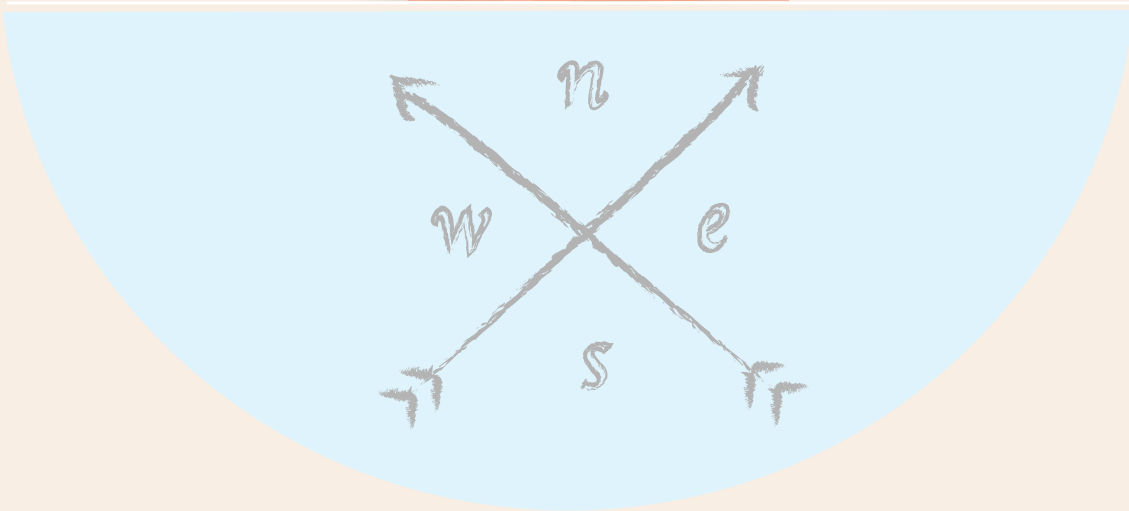
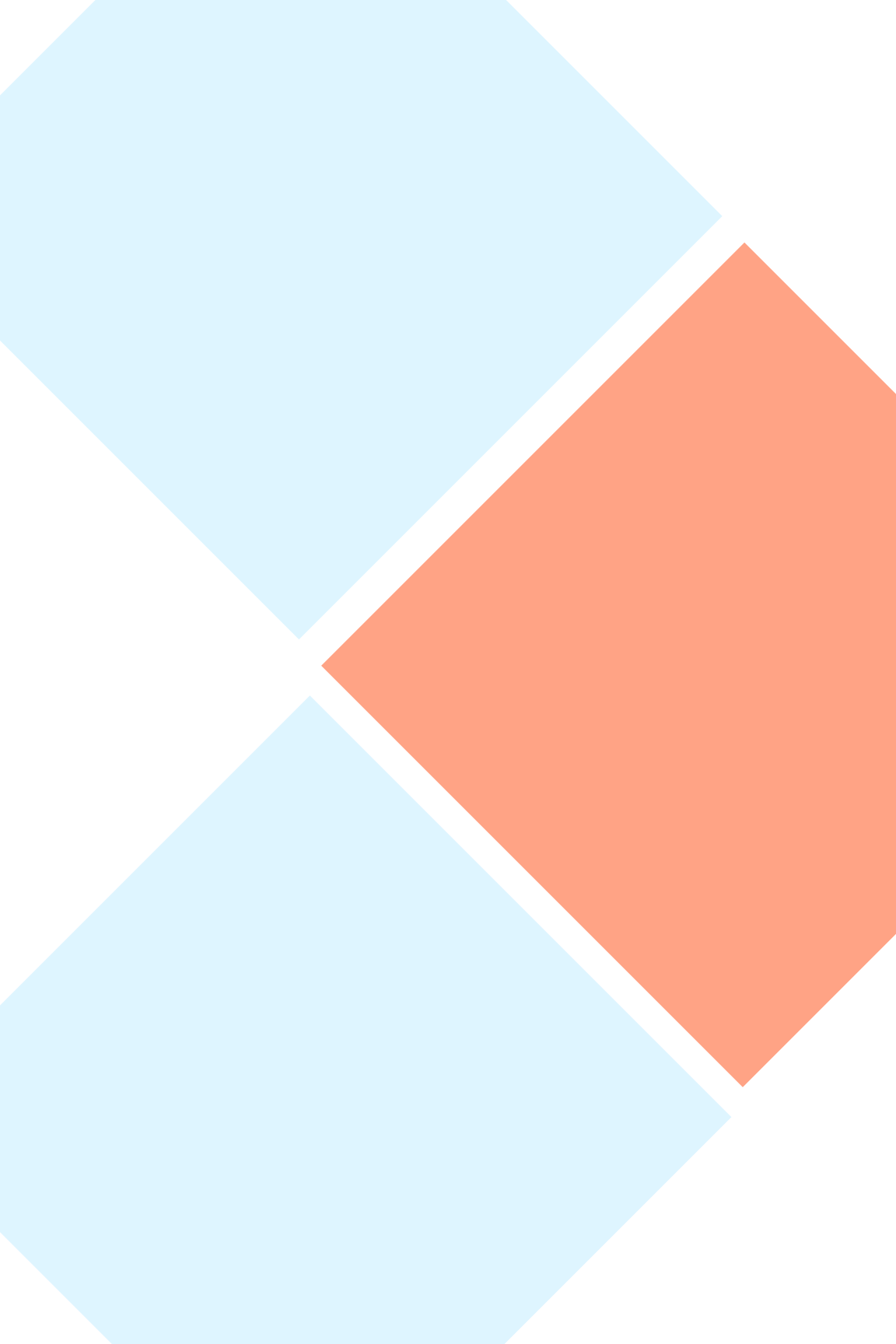


VOYAGER

Literary & Arts Journal



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voyager

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Tell me why your
name lingers on my
tongue each time I
drag smoke into my
lungs and breathe out
fire to the
dim
Moon.

I pray to fade
at night in a
bed of stars that
sparkle
until the lights
go out
and
electric

Dreams flicker.
Decayed ruins
found in
past pulses,
currents
are too
strong for
sleep.

look to the moon

Jessica Mizzi



John Bhatti

mosquito

Earl Owen Minoza

Little more
than a speck,
this cup of life
prevails in
twining us in
ways marriage
cannot make.
In this vessel
miniscule,
both our
bloods do swim,
the sanguine
sac of our seed.
For even in our
eager efforts,
I cannot conceive.

sunny star, dead star

Sabrina Calderon

Red Giant Star

that's what they say you
are. Solar whips at your hips
commanding your ailing armies.

Your vermilion vengeance infects our green marble.

Pigeons covered in pussing blisters and boils
shiny in your blistering sun flail.

STAY INSIDE! WARNING! DEADLY SUN FLARES!

Infectious.

the artist

Earl Owen Minoza

Renders me captive
Under her brush, where
Jade and quartz are ground
Into gold dust, and smiles
Lose their false
Lustre. Comfort
Occupies the charcoal of
her eyes

And my sleepless head
Nestles into the hearth of
her chest, where fire
Gnaws at damp eyes,
Evaporating the drops
Leaking from my spring
Into her warmth.
Quiet in compassion, she
tucks me
Under her blanket,
Erasing the jaded world.

