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# Kilroy at the Zero Hour, Story Time

John Hennessy

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# Two Poems

JOHN HENNESSY

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## Kilroy at the Zero Hour

*by Tokyo Rose*

Kilroy's a bonehead, a skull on a stick,  
a somber emcee. He's sergeant, lieutenant,  
he's just got his stripes, Grand Marshall  
of the parade, the Fourth of July  
on Guadalcanal. Come to my party,  
come to Leyte in your little canoe, camp  
with me at Cabanatuan, I said  
when I saw him—it was love  
at first sight— Kilroy, please meet me  
in Port Moresby, I'll show you my duck  
and cover, all covered in clover. Oh brother,  
the brothels! Your honey's at home,  
sad little sweetheart, jitterbug shuffling  
with Kilroy's cousin, that flat-foot 4-F.  
Here's some star-shine, a moonlight  
serenade, listen while you can—  
our suns rise tonight, unloading their light  
over the 43rd then Kilroy will waltz  
to an orchestra of angels, so here's  
another record to remind you of home.

## Story Time

*i.m. Angela Carter*

Cannibals skirt the forests we conjure  
 with a few simple words: shadowy, pine needle  
 paths, poisonous mushrooms and deadly berries,  
 tree trunks strangled by vines. On our way  
 to the witch's cottage we walk barefoot through burrs  
 and brambles, pass thieves and murderers lurking  
 behind darkened ferns, lured by the chimney  
 chuffing wreaths of sugary smoke. My son's  
 best friend from school will be cooked alive in a cast-  
 iron pot—unless we're there to save him in time.

Or I'm the one in danger, transgendered to Red,  
 my hapless grandma just meat-stripped hip and ribs  
 beneath the bed. Buttercups tempt me off  
 the sodden path, red poppies, primrose, moss—  
 where am I? Now he tells me he's no pup  
 but prince of the solstice, spittle in his jowls,  
 lice moving in the fur between his shoulders.  
 And what big eyes he has (his father's), what big  
 teeth. All the better, all the better, he says, the hunter  
 naps at the woodpile, the woodsman never arrives.