

**The  
Gallatin  
Review.**



# The Gallatin Review.

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# The Gallatin Review.

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# Kindergarten Soup

DERICK MCCARTHY

It was mid-afternoon, but the classroom was dark. The soft sounds of children's snores filled the air, with an occasional snuffle from someone crying. That someone was me. I could taste the salt from my tears running down my face. All the other kindergarten kids were napping, and I was the only one left at the table with my bowl full of soup. I hated soup. My teacher Mr. White, who seemed like a giant to me, kept coming over to check on me, with his deep trombone like voice saying the same thing each time he came over. "Finish up your lunch, then you can nap." He sounded more sinister than sincere.

The same scene took place weekly. Before I would see it, I would smell it, that repugnant aroma, and know exactly what we were having for lunch. It would fill the air like a thick cloud of smoke and my eyes would immediately start to water. I dreaded whenever soup was being served for lunch and everyone knew this. My classmates would giggle and say, "Eat your soup, Derick" in the singsong way that kids do. I would just sit there while everyone ate their soup, staring into my red bowl of brown oily liquid full of beige orbs of dough and flimsy vegetables.

Now here I was once again, sitting at the table with my back to the rest of the napping class, in the dark, crying, sounding like a baby goat, hoping someone would save me. But no one ever did. I had to eat the soup.

I despised cold soup, but I had to eat it quickly. Sleep was starting to come over me like a warm blanket. If I closed my eyes before the soup was finished, SLAP! I would get the ruler to my hand (this was Catholic school in the 80's). A spanking was worse than eating soup. I held my nose to escape the nauseating baby diaper smell of the soup. I shoved spoonfuls of vile liquid and soggy vegetables into my mouth. No chewing, just swallowing. After that came

the hard part, the dumplings. It was always around this time that Mr. White would appear like an evil teacher genie and say, "Eat it all. Then you can nap."

The dumplings looked like deflated basketballs, denty but somehow not any softer after sitting in liquid. In order to consume them, I would have to break them into pieces. They were hard to chew and tasted worse than they looked. With each bite, soup squeezed out them like spoiled bread-flavored starbursts. To this day, I can't understand how something made out of dough could be so tough, like jerky.

After I was finally done, I would show Mr. White my bowl, and he would allow me to lie down. We slept on cots made of some type of funny plastic thread that was supposed to be easily wiped down if a youngster had an accident. Of course, since I was the last one to lie down, I had the most out of shape cot. It smelled like bleach and urine combined. As soon as I lay on it, I sunk in like quicksand. But after my weekly soup standoff, I didn't care—I just wanted to close my heavy eyes and nap like the rest of the class. I would lie there smacking my mouth, trying desperately to get the gross taste of that sewer water off my tongue and before I knew it, I would fall asleep.

After I got out of kindergarten, I vowed never to eat soup again. I am now 28 years soup-free. However, I did learn something that year, one of my first life lessons and probably one of the most valuable. In life there will be things that you have to do that you won't necessarily like, but you have to do them anyway. The world does not care if you cry and complain about how much you don't like it, it's still going to give you soup. And at those moments you're going to have to hold your nose and eat the soup. Only then can you take your nap.

# The Oak & the Vine

EMILIE WEINER

allows us to work from the ground up.

i am watching them march,  
jeans loose upon their legs,  
skin stretched tight across their backs—  
scowls clinging to their faces  
as if anything less than a grimace  
would account for peace.

“the right of the people is to be  
secure in their persons.”  
these are the words of our founding fathers  
dressed head to toe in white privilege,  
without forgiveness, yielding sickness,  
demanding a new world  
out of one that has long been created.

“the right of the people is to be  
secure in their persons.”  
but how can you expect this nation  
to stand with their feet firmly on the ground  
when there’s a virus running rampant—  
symptoms include knocking knees,  
being up in arms, and...dismantling statues?  
how can you expect security when there are  
people being shot here,  
when there are people being banned here,  
when there are thousands of men screaming  
that they shall not be replaced when any  
would be ashamed even to be in their space?

in other terms, let me tell you about the tree:  
there’s a beautiful oak with  
its roots buried beneath the country;  
she is tall and blooming and proud.  
but have you ever heard of the trumpet vine?  
it seethes and warps and curls its way around the trunk  
it will blare its brassy tune until the world collapses around its figure,  
using the magnificent oak for support,  
taking and taking and taking  
all while killing her in process.  
“no person shall be...deprived of life,” they say  
but we’ve become lost in the law,  
stuck to the foundation instead of being  
willing to build.  
progress is not just repeating yourself.  
we may come back to our rudiments  
but never to begin again.  
our buildings have fallen before.  
new york city has been brought aground,  
but we must learn to take in the view.  
behold the scaffold—  
persevere beyond preceding generations  
of evolution and learning  
so we may see clearest.

it’s easier to say we the people.  
it’s easier to preach love  
than to feel it on the bottom of  
your aching feet,  
at the tips of your finger,  
even when they’re curled into fists.

there are people forcing us to remember  
something we could never forget.  
when our president is emboldening hate,  
we’re left wondering  
how we could have possibly ended up here,  
instead of looking how far we’ve come.

# Portrait in Dread Marble

EMMANUEL CARRILLO

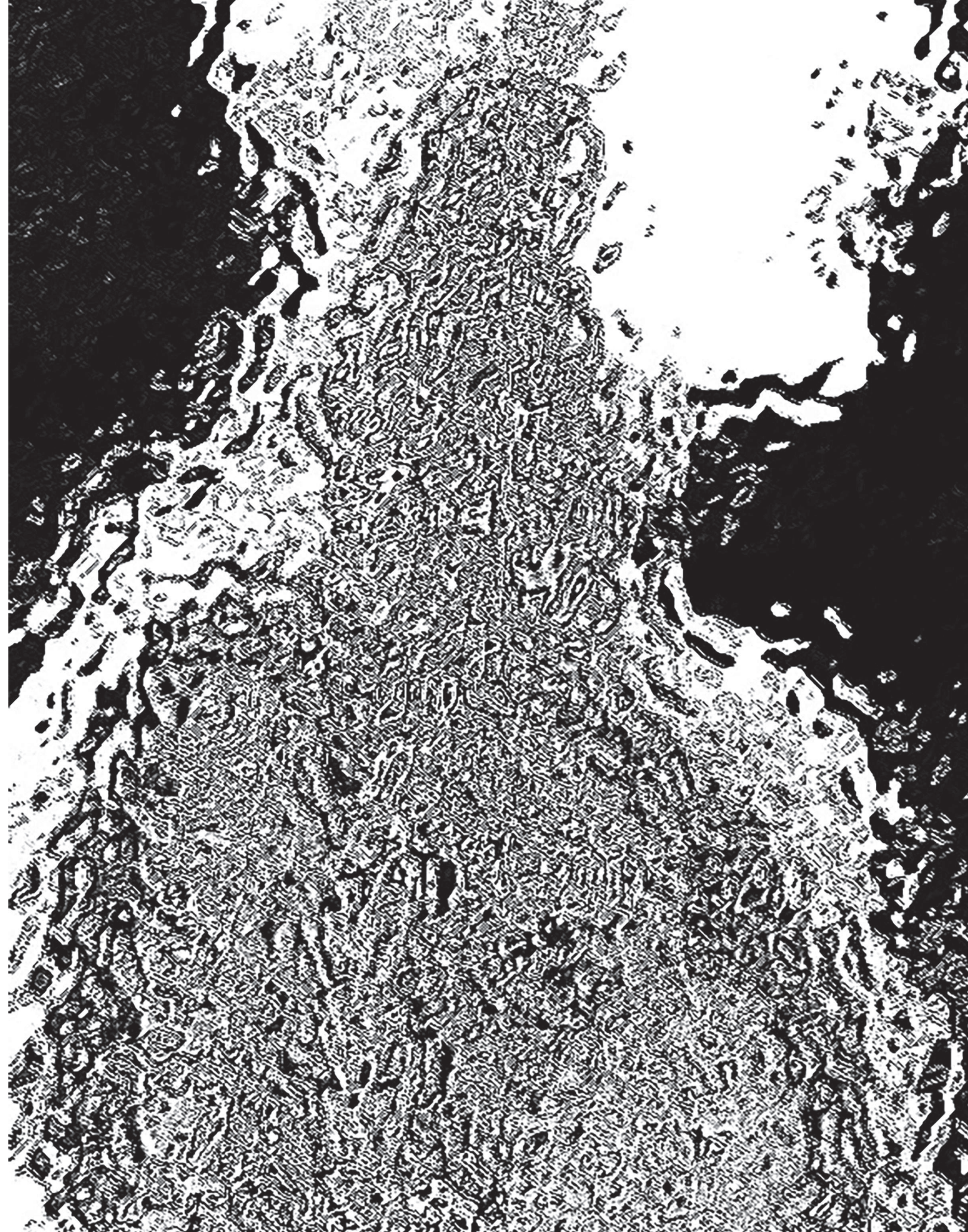
Sullen cloth grey, please smother me tender,  
For later today I shall paint myself gold.  
Aching bones lay strewn fresh in surrender,  
Awaiting what may be a heart beating cold.

Peel my dead skin, see chalky lead vines grow,  
Mold hesitant grin at their familiar hue.  
Rest your soft chin on me as faint words flow  
Above the deep din that has trapped all but few.

Clumsy feet trip, one fall so eternal,  
Beneath a sun drip where the grass grows azure.  
Tangled hands grip when a pale nocturnal  
Light brushes your lip, bringing forth a soft cure.

**Modified Bone**  
HARRY FINK

*PNG*



## Office #243

MARK ETEM

Mr. Liaison was a mousy man with round spectacles who liked to call meetings frequently, because that's what managers are supposed to do. He would arrange muffins for morale and coffee for productivity. And everyone was invited; it was all-inclusive and well known that everyone should be treated as equal no matter what the topic of discussion was. Even the janitor would have received everyone's attention if he ever decided to say anything. Mr. Liaison's secretary, who went by her first name, Yuda, was always by his side, because that's what secretaries are supposed to do. And the whole office came to the meetings, because that's what employees are supposed to do and also, because free muffins.

The truth was that there was not anything in the office that particularly needed doing. For a couple of years, the work had either been accomplished by new software or overseas workers. Everyone in the office had assumed they would lose their jobs long ago, but by some bizarre act the office stayed open. Secretly, the key was Mr. Liaison. As the manager, he should have filled out the forms that corporate sent him to designate individuals who would be redundant. But he didn't and instead, he stopped liaising with corporate at all. His aging computer was dusty and the phones were always quiet, and everyone in the office got the impression that someone had hired Mr. Liaison because of his last name, rather than any real commitment to his position as a liaison.

One day, the phone rang. From the boxy phone on Mr. Liaison's desk, the sound was flung through the glass wall of his office, across the large rectangular space and around the three long rows of gray cubicles to echo in the opposite meeting room. Then the phone launched a second assault, which was distinctly heard in the break room and even through an open window to the parking lot outside, where Jay had just arrived in his blue sedan.

Mr. Liaison was reclining in his desk chair reading the daily paper, spectacles on the end of his nose, when it happened. Just a moment before, he had picked up his mug of coffee and was presently holding it to his lips. He was so surprised by the digital two-tone undulation—the abruptness of it, the sheer impossibility!—that he catapulted forward from his reclined position, first pouring coffee down his chest and then sloshing it in his face as he stopped dead, upright. The mug still held out in front of him, and the paper in his lap, Mr. Liaison sat rigid staring at the phone, wondering whether the ring had rung in real life or only in his mind. After what seemed like ages, the ring resumed. It was really ringing! Mr. Liaison all but threw his mug on the desk as he rushed to shut the door and blinds of his office. He wasn't going to answer—he needed time to think.

Outside, Jay thought about getting back in the car. He still had one foot by the pedals but he also had one foot on the pavement in between the carriage and the open door. His right hand was in the process of pulling out the key, his left holding a folder with blank pieces of paper concealing a disc with the latest real-time strategy videogame. Watching this morning unfold was probably going to be very tragic and also very interesting. It would be a guilty amusement, like laughing during *Titanic*, or watching footage of planes crashing. Perhaps it would even rival his real-time strategy game in real-time excitement. Still, he had half a mind to just come back to the office tomorrow, so he could use the superior processing power of his work computer without interruption.

Jay pulled the key from the ignition and shut the door. Inside, a score of workers in their gray cubicles were standing like prairie dogs at attention, their heads cocked towards the office of Mr. Liaison, fresh with the sight of his wet, coffee-stained appearance. And, like prairie dogs, they immediately took to incomprehensible conference with nearby

neighbors, discussing the integrity of their precarious underground existence. The one thing that held the office together was Mr. Liaison's insistence that appearances be kept up. Show up on time, abide by the dress code, come to all regularly scheduled meetings, and read all memos marked "important." The fact that these things continued to exist after communication lines with the rest of the company had been cut was due to the genius of Yuda and Jay. Yuda, being in Mr. Liaison's confidences and necessarily aware of his communications or lack thereof, had spilled the beans to Jay during some flirtatious water cooler talk only one day after shredding the incomplete redundancy forms. He came up with a plan: as the communications officer of the branch, he would recirculate the work orders and memos from the prior year, so that everyone would continue to busy themselves and he could be paid to play computer games and have more flirtatious water cooler conversations. Yuda passed along his recommendation and Jay received a response the next day on official company letterhead, placed on his desk before he arrived.

"Do it.  
—L"

So now it was Jay and Yuda, lightly yet urgently knocking on the glass door of Mr. Liaison's office. The corner of his window shade lifted up, revealing a rather terrified eye, and Mr. Liaison let them in hurriedly, shutting the door behind them. Today, there was no pretense of normalcy.

"What should we do?" asked Mr. Liaison in a hushed tone. He pointed a coffee-stained finger at the red flashing light which indicated there was a message on the answering machine. Jay thought that using the word "we" implicated him in a way he was uncomfortable with, but this was all very exciting and it would have ruined the mood to point this fact out, so he took it in stride. "Maybe we should leave it!"

"But what if they haven't figured it out? Maybe it's nothing!" Yuda pleaded.

Mr. Liaison, hearing his own urgent voice reflected in those of his conspirators, realized that they all

needed to calm down. He pushed the wet leather chair away from his desk, sitting against its edge, removing his glasses and cleaning them with a cloth from his pocket. Taking a deep breath, he set the spectacles back on his nose and said, "I guess we'd better have a listen, then," and reached to play the message on speaker.

In the rows of cubicles, the employees had become restless. There was a group by the breakroom and a pack in the meeting room, all whispering and glancing nervously in each other's direction. A few more enterprising workers had approached Yuda's desk outside of Mr. Liaison's office. The small troop was examining the intercom which allowed Yuda to converse secretarially with Mr. Liaison about calls and appointments that had long since ceased.

"I doubt it even works anymore," one said to the other. "Here, let me try!" urged the next, grabbing at the dusty intercom and fiddling with the plugs and switches on the back. The machine gave a small robotic whine and its green light flickered on. The group looked at each other anxiously, even hungrily, and waved over the other employees as they craned to listen. Ever since the work orders had been replicated for the third time at the beginning of this year, tensions had been somewhat higher, and many wondered who would be to blame when they were inevitably exposed. Now, with Mr. Liaison's distraught, stained appearance and this secret conference in his office, there was blood in the water.

They heard Mr. Liaison clear his throat, and the phone pick up from the receiver. A single tone played twice, as he presumably hit the message button, and then turned on speaker. There was a plastic click of the phone being set back down. "One new message. To listen to this message, press one. To—*Beep*." Here we go.

"Hi, Mr. Liaison? This is Alfred Hooper from HR in the head corporate office. I'm calling with some—" there was a sound of papers shuffling, "some rather interesting news. If you could give me a call back as soon as possible, it's very important that we get in touch. Please call me, my number—" At this point the group gathered outside was whispering hurriedly. *Shhhh*. Someone signaled that audio was coming

through the intercom again. Everyone leaned in.

“Well, that doesn’t sound good!” Yuda said.

“Certainly not!” replied a perspiring Mr. Liaison. “I knew this day would come, but I just don’t understand. Jay, you said this would work!”

“I said no such thing!” said Jay, getting flushed. He realized that allowing the subtle “we” to slip by earlier was a mistake. He was not going to take the blame. “I just offered to do this to help you!”

“No, you did it so you could play computer games a few more days!” Yuda piped in.

“You made me do it!” Jay saw red, his hands were shaking. He’d do anything to get this madness to stop. Why had he gotten out of the car?! Jay yelled, “You seduced me in the janitor’s closet and told me there was more where that came from if I kept it quiet!” Shocked silence.

“Yeah! Well! And you kept calling out strategy commands and names of videogame characters!” Yuda shot back.

“Why would you say that!” Jay was sputtering. “That doesn’t have anything to do with—it’s not my fault!” he yelled.

“Well, Mr. Liaison wouldn’t—” Yuda launched herself towards Jay and the group outside heard hitting and the sound of bumped furniture, “have known”—everyone gasped and stifled laughs—“about *that* if you didn’t *say anything!*” Yuda was yelling back, chasing Jay around the office.

“Stop it. *Stop it! You two!*” Inside, Mr. Liaison had positioned himself between the pair, arms extended to keep them apart. “This is no time to lose it!” Mr. Liaison breathed harshly. Jay and Yuda moved to opposite sides of the room, and a moment passed.

“All right, we have to call him back or else they’ll know something’s up,” Jay muttered.

“He’s right,” Yuda concurred resentfully.

“Ok. Ok. You’re right.” Mr. Liaison said, picking up the receiver and pressing redial. Outside they heard the *click-beep-click* of Mr. Liaison putting the call on speaker. The pack of employees was regaining their composure, remembering the circumstances.

“Hello? Alfred Hooper speaking.”

“Ahem.” Mr. Liaison cleared his throat and glanced at Yuda and Jay. “Hi, Alfred. This is Mr. Liaison from office 243. I’m returning your message.”

