

# horizon

05



*art • literature • photography*





# This is *The Horizon Magazine*.

WE ARE A SPACE DEDICATED TO THE CULTIVATION OF NEW VOICES AND BOLD WORK. WE AIM TO SHARE ART AND LITERATURE THAT PUSHES BOUNDARIES, CHALLENGES AUDIENCES, AND IS POWERFULLY EXPRESSIVE.

Horizon is a high-quality artistic journal that mixes mediums of *art*, **literature**, and photography. The magazine shall always be free to read, published online and accessible to all, as well as printed and distributed in select locations.

We strive to make each edition of Horizon a collection of beautiful and diverse work. We want every edition to be open to writers and artists from all backgrounds. There are no submission fees or requirements, as we believe there should be no limitations on the opportunity for self-expression.

This is a space for **the bold**, a space for [the beautiful], and a space for the *unique*.

*for writing on the horizon*



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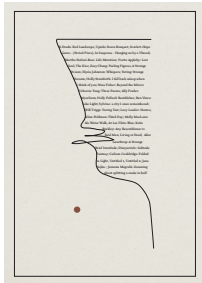
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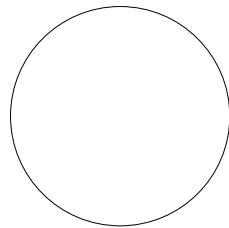
FRONT COVER: **Beyond the Mirror**  
[illustration] by **Nina Fisher**



# NOTE

# FROM

# THE



# EDITOR

On the border of Kotayk and Ararat provinces in central Armenia is the Garni Gorge. The gorge itself is home to the so-called ‘Symphony of Stones’; a natural wonder the scale of which can only be expressed in words through the assertion that it cannot be expressed in words. An entwined knot of basalt pillars which communicates an undeniable musicality. The form is self-evident, but the alchemy of its assemblage is something of a mystery. Staving a composition through rocks and foliage is logically an impossibility. What key signature is a cliff face? (My bet is on C major.) Yet this is a praxis that at this point all of us should feel familiar with. Symphony is *bricolage*.

The postmodern condition is one of choice. To choose or refuse a people, a culture, artistic form, ideals, even whole nations. And yet the binary of choice is dishonest, the reality being an unplaceable dynamism in between. It’s to scavenge a truth from fragments of a world smashed to bits. Accelerationism’s hand creeps out of theory to guide the sole point of material interaction dispossessed individuals of modernity have upon the world; consumerism. Acquisition and disposal cycle with a whirlwind action, and the old newness of a Poundian mantra is outmoded and clichéd. Clichéd as might be a motif of Boccherini’s “Minuet” or Khachaturian’s “Sabre Dance” in which art misfires to become unreal kitsch.

Yet once discarded, these form the building blocks of new experimentation possible only through their obsolescence. Consider the polystylism of Schnittke, the bewildering Baroque-inspired passages of “Concerto Grosso No. 1”. Its effectiveness stems from the reappropriation of our own waste in a manner pleasing or poignant. There is nothing to “make new”, concurrent industrialisation of thought and object has made sure of that. How then will we come to supplement our conditions of limitless trash? The reemployment of items for a purpose other than how they were sold to us? We’ve already bought in. A pseudo-classicist project of dislocating antiquated values onto our modern cultural kleptoscape? We’ve surpassed our sense of irony. A desperate scramble to erect a barricade of all experiences and materials available to us? Perhaps this is the dubious resistance Horizon represents.

On a cliff to the North-West of the Symphony of Stones stands the Temple of Garni, the only surviving pagan temple in the whole of the post-Soviet world. Nothing is truly forgotten in the performance



of the symphony. No one is left behind. As Lévi-Strauss taught us, the *bricoleur* speaks not only with things, but through things. What end is there then to our voices when everything is commodified? Each word is harmonised. Each paragraph a stave. All ends in another discarded tsatske of the past; polyphony. With Horizon, through our compulsory celebration of form, aesthetics, expression, all of us - all of you - aim to conduct our own symphony of standpoint.

Distribution is key. That we recognise the insurmountable odds facing us in an insidiously dynamic globalised superstructure and redeploy that infrastructure in our favour. Culture, experience, and expression must be kept in constant circulation lest we fall back on static monuments of mythmaking unable to refer back to anything other than themselves. The motion is what truly matters. The movements. Allegro, andante, allegro. A throwaway motif of Mozart's becomes an agonised assertion of being in Shostakovich. Each undergoes an aestheticized displacement in a Danny Elfman score for a forgotten Stephen King adaptation. The Soviets are gone, long live formalism. In lieu of a national music, of even The Internationale itself in a post-capital noosphere, there arises an assemblage of atomised pieces:



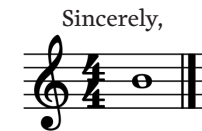
Figure 1 Mozart, "String Quartet 19".



Figure 2 Shostakovich, "String Quartet 8".



Figure 3 Elfman, "Introduction" from Dolores Claiborne







# THREE (by Ucherie Tang) POEMS

2011

1108

Because in the depths of forgotten  
From those times reappearing in front of me  
There is still a perfect memory of pure passion  
Reminiscences of moments suspended in eternity  
This is the only real thing about me  
But I know it's always too late  
I like to watch a curved movement  
I like a tree in a proper position in the scenery



2012

0601

Alternating back and forth between calm and violent emotions every day  
Sadness without an outlet is like a meteorite  
Smashed me into a mollusk

2012

0610

You once said that my private parts are the smell of the sea under the moonlight  
I will count the wrinkles like mounds and fall asleep  
Will plant all anger into grapes  
While waiting for the vines to be as charming as youth, we are planning for the next harvest  
Will meet with roses in dreams with the fragrance of lips and teeth after sex

Feel the ocean after the storm for the 300th time  
Calm, chaos, joy  
Only on you  
Feel a salty breeze  
White pigeons embracing  
Everything back to life



below In Suspense — Hanging on by a Thread [sculpture] by Scarlett Hope-Gates



Light spills in            like rain  
like the sky's gutters have split  
under another Fall's accidents

& the light is wet  
feel it dashing down skin  
in tingled  
tangled rivulets  
a nervous system  
collapsing under excitement's weight

& the light is translucent  
reflects itself in un-there  
cylinders & cones  
air's airy phloem  
gurgling day at the back  
of reality's throat

& the light is parched  
thirsty for always more light  
swimming in not enough of itself  
a salted sea of crystallised chances  
missed in sight's afterthought

