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TURN PIKE



DEVIATIONS | CHANGES | SHIFTS

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Mission Statement

Turnpike is a literary and art magazine that aims to provide positive content, to create a space for all voices, and to hopefully brighten a few days.

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RESUSCITATION, *Laila Halaby*

on my way back
from dumping the recyclables
I glance at the dog's water bowl

a pale white moth floats
on the quiet surface
a delicate triangle

I dip my finger in the cold water
scoop it up
hold still for a few seconds

then place its waterlogged
and immobile self
on the bench to dry

Luna and I stand side by side
watching
I nudge the moth with my finger

nothing
I think we are too late, Luna
I say

my seventy-pound dog
who has charged at other dogs from half a block away
and bitten holes in her sister's flesh

sticks her giant black nose
at the back of the tiny moth
and snorts

the moth jumps
and then, looking like a drunk nun
ambles across the bench

Luna looks up at me
and turns to go into the house
I remain

amazed

FOR THE SAKE OF NAMING, *gabe membreno*

queer, sister. can i say
i've got an awful feeling i don't know
what to call myself most days. i've settled
quite comfortably into a shrug.
sometimes, my eyebrows are the puzzle.
they lower like a penny-holding hand
before a well, the splash of water an answer.
rub it in, will you? you've always been
woman. there was a year
i lived when no one called you
mother. at one, i became infant uncle. why
brianna? you wanted strong, huh.
statuesque replica.
you named your first son edison for the wealth
that could be, and wasn't. then there was
haley. comes around in the summer
from another side of the world—getting away
from the wet heat of southeast asia.
and you, iliana. go back
some thousands of years, you'll find your name shadow
to a queen's. sometimes you can't be the sun.
you can be the hell it makes of someone's skin.
sometimes, we've only got vaporub
to adorn our chests with. last year,
i shaved a few letters from my name,
called it easier on the tongue.
i became talk of the town.
with baby max now born,
am i auntie to someone?
proverbial two-toned butterfly
to an eager scorpion. maybe it's science how it goes
from crawl to flight for one of us.
and the other molts a family from its back.
a single sorry left in the dirt.

SHE SLIPPED OUT OF MY HANDS, *Yvonne Campbell*

There we were, in Dad's garage last Sunday evening, the sun starting to go down. I said I'd come to do the laundry, but it was really to hang with Dad, who's nearing ninety. My other remaining male blood relative, nephew Geoff, pushing thirty, pontificated in his soiled t-shirt, pretty cocky for someone whose life was a complete mess. He was always hinting that he might move out, leaving Dad high and dry. I liked to pull up one of the green plastic chairs in the waning light so the dying rays would hit me square in the face as I listened to them.

Dad didn't do much in his garage, but there were remains, evidence of prior activity, in the tools hanging from the open beams: slicers, wipers, saw blades, drill bits, T-bars, and more. The work bench built from weathered beams had a Jim Beam bourbon feel about it, accented by the world map with red pushpins in it stretched above. Uneducated but curious, Dad loved to get around and had marked each spot he'd visited. He loved to take a pin out and tell a story about what he had seen or done at that exact spot. He was a man of few words, so they had weight, as opposed to my nephew's, which spouted like a waterfall.

"Well, she was pretty lively today." Dad knocked the ash off his Marlboro into the dull amber prism-cut ashtray, smoke blowing back in his face. I moved my chair to catch more of the light declining behind the roofline of his seventies ranch style suburban house. Surrounded by the live oaks and laurel bays of Contra Costa County, it had its charms. Leaning forward to catch Dad's words, straining in my chair to absorb the sun. I never really knew if it would come up for him again.

"She almost got away from me," Dad pressed on, describing his day with Shirley. She lived in the assisted care dementia unit at a facility called Sunrise. "She had to get to the bathroom, and all of a sudden she just jumped up and ran as if she was on fire." Bright, vibrant, and talkative, Shirley had lived with Dad in the house where I was brought up. Gradually she replaced my mother's personal possessions with walnut antiques and small family portraits of her sons, her sisters, and one portrait of herself with her father—a stern looking New Hampshire farmer.

But it was in the back forty, the rear garden area where Shirley really made her presence felt, among the succulents she patiently raised from cuttings and transplanted to luscious ceramic pots. She mixed colors and textures so that her garden took on the tones of a Monet or a piece of embroidery. Whenever I came over, Shirley had seemed to float out of the house and into the garden like Loretta Young, her arms out in greeting, a soft serene smile on her face, noting my new blouse or cut of hair, inquiring

SHE SLIPPED OUT OF MY HANDS, *continued*

about my daughter and offering me a “refreshment,” while gently chiding her husband, my father, “Don, you’re the only one drinking!” My hand would be empty while he continually sipped from a crystal cut goblet of chardonnay. She got the drink, though always forgetting if it was wine or iced tea I’d requested.

We all chalked it up to absentmindedness until the night she forgot where she lived and was found perched under the neighbor’s Camellia bush. She didn’t even know who she lived with, but claimed that he beat her. Unlike my nephew, she remembered too little, too late.

Her sons had insisted on taking her away, putting her someplace safe. “It would be better,” they said. Better for who?, we asked but we knew better than to argue. Later they said, “It was her idea!” Whoever’s it had been, I knew it was a bad one, but like Geoff, I had a memory problem. In my case that meant remembering all the wrong things, including her sons’ voices like the washing machine in the garage, tumbling and twirling, tumbling and twirling, but never saying anything.

“It was better that way,” Dad said, adopting their word. Still, he drove down Clayton Road every day to her small room without even a container of ivy or carnation in a bud vase. Otherwise, it was the equivalent of a four-star hotel, plush wall-to-wall carpet and soft beige wallpaper, personally decorated room doors (think college dorm). Were the residents aware enough to appreciate it?

“I almost lost her,” Dad said, his hands clasped in front, reliving the moment when he had tried to keep Shirley up on her feet in the bathroom. “She slipped out of my hands,” he muttered, his eyes glazing over as I pictured Shirley, her body a ruminant mess of flesh and sticky plasma, silly putty-like on the floor. Geoff’s cry broke my sad reverie.

“What, you almost lost your wife? I hope I never get to the point where I can’t hold onto my wife that she slips out of my hands and falls to the floor.” I nodded miserably. “I’ll never be like that,” repeated Geoff, his voice rising like the slight breeze from the west, his voice held tight and wailing like a spirit. “My wife won’t ever get lost. I’ll make sure of that. And she’ll never forget who she’s married to.”

“Yes, I had to hold on tight to her, and grab her by the back of her neck,” Dad said, knowing enough to ignore Geoff. Imagining Shirley held tight like the pup in a mother’s mouth, I released my breath and moved into the remnant of sunlight haloing Geoff’s left shoulder. I held the last rays tight, waiting for Geoff’s next volley. His imaginary wife didn’t know how good she had it.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF AN UNCHANGING ALMOND CROISSANT, *Siu Siu Sik*

When Z hears on the kitchen radio that his first love MMF has just been elected the first female Empress of Happy Kingdom, he is whipping the cream for his daughter Emma's birthday cake, his wife Katy kneading bread dough, his cat Medusa yawning by the sink. Neither of them says anything. All you could hear was the whooping of the radio host, the beating of the whisk, the punching of the dough. And the shuffling of some LEGO bricks from Emma's room. Occasionally you could hear neighbors cheering next door, people honking on the street and police sounding the siren.

Then they come haunting. The memories.

Z tries to suppress them. And focus on the cream.

But fails. And is forced to relive them all.

He avoids the romantic. And the erotic.

He swallows. And shuts down his mind.

But fails. And is taken to the scene he dislikes.

Taken to the time he pulled out a Band-Aid from his mouthful of almond croissant. Startled he examined it between his thumb and index finger. He extended his arm to get a better view. On the cloth was a small patch of blood reminiscent of an unhealthy person. Z spat out the rest of the mouthful, now porridge-like and amorphous. He remained calm.

What? asked M when she saw the mush.

Gross! exclaimed M before Z could say anything. A Band-Aid?

M stood up from her seat and walked towards the cashier. Z took her hand and said, Just leave it.

Leave it? said M. It's unheard-of! A Band-Aid with blood stain in a goddamn croissant! How can you leave it?

Sit down first, will you? Z nudged her on the elbow and M sat back down.

Go talk to them, she said, arms crossed.

But, love, can't you see? It's New Year's Eve. They're busy. It's an accident. I can just remove the Band-Aid and eat it. It's still the same.

Manslaughter with a Band-Aid is okay? Busyness justifies negligence? What if it's not an accident? What if they always serve you a little something extra?

Now you're exaggerating.

Because you're avoiding confrontation again! You're risking lives with your "just leave it"!

