

VOYAGER

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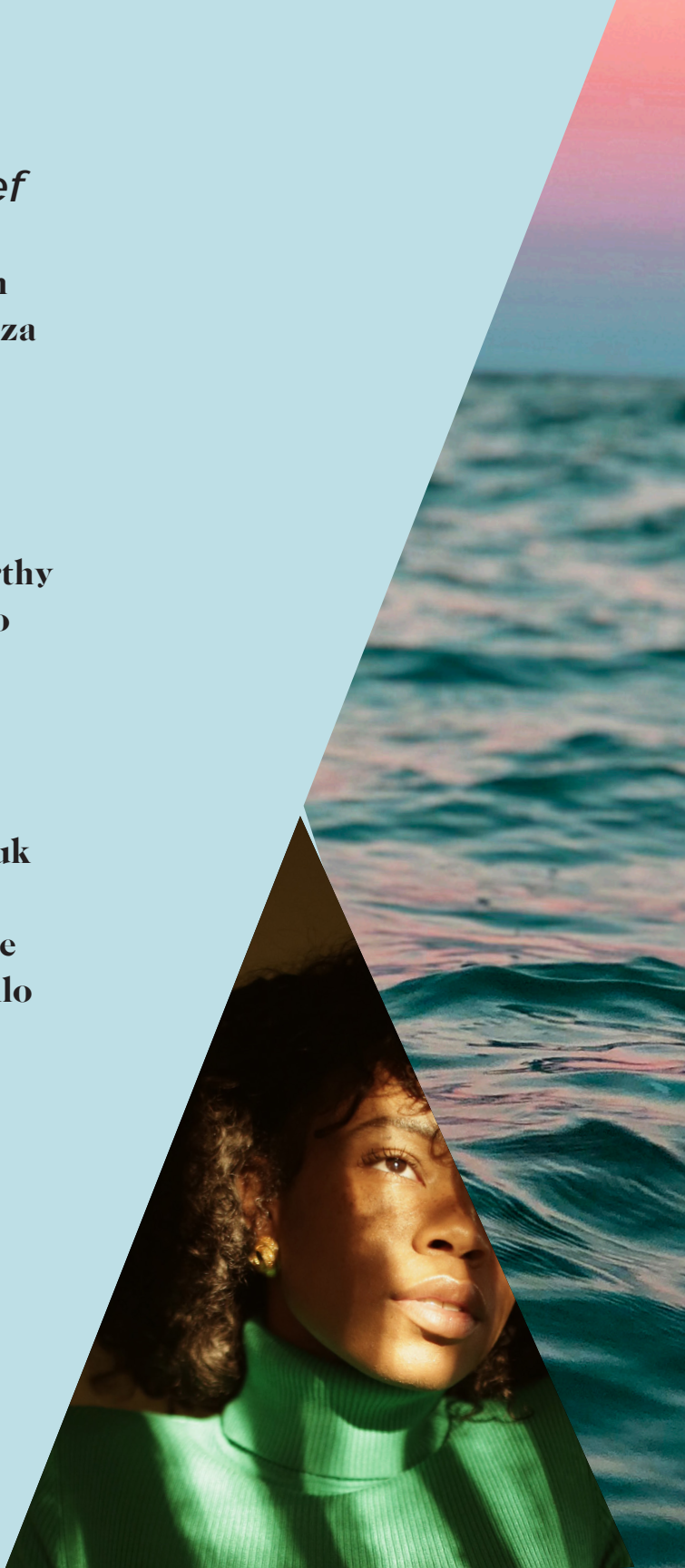
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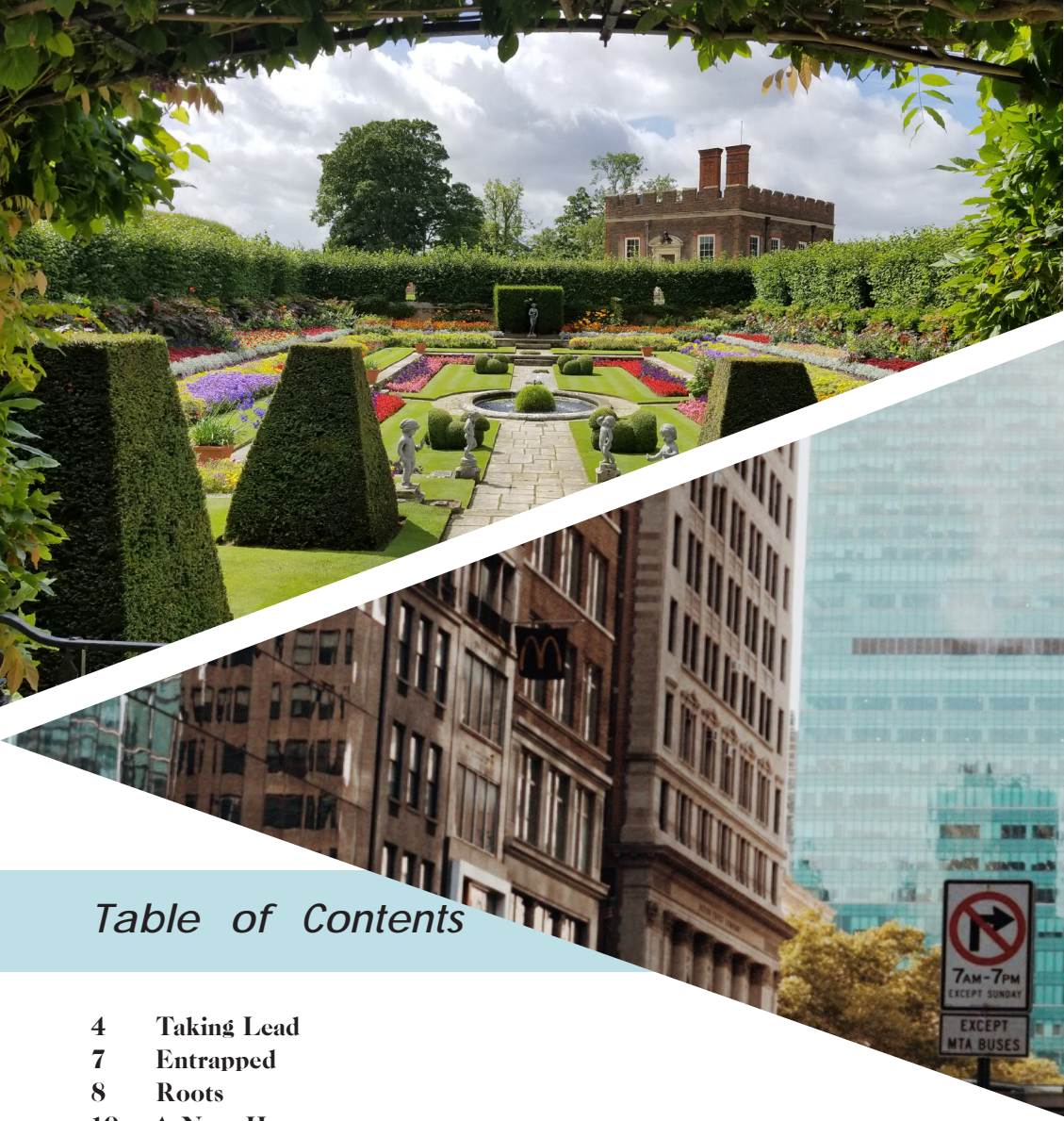


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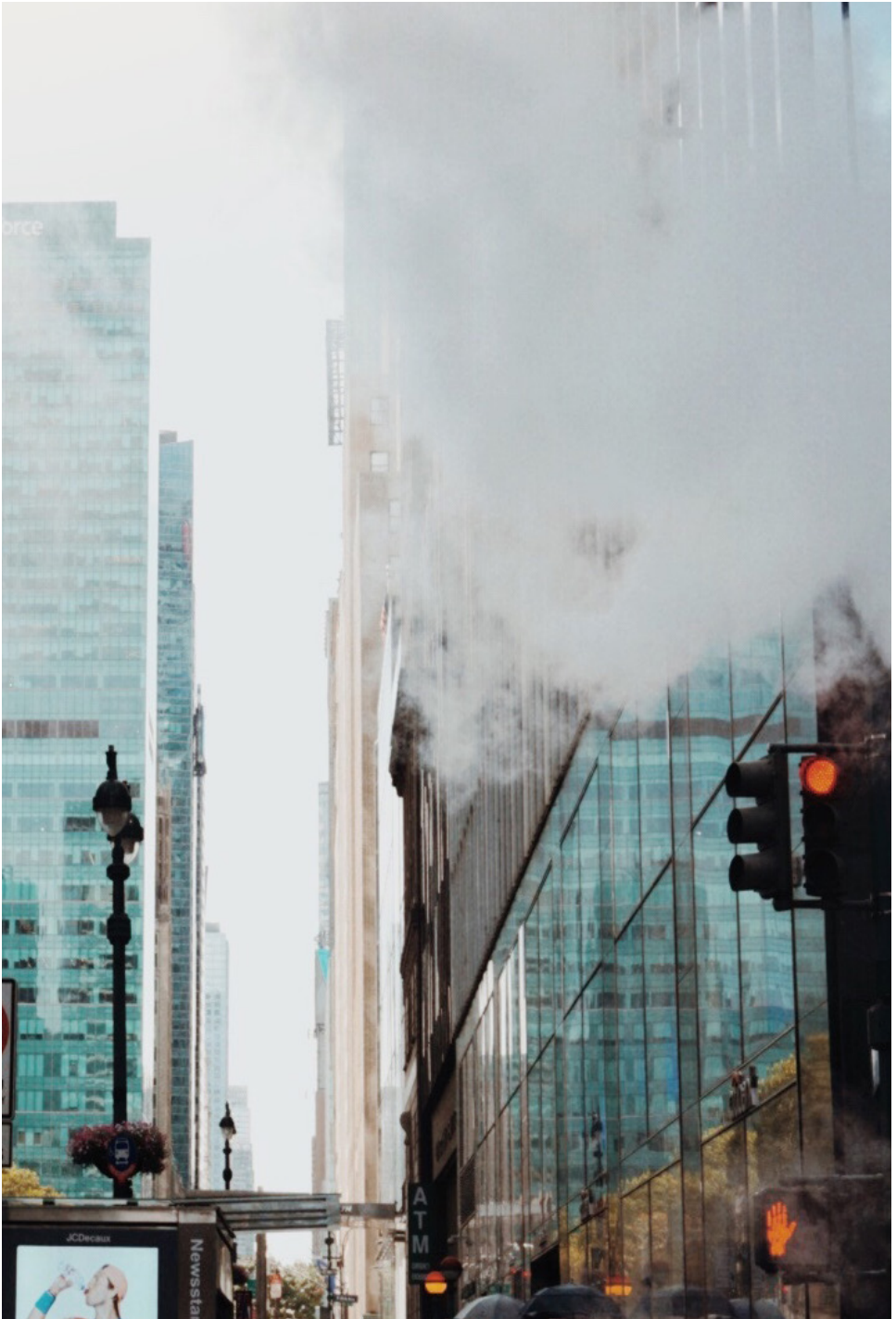
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He calls me late at night when I'm
dreaming of someone new.
He tells me that he wants me and
that he needs me,
but never follows through.
I know it's wrong, but I play along
because I'm lonely too.
Some might think I'm stupid.
That I let him play me for a fool,
but I lost my feelings months ago.