& the light is running

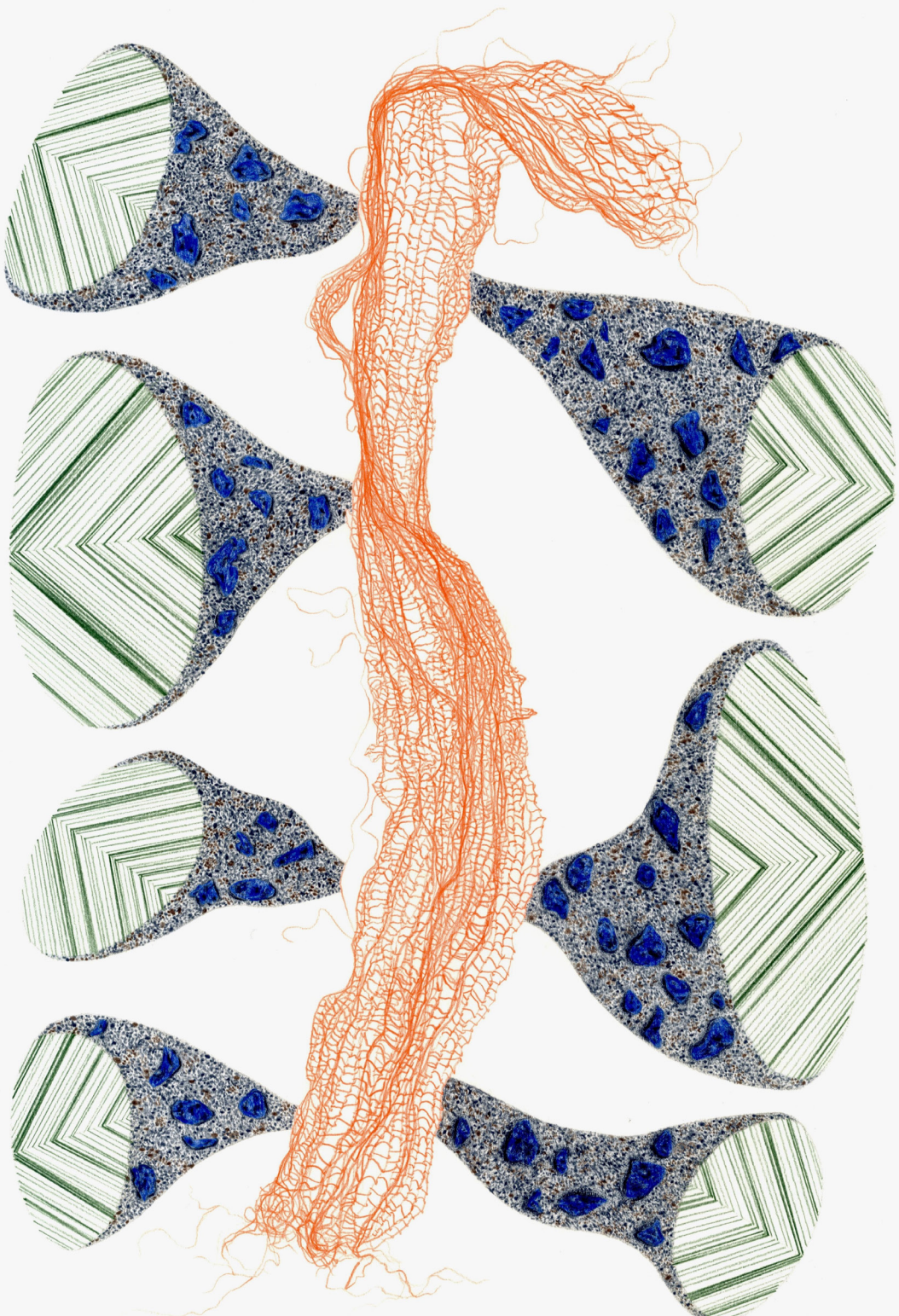
& light is the streaming

& runs streams spills light  
like rain            like rain

& like rain the light  
runs on liquid legs  
never tired never quite getting there  
carving channels in the world  
in invisible bedrock  
a glass of pure day  
spilled            not drunk

[poem] by **Ben Vince**





B

U

M

B

# *BUMBLEBEE*

[poem] by **Holly Pollard**

L

E

*b*

*left from* **Life Mutation**  
[drawing] by **Martha Stefani-Bose**

*e e*





'But, the parasite is both inside and outside the system and it is this dilemma which perturbs and agitates the very logic of the binary system: it produces movement and turbulence, without which nothing new would come about in our world.'

— *Silent Images* by Vit Hopley and Yve Lomax

You are the crackle — in-between  
radio-stations — yes, you are yellow-noise.

Your six legs, like lost eyelashes — perch  
on an inhale, the wisteria's gasp.

Stilled, your once-dithering wings are used  
cellophane wrappers from boiled penny sweets

now swallowed. Pollen *and* flower. Words  
leave my mouth fuzzy, tumbling,

lost for an ear. Six stuffed sweet peas  
are blushing blue. For you are *and*.

The indecipherable translator,  
figure-bound in fertile bumps.



M Y C E L I U M

[poem] by Ally Fowler



myopic belief system\_\_\_shapes babel\_\_\_ underfoot  
the arc of the\_\_root like a\_\_\_\_bethlehem beam  
guiding\_\_\_star\_\_\_\_existed before\_\_\_kings  
upturned into soil\_\_\_\_\_ and concrete now  
risen to block\_\_\_out the\_\_firmament\_stretching  
the universe\_and folding\_\_\_\_\_in the\_\_ shape  
of\_\_\_\_\_fungal\_\_\_\_\_mycelium

curved as\_\_\_a bundle of\_\_\_\_\_ nerve endings  
like\_\_\_\_conductive lightning\_\_\_\_\_ like the  
shape of\_\_\_the\_\_breath\_\_ at winter solstice

networks\_\_\_fractal\_\_\_and\_\_\_\_\_ familiar  
mushrooms\_\_\_\_\_ bloom tender and  
their\_\_\_roots traverse\_the\_\_\_same miles  
underground\_\_\_\_\_as above  
firing\_\_\_messages\_\_\_\_\_ like a military squad  
such as\_\_\_here i am\_\_\_lovely decay\_a holy story  
for the disbelievers\_\_\_a fact in\_\_\_ earth's core  
written\_\_\_in the roots\_\_present\_\_in the spores

we share half\_of our dna\_\_\_with\_\_\_ fungi  
half of\_\_\_our illness\_half of our\_\_\_history  
moulding\_\_\_\_\_and\_\_\_\_\_ primordial  
presence of\_\_the plant\_\_\_\_\_in our veins  
the\_\_secret of\_\_\_\_\_death\_\_\_\_\_just  
like love\_\_\_\_\_but\_\_\_\_\_ never violent

like love\_\_\_\_\_without\_\_\_\_\_precaution

love like\_\_\_the mushroom head\_\_\_\_peering  
from the\_\_\_woods\_\_\_\_\_at the\_\_\_ hikers  
searching\_\_\_for that\_\_\_same intrinsic\_rush  
and\_waiting\_\_\_for them\_\_\_\_\_to find it  
buoyed\_\_\_\_\_from the\_\_ground up

