

RAINY DAY

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VOLUME XLII, No. 2 / FALL 2014

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Dear *Rainy Day* Reader,

I am asking you to pause before you crease the spine of our humble publication and eagerly flip to the piece penned by your friend, partner, family member, student, classmate, or self. Let's first take a moment to consider how it got there.

The editorial process employed by our talented and diverse staff is inefficient, inconvenient, and painstakingly slow. Each of the submissions—nearly two hundred for this issue alone—is read, discussed, and eventually voted on by the entire editorial board. When the time comes to assemble the journal, we repeat the process for the highly-rated submissions. I came to *Rainy Day* as a transfer student and a veteran of two literary journals, and I assure you that such attention to each piece is not the standard for publications staffed entirely by undergraduates. Every submission—stripped of its author's name and school—has the opportunity to capture the attention of the board, and every member of the editorial board has the opportunity to advocate for any piece. This process, cumbersome as it may be, is our attempt to live up to the impossibly high standard set by the talented and tireless writers whose submissions are the currency by which *Rainy Day* continues to exist and thrive.

In 2014, when college students are implored to accumulate professional experience and build mountainous resumes, *Rainy Day* remains the product of thoughtful reading and spirited debate, as it has for decades. This journal is a testament to the virtues of dedication and patience. Rather than argue for the merits of our process, I will let the final product speak for itself. So, reader, as you browse the twenty pieces comprising this issue of *Rainy Day*, which span across styles and bend genres, composed by authors living in Oxford and Iowa, Ithaca and Chicago, please take your time.

Yours,

Sam Wolken

RAINY DAY

an independent student publication

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Fall 2014

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EXAMPLE: YOU ARE BEING CHASED DOWN THE STREET

Kathryn Winner

Frank is chased down the street by a man with a knife. Frank stops running and turns around and says, just give it up, I was a track star in high school at Loyola Prep.

The murderer stops and is looking at him.

My name is on a banner in the gym, says Frank. Okay? Do you get it?

The murderer puts down his knife.

That's right, says Frank.

Now Frank and the murderer sometimes run into each other around town. Frank sees him on the street on Tuesday. He nods and the murderer nods back and they pass each other and get breakfast at different places.

They see each other again walking home. They say hey at the same time.

A week later Frank sees the murderer in the train station, standing in the line for the bathroom; Frank hesitates for a moment and then decides to use a different bathroom. He turns around but then changes his mind and turns in a circle. It's no big deal, they're both adults—but then yes, he should use the other bathroom—he turns a third time and gets away before the murderer sees him.

That afternoon Frank walks past a bakery. He looks in a window and sees the murderer looking at a counter with bread on it. He walks inside.

Hey, says Frank. I've been seeing you around.

Hi, says the murderer.

I was thinking we could get drinks sometime, says Frank.

The murderer looks unsure.

How about tonight? says Frank.

Okay, says the murderer.

Yeah? says Frank

I'm free whenever, says the murderer.

Okay, tonight, says Frank. Great.

At the bar Frank says, So hey what do you do, what is your deal?

I work for a non-profit, says the murderer, that I founded and no one knows about.

How is it going? says Frank.

Poorly, says the murderer. Then he picks up his drink. I just want something to work out for me.

It will, says Frank. Frank drinks from his glass.

The murderer drinks from his glass, too. You don't know that, says the murderer softly, looking sad.

Self-pity is so ugly, says Frank.

With me it's not like that, says the murderer. Do you know anything about me?

Well, says Frank. Then he says, I have a complicated history, too.

Please tell me about it, says the murderer.

I might have a mental or emotional disorder. That also reminds me of my father's mother, who drank too much and often saw or heard things that were unreal. And speaking of which in high school I suffered from anxiety. But please do not ask me to talk about it.

I wasn't going to, says the murderer.

And still I'm generally a very fulfilled person, which is an amazing thing about me, says Frank.

There is a pause in the conversation. Frank looks at a couple sitting on the other side of the murderer. They seem interesting—a thin blonde woman and a thin dark-haired man. Frank watches the man and woman talk to each other. The man taps a pen on a notebook he's holding. He says to the woman, You know I read something the other day that is just like this. She flips him the bird.

I want to go somewhere else, says Frank. They go outside into the dark. It's August. Gaps and weeds in the sidewalk. A young woman walks past them in high heels.

I like that dress she was wearing, says Frank.

I don't think she saw you, says the murderer.

Frank doesn't respond.

You don't dress well, says the murderer.

Why, says Frank, did you want to murder me in the first place?

Hey, says the murderer, I was wondering when you would get around to asking me that.

Frank looks up at the sky and then down at the sidewalk and then at the murderer. I think I have a couple of guesses, says Frank.

Okay, says the murderer, shoot.

Was it sexual? says Frank.

No, says the murderer.

Frank looks at the ground. Let me think about it for a while, he says. I'll get it eventually.

They walk, quiet, to the end of the block and turn left again. In a grassy lot a crow struts around and an older woman throws pieces of bread at it. Frank and the murderer stop to watch. The murderer asks Frank if he knows what it's like to lose a pet.

