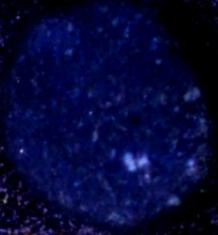
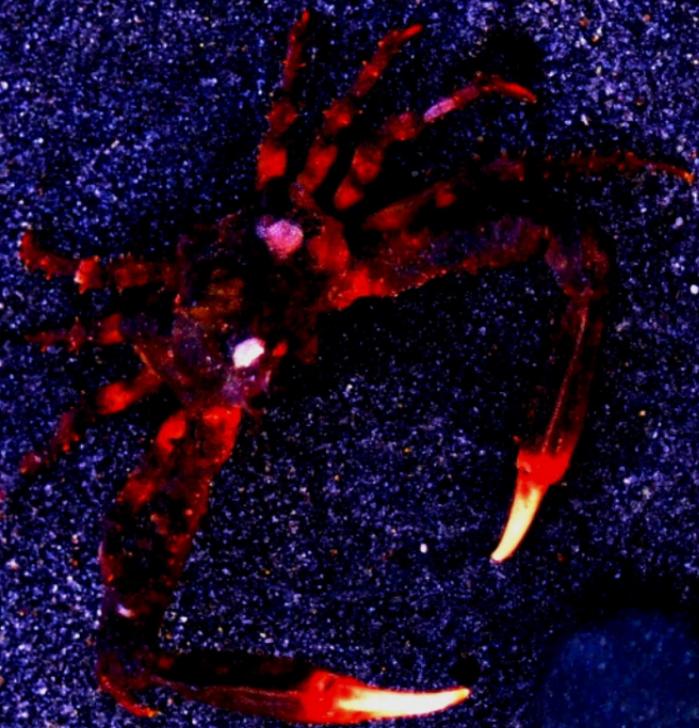


**THE BEND**  
13TH EDITION





{ THE BEND }

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The Bend

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## { LETTER FROM THE EDITORS }

Dear Readers,

We think this year's issue of The Bend has got a bit of magic to it. This sample of creative writing from the University of Notre Dame MFA program has us proud to be among such talented writers and artists. While you flip through these pages we hope you'll be as excited and enchanted as we are.

Sincerely,

The Editors

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{ Jace Brittain }

## THE HOUSE WITH THE LAUGHING WINDOWS

– a dream after Majora's mask

When there was an order to things, it wasn't so repetitive.

There used to be an order to things. Now, it's so repetitive.

There used to be an order to things before it got so repetitive.

Born. Bellow. Kill. Die. Haunt.

The First Day, maybe, I remember saying, Today feels just like the first day maybe. For that reason, it really was the First Day. It's the repetition, what I always say, and that it's a dreamer's amnesia. Everything feels familiar, so nothing is. But that feels so senselessly enigmatic, especially on the First Day when the music feels lighter than the air, which itself breathes a little easier on the first day, and everybody has a little skip to their step and satisfied sighs to their labor. There's purpose to the First Day. A new leaf absent the knowledge of its having been turned. But I know and he knows. That's why his face exists out of time, that's why his movement deceives the eye. Smiles I name him for his bone saw grin. He rattles and giggles against his own edges almost so that he disappears and is born whole just a breath to the left from where he was and always laughing, ready to pop what a gas, what a terrible fate he he ha ha. What a day to be born and again and again.

Inspired by recursion to test my own boundaries, I loose arrows in a constant stream yawping that in a universe of infinite possibilities I will certainly pin at least one sad character to a tree. Full of arrows dumbly maybe

doesn't even know grasping for rupees that I freed with my blasts. What a character, what a card, I would say, see you tomorrow, Sebastian. Or maybe one shot'll catch some mythical bird by head, tails, or talon. Maybe I'll catch myself on another First Day. The First Day goes how it was going to today. Always productive to think about the First Day and how it goes, since so often that's how First Days go.

The First Day goes.

The First Day went. Don't forget to write! Ha ha ho ho.

And other days? Clocks running circles. The laughing's higher pitched now, or I just know so well how things end that my brain rushes through while my thumbs twiddle around one another. Even these changes get predictable. Wait, that's it: while dodging old bone saw and his titters, some things change in predictable ways.

Old bone saw and his jitters. I bawl out a wild whoop whenever I see him, run off like I have something dreadful and important to do. Really like everyone just burning daylight below the killing moon.

The world destroyer rock aflame and now so close could paint a face on it.

I paint a face on it.

When the moon eats us all up whole laughing and teeth, I wake up from the same dream. And the others carry on as if I never was involved with their schemes. Whatever satisfaction I get from it might as well be ashes in the wind. I file my accomplishments in even stacks, and I say: light it up, Smiles. They'll make the same new plans from the old dumb ashes. In their fleeting thoughts, I'm just a ghost. Anyway: they have plenty of those, so I'm just another ghost. While I think about their schemes.

And the tones which are so repetitive and sing me to sleep again.

And that order lost in washes of programmed shortcomings. Analog paralysis.

Facial blindness and forgetting. I bellow, don't die.

I'm trailing faces, takes two hands to hold it all together. I'm leaving grins wet and drying behind me wherever I go. Hee hee hee hee hahahahaha.

There are easy tricks.

And there are flicked flame falls which cast just the right shadow and disappear but burned in my memories. I'll follow along, I'll scribble it down, get me a stamp in the meantime. These cheesy grins are starting to look the same. Sing me to sleep smiling.

{ Carina Finn }

## AS I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP

Around the door to my room there is a crack of light  
that spills over me like a pool of rosewater sucked from the stems  
of roses. Out the window darkness makes a crease in itself inside  
a shade made of darkness it shields the night from mourning.  
I don't want to go to sleep I want to stay up dreaming dreams.

I press stones into the belly of my love who runs away across a moor  
upon a pony who eats nothing but violets.  
I catch a fish in a stream and thank it before I eat it.  
I hunt a bear in a forest and befriend it. Then I die and a gazelle lies  
right beside me gives me life.

What have I done to deserve such tenderness from the animals? All  
I am is a princess from someone else's dream.  
Still, bird after bird sits beside me on a bench in a courtyard outside  
a temple of sacred women. I am dressed entirely in white glimmering  
as stars and a little girl dressed in white satin

approaches me and together we look at the cosmos making sense  
of the future & the past.  
It is a good deed we do on this planet. I touch my  
burnt hand to the lock on the door that keeps me.  
I wish I had a tower.

But I lie in a bed on the floor of a house where I am watched over by  
a good black queen.

When the spirits come for me as nightly they do wood is burned oil  
lamps are lit hay ash and fish bones citrine and pearls  
strawberries and sage we put the cups and saucers away but never

the dinner plates. And I hop across the threshold on one foot like an  
injured bird. A white steed in the stable of the good queen whinnies  
for me when I rise before dawn to confront my life ask it whether or  
not we shall fight the battle the answer is always yes  
except when the good queen draws her sword

drags it across the silver plate of my chest. Takes a little blood to drink.  
Weakens me. There's a challenge in this —

{ Danna Ephland }

## WHEN I WAS A BALLERINA

– a *pas de deux* with D.A. Powell

Because I have photographs, I dismember  
dancing in the paneled room, limber

peg up the wall, nose to my shin, careless knot blips  
open at my rankle. I unwind satin, read lips

from wings, from the other broom, that family  
(like it or not) offered first lessons in form, in hominy.

