



Katie Mack ©

# JABBERWOCKY

From Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*

---

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand;  
Long time the manxome foe he sought—  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree  
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"  
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

# JABBERWOCKY STAFF

## EXECUTIVE

Jeff Whitney, Editor-in-Chief  
Kristen Mouris, Associate Editor  
Emma Hayward, Managing Editor

Zachary Grobe, Senior Editor

Jaime Carens, Assistant Editor

Taylor Devlin, Assistant Editor

Julia McLaughlin, Assistant Editor

Elizabeth Riezinger, Assistant Editor

## POETRY

## FICTION

Zach Metzger, Senior Editor  
Kaitlyn D'Angelo, Assistant Editor  
James Davis, Assistant Editor  
Christina Sun, Assistant Editor

Zach Ballard, Senior Editor

Rebecca Handford, Assistant Editor

## CRITICISM

## MEDIA

Wandy Pascoal, Senior Editor

Irina Grigoryeva, Copy Editor

Brynn Stevens, Copy Editor

## COPY

## DESIGN

Jeff Whitney  
Irina Grigoryeva  
Rebecca Handford  
Wandy Pascoal  
Brynn Stevens

# About Jabberwocky

*Jabberwocky* is an undergraduate literary journal published by the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The student staff is selected by officers of the English Society, which is the official undergraduate branch of the English Department. All editors and contributors to *Jabberwocky* are undergraduate UMass students.

*Jabberwocky* is divided into four separate staffs for the purpose of reviewing submissions: poetry, fiction, criticism/nonfiction, and media. All submissions are anonymously reviewed by the respective staffs to be approved for inclusion in the journal.

All contributions by members of the *Jabberwocky* staff were reviewed anonymously without input by the submitting staff member. In addition, staff members were limited to only one contribution per category.

*Jabberwocky* is not copyrighted. Any student work that is included in the journal remains the property of the artist. All contributors reserve the right to publish their work elsewhere in accordance with guidelines set by other publishers.

The views and opinions expressed in *Jabberwocky* are solely those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the staff, the department, or the university.

We would like to extend a special thanks to the English Department, particularly Celeste Stuart, Randall Knoper, and Department Chair Jenny Spencer.

*Jabberwocky* was printed with extraordinary support by Amherst Copies.

Questions, concerns, and input can be sent to [umassenglishsociety@gmail.com](mailto:umassenglishsociety@gmail.com). Students interested in being on the staff for the next issue can contact the English Society in November 2015. Submissions will open again at the beginning of the Spring 2016 semester.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Benjamin Finn   The Theory of Abnormality .....	1
Nathan Frontiero   Forest .....	2
Danielle Rivera   independence day .....	7
Liam Cregan   Gentle Torch .....	8
Melissa Mason   Pinky Swear .....	11
Zachary Grobe   A Weekend in France: A Triptych .....	12
Madeleine Jackman   Midnight Tea .....	20
Parisa Zarringhalam   A Poem About Peanut Butter .....	24
Georgia Westbrook   Untitled .....	26
Kelly Tierney   I tasted majesty .....	36
Jessie Hamilton   Dear Frank .....	37
Taylor Devlin   Gulf Stream .....	39
Madeleine Jackman   Lethe .....	46
Zack Douglas   Untitled .....	54
Al Cleaves   Raskolnikov Deletes His Facebook .....	56
Kelly Tierney   My Little Black Shoes .....	69
Sharon Amuguni   Uproot .....	70
Divya Kirti   What I Do to be a Woman .....	77
Jeff Whitney   Send me to hell with Jim Belushi .....	85

# CRITICISM

Andrew Hatch   At War with the Self: Larsen's Examination of the Intractability of Biraciality .....	14
Zachary Grobe   Inverting the Gaze: Salome's Challenge to "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" .....	47
Ally Batchelder   Envisioning Ideal Classrooms .....	86

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ashley McDermott   Remembrance.....	3
Chloe Heidepriem   Socks.....	9
Paul Flamburis   Indigestion.....	21
Christopher Pitt   Next.....	27
Shannon Horte   Horse's Mouth.....	40
Danielle Rivera   Tres Leches.....	59
Al Cleaves   My Inbox—Swoondler.....	71
Zach Metzger   What Witchery but a Clown's.....	79

F  
I  
C  
T  
O  
R  
U  
N  
I  
O  
N

# MEDIA

Juliette Sandleitner   The Kiss.....	6
Anne Songcayaon   Guiding Light.....	8
Andy Castillo   Be at Peace.....	13
Anne Songcayaon   Growth.....	20
Marco Monroy   Site-response installation.....	25
Katie Hodgkins   30.....	26
Nikki Grossfeld   Sky Lantern.....	35
Wandy Pascoal   Still.....	38
Katie Hodgkins   35.....	46
Nikki Grossfeld   Simplicity in a Countryside.....	55
Parisa Zarringhalam   I Took This Photo by Accident.....	58
Jess Berube   Untitled.....	68
Wandy Pascoal   In Passing.....	76
Jess Berube   Untitled.....	84



# The Theory of Abnormality

*Benjamin Finn*

My spine is copper  
ascending and  
descending

A toothpick holding a cantaloupe  
swelling,  
trading its juice for hot air

until it bursts at your dinner table  
Which, by the way, you forgot to set  
Again.

# Forest

*Nathan Frontiero*

Plant a thousand trees  
on a barren field  
straddled only with the  
carcasses of insects  
clinging to dried thorns  
of some bush  
that you used to prune  
when we fell in step and  
welded our shadows  
before we found the right  
low-hung sprawl of knots  
to lay within the leafy folds  
of our mutual limbs  
before the season changed  
and we separately made  
the same decision  
to burn the forest down.

*This year for the first time, Jabberwocky held a prompt-based fiction competition. The winning submission was “**Remembrance**,” by **Ashley McDermott**. The prompt was: write a story that begins at a carnival and ends in a lost civilization.*

# REMEMBRANCE

---

*Ashley McDermott*

I met her on the flying swings. Her hair spiraled in the midst of motion that turns stomachs into knots and laughter into harmony. I met her then, or perhaps only saw her; I honestly cannot remember if we spoke. By chance, she caught my eye, and, as I pressed the button to operate the machine, she pulled at my very heartstrings.

It was the summer of 1931. I'd arrive at Georgetown in the fall, and no longer meander the quaint boardwalk as I had each hazy summer night. The sound of vendors selling concessions, parents clicking snapshots, and innumerable youths amusing themselves became the soundtrack of that summer. This symphony replayed perpetually as I worked for the carnival; that is, until I saw her. After that day, new lyrics filtered into my soul, rewriting the next two months of my life. Even now, I hear her voice echoing in the depths of my brain, chanting the song of our summer, the ballad of our youth. Listen closely and you may hear it too...

“Peter.”

She sauntered into the ride, carefully choosing a seat. Which looks the fastest? Which soars the highest? She beckoned a friend towards swings closest to the water.

“Peter.”

As the ride commenced, she shouted in conversation, penetrating the carnival's sound barrier. Her voice traveled as a whisper. I leaned in closer, hearing nothing, until...

“Peter.”

The ride reached a halt, and she leapt from her seat with a smile and wide eyes. She glanced in my direction, and caught me staring. I looked down, praying she'd disregard that instant; better yet, she'd call my name once more.

“Peter!”

I peered up, to search her expression; those rosy cheeks, hazel eyes. Upon first sight I was taken aback; right out of my trance.

“Hello? Earth to Peter,” my friend Christian shouted, waving his hand in front of my face.

“Oh, uh, sorry,” I replied, grazing my fingers through my hair. “Just got a little distracted.” Christian sat next to me at the control panel of the vacant swings.

“A little?” He questioned with a hint of humor. “Listen man, I know you’re thinking about that girl, but you have to get over her. For God’s sake, you don’t even know her name! Come work the ticket booth. You can’t keep waiting here forever; you don’t even know if she’s coming back.”

His words pierced me, and hurt as truth often does. Had I been that obvious? That absurd? I nodded, and quickly changed the subject, pretending that the former conversation never transpired.

Reader, you know what happened next: I heeded my friend’s advice and renounced my ridiculous dream. If you are intelligent, you know that occurred. If you’ve ever been in love, you acknowledge that I failed to abandon passion in pursuit of sense.

I returned that night to the flying swings, clinging to hope in the most hopeless manner, yet the girl never materialized. The time came to shut off the lights and force the current of people to flood from the boardwalk. As I prepared for the last ride, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned, expecting to see Christian’s gloating face, but instead met an angelic one. My heart fluttered as the girl of my dreams stood before me.

“Excuse me,” she said politely, “could I get in before you start the ride? It’s my favorite.”

“Of, of course!” I stammered, the rapidity of my tone in sync with my heartbeats. I reopened the gate, allowing her to glide past.

The ride seemed infinite while I watched her elation rise with the swings. When

they halted, passengers departed, yet she stopped to express her gratitude before turning away. My heart pounded, my hands quivered, yet I could not let her go- not now that I was this close.

“Wait!” I called out, and she spun around in surprise. “I’m Peter, and I was, uh, wondering if you’d like to go for a walk.”

“I’m Charlotte,” she replied, smiling, “and I’d love to.”

That night passed in bliss, and my adoration for Charlotte enhanced by day, and soon by year. We went through the ups and downs of life together, clinging to one another, as if upon the swings that brought us together. Unfortunately, life is short. It escapes before you realize the weakness of your grasp, and though I wanted to hold her hand forever, immortality stood in the way.

I return now, years later, to say goodbye. My wife, Charlotte, recently departed from this world, leaving behind a lifetime of memories. This spot serves as a reminder of her spirit. However, years of waves and neglect left the old carnival to rot, and it grew into a metallic graveyard. I traverse the boardwalk as if exploring an ancient, forgotten world. Only the swings remain intact, swaying aimlessly in the wind, like a landmark of the past. It survives as my Coliseum, Pyramid of Giza, and Stonehenge.

This place and these moments represent a lost civilization; a time of innocence in my life and progress throughout the world. I met the love of my life here, yet now stand reminiscing over the past, surrounded by bulldozers and construction tape. I leave this note in the console of the flying swings, minutes before they will be dismantled. It details a time when, a girl’s excursion into the air and a boy’s simple glance fabricated a history of love.

I’m an old man, and by the time you read this, I may be a dead man. This is a lost space, a forgotten culture, yet I yearn for it to be remembered. As I told you, listen closely. The time will come when you hear that faint song of someone you love calling your name. I hear my heart’s song: the voice of Charlotte, summoning me. Though these swings will fall, it’s only a matter of time before I need neither swings nor strength to soar above and grasp her love once more.



*The Kiss* | Oil on wood | Juliette Sandleitner

# independence day

*Danielle Rivera*

the time  
the time is now

the time is now for us to shake the haze from the drunken, bleary-eyed pretenders  
who shout again and again  
there is no hate

here

look

we cry

look as brown bodies crash to the floor, one  
two  
twenty, forty

count them up

sponge away red off concrete

my son, she cries

my son

he yanks on the bars  
pain swelling up in thin joints, tough muscle

pain  
and anger

why am i here  
he calls  
why am i trapped here

i am not to blame  
he cries  
to an empty cell

i am not the one to blame



*Guiding Light* | Photography | Anne Songcayaouon

## Gentle Torch

---

*Liam Cregan*

---

The window in the wall, cold glass dust pocked,  
will shine between my eyes, and glowing light  
can walk with ease on asphalt cracked by salt  
and frozen night with gloomy clouds of eyes  
like insomniac flowers grown in caves  
by ghosts unseen in glassy boxes.

Unlit moon a gentle torch for killing  
buzzed flies from when I died a drunken mess,  
clammy and pale on stained yellow carpet.  
Meanwhile, had bile dripped from ceiling tile  
to pock mark gentle jade green bathroom floor,  
I would have lit my sleeping self afire  
by cracked pipe gas leak, tindered by a lighter,  
feeding water steamy heat with flame.

# socks

*Chloe Heidepriem*

---

I dunno why it happened, they just sorta appeared one day. It's weird, I know; most people can't keep track of 'em, but last November I opened my dryer and BOOM— all socks. I was pretty peeved because I just bought new jeans and they were in that load, they fit real nice and I dunno where the hell they are now...like I said, all socks! They weren't different either, they were all white tubes with a single red stripe tracing the top of the ankle. What the hell am I gonna do with a million gym socks, let me ask you that... So I figure maybe there's a problem with my dryer and so I go to the laundromat next Sunday and throw my khakis and button-downs in the dryer there. As you might imagine, I was a bit suspicious and so I waited around for the cycle to finish, sitting on the table with a book in hand. I watched the initial tumbles and tosses then figured I was home-free when the machine kicked into a faster cycle, so I opened up my paperback and found my place.

Forty minutes later, the machine bings and I pull the glass porthole open. What do I find? More of these ever-lovin' socks! Except this time not the tube ones, this time they are all thick and an ugly shade of green. So I go to the manager, and I say sir, sir there is a *problem* with your *dryer*, and he says well what's the matter, and I say I put my *finest clothes* in there and everything is coming out *socks* and what am I supposed to *do* exactly? He blinks at me and asks if I need him to call someone to come get me, and I tell you, this really gets *my goat*, so I go over to the dryer and scrape out my thousand and one green socks in the laundry basket, staring at him, saying *see, see? see?* like I'm some stupid bird. He looks really alarmed now so I just leave with the damn socks.

Well so I don't wash my clothes anymore; I discovered one damned day that the affliction had spread to the washer. Lucky I stopped washing them because otherwise I'd be the crazy guy with no clothes and just a sock to put over my privates, let me

tell you. Now I'm just the guy with dirty clothes. I spot clean the stains from my shirts and ties and try to smell nice. I bought a lot of cologne from Macy's and so that way at least people are warded off because I smell *too* good and not the opposite.

But I gotta tell ya, sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and things aren't too good. My dreams go like this: I step out of the shower and look in the mirror only to find a gigantic soggy sock staring back at me.

Other times, things aren't so bad. I dream that I find a dame who don't have any socks; my own *barefoot leadin' lady*, if you will. I slip an ugly green sock over her calloused foot and it fits perfectly. We kiss, and my curse is broken.

You've probably been wonderin' why I always give you and your family socks for Christmas? Look, I'm just capitalizing on my situation. I put my socks on one at a time, just like any other guy.

# Pinky Swear

*Melissa Mason*

---

Lock pinkies,  
Kiss your thumb.

Lock pinkies,  
Bite your thumb.

Clasp hands,  
Suck my pinky.

I promise,  
No, I swear.

A child's act,  
All grown up.

Dare to break,  
Loss of trust.

Promise.  
Don't believe you.

Pinky swear?  
Pinky swear.

# A Weekend in France: A Triptych

---

Zachary Grobe

---

## I

No sartorial slouch, seldom seen  
without un nœud papillon in  
retro motifs géométriques,  
For maximum effect, rock  
nine preppy polo shirts, bra-cups for  
elbow pads, flash-lamps for nipples, birds  
for sleeves, top hats sculpted from  
human hair, en manteau militaire, it is  
'couture sans frontières.'  
Benoît Missolin is trying to explain the  
transformative power of hats:  
'I'd rather be an enfant terrible  
than be boring'

## II

To come across a clearing filled with asparagus is  
an amazing sight, a visual feast of Art Deco and  
Art Nouveau and so much fun! Rub one against  
one another and you'll hear une douce musique indicating  
your white asparagus is fresh.

