
broad!
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BEFORE THE HUNT
Emily Wick

Night before the first wolf hunt
beasts slink and huddle.
Chase the hares silent,
no longer calling.
Wrapped up together
in the dry river bed
we howl to fill their silence,
warbled warnings to ease our conscience
before tomorrow's guns enter the forest.

In this pre-dawn stirring
with you and the cracked dirt,
I release my right to dominion.
Let me sit at the earth's table,
let me kneel at the bedside
of the faltering planet.
Let me follow wide paw prints
to where the pack is hiding
and with them lie waiting
for the hunter to come.

Emily Wick *lives in Saint Paul, Minnesota and works for a conservation organization. Her poetry has appeared in* The Great Lakes Review *and* The Legendary. *When she is not writing, she hikes, cooks, and reads as many books as she can.*

SKINNING A DEER
Crystal Stuvland

It's easier in November, when Thanksgiving comes on
thick and strong and cracked like a form of meringue.

The canning has been done. Thumbtacked
to the pantry door is an inventory of goods.

We'll sneak past the neighbor's orchard with our rifles
and camouflage ourselves in the undergrowth.

It's not so silent and terrible, now that
the sun sets this early. The gray is terminable;
the deer have giant coffee eyes.

Our eyes are hungry and avoidant.

The thing about a freshly dead animal is not
its smell but its warmth. And the way it watches
as its insides are pulled out by our frozen hands,

the scraping, the tearing skin, the weight.

Crystal Stuvland *is a writer, wanderer, and bicycle mechanic from the woods of north Idaho. Her poetry and nonfiction have been published in remote corners of the internet and beyond. She thanks you for reading.*

ADONIS AT 254 CROWN
Rachel Corso

I would play piano melodies
across the ridge of your collar
if the bones in my fingers didn't tremble
every time my hands reached out
just to press up against you.

And I would love to nuzzle
into the vacant space below
your jaw line so I could kiss you,
but the little grooved edges
of my front teeth dig
into the crescent-shaped flesh
crafted as my curled
lower lip.

The soft fold folds outward,
away from the right edge
of my mouth's fine creases—
rippling—like the hardened oil
of Monet's Water Lilies.

Our complex motions frozen
in fragile sighs over and
under stretched fabric
and wooden framing.

A moment pinned stagnant
in pools of warm paint breaking,
continuously, against the peek
of itself, of ourselves.

Your calloused palms captured me
this way: without white lilies
suspended in sea foam—bare
but still clothed in a barbed net
of your roses.

Rachel Corso *is currently a senior undergraduate at Quinnipiac University. Her poetry has been featured in* The Helix*, on bar napkins, and in Microsoft Word documents archived on her outdated MacBook Pro. For now, she likes to pride herself on being considered a "Hamden Townie."*


Piligou

EULOGY
Emily Jaeger

my mother arranged for you to wake me the mornings
she gave birth to each of my brothers
and so you were knotted into the family I grew up in without words
just your face leaning over and my eyes filled with the early light.

Emily Jaeger *is a returned Peace Corps volunteer and backyard organic farmer who dreams in four languages. Currently an MFA student at UMASS Boston, she is co-editor and co-founder of* Window Cat Press *[http://windowcatpress.weebly.com], a zine and tumblr for young, emerging artists. Her work has recently appeared in* Cecile's Writers' Magazine *and* Broad!.

THOSE SMARTING STARS, OR JOAN OF THE COYOTES
Sophie Strohmeier

A figure was walking along the road whistling, and at dusk came onto a rest stop. From a distance the figure had appeared like a scrawny young man, wearing a white sleeveless shirt and dark blue jeans. Up close, the face was smoother, like a girl's—or a boy's, if he were to be particularly pretty. The hair was bleached from the sun and had a kind of non-color and straw-like consistency. The eyebrows and eyes were a dark brown.

"You're just a girl, aren't you," said the woman who ran the rest stop with her husband. She was a large, beautiful woman; as beautiful as they come. Black hair, broad red lips, large white teeth. The heat of the day had sent just a slight sheet of sweat over her body that made her chest and throat shimmer deliciously and seem so much closer to the touch.

The girl chewed on a toothpick and leaned onto the wall of the rest stop. From the back of the rest stop's kitchen, the radio was blaring an opera singer's voice. *Fatalita, Fatalita…* she sang. It was a creepy, foreboding sound.

"You know how I can tell?" said the woman, "I'll tell you how. It's not that your shoulders are so slender—it's your hips. They're just a little round here," she nudged the girl's thigh with her knee and laughed. "A little too round. Sorry if that makes you sore."

"It doesn't make me sore," said the girl, "not one bit. You can do it some more if you like."

At night the stars hung close over the slim line of the desert. The girl walked out as far as she could go and lay down on the ground to look at the stars and nothing but the stars, the way she might climb onto the woman and see the woman's skin and nothing but her skin, she thought.

Far off in the distance she heard the cry of wild cats. Panthers in the dark could cry with a woman's voice. It was an eerie, lonely sound, simmering away from the low murmur that came from somewhere between the sky and the desert; but the girl wasn't afraid. Perhaps those cries were coming from the rest stop, from the back of the house where the owner of the rest stop was bedding his wife. The girl tried not to think about it. She watched the stars. There was nothing but the sky and the stars.

A while later she began to worry about snakes in the sand. She got up and headed back. She walked quicker the closer she got to the garage. She had begun thinking of a sad story she had heard in one of the towns along the dry river; it was a story of a murder and a beautiful lady and it gave her the creeps.

* * *

Through the buzz of her dazed mind, she decided that she had much to be thankful for that evening. The woman had put in a kind word for her with the husband.

They'd said the girl could stay on for a while and lay low. She would have to help around the stop, washing dishes and running errands for the Mrs. She would hose the lawn down a couple of times a day, depending on the heat, and keep the dust off the neon sign that said the name of the rest stop.

The girl climbed a ladder up to the boards beneath the roof of the garage. It was hot up there and smelled lovely, of wood and tarp and turpentine. This was where they stored canoes, kayaks, etc. They had put a little mattress on the far side where the roof slanted. The girl had put her sleeping bag there and a wooden wine crate she kept her things in: a canvas backpack, pocketknife, flask, etc. The girl carefully wrapped her moccasins in her blue jeans to make a pillow, the way she had learned from books.

She hummed to herself what she remembered of the tune she had heard earlier on the woman's record player. The song now felt lonely and full of longing.

The roof of the garage was well built and contained no cracks so she couldn't see the stars from where she lay, though she knew they were right up ahead. Finally, before going to sleep, the girl pulled out her matchbook. She lit a match and read the last sentences of the letter she kept in a fold of her backpack. The match lasted just long enough for her to read her favorite part of the letter:

We will always be one as we are like the stars.
We are all made of the same matter as the stars.
Therefore as far as we are apart we are still one and
will always be one forever.

The match went out with a hiss and a pleasant smell of burning. The girl folded the letter and pressed it against her breast. She thought about what she had read for a while and then cried a little, in a good, noble way, and it put her to sleep.

The little accident happened a few days later. It happened in the kitchen, which was the embarrassing thing. The girl had been washing the dishes and a glass had slipped. It happened in the dirty wash water, very slowly and very clumsily; one shard cut her badly across the palm of her hand. "Not the hand," she whined to herself. She'd have rather received a cut to her knees or arms or elbows. The cut was bad, and there was lots of blood. The girl held her hand up and quickly walked out of the kitchen, blood running down her arm and dripping onto the ground

behind her.

The woman went after her and found her by following the trail of blood.

"It looks like someone's been stabbed in there," she said. She was shaking with silent laughter. She walked the girl back to the house and upstairs to the bathroom. There, she forced the girl down onto the lid of the porcelain toilet seat.

"Are you going to faint," she said. Her voice was low with amusement.

"I never have," whispered the girl.