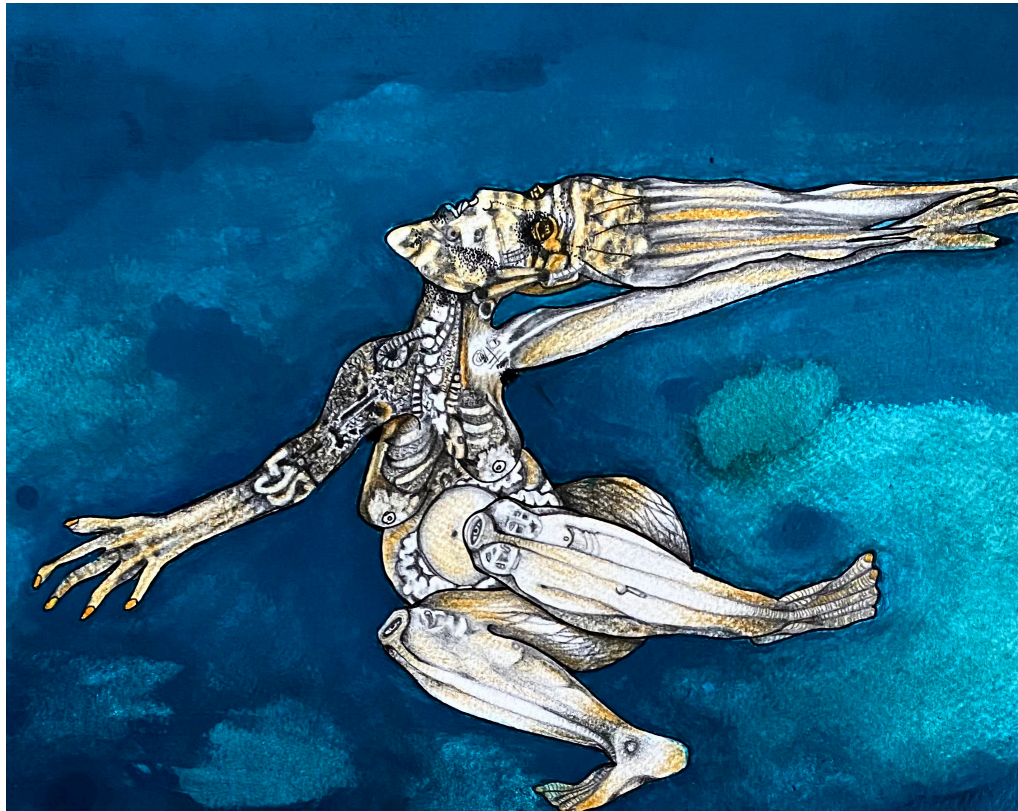


# ALE

# WATER

# WALK

[prose] by Molly MacLean



*To Auld Tam and the River Ale*

*Bhómoosley bent double, courparsalée go tumble tumble turning brown with Septem's marrons. Your heelmark fills with a cloudburst, swell with rain your feetstoops marked otte stamped in the bleubrown miroir you made of land and see see see the sky is bleuening. Walk on with otteleft and otterecht. Step ottehuitetochoachteottoagusochd.*

Rain and river, run like ale, riverelle, run the rig, run like ale and the river runs a jig. Filetyplocetyploufettybodhran. Bending blue, affretanto by Riddle Tower too vois? Noo entendre! Gan further, chloiser steal! Go bubbubabelbabbling upon the peeples. Kingfisher catch and skimming stones. Blue caps on fatted froth. This wis once a dump ye ken?

Marking mud with your otte boots, see otters by the brig and Cuthbert cometh along the Way. His path is trod by your Ambrose mark. Ochd acht the leftfooted wayfarers mumble. Ambrose. Fleur on shirt sleeves dewed, splashed, eau du jig! Custard lichens arbres embracing barkque and bank, amberose, flaschfloating goes eau d'ale.

Jigged' upstream to the apple orchard where porcelain juts from the bank. Ah ken the way. Deposits grew a pommier, ach well too va à vau-l'oh! I want to go to follow l'oh! An apple drops a big bass oh, dropping in l'eau; bobbing to see the sea. But first melee in tweedledee.

Aye, when we were wee. Bairns, babes grown and the tower let. Imagine you could... Sauter bigger when we wis wee. Sam slept in hain's hallows and we went bobbing in a bucket. Herbst's Früchte! And a cold or a sore. Woodland in crescent with warted bark. Find your trail of feetstoops, each otte bluebrun with rain and follow Cuthbert hame to the reel of the ale abhainn.

# ALE

# WATER

# WALK

[prose] by Molly MacLean

*left* Lost Soul [painting] by Yvette Appleby

# THIRD DAY

[poem] by **Alina Pohlmann**



I imagine  
it's the world at the beginning of  
it's third day,  
before time,  
when all moments stretched  
into eternity,  
its banks of sand never moved,  
the sea never a refuge  
from the violent crash  
of the shore.  
Out there, before they were left  
starving  
between beauty and death  
as a political act  
the world waited for humanity  
to arrive -  
still waiting  
subordinated to the wave,  
to prayer,  
caving  
in time  
for the open flood.

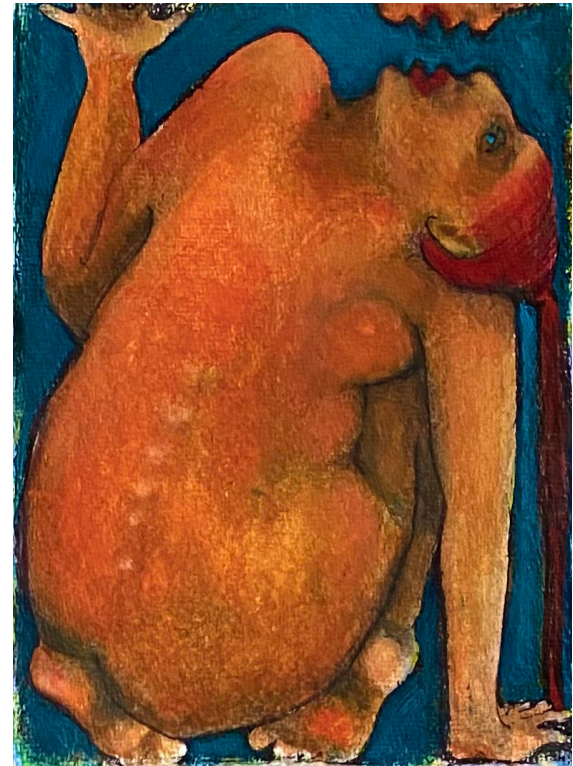




[prose] by **Molly MacLean**

## Les

*at*



*Filets*

*Bleus*



**Watchin you piss,** an artist after all, behind cars an doon alleyways an am desperate to get it oot but ah dont have a cock, better keep it in ah suppose, ah mean a can drink a pint just as well an ah did, a just cannah let it oot in the same way, buh its ah about mindset he says to me while holding his cock, how the fuck is it aw about mindset, ah dont have a cock so ah canny do it in the middle of the street, ah canny just let it oot publicly like aw these singers an poets an drunks an dogs an doctors an whatever the fuck else they hink they might be trying ta be wi their cocks in hand, theyd see right up ma arse and ahd be done for perversity an indecent exposure, a madwoman theyd say, an maybe nice legs, an maybe profanity if ah managed t piss alphabets buh ah canny piss alphabets or even really use um the same because ah dont have a cock, wits wrang wi an arse and a gash anyway? Am tryn t write but am in Brittany and je ne parle pas, pas du tout an am pure burstin for a pish an its cold an its rainin and av run oot o cigarettes passing em t Sodom and Gomorrah over here wi their songs and verses. We are besides the castle buh is no really a castle becus a castle would surely have a fuckin toilet buh definitely wouldny let a woman piss in its courtyard and by fuck ah want to. Ah just need to get something oot but am tongue tied and full o pish and ah hink av just about had it upta here when ah hear masel saying in ma Da's voice- fucking come on woman, ah always hated that buh today its doin the job, a have no pen nor do a have a pot to piss in or a word in bastardin edgeways at this philosoûl roundtable in the middle of the rue du saint something or other an as we start to move along the harbour wall past a haunted filets bleus of harem pants an sixty quid sandals an on towards another bar a old fuckers drinking diabolos brighter than the sea an puffing away beneath their caps, you dart away te get your cock oot again and ah canny take much more. Tha beach is empty noo an there ar high rocks, only a wonky seagull an a moon that cant for the life o it break through the mist an spray that are there

t see me. Peelin sodden jeans from ma thin achin thighs a let masel pish doon oer the rocks, the cracks filling and sediment swelling, marking on the granite a dark blue delta, feels good man, wipe wi an ol handkerchief an smear something offgreen from me on the rock. Ah head back t the harbour road without looking at the sea an diggin ma toe in the sand ah nearly sketch a word buh the pints are working and ahl no doot need t piss again before the next place so ah dont stop and leave only scuffs and footsteps.