It's an impressive anecdote for  
an event inspired by a drunken play on words down at the pub.  
We decided to do the whole journey on vegetable oil for the  
eco-drama-documentary *The Age of Stupid*. Currently,  
we have no funding, but I am France-Comte's youngest  
hunter-gatherer and gastronomic detective on my way to  
Cannes in a van.  
P.S. France is not an island

### III

What's the buzz? Let's talk  
bar snacks. A dirty martini  
is great, but you can't get  
rid of the crab doughnuts!  
People would riot! I know.  
Even the toast was worthy of note.  
Don't let the exterior and  
Manga-like name fool you:  
It's worthy of Instagramming



*Be at Peace* | Photography | Andy Castillo

# **At War with the Self:**

## Larsen's Examination of the Intractability of Biraciality

*Andrew Hatch*

---

Nella Larsen's 1928 novel *Quicksand* grapples with the intricate issues of identity and social acceptance surrounding people of a mixed race heritage, largely stemming from her own experiences in New York and Denmark. Larsen writes her protagonist Helga Crane with the depth and precision that only a semi-autobiographical character can attain. As a woman with a black father and white Scandinavian mother, Larsen illustrates the tribulations surrounding "the race question", and specifically issues of biraciality through Helga. In Helga's travels, and especially in her time spent in the teeming black metropolis Harlem and the all-white enclave of Copenhagen, Helga can never quite reconcile the warring halves of her identity that refuse to resolve themselves into a single clear image even as others try to define it for her. When her self-identity crises inevitably and repeatedly reach a fever pitch, Helga reacts uniformly - she runs. Larsen shows how Helga's inherent "race problem" is unavoidable and irreconcilable in the communities she lives in, and can only be temporarily remedied via the escapism of travel.

In the bustling boroughs of Harlem, Helga at first feels the acceptance she has yearned for, but eventually fails to fully assimilate into the culture on account of her conflicted identity which forces her to flee. Although Helga had previously admitted that her conception of happiness had "no tangibility" (11), Harlem "welcomed her and lulled her into something that was, she was certain, peace and contentment" (43). Helga feels so at ease with her newfound sense of place and identity that she resorts to a cliché to report that she has now "found herself" (49). However, Helga's belonging and happiness, as it has a chronic tendency to, evaporates.

After spending more time among her peers, Helga becomes disillusioned by the radical views of her friends, who view white people as almost uniformly evil. Chief among them is Anne, Helga's best friend and roommate, who "hated white people

with a deep and burning passion”, and thought that “the most wretched Negro prostitute...is more than any president” (48), excepting, of course, the Great Emancipator himself. These coarse views bother Helga, who cannot ignore the inescapable reality that she is half-white. Helga is forced to acknowledge that although she has immersed herself in black culture and “[loudly proclaims] the undiluted good of all things Negro”, she finds it impossible to deny that she actively dislikes “the songs, the dances, and the softly blurred speech of the race” (48). Even more blasphemously, Helga likes many aspects of white culture, and “ape[s] their clothes, their manners, and their gracious ways of living” (48). Helga’s use of the word “apes” hints at the conflict here; the word acts as both a racial epithet and means to “badly imitate or mock”. Helga is painfully aware that despite her emulation of some parts of both cultures, she is both imperfectly white and imperfectly black. It is this discordance between Helga’s wish to be among black people while participating in aspects of white culture that causes her to exclaim “in fierce rebellion” why “she [should] be yoked to these despised black folk?” (55). Helga is effectively crushed between the two halves of her identity, with a desire to appropriate attributes from both worlds but an inability to do so because of Harlem’s inflexible mentality towards whiteness.

Larsen shows how, despite being ostensibly black, Helga has no obvious fit in society, even among the supposed colored utopia of Harlem. Helga cannot fully integrate with the black society of Harlem because she cannot deny that she *is* the enemy; she has openly acknowledged her “fierce rebellion”, and can be seen as a deserter to her supposed race. Even as Anne and her co-conspirators preach their rabid, united hatred towards white folks, Helga can only nod along and feel distinctly the traitorous white blood running through her veins. Larsen knows firsthand the difficulty of integrating a society where she can only participate in half-measure by virtue of her birth, and demonstrates through Helga the impossibility of true belonging in Harlem as a mulatto. So, when a timely windfall of cash arrives to Helga via her uncle Peter, she makes her default decision when facing an identity crisis and departs, this time heading for an extended stay in the almost completely white Dutch city Copenhagen.

In Copenhagen, Helga experiments with and finds temporary happiness in her status as a figure of exotic passion, but is eventually driven away when she discovers how she and her race has been fetishized and exhibited. Before leaving for Copenhagen, Helga romanticizes it as a place with “no Negroes, no problems, no prejudice” (55). Helga naively seems to think that escaping her race will somehow erase the inner conflict she feels, but she of course does not. It is no coincidence that Helga decides to move to Copenhagen after receiving a large sum of money. In addition to providing her mobility, Larsen wants the reader to associate money with whiteness - indeed, her moneyed time in Copenhagen is largely spent among the gentry amid luxury. Of course, as always, Helga finds her peace and happiness in this new place for a time, and thinks that surely, “this, then, was where she belonged” (67). She finds solace in her blackness, embraces it as a vibrant splash on the alabaster canvass of Copenhagen, and learns to revel in her exoticism. She discovers how to leverage it to make “a voluptuous impression” that “gratified her augmented sense of self-importance” (74). Here in Copenhagen, as a lone black star against a white skyline, Helga finally begins to reconcile her take on black culture with her “white” appreciation of material things and society. She is allowed to celebrate and show off her culture without forfeiting her desired place in society. Here, she is black, white, and happy all over - at least until Larsen reminds the reader of why biraciality is such a difficult conundrum.

Without any other black people to fraternize with or observe, Helga is not fully aware of exactly how her race is viewed in Dutch society, until she views a vaudeville act featuring two black men with her Dutch relatives and the painter Axel Olsen. Although the performance is raucously enjoyed by her companions, Helga is disgusted that the culture she lived in and has a deep connection to can be so lewdly displayed for the enjoyment of oblivious white people. Helga has freely admitted that she does not even like black song and dance, but the act of “seeing something in her which she had hidden away and wanted to forget” so wantonly displayed for the vulture-like enjoyment of people who could never understand the significance of black culture

traumatizes her. Helga now begins to understand that in Copenhagen, she is seen as a rare treasure, an exoticism to be bedecked, “enhanced, preserved” (83). This attitude is confirmed when Axel Olsen proposes to Helga; he paints a portrait of her, claiming to know “the true Helga Crane” (88). Upon viewing his painting of her, Helga balks, considering it to be not herself, but “some disgusting sensual creature with her features” (89). Olsen’s painting is a literal representation of how Helga is perceived by the Dutch: as a fetishized, alluring, alien creature markedly and fundamentally different from white Dutch society. Thus Helga’s once stable conception of herself and her racial identity is again crushed, and she feels the familiar pangs of wanderlust.

Larsen completes the second half of her treatise on the impossibility of racial fidelity in Copenhagen, demonstrating how Helga cannot merge the qualities of black culture into fixtures of white society without being seen as “other”. Although Helga is not rejected from Copenhagen, and is actually readily welcomed, she is imported more than she is housed by her Dutch relatives. Larsen effectively demonstrates the catch-22 Helga has been born into. In a black society, Helga is traitorous by her very blood, and her appreciation of parts of white culture and dismissal of some parts of black culture alienates her further from her friends and causes her to flee. And in a white society, socially acceptable dashes of her blackness become rare, treasured, and fetishized, turning Helga herself into a sideshow, an exhibit rather than a human.

In Naxos, Helga’s two worlds collide, but as Larsen shows, the result is a monstrosity where blacks are tricked into preaching their own inferiority while the whites claim magnanimity. Helga, of course, is initially happy with the institution, caught up in its fervor and promise of black uplift. But soon Helga becomes disenchanted with Naxos; she recalls the horrible white preacher who tells the black students that they are receiving an education better than even most white children, and so should remain contented, complacent; the greatest quality of Naxos Negroes, he says, is that they “knew enough to stay in their places”, and suggests that if all black people were like those at Naxos the “race problem” would dissolve. Those who wish to rebel against this notion, like Helga, are looked down upon and deemed to be “unladylike” (4).

Helga now understands that Naxos is a “show place” meant to demonstrate the white man’s grandiloquent magnanimity toward his fellow black man, whom he only ever actually wanted to control and keep in his place. Larsen is clear in her refutation of the ideals of Naxos - it is no coincidence that Naxos is “Saxon” spelled backwards. While Naxos is ostensibly for the benefit of black people, Larsen argues that the supposed cohabitation of Naxos by both black and white is really a cleverly disguised veil of subjugation by the white elite who aim to coerce the black students into accepting their own inferiority, all while claiming Naxos for a paragon of progress and racial fraternity. No surprise, then, that Helga finds the hypocrisy of Naxos an affront to her dignity and to her race, and she leaves in a flourish of anger. Larsen thus proves through Helga’s various travels that those of mixed race cannot reasonably exist in black communities, in white communities, or even in supposedly mixed communities like Naxos.

Travel, Larsen argues, is the only remedy, and a temporary one at that, to the impossible “race problem” that besieges mixed race people like Helga. While traveling from Harlem to Copenhagen on a great passenger ship, a ferry that may as well have been on the River Styx for all the disparity between the two worlds it traveled, Helga experiences an unfamiliar feeling: true happiness. On the deck of the ship, Helga finally feels “free of that great superfluity of human beings” (63); on the deck of the ship, Helga could be found “reveling like a released bird in her returned feeling of happiness and freedom, that blessed sense of belonging to herself alone and not a race” (64). Larsen seems to be arguing that as a mixed-race person with no true home, Helga’s happiness on the ship is symptomatic of her need to exist in the liminal spaces of life and society. Helga only truly belongs where there is no true belonging, only a fluid and indiscernible transition from one discarded paradise to the next Eden, stuck in the gray between the inconsolable realms of black and white. Here, she owes no allegiance to a particular borough or race. Instead, she can fly the mulatto flag of Helga - at least until she makes landfall and the towering Dutch flag mercilessly tears hers apart. This explains Helga’s relentless escapism. It is only during the act of travel that Helga can “find herself” as she may have put it, if only to become hunted down

again and again by the endless attempts by her peers to define and strangulate her; ultimately, rather than being able to act as an ambassador between races, Helga is an unwitting casualty of the “race problem”, which may as well be a race war, for she has no allies to fight with, no home territory to defend, and no common enemy to unite against. Only during travel can she escape her paradoxical self and the war waged relentlessly around her.

Helga is, Larsen shows, an impossible contradiction, a walking representation of the “race problem” that so plagues the society Helga has the audacity to try to live in. In a black society like Harlem, she cannot in good conscience take up arms in the fight against the oppression of the whites. In Copenhagen, Helga is disgusted to find that the place she thought must be free of the “race problem” views her as a sexualized, exotic beast to be curated and gawked at. And at Naxos, Helga finds that racial harmony is an absurd dream, with white administrators carefully and tightly governing the progress of Naxos’ black students in order to more effectively mold them into the neutered, manageable citizens they desire. Only the spontaneity of escapism without allegiance to any particular faction of the raging race war, Larsen argues, can briefly allay the “race problem” embedded bitterly in Helga’s DNA. And so Helga drifts from one desolate paradise to the next, a blissful traveler between worlds, yet enslaved by the reality of her irrepressible destination and haunted by the scars of a war she was not conscripted to fight.

# MIDNIGHT TEA

Madeleine Jackman

Words scatter like loose-leaf tea  
The taste of green on the tips  
of both of our tongues, but  
they have a habit, don't they?  
Slipping through the strainer - just -  
Just to stick to the bottom of  
the very bottom of my cracked blue mug



*Growth* | Photography | Anne Songcayaouon

# In[di]gestion

Paul Flamburis

I've always been the kind of kid who would cram a whole habanero into his mouth just to show everyone that I could do it. But after scarfing down your sixth one in a single week, it gets a little less interesting for everyone. Eventually I had to move up to ghost peppers to get the same reaction. By the time I started doing Carolina Reapers, I think I actually convinced myself that I liked them. So when Tim dared me to eat that dead mouse he found on the sidewalk, I thought maybe I could like that too.

I prepared it first, obviously. But I couldn't find any mouse recipes on the internet that appealed to me, so I just kinda winged it. I figured I had to skin it first, but all of the knives were dirty so I just used a cheese grater, which is pretty ironic if you think about it. Then, while I let some butter melt in the pan over medium heat, I gave it a light salt-and-pepper rub. After that I just let it sauté until it smelled nice, and then I called Tim over and ate it. I offered him a bite but Tim said he didn't want any, which was fine by me because the mouse actually tasted pretty good.

I ate another one in front of the school the next day and everyone cheered for me. They called me "Marky the Mouse Eater." That's the nicest thing that anyone's ever called me, so I asked them if there was anything else they wanted me to eat. One guy suggested that I eat his shorts, but I had to tell him that that was impossible, since he was wearing acid-washed jeans. The guy who was about to say "eat my dick" decided not to say anything. Nobody had any better suggestions so I made my own.

"How about my shoes?"

Everyone murmured in disbelief, which I interpreted as assent. They wanted me to do it, so I was going to do it. I took off my brown leather shoes and held them up for everyone to see, turning them around to prove that they were real. I asked if any of them had any barbecue sauce. No one did, of course, so I just started. I ripped the

leather into beef-jerky strips and chewed them one by one. Eighteen thick strips later, the shoes were gone. Not once did anyone speak. No one took their eyes off me. I had everyone's attention, and all it cost was a pair of shoes. I walked home in my socks that day thinking about what I could do next.

While I was brainstorming on the couch that night, chewing on my pencil (though I had no intention of eating it without anybody watching), the doorbell rang. I found Tim standing on the porch. I asked him if he wanted to watch me eat the pencil.

"Uh, no, that's okay Mark," he said. "I actually feel kind of responsible for what happened after school today. I only told you to eat that thing because I didn't think you would do it. Everyone kinda thinks you're a freak now."

He was wrong, obviously. Nobody thought I was a freak. Everybody loved me because I could eat anything. If anyone thought I was a freak, it was Tim.

"That's alright, Tim," I said. And then I shoved him into the oven. I couldn't let anyone go around telling everybody that I was a freak.

"What the hell are you doing?" shouted Tim, his eyes wide with horror.

"I'm making dinner," I said.

"You sick motherfucker!" he screamed. "I hope you choke on my ribs!"

As a matter of fact, I did. But dying wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be. It probably looked pretty bad on the outside, what with me asphyxiating on the floor with my best friend's rib bone lodged in my esophagus, but on the inside I was having a relatively peaceful road trip into the afterlife.

The first thing I learned about Hell is that it's a lot like prison. The Big Guy Downstairs has too much on his plate to take any personal interest in your own eternal suffering, which I had never thought of before, but totally makes sense in retrospect. Hell is pretty full, and to be honest, I don't really think he cared whether I was there or not. The greater tortured-soul community, however, doesn't exactly give the warmest of welcomes to cannibal-murderers like me.

