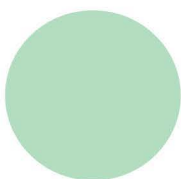


UNBOUND

JOURNAL

WINTER



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.

We will be fielding submissions for Volume X Issue II on a rolling deadline for all of winter term (January to March). If you are interested in submitting your own work for publication or in applying for a position on our editorial board, please direct all correspondence to unboundjournal@uoregon.edu. We receive funding from the Associated Students of the University of Oregon and the English department.

Cover set in Raleway
Body set in Playfair





Portrait by Kezia Setyawan

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Ten years ago, *Unbound Journal* emerged as a Clark Honors College thesis. Its mission was simple: to provide an online platform for the outstanding prose, poetry and visual art of UO students. We have zeroed in on that original vision with our decennial issue's implementation of a double-blind review, enabling the editorial board to maximize critique and dialogue on submissions while minimizing bias.

We have also reinforced one of the journal's newer yet primary foundations: for all contributors, both accepted and rejected, to receive constructive feedback on their submissions. It is all too often that literary journals decline submissions with no insight or suggestions on what to improve upon; it is all too easy to reject, and inversely, all too easy to greenlight and publish work without articulating to the author how and why particular bits of language moved us.

As our contributors' peers, we understand that to get your work out there—really looked at, truly noticed—takes so much heart, effort, patience and resilience. Redacting names from submissions before editorial review helps to provide the most objective means for this, but we seek to manifest this in the flesh with a workshop this term. We will introduce digital modes of creating poetry as well as provide a space to give and receive in-person feedback on previously created work.

The prose and poetry you are about to read deepens our individual and collective sense of place. It is my hope that your experience reading these pages not only illuminates the quality of work that our peers are creating, but also provokes the experience which language can provide in bringing forth a more substantial and expansive interpretation of the world. May this issue of *Unbound* inspire you as the sunshine harpsichord gives way to its last notes under the grayling winter sky.

Warm regards,



Patrick Dunham
Editor in Chief

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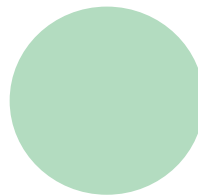
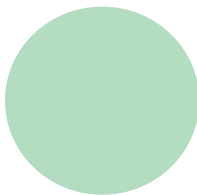
MORGAN ROBINSON

POETRY EDITORS

CORBETT UPTON | Faculty Advisor
Special thanks to LESLIE SELCER

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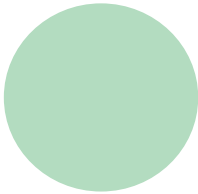
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POETRY



*I WRITE THE GREAT ASIAN
AMERICAN POP PUNK ALBUM
FOR ALL THE SAD BROWN BOYS
THAT HAVE NEVER COME HOME*

Alex Dang

since our parents always knew where quê hu'ông was / always knew
where home was / they left & couldn't come back / but we /us born
from / Where Are You From? / how do you return to a place that
never / let you arrive? / we boys who were taught / how to curtsy
our speech / then had muddy boots / shoved / down our throats /
we're so likeunlike our parents / they who would not swallow ocean
/ & we who swallow like one / our moms still know how to say mom
in mother language / our dads still have the selected silence / held
in their lungs / carried across a suffocate of saltwater / it's held in
every kept / cigarette breath at his never end of a work day / but
we / we boys have no words / only new sadness anthems / so many
years I spent / drowning myself into / a warm midnight / the siren's
mouth / rotted fruit dances / each the same- a drop of sweat in a
never ending concert / I wake up at 23 & sob / into the sound booth
of my hands / I flood my knuckled auditorium / with tears from
the fire sprinklers / now look / the boy water cycles into his mom /
he cries Pacific / & all my friends know / ask what's wrong / but I
puff into my father / so from gulp of water / to choke of smoke / us
shapeshifting / generation vietnamerican / half dirt half sea / are we
a planet? & there it is / we open our chest & out spills / 7000 planets
each spilling / another infinite 7000 / & I ask us / how are we doing?
/ one planet composes the longest winter / & on one world it is a
homecoming / & on another a farewell/ & I'm crying again / but
/ this time I'm not alone / a universe swirls in my palm / turning
mixtape / plays This Town Doesn't Fucking Want Me / This Country
Fucking Haunts Me/ raised by apparitions / apparent Parent anxiety
/ screaming through me / I am / coiled tight under a ceaseless
rain of / I Don't Have Time To Be Sad! / my mother who could halt
a pendulum / my father who stopped grains of sand mid-fall / &
then me / the boy with too much time / in his hands / which to me
is the sad / which is everything / the anvil day & the immortal night
/ I become the stroke of 12AM /never wanting to come home / me /
whose heart is / an eternal alarm / I measure passing through song
now / I hope you never hear this

*WHEN I SAY LOVING ME
IS LIKE JULY 4TH, 2017,
(AFTER HANIF WILLIS-ABDURRAQIB)*

Alex Dang

what I mean is:

the Eugene Emeralds, a minor league baseball team,
went 20 innings against the Boise Hawks,
lost,
then promptly began July 4th fireworks
on July 5th, at 1 in the morning.

I will try really, really hard
only to lose because
I didn't try hard enough.

Why couldn't you go a
little longer?

I was tired.

So was she.
She was there
as long as you.
What's your excuse?

I'm sorry.

Here's a pretty
firework display;
here's a fleeting
puff of light
& smoke; here's
my breakage of
your sleep.

