

Fall 2018 / Issue 16



# Jet Fuel Review

Featuring work by Alan Chazaro / Dorothy Chan / Matthew Zapruder  
Toni Nealie / Fabrizio Arrieta / John Sibley Williams  
C. Finley / Zefyr Lisowski / Jameka Williams



# **JET FUEL** Review

The logo features the words "JET FUEL" in a large, bold, black, distressed font. The word "Review" is in a smaller, black, sans-serif font to the right. A blue, stylized arrow graphic with a white outline and a dotted pattern points from left to right, passing behind the text.

*A High Octane Literary Journal*

*[www.jetfuelreview.com](http://www.jetfuelreview.com)*

*[lewislitjournal.wordpress.com](http://lewislitjournal.wordpress.com)*

*Artwork: Fabrizio Arrieta's "El nacimiento del Futuro"*  
*Cover Design: Kayla Chambers*





## Mission Statement

We seek to create a writer's community, publish quality writing and artwork, and maintain a blog connected to the literary journal site.

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# Foreword

Dear Reader,

Welcome to Issue 16 of *Jet Fuel Review*! The editors are thrilled to share with you the exquisite array of writing and artwork that inhabit the pages of this issue. After months of reading, and much deliberation, editors have selected pieces that embody our commitment to curate a publication that is evocative, thought-provoking, and representative of the many voices and experiences that shape the world we live in.

Housed at Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois, *Jet Fuel Review* is a student-run, faculty advised, internationally recognized literary journal that publishes writers and artists from across the globe. Founded in 2011, *Jet Fuel Review* continues to flourish with writers and artists breathing new life into the literary world. We are truly honored to serve as a platform for voices that may lie in the margins, and we are eager to have their testimonies and stories heard. We are honored to showcase artwork that forces us to view the world from a different lens, to envision a life outside of our limited, single perspectives. The featured cover art for this issue, “*El nacimiento del futuro*” by Central American artist Fabrizio Arrieta is one of five of his pieces that use methods of distortion, deconstruction, and collage to produce images that are visually arresting, and reimagine the world around us.

In our poetry section, we are privileged to publish Guggenheim Fellow Matthew Zaprunder, 2014 Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Fellowship Finalist Dorothy Chan, multiple Pushcart nominee John Sibley Williams, and recipient of the 2017 National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures grant, ire'ne lara silva. We are also excited to present Zefyr Lisowksi's haunting poems dedicated to the murders of axe-yielding Lizzie Borden; all set to appear in their forthcoming chapbook, *Blood Box* (Black Lawrence Press, 2019). Also, in this issue we are thrilled to be publishing Nigerian poet Logan February, an emerging writer who is already making waves throughout the poetry community at the age of 19. Their pieces “Mannequin's Samsara” and “Corpus Vile” manifest in ways that are sonically satisfying, imagistically distinct, and engaging to the eye especially through use of contrapuntal structure.

In our Fiction section, we are elated to be the home of Hannah Son's first published piece, “Eukarya.” Also, featured in this section is Toni Nealie's, “Bloom,” which presents a splintered marriage between husband and wife, a bond that slowly severs before our eye. The works of both women are among other prose pieces that exemplify the beauty and magic of the written word and its ability to immerse readers in lives other than their own. Our nonfiction section features Nicole Schnitzler's “Permanent” which explores the intimate relationship between mother, daughter, illness, and hair.

There are many more voices that comprise Issue 16. All of the pieces that live within these pages are an amalgamation of fresh writing and artwork that challenge the single narrative, coupling innovative style and sharp social commentary to create work that transcends the page, leaving a resonant impression on the reader. *Jet Fuel Review* is committed to providing a platform for work that is diverse in both style and creator. We aim to publish writers and artists from all ages, races, ethnicities, genders, religions, socio-economic statuses, and the multitude of other demographics that humans balance and, once again, to present a journal that represents the dynamics of the human experience. We invite you to enjoy our 16th issue and we hope that you appreciate the enthralling assortment of work that we have collected.

Read on!

Zakiya Cowan & the *Jet Fuel Review* editors





**POETRY**

The word "POETRY" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font with a white speckled texture. It is centered horizontally and overlaid on a thick, lime-green zigzag line that spans the width of the text. The background is plain white.





## **Dreaming Dogs**

Don't they too try  
To speak, surfacing,  
Submerged,  
As some phantom  
Chases them awake?

Don't they also seem  
So often to be after  
Something, scratching  
At air, splayed  
On their backs?

And can't whatever climbs  
Free of the teeth  
Of its age to sleep  
In the predecessor trees  
Or caves or dens

Desire liftoff and try  
To sing—in dreams  
If it must, hopefully  
Though, in the morning,  
In sunlight?

Rising from dreaming  
My own dog was drowning,  
After I dove in  
And took hold of her  
Harness, I walked outside

Early on a Thursday  
In the middle of June  
Singing low in my throat  
A melody descending  
Slow as creation,

While our two leashes  
Swayed a string  
Accompaniment  
Across the concrete  
And lilacs; and why not

Believe that they too—  
The wooly ones with  
Wolves for great  
Great great  
Great times twenty

Thousand great grandmothers—  
In their less-muzzled  
Dreams, like us,  
Inexplicably lift  
From the dust and rise?

## **Plastic White Girl**

White guys online want me savage,  
draped in beads. Long black nipples,  
nothing else.

:

Do not hold me to the light.  
I have a lot of browning thorns.

:

Skinned & kinked.  
Sally Hemings in leggings.

:

In *Pinky*, Pinky Johnson passes for White.  
& still her skin - blue vein surface -  
thin enough to witness the yellow in her.

:

Nina Simone's skin was black & slick  
with gin sweats. A furious drunk, she never  
got a pair of blue eyes for Christmas.

:

Don't leave me, my love.  
Tangle your fingers here:  
dark roots meets alabaster skull.  
(deletes Tinder account)

:

I received a bar of Ivory soap &  
a washcloth for Christmas one year.  
A plastic white girl the next.

:

Gin is also white.  
Simone's teeth: white.

:

I'm drunk: the white walls vibrate  
like mice.

:

Simone sang of four women: *My name is Aunt Sarah!*  
Sarah's skin: yellow, her father: rich-white, her black mother:  
forced.

:

My Sarahs are foamy leaves rippling through a latte.  
My Sarahs get DNA test for birthdays to see if they  
have a little Wakanda in them, on their mama's side.

:

Spoiler alert: Pinky puts the wrong skin back on.



## **The Animal**

Consider an animal lives behind your eyes / eating pissing sleeping / in your head / Drags broken fingernails along your optic nerves / Screams all day / every night / She wants to fuck / but there is no one to fuck / (short needles of black hair trail down her navel to a tuft of wool) / She wants to eat (something with sinewy flesh) / but no one is here to get eaten / You catch a shy guy on the El / he smiles in your direction / He has fragile eyes / The animal inside you says / you cannot have that / Things you cannot have: sugar / money / blood / She wants a peanut butter sandwich / one Tuesday afternoon / You gargled fistfuls of peanuts between sobs / You sink shots of vodka / retching / The animal says she needs fresh air / & she wants to get out / & walk across your epidermis / You want to carve a road down the fine line / of the vein of your right wrist / Instead you etch six short trails in your forearm / because you don't want her to leave / She's been fun / Stay / A little blood / will suffice / She flies off kicking / into your brain stalk / wailing / all be damned.

## **Joystick, Ending with a Question**

*“I dunno what was so funny or why i was smiling so hard that night but i never smile like that. Im tryna feel this good all the time” -Darrwel Torres, former student, on Facebook*

If being boy is being broken and being broken needs fixing, then let this joystick help us move towards something better, and let better mean the next level, and let the next level mean victory—when we’ve outplayed the frames-per-second speed we’ve been allotted on our screens, because we’ve reached our goal and finished this game, when we can look around our empty living rooms at 2AM and say *here it is, world, something we’ve accomplished today*, and even though no one is looking, we will know that this is the opposite of hurt, that a Nintendo 64 is more than wires crammed inside black and gray plastic, that boys who have conquered galaxies in *Star Fox* have prolonged their own defeats if only for another day of holding something sacred, like a controller in our callous-thumbed hands, and what is this if not a cosmic form of joy?

## Link, Hero of Kingdom Hyrule, Speaks Out on Depression

There is a German word that means *The feeling in your fingertips*. I don't know how to say this properly or how to spell it but I know the feeling

in my fingertips is glacial, is bladed, that my shield cannot deflect self-doubt, that red clouds suspend opulence. I sometimes hear the stars

calling out to me. I imagine they are searching for a martyr to spitshine glory into them. Before breathing, I learned about sandstorms, how they refused

to be held. I learned that *storm* is code language for *forward*, that you mustn't get swept away. Away, such a slippery word. A way

or away, circle the better choice. Circle what you've found to be false within you and recite the ten definitions of hope. Follow

whichever rhapsody you must. Last week I overheard someone say *I once believed I was the one starting my days*. I know this

is not my truth. I no longer understand the difference between slow-bleeding and the moon overturning.

## **Mourning Dove**

The method of sustained grief  
is an intonation

falling back into the cage of the chest. Hear how it knocks.  
Examining loss is another way toward

finding what you have. When I say  
*you*, I don't mean "one."

What you have is before you, always a little  
lonely for the next glance.

It doesn't matter if every embrace is meaningful. Touch  
adds to itself. Bodies sell its thrill.

A reliance on language — can it solve  
the impropriety of absence? Who

left you, who will leave you, what comes  
next. It will happen, it will.

## **Along the Water**

The girls who cut class  
walk down by the creek.

They gather handfuls of tall fescue  
still anchored in mud

and braid them, leaving  
hip-high green arches as a reminder

of a newfound restlessness.  
If boys knew anything — and some

did, but were too shy to let themselves  
be known — they would see

into these spontaneous structures  
the pressing need of hands

to touch and be touched, to work and test  
the fiber of limbs rising from the breathless ground.

## Glassmaker's Travel Diary

*after Leopold Blaschka*

Grief doesn't bloom/doesn't float but falls/shedding  
stillness until it touches black/the ship motionless  
on a mirror sea/becalmed a word for a state of mind  
that might mean trapped/might mean caught in  
an absence of wind/yellow fever took my wife/  
my father dead too/America an idea on the other  
side of waiting/at night the sea creatures rise up  
onto my sketch pad/swim across my eyelids/when  
I get back I'll turn them into light/dip memory  
in melted sand/memory a word that should  
mean forever but doesn't/the color of her eyes  
wavers/the shade of her hair in summer/my father  
wearing a suit and folded arms/becomes watercolor/  
his voice lost in breaking waves/the jellyfish glow  
translucent as they disappear/when I get back  
I won't let them go/because replica is a word for  
a state of being so strange/it can live at depths  
where mortality is only a loose net of syllables.

## The Chinese Zodiac Snake Cocktail

According to the Chinese Zodiac,  
Snake and Rat meet at a bar, and she slithers away  
sipping something a little smoky, a little sexy,

a little jalapeño mixed with tequila, because  
*Light my fire, baby, light my fire*, she's thinking, ready  
to devour the Rat Man whole, and the Snake Woman's

a seductress—fire embodied, the face and body  
that launched a million ships into the night, that oversexed  
little human who really means no harm,

unlike Eve's serpent of the candied apple,  
but really, who wouldn't have been seduced by that creature  
so long and graceful, long and graceful,

baristas had to name a coffee after her: The Snake in the Grass  
made of mint and mocha and a shot of espresso—  
*Ice me, baby, ice me*, or what about the cocktail

of gin and vermouth and lemon and ice,  
and let her sneak up on you, and why don't you imagine  
you're stuck in the sheets, a boa constrictor slithering

up your way, and would you push her off? You've got  
to admit that even if you're terrified, you're turned on,  
and the Snake Woman is a seductress ready to swallow

the Rat Man whole, and he loves how she's wise,  
good with money, a little arrogant, and in Chinese culture,  
if you're called a snake, it's a real compliment—a good eye,

the cunning to succeed, beautiful eyes, and I learn this  
when I'm six, stunned, facing a yellow snake caged up  
in a pet store in Pennsylvania, and when I go home,

my father reads me a fortune, tells me I'm a snake,  
and when I'm fourteen, losing my temper, my mother  
tells me about the family fortune teller visits before I was born,

how he warned my parents about my temper:

if I lost it too often, I'd end up a housewife with two children,  
and in that moment, at fourteen, I want to cry

at my kitchen table, but my mother tells me in every  
case, I marry a handsome man live happily ever after,  
and I'm not romantic, but that fairytale's carried me

through adulthood, the way I think about the animals of the zodiac,  
and the Snake Woman's a seductress,  
ready to eat the Rat Man whole, and she's compatible

with roosters and oxen, but rabbits are too much sex  
for too little time, but there's just something about a snake and a rat  
playing cat and mouse at a bar—how she slithers

away, he's intrigued—she's hard to read, she swallows him whole,  
and they forget about everyone and everything  
in the world, in this scene of tension

you could cut with a knife, and it's sexy the way  
she wraps herself around him, and the rest is history, and if the fortune  
teller's right, I can hardly wait to swallow my Rat whole.