She comes from a different time.
One where she belongs far past the boundaries
of an oil painting hanging on the wall,
with love in her eyes
and lilacs in her hair.
She has novels and ballads laced into
the netting of her skin
and she laughs until she forgets
everything she is forced
to remember.
She lives in an eternal
shimmering Autumn canopy
and has little galaxies
mixed magically into her veins.
She strips herself of
nothing
but the façade she once created.
She could knock down kingdoms,
for though she seems meek,
she is the fire that feeds the dragon.
Yes
she comes from another time.
A regal time,
when the violins ceased to play
as she entered the room,
because she is a Gold Dust Woman.

gold dust woman

Ariana Carpentieri

According to the *Continental*, Adams was "already certain he would be elected President, and if not that, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court." Adams was "a man of many abilities and attainments," and he "deserved that he [should] be elected 'provisionally' unopposed."

Henry Knox and Benjamin Lincoln, two stalwarts of the Continental Congress, came to Philadelphia, warmly endorsing the prospect of Adams as Vice President. Ezra Stiles, president of Yale, wrote Adams a letter informing him that he had received an honorary degree from Yale in recognition of Adams' services at the thought of Adams for Vice President.

In keeping with the unwritten rule of the time that an incumbent president should be unopposed, Adams kept silent. But, in fact, Adams had decided from the time he arrived here that he would accept the presidency, and that rule only, any other rule, "beneath him," as Adams put it, was completely null in a letter to Stiles.

The ranks of political leaders in the country had changed in Adams' absence. Many with whom he had served in the Continental Congress had passed from the scene. Some, like John Jay and John Adams, were recalled from public life; others, like John Jay and John Adams, who had signed the Declaration of Independence were dead, including Stephen Hopkins and Charles Rodney, and much about politics was now in the hands of "new men," younger young men, known to Adams only by reputation. Madison of Virginia was still in his thirties, Hamilton of New York and Fisher Ames of Massachusetts were younger still.

Because Washington, a Virginian, was certain to become President, it was widely agreed that the vice presidency should go to a northerner, and Adams was the leading choice. That Adams could be blunt, stubborn, opinionated, exact, and given to jealousy was understood. Further, many of the "new men," notably Hamilton and Madison, questioned the advantage and loyalty Adams might serve in second place to Washington. It was one of the advantages he was said to have had with Franklin in Paris.

The one person known to have recognized a friendship between Adams and Hamilton was Judith Sargent Murray. She was a young woman from Gloucester traveling with her husband on the *General* when she stopped at

In October, he saw in "the countenance of Mr. Adams" a "pleasing benevolence" she had not participated, as well as the "deep thinking" customarily associated with "the sage, dignified man," and "unbending integrity." Here was a man who had "placed before kings upon an equal level," she wrote. "I expected to be struck with a painful awe, but strange to tell, every idea of distance was entirely banished." Of Abigail she observed: "It is evident she is great as well as the more brilliant virtues are all her own. We are grouped in familiar chat. It was with [difficulty] I remembered they were not friends of ancient date."

Winter approached, and still Adams remained silent on politics. Abigail left for New York to be with Nabby for the arrival of another baby, a second son, John Adams Smith, leaving Adams alone with his family in Paris. "I think of my poor dear and pity him," Abigail wrote from New York to Mary Cranch. But Adams wanted no one to feel sorry for him. Whatever the outcome—whether he was denied the vice presidency or whether the honor was to be his—he would be the winner either way, he insisted. "If they mortify my vanity, they give me comfort. They cannot give me of comfort without gratifying my vanity."

To Jefferson in Paris he wrote, "The new government has my best wishes and most fervent prayers for its success and prosperity, but whether I shall have any thing more to do with it, besides praying for it, depends on the future suffrage of freemen."

BY PROCEDURE established in the new Constitution, the President was to be chosen by "electors" named by the state legislatures. Each elector cast one ballot with the names of two choices for President. The elector with the most votes in the final tally was to become President, the runner-up vice President. In the event of a tie, the decision would go to the House of Representatives, a prospect so distasteful to Alexander Hamilton that he "declared his essential political caution" as to "advise Adams (Admiral Anson) with such a strong show that the electors would not choose Washington. He was not agreed. Adams himself declined precisely. Mr. V. a commander sailing, by day, to Philadelphia, added an additional vote for the bulk

my first shower after you

Natalie DeGregorio

I step into the hot shower
And I put my hands above me
I feel the warm water hit my skin
And shut my eyes
Trying not to remember
What happened last night
I begin to wash my legs
Making sure to get every inch of skin

I move my hands upward
and begin to wash my inner thighs
I remember your lips
And how you smelled like cigarettes
And how you kissed me in between
my legs
I take my bar of soap
Hoping to get rid of every trace of
you
That was left on me

I remember how your tongue
Licked every inch of me
And how your rough fingers
Jabbed right into me
I begin to scrub some more
And cringe at the fact that
I ever let you near me

I move up to my stomach
Where you kissed me all over
When you said you were in love with me
To try to convince me to give it up to you
I take deep breaths and start to wash my
face
I trace my lips with my fingertips
Remembering the way I squirmed
When you bit and pulled on my bottom lip
And the way you tasted like beer

Every time we kissed
I finally make my way up to my hair
And begin to scrub away the smell of your
cigarettes
I take my shampoo and begin to scrub
harder at my head
I try to forget about all of the horrible
And disgusting things that you said
For not giving you exactly what you wanted
But no matter how hard I scrub
I can never wash away your repulsive
memory

From my mind





Clint Walker

it started with the bees

Jennie Franze

I.

Billions, then millions,
then thousands....

Your ranks slowly shrinking.
Wings plucked

one

by

one

as your corpses sizzle
under magnifying glasses and
snap under boots and
fall from the
skies,

yellow

and

black

striped uniforms scattered
on the ground,
beneath the flowerbeds

II.

I see you playing,
clueless as to what is happening
You sit on the floor, toy truck
rolling over the carpet.

You don't know any better.
You are innocent, born
into this way of life.

I walk over to you, kneel
before you, and say,

"Let's play a game, just
me and you. Let's go outside
and play cops and
robbers."

You look at me and
tell me that we have never gone
outside
before. That I always said
it wasn't safe.

"You're old enough now. A
big boy of four. Now here, take
this,
and remember-it's
just a game."

You take the gun from my hand.
You put on your cowboy hat.
We step outside.

"They're hiding in the forests.
If you see a robber,
shoot. Just like this."

You jump back at the sound,
your green eyes hidden beneath
dark hair. Gap toothed and
freckle-faced,
you nod your head.

"It's just a game.
It's child's play."

III.

My dear best friend,

I have had much time to think
about the little things
and big things,
and sometimes even the
medium-sized things.

It has been so long....

I have been counting the days,
waiting for you to
return.

I hope that you will not be too
disappointed when you come
home.

