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The
Gallatin
Review



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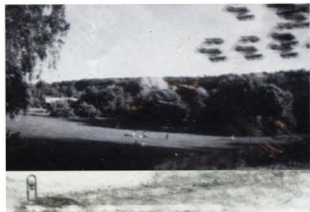
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Insubordination
Bob Delaney

A black-robed umpire glowered from above
His lisp lay suspended during my consignment of fate

A curved finger bent twice before it went straight
Vowels dripped and oozed from his decrepit face

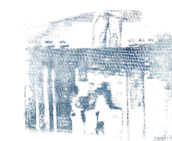
His teeth, the undated shards of a rotting Necropolis
Cottony foam pooled and cohered like spoiled paint

Mainlining ink harvested from newspaper hate
I pace and grit fostering a reprobate

I have grown tolerant of years
Yet impatient with minutes

Moldering calendar pages crowd my feet
I mourn and sift for reason

I am a mad weed
In an unnatural garden



**Metronomically
Thrashing**
Ariya Reddy

Smog-city.
Bohemia of mass perception.
Three months in,
and smoke already tendrils under my veins,
irreversible and under my skin.
Concrete oscillates:
metronome drum playing God,
playing tempo.

Watch the windows.
Subway-car thrumming.
Surface-tension rupturing.
Hear the ossified undo;
Sidewalk to stage, movement to dance.
Feel the collective love, collective rhythm.

Feel the flow of fear:
Bodies brutalized!
Students brutalized!
Beat lapping against your body.
Do you feel it?
Anonymous agape.
Ruptured and screaming.
There is a rhythm to it.
How can you not feel it?

Political murmurate.
Grind your teeth, and
lean on lovers,
syncopatic thrash,
ocean-tide thud.



Coney Island, 2023, Hunter Mathews

Eleanor Okitana

The fifth time Eleanor Okitana moved homes, she knew it was on purpose. Not that there hadn't been some sort of decision made the other times. But moving house five times in seven years is very different to moving four times in six. And she felt it. She felt it in the straight neat pleats in her silk curtains as they waved cheerfully at passersby and in the box that sorted her shoe polishes from stark black to midnight blue. She felt it in her collection of veneers and box of deodorants, with flavors such as chamomile and bungee jumping. In short, she felt it in everything that showed signs of having been rehearsed.

Eleanor Okitana was used to being in different places, and every time she moved, she had to become part of that place. So that no one was suspicious. In order to mask her footsteps, Eleanor would take things from people. Not anything they would ever know was gone—nothing even that ever really left—but still, she would take things. She would take, for example, brand names. If she happened to find herself alone in the changing rooms at the neighborhood swimming pool, and if the mold didn't clot her insides and the blood didn't leap out of her veins, then Eleanor might gently pull Mrs. Sullivan's blouse out of her bag and take a look at the tag. And she would write it down. And she would go to town the next day, walk into a clothing store, and ask if they sold that brand. And if they didn't, she went to another one.

Mrs. Sullivan, mind you, was a lovely

woman. She had gone to finishing school, carried two books around on her head until there was not so much as a dimple in her spine. And she had brought Eleanor to join her church choir, had taught her how to breathe with her diaphragm. This gave Eleanor a certain feeling of power, standing on stage with her belly sticking out. Mrs. Sullivan complimented her shirt the next week.

However, Eleanor's life didn't always work out so comfortably. She knew they were following her—there were signs—but she knew they hadn't caught up yet. Though they had come close. One time she had seen on TV—they were looking for a woman in Arizona, middle-aged, long, thin blonde hair, with a blaring traffic-cone orange turtleneck. She had moved. Another time, five police cars drove down her street at seemingly unrelated times over the course of one day. She moved that day, too.

But it was her calling cards that tipped her that one day in mid-July. She was tanning the crown of hairlessness on top of her head, right between where her hair went forwards and where it went backwards. It was just starting to get a rosy glow when she caught a glance of maroon in the corner of the room. Now a color might feel like an unpossessable thing, but for Eleanor Okitana, maroon red meant a calling card. It was just something she left in every place she lived in before she had to leave. It could be any object, but it had to be maroon. Once it had been a little plastic toy dinosaur, once a stained glass

window, and once even a box of floss (it was the nice kind.) It was comforting, knowing that a little piece of something knew her and remembered her and maybe even wondered where she was every so often. But now the maroon in the corner of the room poured down from the book shelf, profuse in its bleeding, dripping, trying to leak onto all the other books, every book a victim to the sacrifice.

It was in that moment she knew she had missed something. Maybe it had been placed there to scare her and maybe she had been here before and simply didn't remember. The carpet rose to greet Eleanor as she fell to the floor. But as this carpet tried its hardest to come towards her, she kept falling and kept falling and kept falling until she was falling long enough for a thought to crystallize in her head: I need to surrender.

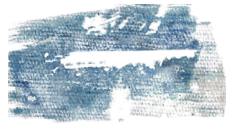
That is how Eleanor found herself driving home that night. She packed nothing but a spare pair of underwear and a bottle of iced tea, and she wore her best dress—the flowery one that her mother had repurposed a tablecloth for. Eleanor hadn't been home in seven years, but when she pulled into Cavendish Road it looked the same. The same lampposts and the same overgrown hedge, the same neighbor sunbathing in November then tucking his crumpled shirt into his trousers.

Eleanor Okitana went inside, poured a glass of iced tea, and waited to be caught. And she kept waiting.

**THE
MITOCHANDRIA
IS**
Piper

sirens beeping scissors peeling nakedness you beeping
hands pressure hands pulling hands beeping tearing
gloves hands you still chill air nothing absence pressure
binding turning drop spin still nothing chatter shiver
pressure still hand leg shoulder hands needles

[i want to talk about something; i am thinking about what
my body *is*; the first of my layers is the epidermis, my
skin, the dermis, my true skin, and the hypodermis that
holds it on; then fat, least favorite, subcutaneous and deep
adipose; fascia and connection; muscle; bone; deeper than
bone, the spongy part, the marrow; smaller, the cell; *the
mitochondria*, golgi, reticulum, ribosome, cytoplasm,
lysosome; the important one, the nucleus; then, just
mother, father]



***Convalescent Flâneur (3)*, Ava Filan**

The Monster

I came flying out of the precinct, followed closely by my little brother, Reg. Right behind him, literally on his heels, were some of my closest friends: Spud, Eyes, and Fat Boy's older brother Chip. If you had been standing outside of the precinct—watching, hoping, wishing, praying that we would make it out safely—you would have probably thought that some type of monster was chasing us because we were all running as if our lives depended on it. In fact, our lives did depend on it.

Perhaps I am getting ahead of myself; let me start from the beginning. My name is Rashawn, but all my close friends and family members call me Rash because I had this hideous pimple problem that screwed up my face when I was younger. It's not funny. I got into plenty of fights in the schoolyard on the side of my building because other kids would make fun of me. Fights that I won, but for some reason the nickname has remained.

Anyway, I grew up on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Below 110th Street, on 97th Street to be exact. As a child, my neighborhood was restricted to a specific area. It was always sandwiched between Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues. If you looked at it on a map, it resembled a long rectangular box that extended in both directions—exactly seven city blocks, starting from 97th Street where my building was located.

90th Street to 104th Street. Those were the imaginary walls in which my parents enclosed me and my younger brother Reggie,

who we all called Reg (like “regular”) when we were kids. Traveling past these invisible boundaries without permission was an occasion for me and my brother to have to run from The Belt. The Belt, a long, black, and relentless object, was not used to hold our pants up. It was used to enforce the rules. It was used on the rare occasions that me and my brother got caught bending the rules just a little bit, or when someone in the neighborhood would tell on us. It was used when my father was actually able to catch us, as we would run and hide in secret locations in our apartment. Sometimes, I really don't think that my father actually looked for us, because there were no secrets in our house, and there were definitely no secret places for us to hide.

Just like it wasn't a secret that I hated the precinct. Everybody hated the precinct. My mother hated the precinct. She told me once that it was a constant threat to her babies. My father never said, but I overheard him and my mother talking one day when he sadly informed her that the precinct had taken his very close friend Bishop (who we all called Uncle Bish) supposedly eating him alive and then spitting him back out whole to suffer for the rest of his life. When my brother and I would ask my father, “where's Uncle Bish?” my father would say, “Uncle Bish is sick, he's in a special hospital for when your mind starts to hurt.” I always took that to mean that the precinct had taken his mind. Made him crazy.

There were plenty of other stories that circulated throughout my neighborhood of how the precinct “ate” young brown and black kids, digesting them whole, like a monster, sometimes for years and years at a time. The precinct was located on 100th Street between Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues. It was directly in the middle of the block, on the “right” side, if you were entering from Columbus Avenue, but still we considered it to be located on the “wrong” side, or should I say, “the wrong block.”

Directly across the street from the precinct was St. Agnes' Public Library and Ryan's Health Care Center. The library was an extremely nice place. There were no stories of it eating children. It was quiet; with gigantic windows that looked out onto the entrance of the precinct across the street. I always avoided looking out of those particular windows when I visited the library to use the thousand-page encyclopedias to complete my schoolwork.

Ryan's Health Care Center was right next door to the Library. It was a low-income health care provider for members of my community. This building was much taller than the Library. It had smaller windows, and although I mostly didn't look out of them in the direction of the precinct, when I did, I really couldn't see the entrance all that well. It was the same health care center where my dad would take me and my brother to get tortured and poked with this giant needle that was supposed to stop us from

getting the chicken pox. Still, we all got the chicken pox.

Across the street, right next door to the precinct, was the fire station, Ladder #24. I loved the fire station. I loved fire trucks. In fact, Santa had brought me many, when I didn't have to run from The Belt and received good grades. I loved how the huge fire trucks would race down Amsterdam Avenue, honking the horn, and the Firemen would wave at the neighborhood kids as they whizzed by. I especially enjoyed how the long snake-like hoses whispered to the water, telling it where to go to put out the fire. The way the fire trucks, when turning, would almost split in half, without breaking. The way the long ladders would disappear into the clouds of billowing grey smoke. The way the millions of lights would sing and dance to the siren's alarming song that could be heard screaming throughout our entire neighborhood. I even wanted to be a fireman when I got older. Just not a fireman next to the precinct.

I really can't explain why I hated this particular block so much, but I do know that it had a lot to do with the 24th Precinct. Could have been that a mystical energy, sort of like a Fairy Godmother, or a Tooth Fairy, or my Grandmother secretly put this envisioned hate under the pillows of all the young boys in my neighborhood as a warning that the precinct devoured little boys like myself. Perhaps, it was just a feeling, something that naturally developed in us young Black and Hispanic boys, like playing basketball.

Rodney “Shai” Henderson

When I was about seven or eight years old, I can remember my best friend Bernard, who we all called Spud because he didn't grow that much, telling me that he saw his father go into the 24th Precinct and that he hasn't seen or heard from him since. Come to think of it, I have never, ever met Spud's father. He's always saying that my father is his stepdad, and I think my father might have even told him that. Although I never heard my dad say it, we all believed and acted as though it were true.

Like I said, I really don't know why I have always hated this block, but I do know that I wasn't the only one who felt this way. In front of the precinct there were these miniature street lights, a little taller than an adult, that were positioned on both sides of the entrance. During the day of course, they weren't on. However, when the sun gradually fell from the sky, the lights would magically turn on. Strangely enough, even as a kid, I noticed that the lights were not blinding white, or bright. They were green. A dark green. An illuminating green, like the traffic lights that told my dad when to drive after he had been told by the crimson red part of the same traffic light that he had to stop.

It wasn't that I hated my neighborhood, Only 100th Street and not all of 100th Street, just the area where the 24th Precinct was located. Everything else I still enjoy to this very day. Especially the school playground on 98th Street where my friends and I would always play. The pet store on 93rd

Street where we learned the difference between snakes, salamanders, tadpoles, frogs, and turtles. The bicycle shop on 102nd Street, which was exactly a block down from Tom's Pizzeria on 103rd Street, one of my favorite places to hang out and play video games.

