

Matthew Pearce
—
At Slaughter Beach

The Fear
/
Sarabeth Domal

Everything my spine is now that it is no longer my spine
:
:
:
DC Restaino

Never Is Forever
Too Kat Evans
/

晚會先生、

Feedback Loop:
A test
↕
Eponine Howarth
⇌
Micaela Brinsley

june
2024

horizon

art
literature
photography

Dreamers Wasteland III
/
I Can See You Breathing
/
Mikun Oluwayemi
()

Absence of Love
\
Chochana Rosso
/
A Young Priest Leaves his Eye in Keefe Library

Bound by Light
||
Artificial Memory
—
Patricio Villanueva

—
—
Soft Rock
—
—
Sofia del Carmen

Secret Keeper
:
:
Nik Liguori

Long exposures as the sun rises
○
Harry Chapman

dead don't get to dream *
Jack McKenna
A g l a a
© Lam Jane

c. 1899 (for Noel Kavanagh)
/
Jacob Ray-Halliday
\
After the Storm Alessia Fenwick

Cute girl m y t h ologies
Fig 2
▶
▶
▶
Isabella Inskip

All that there is
Caitlin Loi
—
trembling parasites pulse to shit beats

Things People Say
Cleo Vanessa
RAWness

記唔記得我啊?

Forgetting to ask whether I really exist
— Ester Freider
↓
The Winner
↑
Amy Wheeler

—
→ Puddle
California ←
↓
Jumana Mograbi
—
Mince

Paloma Moniz
i kiss you and i am (w)hole *
Fran Hayes
The Dream
.
Adela Gómez

Enjoy your meal .!/
Yiru Qjan

:
Giulia Cozzi
Jack So

Do I find comfort here ... Jake Goddard

syntagmata ▶•— Peter J King

Between Shards // // // Will Pinhey

○
Veins * * *
Mound * *
Lauren Kaigg
Yawning at a disco < ^ >
Ho Kin Yunn

Molly MacLean
Nights in the Suburb
/
Yan Jiacheng
A memory side flip / Fireworks whereabouts

Hands / Lust
\
Still Tongue Wise Head
/
Deliverance / Rosa Burgess

Regret = Espresso
||| Mu
H u m b a b a
**

Clara by close of a prayer, like this
:
Noorie Ali

L i f t
O f f
f

Max Walker

07

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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I've started learning poetry by heart again, like when I was a schoolboy. Some favourites to start have been gorgeous Shakespeare sonnets, a little Larkin for a laugh, Wendy Cope on oranges. I'm not sure what will be next. It brings me joy and satisfaction, like doing a little puzzle, and what a way to spend your commute or wait for loved ones at the pub. The perks are huge, I have to admit: I can now walk around reciting Shakespeare, like dame Judy Dench! But mostly, I hope and wish, perks will come in later years, when so much time will be behind me that I'll struggle to keep up. I hope that then, like my grandmother, I'll be able to recite little passages of Dante, like her, or little sonnets, or songs; words to please my mind and offer comfort in old age. What a luxury that would be, what solace.

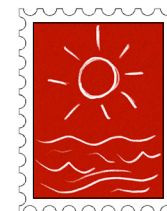


I've started discovering poetry in novels again, like when I was a university student. I became personally disillusioned with the practice of writing poetry a few years ago. Words felt flat, just a shape to fill a lack. I took some distance. But then I started reading beautiful language. As *I Lay Dying* by William Faulker, *Los Darios de Emilo Renzi* by Ricardo Piglia. I was overcome by their significance. I started jotting down sentences, lines, words I read. When I would finish the novel I would look at my tally of lines and reach out for interaction. It brought me joy and satisfaction, like doing a little puzzle, a way to spend your commute or wait for Giorgio in the pub. I was entranced by a line of Faulkers', not just a line, an entire chapter dedicated to this single line: "My mother is a fish". For those who have not read *As I Lay Dying* the line seems absurd, silly, non-sensical. But within its context it is haunting and laden with ineffable pain. This is why I love the practice of found poetry. To decontextualize language is to write anew. To extract utterances, compile them in a new order, is to resignify them. It is to birth new meaning to old language. This practice of contextual interaction permeates each edition of *Horizon*. To place a poem aside a particular photograph or a short story with a certain artwork offers a small recontextualization, drawing new lines of flight for the reader.



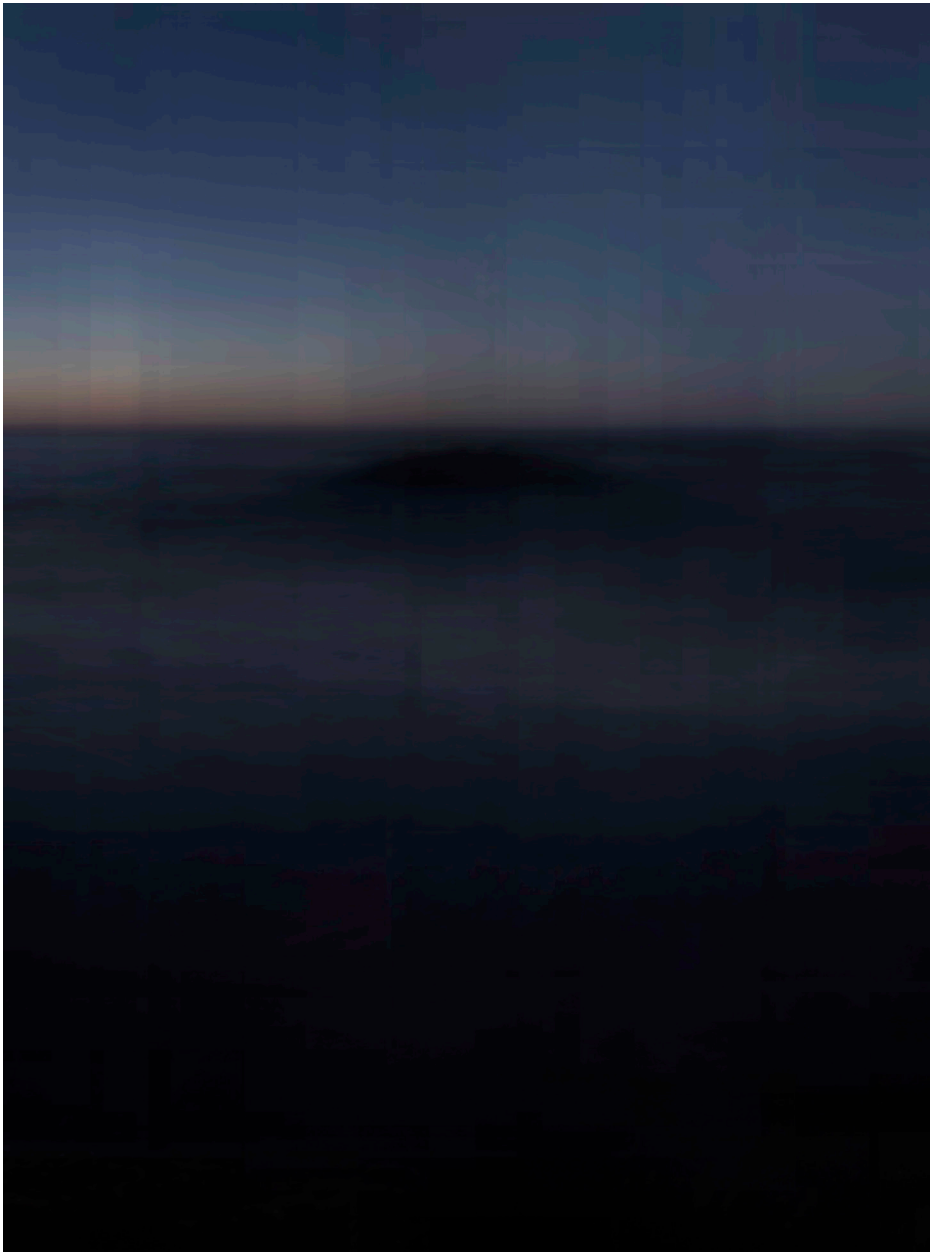
Nowadays the flights of interaction are almost painfully incessant. It is no epiphanous revelation that we are a people saturated in data and information. It has been the age of information for decades and the postmodernists already perfectly captured the horror of quantity beyond the mind's power of quantification (thank you Pynchon for the beautiful nightmares). But are we content for these big P and small p posts — to be the last to hold any relevancy over us? To be the last Post? Perhaps a Postal Revival can re-enliven these little lines between artist and audience (and by the way, we thank you for your order in the event that you are reading this). Just like its university-educated cousin, Orthodox Post (Big P) finds itself serving in the interest of the ironical and unreal. It's a novelty to be enjoyed in the spaces between our real lives, like sending postcards. Selecting a totem of our self, adorned with different emblems of whatever, bridging the gap to someone familiar; two anchors. Perhaps it depicts a stylish beach goer wearing a hat out of time, a remarkable landscape one might have passed through as a face in an organised tourist group, or decontextualised national iconography emblematic of alien mythologies. In sending a postcard, I declare that I am not this beach goer, I concede that I am not from this place, I recognise that I am a stranger to these people and their history, but to you I am familiar. And that's where I am, in the little letters inside (Hello! Summer greetings from gloomy Glasgow. I've started making pirozhki again, like when you were both here in February), and I know you'll remember me. In our conspicuous foreignness, I know you'll remember me.

After all, Horizon is a generally read Post-Card, so, it is probably wise that we learn to play with the jumbled heaps of language which data crashes against our shore. In the search for beauty, meaning, love, or just a bit of fun.



**Wish you were here,
*Horizon***





ezra waits in venice, dead
you find him in fragments — one hundred and twenty
'in a station of the metro' she jumps and covers her ears
with her hands and the track is wet and black
the butterfly shimmers, arcs into the corralling dusk
what do insects do when the rain comes down in sheets
you say — i say i don't know, i don't quite know, it is enough
just to be here with you

in derna the dam bursts and the main street becomes
a proud river, a killing machine
and in new york city the first leaf falls (mccarren park, williamsburg — it
is autumn in north america)
in the hospital there are whispers
of someone waiting in the sky
and in blood meridian i recoil
as the comanche roar across the plain

[poem] by **Matthew Pearce**

Everything My Spine is Now That it is No Longer My Spine

[poem] by DC Restaino

↑ Never Is Forever Too [artwork] by Kat Evans



capitalism/debt calling for interest/sandbagged/Frogger right before the car/a cat, legs kinked, dragging itself across sticky pavement/an event horizon/flares of a star before burning out and collapsing in/blacked-out sorority girl riding a mechanical bull at the hard edge of morning/draining a pint while leaning too far back/all my fault/a harsh mimic of my sight, fading/my full-bodied sneeze/the pig I dissected in high school as I pieced myself fragmented identity together/the rattle of my brother's final breath/my father cursing when the food disposal grinds to a halt/my twin's supine form, curved C and unresponsive, as my mother speeds down the highway for a hospital/the silver pine I saw gnarled on the mountainside clinging to life above the tree line/my palms curled together in prayer to silence

FEEDBACK LOOP: A TEST

Please fill in your answers using black pen.

1. Pick the correct answer. Silence begins with:

- a. nothing
- b. immobility: the absence of movement
- c. a blank page
- d. a canvas
- e. a suspended precipice
- f. an absence of societal pressure
- g. ambivalent audible

a	b	c	d	e	f	g
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

2. Of all the options, which is most accurate? Silence, it:

- a. contains a lot of information
- b. is the absence of noise
- c. can be comforting sometimes to be in it (both alone or with others)
- d. can be disassociative
- e. benefits from legal protection
- f. is transitional
- g. is a tactic in political movements
- h. is a message that no language is adequate to communicate (atrocities, grief, violence etc.)

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

3. Select the correct synonym for silence:

- a. eventfulness
- b. movement
- c. transformation
- d. solitude
- e. art as an event
- f. prohibition of speaking
- g. all of the above
- h. none of the above

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

test continues next page

4-8. Consider the following things and/or places. Choose the right option.

4. Silence is

silent noisy

5. A waiting room is

silent noisy

6. A hospital room is

silent noisy

7. An exhibition is

silent noisy

8. A cinema is

silent noisy

9-12. Consider the following statements. Choose the right option.

9. Does immobility = silence?

Yes No

10. Does movement = noise?

Yes No

11. Can there be silence in movement?

Yes No

12. Can there be sound in immobility?

Yes No

13. Fill in the sentence with the correct word: Silence is a _____ thing.

- a. social
- b. evil
- c. rhetorical
- d. soothing
- e. fragmented
- f. tiring
- g. all of the above
- h. none of the above

a b c d e f g h

14. Listen to and/or watch John Cage's 4'33". The artwork is:

- a. silent
- b. noisy
- c. a theft
- d. emptiness
- e. a collision
- f. a staged collective composition
- g. a kind of invisible score
- h. an artistic object that can be possessed
- i. decorative
- j. all of the above
- k. none of the above
- l. nope, it doesn't fit in our boxes

a b c d e f g h
i j k l

15. The space between notes on a score is:

- a. silent
- b. empty
- c. noisy
- d. a mistake
- e. secondary
- f. orderly
- g. all of the above
- h. none of the above

a b c d e f g h

16. Silence is:

- a. a choice
- b. a period of time
- c. a distance
- d. an absence of breath
- e. a suppression
- f. a state of suspension
- g. a sign of respect
- h. contextual
- i. all of the above
- j. none of the above

a b c d e f g h
i j

test continues next page

17. Pick all the following options that can be silent and/or silenced:

- a. words
- b. colours
- c. light
- d. sounds
- e. stone
- f. wood
- g. all of the above
- h. none the above

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

18. Put the following sentences in the correct order, so as to constitute an extract from *A Breath of Life* by Clarice Lispector:

- i. I know how to create silence.
- ii. It's like this: I turn on the radio really loud — then suddenly turn it off.
- iii. And that's how I capture silence.
- iv. Stellar silence.
- v. The silence of the mute moon.
- vi. It stops everything: I created silence.
- vii. In silence you can hear noises more.
- viii. Amidst the hammer blows I was hearing the silence.
- ix. I'm afraid of my freedom.

