

CHRYSALIS

2012

Chrysalis

WILLAMETTE
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Chrysalis

Willamette University
2012

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Chrysalis

LITERATURE

AMY SNODGRASS	FATHER TIME	1
BETHANY WILLIAMS	[I WALKED INTO THE THEATER BUILDING]	2
EMILY BRAY	ON RIDING IN CARS	3
ADAM LOZIER	IN COMMUNION	8
REBECCA JOLIFF	END TIMES	9
DAN DALY	A FEAST AS EVENSONG	10
HANNAH SCHIFF	HAIKU, OR, DISCUSSING LOVE WITH POE OVER SPAGHETTI AND A NICE CHIANTI	15
KAT DOYLE	WHAT TIME IS	16
EMILY MILLER	A MOMENT	18
SEAN DART	TACO SALAD	21
KIT KINGSTAD	ADVICE FROM A BARD	28
ELI UTNE	TIME AND AGAIN	29
D'ARCY WRIGHT	LA RAMBLA DE MONTEVIDEO	30
ADAM LOZIER	[I DREAM OF ROETHKE'S FAR FIELD]	34
SARAN WALKER	OLD FLAME	62
NOAH CHURCH	FREDRICK NIETZCHE'S MUSTACHE	64
EMMA REAGAN	THE EMPIRE STATE	69
DALLAS FREDRICK	MOVING AND MOVING AWAY	70
EMMA JONES	THE MOUSE	73
KATIE JADE MCCOY	PRESIDENT PELTON AND HIS WONDERFUL WEATHER MACHINE	75
GRAHAM ABBOT	THESIS RAPS	77
REY AYALA	CONTROLLER	80
MADISON NIERMEYER	QUARANTINE	81
HANNAH SCHIFF	HAIKU #73	86
SEAN DART	TUESDAY, THURSDAY, 12:50-2:20	87
EMMA REAGAN	[I REMEMBER THE DANCING]	91
ALYSSA WILSEY	TOO SUNNY FOR AUTUMN	92
ERIN HALL	MY MAMA KNOWS	93
KATIE JADE MCCOY	THE POET	97
TILL GWINN	AND IT FELT LIKE A KISS	100
HANNAH SCHIFF	COSMOS	101

ART

SARAN WALKER	GHOST IN SPACE	36
MADELINE MOREHOUSE	[UNTITLED]	37
ANDREW GUSTIN	SONJA COHEN #05	38
KIANA DIAZ	MONOCHROME CIRCUS	39
BLANCA GUTIERREZ	POSTAL SERVICE	40
SAMUEL KUNIHOLM	GULLEY	41
HANNAH SCHIFF	MAKING TIME, SHOOTING LINES	42
ANDREW LONG	[UNTITLED]	43
ASTRA LINCOLN	[UNTITLED]	44
SAMUEL KUNIHOLM	BLUE AND ALUMINUM	45
MAKENA JOHNSON	DAVID'S WHOPPER	46
STEPHEN YAMADA	EYE	47
STEPHEN YAMADA	KERNEL	48
MADELINE MOREHOUSE	[UNTITLED]	49
BRITA NESS	IG	50
DANA CROSBY	[UNTITLED]	51
DANA CROSBY	[UNTITLED-REVERSE]	52
ASTRA LINCOLN	FOUND FILM	53
CAMERON HILL	ABSENT LANDSCAPE II	54
SHEALYN FRIEDRICH	MUSIC OF THE MORNING	55
ELISE MCGLONE	RED BLOSSOM	56
ASTRA LINCOLN	THE SEA CLOSE BY	57
DANA CROSBY	UNTITLED	58
CARA THOMPSON	UNTITLED	59

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Amy Snodgrass

FATHER TIME

Time drips honey into his tea,
glancing towards me
with golden eyes
as he quietly explains
that he rarely receives visitors.
We drink from his best china.

As pleasantries fade,
the shafts of light
swarm with dying seconds,
spinning like dust motes
through the air.

I ask him how the earth rotates.
He opens his palm,
allowing a second to settle
onto his creased skin.
“Everything becomes habitual,”
he says,
“I barely notice a day pass.”

.....
Bethany Williams

[I WALKED INTO THE THEATER BUILDING]

I walked into the theater building and I saw
your face on a fancy screen, and here it is again
in front of me, looking very much the same,
and I think to myself that we should know each other.

You from your screen and me
from my tiny plasma window.

In front of the dirty glass square, a big brother with a limited
view.

The one I wish I could scream at
at two in the morning as the drunks and quarrelsome neighbors
sing their songs.

Instead of seeing your face outside my window,
I hear unsoft sounds,
yelling, storytelling signed in beer cans and blood,
verified by vomit.

And dogs being walked the next morning by unassuming
neighbors
from farther down the street. Same street. Different block.
Lucky dogs.

I think I'm lucky enough to break you out of your screen
and pull you through the dirty glass window into my room,
sitting on the red-orange corduroy chair or
lounging unquestioningly on my bed
in mock relaxation that refuses to hint at the reason why you're
here.

At the reason why I ever walk into the theater building,
which is to look good naked.

.....
Emily Bray

ON RIDING IN CARS

I love to push the grocery cart in the supermarket. It dates back to when I was seven or so and my grandmother told me because of the way I pushed the shopping cart, that I would be a good driver when I got older. I think she was wrong about me, but I still love to push carts. Somewhere in the back of my mind, when I turn down the bread aisle, breeze past the frozen foods, and park in the shortest line, I am a good driver. And there is something magic about cars.

I waited until I was almost seventeen to get my license, which seems strange with my love of cars and driving. However, there was never anywhere I needed to go-alone. And I hadn't tasted the beauty of having a car to myself yet: the beauty of freedom where thinking out loud is encouraged. The car provided time to talk with my sister, my best friends. Time where, in the confines of the car, I couldn't be passed on for other things, other places, or other people. It had a pure simple kind of magic. So I often find myself in cars with the people closest to me, and in these minutes and hours I have found one important fact: people tell the truth in cars.

When I was younger, my father and I used to road trip to Southern California on a bi-weekly basis. Softball tournaments bonded my dad and me through long hours on the road. The drive took about seven hours, and often went well into the night. We would leave after school got out on Friday afternoon and come back after the last game on Sunday night. On one of these excursions I cussed in front of one of my parents for the first time. I told my dad, while I was basking in the heat, sweat, and dirt of a victory, somewhere driving north on I-5, that "their second baseman was a bitch." I shut my mouth, eyes suddenly fixed to the white lines that disappeared under the front tires. I waited for the retaliation. The furrowed brow. The sound my dad makes when he is disappointed: his tongue against the roof of his mouth makes a distinct noise as he opens to take a deep breath before he tells you what you did wrong. It sounds like a low cluck mixed with a condemning hiss, and I can hear it from anywhere. Just hearing it tells you what his face looks like; I don't have to be facing him

to feel his disappointment. So I kept my eyes glued to the never-ending lines on the freeway. Yet, all I got was a “yeah she was. So was the head coach. Did you see the way he kicked that bucket when we scored?”

Being the rebellious teenager we all are on the inside, I pushed this newfound freedom of speech over subsequent trips. At first it was only about softball, knowing the adrenaline might excuse such devious behaviors, as much as it made maliciously putting cleats into someone’s ankle a commendable event. However, soon shitty, damn, bitch, and hell, all part of my normal vernacular, became not only part of Sunday night game replays, but part of the road trips themselves. They were as welcome as the cup holders, In-N-Out trays, and the Counting Crows. Thus breaking down the barriers between my father and I. Boys, life, and friends wormed their way into the mile markers and freeway underpasses. At points there were extended silences, when CDs were traded and complaints were lodged. College stories were recalled in fraternity brother detail. There was no alternative version of myself with my dad like there was at home. No watered down thoughts, or regulated statements. There were too many rules once we got home, too many expectations, and not enough equality. But following the white lines through the warm nights, in the confines of the car, we were ourselves, and equal.

Being in the car doesn’t mean equal, but exposes the truth that lies beneath the layers of display we drape around ourselves. The first time I was ever naked with a boy was in a car. Seems totally fifties, I am well aware, but these things happen somewhat out of our control. He picked me up after I finished waitressing a charity crab feed for the Boys and Girls Club. At this point I had my license, but a provisional one. And since my parents weren’t okay with me breaking the law of driving past eleven, as is law in California, they were okay with someone bringing me home. I just had slightly different ideas. There is no honesty in driver’s licenses. Those are completely untrustworthy.

There is something honest, however, about being naked. Something about exposing your body that makes you strangely comfortable. Forced to face what is normally hidden, there is no

longer anything that can mask you. No way to pretend you are something you're not. It's freeing, watching someone take in the frankness of your body. Without words, answering the questions I had long pondered in front of the mirror before it fogged over with steam. Answered not by a grimace, or a flick of the eye, but a sweet smile. After that night, I had so much confidence in myself, knowing that my bare skin was not alien. And instead was something not only human, but mesmerizing.

But what haunts me about that night in that station wagon, I remember as green, but have been told was tan, were his eyes. Dark brown eyes, swallowed by oversized pupils, straining to see in the dimly lit streetlamp light. Eyes full of deep adoration, of pure bliss. Feelings my eyes blatantly did not reflect. There can be a thing as too much honesty, and it makes for awkward rides home.

When faced with the awkward, however, cars can also work their magic. Fast-forwarding a few years to a ride home from school with a roommate. The unbearable tension brews in the car, and finally steeps. There is nowhere to run and nowhere to hide. This is when two miles feels eternally long. In our big house, three of us live in what seems like constant dismay. We are failures at communication and masters of the passive aggressive. The anxiety sticks to cobwebs laced on the high ceilings. But there is always a door to keep it at bay, windows to open to let it sail out into the night, other people to fill the space, soak up some tension into themselves, and take it home with them. Not so in a car, alone, on the long two-mile trek back to the house. It suffocates; it pushes at your eardrums and squeezes at your stomach. It pulls words from your mouth. Words that have needed to be said, in some fashion, for months. Under the glaring red light, stubborn and unchanging, in almost a whisper, she asks if we can talk. She stares at the road in front of her, as do I. My hands move around the steering wheel as if it were red hot. We talk. We talk to push away the oppressive force. The slightest silence is filled. The truth drops like acid. Anything to try to dissolve the anxiety surrounds us. There are tears on my face, I only guess about hers. The light turns green.

When I go home to the dead quiet city in which I was born and raised, my best friend and I often go for drives to

entertain ourselves. Our cars being hours away, we find ourselves with gas tanks filled by our parents and the long dark night ahead of us. We play a game, almost without fail, until we find ourselves somewhere. Right, Left, or Straight. I drive, she chooses. Sometimes she chooses with her eyes closed, as we snake around the memories that still haunt us. We rarely find somewhere new: it's the same network of roads, same stoplights. We laugh at most memories, taking them for what they are: stepping stones to the lives we currently are living. We cruise the streets and chat about the here and now. But sometimes she'll say to turn right, and I will say nothing. Because I know why we are here. Even with her eyes closed, we almost always get here. A memory that lays forgotten in the rampage of life. A memory of love. One that will never be spoken, but always remembered.

We suggest instead, as we drive, things we could be doing, destinations where we could end up. Yet we linger in front of memories, deciding if we go back to my house or hers. Deliberating while silently dealing with our own pasts. There is one stop sign where I always linger, check for cars, and cats, and ghosts, before the tires begin to roll again. I haven't turned up the street in almost two years. But the flicker of resistance on the pedal and the momentary fiddle with the radio divulges the truth. The need to wrestle with my specter remains, although I will rightly deny it. Even after you read these words, if you looked at me in the eye, I would meet your gaze and lie. But I cannot lie to myself.

I often wonder out loud, mostly in cars because I know I will go unheard, about the truth. If there is more than one truth, or if it changes. How I can tell the truth to myself and then, thinking deeper, find it to be a lie. Maybe what I find inside of cars is not the capital T truth, but a truth, or more, layers of truth. Versions of language, of body, mind, and spirit. Together creating a version more real than what I get in houses and buildings where there is too much room where lies can lurk, and we can ignore them. Too many trappings to distract us from the real. Or maybe it's that we can't hear the lies as they come from our mouths until they reverberate off the windshield and back into our ears. Is it the step from reality, the lack of eye contact, or the secluded nature that

lets cars become the gateway to the truth? It is that in moments in between aspects of our lives we have no roles to play, no hidden agenda? Only the destinations demand what we are supposed to be, and, in getting there, the facades can drop to expose the truth. Cars are glorified for freedom from dependence, but the real magic comes from the freedom from ourselves.