I can remember an older guy in our neighborhood named Larry, who everybody called Leaning Larry because he was always leaning, half asleep, half awake in the crevice of the doorway of the building on 98th Street, a couple of doors down from the liquor store. Leaning Larry told me that he had been in the precinct a few times. He said that sometimes, when he was leaning and could barely walk straight, he would be taken to the precinct so he could learn how to walk straight. He told me that every time he came out, he would have these visions of scary movies. Very bad dreams, nightmares, that would cause him to tremble and lean even more. I believed him.

One day, when I was in the sixth grade, my art teacher Mrs. Owens excitedly announced to our class that we would be going on a field trip at the end of the week. We always went on these incredibly fun trips. Trips to the Museum of Natural History and the Planetarium. Trips to Central Park, Madison Square Garden, and Times Square. Mrs. Owens went around the class, passing out permission slips that we had to have our parents sign in order to be able to attend the trip on Friday. She then asked the

class, cryptically, cynically, with this sinister grimace attached to her face, "Hey kids, guess where we're going on Friday?"

Then she hauntingly revealed, "We are going to visit the 24th Precinct." I think all the boys in our class seemed to shrink a little in height, as we inwardly imagined that Friday could possibly be our last day on earth. I can remember thinking to myself, "I wonder if Mrs. Owens knows about the Monster inside the precinct?" Still, I was too afraid to tell her. When she made it around to me, I hesitantly took the permission slip, wanting so desperately to scream, "Mrs. Owens, we can't go to the precinct, it will eat all the boys!" But I kept my mouth shut.

After school was over, I waited for my friends Fat Boy and Spud in the park on 97th Street. As soon as they arrived, we went towards the back of the park, by the swings and the monkey bars, where we came up with a plan that would definitely be another occasion to meet The Belt if we were caught. But what else could we do? It was better than being swallowed by the Monster or Monsters inside the precinct. I would prefer The Belt over the precinct any day of the year.

We came up with a plan. We decided (or was it Fat Boy who decided? I can't remember) to take our permission slips to Fat Boy's older brother Wayne, who we called Chip because one of his front teeth was halfway broken. For the ransom price of a dollar each (or in my case, the four quarters that I jiggled out of my mother's coin jug without

her permission) Chip would sign everyone's permission slip, saying that we would not be attending the trip to the precinct. When I handed Chip my four quarters, I hugged him tightly, and thanked him for saving our lives.

About three years later, in my very first year at I.S. 44 on 78th Street (the big boy school), I was easily convinced to play hooky from school along with a bunch of boys and girls in my English class. We had come up with this fantastic idea to go to Central Park, to go to Row Boat Lake and borrow a boat (alright, sneak a boat that we were going to return), and go out on the lake. We had so much fun. Actually, I thought we would never get out of the water because although we paddled and paddled with as much strength as our little arms could muster, we could never quite get how to turn and navigate the boat right or left without a steering wheel. So, we kept going straight until we finally hit land. We left the boat, which we had been going to return, and headed out of the park.

As we neared the entrance on 79th Street and Central Park, there were two police cars awaiting our exit. Upon seeing the police cars, everybody began to run, scattering like roaches in different directions. I ran too, but wasn't fast enough because I was eventually caught, and put in the back of the police car. Then the officer that was driving informed me that I was being taken to the 24th Precinct, possibly to be eaten and never seen again. All because we had had this great idea

to cut school and go row-boating.

It was a very long ride. Perhaps the longest ride I have ever taken, except when we went on vacation to North Carolina during the summertime. While traveling the twenty or so blocks, I nervously alternated between looking out of the windows on either side of the back seat, possibly seeing for the very last time some of my favorite neighborhood places. The Catholic school on the corner of 79th and Amsterdam, where boys weren't allowed, and all the girls wore the same clothes (which made me think "why did the precinct only eat brown and black boys? did brown and black girls taste differently?"); the rusty red church on the corner of 86th Street where I attended afterschool. The pet store on 93rd Street where my little brother Reg got Chubs, our extra-large hamster, for his seventh birthday.

During the drive up Amsterdam Avenue from 78th to 100th, it seemed like all the other cars were standing still, and the police cruiser was the only vehicle allowed to move. Nervously, I glanced at the hanging traffic lights up ahead and was devastated when they all seemed to be the color green. An illuminating Green. A haunting Green, that seemed to say that the precinct was open today, and that the Monster or Monsters were hungry.

The closer we got to the precinct, the more I began to sweat. I began to have trouble breathing, and now understood why my friend Isade (who we all called Eyes, short

for Isaac) had to repeatedly squeeze air from this hand-held gadget into his mouth when he couldn't breathe. I wished I had one of those hand-held gadgets at that moment.

We arrived at the entrance of the precinct. The policemen parked the vehicle. The officer who was driving got out first. He approached the rear door and started to lift the outside door handle to open the door. That is when I took off. My shoes never touched the ground. My little arms flailed up and down as I ran. I continued to run. I ran like the runners in the Olympics when the gunshot echoes "pow." I ran like my life depended on it, and you couldn't convince me that it didn't.

I ran so fast, so hard. I don't remember stopping. Perhaps this is why I have been running ever since, avoiding the precinct, running as if my life depended on it. All I remember is Larry, yes, Leaning Larry from 98th Street, snatching me and pulling me into the entrance of the building that he was always leaning in front of. I can remember him saying, slurring, trembling: "It, it, it, it's okay." "Th-th-th-the, mmmmonster can't get you!"

The horrific fear that I had of the precinct constantly guided how me and the other boys in my neighborhood navigated life, and was by far more real than imagined. It was never really talked about among my friends, but we always talked about it in silence. We always felt the presence of despair when we would pass through 100th Street. In the way

we looked at each other, not speaking, but yelling without words, "Beware of the precinct. It's a monster who eats brown and black people." It seems as though, thinking, dreaming, and essentially growing up with the many fears about the precinct one day abducting me and my friends has been permanently tattooed on my brain, possibly for life.

One day, Reg, Spud, Fat Boy, Eyes, and I were playing basketball in the park. We had only been playing for a short while before Eyes, my friend with the asthma, had some type of attack. He was nervously grabbing at his chest and trying to say something, but it came out jumbled, and all I could decipher was the "I Can't Breathe" part before he passed out. We all ran towards him. Frantically, I began searching his pants pockets for the hand-held gadget that he was supposed to carry with him everywhere.

The plastic breathing machine was nowhere to be found. My friend Eyes was laying on the pavement with his eyes closed, still not breathing. He seemed to be turning blue, even though he was brown, but we referred to ourselves as being black. When I summoned up enough courage to check his heart, there was nothing. No beat. No nothing. I panicked. My friends panicked.

Before I knew it, I just reacted without really thinking. I ran out the entrance of the park, made a right on Amsterdam, and ran to 100th Street. I made another right on Amsterdam and ran straight into the pre-

inct, followed closely by Reg, Spud, Fat Boy, and Chip.

Once inside, I approached the long desk where a bunch of police officers were standing around talking, I yelled to them, exclaiming, "We need help, my friend Eyes needs help, he's dying." One of the officers replied, "Can you take us to him?" But I had already taken off, running back into the direction of the park with a sea of blue monsters in our wake.

I came flying out of the precinct, followed closely by Reg. Right behind him, literally on his heels, were our friends. If you had been standing outside of the precinct—watching, hoping, wishing, praying that we would make it out safely—you would have thought that some type of monster had been chasing us because we were all running as if our lives depended on it. In fact, our lives did depend on it.

When we reached the park, the many police officers who had not chased, but quickly followed us, concerned for Eyes' safety, reacted quickly. They savagely ripped open Eyes' Pac Man tee-shirt, and immediately began to pound on his unmoving chest. When one officer started to tire from the frenetic pushing up and down on Eyes' chest, another one instinctively traded places with him. The replacement officer started to open his mouth very wide, bending over my friend's face as though he was getting ready to "eat" him.

I could no longer look, afraid that my childhood fears were being confirmed. I was

stuck, frozen in my thoughts, my reality. I closed my eyes, and when I reopened them, I was met with this wonderful vision of Eyes' chest moving slowly up and down. The officer continued to blow gusts of wind into his lungs, pausing only to check that he was continuing to breathe on his own.

In all the chaos, the schoolyard had begun to fill with concerned members of my neighborhood. Men, women, children, even Leaning Larry (who wasn't leaning), were there. When I looked toward Eyes, his eyes were smiling, he was breathing much better and starting to stand. He gave me a thumbs-up. The signal that he was alive. The unvoiced message that everyone in my neighborhood somehow understood. I then sought out all my friends, and in the mirrors of their eyes, I saw the tremendous weight of misunderstanding and mistrust as it began to depart from their faces. I saw with my own eyes that the precinct was not "eating brown and black children" on that day.

a mother's letter
Tess McLafferty

you tell me i have a 'cancer sun'
it makes so much sense, you see

my eyes must be sensitive since they wash
your spine, the one cradled in my handspun sweater

you are trying to climb back into my womb
where it was warmer, the gentle kind

where my intuitive feelings would not lead us
to doctor's offices and abrupt unpeelings of soul

where pitter patters would not glaze linoleum floors
the water signaling me like your cards predicted

where you would not shriek silently with your eyes
poking my chest, searching for the unraveler

i follow your fierce lead, trying to fold back into
the warmth of pink ignorance

where my protective nature could nudge you
into the cradle of the earth's palm we call a yard

where you never knew mirrors as checking places
or hair as anything but a growing place

where my cancer, son
was not the shadow folding our fields into linoleum.



Untitled
Ling "Cecilia" Hua

1.
Mother

In the mornings with no need to rush,
we don't speak of love.
Rather take a walk
together in Shayuan.
Uphill, downhill, and then uphill
falling, raining,
breathing.

We can quaff—
the tea on table,
we can also take sips, a sip follows another, and then another.
In the cup: a little goldfish,
leaping out of the piping hot surface,
I hold onto the cup, hold onto her.

Across the other shore of the table,
mom sits,
looking at me, quietly.
She always forgets
to fill my empty cup.

She is a newborn.

8/28/2024

母亲

无需早起的上午
对于我爱你，我们从不提及
散步在沙园
上坡下坡，上坡下坡
落雨，安静
呼吸。

桌上的茶
我们可以一饮而尽
也可以，慢慢慢慢喝
小红鱼儿，在杯盏里，它就要挣脱滚烫水面
我握住杯子，握住它

桌子对岸的母亲望着我，呆呆的
她总忘记添茶，
她是一个婴儿。

8/28/2024

4.

Jade

When I was eleven, her lover gave me a jade.
A classic one, in the shape of a dewdrop.
Green, and so green that the greenness is dripping
no impurities.

He is married,
was in Burma, a business trip.
He said she deserves the best things in the world.
She loved to hear.

Can what has been written be all erased?
Like the bridge drenched by mist, footsteps, white cake, tides
or the frigidity beneath the Putuo Mountain, and secrets.

I pulled it out from my chest.

Green, and so green that the greenness is dripping
no impurities. A classic one.
Warm.

I want to give it a name.

