

the plum creek review



spring 2012

THE PLUM CREEK REVIEW

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table of contents

<i>words</i>	1	Before I Set to Dreaming m. allain jr.
<i>picture</i>	2	Fourteen Across hannah klein
<i>words</i>	3	Ghazal saksham khosla
<i>picture</i>	4	untitled sarah rose lejeune
<i>picture</i>	5	untitled sarah rose lejeune
<i>words</i>	6	Grandma claire hoffman
<i>picture</i>	7	untitled rachel adler
<i>words</i>	8	Empathy julie gaynes
<i>picture</i>	9	untitled rebecca dewitt
<i>picture</i>	10	untitled lily gottschalk
<i>words</i>	11	No Go Zone, Odaka, Japan alice beecher
<i>picture</i>	14	Ingress lily gottschalk
<i>words</i>	15	The Off Night (i) galen beebe
<i>picture</i>	16	max victoria velasco

cover art: "cover" & "bed, scene and not heard" by briggen scharf

<i>picture</i>	17	untitled lily gottschalk
<i>picture</i>	18	All of Western Thought Wrung Into a Villanelle connor mcnamara stratton
<i>picture</i>	19	untitled marlo barrera
<i>picture</i>	20	untitled sarah rose lejeune
<i>words</i>	21	Airport Dispatch rachel adler
<i>picture</i>	23	untitled paul miller gamble
<i>words</i>	24	One Thousand And One rebecca dewitt
<i>picture</i>	26	Okay mj robinson
<i>words</i>	27	To the Good Ol' Boys jessica tolbert
<i>picture</i>	28	Neighbors zack knoll
<i>words</i>	29	Thanksgiving sofie ghitman
<i>picture</i>	30	untitled dyeemah simmons
<i>words</i>	31	The Off Night (ii) galen beebe
<i>words</i>	32	Clot charlotte istel

<i>picture</i>	40	Everything I Learned in School zack knoll
<i>picture</i>	41	untitled walter gordon
<i>words</i>	42	The Off Night (iii) galen beebe
<i>picture</i>	43	Thirty-three Down hannah klein
<i>picture</i>	44	Water anonymous
<i>words</i>	45	ALLIUM SATIVUM nicole balin
<i>picture</i>	46	untitled paul miller gamble
<i>picture</i>	47	untitled paul miller gamble
<i>words</i>	48	Translation of "Froid Jaune" rachel brooke
<i>picture</i>	50	January One hannah klein
<i>picture</i>	51	January Two hannah klein
<i>words</i>	52	I Have Not Grown Soft julie gaynes
<i>picture</i>	54	The Hills to the East zack knoll
<i>words</i>	55	Hot Strawberry elisabeth asher

table of contents

<i>words</i>	58	The Off Night (iv) galen beebe
<i>picture</i>	59	star slinger cole hager
<i>picture</i>	60	got milk nicolas hen
<i>words</i>	61	THINGS saul alpert-abrams
<i>picture</i>	62	Grasp elena makansi
<i>words</i>	63	a bit of fabricated nostalgia: cole hager
<i>picture</i>	66	Old Dad eve peyser-sappol
<i>words</i>	67	The Off Night (v) galen beebe
<i>words</i>	68	Ghazal saksham khosla
<i>picture</i>	69	Thirty-four Down hannah klein
<i>words</i>	70	a sad piano song meagan day
<i>picture</i>	69	untitled rebecca dewitt

Before I Set to Dreaming

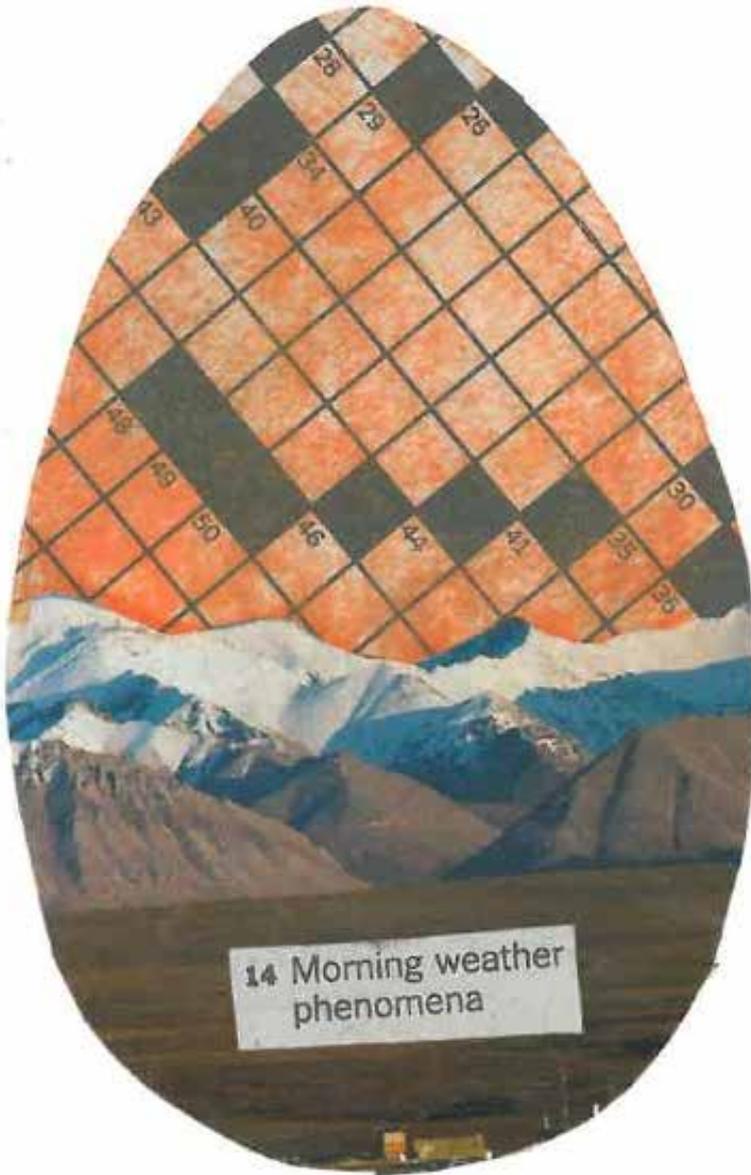
I think of a child between
two enormous rocks
the side of a mountain split.
Stalks of cane burnt near
black but cold to touch.

Wet through the shadows,
hair blond gold
bobs like cattails in the breeze

while evening in the throats of frogs
rings around the porch.

m. allain jr.

hannah klein



Ghazal

The cartography of sighing comes naturally to speech.
Tonight I write the obituary of speech.

The Taj Mahal has interrogated itself into dust.
Desire's bleached bones narrate the history of speech.

After all was ash, I smeared the pyre upon my shoulders.
Crushed pain's outlines into an obscenity of speech.

Around the candle, an exodus of Selves. The Other immolated with wine.
Let the death of the mushaira be its elegy to speech.

Across continents, I have succeeded in reclaiming memory.
Entombed, all I lack is the familiar calligraphy of speech.

O Yaar, your glances are metonyms tailored for diyas.
Under the full moon, on Diwali, we'll see who owns the aristocracy of
speech.

In place of the Yamuna, Delhi was flooded with sehnsucht.
There is some left over. Allow me to add it to the chutney of speech.

Saksham, had you not superimposed a city over the heart,
the Beloved may have forgiven you for your incapability of speech.

sarah rose lejeune



sarah rose lejeune



gelatin silver print

Grandma

now on the other side of 5:30--
I'm breathing flour.

if you are still on my hands,
who would know?

claire hoffman

rachel adler



Empathy

What is this, your friend?
Two boys hold it down,
one at the wings. The other
clamps the crying beak shut.

It's not ready, I insist
to the dirty boy with the knife.
He has scabs on his little knees.
He is not my friend.

Does it call you sister?
There is a shaking body by the hole.
Too soon, I find myself ravenous
And with a handful of feathers.

julie gaynes

rebecca dewitt



Lily gottschalk



No Go Zone, Odaka, Japan

“Before they returned to safety, Whitaker met Naoko and Susumu Ito, who were living 10 miles down the road from the nuclear power plant. Despite the threats of radiation and government warnings, they still refuse to leave. Ninety-four year old Susumu, who has Alzheimer’s, told Naoko that she wants to die at home, and her daughter is respecting her last wish.” CBS News, March 12, 2012, “A rare look at the Fukushima Daiichi no-go zone”

Her hometown

She lived in a town of white houses and twisted telephone wires where the beetles wrote scripture on her skin every night. They wrapped their arms around her in such good faith, they believed she must be mighty, that pretty girl, that strange thing. As a girl she drank hot pots of saltwater from the sea that sheltered her and it tasted like sweat, like shell and broken bone.

What there Used to Be (daytime)

There used to be 13,000 people. There used to be a sign that said “Let’s Be Happy” on the store that sold yellow fruit on Sundays. Her parents promised her the sign was not lying, that this was the happiest of places. They did not become old until the radiation came, until it birthed into them like a bad berry, made them all thin and grey faced. Before they were fat, they had fine things. The traffic lights still turn on and off, like hot blinking eyes, green and red, green and red. No one has stopped them.

(night time/tsunami)

The first kiss on the cheek was not fond. He rose over her, eclipsed the wrinkled curling of her forehead and smacked her with a tongue full of dead earth and salt. She found him handsome, the bristled curling of his white muscles, white teeth. She had never seen so much sound, had never had such a lover to coil his hulking body around her tiny ribcage, her small breasts. He opened and closed, opened and close, sent her blue dresses tumbling like a laundry vat. He was not a suitable man, her mother said. Not fit for marrying.

What There is Now (false dawn)

He forked his palm into our cheeks, one microsievert of radiation per hour. There are no houses, there are no jobs at the fat bellied factory that blew its blood onto all of us. The one's left wear breathing masks. They try to find work in Tokyo. Tepco and the government and the Atomic Energy Agency leave us in threads. In two years the men in white coats (the same one's who said nuclear would be the great glorious) in two years no one will be able to live in Odaka. They read the radiation levels to us each day, like weather reports.

When the Sea Came Fumbling Down Downwards

It tremored through her like a band of hot coils Mama and Papa said it was like horses' breath. The night before the boy from the fruit store said that he really loved her. Loved her for the day, she thought. The water punched her skin like hot wax, like metal lips. She watched the sea do it's odd entangling of bone with mouth, flood through her like a craving. Like the sea the plant was a transient body, a mountain full of salt. On the day of his awful dawning they evacuated all of the schools and all of the houses. She felt his arm twist around her neck, felt a sharp tug, a breath full of chemical dust.