I don't pretend like he really wants
me,
and I don't think he'll change.
But just so long as he delivers,
I'll play his little game.

It's not like he gives a damn.
Why shouldn't I enjoy it.
People, if only they knew,
would look down and assume
that I am letting myself be played
for a fool.
He might have started it and I might
have agreed,
but don't mistake who is taking the
lead.
I'm no fool.
If he is okay with using me.
Rest assured I'll use him too.





anna ristova



Entrapped

A gentle finger curves towards
Young water lilies, placid, floating
Near the strong stone bridge
Set by the sun.
Many pass without pause.

The cherub is running on water,
A secret known only by the Jewish
Man.
Together their wings are stable
And Earth-bound.
The cherub does not know the
Jewish Man.

Instead he is stuck in stone,
Covered with concrete,
Unable to speak or breathe.
He struggles to make his way to
Heaven,
His godforsaken right.
But he is stone.

When the placid lily pond rises, the
cherub will turn to moss.
He points to them knowing his fate.

Melissa Mounier



Roots

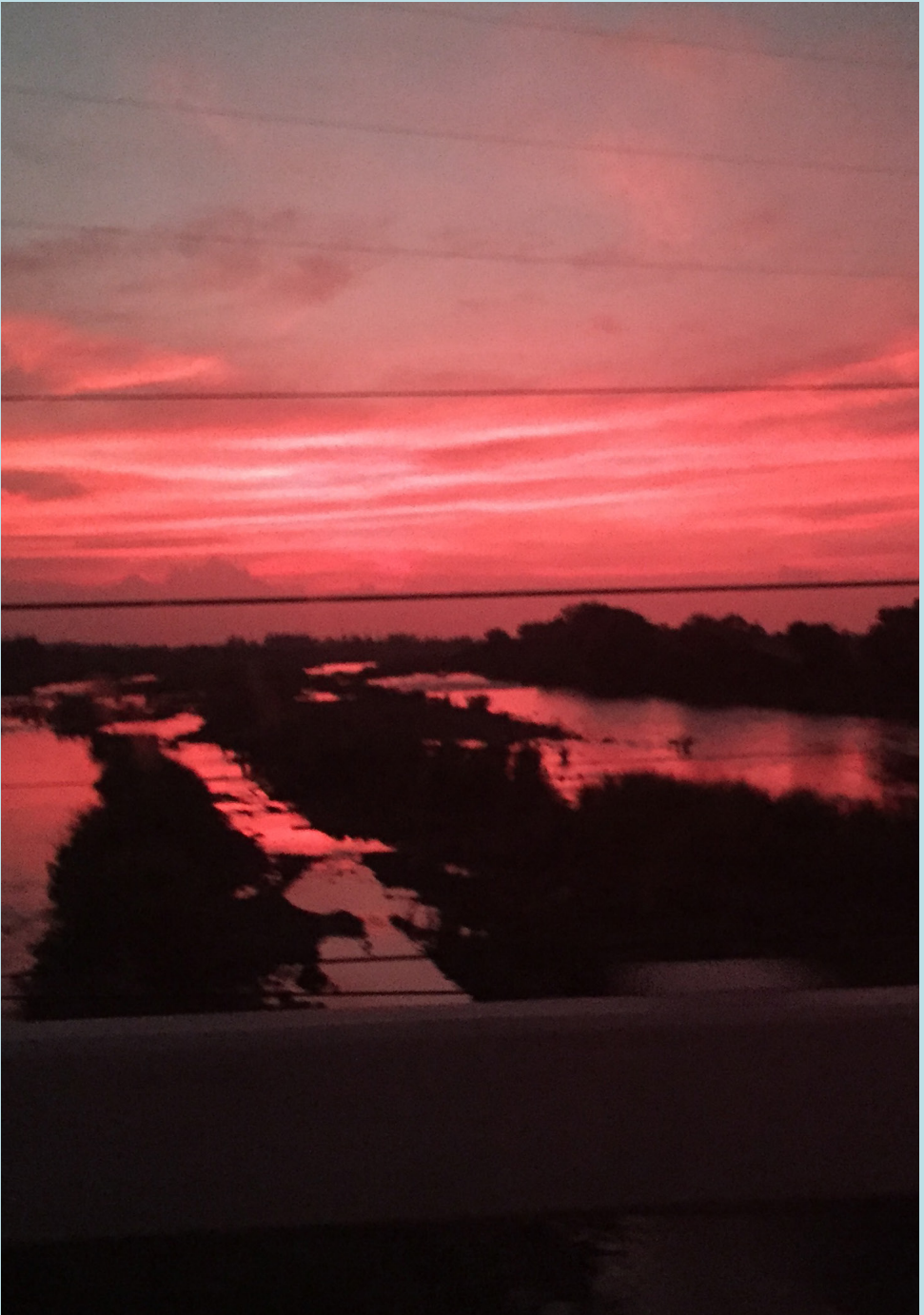
We stem from a flower of lies
A foolish dictation that we are not
What we were called in our past.
We are not who we once were.
No.
We became ourselves through
Shameful caverns of cruelty
And deafening criticism.
Through pain and tragedy,
Through the highs that would never
reach the stars,
Through the lows that emphasized our
scars.
Like terriers clipped to splintered posts,
Prancing dazed
In endless energetic circles
of depression and isolation.

Like bombs of adrenaline and insecuri-
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That is exactly
What
We
Are.

April Danielle



aliza deen

A New Home

On Tuesdays, when we'd return
from the house that was always
home,
He would welcome us, ask us
How the day had gone, how we
were.
The scent of dinner mixed with
The smell of the house, the mold
That he so often complained about.
The walls, a blank white,
Like canvass to paint our memories
are stained.
I don't remember them happy
together. Did they ever kiss?
A lawsuit against the builder,
without compensation,
our college savings gone.
She pleaded, and her arguments
were valid.
He did not care. He lashed out at
things.
That beaded necklace, the pieces
scattered.
My brother's tears, the slam of the
door.
We had PB & J that year, for
Christmas Lunch.
His parents, they don't seem so
"grand" to me.
It was Christmas, and they could
have waited for us.
She was mad. "In-Law" meant
"resistance" for her.
That meal, the table was empty,

except for sandwiches.
Here, the table is always cluttered,
but not with food.
Books "For Dummies", pens, notes,
mail,
A laptop, monitor, mouse, pages of
code
They all end up on that tiny table.
He'd collect them up and push
Them aside, not unlike our mother.
She'd hate the clutter. Lucky for
him,
One paper terminates his bond, his
word,
That he promised over a decade
ago.
When they were together, he kept
work
Out of the open, away from home.
Now it covers everything. Code
books on the fireplace,
The hallway desk, the coffee table.
White pages
Litter the house with the wilted
white walls.
Wednesdays were different. On
Wednesdays,
We saw the halls of school and of
this new home.
That was the biggest change. We
didn't see Mom.
I wonder if this was how it was
meant to be.

Dan Monarchi

Fall into Place

Do you remember who you
were before
society told you who you should
be?

You've been brainwashed to
think that girls
are only beautiful if they look
like Barbie
dolls and that our appearance
determines our worth
When was the last time you
actually loved yourself?
When you looked in the mirror
and thought, "I am a beautiful
and loved human being"?
That was ages ago, right?
I know there are demons in
your mind that
are just too strong
"You're worthless. What makes
you think that you'll ever be
good enough for anyone?", they
scream

Some adults say that your
generation is
lazy and a disgrace, but they
don't know the tough battles that
you have to fight

What do you have to do to
convince them that
these issues are important?
Nothing starts to change until
someone dies
It's the tragic truth
When did people become so
blind, not realizing the sadness
that can be hidden
behind smiles?
When do we say enough is
enough, that we have to fight
for what's right even
if it takes many years?
The time is now
I want people to be able to talk
to their families about their
mental illnesses
without thinking, "do they
believe me?"
I want people of all races and
genders to be able to say, "my
differences make me beautiful."
When this happens, peace will
start to spread
The countries of the world will
hold hands in harmony
That's when everything will fall
into place.

