

nim·bus- (noun) 1. an aura or halo surrounding a person or thing of literary quality

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Letter from the Editor

If you're an old friend of Nimbus then I am sure the new size of the book was a small shock, but hopefully a pleasant one. I am happy to assure you that the size change is just the beginning of our new look. This semester's staff decided it was time for a bit of a makeover. We have played with font sizes, thrown in splashes of color and integrated the literature and photos in a more obvious way than previous books.

While I would love to take credit for all of these changes, I really must acknowledge the two persons most responsible for this transformation, Professor Antonio Reonegro and Sarah Sutliff. Professor Reonegro was nice enough to fill in for Professor Andrew Needle, currently on sabbatical, and he has been invaluable to our work this semester. We are very appreciative of the time that he has given and the expertise he shared with all of us.

Sarah Sutliff is our current Design Editor and has really let her creative side show in all of the page designs. She is a great balance to my serious, organized self and I know the book will

be safe in her hands next semester.

That's right. I will be graduating this year and it is time for me to leave the book that has kept me sane throughout my undergraduate career. In the last issue I talked about how my love affair with Nimbus began. Today, as I sit in the office trying to write this letter and catch any last mistakes before sending this to the printer in an hour, I can say that the love is as fresh now as it was four years ago.

The stress of preparing for graduate school and trying to pass classes has been a lot this semester, but I still relish every rushed moment I have spent on this book and I know that I will truly miss the thrill of creating a 72 page book in two weeks.

Before I go, I would like to share a few things that I have learned:

College is what you make it. You can be active and take advantage of the education that very few people can afford or you can squander the opportunity.

One good friend is enough. Thanks Rooms.

Respect the faculty. Teaching is not exactly

a high paying job, though it should be. The people that do it love their work and they care about their students. Be prepared for classes. Read assigned texts. Turn things in on time. Pay attention in class. Every day, you should strive to be the student that reminds them why they chose this profession.

Travel. If you can study abroad, do it. If you can only afford to take a road trip to a few states, do it. Even visiting the different neighborhoods in New York is good enough. Get off of this campus and explore the diversity that the world has to offer.

Do what makes you happy. Be a little selfish. At the end of the day, you are the only one who will stand up for you.

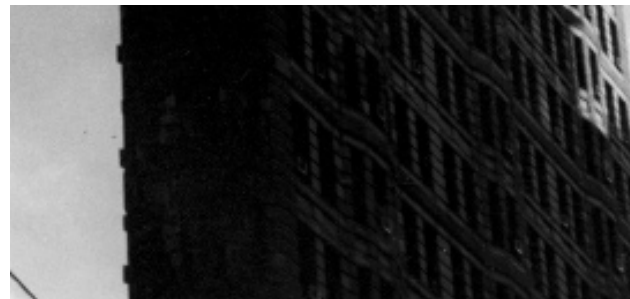
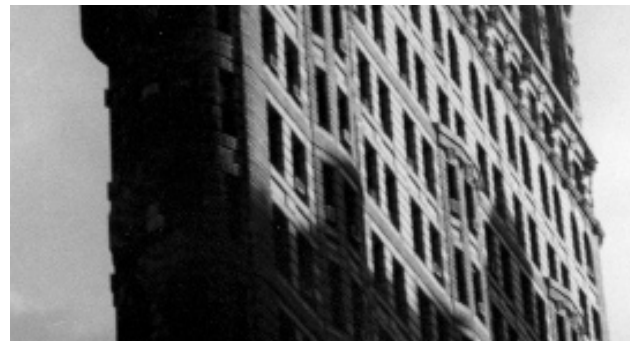
Learn to say no. I love helping people and being involved, but I am only one person and I cannot do everything. Even as I type that, there is a part of me that is yelling, “No! It’s not true!” That voice will probably never go away, but it has lost a bit of its volume over the years.

There is much more, but I am sure that you are as eager to get to the actual book as I am for you to explore it. I will close with a special thanks to Professor Needle for being a great advisor, to Professor Reonegro for going above and beyond, to **Tom Lynch** for helping with design, to Professor Kiss for your continued support, to Sarah for filling those long nights in the office with your bright spirit and that awesome hair of yours and, of course, to the staff this semester. Last but not least, I would like to give a special thanks to long time fans of Nimbus and newcomers. Enjoy.



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All contents of the Nimbus Literary Arts Magazine are accepted by anonymous judging. Works are judged based on content, originality and craftsmanship. While we would like to accept and publish all works we receive, please keep in mind that our publication is like any other: we function by budgetary constraints as well as a lengthy editing process. If your work was not accepted this semester, it should not discourage you from submitting in the future. Please keep in mind that since Nimbus is an uncensored magazine, some content may not be appropriate for all readers. Thank You.

Savage

Jessica Melillo

Off with the lace,
I'm high as a kite,
high
high
high
tripping balls and running
into my own breath
contracting in my chest,
incapable of silencing itself
as a small simple motion
exhales fire
into my
flesh
and sends my eyes
falling
backwards into
my head.

I can't believe this is real
Is this real
Oh my god
my limbs are breaking
off and the world is
aflake
and maybe we should
save something
before my
body explodes
but
good god
I can't move
I'm just going to lie here
forever

I'm in hell
but
I don't care
because I can see
God
and
heaven looks like
my face in my
hands
screaming
your
name

Are you okay with that?

“And the day came
when the risk to
remain tight in a bud
was more painful than
the risk it took to
blossom.”

-Anais Nin



Imbroglia Michael Garamoni

1. Dramatis Personae

Looking out from the terrace to the field,
The grass is always greener this time of year.

Something in the way the world ticks by;
A movement of the echoes of the living
Who live no more, and have not lived
For a generation.

Startled at the wave-less beach of the Pacific,
I slough along, expecting the tide to come in;
To bask in the cool blanket.

Listless acceptance of the inexorable turning
of the clock...

I walk forward facing backward, eyes glued
to the anti-horizon
And in the distance I hear a cherry tree being
chopped down.

2. Imago

The winter winds are losing their echoes
And color seeps back into the canvas of the
world.

It works like a ticking clock, the loss of
human integrity,
In a simply complex combination of gears
and magic—

Like the birds of spring, chirping elatedly
Among the sprigs of new life
Bursting forth from the vibrant trees,
A natural construct as effortless and
convoluted as a thought,
When the first lie is told.

Nothing is golden, l'oro sta scomparendo.
Clouds lined with silver weigh down, down
Upon the conscience of the delusion,
And even copper is worth more than the
brick gold of some dreams
And weighs heavier than the platitudes of
the faithful.

But still, according to nature,
Some storms bring new life
Or revitalize fading life.

As the iconoclast retains his cynicism,
So does the season retain its weather
In a cycle of tortuous motion, ponderously forward
Yet never changing.

Beyond the terrace, just before the field extends
In acres of verdant, convivial grass,
There is a small copse at the bottom of the hill.
Azure droplets of foggy dew
Reflecting a spectral funhouse-mirror world
Quicken on the sturdy branches
And release their mocking refreshment
To the drowned patch of earth beneath.
It beckons to the weary hearted—
Appearing golden in excessive triviality—
The wary expect instant desiccation
Like a lightheaded mirage in a desert of torment,
But this time the illusion holds firm
And the field beyond offers promises that might just be kept...
If only the vaulted copse were passable.
Volte-face, an impasse.



3. Anathema

Offal litters the surfaces of the oblique room.
Scantly hidden monsters await the deaths in the gloom
Hanging unperturbed in the forgotten places
And following disturbances with hungry faces
Pleading for a mercurial drop of elixir
In the End Room.

Bolted harshly to the viscera-lichened northern wall
A clock clacks through time-unadorned wishes
And leans against the wall, a whore blowing smoke
Through blood red lips, obscuring essence,
Pushing on the wall, moaning in ghost coitus.
And it continues.

We parade ourselves, vaunted, before the hungry eyes,
Mythologizing the opaque penury on which we base our existence
Until, like a picture, our parade exudes nothing of the original.
Art in deception. Art is deception.
That is the state of the art.

The monsters await
The children of men, who wander in unknowingly
Following the fear-laden footsteps of their progenitors
Because that is all they know
And blindly, blindly, a young boy,
Raised in lies and reared by falseness,
Schleps forth into the darkness of the austere room.
Calmly, collectively, the shapes excise themselves



From their shadowy crevices
And devour the boy.
As blood and viscera splatter across the
room,
A chunk of hair is ripped violently from the
boy's scalp
And a small birthmark is visible
The triumvirate of evil, not represented by
The three sixes arrayed radially on his head,
But by the institutions that condemn them.
It is the pitiful scene of an innocent-turned-
corrupt.

The monsters await
The people, all, on their trail of tears.
They will rip and tear
And rend us to our stolen parts,
As we, the patchwork flesh of history,
Begin to lose even the reverberations
Of the ideas that planted us in the soil.
Our future is one of mules,
Our every concept stillborn,
In the End Room.

