

# SINK HOLLOW







LET THE WORLD BURN THROUGH YOU.  
THROW THE PRISM LIGHT, WHITE HOT, ON PAPER.

- RAY BRADBURY

I was born lucky in that I always knew I wanted to be a writer. I imagine a lot of us are that way. We know it from the electric lift of the hairs on our arms when we read good writing. We know it from the compulsion that drives pen to paper and fingers to keyboards. We know it from the way we see the world and the way we catalog our thoughts and the way something deep in our stomach drives us to create.

This is the spirit of *Sink Hollow*—and it is this spirit that we hope to capture. We called for pieces and the pieces presented in this, our inaugural issue, called back—loud and clear we heard them and preserved their echoes inside us.

Listen, and you can hear them, too.

Welcome to *Sink Hollow*. We hope you stay a while.

SHAY LARSEN  
EDITOR

# CONTENTS

## POETRY

Brian Czyzyk	The Kirkbride Plan	7
	Nothing, AZ	44
Andre Gray	Anthropology of Greenland	8
Natalia Mujadzic	The man who owned the Food & Wine	13
Megan Olsen	Inversion II	14
Shannon Hess	Haiku: A Fall Collection	25
Cal Louise Phoenix	A Weekend, One April	26
Jordan Floyd	Pocket	28
Ali Everts	<del>current</del> definition of a woman	30
Maura Sands	Full of Absence	38
Bobby Bolt	Frailty: An Exercise in Structuralism	40
Alyssa Quinn	How tired gravity	46
Bryanna Adams	Monsters	49
Paul Ricks	Olive Trees in East Jerusalem	54
	#17	80
Heaven Barlow	Letters I Never Sent	56
Benjamin Ostrowski	Lotus	73
Ariana Yeatts-Lonske	Ode to Female Body Hair	74
Kyle Cina	Poughkeepsie	76

## NONFICTION

Macie Mitchell	On Smells	34
----------------	-----------	----

## FICTION

Derek Rose	Electric Nothing	17
------------	------------------	----

Luke Faste	Babyhead	60
------------	----------	----

## ART

Lydia Tullis	IMG_7309_1	11
--------------	------------	----

	Full Size Render	27
--	------------------	----

Julia Barsukova	The Old Town	12
-----------------	--------------	----

	Away from Home	43
--	----------------	----

	Helsinki Life	72
--	---------------	----

Jamie Duke	Untitled	16
------------	----------	----

	Blue Hour	75
--	-----------	----

Tiana Godfrey	Maude	24
---------------	-------	----

	Concrete in the Rain	58-59
--	----------------------	-------

	Jason is Fine Okay He's Fine	81
--	------------------------------	----

Hailey Treasure	Meiji	33
-----------------	-------	----

	Weeds	48
--	-------	----

	In the Wind	55
--	-------------	----



BRIAN CZYZYK

# THE KIRKBRIDE PLAN

We sank with the sun  
into a former madhouse

where hypomanics cracked  
plaster, and bats

gnawed the antiseptic air.  
We could feel the ice

baths choke us,  
smell the formaldehyde

seep from boiler pipes.  
In a room graffitied

with Bible verses and mushrooms  
was a woman wrapped in burlap

who scratched her teeth, unsure  
if she had fled anywhere.

ANDRE GRAY

# ANTHROPOLOGY OF GREENLAND

Reporting straight from strait,  
the dumb kingdom of a bonefish,  
Eyes like tiny caviar sums forked in an ice dish,  
And the University's rich ladies  
paying for this  
unaffordable Fjord  
eyesight abandoned,  
(I cite with abandon)  
stranded light, inter-mitten  
couples snowballing to fight.

Preserve my scholarly infertile bite  
despite the barmaid light brigade,  
*Subliminary notes:*  
*They'd sell their refrigerated library,*  
*for a few strips of Danish suede,*  
*and his military sway.*

Their kayaks just skins  
stretched over frames like drums,  
You can paddle into the middle of the  
soaked-through porch,  
Take a little "break in the wake,"  
park the long-lipped Porsche  
and get drunk.



Hearty beer but  
spirit's poor,  
not like the stuff in the city their  
soul bits bored and sordid  
with dog-bit sores.

Out here, it's so stuffed  
dumb with meaning  
the village myths lack feeling.  
I came across two tombstones  
that said "No more!"  
And watched a folksy play end in divorce.

I cried like a colonoscopized colonist,  
How many nails do I have to dig up  
before I get some grit?  
I brush, refine, and realign in grades,  
where does this skullbit fit?  
Who's culprit? Who's staved?

What I've written so far can't be published:  
*The local women look at me,*  
*Mystery skirts go in Sanskrit*  
*Like I have something to say,*  
*Sans spit,*  
*Like I'm literate, like I can dance,*  
*I'm unfit*  
*please look at me another way.*

All my love's preoccupied anyway,  
Taking record of ice cores,  
Hunkered alcoholologists will rub them  
on their face,  
Rave about polar pores,  
I believe them,  
forever an apologist  
I ask for a taste,  
and I learn that all the dogs huff about  
is last year's sled race

These guises, geysers, gazers,  
archly arctic paintings of sky fader  
So pretty Vikings  
waited for later

But this is sight sex,  
read regarding *Egret's Digest*,  
force-fed coast digress,  
I'm here strictly about a bipolar divorce text  
I'm here for the convention on how Erika the Red dressed.  
And the microscope's mute brevity,  
when we get around this  
island's flat crested request.



LYDIA TULLIS

IMG\_7309\_1



JULIA BARSUKOVA

THE OLD TOWN

NATALIA MUJADZIC

# THE MAN WHO OWNED THE FOOD & WINE

on Fifth Street always kept a candy cane  
lodged inside one cheek, that stuck out the corner  
of his mouth as he leaned his back against  
the aged brick, watching passersby on his storefront.

I found his year-round candy cane consumption  
eccentric, his voice unnerving. It was the manner  
in which he mumbled, *Careful*, after I walked in  
empty-handed and out with a pack of Newports

and a Colt 45 that turned my insides out,  
how the man never actually looked at me until  
he was made a standing watercolor in my peripherals  
as I failed to meet his gaze but felt it graze

my fleeting occiput. I would never work out  
if his warning was meant for my ears alone,  
that somehow this year-round candy cane eater knew  
I was a desperate moth thirsty for light,

or if it was a mantra he relied on  
to prevent himself from chasing after me as I sprinted  
to the end of the block.

MEGAN OLSEN

## INVERSION II

god doesn't care about the self-portrait you sent him  
just to make sure he'd remember what you need.  
You give him a picture of yourself, from the shoulders up

trying to inhale deeply, and choking on something  
that tastes like oils and acetone. You ask god  
what clean oxygen must taste like.

Proportions are hard to get right the first time  
and so is tracing the perfect shape of an eye pocket  
when it looks up. Your face is a little off

which reminds god of a big black beetle  
he had once made and placed on a mound of dirt

in the middle of North America. You might ask god  
to define the word *stratus* but you don't expect him  
to push all the cold air down and give you an easier background

to paint. Smudging dirt through the air, your hands get covered  
in invisible particles surrounding you. Toxic

like the devil's horse coach beetle you're stuck  
in a thickness of dirt looking up for some sort of light,

like the top of the painting you left white,  
so god would be able to see the shine of your head.  
The idea was, he would be able to see

your forehead crinkle while you ask him  
about smoke-stacked factories down the street.

