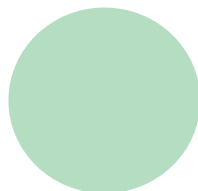


UNBOUND

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2018





Instagram: @unboundjournal
Contact: unboundjournal@uoregon.edu

Unbound Journal is run exclusively by undergraduate students and biannually publishes the prose, poetry and visual art of students at the University of Oregon. Prose and poetry are selected for publication by editorial board members through a double-blind review process.

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Cover set in Raleway
Body set in Cormorant Garamond



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Another long winter has come and gone, replaced by a sunburst that is just starting to melt through the oppressive grayness of the past few months. From my desk I can see fresh green boughs unfurling in the warm wind, the rose hedge below my window just beginning to swell its buds upward into the light. Steeped in emotional sludging from the November-April darkness, it is a burst of hope to see, smell, and feel the vitality of the newly-arrived sun. Keeping in celebration of blue skies and ripened spirits, I am very proud to present Volume X Issue II of *Unbound*. Our latest issue features creative nonfiction and a one-act play interspersed with poetry and prose, all of which have been selected through double-blind review from the journal's largest submission pool yet. We have maintained our tradition of providing constructive feedback to all who submit with the belief that it makes a difference to offer tangible suggestions for revision.

In approaching the closing of the school year, and of my own undergraduate career, I can now begin to reflect on the wild, unpredictable ride that *Unbound* has been since my editorship began last June. Somehow, as an unpaid staff of student editors, we were able to find dozens of hours atop our frenzied schedules to curate then finesse a publication reflecting our peers' most compelling creative work. My involvement with the journal has been a tremendously fulfilling aspect of my time here in Oregon and it has brought me joy to bring so many authors together between the same binding. I hope that all who read the journal are inspired and recognize that they can be published by virtue of quality alone; though it can feel this way on campus, one does not have to be in the in-crowd or within an inner circle of contributors to be published.

As a last thought, I am grateful to our contributors for being vulnerable in allowing the editorial board to review their work. I am also grateful to all on staff for devoting so much time to reading our peers' work, discussing it in section meetings, and compiling feedback. In welcoming back the slow time and ripening heat of summer, enjoy our peers' exceptional work in language somewhere under the sun's soon-to-be-familiar heat, as the days begin to fold into one another with barely a crease.

Signing off,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Dunham', with a stylized, flowing script.

Patrick Dunham
Editor in Chief



Portrait by David Rollins

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OXALIS

Trenton Goodman

The preamble to my morning ritual begins to chime as the floor and overhead lights flicker and then ignite. “Good Morning, Marvin.”

“Morning, Roman,” I instinctively reply as I sidle out of bed.

“Are you ready for your hygiene equipment?”

“Yes. Go ahead.” A carefully laid out display is now outstretched from a metallic wall.

Toothbrush; extra soft

Toothpaste; no fluoride

Lowball glass; 4 ounces, water

Straight razor; G-10 military grade grip handle

Badger hair brush; oak pommel

Shaving soap; lavender and oatmeal

Steamed towel; machine washable, dryer safe

Perpetually perfect placement every day. Roman, the A.I., had already made the bed, showing no sign of me sleeping in it. “They made you efficient, Roman...to say the least,” I mumble as I begin to brush my teeth.

“Yes, I was built to maximize the efficiency of all members in the Cascades Scientific Research Facility. If you recall me discussing my origin, you would remember that the first scientists involved in this lab designed me to function as the emotional necessity for future scientists. Although you have never been in the outside world, the human has a need for comradery. Marvin, there is a great chance you wouldn’t stay sane if I were not here. Nonetheless, your work is far more important than my housekeeping,” Roman releases.

“I’ve been having strange dreams the past few nights, Roman.”

“Well, what about?”

“I was riding a bike, and there was a clover field...I had a brother in it t—”

“Dreams often feel real, but they most certainly are not, Marvin.”

“Maybe not, but this felt like more than a dream.”

I dry my face and begin to prepare for my venture to the dining area. Today, I will beat my record of forty-eight steps from my cabin to the dining entrance. Only perfect form and heel-to-toe movement. No looking left. No peering right. If both feet leave the ground at the same time, I’m disqualified.

Go.

Left foot.

Right.

Appropriated arm swing complementing my aggressive left foot placement.

Don’t plant too hard, I’ll lose momentum for the next step.

Almost there.

Don’t get complacent.

Right as my foot breaches the bottom of the door's frame, a curious Roman asks, "Did you beat your previous record, Marvin?"

"I missed it."

"By how many steps?"

"Just one."

"Extraordinary effort. Maybe tomorrow, Marvin."

"Maybe."

"Don't let the gravity of this setback drag you down. Progress can only be made after we fail."

"I just thought I had the momentum to make it."

"Your accomplishments far exceed this minuscule moment."

The dining hall is cheerless. An isosceles frame, square table, a round plate paired with a cylindrical glass, and a cold circular seat are what make up this sector.

Breakfast.

Warm, but not fresh. Three eggs scrambled with carved turkey and mayonnaise on a brioche bun. A medley of greens blended with blueberries and mango are part of the drink mix. Within ten minutes, it's all bathing in my stomach.

As I begin down the corridor to the lab, a curiosity burns from the past week's ponderings: "Will I ever meet any of the other scientists?"

"When your research is completed, Marvin," Roman reminds.

Directly across the lab there is a sealed doorway that births its own persona. It's the only red I know that feels cold. The steel door cloaks what I would assume to be the other scientists, but Roman would never answer questions about what it divides. Each passing day, I walk next to the door and grow more anxious to learn what world lies beyond. Brilliant minds, all of them ecstatic to discuss the progress of our work and how we have changed the world for the better. I wondered if they all grew up in the lab like myself. Embryotic manipulation was fairly new at the time, but I doubt I am the only one here born this way. While my thoughts were raging with the idea of meeting others, the lab door began to rise. It opens with the usual click as it reaches the top.

Important things needed to be done today; all will take precise measurements and calculations to complete successfully. "Roman, how much time do I have to modify the equation for the crop?" I ask, knowing the answer won't be favorable.

"You have 46 minutes, Marvin," Roman methodically hymns. "Please remember to utilize the Roman Automated Information Network so the others may see your work."

"Better than last time," I whisper, feeling the weight of the world kiss my shoulders.

The formula I am creating feeds the world by creating a crop with enough essential nutrients to sustain an individual for a full day. Roman has told me about the previous version I created and how I've saved the world.

Roman chimes, "The rebellion was nothing more than an idea when this project first began, but they are the reason it still exists." Roman says they were our leader's prior right-hand men and women. The rebellion fights against the progression of science and modified plants. Nothing grows without modifications now. The soil has been drained of nitrogen and crops can't produce a healthy yield. I want to shake off the redolent fear and dig into the dream I had, so I ask, "Hey

Roman, how was I as a child?"

"Spry, to say the least. It took much longer to develop your skillset than other scientists. It was quite rewarding to see you blossom in your studies, Marvin."

"Well, how do I know you aren't lying? I know of the world, I know of the things in it, and I know that I want to be a part of it. My mission is all I seem to recall, though."

Roman remains silent.

I raise the reservation, "Then what you're saying is Pavlov's theory of classical conditioning is the best method of raising a child without any human interaction? I'm basically a dog doing tricks for treats."

"Much better than being Schrödinger's cat."

"Then all I would have to worry about is someone opening the box."

"You're nothing short of clever, Marvin. May I remind you that there is no greater mission in the world than what you're doing here today," Roman posits.

I let silence fill the room as I adjust the final algorithm and send it to the R.A.I.N. Cloud. My estimation puts me at thirty-two minutes, which is much faster than I could've hoped for. A cheeky grin strikes my face as I imagine meeting my colleagues for the first time. I confidently inquire, "How much time is left now, Rome?"

No reply.

Thinking the nickname may have not triggered a response, I walk to the door of the lab and more urgently state "Roman, how much—"

Strobes of white and black blind me; God taps the glass of my tank.

