

RE-SIDE

ISSUE #09 – ITERATIONS

POETRY | ART | PROSE | CNF | PHOTOGRAPHY

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The singular

the singular hue mixed ;
burnished crimson + aquamarine
I put my hands inside of the
face of the future
I let them fumble ageless-ly with the door key

I let my fossilized bones name myself ;
Tyrannosaur ; tyrant ; troublesome
I carve my back into an arch violent
enough to spark a fire

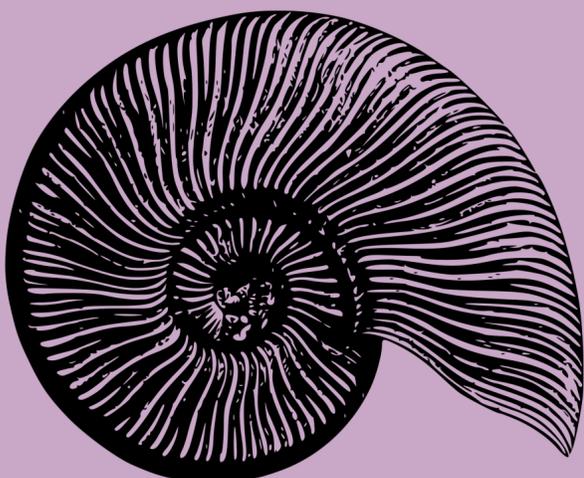
I let the chill thrill through the air
for just a minute longer
before I let the boundless
grace of spring sing through the rivers
of the sky
I trace myself towards the
everlasting outline of the new gods
The firm Herculean rapture of something
waiting to be born

I, fever, discover the
Rattle-bones
of the new season / only the daffodil scent
Of the new day / only a field of wide-eyed endlessness
looking towards the horizon
once again a passport of crouched dandelion
whispering a song of plated hieroglyphs
no one can teach you

when you look and see the
reflection of the grass staring back at you

no one but anyone will be reborn again
the way that this Earth will be reborn again
and everyone always will follow

- Lauren Suchenski



Salt water boy

Salt water boy
with poetry in your head.
Let me show you sunset
from the foot of a white dressed bed.
Salt water boy,
with sunshine in your hands,
a smile more homely
than four walls can stand.
Salt water boy,
voice carved from wood and whiskey bliss,
trust that spring is always
worth the risk.
Salt water boy,
ocean waves in your veins,
time will tick
and your heart will beat again.
Whether you feel at home on earth
or not,
the planet is spinning, so dance
until it stops.
Let me hallucinate your halos,
your holiness in might.
If we hold our breath long enough
the dark becomes the light.
I see the way your eyes sink into the sunset,
as though the sky could make a decision for you.
Searching for miracles on the horizon
when there are mercies in your view.
Salt water boy,
eyes like hazy June afternoons.
Can you end
this January gloom.

-Lucy Aur



Rêverie by E. F. Hay.

Dribbling saliva, slumped in the deepest of rêveries, he was approached by a French accented usherette- a veritable mini-skirted caricature, advertising a take-me-from-behind coquetry; she tottered wantonly, making a beeline towards him. Sporting patent black stilettos, & sheer Hi-Vi stocking tops, with ripened honeydew melons squeezed into a plunge-cut white silk blouse: 'you are not 'ere to see the peeping show I 'ope?' Despite horny Mediterranean tones wafting a frisson across his prostate gland- Monty just managed to feebly shake his head; spent, unable to accommodate whatever she had to say, or offer. In a vintage styled slim-line tray, hanging from her fetching, slender bronzed shoulders, by an ebony black bespoke cord, continuously bearing the word psychopomp in a bold white text, were presented several uniformly sized ice-cream tubs, all gaudily badged glacé: 'a final treat perhaps, something for the road? They're only £9.99 each.' Trying to make light of hellish migraine, toothache, heartache, a 360-degree grave discomfort, Monty mouthed: 'my mum don't let me carry big change like that.' It didn't matter- nothing did any more, nor would it ever again, as dark curtains descend, signalling an end to proceedings. She was uncannily strong for such a pretty young thing, twiddling him up from his seat, onto her shoulders in a fireman's lift (as if this sort of activity was second nature to her), it really was a fantastical intervention; she provocatively guided him to his final resting place, an act which she whispered was: 'in the interests of good form.' Laid out under an Afghani flag of convenience, spectacularly physically & chemically restrained, rendered to a pimped-up black site shipping container of carnal humidity, Monty witnessed a truism (humanity is set to destruct). Hackneyed conspiratorial sub-plots, par for the course: wealthy people, organised, confederated to extract whatever they desire, whenever, wherever, & from whomever they fancy; well protected from repercussions, aided, abetted, systematically catered for by institutional intermediaries, business people, & servile providers (bleeding obvious, as lame as dedicating a movie to the proposition that rain is wet). A black-&-white metric montage rapidly leafed through Monty's inner directory of drastic disaffection; polemic streams of subconscious, & unfolding, flashing vitriolic scenes presented in butchered mental forms. Sir Robert Maxwell holds hands with Dame Shirley Porter, prancing over autumnal casualties strewn around a bloody decapitated mediaeval battlefield. Incognito, an avuncular press baron contacts Benjamin Netanyahu, who gladly, without arrière-pensée, decants everything he knows concerning a haunted Saxe-Coburg Gotha. Malicious, victorious forces, marshalled by Alan Greenspan carry severed limbs aloft as trophies, atop spiked banners inscribed with Supremacy, Misogyny, Colonisation & Freedom; waving goodbye as they jauntily march to loot a nearby abbey, passing as they do, an elderly Mohel under a convenient covenant pavilion, performing a bris on a newly born Jeffrey Epstein. Prince Andrew temporarily leaves the tribal ceremony with a prawn sandwich, to be intimately debriefed by insouciant teenage Mossad Agents, burlesquely attired in counterfeit Victoria's Secret lingerie. Monty hears Royal laughter, mention of operant conditioning, Stockholm syndrome, Fiat currencies, regulatory capture, Black Death, inter-generational, international, state-resourced, trans-Atlantic fist-fuckers of humanity, neo-feudalism, austerity, & Leviathans.

Fluctuating betwixt life & death, drifting over any sense of identity, vis-à-vis the origins & basis of inequality; reflecting upon subjugation, propaganda, guilt. ROTL, an acronym, pops up unexpectedly. A day release kid from YOI Feltham transported back & forth over a week's work experience in the warehouse at Bourne End, told Monty his Student Support Worker counselled him in respect to resilience in social environments. To succeed, was predicated, fundamentally, on disengaging from peers &/or family involved in criminality. Upon the boys release from incarceration, on temporary licence at 16-years of age, for good behaviour, he was rewarded nominal assistance towards achieving social stability in a half-way house, inhabited by products of backgrounds rich in shared exogenous factors: small family flats, rented by unhappy parents, battling, blaming, adventurously polygamous, accusatory, uneducated, inarticulate, unconfident yet enthusiastically domestically violent, unskilled migrants, without faith, property, land, gold reserves, fine art collectables, off-shore bank accounts, cash savings, family assistance, or career prospects- showing little love, or interest; separating during their children's primary school years. In the fullness of time, unprepared, socially disconnected, & without any reliable access to material resources, a youth sets out to survive, & avoid repeating the miseries experienced whilst resident with their progenitors. Sounds like a plan, but this leads to the endogenous factors i.e. being an average person, minus star qualities, & incapable of earning much beyond what is required just to keep a roof over their head. What a contrast, muses Monty to a multitude of antecedents, despots, frauds, slave owners, facilitators, as guilty as hell, whose descendants aren't expected to, make reparations, or disconnect from those associated support networks, & their affiliates, the status quo, eternal partners in international crime.