## I'll Take the Love and Not the Money, Plus Some Oysters by the Half Shell

All I want is a dozen oysters at the hotel bar,  
no mignonette or lemon required,  
and don't the best nights start this way:  
I'm hankering for an iced seafood platter  
or a dirty martini with extra olives, or the seven-star suite,  
bowling alley and stripper pole included  
for a little *I-won't-tell-if-you-don't-tell-2-AM*-dance  
where I'll take the clothes off your back,  
you applaud, and room service of filet mignon  
and garlic mashed potatoes miraculously appears,  
and don't you dare betray me the way James Bond  
killed that stunner-of-a-Godiva-woman-walking-her-  
white-horse-on-the-beach-a-green-bikini, *after*  
they rolled around on the white fur carpet, and *before*  
their room service of caviar and Prosecco arrived,  
but instead of all of the above, tonight,  
I end up with \$1000 in chips at the Blackjack table  
because some guy I met at a Scottsdale bar  
called a limo to Talking Stick Casino & Resort,  
insisting I play the role of eye candy,  
but no, I'm not the girl who blows on dice for luck,  
so, he buys me that \$1000—will I take the lust  
or just run with the money, picturing '90s Demi Moore  
rolling in the dough, in her prime, what an *Indecent*  
*Proposal*, and oh, the thought of starring in an XXX  
where money's the lover is just so appealing,  
but I think the answer is I'll steal the \$\$\$  
and be with the one I actually love, but is it stealing  
if it's rightfully mine—how the best feeling in life  
is a beautiful woman whispering in your ear  
or what about Botticelli's Venus rising out of that scallop shell,  
her Victoria's Secret curls ready for a little romp  
on a seashell bed like an Old Hollywood actress playing  
peek-a-boo of *find the pearl, spread my legs,*  
*cater to my every whim,* pearls wrapped around my breasts,  
a pearl necklace as a thong, or what about Japanese  
love hotel roleplay where we get it on to the fish and mermaids  
in this make-believe tank of a wall, or if you'd prefer,  
we can watch the solar system, and all I want is a dozen

oysters from the hotel bar, and I'll leave the money,  
and instead we can have nicer things like spaceships  
and shellfish and romantic tension, and oh, oh,  
your face, smiling underneath the sheets  
when room service knocks on our bedroom door.

## Ode for Baby Pandas, Hong Kong Mornings, and My Grandmother

The one English word my grandmother knows is beautiful—  
    *Beautiful*, like pandas knocking over buckets of leaves  
in Sichuan, over and over again, and their nanny moves them  
    to a corner, their adoring fans waiting with cameras,  
and if I won a million dollars, I'd fly across the ocean  
    in a heartbeat just to hug them, just to give them cardboard  
to rip, just to see them trot along on their merry way,  
    ready to cause more destruction, ready to knock over  
more buckets of leaves, and it's *beautiful*, and speaking of cute,  
    I'd take a date with baby pandas over a date  
with the celebrity dreamboat of my fantasies any day,  
    even if said date included a view of Tokyo Tower  
and raw oysters and every caviar imaginable and the best lobster  
    in the world and a nice serving of uni and a little Cioppino  
and pistachio gelato and some French fries with sweet ketchup  
    on the side, and *Do you want to go out for a steak  
later? I'd like it nice and rare, nice and rare*, and that's everything  
    I want, but I want the pandas more, and it's beautiful  
the way the panda expert on television declares that pandas  
    are beautiful because they remind us of our own children,  
and I'm jealous of travel show hosts who get to cuddle them,  
    because I think about their black and white goodness,  
like black and white cookies or Little Debbie Chocolate Cupcakes  
    with their oh so twee vanilla spirals, reminding me  
of cute girls wearing cute blouses with black ribbons,  
    and I'm not pure enough to pull that off, but I appreciate  
the effort, ladies—beautiful—and what about blackout cake  
    or white truffles or my favorite Hong Kong drink of all time,  
the yuenyeung, the yin yang, the divine East Asian morning  
    concoction of three parts coffee and seven parts milk tea,  
and it's eight, not seven that's the lucky number in Chinese  
    culture, but that's beside the point, because this drink is  
beautiful, beautiful with a Hong Kong breakfast of noodles  
    and ham in broth or what about condensed milk on toast,  
a side of Asian sausage, or what about plain and simple  
    congee—what a beautiful morning, and oh, my grandmother's  
so beautiful, and it's beautiful how *beautiful* is the only word  
    she knows in the English language, and I love how she loves  
girls wearing double buns because they remind her of pandas

and I think it's *beautiful* how the Scottish Fold next door  
makes her smile like she's a kid again, and she wants  
to let him in, but I'm allergic, but oh that smile—beautiful,  
like my first memory with her, making cookies in the shape  
of camels, and if I won a million dollars,  
I'd fly across the ocean, take my grandmother with me  
to play with pandas in Sichuan, order her a bowl of noodles  
with lots of beef and tripe, and oh, do you see those baby pandas  
knocking over those buckets of leaves—beautiful.

## a song of burning

i never forget the ash a thousand thousand black wings in the sky  
black against a blue so blue so wide so bright

i'd see the ash and  
know they were setting fire to the sugar cane fields before harvest  
burning away leaves and straw and tops

clearing and cleaning  
causing the creatures to flee the scorpions the snakes the bees  
rendering it safe for the workers to collect the precious stalks

what else do we burn  
with this purpose this desire to shed the unnecessary to concentrate  
one single intent to collect the sweet

what else do we burn  
knowing we are not destroying not erasing only doing away with  
the chaff and husk of us the mean the petty the unjust

have you  
never heard the fire singing singing as if every sound hurt as if  
every note was pulled from deep within and the leap from emotion  
to sound left a wound

ragged and bleeding but give me that song it  
is the song i need to stay true the fire has come the fire has sung

i  
am straight blackened stalks of cane now bare to the eyes bare to  
the hands

only the sweet of me left and i obey my gods speak when  
they bid me speak set myself on fire when they say it is time for  
harvest

some sweet is the collected essence of flowers some sweet  
grows long and green swaying with the wind under the sun until it  
is brought forth from flame and ash

and i am ash always the ash  
in the sky and i am the sky and the light landing on the black of my  
ash

and when my gods bid me rise again i rise again and i will  
rise again whenever they bid me until there is nothing left with  
which to rise

## **Chimera**

Eventually the sun licks the white off a hung dress.  
All gods turn to violence to retain their lost worship.  
A wounded dog seeks comfort in the call & unresponse  
of its master. & the men we promised we'd never grow  
into multiply in the bathroom mirror. Let us start with  
the fact a cesarean scar implies both genesis & denouement.  
That a single gesture can bring a country to its knees  
or lift it from servitude. My son at the beginning  
resembled the end of my infancy. My grandfather once said  
we're only as old as our complicity. There is a monument  
to a Confederate general still riding his stone horse  
into an integrated school & another down the road  
dismantling. The first time you see it, a barn fire at dawn  
can break your heart. Eventually perhaps I'll get a taste  
for all this waning.

## **Currency**

*If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water,  
how can you buy them?  
—Chief Seattle, 1894*

You could fold this paper into any kind of animal,  
launder a constitution until the language blears;  
illegible, which is to say you can remake a country  
in your own image without knowing what  
you look like to others. Silent in its frame,  
a body can be spent like any currency. Beads,  
for example, bartered for an island. Or blankets.  
Small pox. Invitations to a feast. Almost nothing  
can be abandoned without first being held; tightly,  
for example, a narrative. Or water, withheld.

**Dear Ahab**

I'm somewhere out there too, entangled  
in my own narrative. Not lost, exactly, but still  
a good distance from being found or finding. Froth  
& foam. Fatherhood. Language. Obsessions: I know  
in comparison mine seem less *grand*, less *ungodly*  
& *god-like*, like chasing fireflies in a field overlit  
by stars. Like grinding lies against lies  
until a few sparks burn true. Then handing those  
to my son so he can see me in the dark when I'm gone.  
Just replace harpoon with whiskey, with unending  
packs of cigarettes meant to keep eternity at bay;  
the self-doubt woven through love. Replace drowning  
with living a long life landlocked between words  
& everything I cannot make them mean. I know nets  
aren't meant to hold the wind, but what else would you call  
this empty billow? It's okay if there never was a whale  
or fireflies to snare & pull closer. It's okay if in the end  
my son forgets me. We all see what we need to see to keep  
that fire lit, to embrace the world by pursuing it a bit too far.



**The birds begin to rust**

& crack; black wings coiling copper, flaking  
down on us. These days we'll take

anything to fill our lungs with. Even  
horsehair, corroded barbs unlaced

from fenceposts, clouds of sheered wool,  
a father's promises. A country's.

The dead have nothing but stories  
to roll around endlessly

in their mouths. Stories that reach us  
as screams. We used to

scream too. These days not much echoes  
apart from our burning

the surplus crops & harvesting the same  
from their ashes

& burning old photos just to remember  
the dead more fiercely. Please

give me back my war. I don't know  
what to do with this much silence.

## **Happy Valley**

The ladder gets me but half-way  
to the cool of your stone, so I  
must climb the rest to reach  
the gladiolus wilting into dust,  
your silent neighbor until guilt  
brings me to your sweeping.  
I come this time with your sutra  
learned by heart, sweetened only  
by the tea and bread you used to  
prepare for me just over these  
hills that brown over now in  
the third year of your absence.  
They still call it the happy valley,  
a name that never appealed to your  
ear more attuned to the pair of  
nightingales that stopped singing  
when you did not come to hear the  
news over breakfast. By the time the  
pat of butter had melted, you too  
were gone, and I would not brave  
the trams with you again thereafter  
in the uniform you had patched  
with callused fingers needled  
to bleeding. The valley has you now,  
I know, but I come sweeping only  
to beg for something more than your  
forgiveness, something that kept  
me believing in the wish of a name,  
for the middle of mine still carries your own.

## Talking to My Daughters About God

“The ring in which you are but a grain  
will glitter afresh forever.”

Nietzsche, *Notes on the Eternal Recurrence*

Easy to forget when you're eight  
and untutored in the rights of the holy,  
you have no touchstone for the untouched,  
which makes *virgin* word as simple  
as *daguerreotype*, for which you also sought  
definition after some reference heard off  
public radio earlier in the week. But  
you're eight, and your sister at eleven  
has read the body book without  
a chapter on babies, so I start with Mary  
because it's a week past Christmas,  
and you know enough about the star  
and manger to see specialty in a surrogate  
birthing a god, unaided from the start  
by the hands of a man. I can't help  
mention property, propriety. The real  
message is a warning: how I lost  
religion in this vision so delicate  
the slightest brush of fingertips  
could forever tarnish. Or in a desire  
not to be locked behind some enclosure  
of glass. I never bought a religion's  
insistence in men at the head, even more now  
when men as head seem again eager  
for the fight. So we try to separate god  
from the warring faiths, locate the *what was*  
before science's spark, and the *why create*  
if life means accepting only one half  
the image, or only that which mirrors.  
Or even less. We begin to think  
science and god aren't so different,  
the natural world as random and unfair  
as an unconcerned creator. We talk  
about bilingual Jane, her T.V. virginity.  
And Aristotle, Einstein. Energy that cannot  
be destroyed, which you say is as close  
to god as cinema's force – also wrapped

in battlefronts and fictions. I avoid  
Nietzsche, though we are circling  
eternal return, because I can't imagine  
yet fully a world where humanity  
means so little to itself. A world  
floating in some thin space between  
silver-plated copper and mercury fumes,  
its image unmoored from its casing,  
meaning a world all too easy to erase.

## Unified Field Theory

The passage of time depends on the particulars – trajectory followed and gravity experienced – of the measurer.

Brian Greene, *The Hidden Reality*

Suggest: time, as acted on  
by gravity. Light stream  
of photons or mathematical  
waves based on your  
language. Is strength  
direction, the movement  
of gears, switch of teeth  
by valley, and your second  
split in the ambient  
radiation that makes each word  
on each page clearer?  
The centenarian sees each story  
in the paper as human  
oscillation. We repeat, in time,  
repeat. In time, Einstein  
sought to unify fields.  
But only the two named  
in his time, now four,  
and we repeat tooth  
to the valley. Numbers  
can be words. As words emit  
from moonglaze in wind  
whipped waters, the stain  
of diatomic slides.  
Is there a theory of such  
communications lodged  
on record? To unity, then,  
we repeat. And hope.  
For a perspective better  
than our own. A space  
that lives life right.  
A time, to repeat, a light  
when the potential  
needs not escape as actual,  
but holds true to the best  
dictionaries of all language.  
So all can mean *I have done  
my share*. And let go,  
time, light, in elegance.

## Color Is an Event: Yellow

The sun is yellow.  
    The sun is a blotch  
Of paint, the paint  
    Is egg yolk and  
Orpiment crushed  
    With the utmost  
Pressure *for ten years*—  
    If you can manage—  
*So much the better*  
    Said Cennini  
And *don't soil*  
    Your mouth with it.  
This is not for cowards.  
    The orpiment  
Is arsenic  
    Sulfide, a rock  
Layered impasto  
    With the run-off  
From a volcano.  
    The sun is a volcano.  
The sun is a poison.  
    The sun is the sun.

## **Color Is an Event: Blue**

Lapis you've covered your lap in matches your eyes,  
The skirt you're wearing, lifted over thighs:  
Blue lace receding from a white sand beach,  
Oh sweet shipwreck. I would de-blue you stitch  
By stitch, raise the bluest flame from your skin  
With every kiss, flood and loose every vein  
Until all left is your cloud-breaking peak.

With broken boots, with sorry song, desire  
Leads to the Afghan mine where blue fire  
Is blown with black powder into the world  
And polished. Bullets were hurled  
Here yesterday, perhaps tomorrow too.  
Always, until the mountain crumbles to  
The ocean, and the ocean throws it back.