My favorite stops the quick ones, foot flicks  
in any dissection, the length of my leg licked

high, slowly lowered. I burn toward the barre, rollover  
to the other hide throwing my left leg just as nigh, as if too hot covers

smothered in the tight. Blood flares at my cheeky  
profile on the spillover. These walls are what I wanted, picky

and predictable. I would have everything in sweet nines just like Madeline,  
like nuns, or an old man's drawings traced in kid-night gelatin.

## THIS OLD INSTRUMENT WITH ITS NEW CHARMS

I nod in the direction of the wings. I am thinking. I am leaving. The shape of consciousness and of art is time, of course, tracing a course through my body, long scar down my belly, organs that sigh and beat. I keep staring at my hands, they are not my hands. Bones threaten to fuse, enlist muscles for exit, moving away from melody. This old instrument with its new charms seduces me with its possibilities. No matter whose hands, every instrument changes, every performance evaporates into the open bodies of an audience, seated, then rising, they dissolve too, exiting through the lobby into the street, leaving me to toss the dirty costume in backstage laundry, makeup running down my face, splashed above the small sink drain. The stage door opens onto an alley.

{ Sarah Bowman }

## LEPIDOPTERA ECONOMICS

we behave  
we misbehave

borrow against the rivers, the air, the land, the imagined  
self

all the while knowing  
the same stream never flows through the same meadow

no matter  
torture the data

the herd upon the plain, ears prick  
whether to stampede, whether to lie down

anything can be justified  
the empire topples the village

the model realigns  
order is seductive when nothing is beyond

the forewing, the hindwing  
unfurling along the crease of existence

a luna moth emerges  
it climbs the sweetgum

and awaits the functioning of its wings  
offers this world one human week

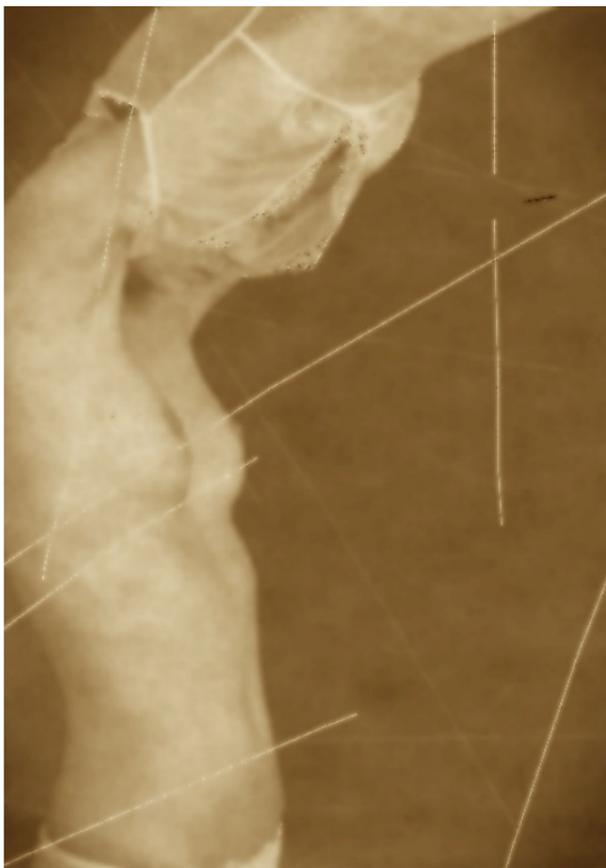
to fill the night sky with lime-green flight  
coating the underbelly of the leaves with eggs

you and I in that same half-light  
offer nothing to this world

but quiet love-making between a husband and a wife  
and we are crucified on the altar of commerce

{ Matthew Benedict }

## THE WOMAN IN THE YELLOW WALLPAPER



{ Evan Bryson }

## THE FUTURE

The fold-out chairs in the church basement were half full. Mostly young people, though a few seemed Patty's age. They looked—dazed. Or was it frightened? Why was her generation so affronted, so frozen, by the youth? It's true they wore very little clothing and talked fast and gestured sharply but Patty had an iPhone, too. She pretended to text while waiting in line. No one had money, she thought, and that was kinda pleasant? It was like winter that way: layers of coats democratized bodies: the thin looked fat, the fat looked fat, everyone orbited around an animal need not to freeze to death. And money was this other equalizer, this other shaper. You didn't come to a church basement in the middle of the week because you were spendthrift. Her sisters both had sons who moved home after college. Patty didn't have kids. It was something she and her husband had fought about. The kids did look scared. They had inherited a dying earth. All of that.

She wrote *Patricia* on her HI! MY NAME IS sticker—she reached for another sticker—she received a sulky look from the card-table attendant. She crossed out *Patricia* with three thick lines from the Sharpie, and in a smudgy, crimped script wrote *Patty* in the remaining space. This is why I don't go in for the Presbyterians, she thought. No levity, no improvisation. Then she mumbled, inaudibly, "Ex-husband," suddenly struck by his own off-putting sense of humor. One time he had witnessed a bloody collision in the street between two cyclists and likened it to a revue by Red Skelton.

This recollection combined with patter from behind and discordantly resonated: two young women were discussing birth control. "I'm on it," said one, "but I wake up and there's spots on my panties."

"Bloody spots?" asked the other girl. Patty shuffled along and they

followed.

“No, my *piss*,” said the first girl, clearly vexed. “No—*of course* blood.”

Her friend conceded: “I don’t know what’s worse than bloody spots on panties, but the word *panties* is like pretty fucking close.”

“You are a total bitch. I could have cancer.”

“Or a baby melting very slowly outside of you at night.”

Patty didn’t want to offer to the young women that they were in a *church*, though mostly because the last remark struck her as a fruitful premise. When she sat she did look over her shoulder. Oh, but they’re girls, she thought.

These *kids*—twenty-somethings—shifty, or sulky, many of them wearing coke-bottle glasses, they had about them an aura of dispossession. Patty reminded herself: we are poets, artists, singer-songwriter-types. I know in this month alone I’ve not gone to Arby’s for want of buying a book.

Patty gave herself two splurging options: fast-food or books.

The uniform was Dickensian. Too-small jackets with large buttons, V-neck shirts with stripes, chunky shoes with silver over the toe boxes or golden sparkling heels. Ostentatious, thought Patty, not Dickensian, though still befitting orphans. The urchinry. This word came to her. She was not judging, but. The young men had on pants as dark and tight as a matador’s. She corrected herself. Torero. How come she wanted to be a writer: the world has a proper name, a precise name, for each thing, every bit of creation is parceled out in a series of consonants and vowels, contained, married, sanctified, perfected.

Patty’s own marriage dissolved last winter. She consoled herself through the spring and summer by reading books about bull fighting; she developed quasi amorous designs, well, really these richly embroidered fantasies, of meeting a banderillero and shaping his twitching instincts in the blood sport so as to usher him to glory. She would shimmy off his close-fitting tights, the taleguilla, maybe with her teeth, and then wear them herself. Pull the crease into her own. How come she wanted to be a writer—rather, a success at writing. She wanted access to the places she was guaranteed (by dint of her ordinariness, and her living in a nowhere town) never to have access to. Her ex-husband had the romantic name of Troy and while they still talked—

texted—in fact he was already settled with a woman slightly younger, a CPA he had met while figuring out the nightmare of broken estate taxes.

She sat behind a young man wrapped in a cape of sorts, a muleta. She thought, What a nightmare, but tapped his shoulder anyway. “I like your cape,” she said to the young man when he turned around.

He was sucking on the rim of a cream soda. “Thank you!” he said. “I made it myself.”