She was alarmed she had so much blood in her and that it could keep on pouring. The woman sat down on the bathtub beside the toilet and started cleaning the wound. The bleeding stopped soon after that.

"I don't know if you are going to need stitches," said the woman, examining the open gash, opening and closing it with fascination. The girl groaned and looked away. Her short blond hair was sticking to her forehead. The woman laughed so that her large white teeth showed and she drew her hand over the girl's sticky forehead.

"That hair," said the woman, "you look like Joan of Arc that way, you know that?"

The girl smiled meekly. Her first name really was Joan, and the woman knew.

"That's nice," she said.

The woman bandaged the hand. "Don't tell me this hurts you. I'd be disappointed in you if it did. You seemed like such a tough one. And now you've gone all pale on me, like a little girl."

"I don't like blood," said the girl. "It's nothing to do with toughness. Blood just gives me the creeps. I make sure I never get cut. I'm careful. But catching a piece of broken glass—what a stupid thing to do. It sure was a stupid, stupid thing. And my right hand, too."

"Lucky you didn't lose your thumb, eh?"

She wrapped some cotton around the girl's palm and wrist. Then she left the bathroom and came back with an ashtray and two cigarettes. She opened the windows to her bedroom. The bathroom was like candy, all in white and pink with lush fluffy towels. (The girl wasn't used to bathrooms like these. She washed and brushed her teeth in the rusty sink at the back of the garage.)

There were great big splotches of blood on the white and pink carpet of the bathroom.

"I ruined your carpet," the girl said out loud.

The woman handed her one of the cigarettes. "Here," she said, "relax."

The girl took a drag. "These aren't ladies' cigarettes," she said, surprised.

"I don't smoke ladies' cigarettes," said the woman, "neither do you."

The girl felt herself growing hot and moist, though not on her forehead. “Okay,” she said meekly.

“You’re not very entertaining after that blood loss,” said the woman. The smoke from their cigarettes had filled the bathroom. The light seeping in through the door played with the smoke. It made lovely swirling shapes, like mermaid’s tails. The girl was thirsty but she didn’t say so. Gradually, she relaxed and managed to stretch out her legs. She pressed her canvas sneakers against the rim of the bathtub. The woman placed her hand on the girl’s foot as if to steady it; it was a comforting, belonging kind of feeling. Then, she let her fingers wander over the sneakers. She gently tugged at the strings of the shoes, untied them and finally pulled the sneakers off. She rubbed the girl’s naked foot in a delicious way, and then she ran her hand up the girl’s leg on the inside of her wide blue jeans.

The woman’s family had come from Italy before she was born. In her childhood she remembered her father listening to operas on a radio he shared with the neighbors. He was a solitary, poetic sort of man who didn’t enjoy drinking with the other men. He told her the stories from the operas; his eyes glistened strangely when he did. The music pierced her heart; there was nothing but that and the stories and the evening air, her mother in the kitchen and her father in his green chair with his fine shoes and the sadness and anger and love in the music.

When she was sixteen, she and her seventeen-year-old sister had participated in a beauty contest and her sister had come in second and she had come in first.

There even was talk for a while of her going out west and becoming a real star but that hadn’t worked out. Neither had her life at the circus; this had lasted two years before ending with a broken hip. She had been dropped from a great height while leaping from a trapeze to another swinging acrobat. It had been a short, un-heroic fall, unfortunately not deadly. For the opera lover within her, this missed opportunity at a tragic demise had been her greatest failure.

Now she was thirty-six and she ran the rest stop with her husband. She was awfully good at playing cards, so good no one wanted to play with her. Mostly she cooked, or oversaw the cooking, and sat out on the green lawn in the sun with her sunglasses and her cigarette, the record spinning round and round. The music promised the relief of darkness; it spoke to her of lust and wild beasts in swirling magical nights of forests and moisture. Her black hair glinted in the sun, her curved chest moving, slowly, up and down. There was a shimmer that encircled her skin.

The girl passed her like that several times a day walking back and forth from the garage. She would watch this most beautiful of things carefully out of the corner of her eye. Often she frowned from having to squint like that in the hot light.

* * *

“I won’t tell anyone if you don’t want me to,” said the woman.

“That’s okay,” said the girl. “I’m not hiding anything, if that’s what you think.”

She was sitting on the carpeted floor of the woman’s bedroom beside the record player, chewing on another toothpick. The record covers lay scattered about and came in all kinds of colors: green, turquoise, pinkish. Most had faded edges.

The woman had bathed but her chest was still shimmering the way it did. She had wrapped a large towel around her body that hid her breasts and hips and ass. Her legs, too, shimmered from all the lotion she was smearing on them. The woman was very much taken with her opera music.

“You hear that?” said the woman, “the way she breathes. All I ever got to do is hear her do that thing, right before she sings, the way she pulls in her breath like that, it makes me feel like I can’t tell you. Like it’s the heart and pull of the universe. The very pulse of it, the womb, stars and all.”

“I think it’s a kind of, I don’t know, creepy sound,” said the girl. She couldn’t explain how the music felt to her like a brightly lit liquid that ran right through her center. Like petrol. You could throw a lit match at it and it would burst into flames.

The woman bent down and drew her fingers through the girl’s short blond hair. She pulled her head back.

“Ow,” muttered the girl.

The woman pulled the toothpick from the girl’s mouth and threw it out the open window.

“You’re just a little coyote, aren’t you,” said the woman. “A little coyote with dirty teeth.”

“You threw away my toothpick,” said the girl. She boldly reached out and pulled at the woman’s towel, which loosened, fell, and then lay, with a gentle little shudder like fallen snow, at the woman’s feet.

“Heh,” said the girl.

The girl helped the husband pack his fishing gear into the back of his truck. It wasn’t because he couldn’t have done it himself; it just would be quicker that way. The husband was going to be gone for the entire weekend. He was a tall blond Swedish man with a blond moustache. His shoulders and neck were so beefy he could have been two of the girl. A long time ago, he had been a trapeze artist. Now he was driving away to be alone to paint and fish.

He looked at the girl and they shook hands. The girl’s right hand was still bandaged. When the husband squeezed it, the girl thought of the gash in her hand opening and closing.

“Don’t scowl like that,” he said, “It doesn’t make you look any more like a boy. It just makes you look like you’re trying much too hard to be one. Relax your face, see, what a handsome fellow you are.”

The girl closed her mouth. She hadn't been meaning to scowl in the first place and now she hated him for what he had said. She watched the truck pull out onto the road and hated the truck as well. The man was going to drive someplace in the mountains.

When the truck had disappeared as a dot round the curve of a distant hill, the girl turned on her heel and ran up the driveway, past the lawn and into the house, banging the screen door, and up the stairs. She stopped right in front of the woman's door; the carpet under her feet made a nervous kind of sound.

"Has the Viking left already?" the woman called. The girl crept into the room.

"Well," said the woman, pulling the girl close by the hip, "lookit what the cat dragged in."

There was the sound of a button popping through a hole. The girl waited patiently for her things to come off. Then she caught hold of the woman's wrists and pinned them down as she climbed between her legs, biting and licking as she went. Her entire body felt filled with liquid. She was stronger than the woman, she realized with pleasure, bearing her teeth just a little. Her breath caught in a snarl when the woman wailed. "You're good," said the woman. "Oh, you're a good one."

The woman was running her fingers through the girl's hair and massaging her scalp as though she were a cat. She liked playing with the girl's stiff colorless hair and the curly darkish fuzz under her armpits.

The girl lay flat on her naked back, staring at the oily painting that hung over the bed. There was a bright mountain in it with greens and a sparkling blue lake. The husband had painted teeny tiny star-like dots into it to make it sparkle like that.

"Say, this hair is getting long," said the woman, "and you're getting all plump and cute. Soon you'll be looking like a girl. What do you say, let's give you a haircut."

The girl wasn't really listening. Then she looked at the woman.

"Okay," she said. The woman went and got the scissors.