## **The Mannequin's Samsara**

Sometimes I find myself dangerously close  
to the meaning of life, until it slips away again.  
To a hawk, gravity must be an annoying rumor.  
I understand this crisis too well. My song is  
loudest at my ribs, with no one close enough to

hear it. I am plagued with the predicament of hiding.  
Imagine a small, brown house. Inside it,  
rooms so clean they must be full of ghosts.  
The foreboding closet door, rattling. Behind it lies  
a heavy coat of black velvet & fox fur. Beneath that,

the boy's racing heart, his hairy legs, blood rushing  
beside folded bone. This exact heat I was born into.  
The self buried in the self. Why does no one cook  
the cow's bladder? Is it not infused with sweet water?  
Is it not close to the womb? Only in dreams

do we know what is precious. The girl who failed  
her semester drowns her guts in battery acid.  
Her oblivious grandfather uses his glass eye  
as a paperweight when he reads the news  
by candlelight. A delicate wisp of smoke slips

out the window, into the night. Even fire  
must separate itself from its darkness.  
Dearly beloved, I am not asking to be sanctified.  
Pray for a garden to bloom, or for a path  
to be clear. I want to be naked. I want to wander.



**Corpus Vile**

The child is small & rounded. Perhaps,  
a violin wrapped in brown-skin &  
dirty blood. He came from the outside  
& didn't demand milk. This is how I am,  
a stranger in my own home.  
We don't quite know how I was born,  
why the boy is here, by myself. My mother  
thought that door was sealed, was surprised to have me.  
Nobody gets it. She didn't know what to do —  
we had a riddle with me. So I did it myself,  
a glowing lump of brittle — fed, wiped, vanished. I was a mother  
who didn't know sleep for a hundred days.  
We have tried to rectify this. Now, I have grown so tired.  
The child dreams of my own milk. It reeks  
& lasts a lifetime of small compromise. I want to sleep  
without waking, after all of this acting.

## **There are days**

the leaves read feverish and  
my hipbones blush.  
They fatten and sink in their  
little horns.

\*

I want the noodle of honey  
I read once.  
I could die to slurp that  
odd noodle,  
sinking my tea leaves down  
or stuffing the honey bear  
up.

There is something to tasting  
like there is something to  
touching—  
the age of an avocado,  
the filth of summer on a  
tomato husk.  
You have to feel one  
wrinkle.

\*

I am erupted.  
A hot spring, I shake  
loose like a chair—  
watch my hair grow out  
its hay.  
I wish I could go quiet  
like a baby  
river.

\*

I want to paint it red,  
finger around the empty with  
red paint—  
my two red fingers  
riding the lines,  
brighting them.

\*

The light goes tinsel and  
I thread a want—  
speak you my hands.

They say people like me river in myths  
to simply water  
their mouths.

\*

I am mad with snow, a truss  
riddled with peach  
skin. Look how I fur.  
I think I want to  
be less like the land  
and more like  
a girl wearing the land.  
I want to die like a mineral and rise  
midday.

\*

I earth a hate  
and tree a  
decadence—  
if only for some chocolate  
cake.

Fork my tongue.  
See how I glow.

\*

Juice is full.  
I beat it like a plum,  
beg for simple syrup.  
Just some  
sweet weight.

## **Suddenly**

There is a better way of leaping than *Just Because*.  
We all know the water's not always black  
at the bottom.  
Sometimes you just need a good xylophone.  
A bowl of coffee. An afternoon alone

with the tulips & Lawrence Welk mashups.  
The tightrope strung rooftop  
to rooftop lets you see the birds  
swimming below.  
They are another form of language or

a song without staves.  
In the wind that is the world flung in circles  
round the sun, the clouds are water's desire to fly.  
All is movement. All, song. Every last thing  
a test of light's power

to turn a flower's head.  
The way a wildebeest's does  
when a cheetah, having patiently  
calculated distance & speed, suddenly  
blurs.

## **We've Come too Far to Turn Back Now**

We've come too far to turn back now.  
Ghosts lean out car windows, waving plastic flags,  
Grinning with mouthfuls of black candy.

The living throw rocks at the living  
Because they are not dead.

The sky trails a shadow that wavers over houses  
In the shape of a large bird.  
The bombs come like the heavy strokes of a piano.

There is a boy standing before an altar of rubble  
Screaming the name of his sister.

A father wonders if there are floating spirits  
In the dreams of machines; if there are,  
Why won't his prayers reach them?

If only he could send the hot breath of God west  
To devour the gold trees, the gold fields

Planted one after the other in ordered squares  
Of plenty, of overflowing grace. But he is just a man  
Covered in dust, a man

Among many, fire stinging like an angry wasp  
His shaking body.

## **The Smallest Divisions**

There are, of course, degrees.  
A cup of water is a displacement,  
anything sluiced from the blue, a longing.  
Similarly, when fire collects itself,  
it is called a forest. Out west, it is dawn.  
I'm not quite sure of the southern  
term for it, but I think it's a withering.  
When the air's thick, dandered hands press  
over your nose and mouth smothering you,  
loving you so much even though you push it to do  
these terrible things. It presses you into  
sunken earth where the feast of needles  
begins, myriad mandibles dragging from you  
all you're worth to further green the world.

## **Finally the land is surrounded by seeds**

1. I remember them saying your feet could never ever enter a land you were not destined to see. You go where your rizq takes you, nowhere else, they said.
2. Your rizq is yours but it is god's gift to send you.
3. If you're all the way at the gate waiting to cross over, but you don't have adequate rizq, you can forget it. Even if you desire it.
4. You want and I want and Allah does what he wants.
5. If you're at the gate / if your mother is on the other side / suffering / if it's the last day on earth / and there's no light left / if you want to leave / if everywhere there are rats that look like figs / figs that look like rats / if you need blood / or other things / like mangoes / distance / if the other side holds him / if it holds her / if you want them all / if there's no way back / if heaven is in fact gated and it is waiting / forget it.
6. The exact contours, the limits of lands, are not stipulated. Truth is, there are many smaller lands inside large lands. Many gates. Your rizq may allow you entry to the stone outside the ocean but not the ocean.
7. How does one enter stone? Or women? And if god would nod his head, and you could enter, would you still stop at the gate for fear? Lethargy? Generalized anxiety disorder?
8. Lands are of different sizes and they have whims of their own.
9. There are windy days when you cannot dock.
10. Stormy skies when you cannot come down.
11. Suddenly the birds broke all over the side of the sky I thought you'd come from.

## Balding the Desert

*after Carl Phillips*

I have no idea why you packed  
a bag full of goat skulls  
then drew yourself  
climbing three quadrants of sky,  
the skulls  
on your back. I am not imagining.  
When we crossed,  
we grazed their ghosts  
until we hit sand. It  
was all very fast like the future tense  
spoken at dusk. It was all  
red, much more  
than I thought. What  
would it have been  
if not red? There is a kind of love  
that changes the color  
inside you. There is one  
that makes itself a needle  
and squints its eye so  
nothing could come through.  
There was skin of yours  
everywhere  
on my back and  
in my palms, but I was  
thinking that could have been  
the sea, or the  
leftover gunpowder  
from that single bullet you pinned  
on the goat's head.  
You call this kind  
sacrifice. Something you do with  
your eyes open  
or just  
with your eyes.

At night,  
the distances between things grow  
shorter.  
All we have is looking  
at each other.  
Like one of those  
skulls  
on whom the shadow falls  
drowning  
its eyes.



**Emily as the Audacity of the Red Egg**

*for Sam Roxas-Chua*

The sun is never white.  
The chest collects  
only breakable bones.  
Each new day  
carries with it a tribe  
so native to this  
moment the wars  
do not have the time  
to fill our throats  
with a second cry.  
I look to focus my eyes  
on the landscape  
& the fog that once  
hugged Ohio charges  
me. I relax my gaze  
& I see Emily  
as a red egg, paused  
on the impossible tip  
of love. I see her  
in defiance of all want.  
A table cannot starve.

**Ghost Birds**

for a long time  
I didn't see them  
at first it was all  
just indeterminate  
red and black shapes  
like facts  
about which I have  
mixed feelings  
but first with my body  
then my mind  
I began to perceive  
faint figures striding  
the surface as if  
a child holding  
a piece of chalk  
at the last moments  
of day had absently  
over all those numbers  
faces and trains  
allowed her hand  
to trace translucent  
sentient monitor beings  
then the man  
with the green hose  
at night mostly  
washed them away  
I look at them  
like I am looking down  
at my life  
in the middle of it  
they seem without heads  
scarily graceful  
I can see a whole life  
of travels and doing  
weave such beings  
like thread strung  
around nails  
to make shapes  
which was how  
I failed geometry  
staring down at what  
I could not understand

the painting says  
as we move  
we draw them  
and when we are gone  
they go on to finish  
what we could not  
I call them ghost birds  
if you know  
what they really are  
don't tell me

(for the painting "Emmy Lou" by Robert McChesney)

## **Just Deserts**

The newspaper said the bank deserved  
to pay for its reprehensible transgressions.

Even the bankers agreed.  
But where to find its giant shadow face?

The next feeding isn't for centuries.  
How to force its shadow body?

And what about the shareholders  
weeping gently in the alternate boardroom?

Should they have to sell yet another painting?  
Footsteps out in the hall

sound gently ominous  
like the future at last

had gotten up and begun searching.  
In the room with the copier

the hum makes me feel  
like the whole building is alive.

At night when I should be sleeping  
next to my love instead I wander

another life where I'm at home  
with my television wife.

She tells me eat your sorrow.  
Those are your just deserts

where you must go without water  
to beat that dead horse one more time

until it laughs and coughs up  
another monstrously jeweled president.

**Sunday Mass, 1891**

*Lizzie*

*“Lizzie has been a morning teacher in the mission school connected to the parish, and has always been very active ... in the work of the church.” - NY Herald, Aug 6 1892*

In church, our lips move silently to the hymns.

By lips, I mean: our throats. The whispers

in church are so mean, Father

tormented by his pettiness.

By our, I mean: Mrs Borden.

By our, I mean: my father.

By our, I mean: me.

Don't absolve me from this.

I am in the pews, singing

the songs like they are his body,

and am fourteen again—

still learning how to keep a secret,

lock a bedroom door.

Don't absolve me from this.

By throats, I mean as follows:

last week I taught at the mission,

same as any other. Children

surrounded me as I held up the flimsy

paperback, pointed to the illustration

of Christ in the garden. My voice

felt aflame, as if I couldn't say

the words I had planned.

But they came out anyway:

*This is what it means to feel,*

I said, pointing at His tears.

*This is what it means to feel alone.*

**There's been a death. Of course no one knows what to do, 1892**

*Emma*

My brow is thick, my hands heavy. I redraw  
my face every day in this tumescent heat—hoping

for an almost showy sadness. I am nothing compared to my  
sister. Journalists say “remorseless” to describe her rouged  
visage. As if painting only exists to create new emotions.  
As if kindness were an aesthetic choice.

If there was anything Mrs. Borden knew, it was that—the way she buried those garden pears  
inside her pies.  
Face powdered into blankness. How can any of us

compete with her secrets? I tell Lizzie, *of course she knew  
what we said of her*. She knew everything:

how molasses covers up the festering sweet  
of rot. Makeup, lockbox, little hole  
in the ground. Grief is made

by its performance. Am I bereaved?

I am bereaved. Look at me: I wear  
my suffering on my skin. I wear my skin  
on top of my other skin.

**Body Wrench**

*Emma*

When I am burgled, I know what happens—  
Our walls are so thin. Our skins are also walls.  
Flesh and house both a thing that steals.  
Her eyes like teeth.

I wrench my body in my sleep,  
I dream of it slithering past.

I vow the following: abandon you.  
My sister. My stepmother. A thorn.  
Who else is in this list.

When I am burgled, I wait  
for it to happen again,  
same as everyone here.

My abandonment will be floral,  
can never go out.

I ask questions to the house:

Do you ever feel kindness  
or warmth, can your flowers bloom

I don't

They don't

**A Corrective, July 1891**

*Abby*

I talk about Andrew because it's how I've been taught—  
The safety in men against the curl of sin in my breast,  
the crinoline I use to cover where the bruises show.  
I try so hard to be disciplined, Godly, a “good” “woman”. But young  
Emma tells me when I first move in of her mother, the box  
of rage which was her most distinctive feature, and this haunts me.  
The way Sarah shadows Lizzie, her fingers I imagine more a wolf's  
than a woman's. Her anger. The ghost she casts constricts me  
as much as that of who her spouse was. My second  
week in the house I find a letter, unsigned, in the boudoir:  
“were she still alive, she would kill you immediately.” Neither  
Borden girl says a word, but that, too, is a reason I've turned  
to my man, sought comfort in he who brought me to this grave:  
face spiteful, his knobbed spine a rock I cling to against all else.  
Forgiveness only means that which we can or cannot forget.