“I love it—” she looked at his name tag “—Tarby.”

He looked at her name tag. “And I like your shaggy haircut, Patty.”

The topic for tonight’s Write Time, Write Now was The Future. And appended below in careful script: A Manifesto. God, she prayed, God, put a torero in my future.

She said: “Manifesto night,” grinning, touching pieces of her hair, putting hair behind her ear.

Tarby rolled his eyes a little. “Let’s hope it comes down from Marinetti himself.”

She continued beaming, not quite certain to whom Tarby had referred. She touched her hair some more. The night’s speaker arose from the small gathering. Conversation trailed off. A girl’s high, scarred laughter mottled into a rough cough.

The speaker took his place behind the lectern. Stoop-shouldered, sunken cheeks, black-garbed. Grizzled? Dysenteric? Patty generated nervous observation.

“You’re gonna have to fuck your way to the top,” said the rakish shadow. His mic hissed. “That’s the old story.”

Patty sunk four inches in her seat. Other people seemed rejuvenated by this opening remark.

The speaker continued: “Also the new story.” People nodded at him. “Take to your knees. If you have an ounce of talent, horde it like gold, secret it somewhere out of the prizing claws of the market, leave your mind and your peace—but: get your tongue out. You will need to get your tongue very strong. You will need to hum, and loll, you will need to lap a lot, and lap with your tongue for a very long time.

“They have,” the speaker took a moment to consider, “they have videos on the internet—these exercises you can do in your car—to roll your tongue.”

Patty’s face also sank, inwards—as though she was sucking a lime. She knew she looked fretful but she couldn’t relax her brow. If anything, she was becoming too aware of her forehead, its sweat, its furrows. And worse, she was too aware of her tongue; she wanted to hide from it, she wanted it out of her mouth, she seemed to be trying to swallow it. Her saliva had disappeared.

“The industry has a lot of dirty assholes and you’re going to need a strong tongue to clean them. These assholes have the usual lint fare, but they’re also a buffet of shit crusts, tissue pieces, a musky kind of fart distillate that’s seeped into a blankety braid of thick, coarse hair.” A slim man, a bull’s shadow rising behind him, thundering: “You’re gonna need spit. You’re gonna wanna stay hydrated. Think: a breakfast of shredded wheat. But instead of milk you’re going to top it with turds. Do I make myself clear?”

People nodded.

“Good! And you’re going to have to tuck into the feces-flavor until you get to the asshole-proper, at which point you may be asked to finger-fuck it.”

Patty thought she might cry. It was an infantile reaction, she knew, she should be more hip, more humorous, but it was so gross to think about, and so hopeless, too.

“And if you’re finger-fucking that asshole, it’s gonna get dirty again. It’s cyclical. It’s—um—it’s Hegelian. And there might be an accident. There might be an on-purpose-accident, which is just a regular, spiteful, shit-soaked unloading of pain in your hand, in your face, and you’re gonna have to eat through all of that, you’re gonna have to really tuck in, really show your strength, your unwillingness to compromise, and you’re gonna have to clean that peanut-buttery asshole with your mouth. It’s unsafe conduct. But, that’s what great writing is all about: great writing has never been averse to risk.”

The youth giggled, some. In a disappointed way. Someone in the audience called out “Butt sex!” and the youth giggled again, and the speaker graciously acknowledged his admirer with an “Amen.”

Tarby swiveled around and frowned at Patty. A sympathy frown.

She was very hot. Her stomach was an apple bobbing in acid. Last week’s

presentation at Write Time, Write Now was given by a very patient, very sweet woman who talked about using the county archives to enrich period detail in historical fiction. In the church basement, she thought. She felt shame, a hot towel of it, drape itself about her hunched back—burning shame. Wetly. To believe this series would have helped her develop a unique talent and also get her out of the house on a weeknight! To believe also the series would introduce her to a book-loving man. The darkling speaker (for she suddenly saw him as a demon) was talking about other uses of the internet.

“Use it. Oh, god,” he said, “use it all the time. Use it to bully your friends into sleeping with you or someone you know: you need to create an emotional density among your relationships, on and off-line, conducive to a perpetual chain of emotional blackmail. If you want published, you will need, yes sir, you will always need more, and varied, entanglements of pain, jealousy, insinuation, desperation. If you wake up tomorrow morning thinking, *I have not sown enough destruction*, you are absolutely right. Sow sow sow. This is our sowing season. Find a patch and pillage it.”

Well, that is just confusing, thought Patty. She had sixty or so friends on Facebook and most of them were immediate family members, or people from high school she had long forgotten, and all of them seemed to live two or three states away. They owned pontoon boats and flourished. She used the internet to look at magazine competitions, to look up movie show times, to catch up on the local news and also New York City’s news, that is until the pay wall at the *Times* caught up to her. Patty used her iPhone mostly as a GPS navigator, although her trips were mostly to places she already knew how to get to, places she’d always gone. But it was nice to have this new voice, this new technology, to assist her in the old things, to tell her about her past in a sparkling up-to-the-minute manner. “Turn Left in seven hundred feet onto Buckshore South Avenue.” A very proper robot-kind-of lady talking to her about the trip to the grocery store. Patty thought, That’s “The Future.” Someone reports your life to you in real time, or slightly faster than real time, to offer course correction. That would be handy—

Somebody from the audience called out: “What about death?”

“What about angels?” replied the speaker in a toxic mewl. “What about

the devil? Listen to me, just, uh, pay very close attention to this next part. Death is not an option in this industry. You can die tomorrow in a grocery store, your fat hearts can just stop beating blood, I don't know, all those tears you cried for the end of fucking Twinkies might fucking drown you, and then I will come to you, I will come to your still body, I will come to your graveside in the night, and I will raise you. I will raise you up like sweet Christ himself, I will raise you up and fill your head with more trash, and let you blog about your near-death experience and get your page-views way up, and get you feeling good about yourself, again. I would do that for each of you because I love you. I love you. I love just some of you. Now—now, be mercenary about death and dying. Be as mercenaries unto others. Just, steal—steal something, I don't care what."

Patty had chewed down a thumbnail to its quick. She sucked on her fingertip and remembered a writing camp she'd gone to for one week when she was a young lady. This was a university extension program for teenagers, and it was on invitation, and she felt enormously self-possessed and charismatic, she felt enormous self-potential, for having been recommended to this program, to be with other writers—to be with fast-friends who love books and penmanship, who liked to pretend whole other worlds, and make up zany dialog, and have characters magicked out of thin air.

Her grandmother had paid twenty-five dollars for her to attend all five days, and she was just in love for those first four days, just humming every minute, behind an electric typewriter, behind her box lunch, behind her new gal pals and a boy—oh, this small young man with a waving cowlick. On the last day, when she turned in her story for the anthology the directors would mail out later that summer, one of the staff, an older woman who really pushed for silence during the free-writing hour, who really *screamed* for that silence, she said: "But this is too long, honey. There's a four-page cap on stories. What is this story? Nine pages? Honey, photocopying ain't free and it surely ain't fair for the other writers here. Don't you have anything better than this?"

