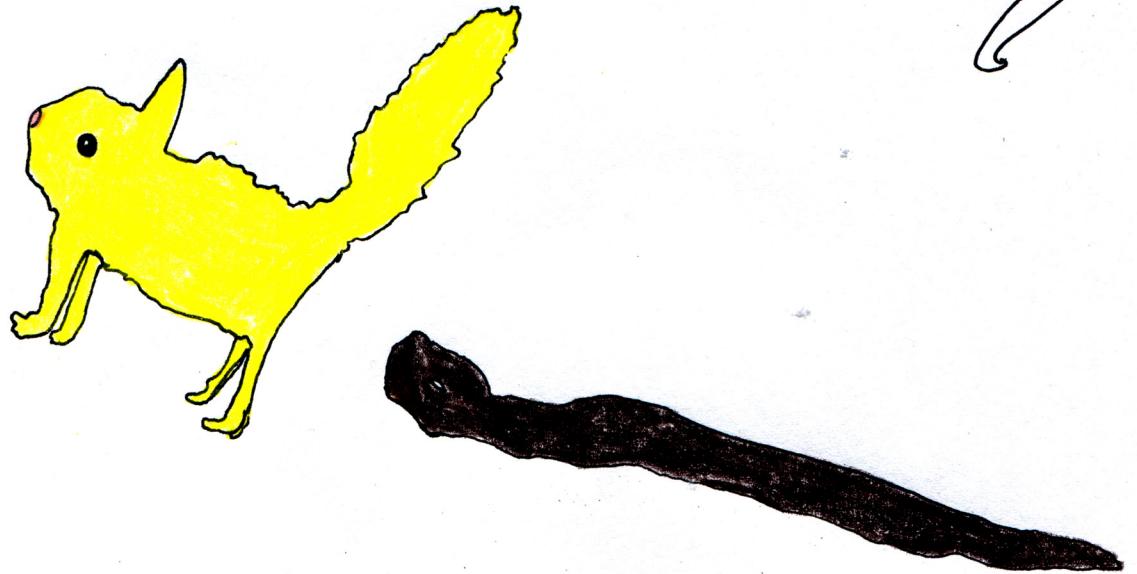


# Extrication

Watched a small, fluffy rabbit-dog poop out a snake: a shit anaconda with a jaw made from bone.



Its head moved around. I considered the nature of a beast made from excrement. Was it sentient? Circular? Could it digest?

DOUBLE-TAKES FROM SYLVIA AND CELESTE'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Extirpation

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The Evergreen State College  
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## I. Blue Corn

Frida Kahlo made a movie about somebody else pretending to be her. The actress, her name is Sylvia, had her arm broken in the film because she didn't know how high the building was. The managers called her boyfriends to interrupt the dream. They took her out of the bathtub and put her into a cast. "Something has happened," she confessed, "I am in love now." Accidentally, one of the boys had grazed her shoulder with his, and so now, she found out, she was married. Even though the movie had not begun; even though she had not yet sat for her portrait.

She thought, "It's a shame that I am frozen in the cast now," meaning, "I am amongst everyone else." She was only just beginning the Icons, just beginning Mary but it was not her own thorns which cut across her throat. Now Mary is the only place she knows to lay the roses, the only address she can find. So Sylvia sent her stories to Mary even though she suspected blindness, due to her age.

Sylvia and Lucille went to Mexico, bringing everything in backpacks. One of the bananas had an amoeba and Sylvia ate it, barfing into a black handle-bag used for transporting postcards. She couldn't decide on the folk remedy, drinking seven coca-colas.

When they felt better Lucille and Sylvia had blue corn dipped in butter. Two leather hands wrapped a baby and both the baby and the mother were asleep though more awake than she could see, as a foreigner. What could be done with more than one shawl? So Lucille and Sylvia split it down the middle and each took half to the homes they were deciding upon. They thought it would be better to give the woman a coin and to buy her fabric even though they already had a bunch of backpacks. Even though they stole a jam-jar from the supermarket when he wasn't looking, because it was French jelly.

They took a bus to Guatemala. A man was hitting his wife, she told the other girls, and he was hanging in a hammock in the chocolate tree. Sylvia was trying to remember the name of the civil war but it was impossible to forget everyone she knew, even to write a story about somebody else, but the woman's name was Lucia. It was an easy name to remember.

## II. Celeste

There are two women with black hair, one of them she thinks dyes it and keeps her face powdery, and not sure if she is a witch or not. Her name is Celeste and she was writing a novel. The ending came into view, which she knew meant she would be famous, so she would never have to work again. Or at least they would pay for her plane tickets. Celeste was optimistic, in a sense, because she believed that evolution was mutable, to be left to the individual's determination. Dream was astrological destiny; hers was to become famous, so she conjured it up.

Sylvia was going to college holding her white girl-magic beginning to turn blue. Celeste came up to her, smelling like adrenaline. "I am extremely fucking productive!" Celeste told her.