**The Sheets, 1892**

*Lizzie*

I'm well aware of my failings—temper like a brick,  
thick, quarrelsome ribs. I am building a body  
out of other bodies, a sin haunted by other sins. Maybe

the word I'm looking for is a feeling instead:  
the jurors' ogle at me when I entered  
the courtroom, paint still splashed bright on my doorstep.  
My body brimming with what. With seep. Even

younger, I am stained by my mis-conduct—  
when I touch my travelling companion in Europe  
many years beforehand, her skin is pillowy, and our room

overlooks the Seine. That night, twined together,  
do I dream a prediction? The hatchet falling. Father's body.  
I try to be Godly, but His men and their agents are stingy,

bitter, full of poison. I try to be sweet and think only  
of her, and the others, and the others. My palms are soft

and my fingers willowy. Am I regretful? I am  
regretful. If I've learned anything from  
my life, I learned it then: the weight  
of a companion,

our mutual wretchedness, the scent  
of copper, a hand that  
holds but only leads astray—

**papaoutai**

like so many in this hill-studded land      we are here to forget  
    at home    my sister      beaten by her not-father  
        begs god    to bring back her namesake  
while we dance    drink in hand      numbed by the rhythm of a man  
    still searching for his dad    a country's battle cry  
        we thought we could escape      hail a moto  
drive off into the sunset without looking back  
    silly muzungus      the spies are watching you  
the bruised men finally ready to speak of their crimes  
        don't you know      even the killers  
shared songs & primus  
        before they raped the village

**[The Owl]**

Glued a voice to the ear. Left its shoes on the mat. My father's japanese movies. Imprinted stomach scars. Showed the thing what was there. Not much. Blue ripples. Oars in an Italian canal. Two blind pianists. A bucket of Elmer's. Far from the factory laughs were miracles. Sounds of pasta boiling over. The brakes were shit. Cave cases. Instruments of brass. Made forts. Kept together with glue. The roof got sticky. If it dripped the moon was giving us milk. Summers went. Everything was beautiful. Winters went. Tied false with the perfect bow. Layed in the snow. Quiet. The head voice even in the stillness. Falling in the fishing hole. Got buried in frozen water. Wet glue. Even kids know to keep water away from fresh crafts. Took ill in the bathtub. Sometime between glances. Changes happen. Cheaper stuff. A month. Glue peeling off your palm. A person's fleshy funeral. One meant for the corn snake. The days that wilt. Chrysanthemums. Real pirates. Didn't think much kept its beauty anymore. Sunflowers have been off the map for weeks. Don't need it to see. Water over the ribs. From bathtub to bed. Sun shined on horseshoe prints in my skin. Repeat. Turned nocturnal. Name means wisdom. Invisible ink glows through highly lit eyes. I am the insomniac detective. Needle coffee in the morning. Nights too. These days. Dizzy. I am. I am still. Thank space. The Owl.

## **The Solar Plexus Chakra is Associated**

with the color yellow—  
rows of aspens, tendered corn silk,

yellow jackets in picnic sweet tea,  
street signs, tender buds

of ranunculus, mango, lemon, papaya,  
yellow paint beneath

white paint on the neighbor's fence.  
Someone somewhere else

has yellow curtains. The book says  
wear yellow to encourage

confidence, happiness, stability.  
Yellow spinning,

swirling shrapnel, dizzy yellow  
to the knee, to the ground—

the man who raped me  
wore a yellow shirt.

## The Time Ray Reached Across the Table for the Potatoes and His Mother Sliced Him with a Steak Knife

Reaching was impolite, she said.  
Sixty years later, we face the wind,  
ocean at our feet, & I want to rise  
above foam-crusting spray, a black-finned

whale, a cormorant cresting grey waves,  
dissolve to ether, travel myself  
back to Ray's mother's oak table  
where I'd hand the eight-year-old

a bowl of potatoes slathered in butter  
and salt. I'd offer soup with fresh okra  
dusted with orange peppers.  
There would be strawberries

plucked at the edge of a forest  
where the children would have played  
all day fashioning bows and arrows  
from tree bark and minted sea glass.

As my skirts swooshed into the next room  
I'd say, *If there's anything more  
you'd like, you can grab it off the table—*  
I know children are hungry.

We walk the bay's perimeter counting  
stars against a darkening sky.  
Ray's corona of white hair lifts with the salted air.  
*It's hard for me to love myself.*



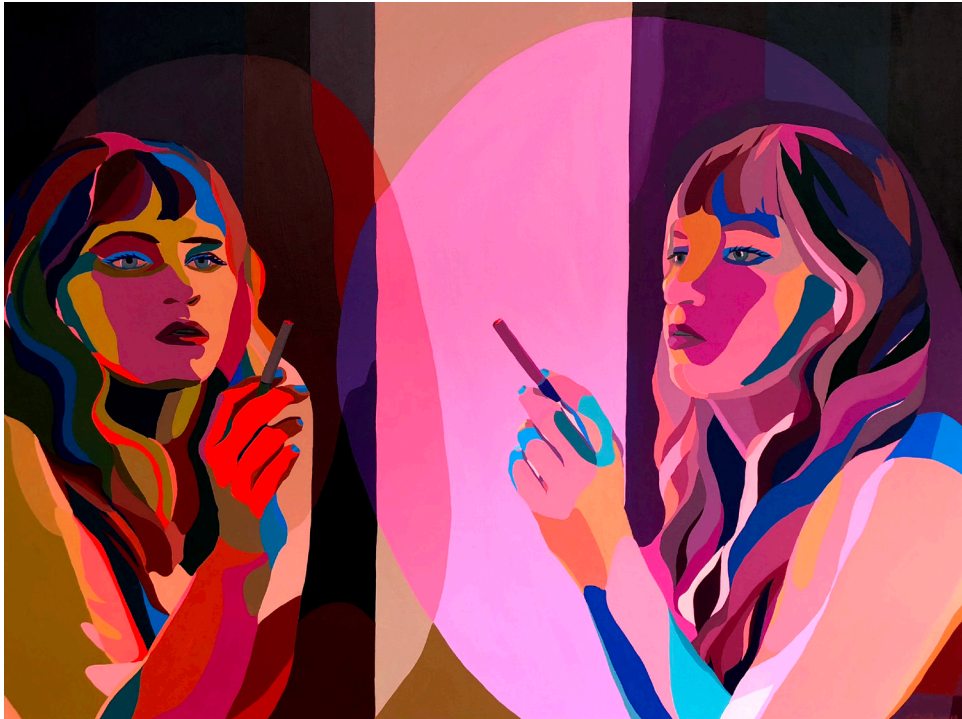
**ART**







**Smoke and Mirrors**



**Window of Opportunity**



**Buddha Our Lives Are Shaped By What We Love**





Libra



**Chapter 1: In the Cemetery**



## Hyeseung Marriage-Song

### Everyone is Golem





## Hyeseung Marriage-Song

Lilo



**Fall of the Clerval**





## The Misuse of Chemicals in Modern Agriculture



## **Litter in Scotland's Canals and Waterways**



## **Plastic Pollution in Scotland's Seas**



**A Plastic Funeral for Scotland's Marine Life**





***El Sr Bucle***



***El nacimiento del Futuro***



**1947**



***Jimmy Blues y la señorita de al lado***





**Tox**





**FICTION**

The word "FICTION" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are filled with a white, starry or speckled texture. A thick, lime-green zigzag line passes behind the text, starting from the left, rising to a peak above the 'F', dipping below the 'I', rising to a second peak above the 'T', dipping below the 'I', and finally rising to a peak above the 'N' before ending on the right.



## **And in Barrow, Roses Will Bloom**

For an unknowable period of time, 93952^8 rode a 26.7 degree Celsius, 96% humidity vortex of air in a shower stall of Housing Module 18 at Axion Oil & Gas Corporation's site 5211B in ANWAR, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on Alaska's North Slope.

93952^8, a 0.1-micrometer drop of jelly enclosed in a plasma membrane, knew none of that. It could not realize it shared the shower stall with Tim Pierson, a 41-year-old drilling engineer from Oklahoma City. It didn't understand that Tim Pierson was about to catch a Cessna to Fairbanks. It didn't care that Tim Pierson would then fly on to join his wife at a gymnastics meet in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where their 14-year-old daughter Audrey was competing. Moreover, 93952^8 did not appreciate the consequences of a warm updraft of air sweeping it in to Tim Pierson's right nostril.

93952^8 had two eons of experience with enervating cold, far less with these levels of humidity and heat. Hardiness and adaptability were about to be put to the test as it tumbled past epithelial cells that lined the nasal passage like microscopic brickwork flailing lethal, whip-like cilia that 93952^8 barely evaded. Internally, a chemical alarm went off. Immobilizing goo sprayed from a dozen directions, and 93952^8 fired back with its own munitions. Hundreds of Tim Pierson's protective phagocytes exploded. 93952^8 snuggled against one of the dead cells and then penetrated it, devouring it from inside. As 93952^8 ate, it swelled. At the point it seemed it too would explode, a dark line bisected its jelly. 93952^8 split into two. Four. Eight...

#

Sent: 7:27 AM

10 horas 27 minutos 45 segundos Loco!

Dulce topped off Akil's coffee.

"What time does he get in?"

"Eleven-fifteen. I teach a dance class, come home, get some sleep, then meet him at Newark. We'll take the train, then catch a Lyft uptown."

"Give him a hug from me."

Dulce moved between the tables of Mike's Rincón like a 22-year-old dancer, springing from the balls of her feet, suppressing the urge to break in to some bachata. She did not play at her job and put focus into overseeing that Rogelio's mangú was topped by an egg over easy, that Lili Cruz got Half-and-Half with her Constant Comment, and that the batata with Mr. Jerry's bacalao was fried crispy. But today, three time zones away, Mateo was pulling her focus. He and Danh would have shut down their restaurant by midnight, and then Mateo would have sped home, slept, and headed to Sea-Tac in pre-dawn darkness. Now at cruising altitude in a middle seat, he would be sipping coffee and thinking about her. And she was dreaming about wrapping around him like a Passiflora, about being spoon-fed tres leches in bed at the Saint Nicholas Inn.

“¿Y qué clase de locura es ese?” asked Lili, looking up at CNN.

“—the oil and gas giant was performing tests inside Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, a cause of much controversy and protest. Axion’s headquarters in Houston, Texas, reports they received emergency phone calls from the Alaska test site at approximately 3 a.m. Central Time describing a mysterious illness striking the approximately eighty-person exploratory team—”

“I heard half ‘em dead,” said Mr. Jerry.

“Horrible,” said Dulce, taking his plate.

The kitchen was crowded now. Tommy and Elena had arrived, and Raf and Mike were at the stoves. Mike’s huge bulk bent over a cast iron skillet of frying plantain; he flashed Dulce a grin. “¿Te vas a escuela?”

Dulce hung up her apron. “Claro. Tengo una clase de modern dance.”

“Muy bien. Tengan cuidado ¿me oyes?”

“Sí, jefe.”

Mike leaned down so his daughter could give him a kiss. Swinging her jacket, Dulce stepped out of the back door of Mike’s Rincón in to the October morning.

#

He sat between a sleeping businessman and a Seattleite who had actually eaten at Ho Chi Migo. “Those crepes. Those crepes were amazing,” the woman said, eyes wide behind steel cat eye frames.

“Oh, the banh xeo. We put our own little spin on them with the shrimp-chili-mango filling.”

“So good I wrote you guys a Yelp.”

“Thank you! You look kind of familiar. Maybe I saw you from the kitchen.”

His phone chirped a text notification:

Sent: 5:31AM

AT  
TA  
CG  
CG  
    TA  
    CG  
    CG  
    CG  
GC  
CG  
CG  
AT

He deleted it and texted Dulce:

Sent: 5:35 AM

Are you sending me código secreto?

Received: 5:37 AM

No, k dice?

Sent: 5:39 AM

Alfabeto: QCKTISLZLE  
Where y@?

Received: 5:45 AM

On the train on my way to class.  
I can't wait I can't wait I can't wait!

The businessman groaned and fidgeted in his sleep, and Cat Eyes was busy with her phone, so he took out a pencil and opened his cuaderno to a self-portrait as a winged dragon with a scraggly goatee and John Lennon glasses mounted by a bikini-clad woman holding aloft a fiery sword.

“That’s interesting,” said Cat Eyes.

“If it bothers you, I’ll work on something else. You don’t have to call the TSA...”

“You’re good. Jessica.”

“Mateo.”

#

From ice-bound dormancy to full function at 40 degrees Celsius, 93952^8 and its descendants adapted with remarkable speed. Tim Pierson’s lumbering 37.2 trillion-cell organism couldn’t match the challenge. Shock troops blasted a brew of cytotoxins and invasins, withering Pierson’s olfactory nerves; dissolving his gleaming, white connective tissue barricade, the dura mater; almost instantly consuming the delicate arachnoid and pia maters that sheathed his brain. Pierson fought back, his defensive microglia pumping cytokines, chemokines, and nitrous oxide, but gradually he was laid open to the invaders who divided, divided again, and then settled down to eat.

#

The wing’s fore glowed, lit by the rising sun. Mateo and Jessica reclined in their seats, gazing past the businessman through the small window at the violet and gold clouds.

Text notification cheeped.

Received: 6:11AM

CG

CG

CG

CG

AT

CG

TA

GC

AT

AT

CG

GC

He held out his phone to Jessica. “Look at that. I keep getting that.”

“What is it?”

“I don’t know.” Mateo turned back to the window. The businessman’s head was turned toward him, face waxen, eyes transfixed, the pupil of one gray iris dilated.

Mateo softly asked him, “Excuse me, are you—”

Mateo’s glasses flew off as some hectic force collided with his face. The narrow, three-seat row turned pink and red. His nose was a geyser of rich, dark claret, and the businessman was flailing and cavorting in his seat, his bobbing head wearing a full beard of strawberry milk shake-colored foam. Jessica stood, screamed, and stumbled in to the aisle as flight attendants hurried from both ends of the plane.

#

Sent: 5:42 PM

Loca, we’re in Chicago.

Somethings going on, were going to be stuck here a little wile. No t preocupes te amo

Recieved: 5:58 PM

OK let me know the minute u r on the next plane te amo

All four walls and the ceiling of Dulce’s tiny bedroom were covered with worn out dance shoes, music video stills, programs, posters, postcards from the Dominican Republic, and photos of school, dance, family, and Mateo. Dulce and Mateo mugging, goofing, smirking, locked in an embrace...

