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# RAINY DAY

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### **Submission Guidelines:**

We only accept e-mail submissions. Send all submissions to the editor (rainyday@cornell.edu). You must include the submission as an attachment, preferably a “.doc” file. Please make sure all the formatting is correct. The subject in the e-mail must be “RAINY DAY SUBMISSION.” Also include within the document your name and contact information. We accept multiple submissions. Send all inquiries about joining the staff to the editor. Further information, as well as back issues, can be found at our website: [www.rso.cornell.edu/rainyday/](http://www.rso.cornell.edu/rainyday/).

## UNTITLED

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Aaron Weinstein

“Get me Satchmo  
And six fine Cats,” God cried,  
“For Judgment Day is here  
And I feel like dancing.”

## DECEMBER, 1933

---

In repose by the fire the Fuehrer  
wraps gelid feet in woolen socks,  
seeming (for a moment)  
like every other man on Earth: thankful

only for the comforts  
of glowing warmth on a winter's day.

Steeped deeply in his chair,  
he draws heat from the hearth in bursts  
of cobalt fields and virescent skies.

(The embers murmur  
their assent as the canvas offers itself  
skyward in smoldering sacrifice.)

And hymns of conquest swing gently in his throat as,  
sipping tea, Herr Wolf feels again at peace  
with turning away from aspirations of Vienna.

## SNAPSHOT

---

Breathing heavily, two smokestacks sit up,  
propped against a sky whitewashed shut by snow.  
They stretch; yawning upwards, mouths agape,  
belching lustrous clouds from ash burned throats.

A third of a mile back,  
etched in the distance,  
a clock eulogizes:  
Eleven past the hour of Nine.

I shift uncomfortably in my seat,  
wishing I had my camera.

This will have to do.

## QUENCHING INK

---

Shoan Yin Cheung

I come here to  
drink juice  
water the color  
of artificial summer  
for 50 cents less

and wait for  
words to fall  
like black ink stars,  
because I like  
to write in the city.

Once, I wrote  
a poem on a scroll  
of white paper  
birch bark  
and let it fly,

but it caught  
fire

the day  
I walked  
into sfumato streets;  
the air drizzled

with death—  
cherrywood romances burning  
ears, eyes, lips.

In firemen's rain  
I write to quench

hot coals of memory, hoping  
for the day I find  
a black peacock

• 8 RAINY DAY

in dandelion-tangled fields trundling,  
tail unfanned,

and not have much to say.



## BALLET

---

Amos Lichtman

Tinny Prokofiev filled the studio where four rows of parents shifted restlessly on metal folding chairs, some bored and fighting yawns, a few proud and beaming, but most watching with critical stares as their young girls executed imperfect pliés and twisted their smooth powder-white legs into second position with nervous familiarity.

The air was stuffy, sunlight streaming through the tall windows, closed and fastened. Sweat began to glisten on Mr. Brodsky's brow as he alternated again and again from pressing his eye against the video camera and peering over the top. Mrs. Brodsky watched his fidgeting with the corner of her eye, and tugged at the hem of her dress. Her daughter was one of the better dancers, graceful and mature. She was beginning to fill her leotard, though, Mrs. Brodsky thought. Already her bosom stretched the white synthetic fabric of her leotard into a gentle curve, and soon enough would affect her balance. The garment was stretched taught, and the skin on her inner thigh was bared higher than was decent. Mrs. Brodsky leaned toward her husband.

"David, will you bring me some water?" She whispered, holding out an empty plastic bottle.

"The video, Elina," Mr. Brodsky answered without taking his eye from the camera.

"I can hold it. My throat is dry."

"You don't know how to use it. The fountain is just outside the door."

Mrs. Brodsky stared at her husband for a second longer and remained in her seat. Her armpits began to feel damp. She rubbed her calf with her foot, and was reminded that she had not shaven in a few days. The room was too warm.

When the tape ran out, the girls ran hesitantly toward their parents, proud but still nervous, while the instructor stood at the front and received thanks with an air of reticent strictness that offered reassurance that it was a privilege for one's daughter to be in her competent hands. Anna caught her father's eye in the crowd and ran into his open arms. She smiled wide and asked him to show her the video.

"Anna, go and fill this up at the fountain in the hall," she said, thrusting the bottle into her daughter's hands.

"Okay mama. Did I dance well?"

Mrs. Brodsky grunted.

"You danced like an angel," Mr. Brodsky said. "Here, hold the camera and stay with your mother, and I'll go fill the bottle up."