Samantha Davila



Sex

**The illusion of self-expression blinded
by lust.**

Or

**A social experience shrouded in intense
feelings and emotion???**

Orgasm

**A six letter word to influence the
absolute control of someone's body.**

Or

**The best feeling in existence shared
between people who truly trust one
another???**

Love


**A four letter word that can't begin to
openly express how you feel about
someone.**

Or

**Something that is seldom found and
should never be let go???**



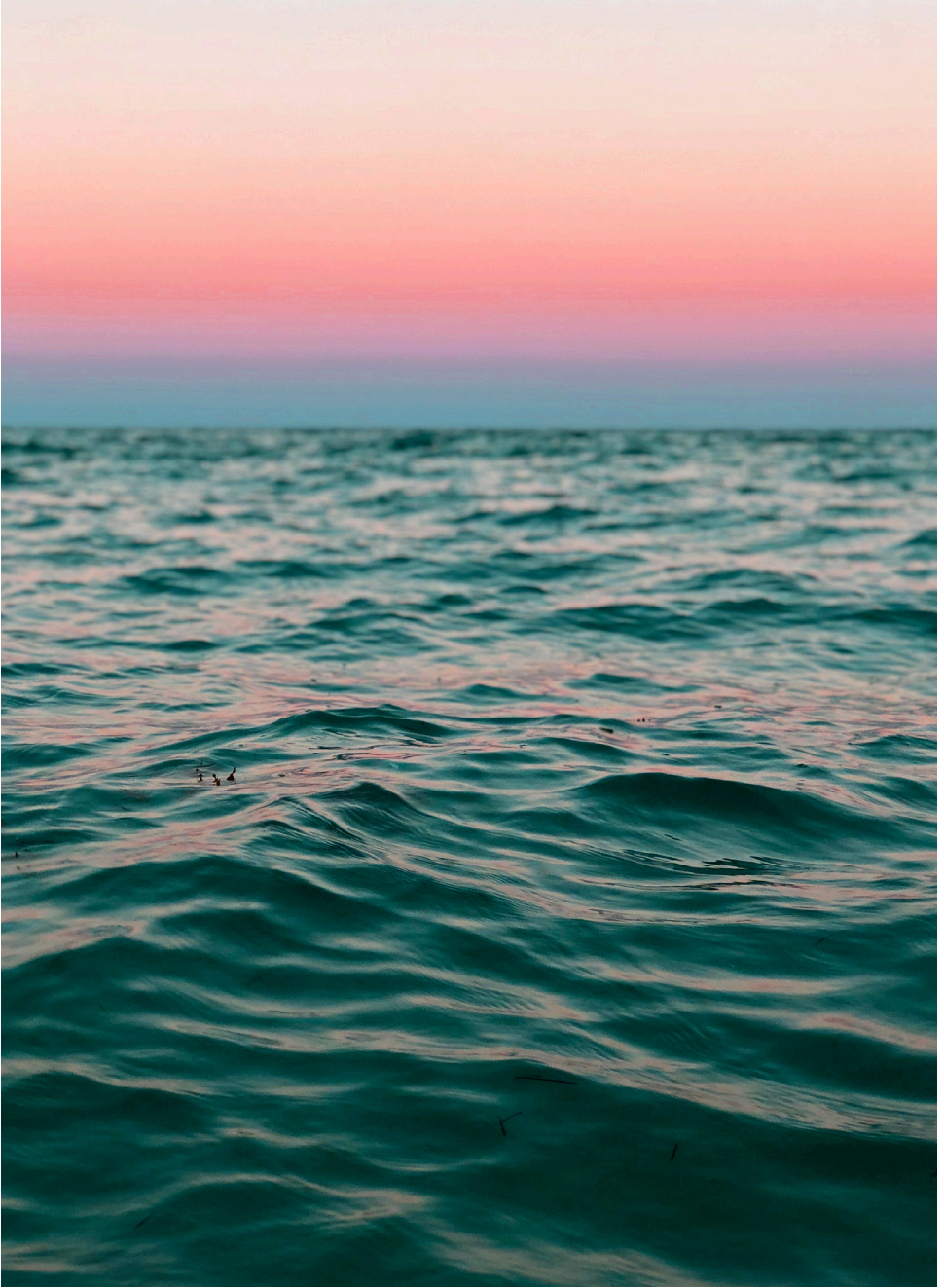




**You kissed me
transportandome to the moon
Unicamente
you kiss me like no one else can do
The ecstasy was taking over
While you were touching me
A huge pleasure never could see
My heart beat hard
Mis caricias en ti were spilled
In the deepest places,
no one could see
And I knew you only loved me
Que mas da if the sun does not come
out
The important thing is that I am with
you now
Que interesa if there is no moon
Siempre and when you are conmigo**

Alex Vasquez





Ylmer Villafana



His sister kissed me.
Gentle at first. She claimed my lips for hers. She pushed me onto the bed, and plunged her tongue into my mouth. She ripped the bowtie from my throat, and tore open my collar. It clung to the last buttons that kept my chest from colliding with the cold spring air. Her lips sent surges up my spine the way they moved down my neck in little trenches. My body stiffened. I was deer to lioness, shallow breaths escaping from my neck as it bled brown and red.

Bruises.

Triumphant and torturous. He stood there, reveling in them from the corner of the room where the light could not reach. Half of them were his after all. Watching.
Waiting for his turn. He bit his lips at the sight of them. I could feel his pulse from across the room. The way his body pounded.

As she reached my sternum, a sigh escaped my lips, "Peter."

She didn't like that. She grasped my chin and brought my head to meet her gaze, "No no. You're mine right now." She pressed her lips to mine. "Siobhan. It's my turn, remember? Focus on me."

She continued lower, brushing the front of my slacks. Her eyes were crystalline blue, just like his, but her locks were longer and even goldier than his. His was an upright wave of suave, while hers was a cascade of curls. Her body was soft where his was firm. Rounder where his was leaner. She caught me staring deep into her and she smiled, "I love you."

Of course I loved her, "I love you too." I fell in love with her first. How could I refuse her? I grasped her waist, and pecked her lips, then her neck. I dug myself into her the way she did. Her smile widened. The rouge of her cheeks reddened. My eyes flitted back to him, and his smile disappeared. He didn't like that. I reached out for him, extending my arm in the air, but she caught my fingers and twined them with hers, pulling me back. "Not right now."

She kissed my shoulder and, with her other hand, grasped me between my legs, "Right now, I need your fullest attention."

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Empty/Hook-Up

Do you feel
Empty
Because they
Fucked your
Every hole into a
Chasm?
Or because they
Would not stay
To fill them?

Taste

I coil myself in
gold wire,
running currents
through my skin.
The wire slips into
gold veins
whose ore I
harvest with
pickaxe prowess.
I am both predator
and prospector,
mining myself into
the gold dust
until all I can taste
is blond.

"This boy is a fool
for blonds."

Tango

To toe the line
between loving
and leaving
is the hardest
dance I've ever
performed.


Mortal

Do not comfort me.
Do not speak for me.
I am not voiceless.
I am drowned.
Listen.
Do not just hear me.
Listen.
As carefully as you
would
a heartbeat.
I need an Audience.
Not a mere mouthpiece.

They say that in life
The things you want
Happen when you least
expect it but
Just because it comes
Does not mean that it is
good for you
Or even that you need
it
I no longer need you

**We writhe against
mountains of Gods
because they have
set us afire on
burning bushes
hoping to purge
our existence from
memory, but
they forget
You and I
have built them
high, and with
hammer and
spike can
bear them
low.**

**Let us drive
a reminder
into their
conscious,
and with each
swing of
the hammer
revel in
the act
of
decide.**



**My God,
I never lost you,
You lost me.
High above the bogs,
Past the grimy glaciers of a desolate
world.
Will You sing to me?
I am hungry,
so hungry for divinity.
I am lost amongst the bones.
My fingers know desolation,
The absence of love;
And soon to ashes I shall return.
Tell me I don't deserve such
beauty.
As the drifting swallow skims sister
ocean,
With her blue and black wings:
Descending and ascending,
Faraway into Heaven's body,
Here I stand, Falling
For heaven, an endless
Pit, where I will end.**

Trains are for Lovers

It's just a train mom, I'm okay.

We're breathing on each other at 7:32 in the morning. This is the kind of closeness I felt with my mom, during the days I laid on her chest, the rise and fall so much better than the way the sun does it.

I'm sorry you know I worry

My shoulder is brushing your shoulder, and it makes me wonder all the people who've touched this part of you before. The stars are burning behind my eyelids. Why am I jealous?

It's okay.

Touching you. I am touching you as you touch me. As your elbow touches the upper right-hand corner of my copy of *The Argonauts*. I imagine you're reading it over my shoulder. Is it touching you like it's touching me?

When the train slows we unfold our petals. Sill grazing, I have to tilt my head down so I don't kiss you. We've reached this level of closeness.

I arrived in Hoboken, walking to the Path now.

We move in a constellation to our next destination. We sweat together on the platform, our moisture misting the heavy February air.

Then we squeeze through the doors. So tight.

Text when you get there

My hand slides down the pole and accidentally touches you. I'm getting to know your skin by now. It's a complicated latticework that screams you need good moisturizer and a cup of coffee.

I blink, then you're already getting off at 9th street. My embroidered heart floats to the floor when I remember we will not see each other again.

But I'll forget you tomorrow. Tomorrow, when I have a new seatmate, you'll be infinitesimal.

We were intimate. We are strangers. Estranged, and it's only 8:24.