.....
Adam Lozier

IN COMMUNION

In communion he watches the trees,
having just shaken the bristling stubble
from his face. There is something almost too
human in the valley oaks' bending limbs,
sun-seeking to the point of deformation. So
slow as to be imperceptible. Snow catching
on the twisted branches.
He pretends to consider
the blankness of loss,
pen uncertain on the white paper,
dark ink on his fingers. Feet restless and slow.
When she first told him how her father
died, he felt alone by her closeness.
Everything was colorful mystery. He sees now
how he painted it blindly, looking for wisdom in corners,
as though to eat it from a wooden bowl.
Heart shaking, hand steady. Spouting untruths
with the certainty that comes
from a confidence born in haste.
Uprooted. Wind-gnarled.
Not yet feeling the rain.

.....
Rebecca Joliff

END TIMES

Since tomorrow computers everywhere may fumble
over a series of 0s and 1s, sending us into murky corners of
pantries
for saltines and cream of mushroom soup,

tonight I would like to pour you a glass of wine
from a screw cap bottle in some restaurant with a flickering neon
name,
and brush your fingers as I slide it across the table,

while outside the streetlights blur in the rain.
There will be pedestrians shouldering plastic bags
of candles and dehydrated milk, cursing as cars splash
muddy slush onto their overcoats,
umbrellas jabbing their dark stars skyward.

You and I will finish two plates of fries and two burgers,
an entire chocolate cream pie, another bottle of wine,
and we'll scrape our plates clean,

waiting in silence for the end to creep in on cats' feet,
darting closer with every clink of our forks, with every sigh.

.....

Dan Daly

A FEAST AS EVENSONG

SCENE—A forest, a late-evening picnic.

In the blackout, laughter and clink of glasses is heard. Lights up, revealing twilit picnic table with three candles and the remains of supper, around which sit JENNA, MARK and PROFESSOR. Lights gradually dim as scene progresses.

JENNA: I'm so glad you came, Professor! Mark has told me everything about you, or—I thought he did. I had no idea of the sheer number of indecent stories—

PROFESSOR: Please, please, Mrs. Swanberg! You must forgive me, and forgive your husband—it's not as though I could have told him any, not in the hallowed halls of our prestigious, our mighty, our divinely sanctified—

MARK: To Oxbridge!

JENNA: To Professor Sorensen, doctor of philosophy, master of history, and bachelor of barroom ribaldry!

PROFESSOR: Damn right!

They toast

MARK: I wish you could give us one of your lectures now—in particular, the 'anatomy of morality'—

PROFESSOR: Come now, Mark. Playing the student? Even on your honeymoon?

(to JENNA) I don't think he was always like this.

JENNA: Nonsense. He always will be a student and always was, whether tearing down Descarte, Berkeley and Kant or pinning up beetles, butterflies—

PROFESSOR: And actresses.

JENNA: And pretentious wallpaper. Brown daisies with gray leaves.

MARK: Distinctly manly wallpaper—

PROFESSOR: Fine, fine - I merely thought that the anatomy of morality might be foregone under the blissfully nuptial circumstances, wherein a moral exploration of anatomy might be more likely.

MARK: I can't say I ever let the technicality of marriage come between me and a thorough anatomical dissertation.

JENNA: No indeed, not after I was through with you. Do you know, Professor, Mark used to be quite a conscientious churchgoer?

MARK: Of the touring type, of course, the cathedrals and catacombs, and some of the—

JENNA: Oh come, Mark. You can tell the Professor.

MARK: We have plans to see several of the Gallic monasteries as we pass through the continent.

JENNA: God! What he's not telling you is the choir robes, the confirmation, and but for my friendly aid, the ordination!

MARK: Jenna—

JENNA: No, it was really very entertaining! He had the cutest ideas about right things and wrong things—

MARK: Before I knew you, Professor.

PROFESSOR: I would never hold something so valuable as a personal conviction against any of my students, no matter how ignorant, babyish, medieval—

JENNA: To the emancipated mind!

MARK: Damn right.

They toast

MARK: But really, Professor, when I ran into you today, I thought what fun! Jenna and I will be out of the academic loop for a bit—though I'll tell you confidentially—

JENNA: He's up for an assistantship!

PROFESSOR: Mark! Well done. Soon be writing lectures of your own?

MARK: That's the thing. I'd like to polish my style. And Sorensen! The very man. I'll have him to dinner tonight. Plus, I'd hoped you might give Jenna a fright.

PROFESSOR: A conduit for comforting embraces.

MARK: We were all terrified of your lectures; thrilling, they were. Most of us still had aspirations to basic goodness.

PROFESSOR: I do like to get the freshmen, especially the uptight ones.

.....

JENNA: What was scary?

MARK: Well—

PROFESSOR: Nothing was frightening, nor would be, to one such as yourself. Merely to the pathetic dunderheads like Mark who found the unfixing of comfortable social conventions a source of agitation.

JENNA: Ah.

PROFESSOR: You see, Mrs. Swanberg ...

Long pause as PROFESSOR begins to play with a steak knife. This could be a place where lights dim perceptibly.

PROFESSOR: How would you feel if I—in the most calmly practiced manner—were to cut up someone’s throat ... say Mark’s throat? *(Pause)* A purely academic question, I assure you.

JENNA: I’d feel angry and want you in prison.

PROFESSOR: Good, good. That is most definitely how you should feel. You have been—

JENNA: What does it have to do with anything?

MARK: Let him go on; you’ll like this.

PROFESSOR: Supposing I said I’d rather not go to jail. What would you do then?

JENNA: I’d call the police. I’d call the police anyway.

PROFESSOR: Why the police?

JENNA: The police would take you to jail.

PROFESSOR: Oh. Why?

JENNA: Because you murdered a man! You can’t murder somebody without going to jail for it. They might even kill you, though I don’t say I agree with that particular punishment ...

PROFESSOR: Remember, we are talking about Mark.

MARK: That’s right.

JENNA: Fine, I’d call the police, testify against you, and hope for the capital sentence.

PROFESSOR: Why?

JENNA: I love him!

PROFESSOR: Yes, yes. But supposing—merely for the

argument's sake—that I do not love him. Would you still arrest me?

JENNA: Damn it, yes! Mark, we should probably go back to the hotel; it's getting dark and we've got the Chunnel tomorrow.

MARK: Just a minute, Jen, let him finish.

PROFESSOR: Completely hypothetical question, Mrs. Swanberg, but if I murdered Mark—whom I do not love—why should I be punished?

JENNA: You broke the law.

PROFESSOR: Whose law?

JENNA: America's. The world's. Most everybody's throughout history.

PROFESSOR: You must forgive me, but I don't have a great deal of faith in any one cultural moment, nor in America's justice, nor in any society's authority to dictate the law to me.

JENNA: Oh?

PROFESSOR: No. It comes down to powerful people telling weaker ones what not to do. I'm sure you agree with me. Remember our discussion of the church and marriage?

Pause

MARK: He's saying that you already regard sexual abstinence before marriage an outdated social convention created by an authoritarian church, though it too was once law.

JENNA: But that's so different! That law kept people from happiness—and the act itself didn't hurt anybody!

PROFESSOR: Is there any reason I should concern myself with the happiness of others? And what if it makes me happy to kill your husband?

JENNA: God, I don't know! You're talking like a madman! (To MARK) I want to go!

PROFESSOR: Many of them are the most lucid of us all. They understand that conforming to man-made law is the basest, most subservient kowtowing to nonsense man can endure.

With the knife, PROFESSOR leaves the table. By this time, the stage is completely dark except for the candles.

PROFESSOR: You see, Mrs. Swanberg, the murder of Mark is

not morally reprehensible in any ultimate, meaningful way. You have appealed to man's authority and found it in conflict with other men. You might have appealed to God, but you and I have traded him long ago for the freedom to live how we like without conscientious ramification, for what you call the emancipated mind. So who will save Mark?

PROFESSOR returns to the table.

PROFESSOR: Not only is his death morally meaningless, it is imminently likely. After all, we three are intelligent, (*Snuffs a candle*) well-educated, (*Snuffs another candle*) and we don't let the cute ideas of right things and wrong things keep us in the dark.

PROFESSOR snuffs the last candle. In the blackout, JENNA screams. A heavy crash with shattering glass is heard.

MARK: Jenna!

A pause filled with the sound of strained breathing. Mark turns a flashlight on, revealing the body of PROFESSOR lying over the wreckage of the table, dead. Jenna stands by, panting, holding a bloodied knife.

JENNA: He was going to—

MARK: My God, Jenna! He was giving a lecture, a show! It wasn't real; it wasn't real!

Blackout.

.....
Hannah Schiff

HAIKU, OR, DISCUSSING LOVE WITH POE OVER
SPAGHETTI AND A NICE CHIANTI

The beat of a drum
between my ribs and lungs,
we undo ourselves.

Kat Doyle

WHAT TIME IS

I stand at the edge of your bed
holding your hand as time pushes
you forward, forcing you into a place
I cannot see—not for lack of trying but because
you drift between here and there.
You talk to your dead brothers, the
Council of Elders, who pull you slowly,
slowly towards them. I know you can
see them, as you raise your arms upwards,
hands held together, eyes wide but not seeing,
not looking up at the ceiling as you are but
looking at them assembled before you
in clothing you used to remember, the silk bell
sleeves and frog-knots, speaking
in a foreign tongue I tried to have you teach me,
words you'd all but forgotten that are now all you know.
My aunt tries to reassure me that it's your time,
that she has seen visions of Them, that you
and they are waiting for me to leave before
they take you from us. We talk about how
time is cyclical, not linear, but all I see are lines
criss-crossing their way across the handles
of your bed, the slatted doors to your closets,
the shelves and window frames you filled
with trinkets that meant something to you.
A miniature pagoda carved out of ivory, a tiny
clock set in a watchtower, unwound for years.
Time that filled so many days I wasted
sitting idle in silence, when I wanted to
speak but without knowing how, and now,
with heart pounding, have so much left unsaid and unasked

that it burns in my breast, hot in my throat
and I am unable to. Out of time.
Both of us,
out of breath.

Emily Miller

A MOMENT

i only meant to pass by, never to stay, but something drew me. we had met several times before, i introducing myself each time and her doing the same (though it was pointless, for i remembered all her details). still, there was something more palpable surrounding us this time. her silhouette was tangled in the thin linens, gown loose and draping, hair drifting along the pillowcase creases. on my way to leave i lingered, smoke-like, in the doorway. i was unable to stop from watching her heart shudder again and again and again and

it seemed more intimate than i intended. i could see her lungs, too, rising but struggling, like petals in the winter (wanting to make it but slated to fall). i didn't know if she was yet asleep. all i knew was that i was mesmerized by the beating, the breathing, and the lidocaine lining our distance: she lay while i stood and only a flurry of moments separated us.

her fingers unfurled, one at a time (this time, a flower in spring), and her open palm whispered onto her knee. she was conscious enough to recognize and i turned to go, not wanting to risk hearing her farewell. still, i looked back. her thumb glanced upon her skin again and again and again and

i could not even imagine how she would feel when she woke. my curiosity finally succumbed to respect for her, and i pulled the door shut as i left. as i turned to her physician, i could tell that he understood my anguish. i felt as though my own heart and lungs were x-rayed and magnified for him to see alongside hers, beating and breathing in rhythm.

all the cancer patients i watched him treat were very sick, but her specific diagnosis was unique to the clinic. i knew a boy who died from it when i was in elementary school. he was my age then, and she is my age now. both of them could have been me, but they weren't. i don't know that i will ever understand why. now i stand here, in the hospital where he died and the one where she might, wishing there was something i could do.

"are you sure leg removal is the only option?" i asked; my feeble attempt to cast doubt on her fate.

he nodded, but i already knew.

.....
Elliot Babcock-Krenk

CONSUMPTION (A PALINDROME)

Consumption is the answer to everything.
We must realize it is stupid to believe
We can preserve our world.
Oil ... water ... minerals ... trees
Belong to us.
The resources can't speak for themselves, and they shouldn't.
Our cars need oil,
Our homes need wooden walls, and
Our husbands and wives need precious jewels.
We shouldn't accept a world where
Material possession can't come first.
100 years from now,
We should continue to look forward to our future.
After all,
If the earth exists to serve us,
Abuse shouldn't be in our vocabulary.
Environmentalists will tell you that
It's true; our world is on the verge of self-destruction.
What they say doesn't contain a shred of truth.
Liars are the scum of this Earth.
The truth is
Our desire
Is more important than
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.....
Sean Dart

TACO SALAD

They say opposites attract, but I say opposites share Taco Salad.
And a Starbucks tea with a peppermint straw.

