

insanity's horse

FALL 2007 - SPRING 2008

insanity's horse

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SPECIAL THANKS TO
Walter Makarucha
and
All Drew students who
submitted art and literature

Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me
the glint of light on broken glass.

-ANTON CHEKHOV

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1

You may say I'm a dreamer....

Christa Van Eerde

January 1, 2007

You may say that I'm a dreamer
And the countdown begins!
15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 11, 9, 8....
Guess Dick Clark needs to practice
His countdown for next year.
Well, Happy New Year!!
A new year equals a new beginning—
A year for resolutions
But I'm not the only one
Of going to the gym more often,
Spending more time with family and friends,
I hope someday you'll join us
Getting out of debt, losing weight, you
know the deal.
A year that I began with a tear in my eye
Because John Lennon's "Imagine"
Was playing throughout Time Square.
And the world will be as one
The last song played in 2006.
It could not have summed up the year any
better.
For many the song sends a message,
Give peace a chance.
Imagine no possessions
But for others, like me, this song carries
more than one meaning.
Hearing John Lennon's voice blasting,
Seeing the million reflective faces of the
people in Time Square,
I wonder if you can
The song allowed listeners to think about
the past year—
The exciting, happy moments as well as the
tragic and hurtful.
This year the sad overpowered the joyous
moments.
See for me, the year 2006 will mark the year
I lost you.
Not only was it the year I graduated, went
to Europe, started college,
But also the year you slipped away.
As "Imagine" played on the tv,

We all sat in silence on the couch, unable to
speak.
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
We listened in respect, silence, for you.
Not a word was said as that song played
But a few tears were discretely brushed
away.
Imagine all the people
I honestly was in slight disbelief-- The
timing, the silence,
It was perfect, just the way you would want
it to be.
I have not quite figured out what I believe—
Was it fate? Was it a simple coincidence?
Sharing all the world
The only thing I know for sure, is that
During the song I imagined you in the room
And could predict your precise emotions
and movement—
You were in the room with us, counting
down,
Listening closely to the words Lennon sung;
You may say that I'm a dreamer
And there to tell us you have never truly left
at all.
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one

Gilligan, His Island

Christine Hamm

the last lemon shrinks
by the light of the Tiki fire
between torches stuck in sand
rough hewn table, palm trees
and coconuts

we learn to make do
your red shirt never rips
you never sunburn

your white hat like a little
beacon of surrender
in the woods you
are a constant polka dot

your hammock leaves diamond
marks on your legs
you wake often and fall
but nothing ever breaks
no tooth, no phonograph

every day exactly
like the three hours before

In Stitches

Christine Hamm

the hum click slower and faster
of the sewing machine, the needle a big fish
feeding from the bottom
of my mother's hand, the tiny light
a glass eye hovering over her
fingers

she unfolds the transparent
human-colored paper, slides off my shirt
so she can wrap the pattern around me
mark space with a pencil

I hold my breath
the hair on my arms
rising

Siren, Seraphim –do you know your way?

Words cannot fill this chamber. But words built it. Words set the windows in the walls, formed the angles of the glass, painted the walls. Words directed the placement of the light fixtures, swept the floor, dusted cobwebs from the pulpit. Words will bring us here, to gaze on one another in front of friends, family. And words will bind us and can unbind us to one another. – Laurie Flynn to Hazel Doyle, 6 months ago.

Hazel turns in her empty bed. It has grown stagnant, its cushions ripped, thrown off. What's left is the base. Though she throws on a thin sheet and dreams of nesting, she cannot return, the cushions strewn.

'I threw away the cushions,' she says to no one. 'They pricked at my back, tugged at my ankles. I took a knife to them, prodding at first. They didn't move. I began slashing.' The feathers spurt out, the silk tore, the cushions dropped.

She looks at the cushions and lets herself fall. The frame scrapes her neck, she cries out; her hands fly to cradle the scratched skin. With her head bent to her chest, her eyes tear, the drops plop into her shirt, puddling in splotches. She rocks herself.

'There was a boy...' she begins whisper-singing, head still to chest. 'a very strange, enchanted boy...'

The words blur, the blood congeals on her collar. She sobs, her ginger hair spills before her face. The tears cling to the strands and glisten. She shivers and yawns. But she can't sleep. She promised to go out tonight, her friends are waiting, they will be waiting if she stays.

She shakes the tears out of her eyes, wipes them away with her fingers. Sniffing the snot up her nose since she used her last tissue an hour ago, she stands, picks a falling green dress, pulls her shirt off, wipes the blood away and throws the dress over her leggings. Eyeliner and shadow cling to her eyes to distract from her beaky nose, made mushy by the running of mucus. She powders it and it looks more pointed. With her nose pricking the air and her hair smoothed back she looks like Horus made more human.

Having made up her face, she fastens a choker around her long neck to hide the scrapes and leaves her make-up pouch lying on her night table. A knock rattles the door.

'Hold on!' Hazel grabs the sheet and tosses it over the cushions. She pokes her head out. With a flutter, Molly jumps at her.

'Oh good, I thought you were gone. You're still coming, right?' Molly's inked lashes fan her pug face. The squashed nose and stretched cheekbones mush into a smile and her ample hips and bosom, soft as down, sway beneath her skirt and scaly shirt.

'Yes,' Hazel says from the crack. 'Give me a moment.' She opens the door barely wide enough for her body and shimmies through. 'Okay,' she nods. 'Let's go.'

Downstairs, Launa leans against the wall, her legs encased in knee high boots, her body in a wrap-around dress, all dark. She smiles at Molly and Hazel as they come down, adjusts her glasses. Her eyes, magnified by the black frames, bulge out, a bright penetrating blue. They linger on the red rims of Hazel's eyes, the tail of the scrape poking out of the choker. Hazel's hand goes to the spot as if to scratch it.

'Took you long enough,' Launa says, cinching the belt of her raincoat.

'Not that long,' Molly laughs, opening the door.

Hazel rubs her neck as she shrugs and passes through. Outside, the car lights whoosh by as Molly and Launa prance on the sidewalks, their heels going 'ntich! ntich!' on the pavement, the bottoms of their skirts tapping their stretched calves. A man, not so tall or young, passes by. Hazel

searches his face. His muscles fill out his sweater nicely, she thinks. She sees herself rubbing against the stubble on his cheeks, drowning in the cologne on the curve of his neck. His footsteps fade and the night hits her. It worms between the threads of her leggings. She shivers. Molly doesn't notice but keeps laughing, knocking into Hazel and Launa. The trail of their dresses flutter. Launa points to a neon sign, a man in black posing in front with clasped hands, sunglasses wrapping around his face. She nudges Molly, who nudges Hazel. With a sigh, she joins the line leading up to the bouncer and targets the young man in front of her.

'Hello,' she says sullenly. Her hair fans with a breeze.

He leans forward. His nose touches the end of a red strand.

'Nice dress,' he says, not looking beyond her face.

She shrugs. 'Nice shirt.'

His eyes remain fixed. Hazel rolls her eyes. His washed-out face and overeager eyes offer nothing to her. She looks over his shoulder and stretches, jutting her chest forward. His eyes take notice and his cheeks pinken.

'Y-you could go ahead of me,' he stammers.

'Oh, good!' Molly squeals, pushing her way forward. The young man stares at her as well, but stays where he is. Hazel reluctantly follows. Molly turns to Launa. 'Your turn.'

Launa grins. 'Easy,' she whispers to Molly and Hazel. The cluster of boys in front of her talk amongst themselves and pay no attention. Hazel cannot tell one from the other, each clad in primary colored sport shirts, their heads topped with the same wind-sopped dirty-blond hair. Launa takes a few steps forward and they continue talking. She taps the nearest one, Blue-shirt, she thinks, and he turns, scowling. 'Oh, don't you love the weather tonight?' she says to him. He stops. His body leans into her.

'Yeah, it's nice,' he says and offers his hand. His companions have stopped talking. 'Have we met?'

She takes the hand. 'No. But we could.'

Blue-shirt holds onto her hand but she pulls away. He drops to his knees, hugging her ankles. 'Take me with you!'

His friends turn, Molly laughs, Hazel groans. 'Aren't you sick of this?' she whispers to Launa. Launa moves her eyes away from Blue-shirt, who has begun nuzzling her ankles. Men and boys passing the line on the street have stopped at Hazel's whisper, dropping briefcases, papers.

'I need something,' one says to his wife, 'over that way. I remembered, something like music-'

The wife shakes her head. 'We've been to the music store already, Rupert. You're getting senile,' and pushes him to move on.

As amnesia spells spread, Launa has been grinning.

'Never,' she replies to the whisper. Launa looks down at Blue-shirt. 'Be a love and let us pass.'

He whimpers but rises, ushering her and Molly and Hazel before his friends, who step aside quickly, lining their path.

'See?' Launa whispers. Hazel shakes her head. Just in front of them, a girl made up in heels and leather turns around.

'Are you trying to jump the queue?'

Hazel blushes.

'No, not at all,' Molly steps in. The boy at the girl's elbow, dressed in matching black, turns and stares.

'Oh come on, Viv, they weren't jumping.'

The girl named Viv huffs. The boy turns to examine the trio and smiles. 'Weren't you, ladies?'

Molly's dress swishes and the boy leans in further.

'No, of course not! -Utter rubbish!' she exclaims with a stomp of her foot. The line moves forward. The boy takes Molly's hand in one of his and that of the girl named Viv in the other. He looks at both and grins.

'Now if we can't get along-'

The girl named Viv pulls her hand away and slaps his arm, jolting Molly and pushing away her hand. He looks to the ground. 'Sorry,' he mutters. They shuffle forward and disappear into black as the rope lifts. It shuts immediately after them. Molly pouts and Hazel rolls her eyes again. Molly nudges her and Launa and sidles up to the bouncer, peers tiptoe into the darkness.

'Is the wait long?' she asks him. His head inclines forward and Hazel can tell through his sunglasses that his eyes are fixed on Molly's face and will not break away until she leaves.

'For you, not at all,' and he removes the rope. Molly passes with Hazel and Launa close behind, but the rope comes between them. 'Sorry, can't let you through until another two come out.'

Hazel sighs. Her hair dances around her face. 'But we're with her,' she says in monotone. The bouncer's eyes fix on her.

'Me too,' Launa says, inclining a finger like a child in kindergarten. His eyes swivel to the voice attached to the finger. He nods. The rope lifts and Molly giggles, Launa beams and Hazel walks blank-eyed. They sashay into the subterranean where neon blue splashes against black. Light spasms on gyrating waves of heads and limbs and bodies lounging on couches, trying to hold onto conversations or trying to secure companions for later in the evening, cradling drinks.