Yes, says Frank, I put my dog down last year and in the vet's waiting room people saw me crying.

With me and my dog it was the same, says the murderer.

It's either a crow or a raven and now there are two of them. The old woman keeps feeding the one on the left and the one on the right can't take a hint. Frank recognizes her—she lives on his block. Lonely: she's always wanting to have sustained eye contact with animals.

I know her, says Frank to the murderer.

She looks sick, says the murderer. Is she sick?

I don't know her that well, says Frank. I'm busy. I have a job.

Frank and the murderer keep walking. There's the thin couple from the bar. The woman is still flipping him off and he is telling her that someone ought to write a book about this.

We're almost back at my apartment, says Frank.

The murderer nods.

This has been a strange night, says Frank. I think I'll remember it for a long time. The murderer walks Frank up the stairs.

I kind of feel like cereal, says Frank, you're welcome to come in and have some.

The murderer says, Frank, I have to say something.

What? says Frank. What is it?

If someone is chasing you with a knife, says the murderer, don't be ridiculous. You don't turn around. If someone is chasing you with a knife you just run.

Why is this coming up now? says Frank.

It's been bothering me, says the murderer, this whole time. I should have killed you. I still should.

Are you going to?

The murderer looks at him.

There are so many people I think would be better for you to kill than me, says Frank. You could kill someone in my place. I know someone who, she makes this clicking sound with her tongue before she opens her mouth to say anything.

I see, says the murderer.

It's unpleasant, says Frank. She's a coworker of mine, her name is Megan. I can give you her address.

I could kill her, maybe, says the murderer.

That old woman back there, says Frank. She's already sick.

The murderer nods.

I know another person. My cousin—who once told me that he can't find a girlfriend because no one can connect with him because he thinks in colors.

Oh, I could kill him, sure, says the murderer. But you know there are things about you that are bad, too.

Frank stands with both feet on one step and the murderer stands with his right foot up a step from his left. There are two stars that are much brighter than all the other ones because maybe they are planets.

I think I'm going to go in, says Frank, and have a bowl of cereal.

Okay, says the murderer. I guess I'll see you around.

Frank goes inside and eats cereal. He finishes one bowl and pours himself another and reads a page of the newspaper he's already read, an article about the relationship between cell phones and life-threatening cardiac events. There's milk on Frank's shirt. His phone rings.

Hello, says Frank.

Hi, it's me, says the murderer.

Hi, says Frank.

Your voice sounds different over the phone, says the murderer.

Why are you calling, says Frank.

I found a bill in my pocket that I don't remember being there. Did you lose five dollars?

No, says Frank.

Oh, says the murderer. I just wanted to check. It's five dollars.

Nope, says Frank. Not mine.

Okay, says the murderer. I might just keep it then.

Okay, says Frank. Bye then.

Frank, says the murderer.

What? says Frank.

Nothing, says the murderer. Night.

Frank hangs up the phone. He sits in front of the television but doesn't turn it on. It's the weekend, and he doesn't have any plans. He thinks of people he could call. He thinks that there's no one really he could call without it seeming strange. He doesn't know any of his coworkers well enough. Maybe he should take a class or something. Meet people with similar interests.

He looks at the calendar hanging on the back of the pantry door. It's turned to three months ago. He fixes it.

He goes to his bedroom and sits on his bed and unties his shoes. His phone rings. He can't get the left one off, so he leaves it on and walks lopsided to the kitchen. He puts his hand on the phone but doesn't pick it up. He lets it ring until the answering machine gets it.

"Hey, it's Frank. Leave one."

Frank likes that. He likes the way he says that. Leave one.

FAMILY HISTORY

Kathryn Winner

The women on her dad's side of the family got sick after they turned fifty: diabetes, osteoporosis. The men were unhealthy too; Uncle Del had an aneurism on the back porch in the snow. But Uncle Del was a sociopath and someone she never loved or liked.

Her dad is sixty now; he's not fat and he doesn't get headaches and he's treated her well. He is healthy.

"I'm not going to be around much longer, Jane," he says to her.

"You look fine to me, Dad," says Jane.

"Nothing lasts forever."

"But you're not going to die anytime soon,"

"You don't know that." Dad shakes his head, like he can't quite believe it.

"Any minute now. Any day now."

Jane looks at him. Dad looks back at her.

"What if I had died just then?" says Dad

Jane doesn't respond.

"It's not something you can understand at your age, but I'm right up against it. And that's just—it. Done. Man oh man oh man oh man."

"Dad. There are people in worse shape than you."

"If other people could see the world like I see it," says Dad. He looks at his shoes. "The reality is I'm dying right now as I'm talking to you. I could die tomorrow."

"So could I," says Jane.

Dad stands up and makes a sound from his stomach. He walks out of the room, Man oh man oh man.

"I've been thinking," he says the next day. "I've been thinking maybe it's time for me to get out of here, travel. I could die without seeing Yellowstone National Park. Isn't that insane? It's insane that I could live an entire life and not see Yellowstone National Park."