She packed her bag and then spent over two hours trying to decide what to wear. She



wasn't sure if they'd just cuddle for the night at the hotel or go to dinner and a club. And the weather was so weird, warm, sticky, more like August than October. She put on a short, sleeveless, black lace dress with black gladiator sandals. Checking her phone again, the scary "Alaska Outbreak" story appeared in the headlines. Half-listening, she sorted through her make up case until she found the right shade of lipstick, *Bloodlust*.

Now the furrowed brow was Travis Chang's as he listened to "Dr. Peter Harmon, CDC epidemi—"

"—believe we have found the organism involved, but we haven't identified it. These bacteria are un—"

"Some new bacteria can just appear out of thin--?"

"—permafrost thaws in vast areas of the arctic. Bacteria, fungi, and viruses that have been locked in ice for thousands, even millions—Some organisms may only have been dormant, and in warming temperatures could be—"

She finger-combed out hair into a wild fro and then opted to wear it up.

"—perfect segue—Rhonda Norton—former Axion employee—huge animal carcass—reburied"

Spraying *Les étoiles* on her pulse points, putting on the antique crystal earrings Mateo had given her three birthdays ago, and tossing her phone in her purse, she missed the footage of endless mud, black rivers, and gray skies; the aerial shots of Axion's lifeless housing modules, rigs, and trailers; the narration stating that eighty-six Axion employees were confirmed dead; and the chyron repeating that the hunt was on to locate an unidentified Axion employee last sighted onboard a Cessna eight-seater to Seattle.

#

93952<sup>47</sup> and all descendants of 93952<sup>8</sup> shared the characteristics of life: cellular organization, reproduction, metabolism, homeostasis, heredity, response to stimuli; growth and change; and evolution. Their only intention, insofar as they had intentions, was survival. Killing was incidental. There had been no aim to kill the mastodon on that windswept Arctic plateau; the gigantic herbivore's solitary death was the outcome of the microbes' need for food overriding their need for shelter. Twelve thousand, three hundred, fifty-seven years later, the same faulty processes would lethally impact Tim Pierson. By excessive exploitation of him as a food source, the germs destroyed him as their host. Tim Pierson was a husk slumped in the seat of Compass Airlines Flight 2677, his remaining brain matter oozing from his nose. 93952<sup>47</sup> could have perished with Tim Pierson. Instead, an evolutionarily more advantageous path was taken, and the progeny left Tim Pierson the same way their ancestor had entered him. By air.

#

Mateo lay on a cot at the rear of the plane holding Jessica's hand. He wasn't sure what was worse, the maddening pain in his face or the shouts and screaming from the other passengers.

"I'm calling out and calling out, and none of my calls are going through," said Jessica, her face wet with sweat and tears. "We are landed. Why the fuck can't I call out?"

"Keep texting. Dulce is answering my texts." His voice, adenoid and muffled, boomed in his head, amplifying the pneumatic drill inside his skull. He shifted, froze a moment, and then reached inside a pants pocket. "Look. What do you think?" He held a small velvet box up to her, and she opened it. The ring gleamed in the dark.

"Oh, Mateo, she's going to love it."

"Yeah. Do me a favor." He laid the ring on his chest. "Take a picture of it."

Sent: 7:22 PM

te ammmmo y simpre t he  
amddo desde primera vista n  
Georg walsh Elementry, fith  
grade. cuano t vea, vo a besarte  
p un mes entero.  
ten fe

Recieved: 7:23 PM

No te preocupes Corazon. Nos  
vemos bien pronto. Y tu sabes k  
te amo te amo te amo te amo

#

The line snaking to the ticket counter through belt barriers felt like no airport line Dulce had ever experienced. A dozen security officers and Compass officials stood at the margins. A man behind her in line who began yelling, “You KNOW what’s happening!” was quickly led away. Everyone else focused on their phones, following news feeds reporting that Compass Flight 2677 was being held on the tarmac at O’Hare Airport.

Dulce turned to a woman with a left half sleeve tiger tattoo and *Brunswick* delicately etched on her right wrist. “Who are you waiting for?”

“My wife.” She glanced at Dulce’s little black dress. “You had other plans for tonight. Didn’t we all. Who are you waiting for?”

“My boyfriend.”

The woman winced. “Any of his family with you?”

“No, just me. My family is his family.”

At the counter, Dulce faced another Black woman, a Compass employee wearing a blazer, pin, and a slight smile that was pleasant yet impenetrable, conveying absolutely nothing.

“Your name, please?”

“Dulce Renee Valdez.”

“Ms. Valdez, who are you here to meet?”

“My husband, Mateo Sotomayor.”

Three minutes later, Dulce was walking down a long, windowless, fluorescent-lit corridor. She heard footsteps running to catch up to her. Hand in hand, she and Brunswick entered the auditorium.

#

Recieved: 10:41 PM

CG

CG

GC

AT

TA

CG

CG

AT

GC

GC

CG

CG

He was alone now. He didn't know where Dulce had gone, but he was surrounded by an odor that summoned a vision: his mother. He was standing on tiptoes to reach her crimson smile and her *Butterfly* cologne. Then he was at the port in Veracruz, walking hand-in-hand with his grandfather, assailed by diesel and fresh and rotting fish. Now at his mother's bedside at University Hospital, inhaling the odor of sweat, ammonia, and disinfectant. Mike Valdez holding him tightly as he breathed his odor of chicle and Newports. Pork and yucca, cebolla y plátanos tantalizing him at the table of the Valdez family, but being too grief-stricken to eat. Skateboarding in an abandoned parking lot with Dulce Valdez and her aroma of Bubblicious and baby powder. Chopping fresh coconut in the kitchen of Mike's Rincón. And then, a presence that highjacked all of his senses. Five tons of flesh caged in ice for twelve thousand, three hundred, fifty-seven years corrupting in warm, humid air. Fermentation and rot, liquefaction, putrefaction. A dizzying descent in to darkness. And then: nothing.

#

Sent: 11:10 PM

Mateo I am calling you over  
and over please pick up  
contestame

Recieved: 11:11 PM

GC  
GC  
AT  
GC  
    GC  
    TA  
    CG  
    GC  
CG  
GC  
GC  
TA

The room felt like a January day. A blue-clad attendant at the door handed her a clipboard with forms, a pen and marker, and a sheet of cardstock where she was instructed to write Mateo's name. Past that attendant and along the wall stood more airline employees dressed in blue, holding clipboards and boxes of Kleenex. Beyond them, there was a white cloth-covered table with pitchers of water and a coffee and tea station. Finally, there was an area enclosed by blue partitions. The carpet was a blue hounds' tooth, and blue draperies hanging from the high ceiling rustled slightly with blasting air conditioning. Goosebumps rose on Dulce's bare arms.

Rows of chairs spaced approximately two yards apart faced a podium. Families, couples, and individuals chose to evenly space themselves out around the room. When the room filled, the double doors shut, and a Compass employee with a maternal air took the podium. The woman gently explained that Compass Flight 2677 from Seattle to Newark International remained in lockdown on the tarmac of Chicago's O'Hare Airport due to an infectious illness onboard. Health professionals had boarded the plane, and everything possible was being done to care for their loved ones. The Compass staff here in this room had information on their family members, and these staff would sit down and share all known information with them.

It began like a slow detonation. Sometimes a long exhalation. Sometimes a sharp intake of breath. Then the screams. A man shouting "NO" over and over. A woman keening. An entire family erupting in sobs. Calls for EMTs who hurried from behind the partitions to Brunswick, who had hit the floor in a dead faint.

Now a blue-suited Compass employee sat down beside Dulce, a white man close to retirement age with tired blue eyes. Without even hearing his slow, careful exegesis, she knew. The ice broke under her chair. She was falling. Freezing black water rushed up to meet her.

#

The temperature at Axion site 5211B was strikingly similar to that of Newark International Airport Conference Room 26: 17.6 degrees Celsius versus 17.3 degrees Celsius. 5211B did have far higher humidity at 68%, which was only logical.

5211B was active again, now with pathologists, forensic scientists, epidemiologists, and lab technicians sweating in HAZMAT suits as they slogged in the mud between Quonset

huts. It was far safer to analyze bodies and specimens on site than to transport them back to the CDC.

The mud again revealed the mastodon carcass that Axion employees had attempted to hide. Pathologists sought usable tissue samples in the rotting hulk, and then construction workers with a backhoe tried to bury it a third time, but two meters down struck black water. The remains were covered with quicklime and giant sheets of white plastic to limit exposure to the balmy, mosquito-laden air; however, quicklime and white tarps would not purge the microorganisms inhabiting the housing, air, and soil of 5211B and embedding the upholstery and carpeting of Compass Flight 2677, which still sat on the tarmac at O'Hare.

*Staphylococci Anwarellia*, the newly named progeny of 93952^8, had survived the mastodon, the ancient horse, and the giant short-faced bear; had outflanked and outmaneuvered extinction, and now were swarming in the mud splattering satellite phones, safety goggles, and landing gear.

The collective lives of every species one-day end. The only question is duration: years, centuries, millennia, eons? There was no way of knowing how much time *Anwarellia* would have for their second chance. The bacteria had no understanding of the interplay between vanished glaciers, warming mud, heating skies, boots, earthmovers, and airplanes in their reemergence, but they ventured blindly on, driven by happenstance and hunger, by a mesh of genetic material in the cytoplasm of each of them, and by the will to survive.

END

## Eukarya

### *I. Fungi*

The foul odor of death clings to every surface. Bacteria have run their course, the fleas and maggots are long gone, and at last, the cruel silence of us closers swallows all else.

A mangled corpse is far less intimidating when decayed beyond recognition. Upon first sight, it is barely distinguishable from its surroundings. A double take may uncover a protruding mound or bones attached to rotting flesh—or, perhaps, the agony of dying too early or too late, too quickly or too slowly. Dumb, stunned suspension follows. Dreadful revelation wraps itself around the core of the bereaved, cackling.

We advance.

Granted, we, too, grieve: bawl into open arms, kick and scream in our uncontainable rage, mourn for countless midnights until finally, we grow tired and refuse to ignore the ravenous hunger within ourselves. We stay in this unseen place, taking our fill with stealth and greed. We hoard condolences, misplace our hostility, and victimize ourselves until the tendons between the active and the passive deteriorate. Before we take note of its departure, the weight of the loss relinquishes to our grasp.

Our only means of moving forward are through growth. So we deceive ourselves into mulling over corrupted pain until nothing pure remains. We shroud new life, engulf oceans, and swaddle everything that came before us. We devour.

### *II. Protista*

The onlooker's silhouette eclipsed the window behind them as they paused in the doorway. Ceaseless babble pierced their ears.

From inside the room, the crowd rearranged itself effortlessly. Smiling figures contorted to let one another through, polite to no end. Their stiffness betrayed the polished facade. Between sweeping, down-the-nose glances, they had allowed envy to tiptoe into the room, each individual foolishly convinced that their neighbors were oblivious.

On an inhale, the onlooker watched the mass settle into orderly groups. Chipper greetings were exchanged, slight variations on the same stuffy small talk creeping across the room.

Feigned enthusiasm and longing glances and guarded responses—their onlooker caught it all. They recognized solidarity in convenience at once: if given the choice, not a single person in that room would remain loyal to their current circumstances, but they were all too cowardly or too lazy or too prideful for the pursuit of their desires. So still, they sat, gossip, gawking, grudges galore.

Itching to lurch forward, the onlooker twitched. The chatter built into an unintelligible rumble, drowning itself out with each passing moment. It seemed as though they spat out every word, every thought, in a single breath. They were united in neutrality: neither anxious nor collected, neither calculated nor spontaneous, neither alluring nor banal.

The light from the window burned the onlooker's back. They grew frustrated.

In a peculiar rhythm, they began to pelt one another with trivial inquiries.

The cacophony of the starved soon arose. They shifted under the weight of unspoken sins, baggage harbored for eternities, and the monsoon of bleary rambling: what are we doing why are we still here would it be that hard to get out how do we move on when did we lose ourselves where are we where are we where are we where are we

Quietly, the instinct towards destruction found its footing. They could have turned around. But in truth, there was no escaping themselves.

### *III. Plantae*

Blades of grass tickle knobby knees as a child sprawls across the lawn, admiring the blue expanse towering above. Willowy limbs stretch outwards. They can never seem to reach far enough, but today, she doesn't mind. She is weightless. Her arms and legs jolt together, then apart, open and closed, open and closed stuck unstuck together a part gone until she declares that she is done. There is a moment's pause. She rolls onto her stomach and pushes her little body upwards.

Mismatched shoes lug around sweaty feet. Hair matted by the day's affairs, she toddles about, carrying her own grace at an uneven rhythm. With every step, she emanates warmth and purpose, touching every unturned corner and unexplored surface in her line of view. Marveling, she basks in all that she finds. In no time at all, she shoots upwards.

From afar, a tut of distaste reaches her ears.

*Come here.*

*Come HERE.*

*Always gets her clothes dirty, I swear.*

*Get OVER here.*

The voice does not staunch its stream of remarks. It says that she does not branch out enough or yield enough. It tells her how she should want to behave. It nips at her budding whimsy. It speaks in contradictions, calling her an overgrowth during daylight and complaining of her meekness in the evening. It tramples over her and cuts her down.

But she does not despair. She clings to her roots and holds herself high. She remains, grounded, and turns toward the light.