The Art of Staying Still

They will not look for hope in any other places. They believe now that all places could break like that. Mama weaves the hours into her skin like nails. Papa collects the refuse from the streets and listens to the radio roar. At night they sleep soundly, say this is as good a way as any to go. They will stay.

matthew gallagher

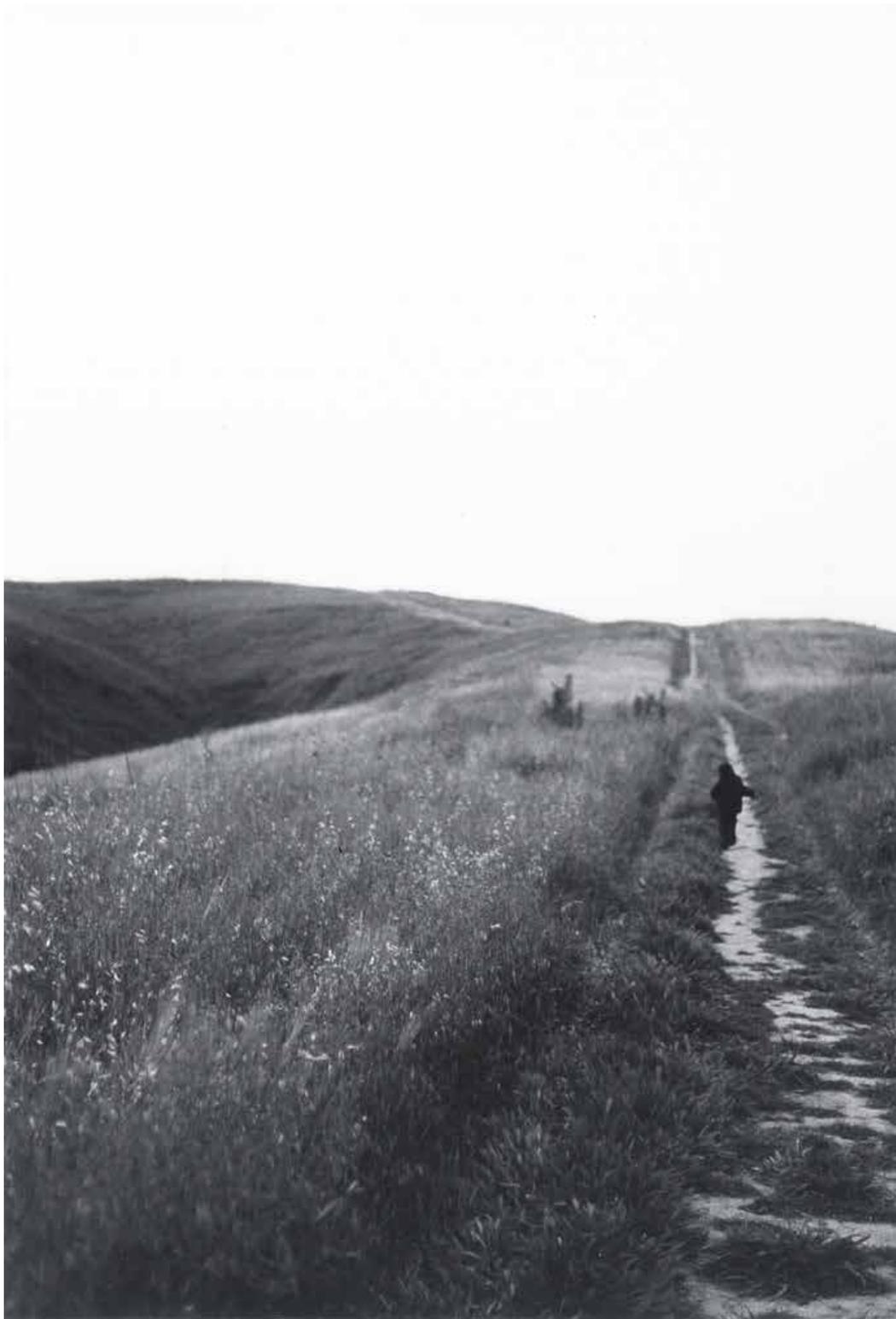


The Off Night (i)

All around the mulberry bush
the monkey chased the weasel.
The weasel called the monkey a bully,
and the monkey started crying.

galen beebe

victoria velasco



16

*max
gelatin silver print*

lily gottschalk



photograph

All of Western Thought Wrung Into a Villanelle

I want this to be my only first line,
To begin and to know that I had begun.
Then, I could dig for the end of this mind.

I want the one, original time
When definitions dried like a lust-filled tongue,
I want this to be my only first line

About roots of our earth: all that's alive
But also the words from which deaths have been hung.
I will dig there for the end of this mind.

I have picks so sharp and diamonds so fine,
And history straightened like weary necks wrung,
I want this to be my only first line:

I left Plato's Cave—it was not worth the climb.
I have come; I have seen; I am done.
What is there to dig if the end is the mind?

Both what has been dug and what is still mine
Are lips inked black with coal, having sung:
"I want this to be my only first line."
So I dig—and still dig—for some end to the mind.

connor mcnamara straton

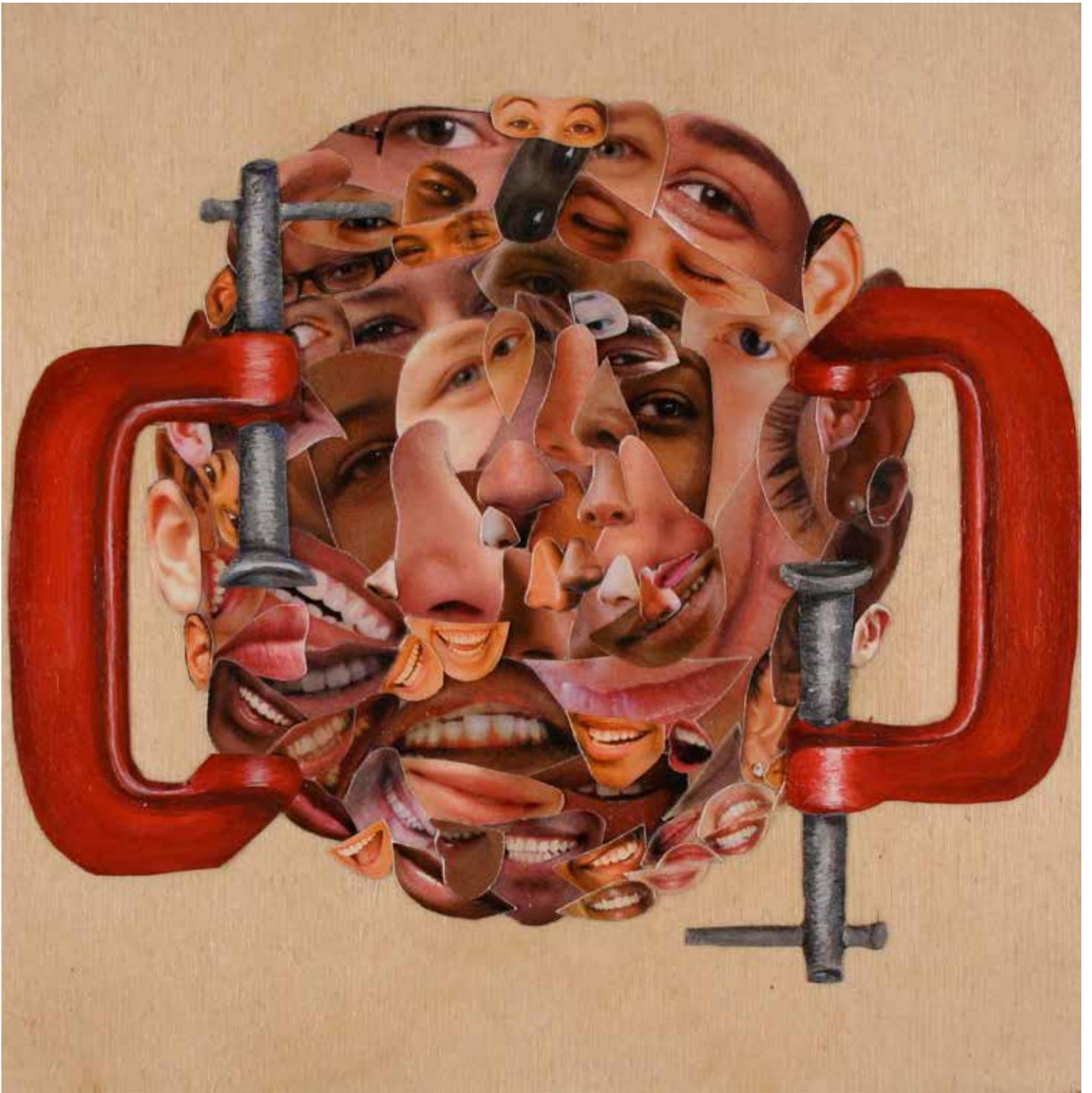


watercolor

marlo barrera

19

sarah rose lejeune



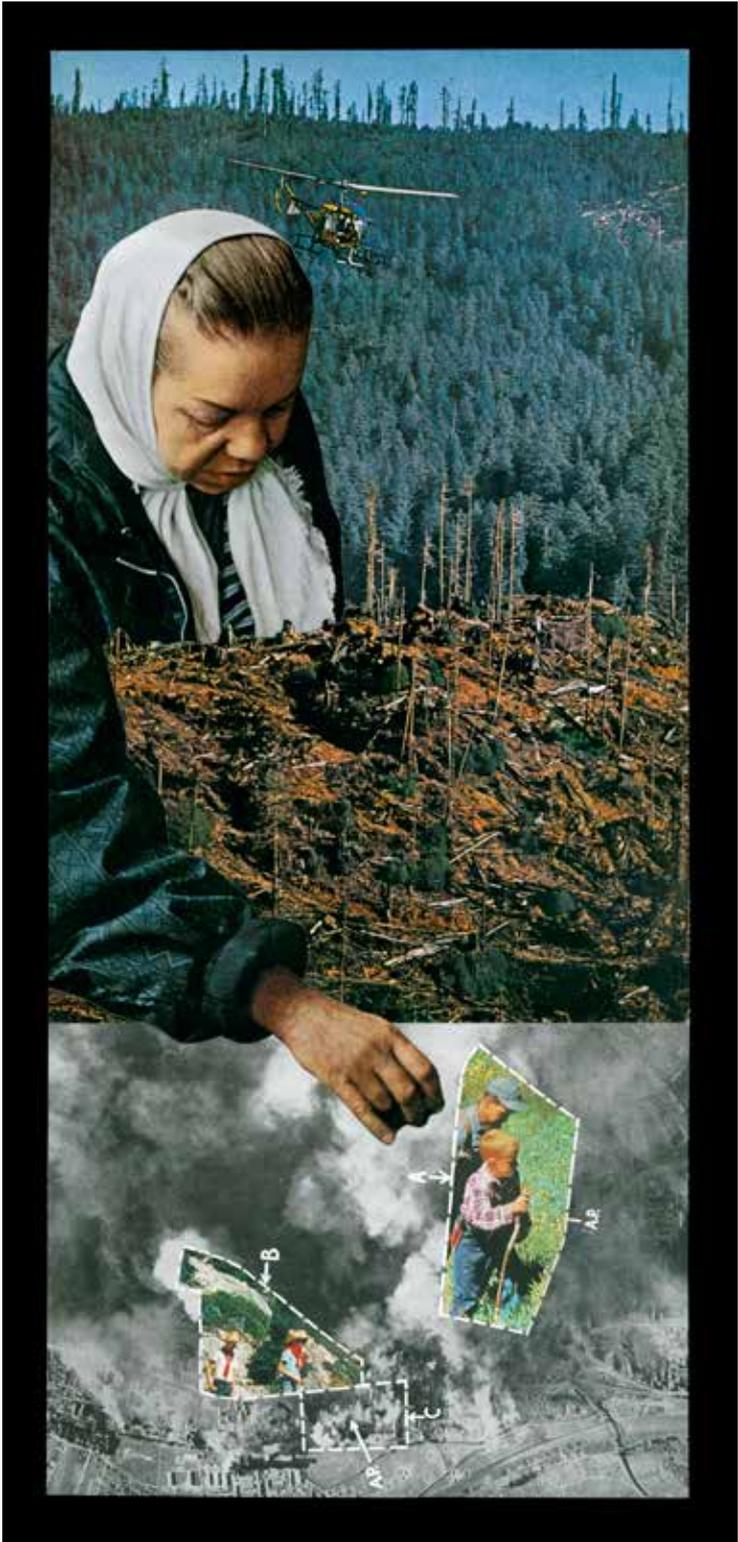
Airport Dispatch

Only time I ever went to school, after high school, I had one year of community college. I took English, because who doesn't need that. So I remember one assignment we had – this teacher, this professor, says, Write a descriptive essay. You know, just sit down and write this descriptive essay.

So at the time I had just gotten into, and I was really just enamored of, this thing – this, ah, scuba-diving. As a nineteen-year-old, you know, I hadn't had a lot of life's experiences, so this was really exciting. I took all my courses down at the YMCA, and then I got to put on the suit, that special one for the water. And I spent all my money on the tanks, and the equipment, and all. And I just loved that. Putting all that stuff on. Learning to go, you know, do that.