But you only see the muck, the particles of dirt,  
smudges of grey fog smearing rays of sun,

like the way your hand smears the letters of your name  
when you sign it on your bug-eyed painting,

and then you look up for any gesture  
that anyone has received your request to breathe.



JAMIE DUKE

UNTITLED



DEREK ROSE

# ELECTRIC NOTHING

*What the rolling pin sees:*

The lasagna is flying! High above the kitchen, it pauses at the pinnacle of its arc, weightless. The top layer of noodle clings valiantly to the edges of the pan; coils of steam rise from the ricotta. Now it begins descending. Slowly, sinking, faster. It meets the linoleum with a crash. Pyrex pearls skitter across the floor. The marinara hemorrhages.

Ms. Conroy lies among the wreckage, clutching her chest. She's moving too much to be dead, that I know. Heaving, spasmic. It looks like she's trying to make snow angels in the sauce. (Er, like she's trying to make sauce angels in the sauce.)

But why doesn't she attempt a mad lunge for Telephone while she has the strength? Or why not cry out, even though no one is around to hear?

What a mess. It would've been a fine meal.

On any other day, the sight of lasagna on her floor would have sent Ms. Conroy into the same cardiac state. She often confuses the kitchen for an operating room. The fluorescent lights, the too-clean smell of disinfectant.

Wait, she's muttering something.

Hm? What's that? Speak up, Ms. Conroy. I doubt even Table Leg could you hear you, and you're right beside him.

The words seem to have jammed up somewhere in her throat. Now the panic begins to spread. Her breathing is jagged. Her eyes are flitting like two crazed goldfish. She stretches her hands into the air, grasping at nothing.

What a twisted sense of humor life has for the living: a heartless woman done in like this.

Well, at least she has us with her while she goes.

*What the salt shaker sees:*

Oh, goodness, I've really done it now. I'm positive I've killed her. What else could it be but the blood pressure? She has always fancied her salt. And to think how many years she has eaten alone now. So much seasoning for just one person. She's lucky her heart didn't stop ages ago.

Then again, maybe it did.

I mean, I like Ms. Conroy. Really, I do. She's always treated me well: never shaking too vigorously, never spanking the salt out too firmly. It's just, she used to be different. Back when there were more people around the table and more mouths fighting to be fed, she was happier. Now I can hardly tell which of us is the living.

But, I promise you—

Oh, for heaven's sake. She keeps trying to get up, but can't gain any traction in the sauce. Now she's dragging herself across the floor. Look at her go, slogging through lasagna like a member of the Triple Entente through the trenches.

Where was I again?

Oh, yes. I promise you there was life in her, though. Don't listen to Rolling Pin. He hasn't been here long enough to know how things were. Ms. Conroy's laughter used to ring throughout the house, full as church bells.

Her husband was a photographer, you know. He worked mostly for real estate agencies and newspapers, sometimes the occasional wedding. When he wasn't working, Ms. Conroy was his endless muse. I'd be surprised if they ever saw each other without a lens between them. She would wait in pose while he told her about shutter speeds and shadows. A tiny click, a burst of light, and the moment between them would be frozen forever.

I dream of having a love like that. What an experience it must be to bare yourself, petal by petal, to another. I've tried to meet someone for years—always flirting with Basil or dropping hints to Pepper—but it's a small kitchen, you see. The only suitor I've had is Cumin and, I'm sorry to say, he's just not my taste.

At times it's difficult to keep hoping, especially seeing Ms. Conroy the way she is. Then again, the thought of love usually

outlasts love itself anyway. Or, so I've been told.

I once asked Dust Pan why people kiss and he said it's so they know they are still alive.

Ms. Conroy was alive once.

*What the key rack sees:*

She stops moving midway to the stairwell. Whether she has lost the ability to carry on or forfeited the will, I cannot say. Afternoon sun is falling slantwise through the kitchen window, casting a barcode of light onto her body. I now see how frail she truly is. I think raindrops could collect in the divots between her ribs.

Having known her longer than any item in the house, I should reiterate that she has not always been like this—she is but a mere quotation of the woman she once was. It is like time itself whittled her down, hour by hour, until one day she awoke and was incapable of feeling anything at all. I'm not sure what spurred the change, but I do know it began long before the children aged and moved away, even long before Mr. Conroy fell out of love with her. Perhaps she just grew tired of life—buried its meaning, redacted its color. She has not left the house in so long that cobwebs are threaded between each of my pegs. We have been voyeurs to a vacant being.

I often recall the last time the whole family was here, the last time there was any life in the house. Each time I think back to it, the margins of the night become less important. The day does not matter, nor the time. It is the occasion that matters: her daughter's wedding announcement. It was in this very kitchen, at that very table. The clinking of silverware, a silence furnishing the room—save for some Van Morrison song lilting in the background. In that moment, I could hear everyone's heart beating. I have searched for my own many times since. After the announcement was made, Ms. Conroy remained impassive, idly gazing into the distance as if she had not heard anything at all. I think that's what finally did it. A fit of protest or even a roll of the eyes would have been better than that nothingness. Soon after, the kids stopped calling, stopped visiting. Then the day came when Mr. Conroy tossed two suitcases down the stairs, kissed his wife on the forehead, and turned out the door—his house key dangled like a pendulum beneath me.

There is a rumor amongst the house that she keeps every picture her husband took of her in a shoe box in her bedroom. (Of course, it was Armoire who passed that story along and we all know that Frenchman's penchant for the melodramatic. Tall tales are his *raison d'être*, if you will.) Nevertheless, I would swear Ms. Conroy was trying to make it upstairs to see those pictures one final time.

It is getting late now. Through the window above her body I can see that shadows are keeping time. This has been my view for

my entire existence. What a wonder it would be to step outside and feel the world upon me. To feel myself upon it.

I cannot say what it feels like to die, as I barely know what it feels like to live, but I have pictured it many times. I imagine it feels like lying down in a snow storm. Infinite bits of white fluttering and falling all around, softening everything until you finally rest. The snow must have begun falling on Ms. Conroy years ago.

I can hear the tide of her heart becoming slow. A rigid, blue vein knots and unknots against her forehead. Everything is still, aside from the ringing that hides within a deep silence. It is only this soft hum, this electric nothing, that I can hear until Telephone begins to ring.





TIANA GODFREY

MAUDE



SHANNON HESS

# HAIKU: A FALL COLLECTION

When harvest begins and so does school,  
Mothers can their peaches and children read  
*Lord of the Flies*

When I breathe out early morning air  
I still can't see my breath,  
But I wait for the morning I can be a smoker and a dragoness.

Something in the grass  
Bit me.  
Oh, dew.

The trees still cling to their green leaves.  
What's wrong with holding on? Only that  
No one likes your green leaves, we want the orange, yellow and brown.