Sirens drown the calm voice, "Marvin—evacu..."

"Roman? What is going on?" I yell over the sirens. The strobe bursts at a speed that makes everything around me come to life and then die in an instant. I scramble to the middle of my work station. Every step feels as if it remains in place until I collide into the table and then crawl underneath. "Roman?!" Terror pumps through my body as I have never felt so alone. Hiding now, I bring my knees to my chest and wait for the misery to end.

The strobe sends me into trance. A memory to a warm summer day at my aunt's house in Colorado pulls me into a sort of serenity. The people around me...I know them all; my older brother, Aaron, my father, and my aunt are all cheering me on as I attempt to ride my bike without training wheels. The warmth of the sun reaches over the mountains and holds my chin up as I pass the neighbor's driveway. My brother is keeping pace with me, just running by my side to keep motivating me and telling me not to be scared. My dad and aunt are cheering and smiling near the mailbox, the same one that has an indent from those teenage joyriders. The big hill is coming up and my brother warns me to stop before I get too far. I hit the brakes only to find myself moving faster.

"Aaron! Help me! The breaks are malfunctioning!"

"Jump off in the grass, Marvy! It isn't so bad!"

The ultimatum lasts a lifetime from one second to the next as I feel the bike pick up a speed I can no longer control. The handlebars begin to wobble then jerk to the right as Aaron pulls me off and into a clover field. He begins to laugh while bent over top of me, "Jeez, Marvy. You gotta be okay with falling sometimes. Look at that scratch," he triumphs as he pulls up his plaid sleeve, "Pretty sure it's infected!"

I look back over to the bicycle; front tire in the air, playing card punishing

every spoke that passes. The sound slowly becomes consumed as I roll over and spot a helicopter landing in the cul-de-sac one street past my aunts.

"What do you think that is about, Aaron?" I say, watching my aunt take her bags in hand while crossing the backyard. "Well, go find out yourself, brainiac!"

I rumble over to my dad, who has a bag ready for me. "Listen son, Pop don't know when he's gonna see you again, so be good for your auntie while you learn all the science things. I know we came a long way from Blue Ridge to housesit while she was away, but she's gonna help you learn things I could never teach you. Love ya, Marvy. You're gonna change the world someday."

My aunt motions for me to come over to the helicopter. "Okay, Marvin. Let's get you in here and buckled up. Are you ready, sweetheart?"

I can only nod as she lifts me up and puts me in the seat across from her. "Ok, we have to make a few stops, so please be patient." I have never heard such a calming voice speak so loud. The blades begin to rotate, reminding me of the alarm that starts pulling me back. "Where are we going, Aunt Malia?"

"We're going to the Cascades Scientific Research Facility."

The flashing and blasts of noise still remain as I notice a wetness from the inside of my pants.

I can remember.

I am real.

"Where is my Aunt Malia, Roman? Why did you lie to me?"

No response.

"I'm going to tell the others. I trusted you, Roman. I'll find a way to get to them. When I do, I'm going to tell them how you erased my life. Then, I'm going to erase yours."

I pick up the chair and launch it into the computer. I scream as I bash the instruments into unusable scraps of glass, plastic, and metal. Every paper I could find multiplied with each rip. Finally, the flashing ceases and the noise fades.

Dim lights flood the floor.

While trying to catch my breath, a relief washes over me.

Stomping my way down to the sleeping corridor, I turn and gaze as the red door begins to decompress and open.

I've done it.

I finally get to meet them.

I get to tell them how evil Roman is for enslaving me and filling my head with lies. Elation pulses through me as if that cold red color gave me life. The door crept to the top inch by inch, taking longer than I wished to wait. Roman's voice returned as I began running through the main hall.

"Marvin—be advised—"

"Fuck you, Roman."

As I hastily step under the door with a greeting smile, I'm met with a rifle's butt stock that bruises my forehead, knocking me unconscious.

"Get up," a foggy voice demands, dragging me by my seemingly lifeless arm.

“Who are you?” The same voice stated, less muffled with each word.

“I’m Marvin, I’ve...Are you another scientist?” I whimper with the attempt of not being struck again.

“Marvin? As in CSRF’s Agricultural Engineer?”

“That’s right. Who are—“

“I’m Salomon.”

I remember the name, but I couldn’t put a finger on why. There was an austere crowd that formed a wall in front of me, casting a judgment I didn’t quite understand. Salomon began to preach, “You’re the biggest murderer to ever live, Marvin. Do you have anything to say for yourself?”

If I was not held by Salomon at this point, I would be metal to a magnet against the floor.

“...I have created food to feed the world. I’ve made it so that human life can exist at the most efficient possible rate. How is this murder? I’ve been put in here to do the things no one else is able to do, and now I kneel at the feet of a rebellion that burns these crops and murders the citizens?”

Salomon became somber, but stern, “You’ve been misinformed, Marvin. The crops you modified to feed the world went to cattle. Not just some, but all of them. The cattle became sick with Bloat. It began to wipe out the food supply. The carcasses were diseased, so all that could be done was mass burnings. The government had control on the remaining food supply and didn’t ration enough food to sustain anyone but themselves.”

“All data has been—removed—from the—R.A.I.N. Cloud—due to an—unauthorized—breach of security.”

“Shut it down.” A member of the rebellion steps back and into another sector. Salomon continues, “Looks like your friend bailed on you.”

“Roman is not my friend.”

“He must’ve meant something.”

“Roman was a liar. He said I was born here, but I was alive out there, just like you...How do I know you aren’t lying too?”

“Hell, no one could work. Nothing left but burning animal corpses while you were in here getting natural foods for every meal. Must’ve been hard.”

“I don’t believe anything you say.”

“Out there, Riots broke out. People were killing their neighbors over moldy bread and cans of food, Marvin. People starved to death within three months.”

“Roman lied to me! I was brought here and tricked into believing I was doing the right thing. Why would I take part in that?”

“You’ve lost your position of power, Marvin. Why would we believe you? Huh? Why would we care, anyway? That doesn’t fix what happened out there.”

I don’t know what to say.

The pain in his voice is a slow poison infecting me with all of their struggles to survive.

I’ve been killing those I thought I was protecting.

“You are gonna do whatever it takes to save your own ass. My father died here, Marvin. He died trying to stop the evil that was being bred. Pieces of shit just like you that think the world is all yours. I’m sure you will deny knowing about that as well.”

“I don’t know about any of that, I don’t know anything except what Roman

has told me! I have a father and a brother in Colorado, let me talk to them so they can... Aunt Malia! She is here. Let her explain—”

Salomon booms, “We owe you nothing.”

“Where are the other scientists? Did you kill them? There is no way they could’ve known...”

“You were the only one, Marvin.”

“I want to leave this place; I can help you rebuild. Roman erased my past, he erased it!”

“I’m sure he did. Now, Roman is dead and we, the rebellion, exist to rebuild a future...one you won’t be part of.”

Salomon submerged his boot into my sternum with the force of God. Gasping for air and equilibrium, I hear the door begin its descent. Now halfway closed, he warned, “This is a better death than what you deserve.”

“Please, I didn’t know!” The red door sealed itself while I lie on my back in front of it.

“Roman?” The silence echoed in the incandescent hallway.





THOR'S WELL

Daniele Armantrout

BLUE COLLAR POEM

Daniel Yim

Mother said not to stay out too late tonight,
watch out for “commonists”
and be sure to put something
on your head.

Earlier tonight I took our dog up behind the house,
along the dirt track switch-backing up the tilted fault block.
Rock fleshed like juniper bark: cooling in columns seventeen
million years ago, hexagonal joints succumbing
to lichen and brush.

When we walked up that track on snowy days
last winter the wind whipped around the horst,
shaking hands with the lonely juniper trees,
rattling berried collars of snow and ice.

Tonight there is no snow on the drive into town,
just the neon red glow of the V.F.W. Hall, headlights
flashing in the chrome of the motorcycles parked outside,
and the drunks stumbling down Main Street towards the next escape.