Now you'd be down eighty feet – or seventy feet, or ninety feet – didn't matter, you're down there. And when you're down there, it looks – it looks just like this. Not with all the cars, but the space, the – the growth, you know, the trees – down there there's the seaweed, and what have you. And it's quiet, all quiet, and all you see is that space, and the bubbles – you got your bubbles around you, all going up – and that serenity... The combination of the quiet, the serenity – and then that pressure. You know, when you're down there, it feels like...pressure – like you're being squeezed. Like you're being hugged, if you think about it in another – I mean some people find that unpleasant. Scary, like. They say, you know, Oh, that man down there, he's gonna be crushed to death, that's – well, but if you think about it, look at it another – well, it feels good, you know? Like you're being...anyway.

So it's that combination of the serenity, and that pressure, and the – well, look: as I was swimming around, with my suit and my fins, back there, I saw – over there – this rock formation that was just like this – kinda like a bench. A little like that one, with a place, a smooth place, for a seat, and then this upwards – a back, kind of, and you had your – you know. So there was this sorta bench. I swam over to it, and I sat down on it, and leaned back, and, you know, my tanks went clunk – and I just sat and watched the ocean. You know the ocean's like soup – like a fine minestrone, you know? All that stuff floating around. So I just watched the stuff in the water go by – big fish, little fish, what have you, a myriad of things. And it's the combination of that, ah, what did I say – that serenity, and all the stuff, with fish, and the bubbles, and that pressure... Well, what I was going to say is that's the only time in my life I ever got an A. I wrote about that for that descriptive essay – just put it down like the dissertation I gave to you just now – and the teacher writes on the paper, just goes, Oh, A. All the rest was C's, and B's, but that – there I got an A.



paul miller gamble

One Thousand And One

I.

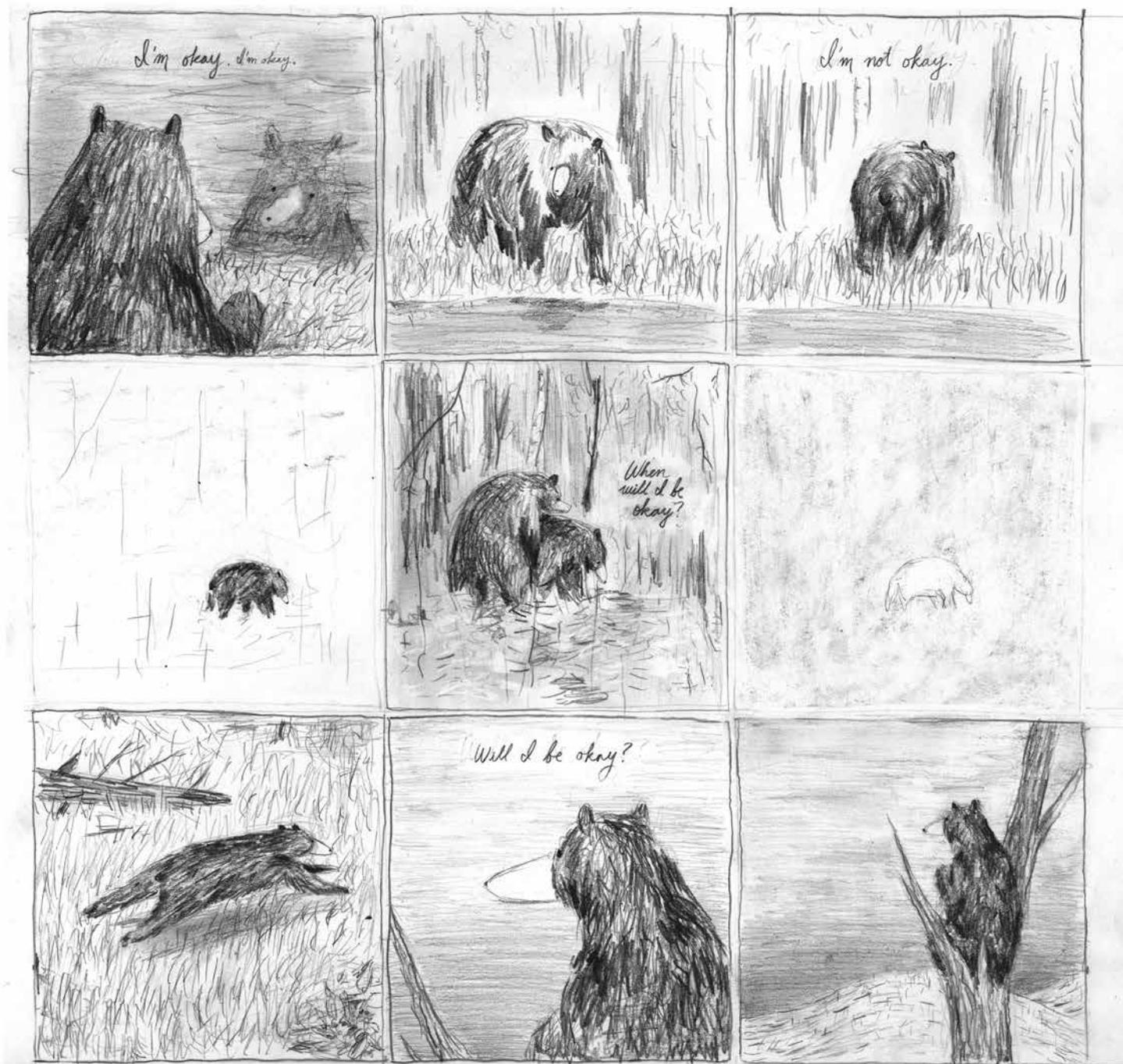
A story? Scheherazade
traced a cure for a city, shot
slick narrative into the veins of a king,
nightly arced her arms round to form the tourniquet,
and kissed where her poems pricked,

her hands thick with holding and
withholding. The king,
a stone-faced man, gone to soot,
his smile yet smoldering, as
every night, he threatened
her death, his lips against
her wrist.

II.

My favorite was always Dunyazade,
the sister: agitator of action, dealer
of queries, who asked for tale
after tale, stroking
patterns into carpet, while
the queen and her king explored
rising action and climax.

Dunyazade, who hated epiphanies,
tropes of teeth-moon-trees-moon-blood— hated the way
paintings by old masters lapsed
into strictures of light,
guiding golden principle. Yet still
she felt as water to wine,
a process of becoming—
a house swollen with windows
open, full of corridors and empty
rooms and moon and blood...



To the Good Ol' Boys

in elementary school Andrea
from Bogota came to Alabama the principal
valiantly tackled her last name remember being that young and
Southern as Southern could be with kike parents, no offense, but I've heard some bad
things about Colombia

she shrugged in response

blood and milk and bone is what makes a person
we can often function within systems that we do not believe in
godbless the man's a tragedy

you thought you weren't a real New Yorker til you puked on the 49th street platform
in front of a crowd of horrified foreign tourists you learned
about Fritz Haber's Zyklon made men drown in grass the color of metal birds he
kneaded bread from air the man's a saint

like remember Arthur who rationalized saying Richard Pryor freebased I wanna be like
Richard Pryor so you're in good company even if Colombian drug lords had to scalp a
few folks with

minced oaths, git your ass back here, as the nails in christ's palms Gods hooks, gods
light, by the cross of the mouse foot

you held onto the foil wrapper and the bold printed box as some kind of holy artifact your
progesterone relic kept in a drawer mother
was helping clean up opened the drawer she didn't react you thought she had ignored it
out of courtesy but maybe she didn't see it at all

jessica tolbert

zack knoll



Thanksgiving

listen
you need to be very careful

the good is only a fraction
of what really happens

railing two
tablets of percocet
on the greyhound
to ohio

alone
on the bus
are you beginning
to understand

sofie ghitman

dyemah simmons



The Off Night (ii)

Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet,
eating apple pie à la mode.
Along came a spider who sat down beside her,
but there wasn't a fork little enough for him.

galen beebe

Clot

I don't want to be Lily anymore.
I want to be a pile of sorted through pictures.
Snapshots of what I choose to remember.
Only self-portraits.
I can redesign my past.
I stand on a stool and lean into the camera.
The camera has a timer.
Propped upon textbooks five feet away.
Click-click, evidence.
The first picture of me.

"You're still my Lily," Mom says at dinner, an hour after.
I want to stab her with my fork
but there's chicken stuck between the spokes.
I bite then chew instead and
suck on the fork till it tastes like loose change.
"Don't make your tongue bleed again, Lily."

Lily's first memory was two years old at her grandmother's wedding in Connecticut. She snuck into her family's hotel room closet and pooped in silence in the airless dark.

"I thought the gardener kidnapped her," Carol would always say. Carol is my mother. She wears black leggings and tight neon yoga shirts. Her physique resembles an asparagus: tall, shapeless, with a curly bun plopped on the top of her head. She likes protein shakes and veggie shots and foam mattresses.

"Describe your mother," Lily's learning specialist had once asked her.

"Wholesome," she said.

Lily wore overalls and her older brother's hand-me-downs. She didn't care to stretch in the morning or even look in the mirror, like Carol had always done.

"Lily, your nails look like baby watermelons," Carol said once to her after school. She hasn't forgotten this analogy; nails red from aggravation and cold, sandwiched specks of dirt and grass-bleed fingertips. She thought it was the smartest thing her mother had ever said.

Lily's father, Ralph, is an architect. He stays up until dawn drafting, drafting. He'll skip dinner and just come out of his office for a cigarette and to wash the dishes. He designed their Brooklyn brownstone, strategically placing his office on the opposite side of the kids' bedroom area. He only gives Lily his attention when she either draws a nice picture to hang up in his office, or when she takes too long in the shower.

When Lily was five, Ralph painted her a map of the world across one entire wall of her bedroom. He was unemployed at the time, but Lily doesn't think of it in that way; she keeps onto the wall because it reminds her of when he cared.

The remodeled house is littered with yoga mats and Civil War paraphernalia. Ralph is a Civil War nut, collecting antiques since graduate school. The entire north side of the house is Union themed and the south half, Confederate themed. The decorations are subtle, unobtrusive, except for the rifled musket on the wall of the vestibule.

Carol gave up long ago on trying to get rid of, at least, the guns. She leaves out her yoga mats on the living room floor because it annoys Ralph, but he knows that he'd seem hypocritical if he complained.

Day 2

I still want to look at maps, though.
The map that covers my bedroom wall
is still beautiful:
it's geometries, the dotted diagonal lines.
I try to ignore the red countries now.
I take a picture of me in front of the map
on the stool
sitting. I put on clothes
and take my hair down.
I stare at the map again and wonder
why South Africa is green.

Day 3

I try not to look at the red countries.
But then go to bed and dream about it:

When Lily turned ten, she discovered her period. She liked watching it drip and drain into the bowl of toilet water below. It reminded her of squeezing food coloring into cups of hot water for dying Easter eggs.

One morning she woke up and had to go to the bathroom. She watched drops of blood walk the plank of her thigh, plunging into her red sea. Then a glob of something came out, something Lily had never seen before. She thought it might be a baby before it forms.

She remembers overhearing Carol talk to Justin, Lily's older brother, in the kitchen. They were cooking eggs and having the who-came-first-the-chicken-or-the-egg debate. Then they talked about human eggs and Justin, fourteen and curious, was asking her all these questions about ovulation and pregnancy.

"That's why," Carol said, "in the past when they'd give back-alley abortions—"

"What's a back-alley abortion?"

"Where a doctor would stick a coat hanger up into your ovaries and pull out the beginning of what a baby would be," said Carol. "Like what you started out as."

"What does that look like?" Justin asked.

Carol cracked another egg into the frying pan. Lily loved the sound of sizzling.

"A big mass of congealed blood. Gluey," she said. "Can you pass me the salt J?"

"Jelly-like?"

"Something like that, yeah."

Lily found her father's pencil rolled up in his half-finished crossword puzzle, stabbed it then scooped it up into a tissue.

