

SPRING 2023



EMULATE

EMULATE

*redefining
love*

ISSUE 4
VOLUME II

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Dear Reader,

A few weeks past Valentine's Day this spring we started our call for submissions: we asked you to redefine love. Roses had wilted and heart-boxed chocolates were hard to come by even in the discount aisles of drugstores. But that was okay. It's not what we were looking for.

Redefining Love might be redundant — we all love in our own distinctive ways — but we wanted to push and stretch and shake any steadfast definitions. We also hoped it might inspire something more than that. Love can be a powerful tool to reclaim, to rejoice, to reinvent. Love ties us together and pulls us apart.

Emulate is still growing, trying to figure out what it should be for Smith and the Connecticut River Valley. I've loved being Editor-in-Chief through this evolution and I can't wait to see what happens next.

I hope you enjoy this first print edition of Emulate, if you are lucky enough to be turning the paper pages.

Love,
AC + the Emulate Team

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Frontera Frontera

ISABEL CRUZ

I give you my borders— the shrinking edges of curls and canela
The places where my sand gives into your snow La frontera
de mi alma—estrella y espacio a muddled damask
of olive and alabaster I give you my fingertips and the curve
of my back The frontiers of this body
where lines run together—turning poetry to prose
I give you the husk in my throat and my tongue
stumbling over the syllables we are learning together
The azafran arches and powdered-sugar palms
The parts of me that hide in plain sight
We are dulce that melts on warm lips in
February frigid—I am not summer and you are not fall
somewhere we meet in between
like ice crystals falling in a desert night. ☀



Broughton Archipelago

ANNA FRY

At the
Edge of the World

BELLA
COOPERMANN

On a cold day in September, I met her sitting on a cliff that looked out at the very edge of the world. When I came across her sitting there, dangling her feet over the endless winds and the river far below, I had no idea who she was or why I had been drawn to her,

but my feet wandered towards her in winding paths until I stood ten inches or so behind her back.

I looked down at the top of her head with a building heart rate, as if my body had already met her even though my eyes had not. She didn't look at me just yet, but with silent

words and a far off gaze, she told me that her gaze would come.

"Look," she said, out to the edge of the world, gesturing to the mountains, the trees atop them, and birds atop both that we could not see.

I sat beside her and I looked, drawing a line from the tip of her index finger to the world ahead, making sure I was looking exactly where she needed me to. I tried to follow this line, as if following a cast fishing rod, but I couldn't see it. At least not what she needed me to see.

"What's over there?" I asked her, as she looked straight ahead with her finger resting upon the cold, morning air.

"You don't see them?" She smiled and finally lifted my head up, but without touching me. She did so only with her eyes, until hers met mine, clicking into place as if we had never looked anywhere else before. The corner of her mouth shifted up like the front of a boat, and she shook her hand, as if saying, *There! Right there, silly!*

How can you not see them?

And I shook my head, because all that was there, far off past her pointing finger, were trees and mountains and the birds we could not see.

"It's us, sitting on the opposite edge! How can you not see? The same clothes, the same hair, except no finger pointing back. I wonder if they can see us." She paused.

"I don't think they can." Her feet began to kick back and forth on the side of the cliff, bits of rock and earth falling into the river, falling like raindrops.

Once again, I shook my head, now almost in tears. I couldn't see them. I couldn't see us, over there at the very end of the world.

"Be my eyes," I said, looking towards her. Gentle tears finally slipped into the corners of my mouth, leaving me with a salty taste on my tongue. She wiped my tears with her left thumb and then put that same arm around me, her finger still remained pointed, as if frozen.

"Us, we're right over there. Right below the tree that looks redder than the rest. It looks sunnier over there too. My hair is curlier and yours is lighter, but we are the same. I'm holding you over there. We know each other well there. And maybe we're a bit older, or maybe we're the same age but we smile and laugh so much that it shows on our cheeks."

And while I still couldn't see ourselves, us over there with wrinklier cheeks, I smiled and took a breath. Clean air filled my lungs. "I see." I nodded. "I see it now."

Without a word she smiled, and we held each other on that very edge, like the versions of us did past the cliff on which we sat. They smiled and we smiled too, all of us holding each other at the very edge of the world. ☀

EMULATE



Sleep: artificial skinhood

ROMA
Il Pantheon
Angelo (Bernini)
Angel
Angel
Angel
Angel

You always had that golden halo
around the crown of your head

MUST EVERY THING BE
IN THE CLOTHING. MUST PERTAIN
TO: A girl or God

FROM: The 7th terrace

NOVEMBER 6, 2022

DA FOTOCOLOR - KODAK EXTRACHROME

ARCA

Dear Atthis,
You can't write it all in one day, so I have to settle
on a letter. I've been crawling through my memories and
you keep reappearing. The skin of your shoulders, tender like baked white fish.
The bits of mascara trickled on your eyelids. What up with girls hiding in back alleys? *id est* NINETY^{THREE}
Why am I always smelling your perfume in an empty room?
I left my house today at dusk. As I walked to Bernini,
the breeze combed through my hair and I was
powerless, afraid, tired. I let the world fall
in itself - looked up to find the sky leaping
with prickled darkness. Isn't that scary? The
clouds were soft purple-grey, the sun was white
like the inner surface of an oyster. Piercing.
The soles of my feet were gritting with expectation
that you might materialize next to me, that my
desire might name itself in the shape of your
holy face regarding me.

Time is capricious and weightless in the way it
sometimes feels like pressing your foot through
325 fresh snow. still sinking, I miss you

Letter to a Girl or God
SIMONE MENARD-IRVINE

ALEXANDREA BEARDSLEY

**next time i'll kiss you longer in the
dunkin' donuts parking lot**

4/6/2020

she pressed her lips to veins, tasted
the pulsation of my wrists.

