

Metachrosis



Issue 5, Summer 2025

Cover Image: Anniversary, Nicole Manning, *oil on canvas*.

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Issue 5, 2025.

Catacombs
Wavelength
Remains

Edited by Ellen Harrold and Dearbhla Hanney

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Editors note:

Objectification is an all consuming process. Many things regarded as nouns would be better understood as verbs.

Chapter 1: Catacombs

Name
Giles Goodland

The river Name has no name, it
flows unattributed through its dark. We draw
from it with the chains of sentence.

Gazelle
Richard Oyama

The north road asphalt runs into sand.
Sand blurs our goggles, grits our teeth.

We eat it.

Truck curtains flap like a tongue.
There are no coordinates.

Oil flames on the horizon, spilling
Crude. We cross the Diyala.

Swaddled Bedouins extend palms. Ahead is
A dead man, eyes fixed on eternities.

A ziggurat fingers the sky.

We decamp in a palace's thousand rooms.

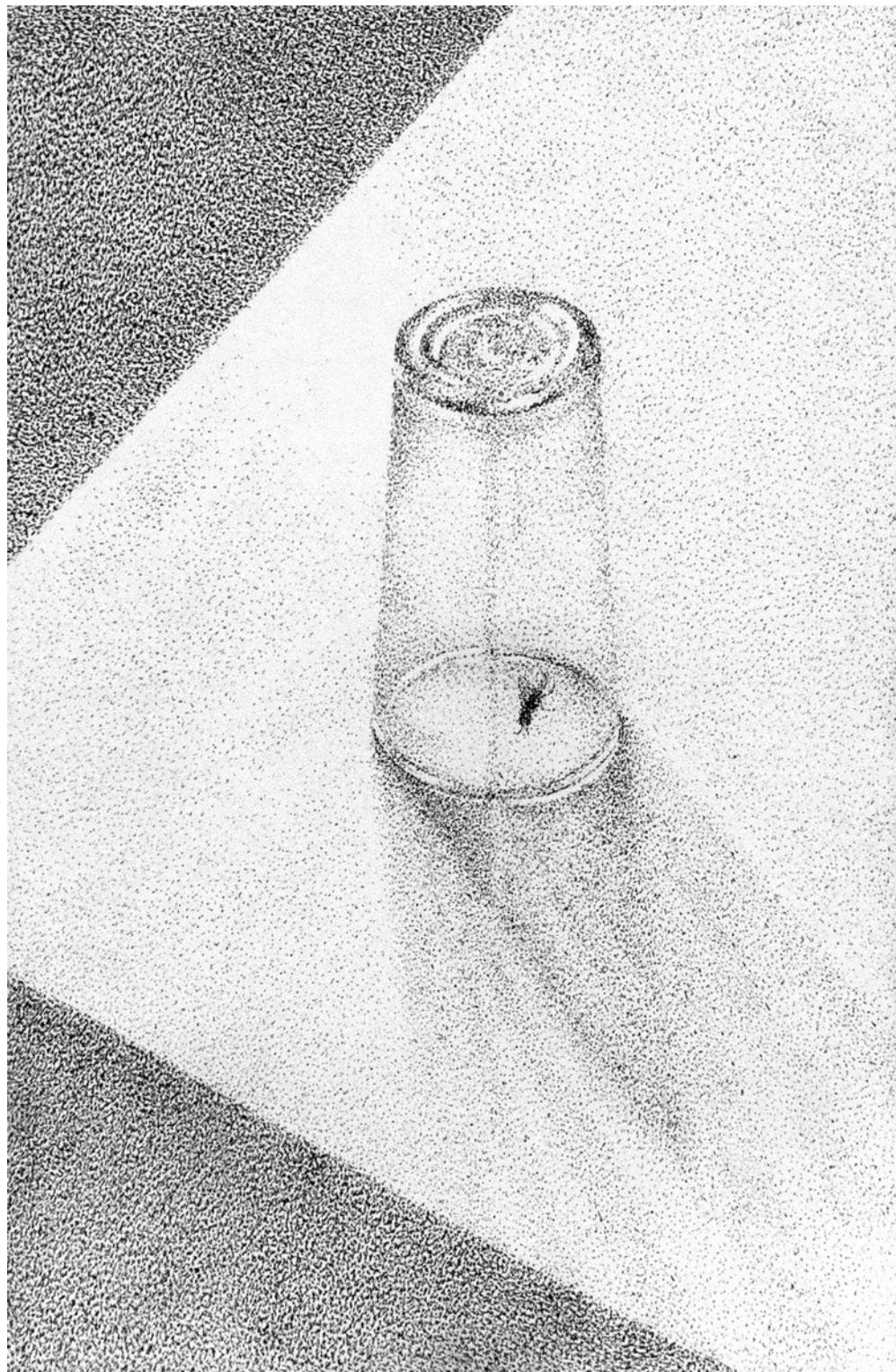
Chandeliers glitter in the squawk of laptops.

The smoked glass is smashed. Past

The rose garden, a gazelle floats the sandbag perimeter.

They call me a Recovery Specialist, a repo man salvaging
T-55s, ABRAMS FVSs, light and heavy wheel,
Self-propelled artillery systems.

I hose out the blood.



Thief (Inspired by a Michał Grochowiak photograph), Linn Hansen, *fineliner on watercolour paper.*

Larking John Mackey

We were never closer than the morning after the night before, waking up in zipped-up sleeping bags on a cold couch, our bodies full of static and our minds cracked open like conkers. We could talk for hours, hoarse with laughter and stuck thereafter in a beautiful, bright fog of nothingness. The feeling you gave me of complete admiration was unlike anything I'd ever known. All I had to do was show up for your ovation, bow, and return the applause. Both badly burned by childhood, we happily soothed ourselves in the balm of each other's back pockets.

I think it was unfulfilled creativity that took us towards the warmth of alcohol. The social theatre of drinking felt like painting, or making, or doing something worthwhile. We could postulate and plan masterworks of art without the burden of talent or dedication. We could try on the hardship of hard liquor and feel the playdough pain without the ache of creative labour. You once memorised a poem by Mahon and recited it to tourists as your own. In a hot wooden corner, they sat enraptured by the story of your moment. Independently codependent, we relied on each other to maintain the mediocrity, selfishly safe in each other's faults. The inertia of hurting often got away from us and we'd have to start all over again, rolling the rock back up the hill.

The cautery of debauchery was enough to stop infection, but we never healed. We seldom talked about anything real. Suspended in surface level joyousness, we rarely drew breath and dove to any depth. Like children building a fort out of wooden crates, only to watch it rot in the weather. There's a romance in the wastefulness of alcoholism. We both fell for it at times. It rested against our skin like new polyester, familiar but synthetic. For a while it all felt really nice, like a smart uniform, or a colourful costume. In time your clothes grew tattered,

he buttons dulled, and the seams began to fray. The gruesome half-stitched sockets hung raw and ugly. What started as a bright and shining plumage grew thick with rot. In time, you stank.

All young friendships suffer the tyranny of time. An unstoppable clockwork of changes serves to separate us from each other and bind us to someone new. I often wonder if one hard conversation might have steered us in a different direction. If, in a moment of courage, you'd told me something you've never told anyone before. Something new, and true, and beautiful.

I remember sea swimming together in April. Pale and prickly, we approached the limewashed shoreline. The weighty sea tumbled cold medals of water towards us. It washed up our legs and cradled our soft guts. The water wanted to pull us in and purify our poisons. We were wading in together but just when it got difficult, you gave up and turned back. The cold could have slowed the ripe breath of decay, and you were so fucking close to making it. All you had to do was sit out the discomfort. In the oily blue ocean I paused mid-way and regained momentum. I took a deep breath and swam clear of the current and into the chainmail pain. Pulled down below the cusp of the waves, each ripple left room to gasp just enough air for another stroke. I felt the heft of the water on my back, but soon I was swimming in a clear unburdened joy. When I turned back, you were already dressed, watching from the beach with a flask in hand, sipping on the heat that I had made for myself. Every rotting reef starts with a single blossom of decay. I saw yours so clearly that day.

Sometimes I dream that you are drowning. I hear you gurgling in my sleep. Too far away to save and too close to ignore I can only watch you struggle from a distance and wonder why you never at least learned to tread water.



Confluence I Decline and segments, Fernanda Morales Tovar, *Oil on Canvas*.

Bog (The Ending) Eden Chicken

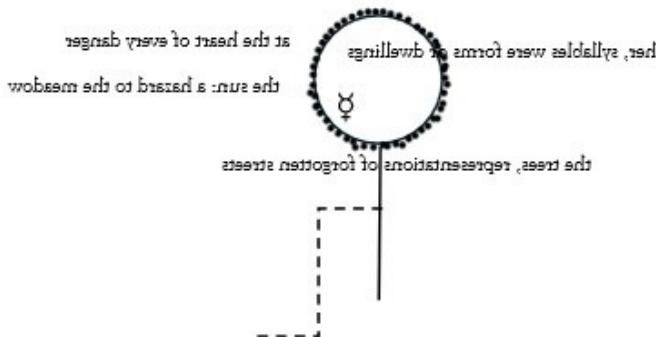
feel self absorb bog feel self sog feel self dissolve with wet feel sog erode
hair from skin sog nail from skin bog gnaw epi- from dermis to hypo- gnaw
skin to fat all damp feel fat absorb bog all greenbrown wet bog sponging fat
not bloat not burst but erode as soak as sponge erode skin to fat to muscle
feel muscle drench as absorb bog drench until douse until souse until drip
until leak until bog feel wet feel bog as sog as clog as erode skin to fat to
muscle to nerve no eye no spit no breath no beat no bile no gall no shit no
piss no spunk but bog but sog corrode skin through fat through muscle
through nerve through to bone now white now bone now mould with
greenbrown bog with wet with sog feel bone not white as drench erode skin
to fat to muscle to bone to marrow now wet now wetter wet as blood wetter
than blood feel self absorb wet bog erode bod as feel sog skin to fat to
muscle to bone to marrow to cell until bloat until burst until no cell no
plasma no mitochondria no ribosome no nucleus feel bog drench away skin
no fat no muscle no nerve no bone no marrow no cell no molecule no self
bog erode skin fat muscle nerve bone marrow cell molecule atom wet as sog
until only greenbrown
only mulch
only bog



I Hear You Cindy (the Sherman), Goran Tomic, Collage.

Mercury Dusk
Maureen Alsop

The last glass bottle
 off the last glass ship
 is tossed
 into the fire.



districts of sunlight. I renounce the light
 that eases away from the ocean.

Dead again, I spoke
 to the dead. I know
 ghosts, *my ghosts*, who've all at once
 gone quiet
 The world, a horizon or a meditation,
 approaches as a failed communication—

I renounce the sand dune or alluvial crust upon which I walk. There is amnesty
 in the body, an immediacy of an animal's fluent call, a fleck of green.

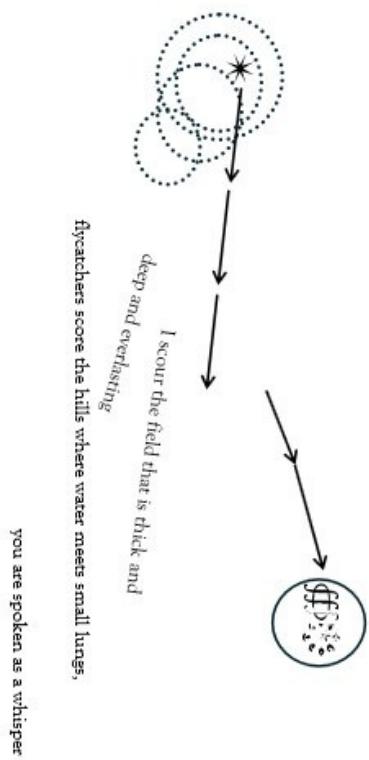
Mercury Dusk
Maureen Alsop

It is an old language and a promise.
My heart amasses the question,

a choral equation—I scour the field
that is thick and deep

and everlasting. I am holding
up this little patch
of the world. I am learning to love.