He is saying this with sunglasses on. They're driving home from an early dinner and the windows are open. Humid. It hasn't rained in weeks, but it will tonight. Dead mowed grass—a little of it blows into the street—it smells like that.

"Dad," says Jane. "Stop talking about it."

"I feel like almonds," he says and pulls into a convenience store parking lot. He parks the car and slaps his knees with his palms. "Yes," he says, "almonds. That's what I want. I need salt."

Jane says she'll stay in the car but changes her mind as soon as Dad disappears into the store. She walks inside; she fills a cup with coffee.

"It's not too hot for that?" her dad says as he walks by with a little can of almonds, unsalted, and pays for them. Jane buys coffee and a candy bar, which her dad looks at with his eyebrows raised. He's fitting the key into the car door and looks at the candy bar with his eyebrows up and looks at Jane and back at the candy bar.

"What," says Jane.

"Looks like a good candy bar," says Dad.

"Do you want some of it?" says Jane

"Nah," says Dad, "I've got almonds."

Tar on the roads in those long wobbling stripes.

"It's good to have you," says Dad. "I'm glad you finally found time to visit. It's good to see you."

"Yeah I'm glad too."

A quiet ten minutes, turns in the road. Jane puts a foot on the dashboard and takes it off the dashboard. When she yawns her dad yawns too, and says "Look now you've got me going." The driveway.

"It's so funny that it bothers you," says Dad. "It's so funny, because, you know, it's just a fact? It's just a fact. Me and my dad talk about him dying all the time."

The car is in park. Jane opens her door and starts to get out. Dad sits with his hands in his lap and the door closed and he still hasn't eaten any of his almonds.

"I'm going to sit out here," says Dad, "for a little while longer."

"Okay," says Jane, "I'm going inside."

Jane doesn't move. She and Dad sit in the car with the doors open. It's about to rain; there's thunder Jane can't hear but she knows it's there because she can see the dog hearing it, the dog hiding in the garage and digging at the concrete.

"I should let the dog inside," she says.

"He's so funny," says Dad.

"Yeah he is," says Jane. She plays with a bracelet she's wearing. The dog runs out to the car and runs back into the garage. He scratches at his collar and his foot rings the tags.

"I'll go let him in," says Jane.

She goes inside and up to her bedroom that's a guestroom now. She looks out the window and Dad is standing in the driveway looking at the clouds. When she was younger he made her stand on the porch during thunderstorms. Or right before thunderstorms—so she could watch it get going. Feel the updraft; her dad would ask her that: if she felt the updraft. Do you feel it? This is a big one.

The rain starts loud on the roof. Jane goes downstairs and Dad is sitting down at the kitchen table with dark spots of water on his shirt.

"Did you see the paper?" he says. "Mars is going to be close to the Earth."

“Yeah?” says Jane. Maybe he does look a little older—see how shifts his weight to the other hip? She should hug him, or something. She loves him so much. He looks fine.

“Yeah,” says Dad. “All week, you’ll be able to see Mars. I think brighter than it’s been in a hundred years or something.”

“That’s really cool,” says Jane.

“Jane.” He says. “Janey, Janey. What’s new? I haven’t heard about what’s new with you.”

She inhales in a controlled kind of way. “Oh, it’s good. We get busy in the summer.” Her dad goes “mmm,” and she cannot think of another thing to say. She washes a dish in the sink.

“Don’t have a lot of words today?” says Dad. “I have days like that.”

“Yeah,” says Jane.

“How long are you staying?” he says.

“Until Friday,” says Jane. She puts a plate in the cabinet. Her dad stands up and walks upstairs and in a minute comes back. Jane sits at the kitchen table with her laptop and checks her email. He sits across from her. He’s put on a sweatshirt with a drawstring hood.

“Man I love this sweatshirt,” he says.

Jane looks up at him and says she could use one like that. He takes it off to see where it’s from but can’t find a tag with a brand on it, so he just reads aloud: “Built for comfort.”

“Oh, here,” he says, as he’s pulling the sweatshirt back over his head. One sleeve on, working his elbow into the other one, he hands her the back page of the newspaper. “Here. That thing about Mars.” When she looks at the article sees her dad seeing her: grown, her laptop. The wide-open look on her face, the sorry. The two of them in the humid kitchen, both feeling like: something about today. Bigger than just today—and just noting it, and nothing in particular.

FRACTALLING

B. Joanna Chen

You told me I was a coat and you
a pair of gloves. I pictured us overlapping
at the wrists, my sleeves around
your knit ribs knit to your spine;
the giveaway shakes every damn time

you kiss and I stopped listening
for a moment succumbed to sensation,
pixels coupling in the first brush
of lips, the gradual untensioning
of shoulders. I'm fractalling,

sinking into a deep pool
of down comforters, finding freedom
in fatigue, a loosened brain.

You said, "Let's run away
together." I say, "Let's
count pixels together."