Why are you getting cross with me? It's the first time we see each other in months and you're fussing about a goddamn croissant. Why can't we just enjoy our time? Let's get going and never come back?

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF AN UNCHANGING ALMOND CROISSANT, *continued*

Z, you chicken out a bit too much sometimes. You really do.

Daddy! Daddy! Look! screams Emma. I made a spaceship!

Wow, Z says with delay. Is it for us?

Yes! I'll take you and Mommy to the Moon!

Will you take your brother too?

I don't have a brother!

Well, you do.

Where?

In your Mommy's belly.

Really?

Yes, now, build a bigger spaceship for four people. Daddy needs to bake your cake.

Emma skips back to her room, Z back to whisking, Katy pinching the dough into different shapes.

Seems like your daughter wants to be an astronaut, says Katy.

It's too early to tell.

Anything but a politician. Anything but an MMF.

Z nods, reluctant to talk about his first love beside his love.

Not that I don't like her, continues Katy. I just don't want to support her simply because she's a woman.

But you're a woman too. Doesn't that do you—us—good?

Good? Politics, as I always say, is a rotten avocado. It tastes like mushy trash no matter who you are. Anyway, it's too early to tell, says Katy, mimicking Z's voice.

Yes, Z says. And takes some paper towels, wipes off the flour on Katy's face and kisses her neck.

Then a Corolla pulls into their driveway.

Who's that? Z asks.

It's Johnny and Bridget. I told you they're coming.

Did you? Wouldn't it be better with the three of us alone?

Just this time, for me. I'll get the door.

When the guests come in they comment on how the sun shines here not there, how there is snow here not there. Followed by hugs. Perhaps. Coats off. Time to. Smell of the food. Send her. Praise. An email. A Foam Clay set for Emma. To. Wine to the bar. Congratulate her.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF AN UNCHANGING ALMOND CROISSANT, *continued*

Z?

Yes, he says, in a trance.

I'm gonna show them the primroses. Keep the dough from Medusa.

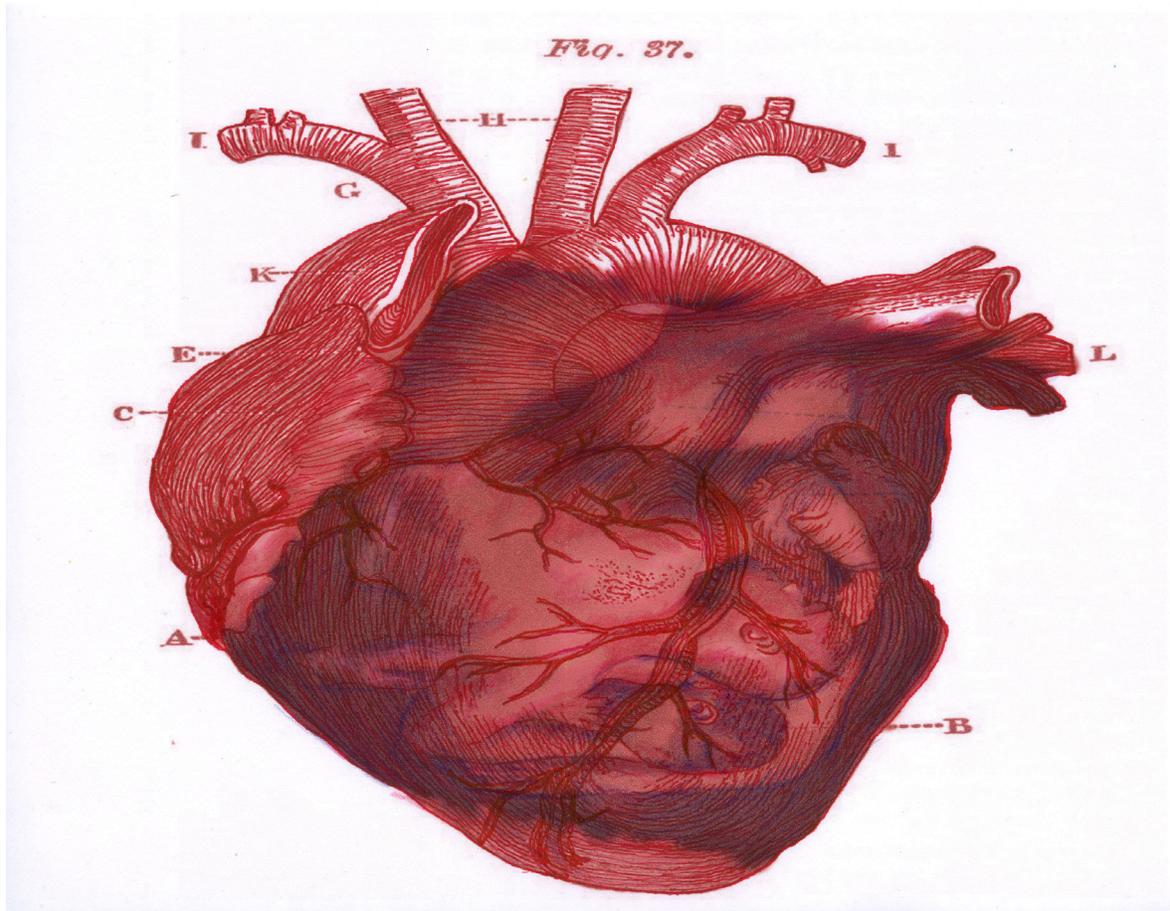
Okay.

And there the dough keeps rising and rising, Z, one hand reaching for his phone, staring and staring.

Into infinity and mutability.

And the unchanging almond croissant.

MERGING HEARTS 5, Stephen Mead



Dimensions: 8" x 10"
Materials: Ink and Pencil

TOO BLESSED TO BE STRESSED, *Rebecca Ciota*

Rosalia, God of the Golden Tamarins, sat on the edge of her desk. Like the animals that worship them, Rosalia was an orange-red monkey with little claws. They wrapped their tail around the pencil cup and stared at Alice.

She tried not to look at the monkey god. She had to clean up this mess. The Fast, Good, and Terrible film was all anyone could talk about. The journalist/media personality Josh Malone ate a So-Good Burger, Fast Fries, and a Minty Milkshake every day for 28 days. (He ran his idiot stunt in February.) He gained twenty pounds, vomited on-screen, and whined about how bad his mood was. The documentary didn't mention that he stopped exercising...and there were plenty of Fast n' Good items that would not have made him as fat or grumpy. Who ate burgers, fries, and a milkshake for every meal for a month straight, anyway?

A message had come in from the CEO. You need to get this under control. It's been two weeks, and our stock is down 15%.

"Too bad," she grumbled. "You can't clean up this big of a clusterfuck in two weeks."

The media didn't care about that. Of course. Whatever got the most clicks and views was their "angle." What had happened to journalism since Alice had graduated with a journalism degree? And activist investors were equally annoying, demanding that Fast n' Good switch to organics only. She never understood investors. (That was Investor Relations' job.)

"Don't be so pessimistic." A yellow-green margarita appeared in Rosalia's paws. Alice waved dismissively. "I can't drink at work."

The margarita vanished. Tamarin-god magic. "Think how lucky you are," said Rosalia. "After Triton Cola let you go, you didn't think you'd ever get another PR job."

"And you got me the job," she grumbled. She had been an atheist. But two years out of a job with two daughters about to go to college, Alice had been desperate. She had prayed to whatever would listen.

Apparently, that was a monkey god.

Alice got her job as VP of Communications at Fast n' Good. She had thought it was a blessing. But with this media crisis, it was now her job to develop the unified response to this crisis. She had developed a campaign of "What we agree with, what we disagree with." Everything was facts or opinions. (Which you couldn't be sued for.) No false claims or unscrupulous evasions. All the spokespeople stuck to the script. The media was frustrated by it, always trying to incite someone with accusatory questions. And she and her team were the ones who had to put in 80-hour work weeks. Some blessing.

TOO BLESSED TO BE STRESSED, *continued*

"Don't look so depressed." Rosalia's fur rippled. "You are so lucky."

Alice's head was throbbing, and she was still furious at the reporter she had spoken to an hour ago. He had accused Fast n' Good of being the sole cause of the obesity epidemic. She had wanted to scream at him. She congratulated herself on keeping cool. But it was so easy to look grumpy...and not feel lucky.

The god's magic forced Alice's mouth into a smile. Her palms burned until she piped, with false cheerfulness, "You're right. I am so lucky to have this job. And I'm so lucky that Fast n' Good is getting so much publicity."

Rosalia conjured a flower and chewed on it. "That's much better. It's very sad when you're not grateful."