"Sit up," she said.

She cut the girl's hair short and then brought out her husband's electric razor and cut the hair very short at the nape. "There," she said. She reached up and touched the supple bristles just above the neck. The girl reached up and touched herself there, as well. She leaned forward to have a look in the mirror over the dresser. She looked like someone had planted the head of a fifteen-year-old boy on the body of a slender young woman, a noble young woman, she thought.

"You like it?" said the woman.

"Yeah," said the girl. The haircut suddenly made her breasts and hips seem more like a girl's than ever. Her nipples were hard and brown and her skin was sunburnt and strong. She found herself grinning. She

looked at the woman.

"Joan of the Coyotes," said the woman.

The woman's lips were red and wide and her teeth behind them were a little large and crooked but that even seemed to worsen her beauty, which already was the kind that makes the heart change. They laughed and kissed with their mouths open with laughter. Their teeth clashed a little. The woman reached out and touched the girl's breasts and it gave the girl that shuddering feeling and she held the woman's breast and ran her fingertips over her nipples again and again.

"Oh," said the woman, closing and opening her hand over the girl's naked thigh, "oh, oh, oh."

They did this all of Friday afternoon and evening and most of Saturday with nothing to disturb them. The woman's nipples were small and soft and pink.

The husband had hired someone to take care of the cars in the rest stop while he was gone, and the cook did the cooking and serving. There weren't many people around that weekend so the girl and the woman only went down to the kitchen now and then for sandwiches or waffles but it was so hot they mostly stayed upstairs in the shady bedroom. Once, the girl went downstairs for two bottles of beer and some potato chips.

It was growing dusky and the nighttime noises from the desert were just about starting. Tiny lizards slithered across the driveway and into the desert, as though they were anxious for something to happen there.

The girl had forgotten about watering the lawn. She stopped, put the beer back in the fridge, ran out and turned on the hose. The grass was still green but it had an unhappy look to it. She stood watching the grass and the water, the sky in the distance turning a berry color. From the garage she could hear the two hired men muttering over beer and cigarettes. They were talking about coyotes, calling them "kay-yotes", not "coy-o-tees" the way the girl and the woman did. One of the men had driven over a kayote with his truck. It had got caught in the wheel and the man didn't know how to peel him off. The girl put her hands in her pockets and turned back to the creeping dusk.

That evening the girl did a stupid thing. She had been lying there on her naked back, staring at the tiny stars on the lake in the painting. The record was playing a very sad aria, sung by a tenor this time. The music was making both of them melancholy.

The woman mumbled the words along in English, translating as they went by.

"Oh, sweet kisses…" she mumbled, "and … *carezze*. While I stripped the beautiful form of its veils."

The music was too quick for her to translate. The woman sighed. “It’s so sad,” she muttered to herself, “Never before have I loved life so much.”

She exhaled white smoke. The evening light shifted in the blinds. Then very suddenly, the aria ended.

“Say,” said the girl, lifting her head, “How come you never had any kids?”

The thought had struck her suddenly in a glum little spot. She had had the fantasy of the woman getting her pregnant, and that had been a very lovely thought, like touching the inside of a rose petal with the tip of her finger.

“What the goddamn has that got to do with anything,” said the woman, “what on earth goes through your little mind at times, I wonder.”

They were quiet for a while. The girl stretched out her legs. “We should run away together,” she said.

Then she wished she hadn’t said that. She was tired from the heat and from laying still. “Do you ever wonder what the stars taste like,” she said helplessly, “I imagine they might taste something like snow.”

She could hear the woman exhaling loudly. The girl bit her lower lip. “I better be heading back to the garage, I guess,” she said.

“You better,” said the woman, “Bosse’ll be home any time soon.”

The girl lay awake on her sleeping bag high up in the dark of the garage. She inhaled the smell of wood and turpentine, but it no longer gave her that wondrous, sad, noble feeling. It was still a little light outside. In the distance she thought she could hear the record playing the creepy, foreboding aria.

“I hate it,” she said out loud when she couldn’t stand it any longer. She rolled to her side and fell asleep feeling sickly.

The stars were out and bright and the earth smelled of night. The girl crept back up to the woman’s door. She gave it a knock. The woman appeared in the crack between the door and the frame. She’d been smoking a cigarette in the dark. Her beautiful cheeks looked blue-ish in the night.

“Where’s Bosse,” said the girl.

“I haven’t the slightest,” said the woman, “Probably he’ll be back tomorrow at noon.”

“Sure,” said the girl.

“What,” said the woman, her voice low with amusement, “you want to kill Bosse in his sleep or something? With your little pocketknife? He’d snap you in half with his eyes closed.”

The girl fingered the pocketknife in her back pocket.

“No,” she said slowly, “there’s some roadkill stuck in the tires of a car in the garage and it stinks like carrion up all the way to my bunk. I

was wondering if I could sleep in here I guess. It gives me the creeps."

"You give me the creeps," said the woman. "By the way you were going at me I'd think you'd be very fond of carrion."

A whining sound caught in the girl's throat. "Oh," it whined. Like a growl, the sound stayed there, buzzing; she couldn't swallow it. She had always liked the idea of being a part of everything in the universe like the tiniest specks of dust were actually part of everything. But this she didn't want any part of; she could try ridding herself of it, but in the end there was no escaping it—they were still part of the same matter in the end and it was an awful thought.

"Where're you going?" the woman cried after her.

"Where the lizards go at night," said the girl with a snarl.

The long toenails of her bare feet scratched the carpet as she went down the stairs. She dropped down and kept running on all fours.

The stars hung low. A shape was heading off into the distance, feet making a soft padding noise in the gravel like little paws. From somewhere a coyote was calling a high and creepy cry that sounded nothing at all like a woman.

Sophie Strohmeier *is a bilingual writer and part-time film critic residing in Vienna, Austria. Author of the poetic lesbian pulp novel* Küss Mich, Libussa *(edition a, 2013), she has also written for* FM4, Der Standard, The Gap*, and* Sissy *Magazine. Sometimes she blogs at http://cagedwomeninfilm.blogspot.com/. This is her first publication in English.*

ANDY
Maria Marrocchino

Andy Warhol died today and
I began crying and running and
crying and all of sudden it started
raining only you said it was snowing
but snow blinds you like an old man
without his sunglasses so it was really
raining or it could have been my eyes
blue and a little green, like one of Andy's
flowers. I tried to tell you but I got distracted
by all the signs and noise and cars honking
and grinding, like one of Andy's rhymes and
I was still crying but then you said something
and it made me laugh and we were laughing,
together smiling. What was it that thing you
said you told me how your mother made you
sing that song about the dragonflies, like one
of Andy's smiles and I was walking along
cold, my feet wet but I was laughing until
I looked up at the sky and remembered that
Andy was dead and I started crying again.

Maria Marrocchino *is a freelance writer and producer. She has been writing poetry since the age of 12. Maria lives in New York City. Her poetry has been published in* Main Street Rag, SNR Review, Belleville Pages *and* Clockwise Cat. *Her website is http://www.krop.com/mmarrocchino.*

GOD OF YELLOW LIGHTS
Angela Stinson

God the Living and God the Dying
God the Fucking, the Seeking, the Crying
God Eternal and God Immediate
God of infamous, slow-moving, expedience
God in the brushing your teeth
the shushing the baby
the seething with anger
the bent-over laughing
the long talks with strangers
God in the holes and spaces
the nooks and crannies
the gaps and small spaces
the empty place between electrons
energy pushing through every
every
every opening
God the solid, liquid and gas
God dissolved, watered down to appeal to the masses.
God the Paint and God the Brush
the rush that crawls
up and down your skin,
crowning your head and
bedding you.
Holding you up.
The feeling in the car by yourself
elbowing your ribcage
pushing on you just enough
to remind you that breathing is special.
God of the crazy wheeled cart in the run-down store
of whores dead-eyed and eye-lined and offering
themselves up to
God, in the rain
that dumps on every
every
every head.