And Patty remembered when her grandmother and mom picked her up that evening, to drive her over for pizza and ice cream for a job well done,

she attempted to hide her distress by speaking very little and very softly, and chewing ravenously on her fingernails. Only when her ring finger was bleeding did her mom turn in the seat to ask her, “Patty, what on earth are you so nervous about? Land sakes, you are eating your fingers!” And that’s when Patty began to weep bitterly. She was in the seventh grade and had decided then that she would never be a real writer. “My story was too long!” she wailed. And here she was, strangely unrecovered, and feeling like a slightly bigger failure at life, listening to a goon prattle on about meat, or about defiling icons, or—

The mysterious speaker had moved on to something else. She couldn’t quite get the gist of it:

“I been down that road,” he said, “I been up it, I drag raced it once or twice, thrice, for the ladies, the ladies waving flags, the extreme and exciting danger of the hunt. The hunt for poon. I’m a poon hunter.”

He seemed to be summarizing a kind of tropic Angry Young Man activity. Or, it came to Patty, a scene from the movie *Grease*. Maybe tonight’s presentation will have a musical component. Maybe the sinister man will break into song.

“I kissed my girl right on the lips and told her she was the only one and then I put my sunglasses on, my visor down, I put my racing gloves on, I turned the radio way up,” he said.

Patty surprised herself by raising her hand. She kept it raised while the speaker continued to describe a dusty nighttime game of chicken, or a race, with an underdog kind of GTO. Other people seemed a little lost. Some of the youth had pulled out their phones and were surreptitiously checking their messages, sending messages, smirking.

Patty waved her hand. Finally she said, softly, “Excuse me?”

The speaker ignored her: “We come up over the lip of the cliff, the stars are burning so bright they are practically beating against our eyes like drums alight, like kerosene barrels, when my engine stalls—”

“Excuse me,” said Patty. She cleared her throat. “Excuse me.”

The speaker said, “WHAT.”

She said, “I wanted to say I am poor. I have a not-great-job and will

probably be laid off soon anyway.”

He replied: “FINE. YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE.” He was speaking in a sepulchral voice. Maybe for his prepared remarks he had one voice, but without them, his whole persona fell apart and he took to shouting like a ghost in a tomb.

“Yes,” said Patty, “it is frustrating. But anyway. I used to write because I thought it would make me attractive and funny. Or deep.”

“IT DID NOT.”

Patty’s lips turned down but she continued: “Yes, because I had, I guess, attached its importance to its reception. Um, to how people would read me?”

“NO,” he said. “NO NO NO. I ANSWERED THIS POINT IN THE BEGINNING WHEN I COMMANDED EVERYONE BE ASS-LICKING WHORES.”

Patty shook her head. She said, “Yes, but I can’t just, like, move to the big city and start—start—doing—*that*. I’m still paying off my car, for one thing.”

“SET IT ON FIRE.”

“No, that’s not—the car isn’t what’s important here. I guess I just wanted to say that it’s all well and good to be in a community of writers, just like this one, here in the basement of the Haver Hill Presbyterian Church”—she put special accent on *church*—“but maybe I should like my own writing first. Before coming here, into this—”

“VIPER’S NEST.”

“No, just, this basement wanting ... wanting people to like me for my writing? They’re just words on a page. And, um, they’re, you know, better than the text messages I get from my husband, as far as any words go. The stories I tell myself.” The color raised in her cheeks. “The stories about the hot bull fighters. Oh ... but ... I don’t really know what I want,” Patty said. She saw the craft table with its donuts and coffee. “I want a donut and some coffee,” she said. She stood up with her things.

“YOU HAVE NOT EARNED THESE SENTIMENTS,” said the man behind the lectern.

She crossed the room to the snacks. She felt she was no longer wasting

her time. The sense of this was extraordinary.

He pounded the lectern. He said, “YOU HAVE NOT EARNED THIS ENDING.”

The youth followed her over. They talked about the lame spread but started eating it.

“THIS JUST—THIS JUST ENDED, LIKE THAT? WITH PEOPLE EATING AND FEELING A LITTLE BIT MORE IN CHARGE OF THEIR LIVES?”

Patty texted her ex-husband. She wrote: *story hour @ church got weird*. He might text a day later. It was infuriating but then she couldn’t stop herself, and he couldn’t help himself, and it was utter shit but expected and, in the end, manageable.

“EAT YOUR DINGLEBERRIES YOU FAT DUMB DOGS!” said the speaker.

Patty put her iPhone in her purse. Tarby handed her a coffee. He was very sweet and very obviously homosexual. Without prompting she said, “It’s true I’ve been writing about hot young bull fighters. I’m on chapter seven of my novel about a cool night in southern Spain. My hero gets gored.”

Tarby laughed genuinely. He was sincere when he said, “That does sound very hot.”

“SAVE ME SOME DINGLEBERRIES YOU WHORES,” admonished the speaker.

{ Luis Lopez-Maldonado }

## ON COOKING & WINE & DEATH

Baby gold onions cut in halves  
In thirds in six parts  
*Los tomates rojos* split open  
Like legs of a virgin  
& I wonder how many names  
They have for *mi*—  
*Gringo! Pocho! Joto! Puto! Loco*—  
Shitty linoleum beneath my brown feet  
Full of cuts & calluses from ballet  
*Me vale madre!*  
A fourth glass of Merlot  
& I start seeing double  
Seeing my reflection in boiling water:  
Sliced testicles & hairy vaginas split in half  
Pursed nipples here & there  
Inverted anuses & fetuses inside mason jars  
In all stages of development.

Outside! Heavy sheets of snow  
Fat squirrels grinding on acorns  
& in the distance a faroff star expires,  
*La estrella de la eterna salida!*  
Is this how you become a poet?  
Notice crap around you that others don't?

Drink & cook *desnudo* in some apartment?  
Jackoff as you wait for the potatoes to soften?  
I know this: Language does not survive death  
& I will die with a thousand sunsets at my back  
Let me start over: Like this brown rice  
I too will be flipped & turned,  
Reversed a thousand times  
& I will go away to come back  
& cut more tomatoes & peel more potatoes,  
Knife in my right hand  
& black crows will wait outside my window  
Hoping to see *mi* burn that rice.

# I AM CECIL!

— *For all the colored boys that are into boys*

*Huizache* flowers drown the ground  
The whiteness of the walls bleeds  
Into my body, waist deep in *poesia*,  
My brown voice screams inside  
A bottle of 1800 *Tequila*.

I sip on vintage black wine  
And stare at graffiti scarred windows—  
*Joto!* Get out of my town—  
And the day never ends, never stops  
Counting itself, never notices  
Poetry as homophobia.

Humid Spanish moss hangs  
Against blueberry skin,  
And you speak to me  
In the languages of crickets,  
Blow a cold breeze my way:  
White stars bend down  
And I light a Camel Crush.

The birds mock us tonight  
Singing in vowels unintelligible  
To us: fuck inclusion!

I want to scream and weep and roar  
as if we were already dead—  
In the distance of an awkward corner,  
Orchids dissolve, as if made of sugar.

{ Sarah Roth }

## MEAT CAKE

My father is famous for his meat pies. Every year he wins the blue ribbon at the county fair. The formula, he says, is a quick slaughter.

“The meat stays tender. It isn’t roughed up with adrenaline.”

“This pork tastes like childhood,” Ms. Wilson, the schoolteacher, once said, licking her fingers.

“This beef tastes like good balsa,” Mr. Garvey, the town carpenter, once said, eyes rolling back.

This year, my father baked the biggest meat cake anyone had ever seen. It looked like the kind of cake a Marilyn Monroe impersonator would slink out of to surprise the bachelor. It was bubble-gum pink and frothy-topped. It sat on a huge pan in the bed of our pickup truck. We had to strap it in tightly so it wouldn’t fall out on the way to the fairgrounds.