# a city I once remembered

[poem] by **Sylvine**

my body is cogs and tar  
vrooming along the concrete grass

my heart a honk aimlessly bap-beeping  
arrhythmic coughs of everyday

my skin speaks asphalt, quite fluently  
so smooth the poets can't help themselves  
but gawk, describe, make footprints in it  
lasciviously, religiously

my lungs - chain smokers, they puff out  
dusk  
and spread it like icing over the streets of  
my calves

my tits, rather rugged, are tiled unevenly  
they pitter and patter when excited cor-  
rectly

my badonkadonk spreads wide

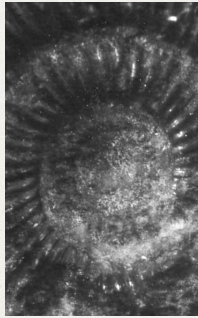


and silently absorbs  
the fumes, the trash, the bam-bangs, the hoots,  
which make it grow chonkier and chonkier en  
masse

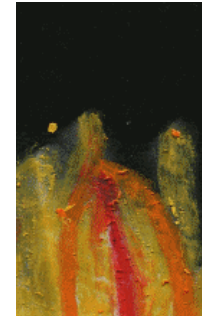
my dick can tick, erectio perpetua  
bids ordnung on walkers with its spiky whips

my body is loud but my voice is mute  
stamped out by the buzzing swarm of decibels





Light spills in



like rain







SEE SEE SEE  
THE  
SKY  
IS  
BLENDING  
WALK ON WITH  
OTTELEFT  
AND  
OTTELEFT  
STP  
OTTEHUITETOCHOACHTEOTTOAGUSO  
CHD

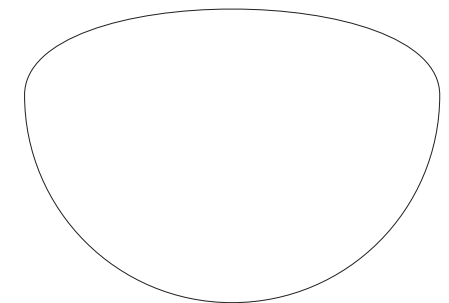


right **Untitled** [photography] by **Cailean Couldridge**  
words from 'Ale Water Walk' (Molly MacLean, pg. 18)

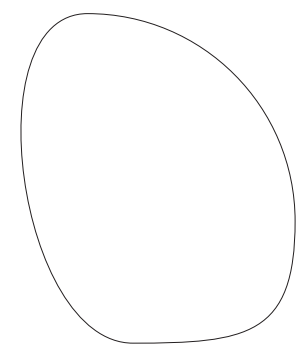




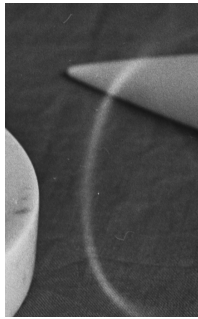




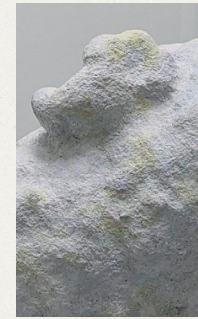
*six  
sweet stuffed sweet-peas  
are  
blushing blue*



**Rain and  
river, run like ale, riverelle, run the  
rig, run like ale and the river runs a jig.  
Filetyplocetyploufettybodhran.**



like the sky's gutters have split



under another Fall's accidents





*ANY  
RESEMBLANCE  
TO REAL MEN,  
LIVING <sup>or</sup> DEAD*

[prose] by **Katie Buckley**

I AM NOT GOING TO NAME THE MEN IN MY BOOK. I am going to call them all 'he' and let them read it and figure it out for themselves. I don't want someone to be able to text them and say hey, remember that girl you fucked at university? The leggy blonde? She wrote about you in her book, it's right here, on page 134. Yeah bro, I'll read it to you, hang on. I want them to have to stand in line to buy a copy because they aren't quite sure if they were important enough to warrant an immortalisation. They are nervous and jittery and kind of excited. Maybe it will be flattering. Maybe I will be kinder to them than they were to me. They stand in line at Waterstones and say yes, just this please. They start to read it on their walk home.

There was a boy. I wish I could name him, he has the kind of name that would make you understand what type of person he is. He has several chips on his shoulders and the borders of them are still sharp. He wears mostly black. He has pointy teeth and reservoir eyes. Man made depth. Cold and unsafe. There is moss on the concrete banks. You lose your footing and no one is there. I broke his heart. I left him for his friend. I broke his friend's heart too, when I left him for you.

Me and the reservoir boy, we'd been friends for a while, but he would sigh when I walked into the steamy cafe where he worked. He would whisper  
Fuck





when I walked down the stairs in my little black boots and my evergreen mini skirt. He would give me free coffee and cakes and ask me about my day. You're just so cool, he'd say, and I'd laugh and do that thing where I'd wait for him to go back to the bar and then I'd put chapstick on really slowly and catch him watching me and laugh again, as if it was all just a silly mistake.

I met up with him one night at a pub that made me blush whenever I walked into it because I had asked the manager out when I was sloppy drunk and then cancelled my date with him because I started sleeping with someone else, who he was, in fact, friends with. The man I slept with instead, he told me they talked about me. What do you talk about? I asked, playfully. I tilted my head to one side like a puppy. Oh, I can't, I don't want to - He took off his skater cap and ran his hands through his hair. We were sitting in the park. I was doing a very good job of pretending to be interested in anything other than how his face looked when I undid his belt with my teeth. Grass starting to get wet with the promise of evening. What, you can't tell me? I said. I can't tell you. He looked at his lap. That good, huh? I said.

The evening I met the boy in that pub I drank 12% beer (don't worry if you can't keep track of which boy I am talking about. It makes no difference). I drank La Chouffe and other beers that other men had bought me in foreign countries. I ate olives and licked brine drips off my wrist. Who knows what we talked about. I can see myself through the candlelit window, with my tongue in his mouth, sitting on a rickety stool in the corner.

Just so you know, I said, I'm not looking for anything intense. Sure, he said. Breathing hard.

When I started to unlock the dark green door that led to the cool quiet of my building's stone hallway, he grabbed me by the throat and pushed me up against the wall. He bit my lip so hard it bled. Someone walked out of the building and had to brush past us.

And they didn't say anything? Francesca asked the next day. What would they have said? Hey babe, are you into choking? Or is he bothering you? I mean, yeah, she said. They could've checked that you were okay. I was fine, it was just weird. Who does that? At least ask, you know? Outside? Choking someone outside on their doorstep? Insane behaviour, she said. We went upstairs and I pushed him down on the bed and we kissed and he paused and said, I really like you. And I said, Okay. We kissed some more and then he said I just want to go to sleep.

The next morning he left at 7am. Months later we went for dinner. He sat opposite me and picked at his food. He was smiling in a dangerous way and I asked him questions about what he had been reading and thinking about. You're super different in a sexual situation, he said.





Yeah?

Yeah like, you know what you want. It's kind of intimidating.

Interesting commentary from a man who choked me on my front doorstep. Dangerous to assume I don't know what I want everywhere I go. I didn't say anything. I laughed, I shook my hair as if it would make the noise it makes in my head, church bells ringing from far away.

Hey trouble, been thinking of you x

I am willing to fulfil the prophecies of men less wise than me. If you think I am going to ruin your life, please, don't tell me. I am willing to ruin men who think I am ruinous. I am also willing to destroy men who think I am not. You cannot overestimate me, believe me, I have tried.