I hope that you wont be
angry
with me.

You see, the wind
has carried dirt into the house
through the cracked
windows and from under the door.
I am unable to dust,
and the house has become quite
filthy.

it gets cold,
sometimes. I miss not
having you to cuddle,

but I know that you are off
doing grand things.

You no longer need me to
fight the monsters under your
bed. You are all
grown up now.

So I shall wait here and
continue to count the days.

I know that one day you will
come back to me
and we will share one last
adventure,
just like you promised.

Love,
Teddy

IV.
Shaky breaths and
trembling limbs,

weak from starvation and
lack of sleep

Calenders are a lost luxury to us-
No one has the faintest idea
of what day it is

Years have galloped past us
alongside of the horsemen,
leaving us to a multitude of endless
eternities,
our minds at the mercy of Mars.

Bare feet, skin
calloused, cracked, and blooied from
running away-men flee from men.
No longer do we
flee out of feat of desolate figures
who lurk in the shadows,
but out of dread that we will become
the new generation of executioners.
We have leapt from the
gallows, starving for
salvation.

Now we stand with the world
screaming

behind us. Ash and smoke
dance in a frenzy as rust crumbles
from the gates that stand tall and
greet us.

Until now, children's laughter
was a faint memory-a taunting
dream.

Now it echoes as the
Black Rider opens
Heaven's parallel and crows,

"Welcome to Wormwood."

V.

Heat, heavy
on my tongue.

Throat dry,
mouth open, gasping,
begging.

Beads of sweat congregated
on my nape and

between my breasts.

My body began to convulse.

You took my hands and asked me
if I was okay.

I closed my eyes,
unable
to look into yours.

The smog was too
thick.

It became hard
to breathe.

I collapsed with the towers
and the trees
and the churches
know that one day will
come back to me
and we will share one l
ast adventure,

just like you promised.

Love,

Teddy

devil's bait

Maya Caban

Thunder clouds
above my head.
I stand alone amongst the dead
Through wind and rain I hear
my name
The devil's taunt drives me
insane
My heart is pounding my
movements steady
My eyes on fire my breath turns
heavy

As darkness surrounds these
horrid grounds
I slowly pass the devils hounds
As ravens fly above the sky
the souls of the dead run and
hide
Through the doorway and up
the stairs
The devil's smile suggests to me
beware.

Why do I pass through this
lonely place?
Was my life not worth God's
grace?
As I think back upon my life

I'm reminded of my sick wife
She died alone without my love
Her hair once smooth, like the
wings of a dove

She gave me all the love she
had
Her skin as rough as an infected
scab
I walked away and never
looked back
She called to me come back,
come back
And now it's time to face myself
The devil waits for me in hell

I know right now what it is to
love
Too late for me my little dove
This horrid place is now my
home
Her place with God is where so
roams
My selfishness have sealed my
fate
because I took the
devil's bait.



the disconnect

Ariana Carpentieri

I promise you
that nothing in this world
can possibly make you
feel more pain
than the day
your heart
and your mind
are in two very
different places.

banshee's wail

Earl Owen Minoza

Death awaits
a couple whose love
is built beyond
tabernacle tables.

a woman whose
body is her country,
where she governs
as both priestess
and sovereign.

a man whose arms
forge to feed a nation,
but whose papers
lack the green
of his thumb.

a girl who kneels
five times a day to
worship the East.

a boy whose hands
search deep for wallets,

not guns.

I look into their smiles
to find tar behind teeth,
but instead find
truth residing there
carven of love and care.

So I wonder why
people prop up
executioners to build
gallows for these
fellows.

I cry out
for justice,
for mercy,
but those faces wear words
dangling from lips
on vulgar wires.
Hateful rhetoric.

I shriek against it,
but even I cannot stop the
Death of a Nation.

cherry blossoms

Sabrina Calderon

Cross legged and blind I sit under a cherry blossom tree.
Feather petals twirl down one by one
and two by two.

One stark white pedal whizzes past
grazing the underside of my nose.
No smell.

Few know that *Prunus serrulata* has no real scent.
The scent is all imagined.
The pulchritudinous sakura.



Gabriel Yum

qu'est-ce que l'amour?

Ariana Carpentieri

She does not love him.

But for the moment, she convinces herself that she does.

The pull of the sun-stained sheets in the old motel are cool against Calantha's bare chest. It creates goose-bumps that outline the marks on her arms. She resides in the City of Love, but she's empty inside. The darkness emanating from the night sky creeps in through the smudgy windows and fills the corners of the square room. The only source of light is coming from the oscillating light bulb, which casts off a Champagne glow. A little pearl-colored plate meant for resting a teacup on sits atop the nightstand with eleven cigarette stubs smashed into it.

"How old are you again, darling?" He desires youth.

"Twenty-two."

She assumes the fetal position as she wipes her chapped lips on the back of her right hand, catching a glimpse of her salmon fingernails. The name on the bottle said "I'd Blush For You," which she thought was sweet and mildly romantic. Calantha painted them specifically for tonight. Earlier today, she fantasized about him taking a curiosity in the name of the shade she carefully selected. But it seems as if he hasn't even noticed her painted nails, because quite frankly, he couldn't care less.

She moves her tongue against the overbite of her upper teeth. The inside of her mouth tastes bitter and lifeless. She rests her flush left cheek on his naked pelvis, as he lies flat, contently staring at the ceiling with his lanky arms roughly folded behind his head. Her long golden tendrils lay in wispy ripples across his wool-less legs.

He has never met Calantha prior to this night, yet he avoids her hazy stare. He busies himself by finding interest in everything but her tired, hazel eyes. Perhaps it's because he knows his wife eagerly awaits his arrival at home. She patiently nurses their newborn daughter while he tends to "a late night meeting at the office to finish up his company's biggest pitch yet." He has been sneakily cheating on her with various different ladies for a little over a year now, but he lost his sense of guilt by the seventh month. He gets a strange pleasure when he sees his pants crumpled up on floors other than the ones in his home.

He sighs graciously as he moves his hands to cover the lackluster flesh stretched thinly across his flat stomach. There, his hand almost brushes against hers. She is hyper-aware of the fact that his pinky doesn't even graze against her skin.

Peering past this stranger's torso and up to his cleanly-shaven face, Calantha is suddenly reminded of how she ended up like this. Her past was perfectly muddled and her single mother was quick to abandon her as a feeble child. Her lack of stability in life never made her adore France in the same way tourists do.

When she was a young girl, her auriferous-colored curls bounced widely as she walked. She would get stones thrown at her by snickering, jealous girls as she hurried up the block to get a quart of milk, which she could seldom afford. The milk was for her secret kitten named Lilou she kept housed in a flimsy cardboard-box in the bushes behind the all-girls academy she attended. Sometimes the milk would be knocked from her hands and spill all over her only pair of shoes, and streak like chalky tears across the sidewalk. Ever since then, Calantha has despised her hair. This is the precise reason she chopped it into a bob-cut at the age of fifteen and felt no regret when watching her darling ringlets fall gently; a stark contrast against the dark floor.