we left imprints, found the cracks in the mattress, but foremost

she lingers,
tangled in my hair,

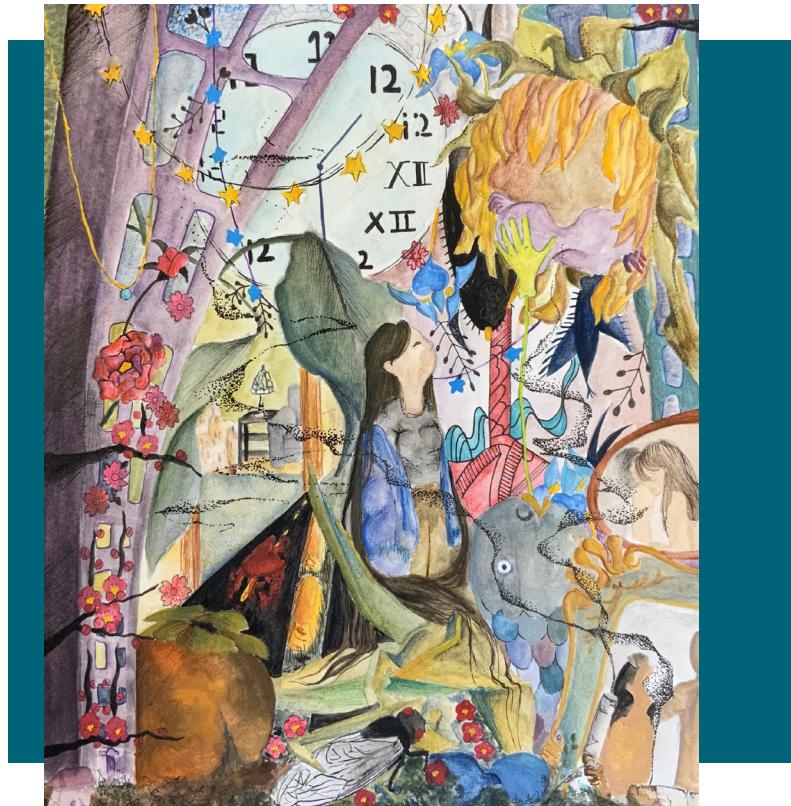
a giggle escaped as we lie twisted up,
entwined in sheets

i haven't felt her since life paused; stop,
play the tape in slow motion, taunt me,
taught me not to get comfortable.

i hold what's hers close,
pray to god i don't forget
how her body fits in mine

pray she never fades away. ☺

EMULATE



Numbing Nostalgia

JINA LEE

Nail Polish

AMELIA
BURTON

Painting nails is much more complicated than I remember.

I remember being nine or ten, my sister's hand grabbing mine, thumb and forefinger pressed to palm and knuckle, pulling closer. I remember watching the brush flood

bubblegum pink onto each nail, the shaky strokes lapping around the edge, licking up onto my skin. She'd reach for a tissue, swipe the lines a little neater, press the blunt of her nail into the corners of mine. I remember that sharp nail polish

scent, close cousin to acetone, swamping the room until we couldn't smell it anymore, only feel it in the pinch of a headache. And I remember it being simple. One coat, maybe two. Quickly lost to cracks and scratches, my fidgeting fingers shucking off flecks for days to come.

But that was twelve years ago, and the process seems to have absorbed just as many steps.

She pushes and prods and clips my cuticles, jerks away when I make a sound of pain. She turns on the drill and buffs the surface rough, applies adhesive for the extensions, plucks out tiny plastic scales and presses them to my nails. It burns a little at the edges, gel quite literally cooking under UV light. The only familiar part is how she pulls on my hands, lifting my whole arm with a tight, two-finger grip to set it nearer to her across the table.

(Stacy didn't pull my hands like that, at the sleepover in eleventh grade, but there and then, painting nails meant something it never had between me and my sister. Something that pulled in a different way.)

She clips the nails that aren't exactly mine, files them down into even arcs, brings my fingers close to her eyes so she can ensure each pair mirrors the other in length—pinky to pinky, thumb to thumb. Ring to ring.

(They snickered with each glittery heart sticker pressed to my nails, scoffed at my insistence that I didn't have a crush.)

She has three shelves of gel polish, pastels and neutrals and deep jewel tones. We go for a spring turquoise and white daisies, the petals pressed on with the tiny ball of her dotter. Yellow centers, even smaller, poked into place with the tip of a brush.

(Nail polish meant girl-talk and gossip. Meant a world I wasn't privy to, pink fingers and pointing. Meant feeling alone in a room full of people.)

The final coat goes on, cured in the dome of bright blue light I'm not supposed to look at, and she brushes oil onto my cuticles, rubs lavender lotion into my knuckles and the peeling skin at the root of my thumb. My nails shine like little gems of candy on my fingertips, and I rub them back and forth to hear the washboard-strum of them clacking together.

Painting nails is much more complicated than I remember. Yes. But my sister makes it something simple again.

She grabs my hand, that insistent tug, and coos over her own handiwork, the nails pretty for their own sake. She doesn't ask those questions. There is no girl-talk and gossip. There is my sister, the nail polish, and me. ☀️

Love Poem for the Puerto Rican

ISABEL CRUZ

this is a puerto rican love poem
full of cariño and vaporub whispering
and too loud `

the puerto rican love poem is full of parcha or chinola or
maracuya whatever you want to call it
a cut fruit love language learned from

brusque ladies who say *hay comida* instead of acrid apologies that
ajonjoli stick in their throats

bellyful of unlearning
quieting
the underside rumbling

this puerto rican love poem breaks
generational curses gives

second chances says
i'm sorry says
i love you says
we'll work through this.

this puerto rican love poem is salsa
dancing on 1 instead of 2

soldiering on like a little young lord
against an unbeatable foe

the puerto rican love poem loves hard
hard like machete blade evicerating
coconut meat. ☀

SPRING 2023



Gift

REBECCA AWARE

Changing with the Seasons

JULIA PETRINO

To look at her without intention,
to see her through my glazed-over eyes and let her wash over me.
Like a highway in June, her presence flies by before I can catch it.
No air conditioning and I'm still looking at her
because I'm always looking at her even when she thinks I'm not.
Seeing someone all the way through,
without love or lust,
just to look.

I hear them in the kitchen, and they're talking about us.
Whispers from three feet away and also it's January, and the snow is coming
down like rivers.
Calmly and slowly but all at once.
Unrelenting.
You might recognize yourself out there, my dear.

It is crowded in my brain, and full of all of my fathers.
Awake and asleep. Sober and Drunk.
I don't blame them and I am jealous of them,
because there is nothing more confusing than a man who has chosen to save his
own life.

I'm pulling my grief out of my chest and pouring it into her hands.

It is time for me to be selfish,
because what would your hands be good for if not to hold the worst of me?
Careful, I am still fragile.
Yes, still.
After all this time.
Even after all this time. ☀

PEACH BLOSSOM

人面不知何处去，桃花依旧笑春风。——崔护《题都城南庄》

I returned to a place once grand,
Only peach blossoms remain to stand,
though her face is gone,
The peach blossoms still smile on,
In the spring breeze, petals dance and sway,
radiate in the light of day.



e
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PLUM BLOSSOM

相思一夜梅花发，忽到窗前疑是君。——卢仝《有所思》

I gazed upon the plum blossoms bright,
Lost in thought throughout the night,
And then I felt a sudden flight
Of hope that you were in my sight.