Alice didn't mention that she wasn't grateful anymore. Being VP of Communications was more stress than it was worth. And having a manipulative god following you around was not the blessing Rosalia seemed to think it was.

"Now, let's write to your boss," they said. "Dear Wenyi, This situation will sort itself out. We simply need to continue using the talking points. They are effective and efficient and don't give any room for further controversy. This crisis will be over shortly. – Alice."

This was why you shouldn't let a monkey write your work emails.

When Alice hesitated on sending the email, the god caused her wrists to ache so badly that she began to cry. Rosalia tapped on the mouse, sending the message themselves. "Why is it so hard to send an email?" they admonished. "I've blessed you with a prestigious and well-paying job. I've helped you lose weight. I got your daughter a full-ride scholarship to that college she was raving about and you didn't think you could afford. I even got you a new boyfriend who rides motorcycles. Just like you wanted."

Alice smiled bright, rubbing her wrists. Better to play along. "I was just spell-checking. I didn't want to send it with a typo."

"You think I would let you make a typo?" Rosalia curled their tail around themselves. "You worry too much."

"I try not to." Alice's face hurt from the fake smile. "Sometimes, life is hard."

"Not when I'm here." They pat her hand with their tiny claws. "Maybe we'll schedule an appointment with a psychiatrist. I'm sure a drug or two will help with your stress levels."

"Sounds great!" she lied.

"It'll be on your calendar in the morning," said Rosalia. "Now, you should prepare

TOO BLESSED TO BE STRESSED, *continued*

your talking points for that CNN interview tomorrow. And remember..."

"I'm too blessed to be stressed."

She beamed ridiculously until the god had vanished. Her face slumped and she rubbed her eyes. How did you get rid of a monkey god?

FAMILY CHRONICLE, *Aitana Alberti*

Surrounded by my dogs I'm at the center of life
Some stare at me from afar with eyes of water in love
others on my lap keep away shadows

Corridors converge around
where Father walks weaving poems
that curved mirrors keep repeating
The word is fueled by silence
and soaks up all the air around me

In dark corners Mother talks to Death
Death is eternally hungry
devours with greedy tricks
and Mother finally gives up her small skeleton
before I steal a bit of fear from her

Meanwhile Father resorts to the last exorcism
because nothing is forbidden
when glory plays its bugles
and holds the key to paradises or mirages
that split up in apocalyptic escapes
or rock him in eternal dreams
Mother leaves us forever her agony in whispers
and lifts up all my pains
I feel her lean against my body
she has woven her cocoon inside me
with tangled threads that join our heads
And together we gaze at a strange view
from the desolate shore

Translated by: Toshiya Kamei

CRÓNICA FAMILIAR, *Aitana Alberti*

Rodeada de mis perros estoy en el centro de la vida
Algunos me miran desde lejos con ojos de agua enamorada
otros en mi regazo ahuyentan sombras

Alrededor convergen corredores
donde padre camina devanando poemas
que espejos curvos repiten sin descanso
La palabra se nutre del silencio
absorbe todo el aire de mi entorno

En rincones oscuros madre dialoga con la Muerte
La Muerte tiene hambres inmortales
con ávidos engaños la devora
y madre al fin le entrega el pequeño esqueleto
sin que yo pueda hurtarle ni un ápice de espanto

Padre en tanto recurre al último exorcismo
porque nada es vedado
cuando la gloria toca sus clarines
Accede a paraísos o espejismos
que se disgregan en fugas apocalípticas
o lo mecen en sueños de eternidad
Madre nos deja para siempre su agonía en susurros
alza en vilo todos mis dolores
la siento recostada en mi cuerpo
dentro de mí ha tejido su capullo
con los hilos enmarañados que unen nuestras cabezas
Y juntas contemplamos desde la orilla desolada
un panorama extraño

Translated by: Toshiya Kamei

WAS IT LOVE? *Frederick Fullerton*

Paul hadn't seen Ursula in 30 years. What do you say after so many years to a woman you once believed you loved? All he could think of was "Hi, it's good to see you again" and smile.

He stayed in Germany after his discharge from the Air Force. The Cold War's geopolitical tension still kept people fearful and Germany was still divided into East and West. Wiesbaden, where he had been stationed, became his expat home. Paul taught English at a private language school, translated diverse documents into English for German companies, and tutored English to Germans who wanted to improve their English.

Two years later, Paul moved to Munich, doing what he did in Wiesbaden. Soon after, he met Ursula at a cabaret performance at Muh, a popular nightspot for students, artists, and intellectuals in the early 1980s. She was a vivacious art student at Munich's Academy of Fine Arts and he was stricken not only by her natural beauty, wit, and effervescence, but also by her deep-throated laugh, which he found contagious.

A year later, Paul left Munich and Ursula to return to the States and eventually pursued a successful career in advertising and public relations. After he retired, he returned to Germany to visit old friends and haunts. His old hangouts were mostly long gone but many of his old friends were still alive and kicking.

When he contacted Ursula, who now owned a gallery in Munich's trendy Schwabing neighborhood, she agreed to meet him for a cup of coffee and a chat at Cadu, a well-known café on Leopoldstrasse. They sat at a sidewalk table and ordered coffee—a cappuccino for her and a double espresso with a side of water for him. Ursula was fluent in three languages, but English wasn't one of them. She always spoke to him in German and pronounced his name the German way, which sounded like Powl. Now in her late 50s, Ursula's hair was streaked with gray and white, her face showed a few wrinkles, and she was thinner than he remembered, yet he still would have recognized her immediately. She wouldn't have recognized him at all, she said, noting how he was bald and his once multicolored beard was now white. She added that at least he still appeared fit, unlike many men his age. Paul smiled and shrugged. "I do what I can," he said.

"So, Paul, what do you now that you're retired?" she asked.

"I do what many retired old men do," he replied.

She shook her head and laughed, "But you're not old! My mother is old at 92, not you. So what do retired old men do?"

WAS IT LOVE? *continued*

"You don't know?" he asked.

"How would I? I'm a woman and not retired."

"We sit in our easy chairs before supper, listen to music, sip a glass of wine or whiskey, and relive the past. We think about when we were still young and fantasize how our lives could have been—or maybe should have been."

"That sounds frustrating and pointless to me," she responded.

"Perhaps it is," Paul said nodding.

"And what should have been? Did you really love me then?" she asked, her eyes searching.

Paul stared at her but didn't speak. Should he tell her how often he still thought about her—especially her? How after he sought a love never found? Did he ever really love anyone? He sipped his espresso. "I think so. You were different—a delightful mix of Eros and intellect—you mesmerized me," he said finally.

"Think? Didn't you know? If you loved me, why did you leave?" she asked, suddenly sounding cross.

"Did you love me? I knew you cared for me in your own way, but was it love?" he countered.

"Maybe, but I was torn between Dieter and you."

"Ah, yes, Dieter the artist!" Paul interjected, remembering when she spent that New Year's with Dieter in Düsseldorf while he sat alone in his studio apartment in Haidhausen.

"Look, it was a long time ago. My first priority was to finish my studies at the university," she said.

"And I was torn between feeling stuck in Munich, perhaps as a second fiddle to Dieter, or pursuing a different life in the States," Paul riposted.

"But you struggled after you returned to the States," she reminded him.

"Yes, but ultimately things fell into place. It just took much longer than I expected."

"And you wept when I helped you pack your books and belongings to be shipped."

He nodded. "I wept because I really didn't want to leave," he said, recalling that raw, overcast March day when she helped him pack.

"When you left, I felt as if part of me left too," she said. "I kept thinking about our first night together."

WAS IT LOVE? *continued*

They didn't speak for several moments. Finally, Ursula leaned forward in her seat and waved her hand in front of his face. "Are you there, Paul?" she asked.

Paul looked at her sheepishly. "Got me! You just took me back in time—but here we are years later."

She nodded. "It has been a long time—a very long time."

"We were young and full of dreams. Did we realize then where our dreams might lead us?" he asked.

"Our dreams? At the time, they were hardly more than passing thoughts. I never dreamed that I would one day be a mother and own a gallery. Do you remember my friend Anneliese and how the three of us promised to meet after 10 years on June 10 at 10:00 a.m. in Paris in front of the Pantheon?"

"I do, but not why we chose to meet in Paris instead of in Munich or someplace else. Of course, I never made it. Life got in the way."

"Paris was my idea. You remember how I always preferred France to Germany, don't you? I didn't make it either, I was a single mother raising a young daughter and had just opened the gallery," she said and then remained silent.

Paul waited for her to continue. "I assume Anneliese never made it either," he said quietly.

"No, she was going through a divorce. She never had much luck in love. We lost touch long ago."

"People change and relationships dissolve."

"And now? Am I an old friend or an old love?" she asked.