Hello are you OK?

Ariana Carpentieri

Long Distance?

Every time you leave me it feels like you're leaving forever.
Every time you walk out that door you take a piece of me with you.
But this is not the end..this is not a break up, yet why do I feel abandoned and miserable.
It's like a fire has erupted inside of me and left a burnt out shell
I want to be detached from you so the pain that courses through my veins and makes it hard to live will stop.
My heart and soul ache to be with you but you are too far away. I crave you.
I wish I was intertwined with you, your arms wrapped around me, I wish the only distance between us was room for our breaths.
I wish I'd wake up to the sun creeping in through the curtains. I'd look over to see the light dancing on your peaceful face, and I could just bask in awe, for this is the man I love.
Life gets in the way. Reality shatters my dreams of you, because we are "too young", "too new", "our future is not soon"....
I hold on so tight but you make known you have to go. and you're okay.
So why am I not?
You don't express your pain of missing me. Do you even feel as deeply as I do? I feel like I am clinging to you like rain drops on

windows.. dragging across trying to hang on.
You are mine but not in a satisfying way. It's like borrowing something I can't keep.
My feelings for you are so intense and they consume me at times.
Sometimes it is as though I live in darkness and you are all that can bring the light.
When you're with me I am overwhelmed with emotions of love, like I can't even think clearly, all I know is i feel love, that I feel safe and full when you surround me.
And when you're away from me i feel breathless, hollow, trying to fill myself up with meaningless friendships and cheesy television shows, that always lead me back to you. I wish you were truly mine, so I can be with you everyday, so that I won't ever have to be sad because I'm missing you.
Without you my insides feel like coming home to an empty house every night. I am lonely with everyone else. Joy, it's temporary. But with you It feels constant. I feel complete, I feel okay, I feel whole.

PSA

Please
Let us not forget
Cries for help
and
cries for attention
are two different things.
But still they are treated the same

The Gift

An unsuspecting child,
Ten years old,
boiling with anger about something
that had happened earlier that day
huffing and puffing as she stepped
through the door
blocked by a man with a video
camera
her father
she brushed him off
one moment of not knowing.
one.. two.. three..
SURPRISE
all her friends and family jumped
out of their hiding spots
the anger fizzled away
she became joyous
however this surprise wasn't the
real gift she received for she was
unaware that this was the last
birthday
she would ever spend with him.

The Prince and The Dragon

From the moment I was born, I heard the whispers. They started as echoes, bouncing off the walls of my strong stone fortress, onto the sheer canopy, and into my cradle. Prince Xavier, they mumbled into my ears as I slept. Find your princess.

Father was a kind king. His bedtime stories were his respite after hours of sitting at his desk and negotiating with courtiers and concubines. He would sit on the edge of my bed and stroke his wise old beard, holding out a book for me to see as he read in all sorts of voices. When voicing the vikings, he would lower his voice into a gruff, hoarse grunt, thick eyebrows wiggling suggestively after every line. When voicing the maiden, he would coo and sing his words in as high a voice as he could go. I would laugh and clap my fat hands at his mockery, ghosting them over the hand-drawn pictures every time Father turned the page. Finally, when we got to the climax, I would turn away in fear. "I am the dragon," my father growled in a low, gravelly voice. He hissed what I assume he meant to be fire coming out of his mouth. "You have to get past me to get to the princess! If you don't, I'll huff and puff and gobble you right up!" I now hold the same book in

my mature hands, dragging the callouses of my fingertips over the smudged pictures, over the fierce serpentine beast. "It is only proper that I return the favor," I tell myself again and again in this open field. As crown prince, I must expand upon my father's legacy the same way he did for his father, and his forefathers, and thus the cycle continues. Princess Edeline, my princess, is waiting. I remember this every time I dismount my stallion, every time I stop for a rest during the trek towards my quest.

Never once have I felt unloved by my parents. Mother tried her best to be a role model for the kingdom, the most pristine and the most elegant lady I have ever laid eyes upon. My younger sisters took after her, my younger brothers cared for her, and every other maiden in the land aspired to be her. They wanted her long blonde plait secretly covered with knots, big blue eyes poisoned with belladonna, and seventeen-inch waist. I used to watch my sisters lace themselves up in corsets until they passed out and Mother chastised them

for being impatient. While I don't remember her ever smiling, I do remember her patching my wounds after sparring practice. By the way she caressed my cuts and bruises so gently with her open palm before covering them with gauze wraps, I knew of her love.

Like Mother when Father was my age, Princess Edeline is supposed to be in waiting, young and fair of noble breeding. Untouched by men. But the details of her tower location drove the other men away. One month ago when she turned sixteen her location was released, rumors of a vicious dragon guarding the tower grew. The fierce beasts of lore are no longer a myth.

"Impossible," Father stated before coughing up his own sick, staining his gray beard with red. "My boy is stronger than something like that. I know my son. He'll take on any challenge, any rumor. Just you wait and see, he will bring home that princess before anyone else! He will!"

Mother said nothing, but she did the unspeakable. She frowned.

"I must return the favor," I repeat again, staring down at the leather map I was given by Edeline's father. With every sun, I come a bit closer to my legacy. With every moon, I feel myself slipping away, wanting more to run back to my kingdom in shame.

Shame is not an option for a crown prince. My fate was sealed before I was born.

All too suddenly, the whispers come back to me. They

run along the bark of oak trees, out of the beaks of songbirds, in the mist of waterfalls. At night, they were the twinkling of stars that guided my journey and the calls of nocturnals catching their prey. Prince Xavier, you must find your princess. She cannot wait any longer. This is your legacy, you must tread forth and claim your birthright.

No, shame is not an option. I have no other options.

I flick through the picture book one last time on the back of my white horse. He is starting to pant again and I consider leading him in the direction of running water. But I know the tower is close. My chest tightens around my heart, my gut around my empty stomach. I too am sweating under the blazing sun. Thoughts of who the princess might be haunt me, and my eyes stare upon the picture in the book. The princess in the book is doe-eyed and fair-skinned like Mother, with lips like rubies and eyes like sapphires. Age does not hang over her like a plague. She is pure in every way, loved by many. She is virtue incarnate.

Like every other time I saw her face, I wonder why she never smiled. After a moment to myself, I look up. My book drops to the ground near my stallion's hooves.

For a tower guarded by a dragon, I could never imagine the stone fortress to look so abandoned. Ivy litters the entire outside, leaving me to wonder how long Princess Edeline went without being exposed to the outside world. Did she ever touch her feet to grass? Of course

not, her skin must stay pale and beautiful, never touching the sun. Did she ever read about our customs and rich history, or even that of her own country? Of course not, her education needed to be determined by her husband. Did she sing, even with nobody to hear her? Of course not, she does not speak unless spoken to, and there is nobody to speak to. I dismount my steed, preen the mats in my hair, and climb the ivy just like the prince in my book. My muscles strain under my weight, thin roots seizing in my grip causing me to slip. But I must push on. "

Princess Edeline," I call, praying she can hear. If there is no dragon, I should not be afraid. It would not be proper for a crown prince to be afraid. "I am Prince Xavier, crown prince of Novia. I have come to take you from this tower."

Upon my full arrival inside the tower, the first thing I notice is the distinct lack of sunlight. There are no cracks in the stones indicating the time of day, nor is there an opening in the ceiling to let in the sun. There is a bed that sat messy and unmade against the far end of the room and a large vanity where her cosmetics are strewn about the floor, knocked off by a strong force. Rich rugs muffle my footsteps as I look around the empty tower, eyes focusing on a narrow stairwell partially hidden by a large wardrobe. Before I descend, I unsheathe my silver sword, listening with trained ears for any signs of movement. I ignore the sound of blood to the best of my abilities.

"Princess Edeline," I call, much softer this time. I wonder if another man has claimed her already. I wonder if my strife was worth the journey. In my last moment of blissful ignorance, I wonder how many other princesses are locked in towers in need of freeing, and how long it would be until I have my chance again. The prince and princess always end up falling in love. I now see the shame in that cliché.

I start to call Princess Edeline's name again, but am halted by a shadow in the room below. I crouch in the cover of the stairwell, praying I am not seen. Is this the dragon from the rumors? Did she eat the princess and take up residence inside the tower? I know from my tightening stomach and frantic heart that I need to avenge my princess, to be the source of her honor after death.

The shadow, in her indistinct shape, catches my gaze. Just faintly in the dim light, I see her red eyes. They are completely bloodshot around a keen, ethereal iris. Pupils blown wide from the dark, her eyes narrow with an anger I do not begin to comprehend. I hold my sword in front of me in a defensive stance, which does not deter the beast in the slightest. She hisses at my attempt.

"Princes like you are worthless," the dragon growls, her voice like sand and cobblestone. "They wait too long and when they see the result of festering and neglect, they draw back. Your life will be filled with disappointment.

Turn back, like everyone else.“In response, I gulp down the fear that had accumulated for the past month at the back of my throat. ”I am Prince Xavier, crown prince of Novia.“ I repeat the practiced line like second nature. ”I have come to take Princess Edeline from the tower. Show me where she is and I will make your death quick and painless.“ The foul beast has the audacity to question me from the safety of the shadows. ”Oh? Would you not kill me either way?“ she asked, her words lilted at the end. I take a deep breath, not once leaving my stance on the stairwell. ”Cooperate and I might reconsider.“

As my eyes start to adjust to the dark, I hear the dragon release a single hot breath through her nostrils. She is becoming impatient and possibly hungry. I can just barely see a thin form just up ahead to go along with her burning eyes.