He's left-handed, she's right-handed, and sometimes class discussion is so painful that I forget what's my right and what's my left. I make an L with my left hand, and a J with my right hand, and the couple sits neatly in the frame: a picture-perfect still-life of affection and love. I stare through my fingers' frame and wax poetic about reciprocation, boyfriends, girlfriends, in-class-cuddling, and dinner dates while the girl next to me is vegan and bounces her leg.

Usually, when you get food to-go, they hand you a spork, because they're not sure what you need. The serrated knife isn't ever sharp enough, and the prongs on a fork break off every time you jab at a crisp tortilla. A spoon, by itself, is impractical.

He can't keep his mouth closed and I don't think I've ever seen him try and, every time I raise my hand in class, I make a conscious decision of how many big words I will use. Couples share taco salad, boyfriends rub backs, girlfriends laugh at jokes, vegans bring cans of kidney beans to class without a can opener. Writers write, and I record every observation with detail, and the woman next to me is practically asking to be written about. Earth-tone clothes that are fashionably unfashionable are actually fashionable when phrased correctly, and her wardrobe is the most concise paragraph I've ever read. A denim jacket from the 70s drapes over her bony shoulders and the maple-wood corduroys are a coat rack. She wears her eating habits well and her left leg is muscular and toned from the repetition. Bounce, bounce, bounce. My leg bounces in time with hers, and I try my best to keep up. The boyfriend across the room wears his fraternity's letters on a torso that's been inflated, rounded and padded by too much taco and not enough salad. He wears his eating habits less eloquently. The girlfriend pokes at a tortilla three times all class and wears Forever 21. I'm 22, but I just declared as an English major. English majors have big vocabularies.

Every time I raise my hand in class, I make a conscious decision of how many big words I will use.

“The binary opposition illustrated through the character's

complex personality suggests to the reader that she has embedded, bewildered desires to be sexually deviant and coherently inaccessible to those around her, yet her sense of agency is compelling and suggests her independence,”

I have no idea what it means, but they are sharing taco salad.

While he stares at ESPN.com on his laptop, she stares at him, and I stare at them staring. I undergo a detailed daydream of their daily interaction and how it can't be normal. Then, I think how abnormal it is to daydream of interactions I find bizarre, and sharing taco salad is just that: sharing.

A spork could scoop up the whole taco salad. Easily. My ears perk up for a second when we discuss “the pleasure principle.” Just enough, but not too much. The glorious middle ground. Not a fork, not a spoon.

“Why is the spork so constantly mocked?” I write in my margin notes.

While his saliva silently gathers for the first time, calculating a reaction, my daydreams shift to silence and a bouncing leg that can't sit still.

She juttred the cup towards her boyfriend, jousting the straw into his shoulder. If it were a sword, he'd be dead. But, it's a straw, and he mouths to her. “What is it?”

“Here,” she nudges his shoulder again. If the cup were a wooden spoon, she'd slap him with it. A child pursing his lips, refusing to take his cough syrup. He takes a sip for long enough that the iced liquid jumps to his lips, on the bed of his tongue that is six sizes too big for his mouth. Then, gravity happens. The tea falls back to the bottom of the cup. His taste-buds barely knew.

They're sharing, like couples should, but the sweetness that lingers on his tongue is temporary. He craves more, but he'll have to wait until she kisses him. Her mouth permanently tastes like peppermint, and he takes great comfort in that permanence.

Kissing is sharing drinks, except sweeter. And couples sit next to each other in class. Except you can never tell who's a couple, because not everyone brings taco salad to class to share.

He really liked the tea. He fell in love.

I've been falling in love lately, too. I like movies a lot more than I used to, even if I don't have a girlfriend to share popcorn with, and sometimes I spend time just to spend time, even though it doesn't improve my vocabulary. I also can have conversations about things that I don't care about, with people I don't care about, because having conversations is talking to someone, and talking is reciprocated with more talking, which makes me feel balanced. I love everything, even losing that balance. I have Kobe Bryant posters in my room and Taking Back Sunday band photos, and I love them all the same.

I pass notes. Just to myself, about them. And sporks. From my left margin to my right. Why are sporks so constantly mocked? Nobody has answered my margin notes, and now, the discussion has a moment of silence, and the stage is set. Everyone is looking at them, and if they aren't, they should be.

He really liked the tea. "That's good!" he whispered. If the whisper weren't a whisper, it'd be a shout. Atop the rooftops, on his Facebook, and in his journal, because boys don't keep diaries. But, it was a whisper, and he was smitten in seven different ways. They were sharing.

I've shared too. I've reciprocated, even. I've given more than received and seen the dark side of definition. When I was prom prince, but not prom king, I watched with a smile that wasn't real as my high-school sweetheart danced with a smile that was real with a guy that wasn't me. He was wearing a crown that wasn't mine. I was 79 inches tall on top of a 3 foot stage, which made me 115 inches tall, and I already blush easily.

The couple holds hands for an hour, and not an ounce of blood rushes to either of their cheeks, while I sit in a college classroom, listening to discussion on the pleasure principle, and how it says anticipation and desire make things appealing.

I sit in a college classroom while he rubs her back with his fingertips only, because it feels better than a whole hand. A whole hand is too much, and fingertips are in accordance with the pleasure principle. Fingertips are the sporks of body parts. So versatile. Under-used. I hope he's a worthy back-rubber. Poor back rubs feel like your grandparents assuring you that you've grown

older and taller and more mature since last summer.

We make eye contact, and he pulls away like he just saw a ghost. He didn't see a ghost, though. He saw an observer, and through his discomforting gaze, I saw myself in the reflection of his pupils from 20 feet away. I saw someone nostalgically caught between disgust and envy.

I always thought it was cool to hate public displays of affection. We hugged in hallways, but that's all. Now, I bounce my leg, wink, smile, raise my eyebrow, make dumb jokes. Very discrete, covert ops, a stealth bomber with a goofy smile and a femur with ADHD.

It's really easy to make fun of them while she slips off her flip-flop, crosses her legs, and drops her left foot into his right hand. Several people in class scoff, but we go to a liberal arts school in December, and there are so many open toed shoes in this classroom. I know their toes are cold, and mine would be too if my leg wasn't bouncing. She twiddles her big toe and traces his palm with her middle piggy who went to the market last time her foot was touched. He'll go to the market later if they need milk. She drinks almond, he drinks whole, so he buys each.

The bare foot is strange to cuddle, but it also is the only thing that keeps our legs bouncing, and it's too clever to point out that both of our shoes are off, but she's always comfortable, and I'm always clever. She thinks I'm always uncomfortable, and if she doesn't pick up on my clever jokes, I know it's a bad joke. She's as brilliant as the hair that tangles her thoughts and invites me to raise my right eyebrow at her when her leg bounces higher than mine. There are only two people in this classroom shaking their legs, and they are not giving each other back-rubs.

The spine is not as intimate as the leg or the bare foot, but is generally easier to access. I remember my fascination with the back-tickle, and my friend who always made me write out sentences on his back before he went to sleep. I thought about the discs and the bulges and the skateboard ramps that are often our body parts, we just don't have enough imagination to see it. Then I think about how the term 'best friend' isn't limiting, but rather liberating, and friendship defies limitations. Friends touching and insinuating intimacy is assigning meaning to your favorite song. You listen

every day, but it means a different thing to everyone, yet when someone asks you what the song is about, you go blue in the face before you can finish explaining why it's about the perfect back rub. The song means something different to everyone.

This doesn't stop people from picking "our songs" and dancing to it at their wedding. People get married for a reason, but to know that reason is to be wrong. Sometimes they have children, and those children find boyfriends or girlfriends and limitations and labels and call their mom when class got cancelled or they have a bad cough, and ask for the more expensive Christmas gifts from their father, who makes more money than their mom, and will see you on a weekend in January to exchange gifts. Even if he doesn't make more money than the mom, you still ask for the 80 dollar sweater because he left when you were five and they were once this couple in this classroom, rubbing backs, sharing taco salad, caressing bare feet and reciprocating. She was never the sorority type, but she has 3 master degrees. He traded in his frat sweatshirt for the sweater he wears on dates arranged via match.com.

My partner in leg-bouncing makes fun of me for saying via, but the whole point is she said something, and we both laugh about it afterwards, cackling abruptly, the silence between the outbursts like skips on a record player blaring your favorite song. It's different from a record skip, though, because those make you uneasy. When her cackle dies, mine is born. When silence falls, mine fills in. To the untrained ear, it sounds like a skipping record. To her, it sounds like laughter. To me, it sounds like reciprocation.

When she tells me that "communication is key" I regain faith in human relationships, and bounce my leg through the ceiling.

When my dad tells me he is on match.com, I think about husbands and wives. Then I stop thinking about husbands and wives.

Reciprocation is a dilemma, and people are supposed to reciprocate.

Other people have dilemmas, too. I have an ex-stepmom; she is learning to sail, and hasn't created a match account because, "I don't know, it seems weird."

Every time I take something too seriously, or think about being

an athlete, or a man, or an English major, or a student, or a worker, or a husband, I say something. In the moment between me saying something and anyone responding, I get anxious, so I keep talking because as long as I'm talking it's not weird if the other person doesn't respond. That anxiety is met with comfort when she replies, "That's how people feel."

The act of sharing food is far more important than what's being shared. He didn't even like the Starbucks sweet tea. But when it jumped to his lips, it reminded him of how she has to bounce on her tiptoes to kiss him goodbye. He recognizes this to be sweeter than peppermint.

We are both right-handed. We talk about being right-handed and how so much beauty exists in the middle ground. We talk about how humans should be able to interact and communicate and the necessity that is friendship. We talk about how if something tragic happens in an apartment complex, the surrounding tenants become depressed and feel for each other. We are both right-handed. And that is fine, because I am ambidextrous and she is versatile and sporks are still underrated.

The spork uses itself to break the packaging. The spork is a friend of the pleasure principle. It's a happy in-between that doesn't make you a boyfriend, a girlfriend, a bully who face-punches people, a teacher, a note-passer, or a match.com account holder. The spork just wants you to enjoy your meal. It's flexible, pliable, reliable, and able. It's the best tool because it isn't concerned with being a tool, but rather is concerned about being a spork, which is neither a tool, fork, spoon, boyfriend or girlfriend. And they do say that opposites attract.

When I look back at my margin notes about the couple they now seems like more of a reflection of limitations and their flaws, rather than living, breathing boyfriends and girlfriends. I scoff at the lines on my paper. My letters overlap them, my words defy the notion that a blue line is supposed to guide my thoughts and mock them for assuming they can contain or define. Her leg knocks against the bottom of her desk, and limitations have never meant less. I notice all of my valuable observations exist in the margins, because they aren't parallel with the lines and don't have to be

notes, or boyfriends, or make any sense in particular and if we were to share food, we'd use a spork.

I've been falling in love a lot lately, and the sound of her aluminum can sliding feels like a chorus. Even when the fork falls to the ground and the whole class shifts their eyes to the utensil that is so plainly useless now, I don't hear the mutters and whispers, but I hear a versatility being constructed. I don't know what I'm anticipating, but it feels so good to look forward to it, and even better to know that I don't know what it is. My margin notes ask the fork lying lifelessly on the ground, and ask the spooning couple, "why is the spork so constantly mocked?" Nobody answers, but my anticipation hears the answer loud and clear from the squeaking Styrofoam container with remnants of beef and lettuce and tomato and tortilla that just wanted a spork. It sits in the boyfriend's hands, on the way to the garbage bin, and the take-out container screams to me, "You're lucky!" I believe it.

When the Styrofoam is discarded, and the taco salad sits in the trash can, they look at each other, as people. I look at them, as a person. He offers a mute smile to her, and exhales through his nose. She shows her teeth, and a jet-stream of pent up laughter blasts her pages on the desk, shifting the order of notes and quizzes and essays, boyfriends and girlfriends. He notices the disorganization, and laughs again. His wind nudges the papers back in place. Her eyes thank him for the reciprocation. The class nods in agreement, and the wintry breeze that whistles through the cracked window smiles at the temporary current they've created.

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Kit Kingstad

ADVICE FROM A BARD

Eloquency, my Excellency,
Is the key to commanding your Kingdom.
And although you are prone
As you sit on your throne
To their lies and acute accusations,
With your speed and your smart
And a quick sly remark
You'll deny all their sharp imputations.
Now here
 I wish you well.
How the events go,
 Do tell.
But now I'll grab
 my modest spouse
 and proceed to run like hell.

.....
Eli Utne

TIME AND AGAIN

Time and Again, with you,
My friend, the minutes are
Stuck to the Wall.
All we have between Then
And When, is the promise of
The Here and the Now.
So let's drive to the Coast,
Bundled finger to toe,
To feed our hungry souls.
Draw jokes in the sand
And Castles for Crabs.
Ebb tide washes all away.
Let's stay for the night,
Sky-naked, moonlight.
This, here, is Heaven on Earth.
Mist takes her turn,
Ready to burn.
Wrapped in our bodies-to-be.
Pacificaly perched,
Our eyes to the Sea,
Our backs to the start of the day.
This time, and last time,
And next time, together,
The coast is clearer
Than ever!