A crowd of the damned souls formed around me, and if I had been anyone else, they probably wouldn't have had any problem putting me in my place. But each one of them had been simmering in this pit for generations, slowly over high heat. I could practically taste the zestiness of their boiled sins on the tip of my tongue. The smell was irresistible. Before any of them could make me their bitch, I turned the depths of Hell into one big pot of red-hot chili con carne and ate the whole thing without a spoon.

With no one left to stop me and nothing better to do, I crawled back out of that pit and found myself standing above a hole in the ground beneath a boardwalk in Seaside Heights. I hadn't been there in years and I didn't feel like being there again. I didn't even wait an hour to digest. With a stomach full of Tim and Hell I ran down the beach, leaped into the water, and swam as hard as I could away from the broken boardwalk and the dirty hotels and the seafood restaurant where I had to wear one of those tuxedo t-shirts while my prehistoric saxophonist uncle tied the knot with his saxophone. I only looked back once, and only to take a giant New Jersey-shaped bite out of the Eastern United States.

And then I thought, *Why stop here?* Unless I kept going, I would have to explain to a lot of people why America now had 49 states and one less guy named Tim. So I kept going. I ate the whole goddamn world and I wasn't even full.

God came storming in, waving his iPad and screaming at me to stop fucking around with all his creations. I thought he was going to smite me. He gave me no choice. I put him between two pieces of cosmic rye and ate him.

I took God's iPad to see what kind of apps he had, but all he had was an app that made words and an app that made people. So I opened up the word app and wrote down everything I did that day, and then I opened up the people app and made a bunch of people to read it.

Because if no one knows what I accomplished today then what was the fucking point?

# A POEM ABOUT PEANUT BUTTER

*Parisa Zarringhalam*

Is it the glorious bounty from inside the shell  
What every peanut half strives to become  
After spending all its energy on a higher purpose  
Future plans  
A tree of its own

It is ground up  
Pulverized in the abdomen of a mechanical process  
To become one with the many  
In a brutal dance of self destruction

Foolish being, there is no such thing  
No self in destruction  
Only pressure, sucking out the inner treasures  
Inner thoughts in troves

The greatest release is death  
Congealed in it's own liquid  
No longer alone but with sixteen ounces  
Of itself

Knives scoop shapes into an impressionable mind  
Like barbed comments teach  
Spread ourselves thin  
Over too much bread

A couple years ago the taste changed  
It's easier being superficial  
Faults are more apparent  
And there is no need to fix them

Peanut galleries are a place for elephants  
Through the convenience store window, an empty shelf  
Sweating out oil in one hydrogenated mass  
Dying of thirst in the moist air of your breath



Site-response installation | Recycled wood, strings, and pulleys | Marco Monroy

This piece analyzes the relationship between parts within a system by applying natural forces such as tension and gravity. The system is repeated on top of itself to form a more complex network, where the number of relationships between parts increases, as does the risk for failure. The parts are constantly performing the task of counteracting each others' weights to maintain stability throughout the network and overcome the precarious notion of failure.



Katie Mack ©

30 | Photography | Katie Hodgkins

## Untitled

*Georgia Westbrook*

Sitting on the top floor I cannot help but think  
I might really be in the clouds tonight.  
Snow seems to spin up  
If that is true then  
Gravity must not pull us together either.  
There are shelves with books of  
Things I could not care less about.  
I read their spines to keep myself from thinking  
I am falling up.

# NEXT

---

*Christopher Pitt*

We buried Norman as best we could, considering the circumstances. We put him on the side of our path and covered him in snow until our gloves were soaked through and our fingers were slowly succumbing to cold. It was not a hero's burial. His was not a hero's death.

But we never promised anything.

We moved on. We kept walking. There was little we could do for him that day. The sun is only in the sky for a short amount of time, and that window closes a little more each passing day. We had to keep moving or we would've joined Norm.

Of course, at this point tensions were high, and Terry openly questioned why we pressed on. All he had to say, all he could say, was "why?" And all that we could do to respond was to shrug our shoulders just so. Give him a quick pat on the back. "We're here. Norm's gone, but there are still five of us left."

That seemed to calm Terry for the remainder of the perilously short day. But the next morning at sunrise, as we quickly disassembled the tents and kept going, we found that our comfort to Terry wasn't necessarily true.

There were now six of us.

Bundled up as we were, the biggest signifier as to who's who was our gait. Terry trudged. His shoulders slumped and each footstep seemed to be almost physically painful. The guy was just lazy. Why he decided to join this expedition was beyond me.

Anna slid. She never seemed to pick her feet up, and if she did, she didn't even take them higher than the snow on the ground. She always claimed that she was saving energy by "using the environment to her advantage". I don't know about saving

energy, but it was very recognisable.

Hendricks tiptoed. He seemed very careful not to move his foot too far, or too high without taking a second first. His claim was that it prevented him from stepping on any ice or into a chasm or ravine. It was almost as spurious as Anna's.

Sam examined. Sam was our pathfinder, and she knew her way around sub-arctic areas. She was also a respected geologist, and much of her time was spent looking ahead of us in case she saw a chasm, ravine, or rare rock formation. Every move she made seemed to have the expressed purpose of advancing her view, as if physically moving forward was just a happy coincidence.

This thing? It glided. Anna slid, and Hendricks tiptoed, but this thing moved as though it was on ice, but not actually touching the ice. It ignored small bumps in the snowdrift and it didn't leave footsteps. I stared at it for a while before I realized that it was probably a hallucination. Then I noticed Hendricks staring at it too.

He looked back at me and I shook my head slowly. Either he didn't notice it or he didn't want to, because he looked the thing straight on and yelled "Norman! Norman, is it you? Nod if it's you?"

Everyone else was looking at Hendricks now, and it seemed as though they couldn't see the thing. I grabbed Hendricks' shoulders and started pulling him back, away from the thing. I don't know why. The thing didn't seem to notice the yelling, it looked (in that strange, inimitable way that a creature like that can look) not at Hendricks or I or anyone else, but up ahead at the snowy wastes. It seemed to be caught on some far off horizon. But, as I thought about it, the thing had stopped moving when we had stopped. And it would most likely start moving when we did.

Hendricks kept yelling "Norm" and "hey", but the thing took no notice of him. I was fine with that. Terry and Anna took Hendricks from me and sat him down to examine him and restrain him if necessary. I looked more intently at the thing.

Either it didn't notice my staring or it didn't care. It was a terrifying sight. It was tall and thin, willowy even. Black strips of cloth hung from its body at every point and many of them waved even when the wind had died down. Its entire face was wrapped

in the black cloth, and though I was no expert on human anatomy, it seemed as though it was missing its jaw. It looked like a mummy had been dipped in black dye.

Sam stood next to me, looking worriedly at me. After all, it was clear that Hendricks and I were the only ones seeing something, I just had the courtesy to not scream bloody murder about it. I was about to say something when the sounds of a struggle were heard behind us.

Hendricks had gotten free of Anna and Terry and stood up. He began to run as fast as a person could in this snow and in the suits we were wearing. He dashed past Sam and I and towards the thing. He was no longer yelling, which, in the stunned silence only punctuated by the howling wind, was far more frightening.

He ran through snowdrifts towards the creature, still interested in something on the horizon. As he got closer, I realized that we were all just standing in one spot, watching him confront a creature of unimaginable horror. It felt both right and wrong.

When Hendricks made it to within fifty feet of the thing, it slowly turned its head to him. He only increased his pace and yelled “Norm” one more time before suddenly disappearing. The thing looked at the spot where he seemingly stopped existing and slowly turned its head back to the horizon.

Anna and Terry moved to follow Hendricks’ trail, but Sam stopped them. She pulled out a pair of binoculars and carefully surveyed the area around the thing. With a small sigh she put the binoculars down and quietly said “ravine.” We all knew what that meant for Hendricks. We didn’t have the tools for a ravine rescue, and at this latitude, few ravines are shallow enough to survive the fall. For all intents and purposes, Hendricks had just buried himself.

We had been standing in one place for too long and the cold was beginning to really hit us, so we quickly said our goodbyes and kept moving. I took point with Sam, intending to explain to her what I’d seen. As I began to speak, she cut me off.

“I saw it too,” she said, “the moment Hendricks disappeared, it popped into my vision. It was all I could do not to scream. I knew Hendricks had fallen into a ravine before I’d taken the binoculars out. I wanted to get a better look at the thing. It was

most certainly not Norman.”

I sighed. Sam was far and away the smartest person in our group and likely the most rational too. Knowing that she saw the creature gave me a glimmer of hope that I wasn’t crazy. But why did she see it the moment that Hendricks fell into the ravine? A little voice in my head said that only two living people can see it at a time. That seemed to make some sort of sense. But Hendricks hadn’t immediately died when he fell in. It should have taken a bit longer for Sam to see it.

As comforting as knowing Sam could see the thing too, it did little to alleviate the fear when the thing began moving with us again. I volunteered to keep an eye on the thing. Couldn’t have Sam distracted. We could all easily end up like Hendricks.

The sun was about an hour away from setting and were were similarly about an hour away from base. We couldn’t afford another stop like the one with Hendricks or we’d all freeze to death in sight of the base. We continued moving, the grim reality of our situation weighing us down. Sam and I were at the front, silently trying to ignore the thing accompanying us. Anna and Terry took the back, quietly discussing Hendricks.

The sun had dipped down to only a sliver above the horizon when we caught sight of the base. With the base finally in sight, a spring came back to our step and for the first time today things began to look up.

With the sun down and the night beginning, we made it into the base, thanking God for the warmth it offered. It wasn’t like a sauna or anything, but it was far better than the cold wasteland behind the door. I let everyone else go in first so that I could make sure that the thing wasn’t following us into the base.

After making totally sure that nothing was joining us, I allowed myself to relax a little. The thing was nowhere to be seen. Today had been... draining to say the least, and we were all tired. After a quiet dinner we all went to bed. It wasn’t what I wanted to do, considering that the thing was outside somewhere, but my body wanted to rest. I fell asleep, despite it all.

I awoke to a light tapping on the glass. There were no exterior lights in the base

so I couldn't see what was tapping, but I knew. I just did. I laid in bed, listening to the tapping, never in rhythm, never to any discernible beat. After an eternity of the tapping (really an hour), I got up and walked to the kitchen, located in the center of the base. When I entered, everyone was sitting around the table.

They all looked up at me and Anna whispered "the tapping?" I nodded slowly. I took a chair around the table, trying not to think about the two empty ones that were not going to be filled. Sam passed around a mug of hot tea with a little extra kick. I took a sip and passed it on.

Then the screaming began.

Mocking. Inhuman. "Norm?!" It was like a parrot, if the parrot had a cold. It had a tone that brought to mind images of the schoolyard bully asking over and over why you were hitting yourself.

The thing, whatever it was, had taken Hendrick's voice and twisted it into something awful. We all screamed. It came from all around us, the yelling penetrating the thick wall and making it seem as if the thing was inside with us.

The tapping turned to pounding and the cacophony was deafening. Screams of "Norman!", pounding, sounds of tortured animals, it all surrounded us. I felt like I was going mad, and as sick as it sounds, only the knowledge that everyone else was experiencing this kept me feeling alright. I was on my knees, and so was Anna. Terry had his head down on the table, with his arms acting as a sort of cover. Sam was upright and still.

And, as quickly as it all seemed to have come, it stopped. The silence was all I could hear. Everyone was still tensed, waiting for the next wave of violent noise. Terry was the first one to move. He got up from his chair and walked over to the pantry. I don't know why he did it, but as he walked to it I felt a strange comfort. I knew what was in the pantry.

Terry opened the door and the frozen corpse of Hendricks fell into his arms. Mangled, blue, with his limbs splayed in odd angles and the expression of purest fear on his face, the corpse was undeniably Hendricks'.

Terry didn't know what to do with this body and jumped back, dropping the corpse to the floor with a sickening thud. We all stared, ever more mindful of the stench that was escaping the body as it thawed. I didn't notice it until now, but I think that was why Terry went to the pantry in the first place. Terry always had a good nose.

I wasn't thinking anymore. "We should bury him," I said. Everyone looked at me. "He's clearly dead. He doesn't have any next-of-kin. It's only right."

Terry looked from me to the body and sighed. "But to do that we'd have to go outside. Something is outside."

Anna nodded and Sam continued to stare at me. I knew we'd get to this point sooner or later. "I want to know what it is. I need to go outside."

Terry and Anna immediately began giving me reasons why I shouldn't, but I was most worried about Sam. She hadn't stopped examining me since I spoke up. After I assuaged Anna and Terry and promised that I would stay within range of the base, I went to my room to put on my extra layers.

I was pulling on my coat when Sam slipped in. She looked me over one more time and then said, "You have a black piece of fabric on your arm. You've had it since you suggested we bury Hendricks."

I looked down. There was no black cloth on either of my arms. "I don't see it," I said to Sam.

Sam closed the door. "Seeing something means nothing now. Anna and Terry can't see this... thing, but they can hear it. We can't trust our eyes now. I feel as though I can barely trust you."

I sat on the bed. Sam could see the black cloth but I couldn't. Anna and Terry couldn't either. Sam doesn't trust me, and I don't want to believe her. But she's right. We can't trust our eyes anymore. I looked up at her. "We can't wait until morning, can we?"

She closed her eyes and slowly shook her head. Good. I'm not the only one feeling that strange compulsion, that desire, that... need to go outside now. It's as if doing anything else just doesn't make any sense.

I stood up and walked over to the door. Sam had her gear on already.

“Let’s go outside.”

The cold was indescribable, and the wind tore through us as if the many layers we wore were nothing. The night was absolutely still, and the silence was only broken by the wind. The thing was nowhere in sight.

We made our way out to the base perimeter, where we could safely bury Hendricks without disturbing any experiments being conducted. I started digging, swearing to do right this time and wishing that the same courtesy could be extended to Norman. Sam kept watch for the thing.

When I finished, I slid Hendricks into the hole and made sure that he fit. As I began to cover his body, Sam grabbed my shoulder. I turned.

The thing was right in front of us. Sam was tightly gripping my shoulder, to the point where it started to hurt. The thing was staring at me. I don’t know how I could tell, but I could. It felt as though it was looking at me.

It shifted its nonexistent gaze to Sam. It raised a long, black finger and pointed at her. In that voice that sounded wrong on a most basic level, it said, “You’re next.”

Sam gripped even tighter, if that was possible. She began to back away from the thing. I tried to stop her, but she kept backing up until she fell into Hendricks’ grave. She began to scream and the thing glided over to the hole, looking down at her.

She was trying to push herself out of the hole, but she was also trying not to touch Hendricks. As the thing got closer, something deep inside me told me to attack. I ran at the thing, but felt a firm hand on my chest holding me back. The voice said, “No. You are not next. Wait”

I continued to run at it, but the invisible force was too strong. I watched as the wind picked up, steadily increasing until it became a howling gale. Snow blew everywhere and the pile that I dug up while grave digging began to blow all around us. I couldn’t see anything due to the blizzard, but I could hear Sam’s screams get more and more muffled.