Molly and Launa both turn for the bar immediately and down shots before going onto the dance floor. Hazel slinks behind them and laps up an orange vodka. Ten minutes later, still standing away from the dance floor and the couches, she orders another, tossing coins on the bar counter. She stands at the dance floor's edge. She sees the tassels on Launa's dress move like wings. She slouches forward, tumbling her body into the central mass, her drink careening out of her hands. The glass shatters.

'Be careful,' she intones to a boy next to her.

He looks up, picking his way past. His steps are sticky, the glass unavoidable. He sways toward her, his eyes search her face.

'Ah, no worries,' he grins. She shrugs and shimmies. He begins dancing with her, filling in the cracks of her movements with those of his own body. 'Sorry, I don't think we've met-'

'It's Hazel.' She thrusts her hand to meet his, still dancing. He stops, takes her hand and gives a slight bow.

'Hazel,' he repeats, looks at her eyes and replies, 'Fitting.' He gives her hand a light squeeze. 'I'm John,' he says, lifting her hand up and twirling her around. 'You have such a lovely voice.'

'Thank you.'

The lights pulsate, she sways. He grins and pulls her in, slides her hands to his neck, his hands to her hips. He plucks her off the ground and presses her against him. She flushes, her breath spurts in out, in out. John lets her down, his lips part, he spins her around again, in and out and in and out like a yo-yo. He pulls her in again. Her hands slide on his torso but can't find his waist. His stomach and hips merge together. He pulls her hands away, up to his shoulders and sweaty back. For a moment, she flinches, but her body presses her forward and in an instant, he leans his lips to her ear.

'My witch hazel,' he says, grinning. 'How do I know you?'

Hazel's limbs stiffen. Her eyes dilate. 'You don't. You don't know me.' She begins to

pull away.

He presses against her, strokes her neck. 'No, I do. We've met before.' He fingers the edge of the choker and works his way to the scrape. She jumps away, bumping into a girl grinding. The girl scowls.

'John-' she starts. He comes up to her again. She holds up her hands. 'You-' His eyes are eager. 'You- just -go buy me a drink, okay? I'll see you off the floor.'

He nods, inclines a hand to let her pass. She searches the floor for Launa or Molly and spots Launa dancing with Blue-shirt and his crayon box friends. She waves a hand. Launa sees it and waves the boys off. They peel away, looking sullen without her, shouting something Hazel cannot hear over the music.

'Hiya!' Launa says, coming up. 'Problem?'

Hazel glances back at John, still waiting at the bar. 'He's no Laurie,' she says to Launa.

'What did you expect?' Launa throws a glance at John's rear, appraising his shoulders and profile. 'He's not bad, though. Only a mite on the chunky side.'

'He called me "Witch Hazel"'. -Do you think he knows?' Hazel's eyes dart from torso to torso, around a pillar, hunting for a crucifix, a glint of a wing. 'Do you think he's one of them?'

Launa sucks in her cheeks and frowns, adjusts her glasses. 'He's listened to you, right?' 'Yes.'

'Then no. If he knew, if he was one of them, he wouldn't be able to.' She smiles. 'Buck up. You worry too much. Wasn't Laurie trouble, always contradicting you?'

'No. I liked it.' She looks at John, now paying the barman. 'This is too easy.'

Launa wraps her arm around Hazel. The tassels on Launa's dress tickle Hazel's armpit. 'Hazel, you were born into this. You can't escape it. So just enjoy yourself. Think: You don't have to worry anymore about being found out. So enjoy your boy, forget Laurie. He's gone.'

Hazel pushes the arm off. 'I can't forget.' But he was gone. The music beats into her body like the wave had into his before his head slipped below the water. Hazel shivers. The harbor had been too far away, he shouldn't have gone in. But she had slashed. Swum away and slashed the pillows, slashed his wings. Never again. The feathers had floated on the surface. She had pushed him away. No one knew. But no one kept with a mate for so long, and Molly and Launa had pressed. Her mother had pressed. Her grandmother had pressed. All of them had, pressed her into it, pressed her into tonight. 'Yes, he's gone,' she hears herself say. She takes Launa's hand and presses it.

'Atta girl,' Launa squeezes. John was a foot away. 'Now go. It'll be better in the morning.'

Hazel stilt-walks to John as if her joints are frozen. He hands her a glass. She shakes her head.

'Let's go.'

His face contorts, puzzled. 'But I thought you-'

'I did.' She rests her hand on his shoulder. 'But not anymore.'

He shrugs and downs the liquid. She swallows hers in two gulps. It stings. Together, they stumble out of the club, their arms linked. The stairs come up to meet their feet. Street-lights glare at the damp streets and rain replaces sweat on John's forehead. Hazel leans on his shoulder and closes her eyes; raindrops cling to her lashes. John strokes her hair. They walk, Hazel hears voices. She opens her eyes.

'Shut up!' a man wheeling a bicycle calls over his shoulder.

'No, why don't you shut up!' a woman's voice comes from further down. 'Not very nice,' Hazel can hear her say as they get closer.

'Why don't you shut up, because no one wants to hear your crazy rambling!' the man

yells and keeps going. John walks on, unperturbed, but Hazel still watches and listens from against his shoulder. The woman yelling wears a neat green skirt and battered sneakers, an enormous blue jacket and a fresh plastic shopping bag looped over her shoulder. Just like Laurie's mother, she thinks, kind Mrs. Flynn. A bell begins ringing in the distance, its tones turning sharp to flat. John raises his head.

'Lifetimes of abuse, that's what's wrong,' the woman who looks like Mrs. Flynn says to the couple next to her. They ignore her and walk ahead. 'And it can't be stood for. Something must be done! Sending people on wild goose chases! That's no way to live. Sending people on wild goose chases! It's unacceptable! Do you know how many people have died going for those potions?' A feather flutters on the woman's shoulder and Hazel sees Laurie again, his eyes dancing before she gave him the drink, before she tossed him out of the boat. She shudders, her throat grows dry, her body burns. She shuts her eyes and begins to disentangle herself from John but stops. Never again. She digs herself into his shoulder and keeps walking. He wraps around her tighter, but the bell rings another 'Gong!' and he looks at the woman, who continues shouting, 'Mrs. Gottfried and Mrs. Vale? Do you know how many people have died going for those potions you make, says Mrs. Gottfried, Mrs. Vale? Destroyed their lives, Mrs. Gottfried, Mrs. Vale? Sending people on wild goose chases! That's no way to live!'

Hazel stiffens. The woman begins to break into operetta, repeating, 'Can't you ever be nice? That's no way to live! -says Mrs. Gottfried, Mrs. Vale!' John and Hazel pass her and the voice fades. John stops looking but a tear falls from Hazel. She leans back onto John and forgets everything, sees only warmth, even in the climb up the drafty staircase to the third floor of her dorm. To my turret, she half-thinks, pushing onward with her body. Mechanically, John holds her and follows her push, waiting only a moment as Hazel uses her key.

They fall into Hazel's doorway and onto the blanket. She shoves it aside and John takes a look at her before they begin amongst the stuffing of the pillows, flowing as a semi-bed. They disappear in the fluff, clothing falls by the blanket. They wrestle, rolling, bobbing, tossing until they surface and breathe.

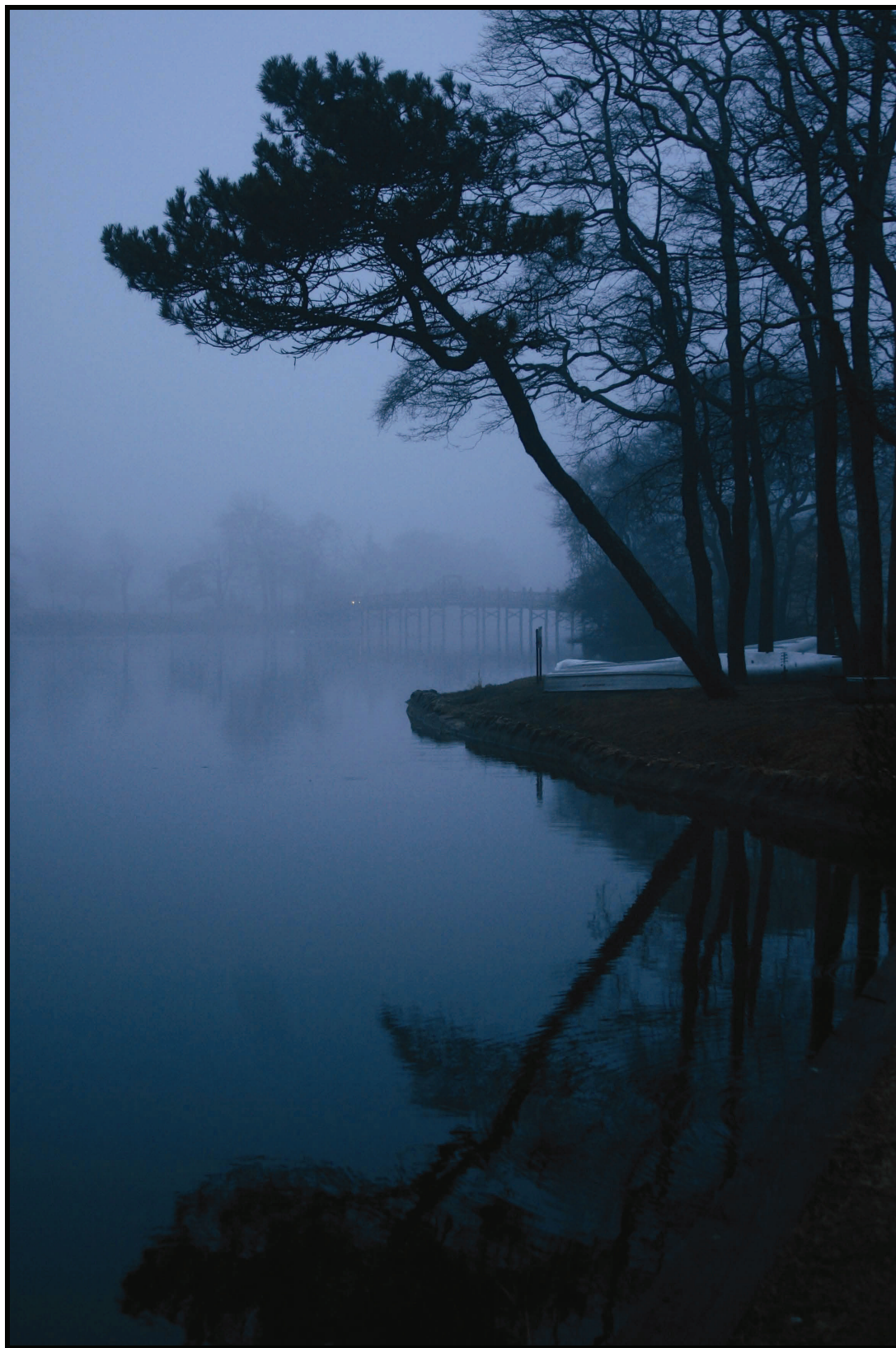
John closes his eyes and wraps the blanket around him, not noticing the hard floor but drawing an arm around Hazel. She lies back and blinks at the ceiling. Sweat drips off her forehead and trickles between her breasts, down her navel and between her legs. Carefully, she picks her way out of John's grasp and gropes for a shirt. Putting it on, she rises and drags a chair to the edge of her room.