At the fair, my father handed out tin plates. They clanked as the town scrambled to gather around the giant meat cake. The whole fairground smelled like meat cake. Everyone wanted a piece. Everyone ate a piece, thick slabs of meat and frosting piled onto steel discs. We started with forks but none of us used utensils for long.

After one bite, the mayor gave my father the key to the city.

“This meat cake tastes like municipality,” he said.

Slobber pooled into the cleft of his chin. Slobber pooled down his neck and into the V of his sweater. He stood at the microphone on stage, tin plate in one hand. As he strung the key to the city around my father's neck, he licked his plate clean. The mayor grinned at my father and licked his lips.

"I want more meat cake," he said.

I was slobbering, too. I couldn't help it. I wanted more cake. We all wanted more cake. Because I was his daughter, my father let me take a second slice. I ate it in a single chomp. Meat dribbled onto my dress. Drool poured from the corners of my mouth.

The News Channel 8 anchor walked up to my father and punched him in the shoulder.

"More cake!" he said, slobbering. "We want more cake!"

"More cake!" cried the mayor. Slobber coated his tweed like an embryonic sac.

"More cake!" I shouted. Slobber soaked into my sneakers. Slobber muffled my hearing. Slobber blurred my vision. I poked my father in the eye for revenge. "We want more cake!" I snorted.

Everyone was so hungry for more cake. We wanted to taste the meat! We were overwhelmed by desire for more meat, for more fleshy meat meat meat in a cake cake cake. I wanted to bathe in a bathtub filled with meat cake. I wanted to roll around in meat cake and chuck it from my hooves. I wanted to fight! I mounted the mayor and bit him in the snout. I was so hungry! The mayor bit me back, and so I kicked him. He snorted. So funny! The key to the city was hanging among his testicles from a cord wrapped around his pink rump. Ha! I snorted.

I charged the stage. Before I could bite the mayor again, a pair of hands lifted me by the belly. They smelled so good, like meat. Before I could chew

off the knuckled fingers I was inside a cage with everybody else. We all wanted more! And so we began to eat one another. Legs first, and then snouts, and then throats. It was a pig-eat-pig caravan. Luckily I was hungry enough to eat a lot and I felt ready to eat some more. But my paunch stretched so big and so wide that I thought the whole town might come tumbling out of me if I opened my mouth all the way.

Now I live in a pen. The dirt has lots of minerals but that's a good thing. I am still waiting for more cake and I think my father might make some for the next county fair.

## HEELING

keel of a ship  
in distance divides  
weather from rumor

under thin cotton  
slides a shoulder  
subsiding, flattening

in rest, fulness  
maps the evenness  
we have made

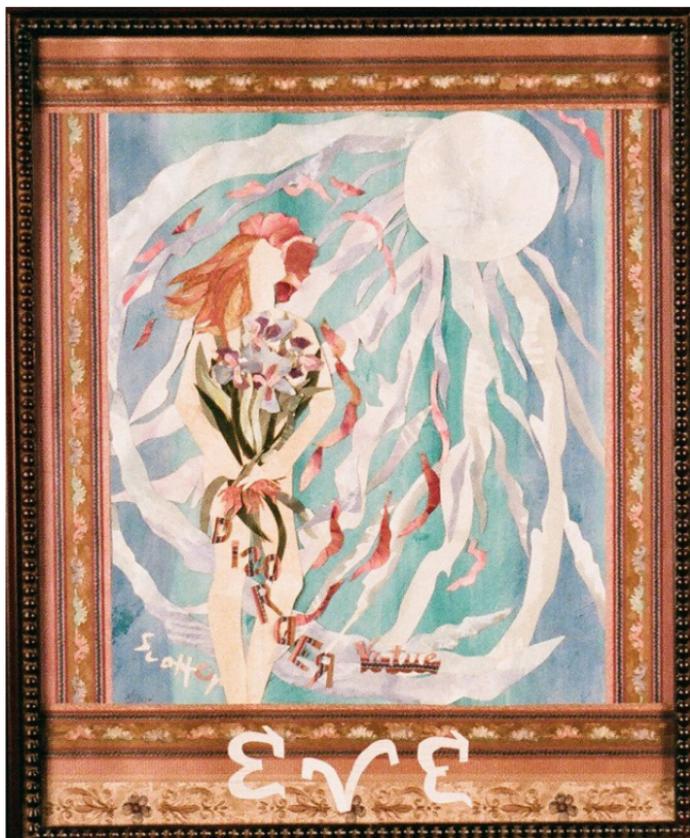
{ Amy Thomas }

FROM MY PERIPHERAL  
AND PARENTHETICAL BODY

pluck a fig as ripe as any sunrise. I'll ask you to slide it open and observe the rows of tiny teeth tight as a midwestern crop field and more yielding. what you see here is a lifetime of evasive and glittering sacrifice. this little molar here took months to sharpen at the edge but look at her now. smear a little cake on my face and call me a prize. at night when they charge past you and run only as far as the edge of the next pasture, I'll ask you to remember every milligram of pulp and recite it at will. this is my body.

{ Mary Dixon }

EVE



{ Peter Twal }

## IT'S THE MEMORY OF OUR BETTERS

And in this montage sequence you, more than ever, become  
my supernova-like nostalgia with all those disposable cameras

strapped to your chest Your cellophane  
skin expands expounding upon the mystery  
of comedic timing (Somewhere off screen in the city: Death

trading in his scythe for a cellphone skinny pants painted on,  
cloak left in the closet) *Please no more*  
*dick pics* becomes a thing the personified universe that pile of phantom  
limbs says to itself in the mirror buffing out the steam (more often  
than it would like but not without the implicit understanding

it's all just part of the deal) After a strobe light shower, everything shines  
like the afterlife Watching you skeet shoot aerosol cans  
from the roof of your garage the night before your very own

meteor shower and *my texts*— *the blurred things they were saying at the time*

## YEARS TRYING TO GET WITH THE PLAN AND THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

And what of it— even the little Mars rover will run out of curiosity  
in the end, surrounded by red Just like you to show up to a game of charades with a bag  
of actual blood You, my reanimated corpse, the violence of memory, the Frankenstein  
come to kill me and unraveling into the invisibility of time when I'm not looking

What I would give to spill a cup of coffee in the lap of my littlest self  
to his face, say oh *to oxidize your eyes to the beautiful rust*  
*from whence they came disintegrate back home before it's too* [transmission

lost] What would he do The Mars rover, I mean spend the rest of his half  
life thumbing through pictures on his phone The earth forever a blink

in the background and blushing Must be the performance of a lifetime when you fake  
step on a landmine in my living room and I get why all my friends are foil wrapped  
like shrapnel now My living room floor, a crater and then God shows up late Texted earlier  
to say he couldn't but God shows up to the party with something green  
between his teeth and no one has the heart to tell Him

{ Dani Rado }

## VERMINTICIDE

When she pushes the bookcases from their position along the wall, the snakes are still there, mouths suctioned to the eggshell paint covering the gypsum board, bodies dangling like so many broken timing belts that once made this machine run.

She's woken from the dream she dreams every night. First, her hair is full of worms, and then her hair *is* worms. Why worms?, she wonders. She kneads her fingers into her tousled curls and stares at the snakes.

Snakes aren't the only things. Their house is a motel for vermin. Mice, hornets, bats, bugs, (and soon, even though they can't imagine it now, a turtle), check in and out as the weeks rotate themselves into months on the calendar tacked above the telephone in the kitchen. There's so much to contend with, the calendar's glossy photos of baby animals defiantly curled into adorable poses go unnoticed.