VICKY XU

Redefining Love

A PLAYLIST BY WOZQ

She Dances by Billie Marten

This song approaches fragility, admiration and love in a familiar way. Despite this, the sonic representation and vulnerability encourages a connection to both love for someone else and love for yourself. The song creates a simultaneous aching and warm, held feeling. - Iris Diez

Same Shoe Size by serpentwithfeet

I think this is a great song that explicitly celebrates love between black gay men which is not a highly visible genre of love song. A lot of the music by serpentwithfeet celebrates his identity and I think he is doing really great work insisting on the visibility of his experience. - Fiona Moore-Keish

Simple Song by The Shins

This song brings me back to my high school's art studio, to learning to paint and making new friends. - AC Manning

Like the Dawn by The Oh Hellos

This song fits with the theme "Redefining Love" because it speaks of meeting your soulmate, someone like you. While the song appears to be based off the Adam and Eve story, the lyrics can fit anyone's story. The song expresses the joy of meeting another person and the joy of not being alone anymore. Seeing your soulmate is like light breaking through the dark. - Nora Youtz

Wait for Me (Please) by Kleenex Girl Wonder

It's awesome and they have a fraught romantic relationship and its a great song! - Maggie Janowicz

Love is Everywhere (Beware) by Wilco

Love is both an overused and underused term in our vocabulary; it can mean a million different things, but sometimes love takes courage. Jeff Tweedy (the lead singer and songwriter) said it best: "For love to triumph I believe we're duty bound to create more of it, and for more people - people we don't know, even people we don't like! And that takes courage I don't always have. The song is a reminder to myself to act with more love and courage and less outrage and anesthetized fear." - Olivia Petty

Walk Backwards by Maude Latour

This is a song about loving with no labels. It is about a relationship that is unbound from the concepts of romance and societally accepted concepts of love. As an aromantic spectrum person, this song speaks to the way that I redefine love. - Ixchel Quinn

I always hesitate to share the story of my first kiss, because it took place in the most unsentimental, dingy, cloyingly commercial location I could possibly conjure: a certain ubiquitous burger chain. Ahh, romance...

Golden Arches

LUKE HERZOG

First kiss and fast food do not oft entwine,

But do not both instantly gratify?

McDonald's Don Juan, fourteen at the time,

Beneath golden arches that touch the sky;

I know in "truth or dare" you tell no fibs,

When you dare me to kiss my hands do clench,

Heart beats so fast it bursts through my McRibs:

Here let the fries be the only thing French;

In greasy corner booth grotesque to some,

Your intentions are a napkin unfurled;

Like the mascot, a clown I am become,

And my oily heart henceforth hamburgled;

With salty kiss we seal our covenant:

And ba da ba ba bah... I'm lovin' it.

Fittingly, the McDonald's was stripped and converted into a Starbucks soon after. The golden arches gave way to a logo featuring a seductive siren, a monument to temptation. ☀️

MADDIE McALLISTER

ode to a freshman-year comphet crush

everyone is getting up to go backstage,
but we don't move.
it is as if it if our life's ambition
to watch the golden boy sing.
he is soft-spoken,
filled with light.
he doesn't always hit the high notes, but we
can't be bothered to notice.
fourteen years old and holding hands
in creaky auditorium seats,
we make flustered eye contact
as he pushes his glasses up his nose.

we are two girls in love
who do not know we are two girls in love,
because we do not
look like,
seem like
feel like,
two girls in love.

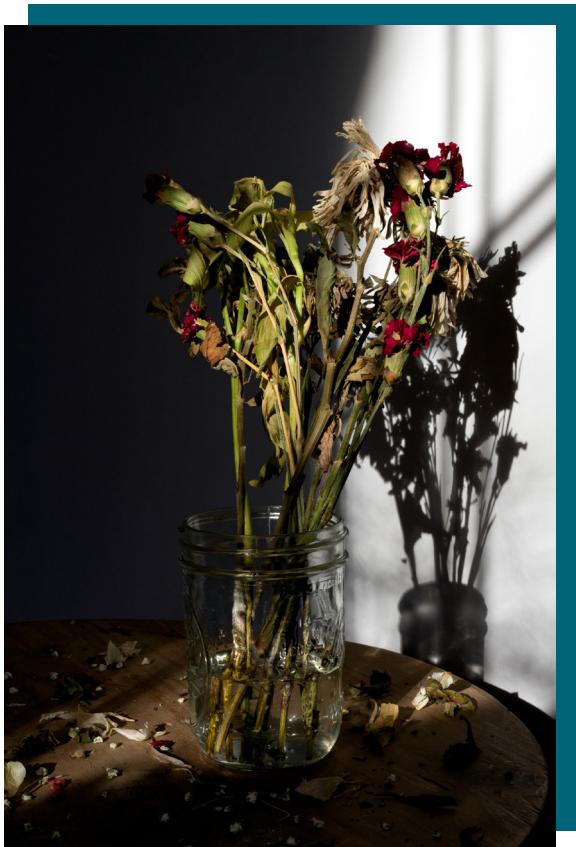
girls who love girls
feel the way about girls
that we do about that golden boy—
tugging the backs of each others' aprons when he
smiles under the canopy,
making eye contact across the stage when
one of us has the good fortune to
stand next to him during a dance.
singing his praises in whispers down the hallway—
and that's not how i feel about you.

you are safe. you are warm. you are a
rainy saturday afternoon in the middle of the band room floor,
two layers of jackets as i fall asleep with my
head in your lap.

(it is only later that we hold hands in the back of your car, that i
press what might be considered a kiss to your shoulder.

it is only later that we realize that we are two girls in love.

it is only later that *i* realize the golden boy had nothing on you). ☀️



We Tried to Keep Them Alive

LILIANA WOLLHEIM-MARTINEZ



Sunday Morning PHOEBE KALLAHER

self love
ELÉNA ZYTNICKI



All of it

AC MANNING

It's another day, and I take a new breath with myself. I've learned so much this past year, these past months. I am forever grateful to the friend who told me on the empty beach to love love; love the feeling, all of it. And to the girl to whom I gave this love, with whom I found this love. Everything is new and exciting and all at once. Everything is happening and growing and shifting and changing, this malleable world takes on new forms. I miss red clay in my fingerprints and oil paint on my arms. Today I walked by the playground on Washington, across from the church, near the library, where the bus used to stop from USDAN, and I breathed in the smell of city sprinklers on burning pavement and the ices cart's bell; there were the yellow lights of the Brooklyn Public Library, reflected off my first library card; there were the crashes of hail on the school bus on the LIE, pulled over on the side of the road until we could pass into the blue-skied city. I kept walking. I'd been traveling all day and was nearly back where I had started. What is the point of this piece? Maybe, sometime later, I will look back and analyze it, and myself, and try to decipher this fragment of myself. Or, perhaps I will keep walking on. This all started with learning to love feeling, all of it. I'm starting to embrace the world. ☀

EMULATE



Nuptial Blitz: Ellen



Nuptial Blitz: Michele



Nuptial Blitz: Paul

In August 2019, sitting on a couch in Portland, Oregon I flipped through my brother's wedding album, fascinated by the story being told through these images, clearly directed by the photographer. It prompted me to begin researching wedding photography on social media. I observed how certain positions and gestures appeared so frequently. For example, the suit-wearing partner standing behind the gown-wearing partner and hugging 'her' waist (a trope I call "The Protector").

