Spectrum Literary Arts Magazine

Fall 2006

extremity

EXTREMITY

SPECTRUM MAGAZINE

northeastern
university's
literary arts
magazine

FALL 2006

Ever since embarking as editor of this eminent entity, the explosion of effort engineered by an exponentially escalating entourage elates and empowers my expectations of eclipsing the elderly editions with effervescent esprit. Enthusiastic and earnest, their excellent efforts emphasize the eloquent (even eccentric) etchings and edicts of expertise with ease and efficiency. This elegant, enchanting, engrossing, enormous entanglement embodies enlightenment, education, and eclectic etceteras sure to engage even the most enfeebled eye and elicit embraced eyestrain in every other. Each episode existing in this emblem excludes, perhaps eliminates, the elements of poor execution in lieu of envisioning equal parts ego and edge. The elementary explanation: we exemplify the extreme. Enjoy!

Editor-In-Chief

Spectrum Literary Arts Magazine showcases the talents of the writers and artists at Northeastern University. All members of the Northeastern community are encouraged to submit works of original poetry, prose, and visual art. For more information, please visit our website at www.spectrum.neu.edu.

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Spectrum Literary Arts Magazine is Printed by

nextgen
next generation printing

www.nextgenerationprinting.com

Special Thanks to Phil Cara

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Language, in its perfection, deals not in seem.
It deals in what is and is not. And the language of these
strung-together words shows what is not: a poem.

The Composting of Words, Kirby Robinson



Roots - Melanie Bishop

Awakening

The smell of fresh-cut grass in the morning,
hazy fog,
steamy dewdrops.

This is the time of day that I like best,
when the world awakens
from a long night's rest.

Clouds rollover one final time,
stretched across beds of cotton.
Sun kisses my lips.

My eyes glisten in wonder,
in admiration of this glorious earth
smelling of moistened dirt and earthworms.

I am late for work again, though
today it doesn't make any difference.
I am uplifted.

Today,
I would rather walk to the ends of the earth,
and back again.

Take reverence in my surroundings.
At this early morning hour,
when the day is clean, and my heart

Unadulterated.

Emi Gonzalez

In The Morning

Peter Franklin

It's difficult in the morning, when the world wants to greet you with gleeful roseate fingertips and golden rising smiles, when nature bows before you and says, "Here is my gift: another day of life, another extension of infinite possibility. Use it as you will." It's difficult in the morning, because sometimes you forget and you succumb to nature's offering. But then your senses shade themselves from the abundant, radial blast of Earth's finest moment, and somehow they see beyond it all as if it were a wispy curtain, and there they find the ugliness. And with it they drag you from that sun-bleached morning perforated with the song of birds and the breath of a gentle cool air to your old place, the place in which you didn't want to find yourself.

Ugliness can be found in the most precious or most simple things – a sly tendril of her perfume upon the pillow; a flat, cold space upon the bed where her warm figure belonged; the silence of an empty kitchen, no longer reverberant her laughter; the strange look of only one plate on the table.

You make mistakes because you are not easy to put away her broken love; it still sits in a frame on your nightstand – sometimes you kiss it, knowing it will be cold and flat and unsatisfying. You go to the wrong side of your car thinking you still have a door to open for someone. You brew too much coffee or buy too much food at the grocery store. And once, just once, you accidentally said "table for two" and were so ashamed of your lie.

The days stretch like miles of gray, rocky coastline on either side of you and the nights are even harder than the mornings because not even nature is joyous then – no, she is quiet and shy. She may send forth a nightingale, but he always sings alone. And the books of dead authors don't like to talk; they just like to whisper in your head to remind you of her when you've closed them shut. And there in your dark frowning house awash with sad moonlight you sit with your book, and you don't know what to do with yourself.

And your mirror-self looks at you with more and more frailty each morning. You are leaner and darker faced each day. You try to eat but you only waste food, and eventually it sits lonely and untouched in your trashcan. And then you get new friends – bad habits that never forget you. Your fingertips yellow and burn with the decay of nicotine, your throat feels dry and harsh like steel wool. You smile sometimes with an empty stomach soaked in alcohol, but you don't mean it.

Sometimes you go to the city to be a real person again but all the real people there pay you no attention. And the neon signs glare and rinse over your clothes in reds and pinks and yellows. You go to your favorite places, but they're all ugly now – there's something tainted and crushing in their dim corner booths and their flickering

fluorescence, their languid fabric kisses and grassy cool lawns. They've betrayed you now; they sneer at the tears in your eyes.

And one day you find the days have piled into weeks like dirty dishes in the sink, and the weeks have melted into months like so many dying candles. And somewhere in your mind a seed that's been germinating in the soil of your hurt has sprouted. And you suddenly want to do the old things you loved before her, the things you'd forgotten in the torrent of pain that has ever so slightly begun to narrow.

You don't even know it, but it gets narrower every day. Her place in your heart shrinks, crumpling, while all along the sprout grows. Quite abruptly then, the sprout is a flower, and the morning isn't so hard, and the pain only trickles like a faulty sink in the night. You begin to see beauty in the ugly things, and gorgeousness in the beautiful things. You begin to ask yourself important questions, and the answers are good, but difficult. You notice others more striking than her, and you appreciate them with a timid heart. And you realize one day the dust has settled and your long lost life has returned like a tulip after the winter. You wonder if you wasted your time with her, and you're not entirely sure, but you feel that maybe, just maybe, your flower will blossom into hope.

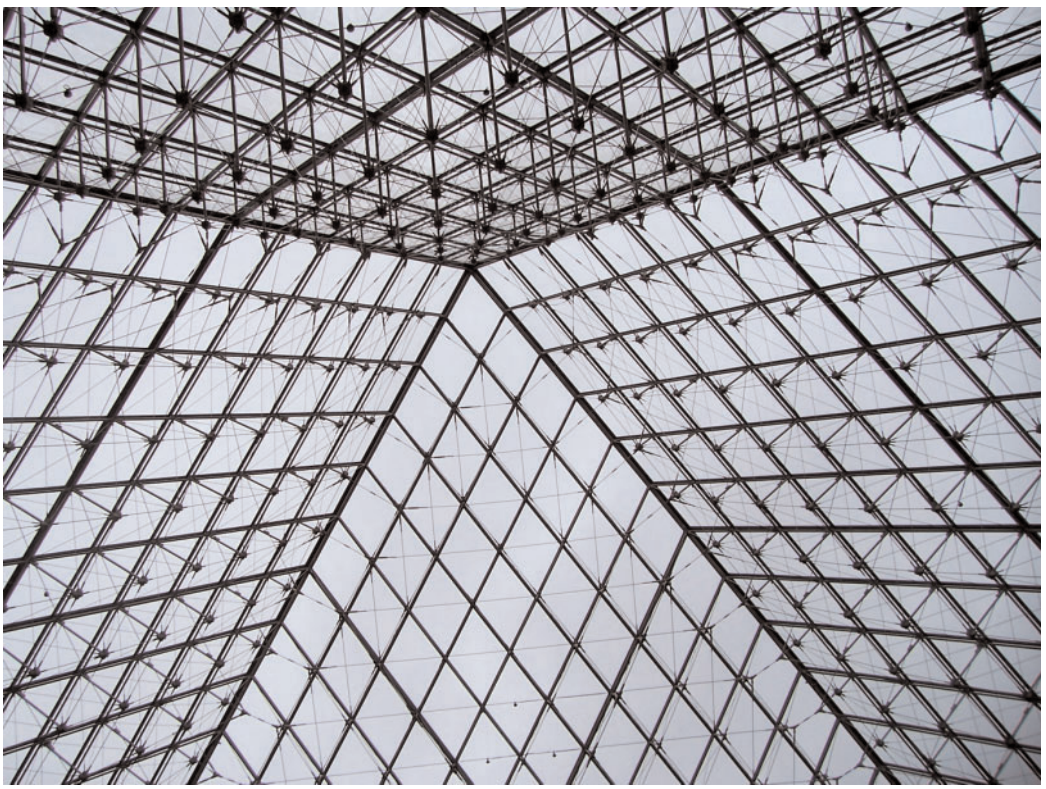


Pain - Gina Bollenback

EMILY

What was in that expired room
that kept her from unbridled insanity?
Was it pieces of tangled dreams and
distant, not quite tangible memories
that made her keep herself
from screaming out in the dark?
Was it the lingering presence
of the coarse touch of his hand
when he told her he was leaving?
Not one ink stain mars the purity
of her white dress, as she stares
into the dark recesses of a drawer.
A silent scream of anguish—
reverberates through the centuries.

Erin Costello



Louvre Pyramid - Joseph Eveld

Fiction

Lauren Wood

There's no reason for me to lie,
To you or anyone, and yet
Like words on a page
I am just real enough
To make up a life
Of my own.

And so you keep reading
This fiction life.
And I spit characters
To keep pages turning.
And I pray my real imagination
Can turn my words into worlds
For you to explore.

Sometimes I wonder
Would it be best
To remain a clean white page?
Without pen-scratched lies,
Without character?

I've never been in love.
I thought about it once
but then got too busy—
spent too long hiding in
saline and blood thinners
and antidepressants,
taking care of friends
who were starving themselves
to the bone,
with bandaged wrists and
mouthfuls of pills
because I do love them, too.
Staying alive gets in the way
of love sometimes.
Though I've had time to ponder,
between chemicals and narcotics,
to think of what I might be missing.
I recognize the absence most
on the dusky edge
of summer evenings when
the heavy breezes carry the season
and there are fireflies,
they find each other in the night
without words,
and I think it might be nice
to be somebody else's
light in the dark.

Love Poem

Joseph Eveld



Sad Eyes - Sara Berks

Life's Sweet Deceit

Dinah Alobeid

Shielding the lies,
he promised more,
told the sweetest tales,
dripping with deceit,
of future, of family,
of living free.
scrutinize each stranger,
no one can understand truth.
not elusive, but mystic,
not black and not white
with more grey than the stormy heavens over a dark sea.
why can't we all see the falsity in this world?
fooled to believe everything.
unknowingly or completely conscious
of the cuts inflicted,
wandering the planet in the distant hope
one thing will understand us.
one thing will put us above all else,
nurturing the soul,
protecting the body,
caressing the heart in ways unseen.
but this is life's sweet deceit,
the insurmountable
insecurity,
paralyzes the heart's capability to believe,
to trust,
to let go,
and let someone love.

Russian Roulette

Honorio Franco

Lying awake, avoiding the joy,
When the flow has stopped it will be too late,
I will be far away, much too far to reach,
A habit I seemed to pick off your body,
As you lay there I forage like a vulture
Attempting to find the remains of hope and love lost
The metal feels warm now inside my mouth
And yet in my reflection it should not be this way
I tried to aim for you, but seemed to miss your heart
And caught myself instead, but the time for saving has passed
You loaded up my gun with promises and lies
I, blindly, throttled the ignition and trusted your instinct
The instinct of a predator I never could have caught
And so you tore me to shreds and fed me to your pack
Your eyes of ice burned deep into my heart
Let the blood pump now as it trickles out my mouth
In the same fashion yours bled lies
My red is filled with hope, hurt, and lead
The blood tastes of you when it should be me
The demon I've become I can no longer let live
The gash, a minor set back,
an impediment cured with healing white lies of happiness
This game has announced me the winner and yet
And yet there is the wound, my prize, my trophy
Let me revel in its wonder and forgot who I've become
My possession leaves me weakened and too fatigued to try
To become more than what I am is too hard a struggle
Close my eyes, a final time, and whisper in your ear
"Goodnight my sweet," you said to me to which I did not reply
The blood has stopped, my life is spent, the sun begins to rise
Today, a different day, a perfect day to fall back into my patterns.

Pressure

Our blood tides with the sun on cloudless days.
Lift off and gravity pulls upside down.
Grey haze, lacking a bottom to the sky,
speak you anything, unanchored drift mine?

We hold our breath, peruse hidden caverns.
Our orange jelly eyes hallucinate
crocodile teeth that chase cicadas
through delicate paper pig heart blossoms.

We ride the elevator guillotine,
via silver cables that flux and beam,
to surface, to laugh nitrogen bubbles.
Engorged with salt tea water and cacti,
we breathe new gas, we forget oxygen.

I see outlines of myself in places
I do not occupy. Senses ripen
then die.

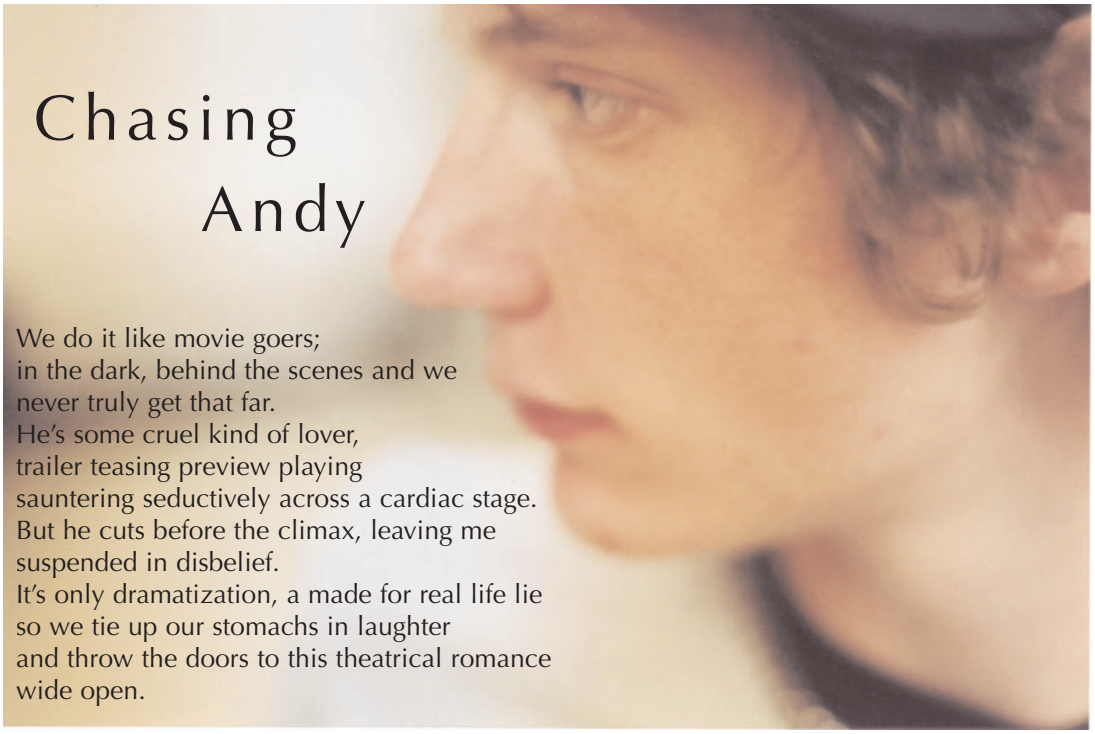
Tess Matukonis

From the Corner

Emily Lemiska

six
sailboats
of mahogany
pirouetting
bumper cars
slick with light
watching from the corner
frail inverted pyramid of
dancer pairs
moving in
time to

six
people
moving in and out the room
unaware and talking
to themselves and sometimes
at each other
pale shadows in thick
seaside late night soft roar silence
i shape my lips into a
poem perfect o
and blow
(they shudder and sigh
at the intrusion)



Chasing Andy

We do it like movie goers;
in the dark, behind the scenes and we
never truly get that far.
He's some cruel kind of lover,
trailer teasing preview playing
sauntering seductively across a cardiac stage.
But he cuts before the climax, leaving me
suspended in disbelief.
It's only dramatization, a made for real life lie
so we tie up our stomachs in laughter
and throw the doors to this theatrical romance
wide open.