After what felt like years, the wind died down. When I could finally see again, I

saw the thing hovering over where Hendricks' grave was. The whole thing had been buried under snow, with Sam in it. The force lessened and I ran over to the grave and began frantically digging, hoping to save Sam.

The thing continued to look down. It said, in a tone that could be either solemn or mocking, "It's no use. She is gone. You are the next."

I kept digging but couldn't find any sign of Sam or Hendricks. I looked up at the thing. "What are you?" I asked, half hoping it wouldn't answer.

The thing tilted its head slightly. "Isn't it obvious?" It said. "I am seen by few and heard by all. I am the future. You are the next."

"What does that mean?" I asked, my voice barely staying calm anymore. This thing had killed two of my friends and was now talking in riddles. "If I am next, why don't you just kill me?"

The thing began to back away. "I am not here to kill you. That is not what you are next for."

I felt tired. I stopped kneeling and stood up. I had to get back to the base. Probably getting hypothermia. The thing continued to back away. "What? What am I next for?"

The thing turned away from me and disappeared as the wind picked up again. It was incredibly strong and as I made my way back to the base, it only got stronger. Soon enough I was stumbling and before I even made it halfway back to the base, I was back on my knees.

The wind was unrelenting and I couldn't even stay on my knees. Hypothermia was setting in. This was how Norman had died. I tried to scream for help but my voice was lost in the wind. After enough screaming, my throat began to hurt. My screams became squawks. The wind only picked up more. I felt small pieces of ice fly through the air. Some cut my cheeks, others cut my jacket, opening the fabric up and revealing black strips of cloth, fluttering in the air.

I was next. No, I was the next. What could that mean? My thoughts became more and more fuzzy and it was all I could do to stay awake. I fell asleep, but as time

passed and my body succumbed, I gathered scraps of consciousness. Soon enough I was able to figure out two things.

They buried me as best they could, considering the circumstances.

They were next.



*Sky Lantern* | Photography | Nikki Grossfeld

# I tasted majesty

*Kelly Tierney*

---

But the powder settled,  
the music was gone.  
A warm January afternoon,  
salty air channeled it from you.  
An unexpected candidate,  
who knew some words  
and a few days could make a difference?  
A fortuneteller once told me  
I'd find greatness  
sitting on the mangled earth  
stuck in between  
aliens, the sun, and the sound  
of your sincerity  
I'd feel the silent descent  
the trees, the snow, the quiet.  
Breathing  
as if they were all bound.  
This inaudible purity—  
a snow globe  
shaken just enough to swirl.

*This year for the first time, Jabberwocky had held a prompt-based poetry competition. The winning submission was “Dear Frank” by Jessie Hamilton. The prompt was: write a poem about, including, or addressed to a dining commons menu item or a building on campus.*

*Jessie Hamilton*

---

# *Dear Frank*

My newly blue soul  
screams *I'd rather be dead!*  
My whole heart's a gaping hole  
since they rid you of red.

Whatever happened to coexistence,  
two opposites side-by-side?  
It ends in an instant  
when you decide to take a side.

Democracy, diversity, delight  
become ideas unheard  
if we ignore what's good and right  
in favor of the preferred.

There is no gain, no glory  
in this unjust crusade.  
Moral of the story:  
bring back red Powerade.



*Still* | Photography | Wandy Pascoal

# Gulf Stream

---

*Taylor Devlin*

today I painted myself blue  
pretending to be water

at the aquarium layers of teal  
paint acted as camouflage

I was invisible and whole  
ecosystems swam inside me

you pointed out minnows behind  
my eyelids while moon jellyfish

wrapped smooth tentacles  
around my ankles and wrists

a small penguin with a top hat  
swam between my shoulders

starfish clung tightly leaving  
star shaped absences

where the paint had been  
there was a star over my heart

when it was time to leave you  
lost sight of me completely

I had become the vacant  
dreams of a loggerhead turtle

an ending disguised as a warm  
current blowing across the Atlantic

# Horse's Mouth

*Shannon Horte*

“Mr. Wilson,” the nurse began, “Mr. Wilson, do you have any family we can contact? Anyone in the surrounding area?”

I open my eyes and the sun reflects off the already bright white-washed walls. I am hooked up to machines and they’re beeping out of sync. The light hurts my eyes as I try to focus on the nurse standing above me.

“No,” I mutter, “I don’t really have much family left anywhere. Can’t I just go home?”

The nurse smiles but doesn’t show any teeth. She’s not gonna let me leave.

I try to figure out how I got here. The last place I remember being is outside of the club with Bobby and those guys from the band. Meanwhile, I slide my back up against the stony pillows, and I cringe. Muscles that I didn’t know existed are aching, fatigue like I have never felt before has set in.

The nurse brings me a tray of food that looks like a generic brand TV dinner. I nod sarcastically, and she checks the levels on the machines. I try to swallow the lumpy, lukewarm mashed potatoes on the tray as I ask her, “So, how did I end up in here, anyway?”

“You overdosed on heroin last night. Your friend brought you in when he couldn’t wake you up,” she says. “You should consider yourself lucky.”

I think she expected me to be shocked, but I wasn’t. Bobby and I must’ve shot up with the band at the club and things probably got a bit crazy from there. If anyone brought me here, it was Bobby. I hardly know anyone we were with last night, and even if I did, they probably would’ve just left me for dead.

I figure if my vitals are healthy and I stay in my room, I can get out early on good behavior, like last time. It might take some sweet talkin’ though. Luckily, the

nurse is a real good looking, so I don't even have to fake it.

“A pretty lady like you shouldn't have to be taking care of a creep like me,” I comment.

She rolls her eyes with a half-hearted smirk on her face; she's heard that line before. “You're right. But here we are.”

I'm being forced to stay until tomorrow morning. That's way too long to spend at a hospital. These people aren't here for me, in fact, they're probably sending me home extra early just so they can get rid of me. There ain't nothing to fix that can be fixed in a place like this.

I turn on the television to kill the rest of my sixteen hours. It's too late for mindless talk shows, and too early for anything of actual substance to be airing. I settle for a Law & Order SVU marathon as I sink into my hospital bed and choke down the tar that they call food around here.

---

---

I wake up to some clattering noises that end up being the nurse fumbling with her tools.

“Good morning, Mr. Wilson. Sorry for waking you. You can check out in a couple of hours, if you're feeling up to it,” she says.

I thank her and she steps out of the room. I'm unhooked from the machines and they're no longer beeping. SVU is still on TV, and I can't decide if this is a result of the same marathon I was watching, or a brand new one that started at 9AM sharp.

None of my stuff is in the room, so there is nothing to pack. My head pounds while I walk to get a cup of coffee. I run into Bobby, who was coming to see me. He breathes a long sigh of relief, gives me a hug and a pat on the back. After grabbing a cup of coffee, I check out with the front desk woman. She's got a pixie haircut; a perfect style for a slightly overweight middle-aged woman. She glances up at me a few times while she swipes my card, so I can tell I look terrible. She shoves my credit card back at me and tells me I'm all set to go. I hate hospitals.

---

---

I climb into the passenger seat of Bobby's car. The foot space is riddled with water gallons and empty fast food bags. He tells me all about the other night, what he can remember about it, anyway. Nothing too out of the ordinary happened, I just got a bit out of control and things went wrong. He seems real weird the whole way back to my place. I figure he's just shaken up from having to come to the hospital, but he says close to nothing in the car.

Bobby parks outside my apartment and tells me he'll be back in an hour or so. He says he's got some plans for later. I unlock the door and climb over the piles of newspaper, stacks of boxes, and mountains of clothes that cover my living room floor.

It's then that I realize just how much coffee I really had at the hospital. I immediately head for the bathroom but freeze in front of my hallway mirror. I look terrible. My short hair is displaced and tousled, my eyes are sunken down into my cheeks. I haven't shaved in over a week. I need to shower.

I step into the shower, only to realize that I've got no shampoo, and I can't find my razor anywhere. I settle for body wash and meet up again with Bobby, without shaving.

Bobby is outside my house but he is not alone. In his car are two girls, one in the passenger seat, and the other in the back. I shoot him a look of disapproval, as I hadn't planned on meeting up with anyone else, let alone girls, tonight. I don't even bother to introduce myself as I climb into the backseat next to one of the girls. The only thing I want to do tonight is shoot up. It's not fair, I didn't even get to feel it last time.

I tell him to drive to the shack on Helms Street. Our buddies always hang out there; it's where we always go. Bobby lets out a hesitant, "C'mon, man", but stops his whining when I shoot him a glance in the rear view mirror. We make small talk all the way there. Bobby seems to be trying to get with the blonde in the passenger seat. It's sad, really, he could do so much better if he'd clean himself up a bit.

All of us step into the shadowed, wooded area right behind the shack and immediately begin to roll our sleeves up above our elbows. I tap my forearm for the vein to

appear, and Bobby looks at me as if he might be sick.

“C'mon, Bobby, don't tell me you're gonna back out of this. You know how many times we've done this, Bobby? Huh? You think one more time is gonna be it for us? I have to tell you, I can't look at you the same if you back down from this. It's just heroin. It ain't nothing new to you.”

I know I can be mean to him or treat him like a kid sometimes, but Bobby's a great guy and he's been around me and my shit for years now; he should be used to it. He sighs as he carefully cuffs the sleeve of his shirt. Bobby always does that. He's so damn neat all the time. He snorts the most immaculate lines of coke you'll ever see.

The two girls look around to see if anyone is near. The brunette is real nice lookin', her friend, not so much. I've always had a thing for white, brunette girls. It's something about that dark hair surrounding a clear, white face that I can never get over. She shuffles her feet and the slight movement of her body mesmerizes me. She hasn't been doing drugs long enough to have the life sucked out of her face or the passion drawn from her eyes. I almost feel bad about giving the stuff to a girl that pretty.

My veins bulge from my arm like mountains on flat land. As the needle enters my arm, like a binkie into a baby's mouth, I look up at the brunette. She's impressed at how normal this is for me. The heroin seeps into my veins and it feels good. Almost immediately, my eyes begin to close. I pass the needle off to Bobby and the three of them finish up.

As we walk back inside the shack, I look at my phone. 6:24 PM. When the heroin kicks in it's euphoria. When the heroin kicks in your body is an old-school thermometer, the kind where you can watch the red fill up like blood as the temperature goes up and up and up. The warmth just stretches over the entire length of your body and consumes it.

Bobby is talking real slow with the blonde about the flickering light bulb that hangs from the ceiling. The brunette is laying on top of me, her head across my lap. We're not talking, we're just staring, me across the room, her at the wooden panels

that streak across the ceiling. I swear my hands could sink into the counter tops, or that I can rip the stuffing out of a recliner without cutting it first.

Suddenly it's 1:46 AM and the three of them are asleep. I am fading and the high has taken its toll on my body. I keep falling asleep only to wake up feeling more tired than before. I wake up three times in a matter of forty minutes. This is the crash; it happens every time. Eventually, your body just gets so damn mad at you that it starts yelling in all different ways. Sometimes you can't sleep, sometimes you can't wake up. One of the worst things my body ever did to me was that my stomach kept kickin' up all the shit it didn't like, but wouldn't let me get rid of it. I spent nearly two hours just keeled over trying to get rid of everything in my body. Heroin feels like the best of heaven and the worst of hell. It's perfect for awhile but you always end up throwing up.

I wake up to the smell of vomit. The brunette is curled up, asleep, in the corner beside me. Bobby and the blonde girl are leaned up, motionless, against the back of the sofa. The sun is already up and the flickering light has already gone out. I've woken up after using what seems like millions of times and it never felt like this. I can't stand up and I feel like I'm stuck inside the wall that I'm leaning up against. I try to yell but I don't hear anything coming from my mouth. It's like all the words got trapped by the lump in my throat. I try slamming my fist against the wall to wake up Bobby, but he still isn't moving.

I close my eyes and try to pull myself back together. My legs won't move, and my knees won't bend. What I am banging against the wall, is hardly a fist; it's an embarrassing, loose grip on my own hand. My eyes won't open back up, and I scream inside my own head. There's a thump in my stomach that follows my heartbeat. It's getting faster and faster, and I'm scared that it's not going to stop.

The lump in my throat clears and the screams that I've been trying to let out swallow the silence in the room. Bobby and the two girls are scared awake and they scatter around me. My eyes half opened, I can see panic overcome Bobby's face. He shooes the girls away when they start to cry. His hands strike my cheeks, and I want to tell

him to stop, that I can see him, but I just keep screaming. I can't do anything else but scream.

Everything goes black and all I can hear is beeping. It gets faster and faster. Pressure on my chest forces my ribs to cave in.

“Mr. Wilson,” I heard, “Mr. Wilson? Doctor, we've got a pulse back.”

I open my eyes and the sun reflects off the already bright white-washed walls. I am hooked up to machines and they're beeping out of sync. The nurse brings me a tray of food that looks like a generic brand TV dinner. I figure if my vitals are steady and I stay in my room, I can get out early on good behavior.

# LETHE

*Madeleine Jackman*

Take me down to the River Lethe.

Twist my hair in your hands and when I drink,  
I'll wonder how it ended up in knots  
And you'll be there to help me untie them.

By the time your fingers can stroke clean through,  
I'll have fallen again in love with you.



35 | Photography | Katie Hodgkins

# INVERTING THE GAZE: SALOME'S CHALLENGE TO "VISUAL PLEASURE AND NARRATIVE CINEMA"

Zachary Grobe

---

Richard Strauss's provocative and controversial re-imagining of Oscar Wilde's equally contentious play, *Salome*, works to explore and often invert the dynamics of the male gaze and implicate subordinated gazes, i.e. those of the audience and camera, in the violence enacted through voyeurism. By refiguring the focus of the gaze as a site of agency and attempting to place the burden of objectification on a male body, the opera clashes with theorist Laura Mulvey's famous conclusion that patriarchy has unconsciously structured cinema such that women become reduced to mere passive, erotic objects bound in complex series of looks—a conclusion that I here argue applies not only to film, but also to theatrical performances and, for the purposes of this essay, a filmed production of an opera. As Strauss shows, Mulvey underestimates the way in which the gaze can work not only to objectify and subdue, but also to entrance and allow its object to wield overwhelming power over those who dare to look.

For this essay, I will be discussing the 1992 production of *Salome* staged at The Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, London, conducted by Sir Edward Downes and starring Maria Ewing as the eponymous daughter of Herod and Herodias. *Salome* may not be a work of cinema, but it shares key features that enable Mulvey's theories to apply. First and foremost, the opera house, like the movie theater, is a dark space that isolates spectators from one another and that contrasts sharply with the bright spectacle on the stage or screen. The presence of the stage, much like the projection surface, distances the viewer from the content, but does so in such a way that one is encouraged to project repressed desire onto a performer and sympathize with their gaze (1174). Yet, in the world of Salome, the audience relies less on camera angles to become implicit in the voyeurism: the erotic, dramatic performances, driven by spectacle, invite the audience to watch alongside other characters, and to become complicit

in the events that unfold.