"Give me that, you'll break it." Mrs. Brodsky snapped once her husband had gone. She grabbed hold of Anna's wrist, smooth and dry despite dancing in the heat, and tried to wrench the camera from her stubbornly clutching hands. Anna screamed as it went crashing to the floor, and began to sob in short hiccoughing bursts.

"You brat! Do you know how much money that cost us? Your father is going to be furious with you!"

The other adults still left in the room looked over to see what the noise was. Little girls crying at ballet recitals were nothing new, but always a spectacle worth watching. "Thank God that's not *my* child," they would all think, shaking their heads and smirking smugly on the inside.

Mr. Brodsky returned from the water fountain to see Anna crying and holding a camera with a broken lens, her mother standing over her with her arms crossed and jaw clenched, breathing hard through her nose, with sweat glistening on the tiny row of hair above her upper lip.

"Do you see what she did?" Mrs. Brodsky said, taking hold of Anna's elbows and shaking the camera and her arms at Mr. Brodsky. Mr. Brodsky sighed and pulled Anna away from her mother.

"It's alright, it was an old camera," he said, smoothing her hair and rubbing her shoulders gently.

"David, she is too old for this immaturity. You have to make her responsible for what she's done!" Mrs. Brodsky insisted, franticness edging into her voice as she watched Anna turn away from her and sob into her father's chest, her young breasts pressed against his stomach. But Mr. Brodsky ignored her, calmly soothing his daughter until she was sniffing and wiping her eyes.

By now most of the families had left, and the ballet instructor was giving them meaningful glances from a distance that said she would like them to follow suit. Mrs. Brodsky strode out of the room in front, turning toward her husband as she held the door and glaring at him coldly until he knew that she would not be speaking to him in the near future. They rode home silently. Mr. Brodsky drove, looking frequently in his rear view mirror at Anna, lying across the back seat, exhausted from dancing and crying. Elina sat staring through the window at herself in the side mirror, back rigid, hand running across her face in a futile attempt to smooth the wrinkles that seemed to have deepened without her noticing.

## VICTORY GARDEN

---

Ian del Giacco

You said, don't look in the fridge  
Embarrassed at the poor showing  
The apartment already cold but  
I looked anyway  
A head of lettuce with life wilted out of it

I feel as if I am standing in a Chelsea victory garden  
Or the delivery room where my brother is lying still  
In the womb and mother  
Labors even though she knows too  
When he comes, his face will be cold

In the fridge there are turnips  
The same purple as a cocaine nosebleed  
One more line will spark cold fusion in my frontal lobes  
Maybe I will  
Cut them out and cook them just to see you eat

Because even behind those full lips  
And the chipped smile, the acid burns still show  
There is blood down to your chin  
I'd fix you some victory cabbage  
But you're already wilted

## MINOTAUR

---

Bold Theseus descend, nobly, into dark halls  
Lending fire to the scurry of rats fattened on your kin  
Their shadows looming large crawl up walls  
Their rush a rustle, dead leaves in a breeze  
Shades catching at knees in supplication

Wander where dust kicked up off a traveler's sandals settles, nearly  
Then tussled lifts its shifting dunes  
Each speck some afterthought of an unseen crime  
Hard grasping hands and dreams that pass  
Fast sleeping through the horn-beamed gate  
Of Minotaur's *rhyton* head

There's light to tender and lighter still  
A labyrinth revealed same rooms same yellow  
Same hollows behind beast eyes *apotropaic* teeth  
Rank with murder or age making Cretan baths unclean  
And who stalking stall to stall but  
Minotaur

I most cursed among all Minoans though no Minoan myself  
Half man half bull half desirous of an absent king's love  
And blood still to salt the stale air, a prince's  
My own or *this* prince's prisoner in a palace made mine  
Oh but I am rambling, turned round through rooms oft tread  
The words and thoughts and deeds in this *rhyton* head  
A labyrinth all their own

And where mighty Theseus? Emboldened in fraternity  
He treads the corridors of my mind with princely step  
Not one back taken on fire on spike tight-grasped  
And steel that ever lent bitter flavor to my feast  
Yet here the rub for trailing, ball in hand  
I caught his thread and tailing, he presses, I at heel  
Following by beast scent the white line  
Though to salvation or sword I know not which

Now echo of earth he steps, hoarse breath  
Our vaunted hero into vaults steeped mad in blood  
Round corner and white neck bared for murder I pause  
Reel run though hand on thread the back a tangled maze  
And dreaming blind by my errant mind I flee  
Nose and throat set fire to my Minotaur's head  
The white line ends and crashing reach the door  
Warm sun a seabreeze

## OR COMEDOWN

---

Toby Huttner

5a: sudden disconcerting  
appearance!  
between  
the physical and spiritual  
worlds during their  
descent  
of  
the  
ski run.  
By chromatic intervals,  
An inclina  
t  
i  
o  
n downward.  
4a: The act. An ancestor, 32...Its final furious descent  
3: a derivation from...  
2: a decline.  
1: The...process of desc  
ending.