4. Threnody

Ignited into passion by an unwary gaze
Worthy of a vast ocean
With its perceived depth and multitude
And traversed by we submarine
adventurers,
We toilers of the sea, this sea,
In our battles against the giant squids
And giant octopi of popular legend.
How disconcerting when we find that they're
real,
More real than we could have imagined,
These monstrosities, resilient and potent,
Beneath the depth and multitude of that vast
ocean
In that unwary gaze.

Ah, but above the racing currents of the
foggy depths—

The masses sift through dirt and mud
For specks of bright gold.
Gold!
They sift for the tyranny of their golden dreams
And they are rushing, rushing, rushing—

The Pacific Ocean defies the moon,
The surface still, stagnant.
There are no waves, no tides,
No refreshing mist of salty, briny air
To rip open the senses and irrupt the barriers
Of senseless wandering.
There is no motion.

Passion is a curious word when examined
By those who have felt it most intensely
And then watched it fade.
Passion and desire, to be ever confused with love,
Fixate on the point of nexus
Between necessity and desperation.

And even when the leviathans,
Pitted in their immortal battles,
Consume the mind and soul
And heart,
Something is absent.
And the waves are nothing but a memory
Of a memory
Of a dream
Of fulfillment.



5. Fulguration

A shock.

“Silence follows it,
And only the sound is heard,
Some way away in the orchard,
Of the axe falling on the trees”

A sizzling fissure in the ground, black and charred
Where the bolt struck down too quickly for eyes to see.
I stare at the hole, eyes bulging, mouth agape,
Stuck in this moment I cannot escape.
And what a long moment it is,
I think to myself
As I hear the ticking of the clock,
Hacking away at the time, hacking like an axe.
It is indeed a long moment, and I keep staring.

Visions, bold and brutal, open in the darkness of the hole.
Incisions: swift, surgical, methodical, and ultimately right.
The simultaneity causes my head to swim.
And I begin moving, and I feel my body
And it is moving forward, moving east,

But my eyes see the distance growing
From the smoking fracture in the ground
And in the fairytale backdrop, hastily painted and badly torn,
The sun is setting. Setting.
This holds some important meaning but I know not what.
And the axe is ticking.
The clock is hacking.

But what is this fairytale backdrop?
Whereupon did it appear and how did I miss it?
It quavers faintly in the wind.
I see an alternate universe in this fairytale backdrop,
The frozen garden of a Giant whose wall did not break
And no children came to warm his heart.
It all means something. But I am in the dark.

No. No, it is not the dark of unknowing.
It is the dark of eyes overshadowed
By the road that lies behind.

So many stare at the sunrise in hopes of a gleaming day
Yet I must glare ever at the sunset, weary of the rending night.
And days turn to weeks turn to months turn to years
And in the distance I hear a cherry tree being chopped down.

6. Denouement

I descend from the terrace to the top of the hill
And I turn and face away from the green field
And the mist that was settled beneath the terrace begins to dissipate,
Revealing a roborant sight
That I will keep as a secret locked in my heart.

Someone will paint a warning on the door of the End Room,
And those with strength of mind
May yet follow the seldom-tread path around
For hope and for the new.

A lost fisherman floats, unmoving, on the
stagnant sea
He is parched, failing, dying, praying for the
wind
In his final moments he believes he feels a
breath of cool air
And his eyesight is gone, but there is a single
ripple on the water,
And it spreads.

Roots are strong, and some roots go deeper
than we imagine,
But swiftly are roots and trees riven from the
healing ground
And I have stopped, and look neither at the
sunrise nor the sunset,
I look at where I stand, and I watch my feet
take their new steps
Knowing not what is yonder, for change can
be ponderous or tantivy,
But I cannot waste fallen cherry trees
On mourning my fairytale backdrop sunset.



7. Epilogue

There is no moral to this story.
It simply waxes and wanes, and goes on.
There is no end, and there is no beginning.
There is only thought, and,
In the few remaining inches that are my own,
Inside my skull,
There are ideas.
And ideas are bulletproof.

Harvest Alexa Dietrich

Paper, plastic, steel.
So much, so soon, so many.
Please recycle now.



the one thing
you don't understand:

I couldn't kiss you
because
I love you.



“read me” Sarah Suttiff



“A poet’s work is to name the unnameable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world, and stop it going to sleep.”—Salman Rushdie



Ache

Alexandra Videll

Sometimes she wanted to hold him so badly that it became an actual, physical ache. She was, at these times, acutely conscious of the surfaces his body would touch, the width to which she must extend her arms to accommodate him. She knew exactly how his chest would feel beneath her cheek, rising and falling, heart beating just below the surface. His smell, the feel of his arms around her back, his breath in her hair. It was not an idle desire, a passing thought. It became, in these moments, all-encompassing, and the silence in the room was tangible, alive, oppressive and distinct. Normally, she would have said she did not need him, did not want him around when she was trying to work or think or be. But, every once in a while, she wanted the working and the thinking and the being to be a collaborative effort, an action effected without speaking, without defining, without naming, because such

things should be understood between two people such as they. Because her feeling his heart move beneath her cheek, him feeling hers beat against his chest, seemed the only definition or understanding, the only name sufficient or necessary for what they made. She wondered, both idly and not idly, both hopefully and secure in the conviction that he could not, if he felt this same way sometimes, if he simply wanted to curl his body around hers, because that was the only way to banish the quiet. If he ever ached the way she did, breathed air that felt like it couldn't possibly be made of oxygen, even though everyone else in the room was not gasping. She wondered if the ache steadily built in him, as it did in her, until there was simply nothing to do but take a shower and climb into bed, alone, still gasping, aching until she fell asleep, because she knew that in the morning she would no

longer feel this way. She was, she felt, mostly complete on her own, the finishing touches coming towards her down the line of years quickly and irrevocably, knew that she was her own person and knew her own mind. But that damned ache, that shifting mass of breathlessness and loss, crept up on her sometimes, just for a while, and the only thing she wanted to know, the only thing she felt she had ever wanted to know in her whole life, was if he felt that ache sometimes too.



Uncharted Waters

Amanda Arcieri

White sand glints
Of glistening crystal gleam,
As the embers of *Solaris*
Rain down a silken beam.

The water's bubbling edge,
Waltzing with the tide,
Rises and falls with grace
On the wave's gentle ride.

The zephyr, rustling palms
With his scent of ocean mist,
Leaves dewy droplets, sweet
On those which he hath kissed;

And beyond the vast horizon
Of Royal Islands' past,
Exists another realm
Where peace lives at last.

Ripe

Liane Ortis

Peel back the young layers
Sweep into the white, fleshy middle
Empty the core of unplanted seeds
And hopeless dreams
Thousands of red, yellow and green ones
Some juiced to the very grits others
Ripped apart bit by bit
Each consumed by the raw, harsh nature
of life
All with such strong initial taste,
Fading with every bite
Then the remnants of sour and sweet
And some bitter filled with worms

This is the path to death
Just like eating an apple



“We read to know
that we are not
alone.”
—C.S. Lewis

Für Elise

Kyle Glover

“Fuck you, Cilian!” The door slammed. I am alone.

After the latest and worst of conflicts with my girlfriend, Elise, it seems that we can no longer stand to be around one another. That isn't completely true; it's more like I can't be around her. It is nothing against her; I think that the prospect of loving another human is the most terrifying thing in the world. Not the “I love you” kind of thing, those are just words. I'm sure plenty of spouses have told each other “I love you” right before committing some of the most egregious acts of physical and emotional violence. It's something more than that, but I can't really tell you. How do you communicate the wordless to others? I think that's why we are screwed; no one really understands each other

even when we are saying the same thing.

I stared around my apartment and took in the scene I wake up to most of my days. The cramped walls of a Brooklyn apartment are about all I can afford these days; times are tough for the proud owners of a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. I sat up to peel my eyes off of the cream colored ceiling. I was naked, only half an hour ago Elise and I had finished having sex. Usually couples save the sex for after the fight, they need that extra vitriol to get off, but I saved my best for post coitus.

I dragged my ass across the bed to get to the edge and I looked into the mirror to my left. I felt like I had lost a little weight since I graduated a year ago, but a steady diet of a thousand calories a day will do that to you. I pulled the sheets around me as I got up to close

the blinds on the bedroom windows. I looked into the window, which was divided into four panes and tried to divide my head in the intersection of the wood. A strange reflection peered back at me, a head divided into fours, four different visions. I looked outside past the glass and the rain that was falling came into view. It fell lightly now, but I could tell that early on it had been coming down forcefully. I pulled my attention away to something in my peripherals; a small spider was running across the wall to my right.

“Life is strange,” I said to no one in particular.