(continued)

God of yellow lights
who shows up in the waiting
just like the stillness
just like the busy, busy breathlessness.
He can't help it.
Always hiding behind corners,
sneaking up soft-footed behind me so He can
follow my footsteps
smell my hair
whisper quietly,"Hey Baby.
I'm still here.
Did you miss me?"

Angela Stinson *has published poetry in Portland Community College's literary review,* Alembic*, and Marylhurst University's literary review,* M Review. *She lives, writes, teaches and goes to school in Portland, Oregon.*

LITANIE DE LA HAINE
Renée Vivien

La Haine nous unit, plus forte que l'Amour.
Nous haïssons le rire et le rhythme du jour,
Le regard du printemps au néfaste retour.

Nous haïssons la face agressive des mâles.
Nos coeurs ont recueilli les regrets et les râles
Des Femmes aux fronts lourds, des Femmes aux fronts pâles.

Nous haïssons le rut qui souille le désir.
Nous jetons l'anathème à l'immonde soupir
D'où naîtront les douleurs des êtres à venir.

Nous haïssons la Foule et les Lois et le Monde.
Comme une voix de fauve à la rumeur profonde,
Notre rébellion se répercute et gronde.

Amantes sans amant, épouses sans époux,
Le souffle ténébreux de Lilith est en nous,
Et le baiser d'Éblis nous fut terrible et doux.

Plus belle que l'Amour, la Haine est ma maîtresse,
Et je convoite en toi la cruelle prêtresse
Dont mes lividités aiguiseront l'ivresse.

Mêlant l'or des genêts à la nuit des iris,
Nous renierons les pleurs mystiques de jadis
Et l'expiation des cierges et des lys.

Je ne frapperai plus aux somnolentes portes.
Les odeurs montent en moi, sombres et fortes,
Avec le souvenir diaphane des Mortes.

Renée Vivien *(née Pauline Mary Tarn, 1877-1909) was a lesbian poet and writer of the Belle Époque who courageously "came out" in 1903 by publishing a collection of love poems (adapted from the Ancient Greek of Sappho) under the feminine form of her chosen name. The poem "Litany of Hate" ("Litanie de la Haine") first appeared in her 1904 volume* The Venus of the Blind *(*La Vénus des Aveugles*), during what was arguably Vivien's most experimental period.*

LITANY OF HATE
translated by Samantha Pious

The tie that binds us, more than Love, is Hate.
We hate the smirking song-and-dance of day,
The sunlit springtime's harsh returning gaze.

We hate the aggressivity of the human male.
We share the last regrets, the bitter gasps for air
Of Women empty-eyed and Women pale.

We hate the brutish rut that soils desire.
We shun it as anathema, the cry
In which unborn sorrows of life are sired.

We hate the Law, the World, the thronging Crowd.
Our revolution shudders and resounds
Like some rough beast come slouching into town.

Lover-less lovers, husbandless wives,
Lilith has breathed her shadow in our lives,
And on our lips the kiss of Eblis lies.

My mistress, lovelier than Love, is Hate.
I covet her cruel priestess in your shape
Whose ecstasy my rage exacerbates.

Twining greenwood's gold with iris dark as night,
We shall renounce the tears of the contrite,
The penitence of lilies and of candlelight.

I'll leave those sleepy homes unvisited.
Scents are rising toward me, dark and dread,
And memories of the martyred Women dead.

Samantha Pious *is a Ph.D. student in Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania. Some of her translations have appeared in* Lunch Ticket*,* Lunch Ticket*'s bi-monthly offering* Amuse-Bouche*,* Construction*,* Gertrude*, and* Rowboat*. Others are available on her website at samanthapious.wordpress.com.*

10 LEVELS OF MILK
Ida Therén

1. One hour old and she teaches me. I don't know how to do it, but she does. Grabs on. A kiss that tickles.

2. She doesn't let go, the months pass, suction cup.

3. Her legs start walking, the world is huge. She runs back to me, the shield, recharges. Returns, again searching. Forward, back towards me, the motion of tidal water.

4. It is no longer about food. It's about love.

5. Is it time to move on? Her eyes gazing at me from the white peace. "No way."

6. I come home from work. She makes a smacking sound with her mouth, looks me deep in the eye as if we were about to share a romantic kiss. We unite again, turn into the whole we always were.

7. I ask her what it tastes like. She smiles. "Vanilla ice cream," then wipes off her peanut butter fingers on my only clean pair of jeans.

8. She says she wants to draw us together. She makes a large bubble with two circles in it. "That's me." She points at one circle. "That's you." I'm the other tiny circle in the bubble that is us.

9. The hope that there will be enough words to replace the silence in our communication, when the day has arrived. For this to end.

10. She falls off a cliff. I catch her with clouds of milk.

Ida Therén *(born 1985) is a Swedish freelance writer, currently based in Brooklyn. She is the editor of Swedish literary journal* CONST Literary (P)review *and recently released the children's book* Carried On Your Back. *Now, she's just finishing up her upcoming novel* Champagne.

HOSPICE
Emily Jaeger

the blue of the saints' gravestones
in Safed is a Dead Sea
blue the color of
waters grown heavy
with minerals under the sun
of the springs leading

to the Asa river
where you grew up
where I imagined you came
as you disengaged
piece by piece
from the body wrapped
in the grey sheets
of a hospital bed
back in Boston

until I was swimming
through you in the Asa river
drawing you in
between pursed lips
swatting you as the fish
who hide at the edges
of the spring
sucked on my toes.

In Jerusalem someone
has painted my two windows
this same cerulean
I position my desk
in the middle of the room
so I can see them both
and wait to hear
that you've died.

Emily Jaeger *is a returned Peace Corps volunteer and backyard organic farmer who dreams in four languages. Currently an MFA student at UMASS Boston, she is co-editor and co-founder of* Window Cat Press *[http://windowcatpress.weebly.com], a zine and tumblr for young, emerging artists. Her work has recently appeared in* Cecile's Writers' Magazine *and* Broad!.

THIS IS YOUR AZALEA
Carol Coven Grannick

When she calls, my Mom,
it's to give something she's bought.

This time it's azaleas, two
for me and my sister,

this time she says, "You'll pick
the one you want.

My heart's been closed but comes
alive again.

I'll get there first! I'll pick
the azalea that's prettiest.

I zoom the distance, twenty miles,
pull up the winding driveway,

heart flying out front. I jump
out of the car and run to Mom.

"This one's yours,"she says and hands
me the small red one

with browning leaves while the new-blooming
azalea boasts in the sun.

Carol Coven Grannick *is a children's author whose middle grade novel in verse,* Reeni's Turn*, was a finalist for the 2014 Katherine Paterson/*Hunger Mountain *Award, with excerpts to appear in the Spring/Summer 2015* Hunger Mountain. *Her work as a children's author, poet, and freelance writer has appeared or is forthcoming in and on various venues, including* Cricket*,* Highlights*,* Ladybug*,* You & Me: America's Medical Magazine*,* The Shine Journal*, and* Author Magazine. *As a writer-psychotherapist, she pens "The Flourishing Writer," for the Illinois-SCBWI* Prairie Wind*, a regular column that explores and supports the writer's emotional journey.*

TA TA: A FAREWELL TO THE BOOBS OF MY YOUTH
K. Willcox

Not to brag, but I used to have a really nice rack. Average would be a fair description of the rest of me, but since seventh grade, when breasts appeared overnight, I've had the dumb luck to have a chest that matched the magazine standard of acceptable boobs. Memory condenses what must have taken place over months to a single, startling glance: one minute I was nothing but washboard ribs and the next, miracle of miracles, there were breasts. I couldn't believe the implausible fact of them, and on me. Plain Jane. Nobody.