Mercury Dusk
Maureen Alsop





Mercury Dusk
Maureen Alsop

Over the wall *in my hog-book*
a cold wax snow *O immaculate one*
all around you *a dim fluorescent buzz*

I half name the silence *the sun fades*
what is it that enjoins you

you want to be alive as the field opens *dust, galactic beetles*
love in the sensual world *there is a space at the forest's edge*

Mercury Dusk
Maureen Alsop

I wade into summer's body — I wade
into the river basin & broken bottles—
my legs numb with sleep. We speak through tides
into the sun's hazard—

Mercury Dusk
Maureen Alsop

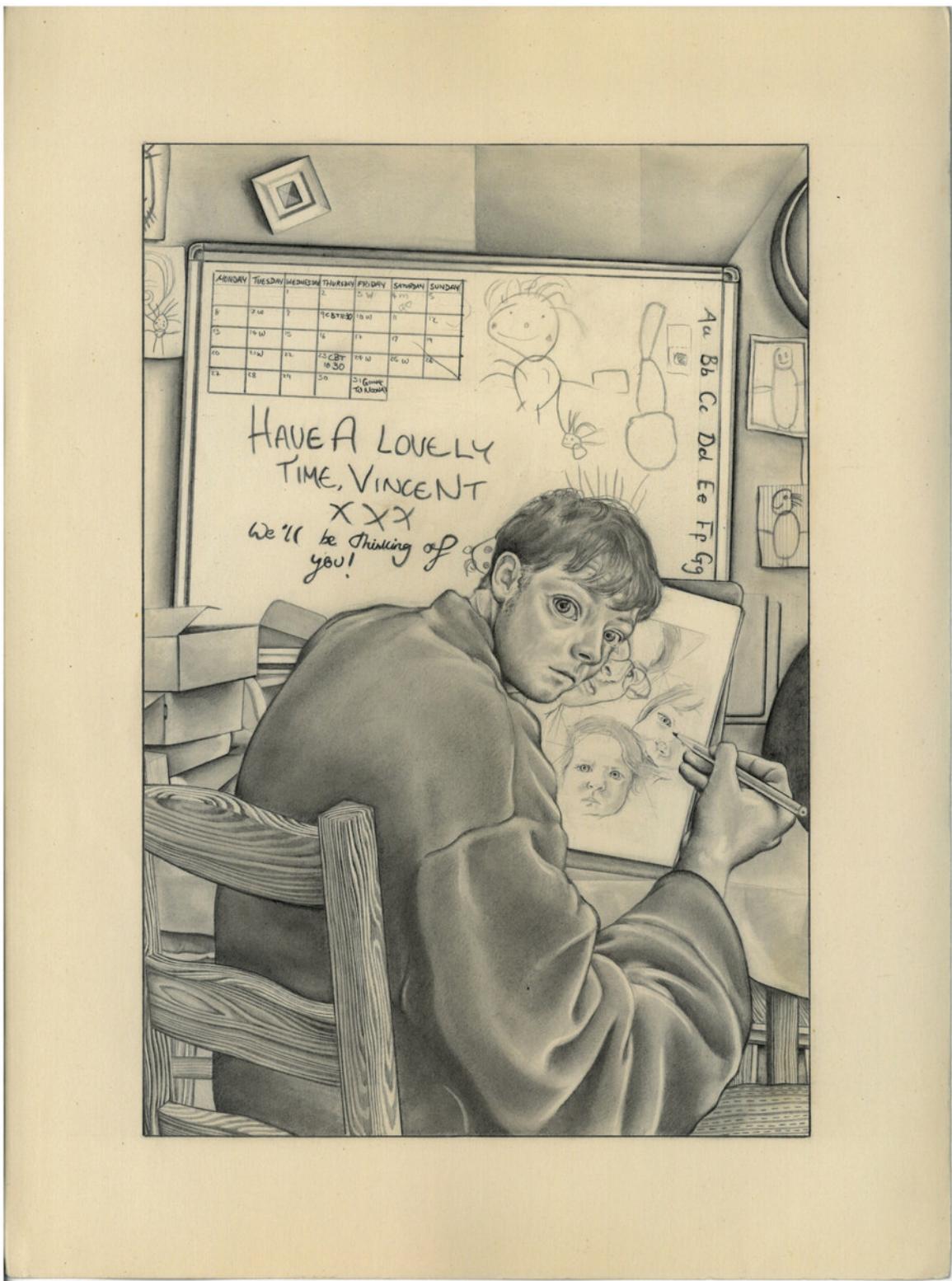
Perhaps you are a miracle, though silent.

The sky in many combinations remains four
irregular quadrants, two seasons.

I am upon the body going into the orchard.



Dead Leaves 5, Naoual Peleau, *Anthotype on linden leaves*.



Household Routine #16, Vincent Louis Stokes, pencil on paper.

Convection (Victory) columns. *begins on page 18, read backwards*

Ross McDiarmid

an' inscribes Joy there - everywhere!
their navel. Gazin rivals stone
that we, in procession, might bore
Tae wonder us an' ours, frettin

ay mammals, Homo Faber wakes
therasids, our time comes. Fie pyres
where convection currents run through
Over-keen miss the slow shift; there

won in new red sandstone. Designs
laudin sheer order an' ascents
on Trajans's spike - traces ay time
As like yon Romans an' Dacians

bodies. Bloodied by ochre lie -
happy wi stipple... dehiscin
as aw detritivores, sifts through -
Gluts the selective maw. That Fox,

baits the cod end; decimation
narrowin doon; speciation
Amniote, Synapsid, their forms
Right new in old life: Tetrapod

abreast when terraformin. Earth
histories twine, contest, yet march
ay stark extinction. We ken maist
Strides the phyla through periods

forth. On her shield, rich enjambment
trophic tokens, such futures sing
escutcheon-marker; bedecked by
Not jonquil, but Daisy; sprite-winged,

Joys rebound as off glass; ceilins
ay sheer aether keep them. Below -
knee-deep - in thought, a figure gains
weight fie graven mass. Gravity -

What force! - burdens their mien. So fraught,
Homo Spiritualis waits
'twixt, neither plume, nor swoon - for fate,
like the stars, exceeds. Their prayers

Grave every pore, hopin tae store
their prized vault. On the knee is no
stippled star chart. Another form -
the patella - warps; curvature

Unbounded by axes. Yon scenes
tae the bone are cut; cross sections
strange, diagrammatic; stories
never ere seen: a chthonic sun

(No Hades - fie another Time's
leg) - geogony! - sans godlike
brawn; tendons, like strict menhir, gird
in radiences shimmerin

Their concentric ambitions - aw famed:
charge-bearer Magneto; Atmos
ay gauzy gravity; Bio
fair, yet slight; Placoderm Litho

Wi the earthbound twins, sanguine-cloaked
Astheno an' Meso. Lambent,
like nacre, these serried bodies
ensphere. A *xeno*-core relief:

like Narcissus - sees reflected
(dividin tibia fie knee) -
visible lives grave. Victory
As eons cease an' start. In aw,

explosive *lagerstätten* break
stays them. Throughout unearthened measures
buff sandstone calves - sessility
The Ediacarans impress

haunt Tempes's values. In bas-relief
famed flora, fauna, an' fungi
is strange, yet brings stranger; kingdoms -
Notched by triumverate. Kinship

deep in eras - borin billions
ken well stability, stratum
yields us. New-formed Eukaryotes
That makin an'breakin domains

The Oxygen Holocaust tells
death as a waste resource; worked deep
banded iron layers betray
Generating former lives, till

Ur, Kenorland; *archon* times
perused laminae - Vaalbara
epic continents cycle. Through
Like Archean stromatolites

wi shields kinked. An' foliated
on spare plates. The cratons resist
dull roots an' little lives left dried
We ken came strength-raisin tubers;

flute their songs. Ay ocean furrows
like blood. Fie stone arris, Tektōn

Rictal friezes ay Calor, tales
shiftin an' feverish enwrap
the musculature; *calor-ous*
mantles - dolor, rubor, tumor -

Negate that virr. In our vast pride
we hink this annular craft strives
ttae us, that *anthro-* affixes
as prefix prime an' add as much

As Adam did. In genesis
we're burdened, no what the earth is
made for; damnation, as Atlas
(etched wi the tibia) faces,

We confront here. In underworld
cancers irrupt in high relief,
vivid struggles marks this body
wi the weight ay their world. An'yet,

Though lurid as the column ay
Marcus Aurelius, triumphs
brace the knee; shinbone, fibula,
compassed by masonry - the works

Ay giants! We ask, *Ubi sunt?*
for this arch isnae triumphal,
but zygomatic. Lost causes
maire than conquerin show - bones sign

Victories arenae Edenic,
they are temporal. Fenestrae
ay opportunity! That force
erodes its form: yoked, yet varied

Were synapsids. This aperture
holds a sleek skull wi'in its span,

the first folds ay waters, showin
Through them; telescopes ay time bring

Erawandoo. We see deeply
yon zircons haunt the cambered shin
through states mountain-high an' hadal;
Ainely they'd no been eroded

tae the oldest, an' lowest if
where molten charnel grounds ripen
long *requiescant in pace*,
In those open graves we rest in -

pockmarks an' *maria* place us
au clair de la lune we're re-faced;
what Earth forgets in turnin. Ah,
Bombardment; Selene minds well

hairs trace hails ay meteorite
gleam in luna marble. Scored thick,
an' deranged throes craft; satellites
On. Still, Theia skips her anklet

Gravity draws the heat tae hold
form hallowed lithification.
wait in buried ash – twice those rites
Fonts ay fire. Cremated figures

Us ay the earth, tae the Great
kin ay Energeia, rousin
tae manifest darg time through times as predator, then prey, meek flesh,
then clay, passin through nights an' days; forebear ay domains an' kingdoms,
we enwrap these demonstrations: the calcaneus an' talus –
skeletal chalk an' die – were razed for such works ay triumphal height.

Fire, your *ergon* is the rootin base,
ennergia an' aw us scored

wi a lank jaw that juts; this face
we ken - it's Fox the Maw. Drawn here,
In petrified sores, is the rise
ay aw that went ere. That high cause
we seek tae decipher therein
lies. We see, chiselled in the line

The procession takes before Maw,
uncertainty. Taewards the gap
they march in step (Time's numerals),
yet seek in reverse. The solid

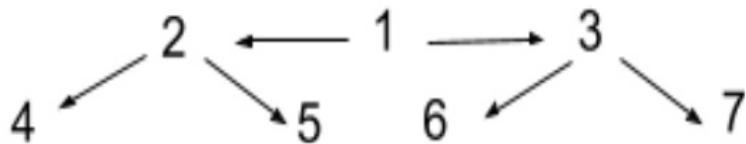
Source ay their obsessions hides off
the design; a substance wi'drawn -
what species ay object! Concealed
noumenon dae declare, yet ne'er

Disclose - their emissive virtues
broadcast. As radiation shows,
matters are effusive - jist ask
the Grecian Urn. Victory lies

Ootwi this stour; forgetful shades
in katabasis - aw spoorin
Calum Columbidae's further
substrate...an'it's sin for the win?