“Oh, hi! Mr. Liaison. Well, I’m glad you called. See, we’re running a new program that handles complaints among our offices.” Alfred’s voice flowed coolly over speaker and out of the intercom. Mr. Liaison held his breath, as did everyone else who was listening. “Mr. Liaison, are you there?”

“Yes! Yes. I’m here. Has there been, um, a complaint?”

“Well that’s what I wanted to call about. No, actually. In fact, none in two years! I see here that in the past, the record of office 243 was substantially worse. In fact, your office was responsible for a large portion of client complaints, but, ahm, well! Not anymore! You see, this represents the biggest turn-around of any branch in the company and so I am calling to commend you, Mr. Liaison!”

“Oh, Jesus!” Mr. Liaison could not help but exclaim in surprise and relief. Jay was struggling to conceal his chortles of amusement despite his remaining embarrassment and Yuda was rolling her eyes. Outside, the group was glancing amongst themselves in amazement. There were whispers inquiring about the raise this would entail. Mr. Liaison was their leader!

“Sorry? Mr. Liaison?” Alfred was confused.

“*Ahem!* Alfred, thank you! It’s been a tremendous effort, but I couldn’t be happier with the work of all the staff here in office 243.”

“Well, I should think so! I’ll have one of program organizers call your secretary with the specifics. But this should entail a nice bonus for you and your employees this year.”

“Very good, Alfred. Thank you!” Mr. Liaison managed to get out.

“No problem. Goodbye, Mr. Liaison.” And the line clicked. Mr. Liaison collapsed with shrunken shoulders into the armchair in the corner of his office, sighing heavily. Suddenly, a cheer went up outside. Jay opened the blinds to the sight of his colleagues high-fiving and laughing and pointing at him and Yuda—and clapping for Mr. Liaison.

*Jesus.* All Jay wanted was a full day of real-time strategy videogame.

Mr. Liaison got up brightly. “Mandatory meeting! Time to get out the muffins!”

## Race-ism

OMAR PADILLA

From slavery to enslaving us in prison,  
this plantation, a new caste system,  
the United States created a constitution  
where all men were equal,  
but labeled anyone that was not white  
beneath them.

The new Jim Crow:

slowly, but surely,

America is going back

to when whites were lynching blacks.

Trump criticized Barack

for being the first president who’s black,

diverting the real issues,

like our own people dying in Iraq

and white police killing unarmed blacks.

For 400 years of slavery,

can’t get nothing back.

They promised 40 acres and a mule.

They want us to keep our mouths shut

and continue to play the fool,

while the opioid epidemic

affected white America.

What you want us to do?

Now you panic,

since it happen to you.

Do you even care about

what we been through? No jail time

and you want to be treated,

while the police raid our

neighborhoods, locking up blacks,

thinking it’s cool.

Look at how we get mistreated.

Some have the complexion for the connection;

others born into a system defeated.

Judged on the color of our skin,

it feel impossible to win.

In the end,

regardless how anyone feel,

black is beautiful—

and that’s keeping it real.

# In Defense of Muzak

HENRY SHEERAN

It has to do with not being postmodern anymore, because it makes too much sense. Say you're reading DFW at Gate C12 at LGA on a Thurs, and the oily music slips like melting butter out of the perforated metal portal and it's really better than most pop music because it holds itself back, it has space and weight and movement and is slick like unwashed hair or tile-wax, and for all these reasons and more it makes sense against the super-secure humming of the walls, so much sense, in fact, that I get mad whenever it's cut off by the brutal and doubly-loud announcement of delay, which is of course ripe with throat clear and the listing of numbers but isn't that part of the fun? We have ascended and progressed!

*November 2017*

**Untitled**  
TEJAN RAHIM

*Medium format film (Portra 800)*





**Two Wheels**  
MIGUEL VOLAR

*Photograph, C-print, 24 x 24*



**Fulton Street**  
WENKAI WANG

*Digital photograph; Leica M8, 50mm f/2*



Gun  
SAM CHENG

*Digital C-print, 8x12*



**Canyon Lights**  
JIMI STINE

*APSC-II digital camera sensor (DSLR)*



**Sprawl**  
ELAINE LO

*Charcoal and ink on paper, 2.5 ft x 3.5 ft*



# What is America?

RAYVON GORDON

What is America?

A shimmering speck of hope.

A shot of opportunity submerged under a bundle of disappointment,  
where the strong-willed tree-top and  
the weak never grow.

Overtaken by toxins, derailing a dark road,

America is the people looking at the picture from all angles,  
capturing collective moments through  
smoke and mirrors,  
materializing its worth and value through  
sheer love and remote perfection.

Its life reveals, reveres, and revels in us.

America announces freedom; we're all enfranchised,

But we suppress in order to capitalize.

Fatigued honorable men garbed in fatigues,  
armed and refined from nightmares overseas

where dreams take pride,

while we're too choked from tears our crying babies can't conceive,  
the life fashionably promised,  
yet buried under weeds.

Once confronted,

America bobs and weaves.

Pledging lesser than less,

of what once was a remarkable creed.

Though in allegiance we bleed,

we ambitiously retrieve lost treasures

as past suffering ancestors tilled on their bending knees.

## Bodysong

HARRY FINK

PNG



**Seasons of Love**  
KYLIE MCMANUS

*Digitally edited graphite drawing, 12 x 9 inches*



**Oyëh Times Three**  
SALLY YËRIN OH

*Oil pastel, acrylic, and thread on vellum, 24 x 18 inches*



# Lungs

ARJUN PARIKH

Just keep drowning  
and washing up on shore  
Soon broken waves  
will grow tired of you  
fracturing their sleep  
They will call out  
to their sleeping brethren  
who rest  
away from land  
to stuff you into heaven  
like the ocean fills  
dying lungs

**Piss-tol**  
SCOUT ZABINSKI

*Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 12 inches*



**A Spectator Looks Over an Avenue**  
KAYLA HERRERA-DAYA

*Silver gelatin print*



**Life in Product**  
KAYLA HERRERA-DAYA

*Silver gelatin print*



**Banal Block**  
KAYLA HERRERA-DAYA

*Silver gelatin print*



**Lonely Crowd**  
KAYLA HERRERA-DAYA

*Silver gelatin print*



**Surreal Swimmers**  
MATÍAS ALVIAL

*Acrylic on canvas*  
10 x 20 inches

## 1959

ZAINAB FLOYD

He reminded me of Ché.  
His dark hair, fair skin, dark heavy pocketed vests,  
dark purple textured berets and worn out cuffed pants.  
A young Ché.  
A crystal hung from his neck as we quickly strolled through  
125th Street.  
A young man who was on a wave length.  
A displaced namesaken wave length.  
Never here nor there. Somewhere, some place without a trace.  
A nomad.

There I sat, hearing songs of La Lupe as his arms were crossed.  
Guarded and bombarded with sleep deprivation as he sat adjacent to me.  
Somewhere between these lines, the drums of Cuba played,  
which had nothing to do with Ché, but everything to do with Cuba.  
La Lupe effortlessly and soulfully sung from a whisper to a yell.

I thought, *What in the hell am I doing here?*  
I fretted from smiling.  
There I was:  
Lips dry. Lips painted and stained red. Lips peeling as teeth stained yellow.  
Hair wrapped. Hair thick. Hair unkempt. Hair twisted underneath African fabric.  
My waist was wrapped with a leather strap that was swaddled two to three times, tightly cinching my ribs.  
I sat gasping for air. As my lower belly spilled out. I readjusted my belt, nervously.

Somewhere between this mix, the drums of West Africa and the blaring hums of Cuba called my name. I  
looked like 1959. Although we were in New York City, somewhere in the Lower East Side, on subway lines  
that stood on the Guggenheim.

I felt and looked foolish. I looked like 1959 lost in time. I was giddy inside, and masked it with a serious  
mood and loads of questions to mention and reveal how cultured I was. But I was not. I was nothing like  
what I wanted to appear as. I was nothing but a bore. We sat on a bench as I would watch you yawn and  
spawn your finger rings that glistened on each knuckle. I was not interesting, or engaging. He reminded  
me of Ché.

And suddenly it looks delicious to me.

# The Box

*The True Account of My First Thirty Days in Solitary Confinement*

DERICK MCCARTHY

## Part 1

“McCarthy!” yelled the Rikers Island C.O.

I walked to the desk, knowing there was usually only one reason the C.O. would have called me to the desk at 8:30 am. I approached the lugubrious, big-bellied officer and he said, “Pack up.”

“Where am I going?”

“I don’t know,” he replied, but I knew.

About two weeks before, after I left the visit room, three other inmates and I were simultaneously strip searched by one C.O. During this search, a small balloon fell from one of the guys and landed near me. The C.O. did not see it fall but discovered it as we left the search area. The balloon that the C.O. recovered contained an ounce of marijuana and, since he found it close to where I was standing, he said it belonged to me. I was given a misbehavior report and subsequently found guilty and sentenced to ninety days in solitary confinement, what we called “the box.”

“They packing you up, scrap?” said Killa, a thirty-year-old guy from Brooklyn whom I had become friends with in the dormitory. He had dreads, a scar down his right eye, and an aura of “I seen it all, done it all.” Killa was locked up for a gun charge and had been sitting in Rikers for a year and a half. He was a persistent felon trying to get a cop-out for three years, but the D.A. wasn’t going lower than seven.

I had only been at Rikers for three months and I was already going to the box. I was nervous and didn’t want to go.

“Yeah, homie, I’m going to the box. Damn! I just went to commo, too,” I said, knowing that I couldn’t take any food with me.

“Don’t worry, the homies is gonna take care of that for you,” Killa said sarcastically, with a big smile. “Homie,” “fool,” and “scrap” are terms used to identify other Blood gang members.

“You want to know a trick not to go to the box, though?” Killa continued.

“How?” I said anxiously. I’d try anything to not go.

“You’ve got to boof a battery,” Killa said. “That way you can’t clear the mag. And if you can’t clear the mag, the box won’t accept you.”

At Rikers, inmates tend to hide small amounts of drugs or razors in their rectums, which is called boofing. They do this because the C.O.s are not allowed to give us a cavity search, so once something is up there, it can remain undetected.

“McCarthy! Are you ready?” yelled the C.O. “They’ll be here to pick you up in fifteen minutes.”

I was going to try Killa’s idea; anything was worth a shot to keep me from going to the box. I had never boofed before in the streets, but I had learned how to do it in jail. It was a must-have skill if you were going to carry contraband. At first I thought it was going to be painful, but it’s not. It just feels a little uncomfortable when it’s in you, like you have to take a shit.

I grabbed a battery, put it in a finger of a plastic glove, put Vaseline on it, went into the bathroom and boofed it. I then quickly packed all my property and gave all the homies my food.

“If I’m not back by dinner, then it didn’t work,” I told them and left with the C.O. who came to escort me to intake.

I sat in intake for two and a half hours, until the bus that would take me to the box arrived. When I boarded the bus, there were two other guys on it. The bus stopped at two more buildings and picked up three more people; it was six of us all heading to the box.

“I just left the box last month,” said a fat, dark-skinned young kid, around nineteen years old, with nappy cornrow braids.

“You know they stay with late night in there,” remarked another young kid. Tall and light-skinned,

he was maybe nineteen or twenty years old, with a full beard. “Late night” is what we call marijuana.

“My weight is up; I’m gonna get my whip ASAP.” A small portable radio is called “a whip.” You’re not allowed to have your radio in the box, but some people still do.

“I only got thirty days, so I’m going to the cookie floor.” “The cookie floor” is a house in the box where you’re able to purchase commissary and have your radio. You normally go there when you have under forty-five days in the box, which is rare.

As I listened to how excited they sounded, I wondered how anyone could be this thrilled to go to the box. Why? I thought. No commo, no yard, no phone, no radio, no cooking—didn’t sound like fun to me.

We finally arrived at a five-story grey and blue building. As I got off the bus, I could hear two guys having a weird kind of long-distance conversation out of their windows.

“Did you! Did you! Tell her! Tell her! Not to! Not to! Come up!” one guy yelled.

“She said! She said! She’s still! She’s still! Coming!” another guy yelled back.

I would later learn that this is how inmates communicate through the window to ensure that they hear each other.

I entered the box, not knowing what to expect. I saw two tiers of about fifty cells; some doors were open, a few were closed. I would later find out that this was the intake.

“Name?” C.O. Hernandez asked me. He was a tall, lanky, Spanish man in his late forties who spoke with an accent. You could tell, by the way he spoke to the C.O. who had driven us there, that he was a masher.

“McCarthy,” I replied, and he looked through the folders he had in his hand until he found mine with my picture on it.

“Book and case number?”

“Four, four, one, oh, four, oh, three, four, four, four,” I replied. He motioned for me to go towards C.O. Smith. She was a pretty, short, black woman in her mid-twenties. Her uniform was skin tight, which was not uncommon for female C.O.s, and she had a bodacious body. She was chewing gum and wore the

sweetest perfume I had ever smelled. You could tell she had a little sass to her, too. I instantly had a crush on her. She un-cuffed me and told me to put my property through an x-ray machine, the kind that you see in airports and urban high schools. I did.

“Walk through the mag,” she said.

Immediately I noticed this wasn’t the regular mag that I was used to seeing. This one was different. As I walked through it, it rang *beep, beep, beep, beep*, and red lights lit up on the sides.

“Walk through it again,” she said, as another C.O. came over to observe.

*Beep, beep, beep, beep.* This time I noticed that the lights would only light up on the area where it detected metal, which was my waist.

“Do his records say he has metal in him?” Smith asked Hernandez, who already was looking in my folder.

“Nope. He’s got something in his ass,” replied Hernandez. “Put him in the isolation cell and let him sit there for however long it takes him to get it out.”

I felt embarrassed as Smith escorted me five feet away to a cell with just a window and a toilet with a screen in it to prevent anything solid from going down it. I figured that the C.O.s were bluffing and wouldn’t let me sit in here long, so I just waited and looked out the window. When I saw the bus that had brought me there drive off, my jaw dropped. The plan hadn’t worked. I was staying in the box. So I pushed the battery out, hid it under the toilet, and called for the C.O.

“You’re going to clear the mag, now?” Hernandez asked me and I nodded my head. He brought me out and I walked through the mag. This time there weren’t any flashing lights or beeping. He perfunctorily walked me up to the second tier and put me in another empty cell exactly like the one I had just been in, only this time the toilet didn’t have a screen in it. He left and came back with a tray of food for me: brown rice with ground beef in it, soggy vegetables, a yellow mush that I couldn’t decipher, and four slices of bread. The whole tray had a repugnant odor to it. I ate only

the bread, which left a funny aftertaste in my mouth. Then I pushed the tray out of the bottom of the door and fell asleep on the floor.

I awoke to someone yelling. I got up and looked out the cell door window. There were five C.O.s dressed in protective riot gear. They had helmets with eye visors on them and protective padding on their chests, knees, elbows, and shins. One of the C.O.s had a shield and another one had a video camera. He was taping two officers who were dragging an inmate. The inmate was handcuffed and his feet were shackled. His limp body appeared to be dead as one C.O. dragged him by each arm, leaving behind streaks of blood on the floor.

“You ain’t so fucking tough now,” one of the C.O.s said, infuriated that the lifeless body wasn’t responding. The C.O. punched the inmate in the side of the head. “Huh, you little bitch?”

All I could do is watch in astonishment until they were out of my range of view. I shook my head and sat on the toilet. Suddenly, my cell door opened. I jumped to my feet, thinking that I would be assaulted next just for being a witness. C.O. Cole came in and handcuffed me to the railing on the tier. He was of average height, a stocky, bald, black man in his thirties. He went through my property, separating what I could take inside the box with me and what would remain in my locker until I left the box. I was placed back in the cell with the property I was allowed to keep: three pairs of socks, boxers and t-shirts, one pair of basketball shorts, shower slippers, some cosmetics, and a few magazines. Cole then gave me a brown jumper and a small white towel, two white sheets and a pillowcase wrapped up in a battered blanket.

“Put on the jumper and get ready to leave,” he said. We weren’t allowed to wear personal clothes in the box; instead, we had to wear a brown one-piece jumper whenever we came out of our cells to go anywhere. I took off my clothes, put on the jumper, and wrapped my property in a sheet. He handcuffed me.

I didn’t know what to expect as we walked down the steps toward a large glass door. The only thing I knew about the box was that it was the mecca of

gang activity. Gangs probably made up 80% of the box population. If you weren’t a gang member going in, you’d likely be one coming out.

The door opened and we approached a giant bubble, an area where all the information on the inmates in the unit is kept and where a C.O. who controls the opening and closing of all the cells sits. This area is enclosed with glass on all sides; hence the name “bubble.” Cole handed my floor card through a small slot to the C.O. inside. A floor card is a small card with my picture, book and case number, birthday, arresting charge, bail amount, classification, and any other important information that an escorting officer would need to know: for example, spitter, cuff to the front, double escort, slips out of cuffs. This is assessed by various incidents that an inmate may have had. The housing unit doors opened.

As soon as we walked through the door, it hit me like a punch in the face—the stagnant aroma of marijuana, cigarettes, and wicks burning. I’m surprised the C.O. working the floor didn’t catch a contact high every day. It looked just like intake except every door was closed and it was very, very loud, as if everyone was talking to each other all at once. There were two tiers and each one had twenty five cells on it. Each cell door had a window and a rectangular slot, which could be opened to put a tray of food through. However, the cells on the bottom tier had a rectangular box with plexiglas on the doors that I had never seen before.

“He’s going to thirty bix bell,” C.O. Mendez, the officer in charge of the floor, told Cole. Replacing the c’s in a word and the s in six with b’s is how the Bloods spoke as a form of disrespect toward their rival gang, the Crips. Being around and talking to so many gang members on a daily basis tended to influence the way some C.O.s spoke, but it in no way meant that they themselves were gang-affiliated.

Mendez was a muscular, Spanish guy with corn rows and a swagger to him. He had to be in his early twenties and moved as if he was more down with the inmates than his fellow officers. This is true of most C.O.s on Rikers Island, because they come from, and still reside in, the same communities we come from.