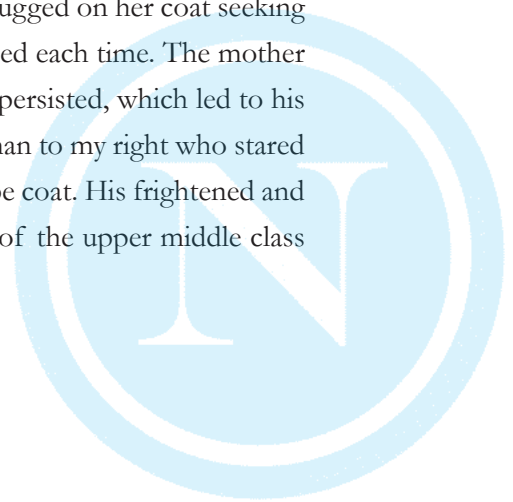
Daily life has to go on in the midst of all these large dramas. It was early morning on Sunday and I had a bit of a day ahead of me. I’ve been ignoring calls from my mother the past few weeks, so I should do my filial duty and call her back. Should I be more shaken up than I am? Every now and then that slips into my head. Thinking about the schedule of the day helps me move past it. I walked to the kitchen (I use that word lightly because it is more of a closet with a fridge and oven) and began to rummage through the sparsely populated fridge. I don’t know if I can consider it rummaging if I have a half-gallon of milk and a most-likely-expired package of Velveeta cheese as my only options, but I continue. I pulled out the milk and poured myself a large glass.

I eventually have to make it into Manhattan to see my professor from school. He was my mentor while I was there and we meet up in this café called Doma around the Village. Probably a good guy to talk to in times like this, he’s a psychologist by trade, an Existentialist to boot. That stuff scares the shit out of me, I was always fond of the Greeks myself. Besides all that, he knows how to get you to solve your own issues in a way. Do I have issues? I quickly turned to head towards the bedroom, but my arm was extended a little too much and I knocked the glass of milk over. It spilled onto the floor and I felt the heat of embarrassment rise up into my neck. “God damn.” Once again I offered this prayer to the indifference around me.

After cleaning up the mess I retreated to the bedroom to get ready for the day. I peered out the window and the rain was still coming down. I suited up appropriately for the elements. It's important to put on the right armor when facing the outside world. I remembered I had promised Billy that I would hang out with him sometime this week. I was down to Sunday and I hadn't visited yet so I guess today is the day. I know Elise won't be stopping by today, so that frees things up. Do I miss her? No, I just have to go on with the day. I grabbed my umbrella and walked down a flight of stairs to get to the front door of the building. I waved to my fellow building mate, who promptly ignored me and walked back into his apartment. I breathed in the slightly stale city air as the door opened and set upon the day.

The subway is an interesting phenomenon. Not only does it travel underground at fast speeds in a catacomb-like tunnel system, but it is full of people who would have nothing to do with each other otherwise contained within a small space. This is very much true of the ride from Brooklyn. Once we cross into Midtown, there is an assortment of people from every socio-economic and cultural background. The rich, young Jewish kids from upper Manhattan meet with the businessmen, who meet with the poor black families who are all staring at the Mexican Mariachi band who are taking up space on the subway and annoying the piss out of everyone.

I happened to be facing a young black woman who was with her small son. He looked up at her and tugged on her coat to get her attention. He spoke in a high-pitched voice that irked the others around him, but was very endearing to me. The mother was playing with her cell phone, but this was clearly a front to get her son to stop bothering her. Still he tugged on her coat seeking all that a child really wants, the attention of his mother, but was dismissed each time. The mother grew increasingly incensed with this behavior and told him to stop. He persisted, which led to his mother slapping him and cursing at him. I looked away to the businessman to my right who stared back at me. He had a flag pin on his lapel and a red tie under his pin stripe coat. His frightened and disgusted eyes conveyed all the requisite self-righteousness and racism of the upper middle class American. I looked back and said to myself, "It must be love."



The walk from the subway was quick. I shook my umbrella off under the awning in front of Doma and walked through the door. Nestled in the corner of the café by the books was Martin, my old professor and friend. We made eye contact across the room and a warm smile came across his face. I walked over to the small table and he motioned with his hand for me to sit down. “Hello Cilian,” he said rather dryly, but the affection was there.

“How you been, boss?” I asked in order to divert attention away from myself. This was a futile effort on my part; he must have seen my eye twitch for half a second to give away today’s conflict. I began to explain to him the scenario. He knew of my past, after a while it became normal to tell him about this and that issue that was facing me. The pattern in my relationships had begun to bother me and I figured it was worth a shot to get some insight from him. Eventually we got to a point where I had aroused his interest. “When she gets close to me physically my chest starts to close up and it gets very hard to breathe.” I saw a light go on in his eyes.

“These are anxiety attacks. It would appear that the prospect of having someone close to you causes a pretty harsh reaction. Either that or you get the ‘butterflies’ fairly bad around pretty girls,” he said with a slight wink.

“I think I passed through the ‘butterflies’ in the tummy stage a while back. Even now I feel pretty tense. I’ve been a head case for as long as I can remember.” I thought about the past and what could have made me freak out this bad around people. I was playing psychological detective with an actual psychologist right in front of me. Easy to get stuck in one’s head these days.

“You are thinking about the past, aren’t you?” He nailed me again.

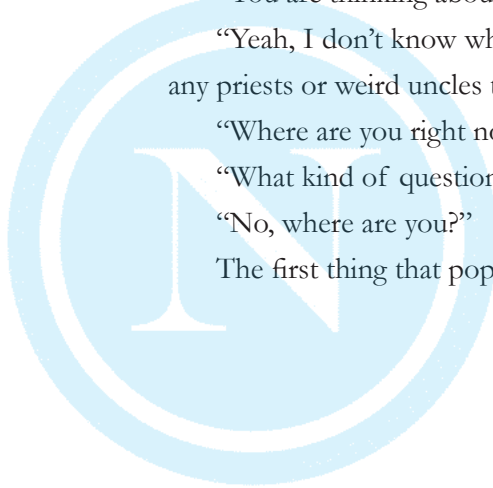
“Yeah, I don’t know where else to go for this.” I was quickly exasperated. “I don’t remember any priests or weird uncles touching me in funny ways.”

“Where are you right now, Cilian?”

“What kind of question is that? I’m right in fucking front of you.”

“No, where are you?”

The first thing that popped into my head was with Elise. Despite all of my best efforts to the



contrary, I usually felt that where I wanted to be was right by her. “I’m with Elise.”

“Why is this hard?”

“I’ve been feeling a lot of pressure lately to make things work.” I laughed. “Strangely enough its been manifesting in my body. When she touches me it feels like somebody is dropping weights on me. I’m always tense.”

“Pressure? Why do you feel like you have to make things work?”

“Maybe it’s cause I come from a messed up family. Maybe I take being a guy a little too seriously.” I kept musing over the possibilities.

“You mean that you take the pressure of providing a bit too seriously?”

“Yeah, I think I might. Doesn’t help that I’m a philosophy major in a time when no one wants to think about anything. No money in that. I guess I thought that I was one of those guys who wasn’t so socialized.”

“It happens, Cilian. Life has only begun to open to you.” He looked to the rain as though it was telling him something. His light blue eyes seemed to be looking at things that no one else could see. “Perhaps this situation with your parents is something that you take upon yourself as well?” He finally spoke after minutes of reflection.

“Well for some reason it makes me think of something Elise told me about when we first got together. She is really into theater, especially Shakespeare. I’ll be damned if I can remember the title, but it involved a King and Queen.” I thought back to the conversation. “The Queen gets pregnant and the King somehow is made to believe that the child isn’t his own. He banishes the Queen, the child and who he thought knocked her up to somewhere far away. The kid grows up without her family and is generally pretty sad. Not a good situation for anyone involved.” I looked out to the rain. “Eventually a sculptor for the King makes a statue of a woman that happens to look exactly like the Queen and he gets real down. He looks at that statue as a punishment for what he’s done. But then in the depths of his sadness the statue turns into the real Queen and steps down to embrace him. She says ‘It is required that you do awaken your faith.’ Or something like

that.” I looked back to Martin. “Then the kid comes back and they turn out to be one big happy family again. Sounds great, right?”

“Who do you think you are in that story?”

“Well, the King of course. He sends his love away on impulses and is miserable. I’m just worried that I can’t bring my Queen back.” It was one of those things that when you say it, you don’t realize how much it is going to hurt.

“What if you are the child as well? The poor child gets thrown about by forces beyond its control and has to deal with the consequences of other people’s actions.”

“Like my parents splitting up?”

“Ah, yes. Then as the King you have the power to restore the relationship that you couldn’t do as a child. Sounds like an awful lot of pressure for anyone who is going to be with people.” He gave me one of his wry winks.