Due to my personal views about the institution, I'll never get married and experience wedding photography as a bride, but why couldn't I participate in this ritual in my own way? I began inviting people to pose as my partner for wedding photos and ended up generating thousands of images.

Wedding photography is glossy, rooted in fantasy and frequently gendered. In stepping into these tableaus, I point to the power of images to solidify cultural norms. Can I democratize the image of love by embodying these shapes with people other than my romantic partners? Can I chip away at still entrenched gender norms by inviting play? Nuptial Blitz is a space to metaphorically and literally try something on including touch and tenderness with a friend or stranger.

GABRIELLE REVLOCK

Film Recs!

Our department is proud to offer you a few select recommendations of films we think challenge the definition of love. Each offers a unique perspective on love, and has pushed us to redefine love in our own minds. We hope that you enjoy both the works selected, and our musings.

Microhabitat (2017)

Written and directed by Jeon Go-Woon

This contemporary Korean drama tells the story of a young woman battling homelessness on her quest to preserve the love in her life. Namely, her love for cigarettes and whisky. After rising costs force her to choose between making rent and fulfilling her vices, Mi-so is left couch-surfing through the tumultuous waves of her past relationships. Mi-so chooses to prioritize the love in her life that comes not from external relationships, but from indulgence in her internal desires. While each friend welcomes her openly, it is never for very long, as her presence becomes an obstacle in their own pursuits of desire. The love held for Mi-so by her friends is tested and broken as she refuses to make any effort towards self preservation, calling into question whether her own love deserves to be prioritized, and if love can ever be sustainable.

All About My Mother (1999)

Written and directed by Pedro Almodóvar

Taking place in Spain during the 1990s, the film follows the character of Manuela's ventures to relocate the father of her child, who has since transitioned, after her son dies tragically in a car accident. Along her journey, Manuela finds herself in the orbit of several women whose life experiences have also left them feeling ostracized from conventional society. A central focus of the film is its emphasis on how the relationships between these women provide care and a sense of community where traditional structures of love and family have failed to do so. The film's messaging serves as a reminder that love is defined not just by the tropes presented in rom-coms and fairy tales, but by the all manners in which we uplift one another through triumph and adversity.

Saving Face (2004)

Written and directed by Alice Wu

A classic early 2000s romantic comedy, this film follows the story of Wil, a young surgeon living in New York City as she begins a relationship with Vivian, a dancer raised in the same local Chinese-American community as herself. Tensions arise, however, when Wil's widowed mother Hwei-Lan becomes pregnant. Refusing to name the father, and without a husband, Hwei-Lan is kicked out of her parent's home and community, leaving Wil to take care of her. Closeted as a lesbian to her family, Wil's relationship becomes complicated by her mother's new presence in her life and home. Though filled with the typical rom-com tropes, Saving Face remains, at its heart, a love story between mother and daughter, twisting the common narrative of the genre to create a more three-dimensional view of love in all its forms.

Love (whatever that means),
The Film Crew

SACHA LICHOLAI



***YOU MATTER MORE
THAN COMFORT***



watch the film!

Une étrangère et un étranger

EMULATE

In the 10 minutes of waiting, I was briefly in love with this man.

What was I asking? I'm not sure if I was speaking the correct English.

Wasn't he also unsure? What if we were both struggling with giving the correct answers?

Clumsy with our limbs.

In the three little bursts of "yup", he was like a young pine,
erect, curious about speaking the language
to me . . . ? The sounds of the letters were a vessel. We were
in it.

Would he feel disappointed if he knew I'm not an American?
Or did he already perceive it?

The skin of his hand was soft and milky;

a Persian cat's eyes, twinkling green.

"You're welcome," his tongue was sliding upwards along
the circular orbits of the first two syllables. Oh, so we were
taught by the same textbook.

His silence was cold

besides the woman who was repeating the letters of "bonne
matinée" and "chocolatine".

We either touch each others' fingers
or speak.

Pendant les 10 minutes d'attente, j'étais brièvement amoureuse de cet homme.

C'est quoi que je lui demandais? Est-ce que je lui parlais le bon anglais?

Il en était pareillement incertain, n'est-ce pas? Que faire si l'on avait tous deux du mal à trouver les réponses correctes?

Maladroits avec nos membres.

Dans les trois petites énonciations gaies de «yup», il était comme un jeune pin, tout droit, curieux de parler la langue quand moi seule était son interlocutrice...? Les sons des lettres étaient un récipient. Étions nous là-dedans.

Éprouverait-il déçu s'il savait que je ne suis pas Américaine?
Ou l'a-t-il déjà perçu?

La peau de sa main était souple et laiteux;
les yeux d'un chat persan, verts, scintillants.

« You're welcome, » sa langue glissait vers le haut dans les orbites circulaires des deux premières syllabes. Alors, nous étions enseignés par le même manuel.

Son silence était froid

à côté de la femme qui répétait les lettres de «bonne matinée» et «chocolatine».

On touche nos doigts
ou parle la langue. ☀



Tatta Patti
NIVEDITA PARI



EMULATE

The pseudo-classic wedding toast, the sit-com one, always starts with,

"Webster's Dictionary describes love as..."

I struggle with defining love. I struggle with whether or not I've ever been in love. I struggle with calling the wrong men my lovers when they won't remember what my face looks like.

To love someone means to want what is best for them, for them to be happy, even at the expense of your own happiness or well-being.

That sounds pretty good, right? How selfless and beautiful. If that's true then we should tell Hobbes and all the rest to give the defining human nature thing another try. This is the one the well-meaning modern poets subscribe to. If you love something, let it go. If it loved you back, it will return.

I don't buy that for a moment. That's not the kind of love I endorse.