9/2/2024

翡翠

十一岁时，她的恋人送我一盏翡翠
一粒经典的小水滴
绿绿的，绿得要一并滴出来
一点杂质也没有

他结婚了，
他在缅甸出差，
他说她值得世界上一切最好的东西。
她爱听

笔下的什么都可以擦掉吧？
被雾打湿的桥，脚印，云片糕，潮
又比如普陀的寒气，和秘密。

我从胸口掏出它，
绿绿的，绿得要一并滴出来
一点杂质也没有
温暖的。

我给它起个名字

9/2/2024





Grandma Nancy, 90, Chelsea Thorpe

Double Groove
Abe Kaye

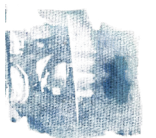
Sitting in a valley
purple light in the canyon
watching it go down
moon go up, let it
disappear again, something
howls, don't care really
won't go looking won't
be scared, good to spend a
week without saying a word
rest my voice in case I need
to use it one day, saving myself
for a high note, waiting for
a miracle, already came and
I quite liked it, I quite like
miracles. The moon goes up
and then goes down again. Goes
behind a building. Another full
moon. I'd rather not know. Keep my
head down and still see it reflected
in the water of a little fountain.
Reminders everywhere. New moon
devoured itself. Left itself hungry.
Cool wind in the valley. Let
myself sleep out in the open, cold.



Ol' Glory N²

Success or failure? We all have choices
 Loudness or silence, yeah, we all have voices
 So, when exactly does Black Lives Matter?
 After a White officer makes a Black life shatter?
 How 'bout putting a Colored man in a choke hold?
 Kneeling on one's neck for over 9 minutes is definitely a no-no
 A gang of Black officers beating one to death who looks like them?
 Eh, so-so
 Black and Brown bodies have been broken for centuries, you feeling me?
 But ironically, I'm supposed to sit here and learn about another's fragility
 Land of the Free where a Destiny takes a bit longer to Manifest
 Where learning is shunned and status attached to an arrest
 Home of the Brave, a place that sought to outlaw Black Prosperity
 U must listen to what's not being said if you're hearing me
 With restrictions in place due to my skin's hue
 I often ask Self, "will you resort to hustling?"
 But these present circumstances will soon be in the rearview
 And I'll be damned if I'll be that person going back and forth struggling
 I should've been out the game with all these strikes on me
 I'll probably never be accepted by the mainstream
 Which'll cause me to react roach-like when the spotlight's on me
 Ol' Glory looms large in my conscience
 But most times I don't feel as if I belong, if you want me to be honest
 Red, the color of the soil on which some of my foreparents toiled
 White, I mean if it ain't right, right?
 Blue, how I feel at times when not in the right state of Mind
 As far as the Yellow uh, never mind that

To my youth, damn I wish I can rewind back
 All I had to do was listen to my parents
 Be an astronaut, architect, lawyer, or something clinical
 What'd I do? Well that's pretty apparent
 Got myself kicked out of college, the military, and committed acts that
 were criminal
 With this time on my hands I've realized that I can't blame others
 I gotta accept responsibility
 No more bringing strife to another's son, daughter, pops or mother
 And work on Self to become my best version realistically
 When do we stop using slavery and prejudice for a scapegoat?
 Instead of following the blueprint, put petty differences aside and learn
 to take notes
 I mean look around, we're the biggest consumers
 What do we really get out of rocking Prada, Tom Ford, Nike, or Pumas?
 A few nods of encouragement, we're more like mobile billboards
 We've made them multi-billionaires, and us, we're still poor
 Is it asking too much to pick up a book and pay attention to stay Woke?
 It costs way too much to spend our dollars outside our communities to
 stay broke
 I'm more than guilty so I'm speaking first and foremost to him in the
 mirror
 But the fog is beginning to lift and my Vision's getting clearer
 To answer my question earlier, it's success that I'm choosing
 To paraphrase Professor Terrence Coffie, I went from being the problem
 to now becoming part of the solution.
 What are you choosing?



**How does one
atone for falling
in love with an
American Boy?
Katie Liao**

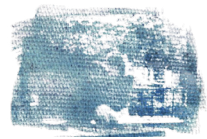
Dear Mother,

He said he'd start wars for me.

*holds me under no eye
fucks me under no light
and if i ever bleed
through his starry cotton sheets
he'll hang it next to our people's bodies.*

But Mother—
He is all I have.
Let him be my last bet,
and so what if he becomes my last breath.

Yours truly,
Your Formosan¹ daughter



¹Formosa (adj. "Formosan"): Portuguese for "beautiful"; old name of Taiwan, given by the colonizer, to my motherland.



Second Nature

It's a peculiar genre of dissonance, being the healthiest you've ever been and knowing your race will fall out of existence within the year. I write from within my forty-year-old shell, my longest and truest friend. For this will and testament to make sense, you'll first need to know two significant components. The extreme circumstances, partially of my doing, which have led to the aforementioned future; and the past. It's funny: now that I'm writing this, I realize its unusualness. Writing a will no one can read, an unreadable elegy as it were, the sound of a generational tree toppling, with no one to listen. I sometimes wish I had possessed the language of destroyers; perhaps then this fate could have been avoided. Let us begin.

The past.

In the mildly humid Maryland summer some centuries ago, as the marigolds danced, three juvenile snapping turtles, each already having found their respective mate, emerged from the Great Bog and journeyed to Pmac, the place of my birth. The abundance Pmac offered made it the perfect home to raise their young, and one hundred years after their arrival, I was born unusually small. Except for one protruding leg, which made the rest of me look all the smaller. My father, always the comforting presence, told me, "You know your old dad had a short tail, and mom looked past it." As if the two shortcomings were comparable in any way.

On my 30th birthday, my father, at the age of 42, went to the far side of our lake to har-

vest fish for the week, and that was the last time I saw him. The great destruction had rapidly begun, and he was the first casualty. In my dreams, he dies fighting. As hands and feet are vaulted towards him, he snaps and scratches, and the image of my sister and me flashes through his mind before permanent darkness. Days later, two of the neighboring families go to investigate and return with his tattered remains. Torn apart. Evidence of a foreign invader slowly draining the farthest section of Pmac is presented to the Elders. Ten elders vote, one for each family that lived in Pmac. Well, technically nine, as my father's vote was no longer. On the tepid faces of the council, I could read their choice. I knew they had chosen to stay before their greying beaks could separate. To leave would mean abandoning the provenance of the three, the three who chose this place, who chose Pmac, for a reason. A reason that at the time was known by few and now by none. "The lake's changing shape will not be the reason decades of turtle tradition yield." I still remember the current's distinct push that day, the way doom and grief coalesced in a spectacular whirlpool. We should have left that morning.

A day later my sister and I, now orphaned, vowed to never leave each other's side. She hardly ate in the following months, a period during which I woke up often in the night, rushing to find her. Each time I hoped that her gorgeously symmetrical shell would not be floating lifeless at the water's surface, a

dark second moon. She was five years old when my mother died slowly of sickness after my birth. She never blamed me, only loved me in the way a sister can—but once our father was killed, her kind, loving eyes grew darker. She'd always remain sunbathing after the rest of us had rolled off the log. There were days she'd return burnt, dried out, weak.

As the Spring drew near, the lake drew nearer. Every morning, our home shrank until April, when the first family left. No words were spoken, no fight put up, they simply were gone when the sun rose. Though no answers were ever found and every question was asked, each of us, from elder to child, knew the reason.

Soon, we would be forced to watch as our draining home was built from every direction. The grassy raised inlet where I learned to find spiders was covered by a wooden platform seemingly of no purpose. At the bank where Father would tell us stories, an elaborate snake-like tube was installed. Each installed piece shook Pmac, which, by the time construction halted, resembled more of a pond. On the last day of Spring, I watched the heron take flight; she made two elegant unflapping circles around our home before going east, never once looking back. Food had become scarcer, and after one mother's entire clutch of eggs was lost when a corrugated metal sheet fell violently into the water, many took that as a sign to go, an omen. I would wake up each gorgeous green morn-

ing to the news of another turtle gone. The elder who taught me history as a youngling, the friend's mother who brought us water lilies after the death of our father. It had been four years and only two turtle families remained from the original dole: my sister and me, and the chief's family. I always assumed that he stayed out of commitment to the decision he made all those years ago.

My sister and I stayed because we simply had no desire to go. I'd asked her on multiple occasions, or rather told her, "To leave would be the smartest option." She would say without needing to utter words that she was born in Pmac and planned on dying in Pmac, the home of her father, the home of her mother, and the place where she watched her brother enter the world. I could see the fear she hid so cleverly in her shell, the questions that rotted within her like a plague. Without the familiar logs and fish and consistent flutters of the cattails, what if she began to forget things. The way my long arm struggled to balance on the winter ice when I was younger, the cadence of our mother's goodbye.

In July, the little ones came. Like the destroyers but smaller, louder versions. The seven of us that remained assumed they were just created smaller. My sister put forth the idea that they were the destroyer's offspring; she liked that thought. They jumped in the now pool-sized Pmac, splashing around and showing their teeth. They leaped from the wooden platform and swung from the trees sheltering our home. For nearly two weeks

we hid deep in the water, fearing the instrument of our descent.

Around August's onset, my sister's longing for the sun grew, and she ascended, hoping the offspring would be kinder than their forebears. Because our pact commands it, I followed behind. I grew nervous as she breached the green water's surface and I followed her onto the sandy shore. There were two longhaired destroyer offspring standing on the sand. Less than two feet in front of me, she stopped, closing her eyes, feeling the sun's heat against her wet shell. I watched the kids begin to open their mouths and then scream in unison as if they'd seen a predator. Frantic and terrified, I turned around, squirming toward the familiar embrace of Pmac's waters. As I slid down the shore, I looked back to see that my sister was unmoving, still, eyes closed. I turned around quickly, but not even my deformed arm was long enough to grab her and pull her to safety. The taller destroyer had been nearby, and with the stroke of a metal stick, net bound to its hilt, she was scooped up. The chief and his entire family fled Pmac that night.

It wasn't until the next morning, floating in the still water under the same sun as the morning before, that I realized her absence.

In the years that followed, the last glimpse of her remained like a weed, its roots crawling through me, deeper each hour. Her eyes closed, unmoving, taken so swiftly. "Why did the destroyers look so afraid?" I've asked myself many times that day and since. I still

do not know. I have often wondered if they were aware of the consequences of their intrusion, the loss of life, the desolation their actions beget. Which brings me to the aforementioned extreme circumstances of

My Doing

The years after the loss of my sister and the chief's departure mainly were quiet and, in that, sad. Before he left, the already old and weary turtle imparted to me some final words of advice: "Try not to dwell on your sister's loss but rather bask in the light of her memory." I understood the sentiment but resented the pompousness with which he said it. He dared lecture me while his family remained whole, and his commitment to his home was swept away in the morning ripples. As he crawled out of Pmac, I felt no longing for him or his children to stay; only grief occupied my shell that night.

A year or two later, I began to feel lonely when the small destroyers continued to frolic in the water, their laughter and howls a sick and calculated mockery. They eventually brought long, shiny devices they used to navigate the river. Only ever going in circles, the destroyers used modified sticks to steer the odd flotation devices. I admit I enjoyed watching them occasionally flip over, their pale bodies flailing. After four years, I began to wonder if the waters of Pmac were, in fact not divine but, perhaps, cursed. I spent many nights thinking about how the ideas of promised and doomed are as intertwined as lily pad stems.

By 38, I was in a place past loneliness wherein the thought of eating, swimming, and breathing felt pointless. Looking up, the sunlight completely vanished, and the only visible objects were small white and pink globs that seemed to descend from above. It took me, well, let's see, it took me almost an entire year's time to recognize those ugly globs as, in fact, toes; attached to the destroyer's lower limbs, they wiggle for an unknown purpose in the depths of the lake. I'd spent at least three months biting at them when they appeared, thinking they were worms, with lousy luck. I neither hated nor feared the destroyers; those emotions were beyond the scope of my feelings, my heart. I only knew one thing. If my death could bring back my sister, I would certainly do it with haste. Even if she was allowed just two more minutes on a sun-enveloped log, floating in the summer waters Pmac once knew, I would settle for just that; I wouldn't even need to be there to see it.