“Damn.” I laughed at the thought. “I might be pretty fucked.”

Martin quickly changed the subject. “On days like this I like to listen to the rain.” He looked at me with a smile. “Sometimes it says more than thousands of words can. Or at least it is more to the point.” I sat quietly to think about that. “Well it is time for me to go, my young friend.” Martin stood up to put on his coat. As he walked past me he put a comforting hand on my shoulder and squeezed lightly. When he reached the door he coughed lightly and walked out into the rain.

I sat at the café a bit more to finish some orange juice that had been brought to me. There seemed to be a lull in the rain outside. I thought of Billy and that he lived just down Greenwich Avenue. It would be a short walk from where I was and I had not seen him in some time. If anything Billy was good for some strange advice every now and then. I got up from the table and walked out into the rain-covered streets.

Billy’s apartment was a welcome retreat. Not much had changed for him since we graduated college, so being there was like traveling into the past. The place smelled like weed and cigarettes, but it was charming. Billy and I roomed together for three years while going to school before I

“On days like this I like
to listen to the rain...
Sometimes it says more
than thousands of words
can. Or at least it is more
to the point.”

moved off campus for senior year. At first glance, Billy was your average college stoner. He hung out with dudes named Khalil and Mikey J, people you wouldn't really assume to be part of the academic elite of your school, but Billy was different. Maybe it was the LSD he used habitually, but Billy was a genius when it came to religious studies. Not just the studies though, the "religious experience" as he called it. Sometimes in class we felt like Billy was better equipped to teach us about Shiva and Shakti than the professor was. Mostly it was because Billy had probably met them on a trip, as opposed to speculating what socio-economic factors led to their worship, or whose introjected superego had made them god. If anything else, Billy was a good guy to talk to when you had to get your mind off of your earthly troubles.

"Yo, Cilian, how you doing, bro?" Billy was already stoned. "This is Rainer and Spider, dude. They're from Wiesbaden in Germany."

I took a seat on the big sofa. "How the fuck do you get a name like Spider when you're from Germany?" I asked, my daily tension rising.

"It's not my real name." Spider said in heavily accented English. "It is my X-Games nickname."

"Didn't know they did a lot of X-Games in Manhattan." I quickly defused my frustration with this jerk off nicknamed Spider. I turned my attention to my old roommate. "Billy, I came by to talk with you. I'm feeling pretty down, I think Elise is going to leave me soon."

"Oh shit, bro. That sucks. You want to smoke this?" He passed me a joint that was pretty close to being the size of my wrist in diameter. I thought about not smoking it, but then I realized how shitty I felt and took a few hits. I coughed uncontrollably for a minute or two, but Rainer passed me some water to soothe my throat. Billy started to speak once I finished coughing. "What's going on dude? Is she pissed you don't have a career or something yet?"

"No man, I keep fucking up. She gives me this really supportive, loving environment and I keep pushing her away. You remember when we were seniors and we started dating? There was that spark, man. The whole world was lit up by how I was feeling and now it's the same shit,

different day. I know that love is still there, but lately all I've been feeling is that I hate her." I spilled it out to him, but the weed started to kick in and I felt the cold caress of carelessness starting to creep in. "But forget it dude, lets talk about something else."

"No C, this is important. You are having some really ambivalent shit going down right now. When you both started hooking up I could feel the love, dude. That was something special; it was rubbing off on everybody. There was that time I was tripping and I came back into the room after you guys had sex and I could really feel the Eros. Most of the time when people are done having sex, all I feel is a sort of empty vibe coming off of them." Billy was getting started with the crazy shit.

"How many times have you been tripping and walked in after people have had sex?" I asked.

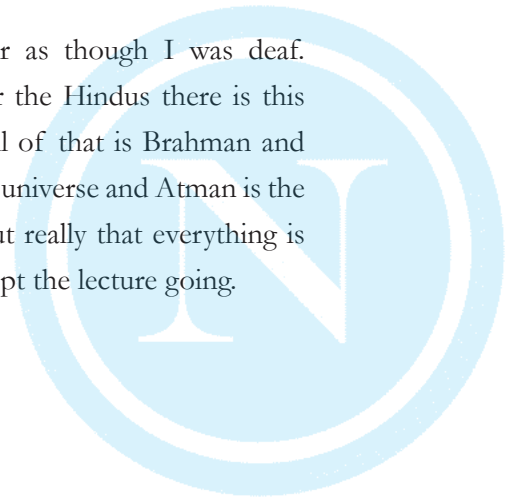
"*Too* many times, bro. *Too many*." Billy looked slightly scarred, as an empty stare filled his face. He quickly turned his glazed eyes back on me. "That's a story for my therapist, bro. This is about you."

"Whatever. It just seems like we don't get along anymore. Maybe our personalities don't mix or something. It just seems like as time goes by it gets harder and harder to be around Elise." I was feeling really uncomfortable, like the weed wasn't letting me keep my feelings down.

"That's *Maya*, dude," Billy said with a certainty not seen often on the face of recurrent LSD users.

"No, this is Elise! How fucking stoned are you? I've never dated anyone named Maya." I was pretty upset to find out that Billy hadn't been paying attention.

"No, *Maya*." He dragged out the pronunciation on each letter as though I was deaf. "It's a Hindu term, it refers to the world of illusion. Check it, so for the Hindus there is this world as it appears to our everyday senses called *Maya*. Underneath all of that is Brahman and Atman, the true foundation of reality. Brahman is the foundation of the universe and Atman is the manifestation of it in each of us. Don't think of them as separate, but really that everything is connected. *Maya* is the illusion that everything is unconnected." Billy kept the lecture going.



“That’s all well and good, Billy, but how does that have anything to do with my god damn life?” I was exasperated. What a day, I managed to get stressed out while I’m stoned.

“You shit for brains, no wonder you were a philosophy major. Are you listening at all?” Billy showed rare signs of annoyance. “Your two personalities clashing is Maya. Love isn’t two personalities tolerating each other; it’s two human beings connecting on an authentic level. The ego has no place in love, dude. If you strip away all the fancy mysticism from what I’m saying you get a real look at what’s going on with humans. We go on dates, which amounts to little more than shopping for spouses, all the while the love is gone from it. We both take out the shopping list and turn the person into a series of criteria or we throw ourselves at them in the hopes they can stop the world from being such a lonely fucking place.” I looked at Spider and he nodded as though he actually understood what was being said. Billy coughed a little and continued.

“But the only reason it’s lonely is that our little ego personality cut us off from everything around us. Then when we do have them we try and hoard them like gold so we become their only possibility. So we go around eating each other and call it love, cause we’re looking through a glass darkly. We don’t see that ‘I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together.’ That’s what was going on when you two fell in love. You both saw each other face to face.” Billy was done.

I was stoned out of my mind now, but maybe what Billy was saying got through to me too. I put my hands behind my head and leaned back in the sofa. “Well ain’t that some shit.” That was all I could say. Billy raised his eyebrows at me a few times with a joker’s grin on his face, turned to Spider, who handed him a comically oversized bong and took a heroic rip.

I must have passed out. When I came to the Germans were gone and Billy was messing around in the kitchen. I looked out the window to see that the rain had picked up again. I shook off the stoned daze I was in and walked to the kitchen. He turned around once he heard my footsteps approaching.

“Hey dude! Hell of a little rainstorm we are having, aren’t we?” Billy looked overly excited for it.

'Remember Who You Are.



GIBBNESS
IS THE ONLY
DIRECTION
THAT NEVER
FAILS



↑
LOVE
LIFE →



“Yeah. I think I’m going to go home. I’ve got some stuff to think about.”

“No worries, bro. You’re always welcome here, but I think at this point it’s up to you to figure things out. I already said my crazy piece before you passed out, but just remember “Twofold Always. May God us keep from single vision and Newton’s sleep.””

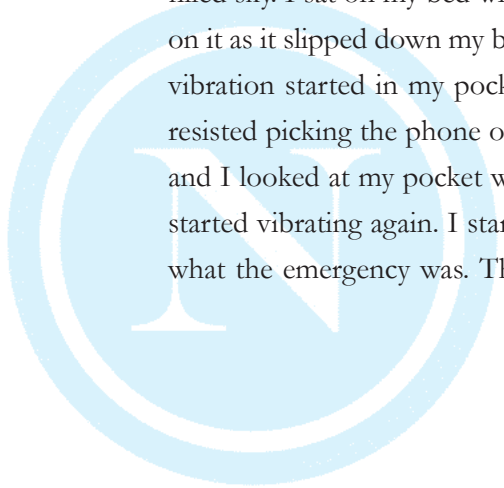
“What the hell is that, Billy?” I looked at him puzzled yet a little amazed.

“Some old poet dude. Don’t even take what I was saying that seriously; you gotta see it with multiple vision.” He turned to a bowl of Coco Puffs that he had poured and slurped some milk out.