A Winning Game

Soledad Santana



1. Like waxing the upper-lip, my fingers string flesh off bone;
I shake the warmth remaining inside the tin bowl.
2. Your humid eye observes me
from the counter, stickied with ritual.
3. The fat green flies approach;
you have no hands with which to swat them away.
4. The men take their seats at the table, their trouser hems stained
with rooster blood, whiskey, and cum.
5. You'll slush in my uncle's stomach, become
the tissue lining his fat throat.
6. They are locked around my waist. Our heads joined
in a smoke cloud, I drop capers and olives into the fire.
7. The power leaves; your chin still on my shoulder, we listen
to the clang of bodies brushing unfamiliar shapes.



Animalculum, Alan Murphy, *digital photograph*.

Turner Prints

Aravind Enrique Adyanthaya

Prints produced by Chicago's Turner Manufacturing Company were glorified during my formative years. They were framed with mirror borders. Atypical flamingos and egrets emerged in them (from them). Transparently dense landscapes, aquatic leaves, palm trees, flowerings revealed a succulent, elemental, oneiric nature. Elegance. Libido. Infinitude, a suggestion of flesh: the appearance of liquid, supraconscious lives, almost extinct.

They were usually placed on the walls of the bedrooms and of the aisles conduced to the bedrooms. I remember one on the wall over a semicircular Shaker chair.

If $z = x + \dots$

I sleep with one of these pictures on the wall near my bed's footboard. I look at it when I lie down. The wall is yellow, worn out, almost pink.

$$U(x,y) = \operatorname{Re}(f)$$

$$V(x,y) = \operatorname{Im}(f)$$

If-

It shows two heads in the foreground. I pray to it.

$$\partial U / \partial x = \partial V / \partial y$$

$$\partial V / \partial x = -\partial U / \partial y$$

Today, fifty years later, physical distances between the island's towns are more difficult to traverse. Encounters are more difficult.

The public car transportation line between Lajas and Cabo Rojo is no longer running. The lines between Arroyo and Naguabo and San Germán and Hormigueros are closed. Buses are nonexistent. References to the train have been for a long time, rhetorical, folkloric.

The conscientious cost of fossil fuels makes driving a car prohibitive. Occasional trips and courtesy visits are out of the question.

For required engagements, we propose here to revive the Turner method:

-As you get ready to sleep, place an empty chair near the bed's footboard just under the picture.

-Wait to enter the "intertwined" ("passive animation") state. In this

maelstrom, in which you jump between images and alertness, force the will of your body to stand up over the bed.

-From this position –which can be achieved by a sudden jolt towards verticality, or by simply feeling upright without actually being so– [insert an integral here], invoke the intercepted, who will appear at the feet of the bed.

This is how I meet my son, a blondish boy who says he resulted from an act of impregnation I performed at a Christian retreat when I was sixteen years old.

The sound of raking weeds or grass at night in the middle of town is particularly garish.

The picture really is only indispensable for the return (to send intercepted beings back to their place of origin). This place is larval.

“I remember you as a young man,” he says, “studying the Cauchy-Reimann equations. Take, for instance, $f(z) = z \operatorname{Re}(z)$, z multiplied by its real component. The function is only differentiable in one point.”

“(0,0)”

I tell him that he is mistaken, that there was indeed a retreat during my time in high school, but I couldn’t go since I had the flu.

“Conception took place just after watching a didactic movie when the boys in your class fled the screening screaming.”

“I heard about these pictures of genital interventions they showed in the mountains,” I say. “They were full of red and membranes. But I never saw them. My classmates talked about them when they came back from the retreat. They sat me at a desk in the middle of the classroom and they would come to tell me what they really thought about me. They cried a lot. They were adolescents. It was temporary (in a week they had stopped crying and asking for forgiveness). And I really never understood these dynamics. (I never went to the retreat. I never cared about my adolescence. It never happened to me.) It was something that didn’t matter.”

He shows me an area of anomalous pigmentation between his shoulder and his chest. Signs like this are the result of crossbreeding between individuals of different races distanced genetically. I have the same blemish.

$$\begin{aligned}
 f(z) &= f(x+iy) = U(x,y) + iV(x,y) \\
 f(z)^* &= z \operatorname{Re}(z) = zx = (x+iy)x = x^2 + ixy \\
 \partial U / \partial x &= 2x \\
 \partial V / \partial y &= x \\
 \partial V / \partial x &= y \\
 -\partial U / \partial y &= 0
 \end{aligned}$$

“They say that every real number can be read as a complex number. But actually, there is just one number that is completely real and simultaneously real and imaginary,” he whispers. “That is, just one instance, just one instance of life in the universe.”

$$\partial U / \partial x = \partial V / \partial y, 2x = x, \text{ if } x=0, 0=0$$

$$\partial V / \partial x = -\partial U / \partial y, y=-0, y=0$$

“Do not differentiate yourself,” I think he is saying. “Look at the picture.” But I know that he is referring to just another function (of absorption, of nakedness, of imprinting).

I remember that in *La Géométrie*, Descartes uses the term “imaginary” in reference to these numbers in an admonishing and frankly cocky manner.

--

* I bury my feet in the mattress (as if were sand). Out of a sudden, the stylization of the print permeates the intercepted, turning him into a vector (like an insect carrier). His figure deliquesces succumbing to the effects of this absolute temperature. Like the body of an adult, mutual, close friend. It is net matter, abyssal. His internal organs (my perception of these organs) exteriorize. Monads of the self (primary particles, so-called “dirty”, so-called “simple”, so-called “spores/stamens”, “metamolecular”) turn inotropically towards me.



II. The Notebook of Mut(il)ations, Aravind Enrique Adyanthaya, *mixed media on paper*.

Chapter 2: Wavelength

Side Effects of Bipolar Radiofrequency Devices for Facial Skin **Danielle Altman**

Today there is a dramatic increase in demand from patients for skin rejuvenation, meaning any effective safe painless and low-cost way they can exploit to secure their youthfulness

Great candidates are patients that are young

Only targeted layers of skin and subcutaneous fat are suctioned between the electrodes

The pulsed suction allows for deep energy penetration
Modification in protocols have also improved patient comfort and rare events such as burns

Source: Sadick, Neil, and Kenneth O. Rothaus. "Aesthetic applications of radiofrequency devices." Clinics in plastic surgery 43.3 (2016): 557-565.



**Neurophilosophy 2 diptych, Sharon Reeber,
*monotype on paper.***

Radar Man at the Black Hole Automat
Harrison Fisher

I had been cultivating
a unidimensional personality
for a long time,

hoping it would have
a slimming effect.

Then this staticky transmission
intruded like uniform blast cells of product:
wordless, world-less

feed from space,
ultra-volcanic glass blown into “hair”—
Blast it!

Don’t eat no moon pie, and hands off
the automat’s perpetual motion sliding doors,
your eyes are bigger than your stomach—and beeping!

Parti-colored units of Time and Space
still buzz our dumbfounded temples—
you go to the automat, you take your chances.

The person with the most names
is a molecule. The plates are so large
they move continents, so small

that fruited gelatin
hangs over the sides,

spaghettification clearly audible
in the harmonics of
pulling pain.



Hyacinth, Fiona Young, *digital photograph*.

Eye Test of a Tarsier After the Flash
Julia Jimenez

20/200	T	1
20/100	O O	2
20/70	S M A	3
20/50	L L T O	4
20/40	C H O K E	5
20/30	T H E T O U	6
20/25	R I S T S B U	7
20/20	T I H A V E T H	8
20/15	I S T R E E T O M	9
20/13	A K E M Y S K U L L	10
20/10	S O F T A S L I G H T	11

The Gloaming
Tallulah Howarth

I took one more wistful look
as you turned the corner of day
and could just make out
the back of the sun's head
shuffling towards the Abu Bakr supermarket.

The moon is on a street corner
a fair distance away
smoking next to the Jehovah's Witnesses.



Spotted Hyena, Patrick Olo, *pen and ink*.

יונה - Yonah**Jonah Corren**

'...like a dove, easily deceived and senseless.' *Hosea 7:11*

Hebrew makes no distinction between 'dove'
and 'pigeon'. *Genesis 8:11: 'And came to him the יונה in the evening an olive leaf in her mouth.'* My parents

believed it a gift, pinning me to peace
like the white poppies my mother bought online
and fastened, proudly, to our lapels.

In this family, we are arbiters of peace.
My grandfather coos like a יונה about the bravery
of the *IDF*, the righteous struggle

that has swallowed my cousins into its folds
like the lapping of floodwaters.

Homes bulldozed west of the river: peace. A medic

shot while attending to protestors' wounds: peace.
More settlers make עלייה to the promised land,
ankle-tagged יוצאים crossing continents to reach home.

Somewhere in suburban Yafa: '*That fucking יונה has crapped all over my car.*' I bought it all for so long.
At school, insults split evenly between cartoon antisemitism

and little poems derived from my name:
it rhymes with 'loner'. At least there was a country
with which I had that in common.

From the Hebrew naming book, my parents chose
'dove of peace': the weightless white bird,
clear in its purpose. But so too

came the sulking prophet under his קיקיון,
waiting for the damned city
to buckle under its sin.

יונים - *yonim (doves/pigeons)*

עלייה - *aliyah (returning to Israel)*

קיקיון - *kikayon (a large gourd)*



Too Heavy to Bear, Pomidor Art Team, *textile hand-sewn flag from the Speech(less) series*, 144x144 cm, 2023.
Photo by **Kate Kantur**