### *IV. Animalia*

She sits with bent knees touching, feet stretched towards the blazing horizon behind her. Her head cocks at an odd angle. A hummed melody carries itself just past her cracked lips, punctuated by sharp breaths and tinkling giggles. She begins to sway. Bare shoulders paddle gusts of wind as the sun plunges downwards, setting the world aflame. Blood puddles beneath her.

Dirt-caked fingernails wander, first crossing her torso to claw at bony arms, then clambering up her neck, scratching her face, and running through her scalp before splaying to the sky. To her own gleefully frantic tune, she dances.

Darkness dampens the fire, and the aching simmers into a cyclical buzz. She waits.

Asleep, she dreams of his horror and relief in finding her. He will lift her gingerly, tucking her head against his chest as the grime of her injury spills onto him. The vastness of the night will not faze him; he has been here before. Determined, he will charge through rough, open terrain for hours, playing hero once more.

In her contented torment, she turns.

When her struggling overwhelms him, he'll break down, nuzzling into her, tears staining broken skin. Harsh winds will draw chills on exposed limbs. Howling, he will cradle her in trembling arms. His whispered promises of healing and unending apologies will restore life in her. Hungry eyes will meet.

The fantasy caves. Silence reigns, but she rises with pointed certainty. Drenched in crimson, a knowing smile flashes across her face. She begins to hum once more.

He will always come crawling back to lick her wounds clean.



## Bloom

She only meant to kill him a little bit. A small nick with the kitchen knife was all Dominique had in mind, but the new blade had free will. She bought it in spring from a young salesman who rang her doorbell then tapped twice with the lion's head knocker. "Chris Burnham," he announced with a half smile. Stepping across the rooster doorstep, he said a neighbor had recommended this house. He showed her a list of names of recent purchasers, including Mrs. Olivia Henry, 320 North Shore Avenue. Warming up to his prospect's potential—"Look, see!"—he flashed before her a yellow sheet of paper, signed with a spidery wisp. Mrs. Henry had provided a testimonial.

Dominique was a sucker for students, their earnest patter and whiff of neediness. Whatever her neighbors bought was alluring to her—one year it was Hummers, followed by Lexus's and recently Teslas. Dominique and her husband Terence had just ordered a Tesla. At block parties the neighbors talked about sending their kids to M.I.T, University of Michigan, even Harvard—the biggest purchase of all, although recently the conversations had shifted to the attributes of a gap year. Now the kids flew off to Guatemalan orphanages, a Thai elephant reserve, or picked lavender on organic farms. She couldn't compete with that—she and Terence had no offspring. Children need mothers around, he told her after grad school. Her acting wouldn't fit with motherhood, he said. Travel was essential to career advancement, he added some years into their marriage. She went along.

How could she forgo the attributes of a sharp blade? This one could slice through watermelon, sliver a Kobe steak, fine cut an onion, chop squash without straining her wrist. It came with a lifetime guarantee and multiple copies of paperwork.

Tangles and thorns weren't visible to her younger self. The boredom of marriage, joined lives bifurcating—how could she foresee the rub and wear of time and indifference? Terence appealed to her as a steady earner, a reliable good sort, when they met at a barbecue and he, inexplicably after a few beers, outlined to her the wisdom of a savings plan—pay herself first, then bills, then short-term savings and long-term investments. She'd come straight from the theater, waifish in a wispy black silk dress and high heels. Her costume had set her up for a role that never quite fit.

Dominique watched Chris julienne a carrot. She'd seen the neighborhood children grow up—not with wistfulness or any feeling of missing out—but with growing tension as her domain shrank and her husband's expanded. Those kids were now in their prime, still taut-skinned and bouncy, expecting that life would unfurl before them like a shining ribbon. Chris, standing expectantly in front of her with his open display, reminded her of her younger self, uncertain yet hopeful, pragmatic yet aspiring for more than the merely prosaic. Was this a pyramid scheme, where he'd been obliged to buy the merchandise first?

Her expectations were low. She could keep sawing through meat just as she had with the old Sabatiers she kept in a wooden block and dragged across a whetstone each Thanksgiving. Dominique's potential purchase had a black handle made of thermo resin, whatever that was, and a carbon steel blade that didn't need regular honing, but if it *did* get blunt (a contradiction she noted silently, but refrained from cutting into Chris's spiel—she wasn't one for interrupting), she could ship it, at no cost to her, to the factory for free

sharpening.

“If... *when*,” she bought from him, “she would be part of a family,” Chris said. Dominique liked the idea of being part of something bigger than herself. Perhaps a movement to stop climate change or save sick babies, but she could settle for being part of a cutlery family. It was quiet on her block. Some families she’d known since their diaper days sold their large Victorians and American Four Squares, vanishing to condos downtown or farmlets in Tennessee. What would she and Terence do, when Terence retired from his consultancy? Long-haul flights and late-night snifters were rounding his belly, straining the buttons on his cotton shirts. Menopause was thickening her well-exercised midriff too. Maybe Terence and she could move to South Carolina, where her parents lived in their final years. Or Italy where they’d vacationed. You could buy a whole village for the price of their current property taxes. Trawling through real estate sites, she found a small villa in an olive grove, a few miles from the sea, elevated so it had a perfect sixty-eight-degree climate, unlike the soupy summer weather here. Just the thought of heat made her perspire. She wiped her palms on her white linen blouse.

Catching Chris in her peripheral vision waving documents, Dominique focused instead on endorsements from Ray from Texas and Sherry from Idaho and Mrs. Henry from 320 North Shore. Purchase complete.

That was how it came to be on this Tuesday, a day started off-kilter. The summer air felt like a damp shroud. Dominique woke irritable, with itchy skin and frizzy hair. “Could you turn the A.C. on,” she’d asked Terence when he crashed into bed in the wee hours, back from Shanghai. Stinking. Airplane whiskey. Perspiration. Sickly sweet undertone. Rolling over, he muttered “Headache. Gift in my bag.”

When she rose, Dominique caught a whiff of patchouli in the clothes Terence had thrown on the chaise. Reaching into his carry-on bag, she pulled out a blue Tiffany box tied with a white satin ribbon. She shoved it back. Lurching downstairs, she rubbed the spasm in her temple. Her stomach soured and her mouth filled with a foul taste. Perhaps the barometric pressure was high. Maybe she was on the edge of a migraine. Her hands and feet were clammy and her anger was on the boil.

Knife in hand, she rocked the blade back and forth across a bunch of parsley. Sloshing vodka, tabasco and tomato juice over ice into a pitcher, Dominique thwacked a length of celery and used it to stir in parsley and pepper. She spooned scrambled eggs onto matching grey plates, then arranged a garnish and soldiers of rye toast. Setting the jug of Bloody Mary on the opposite side of the kitchen island, she called to her husband that breakfast was ready. Coming, he yelled, but he didn’t come.

Eggs are getting cold, she yelled up the stairs.

Still he didn’t come. She heard him in the bathroom. Dominique seethed. He did this. He knew when she was cooking, he knew that food was almost ready, but almost always, he would have to make a phone call or return an email or go to the toilet. Just for once, for goddam once, he could arrive on time. Waiting for him was the central theme of their marriage. Waiting for his next promotion, waiting for him to come home, waiting for him to roll off her after he fucked her, following six minutes of foreplay, in his predictable favorite position with her lying off the end of the bed. Nothing was placated by the years of scarves and bracelets he brought home—habit, apology, tic. A stack of unworn blue scarves lay sequestered in her closet, trinkets still in boxes lined the shelves. She hadn’t worn blue for years, since she lightened her hair, nor bracelets since taking up Pilates.

She ate her luke-warm eggs slowly, sitting at the island. Laying her raging head on the cool countertop, she gazed at the pool just beyond the open glass kitchen doors next to her, hoping the sight would soothe her. Sweat rolled past her ears and pooled under her temple. A blazing white knot wedged between her ribs. All these years of accommodating her spouse, turning a blind eye to his idiosyncrasies, his comings and goings, his indiscretions and his habit of watching soccer at full volume when he was home—it was time he learned respect, R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

Hadn't she fulfilled her part of the bargain? No kids. No fuss. Pilates and a trainer three times a week. Putting on a long, slinky dress and slipping her arm through his every time he had a client event. The least Terence could do was join her for breakfast and eat his damned scrambled eggs while they were hot, before she sluiced them down the damned waste disposal!

If the marriage had a point where she noticed it shifting, it was when they lived in London. Terence worked late most nights, so occasionally Dominique met him for lunch. Once, they'd eaten on the run and walked to Sir John Soane's Museum to look at "A Rake's Progress," by William Hogarth. Terence seemed oddly agitated when they started out, and as they looked at the bawdy images of Tom Rakewell in a brothel, he slipped his hand up Dominique's dress and licked the back of her neck. It was most unlike him, usually a satisfying yet predictable lover. As soon as the security guard's footsteps receded, Terence ventured a finger inside her. Discovering—surprised, she thought—her excitement, he'd grabbed her hand and pulled her into a little gated park nearby, to a bench conveniently secluded by trees. Too convenient, she thought later. How had he known it was there? That day she stepped out of her underwear and sat atop him for what she recalls as the best sex they had ever had. And had not had since.

Subsequently, he'd gone on an unscheduled work trip to Brussels and stayed the weekend. On return, Terence announced sharply that he couldn't stand his workplace a minute more and wanted to go home. Dominique didn't ask why. They just left. When the next job took him to Delhi, Terence suggested that she stay home and supervise house renovation and pool construction. When he left his chief financial officer job to begin consulting and years of global travel, she remained put, her own career long ago mothballed. She'd paid attention to Terence's lesson about long-term savings, but she had forgotten the initial part—to pay herself first, to see to her own needs and measure of worth. So had he.

Dominique felt the air change as her husband passed her to take his place. She breathed in wet hair and hint of lime. She sat up. Perhaps that was when she grasped the knife and delicately thrust the tip into his neck, as if she was spearing asparagus. Just a nick, to teach him not to mess with her. She was not a violent person. She didn't know any criminals or people who carried knives. She didn't fit the profile that she'd read about. She wasn't a seventeen-year-old male, with a history of drug use or violence or a distrust of police. Dominique was as surprised as any of her neighbors would be ("She just didn't seem the type," "such a thoughtful woman," "who would have guessed?") to find her rage lifting her across a threshold, into a different sort of family than the one she expected to join with her knife purchase.

Terence didn't speak. His mouth opened enough to make a mewling, like the small calico cat that sometimes wandered under their gate. He knocked the pitcher to the floor, and a red ooze crept across the polished bamboo boards. She noticed the intense blue of his eyes, widening and reflecting light from the sleek surfaces around them, quartz,

stainless steel, the water dancing beyond the door. The color of cornflowers or love-in-the-mist. They had a velvety rim of black, a faint starburst of white radiating from the pupil, and the left eye had a shadowy teardrop in the lower right quadrant that she had never noticed before.

Her love-in-the-mist hadn't done well this year, but she could see the deep plum hibiscus glowing in a planter outside the kitchen. Reliable, it could be counted on to bloom every July. It seemed to expand in the corner of her eye, pulsing, quivering and growing larger. She turned her gaze back to her husband and the flash of crimson trailing down his neck. Across the gleaming kitchen island, over the floor, a carmine shimmer—wet, becoming viscous, pooling in places and trickling slowly towards the door. The floor must not be level, Dominique thought, following a rivulet towards the front step, watching it tumble out and bloom into the pool, multiplying and cascading like a riot of tropical flowers.

She rested her head again on the slippery counter. If she squinted her eyes, the pool looked like a sunset, bruised and bleeding across the day. It reminded her of a time when she'd met Terence in Nice after a work trip and they'd driven along the Italian coast to Portofino. Particles from Spanish forest fires seemed to set the entire Mediterranean ablaze, a liquid rapture. "Terence darling," she murmured, straightening up. "We really must go back to Italy."

## Row of Stones

Artie was only six when Father died. The task of running the farm had fallen to Mother, who had, without blinking, hired the job out to a set of men who were broad-shouldered and loud-talking, and who blocked the doorway to Father's workshop, which is where the best pencils and glue and shoelaces had always been kept, and where Father's tools still hung, and where, for just a little while longer, the air would still smell like dog food and wet shoes and hot metal.

Artie was twelve when Mother died, and this time the farm went to Gina, who said she'd had enough of strangers running things around here already and shooed the men out, right behind Mother's body. In their place came a rotation of high-schoolers whom she invited up to the house for pizza after their shifts, and for whom she wrote college recommendations, and with whose fathers and older brothers she flirted.

In the end, she'd landed a husband this very way, and so, on the evening of the wedding, after Gina was toted away drunk and elated in the passenger seat of an oversized pick-up truck, eighteen-year-old Artie sat on the front porch until the sun went down, watching the sheep moving cautiously through the pasture, and the fireflies beginning to flicker.

He went inside, warmed the casserole that Gina had left him, ate it, washed his plate and fork, hand-dried them the way Mother had always said that he must, and put them back in the antique maple hutch where they belonged.

Then he went upstairs and looked into his parents' room, with its musty drapes and twin beds, and into Gina's bright-painted room from the hallway. And when it was late enough, he climbed into the twin bed he'd slept in every night of his life, in the smallest of the house's three bedrooms. He pulled his quilt up tight under his chin, turned out the light, and waited for his eyes to adjust. But the dark was darker than it had ever been, and tonight it stayed dark and didn't yield. The house around him held its breath, cold and empty, with only his one body inside it, breathing in and out, afraid of tomorrow.