They have the same friends we had and were faced with the same obstacles we faced growing up. A lot of them had even dabbled in criminal activity but had been fortunate to never get caught, and later got jobs as Correction Officers. They understand what we're going through and how easily it could have been them.

Before we could start walking, Mendez cupped his hands around his mouth and roared, "Dead man walking!"

Suddenly, the whole house erupted: "Who dat, who dat, who dat, who dat!" People were banging on their doors and staring out their windows. "Who dat" is a term used by the Bloods to state that someone is an enemy or a fake Blood and will be assaulted.

Since I was a member of the Bloods at that time, I yelled back "Never who dat!" while being escorted up the stairs to my cell. "Blood up! Blood up!"

Cole placed me in my cell and signaled to the C.O. in the bubble to close the cell's electronic door. Once it was closed, he un-cuffed me through the slot. The cell was different from the one in intake. It had a desk that was part of the wall. The bed was in a rounded rectangular hole carved out of the wall by the window; it was just a flat plastic mattress without a pillow. What was the pillowcase for? I thought. There was also a toilet and a sink with a scratched-up, foggy mirror made of metal, not glass. The window had been closed, so my cell was hot and stuffy. The homies started yelling up to me, talking from under or the side of their cell doors. They all introduced themselves to me. To my surprise, I already knew a few of them.

Mendez came to my cell door and said, "What's poppin'?"

"That 5," I replied. The Bloods used certain numbers to represent them: 5, 21, 59, and 31. These numbers were considered to always be poppin'.

"All right, you need the phone?"

"Yeah."

He pulled a grey flat phone from his pocket, plugged it into a phone jack on the side of my cell,

and slid it under my door.

"You only get one bix minute call a day," he told me, in an affable manner.

I made my phone call and started to unpack my stuff. While I was unpacking the s.p.a. (Suicide Prevention Aide) came to my door and slid some magazines under it. The s.p.a. is an inmate who is not in the box, but was allowed to move around the box floor checking on guys and making sure no one hangs up (commits suicide); what he really did was pass magazines and contraband all day long. The s.p.a. was a short, fat guy in his late thirties with a receding hairline and waves in his hair. He wore black fingerless mittens; I would later find out this was to prevent him from passing things for us, but it didn't work.

"That's from Ado," he said and left. Ado was one of the homies I knew from Queens. He was in his mid-twenties, light-skinned, chubby, and had a chipped tooth. He was locked up on an attempted murder charge. The last time I had seen him was at court and I had forgotten that he had been in the box for the past eleven months. Inside the magazines was a stick (a small marijuana cigarette), and a note from Ado that read, "Yo Bali. If u need anything else holla @ me. I got u homie. I'm in 18 bell. Use my whip 4 the night. I'll get urs out ur locker tomorrow. Go 2 the yard in the a.m. Police walk @ 7. B on ur gate. —Ado Brim."

I put my ear buds on and lit the stick.

"Maybe the box isn't going to be as bad as I thought it would be," I said to myself as I laid back on my bed.

Unfortunately, that couldn't have been further from the truth.

## Part 2

A few days passed and I got used to the workings of the box. There was a daily routine: breakfast at six, recreation at seven, showers at eight, lunch at 11, take a nap at noon, mail at two and dinner at five. The only thing that would change up the monotony were the visits that occurred Wednesday and Thursday evenings and Friday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings.

When you first arrive in the box, you must do something called "getting your weight up," which is essentially having clout. In the beginning, the C.O.s don't know you, so they'll shit on you; this is called "not having your weight up." You'll come out last for the showers or you might not get one; you'll get the phone last; you won't go to rec; or your food tray might contain a smaller portion or the food will be cold; plus a lot of other disrespectful things that might happen when you deal with a C.O. Getting your weight up is not hard to do but it is not easy either; everyone in the box does not have their weight up, and some never will. Getting your weight up has to do with a combination of things. First, the guys who have been in the box the longest or those who already have their weight up must jack you. "Jack" is a term that we use to express that we accept and respect another person and/or their actions: "I jack the way he is handling that." The C.O.s must see that other people with their weight up jack you. The s.p.a. and other inmates must jack you. You must make small talk with other C.O.s so that they can jack you also. Secondly, you must not tolerate any disrespect from anyone. Any aggression or disrespect toward you from another inmate or C.O. must be handled swiftly and possibly with violence. You can accomplish this in a few days, a few weeks, or a few months, but once you are jacked, you have started to get your weight up. There are other ways to get your weight up, but these are the most common.

There are different levels of having your weight up: the first level is having your weight up a little bit, meaning that you can do little things like getting the phone next if certain people aren't waiting for it, or maybe a little extra food on your tray, and a few other small things. This level is normally achieved by association, hanging with someone with their weight up. The second level is having your weight halfway up: you can pick what shower you want to go into; the s.p.a. comes when you call him; you might be given some drugs if they're in the housing unit; you'll get extra food on your tray, unless the food is short; you'll be able to have your whip. The third level is having your weight all the way up, which

means that you do whatever you want. The C.O.s come when you call them; you can pick when and what shower you'll get in. You'll always have extra food; even when it's short, they'll call the mess hall to get you more. You get the phone exactly when you want it; they'll wake you up to go to rec; you'll go to the barbershop every week. When they search your cell, they will not take anything from you; the S.P.A. will cook for you. Everyone, even captains, stop at your cell to talk to you and you receive some of every drug in that comes into the house. Basically, you run the place.

About two weeks had passed and little by little, I had started to get my weight up. I started being able to pick the shower I wanted to use. I would get a little extra food on my tray and I wouldn't get skipped for the phone. The C.O.s were even starting to jack me.

C.O. Barsdale worked the 3-11 shift when Mendez was off. He was a tall, dark-skinned, husky man in his late thirties with 360° waves in his hair. He carried himself with a don't-care-about-inmates attitude. He had been on vacation for two weeks and now he was back. He had seen me when I first came to the box, but had not been around to witness me getting my weight up.

It was dinner time and Barsdale, along with the s.p.a., were giving out the food trays on the top tier. When they reached my cell, Barsdale opened my slot and the s.p.a. handed him a tray with four pieces of fish and mashed potatoes on it.

"Take those fish off the tray," Barsdale told the s.p.a. You're only supposed to get two pieces of fish, but since my weight was up a little bit now, I was getting four. The s.p.a. took the extra fish off my tray.

"Barsdale, what are you doing?" I said to him, but he ignored me and placed my tray on the slot.

"Barsdale, you violating," I said again with anger in my voice.

"Are you gonna take the tray or not?" Barsdale asked me, as if he was doing nothing wrong.

I took my tray and sat on my bed, fuming mad. How dare he disrespect me, I thought. I got on my vent and called down to eleven cell. In the box, a

group of four cells are connected by a heating vent: two on the top tier and two on the bottom tier. On the top tier, I was connected to 37 cell, which had an older man named O.T. in it. On the bottom tier. I was connected to eleven and twelve cell. In the eleven cell was the big homie named F.D. A big homie is someone with a high ranking in the Blood gang. F.D. stood for Father Divine; he was a forty-something-year-old fat man with grey hair and a receding hairline, but he was a gangster. F.D. had been sentenced to a three to six in 1991, but continued to receive additional sentences for crimes he committed while in jail: various assault charges, weapon possession charges, drug possession charges. He was in the box because when he had come down from an upstate jail to Rikers for Family Court, he had cut a Crip. Twelve cell was empty.

“Yo, F.D.!” I yelled into the vent.

“What’s up, lil’ bro?” he replied.

“The C.O. deaded me on my extra fish, homie.”

“You didn’t get your tray, scrap?”

“Nah. I got my shit but Barsdale tells the s.p.a. to take the extra fish off my tray. He violated, yo.”

“You got your food though, right?”

“Yeah, but that’s not the point. Barsdale violated.”

“Don’t worry about that, lil’ homie, I’m a talk to him when he comes down here.”

“All right.”

I was still upset. I walked around my cell thinking about what I could do to get back at Barsdale. I wanted to fight him. How was I going to fight Barsdale? I wondered. I can’t get out my cell this time of night. Maybe I should splash him. (“Splashing” is when you throw a liquid, normally urine, on someone. This is commonly done by filling an empty toothpaste tube with the liquid, positioning it under your door and when the C.O. walks by on the bottom tier, you stomp on it, causing it to spray out on them.) Finally, I knew what I was going to do.

I sat in my cell and waited patiently until Barsdale finally came around and asked me if I wanted the phone.

“Yeah, let me get it,” I said. Barsdale plugged the phone in on the side of my cell door and slid the phone underneath my door. I made my call and waited for him to come back.

“You done with the phone?” Barsdale asked me.

“You’re not getting that back,” I said calmly.

“What! Let me get that phone.”

“You want this phone, you have to come in here and get it.”

Barsdale walked away from my cell and yelled, “This fuckin’ lil’ bitch in 30 bix bell is holding the phone, so the s.p.a. is dead for the night.”

Immediately, homies started yelling up to me to find out why I was holding the phone.

“Yo Bali, what’s up?” Ado yelled up to me. “Why you sticking up the phone, Blood!” “Sticking up” is a term that we use whenever you hold onto something or refuse to leave an area, for instance, “sticking up the shower.”

“Barsdale violated!” I yelled back from under my cell door.

“What’d he do?”

“He violated my food and tried to play me.”

“All right, homie. You know they gonna come in your cell to get that phone.”

“Yeah, I know. I want Barsdale to come in and get it,” I said. “Yo Barsdale! Suit up!”

C.O.s were not allowed to ever open any cell or area where an inmate was, unless that inmate was cuffed. Whenever an inmate refuses to get cuffed and the C.O.s has to physically remove him or an object out of his cell or area, they bring in what is called an extraction team: a group of randomly picked C.O.s, usually the biggest ones on duty. They wear helmets and riot gear paddings and carried wooden batons. They enter the area, subdue the inmate, cuff his hands, shackle his legs and drag him out. All of this is done while another C.O. records the incident with a video camera for security purposes. Of course, while they’re extracting the inmate, they’re also beating the shit out of him—but somehow the video footage is always unsteady and never shows that part.

I put on my brown jumper on, tied my sneakers tight and waited for the extraction team, hoping that Barsdale would be on it. Suddenly, I heard someone calling me from the tier.

“Bali! Bali!” I looked out my cell door and saw Money A, across the tier, in 47 cell with his slot open. Barsdale opened his slot to give him

something and Money A stuck his arm out of it so Barsdale couldn’t close it. Money A was a brown-skinned homie, in his early twenties. He had gold and diamond caps on his front teeth and wore diamond earrings in both ears. We had started talking on our way to court the previous week and we just clicked. He was from Far Rockaway, Queens and was flashy: my type of guy.

“We sticking it up, Blood. They take you, they gotta come and get me too,” Money A yelled and then started laughing.

“You guys really think that y’all tough, right. Just don’t bitch up when we come in there,” Barsdale yelled up to both of us from the bottom tier.

“Suck my dick, Barsdale!” I yelled down to him.

He made his way up to my cell door and said, “All this for some fish?” He looked more annoyed than angry.

“Yup, you played yourself,” I said.

“I should open this door and whup your ass.”

“Yeah do that. Come in here and I’m going to fuck you up,” I said with my one-hundred-and-twenty-pound frame shaking from all the adrenaline.

“You gonna give me that phone,” Barsdale said and grabbed the phone cord outside of my door. I grabbed the phone and pulled it back. The cord popped. We both yelled obscenities at each other until he laughed at me and walked away. F.D. heard all the yelling through the vent and yelled up to me.

“Bali, you alright?” F.D. asked.

“Yeah bro, this cop really thinks he’s so tough. He tried to pull the phone out of my cell. Word to Blood, I’m a fuck him up.”

F.D. laughed and said, “Calm down, lil’ bro. I’m a talk—yo, Barsdale!” Barsdale had walked past F.D.’s cell and he jumped off the vent to talk to him. “Let me get that phone.”

I put my ear to the vent. I could just make out pieces of F.D. speaking to Barsdale. At first he was talking. then he started yelling. I couldn’t hear everything, but I could make out words like “bitch,” “your mother,” and “come and get it.” When F.D. came back to the vent, he said, “Fuck him.”

“Yo, what happened?” I asked.

“He’s a bitch. Fuck that, I got the other phone

and I ain’t giving it back. They gotta come and get me too.”

“Yeah, big homie! We outta here,” I said with excitement for all the camaraderie. It had started with me feeling disrespected and wanting to do something about it; now I had two other homies ready to get extracted with me. Even though I knew we were in a no-win situation, I still felt good. I felt like the homies really jacked me.

Two hours had passed and nothing had happened. Money A had his slot tied up with a towel, so that a C.O. couldn’t sneak up and close it. F.D. and I both had the phones and we weren’t giving them back.

I was on my vent talking to F.D. when Hayes, the housing unit captain, knocked on my door. Captain Hayes was a dark-skinned, bald man in his forties with a gold tooth. He was, for the most part, a reasonable man. He stood at my cell door with a tray in his hand.

“Listen, McCarthy, I understand that this whole mess is over some extra fish,” he said. “Give me back the phones and tell forty seven cell to close his slot and I’ll give all three of y’all a whole tray of fish,” he said, pointing to the tray the s.p.a. was holding.

“Nah, Hayes, ain’t about no fish,” I explained. “This is about respect and Barsdale doesn’t respect me.”

“So what now?” he asked.

“I want him to suit up, come in here, and fight me.”

“Listen, young man, if we come in there it won’t end nicely.”

“I don’t care. Tell Barsdale to suit up, come in here first, and I bet you I’ll knock his head off.”

Hayes shook his head in disappointment and walked away with the s.p.a. I got back on the vent and told F.D. what had happened.

It was getting late and the extraction team hadn’t shown up yet, but we knew they were coming because Barsdale had left the housing unit and another C.O. had taken his place. The house was as quiet as a library when suddenly someone yelled, “Here they come!” I jumped up and ran to my cell door. The whole house erupted and everyone was banging on their doors and yelling at the extraction team.

I saw five C.O.s and a captain come into the housing unit wearing riot gear. One C.O. had a shield, one had a video camera, and three of them had batons. The

captain was carrying handcuffs and leg shackles. Two of the ones with batons were probably the biggest C.O.s I had ever seen at that time. The third C.O., I'm sure, was Barsdale, but I couldn't see his face because he had the visor down on his helmet. I could tell that the captain was Hayes; the person holding the video camera was a lady I didn't know. They marched up the stairs to Money A's cell and aligned themselves on the right side of the door. Hayes stood in front of the cell, positioning the shield in front of him.

"I'm giving you a direct order to remove the towel from your slot and allow me to close it," said Hayes. At that moment, a splash of liquid came out of the cell's slot and hit the shield. Hayes moved to the side and handed the shield to another C.O., who positioned himself in front of the cell. The shield then started to spark and blue streaks of electricity danced across it. I was shocked (no pun intended) to find out that it was an electric shield and immediately felt scared for Money A. How was he going to fight against electricity?

The C.O.s were positioned to enter the cell one after the other and Hayes was in the back with the camera lady.

"Open up 47," Hayes said into his walkie talkie.

I didn't know this at the time but, when you get extracted, the key is to try to make it out of the cell onto the tier so that the C.O.s won't be able to beat you up. If they still beat you up, one of the many cameras on the tier will record it and you will have the possibility of a winnable lawsuit.

As the cell door slid open, Money A tried to run out of the cell but was pushed back by the C.O. with the shield. You could hear the crackling from the electricity. At that moment, the unit was dead silent. All you heard was the C.O.s in the cell yelling, "Stop resisting! Stop resisting!" A good two minutes went by and they finally emerged from the cell with Money handcuffed behind his back and with his legs shackled. A C.O. held his arms on each side and escorted him down the steps and out the door. They were walking fast, forcing him to try and walk at their pace. Money A moved like

a punch-drunk boxer as he tried to walk with the leg shackles on.

As this was happening, everyone was back on their doors screaming and banging. I was in my cell, my body full of adrenaline. I was jumping up and down, ready for them to come and get me next. I wanted to make them pay for what they did to Money A.

"Next!" I yelled from my cell door. "Next!"

However, I didn't want to get electrocuted so I had to come up with a plan. I decided to flood my cell; if there was water on the floor, they couldn't use electricity. I stuffed my towel in my toilet and started flushing until it overflowed onto the floor. I continued to do this until my entire cell floor was flooded. I was ready.

I waited and waited and nothing happened. It hit eleven o'clock and the lights on the tiers went out. It was over. They weren't coming to extract me or F.D.

"Yo, F.D.," I called into the vent.

"Yo," F.D. responded.

"What do you think is going on? They're not coming to get us?"

"Looks like it."

I was disappointed. I laid on my bed fully dressed with my sneakers on and sulked. Before I knew it, I had fallen asleep.

"Waterfall! Waterfall!" someone yelled to warn the house of what was about to happen. "Waterfall" is what we call a search. I jumped out of my sleep, forgetting the water on the floor. I splashed my way to the door. It was about eight o'clock in the morning.

"Yo, Bali, get up! They're coming," F.D. yelled through the vent.

I looked out my cell door window and saw three C.O.s and a captain on the other side of the tier about to search a cell. I also saw the extraction team walking on the bottom tier headed toward F.D.'s cell. It wasn't the same people from night before; they were a lot smaller. I jumped on the vent to warn F.D.

"F.D., they're coming to your bell right now," I yelled into the vent. He didn't respond.

"F.D.! F.D.! F.D.!" I yelled. Then I heard him through the vent yelling, "Come on, motherfuckers." I heard his door opening then a lot of tussling.

"Stop resisting! Stop resisting!" There was more tussling for about forty seconds, then F.D. was taken out his cell. I looked out my cell window, but I couldn't see him. They were coming for me next. I started amping myself up, jumping around in my still-flooded cell. Come on, come on. Maybe ten minutes later, they were at my cell door.