But if only those bratty girls could see her now. She's sure they would have nothing to be jealous of... certainly nothing at all.

She gained her first job as a

model for a rather risqué photo shoot when she was just past seventeen. She wore nothing but a bulbous scarlet bow tied around her swanlike neck, velvet elbow-length gloves as black as a raven's wing, enticing stilettos she couldn't even walk in, and a cigarette holder pressed delicately between her index and middle finger. From henceforth, Calantha was quite captured by all of the dangerous glories this world has to offer. Her body is now simply a temple that she rents out to others.

If she wasn't predestined for this destitute life, Calantha would've loved to have been a writer. And damn, is she good at it. She is able to create full life-stories of beautiful tourists she sees in local cafés. She wishes her eyes would match their level of excitement about trivial matters, but she feels no sense of motivation to see things from a clearer perspective. So she continues to spend her days idly sipping from a clouded mug of bitter black coffee, writing her brilliant stories in a worn leather notebook that will never grace the eyes of another living soul.

"It's getting late, I need to get going," he opens his wallet, getting ready to pay her. Inside there is a picture of him and his wife with the baby on her hip between them, standing in front of the glittering Eiffel Tower on a clear night.

"She's very beautiful," Calantha remarks. Once spoken, she's unsure if she means his wife or the baby.

He closes his wallet quickly,

suddenly conscious of what he is doing here. "A woman like that only happens once in a lifetime, you know?"

Calantha doesn't know, but she hopes one day she will. She shakes her head.

"Eh, well maybe sometime you'll understand, kid."

Once he pays, Calantha leaves the dainty motel in Marseille long before the incandescent sun begins to peek past the horizon line. She returns home to her lonesome apartment in the 18th Arrondissement, where she's merrily greeted by a much-older Lilou that leaves amber hairballs across the floor in her wake.

The days leisurely pass while Calantha sits in chosen solitude. The apartment's spacegrey walls adorned with miscellaneous pieces of art encompass her until she decides to blindly turn on the television for white noise. Or maybe she sits with her naked thighs pressed against the cold tiles of the bathroom floor. Her forehead is now pressed into the palms of her hands as her shaded eyes melt and become one with that little pink plus-sign staring back at her. Mocking her—just as everyone else has in her life.

This make her heart sink, because she knows she will never see the quick lover from that rendezvous ever again.

Oh, but this is not a lover. She does not love him.

She scarcely even knows what love is, aside from adoring eyes on

movie screens.

And she's not fit to be a mother.

For how can Calantha ever come to love another, when she does not even know how to love herself?

* * *

Her pants fit differently and her stomach is bulging just a little bit, a hardly noticeable swollen peach under her navy blue sweater. It's undetectable to the human eye—but she is always aware of it's presence. It is there, festering. Growing. The wool of her sweater is unraveling on her left wrist. She's sitting with her head down, focusing on keeping her breath level as her pen glides messily across stark white papers. It's been three months since her period left her alone, and she spent this time collecting tip money from a sleazy bar down the road from her apartment. Saving every penny she possibly could for this moment.

Only on the cusp of twenty-two, and she feels as if her life is being swallowed by an ocean she has only ever seen in pictures. One she dreams of seeing in real-life.

Calantha took the train to get here. She never had a reason to come to England before, but she heard in passing once that they got the job done better. Cleaner than the underground places they had in France.

Back at the girl's academy, she only had one friend, whose name was Adeline. Before Calantha left school at 17 to spiral down the rabbit hole of risqué modeling, she spent the majority of her time with her only

friend, desperately wanting to escape the terrible school they were bound to.

Back at the girl's academy, she only had one friend, whose name was Adeline. Before Calantha left school at 17 to spiral down the rabbit hole of risqué modeling, she spent the majority of her time with her only friend, desperately wanting to escape the terrible school they were bound to.

It was them against the world.

Both girls were ostracized by their peers because they loved the arts. The other girls at school would maliciously mock them. Calantha had hair they envied. Adeline had glasses shaped like bulky tortoise shells and was an insanely beautiful artist, painted mostly flowers and lush landscapes.

Once when Calantha was walking back to a table with her lunch food, they tripped her. Her body-weight slammed onto her left hip and she braced her fall with the palms of her pale hands. Her milk spilled in a splotchy mess, her sandwich came undone, and her apple rolled halfway across the room.

At the sight of this, Adeline snapped. She came to Calantha's defense, pushed and pulled the hair of the brat that tripped her best friend. No one expected the girl with the glasses to have such fire inside of her. Because of the outburst, both Adeline and Calantha got punished. Pantyhose ripped down, skirts shoved up, bent over the hardwood table while the Mother Superior, Sister Madeline, beat their

bare behinds with a long ruler for ten agonizing minutes straight. Afterwards, Calantha was free to go. But because of her aggression, Adeline was locked in the basement for six hours.

She never spoke of what happened down there, no matter how many times Calantha asked if she was alright.

Calantha taps her pen against the clipboard. Today, her nails are painted a plum bruise called "Nightshade," a color she got for cheap at the drugstore.

She knows what she's doing now is for the best.

After filling out what she needs to, she hands it in and returns to her seat, scribbling furiously in her leather notebook about how the air smells like metallic dust and linoleum. The waiting room feels coolly thick and she can hear the back and forth footsteps of the dentists above her. This place is kept secret by dental signs and smiling teeth.

"Calantha Jaillet?" Her name is called. She stands, knees crack as she pushes herself towards the woman dressed like a nurse. But for all she knows, this may not even be a real nurse, and her outfit can easily be scrubs from a costume. Calantha silently walks behind her as she says something in a deep English accent. But Calantha doesn't quite catch it because her internal thoughts are too noisy. She is led to a room with pale walls and an equally as bland chair staring at her

from the middle of it.

She settles down uncomfortably, propping her feet up on the little footrests.

"The doctor will be in, just a moment."

She nods, remaining silent as her head pounds with thoughts. Is that her heart slamming out loud? The rush of the blood crashes through her veins, tidal waves overtaking her insides. For a moment, she almost feels her peach swell a little larger. The humming of the fluorescent lights overhead match the buzzing in her ears.

This is for the best, she thinks to herself, working to drown everything out.

Lightning strikes in her bones when the door opens and the doctor steps through, closing it slowly behind her. She looks down at the clipboard in front of her, then gives Calantha a small talk in which she can only nod to. What words are being said? The Doctor's mouth is moving in slow-motion. Of course Calantha understands and speaks English, but the hurricane within her body prevents her from being able to properly communicate back.

"I'll be right back, I just need to go get a few things. But just know there is no going back after this."

Abruptly, everything goes dead inside of her and this is all Calantha hears. As the doctor closes the door, Calantha grabs her bag and bolts out of that God-awful chair.

What a hideous chair to end a life in. She runs as fast as she can out of the underground clinic, pumping her arms and legs as if she needs to escape a demon that's trying to soil the precious thing she has growing inside of her.

When she has tired herself out, she presses her back against the brick wall of a building that sells kitchen supplies, and she grabs at her stomach.