Sylvia read Celeste's manuscript even though she was afraid it was better than hers, and she thought Celeste was kind of a dumb-ass about history. It was handwritten on coffee filters in red and green pens, colored pencils, and typewritten words, with all but the most necessary words washed away. For example, "Lent" had been left as an outline such as two crescent moons (parentheses) and that word was somehow ringing Sylvia's bells because there was a Christian outline to the country. It was like passing many fields in which the grasses don't have names to suddenly come across some definition.

That girl's writing was so trimmed, it became happy again with all but the bones of sadness left. It was all about the difference between being an animal and being religious. Holding the few pages she thinks, "Only somebody crazy could've written this."

### III. Wizard Class, by Celeste

Celeste was sipping her afternoon coffee and working on her novel when she said to Sylvia, "I'm sorry but I'm going to have to typecast you." Now Celeste was writing about Sylvia. She gave her brown hair and put her into a woolen skirt, tying a bow around her waist.

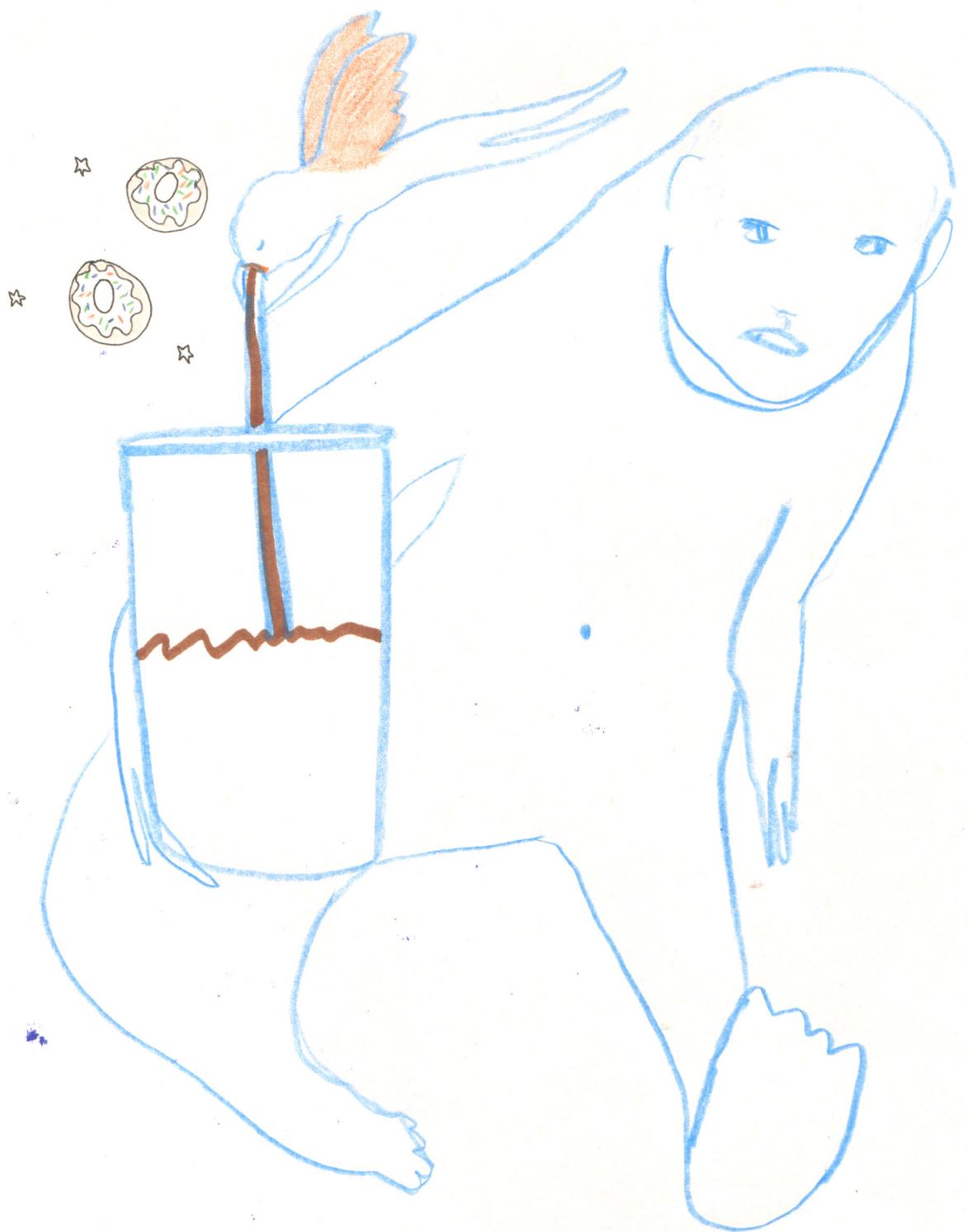


It is a process and not a disease, but must find a word for searching in the index: some kind of a name.