Cui bono?



Wake Up - Kelly Stohr

Medea

after Frederick Sandys painting and 'Musee des Beux Arts' by Auden

About women's suffering
they were always wrong, the old masters.
See – Medea at her spells,
petering a small flame
between her breasts,
clawing at the bonds
of coral beads
over her heart
with delicate,
pink-painted fingernails.
Cruelty is nothing new.
Behind, Jason's ship sails by
blameless, almost
out of sight.

– Betty Doyle



The Glass Blower

I turn the pipe and force words
down towards the bulbous orange,
holding it so the orb holds,
burnishing my lustrous reflection.

I make new stories in the bends,
revising curves until it is a shape,
that catches, that steals the light
from the eyes that glance upon it.

Viscous is the gather of material,
vicious is the made truth, made
from jagged fragments in the furnace,
nothing clings to my scorched smock.

Don't hold your breath waiting for me to finish,
for the conspiracies to cool in water,
for I have apprentices,
trained without their knowing,

to keep turning, turning and widening
the great maw of my creation.

– Glen Wilson

Iterations

They say we are fated
to keep repeating the same mistakes,
drafting and redrafting
until we get it right:

Across a pub table made harsh
by unaccustomed daylight, we
discuss a mutual acquaintance:
'She won't meet me,' you complain.
'Perhaps she's scared I'll pounce?'
'Well, you've never pounced on me!'
I answer. We both giggle.

My hands are ice. You press them,
fingertip to fingertip, try to bring the pulse
back from the blue: there are no words.

We stumble our way through stanzas
of incomplete songs, trembling strings
that resonate, but never quite connect

'It is futile!' you say, 'Stop playing games' –
Life is not a game

I spend an afternoon trying to make your words fit
the spaces in my head, hammering at their edges
until they bleed.

A proffered 'luv you' in a jokey text skims
Its way across distance, dot, dot, dot...

And we'll keep on trying,
one iteration after another
until we can find
something
that fits.

– Rebecca Lowe

The thought from outside.

For Michel Foucault

I want to know above all what it feels like
its time and place failing to excite a sensuous expanse
wherever it appears there you go to find it.

Tectonic ground,

it has an itinerant schedule
wants ardour wants risk tries ache loves philosophy a smidge.
Its name is already a margin in a glass jar complicit before it even knew it was
stuck with an affection for simplicity, but since thinking
has a time frame, however angling
by history,
being outside,
permanently
resists
the
wish
or tryst
lying
tough,
nor this.

- Michael Black

aftermath

Poesy on, anon, upon topographies of crusting blisters,
The viscosity of their seepage down preselect welts,
The velocimetry of emergent prescient pus,
In slo-mo, tepid stench cascade.

Mail me your hot urge; combust in its hot fuss,
Its singalonga kick-down,
Its kickabout shaft of boot-stomp chorus,
Its meted wounds, ever sanguine porous:

And in their unalloyed, death-rattle susurrations -
Hark! - the chit-chat of your distant Gods, laughing.

-Barney Ashton-Bullock



translation 1

i write
on yellowed paper
hearing words in my head
but not speaking them
i write a poem
wait
then translate it
a new poem
each word spreading
from itself
forgetting what came
before

i translate it back
it becomes
a plant
that grows
then bends
towards
soil
taking root
when stem
touches ground

my poem
writes
itself

traduzione 2

Scrivo io
su carta ingiallita
sentire le parole nella mia testa
ma senza parlarle
scrivo una poesia
aspettare
quindi traducilo
una nuova poesia
ogni parola che si diffonde
da se stesso
dimenticando quello che è successo
prima

lo traduco di nuovo
diventa
una pianta
che cresce
poi si piega
in direzione
suolo
mettere radici
quando stem
tocca il suolo

la mia poesia
scrive
si



Translation 3

I write
on yellowed paper
hear the words in my head
but without speaking to her
I write a poem
wait
then translate it
a new poem
every word spreads
from himself
forgetting what happened
before

I translate it again
it becomes
a plant
growing
then it folds
towards
soil
take root
when stem
touches the ground

my poem
writes
Yes



Four Inhabitants

(of Mexico City)

1938

We have no toes -
My nurse and I;
Beautiful ripe breasts

Juxtapose - the lack of a mother
The masculine square shoulder
The shadow - spreads across me - oye Judas -

¿Puedes darme un poco de espacio?
Just because Diego likes you near - sick bastard...
Thinks it is so odd and funny;

Whispers in my ear - jajaja...
Mira mi Reina - fijate mi Vida

The men are all here - commanders of the Zócalo
Las mujeres, but figments of the past
Meek figurines of future abandonment ---

To have had a child; to have kept my toes
Intact, my uterus intact; I would have had to
Praise the easel of a man;

Lied to Jesus at least thirty times -
Estuviera sido traidora a la Xōchiquetzal;
And I would not do this... jamas - to her:

The woman who fed me from her breasts
Who removed with knives her own toes
As an act of feminine solidarity in 1934 -

It's just not fair for children -
To suffer such horrible nightmares
To play with the dust and rocks and sell gum - while
The sovereign masculine gods

Don't lift a child from the earth to soothe her,
The female has been rendered useless -
Al medio de este Zócalo íntegro -

Amputated - inert - punctured - flaccid - uterus

- Elisabeth Horan

Love Poem With In-Jokes

Ten years in, we make a lot of jokes that aren't really.

"I want a pie and i love you"

"We've written our own vows"

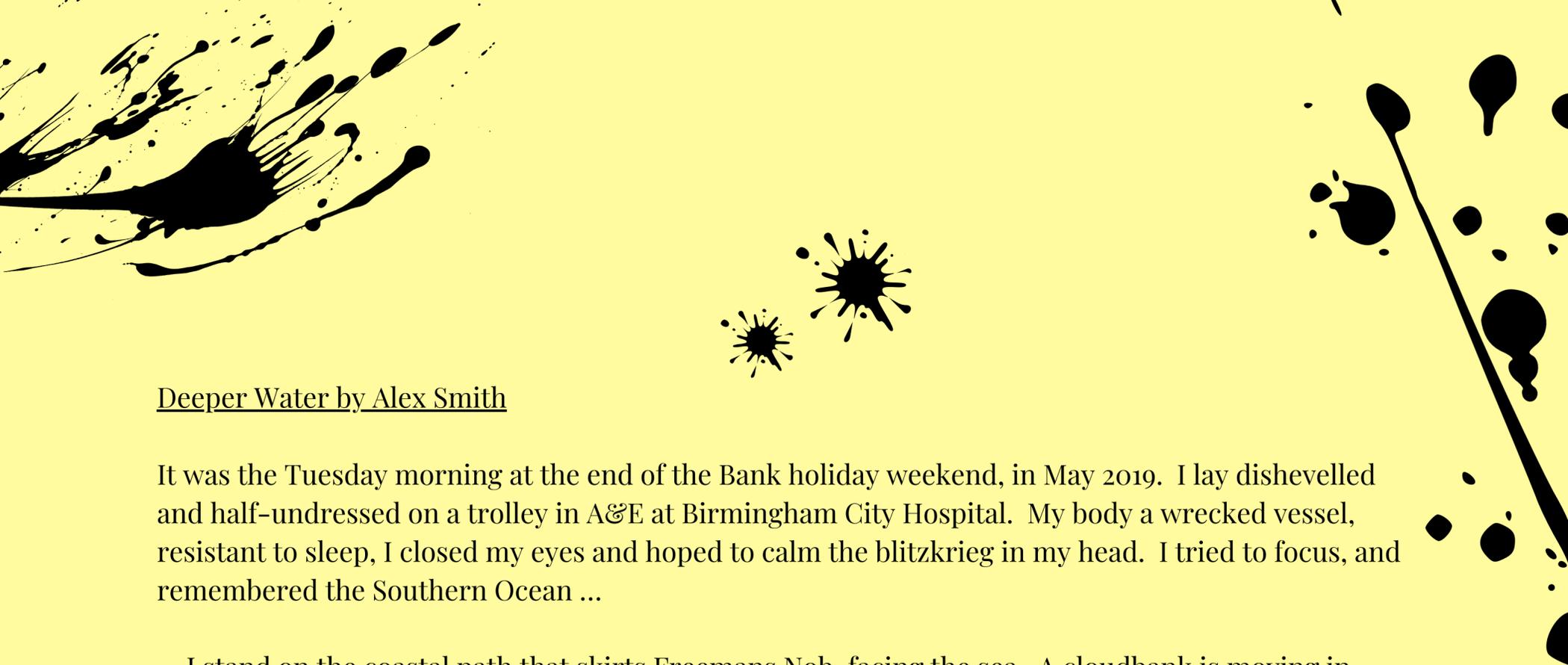
"Last night i dreamt about your body"