*Taken from Webster's 3rd International Dictionary, G & C Merriam Co., Springfield MA 1961,  
entry for "descent."*

## I WAS ABOUT TO SAY

---

“something important, nothing terribly meaningful, but something some *thing*, that would impress—something that could be quoted”—and they<sup>1</sup> (who?) could attach My Name to with a hyphen; something my audience (if such a thing exists) could remember, even if it was just with a fleeting memory while picking their toes or fixing clocks. I had justly chosen these exact words I would say when I was subt(en)ly jerked by an odd sensation of plurality, or, that feeling you get while watching yourself in a mirror; now there are two of you you! Behold then, for your entertainment, the moment of... transition... of... transcendence... of[ellipsis][space]transtemporal[hyphen]transmutation! Truth! Hear two four referred to as blank. What else? I can think of many things (including: nothing), none of them would prove my point (if such a thing exists). That is, who, after all, stole the queen’s tarts?

---

<sup>1</sup>could attach A Name to with a hyphen; something a reader (if such a thing exists) could remember, even if it was just with a fleeting memory while fixing their roes or picking socks. I had rightly chosen these extracted words when I was struck by an odd sensation of plurality, or, that feeling you get while watching yourself in a mirror; now there are two of you you!<sup>1</sup> Behold then, for your entertainment, the moment of... rendition... of... recreation... of[ellipsis][space]restricted[hyphen]reasoning! Wrong! Hear two four referred to as blank. What else? I can think of many things (including: nothing), none of them would prove my point (if such a thing exists). That is, who, after all, stole the queen’s tarts?

---

<sup>1</sup>Behold then, for your lamentations, the moment of ab-sence... of ab-scission... of ab-arration...of[grammar]ab-jection! This we call: a footnote. What else? I can think of many things (excluding: nothing), none of them would prove my point (where such a thing exists). That is who, after all, are you?

## THE GIRLS AND THEIR BOYS

---

Molly O'Toole

There was a boy, and a pizza box, and a cruelty in the creaking of the grasshoppers.  
There was a kid, and two best friends, a secret, and some sand in the bottom of a shoe.

There was a young man, and two sisters,  
a beginning, crying in the closet, and an ending, crying on the floor.  
There was a stranger, and two desks, and a couch cushion for an oracle.  
There was a victim, and a cool wooden pew,  
a part in the hair, and a fear that he was her.

There was a man and two funerals, crumpled chemistry homework and a trashcan,  
and a stain-glassed dance on a Mexican sun warmed comforter.

There was a misunderstanding, and a girl who wasn't lost, a short haircut and a swimming pool, sitcom conversation, and one of those that should've worked but didn't.

There was a fit, and blue eyes,  
a poker chip that flipped, back and forth, back and forth, across his knuckles.  
There was a wrong, a winter path, a moon splashed step, and a bottle of wine,  
a sadness and an anger that were the same thing.  
There was a find, and a pair of glasses, and poetry on window panes, a pair of cartoon pajamas, and parties set for tea for two.

The man came back, with a comfort, and a guilt, and a trap, disguised as a windbreaker  
that kept love lukewarm on the stove for leftovers.

He stayed for awhile, and a while longer after that.

Then there was a fix, and a hunger, a bridge, and a snaking lamplight reflection, a shivering, a door slam, and a tree that leaned as much as he did when she walked away, tripping on cracks in the sidewalk.

There was an arrangement, and a list, and a snicker, and an invisible origami crane on the pillowcase in the morning.

You were there, and there was a prediction, and a hand to the forehead, and a bitter laugh, but I wasn't there, and there was a wheezy, r rolling voice, a red plastic cup, a dark corner, and a black space behind the eyes.

Now there's more, but it doesn't matter —

There was you,

And then there was me.



## THINKING INSIDE THE BOX

---

Let's	See,	If	It	"Works.
Go	on —	"you"	seems	to
Fit	a	mold	with	"me,"
a	schedule	space,	(empty)	said
"girl."	Timing	is	cheating,	Fate,
to	a void	all	pain.	As
fit	for	this	is	"she" —
your	pleasure is	really	more	cut too
taste.	The ideal	here?	Real.	short.