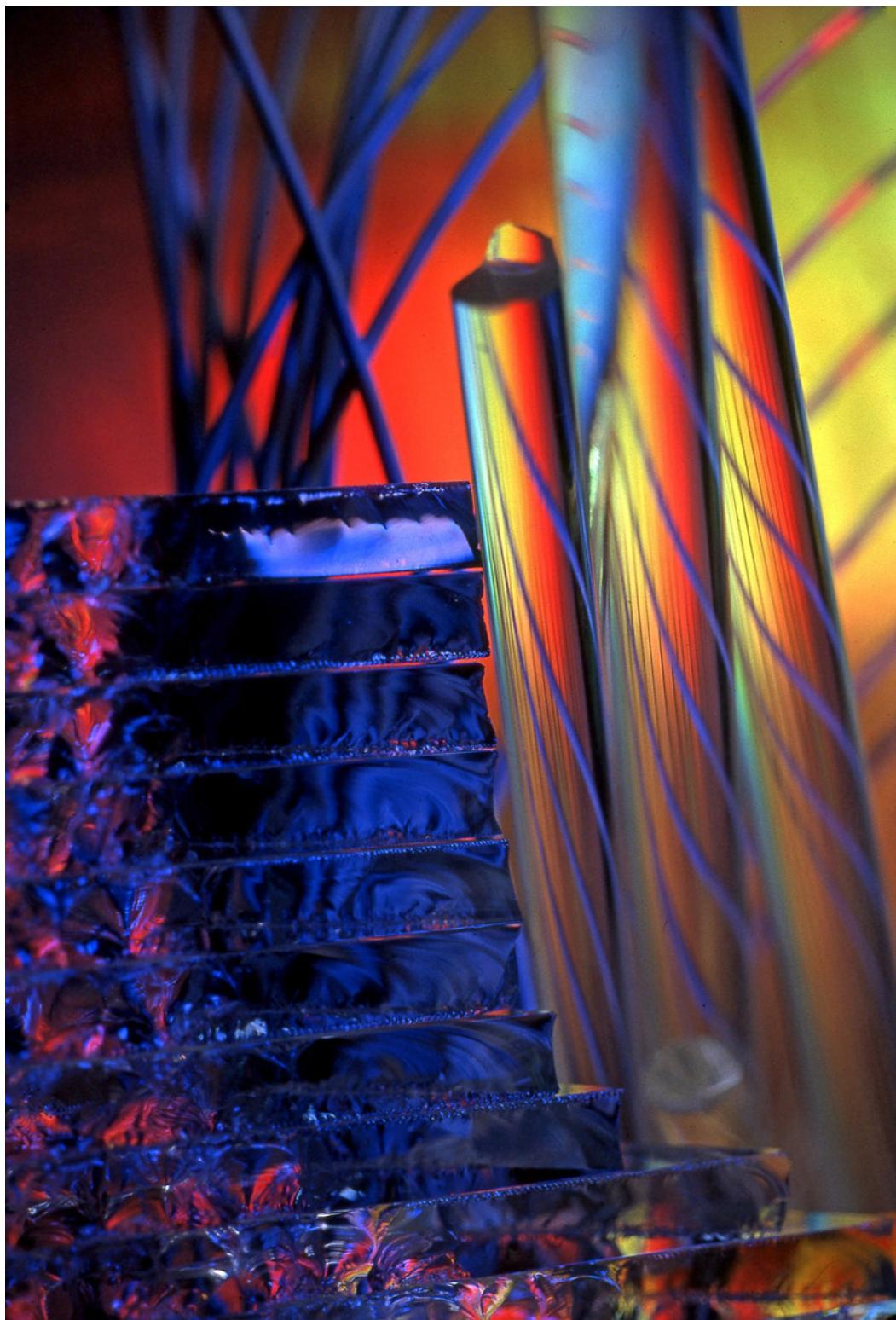
SALUTE TO THE SUN GOD IN MY HEAD

Jennifer McCormack

SUN GOD
SUN RA
SUN TZU
HIGHER THAN THE SUN
AFTER SUN (CHARLOTTE WELLS)
SUN KISSED
SUN BED
KC AND THE SUN SHINE BAND
(DON'T TOUCH THAT) SUN DIAL
A PLACE IN THE SUN (ON THE SOFA)
THE SUN ALWAYS SHINES ON TV
HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN (GOOGLED:MEANS BROTHEL)
SUN DRIED TOMATOES
SUNNY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN(TAPS AFF)
SUN BATHE
SUN RAVAGED (LONG COLD LONELY WINTER)
SUN BURNT (GOAT'S MILK)
SUN BLOCK
SUNDAY SCHOOL
JESUS WANTS ME FOR A SUNBEAM
ICE CREAM SUNDAES
A MONTH OF SUNDAYS
SUNDRIES
WHITSUN
MIDNIGHT SUN
LAND OF THE RISING SUN
HALF A YELLOW SUN
SUN DRENCHED BEACHES OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
SUN DOWN (CURFEW FOR LOOTERS)
SUN SET SONG (TOO LONG FOR THE YOUNG TEAM)



Abuburo Kosua (Egg of the dove), Kstony, *clay, metal, low fire glaze.*



Light Music, Roger Camp, *digital photograph*.

Seizure #9 (MOUTH BLEED) BA Didcock

SEIZURE #9 (MOUTH BLEED)

What Epilim Gastro-resistant Tablets contain

- Each 200mg gastro-resistant tablet contains 200mg of the active substance, sodium valproate.
- Each 500mg gastro-resistant tablet contains 500mg of the active substance, sodium valproate.
- The other ingredients are povidone (E1201), talc, calcium silicate (E552), magnesium stearate (E572), hypromellose (E464), citric acid monohydrate (E330), macrogol 6000, polyvinyl acetate phthalate, diethyl phthalate, stearic acid (E570), titanium dioxide (E171), amaranth aluminium lake (E123), indigo carmine lake (E132) and hydroxypropyl cellulose (E463).

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Seizure #7 (VIATICUM, OR A PRAYER FOR THE DYING) BA Didcock

SEIZURE #7 (VIATICUM, OR A PRAYER FOR THE DYING)

What Epilim Gastro-resistant Tablets contain

- Each 200mg gastro-resistant tablet contains 200mg of the active substance, sodium valproate.
- Each 500mg gastro-resistant tablet contains 500mg of the active substance, sodium valproate.
- The other ingredients are povidone (E1201), talc, calcium silicate (E552), magnesium stearate (E572), hypromellose (E464), citric acid monohydrate (E330), macrogol 6000, polyvinyl acetate phthalate, diethyl phthalate, stearic acid (E570), titanium dioxide (E171), amaranth aluminium lake (E123), indigo carmine lake (E132) and hydroxypropyl cellulose (E463).

E		sistant	ta
	so	pro	
E		sistant	ta
substan	dium		
	dien	povidio	al
			omellos
in	thala	die	thala
a	dio		a
lumin	in	carmin	

Seizure #5 (DISSONANCE) BA Didcock

SEIZURE #5 (DISSONANCE)

What Epilim Gastro-resistant Tablets contain

- Each 200mg gastro-resistant tablet contains 200mg of the active substance, sodium valproate.
- Each 500mg gastro-resistant tablet contains 500mg of the active substance, sodium valproate.
- The other ingredients are povidone (E1201), talc, calcium silicate (E552), magnesium stearate (E572), hypromellose (E464), citric acid monohydrate (E330), macrogol 6000, polyvinyl acetate phthalate, diethyl phthalate, stearic acid (E570), titanium dioxide (E171), amaranth aluminium lake (E123), indigo carmine lake (E132) and hydroxypropyl cellulose (E463).

Each
0 n e
a red
tear
on
an
indigo lake

Seizure #2 (COSH)

BA Didcock

SEIZURE #2 (COSH)

What Epilim is

The name of your medicine is Epilim 200mg or 500mg Gastro-resistant Tablets (called Epilim in this leaflet). Epilim 200mg or 500mg Gastro-resistant Tablets are “enteric coated” this means that the tablets have a protective coating that allows them to reach the intestines (gut) without being dissolved in the stomach first. This helps stop them from causing a stomach upset.

What Epilim contains

Epilim contains sodium valproate. It belongs to a group of medicines called anti-convulsants or anti-epileptic agents. It works by helping calm the brain down.

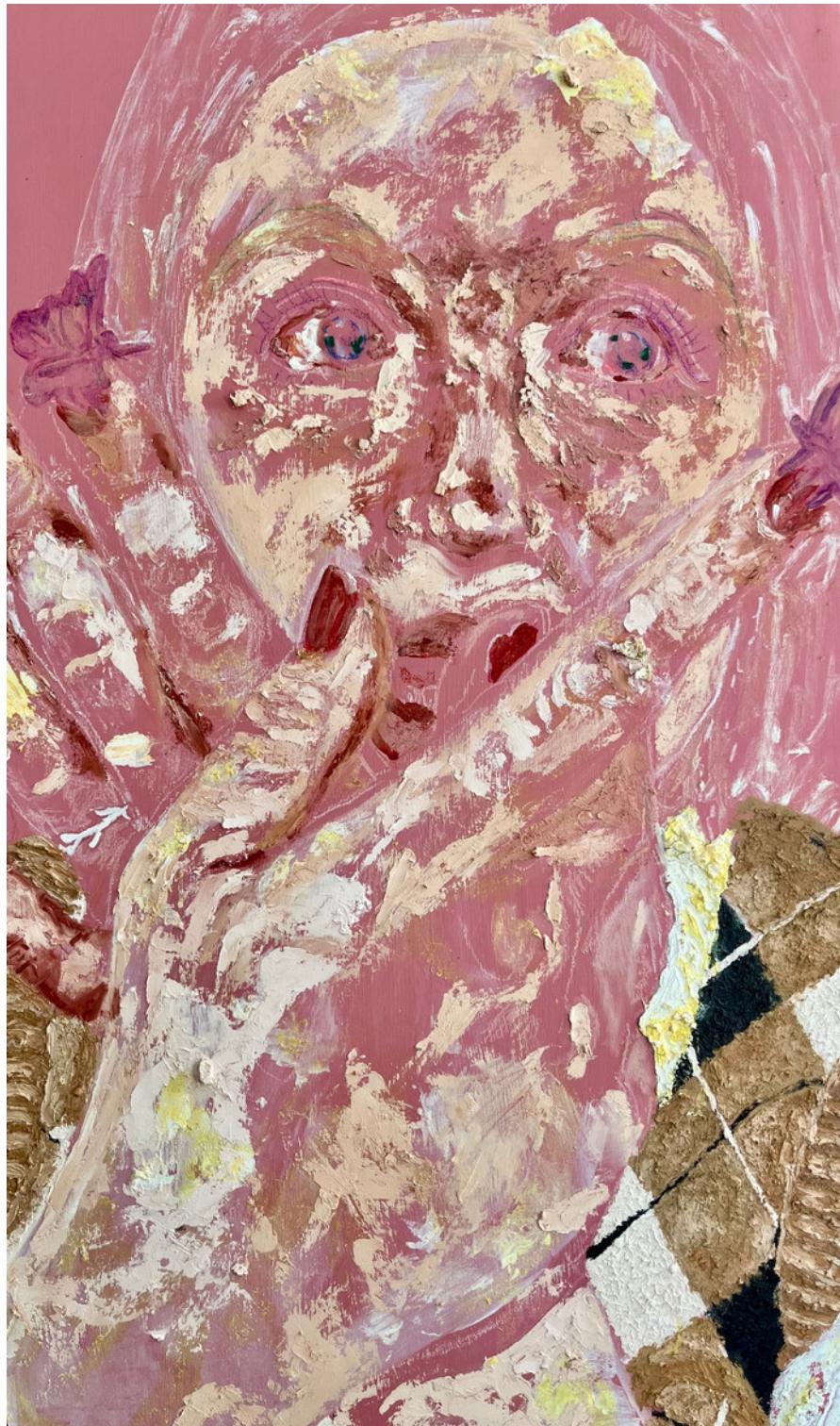
What Epilim is used for

Epilim is used to treat epilepsy (fits) in adults and children.

The medicine
is ()
dissolved in the fi st

What sodium

for us children.



Baby Clips Hear Me, Christopher Coryat, *Wood, Various Prescription Pills, Lacosamide 300MG, Gabapentin 300MG, Levetiracetam 500MG, Oil Paint*

My Dearest Irma...
Shannon Frost Greenstein

8 Oct 1991

My Dearest Irma:

I was happy to receive your last letter so quickly. The photographs of your garden are striking...is it difficult to grow flowers in America? I enjoyed reading about your craft group at St Paul's. I also joined a social group at church when Mathilde passed. It is a small congregation where we were members for many years...two of our children were baptized there.

You inquired about my health. It has remained steady since my bypass surgery five years ago. I have the aches and pains you would expect, but I am thankfully still able to live independently.

I hope you are enjoying the autumn in New York. The colors in Prague are vibrant this year. I am looking forward to the holiday season. I will see my grandchildren on Christmas Eve, all together for the first time since the Velvet Revolution.

I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Fondly,
Robèrt

4/04/92

Dear Robèrt:

I am glad you enjoyed my garden. It was Longin's pride and joy. He started it the day we moved into our house. My daughter Linda helps with the weeding now.

It has been raining here for several days, but it is due to clear up tomorrow. Today Linda is taking me to a doctor's appointment to address my arthritis. My youngest granddaughter Shannon is dancing in *Sleeping Beauty* this weekend, so we will go to see the show on Friday evening. I am also looking forward to the Women's Spring Bazaar next Sunday. I have been sewing a number of pieces to contribute.

I would hear more about your upcoming vacation to Dubrovnick with your family this summer!

Sincerely,
Irma

7 Dec 1992

My Dearest Irma:

Last week, our childhood home became part of the new Czech Republic. What a journey we have all gone through!

I do wonder how different my life would be if I had not been born with poor vision. So many of our classmates fought in the war. So many did not come back. I was fortunate to be able to start a business and grow a family...life has been good to me, even with failing eyes!