MIRANDA DOES FAIR PLAY.

B. Joanna Chen

Last night we sat
at the dining room table, surrounded
by the nice china, playing at chess.

Only, you were, I think, going by the rules
of checkers. Not that I would say

you were per se cheating.

It's understandable. Inheriting a kingdom
can make one reckless.

But watching your pawn
puddle about, then handle my rook,
then be wanton

or whatever with my queen,
I had to switch to inflating my stomach,
exhaling out of my throat.

You took out my two knights
with a swipe of your bishop
revitalized from the sidelines.

Breathing wasn't doing the trick.
I went to the kitchen, took the Domino box
from the lazy Susan and shook out

three lumps of sugar, rattling
in my hand like dice. Swallowed them
unmuddled—relishing in the scratchy-
sweet going down.

* * *

Last night I wanted you to stay
so we could lie
skin-to-skin.

But you got in your car and drove
swervily away. I said, “fuck,”
and went up to sleep.

Woke up damp
knees-to-chin and jawclenched.

* * *

Let me be clear, baby, let me be
crystal and smooth as Grey Goose.

You like me a little loose
and I like you better

when I’m a little boozed.
Nothing but the truth,

didn’t we say?

If you have humility to lend—let me know.
I’ll swallow. Regurgitate. Form for you

a perfect pellet of excess fur, mice bones,
gut-polished apology, sugar shards.

Nothing you’d file under “nutrient-rich,”
but something for posterity.

Your grandchildren
will sit at your knee, reach

for my relic.

Don’t scold when they pick it apart,
put it in their mouths.

Remember that my edges
catch: the pliancy of my pieces
comes at a cost.

Draw the curtain and I'll be
at your back, cold blade,

steel plane—expectant.

SOME THOUGHTS FROM CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS-ROGERS JR.

B. Joanna Chen

1

My mother combined her last name with my father's last name, because she is a feminist, but also an egalitarianist (her answer to why she didn't just keep her own last name, or make him take her last name). I point out the irony, because "Rogers" is like "Roger," which is a man's name. She laughs, but I can tell she doesn't think I am funny.

2

When my mother is angry with me, she puts the unhealthy peanut butter on my after-school sandwich. It is the creamy kind, with high saturated fat content, and I actually prefer it to the expensive peanut butter they raise on organic farms. But I pretend to be sad about it (even though my mouth and I secretly enjoy ourselves) so she won't be mad anymore.

3

A girl in my class comes in today with pink cheeks. She says she had a dance recital last night and her mother let her keep the makeup on. I think she looks embarrassed. But when I ask her if she is embarrassed, she says no, it is the blush. She actually looks surprised when I ask her if she is embarrassed, but I figure this is because she has a second set of eyebrows, which are brown, even though she is blond.

4

How odd, to blush without blushing.

5

My babysitter picks me up after school and takes me home. She goes into the living room to talk on the phone with her boyfriend. When she is giggling particularly loudly, I spin open the Lazy Susan. I get out the cinnamon and go to the bathroom. I take off my socks and step into the bathtub; I lie down and think about taking a nap. Maybe later. I pop off the top to the cinnamon shaker and shake some onto my cheeks. It gets up my nose too and makes me sneeze three times. I bless myself, also three times. I get up from the bathtub and put my socks back on.

6

My mother likes the cinnamon. She says it looks like freckles. My father pats me on the head fondly when he comes home from the office. I now freckle myself every morning before school. The ballerina in my class asks me for tips.

AFTER HIM: DAY #4

Sara Henry

At 9:56 AM you wake up and you don't shower and you put your jeans and wrinkled t-shirt on and walk to Bullshit Hall for Bio and you sit at your desk for 92 minutes and you get up and walk to the cafeteria and sit with your coffee for 23 minutes and you get up and walk to the library and see Christina What's-Her-Face and she waves Hi and you wave Hi back and she moseys over and you think fuck almost got away as you embrace her and she says We should hang sometime and you say Totally, for sure and she grins her dumb grin and you grin your fake grin and say See you later and you curl in a cubicle and look at something for 37 minutes and you get up and walk out of the library because you have History and Other Fuck-Ups and you see his shock of black hair drifting across the quad and it's someone else and you slump to a bench and sit for the next 74 minutes staring at the grass that's so green it looks like it's about to puke and you get up and walk back to your dorm room and fall facedown onto your pillow that smells like puke and you don't check your cell phone until 11:04 PM and it doesn't matter since there are zero received messages and you type out a text to him that says Hey and you add an extra Y and you delete the Y and you delete the text and you pass out in your clothes and sweat in the light of the lamp and the lamp glows its mean glow the whole night long.

AFTER THE FUNERAL

Sara Henry

You and dad take a drive with the top down,
still in black on the speechless roads.

On the highway your hair beats hard,
the dark strands snapping up cold.

The speedometer leans right,
dad's face glimmering low.

The wind finds every corner,
lifts you from the car.

You steam into the sky,
a smudge of ash in pure blue.