"I'd like to think we're still friends. Aren't we?"

"Why not?" she answered, looking at her watch. "But now I must return to the gallery."

They both stood and embraced, kissing chastely, promising to keep in touch. She began to leave, turned, and waved. Paul waved back then sat down again, thinking about the juxtaposition of his two lives: the past in Germany and the present in the States. He thought how ironic that after living a full life with a successful career he still felt unfulfilled. Would his life have been different if he had remained in Munich?

He thought of the German word Glück, which means both luck and happiness. There was a time when he thought he had both; now he felt caught between the two. Could a person be lucky and happy? Would there be a miraculous reconciliation of opposites and he'd once again feel both? He thought about Ursula. Was it love?

WAS IT LOVE? *continued*

Paul signaled the waiter, paid, and left a tip. Early the following morning he took a train to Frankfurt and caught the next flight home.

#

THE SURVEY, *Oguz Dinc*

"What's this about?" asks the guy. He's pudgy; a man of middle-height. A small bag on his shoulder.

"About a new drink," says the young surveyor, and opens a new page on his forms. His face is slim, arms slender, he's at least twenty centimeters taller than the guy, and in his lucid green eyes shines the light of cheer and confidence. One of those people who never put on weight. When he asked if he would like to join their survey, this guy first said, "Sorry," went on his way, and then came back.

"Okay, let's do this," says the guy, smiling, and the surveyor begins; any family or relative working in the advertisement or food industry? No. Great. The guy is living in Istanbul, working and earning his living. Did you participate in a similar survey in the past three months? No.

"What are we doing now?"

They slip away from the crowd in Beyoglu and enter a building nearby. The manners of the surveyor reveal that he has been brought up in a decent, middle-class family. A handsome, kind young man whom his father would dream to see in a groom's suit at his wedding ceremony.

"Are you a student?" asks the guy, as they climb the stairs.

"Yeah, I study in Denizli," says the young man, the fulfillment of passing the university exam in his voice.

A large room. A computer placed on the office desk by the entrance. The grissini breadsticks on the plastic plates, and clear plastic cups are waiting on the tables set for the survey.

They sit across from each other at the table by the window.

The first drink to test is muddy, looks like a fruit juice.

"You can have a grissini if you'd like."

The guy reaches to the grissinis, which look like small wooden parts, and, "These are wet," he says, smiling, "did you wash them or something?"

"I guess they spilled water on them accidentally," replies the young man, his lips purse as if to mean, "Oh, shoot, who wet these?" and he hands the guy the answer form.

"Did you like the look of this drink? Would be great if you could answer according to the form. Yes, that part..."

"Honestly, I didn't like it," says the guy, "too cloudy," and he checks the scoring scale, "two."

The surveyor marks "two" on his form. This time, the way he purses his lips seems

THE SURVEY, *continued*

to say, "Shoot, he didn't like it." The guy waits for him to finish marking with a friendly smile that guarantees he will complete the survey smoothly.

The questions continue, but this drink is a hopeless case and gets a poor score.

They wait for the service guy to bring the second one.

"What are you studying?" asks the guy.

"Chemistry."

"Engineering or teaching?"

"Teaching."

"Great. Living in Istanbul?"

The young man was born and raised in Istanbul; he's going to Denizli for school and doing this job part-time during the summer break.

In the meantime, an excited girl steps into the room and grins curiously. The surveyor who accompanies her, a young man with loose hair, takes her to the table at the corner.

The second drink is red, like cherry soda. The guy pops a grissini into his mouth and takes a sip.

The surveyor skips some words, reading the instructions hurriedly. "How much would you consume of this drink?"

"Well, it's tasty, I could easily have two buckets if I let myself. Maybe it's, 'How much would you consume per day?'"

"That's right, per day."

"I'd say, two glasses."

"Okay, and where would you prefer to consume this drink?"

"I liked it, so I would consume it wherever I find it," replies the guy and checks the options. "At the office, for instance, or at home, at other people's homes, I'd drink anything in someone else's home, would be impolite if you don't, when you're the guest." He observes the movements of the 0.5mm pencil in the young man's hand as if watching an old movie.

The surveyor goes to bring the new drink.

Out the window, the guy can see the historical engravings on the wall of the adjacent building. White marble, bearded men's faces. A beige-colored air conditioner hidden in a balcony. The pigeon perched on the railings returns his gaze.

The third drink is tea-colored. The guy speeds up in answering.

The roar of the street repair trucks, which has become chronic in Beyoglu in the

THE SURVEY, *continued*

past two years, fills the room.

"How much would you pay for this drink?"

The guy's lips move, but the roar prevents the surveyor from hearing him. "Sorry, I can't hear you," he says and extends his ear, and when the young man gets that the guy is just pretending to speak, they burst into laughter.

"Nice joke, huh?"

"Yeah, it is," the young man replies; he wasn't expecting anything like that.

The fourth drink is cranberry flavored. The guy likes its sweet and sour taste, and it gets the highest scores. Its color is great. The sweetness level, precisely the way he likes it. The cranberry taste, he totally liked it. He'd definitely buy it. Red would look good on its package.

Thanks.

"That's it?"

"Yep, that's it," the surveyor replies.

Walking out of the building, the young man asks in a candid voice, "I wonder why you went away first, and then came back."

The buzz of the planes flying over Halic for Red Bull Air Race is echoing in Beyoglu.

The guy puts on his sunglasses and smiles. "I remembered my elder brother; he had done this surveyor job for years when he was at the university."

They warmly shake hands.

Watching the guy walk away and become a tiny motion in the wave of the crowd flowing toward Galatasaray, "I will take the surveys, too," the young man promises to himself. And his future suddenly looks so far away, and so out of reach.

THE BURN OF TEENAGE HEARTBREAK, *Traci Musick*

"Is your son dating anyone? I have a student who is quite pretty and smart, but she doesn't have a date for the prom. She is extremely distraught."

My cell phone pinged and lit up like a flare in the night sky. A friend, who teaches at a neighboring school district, woke me from a sweet slumber with a teenager's urgent plea.

In a flash, I am shot backwards to 1988.

It is my senior year at South Point High School. This last year of high school, filled with the highs of academic and musical accomplishments, lingers like bitter medicine in my mouth. The laceration of senior prom overshadows my memory. As another prom season approaches, my scar from three decades ago throbs like a third-degree burn in this former nerd's teenage soul. Rubbing across this once-upon-a-time wound, I am reminded of the night I lied and labeled it as a "good time."

During senior English class, I recalled sailing through grammar review exercises. So intent on my work one day, I never saw the note appear. Navigating through the blue Warriner's English Grammar and Composition textbook was my territory. I reigned as Grammar Queen Supreme. Warriner's had nothing on me. I reveled in the grammar exercises that Mr. Wheeler, our teacher, piled on us. I was in the zone. When the spiral edging of perforated notebook paper magically appeared on my desk, I hadn't even noticed.

"Adjective clause here. Adverb clause there. I am on a roll!" I whispered, championing myself through the sentences.

"Psst! Look!"

Burl leaned his Charlie Brown-sized head towards my desk and pointed with his pencil to the spiral edging wadded up next to my beloved Warriner's. He sat two seats away from me and with wide eyes continued pointing.

I hadn't even noticed the miniscule note on my desk. How could I? My focus centered on slaughtering those sentences and serving up some major clauses to feed to those independent ones. Why was my best guy friend interrupting my work here? I had my grammar groove going. I was slicing and dicing away! What did he want?

As I unrolled the spiral edging, I saw nothing.

"What?" I mouthed to him hoping not to get caught talking. Mr. Wheeler was not in the mood to be tested today. He made that clear at the beginning of class.

"Look!" Jeff mouthed again pointing his pencil towards the tiny paper in my hands. When I looked again, I saw in the tiniest of handwriting: "Have you got a date for

THE BURN OF TEENAGE HEARTBREAK, *continued*

the prom?”

Are you kidding me? This guy, a friend of mine, ranked as the smartest kid in our senior class, wrote, “Have you got?” Wasn’t he paying attention to these grammar exercises? Didn’t he know the proper form to that question was “Do you have a date for the prom?” Sheesh!

With the quick stroke of my pencil, I scribbled back: “I feel so stupid! I didn’t know this was a note! No, I do not have a date.” I enlarged the word “have” to stress the point that even though I wasn’t ranked number one in our class, I knew how to write properly. Doubtful he even noticed, but my Grammar Queen tiara would not be tarnished by such sloppy style.