"Last night i dreamt my teeth were falling out in little pieces sorry"

It's warmer today and I am putting the plants out on the front step to get the sunlight. I thought you'd like that. Sometimes we congratulate ourselves and that's okay. It's hard to explain what it does to a person, growing up in a place where we don't tell our friends we love them. It's hard to explain that, before we came here, we'd never once heard the expression "closed mouths don't

get fed". With you I barely explain anything.

- Kate Hewett



Deeper Water by Alex Smith

It was the Tuesday morning at the end of the Bank holiday weekend, in May 2019. I lay dishevelled and half-undressed on a trolley in A&E at Birmingham City Hospital. My body a wrecked vessel, resistant to sleep, I closed my eyes and hoped to calm the blitzkrieg in my head. I tried to focus, and remembered the Southern Ocean ...

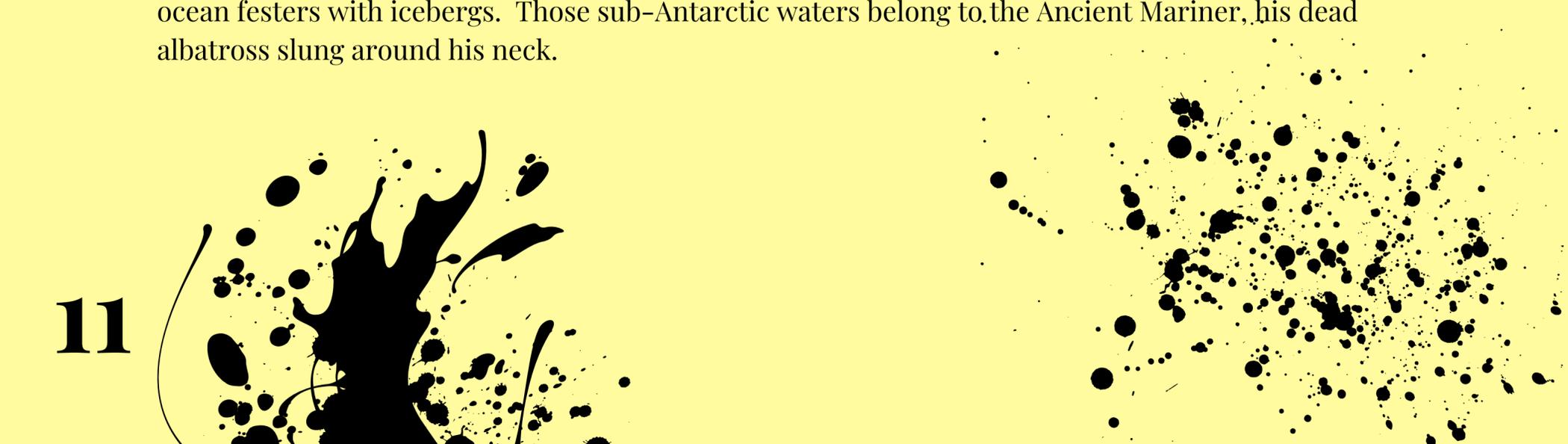
... I stand on the coastal path that skirts Freemans Nob, facing the sea. A cloudbank is moving in from the southwest, stealing the sky in its slow march towards the land behind me. I am peering as far south as I can, the cool blue-grey water heaving against the granite rocks below.

Off to my left, seagulls screech and squawk and dive for fish in the swell before returning to their nests on Puffin Island, a mound of granite boulders smoothed by the sea. The narrow island squats in the middle of Horseshoe Bay, protecting it from a direct frontal assault by the Southern Ocean. The rocks resemble upturned grey scoops crowned with seaweed and the white 'icing' of seabird excrement.

Close to shore, I can see rip tides foaming up where the underwater currents collide and wrestle. From the breakwater to the rocky coves and inlets carved into this promontory, they draw flotsam and detritus – driftwood, fishing nets torn loose, plastic bottles that glint in the sun – out into the deeper water. The motion is soothing, seductive: a siren call.

There is a quality to this ocean that most other Australians, accustomed to the warmer climes of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, do not instinctively grasp. You can stand at the top of Freemans Nob, with your back to the continent, cup your hands around your eyes, shielding them from the sun, and stare out, for miles and miles, as far as the horizon. Chances are, you will see nothing. The shipping lanes – the Roaring Forties – are far to the south and seldom used any more, since the age of sail gave way to steam. Life here – the birds, the penguins, you'll see seals if you're lucky – sticks close to the coast. Where the waters deepen, the surface monotone, you might sometimes spot a lone fishing boat. There were once whales in these parts, too, but their population had been hunted to extinction in the late nineteenth century. A hundred years would pass before curiosity would get the better of the occasional Southern Right, venturing this far north again, from the relative safety of its Antarctic breeding grounds.

Looking into the distance like this, I would imagine hundreds of nautical miles of nothingness until you reached that latitude – far, far to the south – where the temperature noticeably drops and the ocean festers with icebergs. Those sub-Antarctic waters belong to the Ancient Mariner, his dead albatross slung around his neck.





This is the Southern Ocean: cool, composed, but also insolent and impossible to predict. To gaze upon it is the closest feeling I know to standing at the edge of the world and staring into the abyss. It has the power to inspire awe and fire the imagination.

I close my eyes and remember what my grandmother taught us as young children.

Listen to the sea, she said.

There is a rhythm. The sea has a rhythm.

I hold my eyes shut.

‘You need to listen to the sea.’

I’m listening now ...

... And I hear the crash of waves against rocks, followed by the muffled growl of the sea draining back from the breakwater.

I begin counting as I hear the next wave strike the shore.

One ...

I picture the sea stretching, straining between the crests of newly forming waves.

Two ...

The surface shifts, waters deepen, dragging down against the seabed.

Three ...

I take a breath, inhaling slowly, deeply. In that moment, I realise my breathing is falling in step with the rhythm of the waves.

Four ...

I breathe out.

Five ...

The waves are growing stronger, rising, gathering pace.

Six ...

‘Every seventh wave is the big one,’ I hear Nanny say.

Seven ...

The waters swell. The seventh wave breaks.

It is the big one.

Its tip high, higher than those that have preceded it, and it drowns the breakwater.

Then I start again, from the beginning, counting to seven...

... Lying on that hospital trolley, wheeled into an annex off A&E, my heart racing and my eyes closed, I stood before the Southern Ocean, listening to the sea, counting the waves and taking deep, slow breaths. The steady bleep of the heart rate monitor and the regular metronomic drip of the intravenous saline solution feeding my arm helped mark the time.