"I'm sorry, I am so, so sorry." She pleads, running her fingers in fast circles over her seemingly flat tummy. "I can't hurt you, I'm sorry for thinking I could. Please forgive me, please forgive me...please, please..."

She holds herself until her breathing levels and the ocean within her becomes calm once again. When the shaking stops and her mind is clear, she feels as if she never wants to remove her hand from her abdomen. Suddenly, what she has growing inside of her is so precious that she can't think of bringing harm to it. It took her this long to realize she wants to keep it, and now she never wants to let it go.

Maybe this means she won't feel so alone.

"Come on, let's go home."

* * *

When Calantha finds out she is having a boy, she's ecstatic and immediately takes a walk to a small shop not too far from where she lives that sells baby items. She's been saving up for a while now, and her

financial situation better than it has ever been. Not great, but better. She picks out everything blue that she thinks is darling, and adds it to her basket. Wool socks, soft sweaters, fuzzy bears, little onesies. She never realized before how incredibly tiny babies bodies are. She thinks it's magical.

A warm older woman wearing a matching pearl necklace and earrings saunters over to her. She works at the store because she has a shirt on that says as much.

"I can see you're having a boy!" Her voice trickles like honey.

"Yes, I am." Calantha says, never before feeling as proud as she does in this moment.

"How far along are you?" "

A little over six months." She picks up a book with zoo animals on the cover and adds it to her basket.

"That's wonderful! Any names picked out?"

Instinctively, her right hand feels for her much bigger belly. She loves to feel his warmth under her hands. "I want to name him Ames. It means 'friend,' which is special to me, because he's going to be my little buddy."

The woman smiles, "that's such a beautiful name! Is he your first?"

"He is! I'm so excited to be a mom, I never would have guessed it would feel like this."

"I can see it in your eyes, love. Let me tell you, I have three of my own—all grown now,

two of which have babes. But the secret is, the feeling you have now will never go away if you play your cards right."

Calantha feels like a light is illuminating from within her, "I hope so!"

"Well, congratulations my dear, be sure to bring him around here after he arrives!"

"I will, thank you!"

Calantha pays for the things she selected, and walks towards home with a smile stretched like a string of lights across her face. For the first time in her life, she is genuinely happy. A gentle breeze sways her bright blond hair, and Ames makes little kicks from inside her. This is her world, and never before has she been so happy to live in it.

* * *

Adeline changed. She cared less about school. She began sneaking out at night to see the newspaper boy who was bad news. Her artwork changed, became more vulgar. Human bodies contorted into unnatural positions, flowers blooming from various orifices, eyes always vacant.

One night before bed, Adeline whispered, "I'm leaving this place."

Calantha blinked up at the blank ceiling. "What are you talking about?"

"I'm running away, I can't stay here anymore." She sniffed heavily.

Calantha couldn't process why the one person who cared about her

was going to leave.

"But why?"

"I'm two months pregnant," she paused to take a deep breath after this heavy announcement. "And it won't be long until the Sisters find out and punish me for my sins. I must go. I love you, so. Take care of yourself."

Just like that, Adeline fled under the thick blanket of darkness. Left her artwork behind with her best friend, and never looked back.

One year later, Calantha read in the newspaper that Adeline drowned her baby before making its body into a lifelike version of her artwork. The flowers were a gruesomely beautiful touch. Right after she perfected her final masterpiece, Adeline took her own life.

The newspaper was delivered by a different boy that time.

She wakes up abruptly at 5:46am, panting heavily.

Something is wrong.

She has stabbing pain in her lower abdomen, like little knives stabbing her relentlessly from down below. Her back is in agony, too. Nervously, she shrugs clothes on. For the past few weeks her vision has been blurry, so she squints as she looks at the number for a cab.

She is nearing month eight, and she knows it's too soon for labor.

Can this be it, though?

She gasps heavily with each blow, checks her bed to see if her water broke.

No wetness.

She hurries to pack a bag and Lilou hides under the bed, not sure of what's going on. Calantha rushes out the door when the cab honks on arrival. Her fits of pain makes the drive to the hospital feel ten-years long, but somehow, she gets there sooner than she thought she would. Time works in mysterious ways.

The following hours are a blur for her. The lights above are too bright. Needles prick and probe her skin. She repeatedly fades in and out of consciousness, and she's too weak to lift her hand to feel her stretched belly like she so desperately wants to.

At 12:11pm, she awakens. She can tell her body's in pain, but she can't feel much of anything yet. A nurse is looking down at her.

"Where's...Ames?"

The nurse rushes from the room and brings the doctor back with her a moment later. He has been OBGYN since the day she decided to keep Ames, so she's grown comfortable with him. But as he takes his glasses off and slowly approaches the bed, her heart sinks into the depths of her stomach.

"Miss Jaillet, you experienced a Placental Abruption..."

After that, the facts fall into place and everything else crumbles. Upon hearing the news, she lets out a howl. Her body shakes, and the nurse holds her, lovingly. Or maybe out of pity, Calantha couldn't

care to tell.

"Please...please let me hold him. Please? I want him in my arms." Mucus runs past her lips.

The Doctor shoots the nurse a look, who nods in response and leaves the room. When she returns, she's holding a tiny blue bundle. Carefully, she sets it down into Calantha's outstretched arms.

For the moment, she acts as if he is alive. She sings him as French lullaby, notes how they cleaned him up nicely, tells him how handsome he is, ignores his blue lips, feels his soft skin with her fingertips, memorizes every tiny detail of his face. She burns this moment into her memory. He is all she has in the world.

She curses Adeline for taking the life of her own child. How could a mother do such a thing?

She wonders if she should try to track down the father, tell him he has a son that left as quickly as he came. Maybe he would help her bury him.

She thinks about how she can never to bring Ames to the store to meet the warm saleslady, and that when she goes home, she'll have to return all the blue things she was so happy to buy. Maybe it'll make Lilou sad.

She hopes Ames is able to see the ocean she has never seen.

Calantha tries to swallow the lump in her throat before she parts ways with him for good.

"This. This is what it feels like."

The nurse has glassy eyes, "What, dear?"

"This pain. This feeling like you are being eaten alive, like there's a hole inside of you that demands to be filled. Like your heart is running a marathon, only to trip and fall, then stand up and run again. Like the whole universe is exploding from inside of you," she pauses to smile through the tears while looking down at her baby's still face. "So this is how it feels to love."



Akil Andrew

doomsday someday: imaging the apocalypse

Summer Lee

To imagine the apocalypse is to plan for the future. Life on Earth faces a multitude of opponents, a great number of them being manmade. Cataclysm via weapons of mass destruction would result in a nuclear holocaust and the collapse of civilization, and it appears more and more to be a distinct possibility. As of March of 2017, North Korea has launched four missiles in what was observed to be "practice" for nuclear war. The presence of bomb shelters and the threat of the world's end were no curiosity to Americans during the Cold War, and to many survivalist groups, they have never gone out of fashion. However, an idea of apocalypse that is unique to this generation is the ever-worsening threat of global warming and climate change. The steps that mankind takes in the present to reverse our harm to the environment in the past is crucial in determining whether or not we have a future. However, regardless of the method, the apocalypse is inevitable - but humanity plays a large role in determining how and when.