The sad truth remained: I had agonized for months about getting asked to prom. In high school, I learned that acquiring academic knowledge wasn’t the only goal. I had also learned an important social reality: my book-loving, teacher’s pet, homework-always-completed, awkwardly-shy ways never snagged me a date to any dances. For last year’s junior prom, I begged a sophomore at church to go with me. I didn’t want to be the lone loser without a date. I even had to drive. The poor kid wasn’t old enough to have a driver’s license. With senior prom breathing down my anxiety-ridden neck, I was distraught that I would find myself once again begging—possibly even paying—someone to escort me to prom.

But now...facing the wadded up perforated note of an ill-phrased “have you got a date,” I felt a mountainous glacier of anxiety melt off my shoulders. Why not Burl? He’s my best guy friend in the world. I knew he had recently split with his longtime girlfriend. As friends, we had even watched a couple of movies together. So what if everyone jokingly called him by his middle name “Burl.” That didn’t make him a bad person. And maybe he did have a bulbous-like head much bigger than the rest of his body. No big deal! That bobble head of his was packed top-full of knowledge. I had witnessed him in action on the quiz team. And who really cared that he spoke with a thick, country boy accent and threw out occasional incorrect verb tenses? Most of the kids in my school did that, too. I was used to it.

So, plans were set. I had a prom date that I didn’t have to beg, cajole, or even pay into going. Senior life was good.

Or was it?

On the horizon loomed a scent I couldn’t quite put my finger on. What was it? My head said to me, “be on guard,” but I pushed it aside. I had a date. That’s all that mat

THE BURN OF TEENAGE HEARTBREAK, *continued*

tered.

On Friday, April 29, 1988, senior prom took place at the Marshall University Student Center, which was a short fifteen-minute drive from our tiny village of South Point, Ohio. I purchased a purple sequin and taffeta prom dress months earlier in hopes that I would have a date. Now that I was going with one of my best friends, my heart hammered with anticipation that this prom would be the best.

“No, you cannot tuck in the straps,” my pious father chided me. “The straps are meant to be worn, or you will not go,” he continued as I walked into the living room to get the mandatory family pre-dance pictures taken.

“Oh, my God,” I murmured to myself as I yanked out the spaghetti straps of my dress. “I can’t even look like the other girls.” I knew they would all be wearing strapless dresses.

I thought my father wanted me to forever remain in the Laura Ingalls Wilder stage, dressing like Little House on the Prairie. Still, I had a date and would not let little dress straps ruin my night. In my idealized, romantic head, proms represented enchanted, magical evenings where girls got swept off their feet by their dates. Slow dances would happen where hearts would beat as one. Whirling through my naiveté dreams, I thought prom was Cinderella’s ball, and I wanted to WOW—even in my nerdy, spaghetti strap sort of way.

So off I went baring those spaghetti straps as Burl drove me to enchantment. But life has a way of reshaping naïve misshapen minds.

With Richard Marx’s “Endless Summer Nights” crooning as our prom theme, I stood breathless in the center of the university ballroom. It glimmered in candlelight. With emerald green and silver balloons carpeting the parquet dance floor, shimmering cardboard silhouettes of city scenes dotted the room’s landscape. The Dance Dimensions DJ pumped out the tunes of INXS, George Michael, Rick Astley, Michael Jackson, and Billy Ocean. For a moment, I stood and let the DJ’s multicolored dance lights wash over me. The warm bath glow stoked a fire in each cell of my soul. I felt radiant. I turned and hugged my best friends who had arrived. All four of us jumped and squealed with delight.

But...wait. What was missing in this dance scene? Air conditioning.

Why was it so blazing hot? Standing in that ballroom, I felt the heat smother me, and then a waterfall of wetness glided from my hairline down my face. Oh no! Hair and make-up emergency activated in an instant. I had jacked my hair to Jesus with one full

THE BURN OF TEENAGE HEARTBREAK, *continued*

can of Aqua Net, and now that effort would all be in vain. My 80's poof quickly deteriorated into a sticky goo against my head.

As Billy Ocean cranked through the stereo speakers, "Get Outta My Dreams, Get into My Car," I be-bopped on the dance floor with my girlfriends. For every fast dance, my pre-prom angst of finding a date became a more distant memory. My golden girl friends and I could dance our hearts out without any dance partners.

But the first slow song brought out an issue that had never even occurred to me. What happened when a date reunited with his ex-girlfriend at the prom? Where was my slow dance partner? Oh yeah, I spied him playing kissy-face with his former but now present girlfriend on the dance floor.

Like a wounded soldier who has lost the battle, I slunk back to my table to watch all the couples dance their magical moment to Exposé's "Seasons Change." Indeed, how fast seasons do change. My season of joy spiraled like a downed jet into a season of discontent. I was left sitting alone with my hair plastered to my head as the sequin top of my dress rubbed my boobs while the spaghetti straps slid down my shoulders. They seemed to remind me that I was the girl no one wanted as a date.

As I looked around the room, I was one of three sitting alone. Twirling the purple satin ribbons dangling from my nosegay, I spied the Ken and Barbie of my senior class nuzzling on the dancefloor. Their matching fake tans and Ultra Brite teeth glowed in the candlelight. I wondered what it was like to be in their dancing shoes? To be labeled the "pretty couple," to always have a Friday night date, or to reign as the cheerleader dating the captain of the football team? I watched them and felt sorry for myself. Where was my Ken doll? Would I ever be the girl that someone pursued?

For every slow song played that night, my status remained the same: I sat alone, picking at the sticky sequins rubbing me in all the wrong places. The smell of rejection billowed around me like the stench of methane. My sour face manifested defeat; it didn't help my slow dance cause.

In the end, this social laceration cut me to the core and left me bleeding on the dance floor. The looming storm which once clouded my pre-prom thoughts had finally burst forth, raining down and washing away my Cinderella fantasy.

As I returned my friend's cell phone message, I recalled being the once-dis-traught girl hoping, wishing for an enchanted prom. I know not having a date felt the same as walking around with malaria—like being an infection no one wants near. After rubbing this old wound once again, I resolved to help find this girl a date. In my senior

THE BURN OF TEENAGE HEARTBREAK, *continued*

scrapbook, I documented the 1988 prom as a “good time.” With a wry grin, I knew those two words were a lie.

Today, my good friend, Burl, describes himself as a “distinguished engineer” on social media. I knew his bulbous head would land him a great career. Although he didn't marry his high school sweetheart, he did marry someone a few years younger than us.

And even though I still remember the third-degree burn of a terrible senior prom, my heart has since wrapped itself around Ken. Yes, every night I get to fall asleep in the arms of former Mr. Fake Tan and captain of the football team. In the end, I realize even a bad prom makes for a memory. More than thirty years have passed since this “burn.” Since then, I've come to learn that what matters most are grateful hearts burning for one another. Also, that home can be found in a loved one's arms.

Who would have guessed back in 1988 that this nerd would one day become someone's Barbie? Through my Ken doll, the burn of teenage heartache finds soothing relief.

IN PASSING, *holly day*

If I could just make myself believe
that all of the ants swarming on the sidewalk
contained the souls of all of the people I've lost
I would be happy to lie down right here
and let them crawl all over me, whisper shared memories in my ear
tell me they're still with me. If I could have some assurance
that this was so, I would lie down right now.

And if I stayed still long enough, I imagine
they would find some way to end my time here as well
remove the bits of offending flesh one tiny piece at a time
until I, too, am only a tiny insect scurrying
out of my desiccated corpse, free to be with my friends, my family
once again. I would be happy to let them take me
completely apart, knowing that this was the only way
I could be with them once again, but I would need

some sort of proof first, some guarantee
I wouldn't emerge a frog or a spider, a great, furry anteater
bent on destroying all of these people I loved
all over again.

THEM NEAR ME, *Jo Rohlfing*

i held their hand as i held still on the double long gurney
they looked over to me
and squeezed
down went their gown of needles as they searched along my hips
blood clots covering my womb blocking the doctors vision from the view of the growth
i gave motherhood a kiss
it was tender— full love— bitter
i kissed them away as i squeezed

AND BETWEEN THE TOES, *Jo Rohlfing*

Behind the ear. Dust.

Under the bed. Dust.

In the flower pot. Dust.

NEEDY SOUL, *Dan Keeble*

Joanne Hillman sat at her desk and projected her intentions onto the piece of rough quartz crystal. Alert blue-grey eyes denied her sixty years. She hoped that an ethereal message would draw him to her. The scent of moonrise candles and patchouli sweet-grass incense stifled the room.

As with all her first meetings she could show the sweet side of her nature; she could be demure. But her body bent deliberately to disguise her height allowed an oversized silver Pictish pendant to swing threateningly in front of her.

Reginald was sixty too. Not handsome, but respectful. She ran a finger over his name on the card. It read boss man. Flippant, sense of humour, or commanding? It didn't matter.