"Give us the phone and place your hands through the slot so we can cuff you," a captain with his helmet visor down said.

I stood there swinging the phone by the cord. "You want this phone? Come and get it," I said, then I swung the phone against the wall, smashing it to pieces.

My cell door began to slide open and as the C.O. with the shield started to come in, I charged at him. I ran into his shield and punched him in the head. After that, it was all downhill for me.

I was immediately slammed to the ground in my flooded cell. A knee was on my upper back while my head was being held down. My cell floor contained about two inches of water and with my face in it, I felt like I was drowning.

"Stop resisting! Stop resisting!" the C.O.s yelled, while pulling my hands behind my back in efforts to cuff me. I was struggling to keep my face out of the water and the feeling of drowning caused me to panic. I wasn't resisting; I couldn't breathe and my body was reacting on its own because I needed air. Someone was trying to grab my legs, but I was struggling like a seven-year-old boy being forced to take a bath. Somehow, through all of this they managed to cuff both of my hands behind my back. One of the C.O.s then took my left hand and twisted it forward. I felt a crack in my wrist and the pain shot through my entire body. I screamed and my body went limp. At that moment, they shackled my flaccid legs and picked me up. I was soaking wet.

A C.O. held my arm on both sides and they quickly walk-dragged me down the tier toward the steps. My legs were shackled, which prevented me from taking long strides. With each step, the metal shackle jerked around my ankle, causing excruciating pain. It was

extremely difficult to walk, let alone quickly, but the C.O.s did not care.

We went down the steps and out the housing unit. We kept walking in silence. I was scared out of my mind. What are they going to do with me? Lord, please don't let them kill me in here. I can't die in jail. Not like this.

We finally arrived at the medical unit. They took me into a room with an examining table, propped me on it. and handcuffed my already-handcuffed hands to a wall. I sat there in pain from my wrist and my ankles. I knew what was next, so I braced myself as best I could. The C.O. with the camera had left and it was just me and the three other C.O.s. They took off their helmets and to both my surprise and disappointment, none of them was C.O. Barsdale.

"Look at my uniform," a light-skinned, husky man with dreads said. "I'm soaked." He looked down at his clothes, then up at me and punched me in the face. My ears rang out. Another C.O. punched me in the stomach. I hunched over, yanking the cuffs and hurting my already hurt wrist; the pain caused me to sit back up.

"Oh, he's a tough guy. He wants more," another C.O. said. He was short and muscular with a low haircut. He swung at my face but I moved and he hit my collar bone. He grabbed his baton and hit me in my shin.

I screamed. The pain from that hit hurt so much that I started to tear up.

"Oh don't cry now, after you fucked my uniform up. Your mama ain't here to wipe your tears, bitch," the other C.O. said. He was a large, bald, white man. He reached back to punch me. I closed my eyes and tried to brace myself, but the captain walked in.

"That's enough," he said. "The nurse is about to come in."

I had never felt so relieved in my life. The nurse entered the room and the C.O.s uncuffed me, so the nurse could examine me. The nurse was a grey-haired West Indian woman in her late fifties; she reminded me of my grandmother a little bit. She examined different parts of my body. When she touched my wrist and shoulder I tensed up.

"We will put you in to get x-rays," she said in

a caring but nonchalant voice. The three C.O.s remained in the room as she continued to examine me. She asked me a few questions, but none of them were about what had happened to me. I'm sure my injuries were consistent with that of an assault, but I said nothing and she didn't ask.

The C.O.s escorted me to another room where the x-rays were performed on me. After that, I was taken back to the examining room, where the nurse examined my results.

"You have a hairline fracture in your collarbone and wrist," she said and started to wrap my hand in a plastic half cast with an ace bandage.

"Take these for the pain," she said and handed the C.O a bottle of pills.

"Tell sick call if you need more and I will schedule a follow up with a doctor in two weeks," she said. "Take it easy, Mr. McCarthy, and you'll heal just fine," as she walked out of the room.

The C.O.s then cuffed me to the front and we left the clinic, this time without the shackles on my legs but still with two C.O.s escorting me. When I got back to the housing unit I was put in forty seven cell. As I was being escorted up the stairs, the whole house erupted in cheers.

"YEEEEAAAHHHHH! SOO WOO! SOO WOO! BBBDDDDDDAAAAAATTTTTTTT! BBBBDDDDDDDDDDDDAAAAAATTTTTTTT!" and banging is all I heard. "Soo woo" and "bdat" are Blood calls. I couldn't help but smile a little bit. When I got into my new cell, all my stuff from thirty six cell was in there. I peeled off my damp clothes, made my bed as best as I could, and fell asleep.

I woke up that night to a C.O. at my door with my food tray on my opened slot.

"Yo, you wanna eat," he said, banging on my door with his keys. It was a C.O. I had never seen before.

"Yeah," I replied and hobbled to the slot. He handed me a tray with two pieces of chicken and brown rice on it. You are only supposed to get one piece of chicken with this meal. I took my tray, sat on my bed with a big smile.

My weight was officially up.



**Great Wall**  
LEZHOU JIANG

*Digital photograph; Nikon 3400, AF-S DX Nikkor 35mm f/1.8G*

# Alternative Endings

MELISSA KALYONCU

- 1 I am me and you are you and you love me. We look good together and I constantly Instagram photos of us with captions that are probably more annoying than cute. I've lost at least 17 followers because of this, but we make such an attractive couple that I almost don't care as much as I say I don't care. So we grow old together, slowly abandoning every position but missionary and the occasional doggy which makes me feel like the dirty little whore that I once was. You age faster than me and one day, as I wipe the shit off your ass, it occurs to me that I am me and you are you but maybe I didn't love you as much as I would have liked to.
- 2 I am me and you are the best version of yourself. A little longer, a little thicker, and a little taller. I'm not good enough but I'm good and sometimes I'm enough, and you don't realize that your parents hate me, no matter how many times I tell you, until we find out that I can't get pregnant, and your mom wants grandkids more than she wants your happiness. So we break up. I get a dog, you marry one, and we don't even hate each other.
- 3 I am me and you are dead. I don't believe in life after death.
- 4 I am you and you are me and you finally learn to appreciate me. I don't hate you for being better than me, because I am you and you are me, so I know how to make you come. We have two kids and the younger one ends up becoming the President of the United States of America. We make the world a better place because I can make you come.

- 5 I am a less egotistical version of myself and you are you. When I cheat on you and you get over me much quicker than my dad expected, much quicker than I was ready for, I don't get obsessed with you just because my head is so far up my own ass that I can't wrap my mind around the fact that someone like you can fall out of love with a goddamned angel like me.
- 6 I am me and he is you.
- 7 I am me, and sometimes when we make love I close my eyes and pretend he is you. But I figure it's okay because sometimes I also pretend that he is a complete stranger. I make peace with the internal struggles I have to face to get through the day instead of making my shrink rich, and his wife starts doing grocery shopping at Trader Joe's instead of Whole Foods.
- 8 I am God and you are an atheist.
- 9 I am me, and you are far away. Sometimes I look for you in people that I meet, sometimes I still write about you. You are unaware. This is how I like it, this is how I want it to end. With me writing a poem about you, somewhere over the Atlantic. Somewhere post-us.
- 10 ...

# You Wouldn't Believe These Simple Tricks

HENRY SHEERAN

CARDI JENNER LIP KIT PORNHUB  
SWELL BOTTLE FRANZIAC SHAKE  
SHACK SHOULD I INVEST IN THIS  
RELATIONSHIP NAH SWIPE THE FUCK  
LEFT ON THE TOKYO SUMMIT NETFLIX  
CAT ON TWITTER LOVES WINE  
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS HAAAA  
WHERE'S MY UBER? DID YOU KNOW  
THE ONE THING THAT GIRLS  
LOVE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE?  
LOOK AT THESE DOG COSTUMES  
HERE LOOK LOOK LOOK AT HIM  
THERE ARE NO MORE BAKERS  
ONLY CUPCAKERS NO MORE BUTCHERS  
ONLY BURGERS NO MORE RESIDENTS  
ONLY TOURISTS NO MORE HOMELANDS  
ONLY HOTELS THRASHER FIRE BUMBLE  
BEES ARE DYING FROM ASSAULT RIFLE  
ANTI-SOCIAL SOCIAL WHITE SUPREMACIST  
CLUB EVEN OUR LIVING PARENTS ARE  
DEAD TO TAYLOR SWIFT MIRROR  
WORLD WALT DISNEY AND A DOLPHIN IT LEARNS  
MERCEDES I HAVE THE BENDS OF ROADS  
ARE STRAIGHTENING INFINITELY SO WE  
CAN GET TO WORK FASTER

THEN I YOU HE SHE WE ARE ALL  
PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS  
WELL-VERSED IN COMMUNICATIONS  
BUT SOON NO ONE WILL BE ABLE  
TO SAY HI AND WE WILL BECOME  
A PAJAMA STATE WHILE THE WORLD  
MELTS AND RESOLVES INTO A DO  
YOU LIKE ALLUSIONS PROBABLY NOT  
BECAUSE FATHER BUZZFEED TELLS US  
WE ARE ALL ABSOLUTELY DIFFERENT  
AND EVENTUALLY WILL NOT BE ABLE  
TO SAY HI TO EACH OTHER I MEAN  
I AM AN INTROVERT RIGHT HELL  
IS A WORLD FILLED WITH INTJS AND T  
RUMP IS ANOTHER WORD FOR BUT  
WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN THE SPEAKER  
AND POET HAVE MERGED INTO  
ONE DELICIOUSLY BLAMABLE ENTITY  
FIVE YEAR PORTFOLIO LONG TERM  
GOAL WASHINGTON REDSKINS SCALING  
STANDING DESK START UP SOLDIERS  
AMERI CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE OF WHAT  
IT NEEDS NOW PRINT THIS POEM THEN  
THROW THIS POEM OUT THEN PRINT IT  
THEN THROW IT OUT AGAIN

# The Herng-humerngh

DAVIS CLOUD

Many years ago, it seems, there lived a poor man called Nikolai Ivanovich Popovovitch to whom events such as this one, extraordinary or otherwise, rarely if ever occurred. Nikolai was a painter of only meager talent and consequently had a difficult time feeding himself and his wife, Irina Popovonovna. A wife of the meanest sort, Irina often beat poor Nikolai and shouted at him, "Your paintings are awful! Nothing you paint looks like anything it should!" Which was true, except for when Nikolai painted food.

As Nikolai's career had gone on, and he had grown hungrier and hungrier, he had gotten into the habit of eating those paintings which had gone unsold (nearly all of them). Soon enough, he realized that it was the paintings of delicious foods which tasted best, and so Nikolai became extremely skilled at painting still life of piroshki, shashlik, beef, cakes, pelmeni, and, most frequently and most deliciously, borscht. These paintings might have sold quite well if Nikolai did not devour them as soon as he was finished, and so he remained poor and unknown in the art world, though not altogether unhappy.

One morning, Nikolai was swimming in the river that ran through his village with his neighbor and friend, Osip. Though Osip was a known Jew, the two of them had become friends through a shared intimacy with suffering, and their conversations were comprised nearly entirely of complaints hurled at one another, each one trying to prove that he was hungriest, or that he had the worst case of gout, or that his wife had beat him the most that morning.

They often swam together and would race up the river against current, and then float back downstream arguing about who had won before

the race began anew. Though Osip was the stronger swimmer of the two, today Nikolai was winning more than usual, and the two friends resolved to have one final race on which they would wager 50,000 rubles (an amount neither man could begin to imagine, never mind risk gambling on a swimming race). The race commenced, and though Nikolai was ahead half a length for the first two thirds, in the final stretch Osip pulled ahead and finished first.

"Aha! Nikolai, my friend, it appears you have lost! Shall I come round to collect my winnings in—*blyad!*"

Osip ducked under the water in pain and grabbed his foot, then swam to the riverbank and climbed out. He cradled his wounded foot which was now bleeding quite a lot.

"*Pizdec!* I cut my foot on a rock! We will have to settle this next week. I need to have my wife stitch this up, I think. Are you finished swimming? Or will you stay longer?"

From in the river, Nikolai called back to Osip, "I think, my friend, I shall stay a bit longer. Get well soon so we can race again!"

Osip laughed and limped off to fetch his clothes.

*Poor Osip*, thought Nikolai, *but he should have known better than to try to walk in this river!*

Nikolai swam for a while longer. When he was finished, he climbed out to look for his clothes, but they were not where he had left them and all along the riverbank they were nowhere to be found.

*That scoundrel Osip!* He thought and cursed his neighbor. *What kind of schoolboy joke is it to take a man's clothes when he is in a vulnerable position? Now I have no choice but to run home, nude as the day I was born!*

Nikolai had no choice but to run home, nude as the day he was born. Cupping his hands over his

genitals, he sprinted across his village from alleyway to alleyway, hiding behind corners, waiting until there was nobody in sight, then darting across the roads to his next hiding spot.

Nikolai had nearly made it home without being seen when, perhaps emboldened by his success thus far, he scurried out into the middle of the road without looking properly and was run over by a carriage pulled by two horses.

The occupant of the carriage called for his driver to stop, climbed down from his seat, and ran to assist the concussed Nikolai who was lying on the ground.

“Oh, you poor thing! I’m terribly sorry! Oh and look at the state you’re in! Are you all right, sir?” The passenger said as he helped Nikolai back onto his feet.

Nikolai, naked and bruised, stared at the courtly man holding him in his arms, not understanding what had happened.

“Goodness. Can you stand on your own? Are you all right?”

Nikolai nodded somewhat, still confused.

“I should hope so! That was a nasty collision. Are you sure nothing’s broken? Oh! Where are my manners? I am Lord Yevgeny Grigorovich Dmitri. Not to worry, good man, I’ll gladly provide compensation for any inconvenience or medical issues.”

Lord Yevgeny looked at the pathetic man in front of him, but did not wait for an answer.

“Well, if you’re sure you’re all right, at least take this to cover your nakedness. You’ll catch a horrible cold running about like that, man.”

Lord Yevgeny removed his overcoat and placed it around Nikolai’s shoulders. It was extremely well tailored and constructed from materials which only a Lord such as himself could possibly afford.

Nikolai, still struggling to remember why his head was hurting so badly, watched as Lord Yevgeny climbed back into his carriage with energy one would not expect of such a graceful man and pulled away.

Freshly dressed, Nikolai turned towards home and started walking. He put his hands in the pockets of his new coat to keep them warm. There was something

in one of the pockets though, and when he pulled it out, Nikolai began running back in the direction of the carriage, shouting after the Lord to come and retrieve the herng-humerngh which he had left in the coat’s pocket.

“Lord! Lord! Your herng-humerngh, sir! You accidentally gave me your—!” But the carriage was already out of sight.

There was nothing to be done. Nikolai started to walk home again, thinking carefully.

Perhaps, he reasoned, Lord Yevgeny had meant to leave the herng-humerngh in his pocket. The more he thought about it, the more sense it made, actually. Who in their right mind, after all, would give a stranger a coat and forget that they had left their herng-humerngh in its pocket? In fact, Nikolai couldn’t believe his luck, now that he really considered it. A new coat *and* a herng-humerngh? Such good fortune was unheard of. And now that he *really really* thought about it, perhaps it hadn’t been luck at all, but rather Providence which had run him over with the carriage.

Thoroughly convinced, Nikolai rushed home to give his wife the good news: Heaven had declared that the two of them should never again go hungry!

“Irinushka! Dear wife!” He said as he opened his front door, “I have good news to give you! Heaven has declared that the two of us should never again go hungry!”

Irina, skeptical and accustomed to her husband’s fanciful claims, did not even look at her husband as he came through the door.

“What are you talking about, you silly man?” She looked at him, “And where did you get such a lavish coat? Oh, Kolya, you haven’t killed a man and robbed his home, have you?”

Nikolai laughed, “Of course not, wife! Why are you always inventing such tales? And the coat isn’t all I have to show you!” He produced from his new pocket the herng-humerngh. “Now can you see how great God really is?”

“What is this!” She said. “Nikolai, where have you gotten these things?”

Nikolai told her the story of how Lord Yevgeny had run him down and given him the coat with the herng-humerngh still in the pocket.

“You foolish man!” Cried Irina. “A Lord offered you compensation and instead you took his coat and stole his herng-humerngh? What a fool you are! You must go find this Lord Yevgeny, return his herng-humerngh and demand a reward, plus compensation for his running you over. Can’t you see that we have finally been given an opportunity to escape this poverty? I can’t spend the rest of my life eating paintings of borscht!”

Nikolai, ashamed by his wife’s words and somewhat offended by what she was implying about his culinary abilities, started to argue with his wife, and tried to convince her, as he had convinced himself, that God had placed the herng-humerngh in his hands.

But Irina would not be reasoned with. She began to beat him and so Nikolai sulked back onto the street, defeated, to find Lord Yevgeny.

He wandered for some time, scouring the village up and down in search of the mysterious nobleman. Such a man, it seemed to him, should hardly have been in a village such as this in the first place. The odds of him returning seemed unlikely at best, especially if he had indeed meant to give Nikolai the herng-humerngh.

He kept his hands in his pockets as he walked, imagining all the possibilities of the herng-humerngh. That foolish woman. She wanted money? What good was money when you had one of these! Perhaps, though, she was right. “Ill gotten treasures have no lasting value, but righteousness delivers from death.” Still, he thought as he passed by a restaurant, one cup of borscht couldn’t hurt. He turned and went in.

The restaurant was nearly pitch-dark, save for a lone candle. *What sort of fool runs his kitchen in this blackness?* Thought Nikolai. At a table in a far corner sat Osip, sipping from a cup of vodka. Nikolai, angry, remembered that it was Osip who had gotten him run over in the first place.

“Osip! You rascal! You feign injury and then you steal my clothes! I was nearly killed because of your stupidity!”

Osip looked up from his drink with a confused face.

“Nikolai? What are you talking about? I have done no such thing!”