“Alright, Billy,” I laughed. “I’ll see you around.” I turned and left the apartment. I descended down to the streets where the rain had picked up a bit. I put up my umbrella to shield it from me and started walking for the subway. Being even a little stoned on the subway was not an ideal situation for me, but I had the overwhelming feeling of wanting to be back home in my own bed. I proceeded underground when I got to the subway station and made the subterranean trek home.

Walking back to the apartment was relaxing once I got over the marijuana-induced fear of traveling underground. When I got back to the front of the building I saw my neighbor who had ignored me earlier in the day. I waved once again to try and initiate contact. This time he just stared at me with starved eyes and I couldn’t help but look away. I put my key in the apartment door and stepped through the gateway.

The haze of the weed was starting to wear off as the sun finally went down behind the rain filled sky. I sat on my bed with a glass of water. Every sip was cold on my lips and I concentrated on it as it slipped down my body. I could feel the cascade down the inside of my stomach. A small vibration started in my pocket, but I ignored it. My head started racing, thinking it was Elise. I resisted picking the phone out of my pocket, but I really have no idea why. It eventually stopped and I looked at my pocket waiting for the voicemail vibration. It never came. The phone quickly started vibrating again. I started to worry a bit about it and I slid my hand into my pocket to see what the emergency was. The name on the face of the phone read “Mom.” I flipped open the



phone and said, “Hey Momma.”

“Cilian!” Her voice was sweet yet a little desperate. “How are you? What’s been going on?”

“Oh, not much Momma.” I was pretty pissed that I was talking to my mother and I was hoping that she would be able to tell.

“Well have you spoken with your father?”

I love playing twenty fucking questions before we get to the point. “No, Mom. He’s either sleeping or working.” My mother has a good way of making me into a catty bitch from the time we start talking.

There was silence on the other side of the line. “Why do you have to be so rude, Cilian?”

“God damn, Mom, this is why I don’t call you!” I snapped even though I didn’t want to. “Why don’t you just get to the point?”

There was now small sniffing coming out of the earpiece. “Cilian, I just want you to come home and visit. I can cook dinner and maybe we can talk about how things are going for you and then may...”

“So you can tell me about how stupid it was to major in philosophy again? Maybe we can go into how I’m going to hell because I stopped going to church?” At this point I didn’t care. A little time passed and there was a little too much silence for comfort now. “Damn, I’m sorry Momma. Elise is probably going to leave me soon. I’m just a little fucked up right now.”

“Oh no! My poor little boy!” The sweetness and care was not faked nor forced. “You definitely should come home and relax.” She is persistent though.

“Of course, Mom.” I paused for a moment. “Do you ever think we could have had a happy family? I’m worried that I’m not ever going to be able to get it together.”

“I’m sorry, my boy. Sometimes things don’t work out. I just hope that you know that I lo...”
The connection cut out and silence filled the room. I looked at the phone and the words “CALL LOST” filled the screen. I threw the phone down on the bed and leaned back onto my pillows. I looked out the window and the rain had picked up substantially. It seems like its been raining for

days now.

I drifted off to sleep, a combination of stress and marijuana must have done it to me. When I came too I was looking at a black and white image of Elise. She looked odd; it looked like she was dressed in clothing from the early 20th century. I looked down at myself and I was wearing a trench coat and though I had no real way of knowing, I had the strange feeling that I looked like Humphrey Bogart in Casablanca. “Elise, where the hell are we?” She looked at me with eyes that betrayed no feeling. “Elise, what the fuck is going on?” She pointed down at me. I guess I didn’t notice that she was now towering over me on a ledge where we once stood with equal footing.

“Say hello to the underground, Cilian. I am going to see the sun.” She walked away from the ledge and disappeared from sight.

“Wait, Elise!” I yelled, futilely. I turned around and saw that everything was in color once again. There was a subway platform right in front of me that was populated by only me. A train pulled into the station and the doors parted, but no one got off. When the train noisily pulled away I could hear the echo of footsteps coming down the platform. They filled me with such dread that each one made me cringe. Then an older gentleman with glasses came around the corner who looked startlingly familiar though I had never met him.

“How do you do, young man?” His accent seemed bad, like a cheap imitation. “I am Sigmund Freud and I will be your tour guide for the unconscious today.”

“What the hell?” I was now perplexed. “I’m Cilian.”

“Well my young friend, we are going to need to get onto the next train to get where you want to go.” He was quite sure of himself.

“How do you know where I want to go?”

“This is a dream, Cilian. There are many places to go, but they all lead the same place.”

“Which is where?” I was fairly pissed off at this Austrian asshole now.

“To the Dream’s Navel!”

“You really were a crazy son of a bitch weren’t you?”

“Out of my mind!” He exclaimed.

The subway pulled into the station and the doors opened up for us to enter. We sat down and enjoyed the relative emptiness of the subway car. Freud, who asked me to call him Siggy, then took out a large phallic like object that happened to be a bong. He looked at me with a wicked grin and winked.

“Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, Cilian!” He proceeded to take hits from the bong and offered it to me.

“No thanks, Siggy, I already partook today.” It seemed ridiculous that I would say this in a dream, but I really wasn’t feeling it at that point. “So I suppose that this is really some sort of crazy symbolic journey you are taking me on full of multiple meanings that’ll show me what is up with me?”

“Well if you read my Tow Papers then you would know that this could only mean one thing. However, that is not for me to show you. I’m just the ferry boat captain here.”

The subway pulled into another platform where it was quite damp. It seemed as if it had been raining underground. I stepped out of the subway to see what was going on. There were no stairs up to get above ground, but the platform merged with a grassy area that was being perpetually rained upon by the dark clouds above it. I looked back to Freud, who was waving goodbye. He pointed with the other hand to walk through the field. After a while I was drenched, but it felt good to feel the cold rain on my skin. In the middle of the field was a large stage covered in vines and moss. It seemed to have been integrated into the very nature that surrounded it. A lonely figure stood on the stage whom had clearly spotted me walking toward him.

“Hello there, stranger!” His voice was heavily accented in some form of old English. I had it made up in my mind that this was William Shakespeare himself. “Quite right there, friend. You can call me Willy!” It appeared he could read my mind.

“Freud sent me here. I guess you are the next guy to help me out in this wacky-ass quest.” I

was thoroughly confused. “Why don’t you show me the way, Willy?”

“I was hoping to have a conversation with you, Cilian. It seems you Yanks don’t know the slightest about etiquette.” He was perturbed by my lack of manners.

“I apologize, Willy.” His face lit up with a smile. We made some small talk about things, turns out he was a big fan of soccer. I did have a serious question for him though. “Did you ever act in your plays?”

“Oh no, Cilian. It is so dreadful to spend one’s time acting out what you are directed to do. That is why I wrote if you can believe it, I wanted my works to show how all the world’s a stage. Really I just wanted to burn the whole thing down.” With that the stage lit on fire and I quickly panicked. The fire was consuming everything around us and even the constant rain could not put it out.

“Jesus Christ, Willy, we’re going to burn to death!” Realization swept over me. “Oh yeah, this is all a dream.” The fire encircled us and now we stood in a perfect circle of flame.

“Life is but a dream, Cilian!”

As if I hadn’t heard that one before. “But for now it is required that you do open your face!” Before I could think that that didn’t sound remotely like the line, he reached through my face and split it right in half. He lifted my brain right out of my skull and dug around in it until he found a little tiny man in it that, I suppose, has been driving me around. He chucked the little guy away and placed my brain back in my skull. “There you go, chap.”

My face closed up and I said “What the fuck did you just do?”

“Just removing that nasty little bugger. Don’t you think it’s time that you sat in the driver seat?” Shakespeare was once again to the point. “Now fall Cilian!” A trapdoor opened from underneath my feet and I fell deeper into the dream.

When I finally hit the ground the rain was falling more heavily than before. A faint sound blew through the dark space around me. All was faded to black except for the splashes the rain made on

the ground around me. The sound grew in strength and I could now tell that it was a voice trying to speak to me. As it grew to be understandable I could hear a familiar German accent. It began to speak with me. "Cilian, I am to lead you to the Dream's Navel."

"Well lead on. Where the hell are you by the way?"

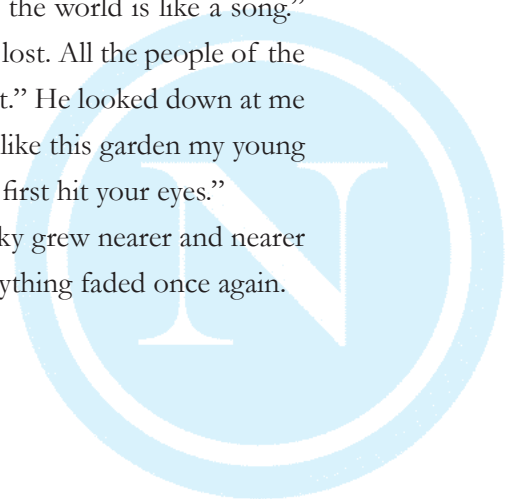
"I am the rain itself, it is time to listen to me."