She replied to his one letter, selecting a purple pencil from the ornate jar she bought from Spirit & Soul. Purple is a capturing colour. Enticing. She allowed the pencil freedom to guide her words, but it had nothing to say.

Each morning she filled a skull mug with tepid water. It was held aloft while she recited the lotus mantra, before decanting a little of the contents into the saucer of the potted poinsettia. It was the gift Reginald brought to their meeting. It carried on dying despite her care.

Joanne laid the tarot cards with purpose. They told her she would make herself more attractive if she was to dye her hair deep auburn.

THE POLLINATOR, Susan Sarver



Dimensions: 8" x 10"

Materials: Oil on Board

THE GOLDEN HOUR, *Jonathan Payne*

Twenty Twenty

You remember the arrival but not the journey.

Deep into a night full of stars, you are woken by a sense that the ship is slowing. Dazed, with sandals in hand, you emerge onto the deck to find lines of passengers streaming up the beach. The stragglers are illuminated by starlight, the leaders disappearing into gloom.

You follow, joining the back of a line, only then realizing that your luggage is still in the cabin. Don't worry, says someone, in a heavy accent; luggage will be taken care of. The sand is damp under your toes.

Above you, perched on a cliff, is a mansion the like of which you have known only in story books. Towers and turrets, wings and balconies. Flaming torches around the grand entrance are buffeted by swirling sea mist.

The lobby, the size of a railway station, smells of incense and log fires. It throngs with new arrivals chattering, exploring. You have never set foot in this place before, and yet it is familiar, as if from a dream.

#

Twenty Twenty Three

It is several days before you become familiar with the routine of the house, and still you often find yourself lost in its halls and anterooms. In contrast to the bustle of arrival day, the atmosphere has settled into the whispered hum of a convent. Your room is functional, but austere. You spend no time there, aside from sleeping, preferring instead to walk the grounds and corridors. People passing by keep their heads down; they are respectful but not quite friendly. Perhaps they speak other languages.

There is always work to be done. On some days you sweep floors and clean fireplaces; other days you chop vegetables; occasionally you chop wood. To your knowledge, there is no roster, but everyone finds useful tasks, it seems, without instruction.

In the evenings, when the day's work is over, you gravitate to the great room, where there is often music or poetry by the ornate fireplace. Both are plaintive, in languages you do not understand. Sometimes, when the armchair is comfortable, you fall asleep by the fire. On one occasion, you wake again suddenly, overwhelmed by the sense that you have left something behind.

#

Twenty Twenty Five

You are in the kitchen, preparing vegetables, the first time you hear the phrase the

THE GOLDEN HOUR, *continued*

golden hour. It is whispered between two people tending to cooking pots on the stove. They stand with their backs to you. Have you heard, asks the first person. There's going to be a golden hour. Wonderful, wonderful, says the other person. How soon? Soon, says the first person. Wonderful.

#

Twenty Twenty Six

That evening, just after sunset, you wander into the great room, but it is empty. The fireplace stands dark and cold. The sky is lighter than it ought to be; something is happening outside. Pressing your face to the window, you see hundreds of people, perhaps thousands, in the grounds. Some are standing, some are sitting, all are looking up to the sky. Tonight there are not only stars but also streaks of shimmering light in blue and orange and gold. The lights are moving, changing shape, dispersing and reforming. They cast an eerie glow over the throng.

Tentatively, you walk out onto the stone entrance steps. The gathering spreads not only across the grounds but also down onto the beach below. Everyone is watching the sky.

You move down onto the lawn to get a better view. Taking your cue from those nearby, you sit cross-legged on the grass and look straight up. At first, the image above you is blurred, and for a few moments you enjoy the extraordinary light show. In your peripheral vision, you notice that some people are attempting to converse with the lights; some are even standing on tiptoe and reaching up to touch the sky.

Slowly but surely the image above you comes into focus. The scene stirs deep feelings of familiarity. Four people are in a garden, an older person and three younger. They are talking calmly, and there is a tenderness about them, but sadness as well. You stand and tilt an ear to the sky, in the hope of hearing the conversation, but the only sounds are the murmur of the crowd and the lapping of waves below.

You cannot take your eyes off the scene. Eventually, the three younger people stand up as if to leave, apparently saying goodbye. The older person, now alone, goes inside a familiar house. This person moves around the house, perhaps tidying, perhaps looking for something. After a while, the lights inside the house are extinguished. All that remains of the scene is a single exterior light that casts a dim glow across the garden. The wind picks up, causing trees to sway.

Next to you on the lawn sits an older couple, arm in arm, enthralled in the lights above them. You notice that their lights are still bright, still moving and dancing. To you,

THE GOLDEN HOUR, *continued*

the image above them is blurred. Perhaps their scene, although different, stirs in them similar feelings of familiarity.

You look at your own lights once more. The trees in the familiar garden continue to sway gently beside the sleeping house. You watch the peaceful scene until it, and indeed all the lights, fade slowly to black, leaving only stars. The ambient glow across the grounds and beach collapses suddenly into darkness, like the beginning of a solar eclipse. All around you, people begin to stand and stretch and walk slowly back to the house.

#

Twenty Twenty Seven

You spend much of the next day raking leaves. Although there are many others also working in the grounds, no one says a word about the previous night. While resting under a tree, you attempt to engage some fellow workers in a conversation about what happened; they excuse themselves politely and return to work.

#

Twenty Twenty Nine

Your second golden hour arrives with as little ceremony as the first. You are relaxing in a deckchair after dinner, overlooking the grounds, when the light begins to change. As the sun goes down, the sky turns first to a deep gold, before blue and orange streaks begin to appear. Slowly at first, and then with a steady flow, people emerge from the house to find space outside. You follow some of the early arrivals down the cliff to the beach, where you choose a spot on the sand almost close enough to reach out and touch the lapping waves.

You lie back and look up at the lights. It is some time before everyone is in place. As the image above you comes into focus, a hush descends over the crowds. The same four people are in the scene, but the setting is different. They are not at home but in a hospital. The older person is lying in a bed; the younger three are gathered around. As before, there is both tenderness and sadness. You sense that this sadness lives within you as well as in the image above you.

Nearby on the beach is a frail older person who seems determined to reach up and touch the lights. There is a brief commotion when this person falls onto the sand. With several others, you go over to lend a hand, and someone encourages this person to sit instead.

Returning to your scene, two of the younger people have left, leaving one be-

THE GOLDEN HOUR, *continued*

hind to sit with the patient. They are holding hands and speaking quietly. After the final younger person leaves, someone else enters, apparently to administer medicine. The patient is left alone, in semi-darkness. You spend the rest of the hour watching this person sleep.

#

Twenty Thirty

You are in the great room, listening to poetry in a language you do not understand, appreciating the atmosphere of the words if not their meaning. Without warning you are overcome with the sense that something significant has changed. You cannot put your finger on it. Somehow the mansion and its strange ways are no longer foreign; you are known. You are understood for the first time since you arrived in this place.

The poet stops speaking and the doors are flung open. Everyone in the great room rises to their feet as a crowd of people floods in from the lobby. Wide-eyed and timid, apparently these are new arrivals. Making your way through the crowd and out onto the porch, your suspicion is confirmed by the presence of a huge ship moored in the bay, much like the ship on which you yourself arrived.

You are compelled to remain on the porch as new arrivals in their hundreds stream past you into the house. The sense of being known grows stronger by the minute.

From towards the back of the throng, someone peels away and approaches you. No words are exchanged. You gaze at each other.

Once the new arrivals are mostly inside, the ship begins to maneuver out of the bay. You guide your companion inside and spend the rest of the evening providing a tour of the mansion. Without discussion, it is clear that this person will share your meagre room. For the first time since your arrival, the room feels complete.

#

Twenty Thirty One

Your companion, a quick learner, picks up the routines of the house much faster than you yourself did. Although the arrangement remains unspoken, you choose different work tasks during the day, meeting again for dinner followed by walks in the grounds or an evening listening to music.

If you are not mistaken, other people have noticed the arrival of your companion, and you sense that this is perhaps acknowledged in the occasional smile or nod as you pass while walking together in the grounds or hallways.

THE GOLDEN HOUR, *continued*

#

Twenty Thirty Three

On the occasion of your companion's first golden hour, it occurs to you that you have not explained this tradition. You decide it is best for new arrivals to discover it for themselves, just as you yourself did.

As the golden glow begins to descend on a perfect, starlit evening, you invite your companion down to the beach where you sit on the sand as the crowds gather. Despite the hour, it is still warm, and you both remove your sandals in order to feel the sand under your toes.

Understandably, your companion is transfixed as the golden lights above you begin to morph into a familiar scene. You hold hands as you watch the three younger people come into focus. This time, there are other people with them, including several young children. As the image flickers and develops, it becomes clear that this group is at a beach, not unlike the beach on which you and your companion are sitting.