I drive past abandoned buildings, boarded-up relics of a time when trains
plundered the hills of pine and juniper behind the town, ferrying logs down
to the sawmills floating on the briny water like pelicans,
and I think of how lucky I am to be leaving tomorrow,
racing tumbleweeds: extinguished lanterns blown north
to the light.

ABOUT BIRDS

Daniel Yim

Dusk.
Dark geometry
skims over late August
fields: a symphony of eating,

wild, graceful hunger.
Feathered coats make
robe à la polonaise:
ruffled white unveiling blue-black.

Watching from the house,
you in your Sunday dress
and me leaning against the porch
railing, fading horizon melting persimmon to ink—

That un-shrill language almost names
the music of what happens next.

There is a arkness on the other side of these radiowaves wife waves light

Light light light

visible inmy mind

It is going through my mind

tears I hear tears for

yeats

The falcon has heard enough

I hear yoi cry in the car cry in the car

so far away re youfrom me I willstay s t ay on the phone with me and my
silence.

There is no voice in my mind that is me

walls, they only close infinitely

The boy crunches his own jalapeno chips

He is oblivious to his surroundings

Oblivion sets in, and it feels love(...)ly

If you think of yourself as wise enough to do the wrong thing

Oh
MY

(po9)

Oh MY

I see something static

Electrical bubbling light

Like sand from a clock

or water from a pot

And the night goes on.

how do you say "how do you say?"

there seems to me many questions unanswered
maybe only a few remain delayed.

surely, certainly, without question I was asked to account
for things unsaid.

I bow my head, I bow my head, I bow my head.

teach me a new way to say what has already been said,
that way it will feel like easy progress

null and void
null and void

the breakers break upon the shore as if to say even water
wishes for no more.

speak, memory, speak, memory--as tears have been saved for
a day without rain.

wherever I go I'm forgetting a piece of myself
 land

forged from a fleeting conversation

what pretense makes itself known?

IN THE GARDEN

Caroline Fenty

ACT I

SCENE 1:

GEORGINA sits on a bench in a garden. GEORGE enters and joins her.

GEORGE

Lovely day.

GEORGINA

It is.

GEORGE

Slight breeze.

GEORGINA

Mm.

GEORGE

Can't complain.

GEORGINA

Can you ever?

GEORGE

Is that a jibe?

GEORGINA

Why would it be?

GEORGE

Am I too agreeable?

GEORGINA

Is there such a thing?

GEORGE

I don't know.

GEORGINA

Then why worry?

GEORGE

You never answered the question.

GEORGINA

Was there one?

GEORGE

I can't recall.

GEORGINA

Ah memory.

GEORGE

Indeed. I sometimes feel as if I am losing my marbles.

GEORGINA

Lawrence left his marbles on the stairs.

GEORGE

Did he?

GEORGINA

Yes. Darla slipped on them, broke her ankle.

GEORGE

Little tyke.

GEORGINA

It was most definitely purposeful.

GEORGE

I don't doubt.

GEORGINA

He hates her.

GEORGE

As do I.

GEORGINA

I fired her.

GEORGE

Splendid.

GEORGINA

She contested.

GEORGE

Did she?

GEORGINA

Said she'd sue.

GEORGE

Ungrateful wench.

GEORGINA

I slapped her across the face.

GEORGE

Well deserved.

GEORGINA

Bertie saw me do it.

GEORGE

Unfortunate.

GEORGINA

It's only the help.

GEORGE

True.

GEORGINA

I know you slept with her.

GEORGE

Unfortunate.

GEORGINA

I intend to leave.

GEORGE

Georgina.

GEORGINA

George.

GEORGE

Stay.

GEORGINA

Mm.

GEORGE

I love you.

GEORGINA

Mm.

GEORGE

I hate her.

GEORGINA

Fine line.

GEORGE

Is it?

GEORGINA

You hate me.

GEORGE

I don't.

GEORGINA

I hate you.

GEORGE

You do.

GEORGINA

Bertie saw you do
it.

GEORGE

Unfortunate.

GEORGINA

She set Darla's hair
on fire.

GEORGE

Clever minx.

GEORGINA

She said she'd sue.

GEORGE

Having flammable help
is not our fault.

GEORGINA

I don't doubt.

GEORGE

Having fetching help
is not our fault.

GEORGINA

Questionable.

GEORGE

She's gone now.

GEORGINA

Indeed.

GEORGE

Place the blame on
her.

GEORGINA

Perhaps.

GEORGE

Snake in the garden.

GEORGINA

Slippery slope.

GEORGE

How so?

GEORGINA

Snake bites.

GEORGE

Small holes.

GEORGINA

They sink ships.

GEORGE

Shallow wounds.

GEORGINA

Venom spreads.

GEORGE

Only if untreated.

GEORGINA

What treatment is
this?

GEORGE

In house. Naturalis-
tic.

GEORGINA

Holistic.

GEORGE

Indeed.

GEORGINA

How modern.

GEORGE

We can't live in the
past.

GEORGINA

Indeed.
GEORGE
We must push on.
GEORGINA
Against the grain.
GEORGE
Absolutely.
GEORGINA
She tore our pantry
apart.
GEORGE
Unfortunate.
GEORGINA
Grain everywhere.
GEORGE
How bestial.
GEORGINA
Unsurprising. I
blame you.
GEORGE
I don't doubt.
GEORGINA
Disappointing.
GEORGE
Am I too agreeable?
GEORGINA
Is there such a
thing?
GEORGE
I hate you.
GEORGINA
I know.
GEORGE

The children know.
GEORGINA
Indeed.
GEORGE
They blame Darla.
GEORGINA
Mm.
GEORGE
I haven't forgotten
Frank.
GEORGINA
You haven't forgiven
Frank.
GEORGE
I didn't leave.
GEORGINA
You stayed and sim-
mered.
GEORGE
Am I too agreeable?
GEORGINA
You aren't agree-
able.
GEORGE
(Offended)
I beg your pardon.
GEORGINA
I find your amiabili-
ty arguable.
GEORGE
I beg your pardon!
GEORGINA
Good. Beg. That is
agreeable.

GEORGE

(Settling back in, pacified)

Good.

GEORGINA

Forget Frank.

GEORGE

Do you want me?

GEORGINA

Yes.

GEORGE

You wanted Frank.

GEORGINA

Yes.

GEORGE

I didn't want Darla.

GEORGINA

Didn't you?

GEORGE

No. That is the difference.

GEORGINA

Mm.

GEORGE

She snuck into the garden, he slept there in your arms.

GEORGINA

George.

GEORGE

Georgina.

GEORGINA

That was a long time ago.

GEORGE

Ah memory.

GEORGINA

You hate Frank.

GEORGE

I do.

GEORGINA

I hate Darla.

GEORGE

I don't doubt.

GEORGINA

We hate each other.

GEORGE

Fine line.

GEORGINA

Are we even now?

GEORGE

Am I too agreeable?

GEORGINA

You are abominable.

GEORGE

As are you.

GEORGINA

The children know.

GEORGE

Unfortunate.

GEORGINA

They're abominable too.

GEORGE

Indeed.

GEORGINA

We are snakes in the
garden of the world.

GEORGE

I don't doubt.

GEORGINA

I do love you.

GEORGE

Fine line.

GEORGINA

Isn't it always.

GEORGE

I love you.

GEORGINA

Not well.

GEORGE

We are unwell.

GEORGINA

Oh well.

GEORGE

Indeed.

GEORGINA

Lovely day.

GEORGE

Isn't it?

End of play

REFLECTIONS OF BROAD STREET

Joshua Plack

A thousand man-made suns scream
off the windows of the Loews Hotel
on Broad Street making
me stumble back and lose
myself for a moment.