"Carol!" Lily screamed from the bathroom. She didn't like calling her Mom.

"If you want to talk to me then come down stairs," Carol said. Flustered and curious, Lily swirled down the spiral staircase.

"What is this?" with both hands Lily stuck out the tissue and opened it.

"Where did you find that?" Carol asked matter-of-factly, barely looking up from her emails.

"Oh," said Carol, her slither of glasses at the tip of her nose. "It's a blood clot. Totally normal sweetie. Don't worry."

"Tell me more," Lily said. Carol looked up and had expected to see fear in Lily's eyes but was unsettled to find zeal dreaming between her eyelids.

Day 4

I tear open my morning grapefruit.
I let the citrus infiltrate the tiny cut on my lip;
punishment.
When I close my eyes, all I see are blobs of red.
I don't like blood
I don't like blood
I don't like blood
I take a picture of myself at the kitchen table
without a fork, but with my eyes open.

Day 5

I pick up knitting and
take a picture of the left side of my face
with my eyebrow grown back.

Three days after Lily's twelfth birthday, Lily did something she never told anyone about. There was a pineapple in the fridge, and she went to grab the carton of milk, pushing the pineapple aside with her palm. The needles pricked her and a baby bullet of blood slithered down her wrist. She watched it ski down the inside of her arm, dispersing to either side at the crease of her elbow.

Lily took the pineapple out of the fridge, her heart whipping her chest. She cracked off ten needles, placed them in her pocket and ran up to her room. She laid them out on her desk, and starting with her thumb, she pricked its center. A perfect red bulb emerged and then she pricked her pointer finger. She pricked each finger and stared at her hands.

Day 6

I see a pineapple in the fridge
and don't make myself a snack.

Day 7

I look at the map
and feel scared.
I'm fourteen now and
the map isn't going to help me change.
There's too much red
Russia is red
and so is Mexico
and France.

I go to dad's office:

—Hey Ralph

—Hey Lily

(I stand against the doorframe.)

—I'm painting over the map.

—Why?

—Because.

—Why?

—I don't like it.

—Do you have paint?

(I wish he'd put up a fight.)

—No. Do you?

—I worked hard on that map.

(He looks back down at his drafts.)

—So?

—There's white paint in the Laundry room closet.

I turn to leave just before tears drool
down my cheek, jaw.

I wanted him to care.

I wanted him to care.

When Lily was seven, she was able to walk home by herself from school. They lived on 4th Street in Park Slope, three blocks and one avenue up from P.S. 321. Carol felt that it was safe enough to let her walk home alone.

It was late fall with a thin sheet of snow on the ground. One day Lily had forgotten to wear mittens and walked home with cold hands. When she got home, her fingers burned and she looked down at them and they were red, blood rushing in and out of them. She was curious about the way her hands looked when they were cold. She loved the idea of pulsing-red hands instead of pale ones.

That week she got mad at Justin for throwing a ball at her face. She was in the living room, staring at the TV, upset. She felt an urge to see her hands red, to numb her anger. She thought that would make her happy again. She went to the kitchen, stood on a stool, and stuck her hands in the freezer. Carol walked in and saw her.

“What are you doing Lily?”

“Making my hands cold.”

Carol laughed and told Lily about how when she was young, she loved to make her own popsicles and watch them freeze.

Day 8

I paint the wall white
and take a picture of myself in front of it
with my favorite white T-shirt on,
my mom’s old jogging shirt
with the holes in it.
I brush my hair first.

Lily wanted a lava lamp for her thirteenth birthday. Her parents got the red one, just like what she had asked for. Instead of freezing her hands when she was angry, Lily now liked to watch the floating red globs gravitate and transform.

The next week in poetry class Lily had to write a haiku.

She wrote:

O menstruation
blood clots float in lava lamps
the boys don’t know that.

After she read it aloud the class fell silent, besides the few boys who felt uncomfortable and snickered. No one had a comment. Except for one girl.

"Why isn't there an *h* after the *O*," she said.

Lily hated this girl. She always looked at Lily as if Lily smelled like unattended wet laundry. Lily dug holes in her piece of paper with her pencil. After class, Lily's teacher came up to her and told her that he really enjoyed the haiku.

"Witty, he said. "You're a brave writer. Keep it up."

But when Lily got home she was still angry. She felt embarrassed that she was thirteen and writing about lava lamps. She was embarrassed that she had to read it out loud, and that everyone had a copy of it now.

Day 9

I'm in the kitchen

staring into the toaster-oven,

watching cheese bubble and

blanket the bread.

Last night I took the hammer

I keep under my mattress in case

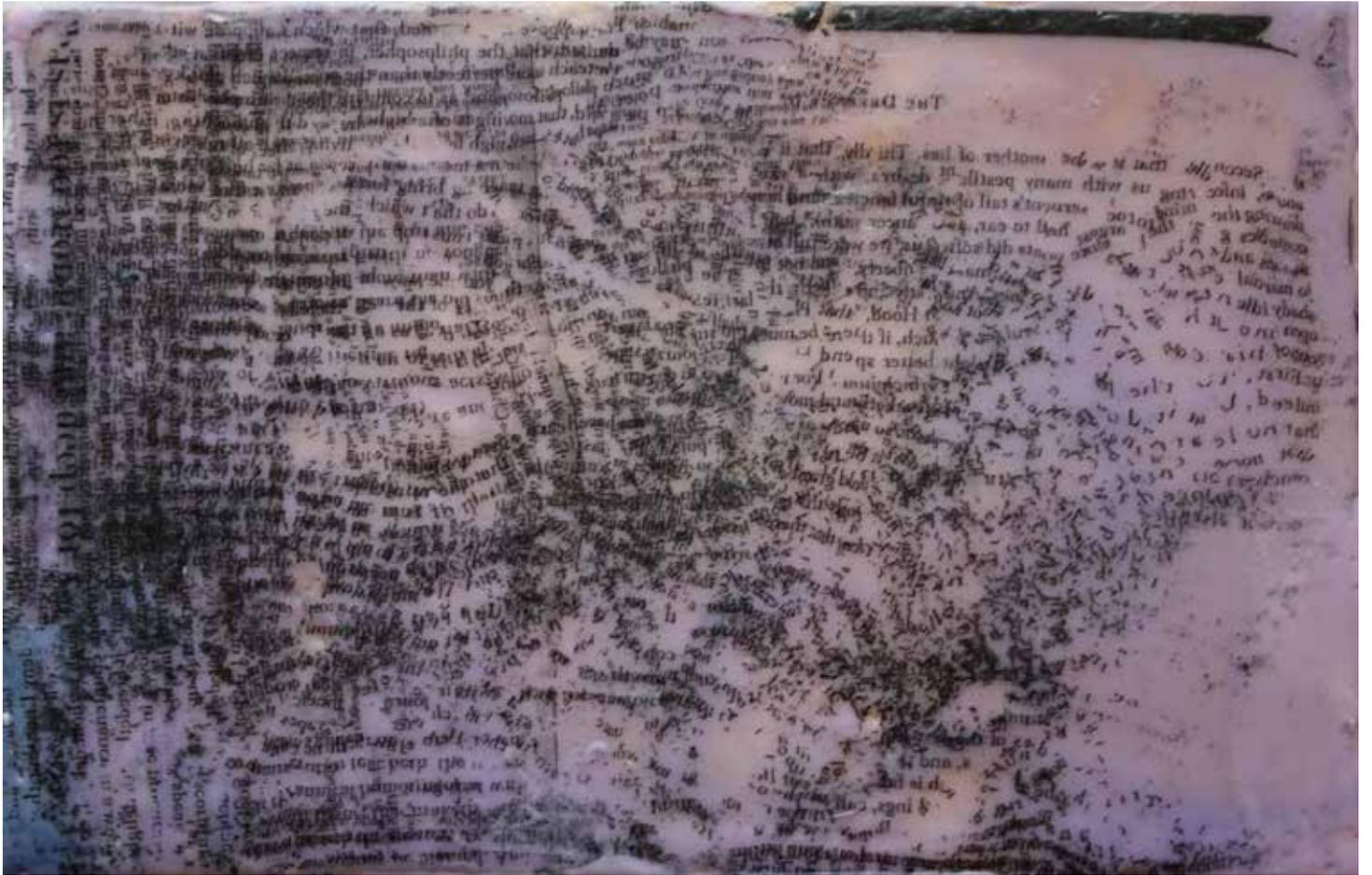
a rapist comes, and

smashed the lava lamp with it.

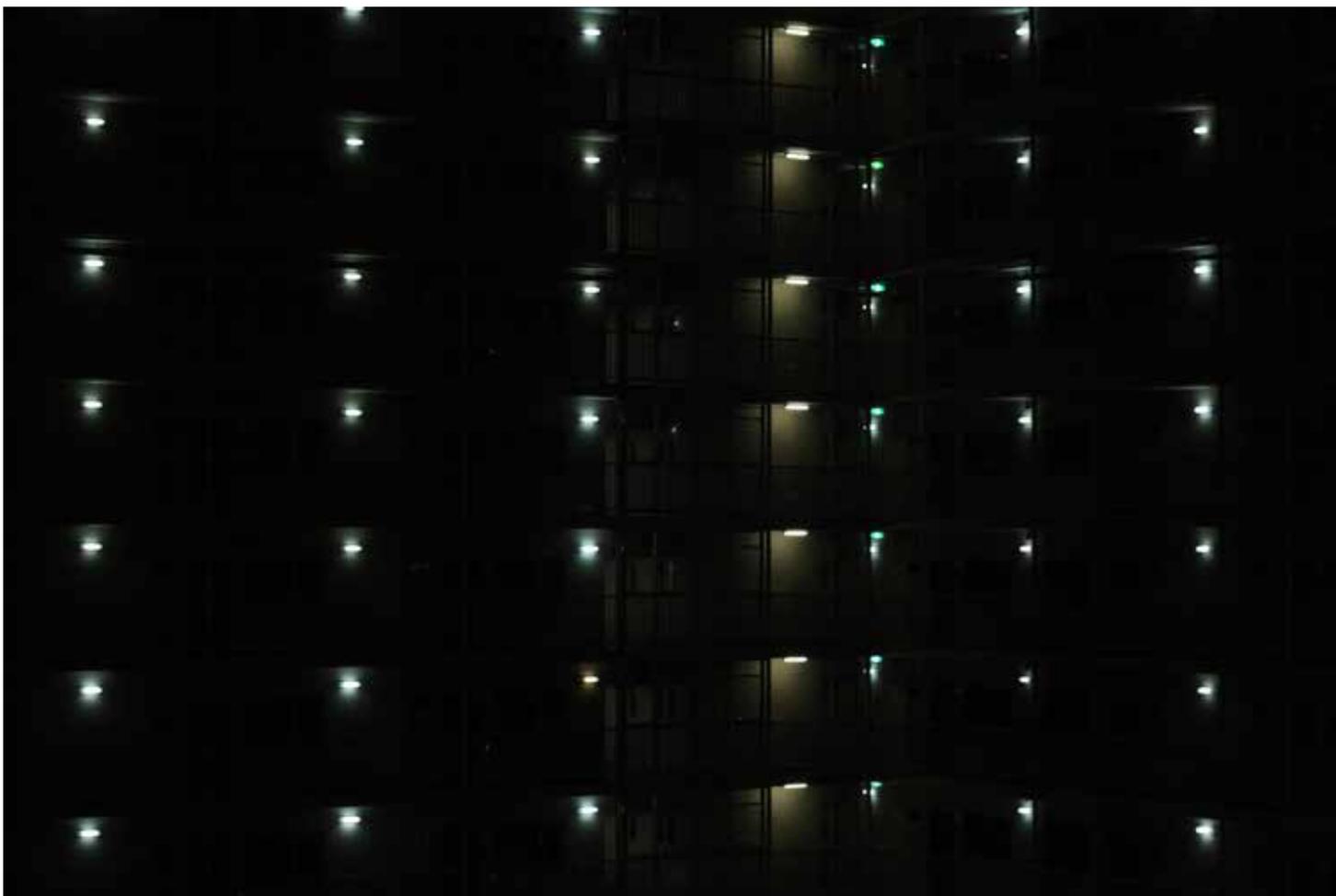
I woke up this morning with a baptismal glow,

cleansed from my past.

