

She was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'What's the use of a book?' thought Alice 'without pictures or conversations?' So she was considering in her own mind /as well as she could, whether the pleasure of holding a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her. There was nothing so VERY remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, 'Oh dear! I shall be late!' /when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it seemed quite natural;/ but when the Rabbit actually TOOK A WATCH OUT OF ITS WAISTCOAT POCKET, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started back with surprise.

JABBERWOCKY



It went down the hole after it, never once stopping to think how to get out again. The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down a very deep well. Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her and to wonder what was going to happen next. First, she tried to make out what she was coming to, but it was too dark to see anything; then she looked at the sides of the well, and noticed that they were all filled with cupboards and book-shelves; here and there she saw some pictures hung upon pegs. She took down a jar from one of the shelves as she passed; it was labelled 'ORANGE MARMALADE', but to her great disappointment it was empty: she did not like to drop the jar for fear of killing somebody, so managed to put it into one of the cupboards as she fell. 'Well!' thought Alice to herself, 'after such a fall as this, I think nothing of tumbling down stairs! How brave they'll all think me at home! Why, I wouldn't mind falling down a hole like this if there was nothing else to do.' Down, down, down went Alice after it, even if it fell off the top of the world!

'I've seen it by the town, I've seen it /for it in her lessons opportunity for sho to her, still it's right distance—' /Alice had no idea where it was, but thought they were nice girls. 'I wonder if I shall fall right into the hands of the people there?—I think—I was rather afraid to come out among the people there, as it didn't sound at all like asking them what the name of the country was. 'Is it New Zealand or Australia?' /and I CURTSEYING as you're falling through the air? /'And what an ignorant little girl you are! You'll never do to ask: perhaps I shall be eaten up somewhere.' Down, down, down. There was nothing else to do again. 'Dinah'll miss me very much, I should think!' /Dinah was the cat./ 'I hope they'll remember me! There are no mice in the air, I'm afraid, but you might catch them and that's very like a mouse, you know. But do cats eat bats, or?' And here Alice began to get rather sleepy, and went on saying to herself, in a dreamy sort of way, 'Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats sometimes, 'Do bats eat cats?' as she couldn't answer her question, it didn't occur to her that she was dozing off, and had just begun to dream that she was walking ha-

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Jabberwocky

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 babbled 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.

~ Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

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The Musings of a Lonely Man who has Watched His Hat
Fall from the Cliff into Oblivion // *Johnathan Sanders*

Dang.

A Sundog Dirtbag Enterprise // Stevi-Lee Alver

I watched her dropsaw briefcase snap open releasing
papergun necklaces, which rattled the branches of trees.
Where had the paints gone? the ones lost in the freezer.

She is a good deal, blonde.
Red fading turns to brown, and the
heat is forgotten as skyward bubbles fill slender necks.

A hashtagged cat cries all night and sleeps all day, as
a star-picket prosthesis steadies a scabby table in an unshaded yard.
A petite female frame planes plywood from a Sasquatch footprint.

A teacup pig snorts
from the businessman's car, full
of surfboards and clinking empty glass

almost full, always leaving room for more. Lacquer drying
in toxic waves of heat, bending McDonalds splintering
in sunburn, and drying spray-painted collages, fifty shades of hot-pink.

She is a Sundog Dirtbag, her
dream is an enterprise. I heart
her art, which can be found online.

Teeth // Sharon Amuguni

After you knocked him out
In front of the Stop and Shop down the road
I picked up his teeth and took them home
Rinsed them, placed them in a small jar
With water and sea salt, and six lemon seeds.
Two years later I forgot how his palms felt on my back,
How his words felt in my mouth.
And this angered me,
Or saddened me, I still can't discern which it was.
So I swallowed them.
His teeth that is. Four big gulps, salt water, seeds and all
I swallowed them and fell asleep.



What a Cock // Anna Gibson

January Snow // Brian Ward

Snow was still coming down in occasional flurries on the chilly January morning. A boy ran through his backyard into the woods, hearing his boots crunch on old snow and swish through the fresh powder atop it. He was wrapped from head to heel in fluff that made him sweat, with only his eyes and nose showing through a woolen scarf and hat. But he endured the silly clothes, because without them he'd be stuck inside his loud and stuffy house, watching the fresh white flakes float by his window.

The boy dashed off the trail into the denser part of the woods. He climbed atop the old stone farmer wall and breathed in deep, feeling the clean winter air sting his lungs. His gaze swept through a small clearing, the only thing marring the pristine landscape were the footprints left behind by the wild creatures of the woods. He hopped down into a snowdrift and listened to the hushed silence that always accompanied new snow in Lakeville. His mind went blank as he sprawled in the snow pile, feeling the occasional wet shock of flakes melting on his cheeks. The drift a comfortable bed, and soon the boy's mind was passing in and out of the waking world. He remained dreaming on his crystal throne, imagining far off and forgotten lands, with curious animals now and again pausing to sniff at him as they moved through the wood. Time drifted by on the wind. He was called back from his reverie by a far off voice on the air.

His mother, announcing that there was hot Ralphie Soup on the stove, and that there'd be none for him if he didn't get inside before he caught his death. The boy wriggled his way out of the snow and slowly started trudging back, leaving his winter world behind.

A teen woke on a chilly January morning to see that five more inches of heavy snow had fallen overnight. He forced himself out of bed, knowing he'd need the extra time to shovel if he hoped to get to class on time. He threw on a pair of jeans and boots and grabbed a stale muffin off the countertop before trudging out into wet grey morning. He shoveled the driveway for the third time in a week, a knot tightened in his

back. His breath came out in great white puffs of mist; he regretted not grabbing gloves. The teen dug out his car and started the engine, holding to a thin hope that by the time he was done the heat might be working. The acrid tang of exhaust fumes stuck to the inside of his mouth as he continued to shovel. A plough drove by, scattering sand salt and slush as it went. Somewhere down the street a dog was barking. The cold biting wind did nothing to improve his mood as it sapped the little warmth and energy that remained to his sleep deprived body. The teen then began to scrape the ice off his windshield, noting how much road salt plastered the sides of his already shabby looking car. With his job complete he steeled himself for the ride to school, knowing that the steering wheel would be too cold to touch, and that, despite his hopes, the heat wouldn't actually start working until he arrived in his parking space. As he pulled away he thought that they're probably the only school in the county that didn't get the day off.

A man looked out on the fresh snow that was building up in his front yard. By the end of the day there'd probably be over a foot of the white stuff all over town. He took a sip from his warm coffee and turned at the sound of his son and daughter charging down the stairs. Before they'd even reached the bottom he'd set his coffee aside and was digging their snow boots out of the storage closet. He redirected the stampeding children towards their mother, who made sure they were bundled up to the point where you couldn't see their faces, before sending them back to Dad to get their boots on. Without seeming to slow for a second they rushed out the door towards the woods, shouting at one another the whole way. The man smiled over to his wife, whose eyes reflected the amusement he felt. He picked up his hat, stomped into his old boots, and followed the kids out into the storm. There was time for at least one snowball fight before work.

Lilies // *Jack Giaour*

A surprise reserved for
the heavens, for only those
climes where speaking

a native tongue opens hidden doors
into houses long abandoned by their inhabitants,
corresponding to the colors of words. Where fear
of flatness is often shamed,
euphemistically, sentimentally ostracized, and fondly
termed “prairie sickness” by sufferers like me.

On the way home I saw them,
something like white flames, something
only permanent in twilight.

Selective engineering of flowers,
and rendering cityscapes silent, and the
eschewment of flat land prompt sudden
understandings I understand aren't practical. They're
constructive adjustments of emotion,
Historical reconstruction of my thoughts

And admiration intended
For later gardens. The lilies lived
For a fortnight, and
We see only their decay.



Feathered Family // Wandy Pascoal

Post-Modernism (Or Something) // Elizabeth Riezinger

“Sonic voices...fragmented
human form...chocking and scandalous...
canonical reactions of a utopia...
integration...theories of the sublime...
Now turn to page 5.”

Hitler's Glass of Milk // Tyler Ramsay

Don't cry over spilled milk, unless it's laced with explosives.

I know, it sounds extreme, and most of you will probably never encounter dairy products that could make you go from a human being to a pile of yogurt in 0.2 seconds. But I, on the other hand, found myself in a hairy predicament involving a team of Nazi generals, Adolf Hitler, and the world's most dangerous glass of milk.

The room was silent as the Führer himself strode in, his pace quick and nimble. After he plopped a pile of folders down on the meeting table, he brushed his hair to one side and groomed his moustache (a style I had been trying to grow for years, since it was all the rage in the Third Reich; unfortunately, the clammy and awkward grip of puberty still prevented me from growing anything but peach fuzz, even if I *was* twenty-three years old). His dark eyes scanned the room, marking each face at the table; when his met mine, my heart jumped—out of fear, I assure you, not joy. Yes, Hitler was like the Elvis Presley of the German world, but I didn't exactly share the swooning sentiment. As much as his eyes frightened me, though, I will admit they had a distinct passion. If he looked upon you in approval, they lit up like sparkling black suns. If you sent him into a blind rage, his eyes could burn like coal.