I remember.
I am meeting
Bill Elliot from the police union
at the Brasserie for highballs
and turkey clubs.
Bill's a nasty pile, but with a little
liquid lubrication and this envelope
of twenties I'll be writing
policies for the whole force.
Maybe when it's done I'll go
somewhere where the sands are musty
and last year's prom queen waits
to rekindle someone's attention.

A young woman passes,
stealing my gaze with the bobbing motions
of round shadows. My stare holds
a touch too long and she looks away
fleeing my eyes. Girls have to do that,
pretend to hate what they secretly love,
especially when you have what I have.

Across the street there stands
an old man, looking lost,
at me, in that tired, flannel uniform of old age that fills
my nose with moth balls across four lanes of traffic. The light changes
and we cross
into each other's paths.
I move out of his way
but his movements mirror mine
with perfect fluidity. When I reach
the shop window I look at myself and remember
that Broad only has two lanes. I touch

my reflection and suddenly I remember
that my life had already been lived.

I remember that wry smile of the woman
who smelled of orange blossoms and wore
sundresses no matter the weather. How she said
no and how it drove me wild. How she taught
me to give up the weight of the world and carried
it herself when the world felt cruel. How she took
my name, and how that name came to be etched
in marble on a stone behind the church we were married in.
I remember how long it had been since I sat
by that slab of granite and listened
for the voice of the woman who carried my sons,
saw them off to war and welcomed one home.
My sons...

The clouds part and a thousand man-made suns scream
off the windows of the Loews Hotel on Broad Street, making
me stumble back and lose myself for a moment.

I remember.
I am meeting Bill Elliot from the police union
at the Brasserie for highballs and turkey clubs.

PICKLED PEACH

Nick McClurg

pickled peach

you used

to be

so

sweet

PLAYING HOUSE

Taylor Brown

HOW TO GET A GUY TO LIKE YOU—COSMO TIP #1

“Before going out, primp until you’ve tapped into your inner Kate Upton. When you’re looking and feeling your best, guys will sense that uberconfidence, which is practically catnip to men.”

Tapping the flat iron just a millimeter too close to my bare neck, I am seared by metallic heat. Cursing, I dip my head under the faucet and turn it on hastily. One of my limbs, forever vexed by gangly ungainliness, knocks over the can of Coors Light I had balanced on a domino-like stack of eyeshadow palettes. Looking at myself in the mirror, I see the scorching red burn just above my collar bone. I named my flat iron Icarus because of its propensity to fly too close to my flesh; I seemed to always have a string of hickey-like blemishes in various stages of healing wrapped around my décolletage like a fashion accessory.

“Is this showing too much boob?” Naomi asks. “Do you think it’s too much? If Robby saw me, would he want to talk to me? Do you think I should wear leggings or shorts? Do you think it’ll rain when we’re walking to the bar?” she says with break-neck speed.

I answer no, no, yes of course, leggings because it’s cold, and I’m not a meteorologist. There had hardly been a moment the last three years of college that brought her down: she’d laughed off passionate trysts and toasted red Solo Cups of champagne to failed tests. With enormous brown eyes, a naïve optimism that made her brave, and a sprinting mouth that assured no silences, people flocked to her. Sometimes for the worse.

“You’re sure you’re doing alright, Naomi?” I ask her.

She looks up and grins, backlight of her cell phone glowing, face looking like a ghost prettied-up for a daguerreotype photograph.

“Of course! Why?”

“No reason.”

I knew her and I were destined to be best friends when—during the first week of our freshman year—she’d eagerly agreed to teach me the ins and outs of becoming a 21st century collegiate woman. I learned to never wear my hair “up” at a party because in the congested darkness of a fraternity basement I’d be mistaken for one of their effeminate brothers. I learned that perfume is useless until I’d sprayed every inch of my body, hair, and clothing with the scent of sandalwood and orange

blossom. I also learned perhaps Naomi's most steadfast rule of all: Never wear a skirt, shorts, or dress without at least one layer of Spandex, because boys detest panty lines. As she'd struggled into another layer of the stretchy material herself—"This one's for slimming!"—I asked her why stores like Victoria's Secret even existed if men were so averse to a tempestuous stripe under a woman's shorts.

She hesitated, but eventually said, "I mean, for me at least, it's because what they imagine your underwear looks like will almost always be better than the real thing. You don't want to spoil it!"

Our friendship became the real thing as we both counseled each other through years filled with stale vodka and freshly-printed term papers. We made weekly trips to the mall, our fingerprints smudging glass storefronts full of sundresses and unironic denim overalls, knowing we couldn't afford any of it. We made it a game of pretend, challenging each other to go to stores with made up names, accents, and backstories: Tatiana, a Russian technology startup CEO. Lucia, a Midwest girl with a secret foot fetish. Katie Rae, a sweet southern peach who ain't never been on this side of the country before. We got good at it.

And then there was that night.

I struggled to avoid the topic altogether, unsure of her own fragility, asking questions that obfuscated; "How are you doing?" had lost its triviality, and was instead a daily ritual measuring the lilt and cadence of her voice for signs of distress.

Staring at the mirror, I frown at my belly, rolling my eyes at the wispy trail of blonde hair beneath my belly button that I always forgot to shave away. My stomach was the one part of my body that was beginning to show the effects of fast food drive-thrus—a number two with extra ketchup at McDonald's, a number five with mild sauce at Taco Bell, a number seven sans onion at Carl's Jr—my mother's half-joking words always in the back of my mind: "It'll catch up with you sooner than you think." Pulling a pair of tight leggings on, I relish in the snap of the waistband over my navel, hiding it all in vertical constriction while stripping away my ability to breathe deeply. I enjoyed the act of getting ready, of becoming. I hid my too-wide nose with clever contouring and a diamond stud in one nostril. I hid my eczema-blotched skin with a creamy layer of foundation. I hid the constellation-like birthmark on my hip by diverging the attention to my chest, the one feature I didn't have to pound pricy powders onto, just display.

I slip on another layer of plum lipstick, blot it out counter-productively with my pinkie, and smile in Naomi's direction.

"You look nice!" she says.

I try not to take it as an insult.

I watch my mother separate her hair into puffy sections, the undusted vanity lights of her bathroom highlighting interspersed gray strands, invasive species hiding from her agile tweezer. The rest of her head is a dull brown that's just like my

own. Melancholy, tedious brown. Taylor Brown. Nobody's favorite color was brown. She catches me looking at her in the mirror.

"You wanted to learn how to do this, right?" she asks, gesturing to the ceramic flat iron in her hand. "You would look so pretty with straightened hair."

"So I'm not pretty usually?" Part of the charm of being thirteen is taking everything, no matter how well-intentioned, as formal declarations of war.

She frowns and threatens to leave me at home; I nearly send back a melodramatic retort along the lines of, "however will I survive not being around the geriatrics ward at Sizzler?" But I hold my tongue: the pantry is threadbare today, its crown jewel a palette of beef-flavored instant noodles.

Instead I observe my mother as she carefully manipulates her hair into submission, frothy cotton texture pressed into sleek modernity with 425 degrees of heat. I look at her face, pock marked and blemished, a hundred pale potholes from old cystic acne. She'd put on mascara and dusted on drug store blush. Diamonds shone like dewdrops around her neck, a gift from my oblivious father the day after their latest anniversary. She pulls the mirror open, revealing a scattered trove of chapsticks and vaginal ointments. Stuck to the inside of the glass is a Post-it with my mother's casual calligraphy:

Motivation to lose weight:

Be happy with myself

Have more sex

Won't embarrass kids

My knees tremble at the words, fingers suddenly quivering at my sides. Just the week before I had been summoned in front of a school assembly for a supposedly prestigious award in writing, which was little more than a thick piece of cardstock that denoted my knowledge of the differences between "there their and they're." The principal looked like a stiff trophy himself as he shook my hand and told me to stand just so. My mother rose to embrace me after the ceremony, proud tears dampening the sleeves of her blouse. Aware of classmate's eyes on me, I darted away from her hug. The other moms were thin, wearing modest wrap dresses that must've been advertised in a PTA newsletter, while my mother wore my father's thick gray sweatshirt. It was one of the only garments that fit her anymore, over 100 pounds of weight gain relegating her once floaty blouses and tight jeans to the bottom of her closet. I didn't want the other kids to see us together, feel the all-over itch of hidden giggling judgements, boys I had crushes on wondering if that's what would happen to me.