I followed the voice through the seemingly endless void until the rain grew lighter and lighter. I was perturbed by the darkness and anxiety set in about the boundless space. If the rain were not there to fall upon me I would have crashed down into the darkness. Soon a light shone in the distance and I started to run towards it. The rain blinded me, but I ran and ran until the light got so bright that I abandoned all fear. I broke through the light and disappeared.

I awoke in a garden of plenty. I tried to walk, but my legs would not carry me. It was at that point that I realized that I had reverted back to a baby. Someone scooped me up from behind and carried me gently in their arms through the garden. They carried me until we reached a piano in the middle of a glade in the woods around the garden. I was placed on a comfortable blanket on top of the piano. I looked up at the person who had carried me and to my amazement it was Martin. "Hello, Cilian. Welcome to the Dream's Navel."

I could not speak, but I seemed to be conveying everything that needed to be said to him through my presence. He began to play the piano slowly; it was a beautiful melody that I had never heard before. It seemed like the whole forest was in harmony with the piano's song, as if all the multiple sounds in this garden were one great breath. "You see, the world is like a song" Martin spoke softly. "Right now it is out of tune, the harmony has been lost. All the people of the world can hear it in varying degrees, but their hearts have turned to frost." He looked down at me warmly. "When the imperfect harmonies cease, then everything will be like this garden my young friend. Now it is time to be reborn, screaming and crying as if the light first hit your eyes."

I felt myself become light, like gravity was dissipating slowly. The sky grew nearer and nearer as I rose towards the sun. I was enveloped in the warmth and then everything faded once again.



“Wake up!”

I came to back in my bedroom and immediately began to cry like a newborn baby. I sobbed and grabbed my pillow like a life raft on the unforgiving ocean. The tears flowed freely and convulsions shook my body. After a few minutes I began to calm down. I picked my head up from the bed and stared out the window to see that the rain had ceased. My body felt raw and fresh.

From time to time the harmony is so clearly present to me, but the days are long and sometimes it does not come in as strong. I try to convey what I hear to everyone around me. Some try it through music, but unfortunately words are the medium that most of us try to express ourselves through. I think that despite all of the multiplicity of words that we have, in the end we are all trying to say the same thing. It rings in our heart of hearts and shines through us when we are at our best with each other. I'll never be able to convey it to you like this. Every now and then the light turns on and I try and let it out, but I haven't succeeded yet. If I could tell you what it is, I would let you know. Until then, listen to what I am not saying.





“Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius—and a lot of courage—to move in the opposite direction.”

E. F. Schumacker

Charles Mingus

“Making the simple complicated is commonplace; making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that’s creativity.”



Yeah,
yeah,
yeah,
I know -
this doesn't happen
everyday
and it's fucking
better than cough drops
and all of that nonsense,
but could
I catch a goddamn
break
from
all these
breaths caught in my
chest?

I've the blues
and then the
red
greens
purples
pinks
swirls
twirls and
curli-cues
and none of them
compare to you
even though
I wish they would,
wish they could,
my eyes
stubbornly refusing

Shade

Jessica Melillo

the sand of
sleep because
you've taken it
all
and I can't
have it
back(don't want it
either,
I promise,
I don't
mean
to
complain).

I am terrified
of a life resigned
to alarm clocks and
little pills
and drumming
my fingers against
table tops
waiting
for a call
or a text
that's always less
then I
expect (but I guess
then
I'm to blame) and
yet
more than
I could ever want
and I
swear to christ

I'm crawling out
of my skin
but you're
too far
to undo the zipper
and
I
just
want
to
cry.

The sky's so low
when you leave,
the bed so cold,
and I need too much
more than I know
how to express
and this loneliness
may suck the marrow from
my bones
before
you
can
object,
so hurry (please
please
please)
home.

The Strangers

Jaxson L. Morris

There is this fellow, who knows nothing,
He's always been devoted to what he has been told.
And his journey is to unfold what others think as cold,
So the people around him bring him joy,
But as time progresses,
He gets old.

And he relishes this journey full forth,
He does not care about the mess,
So just as the birds fly free,
He wants adventure and nothing less.

Just as this man wanders the streets,
There is the lady waiting to be swept off her feet.
She is beautiful,
And her eyes glisten like the stars at night,
She adores Jane Austen,
And wants a man to care for her at night.

She beams for adventure and so does he,
And they both realize that there is only one way to live,
And that is to be free.

The man and lady both have similar feelings,
They are ready to start something more,
Yet they haven't even met each other,
For they have been too far apart.

But this has all changed,
For the man and lady have rearranged,
Their journey together is about to start,
It's about to begin,
They just need to open their heart.



The Black War

Anonymous

Pestilent rats scurry along the dark tunnels and passages of my mind,
echoes reverberating off the walls, malevolently whispering unforgivable fallacies
Permeating the deepest, most pure impenetrable universal defenses of my battered
conscious.

How do I hush the crescendo?

If someone is screaming an answer, their attempts are becoming futile.

The voices are deafening.

Garnering more power, they quickly saturate the crevices of my mind like black, acidic
venom relentlessly pushing and racing through the cold pipes of a dilapidated water
structure.

Pulverizing all barriers of light, it begins to ooze through all bodily orifices with sick
satisfaction.

A flood of insatiable evil cascades the walls of my body, threatening to swallow it whole
and create an avatar of misery.

Possession seems eminent in the blinding darkness

Where is the light?

Have the Sun and Moon already risen and vanished?

My heart beats steadily as my eyes become abyssal black holes and my lips seal
themselves shut.

I have to let it out..

Self-destruction is not an option, it may be a necessity.

I close my eyes and prepare for the same agonizing battle.

My body, heart, and soul seem a suitable war-zone

There can be no victor





What sounds my newfound mind adores today
that shakes upon the tones I have embraced;
awakens me to all that cause dismay,
and now fulfills my mind with tones erased!

Oh fellow man, the long lost seed exists
astounding how it conquers many years;
no longer is my ignorance such bliss,
I've grown a heart that sings against my fears.

Alas, these certain sounds produce a tune
embroidered as a mark upon my chest;
It will reveal all strength beneath my womb
to march the way I shall confront my quest.

For my innate, grown seed is how I'm strong.
My planter, what has hindered you so long?

Sonnet

Jaime Maraviglia

Starlight Road

Sitting beneath a street sign that reads “Starlight Road,”
Two spirits connected by a pulsating light,
Sharing life on autumn’s bated breath,
Our hands clasped delicately
With the strength of an ocean
In the misty twilight of the world beneath the street light
Of Starlight Road.

Michael Garamoni

I am yours, I am lost in you.
Lost, and though I longed to be
Lost as a star in the daylight sky,
Lost as a pebble on a road,
I am lost as only a dreamer is lost in reality
When suddenly reality is the dream,
And you are the monument of my dream.