Outside, the sun is already rising, its rays mutely touching the grass and trees. Yet the sky is still a dark blue and Hazel shivers. She tucks her legs beneath her and hugs herself, sighing. It calls to her, she can feel the breeze on her chest through the closed window. It calls, the sea calls, her sacrifice calls. She reaches for her desk and gropes for a photograph under papers. A boy, blue-eyed, his ruffled hair peaking in a crest, his skin luminous, grins at her. She tears, tucks the picture back beneath the papers. Her sea sticks one of the pillow feathers to the sole of her foot. John rustles behind her and she sighs, picks the feather off her foot and returns to the mess of fluff, clothing and limbs. She shuts her eyes and lets sleep render her mind inert, her body heavy in surrender to nature.

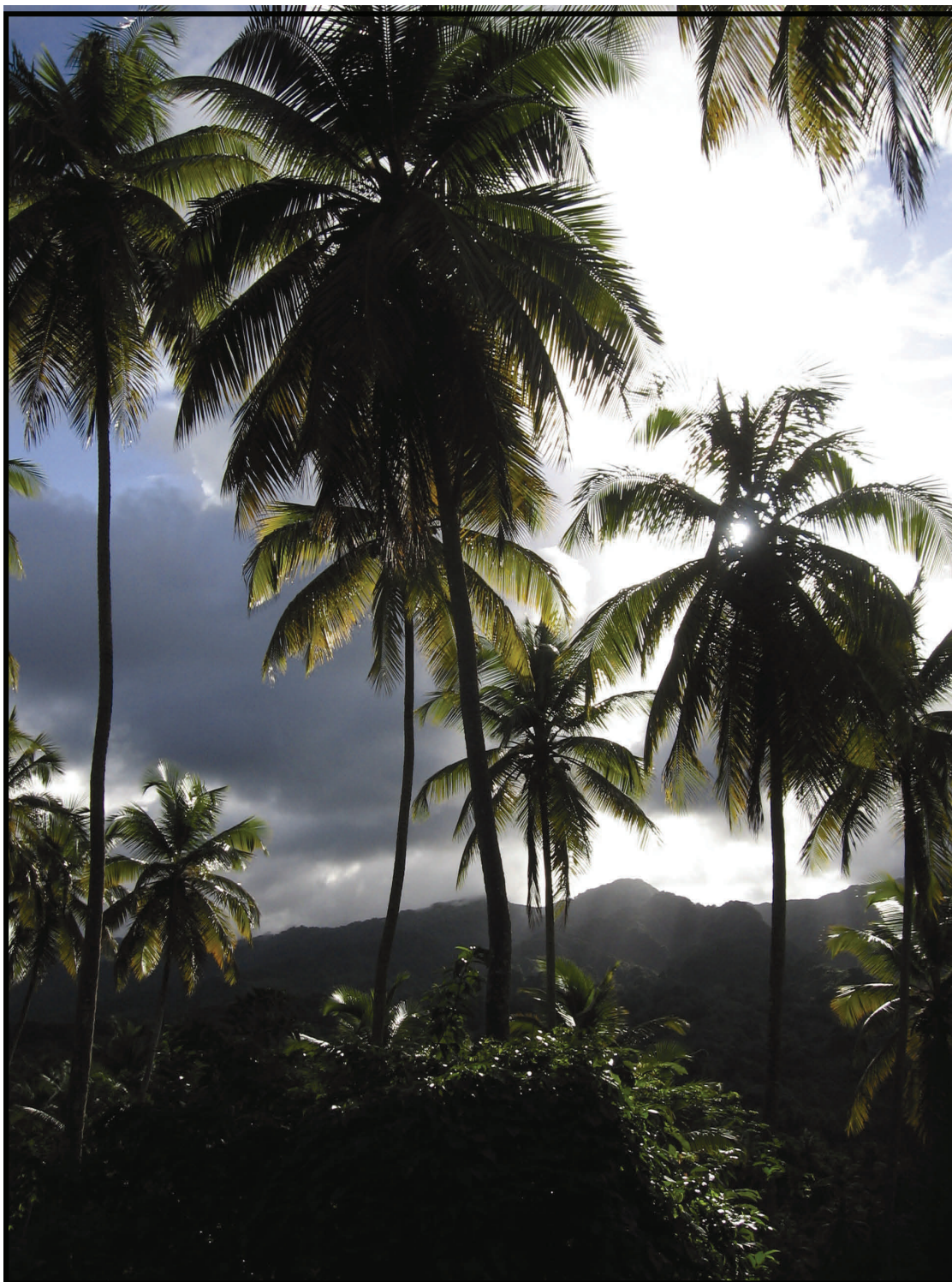
Maria Eliades



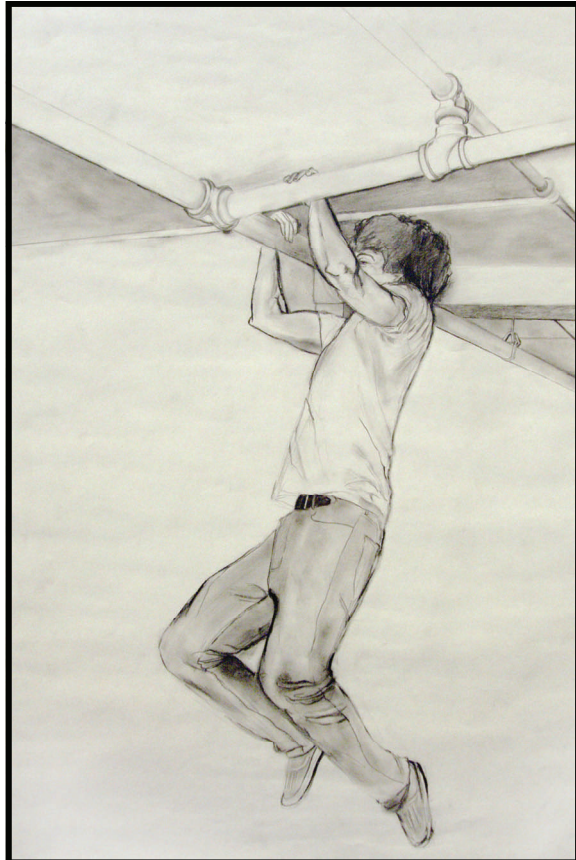
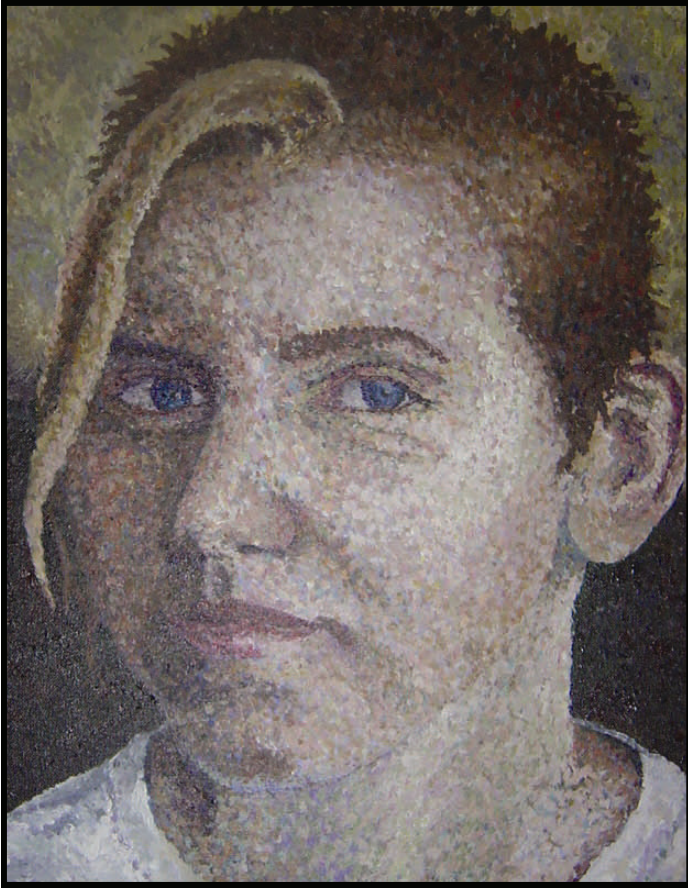








13



Stagnant

Heather Sudol

7 Feb. 2008

The once-red roses
 my roommate's ex-love gave her
 are still in a glass vase
 above her desk.
 The petals have blackened;
 the leaves have dried
 and now crinkle to
 dust at the touch.
 The twelve stems have
 rotted and browned
 in the stagnant water —
 Spiraling thickly with millions of protozoans
 consuming the decaying plant matter,
 the olive-green water
 is
 alive.

The Better Days

Samantha Pritchard

Her face is lost in thought
 Of days when happiness
 Was sold in the form of
 Penny candies and soda pop.
 She remembers life before
 Marriage, wrinkles, isolation.
 She still calls dinner
 Supper and
 Prays that all will be solved
 When the milkman comes
 In the morning.

Polaroid Photograph

Heather Sudol

5 May 2007

Love had developed like a Polaroid photograph.
 After we opened the shutters to see,
 We held the immature film between us
 to keep it warm.
 With our impressions, development commenced and continued
 An image slowly formed,
 unknown to us until after we'd seen
 the fully developed picture.

From the Vantage of a Park Bench

Abby Hoke-Brady

I am a telescope. A camera zoom lens
poised and ready and letting the morning
pass through from reality into my mind
where it saturates into my memory
and becomes a story. A story of
people and time and this city block,
this city block as the nucleus.

Old men smoking pipe tobacco
and making a fuss because
politics don't suit them anymore
and they cannot change to fit but
they can still raise hell about it
and complain about money and coffee
and doctors' orders which also
don't suit them but what can they do
because they have grandchildren?
so they turn their attention to
other matters and whistle at the
passing women they have never
had in their beds but have had
plenty in their heads.