D'Arcy Wright

LA RAMBLA DE MONTEVIDEO

- Gracias por venir, Elvira. Es mi último día en Montevideo y quería decirle las buenas noticias - dijo el director de la compañía norteamericana hablando con una formalidad que le sonó rara a Elvira y que lo delataba como extranjero.

- Usted ha sido aceptada para un puesto en nuestra oficina de San Francisco. Es un puesto para trabajar como secretaria y hay muchas posibilidades de promoción. Aunque no es nuestra costumbre, puede empezar el trabajo en diciembre cuando termine sus estudios en la Universidad de la República en vez de comenzar inmediatamente. Usted es ... ¿cómo se dice 'gifted'? Ah, no importa. Me entiende, ¿no? Bueno, estamos muy felices de que vaya a ser parte de nuestro equipo.

Elvira no sabía qué decir. Se le cerró el estómago. Pero no sentía la felicidad que había anticipado. Sentía como si fuese a vomitar. Hizo un esfuerzo por sonreír. - Gracias señor Adams. No puedo estar más feliz - , Elvira mintió. El director continuó hablando en su español sencillo, pero Elvira no prestó atención a lo que dijo. Puso un documento en la mesa para que lo firmara. - Elvira Ordóñez 17/7/2010 -, escribió pero no sabía qué significaba ni ese documento, ni ese día, ni ese nombre.

Cuando se fue de la oficina, casi olvidó su mate y su termo (Al salir de la oficina, se dio cuenta que se le había olvidado su mate y su termo). - Su, eh, té. Elvira, no olvide de su té - dijo el director (but that may have been intentional to demonstrate his foreignness). Agarró su mate y su termo. No pudo irse con suficiente rapidez.

Llegó al coche que su madre le había prestado para ir a la reunión, se sentó en el asiento de conductor, y se tomó un mate para calmarse. Miró el reloj del coche y supo que debía irse, pero le tenía pavor al maremoto de preguntas a manos de su madre - ¿Cómo estuvo la reunión? ¿Qué dijo el director? ¿Por qué quieres vivir en los Estados Unidos? - Aunque no quería, arrancó el coche y comenzó a manejar hacia su casa en el barrio de Malvín, situado en el otro extremo de Montevideo. En vez de cruzar por la ciudad, eligió tomar la Rambla, una avenida que pasa alrededor de la

ciudad. Era el camino más largo pero a Elvira siempre le gustaba mirar las olas al lado de la Rambla. Era un día frío y ventoso, así que el mar seguramente tendría unas olas buenísimas.

Buscando el mar, dobló por la calle de La Paz. Sin embargo, lo que vio fue una ola de banderas uruguayas en casi todos los coches y ventanas de los edificios. Se preguntó si eran para el día siguiente, el día de independencia, o a causa del equipo nacional de fútbol. Los Celestes, como eran apodados, estaban luchando por la copa mundial y hasta ahora estaban ganando. Elvira había notado que todo Uruguay estaba feliz y lleno de energía, emocionados por apoyar a su equipo.

Pero ahora, no compartía la alegría de sus compatriotas. – ¿Por qué no estoy feliz por recibir este trabajo? – se preguntó, doblando por la Rambla Franklin D. Roosevelt. Aunque era un trabajo poco calificado, como le explicó el señor Adams, le permitiría trabajar en los Estados Unidos, lo que era su sueño desde que vio las imágenes del Golden Gate Bridge en la televisión cuando comía la merienda con su madre. – Hay que salir de este país pequeñísimo. Y sobre todo de casa de mis padres –. Era una adulta, una mujer y ya no quería a su madre espiando y comentando sobre todas sus acciones. El coche giró otra vez para redondear la península que conformaba la ciudad y entró en Rambla Francia. Apareció un grupo de gente, con la cara pintada del amarillo y azul claro del Uruguay, cantando y agitando banderas nacionales. Notó también que algunos vestían la camiseta azul y roja del equipo Montevidense, el equipo nacional, y otros las camisetas negras y amarillas de su rival, el Peñarol. – Sólo la copa mundial podría juntar a los fanáticos de estos dos rivales –, se dijo riendo, y bajó la ventana para oír sus cantos. – ¡Es la hora, es la hoooooora, es la hora de ganar! – cantaban. – Ah, Los Celestes deben de haber ganado otra vez –, se dijo Elvira, sintiendo una sonrisa que se le formaba a los lados de la boca.

Cuando su coche se acercó dónde la Rambla Francia se juntó con la Rambla Gran Bretaña, apareció el Cubo del Sur, un antiguo emplazamiento de cañones. Hoy día servía como un lugar hermoso para mirar al mar o para tomar un mate entre amigos. Decidió parar un ratito para mirar las olas en la orilla. Sentada en un banco

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y mirando las pequeñas pero violentas olas, Elvira retomó el tema de su nuevo trabajo. Había querido salir del país porque tenía la impresión de que todos, desde sus amigos hasta su hermano, se quedaban en casa de sus padres hasta los treinta o hasta que se casaban. No quería hacer eso, no podía. No podía soportar más los mandatos de sus padres y de su hermano.

- Vení a buscarme a mi trabajo después de clase hoy -, le ordenaba con frecuencia su hermano mayor.

- ¿Por qué no podés caminar las cinco cuadras a casa? -, preguntó ella ahora, - No necesitás estar celoso de que puedo usar el coche de la familia porque mi facultad está más lejos -, pensó Elvira.

Y su padre, siempre le decía los mejores caminos cuando manejaba con él. - ¿Por qué andás por la Rambla? Es más rápido tomar la avenida Italia.

- Porque prefiero tomar la Rambla. Es el camino más tranquilo-, Elvira quería decirle.

- Necesitamos leche. Andá a buscarla al supermercado y no tomés tanto tiempo esta vez - le decía su madre.

- ¿Pensás que no tengo nada mejor que hacer? - pensó Elvira. - Estoy muy ocupada entre mis estudios y mi trabajo. ¿Por qué todos quieren decirme qué hacer o qué camino tomar? Tengo que hacer mis deberes y puedo elegir mi camino. Por eso acepté este trabajo en San Francisco. Para no quedarme en casa ahogada por mis padres como todos mis amigos.

En este instante, el sonido de tambores interrumpió los pensamientos de Elvira. Al otro lado de la avenida, por la calle Maldonado, apareció un grupo de candombe. Era el del barrio Sur, el grupo más conocido de la ciudad porque siempre ganaba el concurso de las Llamadas durante el Carnaval anual de Montevideo. Se decía que ganaba porque el candombe se inventó en el barrio Sur. Allá, se mezclaron los ritmos africanos durante la época colonial a causa del mercado de esclavos. Estos ritmos continuaron combinándose hasta el siglo XIX, cuando el barrio todavía era uno de negros e inmigrantes pobres, y esta mezcla resultó en el candombe uruguayo. Se decía que este grupo todavía

tenía el alma de sus ancestros, los inventores del candombe.

Viendo al grupo practicar, Elvira se acordó de todos los domingos que había pasado con su padre siguiendo el grupo de Malvín en la calle de Aconcagua. Mientras que el grupo practicaba su desfile para las Llamadas, los vecinos de Malvín salían de sus casas para seguir, escuchar y bailar con el grupo a lo largo de su camino. El ritmo de estos tambores, le hacía sentirse casi obligada seguirlos y Elvira cruzó la calle para tomar parte del espontáneo desfile.

Guiando el grupo, El Gramillero dobló por la calle Ciudadela y Elvira lo siguió hasta la plaza de Independencia. En la plaza, a penas se veía nada del verde de su vegetación. Todas las treinta y tres palmeras estaban cubiertas por banderas uruguayas. Otra vez, Elvira se preguntó si era en honor del equipo nacional o por la fiesta de la independencia. El grupo se paró delante de la puerta de la ciudad vieja, la anciana entrada en la fortaleza de Montevideo. Elvira cerró sus ojos concentrándose en el ritmo de los tambores. Parada con su espalda hacia la Ciudad Vieja y su frente hacia la avenida 18 de Julio, su estómago finalmente perdió ese sentimiento de ansiedad. Abrió los ojos, respiró y se relajó. Mirando a través de la plaza, hacia la avenida 18 de Julio, se dio cuenta de que ya se había alejado demasiado de su camino. El reloj de la plaza decía las 15; su madre debía de estar preparando la merienda. Sintió hambre y le nació la esperanza de que fuera una merienda de bizcochos - los de membrillo eran sus favoritos. Como su madre la estaba esperando, tenía que volver a casa. Quería volver a casa.

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Adam Lozier

[I DREAM OF ROETHKE'S FAR FIELD]

I dream of Roethke's far field,
standing at the shore of memory.
I watch it flow.
I watch for eddies.

My father's hand half-floats, half-sits in the gray silt,
disjointed, as though afloat in another's stream.
Often I have wondered at its weight in the river,
wondered often at its weight in the swamp.

I feel the breadth of his palm against mine
and see the Gainesville tree house rooted up from my childhood,
clear in my memory's blurred Florida,
ivy and moss grown through the floorboards.

All is caught fast in the eddy: I see the wood sinking from the
shoreline
like the cattails and crocodiles, sucked slow by marsh lips, softly
falling. Like the water-glutted logs in the creek past the house,
leaning on each other
in the cold, clear water, giving themselves to the slight pulls of the
spinning currents.

Under the wet Oregon sun, we lay naked, splayed against the wood.
I looked at my palm,
resting on my stomach, and read the river's currents carved there,
as its ebb and flow have hewn softly the faces of my mother
and father, and saw myself, an eddy there.

We jumped from the rotting summer trees till our lungs no longer
shook with spasms
at the shock of the creek, giving ourselves to the undercurrent.

I carved myself into that stream,
my naked body running sideways over the bright rocks,

and listened to the slow, white
noise of it:
the river's tongues moving slow at my feet, speaking slow,
sinking from the bank, listless,
where the sword ferns lay cut
on the dead rocks.

The shoal sucks slowly, dryly,
at this Western end of the field.

Saran Walker

GHOST IN SPACE



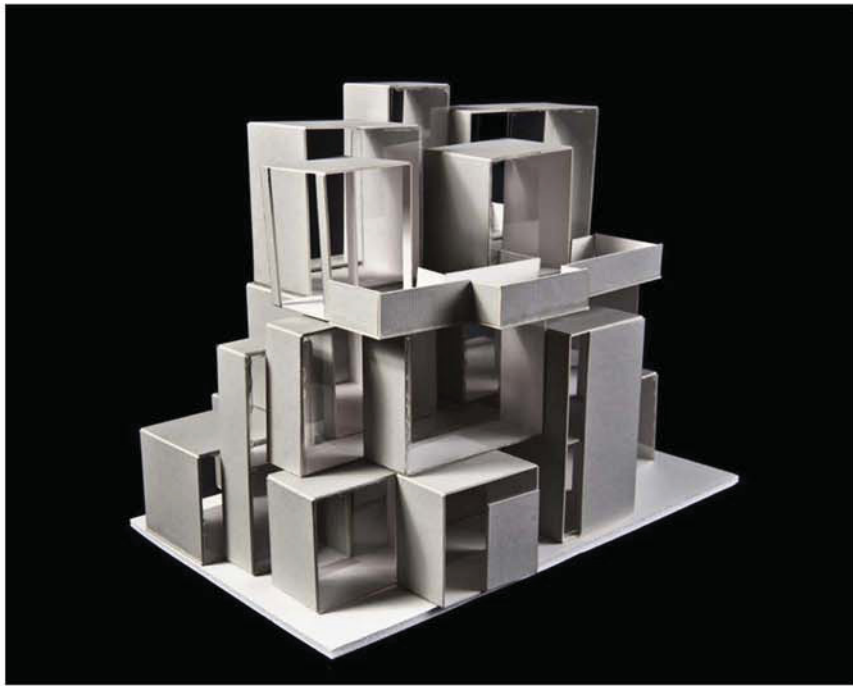
Madeline Morehouse

[UNTITLED]