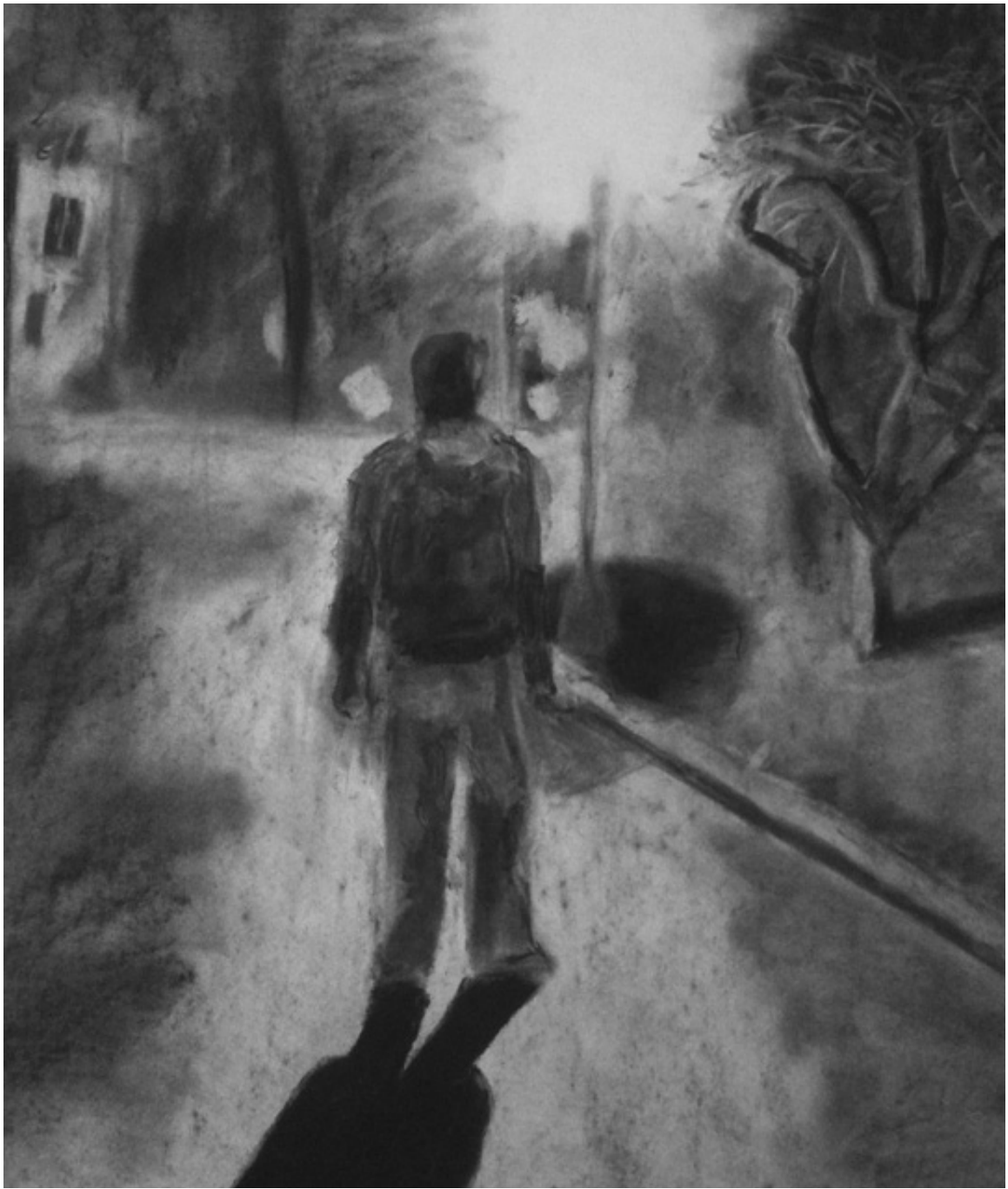
You are my crack of sunlight
After a darkened land.
I wandered for ages in the fog of uncertainty.
I emerged breathless and found you.
You reached out your hand and you took me
To Starlight Road
And our whispers were music
And our lips traced the stars.
You lifted me and brought me the Air
And the Light.

Our souls touched.

I felt the starlight in your eyes
From across the vaulted world
Summoning my heart to you
And of myself awakening
To the perfume of your smile.

I felt the million gilded words
We spoke through vaulted dreams
Enthralling me to your gilt laugh
And pairing us as two, as one,
For an eternity wreathed in light.

And here we sit on the side of Starlight Road
Beneath the splendor of the night sky
Gazing ahead, as I have feared to do,
Looking down the way to morning
And all that I can think is:
This is why I am alive.





2:00 a.m.

1/29/11

The brittle skeletons of dark trees hover over the once virgin snow, now soiled here with mud, confused there by wandering boots, a bleeding yellow wound there where an undergrad relieved himself, and anointed with the delicate flakes that shimmered quietly as they fell the other night, caressing the slope of the hill with a fresh frost that glistened for an hour with the moon and yellow lamp light. The rustle of dry branches and the warm greasy steam that floats out of the sewers, like ghosts, remind the once virgin snow-spring is never far off.

-Joseph Messano

A light chill
Kisses the air,
Pungent with the scent
Of October rain;

Dew gleams
Like glistening crystals,
Ever delicate;
The sweet remain

Of a wild storm
Raging with passion;
Deep in the Eye
Of Her untamed Soul:

Free--unbound by
Chains of vanity,
Breathing Life in
To that which Death stole.



Autumn Sweetness



Amanda Arcieri





Wood

Liane Ortis

The workshop was full,
full of wood, every summer
we would clear it out because
in the fall it begins to rot. Just before winter,
we would replenish, you would chop, and
I would pile and pile.

Now it's empty. No pile of
woodchips in the corner, under
the bench with the electric saw.
No mountain of wood by the right
wall, where I would spend hours
searching,
searching for spider webs to wipe
away. No longer am I the keeper of
spider webs among the wood.

So there's no wood anymore, at least
not in the workshop. Now it's marble,
marble floors, marble barriers between the
perfectly polished hardwood, between
one lost soul and the next. A large marble
slab with your name on it. Fourth one in
from the right, sixth from the left, third
from the bottom, and second from the top.
Just another slot in the marble walls.

I wish I could express
all that makes me
real
those pangs and prods
that
at once so actual
fleet
and are gone
not to be recaptured and bound
in attempted approximations
that will never be enough

you are
in all your loss
and imperfection
sweet perfection in the doubt
self inspired cynicism
and disapproval
this is why [I love you]

give me the reality
that I can only play at
an amateur in my affect
a failing comedienne
hiding behind boldness
your weak broken truth
the access to my
long forgotten

vulnerability.

take me home
the wrong three words from me to you

Sarah Sutliff
a moment of knowing

Slowing growing
Attached
Like leeches sucking out your soul
In the belly of pain
Till no end.
With the power to
Kill you
It feeds.
Quicksand
The more you struggle
The deeper

You
Fall.

Lie still
Consuming every part of you
Mentally two worlds
The fight between good and evil
Who will prevail?
Like a never ending ocean
Deep..dark..
And bigger than all of us.
Suffocating your thoughts.
You'll know nothing else.
Once you've fallen to her depraved trap
Hope is a fairytale
Sorrow...like death
Showing no mercy.

Sorrow

Anonymous





SKINHEADgirl

Jessica Melillo



I tiredly swung my arm into
the door handle of the bathroom stall
without bothering to control its spasm
and I emerged with a bruise,
new and blue and so big
it was worth telling you
about
and so I did
and
you laughed,
though I imagine it was
only because my clumsiness
was darling,
not because my limbs
embarrass you
when they fail to
control themselves
on days that
end in
'y.'

I am so full of little bruises,
shiny,
but ugly,
dotted along the contours of my
flesh
like unconnected
constellation stars
in a porcelain-flaked
night sky.
They create no shape
worth reconstructing
and many fade
before astronomy can
claim them
and color them
with science
and technical terms
like ursa major
and corona borealis(though
I sure do like that one)
or some useless bullshit
like that.
I have no need for astronomy
or stars
or connecting dots in the dark

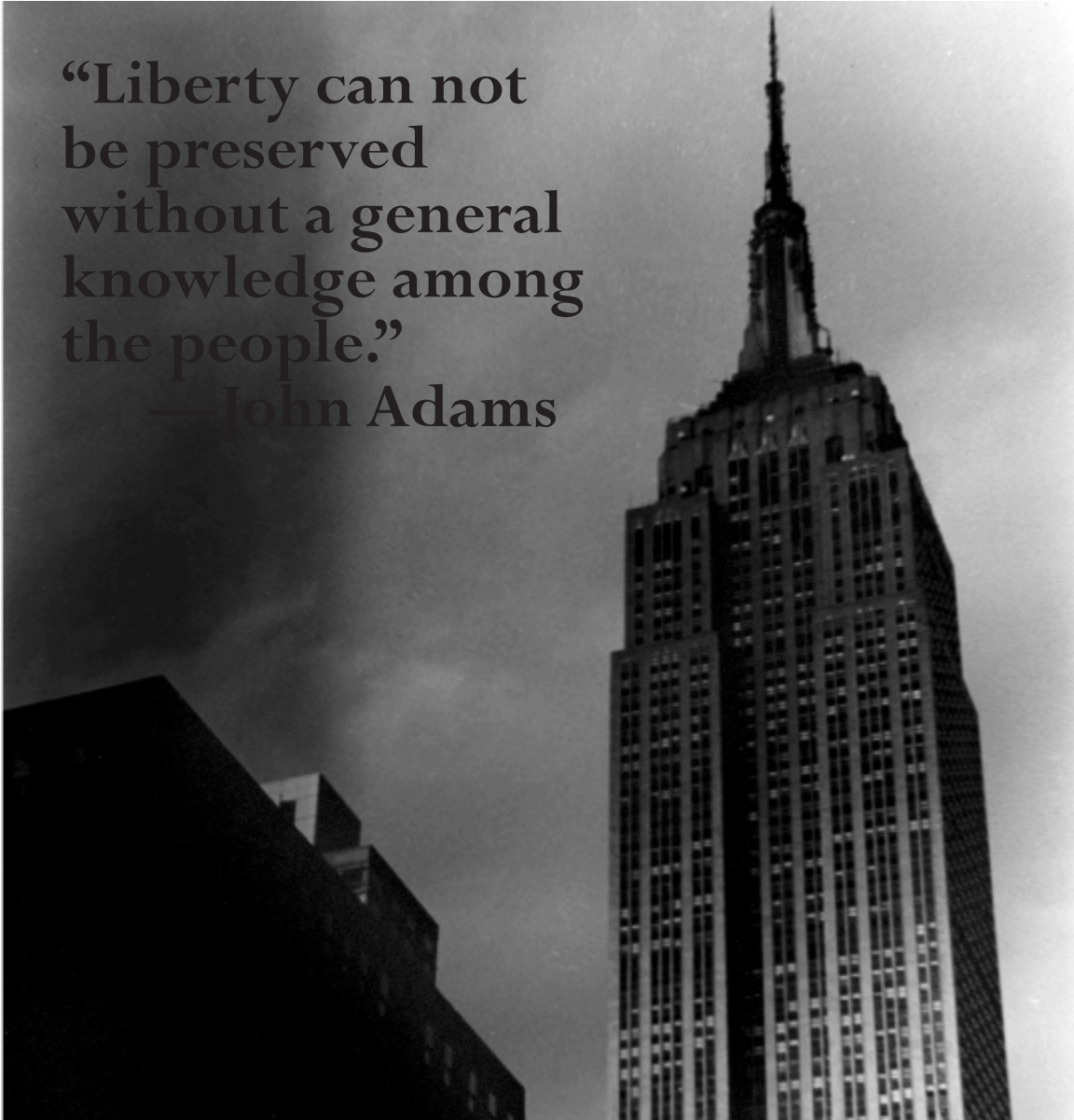
with my roving,
sleepless eyes,
but I am willing to share
my teeny black-and-blues
with
someone whose name
I believe begins
(and ends)with
You
in the night
when I can't
(or won't?)
sleep,
under blankets
that will bear your subtle scent of soap
in the morning
when I wake
and you have gone(though you're never
really gone, are you?).

