds. We were sweaty and ready to surrender. What was there left to say? We turned on the teleprompter.