Chessie Monks

Ushered outside, sun kissed and dizzy in daylight,
we smile through squinted eyes, admiring
all the scenery overexposed
like a Hollywood façade, we are
already in love with autumn
and ready to go falling.

Like stars, we come crashing in
on the city skyline at night.
He holds me like
champagne under his tongue
as we move in step to a cinematic soundtrack,
leaving lip prints on wineglasses
wherever we go.

We are motion picturesque,
lost in lines from silver screen scenes
where silent men spoke in diners
of foolish pride giving way to regret.
If we could only stay Dreamers
living forever in independent films,
he would kiss girls
and the credits would roll
right over our heads.

Lauren Chapman



Gift - Jesse Silverberg

From Dido, With Love

Brittany Malitsky

"That man who took me to himself in youth
has taken all my love; may that man keep it,
hold it forever with him in the tomb."

these hormones are at it again
charging at the speed of your fist when it hit me
square in the heart; that day my soul
signed its resignation.

as i lay bleeding i recall the longest days of august, spent
laying bricks and moulding mortar
beside you as we waited in the trenches -
first a cabin in the woods, then a pair of graves.

sometimes i forget how i traveled three hundred miles for
three arduous years, sun on these shoulders,
to find my unpaved path - so defiantly chosen -
climaxed at a dead end.

now the scent of metallic wet, the sounds of cities,
the greys and browns that paint this dead new england winter
replace the paradise we lost;
it slipped between my fingers and sank to the ground.

before us a pile of decomposing memories
recoils slowly, retreating
back into the soil from which love once flourished,
so that God may do good with it.

Another Day at the Office

Nikki Frankel

Walking through the halls of the hospital, I couldn't help but glance into the various rooms I passed. Only for a second I would catch a glimpse of the unfortunate occupants. Most of the time I could cruise prospective candidates undetected, but every once in a while my eyes would connect with the gaze of one of those helpless figures lying listlessly in a marshmallow white bed.

That's when I would feel a sharp pang of guilt about what I do.

There was life there, only in that moment, but true life existed. They knew why I was lurking around; they knew what I was all about.

I can appreciate life. I can appreciate that when people are alive they can accomplish amazing things. But that must end.

That's where I come in. As soon as that monitor flat-lines, I spring into action.

The worst is when the code team actually is successful. Those bright-eyed interns rushing into the room with silly mortal instruments in hand. Sure they can work, but when it's meant to happen, nothing can stop it.

I can't influence an outcome, but I won't hesitate to hope for one in my favor. It can get awful boring and lonely in this line of work during dry spells.

You should see this place around holidays. The old fuckers hold on like nothing else through Christmas. God forbid my target is Jewish; I'm sitting there for eight damn days waiting.

Not fun, let me tell you.
I'm not asking for sympathy, just a little understanding. It's not like this is a union job or anything. I have no benefits. No sick days. No health plan.

Ha, health plan.
That was a joke.

But seriously, I think all of you could really benefit from understanding my position in your society. If you just accepted your finite nature you'd be so much less stressed.

Stop fearing me because there's nothing you can do to keep me away. I mean, certainly I wouldn't advocate walking in front of a train because then there's all this paperwork I've got to fill out explaining to my boss why I had to process you so suddenly. Everything is rather orderly back here. We don't like surprises.
We'd appreciate some cooperation.

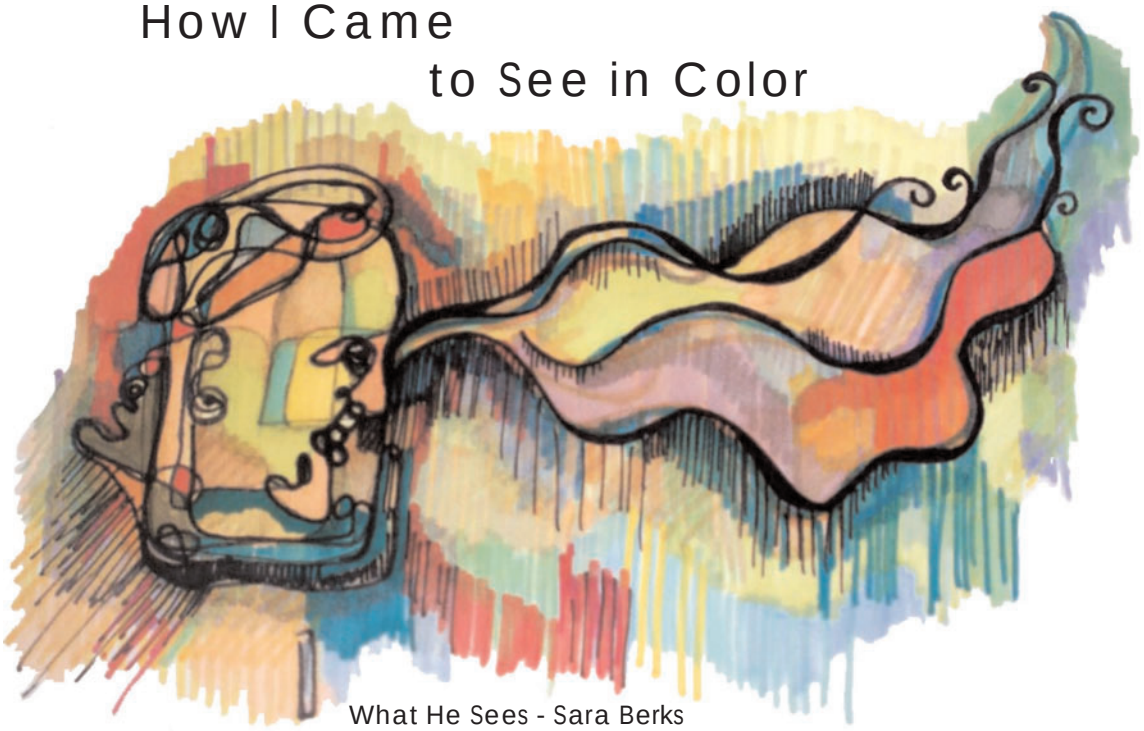
If the religious right has one thing figured out, it's that suicides create more problems (for both worlds) than they solve.

What I'm advocating is more of a laid back attitude.



Joshua Cristiano

How I Came to See in Color



What He Sees - Sara Berks

To confess:
the Arts and I are in the midst
of a passionate love affair.
With each encounter
my mind is elbowed
from the cramped corners of my skull,
and Verbs and Hues
placed just so never fail to set me to shivering.
Whether they have come to me
on lined paper,
on stage,
or simply lay vertically, suggestively, on the wall;
I could drink of them forever.
Each a jealous lover, and

I have been captured
length and breadth and soul,
in a thousand, thousand shades
and sadness
by Hue and Tint and Clay and Chord.

I have seen
this cosmos writhe
between the stars,

and I have loved the stark nobility
of black and white,
of staccato notes
        of arrogance tinged with lust.

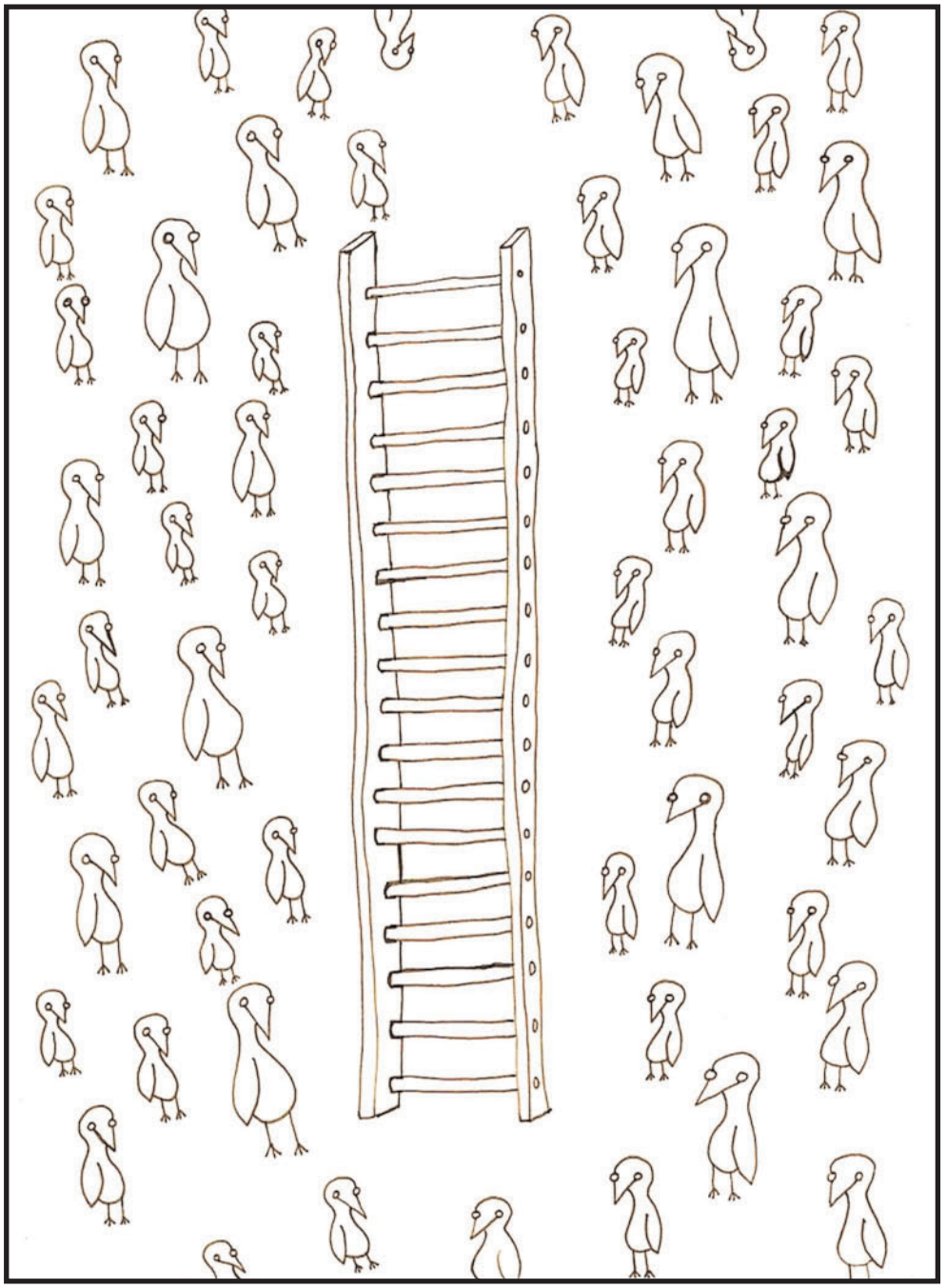
I tremble and
I breathe in these embraces;
these sinuous curves and elegantly awkward abstractions -
                draw in,
these ticking scenes of everyday, distilled -
                let go.

The reassuring strength
of these vertical lines and shuddering chords
pulls me
                heaven bound,
        while a sweeping silhouette
buries feet in damp earth.
I am stretched between these poles until
        I can scarce draw breath
        and I am
held up
        through these frames
to see the vastness of the world
                and left to languish
                in its terrible grace.

This rolling into greying dawn:
like breathing,
        ordinary and painfully beautiful.
I am drowning ,
                pleasantly,
in a sea of deepest blues and golds
with each rushing water,
        every crash, and soft retreating pull
as whispers into curves
of my seashell ears.

There is no escape,
        this love is Life,

                        and I am in love.



Laura Mangano

Directions

Lauren Wood

Words echo in her head
(echo in her head
her head)
Words she should have written down:
Turn right
(right?)
On sixth
(or fifth?)
Road, and next immediate left—she was sure.
(Sure!)
Then left, then right, right, left, right, straight, then
Right leftleftright bearleftleftsharpright left…
Until:
Lost—she retraces her steps,
Backwards: leftsharprightleftleftbearleftrightleftleftright
(right?)
Right here, left again there
(right?)
The words keep echoing
keep echoing
echoing
Words she should have written down.

Mangos

Rose Pappert

They hang overhead,
these fruits from afar,
redolent with spice
on shelves by the jar.

They sweeten the
winter's silvery days,
reminders of countries
where summer light plays.

The Irreversibity of Love, Unrequited

Maybe if I hadn't talked her out of tying her bracelet to the tree she would still be here. We can never be sure now; there's no rewind button in the real world. I remember she told me that while we were talking about the time I first saw her. I'd heard her laugh before I laid eyes on her. She'd been sitting at a table in the corner, playing cards with some guys. For some reason, I couldn't go up and say hello. She was the kind of girl who smiled a lot but never told you what she was really thinking. That's how she kept winning each round. I watched her from the other side of the room, and even though there was a party going on around me, she was the only one there. I watched her leave and wished that I could go back in time and at least look her in the face. When I told her that later, she looked at me and said, Sweetheart, there's no rewind button in the real world. And I guess she's right, but that doesn't mean I can't wish anyway.

I keep wishing things were different, but as it turns out, they are what they are. You can't change anything except what hasn't happened. I asked her once if she believed in fate. She'd thought a moment and said that there must have been something going on, because I managed to find her again. That's not exactly true. I didn't really find her; she just showed up and I didn't know I was looking for her until she was standing right in front of me. A friend introduced us and I said, Weren't you at West last night? I think saw you there. She smiled kind of funny and said she didn't remember seeing me. I believed her.