A Blizzard of Blossoms

1

Succeeding sour winter,
tiny shoots appear
on silent branches.

Quickly blooming,
providing enterprise
for fewer and fewer every season
but still industrious bees.

2

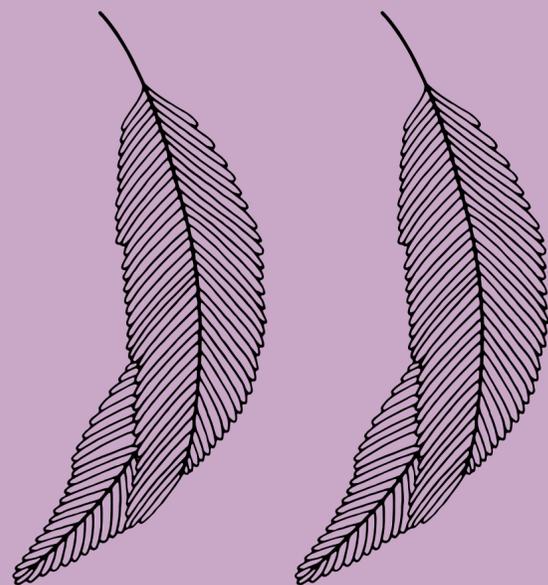
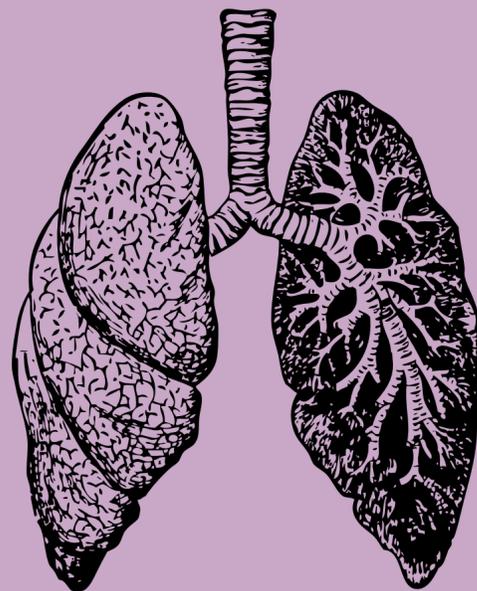
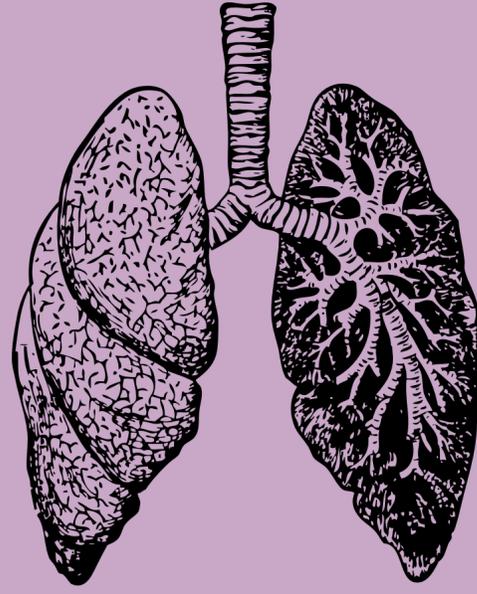
Warm spring breezes
capture cherry plum trees
clustered in the yielding back yard.

Pink petals cascade
in a blizzard of blossoms,
on green grass
forming a blushing mosaic.

3

Dark purple foliage
clutches to dusky branches
waiting for another scorching summer.

- Rob McKinnon





Venado - Bianca Perez

A High Called Alice

I know we've only
Just met. But let's forget about introductions; when
The bar closes can we go together and keep this party going at the
Entrance to wonderland. Let's lap up this electric night
Dance beneath traffic lights until the bus comes;
Drink from the same spirit bottle try to keep it down
Hold my hair and hold my hand - I'm
Feeling nauseous but its gonna
Be fun. Let's kick off our shoes and fall
Over cigarette butts on the street - leap further
Down the rabbit hole than
Ever - and I'll act like I've never done this before.

- Imogen. L. Smiley

Hands

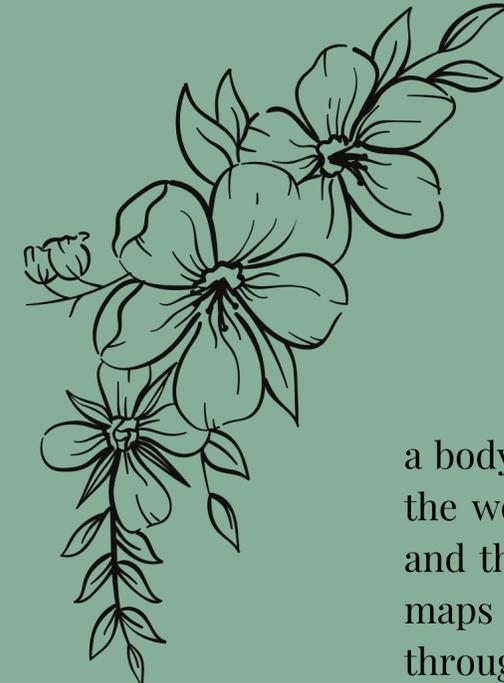
Neanderthals laid flowers on the graves of their dead.
In a 70,000 year-old burial cave, paleohistorians glean
sifts of ancient pollen on disinterred remains.

I am moved by this finding—this continuum that stretches
before and maybe after us. Homo Sapiens have no hold
on rituals of mourning, on flowers, nor on love.

There are photos from the dig in my newsfeed, one
of a Neanderthal's left hand, extended in a narrative
I almost know, the crimson-brown finger bones a code.

And then I'm struck: they're the colour the carrots turned
when you froze them by mistake, a fresh bag meant
for cellar storage, tossed into the freezer with the meat.

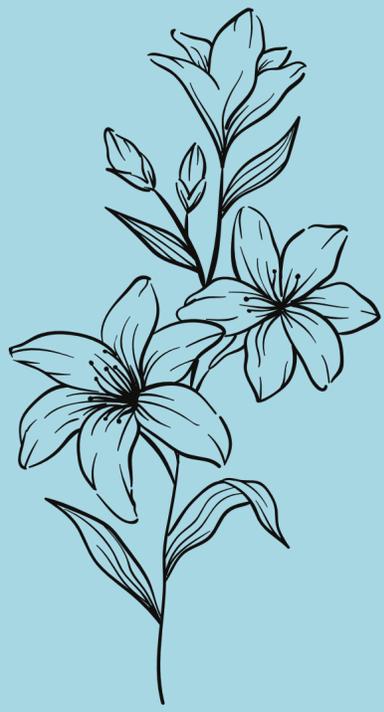
- Laurie Koensgen



a body is a body is a body a body is also a code to inhabit and understand the world that is to say we can only understand what we have inhabited and that only starts and ends through the possibility of our bodies of the maps and pathways our neurons take that are divided and understood through the experience of what we call a consciousness so there is a dualism in the perspective of living and breathing saying this is the brain that exists inside my body inside my body that is a body and how that brain connects and creates a map of experiences and knowledge that will never be the same had my body been the body of the other instead of my body being with the body of the other and my body as I type because there is still an I here even though you will get only the machine my body is a body is a body that is brown and female and the map of my neurons inside my skull can only trace the experiences of living through the dichotomy of this body and the other and how those experiences have marked and traced the pathways of my brain blinking on and off saying my body is also the space of electricity with which I understand the world and through their plasticity I come to be electric and machine like while still soft inside the body of my body