If you don't want the sirens to sink you, don't get on the ship. Don't sit down below singing songs about the slap of wet flesh and the things you stole from our sea. Don't dream about wrapping your hands around throats. Don't expect victory. Don't lean over the rail and guffaw at the shipwrecks. Whatever you do, don't lounge on the deck and proclaim you aren't scared when you see me rolling and rolling with pleasure in the water, hands in my own hair, wet all over, don't say that you are going to haul me up and put something in my mouth to stop that singing and then throw me back down limp as a fish too small to be eaten. This is a warning. I have written it in the language men understand. Remember Ulysses? Remember the sirens that swam round his ship? If you start down this path, it will not end until one of your friends taps your hand as you sit barely alive at a pub that charges too much for a pint, thinking of the way I rode your body like the crest of a wave and says

You alright buddy?

And you'll shake your head to get the sound of me sighing out of your ears. Can't you hear the sirens? Police cars roaring past the room where I fucked a man who loved me so much he wrote me a letter about it. He wrote it all out on a series of postcards. I used to show them to people at dinner parties I hosted. I read them aloud, sitting on other men's laps. One man's wet dream is another man's nightmare. Can't you hear the sirens? They sound like me, whispering

I really like you

in the shell-like whorl of your ear. The sirens start singing and they will not stop.

He brought me a copy of *On the Road* to take on my trip. I was going back to the country I'd ran away to when I was younger. He brought it to my work, where I was outside, watering the restaurant's window boxes. I was eating strawberries. I had a green silk blouse on and my hair held up by a pin. Edith Piaf was coming out of the open door and drifting over the heat-soaked pavement. He said

Please be careful.

I smiled, I said something noncommittal.

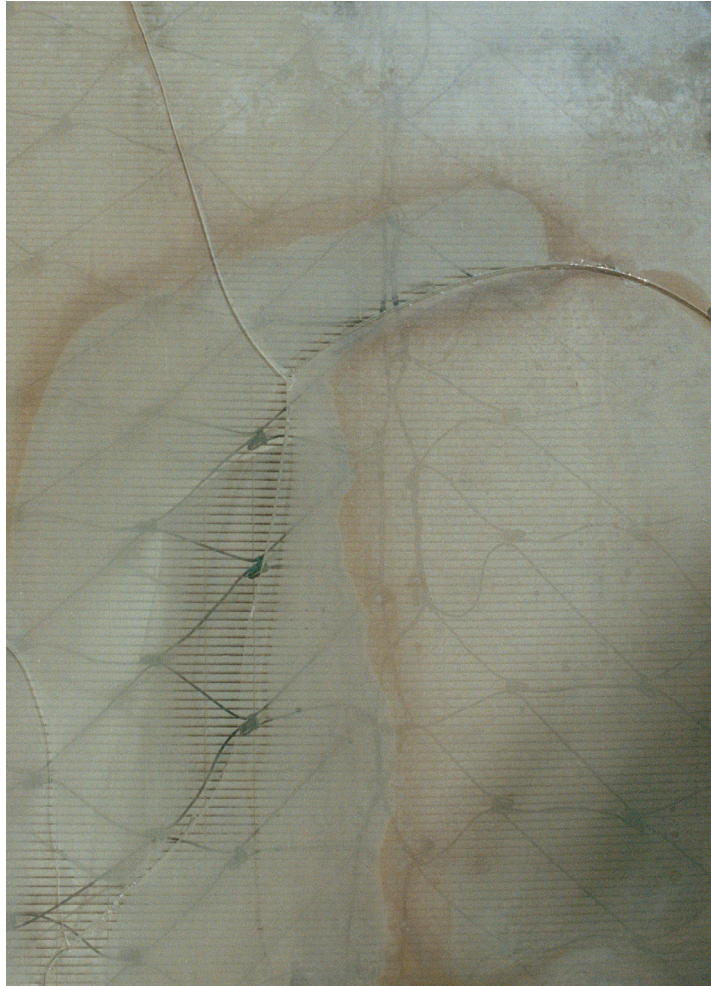
He said

I don't know what I'd do if something happened to you.

I laughed my bell chime laugh. I never read the book. I'm never going to.

Later, my friend sent me an article. It was called TOP 10 BOOKS FUCK BOYS GIVE WOMEN. The first one was a Bukowski. The second was *On the Road*. I think that boys believe





the things men write about women in books. Women play the opposite of starring roles. They play absence. Recesses. They are tunnels, dark and wet and full of danger and at the end of the tunnel there isn't a woman but a man who suddenly recognises himself from inside the woman and withdraws, sticky and whole.

Bukowski wrote that

There is a quality about women who choose men sparingly: it appears in their walk, in their eyes, in their laughter and in their gentle hearts.

The boy said to me once

You're so beautiful I never thought of you as a real person.

And I said

Really?

But what I thought was, why the fuck have you been friends with me for two years if you don't think I'm a real person?

And of course, he answered my question the night he pushed me up against my front door.

This is why, his hands said.

He found out I was fucking his friend at a party at the cafe where they both worked. It had been strange between us for months because I didn't want to spend time with him. He wanted me too much and I had found out that it wasn't me he wanted but a version of me who would lie there and moan while he did what he thought modern girls liked. And so when he texted me at 3 in the morning and said

We have to hang out soon. I miss your lovely face! x

I would reply

Ahh I'd love that! x

And then when I saw him lying in the sun on a rare hot day I would try to move in a way that meant he didn't notice me. I could hear him panting from a great distance. I could feel it on my neck. He set traps the way you set them up for lobsters: thundering, one after the other.

At the party, I sat next to him at first. There is a picture of it somewhere - he is smiling, big - I am looking past the camera to where Francesca is standing, a few feet away. I am looking for the exit. He was putting his arm around me and telling me how nice my hair looked and halfway through the party I got up and walked around the table and sat on his friend's knee. He stopped talking midway through a sentence. The words got crushed at the bottom of his throat. And I remember thinking, good. If my body is going to speak over him, it'd better work. He got up and walked out of the party and left all his friends behind and I laughed and threw my head back and went to get another beer with everyone's eyes following me and I was glad that it made them dislike me. I wanted them to be scared. This is a warning.

Ten minutes after he left he called me. I rolled my eyes and answered. Francesca





mouthing who is it? And when I mouthed his name, she said  
Oh fuck OFF.

I was laughing when I said

Hey what's up?

Yeah can you meet me outside?

Sure, I said, and I thought if we are going to have a fight at least it's going to be interesting but if he wants to cry about it I will laugh and laugh and tell him that I knew what I wanted and what I wanted wasn't him.

He was sitting at the empty bus stop when I came outside, waiting for something that would never arrive. His hands in his pockets.

Yeah? I said.

Are you fucking kidding me? He said. He stood up. I did not step back.

What are you talking about?

Are you sleeping with him? He gestured inside.

Yeah, I am.

And you didn't think you should tell me?

Why the fuck would I tell you? I laughed. You have a girlfriend. We never dated. Why on earth would I feel like I had to tell you?

We broke up actually. He threw that information across the few paving slabs separating us like it was going to hurt when it hit me.

So?

So, I broke up with her for you.

I have nothing to say to that.

You know I'm in love with you, he said.

And because you're in love with me, I have to go out with you? I was tapping my foot in my beat-up white sneakers. Another man had eased my foot out of them the summer before and said, we have to get you some new shoes. He had kissed the salty instep of my paw.

No, but -

You've never told me you're in love with me.

You knew, he spat.

I shrugged. I reached into my pocket and put honey-flavoured lip balm on while he quaked opposite me.

He should've asked me, he said.