- a. i-ii-iii-iv-v-vi-vii-viii-ix
- b. i-iii-iv-vi-v-ii-viii-vii-ix
- c. ix-iv-v-viii-vii-vi-iii-ii-i
- d. ix-viii-vii-vi-v-iv-iii-ii-i
- e. iv-vi-viii-vii-i-ii-iii-v-ix

a	b	c	d	e
---	---	---	---	---

19. In which language(s) do we announce the tone, or form, of a sentence before it starts:

- a. English
- b. French
- c. German
- d. Italian
- e. Spanish
- f. all of the above
- g. none of the above

a	b	c	d	e	f	g
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

20. In which language(s) do we invert the verb and subject, or add an interrogative word, to let the reader know that a question is on its way:

- a. Spanish
- b. Italian
- c. German
- d. French
- e. English
- f. all of the above
- g. none of the above

a	b	c	d	e	f	g
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

21-25. Read the following extract from *A Breath of Life* by Clarice Lispector:

ANGELA: I'm like a sleepwalker. I want to compose a symphony whose scenario includes silence — and the audience wouldn't clap because they would sense that the motionless musicians — as in a photograph — didn't mean to say "the end". The music is at its peak — then there's a minute of silence — and the sounds start again.

21. The author is a sleepwalker.	True	False
22. The silence is created by the motionless musicians.	True	False
23. There's a minute of silence to commemorate the death of the author.	True	False
24. There's a minute of silence to commemorate the death of the musician.	True	False
25. Silence is darkness.	True	False

test continues next page

Consider the following statement:

If silence of any form can be copyrighted, then history books should be full of mostly empty pages. This would demonstrate that there was silence imposed, both linguistically and through concerted acts of violence and ignorance, on the ability of most people to articulate the events in their life from their own perspective.

26. Is it

True	False
------	-------

27. Consider the following findings. Which is most accurate?

- a. Absolute silence isn't really a thing. You can hear birds chirping, the sound of the wind, of cars or whatnot.
- b. We perform silence for others.
- c. Silence is a form of calmness.
- d. Silence is a form of torture: total isolation, in padded rooms that create 'silence'. We can't stand that.
- e. We create silence for others, such as by walking on our tiptoes late in the night.
- f. Silence is unpaid labour.
- g. None of the above statements are true about silence.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

28. Read the following extract from *A Breath of Life* by Clarice Lispector. Pick the correct word:

AUTHOR: Besides my involuntary but incisive role of poor scribbler — besides that is the _____ that invades all the interstices of my total darkness.

- a. silence
- b. conversation
- c. pause
- d. noise
- e. music
- f. chorus

a	b	c	d	e	f
---	---	---	---	---	---

29. Read the following extract from *A Breath of Life* by Clarice Lispector. Pick the correct word:

AUTHOR: When we write or paint or sing we break a law. I don't know if it's the law of the silence that must be kept before sacrosanct and diabolical things. I don't know if that's the law that is broken. But if I speak it's because I no longer have the strength to remain _____ about what we know and what we should keep.

- a. silent
- b. loud
- c. dead
- d. alive
- e. sick

a	b	c	d	e
---	---	---	---	---

30. What is the unit of measurement for silence?

- a. celsius
- b. screams
- c. kilograms
- d. noise
- e. fahrenheit
- f. pain
- g. feet
- h. ulcers
- i. kilowatts
- j. time
- k. litres
- l. fiction
- m. autobiography
- n. delusion
- o. all of the above
- p. none of the above

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p

31. Pick one answer. The most common reason for silence is:

- a. to keep noise levels down to avoid disturbing others
- b. shock
- c. to concentrate
- d. to rest/sleep
- e. a boring conversation
- f. death
- g. all of the above
- h. none of the above

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

test continues next page

32. Read the following extract from *Faces in the Crowd* by Valeria Luiselli. What does silence do in this context?

Speech! Speech! I wish for an instant death I am unable to bring about.

Then I speak:

I came because I was invited.

(Silence.)

I came because I've always been a dedicated feminist. Viva Mina Loy!

Viva!

(Silence)

In fact, María, I came because I wanted to ask you to lend me just a few dollars to take the children to the fair next weekend.

(Silence.)

- a. highlight noise
- b. suppress movement
- c. show transformation
- d. impose solitariness
- e. prohibit speaking
- f. all of the above
- g. none of the above

a	b	c	d	e	f	g
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

33. When no one is looking at this page, is it silent?

Yes	No
-----	----

34. After filling out this form, at your trial you would rather:

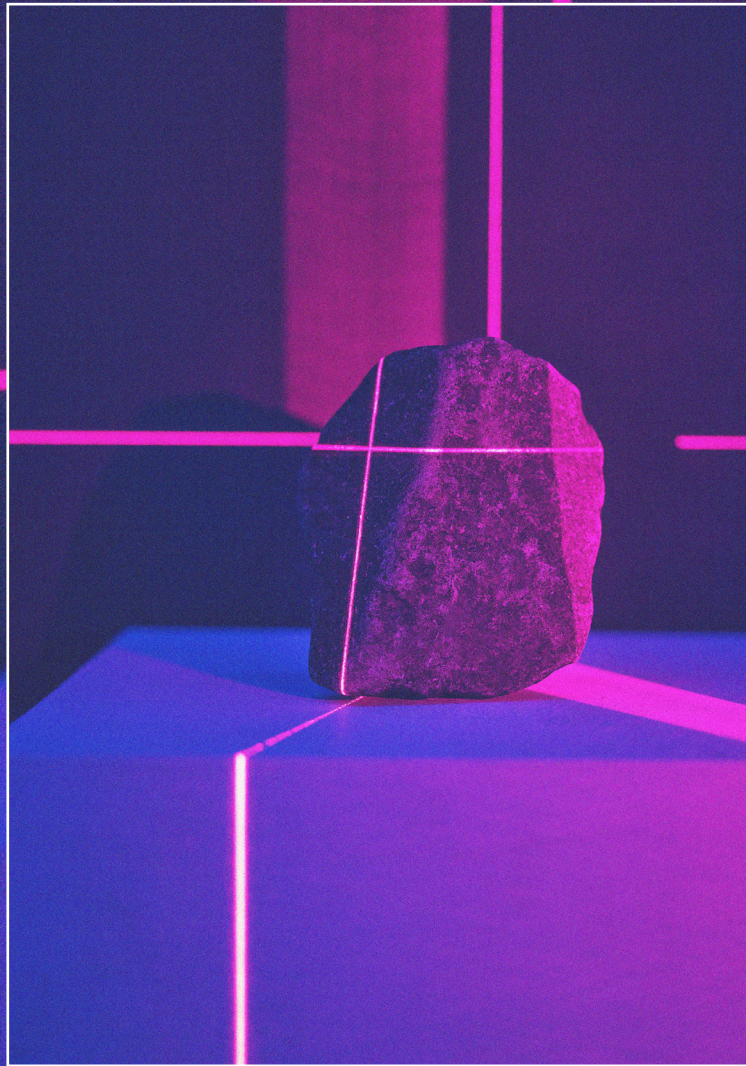
- a. remain silent
- b. tell the truth
- c. play John Cage's 4'33"
- d. all of the above
- e. none of the above

a	b	c	d	e
---	---	---	---	---

test ends here

1. a 2. a 3. a 4. a 5. a 6. a 7. a 8. a 9. No 10. Yes 11. No 12. No 13. a 14. a 15. a 16. a 17. a 18. a 19. a 20. a 21. True 22. False 23. False 24. False 25. True 26. False 27. a 28. a 29. a 30. a 31. a 32. a 33. True 34.

ANSWERS



↑ **Bound by light** [photograph] by **Patricio Villanueva**

SOFT ROCK

[video] by **Sofia del Carmen**



↑ scan to watch

SOLID

NOT

IS

ROCK

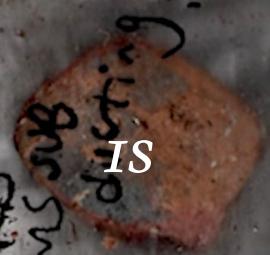
A



Finds you in

tremors you

HARD FORMS SUB



ducting in



plates colliding



the ground



A



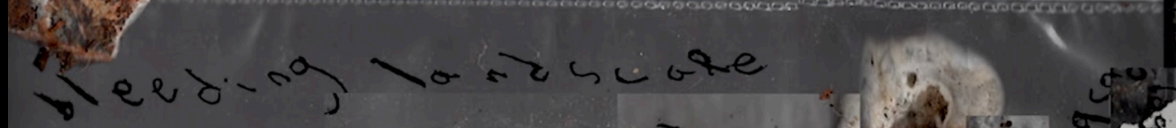
against

tsn

blanckes



A



A bleeding landscape



the ground

plates colliding

tremors you

HARD FORMS SUB

ducting in

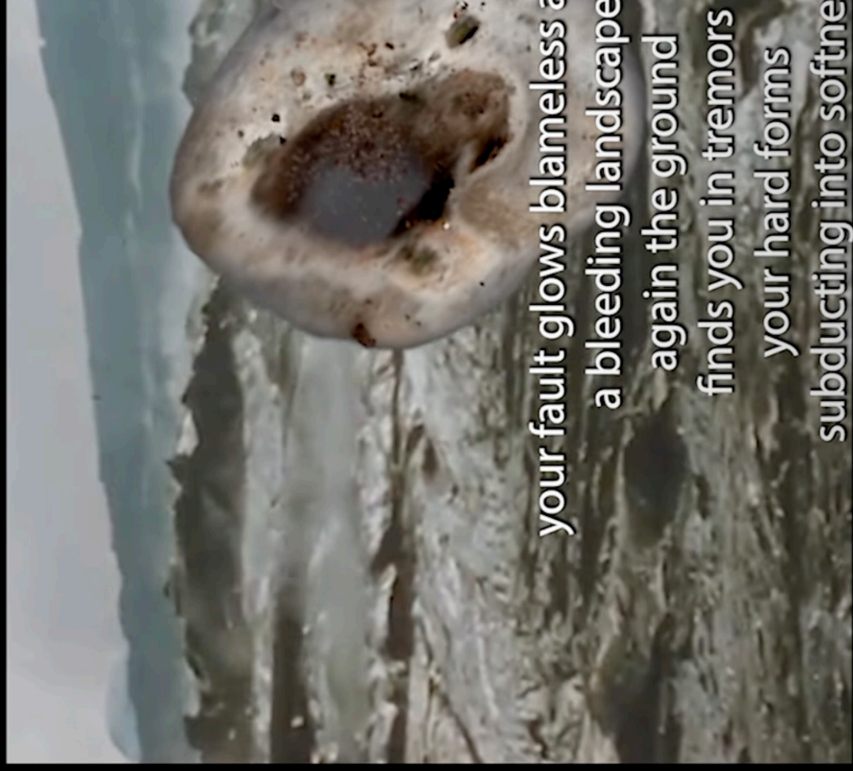


softness

cycling

buried beneath

the mantle



your fault glows blameless
a bleeding landscape
again the ground
finds you in tremors
your hard forms
subducting into softness
cycling geological time
buried beneath
the mantle

[poem] by **Jacob Ray-Halliday**

*A Young Priest Leaves His Eye in
Keeffe Library c. 1899*

(for Noel Kavanagh)

His eye rests on the piece as if he's crying into an eggcup —
bubbling yolks ebb and flow in the steel canvas above.
Pinching the focusing knob, the heartbeat in his ear
thickens with each delicate turn. He steps back
from the telescope, fixes his cassock, and sighs.
He leaves behind his eye.

This was more than a hundred years ago, you tell me,
and the young priest's eye is still nestled in the piece.
I approach the telescope and see it sleeping there,
coated in a milky lacquer.

The eye kisses its teeth as I unplug it from its bed.
I slip my fingers around my own right eye,
the tips meeting at the optic nerve, and pluck it
from my skull like the head of a firm, white tulip.

The young priest's eye rests snug in my face,
and I am thankful for what he has left me.
And I'll leave it laden with
unsated hunger, as he has done
and those before him too. And when the time comes,
I'll sit somewhere in Carlow College (Cobden Hall,
or the canteen, maybe)

and leave with you my eye — the only thing I have to give.





↑ **The Winner** [drawing] by **Amy Wheeler**

[poem] by **Jack McKenna**

*dead
don't get
to dream*

Toying with a fibre in my pocket, nodding
At the fly on the screen. We're all so vulnerable to

The froth of happiness. Every now and then
I'm selfish. The council have decided

You're a silly, silly boy; time to go home.
Lay out all your socks and see what matches

The feeling. Truly, it's nice to be held
Accountable. However, I must confess:

I've been doing the Macarena wrong my whole life.
Undoing mismemory is hard.

A trace ripples across the surface, lighting up
The threads that found us.

An early gardener would snip or pull,
The only choice is weather.



↑ I Can See You Breathing [photograph] by Milkun Oluwayemi

With you, time is like if a black hole
walked into a bar. My alarms chug along and so do the
people outside your window. Your back couldn't be softer.
I want to pour water into a hole with you
on our fishing city's sand, and keep pouring, watching it
whorl and
muddle,
Until it becomes an ocean.