”The princess as you know her is dead,“ the dragon hissed, taking a single self-assured step towards me. I push back towards the top of the stairwell where there is undoubtedly more light away from her. ”She died many years ago.“ I have failed her and her family. My journey was futile, I muse, dropping my gaze for a second before reinforcing my guard.

”You ate her!“ I accuse in a sudden rush of rage. ”You killed her and stole her home! Prepare to taste my blade!“ Before I could swing my sword in her general direction, the dragon snaps her sharp tongue at me. ”The only one who killed her is

you!“ she roars, baring her crooked teeth. ”You and every other prince like you! You killed her! Like you kill every princess! Every single one! They’re all dead because of you!“

My stance falters and I stumble on the top step, falling backwards and hitting my head on the wardrobe. My sword falls down to the bottom floor, clacking against every step on the way. I sit on the edge of the stairs, keeping my eyes trained on the beast below as it moves into the light. Pale greenish skin like leather bind the form, flaking and hanging at different parts of her body. Her nails curls like claws around her veiny hands, poised to strike. Her head is narrow and sharp like a knife, jagged teeth poking out of her chapped lips. She is skinny, too skinny, too sick like a snake. Malnourished, dehydrated, left without sun all of these years. Those bloodshot eyes stare at me with every ounce of hatred in the world, every particle of betrayal, as I look over her body.

”I’ll ask you one more time, Where is the princess?“ I ask in a daze. But I know the answer before she is laughing from the bottom of the stairs and I feel her poison breath on me.

”You fool!“ she exclaims. ”I am the princess!“

A Hidden Letter

I couldn't stop staring.
From the moment I saw you,
hair slicked suave, million watt
smile.
Your presence stops
the room mid-sentence;
even the door moans when you
walk in,
the melody of the world freezes
and I am left
untouched.
I sit opposite you
in the class room, this classroom,
catching fleeting glimpses of
your goldmine.
But I don't let you see me
silverstruck,
the glint of my gilt against your
gold,
But that's the goal, isn't it?
To be heard, but not seen.
Pyrite phantom.
Each day a lesson in learning
how to disappear, but still be
recognized.
Because of course I can't
tell you how I
feel...
So instead I'll write you this
poem
in hopes that one day you'll gild
me golden in your molten ore.
Pour gold from your lips and
coat me queen.
But until then I'll sift through
comet crusted riverbeds, in
search of your glittering vein.
into place.

*Sabrina Calderón
Owen Minoza*



Shedding Skin

You woke up and thought you were dying.

Your morning sheets were stained; the same way a tea bag soaks a paper towel--a small pool at first, then hastily spreads. You stood up in your creamy nightgown on newborn doe legs, horrified that your body had somehow betrayed you. Your organs must've been exploding from the inside out. You could feel it. A squeezing pain. Like flower petals peeling open for the nectar to be sucked out. The tears ran as quickly as that browning liquid down your legs, a friendly competition of which could hit the floor first.

Though not dead yet, you were already a weighty ghost in the house, filtering like dusty sunlight, floating from room to room in search of your

mother. But she was out hanging sheets in the field. So you ran to her, your body already folding in. It was just a matter of time until your heart exploded. You feared that was what came next.

Mama, her name ripped from you. I'm dying. I'm dying, Mama. Help me. Please help. She clipped up one half of a milky sheet with a brown clothespin. You stood with your legs apart. You didn't want your thighs to touch because something felt wrong in between. Mama saw the stains and smiled. My Yeetus, you're a woman now. You didn't understand what she meant, so you cried some more. She chuckled as the fresh farm soil beneath your feet swallowed the honey you dripped. She hung the other side of the sheet with a twinning pin.

Ariana Carpentieri



Spilt Milk

In the beginning, her body was
a milk carton. Hollow
plaster-white,
waiting to be ripped
open for consumption.

The Germans estimated the
average prisoner's life span in
a concentration camp at three
months, due to lack of food and
clothing, constant epidemics, and
frequent punishments for the
most minor transgressions.

In the morning, she roused
her skeleton to devour
coffee beans and rocks
that splintered her shrinking
intestines.
Now she was even jaded
on the inside.

In both camps and ghettos,
women were particularly
vulnerable to beatings and rape.

In the evening she was
a cigarette, passed between
cackling men.

When they mounted her,
she wondered if they felt her
stabbing them with
her protruding ribcage
as their milk ran thick
between her legs.

Holocaust is a word of Greek origin
meaning "sacrifice by fire."

In the end,
she, too, wanted to burn.
To spill.

So she tipped
Yeetus down the drain
and reconstructed what was left into
an unnamed, stillborn vessel
in order to survive.

When she made it to the states,
the milk carton never mentioned
a missing person.
Instead, it was slapped with a new
label:
Julianna.

Although death rates were high, the
camps were not designed as killing
centers.

The sheet was a clipped butterfly
wing. It flapped like a layer of skin
in the breeze.



Sleep Soundly

I hope your mother's ashes
landed
in a meadow someplace sunny.
I'd like to think she
helped flowers grow, that their
roots run deep enough
to reach me.

I hope your father's body was
gently rocked
to the bottom of the sea,
that he floated down like a wet
feather and that there's a little
piece of him
in every shell
I've ever picked up.

I hope your body finally felt
safe,
in your sweet cream sheets
at eighty-six with a slack jaw
and
eyes looking far beyond me
while I held your hand
until the warmth faded.

I hope you three left this world
just to find each other
somewhere else. That death only
felt like a crochet blanket being
pulled up over your eyes,
getting tucked in one final time.

The sheet was a clipped
butterfly wing. It flapped like a
layer of skin in the breeze.

Ariana Carpentieri



**I remember the way you shaped
me in my days of innocence.
You took the anatomy of my
heart and molded it to your
standards. You never called me
by my birthright, but by my
soul name.**

**Tender was my soul. Tender
was your heart. I knew I broke
when I told you I was no longer
your tierno. But I was only 10
and I didn't really mean it.
I like to think of you as a
cowboy sometimes.**

**You came to what seemed like a
galaxy far far away without any
on this side. But you brought
my parents here, you brought
my uncle here, you brought my
cousin here, and as a secret only
my parents knew at the time,
you brought me here.**

**3 years have gone by and my
world has changed. I miss you
endlessly, I feel your rain drops
wash over me. I'll always be
your tierno, and we'll meet
again, in a galaxy far far away.**



Erica Murphy

Somatoform: Physically

I vomit when I remember
the taste of the words,
You cheated on me.
Bile haunts the back of my throat
the same way your image buried
itself into my brain that night.
I caught you in bed
naked,
Your sex swinging between us as I
split your face open.
I vomited then too,
sharp projectile,
shrapnel words against flesh bodies,
How fucking dare you. Two years
of my life,
you fucking liar.
and to her
I gave you the benefit of the doubt,
I thought you were an innocent
girl.

My throat was a powder keg
coffin,
I could taste the gunpowder under
my tongue.
When the door swung open, your
cock was my combustion.
The mountainside blew open. My
throat was avalanche erupted.

I was landslide swallowing
cityscape.
I wanted to crush everything around
me, bury the bodies under your
betrayal. I wanted to smash brick
after brick
against your face. Violent
compulsion.
Volcanic expulsion. Boulder after
boulder.
Mountainside made empty.

And as my convulsions conclude,

I take a deep breath and
I wipe my lips clean,
let the words run their course.
Perhaps this purge is
remedy, not injury.
I stare and
breathe as my bedpan brims full.

Conversion Therapy

I imagine your hips buried between hers,
her legs wrapped around your waist
as my fingers find my member
pulsating. Pump.

There is a river on my arm running red from the nail you dragged through it. The prick you used to open my arm is the same one you puncture her over and over. You peel back her plywood skin and bend her back to how you want to fuck it, curve it to best fit your cock. How you must have hammered her hole. Did it remind you of how you molded mine? Pump.

The way you pull her jaw to face you
and ram your lips into hers, maybe even your tongue.
How you hate tongue, undulating mass,
except when you're really horny.
I'm sure she makes you really horny.
Pump.

Did you enjoy sliding your every inch into her? You must've gasp from her tightness. Did you throb when you entered? Did she feel your heartbeat the way I made it. I wonder if it felt the same. Pump.

I can feel your hands grip her hips the way you held onto mine. I hope you pulverize them into ash, cripple her insides with your cock, so I won't be the only one deformed by your pickaxe prick. Pump.

How did it feel taking her virginity? She told me you laughed about it. Did you revel in breaking her blossom? Did you enjoy being the 1st stake to claim her? Did you feel like Columbus? The rape of a continent. Conquistador? Treaded your tobacco tongue across her great expanse? Pump.

I pull the knife from my archipelago chest
and wipe the water on my member.
It's lewd at first, but I quickly learn why you used my tears as lubricant. Slick enough to stroke.
Imagine how fast you would've come had you bled me directly into her pussy. Pump.

Fuck you. Pump.
Fuck you. Pump.
Fu-uck.

Earl "Owen"
Minoza

Mythos: Haworth, NJ
Jan 24 2018

Hera sits in art class, contemplating
what He is doing at home. she calls
Him during break.

He doesn't pick up. her number is
blocked.

She swallows another stone.

She cannot concentrate on collage,
excuses herself from
class. she mounts her horses, charts
her way across azure skies.
she wants to see it.

He is home. But not alone.

Olympus' clouds darken,
opens his temple doors,
and the clouds tear open.

WHAT THE FUCK!?

Naked rain

gives way to indignant thunder.

The crash of it deafens,

WHAT THE FUCK!?

He rises to explain,

His sex swinging between them,
prophylactic on the floor.

She smashes lightning across his
check.

he topples mountainside.

Another for good measure.

Make him crumble beneath Her.