Up there, you watch the blot of metal
hunt the thin horizon—

a dog chasing air, the smell of bone.

FRUIT

Demetrios Papageorgiou

No more my father says
to my prodding spoon,
there's a train coming
from the fruit fields
I'd like to catch.

You've barely eaten I say
brushing bits of cracker
out of his mustache;
I'm tired of your trains.

But you've never tasted fruits
like these, he says
fingering the lip of his bib.
Give me an apple and some red wine;
I'll show you.

In his trembling hands
he slices a piece,
dunks it in the wine
and lifts it up to my mouth.

I'll feed you before I go.

FISH FOR THOUGHT

Samantha Gobioff

“Fish embryos never quite did it for me.” He was gazing at me expectantly, gnawing on a carrot stick.

“It’s Beluga. And they’re not actually fertilized.” He smiled at my correction, exposing coffee-stained teeth, and pushed his binocular glasses up over the unfortunate bump on his nose. His swollen lips were pale and slick like slugs. They wriggled at me.

We were hovering by the buffet table at our company’s annual benefit - a charity event for cleft palates...or world hunger, I can’t remember which. Since they had clearly spent a contemptible fortune on the food, I was helping myself to whatever looked expensive. I piled a hearty helping of Beluga onto a translucent wafer and popped the whole mess in my mouth. Wet explosions of fishiness do not a delicacy make. Such a feminine food. I twirled the little serving spoon that made me feel like a giant. Tiny utensils, tiny crackers.

As I contemplated how to surreptitiously spit the glob into my napkin, he rambled an introduction: “I’m George Meyers, the new sales rep. Wow, did you try these mini crab cakes? They’re freaking incredible.” I suddenly felt nostalgic for the previous sales rep who would spit with fervor whenever he bragged about the size of his wife’s tits. George offered me his right hand while using the other to wipe off the oil shimmering on his chin. I stared - all his fingers looked like thumbs.

“Germaphobe? My wife’s the same way. She showers right after we, you know, do the deed.” He retracted his hand and caressed his left ass-cheek to pull out a wallet that was worn so thin it looked like parchment paper. He opened it and handed me what was now a greasy picture of his two gremlin children and wife. They were waving from the backs of emaciated donkeys as they descended into what appeared to be the bowels of the Grand Canyon. They wore matching straw hats.

I later learned that George had been married for more than twenty years to Cynthia, a petite blonde whom he had met in a college Introduction to Accounting study group. She was a pen-chewer who teased her midlife crisis professors with her southern-belle routine - “Hi ya’ll, I’m Cynthia Woodsen, I’m a freshman from Kentucky, my favorite ice cream is rum raisin without the raisins, and I’m taking Accounting 101 because I want my daddy to start giving me some credit. Get it?!” - and he was a product of New York suburbia who came to college with raging acne, an undescended testicle, and an Oedipus complex. But people said that he was going places, and for that she was willing to dig - doggy-style - until she struck gold. A rabbi who spoke Hebrew with a southern accent married them right after graduation.

When I failed to comment on the picture, frankly disturbed by how

despondent those donkeys looked, George asked in a waft of crab breath if I had any kids. I replied, “No, probably because of a childhood trauma involving my Uncle Marty, a vanilla candle, and a conveniently empty house.” He burst out laughing and clapped me on the shoulder, shouting, “What a ball buster! Good to see there’s someone here who doesn’t take himself so seriously.” He toddled away, leaving spittle on the left side of my face. I put the little spoon in my breast pocket.

George rejoined his horde – a paltry group of five, each flashing brief twinges of distress, like junkies faced with the prospect of having to do without. I observed them from the buffet table, trying not to catch anyone’s eye lest I get pulled into a conversation about, well, anything, as he clasped his watered-down scotch in one paw and gripped his balls through his pants pocket with the other. Apparently George was a multitasker. At each spurt of twittering laughter he glanced around the room – looking for a window to jump out of, I imagined – with sharp twitchy motions reminiscent of a pigeon.

I was just eyeing the lobster salad when “Hey, come join us!” consumed the room - and my appetite. George was calling me, motioning with his arm in a Come on, champ! kind of way. My shoes suddenly felt unbearably heavy. I briefly considered hurling them at George so that he could use them to build himself a new leather wallet, but my boss was now eyeing me from over the brim of his wine glass. So I took the little serving spoon out of my pocket and clutched it as I forced one foot in front of the other toward George and his posse. They might as well have been on the other side of the world.

They expanded their circle to let me in. I scanned the group: Wendy from HR who, according to office gossip, had actually slept with half the office; Kenny from PR whose son was caught masturbating during the Sea World Shamu show; Thomas from accounting, who had gastric bypass surgery three times and was the reason we all had to label our food in the office refrigerator; and a secretary named Sherrie, a mother of six children whose names were all derivatives of Michael, after her “late” husband who hadn’t been seen in public since his company’s corporate veil was pierced.

Wendy dove right in. “Well, hiya Neil! I haven’t seen you around the office lately. Everything alright?”

“Fine, fine.”

“How’s Martha?”