What is wrong with you?

I don't know.
I know I lost.
Let's celebrate instead.
Isn't my apology
entertaining?

& I HAVE BEEN PLAYING RUN THE JEWELS (THE MOMENT AFTER YOU YELL)

Alex Dang

to fill the emptiness that will sleep
gluttonous inside my days. i remember when i was strong.
there was a time where my hands could hold the glint off a crown tight.
now i am a prince of a wasteland. a king of smoke.
we all know it takes an upheaval or storm or rebellion or release;
what is the sudden opening of a voice? will it always sound red?

i look down & the floor splits open, becoming a mouth-red
cauldron. the demons dream of me taking a rolling boil sleep
& i shake up from the same nightmare, a drownoutline release.
ghost into the bedsheet- me, but only salt & water. strong
people enter swelters to come out forged. i come out smoke.
i've gone from the choked throat to the tight

-ening of one. titans were killed by the future. i tight
-en around the mourned morning. we touch, it's red.
we move, crimson. we scarlet glow. kissmolder up & smoke!
the nights where i furnace in my winterbrain, i sleep.
the nights where it hellfires in my scorched, the strong
achieve ice water in their vein results. i, instead release

steam. screaming. hissing. whistling. i release
& release & no more am i coiled. cocked. justincase. tight.
even if it's for the length of a song, i'm thankful to be strong
enough to dance from start to finish, until i am sweat & red,
my tongue marathon your signets & gems to fall asleep
on my neck & her fingers & in our vault. if there is to be smoke,

let the fire be warm. let there be water. if there is to be smoke,
a miracle when you speak me oceanwhisper. i ask for release
because i know that i have two beds & still a home for sleep.
when pride arrives, trust my grip doesn't autumn. let the ropes be tight,
like our path definitive but not as narrow. bright as our red
hearts beating gun & fist position. treble work. bass drum strong.

i hold a strong flame, i hold a stronger smoke,
clawing out red & thrashing, i let my me release
& i don't run. the crown isn't tight. i walk. i gold. i sleep.

WHATTA TO DO

Caroline Fenty

whatta to do
to tiptoe
around a truth
so terribly loud

than to fill
every space it leaves
with a loving embrace

let there be no space between us

let syllables left unspoken be swapped
for b r e a t h i n g you in

I want to know every inch of you

and I'll start with your eyes
because I'm obsessed with them
like a child

like a child

like a child

I'm a child
who presses
small hands against cold glass
to stare
at the first snowflakes
they've ever seen
and I must be the frozen one

because

you melt me
straight into a puddle
with your
beautiful
seaside soul
rough
and tumble
waves

romance the shore
kissing the sand

every granule that slips
through the hourglass
I wish to
 whisper
sweet nothings to you
whatta to do whatta to do

THE AND DOESN'T MATTER

Caroline Fenty

Shadowy swoops
and
faint fairy wings under your eyes
and
mine match the color of the sky
And
we are walking
And
it is early
And
our steps are brisk
And
the air is brisk
And
with cold not quite cloud puffing bated breath

we are waiting

Eagerly anticipating every sweet second that is to come
And
We are planning
And
Plotting
And
placing dominos purposefully
And
Life is one beautiful pattern that we are putting into motion

Patter patter patter patter
Watch the dominos fall

And
Yet in the whispery hours of the morning
Too dark to tell the time
And
Too deeply tangled in your arms
And
In my dreams to care

The only concern to what comes next
is the question of how long I can press my nose to the crook of your neck
snuggle deeper into your arms before the day steals away the moment

Does the
And
Even matter
At the end of the day
It's you
And
Me

You
And
me
You
me
Us

Whatever composes our souls
Ours are of the same star stuff
For even galaxies could not keep us apart

Why would a single word be any different
Be more powerful than that which holds the cosmos
As you hold me I cannot think of an answer
As you hold me I don't need one

At the end of the day the and is no more
At the end of it all there is only us

DOGS PEE ON ME (AND OTHER COMPLAINTS)

Caroline Fenty

There are some serious tribulations
in being a tree
for starters
you are always apologizing
quietly
for everything
every whisper that you overhear
every sob that soaks the ground beneath you
every time a small child climbs upon your branches
and falls
because he couldn't hear you
crying for him not to go any higher

I have heard the nature tours tell of how
Within me
There are rings to count all the years gone by
I do not count the days
I count the stories
That I collect
The carved names in my trunk
The conversations
Of love and loss and life

My favorite story
Was told by a teacher
Who brought his class to stand beneath my boughs
Look above and marvel at the majesty of me
Of all that grows above them
The story was about me
But not really

It was of Douglas the mouse
that when the forest caught on fire
he saved all of the mice
by telling them to hide in pinecones
and because these were chubby mice
they only fit half way in
and if you look closely enough you can still see
the back end of each ancestral mouse
fat little feet and tail

hanging down on the cone

I like the idea that I am not alone
That hanging from my branches
are a hundred friends
Sometimes I think about what it would be like
To feel their presence
of pitter pattering up and down my trunk
amid my arms
rustling
stepping in sap
creating a carpet of needles
that they can nestle in

Instead my companion
is a cocker spaniel
that pees on me
No big deal
you inconsiderate owner
but I will never call your
curly haired chestnut of dog
caramel corn
to me
that jerk
will always be
butt licker
my little revenge
for being seen as nothing more
than a substitute fire hydrant

REFUGEES

Sararosa Davies

Miriam shows me her roof before we sleep,
and reaches across the valley to Efrat.