To that point, my highest aspiration was to blend in with the walls. I worried so much about deflecting negative attention there was no time to think about the other kind. And then there they were: 34C, as though ordered by mail. They made me feel safer, and a bit compensated for freckles, and a nose too large. My survival strategy had been to carve out a specialty niche as a bookish geek who could also crack a joke. That was my schtick, the way I kept my head down, but getting breasts changed the program a little. For the first time, something countered the desire for complete invisibility. These were enviable. I might want someone to notice these.

It was my mother who saw them first. She saw me changing (this must have been around the time when such sightings were becoming rare) and realized that I was busting out my training bra.

"You must get that from your dad's side," she said, sounding alarmed. "It certainly isn't from me."

My father's mother, Marjory, was five feet in heels and wore a wedding band sized for a child, but she and her sister Peg filled their girdles amply and were both, judging from pictures, solid D cups. I'm 5'7," lanky, and on the rare occasion that I wear heels, I look like a colt learning to walk, but I inherited the genes that gave Marjory and Peg their curves. When that coding kicked in it took me, and my mother, by surprise. We went shopping for a real bra, at a department store. I remember feeling quietly proud that, while my friends were still begging their mothers to buy them bras to cover nonexistent breasts, I was skipping grades, right over A and B to a voluptuous C. I was stacked. Whatever that meant.

And that was my shape for twenty years, until pregnancy and breastfeeding swelled me to D, then double D and finally a not-so-pretty triple D. For most of two decades I dwelled in that rarest of realms: I looked, in one aspect at least, like I thought I was supposed to look. Bra models and mannequins looked like me, from the neck down. Clothing was tailored for a figure like mine. And you know that mythical bit of stretch across the front of a sweater, that teenage boys are always so bothered about? I had that. That was *me*.

I've come back to earth, literally and figuratively, now that my

second child is done nursing, and I barely recognize these appendages as my own. They've surrendered to gravity. The difference is upsetting. It's not just that they are smaller; it's that they're so visibly fallen. I can't help but think of collapsed soufflés when I look in the mirror, or the weather-beaten faces of women who've tanned too much. My breasts have seen smoother, fuller days. I'm not saying they're hideous, but these are definitely last week's party balloons.

This shrinkage has occurred alongside other expected changes of motherhood and the life of a stay-at-home parent. Witness the crinkly, dull skin around my eyes. My hands chapped from continual soaking in bathwater, dishwater, hand sanitizer. I frequently leave the house in clothing that many would consider too casual for sleepwear, but I can change my outfit, my haircut, my moisturizer. I can't change the fundamentals of the body underneath without costly intervention.

Anyone who wants a boob job or a tummy tuck should go ahead and get one—far be it from me to judge—but to me that's a fix of the wrong thing. What I need is a kindlier attitude toward my body now that it doesn't so charmingly agree with magazines and catalogues. If I'm lucky, I'll see the gradual sinking of this whole ship, and I don't want to witness it with shame, humming the words to "Glory Days" as I hide in the baggy uniform of the stay-at-home, those tents of stretched-out cotton that say, "Move on, male gaze—there's nothing to see here." What lesson would my daughter, who hoists my bras over her 3T overalls and pretends to be me, take from that?

Anyone can tell that my primary relationships now are with people who use my pant legs as handkerchiefs and don't much care if the shirt I wore to bed last night is the same one I'm wearing at dinner.

But when I was young and looking for love I took care. I was Plain Jane, but I made the best of it. While the boyfriends of my teens and twenties respected my mind and heart, they all, to a man, treated the knockers with an almost worshipful regard. It made me feel better, in a petty sort of way.

We hetero gals expect a certain amount of bawdiness from the guys—a few lewd pats and pinches—but in private the men I've known were deferential to my body. Even a little afraid. One called my breasts "perfect," as if he were giving me a medal. Another said he was impressed that I didn't display them with low-cut tops; the implication being, I guess, that there was cheap power there, and I was gracefully holding it in check. A self-important Englishman (an Oxford man no less) said in boyish wonderment, "You have the largest breasts of any woman I've dated."

These attentions were flattering and reassuring, though I knew they said more about the observer than they did about me.

Several boyfriends later, when I was thirty-one, I got married and then another lucky thing happened to me: I tried to get pregnant, and it worked. I had a daughter, one miscarriage, and then a son. A lot of women say there's something alien to them about their own pregnant bodies, especially in the swollen third-trimester, but I never had that it-can't-possibly-be-me feeling. I'd always wanted to experience pregnancy—not that I terrorized those aforementioned boyfriends by mentioning it—and had pictured looking just like this. Like a giant, stumbling pear.

Being pregnant released me from the fear that took up most of my twenties, which was that no one would want to have children with me and that if by chance someone did, we'd discover it was too late and my uterus had already become the Sinai desert, fertile only in the distant past. But I did marry, and soon afterward saw a blurry but unmistakable plus sign on the pee stick. Overnight, I adapted to the idea of myself as a pear-person, an almost-mother.

Getting pregnant in my thirties, like getting breasts at thirteen, was luck I soon grew comfortable with, although my entitlement was tempered by the sorrows of others: friends who could not get pregnant with any amount of trying, who suffered miscarriages, stillbirth, or a narrow escape from death themselves from high blood pressure.

Taking one's good fortune for granted must hold some kind of evolutionary advantage because as a species we sure do it well, and I as an individual excel at it. No, you can't always get what you want, but hey, look at me! I produced two kids using only the tools that nature gave me, and some key collaborations with my husband. *Aren't I clever?*

The trouble in assuming we deserve the good things in our lives is that there's a flip side. If I was owed nice boobs and easy fertility, then I also richly deserve the body that comes after the babies, with its sags and folds and puckerings. And here, as we say in therapy, I've got some work to do.

But before I get to that, I feel an obligation to tell you—because no one told me and it was a painful surprise—what happened in the days after my kids were born and my proportions got further out of whack than I would have believed possible. What happened was that my brain unleashed a flood of hormones and my breasts responded by becoming enormous. I'd swelled enough in pregnancy that when I laughed, I reminded friends of the jolly shaking of old women, but after my daughter was born, and even more after my son, I was painfully huge and there was nothing jolly about it.

"Engorgement" doesn't sound like a big deal, I know. If you've already ballooned to the size of a parade float, what's a little more? I'm

here to tell you it can be terrifically painful. Not painful like labor, but wincing enough that I, for one, felt seriously wronged. After all I'd just been through—or rather, after all that had just been through me—to be hurting in yet another place seemed unjust, and a cruel joke since the swelling made it all but impossible to breastfeed. It hurt so much I couldn't hold my son, much less nurse him with such distended, and alarmingly blue-veined, tits. I do not exaggerate when I say that they started at my collarbone and swelled into my armpits. I was beside myself. (An apt phrase, that. In the days after giving birth, there is the normal you, sore but happy, and then there is this hormone-addled crazy person, also you, who weeps and carries on as if these were the End Times, and it's a while before you reintegrate the two into one hyper-emotional but functional being. I digress).

Even our midwife, whom I went to in desperation, was startled when I took my shirt off to show her what was happening. She recommended warm compresses followed, if I could possibly stand it, by "hand expression," which means (I'm sorry) to gently milk one's breasts by hand, a process that cannot be described, let alone accomplished, daintily. I was to do this twice daily so that the milk supply wouldn't dwindle before the swelling ended, which it did, thank God, a couple of days later. I looked like a normal mother of a toddler and a one-week old; that is, a teary, sleepwalking, half-inflated tire. My son fed from breasts no longer larger than his head, and he nursed so ravenously he was like a contestant in a pie-eating contest.

My breasts had hit their stride, if breasts can be said to stride. It was their finest hour.

Back in high school, my friend Jeppa said something about breasts that I've never forgotten. Senior year, we were in the school play together. *Crimes of the Heart*, if you were wondering; I played the talented but tormented Meg with somewhat less skill than Jessica Lange in the movie. During a late rehearsal, Jeppa (who played Lenny, the spinster sister) wondered what we'd look like when we got older.