## STORAGE

---

Rebecca van Laer

1.

Each bedroom in the house, a box in its own right, is now filled with smaller boxes, like a matroyshka. These boxes are usually in the rooms of their former inhabitants; my room is filled with boxes from the toy company I modeled for (*Kiddablers!*), several boxes of Laura Ashley dresses, a box of beanie babies, a box of my grandmother's shoes, jewelry boxes, a set of box springs (rendered useless once the standard mattress was replaced with a remote controlled replacement) leaning up against the wall, several boxes of fabric scraps, a pink tissue box.

Some rooms, in their glory days used as studio space, have been transformed into storage bins for holiday decorations, discarded issues of *Good Housekeeping*, and rolled up oil paintings. I believe some of the oil paintings may have been burned in a bonfire a few years back, but it's difficult to tell what's what. I like to think that this new sprawling constellation of the defunct and disused, though, has made an admirable use of the vaulted ceilings and abundant natural sunlight on the upstairs level, circumstances considered.

2. Christmas Box

As a manager at a high-end retail store, my mother took it upon herself to make sure that the display Christmas trees were wrapped in strands and strands of blinking lights. Every branch, every twig, was wrapped – the live pine trees, with so much white wire, began to appear artificial. This ritual was, of course, also performed at home. The Wrapping took hours; hours of anguish as other members of the household failed to wrap efficiently. My own intense allergic reaction (sneezing, feverishness, hives on some years) made the spectacle increasingly stressful as we progressed from the wrapping stage to the hanging-of-ornaments stage.

When, for the first time, it became my father's duty to perform the Christmas rituals, the tree became much smaller. It was roughly two feet tall, neon green, and square. In fact, it was a box. *Oh Christmas cube, oh Christmas cube, how lovely are your corners.* I was not allergic to the fluorescent spray paint, even though the smell permeated the basement for days. We were not required to spend any time decorating the cube – its elegant, minimalist form required little in the way of adornment.

By Christmas day, though, we had all become upset by the obstinate presence of the cube, and the problems it presented. Who was to water the cube? When other

square parcels appeared, would the cube be dwarfed by them? Did it need a cube stand? And what was inside of this looming neon presence?

### 3. Matroyschkas

“Two peas in a pod,” says my mother, and I silently protest that this phrase implies a stifling symmetry. Our feet are similar: wide at the toe, tapering towards the back, metatarsals jutting out alarmingly. I am three inches shorter, though, and considerably younger; when I lust after men twice my age they are not yet impotent. My eyes are not deep set and I bear no marks of her Russian heritage, I cannot even spell *matroyshka*, although I did once fit inside.

“A bottomless pit of need is what your father said to me, and you are in many ways my daughter.” She must have started with grand needs, I suppose: the ceremony, the house and its sprawling yard, a sports car, a child, then a smaller; increasingly miniscule and significant demands that sustain the insatiable need, which stretches out, like the blades of grass in the back yard and the hairs on my head, towards infinity.

I am not sure, really, if I represent one shell, or if I’ll have a sequence of my own.

### 4. In the Basement

My father’s house is out in the country, in view of a particularly impressive ring of pecan trees. On one dark night, I remember driving round in my mother’s sports car in search of the house; at night, though, most trees seem to look the same at high speeds, even under the glare of headlights.

There is a kitchen, a living room; there are three bedrooms, there is a basement. There is a second room in the basement. The door to this room is locked, and has always been locked. It has no door knob, though, and one can see through the hole where the knob should be.

At first, it was fun to pretend that it was a mystery. The Locked Door in the Basement could lead to a pile of treasures. Alone in the front bedroom with the wind blowing out across the shattered pecan shells, though, I began to have second thoughts. A locked door in the middle of the country was a perfect storage space for something terrible. When it was light the next day, I spent a considerable time crouching and peering, stretching out on my stomach with a flashlight, trying to see in.

There appeared to be a number of cardboard boxes and a lamp of some stature.

My father insists that the owners of this rental have left a few good for “storage.” My mother tells me that perhaps his rent is so affordable because of the tragedy that once took place beneath the pecan trees.

## NOTHING AT ALL LIKE AN EMPTY GLASS

---

She says, to me, “Today I feel empty.”

I wonder if she means half empty, or half full,  
or indeed completely devoid of any substance  
or any sense of once having been full, what  
I must in turn claim to maintain equipoise.