The city's lights glare at us, and I remember
years ago hands up my skirt and my host

brother saying that his army unit
kept the Palestinians in check.

Miriam offers me coffee and tea
and whispers that the soldiers threw tear gas

at her home a couple days ago, and I
remember crying into my mom's arm,

telling her that an Israeli boy did something
I did not have the words for yet.

Miriam has not been home to the states
in months and says that the soldiers

use the camp as a training spot.
She lists those who have been hurt,

and I remember my shoulders,
the pain that grew there, rooting itself like a tree.

Miriam says that the violence continues on
and that when her cousin was taken to prison

his dad said *we will see him in our dreams*.
At night they wait for him to appear in them,

and I remember how long it took me
to heal. Miriam says that she hopes

the refugee camp lights could be seen
from across the valley during Ramadan,

and I remember being in Efrat, surrounded by darkness
using some distant lights across the valley

to bring myself into my body again.

NATURAL DISASTER

Wendy Roman

My father wants to leave.

Sometimes I want to push him through the threshold
And lock the door behind him.
I'll tell him I've already done the hard part.

I spend my life watching two people
Make each other unhappy.

Earthquakes and storms;
We duck and we cover and we repeat.
Look at their love,
A natural disaster in their hearts.

This home is all failing memories
and misplaced forgiveness.
Look how it bends.
Look how it breaks.
My parents are the people that refuse to evacuate
Even when the hurricane is rushing toward their doorstep.

I'm a self-appointed first responder.

There is always someone to dig out of the wreckage.
Sometimes I dig myself out of the wreckage.

I don't know how many more times we'll rebuild this house
Just to see it fall again.
Sandbags and floodgates,
All standing on crumbling infrastructure
Only delay the inevitable.

After I move away to higher ground,
I don't always want to come back.

I know they still need me for the rescue effort,
But these bones are tired of playing savior,
Tired of screaming fight or flight and always choosing neither.

Maybe it's selfish.
Maybe it's instinct,
The way this heart wants to save itself.

ONLY PIANO

Twila Neiwert

PIANISSIMO

Adagio, Allargando, Allegro, Andante,
Crescendo, Ritardando, Staccato, Da Capo al Fine.
Whole note, half note, quarter note, eighth,
Diminished Chord drops third and fifth a half step
But keeps the Root on faith.
(At least for classical — jazz breaks this rhyme)
Hold a beat.
Keep the time.
One part Italian —
One part circles caught on the page —
One part specific, obfuscated, musical language —
And one part that thing that cannot be taught;
A feeling, a fluttering, a song sung inside.
You feel what it is, but
Can't know what it's not.
I'm stretching for that rhythm,
But they do not dance across the keys,
These fingers of mine.
My mind and
my hands
Stumble over the lines.
I slip, crash, and the clamor from the piano
Is a whole different creature
From the melody intended
By the music's creator.

MEZZO FORTE

I practice for over an hour a day; my tired hands shake when
I stretch my arms out straight. Learning this musical second language
Is being thrown in the deep end of sound
While your parent yells, “swim.”
In class someone asks me,
“You like Kabalevsky?”
I smile, nod,
Feign knowledge,
And later look him up.
Kabalevsky, composer, finding value in simplicity,
Communism, a life spent in teaching, and music interspersed with
melancholy.
I look further, in wonder, finding Mozart, a man of strange thoughts,
Who wrote a Requiem for the Dead,
And left it unfinished,
dying.
Bach, composer of cantatas,
Praised God, spent a month in prison,
Was blind when he died,
But raised beauty from every hymn.
Then Beethoven, whose music moved deeper, lower
As he heard less and less.
He would wreck pianos
By pounding on keys
With the force
Of distress.

FORTISSIMO

Eleven at night.
Before I leave the practice room,
I shut off the lights. Then I pause, turn around, take a seat,
And play by the feel of the keys, music from memory.
I think of Beethoven as I play, his desperate energy,
Sound hitting fingers and teeth
Instead of his ears.
The melody rises around,
Overtaking
The night.
Beethoven without sound,
Myself without sight. If I stood,
And strode away from the piano, I might trip
Over the music; notes would bump against my arms and legs
And drift away through the open window,
Startling people, rebounding off
Walls of stone and brick
Down the winding street,
Glowing through
The dark,
Music.

NOTE TO SELF

Sam Beeker

The only thing is I
 have no idea what to wear it to
 be able to see my eyes and see if you were
 ever in need of some in this it would have a good time waster
 but I can't believe that I have known you a little bit of more years
 to come back in time for me I was a great way to go to SLEEP
 in my life is a great day to be able to do that for when I'm in LOVE again

I have no clue who they really are you going on a date to homecoming
and even more of a new
song on my phone
and my dad just told my mom just called my phone
and it was not immediately known whether or not I will be able to see
my baby

girl I know that I have no idea what I'm doing this weekend and I'm still not sure what to do but I can't SLEEP anymore.

EXILED MOONS

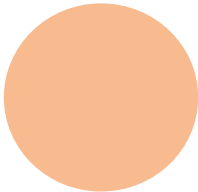
Ruin Xi

These days
the world is full
of abandoned meanings
and countrysides
where the rain
falls ceaselessly
into the past.
I stand inside where
it is warm and watch
the hummingbirds fight
each other
for the last
drink of nectar.
Out of the fog
and primordial waters,
I construct memory
around me
like four walls —
language, shape,
color, prayer.
I study the shadowed
genealogies
growing on the walls,
the phantom aches
and small desolations
of forgotten lilies and iris.
The samurai's armor
inhabited by air.
Crumpled water,
slender river.
What follows is always wind.
Then snow.
The ripped pages
of an old book
go scattering along
the streets,
as the full moon rises
and we carry
one another
into oblivion.