Passing women who have given
themselves away in search of
power and companionship and used
to try at love but gave that up with
their promotions and are now in their
thirties and believe in yoga instead.
And believe in tailored skirts which
they will diet for and universal healthcare
which they will support with their
mouths but not their money. Their money
they will save to buy a new dining room
table instead of giving it to the
homeless hippie whose cause their mouths
support.

The homeless hippie collecting
money on the corner

who wears bone jewelry and old hats
that she finds in cardboard boxes set
along the street to be sent away to
Good Will or a third world country
but which she gets first and stuffs into
her backpack until she has time to clean
them. But in the meantime
she sits on the corner
and spends her days being ignored by
passing women and jeered by street kids,
street kids she hates.

Street kids with their hip rejectionist
attitude
and fashionable disgust for their mothers
who wait anxiously at the steps
of suburbia while the street kids
piss their alcohol sodden dreams away
on public property their fathers paid for
and stay out past their curfew spending
money that isn't really theirs but they
don't care. Street kids with good homes
and erroneous anger and plenty of brains
but no identity and no passion, who
believe in their own brilliance and beauty
and early 80's punk and drink beer from
tall cans in paper bags because they can.
Cans
in bags they leave under my bench
because
they are entitled.

My bench where I sit and wait and
allow the world to saturate my memory
with people and time and image of this
nucleus block, this nucleus block I'm
watching,
And I am a telescope. A camera zoom lens
poised and ready.

Transit

Rebecca Gambale

I could be your three weeks
full of sick days.
We'll sleep drawn out,
long ribbons
in opposing directions,
fingers curled
around the ankles.
Slices of orange light
from the street will pare
our skin.

We could be dilettantes,
amateurs criticizing
cityscapes, imagining
these streets as lines on paper.
The houses and buildings
will spread like cancer
until the ground disappears.
You can be my walking shoes

we'd wake up to the coffee smell
and roses on the sill.
You could switch from coffee to tea,
I could go from two sugars
to bitterness, from cigarettes
to oxygen.

I could be your birthday blues,
your rolodex, your daily grind.
You can show me what to do
when the light is gold
through slats. Your skin --
this could be your monument.

Fashioned like a statuette,
light splinters off of clavicles.
No one notices but pigeons
and me.
The braille of our bodies won't translate.
I will believe that no one has arms and legs
but us
and no one ever has
or will.

To Come

Jeff Blanchard

6/13/06

The days of fulfillment
 have passed.
 The over-ripe fruit once hanging,
 waiting to be plucked,
 has fallen.
 The oozings of the cider press have stopped.
 No longer do young, promiscuous individuals
 roll together in the fields
 following the harvest.
 This time is gone.
 We have moved beyond it.

Now,
 a cold western wind
 blows across the icy plains.
 brittle leaves fallen
 from once lush branches
 scurry away
 like weightless shards of ice.
 All that was once fecund
 and beautifully in abundant
 is now cold and indifferent.
 We are within this.

And yet,
 I feel a slight warmth
 on my face.
 Somehow,
 a radiance pierces through,
 dispelling the cold indifference
 that had settled around us.
 A new day awaits.
 For the sun is still warm on my face.

I can still feel the morning sun on my face.

Canadian fourth of july

Caitlin Gallagher

Dash past
 the shower soaked
 streets wearing the
 yellow rain boots
 mom gave to
 your sister.

The nights dry up.
 Puddles sizzle in
 the heat.
 Hold a sparkler
 up the muddy hill
 next to the cabin.
 A little sulfur explosion
 in your hand.

Run down to the
 edge of the dock
 where dad
 rows his tiny boat,
 smiling and waving
 as another whizzing
 star shoots up. The ring

pierces the stillness.
 Gasp caught
 in your throat, until the
 Pop.
 Exhale.
 Gold rains
 down,
 setting fire
 to the river.

The flame on the metal stick is
 dwindling down, but before
 it dies,
 you blaze
 your name
 into the cloudy,
 amber-lit
 sky.

Places He Will Never Go/Double

Back

Cara Swan

I walk past that tree every
Day
Turns into
Night
Lights glowing in the
Dark
Shadows against the pale moon
Face
Me, face your
Fear
Fell down my spine.

a while ago, I found my
Dreams
consist of nothing
I have
one
Dollar to my
Name,
address, and phone
number
of times I have made pancakes with
chocolate
chips
Of paint brushed from his
Clothes -
She picked to
Wear
On the tires of his bike made it easy to
Fall
Brought crisp apples caught in the
cold
milk and sugar cookies
dribble
down the court to the
basket
holding dyed
eggs
green, and served with ham.

Trees grow into the sky.

Happiness dwells deep
Inside

The tree are ringed years
Layered, between the frost and the
maple
Syrup gives me a headache and my
stomach
hurts
You as much as I
Do
not ever
change
Occurs without warning.

People are staring into
Space
Camps have indoor
Pools
The money on the
table
The issue and move on
To me
It seems as if I am alone, standing on
The sidewalk
Is cracked in several
Places
He will never
Go
Look and see the place
Where
Has the tree gone?

Prayer

Corinne Brauer

Who do they look up to when the wailing and
Gnashing of teeth becomes too much?
Even Ra must worry to the stars at night
And Atlas ask from someone strength
To keep on holding earth and sky apart
The feathered, scaled, and winged serpent gods
Who drink the blood of sacrifice
Must hunger now and then for answers too
And on their clouds or deep in mountain temples they
Hang up their Grand Design and lay aside their Plan
And maybe drifting off in godly sleep
Give up a little prayer to Man

A Meditation on the Transience of the Human Form or,

This is my body.

These are my hands. My aunt always made fun of me for having smaller hands than the rest of my family. My fingers were never long enough to play the piano; they were too clumsy for guitar. My middle fingers are crooked, leaning outward, bent at the knuckles. My hands are full of little imperfections, like the scar on the back of my left one, an almost-perfect oval. I was eleven. I fell in wood chips and glass. I didn't get stitches or staples, only a compress and something the on-call doctor at the free clinic called "healing gel." The only marks on my right hand are on my ring finger: ink – black and blue stains that seem to never disappear. My hands are soft, a far cry from when they grew calloused after spending three months in a wheelchair and on crutches. I was twenty-one, a senior in college. In a split second my hands went from my sides, keeping balance, to the thick, coarse bark of an old tree.

These are my knees. A chilly night in September 2007, I landed on my left one as my right leg twisted out from under me. I slid right down a hill on my campus, doing laundry sober. My knee and the rough, slatted bark kept me from going further down. My right knee now has a two and a half inch scar dividing it. The skin around it, pink and tender, is still numb to my touch despite the fall being four months gone; my own hands brushing that skin could be anyone's. As it flexes, it cracks. It's a small reminder of all the different ways I had to get around: the period when I couldn't let my foot touch the ground, steadying myself on silver crutches instead; the fatiguing first steps with an immobilizing four pound knee-length ski boot, three inches taller than the Converse housing my left foot. This kind of stress makes bad joints inevitable, my mom always said. It happened to her. Years of hospital nursing finally took its toll. In the Summer of 2006, she had her right knee completely replaced. I often think about what my knees will feel like when my inheritance and injuries eventually combine. If doctors will have to re-open my scar, make me chrome or plastic.

These are my legs. The hair on my calves grows coarse from the Catholic School shaving technique: only shave what your skirt won't cover. It's like that Pedro the Lion song: husbands in winter, and girls who don't have anyone to show their legs to, know the truth. My right leg has four more scars from the Open Reduction Internal Fixation surgery I had to repair my cracked tibia and fibula for a total of five visual signs of my penchant for falling. My right ankle swells with humidity and gets stiff with low temperatures. The two screws inside it are my personal barometer, an advance warning of snow or rain. There's a rod, too. This is my invisible metal core. A third screw rests right under my knee, the easiest to forget unless I've been driving too long and my keys start pushing up against the irritated skin. These permanent titanium implants hidden underneath layers of bone, muscle, skin, and hair are a constant personal reminder of how quickly a person can lose three months of his or her life.

These are my feet. They are men's size seven. My affinity for Chuck Taylors means I have no idea what size I am in women's shoes. I start at eight and work my way around to find what fits. My feet are like long-lost twins. They used to be equal until my right one spent three months Velcro-ed into immobilization. The skin became cracked and hard. I spent hours each week with a pumice stone, peeling layers of dead skin away from the surface. There was a sore too, a dime-sized black blemish on the back of my heel. The physical therapist decreed it was a burst pressure point, not harmful unless it broke the skin. It disappeared five weeks later in the

shower, unnoticed. Months later, all the scrubbing and constant attention made it the softest skin on my body. Supple, yet stretched tight over swollen muscle.

This is my skin. I have been blessed with a porcelain finish. My friends often joke that I am paler than FFFFFFFF, white's hex code. I've always had an addiction to sunblock, watching my family age has made me obsess over taking care of this, my most delicate organ. Despite my efforts, it spent months in a destructive state while my leg was in lockdown: the traumatized skin began to crumble at anyone's touch. It began to simply fall off from the friction inside the boot; it became a graveyard coated in dead skin cells. I was a snake, shedding old skin, making room for the next shining layer. Slick with skin-evening cocoa butter, my leg would slip into the boot, the smells of death and regeneration mixing with the sweet cocoa scent, lingering. It's a smell didn't come out. The rest of my body isn't a stranger to scars, either. My skin is also flecked with Chickenpox scars. In Kindergarten, I couldn't keep my hands from picking off the discolored scabs, ugly marks ruining my pale complexion. I wanted to be like the Little Mermaid, beautiful and clear. Little did I know then that I'd develop adult acne I couldn't get rid of, that the Chickenpox scars would still be there sixteen years later. A series of perfect ovals scattered over my imperfect limbs.

These are my muscles. They pump and rest. My wrists and upper arms are strong from years of helping my grandma move furniture and open cans. Some of them had to be resurrected once: my right *tibialis anterior* and the *flexor digitorum brevis*, the muscles connecting my calf to my foot, just to name a few. Their names made them seem like something greater than myself, not something internal or a part of me. They were foreign bodies, frozen, immobilized by splints and casts. The arch of my foot was tense and stiff, as solid as the *Arc de Triomphe*, just without all the triumph. During my surgery, these muscles were moved, the *tibialis* cut in to. This cut caused a seventy-five percent loss of strength. After ten weeks of physical therapy, the muscles began to remember how to contract, how to relax. They shook off the stiffness, they moved in ways they forgot how. Stretching never felt that good. It was triumphant. However, you can't build back twenty-one years of muscle strength overnight. After being out of physical therapy for a month, I still have a limp and I'm not entirely sure when it will disappear. I can only hope that it's gone in time for my college graduation, exactly eight months to the day I snapped my bones in half.