Maybe I am being too forward
or even too out of line
these days
with all these weird little poems
about my weird little ways,
but I've catapulted myself
into the heavens and I'm too busy
floating to bother with such petty
thoughts that mattered only when
these bruises I've received
formed from being too long on the
floor with
my face to the wall
and my eyes on the life I wasn't living,
breathing heavily,
egregiously,
to suit the ego of an expectant suitor
that I tried my very best to love
but couldn't
because I was too busy waiting for
someone that looked like
you, I think,
though
god knows
I could
be wrong.

It would not be the first time
or the last
but the only
that sends me
reeling
peeling
keeling
over
into
the starry
horizon,
the ends of my
smile
hanging leisurely on
its sky-bound, brilliant friends,
swinging
brightly,
without wavering,
at
mid
night.

“Liberty can not
be preserved
without a general
knowledge among
the people.”

—John Adams



The Bird

Jaxson L. Morris

There is this bird,
His name is Steven.
Steven loves his friends,
And even when they fly above,
He tries to keep up,
For he always pursues it,
Even when push comes to shove.

Steven is different,
He has something wrong with his wing,
And just like his heart,
It is broken.

He has struggled,
Throughout the life he lives,
But all he wants,
Is acceptance from the other birds.

They tease,
Poke fun of and scrutinize him—
Because of his wing,
But he would do something to cope,
He would sing.

He would sing and chirp every morning,
And just as the sun rises,
It would help his mourning—
That occurred every time for it wasn't funny,
That he knew what he had was the same,
It was above his tummy.

It was his heart,
He had that and so did all the other birds,
But what they couldn't see,
Was that what they were doing was absurd.

So one day Steven flew,
As high and as far as he could to make him
feel glad,
To be away from all of the other birds,
That makes him feel sad.



**“Quotation is a
servicable
substitute for wit.”**

Oscar Wilde





**“I like
nonsense, it wakes
up the brain cells.”**

Dr. Seuss

No Faith in Love

Liane Ortis

You had been fighting it for years,
Contemplating it, never letting it go.
Because someone said something to
You that was simply unforgettable.
Like a math equation scholars are still
Struggling to solve, to understand because
It's simply the work of an Einstein.

I saw the moment it clicked for you
When it finally all made sense. The relief,
The elation, the wisdom growing inside you
And starting you out on that road to happiness

Now your eyes don't wander, and
Your chin isn't tucked down. Your
Stride is strong and confident, and
You never frown.

You see me now, for everything that I am.
And you're beyond that place you once were lost in,
When you had no faith in love.





Christian Rautenstrauch
**A Pelican's Point
of View**

Fish is a wish for me,
Oh I wish I could fish at the sea,
If I caught a fish it would be on my dish
except that hasn't happened to me.
But then one day I was high in the sky
When I saw a school of fish out the corner of my eye.
So I turned right around,
Then took a dive,
My day to catch a fish had finally arrived.
But then came a shark
Who was hungry for meat,
And I was the one he wanted to eat!
I tried to turn, but was frozen with fear,
until I heard a voice in the back of my ear.
It said "please Mr. Pelican,
don't give up hope,
this shark's a big fat ugly dope!"
So I stood up straight, and hoped for the best,
but no need to worry, my feet did the rest.
They hit the shark with a resounding crack,
And he swam away, and never came back.
As I climbed out of the water, tired and weak,
I realized I still had nothing to eat.
But I won't give up, till the day that I die,
Because success never comes, to those who don't try.

Monday Morning

Charisse Willis

She was frantic, much like she was all the time. Most people never know it because she only lets it show in the morning when no one's awake to see her.

She stumbles out of bed, pees, washes her hands and looks in the mirror to make sure nothing foreign grew in while she slept.

Two face towels. One big towel. A hand towel. Two hangers. She's ready for the shower.

Wrong. She forgot her soap. She shakes her head at her forgetfulness and goes back into her room. She grabs her soap and glances at the clock. Thirty minutes.

She goes into the shower and fights the water. It's hot and runs over her body, threatening to envelop her or, at the very least, distract her. There's no time for this.

She puts soap on cloth #1 and washes. Rinse time. She puts soap on cloth #2 and washes other parts. Rinse time.

She allows herself thirty seconds of scalding hot water running over her hair, a luxury she can scarcely afford.

She stumbles out of the shower onto the neatly placed hand towel, wraps herself in the big towel, collects her other items and goes into her room.

Ten minutes have passed. She goes back to the bathroom, washes her face, brushes her teeth and checks the mirror again. Same face.

Seven more minutes have passed. She puts her hair up. She has to go to the office and ever since that damn eating of the forbidden fruit, women who wear their hair down are looked at in a certain way, a way not appropriate for a career woman. Some days she fights this ridiculous stereotype, but today she is tired.

She starts the coffee-making process. Cold water, filters, coffee grinds, cinnamon. It's all in. She turns the pot on.

She goes to close the bathroom and realizes she left her soap. She shakes her head at her forgetfulness. Her mind flashes to her family history of Alzheimer's but the smell of the coffee overrides these thoughts and she shrugs. It's just soap.

She comes back to her room. The coffee is almost finished. She has eight minutes to get to work on time.

In a panic, she abandons the concept of order. Clothes fly, hangers are lost, she trips over the shoes she has tossed about, and, finally, she's dressed.

Her coffee is finished. It goes straight into a thermos with a little Half and Half and some hazelnut flavoring. She tosses anything she thinks she might need in the next ten hours into her bag, grabs her keys and leaves.

Thirty seconds later, she realizes that she's forgotten her coffee. She sighs, turns around, grabs it and leaves out again.

She scolds herself all the way to the office. She could have gotten up earlier. She could have picked out her clothes last night. She could have simply moved at a faster pace.

She's at the office. She puts down her things, logs on to her computer and sinks into a chair. Her e-mail is up. Twenty new messages and not a single one is spam. It will be a long day.

She goes to open the first one, but her eyes land on her thermos. Caffeine time.

At the first sip, everything slows. As she closes her eyes, she wonders if this is how heroin addicts feel after the needle goes in.

She knows that some people picture clear skies, forests, or beaches. The examples would continue, but she doesn't really know what it is that others picture when they are perfectly at peace because, for her, the only thing that she sees is what she is doing right now.

She pictures that last first sip, when she felt the warm brown liquid float through her lips, across her tongue, down her throat, and into her stomach. She imagines the second sip when she's a little more relaxed. She can enjoy the flavor and she forgets all of the things that she should be doing.

She is addicted and that is okay. She embraces her addiction and keeps drinking and thinking about drinking until she's swallowed that last drop.

Her eyes stay closed. Just a few more seconds. She takes a breath, not a deep one. It's not needed. She savors the aftertaste.

Then, she turns back to her computer, reads message one of twenty and begins typing.





my classroom looks like a spaceship
but only if you
look up.

it is all in
the ceiling.
so sad that people
pretend to
care
and miss out on this.

glad I
couldn't give a
rat's ass.

let's call it
an
"Enlightenment
Experience"

suckas

4:21
Sarah Sutliff

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