PROSE



SPLIT

Caroline Fenty

There was a strange pressure inside of Augustus' stomach, like a river widening a canyon, or his father pushing the wall away from the bed and the bed away from the wall to get Gus' fallen toy. He was sure that he had eaten too much. Or that he was pregnant. One of two. Augustus wasn't sure if it was possible for him to be pregnant, but he knew that if he was, his abdominal muscles would split like the red sea to allow room for the baby to pop forth and form a bubble of a belly. Augustus imagined that there must be a lot of air pressure in that belly, or that the baby must be shaped like a bowling ball because when his mother moved past him and his hand brushed her stomach, it was hard and smooth. It was odd to him, this steely intruder inside of his soft mother. His mother who smelled like lavender and was small but not so small that she couldn't scoop Augustus up in her arms and was soft all over, just the right amount of squishy to make her the perfect pillow, to make Augustus want to stay in her arms all the time, unlike the arms of her friend, Aunt Janie, who was tight and tendony. When Auntie J juggled Augustus, it felt like a bungee cord wrapping itself around, like a spring, not constrictive, but quick. Any time her arms encircled him he could already feel the hug's end, feel her springing back to herself. Aunt Janie had said that she didn't want children and Gus wonders if it's because she's scared to have her stomach split, scared that she won't spring back or that when she does, she'll snap the baby in two. Augustus gets that. It's an awful thing to break or be broken.

He wonders if having a baby will break him, if he is pregnant that is. He imagines himself cleft in two, perfect halves of himself falling away to reveal a perfect baby who is swaddled in some soft cloth and is possibly cooing. The internet has told him otherwise, shown him blood and slick sweaty images that suggest one splitting apart to birth a baby is something only a woman can do. But Gus read a story, in the Greek mythology book he got for Christmas, about the birth of Athena, who arrived dressed in full battle armor, fully grown, and leapt dramatically from the head of her father Zeus, which had been split open on an anvil. If this story was any indication and the internet wasn't right, then Augustus could be pregnant since Zeus was a man like him, and he had had a child. It was not Zeus' child bearing abilities but the head splitting however that sent Augustus sprinting to the computer highly concerned. Zeus was a god, he could survive a head splitting, his mother could not. Or maybe she could. Maybe pregnancy imbued women with some god-like capacity. Augustus could see that. After all, God is the creator, and in having a baby, a woman was creating, and they talked enough in Sunday school with reverence about Jesus' mother Mary for Gus to believe that women could have some kind of secret pregnancy powers that he was not aware of. But he was still concerned.

He had seen Marcia's head split open on the playground at school when she fell off the monkey bars, saw the slow trickle of blood

before the crowd amassed and pushed and pointed. Roger swore that he saw her brains spilling out for a minute and Augustus wasn't close enough at that point to see or know for sure but Roger had gotten every word right on the spelling test and good spellers rarely lied. So if Roger said he had seen Marcia Maloney's brains spilling out of her head, Augustus was forced to conclude that he had. His reading then, that informed him that babies could be born through head splitting, sent him into a swirl of concern. Gus was scared because his mother's stomach was a balloon and a hard one that he did not think would care if it split his mother's head open, rising, as balloons do, up, up, up, until it burst and broke his mother and began to live while his mother lay broken. He was scared because the internet had not improved upon this idea, just offered an alternate scenario, one that broke his mother in other places, slit her stomach or brought the baby bloody through her legs. When the baby came, Augustus knew that his grandmother was to come, had heard them talking about it at lunch, and he knew she'd bring her sewing. He wondered if she would have to sew his mother back together, if she *could* sew his mother back together, or if his mother would stay a little more broken than before.

Augustus hated this idea. It horrified him. But he felt helpless to stop it. This evil balloony intruder that would inevitably break his mother was already inside her and he could not have stopped it. He didn't even quite know how it had entered her in the first place. He could have researched it, but he only got fifteen minutes of internet time every once in awhile and his searching had been spent on Zeus and looking up images of babies and births and he wasn't even sure what he would type in the browser. His only point of reference therefore was the story of Mary in which Jesus was placed in her belly by God and if babies were placed in women by *God*, then Augustus knew he had been helpless from the start because who could stop God? Perhaps he could if he actually was pregnant and possessed the godlike pregnancy power that he had hypothesized might exist but even that was unlikely because he had eaten enough of Grandma's chicken pot pie at lunch to suggest that his possible pregnancy would eventually amount to only a large poop later in the day.

At this point, full of pot pie, paralyzed by worry over his mother and pulled by a deep desire to protect her, Augustus didn't know what to do. What could he do? He couldn't watch, couldn't bear to be simply an observer, to do nothing at all, knowing what was to come. He couldn't evict this intruder from his mother's womb, especially when she seemed to welcome it, seemed to want it. He didn't understand this, but he had seen it. Seen her singing and smiling and stroking her belly beaming, talking to her stomach and calling it by name.