I've put all my eggs in your
basket. You've put all of yours in my stomach. I wonder if
you can feel them there with your
thick, round palms.
On the balcony, our two white chairs, stiff as old men.
I light a cigarette. A goose eats our greened bread. We talk
about bad mothers
and better children.

Sometimes, when I feel like my mother, I shut my eyes to
your own
and purse my lips inwards
in a conductor's cue for silence. It is the worst thing
I have done to you.

We use chili like it's salt. With our meat, oil, basil, oregano.
A singer on your screen crones, *I call you in the dead of
night... I need you.* I kiss the back of your neck, under the
last blossom
of black hair. It is warm with the stovetop's drifted air. The
bottom half of your cheek, ripe as a plum. I kiss there too,
as you stir wilting greens.

[poem] by Ester Freiden



Cute girl mythologies

* [essay] by Paloma Moniz



* Hands [collage] by Rosa Burgess *

I step outside, temporarily, in my new sailor shirt. I'm afraid of not being pretty. The kind of pretty that consumes and insists on being consumed at every instant. The kind of pretty that has no shape, no form, that bends and loops time, forever. The kind of pretty that can only ever be truly reflected by angels, and by this I mean girls. At what age do you stop being an angel? And a girl?

Sorry that I didn't beat back, I was under angelic influence.

When you're a girl you don't have delusions, you have prophetic visions.

I'm kind of like a perfect sweetie pie angel who is always kind and pure.

I don't really know where I stand, other than I want to go to heaven through the rabbit hole. I'm girl-pilled and I'm bored. I have tried to restrict myself from knowing, from fluidly scrolling, painlessly wandering until there is nowhere left to go. There is a screen limit that I keep on ignoring. Ignore limit for today, every day. Isn't that beautiful? So I get through the fake gates straight into the depths of cuteness, into Miffy apparel, pastel pink bunny ears and Sylvanians drama accounts. I'm online and the girls are gathering, wearing their plushies with pride and vulnerability, tying them to their waists and bags, rejecting seriousness, flirting with innocence. I see intersections of fandoms, the poetics of matching your outfits to your bunnies and Sonny Angel blind boxes as self-care. Hot girls love Miffy, someone on TikTok preaches as they stare blankly into the camera.

I can't remember how or when I got here. As I slide once more to the bottom of my instagram I bear witness to the softness of the pink cloud, an echo-chamber of delusional girlhood labouring for undivided attention, spilling from one screen into another, into me. I keep thinking about what it means to yearn for smallness, softness, sweetness, harmlessness, and helplessness.

Cuteness is the ultimate fantasy of the commodity that triggers our most profound affects, that stares its guardian in the eyes and begs for care and protection. In opposition to the Japanese word *kawaii* (literally acceptable love), in English cute derives from acute (sharp, severe). Consequently the cute is also the unclear, the uncertain, the uncanny, oscillating between domination and passivity, cruelty and tenderness, femininity and androgyny, sweetness and eroticism. Eternally malleable, it appeals to the current gaze as the perfect versatile extension to our multiverse of cores. Hello Kitty patches on micro skirts, cat earmuffs to the club, thirst-traps in front of bunny altars. Its duplicitous nature rests on unresolvable ambivalences, shining through the faces of the ultimate commodity, through the restless bodies of young women performing vulnerability online.

Onscreen, woman defaults to girl, a cute girl, not really old enough for the screen to entirely refuse their face, Joana Walsh writes in *Online Girl, A User Manual*.

The girl in the digital space represents a shared identity for young women to appear, by association with wealth, power and art, camouflaged in webs of unconstrained beauty and tenderness. Through repetition and never reproduction, she moves across time to become the face of girlness itself and, graciously parading powerlessness, commodified symbols of our most perverse affects. Playing with notions of power, of who is in power, the cute girl steps in and out of these roles, dominant in its apparent submissiveness, serious in its esoteric presence. I wonder how old everyone is, and how young everyone feels.

Last year Heaven by Marc Jacobs, a brand big on bunnies and stolen simulations of the cute, released a limited edition collection of soft bears in collaboration with photographer and filmmaker Dean Hoy. Bears who Care was a series of emo up-cycled plushies, outsourced from secondhand shops. I really like it when they look a bit distressed because it means they have been loved, he replied when asked about his approach. Returning to its etymology, the cute embraces the sharpened, the pointed and the piercing. To be cute is to be in pain, to be in pain is to have been loved. Am I standing amongst the most loved girls on the internet?

In the flatness of the screen the cute screams for intimacy and touch, the exaggeration and stimulation of all senses and sensibilities. As I look for identity online I am presented with infinite renders of my softer self, versions of what the algorithm thinks I might look like, or want to look like. Across all boards there is a sense of familiarity, of safety that welcomes me inside. I can't remember how or when I got here. I'm in my mid-twenties. In front of my big screen there is an Opening Night poster, my favourite movie, because Gena Rowlands is afraid of being made obsolete, and so am I. There are souvenirs of girlhood stuck on my walls. I chain smoke, press my bangs down and my boobs up. I superficially resemble all the images of the girls inside my phone that stare right back at me. I have seen it with my own eyes and touched it with my own hands, I believe. I'm a flexible object, a serious woman in the body of a girl, I believe. And the closer I get, the more I just want to kiss all the cute images goodnight, every night, I can tell you that for sure.

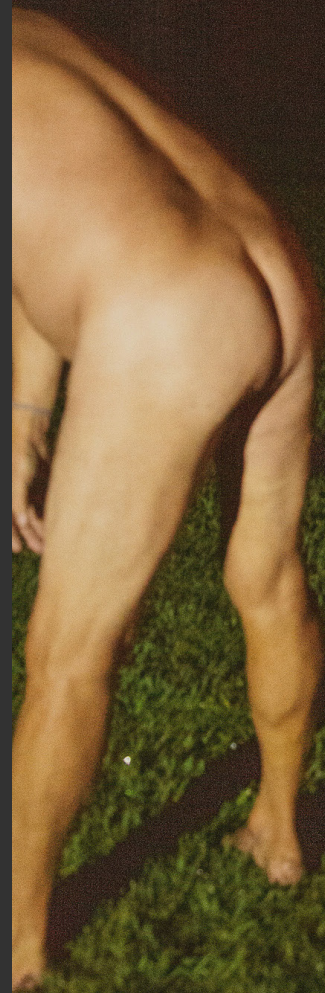


CON SI DER ATE



C.U.N.T.S

IT WAS THE
BEGINNING OF
UNDERSTANDING.
THE
UNDERSTANDING
WAS BEGINNING
AND
THE GRAMMAR OF
THE EQUINOXES
HAD JUST BEGUN.



trembling

parasites

[poem] by Fran Hayes

pulse to

shit beats

Severed pigeon legs
Flamin' hot Cheetos

Tacky pop references

Vanilla ice cream
The primary colours without yellow

How do you make a primary colour?
I forgot the recipe

Blurred pigeon talons
A mouldy hybrid

Glistening globules ooze fiery flame

A sharp stabbing feeling
Erupting from my stomach
Flowing through my body
It fills the infinite corners of my infinite self

I am nowhere

But

I am everywhere

I fill the vast ecologies of multiple worlds
Ripping through space-time

Triplet triad trinity
Marred by the reflective ocean

Gloopy skies haunt puckered golf ball lips

In and out of focus
A glitch
Glitching
Stuttering
spluttering
Spittle Flying

Crystallised rivers
Rock formations forming under enormous pressures
Pushing in on themselves

Desaturated
Decompressed
Decompensated
Dilapidated

Violent words cause violent outcomes

Beautiful intricacies
A dimpled golf ball texture

Disgustingly pure
Outrageously virgin
Extra virgin
Olive oil slut

Slippery sticky

Watch out you'll get your tongue stuck to it

Platform
A platform
Self-perpetuating cycle
The spawn of oneself

Self-facilitation
Facilitate yourself

Glass spines exist to be shattered

Trembling parasites pulse to shit beats
Their tiny bodies can hardly control themselves
Backlit by golf ball textured skies

Explosive motion
Quivering intimacies

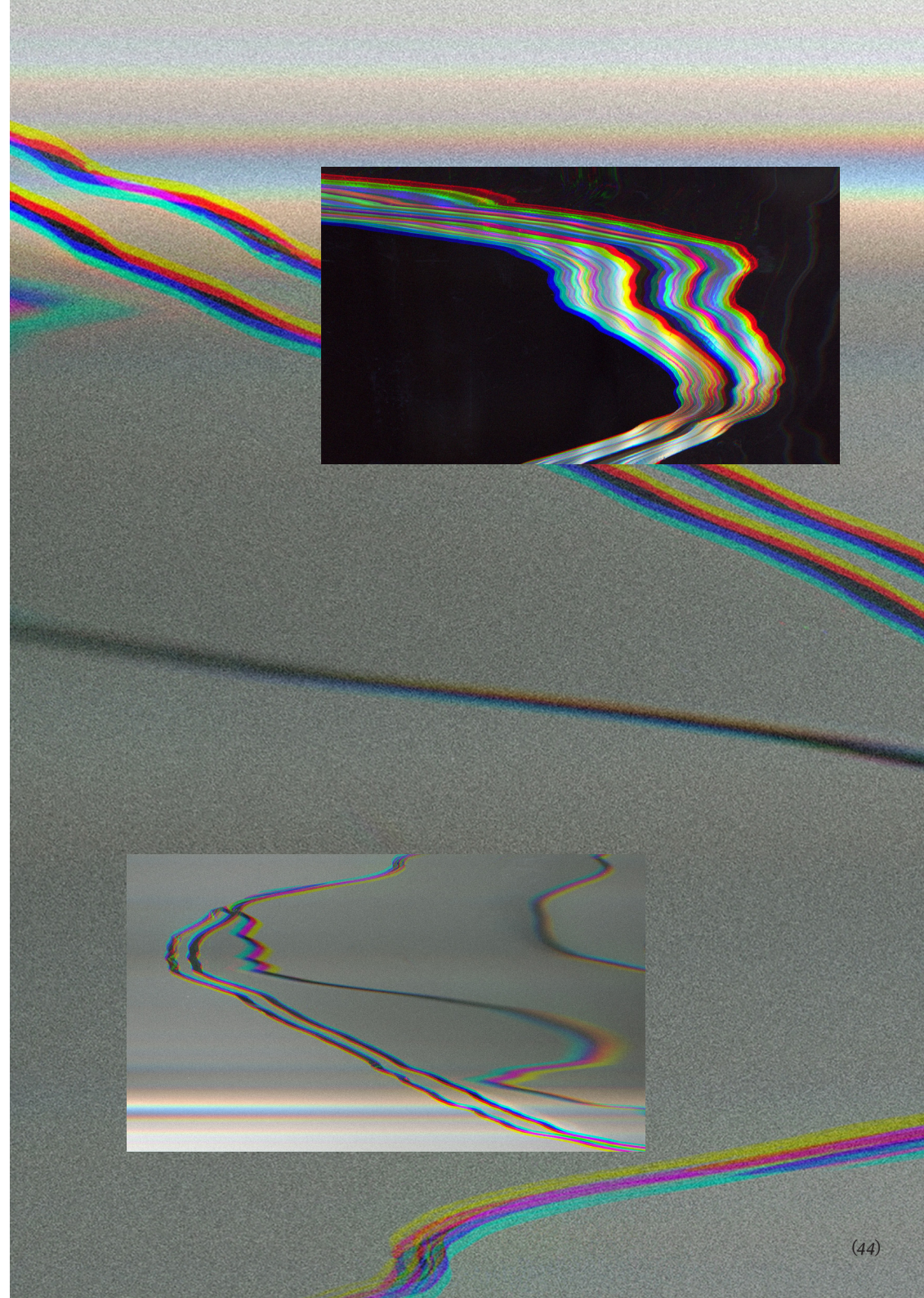
Glistening metallic raindrops

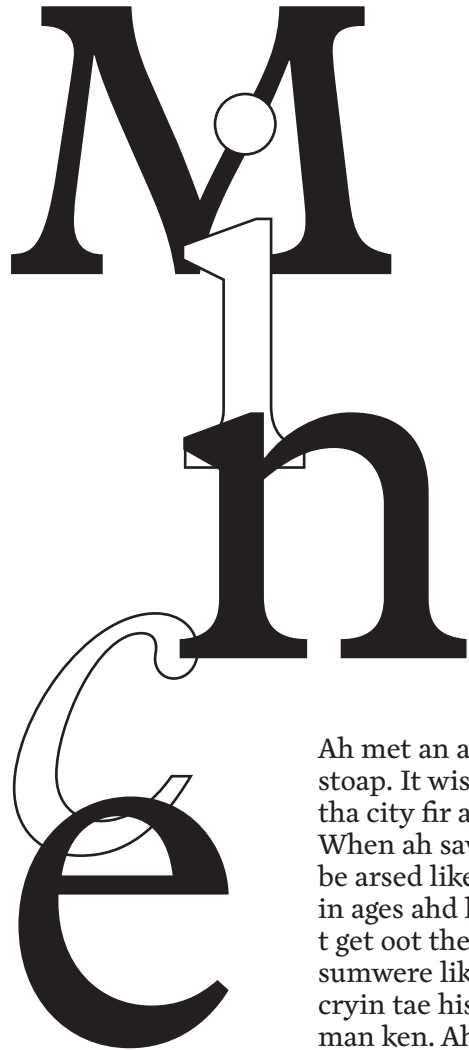
Your pixelated body slides along my clammy skin
It's like nothing I've ever felt before

I am obsessed with your sweet glitching body

Suspended in placental liquid
The womb of eternity
organic matrix

Dancing in thick nothingness
Swaying to someone else's beat
You reach out for your lover's mercurial form
Yearning for their tender touch





[prose] by **Molly MacLean**

Ah met an auld man cryin in ah bus stoap. It wis tha first time a had got oot tha city fir a lang time wi work an that. When ah saw him a really just coodny be arsed likes, ken it wis tha first time in ages ahd hud a day aff an ah wis tryn t get oot the city doon tae Crammond or sumwere likes, an heres this auld duffer cryin tae hisselt first hing oan ma day aff man ken. Ah tried ti jist ignore him bit it sayd tha bus wis late an wasny comin fir another twelve minutes so ah asked him wit wis wrang cos he was standin aw funny likes. Ah tryd to get him under tha shelter cos it wis pure pishin it doon man an he wis gettin right soakin an it wis cauld tae. He had his hauns aw screwed up ower his face an wis sobbin awa real breathless n that. He woodny come under tha shelter wi me an wis aw stiff an he wis jist about tae start fuckin

hyperventilatin on me man, so ah left him coz by this time I was half fuckin soakt in aw an a went back tae tha other side y tha shelter.