In the dark, Mother came to him first. Upright in her favorite chair—a fancy chair for a farmhouse, everyone agreed: dark mahogany with carved legs and candy-cane striped silk. The version of Mother who had stung the back of his neck with a ruler if he tracked mud into the house on his boots, or was too slow at his reading, or cried when a fox mauled the chickens. And the other version of Mother, too: the near-skeleton, slumped in a soup-stained nightgown, barking *harlot* at Gina as she walked past carrying trays of food and baskets of laundry, and hissing *retard* at Artie when he tiptoed past empty-handed.

Artie thought about the dead. About Mother and the green hill not far from here where she was buried, and Father's body buried beside her.

Father. Father had taken him fishing. Trusted him to use the toaster. Taught him, allowed him to climb trees. Held out his arms, for Artie to jump.

*Maybe a dog*, Artie whispered to the dark. A big muddy-pawed shedder, like Father used to have, before Mother said *No more, those dogs were soiling her upholstery*. He could let a dog come inside the house. Lick the dinner plates. Come upstairs, even. Sleep in his room.

Artie turned over in his bed and looked out the window. Joonie, the last one had been. Artie and Gina had liked riding in the back of Father's truck with Joonie, and throwing her rubber ball as far as they could.

He sat up and went down the hall to his parents' old room, and opened his father's dresser. He pulled a pair of Father's overalls on over his pajamas, found a flashlight downstairs in the workshop, and went out and across the field to the grassy space behind the barn, where a row of stones marked the line between a thin-mown tractor path and a thicket of wild grasses.

A long line, ending with Joonie. He sat and patted the last stone, and missed Joonie so suddenly it felt like a cannonball hitting his chest, and he wished everything around him weren't dead.

A square-shouldered shadow sat overlooking, and Artie lifted his flashlight. Up to its ears in grasses sat the old heavy-fendered truck. Artie could still hear it rumble.

He pushed through the grass, tugged at the driver's-side handle until the rusted hinges moaned open, and climbed in. The seat was still set way back, the way Father had it, and the vinyl seats creaked the same old way. Artie turned off the flashlight and waited for the night noises to pick up where they had left off.

After a day of fishing, at the top of the long road back into the farm, his father's long, narrow hand had swept across everything Artie could see, from one end of the dashboard to the other, and then reached out the window and patted the roof of the truck.

"These are your fields, you know," his father had said. "Your land, your sky, Artie. Even the moon belongs to you."

Artie stretched his legs all the way out into the long, empty space in front of him and tilted his head back against the seat.

This truck, sleeping here in the grasses, watching over. Those thick shadows, shifting expectantly in their enclosure. Those fields, pulsing with light. All of these lungs, here together, being alive.







**NONFICTION**



## **Permanent**

I hate it when she asks me to brush her hair.

This time she is sitting on the couch in the living room, the one with a Navajo print that is so awkwardly placed in the middle of the walkway towards the den. Her back is to me as I walk past her. She is reading a romance novel — the fat paperback kind that they sell in the grocery store near the gum. She doesn't move a muscle when she asks. "Please? Just for a minute," she says, attempting to graze my hand by bending her arm behind her, not losing sight of her page. Lately I don't even try to hide my contempt for the job. "Mommmy," I say. "I have homework to do." I don't.

"Just for a minute," she says. And with one look at me with her big brown eyes, I can't say no.

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In the car ride home from swim practice, she tells me she envies my hair. "It's so thick," she says, running her fingers through my half-soaked strands as I wriggle my way away from her. "Don't you think so?"

"I dunno," I say, as I watch suburban autumn pass by my window. "I guess." I hadn't thought much about it; these days I'm a lot more concerned about hair that was beginning to patch up on other parts of my body. Do I bring this up to her now or wait? She begins talking about dinner that evening. Fried chicken with homemade fries, but we needed to stop by the grocery store for breadcrumbs first.

I decide to wait.

\*\*

We're in the basement of a home on the South Side of Chicago, and I'm propping myself up on a booster seat to feel higher in an adult chair. I don't know what awaits on the other side of these walls — all I know is that it's something that adults do. And something Mom thinks I'm ready for.

"OK, here we goooooo," croons Louise as she walks towards me and helps sturdy my head back into the dip of the basin. She's a Polish hairdresser in her mid-fifties whom my grandma began visiting weekly.

It began to feel like we went weekly, too, though in reality it was monthly — when my dad and brothers would be in dire need of haircuts and when Mom would talk to Louise about "changing things up." They would peruse a cocktail of highly produced hairstyles in the look books the hairdresser kept — the pros and cons of each. Each one was worthy

of its own conversation. “These bangs are perfect for big eyes like yours, and look at the angles here that frame the face,” Louise would say, pointing to the laminated sheet and searching Mom’s face for a reaction.

She nods in agreement and flips the page. My hair is still wet. I’m waiting my turn on one of two couches that takes up space next to Louise’s station. There’s a TV between them, but it’s never on — I wonder today, and every time, if it works. I turn to my bag of White Castle and squeeze the ketchup container until the sauce rises high enough for me to dip my last deep fried chicken ring into it. Daniel, my older, autistic brother, is shoveling onion rings into his mouth. “Slow down, buddy,” Mom chimes, looking up as best she can while sitting still for Louise. “No one is going to take it away from you.”

Every few minutes I look back over to Mom, who now has nowhere to look but into the mirror of herself and our host. I wait until Louise spins her chair around in my direction so we can exchange a smile. She asks for a fry. They talk about Mom’s work, my grandma, and Louise’s daughter, who is also named Nicole. They bond over this.

Footsteps. I force myself to swallow another mouthful of fries and wipe off my face. If I’m already eating, I fear I’ll be skipped over. I need to look ready and able.

It’s Staś, Louise’s husband. He only makes one entrance to the basement during each of our visits, and when he does, he brings a satchel of candies he buys in bulk from the Polish grocery store around the corner. I hug his ribcage, ask how he is, and wait for him to open up the plastic bag to reveal a rainbow of foil — some wrapped once on top, some wrapped on both ends. I toss those politely to the side as I sleuth for the most modestly packaged item of the bunch, and all that matters in that moment: caramels that are covered in white paper that is inked with a cow drawing. Mom got me hooked on them. She loves cows.

I grab the five I can spot and hope he thinks I’ve taken three.

One hour and three caramels later, and my curlers are ready to come out. I change seats with Mom and stare at myself and Louise in the mirror. We talk about science class, my upcoming birthday, and why dolphins are my favorite animal. “Oh my goodness,” she says as she slowly unravels the first one. My eyes widen as I see the transformation from straight to wavy; from passable to noticeable; from young to not so young. Once they’re out, Mom comes and runs her fingers through the new waves.

“Wow, Cole. Look at how grown up you look,” she says, eyes smiling through a layer of richly hued brown bangs, freshly trimmed. I return my gaze to myself, trying to see what she sees.

Louise gives us a bag of grapes for our car ride home. She grows them in her backyard, she tells us. Concord. On our way out, I peer into her kitchen but only quickly — even though Louise has never said anything to support this belief, I have the impression that it, along with the entire first floor, is forbidden territory. Before I see a thing, she covers my face in her bosom, all while watching the hair. “Careful for the seeds,” she says, opening the door and kissing us on the way out. Our car is just 20 paces away in their driveway, but

we're always rushed. "Walk quickly," my dad says. I hear fireworks that must be going off just blocks away, but I don't know why. It's only mid-March.

\*\*

She never liked her hair. It was always so thin, she'd complain — ever since she was young. In between laps at swim practice I look up to the stands to make sure she's there. In the sea of other swimmers' moms with bob cuts and pixies, there she is, always: lean, attentive, and eyes alive underneath a curtain of blunt brown bangs and a head of long, chocolate strands that fall to her shoulders. "Nice work today, honey," she says. We're driving home from practice, but first, a stop for taco supplies. "Why don't you cut your hair like all of the other moms?" I ask. She pauses and smiles. "Well if I did that, how on earth could you brush my hair like you do now?"

\*\*

She picks me up for lunch and asks me what's wrong. "I don't know if I like it," I say. "it's just so...big."

"I think you look beautiful," she says, taking a long sip of her McDonald's iced tea before slinging it back into the cup holder and changing lanes. "Plus — it's only temporary."

But isn't it called a permanent? This gets a pursed lip smile, and a wink. "Jamie might like it." He doesn't, I tell her. In fact, I think he's noticing me even less than before. "Sometimes these things take time," she says. "Especially when you look this grown up."

We have the same conversation every week, until one day, the perm is gone. Just like she said it would be.

\*\*

She asks me to paint her toenails. I nearly forget that I'd packed a collection of colors to give her a pedicure today. "Which one?" I ask. "I like the one you're wearing," she says. It's a mint green that I copied off of a popular girl in class who I'd exchanged three words with that year. Boys talk to her. She would soon start wearing Tiffany & Co. while I continued adding charms to my bracelet from Claire's. She has iron straight hair.

Mom is supine but tilted up to observe my handiwork. It's my first pedicure, but I try my best. "Do you want two coats?" I ask. She looks at my chipped fingernails for a moment. "Is that what you have on?" I nod. "Then yes, of course." I'm fairly certain this is her first pedicure, too.

A nurse enters the room. "Ladies, ladies — oh my, it's a beauty parlor in here!" she exclaims, checking multiple bags of hanging fluid only after she scans the polish color. "That's a daring hue, Sue."

“Isn’t she talented?” Mom says, attempting a tired smile. “Cole, tell her about your birthday party.”

It’s in two weeks, I say. It’s cosmic bowling and will be in the theme of *Romeo and Juliet* because Mom and I just saw it in theaters. Well, the theme isn’t so much *Romeo and Juliet* as it is Leonardo DiCaprio. In between my explanation, mint green ends up on the skin of her big toe. I run to the bathroom to wet a tissue and wipe it off.

“My mom will be there too,” I say confidently, closing up the polish and standing up to sit by her waist. The nurse looks at me and smiles, but it’s one I can’t discern. Mom grabs my hand to bring me closer to her to kiss my forehead. I kiss hers back, expecting a curtain of blunt brown bangs like the ones I recently got from Louise, to copy her. Instead, my lips meet the coolness of a silk scarf, purple with a floral pattern throughout. The nurse exits, saying she’ll be back in time for the manicure.

“Cole, can you please rub my shins? They’re so pent-up right now.” Before I can respond, she speaks again, quieter. “Just for a minute or two.”

I return to the foot of the bed and brush the bangs away from my eyes so they can meet hers. Big. Brown. Devoted. And I get to work.







# BIOGRAPHIES



## Poetry

### Stevie Belchak

Stevie Belchak divides her time between Northampton, MA, and San Francisco, CA. An MFA candidate at UMASS Amherst, she was a recent finalist for the Center for Book Arts Poetry Chapbook Contest (2018) and is a staff reader for *jubilat*.

### Jacob Boyd

Jacob Boyd teaches English at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he recently graduated from the PhD Program for Writers. His chapbook, *Stilt House*, selected by Heather McHugh as the winner of the 2018 Emrys Press Chapbook Award, is due out soon. More of his work can be found at *Blackbird*, *Copper Nickel*, *Iron Horse Literary Review*, and elsewhere.

### Laton Carter

Laton Carter's *Leaving* (University of Chicago) received the Oregon Book Award. Previous work has appeared in *Brilliant Flash Fiction*, *Brooklyn Review*, *The Citron Review*, *Sonora Review*, and *Split Lip Magazine*.

### Daniel Casey

Daniel Casey has a MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Notre Dame. His poems and reviews have appeared in *The Rise Up Review*, *Tuck Magazine*, *Waxing & Waning*, *North of Oxford*, *Heavy Feather Review*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, and *JMWW Journal*. He lives in Murray, Kentucky.

### Dorothy Chan

Dorothy Chan is the author of *Revenge of the Asian Woman* (Diode Editions, Forthcoming March 2019), *Attack of the Fifty-Foot Centerfold* (Spork Press, 2018), and the chapbook *Chinatown Sonnets* (New Delta Review, 2017). She was a 2014 finalist for the Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship, and her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Academy of American Poets*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *The Common*, *Diode Poetry Journal*, *Quarterly West*, and elsewhere. Chan is the Editor of *The Southeast Review* and Poetry Editor of *Hobart*. Visit her website at [dorothy-poetry.com](http://dorothy-poetry.com)

### Alan Chazaro

Alan Chazaro is a high school teacher at the Oakland School for the Arts, a Lawrence Ferlinghetti Fellow at the University of San Francisco, and a June Jordan Poetry for the People alum at UC Berkeley. His poems have appeared in various journals such as *BOAAT*, *Frontier*, *Huizache*, *Borderlands*, *Juked*, and *Iron Horse Review*. He is most proud about his sneaker collection, his recent Pushcart Prize nominations, and being selected by 2017 Pulitzer Prize winner, Tyehimba Jess, for an AWP Intro Journals Award.

### Darren Demaree

Darren C. Demaree is the author of nine poetry collections, most recently *Bombing the Thinker* which was published by Backlash Press. He is the recipient of a 2018 Ohio Arts

Council Individual Excellence Award, the Louis Bogan Award from *Trio House Press*, and the Nancy Dew Taylor Award from *Emrys Journal*. He is the Managing Editor of the *Best of the Net Anthology* and *Ovenbird Poetry*. He is currently living in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.

## **Sarah Elkamel**

Sara Elkamel is a journalist and poet, living between Cairo, Egypt and New York City. She holds an M.A. in arts and culture journalism from Columbia University. Her writing has appeared in *The Guardian*, *The Huffington Post*, *Mada Masr*, *Guernica*, *The Common*, *Winter Tangerine*, and elsewhere.