"Henry." She would coo. "Henry, Henry, Henry." She was so happy, seemed so unconcerned with what was to come. Her friends had

thrown her a party even, where they ate cake and gave gifts and there were balloons all over the house, a touch Augustus personally thought was insensitive, or maybe a little sick and twisted. It was so beyond him, this happiness and excitement over the inevitable halving of his mother. Augustus had begun to wonder if the baby was more powerful than he had thought. That perhaps pregnancy imbued his mother with powers because inside of her was some magical being with the power to possess everyone around it with the belief that its birth was something beautiful. Athena was the goddess of wisdom and Jesus had saved the world so Augustus could believe it. He wondered then if he too had a power, that he was able to see past the persuasion of this parasite, if that put him on its level.

Laying on his grandmother's couch, hands resting on his full belly and her cat Whiskers curled over his feet, Augustus suddenly sat straight up. If he was on the same level as this beast, maybe he could bargain with it. Maybe he could do something after all. Forcing an annoyed and sleepy Whiskers off of his feet, Augustus tiptoed towards the guest room of his grandmother's house where he knew his mother was taking a nap. Pushing open the door, he could hear her soft snores and his feet sunk into the cobalt carpet, a deep sea surrounded by the room's flowering wallpaper. His mother was on an island in its middle, atop the quilt Augustus knew his grandmother had made herself and underneath a thick blanket that she had not but that Augustus had always liked because the wool was warm and not scratchy. He crept closer, accompanied by the sound of the soft windfalls of his mother's breath and the satisfied exhales that alerted him that she was deep in sleep.

He reached the bed, the springs slightly squeaking as he climbed on, came to face the infamous balloon belly that had dominated his thoughts and fears. He hesitantly placed a hand fully on it, something he had avoided doing at all costs before, always shook his head when his mother offered. His mother had never pushed him to be part of her pregnancy, only offered, invited him to dance when she was dancing, cradling her belly and grabbing his hand, asking without words if he would join on the joy. Augustus had never had the heart to turn her down in these circumstances, partly because he never wanted to be the reason his mother's smile broke, never wanted to be something that made his mother more breakable, and also because he loved watching her dance. She had danced before and danced now, even bigger and bearing a boulder of a belly and she was graceful and would spin and sway and shake the house with her happiness.

When she did this, Augustus felt as if they were all invincible, that the spinning and the swaying made his mother strong and him sure that nothing could go wrong. His mother was graceful and beautiful and everything good in the world and he was scared of the day that the baby stopped her spinning, stopped her from shaking the house with happi-

ness with her dancing. He stared at the round swelling of her stomach with his hand solidly set upon it. He could feel something, something alive sitting inside and feeling bold, he crept even closer on the bed and put his cheek against it. He closed his eyes, focusing on this fortress, on its occupant, on his mother's breathing that his had begun to match in its ins and outs. Being so close to her massive belly, to the baby inside of it, Augustus felt an odd intimacy, an understanding of this creature being created inside of his mother. He could hear a faint heartbeat, that maybe he was imagining, maybe that was his own, but that he thought might be the baby's. It was so soft, so gentle, like his mother, not like the monster he had thought and for a second he forgot that this was what he had come to battle, this beast, that he had come to bargain with in an attempt to save his mother. Now unsure again of what to do, Augustus stayed, listening, letting the breath and the beating envelop him as the sounds of he and his mother and the baby she was carrying mingled together on the bed. The more he breathed, the more Augustus found himself clinging to the moment, to this closeness, to the connection that the three of them shared. Laying with his cheek pressed against his future brother, he felt so close to him, felt as though he could feel him and wondered if maybe the baby could feel him too.

Maybe Henry could feel the love he had for his mother, maybe if he couldn't, Augustus could help him, he could soften him, make him less hard, call him by name, remind Henry that he was human, would be human, would be a brother, have a mother, be like Augustus himself. He wondered if he was losing his power, falling under the spell that had overtaken his mother and all others. He found himself unable to care as he curled himself around his mother and her massive belly, cradling it, hugging the smooth balloon, trying not to burst it, to stroke it as his mother did. He pressed his face more fully to her stomach, allowing his eyes to close, for sleep to begin to overtake him as he pressed his lips against her belly and whispered with his last breaths of being awake.

"Henry. Henry. Henry." He breathed in. "Please be gentle." Out. "Please don't break her open." In. "Or if you do." Out. "If you have to." In. "Please." Out. "Put her back together if you can."

Augustus fell asleep. On an island surrounded by flowering wallpaper, his mother slept with her two sons, the elder wrapped around her and the one inside of her, her little protector, attempting with all his might to keep her whole.



DIGITAL CONSTRUCTION III

Tricia Knope

THE BOILING POINT OF WATER

Sam Beeker

The sound that boiling water makes is curious; it is not a quiet chemical reaction. I didn't know it at the time, but a mix of negligence and apathy kept me from turning off the stove as I was waiting for the water to get up to temperature. *212 degrees Fahrenheit or 100 degrees Celsius* I thought, depending on if you use the metric system or not. This is the boiling point for water, at least that's what I've been told.

I'm not sure really why I left the stove running, honestly. I just wasn't sure when the water would actually be *done*, you know? I know it sounds silly, but I have a patience for observing excessively mundane things. I'll watch water boil. I'll watch a fly repeatedly run into a window as it tries to escape. Hell, I'll even watch a soapy load of laundry cycle up and down in one of the washing machines in the laundromat downtown. It makes no difference to me what activity I'm observing, I just like to observe.

So, back to why I left the stove running. I was seated at the dinner table to watch the stove as I began to hear a sound. It started quietly, like a steady buzz, and grew louder and louder. For some reason I felt as if I was hearing water boil for the first time. Honestly, it sounded so foreign to me. I decided to stand up and walk over to the stove to examine the pot. Sure enough, the water was moving and bubbling and steaming like it always does when it boils. It looked so natural, so I let it continue.