My kind is the grand, romantic gesture. Run across the airport and get there just in time. Stand below their window with a jukebox. Forget that you're from two opposing clans who despise one other. Find sleep in Seattle.

I swear I'm not delusional. I know that it appears that romantic comedies have ruined my sense of reality, that most people are far

too busy (and far too emotionally repressed) to scream how they feel across Times Square. This stubborn belief comes from my parents' story, which, if it was made into a movie, would have far too much flannel.

Both my parents were born in Connecticut. My mother, to middle-class Jewish parents, second generation immigrants. They instilled in her a strong work ethic and a fierce loyalty to family. My father, to struggling Jewish parents in Hartford, pre-gentrification, his father a World War II veteran with serious battle scars. When he was nine years old, his family moved to Miami. This was the classic move not just for WWII vets, but for poor Jewish folks at the time. Warmer weather and water to soothe your injuries. More Jewish schools to protect

South
Beach,
1998

your heritage.

My mother lived in Connecticut until she went to college in Saratoga, New York. Eventually, she would attend graduate school exactly where she needed to: Miami.

One night in the late nineties, my mom was convinced by her friends to go to a Jewish singles' party. My father reluctantly attended with his brother. Both were convinced they were wasting their time, until a handsome, frighteningly arrogant man approached Tracey. They struck up a dialogue, until they were interrupted by an even more handsome and arrogant man. Popped collar, (intentionally) exposing some chest hair and a *chai* on a gold chain.

"Why are you talking to his guy when you could be talking to *me*?" He had a glimmer of mischief in his eyes. She was slightly disgusted.

Moshe had noticed the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen across the crowded room and nothing was going to stand in his way.

Tracey accepted both of their numbers. She even called the other guy, whose name has been lost to history. They didn't work out.

On my parents' first date, my father was stuck in traffic. It was pouring hot rain and he couldn't find parking anywhere. Miami had slowed to an angry stop. He began to panic, as he watched time tick by on the clock of his now infamous '89 Camry. Moshe feared this beautiful woman, the one getting her doctorate in psychology, the one who was so clearly out of his league, would think he had the gall to stand her up.

So he parked twelve blocks away and sprinted all the way to the restaurant. He showed up sweaty and red-faced and soaked from the rain, but at least he showed up.

Thank God Tracey waited. I guess the bread must have been really good.

Or she knew something even then. Up for interpretation, fellow deluded romantics.

This story has become fuzzy and rosy. It is the stuff of myth, of fairytale. The details lost in memory. What survived, though, was the spark between my parents that grew into the flame of the life they built together. That fire stoked the embers of my siblings and I, who carry my mother's strength and my father's romantic spirit. It forged in steel the house in which I was raised, when they picked up and moved back to the home state they share.

SAMANTHA SONDIK

EMULATE

In 2019, over twenty years since the day South Beach bore witness to a beautiful love story, my parents let us know that the spark had died.

Writing this now, four years later, it amuses me to see who they have now chosen to spend their lives with.

Despite the anger and pain they caused one another, my mother married a wonderful man—completely different from my father except for his incredible sense of romance and grand gesture-making. My father has fallen hopelessly in love with a Jewish woman with strong opinions and a great sense of humor, though she is in every other way different to my mother.

Maybe we don't love souls, and maybe we don't love how they make us feel. Maybe we love moments in our shared existences. Maybe Tracey and Moshe fell deeply in love with one another in 1998. And twenty years later, maybe they were completely different people

with different desires and needs and they could no longer provide for one another.

They both regret so much, but not that night in the late nineties, when my mom inevitably got a belly laugh from my father's shocking confidence, and he was jolted awake from his long, sleepy bachelorhood by her hazel eyes.

Through it all, I remain in full belief today that love is a daily choice we make. That each day, you must pledge to stomach your pride and offer your support, that you'll cook dinner when they work late, you'll drive the kids to basketball practice, you'll tell them that you're divorcing because they just can't.

That choice starts with a declaration. Loud or quiet, public or private, smiled or through teary eyes.

I stand firm in my support of rom-com style moments. They make for incredible stories to tell bright-eyed children. ☀

Tree!

MEREDITH
CLOWSE

SPRING 2023



ALEXANDREA
BEARDSLEY

/kə'laps/
3/16/18

we drop pennies into the ocean
praying for better weather and bigger breasts.
we watch porcelain girls taste foreign boys.

I rupture.

my second grade gold star rusted,
water and tainted metallic.

I'm tired of burying things I love. ☀

Leonora JAY
FROTHINGHAM

Why should I describe the deer?
It was cold, early morning sun, just past the cowfield
a smooth stench stretched over jutting weeks
don't you already know death?

What was so special about the growth?
In the trees, under a log, by a river
wood rich rotting into mud on your yahrzeit
do you know how many have passed?

I miss you.
When I smell jasmine flowers
I am six years old and next to your bushes I am so small
and you are right there, I know. ☀

SPRING 2023

AVA HARPER



Angora 1



self love

ELENA ZYTNICKI

pick out singular moments of [] enormous
like that. Sascha was truly, truly there both
for and with me in one of my most
unbearable moments of pain, and so it became
one of my moments of greatest healing. That
will always mean [] immeasurably more to
me than all of the times in which, for her own
reasons, she is unable to acknowledge those
moments. When we're there in them together,
I'm certain she feels them as deeply. On
the phone that night, she was the one who
cried.

Today I went on to tell her that it
makes my heart stop that even though I
truly feel and fully believe that I've found
love, and I'm no longer searching, and I
absolutely do not feel any space where a
romantic partner should be - I'm still
obsessed with Beary. I can't wrap my head
around what it must mean [] to not
need [] but to want her anyway as
desperately as I do. someone to fill that role

No - I know it means that I love her,
but I can't fathom [] how much
that must be.

Sascha said "the connection you have
really breaks me sometimes I wonder
how many times can you love someone like
that in a lifetime".

Buried within that question is the implicit
statement - one of my most prominent fears
that perhaps it is only once.