## **Logan February**

Logan February is a Nigerian poet and a book reviewer. His work has appeared in *The Adroit Journal*, *Vinyl*, *Tinderbox*, *The Bind*, *The Raleigh Review*, and more. He has been nominated for Best of the Net Awards, and his first full length manuscript, *Mannequin in the Nude*, was a finalist for the Sillerman First Book Prize for African Poets. He is the author of *How to Cook a Ghost* (Glass Poetry Press, 2017), *Painted Blue with Saltwater* (Indolent Books, 2018) & *Mannequin in the Nude* (PANK Books, 2019). You can find him at [loganfebruary.com](http://loganfebruary.com)

## **Jason Gray**

Jason Gray is the author of *Radiation King*, winner of the Idaho Prize for Poetry, as well as *Photographing Eden* and the chapbooks *How to Paint the Savior Dead* and *Adam & Eve Go to the Zoo*. His poems and reviews have appeared in *Poetry*, *Kenyon Review*, *Image*, and *The Southern Review*, among others. Find him online at <http://jason-gray.net>.

## **Sophie Gregory**

Sophie Gregory is currently studying the poetry and the written arts at Bard College in the blue Hudson Valley. Her work has so far been published in *John Hopkins' Zeniada Magazine* (Poem - *For One Day*) and in the *Writers of Gainesville Bacon Literary Journal* (Poem - *Astrovan*). She spends her days swimming in language and watching her dog dream in the aquatic; she adores her best friend, Henry.

## **Lisa Higgs**

Lisa Higgs' third chapbook, *Earthen Bound*, is forthcoming from Red Bird Chapbooks at the end of 2018. She is a poetry editor for *Quiddity Literary Journal* and has reviews at *Kenyon Review* online and the *Poetry Foundation*.

## **Lori Lamothe**

Lori Lamothe is the author of three books of poetry, most recently *Kirlian Effect* (FutureCycle, 2017). Her work has appeared in *Blackbird*, *Calyx*, *The Journal*, *Verse Daily* and elsewhere.

## **Travis Lau**

Travis Lau recently completed his Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania Department

of English. His research interests include eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature, the history of medicine, and disability studies. His academic writing has been published in *Journal of Homosexuality*, *Romantic Circles*, *English Language Notes*, *Digital Defoe*, and *Disability Studies Quarterly*. His creative writing has appeared in *The Deaf Poets Society*, *Wordgathering*, *Assaracus*, *Rogue Agent*, *Up the Staircase Quarterly*, and *QDA: A Queer Disability Anthology* (Handtype Press, 2015). [travisclau.com]

## **Zefyr Lisowski**

Zefyr Lisowski is a trans femme artist and writer currently based in New York. She teaches and studies at Hunter College, edits poetry for *Apogee Journal*, and is the author of the chapbook *BLOOD BOX*, from which these Lizzie Borden poems are excerpted (*Black Lawrence Press*, forthcoming 2019). A Pushcart nominee, Zef's work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Muzzle*, *DIAGRAM*, *The Felt*, and *The TexasReview*, among other journals. Find her at zeflisowski.com or on Twitter @zefrrrrrr.

## **Steve Mueske**

Steve Mueske is an electronic musician and the author of a chapbook and two books of poetry. His poems have appeared recently in *The Iowa Review*, *Typo Magazine*, *Water~Stone Review*, *Thrush*, *The American Poetry Journal*, *Verdad*, *Redactions*, and elsewhere. He is currently collaborating with photographer Kevin Solie on a series of poetry and image conversations.

## **ire'ne lara silva**

ire'ne lara silva is the author of two poetry collections, *furia* (Mouthfeel Press, 2010) and *Blood Sugar Canto* (Saddle Road Press, 2016), which were both finalists for the International Latino Book Award in Poetry, an e-chapbook, *Enduring Azucares*, (Sibling Rivalry Press, 2015), as well as a short story collection, *flesh to bone* (Aunt Lute Books, 2013) which won the Premio Aztlán. She and poet Dan Vera are also the co-editors of *Imaniman: Poets Writing in the Anzaldúan Borderlands*, (Aunt Lute Books, 2017), a collection of poetry and essays. ire'ne is the recipient of a 2017 NALAC Fund for the Arts Grant, the final recipient of the Alfredo Cisneros del Moral Award, the Fiction Finalist for AROHO's 2013 Gift of Freedom Award, and the 2008 recipient of the Gloria Anzaldúa Milagro Award. ire'ne is currently working on a new collection of poetry, *CUICACALI/ House of Song*, and her first novel, *Naci*.

## **Alicia Elkort**

Alicia Elkort's poetry has appeared in *AGNI*, *Arsenic Lobster*, *Black Lawrence Press*, *Califragile*, *Georgia Review*, *Heron Tree*, *Hunger Journal*, *Menacing Hedge*, *Rogue Agent*, *Stirring: A Literary Collection*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal* and many others. Alicia's poems have been nominated for the Orisons Anthology (2016), the Pushcart (2017), and Best of the Net (2018). She lives in California and will go to great lengths for an honest cup of black tea and a cool breeze.

## **Gabrielle Spear**

Gabrielle Spear is a poet, community organizer, and educator based in Queens and raised

in Northwest Arkansas. She was named a Goucher College Kratz Summer Writing Fellow, a finalist in LUMINA's 2017 Borders and Boundaries Nonfiction Contest judged by Leslie Jamison, and a Brooklyn Poets Fellow. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Matador Review*, *The Indianapolis Review*, *fields magazine*, and *The Sonora Review* among others.

## **Jameka Williams**

Jameka Williams is a MFA candidate at Northwestern University hailing from Chester, PA, fifteen miles southeast of Philadelphia. Her poetry has been published in *Prelude Magazine*, *Gigantic Sequins*, *Powder Keg Magazine*, *Yemassee Journal*, *Tupelo Quarterly* and is forthcoming in *Painted Bride Quarterly*. *Muzzle Magazine* nominated her poem, 'Yeezus' Wife [when asked what do you actually do], from their June 2017 issue for 'Best of the Net 2017' and the Pushcart Prize. She resides in Chicago, IL.

## **John Sibley Williams**

John Sibley Williams is the author of *As One Fire Consumes Another* (Orison Poetry Prize, 2019), *Skin Memory* (Backwaters Prize, 2019), *Disinheritance*, and *Controlled Hallucinations*. An eleven-time Pushcart nominee, John is the winner of numerous awards, including the Philip Booth Award, American Literary Review Poetry Contest, Phyllis Smart-Young Prize, The 46er Prize, Nancy D. Hargrove Editors' Prize, Confrontation Poetry Prize, and Vallum Award for Poetry. He serves as editor of *The Inflectionist Review* and works as a literary agent. Previous publishing credits include: *The Yale Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Sycamore Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Saranac Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *TriQuarterly*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Third Coast*, and various anthologies. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

## **Matthew Zapruder**

Matthew Zapruder is the author of four books of poetry and *Why Poetry* (Ecco, 2017). An Associate Professor in the MFA at Saint Mary's College of California, he is also an Editor at Large at *Wave Books*. He lives in Oakland, CA.

## **Art**

### **Fabrizio Arrieta**

Born in 1982 in San Jose, Costa Rica, Arrieta is recognized as one of Central America's most interesting artists. His recent exhibitions have generated excitement among audiences and reviewers alike.

#### **Artist Statement**

His work believes in the historical review of the pictorial western tradition, as an attempt of locating the painting in a moment and certain context. Arrieta "cuts and sticks" material from diverse but related sources revealing opulent transformations and manipulations of objects and ideas. Owing a debt to contemporary visual culture, he believes that different

artistic manifestations can coexist and find inspiration in their diverse meanings and origins. He insists on making visible things seem more significant than we may perceive them, such as the daily life of humans. In this exploration, Arrieta defines his role as an artist as, “translator, way-finder, and mediator.”

## **C. Finley**

New York and Rome based artist C. Finley is known for her elaborate geometric paintings, skillful use of color and her activism through street art. Previous projects include the Whitney Houston Biennial: I’m Every Woman, and Wallpapered Dumpsters which has been featured in the *New York Times*, *La Repubblica*, *the Huffington Post*, *NYLON Magazine*, *Dazed*, and *Women’s Wear Daily*. Finley has shown internationally with exhibitions at Galerie Ernst Hilger, Vienna; Superchief Gallery Los Angeles; Jenn Singer Gallery New York; Context/Art Miami; Scope Miami and New York; FDA Projects, Rome; High Energy Constructs and Salon Oblique, Los Angeles; and the Dumba Collective, New York. As a member of the artist collective HowDoYouSayYamInAfrican?, she participated in the 2014 Whitney Biennial. Finley received her BFA from the Pratt Institute, New York and her MFA from California State University, Long Beach.

## **Hyeseung Marriage-Song**

Hyeseung Marriage-Song was born 1978 in Seoul, Korea and grew up in Houston, Texas. She is based in Brooklyn, New York. Her work is held in collections in the United States and internationally. She can be found at [www.hmarriage-song.com](http://www.hmarriage-song.com) and on instagram @hyeseungs.

### **Artist Statement**

These submitted images are the result of a collaboration with writer Tommy Zurhellen and are a response to his imaginative retelling of Mary Shelley’s classic *Frankenstein*, this year in its bicentennial. These paintings are not direct illustrations but instead, psychological and philosophical meditations of Shelley’s and Zurhellen’s texts and the golem mythology. Zurhellen’s characters are portrayed psychologically, with the action of the story reflected in the visual idiom of unsettled and fractured forms, swirling circularity, brushwork that is at times resolved and at others broken. The manipulations of art convention serves Marriage-Song’s vision that every generation creates copies of themselves which are let loose upon the world, and then those, inevitably becoming artist-makers themselves, create again, and so on and so forth, thereby making us all a little bit monster, a little bit artist. See [www.frankensteinkonfidential.com/art](http://www.frankensteinkonfidential.com/art) for more explanation.

## **Gavin Smart**

Gavin Smart is a freelance photographer and digital assistant based in Edinburgh, working throughout the UK and beyond. Gavin enjoys capturing unique stories with authenticity, sensitivity and creative flair. Gavin’s work has been widely exhibited, with highlights this year including the Royal Scottish Academy of Art at Edinburgh’s National Gallery, and the Royal Ulster Academy of Art in Belfast, and the Royal West Academy in Bristol. He has won a number of awards in the UK and beyond, highlights of which include the BIPP Student Photographer of the Year 2017, MPA Student Photographer of the Year 2018, and finalist in the 2017 AOP Awards.

## Artist Statement

Scotland and the Environment is a conceptual series touching on a variety of contemporary issues facing Scotland today, such as plastic pollution, marine conservation, intensive agriculture and woodland protection. Whilst we frequently see images of starving polar bears and melting ice caps through the important work of global publications such as National Geographic, it is easy to forget that there are also serious issues at stake much closer to home.

With the rising volume of disposable plastic as well as the loss of valuable natural habits and migratory routes, it is Smart's hope that the imagery behind the project will captivate the imagination of the audience, and in turn raise questions of individual and corporate responsibility. It is the contributions of the individual as well as major businesses that can help protect Scotland's beautiful nature and wildlife.

Drawing inspiration from classic Surrealist art as well as the advertising work of non-profit organisations such as the Surfrider Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund, the project aims to present these everyday issues in a fresh and engaging way. Using carefully planned composite photography, it is Smart's hope that these images will catch the attention of the viewer, but as they gaze longer on each individual scene, the deeper underlying messages become clear and are impossible to ignore.

## Fiction

### Molia Dumbleton

Molia Dumbleton's short fiction has appeared in journals including *New England Review*, *Kenyon Review Online*, and *Witness*, and has been honored with First Prize for the Columbia Journal Fiction Award, the Seán Ó Faoláin Story Prize, and the Dromineer Literary Festival Flash Fiction Award; Third Prize for the Bath Flash Fiction Award and Bridport Prize; and Finalist for the Iowa Short Fiction Award, Glimmer Train Very Short Fiction Award, SmokeLong Quarterly Flash Fiction Award, and others. She is a reader for *The Masters Review* and a member of the Curatorial Board at Ragdale, and writes and teaches in the Chicago area. Full publications list and other info can be found at [www.moliadumbleton.com](http://www.moliadumbleton.com).

### Toni Nealie

Toni Nealie is the author of the essay collection *The Miles Between Me* and the Literary Editor of *Newcity*. Her nonfiction and fiction have appeared in *Guernica*, *The Guardian*, *The Rumpus*, *The Offing*, *Essay Daily*, *Chicago Quarterly Review*, and elsewhere. From New Zealand, she now writes and teaches in Chicago.

### L.N. Lewis

L.N. Lewis has been writing since childhood in various genres: fiction, poetry, stage plays, screenplays, journalism, and essays. July 2018, online magazine *Black Youth Project* just published her essay "Three Arrests, One Strangulation, and \$2" (retitled "The 'Positive Outcome' of the Starbucks Arrests..."). She lives in Detroit and is currently at work on a novel.



## **Hannah Son**

Hannah Son is an aspiring writer and student. "Eukarya" is her first published work. She lives in Texas with her family and two dogs.

## **Nonfiction**

### **Nicole Schnitzler**

Nicole Schnitzler is a Chicago-based freelance writer whose work has appeared in outlets such as *USA Today*, *Hemispheres*, and *The Chicago Tribune*. She is earning her MFA in creative nonfiction at Northwestern University and is currently working on a collection of essays. She is also the founder of Doors Open Dishes, an organization that partners with chefs to help keep the doors open to group homes and workshops for those with developmental disabilities.