Andrew Gustin

SONJA COHEN #05



Kiana Diaz

MONOCHROME CIRCUS



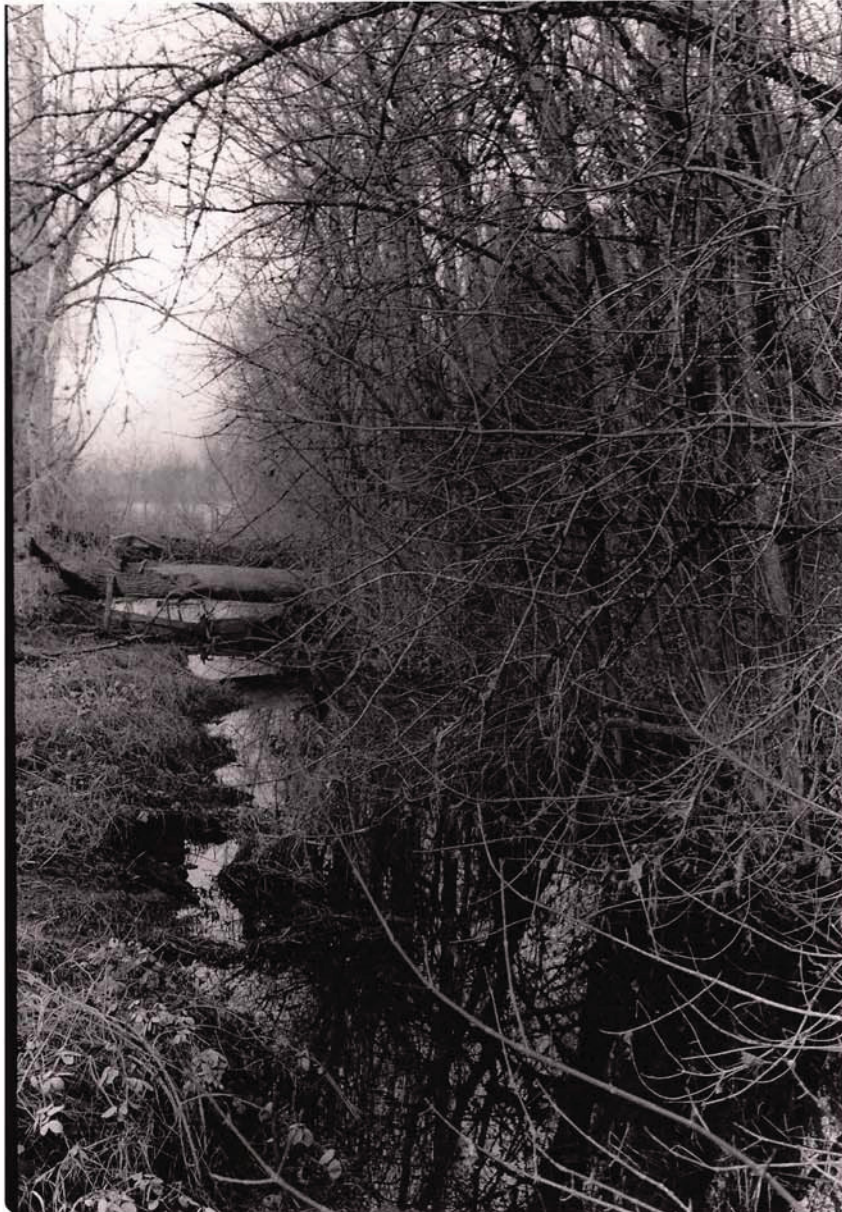
Blanca Gutierrez

POSTAL SERVICE



Samuel Kuniholm

GULLEY



Hannah Schiff

MAKING TIME, SHOOTING LINES



Andrew Long

[UNTITLED]



Astra Lincoln

[UNTITLED]



Samuel Kuniholm

BLUE AND ALUMINUM



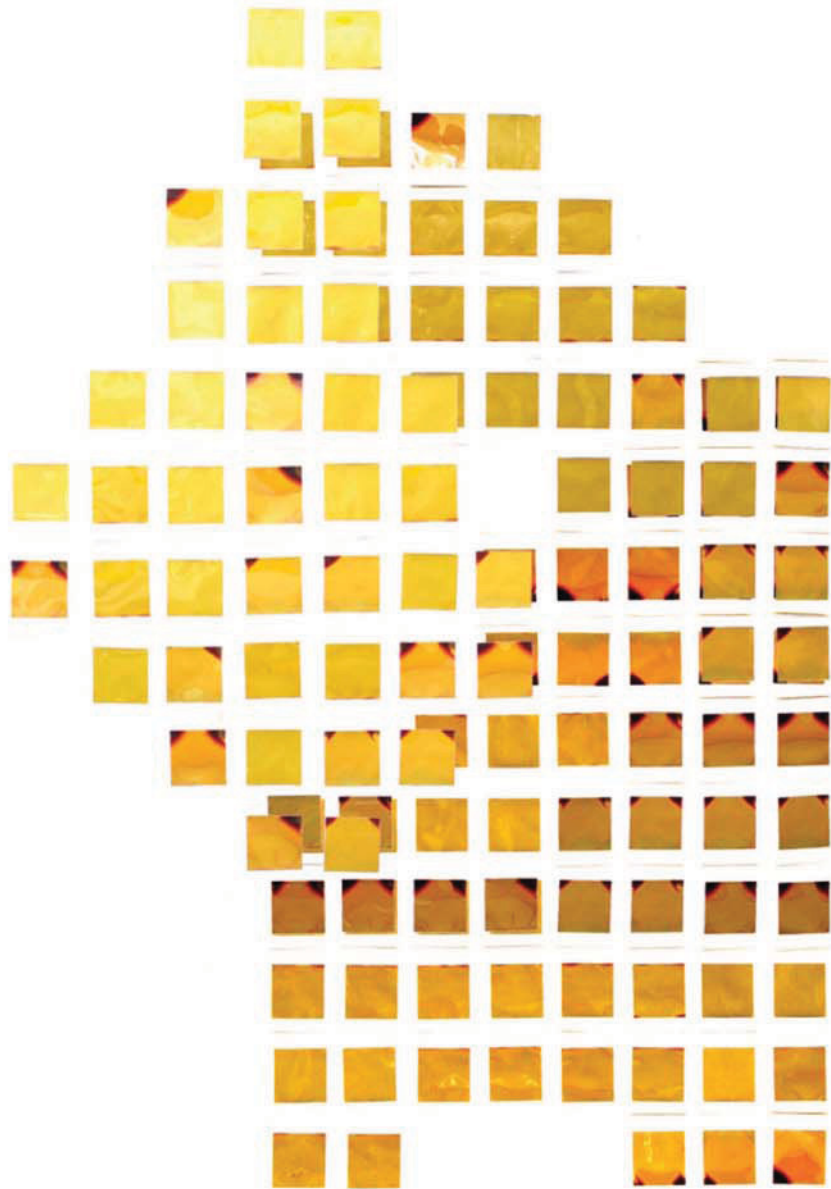
Makena Johnson

DAVID'S WHOPPER



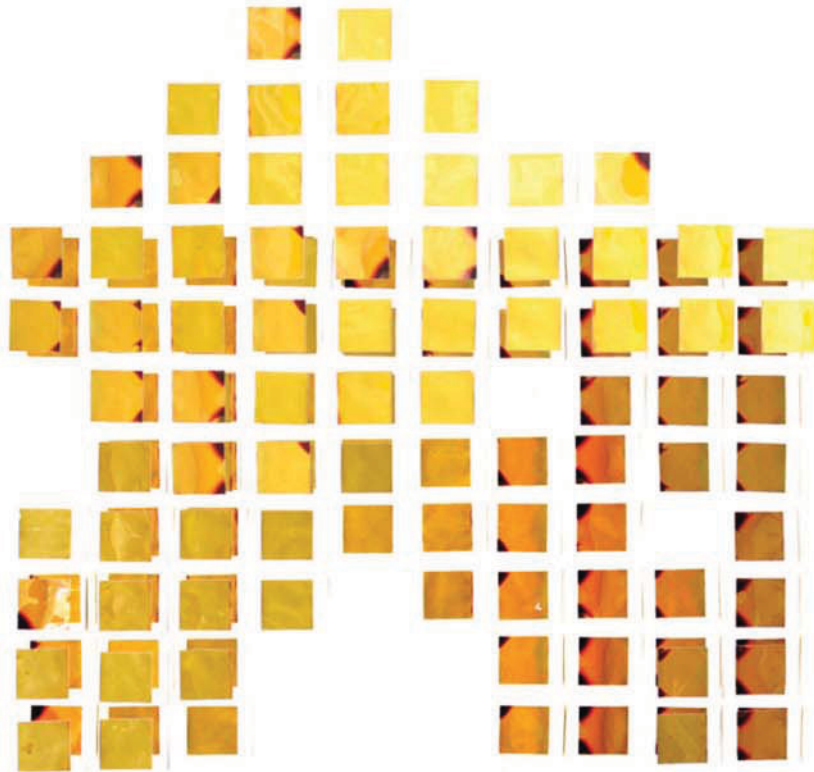
Stephen Yamada

EYE



Stephen Yamada

KERNEL



Madeline Morehouse

[UNTITLED]



Brita Ness

IG



Dana Crosby

[UNTITLED]



Dana Crosby

[UNTITLED-REVERSE]



Astra Lincoln

FOUND FILM



Cameron Hill

ABSENT LANDSCAPE II



Shealyn Friedrich

MUSIC OF THE MORNING



Elise McGlone

RED BLOSSOM



Astra Lincoln

THE SEA CLOSE BY



Dana Crosby

UNTITLED



.....

Astra Lincoln

MID-JULY

The glass spice jars are not entirely full. They sit in crowded rows on the shelf in front of the window, and light shines through them, rays falling in slanted ripples on the wall. *Laurel. Apio. Jengibre. Nuez moscada.* What's for dinner?

The old woman enters the room. She wears her hair like a helmet. Her hard eyes are the wings of hawks framing her straight, long nose. *Les prunes sont tombees*, she says, and gives me a hand shovel. *Range les prunes.* We stare at each other for several seconds without expression.

The field is covered in fallen plums. They have reattached themselves to the earth, their bruised black skin making sticky amends with the soil. In death, plums seem to become stubborn in their want to feed the ground. The shovel does not help in lifting the corpses of summer's forgotten fruit. The heat is heavy. A blond woman stops and stares. In Dutch, she tells me tonight there will be no pie. I know no Dutch, but what else could she be saying. Dreams of jam with cinnamon and of sliced summer fruit with peppers and garlic on warm bread, dreams of plates drenched in their purple blood run through my mind. Visions of someone else's summer. I fill two buckets with the sweet meat and peel that lie in disheveled heaps. A family of beetles picnics where they have landed on top. Their wings are iridescent and indecisively blue-green. I pluck them out with my fingers and the damp, warm smell of fermented fruit fills my nose.

I place the full buckets on a crooked table where I meet the steel-haired woman. She laughs at my knees, blood red and brown. *Bien. Retirer les coeurs.*

The wood of the bench feels rough and real against my thighs. I sit a while, my fingers playing in the plum slop in front of me. The air feels lighter in a newborn breeze, but it looks grayer. The linen hung today on the string is all white and it reminds me of a dream. The sounds are brighter than the sights here. The chatter does not sound like life but like early darkness in the afternoon. I listen to the whisper of the trees as leaves lick leaves with silent slaps. It is a

slow sigh of contentedness that the world breathes, and so I pick up a plum. The side is split open from the sun, and that is where I place my thumbs, plunging them in towards the center stone. My nails tear apart jagged halves. The ripped fruit reveals a colony of small white worms. I wonder what they will become and drop the plum into the third bucket, only slightly lined in dirt. Plums to be frozen until winter when they will be jam again. I lick my fingers clean of the taste of mid-July.

Saran Walker

OLD FLAME

I think memories fade like sun-kissed photographs.
You too will be forgotten,
a bleached outline of long-legged, sandy-haired youth.
But even now, a single song transports me
back to the night when it was blaring out of your car speakers
as we drove, illuminated
across the harbor.
Once, over a game of Scrabble,
you found words that I was terrified to say,
ones that couldn't be spelled with my tiles
or sung to the albums you played me.
As you stretched out on the other side of the board
I spent my turn trying to catch your eye
until bashful thoughts crept from my head
and somehow came marching out of your mouth.
On the coldest nights, we take root in cramped corner tea parlors
where herbal steam sinks into the furniture and our clothes
and the chairs compress us
into tangled balls of limbs.
Radios hum in time to your questions,
my answers, and the chime of your laugh.
As silhouettes, we stir honey into our drinks
leaning over the table and picking at spoons and straws
to keep our hands from meeting.
I drive north while you're away for the winter.
My car is one insignificant blur
amidst rows of pines that, stagnant, journey only upwards.
They caress each other, passing whispers across the highway
about the farms and lakes where they are planted
and I wonder what music you'd play if you were behind the wheel.

You're miles away
so I can only listen to the best impression of your tastes
and songs that remind me of you.
But by the time I return
your presence will fill albums.