And there is no one living or dead who
better understands my love for Beary than
Sascha does. I think she knows the depth
of it as well as anyone other than me
could. With unspeakable empathy, she does the
near-impossible by joining me in my own
highly specific brokenness. And over and over,
she has been there to hold the love that
I could never give to Beary. It's like
when Fleabag's mother dies, and she tells
Boo, "I don't know what to do with it

We Tried to Keep Them Alive

LILIANA WOLLHEIM-MARTINEZ

Calling Me Calling Me

CIANA SOCIAS

Today I called our mom
And music played instead of a dial tone
That's the sound of cellphone signals
Crossing the ocean

The sound of signals crossing land
Is the sound of my feet pacing the side room
(hush, don't wake my roommate)
Is the sound of a cat in the background on your end
(That's new, is she my replacement)

We could talk for hours
We're lucky, you know,
You could trace the Florida-Massachusetts distance
With airplanes or with cars but
We made it fit between the ringing and hello

How do I say, I'm so happy you're here
(After our fights, when we walk by the river)
How to say I'm scared of things like tides, leaves, weather
(Like, is it possible to love me,
even when you aren't calling me) ☺



Hometown
RUZHUO CHEN

The First Snow

JULIA
PETRINO

"If, relative to the history of our planet, an individual life is so short, a blink of an eye, as they say, then to be gorgeous, even from the day you're born to the day you die, is to be gorgeous only briefly." - Ocean Vuong

At the exact moment you died, Leigh dropped a roll of packing tape on my foot. You exited my life just as abruptly as you entered it. Alone, at odds, snow over the ocean. Of course, only you could ever decide when your story was over. Leigh, still struggling to close the final box, glanced up at me with that look. The one that said 'can you please get off your ass and help me?' You never met Leigh because she crashed into my life three months after you moved to DC. Do you remember that coworker I had? The one who you said looked like his mom picked out his clothes for him each morning. Leigh was his girlfriend at the time. She came to a holiday party at the office, and I instantly hated her. She was sarcastic, and stuck-up, and way too smart for him. She was everything I never

knew I needed, and she broke up with Harrison the same day he told her he was moving back east to be closer to his parents (ironic, right?). She's moving from Boulder to San Francisco to work as a press intern for the Golden State Warriors, and I think I might follow her. I know what you're thinking, *Don't follow anyone anywhere! You can't rely on anyone but yourself!* You always told me that, but I'm sick of being alone, and Leigh has never made me feel stupid for wanting her company. 8 hours later the moving truck is packed, Leigh insisting she do it herself because she doesn't trust the moving company no matter how many times I tell her they do this for a living. She's particular like that. You would've liked her. 8 hours later and I'm slipping my phone into my back pocket after reading what your sister posted on Facebook. We're standing in the apartment, empty except for our bodies, and now my grief, bursting through the windows and spilling out onto the street below. Apologies to everyone

who happens to be walking by.

"Let's hit the road, yeah?" Leigh asks me. Oblivious to how you have managed to break my heart all over again.

"Yeah."

We were under the Marquee at that little theater in Boulder, do you remember that? You were tapping your cigarette against the wall behind us, the black ash falling onto my Doc Martens. You said it was good to see me. Which is funny because I did not consider this interaction to be particularly good. Beige by Yoke Lore was playing in the theater behind us, which is to say it felt like I was being stabbed in the stomach. *What's wrong?* Do you remember asking me that, and turning away like you didn't really want to know?

I smiled slowly,

"Nothing, I—" I looked down at the red Solo cup in my hand. One we both knew was filled with water.

"This is just really strong." You rolled your eyes, but I swear I saw a hint of relief that I didn't say what both of us were thinking. You said you had to go but, *text when you're in DC! We'll catch up.* And then you were gone. I closed my eyes and allowed the memories to play out in front of me like a movie. I let the Solo cup slip from my trembling fingers, splashing water onto the pavement below me. Cigarette ash and water. I felt Leigh hand me a paper towel and ask me something that sounded vaguely like 'are you good?' New

boots and empty apartments, road trips and chapped lips, winter nights on summer days. Imagine that, how you could still manage to turn all this summer heat into a delicate snowfall?

We were in the mountains of Salt Lake City when Leigh suggested we stop for the night. We hit 6 hours which means we hit the moment when I wondered what it was like to ever be outside of a car. You might be thinking, how could you ever do this with Leigh? 20 hours in the car? Won't you fight? The answer is no because I can't fight with Leigh. Not because there isn't anything to fight about, or because we aren't both opinionated or even because I don't want to. But because she tells me that getting mad at someone is a waste of time, just tell them how you feel and move on. We're at a sushi restaurant and I'm thinking about how much you loved sushi because it reminded you of when you were little and you lived near the ocean. More on that later.

I'll let you in on a secret. I was in DC that summer, with my girlfriend at the time. I saw you outside that little coffee shop, the one with the purple and pink potted hydrangeas on the windowsill. I saw you and I wanted to drop my girlfriend's hand and slide into the chair across from you and tell you that we got it all wrong. Your work wouldn't be so stressful, and I would follow you anywhere. Maybe we got it wrong.

Let me start over.

EMULATE

Three hours in and the sun is rising. As we hit Elko, Nevada, I feel ready to shed the weight of the Rocky Mountains, leaving winter for what will inevitably be a neverending summer. I insist

on driving early in the mornings because I can cry and Leigh can sleep. I feel tears blur my vision and run hotly down my cheeks. I cry for the nights I would eat dinner alone because you always worked so late. I cried for the way Leigh would laugh when we would drink wine on her kitchen floor. I cried for the moments you would say Eliot and then look me right in the eye and say, *what we have? This is real, baby. So real it scares the shit outta me.*

Do you remember that club in Boston? We were on break for Thanksgiving but Colorado was a long trip home and we spent the week together. Together as in you spent every night with your friends, and would occasionally invite me when you went out. Between you and I, I never really liked your friends anyway. That club we went to had that little wicker basket full of light-up bracelets and we slung them around our necks and wrists and danced to the bar. A group of fireflies, alive and lit up, if only for the night. I don't think you remember anything after that so I'll tell you what I remember. When you took off your shoes because it made you feel "grounded" and spilled your High Noon all over the floor. Sticky footprints followed you for the rest

of the evening, a trail marking your sloppy dance moves. I mopped up your carelessness and threw the rest of your drinks away. The rest of the night you kept wandering around to people and asking, *who stole my drink?*

I did.

An hour outside Sacramento means three until we hit San Francisco and I'm not allowed to blame my quiet on the car sickness. Do you remember Boulder's first snow? When I woke you up and we wrapped blankets around our shoulders so we could balance on the fire escape. It was so quiet, and you were so calm. You asked me, *can I tell you something?* And I said yes because

the only thing I've ever wanted to have was more of you. *Everyone always talks about the first snow here. But the first snow is just snow. Just as much as the second, and the third, and the fourth. If we're lucky enough to get a fourth.* I looked at you for a long moment. Snowflakes covering your dark hair, drowning you, too quickly for me to help. I almost wanted to ask you to kiss me goodbye when you told me you were moving, but that would've been foolish because we had been broken up for 3 weeks. Every second of those weeks I hated, more than I had ever hated anything. More than I hated when you left your mugs in the sink or didn't close the blinds at night. You stood in my (our) living room and hugged me one more time. Your Carhartt jacket against my cheek,

you whispered, *don't cry*. Not in front of you. Never in front of you.