"We'll have *pancake boobs*!" she shrieked.

Yes, I nodded. We would. Just as humans would one day populate Mars, and discover a cure for cancer. It was plausible, but not really going to happen.

I haven't seen Jeppa in years, but with help from Google, I learned that she's a performance artist in Seattle who often wears a homemade strap-on in her performances and pretends to nurse a rubber chicken, thus making her about a million times more interesting than any other acquaintance I've turned up in internet searches. The clips of her shows I've seen on-line are wild and celebratory, smart and raunchy. Here is the antidote I need for all this petty shame, this cowardice about growing older and looking it: my brash friend from high

school, now older like me but singing loudly, center stage, in a star-spangled leotard and testicles made out of maracas.

"Dear Jeppa [I am tempted to e-mail], The fateful day has arrived! My boobs are pancakes. Your prescience astounds me, and I could use your irreverent perspective again, now that the shores of middle age are in sight. If I'm ever in Seattle, you'll find me in the front row. If you make it to Boston, please call."

My life doesn't include much performance art right now unless you count my impersonations of *Sesame Street* characters or Max boogying down with the Wild Things. These are the years of Netflix, after the kids are in bed, and only when I can stay awake another two hours. Around the time that my son stopped nursing, I watched the documentary film *Babies*, which chronicles the lives of four infants and their families from around the globe. The lives of the urban tots, Hattie in San Francisco and Mari in Tokyo, look familiar; there's all the gear, toys, and constant adult company my kids are used to.

Then there's Bayar on the wind-swept steppes of Mongolia, who rides home from the hospital in his mother's arms on the back of a motorcycle, and Ponijao, a member of the Himba tribe in Namibia. Of the four, Ponijao's life is freest of enclosure. Adults are never far, but she moves unrestricted within a safe radius. Her toys are sticks and rocks, other kids, a necklace, her mother's hair.

The film has no narration. It interlaces footage of the four children at home, from their mother's pregnancies through the first year. By leaving out narration the filmmaker avoids the pitfall of dragging moral conclusions from his subjects' lives—a restraint I admire tremendously, even as I forgo it, right now.

The thing is, Ponijao's mother and the other Himba women all have boobs that sag, and this is not an apparent concern for anybody. What would it be like to live in a place where breasts looked, and were expected to look, as they have for most of history: not a cone or a dome, but a flap of flesh that a baby will occasionally reach for. I'll stop short of rhapsodizing about the Himba tribe's appreciation of the body's natural beauty because, obviously, I don't know the first thing about it. I'm as well-traveled as most of the American documentary-viewing public, meaning, my closest brush with Africa was Paul Simon's *Graceland* album. But I can't stop thinking about the Himba mothers talking and laughing while their children play nearby, and every once in a while, a baby clambers up to nurse. Clothing covers the lower halves of their bodies but not the upper because—in my narrative overlay—modesty is just an airy abstraction overlying a set of arbitrary rules. The Himba must have arbitrary rules about some things, but breasts aren't one of them. They don't recognize as an event that which I am treating as a personal crisis.

And there you have it: I can watch a film about people halfway around the world in Namibia and somehow make it all about me. A good thing, perhaps, that my expressive impulse veers toward the personal essay, where a bit of narcissism is sort of expected.

When I say my youngest has stopped nursing, that's not quite true. We're mostly there, but I still nurse him in emergencies. It's the last arrow in my maternal quiver if snacks, pat-a-cake and board books are angrily refused. When he's lost it and I finally say, in a low voice, "Wanna nurse?" he smiles at me tearily, and lifts his arms. It's a look of such pure relief that I wonder if I'm doing the right thing to wean him now. Every time I pick him up knowing this might be The Last Nurse, so I try to assume a Madonna-like tranquility for the task. The precious babe in my arms though, is sixteen months, twenty-three pounds, and a biter. He also kicks and punches, which makes it hard for me to keep my Madonna face perfectly composed. So that's why we're wrapping it up. That, and his milk allergy has meant a year of dairy-free eating for me, and I feel that twelve months without cheese is martyrdom enough.

Let the record show that I loved nursing my kids even when it was painful and complicated, and even though the effects of that service are now saggingly plain. Nursing satisfied a greedy wish to be my children's everything. I was food and comfort both; I was their personal docking station. No one could anchor them like that (I say to myself). To hold on to that centrality is impossible, and a sure way to drive one's children to angry diatribes in therapy.

And yet.

The hours I spent holding them while they nursed have been among the sweetest of my life. That's what I'm telling my therapist, anyway.

Will I ever love the pancakes, and not just the memory of what they were? I don't know. Vanity dies hard. A new self is not as easy to adopt at thirty-six as it was in junior high. But my husband tells me my breasts are still lovely—all the more because they fed our children. I know being wed to a geek like this is a far greater piece of luck than having once had nice hooters.

Those high times are surely over now. And though my breasts now require a lift of Spandex to keep them from completing their migration to my waist, I won't force them into molded cups, or punish them with underwire. They are mine, and for all their imperfections, they are quite a pair.

K. Willcox *lives in the Boston area with her family. Her work has appeared in* The Beloit Fiction Journal *and* Cimarron Review.


Piligkou

AFTER PARTY
Penney Knightly

Half undone, sides of my dress sleeves sliding
I remind myself of so many Hollywood harlots
I am housemaid Monroe, a non-vampish intermediary.

With nowhere to go
small little party of one,
lonely as a soft, round flower in a vase,
containment, contrived elegance.

But quiet rapture happens, in the brain,
the moan of ecstasy engulfing:
like that time I was on the phone with my mother
and you went down like a tropic sunset,
bursts of waves between phrases

alone, aware of sex spreading out
onto the room like a carpet over ground,
or a rush of ivy over the fence;
wavelengths between dust, flavors of air,
melted honey, bees of sting and sweating pain,
a wet must of youth, sitting ignition.

Recline, a brief thought of self-satisfaction in the middle:
Plan B, an escape, a weaker extract, yet self-tested, exact.

Before going off, a short love letter:
to all my children that have not been born,
all the love that was lost, long imagined from before,
the tilt of the slip, the slit between the hips,

flower petals bloom in pocketed places,
the dress holds heart, skin, and breast
akin to arrest.

Penney Knightly *is a survivor of child and adult sexual abuse, and explores themes based on the subject in her work. Her poetry has appeared in* Raving Dove*, a magazine featuring prose and poetry against physical and psychological oppression. She happily lives on the California coast with her Clydesdale horse, Stargazer.*

JEZEBEL
Louise Robertson

At first,
I will fuck you like a choke,
like a knife
in my throat. Then,
I will fuck you like
trying to hurt myself
on your body. You will like it.
I will fuck you like
your flat back won't crack.
You will like that too.
I will fuck you like the hammer
I break all of them with.
I will fuck you like a wave
—keeps coming back. I will
fuck you like the sword
in the sheath, like
a dim headlamp,
like the call you didn't make.
I will fuck you like
like a conversation
you don't want to have.
Then you will have it
and we will fuck each
other. Like glass,
like cream
tongue broken,
like tap water,
like French doors,
like "try this."
I will like that.
You will fuck me like
"try this."
You will fuck me.
And I will always believe
you. Like I believe in
soft dirt,
bare feet. Salt.
Like a wine buzz. Like
a bowl of gasoline.
I will.

Louise Robertson *has earned degrees (BA Oberlin, MFA George Mason University), poetry publications (*Pudding Magazine*,* New Verse News*, and* Borderline*, among others) and poetry awards (Mary Roberts Rinehart and Columbus Arts Festival Poetry Competition, among others). She is active as a poet and organizer in her local Columbus, Ohio poetry scene.*

DIAGNOSIS
Emily Wick

You were told to climb this ladder
that leads upward.
You take the first step
because you do as you're told
but take the second, third, fourth
because you refuse to fail.