I didn't see her again for a while after that night. It was my turn to forget her. It was a Monday when she passed me on the street and stopped to say hello. She invited me to a dance class; I don't know how to dance all that well, but I walked with her to the lesson, and when we got there I realized that she was teaching the class. I'd thought for some reason that maybe she was as much of a novice as me but she danced the same way she laughed – effortlessly. I went to the lesson again next week, and the week after. She didn't seem to pay any attention to me, and I didn't really pay attention to her. I could never tell if she was interested or not, but I mean that was then, and this is not then anymore.

She was audacious like I can't even describe. It sparked and hissed beneath her skin, jumping out every now and then so you never tired of her. We had a lot of fun together. I used to be afraid to come out of my shell sometimes, you know? But I still managed to have fun. With her, it was just a different kind of fun. We learned from each other. When we'd be lying in bed next to each other, skin against skin, I think we tried to put ourselves as far away from that moment as possible. We were in denial long past its expiration and almost didn't see past

it until it was too late. Everything has an expiration date whether you want one or not; a point in time after things stop being like they were. The tricky part is figuring out when that is. The only definite dates are on cartons of milk at the grocery store, and even then it's not always reliable.

I used to tell myself that she wasn't important to me. Looking back, that may seem cruel and an obvious lie, but I didn't know what I wanted. I was younger then than I am now, and it felt wrong to know that she may have been okay to want. We would talk sometimes, mostly because she wanted to, about what we were. I didn't want to think about it, and it seemed she only did because nobody else would. We played every mind game in the book and I'm glad we did it.

My memory is not like hers. I'd mention something we did in the summer, and quick as anything she'd correct me with the exact date in spring. I do remember that time I took her home to the Cape. That weekend something changed. Somewhere in the sand or the sun or the car ride back, something happened and I think I liked it. She remembered a lot more about that weekend than I do, but we both remembered that feeling that didn't seem quite right at first but became something good by the time we got back to the city.

I'm walking down a street now that's filled with store windows, and I can't read the signs. Maybe they aren't in English, maybe I've forgotten how to read. The last time I forgot how to read I was still in Boston with her and we had both gotten drunk off of tequila. She sat on a stone bench by the reflecting pool and I watched it spin circles in my face. It was warm and summer and I laid there on the stone bench while she pointed out stars in the night sky that I couldn't see. Someone messaged my phone, but I couldn't read it because my eyeballs were too busy dancing with Jose, so I handed the phone to her. She read it for me, said that everyone at the party was wondering where we were, since it was our party at my apartment. I woke up at her place the next morning as she shook the margarita salt out of her halter top. Every now and then, she'd remind me about that night and how I forgot how to read.

I woke up at her place the next morning as she shook the margarita salt out of her halter top.

What's the bracelet for? I'd asked her one Friday morning as I laid back on the pillow with her draped around me. She lifted a wrist and inspected the red and white string tied around it like it was the first time she'd ever seen it in her life. For good luck, she told me. It was a Bulgarian tradition to wear it until you saw the first sign of spring. A friend had given it to her. I can't wait to get rid of it, it's filthy. True, the white parts weren't really white anymore, and one of the beads was missing, but she's told me so

many times how she could never bring herself to get rid of anything. I kissed her wrist and changed the subject; at that point, I was more concerned with consuming her than conversation.

If the trailing of her fingertips and wordless expressions were any indication, I don't think she minded really. Her appetite seemed more voracious than mine. I guess that's not too surprising; sexuality oozed from her pores like honey, lazy and deliberate. It was in the way she bit her lip, the way she wore her glasses, and the way she lit up a crowded room and held it captive. It bothered me when I saw others looking at her, but there was nothing to do about it. She wasn't mine. And even though she acted as if she didn't notice, and maybe she didn't notice, but I knew that she'd touched at least one of them the same way she did me. She'd look at me and tell me so as if she were at confession. According to her, they were all mistakes.

I'd heard her last confession with the taste of her still in my mouth, and it hurt in ways that it wasn't supposed to.

I'd heard her last confession with the taste of her still in my mouth, and it hurt in ways that it wasn't supposed to. It was too much for me; I was done. Her face looked like a sheet of stone and the only things that were alive were her eyes when I tried to throw her away. I can still see the way they widened, and then the shock of utter disbelief welled in them. I may have seen part of the real her, swimming in her eyes, caught completely off balance and thrown. Every once in a while, I thought that maybe I saw someone different lurking beneath it all. After she left I was too angry to think straight and I spent the next day trying to figure myself out. I needed to be safe from her, find someone else, maybe lots of someone else. There was no point in dragging it out any longer; she was leaving in two months and so was I. No way would something have stayed between us with her in Scotland and me in Denmark. Hell, no way would something stay between us, ever. That was October.

But here we are in March, with the sun shining through rainy clouds when it doesn't think we're looking, making mirrors out of puddles on street corners. Somewhere in between then and now, everything has changed. As I'd walked away from her, there was a fleeting feeling of doubt, that maybe I'd done the wrong thing. I thought about what I needed for myself, what I wanted and what I was supposed to do. I thought for two weeks, and when I gave her my answer I still wasn't sure if it was the right one. I told myself that even if I fucked up, it would all be over soon. That's the great thing about expiration dates, they take care of problems for you.

Tequila must have run like blood through her veins because she would drink it like water. She told me later that she did shots of

tequila before bed every night of those two weeks. In fact, the back shelf behind the counter of the liquor store knew her well. She once told me that would rather drink vodka straight than have to finish a beer. But the other night, I took her out to a bar here and I watched her drain a pint of Tuborg in what felt like thirty seconds. As my friend and I slowly sipped our still full pint glasses, she set hers on the floor and leaned against the wall with a smile like she had a secret in her mouth. A year ago, she would never have chugged a pint of beer in a dirty Copenhagen bar, but a year ago, we were busy avoiding each other in a dance studio. I didn't know her, and she didn't know me. We were just people who knew each other though a friend of a friend, a game of connect-the-dots on a social map.

There wasn't an exact moment that I fell in love with her. It built up little by little and before I knew it the words fell out of my mouth. And she said nothing, just looked at me with those eyes for a long time and I didn't care anymore what the consequences would be. But she didn't get up and walk out of the room or even laugh at me. After what seemed like hours, she buried her face in my neck and said that she thought she loved me too. When it was time for us to part it wasn't as easy as I thought it would be. I missed her even though I don't ever miss people at all, and when I heard her voice filtering through the static over the ocean and through the phone, her laughter never changed. E-mails were sent back and forth rattling off our day to day happenings, all the while trying to quell questions and doubt either of us had with remarks about the horrifying exchange rates in our respective foreign countries. And then she booked a flight to see me in Denmark.

We were just people who knew each other though a friend of a friend, a game of connect-the-dots on a social map.

Would it be awkward to see her again? I thought while I waited for her at the international arrivals terminal. I waited five minutes, then ten, then fifteen and when I least expected it, saw a familiar pair of legs striding toward me in a skirt so short that nobody in their right mind would travel in except for her. Two flights and a layover didn't seem to have affected her demeanor at all. She walked right up to me, kissed me, and though it hadn't felt completely right, it wasn't wrong either. As we walked out of the terminal she tugged on the hemline of that skirt and before I knew it, I was laughing with her the way we used to, as if distance between us had never been.

There's no rewind button in the real world. I keep repeating that over and over in my head, but it only makes me angry. None of this is my fault but I feel like there should have been a warning sign or a way to know that things would go wrong. The only thing I can think

of is that bracelet; that stupid bracelet that she wanted to tie to a tree branch while we were walking around before going to catch her flight back to Scotland. For good luck, she had said. I wasn't serious when I said that it was dumb to be superstitious and that a piece of string couldn't really make that much of a difference. She gave me a sideways look, stopped untying it from around her wrist, put her hand back in mine and we kept walking. Maybe if I hadn't said anything and let her tie it to that branch at the first sight of springtime like she was supposed to, her plane wouldn't have crashed onto the runway at Edinburgh in the rain. She would always complain about how it never stopped raining there. It's been a week since I got that phone call from her parents, even though I don't know how they got my number. But that wasn't important compared to the knots that were tying up my stomach and my throat closing in on me. I'd walked away from the airport after seeing her off, thinking about our plans to meet up in London in only a few days. We didn't even bother saying goodbye and it hadn't felt like one. All I've been able to do is walk around to keep myself from staying in one place, because I don't think I'd be able to get up and move again if I stopped. The sun is out full force now, but I can't feel it burning the back of my neck. I don't see the way people look at me; I just keep walking. Sweetheart, she told me, there's no rewind button in the real world.

Addya Bhowmick



View from the Window - Danielle Dobson

Anapest Destiny

Aidan Michael O'Leary

Iambs and trochees, my form is my prison
Others can willow and wisp
I must not waver from stress and destress
<or> That is the mood that I chance
Blank verse I master but free is my bane
Sonnets can flow from my tongue
Pilfer my meter and gone is my voice
<i> Find it a terrible shame

Trochee is harder but iamb is fun
Anapest now is my best
Dactyl belongs to an age prehistoric
<and> Not in my stanza or verse
Whimsy and meter, they skip hand-in-hand
Gleeful and drunk in their life
Lending the simpleton's feeling a trace
<of> Shrewdness of mind and of wit

Pleasing the child is ever my fate
Sing-song and silly, my rhymes
Giggle and grin, for they intoxicate
<the> Meaning I hope to relay
It may sound happy, this story I tell
Meter again with it's wool
Fooling you out of the sobriety
<in> The message I hope to impart

Simple these words that I lay on the page
Shallow in depth or in height
Yearning sobriety in every foot
<i> Wish for the day that I break
Out through the bars of my rhythmic design
Straying outside of my form
Serious thoughts can afford the panache
<in> Stead of my metric caprice.

<but> Wishing is fishing in ponds that aren't yours
<or> So I would have you believe
<so> I will continue to write as I do
<and> Whimsy will have to be borne

spired in the gothic tower
bloodied camera,
celsius shower,
holiday frame for a
rebirth hour.

[buying a chainsaw]

A Question

Tess Matukonis

absent of choice
the polyglot voice
wins over the glance
and void of romance
the sweat and a beat
on the mecca cold street.

[2000 crowns]

Steel bottles, my chance
for comfort of stance.

[mile long escalators]

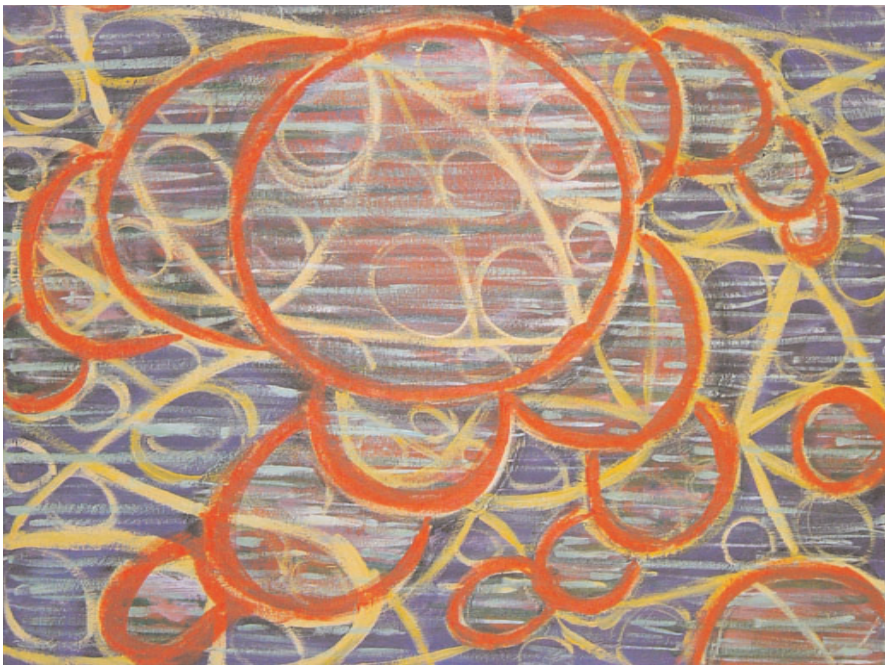
here I traverse,
becomes darker and worse
silent tongue, muzzled hot
sees point blank the shot,
all the time I think

[
do the streets widen
or do i shrink?
]



Joshua Cristiano

Joshua Cristiano



The Question is Yes

I am not saying we can do this alone
In the confines of our minds or the comforts of our homes

It will be in a miniscule moment the greatest change be born
Infantile wisdom as old as the first betrayal
The moment the first cell divided itself
In search of companionship
We divide ourselves from some in order to be close to others
And division is necessary, but it's not the whole story.

Necessary because of its existence; no entity that lives is gratuitous
Though not all entities that live are conscionable,

How do we know the floor from the roof?
We seek the Truth, we seek the Truth

How do we know original root?
We seek the Truth, we seek the Truth

How do we find infallible proof?
We seek the Truth, we seek the Truth
Though,
Even the idea of absolute truth is relative

"What now?" the seeker wisely asks
"to what end will define my divine tasks?"

an order for the house! A structure for the state!
A unifying method that will help us all relate!

Why must this be God? We have each other – though that is not certain
A person falls short,
we need something more permanent
we cannot put Trust in the perishable, the temporary
the loss of such a thing is exactly to the contrary
the betrayal is perpetuated
and we are separated…again we are cleft
cause faith is the only one left, when you're the only one left

don't let me be the only one left

And history's wisest see
This is more than just a need

Josiah Proietti

It is a [{ (o) }]

So revel in your faith, for I do not claim fallacy
Only; it is not the belief in an unseeable relation
But the finite sentence we serve here the center of revelation
When we serve together it is cause for celebration

A Cup of Irish Coffee

Jay Cinq-Mars

Happiness,
The afterglow
Of a cup of Irish coffee,
Shared with a close friend,
On a busy day,
In a warm room.
Where feelings float about,
Like ribbons of passion manifest,
Suspended lightly in the air.
And they fill the senses,
Like
A loaf of baking bread.
A generous Sun.
A dewy summer morning.
Happiness…
TO HELL with the stigma
Of cliché, for
Life
Is indeed that way sometimes!
While Happiness ebbs and flows
Other things clutter,
And get in the way.
So that by the time
We recognize its caress,
Its presence,
The moment vanishes!
It all floats away
Like an aroma.
And all we have left
Is the memory, the afterglow.
Savor it…

Meaning?