Pretending  
not to know  
they don't  
know





In the wizard's medicine there is shape-shifting not merely reduction. There is a reason for the shape, or at least, it has meaning.



The wizard, both a deist and a psychic, was imitating cats that are sick. Sylvia tried to copy the sounds he made into her notebook. She drew squiggles out of the mouths of the cats. He was telling his students about coughs. Once there was a demon; it looked like a slug, the wizard pulled it out of a man's throat with a poultice.

The wizard made tinctures out of pine needles, out of everything. He learned about Paraselsus and Hildegard. He learned the names of all the plants, even peaches, because he was working on an encyclopedia about Greek and Arabic chemistry, and all kinds of folk magic.

"Magic is very good for your skin," he told them sideways, though that was not why the students had assembled. Finally they thought they could make money. So Lucille and Sylvia changed their names and moved to So-Cal to be herbal estheticians.

Meanwhile what do journalists and doctors know about the blood and viscera? Evoking one history over another though the mountains remain larger than you can measure with tape.

#### IV. And Then, Those Fucking Twins

The stars had been looking a bit peaked so the sisters decided it was time to intervene,  
amongst Palm trees and olden castles.

Taking to heart the lessons of the wizard, they feed celebrities figs and yogurt packed in mason  
jars. They feel the skin on the inside of their wrist, and give them Peach Leaf, Yellow Dock, or  
Cleavers, depending.

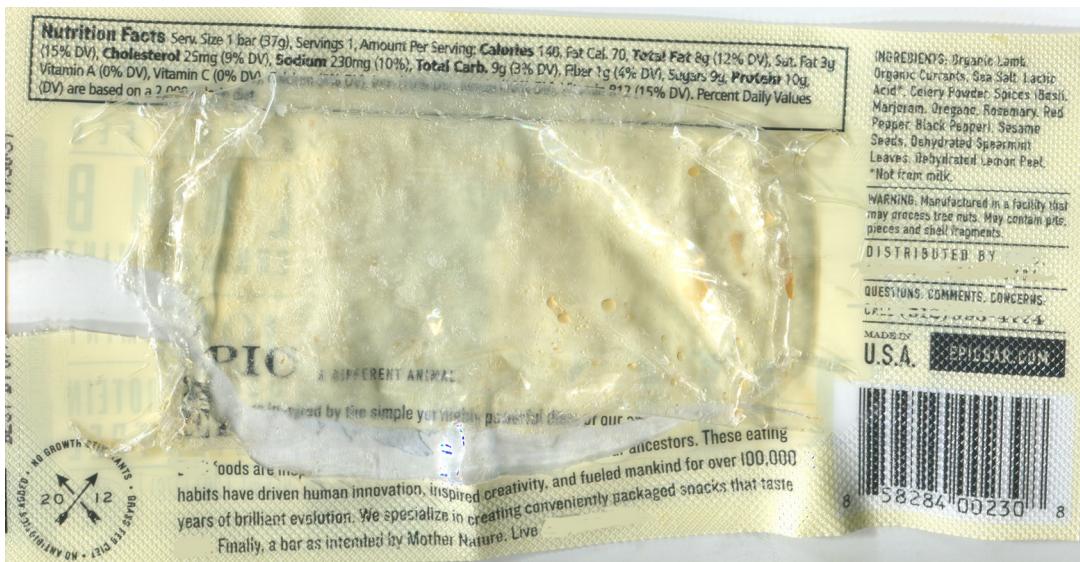
A certain way of appearing suggests what is to be done.

They tell their clients, “It’s simple to be healthy!” Each part is aglow.

Sometimes, heading up to the hills to whisper with the Brush.  
(Sage Brush.)



They keep a Peter Pan window open and  
use a polaroid to document the  
footsies and all the pretend milkshakes.



Borrowing from an idea of a cave-dweller or spider-soup, one eating not bugs but beef, and ignoring the pollen-witch who made enough bread for all of the babies. Yellow bread the color of the sun, like bees they baked on a platter.

## V. Sylvia's Mother

It is a store for cookie cake, big bags of chocolate chips, wholesale. It is very practical for making many dumplings, infinite snacking for the supply closet, children.

Sylvia's mother, too, has a sadness muscle. It might be genetic. As in, metaphysically destined.

Finally, something sincere:

## VII Chronic fatigue by Sylvia

It took Science to decipher the sawdust in the Supplements, but you don't need an instrument to identify a factory.

Religion itself could not protect the owls, but it saves the Sabbath day, usually, for my mother.

Bosses don't look at her patients' skin, so it's hard for them to believe the disease.

She checks their blood for signs of sickness and asks me for herbal advice.

I say, "They have been hexed, give them one drop of yarrow" because they need time + money to cook. An indeterminate promise, that is why we write novels.

- The End -