In the hope of conjuring one of these divine occurrences, I began trying to bite the pink globs as much as possible. I felt remorse for the suffering I inflicted. I knew violence would not bring her back. But I felt a sick pleasure knowing how they'd conspire on the surface, the way they would plot about the "snapping turtle lying deep in our lake." Or maybe after so many years, my kind has become a legend: "Rumor has it a snapping turtle once lived here." I can recall in the days before my dad's final trip, there were

similar tales of giant pale things moving in the trees. Then, all at once, they were not legend but reality.

The biting I did had no noticeable impact for some time. The thought of their toes lacking sensation crossed my mind. Maybe the destroyers' mushy globs are like my shell—I cannot feel it, but it is connected nonetheless. Eventually, this was proven untrue when I bit one and tasted blood, unmistakable. I anticipated it would taste saltier, more bitter than the blood of a bird or bug. Somehow, the destructiveness seeped in, but it was not quite pleasant, really. That was the day the globs were gone and ceased to return, and I could not say why I missed them, but I did.

Three days later, they started draining Pmac completely. That was a week ago, and as I complete this will, I float in no more than a shallow puddle. "Within the year" may have been a generous guess.

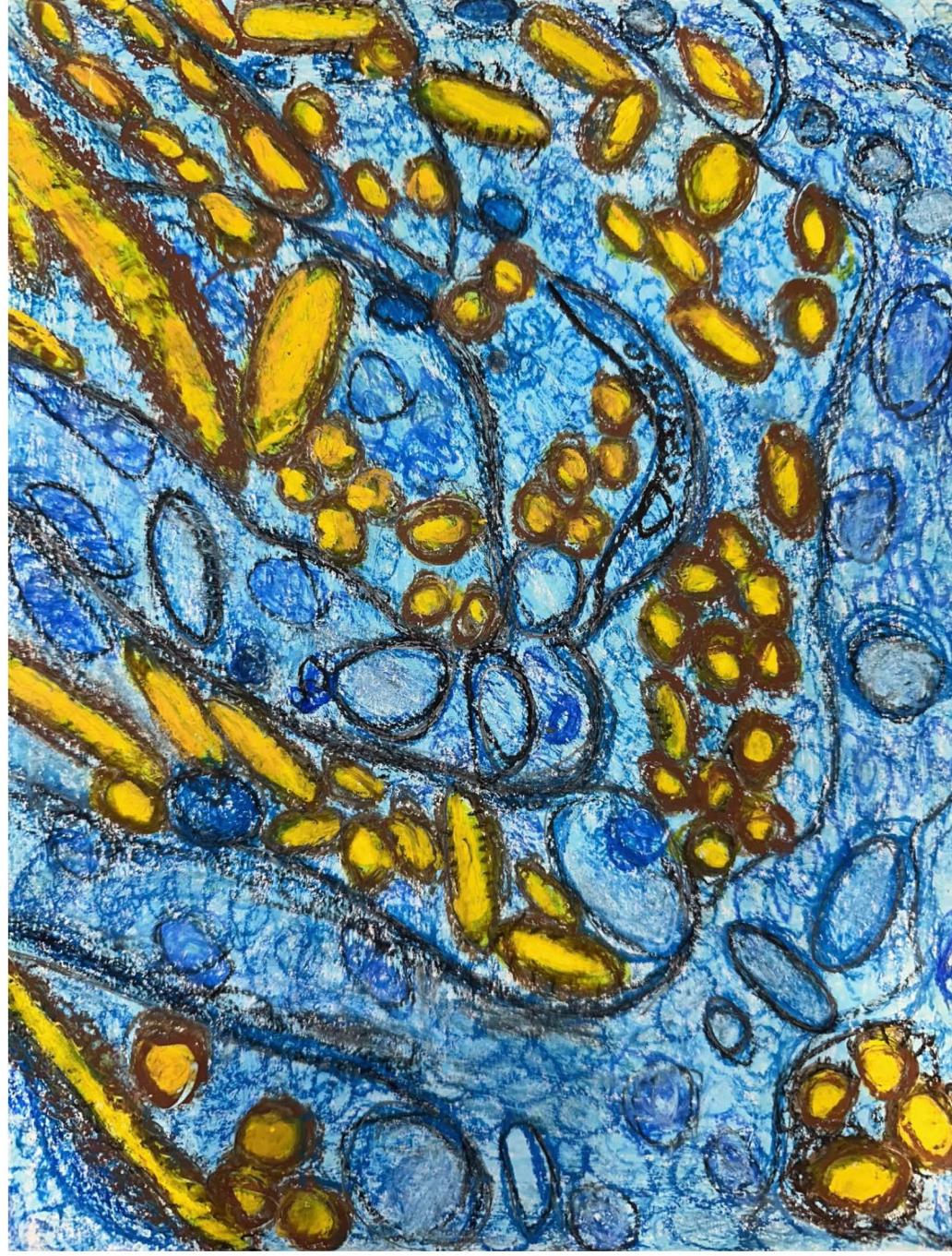
I suppose the last bit of this should consider memory and, more importantly, what to know should this be recovered and somehow translated. Firstly, I am sorry. Not for the harm I caused or for refusing to leave the place of my birth and the home of my father, but to Pmac, my violence having caused the final draining.

And more importantly, if somehow you still have the bones of my sister, bury them somewhere sunny.

Wig, Lilla Fleischmann



H1N2, Ralph Rodriguez

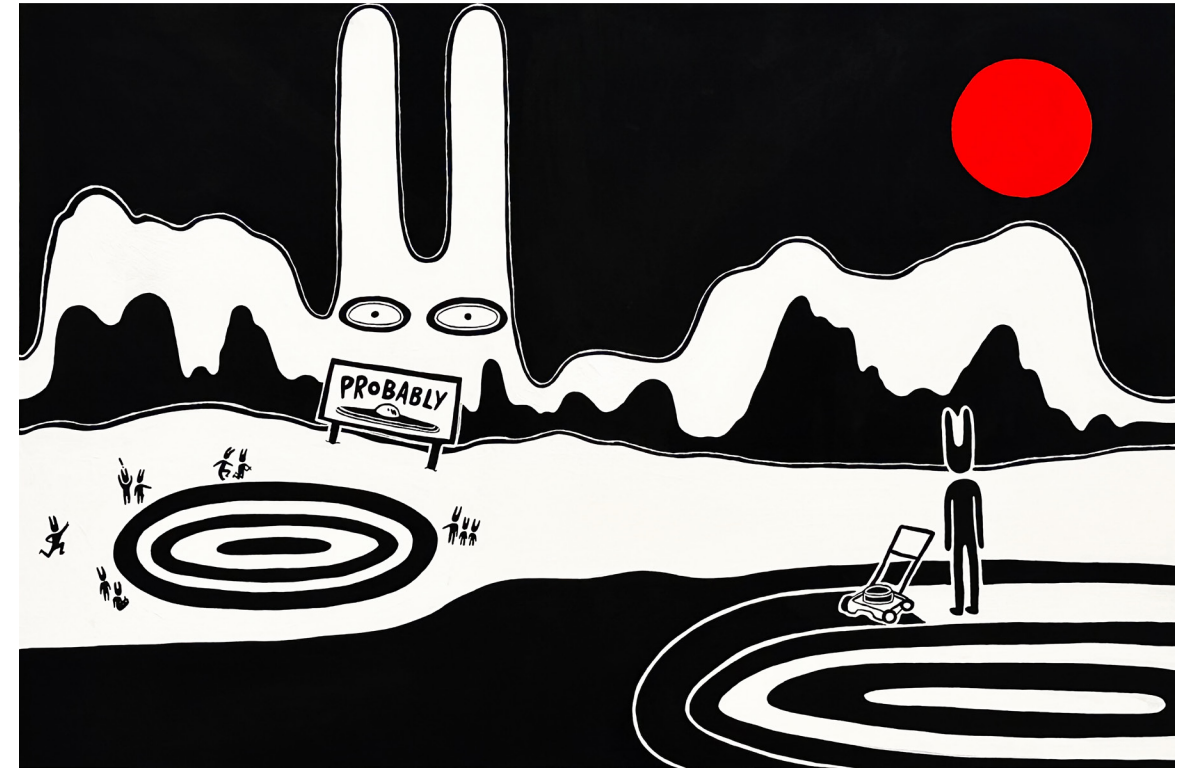
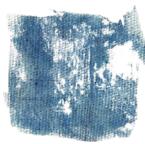


BLUE WOMEN
Sophie Tananbaum

They
 are still, at first,
 but like the tide
 they come too.
 One by one
 rising from the depths,
 whistling a frayed
 blue wail.

One day I will
 go out with the tide
 and let them tuck me into
 themselves
 (next to their stomachs
 behind their lungs
 under their breasts)
 and we will collapse into limbs
 sinking like pennies
 deep in the water
 down to the bottom
 where nothing lives
 but blue women
 and the cold—

and in that salty black night,
 we will hug ourselves right.



Mowers, Believers, Adison Gamratt



Smile More, Mandy Bell

**Unsure, unknowing;
mass, displaced.**
Ariya Reddy

Gravity shifts:
I am liquid-essence
condensed into your
pasted, patched-up
person with
hips and
lips,
watching your hands
dip in and dry out.

I pull towards,
thrummed up,
eyes tied,
lust lined,
hazel-honeysuckle and brunette brown buckled.
When you hold me,

my core coats you,
coaxes you.
Lover-current bound up
splashed against hands,
crumbled under nails.

Stuck in
sinew and
imagined,
invented.

Straw-suck.
Spit it out.



A Clean Slate

I remember when you left me clearer than a crystal vase. It must have been some time in the middle of the night. Was it while I was sleeping? Were you that eager to go that you couldn't have at least given me some kind of warning? It was all just so abrupt. From what I've seen, these things usually happen in stages. I've seen it happen to friends of mine before. The bonds that tied them together gradually loosened and slowly, over time, it became painful to watch them hang on. Inevitably, it is always the man who holds on longer than he should. But it is a touchy subject and any advice on the matter is probably best kept to oneself. Eventually he'll accept what's happening and will cut it loose. Most likely he will find he is actually happy to start with a new and shiny slate. But you—you didn't even give me the dignity of suffering. You just left. Weren't we good together? Remember when we were in high school and were still trying to figure each other out? Sure, we went through difficult phases, but who doesn't? You were always a wild one and seemed impervious to my feeble attempts at taming you. I remember getting so fed up with you, I tried to cut you out of my life on multiple occasions. You always came back though and I was always happy when you did. You grew on me, and I began to find a balance between your wildness and my shyness. When we went out, it was always you who got the compliments. I would just smile and blush, unsure of what to do. It is ironic because since you left, my skin pinks

even more than it did back in those days.

Now that you're gone, I can figuratively and physically feel the emptiness where you used to be. I've tried to replace you, but anything else feels unnatural. The morning after you left, I tried to carry on with my day as normal, but everyone could tell right away. "Oh my gosh! What happened?" they would remark in shock and concern upon seeing my appearance. So, I told them. I told them how you left me in the middle of the night, and how I didn't realize until I looked in the bathroom mirror that morning. I felt the space that you had left bare, and I couldn't understand how it had happened. When I stumbled back into the bedroom and saw the mess you had left for me to clean up, I knew it was over. You were lying there on the pillow. My pillow. Wild curls scattered across the fabric. You seemed to be mocking me as you neatly outlined the impression of where my head had been only minutes ago. I rubbed both hands over my head in exasperation and reminisced on all the good times and the bad: watching you dance wildly in the wind as I snuck glances at you in the rearview mirror of that old convertible I had in my twenties. The fights we used to have when I struggled to convince you to behave in a civilized manner at those boring meetings with corporate. The last memory I have of you is watching you disappear from my life forever as I whisked you away with a handheld vacuum cleaner. Sometimes, I still find traces of you in the house. A strand on

the shower wall, a curl on the comb I no longer use but keep in memory of you.