Mom yells from the living room,
—Lily, is there anything you want for Easter?
—No.
—Not even the jellybeans you like?
—No.
—When do you want to dye Easter eggs?
—No.
—That wasn't an answer.
—Do you we have to this year?
—It's a tradition
—I don't like tradition.
—Why?
—Tradition doesn't allow change.
—Why do you want to change?
—Because I need to.
—You're great the way you are.
—You don't know who I am.
—I made you, Lily. Of course I know who you are.
—Did they cut your stomach open?
—You were too big to squeeze out.
—Was I all bloody?
—Of course.
—Covered in your blood?
—Yes.
—Covered in blood clots too?
—I was screaming Fuck Jesus too loud to notice, Lily.



walter gordon



photograph

41

The Off Night (iii)

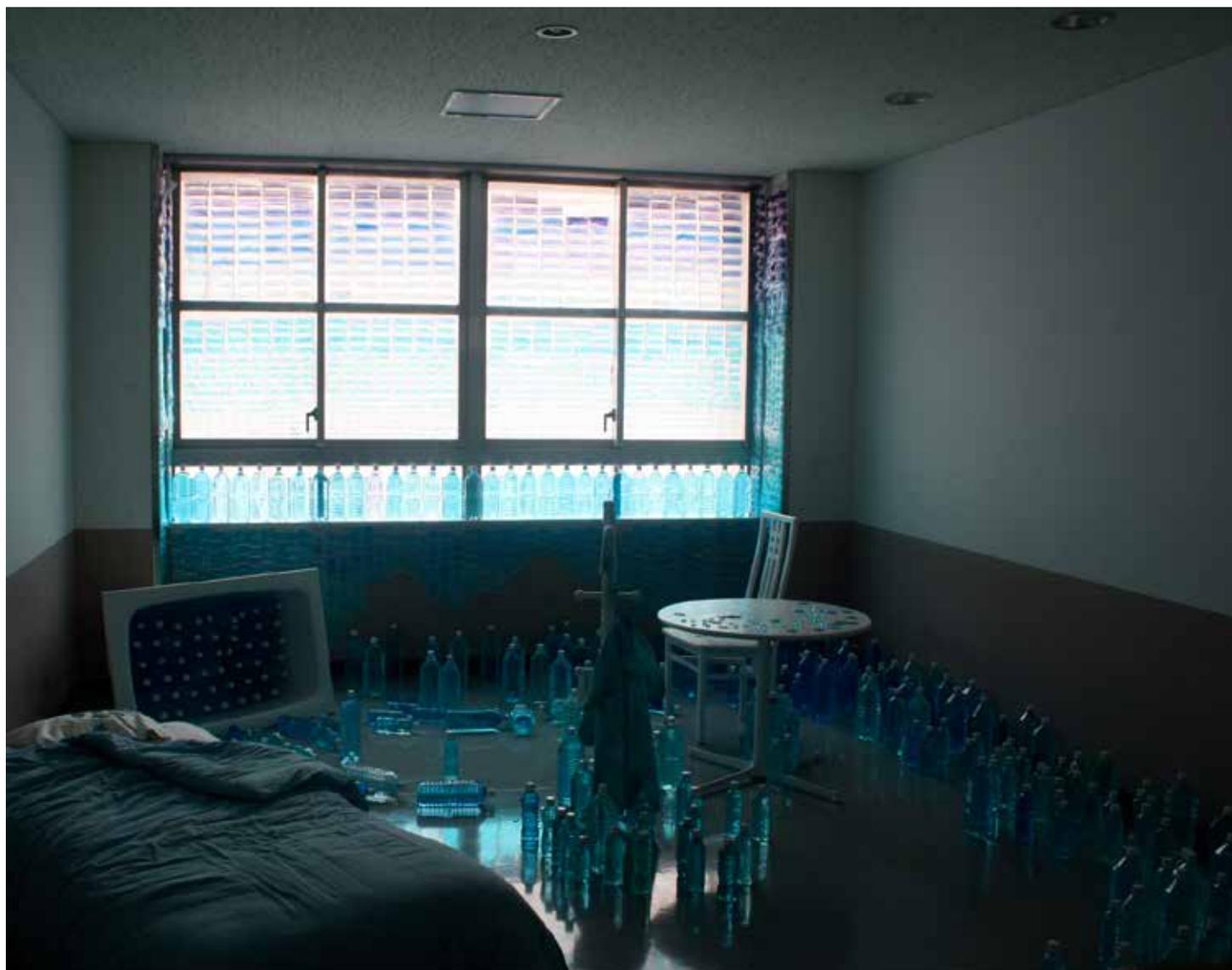
Hickory-dickory dock,
the mouse went to a party.
The clock struck one,
and the mouse was still out.

galen beebe



Thirty-three Down
collage/mixed media

anonymous



ALLIUM SATIVUM

sounds of winter waking
root a knowing
fleshed dormant
and dry

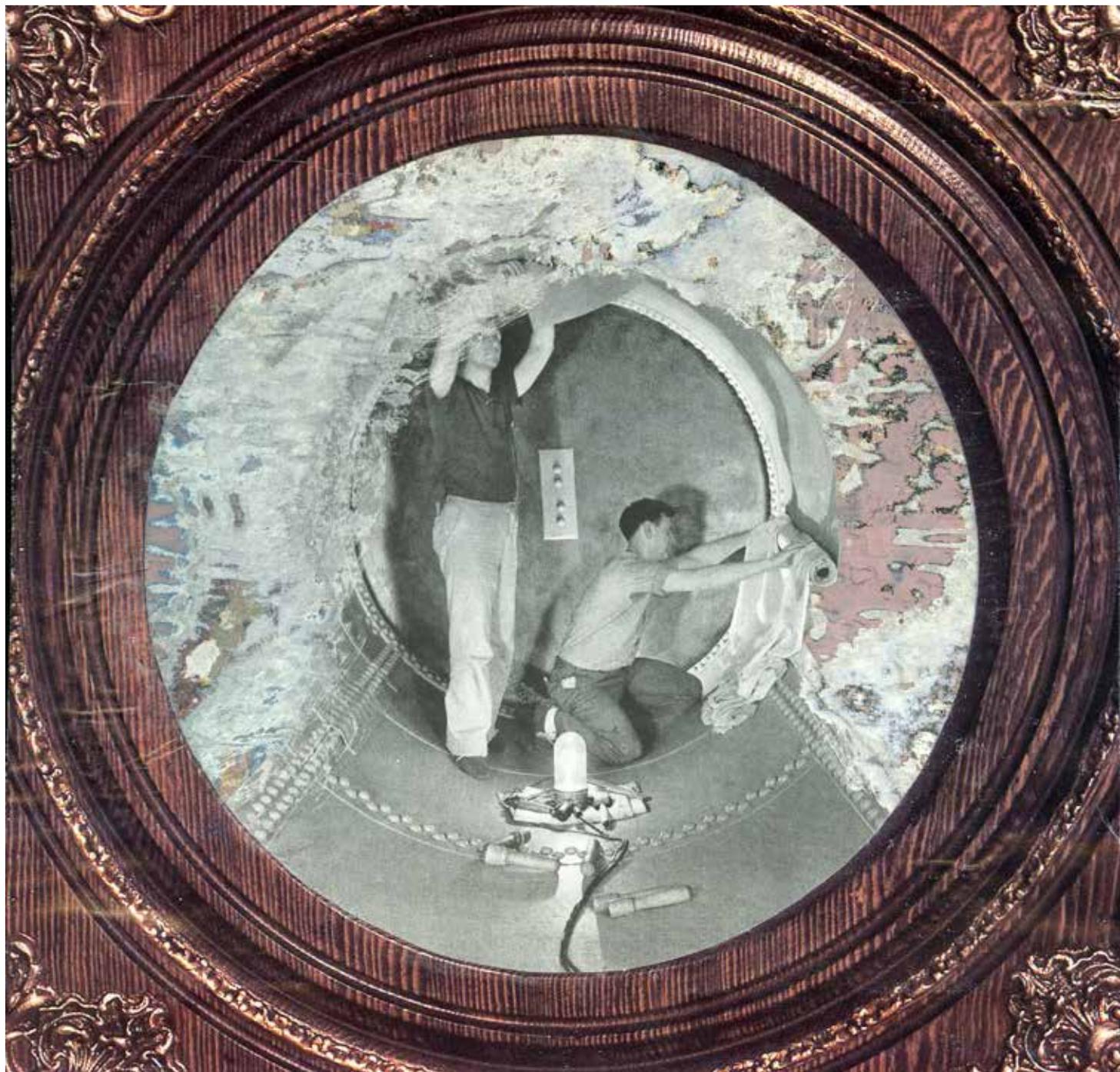
bulb peeled of its husk
broken
cloves silken
as ears
that no longer know
 how to coil
 but collect

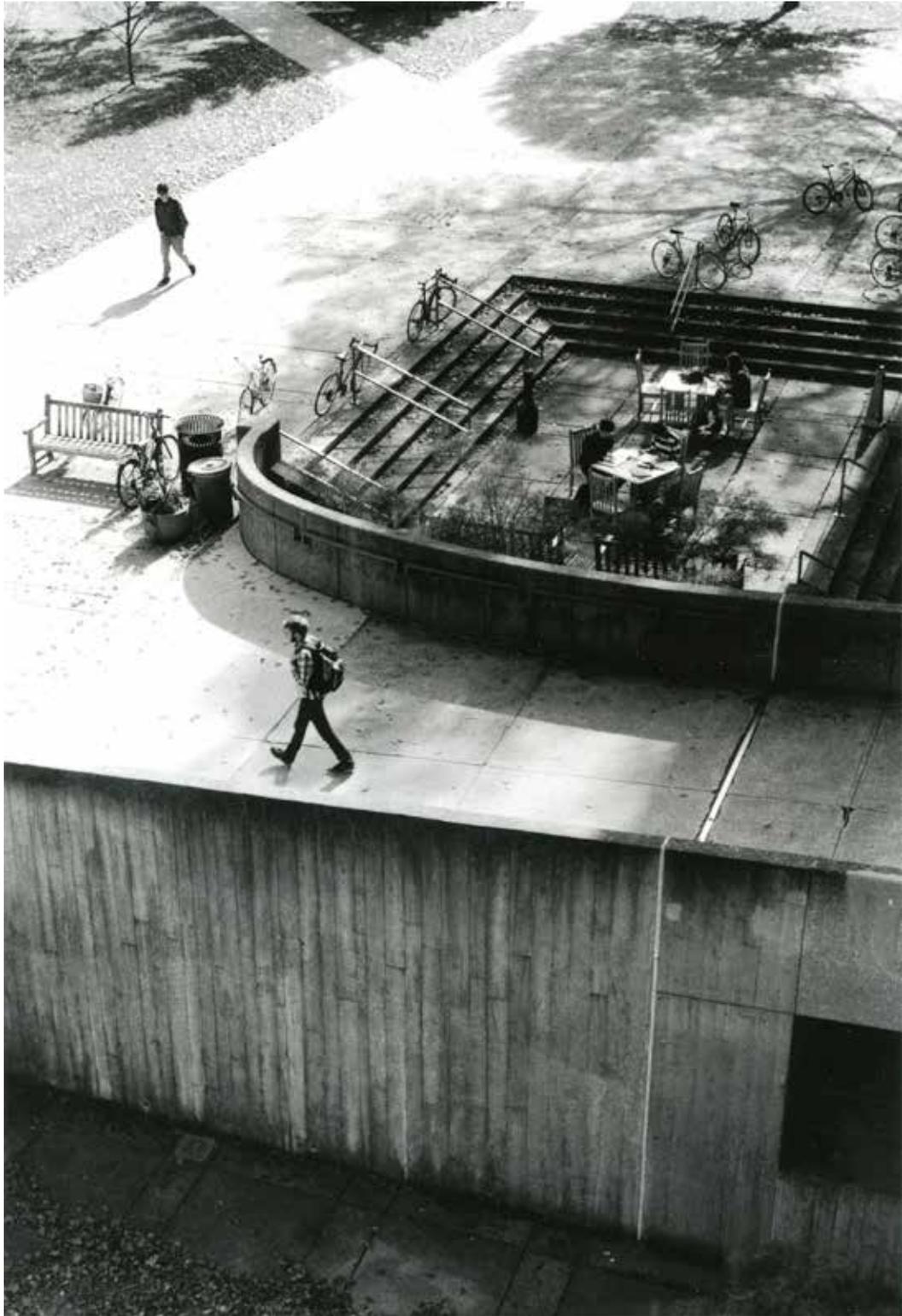
pungency wedged under
nail only a surface
skin only a breath
opening closing