We ended the drive four hours later, long after the sun had set. Leigh's new apartment is empty, and she's tapping her keys against the exposed brick as she 'sizes the place up'. I look out the window and it's snowing. Fat flakes cover the ground in seconds and it's something I'm sure Californians have never seen before. The first snow for so many, and I start to wonder if this might be my first too. Leigh is blowing up the air mattress behind me while I press my hands to the glass, warmth and snow, midnight in the middle of the day. Just so you know, I'm not writing this letter for you, or even for me really. I'm

writing this because Leigh deserves to have all of me. Which means it's time to pull the grief out of my chest and pour it onto these pages, left for you to pick apart like I have. I'm writing this because I cried in front of Leigh when she told me she was moving. I'm writing this because you were wrong about the first snow. It isn't just snow, because every single snow since you have left has been my first. Snow on the mountains in Boulder, under the Marquee, in Nevada, covering empty apartments in San Francisco. I have to go because Leigh is asking me to go outside and look at the stars with her. Imagine her surprise when she sees the ground, covered in snow angels. ☀️



serenity
ELEYNA BAYER

Sun On Gasoline

JULIA PETRONI

“Super Rich Kids” by Frank Ocean and a green Camry

Keyed on the side, the paint is gone, jagged lines cracked across an aging body.

I run my finger along the lines, and we’re at a gas station.

Sun on gasoline, “Super Rich Kids”, and milkshakes.

Five minutes and it’s gone,

I forgot how much I hate milkshakes.

I am standing next to my brother and it’s windy.

I’m talking, but the wind eats my words and I am saying nothing.

He is older than me.

He has always been older than me, but for the first time ever

I feel like I am younger.

Is he still my brother?

Sandcastles and lighthouses

pushed over by wind or age, it doesn’t really matter because all of it is gone.

Close your eyes and count to three...

We’re playing hide and seek.

1...2...3...

Eyes closed. Slow breathing. As small as possible.

Time passes.

He forgot to find me.

My hands shoved in my pockets

The fuzz from my sweatpants rubbed against my fingernails.

He was standing beside me and telling me something he was sure I didn’t already know.

Sand beneath our feet, his hands pointing to the sea,

I knew what he was going to say.

Thanksgiving weekend and my brother is gone.

The windows are down and my dad is smoking.

We’re in traffic, music is playing.

In this moment, I think we might be the same age.

I miss my sweatpants and maybe I didn’t know what he was going to say.

I just thought I did.

I'm alone in an apartment that was once his.
A series of hand-me-downs, and I've reached the final one.
I wish the air was warmer, and I miss that sweet melody.
A mattress on the floor, bare white walls, empty fridge.
I asked you what you would miss most about this place, but you never told me.
There's a blanket on the floor that you never let me touch.
But I am cold, so I wrap the blanket around my shoulders, and suddenly
I am all grown up. ☀



where you sit
ELOISE SILVER VAN METER

EMULATE

for a lover

TESS NEALON RASKIN

Here i am
My throat
My scalp
And my mouth sour
My wrists,
Rice-paper chest,
Chest bone abacus.

Taste my marrow, swollen plums.
My ribs for you to count
Twelve-twelve,
No divinity in the low light,
No adam,
Just animal, white as headlights, never
a stir from my pink womb
Never once.

Take me as i am

My lungs, lemon tree

Inside me a well
from which you cannot drink,
But you can drink from my hands. ☀

SPRING 2023

*Slice into my heart
like a knife through a ripe fruit*



LULU WANG

Impressions of Gingko Leaves

ANNA FRY



First Plantings

ELEYNA BAYER

Your fingers fold kneaded velvet
into the soil around my thighs.
Pregnant moonlight sweats down your neck,
And so I let you
drink me.
Coated in chamomile.

You rest my hip's white lilies on your mouth
with stained hands, you turn your wrist
and I am white no more.

Under spring sun
I'll harvest torn roots of my ankle,
bittered thorn of my spine,
For your silent sleep and clear water thoughts.

But now,
winter comes and under you, the leaves are no longer cracked
fire
but sweet ash.
That I smear on my tongue,
behind my ear.
Reminders of where carved crescent your fingers lay. ☀

Love manifests via distance: *Moonlit Winter* (2019)

VIVIEN LEE

When one grows up under the shade of their mother, it becomes natural to assume her position as unconditionally sacrificing her life for us – our learning and growing to become our own person occurs concurrently with a mother's time and existence transformed into one's lonely walk to the bus stop for work, and to one's quiet presence in the dinner table, solely chewing on their food, while she simultaneously is expected to conceal and ignore her pain. The only sliver of leisure she is offered is under the street pole, with a cigarette hanging between her fingers, as the evening moonlight envelops her. In Lim Dae-young's 2019 film, *Moonlit Winter*, our protagonist, Yoon-hee, blow out a final puff of smoke that imbues resignedness, yet also a lingering hesitancy, before returning home, and continuing to carry out her role as a mother. A permanent cloud seems to have been cast over her life for as long as she could remember, as she distances herself from the people in her life. Evidently,

when asked about Yoon-hee, Inho, her ex-husband, bittersweetly mumbles: "your mom tends to leave people... lonely."

Yet, Yoon-hee's almost invisible life is noticed by her daughter. When Sae-bom discovers the heartfelt letter sent from Otaru to her mother, a letter soaked in regret and yearning, Yoon-hee no longer remains a mother to Sae-bom, but rather a woman of her own, who experienced pain that turned into an unforgettable scar, continually haunting her life. Her supposed lack of unconditional attention to her daughter, and her subtle distance from everyone, which was thought to be unnatural, becomes a reasonable ramification of her aching past. The silence that chokes Yoon-hee and Sae-bom during dinner, and the blow dryer noise that drains everything but Yoon-hee's thoughts stem from a woman's struggle to live her life she perceives as a punishment, not mere indifference to her child. Yoon-hee didn't leave people lonely willingly;

EMULATE

it's that she never healed from her past, embraced with the right form of love and understanding. Thus, Sae-bom, who is on the verge of graduating high school, glances at her mother one evening, who busily washes the dishes in front of the sink, and indifferently – even a little harshly – utters, "You don't need to live for me anymore."