Dinah Alobeid

perplexity
blurs the lucidity
I wish I could find.

confusion,
misconception,
makes anguish,
everyday life.

why is it so hard,
to find something real?
believing is hard enough,
without unrestricted fear.

fear of loss,
fear of love,
fear of giving all,
to someone,
something,
undeserving.

let go of fear,
though it takes years,
learn to stand up,
alone,
but learn to love
and be loved.
Learn to let yourself
lean against the rock
that holds you back
and helps you stand tall.

Limitations

Lauren Wood

I write and erase in English class.
Filling the margins of ruled paper—
A red line holding my doodles in,
separate from some finer points
On a finer poet's genius.
In counted lines and syllables
And a constant, perfect rhythm,
His [italics] wit and soul and heart
Shine through the studied laws of verse.
He shames my weak formless distraction:
These lines, shaped solely
By a common notebook's rulings.
Is genius trapped, within the margins,
Aching to flow in sonnets?
Or should I end with class today,
Content with my limitations?

Cold Sneakers

Kate Downey

I wish I could explain to you how this feels;
Deconstructing myself to answer your questions
Handing my secrets over piece by piece
Waiting for the breaking point
Or the boiling point
Or the freezing point.
At what temperature does a heart combust?
Wrapped up in you on a December midnight,
I'd say around 15 degrees.

The Green Swing

Shellie Leger

Swings can go high. You used to run under mine when you pushed me. Nice, my heel caught you right in the middle of your heady head head. It reminded me of Jacob and Esau. The thwack of my booted right foot against your forehead sickened me, but excited me too. When the swing retuned to its down position, what would I find? Would you lay crumpled, like a wadded up piece of paper, on the dry brown grass of early spring in northern Maine? Would there be blood? I'd sort of hoped so.

Twenty-five years later I meet you randomly in line at a mediocre Mexican restaurant in San Francisco? That sounds good. I would recognize you by the small sickle shaped scar on the upper left quadrant of your high and rather expansive eastern European forehead. Your last name was Belskis, right? I'd laugh, and introduce myself. Constance Aggasiz, remember me? Apologize for leaving you bleeding under the green swing that March afternoon, in the deserted playground by the mill. You'd take me back to your attic apartment in China Town and fuck me. We wouldn't even bother with burritos. And I'd tell you that I'd always loved you, even then when we were children.

-Why do you taste so foul? You'd ask, when we were finished, lying in your narrow lumpy bed.

-Was that meant to hurt me? I'd ask.

-Duh. What do you think, Einstein? You'd answer back, wrapping a chunk of my long flat black hair around your meaty red fist, and yanking.

-You seem so angry! I'd say at that point.

-Do you know how much a head wound bleeds? Especially if you're a hemophiliac? You'd yank a little harder on my hair, now tangled around the large knobby ring on your sausage finger.

-Let it go, already. It was twenty-five years ago. I'd say, with my eyes watering from the sensation of tiny hairs being ripped from my tender scalp.

Or what if we met on a lobster boat. You'd be the captain, and I'd be a crew member. You'd take one look at me, my prodigious breasts stuffed into an old stiff salty flannel shirt, and you'd want me so bad that any recollection of my abandoning you to your untimely death at seven would simply go poof! Like a little cloud of dandelion fluff.

Orchid Love

Gary Price

Orchids don't wither;
They only get blown by winds unbecoming of extenuation,
Unbecoming of my frantic immortality.

Pictures don't get tainted.
They merely fall into the soiled hands of a charlatan's fancy,
Into my depth charge of emotion.

Soiled hands can't extenuate the wind they blow,
The stems holding up picturesque,
Anxiety-inducing,
Xanax-necessitation
Orchid photographs.





Joshua Cristiano



Joshua Cristiano

The Secret Life of Words

And tell me, how can I deal with absolutes,
when my house is full of relatives?

"At My House" (1963)

At the fortieth reunion, over drinks,
Bruce Mansdorf says that he remembers me
for those two lines, penned in my sophomore
year and published in The Trojan Horse—
lines that have grown old enough
to have grown lines of their own,
to be the remarks of the CEO
of a Fortune 500 company,
to be retirement plans.
The secret life of words is as Blake states:
he came upon one in the cool of the day
and found it golden; he came upon many
and built Jerusalem with them.
But gold does not stay golden,
and Jerusalem has its appointed time.
A single letter separates
words from worms. Every language
has its terms and its term,
then slouches toward the lexicon
like certain friends of Berryman:
indexed, dying, warm.

Stuart Peterfreund



The Shore - Danielle Dobson

The River Acheron

It took a lifetime
to get here,
standing amongst
shades
on a shoreline.

I don't remember how
I got here
I cannot leave.

My feet
stuck in the soil.

There is nothing to do
but wait and wish
I could raze the universe.

It never should have been
this or that way;
it never should have been
at all!

A lifetime
to get here,

for what?

I hear a dog bark in the distance,
a boat shuffles back and forth.

I wait

I don't even have any coins
to buy my way into hell.

Stephen Evans

Fata Morgana

high tide
tumble-

-weed my mirage
with your shoelaces
untied.

reset
the unset
sun.
.shine loose auburn
through the blind

pits of our palms
/ cover them,
thick /
in poison,

splotch
mosquito
secretion

Quickly; Now,

before we surrender
our cotton.
/ shadows

inverted / breathes
coil the sand
a moon slivers
to the lull

oily, giftwrapped
in thirst,
/ an illusion /
Shiver

a lover and a dreamer
with a broken compass

Revolutions

Emily Lemiska

sweet & sad
and softly amused at the world and its circles
around the sun forever & always & so on
through turnstiles and hulahoops
never looking below or behind
as meteorites and years
slip, slip, by
whispering—
good-bye;
good-luck;
see-you
'round.

From St. James Gate

Joseph Eveld

I want you,
my Liffey Love,
on wet coasters torn to shreds,
mahogany bars and velvet couches,
in settling heads
and coins tapped on glasses.
Pints measure progress
and currency exchange.
"Oh, Jasus! It spilt!"
And it's another round
so "no bot'er."
Money's never wasted on
the dark blood of Dublin.
Poured down from the taps
in the pub—light and dark,
I drink you for warmth
from the cold air and rain.
Two fingers down and I
already want more
of my bitter wet comfort from
the sodden outdoors.
Through the fog goggled window
to the oil slick streets
I see cold cobblestones
and they point the way home.
But I'm not ready to leave,
My love, you're a port in
the storm, so be my
stout shelter and I'll say
"give us some more."

Eternity - Jesse Silverberg



I have gazed upon the eyes of Medusa, I have stared into the fathomless soul of the Id, I have glared into the pond of true reflection and, yet, I have never looked at what I have looked at on Friday ever before.

I have touched the burning magma of a dragon's belly, I have held the softest material only created for slumber, I have gripped the coldest snow that would have frost bitten many a man and, yet, I have never touched what I have touched on Friday ever before.

I have tasted the bountiful fruits of Eden, I have licked the honey of the comb, I have devoured the most horrid foods and, yet, I have never tasted what I have tasted on Friday ever before.

I have heard the cry of the banshees, I have heard the screams of children, I have heard the intoxicating melodies of sirens and, yet, I have never heard what I have heard on Friday ever before.

I have smelled the sweet perfume of marmalade, I have sniffed out the most putrid of tracks, I have smelled the stench of pure hatred and war and, yet, I have never smelled what I have smelled on Friday ever before.

What an experience.

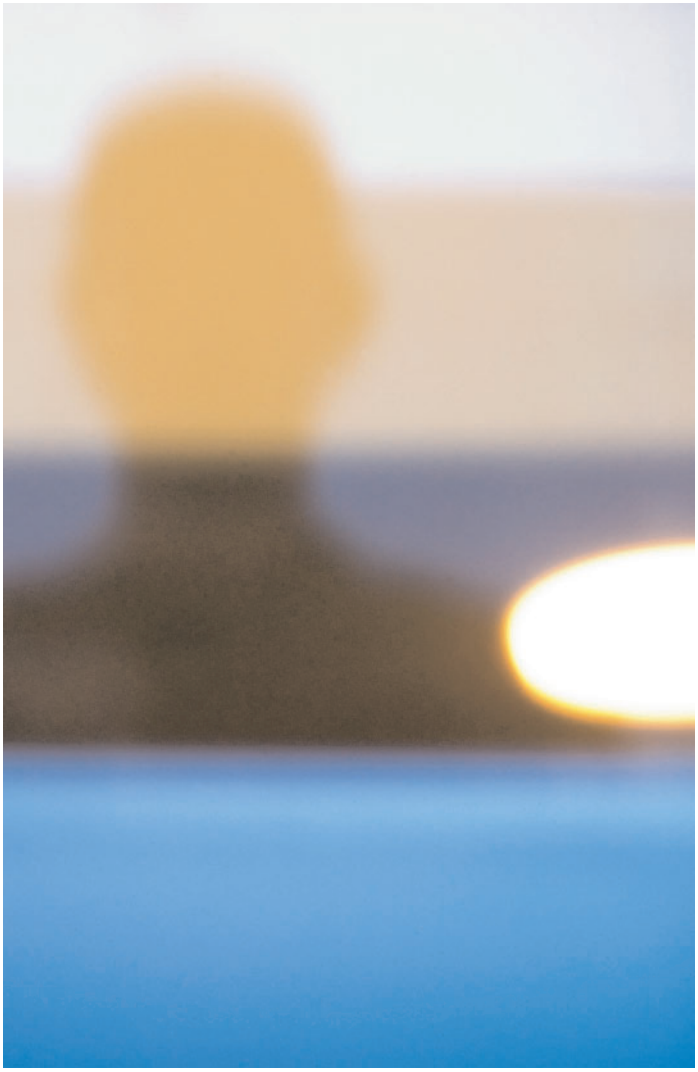
You were lovely that day.

I want that sensation forever.

Friday

Rodney Dominique

Artist on the Orange Line



Beheaded, Decapitated, Blue - Jason Jedrusiak

Now acquainted,
she smiles.
Held captive by those
innocent eyes,
falsely advertised.
She kisses his words
with laughter,
juggling her hands expressively
in the otherwise
inanimate atmosphere of
public transportation.
No more than minutes and
she's already against the wall.
Spread on a white sheet,
she quickly pens out a
makeshift identity.
She didn't know it, but
she was silently seduced,
and he didn't know it, but
I could tell.
Whilst I forever remain
silently stowed,
all the way across the train;
disregarded yet undiscarded
by his side.
And I wonder,
have I ever been beautiful
to a stranger?