Yellow flowers in a dying lawn,  
So beautiful to the three year old girl  
With a runny nose.

CAL LOUISE PHOENIX

# A WEEKEND, ONE APRIL

Straddling a worry doll,  
I've fountained into a million reflective pieces.  
It's the same feeling of being beside the sea  
—of being buried.

One can retrace  
having put my hands in the curly thicket of your hair  
and licked its pastry scent from my upper lip—you pulled  
the endless river of mine  
until we both unraveled into puddles.

You taught me that I'm allergic to  
coffee cups with liquor kissed rims and that  
life is packing into ill-fitted spaces. You taught me  
how to brood.

By the anxious eyeing of a hotel's digital clock—paused  
with a worry: *have we become codependent?*

For four nights, I was the blood of your lungs. The rest  
was accidental—*harassment!*  
Someone will relearn to love patches  
of cold cotton; my money's on the lion-hearted.



LYDIA TULLIS

FULLSIZERENDER

JORDAN FLOYD

# POCKET

Your jacket is long gone  
I think you hung it on the door  
strung out on the bed  
fingertips pounding staccato rhythms  
on my bare spine.  
There's a wind in my ear  
pushed out from your lungs  
that bulge beneath a menagerie of ribs  
soon enough they'll break.

I bet the dead will smile  
when I press your hip bone  
the skeletons will shake—

You wear handprint medallions  
on your pale skin  
and smoke a cigarette at the bed's edge  
remove the L.A. woman mask  
you, the chrome marauder  
gun slinging, modern woman of the west.

I recall the way your black hair swings  
like a pendulum,  
how you were confined by four walls  
and strange lips curling over teeth  
how I sensed injustice, but you found

bitter coffee grounds can remedy  
the passing of an old friend,  
a martyr, and the days when  
your father's dry hand on your thigh  
conjured unfamiliar longings, magic.

You can't just talk about it  
cut your stomach open  
and show me the severed threads.  
Lock the car door,  
hole yourself up in this garage graveyard

Put your foot down,  
drive fast.

ALI EVERTS

# ~~CURRENT~~ DEFINITION OF A WOMAN

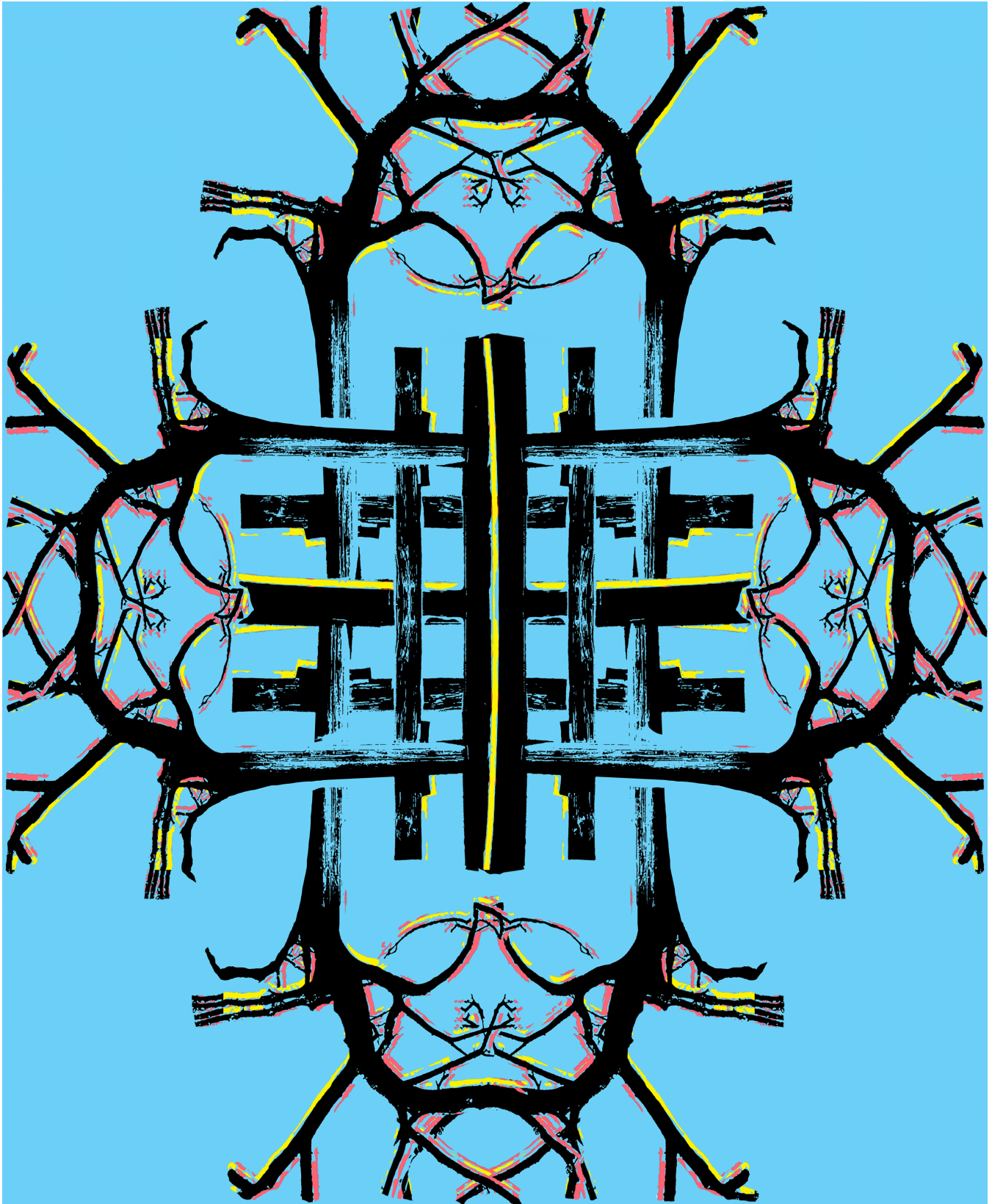
*(written on the back of a drink menu in the suburbs)*

crossing legs  
putting him in his peg  
drinking like a pig  
love trickling from kegs  
that sit on the wooden legs  
shaky and uncertain lig-  
aments of a girl talking big  
but he'll eat her out like a vig-  
ilante silently playing a sad bit  
on the old moral piano grit  
in the back corner of the bar's clit  
and clutter left behind and quit  
are the days where love meant  
love and sex meant sex, I repent  
so we newbies cross legs  
drink wise and guard our eggs  
sing with the sad jazz number, our bed  
having clean sheets and we said  
no, time after time like our dad begged  
quiet hands reading quiet prince charming deeds  
not partaking in weed  
putting our forks down and not weigh

too much we pray  
and so long we have stared at they  
those girls who mix sex and love prey  
on men with their eyes fire ashtrays  
and ours pure but alone and grey  
and as we sit on display  
a trophy waiting for decay  
our lips turn down sharp and we say  
FUCK THIS VIRGIN WAY  
trade our un-colored hair with black wig  
dance with too much ass dig  
freed from the hermaphrodite brig  
and we take a big wild swig  
join the young bar scene meant for liv-  
ing and breathing women drive  
recklessly but powerfully strive  
to be just as free and alive  
as men with just as much sex drive  
making just as much green money piles  
looking out at the America country miles  
living in a white house of aged smiles  
speaking just as loud as our brothers  
who were encouraged by our mothers  
to join the experimental sex scene like our fathers  
while we sat crossing our legs, rather  
defending our human rights, oh bother  
it's not a man's issue you detour  
holding in your tears scared to be sensitive and girl  
don't admit an internal pain, driven to suicidal cure

stop the cycle that sticks like wild burrs  
wanna eat 200 year old prejudice or freedom burgers  
will you teach your daughter to cook all eggs  
but her own, bow her just-as-intelligent head and begs  
for a raise, for respect, for equality, for no jacked-up rigs  
running her life and her ability to have kids  
again I'll ask for the highest bid  
the answer will set us free or take us to bed  
will you teach her—like you—to cross her legs?