Eventually, I accepted your abrupt exit from my life. I got over you by staying busy and wearing a lot of different hats. At work, I volunteered to be Saint Nick at the annual Christmas party. I got to wear a Santa hat all night long. I've started jogging too, which is always a good time to slap on a baseball cap. I've been thinking about starting cycling to work in the mornings as well. I've already bought a helmet. I've even been spending a bit of time with a fedora. I know, can you believe it? Sure, I used to make fun of them, but that was a long time ago, and since you left, I've actually become quite sophisticated. Even with all these new exciting things I'm doing, there are still things about us that I miss. Like taking you to be pampered at the salon, the floral whiffs of scented shampoo you'd give off after a shower, even the look of disarray you had every morning. But those days are over now. Maybe at the end of the day, a clean slate is what every man needs.



The Gros Ventre Cecelia Dyson

I wasn't born yet
but you stand next to me

C'est une grande chose
and you can't cut me out
take my hair and smell it
like a newborn
A child

Le Gros Ventre
she still stands and you stand with her
that belly so concave she's lost all her weight

Je n'étais pas née
but you still walk her
your back full of sticks and hands full of film
Those stones so yellow and bright
they blind until your eyes turn white

Fais des mémoires avec moi
because after the sunsets I'll be gone
My shine wears off and the trees go down
the birds start their screams
and the valley sings
and 1927 begins

I stand by you
and hear
thunder
Your sediment
rolled onto me
Your dam broke
It can't hold
Dam failed
dam filled
Your dam
is damned
to damn me

It's a big thing

The Big Belly

I wasn't born

Make memories with me

Your damn water
 stands tall at six feet
 Your dam water
 took me
 in one sweep
 Clean, clean
 I was drowned
 and cleaned
 My lungs rinsed out
Mon corps, c'est propre
 I threw up
 my bile blue
 my mouth silent
Mon gros ventre
 stuck on
 my throat
 like glue
 That's where
 my sediment
 lies
 Gravel and dust
 300 feet up
 leapt out of
 the gaping hole in
 my side
 I'm missing a whole half of me
Mon gros ventre

My body, it's clean

My big belly

My big belly



Untitled, Chelsea Thorpe

**I Wouldn't
Expect You to
Understand, Part
One**
Curtis May

I wouldn't expect you to understand why I use slang when I speak, or mask my words with a dialect or lingo, or use different pronunciations in order for you to not understand what I am saying. I wouldn't expect you to understand why I think the way I do when you have never experienced life beyond the comfort zone of privilege; when you never had to fight for things that belonged to you, but others wanted. I wouldn't expect you to understand why I don't smile as much anymore, or how a smile is only a cover I have mastered to mask my anger and tears. I wouldn't expect you to understand why I write the way I do, or why I never made it past the ninth grade, or why academics became the least of my worries. I wouldn't expect you to understand how hard it is for a kid to concentrate when his stomach is empty, and all he can think about is where his next meal is coming from. I wouldn't expect you to understand how bonds are forged with others similarly situated, and a whole new culture and way of life is created.

Within this culture, a language of our own is fashioned, one that we all understand, love, and embrace. A language that connects us, yet differentiates us from the rest of the world that turned their backs and disowned us. James Baldwin writes: "A language comes into existence by means of brutal necessity, and the rules of the language are dictated by what the language must convey."

Neglected and cast away from mainstream society, within the depths of some of the darkest corners of the world, where life is undervalued and countless stories of heartache and pain go untold, a language is born. A language is born out of pure necessity—a necessity for survival—and is our way of exhibiting resistance to a world that would rather deny our existence, or only use it as a way to justify injustice.



Self-Portrait While Flying, Iris Erwin

Looking at a Glass
 after Wallace Stevens
Mia Sloan

I.

On a whirling bend of the world,
 on an inlet of the turning sea,
 in a house on the mercurial fault
 is the watchful glass upon a table.

II.

A glass is a vessel
 for all. The rim
 of water, the mouth
 of air. Raised to the mouth
 is the exchange of things:
 of water into water,
 of air into air.

III.

Refracted through the glass
 the light flared a lucid arc
 across the room,
 reproduced in the arch
 the wordless opus.

IV.

The glass is the form
 of the artist's breath,
 articulated
 by the artist's hands.
 I do not know which
 came first: the form,
 the breath,
 or the hands.

V.

At once ten million glasses lift
 to life, florid with wine.
 Raised to the clear moving stream,
 she mistook the curve of glass
 for a river-tossed stone.

VI.

The glass shattered
 against the wooden floor,
 resounding the impression
 of a soundless mood.

VII.

The conical dusk of eclipse
 sweeps across the hills.
 Above, the blazing rim of a glass
 encircles a disc of black time.

VIII.

I do know the roundness
 of a glass lip, the diadem
 of dilating circles of water,
 the rambling of the fluent seasons.

IX.

In the vacant quarry
 a rim of opaque glass
 leaned archly against the granite.
 The rain, when it rained
 drew the mud atop it.
 O the young of us
 have you not once forgone
 symbols and phrasings,
 known those real and dormant
 matters of impermanence?
 For five days, the rain did not cease
 and the glass was relentlessly buried.



A Political Parable

I never considered myself a particularly violent person until I found myself in a war. When my roommate and I first moved into our apartment—my first New York City apartment—it took us an entire weekend to clean the place of mold and dirt. Then came the flies.

Whether they came from the AC unit we accidentally unsealed while cleaning or the kitchen or bathroom drains we'll never know, but by the third week, we had dozens of other roommates. I wouldn't have cared so much if they'd contributed to rent.

In sixth grade, during science camp, I promised to never kill a bug. I figured this world belonged to them as much as it belonged to me. At first, the flies meant an occasional swat as I worked on my computer at the kitchen table. Then, I found my right hand jerking up from its resting position on my keyboard every few seconds. They had invaded my space. It seems that's how war often starts: mine, mine, mine, and broken promises.

I began by reading up on Reddit about military strategy. The perfect trap: water, vinegar, dish soap, and a little bit of apple juice for the lure. As I set the bait, I imagined the foolish flies inhaling the scent of the fruity concoction, testing fate by flying closer and closer to the barely-orange liquid in the glass. Until the desire for sugar becomes too strong. They touch down on the potion's surface, and the ground falls away underneath me. I take a breath in, and the sugar I want-

ed so badly floods my spiracles and infects my tracheae. That's the dish soap's job: to decrease the surface tension of the water so the flies drown more easily.

My first trap caught three or four flies, and when I stabbed holes into a plastic bag and rubber banded it to the top of the cup, I caught about 15 more. Still, the fattest one or two remained lounging around my apartment, and no matter how many times I bleached the trash can or poured boiling water down the drain, they buzzed in my ears as I tried to fall asleep. The image of the flies circling my sleeping body was all too close to the likeness of flies circling a corpse. I knew the flies couldn't actually kill, but their effect on my self-image was irreparable. My roommate and I both suffered midnight bites, which I thought would inspire a wartime effort in her as well, but it didn't. She couldn't hurt a fly, and I could hurt many. These are the lessons war teaches us.

As I lay in bed, my consciousness fading, I felt the skin on my arms and legs tingle as if little vermin were crawling all over my body, and I had to pretend I didn't because I worried the hallucinations meant I had more than a fly problem.

I tried to wash my sheets as often as possible to boil the imaginary bugs alive, but getting to my building's laundry room required walking past trash cans at the top of a metal staircase, and I didn't like disturbing the rats. Every time I kicked the building's door open, the black bags came alive with

small lumps that then scampered through holes in the bags and transformed into furry things. I always tried to suppress my screams as they scurried past my feet, but the horror of watching their little bodies launch away from me, clanging against each metal step as they part-ran part-fell down the stairs, was too much. Their escape required so much violence. Scared the rats had broken bones as a result of my laundry, I limited myself to once every two weeks. I entered a war with the flies, not the rats. Nobody told me how difficult it would be to contain cruelty.

My only attempt to resist the newfound violence of my imagination was that I tried to imagine what it would be like to be stabbed. But I couldn't.

When the midtown stabber's third victim died, I only learned her name and her age: Wilma Agustin, 36. I didn't want to know anything else about her because I was worried she would remind me of myself. I was worried that I couldn't imagine what being stabbed would feel like because soon I wouldn't have to. I was worried New York was dead and was going to take me with it.

From time to time, I felt the wave of my anxieties recede, and what remained on the sand that my feet sank into was the mindset I came to New York with. I walked past a man rifling through the trash, throwing colorful debris behind him, like the contents of a slow, dirty piñata. He launched an empty beer can behind him, and it barely missed my torso. I thought to myself, *Wow. I'm so*

lucky that can didn't hit me.

My first few months living in the city, I marveled at the patterns New Yorkers created as they marched through the streets. I enjoyed studying on the higher floors of my university's library near the big, north-facing windows because it was inspiring to watch swaths of people weave in and out of one another. In those days, New York aligned perfectly despite all likelihood. "New York" was synonymous with "belonging." In studying the park, I found I also timed my strides to interlace myself between groups of people walking in directions perpendicular to mine. Back then, the city's careful chaos called me to be part of the blood that coursed through its beating heart.

Historians find it easy to map out a descent into war. Living through the descent is less clear. We are not violent until we are emotional and blind, denying our emotion. Only looking back do you find that anxious is to content as war is to peace.

Last week, I went on a quick Trader Joe's run to pick up blueberries. Four drumstick clicks—"Weird Fishes/Arpeggi"—and I stepped outside. I joined a single-file line of maybe five elderly New Yorkers equally spaced, seemingly unassociated, carefully dragging grocery carts down the sidewalk.

In the deepest ocean / The bottom of the sea / Your eyes / They turn me.

I thought I was hallucinating. And as I took account of my surroundings, the hallucination swelled. There weren't just five

Alexandra Rozmarin

grocery carts. On my sidewalk, and the sidewalk across the street, there were maybe twenty elders all going different directions. I thought whatever deep end I'd been peering out at for three months had finally engulfed me.

Why should I stay here? / Why should I stay?

The only way to be sure of the physical reality of this scene would have been to reach out my hand and touch one of the grocery carts, but I decided harassing an elderly person was morally worse than hallucinating and so didn't. Instead, I decided to believe in the reality of the scene, taking my ability to breathe in and out as proof of life. At the very least, this was my reality, and in my reality, their synchronized footsteps were, at that moment, New York's beating heart. One step: diastole—the atria contracts. Two steps: systole—the ventricles contract. Between these footsteps, I felt my blood collect in the chambers of my own heart.

I'd be crazy not to follow / Follow where you lead / Your eyes / They turn me / Turn me on to phantoms (way out).

"Us" and "them" are words, not feelings.

I follow to the edge of the Earth (way out, way out) / And fall off.

I, marching along 11th Street on my way to buy blueberries, found myself the protagonist in a modern Zen kōan, the short anecdotes Chan Buddhist masters used to train their disciples. I am not religious, but you don't have to be Buddhist or Muslim or Christian or Jewish to believe in the power

of love.

Yeah, everybody leaves (way out) / If they get the chance (way out) / And this is my chance (way out).

Eric Adams is indicted. Everything costs an arm and a leg. The city is cold and unforgiving and full of rats and the subways are always delayed and why is the F leaving from the C platform that's only supposed to happen on Friday mornings. But we aren't dead yet.

Anger, anxiety, and frustration turn us into versions of ourselves we never meant to become—versions of ourselves we are allowed to abandon, maybe even kill.

I get eaten by the worms

And weird fishes

Picked over by the worms

And weird fishes

Weird fishes

Weird fishes

I'll hit the bottom

Hit the bottom and escape

Escape

I'll hit the bottom

Hit the bottom and escape

Escape.

Sprache Theo Bentley

Weft and weave,
reel let run,
something dead
is also undone.
Words warp,
split, and fray;
multitudes loosed
in visible array.
A knit wit
suffocates on string,
an umbilical chord
which forms a ring.