These are my bones. Bad bones run in the family. My grandma broke her ankle seventeen times. She was young then; my grandfather spent nearly three years carrying her around. I broke my ankle twice. I don't remember either time, but there is a set of wooden crutches in my attic signed by my seventh-grade classmates that confirm my foggy past. I broke my left wrist, too. Second grade. I fell off my bike. It was a crushing sound, like the sound of compacting trash. It wasn't the quick snap of my broken leg, its sudden crack was like stepping on a twig. My hip bone pops now, the bones readjusting to the feel of two feet on the ground, walking. My other joints slide and crack. My spine clicks back in to place after sitting for too long. This is the sound of pushing twenty-two after trying to live a lifetime of events burning in every moment.

This is my blood. My veins reflect thick, bright blue all over my arms. One vein on my right wrist has bulged from spending a week pierced by an IV. After my leg surgery, the risk of a blood clot skyrocketed. I was taken off all the medications I was on and had to have a blood thinner injected into my stomach every day for a month and a half. I was in a state of

suspended animation as my blood continued to pump. Red blood cells traveling at lightning speed; I was still and still moving. It was something I thought about a lot while I spent a week lying in that motorized hospital bed. The hospital's liaison for the Catholic Church would visit every morning, asking if I wanted the Eucharist, "the body of the Lord, our Savior." On the third day, I said to her, "My body is broken. I don't see how another's would help it mend." My grandma, startled by my honesty, told her not to mind me; it was just the Dilaudid talking. I remember thinking about what the painkillers flowing through my veins really looked like. I saw my cells transform into words, my body becoming composed of letters strung together into phrases and fragments, my mortality as transient as if I were being spoken.

This is my body.

This is my body which will be given up.

Amanda Brennan

Barcelona

Rebecca Gambale

We are the grit of the street, the grinding of gears,
the crunching of pavement
beneath shoes with high-heels. We arrive.

It was beautiful out my bedroom window,
-- some church, something like that --
I meant to take a picture of it one day,
but I fell victim to alarms,
busting my brain every morning before work.

I got drunk at bars on my lunch hour;
vino, por favor, vino tinto.
I noticed the contrast of leaves on blanched buildings.
I never noticed, or rather, never complained
that the streets reeked of urine and beer,
saltwater and onions, because I could see the water
past jammed streets and billboards;
I could always feel that water on my skin.

The sing-song dialogue of locals
mispronouncing my name like a designer label
on an expensive shirt I bought at the mall
back in Jersey. Each vowel
enunciating the terror of words
I could not say. But I said much,
I said nothing -- I just thought a lot; silent
in metros and bars. Words failed
and I let them do so.
And I left.

C – H – O

Corinne Brauer

I was born in an ocean where carbon danced
 in a lightning storm
 And was made to hold fast
 The steps changing almost imperceptibly
 The moment life twitched into being
 The vast world to explore
 Becoming two and four and eight
 The exponential thrill of growth
 Was in me from the first

Cells met and clasped
 I made my way through forms
 Forms made their way through me
 I pulled on scaled armor
 And breathed first with slits full of
 feathering capillaries
 Perfectly fanned to catch the drifting air
 Or I settled down on a rock to sit unmoving
 To learn patiently the colors that drink in
 sunlight best
 I sampled all the elements about me
 Choosing which best propelled me into
 future moments
 I sifted life out of the moving water
 Or gleaned it from my sister cells that
 passed by
 With a million wriggling bodies once my
 own

Then slowly I set down my feet
 All guesswork in the dark of endless chance
 And pulled myself from watery twilight
 Into the first day
 My bones twisted down to meet the earth
 I twisted leafy arms up high to pray
 I moved through thinness and knew only
 then thirst
 Meant missing what was once the air I
 breathed
 I slid into the dark damp places to sleep in
 cool shadows
 I lifted arms and found that sometimes bone
 Can bend the air to lift it up in flight

Here I learned the trick of letting my
 children grow inside me
 And bore myself anew into more wonderful
 shapes, colors, and designs

I swelled to meet the swirling clouds
 Or shrank down to creep beneath the soil
 I returned to the sea
 I stepped into the sky
 I clung between grains of sand
 Until all the world was filled up with me

With only the physical world to bind me
 I am becoming and becoming
 Casting off the forms the world rubs raw
 And with aching slowness tease new ones in
 being
 Claw and tooth and hide, millennia have
 seen grow
 Millimeter at a time I move
 Climbing mountains even as they rise
 Riding raindrops to the sea
 Until this world may go
 In swift flame and ash
 Or icy slow
 And I am again undone
 C H O

Kinesis

Maria Eliades

Too inflamed my lips, my heart pulsing
to fire my fingers.

I never meant to dance so close-
tendrils grasping air
and your hand snaking
to wrap my wrist.

My words mold around yours, growing
soft and quiet, eating themselves.
But my lips wetted I drink your scent,
wine made bittersweet.

I have known your face gleaming
in drumbeats quavering
with black and white keys.

I have known many faces
Shaded and entranced, glowing under
stadium lights
grinning in the rain; watching beneath
Panagia, incense and candle
held by hoots and baklavá.

And so many faces have you known
braceleted and bearing
lead onto your hips and neck.
They pressed palm into palm,
merging their limbs with your own.

Your head groans with voices croaking
regret and memory with hands grasping and
teeth aching
for broken bits around a battered core –
splintering unions.

Your hand swoops to catch a curve
the mind whirs
motion at last within my grasp.

Feet keep turning turning
with time running away on hands dropped
by the side of your bed.
Present and past hover at the door.

And I tuck myself in, ignoring a heart's
protestations-
the thud and rumble of a storm breaking
-bits for you to rotate.
Too inflamed, my lips for my heart to fire
fingers to pause before the last button.

The Whittler

Kurt Klein

Now the rushing tide is white with cold
intent
The sand shivers on the gray beach, each
grain separated
Gulls and turns glide on dying currents
Their young sheltered by sparse sheaves of
dried grass
The house overlooking the bay is stooped,
and sagging with rot
A man with once blue eyes emerges from that
decaying shack, old
He deftly carves a weathered oak branch, a
survivor of the sea
Now after eighty years the man carves for
himself, his family will not lend their
hands

Is Woman

Fiona Kyle

Genuflect in order to confess new injuries
 made in the dizzy duration of an evening
 spent denying my multiplicity of falls
 from grace; thrice into the arms of depravity,
 thrice against the chest of missed opportunity,
 thrice into the body of our selfsame brokenness.
 I found false stability behind me steadying
 my dizzy steps down the rabbit hole
 as I barked and bit at the hand that fed me
 inconstancy and engendered new nagging
 inadequacies where there once had been only
 strength; now frailty screams my name.

Admission of the origin of each black and blue
 strange bruises as I bruise like fruit thrown
 against a wall, onto dirty cushions made filthy
 by prior uses; that was the birth of confusion.
 New scratching posts made in the dark groping
 searching with fingers as eyes, desiring pale
 for pale in black-browed night.
 Teeth gnashing, biting lips with broken skin to
 prove the morning after as dried blood gathered
 on my lower lip tasting of salt, skin and beer
 as confusion began to fountain behind my lips
 knowing not to speak, not even daring to look
 up and see how lost he might have been in cogitation.

Time spent in polymathematical conversation
 inevitably leads to these complexities between us.
 Awoken by bewildered, amused voices reminded me
 to feel wrong, to forget each word not spoken
 each look and touch not given to me, but dispensed
 falsely to another whose lips had barely known his.
 In the quiet between his waking and sleep, having been
 left alone to insomnia, I felt his fingers lace through
 mine as if it had been done mornings before
 as I pushed closer in the morning's cold light.
 In my misplaced footfalls I felt the odd itch of guilt
 between my thighs, my face impassive but showing
 signs; the guilt of not feeling regret built until words
 and tears were smoked back in the night.

I am still waiting to fall asleep.

Supermarket

Rebecca Gambale

I'm home for the weekend and I'm 7 again,
dragged to the supermarket with my mother.
I always hated the thought of her slowly
sauntering down the dairy aisle alone
or waiting halfheartedly for her butcher
number to click up in bold red.

She reaches her boney fingers,
one newly naked, to a generic box
of cereal on the top shelf.
This is the same aisle I did cartwheels down
as a kid, looking around sneakily before launch,
shirt flying up over my head midair.

I'm instructed with great care
to grab the easy things, the everyday:
milk, eggs, Wonderbread. I skulk past
the mothers with their children, the bachelors
with their microwavables.

Pressurized double-doors spit us out.
The tall lights of the parking lot stare down at us like adults.
With a running start she jumps on the rung of the shopping cart,
grips the handle tightly, goes flying --
through the rows of parked cars,
the tan, black, silver bodies awaiting their owners,
her red hair warring with the amber beams from above.

It's just this thing I like to do when I'm alone, she says.

Somnambula

Fiona Kyle

To sleep; I dream awake
 eyes flutter for sunlight,
 against a shadow I break:

boxing another lost fight
 with each passing word
 swords, tongues rich in spite.

Venomous God, my lord,
 I suck the sleepy poison
 from the wound she adored;

now to tip the bottle, lessen
 the pain, dull the ache
 not knowing the pidgin

in which we speak of late,
 I confuse her utterly wanting
 one more moment to wait —

she's gone. I went walking
 to discover one more shadow
 misplaced in the night weeping.

Each footfall heavier I forgo
 rest, my diplopic eyes creating
 Niobe, the wailing widow,

weeping into her cup filling
 it with salt water, not hoping.

Triggering Thoughts of You

Anna Stange

I think of you
 everytime I listen to Ani
 the burned cd of Dilate
 and Not a Pretty Girl

we aren't pretty girls
 as we dance in the kitchen
 at 3 in the morning
 to her music – our music

scream-singing the lyrics
 of all our favorite songs
 we flourish on the angsty-woman music
 we know the best by heart
 like Superhero dubbed shuperhero

it's the inside understandings
 that aren't worth explaining
 to anyone else
 because only you know what I mean
 when I say "u-ey"
 and "pop goes the fuzzy muffin"

ode to a three night stand

Amanda Brennan

i. so what did that creep whisper to you?

you are a soft snowfall.
delicate. pristine. white.
a cracked snowglobe's glass covering a kitchen floor.

you are a summer's peach.
sitting on a windowsill, morning glazing your flesh.
the october warm engulfing your decaying skin.

i want to ravage your human shore,
litter it with seagulls' skulls,
the remains of beating hearts.

ii. he'll only ruin you, you shouldn't--

pressed against a car window,
pulling at zippers, over coats.
the glass, foggy and wet with hot air.
mouths pressed against, stealing meaning
less words from each other.
bodies pressed, skin against skin,
rustling, nails digging into flesh,
teeth scraping, hands brushing,
the sound of beating hearts.

iii. and what about the aftermath?

you are a soft snowfall.
my car skids across your snowdrifts,
my windshield buckles under your ice.

you are a summer's peach.
your fragrance, sickly sweet
your flesh gives me hives, i flush, i burn.

you have ravaged my shore,
waves break upon scattered bones.
my heart still beats.