Sae-bom never explicitly delineates her love or understanding towards her mother. Instead, discreet plans and vague statements that circumvent points are made. She nonchalantly mumbles about the lack of snow in Korea despite it being winter and suggests to Yoon-hee that they should travel abroad to somewhere with more snow before she heads to college. Said suggestion, frankly, does not derive from Sae-bom's seemingly childish and adolescent desire to go travel overseas, but rather to provide her mother a chance to reconcile with the past, as they head over to Otaru, the town the letter flew from. Sae-bom's understanding toward her mother further reverberates during their trip; Sae-bom and Yoon-hee are never always quite together – not only do they sit in separate aisles on the train ride to Otaru, but the moment they settle in their hotel, Sae-bom announces, "Let's spend the mornings doing our own stuff. Evenings are for family time." In said manner, Sae-bom draws a line between her and Yoon-hee

to distinguish their own selves – now grown up, and on the cusp of entering adulthood, Sae-bom no longer relies on her mother, and further no longer wishes Yoon-hee to feel burdened by needing to provide dependency for Sae-bom. In other words, both attain their sense of agency and self.

This point is depicted through the two character's relationship with people beyond familial realms – Sae-bom uses her mornings to meet with her boyfriend, Kyung-soo, who followed the two to Otaru from Korea, not only to share quality time but also to help Sae-bom scout around the area regarding Yoon-hee's past lover's whereabouts. At the same time, Yoon-hee is encouraged to rethink her scars and muster the courage to meet her past lover, Jun, one morning during the trip. She drives to her house, but is ultimately unable to face Jun again, fraught with fear. When Sae-bom comes across said fact, she immediately realizes that Yoon-hee's life will continue to be haunted by pain, and takes the final two mornings of the trip to talk to Jun's aunt, and then Jun, to discreetly arrange a dinner plan for Yoon-hee and Jun. Said plan ends up successful, as Jun and Yoon-hee engage in a cautious, yet tender reunion at the Otaru Canal. Seeing the two exchange glances of love, and her mother in a moment of healing, Sae-bom smiles in contentment. While her walk back

to the hotel is seemingly lonely, she is greeted by her own lover, Kyung-soo, sneakily attempting to light a cigarette. When Sae-bom takes the cigarette away from him, scolding him as to why he would try smoking, Kyung-soo sheepishly replies, "I just thought that it'd be nice if we

In *Moonlit Winter*, love is defined through one's acknowledgment of another from a distance. It is Sae-bom's plans to discreetly help Yoon-hee overcome her past after discovering the letter from Jun, and it simultaneously is Yoon-hee's subtle acknowledgment of

Sae-bom's life, acutely knowing about her smoking cigarettes, and having a boyfriend named Kyung-soo without Sae-bom telling her anything about said topics. It is the slight distance that is between the two when they walk through the streets of Otaru, and the pictures they take of each other from afar where love still manifests. It is when Sae-bom mentions Yoon-hee's constant rubbing of her wrist while walking up the steep snowy hills in Otaru that Yoon-hee never knew about before her remark. Because love does not only manifest

via closeness but distance – love occurs when one truly understands the other, absent of the roles and expectations they are to carry for us. Love is to be aware of each other, secrets included, but pretend to not know, and instead offer a gesture that we will be on each other's side. ☀️



Distance is not separation

JOAN KOBAYASHI

smoked together." Sae-bom and Yoon-hee's final nights at Otaru, ultimately, are respectively spent as moments to live as a girl on the cusp of experiencing adulthood, and a woman revisiting her traumatic past by meeting her past lover.

Where Must Love Be if Not Within You?

I always thought that to love someone meant to need their body close, to want to crawl inside their chest and make myself at home within it. A home located outside the confines of my lover's ribcage was not a home I desired to live in. I'll just tuck myself into their body, using flesh as my pillow, and as my blanket too. "Goodnight!" I'd say, and then turn off the lights.

I thought that what love meant was not just any type of warmth, but the kind that comes from pressure, seclusion, and distance from the cutting cold of the wind just outside. I could peer through my lover's eyes like a window to the outside, watching leaves swirling in coiled patterns, sweating in the heat of what I had thought was true love.

Yet no one told me how warmth often suffocates. That heat becomes uncomfortable and has no choice but to boil over, burning and searing all that exists around it.

BELLA COOPERMAN

So I began to look for love elsewhere. I looked under rocks and in the cracks of the sidewalk. I even scraped under my fingernails, just in case, and looked there too.

And as I continued to look, love began to appear around me. Once, I found it in small pockets of the wind, love lifting up my hair and kissing me behind my ears. Another time, I discovered love sitting at my kitchen window, whistling and humming, and letting me do the same.

Love is cooling and love pacifies. Love makes lightness inevitable. Love licks your wounds and pats them dry.

When I love, I breathe freely, feeling the fresh air pour down my throat and pool gently at the base of my lungs. When I'm

loved, I feel weightless, full of bubbles and butterflies. I float above the ground, but only a few inches or so, moving in winding paths following nothing in particular.

My home is in the clouds that the airplanes pass by. My love is in the breath that the one I love breathes, in the dew upon

the flowers that yawn as the sun begins to wake herself. My love is here and there, and in the next room too.

My love is beyond their ribs, beyond just us, and exists just how the wind does, moving in no rush at all, whistling and humming, inviting me and you to do just the same. ☀️



Taken Home
AC MANNING

EMULATE



Self-portrait
JOAN KOBAYASHI

not fully formed, though, he taught me
first the dough, how to mix it,
roll it, cut it, which metal shapes to choose
for Christmas, holidays and so on.
The right proportion of sugar
and cream to make frosting.
Set out different bowls
and told me to pick a few colors
and I'd pluck three teardrops
from their little coffin.
When the mini-men and trees and eggs and
hearts were pulled from the oven
he would leave it all to me:
sit me down with
twenty or so blank sugared canvases
and when I was done he would
take his camera and photograph each one
with a certain kindness
reserved only for grandfathers with cameras
and say *what a great job, Soph.*
As he was preparing the icing he would stand at
the counter cutting a hole in each bag
His mellow hands placing the metal tips
in the plastic; his expansive laugh
thrown to me at the table and then back to
watching the birds from the window and
he knew the names of every kind;
the chickadee, the robin,
warm-chested and fleeting,
their chirps in the sun as it streamed
onto his grinning face
there was an owl hanging from the kitchen light
made of yellow stained glass,
wisened, bright and breaking-
how refractory it is now- his going
without a goodbye.
and still, tender in every step
even in the cruel rush of things
how easy it is to be gentle

my grandpa made me cookies

SOPHIE
JONES

EMULATE



Distance is not separation
JOAN KOBAYASHI

EMULATE | SPRING 2023