

Ninety seconds to *Scarfinger*. Not on the end table. Not by the pile of magazines. Not between cushions, under couch, behind the throw pillows. Ah. On top of the wall-mounted TV, perched like a finch.

How did it escape the armchair holster? David questioned friends and family, but they seemed uninterested. The universal remote ended up in the freezer, in the bedroom naughty bag, at a gnome's

feet in the garden, gently flecked with mulch, tucked and besooted in the chimney flue. Several weeks of dependable access and easy couchside surfing passed before the next vanishing act, and the call

to his therapist, who asked if "remote" wasn't just a metaphor for life falling into itself, an existential lollipop, the search for a clear signal.

"*The B-Team* won't just watch itself," David told his ex-mother-in-law

as they shared another cigarette afterwards. "Just leave the station on YBN," she suggested as they posted "LOST—REMOTE: REWARD" flyers around the neighborhood, giggling like negligent babysitters.

Then there was the phantom flipping of channels and the watching of everything but the TV. So tired that he didn't notice the replacement remote left behind his car tire. Snap. Crackle. If he cut off his own

hand, would it stalk the dreamtime at night, until it could clutch again the wayward device on the astral plane? Who or what left the bloody bread crumbs that led him to reclaim the real remote in a sad Nebraska

diner? The police said he stole it, but they were ignorant of his connection to the great unknown, the grip in his hands almost sexual as he mailed the remote to the Dalai Lama just before getting zapped and tagged

like a side of inferior beef, shocked legs twitching on the tile floor. After posting bail, David disappeared: wandered, globetrotting, tracking whispers: the remote had reached nirvana, the remote had staged coups

in recently renamed countries, the remote had developed an affinity for Thai massage, masquerading as a calculator in a complicated Ponzi scheme. David had already given up hope when they reunited

on the Patagonian landing strip, wrinkled duct tape and stainless-steel pins holding each of them together. Here comes the fuselage lights. Here comes the mother ship. Together, they will channel a sequel.

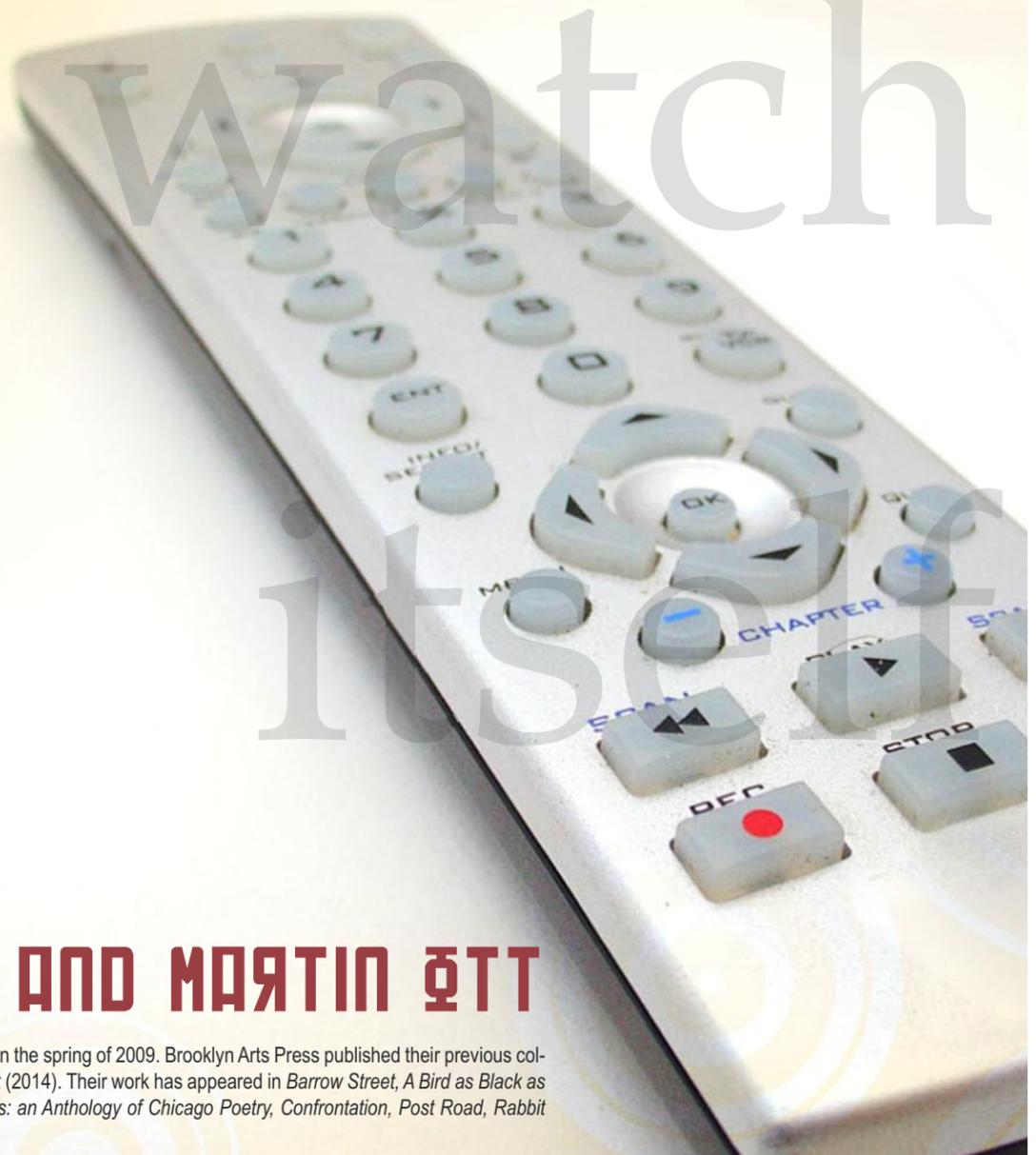
DAVID LISTER VERSUS THE REMOTE

B-Team

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JOHN F. BUCKLEY AND MARTIN OTT

John F. Buckley and Martin began their ongoing games of poetic volleyball in the spring of 2009. Brooklyn Arts Press published their previous collaborations *Poets' Guide to America* (2012) and *Yankee Broadcast Network* (2014). Their work has appeared in *Barrow Street*, *A Bird as Black as the Sun*, *California Poets on Crows and Ravens*, *City of the Big Shoulders: an Anthology of Chicago Poetry*, *Confrontation*, *Post Road*, *Rabbit Ears: An Anthology of TV Poems*, *Redivider*, and *ZYZZYVA*.