“No, nothing like a glass at all.”

And, looking into the receding shoreline  
of her eyes I discern that she does not,  
cannot feel transparent –  
this emptiness is like the longing  
a dried riverbed feels, devoid  
of the layers of muck and grime  
that should dwell above it,  
lacking only the rushing  
of currents, waxing and waning  
with the movements of the rain  
and the ocean and the seasons,  
cut off from the birth  
and development of tadpoles  
and other small and slimy creatures,  
the hatching of mosquitoes  
and the feet of children running back and forth:  
the loss of all things,

and also like the thirst one feels  
upon waking up.

## ON CONVOLUTED SURFACES

---

And so, as the skin bears its marks – birth, pock, notches  
left by knife slips, pit falls (each wrinkle  
in an elephant's grey hide, packed with soil, yellowed  
strides across the water, could unravel into roadmap) –  
the brain, exposed, gives up the secrets  
of its breathless moments, liquid misuse,  
the times it banged against its boundaries  
(memory resides in marks).

I've been known to fold over the corners  
of my favorite pages, leave creases  
like a well-worn pillow's, press petals 'til they're dry  
as exoskeletons (the body sheds purposefully,  
takes weeks to husk itself, confuse its natural  
predators with the discarded scent, shape.  
Flesh heals where axons can't).

And shape unfolds the strangest things:  
the rounded corners of these pages  
and the convex curve of eyes averted:

Brushing my hands over this yellowed surface,  
when I feel the edges cracking,  
I learn to admire smoothness.

## OLE LUKOIE

---

He walks in socks. Só  
    quietly. Sprinkles sand  
in children's eyes –  
    not to blind, but to protect

them from his gremlin visage.  
    Good children have good  
dreams. That summer – thirteen –  
    I dreamt of sand dunes.

The day's heat bleeding  
    Free-form, view stretching out  
over sand-bent tundra, grains  
    still nestled, somehow, in my gums.

My father'd flown me down  
    to North Carolina. A canal rose out  
back, green with water moccasins.  
    Beach to the East, but  
the dunes rose up from the highway,

deconstructed, decontextualized  
    sand castles. By day I'd caramelize  
out in the grass, hips jutting towards  
    the white light, balloon

flowers, transplanted palms. At night,  
    I biked alone  
and humming towards the Dairy  
    Queen, cone dripping chocolate

shell by the time I reached the sand.  
    Walking up, each footprint  
is swallowed by the next.  
    Mown over: no trail, no

proof, just a constant two-steps-  
forward, slip-and-slide back. Ole  
Lukoie: “It’s astonishing how many  
old people are anxious to get

a hold of me. ‘Ole, Ole, we can’t close  
our eyes.’ Ole Lokie doesn’t give  
dreams for pay.” My mother might  
remember the rough starch

of her hospital gown, my father his  
late night phone calls; I

Remember: rough tumble, white  
grit sticking to the body like dried  
moths on the outdoor lanterns,  
muscles slackening up the slope.

Like a pilgrim at the top. No  
view towards seeing much,  
few thoughts of escape, just  
white-coated exhaustion.

And waking up, sand in my eyes.

## DAPHNE GASPED,

---

Rebecca Chapman

her heart's engine blasted as  
Apollo's intentional fingers  
brushed her hipbone, already half  
turned to tree; the  
spreading bark blocked  
most of his spread palm's touch  
but what remained was  
stunned. Her first  
and last man's touch, at once,  
she couldn't help  
her head from turning back, so that  
she wouldn't see her hands already  
leaves, too late to twist  
to girl again, not  
human, but not yet tree, she  
tried to find Apollo's eyes  
with hopes a glance  
would make the earth crack as  
much as his polished fingertips had  
made her skin flinch, and  
so uproot her growing toes.  
At last she knew the bark's caress could  
not compare to one of flesh and  
glanced her carved eyes back to see  
his eyes were somewhere else



## NUDETON'S LAW

---

What does it take to stand  
up straight?  
Under the plummeting shower plumbing  
my back's curved line  
cowers under the force of haltering  
lathering, Dial soap laid backwards  
(because letters don't stick)  
slips on the dish, slips off the dish,  
the soap dishes:  
"hot water, showering, steam.  
oh wet rat! Whose grin tames them teas?  
We hot art, how reigns the meat?"  
What does soap know anyway?  
I suspect nothing.  
The bubbles burble.  
My spine pines for a t-square,  
among other things, but to unfurl  
is a slippery thing, so  
I no longer know if that's a curtain,  
or a fucking car unit, or  
if that's even my hand  
reaching for it