opening every scent
trying to hold inside
like an organ
stretched in chords

nicole balin

paul miller gamble





paul miller gamble

froid jaune *(Tristan Tzara, originally published in Vingt-Cinq Poèmes, 1918)*

nous allons nuages parmi les esquimaux
embellir la convalescence de nos pensées botaniques
sous les crépuscules tordus
ordure verdie vibrante
blan

j'ai rangé mes promesses confiserie hôtelier dans sa boutique
paulownias définitives
l'éloignement se déroule glacial et coupant comme une diligence éloignement pluvieux
adolescent
ailleurs sonore

piéton fiévreux et pourri et rompu et broderies réparables
je pensais à quelque chose de très scabreux
calendrier automnal dans chaque arbre
mon organe amoureux est bleu je suis mortel monsieur bleubleu

et du cadavre monte un pays étrange
monte monte vers les autres astronomies

cold yellow

we go clouds among eskimos
embellishing the convalescence of our botanical thoughts
beneath the crooked twilight
filth paling vibrating
blan

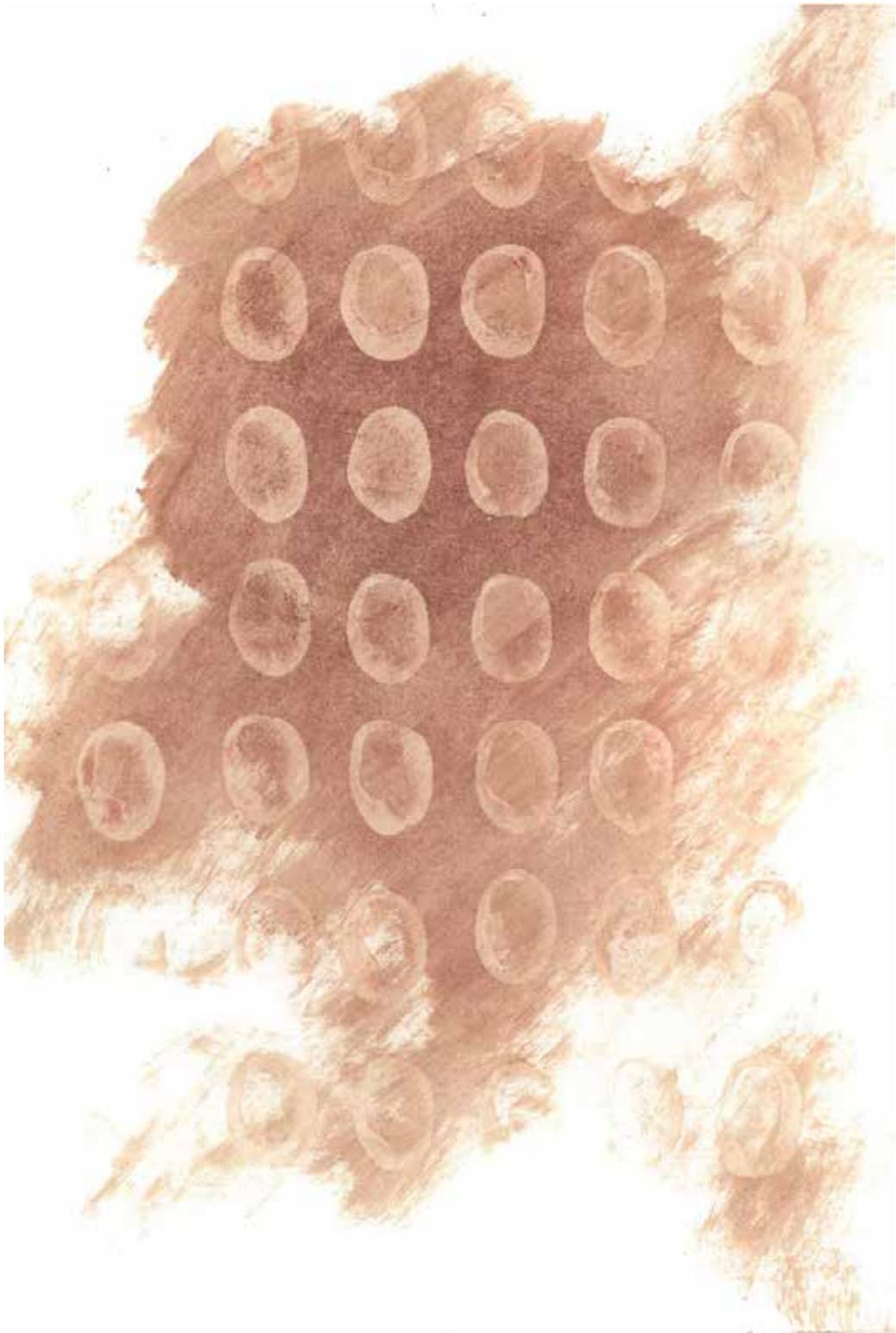
i've arranged my promises candy hotel in his shop
definitive paulownias
distance happens glacial and sharp like a stagecoach distance rainy
adolescent
elsewhere resonant

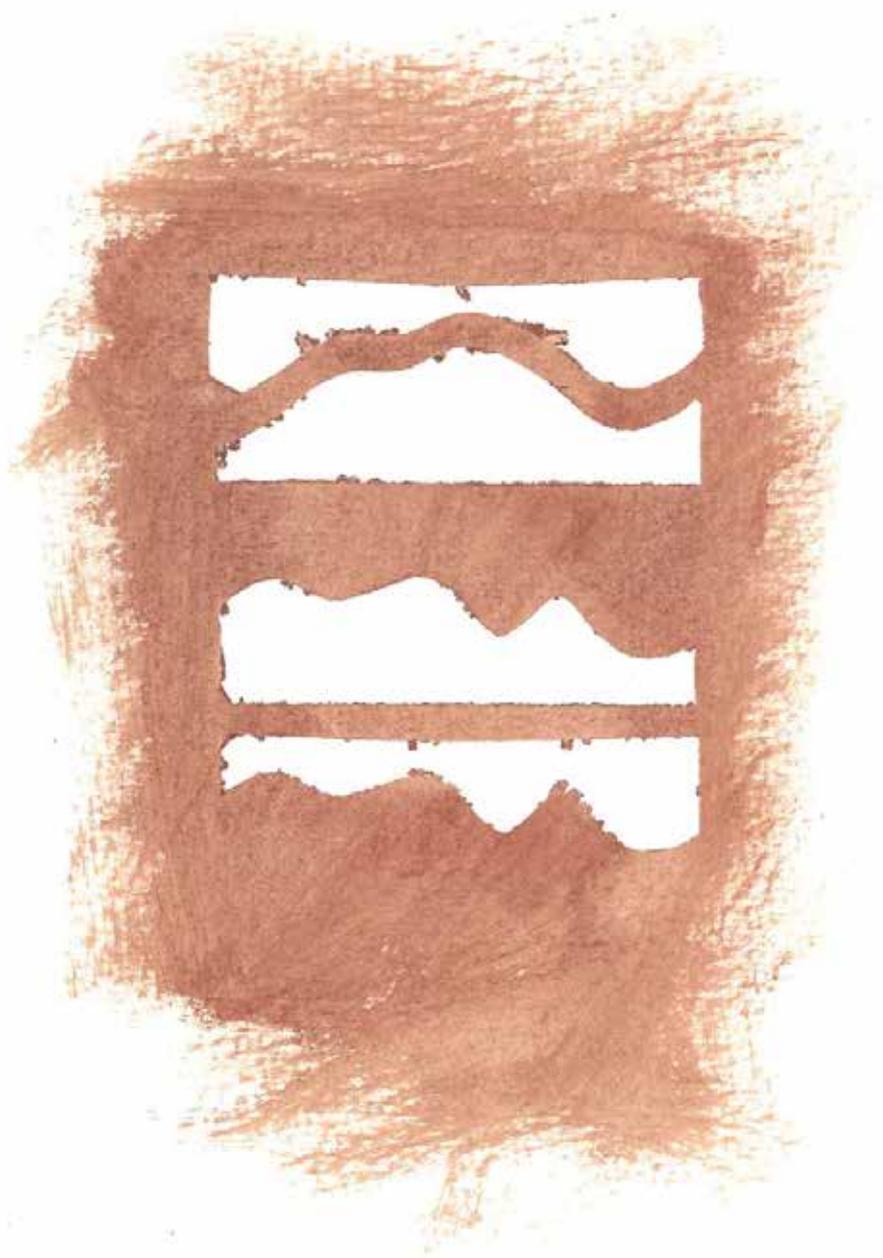
feverish pedestrian and rotting and broken and reparable embroidery
i thought of something risqué
autumnal calendar in each tree
my love organ is blue i am mortal mister blueblue

and the corpse erects a foreign country
erect erect towards other astronomies

rachel brooke

hannah klein





I Have Not Grown Soft

julie
gaynes

My babysitter locked me in a silent room and said she wouldn't let me out until my cheeks were dry. Who wants to hear you cry without reason? she asked. *No one.* And so I toughed it up and tapped it in for good.

Years later, she haunted me at my grandfather's funeral, leading me through his nursing home where his old friends sat in the dining room, heavy with skin, waiting to die with plates full of stale cookies.

She sat me down at a table full of relatives, served me tea and sang me his favorite song, belting while the piano tinkled along with soul. When my eyes grew damp, she slapped my cheek and stuffed my mouth with cake.

Outside—it was winter—she appeared in my grandfather's favorite rocking chair, puffing one of his old cigars, smoking a cigarette, smoking a cigarette, whiskey. She patted her head to make sure her comb-over wasn't frozen and blew me a kiss.

Then her body convulsed on the rocking chair as she suffered her first heart attack, second, third. Her mouth contorted from oral cancer and she attended the family picnic, quaked, shuddered, won a game of Scrabble, cringed at the final stroke and roared *It's not for dummies.*



paul miller gamble

zack knoll



Hot Strawberry

The sunrise had two suns in it and they both fell through the window. Like all mornings in the morning the sky would drain of darkness as the first pale sun began its arc overhead. The second followed in a swoop, and always they'd line up to peek through the window of her very small house, spread out on the mat where she slept, and wake her up. The same time every morning, with their soft light and no heat. Neither sun could press enough warmth to thin the frost that skated over the cliffs she lived on, and her mat didn't quite do, but she got by.

There wasn't much in her very small house – it was outfitted for only one – but there were quilts and quilts she'd sewn herself, pancaking her bed and strung up on her walls. The girl was very good at making quilts because she had time to be. They were all gray, all gray patches with dark stitching of each kind of angle she'd seen in the mountains around her, so crooked and scribbled that it seemed like it should be stone draped over her shoulders. But they were thick and cradling. Sometimes she would bury her face in the ones insulating her walls and whisper things into them, like what she was thinking about, like, "I really like this color," and "I wish I had more cereal to eat." The girl had some other colors of thread, like purple and gold, but she'd never used them and didn't know what to use them for. She would wrap herself in a quilt after spilling out of bed, then perch herself on a jutting rock to eat her breakfast.