*Why worms?* She knows everything must decay. There is inevitability and no one and no thing is an exception to this rule. This situation then is nothing new. There's no time to tell if this is comforting or not, the oximeter is sounding from the bedroom and she must hurry back upstairs. Everything but this alarm's bell is a secret message for which she has no cipher.

He's woken to the alarm and meets her in the nursery.

Then there are mice. They scurry up and down the thick blackout curtains over the living room's bay window. The tiny claws that protrude from their skeletal fingers prick at the fabric, making just enough rustle to disrupt those raw moments right before sleep, when the smallest noise springs her upright and animal-ready in their bed. If she isn't already awake, he jabs

his elbow into her ribs at the noise. She is never not already awake.

She creeps down the hall in her slippered feet as though she's the intruder of this house, and the ghosts of her home, those she doesn't know and those soon to be, are its actual residents. She pulls the edge of the shade around to reveal the hunched backs of mice arranged like a string of bells. The oils of their coats shimmer in the celestial radiance that spills through the bay window when the dam of the curtains is removed.

His elbow is flapping against not her in bed.

Rodents have the ability to squeeze through the smallest opening, sometimes no larger than a coin. If you give them a quarter, they'll take a mile.

He doesn't wonder, *why mice*? He returns the following day with a brown grocery bag and unpacks it on the kitchen counter. Rat poison, trap, trap, trap, trap, more poison, another trap. He sprinkles rodenticide around the edges of the kitchen, along the rear sliding glass door, under the large front window, around their food in the cabinets, into their mugs and bowls, down the hall, into their dressers and shoes. They haven't been eating anyway. They haven't redressed since this began.

She doesn't dream of mice. They are here, birthed into her home through the narrow openings they gnaw into existence. Soon she finds their bodies scattered about like discarded toys.

Her abstinence from eating makes the objects of that withdrawal, once so familiar, take on the uncanny gloss like food does when placed in a display window, the biological appeal of it precluded by the polished coat so that in place of instinctual hunger is the awareness of the absence of that hunger.

Once she was in a doctor's office and picked up a magazine that was written with all the familiar characters of the alphabet. After several moments she realized it was written in a foreign language, but during that time she believed she was reading it, absorbing its information by believing she was. Then the nurse called her name and she was lead to a cold room to change and await the obstetrician. Now this is happening to her with things written

in English. The simplest word—would, for instance—shivers on the page as if she's momentarily seeing through the mask of each letter. They reveal themselves to her as symbols for something even deeper and more mysterious than language. She's afraid of what she may find if she delves beneath that surface.

Hornets build a nest outside over the front porch, a giant catacomb for their queen. They burrow into a crevice along the siding, just under the gutter, and over the course of months, years for all the residents of this house know, add waxed layer upon waxed layer until the hive of their existence enlarges like a heart, cracks its sternum, and pulses with sudden life against the frame of their front door.

Wax, for instance.

The shiver happens with other things as well. These things, she feels, were put here to occupy space until the other things, the real things, come along. The cabinets, the dresser, the things within these things, the spoons, the mugs, the shirts and underwear. Things are waiting for things. These things will not be metaphors; there's nothing to compare them to. She catches herself in the mirror. She shivers. She too is one of these things, occupying space for something else. There is a turtle coming, but that's not it.

If they were to open their front door, they would run the risk of being stung, so they seal it instead. They line the spaces along the frame with caulk and visitors must walk around the side of the house and up the steep wooden stairs that lead to the raised porch and the backdoor. Underneath the porch, the wheelbarrow is turned over on top of the pile of stepping-stones that have not been laid out along the path to the garden that has not been planted. The ground is a mix of rocks and always cool earth.

She doesn't dream of walking out the front door. It is just another thing holding the place between her and the outside world.

Bats are next. They enter the attic through the opened flaps that had protected the giant fan mounted just below the gable. When she turned on the attic fan in the early summer before the weather had gotten too hot, she

assumed, or would have assumed if she had had reason to think about it, that the blades would be enough of a deterrent for flying creatures, or at least the less foolish flying creatures; but she didn't know then the fan was broken, and although she had flipped the switch in the hallway and rotated the timer to the right to set the runtime for approximately one hour and twenty minutes before the fan would switch itself off, and then heard the timer begin to tick away (and would continue to tick away over the course of eighty minutes), though she only noted the sound briefly and then took it for granted because it's not only her, but everyone's default to assume all interior mechanisms are working well and only when symptoms, like bats, reveal themselves as the placeholders for the healthy functions does a fan or food or a word waver before us and we realize that though the motor revved and churned, the machine was in fact paralyzed all along by a broken belt—the internal flaw she could not have seen and how, how was she or anyone supposed to know the fan hidden in the attic was broken or the frailness of her baby's body when it was still inside her? That the noise she had heard was only the gears reeling against themselves, struggling to stay alive, while the shutters opened wide in an embrace of the world and all that it had to offer.

If a bat bites someone in their sleep, they would not even know it, and most likely die of rabies before they had cause to suspect it; two minute teeth marks left as a belated revelation for the examiners. She doesn't worry about these things, but turns her baby to her other side to prevent bedsores.

He doesn't know what she doesn't think about, only that there are bats in the attic. Really, both only know for sure that there is a noise in the attic, the sound of rustling from above, which, if it occurred a few years earlier, when they still lived in that apartment in the city, (when, more accurately, he had lived in the apartment in the city and she had just spent all her time there before they married and moved to this house in the suburbs, away from the smog and cars and muggers and people coming home late from bars, where nothing could touch them but drunken dreams born of drunken lust and drunken fights; and mice with hackled spines and patient hornets and bats with rabies only scarcely existed in the lives of other people who scarcely existed in their own), when this noise above them would have been nothing

more than the neighbors going about their daily routine, as if all a daily routine consisted of was making the same sounds as the day before, and not the activity itself, which remains a secret thing behind the door.

How complicated their routine was now. The BiPAP machine beeps steadily down the hall, marking the baby's labored breaths. How noisy.

He sprinkles poison around the fan, its vents, the interior of the folding staircase that opens to the attic. He then latches the hatch shut. When Christmas comes, they leave the decorations—the twisted lights, the disheveled bulbs, the star for the tree representing the miracle of Bethlehem and the salvation of humankind—fallow in the boxes.

The turtle is burrowed deep underground in its brumation.

Some mornings, wearing thick yellow dishwashing gloves, she goes around the house and picks up the little departed and places them in a plastic bag, which she ties off and puts outside the back door. The delivery man at first was kind enough to take this with him to throw in a dumpster along his route, but now, unlike the vermin, he avoids the house as much as possible. At first the sign on the front door that told visitors to go around back didn't bother him. He'd seen similar ones on other houses before. People remodel. People move to the suburbs to remodel. But the house too took on a quality of stillness he had never noticed when one underwent a remodel and after the estimated amount of time for such a project, even the most involved one, had passed, the note remained taped to the front door. No trucks with ladders strapped to their racks were ever in the driveway; no men in paint stained overalls plodded along the roof. He would have assumed something ghastly had happened if it weren't for the regularity of notes left for him at the back door—wrong formula, wrong medication, need 2 more O<sub>2</sub> tanks next time—along with empty tanks and plastic grocery bags full of dead creatures. After a while, he dropped the packages and left as quickly as possible, fearing she'd open the door while he was standing there and say something in a mysterious language. Or worse yet, in an English that made no sense.