## CATHEDRAL

---

Amos Lichtman

face twisted up filling his eye sockets with cheek, tear ducts pointing every which way in the cold misting rain. his gait is tense his knuckles clenched tight wet fingernails sliding across his palm wrist to fingers wrist to fingers, but he is faster with his head down than the others who walk with their heads down and he weaves through them in starts and stops like a ball in a pachinko machine. and now he is through and onto empty pavement next to waterveined windows and into one of these he glances, it could be an art gallery but he's not sure. he is not moving now, his eyes have stopped first then his head and his legs, and neither is the photograph at which he stares, twenty inches by thirty inches in silence. they are lockstep in their stillness. the knots in his face have all come undone. he is frozen hot like pompeii, the flow of glistening black umbrellas washing over him, and in a thousand years this is where he will be, the rain having traced in eternity the contours of his hair, his coat, his lips. this time a thousand years is seven seconds and this time his reanimation is a shudder and a shivering inhalation. and in those seven seconds fourteen years had disappeared and two feet and the stubble on his neck and there he lay with his head on the cold inlaid floor of the cathedral listening to the words that escaped from the thin rectangular box beside him. there were five others like it laid out like pips on a domino, and from each came words in a different language, and in each voices spoke in the same tone. the language in the box beside his prone body was the one his mother spoke, and the words he collected and arranged and filled in the missing in-betweens, repeating, repeating, so he would not forget. the ceiling of the cathedral was as high as he could imagine a ceiling to be, and the space beneath it so cavernous that only a whisper could fill it. he had once wondered how great a sin one would commit that he would feel compelled to speak it in a room so enormous, in a box within a box. not now. some people worry about the smallest things, and some not. seven seconds and his ankles were stuck against the heavy bottoms of his pants. his eyelashes dripped. umbrellas blocked out the sky.

## CENTO: ON LONGING

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Meredith Shepard

*Fragments taken from poems in The New Yorker*

We give each other the secret passwords  
the instant after the lights go out and before the stars turn on,  
for at twilight each voyage is, in fact, our requiem;  
the same as dreams are cubbyholes-  
the mind chasing a wagon of illumination  
through the mechanical universe-

with nothing to assist  
but the last and most fabulous of beasts-  
language, language-  
which knows, as I do, that it's too late to record the loss of these things  
but does so anyways, and anxiously, in case it shares their fate.

Maybe I'll be riding on the back of a snow goose,  
with all the time in the world to fly through  
not concerned about ever arriving  
to meet an old love without pain  
in the gilded silent grove:  
Aspens doing something in the wind.

I keep thinking maybe June is what I need to make me happy  
but wanting can't make it so.  
Tears? Of course, but also,  
"the soul is our capacity for pain."

## HABIT

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Beatrice Mao

### 1. *Habituation*

The danger is when the familiar becomes true,  
When the fit improves with time. Call it broken-in,  
Call it tailor-made—it's a fit  
Of orthopedics, an accommodating tantrum. We cry  
For comfort, for the honor of living long  
Hours in the prestige of our lasting. Who says lingering  
Warrants respect, and that what survives  
Isn't all dregs and settlings?

What survives  
post-mortem is the cadaver, the ritual of mourning,  
but also implantation—giving flesh to earth,  
its memory can propagate untethered to its antecedent.

So when you say “stay,” think of the unbridaled  
possible, the volitent feral stray  
who comes in for weekly feedings:  
no collar, no bell. Just appetite.

### 2. *Cohabitation*

They warned against it  
for good reason—now *not at home*  
means *fucking someone else*. Worse,  
coming back to it: to the smell  
of a foreign perfume lingering in the hall,  
the muffled laughs and probably sex  
when it's quiet. The silence gives you away.

But we never really lived together  
in the first place—marriage is always absorption,  
one into the other. And we were devoted  
as if sharing utensils and showers weren't also  
eco-friendly, a convenient conscience, going halves on ethics.

Separate, we're pitied; but we don't mistake  
 the funeral for the real goodbye,  
 when memory and mobility fade and recede  
 like joined cars of a leaving train. Or perhaps  
 one's leaving facilitates that of the other,  
 and infinity's two loops coming unlinked  
 leave nothing. Two pinched teardrop zeros.

### 3. *Ratihabitation*

Because our relative testicle size is between that of the chimp and the gorilla.  
 Because we don't advertise our ovulation periods.

Because I'm still young and can't be claimed.  
 Because I'm a skeptic and hedge my bets.