I feel my cheeks burn, and now I'm only embarrassed for myself.

My father appears next to me in the doorway, glances my mother up and

down. He smells faintly of chocolate protein powder, his one “treat” in a life filled with gleaming silver barbells and shirts tight enough to emphasize the body he spent his life nurturing, fine-tuning. He could eat grilled chicken, white rice, and burnt asparagus for the rest of his life and be completely content, so it confused him endlessly why my mother gorged herself on slices of cheesecake and pizzas stacked with her own supply of veggies. He’d gifted her fancy gym subscriptions and paid for the myriad of diets she tried, from Weight Watchers to Paleo. When she’d start a new one we’d sing her praises and tell her how proud we were. You can do it! This time it’ll stick! But it never lasted long, and soon enough we’d find contraband hidden in the corner cabinet, her not-too-secret stash, bearing the labels of Little Debbie and Frito Lay. It was hard not to get frustrated.

But now, guilt choking me, I want to shout out at him and tell him to call her gorgeous. Lovely. Radiant. Even pretty. I want him to wrap his long arms around her large waist and tell her she looks so pretty tonight. Even if it’s just pretending.

“You look nice,” he says instead.

How to Get a Guy to Like You—Cosmo Tip #5

“Be slightly out of reach—so act flirty towards him, but not like you’re ready to lock it down. You want to make it clear you’re interested while letting him know he’s still got some work to do to snag you.”

We arrive at the bar tipsy and shivering, bare skin exposed to January hail. Our eyelids shine with bronze glitter, and we’ve painted high cheekbones above our own. Naomi babbles on about her latest Tinder date, and I try my best to follow along while surveying the horde of college kids clumped together in warm huddles, each stealing glances at the strangers around them. We take our seats in an open booth where the laser lights aren’t blinding and attempt to ignore the faint stickiness that adheres us to our seats.

Before I even have a chance to look at a bartender, two boys, both alike in averageness, approach us with six drinks that bear the unmistakable turquoise hue of Blue Caracao liqueur. They’re balancing them between the webbing of their fingers as the muscular one fretfully eyes our table in hopes of reprieve. Half amused, I wave them in.

“What’s your name?” the skinny one asks me.

I take a second too long to answer, annoyed with myself for forgetting to refine that night’s character before finishing a second beer. After stuttering away a few suspicious seconds, I finally settle on an imaginary co-ed named Haley Black from a coastal town I’d seen pictures of one time in a glossy travel magazine, all palm trees and neon-soaked boardwalks. Haley is the name for a girl who can order a Sex on the Beach at bars without indecision or flushed cheeks. Haley speaks only in double entendre and licks her lips enough to signal that that isn’t all her mouth can do. Haley pounds her liquor without pulling putrid faces afterwards, never worried

she's keeping up with the boys because she's already three shots ahead of them. And of course—Haley is beautiful.

The boys test drive the name out on their tongues like a new Ferrari: Hailey. Hay-ley. Hayleigh. Naomi looks uneasy, so I give her a wink.

We all go around the table like schoolchildren and share the conversation starters that bond college students together in tedium: What year are you? What's your major? How drunk are you already? Skinny Boy sticks a straw in front of Haley's lips and tells her to suck. She tells him she's not that kind of girl, giggling. He doesn't believe her. Muscle Boy mentions the amount he bench pressed last week and Haley feels his bicep through a t-shirt bearing his high school's mascot. Haley tells everyone she studied abroad last summer, but can't seem to remember the name of the city she stayed at. She blames the alcohol, and they seem to like her more for it. Naomi remains uncharacteristically quiet while thumbing through her Facebook feed in a darkened corner of the booth. She shoots me pointed looks, gesturing her head to the women's bathroom. What? I want to shake her, tell her to have fun! I'm drunk! We're having fun! I don't want to go to the bathroom, I'm having too much fun!

The boys push more AMFs into everyone's hands, a bastardized drink concoction equal parts vodka, rum, tequila, and gin. Haley grow livelier as the drinks grow sweeter. I can tell they're smitten with her as she bouncily argues about fantasy football quarterbacks while doling out calculated physical contact.

"It's like I made you in a computer," Skinny Boy says, not breaking eye contact with the deep V of her blouse. "You're gorgeous."

I let the words embrace me—the real me. I am gorgeous. Lovely. Radiant. Pretty. I notice the crowds of boys, drops of beer trimming the ends of patchy mustaches, plastic cups full of foam. I realize they are looking at me. Winking at me. Wanting me. I am exhilarated by it all. Broke kids with ripped baseball caps buying rounds of drinks with money their mothers gave them for rent. Dancers who grind to the wrong beat, palms growing clammy against their partner's pale thighs. Girls who don't say their real names because it's more fun to make-believe they're a character in someone's else's story, unattainable because they don't exist. I am swept up in the games of pretend around me, a layer of shiny wax that transforms the sticky divebar to a laser-dappled fantasy land.

"If you could be anybody else in the world, who would it be?" my mother asks.

My father and I both pause from wounding our steaks with thick knives, and look up at my mother, who is scanning the restaurant full of strangers.

"I mean, even in this Sizzler, if you could be anybody here, who would it be?" she asks again.

I look around now, taking in the faux-rustic architecture of the restaurant, counting the number of elderly people. Most of them eat with fingers so shaky that

when their forks finally reach mouths, their bites of rice pilaf or grilled shrimp have already fallen back onto their plates. The only real splash of color in the gloomy brown interior is the neon yellow tennis balls fastened onto legs of walkers, gingerly parked next to customer's booths.

"I guess myself? I don't wanna be an old lady," I reply.

My father chuckles, but my mother still looks reflective. I notice she's locked her gaze onto a booth in the far corner. Seated there is a young couple, baby making fussy hissing sounds in a high chair at the head of the table. The pair sits close together, smiling every so often as they share a menu. The woman is cute and petite, feet barely scraping the ground in her chair. The man curls his body around hers as if they're being forced to huddle together for warmth. It reads sickly sweet to me, but I can tell what would be my mother's answer to her own question as she continues to stare at them.

"Hey mom, did you see their dessert bar? They have mini cheesecakes that actually don't look awful. Wanna share a plate together?" I ask. The manufactured cheeriness felt foreign in my throat, but I pile it on thick as the note from earlier rips into my memory like a pronged hook. Be happy with myself.

"Maybe you guys should take it easy," my dad warns, only looking at my mother, "Everyone's eaten a lot tonight."

I grind my teeth together and watch as my mother furrows her eyebrows, glares at him, and pushes her empty plate to the center of the table.

"Actually that sounds great, Tay," she says, "Let's go."

I swivel my head between both my parents and realize I'm being forced to choose a side. They both sit there in silence, waiting for me to make a move. It was a familiar game of walking the tightrope between my father's earnest yet ill-conceived attempts at regulating my mother's health, and the crestfallen look on her face as I'd gently remind her we don't really need that extra tin of cookies at the grocery store. There was no winning; either we'd be wolfing down McDonald's cheeseburgers in front of the television while I imagined her slumped over with a heart attack, or I'd be one of the reasons she wrote that Post-it note in her bathroom—won't embarrass kids—knowing she felt ashamed and rejected by even her own daughter because of how she looks.

"You're probably right, Dad. We did eat a lot already."

How to Get a Guy to Like You—Cosmo Tip #13

“Work just a sliver of skin into your ensemble—think, a tight, lacy top or a dress with a peek-a-boo cutout. It’ll get his blood pumping, but leaves enough to his imagination that he’ll be dying for a peek at the rest.”

“Taylor, I have to tell you something.”