Nikolai was furious. “You expect me to believe that my clothes disappeared on their own? And if your foot was so badly injured, how did you manage to walk here in the first place? What a cruel joke indeed.”

“What are you speaking of, Kolya? When did such things take place?” Osip said.

“This morning at the river!” Nikolai said, “When I left the water, my clothes had gone missing.”

Osip began to laugh, “But Nikolai, such a story is impossible. I was at church this morning!”

Nikolai didn’t understand why Osip was saying such things. Why would a Jew have been in church? And what reason had he to be spinning such tales?

“But why would you have been in church Osip! And ...and what about your foot? You cut yourself on the bottom of the river. That gash must have needed at least a dozen stitches!”

This only made Osip laugh harder. His obnoxious horse laughs filled the dark restaurant as he reached down and took off his shoes. Osip peeled off his socks and held up the soles of his feet for Nikolai to see: nothing!

“Nikolai, my friend! It is Sunday morning! How could I have cut my foot swimming in the river when I was at church...with you! Ah ha ha!”

Nikolai thought, *how strange, but I suppose it is Sunday, and if it was in fact Sunday, which it is (Sunday, that is), then there must have been Mass, and a man as pious as myself would most certainly have been there, at church, and if Osip were in fact there at church this morning with me (as I assuredly was), then what reason would a Jew have to be in church if not for his own lack of Jewishness, which certainly is the case, as what else could Osip have been doing in church on a Sunday morning if he had not, in fact, been there that morning in church with me myself, had he not?*

*Yes, of course, how strange indeed. Then, as that were the case, as it was, why then had he (Nikolai) been out in the first place? He had been looking for someone.*

Nikolai put his hands in his pocket and felt the herng-humerngh. *Something about the Lord... Yes, of course! He was going to see Father Yevgeny at the church, for a meeting.*

“Well, Osip...” He said over his friend’s laughter. “I would like to stay and have a chat, but I’m going to see Father Yevgeny at the church for a meeting, you see.”

Osip stood up to shake his friend’s hand, his bare feet on the sticky restaurant floor. “Nikolai, it was quite nice to see you, I hope your meeting goes well with the Father.”

“Yes. I should hope so as well.” Said Nikolai, who nodded, and departed from the ill-lit restaurant in the direction of the church.

In the summer months, the journey to the church was nearly twice as long than during the winter, as one would have to walk all the way up the river to cross the village’s only bridge and then back down to the church. Thankfully though, in winter months like these, Nikolai could freely walk across the frozen surface of the water directly to the church.

When he reached the opposite side, Nikolai looked back across the river at the path which had been worn into the snow by that morning’s churchgoers. The same path appeared each winter, no matter how many times the snow covered it up the congregation always seemed to find the same route across where the ice was thickest.

*How good that I have this overcoat to keep me warm, thought Nikolai, although it seems a bit loose around the gut, as though it belonged to a fatter man than I. I should like to have it taken in by the tailor, though where I might find the money for that I don’t know.*

Nikolai could hear the afternoon choir practice from outside the church doors. He couldn’t make out what the hymn was, but they were singing the same few measures over and over trying to get it right. Someone, it seemed, must be singing out of tune, though it sounded quite fine to Nikolai.

He opened the doors. No, they had not been going over the same short section many times, they had been singing and repeating the whole of the Lesser Doxology. Yes, now that he could hear the words, he knew what it was.

Nikolai descended the stairs to the church basement, where the priest’s office was, and knocked on the door.

Father Yevgeny’s familiar voice called for him to enter and, when Nikolai did, it remarked that this was a pleasant surprise.

“Surprise, Father? Did we not have a meeting scheduled at this time?”

Father Yevgeny considered this, but said that they had no such meeting scheduled, to his knowledge, though he had some time to talk if Nikolai would like.

“I would like that very much, Father, though I could hardly say what we should talk about, as I believe that you were the one who requested a meeting with me.”

Father Yevgeny said that actually, as he recalled, it was Nikolai’s wife, Irina, who had arranged the meeting.

“Hmm? Yes...perhaps you’re right. Yes, yes, of course. She wanted me to give you this. Irina hopes that in presenting you with this offering, we might receive a blessing from God.”

Father Yevgeny examined the herng-humerngh that Nikolai had presented to him, but said that he wasn’t sure what use the church would have for something like that.

“Please, Father, if you would only accept it as a token of faith, my wife and I would be very pleased.”

Father Yevgeny smiled at the painter and handed him back the herng-humerngh. He said that it was a gift from the Lord, and that it was not in God’s nature to take back gifts. Instead, Nikolai should return to his home to rejoice in God’s glory with his wife.

“I think, Father, it would be easier to rejoice if only I weren’t so hungry. I am afraid that, as my stomach shrinks, so too does my faith in God. If He really wanted to give me a gift, He should have given me something I could eat.”

Father Yevgeny chuckled at Nikolai’s blasphemy and said that he had a feeling that if Nikolai were to return home, he might find that the Word of the Lord had provided him with an even more satisfying gift.

“What good is God to a starving man! You claim to speak for God, but have you ever even seen him! Every Sunday, you grow fat on what the congregation puts in the offering bowl, while all I have is this damned herng-humerngh! Good day, Father!”

The choir had stopped singing when they heard Nikolai slam the priest’s door, and they watched in silence as he stomped out of the church without even looking at them.

Furious, Nikolai went back through the village and returned home.

“Kolya!” Irina cried when he came through the door, “Come and see!” She grabbed his hand, smiling.

“Not now, woman!” said the still-raging Nikolai, and he smacked her across the face. “I’m going to my studio to prepare dinner! I will not be disturbed!” He stepped over his wife and went to his studio, a tiny, windowless room the size of a closet, and bolted the door behind him.

Nikolai felt around in the dark studio, blindly running his hands along the canvases which leaned stacked against the walls as he searched for a candle. He flailed his hands out in front of himself, grabbing at the black and empty air.

He cursed his poor foresight. What sort of painter runs his studio in such blackness?

Irina banged on the door shouting over and over “Kolya! Kolya! You must come look! Come see!”

Frustrated, hungry, and blind, Nikolai screamed at her to shut up.

He found the candle and struck a match, finally ready to paint. But in the new light, Nikolai could see, to his horror, that there was something terribly wrong.

Though each canvas had once been painstakingly adorned with his bland works of art, it seemed that his passion had all been for naught. Where there had once been two lifetimes’ worth of beautiful paintings of food, there was now nothing! This godforsaken

herng-humerngh! It had brought him nothing but misfortune.

Nikolai ripped open the door and screamed at his wife. “Wife! What have you done? My paintings are all blank!” But Irina laughed and, smiling, fed him a spoonful of borscht.

“Husband! It’s a miracle! Do not speak! Just eat!” And goodness! The borscht! The beets soaked smoothly into each taste bud, so smooth that one hardly needed to swallow. Its broth had a distinct and muted sweetness with just the right tangy overtones of a sour cream dollop. The vegetables had nearly dissolved, lovingly wrapping their flavors around the beef with an almost wine-like roundness that filled the palate with an aromatic consummation of nature’s gifts to man and carried across the teeth and down the tongue by a pinch of salt that was made effortlessly soft by sunflower oil that warmed the belly. Shredded purée of beets nestled themselves among the mouth’s crevices, cushioning and gently caressing at regions of flavor and scent which might never have been discovered if not for this graceful stew. Thick (not too thick) cream mingled with saliva, gently lapping at the tip of the tongue, each tiny quiver brought with it the hint of fresh dill and—was that?...Yes, of course it was—just a dash of lemon juice that married the sour cream to the tender carrots. The carrots pushed themselves through the cracks between one’s teeth, refreshing and guiding with a firm but warm hand towards the black pepper, which in turn showed the way back around the smooth and familiar sweetness of the beets, which soaked smoothly into each taste bud. As sweet as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be: borscht without end. *Amen.*

# Half Home

ANAÍS KESSLER

In the house where my mother lives now, I find small pieces of home everywhere. There is detergent in the laundry room from my grandmother's house. The instructions are written in a language that I struggle to read. The level of the liquid has not changed since she first moved there, many years ago. I know my mother does not use it, has not used it, will never use it. Maybe there is a level of comfort in seeing it there every time she does the washing, next to the detergents that she actually uses. The ones that have instructions in English.

I came back to visit her one New Years and found the cap sitting next to the bottle, the room smelling like my grandmother's laundry room. It had only smelled this way one other time. When my grandmother died, my mother washed the sweater my grandmother had knit for her with that detergent. She wore the sweater when people came to sit shiva. In that yellow sweater, her long hair flowing down her back, my mother was surrounded by black-clad mourners, while the smell of my grandmother's nudelkugel wafted through the kitchen. My grandmother loved nudelkugel. My mother hated it.

That kitchen could be split into different worlds, almost right down the middle. One half home and one half American. There was Vermont maple syrup

in the fridge, pancake mix, in the cabinet to the right of the stove, ingredients for a pecan pie, a recipe she mastered after a road trip south. The cabinet directly to the left of the stove always had the same things, hand-picked from the market down the street from my grandmother's house in Jerusalem: the cumin, mint, garlic, onion, and black pepper that my mother made me bring from home whenever I went to visit. "Will you sneak some chickpeas on the plane?" she used to ask, "I'm going to make you hummus."

My brother and I would dutifully take the bus to the corner of Agripas and Shomron Street and scavenge the bazaar for all of the things our mother could want from home, filling the cabinet to the left of the stove with the familiar smells and tastes and colors. We'd take a detour on the walk back to the bus stop and walk past our grandmother's house. We'd tell stories about her. As children, my brother and I would always arrive fresh off the plane to our never-changing grandmother, singing old Hebrew songs, pulling a fresh baked challah out of the oven. Our mother does the same when we visit her now, bringing the sights, smells and sounds of home to her beautiful kitchen on the other side of the ocean.

# Jeeping

HANNAH BENHAMO

"The Bedouins say a woman's honor cannot be regained," is all I've said for the entirety of the car ride. I say it whenever anyone looks at me, or when I think that something's going to fall out from inside me in the form of a sentence and hurt me.

"The Bedouins say a woman's honor cannot be regained."

I stick it there in the conversation like a bathtub plug, and then I say it a few more times, with the best enunciation I can, because you cannot enunciate perfectly while sobbing and I'm choosing to enunciate. You cannot have it all. That's one of the things I've learned.

Snir, my driver, flicks his ear back at me to catch what I said, like a horse. "What did you say?"

"The Bedouins say a woman's honor cannot be regained."

Snir slumps back into the driver's seat and shakes his head. "Say something else," he says. "Please. I'm asking you."

"The Bedouins say a woman's honor cannot be regained."

We pass a village where the Bedouins still live. I try to remember another tidbit about the Bedouins, but can't recall anything else. I like the desert. The desert is a sight you drink in; it intoxicates.

Snir shifts gears. My girlfriends in the back, Gila and Ilanit, lean forward so their shoulders press up against mine. "He's cute, no?" Gila stage-whispers to me. "His hair's cut like an Arab, but with those blue eyes."

Ilanit and Gila have taken me on a girls' trip to a spa hotel in Be'er Sheva for the weekend.

Ilanit had said I needed it after the third miscarriage. Sporting the khakis that he wears on weekends, he had carried my suitcase downstairs and kissed me goodbye through the rolled-down backseat window of the taxi cab. He told me to enjoy it, and then I was off. I do not think he watched the white cab wind down the road until he couldn't read the writing on its side, and I certainly did not sit with my face pressed up against the glass until I could not see him any longer. I think he had gone back inside to watch the new singing show that he likes and I hate, and I had checked Instagram.

We are supposed to be in a Jeep, a yellow one with an open roof, but the Jeep had broken down earlier in the day and the campsite employees had suggested we either wait for the first group to come back or take the company car, which is something of a sports utility vehicle, something a housewife who enjoys light hiking on weekends and bi-weekly yoga sessions might select from a used car lot. Ilanit and Gila grumbled as they got in the car, but I liked that the tires were an appropriate size. I said nothing as I hopped into the front passenger seat, save for telling Snir that the Bedouins say a woman's honor cannot be regained as I passed.

Snir doesn't want to roll down the windows and get dust in the car, which I understand he borrows on weekends. He asks if I mind. I don't say I mind, just repeat that same little phrase once more, and so Snir keeps them closed. We avoid the dunes, too, because Snir doesn't want to get a flat. Gila and Ilanit chatter endlessly like schoolgirls, provoking Snir, asking him if he has a girlfriend and what army unit he is in. I sit and consider whether Snir is still my driver if I am sitting in the passenger seat beside him. I try to come up with a set of occupations that





*Your children.* The three of us—Dana, Ilanit and I—bristle involuntarily at that, and I’m momentarily grateful for their being here.

“Yes, I can,” I tell Snir. “I can teach my children to read with Ilan and Ilanit.”

There’s a rumble. I can’t tell if it’s from within me or far away. “What was that?” I ask Snir.

“Cars,” he responds. “We are adjacent to the main road.”

“We are?” I thought we were deep in the desert.

Snir smiles at me. “Exhilaration without risk, remember Dana? There’s even a *terem* just a few kilometers away, in case of injury.”

Exhilaration without risk. Our familiarity, this little joke that we’ve spawned and now balance between us like some precarious little thing, like a tennis ball, like a child, is funny.

“Snir.”

“Yes?”

“Could you take us out onto the road, onto the freeway?”

“What? This is a Jeep, for Jeeping.”

“But it’s not a Jeep. It’s an SUV made by Jeep.”

“It’s practically a mini-van!” Gila calls from the backseat with a huff, and whispers loudly to Ilanit, “We better be getting a discount. They’re robbing us, robbing us of an *experience* we paid for.”

“It’s a mini-van,” I agree. “It’s meant to be on the road, to go back and forth from dance recitals and the grocery store. It’s a mommy car.”

Snir jerks the car up a particularly jagged plain, and the car jolts forward. He attempts a thrilled look, but it fades quickly and he glances down for some indication of a flat tire. “We are Jeeping in this car,” Snir says. “Therefore, it is a Jeep.”

“A thing is not defined by its function. That’s just not true,” I say, because I need it not to be true. I need it not to be true in the same way I know it to be true, because here I am a vessel who cannot contain, and therefore not a vessel at all.

Snir shrugs. “I think it is. We aren’t what we hope to do or will do or wish to do. We are what we do. I am a Jeep driver.”

I don’t feel the trickle now so much as the spread, the slow inevitably of it hot and damp in

my underpants. The car makes a rumbling, dragging sound, and then it stutters to a stop, and Snir curses the car and bangs on the steering wheel.

“Motherfucker. We have a flat.”

I am lightheaded, but still cynical. “Is it no longer a car then?”



While Snir fiddles with the tire and searches for a spare he will not find, I extricate myself from the seatbelt and go and lie flat on the dune. Perhaps I should have been horizontal all along. The spilling slows, and I doze off listening to Snir yelling at his co-workers on the phone.

I wake to the sound of a Jeep nearing. Snir heaves me up from the dune and, the realization dawning visibly on his face, offers me his sweatshirt to tie around my waist. Dana and Ilanit grumble about wanting a refund as we all pile into the backseat.

“At least we are really jeeping now,” Snir mutters to Gila and Ilanit. “We’re in a real Jeep, and we’re jeeping.”

“And I’m not a mother,” I concede, so quietly that only Snir hears.

Snir reaches over to hold my hand. I rest it in his for a moment before quietly returning my hand to my lap. When we pull back up to the campsite, I spot Ilan’s Mazda waiting by the main tent. Ilan is fiddling with the radio, but his face breaks into a smile when he spots me.

“Surprise!” Dana and Ilanit cry. Dana squeezes my shoulder reassuringly. “He booked a suite at the hotel weeks ago, *motek*. You’ll have to get deep-tissue massages without us!”

Snir gestures to Ilan with a wry smile. “There you go, Miss Bedouin.”

I don’t look back at him as I walk across the parking lot and let Ilan get the car door for me. The radio is already set to my favorite oldies station.

“Missed you,” I say, leaning over to kiss him. We hum along as Ilan drives out of the campsite.



Chinatown  
SAM CHENG

*Gelatin silver print (35mm film)*

# The Myth of the Boy Who Defied the Sky and Escaped Only with a Broken Pole

PRASHANTH MOTURI RAMAKRISHNA

**S**tories travel omnidirectionally from their origin. Somewhere—perhaps at a shelter around a fire or at a hostel over a hot meal while Appalachian fingers pluck away at ukulele strings—a bearded sage, the trail personified, weaves for his audience this tale:

Salisbury is a small town of fine tastes and high education. The people there enjoy comfortable lives of a sort that one might readily imagine stock the jacketed, boarding-school, historic villages of New England. It's the type of place where uptown New Yorkers own country homes, which lie dormant until spring gives way to summer and leisure implies golf carts and caddies. Collared shirts of the Polo brand complement clean shaves and smart cuts as they stroll the sweet streets. Grass is always handsomely trimmed and bushes elegantly groomed. Everything is quaint and in its proper place.

If there were ever a town to which the word "colonial" would apply, it would indeed be little Salisbury, 276 years young, tucked away in Connecticut's most distant North West corner. The Town Hall, rebuilt after its Jeffersonian colonnade and Doric columns crumbled to ash in the late 80s, stands resolutely, protected by an armor of white clapboard. Main Street is bisected by the Salisbury Congregational Church, its belfry and Palladian windows overlooking barns, mills and wholesome saltbox houses. One such house, to the right of the Church and still further to the right of the Town Hall, on Lock Up street, is owned by a woman named Vanessa Breton. Almost every day, weary hikers, slightly rested from their stay at the home of Vanessa Breton, set out onto Route 41 to resume travel on the Appalachian Trail.