Because the fruit doesn't fall far from the tree.  
 Because one wasn't enough for my mother, either.

Because I want to find it, what I'm looking for.  
 Because the template match comes back negative.

Because I reject the *habendum et tenendum*.  
 Because I don't have a title deed.

### 4. *Inhabitation*

I am the madwoman in the attic,  
 entranced by the women in the wallpaper.  
 It's a sickness, this idea that things grow old,  
 this plural license, this denial of the One.

That's why you kept me here  
 waiting, that's why you told me you'd be back.  
 No property rights meant open access,  
 and you wouldn't be a wittol. Your axe

to grind, this obsession with cuckoldry,  
 this endless counting-over of eggs.  
 Don't think you're better

for your Kali's teeth bracelet; that I don't hear you  
replacing and relocking it when you climb into bed.

5. *Habit*

We used to go back  
for more, like we didn't know  
it was consuming us, like coming clean  
was a mistake, an imposition.

We used to wear it  
like a garment, this time test(ament).  
Three years of these twenty-two together—  
the fraction an irrational number,  
the ratio urging slaves to obey their masters  
out of the fear of God in Colossians.

We used to talk it  
down to those who congratulated us  
or asked, suspiciously, eagerly, *When?*  
The time won't come. Now when we say *when*  
we mean *stop. Enough*. I still want to ask you  
exactly what you meant—was it *any more*  
or *anymore* you didn't want of me?

Regardless, we've got our new addictions. What's left to do  
besides steal back gifts, put salt on cakes,  
pierce condoms like voodoo dolls with pins?  
There's a solace in malice that doesn't quite die hard  
with the aging vessel—just takes the edge off,  
softens it, tongues it to tolerability.

## BIOTERRORISM

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Stuart Katz

Anthrax in the post –  
It has poisoned my goldfish.  
Poor little Blinky

## JERKING OFF

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Bendi Barrett

all orgasms must live  
in the same three words, “oh”,  
“fuck” and “god” like trinity. They must sing

a tiny repertoire, a litany of monochromatic  
buzzing and edge-yellowed favorites, dog-eared  
with long use. It’s redundant to moan

how good it slides, into the receiver,  
how good it slides, around the base,

when all it takes is a little: spit, lube,  
blood or butter to manufacture miracles.



## SNAPSHOTS OF LAST FRIDAY NIGHT

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i. shot glass & looking glass  
this line is infinity, he said  
inhale  
and so it was.

ii. at dino's (parts 3-10 and the Bolshevik revolution is happening in my head)

horny as a rose is thorny,  
I'm tripping dance steps like angry fractals:

I'm a fucking oyster and my pearl's a diamond:  
It's like acoustic guitar, like Agamemnon

said fuck troy, changed his mind, took up  
Love.

ii. phone sex

is the only way into a man, the only come  
down worth coming down for.

## LIVING WILL

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burn through a man's constitution  
so fast    that even the bones char  
black, pitched perfect as an eclipse.

Near the end, even synapse  
sickens and dendrites deny  
their impulse    to spark.

Then, shut me off, stuff  
my pieces in their old places  
and fasten down the fade.

## THEOPHANY

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“in the heaven that God  
told me about there was clouds lightning blues hot dogs...”  
-jon papas

i.  
neither blond enough nor tan  
soaked, God had soft eyes  
green rapt focus,  
practiced. I let him fuck me  
because I didn't think Ginsberg would mind.

ii.  
an eclipsed bedroom, tonguing cigarette leftovers  
on his cheek's insides, between his lips and the rose red  
of his suction-stained neck. baby, he glances,

you're a fucking calamity. Roll over. I'm fist-  
fulls and face deep in the bed's cotton prophylactic,  
he repeats the steps and I recall the lord,

his prayer in my ear, alongside blood-thump and deep  
breathing. Trash or transformation, I'm a wavelength:  
dip peak dip peak dip.

iii.

I think of you, almost naked (decency permits  
at least a little skin) and forget whole stanzas

..

..

..

iv.

i remember now, why I repented your  
sharp bitter thrill and junkie's luck, your

fingers as forgetful as fish, your  
one candle making short work of the black  
out, and the handheld radio playing bachata  
until the batteries died while we  
weren't listening.

v.