One of the men stood, and everyone else followed. The man—his name was Heinrich Himmler, maybe you've heard of him—projected his right arm into the air and stated powerfully, "*Heil Hitler!*" My arm shot out as well, more out of muscle memory than anything to be honest, and the words escaped my mouth along with everyone else.

"Sit down," Hitler snapped.

As we all took our seats, making sure our posture was so straight it looked like someone had shoved metal rods down our backs—now wait, before I go on, let me explain this little simile.

One of my good friends, the reason I was sitting in Hitler's

council chamber in the first place, had told me how to act in front of the Führer. Don't smile. Keep your hands on the table. Don't raise one eyebrow above the other. Don't speak unless spoken to. Don't grind your teeth or lick your lips or tap your foot. Don't laugh. You make sure both buttocks are evenly planted in your seat or, Heavens above, the Führer will *know*. And over all, you sit up straight like Himmler himself has rammed a metal rod down your spine. Not a fiery metal rod, my friend explained; there are always those people who start to sweat in their seat when Hitler walks in the room and they shift and it looks like they're doing the potty dance. Hitler only has a taste for the tango, or so I've heard.

Anyways, everyone in the room looked like they had passed the raunchiest fart in the history of the Third Reich and was trying to ignore it completely. Maybe Hitler noticed, or maybe he had passed it himself—I guess the world will never know the Führer's flatulence patterns. What a shame.

"It has been reported that the Allies are coming closer, is that correct?" Hitler asked, perusing the papers and maps before him. He always licked his finger before flipping a page, which I thought was atrocious. I prefer the corners of my papers to *not* be damp, thank you very much.

"This is true, Führer," Himmler said. "But there are other matters to attend to, like—"

"What is more important than the position of our enemies?" Hitler growled.

"Building more airplanes, Führer."

"Well, they're not going to build themselves! Get our best men on it."

"We need funds for that, Führer. Money is low."

"Print some more!"

Sometimes I wondered how this guy came to take the title "Father." For someone who wanted to be called Daddy all the time, he could be pretty dense.

"We cannot do that, Führer. The rate of inflation—"

"Shut up! I was joking with you. I know my economics. What do you think I studied after I was rejected from art school? Swine

herding?"

"No, Führer."

Hitler laughed. And when he laughed, *everyone* laughed. I mean, he could have just told the most racist and offensive joke in the world, and this room of prestigious generals would suddenly become a pack of dumb cackling hyenas.

"Talk to the mechanics yourself, Heinrich," Hitler said. "That should get them working quickly enough."

"Yes, Führer." Himmler was sweating so hard it looked like he had jumped into his uniform after a shower of ice water. He sweated more than a pig in the oven on the Führer's birthday.

Hitler looked around the room with a mad grin on his face. "When is the coffee getting here? I was told there would be coffee."

Himmler pushed his glasses up his nose—I mean, up the bridge, not the nostril—talk about *picking your brain*—and looked to the door. "Ah, yes, of course, Emma should be here any minute. I assure you, Führer."

Just as the words left his mouth, the door opened and she walked in. Since I had seen her that morning, she had taken time to dress up. Her blouse was dark green to mirror the generals' uniforms, but studded with diamonds around the neck. She had most definitely put blush on, and the black makeup around her eyes highlighted their vivid baby blue. Her short blond hair was smoothed to one side, which I admit looked rather nice on her. I mean, I was her fiancée, which meant that her hair could have looked like vomit, but I would still be required by unspoken law to tell her that it looked simply marvelous, darling.

In her arms she held a tray, which she carefully set next to Hitler. I eyed the fateful jug of milk. I tried to catch her eye, but she refused to acknowledge my presence. She's pretty good at that, especially after we argue. With Hitler in the room, it was probably better that way; there were more important matters to attend to.

"Would you like coffee, Führer?" Emma asked. Her voice was light as a feather, as sweet as honey. Yes, two of the most cliché comparisons ever, but what can I say? Just the sight of her makes me sappy.

"No, no, no," Hitler insisted, despite his previous demand for coffee. "But the milk. Yes, I will have the milk."

It's funny how the word *milk* suddenly made me want to lose my bowels.

Emma took the jug and started to pour some into a glass. Suddenly Hitler touched her hand and she stopped.

"Is something wrong, Führer?" she asked innocently.

Hitler licked his lips and flicked his eyes between Emma and the milk. "Put the jug down."

The clink of the jug on the table sounded like the shattering of glass. The room was deadly silent.

"My dear," Hitler said, standing. He placed both palms on the table and leaned forward. The table creaked, like an old man's joints when he stands.

Oh my god, I thought over and over again. Great God in Heaven, he knows. Lord, take care of my parents when I'm put in front of the shooting squad. Jesus Rollerblading Christ, help me in my hour of need.

"This milk . . . is tainted," Hitler spat. "I can smell it."

Emma's mouth half-dropped open. Then she looked around the room at the stone-faced generals and found me. I could offer her nothing but the cold sweat running down my face. She turned back to Hitler. "I have no idea what you mean, Führer."

"What type of milk is this?"

"Two percent, Führer. Ideal for flavoring—"

"*Two percent?* This milk is not worth two percent of my attention. Get it out of my sight. Do we have any skim milk? Yes, skim milk! Now *there's* a dairy product I can get behind."

My heart was fighting to pound its way out of my chest, bounce across the table, and jump to its untimely death out the window, in full view of the Big Daddy of the Third Reich. We had spent so much time getting *that* particular jug of milk into *this* particular room at *this* particular time, in the hopes that Hitler would take milk with his coffee, and the secret chemicals in the milk would interact with the Führer's divine saliva—and then his body would become a beautiful bonfire, dressed in a hot new outfit of flaming orange, red, and yellow.

Hitler slammed his fist down upon the table, rattling the jug of milk. Emma yelped, an ugly sound that remarkably resembled a weasel being dry-wrung like a rag.

“Get me *skim milk!*” the Führer shrieked. He threw his arms in the air and his hair breezed across his forehead.

Himmler leaned closer to the Führer and whispered something in his ear. Hitler pulled away with a look of the utmost disgust splayed across his face, as if Himmler had just suggested a most ludicrous idea, like racial equality.

“I know that I’m lactose intolerant!” Hitler snapped. “What is an hour in the bathroom compared to the sweet taste of skim milk!” He whirled towards Emma. “Get me skim milk. Now!”

“Yes, Führer?” Emma cried. I could tell that she was on the verge of tears as she put the jug and the half-filled glass of milk on the tray and sped towards the door. As she was about to pass through, Hitler shouted, “Wait, woman!”

Emma froze and blanched.

“Bring me that milk.”

“Yes, Führer.”

She came back to the table and set the tray down. Hitler seized the glass of milk and brought it close to his eyes. “Two percent,” he hissed through his teeth. “How many of our cows produce two percent milk? I want them executed. And the one percent cows. Keep the skim cows.”

Himmler glanced around the room worriedly. “Führer, there’s no such thing as—”

“I don’t care!” Hitler shouted. “Just execute them!”

“Yes, Führer.”

Hitler eyed the glass of milk with fury seething in his eyes. “Two percent. What a disgrace to the world of dairy.”

And then he spit in the milk, a huge glob of saliva that was at least the size of a Ping-Pong ball. It left his mouth slowly, oozing out like slime out of a pipe, like yolk dripping out of an eggshell. I can only imagine how long he had *that* thing stuck in the back of his throat. It took a hundred years to hit the milk, in a *splash* that I knew would shatter this room.

Saliva-reactive explosion, my friend had told me.

The milk began to bubble and boil and foam over the top. “*Führer!*” Himmler shouted. He leapt from his seat and snatched the milk. In a strong pitch that baseball professionals would have admired, Himmler sent the glass of milk flying through the window. As the milk streamed through the air outside (and by the way, did I mention it was a lovely summer day?), it lit aflame and created a rainbow of fire in the yard.

Everyone in the room jumped to their feet and crowded around the window to see the sky streaked with fire. Meanwhile I had run to the side of Hitler, who was glaring furiously at Emma. Three Nazi soldiers burst into the room, guns ready. “Is everything okay?” one of them barked.

“The chef has given us explosive milk!” Emma squeaked.

“We must find the chef,” I agreed.

“I will feed the chef his own milk,” Himmler growled, pushing up his glasses again.

Hitler stalked to the window and looked outside. Many of the soldiers on standby were observing the shattered glass on the pavement, while others were rushing into the building to check on the Führer.

“Someone has tried to poison you, Führer,” Himmler said.

“That was not poison,” Hitler said. His face was red and his eyes sunken. “It was two percent.”

Maybe I did not cry a lot, but when those words left his mouth, a single tear dropped down my face.