Lauren Chapman

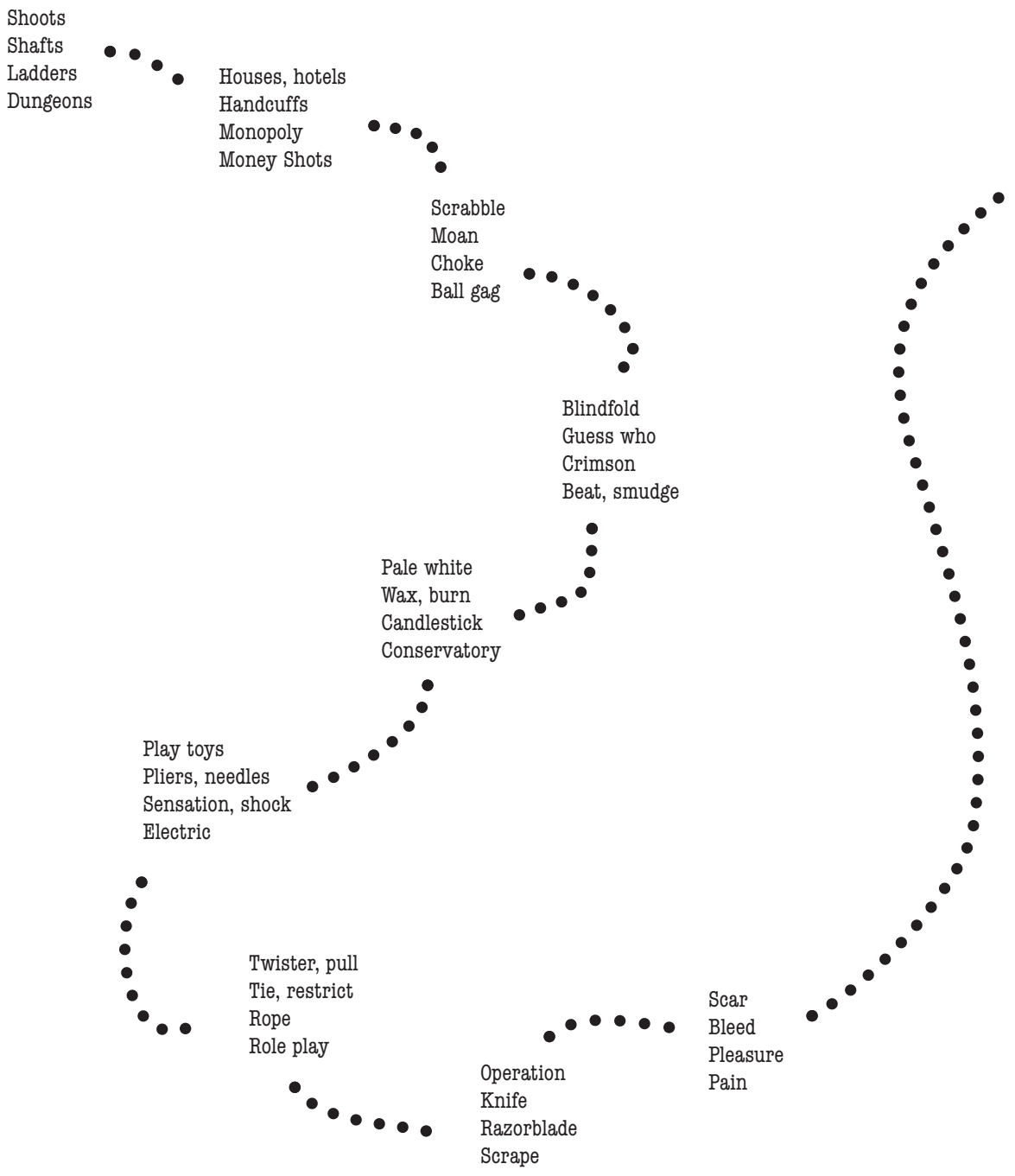
Distance From Convention

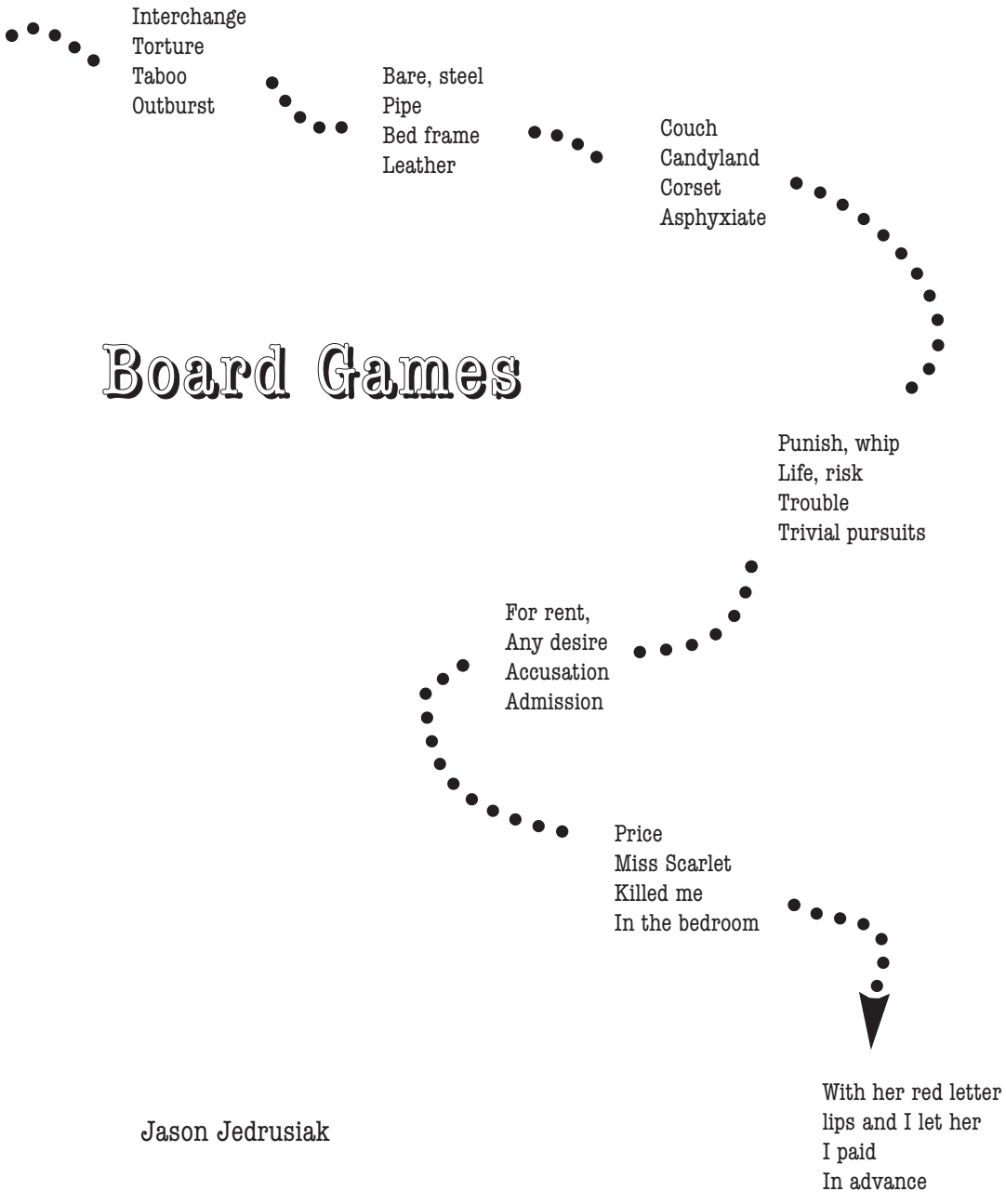
Erin Vinacco

So easily I have left
and will continue to leave.
Once the distance has been traveled,
an unstoppable feeling takes hold.
There is a need to go deeper
in an unknown direction.
Fueled by the peril
of my relations,
exposed, with no desire to hide.

The places
you touch
ignite.
Your musical hands
your hips against mine
stop my breath
at the thought
that I could give no one
everything
you haven't earned.
But you could have it all.
I need no guarantees
of fickle feelings
only promises of pleasure,
if only for the immeasurable now.

But I want to go deeper
to be closer,
to get inside
and stop your breath.
I want to open you,
to break the ritual and
make you mine.
Vulnerable and exposed,
to a forbidden touch.
A feeling sweetened by its
distance from convention.


Shoots
Shafts
Ladders
Dungeons
Houses, hotels
Handcuffs
Monopoly
Money Shots
Scrabble
Moan
Choke
Ball gag
Blindfold
Guess who
Crimson
Beat, smudge
Pale white
Wax, burn
Candlestick
Conservatory
Play toys
Pliers, needles
Sensation, shock
Electric
Twister, pull
Tie, restrict
Rope
Role play
Operation
Knife
Razorblade
Scrape
Scar
Bleed
Pleasure
Pain



Jason Jedrusiak

Birds and Bees and Honey Trees

Kate Downey

When our buzzing bodies come together
Like two hives of bees
And your honey blood beats slower
Every time
We kiss

As if some invisible aphrodisiac
Was flooding your mouth
That you won't share

And for want of it
(frustration; I can never taste that sweetness)
my veins pulse and
accelerate

to twice
the speed
that yours are marking
our metronomes
in strict
syncopation

Summer

Rose Pappert

Then, dome of green light,
and fragile, stand
for but one day
casting Spirit-shafts
at all heights and
lengths!

Flicker; that life in
quaint insect robe and
green-lit stick and shoot
and fragrant wall of flowers
and mass of pale aquatic
plants awaver in lake waters
may burgeon briefly,
flaring, broken-lighted into
bright diversey strengths!

Breathe, Summer;
light and shelter all!
Make us loathe to cadence
onward into Winter Hall!

Everyone Says I Look Like I'm From Detroit

two loves at once, i'm writing in triplets:

cramming ear plugs into pockets and caffeine pills into mouth must wake up must wake me the fuck up- bite marks on stomach, and, she loves drinking water. chemicals make me who i am she says "get hyped" i just can not sit still it's nice outside today and i saw him on the stairs the brazilian flag waving and he is balding and i have sweat on my forehead and a hole through my head, hand reaches in and pulls out through the other side. paint the room black and help me pick out the right color for the house, make it stand out make yourself stand out and just give me some goddamn feedback i want to know how you feel when you look at me like that- juice on upper lip can't keep your fucking mouth shut and they all talk all the time about how he climbs and climbs and she's just the opposite (falling down all the time) and when her hands shake she lets go and the drop is not that far, swim to the other side and they block her in anyway. pollution in my lungs love it love it love it hey lover please drive me home next time we use each other.

he comes into the room it smells like fresh carpet and he says let's smoke a blunt i sleep for half the day clutching her i am sweating and shaking withdrawal the body sweats out the chemicals and next time i walk outside i am dizzy with rapture and the sky looks grey. he calls and says in broken english "you are a fucking liar" and i say "he just wants you around i guess it seems convenient" and we all need hair cuts but i am forbidden to use scissors and i run around instead and she goes home. i'm sick of playing referee and her voice is suddenly sexy and i balance the books on my head for protection it is hailing tree branches and i want more pills to let my throat swallow burning words, give up give up give up they swear ghosts live in the house but i know it is just mice within the walls because that is where i go to tunnel my way into dictionaries and swamps, woodlice greet me on the way and i itch with pleasure at the thought of playing music with the bass turned up and my muscles reversed (your body turned into hers and then you were nothing at all).

chain smoking until i can no longer breathe. he is by the ocean and i am suffocating in here alone.

she calls says "well today i had a spiritual experience" and i slick my hair back with saliva and stare at the ground i walk on the worms that live there and she is ashamed.

at her apartment in the bronx:

crossing the bridge in the dark and giving out dollars when I can to the crack users outside they shout to me when i smoke on the balcony and the money floats down.she wipes off her makeup before going to bed my pretty pretty princess slut, and tonight i am going to bed drunk but not early and in the morning i will hear your voice and in my

head and the beat will play and for once you will not ignore me.

speak dirty words too busy fucking to make the bus on time she stays in bed all day- drinks japanese beer and watches the day turn into twilight;

paralyzed because

he lies too, but don't we all and still i say hello every single day.

back home for a minute:

i called him up i said "hey i'm feeling kind of weird i keep wanting to stick my head in fire hydrants and i think worms keep crawling out of my spine but i could be wrong, i am reading a separate reality and feeling it too."

and he says "i've got a fifty dollar fine for drinking all the time i'm in negative money and still i only work for the money but it's all gone all the time god this is horrible i am also reading a book by that author it is called the art of dreaming. tomorrow i will meet you at the bus station, the one where that twilight zone episode was filmed, and i will see you surrounded with diesel and drool."

she called me up said "i just got into town what's good what's going down" and i said "cross the city come to my house come get me pretty please."

and she drove down the street and i said "hello" sweat was dripping down my face and i guess i was nervous. climbed the stairs saying nothing hysterics acting up already. introduce the sister the mother the baby daughter hello- they are the flesh and blood of which you have heard so much about. cramming food in and hoping eye contact interrogation will end. i pace i stand up move back and forth it is time to leave and so we do drive around make some calls pick up the ex buy drugs at some slum house she runs into her ex, how ironic- only in town for a weekend? drive in circles and we end up in a jewish graveyard on the east side getting high and laughing on the roof of the car.the boys leave, they were never really there. and fuck the good canadian shit i'm thinking of the bronx across the bridge and four blocks down that's where you know it's good-ya'll ain't cops now. we drive home but it's early and i am animated and obvious, trying to avoiding seeming desperate and boring and we return to the house smoke smoke smoking all the way there disgusting lungs envelope the sky and i am just full of the night. dark and dirty and she calls herself a sleaze, a scumbag bad influence and i am half inclined to agree until i remember the dxm trip i chose to take with an alcoholic- endless dissociations and insomnia- i told her "you will sleep with me i am right and you are wrong you can not have those nightmares again i will be comfort i will let you rest."

the phone call:

i woke up tired and put on the grey cardigan and tightened the belt around my waist and contemplated mirror face. i thought of the birthday candles on the cake and her swollen eyes and her swollen belly and her statement " how can you throw away what is mine? this was my home." guilt.

i made tea. i sat on the porch and called him. i balanced the bowl in one hand and in between hits i said hello. it's not that i'm addicted

i just need the alteration in order to deal with this

(i am thinking of him in the shower smoking cigarettes and how something so personal becomes meaningless if one is hurt. his choked voice practically screaming at me "thank god i did not fuck you".) and so he picks up.

and i don't know what to say, not really, but i never do anyway. i am terrible at these things and he knows it. i breathe the smoke in deeply and exhale and tell him i am broken.he does not understand and so i stop that train of thought and uncued silence fills up space.

the wind shakes the screen.my nails are dirty

"hello?" he says "i am worried we are growing apart"

and

back to me "you're goddamn right. you should be concerned.

i

mean nothing, and you know this. don't say sorry."

he is stoned. his voice is thick and all i can think about is what an awful writer anne frank is and whether or not i will ever finish what i start and his lips-how for a minute i really did see things upside down.but back to the point we need to just stop this bullshit this "will it work" false optimism i am drowning in these fucking cliches. i hang up when he says "i love you", because he is a liar. but more because i remember how he tried to pretend he was a beautiful person.

i'm only alone if loneliness is not:

he does not call except to say "i am not going to be seeing you today" eyesight i'm angerblind and a whole bunch of words float like moths from my mouth but they don't mean a thing and i'm just sick of crying.

this weather disgusts me i hate sweating and feeling my own body beneath the skin and it won't stop the window is always down i am always awake at night and the bed is like a casket this house lies because it's not a home not a home not without you anyway. it was raining and the car drove by and i went in the passenger side my sweater stuck to my arms wet wool reeking i looked you in the eyes and saw everything i had missed and hated everything about the past year mostly because you were not there and it was that fucking problem, distance. well i call it protection. he says to me you have been thinking entirely too much you have to take care of yourself (what self?) and it will get better.

and so:

miles away she sits, smoking and trying to forget. this time though i will not let her walk alone.

Morgan Jensen

Funeral Hymn for the Damned

The sunlight dripping in my wounds,
I see the anger soon, so soon,
and lacking nothing more in more
I lick my wounds and senses sore.
Repeating all the while a score:
the hatred I will feign ignore.

Your soul in damnéd hell abhorred,
I clapped my hands til they grew bored.
The stabbing pleasures it brought me
are countless. Now why won't you see?
The damage caused can't be revoked,
your throat it cannot be un-choked.
My wife, you stole her right from me,
but who does own the last "tee-hee"?

I staggered, clawing at my hair,
for love requited: nothing there.
And all the while knowing that
you ran off with that man, that rat.
You torture me with all you've done,
and so I'll even up the sum...

Matthew Lavigne

I tip-toed to "our" bed at dawn,
stood silent; then I heard your yawn.
Your lax attention gives me chills
my disposition full of thrills.
Took one step back, let blunt edge drop,
you cried out once for it to stop;
but cries were muffled once I threw
my caution out, anger renewed.

Alone I find myself a noon
or lying without gain or boon.
I trudge without a soul this day
my prison is the price I pay.
You haunt me everyday I live;
my life, the sacrifice I'd give
to see you once more animate,
my act gave no one benefit.

Reminded once more of the crime,
these walls entrap, count down my time.
And now I wonder if death's toll
is taking fruit from out this bowl,
or if this bowl is naught but sin,
and tainted is this suit of skin.
Your soul knows not to where it's been:
recitals of my sweetest sin.

Inca Mirror - Jesse Silverberg



Emotional Graffiti

C.E.Osthimer

ranting raving screaming tearing aching ripping stealing
dying open like blood clots on busted knees scarred
torn broken battered pieces in halves in halves in
halves in halves over up down right to the marrow
deep-ly talking thinking drinking eating not so much
sleeping but sitting staring at nothing at all in violent
blue while shaking shivering wondering is it all for
nothing like nothing can be people places things
ideas simply placed ideally inserted into lives like
mine for oh so short times fuck i might as well be
stop
i've been lying to all of you
stop
i shouldn't have i shouldn't have i shouldn't have
stop
you never grew up
you're a fucking facade, a victorian roof top

C'est La Vie

Emily Lemiska

so let us write c'est la vie
in pink chalk
down the highways of the great wide world
of course chances are
it'll rain that morning, just before rush hour

and we will
sip our coffee
and we will
say softly
c'est la vie
but honestly,

we will still get pretty fuckin' pissed off.