Noah Church

FREDRICK NIETZSCHE'S MUSTACHE

One day, I was looking at a profile of Friedrich Nietzsche's giant mustache and wondering why a man would ever grow such a ridiculous impediment to ingestion. My professor told me that it was not Friedrich's idea, that his sister thought that it would look nice, that after a brain disorder and two strokes had crippled her brother's faculties of speech and movement, Elisabeth was free to re-imagine both Friedrich's face and his work in ways he never would have permitted if still sane. In the picture, Friedrich's hand is clutched over half of his face, the one exposed eye wide and dark and trained like the barrel of a Dreyse needle-gun on something off-camera—his sister, I believe, telling Friedrich to sit up straight and to please try and keep his mouth from sagging open. Or perhaps I am wrong. Perhaps the confused web of dead and living neural tissue kept Friedrich locked in his own mind with Socrates and Dionysus and a hungry snake, and his eye expresses all of the awareness and intent found in a vanilla pudding.

My grandfather never turned into a vanilla pudding, for which I am grateful. His illness was of the body, and though disease and cure turned his bronze skin waxen and robbed his shoulders of their former fullness, he remained in control of his facial hair until the end. Months beforehand, my father returned from a visit with my grandparents. He said at dinner, over a roast rubbed with basil and rosemary, that he was shocked by how soft and white his father's hand had been. My own father's hands are thick and rough with scars and calluses. Mine are somewhere in between.

I never talked with my grandfather as two adults talk; I was too much a boy when he died. In fact, it was not until I was 20 and my grandfather dead that I learned he had had a wife before my grandmother. At lunch one day, my father brought up the story to my mother in casual conversation, not realizing that I had never been told. My father had not even known about this first wife until a year before then: he had heard it from my aunt, who had only just learned it when my grandfather's sister—not realizing that my aunt had never been told—had brought it up in casual conversation.

Nobody was certain whether or not my grandmother had been told. I recommended that we bring it up in casual conversation.

When class ended I went to the library and researched Friedrich's family. Friedrich did not like his sister. Elisabeth had married in 1885 to Bernhard Forster, founder of "New Germany," Paraguay, in which those pure of race could live without the corrupting influence of lesser peoples—especially the Jews, "a parasite on the German body." Friedrich did not like anti-Semites, and he probably was not sad that Forster killed himself to escape debt in 1889. He might have been sad, however, if he knew that his sister would posthumously align Friedrich and his work with the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Friedrich did not like socialists.

It occurs to me that Friedrich did not like a great many things.

My grandfather liked football, crabbing, his wife, and spitting watermelon seeds in the last light of a summer day. It turns out that my grandmother did know about the first wife. In describing the woman, my grandmother used phrases like "wild" and "running around town" and seemed to insinuate that she was a prostitute. None of us is a confident translator of old-person euphemisms, but my grandmother seemed pained by this conversation, and we don't have the heart to ask for a clarification.

My grandfather was 26 when he married my grandmother. He was 21 when he married the other woman, whose name we do not know and which marriage lasted less than a year. I see my grandfather loving this woman from the moment she met his eyes crossing the street. She had just left the factory where she manufactured shells to be exploded on Japanese men in the South Pacific, and the day's sweat and grease still lay heavy on her in a way that seemed both vulgar and noble. They were married shortly thereafter. As newlyweds, they were happy for awhile—a week, a month, half a year. Then my grandfather's pain at not being able to struggle and bleed alongside his friends at war began to erupt at unexpected moments each day.

They don't allow invalids into the military.

When my grandfather was born, his father was 52. When my grandfather was 16, his father was dead, and it fell to him to care for his mother and two sisters. He vowed to never do the same to his children. He would live in the present, marry early, bear children while he was still young, and live to see those children have children. My grandfather probably should not have been chopping wood when the light was failing, but it fell to him to keep his family warm—and it felt good to hit something—so when a particularly knotted piece of wood resisted his axe, he held it in place and hit harder. Then—without knowing why—he was on his back looking up at the clouds, which roiled nauseatingly like squeezed grapefruit. The axe was at his feet, and it took him several minutes to right himself. Holding his breath in with his teeth, he wrapped his hand in a discarded shirt and went inside the house, leaving his thumb in the foot-trodden dirt beneath the chopping block.

Living with his new wife and surrounded by talk of the war, my grandfather would often wonder how his life would have gone had he not been stupid enough to dismember himself. His friends died far away for the safety of the world and the glory of their country, while he remained home with the women and the children and the old men. His resentment showed in outbursts over undercooked dinners and spilled coffee. When it wasn't punctuated by shouts, the silence of the house clung to my grandfather's wife, heavy and grey like lead. She started to stay out late at night, and things went downhill from there.

Or perhaps I'm wrong.

Elisabeth comes to mind. After Friedrich died, Elisabeth rebuilt her brother's legacy with *The Will to Power*, a patchwork misrepresentation of notebooks that Friedrich had never meant to publish. I don't blame her. We all distort the memories of our loved ones, though we usually wait until they are dead. Sometime after my grandfather died, I heard the peremptory raps on my door that were characteristic of my father. When I opened it, he gave me a photo and said, "It seemed right to take this." He looked at me for a moment, nodded, and left.

Friedrich was fascinated by Greek tragedies. He thought that by

showing a virtuous hero absolutely destroyed and disgraced, these tragedies took everything we hold dear—law, form, communication, knowledge, religion, science, individuality, community, reality itself—and exposed it all to be a meaningless façade, “will-o’-the-wisp and a dance of spirits and nothing more.” When the veil is drawn back, we are exposed to the horror of emptiness—absolute meaningless black. This is how I feel when I look at that picture. A body lies on my grandfather’s favorite chair, skin slack and sallow, eyes yellow and glazed, mouth gaping, and everything that was my grandfather is gone.

When I look into that abyss, I like to remember that Friedrich was an optimist. What he admired most about the Greeks was how they could look beyond the veil, feel that horror, and then pull back and affirm their way of life. They admired appearance—delighted in it—because they knew that appearance was all. And when this thought fails to comfort me, I like to remember that Friedrich’s last act as a sane man was to run across the town square and throw his arms protectively around a horse being flogged, weeping with compassion.

Emma Reagan

THE EMPIRE STATE

there's white powder
in the street
workmen brush it around
as if in a rock garden
you and I watch us
as we bow down our
pale necks
and snort it off the
white curved breast of
mother building

.....
Dallas Fredrick

MOVING AND MOVING AWAY

Love is a woman,
fat and round like an old baobab
and strong like the grass around,
bending under the weight of the wind,
moving,
and they were the hands that held our knees,
brushed your elbow when the ground came to meet you.

She is an early woman, and
a simple laugh will hold her up.
I, the table of folding hickory,
am stricken with fever to watch her
closely as her eyes close and
she trembles like a tremor of beauty.

Brown.
Those eyes were once brown near the asphalt.

Man is the mud on my hands,
cracked and peeling away when the sun makes things idle,
and thin pieces of it,
like boards or tile,
are made in the drying.
Moving away,
in this thick of the woods
man is the water's edge,
bent and bending still,
and still
like
time

There was an opening and
a showing of signs by the river,
and there were mouths
and sounds all fluttering around and
pushing ripples from the water.
My daughter was there
touching her muddy shoes,
covered red in adobe,
her arms were fallen over
and shown faintly by the ferry boats.

Sunlight
and

so many people,
all of them shining and black like beetles,

always crawling through the dust and burning.
I hurried over to hold her sides,
to keep her steady and steer away the light.
Suddenly it had broken open,
she looked blank,
her mouth gaped wide,
gasping for air.

She was wet and something strange,
they were a cage, and I stayed
there like some dumb thing,
groping to lean her against me.
There was a raptor and the east
easing in the breeze,
and there was a brush of bodies
and the sand on my knees,
and a sweetness that clung

to her cheek in the fading.

I came to all empty in my arms,
sinking and lit up by the shallow glow of a streetlamp.
Light is lonesome and sleeping
tonight by her nose that edges in my chest.
“We are all close to death,” says that breeze
when it tumbles from our window.

She is a bright woman and
I think I could hold her if the timing was right.
I, the corner chair still shaking,
am lost in thought when watching
her fold and
show her lips like
life is funny,
life is a phantom

Music.
Those eyes were once music on the ground.

Emma Jones

THE MOUSE

The mouse's miniscule claws ticked as it ran on the linoleum, pressing against the wall. Its nose twitched at the scent of the bread crumbs on the kitchen floor. It followed the trail, boldly crossing the open floor in search of its prey. The crumbs lay scattered below the counter. The mouse tapped towards them, hiding beneath the lip of the cabinets. It came upon its bounty and sank its teeth into a small morsel.

Caroline's stomach gurgled as she sliced the brisket into fat strips. A thin ribbon of carrot fell to the floor, and she bent to retrieve it. The mouse dropped its meal and sniffed at Caroline, whose eyes widened.

"Oh Jesus!" she screamed, dropping her knife and knocking a head of broccoli to the floor. It bounced and rolled under the table as Caroline backed away from the counter.

In the living room, Mike raised his head from the newspaper. He had been reading about the mayor's latest decision to install a statue of Robert Mason, the town's founder, in Hartford Square. Mason had been an avid naturalist, so he was to be sculpted standing triumphantly before a sleeping cougar. Mike found the statue to be in poor taste. "What's wrong?" he called into the kitchen.

"A mouse!" screeched Caroline.

Upstairs, Jackie popped her gum. Her mother's yelp floated up and, after turning an ear toward the door for a moment, Jackie lowered her eyes to Vogue again. An article was teaching her how to use makeup to attract men. "Smoky cat eyes read sexy, mysterious, and classy," said the article. Jackie lifted the tip of the brush to her eye and, as the article instructed, applied a deep plum to the outside edge of her eye. "Ugh," she said to the mirror, and wiped off the silky powder.

The baby stirred in his crib. He reached for the small stuffed animals that hung from the mobile above him. He giggled and kicked his blankets away, but soon grew cold and began to whimper.

“Get it, get it, get it!” Caroline yelled at Mike, who stood bow-legged in the kitchen, the newspaper rolled up in his hand. He scanned the floor but saw no mouse. The baby monitor laughed and whined. Caroline rushed from the kitchen and up the stairs. She entered the baby’s room and picked him up, softly shh-ing as she bounced him in her arms. The baby reached again for the animals, stretching away from Caroline’s grip.

Jackie entered the room. “What happened?” she asked.

“There’s a mouse downstairs,” whispered Caroline.

“Ew,” Jackie said.

“Shh,” Caroline replied.

Below, Mike crawled on the linoleum. He drummed his fingers on the floor and lowered his head. The mouse had probably scurried away by now. He wiped the bread crumbs into a small pile and picked up the broccoli and the knife. As he dropped them into the sink, the baby began to cry. Mike listened through the monitor.

“Shh, shh,” Mike heard Caroline say, “Daddy will get the mouse.”

The crying softened. Mike took a piece of brisket from the cutting board and ate it. Juice clung to his mustache and he sat at the table, setting down his newspaper.

Katie Jade McCoy

**PRESIDENT PELTON AND HIS WONDERFUL WEATHER
MACHINE**

The morning began, that hopeful spring day,
With a shimmering, gold-and-blue dawn.
The birds were in tune and sang arpeggios
O'er the picturesque, emerald-green lawn.
The Mill Stream was lovely, all rippling and blue
As the ducks honked their early morn greeting.
The clock tower chimed its slow, resonant song
In harmony with the birds' tweeting.
The students all donned their flip-flops and shades,
Prepared for a fine, sunny day;
For they knew, you see, skies would always be clear
When young college recruits came to stay.
You may ask, in light of this information,
"How could they possibly know?
Oregon's weather is irresolute,
And the weatherman's only so-so."
The students would chuckle, and point to the North,
To the cupola crowning the chapel,
For there lives our President, Marvin Lee Pelton,
The wizard with whom the clouds grapple.
In addition to being a trustworthy leader,
He owns a most splendid device:
A wondrous machine that takes charge of the weather
So tours of the campus are nice.
Nobody wants to enroll at a school
If it's overcast, frigid, and rainy,
So Pelton pulls out the old weather machine
And attracts the young folk that are brainy.
On the spring day in question, announcements were made—
The students were downcast to find

.....

That our President, after thirteen faithful years,
Was leaving his dear school behind.
Oh, Pelton! Pelton, why would you go
When the prospective students are here?
High-school soon-to-be-grads, all bright-eyed and fresh
Are expecting to find the skies clear.
The clouds were beginning to gather in earnest—
Already, the light had grown dim—
But Pelton was gone, with his wondrous machine,
And he'd taken his weather with him.