The children run and play on the sand and swim in the sea. Everyone seems relaxed and happy. The sadness you have sensed during previous golden hours has lifted.

Eventually, in the scene, the sun begins to set, and the people round up their children. Tired but happy, the children run on ahead, away from the beach, their parents following them across sand dunes.

Once the images begin to fade, you wait for a response from your companion. Turning to you, your companion smiles and says, never have I felt so alive.

BOTH INSTRUCTIONAL AND LEARNED, *CourtneyLeBlanc*

Bodies angled toward one another; hands clasped in their own laps. Tentative flirting, not touching but close enough to feel the heat of one another's skin. We don't yet see the jealousy that runs through his veins, the red blood that rushes beneath the surface. It will bubble up slowly, so subtle she won't realize it, quietly accepting the restriction he places on her: the shirt too revealing hidden in the back of the closet, the male friend too friendly, never allowed to call. She bends to him, never realizing all she sacrifices. She accepts these conditions as the price of his love. She forgets the act of swallowing is both instinctual and learned.

LUST, *Lisa Friedlander*

A moment after taking the first bite of peanut butter toast, and without knowing how full my belly will feel, I imagine and crave a second slice. My lust, for anything, outpaces its material realization, like a wild stallion leaping over its corral, to an abundant beyond where possibilities exist, that already exist within the boundary—the same sky and air, verdant grasses. It's the idea of more. It's the idea of getting more that makes a desired future blur a sating present. It's the gambler's scratch, the drinker's extra twelve pack, the honeymooner's disease, the can't-get-enough-ness. And the growing cavities they feed.

It's not only the 'more' however, but also the 'what.' For the particular constellations of stars in our desires, our Ursa Majors, Andromedas or Orions, have as their genesis those intimate stories, those enchantments of vocal textures and gazes, those touches that excited and revealed our greatest radiance and untamed chaos. It's why I will open the loaf of bread from the other end to extract the additional heel before I slather it with peanut butter. Our mother, such a young widow, taught us not to waste. We believed her, that the bread-ends were the prized parts, with their spectacular chewy-hard texture. As did early spring sun express the best weather, and the vernal pools in which we splashed barefoot the greatest dare. Apples in the neighbor's orchard, still green and tart, their stems un-twistable and clinging to their branches the most prescient gauge of their deliciousness at harvest. We lusted to outrun each other, to be fastest, to be first to hide in the branches of the willow winging over the lawn with its yardage of leaves that looked like feathers.

My first head-over-heels love looked and smelled like Catty. She lived up the hill from me in Five Fields, the rural community of my childhood, with its two dirt roads intersecting, and the houses going up one after the other, in what my mother called 'development.' Catty's house, a repository of odors, drew me in. Unwashed bedding and clothes, the stench of fried fish sticks—her French mother's nod to haute cuisine, apron on, spatula in one hand, glass of Scotch in the other, and a cigarette lounging in a bean bag ashtray with an aluminum rim. You could smell horses from the riding crops draped carelessly over the stair rail, and from the Jodhpur boots kicked to the side at the front door. Catty's father, a full blooded Native American, smoked a pipe and saved things—shards, antlers, ropes, the baby teeth of each one of the four children in tiny leather boxes, old photographs, children's classic books with original bindings.

I went on a horseback-riding expedition with Catty. We were seven. Her large horse stepped on the big toe of my right foot, but I felt too embarrassed to tell anyone

LUST, *continued*

as she was helped to saddle up. How to tell a horse to move? I leaned into the side of the horse/girl, a centauress, worthy of this minor dislocation of tissue and cartilage, proof of my mythic devotion. In retrospect it seems a small sacrifice to make for love; the first of many.

For years my toe hurt and throbbed when bent at some angles. But it reminded me of her, my idol. How I wanted her in some unnamed way, wanted to become her, the tightness and composure of her, while my hair, even braided exactly like hers, with a part down the middle, tended toward the pedestrian, a fine tangled mess.

In Five Fields we skated on a small pond in winter that the fathers would sweep. Glennly Wilson, 16 to my 10, drove me nuts with a lust I didn't know I had--tucked away in my stem cells waiting to take shape, but letting me know, ahead of time, it would grow me up soon. Soon.

Glenny wore only a flannel shirt under a ripped sweater, his hands bare, to my layers of sweater and parka and heavy mittens. He stacked three sleds on top of one another, and after a rip roaring run across the ice, tucked his knees impossibly high under his chin as he flew over them, jet landing on his hockey skates and taxiing all the way to my end of the pond where, my feet frozen in my figure skates, and so spell bound I forgot about having to pee, I stood shaky and awed. He looked huge then, an Adonis too, his classically broad shoulders balanced over narrow be-jeaned hips. He put his hands on those lean hips and smiled at me, teeth white as the cold.

At fifty we met again, at a neighborhood reunion, both of our families having moved away for different reasons years before--mine because my father was a drunk and my parents thought a change of location, type of job, or company-they-kept would help; and Glenn's because his father died and his mother needed her family, in Idaho. His hugeness then morphed into a smallness now. He stood, pot belly already canvassing for space between us, at three inches shorter than me. He still had wide shoulders, but not so broad relatively speaking. The same kind of flannel shirt. The jeans. Boots. And graying facial hair grown to a scale his height and proportions could no longer deliver.

I wondered, as my heart dropped, and the memory of that day on the pond slipped from my pocket like a lost hundred-dollar bill, which was the real Glennly. What would have happened if we had somehow fallen in love and my body had outgrown him? And I had gone to college and graduate school and gotten my dream job, while he had not and sold auto parts?

LUST, *continued*

Shame entered me like a small parasite, nauseating. The muscles at the back of my neck tightened. The shame of making a mistake then, and a refusal now to see the skater in this man before me, fingers yellowed from cigarettes without filters; the yellow a stain inching down his long, untrimmed beard. I thought of the blindness of my many lusts. And that my mother had sometimes felt lucky to have married a man who retained his handsomeness and his charisma, even with the alcohol-pulverizing-his-insides-killing-him-at-the-age-of-44 caveat. And even though she never married again.

After the six-day war in Israel we arrived there by boat, to save my father from J & B Rare. As teenagers, my brother and I smoked hashish, lit on fire in broken bottles, at the park down the road. And later at night, I snuck out the side yard window in the bedroom I shared with one of my sisters, to meet Ari and others on the beach, to swim in the phosphorescent waves and watch the shooting stars as if there were no danger, no uneasy truce. Thereafter, I lusted for windows that opened onto foreign worlds of resinous drugs and kisses on the neck that left purple tattoos.

In college, I frequented the beds of the two Brunos. In their mid-twenties, they came, on the GI bill after serving in Viet Nam, one tall, one short; strange pieces of a puzzle from an alternate box in the universe of concerns, entirely different from Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and Emily Dickinson. One finished his Bachelor's, and the other dropped out, as he had dropped from aircraft in the war, and moved to New York. Both died way too young, one in an apartment fire and one by his own hand, as often wars, even won, begin unraveling sanity.

At twenty-three, Marcus unbuttoned what seemed like a hundred buttons at the front of my green jersey dress. It fit closely all the way down to my ankles. No contest, he advanced his fingers slowly, deftly, entwining his gaze with mine; seamlessly infusing my whole being with a melody, like those ballads of longing and lost love, whose iconography keeps you searching. Occasionally, I still wonder about his life behind the LinkedIn profile.

Have you ever wondered if, like sound or light waves, or electricity, orgasms circulate through the world and when we are so stimulated, our wiring, as if we had plugged into Gaea's socket, excites to a pinnacle of elation? And we feel we have touched something beyond ourselves, the radiance. We surrender control, and revel in utter mismanagement of our bodies. This extraordinary dumbness, this uncoupling from the artful and civilized, deconstructs our matter into the energetic space between and beyond the particulate. Involuntary, pungent, wet, contractile. Breathing heavily and

LUST, *continued*

fast, our hearts run to catch up. Like the whirling dervish children whom I see running across the lawn, tossing themselves into the air and pummeling the ground. The way sometimes one line of poetry, at the rise of a stanza, leaps into, into, your heart, and after that you can't go back to the person you were before.

Lust and its objects shapeshift, expand and then contract, though the impetus feels recognizable. It is so late in July. Already. The sun at sunrise gorgeous this morning, I got up to take a picture shortly after it popped up above the horizon line--the line that is not a line, but an indicator of the beyond we cannot see. This reference line-that-is-not-a-line reminds me of all the problems I still want to attend, the people I want to love better, the new books I want to read, the several recipes that sound delicious, the national parks that beckon.