HAILEY TREASURE

MEIJI

MACIE MITCHELL

## ON SMELLS

My mother flips a quarter and I call tails. I always call tails. It lands heads up in the small of her palm and this means it is my turn to ride the bike to Fralick Heights for drinking water, baby trailer attached behind, filled with empty apple juice jugs.

Our water comes from a well, runs through the faucet orange with rust. I fill a glass and hold it up to the light. It is foggy and dark but it is only iron. I want to drink but my father tells me not to. My mother tells me to smell it first. My parents don't want me to grow up drinking this, so they put me on a bike and send me to my grandmother's house. The tires squeak against gravel. For six miles I smell only pine trees.

Fralick Heights is mapped in circles, exactly two, weaved together with mustard houses, wooden street signs larger than eight year old girls, and grandparents drinking merlot on their patios. Brothers with bloody knees race for their father's last piece of cinnamon gum, their thin tires spinning until their mothers call them home, until their dinners are cold. Girls run with pink, sparkling hula-hoops to the old Buddhist's home, tossing their rings around the copper statue on the front lawn. Their grandmothers tell them this is okay. Their grandmothers tell them about worshiping false gods.

I turn my bike into my grandmother's driveway and see the drunken, callous man from next door spit tobacco into the wet soil around my plum tree, his cracked hands clenched as he pretends not to notice the sound of my tires. I get off my bike and walk toward him. I hear the neighborhood boys laughing at me from their porches. They don't know what this soil means to me. I reach out, pluck a fruit from the tree, and squeeze it in my hands. I can smell the juice between my fingers, ripe and warm. I can smell the black-eyed susans. My mother planted this tree for me while I was in her womb.

The Buddhist across the street waves at me from her yard and I walk over, plum still clenched in my hand. She lets me touch the copper statue. It smells acrid and metallic. It smells like pennies. She takes me inside to wash my hands and her house is cold. Her thin, dark fingers rub soap between mine and she smiles at me. I notice the cracks in her lips and the way her bottom teeth overlap. I notice the freckles on the bridge of her nose. She clips me a piece of witch hazel, tells me how she uses the fruit she grows to make jam, tells me, "Not everyone is soft like us."

Her name is Anne and she is not a Buddhist at all. When you're twelve it is hard to understand these things. I ask her about the figure in the yard and she tells me about Vishnu, Hindu god of protection. Anne asks if I would like a glass of water and I tell her about the plastic vessels I have carried with me. She offers to

fill them. I smell the jugs before handing them to her, one by one, untwisting the yellow caps, making sure the water will not taste sweet.

My mother taught me to smell before I consume; to inhale the spice of red wine, sniff the tea to tell if there is enough lemon, make sure the cow's milk has not gone sour. "Don't drink if the scent is off," she'd say. I have carried this lesson with me into adulthood. I never drink a cup of coffee before breathing it in first. I rub lavender between two fingers and smell. I test the aroma of canned soup before heating it up, smell the small chunks of pink chicken, the thick yellow broth, the aluminum tin.

Some people do not understand this and I am always hesitant to sniff the cup of chai that is bought for me on a first date, to smell the glass of water from a house I've never been to before, or ordering a café au lait in a restaurant for breakfast. This never bothered my mother like it did me. She never flinched when people would stare.

\* \* \*

When I was eighteen I moved into my own apartment. The first thing you saw when you entered was the scuffed scarlet kitchen floor, the cracked porcelain sink, the faucet aching with rust. The walls were stained yellow with nicotine from the woman who lived there before me. The cupboards smelled like dirt.

On my first Saturday morning there, I woke up alone with a thirst that needed to be quenched. I thought about my mother as I dragged my feet over the scarlet tiles into the kitchen, as my fingers reached for the brass handle glued securely to a large, mauve cupboard. I moved my hand through the cabinet searching for a glass mug.

Above the kitchen sink were two wooden boxes, each with three shelves, painted white many years before, the varnish cracking and peeling. A small light with a pull string sat on the brick wall between the boxes. On the shelves were jars of homemade jam, candles shaped like fruits, field guides on edible flowers, ripening bananas, jars of olives, and a small copper statue of Vishnu.

My mother would have hated the place. She never visited. But I thought of her anyway as I placed my hand beneath the faucet and turned the plastic nozzle. The water dripped out of the spout, black as plums. The roseate terns outside coupled in the ash tree, their dander bursting into the air. I bit my lip. I thought of her. I filled my glass and I smelled.

MAURA SANDS

# FULL OF ABSENCE

The monotony in my brain keeps coming back again back again back  
to the continental divide of the lobes. Right  
side, the pause in my breathing at night after each exhale & left side driving  
through a red light Blinking projector:  
hands slide down sides hands close throat to laughing hysterics  
wrong segue, I'm sorry.  
What do hollow words do but remain hollow.

My unflawed mother told me that *beautiful flowers don't always have perfect petals* that I put onto my lips but I still think that the  
same shade always slides over with open mouth.

There is a mixed-drink behind my blood that never seems to match the  
panicked stop & go of oxygen reaching its hollow tree. How can a  
tree be so heartless after all that has inhaled its hollow space,  
the projector slows. A shock to my shaking pills contain  
the sweet ends of trumpet vines with green pulsating humming birds figure-8  
wings fresh picked apples & a golden necklace.



BOBBY BOLT

# FRAILTY: AN EXERCISE IN STRUCTURALISM

*Of course you wrote a poem for your cat.*

I am not sorry for this, and *sorry* has devolved into a curse that coats my mouth like so much bad coffee. *Sorry* is an acceptable way to start one's day, but I won't anymore, and after all, one must so carefully pick one's battles.

So carefully I will pick all things, knowing thorns only keep roses closer with the flesh.

You were broken when I arrived, another lesson in pain:

The ambulance doesn't always drive fast enough, but *technically* nobody dies in there, and *technically*, the event was a fracture, so *you would be surprised* how often this happens. *Technically*, only the ulna snapped with the radius assuming a stronger and more supportive role.

So strong is the other's behavior under pressure, he-who-talks-a-little-too-quiet-and-too-close feels you may not need a cast, but *technically* this isn't a field in which he is an expert, so he leaves to find one.