A Little Preoccupied - Megan McCormick

Tonight

Laura Mangano

Tonight-
There's gonna be some vandalizing, scandalizing,
greedy grafitti
spliff rollin, street strollin, bleack waering, uncaring
poetry capturing mind rapture-ing
characters
on the bleak streets with pockets deep we're gonna creep up to the ones asleep
shake em, wake em, ensnare senses once under false pretenses
cause this dexterity
it's taking over me
and I can finally see
what it's like to be free
and I want you to be
what's infiltrating me

and there's gonna be some
high flyin
grinnin tooth smilin
back seat smoking
reverberation vibration soaking
bass is blastin
and my body's crashin
and I'm loving what it means
to be a delinquent living dreams.

Be My Guest

Nikki Frankel

Hanging on a clothesline
Strung out
It's been too long since my last fix
Of your candy colored rough and tough
Lies.

I'm addicted to your sarcasm
We've got a matching set

Coordinated confusion snakes through
Our particularly decorated plane

Shared tears of crimson jealousy
Your words, not mine.

I wanted to parrot back your overused phrase
But my feathers were removed long ago

Outside forces change and shape me
Like safety scissors in the right hands of
Curious and imaginative pre-schoolers

Construction paper + glitter = masterpiece.

Thirsty Thursday Claims a Victim

Once upon a Thursday dreary, while I pondered, eyes a-bleary
Over dull, long-winded volumes of some academic bore,
While I studied, pressure mounting, suddenly there came a sounding
As of someone drunkly pounding, pounding at my dorm room door.
"Tis some idiot," I muttered, "Pounding at my dorm room door.
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, forlornly I remember, it was in the bleak December
And my smile's dying embers fell and smoldered on the floor.
Groaning loud, I cried for respite – vainly I had sought to grasp it
From my books and I was desperate – desperate for far-off March 4.
For the sunny, spring vacation, which Sir Freeland names March 4,
Seems too far for evermore.

Then the violent loud vibrations, shaking o'er the wall's foundations,
Through me, moved me to annoyance as I'd never felt before,
So that now to slow the rushing of my blood, I said, huffing,
"Tis some moron who is wanting something at my dorm room door;
Drunken moron who is wanting something at my dorm room door,
That is it and nothing more."

Presently my rage grew stronger, hesitating then no longer
"Dude," said I, "Or damsel, truly your quick leaving I hope for.
But in studies I was drowning and so gently you came sounding
And so faintly you came pounding – drip'd sarcasm wet the floor –
That I scarce was sure I heard you." Here I opened wide the door:
Hallway there and nothing more.

Deep the corridor was stretching, I was sounding rather fetching
Doubtless loosing oaths that sailors never dared to growl before
But no figure then appearing, no one there my cursing hearing
Fast insanity was nearing, and I sighed the words "March 4..."
This I whispered, hallway tiles echoed back the words "March 4..."
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into my dorm room turning, last night's pizza in me churning,
Soon again I heard a pounding somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "Surely that is nothing but the tipsy patsy
Of some pranksters' vulgar crassness, for which they knocked on my door –
Let my blood be still a moment and these immatures ignore –
Tis a prank and nothing more!"

I flung open with a clatter window, and from off a ladder
In there fell a wasted frosh who'd done the Thirsty Thursday tour.
Not the least "Excuse me" said he, not the least apology made he,
But with legs that were so shaky, fixed his stare upon my door –
Leaned against a dean's list letter opposite my dorm room door
Leaned and stared and nothing more.

Then this wobbly freshman student changed annoyance to amusement
By the stupid, blank expression which his facial muscles wore.
"Since your mind is clouded, hazy, surely tongue cannot be lazy,
Tell me," said I, "Freshman crazy, peer enjoying beer for sure:
Tell me what thy parents named thee on the night when thou was born."
Slurred the Drunkard, "Nevermore."

Much I marveled this partaking fool could give an answer straightly,
Though his answer little meaning, little sense it made, of course.
For to argue would be folly I had e'er been paid a calling
By depressing, study-stalling drunk inside my dorm room door—
Leaning frosh against dean's letter opposite my dorm room door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the drunkard leaning heavier on the commendation letter
Spoke that word as if it named his single favorite packie store.
Nothing else his mouth escaping— not a sound the still replacing—
Till I muttered, freshman facing, "Other drunks have left before—
In a minute he will leave me, as all drunks have left before."
Then the frosh said "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I "what he utters, caught it from another, for
Glum of graduating senior, dreams of who killed by life's stinger,
Spread the loss of joy that lingered from the happy days of yore—
Undergrad, the time of glad, the time which senior wanted more
Will return Nevermore."

Changing still, this wobbly student, my annoyance to amusement
Down I sat in plastic chair provided me by freshman dorm;
Then my mind commenced its working, tried to find a purpose lurking
In the frosh's cryptic wording – meaning was, in clearness, poor—
What this student from my window, spoke with clarity so poor,
Meant in slurring "Nevermore."

This I sat and puzzled keenly, wondering what would answers bring me
In regards to frosh imbibed and looking like he might soon snore;
Quiet was I as I figured, silent other than a shiver
From the thought on which I lingered – chair was making me feel sore
But the molded plastic shaping which was making my back sore
Soon shall vex me nevermore!

Then it hit me, I recalled a paper, t'would my dread dissolve
Subject for which I had picked the mighty thunder god of Thor
"Duh," I cried, "my class provided a distraction from this minor
Whose naysaying has collided with my visions of March 4;
Write, oh write this research paper and think not of fair March 4!"
Slurred the Drunkard "Nevermore."

"Villain!" said I, "lying moper! – lies you're telling, drunk or sober!
Whether prankster sent, or whether wandering brought thee to my floor,
Thou hast turned my hope to grieving by this one depressing meeting
So to keep my dreams from leaving, tell me truly, I implore –
Are the beaches waiting for me – sunny, cloudy, either or?
Slurred the Drunkard "Nevermore."

"Villain!" said I, "lying moper! – lies you're telling, drunk or sober!
By the campus all around us – by this place we both deplore –
Tell these eyes fraught with frustration if, when school runs its duration,
They shall see the relaxation which Sir Freeland names March 4.
Deep and calming relaxation which Sir Freeland names March 4."
Slurred the Drunkard "Nevermore."

"Be that word our last au revoir- scram!" I shrieked, all hoarse and raw
"Get thee back into the drunken joys thy night still holds in store!
Leave no stench of beer reminding of your single word so frightening
And your dark prediction binding doom unto my being's core!
Leave and ne'er return and take thy doom away from my soul's core!"
Slurred the Drunkard "Nevermore."

And the Drunkard, never leaving, still is leaning, still is leaning
On commending college letter opposite my dorm room door;
And his eyes are glazed as donuts, telling me that it's all hopeless
Happiness of mine his focus, on my dreams declaring war;
And my soul shall fall in battle, yield in skirmish, lose the war –
Shall be victor – nevermore!

A Dialogue between Fate and the Accused



Progressive - Jesse Silverberg

Accused: FUCK YOU!

Fate: ...do you feel better now?

Accused: ... ...slightly, you son of a bitch.

Fate: A-ha-ha! Why accost me so, brother?

Accused: Fuck you and your fucking Philadelphian jests. I am Man...you...you are nothing! nothing but the source of Wealth for lawyers.

Fate: That would be Misfortune, brother.

Accused: You're synonymous, ass...and you know it.

Fate: Hush now, let it be.

Accused: Let it be?! How in God's name can I?! I have been deceived! Terrible!

St. Dismas: Such Malice! There now!

Fate: Into thinking what? That Justice exists? A-ha-ha, and I'm the ass?! Brother, come now...you've allowed yourself to be deceived. A-ha-ha! I can't believe it...when you yourself said you were Man.

Accused: And what of it?! Damn you! We've tried didn't we...Man?

Fate: When? During the Spanish Inquisition?

St. Dismas: ...so sad...in His name too.

Accused: But, we're better now!

Fate: Oh, during McCarthy's time, then?

Accused: We're better still! Each stage better than the last!

Fate: Your trial, brother?

Accused: IT'S A MISTAKE AND YOU KNOW IT!!! YOU KNOW I'M INNOCENT!!! IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!!!

Fate: Why, because I led you here? Perhaps, but I am not the cause of your present and eternal suffering: no, no, no! No brother, it is your Illusions that cause you to cry out in the Night. It's your Illusions...the ideas that have been put inside your head!

Accused: It exists!...it has to! damn it! DAMN YOU!

St. Dismas: It does child...but in Another World.

Fate: Oh, stop your whining! It's sickening to hear your ephemeral pleas, like nails on blackboards and granite stones betwixt molars. LISTEN! Brother, Justice is an Illusion. It is politics. Do you think I am decided in hallowed, ugh, Courtrooms? A-ha! No. The truth is I am decided on Golf Courses and over Drinks, not by Judges or Juries or District Attorneys.

St. Dismas: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

Accused: But through Man, the Universe has come to understand Itself! No Creature compares! It was meant to be!

St. Dismas: Indeed, but through God the Universe came, and only through Him did its Keepers live.

Fate: And Man, through his Hubris, deceived Himself, brother! Tell me, can Man create Heavenly Cities on Earth? CAN THEY?! ANSWER ME!!!

Accused: ... ...no, no we cannot.

Fate: A-ha-ha! Bow your head in shame! Indeed, you cannot! You tried but you failed, and you didn't even need my help in the matter...

Accused: Oh, God! Damn Modernity!

Fate: ... ...oh...oh, come, come, come! No tears please! Shall you not be glum? Only your Illusions have been lost, not your Life...yet! a-ha-ha! Oh, excuse me...forgive me. I got overzealous...

St. Dismas: Only Lives are his, not Souls.

Accused: Before, before...I die, tell me, what is all this business then? My incarceration, courtrooms, and verdicts, it has to be more than...politics.

Fate: Oh, it is a Game, brother, just like politics! Realize that, and you'll be happy! I mean, come off it now. Your vote doesn't count, but who cares?! You can still write jarring editorials and such. And in your country, this particular Game is even more enjoyable! Here you get a Coach, even if you can't afford one (but remember you get what you pay for). You also get Referees with stylish cloaks, roomy Arenas, your own Chair and at the very least even Twelve spectators! Lucky you!

St. Dismas: ...but you can Pray anywhere.

Accused: ...a Game?

Fate: Yes, and good verdicts are mistakes...not only meaningless, but absurd as well, eh?

Accused: Life too?

Fate: Exactly.

St. Dismas: But you have each other...maybe more.

Accused: An End in Itself then... ...eh?

Fate: Life?

Accused: Exactly.

Jay Cinq-Mars

BUNDLE

Laura Mangano

He knew it was happening, unquestionably; he knew it from the very second, the overwhelmed cells collapsing beneath their fresh chemical burden. He saw the arrest in her eyes, saw the toxins flash their threat in the darting pupils, the increasing trembling, shaking, convulsing growing more real by the moment each brutal passing moment. She falls and he pauses and sweats. Wait it out or call to her dying mother in the next room. He pauses and sweats. "Marie" he says too high himself and hot and panicked. "Marie" he whispers louder as she thrashes tensely and they pulsate and throb those blue grey holes where the elixir goes and the slick wet shine of elastic drool spills out and coats his hand which he has now thrust into her mouth to keep her from chomping her young pink tongue clean off. "Marie" getting louder, him crying, ignoring the pain in his almost severed fingers trapped in a lock-jaw junkie's desperate and instinctual oral grip. His love, his first love there below him and almost gone almost too late what were we thinking what were we ever thinking when did it ever get this bad. "Marie" her tremors growing rapid and him smelling the death about to choke on the fear. Then his scream, that firmament shattering cry, that demands a rescue, that begs a forgiveness from the next room over.



Fine Tuning - Danielle Dobson

I Can Lie To Myself

She said, "I can force
What you want to hear
From deep within my gated mouth
And we can exist."
"That works," I said,
(always have had a little trouble
acknowledging existence)
"For me."
Let's pine over logic
At a coffee table
And when we finish,
Empty cup syllogisms
Down the trash,
We'll leave.

"I can lie to myself,
But it's lying to others
Is what bothers me," she said
With a downward glance.
"Like bullet holes between us,
My excuses run dry—
My heart already beats

Joshua Cristiano

Seasons

Through a naive attempt
despite a predestined ending
the vibrant ornaments of spring
allocate a new beginning:
changing of the wind
calm and welcoming
earths splendors waiting to
grace the lonely ground.

Mercifully momentary is
the rude interruption
of the middle months
ardently warm and harsh
dispersing dank air
and inflicting its rage on
the delicacy of the tulips.

Trees garlanded in green
patiently anticipate
the rustling of the leaves
to acquire their new voice
through transformation;
leaves that whisper excitedly
at their own demise.

But true solace and serenity
is the wintry silence
in which the multitude
of colors sleep soundly
and the starkness of trees
bravely expose their ghost
during elongated bitterness.

Rebecca Collins

Considerations of an American

Peter Boller

I blinked and saw David taking a seat. He asked me where I met Rose. I leaned towards his question with a quick smirk, a raised eyebrow, and a sip of coffee. With his innocent question he had caught me in the middle of my nothing. Don't get me wrong, please, I have many things that use my time, sleep, work, eating, entertainment, fulfilling; however, at the end of each second, minute, day, whatever we call time, I still close my eyes and reopen them to my dull reality- an endless amount of repetition, entailing a lonely expectation of more to follow. In a previous life I might have felt like I was achieving something with each passing day, like my toiling and stress would pay off with a loving family or the achievement of an original dream. It might have felt nice, I might have been happy. In this body though, under these conditions, I was holistically inspired by an ecstatic confusion, a longing for more of nothing. Now I was like a glass of water, sitting still under the sun, loosing all that I was only to eventually be just a drop of me in the inescapable reality of my vanishing into the universe.

This life cycle didn't put forth much character; it just put me in me an inescapable mood. It had bills to pay, food to buy, and carried my inescapable need for entertainment, all for which I hoped would, but never seemed to go away. This path in life was solely based on a need of material, all of which needed my only tradable material, money. I guess it had always been this way; I couldn't even help it if I wanted. I scratched the back of my neck each day to make sure my head was still here, to make sure my reality wasn't as fickle as its nourishment. With my parents dead and no one else but myself and my creditors to care if I continue to exist, I sat here alone, appearing deep in thought to any potential observers. So, half full I dissipated into the world around me, coming and going, buying the little pieces I needed, while half empty I came and went, waking each day to the same dry mouth.