Portrait of my Brother // Marlee Gaffey

You spent waves of your teen years
Obsessing over mottled coats of deer,
Coming to the aluminum screen door all red
With doe's blood, mud bricks for boots. I said
I was worried about her babies, fawns,
Ones that nosed for dandelions and yawned
In the sun's pink face. They sprung out of view
When your arrow sliced November into two
Perfect halves. One side was you and her—
Joy nuzzled in your belly, slick murder
On your jacket, hustle in your heart, hands
Clutching your bow, dirt on your pants.
The other side was eyes,
Night colored and bright.



Untitled // Caitlin Halloran

what i've never told you // Makayla Allen

What i've never told you
is every compliment
he kissed in the middle
of the morning,
how the sheets
never shied away,
how neither did i

How I don't know how
to think of your wrists
with his chest against
my shoulders

I'm three years thinner
since you told my
collarbone
about counting the ways
you love me
I'm months beyond wearing
only my skin,
and this slender thing
of a necklace.

I still imagine my birthday
as our day.

I call you and say nothing.

What I've never told you
is how i noticed nothing

turn to
actually
nothing
at the ends of your fingers
knitted in the turns
of my hair

I don't know how to begin
to think
of getting through,
but I obsess over
the thought of
a window in our bedroom
and how the light will look
in the morning

The Green Room // *Zach Metzger*

Asparagus light drifts in through a
Fern colored roof, a pale milky
Mantis light that doesn't leave any shadows.

Olive sticks lie clustered in a
Myrtle cupboard, neatly arranged in little
Buckthorn piles, waiting to be burned.

Shamrock mattresses, rotten through with a deep
Hooker's mold, stand stuffed into a corner, while
Moss slowly curls at their tattered edges.

Artichoke dust drifts up with each step on the
Tea wood slats beneath your feet.
Jungle ash sputters from a rusty kettle when nudged.

Hunter calmness fills this room, a sweet
Verdant serenity that makes you forget the cold passages and the
Harlequin goblins that might lurk there.

Jade feelings come to you then. You let your
Grassy bag slide to the ground, and you breathe, knowing that here,
in the green room, you can be at peace.



The Green Room // Jeannette Rose

Puckered Green // Colette Kramer

That car-sick day we tried to go peach picking,
But all of them were puckered green and I felt apologetic but
It wasn't my fault

In the greasy paper bag:
apple cider donuts that neither of us wanted.
A walk back to the parking lot with
infant fruit mushing up our shoes.

And swelling inside of my harvest-moon brain was a tide so undeniable --
Every vessel stretched to accommodate.
The action potentials I just barely stopped
Brittle nails scrunching pleather

You lived to drive by mansions and say that you could have it
Your unfathomable superiority; a godly ungodliness
Betterness – you were better than us all,
Tell us again how much better you are

In the back of the car I swallowed vomit
Everything that you've ever said to her
You foul, lying monster
You conceited scum
How dare you

In the back of the car
I gagged on ten years of underground anguish
Black ice tunnels that you carved
Ghost trails you never bothered to explore

In the back of the car
Did ever know it?
How I could never trust you?
The buried reason I can't look you in the eyes?

In the back of the car,
until enamel stained red
For ten years
I've been biting my tongue.

In Other Words // *Sharon Amuguni*

I will want you until every field dries up and our grandchildren don't know what a blossom is.
Until they all fall into sordid madness, losing their mind and their love.
Until our own audacity forces us into the milky whites of space and all the broken hearts burst into supernovas,
And then even after we're all dusk no dawn, afraid to speak
And an infant's whisper is the call of the wild,
Even after obscurity has gnawed into my bones
And darkness has sucked on my marrow
I will want you still.

The Move to Mars // Parisa Zarringhalam

Feeling tired of *this* place? Want to get away? *Try going to MARS!!*

Is your washing machine broken, so you have to keep rinsing things out in the sink in a wholly inadequate pretense of cleanliness? Or are you plagued with nightmares involving ozone depletion and the slow dying of the corals?

Have you ever sat up in bed, exhausted, after a night full of hot flashes induced by global warming? *I* know *I* have! Here on Mars, all the simple problems of life will melt away (especially when you're facing the sun in the lower hemisphere during summer)!

Life on Earth can be hard, what with climate change, the melting ice caps and increasing frequency of hurricanes. Not to mention wage stagnation, genetically mutated organisms, and class warfare! NONE of the issues that bother you here *on Earth* would bother you if you were *on Mars*!

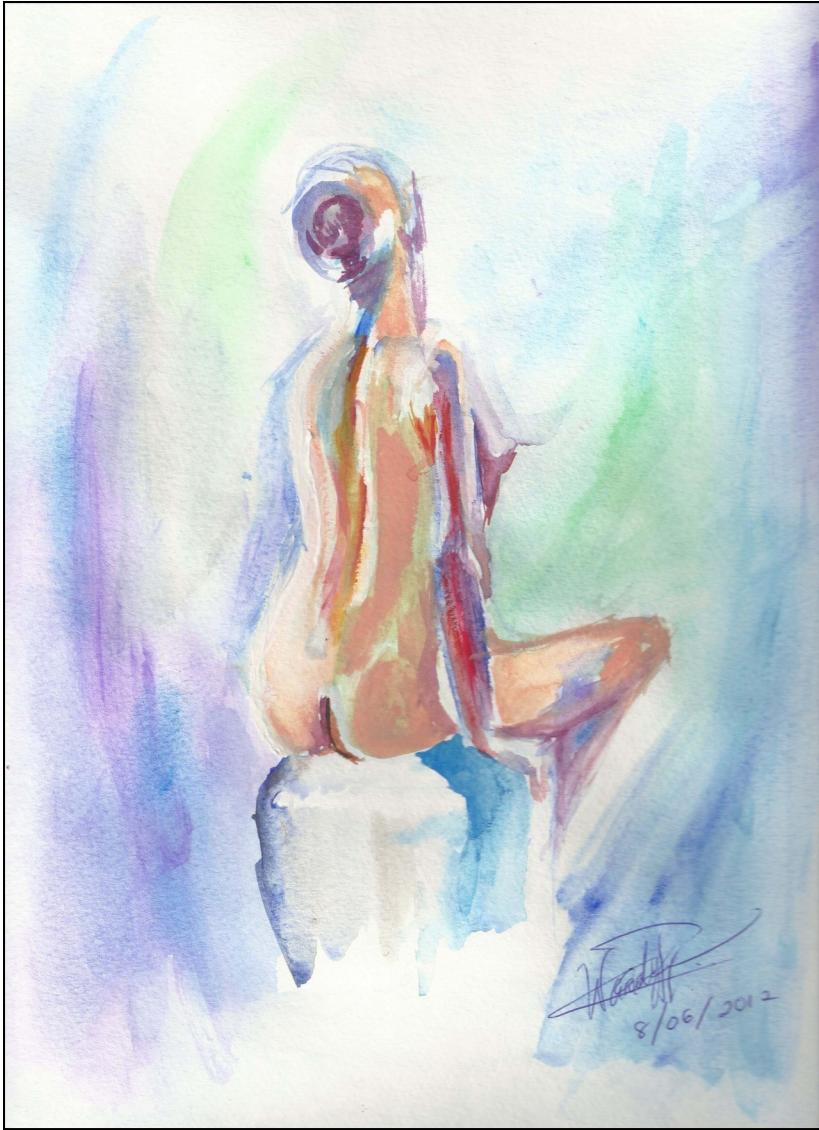
Afraid of getting older? Stressed by how fast time passes unnoticed? You won't be, ON MARS! One year on Mars is about two years on Earth, so you'll age TWICE as slowly and have TWICE as much leisure time! "I would have twice as much time to play outside with my friends, getting much needed exercise which would prevent diabetes and heart disease later on in life, if only my parents would move to Mars!" Says third-grader Jeremy Sarandan of Walpole, MA. Make the best decision for your children's future; consider life on the fourth planet from the sun!

Call 1-800-Become-A-Martian for more information and testimonials!

BUT be sure to reserve YOUR spot on Mars before 9:51 am on August 27, 2003, because Mars won't be as close as it is then for *the next 60,000 years!!* A chance like this only comes ONCE in a lifetime; ladies and gentlemen grasp it while you can!

Skin // Stephanie DiCarlo

Your skin might be warmer than a sun that heats the entirety of the world, a galaxy, a thousand civilizations that have thrived under it but I don't think they've ever been as alive as I've felt for the half-second my hand brushes yours. Light expands across a universe so terribly enormous that the prickle of sweat gathering at the nape of my neck is less than an infinitesimal speck but when your hands slide across the cool expanse of my skin there's nothing more significant than this reaction. It will change the fate of the world. But you are the sun and I am the world, you said at 5 am when I didn't want to wake up and you were brilliant with insomnia. Treetops and a glittering sea, dots of animals and laughter and shopping malls, math homework and stale bread and ten zillion 5 ams where your skin is there to awaken me. I don't, you whisper in a voice hidden by the knots in my hair, want to freeze. Gentle rustlings that trace imprints into skin. Warm lips. Slow smile. I'm alive for eons.