Our going away party is at midnight, and we are two-and-a-half minutes removed. Metaphorically speaking, anyway. With midnight symbolizing lights-out for the Earth, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has used the concept of the "Doomsday Clock" to convey our proximity to the destruction of civilization since 1947. In the year it first appeared, two years after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, the most promising ticket to the apocalypse was a nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. Now, although nuclear weapons are still listed as their primary suspect of doom, global climate change is a now close second. In 2007, the Bulletin officially considered climate change as a potential cause for catastrophic disaster, believing that emerging climate-changing technologies may engender the end of life on Earth. In a statement on their website, the Bulletin advises that "wise public officials" must act to guide humanity away from the apocalypse - and if they fail to do so, the job must fall on "wise citizens". Despite some rare and valiant effort by few politicians, the government has yet to encourage significant change that could postpone the tribulation that we are fast-approaching. Unfortunately, it doesn't appear that citizens will step up to the plate. According to one Pew Research Center poll of registered voters in 2016, the environment was only twelfth in importance as a political concern - far behind concerns such as the economy and terrorism.

In November of 2016, the United States of America elected a president who is a climate change denier - the repercussions of which may be the final nail in a biosphere-sized coffin. While on the campaign trail, Trump stated, in regards to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "We are going to get rid of it in almost every form." He went on, "We're going to have little tidbits left. But we're going to take a tremendous amount out." True to his word, President Trump plans to slash funding to the EPA, which would reverse years of national progress

towards restoring our environment. His current plan would cut the EPA's environmental justice and climate protection programs by more than two-thirds. Any funding related to climate change research, regulations, and restoration is at risk of being eliminated. According to their own website, the EPA has been taking many steps towards addressing climate change, through actions such as collecting greenhouse gas emissions data and engaging in international activities to advance climate change science. All things considered, the president's nationalistic attitude seems disingenuous if he is truly ready to abandon efforts to reverse damage to our global ecosystem. The United States will not be spared.

The climate change crisis is projected to affect human life - and health - drastically and irreparably. Virtually all agricultural and livestock will not be able to withstand extreme temperature and precipitation, severely limiting our ability to grow food. Heat waves will sweep the nation, leaving those who are most vulnerable to extreme heat, such as young children, the elderly, and pregnant women to perish from heat stroke or dehydration. Risk will be even greater in large metropolitan areas due to the "heat island effect" - a phenomenon where air temperature in highly populated cities is several degrees hotter than surrounding areas. Higher temperatures will also increase levels of ground-level ozone, decreasing air quality and potentially acting as a death sentence for asthmatics. In response to intense heat, energy and air conditioning demands will also rise, only further exacerbating air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Warmer weather will lead to increases in the transmission of both vectorborne and waterborne

diseases, such as the West Nile Virus, Lyme disease, and Typhoid Fever. This will most severely affect low income communities, immigrant communities, outdoor workers, and those with disabilities. All of these concerns, however, would only apply to those who survive the flooding of coastal cities due to sea level increase and extreme weather events. The sea level is projected to rise from one to four feet by the year 2100, and possibly even higher in the Northeast due to land subsidence. It is not difficult to imagine climate change as a slow and painful apocalypse.

In the case of an end-of-the-world scenario, the only ones to survive may be a group of the super-wealthy, who view the prospect of doomsday as a real-world sci-fi movie adventure. Steve Huffman, co-founder and C.E.O. of Reddit, gave a voice to a fear shared by many extremely affluent Americans. In an interview with Evan Osnos for *The New Yorker*, he said, "Is the country going to turn against the wealthy? Is it going to turn against technological innovation? Is it going to turn into civil disorder?" Osnos also wrote that wealthy survivalists have their own private Facebook groups, which they use to exchange tips on escape methods, weapons, and even gas masks. Many of the ultra-rich feel as though it's only a matter of time before they are forced to take refuge due to political uprising, or even an environmental disaster. Luckily for them, there is a business to be made out of bunkers for billionaires. Larry Hall, the C.E.O. of the Survival Condo Project, has converted an underground Atlas missile silo into a fifteen-story luxury apartment complex capable of withstanding a nuclear strike. The silo features twelve private apartments, ranging in cost from

three million to one-and-a-half million dollars - and he has sold every unit. Its apartments feature high-end appliances and electronic windows, which are essentially 55-inch television screens which display live feeds of the world above ground.

Hall claims that the complex has completely renewable food and energy sources, so that its residents could theoretically function indefinitely. Hall also told Osnos he was working on private bunkers for clients in Idaho and Texas. However, in the case of the apocalypse, could the wealthy truly just run and hide? In a response to Osnos' article published by Outside Online, Wes Siler points out that in a nuclear fallout, the silo would be a giant target to other survivors. He believes that the true survivors of doomsday won't be millionaires and billionaires, but those who develop real skills and have real-life experience will emerge superior.

With or without the presence of humanity, the Earth will eventually be doomed. The History Channel television series, *Life After People*, took on the job of imagining the hypothetical effects on Earth if all of mankind were to vanish into thin air. Specialists on the show theorized that after one month without humans, the water used to cool nuclear power plants would have evaporated, leading to a series of nuclear disasters around the world. After the fact, however, all the world's ecosystems would embark on an eon-long journey of self-healing which would never be completed. According to an article published by Nautilus, titled "How to Survive Doomsday", the Earth has roughly 500 million years left of being able to sustain life. Authors Michael Hahn and Daniel Wolf Savin explain the sun will become ten percent brighter every billion years, causing

atmospheric carbon dioxide levels on Earth to drop in attempt to cool its surface. Although plants are happy in the presence of abundant sunlight, gaseous carbon dioxide is also a crucial ingredient in photosynthesis. Cool season plants, referred to as C3 plants, would be unable to survive such a stark drop in carbon dioxide and rise in temperature, and they would eventually become depleted. This would then leave C4 plants to spread into their ecological niches, which are better suited for heat and require less carbon dioxide. However, once the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide drops below ten parts per million, C4 plants will perish as well, ultimately causing the end of life on Earth. Without autotrophs to consume or to replenish atmospheric oxygen, fauna will meet their doom. Once oxygen becomes a non-renewable resource, animals would asphyxiate within a few million years.

Professor Stephen Hawking has proposed one solution to avoid the extinction of the human race on Earth - and that is simply to leave. "I believe that life on Earth is at an ever-increasing risk of being wiped out by a disaster, such as a sudden nuclear war, a genetically engineered virus, or other dangers," the physicist wrote in the afterword of *How To Make A Spaceship*. "I think the human race has no future if it doesn't go to space." Hawking's proposition would require the establishment of self-sustaining colonies on other planets, which he foresees being a possibility in the next century. According to Elon Musk, CEO, and CTO of SpaceX, human civilization has a much greater chance of survival if we become a multi-planet species. "If we're a single planet species, then eventually there will be some extinction event," he claimed.

Whether Musk's dream to colonize Mars is attainable or not, he certainly is correct in that statement. In the face of global nuclear annihilation, all of humanity would cease to exist. Both our past and our future would disappear in the time it takes to complete a cataclysm.