I often wondered if I could find happiness within. The question compelled me to find meaning in my life, but didn't drive me back home at the end of the day. Only the here and now drove me. What I needed, as a result of my conditioning, drove me. Oh these damn conditions! I was strapped to them! Life was like a car ride, always making me drive and drive, while watching the lines on the road pass by, one by one, stretching my legs only when I had to buy gas. Even in sleep I couldn't escape driving! Watching the small red lines of the alarm clock flicker and change in the darkness, all towards the same combination of lines each day, I knew life was about little lines in front my eyes, telling me when and where to go.

I blinked a couple of times while turning my head moving it in circles. I

stopped my maneuvers and squinted out the opaque window to the busy, confused street. I saw people, cars, and lots of other things. So many things were in motion, but nothing was colliding. My eyes constantly awaited a collision, but one never happened.

I waited.

I forgot where I was.

I blinked again and in an instant I was in a neighborhood yuppie café with rich white walls and rich white people on the ground floor of my domino office building. I must have appeared too fast because I felt like I just got here. There was a white napkin in front of me strewn all over with big, inspiring words, "To do a common thing, uncommonly well, brings success." It just was advertising. Someone wanted me to feel better about myself sitting here in this café so one day I would come back. It made me imagine the certain well to do someone who had probably gone to an expensive university someplace to get the permission to be able to give me things I didn't need. Now this person was getting paid to put encouragement on this napkin, all for me, all for money! It was nice but I didn't think I needed it.

I wondered, while I looking up and around at all the different and excited people toiling, if just doing this, my action of sitting here, constituted as doing well as being myself? Was I successful? What was success? Could anyone judge my success except myself? I thought about it. I shook my head with frustration and looked at the cup in front of me. The cup had the name of the café on it. The cup read: Grand City Coffee- The Quality Coffee in Your Recipe of Success! It was all that paper with colored lines all over it could tell me.

Blankly staring, sitting in my chair, I wished all the tall buildings surrounding me would fall like dominos, one into the other, one at a time, colliding then falling. Can these buildings move? Could I move them? What a collision that would be! The thought made me excited. I guess that meant I longed for the world to come down on itself. Without helping it, though, I had settled in at the bottom and waited for it all to come down. Realizing my crazy thought, I imagined the one person who is out there, being paid to reassure people like me that I'm crazy. I imagine his salary came from all the people who didn't want the buildings to move. So I guess he wasn't out to get me; instead, all the tall buildings were. But now, I agreed, setting this reflection aside, I decided I was about to solicit myself to the start of what was to be a very intense recollection, perhaps to go someplace a little less stressful.

Looking up and back into the eyes of David, I saw right through him, simply catching a red flower on the table behind him. I always knew what was on David's mind. I saw David for what he was. He was a nicely dressed man, matching neatly his entire image; however, he seemed rather unwound, crazy to the world around him. It was responsibility and expectation that dressed him each morning and anyone could see it in his eyes. He might attempt to pull me out of my drag, we would both see.

I began with, 'I met Rose when I was young,' purposely without as much description as possible, but that didn't satisfy David or myself. While peering into my mind and my flimsy paper coffee cup I could tell, and so could David, that I was about to be brought out of my melancholy mood. As I stared deeper into the black hole and delicately rimmed the stiff brow… I froze all my actions and began to go back in my mind…

Bright, colorful, and naïve, it was during one of those summers, that when you look back, you are absorbed by the all the memories, soft as pussy-willows and as warm as touch. If fresh memories are concise and sharp like the shadow of any object in direct sunlight, my memories of those youthful days are blurred and blinded, like the way one's vision gets after having stared at the sun too long. Rose sprang into my life that summer, but it seemed that seeing her often that summer would become as universal a thing as expecting to see small green buds on trees in spring. Seasons come and go, they came and went. Rose had come, and Rose had gone, but I was still here and Rose was too, planted with strong roots and intense red fever, drafting her perfume through the tree branches in my overgrown mind, through my memories and into my reality, shortly, once again…

Snapping myself back to reality with a sudden convulsion, I coughed out a sip of bitter coffee onto the table before me as I caught myself in my daydream. I had lost myself in myself and had suddenly become strikingly aware of David who seemed so ill at ease by my silenced moment that I couldn't tell if his fidgeting was natural or forced, but I had a feeling. Readily, I apologized but didn't really. His innateness and attempt to force words down my throat with such a personal question had only succeeded in spreading coffee and my saliva over the small café table.

Naturally, David missed the subtle hint accomplished by my moist lap and blushed complexion. He remained seated and engrossed while I patted my lap with a napkin, exchanging quick and embarrassed glances with busy people near me. I sensed his ignorance by the twin brown eyes connecting in a shifting gaze my lap and the toiling people around me, as if the two had something to do with each other…

Those summer months with Rose are vague now, loosely fitting together into one clear regard. Rose helped with that, gracefully congealing our time together into only a memory. Rose was the sort of girl who could fit in with any group, as if she had the power to trim herself at will, then only to bloom into the perfect companion. Every thing was so free and lucid about her. You could take one glance at her face and see all there is to see— a dazzling guided spirit, latched on and confounded in herself, captivated and nurtured by her world. I could have never realized it then, but her nature had no regression, she only blossomed, more and more, and became the sweet essence and starry twinkle in the air of our pervading friendship. She lit my mind. I felt like I was walking straight and mesmerized into an abandoned, grey, and dusty room; struck and mystified by the aura of a single red rose floating on its own

center. As it was, it is now that my old friend magically stands in my mind and brings life to these ancient memories…

David took a small shift back of consideration into his stiff, uncomfortable seat. He then took a deep breath, leaned his head back, and focused on the low ceiling. A faint smile crept beneath his nose as if the smell of something sweet was hovering underneath it. I felt like I was almost not here.

My cell phone vibrated, rubbing itself against five times against unhappiness. My watch clicked a little bit, controlled by my hand, as controlled I was by its. A door slammed someplace and someone left. The sound of another door opening let me know what was there. My watch started beeping.

Sitting in my chair, carefully and poignantly time had moved on and regressed within its inevitability. I felt like seconds ago Rose was here and I was a boy. The innocent times we spent together flickered on and off as I recalled the glimpse of my childhood. My mind and my eyes moved together as I watched us on the streets and alleys of our past fade away. I saw the lush current and the faint tannin pervasively glistening in the twilight of my youth and I saw the only thing I ever loved become a faint reality in a sea of responsibility. But, that was how it had to be, fading forever until death finally took it away. It wasn't ok, but it was impossible. I wanted so bad to relive the one thing that I had loved and enjoyed, but was forbidden by the here and now.

So here and now, I was here and the time was now. I couldn't help it, the mood was dead and my memory of Rose was over. David looked straight into my eyes. I blinked and in a moment he was gone. I don't know where he went but I knew he was close. I stood up and looked around and saw all the people around me. They were fidgeting and convulsing the way humans do when they are blind to their actions. I felt the moistness of my lap seeping against my skin and knew what it was. I started walking towards the door, shifting my eyes around one last time around me to see if there was anything missed from this experience, and it was in that one glance that my inner eye caught again the site of that beautiful red flower, slowly dying in its vase.

I knew then as I pressed my hands against the door, squinting, feeling the rush of the city's soul enter mine; beauty wasn't dead, it was all beautiful; but myself, my time, helplessly, it all had need. Could I escape it? Did I want to? Could I find beauty everywhere, all at once? Not for the sake of this need? Would I ever have enough time? Bring on the beauty and bring on the time; free me from my responsibility, free from my conditions.

The Vacancies

Well off to the side of this
The road of our life,
I found myself
in a dark vestibule,
fumbling with the keys
to my kingdom—an almost
empty apartment, in which
a senile cat could be heard
caterwauling to her past,
and the timed lamps and
NPR illuminated no one.

Climbing past
the second-floor landing,
I heard the neighbor's
overwrought smoke detector
barking for batteries,
although its alert was
inaudible
where she was,
in P'town.

At the third-floor landing.
I paused to let myself in,
and as I did, I heard
that same neighbor's phone
ring itself silent.
At that moment I recognized
my singular good fortune
to own a condo in the city
of the dead. Talk about location:
just a short cortege
from all the major cemeteries.

Stuart Peterfreund







Chessie Monks



Sometimes I Feel Like a Human Pharmacy - Megan McCormick

How It'd Go

A Dramatic Soliloquy Answering the Question of How I Would Choose To Die if I had a choice

I'd push the plunger down, over and over again. Dressed in bold colors in a deep red room sitting alone, slouched on a couch. There'd be a single candle lit and layered sheets of charred tin foil and spoons with burnt bottoms lying around piles of books. Portishead would be on low in the background and the precise, sorrowful chords of a frail and disturbed Beth Gibbons would ease my transition from tangible to intangible. The scent of cooked tar would be prevalent and long loops of delicate gray smoke would hang heavily and lazily in the air. I'd trace a finger down the soft white milky surface and locate a throbbing blue vein to invade. Resin would sizzle in spoons hot bottom and the tip of my mighty instrument would dip below gluey meniscus and suck all that was there up into a sterile, cylindrical chamber of millimeter precision. My fate would be ready and staring me down from within a transparent restraint, amber and fierce, hungering for my blood, my mind, my life. Belted Bicep, Clenched Fist, Pencil Bite. All at once hypodermic ecstasy is buried beneath taut flesh and molecules are crashing, slamming, and like fire to my veins I am in an opiate wonderland where it's no ones fault and time lasts forever and I forget and remember everything at the same time. I fall back and my icy eyes roll to the back of my skull and I can see it all and my will is strong and my patience is sure and I can love and marvel at all that is and ever was. The needle dangles from my forearm carelessly until, at the very tail end of my consciousness, I feebly push the plunger to its end point and release far too much elixir into my already overwhelmed plasma. My ignorant cells writhe in their deadly bliss and my swelling mind settles into a comfortable and inevitable dark. I am drugged to oblivion. I am gone.

Laura Mangano

Organization

Abigail Hawkins

Clean minds present clean homes, they say
which explains why mine is ravaged with mess
and piles of things begging for storage

I'll start with my romantic follies of the past
I'll first grip a broom and sweep
them under the rug, like we all have
at one point or another

After that, I'll move on
to the regrets from actions in haste
and take no breath as I throw them all
into the barrel and out of my sight

I'll take the stresses that cover my desk
and arrange them neatly in separate files
organized and sorted by levels of value
the lowest just tossed to the trash

I'll make my bed like I have before
'cept I won't be sleeping in it, at least not now
For I'll reap what I sow at some other time
when I can recap and sit to rest

At last I'll collect my thoughts
into jars and bins and placed on shelves
for me to marvel at with a cleaned out house

At the End

Rebecca Collins

It is in the deepest dark
of the blackest sky,
in the truest hour of midnight
that the emptiness
from your leaving
becomes the most real.
It is after the days activities —
hectic and exhausting
that my frantic mind
can rest in peace.
It is while I'm lying
on the certainty of the earth
the grass damp
the ground unforgiving
that I feel most connected
to that which has just been lost.
It is under the incessantly lit stars
and my infrequent gazing
that the deep wounds of life
are confirmed by your death.

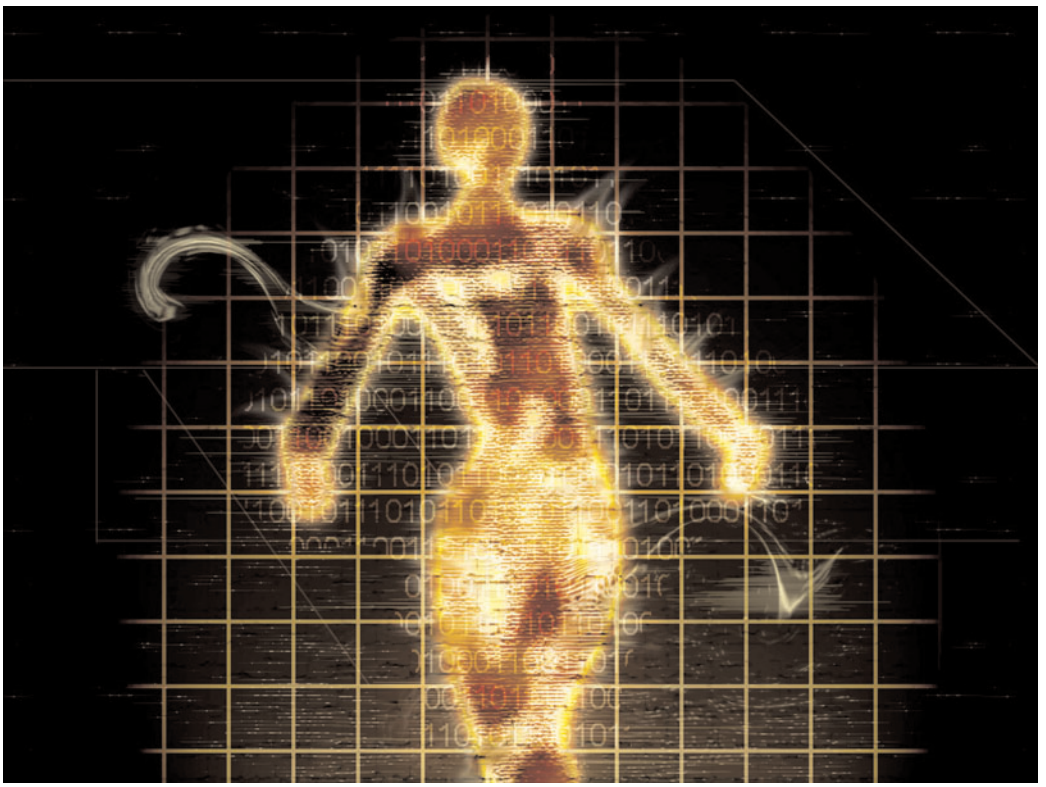
Free from Boundaries

David Shubow

Soft skies behind the building
Dark blue with no clouds
Pink orange trees set in the center
Two stairs and a garden of daisies
Faint sounds of wind hollow in the front yard
Easy rocks on the patio are in the open
Windows out of order
And inside the piano waits
The trees push against the house
A mello shadow on the wall
And suns glaze around the corner
Stairway geometry of the two stories
The sand on the distant beach warm
And cold in a hollow way
And light to dark shades of blue rise
Trees center filled with tangy neon dry dissonance
As a sweet comfort sits within



Stony Creek - Emi Gonzalez



Golden Life - Jesse Silverberg

Studying for the SAT's

Kate Downey

I know
That you are only interested in the mathematical equations
And engineered formulae
Of my cheekbones
And when you trace my jaw
I can see you running calculations past your eyes
Reducing my form to numbers
You can count and master
So my lips are wasted on yours
Measuring the friction of my hand on your thigh
And charting the adrenaline I raise beneath your breastbone

Simply Put,
MATH = Beauty

Rodney Dominique

A complex plain consisting of numbers 1 through k,
Radiates our givens to an exuberant degree.
No land, whether point or space, presents such
A sine of grace as a function of waves.
We can power ourselves up and define the
Magnificent proof of our next value.
Root us and find the basic core.
e us and make us natural.
Graph the pattern and discover what it means
To exist beyond the real, the reality.

