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For Beds

[ESSAY](#) BY [MATTHEW VOLLMER](#)

Merciful God, we humbly thank Thee for setting the earth on its rotation around the sun, thus providing humanity with periods of light that permit us, as we go about our daily business, to recognize with relative clarity the things of the earth, and for the atmospheric changes and angles of the sun that allow us to sense the progression of time and thus acknowledge all manner of climatological differences. So too do we thank Thee for creating a period of darkness during which our eyes might find respite and our minds repose, and where we might also experience a reprieve from sense-making, most palpably experiencing, in our dream-states, the joys and terrors of

embarking upon adventures much greater in scope than we would ever hope to undergo during our comparatively prudent daytime excursions. But most of all, oh LORD, we thank Thee for the beds upon which we sleep, and for which we too often take for granted, failing to remember the hay-or-leaf-stuffed animal skin mattresses of yore, or the goat-skin waterbeds of Persia, or the heaped palm-boughs of Egypt. We recognize now the discoveries of vulcanized rubber and box springs, of memory foam invented by scientists employed in our national aeronautics and space program. We are thankful too, oh Heavenly Father, for the accouterments that adorn these beds, for the linens of silk or cotton or flannel, for blankets of down, for pillows of goose feathers or micro-beads. We are thankful for box springs, oh LORD, and that our beds are raised above the ground, upon which roam the countless creatures that might do us harm, and for the space below these beds, where, as youngsters, we imagined monstrous, slobbering entities, and where now old socks and dust balls have created a netherworld of forgotten things that, when spied upon, remind us that unseen spaces exist in our homes, and that these too deserve, from time to time, our attention. We therefore ask a blessing upon these our beds, that they may not do us harm but fulfill their promise in providing us a place to safely slumber, that they might be rafts upon which we lie to escape the storms of life, and that furthermore, they may remain a place where children are forbidden to jump—if only so that children may discover the joys of benign transgressions, so long as they do not fall and crack open their heads on our dressers or nightstands—and where lonely souls recline to read or bathe in the glow of television, and where couples unite in joyful lovemaking, a space into which children crawl when awoken from night terrors, and where poor souls who have lost loved ones might curl up into the positions they first took in the wombs of their mothers and, grasping wadded tissues, dab at their weeping eyes. Forgive us LORD, if we are to forget the luxuries afforded to us of our beds, and keep us ever mindful of those who sleep tonight upon surfaces that were not made with comfort in mind, those who, for reasons that are unknown to us, face conditions we cannot and therefore do not imagine, and should these poor souls die before they wake, grant them a final dream in which they lie with their lovers on a mattress of memory foam, the pressure-sensitive polyurethane surface molding to the shapes of their bodies, so that sleepers and beds, in the end, become one.

Matthew Vollmer is the author of Future Missionaries of America and the forthcoming Gateway to Paradise (both story collections), as well as inscriptions for headstones (a collection of essays). With David Shields, he is the co-editor of Fakes. He is assembling a multi-authored manuscript titled A Book of Uncommon Prayer.

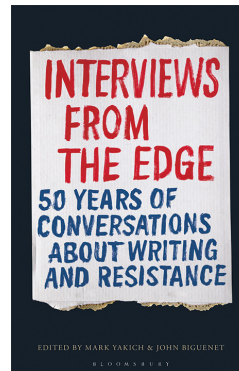
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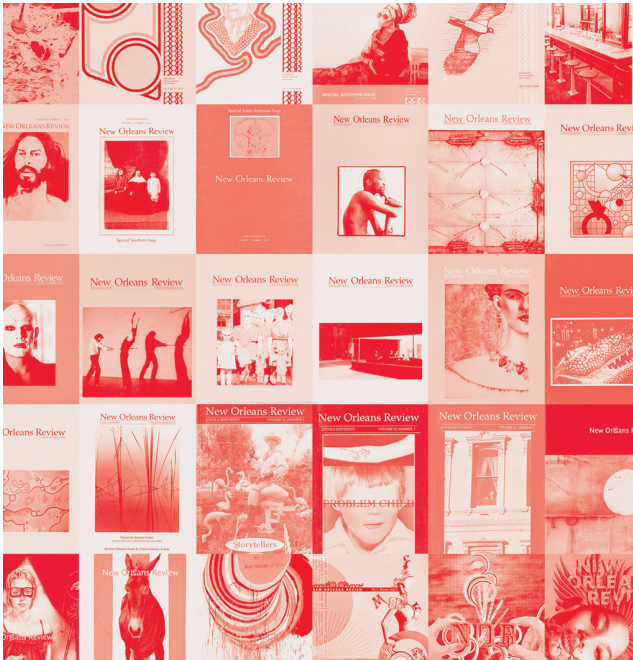
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