Why? Why would he have to do that?

Because he's my friend.

I didn't say anything and what I didn't say meant, well, he made his choice, didn't he?

It made me feel sick seeing you two together.

He was crying now. And I was cold, standing outside in the April evening. I was singing when I walked back inside. Weeks later I saw him and his girlfriend walking together, holding hands. And I felt sorry for her.

I'd do it again. I'd love to. I'd do it again, but this time, I'd do it harder.



# TURING

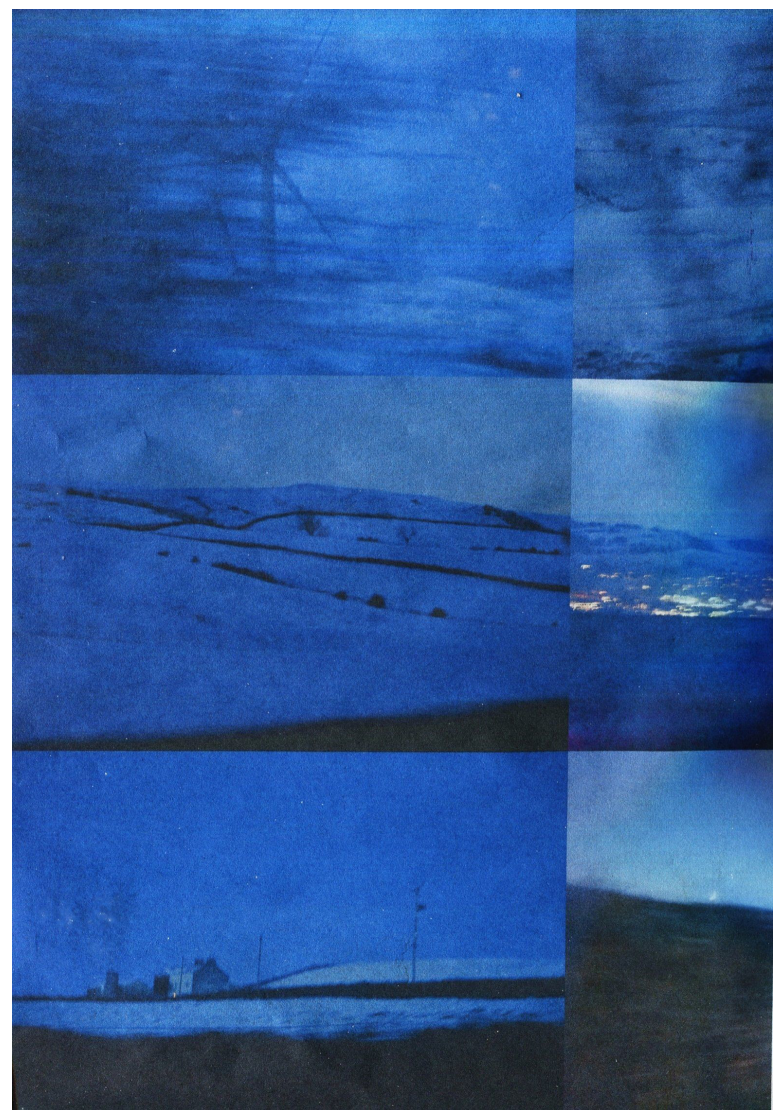
[poem] by Will Triggs

# TEST

I don't know what is so special in the blue or  
 pink colours. I've started with black and white  
 I used to think, or I still do, that the colour  
 is just a decoration of the photograph.  
 But there is something spectacular in  
 these colours. The tone before dusk, spec-  
 ially in the midday, during cold days with  
 clear sky is full of them. I've tried to cap-  
 ture them, but that is nothing better than  
 to see them, in real life.

Rozantai, many kvestadok do zaprosim.  
 Ne ischiam, se z toki lektsiyi vytrahim mi  
 tolyk klyea svoy. Caadam myslu, se male ocher  
 va khone sobie bezor porvalam stane sig  
 fo shmeru mamu. To fochise - pnomiane.  
 Pre-miane. Pre-myanie. Pre-mysic. To du  
 se napravly myshu i uasem besledoshnie.  
 Zhe ledy oshatye. Pnomia zaprosim. To co  
 zaprosim vs me jest pok. Palestine odson  
 pner pnomiyani. Porokavomiy shad, noiz  
 dlya porgruysh pokoleni, o ne kaise ledy  
 Ne vom or sobie ani racheji, ani zadrige  
 makplimoci, jest pnestnen in kchdey pene  
 do, nieloc, melocij, su, rodamany, kved  
 bidle magya pnyce or sobie caie bypactno  
 individuali meyrnistocci, na dany moment  
 pmeuer smator jest melle. Co naymna,  
 sketo orim miltarion. Orem melandoi  
 vrechstrahoi. Tole to fajme, se kasho  
 ma moy sham, vrechshvat or sobie, toly  
 murey go, shone or solone solony. Kany  
 pnomi vnyshni. Mierpimeme spraura, z

I don't know what is so special in the blue or  
 pink colours. I've started with black and white  
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 to see them, in real life.







I have seen  
the way they  
look at oceans  
it is incalculable

the way they  
read the sky  
all loss and  
valence and noise

beautiful  
the noise

I will try  
again

I will count  
the ways that  
snow falls or  
the colours of  
petrol or the  
songs that birds  
yield to a  
morning. My centre

fractals -  
I fault at  
the weight of  
a hummingbird,

the way it  
flashes like  
a child.

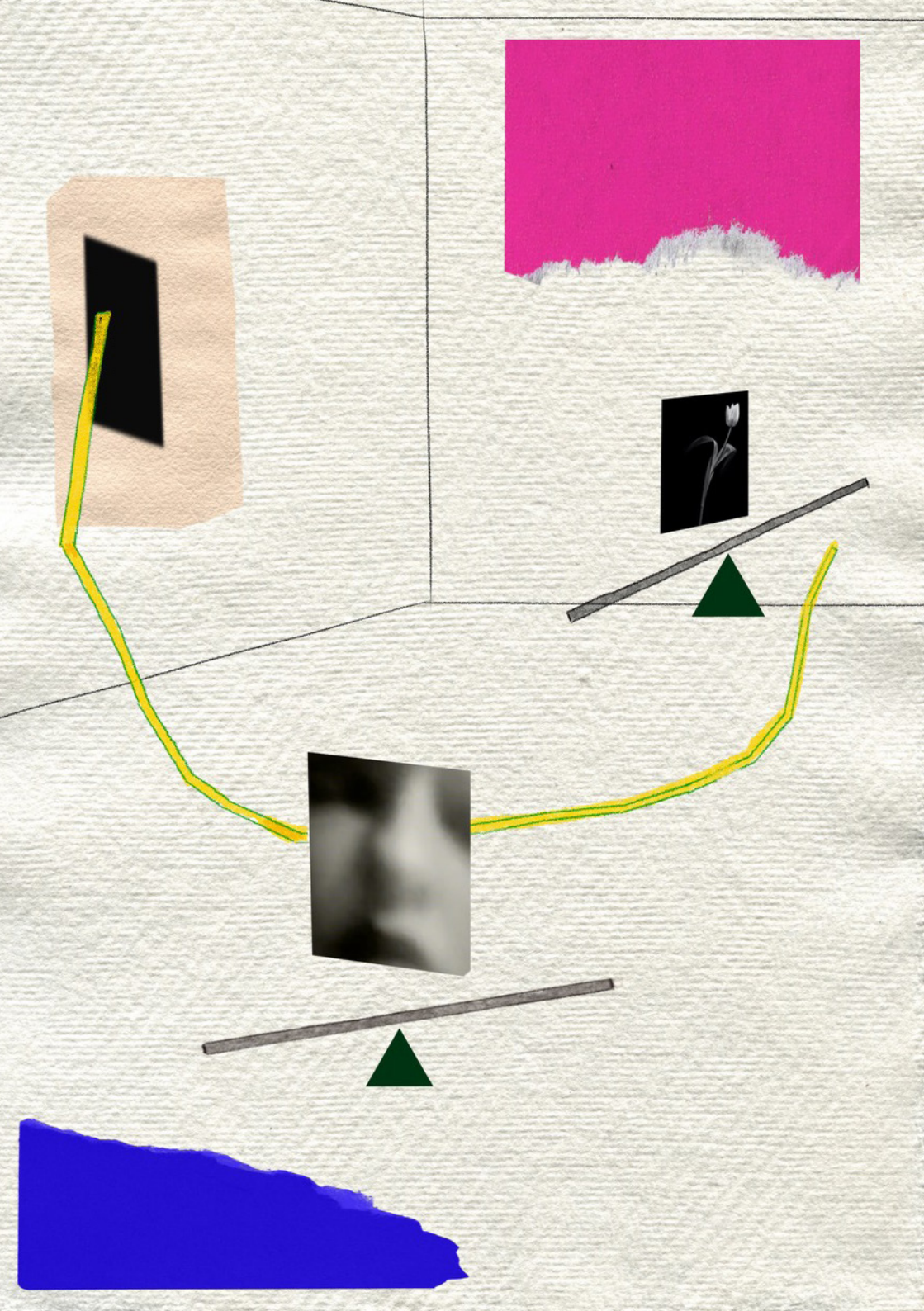
Can I have the sky?