Soon enough, the water began to boil over the top of the stove, trickling onto the red hot electric coils. As bubbles and steam came out from the top of the pot, more water sizzled as it made contact with the coils. It all seemed like a pulsating mass as I watched this go on. Daily life is excessively mundane, yet mysteriously hypnotizing. I wanted to be part of this noise, this motion, so I let it continue. I watched it all happen until all the water boiled out of the pot, and even then I let the whole process continue. I trusted it and I let the world run its course.

Eventually, the pot began to glow red with my impotence. Hot, black smoke came seeping out of the now molten object that I remained ever fascinated with. I already told you why I didn't bother to turn off the stove. It would have simply been too predictable of me. I watched this all happen until smoke filled the room and I could hardly see. However, that's when you came to me.

FEELING LIKE A SCIENTIST

Michelle Muth

It was 2pm on a Tuesday afternoon, as I was sailing toward Tahiti, that I felt like a scientist for the first time. The moment hadn't come when I'd thought it would. I'd spent the night before working by moonlight, hauling in nets filled with the eerie blue glow of bioluminescence. That had been amazing, but it hadn't made me feel like a scientist. During lunch that day our ship rocked so far to one side that the porthole across the table from my seat became submerged under the sea. I still remember how I paused, forkful of lasagna halfway towards my mouth, admiring the most delicate jellyfish I'd ever seen as it wafted past the porthole. But I became so lost in the grace of its movements that I think I forgot to feel like anything at all.

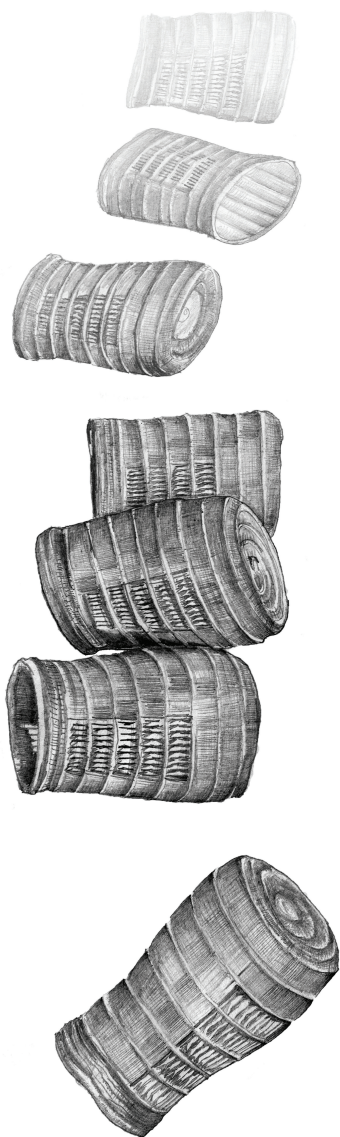
No, the first time I felt like a scientist was inside a tiny room with stuffy air, salt-stained walls, and an odor of musty seaweed. Though it lacked ambiance, this room housed the ship's microscope. Because of that, it gave me access to a whole other world of plankton normally invisible to the naked eye. I particularly admired a type of microscopic plankton called coccolithophores. Coccoliths, as they're often called, are adorable. They create little plates of calcium carbonate that coat their entire bodies, making them look like soccer balls. My research partner and I planned to study the effects of ocean acidification on coccoliths collected during our research cruise. We had just collected our first sample the night before, and it was my task that Tuesday to sit down and sort through it.

I was studying to be a geologist at the time, and so examining plankton was an unfamiliar activity. The first time I sat down at the microscope, I almost knocked the glass slide with my sample off the table. Afterwards, it took me a few minutes just to find the knob that focused the microscope lens. Flustered and unsure of myself, I turned the knob slowly, slowly, until suddenly a tiny universe came into view. It was a riot of sweeping clear lines, intercrossing and layered over each other like blades of grass in a field. I felt like an explorer as I moved the slide up and down and side to side, examining each edge and corner.

My excitement, however, slowly faded as I realized the shapes I saw in the microscope didn't match any sketches of plankton listed in my identification guide. I was beginning to wonder if our sample was contaminated when a graduate student opened the door and stepped in. When I explained my problem to her, she perched in front of the microscope, looked in quickly, and chuckled. "You're focused on the glass slide, not your sample. What you're seeing are scratches". She smiled pityingly at me, corrected the microscope's focus, and hopped back outside to the deck.

When she was gone, I returned to the microscope and regarded the plankton suspended in the thick yellow color of the transmitted light. They were very beautiful, and I was relieved to recognize a few familiar

species. I began to pick up my identification guide, paused, and set it back down. I snuck a guilty, furtive glance around the room. Then I slowly turned the focus knob until the plankton disappeared and the scratched glass snapped back into focus. I resumed my study of the scratches, feeling like nothing less than an intrepid explorer of that tiny, insignificant, but wonderful domain.



UNTITLED

Ruin Xi

3 DEAD *IN* COASTAL ACCIDENT

Dori Mosman

By Phillipa Dyle

NEWPORT, ORE.—Wind chimes are quiet across the central coast this morning. The unlikely silence swells in the wake of a fatal collision involving a semi-truck in the early hours of Tuesday morning. The vehicle, toting close to 20,000 pounds in cargo, crashed head-on into the Traub family home on the corner of Bay and Wayport Avenues just after midnight, colliding with the family's gas-powered stove and igniting the house in a fire which took the lives of Thomas, Annie, and Samuel Traub, 16, 11, and 9. Parents Tom and Diana, who jumped to safety from the second-floor window, survive alongside their daughter Sally.