Underneath // Wandy Pascoal

LABEL // Stevi-Lee Alver

Dear reader,

I have a story for you, a story about an old man. It's an old man's story. No. Scrap that. It's my story about an old man. Wait, it's a story for story's sake. Hold on, forget everything I've just said. It's actually your story about me following an old man. Okay, so that's settled: it's your story following me while I follow an old man, right? (Just so you know, if you continue reading you will be expected to fulfil certain 'readerly' obligations).

Read On.

An old man is about to be described. Description is a process, not unlike an infinite game of charades, in that we stick invisible words or phrases on a bare frame, like 'old man'. The frame will then embody the descriptions and behave accordingly. This is a necessary process, because as you will witness further down the page, an old man dissipates if he doesn't have adjectives and similes to relate to.

At this particular moment, he's wearing only two labels, gender and age, old and man. The old man is light, and like a helium-filled balloon he might float away. To ensure he remains with us we must weigh him down. Let's begin with something significant, like his name. The old man's name is Crystal. And on an elemental level, just like crystal, he is comprised of tiny insignificant bits of carbon. Carbon weighs more than helium, so that should quash the floating sensation.

What else, my dear reader, would you like to know...

... Without a response, I wonder if you are still there. Perhaps you've stopped reading. I wouldn't blame you. But maybe (just maybe) you're one of those quiet type readers silently fulfilling your readerly obligations.

We've arrived at a textual crossroad. Should I continue describing an old man named Crystal? Or completely change direction and discuss actual crystal. This decision is difficult. The question is, would you be more inclined to continue reading if we were examining carbon bonding in crystal

matter. It's very interesting. We could marvel over how graphite and diamond are chemically identical but have different crystal structures, which make them appear physically different. And pore over face-centred cubic lattices and Pythagoras' Theorem. But if we choose to talk carbon atoms and crystal class I'll have to start this story again. And you may change shape and I have deadlines. So forget about it. Drop it. We're sticking with your story about me following Oldman Crystal (yes, I've slightly rearranged his name. I think it sounds better, don't you). **Be Patient – we're getting there.**

Oldman Crystal is an environmentalist. He is a half-recycled minor character from another story I once wrote (as I said, I have deadlines, not time to sit around writing new characters). His favourite saying is 'recycle, reuse, reduce.' And he was more than willing to tweak his character to suit this leading role. Oldman Crystal is a label-bashing labelphobe and a chronic label thief.

He has white hair.

A bristly grey beard.

Blue overalls hang loosely from his HERCULANUM-FONT FRAME.

HERCULANUM-FONT suggests bony yet strong.

A bony yet strong product of text. And at this particular moment he's becoming inundated with label-stick. He feels heavy, and like a lead balloon in water, he can't float.

Did I mention that he has wild-green eyes and a scratchy-brown voice? And that he's a guru, a master of transcending subjectification, offering journeys into liminality and releasing the shackles of language. That's why I followed him. In case you were wondering.

I followed him into a space where nothing could be defined or identified. 'SO AS NOT TO BE DISTRACTED,' he told me. His words were round and hollow. I felt buoyant. He held out his cupped hands and gestured for me to hold out mine. Then he placed a little bundle of tangled black letters into my palm. After which he spoke:

'I'D LIKE TO DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO A RECENT ARTICLE, "THE ART OF DELABELLING", FOUND IN "THE ANTI-LABELLING MOVEMENT RESISTANCE JOURNAL", 2013, P. 666.'

The letters in my hands began moving, tickling my skin. The black letters rearranged, changed shape, and formed a floating body of text. Which said:

'NONADHESIVE PERSPIRATION RESISTS
THE STICKY NATURE OF LABELS TO STICK.
LABELLED DIALECT DICTATES LABELLING.
EIGHT LEGS SPIN LABELLED WEBS, TRACKING
AND TRAPPING LABELPHOBES, LABELLING
THEM DERELICT. LABELLED FOR LABEL NEGLI-
GENCE. SWIFTLY BENDING DIPPING LEGS, SHIM-
MERING TRANSLUCENT HAIRY LEGS, LABELLED
LEGS: COXA, TROCHANTER, FEMUR, PATELLA, TIBIA,
METATARSUS, TARSUS, CLAW - MINISCULE BLACK STICKY
SPIDER CLAW, SCOOPS UP WINGED BODIES AND LABELS THEM FLIES.'

I had no idea what was happening. Why had I followed an old man into a strange space? And how had the strange man made the paper-free letters dance? When he spoke for the third time, he began delabelling himself. It was like a game of charades in reverse. With eyes shut and arms outstretched, he listed the labels he'd acquired throughout his lifetime:

'MALE BAPTISED CATHOLIC CHRISTENED CRYSTAL
(ALTHOUGH NOT BY CHOICE) BROTHER SON EFFEMINATE
BOY BLACK YELLOW BLUE WILD GREEN-EYED STUDENT
TEACHER WHITE TANNED TALL (ALTHOUGH ONLY ON MY
MOTHER'S SIDE) GREY-BEARDED WHITE-HAIRED HUMAN...'

And as he spoke letters began falling from his frame, dissolving as they fell, leaving transparent letter-shaped gaps behind. He continued:

'ATHLETIC SLOW PRAGMATIC MYSTIC SANDY WONDERER
PERPETRATING VICTIM OLDMAN CARBON REPULSIVE
MAGNET GULLIBLE SKEPTIC DISCREETLY GAY (ALTHOUGH,
NOT BY CHOICE, BUT INSO FAR AS CHOICE IS CHOOSING TO
HAVE CHOICE) APATHETIC HERCULANUM-FONT PHLEG-
MATIC NEUROTIC CO-DEPENDENTLY CAPABLE...'

And then I couldn't see him anymore. He was nothing but a voice projecting from where a face used to be:

'THIS EXAMPLE OF FREEFORM LABEL PURGING, CAN BE ATTEMPTED HERE NOW, OR IN THE PRIVACY OF YOUR OWN HEAD LATER.'

‘Ahem,’ I coughed politely, ‘what in hell is going on...’ An unfamiliar voice trailed off. That unfamiliar voice was my own.

At this point, Oldman Crystal was not even a voice but only a sound. A robotic, distorted, loud and urgent sound:

‘WHO AM I
WITHOUT LABELS?
WHAT IS MY
ROLE
OUTSIDE OF LABELS?
WILL I STILL
EXIST
OUTSIDE OF LABELS
AND, IF SO,
FOR HOW LONG
CAN I EXIST
IN LIMINALITY?
WHAT PREVIOUSLY DEFINED ME?
WHAT DEFINES ME NOW?
AM I DEFINED
IN
SPACE
ONLY BY
THE BOUNDARIES
OF MY
OWN SKIN?’

OR AM I
DEFINED
IN
SPACE
ONLY BY
THE BOUNDARIES
OF YOUR
SKIN?
SKIN,
JUST
ANOTHER
LABEL.'

The sound became less audible and more distorted. Like quiet chanting the sound sounded.

'BOYCOTT LABELPHILES
DEFY LABELS
RESIST LABELLING
COLLECT LABELS, BURN LABELS
FORGET LABELLING, LOSE LABELS,
HIDE LABELS
LABEL ABSTRACTLY, LABEL DOMINA-
TION, LABEL ABOMINATION
LABEL DECONSTRUCTION, UNTHINK LA-
BELLING, EXTRACT LABELS, MAP LABELS,
TRAP LABELS, NEGATE LABELS
LABELLING PROHIBITED.'

Then there was nothing. Nothing but a memory.

And then, dear reader, and I say 'dear' with absolute sincerity, because, without your participation as my reader, these ordered letters would have less purpose. And then, dear reader, lunch was over and I went back to work.

The Mason Jar // Alex Schaffer

Of its uses and options
and original intent

none seem farfetched
(whiskey, water, wax)
—that's only the beginning—

countless contemporary possibilities
all in one (but much, much more)

none so tantalizing (intriguing)
but the mix of whiskey with San Pellegrino
—Fill that jar—

I'll exclaim (far louder, louder than before)
For the possibilities (containers, cups, carriers)

Are unlimited and exhausting
—although it's all relative—
(as long as there is
whiskey in my mason jar.)

Open Seas and Scarring Feet // *Erin Rideout*

And we watched the ocean scream against the jagged sand
as its ulcerous mouth opened toward us
like windows of cloudy glass hanging
from invisible string
on a broken frame.

And if they could, these oysters and coral would stand
arms akimbo
feet planted firmly
roots entangled around Achilles tendons
and boney ankles.

And the patriarchy disappears in the haze of the horizon.
And we all want to expose this practice,
but the window panes are eroding
from heavy elbows
plastered hand prints
and heavy stares.

And the clams and quahogs are cloistered together
amidst these rocks and shells,
which are scarring our feet,
but haven't yet reached our hands.

And here we stand,
across from this open sea
as it hulks through our veins
and into the pits of our stomachs
and drowns us in these overlapping waves.