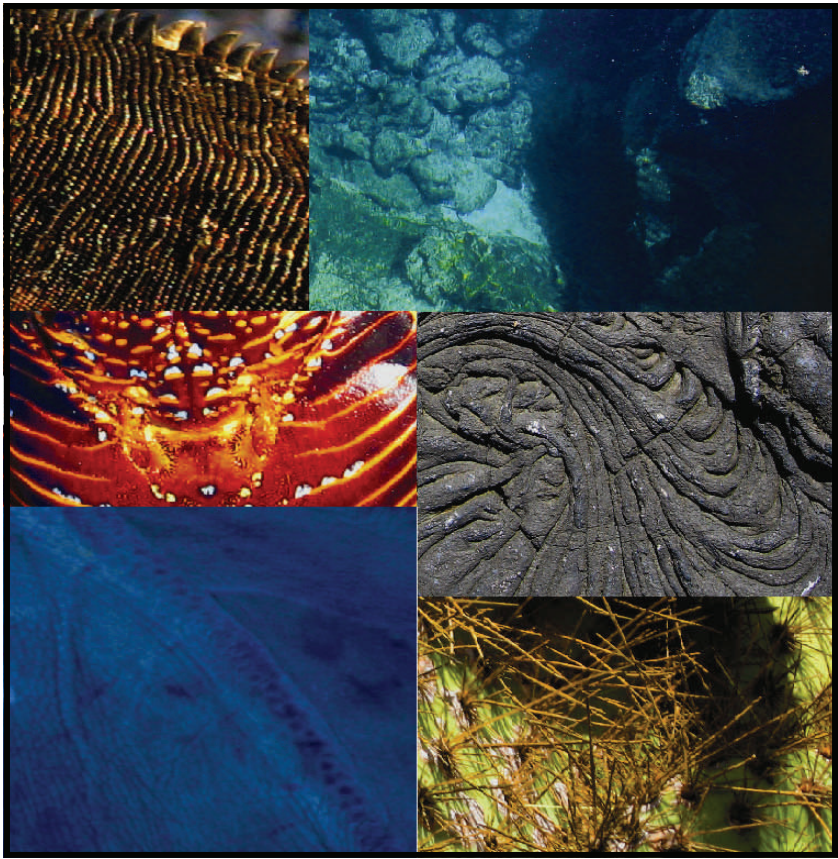
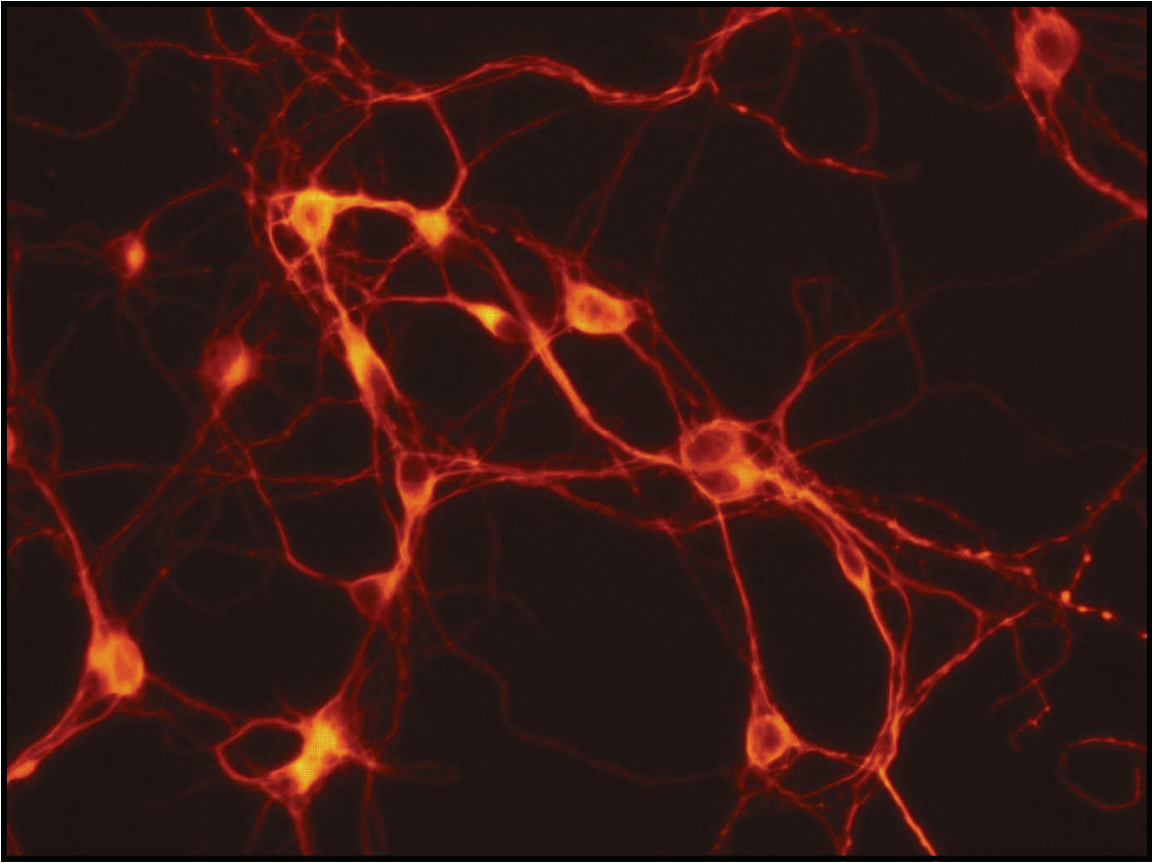












"Are you guys identical?"

"We don't know."

"Do you feel each other's pain?"

"I don't...think so...I guess I don't know."

"Do you ever like wake up and forget which one you are?"

"...what?"

"I've always wanted a twin!"

That last one always gets me. Everyone says it. I wait for it at the end of every conversation that starts with "I'm a twin." I ask them why. They say it would have been nice to have a friend growing up, someone their own age that they could talk to. Inside their heads, I imagine they are watching *The Parent Trap*, cute skinny blonde girls dancing and singing in unison, convincing their parents with identical smiles to let them stay together forever. Having a twin means having someone who is always there for you, someone your age who will want to do everything you want to do. It means being exciting and different and having the world be in love with you. Some of these things are true.

One of my earliest memories is waking up and looking through the yellow bars of my crib. My twin sister's dark eyes were staring at me. Our bodies were lying in the same position on our separate white mattresses and somehow I knew that we had opened our eyes at the exact same moment. I also knew what would happen next. We stood up and stared at the door through which we expected our mother to appear. After a few moments Meredith looked at me and I understood. At the same moment, we screamed as loud as we were able to. I don't know if this is something we did every morning or if it was just the one time, but I remember our natural unity. I remember this unique connection, and this is the connection that most people crave. This is the story they love to hear, and so when they look at me with familiar delight in their eyes, I offer them stories like these rather than the more complicated truth. I tell them about the one and only time we switched classes in the third grade, about our matching hats with the different colored roses, and swallow the truth that I fear no one will understand, the reality that being a twin was in many ways painful for my sister and me, and still is.

For me, being a twin meant knowing from an early age that the people around me, even the ones I loved the most, would not always know who I was. Though my parents generally got our names right, there was the occasional mishap, and if our babysitters or relatives called us by our given name it was generally no more than a good guess. By elementary school, I took it as a personal insult when someone called me Meredith. "I'm Rachel!" I would snap indignantly. The perpetrator would smile, oblivious to my outrage. "Sorry!" they would say, "wow, you guys look so much alike!" Sometimes I would smile to be polite. Sometimes I would say nothing at all. I was disappointed and angry that they got to have a unique appearance that went with their unique soul, angry that I was powerless to control the way I was perceived by others, frustrated that my body had so much power to define me. I could become Meredith in an instant. I could become no one. I could become anything anyone told me I was.

Being a twin didn't seem to have the same effect on Meredith's sense of self. Though it annoyed her slightly, she didn't seem to need outside validation the way I did. While I was desperate to have friends over, Meredith was content to spend time by herself. Once I remember looking for her in the yard. She was walking the edge of the forest and staring ahead, humming softly to herself. There was a power about her, even then.

"What are you doing?" I asked as I approached.

She shrugged.

"Want to play a game or something?"

She shook her head.

"I kind of just feel like playing by myself right now." She said.

As children, our mother tried to encourage the development of our own identities by insisting that we be put into separate class rooms at school. She also recognized our interests, and encouraged us in separate directions to pursue them. This is how Meredith became the artist and I became the actress. There could be no overlapping. I could not be good at drawing, Meredith could not audition for plays, and the three of us respected these boundaries in secret alliance. Despite my mother's attempts however, despite the clues we scattered on the surface, I still felt like a shapeless mess beneath it. While I still depended heavily on the correct interpretation of my outside, for the world to know I was Rachel because I was acting and not drawing, Meredith had an inside that she alone controlled.

As we became teenagers, I continued to admire and envy this force in my sister. She seemed ready to fight the unfairness of our world single handedly. In the wake of our parents divorce, Meredith was the hero. I stood behind her, nodding as she made demands for us. She stood up to our father when his hands shook and his eyes bulged. She asked our mother why the prayer book had been taken down from our doorway and why we weren't celebrating Hanukah. At school, it was the same. There was a pride in my sister that I witnessed hungrily. When a group of popular girls threatened to beat her up (through me actually because they thought I was her) she rolled her eyes and smirked.

"How do you do it?" I asked her one day when she was doing her homework at the kitchen table. "How do you *not* care what other people think?"

Meredith thought for a moment.

"I just...tell myself I'm strong," she said, "and I believe it."