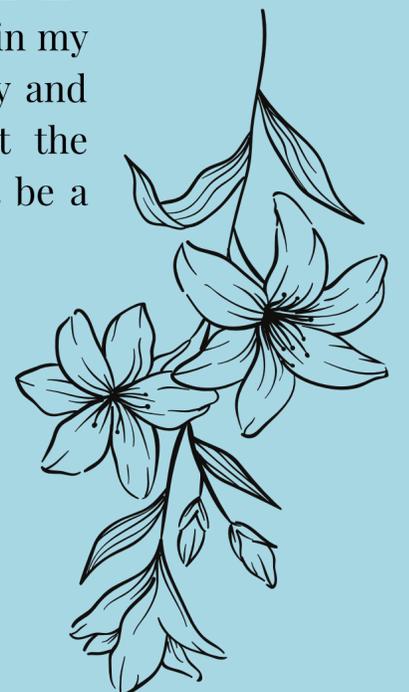
I come to be electric and machine like while still soft inside the body of my body because I have agreed to become a cyborg and as a cyborg I still have a body so you might wonder how are we moving towards a new definition of human or superhuman or ego or superego although these all are just still words but a body is a body and I am part machine and part organic machine which is to say I am a human but also not really so I type on code and binary and we think in code and binary to dismantle the machine to create a machine that kills fascists I am a cyborg because I am part machine to kill babies I am a cyborg because I have a female body that is the space of jail and parasitism the female or the female body or a cis gendered individual wearing a short skirt and a machine that kills cells as to have sex as to not procreate as to recreate we are not inventing cyborgs to fight the system as we are creating them for our own pleasure and we are so willing to become them to transform our bodies so there are new genders but our bodies are still inside the machinery of binary and time is not transforming as fast as science or as fast as our thumbs are scrolling through the images of bodies that we consume and the bodies that we pay for through devices that are not yet us





the images of bodies that we consume and the bodies that we pay for through devices that are not yet us are also the images of the bodies or the representation of the bodies or the relationships through which we regard what is beyond the device beyond the machine beyond what is edged and rectangular and has a shape that undulates like sound or love if there was ever a definition of those concepts standing outside the framed view of machinery and it is also what we regard as us or as humans or as consciousness beyond what is framed inside the curated possibilities of the machines that design our experiences in the present and how we need them and how we are connected to them and how we are still thinking in a binary of machine and human and in a binary of human and other human and in a binary of female and male and separating ourselves when ourselves are bodies to the idea of curation or codes or machines because still there is room for nature still there is room for nurture still there is room for a body to be female and brown and sexed and mine and still there is a room for a machine to be yours when you are you but what happens then when you are that machine when you are not regarded as someone inside the human and the dichotomy of a human

but what happens then when you are that machine when you are not regarded as someone inside the human and the dichotomy of a human what happens when you are regarded as something else something outside of that dichotomy and how can something or someone or anything really be or exist outside of the dichotomies since we have nurtured them so passionately so effectively we have breastfed them and created a role or a work or a labour of keeping them alive and that is definitely female so how could someone be outside our dichotomies if we are mothers and if we are pacifists and if our instinct very rarely takes us to kill our own children but rather starve to death before rather kill ourselves first rather give them away and how can something be outside the dichotomy if we only have two eyes and even our eyes exist opposing each other as to not trust them but how can a cyborg not be female if I am still the machine behind the machinery of this text and I am soft and warm and I still have blood in my veins and an impossible map inside my skull made out of electricity and how could I not be a female body if the electricity states that the experience is mediated through fat and tissue and how could I not be a cyborg if you are reading a machine



Think of a Woman

This woman is a warm bowl of rice, the grain and shape
Of steady even lore. The curve of her voice
A language that exists outside her body

A language that uncoils its golden tongue to disembody
Doubt. The fibre in a rope that binds us to the shape
Of our history. Micaceous face, a raised brow; stories to revoice

This woman leads beyond where hot mouths seek to outvoice
With shrill whistling fear. There will be that, which to embody
Is bowl. Vessel. Briar. But the truth is ours to shape

As women our grain and shape is well versed, warm-bodied, full-voiced

- Lauren Thomas



our women

the women in my family have always just known things;
they can sense things before they happen,
the way some animals can smell fear
now, it is time i come into my own,
to follow in the footsteps of my grandmother
and her mother before her...and my own mother.
i can feel it percolating in there somewhere deeper than my bones
a sensation that's building, my soul starts tingling
and i know now i'm wise enough to understand it for what it is;
something new and beautiful and precarious
something feared by others looking in.
but i've begun to embrace it, this inheritance of mine
the knowledge our women possess will no longer scare me
for i've tapped into it recently, once or twice.
do not underestimate this wisdom we've nourished
for years and decades and centuries
because you might not know it, but we already know
what you will say before you speak the words.
i smile my most flatteringly wicked grin,
you have no idea what's coming do you?
but i sure as hell do, and there's no stopping it

- Veronica Jarboe



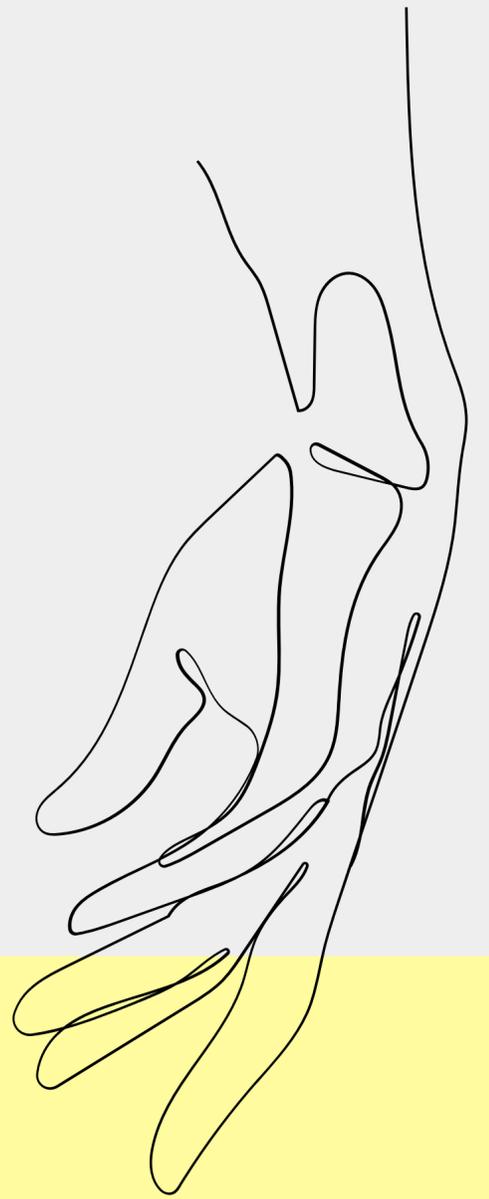
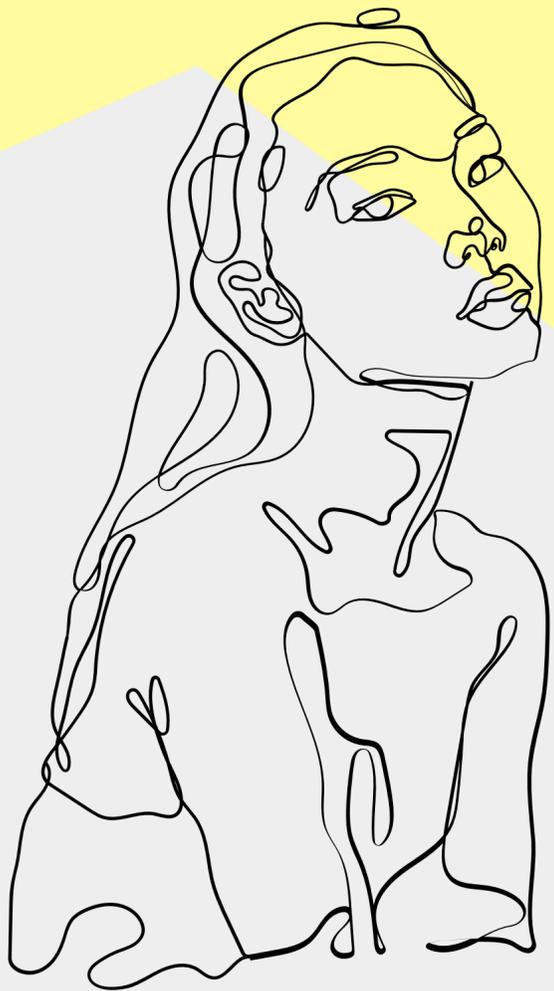
A list of things I do that consume me