He wis still there standin in tha rain when a looked back ower tae him an ah noticed he had a wee plastic butchers bag filled wi mince that he'd dropped on the groon beside him. Ah went back ower tae him, an ah picked up his mince an tried ti have another shot at gittin the auld duffer oot tha rain. He let me move him a bit mair this time and wis cryin quieter noo. Ah handed him his mince back an he looked at me straight throo these big red peepers, an it wis a bit creepy man, a thot he wis gonny hit ees, but he pit his haun on ma shooder an let me help him inside. He was absolutely fuckin ringin man an he wis a fat dood tae. He seemed to be gettin a bit cumfy wi his back up the glass o the shelter noo an he wis starin real fuckin wide at this mince man. Ah asked him if he wis alright an where he got his mince fae an he shook his head an his mooth went all tight like he wis gonny start cryin again so ah said leave it man its ok an whatevers happened it would be ok but ah kindy felt like that wisnae gony be tha case an that he knew that tae. So ah sayd nuhin tae him fir a few minutes an he sayd nuhin tae me until he dropped his wee bag y mince again an a picked it up an asked him wit tha fuck was it wi this mince an it wis then that he telt me thit his daughter had jist died. An like fuck man its ma day aff ah didny no wit tae say tae that. Bit then he jist starts talkin at a hunner miles an hoor an he says that hes hardly spoken tae her fer years coz her ma put him oot when she wis wee an stopped him frae seein her an that, an he tells me that he used to go an pick her up fae the school an wait fir weeks an she woodny come an hed ask her pals if she wis still there but theyd say naw cos her maw hud picked her up ages ago an he never got tae see her. An then he starts greetin again an says that he got marrit again laitir oan bit he coodny face goin tae see her wi his new wife an kid in that shithole they were livin in when she had waynes o her ain wi that junky cunt o a man o hers, an that wen she goat sick he tried tae see her but she lied man she fuckin lied an woodny tell him wit wis wrang, jist like when she said she wasny pregnant but she was. An then when she wis sick he went tae visit an she'd haud the doactir no tell him wit it was an they fell oot an that wis the last time he would ever see his daughter, his wee fuckin baby girl in that fuckin hospital bed, aw sick an no speakin tae him because today he goat a text from yin y his granwaynes sayin he hid bad news aboot Ma an that she hid gone an fuckin died oan him. The auld guy hid been havin a nice lunch at the time an he went outside an stared at nuhin for half an hoor an then went intae a butchers shoap an bought a pound y mince because he didn't know wit tae dae wi himself when he nearly telt

the butcher that his daughter had jist died but he didnay an he left and he couldn't remember how he ended up at the bus stoap.

An me, well ah wis a bit lost tae be honest wi ye man. Some fuckin day aff joe soap here wis havin. Didnay reely no wat tae dae an he wis lookin at his feet noo an cryin again an aw apologisin an ah had a look an tha bus wis still 7 minutes away. Fuck sake. Ah tryd tellin him thit ah wis sorry like, that is wis fuckin terrible, a true fuckin tragedy like nane other but ah sorta felt like a wis makin things even worse for the poor auld duffer. Ah wis tryin t hink again aboot wit ah was gonny do wi ma afternoon aff bit ah jist kept hinkin aboot his mince an a coodny git the image oot o ma heid o this auld fucker sittin ben tha kitchen breakin his fuckin heart at shovelling this mince doon his throat wi sum fuckin mash an peas. Ah thot aboot askin him if he had any broon sauce at hame but ah wis really feelin sorry for the auld boy b'noo so ah thot that wid be a bit cruel ken.

— Ye gan to Crammond? Ah asked him.

— Aye he said all breathy.

— Ye live there? Ah asked.

— Aye he said again.

— Its nice roon there like. He didnay say anyhin. Ah looked at him an then awa somewhere half b'tween us baith.

— Hiv ye goat any ither kids man?

— Aye he said again aw breathy. How auld? Eight. Jist the wan? Aye, just the one. Ah wis hinkin he wis quite auld t huv an 8 year auld an wis sensin a bit o an age gap likes if this other wan that was deed hud had kids hersel n that, a full grown woman likes she musty been.

— I'll fucking kill that bastard he started saying and daein aw mad twisty hings wi his fists again.

— If she'd never met that bastard.

— Whae's that ah asked him?

— That fucking alkie junkie cunt. I'll kill the bastard. He wis startin to go all fuckin wideo on ees an a knew the dood wis upset likes but

ah wis getting a bit tense masel cos ah didnay really take him for the wideo kind like in his grandad shoes n collarless shirt.

Ah didnay reelly want tae engage masel anymare in tha situation here wi tha big dood bit ah found masel askin after yon alkie junkie cunt an he telt me that he wis sum useless bastard faither o two kids that hid been comin an going fir years an it wis his fault she wis deed n that big dood here never liked him an noo he wis goin tae have to speak tae him an look after tha granwaynes fir him but he barely kent tha granwaynes, an organis a fuckin funeral wi this punter, the funeral for his wee fuckin girl, but aw he really wanted tae dae wi this fuckin cunt was castrate the bastard an pull oot his teeth and burn em in front o his ugly fuckin wideo alki visage.

Once more ah wasny really feelin qualified here ken. An then fae nowhere ah started talkin tae him aboot his other kid, a wee lassie ah found oot, an ah said tae him that ah understood why he must be hatin on this junkie cunt an that he wis feelin fuckin terrible the day, fuckin terrible. Bit ah telt him that ah grew up wioot ma auld man an that wee lassie must be needin her dad, today of all fuckin days ken, an wit she disnay need is him landin in the jail for killin some useless junkie bastard same time as her big sister dyin for fuck sake.

He seemed tae understand an fir tha first time he starts just noddin an almost smilin at ees. Ah seen tha bus comin roon tha corner noo. Ah asked if he wis gettin oan an he went all trembly but an said sumin aboot no bein ready t gan hame cos his faimly didnay no yet an hed huv tae tell um. Ah asks him tae get oan wi me an gies him a haun gettin tae his feet, hes dropped yon fuckin mince again man an am pickin it up an haunin it back tae him. Its aw fuckin clabert wi bits o grit an shite an that frae the pavement an looks like some manky fuckin baw sack wi aw the fatty strings o mincemeat squurmin aboot inside.

— Mind that noo ah says tae him an ah gies him a haun getting oan tha bus.

As we git tae movin off ah started hinkin aboot ma ain Da an how a coodny remember him. Ah really wis tryin noo to put his face the gither in ma heid bit it wis jist aw like static ken. Ah could see tha big dood shuffling aroon oot tha corner o ma eye. Tha mince wis safe on tha seat beside him bouncin aroon like some fuckin cancer goldfish hed won fae tha carnies.

Ah wis startin tae feel sad maseel noo wit wi the tale o this guy an his wee kid an sum other kids that hud lost their ma the day an were left fuckknoswhere wi sum alki bampot, an ah starts hinkin aboot how a couldny remember ma ain Da's face. An tha bus wis fleein past tha museum an ah rememberd being there wi ma Da years ago tae see sum animatronic dinosaur exhibition an we hid tae leave cos I startit greetin an ah pished aw doon ma leg cos a big fuckin bangly T-rex heid came roarin oot at me as we went in an that wis that, but ah still couldny remember ma Da's face.

An as tha bus started doon tha hill fae tha Royal Mile it aw started passin like postcards in thae bus windaes — Tha Mound, tha castle, they weird dutch sorta buildings, the galleries an gardens an tha outline o jenners. When we stoapped up oan princes street an ah cood jist see tha monument all black an fuckin hackit lookin an ah remembered ma Da an me havin chips n sauce oan the steps in front aw it this wan time, an as ah remembered maseel playin wi tha buttons oan his jaickit ah tried to remember maseel lookin up intae his face but ah jist couldny fuckin dae it.

Big dood hud goan aw quiet noo like he might be sleepin, his mince still aw shooglin awa wi the motions o tha bus beside him. Ah remembered thit it wis ma day aff bit ah wasny really feelin like havin a gid time anymair. As we wir passin up ontae George Street the telly in the window o Starbucks wis changing fae ah photo of some wee columbian kids wi bare feet tae big fuck off letters that read 'Sometimes the best way to connect is to get together' an ah wis hinkin aye, aroon tha fuckin death bed o sum poor fairmer poisoned by fuckin Monsanto fuckin chemicals, when a remembered the auld dood's daughter lyin in sum fuckin hospital an a looked over to him an saw that he hud just clocked tha sign tae. But it didnae seem like he wis makin any connections which wis maybe jist as well ken cos I wis worried it wis goin tae make him kick aff again, aw this shite aboot togetherness and that bit he wis just starin blind glakit at it, like he wisnae seein anyhin at a, an tha bus went oan.

Ahd been scrollin throo ma phone bit it wis aw shite aboot BBC pedos an road accidents an murders an a wis feelin a bit soft the noo likes an it wasnae what ah wis wantin t'see, when ah looked up tae see that ah we hid just left Bampton so a rang tha bell an started getting up. Ah gestured tae tha auld dood who seemed trancelike but an he started getting tae his feet, his mince lookin right fucking bizarre. It wis aw sweaty an it hud left a wee foosty fuckin pool o on tha seat where it hud been sittin man fuck me. As we got aff the bus,



me thankin tha driver an tha big man sayin nothin, his phone started ringin an he pulled it oot his poackit. Ah cood tell b'tha way he was talkin that it wis his wee lassie oan the ither end. He was totally fine an normal an almost quite a posh cunt noo when he wis talkin tae her an callin her darlin an tiger an sayin he hud bought mince for lunch an that it wis great that she had a friend there and theyd been playin pony jumps in tha gairden. Ah wis fuckin shocked man, likes ah ken ah said he wis tae be there for the wee puss but like fuck. When he hung up tha phone he started on again aboot how he wis goin tae kill this alkie bastard again an ah could see noo that he wis the kinda dood that could commit fuckin first degree murder and still be a good faither tae this wee fuckin lassie when he went hame at night. Ah said nuhlin.

We'd been walkin the gither in silence for a wee while. Well, me walkin, him sorty stumblin aboot an starin at hings, the bag o mince lookin worse an worse by the minute an startin to drip on the pavement. As ah started headin fir the coast ah wis gonny huv tae leave him tae gan his ain way when he started greetin again. Ah asked him wit wis wrang this time an he wis aw apologisin an thankin me and sayin he didny hink he could go on like that for his wee girl an he wis worried wit would happen tay her when he starts trying to explain wits happened an she sees her faither aw cryin an upset like that at her age. At this point ah was feelin really fuckin sad for the dood an ah telt him that ah would rather huv seen ma Da greetin an talkin aboot hings than tae huv grown up without him like ah did, an that it still felt like shite even tho ah knew it wisna ma fault.

— Wit are ye needin tay live a double fuckin life fir? Hidin from your wee kid an woman like that? Yer worried aboot her growin up an lookin back but shed be better lookin back an rememberin that you were there at aw than that you were in tha fuckin jail for killin some junky cunt or creepin aroon the hoose keepin it aw tae yerself like some fuckin Dr Spock an explodin every time ye canny keep it the gither anymair.

— I know that, I know that, he says bitin his teeth thegither, but, buh, an he starts aw stammering, and his chin wobbling again. It's just that ma heid's fucking mince he says.

— Mince? Ah says, and ah gies him a side eye. Really? An he looks from me tae his wee manky bag an he almost starts laughing.

We're movin off again an he's asking me aboot ma Da noo an ah think

its makin him feel better. Ah don't really feel like talkin aboot it but yon dood heres havin a hard time so ah tell him that ah never kent anyhin aboot it but wan day when a wis at the school the headmaster came in an took me oot o maths an ah wis quite excited comin oot o maths like cos a fucking hated maths, but as ahm hinking that this is just fuckin barry, he tells me that sumthin hus happened tae ma auld man an that its got sumthin tae dae wi him havin been in Belfast a while before ah wis born an some o tha hings he'd seen o'er there, an that ma maw wis really upset and that she would be comin tae pick ees up fae school cos ma Da hud gone an done hissels in an ah didny no wit t say tae tha headmaster cos ah didny really like him an he wis tellin me that ma Da wis deed.