“She’s never been better, thanks.” Martha had died four months ago. Hit by a truck three days after she filed for a divorce. “She’s actually down under right now.”

Wendy squealed, clasping her manicured hands to her breast, “Australia! How exciting! I’ve heard it’s hot this time of year.”

“For Martha, the hotter the better.”

“You’re such a lovely couple. By the way, have you met George? He’s replacing Jack, you remember? The sales rep who overdosed on NyQuil?”

George waved at me like we were old pals spotting each other across a

crowded room. He chimed in, "Sure, we just met over by the crab cakes. Has everyone tried them? They're out of this world."

In an attempt to control the caviar that was beginning to fight its way back up my esophagus, I glanced down at the spoon in my hand. My cuticles looked like they had lost a fight with a cheese grater.

"What do you have there, Neil?" George asked me, swirling the ice around in his glass. I held up the little spoon for them to see, the tip sparkling in the light. I was so proud.

"Is that from the caviar?" Thomas blurted out, his chins jiggling accusingly.

"No." It was from my pocket.

"I hate fish," said Kenny bitterly.

"It's fish eggs," George clarified. He gave me the thumbs up.

"Are you sure it's not from the caviar?" Thomas persisted. "I just had to use the sugar spoon."

I was silent. They all looked at me. Even Sherrie, who didn't care about anyone unless their name started with an "M", seemed interested. George gave me a vague Go ahead gesture; a sideways sweep of the palm, as though he were washing the underbelly of a table. Martha never thought to wash there. She liked clean surfaces. She never really gave a shit what was underneath.

I shoved the entire little spoon in my mouth and swallowed it whole.

Sherrie gasped and screamed out for Michael; Thomas caught Wendy as her knees gave out; Kenny looked as though he'd seen worse.

The buffet started to get blurry, black spots marring the colorful spread. So much fish, I thought. The cool metal was body temperature now, a part of me, a horizontal rebel in a world of verticality. It was the David to my Goliath. Did Martha have this much fun when she ran that red light? I closed my eyes, silently thanking the gods for giving us caviar, but most importantly, for giving us teeny weenie little spoons.

My shoes weren't lead anymore. I was walking on clouds, lifting into the sky. Floating away. This is how salmon must feel, or is it sturgeon...?

I woke up on the floor with George's warm slimy lips pressed against mine. Everyone was crowded around us in a halo of curiosity and I could hear sirens in the distance.

"His eyes are open!" Wendy screeched. George looked down at me, his face bloated and red, his breathing labored. With a triumphant grin, he gripped the little spoon in five of his thumbs and held it up for me to see. It had felt so large just a few moments ago. I reached up and took it from him, slipping it back in my pocket.

YOUR HOUSE

Kimaya Diggs

I don't need to speak to tell
eat my voice or hold it
it's safe with you and anyhow
I'm still spectacular and a star without it

dishwasher down stairs dipping
on the drip-dry
dish rack shaking like soul-band tambourine
sugar give me rhythm

girl girl baby girl wails
out her solo miss
placed where you knew she'd hit
the crowd goes wild. Her song is spacious

her throat is gorgeous
her collarbones are Cartesian planes
I want to suck gallium or honey
mercury from spicy Venus lips

THE REASON I SAY I AM FROM COLORADO

Beau Sperry

For Chase Alexander Saxton

Is a refusal to explain.

i.

Why I traded my first-born's vertebrae
for a bowl of Sego stems
and tattooed the receipt above my shoulderblade—
a gift of aching; the reciprocity of exchange.

ii.

Why I celebrated a famine's end
before it finished—
why I danced circadian
as February stretched you like a flat sheet.
when I awoke you were both sheet and aspen bed,
the lying and the laying in.

iii.

Why after it kissed you
you understood Gethsemane
and as it penetrated
you understood that those who pray in agony
pray earnest; could pray for rain
in a rainstorm
because they like the sound
of the word,
its finality
as avarice in clematis vines,
the ability to choke
in full bloom.

iv.

Winter air so thick
 that you cannot see which bones you rent
 or why
 when father gave you a kaleidoscope
 showing the world exactly as it was
 you knew we were our own distortion—
render unto Caesar what is Caesar's,
 render brokenness
 unto the breaking.

LOS VIENTOS DE SANTANA

Cody Koester

In Santanas finds no man shelter
from windy rage, no door cut thick of heavy
oak to hold incessant winds at bay. In Santanas are infernal

ovens opened over wide land, heat gathering strength
out of the Great Basin, heat compressed in high-pressure
out of the highlands sloped through the lowlands between desert

and ocean, whipping current strands through sandy
canyons, pushing ocean out in backwash, depths upturned
in white-capped water mixed with muddy shadow. In Santanas

are heard no clear words, winds rushing
the ear, swirling the mind in incantations, visions vibrate
erased and no man sees clear towards sunset in Santanas. Satanas,

these devil winds, breathe fires orange over chaparral,
sagebrush flames jump firebreaks cut thick as demarcations
over the land, a parching blaze to cross and cross across mustard

grass and golden grain, gnarled oak left
smoldering bone dry, broken on barren earth, no root
left untouched. In Santanas the fires of the mind and no escape,

turn both the sinner and the saint
in restless beds, spores spread fever over
sweltering faces, lovers cast no seed and lovers

receive no germinating seed, Sama
the planter does not sow before rains have laid
the dust, the farmer does not reap under cursed breath.