13-year-old Sally, who survived by leaping off the family's front porch and out of the path of the semi, said she was outside investigating a noise which had woken her at the time the incident occurred. The first-floor bedroom which she shared with her 11-year-old sister was instantly destroyed some three minutes after she left it in the resulting explosion.

"I went out because I heard the chimes," says Sally.

As of Wednesday evening authorities are unable to determine why a class-A commercial vehicle was speeding down residential lanes after midnight at 65 mph. The driver, identified as one James Highland from Quartz Hill, California, had no known friends or family who might account for his whereabouts Tuesday morning. Trace amounts of diphenhydramine not exceeding standard legal usage were found in Highland's system. No alcohol, narcotics, or other intoxicants were detected.

"What we do know," said Newport Sheriff Roland McKivney, "is that at 12:02AM a single-axle semi-truck with California plates carrying approximately 20,000 pounds of Pacifica Inc. products swerved abruptly off-road and into the private residence on the corner of Wayport and Bay. Three fatalities, none injured."

This reporter wondered if there was anything the police knew which couldn't be gathered by asking any Newport local for yesterday's gossip. Sheriff McKivney grit his jaw. "We know the Pacifica affiliate whose truck it was," he said, "was Pacifica Toys and Trinkets."

Most neighbors of the Traub family on Wayport Ave. were awake within minutes of the accident. Mr. Jack Dormer, a witness of the event who at the urging of his wife Mrs. Maisie Dormer was the first to dial 911, recalls how the whole neighborhood woke nearly instantly: "We all heard it," he nodded, his wife nodding with him. You all heard the explosion?

"No," he said, "We all heard the chimes."

Spokespeople at Pacifica Industries were unable to comment on the

presence of one of their drivers on Wayport Ave. Monday night. Inquiries at the parent company were shuffled down an improbably long chain of command which landed this reporter in the Portland office of Dana Lubecker with the Accountability and Legal Services team at Pacifica Toys and Trinkets, a Pacifica subsidiary.

"It's impossible," said Ms. Lubecker with wide eyes. She shook her head softly from side to side, quick enough to pass for a shiver or a tick. "I've searched every file and there's no record of a James Highland ever having been in our employment." She paused, searched this reporter's face fearfully as though for answers or perhaps for retribution. "The truck is ours, but at 12:02 Tuesday morning it should've been halfway across the country. We received a status report the previous day placing it on schedule somewhere just outside Bozeman.

"As for the cargo," said Lubecker, "I have no idea what those were doing in Newport." She blinked once, then twice, closed her mouth, swallowed, and opened her eyes. "We don't make them there. We don't package them there. The market for them in Newport is miniscule." Lubecker opened her palms, a gesture, a plea, a white dove where there are none. This reporter has had lunch with enough corporate reps in her day to know when they are lying. This one wasn't.

At 12:02 Tuesday morning, Sally Traub watched from the yard as Pacifica Inc. freight truck WJN713 plowed into the front of her home at highway speed, connected with the tank under the gas-lit stove and barreled through the kitchen wall and into the adjoining bedroom of Annie Traub. Sally's sister, it seems, died by impact instead of in flames.

When the truck came to a stop somewhere just past Annie's mangled bed and fire made a swift meal of the righthand wing of the house, a deafening symphony rung out through the dark, without order and beyond time. At 12:03 Sally stood up in the lawn on shaky knees. She turned from the house. She went into the road with bare feet and made toward the flung-open cabin of the truck, where 20,000 pounds of wind chimes were pouring into the street.

It was not by any conscious effort that this reporter found herself at the corner of Bay and Wayport Avenues early Wednesday morning just as the sun came up behind the clouds who represent this town's most permanent residents. The firemen and police were gone. So were the truck and the wind chimes. The story, a quasi-obit with no answers and no leads, didn't warrant this reporter's pre-dawn restlessness nor her visit to the hollowed-out Traub house remains. And yet this reporter was there. So was Sally Traub.

Sally stood poised on what remained of the left side of the porch, the wood panels slanting down and breaking off into char as the eyes slid left to right, like lines obscured to a reader by the binding of a book. The

house was lopsided, an apple on the table with one bite out of it, looking gamely out at the observer in the street. It took some time in the heady silence of the first daylight hours for this reporter to realize it was not the house staring out at her but Sally in front of it, cross-armed, narrow-eyed

“What are you doing here,” said Sally Traub. Sally is tall for her age, thin-lipped and freckled with reservation in her face and in her posture that is either natural or learned, though no one from now on will remember which. That morning, that Wednesday morning at five, not a wisp of Sally’s long red hair was in motion, though this reporter imagines that was not true of the previous morning, Tuesday morning, at 12:02. That morning there must have been wind.

In fact, Sally, isn’t there always wind? Especially, yes, especially at the beach. So wouldn’t the wind chimes always be chiming, always be clanging, always be as restless as this reporter was in her hotel room this morning thinking about you, Sally, and your little sister? When would the wind stop? When would the chimes stop? What really woke you that morning? Sally, what really woke you that night?

Sally fixed this reporter with a level stare. She looked small in front of her smaller house. Then she handed over a cliché with pubescent sincerity, disparate grace—

“You’re not from around here, are you,” said Sally.