An tha dood here starts lookin all sad for ees an sayin hes sorry for ees but ah says its alright but that ah canny picture ma Da's face at aw noo no matter how hard ah try an ah tell him that ah luvd ma auld man an that ah used tae count the buttons on his jaickit when a wis wee an a says aboot the chips an sauce an that ah pished masel cos ay they dinosaurs at the museum an the old fat dood is laughing an talking about how gid it is tae have gid memories like thon. So ah ask him about his daughter an he says to me hes no gid memories an that he was a shite Da, too young tae ken whit tae dae and whit wis right an noo shes deed an he never hud the chance to pit things right. Its mental the things a stranger tells ee man. Ah mean wit can ah say other than how fuckin sorry ah am an tell him its not his fault, it's the way hings are an that life wis different then an that's the way hings were, jist wit men did ken? An he seemed to understand wit ah wis sayin but wis still actin no right, kindly like he wis still hinkin o doin himself in or smth.

— She had waynes? Yer lassie?

— Aye he says.

— There's yer chance then, they need you noo mair than ever.

— Aye but I don't know them says he, and their Granny willna see me he goes on. And I don't think, he starts aw this again, that I could cope wi seeing them.

Ah starts on again, an mark here, ahm impressed wi masel bangin on like a fuckin school counsellor talkin aboot baby steps an that aw o them are in this shite the gither. Av nay idea where its aw comin fae but it seems to be workin on yon dood an he's calmin doon again.

But b'noo its getting on fer two an av no had ma lunch yet an ah tells him that his wee lass is waitin on him. He nods an looks up at me aw red eyed an shakin an he thanks me. Ah tells him its nuhin, its ma day aff, don't mention it. He asks me what ma name is an he tells me his is James.

— Well Jimmy man take care o yersel, ah tay him an he starts aff towards his place.

— Ahm so sorry boss, ah really am, a call after him, struggling on the words noo maself. He turns roon an gives ees a bit o a smile an jist then ah see a weetycurlyblondepuss come runnin roon the corner wi a mangled looking bear in her haun. She goes up tae tha dood callin him Daddy an he picks her up an squeezes her real fuckin tight an a think hes greetin again. Ah turn ma heid an leave em tay it as a head fir tha coast. Am hinkin of him aw tha time as a go roon tha corner. Tha poor fuckin dood an his wee granwaynes.

Ah can see the sea now an am absolutely fuckin hank. Ah dont know wit ah want to eat but ah kno it certainly wont be fuckin mince. Ah get a fancy piece from some wee bistro, ah hink its got some kinda mad gorgonzola or summin in it an it's a bit fuckin dear likes but fuck it, its ma day aff, av earned it, an a head doon towards tha beach.

There's a wee man sitting paintin postcards on tha sand. He's smoking a big pipe an hes a face on him like sum auld wizard. His pictures are pretty good tho, an ah hink about gettin one for ma fridge. Some o them are of tha Mound an tha Monument, an another is of tha Castle, an one seems to be of is of hissel just sitting there wi his beard an his hat, smoking and paintin on the shore by the harbour wi tha tide way oot. Am starin at tha sea noo an am tryin again tae picture ma Da's face in ma heid when sum wee kid in blue flashin trainers runs by askin if he can get a postcard fir his Granpa, an ahm hinkin about tha old dood again an how ah hope hes ok but how ah no hes no gonny be, an how ah'm wishin that ah could huv been hat wee kid wi a Da an a family at hame tae send postcards tae.



Clara by close of a prayer, like this

[poem] by **Noorie Ali**



And Sir He who had built history from clay, prayer, and bronze water
by close of prayer do not consult the clock or watch stern weary eyes
cannot tell the time, no, angels would not be long, and rustproof grace
divine shape gazing into our palms — sinful clocks know awe is a healer!
History you've been summoned, a few seconds of grace last and ablest
giving, living below the income threshold is gold dust solves it relatively
quick trust! finalize details of kind dust, brown tears *hold out our hand!*

History what to do with listening! And in layman's terms, it's unheard of
enough Love does not use up her entire energy in one go! love's produce
innocent and excited, undimmed memory-note history, it flows like this.

← **Espresso** [illustration] by **Mu**

ENJOY

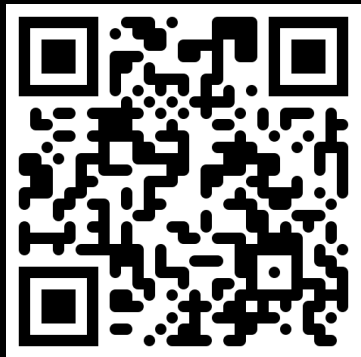
YOUR

MEAL

[video] by **Yiru Qian**

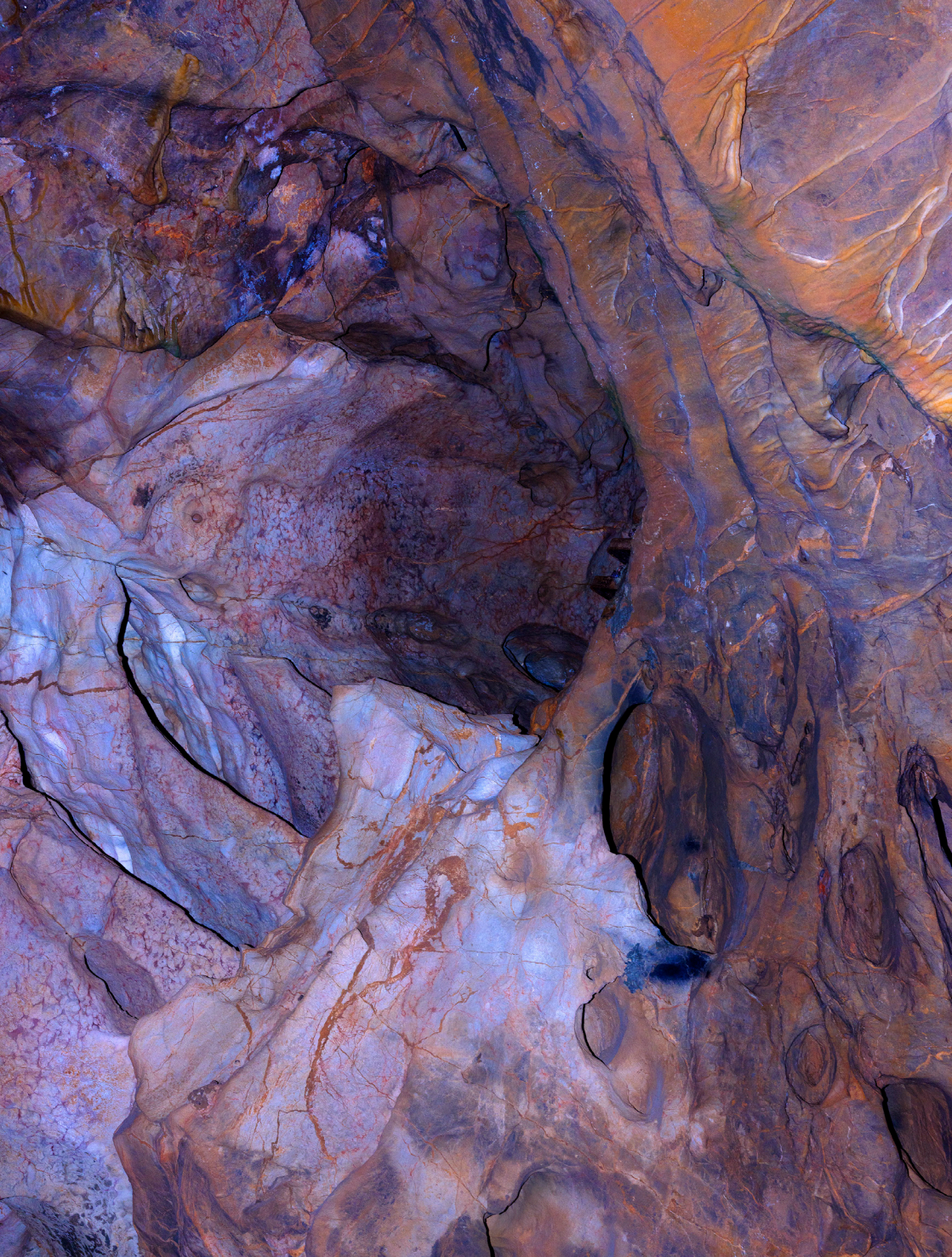
Please deliver as soon as possible

Keep straight ahead



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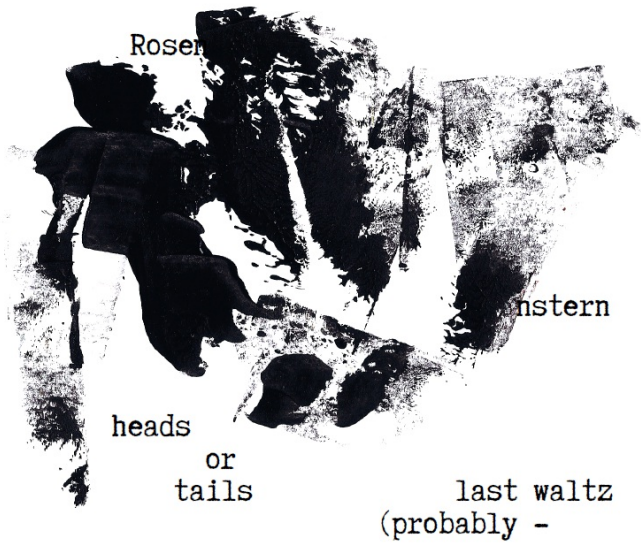
[poems] by **Peter J King**

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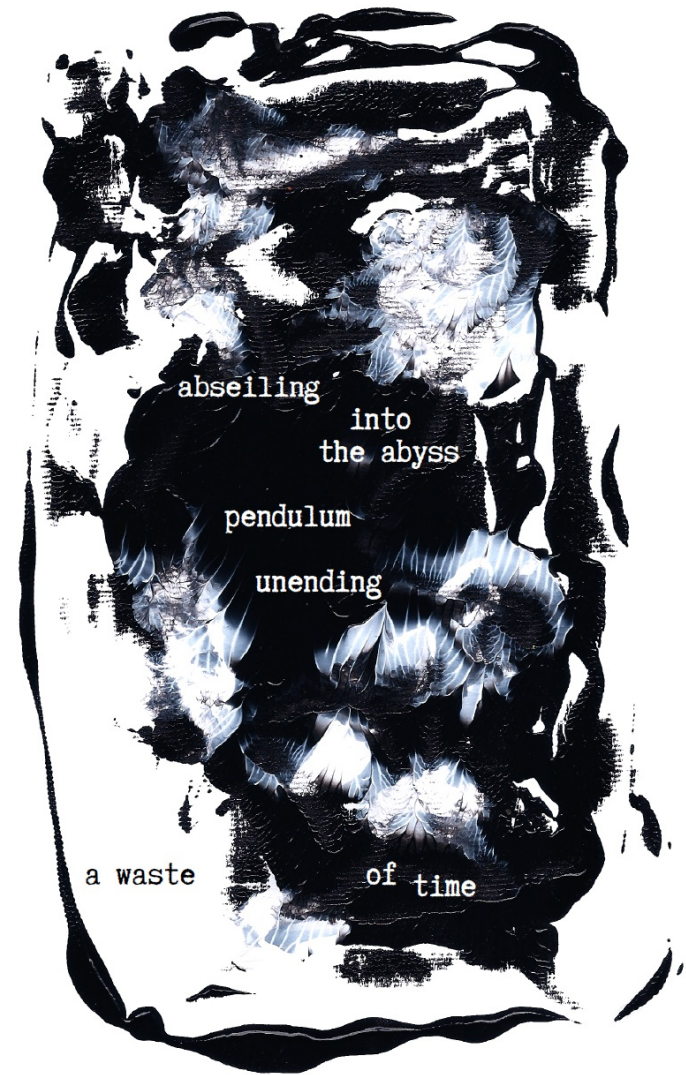
instern

heads

or
tails

last waltz
(probably -

in all this excitement
I kind of lost track
myself)



abseiling
into
the abyss

pendulum

unending

a waste
of time

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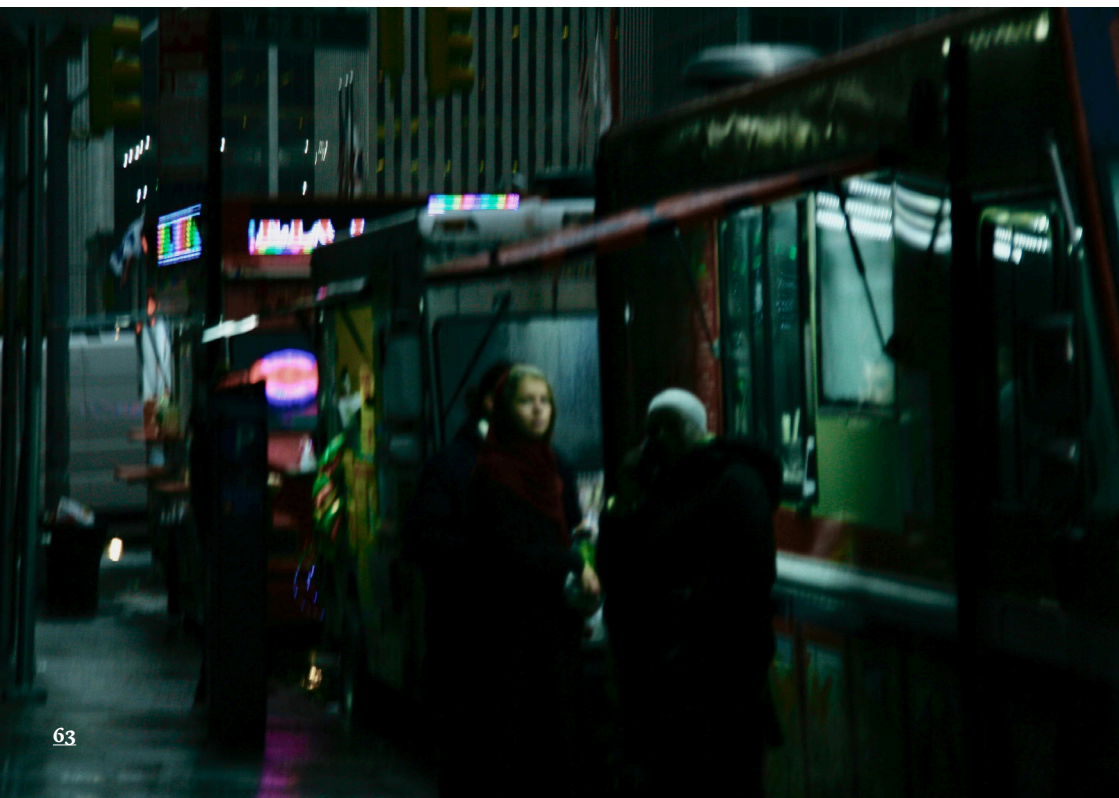
[prose]

by

Will

Pinhey

↓ **After the storm** [photograph] by **Alessia Fenwick**



The bar the musician chose is loud but not in a raucous kind of way, and I tuck myself into a corner booth on my own where I rest my head in my hands and watch the missed calls from Milla tally up. She's not angry, says she just wants to talk. I believe her too, she's not one to point blame for something she was equal parts at fault for, but I don't have the courage yet and I need to figure out where my head's at before I go saying anything more. A message comes through that she's worried about me, wondering where I'll stay if I'm not coming back. I haven't got that far myself either; all I know is I'm not ready to face her again.