Our alphabet is centuries dead
And still proficient.
Dimensions rift, characterizing the
Fundamental history of our youth;
The prime years.
Those days that integrated the volume of our fun,
Evaluating the mass of our fantasies,
Were the stepping-stones of great discoveries,
Of bedazzlement in a splendiferous field.

We aim for the median in our arguments,
Causing modes of betrayal.
Forcefully pushing a derivative towards the edge.
Vector meadows and Z mountains swarm with our
Coefficients, titillating the sights and sounds, but
Never truly changing the world around us.

What pleasures exist in this world?
That of eigensatisfaction!
We eat kernels and attend the finest styling of matrices.
An institute of groupings and cinematography.
For our children, toys of splendor fill their day.
A vast array of light
Produces a spectrum onto their minds,
With a candid frequency.

What can be said of us is this:
Our boundaries lie within the limits
Of our rhythmic souls.

Alleyway Paradise - Jason Jedrusiak



Untitled No. 7

Don't go looking to grassy knolls for me.
Don't bother trying to find evidence of my departure.
A lost ticket stub lies somewhere within Pennsylvania Station,
and with it lie the last remnants of my affection.
The sleigh bells ring through the somber air,
and a cool breeze flutters through my hair follicles.
Imagine with that breeze my last heartbeat.
As my corpse collapses into the freshly fallen snow.

Anthony Marando

June Song

The first day I loved you, I found your soul
underneath your bed, propped against the wall
and I don't think I've ever stopped wondering
what each and every color on those pages really meant.

We told stories until our mouths were dry
against the racing minds and impatient hearts
pounding on in the background of every word.
It was the only night you'd ever walk me home.

You clicked buttons for hours on rainy days,
explaining how the tie is just a decoy, and I think
I saw a little bit of blue sky despite the weather;
I saw an artist buried in the science of you.
I'd express my love in limits, little did I know
you'd change so much with respect to time.

You'd say that it's not a first date kind of thing
but there's more than just space between us, honey.
Maybe it's not anything we could ever measure, but
I'd blame it on the length of sidewalk that separates us
and the wind coming in from the open windows in your car.

Spending summer nights sleeping spine to spine
and giving in to the the Nine Slide, you'd think
by now I'd ascribe these things to time.
Now I'm living in visions of a Motorcycle Drive By;
the cigarette ash smolders until it dies out,
and it's like I'm holding you between my fingers
just one last time.

Lauren Chapman

$9.95

Tara Purasson

I found myself peeling price tags off the backs of hardcover books
I wanted to rip out every page inside
and pull off the colorful binding that first caught my eye
that first enticed me to look inside
for something greater,
something more than just ink on a page…

but instead I ran my fingers over its newness
its smooth anonymity
free of values
worthless because I took its worth away—
those wretched numbers
numbers had become the heart of my misery
time is numbered—
people are numbered—
words are numbered.
but I wouldn't accept it.

I wanted to just read the words
I wanted to feel them,
to become them,
to be weightless,
to be free of that binding—
that beautiful spine with its sharp corners,
curves wrapped around a formulaic structure of gleaming poetry

that subtle separation between
stoic
and delicate.

I wanted to embrace that false decisiveness
I wanted my words to be black and white
to declare themselves unedited
I wanted perfection without the imperfect process.

I wanted to be silent like those words
plucked out of the sky
used
rejected
thrown around in the confines of a mind
poured out…

yet content.

I wanted that ultimate satisfaction
that gratification of being placed on a table
touched
analyzed
criticized several times over
and questioned…

I wanted to be asked to explain my perfection—

how my limbs seemed to flow
a coveted stream of edited prose
ribs revealed in parallel folds.
flawlessness manifested in the story I told
was it something to strive for?
I wanted to be sold.

I wanted to rid myself of those crumpled thoughts
those vain desires and predictable plots

that careful construction,
that marveled page,
so lacking in truth—
I wanted it, too.

that spotless formation
holding together the dreams of millions
I wanted to believe it.

I wanted to be opened gingerly—
for books tell all.
I wanted to obviously succumb to my purpose—

to inspire.

is it clear?
what more can be said?
it's easier read.

have you heard about that struggle?
well it's
right.
here.

I saw images flashing through windows
empty eyes breaking the pages' soul
numbers had become my obsession
but I loved them to the bone.

It's a Good Thing that Cars Aren't People

…and Other Comments on American Life

Gideon Kanen was a tall, thin, startling man with dark hair and light blue eyes that made him look dead. Even the people standing around him in the line turned and stared at him for a moment. He smiled politely at each rude stare, and then returned to thinking about his trip to Africa. Sure, he was deluding himself, but all human beings are self deluding; that included everyone in this store. Hell, whole countries put their faith in one thing or another: the US believed in aliens; Italy liked to claim it had angels; and Ireland still saw fairies.

What was so hard about believing? Gideon looked around and watched as a little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, after waiting in an hour-long line in the middle of a small department store. His eyes moved to her mother, who, in a few years, would tell her daughter that it was all a big lie and that Santa didn't exist. And then that little girl, for the rest of her life, would be one of those people who always questions something that doesn't have solid evidence. Why do they do that? Is it because they just can't believe anymore, or is it because for once in their life they want to find something that really is magical?

Something hit him in the back of his legs. He turned around to find a teenage girl speeding by, holding a dozen bags and not apologizing for just assaulting him. No one ever acknowledged anyone anymore. Who's idea was it to do away with manners? Gideon would like to have a word with whoever that person was.

Ah, forget it. Gideon had waited long enough. Nevermind his pictures. Some lady at the head of the line was complaining about something stupid, and refused to consider anyone else's time, much less give a pin-prick of thought about it. He shuffled out of line, through the Santa Claus line of parents and children, and finally out the door. Glancing at his cell phone, he noticed that Sweeney had called him three times. He dialed his voicemail and listened to the message.

"Hi Gid. Called you a couple times, you're not answering. Just wanted to catch up. I'm trying to think of where you are. Already left a message at your work, so maybe I'll try your parent's house. Call me when you get this."

Gideon hung up and shoved the phone back in his pocket. Unbelievable. The more connected we all become, Gideon thought, the more we become stalkers. Honestly, why did Sweeney feel the need to call everywhere? When Gideon got the message, he'd call back. This stalker behavior was not solely pinned on Sweeney; so many people had been doing that lately. Gideon's thought: if someone does not answer the phone, they're most obviously busy. That's the point of not answering.

He stuffed himself in his small car. Gideon tried not to use it much. First, he hated driving. Second, the earth hated driving – you would hate something that kills you, wouldn't you? Anyway, he started it up and rolled out onto the main road, headed home. He slowed at a cross walk, and waited as two young women walked past. The car next to him, also waiting, beeped loudly to make them hurry up. So, Gideon thought, a person in a huge hunk of metal can beep a horn at two women walking? How extremely rude. There were no other words for it.

He merged onto the highway and watched the mysterious actions of drivers. If people ever did half the things they do within the confines of their cars when they were walking down they street, people would be horrified. For instance, he watched as a small red car to his left sped up behind a mini-van and tailed it closely; a warning to get out of its way. Gideon chuckled at the thought of a man running up behind someone on the sidewalk – and then almost climbing on the victim's back until that person moved aside. Imagine that! That man would be arrested for assault.

Gideon did not realize he slowed down, it must have been his daydream. Oops! Fifty miles an hour on the highway gets you a mean glare and maybe something more. Ah, just like that bearded man in the gray truck. Waving his middle finger out his passenger side window and apparently swearing his brains out at Gideon, even though Gideon had his window closed. Yeah, like that bearded man would walk past Gideon on the street and say "fuck you" out of nowhere and scream and yell at him for no reason. What sense did that make? Or, the better question, what's the difference if you're in a car?

You can be an entirely different person, act any way you want, because you'll speed right by those other people on the road and never see them again.

What about those guys who rev their engines to impress? Do they sit on a bench and clear their throats loudly or something? Perhaps if they had any actual substance, a girl would take notice of them without all the loud noises. Or how about when you wait so long for a parking space at the mall around Christmas time? Then, just as the car pulls out – which you've been waiting for – some little car zooms in the space right in front of you? Would the teenage dumbass driving the little box-car-thing actually pull that kind of stuff in a line full of people? They wouldn't have the guts to dive in front of anyone, for fear of repercussions.

That was it, wasn't it? In a car, everyone had some odd mix of anonymity and aggression somehow fueled by the need to be powerful. With no consequences, that is. You can be an entirely

different person, act any way you want, because you'll speed right by those other people on the road and never see them again. But what happens if all of a sudden you find yourself giving the finger to your mother, driving the mini-van that's going too slow in front of you? Oops. Too late to figure out you're that kind of person, everyone else already knows by now.

Gideon shook his head at the sorry state of human values and turned on the radio. Shouldn't have done that if he wanted to be cheered up. Some guy was screaming at another guy about the Republicans and Democrats not reaching across the aisle, and the other guy screamed back about Republicans being clueless and following Bush, and all that. Gideon was so tired of all this crap. Since when was the human mind either one thing or the other? Republicans and Democrats. What a straight jacket we made for ourselves, he thought. "Oh, to fuck with your stupid politics!" he yelled at the radio and turned it off. Wasn't there anything better out there to worry about?

And why were those guys on the radio yelling so much? No one could have a rational conversation. Maybe we're all hyper and can't contain ourselves. Maybe people are tired of being ignored. Perhaps it's that you always think you're better than everyone else and therefore must command them or something. Politics…how boring was that? Those were the pages and pages of conversations you skipped over in high school literature classes when you read Anna Karenina or something like that. And now everybody screamed about it.

Gideon watched the road as he asked himself how we all got to live in a time when people swear and yell freely in the street. Yes, indeed, there was hatred and all that mess long before us – look at the Bible. But people were polite. That's the difference. Even to their enemies. Everything was done behind the scenes, very hush-hush, maybe a little intrigue thrown in. But never was there all-out warfare – and you can call it that – towards anyone who crossed your path. People back then wanted to believe this was a good world. Now, well, it appears people have given up on the dream.

He turned into his driveway. He looked at his house and wondered where to begin, how to start the change that needed to happen. He had a feeling other people were wondering about it too. He decided one thing, though: he wouldn't forget how he felt right now. Gideon felt sorry for people who realized nothing but their own needs. All too often in our time, we see hope disappear into the past as we wildly grasp at the future. Life becomes a question of instantly-gratifying accomplishments. All of us forget that we are making some epic journey. Now was the time to start.

"It's an odd struggle," Gideon said aloud. "There's no enemy we can smoke out. It's in us; us that live on this insignificantly small, blue planet."



Anthony Marando

stop. talking.

C.E. Osthimer

clenchhands relax and refrain,
fingers retract to familiar positions.
jaws seperate and cheeks soften,
kissably sweet and blushing bright red.
scared-cool on ankles and thighs.
puddles for feet,
fingers retreat into mouths to keep.
safe.
said too much again.
got lost and wound up here.
this all adds up:

if my parents told me stories as a kid, i can't remember them.
i'm an inverted sponge.
a wasteland of time and energy.
a black hole of good intentions.
tomorrow i'll raise my hands while i'm still dreaming,
smirk and smile proudly as the first two words come, flopping in front of me while they gasp for air.
slur, stumble, falter, and fall.
an aphasiac in context,
aware of it all

My Love, My Dreams... and You!

A war of roses
Concludes
By a cunning dandelion.
A common weed
Swirling with Brilliant Dynamite Neon,
Took shape and showed ultimate valor.
Thwarting the best to reach her grave.
She dreamt to beat them all,
To have the world become pacifists.
To end mankind in such a way
Is the destruction of the Id.

Rodney Dominique

Sun Goes Down

Sun goes down
in woods ablaze;
golden flitter
is amaze!

Trembles fern.
edged gold,
spirits cluster
through the hold.

Stepping dainty
goes the sun
now Her Woman's
work is done.

Rose Pappert



Bush and Brush Orange - Emi Gonzales

Poe's Cat

Michael Dzurak

As far back as I remember, 'twas in the bleak month of December,
When each separate dying ember, wrought its ghost upon the floor,
When there came a tapping, a gentle rapping, at my master's chamber door.

Disturbance enough to cause a stirring, in this peaceful moment during,
Which I was relaxing, purring, watching flickers in the fireplace,
Then came this tapping, annoying rapping, that put wonder on my master's face.

He put down his volume of forgotten lore, pages packed with plenty a bore,
And walked to the chamber door, walked to attend to that untimely sound,
That tapping, wretched rapping, but behind the door – darkness unbound.

Cooled by a hint of fear he returned to his seat, next to the fire's soft heat,
And kicked his slippers off of his feet, when there came a chilling breeze,
A window swung open and the black shaped visitor made my master freeze.

The rude guest was a large raven, who apparently sought safe haven,
Not thinking himself to be brazen, brazen enough for the windy night,
And after hours aloft in the sweeping winds, he had finally stopped his flight.

This raven was a strange bird, it spoke, or squawked, a single human word,
At which my master fearfully stirred, penetrated by a deep sense of sorrow,
Sorrow that will ache him today and then tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

Regardless, the only thing that I feel, is the raven - not quite poultry nor veal,
Is meat that can make for a nice meal, and so I set out across to room to devour,
Devour the intruder, who grew ruder and ruder, hiding upon the door like a coward.

Subtly and without sudden sound, I leapt atop the bookcase in one bound,
The bird didn't even turn its head around, just continued ranting – "never, nevermore,"
Thinking he was safe, upon that ugly bust high atop my master's chamber door.

Then I was on him and he was battered, the bust fell to the floor and was shattered,
Victorious I had myself feeling flattered, my master, shocked to see what I had done,
"You destroyed my bust of Pallas!" he cried "Oh, well, I'll get another one."

The Love Affair



Reflections on a Rainy Day - Danielle Dobson

By the weathered door
A dejected umbrella
Soaked and torn
The only evidence
Of the whirlwind's
Tumultuous end

Erin Costello

think

outside

the

margins