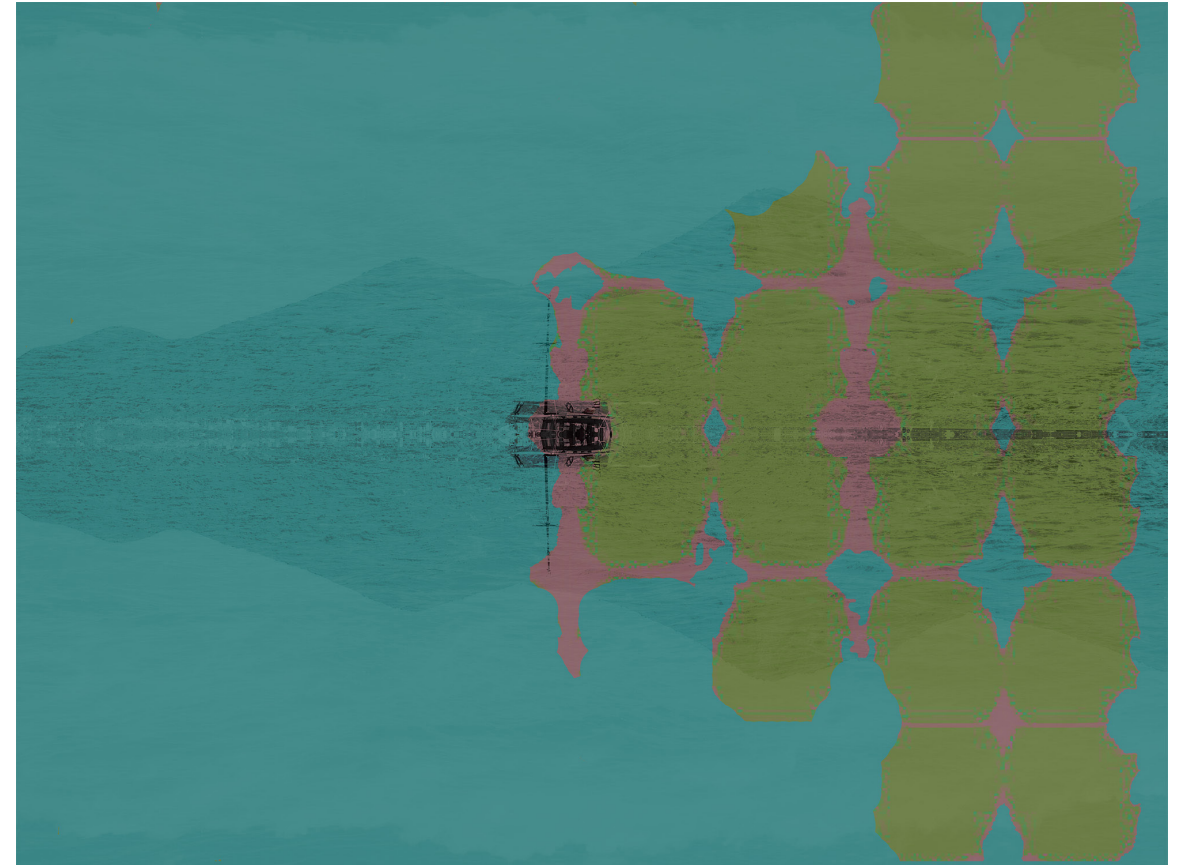
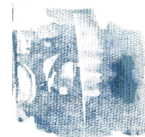


In the night a shadow
 a massive , silent hound ,
 no bark , no growl , just
 eyes , piercing , cold , profound.
 I once cherished dogs , but this
 one's inside me a void gaping
 wide darkness clawing , it's free
 the old mantras fail , no more
 solace they bear Jaded ,
 dog-tired , wishing to
 vanish into

air

But battles once
 fought can't be simply
 undone I need a break
 a room to breathe under
 the sun. Swallowed by water ,
 my lungs gasp and burn
 Drowning in depths
 where the shadow
 yearns Yet I
 rise , surface
 with a smile
 laughter's
 guise.
 I crave not
 survival ,
 but a life ,
 free , to
 rise.

The Black Dog
Anne Yasmine Larati



Sail Away, Zoe Avraamides



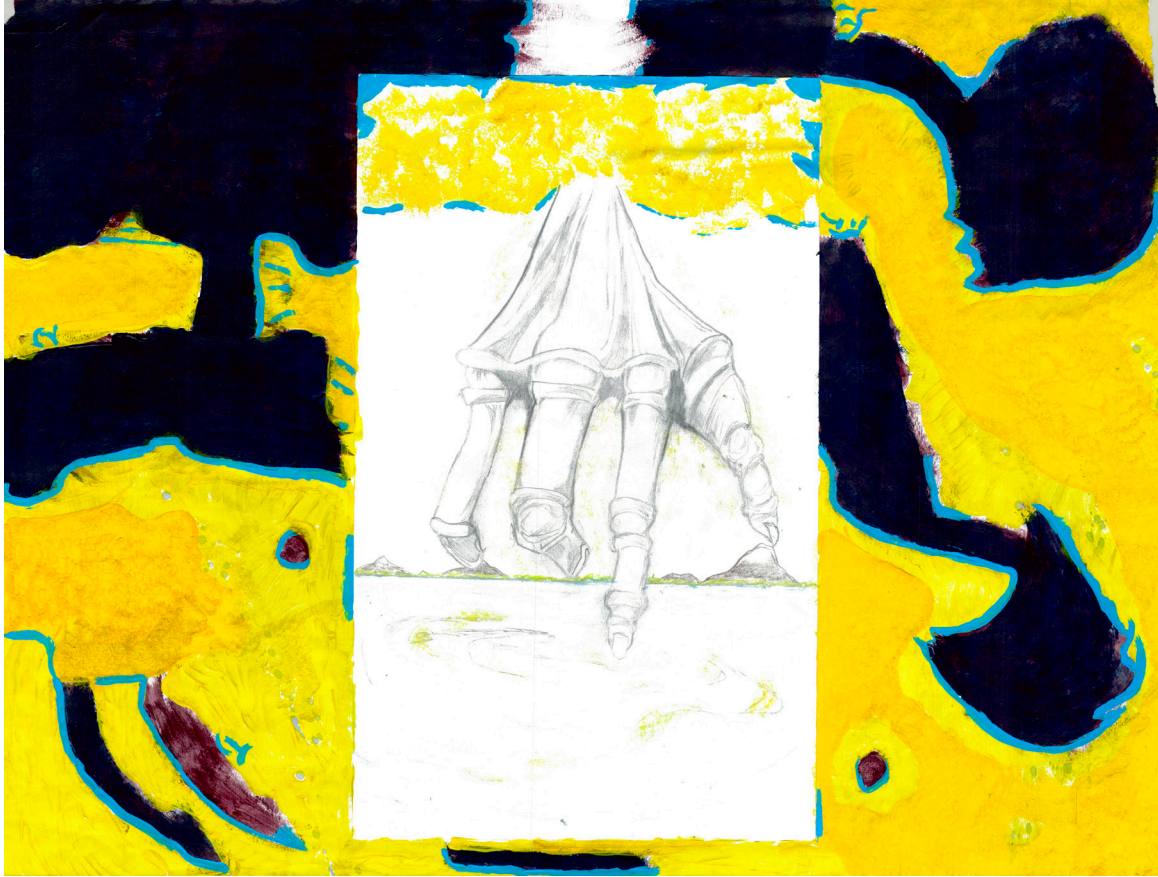
Winnie, Chelsea Thorpe

**1:45 P.M. [AN
ANGLO SAXON
VERSE]**
*Fall 2024 "Art and Craft
of Poetry Practicum"*

Abduct me up
to a world unseen,
my eyes. Silver
at mine, mind
probe me. Handle

a delicate beam
a world beyond
eyes looking back
you, don't mindlessly
me with patience and care.





Untitled, Brian Blackman



Portraits for a Film (2), Tessa Dillman



Mianshi Pu'jiang, Hongsheng Zhang

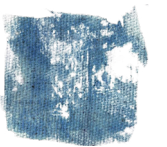
***Homophone of
Her Night Terrors
Katie Liao**

She sat opposite me,
3 generations apart,
chewing overcooked cabbage.
I was imagining life
opposite an empty chair.

She doesn't talk about 4,*
but she grabbed my arm after dinner.

I won't make it back to you.

Bury me next to my mother.



**The Makings of a
Happy Daughter**
Cecelia Dyson

i. some dirt
there's something wrong with me
i've lost all my color
turned dull
the sun no longer shines
over melanin that has been lost
in the worst way
if i have lost that who am i
what to do with a body so devoid

she still has her color
to be invalidated is the worst
blackness is black
that's black
is black
my blackness is black
but not black
i'm black
black enough
not enough black

when it turns winter i have nothing
it's my favorite season
to be cold is comfort
i am freezing in my skin
no more brown only ice
i am clear and slick
everything slides off
even her words thrown at me
sharp and thin
like spikes that drip off rooftops
i take them
and shove them down my throat
i fill myself up until i am bloated
full of water
my insides are hot
and i am void
no color

no cold
i spill all over her

ii. a hug
i thought i saw you on the subway
two days ago
you were there
tall
long legs
big belly
i knew it
i felt stupid

i cried on my walk home

every tall dark skin man looks like you
maybe that's true
maybe i'm racist
or maybe i miss you

i think every black man is my dad

the world took you away
because you loved too much
now they say
cardiomegaly

i say enlarged heart

my arm was chopped off
and no one noticed
so i bled out on the platform
you would've helped
and i would've told you
everything i want to
now

i missed my train while i laid there and let your arteries wrap around me



I am Not a Baker

When I turned five years old, my dad made me a strawberry shortcake. There's a picture of me somewhere lining the strawberries on top of the cake so that not an inch of white poked through the red. I liked that time. I liked that cake. It wasn't indulgent. I didn't need double chocolate covered in sprinkles and Oreos. I didn't need to lick the bowl and stir the ingredients all by myself and hear the cracking of the eggs as pieces inevitably fell into the mix. I was happy to have my father do all of that. For me to be the little girl stacking strawberries.

But somewhere along the way, cake got complicated. Maybe it was on my thirteenth birthday when my best friend refused to eat her slice.

"Thirteen is when things go wrong for girls," my mom once said as an anecdote within a longer story, as if it was a matter of fact and not a disturbing statement worth dwelling over.

I suppose she was right. Thirteen is, after all, when the friend stopped eating the cake. She claimed that she'd never liked vanilla, but that was BS. She had an eating disorder, and quite frankly, by that point all of us did or were at least on our way to one.

Mine was special in that it got bad fast. The summer following that June birthday, I went from a healthy, playful girl to a corpse-like figure within weeks, and all the while I thought I looked lovely.

As a result, I developed an obsession with baking. I can't recall most of what I made—

everything was a malnourished blur—but I've held on to an image of these apple tartlets I baked especially often. I'd estimate the ingredients in the dough, sometimes replacing milk with oil. Then I'd form the dough into balls and shove them against the buttered edges of cupcake tins. I'd add my mixture of unpeeled apples, chopped and covered in cinnamon sugar, to the dough cups, and I'd sell the tartlets to elderly neighbors, who thought I was talented and adorable and certainly not troubled.

My dad didn't want to believe that I had a problem either. Every morning, while I stressed to complete my various orders of baked goods, he'd beg me to drink a banana smoothie. I'd refuse.

"I'm just too busy," I'd say.

And he would agree: "You're just like me. You get so busy that you forget to eat."

As soon as I got better—and it wasn't soon, it took years—most events from that time grew humiliating and uncomfortable for me to relive. I didn't want to think about an apple tartlet ever again. In fact, I didn't want to bake at all. And yet there was always someone from my past to remind me.

"Oh, but you love to bake," my grandmother would repeat.

Or, "What happened to that business?" a neighbor would ask.

Any mention of this made me flush with embarrassment. I wasn't that person anymore. I chose to believe that maybe I wasn't that person in the past either. Maybe she

didn't exist. I wasn't a baker. I never had been. I just had the type of unconventional illness that presents itself in pies.