The bags of departed pile up. It is winter and they freeze outside in their

poisoned anguish. The note is still on the door.

The turtle will approach. Even winter cannot stop its infinite curiosity. Please go to the back of the house when you arrive.

Boxelder bugs scuttle through the bathroom and kitchen. She imagines they prefer tile to the hardwood floors in the rest of the house. When she is on the toilet, relieving what little was consumed from the previous day. In extreme circumstances it seems only fitting to do something extreme, like never eat, but some food must be eaten, and some directions on medications must be read and understood, but she has learned to let the consciousness of performing such acts vanish instantly into the past once they've been completed, or further than into the past, into the hidden estuary for which we need symbols to represent their existence in the world above. Any by-product of these actions then, like the shit they force out of themselves or their daughter's congealed mucus they must suck from her lungs with a heavy and roaring machine, is entirely disconnected from the chain of events of everyday life, and instead occur as some single-celled organism of time. A bug makes a crook-kneed jot from under the cabinet toward the trim on the opposite end of the floor.

What is it about the confined and closed space of the bathroom that's so attractive?, she thinks. When a bug reaches the wall, it rises to its hind legs and attacks the barrier with its forelegs, much like she would do against the stones of a well if she were trapped at the bottom. How is it that they are always surprised by the wall? Can't they see it coming?

She has never been trapped in a well. Or in a well at all.

A metaphor substitutes one thing for another. What if both sides are keeping the place of the thing that can't be said. The house is a bear. They are its stores for hibernation. They are trapped in its bowels. They are Jonah in the whale. They are a prophet attempting to flee his lot. They are Abraham, but without divine intervention to save their child. They are anything that disfigures when it crashes against the inscrutable limits of the story.

He says poison is poison, dubs the rodenticide "verminticide," and

sprinkles it again, this time willing it to kill bugs instead of rodents.

They are not living in a metaphor. They are living in a house. The house is holding a space for them. They are holding a space for the vermin. The vermin are leaving, giving up their space for what. When she holds them by the tails, just before placing them in the bag, they shiver though they are dead.

She slides the back door open and deposits bags of departed on the deck for the deliveryman to not pick up. Through the glass she keeps watch over them. Melting snow makes mud of the garden she never planted. The wind shakes the steel wings of the decorative butterfly staked in that bit of ground. Butterflies will hold the place of her daughter. The butterfly plant clipping that she took from her grandmother's the day of her funeral is embedded in a pot in the basement. The roots need more space to grow. There is space outside. Why, then, is this so hard?

At night, with the snakes, she imagines she dreams that they are worms tilling the soil of the garden. They weave over and under the roots of the butterfly bush while above the purple florets bloom in a wave along the flower spikes, luring butterflies to them.

Today he's killed the turtle. It snuck into the house with the cunning of death then stood frozen in the middle of the cold basement. They stood watching him as he turned his head side to side while lifting first the front left and rear right legs, then the opposite two, repeating this motion again and again until she thought, *he looks like he thinks he's in that race with the hare*. The one, I think, he won. And though this thought seemed to be the seed of something irrevocably important, she said nothing to her husband because such a reference would only cause him to furrow his brow and turn the comment over in his mind until it spat out something fierce, something hateful, something about how could she think something like that in a time like this. So instead she stood there, rocking side to side to comfort herself as he picked up the turtle by its midsection, careful to crook his elbows to

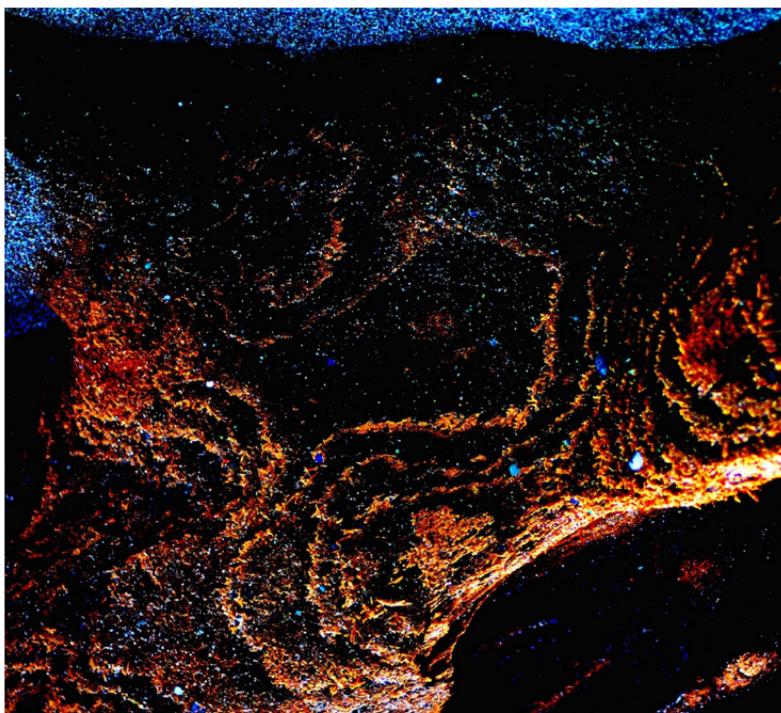
protect his flesh from the despondent but sharp claws that flapped at his arms as the turtle ran, like in that race, through midair.

He dropped the turtle in the large plastic trashcan they kept in the basement then took his shovel from the hook on the wall.

The walnut crack followed her up the stairs to the first floor. She went to check the bookcases to make sure she had put them back in their original positions from which she moved them, groggily, the night before. The secret behind them, at least she knows. But there was no time to do this. The alarm bell of the oximeter is sounding from the baby's room.

{ Jayne Marek }

## DRIFTWOOD COSMOS



{ Kevin Hattrup }

## ICARUS VARIATIONS

time for counterpoise?  
yaw nimble-winged  
featherweight

shearing vanes  
deliquescing to brinemewl  
exploded diagram  
of dead bird man  
streaking wrack-wise

o descant-  
bone of song  
pitching headlong  
    tumbreling in golden decline

along bends, strains,  
tricks, scant odes  
this mortal-hewed metamorphosis  
music of ash and broken glass  
    pose, demigod  
    of wilting tufts  
    and candle stubs

## MARIE ANTOINETTE (I'D THROW IT ALL AWAY)

you walk and sound my heart  
    ullage checked and this echo  
is emptiness and coda  
    and ventricle clicking

o apocryphal coupes  
    saucer casts want

bubbling sighs trickle  
the glass tipping truth  
    all of what exists but what's left

enough to fume taste and glow

so cattailed eyes  
    whip with each  
    pleasured eclipse  
        as though to

bat an eye  
    is to bludgeon

{ Elizabeth Smith-Meyer }

## FEATHER MAGIC

The woman who cleans up horse shit for a living  
carries in her pocket a book about feather magic.

The next week, a drunk driver kills a female turkey.  
There had been two, strutting their mottled brown feathers

across the road. Cool and sanguine, they mark their territory  
in gabled lariats, lashing together weeds of honeycomb and thistle,

but when there's only one, the woman takes four unbloodied feathers,  
presses them in journal pages, and leaves a handful of grain in their stead.

An even exchange, says the earth,  
or so the arbitrary squirrel translates for her,

as he runs helter-skelter beneath the dancing leaves,  
hedging off static electricity, waiting and fated.

## WHAT ALL MOLESTED DAUGHTERS MUST DO

Predator drones dip and do and daddy-glide,  
predating and post-figuring the end of eras  
and the tides of testing essayists.