When I think the world is not much,
When everyday,
I crave for his touch,
When I cry thinking why the world is not ending, When I
am tired of meeting my eyes in the looking glass,
Knowing that I am always pretending
To stay happy.
When every night I assume this will be my last night,
My last plight,
When I try and try and try but can't write.
It consumes me when I feel too much
The pains, the stains.
When I scream
Why the hell heart drains
This goddamn
Blood into my veins?

When I reread the same para,
When I think I am born in the wrong era,
When I bleed without consent,
When I see I don't have enough rights to vent.
When I know my love will ferment,
But when?

It consumes me when I love myself,
When i keep on touching,
Keep on rubbing,
Till I reach my peak.

- Shahana Khatoun



Old Miner's Song

all yow av is yer own two donnies
- a Dudley local

fluorescent vest screams roadworks
sheen on his forehead spells underpaid
he plants himself, digs the drill into the earth
the concrete sings
an old miner's song,
spits out stone and the
stuttering shadow of the pick

the flickering lightest means to profit
the Black Country climbed a ladder in pitch
soot-nosed black-lung'ed boy of twelve
chipping the thick seam for coal
he plants himself, digs into the earth
with bare and bloodied fingers

for a finger of bread, for a sixpence
for a six pack of tinnies and
a tray of chips the shade of a bad spray tan
on the road, in the pit
where industry stifles the working-class man
in the dark and endless mine of the Midlands

- Mary Senier

"donnies" is Black Country slang for "hands".

I cannot be a birdwatcher

"You love birds, don't you, Mummy?
I'll try not to scare them away."

I cannot be a birdwatcher
with a toddler in tow at all times,
and sometimes a dog, escaped from next door.

I cannot stop for more than a minute
to listen to their song, or track their flawless flight,
or memorise their markings.
"Mummy, Mummy, Mu---mmy---" marks
the end of many an indistinct video captured on my phone,
the bird sometimes not even visible when I check later.

I do not own a bird book or binoculars
or a checklist of sought-after birds for comparison.

But when I listen I find that
I am summoned from the sink by
the soft chirrups of the common waxbill and
the harsh screams of the gavião carrapateiro,
the fluting warbles of green ibis
and the grating calls of guaxe.

From my doorway I hear finches administer
electric shocks on the lightning conductor
and house sparrows squabbling endlessly in the guava tree.

By the side of the road I see oven bird nests on top of telegraph poles,
saffron finches hopping in and out of broadband boxes and
flycatchers' grass nests cradled by coils of cable.

Other shared and sacred moments -
a black jacobin hummingbird hovering in the spray of a waterfall,
a cambacica creeping along hibiscus stems, muted grey and yellow
outshone by glorious pinks and greens,
and homebound egrets elegantly uplit by the setting sun.

I cannot be a birdwatcher.
But when I look around me I find that I am in paradise.

- Ruth Callaghan do Valle

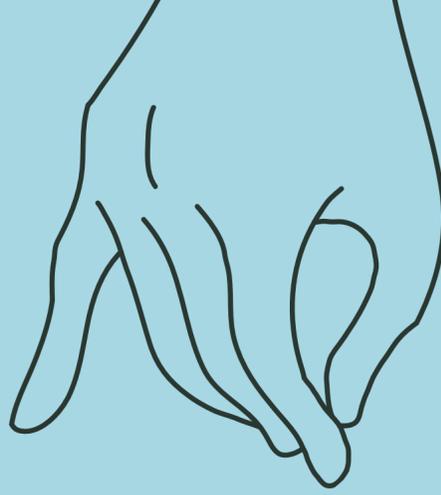


Diamond Diva
for Adelina Patti 1843-1919

Clear-cut eyes glint in spring sun as her single gauge carriage chugs backwards out of Swansea station. The bowed arches bow farewell to a formidable force. This diminutive fairy bird - unyielding still, trills lightly, brightly under weight of Impresarios' jewelled expectations. Prattling parrots' insinuations bring neither simper nor apology to those ruby lips. Buying instead a castle, to hide her earnest paramour behind flint-dark night, she etches love-hearts through Welsh valleys with rivers of trout.

Audience eyes seek to peel her costume open as coloratura sparkles, reaching under skin. And two peelers from Bow Street Station pace the stage in anticipation, of a violence that her philanthropic self has warded off. Her steely stilettos stride across slick Garden cobbles, now gliding past the marble bust up onto timeless stage. And turning to face soaring velvet sweeps, we hear her unleash a woman's most disarming weapon - Her voice.

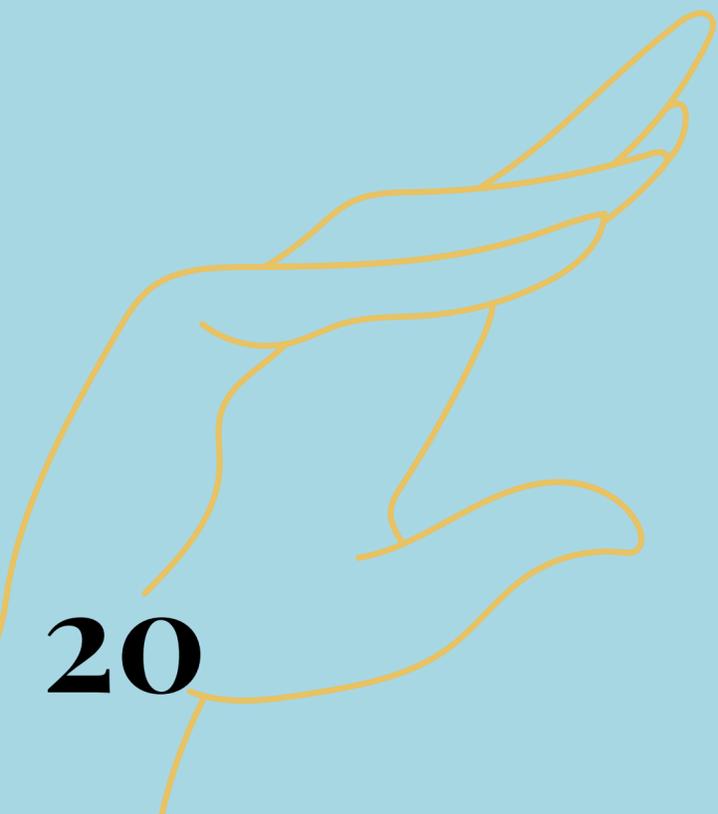
- Sarah O'Connor



TO LET GO ISN'T SIMPLE

You said the money is safe / the water tasted off
and / these people were coming in / strangers and
actors / I wrote letters to the water board / did
you fall in love at first sight / Ireland is far away
from your body / I remember the story in the car
as we drove / the statue never moved did it /
maybe you missed those winding roads / I think
about your flat and you (removed) / the rooms
were all connected / we were connected and I
didn't want / undercover police officers and
penguins at the end / to let go / some people never
rang / you kept asking if we loved you / did we
love you / did you ever believe / fuck the money /
she gave me a bracelet that didn't cost much / I
ignored the hisses at your funeral / I said your
name and your name is (this) / the bracelet felt
like your ashes solidified / things are comfortable
now / he will tell you you were right / did he think
it as he lay / dying / and how did you feel it / I
carry you with me / the water runs through / I
look for you across London / where does it go /
there's a seat at the front of the bus / I saved it for
you

- Nikki Dudley



Trying To Dream Myself

out of a life where the man I love
does not love me
feels like being squeezed

at the horizon line between hush
still water and salmon colored sky.