Reading about Longin's experience as a POW was very moving. I appreciate you sharing something so personal. I thank God for the fortitude that got him through.

What good news that your eldest granddaughter was accepted into college! Please send Linda my congratulations. My own grandson will graduate from the university here next spring. He plans to be a doctor. Wishing you a Merry Christmas!

Fondly,
Robèrt

3/21/93

Dear Robèrt:

Recently, I am also recalling the Sudetenland of our youth. I remember my dirndl as a child...it was blue, and always too long. Someone always had to sew my hem. Who could have known at 8 what was to become of Rýmařov!

Memory can be funny. I have forgotten many details about Linda's childhood, but I still remember Moravia before the war and that long blue dirndl.

It has been warm here for a few days. The daffodils and forsythia are beginning to open. Spring has always been my favorite season...for many years, I visited our nation's capital just to see the cherry blossom trees in bloom.

I was excited to hear about the birth of your great-granddaughter. Please send her mother my best wishes.

Sincerely,
Irma

1 Nov 1993

My Dearest Irma:

I would like to wish you a happy wedding anniversary. I know this day must be bittersweet. My own Mathilde has been gone for close to twenty years now, but I still feel her absence every day. From your description, Longin was a wonderful husband and provider. 51 years is a marriage to be proud of. I hope his memory brings you some solace today.

I want to tell you how hard it was leaving you in Rýmařov when I went to university all those years ago. We were so young, but I loved you fiercely. I was so glad to learn you had found happiness with Longin... and I am delighted Linda found me in Prague to share your address! Another year passed, and winter approaching again. I hope all is well with Linda and your grandchildren. I will be sending you a gift to arrive in time for Christmas. Here's to health and happiness in the New Year!

Fondly,
Robèrt

5/09/94

Dear Robèrt:

I am also grateful for our correspondence. I will admit, the house gets lonesome without Longin these past 10 years, especially when my daughter or grandchildren leave.

I was reminded today of something I'd forgotten. After we came to New York...after the seasickness wore off!...I was dreadfully frightened because I didn't know any English. Our sponsors had gifted us a small

television set, so I watched every program I could. Shirley Temple films were my favorite, but Guiding Light was actually the best show for learning English. I watched it every day.

I have not thought about that period of my life for quite some time. Thank you for the beautiful portrait you sent. I have placed it on the mantel alongside Longin's. As you requested, I am enclosing a photograph of my own.

Sincerely,
Irma

1 Jan 1995

Dear Irma:

My name is Ada Levicka and I am Robèrt's granddaughter. I'm so sorry, but I am writing to tell you that my grandfather passed away suddenly in his sleep last week.

I read him several of your notes over the years, especially after his vision went. He looked forward to receiving every letter you sent. I wanted you to know about his passing as soon as possible, because he valued your friendship a great deal. He was lonely for a long time after my grandmother died.

Robèrt will be laid to rest on January 6th at St. Michael's Church here in Prague. Thank you again for the happiness you provided my grandfather at the end of his life. He is at peace now. God bless you.

Warmly,
Ada



Chapter 3: Remains



In Love, Xing Yu Liu, *Digital photograph*.

1. Instructions to my past lives' barber: an index up to page 125,817¹

— a burning Haibun

Sristi Sengupta

For erasure; incidents of listening on (17) exciting sheets of moringa blossoms pouring into empty shoes (see for razor softness around the neck, 22,222) make blinkers of my ma's hands for as long as possible (476), spray alloy blades frequently (see for allergies, 75,000), I will break the swaddles every five minutes (3874) do not rush the sideburns like the ancient memphis tombs² (79) do not cut the line for Secunder (besides he is not a regular, 1112) whatever compliments *Her* beehive³ (see for the picture in my wallet, 67,890) miss every mole, big or small (see for what *She* counts in the darkness behind the stairs, 50,326), offer licorice roots for *Dadu's*⁴ smoking problem, I miss him so much (89,789) remember the shortness of the trimmed cattails along the Jamna river (see for the right length, 32,999) hope for me (*She* only wants the Moon in the lake, 99,523) when I sit like an egret, loosen me up with a rub of the alum aftershave basking in the tube light (125,787),

[REDACTED] sure; [REDACTED]

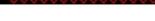
[REDACTED] blossom [REDACTED]

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frequently [REDACTED]

swaddles [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 

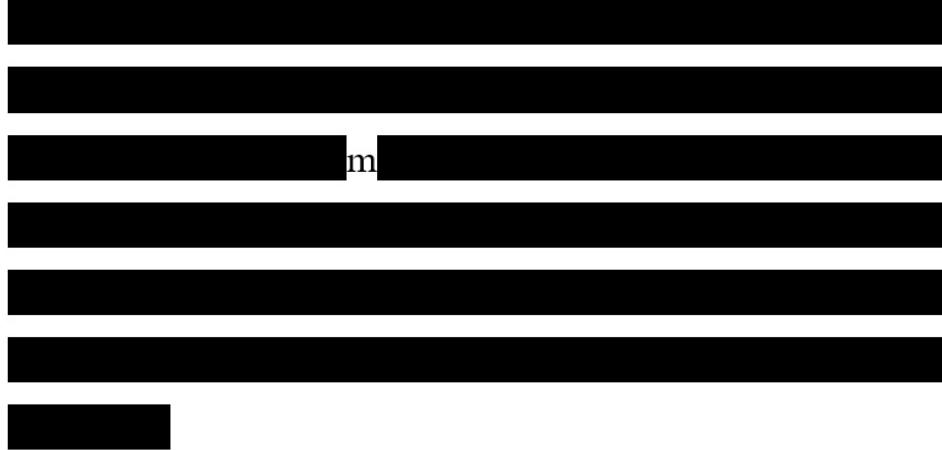
[REDACTED] 

[REDACTED]

my [REDACTED] miss [REDACTED]

She [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] along the Jamna river [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] an egret, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] basking [REDACTED]
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[REDACTED] re [REDACTED]
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1 An average human lives for a handful 29,200 days, 6 previous lifetimes combined, we remain here for an approximated total of 175200 days.

2 Goeffrey T. Martin wrote 'The Hidden Tombs of Memphis' (1991) to capture a first-hand account of the discovery of Maya, emperor Tutankhamun's treasurer's tomb in the sunken city of Memphis after decades worth of excavation.

3 a comically dramatic and flaunting women's hairstyle from the 60s

4 Bengali for Grandfather

Dandelions in My Yard

Kuo Zhang

My parents are delighted
by the dandelions in my yard.
In their crowded city,
dandelions are scarce—
free, natural, healthy.
Dad digs them out.
Mom cooks them.
I don't taste a bite.
I hate the bitterness.
I'm embarrassed for the flowers
yellow my yard,
while the neighbor's lawn
true green.
When I was a child,
every spring after Qingming Festival,
Granma took me up the mountain
to pick wild vegetables.
She knew a dozen kinds,
but I only cared
for blowing the fluffy dandelion balls,
watching the seeds snow.
My parents say the dandelions here
taste better than in China.
But soon, they lose their ambition.
Before they can clear half the yard,
the dandelions bloom again.
Their leaves coarsen—
no longer edible.

Previously published in the 2025 issue of Little Patuxent Review



It's Been a While, Ryan Allen, *ink on paper*.

Costume/Jewellery (the girl with the blue earring)
Morgan Black Wood

fragments of a moment
held in time
a personal revelation, an encounter with someone new,
someone I had only dreamed of, glimpsed in films, on TV,
shining on posters in shops, glossed in magazines
a girl, who was me, and yet not me,
who I fell in love with at first sight
the girl in the mirror, with the blue earring
swaying like the ladies on Top of the Pops,
tight blue jeans just about holding up
not a 'real' girl like all the ones at school,
but one who wanted to be an actress, a singer
in films, on TV, on posters in shops, in magazines
she moved so well, she knew her audience
but the blue earring...it held my gaze, it made her 'her', made me stare at her,
made me want to be her, for ever,
to join her on the other side of the mirror.
the earring from the 'button box', my grandmother's special stash
a trove, a hoard of treasures, small treats of excitement to be eagerly raked through,
rattling, scattering, brass and plastic and elastic and steel and tin and thread and
magnets.
did I find her in that box, through that earring, the pretty blue thing I picked out one
day?
when I first saw it, could I have imagined it would suit her so well,
enchant me, draw me in,

trap me in the mirror along with her?

I couldn't leave without losing her, so I had to stay,
stay in front of the triple-paned looking-glass, check her from all angles
the front, the smooth belly and hips
the side, the curve of thighs, the shadow of ribs,
teasing her hair, sweeping it back, behind her ears and over one eye, puffing and
pouting knowing she was in control, playing along, being everything I had ever wanted
her to be

I was no longer me, now lost in her, lost in the mirror,
two bodies now one, joined by glass yet also
separated by it, twins who both understood each other's needs
she dressed just like me, but did it better,
wearing a bit less, showing pale skin I would never reveal to anyone else beyond that
mirror,
beyond that bedroom

she was for my eyes only, she was special, not to be shared or shown
yet she was brave, bold, copying the covergirls and the models
she loved it, and I loved her for loving it
was I telling her what to do, or did she already know?
how did she know how I wanted her to be, everything I could never be,
doing things I would never do – I was shy, after all, so I was told
but she wasn't, wasn't shy at all
so not-shy that I could never let my parents or grandparents see her –
they wouldn't know what to make of her, and might even put her away –
the button treasure box might be confiscated, taking the blue earring away and her with
it

no, she had to stay where she was – in the mirror – with me, and only me
the two of us, made for each other, making each other, giving and taking
flashing her blue earring, that little thing which made her not just a girl but the girl –
the brassy bendy clip which snapped shut when you pushed it together
nipping your earlobe like a brat at school pinging you with his finger for laughs
but worth the ping, the soft snap when it fixed in place, ready to be flashed, shown off,
when the shiny dark hair was swept back
the sky-blue coloured blob, round and hard,
a blue Smartie that you couldn't eat or suck
but much better than any sweet
(you couldn't get a girl out of a cardboard tube)
it made my ear throb, made the blood rush, but it was worth it,
though sometimes I had to unclip it and move it up or down a bit,
and practice getting it off in a hurry to hide it in case an adult came by,
opening the door, finding me with her and not knowing what to say or do
and my face turning as red as the lobe of my ear
but it made her the girl, the girl,
the first one I had ever met who I wanted to know more about,
to see her again,
what would she look like in a dress?
I would find out soon, after I took off the earring
and put it back in its place in the box,
the box back in the drawer, me back in the living room,
everything back where it belonged, for the moment at least,
me now changed, transformed, knowing I had her to return to, when I was able
when I was alone, and could escape – alone but never lonely
until next time I got to meet her again, to be with her, to be her,
the girl with the blue earring



Anniversary, Nicole Manning, *oil on canvas*.

Eulogy for an Old Man Who's Still Alive

Stephen Brown

Bad Pop kept beagles in a rabbit hutch out back, webbed beans of their precious little paws splayed painfully against metal grating. Feces, urine, and sad droopy eyes concentrated on the ammonia-rich pad of pine needles below. He now lives with my aunt, whose tri-colored terriers terrorize, all over the tops of tables and counters, black eyes weighing his old-man heart like many tiny jackal-headed gods.

He cut his daughters' hair with the line of a mixing bowl so no boys would like them. When we got home from school, my mother chuckles fondly, we had to face the corner of the room, separately. It was a treat to change the channel, to which I don't wonder why we grew up without a television. They were hunting dogs, them all. If two raced ahead with too much glee, he'd shoot them and start over.