But baking, at times, is unavoidable.

During one of those boring and too-long college summer breaks, for example, I found myself having weekly sex with a boy I didn't care for at all. It was one of those things that maybe I shouldn't have done, given that the memory of how his brown eyes would widen before a kiss still makes me squirm. And yet there were fond moments. Like the naughty sensation of sneaking into a friend's empty room. Or how he'd lie over me and bite me on my shoulder. Or how I'd sit on his lap watching political debates and he'd slide his hands down my underwear.

One night, as soon as he came over, he told me that he was hungry.

"Why?" I rolled my eyes, and he provided a vague explanation about some new med he was on.

I brought him down to my sparse pantry and presented him with different quick fixes—strawberry Pop-Tarts, frozen hash browns, pieces of toast with this special grass-fed butter that comes in green wrapping. He refused all. He was a man, he explained, he needed protein—a meal. And so I pulled one of those single serve chicken pot pies out from deep in the freezer and nodded in his direction as if to say "okay, do your thing." But he didn't seem to want to do it himself. So, he sat on the stool, watching with his big brown eyes as I preheated the

oven and peeled the plastic lining off of the pie and poked holes in the cold dough with a fork. We watched TV together for the next forty-five minutes, and I would get up every now and then to open the oven and check on his meal. I hated baking already—but I especially hated baking for him.

When the pie was ready, we sat across from one another at my dining table. I sipped at a homemade martini—pickle juice and vodka in an IKEA glass with ice pebbles—while he dug in, shoving gooey chunks of chicken and peas into his already disgusting mouth. The closer he came to finishing the pie, the grosser it got, as the once brown and crisp top disappeared and the soft carrots mashed into the soupy bottom of the tinfoil. I continued to sip my drink and he poked fun at my concoction as we struggled to form conversation beyond what was right in front of us.

The last time he and I ever had sex was the worst. I fought to avoid tears until they did in fact appear, which I tried my best to hide from him. "What am I doing to my body?" I thought to myself. I must not care for it very much.

Following my college years, I started working as a nanny for a friend of a friend as a quick cash grab. I despised the job. And although everyone told me that I just wasn't used to working, I always sensed that there was something more to the equation than me being a spoiled girl. It felt as though something was wrong in the household itself—it was too sterile, too empty, too sim-

Margot Schiller

plistic. Both parents always seemed satisfied with the bland life they'd made for themselves and I never understood why.

The child suffered from this. While he did well in school and the parents were kind enough to let him watch TV and eat pizza and have the normal childhood that some neurotics these days would prohibit, they never pushed him to do anything more—to make new friends, to write stupid songs, to explore the outdoors. His world was small, and I suppose that's how it should be during childhood, but as I watched him grow up and move to new grades of school, his world didn't seem to grow much with him.

One night, when I arrived at their house around 6 p.m., his parents had laid out an array of ingredients on the kitchen counter: flour and eggs and measuring cups. The child was thrilled. He ran over in his dinosaur pajamas and explained that we'd be making a cake together. The mother winked at me. Together, of course, meant that I would be making a cake myself.

It wasn't even my relationship with baking that bothered me then. It was more my laziness when it came to the job. But I did as I was told, and when the cake was out and cooled, the child frosted it himself, adding to the top center a pool of strawberry jam. For a moment, he reminded me of myself.

We brought our two plates over to the couch and he turned on the TV. He devoured his first slice, covering his mouth and hands with the jam, and then cleaned every-

thing off—even the table—before walking over to the kitchen counter and taking another. I was unsure at what point I should stop him. The parents hadn't said anything about that, and yet I'd hate to see him sick; that couldn't be a good look for me as the nanny. When he got up a second time to take a third slice, I still didn't have it in me to say a word. Maybe, in this moment, a glimpse of my suppressed anorexic past came over me and I couldn't fathom the notion of telling someone so young not to eat.

At 9 p.m., when the kid fell asleep, I pulled open my book on the couch and the cat crawled onto my lap. I was the only person the cat seemed to like—even the parents had commented on it. While an optimist would take this to mean that they had a magic touch with animals, I, a pessimist, took this as further proof that there was something wrong with the family itself. That they couldn't get a cat they fed everyday and had rescued as a kitten to like them, while all it took me was a couple of hours with her. It must be that they're too strict, I figured. They pick her up as they please and don't let her drink from their water cups and scream when she scratches at the edge of the couch. "Cats are not like dogs," I'd fantasized about lecturing them. "They can't be controlled. Yes, you technically own them, and yes, they are small and cute, but it's best to submit to them, to let them do as they please, to only touch them when they want to be touched." Some might find this relationship strange,

unfair, impractical. But I find it hopeful. How beautiful it is to make the active choice to treat something so much smaller and less powerful with respect.

The father came home first that night—another strange attribute of the family: both the mother and father were always gone but never gone together.

"She really loves you the most," he greeted me and the cat, and I smiled. "Just luck."

He was a big man, both in length and width. I imagined that he wished to lose weight but never put in the effort. His chin wasn't as defined from his neck as I'm sure it once was, but the scruff of his beard made it palatable. I liked him, in all honesty. I didn't like his home or the family he'd created or his relationship with the cat, but something about a confident man who listens with intention when you speak is hard to hate.

"How did the cake go?" he asked me.

"Great. Really, really delicious," I replied, as if it had been a wonderful endeavor for me as well, not just the child.

A couple of the remaining half-eaten cake plates sat on the table in the living room in front of me. I had a sudden fear that I should have cleaned them up.

"Here," I said, standing up with the plates in hand, "have our leftovers."

"Oh awesome," he chuckled, "I'm starving."

And so the father sat down at the dining room table and I carried the plates over and set them in front of him. I collected my be-

longings one at a time, taking breaks to ask him about his night and describe to him vague aspects of my post-graduate life.

"Wow, this is amazing," he said, digging the side of his fork into the dense chocolate and licking the sticky strawberry off of his lips. "Do you bake often?"

"No." I replied.

"You never have?"

"Never."

"Well, you're good at it."

I hated myself for how much I loved to hear him say this. It was a compliment I'd never wanted and, yet, coming from him, it invigorated me. I wished to sit at the table across from him. To watch him finish the cake as elegantly as he had started it and then for me to carry the plate away like a good housewife would. Instead, I laced up my Doc Martens and wished him a good night. When he Venmo-ed my check the next day, the message underneath it jokingly read "cake." I thought back to my little business as a child, to the image my mother once took—my skin colorless, my bony fingers gripping a ziplock bag filled with cash from the miniature tartlets and various other baked goods. My business had brought me far more spending money than most kids my age, and I couldn't bring myself to care. Maybe that's what I really hated about baking: the fact that it always seems to be something you do when there's nothing else going on.

The longer I spent working for the kid,

the more dull my own life became. It wasn't a tragic thing, really. I still had fun on the weekends and maintained old college relationships that uplifted me. In the grand scheme of things, it was an unspectacular rut—nothing that could ruin a life. But as a result, I developed a new habit which involved smoking weed at a random time between 6 p.m. and midnight and baking myself something inedible. The recipes started out simple—sugar cookies without eggs, mug-cakes with too much flour, greek yogurt bagels. But then they began to involve frostings and lemon juices and chocolate melted over the stovetop. I tried to create cinnamon rolls without yeast and candies in ice cube trays. I always made a mess that took hours to clean up, and never consumed more than a few bites of my concoctions—they were all too disgusting. I was a good baker—yes—but I had no interest in using the correct ingredients in the right amounts. I only desired to create, to watch the chalky powdered sugar turn gooey with a spoonful of water, for the squishy doughs to be transformed hard by the oven. The process temporarily filled a shallow hole within me—it gave me something to do.

Getting out of the rut of course meant that the baking stopped, as did my time spent with the child. Instead, I found myself a job as a bartender at a recently renovated black-tie establishment. There, I made a name for myself. I bonded with the redhead who worked beside me, I came to know and

network with the older and well-connected customers, I used the black outfit dress code as an opportunity to showcase a different costume of sorts each night. I'd shove my breasts into tank tops with tight built-in bras. Or zip myself into short high heels that made my legs look thin. Or clip on a long necklace that always got caught in things. I enjoyed the discomfort of professionalism. It felt like I was in a place where things were happening, that I was a part of the commotion, that the world was growing with me. And, also, that I could create something without it being for nothing. There was power in the twenty-dollar price tag associated with every little drink I created, with the shaking of ice and the plink and plop of olives and orange slices.

One day, the father from that previous babysitting job stopped by the restaurant. I'd suggested it to both parents as an olive branch, being that I did quit in a hurry, and yet I'd expected it to never happen, or thought there would at least be some warning. He thumped in on an early Thursday night, greeted me like we were long-time best friends, and ordered an IPA. I carried it over to him, the froth on the top of the glass settling, and I placed the cup right in his hands. He seemed to have gained a bit more weight since our last goodbye, but he still looked fine. He asked me about my life, told me how much the child missed me, and I tried my best not to let him guilt me into coming back. I wondered if that's why he'd made an appearance.

“But you seem really happy here,” the father continued as he took nervous sips of the beer, “I didn't mean to intrude. I, just, was in the area and . . .”

“No, I'm glad to see you,” I interjected. “It's really slow here at this time of day.”

There was a moment of silence. He sipped a bunch more.

“You know,” he said finally, “I never forgot that cake you made. Maybe they should give you a promotion here, have you help out with the pastries in the back room.”

This suggestion felt offensive. Perhaps it was the words “promotion,” or “help out,” or the simple fact that he was attempting to give me life advice at all.

“I told you this before. I'm not a baker.”

He didn't respond. He just took more sips.

“I just like it here,” I continued.

“Well, then I'm happy for you.”

He left soon after that.

I reflected quite a bit, following his departure. It was, after all, a slow Thursday and his appearance had jarred me. I thought of that original night with the jammy cake. I wondered how the cat was doing without me. And then my mind drifted to the guy from college and then to the inedible pastries and then of course the anorexia and the tartlets which haunted me more than any of the rest, even all these years later. I could never have to bake again, I thought to myself, shoving potato chips from behind the counter into my mouth. This could be my new life: drinks and fascinating faces and

constant excitement. I would never again be in a position where I needed to cook for anyone else. *I am not a baker*, I repeated to myself, *I am not a baker, I am not a baker*. It was a simple moment of clarity. But of course, these moments don't last long.

It was 11 p.m. on that same Thursday night and I exited the restaurant into the darkness of the streets. My hoop earrings bounced against my AirPods as I walked. There was warmth in the air. I was happy. And then, all of a sudden, I was struck by an image I'd forgotten, throughout my evening of recollection: it was the image of myself as a child, stacking strawberries. I paused for a moment on the street and let myself mourn that moment in time. I mourned the sensation of being not a baker and also not not a baker. I mourned when my world was small.

The Window
Perfect Soto

As I lay upon this one-inch thick strip of teased cotton,
feeling the familiar and unforgiving coldness
of the metal horse beneath it
forcing its way through,
my eyes shift to the single space of salvation
to be found within this 6" by 9" cinder block cathedral
of loneliness, sorrow, and shame:
the Window.

The images that it displays for me each day
are so picturesque in the beautiful reflections of my life,
that it's as if the dark brooding clouds which seem to always be present
are the never-ending dialogues of my diurnal living.

They even speak to me of my very beginnings
as they swallow almost every lumen of Dawn's birthing light,
so as to keep my world in a state of darkness
even after the Sun has chased away the night.

I must admit to feeling betrayed
by both Dawn and Amaterasu.

For they simply refuse to allow me to see
the hopes buried within my heart
play out across even the summer sky's hues.

I pray and plead for them to allow me,
if only momentarily,
to live blissfully,
ignorantly,
in the illusions of fantasy,
and escape the ice-cold fires
that I'm forcefully espoused to
and exist in daily.