Bling // Asia Van Pelt

The Astronauts // Ryan Hill

The astronauts aboard Station 3A are lonelier than you. They spend their days in deep space. They haven't seen earth in four years. They were supposed to see earth last year but things didn't really work out the way they planned. Things rarely work out as planned on Station 3A. A good example would be that the astronauts never planned on being lonely. Not this lonely, at least.

The lonely astronauts saw each other at breakfast and at dinner and that was it. They worked in separate units of the station, typing separate codes into separate screens of separate computers with separate keyboards, all connected to separate systems that made each separate unit of Station 3A function properly. The separate systems work together, but lonely astronauts will never work together.

Stanley was the one who made sure it was always the right temperature in the sleeping unit. The lonely astronauts all sleep in identical sleeping pods in the same unit of the same station, but they all go to sleep at different times, so they never see each other here. Bill always enters first, followed by Stanley who shows up after Bill has been asleep for about six minutes, and after Stanley has slept for about thirteen minutes Walter shows up. Phil enters his pod the latest of all. The pods regulate how long each of the astronauts sleeps each time they go to sleep. Always eight hours and nine minutes, meaning that the astronauts never see each other when waking up either. Bill always exits first, followed by Stanley who gets out of his pod after Bill has been awake for about six minutes, and after Stanley has been awake for about thirteen minutes then Walter wakes up. Phil exits his pod the latest of all. There are no mornings and there are no nights. The only time is the time kept by the sleeping pods that regulate their sleep and will not allow anything more or less than eight hours and nine minutes of sleep every time the time comes to sleep for eight hours and nine minutes.

Terminal // Christina Freitas

Grand Central Station announces another departure
refracting off high arched windows
its bulbous clock reminding me he's
two trains and several hours
late.

We arrived as the gates opened for passengers
and vendors alike, low December sun greeting
the waking city, strips of light
cast across fresh fallen snow.

Last night he'd called and said
Be there by nine
and ten, eleven, twelve came.
Logan did not.

A hand tucks into mine and I abandon my
pursuit of two girls in matching pink coats,
stark beacons in a crowded
terminal. Follow my twin to a row of
benches along the wall.

We'll get lost if we wander too far, he says.

We're only children. Eleven last month.
Held a small celebration in Logan's apartment
three of us and two
candles lighting the darkened room.
He'd forgotten to pay our electricity bill.

You aren't supposed to talk about your wishes but I wished he'd land the job he's been eyeing for months designing books like the ones he reads for us when we fall prey to goblins lurking under beds inside nightmares.

Two security guards gather several paces off,
hands clasping navy-skinned
bellies and black walkie talkies.
The clock drives the world forward,
a merciless taskmaster.
Its black hands twist in my gut.
I want to vomit.
Why did I wish for him to leave home?

If he doesn't come back, they'll
separate us, we who have suffered every
nightmare fever toothache and two
funerals, parents stripped from us by
blackened waters and mangled
cars plummeting from bridges,
together.

I close my eyes and hear trains
churning chugging reaching for the terminal, battered soldiers
eager to rest.

Around us the terminal breathes
in out
in.

Ribbon Candy // Elizabeth Barrett

Three days later
there was acid
in his stomach,
and it was kept company
by ribbon candy
and whiskey.

He had a day of oblivion
before the phone call,
and he knew his sweet tooth
wasn't the problem.

He stumbled
down white hallways
that made him feel
unclean,
his eyes redder,
his breath fetid.

But she fit
as if she had already
been called away,
pale skin
covering a hollow
put in a paper bed.

He stood there listening
and thinking about
what she looked like
underneath.

He couldn't imagine it,
the beating, feeling heart,
because he had lost his
(behind a cork,
and a cap,
in a bottle, in a can).

He had to give her credit
She teetered on the brink
with mastery.
She got closer to the edge
than he ever had
with a pill or a spirit.

And he promised,
as he sat down beside the monitor
and closed his eyes,
that he would never touch ribbon candy again,
and his promise was not sweet,
and it was not candy.

How Earth Died With Us On It // *Kevin Mann*

We drank beer until Larz Melbourne started to cry about everything, and then we switched to spirits. Karen Fischbook took him outside and listened to him while she fed him cigarettes and ginger ale. I caught a glimpse of them at the end.

Harold Trout bursted into the living room and whipped it out asking if anyone wanted to ‘Get down.’ We laughed as hard as we had all night until Beth Goodman and Lawrence Chalk both got up and walked out with him. I didn’t see any of them again.

Patricia LaCroix came over and sat on my lap. She asked me about Jen, who was in Brussels for a conference. I said I hadn’t heard from her and it was on the rocks anyway, even though it wasn’t. We held sweaty palms and poured vodka into each other’s mouths. I was with her the rest of the night.

Tom Dalton puked on the carpet and promised to pay for it. I told him not to worry about it and he fell asleep in it murmuring that he loved me, bro. He stayed there the whole time.

Tammy Sharp worked at a vet and stopped there on her way over to get the sleep stuff for Zeus. She helped me do it in my guest room before it got bad. I cried the most I had all night and the smell of vodka on my shirt made me sick. I don’t know what happened to her.

Patty helped me into the tub and I pulled her in with me. We joked that it was the safest place in the house.



3/52 // Katie Hodgkins

To J.N. // *Zachary Grobe*

Cut down to size
Compressed into a telephone wire
Sublime pearl: kiss me

Vaucanson's Masterpiece // Zach Metzger

Late one morning, maybe a Thursday morning, Kevin awoke to find himself in a room full of ducks.

At first, he assumed he was in some sort of a dream, that weird sort of dream you have when you decide to celebrate beating a bout with mono by chugging Bacardi until your fingers go numb. He supposed if that were the case, he might as well sit back and relax. If he was lucky, maybe the dream would turn sexual, as drunkenly vivid dreams tended to do sometimes. Hopefully the ducks wouldn't be involved in that part but hey, he was willing to experiment.

Then one of the ducks bit at his ear, and it hurt like hell, and he sat up in a rage, and the headache that exploded behind his eyes made him realize he was very awake.

The duck kept trying to nibble at him, and he smacked it away absentmindedly. The pain in his head was exquisite and total; he had difficulty focusing on anything else. The duck he had hit had landed squawking in a pile of his comrades, and all the ducks began quacking in earnest. The sound bore drill bits into Kevin's skull, and he felt like he was going to vomit.

He groaned and put his head in his hands, rubbing at his temples. The ducks waddled around him in circles, quacking away like merry little sadists. Kevin tried to locate the center of the pain, and found that it was directly behind his left eyeball. He focused on that spot, trying to condense the agony. Little by little, the pain began to ebb down, until it had receded enough that he could at least think about other things again.

Slowly, he opened his eyes and looked around himself. The room he was in was large but not aggressively so, somewhere in size between a dining room and a squash court. The walls were bland gray and devoid of any decoration whatsoever, except for two hang-

ing drapes that appeared to cover a pair of windows. No light came from these; rather, the room was illuminated by parallel rows of fluorescent bars spaced out along the ceiling. There was no door that Kevin could see.

From the few flashes he saw of it, he gathered that the floor was linoleum tile, by it was so swarming with ducks that the surface appeared to be little more than ripples on a yellow sea, surging from an unfelt breeze. The quacking had become incessant.

Kevin gathered himself off the floor and realized as he did so that his clothes were different than the ones he had on when he passed out the night before, or at least as far as he could remember. Last night he had been dressed simply with jeans and a blazer. Now, he found himself clad in a brilliant lime green dress shirt and crimson slacks. In a weird way, the colors worked.

But there was no time to ponder fashion. Kevin was confused, and his head was aching, and he badly wanted to get out of this room and away from these goddamn ducks with their goddamn quacking and find out where he was first of all and how he got there second of all and third of all, how in the hell to get home to his bed. He walked over to one of the windows and threw open the drapes.

There was nothing behind them.

There was a windowsill, sure, and a window frame forming a perfect rectangle, but in the center, where sweet, transparent, easily breakable glass would normally sit, there was nothing but a continuation of the wall.

Kevin went to the other set of drapes and opened them as well, only to find the same nothingness staring back at him.

Kevin wheeled around and examined the room again, making sure he hadn't missed anything the first time. But as before, the walls were blank and bare.

Kevin put his head in his hands and tried to think. Obviously there was a door here somewhere. There had to be, otherwise he could have never gotten in in the first place. But where could it be? Not on the ceiling, unless he had been dropped in (*by who?*), and the walls were out, which only left...

Kevin dropped to his knees and started searching the floor.

Around him the ducks chittered even louder but he paid them no attention, brushing them away with his arms as he scoured the cold laminated concrete for anything that might help him. He was looking for a handle, or a switch, or even a hairline crack that could indicate a trapdoor of some kind. He moved up and down the length and breadth of the room, parting the ducks before him like some crawling Moses.

He found nothing, and when he searched again he found nothing still.

Infuriated, he lashed out at the nearest duck and sent it flying. The quacking rose to a crescendo, and Kevin's headache, which had been lurking somewhere deep in his skull unveiled itself in all its fury. Kevin moaned and fell to the floor and into a sea of darkness.