When, in my therapy office, Marni tells me, at the beginning of her session, that she imagines herself in Hollywood or on a multi-millionaire dollar yacht, I know these as fantasies. Not lust. We lust for what we know. What we might reach if we try hard enough, long enough. Lust is the distance between what we see and might be able to see, what we feel and its slight amplification, what the heart knows is but a few beats away. It's not the same as wandering empty, lost in a void of unnamed deprivation. We, the lusting, are lucky. Everything we want lies just beyond our fingertips. We can taste it on the tips of our tongues. From our abundance of lust, we will even desire the desirable for the ones who fall from the weightless paradise of our bodies into the world.

Motherhood. Its disproportionate calligraphy so voluminous, and scrollwork so intricate as to ink everything else onto its canvas. And as each body emerges from your body, you lust for every not-you moment thereafter. That it sings for them, quenches their every thirst, makes their marrow flourish. To leave them diving from cliffs, bulleting out of their own skins with amazement, waking the incantatory; rebirthing.

Libido ergo sum.

LIGHTSWITCHES, *Montana Leigh Jackson*

he calls me *angel* in the mornings
when we wake/ tiny little horrors
embedded in his teeth.

there are things
we cannot figure out how to say/
when the sun has gone down/

when the lights are still on.

when the space between us grows large enough
to have its own shadow/ we check beneath
our fingernails/ finding the pieces of one
another that had come off

when we had held on too tightly.

all i want is to tell you about the things
that go bump in the night/ how we will never
be what we've always wanted/

but adding you to a room changes the way i see it entirely.

i promise to remember/ how
to turn back off the lights.

COLOR BORN, Elizabeth York Dickinson



Materials: Digital Photograph

COLOR CREATED, *Elizabeth York Dickinson*



Materials: Digital Photograph

COLOR ENDURING, Elizabeth York Dickinson



Materials: Digital Photograph

ABSOLUTION, *Samara Shaw*

after "Habitation" by Margaret Atwood

Forgiveness is not
a fortress,

it is where you go after the bombing:

where you sift
through the first pieces of rubble;
 shouts of civilians heard below the surface,
ready to breathe.

Limbs broken,
knees blued.
 Enemies become brothers for the common good,
weak from war.

It is not where you hide.
It is how to be found.

NIGHTSCAPE, *Joan McNerney*

Fog horns sound though
air soaked in blackness.
All evening long listening
to hiss of trucks, cars.

Shadows brush across walls
as trees trace their branches.
Gathering and waving
together then swaying apart.

While I sleep, stars glide
through heaven making
their appointed rounds in
ancient sacred procession.

Dreams as smooth as rose
petals spill into my mind
growing wild patches in
this dark garden of night.

JOURNEY WITH MY FATHER, *Alice Benson*

The backyard of my childhood blazed with color in the summer; orangish marigolds, purple coneflowers, brilliant blue hollyhocks, and red velvet yarrow overflowed the garden my father loved to tend. Water from the sprinkler cascaded over the flowers, a tiny rainbow in each droplet. The silky, perfumed air reverberated with the buzzing of hundreds of yellow-jacketed bumblebees.

When I was five, a friend and I threw a ball back and forth under the shade of a weather-beaten walnut tree. An errant toss landed the ball in a row of hollyhocks. I went to retrieve it and froze, terrified by the bees. Hundreds, maybe thousands, of them covered the flowers, an effective blockade. Tears welled as I realized that my ball was lost forever.

My father, pruning the lilac bush, heard my cries of dismay, and walked over. My heart pounded wildly, my ears rang with the cacophonous buzzing, and my hands clenched into tight fists. In one smooth motion, he reached into the flowers, picked up the ball, and tossed it to me. I know my grin was wide as I turned to my friend, amazed and proud, seeing my father as the bravest man who ever lived. I will always have that picture of him in my head. However, my five-year old self's view of my father changed many times throughout my life.

When I was twelve, I wanted my father to be the one I saw on TV. The dad who put his little girl on his feet to dance and called her his princess. My father was a quiet man, introverted, and he didn't share much of himself. He didn't ever dance with me, but he removed and replaced the training wheels on my bike three times in one afternoon without complaint or frustration as I learned to ride, and gently cleaned and bandaged my scraped knees after I fell.

When I was fifteen, I wanted my father to be a banker or a lawyer, wear a suit and tie, and carry a briefcase to work. Instead, he was a laborer who wore overalls, carried a lunch pail, and came home with dirty fingernails. He never went to college and liked to watch TV and read cheap thrillers. He wasn't an intellectual, but he spent many of his precious days off teaching me to parallel park and, once I had my driver's license, he never went to bed until I was safely home.

When I was twenty, I, again, wanted him to be the television father who danced with his daughter at her wedding. My father still did not dance, but he took out a loan to pay for the wedding of my dreams and teared up as he walked me down the aisle. When I was thirty-one, I wanted my father to be Steve Martin from the Father of the Bride movies and hold me when I cried and tell me long stories to buck me up. I needed

JOURNEY WITH MY FATHER, *continued*

support when I got divorced, and my three sons rarely saw their own father. Instead of telling clever, poignant stories, my dad made each of my kids a toolbox, and they spent hours building birdhouses, racecars, and magazine holders. While I worked, he picked them up from school and took them fishing. He drove them to the recycling center to cash in their aluminum cans for extra spending money.

When I was forty-two, I finally realized I wanted my father to be exactly who he was. He taught my kids to drive a standard transmission and helped them learn to parallel park. He spent his life showing his grandchildren what love and caring look like and the value of integrity. He was always there when we needed him.

When I was forty-eight, my father died. I'm grateful I shared so many of my adult years with him, years when I understood his value. I'm thankful he lived long enough for me to appreciate the man he was, and come to know he was always the only father I ever really wanted.

FORGIVE ME, *Mahima Kapoor*

For I thought of leaving the softest of kisses on the corner of your lips today in class when I should have been thinking of Chomsky and his idea of Competence. You see, you distract me a lot these days when you really shouldn't. I don't know how you spend your days in another city, another country, how you get through each day without feeling like there is nothing and no one waiting for you at the end. I imagine waiting for you. I imagine holding hands with you in the dead of the night when no one can see me being silly. You'd think it silly too. It's quite a fool's act to adore you so, to want to say all of this to you, but you make it so easy. What a thrill to be wanted by someone I too want. Even if it does not add up to anything after all. I've never been afraid of wanting things I can never have. Perhaps I should be. And yet I know I'll think of you tonight, of all the unseen parts of you that I want to feel on me, all at once, of every whisper you have promised to leave trapped within my mouth. And I hope you wouldn't begrudge me that one moment when I inadvertently imagine what it would be like to hold this thing between us in our hands and blow on it like on a dandelion and as it falls over us like wisps of a cloud wish for this little death and this little life to go on & on & on.

A RETROGRADE MEMORY, *Kashiana Singh*

my shoreline is electric
today, it felt like her
fingers brushed mine
with a persistent spark
the morning news
reported
a fallen tree, struck by
lightning

my room was vacant
today, a red jacket
over the swivel chair
your flushed cheekbones
lingered, like harvests
the lady next door muttered
at how conquered, I seem
these days

our stars in concerto
echo a retrograde
mercury, hover over
my lingering decisions, a
vestigial love stirred
disjointed affections
as planets clash, mouths
flaming, a crescendo

we are on margins, always
in negatives, of photos
today, clipped to
a clothesline, your eyes
dripping a gleam
the rest of you on display
rinsed, while
I darn our edges
together,
in increments

MORE INFORMATION ON TURNPIKE

What is Turnpike?

Turnpike is a literary and art magazine that focuses on fulfilling themes and underrepresented voices.

What does Turnpike do?

Turnpike focuses on the changes and shifts that confuse and bewilder us; moments of decisive passion, breaths of fresh air, and all the tiny and gigantic things that facilitate our growth find their place here.

We publish new issues every other month, featuring visual art, poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and anything else you've deemed worthy of sharing. Anything that's especially difficult to describe, explain, or contain in one genre is also more than welcome.

Why "Turnpike?"

We chose the name "Turnpike" to indicate a deviation, or turn from what is expected. So often in the creative community do we focus on one type of voice and one type of theme. In our personal experience with literary journals, we noticed a consistent focus on trauma and misfortune that, while important, can become kind of damper on mental health. Additionally, we noticed that other publications may not highlight LGBTQ+ folk, persons of color, and other marginalized identities.

Our turn from the norm is to provide content based on more positive themes and to provide a space for voices that may be underrepresented in other media. While other publications that explore aforementioned voices and themes are helpful and important, we strive to deviate, to be refreshing and vulnerable in a new way.

Let us know what you think of our latest issue!

– the turnpike team

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