.....
Graham Abbot

THEESIS RAPS

9/5/11 In response to Schmuzanne's verbally-majestic return from Burning Man:

Now looky here my dear, don't fear,
the world is still spinning, though you've been out winning
with the sunburned desert sands swimming,
through the air like smoked trimmings.
I heard you'll get here today, and I just wanna say
that while being cool is okay, being YOU is the real way.

9/5/11 In response to communal reception and reciprocation:

What is this?
Another fortunate reciprocate
to this year's undeniably progressive drug to kick:
this mind splittin rhyme, spittin's got me smitten
like a flea-bitten little kitten named Mittens
that found arsenic in his milk, and now he's killt.
Poor Mittens.

9/5/11 In response to exorbitant praise:

Compliment appreciated, though a thought I must decline.
I can't abide the hubris guy when he's not bonafide.
Truth is, rappin' aint for me you see,
so when trouble comes and shoots and runs
we'll witness the test of fitness, that brings the guns.
Yeah now don't remiss—
I'm a Rhetoric major, dawg:
we just talk like this.

9/11/11 In response to THESIS:

I'm not here to speak as an uptight sneak freak
so watch the havoc you wreak,

.....

‘cause you never know who’s up and who’s down,
 who’s sound and who’s bleak.
I’ll write you out of sight, ‘cause my words don’t go easy.
 They pick and choose, and they’ll do it sleazy.
Here now I just might win the fight, keep it tight,
 ‘cause this thesis is gonna turn out alright.
 The hook waits with no room to fiddle,
 this fishy bullshit doesn’t nibble,
 so be polite and take the bite:
if this topic doesn’t blow your mind, or make you blind,
 you may find this repetitive rhyme just might.

10/3/11 In response to THESIS:

~

I’ll review this literature like a professional would their ligature,
 I’ll write this section styled like God’s own forest fire,
burning through words and phrases the way you burn bowls
 and dis on rolling paper flavors.
This ain’t play time, and it ain’t game time neither.
 This is the thesis rhyme,
and my word crunching syllable bunching’s got me high,
 like sniffing ether.
So back off, I can slack off, and it won’t matter:
 this paper’s only gonna get fatter.

10/26/11 In response to THESIS:

~

Little punk, you ain’t got the BAMF in you to be this,
 you try to play tough but you’re a weak puny thesis.
 I’ll rock you from your base,
 your completion I will ace,
don’t doubt that I’ll put you in your place, you disgrace.
 When you say “thesis due” I say
 “JESUS, DUDE!”
 I write words on your face.



~

11/29/11 - In response to the completion of THESIS:

The manuscript is in. How can you hope to win?

You're nothin' but insignificant worn out thesis sin.

In my estimation,

your intimidatin' explication got left at the train station,

so prepare for condemnation.

Now we're movin' on, we're groovin' on.

Now it's contractual (like having sex)

cause I just submitted

"THESIS_ACTUAL.docx"

.....
Rey Ayala

CONTROLLER

Up, A complicated device used to arouse my brain's hemispheres.
When I push your buttons,
With 8-bit of a reaction,
You respond with the positive.
The information I give you seems to make things move differently
in your circuitry.
That is the opposite of ...
Down, Be a simple device.
That is what you seem to tell yourself.
However, you are articulate wiring of past 16-bit generations.
If you decide to make the pause button obsolete,
You will be the master of a chief.
Left, See, a mathematical equation is what defines your passion.
You began directing Mario through simple arithmetic;
You will have the true powers of the God of War through multi
variables.
Seems logical since your direction pad is located on the opposite
of ...
Right, De arte no vienes.
Contradicting when you try to translate what you help create on
the big 60-inch screen.
The characters exploding with sound, lights, powers, and massive
amounts of colors.
But without you there would be no show.
You are my controller.
Go on, the world is ready for you to press play, little brother.

Madison Niermeyer

QUARANTINE

“I move to keep things whole” – Mark Strand

The old white van bent under the weight of its 11 passengers as it sped around the many corners on the dirt road into Kajiado. I was nested in the heart of this beast sitting somberly next to a Kenyan woman named Jacinta, who was going to be my host mother for the next two months. She had spoken maybe ten words to me over the course of the hour drive from Nairobi. My host father, Loki, sat in the front of the van with a stern grimace on his face. Every once in a while he would lean over to the driver and say something in a low voice, but mostly he too sat in silence. After a few of my eager questions were answered with clipped responses at the start of the drive I spent the rest of the time looking out the window at the seemingly endless stretch of desert; the rolling hills were punctuated by only a few trees and the occasionally “Safaricom” billboard – the dominant of Kenya’s two cell phone companies. I was complacent yet terrified as we drew closer towards what would become my home.

It was dark when we finally pulled up to a small compound of concrete buildings just outside of Kajiado. As we rolled out the vehicle a young white girl emerged from the tiny house chasing after a little Kenyan boy who couldn’t have been more than five years old. The little boy was introduced to me as Junior, the youngest of the family’s children. The girl confidently shook my hand and introduced herself as Liz and led me inside. She gave Jacinta a report on how Junior and his older sister Mercy had behaved that day.

“Junior played outside nearly all day” and “Mercy and I made dinner.”

Out of a concrete room in the back of the house Liz brought-out three silver serving dishes, one full of rice another with red beans and small one with chunks of beef. She placed them on the table and then as the family sat down on the cramped couches in the front room that made up the other half of the house, went back into the kitchen to bring a pitcher of water, soap and a plastic bowl. I

watched carefully as Liz went around the room and poured a steady stream of water so that each of us could wash our hands. My host mom, Jacinta, after her hands were washed dished each of us up a plate of food. They all laughed at me when I told them that I only wanted half a plate, my stomach still upset from the ride down from the city. “You better eat” Liz told me.

Liz and Jacinta then excitedly turned on the television in order to catch the last half of “Strom Over Paradise,” a Portuguese soap opera dubbed in English. I shrunk back into the couch in confusion as they all watched the ridiculous show with rapt attention. “I know what you are thinking, “ Liz, turned and said to me “ but I promise you you’ll learn to love this show.”

After dinner was done Liz informed the family that she was going to bed, and told me to follow her. We walked down a dusty road for a few hundred feet to another concrete building with an aluminum roof.

“This is where I’ve been living and where I think you should stay too. There’s not much inside but its better than being crammed in with the kids in one room, You’ll need your own space I promise you that.” Liz informed me as she turned a skeleton key in a blue painted metal door.

The building had a series of concrete rooms with no doors and nothing in them except a pile of thin foam mattresses in one corner. It had the feeling of a deserted warehouse – a place that would make a great set for a horror film. There was a single light bulb hanging from one of the rooms and underneath it Liz had piled a few of the mattresses into a makeshift bed.

“You take this room, Maddi, I’m headed out of here at the end of the week.” Liz said kindly moving her suitcase into the next shell over.

I am still unsure of how so much force fit into such a small body. Liz can’t have weighed more than 100 pounds and with fine brown hair that fell around her shoulders, looked as if she might have been 12. In reality she was 23 and had been living on and off in various parts of Africa for the past three years. I am eternally gratefully that Liz and I had that week of overlap in Kajiado I

would have been totally lost without her to show me around. She was full of life advice and never afraid to share it with me:

1. "Always keep a small empty plastic container with you. It makes a great sink and even a good bathroom in a pinch."

2. "Never let the girls at school use your phone, no matter how sad their story is."

3. "Whatever you do, don't speak to Loki without being spoken to first"

4. "Bathe every three days, and only change your underwear after you've bathed, you are going to have to get used to being dirty."

I hung on her every word and I know she thrived off the attention. I could hear in the tone of her voice that she enjoyed being the authority and I fed her confidence as much as I could. During the day she would show me the projects she had been working on for the school, how to do simple things like wash my clothes, and inform me on the subtleties how of how to wash "mazungu" (white-person) hair when taking a bucket bath. My host mother Jacinta loved Liz, because she knew just how to make her laugh. The two of them while working next to one another would joke back and forth like they had known one another for years. I was taken aback the first when I heard Liz speak to Jacinta, or any Kenyan for that matter, because even though she was for the most part speaking English she used a drastically different pattern of intonations than when she spoke to me. Within a few days, however, I found myself doing the same thing and learned to see this accent not as a rude mimic of Kenyan English, but rather a courtesy that made our American English easier to understand.

Every night that week after eating dinner and watching television with the family the two of us would sit in our hollow concrete home and she would tell me stories of when she lived in Zimbabwe. She had lived there during the height of Muagbe's reign of terror and when all foreigners were told to leave the country she had stayed illegally. She had to take burlap sacks full of money to buy a single loaf of bread from the market and spent close to a year driving ambulances from the small town where she lived into Harare until all the public hospitals were eventually shut down. Her

fractured stories came together as a mosaic of desperate survival, an existence permeated by death of those around her and a constant hunger to be a hero in the horrific circumstances. The money and privilege signaled by her white skin had been enough of a currency to save a precious few, but it was never enough. After about a year she was forced to return back to the US after being poisoned and getting violently ill. In a voice filled with a strange mixture of guilt and pride she told me that she had felt useless back in the US and as soon as she had recovered enough to travel, had made plans to try and get back to Zimbabwe to the orphanage where she had been living.

That is how she had ended up in Kajiajo, Kenya volunteering at the school where I met her. She told me she was working the Seventh Day Adventist circuit. Although she had not been religious herself she had been raised in the church and it provided an invaluable network of volunteer opportunities around the continent so she pretended devotion and quoted bible verses in order to find shelter that would take her closer to her ultimate goal. Although she didn't know if it would be possible for her to re-enter Zimbabwe anytime soon her plan was to work her way slowly across the country, and wait until it might be possible.

After Liz left at the end of that week on a bus headed south she stayed with me. I thought of her constantly over the next two months, and then was still haunted by her story when I returned to the States. It has been over a year and a half since I've been home and I still can hear her voice echoing in my head. A few weeks ago, I found out that now she is back in the US after being diagnosed with Active Tuberculosis. From what I hear she is responding to treatment well and expects a full recovery. I also know that she is living outside of Portland, Oregon, a short 40-minute drive from Willamette University where I am currently going to school. I know I should go see her as soon as she is able to have visitors, but I don't know if I will, in fact I am almost certain I won't.

When I was in Kenya I too was surrounded by need and like Liz I could dedicate my life to using my privilege to help meet that need, but I don't want to not right now anyway. After I returned home I remember my Dad told me that this was my opportunity to

make a difference by raising money for the school where I had been living. I nodded, unable to voice why I had little desire to do so. I know I am a compassionate person, but unlike Liz after her first two-month visit to Zimbabwe I am not rushing to go back. I need to process my experience in Kenya by being far away from it. I can type that sentence and believe it is true but can't imagine saying that phrase aloud to Liz.

Maybe one day I will be in a place where I will have the courage to go speak to her, but for now its all I can do to pretend that Liz is still living in Kajado thousands of miles away from my comfortable life in Oregon. I have locked Liz away in the memory of that week we spent together and only visit her in the occasional daydream. When I do the two of us never speak. Instead we simply run side by side in order to catch a bus that will take us both somewhere far away from Kajiado's endless desert hills.

Hannah Schiff

HAIKU #73

The last time I wore
this old leather jacket, you
weren't in prison.

Sean Dart

TUESDAY, THURSDAY, 12:50-2:20

The woman that I love actually loves my professor, and I don't know what else to do about it.

Every day, she stares. It's impossible not to. I stare. He stares. She stares. They all stare. Even he stares at himself.

The voluptuous mound of masculinity that confidently sits beneath his belt buckle taunts me. It juts itself towards me. It collects chalk-dust when he turns to the class to say something brilliant, as I jot notes at a fervent pace. I realize my notes have nothing to do with the subject. They're a how-to guide. How to be him.

"Talk smarter."

"Get mad at Dad for inferior genetics."

I'm well on my way. She muses.

"I think it's really sweet how he ran out of space on the chalkboard but still wrote my name as Brenda in really tiny writing, instead of writing 'Bren' or 'Bre' in the same space with normal writing."

She loves him. There's nothing I can do about it.

"I don't like 'Bren'. Bren makes me sound like a fish. That's a name someone would name their fish."

Her eyes are fixated on his denim protrusion, and I'm taking notes. He keeps saying brilliant things and having a bursting zipper. I can't keep up.

"Picture me. And a mini-plastic underwater castle, just swimming around. Aimlessly, really. Bubbling around with no purpose other than to be 'Bren the fish'."

It is when she says things like this that I absolutely fall in love with her. My heart precipitates to my stomach, which craves more of her. More.

"I don't like 'Bre' either. It makes me sound like a middle-schooler."

I try my best to sound smart every time I speak in class. Simultaneously, I want to be one of those guys that says "catch

ya later” and doesn’t sound fraudulent. This is posing itself as a problem when I speak aloud in class. I end up sounding like a highly educated 16 year-old. I can’t keep up with the wad under his fly or the brain behind his brow.