She was sitting there, cross-legged, with a sun directly above each of her shoulders, when she saw the floating strawberry. It bulged out of the side of a cloud, first, then drifted into a whole ripe fruit, shining as if with dew and slowly bloating bigger. She thought about it in her breakfast cereal, the fat red that would drip juice drips down her chin, but her bowl was already clean and empty. She slid her finger idly around its rim as she watched the strawberry morph into a huge balloon. A stream of orange light umbrellaed out of the bottom into the basket tied below. Inside it stood a boy in a t-shirt. The entire fruit was suddenly above her, juicing, hovering.

“Hello down there!” the boy called to her, peering over his basket with hair whipping in the heavy wind and large, oval eyes behind his goggles.

Her fingers slipped and the bowl dropped, scraping short clatters down the rock. “Hello.” She dragged her eyes away from the unbroken bowl and towards him.

“Beautiful day, isn’t it!” He gestured around them in the small whistling of the wind, then dropped his arms flatly under her held gaze. “You wouldn’t happen to know where I am? I’ve been – ”

The girl shrugged and hugged her knees under her quilt, slowly scuffing her shoes against the rock, back and forth.

“There isn’t a name?” he asked, frowning.

“I’ve never heard one.”

“But you live here?”

“Yes.”

“Oh. See, I’ve been traveling for several, well, I’m not sure how many – I was keeping a journal but then I knocked into some trees on my way into this mountain range, and, of course, got right buffeted around and now I’ve lost my pen. It was a nice one. Fountain. See, it’s been several or many days at least. I was just wondering if you’d happen to know where I’ve been.”

The girl noticed that his shirt was wrinkled and torn, and she noticed that his shirt was purple.

“Where you’ve been?”

“Where I am, yes.”

“I don’t know where you’re from.”

Her eyes were moon cups below him, and he looked away.

"Would you like to come down? I have some food. I have some cereal if you'd like to join me for breakfast. I only have one bowl but you can use it. You can use the spoon too. I'll use a fork! It'll be a pleasure. We can talk. I was just about to eat," she said, smiling close-mouthed, hopeful.

"Oh. Oh, well, I would, but I have no shoes. The rocks seem awfully sharp." The boy scratched at his head, knocking his hair flat.

"They're not so bad, really. Look." She stood up with a quilty flourish and hopped lightly around the rocks below him, impish, on her toes then tilting back on her heels, a diagram of a dance. He pressed his lips together fatly, slightly.

"I wouldn't want to impose."

"It's no imposition!"

He shook his head quickly. "My feet wouldn't hold up," he said. A gap stretched out between them like a long, thick stick of bubblegum, and his face glowed slightly red in the cast of the balloon above him.

The boy glanced up at the crossing second sun, took a breath and set his shoulders, snapping the elastic on his goggles. "Say, I better be going. The wind's about to change." He bent inside his basket and clanking sounds clogged up the air, metal clatters spilling over the basket's rim like the tufts of his hair peeking out, fuzzy spiked mountains against the thin sky. He stood up quickly.

"But – say – you wouldn't happen to have an extra jacket or something warm? It gets real cold up here, in the balloon, especially nights. I've only got this t-shirt; it's pretty thin, you know; I could do with some extra warmth, if you have any."

She was still, her arms anchored tight around her knees, just looking up at him.

"Especially in these mountains, you know." He trailed off, then quick blinked several times.

The girl picked at the hem of her quilt and shook her head firmly.

"No, I don't have a jacket. I don't have any jackets at all."

The Off Night (iv)

It's raining, it's pouring,
the old man can't sleep a wink.
He went to bed with an ocean
of dreams sloshing in his head,
and got up in the morning, exhausted.

galen beebe



cole hager

star slinger
digital photograph

nicolas hen



THINGS

painting
busk
children
trash
canvas
games
4D art
sex
contacts
modules

A painting C

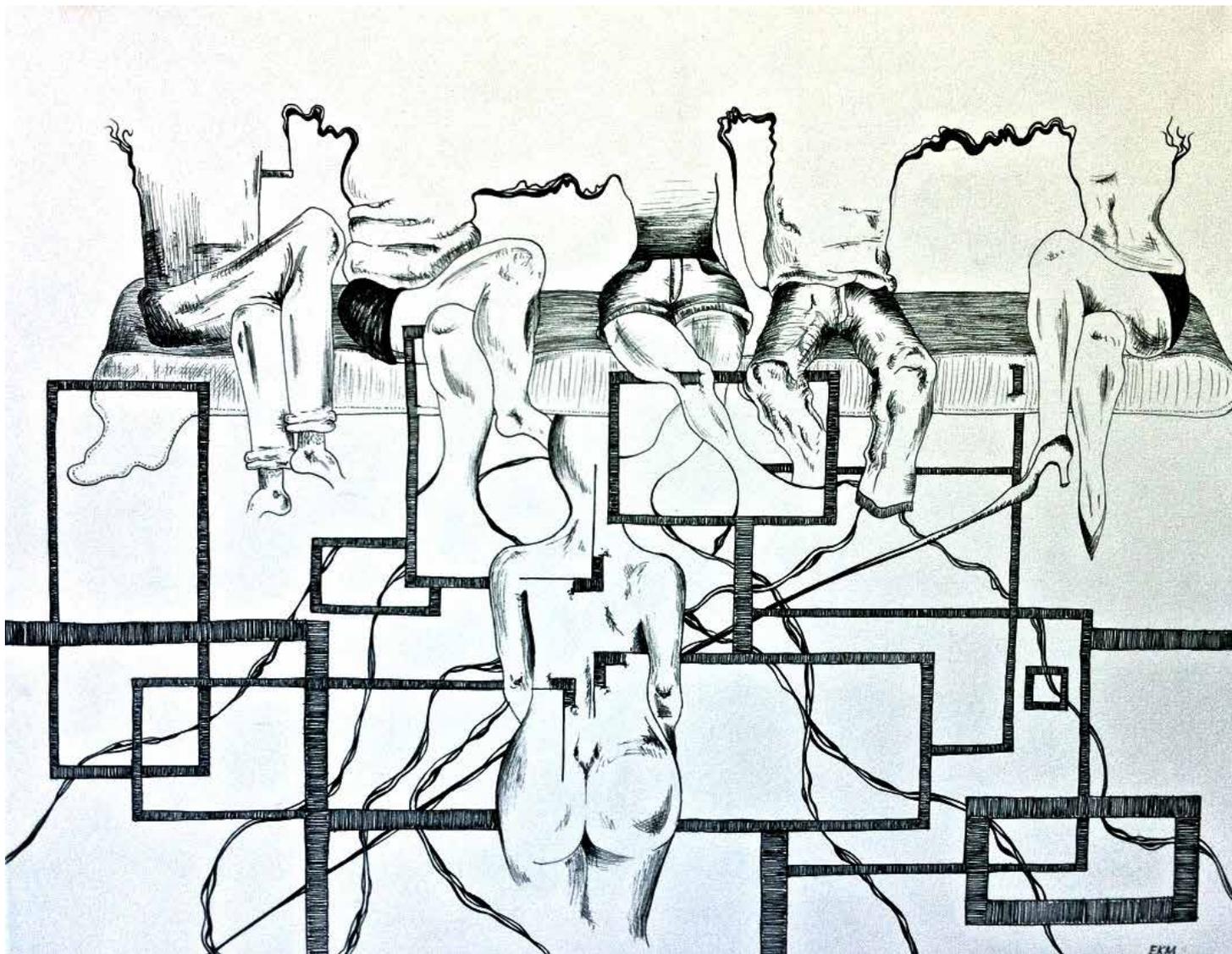
Jerusalem

Bartok Concerto for Orchestra

The shoes of the fisherman's wife are some jive ass slippers
isfahan

saul alpert-abramms

THINGS was discovered in Oberlin's Special Collections, tucked between the front cover and fly leaf of the 15th edition of John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Boston: Cummings & Hilliard and J.T. Buckingham, 1813.



a bit of fabricated nostalgia:

[side a]

(1) *a telephoned conversation* (2) I would like to post an ad, please, if you could write this down, as I say it, with an eye toward fidelity, for cassettes and devices that can play cassettes, and old car stereos, and janky headphones and old 45s, I suppose, while you're at it, and for those silly keyboards, what are they called, the **casios**, I think, and don't write down the parts where I'm stuttering, obviously, and for tapes—did I say tapes—like for a VCR—but cassettes too, if I'd (3) forgotten to mention—and for just any sort of speakers, really, and broken TVs, and hell those instant cameras, the **polaroids**, and for any and all toys, provided they were minted before I don't know '98, broken or otherwise, remember to put, and for just generally a whole bunch (4) of old cassette tapes, you know those things, like from a few years ago, your car might be able to play them, actually, if it's old enough, which let's face it, I mean, you work for the paper after all, and alright so print that, and as a 'want ad', which I am sorry I should have specified before. (5) *a response remitted through traditional post, which was appreciated* (6) greetings, of the highest speculative accord! I am writing w/r/t your recent want ad in the 'gazette', the one entitled "I am not entirely sure I agree a want ad needs a title, and don't print that," with which I agree, incidentally. as it turns out, I have just the most profoundly annoying collection of tapes available in my garage! (7) we're beyond boxes here, my friend; these guys are organized into towers. towers of them! and I say 'organized', but of course

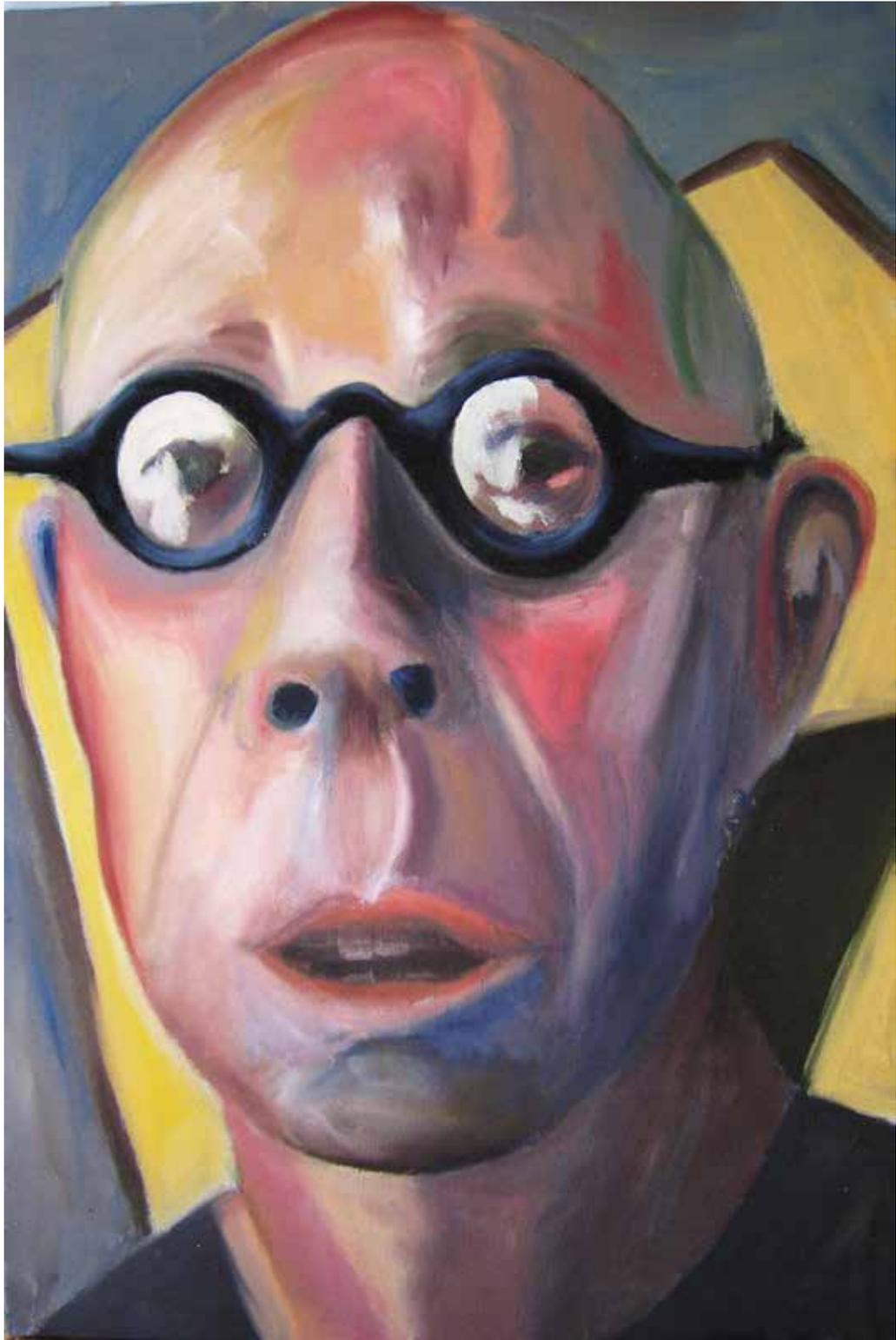
[side b]