At that moment, She feels like a
mountain again. For months,
he had made Her an ash pile,
but now his body burns
Thunderstruck.

Her voice bellows across Olympus,
Her tongue is titan now, climbing
Her mountainous throat looking to
kill god.

to leave, tries to settle his Wife.

Her fury cannot be contained

in brass lips. he reasons his

infidelity with insults, tries to make
Her stay.

She leaves with the nymph.

They comfort one another by diner
light.

The silence, bridged and broken.

A night of lies unraveled

like the eyes of a peacock,

opening for good.

Earl "Owen"
Minoza



Mikeala Fils-Aime



Light Skinned

They tell me I'm light skinned,
a "white" Dominican.

Gringa.

My hair is not curly enough,
not thick enough,
not coarse enough.

My favorite one I get is,
"You talk white."

As if to say proper grammar
and education is reserved for and
only characteristic of,
white people.

I talk white?

Do you see me cough up lumps
of clouds when I speak, that you
believe I

"talk white?"

Remind me again when I asked
"Do I talk white?"

Gringa was a term created for
people that couldn't speak Spanish,
but I can speak it.

"You don't sound Dominican. Like
where's your accent?"

By "Where's your accent?"
do you mean, "Why don't you talk
in broken english?"

Words said without their second
half,
english words said to sound like
Spanish.

Again what do Dominicans sound
like?

And again when did I ask
"Do I sound Dominican?"

How did you get there under my skin little one.
Little ant.
How did you burrow under my skin while I
wasn't looking?
I barely noticed your pincers ripping
o p e n
my skin and your body crawling into my body
like a snake into its substrate.
You slithered down under my skin and I see you
now.
I see you now.

But you are not a wild snake in a desert or
rainforest.
You are caged, sealed in a glass tank with the
fake greenery,
red heating lamps,
and the dead mouse.
But imagine you as big as a snake, hormiguita;
imagine you then,
under my skin raising hills of slithering flesh.
But, for now, you are just a little ant.



Sabrina Calderon

Dandelion Lifted

I held the dandelion seed
and it lifted
my ballet flats off the viridescent
moss coating the roof of God's house.

My body spiralled
with the spinning of the
umbrella seed;
I gave the clouds
tiger lily stripes
with each swipe of my hand through their
water-drenched cotton.

Then I let go.

Felt the air fill my clothes
Felt my hair whip my face.
But I didn't open my eyes.
I just floated like the dandelion.
Spiraling in the grace of the Sun's rays.

Persimmons and Georgia Peaches

Over the briny edge
where the sun and water kiss in a blaze of
fiery passion.

Clementine,
turquoise,
goldenrod,
lilac,
persimmons and georgia peaches.

Sabrina Calderon



Owen Minoza

The wind runs long fingers through
my tangled hair
as I make my way down slippery
stone steps;
Each of them covered with a thin
layer of moss.
There! It's Her.
Her angry sea foam waves greet me.
I pick up my pace.
My feet sink into the cold caramel
sands.
Temporary footprints
are the only thing left behind me,
soon to be washed away by
navy currents.
The idea of
permanence
scares me.
I toss that thought to the back of
my mind and focus on Her.
The strong ocean breeze whips
saltwater at my face.
I'm happy to see you too!
Frigid water surrounds my feet.
It's been awhile I know...I'm sorry
about that.
I step farther into the water. Left
foot first, then right.
A gargantuan wave rumbles up and
cracks
against my body and knocks me off
my feet.

I land face first into the saturated
sand.
I already know you're angry. I saw
the riptide warning on the news...
I try to step into the beast's mouth
again and again
But to no avail.
Wave after mammoth wave
smacks into me.
I'm sorry!
She lightens up just enough to listen
to my plea.
I just came to be with you and
talk...more so just listen.
I plop myself down on the wet sand
and
close my eyes.
She tells me tales of
battles in the deeps of the briny
blue
through mighty breaths that tousle
my hair.
The tide rises and
cradles me
in Her gracious arms.

You always ask me why I cry during sex

I see her around every corner here. Her wavy ash blonde hair whipping around every corner here. Her amber eyes glowing hot embers. They stare at me when I sit alone, here.

The metal frame on the table by the door holds our picture; we were in front of the golden gate bridge. But still, the picture of you and her in the Bronx Botanical Garden, sings my memory like brand on cattle. You and her under a velvety blanket of cherry petals; and it burns more and more every time I see it here.

Her mail still gets delivered here sometimes. Seeing her name printed neatly on the crisp envelopes wraps a icy hand around my hot pulsating heart, and it squeezes as if it means to pop an artery or perhaps pop the whole thing.

I am haunted by her. She is everywhere here. I see her here in the kitchen cooking all

your favorite dinners in her pink flannel apron; the one I burned. I see her here in the bathroom brushing her pearly white teeth in the big oval mirror that hangs over our stone sink.

I see her here, sleeping in your silk lined bed, her head on your squishy feather pillows. I see her sitting on top of our headboard every night; and sometimes her smug smile glows at the foot of the bed and still you ask me why I always cry during sex...

You get me roses and lilies and tell me,

"Love, I got them because they're your favorite."

"Daisies...my favorite flowers are daisies."

I have seen the world in faces.
I have felt the Grecian sea of a wide-set jaw,
And dived into eyes as wild as English hills.
I have harvested Japanese orchards of freckles
and smiles
While the New York City skyline dims against
your cheeks.

I have seen the world in faces,
And I have tasted Jamaican sand on skin.
I have traced the oceans above your brow,
And felt Cali's warmth upon your lips.

I have seen the world in hands,
With Spanish sunsets painted on your fingertips.
Indian summers have been scored into fleshy
palms

And Belgian streets along your wrist.

I have seen the world in bodies,
All twisting in the wind,
With Icelandic landscapes telling stories
Of the wars we didn't win.

I have seen the world in faces,
But nothing like your own.

I see a star-lit dawn
And a house in Prague
And a lion's pride on Sahara's throne.

I have seen the world in faces
But in yours, I found my home.

Experience

Experience: More or less, the good kind,
Part time jobs selling plastic happiness in exchange for real security,
Years and years of books and tests, attacking our stability,
Summers drenched in something sweet, mixed with inconsistency.
Yet when we danced, the sky seemed free
And clear
And nothing could change where we stood, except the world's brief majesty.

Experience: More or less, the bad kind,
Wrong decisions and broken ways, honey laced yet unafraid.
Unfamiliar faces, but hey, they're there to taste!
Realizations come upon too soon, too late,
When words betray
And escape
When they were once calmly hushed in your embrace.

Experience: To speak, to reveal,
To distinguish between right and wrong and what is real.
To understand when right and wrong is not right,
To know how to not start a fight.
To know when to start a fight, when you know you're right,
Or at least, when you think you're right?
To track down your cares, to finally

be okay
With how things ended, and how he played.
With what life has dealt you, what you can't replace.
So find some time to build a brace,
Because today is a day to experience.

And that is all you need to do.
Experience: More or less, experience it for you.
Because no one else can feel your joy
Or feel your pain
Or smile when the wind calls your name.
No one else can speak your voice
Or live your choice
Or be so bold to be the noise.

If you cannot live it for you,
Here are things that you can do.
Experience it for the girls who no longer try.
Experience it for the boys who can't wait to die.
Experience it for the people who stay up in bed most nights,
Praying for something else to need in life.
For needing is a sign that you are alive,
And experience is the sound of the birds outside.

Celine Grajo



Nashikah Lamour

You were always the knife
growing sharper and sharper the weaker I
got.

And boy, did you make me weak.
I was always there begging to be bent to fit
your standards
but your standards were forever changing.

Plucked, like a dandelion
you always called me a weed, cutting me
down when I grew too tall.

It took years for me to learn my lesson
to grow in a garden out of your reach.

The wind blew me away from you
and protected me from ever coming back.
Until one day I grew so tall, he held me in
his hands
And called me his wishing flower.
And forever I am changed.

Bitterness fills the pit in my stomach.
That felt like punches through a wall.
I am swallowing shards of glass that freefall
from my fragile heart.
I knew.
I hesitated to be yours.
You loved me first, and the words just spilled
out of my mouth.
uncertain of truth or gut feelings.
Finally, my heart began beating in synch with
words.
Even though I knew,
I told myself to trust better than I have
before.
But I shouldn't have listened.
I hope you love her more than you loved me,
tongue twisted like fingers behind your back.
I hope you find her soon and forget my
story because you need to make room for all
the memories you'll have one day of
singing in her ear,
walking through the woods
and sitting up all night, drunk.
I will linger on these thoughts until your name
becomes
another eye roll,
another lesson in hesitation.

How to Date a Poet

Wringing your hands, you check the time again. Fifteen more minutes. All you had to do was jump in the shower and comb your hair, but you were so anxious, that you did this three hours ago. It seems like you're hitting the home button on your cell phone every two seconds, because the minute is not changing. The second the phone light dims, you hit it again- just in case- so you don't miss any potential text messages.

Finally, you get one. A single word: ready. As you're lacing up your boots and putting your arms in your jacket, you can't help but wonder how someone who manipulates language so beautifully, could only respond with one word. As you're turning your key in the ignition, you think about how beautiful that two syllable word sounds out loud. As you're gripping the steering wheel, you question how someone could bring so much life to it.

The road is icy and you drive as slow as possible until you come to a full stop in front of her house. You text "here" and hope she finds beauty in these dull looking letters. When she hops in your car, you smile and ask how she is, but you are too preoccupied with trying to figure out what to do with your hands to listen. The car slowly rolls forwards and you turn the radio on. You have three CDs in your car, just in case.