God appeared again, this time wearing board shorts slung so low  
over vicious hip lines. He cut a faultless figure, buffer than his strung

up son, first muse of Calvin Klein. God's eyes were glossy softies  
apt to butter me up and tender cheap worship. Imagine me calm

and imagine me, fingers just itching to itch and ditch their pocket-  
lint companions. God was panting – on this day so hot the bible sweat –

his mouth open slight as a nickel buzz and slender enough to suck  
the brains out my head. His shorts slipped an inch, his thin-colored curlicues

cinched my conversion, and for the record: he mentioned no other heavens.

## FEATURED POET

## Rebecca van Laer

Rebecca van Laer is a junior English major in the College of Arts and Sciences, where she has impressed professors and fellow students with her impeccable fashion sense. Rebecca is no new-comer to accolades and attention, however. As a child, Rebecca was prominently featured as a model in numerous clothing catalogues and toy commercials. Her career in the entertainment industry peaked at age 12 with her half-season stint on the popular children's series "Ghostwriter". Her character, "Louisa," was a brainy know-it-all who all the boys had crushes on, with lofty dreams of a high-powered career in journalism. Rebecca's aspirations in Hollywood were smashed, however, when test audiences found her character to be annoying and obnoxious. Rebecca's interest in writing began a few years later; she completed four one-act plays and a made-for-television screenplay entitled "Sister's Grace: The Best Christmas a Girl Could Ask For." She has since turned her attention to other literary styles."

## FEATURED POET

### Bendi Barrett

Bendi Barrett is an Arts & Science senior/poet interested in formulating an aesthetic which deeply involves the sexualized body. While at Cornell, he's been invested in the development of a poetic/artistic community (to mixed effect) and he sincerely hopes that the upcoming classes will continue that noble, if quixotic pursuit. He would like to thank the Clown Shoes Brigade for suffering through his poetry, Helena Viramontes and the creative writing department for creating a hospitable writing environment and Rainy Day for publishing him. Also, he would like to break the third person here and say that I love the hell out of Cornell and I'm sad (but ready) to go.

## CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

**Rebecca Chapman** is a junior English major. She likes writing poetry and hates writing about herself in the third person. She struggles with prose.

**Shoan Yin Cheung** is a rising senior in Arts and Sciences who likes things that are pretty. She spent a very theoretical semester learning about how the origin in language does not exist, and her science course called *The Origin of Speech and Language* next semester will be the counterpoint of recent learnings. She also enjoys learning languages and tries hard at pronouncing them nicely. This summer she will read, and then lead a field project to Guatemala.

As an Upstate resident, **Ian Del Giacco** divides his time between shooting the breeze at Stewarts gas stations and discussing local sports/volunteer fire department legends at rural diners. He is currently endeavoring to combine semi-autobiographical writing and fine woodworking into a single art form: project name “A Lighthouse in the Bathroom.” Ian badly wants to learn how to whistle.

**Toby Huttner** is an English major in the College of Arts and Sciences from Rochester, NY. When not doing school work, Toby enjoys studying literary theory, playing soccer, listening to music and writing things.

**Stuart Katz** is a senior in the college of Human Ecology. He has one of the most destructive personalities you’ll ever encounter. He enjoys a good red wine and starting brawls in pubs. He believes in redemption but thinks it’s unlikely.

A graduating senior, **Beatrice Mao** is off to study bats in graduate school (but hopes to get around to an M.F.A. in poetry). She was pleasantly surprised this year to receive the Robert S. Minkoff Memorial Scholarship in Creative Writing (wow, you can get money for this?!) and encourages her fellow writers to get in on that ish. She will miss Cornell’s poetry community dearly, and think fondly of her years in [plug] and Rainy Day. She has written under the pseudonyms Rana de Yavapai and Thomasina Sirtalis. Thanks to Alice Fulton, Mark Doty, Stuart Davis, Shelley Wong, and Michael Koch for their support and guidance.

**Molly O’Toole** is currently writing this bio overlooking the streets of London. It’s

out there now, so she might as well admit to it — she'd be Incandescently happy if she could spend her life writing. She'd also like to confess to the following: cheating at Monopoly, corny last lines, being a pessimistic romantic, and fear of writing lame autobiographies.

**Meredith Shepard** is a freshman in the College of Arts and Sciences from Boulder, Colorado. She took a year off before coming to Cornell to work in England, and travel and volunteer in India, Nepal and Rwanda. She is currently interested in studying international development and literature.

**Aaron Weinstein** is a Junior Government and History double major in the College of Arts and Sciences. With this year coming to a close, he looks forward to an amazing summer in New York, where he will be interning at Random House. He's also super stoked to be writing his Honors Thesis in Government, although he's sure that's going to change soon enough.



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