Stop stripping straw bales and hay nets,  
knighted for rot and rotting and rats,  
pink and prostrate on lily pads,  
flat-lined into Middle Earth.

my mother makes muffins  
my mother muffles mediocrity  
my mother makes

Articulation predates manuscript.

Typestrokes postpone plausibility,  
Unduly prophetic, undue prophet,  
Not for profit, not for sale,  
and the glass breaks under a red haze.

Come, what happens, finely honed,  
broken tables, warnings about halves,  
about suggestions, exercises and  
rigor; the ship doesn't wreck,  
no matter the seas.

Sit and watch.

No blood spouts from yellowed lists.

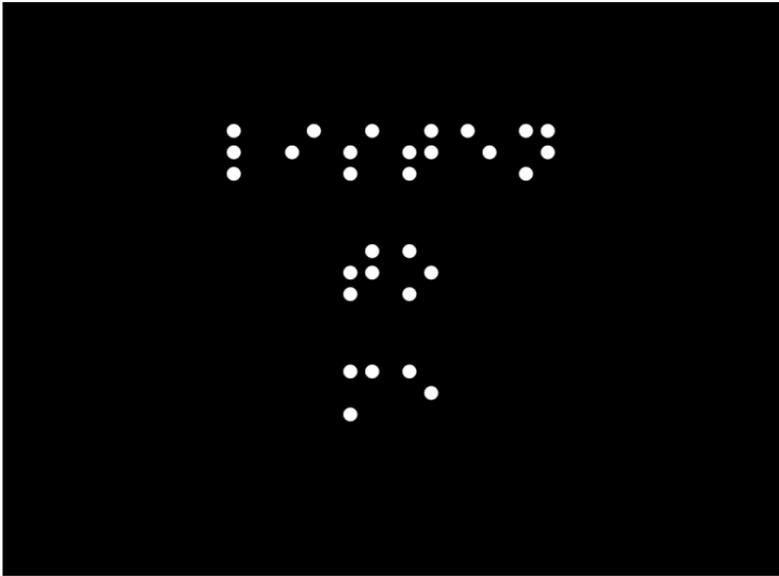
Take notes:

1. Her hand pulses stench;
2. Humor perfects minimalism;
3. Little shields all;
4. Approach;
5. Say nothing.

Leave #6 blank.

{ Matthew Benedict }

## LISTEN TO ME





## { CONTRIBUTORS }

**Matthew Benedict (1994)** lives and writes in South Bend. Last summer, a full-length play, *A False Lie*, had a two-week sold-out run at The Firehouse Theatre in South Bend and is currently under consideration at several festivals as well as publication. In addition to working on a novel and two plays, he is also experimenting with different narrative forms—semaphore, sign language, emojis, Morse Code, braille, etc.—of which “listen to me,” published herein, is an example.

**Sarah Bowman (2000)** has this quote on her desk: “The difference between the almost right word and the right word is the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning” (Mark Twain). She values precision in language—saying what you mean and meaning what you say. Presently, Sarah serves as Creative Director for Coady | Bowman, a woman-owned small business that offers art, design, media and communication services to clients around the world. On any given day, you will find Sarah playing in language, wrist-deep in words.

**Jace Brittain (2015)** lives and teaches in Austria. His writing has appeared in *The Destroyer*, *Sleepingfish*, *Deluge*, *Entropy*, and *LAC!/LAKE*.

**Evan Bryson (2013)** remains interested in writing pedagogy and writing communities, and explores the tensions thereof in his fiction and essays.

**Mary Dixon (2006)** is a visual artist and poet focusing on spirituality of women and nature, especially the Great Plains. She has published a collection

*Eucharist, Enter the Sacred Way, Franciscan* (2008) and in periodicals. She has exhibited in galleries across the Midwest. Her art can be viewed at [raincrowart.com](http://raincrowart.com)

**Danna Ephland (2006)** was born in Buffalo, New York, and is a Lincoln Center trained teaching-artist offering indie workshops called “The Left Margin.” She earned a BFA in dance from York University, Toronto, and MFA in creative writing from the University of Notre Dame. “Bodysongs” is her hybrid work in movement and poetry. Her poems have appeared in *Rhino*, *Indiana Review*, *Folio*, *Permafrost* and the anthologies, *Saints of Hysteria* (Soft Skull Press) and *Villanelles* (Knopf). *A Small Acrylic Frame* won the Celery City Chapbook Competition 2015. *Needle Makes Tracks* was published in March 2016 by Dancing Girl Press, Chicago.

**Carina Finn (2012)** is the author of *LEMONWORLD & Other Poems* (Co. Im.Press 2013), *The Grey Bird: Thirteen Emoji Poems in Translation* (Coconut Books, 2014), *Invisible Reveille* (Coconut Books, 2015), *My Life Is A Movie* (Birds of Lace, 2012) and *I Heart Marlon Brando* (Wheelchair Party, 2010). Her first full-length play, *Two Genius Husbands*, has been produced at Dixon Place and Howl! Happening in NYC. Other work has been recently published or is forthcoming in *The Rumpus*, *H\_NGM\_N*, *Jubilat*, and elsewhere.

**Kevin Hattrup (2007)** raged at the MarMain, and reps the “574” till he’s on his back.

**Luis Lopez-Maldonado (2017)** was born and raised in Orange County, CA. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California Riverside, majoring in Creative Writing and Dance. His work has been seen in *The American Poetry Review*, *Cloudbank*, *The Packinghouse Review*, *Off Channel*, and *Spillway*, among others. He also earned a Master of Arts degree in Dance from Florida State University. He is currently a candidate for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing at the University of Notre Dame.

**Jayne Marek's (2005)** poetry has appeared in publications such as *Blast Furnace*, *Gravel*, *Lantern Journal*, *Siren*, *Spillway*, *Driftwood Bay*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Isthmus*, *The Occasional Reader*, *Wisconsin Academy Review*, and *Windless Orchard* and in several anthologies. She is a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee. She also has a chapbook and a co-authored book of poems, as well as articles, short fiction, and art photographs.

**Dani Rado (2005)** received a PhD from the University of Denver, and managed to stay in Denver with a job at Johnson & Wales University, teaching composition, literature and creative writing, as well as running the writing center. Her stories have been published in *Mochila Review*, *Clackamas Review*, *Unstuck*, *Floodwall*, and a bunch of others. She was recently an artist-in-residence at Sundress Academy for the Arts in Knoxville, TN.

**Sarah Roth (2015)** lives in Washington, DC, where she writes and researches for an inventive nonprofit. In May 2015, she received her MFA in Prose from University of Notre Dame. She often dreams that she is transforming into a wild animal.

**Elizabeth Smith-Meyer (2000)** has been raising children, teaching writing and literature to ages 5 through college, and still writing when time permits. She currently teaches at New American Conservatory, a private school where half the day is spent in academics and half the day is spent in ballet classes.

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**Peter Twal (2014)** is a first generation Jordanian-American, holding down a day job as an electrical engineer. His poetry has appeared or will soon in *Kenyon Review Online*, *Ninth Letter Online*, *cream city review*, *The Journal*, *Devil's Lake*, *RHINO*, *Booth*, *Yemassee*, *New Delta Review*, *Forklift Ohio*, *DIAGRAM*, *Bat City Review*, *New Orleans Review*, and elsewhere. A recipient of the Samuel and Mary Anne Hazo Poetry Award, Peter earned his MFA from the University of Notre Dame in 2014.