The first CD is of your favorite band, but their voices might sound too raspy against her smooth skin. The second CD is all of the bands she likes, and you hope that if you play it, she will grab your hand and notice how soft it is.

Maybe then the letters will fly around her head, clumps of the alphabet sticking together in your mailbox, and you will read about how your hands felt over hers.

The third CD you won't play for her tonight. Maybe in a few months, or even a few years. But not tonight, because when you are scrambling to find the perfect anniversary present in a year or two, you can look at her and say,

"I know how good you are with words, and you know how bad I am with expression, so here's a CD I kept from our first date, with all of the songs that remind me of you".

She will look at you with tears in her eyes. Say nothing until they fall to her cheeks. You will learn by then that everything you do, becomes extraordinary to her.

She will write you a letter every day, and personify every inch of your skin. She will tell you how you are both snow and fire, rain and sunshine, sandpaper and velvet. You will learn to understand. You will wake up every morning and let the light kiss you, because she once told you she rises with the sun to say good morning when she cannot be next to you. You will see every cloud as the whites of her eyes, and every blade of grass as her thick hair. She will teach you to love nature, and will, because you love her.

Even if one day she is gone, you will look at a new woman and your heart will start ticking again, like the grandfather clock your father built. She will change you.

"Star-Crossed"

Encased by the light of a full moon, night descended upon the surrounding forest, blessing those nearby with a rich harmony between the capricious grasshoppers and the mighty coyotes. They thrived in that lone-some cabin towards the forest's heart, where the creek rushed. Together, they ate what fruit the trees bore and hummed melodies with the morning birds while forgetting about the far-off plains, past their huckleberry garden, past their fishing hole, past the river and beach and Mt. Gummybear where there was civilization. Together, somehow, someway, they survived.

Chilly tendrils of the night winds laved at their cheeks when they made their way to that same grassy cliffside where they bathed in updraft, tiny working ants tickling their necks. The first time they sat on their soft grass patch, they had fallen asleep on each other's hot limbs, the forest's night-song featuring acoustics from the steady drum of their heartbeats. And neither did rise until the following day when the sunkissed skyline bid them hello.

"Wait for me!"

He had always been a fast runner. Of the two boys who lived at the heart of the woods, he alone could cross the creek in a single bound and race the hawk to her prey. He had been blessed

with long legs wrapped with lithe muscle while the other was short with ankles that twisted easily. But whatever the second was born with had been a fine trade-off, for he was better at swimming and had the power to visit the nearby miniature islands when he wanted an extra layer of solitude.

"Then run faster!"

And the two boys ran, one after the other. And they laughed and jeered at each other, trying to grapple at the other's half naked body caked with dirt and sweat. And the follower lost his way after stepping on a pebble, his pained yowls drowned out by several orchestrated nocturnes from the trees above him. And he saw a flash of color to his side, those long russet curls glowing cold in the moonlight, and he felt at home once again.

When they inevitably found respite on their grass patch on the cliffside, they gave themselves a few pregnant moments to catch their raspy breaths. Leaning back on their arms, bouncing their sore legs, they slowly raised their eyes towards the stars above.

The galaxy is a bright place filled with faraway planets and icy rings. Like a tear in time itself, billions of twinkling stars congealed into a single winding path towards heaven with little glimmering veins reminding the

Melissa Mounier

boys of scar tissue. A bluish green comet shot across the sky, quickly dissolving into nothing. Together, they tried to recite the constellations.

"Over there is Old Man Fights Bear," one of the boys said, pointing towards a specific pattern of stars. "And there's Hungry Zombie.. Wonder Woman's Belt... Russian Butthole..." Pressing their bodies flat on the earth, they turned their heads to each other and chuckled at their fabricated names. Wide, oily curls tousled with every twitch of his shoulders, even after he righted his gaze on the heavens. After a prolonged look, the other boy fixed his tired eyes on the sky as well.

The boy with russet hair licked his dry lips. "Hey, how long do you think we'll keep living here?"

They looked at each other again, this time with knitted brows, thick with lack of maintenance. "I guess that depends, do you want to leave?"

The forest waited long for an answer. "... Not really."

A cold wind blew against them, rattling the leaves and combing the dandelions behind them. "What made you ask? Something on your mind?"

"No, no, it's just..." he sighed, stretching his arms above his head. "... I really like living with you and stuff, having the whole area to ourselves, and I was wondering if you thought the same."

Ah, the other thought. He's sad because I yelled at him for eating the rest of our fish storage.

"Yeah, I like you. I like living with you. Even if you are high maintenance sometimes."

"Jeez, so are you!" He lightly punched the other boy's arm, neither anticipating for it to hurt as much as it did. "And pfft, I like you too."

Sincerity was hard to tell with that guy, especially when they first left home and never looked back. They were able to feed themselves fine using whatever survivor instinct they learned back in Boy Scouts, but shit, they were kids. They were teens, but still minors. The search parties didn't know what to expect when they couldn't find a single trail, and both knew they were probably being pictured as kidnapping victims with their school pictures on milk cartons and occasional talk show hosts weighing in on the issue with their concerned parents.

Sincerity in him came in small bouts throughout the week, reserved only for times when he thought about his loved ones for too long.

But he truly was sincere, in this moment, right here. His friend smiled.

He turned abruptly, smacking his friend with his long hair. "But just how much do you like me?" he teased, his voice rising an octave. "How far would you go to save my life if I was being attacked by a bear?"

The other boy picked at the grass below his palm, plucking a few strands out from the Earth's crust. "I would find some nice wildflowers to put on your grave after the funeral," he replied.

"You wouldn't try to save me?"

"You're such a princess. Let's be realistic."

His friend huffed. "I would try to save you from drowning
Keyword: try."

"Then we would both drown."

"It's the thought that counts right?"

"Not if we're both dead."

"Then we'll both go to Heaven at the same time, right?"

Steady waves lapped at the bottom of the cliff. It was a near-40 foot drop from the tip and could only be used to help overcome the russet-haired boy's fear of the ocean. Over the seven months span they have spent placid in the forest, little progress has been made. But the other was confident that even Olympic divers would be stunned at his own form he so carefully crafted. For him, this cliff was a pinnacle of sorts. This was as close to Heaven they could possibly get.

If he wasn't agnostic, he would have told his friend, "Yes." Instead, he opted for, "Do you think we'll be able to find each other?"

His friend nodded, curls bouncing around his face. "Even if we were in another universe where we were separated, I would come

find you. I promise."

"Can you really promise that? You don't know that."

"But I do know. And I'll find you, no matter what."

"You wouldn't."

"But I would."

They interlaced their sweaty fingers together, running the pads of their thumbs over jagged nails stuffed with soil underneath. "I just I have this feeling that no matter what, we'll always come together. That means in other dimensions too, right?"

Their hot breaths mingled between them, tingling their clammy necks. They looked at each other with half-hooded eyes, their breathing steady and slow. Soon, the gentle rise and fall of the ocean would lull them to sleep. And still, his russet hair glowed in the moonlight, framing his square jaw and freckles the other boy loved so much.

"... I guess so." he finally answered.

"Would you come looking for me too?"

"... If I could, yeah.."

Oh how they smiled at each other at the declaration. The wind continued to pick up around them, promising a chilly night. Above them, another comet shot across the Milky Way, transcending the billion year old sunbursts and disappearing into nothing.

They pecked their lips together the way they saw their parents do seven months ago.



Wings at My Window

"We're all ghosts. We all carry, inside us, people who came before us". After reading this thought-provoking quote I felt adamant and compelled to discover my ancestors and their hardships. After countless years of intricate research and analysis, there is one person who captured my attention the most. When I would look at my great-great grandmother's face in the many photographs that adorn my family's home, I saw that this was a strong-featured woman who had courage and determination in her eyes and yet a somewhat mournful and grief-stricken disposition. While growing up, I never heard much about this woman or that she had captivated the nation with her best-selling novel titled *Wings at My Window* in 1940. After finding her worn and weathered book that was passed down through the generations in my family, I was committed and driven to read her book and to learn of her story. Her story is quite remarkable.

Ada Clapham was born in Hartford, Connecticut on June 16th, 1887, into a wealthy Massachusetts family, with her father owning one of the largest flour businesses in Boston. On October 27th, 1903 at age 16 and pregnant with twins, she married David Govan in Somerville, Massachusetts. Unfortunately, Ada lost both of her twins in a stillbirth and was depressed for months. Trying to change the atmosphere and reminders of their children's death, she and her husband moved around the Middlesex area until finally building their home in the famous Lexington, Massachusetts area where the "shot heard round the world" triggered the Revolutionary War.

David and Ada had four children: my great-grandfather Malcolm in 1904, Elizabeth in 1910, Jeanne in 1912, and David in 1916. A dark cloud was cast upon their family when Ada lost her two baby girls to an unknown illness when they were each only about a year old. In 1916 when she had her fourth child, his life hung in the balance until he was four years old. To make matters worse, Ada fell down a flight of stairs at her home, becoming a house-bound invalid and unable to do most of the everyday activities she used to perform without feeling extreme pain or discomfort in her hip, spine and back. Her health prevented her from leaving her home, which was adjacent to a natural woodland.

William Engel

On one cold dreary December day while looking out her bedroom window, a chickadee came flying to Ada's window. Fascinated, she began to feed the bird leftover crumbs. The bird's visit flashed through her mind like a single white light in a vast expanse of gray. At that moment, she instantly became enthralled with the various birds that would visit her window. She realized that she, who had been nearly helpless, had been able to give help to that chickadee.