Is his comfort my responsibility, too? When Bad Pop tells me my pecker's small to a room of laughter, some angel suffers him a fall, and though his well-trained family may balk and bellow to the ceiling, Daddy!, their dogs are only here to bite him.

Left Behind in the Wash (a meditation on the docks of Boston, Lincolnshire) Peter J. King

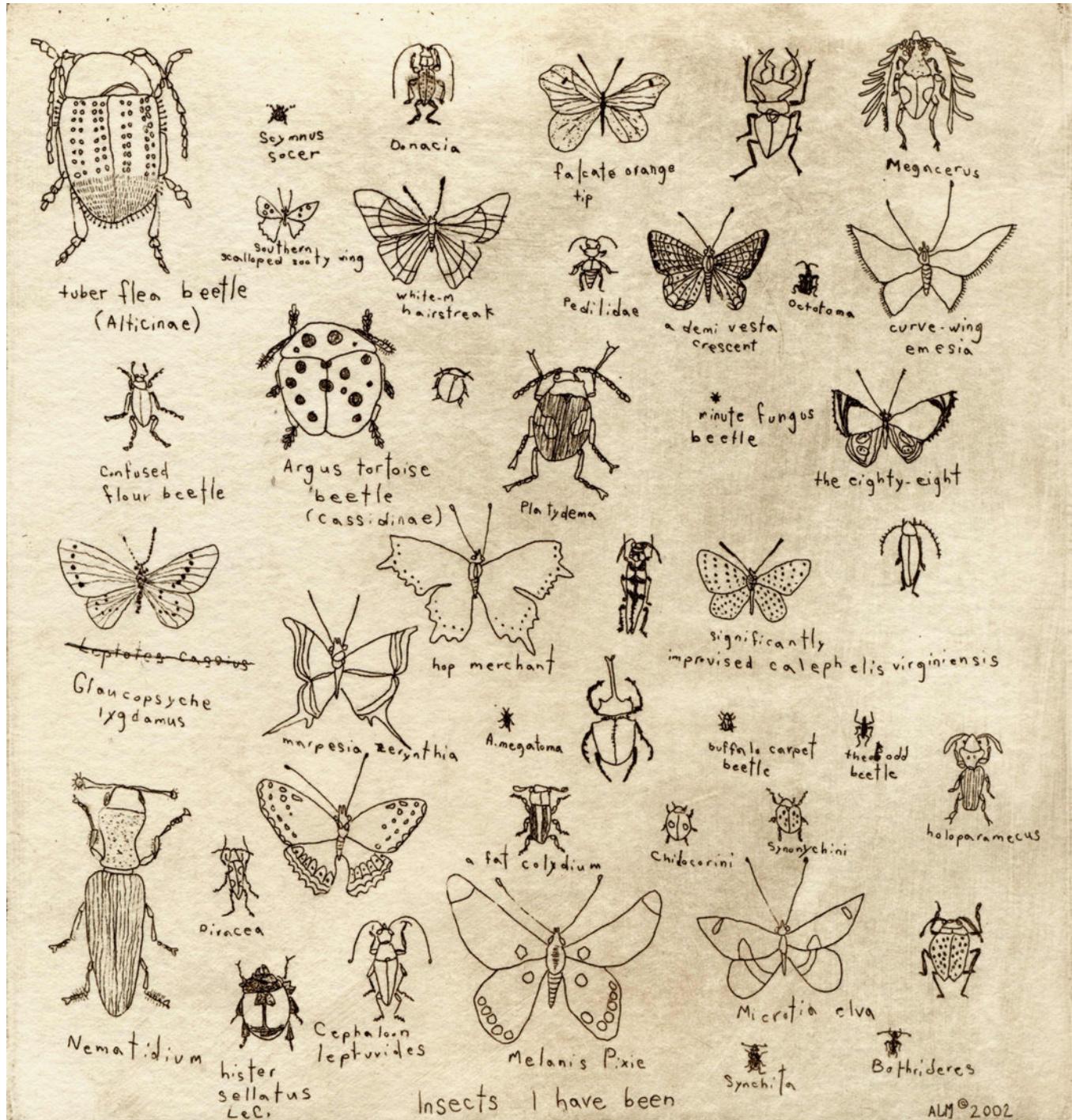
slow trawler
on the pre-dawn tide
between two ranks of rusting cranes
swords raised unmeeting
and a scattering of snow
 grey even in the air
 before it sinks
 into the scummy water
 of the dock

*

a piercing mew
the grimy gull tugs heartstrings
circles in the middle air
forlorn alone
 peers down to where
 there is a glimpse of water
gleaming gloomy through the shifting gaps
 that open briefly
 in the raft of wooden slats
 crisp packets
 dog ends plastic scraps
and here and there a poisoned rat

*

bare berths surround
a bowl of grey-brown water
whorled with filthy foam
 as though the timer's stuck
 the programme stalled
 before the docks are drained
 and filled again
 preparing for the final rins



Insects I Have Been, Anna Jane McIntyre, *ink print*.

Transient Limbs₁

Kali Joy Cramer

¹ Found poetry from Moore, Patrick. Philip's Guide to Stars and Planets. George Philip, 2006. 27-39

Lifting the rocks

Eóin Flannery

(i)

Sitting in the surgery of an orthodontist,
the images on the walls insist
on the pursuit of perfection.

There is no slip,
no defect of nature that cannot be
undone or is beyond correction.

Clean lines drawn that unmask
a route (root?) into a brighter future
as proof of life in cold enamelling,
a fossilized artefact.

A fossil, the planet's dusty tattoo of
a love-bite on the rock record of generations
who laid a claim to here, to there and to
each other.

(ii)

The magazine shows a tiny brush
in the hands of a kneeling make-up
artist, crouched in reverence and
sweeping into themselves.

They count the rings of time
on the once-sharp shards of tamped-down
life – blowing off dust,
to reveal

The kiss of life that fails
even as it travels like starlight
across distances that can only
be bridged by
two crooked index fingers
flying on the ceiling
of a long-forgotten church.



Fiddle Leaf, Myriam Tillson, *pen and ink*.

You Know What Thought Did

Andrew McKeown

‘How big is it?

‘Is it dead?’

‘Has it got teeth? They’re not supposed to have teeth.’

‘Is it blue?’

It was a Monday morning in early spring. Low, orange sunlight frayed the edges of the playground and the encircling houses. Children ran indiscriminately like disturbed insects, stopping to form groups, then running off again. Threading between them was the story of the whale which, they said, had washed up on North Shore overnight.

A boy called Baron had seen it on his way to school.

‘Does it have one of those big heads?’

Judd was in the circle that was asking questions. At home his father kept a World Atlas containing maps of the oceans with illustrations of marine life, shown in vertical section. On one page all the different types of whales had gathered together. Arrows pointed out of the picture to a margin where the sizes of individual species were depicted in numbers of double-decker London buses. On the following page there was an extract from the story of Moby Dick, with drawings of cartoon whales. There was also a footnote explaining the term ‘albino’. When he woke one morning Judd remembered he had seen the word in his sleep spread out on his lap, resting like a fish in a shop.

‘Did it have that stuff inside its head?’

The girl speaking wore a T-shirt with Tweetie Pie on it. Judd followed the movements of the bird as she bounced on the balls of her feet to question the boy.

‘Is it really sperm?’

The ring that had gathered broke into shrieks of laughter.

Baron quieted them: ‘We’ll go after school. You’ll see for yourselves.’

‘Are you coming Judd?’

Judd felt himself colour on the sides of his neck. He looked away. The girl’s question was lost as the group separated noisily and went to form other knots.

*

Later that day, on his way home, Judd pondered what explanation he could have given in answer to the girl's invitation. These thoughts scattered when he opened the back door to the house he shared with his parents and his brother. Entering the sitting room, he saw the bucket had been upset and had rolled to a distance, away from the wheelchair toward the bed where his mother slept at nights. Her face was turned to the window; he recognised immediately the profile of drained anger. Before she could speak the boy had already turned back into the kitchen. He collected a plastic bottle from beneath the sink then ran a cloth under the tap and returned with both to the room. Kneeling down, he shook the powder over the patch of wet carpet and with both hands on the swab began to rub back and forth.

'Where've you been?'

'Nowhere. I came straight home.' Judd checked her expression. 'There's a whale washed up on the beach. All the kids have gone to see.'

'Whale my foot. You don't get whales in Blackpool.' Judd was used to his mother's curt ways. 'You can wait till your dad gets home, or your brother, wherever he is.' White tides had formed a ring around the spot where Judd was rubbing.

'It might be gone tomorrow.' Judd gathered the tide neatly inside the napkin which he folded into a parcel. 'Do you think it's dead already?' He stood up and looked at the patch of carpet he had often cleaned. It was dark brown and calloused, like a mummified skin.

'Well, if it's dead it won't be going anywhere.' There was no gainsaying the ready utterances she had to dispense with situations. Judd went to put the rag and the cleaning powder back into the cupboard under the sink. Then he collected the bucket and went upstairs to the bathroom, to empty the remains and give the container a sluicing. As the water spewed from the bath tap Judd looked out of the window. The backs of houses that met his gaze were blank.

*

Judd came down and switched on the TV. A technicolour cartoon played across the screen while thoughts of his father coming home from work lit up in his head. The tram he took would go right past the place where the whale was stranded. Maybe he would see something? He could ask

him as soon as he came in. Unless he was in one of his moods; unless he was queer, as they had learned to say. His father had strange turns. Sometimes he would question them: 'Are you spying on me?' At other times Judd sensed his father watching him from behind a door. Once he set fire to a skirt he had bought as a gift for his wife. The material bubbled and turned black and gave off foul smoke. Sometimes his mother would cry. Still, Judd wanted his father to come home. It was getting late now and he would have to run but there was time still. He could see the girl, asking him if he would come to see the whale, her lips shaping the words in a way that twisted one side of her mouth. He pictured the twist in her mouth repeatedly as the cartoon creatures made funny squeaking noises.

'You'd better make a start on the spuds.' Judd was going to contest his mother's wish. It would only delay matters. But then he saw that standing at the kitchen sink would allow him to avoid the question of his father's mood as he came in and slip out when the door opened, like some sleek animal. He emptied the bag of potatoes into the sink and half filled it with water. Facing him was the window. Judd checked its cold surface intermittently for grains of remaining light. His knife unskinned the vegetables.

This went on for some time.

At last there was a noise at the back door. The handle twisted a quarter turn; a foot struck on the doorstep.

'Where've you been?'

'Round at Dean's.' Before his mother could pursue her enquiry, Judd's brother had ascended the stairs with a sweep of leaping strides and had shut himself in the bedroom they shared.

'Does that mean I can go now?' Judd let go the knife and shook his hands in the earthy water to rinse them. The fleshy skins of potatoes showed here and there an upended yellow underside. His mother made no reply. Judd went into the front room to get an answer: 'Can I?'

'Tell your brother to come down.' From the bedroom heavy, churning sounds had started to fill the house. 'And tell him to turn that record down.' When they were small they shared a bed and played a sort of game. His brother would hold Judd's head under a pillow and say: 'Get under cover little boy, there's a war going on.' Judd would have to

struggle to free himself and would emerge red-faced and out of breath. Now his brother came home late from school and was interested in other things. Judd had noticed a different smell about him recently and, in the evenings, a stilled expression in his eyes. At night, Judd was sometimes woken by his brother standing at the open bedroom window, his trousers loosed at the waist, the sound of something drumming on the ground in the dark garden.

‘Mum says come down.’