One late morning in the beginning of June, a young fellow by the name of Orwell counted himself among their number. He had spent the previous night with Penguin, Tight-End, Sniffles and Fresh, trading stories about Pamby and Mad Tom, while doing his very best to internalize a new language to which he was only just being introduced. "Yellow blazer" referred usually to the lazy, cheating hiker who passes himself off as having put in his miles, when really most of his time has been spent in cars and bars, hitchhiking from one trail town to the next. "Pink blazer" referred to that love- or lust-struck soul who crosses paths with a woman whose hold he cannot shake and who, hoping to meet her once more, follows in her wake. Penguin mentioned a young man he had hiked with who suddenly, on account of "seeing pink," began hiking 25 miles a day instead of 15 and would likely continue his pursuit into New Brunswick on the International Appalachian Trail. To "banana blaze" was to "pink blaze" in reverse. Orwell had learned about "flip-floppers," "nobos," and "sobos;" "zeros," "neros," and "noros;" "slackpackers," "ridge runners" and "trail angels." He had picked up a few phrases he would henceforth keep close: "Hike your own hike;" "The trail provides." Now, equipped with new poles generously gifted to him by Vanessa, Orwell danced down Route 41 to "Mystery Train" by Bon Jovi. As he did, he was stopped by a bearded thru-hiker who introduced himself as Long Haul and needed directions to the local pizza parlor. Before parting ways, Orwell asked Long Haul why he had stopped his hike so early. There was a storm coming, Long Haul said—"a nasty one just out yonder." He did not want to be around when she hit.

There were thirteen miles between Orwell and the shelter at which he had agreed to meet Sniffles. Along those thirteen miles were Bear Mountain, the tallest climb in Connecticut, consisting almost entirely of steep exposed bedrock sanded down to a finish by millennia of violent elements—and plenty of unguarded ledge, which one certainly would not want to be walking without the guidance of daylight. These were thirteen miles to which he was committed, and he would not be deterred. He simply had to be sure to outrun the darkness.

Two double-turn blazes in quick succession confused him. The Trail was teasing, playing tricks, tossing him forward and backward, hither and thither, North and South—while the storm prepares her invasion, swirling and gurgling and condensing "just out yonder." It was this active paralysis, this vigorous stagnancy that would have been portentous to him of a fierce impending clash, and perhaps of the unification of his spirit and that of the turbulent and capricious sky-goddess whose shrieks had not yet reached him. If only Orwell had been outside of himself, hovering just above his busy body that couldn't seem to find the correct turn and kept reappearing at the same dead end! For as he sat, disappointed by his navigational deficiencies, waiting for some savior to happen upon him and take pity, she was hurtling towards him with a speed and magnificence beyond that of any man. But, alas, our young, bull-headed hero refused to yield to a danger which he had misconstrued as possible rather than probable. So, when old, indubitably wise Doc and his animated daughter Toons, perhaps the most fabled duo next to Fresh and Karaoke (who had once seduced a bartender with his German charm all the way to the back of her rank Toyota Camry in the parking lot) appeared before him, sure of the path on which he had faltered, Orwell resumed with treble the force in his feet. Lost time would be recovered and his two opponents, darkness and sky, both advantaged but one closer than the other, would be outpaced. At least this was his conviction.

Whenever Orwell's vigor stuttered, treacherous black flies, persistent, unforgiving, and far less

benign than the swarming gnats they resemble, snatched their opportunity to launch an attack of impressive coordination. It was a tough sort of love, but he knew that those little fiends that he was either swatting, cursing, or running from were keeping him on task. For that, he thanked them. All the way past Lion's Head to the summit of Bear Mountain the black flies chased him, insistent that he not even pause for hydration's sake. Only then, once the peak had been reached, did they allow a brief break. There was no time for rest or refreshment, however; it was there, at Connecticut's gorgeous crest, in front of a village of spectator midget trees, that she revealed herself to him. And how glorious she was! Roiling and whirling with ever-thickening turbidity, she bellowed from above, cracking her electric whip and asserting her undisputed power. Orwell, shuddered in intimidation, but quickly regained composure. Straightening his back confidently, raising his chin, he confronted sky. He met her gaze. He looked her straight in her eye and, assured by his buzzing companions beside him and his stoic supporters behind, all committed to weathering her tyranny, accepted her challenge.

That first collision of wills was almost mythic. There stood an unlikely adventurer, small, unimpressive by all accounts, a novice on foreign terrain, confronting an ancient beast feared by all other beasts. But bull-headed as our young Orwell was, he thought not of surrender. In any case, surrender was not a choice. All midpoints had been made and his surroundings were unarguably terra non grata. His pathetic tarp, beyond the protection of which the ends of his hammock would not extend, could no longer be erected; there were no available trees that could withstand the murderous downpour. He was forced to press on, but he was not forced to do so with such spirit. Even after a misplaced foot, punished by that smooth rain-slick bedrock with a hiking pole snapped cleanly in half, his stride did not stutter. In fact, he felt more alive in the knowledge that at that moment his expiration date could have instantly and unintentionally been amended to present: a stranded walker impaled by his own equipment!

But this mortality was not morbid in tone, nor was it fatalistic. It was spontaneous and exhilarating. It was essential, primordial, savage even. "The domesticated generations fell from him," just as they had from Buck, Ghost Dog of the Yeehats. He no longer answered the booming dual voices of Astrape and Bronte with words: "I'm still here! I'll always be here!" The wails and woots and chest rhythms that had been pressed into him by eons of civilization came surging forth. "They came to him as though they had always been his." And now, the rain having soaked him to the bone and washed away all but the purest of hereditary instinct, running along a trail transformed into a stream whose current was always opposite his own, he howled. Oh, he howled! He howled the howl of howls past, unknowingly harmonizing with the dual voice with which he had thought himself at war.

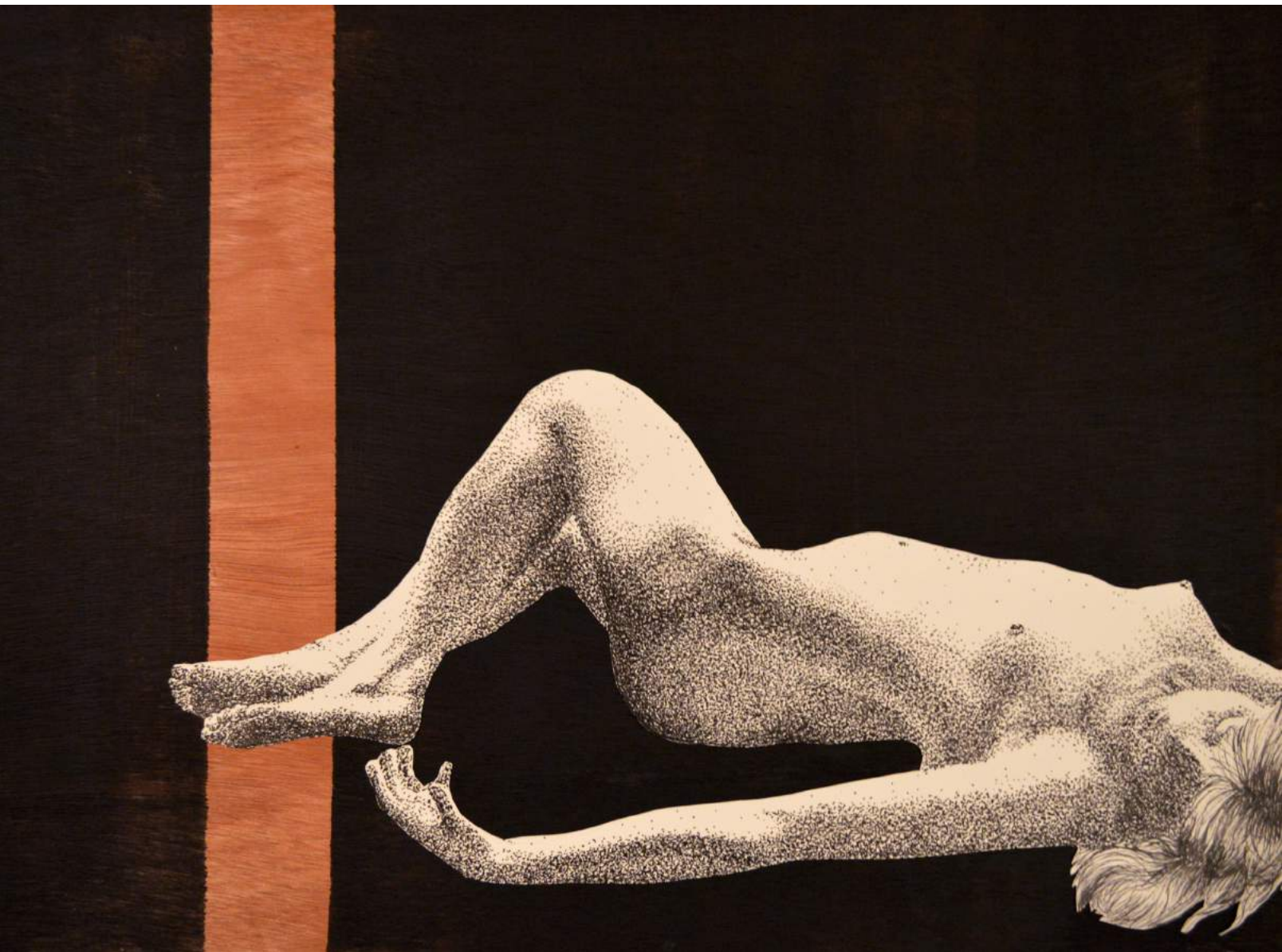
When peace was restored, Orwell found himself walking along a sprawling ridge, watching the canvas before him drip with sunset. He watched until there was no color left. Rather than brace himself against it, he greeted darkness as an ancient friend.

The sage stands, evaporates, and diffuses into the trail. The story remains. And the hikers he told it to? Some of them travel south, some north, and some return home, all relaying a memory-meddled version of the myth of the boy who defied the sky and escaped only with a broken pole.

**Black and Blue**  
ROSALANE CHOW

*Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 20 inches*





**Fallen Woman**  
MATÍAS ALVIAL

*Pen on paper mounted on wood panel, 15 x 11 inches*

## For Betty

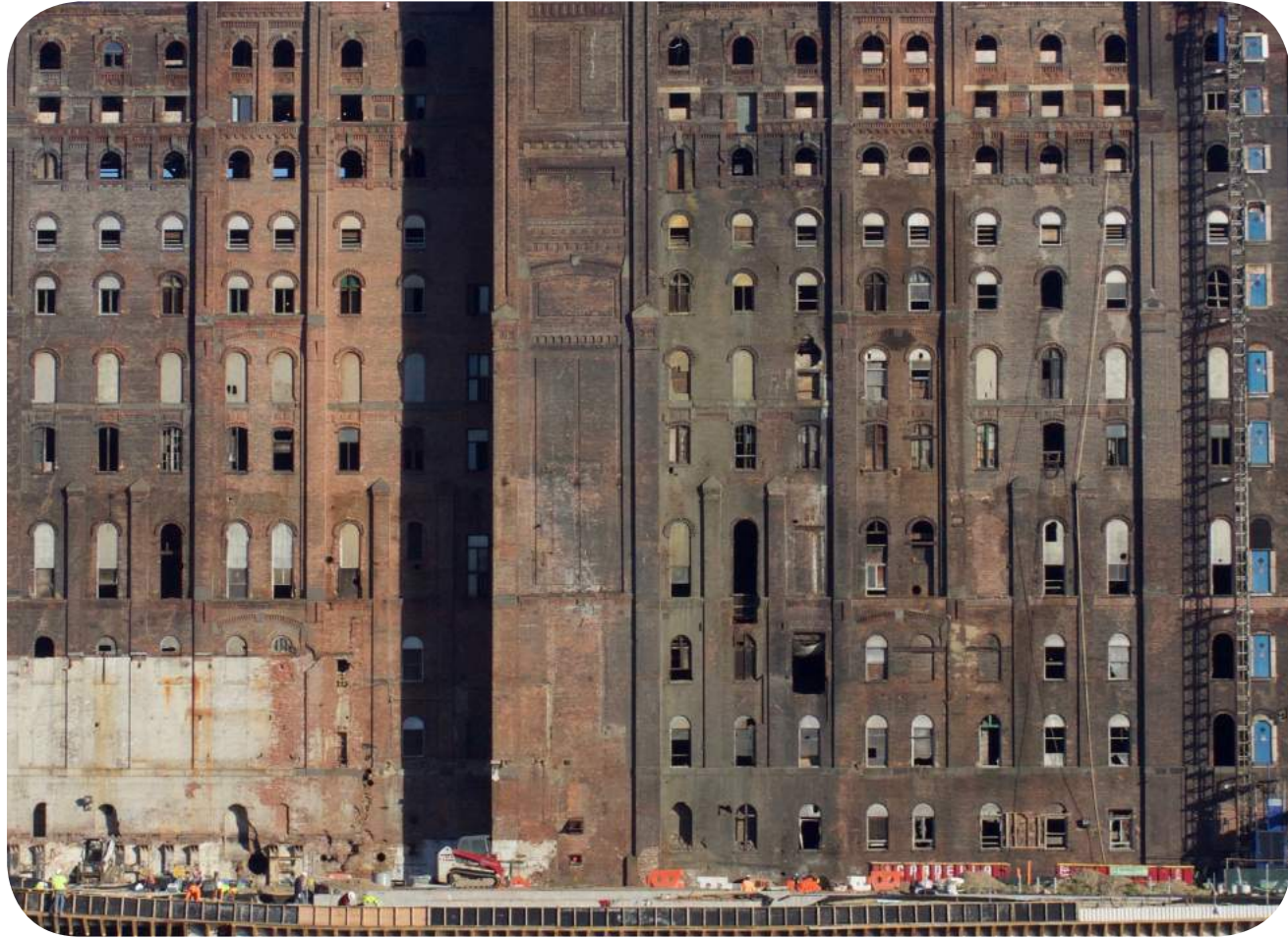
ANNIKA VON GREY

Linoleum guardrails  
and a plastic straightjacket  
Your stovetop is dusted with rust  
and past tense aggression.  
A toy that forgot to deploy  
your parachute apron,  
escaped the nest, found the coop;  
did you not learn your lesson?

I don't mean to place blame on the captive  
or ignore the sinner.  
And I'm sorry for smashing the plate  
as you served the dinner.  
I swear I come as your sister,  
a handmaiden in arms,  
as an aid to the maid  
of the testicular snake whisperer.

Sweet Volkswagen dragon,  
bitter virginal mother,  
you curse his sperm and your spawn.  
Rusty chastity belt  
Lick the wound, the milkman  
and your shopping list swear words.  
Prostrate on kitchen counter,  
you are crying for help.

Lift your leg and your finger,  
dust your chores past the door.  
Remember Betty—  
“No woman  
gets an orgasm  
from shining  
the kitchen  
floor.”



**Perspective**

EMMA COMRIE

*Digital photograph; Canon EOS Rebel T3i, 35mm f/1*



**Girls on Boardwalk, Coney Island, 2017**

LEXI ROTTENSTREICH

*Film, 8 x 10 inches*



Reaching for the Wave  
GRACE HALIO

*Digital collage, 35mm B&W film, watercolor*



**I May Be Younger, But I Look After You**  
SALLY YĒRIN OH

*Sharpie and ballpoint on cardstock, 10 x 10 inches*



**Millennials**  
MATÍAS ALVIAL

*Ink and watercolor on paper, 15.5 x 12 inches*

# A Study in Green

JULIA WILLIAMS

we pretended that the ginkgo nuts were bombs  
filled with lethal gases,

that the branches were stairs  
leading to our home with green walls  
and windows you could see out of but not into,

that the grass was a forest  
where fairies built homes  
and leprechauns swam  
(the worms were their god),

that sticks could be wands,  
but only at 3:25 p.m.  
after we'd left our books at the foot of my bed,  
and eaten green apples with marshmallows  
under the table,

that skirts would be illegal  
as soon as the fire ants invaded  
and we'd have to run away soon,

but we had a green home with a forest below  
(the worm gods would save us).

so let's meet at the swings—

the green ones.

**Lago di Como, Summer 2017**  
MIKUS KANNENIEKS

*Film, 35mm*





**Kerun**  
WENKAI WANG

*Digital photograph; Leica M8, 50mm f/2*



**Priede Garkalnē / A Pine Tree in Garkalne (Longhill)**  
MIKUS KANNENIEKS

*Film, 35mm*



**A Beautiful Day**  
ROSALANE CHOW

*Acrylic on canvas board, 11 x 14 inches*



**Vision**  
IRIS SANG

*Digital collage*



## Reaching

BLAIR SIMMONS

3D-printed curable photopolymer resin  
Photograph by Ella Barnes

## Vantage Points

CASSIE ARCHDEACON

The window to the fire escape is incredibly hard to open and every time I do, I have shoulder pain for the remainder of the night. But still, I open it, slide one foot through the gap, followed by my crouched body, as the other foot drags in my wake. It is 8:30 p.m. in September. The sky is a new blue but not the darkest kind. I spend most of my time looking right, away from the city, down the smaller portion of my block at the people who emerge from the subway to pass through and are now almost home. None of them can see me because of Meserole Street's trees. My fire escape, in particular, is enveloped by the street's biggest tree, and for this I feel lucky.

From my perspective at the center of the street, equidistant between Humboldt and Graham, I see all of the garbage cans stretched out alongside other buildings, almost like an extension of my own limbs. Through the iron slats beneath my feet, I see Tommy opening my building's trash. Tommy isn't his real name, but I call him that in my mind; it sits right. Looking down, I see his black cap swivel: open can, take bag, turn body, place bag, open bag, dig. He finds the bathroom towels I threw out, (I ordered new ones and these were cheap and mascara-stained) stands up, scans the sidewalk, and walks away, leaving the towels on the ground only to return a minute later with a plastic bag he found floating, *American Beauty*-style, up the street. He looks for a while at some hollow metal bars (my disassembled, terrible old hamper) before abandoning my bin for the next, toting the dirty towels in a plastic bag.