Orange groves bear no bright fruit,
strawberry fields bud no blossoming berries,
and bodies are bound sterile gray in returning Santanas.

SAMADHI, THAT WAY MADNESS LIES

Cody Koester

We're all of us in line outside the museum, anxious to appreciate those inspired
 geniuses – the Van Goghs,
 the Goyas –but an unexpected exhibition seizes our attention, a man behind a waist-
 high wall has taken to undulating
 ecstatically, his thrusting pelvis gathering force, a pulsing tempest humping
 violently the rough
 wall, coarse denim scratching like crackling lightning, electric, spectators trying
 to make sense
 of the word he repeats, hisses, through clenched teeth sounds something
 like *beautiful*,
 rapt faces in the crowd leering mute witness to the sight and now the children
 have begun
 to imitate with oscillating hips as nervous parents motion no, but innocence
 knows no *no*
 or maybe knows not how truth is impossible to express, how heavily an urge can
 come to bear.

BUSRIDE

mary kate baker

This place is more than one place at a time.

This is a place with lots of strangers. I can feel them in the seat fabric with its purples and polka dots: they sat here before me, on the long road, watching every empty field through this same bus window, seeing every broken blade become something golden and good.

The air is wet with piss and thick cologne, here I smell the thick smudges on the window glass, the quick sludge of strangers, as the sun makes morning and the strangers and I: we are together.

I do not feel alone, even though I am
I feel like I am being opened slowly by
two left fists and a whole lot of bus stations
and birds rising from broken corn fields, frost
hard and bitter,

bitten through like dark liquor, reminding
every soldier-eye that leaving behind is not
letting go, nor is it forgiveness. But when I am
opened, all I can think is this: that I am loving
you the only way I know how and I am sorry if it
is clumsy or inadequate. I have learned that goodbyes
are important, but neither of us say them.
We each just walk in whichever direction pulled,
pitted and gutted us.
I ended up

here, somewhere that is more than one place at a time.
 I can feel the way I scrape along the
 scalloped edges of reality and lives.
 This town I passed through was a life
 to someone, a memory, a world. To me
 it is this: yellow houses and brown churches.

It is this: air filled with trumpets, old bricks. Strings
 of lights, gold letters, green paint.

It is this: a city of gray stone churches,
 bare trees, leftover snow.

and I have never been here before.

I rest my head against the window glass,
 feel the temperatures change as the
 bus heads south. I am all alone for a moment
 in a way that feels important, like a
 courage that does not take any real guts,
 and the simple sliding, rolling of asphalt beneath
 me is enough to press my heart
 from my body, to make me realize how easy
 it is to move across the earth.

My bones rejoice: look how much world there is!

BURIAL

Matthew Siliciano

One Saturday morning when Eamon was twelve, his mother tackled the grey gander down into the tall grass of the South Orchard, held its outstretched neck flush to a plank from a broken fence, and asked him to get an axe. He folded up his pruning saw and climbed down from the top of the apple tree. When he went over to look at the bird, splayed out and raising hell, she looked up, smiled and said “Deputy, I’ve apprehended the suspect.”

The past few months, they had been finding empty eggshells and puddles of yolk at the bottom of the nesting boxes, and had come to assume that the hens had turned to cannibalism. They had passed over the pair of geese as too ornamental to harbor much malevolence. Eamon’s father had adopted them in a fit of sentiment when the town council shut down the park, leaving no one to feed the birds.

But that morning, just as Eamon was scrambling up the apple branches, his mother walked into the chicken coop to find the gander pecking at a clutch of eggs next to a throttled hen. From his perch, Eamon saw the gander squeeze through an unstapled seam in a chicken wire window and waddle-fly into the orchard, as his mother gave chase.

“Not only are you a useless waste of space, but you’ve been being actively counter-productive,” she was informing the squawking fowl when Eamon returned from the toolshed with the red-headed axe. She had started talking to the animals a little less than a year ago. She said it helped keep her from going too loony, the animals being her only company when Eamon was at school. “People talk to their cats and dogs all the time. Heck, sometimes even like them. So what’s the difference if it’s a lamb or a chicken or pig? Still someone to talk to.”

This wouldn’t be his first time slaughtering an animal. His father had made sure that he knew how to wring a chicken’s neck; his father had guided his hands for Eamon’s first lamb, showing the boy the gap between molars where he’d place his thumb to control the head, how to snap the neck in one direction and slide the blade across the throat in the other. Eamon had cried the first few times. When he stopped crying was when his father began telling him, each time, “Respect the animal. Always.”