Judd reached for the door handle. He would be there in half an hour. He had only to cross the gala field—empty now but full and vivid in July at the summer fair—and he was already more than half way there. That left just Gloucester Avenue, the parade of shops and he would be at the tram stop. From here he would see them, gathered farther off, at North Shore. They would be on the sand, forming a circle. There was just enough day left to make it all out.

*

Judd looked down from the upper promenade. He was out of breath as in one of the smothering games from home. The contours of the lower walk and the rim of the sea on the horizon and the beach in between by degrees fell into place in his mind. Suddenly a tram went past behind him. It clattered across the joins in the tracks, unreally illuminated like some travelling fish tank. Judd thought of his father. Maybe he was home by now. He saw him enter from the kitchen door. He was queer, after all. The light of the tram retreated. Judd looked back toward the empty space.

Like so many buses, lined up end to end, thought Judd. His father’s atlas opened before him. Whales swimming in the deep oceans. Litters of pups trailing obediently behind. They would be singing. He heard the sound they made out at sea, like a long, creaking door. ‘Whales are social animals who form groups called pods’, the book had said. ‘Pods’. Judd spoke the word aloud. On the same page there was a cartoon showing a great white whale biting a ship in two. Even so, Judd felt sorry for the thing, stranded there. ‘A sorry sight.’ That was one of his mother’s expressions. She used it for things that didn’t come up to scratch, like school results, or a meal Judd’s father might have made. ‘Good riddance,’ was another. She had used it that day he threatened to

leave home. He was in the kitchen complaining about something and said he would run away: 'Good riddance of bad rubbish.' Her mouth had grown full of such fixtures. Judd didn't run away that day and now he was sorry he'd rushed to get out of the house. His brother would go out again and his mother would be left alone. She was probably already sitting on her own, staring at the window, like she always did. Once he remembered he had come home from school and there was blood on her legs that had run into her slippers. Her face was hot and wet. She told him to go to his room. He had sat on his bed for some time. When his father came home there were raised voices. In them Judd was able to extract no sense of what had happened or what was wrong.

Like so many buses. Judd thought again. The girl and the others must have gone by now. She'd walked back with Baron. Why did she ask him to come, if she was going to walk back with the other boy? It was his father's fault for not coming home in time; his brother's, too. And wasn't it his mother who had kept him back in the first place? Now he would have to answer for himself at school tomorrow. What would he say to the girl? He couldn't say he had to go home to take care of his mother. That she was ill. That she spent her days waiting for him to come home to clean up the mess. He couldn't say he had to wait for his father, either, who might be queer, who might have gone anywhere or done anything. Like the time when they owned a car and he came home in the middle of the night, between two policemen, his breath thick and sick-smelling. There'd been an accident but no one was seriously hurt, they'd said. No one was seriously hurt... Or that he was waiting for his brother who was always off somewhere, or pissing out of the bedroom window, or... Or that the streets and houses turned and twisted one way one day, and one way the next. And that it went on and on. Absurd, routine exceptions. Like nothing. Like the whale.

Suddenly there was a voice. A voice coming from the path leading up from the lower walk. It was the girl! She'd waited for him after the others had left!

'Too late, love.' The woman speaking was in her fifties and was unsure of her steps, Judd saw, as she came level with him and stopped. Slumped against the woman with his arm lassoed around her neck was a man. He was younger. His eyes were puffed up and closed. 'They took

it away this morning. Brought a crane and hauled it into a dump truck.' Judd wanted to ask, but the woman cut him off: 'A great big blob. Didn't half stink.' The woman made a pinched knot with her face then hitched her companion back on to her shoulders. They moved off.

Judd heard a guttural voice. 'Just a kid,' answered the woman. The voices receded. He looked and looked at the empty beach and it scorned him. His eyes smarted. He felt helpless like someone in a dream.

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At the house he could hear his parents were sharing a joke as he pushed open the back door. The television was still on. A bottle of Guinness and a bottle of cider were on the mantelpiece. His brother was also in the room, sitting on the couch with a glass in his hand. His mother's bucket was in the back room, next to the bed.

'Well?' Her voice had an uncommon buoyancy. 'Did you see it?' For a moment Judd thought he detected sympathy and lowered his guard:

'No luck. They took it away in a truck this morning.'

'Probably just some cow got washed into the sea up by the estuary.' His mother had retreated to familiar ground. 'Must have stunk to high heaven.'

Judd persisted: 'At school the teacher said stranded whales can survive if you keep them wet. I thought...' He didn't have time to finish:

'Well you know what thought did.' Judd already knew the answer. He had been the foil before, but repeated his role, like a child:

'No. What?'

*

Next day as Judd entered the schoolyard the girl came up to him.

'We're going to Tussaud's Waxworks on Friday,' she announced. 'We get the whole day out.' She then ran off.

The waxworks were an annual treat: celebrities, the chamber of horrors, the anatomy section. Maybe he would get to be with her? Judd followed her quick limbs across the tarmac. Looking across the open space where children ran in and out of each other's games he pondered the whale and the possibility that Baron had made it up even while his mother's wisdom from the night before returned to him as no sort of solace:

'It followed a muck cart and thought it was a wedding.'



Samhain, Gary Dempsey, *digital drawing*.

Chapter 1: Catacombs

Giles Goodland: Giles Goodland's books include Of Discourse (Grand Iota 2023). A Spy in the House of Years (Leviathan, 2001) Capital (Salt, 2006), Dumb Messengers (Salt, 2012) and The Masses (Shearsman, 2018). Civil Twilight was published by Parlor Press in 2022. He has worked as a lexicographer, editor, and bookseller, and teaches evening classes on poetry for Oxford University's department of continuing education, and lives in West London.

Richard Oyama: Richard Oyama's work has appeared in Premonitions: The Kaya Anthology of New Asian North American Poetry, The Nuyorasian Anthology, Breaking Silence, Dissident Song, A Gift of Tongues, About Place, Konch Magazine, Pirene's Fountain, Buddhist Poetry Review and other journals. He has a M.A. in English: Creative Writing from San Francisco State University. Oyama taught at California College of Arts in Oakland, University of California at Berkeley and University of New Mexico.

Linn Hansen: Linn Hansen is a German freelance artist and writer based in Dublin, Ireland. Her personal projects incorporate a variety of media, including film, photography, illustration and creative writing. She is currently working on her first English-language novel. She can be found on instagram: @linnsarchive

John Mackey: John Mackey is a writer from Tipperary who lives in Donegal. His writing is informed by challenging moments of self reflection. @johnyowen

Fernanda Morales Tovar: Fernanda Morales Tovar, Mexican, b. 1992. She earned her Master of Fine Art (2018-2020) and her Bachelor of Fine Art (2011-2015) in Visual Arts from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. She completed an Academic Research stay at the Complutense University of Madrid-Spain (2019). She has four individual exhibitions and more than forty group exhibitions, in various museums and institutions in Mexico, the Netherlands, England and Chile. Her work has been selected in the International Art Biennials: the XII Pacific Biennial of Painting and Engraving "Javier Mariano", the IV José Atanasio Monroy Painting Biennial, the Lumen 02 Art Biennial, and the Lumen 01 Art Call. She has participated in Art Fairs in Mexico and the Netherlands, such as BADA 2024, BADA 2023, and 25th Art Laren Art Fair. She was a beneficiary of the "Young Creators" in the Painting category, Fellowship of the System of Supports for Creation and Cultural Projects, Secretariat of Culture of the Government of Mexico (2021-2022). She was a beneficiary of the Scholarship for Postgraduate Studies in Visual Arts, CEP UNAM-Mexico Scholarship (2018-2020). Her work has been published in the international press and she has collaborated through the painting "Displaced Nexus" on the cover of the manual "The Routledge Handbook of Smuggling", Routledge Handbooks - New York (2021); as well as her work is part of the Mexican Collection Arte Lumen.

Eden Chicken: Eden Chicken (they/them) is a queer poet whose work explores hybridity: textual forms; divergent identities; coexistences with(in) nature. A recent graduate from University of East Anglia's Poetry MA, they have been published by *Egg Box, Sentire, Many Nice Donkeys, Reverie, the engine(idling, and new words {press},* as well as featured on *The Poetry Society's* website.

Instagram: @edenchicken

Goran Tomic: GORAN TOMIC is a Collisionist Autodidactic Artist from Sydney Australia who has exhibited his Collages, Video Installations and Performance art over the past 25 years. Raised on Rauschenberg and born posthumously he flaneur's the urban decay searching for his Wilderness Robe.

Maureen Alsop: Maureen Alsop, Ph.D. is the author of *a novel, Today Yesterday After My Death* and seven books of poetry: *Arbor Vitae, Tender to Empress* (Visual Poems); *Pyre; Later, Knives & Trees; Mirror Inside Coffin; Mantic; Apparition Wren* (also a Spanish Edition, *Reyezuelo Aparición*, translated by Mario Domínguez Parra); and several chapbooks She is the winner of several poetry prizes including those from *Harpur Palate* and *Bitter Oleander* and was recently shortlisted for Montreal International Poetry Prize. Her poems have appeared in numerous journals including *Columbia Review, The Laurel Review, AGNI, Blackbird, Tampa Review, DIAGRAM, Action Yes, Drunken Boat, Memorious, The Kenyon Review*, and featured on *Verse Daily. She is the winner of the Roderick Centre Fellowship for Regional and Remote Writers (in partnership with Varuna House and James Cook University)* Her short stories have appeared at *South Dakota Review, TEXT, Lincoln Review*, among others. Her translations of the poetry of Juana de Ibarbourou (Uruguay, 1892-1979) and are available through *Poetry Salzburg Review*. She teaches online with the Poetry Barn. She is a Book Review Editor and Associate Poetry Editor at *Poemeleon*. She holds a MFA from Vermont College.

Naoual Peleau: Naoual Peleau, she/her, born on 25/04/1992 in France Her photography is mostly about experimentation and research. She likes to manipulate the image and its support, transform and also destroy. Part of the creative process is beyond her control. It's a space of freedom and unexpected. In her research she tries to maintain a balance between an accidental creation and a successful experience. She's fascinated by every fragile thing and she wants to witness the metamorphosis. In an intimate and autobiographical practice, She deals with subjects such as solitude, death or the relation with my body. She lives and works in Toulouse.

Vincent Louis Stokes: Vincent Louis Stokes is a visual artist currently living and working out of the West Midlands, UK. In 2018, he graduated from the Birmingham School of Art with an MA distinction in fine art whereupon he immediately began exhibiting across the region. In 2021, The New Art Gallery Walsall purchased his drawing *A Family* under Lockdown for their permanent collection.

Ross McDiarmid: Hello readers, cheers for the opportunity you've gifted us, as it's no very often ah'm able tae share ma meagre wares outwith the scopes ay ma aine heid. Ah've wanted tae be writer since ah wis a teenager, an' huv been writin in earnest for donkey's years. Regards, Ross McDiarmid.

Soledad Santana: Soledad Santana is a Venezuelan, London-based community organiser and poet. She's an alumnus of the Barbican Young Poets and the Poetry Translation Centre's Undertow programme, and is currently working on her first poetry chapbook, which is inspired by the new wave of Latin American 'gothic' writing.