On the other end of the street I see a local man who looks exactly like a Hispanic Ernest Hemingway, a resemblance so unnerving that it merits a conspiracy theory. I have seen him around for the past two years, sitting on stoops looking rather poetic in blue shirts and white pants, his black

hair—thick for a man his age—carefully combed and his beard spotted with grey. He often sits in front of the bodega on Graham and Meserole. Recently, I noticed that every now and then he leaps from his squat for a fallen cigarette butt. A few weeks ago I saw him exiting a minivan at 10 a.m., standing for a while beside the open backseat door. Today I see him sitting in that same minivan again, drinking from a flask in a brown paper bag. For a moment I check in on Tommy on the other end of the street and when I turn back to the minivan I see its front seat unoccupied; Ernest, I assume, has gone to sleep.

Before living here in Brooklyn, I was a child growing up in Oyster Bay, a small town on Long Island. There were no fire escapes, nobody lived in apartments. From suburban windows you can only see some other house's cedar siding or a forested yard. After all, wasn't Long Island once a forest or a swampland? In town there were no street-side personalities—excluding “the Townies,” the people who did drugs near the pavilion in the park, whom I had never seen but had learned to visualize as zombies—only ice cream shops, family-owned taverns, hardware stores, framing businesses, that sort of thing. The walkable part of Oyster Bay, its “downtown” extends entirely from one intersection. Beyond that there are winding roads with large houses, packed neighborhoods with houses that are slightly less large, the bay, and its abundance of motorboats.

“Poverty” was simply a word thrown around in history class, grazed over in English when we read *Oliver Twist*. Most people in Oyster Bay were at the very least middle class. There was a sprinkling of poverty, a few families lived in very small homes, a few in apartments or low-income housing, mostly immigrants. This wealth gap gave way to a petty kind of racism in the town, not the kind of racism

that admitted itself openly; rather, it was the kind that lurked, trickled down from the parents to the school kids. I did not realize that I grew up in a town tinged by racism though, not until I got to college. At an internship, I met a man who told me he was stopped by a cop in Oyster Bay and the cop called him the n-word several times. When I was reading something for my post-colonial theory class, I found out that “coon” was a derogatory term used against black people. The only other time I had heard that word was in high school at the basketball games. The students who stood in a pack at every game chanting together for their friends on the court called themselves the “coon squad.” Formally, the school knew it as the “goon squad,” but that was merely a guise.

I was lucky to have relatively liberal parents there. For the first half of my life I thought Republicans were the best; I didn’t know anything about them but they seemed fancy and powerful. Eventually, I learned this was not the case. I remember my mom waking me up in the middle of the night when Obama was re-elected to celebrate.

In terms of wealth, I have slid the length of the scale. After my parents’ divorce, my father lived in a series of small cottages, ultimately saving up enough to buy a medium sized house in a packed neighborhood. My mother remained in the house they had shared, but later moved around, renting other homes on the same street until settling into the small one she inhabits today. My father started a business to spite a former boss in the 1990s and the business continued to grow throughout my childhood. We moved from the medium house to a large house in a neighborhood with lots of open space.

My mother’s career was a bit more volatile. Every few years she would get a hankering to jump ship. She owned a moving business, then she was a real estate agent, then a teacher, and now she seems to have found her niche in set-dressing. I remember the times when we were less secure financially, and it feels as though just yesterday my mother became secure, but I never remember fearing the status of that security. I never heard my parents struggle with the bills or the groceries. My father likes to recall to me his youth,

a time when Oyster Bay was predominantly blue-collar, swarming with people who wanted just to get by. But I remind him that this was not the version of Oyster Bay that I saw growing up. In what I saw, nobody needed to talk about money because everybody had it. The congregation of mothers that controlled the social cliques at school deemed the people that did not have it, like the immigrants, to be irrelevant or weird. The mothers victimized me on other fronts throughout my life. I was never excluded entirely, but besides the social politics, for me, life was simple. We ate nice steak once a week, dined at an Italian restaurant religiously on Mondays. In our fridge there was always a full jug of milk waiting behind the half-drunk one.

The first time I saw a person use food stamps was at Graham Market. The woman’s total rang up to be a few cents more than the food stamps had covered and when the cashier asked for the remaining balance, the woman grew angry. She said there was *no way*. The cashier, just a teenager, scanned the registers for the manager. I thought about covering the remainder, but I worried I might embarrass the woman, that she might think I was trying to play the prototypical white savior. I, a white girl buying organic milk and turkey bacon, could not justify inserting myself into the conversation. To do so would have been egotistical, or so it seemed in the moment. The cashier, unsuccessful in getting anyone’s attention, shook her head, looked down at the receipt in her hands, and reluctantly gave it to the woman as she gestured towards the exit. My transaction came and went. I swiped with my Amex, the card my dad pays once a month to keep me fed, sheltered, and safely transported at night.

This neighborhood—East Williamsburg if you ask a 24-year-old real estate agent, Bushwick if you ask someone that’s been living here for 25 years, and just Williamsburg according to Citibike—began with a settlement of Puerto Rican immigrants. Beneath the sign for Graham Ave is a secondary one that reads Avenue of Puerto Rico.

The first thing I learned about the Puerto Rican community here is that they celebrate many

holidays. During warmer months they have parades down Graham Ave that must happen every three weeks, at least. The second, third, tenth, and fifty-seventh thing I have learned about the Puerto Rican community here, though, is that they are leaving, ousted by people like me whose fathers pay for one-bedroom apartments that are stuffed with pseudo-art and fancy groceries in pursuit of the New York dream life. My building’s handyman, Freddy, came one day to lessen the burden of my heavy windows and when the job was done, he became nostalgic. He told me that he used to live in the area, but has had to move to Queens where he feels uncomfortable and alone. The families from his time living here have all left, forced to move because of rising rents or failing businesses. He did not know where all of the old faces went. I worried he might start to cry. On a walk up Graham Avenue recently I noticed that a rentable storefront which had once been a deli I used to frequent had packed up and left; it hadn’t left a dent in me.

After the handyman’s emotional overflow, I sat on my fire escape in the dark, wanting the thinness of crisp air on my mushy throat. Down below, the people scampered like motorized ants, maneuvering around trees and pieces of trash on the sidewalk. Freddy had also told me that he used to work on the telephone poles around here and, as I exhaled the crisp air, now warm, onto my hands, I imagined him climbing up a pole down the street. I pictured a simpler time, one where working on telephone poles was considered adventure, where Freddy was waving, joking with a Tommy or an Ernest down on the pavement. I imagined that they all sounded like Popeye, all had baldheads and thick mustaches and cartoon muscles, toothpicks dangling from their seesaw grins. When I visualize the good ol’ days of any place, I see it in a perpetual state of sunset, an orangepeel peeking out between the buildings, and my imagination made no exception for Freddy. Eventually I looked up, away from my hands and down the street, and realized that there are no telephone poles here anymore.



A few days later I took an Uber home from my Manhattan babysitting job. It had been a terrible night. After eating a panini with bell peppers, my insides gave up on me; my boyfriend was out of town which meant he would not be waiting at home to service my needs; and the city was sopping wet. It was pouring. I hit my head on the way into the cab. My pulsing headache shifted from the front of my head to the thud. During the panic that accompanied my stomach pain, I clung tightly to the promise of a silent cab ride. But when I got in, the cab the driver asked me how I was. It was clear he was adamant to converse, not just to be polite. We eventually got to the fact that I go to NYU and when I tried to explain to him my academic interests, I concluded with *I’m not exactly sure yet though, I am still figuring it out* and he laughed at me. Not with me. He didn’t feel my intellectual pain of simultaneously wanting to learn everything and nothing. I heard his eyes roll. He patronized me for being aimless at a school with such a hefty price tag. Once over the bridge and into Brooklyn, he began his remarks about the race for mayor.

Just earlier that day I had been reading the Times’ endorsement for Bill De Blasio. They pointed out a handful of positive things he has done and a glaring negative: affordable housing and gentrification. At this point the Uber driver made sure I was aware that he grew up in Brooklyn and I did not, and that, because of this, he was the captain of the team and I, the scrawny freshman. He drove through the night like the king of this great land, constantly marking his territorial stake with a laugh—and it didn’t sound much like a real laugh at all, just like a person saying *ha* two or three times in a row. He bashed De Blasio’s head in with a metaphorical baseball bat, spewed the same things repeatedly about the horrors of gentrification all the way to Williamsburg. I nodded, I agreed. For the most part, I, like most morally conscious urban semi-adults, really do agree; gentrification is bad. But it was clear that if I had wanted to say differently, he would not have allowed any contrary opinions—I shouldn’t call it a debate, as a debate implies some sort of cohesive discourse between two people and this was not that. He did not want to talk to me about gentrification. He wanted to talk at me. He saw my



and became friends over their shared interest in caring for cats. Pedro has lived in the neighborhood his entire life. He looks to be in his early 60s. I see him around sometimes, always looking jolly or talking with old friends, but mainly I see him standing in front of his house. He helps people find parking spots—alternate street side parking is a labyrinth. When it rains, he puts on a jacket and heads outside with a broom to sweep the water and the trash into the sewer. He sits at a local bar, the Tradesman, every single Friday at 3:15 p.m. Every now and then my boyfriend will stop by and they'll have a drink.

During one of these rendezvous, Pedro reminisced about living here in the 1970s. A few blocks east of Graham Ave you will find East Williamsburg Industrial Park, a sprawl of factories, warehouses, and old roads. There is a main road in Industrial Park that connects to Graham Avenue called Johnson Avenue. Back in the day, Pedro said, Johnson was not lined with cement factories like it is now, but with slaughterhouses. The people in the neighborhood caught on to the slaughter times. After work, they would go to the dumpsters and dig for cow bones, go home, and use them to make soup for dinner.

Beyond the iron-barred walls of the fire escape I see trash. An abundance of it, everywhere. It encircles the bays of trees in the sidewalk. On narrower streets like mine the wind spins it up and throws it back, making it unavoidable and ceaseless. There will never be a day in the neighborhood where any street is garbageless. Maybe it is better that way. I reach for the window, push it up with the strength of my shoulder—collapsed into its socket—and slide my way back into the apartment, the floating white box that I occupy alone.



**Beach 6**  
EMMA COMRIE

*Digital photograph; Canon EOS Rebel T3i, 300mm f/8*

# The Greatest Act

AMBER SALIK

*Every great magic trick consists of three parts or acts. The first part is called “the pledge.” The magician shows you something ordinary: a deck of cards, a bird, or a man. He shows you this object. Perhaps he asks you to inspect it to see if it is indeed real, unaltered, normal. But, of course, it probably isn’t. The second act is called “the turn.” The magician takes the ordinary object and makes it do something extraordinary. Now you’re looking for the secret... but you won’t find it, because you’re not really looking. You don’t really want to know. You want to be fooled. But you wouldn’t clap yet. Because making something disappear isn’t enough; you have to bring it back. That’s why every magic trick has a third act, the hardest part, the part we call “the prestige.”*

CHRISTOPHER PRIEST

When my mom was seven months pregnant with me, she got into a heated argument with my dad. It was nothing unusual. These arguments happened before, during, and after my birth, and we all grew quite used to them. But this particular argument, on some night in March, a month before my mother’s 35th birthday and two months before I was born, he got so angry with her that he shoved her across the kitchen. She forcefully collided with the refrigerator. Immediately, fear for her unborn child overtook her; this was the farthest into a pregnancy she had been in eight years since the birth of my sister. She had had nine miscarriages in her life: seven before Lindsay and two before me. Over the years, I remember her telling me how much pain she was in during those pregnancies, how confused she was over what was happening to her body, how after the birth of my sister, the doctors told her she would most likely never be able to carry another pregnancy to term. But they were wrong. She got pregnant again eight years later and this time, the baby kept. I was her miracle baby, the one no one expected to survive. Later, they would learn it was lupus that had been hampering her fertility, robbing her of child after child. It took me years to understand the weight of her experience, how her body had failed her, over and over and over again.

It would take me even longer to understand all the ways my own body could and would eventually and mysteriously fail me.

*Magic is one of the oldest performing arts in the world, in which audiences are entertained by staged tricks or illusions of seemingly impossible or supernatural feats using natural means. These feats are called magic tricks, effects, or illusions. They leave the crowd entertained and enthralled, the magician cloaked in an air of mystery and skill.*

When I was smaller and blissfully ignorant, I remember being at breakfast with my mom and sister. My mom ordered a hot tea with lemon, but as she went to bring the small teacup to her lips, her hand jerked dramatically, forcing the spoon to clatter against the side of the cup, tea spilling out all over hand and table. I watched the quiet look of concentration on her face and the determination she needed to take one good sip of her tea. Beside me, my sister let out a loud cackle. My mom said nothing and put the cup back on the table. My sister said, “Why are your hands shaking so bad? Are you nervous?” My mom remained silent as my sister continued to laugh at her attempts. Ignorant as ever, I laughed with her.

*The term “magic” derives etymologically from the Greek word “magei.” In ancient times, ritual acts of Persian priests came to be known as “mageia,” and then “magika,” which eventually came to mean any foreign, unorthodox, or illegitimate ritual practice. The first mention of magic and an explanation of tricks in a written text appeared in 1584.*

Eleven years later, I noticed a slight tremor in my left hand. I was trying to put in my earrings, but my hands kept shaking and jerking, and I couldn’t get the stud into the tiny hole in my earlobe. I kept trying to jam it in there, until eventually it fell to the floor. I decided I didn’t need jewelry that day. I hid the tremor from my mom for months, terrified deep down that my body was slowly transforming into one that was as dangerously unpredictable as hers.

Almost a month later, I woke up with a gnawing pain in the space where my neck meets my shoulder. I immediately attributed it to sleeping funny, that it was just a crink in my neck that would eventually dissipate. I got up, got dressed, and ate breakfast. My mom drove me to school. Throughout the day, I kept massaging the muscle, trying to relax the pangs, but they only seemed to grow in intensity. By 2:45 p.m., I was on the bus in excruciating pain, spasms shooting every couple of minutes from my neck to my shoulders and back up to my forehead. All of a sudden, I couldn’t move my head; I could neither look to my sides, nor up and down. I could only sit in a sense of blind terror and confusion over what was happening with my body. I sat on that bus and prayed for the pain to go away, but little did I know, it was only the beginning.

*A trick (or, in some cases, an illusion) is the maneuver through which magic can be witnessed. Prescribed daily medication is the method through which I am able to function and survive. Asrah Levitation. Abilify. Assistant’s Revenge. Advair. Aztec Lady. Albuterol. Battle of the Barrels. Ambien. Book Test. Amitriptyline. Bullet Catch. Benadryl. Cabinet Escape. Buspirone. Chinese Linking Rings. Cryelle. Cut and Restore Rope Trick. Claritan. Dagger Head Box. Excedrin Migraine. Detachable*

*Thumb. Flexeril. Devil’s Torture Chamber. Gildess FE. Dismemberment. Hydroxyzine. Elastic Lady. Ibuprofen 800. Indian Rope Trick. Imitrex. Levitation. Lamictal. Impalement. Lithium. Inexhaustible Bottle. Loestrin FE. Metamorphosis. Mobic. Monster Guillotine. Nabumatone. Quick Change. Naproxen. Radium Girl. Nortriptyline. Predicament Escape. Prednisone. Oragmi. Prilosec. Shadow Vision. Prozac. Suspension. Singulair. Squeeze Box. Tegretol. Three Card Monte. Topomax. Table of Death. Tylenol Extra Strength. Twister. Ventolin. Wringer. Xoponex. Spoon Bend. Xyzal. Zig Zag Girl. Zyrtec.*

The symptoms seemed to pile up. I went from a relatively healthy high-school girl to invisibly and chronically ill within the span of a month. On top of the tremors and the spasms came the insomnia. I was sleeping for two hours at a time before I would wake up and take another thirty minutes to fall back asleep. Every muscle in my body ached, even my eyelids and my toes. I began crying more often than not. I noticed a rash across the bridge of my nose if I stayed in the sun too long. I got nauseous and lightheaded whenever I ate, dizzy if I stood up too fast, burning hot in any climate. All of the symptoms sprouted up at the same time, but none of them seemed to be related. We went to doctor after doctor, racked up medical bill after medical bill, but left every appointment as uncertain as ever. I began living a life of waiting, a life cloaked in fear and anxiety. I sat up at night wondering when the next shoe would drop: what else could and would go wrong? I lost all sense of connection to myself. I became a ghost forced to live and function as if I wasn’t constantly experiencing life-altering and inexplicable trauma induced by my body’s own line of defense. I went from breaking down to effectively broken in the blink of an eye. I was a walking trick gone horribly wrong.

*“According to some historians, the oldest trick in the book is more like the oldest trick on the wall. A painting on the interior walls of an Egyptian burial chamber, created as early as 2500 BCE, appears to*

*show two men performing what's known as 'the cups and balls' and may be the earliest record of a magic performance"*

—Matt Soniak, "What's the Oldest Trick in the Book?"

In 2009, the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported that around 133 million Americans (about 45% of the population) have or will develop a chronic disease in their lifetime, that 7 out of 10 deaths among Americans are caused by chronic diseases, and that mental illnesses and chronic diseases are very closely related in that chronic diseases can exacerbate symptoms of depression and depressive disorders can themselves lead to chronic illnesses.

*"A typical cups-and-balls routine includes many of magic's most fundamental effects, such as vanishes, appearances, and transpositions. A convincing performance also requires many of the art's core skills, such as misdirection, dexterity, and audience management. Because of this, learning the cups and balls is often considered an almost complete education in modern magic entertainment."*

—"Cups and Balls," *Magicpedia*

After years of unexplained pain and fatigue, I finally received answers: insomnia; asthma; anxiety disorder; chronic pain disorder; fibromyalgia; arthralgia; migraines; manic depression; Bipolar 2 Disorder; haphophobia; gastritis. Disorder, disorder, disorder, disorder: I was left feeling confused and completely outside of myself. On the one hand, here were the answers I had spent years searching for, the validation that I was not crazy, that all of this was not something I had conjured up from thin air. I had medical proof to back me up. I was not crazy. I was not crazy. I am not crazy. Yet, I felt like something was missing. Betrayal is a funny thing. Your body can turn against you time and time again; still it is your job to take care of it, your job to understand it in a vain effort to prevent it from betraying you again. Isn't it funny how all the proof in the world can still not be enough?