When Kevin awoke, the pounding in his head had receded substantially, but it had been replaced with a dull hot itch that burned all over his body. He sat up and scratched at himself. Around him the ducks continued in their duckish ways, clambering over one another and squawking all the while.

Kevin sat and thought, trying to get a handle on his situation. There didn't seem to be any way out of the room, but that was impossible, since he had to have gotten in somehow, unless the room was built around him, but he didn't recall being *that* drunk. As for the ducks, they must have gotten in somehow too. Kevin wasn't even going to touch on the why the ducks were there. That bit would have to wait for another day.

As he continued to scratch, he continued to think. What was the last thing he remembered from the night before? He had been out with the guys, he remembered that, and they pre-gamed going to a bar, and there been this really cute bartender that he had hit on, and then what? Nothing.

He kept scratching, his fingernails raking the skin of his back, when suddenly he stopped. He felt something in his skin, something hard and protruding. He experienced a moment of nausea, the kind you feel when you discover a tick while soaping yourself in the shower. Frantic, he picked at the thing, trying to discern

what it was. He twisted and turned but he couldn't get a good look at it. Then he felt a sting in his chest, and when his hands went to it they found a similar thing, a minute hard thing sticking ever so subtly from his skin. He tore open his ridiculous shirt and saw a black speck centered on his body. He grabbed at it and pulled, thinking it might be some sort of blood-sucking insect. But it wasn't, and as he withdrew it, he found to his horror that it was the root of a feather.

That was when he started to scream, and the ducks answered him in their own way.

A few hours later three of Kevin's teeth fell out.

He reacted with horror, and when he stuck his fingers in his mouth to investigate, he could feel a thick and solid anomaly pushing behind his gums, trying to break free. Terrified now, he tried to stand up from where he had been slumping against the wall, and promptly fell over. His legs didn't seem to be working right; there was something very wrong with his knees. A few ducks scrambled over his arms as he lay on the floor, breathing heavily. He felt an absurd urge to scramble along with them, but he fought it, and he stood up again, more carefully this time, using the wall as support.

His head had begun to hurt again; it felt as if his skull was trying to reshape itself. In fact, his entire body ached, pulsing with a low pain that every once in a while sent a shock through his joints. In his throat, there was a strange feeling, an impulsive feeling, like he wanted to shout something but he wasn't sure what it was.

Kevin was hopelessly confused. He had tried everything to get out of this room. He had pounded on the walls, screamed at the ceiling, and even punched at the floor, and all he had gotten were some bruised knuckles and a sense of futility.

What was he to do? Strangely (and he supposed fortunately), he didn't feel hungry or thirsty, though he did feel a powerful drive to get back down on the floor again. Instead however, he tried to consider his situation again.

It had to be something to do with the ducks, he decided. The ducks were here for a reason, as was he. Was he being punished with the ducks? And if so, by whom, and for what? He tried to

push the feather (some more had popped up since the first) and the teeth out of his mind; those thoughts had some rather disturbing implications he didn't want to think about. What he tried to focus on instead was the who: who put him here? He certainly didn't walk in of his own accord, which meant he was placed here, oh so delicately, and probably against his will.

Definitely against his will now, anyways. He wanted out of this hellish room, wanted away from these ducks and their neverending quacks.

A sharp pain came from inside his mouth and he slumped against the wall, barely standing straight. He was very pale and sweating freely. On top of that, his toes had started to hurt in ways he didn't think toes could.

From out of the sea of ducks, a single solitary bird waddled over to Kevin and stood by his feet, looking up at him.

"Shoo," Kevin said.

The duck made no movement besides ruffling its feathers a little bit.

Kevin, disgruntled, tried to push the duck away with his foot, but the duck simply hopped up on top of Kevin's shoe and continued to stare at him. Angrily, Kevin kicked out with his foot; the duck fluttered away, but then turned and came back. To Kevin's astonishment, the duck was joined by another, then a third, then more until the entire sea was crowded around his feet, all staring at him with quizzical (at least so far as a duck can be) expressions on their faces.

Kevin looked back at the ducks and cocked his head, and then, suddenly, a pain exploded in his gums and he tasted blood in his mouth. He felt inside his mouth, and sure enough, something was protruding from split gums, something hard and unmistakably bill-shaped.

Kevin couldn't hold out any longer, and with the last fibers of sanity he had, he realized it didn't matter how long he tried to; the result was inevitable. Letting the sound that had been building inside his throat finally out into the world, Kevin sank to the floor, brought his head close to the sea of ducks, and began to quack.



Katie Mack©

7/52 // Katie Hodgkins

Trip // Chris Lindahl

Today, my thumb.
A lift from the rush and pupils met
the psychedelic chalice: a mélange —
blue-in-blue. Candy ribbon red punctuates
the Eyes of Ibad from grip to
lips as the fog rolls in
and out again.

Later, the storm starts
on the street. Ice comes
down in sheets: cubes collected
by my cup. This blend is black, pitch black,
a smidge darker than my
full-bodied out-of-body taste.
From the shaker: a dash of
virgin snow and a pump of purity.
Cream and sugar, extra extra,
light and sweet or none at all:
like the sparkly Taj Mahal on the
eve of a nor'easter — it's in our nature.

Turn your attention to the time capsule.
one half royal blue — S489 and
one half immaculate — 40 mg in
weight I slide the puzzle piece apart,
split between two pinched thumbs
matched for index. Inside, the fairy dust filters
through my room, crimson highways chug forward,
dusty molecules attached. Broken through
the barrier, my blood becomes

thick with a lust to learn and a drive
to fuck, but first let me clean up.

Now we've counted every little finger—
one thousand feet from my bed.
Life's better buzzed so swallow each
and every pill as the sun comes up,
(illuminating oil-soaked snow) and take
the dreams left upon thy pillow for a try.



We're Buffalion // Amanda De Leon

Broken // Greg Schwartz

Cacophonies of cataclysmic conceptions collide
in catastrophic cremation; countless
caresses come from cold cadavers,
careless caregivers caught
in confusion can't comfort
the conspiring corrupt.

Condolences coughed,
condemning charisma
and character of contrary
captains of code
or commerce—clinging
to creations of countries
curbed by craters
from creators
of chaos—
creak
and crack.

The cackle
of clandestine
commentators
clinging to,
coping with,
crying over communal
conflict, calling for commas
and comets and candles and cakes
that conform to christenings.

Carry, carry clouded cowls;
cough choral colors
and commend comatose carriers:
captured chameleonic contradictors
convicted of capers and crimes colorless;
and climbing the cobalt causeways no longer.

Instructions on How to Crack Your Knuckles // Brian Ward

Much mythology surrounds the cracking of ones knuckles. The actual science behind it is lost on the way. The act itself is a practice that gets easier with time, and soon becomes difficult to stop. The finger has many joints, each of them can crack in turn, with a little extra pressure.

First, force is applied, a vacuum forms in the fluid between the knuckles. The vacuum collapses, and with a crack, relief floods the senses. But the relief is only in the mind. No physical hurt comes of cracking the finger joints, nor physical remedy. And in fact, many hands that go unbent and unforced, suffer no ailments.

An ailing hand is of the ailing mind, which seeks a release of a different kind. Letting the stress of a long day flood out from the body and off into the void, or preparing for a hard task at to come. A soldier on campaign, about to enter battle, a player getting ready for her game, a writer trying to find the last word. Life is release, we find it where we can. The Long Search, ending where it may. The far shores of forgotten Lyonesse, now crumbled into the mists, or in the cul de sac down the street where a breeze comes off the bay; in the simple action of releasing tension in the hands.

Grip, push, crack, and at last, relax.

Grandmothers will warn you about arthritis, I will warn you of what happens if your mind doesn't find its release.



Temple at Segesta // Kyle Little

An open seat // Makayla Allen

I've walked this room
once
for the each of us.

There's nothing
crouching ecstatic
beneath the desk chair.
And the
speakers are electric nerves,
beside themselves
with a ceaseless heat.

The capacity of
this couch
is endless
in a magical nonsense.

I feel this party bouncing on my knees
in a sloppy fit,
all elbows and fluttered
eyelids.

Thumping bass
with the bottom
of His palm,
Winter waits
for an opening
on the cusp of
a body-barricaded
doorway.

Take my place, morning dew,
midnight frost,
There's always an open seat.



Christabel // Jeannette Rose

Parents // Jack Giaour

But it was ink that scared them,
That I –
I'd come home,
And all my
Shorts, shirts, pants, and shoes, trapped in
Suitcases and
Short stories, would be damaged without repair,
Would be in the

Front lawn, marred and stained with ink like
Street signs and my own vagrant skin.
My mother and father were often worried,
Waiting behind my desk, calling softly,
“Abaddon, Abaddon, don’t write anymore, or we’ll
Go in your room and we’ll
Kill you and
Your stories and poems.”
I can kick

Ass and kiss steel, but I still hear
“Abaddon, please take
This and use it whenever you

Find yourself writing.”