Ada forgot the pain in her joints and spine and focused on helping the numerous birds that would visit her at her window. To increase her bird knowledge, she read every bird book she could get ahold of, asked her youngest son to help build feeding stations and bought unimaginable amounts of bird seed all throughout the Great Depression. It was Ada's love for these birds in which she began writing articles for Nature Magazine and the Boston Globe about her birds. Her articles helped her and her family survive through financial crises.

About two and a half years after feeding her first bird, Ada applied for a federal bird banding permit. Bird banding consists of clamping a tiny metal band, on which is stamped the serial number, around the lower part of a bird's leg in order that that particular bird may be identified wherever he flies. Also stamped

on the band is "Notify Biological Survey" which is stationed at Washington D.C. It is through the reports on these banded birds that the government is enabled to keep its bird records and to add each year to its fund of bird information. Ada wrote to a man, recommended by a friend, in Washington telling him of her curiosity about the many birds in her backyard and how she greatly desired to try her luck at bird banding. The man saw her determination and resilience through that letter and immediately granted her the permit, becoming an official bird bander. In six and a half years, Ada and her son David banded three thousand six hundred and thirty five birds of forty-two different species and had recorded five hundred and eighty returns in their backyard alone.

Seven years after feeding her first bird, Ada was entirely healed. The pain in her spine and hip was completely gone. Vigor and joy in living had come back to her despite the loss of her girls. The birds gave her a sense of purpose and hope, and with that, she healed herself by not focusing on the pain, but by focusing on her feathered friends who visited her every day.

Ada published her first and only book titled "Wings at my Window" in 1940. This book, spoken through her voice, tells us the story of how she, suffering from the pain of losing her

children and her illness, overcomes these maladies and wants to live again. Ada wrote bird stories and poems under the name "Of Thee I Sing" for Nature Magazine and was the only woman who had a guaranteed daily spot for her articles in the Boston Globe. Additionally, she was voted one of ten of the most outstanding women in the Boston Area of the 20th century. She also befriended the famous Rachel Carson through their mutual love of birds and even gave Carson and her mother tours throughout her beloved woodland when she was in Lexington. Carson had a close correspondence as well as a long-distance friendship with Govan until Ada's death.

For seven years the tract of woodland behind Ada's backyard grew and flourished despite hard times, financial worries and occasional illness. Through her letters and articles about her birds she had made thousands of friends in New England, the Pacific Coast, Canada and even the British Isles. As time passed, Ada's fear grew that something might happen to the woodland that lay on the other side of her property. If that were to be developed, her birds would surely be lost without it. This menaced Ada's peace of mind. This all came true one morning when she had awoken to the sound of an ax from a woodcutter deep in the woodland. She hurried down to the woodcutter where her worst

fears came true. The woods were to be developed and cleared for house lots. Life for her without those trees would be an empty thing and thought of herself as a fool for believing that anything could last without money. All her family had was a few dollars left of their life insurance policy and a small tax fund. It was at this moment where she had vowed to fight to the last ditch to preserve the sanctuary for her, her friends, and most importantly, her feathered friends.

Ada and her husband withdrew their small tax fund in hopes of delaying the development of the precious woodland. The best they could do was lease the woods for twelve months. Feeling afraid and unsure what to do, Ada decided to read her daily copy of Nature Magazine one morning. While reading the magazine, she had discovered some writing on the back which said "American Nature Association. A scientific and educational organization founded for the purpose of stimulating, conserving and protecting Nature". These words gave her courage having concluded that she was indeed stimulating interest in nature and trying to protect it. That same day she poured out her troubles in the pages she sent to an editor of Nature Magazine and ended up writing her whole story for his magazine, presenting it to its readers. In the July 1937 issue of Nature Magazine she told her

story of the sanctuary and the threat to its very existence which tapped the interest of readers across the country.

The response was unbelievable, with thousands of letters coming in to Ada from people of all backgrounds making small donations towards the creation of the sanctuary. During the next few months, more than eight thousand dollars (about 140,000 dollars in today's money) came in from all around the country from people who heard her story and wanted to save the sanctuary from development. The final papers that made Ada legal guardian of her bird heaven came to her on October 27th, 1937 on her 34th wedding anniversary. And so, the Woodland Bird Sanctuary in Lexington, Massachusetts came into being. While Ada lived, it remained in her loving possession. After her use of it ended in result of her death in 1964 it was passed to the Trustees of the Public Reservations of Massachusetts where they still possess it to this day. In 1985, the town of Lexington, Massachusetts had unanimously voted to rename the 7.2 acre sanctuary in honor of Ada Govan and her tireless preservation efforts.

Ada's life story inspired me to never give up and to stand up for what I believe in. I am proud to be a descendant of hers, having a piece of her in me, and being intrigued with family

history and genealogy only makes her life more interesting and lively. Even though I never met her, I feel like I know her not only on a familial level but on a personal level too. Her countless struggles and hardships make my family and I who we are today. It is amazing how she needed the birds just as much as they needed her. I learned about her story by reading her book and speaking with my family members around the country from Maine to California. Now, every time I hear a bird singing, I not only think of her courage and determination, but of her love and fervent passion for her feathered friends.



William Engel



Confession 1

Didn't I tell you?
I come from a generation of women.
Women who have not only given life,
but who have made the most of the life
they were given.
Women who have had words thrown at
them like rocks
for not being exactly what someone told
them to be--

Silent.
Didn't I tell you?
A man once had his tongue all over me.
Traces of his mouth still linger on flesh
and his words still live inside me.
They kick and coo, "fuck you"
all because I wouldn't let him fuck me.
Didn't I tell you?
When my grandma was sixteen,
her date pulled out a knife and held his
hand over her mouth in the backseat of a
car.
Her breath broke through his fingers,
but she can still taste the
Silence.

Natalie DeGregorio



Confession 2

"So, what did you want to talk about today?"

I twiddle my fingers and my eyes
dart away from the voice,
as I continue studying the white
walls around me.

"Is there anything in particular you
want to discuss?"

"Yes."

"So tell me, what are you thinking
about?"

"I'm thinking about a lot."

"Go on," the voice urges.

"I'm thinking about the news."

"The news?"

"Yes."

"What about it?"

"Did you hear that there was a
school shooting?"

The voice nods and then asks,
"Which one?"

"Is that what you wanted to discuss
today? The school shootings?"

"No" I reply, shaking my head left
to right.

"Then tell me, what else are you
thinking about?"

"I am thinking about how the other
day, a black boy got shot
by a cop just for pulling out his
wallet."

"Which time?"

"Is there anything else in particular
that you want to talk about today?"

"The assault."

"What assault?" the voice leans
towards me.

"Mine."

"Which one?"

Good Morning

I open my eyes and stare at the
blank space in front of me
In a room I do not recognize, the
walls are white
entangled in silk sheets
head dizzy, memory fuzzy
I turn my head
and notice the imprint of a body
next to me, wrinkles in sheets
I do not stir
I listen to water trickling
and the echo of humming in the
shower
I stare at the ceiling fan above me
as I begin to collect every missing
piece from last night
I am dancing with friends
lips painted red, I flash a smile at
your silhouette
eyes glistening, like the strobe lights
around me
You come into the light bathing me
reach out your hand, entice me to
dance
The back of your hand brushes
your forehead
ask if we can get a drink
The bartender hands you water
You swallow like a shot
"Do you want anything?"
"No," but you insist
lift the cup to my lips, lipstick left
like a bloodmark
as they pucker away

"What's in this?"
You laugh it off
The lights seem brighter than they
were
You twirl me under your arm
I'm already dizzy
The lights shut off.
I open my eyes
You are on top, arms above my
head
Your tongue explores the side
of my neck, and my hairs stand
straight
My eyes widen
You do not seem to notice
"What are you doing?"
I am not inside my own body
because you are
You cannot hear me or do not
want to
Your fingers trace the inside of my
thighs
My skin crawls
My arms in surrender
My eyes shut
I empty into the night
as you drink your fill.
The water turns off and your hum
stops
You step out of the shower
I sink under the sheets
and shut my eyes
I never was a morning person.

Natalie DeGregorio



I once had a dream that my body
was a boomerang
being tossed back and forth by men.
In my past life I was a lynx
once being hunted for my fur
I imagine him all over me
but I still lie
like a cracked china doll,
my face split centerfold.

I struggle to let the word "no"
escape my lips
I want to scream but instead begin
to cry
his hands travel up and down my
thigh
My eyes say it all
His hands slide under white
underwear
I say nothing but my trembling legs
speak for themselves
Is this really how it goes down?
A scream comes from within
I remember that I am whole again
My body is torpedo
I am a destructive force you may
not reckon with

I am an old soul who has come
back
to learn each time I had failed and
lost a life
My life, a game of chess
What move should I make next?

My skin now thick like quicksand
I can pull you under
How many lives do I get this time
around?
In this lifetime, I have learned
from my past lives
I have crumbled my mistakes like
a piece of paper
You cannot take from a soul that
has already learned and lived
One that has already learned to say
"NO"

These Streets

Freedom is not born within this city
Hopscotch and freedom of speech are
foreign to these streets
No-- sidewalks do not experience the
pitter patter of children's feet
No-- flowers do not sprout within
these
gardens
Blood splatters onto the streets like
rain
Stick out your tongue and taste the
droplets of hate
No-- flowers grow on these side-
walks
Buried here are bullets, they stick to
soles like gum
Blood sheds, not by words but in-
stead, to silence truths
No-- hate is not an issue on these
streets
I repeat-- hate is not an issue on
these streets-- it just happens
The way the sun sets and rises
the way you drink coffee every
morning
In order for there to be hate, there
must be love too
But only silence exists here
Except when-- bullets drip like rain
Except when-- storm drains collect
corpses
These sidewalks with no dandelions--
no
children's wishes
Only silence

Devin-Kimberly Holt