I have nothing  
to do with metronomes,

I have found only words  
to say,

I have seen the way they look at oceans,  
it is  
beautiful noise,  
incalculable  
the closing sun's warmth,  
the breadth of a mountain's sigh,  
and I know myself  
I know  
I am everything I am  
everything  
I am





*A*

S T R A N G E

B R I E F

[prose] by **Alice Gawthrop**

INTERLUDE





*I can feel something beneath my skin, something moving, something growing, something alive. I am trying not to think about it.*

Here is the thing; this has happened already. I watched my mother change, slowly, like water boiling. I don't know which is worse, the fear of an unknown experience or the knowledge of exactly what is going to happen to you and exactly how alone you are going to be while it happens.

My mother's first symptom was an angry red rash. After it appeared, she started to get irritable with me. She would sit and scratch at her skin until it was raw, and she'd snarl, 'Would you stop breathing so loudly? Would you just shut up?' She'd pick the

flakes of skin out from under her nails and flick them onto the carpet and leave them there. Soon you could trace her entire day by the trails of dead skin she left behind her. Like desire lines pressed into grass, they traced her routine movements, bedroom to bathroom to sofa and back.

I remember staying home from school as a child because I was sick. Nothing serious, just a tummy bug, lots of throwing up and then, when there was nothing left to throw up, dry-heaving. My mother would come into my room and sit on my bed as I heaved over a plastic bowl and she would rub circles into my back with the palm of her hand. 'Shh,' she'd whisper, wiping the sweat-





slicked hair back from my face. 'Soon this will be a distant memory.'

I can still imagine her cool fingers against my fevered face, her warm breath on the top of my head as she hugged me, the cherry blossom of her perfume. But this time she is not sitting on my bed with me while I try to will myself better.

In all honesty, she left a long time ago. She was already gone in her last weeks, not the person I knew anymore, although still the person I loved no matter how hard she made it.

I don't know if she is dead. The last time I saw her, she hadn't spoken in four days. She had just sat outside, staring at the trees that lined our little garden, unblinking. I had wondered then if she was dead, but when I looked for a pulse I found one. Isn't that the criteria for life? So I had just left her there, leaving food and water out for her. The food always went uneaten. The water would disappear, but I can't be sure she drank it, as I never once saw her move except to turn her face to the sun.

Then, on the fifth day, as I laid a sandwich out for her, she grabbed my wrist, so tight that I jerked back. She was so light now that my movement jerked her entire body. I could see the little green shoots pushing out from under her nails.

I was scared to look at her by now. I hated being near her. She hardly looked human anymore. So I couldn't muster up the excitement I should have felt at seeing her react to the world around her for the first time in days.

'Are you okay?' I whispered, staring at her hand on my wrist.

I could feel her trying to speak, unable to form the words, unable to build any meaningful shapes out of the low croaking sound she was making. Her grip on my wrist tightened. Her cold fingers. The green stems poking out of them.

I finally looked at her. Her eyes were glazed green when once they had been brown. A sharp, acidic green veined by criss-crossing darker greens. I remembered science lessons at school, poring over diagrams of plant cells and painstakingly trying to memorise the names for all the different parts. Nucleus, mitochondria, chloroplast. Chlorophyll. That striking green that my colouring pencils could never do justice.

'Take...,' she said, her voice cracking from disuse.

'Take what?' I said. I was worried I was going to be sick. I thought she might be trying to offer me something, maybe the gold necklace she had always worn around her neck since I was little, the one I had always played with as a child when we were at church and I needed to be distracted, the one I had always planned to remember her by when she was gone.

'Take me.'

'Take you where?'

'The forest.'

She could have meant any forest. There were plenty around and I had no reason to believe she wanted anything more specific than an untouched stretch of nature. It's what they all want in the end, according to the news. A quiet place away from any people, away from any traffic. They had a psychologist on the other week to try and explain it. Something about mental health benefits associated with nature, she said. I don't believe that. Somewhere to take root, is what I think.

I needed to believe that she wanted what I wanted: To go back. I needed this to be a sign that she was still there, somewhere, amidst the vines and the leaves that were emerging from her like she was some kind of living breathing shrubbery. I needed this to be a sign that she still recognised me, that I was still her daughter, that she still loved me,





that she wanted to go back.

So I carried her to the car and I lay her down in the back seat and I opened the sun roof for her.

'We're going to the woods, Mum,' I said over my shoulder as I started the car. 'Remember? To the bridge.'

She didn't reply.

I drove us to the woods we always used to go to. I remembered sunny picnics and sticks reimagined as swords and hills reimagined as fortresses. Everyone associates imagination with childhood but my mother was always more imaginative than me. In the woods, just a little ways off the official path, there was a rickety wooden bridge. My mother would look at me, eyes fierce and shining, and say, 'Shall we cross over? Remember, there's no going back.' I never knew what we were crossing over into, it was different every time, but I always believed with all my heart that we would enter a new world and we would be changed by it forever. There were always nerves, but I knew that my mother would look after me, I knew that she had the power to wish away anything that might harm me. So I would take her hand and say the magic word. Yes.

I was always an uncomfortable child. School made me nervous. It felt like the other kids spoke a different language. I made friends and got on with things but I always felt on edge, like friendship was a test and I was copying their answers and I was scared they might find out. When I crossed the bridge with my mother, all of that melted away. Surrounded by trees that towered over us and leaves that crunched under our feet and dirt that got under our nails, it felt like nothing else existed unless my mother and I chose its existence.

Maybe part of me hoped that time stretched a little thinner there, that we could walk through it and go back to what

once was. Maybe I thought that if I took my mother there, she would tell me some wild story again and I'd be a child trusting every word of it.

Of course, we got there and I carried my mother across the bridge and she didn't even notice. It didn't feel the same to me, anyhow. The bridge, the trees, my mother, everything seemed smaller now. Maybe I was just bigger.