At the top of the ladder
is not a sky
but an ocean floor
and you realize you're underwater.
It's fine though, because you have gills.
You don't have to climb any more—
now you can swim.

You align your bones with the corals
that languish there
at the bottom of the sea,
at the top of the ladder.
The corals are dry and calcified—
a perfect match for the swollen joints
of your fingers and angled bones
of your feet. This was the reason
you were sent up the ladder—
to lay your fading bones near the dead,
and to prepare for what is to come.

Emily Wick *lives in Saint Paul, Minnesota and works for a conservation organization. Her poetry has appeared in* The Great Lakes Review *and* The Legendary. *When she is not writing, she hikes, cooks, and reads as many books as she can.*

I.
Trust it, hope
to holy wine
with wafer-thin lips

a white line drawn
in God's image, Christ-like
he cannot be erased

II.
A mother knows
what it is to ache

cells divide and repair
the constant fare
the living pay

a mother knows
she is no stranger
to blood magic

III.
He takes offerings
dried mango, cigarillos
wood stove smoke

perfume my hair again
preserve his name
in a pillar of salt

a placebo kept
under the tongue
it too dissolves

IV.
Empty rooms echo
no soft something
gone the sweetness

(continued)

V.
Kohl-smeared eyes
punctuate loss
we imperfect
pray to the Virgin
for benediction, relief

still dreaming
this poem shut
embed bury sink
into the restless
quiet grief

Kim Dela Cruz *is a Boston-area poet and freelance creative editor whose older pieces can be spotted in places like* Breadcrumb Scabs *and* Every Day Poets. *Her current project is a collection of writing that examines the transformative nature of intimacy, among other things. She is also co-founder and co-editor of* Window Cat Press*, an online variety art & lit zine featuring work by emerging content creators.*

WITH KEYS BETWEEN HER FINGERS
Diana Clark

She sleeps better on friends' couches than she does on her own bed. She is only a carnivore on the weekends. Or at barbeques. Or on holidays. It is hard for her to stay away from flesh. There are rabbits tattooed across her bicep, rolling down her arm, all floppy-eared and puffy-tailed. Do not call them bunnies. They are rabbits. She has a scar next to her eye that she used to cover with foundation. Now she wears it like a Prada bag. Makeup is expensive. So is shame. Sometimes she'll walk through parking lots, count the vanity plates, the bumper stickers, the cars that were drunkenly keyed. The inside of her right thumb is calloused beyond repair. Boots are important to her. Yes, the black ones. Yes, the ones that lace up. When the fist came crashing into her face, cracking her bone like a car crash, she did not cry. She wears spikes on her shoulders. Tiny ones, metal ones. When people ask, she tells them it's a fashion statement. Her favorite words all start with the letter *p*, porcelain and peripheral and plush. When she brushes her teeth, she feels like she's polishing armor. No, not armor. Weaponry. Swords. Be scared. It's what she wants them to think when they see her. Be scared. She knows how to dress for battle. She knows where the exits are in every place she enters. She knows how to wear floral threateningly. She will bite, she will ruin, she will roar. Know better than the man who hit her. Be scared.

Diana Clark *graduated from Lynchburg College of Lynchburg, VA in May of 2013. She hopes to continue her education by receiving her MFA in fiction sometime in the near future. Her work can be found in* The St. Sebastian Review*, or you can find her over at* YARN*, an online literary magazine for young adults, as one of their fiction readers. Diana loves to travel and hopes to visit Greece this summer to participate in a writing workshop. Until then, she's writing what she hopes will one day be her first published novel.*

HOW SHE SLIPS
Brittany Cagle

Everyone knows the old,

their skins slipping
off each shoulder, a sea
sewn to spine.

Only my grandmother's eyes
could speak, so I held her
darkening hand,

the sun in her teeth
each time she tried to recall
my name.

Things quicken. Why
do I always love her mind the most
at the moment of its leaving?

I still hear her stories
from my childhood
whispering within me—

very often, I write them down.

Brittany Cagle *works as a creative writing instructor at the University of South Florida and as the Nonfiction and Art Editor for* Saw Palm: Florida Literature and Art. *Her poetry and prose has most recently appeared in* Spry *(Issues 2 and 4),* Sweet: A Literary Confection*,* Welter*,* Mad Swirl*, and is forthcoming in* The Stray Branch *and* The Poet's Billow.

BOS TO JFK
Elana Friedland

When they come to search the rubble they'll find
her straight rose strands mixed with my cola curls,
shards of skull. She never did get to Puerto Rico.

Our brains make an unexpected ceviche—neither
her nursing skills nor my customer service could
save us. To think—I silently complained about the

ruckus gushing from her ear buds. We stepped
through security together; she leaves on two of her
three overcoats, keeps metal on her chest, they

have her go through again and again. Good
riddance. I unpack my bags, remove my shoes and
when they tell me to raise my arms to detonate

that ever nothing, I do it. Not her. They pull her
purse out too, confusing her perfumes for potions.
She's a nice girl, but I'll never get to know it.

Her employers weren't happy about her dye job,
but they let her keep it: she was going to leave soon
anyway. This way everyone wins. Except American

Airlines. Too much ice. Those daggered chunks took
us down. They said it was a rough air patch. They said
there was no way to have seen it coming. You can

say your prayers and mutter your mantras,
but in the end it's always science, bitches.

Elana Friedland *is a Boston-based poet, musician, and theatre-maker. Originally from the Midwest, she is co-founder and co-editor of* Window Cat Press*, an online magazine for young, emerging artists.*

SOUTHERN COOKING ISN'T GOOD FOR YOU
Maeve Holler

I cannot know if it's sadder to eat
the entire peach cobbler in your refrigerator
or to not want to eat the entire peach cobbler
in your refrigerator.

I can know that its expiration date
is the saddest part.

I'll taste it with ice cream,
I'll make it very sweet.

I'll lap up the tart,
I'll lick all the crumbs from
the corners of my lips.

Maybe it is even sadder, that even when
it is no longer in the refrigerator
it will still leave something
in my mouth.

Maeve Holler *is a bass-playing, dog-loving undergraduate student of English at Tulane University in New Orleans, LA. She is the current editor of WTUL 91.5 FM's zine,* The VOX*, and a DJ. Her experimental poetry has been published by* theNewerYork*. More of her work can be found on her personal writing blog, www.m-holler.tumblr.com.*

when you let go be sure to do it with gloves on. I made this mistake
too many times.
now I prefer them blue, nitrile, sterile, polyethylene.
they come in cases

8446S SMALL QTY: 10 BXS

some girls explode, but
this one goes quiet.
after a point
all that remains is her dust in your hands.
it smells salty.

Claire Gordon*'s work can be seen or is forthcoming in* New Bourgeois, The Fem, Electric Cereal *and* Fried American. *She lives in Portland, Oregon.*

LETTER TO MY CHILDREN
Crystal Stuvland

Remember that everything real is expiring
faster than morning, faster than faces.

Take inventory often, but do not lose track
of your body in this. Do not discover your self
and sexuality independently of
each other, but discover them alone.

Hold still and let your nights be full
of nothing but themselves. Breathe. When the sky
is walkable, wait until you know. To go somewhere
unknown in the gloaming is to leave for good.

When you do leave, rely on sound more
than sight, rely on touch more than sound, and
rely on your lightness most of all.

Crystal Stuvland *is a writer, wanderer, and bicycle mechanic from the woods of north Idaho. Her poetry and nonfiction have been published in remote corners of the Internet and beyond. She thanks you for reading.*

SUDDENLY, JOY COMES
Emily Jaeger

something in the charcoal tasting air, the vigor of the child-laden sheep
burying their heads beneath the last rounds of dried hay
the snow-banks shrinking, roof puddles, days turning
in to finish past five, starting sharper and brighter each morning

it's like a hope—that I could throw your jarred ashes
wrench through the tightening throat of past and responsibility
and land out on the soggy earth. Maybe this is March coming.