Instead,
in answer to my tears and grief
those clouds always begin to rage thunderously,
speaking to me about my most daunting realities.
For the first year I'd look up at that fluffy-stratus slate
and feel my soul fill with anger and hate.

Then as if mockingly, taunting me,
jagged bolts of lightning would shoot across the sky
almost flawlessly in time

with my racing pulse,
their shapes perfectly mirroring
the contours of my majestic sulk.
After a few years I found myself looking forward to
and even yearning for
the gloom painted across the surface of my Salvation
by those bountiful grey clouds,
as somewhere along the way
I'd finally accepted our kinship.

I'd even stay awake,
kissing the shades unchained by the witching hour,
just so I might greet those morose missives of my fate
with the faith
embraced for the return
of a long-lost love.

At the end of one such haunting,
inside the labyrinth tide of twilight,
I was seated at the edge of my bed

a small smile playing
at the corners of my mouth,
anticipating again witnessing
the depths of my soul
washing across the window,
when tragedy struck.

Birds began to chirp,
an alien tune to my ears.

Each note filled me with such anguish
that it seemed as if
all of the souls trapped within Tartarus
had simultaneously begun to lament.

Then as my spirit began its newest descent,

Dawn broke
and Amaterasu's rays
began their loving cascade
across a breath-taking celestial sea of blue.
And once again I found myself
cast amidst the Stars,
and being cradled by the Moon.





Mother's Wedding, 2024, Hunter Mathews

Gaga Dance Class ***Sophie Tananbaum***



In Gaga dance class
we try to be more free.
We jut out our limbs
at random, elbows
smacking the air, our feet
sticking to the floor with
sweat and friction.
Sometimes we try to be
water, sometimes sand,
sometimes something ethereal
that only exists temporarily
in the minds of children
and LSD users.

We wonder if that woman is
on drugs right now
because she is free.
We can tell by the way
her hips speak for themselves,
her body is nothing
but a conduit for
energy and time,
she no longer exists,
the water pours through her
the water is her.
We wish she would give us
some of her drugs so we
too could be free.

Between our trying to reach
beyond the boundaries of
this plane of being
with our pelvises,
we steal glances around
the open room,
hoping to spot the same
deep shame we try to
shimmy and shake and
rattle and roll out of
our bodies every week;
that ours is not the only flesh
who refuses to obey, that each
wiggle of our pinky toes
feels foreign and forced,
and the promised bliss of
freedom from ourselves
must wait another week
and another twenty dollars.



**Haiku for the
Hosue on Willow
and Foster**
Mia Sloan

In the rim of light
the letterpress prints symbols
into space—vacant,

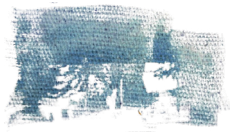
the place abandoned
five decades ago when the
last hands sheathed paper.

Now scrolls amass dust
in stacks; the land is two lots.
Low days wheel across

the pockmarked brick floor,
the mislaid apparatus,
lighting the old way.

A figure passes
with a shining rectangle
outside, regardless—

streetlamps peer down. O
little beacon of letters
draft poems in air :

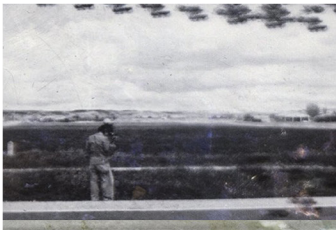




N² As a self-proclaimed citizen of the world, N² (a.k.a. Nai'im N.) is an aspiring writer who endeavors to use his talent to contribute his utmost to universal well-being. N² is a seeker of knowledge who received his AA in spring 2024, and looks to further his education. Lastly, he sends life, love, and light to all :)

Piper is a first-year Gallatin student from Massachusetts concentrating in The Mind and Body in Creative Writing. Their work centers around biological processes, bodily experiences, and states of consciousness.

Alia Attar is a second-year student combining education studies, Middle Eastern studies, and data science in her concentration. Her passion for learning and creativity drives her exploration of history, culture, and social justice. She is especially interested in the role of fashion and calligraphy in preserving cultural identity and challenging colonial frameworks.



Zoe Avraamides is concentrating in The Fabrication of Feminine Design at Gallatin. She is studying textile design, art history, and women's studies. Zoe focuses on sustainability in her artistic practices, sewing garments made of recycled materials in her free time, and working at 313, a designer vintage store in the Lower East Side.

Mandy Bell is a sophomore at Gallatin concentrating in Aesthetic Communication and Design and minoring in Digital Art and Design. She interns for the interior design firm Studio AHEAD and can be found drumming around the city with her band, Dogtooth.

Theo Bentley is a senior double-majoring in English and history with a minor in studio art. His history thesis explores the relationship between migration to Vienna in the second half of the nineteenth century and Viennese modernism. He is from Vancouver, Canada.

Contributors

Brian Blackman will graduate from NYU with his AA degree in May 2025. He is planning to become a business owner serving the Hudson Valley in New York as a commercial cleaner, as well as to showcase his other art works.

Henry Dansicker has focused on writing fiction and perfecting the art of storytelling during his studies at NYU. Henry has written for *The Cusp* and *L'Officiel*, and, after graduating this spring, he will continue to author fiction and hopes to write for *Vogue* one day.

Bob Delaney aspires to write a story that will capture the optic nerve and cerebral cortex in one fell swoop. He is a lifelong motorcyclist and friend of Bill's. Go Red Sox!

Tessa Dillman is a New York-based photographer currently studying Photography & Imaging at Tisch. Her work lives in emotional honesty.

Cecelia Dyson is a first-year student at NYU. Her interests include literature, music, and film. She is focusing her concentration on creative writing, identity in art, and social science.

Iris Erwin is a senior at Gallatin from Los Angeles studying Photography in Practice and Theory, specifically looking at the visual production of "self" and "other." Much of their work engages with portraiture in relation to the family archive.

Fall 2024 "Art and Craft of Poetry Practicum" 1:45 PM. [AN ANGLO SAXON VERSE] was written in chalk on a blackboard as a class collaborative Anglo-Saxon poem in Professor Hightower's 2024 Fall "Art and Craft of Poetry Practicum." The seed of the poem came from one presented earlier by Natalia Zamora. The authors are Jordan

Chiles, Alex Chinn, Anais D'Haene, Ella Edwards, Kate Griffor, Sasha Hunt, Gabrielle Korin, Hamsa Majeed, Juday Marley, Eddi McChesney, Piper Murray, Jerry Pacheco, Sateen Besson, Natalia Zamora, Yiwei Zhao, and Scott Hightower.

George Fay is a writer who enjoys exploring and writing about things often overlooked in life. He is interested in traveling the world and absorbing all it has to offer. After graduating from NYU, he plans on laying down his home base in the British Virgin Islands.

Ava Filan is concentrating in literary modernism, historical and global politics as well as critical and visual theory. Ava has been a partner for Gallatin's Writing Center for the last two years and serves as photography editor of *Embodied*, an arts and cultures magazine at Gallatin.

Lilla Fleischmann is a sophomore concentrating in art, entertainment, and their business practices, mixing her passion for creating and studying art with her interest in understanding the industries they inhabit. She has a particular interest in theater, film, and photography, and hopes to continue exploring these mediums in the broader context of her studies at Gallatin.

Adison Gamradt is a multimedia artist, animator, and designer from Los Angeles studying U.S. history, English literature, and art criticism at Gallatin ('27). To view more of her work visit adisongamradt.com.

Rodney "Shai" Henderson has spent thirty-plus years in correctional facilities; he has vowed to change pre-existing ideals by pursuing educational opportunities that foster growth.

Ling “Cecilia” Hua is an undergraduate at Tisch, majoring in Film & Television, with a passion for exploring the intersection of experimental film, literature, and creative writing. Born and raised in Guangzhou, China, and having moved to the U.S. at the age of 16, her work contemplates mood, complexities of everyday life, and the experiences of transitioning in different geographies and languages. Since the summer of 2024, Cecilia has curated a multilingual poetry Instagram account, @poetry_cecilia.

Abe Dassa Kaye studies film at Tisch, with a minor in English. For him, trying to write poetry every day has allowed him to turn what sometimes can feel mundane and meaningless into something capable of celebration, beauty, and magic. He will graduate this Spring.

Anne Yasmine Larasati is wrapping up her last semester at Gallatin, where she’s diving into Narrative Psychology and Art Activism. As an actor and filmmaker, she’s all about exploring well-being, advocacy, and transformation through storytelling. Check out more of her work at www.anneyasmine.com.

Katie Liao was born and raised in the winds of Hsinchu, Taiwan. She is a junior majoring in computer science at CAS. If she gets her way, she’ll retire early, adopt a Pekingese she’ll name Wanfu, and spend the rest of her life writing silly little poems about things that once made her cry.

Hunter Mathews is a documentary photographer and an archivist at Joel Meyerowitz Photography. She is majoring in Photography & Imaging at Tisch with a minor in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at NYU Langone.

Curtis May is a writer and bachelor’s student at NYU.

Tess McLafferty is studying sociology and creative writing at CAS, focusing on how art and literature can connect people across the world. Tess has published writing in *Washington Square News*, *Baedeker Travel Magazine*, and *The Weasel*.

Willy Oeschli is examining the nature of reality. He works on depicting the absurdity of everyday life and hidden systems that shape our space, under the concept of “Perception as a Room” at Gallatin. You can peer through his eyes at willy.world.

Anna Prenowitz is concentrating in literature, creative writing, physics, and their intersection. She is interested in language and semiotics across cultures, and how they mess with our relationships to technologies.

Ariya Reddy is a first-year student at Gallatin interested in studying computer science, sociology, and sustainability. She’s interested in using computer science to model the urgent questions of the climate crisis while incorporating a humanistic lens.

Ralph Rodriguez is a writer and visual artist working toward his associate’s degree in Liberal Arts at NYU.

Alexandra Rozmarin is a third-year student at CAS majoring in mathematics and minoring in computer science. She is a Dean’s Undergraduate Research Fund recipient for her work on building a numerical solver for plasma equilibrium states required for nuclear fusion. She is also a writer.

Margot Schiller is studying comedy and writing at Gallatin and will graduate in May 2026. She takes inspiration from writers like Miranda July, George Saunders, and Lena Dunham, who are all wonderfully absurd.

Mia Sloan is a writer and artist drawn to the emergent possibilities for storytelling at the intersection of individual, collective, and environmental consciousness. She asks the question: How does art tend to our relationships with ourselves, one another, and the living world? Mia will graduate in May 2025 with a concentration in Creative Writing and Environmental Humanities.

Perfect Soto is a second year NYU student embracing the beautiful journey to becoming a masterful novelist and filmmaker, while crafting a path to a lifelong career in social work. His goal in life is to bring love and light into the hearts of all who may be trapped in some form of darkness.

Sophie Tananbaum is graduating this year with a concentration in Sociological Functions of Narrative and a minor in French. Some of her other work has been published on *Confluence* and in Sonoma State’s *Zaum*. She is currently working on her senior project, a documentary funded in part by the Gallatin Jewish Studies grant.

Chelsea Thorpe is concentrating on Creative Nonfiction Writing and Gender Studies, with a minor in social work. She is spending her upcoming semesters continuing her work in classrooms with ESOL learners, as well as finding communities with alternate care systems to inform her senior research project.

Sovah Woydak is a senior at Gallatin studying Aesthetic Ideologies in Art,

Design, and Architecture. Born and raised on a small farm in the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina, her upbringing fostered a vivid imagination that now shapes her fine art, blending diverse mediums and imagery to create fantastical scenes and portraits.

Hongsheng Zhang concentrates in economics, photojournalism, and jazz at Gallatin. His work explores the intersection of visual storytelling and socioeconomic change. He is currently working on a photobook documenting his road trip observations of urban and suburban landscapes across China, Japan, Canada, and the United States.





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