“Try not to hit my thumbs, sweetheart. It’s just like splitting a log. Go for the middle. See yourself chopping through to the ground beneath the plank, not just the top of the neck. Remember, swing through, swing true.” Eamon swallowed, the tip of his tongue pressed against his front teeth as he raised his arms over his head.

It took two swings. He would tell his friends a decade later, after one asked him about his parents as they all drank beer on the Lake Mendota shore, that the detail that remained with him most vividly from that day was the carcass majestically flapping

its wings, neurons firing a final chordate gesture, before it bled out in the grass. They asked him what he and his mother did with the body, whether they ate it, or made a pillow out of its feathers. He told them that it was old and tough, no good to eat, that it would have been hard as dicks to pluck, and left it at that.

When the blood stopped flowing, he swapped the axe for a shovel and carried the gander up the hill that overlooked the house, the coop, the pens, and the hay fields. The hill had a tall, solitary plain tree that Eamon would climb at sunset to see the whole length of the valley glowing orange and purple. He got to the top, dug a hole, and buried the bird next to his father.

SLABTOWN

Josh Gregory

Ugly grey rag
of sky;

this is the lawn
where weeds shiver

in impenetrable January
dirt; fossilized

trash in frozen mud.

I am returning again
to these yards,

looking out from a
slab of patio

at the morning moon;

its cold
craters

PSALM 75 [EXEGESIS]

Josh Gregory

(To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, A Psalm or Song of Asaph)

75 Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.

2 When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.

3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.

4 I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:

5 Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.

6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

8 For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.

9 But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

name O God give , give thy

receive the judge .

all the the pillars of it.

I said to the wicked, Lift the horn:

on a stiff neck.

the east, no west, no south.

But the judge: he putteth down

and he poureth out a cup, the red full mixture;
all the wicked earth

I will sing to the God of

the wicked I cut the horns of the righteous

OVERNIGHT IN DELPHI

Kate VENABLES

On the way up, we walk over worked stone,
look back over cypresses, sea.

The hot stadium is quiet but for swifts.
Cyclamens still. Poppies starting.

An eagle flies over gorse miles to the north
on its way to olives, lightning,

an old woman staggering and chanting
shamans flickering through rising air.

I swear by Apollo the physician ...

ANATOMY LESSON

Kate Venables

It was not unlike those Dutch paintings –
attentive faces leaning out of shadows to see a tendon;
dark velvet clothes, lace, beards –
but not like.

In her mind, starched white coats
reflect bright light pouring down from skylights.
Maybe it is always the first day –
white coat always the right size. Clean.

The demonstrator pointed at two boys
to let her through so she could see.
And there he was.

She joined faces tense, excited
banter held behind teeth.
Like hunters.

KASCHPER

Laurel Moffat

In bold black letters
on the boat there is a whisper
of hull splitting honeyed surface

down a canal where cowbell
peters out and leaves lost to
wrong-facing heads
are brighter, rounder than gold.

I will miss the wet-brain feelings
of rowing into the sunrise, fighting mud
for a place on the bank,

and ushering in cooler weather
on a long exhale

tingling electric.

Contributor Notes

Mary Kate Baker “Three years ago, I moved from my home in Chattanooga, Tennessee to Iowa City, Iowa to attend the University of Iowa and major in English. I have been blessed beyond words and I thank God every day for pie, music, coffee, photographs, words, colors, the ability to run, and thunderstorms. My favorite thing to do is laugh.”

B. Joanna Chen, an English and Sociology major, likes to spend her free time making friendship bracelets and getting to know people. She feels ambivalent about the Oxford comma. She once cried in excitement at the sight of baklava. Parataxis is her new excuse to share disparate thoughts.

Kimaya Diggs is a senior at Swarthmore College. When not writing, she can be found lying in the sun singing, like a musical lizard.

Samantha Gobioff graduated from Cornell University in May 2014 with a degree in Human Development. She hopes to attend medical school while continuing to pursue her passion for writing.

Josh Gregory is the author of the short collection of poems, “St. Pebble.” He lives in Philadelphia, PA and studies religions and poetry at Swarthmore college where he is a senior.

Sara Henry is studying English at the University of Chicago, where she is a senior editor of Euphony Journal. She won the Foyle Young Poets Award in 2010 and her work has appeared in Magma and the Chaffey Review, among others. You can find her winning Foyle Poem, “Work Night,” on the inside back cover of John Grisham’s Theodore Boone, one of the books distributed for Ireland and the UK’s World Book Night 2014.

Cody Koester is a senior at UCLA majoring in English with a concentration in creative writing. In 2014 he was awarded the Fred Weld Herman Memorial Prize from the Academy of American Poets.

Laurel Moffat is a Nutrition major who relies on poetry and exercise to keep her sane. She finds that the two mix easily, especially in rowing.

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Matthew Siciliano was born and raised in Upstate New York, and attended Deep Springs College before transferring to Cornell. He enjoys Snickers bars and Trappist beer.

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Kate Venables is a new writer. She works as a physician and is also a student in the University of Oxford creative writing programme.

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