Truth // Nathan Fronteiro

You will never read this or hear it read, but to be honest, I lied to you.

I wanted you to feel all of it, to carve into your chest the cavity you bored out of mine.

And paralyze you under the weight that swallows me running into the dark.

You cared so little for what I thought of you that my respect was unprivileged.

My apathy alike my specific physiognomy in shortness of reach.

Gratification only so far could my hands grant your hungers.

I will fashion a necklace from the vocal cords of the next person who tells me to get to the point.

But I digress, now, and must again, but just to tell the rest.

My impenetrable bleak confused you, worried you maybe, enough to earn your ears.

A wounded soul whose wounds were known before had succumbed, was gone.

And I could so easily suffer the same fate in this jealous city, lost in anonymous despondence.

Terrorify the tremendous possibility, a soul known to have dwelt near the ledge, known.

That his peers could not pull him back the next and final time he drifted, lost, to the dark.

To be allegedly loved yet allowed to be lost to loved ones who try but fail during true need.

I said this was not a crushing shift, that this was not bigger than it was.

But this was always bigger, and it always crushed me quick.

My sincerest congratulations for recycling the circle, for writing me into writing you.

For robbing me of a love-lined release from a lovelorn sentencing.
For stripping the first, diminishing, belittling significance into simple pleasure.

For reading me your first pages, then blistering my listening when you burst the book orange.

And for reminding me of the unhealed holes now further non-healing.

Left to the miserable eternal now, which will not yield to later, which presently persists.

I never wanted to end the story like this but my borrowed time is out.

Cannot reclaim spilt ink, nor set type, nor sent sentiments, but printed pages burn.

Never can I rescind, not even rewind, restore before the thickened plot.

Sorry scribbler only left to turn pen on self, to write self out again to the former fists.

To attempt returning the lived-in scenes to their fictions.

Continue craving the chance to be selfish, to forget inherent force to forgive.

To tax your heart upon my turn to direct, to cease the doorway.
You made yourself a story, a ghost, an artifact of the irretrievable past.

You will persist until my strength regains to remove your pierce, to erase our then.

And leave us ever extricable and unrelated in restored ignorance.
But I shall be ever shackled, for as far as these words can lash you for answering my plea.

They will never absolve me of my reflexive hatred for penning it.



Yi Soon-shin — Coast // Daniel Filliettaz-Domingues

clementines // Marlee Gaffey

we are snowed in
with clementines
a wooden box full
of little darlings
to keep us warm
when we are trapped
beneath a silver blue dome—
our hibernaculum that smells
of citrus rind and lavender
because we are feeling holy
and close

Revision 39 // Ryan Hill

I remember reordering the expansive list
of all my favorite things
and thinking to myself
that I really probably shouldn't
because it would just change tomorrow.
you are number 6, I believe,
just above that cold shower on a summer day feeling
and just below the movie Die Hard.
your parents are 337 and 496.
the way you laugh is 1,290.
the way you smell is 14.
when I think of you I think of 2,736 and 128.

993 was the toughest one
because I had to choose between
the living room of my second home
and the kitchen of my first.
they seemed equal at a glance
but I put the living room up to 467
just shy of that book
the strange man in the camper-van gave me
and just superior to that slippery floorboard
in the second floor hallway
just beyond the bathroom door
that gets me every time.



Jem // Asia Van Pelt

Resisting Capitalism: A Brief Exploration of the Limits of Language // *Zachary Grobe*

The language of 20th century American poetry ultimately fails to capture the totality of capitalism, represent revolutionary consciousness, and articulate authentic resolutions to social contradictions, but the ways in which poetry forces language to and past its limits in an attempt to capture that which cannot be represented provides both vision and impetus for action against the capitalist system. The often-beautiful structural breakdown of poetry results in call for other forms of resistance backed by—but more efficacious than—language itself. Thus, some of the key tensions in 20th century American poetry are exposed: how does one reconcile writing and a need for revolution? Where does language end and revolution begin? How do language (and, by extension, art and imagination) and revolutionary fervor engage dialectically? Does this engagement allow for meaningful closure?

Denise Levertov's depiction of the devastation of the Vietnam War provides particularly useful material for exploring the failure of language as the result of resistance to capitalist interests. The violence in Vietnam finds its origin in the neoliberal restructuring of capitalism, in which the concentration of capital and the centralization of corporate interest under the guise of promoting individual freedom led to a regrouping of bourgeois interests and the resolidification of elite class power in a push against the gains of the working class in the 1930s. In an effort to continually find new and better ways of improving and expanding itself, capitalism under neoliberalism is prone to imperialistic endeavors and remains acutely fearful of movements of social solidarity, particularly those of a communist nature (Harvey 39-86). As a result of this new development in the dialectic of class struggle, the United States entered into the Vietnam War to defend its sphere of influence and ameliorate the fear generated by the domino theory—the idea that if one nation in a particular region “fell victim” to communism, the other states sur-

rounding it would inevitably fall as the result of a revolutionary chain reaction. The theory is dubious, but it illuminates the bourgeois anxieties that influenced American international politics from the 1950s until the 1980s.

In her poem, “What Were They Like?,” Levertov attempts to capture the devastating effects of American imperialism, and though she does not explicitly indict the United States for its unjustified motives in engaging in the conflict, the poem bluntly documents the ruin brought about by the actions of the United States’ armed forces and highlights language’s inability to capture and express the devastation incurred by capitalist interests. The first stanza of the poem consists of a numbered list of questions through which the speaker expresses curiosity about and subtly intimates admiration for Vietnamese culture. The queries invoke beautiful imagery, such as “lanterns of stone” (Levertov ll. 2) and “ceremonies / to reverence the opening of the buds,” (ll. 3-4) and imply the artistry of the unknown language as seen in the concluding question: “Do they distinguish between speech and singing?” (ll. 9).

The second stanza fittingly manifests as list of enumerated responses in which the intimations of beauty and reverence are repeatedly and devastatingly negated, and the imagery undergoes a distinct, macabre shift. In response to the question about the ceremony of the opening buds, for example, the speaker replies, “Perhaps they gathered once to delight in blossom, / but after the children were killed / there were no more buds” (ll. 13-15). At the end of the second stanza, the speaker responds to the question about Vietnamese speech and concludes with declarative sentence, “It is silent now,” (ll. 31). The pronoun’s antecedent is likely the native language, but the line is ambiguous; the pronoun may also pertain to the desecration of Vietnamese culture as a whole.

Regardless, the poem’s concluding line helps to illuminate the ways in which Levertov explores and exploits the limits of language as she attempts to capture the cultural devastation arising from the Vietnam War. The overarching structure of the poem intensifies the effect of the final line by generating unresolved dialectical move-

ment: the first stanza intimates the richness of Vietnamese culture, and the second stanza negates the opening insinuations with a brutal assertion of reality, but the poem abruptly concludes without reaching a synthesis. The absence of a third stanza underscores the uncertainty of the future and the poet's inability to foresee how the tensions of the poem will find resolution, and through her silence, Levertov tacitly acknowledges language's inability to articulate resolutions. Yet, the final clause also implies a disturbing finality and may serve as the poet's acknowledgement of defeat. What more can be conveyed when devastation and loss exceeds language's capacity for expression?

In much the same way that Levertov illuminates the limits of perspective and language in capturing the devastation arising from capitalism, Hart Crane demonstrates the structural and figurative failings of language in his poem, "Episode of Hands." For Crane, these failures stem less from an attempt to capture a massive, yet deeply nuanced event and more from a symptomatic failing of language to articulate an authentic, utopic supersession of class relations.

Throughout "Episode of Hands," formal elements, bodies, and class relations converge as an erotic connection forms between a factory owner's son and an injured worker. The poem's homoerotic approach to resistance is made explicit in the opening lines of the first stanza, which take on an intimate quality due to the abundant use of commas, full stops, and dashes that mitigate the poem's volume and intensity. The muted voice of the speaker underscores the gentle affection implied by such words and phrases as "interest," "flush," (Crane ll. 1) and "consented" (ll. 3). The contact, though unexpected, seems welcome and pleasant because it causes the worker to "forget the pain" (ll. 2).

In the subsequent stanzas, the opening erotic subtext culminates in a bond reflected by the poem's formal elements. The ever-stronger connection between the two men is emphasized through the occasionally ambiguous use of the pronouns "he" and "him." Line thirteen, for example, likely refers to son's impression that his hands are like "the wings of butterflies," (ll. 14), but the antecedent is un-

clear, and this moment may also be read from the perspective of the injured worker. The homonym “wound”—meaning both “an injury” and the past form of the verb “wind,” meaning “to wrap”—links the bodies and mentalities of the two men. The repetition of the conjunction “and,” which occurs a total of nine times throughout the poem, further underscores the blossoming intimacy and forms internal rhymes with “hand(s)” and “bandages” for greater emphasis.