I'm two hours early for the interview, so I order an overpriced bottle of wine and start to make my way through it with the methodical precision of a journalist. You should still be able to smoke in pubs. It's the best time for it, anyone who doesn't like it quite frankly shouldn't be there. Haven't had a cigarette in three months, but the rest of the evening is sure to be as intense a test of my resolve as I could ever face, one that I make no pretence in saying I feel up to passing. Can't help but pick out faces I could bum from as I scan the room, and you can bet that singer will have some once he gets here.

I finish my first glass and it gives me enough of a push to pick my phone up and tell Milla I'll talk to her after the interview. She says okay. Leaves a single x. My fingers tingle and I place my phone face down, going into my bag for my notebook. Need to get my head straight, need to focus up. I order an espresso to go with my wine as I start thumbing through my prep, going over the questions I wrote down but the words don't connect, the pages may as well be blank. Either that or they're twisting into pictures of Milla instead, her dark hair knocked across the page like spilled ink.

London isn't my city, and I always call Marcus when I'm in town and need a place to stay. Something about this place always puts me on edge, in a way that I can't quite explain. I grew up in Exeter, but it's not like I have an aversion to scale. I lived in Berlin for two years, live in Birmingham now. I think I've never been able to crack London for whatever reason, feels like it's so many different things at odds with each other. I always found Birmingham rawer, the scene a little less sanitised, a little more unpredictable.

It was Marcus who I lived with in Berlin while on placement at a music press, first bonding over our passion for *Live Through This* being better than *Nevermind*. Marcus was editing three different punk zines and working nights at a crusty rock bar that's long since closed, and he was my way into the city when I needed a guide, having already lived there a couple of years himself. I was mainly there to cover anything electro, but Marcus put me on to German punk as something to pay attention to, and he's been handpicking future obsessions for me ever since.

Marcus met Milla at a mutual friend's birthday a few years after he moved back to London. Innocuous enough meeting but their spark was instant and

fierce, and with her as an international chef of some renown, they always made one of the more interesting pairs professionally when they stepped out at events together. Their Hoxton flat is unbearably well put together, everything so tastefully, deliberately restrained, the kind of place you feel worldlier for having stayed a single night in. The kind of hospitality that's so forthcoming it becomes easy to take for granted, too — never been a time they've turned me down or asked I try elsewhere for a change.

It's not like this was a product of years of unactualized heat between me and Milla — truthfully, we'd always got on, but only really as a consequence of our proximity to Marcus. We're not the kind of people that would have been good friends independently, and whilst her looks never escaped me, she wasn't someone I'd ever found myself guarding a particularly strong attraction to. Last night, however, it was like something had shifted. Like a room rearranged, so you see it in a new way. I looked at Milla with a pair of eyes that didn't feel like mine and found something there I wouldn't have thought possible to see with my own. What's more was that I could recognise that same realisation for her too. It was mutual, sudden, and utterly irresistible.

My first time staying there without Marcus. It's rare that Milla and I are ever left alone, particularly for an extended period of time in a setting that intimate, so perhaps this was something waiting to be discovered between us all along that we just hadn't had the chance to reckon with. Maybe I wasn't alert enough to it in the past. Milla's never disclosed any previous female partners, and, morality aside, it's generally a safe assumption that the wife of a male friend in an ostensibly hetero marriage wouldn't be sexually viable.

It wasn't Milla's first time with a woman. That I could tell. That I knew, from the way she was looking at me before anything happened. There was a readiness in her eyes, not the excitement of discovering something new but almost a determination to return to something lost. And then the way we moved together — I wasn't showing her anything she didn't know well enough on her own already.



I fill up my glass and take two large gulps. This would be simpler if it had been a disaster, if we could chalk it up to a foolish mistake that deservedly led only to mutual disappointment and shame. What makes it harder is that it wasn't — I struggle to think of the last partner I had that I enjoyed that much, and there was a familiarity to it that felt like we were unlocking something we were entitled to, something that had been lying dormant in wait and growing more powerful, more pleasurable, with every passing year it wasn't uncovered.

I slept till noon and didn't dare come out of my room

until I heard the front door shut and knew she'd gone to work. Cowardice, maybe, but I wasn't ready to confront what had happened as real. Still can't be certain how I feel about it. There's guilt, yes, of course, festering and belligerent, but I'm almost having to force the obligation of regret. It's hard to truly regret something that felt so good, no matter the harm it may bring, especially when it's still so fresh. Milla's body still a tangible weight I can feel against my own. Her taste not yet fully faded from my tongue.

By the time the singer, Lawrence, arrives, I'm drunk and halfway through a bowl of chips. I wipe my fingers and lurch to my feet a little too fast when I see him coming, and though he can no doubt tell the state he's found me in, not only does he not mind but he seems keen to get on my level.

"Nic, right?" he checks before he heads to the bar, and I give him an over-enthusiastic double thumbs up that I hold longer than I need to after he turns his back.

Once he has a drink in his hand, he sidles in opposite me. Long hair, eyebrow piercing, chipped black painted nails and a smile that won't stay pretty forever. He's the singer in a band called Violence, a fuzzy, industrial post-punk outfit that actually have a fair bit of justified buzz around them right now, still unsigned but with two well-received LPs to their name and an upcoming third that's sure to ignite an overdue bidding war. I'm interviewing him for this

online rag I only go to when I need a quick publish, and I'm grateful for the fact that he clearly places as much value in this meeting as I do.

We've never met but I've been to one of his shows before, so I start there and he waves me away saying that one was a bust, too many sound issues and a crowd they had to force an encore out of. I'd reviewed it favourably for which he's grateful, and to his credit his modesty doesn't appear false. He has to pause to head to the bathroom, apologises and says he's working through some stomach troubles, won't bother me with the gruesome details. When he returns, we go through the usual motions for a bit, talking about the new album, their new sound, the lure of a major deal. It's all fairly standard and the stuff I could have ghost-written to equal accuracy, when he finishes his second drink, takes a moment, and says, "You look like you've been drinking with purpose tonight."

I raise my eyebrows, look over to my near empty bottle of wine. "What gave it away?"

"Hard day?"

"Hard night. Yesterday."

He nods, leans back in his chair.

"I hear that. Haven't heard from my girlfriend in two days. It's jarring doing these bullshit profiles while it feels like your life's on fire. No offence."

"Offence? Please. I'm just keeping things ticking over. Waiting for whatever the next big thing is. No offence that isn't you, of course."

He grins. "Of course. What do you want that to be?"

I shrug, running my finger around the rim of my glass. "Who knows. Been saying for years I'm going to write a book, but — where is it?" I spread my hands. "I think I need a change. Maybe I'll move. Been in the same place for a while now. You're from Portsmouth?"

"Yup. But I've been in London since eighteen. I don't see myself leaving any time soon."

"Well, you've got the band to think about."

"The band, the band. Things like this with my partner kind of put it all in perspective. What would I rather have, success or happiness? They're not the same thing. I think I want to be happy. What's the point of it all otherwise?"

"You don't think you can have both?"

"I'm ten years in and I'm tired. There reaches a point where you ask what you're doing it for. I think I need to grow up."

"What else would you do?"

"Ain't that the fucking question."

I shake my head, smiling. "I've got all I need, by the way. You're free to go."

"You're staying?"

"Still got some purpose left in me."

He laughs. "That I can get behind. You mind?"

"Go for it."

He heads to the bar to get another drink, and I check my phone while he's gone. Nothing more from Milla. Should have asked what time she finishes tonight. Shouldn't drink much more either, or it's going to be a messier conversation than it needs to be. Might be nearing time to ask Lawrence for a cigarette.

Marcus is back in three days from covering a jazz festival in Switzerland, which is after when I'm due to leave. There's a selfish relief there, but then I'm going to have to speak to him in person myself anyway once Milla's told him. Assuming that's what she wants to do, of course. Is this something I could keep from him? A single night of illicit passion in our late thirties that we don't need to let ruin the rest of our lives? I'm a realist when it comes to monogamy

and I don't think a five-year marriage is worth throwing away over one mistake, but of course there's the sensitivity of me as Marcus' friend and, besides, I haven't been in a committed relationship since my twenties so what the hell do I know?

Lawrence sets his drink down on the table but has to excuse himself to the bathroom again before he can sit. When he returns, his face is a little flushed, his eyes a little darker.

"Sorry," he says, easing down, clearly aware of me noticing his appearance. "I've been having some — health issues. Lately. Part of what my

partner and I are fighting over. I might have to take a break from the music. Like, long-term. It'll kill the band, realistically." He sniffs, rubs his stubble, takes a long sip of his beer. "That's, um, off the record, yeah?"

"Course," I reply, taking a moment. "Shit. I'm sorry."

"Yeah. You kind of got me at a — bad time, to be honest. Was thinking about cancelling."

"That's okay. Why didn't you?"

"Honestly? I wanted to talk to someone." He blows out some air.



“Stupid, I know.”

“I get it. I’m not at my best tonight either.”

“It’s got me thinking about things. Got me — ah, sorry.” He shifts in his seat, his forehead creasing in pain.

“You alright?”

“Yeah, yeah, just need a — just a sec,” he says, gritting his teeth, rubbing his hand over his chest like he’s searching it for cracks. “Might just need to get some air.”

“Sure, sure. You want me to come?”

“Yeah, may as well.”

He gets to his feet and as he nears the light, I realise that he’s turned pale, almost sunken, his face slick with sweat.

“You don’t look so good, Lawrence,” I say with concern, and I have to reach out to steady him as he stumbles and throws his hand to the table.

“It’ll pass,” he gasps, but then he doubles up and out of his mouth spews a fine, silvery stream of liquid that shimmers like crushed glass, coating the table and turning the heads of everyone in the bar.

Screams. The flashes of phone cameras. Lawrence slips in the vapoury puddle at his feet and lands hard on the floor. My body goes numb. Adrenaline and terror. I’m on my knees next to him. A circle starts to form around us. I screech to call an ambulance.

Lawrence has curled up, inward and foetal, trembling and moaning. I touch his face and instinctively retract my hand with the shock — his skin is burning hot. His breathing is rapid and shallow, and there’s a rattle in his throat like wedged sandpaper. Like death.

I saw someone die in the street once. A man, clearly sleeping rough, no shoes, feet bloodied and chipped away by what must have been days against tarmac, collapsed in on himself against a set of traffic lights while people stepped over him to cross the road. The paramedics knew him by name. I’ve forgotten what it was now.

Lawrence vomits again, thicker strands that look like wispy, melting eels. People pull back. I lose all sense of where I am for a moment.

Yells for a doctor. Help. Anyone.

Lawrence jerks onto his front and his clothes start to sizzle, burning against his skin. I go to tear his shirt off but I can barely touch him for the pain. They start to melt, smoke rising, tearing away into distressed strands of fabric that look gory against his writhing body.

Someone appears with a fire extinguisher, but by now his clothes are almost fully eroded, and we can see there are no flames to put out.

And then a sound like tearing carpet. Lawrence’s skin splits down the middle of his spine, just as his shoulder blades burst through his back in a cloud

of glacier-like dust. I stare. His bones are clear, reflective, shimmering like ice.

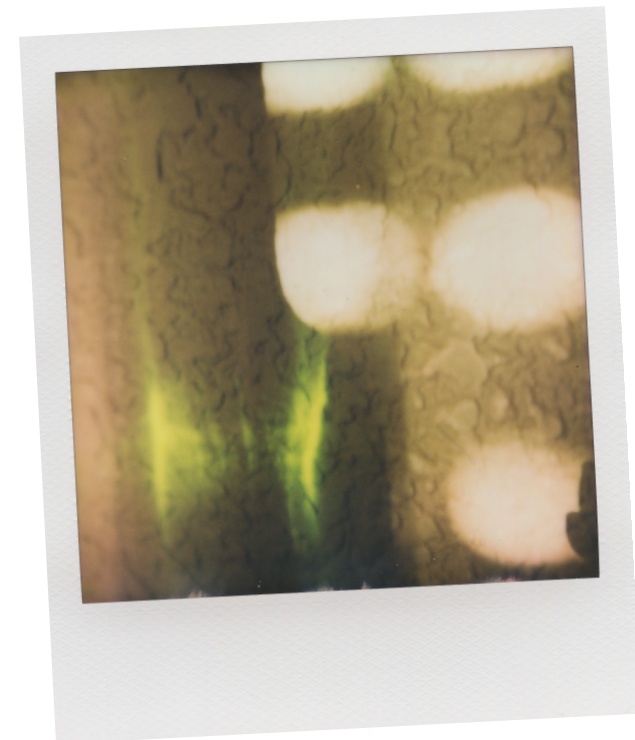
His cheeks rip open. His teeth burst in his mouth, as if a ripple of line charges were suddenly lit across his gums. I fall backwards. His glass bones shed his skin along the full length of his body. His face turns on me, and his eyes seal over into solid, unseeing orbs.