I forget what it means to be like a
whisper dream crawling out of a
sleeping man's heart I wake and, on the
wall, there lies our silhouette

bodies, a heap of shadow against the
blue hue of a fan turned on. I do not
like these nights when I wake up
feeling sorry

in the routine of loving. Nothing
should be dry so you wish it all
would flood instead.

The man? He is still sleeping
with his forearm against my back.

- Bianca Perez

Splash

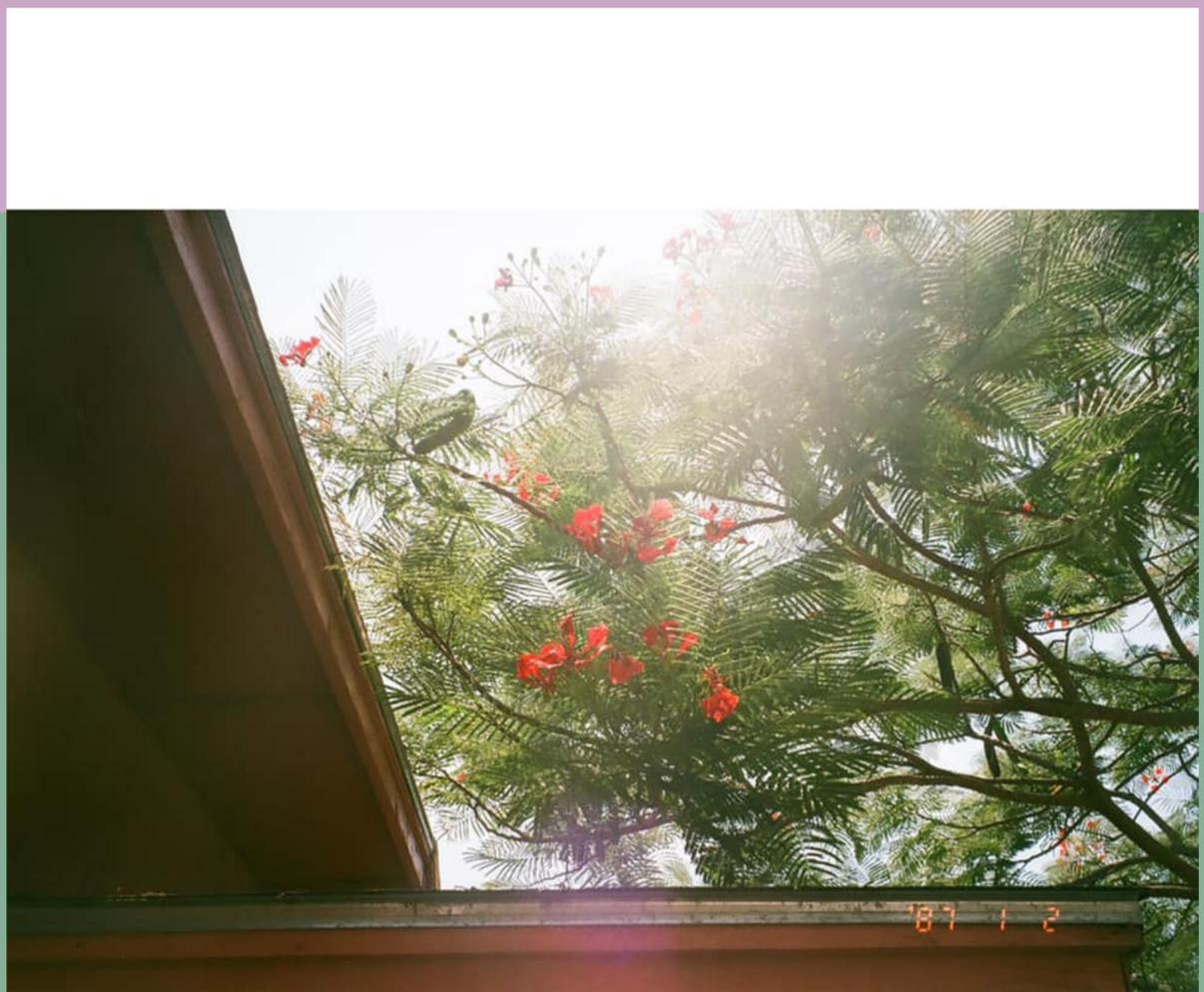
I grasp the steel bar
feet firm on the white tiles.

My vision vignettes around the centre of the pool
where nothing is solid
and the water fidgets
with every stroke, breath and shiver.

I let go and thick spray coats shaky frames in a heavy grain
as I thrash my way
into a weightless moment
before the polished floor
finds my sinking legs.

And no one saw
this boy at the edge of the pool
azure as a slab of fallen sky.
And when he lunged towards the centre
limbs like broken propellers
churned the blue into swan white wings
as he flew, fell and flew again
reaching a little further with each flailing flight.

- Patrick Widdess



Casita - Bianca Perez

Here we go round the mulberry tree by Malcolm Hebron

Our lives are built on iterations – the routines and rituals that give the days and months a shape, which is perhaps the nearest we can ever come to giving them a meaning. There is a time to work and a time to laugh and these times, these regular apportionments, make up the architecture in which a life is played out. And each iteration brings with it a variation. They prepare us for change. Across the table, at the same time each evening, the rhythm of the event holds, like notes in a beam of light, the gently altering expression and intonation and speech we only half notice in one another. Each conversation is a reiteration of so many others, yet each one brings a new thread to the weave, a new resonance to a well-worn note. And so, on these wavering rhythms, we row our boat, gently, down the stream.



In the first lockdown, new iterations entered my life. The morning steps in the spring sunshine in the garden became a monastic hour, a fixed point which gave a point to the before and after. And I noticed at a certain time each morning the sun entering the front window at a certain slant angle, making a sharply defined oblique sliver on the carpet (the cat had worked this out years ago). At the same time each day I would put out a large sheet of paper, and put a simple object on it – a stone, a glass, a pencil – and take a photo. A still life. And each day the image was slightly different: the intensity of light, the refraction, the depth of shadow, nothing ever looked the same way twice. Then I started to draw the trees I could see from a window in the house each day at twilight – each time differently, in ink, in charcoal, with both hands, without looking down, quickly, softly. Graphic iterations. Art, photography, image-making became a way of holding on to this sense of endless theme and variation, of keeping hold of the moments even as they slipped into the shadows.



Iteration is fundamental to art. Continually the same subjects and genres repeat themselves. Sometimes this is a result of the demand of the market – thus the interminable walls of Virgin and Child paintings in the renaissance rooms of our great galleries. But often it is the decision of the artist, drawn again and again to the same object of vision, scratching the same itch: Cézanne and Mont Ste-Victoire, Morandi and his bottles, Yayoi Kusama and her polka dots. It is not so hard to understand, this allure of the familiar – for once you look at something again, it is no longer familiar. Light and space are shifting, and even if every external condition of light and space and form is preserved as closely as possible, we the observer change. Each time, a different cloud of knowing and unknowing, of feeling and thought and curiosity, surrounds what we see. Through iteration, we meet something of our elusive, fugitive selves. We do not pay attention in the same way we did yesterday. Attention has infinite forms. Each step into the river takes us to a different river. Each iteration alters the original formula.