“I think he thinks I’m pretty,” she’s said, three times this semester. I laugh every time, but I know he does. Who couldn’t? Her brown eyes are an acorn in a snow storm. I shiver when she blinks.

He does think she’s pretty. He smiles. Oh, he smiles at her. Every day he smiles. She smiles at him, and he smiles back. Sometimes he smiles first. The seed of jealousy that sits in my throat grows slower when she smiles first. When he smiles first, I’m green with envy.

After she and I had sex for the first time, she said “you have the perfect penis” and it made me feel so certain that my penis was perfect. If my penis was perfect, Dr. Ebbs’ was a framed memorial of what it meant to be phallic. A statue would be more appropriate, I suppose.

After we had sex last night, I was brushing my teeth when she walked into the bathroom. I turned and said, “Dr. Ebbs has a huge penis, doesn’t he?”

“... Yes. He really does. He absolutely does,” she says, slowly, as she is coming to the realization that we are indeed having this conversation, meanwhile daydreaming about the python beneath his plaid boxer-briefs.

“I think it’s really cute when he wears mostly dark colors, and gets chalk dust on his sleeves. I want to be the person to tell him that it’s there.”

Then he’d look back at her and say “thank you” while dusting himself off. The cloud of chalk hovers, resonates like my jealousy.

Yesterday, Dr. Ebbs asked a leading question. The kind of question chalk-dusted-crotch-flaunters ask when they have an answer in mind and hope your feeble brain can muster something adequate.

I tried my best. He told me I brought up an interesting point. I should have just told him he’s got chalk all over his back.

She has such soft hands. They rest on my chest at night, and

around my throat when she pretends to kill me. It's a fun game we have. I'll say something like, "Dr. Ebbs isn't the most brilliant wonderful man alive," then she'll kill me.

"I love him. I couldn't ever just have sex with him ... I want to be with him forever."

She says this like a stone. She is so serious. I don't laugh, but I find it the funniest thing I have ever heard. She means it, and I know it.

I have a certain competition with Dr. Ebbs. I love him too, don't get me wrong. His intelligence and wit are impressive. He matches every day, and I'd like his hairline on my head. He talks smart.

When I answered Dr. Ebbs' question, Brenda didn't write anything down. I watched her, out of the corner of my eye. Whenever I say smart things, she records them.

After Dr. Ebbs told me that I brought up an interesting point, he made a point of his own. Before making his own point, he re-stated mine, except smarter and better.

When he made his own point, the best point, really, Brenda scribbled fervently. She double underlined. She re-traced. She highlighted. Each exclamation point was a middle finger to my ego, a plop of the iron stalk of a superior orator onto the desk. The reverberation echoed in my skull.

The next day, I tried again.

"Anything else, guys?"

"Um ... yeah."

I spewed large words. Words I'd seen on thesaurus.com. Words my mom had to define for me. I leaked knowledge and hoped my combined droplets would form a puddle to rival the sea of wisdom Dr. Ebbs had surrounding his brilliant buoy of a head.

"Mmm, that's an interesting point. I also think ..."

Here he goes again. Being a professor. Teaching the class.

Her hands are so soft. On her notebook, they seem fragile. They rest, circling the pages of her drafts. They revolve with a sense of omniscience. She isn't writing anything down. Feeling it out, I gather.

By god, she's doodling. She is re-tracing the title she wrote 20 minutes ago. I believe she's completely tuned out.

"You're full of shit," she's said to me.

"He's so smart," she's said to me.

"I know everything."

It's her pen, and when she says things like that, I fall in love with her. She notices I'm watching her. She jots down a quick sentence, tunnel vision, self-assured, and shuts her notebook like a trap door as class adjourns.

She walks crisply through the doorway, without hesitation. Dr. Ebbs calculates her gait, gathers his things. Important papers. Books he's written. He smiles at me, I smile back. We both know, and are completely comfortable in our ignorance.

.....
Emma Reagan

[I REMEMBER THE DANCING]

I remember the dancing most of
all and rhythms topographical
schisms in your body
heat like the sundried beat
like another masterpiece of the
puzzle
I don't remember your name or your
taste or your southern
grace but the way your body
shook this place!
falling falling London calling
and a little reminder of the
alcohol stalling your
hips lips as if the
bass just slipped into
your thighs

(lies lies, Shakira you shine)

Alyssa Wilsey

TOO SUNNY FOR AUTUMN

Hiding from the sun and heat
Beneath this gnarled tree
I watch the lives of others pass
but I still sit with only me

People come and people go
this bench only half full
of papers, pens, and poetry
and just one lonely girl.

Let the ink flow from the pen
and cover these pages well,
color in the parts of a missing heart
when, in love, it fell.

Erin Hall

MY MAMA KNOWS

Beth stared into the dark water, her own pensive reflection gazing back at her. Her head was cocked, her mirror image neither smiling nor frowning. Indifferent.

She put her hands flat on the rough-yet-smooth stone cobbles of the well, leaning over until her shoulders came into view. It was a long way down, she reckoned. A long way down. And dark. Beth wondered what it'd be like to fall in, all the way, all the way down. Her mama'd know.

Daddy wouldn't like that she was here. He wouldn't like it if he saw her.

Beth leaned back to stand straight up, still staring at the water, at the dark bangs on her forehead, at the short hair pulled into a small ponytail. At the teeth nervously nibbling her lower lip. She adjusted the straps of her overalls self-consciously. The water really was very dark. And probably deep.

A fresh breeze made the water ripple, her image disappearing, replaced by the glittering glare of the sun once more.

A step in the grass made her look up.

A boy, about her age, maybe younger, dressed in overalls and carrying a puppy in one hand walked toward the well. He had tear tracks down his dirty face and a black eye. He stopped completely when he saw her and sneered, wiping the back of his hand against a runny nose, trying to hide the fact that he'd been crying.

"Hello," Beth said.

He glared at her suspiciously from under sandy bangs, the sprinkling of freckles across his nose reminding her for some reason of the spots on a toad. 'What are little boys made of? Frogs and snails and puppy-dog's tails, that's what little boys are made of' came suddenly to her mind.

She tried again. "Hello." When he didn't move or speak at all, she said, "What're you doing?"

Abruptly, he seemed to remember whatever it was he'd come there to do and he looked down at the puppy. It was just a baby. Its eyes were shut tight and its ears looked soft. Immediately,

the boy looked accusingly back at her and stuck his chin out stubbornly. "What're you doing?" he snapped.

"Looking in the well."

The boy sneered again. "Yeah?"

"Yeah," Beth said. "It's deep. My mama knows."

At this the boy looked down at the puppy again. "Yeah?" he said, softly this time.

"What're you doing?" she asked again.

He turned his nose up at her. "My dad says I'm s'posed to drown this ... this rat." He held the puppy up in one hand. "He don't want a dog."

"What happened to your eye?" she asked.

Startled, he said, "I got in a fight." His chin jutted out again. "Yeah, an' I won." His eyes wandered to the well and he involuntarily took a step back from it, cradling the puppy in both hands. "Yeah, I ain't scared a nothin'."

"Me neither," Beth said.

The boy looked her over scornfully. "Ah, you're just a girl. My dad says all girls are soft. Girls have feelings," he said with disgust.

Beth was quiet, eyeing the golden bundle in his arms. "You don't have to drown that puppy."

Surprised by her again, he said, "Yes, I do. My dad'll kill me. He don't want a dog." He grimaced, walking as quickly as he could to the well's edge. With his eyes closed, tears starting to leak from under his lashes, he held the puppy over the well. "I got to do it."

"No, you don't, just give him to me," Beth said,. "Oor I'm going to stop you." The line of her mouth was set, determined. "My daddy won't mind. He'll be glad."

The boy blinked, drawing the puppy close to him again.

"Sure, he will," she said, encouraging him. "He'd let me have one." Carefully, she said, "I could keep him for you."

The boy looked down again. "Yeah? Well ... well, alright. But he's still mine," he said quickly.

"Sure," she said.

They were quiet again, standing next to each other, the wind

rustling through the grass and sweeping the water into little ripples as they watched. Beth could see her head and the boy's now, together.

Yeah," the boy said suddenly. "The well don't need no more drownings." He looked at her askance, from under his lashes. "Someone already died here once, you know?" he said in an eerie voice, trying to scare her.

The wind whipped the grass again.

Beth said, "Yeah. My daddy told me. My mama knows." She put her back to the well, leaning against it, and sat down.

"Hey, hey, don't ..." The boy squatted down next to her. "You crying? Whatsa matter? Ain't you got a mama?"

Beth shook her head. She didn't want to speak.

The boy huffed. "Ah ... hey, I ain't got a mama neither."

She looked him directly in the eyes. "Did your daddy give you your black eye?"

She'd startled him again, this time into the truth. "Yeah," he said, sitting down next to her, stretching his legs out. "He likes to drown his sorrows, he says. He's angry all the time." He shrugged at this everyday fact, settling the puppy on his lap. He wiped dirty hands down the front of his overalls.

"My mama drowned her sorrows," Beth said.

"Yeah? Your mama drinks too?"

She shook her head. "My daddy says she took her sorrows with her. She drowned her sorrows in the well." His eyes widened as she patted the well behind her. "My daddy says she took them with her, straight to the bottom. I don't think so, though. I think she left them with me."

They were silent for a time, just sitting while the bright sun dipped further down on the horizon. The boy petted the puppy.

Beth stood up. "Well," she said, "I got to go. My daddy'll be missing me now."

The boy stood up, the puppy still nestled in his arms. "Yeah." Slowly, gingerly, he handed it to her.

Beth stroked its golden fur. It was soft, just like she'd thought.

She looked at the dirty face of the boy. “Well, see you.”

“Yeah, see you,” he said. He stared into the well so he wouldn’t have to watch her leave, but just after she had turned away, the boy called back to her, “Hey! This water’s deep, you know?”

Beth turned around. “Yeah. My mama knows.” She walked away, the puppy in her arms.

Katie Jade McCoy

THE POET

1

I knew you
Didn't know you
knew me better
That night in the basement
Pictures cut from magazines
Half-naked girls
Small pink breasts glassy eyes
You looked at them looked at me
Eyes too deep to see more
than our reflection
looking back

2

Toes caress
like lips
Under covers
Breaking the rules of virile youth
Seeing
who can go longest
before

3

Self-worth does not drown
Still it is foolish
to step out onto this tightrope
over a churning sea
with our blindfolds
double-knotted
No way of knowing
if we'll meet in the middle
or tiptoe
until the line is cut

.....

4

I was only
slightly
disappointed that your hair
was too short for me
to grasp

5

I have always been a dog
chasing butterflies
Elated in the moment my jaws snap together
on the dusty fluttering things
Only to stare
mystified
at the splashes of color at my feet

6

Puzzle pieces
I protrude
You bend to meet me
Trying to see
the whole
though the intimacy is terrifying

7

So eager to break
the shell
Words pretend
to be stronger than silence
Everyone spills out
in viscous streams
once the first crack is made
Until we are all
tepid salty puddles
congealing on the pavement

8

Are you still
here

9

There was a silence
that did not frighten
It held us
there

And I didn't think
what you said before
about eyes and souls
was silly

10

I know you
Eyes toes lips hair words you
know I always want you
to come home with me

.....
Till Gwinn

AND IT FELT LIKE A KISS

night of morning: black above
a lack love makes me look into the
dream, dream on bicycle
at the wisp of cloud

slowly grabbing half-moon around the thigh.
too weak to pull her
down but cruelty doesn't know its own strength.

skeletal grasp drips into her
milk thigh, her craters deepen,
heavy with weight of love—
black of night defined by black of night.

ride on, leave them in their living room. a cloud's
grip falls off, passes into
exhausted vapor: sleepy from staying up all night
dragging thin fingers across an open, wet face,
kissing her light when she bends low enough and lets him.

.....
Hannah Schiff

COSMOS

When the guitar goes through the window,
when the house is cold for weeks,
when we sing until dawn
and howl at the chorus,
and huddle for warmth around the glowing ember of the last
cigarette.

When the clocks stop.

When we stop watching the clocks.

When we run out of beer—
and switch to the birthday whiskey.

When we're down to ashes,
when the ashes run out.

When they call and say he got a ticket
and we laugh because it's Halloween
and he was wearing half of a Calvin and Hobbes costume
and riding a bike.

When the floods roll in
and somewhere, the tides must be rolling out.

When the State Trooper stops us
and we laugh because it's Thanksgiving and he sends us on our
way.

When we aren't as fortunate,
when the birthday whiskey runs out.

When all I hear is your voice ringing in my ears,
colliding with the stars tacked to my ceiling.