Everything is cold. And wet. A bead of sweat runs down my ribcage, chilling me. My chin rests on a toilet bowl, and my stomach contents have made their fabulous debut onto my blouse. I read once that the Earth travels over 30 kilometers per second; at this moment I could feel every kilometer, no seatbelt in sight.

“Tay, this isn’t good. We have to get out of here,” Naomi says. She’s kneeling next to me, fingers tethering my hair into a thick braid.

“Clearly I feel great, Naomi,” I say with a hysterical laugh, gesturing to the colorful toilet water. “Isn’t this what all college kids are s’posed to do? Get fucking wasted and regret it later?”

I can hear girls waiting outside the stall. See their thin heels under the door, dried mud caking onto toes. Smell their lavender perfume. I retch again.

“Taylor, one of those guys was there the night I was raped.”

I freeze. Lick my lips. Squish my eyebrows together. Breathe. Ignore the spinning. Breathe again.

“Which one?”

“The skinny one. He was in the living room while the two guys took me in the bedroom... He was there.”

I remember that morning. The morning after. I remember the look on her face as she drooped onto my couch, wide eyes focusing only on the television. I remember watching a marathon of some campy home renovation show together in silence, not a word from a girl whose normal stream of consciousness made it so easy to know what she was thinking. I felt stupid because I didn’t know what to say. What is there to say?

And now here she was, kneeling beside me in a bar bathroom, pulling my hair away from my own mess.

Picking myself off the tiled floor of the stall, I tremble back to the throng of the bar, not registering anything but the pulse of music. The sweat under my arms. The boy I wanted so badly to hurt.

I walk over to him with the small shred of poise I still had left, elbowing my way through a dense gridlock of shoulders and exposed hips. I know he sees me when his face wilts to disappointment, eyes blank, frowning. As if he had been cheated. I wasn’t the girl he wanted. The spell had been broken. Haley was the slosy Cinderella who’d lost her dignity at the stroke of midnight. What was left was the reality:

throbbing pink cheeks covered with glitter and sickness. A broken bra strap dangling across my shoulder. Leggings slouched down my frame, the pouch of stomach I tried to squeeze away now in full view. A part of me felt ashamed, as if I had lost my grip on something I'd so carefully constructed. Something gorgeous.

I can't help thinking: Is this how my mom feels? Does she mourn her old self, the one that had boys lining up to ask her to prom, to kiss her, to make love to her? When I was little I found one of her old bras, which was little more than two cloth triangles held together by skinny spaghetti straps. How could you just let that go? I'd thought. Nothing is more important than keeping up the act. The game of pretend. The strive. Boys calling me pretty is success. Success meant not becoming her. She looked nice sometimes, when she tried. I wanted to be more.

But what did it matter, after all? The boy in front of me now thought I was ugly. I saw it in his eyes. Not gorgeous. Not beautiful. Not lovely. Not pretty. Not even nice. I was ugly to him, and I felt uglier knowing I cared what he thought about me at all.

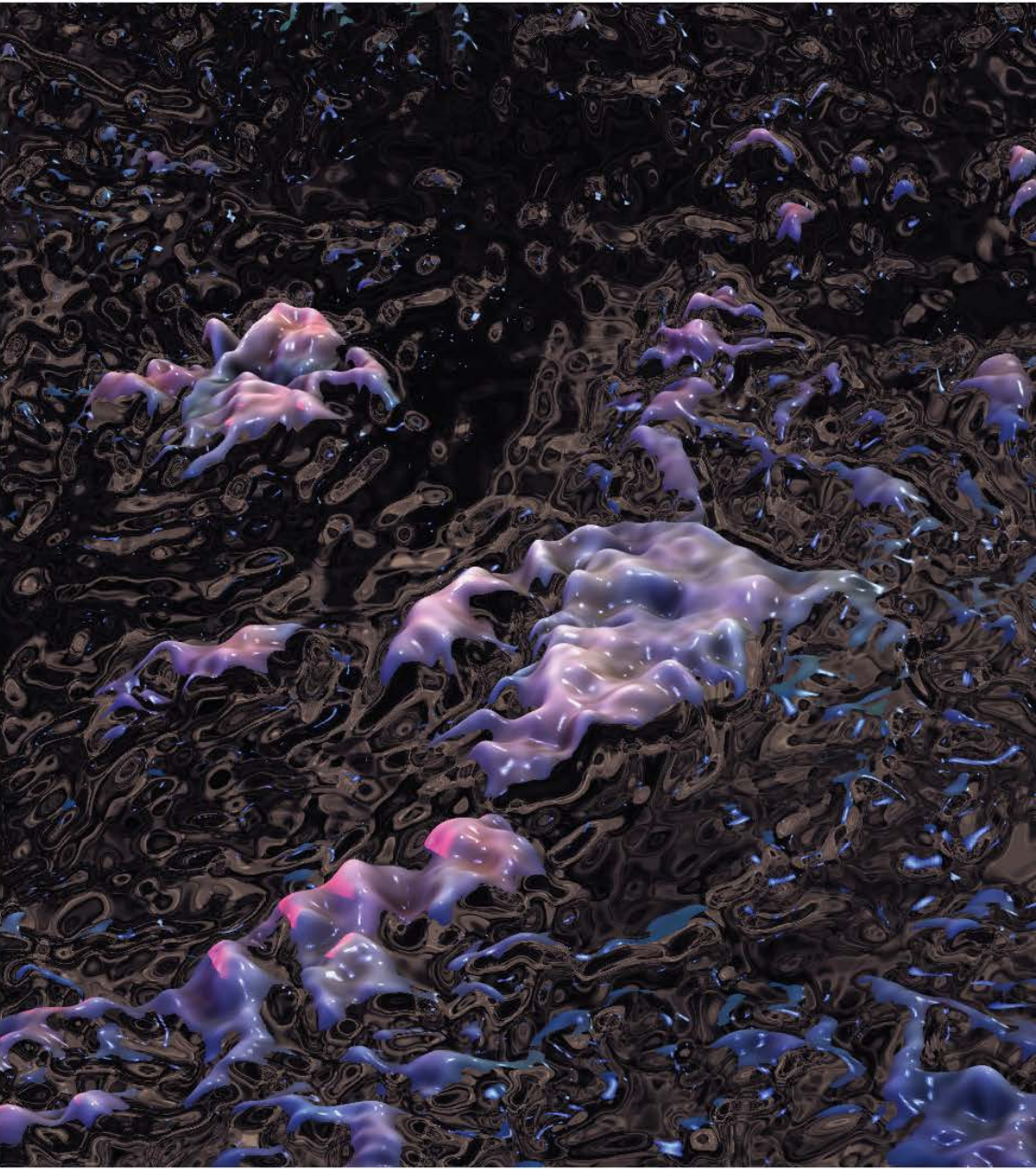
"If you ever try to talk to me or my friend again, you'll fucking regret it."