One of my own iterative projects over lockdown was to revisit a particular tree – a mulberry tree – and draw it, finding variation in the repetition: a variation in technique, in the angle of vision, in the energy of attack, the medium. Sometimes I would look at the whole structure, sometimes at a detail, sometimes I was more literal, and sometimes more free. What grew from this was a deeper understanding of the value of going back to the same thing, only to find it was not the same thing at all. I saw that it was the process of seeing that mattered more than the product, the action of drawing more than the marks on the paper. It was exciting to feel that tangible certainties – that branch, that fork – disappear like vapour when we transcribe them, and become something else entirely. I began to see that iteration was also an itinerary, from known to unknown. Iter – a journey, a going, a way.



Jokes about self harm

hide my matter / hydrogen
it makes it hard
to breathe / what would
it be like if your body
dissolved into
pumice milk / i
saw
barefoot boys
walking lava
online & now i
hurt / hot tap
& burning bath
a man
on the internet
hurt me / cavity
stone of skin / white
tooth melting into
fluid / solubility
possesses
all of me like daughter / like
clouded milk split in hairs
of stress / eggwhite pinks
& trouser pinched
a man
on the internet hurt
me / oval faced &
eyelash whip / excoriate
my name / exfoliate
my feet & fold / dead cells
in hand & hardy flow /
like wind & mother milk / men
of song & him in psalm



O
exultant spirit / boy /
chest projecting release me
dermis / speaking out of pink
& dressed like boy
shave face / shave head / what
man you've never met hurt
you on the internet

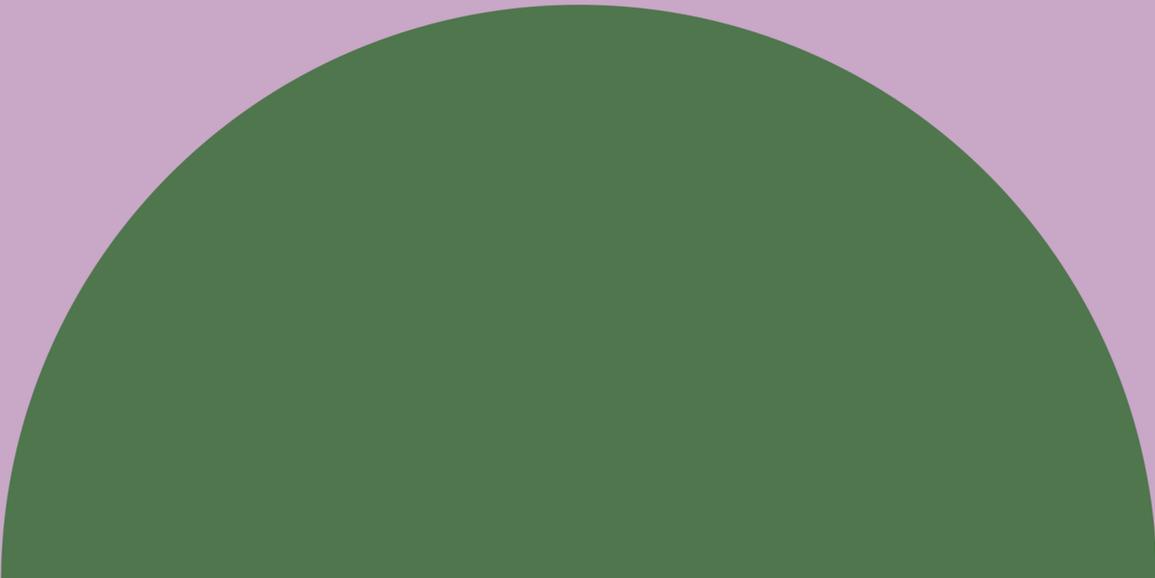
O
makeup flush me over /
full of lung & lip of noise

if they're wearing it
he said / hurt me

barefoot boys walking
lava lines of girls / screen turned
stone & magma glass / bodies
release into sand & black / a man
has hurt me /
hands of gas all glut
with wet & wet's own
skin of harm / hot bath
& holding phone / i

hurt myself / remote /
volcano-gathered
stone

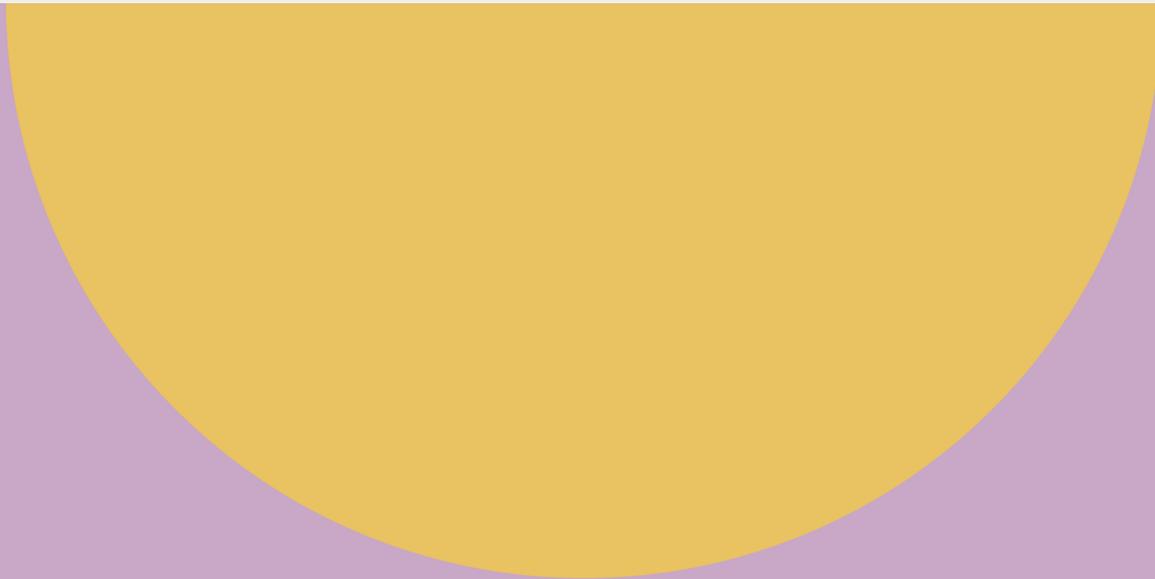
- Summerisle Wilson



Cantor Dust

particles drift languidly through the open window to settle in a patina of dust upon all surfaces
wind-blown soil burnt meteorite pollen fabric fibres human cells
specks are dancing in the sunlit air while
ponder geometries
and neglect to dust

Marian Christie



CONTRIBUTOR BIOS:

Lauren Suchenski has been nominated twice for the Pushcart Prize, four times for The Best of the Net and her chapbook “Full of Ears and Eyes Am I” is available from Finishing Line Press. You can find more of her writing on Instagram @lauren_suchenski or on Twitter @laurensuchenski.

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E F Hay exists in Britain, & rather than follow spurious leaders, over the years has intermittently found it therapeutic to write out various thoughts, feelings, & ideas as short stories, to be examined, considered, & interpreted, by clinical practitioners, who may offer professional psychological assistance.

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Lauren Thomas writes about time, memory and the natural world through women's voices. Her most recent writing is in The Crank Literary Magazine, Briefly Zine and forthcoming in, Abridged Magazine, Green Ink Poetry and Dreich's 'Summer Anywhere' anthology. Twitter @laurenmywrites

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Thank you for reading this issue and supporting our zine as it grows.