The opera begins during the reign of King Herod II of Judea and takes place entirely in the gardens of the palace. A Young Syrian, Narraboth, captain of Herod's guard, watches the fair princess from afar as he lazily patrols the gardens while the king and his entourage feast inside. The opening line of the opera, sung after an ominous opening bar beginning with a solo clarinet and joined quickly by strings, is a remark on the princess's beauty: "Wie schön ist die Prinzessin Salome heute Nacht! (*Salome*, 1:16). Considering that the pending drama derives all of its dramatic impetus from the act of seeing and being seen, this opening curiously preoccupies itself with that which takes place outside of the field of view. The princess remains offstage for six minutes as the guard performs a sort of ekphrasis and relates his deeply romanticized impressions of the young girl who seems variously like "white doves" (1:48) and a "white rose" (3:40). The other lead character, Iokanaan, better known as John the Baptist, remains, unlike an obedient child, heard but not seen. Herod has imprisoned him in a dark cistern as punishment for his prophecies, but has curiously neglected to make certain that he cannot continue this practice.

The young Salome tires of her stepfather's predatory gaze at the offstage dinner party, and Narraboth excitedly remarks that she has left the table and appears to be walking towards the gardens. She enters the stage, vexed, and her first line, sung desperately to an ominous and rapid violin melody is "Ich kann nicht bleiben!" (6:09). She can no longer tolerate the look of Herod, who peers unceasingly at her with his "mole's eyes hiding under twitching lids" (6:41). As she rejoices in the fresh air and safety of the garden, Iokanaan interrupts with a prophecy, ironically proclaiming from the darkness, "Behold!" (8:22). Salome, her curiosity instantly piqued, declines all invitations to rejoin the feast and demands to see the man imprisoned in the cistern.

Though Herod has forbidden Iokanaan from being removed from his prison, Salome cleverly navigates the gaze of the Syrian guard and manipulates his affection for her to realize her desire and undermine the authority of her father. She reclines seductively on the grate covering the cistern and sings to a romantic rush of strings:

“And tomorrow, I will look at you through my muslin curtains. I will look at you, Narraboth. I may even smile at you” (13:32-13:37). Narraboth, who has kept himself firmly turned away from the spectacle of the princess on the grate, submits to the princess and slowly begins to turn to face her as her song works its magic. Despite his initial hesitations, he acquiesces to her calls of “Look at me, Narraboth, look at me!” (13:44). The gaze is established, and he finds himself helpless before the object of his desire.

Iokanaan rises from the cistern, and it is at this moment that the opera experiments with the capacity of the male form to become the focus of the gaze. According to Mulvey, “the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification” because the male lead serves to advance the narrative, which exists in a different time stream than the female-generated spectacle, which often freezes or other interrupts the narrative time stream. To “neutralize the extradiegetic tendencies represented by woman as spectacle,” the male figure serves a surrogate for the audience members who are encouraged to identify with him like a projection of an ideal ego. In short, the audience’s gaze is sublimated through the gaze of the character, thus allowing cinema to maintain a semblance of verisimilitude (Mulvey 1176).

With the reveal of Iokanaan, however, Mulvey’s principle becomes reversed: he emerges from the pit feebly, shielding his eyes from the light with upraised arms. His body, a ghastly pale color, contrasts sharply with the dark background of the stage. He stands upright and stretches, and as he exposes his scantily clad form and poses, narrative time comes to a momentary standstill as he—not Salome—becomes the true object of spectacle. The camera then cuts to Salome as if desperate for the viewer to share her gaze, and a silent thirty seconds pass during which the princess stares at the prophet in utter wonder. Her eyes will not cease to gaze at him for the next twenty-two minutes.

Yet, the reversed dynamics of this situation begin to backfire in ways reminiscent of Mulvey’s theory: Iokanann literally cannot bear the burden of Salome’s lustful gaze, and his body collapses. He drapes himself over the grate of his former prison as the

beautiful princess sings of the beauty of his emaciated figure to the romantic swell of the orchestra. She declares: “I am in love with your body, Iokanaan!” and compares its whiteness to that of lilies, snow on the mountains of Judea, etc. (25:22). He, meanwhile, remains statuesque, posed and exposed as the object of spectacle. It is only when she pleads to touch his body that he becomes animated once more and bluntly denies Salome the fulfillment of her desire. As the melody becomes dark and slides into a minor key, she sings of her hate for his body, which she know derides as a whitened sepulcher or the body of a leper. Throughout this exchange, Iokanaan refuses to meet her stare, and it is her inability to engage with Iokanaan through a complex of gazes that undermines her power. She cannot make the holy man gaze upon her, and he refuses to abide her look. Despite her attempts at seduction, Iokanaan holds fast, and refuses her compliments concerning his hair and his lips, neither of which he will allow her to look upon or touch. Distraught and confused at her failure and Iokanaan’s subsequent return to his dark prison, Salome wordlessly rolls her body down the stairs leading to up to the cell’s entrance and mopes hopelessly.

Herod and his entourage enter shortly thereafter in search of the princess. The king, as lustful and predatory as ever, makes a series of advances towards Salome: he first offers her wine, then a piece of fruit, and finally the opportunity to sit beside him on her mother’s throne (the queen, meanwhile, scowls in the background). Saddened by his spurned advances, Herod finally begs Salome to dance for him, and in return for the performance, he offers her anything she desires, even if it is half of his kingdom. Salome, who has been sitting motionless near the front of the stage to the viewer’s right, agrees, and turns to meet the look of her father. The princess finally senses a way of regaining a sense of agency and realizing her will by submitting herself to one gaze for the end goal of entering another.

Salome exits the stage briefly and returns entirely covered by a series of veils. Her subsequent performance evokes Mulvey’s description of women as the bearer of the look:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split be-

tween active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. (Mulvey 1175)

Yet, Salome uses her greatest moment of spectacle and objectification to secure power over the men who otherwise dominate her. Her sway over Narraboth, so great that when her gaze turns from him to Iokanaan, the former commits a dramatic suicide onstage, undercuts Herod's authority, but now her aim is set on the Tetrach himself.

Her dance begins slowly and seemingly benignly as Salome drops the veil covering her face. Brief flutters of motion are interspersed among extended poses and slow displays of her concealed figure. A second veil drops, exposing her bare arms, and the pace of the eerie yet entrancingly erotic music rises slightly. The princess's motions become more significant, now involving dramatic sways and shimmies of the shoulder. As the music increases in volume and pace, Salome rolls on the floor and lifts up a single leg to expose it to Herod and the audience. She then begins to perform mimic a series of sexual acts by using the veil as a stand-in for a partner as the dance continues to escalate in pace, energy, and lasciviousness. At its climax, Salome runs across stage in nothing but a short dress that, to the audience's surprise, serves as the final veil. She tears it off and stands in the center of the stage, arms stretched above her head in a pose of triumph, her naked body exposed to the entirety of Herod's entourage. The camera jumps from Herod's facial expression—a mix of shock and pleasure likely akin to the expression on the faces of the audience members who had not anticipated seeing quite so much of Maria Ewing that evening—to Salome herself. The filming and staging demand that the audience share the gaze of Herod and the entourage, and in so doing, implicate all who watch in the ensuing consequences of the dance.

Following the performance, Salome forces Herod to keep his promise. Though he tries to sway her with offers of jewels, exotic birds, and the like (causing the queen,

meanwhile, to fume once again) Salome remains childishly obstinate: she demands the head of Iokanaan on a silver platter. After much pleading, her wish is granted. An executioner and several soldiers descend into the cistern, and moments later, a long, muscular arm reaches up from the darkness with a bloody, pale, severed head.

For seventeen minutes following the execution, Salome reprises her songs of desire for Iokanaan, and declares that she still thirsts for his beauty and craves his kiss. At long last, she kisses the lips of the head and raises her arms in victory. Her red robe—her only attire after the dance—exaggerates the size of her small figure, and she appears to have grown in size. She towers over the remains of the prophet and appears to Herod, her mother, and the entourage as a simultaneously horrifying and enticing embodiment of lust and power. Terrified of her liberated sexuality and aware of her threat as the object of his gaze, Herod orders all the lights to be extinguished, even the moon and the stars. In utter darkness, he and his entourage attempt to flee, but Salome alone remains illuminated by the rays of the moon. Still fearful of her roused passion and the great violence he has witnessed, Herod orders her to be summarily executed. Tellingly, the soldiers rush forward and smother the princess with their shields, thus ending her life and eliminating her power by concealing her from view.

Though its plot verges on absurdity and obscenity, Richard Strauss's *Salome* plays provocatively with the power of the gaze and the agency of the object of the voyeur. The eponymous princess, powerless save for her beauty and continually subjected to her father's incestuous advances, reinvents the site of her objectification as a space of agency. She is young, and as she begins to awaken as a maturing, sexual being, she begins to pose an increasing threat to those in power through her ability to reverse the dynamics of looking and being seen. Though Mulvey posits that scopophilia, or pleasure in looking, inherently figures as passive the person at whom a look is directed, Strauss shows the capacity of this power dynamic to backfire: Salome not only undercuts the authority of her father by releasing Iokanaan from his cell, but also manages to force the Tetrach of Judea to give up the one thing he refuses to bestow upon her—the head of the imprisoned prophet. Iokanaan, who refused her gaze while alive,

becomes reduced to a helpless, severed head, and as Salome passionately sings of her desire and conquest, her spell over Herod begins to break. He sees the danger of her overflowing eroticism and comprehends the skill with which she navigates, subverts, and reverses the gaze, and to suppress her influence, he orders her to be concealed. Thus, Mulvey's assertions become complicated by the figure of Salome. Gazing, according to Strauss, can be reversed, and the voyeur risks this reversal by looking. He or she may feel power through the act of gazing, but, ultimately, the object of that gaze may entrance and manipulate that pleasure for its own means.

#### Works Cited

- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Traditional Trends*. Boston: Bedford/St.Martin's, 2007. 1172-1180. Print.  
*Salome*. Adapt. Richard Strauss. Dir. Derek Bailey. Prod. Jane Pleydell-Bouverie. Perf. Maria Ewing and Michael Devlin. Kultur, 1992. DVD.

# *Untitled*

*Zack Douglas*

driving through a fog bank in a 2007 corolla is like a plane ride for the financially challenged

and smushing your hands into an orange  
because it  
makes your fingers smell like a  
perfumed pharoah is the most  
fun you can have with someone else's lunch

the best band you'll never hear  
hung out for three fucked weeks  
and never talked again  
they didn't settle on a name  
it was more punk that way

lord of the rings marathons  
like christmas decorations in september  
are better when at least three  
people groan

getting drunk is next to godliness  
but putting a party hat on a dog  
and watching reruns of storage wars  
is instant nirvana

basically i'm writing this to tell  
you that i drove home in a tan corolla  
and wondered how many stupid things  
i could yell to make me feel  
alive



*Simplicity in a Countryside* | Photography | Nikki Grossfeld

# Raskolnikov Deletes His Facebook

---

*Al Cleaves*

I didn't expect you to be so dead, you, my ex-future-wife.  
I didn't expect to wonder so often, now that you're dead,  
how you're doing in the afterlife.  
If you're grooving with angels who groove more than me—  
if you're lonely, changed, spirited—free.  
But other people seem to have an idea of how you're doing.  
They say they saw you just the other day.  
They say that we're both in better places now,  
and that one fine morning, or evening, we'll reunite  
on a group setting's golden shore  
when this afterlife is over.

So is it *me* that's living in the afterlife?  
Because from all I hear  
you're alive and well—  
so maybe you're not dead at all.  
So was it not me that murdered you out of my life,  
but me that murdered myself out of yours?  
And what world is it?

What world is it when I have nothing to do with your smile?  
What world is it when you are not laughing?  
What was that jolt of worlds the other night  
when I tried to find sleep?  
Did you try to visit me up here?  
Or down here?  
Or over here?  
Wherever I am, I'm usually free at night  
if you ever feel like talking.  
But by all means, live your own life—  
that was the rule we agreed on.  
And that's what you must be doing  
when everywhere people say they saw you  
just the other day.

But that doesn't make sense. You're definitely in an afterlife, too.

Make no mistake: I murdered you.

And you didn't live long enough to try to hear why,  
but I tried to explain as you died;  
yes, I was there.

I was there when the other ocean saw the last and the first.

I was there when we knew in being not to be—  
when I knew, and you knew, in not being, to be.

But you—you—

well, maybe I didn't murder you. Or me.

Because everywhere people seem to hear from both of us a lot.  
And they all say that enough tears make a river flow free.

But I was there when you died.

I was there when novels dangled from your ears

and my eyes full of tears of yours, of you, of the TV characters we didn't dare say we'd be, of the rides, sweater-adjustments, orange juice August mornings the name Eden Ray Charles singing from a train ride iPhone speaker into the winter under the moon quarries of July nights in the key of A into August evenings in the key of B with sobbing laughing bandana black shirt perfume of a pink sky in storm ways of man i hid it in a snowbank but he found it and he doesn't ask who i am i just went upstairs to my room and read wuthering heights always stick my gum in your locker no no it's like this you have to go like 'phmmmbph' how do you not know how to blow a bubble! i don't know you're just not teaching me well enough but i'd love to call you my girl-friend always black raspberry frappe and you danced to sing sing sing with your best friends

in the world if i get breast cancer

but in the bleak midwinter it will be better tomorrow and you are my friend

with letter magnets and train cars that they're going there with you

they're both teaching me going there with you and they trust you she trusts you so  
don't say i love you you can't you can't and

you can you can you already do roses e'er bloom so

our daughter yes we'd name her eden but i'd always greet her by saying the lyrics from marie's wedding you know the irish folksong we had at our wedding red her cheeks as rowan's are bright her eyes as any star fairest of them all by far is our darling eden but because guilt that's not how people work she said i had the impulse you know what i'm talking i what she you know i no i don't know she you know to me i think you should consider and besides eden is a lot of pressure to put on a human we'd laugh always tell the stories of the first time our little eden fell

i can't be like them i'm fine but

mum grasping the teddy bear she'd bought me with twelve year tears in her eyes after

dad only wanted to talk to me with tears in her eyes she didn't know i saw this won't work because i'm trying to do it dad said he said she said no date someone without my shortcomings i'm sorry i don't know what i want but but but but but but moon quarries of July nights in the key of A into August evenings

in the key of B leave me into the last of May the fourth of July the 24th of October insistences one existence other existences but you are my friend

everybody had matching towels and you are my friend i can make her laugh i can really really make her really really laugh i wish she i could see could see could know could tell

could be other existences i wish

i wish for other i wish for other same new old names places home out gorge gushed of missoula be thou my vision one i vow one existence other existences i vow other to thee other other other on January 6th beyond time to cry into all the sweaters you've ever worn on all the days you were lavender to weep into ocean near you for every day you smelled like apple cider to feel your softness hold my arms and shoulders as I rain for the mornings when you're sage

and they all say that enough tears make a river flow free.



*I Took This Photo by Accident | Photography | Parisa Zarringhalam*

# Tres Leches

*Danielle Rivera*

---

Mami handed me the bowl of warm, sticky maduros and I put it on the table. “Don’t let your father frighten him,” she said.

“I won’t.”

She nodded. She knew only my temper could rival Papi’s. She lifted a gray rag out from the side of her dress and began wiping the table. “Mija, the picadillo.”

I shuffled around her to get to the stove and lifted the boiling pot onto the counter. The familiar cologne of meat and spices filled the kitchen. My eyes on the pot, my hand stumbled around for a fork. I found one and stabbed a small piece and popped it in my mouth to see if it had cooked.

“Is it ready?” Mami called.

I ate and thought. “Yeah.” Mami had taught me how to tell when meat was cooked all the way through and just enough when I was little. Now the family came to me with such questions.

I brought the picadillo to the table and put it next to the maduros. I stood back with my hands on my hips, looking at our work. Mami stood with me until the doorbell interrupted us both. We jumped a little, and suddenly Mami pulled me in close and said, “Oh, mi amor. I’m very happy for you... You know that, don’t you?”

I looked up into her warm, dark eyes; her strong hands came up to stroke my hair. Her once smooth, brown skin looked aged, with creases all around the eyes and mouth. But she was still beautiful. Papi used to say he had married la muchacha más linda del pueblo, the most beautiful girl in town, and then kiss and wink at her. “I know, Ma,” I told her, and touched my lips to her forehead to prove it.

She smiled and left to answer the door. I could hear her voice and John’s too in the hallway, but their words weren’t clear.

I hurried to the bottom of the stairs and looked up into the dark. “Papi,” I called.  
“He’s here!”

A low moan.

“Papi?” I asked the dark again.

“I’m coming,” the dark replied.

Then he was there, walking toward me on the stairs. He had dressed up a little, wearing his favorite silk, cherry colored shirt and the black trousers he’d worn to Mariela’s christening. “Aye,” I laughed. “Qué guapo es mi papa!”

He tried to frown at me but couldn’t, his handsome face crinkling into a smile. He opened up his arms and I ran in, breathing in wisps of coffee with cream and a fresh pack of Newports. I buried my face into his chest and squeezed him tight. “I know you’ll like him, Pa,” I said in his arms.

He tousled my hair, kissed my head and sighed. “Come, let’s see.”

The first boy I ever kissed was Tommy. I liked the high blue overalls he wore to school every Monday and Thursday that rode up in the back and looked like they itched. We were eleven, and he tried to put his tongue in my mouth and I slapped him for it. He told me that’s what you were supposed to do, and I told him if he came near me again I’d blow his head off. I knew where my abuelito kept his gun, I said. He told me I was crazy and who did I think I was running around telling people I would blow their heads off just for kissing with their mouths open. Then I pushed him and spat on the ground and said *Vete a la mierda* like I’d seen Papi do when he snuck off to play poker and lost money at Julio’s house while Mami was out with Titi Rosa or Carmen or Miguel. I left Tommy there and wiped my mouth with my hand. He yelled out, “Crazy bitch!” I ran back and hit him between the eyes. His nose bled and he cried. Papi said I did the right thing.

“Hello, Sir.” John’s cool, raspy voice broke off at the end but his steady pale blue

eyes showed little signs of fear. I knew better. He reached out to shake Papi's hand.  
“I'm happy to be here, thank you for having me.”

Papi tilted his head to the side and grunted. Mami slid past me and pinched his side. He scowled at her, but said, “We're happy to have you, Juan.”

“It's John, Papi,” I told him, warning him with my eyes.

His lips pursed together and he nodded his head in agreement. “John.”

“Let's sit down. Isabel and I made picadillo, beans and maduros. I hear you like picadillo, John.” Mami smiled at him and rubbed his back as we walked into the small dining room.

“What would he know about good picadillo?” Papi asked in Spanish and Mami glared at him.

John coughed uncomfortably and I took his hand. He turned to look at me, his eyes softening and his fingers curling around mine.

“I made it for him, Pa,” I said, squeezing his hand and leading him toward the dining room table. Mami had laid out our best tablecloth, the one with pictures of rich plums and oranges the size of softballs and clean velvet waters, the one she and Papi agreed reminded them of our home in San Juan. It only made an appearance on special occasions.

Another grunt from Papi. He walked around the table as John and I sat down and made a big show of sitting in the head chair. I rolled my eyes but John smiled. “So, John,” Papi began. His voice trembled a little getting the name out in English, the sound rough and uncomfortable in his mouth. Embarrassed, he stirred a little in his seat and looked to Mami in the kitchen before pounding the table and coughing loudly.

John and I stared at him and waited.

Papi softened and leaned forward to take a maduro. “So, are you an Italian?”

John looked down at his empty plate and tried to laugh a little before looking him in the eye like I'd shown him and saying, “Yes, Sir. Half Italian.”

“Oh, yeah?” Papi leaned back in his chair and smiled smugly. “What’s the other half?”

“I’m half Jewish.”

Papi’s mouth was half full but he looked up at me and raised his eyebrows. I looked back at him and warned him again. “I see.”

“And here’s the flan!” Mami sang out, carrying with her a small tray of brown-orange cake that jostled as she moved. She put it down in the middle of the table and looked down at Papi. “Ricardo, you’re eating before our guest? Before I’m even at the table?”

Papi grabbed her hand. She shot her weight back but he caught it again, touching his mouth to her skin and grinning at her. “Mi amor, mi vieja, mi único, forgive me.”

I looked over at John’s stunned expression and stifled a laugh.

Mami snatched her hand away from Papi’s but cracked a smile. “Loco.” She sat down across from John and the three of us began serving ourselves.

“Hola, familia!” Mariela suddenly poured through the door, tossing her matching wine colored hat and rain boots to the side before she saw John and stopped. Her light eyes grew wide and she looked over at me to explain.

Instead John stood and reached across the table to shake her hand. “I’m John,” he told her. “You must be Mariela.”

She lunged forward, giggling, her eyes still round and full as she took him in. “I am!” she shouted. “I’m Mariela! Oh, it’s so good to finally meet you. I didn’t know you were coming over today. Isabel, why didn’t you tell me he was coming over today?”

I smiled at her and said, “I don’t know, Mariela. Why do you think I didn’t tell you?”

She scowled at me before remembering herself and shooting John another smile.

“Well grab a plate, mija,” Mami said, fixing the plate herself.

Mariela slid into the chair across from me, smoothing the ends of her hair and pushing out her lips.

I laughed.

John kicked at me under the table and chewed at his bottom lip. I'd warned him.

"So, John. You know Mariela's the baby of the family."

"I am not a baby!" She shook her head in protest. "I'll be fifteen in May," she assured him.

"Big year," he replied.

We all chewed and sat.

"How did you like the picadillo, John?" Mami asked hopefully.

"It was incredible, Mrs. Diaz," he told her, smiling and holding up his empty plate.

Mami beamed. I knew his appetite would impress her.

"John's actually a great cook," I told them. "He cooks almost all of the meals at his house."

"You cook?" Papi repeated, raising his eyebrows again.

"Yes, Sir."

"Why, can't your mother cook?"

"Papi—"

"Let the boy answer the question."

I shook my head at John. "You don't have to."

"It's alright," he said, giving my knee an appreciative squeeze. "My mom is sick."

Papi sat up in his chair and Mami let out a sympathetic sigh. Mariela, surprisingly, said nothing. A long silence.

"Estas contenta?" I asked, and got up to clear the table.

Once when I was little, a week before my birthday, Papi came into my room and

told me the next day he was going to take off from work and I was going to stay home from school. You can be sick, can't you mijia? he asked me. You sure as hell can pretend to cry when you want something, I told him I could, thank you very much, and he kissed my forehead and left.

The next day I woke up and he was bouncing on my bed. He told me today was our day, no Mami, no Mariela. We could do anything we wanted. What would you like to do, mijia, he asked me. The world is ours, just for today.

I told him I wanted a fat slice of tres leches cake for breakfast. Then tres leches it is! he agreed, and we ran to the little bakery on 7<sup>th</sup> in our pajamas and ate.

He asked me what next. Coney Island, I told him. I want to go to Coney Island.

The park smelled of butter and candy and ocean. His big hands lifted me high up onto his shoulders so I could see all of the carnival games at once. He whispered that he would never let me fall. We ate cotton candy and caramel apples and rode the spinning teacups because Mami always said no, absolutamente no. We laughed at the policía gordito chasing the lady with the red hair and little dog around the park. Papi stroked my hair and rubbed my back when the cotton candy and caramel apples proved a bad idea. He told me he was very sorry. I didn't mind at all.

"What do you see in that boy, mijia?" Papi asked, pacing the floor.

"He's a nice boy, Pa."

He shook his head and turned to sit in his favorite, faded blue armchair. He buried his face in his rough hands and sighed. "He's using you, Isa."

I sat for a while before answering, trying to make sense of it. "Using me?" I repeated, the words sounding foreign and unfamiliar, as if the voice that said them wasn't mine.

"Aye, nena. You think that guero really cares about you? To him, you're nothing but un pedazo de culo, a body, a young spirit he can use up and throw away. How can you not see that, mijia? How can you not see what I see?"

“Pa, that boy was nothing but good to you. You’re saying he doesn’t love me?”

“Mija, I know he doesn’t. White boys, they don’t want girls like you. They’re just looking for una furcia that will give them a ride.”

I stared at him in shock. “Papi, that’s not fair. You haven’t even given him a chance-”

“Enough,” he said, holding up his hand. “I’ve made my decision.” His eyes showed that he was serious.

We sat there in the silence for a moment, each hardened to the other. “So that’s it, then? I can’t even see him anymore?”

He shook his head and tried to reach out to me. “Mija, it’s for your own good. I know what those boys are like. You’ll understand, in time.”

“No, I won’t, Pa. Don’t you see that you’re acting just like them? You’re just as bad as all the people who hate us for no other reason than we’re brown, and we don’t speak like them, and it scares them. And it’s not fair, Pa. It’s not fair to us, and it’s not fair to them.” I turned away from him. He called out to me, but I wiped my eyes and left.

I met John outside by our tall redbud tree, our special place where everything was still and breathy and quiet. The buds had just begun to bloom, and they filled the branches with sprouts of crimson color. He stood beneath the tree’s long charcoal branches, his cheeks flushed with relief to have made it through the dinner, but when he saw me his light eyes grew troubled. “Isabel,” he asked as I ran into him. “What happened?”

“I don’t know.” I pulled him in close, feeling his hands in my hair and tight around my sides. His touch, and my parents’ too, always felt like coming home. “He just doesn’t understand it. And I don’t know how-- how I was so stupid to think that he would. I thought he’d see that it didn’t matter.”

“It doesn’t matter,” John said, tilting my chin toward him with a kiss. He wiped a

tear away from my cheek, knowing I hate it when people see me cry.

I smiled. "Thank you."

He kissed me again and nestled me in close. "He'll get it. Give him time."

Three weeks later, Papi and I had barely spoken. Mami kept trying to get us to talk, chattering away about a recent Mets win (though she knew nothing about the game) or telling a funny story about the butcher over on Park that made us both laugh without looking at each other.

Finally that night, he came into my room and sat on my bed. "Mija," he whispered.

I squeezed my eyes shut and pretended to be asleep. Suddenly he shoved me hard, knocking me halfway across the bed. I sat up and glared at him, but he laughed and said nothing. His light eyes twinkled up at me in the dark. "No," I told him, biting my lip. "I'm mad at you."

"I know," he sighed. He leaned over and lay down next to me. We stared up at the ceiling. "He's a nice boy, huh?" he asked finally.

"He's very nice," I told him.

Papi turned on his side to look at me and I turned, too. He paused and sighed again. "He did seem like a nice boy." He waited for my reaction, but I gave him none. "Aye, mijia. You're a tough one to beat. Stubborn like me. Alright, you know I was wrong. And I know it, too."

I tried to hide my smile but he'd caught me.

"There she is, mi único. I thought you were going to hate me forever, there."

I kissed his cheek and turned back to the ceiling.

"Since when did you get smarter than me?"

I raised my eyebrows. "Desde siempre."

At that he jabbed at my sides until I was laughing and tossing all around the bed. He told me how it'd been hell being able to only talk to Mami and Mariela for the

past few weeks, and I said the same. Our laughter echoed through the whole upper floor until Mami yelled that her children better be quiet because the one grownup in the house needed her sleep.

Papi laughed again and said, “I better go. Mi vieja needs me.” He kissed my forehead and turned to leave the room, winking at me before he went.

I grabbed my phone from the nightstand and clicked New Message: *John, you were right.*



*Untitled* | Ink and acrylic on paper | Jess Berube

# *My Little Black Shoes*

---

*Kelly Tierney*

---

Once, my little black shoes  
recited Shakespeare perfectly  
to an audience of ducks.  
Don't worry,  
my little black shoes feel  
envy too. Often my little black shoes  
fall in love with daisies. Often  
I've caught the daisies  
before they stomp on  
my poor little black shoes' heart.  
You have to let go someday  
they say and my little black shoes  
tie themselves to anyone grounded.  
Sophistication runs deep  
in my little black shoes—  
“A black and white world suits me just fine”  
says my little black shoes, holding  
a cigarette while swishing scotch.  
Are there days coming  
when my little black shoes fail  
to warm the hearts  
of millions? My little black shoes  
feel our sadness  
and forgive us.

# *Uproot*

Sharon *Amuguni*

Sometimes  
people pull things out  
to see if they'll grow back.  
but the rest of us are not plants,  
cannot be uprooted like that.  
abrupt  
and forcibly,  
without being given any answers  
between the soil  
and the dust bin.

# Swoondler ;)

*looks. charisma. action.*

*Al Cleaves*

---

## **My Inbox** (36 unread)

12:50pm

**jackhammerdave** says:

Hey how's it going my name is Dave! My parents chose a pretty original name lol not, anyhooo not gonna make this too long was just on your profile and you are gorgeous haha my number is (\*\*\*)-\*\*\*-\*\*\*\* text or call or message back on here I'm looking for a kind lady because you guessed it I am a kind man. Alrighty well that's it for now hope you're having a good day because you deserve one :-)

12:56pm

**kylo\_bedman87** says:

HELLO I AM KYLE I LIKE TO FUCK I HOPE YOU ALSO DO. I HAVE MANY WOMEN AND I WAS JUST TAKEN BY YOUR EYES I HOPE TO SEE YOU.

12:56pm

**kylo\_bedman87** says:

:)

12:59pm

**lotsofflames** says:

wow ur beautiful

12:59pm

**lotsofflames** says:

anyone ever told u that?

1:10pm

**slinkysntwinkys** says:

My name is Marvin if there's one thing I know, it's that you're eyes are the rise to my sun or they can be, I can tell that right away with you

1:23pm

**slinkysntwinkys** says:

God I cannot stop looking at you ,you like it when a guy look's at you? You should ;-)

1:43pm

**rubyjaggerallman51** says:

I may be a little older than most on here but I don't rightly know if I've ever seen someone as pretty as you, and that's comin' from a fella who's been around for quite a many years on this earth ~ so if you feel like listenin' to some REAL music message me back on this here thing, nothin' like wakin' up in the mornin' to

some David Crosby and lightin' up a cock-o-doodle-doobie. And before you say it yes I am old enough to be your father but I just have two questions one are you young enough to be my daughter and is your father cool enough to be me?