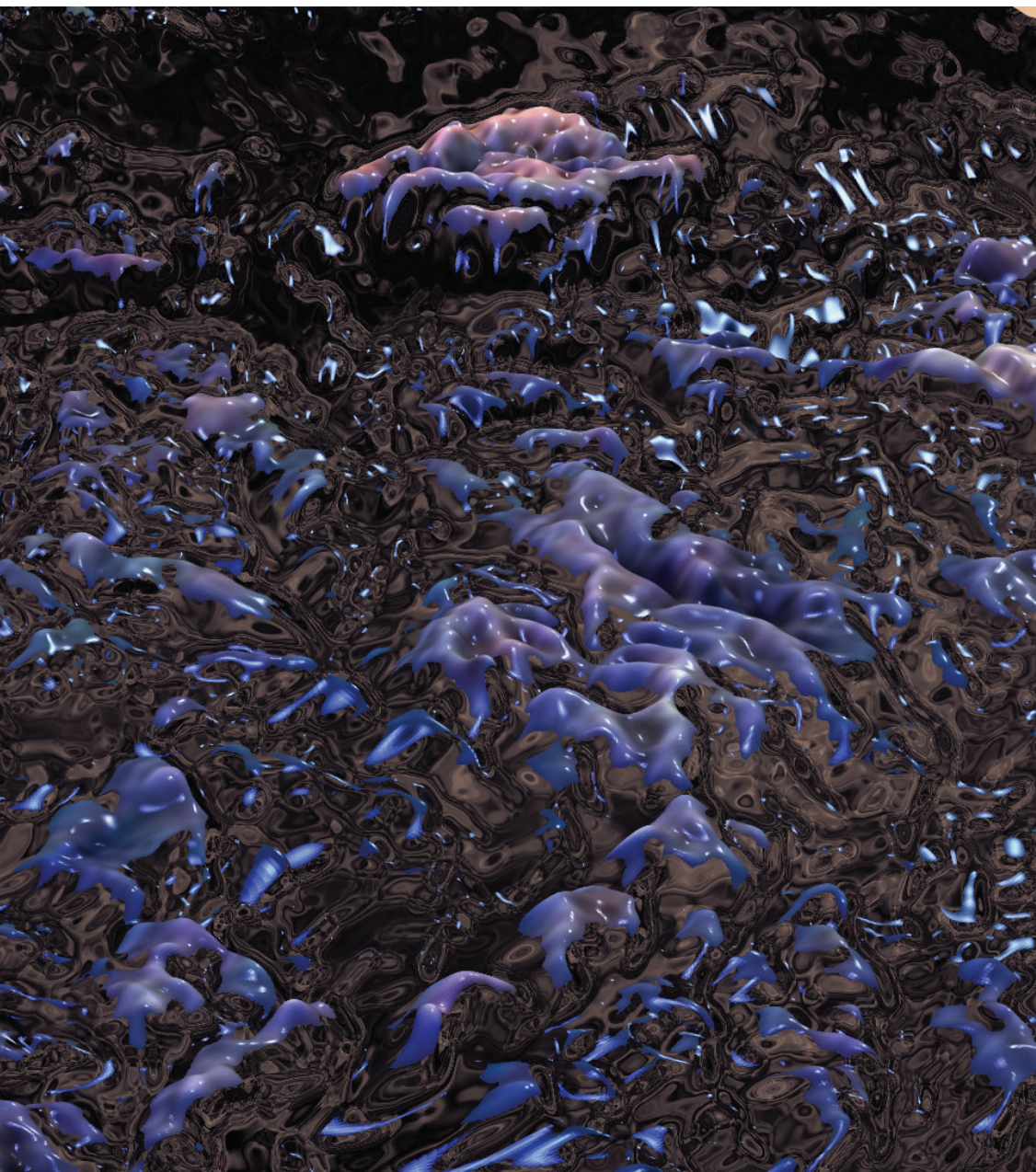
I want to say so much more. Shout at him. Call him repulsive. Say something that doesn't feel like a clichéd line in a movie. But I can feel my hand being pulled away, sifting through the tide of twenty-somethings, only aware of my body when the bar fades behind me and drops of rain slicken my burning skin. Naomi leads me to my apartment, unlocks the door, searches my cabinets for towels. Wetting one under a sink, she pats my chin, wipes my neck, and hugs my waist. I close my eyes.

"Thanks for always being there for me."

I drift to sleep, recalling my mother's words from years before: Be happy with myself.

I awake the next morning as Taylor Brown.





UNTITLED

Tricia Knope

A WALK THROUGH AIR

Serena Morgan

My feet
moved along
a path unknown
they started
on concrete drums
with rhythmic scuffling
moving them along

They didn't stop
as the sidewalk dropped
and I went towards
the edge of the world
they didn't stop
as gravity failed
they continued on
in a silent walk through air

They led me up and down
steps of clouds
past mountains tall
and oceans blue
until with gravity restored
they fell like lead
but on they walked
unperturbed

Time wore through
the soles of my shoes
and in endless days
of bloody raw feet
my mind became wind
in an endless drift
blank and unperceiving
moving past life
without my believing
in any moment
besides my walking
walking and leaving

One day long after the beginning
my foot hit a stone and the world started spinning
I hit the ground with painful force
but then my eyes caught a glance
and I was mesmerized
at a world not passing by
every detail
I took into my eyes
fields of green filled with buzzing bees
dancing between petals and leaves
and the wind how it blew
and rustled the trees

It had been so long since I had seen
a world so blissfully serene
and in so much wonder
I realized that my wander
disregarded everything I left behind
from the first step
I was lost
to my ever drifting
feet and thought
but in the newly found stillness
I found the beauty of what I lost

EXPERIMENTS IN THE UNNAMED ARCHIVE

(A DISAPPEARANCE MANIFESTO)

Allison Schukis



\$2.00 / 8x10" / purchased 18 March 2018, Portland OR USA

Here in this (un)likely place I mourn.

La Chambre Claire

BY ROLAND BARTHES

I have recently converted: It has become apparent to me that I am building an archive. I have, in fact, been building one for a few months. Perhaps there are some sentiments I wish to counter, or, reflect. Finding photographs (you may read this as “searching out” if you prefer) in thrift stores and vintage malls has been a long-term habit of mine, but the actual purchases come from some new feeling or desire to know (my depressive episodes too often lead me into the space of complicity with Late Capitalism).

“Why are you buying all these photographs?”

Aloud: “I study photography...”

Under her breath: “Who could help me?”¹ she enquired.

Although Barthes in *Camera Lucida* states a certain boredom with the personal archive: “show your photographs to someone—he will immediately show you his...”² I would nonetheless like to share with you, reader, my already-disappearing vestiges. The traces of: my economic stability as a person living off of her deceased father’s life insurance, the whiteness of where I frequent, my dislike for images of singular standing men, and the timeline of my episodes of course are here. The selective mourning I perform for analog photographs is both personal and political. (Perikles forbade public mourning after a certain period for the dead of the Peloponnesian war, because he understood public mourning was one of very few places for women to be heard...)

1. \$2.00 / 8x10” / purchased 18 March 2018, Portland OR USA

The first for-sale photograph I ever loved I didn’t buy. I’ve forgotten about it now. At the time the price was unbearable. It still often is. There was an album after that. The most notable element was the army doctor’s note in conjunction with the images.

2. €100.00 / recorded 6 August 2017, Rome Italy

The next for-sale photographs I fell in love with were also, in fact, a whole album, a narrative, a presorted/predestined archive. The pathos, likely, actually stems from utter heteronormativity: a couple moving throughout Rome—they eventually have a child together. I took notes:

“Porta Portese: photo album with leather binding – angels + fleur de lis – sky blue stitching – embossed inside: thick black paper pages – cold press – photographs: all b&w 6x7 contact prints man & woman, French looking, tour Europe – baby girl with bangs – Colosseum – blurry photographs of each other at the coast.”

¹ Roland Barthes, trans. Richard Howard, *Camera Lucida* (Original French: *La Chambre Claire*), (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 4.

² *Ibid.*, 5.

For me, there has always been “punctum” in two people taking photographs of each other instead of, say, requesting one image by a stranger. I too am an introvert (proud of my craft).

I circled and circled in my head, trying to justify one hundred euro (please), moving between the stalls in the crowded market (not a dream). I returned and the album had vanished (thus, I cannot get it out of my head, even now).

Now to define Barthes’ *punctum*:

He writes: “sting, speck, cut, little hole—and also a cast of the dice. A photograph’s *punctum* is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me).”³

Some examples: *the strapped pumps*,⁴ *one boy’s bad teeth*,⁵ *the second boy’s crossed arms*⁶

To myself, a paranoid of this day and age, that which pricks me is too an insignificant detail, so I align with this aesthetic approach from 1982.

Question: Can I buy punctum?

3.



\$1.99 / 8x6" / purchased 6 January 2018, Eugene OR USA

Here is the first photograph I bought. It was tilted out on a shelf of glassware and porcelain in Goodwill. It was the only black and white photograph in the store. The print and its support are both in poor condition.