It falls on mankind to calculate methods of postponing the apocalypse, while still remaining hopeful despite the possibility that it is nigh. The only scenario in which the world's end is truly impending would be nuclear warfare, or a natural cataclysmic event that is out of our hands - in a fate similar to the dinosaurs. Although the current political climate may have us spooked, nuclear winter is not likely. The issue of climate change, on the other hand, grows increasingly more insurmountable. Each day, humanity contributes more towards the demise of our planet out of selfishness and ignorance. If climate change is not stopped in its tracks, we may have no option but to heed Stephen Hawking's advice. Colonizing other planets may or may not be possible - that is up to scientists to determine. However, before considering transplanting life on Earth, it is both most practical and most ethical to attempt to heal the biosphere. It is our duty as citizens of the Earth to demand better, to ensure that there is a future for humanity.



water

Kelley-Michelle Hyatt

I was ten years old when I witnessed someone die for the first time. I was on vacation in Lake George with my family when we heard the screams of a woman from across the street. My dad and I were playing volleyball with a multicolored beach ball in the pool while my mom and sister were sunbathing on the lounge chairs. We looked across the street to the Econo Lodge. A woman was leaning over the pool and she was screaming, "He's drowning! Someone help!"

My father rushed out of the pool, he grabbed a towel from off of the railing and ran across the street. These hotels always had a "Swim at Your Own Risk" sign plastered to the gates on the pool. My mom, who was in the middle of eating a Cheeto, screamed after my dad. I don't exactly remember getting out of the pool and running over to him. But somehow I was across the street, standing at the edge of the pool watching my dad carry this big man out of the water.

When I was seventeen years old I nearly drowned. A rip tide caught my foot and dragged me out into the ocean at Jones Beach. I had been cautious at first but eventually my cousin Matthew and I stopped paying attention. The water was freezing as it grazed my sand covered toes and I watched the giant waves build up and crash over. The ocean was dotted with the heads of people like fishing bobs. A few of those bobbing heads were

my cousins. I watched these people laugh and struggle against the waves. I hugged myself tightly as I felt the sun's heat scorch my skin. I saw younger kids dive into the water without hesitation. I scratched at the peeling skin on my shoulders.

I lifted my right foot up and traced designs in the wet sand. I sat on my knees and picked up the tiny clam shells that littered the sand among other garbage. I forced myself back up and walked a little deeper into the water. My shins froze, my body broke out in chills but I was thankful for the cooling sensation. The bottoms of my feet were raw from walking on hot pavement the day before. I opened my eyes and looked around me again. The waves were a little tougher against my body but I felt stronger. I watched a multi-colored beach ball float by me unattended.

It took three men, including my dad, to get the man out of the pool. He was a tall, rounded African American man at least in his forties. His kids, a boy and girl, clung to each other. Their mom, who was the woman who had been screaming, kneeled beside her husband's body. My mom and sister were beside my dad who was trying to wake the man up. The sun seemed extremely hot. My mind was torn between wanting to see what happened and diving back into the pool.

"He said his chest hurt. He thought it was heartburn." His wife blubbered. "He said he was fine. Said

he was okay. He was just hot.”

“He was having chest pains?” My dad asked. “Did someone call 911?” He asked the other people.

“Ambulance is on the way.” Some guy in a soaking wet yellow T-Shirt and black swim trunks said. He pushed his hair out of his eyes.

“He was fine. He just stopped swimming and went under.” The woman cried again.

My dad had started to perform CPR on the man. His kids began to scream and cry for their dad. My mom held my sister tightly and she tried to pry us away from the motel and back to ours. My eyes turned towards the pool again. I watched an unattended multi-colored beach ball float around on the still waters of the pool.

Matthew stood beside me and held my hand as we walked deeper into the water. He understood my fear and he was patient with me. My aunt called me a sissy because her ten year old daughter was in the ocean swimming just fine while I had stood at the shoreline quivering like a Chihuahua. Matthew stood beside me and protected me from the larger waves. The water felt so good against my thighs. Slowly my body cooled down. The top of my head wanted to taste the salty water. It wanted to go under and listen to the water fill my ears and nose. However, my fear planted my feet into the muddy sand again. Matthew was sweating and nearly sticking to me. I watched his eyes scan the water. He was hungry for the cool water too.

“I’m not leaving you until you feel safe. We can go back to the tent if you want. You don’t have to do this.” He said calmly.

“I got this.” I exhaled.

We were hit by wave after wave, but we did not fall down. In fact, we both started laughing as we crashed into each other. The water came up and splashed my shoulders. I spit out some of the water and let go of Matthew’s hand. A little girl nearby started to scream. The salt water had got into her eyes. Her mother rushed over and dragged her out of the water.

The man was rolled over onto his side and he vomited all over my dad. It was this thick red-like substance. I could smell it from the edge of the pool. My dad didn’t care. He was a volunteer EMT and the chief of our town’s fire department. He continued to perform CPR on the man. The man’s wife was beside him and she was screaming. The other men tried to pull her away; explaining he needed space to breathe. Other pool patrons popped their heads out of their motel doors. Some tourists even stood outside of the fence to see what the hell was happening.

I moved away from the calm pool to behind my dad. The man’s face looked weird. It was contorted. His brown eyes shot open but they weren’t seeing anything. My dad’s face was dripping with sweat and tears. My mom came up behind me and pulled me away. She said something about how it was none of my business. The daughter was sobbing for her daddy. Her brother held her, not letting her run over. Her screams burned my ears like the sun burned my skin. I think we all knew it was too late.

I was waist deep in the water, back to the waves, watching the mom calm down her daughter. She tore open a Poland Spring Water and dumped it into the girl’s eyes. She only cried more. I turned around just in time for

a massive wave. It broke too early or I was too far out. Either way, Matthew tried to warn me but it was too late. The wave crashed on me and I went under. I felt the ocean floor scrape my back. Someone stepped on me. I grabbed at the muddy sand. I scrunched my eyes as tight as possible. My head broke the surface but my lungs filled with water.

I was sucked back under and pulled back into the ocean. It was like that cliché movie scene: the character sticks his/her foot out of the covers and a monster grabs the foot. The character is pulled from the bed and dragged under it. The ocean grabbed my feet and pulled me back out even farther. Every time I broke the surface I had just one second to breathe before being pulled under. I saw Matthew, panicked, and struggling to fight the waves to get me.

I closed my eyes and went under again. My chest was burning like heartburn. My body went limp. I was too tired. I thought maybe it was too late.

"No! No! No!" The woman screamed. "Please keep trying! Please! Ronnie! Oh my Ronnie." She sobbed.

My dad leaned back and wiped his forehead. "I'm so sorry." He muttered.

Ronnie was on his back, eyes open to the burning sun, mouth agape, basking in the heat. My mom covered my eyes but I pulled away from her. I could hear the ambulance coming. The manager of the hotel was beside my dad and Ronnie. He looked everywhere but at Ronnie. Ronnie's wife and kids clung to each other. Ronnie had most likely suffered a heart attack and drowned.

My mom pulled me away from the pool and back to our motel across the street. Jeff, the owner of our motel, gave us our room for free. We never heard from them. My dad was quiet the rest of the day. He walked back over to us in his vomit stained T-shirt, went into the motel room to shower and take a nap. I stared into the water. The sun reflected off the water and burned my eyes. I jumped into the deep end and sunk towards the bottom. I held my breath until my chest burned. I never saw Ronnie's family again.

Matthew reached me somehow. Then he pulled me up and let me cough up salt water over him. I started to cry on his shoulder. People around us asked if we needed the lifeguard. Someone handed me a boogie board to float on. I clung to the board as Matthew pulled me. The waves were getting worse. The sky darkened and the lifeguards started to blow their whistles. My chest was burning. I could not stop thinking about Ronnie.

I never returned to Jones Beach after that incident. Extended family often invited me but I never wanted to go back. However, my family returns to Lake George every July. It is a tradition since I was around four and we stay at the same motel – The Lake Haven, which is still across the street from the Econo Lodge. I learned to swim in that pool. Every year I lean on the railing and stare across the street. I watch the wind gently blow the flower baskets that hang from the railings. The pool I learned to swim in ended up being the pool where I developed a fear of drowning. Every year I jump into that pool, try to sink to the bottom and hold my breath. I always think of Ronnie.

best we could

Theresa Dimaulo

Five bodies cramped perfectly in a two bedroom apartment. The paint on the white doors chipped and faded, the floors lined with cheap linoleum and tired blue carpet. A black box television inside a wooden hutch. Nothing else in the living room but a striped blue couch. The room wasn't big, but we all seemed to fit just fine. The pink bedroom was home to the two of us, my sister and me. The bottom trundle bed was all mine; the bed consumed the entire bedroom when it was pulled out. Her bed always seemed better than mine; she had the real bed. The second bedroom was equally as packed with a large sleigh bed pushed against the right wall and a blue race car bed beside it. There was a computer desk squished in there somewhere too, although I can't recall where. The bathroom was just large enough to stand in, a toilet pressed against the wall and a yellowed shower sported an awkward window. With a living space so tight, I used to find myself locked in that bathroom, sitting on the tile floor with a book. It was the quietest and most private room in the apartment.

I never realized just how cramped we all really were in that apartment. If a friend from school were to come to my "house" they would probably have laughed, or cringed. It was difficult for me to understand why I wasn't allowed to have friends visit; I always thought that my mother was just being cruel. Now I can see that my mother was ashamed, she knew everything I didn't at the time; that the parents of my classmates wouldn't want their child at my apartment. I can hear them now, snickering about the paneled walls in the kitchen, the linoleum tile peeling at its seams, the odd entry way that placed you in the center of the kitchen. I didn't realize then that my state of living was something out of the ordinary, or that my peers in their green uniforms and knee-high socks probably each had their own bedroom and likely more than one bathroom. These aren't the types of details that stuck out to me as a child; I wore my green and yellow jumper just like the rest of the girls at my small private school. I played just like them, I ate my paper bag lunch like them; I was one of them. My parents worked hard so that they could send my sister and me to the small Catholic school in town. We attended St. Paul's for three years until we couldn't afford it any longer; my brother would be entering kindergarten that year and they couldn't manage the tuition for the three of us. That was the moment when I learned that my family was struggling

financially, even the nine year old-me knew that it was more than just private school that we couldn't afford.

Both of my parents worked a lot, and when they weren't home I was often with a close friend of my mother who earned the title of Aunt Mary. My mom was a hairdresser; she worked at a local salon most days of the week, and in the rare case where she would work a weekend, my brother, sister and I would tag along. We would snack on the bagels intended for customer, and bounce from one hair station to another. The smell of hairspray still lingers in my memory. My father worked long days, sometimes well into the night, I don't have very vivid memories of him being home when I was young. He was a plumber trying to provide for his family. Yet I cannot blame him for not being home. Sometimes he would pick up late night snacks on his way home from work. This is perhaps one of my fondest memories of my father. Linden's butter crunch cookies, Slim Jims, and beef jerky remain my favorite snacks. Every time I see that yellow cookie package with blue print, I'm back in that two-bedroom apartment, unlacing my father's work boots after his long work day.

Throughout my childhood, I didn't feel as though I was lacking in any way. Every Christmas there were wrapped presents underneath the tree, stockings stuffed to the brim, monkey bread in the oven and prime rib on the dinner table. Holidays were always

special; my mother needed them that way. Every holiday and birthday was hosted in that tiny kitchen, family filled the space and flowed into the blue living room. My mother's cooking would permeate the air; our apartment was always full of noise. Thanksgiving was a favorite of mine; the Cowboys football game would blast from the small television in the living room, and all the men would be sunk into the cheap upholstered couch. The turkey sat on the small white table, as we all squeezed into the outdated kitchen. There was plenty of food, and leftovers would stock the fridge for days. All food my mother had strategically picked on sales starting weeks before. Neither of my parents had much, but they did the best they could to make our holidays memorable.

When I look back on my childhood, it's not the struggle that I remember, I did not realize our financial deficit until I had grown older. It's Thanksgiving being spent with my family; my father bringing home cookies and jerky, my sister and I sharing not just a room but our life Together.

My father struggled to open his own business, while my mother left hairdressing to join him on his journey. Together we left behind that paneled kitchen and stale blue couch, we left behind the shame, the struggle. It was a long time until we were better off financially, but even longer until my parents learned to get along again.

After my mother quit her hairdressing job, she was home more; we spent more time together; I was happy. Unfortunately, I was happy, but she was not. Opening a business was not easy; it was tedious and expensive. My father had went back to school to work out his licensing issues, and his days were longer than before. The stress had become overwhelming. Sometimes I would lie awake in that trundle bed as I listened to them bicker and argue. Money always had that effect on them; it created tension. Sometimes I would cry as I heard them shouting at one another, the pink blanket pulled just under my chin.

As I grew older it seemed normal. Eventually, I knew that things would calm down and they did. Years passed and so did the arguing. My mother and father learned to become a team again, and their small plumbing, heating and cooling business was successful. Now there was a constant money flow, and they worked and saved. It wasn't long until we could afford purchasing the house that small two bedroom belonged to. I live in the same home at 21 years old, except the two bedroom apartment has evolved into a home with two levels and four bedrooms.

I have my own room now, but the truth is I never thought there was anything wrong with sharing a living space with my sister. The kitchen is now larger than I ever could have imagined, it sports tall oak cabinets and

stainless steel appliances. The linoleum has transformed into hardwood. The unappealing blue couch is now a sectional with reclining chairs. Sometimes it is hard to believe that just our current kitchen and dining room used to be our whole apartment. I would be lying if I said that I don't prefer it this way, but the truth is that then, as it was all happening and I was crammed into that small apartment, I never thought that there was anything wrong. No shame, it was just the way things were. My friends may have lived in a big house, and I didn't. My father worked late into the night, theirs was home sharing dinner. My home was all that I knew at the time, and there was nothing wrong with that. I still don't think there is.

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