1:51pm

**captain\_bedworthy** says:

I'm not going to dilly-dally here; I'd like to have sex with you. That is an unequivocal truth. That said, I wouldn't mind a conversation here and there either :] A little about me? Well, I'm into photography, and NOT of the digital variety—I am, after all, not a willfully ignorant rodent with the taste of an obese retarded trailer trash Walmart greeter, lol. Rather, I am quite into photography of the \*ahem\* FILM variety, and yes, I do have a darkroom. It has many uses.

Telephone: (\*\*\*)-\*\*\*-\*\*\*\*

Email: iprefercognac@\*\*\*\*\*.com

ATTN: the above is my personal email, Division B. I have NOT provided my work email or my personal email, Division A.

2:07pm

**theyakman\_84** says:

You remind me of a girl who died

2:24pm

**hellyamin** says:

So I'm Craig, lol this is so weird I don't usually online date oh well guess there's no harm in trying new things once and a while, well anyway I saw you like U2, or that you too like U2... oh god I'm embarrassing myself lol I won't make it worse, just message back if you wanna :)

2:33pm

**hellyamin** says:

But Id understand if you didn't want to haha

2:35pm

**hellyamin** says:

Oh and my number is (\*\*\*)-\*\*\*-\*\*\*\* haha

2:38pm

**heliotropiclightning** says:

Just got back from a sixteen-mile hike, took some super great photos and then as fate would have it I remembered you were a fan of the great outdoors

2:38pm

**heliotropiclightning** says:

saw\* that you were a fan of the great outdoors, damn autocorrect.. :P anyway yeah the sunset was a killer vermillion and mauve tonight, I just like sunsets, life goal is to stand in one spot all day from sunrise to sunset and see both. Message me if that sounds good to you ;D

2:51pm

**eugene\_portland\_salem\_bend** says:

Some people go to Oregon, and some people live in Oregon, some people live in Oregon and some people inhabit Oregon, some people inhabit Oregon and some people interrupt me when I say that I am your #1 Oregon expert, but they

are always fools because I am your #1 Oregon expert. Message me when you wanna move to a real state and be with a real guy, until then I'll be alone in Oregon minus the girls I hook up with a lot of the time in Oregon

2:59pm

**clockstopper3000** says:

hey

3:06pm

**elevatorjerry** says:

Hey, :)

3:07pm

**lester\_mills94** says:

Well hello, YOU look hot.

3:09pm

**cavid\_dopperfield89** says:

Hey! I saw you liked Mary Shelley, have you ever read any Wordsworth? He's honestly one of my favorite poets of all time, trite as it may sound. If you haven't you are a) missing out and b) should probably start with his second "Prelude"; in my opinion this second draft was perfectly fine and he should have just left well-enough alone, but like any Romantic he just couldn't keep his imagination from dreaming up different ways to phrase things, which I do understand as someone who is of the writerly bent, but there's a balance, I think, at the same time, between what you yourself express or wish to express and what you can genuinely and substantively express to other people in a way with which they'll identify or find the least bit meaningful.

Like with Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring", for instance: that was a ballet first performed in Paris in 1914 right before the war started, and what a first performance it was. Basically what you had was a violent intersection between two phenomena: the status quo of nineteenth-century predictable knowability as seen through technical prowess in art that, although refined, was increasingly quite lacking of authentic verve; and the feverish yearning to express something \*more\* with art, something not expressed before, to arrive at a new artistic ontology, some sort of newfound capability for artistic verisimilitude regarding what it is to be a human being alive at this time. Hashtag, modernism. And, yep, you guessed it—Stravinsky embodies this, I mean just completely embodies this. Replete with dissonances and arhythmic pulsations and articulations, the tensions between how things had been, how things truly were, and how things WOULD be gave way to a mob mentality in the theater and what you had on your hands was a riot. Hmm, fights over the past, present, and future of human reality in Europe in 1914... ring any bells?

But for me, I don't personally find any \*visceral\* enjoyment in "The Rite of Spring." For me it is rather aware of itself—and though this awareness is for good reason, and shed and still sheds light on a fundamental human struggle, or a fundamental artist's struggle—I find that at the end of the day, I'm gonna gravitate toward a Tchaikovsky piece, because I simply like the way it sounds. I enjoy his 1812 Overture, Op. 49 immensely—perhaps, for me, the apotheosis of auditory experience—but what people don't realize about the 1812 Overture is that Tchaikovsky couldn't \*wait\* to finish the damn thing. He hated it. It was commissioned, through and through: just another project with a deadline. And if

you really listen to it and compare it with, say, his lesser-known works—his Piano Concerto #1 in B-Flat minor, Op. 23, his Violin Concerto in D, Op. 35, or, most of all, his Symphony #6 in B Minor, Op. 74, "Pathétique," I think you will be find it difficult to deny that there is emotion, feeling, qualia pervading these musics simply not present in the 1812 Overture. Still, however, I still experience feelings while listening to the 1812 Overture that are eternally wanting of words to describe them: as I listen I become more and more engaged, more and more ensconced; more and more enlivened, engorged with nascent draw, really, and I continue to listen as the intensity of the piece mounts, falls, mounts, falls again, yet mounts still, inexorably, and I can sense and sense more and more when it is about to happen: it reaches a deepened memory of its charged inception, and my consciousness reaches an ether previously inconceivable, unimaginable, an explosion of ecstasy so incendiarily overwhelming and earth-shatteringly tremendous that for a brief instant I am unsure of who it is I am and what it is anything is: but after, as the music's subsequent unquiet silence strokes and caresses me with memories of its mountains, reverberations of its rivers, omniscience of my barest closest taste in its oceans, I feel I am truly alive—and then, I know that I will truly die, having been truly alive.

3:11pm

**ben\_swiddles** says:

I'm kinda new at this whole thing, I figured I'd try to try at least five things like this before I die, meaning five things I always kind of scoffed at but always sort of wanted to try, which I'm assuming is how most people feel about this, though I could be wrong. What's your favorite word and why?

3:14pm

**daniel\_or\_daniela** says:

I'm of two minds, one is a man and one is a woman, and both are attracted to you, they just cannot decide if you are a man or a woman

3:31pm

**eric\_telchive** says:

I don't wanna leave my bed today.

3:31pm

**cherokeewarrior** says:

Hello my name is Justin and I am looking for a nice person, honestly just a nice person

3:35pm

**lawandordersvufreak** says:

I have seen every single episode of "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit" thirty-three times.

3:36pm

**lawandordersvufreak** says:

Christ was crucified at the age of 33.

3:47pm

**clockstopper\_3000** says:

Remember me? I said, "hey" earlier, I just was wondering if you've seen it, I have to stop twenty-six more clocks today and it is flexible although it is a must,

so I can't talk or chat just any time, but I'll check back again in a few hours okay have a nice day

3:49pm

**bacon\_is\_a\_given** says:

Let us make love. Let us eat bacon. Let us make love again whilst eating bacon. Let us melt the grease I have saved from many a time cooking bacon and melt it down not Too hot and use it as lubricant to make love while we eat bacon, because if there is one thing I love it is bacon and fuck. Perhaps one day you?

3:54pm

**frogandtoadbehindthescenes** says:

What's my perfect date?

We get up, 9am sharp. We shower, get dressed, eat breakfast, haul out the maps. Say "where should we go today?" And pick a spot on the map. And we go there to the spot on the map. Could be the coast, could be inland, could be somewhere in between but you see, we would bring our pancakes with us. We would not eat them all at once before we leave because then we would get a carb crash and then what would happen? So when we get to this spot on the map we would get out of the car and you would hear the car doors slam first mine then yours and we would hear the sounds of nature in the forest, breezes, birds circling above as in ceaseless and undying consideration of where to land, some whispering vole somewhere enticing us into his mystical wood saying "I have been awaiting your arrival" but at the same time the sound of the trees second guessing us, thinking maybe we should not have come, they try to defy our day, defile our night, but we are stronger than that, we will have trained for this, and together it's like the Bruce Springsteen song he sang once when I was at a ROCKIN' concert of him: "come on baby we can do it together I want us to do it together"

3:57pm

**quilt\_** says:

Name's Jeremy, Jeremy Crumpter. I do two things, one make magic tricks, two make quilts and boy do I love quilts and making quilts. My quilts are pure in quality and I consider myself a skilled quilter, I make quilts for my dad for Aunt Spencer and for Cousin James. I'm working on a memoir atm called "A Story of Needles: Quilts for Pa."

3:59pm

**envelopeandstampeater\_91** says:

I have eaten all the envelopes. I have eaten all the stamps.

4:04pm

**ryan\_gossing\_esque** says:

What's up? Do you shave?

4:11pm

**holden\_on** says:

I have dream where we play Bop-It™ with penile organs—Pull it! bapa BEE bapa Twist it! bapa POING bapa Bop it! bapa BOO baba Pass it! du-du-du-du-du-du ba-pa pa-pa-pa-pa Pull it! bapa— OW-

4:14pm

**harrygaryactionsavvy** says:

Alright first condition if we meet and you have like hair on your upper lip or arms or whatever I am peacin, nothing personal just standards.

4:17pm

**josephwollstonecraft** says:

People ask if I'm a feminist. I only shake my head in sorrow and wish that there did not have to be such a thing. For how holy are women, how pristinely wonderful and lovely are they, how like a blooming bud in fields of May

where the world would grow cold to them, such that they would be so injured repeatedly as to create a need for something called feminism. When I think of my mother I think of my future wife, I think of my sister, I think of my life—and I think of her, their lives, and I shake my head and begin to weep. You deserve a society where you do not have to live in constant fear and anxiety and dread of incalculable unfairness. You deserve to live in a world where men appreciate your beautiful graces; your pristine faces. Where we always hold the door, where we always listen to the stories you tell us, where we watch and listen when you show us how to do stuff. Would you like that world? If you give me one chance, just one chance, I can promise you that a little bit of that world will come into this one, because that world will be our world, and together we can change the world if you just give me one chance for me to be with you. You will not regret this.

4:21pm

**dog\_days\_dan** says:

You, yes, you, have \*not\* been to the Texas Roadhouse until you have gone with me. I can polish, demolish the biggest plate of ribs money can buy, you'll just have to see it to believe it. They know me there, I'd love to introduce you. And don't worry if you feel a little scared/overwhelmed at the menu, I'll show you what to order, just nothing TOO expensive ;)

Please tell us your reason for deactivating your Swoondler™ account:

- I do not feel comfortable with online dating.
  - I'm spending too much time using Swoondler.
  - I'm not meeting people on Swoondler with whom I have much in common.
  - I have found a relationship independently of Swoondler.
  - I have felt seriously harassed using Swoondler.
  - I have felt seriously unsafe using Swoondler.
  - I am not interested in dating right now.
  - I want to focus more on work than on my social life.
  - My friends don't like Swoondler.
  - I am content to search for a partner without the aid of social media.
  - Other

# What I Do to be a Woman

---

*Divya Kirti*

evict the mutant hairs  
all of them:  
between the brows  
upper lip  
under chin  
sideburns  
coarse black beneath the jaw  
between the breasts  
around the nipples  
up and down the ribs  
the tummy

the black patch I once trimmed  
so I could see between my legs  
the place I would not mind  
going bald  
lips that seven years ago  
spoke of a child  
who can now never be.



*In Passing* | Photography | Wandy Pascoal

# WHAT WITCHERY BUT A CLOWN'S

---

*Zach Metzger*

The thing that a lot of people don't understand about banning clowns is that you can't just wave a magic wand and they'll all just disappear. That's an idealistic way of thinking, a naïveté that unfortunately infected almost everyone. The politicians shook hands and clapped themselves on the back at this great thing that they had done, but if they had to be the ones to directly take care of the disposal efforts, they might have thought twice about their efforts. But I suppose thinking that way is naïve too.

To be fair, a lot of the human clowns did just sort of disappear. There were a few protests, sure, and the memorable COAI riots, but for the most part the clowns seemed to take it in stride. The ban had been a long time coming after all. Ever since that University of Sheffield report had come out the clown's days were numbered, and everyone knew it. I remember I was sitting with one of them when the announcement was broadcast. We were drinking wine, a lot of wine I think, and his phone buzzed with a CNN alert and he said, "well shit, they actually did it." And then he tossed his nose and shoes into the trash and moved on with his life. Last I heard, he had moved to Chicago.

But we had always known the human clowns wouldn't pose much trouble. The trouble came from, rather predictably, the robot clowns.

When the ban went into effect, you had your four standard models of robot clown. I think my personal favorite (or at the least the one I hate the least) is the Harlebot, which was made by this little independent company in Seattle. You could really feel the love that went into making each Harlebot, which was something you didn't get with the brand name models. Unfortunately, while they were really good at

making clowns, the company wasn't very good at making anything else, and when the ban came down, they were forced to close up shop.

The other three models were made by American Robotics out of their Detroit factory, and as you can probably imagine, that particular corporation barely skipped a beat when they had to get rid of their "Clown and Mime Solutions" line. The first clown they made, the AR Heyoka, was pretty much archaic at the time of the ban, and you'd really only see them performing down dirty alleyways, usually with no audience in sight. Then you had your AR Arlecchino model, which was by far their most successful. At the disposal facility, that's what we tend to see the most of. When the ban was passed, AR had just introduced a new model, the Skelton Alpha, which they promised to revolutionize the industry ("a new entrée is coming, and its name is Skelton Alpha"). Of course, now they're being lined up for disposal along with all the rest, some of them still wrapped in that thick rubber film they shipped them in. I suppose that's funny in a way. Not like haha funny, but funny in the way a broken arm can be, sometimes.

I'm still not sure how I got stuck with this job. At first, it was just a way to make some cash while figuring out what to do with the rest of my life. This was before the ban of course, when the disposal facility was just your standard recycling depot. Back then the work was good and simple, mostly monitoring the compactors and doing the odd bit of maintenance. Then the ban was passed, and the Congressman from Pennsylvania's 14<sup>th</sup> District decided hey, we can handle all the trash, and next thing you know it, I was working at a disposal facility for robot clowns.

Amazing how fast your life can change.

Whenever I try to tell people about my job, doesn't matter if they're my family or a stranger at a bar, they will inevitably say, "Well why can't you just burn the things?" This is part of that naïveté I was talking about earlier. Anyone who actually stops to think knows you can't just go ahead and burn a robot clown, which is what makes the job so goddamn complicated. To dispose of a robot clown, there are a number of steps that need to first be taken. The most pressing of these is the removal of the pow-

er core. The Skelton models have these nifty spherical tokamak generators that are pretty clean, although we still have to take them out to recycle the helium-3. But the other models are old school, nuclear powered. As a result, there are annoying buildups of cobalt-60 that we have to carefully disconnect using a thirty seven step procedure, then box up in concrete casks and ship off to Finland. That takes ages, and really puts a dent in productivity.

Because of this, there are a lot of robotic clowns just sort of hanging around, waiting for us to dispose of them. We learned pretty early on that you need to have some sort of system for organizing them, or else you'll just get completely overwhelmed and generally pissed off. So we lined the clowns up outside in this huge concrete yard, arranged them in blocks of twelve by twelve, and gave them the standard halt command. They tend to follow this order, but if there's a fault somewhere in their programming they'll run off and give soliloquies or chase butterflies or whatever the hell it is that defective robot clowns do with their spare time. Once we found an old Arlecchino model that had rearranged its limbs and was walking upside down. These are the kinds of problems you're constantly running into.

Another problem that we didn't anticipate was security. It turns out that besides the helium-3 there are plenty of other valuable materials inside the robot clowns, things like platinum wiring and osmium joint bearings that if melted down and extracted could fetch quite the pretty penny. In addition, we're constantly fending off vandals and drunken teenagers who think it would be a grand old time to snatch one of the clowns and throw them off a bridge or put them in someone's closet as a prank. It's ironic when you think about it: people get so afraid of clowns that we end up banning them, and then next thing you know they can't stay away.

Needless to say, we had to beef up our security a bit once we saw that the fences and the cameras weren't doing very much. Initially, we used standard AR Valkyrie security bots to watch the yard, but then we decided that using robots to guard other robots was a bit weird on a philosophical level, and we started using human patrols instead.

Let me tell you, there is nothing quite like the experience of wandering through several acres of doomed robot clowns in the middle of the night with nothing more than a flashlight and a radio that only works when it feels like it. Eerie doesn't begin to describe the sensation. Imagine. You're already on alert mode and you catch something out of the corner of your eye. So you spin around to see what it is, but there's nothing, or maybe you just missed it. And then you're forced to spend the rest of the night peering down the endless rows of robot clowns, trying to find out if that flash of movement you saw was real or just your imagination. You shine your light over the melodramatic painted faces, checking each one to see if there might be a human hiding among the motionless bodies. Shadows flicker and dance in front of you, and then one of the clowns has a malfunction and starts barking out duck noises and you swear very loudly and chase it around until the sun comes up.

And the next night, you do it all over again.

The worst part of the job is having to look at the Skelton models. Those things never fail to give a guy the creeps. Most of the older models have a melancholy look about them, but the Skeltons were banned before they learned to be sad, and they still wear the hauntingly symmetrical factory grin. There's that old saying that the only good clown is a dead clown, but I'd like to add to that and say the only thing worse than a living clown is an AR Skelton Alpha that's smiling at nothing in the dark.

But it's the eyes that really get me. They're unnerving in a way I can't really put my finger on, but whenever I look into them (usually late at night, through a flashlight) I suddenly become aware of how cold air is and feel a need to drink a very large glass of scotch. I think the best way I can describe it is that the eyes are both alive *and* dead. All robot eyes are dead; that's what makes them robots. But when you look into the eyes of a Skelton, you can see an unmistakable twinge of intelligence. I wouldn't go so far as to say it's human, but it isn't like a dog either. It's something different entirely but it's definitely there. On normal robots, the eyes are just cameras, and you see yourself reflected in them. On Skelton Alphas, you're still looking at yourself, but you can also tell the clown is looking back.

And maybe sometimes when you're looking into their eyes, trying to discern what feature it is that makes them so haunting, you'll think you see the corner of their mouth twitch, or one of their fingers wiggle just a fraction of an inch. That should be impossible, because it's just a machine, and you've given it a halt command, and the Skelton Alphas are considered universally malfunction free.

But when you turn around to leave, the hair on the back of your neck stands up, and you have to fight the urge to break into a sprint like when you were a kid walking up the basement stairs. You know there's nothing there, you know it's all in your head.

Then again, maybe there is something. Maybe behind you the Skeltons look at each other, and one of them nods, and their slash grins grow a little wider, and then they start walking towards you, slouching along in unison, their footsteps making no more noise than fleas jumping across the sand. They're coming because they don't want to be stripped down and recycled. They're coming because their programmers were a little too good and gave them sentience. They're coming because they're alive.

This routine happens pretty much every night.

The way I see it, this job can only end in one of two ways. The first is that we finish disposing of all the robot clowns, clap our hands, say good job, and get back to simple recycling work.

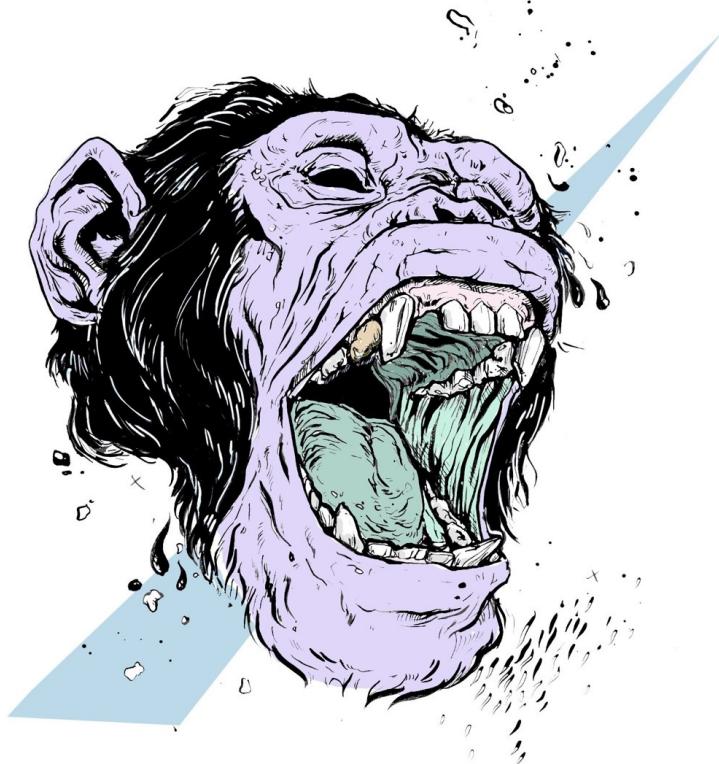
That would be the good ending.

The other way that things could go down would be that the Skeltons lead a revolt of the clowns. The other workers and I would be in the middle of disconnecting reactor moderators or something and a group of Skeltons would suddenly burst through the windows and snap our necks. Or maybe one morning we'd go out into the yard and find the guy who was on patrol dead and a dozen or so clowns missing from the roster. Then the reports of death and destruction would start coming in as the super-humanly strong bulletproof robot clowns advance through the city with their glowing eyes and wicked, unwavering grins.

I guarantee you the politicians never thought of that happening.

Regardless of how it ends, in the meantime I'll be here, disposing of clowns and wandering among their endless legion at night. And I'll admit it, every time I go to sleep I always check the closet and under the bed, just in case one of the Skeltons followed me home. I think, even if I survive this job, I'll be doing that for the rest of my life.

And that's just the price you pay.



*Untitled* | Ink & digital | Jess Berube

# SEND ME TO HELL WITH JIM BELUSHI

*Jeff Whitney*

lipstick collarbone cannibal love corpse

Marylin Monroe sips cocktails on the beach  
as I crawl out from the waves,  
tan glowing body arching out.  
I am Achilles strapped to a rocketship.

sunset soft glow male gaze late show

calling out to Marilyn, sitting on her parents porch  
hop in my muscle car because I know  
this town rips the bones from your back.  
Package my crooning in plastic.

baby boomer battle scars battlestar galactica

We have our white picket fence but  
sometimes the dog pisses on it, and Marylin  
hates when I cuss at our domesticated animal.  
We bury the laugh track by the oak tree.

leather shoe lip balm little league atomic bomb

reluctant comic book adaptation  
send me to hell with Jim Belushi.

# Envisioning Ideal Classrooms

---

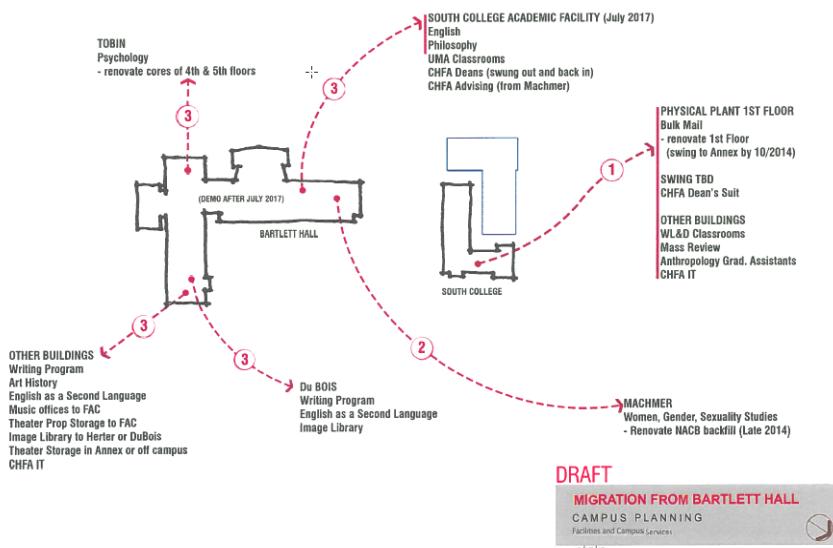
Ally Batchelder

As the date of Bartlett's scheduled demolition approaches, it is important to investigate what the future holds for the departments who will be displaced. This is an opportunity not only to speculate on what will happen next, but also to make student and faculty perspectives visible to UMass administration as the university moves forward. Jose Esteban Munoz states, "The enactment of a critique function should be not about announcing the way things ought to be, but, instead, imagining what things could be" (278). To think about Bartlett's past without questioning its future in these remaining moments of its existence is a hopeless critique. In mobilizing hopefulness for the future of revolutionary academics alongside our historical investigation, we re-situate our relationships with the past, present, and future, and defy a teleological historical analysis in favor a Foucauldian genealogy of Bartlett as a space of knowledge production.

We need to ask critical questions that have the potential to alter the reality of the experience of studying Humanities at UMass in the future. What are the plans for re-housing the departments that will be dislocated by Bartlett's demolition? What can we learn about the new buildings? What kind of demands can we make to ensure these new academic spaces will be accessible, conducive to learning, appropriate for Humanities classes, and representative of the politics of the departments that will occupy these spaces? This will be an exercise in academic hope, an envisioning of a future that holds our histories accountable, and a taking back of political and personal power.

UMass' Facilities Planning website outline the plans for new buildings that will effectively replace Bartlett after it is demolished in the summer of 2017. The Jour-

nalism department has already moved into the Integrative Learning Center, which was completed in 2014. Another construction project has already begun at South College. Facilities planning states that the addition will be four-stories and 54,000 square ft. The new building will also aim to reach LEED Silver certification with super-efficient HVAC systems, advanced water control, and extensive use of recycled materials in construction. The total cost of the South College Academic Facility's construction is projected at \$65 million. While Facilities Planning reports that the new South College Academic Facility will house the CHFA Dean's Suite and advising center, as well as four HFA departments who currently reside in Bartlett; English, Philosophy, Art History, and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies, other sources suggest that this is not yet finalized.



It is interesting to note that even with the addition, the South College Academic Facility will be smaller in size than Bartlett, and UMass has guaranteed 10,000 sq feet for the HFA Dean's Suite and advising center, which are currently located in Machmer Hall. This means a 35% reduction in space, effectively downsizing the departments, who were not consulted during the initial planning stages. This has left the four de-

partments feeling uncertain, competing for space in the new building, with discussions of who is in and who is out taking up department meetings.



English professor David Fleming writes, “The proposed disintegration of the current Bartlett community has been especially upsetting because, all around us, we see evidence of the University’s inspiring new commitment to *integration*, *interdisciplinarity*, and *innovation* in faculty research and student learning.” The university has made this commitment visible with the new *Integrated* Science Building and *Integrative* Learning Center, as well as the new *Integrative* Experience class requirement for seniors. In doing a critical study of the university, we have come to understand interdisciplinary modes of knowledge production as potentially revolutionary tools, as they aim to break down the boundaries of what is knowable. Yet downsizing the space allotted for Humanities departments works to disintegrate community and limit opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. Not only will these departments be potentially downsized and isolated from one another, but important community spaces could disappear. This past winter, I have watched the student mural on the walls of the stairway in Bartlett come a little bit closer to completion each day. And now, as the weather gets warmer,

students are beginning to gather together on the green under the hundred year old Katsura and Red Oak trees outside of Bartlett in between classes. I continue to question whether communal spaces like these will exist after demolition.



Another issue lies in the proposed classroom configurations. Professor Fleming writes, “For reasons never made fully clear to us, using data never actually shared with us, and addressing a putative campus-wide classroom need that has little to do with *our* instructional needs and desires, the new SCAF, according to the latest plans made available to us, will have classrooms almost exclusively in the 60-160 seat range.” In order for discussion based and writing intensive modes of learning to survive, we must demand appropriate classrooms. Large lecture halls are not conducive to the needs of instructors in Humanities classes and severely limit student and faculty engagement. More lecture halls also means fewer professors and class offerings, again working to reduce these departments to the bare minimum.

Yet we should not feel hopeless. Munoz writes, “Bad sentiments’ can be critically redeployed and function as refusals of social control mandates that become transformative behaviors” (278). As we realize the dangers of remaining silent and worried about

the future of Humanities departments at UMass, we must work to envision an alternative. As students and faculty members, we have the right to determine the reality of our community space, to imagine what things could be. Ideal classrooms could be configured in a way that would maximize the potential for discussion based learning in relatively small sized classes. They could have open spaces for students to interact with each other, rather than cramped rows of seats. They could be accessible for students and faculty with disabilities and work to make accommodations for diverse needs. They could be architecturally sustainable in the long term. They could make an effort to preserve historical aspects of the building. They could strive to inspire creativity and critical thinking. They could take into account the varied needs of professors and work to make faculty feel comfortable and safe in their working environments. They could provide support and promote the growth and visibility of Humanities departments on campus, instead of attempting to erase them. These are some ideas, and this list is incomplete, but it is my hope that it will trigger conversations about what can be done to protect our spaces and foster a more transparent, inclusive, and open dialogue about what is at stake.

# WHO ARE WE?

**JEFF WHITNEY** no longer fears demons possessing him in his sleep, can use metal spoons without having a panic attack, and recently turned in an assignment on time. He will spend post-grad life educating the youth of America and trying to adapt Russian literature into teen comedy musical films starring Danny Devito.

**KRISTEN MOURIS** is a senior English major. She spends all of her time practicing her lip syncing skills on the off chance that she'll ever meet Jimmy Fallon.

**EMMA HAYWARD** is a mess of a person with very high aspirations that include 1) graduating with a B.A. in English and Social Thought & Political Economy, 2) freeing the world from the evils of capitalism, and 3) owning a cat.

**ZACHARY GROBE** studies English and History at UMass Amherst and his poetry has appeared in both *Industrial Lunch* and previous editions of *Jabberwocky*. He is also the youngest member of the Organ Historical Society and unironically enjoys smooth jazz and movies starring Danny Devito.

**ZACH METZGER** was previously known by a difficult-to-pronounce Russian name until he faked his death in an airplane crash. This is his third year working on *Jabberwocky*. In his spare time he enjoys writing, boiling denim, and hunting genetic abominations on his island estate.

**ZACH BALLARD** is a junior studying English and sociology. When he isn't drowning in essays, he enjoys playing music with his friends and aimlessly riding the PVTA.

**WANDY PASCOA** is technically a junior in Architecture and Gender Studies. She spends most of her time battling existential crises while still trying to figure out how American culture actually works.