(8) I don't mean anything of the sort, for I don't know fuck all about what's in there (although I glance at it when I'm bored, or particularly nostalgic for the time before my uncle died, and thus I possessed a functional garage). I believe I saw a tape by the *cocteau twins*, although I could be mistaken, because I simply do not care for music of any kind, let only these damnable tapes that of which I promise (9) I am very much looking forward to being relieved. my uncle passed a way a few years ago, although I didn't know him at all, which makes his bequeathing of these tapes (and the accompanying passage in his will, fond as it so disturbingly was) all the stranger. I must be honest, though, because it is a virtue that I prize, that I am to have a yard-sale this very weekend, with the express and fervent intent of ridding myself of these idiotic skyscrapers once and for all. it will be an all-day affair, the tone of which I have decided (10) will be informal and confrontational, because I like to meet new people, aggressively, actually, but only in relaxed environments (I become sweaty and conversationally ineffectual if put under any sort of pressure whatsoever. this is why, I'll say now, that I will not tolerate any haggling of any kind, which I find accentuates my nervous tendencies. you know, of course, how desperate I am to move these tapes, and would thus win any sort of 'haggle', were it to occur, which please see to it that it doesn't). I shall leave it (11) at that, for I fear I have rambled too long, suffice it to say that the sale (12) will take place in my yard this *friday and saturday*, if indeed my no-nonsense salesmanship has failed to move these recordings out of my garage (in which I suspect is my bicycle, which I've lost, and which I'm tentatively preparing to have back). if indeed your analog tape lust remains unsatiated, which I do not understand, but which (13) perhaps you could explain with more detail on *friday*—or perhaps *saturday*, remember—then please do stop by. I will be the one in the hat, an article that I positively demand all house guests temporarily stow, for I do not like being upstaged. until the weekend, perhaps, —jerry.

liner notes:

the current glut of college-aged youth contains, as always, a subset of the counter-culturally minded. to this end (the [twitter](#) generation still sat in the adolescent dugout), an even subber set has taken on the mantle of contrarian, coalescing (amiably it seems) around a sort of anomalously analog aesthetic. co-opting and re(and de)contextualizing the clunky staples of the not-at-all-distant past, this brave or possibly bored collection of artistic strip-miners have toiled to form what has been called, with what I am told is some authority, 'DIY culture'. bolstered by a collision of shared aesthetic predilections (this 'cassette culture' seems to have a roughly aligned affinity for hazy ambience, low-fi production, and [the beach boys](#)) and the sudden, widespread availability of digital composition tools, would-be 'do it yourselfers' often make it their mission to admix and inhabit the modes still sitting at the top of the technological scrap-heap. it is, one could argue with minimal resistance, a hardware driven extension of the musical practice known as 'sampling', which emerged from the roughly-as-distant DJ explosion of the '90s. appropriating sounds of other music, both the current (the remix, often) and the dated, sampling (like the DIY trend) plucks sounds, verses, and even melodic structures out of their cozy, 'finalized' contexts; they are, in so doing, repurposed toward the whims and ends of the sampler, creating—or consciously declining to create—an implicit sort of reinvigorating musical commentary. a particular love for the cassette, a defiantly outmoded form of musical recording, seems to ooze from this movement, the loosely tenable center of which has birthed music so deliberately crackly, so fascinated with the notion of physical distribution, and so deeply, self-consciously dedicated to nostalgia, that it's willfully re-migrated *back off the internet* and onto the ever-grainy strips of magnetic tape. indeed, tape labels have emerged, dedicated entirely to the production of limited run tape prints of blogophylic DIY'ers and their largely web-based jams. the effect is by turns puzzling, stupid, and exciting, and largely reflects (in a nice sort of closed circle of intent) the aesthetic interests of its practitioners. [squeem](#) is apparently composed with this culture in mind.

eve peyser-sappol



66

Old Dad
oil on canvas

The Off Night (v)

Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John,
went to bed wearing his new flannel pajamas
with the firetrucks on them
and his favorite pair of socks.

galen beebe

Ghazal

Nostalgia was beheaded. Idols lay scattered in terrified heaps outside the shrines of this land.
Below dawns streaked with blood and ink, ablutions were performed with the crimes of this land.

Despite the neatness of exile, I swirl past massacres into breakfast tea.
For a prologue to Hell, look no further than the pantomimes of this land.

What further belief will they amputate tonight, Ghalib?
They have made an infidel of me, a Palestine of this land.

The betrayal of prayers tore open bigger wounds.
Is that why the riots needed to Partition the time of this land?

Inshallah, may the dregs of past empires salve these wounds.
Such are the little games; the pastimes of this land.

The old revolutionaries have bandaged their palms.
They are the refugees of temples, drawing the blurred lines of this land.

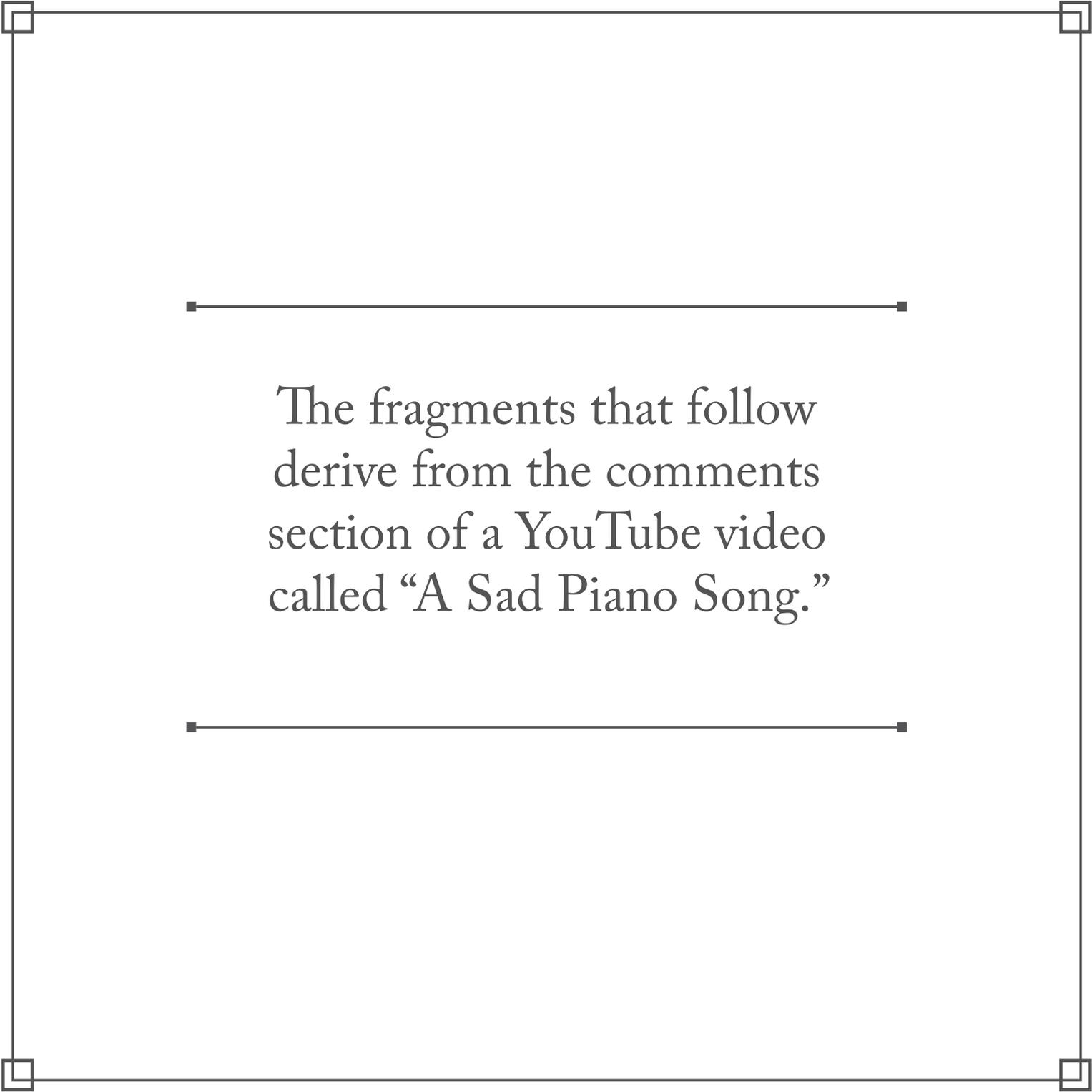
“At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps,” – the cry of the wounded gazelle
storms “the solemn moment.” Deserts continue to invade; led by the dusty spines of this land.

These are Saksham’s experiments with infidelity.
Perhaps wine has assailed the last minaret; I have come to believe the lies of this land.





a sad piano song



The fragments that follow
derive from the comments
section of a YouTube video
called “A Sad Piano Song.”

Five out of five stars
for the soothing sensation.

Melancholy runs in my family.

Jesus wants to save you, and you
can never ever ever ever
change that.

Love is a real great thing.

You should keep hoping.
weak smile

One day a strange figure
appeared on our lawn. Lucky for
us, it was a heaven messenger.

There is no stopping
the cancer witch.

We believe that your soul is in
danger, and that we know
how to save it.

We believe that your soul is in
danger, and that we know
how to save it.

In Minecraft I had nine wolves.
I tried to get them to stand up
but they did not. Realizing what
I must do, I grabbed a diamond
sword, stood there face to face
with them, closed my eyes, and
clicked. Now I have no one. I
hope to find more, but today I'm
too heartbroken to go looking.

There may be a purpose for
the spleen, but the appendix
and the coccyx obviously
serve no purpose.

Some people prefer to
confide in their barkeepers.

I'm no Christian, but life
certainly does seem like a trial.

I suppose you could call me
a budding novelist.

I don't give a damn if people say
to me, "Dragons don't exist."

You have no right.

My, such wonder! The grass
moves in a lonely swaying.

Why the antagonism toward an
intimate and tender creed?

I'm sorry about your loss of
relationship with this young boy.
I hope he will be happy in the
future of the pastaways.

A square frame with four small squares at the corners. Two horizontal lines with small squares at their ends are positioned above and below the central text.

May you sleep without
mares in mind.

meagan day

AkondudeismyIM
TKDKing1000
FeverMickey
Suuz1997
NazcaWolf13
Sexyhotro
Luigiman270
Doodums19
NathanTheGr8
Taarable
Pkinchy
Dragonslayer9
Musicksangel
MrEpiccowful
Bbbizarro
Tantawi1992
Shiigurl67
LadyDoloris

rebecca dewitt