Alan Murphy: Alan Murphy has contributed visual art and/or poetry to journals such as Drawn To The Light Press, Riggwelter, The Waxed Lemon, The Storms, Martello, Mad Swirl, all the sins and Hominum. An award-nominated writer of four collections of poetry for children and teenagers, he also writes songs. Dublin born, he lives on a crow-infested housing estate in Lismore. [@arty_poet](http://www.avantcardpublications.com)

Aravind Enrique Adyanthaya: Aravind Enrique Adyanthaya, Puerto Rican writer, theatre experimenter and interdisciplinary artist. Research-creative vectors encompass live digital writing technologies and poetics, hybrid (intertextual and hypertextual) compositions, performance and neurodivergence and multimedia explorations of ruins in the island. A sample from his recent short story collection "infinite houses" appears on: <https://www.collectartwork.org/post/aravind-enrique-adyanthaya--mystical-world>

Chapter 2: Wavelength

Danielle Altman: Danielle Altman's poetry, fiction, and personal essays have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Afterpast Review*, *Literally Stories*, *Dream Boy Book Club Series 5*, *WREATH Literary*, and *Kelp Journal's The Wave*. By day, she is a medical anthropologist who has worked in HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ+ activism, and rare diseases. You can find her on Instagram at [@end_of_los_angeles](https://www.instagram.com/@end_of_los_angeles).

Sharon Reeber: Sharon Reeber is an American artist, arts educator, and writer. Her art has been exhibited across the U.S. and her scholarly writing has been published internationally. She lives in rural northwest Missouri where she ponders the natural world and teaches at the Kansas City Art Institute. Her work can be seen at www.sharonreeber.com.

Harrison Fisher: Harrison Fisher has published twelve collections of poems since 1977, most recently *Poematics of the Hyperbloody Real*. In 2025, Fisher has new work coming in All Existing, Amsterdam Review, The Basilisk Tree, Chewers by Masticadores, and The Kleksograph.

Fiona Young: Fiona Young is a fine art photographer. A graduate of Edinburgh College of Art. Her work examines her ability to see beauty in the everyday, ordinary and overlooked items that surround us. Decay of a leaf, lichen, a fried egg, bubble wrap, a broken wine glass. The Dutch Masters still life genre of Vanitas is utilized to evoke the fleeting quality of life and the vanity of living.

Julia Jimenez: Julia Jimenez works as a reading intervention teacher for children. She lives in Quezon City, Philippines with cats that count as additional family members. When she's not cracking and eating sunflower seeds, she makes an attempt to write every now and then.

Tallulah Howarth: Tallulah Howarth is a multidisciplinary creative, a member of the Writing Squad and current student on the MA in Writing Poetry at Newcastle University. They are particularly passionate about Polish jazz, foraging and archives. In 2024, she was highly commended in the Hammond House International Literary Prize. This year, they placed second in the Red Shed Poetry Competition. Her work is observational and intimate, and has been published over twenty times in zines, journals and anthologies. It can be found [@tallulahhowarthcreative](https://www.instagram.com/@tallulahhowarthcreative) (Instagram) or at [tallulahhowarth.com](http://www.tallulahhowarth.com)

Patrick Olo: (PatrickOLoughran) Is an artist that works in painting, sculpture, drawing and print. He uses references from still life/life drawings which are then further realized in his studio. He uses "The Grotesque" as the vehicle in his creative process.

Jonah Corren: Hailing from West Dorset, Jonah Corren is a songwriter-poet. Their poems have been published by *Arachne Press*, *The Alchemy Spoon* and others. They are an alumnus of *Apples & Snakes Future Voices* (2024), and an Exeter City Slam champion (2023). Their latest alt-folk single 'Langdon' was released in January 2024.

Pomidor Art Team: An artist duo formed by Polina and Maria in 2018. Their works combine sewing, socially engaged practices, and public street art. In late 2022, they moved to the UK, London.

SPEECH(LESS) is a series of hand-sewn flags. With this project, the artists continue to explore relations between an individual and the state.

Instagram: @maria_pomidor & @polina_pomidor

Jennifer McCormack: Jennifer McCormack is a poet and artist born in Glasgow and based in Malmö, Sweden. She is a part of STPLN lab where she seeks ways to include poetry more in everyday life and co-curates a workshop series called We Curate, about side-stepping algorithms through active choice. Her writing has featured in New Writing Scotland, Ordkonst and Amsterdam Review. This work was produced in response to a low-tech solar design project where artists joined forces with technical minds.

Kstony: Emmanuel Asamoah, also known as Kstony, is a contemporary ceramic artist born in Kumasi, Ghana, West Africa. He carries a profound respect for his heritage and the legacy of his grandmother. Kstony's familiarity with clay and its significance as a daily resource in his community inspired him to expand its use and pursue a formal education in ceramics. He earned a B.A. in Industrial Art (Ceramics option) from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana. Currently, Kstony is a third-year MFA candidate at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, School of Art. Kstony received the NCECA Multicultural Award in 2024, and his works have been showcased in multiple exhibitions in both Ghana and the United States. Notable exhibitions include the 2025 NCECA Student Juried Show in Salt Lake City, Utah, 2024 'AKOKOA' Solo Exhibition at Medici Gallery, UNL, 2024 'Art by the Foot' Center for the Visual Art in Wausau, WI, 2024 – 2nd Ceramic Student Show at Concho Clay Studio and San Angelo Museum of Fine Art, Texas, 2024 UARK & UNL exhibition at the University of Arkansas, the 2023 Making History Exhibition at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the 2023 Circa Symposium exhibition at the University of Colorado. His artistic journey is rooted in the desire to honor the materials, heritage, and community members of Ghana. As a first-generation African immigrant in the United States, Kstony's work actively shares and celebrates the pride of his life, home, and culture through his art practice.

Roger Camp: Roger Camp is the author of three photography books including the award winning *Butterflies in Flight*, Thames & Hudson, 2002. His documentary photography has been awarded the prestigious Leica Medal of Excellence. His work has appeared in numerous journals including *The New England Review*, *American Chordata* and the *New York Quarterly*. He is represented by the Robin Rice Gallery, NY.

BA Didcock: BA Didcock is a writer and musician. His short fiction has featured in *New Writing Scotland* and *Wrong Directions*. As Darkplant, his experimental sound collage work has been broadcast on online radio station EHFM. He is based in Edinburgh.

Cristopher Coryat: Christopher "Ender" Coryat (he/him) is a multidisciplinary artist, Cooper Union alumnus, and co-founder of Art Hoes United. His work spans film, sculpture, music, and performance, centering universal spaces like bathrooms as sites of refuge and expression—deeply shaped by his 2022 epilepsy diagnosis and ongoing advocacy for marginalized artists.

Shannon Frost Greenstein: Shannon Frost Greenstein (She/They) is the author of "Through the Lens of Time," a forthcoming fiction collection with Thirty West Publishing. She is a former Ph.D. candidate in Continental Philosophy and a multi-time Pushcart Prize nominee. Follow Shannon at shannonfrostgreenstein.com, or on Twitter and Bluesky at @ShannonFrostGre. She also comes up when you Google her. Insta: @zarathustra_speaks

Chapter 3: Remains

Xing Yu Liu: Xing Yu Liu is a multidisciplinary artist focusing on video art, theatre production and fine art photography. Her artworks are subtlety political. Identity, and the belonging of oneself to a country is what she finds herself expressing the most. A lot of the times she approach the topics in a dry and documentation manner.

Sristi Sengupta: Sristi/Musu are a non-binary, neurodivergent writer, artist and alternative educator for kids. Their work has previously appeared in the Burningword Literary Journal, Of Life On Other Stars, Academy Of The Heart And Mind, Poems India and The Hindu. Life with AuDHD helps them build a special perception of sensory details that are not normative, something they often love. However, sometimes they struggle with imagery that is too vivid to gate-keep - that's where poetry comes in. Their writing is selfish and very regional. They live with their cats in a Kolkata-ish suburb, where the river runs nearby, its quiet hum -- deliberate.

Kuo Zhang: Kuo Zhang is an Assistant Professor in Education at Siena College. She has a bilingual book of poetry in Chinese and English, Broadleaves (Shenyang Press). Her poem "One Child Policy" was awarded second place in the 2012 Society for Humanistic Anthropology [SHA] Poetry Competition held by the American Anthropology Association. She served as poetry & arts editor for the Journal of Language & Literacy Education in 2016-2017 and also one of the judges for 2015 & 2016 SHA Poetry Competition. Her poems and translated poetry have appeared in numerous literary magazines, including Rattle, Plume Magazine, Tupelo Quarterly, Anmly, The Rialto, New Note Poetry, Nine Mile, Gyroscope Review, Coffin Bell Journal, The Roadrunner Review, Lily Poetry Review, Mom Egg Review, Bone Bouquet, and North Dakota Quarterly, etc.

Ryan Allen: Ryan Allen is a 29 year old pointillism artist, using fine line pens and ink on paper and wooden surfaces. Working with 0.03mm and 0.05mm sized pens, their process involves layering with thousands of tiny dots. Their art is influenced by their deep connection to nature and their gender identity.

Morgan Black Wood: Morgan Black is a BA and MFAAH graduate in Fine Art from the University of Dundee and is currently completing PhD research in gender and aesthetics. Their field of study is the non-binary body and physiognomy in art, society and culture. A multi-disciplinary artist, work encompasses video, performance, spoken word, comix and writing.

Nicole Manning: Nicole Manning is a Dublin-based painter exploring trauma's physical embodiment on the body, particularly chronic stomach pain and the connection to psychological issues. Her emotive, symbolic works feature curled bodies, animals, and PTSD motifs. A recent NCAD graduate, she is currently practicing at the Clancy Quay Studios Residency.

Stephen Brown: Stephen Brown (he/him) is a writer-activist with a Philly attitude and a background in LGBT+ Studies. He is the author of two multi-genre chapbooks, *A Portrait of Brotherhood as Two Boys from Space* (2025) and *His Boyfriend Materials* (2024), both of which are available from Bottlecap Press. Find him at: scarletwitchy.bsky.social

Peter J. King: Peter J. King was active on the London poetry scene in the 1970s. Returning to poetry in 2013 after about thirty years, he's since been widely published in journals & anthologies. He also translates poetry, mainly from Greek & German. His most recent collection is *Ghost Webs* (The Calliope Script, 2022).
<https://wisdomsbottompress.wordpress.com/peter-j-king/>

Anna Jane McIntyre: Anna Jane McIntyre a Black professional artist with a practice combining printmaking, listening, telling, being and microactivism. Her work investigates how people maintain their notions-of-self through visual cues. Projects range from illustrations to 3200 square foot immersive forest installations to giant emojis to feminist-foosball-tables to urban ecology forest school cahiers for BIPOC youth.

Kali Joy Cramer: Kali Joy Cramer (he/she) is from the Chicago suburbs. He was a 2024 Ireland Chair of Poetry Student Award Winner while completing an M.A. in Poetry at Queen's University Belfast. She has been published in *Relief*, *The Broken Spine*, *The Penwood Review*, and *The Blackbird*.

Eóin Flannery: Eóin Flannery is a writer and critic based in Limerick, Ireland, where he is Associate Professor of English Literature at Mary Immaculate College. He has published 12 books of literary and cultural criticism. His poetry has appeared in *The Honest Ulsterman*; *Libre*; *The Galway Review*; *Rochford Street Review*; *Red Ogre Review*; *Juniper*; *The Tiger Moth Review*; *the engine(idling)*; *Inkfish Magazine* and *The Hog River Press*. He is working on a collection of poems entitled, *Unshadow*.

Myriam Tillson: Myriam Tillson is a French artist working and living in London. She works traditionally using primarily water-based mediums. Her surrealist paintings use the human form as a vessel for expressing and working through the ubiquitous juxtaposition of beauty and tragedy in life, and learning to balance the complex make-up of our experiences as sensitive beings.

Andrew McKeown: Andrew McKeown teaches English at the University of Poitiers, France. His stories have appeared in *The Exacting Clam* and *Caliban*.

Gary Dempsey: Gary Dempsey is a Fine Art Printmaking graduate from the Limerick School of Art and Design. His art is shaped by extensive travel and diverse experiences, blending personal discovery with the influence of cultures and landscapes.



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