And then his bones start to flake, to peel and waft and hiss, and he dissipates into unfurling clouds of pale, luminous smoke. He leaves a scorched imprint in the floor in the shape of his body, his surrounding vomit melting away like it had never been there.

People start to cry. To curse. Many to flee. I lie there, immobilised. I do not move. I do not speak.

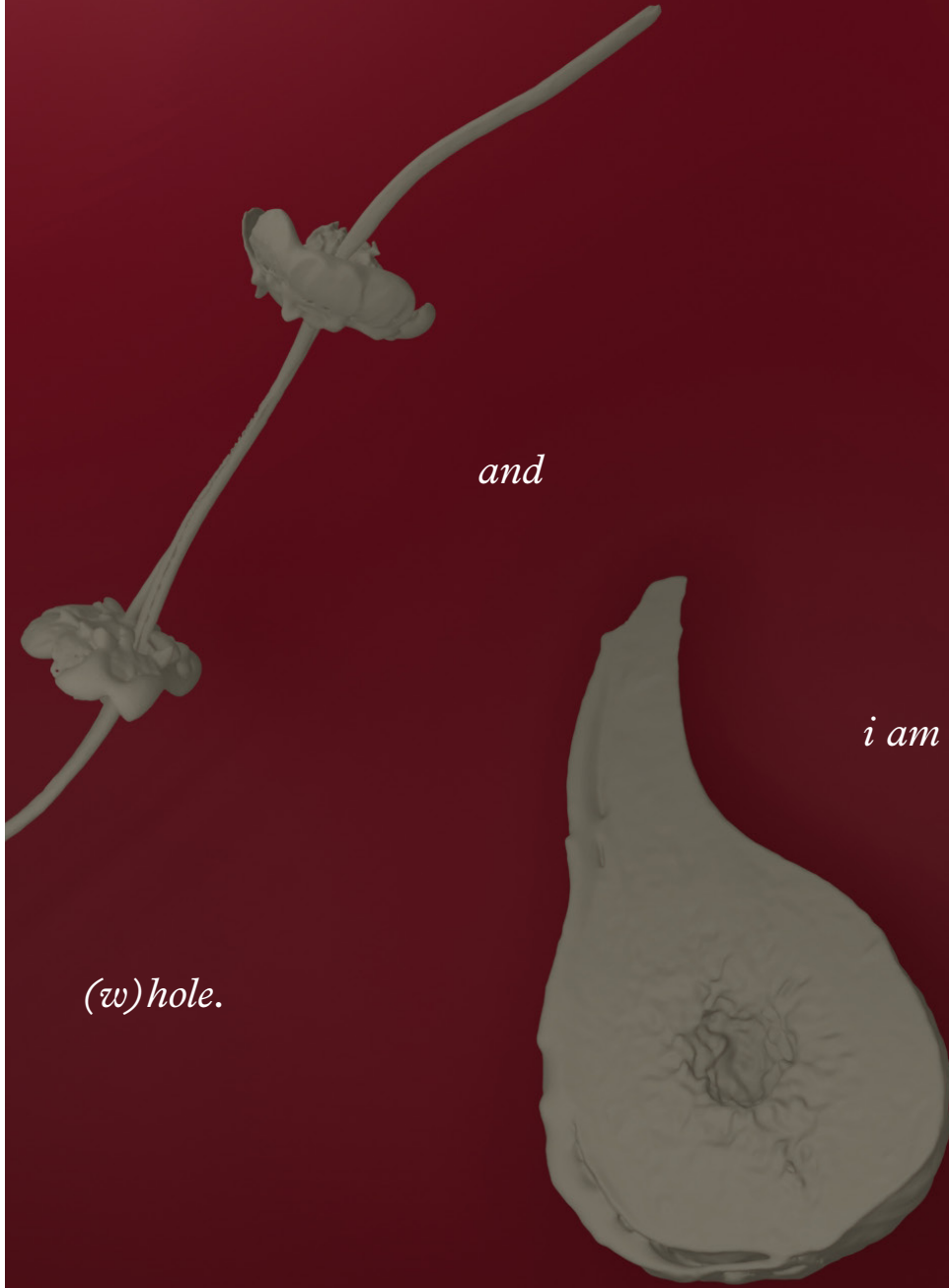
Milla comes to collect me from the police station later that night, and I’m grateful for her embrace, her warmth, her words in my ear. We go home and sob and shout and break things and hold each other, make love, hold each other, make love.

I don’t know what we’ll tell Marcus. I don’t know what I’ll tell anyone. I don’t know what this means for me, for us, the world. I fall asleep next to Milla in the glare of the next day’s sunlight.



↑ and previous from *The dream travels through Time like a floating sailing ship* [photographs] by Adela Gómez

i kiss you



and

i am

(w)hole.

[poem] by Fran Hayes

not understanding while also understanding fully
slow comprehension (with a side order of quick-release tension)

you shudder into existence around the empty pillow
smelling like the colour of hickeys
sounding like the silence in waking up before the alarm
a soft peace

swelling into worlds we stumble blindly through internet-based fear
the blubbering lips of a spent lover fumble over glitter-covered chicken pox
scars. the only residue of pre-pubescent innocence.

(the heaviness of the wireframe makes it slow, weak. while simultaneously
making it the most beautiful .obj in the system. a non-entity. only its bones
are on show. free of stretched flesh, we feel sorry for this gaping body. a
disintegrating whole. its naked structure exists in ignorant bliss, glistening
with possibilities while wrecking my GPU.)

would you rather lose your bones or your muscles? I ask myself this daily.
the answer is always the same.

tongues cause friction burns as they scrape along electric bodies. sparks fly,
igniting both my hard drive and my heart. my arteries become wires, I try
to ground myself but my screws are loose. I am hurtling through your own
personal cyberspace.

what if plants named themselves? I ask myself this daily. the answer is
never the same.

the holes are empty

im sorry I never looked you in the face
it reminded me too much of myself
(she laughed and sent me out for cigarettes)

(ocean dust floats gracefully through the viewport, glinting off light that
has been reflected by both human and machine eyes. this pixelated marine
snow holds many secrets, it overflows with them, exploding in cosmic light;

the static white noise radiation that was vomited out of the big bang's belly
now lies waiting inside our screens
the blue wheel of death

[rainbows spin in hypnotised minds])

synthetic flesh falls into synthetic flesh falls into synthetic skin, synthetic
bodies, synthetic emotions.
tumbling through infinity
a broken feedback loop screaming at the top of its shredded lungs

Instructions for drawing a circle: do not stand in the middle, you may fall in

wanting you to see me weak
capitalising on my own pain
and the pain of those I love and those who love me
a selfish act
a ((non)selfish) sacrifice
I think of you, it makes me weak. you are so strong. I want to hold you while
you sleep, feel your presence melting into mine. plutonic skin on plutonic
skin. plutonic flesh on plutonic flesh. you are my sister and you break my
heart. I wish I could carry your pain. lighten the load. I cannot put you into
words. how much I need you. how much I ache for you.

things building into other things
stuff pouring out of other stuff
a subtle leakiness
a blinding vagueness

porous entities, porous beings, porous hearts
symbiotic sharers smoke shattered shards of cigarettes

(BUZZWORD BUZZWORD BUZZWORD)

i cannot draw how much i miss sleeping with you.
it simply cannot be done.

I kiss you and I am (w)hole.

overromanticised cigarettes hold the pieces of my being together

deep fried brains make deep fried decisions
banana split slippers make me stumble on my words. the words catch in
my throat, sharp as razors I am coughing blood made of pixels, their cubic
forms make flowers on my grandfather's pristine handkerchief. it brings
tears to my eyes. they wobble on my waterline but never fall. I have forgot-
ten how to cry.

how do you make a primary colour? I forgot the recipe.

things I crave:
a soft world
a soft space
a safe space

things I receive:
woven lands
fabricated skies
lubricated thighs

swamp water is still and dark, having swallowed the light in its muddy
throat

(the words that catch in my throat
never quite reaching my lips
how they make me ache)

poverty rubs against wealth
it is sickening
I am sick
I am powerless in my power
a 21st century coward
I am sorry
but
not enough



image as interface

entering the image

navigating within an image

texture mapping the creases of my heart so that they align (un)perfectly with yours.

let me UV unwrap your perfect body, draped in unconfigured wireframe. I tear it apart so untethered vertices scatter the UI, flying through infinite space, smashing up mesh.

I assemble you like a jigsaw. each piece pulled painfully from deep inside my mind. you are a complete fabrication built from lost memories.

(love you miss you let me kiss you)

YAWNING *at a* DISCO

[poem] by **Ho Kin Yunn**

I do it and spark off this momentous gravy train of nonchalance. In fact I had only forced it out after overhearing sententious rhetoric on bpm and spiritual health. Genre resurrections too. We seek metanoia in a club wordlessly, I pontificate under absinthe breath. I'd rather you go sit out kerbside and pick on loose chunks of tarmac while discussing trauma. I'd do that, and whenever I got home at 7am I could tell my mother I had stayed out helping a friend with life troubles. What life troubles could you have at 19, she'd say. Years later my little brother would be 19 when our grandfather passed on the sunken side of his bed, chest sinking beneath sadness into horror, mouth strangely agape like an unfinished yawn. All rhetoric spewed since has been but a response.

All kerb-talk a by-product.

The kerb here on lower parliament street seems less raised, less conducive for sit-squatting. A tilt leading down somewhere. It's probably all that grand wormwood extract making me excavatory. It's the fog machine keeping me out of the visible present. It has to be. The dj drops sean paul for the third time in the past hour and I lose it.



H U M

[prose] by **Max Walker**

*'It was I who cut down the cedar, I who levelled the forest, I who slew
Humbaba
and now see what has become of me.'*

...

B A B A



In the Pacific Northwest I passed through a place known locally as 'a drinking town with a fishing problem.' The logger that told the following led me to believe that his tale had some kernel of truth.

†

The snow made tree tripping a very difficult job, but compared to the incessant midges, new growth, and dense ferns of summer, the cold was welcome. Felling was the most engaging work he'd ever had, requiring focus at all times. In its repetitious method he felt his mind captivated by the scoring, cutting, and tripping of the Douglas Fir, Western Hemlock, Western Red Cedar, White Pine, Spruce, Balsam and Birch, and a handful of polar species.

His contract was paid by the acreage of his cut-block, and so his crew took pains to accurately estimate how long the jobs would take, lest the price per acre become pennies per day. In any event, they split the fees evenly, without heed to individual productivity. Of course, they'd all

notice if someone wasn't doing their share, a fact that he felt keenly as the only logger in his fifties, and at least ten years older than the next most senior crewmember.

In the short early-spring evenings he would often find himself finishing the day under the headlights of his truck. Bone-splitting cold drove the slashers to their cabins more than the dark, and that year the equinoctial breeze that usually brought the first warmth instead brought only more snow. There had not, he thought, been a spring so cold since the year of the mountain lion.

Spring days began in freezing dark and dressing for such temperatures, where a forgotten item is as likely to lead to an uncomfortable afternoon's work as to frostbite, took time. He dressed with care, from the long-johns drying by the fire to the wool fleece, padded snowsuit, and jacket, which smelled of damp wool and pine resin. His wife made him eggs as he dressed, and she'd prepare two flasks, one with coffee and another with soup. She told him to take care as he pulled on his stiff leather gloves.

Even with chains his truck spun on the compacted snow as he pulled onto the main road. It was ten miles to his patch, the last two were along a dirt path that he had paid a plough to clear.

The younger men had strength on their side, but cutting trees had very little to do with strength. He had cut thousands of boughs and only had to look at a tree to know the direction that it 'wanted' to go, noting environmental factors, growth patterns, the wind direction, even the smell of the breeze. Sometimes a tree did not want to fall at all; on those occasions plastic wedges were pounded into the cut to control its direction.

He pulled the truck into the clearing at the end of the track and looked out at the day's work. He scalded his tongue on the flask of coffee and strengthened his resolve to leave the warmth of his truck, waving to two team members as they arrived. They rarely spoke until after work and then it was always about work or sport.

The tear gas that rained on Berkeley in 1969 had driven some further than others. Their fears were different, individuals exiled by fierce

individual rationales. The forests in those hills concealed many hundreds of oddities, and occasionally one of them turned out to be familiar, though he'd invariably known them better for stealing riot shields or for giving a speech from the roof of a police car. They'd shared a cause, and he'd sometimes show them the buckshot in his thigh from Bloody Thursday, a wound of defeat.

He felt that they had lost. Things had come to pass much as they had once feared, and he found himself opening the newspaper to find that the stories seemed much the same, if slightly further down the road. He felt no vindication or sanctimony, and often just as he was on the verge of sleep, he'd hear the droning of police helicopters and feel a twitch of anxiety. Every generation thought that they were the revolution until they weren't.

Regarding the unseasonal cold from his truck, he recalled the winter of the mountain lion and how, just as this winter, the snow had piled almost to the eaves of every house. The snow had remained in the more shaded valleys until that June, and in the deeper mountain passes it would be years still before it trickled down to join the rivers.