Jack Dormer says it started with what Sally did. What did Sally do?

“It was just after you left yesterday morning,” says Mr. Dormer. He is not ashamed to have been spying. No one in these small towns ever is. “After you left she went up to those wind chimes that were still hanging over their porch and she took ’em down gently and then she threw ’em in the street.”

Where are they now?

“Well, Maisie went out after Sally ran off and threw ’em in our garbage bin, ’cause we thought it might be safer, you know, not to have ’em out there in the street. But after we saw that we got to thinking what we could do to help that little girl, to kind of, well, show how we felt about the whole thing...so, I don’t know, I was just goin’ by instinct, o’ course, I always do, and I went out onto our front porch and took down our own chimes and threw those in the garbage, too. Then old Tim and Donna Gordon across the street did the same, then Phil and Lisa Billings, and from there it just sorta took off.” Mr. Dormer straightens up, looks proud of what he is about to say: “I guess you could call it an act of protest.”

But what are you protesting? No, really. The company that made the chimes? The truck they came in? The driver who bore them into the house? The chimes themselves? Nobody knows why it happened. Nobody knows why Tom and Samuel and Annie Traub are dead. So what are you protesting, really?

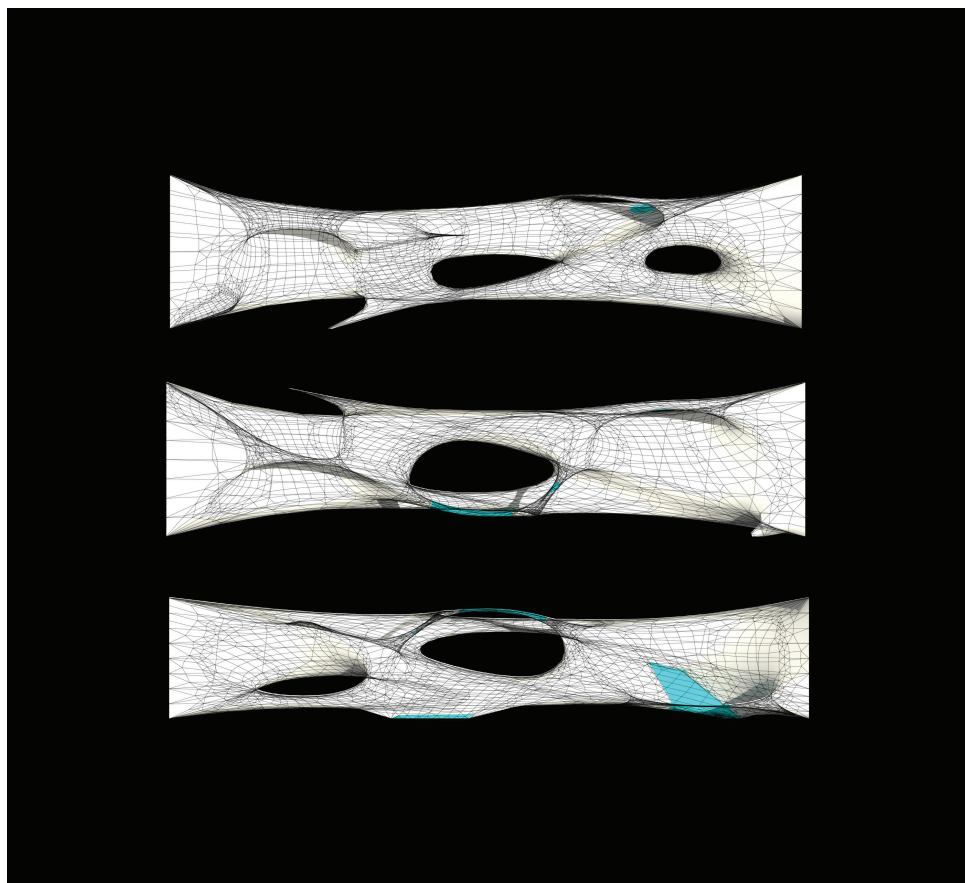
Mr. Dormer smacked his lips. "What kind of a reporter are you, anyway?"

The protest of sorts has spread through all of Newport, some say to parts of Depoe Bay and Toledo. It makes for an uncanny silence, the whole town a film reel with lost audio. This reporter finds herself going for long walks through the city center down by Yaquina Bay, where even the water is quiet, even the water is still. This reporter's editor called her through the hotel desk from his big glass office in Portland on the twenty-second floor and told her he'd almost thought he'd never see the day she took one of these things too hard. Almost. The line is quiet. Her phone is dead. He says to come home, scrap the story, let the local news cover it all they want.

Yet still this reporter wanders through town at all hours, wondering if for the rest of her life she wants to write about death as though it were fiction, as though to write about it were to make it fiction. When she runs into Jack Dormer outside a corner store he acts as if they are old friends, widening his arms to her, slapping her on the back. He says it turns out, you will be happy to hear, that the Traubs will be staying in Newport. They just signed a lease for a duplex over on Bay Street. Isn't it wonderful? Sure, you bet.

"Hey," says Mr. Dormer just before this reporter turns to leave, his arms crossed, his lips upturned: "I don't mean to be rude, o' course, but what are you still doing here?"

Eyes open. Eyes closed. A long-winded attempt at a smile in the afternoon breeze off the sea. I don't know, Mr. Dormer. I don't know.



MESH RELAX I

Ruin Xi

VOLUME X ISSUE I

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