'Now what?' I asked, my voice cracking.

My mother didn't say anything. If she hadn't been faintly breathing, I would have assumed she was dead. She hadn't wanted to go to this forest. She hadn't wanted to cross the bridge together. She hadn't wanted anything but what they said on the news: to be surrounded by nature.

I set her down gently against a tree. The sun's dappled light traced shifting patterns on the ground. A bird cried out softly. Otherwise, the world was still.

'Now what?' I whispered again, but I knew.

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, she moved her hands out of her lap. She pressed her palms flat against the ground, twisted blades of grass through her fingers. She turned her face to the sun. Her eyes, which had been so terrifying to me, looked beautiful now. The last of her skin cracked open like pavement and weeds sprang forth, straining for the light.

I think she was still breathing. I think she was still alive when I left. There was some sort of life, to be certain, because aren't plants spilling out of a person like that life, even if not human? But I think she was alive too, underneath it. Or maybe there is no separation.

The direction and movement of time is just a trick of language. Time marches on, we put the past behind us, we step forward into the future. In the Chinese language time moves



vertically. The future is up and the past is down.

Maybe time doesn't pass us by or drip away below us. Maybe time meets us where we are and says, 'Now, this.'

Now, it is my turn. I know that the illness is changing me the way that it changed my mother, the way that it is changing everyone. I can feel it all growing inside me. Yesterday I looked in the mirror and saw a fleck of green in my left eye. I took down all the mirrors after that. I don't want to watch it happen.

When my mother was dying, before she stopped talking, she called her illness 'the strangest interlude'. I miss her. Grief gets into all those empty little spaces inside you filling them up and filling them out, 'til you're swollen with it, bloated like a corpse pulled out of the bottom of a lake.

But there is no time for grief when you are dying. I have started going for walks. The fresh air helps, I find. I avoid eye contact with the people I pass by, although there is no need for it as no one is paying any attention to anyone else. We are all changing.

This morning, I felt a sharp pain in my ribs. When I looked at it, I saw something poking out of my skin. At first, I thought it was an ingrown hair. I got the tweezers from the bathroom and pulled at it. It took a few tries to get purchase, but then it started to come out. It irritated my skin, but I couldn't stop pulling and pulling and pulling and it wasn't an ingrown hair after all. I think it was a root, thin and spindly and fragile.

I don't know when I stop being human. Where is the line? Have I crossed it already?

I think I'll go out into the garden.

Now. Why wait?

I move slowly, like walking is just something I remember from some distant dream. I am hungry and I know the sun will feed me. I hear her call my name. Opening the door to the garden is a struggle. I fumble with the

key and drop it, my fingers numb. I watch sap leak out from under my fingernails. It is thick and viscous. There is so much of it. My thumbnail drops off. I don't even feel it. The key. The lock. Forget about the nails. Just answer the sun's call.

I stumble outside, drop to my knees.

Now, this. No line between me and nature. I always thought there was. I thought nature was something to come home from. But here I am. Chlorophyll chokes my lungs. The sun is feeding me. I am growing. I am taking root.

When I was younger I sometimes used to think that I wasn't real, or that the world wasn't real. Once I heard a man say, 'I hope the world lasts for you.' All I want is for the world to last. I always seem to lose it.

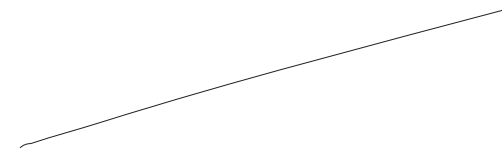
There have always been moments, unprovoked, where the world around me swims in and out of focus, melting away and drifting into the air as a fierce storm battering me from all directions. In these moments, I close my eyes and find something real to hold onto: blades of grass beneath my open palm, the gnarled wooden leg of our kitchen table. It is best when the thing is unmistakably real to my touch, but too big to be contained in my hand alone. I need to believe that the world stretches out further than I can feel or see. I need to believe that the world still exists when I can't see it, that I still exist when I leave a room.

Now I sit on the grass in the back garden and I can feel the earth at my fingertips and I feel myself growing in new ways. I rub dirt like warpaint onto my cheeks. The world will last. I will change with it.

When I look at my arms, I can see it is happening. I dig one of my remaining nails into my skin and pierce it like the skin of an orange and underneath there is no blood, only twisting roots where my veins once were.

A vast, shifting network. I watch shoots emerge, growing like a timelapse, straining for the sun. She watches us and I know this is what she wants.

Can you unspool time? Can you split a second like an atom? There is no forwards, no backwards, there is only here, now, this. Have I been made or unmade? I don't know. But this is all there is and as I grow down into the ground I know I will never be alone again. The sun is warm and I am full.



*artwork (in order)*

pg. 59, 61 **Strange Dreams** [collage] by **Yuting**

pg. 63 **A Strange Dream** [painting] by **Zoey Chang**

pg. 65 **I fall back asleep when I think of you**

[illustration] by **Holly Staniforth**





[poem] by **Lucy Lauder**

n<sup>o</sup>stos

return too fast and firstly  
worry you won't find the words  
firstly worry you'll never feel  
full  
again

feel the warm milk soften  
rice krispies you  
are small  
again

the gap

between front teeth  
will close again never notice  
or naturally will only to wish  
first foot forward no time to

glance back  
again

pinafore  
first

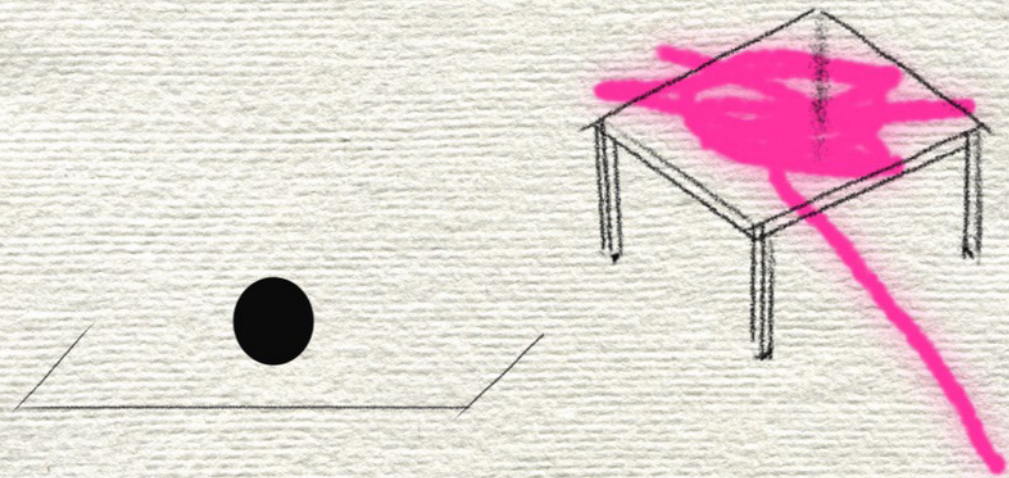
fast to fit again

the gingham rhythm

hair clip last lipped  
before yourself again  
can't now recall nor resume  
it really feel the blue pear blush  
the cheeks

of child again of the  
elephants in your hair







# WORDS

previous page, left **Pansy** [photography] by **Jana Sojka** and right **Strange Dreams** [collage] by **Yuting**  
left words from 'Bumblebee' (Holly Pollard, pg. 14) and 'Mycellium' (Ally Fowler, pg. 16)

LEAVE MY MOUTH

FUZZY,

TUMBLING

nerve endings like

conductive lightning

like the shape of

the

breath

at

winter solstice

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