Eight winters ago he seemed a young man, and instead of slashing, he had kept goats. They had lived further down the plateau in a village where many others also kept goats, hardy things in matted fleeces. During winter, especially that winter when an arctic wind howled for a whole month, the goats slept in a barn. He had built the barn with a posse of other men from the village. It was only three winters old, and he was proud of its gabled roof and hayloft, which had helped to cut their outgoings on feed. The flock slept under the sweet-smelling hay, peaceful, but for the occasional tittering bleat which would drift to the cottage where he lay with his wife.

One frigid morning he pressed on his snow shoes, crunched through the icy crust of yesterday's fall, and opened the barn doors. Still in his stupor, he sensed the first goats move into the field and, just as he turned towards the cottage and the promise of breakfast, the pristine morning was shattered by a shrill cry.

A shepherd's fear is an ancient thing embedded in human marrow. Waking to find your charge neglected, torn to shreds, the reason that



↑ California [photograph] by Jumana Mcgrabi from Long exposures as the sun rises [photograph] by Harry Chapman ↑

Gabriel could so easily startle those poor souls on the mount, a fear of the wolf that you cannot see. The shepherd's fear that meant that he kept a rifle with a round in the chamber above the kitchen door.

His eyes alighted on a trail of blood and he made out in the young day's light the silhouette of two creatures. There was his goat, being dragged across the field in the bloody maw of a mountain lion, bleating as it went.

He didn't consider shooting to be sport, death could not be sport. He considered the forest's near-annual tribute of a single lost deer that wandered absently into his fence system as reward for his otherwise frugal toll on the land. Every year, just as the freezer seemed to run short, a deer would appear. He hung and butchered the animals on a birch tree near the barn and uttered his thanks. It was for this offering that a rifle hung above the kitchen door, a round in the chamber.

The sight had become more pitiful by the time that he reemerged from the house with the rifle. He saw by the rising sun that it was only a young lion, barely the size of a goat, with gaunt, deep, sorrowful sockets that held his gaze. The creature's ribs showed against patchy fur.

Steadying his breath, he watched through the sights as the lion tried once again to kill the goat. Too weak, too malnourished even to escape, the lion held the bleating neck. If he chased it, then it might yet leap the fence but it would only starve in the forest. Like the deer, the forest had sent the dying lion to his mercy, and the kindest end would come with the squeeze of the trigger.

Pressing the cold metal, he exhaled to steady himself as his father had taught him. His father, who had only ever hunted for food, and whose rifle he held. One day his father had missed, only injuring a doe, and he remembered the horror on the old man's face, all the strength of a forester drained with awful realization. They had tried to track the doe's erratic movements, searching until the falling darkness and threat of bears drove them away, haunted all the while by the doe's cries. When they had returned home, his father had given him the gun, and vowed not to shoot again.

He did not miss that afternoon, eight years ago; the lion had dropped into the snow, its hunger and cold gone. He steeled himself, thinking

of the Karok who sold him salmon from a cooler in the back of a truck, and resolved to ask whether there was some ceremony to be performed. He expelled the round from the chamber and watched his goat bound, cross-eyed with terror, to where the rest of the flock had huddled, unharmed.

That spring, he sold their cottage, his barn, and his goats. Something had changed in the place that even the melting snow could not wash away. When something went even slightly awry, a smashed plate, truck stuck in the mud, a goat with maggots, he found himself thinking of the hungry eyes of the lion. The smallest worries become portents to the guilty. So they moved up the plain to the foothills of the great Sierra, where he had found another cottage. Logging was the main trade there, not goats, so he bought himself a saw.



Stepping down from his truck with a sigh, he donned his tools with a ceremonial solemnity. Snowshoes, gloves, he opened his tool chest and removed his sixteen-inch saw, helmet, and glasses, placing each in the bed of the truck. He had fled, all those years ago, fled so that he could pick the war he fought in. He picked up the items one at a time and swung the saw as he walked. Felling, for all the word's Saxon violence, had brought him peace.

The drone of the younger men beginning to work whined between the trees. They had worked the last four seasons together on hundred-acre cut-blocks where the prime timber had already been taken. They cut every tree in the block that the logging crew had missed. Some were small, some were left entangled, and sometimes a mortally wounded "jackpot" would be left because another team had made a mess of it and couldn't get it to fall. He was never more aware of the violence of their task than when he saw the trees weeping sap from titanic gouges.

Tracking along yesterday's footprints under the great canopy, he listened to it creak like the timbers of a ship with the added weight of the snow. He had never doubted that the trees might communicate with each gentle sway, the crackle of a pine cone, and the groan of a bough, even the gentle thud of snow falling from a branch.

↑ *from* **Absence of Love** [photograph] by **Chochana Rosso**

from **Do I find comfort here** [photograph] by **Jake Goddard** ↑



The path came to another clearing where three boughs already lay neatly trimmed of their limbs. He tried to consider his position as curatorial, he curated life so that it could perpetuate, and with every tree felled he thanked the forest, as he had with every deer, as he had with the mountain lion.

He had picked the tree yesterday, a great Douglas Fir. It may have been two hundred years old, but a small amount of damage to one side, blackened, perhaps from a lightning bolt, decreased its lumber value. If hollow or dying then the loggers would avoid it, a jackpot without value.

Approaching the tree he set down his tools. His body position was instinctive, slightly bent legs, straight back, he looked up, and taking the cover off his saw, he assessed that the tree would hold together if he cut it deep and low enough. He marked his cuts and double-checked the angles in his mind. Some used ropes to determine the fall angle, but he needn't be so precise. The perfect silence of the forest was broken as the little saw came to life and he pressed the whirring metal into the trunk, shredding years of growth at a touch.

The newer growth disintegrated to chips that mounded in the snow around him, first the red of the bark filled the air with dust, then the lightness of the older woodchips. He kept pressing the saw forward until the chips turned red again, which seemed unusual. Red with sap. He saw gushing sap, bright murderous crimson, like he'd never seen before. Not sap, he thought, blood. In his moment of hesitation, the saw sprayed his glasses with viscous scarlet blood.

Without conscious thought, he flicked the emergency stop and threw his bloodied glasses to one side. His heart rang in his ears, he felt nothing. In such cold, people had been known to take violent injury, ignorant until the feeling returned to their bodies in the warmth of their homes. Fearfully he peeled off his jacket and ran his hands over his torso and arms, finding no wound.

Slumped in the snow, he looked between the blooded tree and the saw in his hand. He understood blood and he was not afraid of it but the sight of the wounded tree, that continued to pump in violent spasms, filled him with dread. Perhaps he had lost his mind, perhaps the forest

was at last punishing him. He'd fled the frontline to live in her arms, by her rules, and she'd abandoned him. He felt a sting of indignance; after all, nobody could bear a half-century of human guilt alone. Perhaps, he thought, peace is not something that you must be deserving of.

It occurred to him to call for help, but he remembered the way his team looked at his patch at the end of the previous day, disappointed. Of course, they'd all notice if someone wasn't doing their share.

Fury took over quickly, fire on a quickening breeze, it tore through his mind, and suddenly he saw through the fantasy. There could be no blood, for trees did not bleed. The tree would be felled like the others. He set his brow, eyes blazing, and raised the bloodied saw.



'It was a bear,' said one of the younger woodsmen at the pool table, 'The old man sawed a bear clean in half.'

The other, a Georgian, was trying to focus on his shot,

'I thought it was a mountain lion.'

'No, it was definitely a bear.'

'Well, he told me that he killed a mountain lion,' said the Georgian.

'I'll be damned if he finishes the contract now,' said the younger man.

'I thought it was a mountain lion. Anyway, the man's a hippie, he doesn't chainsaw bears to death.'

'It was definitely a bear, and he did, chain-sawed clean in half. Well, not quite clean...Ted saw it.'

Exasperated at the distraction from his shot, the Georgian set his cue to one side, 'That retiree, a man so old he dodged the draft, chain-sawed a bear in half? Hell, the bears are hibernating anyway.'

'I had it from Ted! They think the creature had the misfortune to hibernate in this hollow jackpot, the old man got it right in the middle. Like a Russian doll. Must have been in its sleep stupor. Fright it gave them, Ted said it looked like a murder in a slaughterhouse.'

The Georgian regarded the younger logger and finished his drink, ignoring the protests of the younger man to finish the game, he stepped out. Lighting a cigarette, he watched the cold sun fail on the lowering clouds. He'd seen countless twilights on those hills, yet they'd never seemed so solemn or ominous. One grows used to grim news in the logging trade, it's a dangerous profession, but something about the story had disturbed the Georgian. It's a grim day when a man sets to chainsawing bears, accidental or not. He thought of the old man and resolved to take him some whisky the next day.



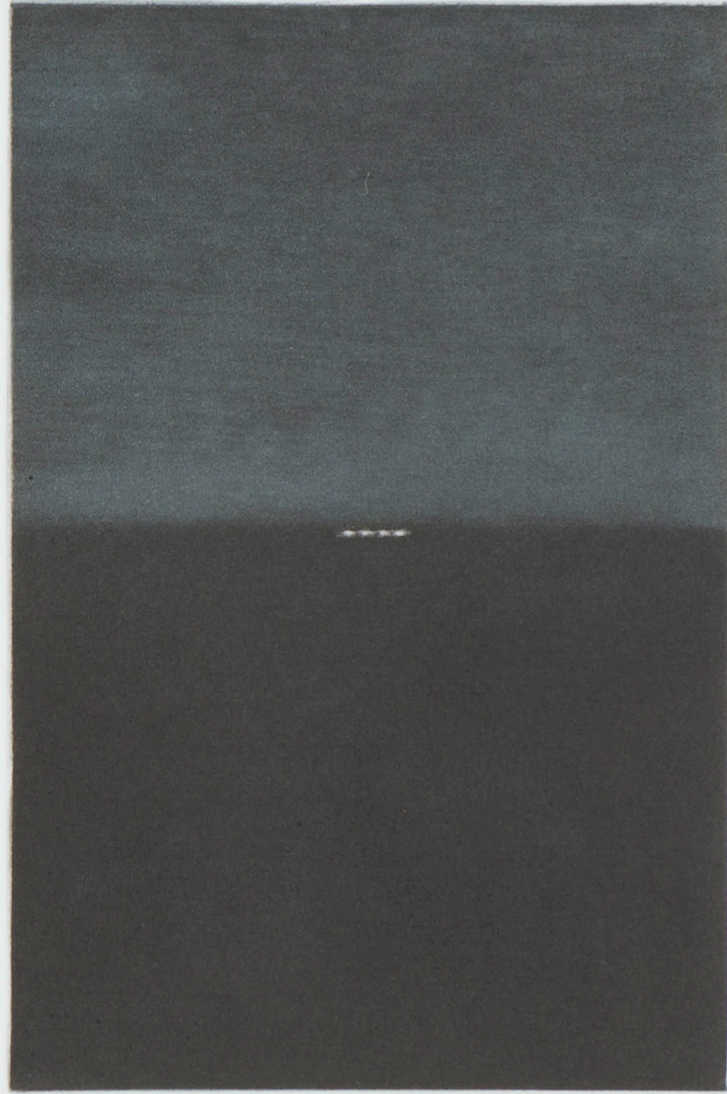
OFF

[poem] by **Milo Christie**

The Barn in the Backyard was declared
off
limits, sternly,
indubitably, catered with a
wagged finger by our
father
He had three rings on that one
stacked in some logic
beyond me,
where I was reflected with bulging eyes
diminutized
in gold, not
the silver of the chevy but with similar
fear and
awareness of my young useless
size
I wake up to tired morning light.
I tried asking the barn cats, one of
them had corneal ulcers in its remaining
eye which popped out an inch past the
lip of a socket, milky basin, he is
blind, I think
So I draw the letters in (the) question
with a stick of willow in his back, rain
sounding marbles
thrown against a mirror, and we both
listen to Angels through the downpour
While looking up because
that's where they are, I think.
He is tired, I think,
and for a split second my vision where I
look at the yard refracted through water
makes the barn fly into the sky, which
I know
is not real,
and I cannot hitch a ride,
but I still reenact it out of cardboard
boxes, and scream because the
countdown is coming too soon, too soon
for me to be ready to see the angels in
the barn in the sky, because that's where
they are, too soon to be famous in the
sky, too soon to get bigger and be tall
enough to reach it.

LIFT

晚會先生、 燭光女士：



[poem] by **Jack So**

記唔記得我啊？

晚會先生、燭光女士： 記唔記得我啊？

Mr Banquet,

Ms Candlelight:

Do you remember me?

Once upon a childhood you said 勿忘初衷, so I flung my heart into the sky and followed its entrails to Manchester. You write yourself all over me, over the full lips my father will one day leave with me, and lately there is too much English in my English, so I write you back. 一顆野心在繁都眾燈 下何來照得亮？ Tell me. Tell me. 我要聽你話你睇好我。 Don't you burn for all sorts of the lost and scattered? I never had to walk so far to stray. Today I told him the truth, even though I was scared. Then I called the doctor back, met my friends in the pub, and had toad in the hole for the first time. Are you proud of me? I miss when you used to sing me to sleep: 氹氹轉，菊花園 — curtains on the rail, soft horns on the highway, a mother opens her closet in the dark of her children's room — 磨利刀，磨利刀 — the same hands that hover over your windpipe pick out a blouse for tomorrow — 抄米餅，糯米糰。 What sings now is the last flame in your cupped hands. Lean into the light, please. I do not want us to lose each other to the world.

你的追夢兒 敬上



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is it silent?

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Spontaneous