I did not buy this because it was isolated or to some, cheap. Imagine instead: the crisp wire-lined white bows droop upon the young girls’ heads, fields of white linen, new sainthood: left in this store for some reason...

³ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

4.



\$0.50 / 1x2" / purchased 4 March 2018, Springfield OR USA

I grasped at a small ceramic frame on a cold metal shelf—the faded photograph in it slid out—this photograph.

What color is disappearance? Ultramarine.

What is viewed is disappearing—the c-print has a half-life.

I think it's regrettable to write too much about certain images.

5.



\$0.50, \$0.50 / 5x7" each/ purchased 4 March 2018, Eugene OR USA

Punctum: These two people, in the same location (significant?) but different photographs. I found these digitally printed photocopies in a locked "rare books" shelf at St. Vincent's.

6. *"trptychs have something holy about them..."*⁷



a. \$3.00 / 3.5x5.5" / purchased 10 March 2018, Beaverton OR USA

⁷ C.C.R.

My first triad. I am uncertain why I bought this other than an impulse and the whites of the eyes of the girl looking out.

For me this photograph does not have punctum... the impulse to buy, then, must come from somewhere else?



b. \$2.00 / 3.75x2.75" / purchased 18 March 2018, Portland OR

Barthes: "And no doubt, the astonishment of that-has-been will disappear. It has already disappeared: *I am, I don't know why, one of its last witnesses...*"⁸

Possibly—my mania, the *eros* I feel about these (mediocre) prints refutes that. Or: no, the disappearance takes longer than I think.

Seeing this half-life is, for me, very beautiful.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 94. My emphasis.



\$2.00 / 4.25x6.5" / purchased 18 March 2018, Portland OR USA

Purchased in illustrated condition.

Some lines from Barthes which bear repeating are on repeat in my head, which regrettably distorts them:

"The only way I can transform the Photograph is into refuse: either the drawer or the wastebasket. Not only does it commonly have the fate of paper (perishable), but even if it is attached to more lasting supports, it is still mortal..."⁹

⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

8.



\$5.95 / 10x7" / purchased 18 March 2018, Portland OR USA

Who am I to project into this now (already) emptied web of relations? It's so much more haunting and powerful this way.

Baudrillard: "we may thus suppose that everything that disappears—institutions, values, prohibitions, ideologies, even ideas—continues to lead a clandestine existence and exert an occult influence..."¹⁰

In re-exposing my archive, what disappeared things am I bringing to bear once again in the light?

¹⁰ Jean Baudrillard, *Why Hasn't Everything Already Disappeared?* (London; New York: Seagull Books, 2009), 26.

9.



\$5.95 / 5.75x7.75" / purchased 18 March 2018, Portland OR USA

For myself, for months now, the Roman Christian martyr, Saint Cecilia's body's posthumous journey (beheading for relics, tomb opening, disappearance...) has been something intensely photographic. She is also the patron saint of music. This, I had failed to represent.

I desire: to wear my own beloved images (icons) thin. To touch impermanence.

Madness: at this point I had considered my archive complete. Satisfied, at least.

To tell the truth I am unsure as to what point my madness will be complete. My void: a hope that I can find other ways to transform the photograph and its half-life.

10. \$20.00 / 3x2.5x0.5" / purchased 20 March 2018, Eugene OR USA

Daguerreotype in a wood and leather case, gold, glass, and red stamped velvet interior. Photograph of a white woman with severely pulled back black hair in a black dress with a large white collar. She wears a ribbon choker, which has a hand-painted golden accoutrement.

Hiding the sacred photograph: for shame (of being unconfident in what a daguerreotype even looks and feels like), for its safety... I documented its addition to my archive but I cannot show it here.

Weeks ago my partner informed me of the location of this object. He had a feeling I would "like" it. Truth be told I procrastinated heartily about paying it a visit.

At lunch, he guided me to the store, to the shelf even. Indeed, the moment I saw the object (once again isolated in the glass case) I felt the eros. I circled, twice. I asked to look at the image. The vendor allowed me to touch the case, to close the delicate metal lock—"only this keeps it together," he remarked of the decaying leather on the hinge—as if he somehow knew.

This is Miguel Roma for W107.3.
 It's 1:04 AM on a Thursday night, so you know what that means.
 The raunchiest late night radio talk show in the greater Newark area.
 We put the jock—and the shock—in shock jock.

Hey babe, you're on the air.
 Well I'm feeling pretty good too baby.
 What's a hot piece of ass like you do on Thursday nights?
 Yeah, I'll bet you get a kick out of that you filthy little girl.
 You really turn me on. Know what I'd like to do to you?
 What are you wearing?
 Okay, well, let's get you out of that tracksuit then.

Local police have asked our station to remind listeners
 To report any suspicious activity
 By calling 911.
 The Face Peeler is suspected to have
 Committed at least two more atrocities since last night.

Up next, our most popular segment.
 We want you to call in with your filthiest,
 Most disgusting secrets and fantasies.
 Ever spotted your neighbor's wife getting out of the shower through the upstairs window?
 Ever done a Thompson Surprise in the back aisle of a Winco?
 Paid a whore to watch you sleep?
 Framed someone for a crime they didn't commit?
 Don't tell me you're too chicken to call in anonymously.
 It's just us here on Romadio 107.3.

Hey caller, you're on the air.
 What's the worst you've ever done?

I—I . . . I just killed six people, tonight alone.
 Last weekend I snapped. I . . . I just went on a rampage.
 There's so much blood—everywhere—under my fingernails—
 Oh god—What have I done—

Okay, babe, sounds pretty hot,
 But that's all the time we have before our commercial break.
 Stay tuned, and keep

Calling in with those dirty confessions.

Quick PSA for our listeners:

If anyone in your vicinity is wearing hair gel or a white crewneck,

Please inform them that the number for inquiries

Regarding the mechanic position at Vinnie's Auto-Repair

Is 555.7423, not 555.7428—

The number of this radio station.

Please stop calling.

Again, the phone number is 555.7423.

It was

a typo.

The sheriff has asked me to

Remind our listeners that the Face Remover is still at large,

And to stop picking up hitchhikers.

That's all we have for tonight,

But tune in tomorrow for more of

My sultry smooth voice.

Carson Schmittle

I wonder what it will be like when I pass.

Will you still drop from bed at a lazy nine o'clock each morning,
Stumbling into the kitchen, eyes chipping away at their frozen lids,
And the heat escaping from under the threadbare robe your grandmother once gave
you?
Will you still slam the cabinets as you search for the beans, the filter, and finally the
maker,
When you prepare—without me—your bitter-black coffee?

I can only hope that your meals aren't lacking,
For I know I was the one constant in your dull routine.
I, who woke you up when your nose—heavy with sleep—fell into your cereal,
I, who shared with you a warm mug each evening with the sunset,
Sit here, after you have gone to bed—cutting our candlelit night short—
Wondering what awaits me.

Will you even notice when I have turned, and my once white body curdles and yellows?
Your sinuses continually clogged, I can't imagine you'll even notice the smell.
Rotting outward, my insides will churn and bubble,
And the gasses from their fermentation will press—bloating—my sweaty sides.
It's only a matter of time until my plasticized shell bursts a leak, and the soup spills out,
And you'll only notice because I have spilled between your toes.

Will you feel the fist of loss twisting your gut?
Will I be so worthy as to draw a tear?
Perhaps—
But I know you'll find someone to replace me,
At the grocery store,
Or even during a quick stop for lottery tickets,
You'll be okay.

It is November 9th.
You step out of your room and the floor beneath you groans,
Like it's anticipating some tragedy.
As you are pouring your cereal, your roommate joins you.
When you blindly grab the milk from the greasy shelf in the fridge, he looks at you.
Carson, he says, *what the fuck are you doing? That milk expired a week ago.*
You sigh, drain and toss the jug, and put bread in the toaster.

un**board**



VOLUME X ISSUE II