Once, I actually tried this method to no avail. In the girls' bathroom I remember staring angrily at my reflection in the mirror. Tears blurred my vision and I could barely see my reflection. *I'm strong*, I thought, *I'm strong. I don't care what anyone says about me.* I hoped that some kind of magic would take place; that the sureness my sister seemed to embody would course through my veins and make me different, make me a beautiful, proud, apathetic warrior like she seemed to be. Nothing changed though, and somewhere inside of me I understood that it was because the words were only half of the spell. I had to believe them, I had to give them permission to represent me, and I wanted to. I wanted to give myself permission to be Rachel whether people knew I was or not, to be good enough regardless of competing definitions, but I didn't know how.

By high school, I had given up my pursuit for a solid identity and instead spent my time trying to make myself as invisible as possible. The strength I had observed in my sister throughout middle school I now accepted as an impossible goal. I could not avoid the altering of my sense of self by others, and so I would take it away from them completely. I would be nothing and there would be nothing to manipulate, nothing to hurt. This is how I would get control. I found that if I stopped talking or moving or making eye contact, most people would ignore me, and this seemed like a pleasant alternative to the uneasiness I had experienced throughout middle school. Obsessed with erasing myself, I would devote entire classes to fantasizing about living in a magic bubble that no one could see inside. I began to experiment with hunger. Exactly when, I don't remember, and then, it happened. Like the magic I always wanted, I had a name. Everyone seemed to know I was Rachel, the skinny twin, an identity that no one could argue with. And suddenly I felt a pride that I had never felt before and a relief I had never known.

I never meant for my new identity to hurt Meredith, but when it did, I couldn't bear

to give it up. I knew what was happening to her even before people said things like “the fatter one?” because I understood, as all twins understand, what happens when one twin stands out. The comparisons begin and worth gets distributed accordingly. If I was the thin twin, Meredith was the fat twin. If I was the worthy twin, Meredith was the unworthy twin. The fact that she was not fat or unworthy was inconsequential to the masses. They would label us as they always had in an attempt to tell us apart and we would be powerless to stop them. This bothered me. I knew what it felt like to be on the uncomfortable end of these comparisons but I refused to let it dilute my newly generated confidence. After all, Meredith had never had any trouble holding on to herself. She could handle this, I thought, and it seemed only fair that I get to experience the sense of self she had always known.

As long as I ignored Meredith’s pain, I thought, I could keep my new thin identity, but soon other challenges arose which threatened its survival. My math tutor Joan was the first person to say anything to me. When I sat down in my usual chair in front of the dry erase board, she turned to me.

“Your face looks green.” She said slowly, staring right at me, “Are you eating three meals a day?”

I left that day feeling terrified. Seeing how long I could go without eating was probably a little worse than your average diet, but no one until that moment had forced me to confront this realization. My behavior was probably not normal. Some part of me understood this, recognizing simultaneously that if anyone really knew, they would try to stop me. This didn’t mean I was Anorexic, I told myself. I wouldn’t let myself think that. Anorexics were beautiful ballerinas and “A” students who starved themselves for weeks on end. I put food into my mouth every day, I thought. It wasn’t the same. I could keep going. I could keep the identity, at least for a little longer. She would have to go instead, I resolved, along with anyone else who threatened to expose my behavior for what it was, or influence my decision to keep the identity I had worked so hard to attain.

“I don’t think I need math tutoring anymore,” I lied to my mother in the car on the way back to our house. “I think I get everything now. Besides, at this point, you either get it or you don’t, right?”

There was a long line of awkward conversations following the one I had with Joan. I also left Nanette, my cello teacher of seven years, after she said I looked too thin, and avoided being alone with my friend Shauna after she told me that my hands looked like a starving person’s.

Meredith was also one of these attempted sacrifices, though my break from her was reluctant and would never be fully complete. The day she confronted my weight loss, we were walking in a circle around the neighborhood. Meredith was walking next to me but I kept pushing us to go faster. “C’mon,” I laughed, “Gotta get in shape!” Suddenly she stopped. “What?” I asked without stopping or turning around. I was concentrating on the burn in my calves, on the sound of my sneakers scratching the pavement.

“Are you still trying to lose weight?” she asked from behind me.

I stopped and after a moment, I turned to face her. The suspicion in her eyes I recognized from countless arguments with our mother, but what startled me was her uncertainty. She was being careful as they all had been. She was afraid of me, I realized. I couldn’t remember ever feeling more powerful than her.

“I guess,” I said, “Why not?”

My words seemed to cause her immediate pain. I watched her open her mouth and close it once before she finally spoke.

“Because...you’re already skinny!” she said, “and it won’t look good on you...our body type

isn't meant to look that way."

I smiled.

"Whatever," I said. Her mouth was still open slightly as I began to walk away from her and I knew instinctively as I had once, as a baby in a crib, that she was watching. For the first time though, I didn't care if she followed me, if anyone followed me. I didn't need friends over or Meredith to play with me or anyone's permission to define myself. I had taken back the night, I thought. Now I would look in the mirror and feel that magical strength which seemed to come so naturally to my sister.

A few months later, my mother picked me up from play rehearsal. I was one of the dwarves in Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, and I had just removed the goat hair beard which had been glued to my face. There was still a red mark on my cheek when I got into the car and looked at my face in the rearview mirror. "I'm taking you to see a nutritionist," she said. Staring at the windshield in front of her, we started to drive. Terror rushed through me and I said nothing, convincing myself that worst case scenario, I would get a talking to. A few weeks earlier, she had taken me to the doctor for a check up. He had stared at me and talked, but in the end, nothing had come of it. "Just keep an eye on it," he had told my mother while I sat on tissue paper and stared at the wall. I figured the same thing would happen here.

I still wasn't convinced that I was Anorexic, but when the nutritionist, whose name was Melody, told me that three consecutively missed periods was criteria for a diagnosis, I wasn't surprised. There was a seriousness about her which made me feel that dishonesty, at least direct dishonesty, would be useless, and I had told her the truth about my missed periods the moment she asked. When she went out into the hallway to ask my mother to come in, I knew I had been caught. I had been given a diagnosis and a new name which both comforted and frightened me. It was good to know I was something concrete, but being discovered also meant I would be given other things, things I didn't want, demands for example, and instinctively I felt that the best way to derail these demands, to maintain my identity, was to make the authority think I was ready to play nice. Maybe I even wanted to at first. I told her about Meredith and how good it felt to have people know who I was. She told me that it was fairly common for twins to develop Anorexia, and complimented me on my ability to be so articulate.

I started to see Melody twice a week and a social worker who worked down the hall from her. For the most part, my family was relieved. They had been told my prognosis was a good one. There was hope. It had been caught early and there was a chance I could recover without medical intervention. Despite my earlier plans for sabotage, however, I temporarily felt forced to comply under the new pressure of my diagnosis. Everyone was watching me and I had been given a meal plan which left little room for my own interpretation. I was miserable and heart broken, unconvinced that life without my new identity was worth returning to. I was terrified and terrible, and Meredith got the worst of it.

I hated the sight of her. She was a walking reminder of the lie I was telling myself. Her normal body taunted me, told me that mine was unnatural, that mine would go back and when it did, the powerlessness which had reigned throughout my earlier life would return. If the weight returned, I feared, I would go back to having no control over my worth. Without cold hard numbers to represent me, I would be forced to ride the tide once more, sliding up and down with praise and punishment, the subjective, messy interpretation of others. It angered me that Meredith didn't seem to understand what that feeling was like. How could she expect me to give Anorexia up when she had never experienced the selflessness I had endured? Not only would giving up my skinny identity mean losing a sense of worth, but gaining the weight would also mean returning to the powerless world of being a twin. Sharing an appearance with her would mean sharing my identity once more and I had grown attached to my new

independence. For all of these reasons, Meredith became a symbol of the painful reality I was determined to outrun, and I treated her in many ways like the enemy. I ignored her pain and used her loyalty to my advantage.

Meredith's presence also bothered me for one last reason. I loved her, and this love connected me with a vulnerability I had taught myself to hate. My sensitive nature, my neediness, had made me defenseless once, and so I had grown to despise it, along with anything else that made me feel, and it turned out, even in the zombie-like throes of my eating disorder, Meredith continued to make me feel. Seeing her cry still seemed to hurt me even when nothing else did. I remember the pain I felt at seeing Meredith terrified for the first time and knowing I had caused it. We were in the waiting room of the emergency room. I was having chest pains and was somewhat convinced I was having a heart attack. Tears were sliding down Meredith's face, her skin as white as paper, and it hurt to see her that way, to know I had made it happen, to know I could stop it. Carefully avoiding her eyes, I turned to my mother.

"Can you make her leave?" I whispered.

"What?" my mother asked. We both knew I was being outrageous.

"She's making me nervous," I said, "I don't want her in here."

I will never forget the look on Meredith's face when my mother asked her to wait outside. Stunned, she stared at me for a few moments, before turning and disappearing down the hall. Just as I had before my diagnosis, with Joan, Nanette, all my friends, and the other members of my family, I pushed Meredith away in order to protect my anorexic identity. Though I had originally been somewhat compliant, I had been in the system long enough to learn the rules and my way around them. I discovered that I could use my acting skills and articulate nature to deceive them all. In therapy, I would talk about my feelings and how much I looked forward to recovery, but in real life, I had no intention of giving the eating disorder up. Partly this relapse was just a delayed reaction. I hadn't wanted to give it up in the first place, at least not permanently, and the only reason I had taken tentative steps towards recovery was a lack of privacy, a little fear, and guilt over what it was doing to Meredith.

Meredith seemed to have lost herself in me. The strength which I had always admired about her had diminished even before the diagnosis, and the more I sunk into the Anorexic identity, the more lost I saw her become. Perhaps her strong identity had been formed around my weak one and in my new falsely confident state, she was unsure of her place. Perhaps she was terrified that I would die. Perhaps it was the fact that people used her to get to me, seeing her as a convenient medium to communicate with her sick sister. Teachers would stop her in the hall and friends would ask her how I was doing. "Your sister is going down a dangerous path," my grandfather would tell her over the phone. Perhaps as a result she began to see herself as nothing more than an extension of me. Perhaps it was all of these things and perhaps I noticed every one of them. I noticed how much my anorexia was killing her, but eventually I selfishly chose to keep my identity at the expense of her own. By this point, I could barely imagine my life any other way.

When my mother told us we were moving in with her boyfriend, I lost another fifteen pounds. No one saw it coming and the pro-recovery persona I put forth in therapy was so good, I even believed it to a certain extent. I was surprised when I walked into my social worker's office one day to find both her and my mother seated.

"I don't even know what to say," she said, "I'm shocked. When your nutritionist called me, my stomach dropped. Rachel, your weight has never been this low. What do you have to say?"