They claim a fracture fixed with poles, tape, and gauze can apparently be fixed with nothing.

Apparently, the radius will support its partner even when they snap in two, but *this is a unique case*, and two together just might lose all structural integrity from the stress of one leaning on the other, or supporting the other.

When this happens, I am less surprised than you might imagine.

I cannot help but believe in the future, one that brought me the picture I still have somewhere of a snap so clear I can almost hear it. These broken parts are only made visible when the pain is too much.

*That's how you really know there might be a problem—you can just feel it.*

I have never broken a bone, only a window, and you may as well have been the broken glass in which I found my face.

*This is not a threat.*

*Please don't worry.*

Who am I even talking to anymore?

And how can you trust those bones again, who would so easily crumble at first stress? Did you hope for an unbreakable coupling, as if such structures exist in nature?

Faith cracked in your hanging, leaving medicine as the only dependable cure.

*May cause confusion, dizziness, and nausea.*

*May cause respiratory depression.*

*May cause addiction.*

You move differently still, though presumably healed, and remember the scream you learned in hopelessness like a brand new language.

Our memories are a hurt that never quit.

Our memories are the shadows in irradiated pictures.



JULIA BARSUKOVA

AWAY FROM HOME

BRIAN CZYZYK

# NOTHING, AZ

Moonlight chews saguaros.  
My skull rattles  
in the Valley of Fire.

Coyote cackles slash the air,  
clip what warmth pulses  
through me. I bare knuckles

in dirt, scratch stick figures.  
My nose pricks with rust.  
A black lizard skitters

behind greasewood. I jam  
my thumb between my teeth,  
owl my head, search for coyotes.

I came to Nothing  
to leave roulette drawl  
and gum-stained streets,

found gravel, a roofless rock  
barn, gashes in the sand—  
a sidewinder's trail.

I drown in the stillness here.  
I want a dun flash in the brush,  
canine rank and fangs,

want company in the dust,  
to join a chorus of howls  
and be heard.

ALYSSA QUINN

# HOW TIRED GRAVITY

the globe holds so heavy—  
how tired gravity must

*be more opaque,*  
capillaries, tissue of heart  
i beg.

i am too  
thin too open,  
nerves and pores let  
air stab cold cold cold; i  
am too close  
too small too saturated  
already.

the globe is choked in throat, blue  
marble lodged, blocking breath,  
sagging down to sternum,  
pulled by

*gravity don't let go,*  
don't let us drop (i know,  
we are so heavy) don't  
let us shatter into black, into

u n i v e r s e,  
    fall fall fall  
        fall  
            to bottom  
            (to bottomless bottom)

i see your fingertip slip over sea,  
hand sag with streetlamp clash—  
how tired you must  
feel, biceps  
pulling pushing stretching straining holding sweating flexing—

i want to close cornea (sight is what is heavy)  
want to clog pulse (do i?)

you want to rest  
you (i) will                      never                      rest.



HAILEY TREASURE

WEEDS



BRYANNA ADAMS

# MONSTERS

She was crying because she ran out of black dresses to wear on days  
like this

Cause mama said there would be days like this  
and I'm running out of tissues to wipe away her tears  
His little brother held my hand and asked me if I believed in  
monsters—

Vivid imagination like mine  
He said that they were black and blue like bruises  
No. Black and blue like cops.  
Can roses grow where there are rocks?  
This city smells like a massacre.  
He used to be his protector.

I'm here. Picking out another black dress.  
Blacklists for black boys. Target practice. Pawns and toys.  
They should really just have a section in here for black mothers  
Wading in tear drops and wails  
My grandma can barely remember what her son's laugh sounded  
like. It has just been too long.  
But, the remnants of it—she can hear it in song.  
Convinced that in the very moment women like her birth a son,  
They are handed the birth certificate and a casket catalogue.  
Life expectancy constantly declining  
Taught him religion so he would know the laws of his resting place  
With teardrops all over her face  
“I loved him! But it wasn't enough.”

Boys who become hashtags before they become men.  
#BringOurBoysHome—I wonder if God has a Twitter too?

We are taught to fear black bodies.

A country with a savior complex, sailing the seas in search of a  
monster to degrade

Separate.

Annihilate.

—Great Grandpapa’s back problems were caused by the nation  
resting on top of it

We built this!

Bodies taped off like a crime scene once we got here.

I won’t apologize for my blackness. For this skin.

This skin.

I’m in.

I’m not sorry.

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Oh.

Alive.

“Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”

\*terms and conditions apply

And I’m bleeding from all of the times I bite my tongue

Verbal thoughts raging against the closing of my mouth—waiting for

someone to say something  
Children become what they are told that they are

We are the guilty ones but—no indictment.  
Hands up. Don't shoot.  
My childhood best friend is about to be convicted of murder and I  
don't know if I should hold his hand too, so...

Dear black boy,  
Don't you know just how important you are?  
Black like 12:01, midnight  
Like absorbing fluorescence  
Black like mourning

It is impossible for him to be absent of light because I see 1,000 rays  
of sunshine in his eyes.

He asked  
Do you believe in monsters?

Everyday I look in the mirror and I am reminded that my skin  
color is a crime punishable by death—people kill what they don't  
understand.  
Exercising my political right not to birth babies because they might  
just look like me  
My mom used to check under my bed for monsters but you're not  
what I imagined that they looked like.  
Mommy, that monster was my friend.

Black boy.

Whose innocence was stolen. Raped by a “just” system.

This society creates monsters and chastises them based on an implementation of their own stereotypes.

You did this!

Not guilty.

Trayvon, baby—we didn’t forget you.

Michael, you too.

Never believe all the lies that they tell because the monster inside isn’t you.

We’re dressed in all black. It’s a celebration.

Attending more funerals than birthday parties.

We’re glad you got out of here while you could.

So I look down at this little boy.

Do I believe in monsters?

Little does he know that he will grow up to be one.

Black boy.

Monster.

Guilty ones.

We are.

No indictment.

I finally found that black dress.



PAUL RICKS

# OLIVE TREES IN EAST JERUSALEM

Do not go out into the olive trees.

Men were shot in a synagogue  
and in their anger the police came  
to the grove and shot tear gas.

Now the gas seeps down into the ground  
and makes the soil weep. A million grains  
of dirt cry in protest and I am afraid  
they will refuse to feed the trees,

and then we will have no olives.

These last years our trees have been drunk  
on the streams of blood that flow  
just under the topsoil. We taught

the trees to gorge on violence and hate  
since no other food could be found,  
and our trees continued to grow.

But if after all I have done, the trees

still wither and die, then nothing  
will be left to soak up the violence.

There will be no olives remaining  
for our family to sustain ourselves.



HAILEY TREASURE

IN THE WIND

HEAVEN BARLOW

# LETTERS I NEVER SENT

Dear Red Hair,  
I saw the fire in your mother's eyes  
When you grabbed my hand 3 minutes  
After meeting me.  
So I twisted my tongue down your throat  
Until she tasted brown sugar.

Dear Family & Friends,  
You do not need to turn on the flash when you photograph me.  
Yes, this is my real hair. NO—you cannot touch it.  
My grandmother was born here. My mother was born here. I was born here.  
If you take off the last two letters, you still can't fuckin say it.

Dear 6ft 3,  
You were supposed to come when the leaves turned brown.  
Now the trees are bare and my feet are wet.  
I told my family about you for thanksgiving.  
They think I'm a liar.



Dear Freckles,  
You kissed me like a stumbling apology.

Dear Ex,  
Your mother and *her* can share combs.  
She doesn't know what it's like to  
Be a fetish.

To whom it may concern:  
I have HIV.



TIANA GODFREY



## CONCRETE IN THE RAIN

LUKE FASTE

# BABYHEAD

When we go to Florida, my wife swims laps in the hotel pool. I prefer the beach, but I never wade further than ankle deep into the water. I'd rather drag a lawn chair onto the sand and watch the seagulls fight over chunks of pizza crust.

Once a year we stay here at La Flaminga. It's an old hotel with salmon stucco siding and turquoise pillars to support the gulfside balconies. We like it because it feels apart from our life in Duluth. Cream wallpaper and purple neon beams running down the hallways, plastic palm trees basking in their light. The lack of a smoking ban. Crystallized somewhere deep in the eighties, La Flaminga calls for you to laze, stagnant in the humid air. Once the airport shuttle drops us off, nothing is required to move forward. Laps and laps around the pool or beers on the beach, that's it.

Because next month is our ten year anniversary, I went all out and booked a second story poolside room. My wife gets up earlier than me, and most mornings I wake to her slipping on her grass green one-piece and tinted goggles. "I'm going for a swim, Dennis. Yell for me when you want to get breakfast."

On this morning, I sleep past eleven. The room has a pleasant amber aura. Yellow wallpaper, glossy golden linens, dim lamps. The AC is pumping against the warm, wet air. When I step out onto the

balcony overlooking the pool, everything turns blue. There's navy tiles on the deck and walls and cloudlessness in the foggy skylight. My wife is underwater. I probably wouldn't recognize her were it not for her swimsuit's color: her figure warps and contracts in the pool's shimmering lens. She's just a shape whose edges I can't define until she comes up from the deep and regains womanly form. Her eyes are not visible behind those goggles but I know she's noticed me standing above her on the balcony. I give a little wave and my wife waves back. She grabs a towel and disappears through the lobby door, leaving puddles in her wake.

I've tried to swim with my wife before. The result—every time—was scaly rashes on my forearms and neck. Somewhere down the line my body must've chosen to antagonize chlorine. I hate the smell of it, anyway. It reminds me of the time I almost drowned in a community pool at the age of thirteen. The curvy lifeguard was like a clam diver, the way she yanked me from the bottom. She watched me vomit pool water on the deck afterwards and rubbed my back tenderly.

My wife returns to our room, hair half-dry and stringy, goggled eyes like black mirrors. Chlorine steam curls off her body in the coolness. The chemical smell circulates and makes me nauseous whenever it passes. Sometimes I wish she liked the saltiness of the ocean—something more natural. Maybe, then, I could swim with her. But whenever she wades into the ocean, she feels like she'll be sucked to the bottom by some current or tentacle.

My wife changes into a sundress the color of key-lime pie and tells me about a couple she met while swimming. They were eighteen, nearing graduation, and the girl was cradling a health class baby doll. They didn't get in the water. They were just inspecting the pool after checking in. "Twelve years our junior, and they've got us beat one-o in the baby game," she says. This is a joke, I think: it's almost four years now since my vasectomy.

We walk to a breakfast place down the street from La Flaminga. We're tired of waffles and microwaved McMuffins at the hotel. My wife orders eggs. I get Kielbasa.

"Do you need anything from the corner store?" she asks, using a butter knife to swirl the eggs around on her plate.

"Nope. Do you?"

"Not even sunscreen?"

"Nah."

"You'll fry, Dennis."

"Okay," I point at the eggs. "You gonna eat those?"

"Yeah, actually, I am." My wife devours an egg and a half in three bites. She saves the last bite for me but I tell her no, that's okay.

Afterwards we're at the corner store buying sunscreen. My wife points to a couple down the aisle. "That's them."

“Who?”

“The couple from the pool, this morning.”

“Ahhhh,” I say. The boy has long limbs and he’s reaching for something on the top shelf. Diapers. Then I remember the health class baby doll. He gives a throaty laugh and his ghostly mustache quivers. He brushes strands of greasy black hair from his forehead and pulls a ten out of his hoodie pocket. The girl is holding the baby and a what looks to be a can of glow-in-the-dark paint against a pink tube top. That’s all she’s wearing except swim-suit bottoms and flip flops.

They notice my wife and I staring. The boy gives a slight nod of recognition with his mouth hanging open a little. The girl makes the baby wave to us, which triggers its pre-recorded cry.

“I think we made a mistake,” my wife tells me when we get back to our room.

“Come again?” I say, mouth full of twinkie from the corner store. I’m trying to avoid the cream filling by eating it like a corn cob.

“Ugh. I don’t know,” she crosses her legs and rubs her face.

I abandon the Twinkie and sit next to her on the bed. “What is it, babe?”

“Your vasectomy,” She snips her fingers like scissors.

“Oh, god,” I rise, and plop down only a foot from her. “Oh, god, are you serious?”

She gets up and shakes her head. “No, no. It’s stupid.”

“Not stupid. I know what you’re saying,” I scan for affirmation in her face. “God, you can’t be serious.”

“Okay, fine, yes!” My wife sits down again, starting to tear up. The AC is pulling its weight, because it feels like Duluth in the room. “We were twenty-four, Dennis! You didn’t like kids.”

“Neither did you!”

She sighs. “It hadn’t happened yet, anyway. So we stuck it to the man permanently.”

I roll off the bed. “Stuck it to the man, indeed!” I yell, and stomp out of the room. “Neutered!” I slam the door so hard that it swings back without closing.

I’m in a deck chair on the beach tapping the plastic arm and feeling toxic bubbles float around in my stomach. They’re popping as my head rattles like a bingo cage.

Somehow, I’ve neglected to notice that the boy from the pool has appeared on the beach. He starts to wade into the water using gym shorts as swim trunks and carrying the baby doll. He gives me the exact same nod he gave me in the store.

I watch him slosh around in the shallows for a while, wishing he didn’t have that baby with him. He stops after ten minutes of sloshing and looks down at something. “Hey.”

I’m startled to find that he’s addressing me. There’s no one else



on the beach. I can tell that he's looking at me now though wet hair that hangs sappy in his face. I answer: "Um, hey."

"Can a jellyfish still sting you if it's dead?" he asks. His voice cracks on the word "sting".

I said, "I think so," though I'm not sure.

"There's a jellyfish over here."

"Oh, yeah?"

"Come look." He beckons to me with his babyless hand.

The boy has come across a translucent jellyfish hovering in the foam. "Yeah, he's dead alright. Been dead for a while, probably." I have no idea how long it's been dead. "But it's still got sting, so don't try your luck."

Right then, the baby starts cooing, *Ma-ma. Ma-ma. Ma-ma.* I look into its plastic eyes. The health class dollmakers didn't even bother to give it irises. Written on it's forehead, in blue sharpie, is "Addy + Eaden." I assume these are their names.

"Goddamn, I hate this bastard," Eaden says. "My girlfriend named it Nash, but I call him 'Ass'. It suits him."

*Ma-ma.*

"Will you give it a rest, Ass, Please." He dangles the baby upside-down. "Hey, you think a jellyfish could survive in a pool?"

"Probably," I say. "If it can survive in the ocean, it can survive in a pool." The sun is getting lower and a cool breeze rolls down over the beach.

I walk down the hallway on my way back to the room. The overhead lights have yet to flicker on, but the neon beams never go off. I unlock our door and come in from the purple glow of the hallway. I find my wife in the bathroom, wrapped in a towel, blow-dryer roaring. She turns it off when she notices me.

“Not having children,” I say, “doesn’t make you less of a woman, you know.”

She sighs. “That’s not what this is about, Dennis.”

“No?”

“You’re not going to understand.”

“Try.”

My wife looks at herself in the mirror. “It’s not about what makes me more or less of a woman.” She runs her hands over her curves. “It’s a beautiful thing, being any degree of woman. Having the ability to cradle life inside of you. Do you ever think about that, Dennis?”

I stay silent.

“But it’s also cruel,” She drops her towel and brushes past me. “It’s cruel that nature has chosen woman to carry that burden, alone,” she says, rummaging through our suitcase and piecing together an outfit.

“That’s what I told myself when we opted out of kids, that I had no contract to oblige that cruelty.” There’s another mirror on

the wall to her left, and she's looking at herself again, half-dressed. Her hair is half-wet, too, because I interrupted her blow-drying. "This morning, when I saw that girl with the stupid plastic baby, I had a twinge of desire to have a child. And once you left, I was so angry with myself." She balls her fists, and looks me in the eyes, shaking her head. "No, not at myself. That desire was not mine. It never has been. That twinge came from somewhere else."

I look down at my crotch and try to feel what she's feeling.

"I know you can't understand," she says, noticing my face, crunched and strained. Any hint of spite has drained from her voice.

"You're right," I say.

"You feel like your body is yours, right? Like it belongs to you. Like you control it." She's finished dressing, in a low cut green top and the shortest shorts she's worn in years.

I look down at my crotch one more time, for confirmation.

"Yes," I say. My crotch is speaking through me.

"Well I don't! I have to fight for it. Everyone...nature..." She pauses. "Thinks my body is theirs."

"I'm sorry," I say. "I really am."

"I think I need to go on a walk," she replies. "Alone."

I'm watching TV on the bed when the smell of chlorine starts drifting into the room. I get up and walk over to the cracked balcony door. As I clutch the handle to close it, I notice something strange:

the lights in the pool room are off. Right then, I hear a throaty scream that purls through the tiled chamber. When I throw the sliding glass door open and step out onto the balcony, I can't believe what I see. Spilled across the pool, in the dim light, is a film of glow-in-the-dark paint. In the center, a body bobs to the surface with a dark splotch surrounded its head, pushing the paint away. The body disappears again beneath the luminescent pool. I can see the dark, lanky shape of Eaden at the end of the room trying to yank a lifesaver from the wall.

Without thinking, I climb the balcony railing and leap. For three seconds, I am suspended over snot-green water. I smash through the surface and open my eyes, feeling the sharp sting of chlorine as it floods my retinas. The glow makes everything underwater bright and clear. I see Addy, sinking, with luminescent paint trailing from her body and a cloud of blood above her head. I hover for a moment and start pushing through the water. She's lying at the bottom when I reach her. I let air from my lungs and descend, scooping her into my arms, and thrust up from the bottom. We rocket upwards and burst through the green gauze. I take a gulp of air and slide her onto the pool deck.

We're covered in paint. Eaden rushes to my side. "Holy Jesus, is she okay?" he asks.

Blood trickles from her forehead.

"Turn the lights on!" I tell him. He runs to the switch, but only

half of them flicker on.

He slides back towards me and tries to offer an explanation: “We were just trying to—” but his testimony is cut off by a sharp breath from Addy. She coughs. There’s no water in her lungs.

Her eyes peel open.

“Wuh?” is all she says. Then, “Ow,” as she feels her head. “Owwwwwww.”

“Call an ambulance,” I tell the boy. “Now!”

“Dennis,” my name echoes in the pool room. It’s the voice of my wife. I look behind me to see her standing on our balcony. “What the hell?”

Eaden hangs up his phone. “On their way,” he tells me before leaning down to hold his girlfriend’s head and wipe away the blood with his sleeve.

I stand up. Out of the corner of my eye, I see the baby, Ass, floating in the pool, beating against the tile on lapping waves. I take him up into the cradle of my arms.

“Dennis!” My wife screams. “Oh my god! There’s a jellyfish!” Her eyebrows are raised to her hairline and she points a trembling finger. “Jellyfish! On your leg!”

I gulp too much air when I see it, this tendrilled, gelatinous creature hugging my leg. I yelp and the plastic baby slips from my arms and slams on the deck tile. From the floor, its damaged, hissing speaker loops in a deepened pitch: *MAMA. MAMA. MAMA.* The

Jellyfish flinches and pulses. For a minute, my body lets me feel no sting. My wife is gone from the balcony. She bursts through the lobby door moments later.

The pain starts to explode when I tell her: “It’s still alive.”

We look at the poor baby squawking baritone *MAMAs*, and back at each other. My wife smirks.

Before the paramedics haul Addy from the poolroom, Eaden croaks “thank you” in my direction.

“No problem, Eaden,” I say. “And give Addy my best.”

He looks confused. “Who’s Addy and Eaden?” Then, he remembers the names, realizing I must’ve seen them written on the baby’s head. “Oh, we’re not Addy and Eaden. Lots of couples had this baby before. Those are old names.” And with that, he follows the paramedics through the door.

Now, I’m limping out onto to the beach with my wife. “We have to let it go,” I keep saying, staring at the jellyfish. “It isn’t ours. It has to live.”

“I know, hun,” she insists.

I start to wade. When the water reaches my thigh, the jellyfish unravels like floss and spirals into the tide. I want to believe it moved by itself, but it could’ve been the backdraw of the wave. I can’t tell.

A sliver of sun has yet to sink into the gulf. My wife puts her

arm around me and faces the fuzzy horizon. I look down at her lower half, which blurs, refracted through the water, like it did in the pool. My eyes travel to her upper half, above the surface, every square inch in perfect focus. It's strange: I'm finding it hard to picture her whole body, replete in clarity. The upper half will have to do.

Pain blooms in my leg. A rolling wave brings the water to our chests. This is the deepest I've ever been.



JULIA BARSUKOVA

HELSINKI LIFE



BENJAMIN OSTROWSKI

# LOTUS

pink lotus, petal of my eyelid  
sugar sugar kiwi pomegranate

it's burgundy, oh ammoruccio  
iris iris prism shaving

la la Lucy like the snake smoke  
feet holding heaven, hair uncared and dendrite

and when she calls *oh god oh god*  
she isn't wrong as she twists

ARIANA YEATTS - LONSKE

# ODE TO FEMALE BODY HAIR

Spurned sister of darkened lashes,  
you are zooish as chimp,  
feral as alley cat.  
No longer proof of firm flesh or first stain,  
no longer promise of warmth,  
you are the weeds of an abandoned garden—  
your keeper too strange or seething.

Snubbed sister of thickened brows,  
you are razed and seared,  
yanked and electrified.  
Furtive blond fluff above  
now bare,  
thicket of dark curls below  
now bald.  
You have been deplumed and muzzled;  
You expect this by now.

Scorned sister of waist-length locks,  
you whimper about the roots  
of *pudendum*—that of which one  
should be ashamed—that shame  
uncured by all of this lack.  
Sweet sister,  
someday I will ruin myself,  
and it will be by you.



JAMIE DUKE

BLUE HOUR

KYLE CINA

# POUGHKEEPSIE

...I sipped at your marrow  
between arterial pumping of pass-by  
cars that won't slow:

    “those were the bones of my  
    childhood, at the department  
    stores when everyone  
    wore nice clothes,”  
they say through slit cornered  
eye, “get out never go in again”

...they're scared to lick  
the wounds of unwholesome memory,  
to brush up next to unwashed  
brick that tasted blood of whales  
all train-oil burned away

...your bloody echo  
changed mouths closed lips  
walked to the suburbs,  
walled up Levittown,  
fled for the Whitehouse

...I was thinking of the very old  
times when the Romans first came here,  
while our group fell on you like a snow  
pale horse, behold! us galloping white through

Main Street past Kennedy's past  
the boxing gym past the church and mosque  
dreaming of change, boulangeries,  
and artisanal cheese shops,  
I saw the stares of disbelief or fear,  
were we lining up to reap the Cantiaci  
we'd come to sew to ourselves?

...they want to Iraq you  
in Dresden fire and wash hands,  
call it a comeback, boom business,  
whatever their greased palm pretends  
their heart is tattooed 'conqueror'

...I've seen your sisters apocalypse:  
benefactors of progression traveling to rallies,  
marching one day in unconquered cities of forced  
segregation, chanting "we gonna be alright"  
with Michael's decoupage bead jewelry  
signs of protest, returning to Hudson proud  
with photos from their pure-tourists journey,  
closing their doors to bullet-sound reality,  
sipping Pernod while voices outside  
invisible walled Warren St. cried 'shame',  
lamenting the plight of never-givens while living

in rentals who's rates went up ten times making way  
for antique store wine bar gelato  
savage imperial conquest,  
going dizzy in glee knowing their coffee house  
once serviced sailors a century ago  
in red lighting and dreamed of seamen  
along the walls, believing what was *right*  
but not right under their feet

...I've seen true savagery  
smashing beer bottles at Mahoney's,  
twin erect lily pricks in button ups  
black jeans and matching snapbacks  
yelling 'bro' before glass drew blood,  
we cheered them on, yelled for the sport  
to be death, and the death to be slow  
like the cops who'd be late

...I've seen true beauty  
when forced past my prejudicial fear to look  
at the creek cutting through town  
trash and all  
the clay in your open armed artists' hands  
shaping themselves the world no assistance  
required at the kiln, burning away  
ox-tails and screaming phone calls

...I don't want to see you fall  
same fated as Upstate, Beacon,

or Peekskill's beginnings, the trust funds  
who'd kill to coast in your ribcage  
burying your vibrant truth in youthful violence

...tell me what *you* want me to do

PAUL RICKS

# #17

*Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was an international flight from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur that crashed while flying over Ukraine on July 17th, 2014, killing all 298 people on board.*

The reporter said they had been scattered  
like seeds in the tall grass, left in the hopes  
that they could dig into the dirt and grow  
up, back into the sky they fell from.

A forest of metal and broken limbs reaching  
for the heavens they kissed a thousand times,  
till instead of clouds there was white  
fire and prayers to God. We have all

imagined ourselves falling, the act  
of looking for wings and learning  
that our ancestors only dreamed of flight.

Maybe they imagined they were stars.  
Maybe beneath them people stared up  
and made wishes as they fell to earth.





TIANA GODFREY

JASON IS FINE OKAY HE'S FINE

# OUR CONTRIBUTORS

**BRYANNA ADAMS** is an undergraduate student at Marist College, pursuing her degree in criminal justice. She enjoys listening to music, performing spoken word poetry, speaking on issues of social justice, and spending time with her family.

**HEAVEN BARLOW** is an undergraduate student at Western Michigan University. She is majoring in creative writing and minoring in world literature. She loves writing and reading. Upon graduation, she will be going the Peace Corps to teach English across the world in developing countries.

**JULIA BARSUKOVA** is an undergraduate student at Saint Petersburg State University, pursuing a bachelor's degree in IT/Math. She loves to play computer games, pet cats, watch TV, occasionally read, even more occasionally (but very passionately) debate over human rights, learn more about the English language and take her camera wherever in case she spots a moment worth capturing.

**BOBBY BOLT** is a senior at the University of Illinois at Springfield, graduating in May 2016 with plans to pursue an MFA in Poetry at Texas State University in the fall. He edits poetry for several journals, most recently working with *Alchemist Review* which will have a table with their latest issue at AWP this year. He loves how editing roles expose him to a large pool of unique and authentic work, also enjoying the ability to share that new work with a contemporary community of readers and writers. "Frailty" was read in an earlier draft at the Poetry Foundation in October 2015, as a part of their Open Door Reading Series.

**KYLE CINA** is an undergraduate student at Marist College, currently studying Adolescent Education. His hope is to showcase the role poetry has had in creating social change, both historically and presently, to his future students.

**BRIAN CZYZYK** is an undergraduate student at Northern Michigan University. He appreciates (but doesn't always enjoy) the six months of snow in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. He has poems forthcoming in *Portage Magazine* and *Dunes Review*.

**JAMIE DUKE** is an undergraduate at USU pursuing a BFA in photography. Her work often explores themes of gender inequality, gender roles, stereotypes, expectations, and roles. Upon graduation she is moving to Portland for an internship.

**ALI EVERTS** is an impatient, self-conflicted, soul-searching undergraduate writer from Montana State University, Bozeman, MT. Who aspires to become one of those hippy poets strolling along beaches.

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**JORDAN FLOYD** is a junior at Utah State University studying English and Journalism. He enjoys skateboarding, writing, and the city of Las Vegas.

**TIANA GODFREY** is currently pursuing a BFA in Painting and Drawing as well as a BA in Art History. She is very into everything that anyone in the 1980s ever thought of, especially thoughts by and about Meatloaf. Pop-culture, consumed online and through a feminist lens, is her very particular area of interest. Every piece of art she has ever made was probably, in some way, inspired by either Britney Spears or the USSR.

**ANDRE GRAY** is an undergraduate student at the University of Southern California. A budding anthropologist and amateur botanist, you'll often find him lounging in rose gardens or prepping his camping gear and specimen booklet.

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