Survived winter, unsure after my last lover's transition whether
to swear off men or women. Your stored dust, a rationed
poison in the root cellar, to gorge in the cold months.

The snow has melted a little and there is room for me in the world
for all of us snatching at the fray of a cloth to knot our way in.
I stand among the dumb animals that smelled it first, tasted it.
Their precocious bodies, locked at angles with mine as I try to spread grain,
butting against me, turning me towards the sun.

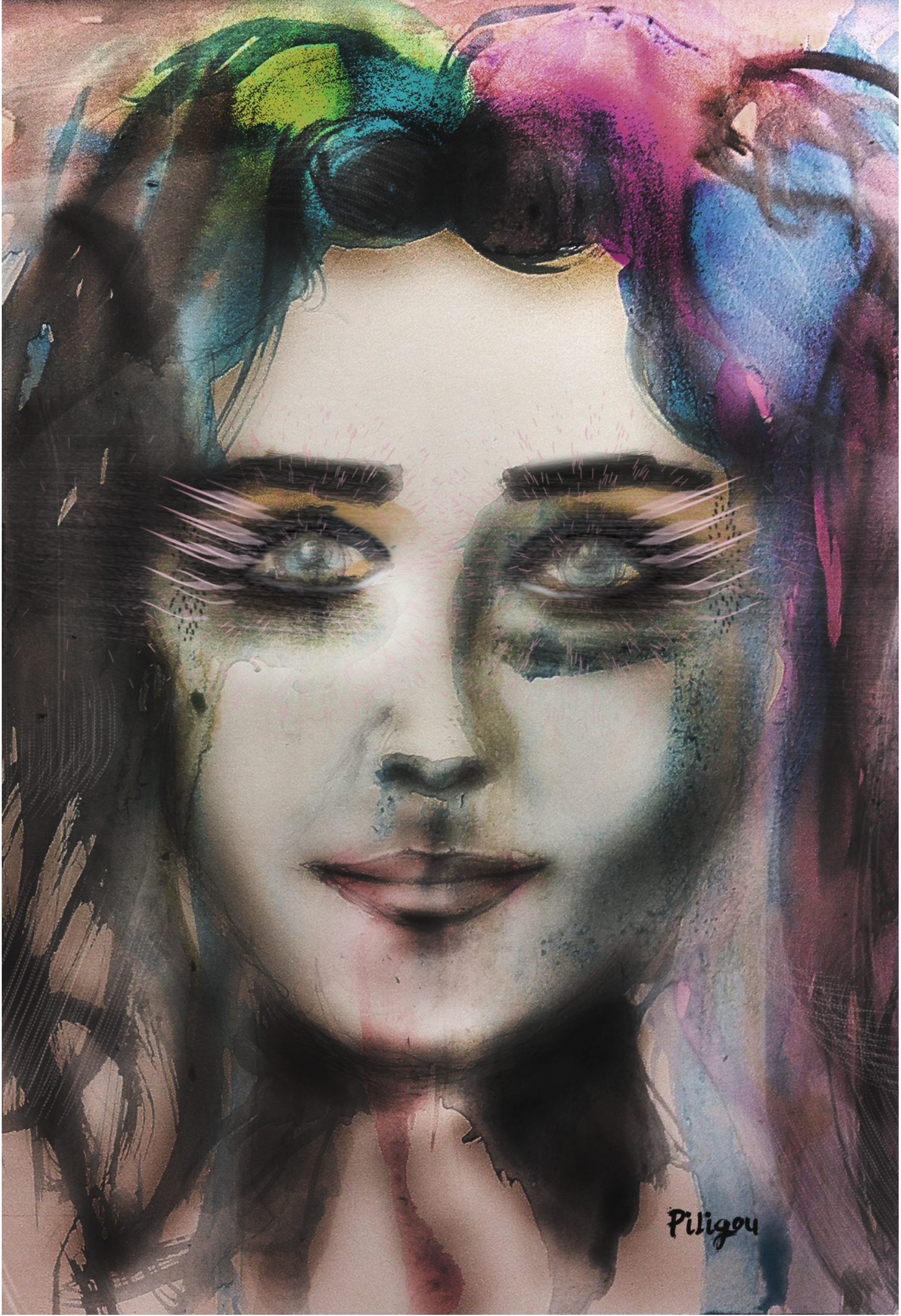
The temperature rises and water swells teaspoon by teaspoon.
Hidden underground, ash goes to seed, quiet and unforeseeable
as a turn in sleep, waking on the second side, wrapped
differently, breathing different air.

Emily Jaeger *is a returned Peace Corps volunteer, and backyard organic farmer who dreams in four languages. Currently an MFA student at UMASS Boston, she is co-editor and co-founder of* Window Cat Press *[http://windowcatpress.weebly.com], a zine and tumblr for young, emerging artists. Her work has recently appeared in* Cecile's Writers' Magazine *and* Broad!.

DISASTER
Laura Madeline Wiseman

It's possible to lose keys or to set the phone in
one room and beg a sister to call you so you can
follow the noise to where it fell into the nest of
bottles behind your desk. A bird can be lost,
smashed into the windows behind the feeders
and if not lost, stunned by a disabused belief of
more places to fly. So many lost a house,
doubling-up with extended family, extending
their stay. The credit always accrues and we're all
hungry for lunch. Japan lost itself, cities full of
homes, coastal waters, only the ticking left to live
among garbage, glass, and monsters. Elizabeth
lost two rivers, a continent, even you. Why not
lose something small like an airplane to water?

Laura Madeline Wiseman *is the author of more than a dozen books and chapbooks and the editor of* Women Write Resistance: Poets Resist Gender Violence *(Hyacinth Girl Press, 2013). Her books are* American Galactic *(Martian Lit Books, 2014),* Some Fatal Effects of Curiosity and Disobedience *(Lavender Ink, 2014),* Queen of the Platform *(Anaphora Literary Press, 2013), and* Sprung *(San Francisco Bay Press, 2012). Her most recent chapbook is* Threnody *(Porkbelly Press, 2014). Her newest book is the dime novel* The Bottle Opener *(Red Dashboard, 2014). With artist Sally Deskins, her collaborative book is* Intimates and Fools *(Les Femmes Folles Books, 2014). She holds a doctorate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and has received an Academy of American Poets Award, a Mari Sandoz/Prairie Schooner Award, and the Wurlitzer Foundation Fellowship. Her work has appeared in* Prairie Schooner, Margie, Mid-American Review, *and* Feminist Studies. *Currently, she teaches English and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Find her at www.lauramadelinewiseman.com.*


Piligou

ARTISTS IN THIS ISSUE

Chrystal Berche *dabbles, lots, and somewhere in those dabbles blossom ideas that take shape into images. Many of her current pieces of artwork start out as three-minute gesture drawings and eventually get paired with still life photography and a lot of playing in Photoshop. She loves to take pictures, especially out in the woods, where she can sit on a rock or a log and wait quietly, jotting notes for stories until something happens by. A free spirit, Chrystal digs in dirt, dances in rain and chases storms, all at the whims of her muses.*

Angeliki Piligkou *is an architect from Greece currently living in Copenhagen. She is interested in gender identities, the fluidity of gender and sexuality and the complex way that humans interact with their surroundings. You can contact her at apiligkou@gmail.com.*

Randi Ward *is a writer, translator, lyricist, and photographer from West Virginia. She earned her MA in Cultural Studies from the University of the Faroe Islands and is a recipient of The American-Scandinavian Foundation's Nadia Christensen Prize. Ward is a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee whose work has appeared in* Asymptote, Beloit Poetry Journal, Cimarron Review, World Literature Today, Anthology of Appalachian Writers, Vencil: Anthology of Contemporary Faroese Literature, *and other publications. For more information, visit www.randiward.com/about.*

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