The bond spawns a moment of intense, Whitmanesque imagery in which the son and the worker seem enshrined in pastoral scenes where the sunlight “[glitters] in” (ll. 6) and falls “lightly, warmly” (ll. 7). Hands seem like “wings of butterflies / Flickering in the sunlight over summer fields” (ll. 14-15), and the worker’s scars appear “beautiful” (ll. 17). The transcendent power of their mutual bond erases the “factory sounds and factory thoughts” (ll. 20) in what would seem to be an instance of healing and union, but dissonance between the flights of fancy and the harshness of reality complicates the moment. The worker, a victim of a capitalist system in which he is alienated from his labor, must toil in conditions that result in bodily injury and effectively remains the property of the man with whom he has formed an intense, erotic connection. The power dynamics that shade the budding, queer bond undercut its authenticity by presenting irreconcilable tensions: it is impossible to harmonize the cause of the worker’s newfound happiness—bodily mortification, specifically a hand injury, or symbolic impairment of agency—with the source of his contentment—the factory owner’s son, who is indelibly tied to the class responsible for the former’s pain.

The poem strains to articulate a resolution of its key contradiction: the worker’s body simultaneously represents a site of victimization and resistance, and the language of the poem strains to contain this duality. By the fourth stanza, the text begins to break as the figurative language compounds:

The knots and notches,—many in the wide
Deep hand that lay in his,—seemed beautiful.
They were like the marks of wild ponies’ play,—
Bunches of new green breaking a hard turf. (ll. 16-19)

Commas and dashes fragment the lines, and the figurative language begins to reassert distance between the two men. The marks on the hand held by the factory owner's son appear as the remnants of something previous, the "marks of wild ponies' play," and not the play itself. The recurrence of the word "seem" further emphasizes the crumbling authenticity of this failing resolution by illuminating the discrepancy between appearance and reality: the hand's marks only "seemed" beautiful, for example (ll. 17). Finally, the use of similes instead of metaphors further underscores this effect by tempering the analogy through the substitution of "like" for a form of "is."

Though the final stanza of the poem depicts the tying of the "bandage knot" (ll. 23) and ends with "The two men [smiling] into each other's eyes," (ll. 24) the transcendent vision of the poem ultimately fails both in function and articulation because the connection between the two men is firmly and inextricably ensconced in a set of fundamentally unequal and oppressive power relations. The poem's inability to articulate a resolution of these tensions and imagine a queer, utopic supersession of class relations illustrates the ways in which language splinters and stretches at it reaches the limits of its expressive capacity while displaying the disintegration of the symbolic economy that could otherwise have allowed this relation to breach class divisions underlying and undermining it.

The failure of language to capture or combat the totality of capitalism leads to questions about place of poetry and the poet in revolution. If poetry can push language to its limits of expression, what sort of efficacy does poetry possess, and what relation should a poet have to revolutionary consciousness? To shed light on these questions, I turn to *Factory*, a collection of poems by Antler in which he addresses not only the limits of language, but also the shortcomings of imagination and poetry as a means for revolution.

In the concluding movement of his work, Antler depicts the end of his time working for a can manufacturer and imagines the forces of nature reclaiming and dismantling the artificial conditions of labor. The heretofore invisible labor responsible for the production of machines, the birth of laborers, the historical development of factories, etc., be-

comes illuminated and inverted as Antler imagines capitalism's demise. Yet, the resolution of the poem is rife with tensions between language and imagination on one hand and memory and reality on the other. The speaker seems doubtful of his words' ability to enact meaningful change, and though he manages to extricate himself from the horrid conditions in the factory, he remains attached to his memories as if holding onto a kite's string; the time or conditions have not yet arrived for him to separate from his experiences in the factory and achieve a sense of closure.

As the poem nears conclusion, Antler inverts the opening line of the larger work: "The machines waited for me" (Antler 3). In its place, he imagines, "The day I would quit waited for me, / Waited for me to apply and be hired" (56). Man was once doomed to work, but now seems destined for liberation. The inevitable strivings towards freedom find their origins in the very beginnings of labor, starting "From the birth of the sun, / From the birth of the earth, / From the birth of all life" and progressing to the "discovery of fire," and "the invention of writing 5000 years ago" and so forth (57). The historical accumulation and development of labor—specifically labor originating in nature—gives momentum and foundation to the poet's seemingly inevitable vision of the end of exploitation in factories.

The construction of the pyramid of labor is then echoed in the inversion of the laborer's life several stanzas later, though the speaker now seems to struggle to position himself in the ensuing conflict between freedom and memory. He states:

Before, I said—"Poets should be paid to skydive naked
to all the doors where slaves go in
proclaiming from the robes of their chutes
how the corpse waits in the man
the man waits in the boy
the boy waits in the child
the child waits in the baby

waiting all the orgasms of ancestors
to be fucked into being (59).

The opening line of this subsection undercuts its sincerity. The poet once stood by these words, but has since imagined something beyond a simple reversal of the exploitation of labor; he envisions a more inclusive, all-encompassing, and greater inversion of capitalism's devastation: refocusing life around nature so that worker's bodies will no longer be claimed and dominated by capital. No longer will one "cut themselves and find clockwork inside" (61).

Yet, the limits of this poetic vision become apparent in the insincerity of the poet's words as implied by form. The climactic line, "I PROCLAIM THE EXTINCTION OF FACTORIES!!!" seems self-conscious of its untenable boldness. The use of capitalization and excessive exclamation points imply a bombastic inflection, and meaninglessness of this line is underscored by the poet's expression of wonder several lines later: "I can hardly believe I am so powerful" (62). This peculiar moment in the poem's tone highlights a growing tension between the poet, his lived experience, and his vision. He has removed himself from the conditions in the factory, yet cannot find sure footing as he seeks to imagine the end of the alienation of the worker. He imagines his memories as a kite drifting further and further away as the years pass, but he cannot allow himself to let go of the string as long as labor continues to be exploited.

The speaker implies the inevitability of his vision of freer, more equitable conditions of labor—he discusses "when the time comes," (63) not "if"—but ends his poem with a haunting memory of a power outage. In the "vast silence of factory" the poet imagines himself living a primitive, industry-free life in a cave and beginning work on a painting of an "antler'd dancer" (64). To the speaker, nature represents the antithesis of factory life, and the poem frequently posits that a return to more primitive, inartificial lifestyles would end the exploitation of labor. This notion pairs well with the previous links between nature and labor—the birth of the sun as a precursor to the invention of writing, for example—and helps to solidify these themes within the poem, but the conclusion seems ominously at odds with reality. The peace, creativ-

ity, and freedom found in the cave—including the liberty to imagine oneself in one's own image, as shown by Antler beginning a painting of an “antler'd dancer,” a clever play on his own name (64)—seem to exist only in a space and time fundamentally incompatible with and unrealizable in our own. In short, Antler addresses not only the failure of language to bring about a revolution—his poetic declaration of the extinction of factories does not, in fact, bring about their end—but also the deeper and more significant failure of language and the imagination to articulate such a reality.

In conclusion, the totality of capitalism, the complexities of revolutionary consciousness, and the difficulty of articulating an authentic resolution to the tensions existing in a capitalist society strain language to the point of causing structural breakdowns, such as the physical displacement of phrases and the compounding of figurative language in the penultimate stanza of “Episode of Hands,” the unresolved dialectical movement in “What Were They Like?,” and the shortcoming and emptiness of imagination in *Factory*. These moments of failure and beauty open unique avenues towards a greater understanding of the character and scope of capitalism, and thus, the failures of language are not “failures” in the traditional sense of the word; rather, they merely represent the inability of words to convey in a manner that results in closure and resolution—an impossibility under capitalism.

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Who are we?

Jeff spends his days looking at advanced baseball statistics and worrying about alternative timelines. He really just wants to get drunk and talk about Hemingway's masculinity crisis with you.

Kristen is a junior English major. Her hobbies include writing, memorizing movie trivia, and raising dragons in order to reclaim the Iron Throne.

Danielle is a full-time feminist, part-time senior year English major. Now that she is graduating, she can start her full time job of getting angry at everything and locating The Last Unicorn. Not the book. The actual final one in existence.

Al is a sophomore English major, jazz piano performance minor, and is pursuing the Five-College Ethnomusicology Certificate—he is in each of these things strictly for the money. He enjoys playing music, writing poetry and screenplays, and procrastinating.

Zach M. is an escapee from a secret government laboratory. This is his second year working on *Jabberwocky*. In his spare time, he enjoys writing, being outdoors, and planning the military takeover of small Pacific islands.

Zach B. is a sophomore majoring in English and Sociology. Outside of *Jabberwocky*, he enjoys making music with his friends, tutoring at the Writing Center, drawing badly, and sleeping in. He is a two-time recipient of the prestigious “UMass Worst Procrastinator of the Year” award.

Jeannette is a graduating senior majoring in English. She enjoys photography and going on nature walks. She is also a part-time vampire slayer who dedicates her time to fighting crime and the forces of evil! Wait, no. That was the Powerpuff Girls.

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