*"Fibromyalgia syndrome is a common and chronic disorder characterized by widespread pain, diffuse tenderness and a number of other symptoms, including but not limited to: chronic pain and fatigue, cognitive and memory problems (sometimes referred to as 'fibro fog'), sleep disturbances, morning stiffness, headaches, irritable bowel syndrome, painful menstrual periods, numbness or tingling of the extremities, restless leg syndrome, temperature sensitivity and sensitivity to loud noises or bright lights. The cause is unknown...It is a chronic condition, meaning it lasts a long time—possibly a lifetime. There is no cure"*

—National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

For days, weeks, months, years, I experience the same routine: undergoing immense pain and trying my best to understand what is happening to body, while keeping it a secret from those around me. Before I know it, I'm nineteen and in my sophomore year of college. I'm out with three friends of mine and we're running late for a party in Brooklyn. I have on four-inch heels and an itty-bitty dress and am trying my absolute hardest to keep up with the group that seems to be miles ahead of me. They don't know the extent of my illness, just that I have bad knees that give me trouble sometimes. It would take too much to explain everything to them, mostly because I don't yet understand it myself. They are good friends but sometimes they forget that I have limitations and sometimes they simply don't care.

"Come on, pick up the pace!" one of my friends calls from a block ahead.

"You know she can't. She's got bad knees—her fibromyalgia!" another shouts back to him. They laugh together as if it was the funniest joke they ever heard.

"Sorry, I don't mean to laugh at you," he says. "It's just crazy to me a nineteen-year-old girl has arthritis. I've never heard of that!" I laugh because it's funny. It still is.

Since my diagnosis, I spend my days charting symptoms, frenetically looking for links between

disparate signs whose only connection is the fact that they are happening to me. I go to the doctor's with a bullet-point list of symptoms, convinced that something new is happening, the likes of which we have yet to encounter together. Sometimes, when I wake up in the morning, there's a tingling in my left foot that doesn't go away for hours. Or three out of five of my muscle spasms happen in my left forearm or left hand. My left ankle was sprained and hasn't healed right since. My left knee is the weaker knee that gives out on a random occasions. And my left eye is the one that gets pink eye more often. I become slowly convinced that the left side of my body is slowly deteriorating, the muscles and nerve endings dying off, and no one is noticing, no one is taking me seriously. Instead they give me medication after medication. They tell me to try physical therapy instead of testing for anything. Because it's fibromyalgia, that's all. It's always just fibromyalgia.

*The curtain rises. There stands the magician, the man of the hour, the god we have all been waiting for. Beside him is his lovely assistant and a large, body-sized cabinet. In his hands he holds three blades. He proceeds to lock his innocent assistant into said cabinet. He slides the blades into the box, one by one, dividing the poor girl into thirds. A volunteer from the audience is called up to the stage to push the segments out into an impossible arrangement. The assistant is seemingly cut into three, her body contorted and held in the three smaller boxes. Then the magician pushes the three parts back to their original position, removing the blades. He opens the larger cabinet door and out walks the assistant, completely unharmed and intact. The crowd goes wild.*

I am in my NYU dorm room, in bed alone, on the phone with my mother and most likely crying. It has been raining for the past three days, and my knees are so swollen and painful that I can't even get out of bed. Throughout this journey of unexplained pain, I have lost my vibrant self and am now giving every ounce of energy I have left trying to retrieve all the pieces that illness has stolen from me. My

mother, at home sixty miles away, listens quietly as I tell her once more how I can longer do this fight with my body. It is becoming too much and I am losing far more than I am winning. She's quiet for a while, just breathing with me. Just when I am about to say goodnight and hang up, she speaks. "It's got to get better than this," she whispers. "What? What do you mean?" I ask. "Life, it's got to get better than this."

*Another wildly popular, yet minimally understood trick is that of the Zig Zag Girl. "This trick is actually quite simple. When the assistant steps into the box, she turns her body sideways so that when the blades go in, they slide right past her body. When the midsection of the box is pushed out, only her hand goes with it, but the black lining of the box gives the illusion that her midsection has been completely shifted. The black stripes on the box are usable space. They are not very visible when viewed from the sides or on TV – thus making the box look smaller."*

—Celine Armstrong, "Answers to 14 Classic Magic Tricks"

Since the first incident with the muscle spasm in my neck, I have had a recurring dream in which I lose my body. What I mean is I shed myself so completely I don't even exist anymore. Layer by layer my skin, my body, my home is whittled away until there is nothing left but the core of me, my essence, the thing that makes me tick and keeps me going when every cell in my body seems to be telling me not to. I have dreamt this time and time again, but still I fail to grasp what message it is trying to relay.

*"It was the art of illusion. They were not magicians, they were illusionists..." The illusions included their own personas. Harry Houdini was born Ehrich Weiss. He 'borrowed' Houdini from the French magician Houdin. His younger brother, Theodore, picked the name 'Hardeen' because it sounded like Houdini."*

—Daniel Kraker, "Houdini Relative Unlocks Some Family Secrets"

My body has changed. Since I first started on medications during my junior year of high school,

I have gained a little more than fifty pounds. The weight has distributed nearly everywhere: my breasts, my face, my thighs, my stomach, my back, everywhere except fun places that need it the most, like my ass, for example. I can no longer fit any of the cute little dresses I used to love. Everyone around me claims they can't see the difference, that I haven't changed that much, that it's all in my head. I play along everytime, smiling, concealing the discomfort, transforming the inner pain into pleasantries. But what they say doesn't matter because I can tell the difference, I can see it. I remember who I used to be, and I can hardly recognize myself anymore when I look in the mirror. I barely even want to look.

I'm beginning to feel like a hypochondriac again, making up phantom symptoms that only exist in my mind. For years, I spent my life waiting for the bottom to drop out, for the other shoe to fall off, for the floor to give way, or whatever other metaphor you want to use and time after time, it did. Over and over again, my body gave out in a new and old ways, inventive and patented, common and uncommon. Even with a dozen diagnoses, I still spend so much time fantasizing and anticipating the next one. Some days, I wonder whether this some elaborate trick I am playing on myself.

*"Brooke Kamin Rapaport, curator of the Jewish Museum's exhibit, points to an archival silent film from 1907 of a bridge jump Houdini did while handcuffed. In the film, Houdini gets stripped down, then chained up by the police. Crowds stand by as he dives over the bridge and into a river. Then, they all wait for him to resurface. They wait with bated breath, counting the seconds that his body remains submerged in the water. As the seconds tick by, their anxiety mounts. Where is he? they wonder. Is he okay? Have we just witnessed the tragic death of the great Houdini? Just as their fear reaches epic proportions, there is movement. 'He [Houdini] comes up with the handcuffs brandished in the air,' Rapaport says. 'There's a great storyline and it's absolutely cinematic.'"*

—Robert Smith, "The Magic of Houdini's Staying Power"

If you think about it, we are all magicians, performing tricks out of necessity and the need to communicate in order to survive. Each and every day, we all do our own kind of magic, a plethora of small, yet meaningful, tricks and illusions. With each rise of the sun, we become magicians, moving through public space in the masks that we use to cope, to cover over our pain, our inner truth. We are all cloaked by some illusion that promises that we are normal, just like everybody else, just fine.

*"I do believe in an everyday sort of magic—the inexplicable connectedness we sometimes experience with places, people, works of art and the like; the eerie appropriateness of moments of synchronicity; the whispered voice, the hidden presence, when we think we're alone."*

—Charles de Lint

# I Have Transformed

KHALAN PENDELTON

I have transformed from a thought to an element, to living matter, into a stature that's most elegant.

I have transformed from an ignorant to intelligent individual who doesn't deal with anything irrelevant.

I have transformed after being transmitted from the heavens down to this lower plane of existence, and I kept transforming while I was in transit, through outer space searching from an inhabitable planet.

I have transformed into something you can't transcribe.

Imma transcend for them telling me that I can't rise.

I have transformed from the day that I was convicted for my transgressions and got transported to prison, sitting on that bus thinking about how I was living.

My life like a savage—blind without a vision.

Wanting something more for myself, I began to listen to the advice people around began giving:

hanging with better crowds focused on better things, reading books 'bout places 'round the world I never dreamed, envisioning possibilities that I could never see, like graduating from college, acquiring a degree.

Now I can be everything in this life that I ever wished and they pissed, 'cause they see me and realize just what they missed.

There are so many things I want to say, but I don't want to ramble on.

So I'm just gonna leave you with this: I have transformed.

# Contributors

**MATÍAS ALVIAL** is a student, originally from Chile, at New York University concentrating in “the aesthetics of commerce,” the intersection of the creative and commercial aspects of business. His studies focus on the relationship between creativity and money, and how artists thrive in a capitalistic society. His work is characterized by the use of vibrant hues and surrealist elements. These characteristics emulate the eccentricity of his creative and curious mind.

**CASSIE ARCHDEACON** is a senior concentrating in the interaction of art and everyday life, and minoring in creative writing. Upon completing her undergraduate degree at Gallatin, she hopes to further her study of writing in graduate school.

**HANNAH BENHAMO** is a freshman at Gallatin studying intersections between aesthetics, wealth and literature.

**EMMANUEL CARRILLO** is concentrating on the ways that space and art interact to promote empathy in urban settings. He is currently continuing his studies at North Park University in Chicago.

**SAM CHENG** is currently looking to pursue photography, international development, human rights and sustainability at Gallatin. She has contributed photographic content for *Washington Square News*, *Embodied* and *Package Free/Trash is for Tossers*.

**ROSALANE CHOW** is currently a first year in Gallatin focusing on art history, studio art and business. She plans to study archaeology in Athens this summer.

**DAVIS CLOUD**'s phone number is (617) 686-8538.

**EMMA COMRIE** is currently a first-year student at Gallatin and has a strong interest in studying social and developmental psychology, media studies and photography. She has been involved with photography and film throughout high school and

her first semester at NYU. She traveled to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil last spring to shoot a documentary about the social and economic impact of the 2016 Summer Olympics.

**MARK ETEM** is concentrating in ‘Innovation by Design’ which sounds really fancy. When he is not attempting to operate all manner of vehicle and walk each continent (as of this writing, helicopters, trains, Oceania and Antarctica remain), he may occasionally write things that make sense.

**HARRY FINK** is a junior from Slidell, Louisiana. His concentration focuses on anthropology, history and environmental science, although he is still working out the details.

**ZAINAB FLOYD** is concentrating in “Afro-Caribbean women of post colonialism through film and fashion.” She is a GUIDE scholar which is a scholarship program that helps high achieving BMCC students with transitioning and succeeding at the rigorous undergraduate liberal arts programs at NYU Gallatin. She has shown work at the Studio Museum of Harlem, and was featured in the *Huffington Post* and *The Jamaica Teenage Observer*.

**RAYVON GORDON** is a 34-year-old creative writer and artist. He was born in Brooklyn and raised in Queens. He enjoys writing poetry, drawing and listening to all genres of music. He plans on publishing his creative writing projects and artistic endeavors in the near future.

**GRACE HALIO** will graduate from Gallatin in May 2018 with a concentration in “intervention in the public sphere through journalism and contemporary art.” Her studies examine the ways in which public art can serve as a means of actionable education in regards to tackling social and climate injustice. Wherever postgraduate life may take her, she will continue to make mixed media art in an effort to create colorful and tangible shared experiences.

**KAYLA HERRERA-DAYA** is a first-year student interested in social conflict of the 20th and 21st centuries in the United States and would like to pursue this through journalism and dramatic

writing. For her, photography is a serious hobby that inspired her interest in journalism and film writing.

**LEZHOU JIANG** is a freshman at Gallatin interested in language, poetics and the inexplicable human soul. He spends more time in the music practice room than doing his actual coursework and sometimes still wonders whether he should have gone to conservatory instead. His novice attempts at photography are a way for him to resurrect his childhood passion for drawing.

**MELISSA KALYONCU** concentrates in “multimedia writing” with a focus on aesthetics and politics. She will graduate from Gallatin in May 2018, and finds writing about herself in the third person to be preposterous.

**MIKUS KANNENIEKS** is a transatlantic photographer based in NYC, currently finishing his degrees in both Courant Institute and Stern School of Business. A mathematician and visual artist at heart, he draws influence from the arts and sciences in his continued exploration of the mystic. 5-8-6

**ANAÏS KESSLER** is a junior in Gallatin concentrating in narrative theory and psychology, and is interested in international story telling through art, literature and writing. She is excited to have a piece published in *The Gallatin Review* after working as an editor for the last two years!

**AERI HWADO KONG** currently studies “expressionism in the modern climate,” focusing on lyrical poetry in the age of technology and cultural diversity. Her interests include visual arts, linguistics, social justice and translation. She will graduate in 2018.

**ELAINE LO** is an interdisciplinary artist and designer and will graduate from Gallatin in May 2018. She studies the intersections between art, technology, and culture and is interested in their relationships to environmental and social justice.

**DERICK MCCARTHY** is a 34-year-old thought leader, opinionator and influencer. He was born and raised in Laurelton, Queens. He has endured many hardships in life, but has managed to overcome

them through his love of learning. His writings focus on expressing his personal experiences and thoughts on life.

**KYLIE MCMANUS** is studying the intersection of art and design with people and cultures. She is currently interested in architecture and how it relates to cultures and communities especially in terms of visual design. This semester, she is studying abroad in Madrid to learn more about art history and architecture internationally.

**SALLY YÉRIN OH** is a clothing designer, visual artist, and sociologist pursuing her interdisciplinary Master of Arts degree in visual communication, social entrepreneurship, art theory, cultural analysis, gender studies and Asian American diasporas. All the while, she is creating a body of work comprised of clothing, fine art, video and poetry. Sally is interested in how the intersection of art, design, activism, and entrepreneurship can be utilized to create positive social change.

**OMAR PADILLA** is a 36 year old from Brooklyn, currently based at Wallkill Correctional. He loves to write poetry and exercise his mental and physical attributes. He is currently in NYU's Prison Education Program working toward getting his associate's degree in Liberal Arts. He writes, “Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to display my work through my art.”

**ARJUN PARIKH** will graduate from Gallatin in May 2018 with a concentration in “African-American studies and government.” He is planning on applying to law school and hopes to become a civil rights lawyer. This is Arjun's first time being published and he is excited to be included in *The Gallatin Review*.

**KHALAN PENDELTON** is a 29-year-old musician and aspiring writer. He was born in Albany, New York and he grew up between New York's capital region and southern New Jersey. He binges classic martial arts films and is an old-school hip hop junkie. He has recently received his associates degree from NYU's Prison Education Program and is looking forward to earning many more degrees.

**TEJAN RAHIM** is a junior in Gallatin whose concentration focuses on photography and how people experience their realities. In addition to photography, he is also interested in other artistic mediums like metal and glass.

**PRASHANTH MOTURI RAMAKRISHNA** is a sophomore studying applied mathematics and cyber security. He spends most of his time working on esoteric projects of minimal usefulness. Occasionally those projects get published.

**LEXI ROTTENSTREICH** is a rising junior at Gallatin, concentrating on film and television writing. Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, she uses her photography as a means to capture the essence of her home and its culture.

**AMBER SALIK** will graduate in May 2018 with a concentration in “creative and alternative healing” and a minor in “child and adolescent mental health studies. Her work has been featured in the Gallatin Arts Festival (2017 and 2018), *Confluence* and *Rational Creature*, and she is excited to see where her art will lead her after graduation.

**IRIS SANG** is concentrating in “film as literature,” mixing film production, cinema studies, comparative literature and creative writing. She has cooperated with Island musician Olafur Arnalds for film projects and was the finalist of Nikon Photo Contest 2017.

**HENRY SHEERAN** studies playwriting, dramaturgy, and German, and just named his colloquium: “Why Tell? Narrating Responsibility after World War II.” He is active as a producer with both Gallatin Theatre Troupe and New Major Records, and would like to thank Matt Rohrer, whose class challenged Henry to break through to new forms and ideas. Keep an eye out for a site-specific play about weightlifting which is in the works.

**BLAIR SIMMONS** is a 3D artist, computer programmer, teacher, freelance designer, playwright and a Gallatin MA candidate who studies performance theory and innovative technology. Her personal 3D

work displayed in this publication concentrates on queerness and bodies. Her most recent play, *Staging Wittgenstein*, was performed at the 2017 Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

**JIMI STINE** is a Gallatin Senior studying narrative design for interactive media. He likes hiking, video games, ice cream and sea otters.

**MIGUEL VOLAR** is an artist who communicates with images, words and sounds. Currently he is studying photography, documentary film and sociology.

**ANNIKA VON GREY** is building a concentration around “Eco-Psychology” with a focus on environmental crisis management. Annika was introduced to her love of poetry writing via her musical project VON GREY.

**WENKAI WANG** is a Gallatin sophomore whose concentrations are philosophy, animation, graphic novels and filmmaking. He published an independent short animation *Bed* last year, and now he is focusing on his new graphic novel *24 Hours*.

**EMILIE WEINER** is a freshman at Gallatin hoping to incorporate the fields of psychology, media, marketing, fine art and social activism into her concentration. She is also planning a minor in environmental science. In the past, she has performed at many poetry slams and readings, and she has shown her art in professional gallery spaces.

**JULIA WILLIAMS** will graduate from Gallatin in May 2020 with a concentration in psychology and criminal justice. Her writing has previously been featured on *Confluence* and in the Gallatin Mental Health Arts Festival.

**SCOUT ZABINSKI** is concentrating in “the psychological quilt of fine art fibers,” and studying the ways psychology links human perception to the history of art and social interactions. She has studied in Florence and works for both the Joanne Artman gallery in Chelsea and hyperrealist painter, Nick Sider, in Harlem.

### A note about the type & design

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