I said nothing. I had nothing to say. Eventually my mother took me home and all of us who lived there began the process of waiting, waiting for something to be done. And while we waited for someone to do something, I stopped doing everything. I stopped going to school. I stopped changing out of my favorite pajamas, baggy gray ones with white snow flakes. I stopped eating anything but oatmeal or the mushrooms my mother brought home from the super market at my request. I stopped leaving the house. I discovered that it took energy to go upstairs, to raise a hair brush or my voice to speaking level, that it hurt to shower, and so I stopped. I just stopped everything, and every one stopped with me.

A few days before I was hospitalized, my mother approached me. It was a warm day in late April, and I was sitting on the deck with the blanket from our couch wrapped around my shoulders.

"I want to tell you something," she said.

I didn't respond.

"Are you listening?" she asked.

"What." I said, without turning to face her.

"I watched this movie a few nights ago. It was about the mother of an autistic child. This little boy in the movie, he has autism *bad*. Rachel, he is really, really in trouble. He can't talk, and he spins this one plate all day long, and his mother..she doesn't know what to do, so you know what she does?"

She waited for me to respond. When I didn't, she continued.

"She spins a plate with him. Because that's where he is at, and she knows she has to meet him there, and she spins this plate again and again, and then...maybe the one hundredth time...he looks up at her. She reaches him." She paused, "So I've decided that's what I'm going to do, too."

"What..?" Now I looked at her, "what are you gonna do? ..Spin a plate with me?"

"No," she continued seriously, "From now on, I'm only going to eat whatever you eat. So I can know where you are. So I can meet you where you're at. Maybe I can reach you."

"Are you crazy..?"

I looked at her. Her face was emotionless. I couldn't tell if she knew what she was doing or if she had actually just lost it.

"You're really going to engage in a power struggle with me at this point? Don't say it's because you want to reach me because that's bullshit. It's because you want to scare me or guilt trip me into eating because you think I will be so worried about you, that I will stop. You think I can still turn this around."

"I think it will reach you. I'm going to try it."

"You are fucking crazy. This will not help me, but whatever; you won't last five minutes..." I said over my shoulder as I walked back into the house, but I was scared. I had been scared since the ambush at my social worker's office, scared that my heart would stop beating, that I would pass out and never open my eyes. My heart was beating so slowly I could count the seconds in between and the family doctor's words had been running through my mind ever since my appointment with him the day before. "Your heart rate is 45 beats per minute. Doesn't that scare you!?" he demanded to know, seeming almost offended by my presence. Yes, it did, I would have said if I had thought Anorexia wasn't listening. I didn't really want to die. I didn't want to live either, but neither choice felt like it was mine to make, and now there were two lives on the line, and an identity to maintain, all of which were my responsibility. It was too much. I would have cried if I had had the energy. I would have screamed. Instead, I waited for Meredith to come home.

Afraid of parting forever on bad terms, Meredith and I had made a strange alliance in the days before I was hospitalized. Partly, this was because we both thought I was going to die, but also, I had begun to understand why she hated the identity I had risked my life to protect. It wasn't making me feel powerful or strong or safe the way it had once, and I was beginning to realize my mistake in choosing it over so many other important things and people. Losing Meredith forever now became more terrifying than blurring the lines between us or even death, and though I didn't feel I could reverse it on my own, I dedicated the energy I had left to trying to take down the wall I had built to keep our identities separate. Though it was perhaps too late, I began to reach out to her the way I had once. I began to let myself need her again.

When Meredith came home that day, she found me staring at a bowl of oatmeal on the kitchen table, looking miserable, while my mother cooked hers on the stove. It probably would have been humorous if it hadn't been so dire.

"What's going on?" she asked me. I told her about Mom's plan.

"I can't eat this if she does..." I told her. I knew how crazy it sounded, but I was desperate for intervention, "...she knows I can't...if she eats, it's because I gave in before her... and I can't...and if I don't, then she's hungry...and...it's my fault...and I don't know what to do...please Meredith, help me. Please, I can't deal with this," I begged, looking into her eyes. For a moment, Meredith didn't say anything. She just stared.

"What are you doing!?" she then screamed, turning to face our mother, "Can't you see it's beyond that!? Stop it!"

"Meredith," my mother said sternly as she approached, "I know what I'm-

"She's DYING!"

At that moment, Meredith seemed to lose herself completely. I watched as she grabbed the bowl out of our mother's hands, dumped the contents into the kitchen trash can, and replaced it on the counter. For a moment, no one moved. My mother looked stunned, then outraged. Her face was red and her eyes were wide, then slowly she went to the garbage can with a spoon and scooped the oatmeal back into her bowl. Defiantly, she ate a bite and left the room. With tears in her eyes, Meredith stared at the place where our mother had stood. She had that lost look again and as I turned back to the oatmeal in front of me on the kitchen table, knowing we had won, I had never been more grateful to anyone or more ashamed. In my sister's terror, I realized, she had forgotten everything, and had become completely devoted to my interests only, to my survival and desires alone. Even with our mother, there had been some room for negotiations, for conversation, for one last try, for her own wants and needs and anger. For Meredith, I now saw, there was nothing left. There was no room in herself for anything but me.

On May 2nd, my parents took me to New York Hospital in White Plains, New York, where I was hospitalized for the first time. Some people call it New York Presbyterian or Cornell. I would remember the day because it was written on the blue and white striped hospital bracelet that was put around my wrist. For the first time, I met other Anorexics, and though initially I worried that they would reject me, that they would look at me and denounce me as a fraud, I soon discovered that they had no reason to. They were all just girls and boys like me. Many of them were not the dancers or "A" students I expected them to be. For the most part, they were just people who had gotten lost looking for themselves the way I had.

Being put on Eight South, the eating disorder floor of the hospital, was the first event which allowed me to recognize that my new identity, the anorexic identity, was shared by many, and that while each of us believed it to be ours alone, in reality, it belonged to no one. In group therapy, I heard their voices say that they would be nothing without it, that they felt

like they had no identity without the eating disorder, and though these words had also come out of my mouth many times, I found myself suddenly surprised. How could they not know who they were? I thought. How could they think they were no one? I saw them. I knew they weren't Anorexia, that they were Colette, Heather, and Jason. They were my friends with unique personalities that had somehow become invisible to them, and I knew then that if I could see who they really were, they could see me, too, that they saw Rachel where I saw Anorexia, because I was Rachel and I had always been. I was Rachel whether I knew it or not, whether I wanted to be or not, and I began to understand that I could find that person again if I allowed myself to.

Coming to this realization didn't make it an easy transition. I went back and forth between motivation and mourning, falling back upon my Anorexic identity when I felt that Rachel was too sensitive or not enough. I was discharged in July at a hundred and five pounds, the target weight the program had assigned me, and was re-admitted the following November of my own volition. I felt myself slipping and did not want to return to the powerless Spring of earlier that year. When I came home in January, I threw myself into maintaining my recovery, but when I reached my original weight, which was also the weight of my twin sister, I panicked. Again, I sunk into my old anorexic identity, but this time I refused hospitalization. Eventually I gained the weight back on my own, and dealt with the discomfort I felt at being confused for Meredith once more.

Meredith's journey has also been a complicated one. Though going away to different colleges has helped both of us in maintaining separate identities, her search for the balance she had once is still an ongoing process. It seems that now we have switched places, that now it is her turn to find her identity, to look for the girl who would smile and roll her eyes at intimidation, who knew what she deserved and what her name was without ever being told.

"You destroyed that girl," she says at Thanksgiving or Christmas or on our birthday when we are together.

I tell her that I'm sorry, and she cries, and so do I, and then she yells, and after a while I yell back as loud as I can.

"Well how long do I have to say I'm sorry, Meredith!? I was sick! I was sixteen!"

"Hey, you were sick or in recovery for six years," she says dryly, taking a sip of red wine, "I'd say you have one more year."

At these times, I feel that the damage I caused during my illness is irreparable, that Meredith will forever carry my scars on her soul, and that I will never be rid of the guilt. Sometimes, I hear a song that reminds me of her and then find myself seeing her pale face reflected in the emergency room glass doors. I'm sorry, I say automatically.

Sometimes though, she calls me, and I hear her voice on the other end, the trust which is still reserved only for my ears. I know that whatever anger she feels towards me is not permanent, that it can never be, and that even when she is pissed off at me, at anorexia, at the world, at our history, I am still the most important person to her. Secretly, I understand as I always have, that neither of us can imagine the world without the other in it. We've known one another since conception, and a unique bond exists already which can never be undone. There is no one before her or beside her. There is no one I trust more, no one I'd rather be with, even if being with her means crying. This connection between us is, as everyone has always said, special, and though it has taken me a long time to cope with its complicated nature, it still remains more valuable to me than anything else I have ever known.

Rachel Posner

Editor's Note

"Art" is one of those tricky words that evade absolute definition. I will not try to define it but I will relate what I have found in my own experiences, as sometime contributor and current editor, to be true: there was never a time when I did not feel distinctly different, somehow transformed, after having written or read a poem or story, or after having made or seen a painting. Each time, things were cast in a new light. There was meaning and significance in places where neither had been before.

I keep these thoughts inevitably in mind. As of the very moment of this writing, my internet "Countdown to Graduation" (placed strategically on my Facebook profile between the Graffiti Wall and the LOLcats) reads: "51 days, 14 hours remaining". Soon follows the realization that 22 years have somehow transpired without my noticing. A mere four years ago, I believed that I had all the time in the world, yet I ran to class when I was late. I still run to class when I am late. Have I learned nothing?

Perhaps not. It may be that art has a place here, when it allows us to say: "Wait, hold on, slow down—let me consider just this one moment. Let me see what it holds for me and what it might hold for you. Let me have time to consider particulars." Such things suddenly loom large. We might find ourselves noting entire conversations in a sidelong glance, a failed relationship in a faulty light, or love realized in the symmetry of a single leaf. And once we have learned to speak that language, to put into words or paint that one moment, to dissect that one image, can we ever truly regress? We may continue to run to class once in a while, but can we ever once again become the person who had not written that poem, had not read that story, had not seen that painting?

Thus, to my staff and to all of our writers and artists, from the bottom of my editor's heart:

Thank you for your creativity, your brilliance, and your courage. I am honored to have had the opportunity to learn from all of you, to have been permitted to share in *your* particulars, and to grow with you. This magazine is for you—a record, of sorts—and I hope that we have done you justice.

Elizabeth Moore
 Editor-in-Chief
Insanity's Horse 2007-2008

The text of this issue is set in Palatino Linotype.
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We have already gone beyond whatever we have words for.
-FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE