

Remus

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Prayer
Robert Davis



after mom sits at the dinner table we pray.
all six of us on good days.

arms spread around the table,
fingers knotted like black thread,
eye-whites fully lidded and gone,
heads bowed. my father,
a mountain man of water and voice, begins:

“thank you for this day lord. we just want to thank you
for your blessings and your grace.
thank you for keeping this family together.
thank you for this food we’re about to receive.
please let it be a nourishment into our bodies.
please bless the hands that made it.
and the mouths about to eat it.”

i open my eyes early.
if we were still young my sister’s grin
would be across the table waiting for mine.
i send a pulse through my palm.
she does not answer.

i rest my chin on my chest again.
bend this body for the mighty man.
i stare at my crotch.
i sit in the wrong seat at the right table.

“and in Jesus’ name”

two beats late to the unison
i repeat after my Father
i push the psalm straight through the bloody rip of my throat

amen

(swallow)

(breathe)

- untitled -
Nausica Rotolo









Scotland and Low Light
Kyla Manlangit

Vila
Karim B. Sabry

It was in the years after the war that on most days the children found themselves in excruciating boredom. They had grown tired of school, the river, and trying to find apples. Their parents had trudged off to work, repairing the nearby town, also partly demolished in the fighting, and the kids were usually taking care of chores at home.

Taking a break from all that, Masha sits around in the dirt lanes between the cabbage and carrot patches sown along their garden. She studies a line of ants crossing between the vegetables, she effortlessly lifts a rock and drops it from the sky, causing the ants to scurry in different directions.

It isn't until she hears her name being called from the path leading towards the river that she was distracted from that little world.

"Masha!"

As she turns around she finds Vila standing on the first beam of the wooden fence, waving his arms in excitement, his chest halfway protruding over the fence, desperately trying to get her attention.

As Masha runs towards him, Vila blurts out that all the kids were gathering by the river. As the boy sprints towards the others, Masha hops through the beams of the fence.

Vila, always a few yards ahead of her, constantly looking back and beckoning her to move faster.

His eyes scours the ground, until he stops to pick up a bullet. He searches that patch, while Masha looks on the other side.

"I found one!" She exclaims.

Vila examines it. "No, that's just a shell, we're looking for one with the bullet still inside." Masha looks at Vila somewhat confused.

Vila rolls his eyes, and searches the inside of his jacket pocket to pull out four copper bullets, and explains.

"See, this is what it looks like when the bullet is still in the shell."

After a good look, Masha inspects the ground, pushing Vila back slightly, his foot reveals a bullet.



“Here’s one!” Masha cries out.

Vila examines it and shoves it into his pocket with the rest, and starts jogging off again towards the others. Now Masha joins him on his search, taking the left side of the dirt road while Vila occupies the right.

After taking a left at the crippled tree, called so only because everything around it was so lush, they cut through the tall grass to find the village kids all huddled up. The eldest of them, Dima, blows at the fire. On most days Dima followed his parents to the factory, but today he stayed home, still covered in the grime and soot from the day before.

By the time they reach the kids, they find over fifteen bullets; Vila empties out his pockets onto the pile of bullets a few yards away from Dima. Suddenly, the sparks catch on to the newspaper sticking out from the pit; the other kids come to look at the fire and feed it more newspaper and twigs. Dima then looks around the circle and tells all the kids to grab some of the bullets. Masha looks at Vila and tugs at his jacket.

“What are we gonna do with the bullets?”

Vila tells her that they’re going to make some fireworks, and with a snicker on his face he says to run when he says so. The other kids overhear and give out a few smirks and chuckles of their own.

Vila and the others grab a few bullets from the pile. Masha stands back as the kids encircle the fire, and Dima yells out, “Ready ... go!”.

The kids all throw their bullets into the fire and scream. Everyone scatters in different directions, Masha runs off as well. She can see some faces running through the long grass, but they come and fade. It was only about twenty seconds till she heard the first pop. It let out a whistle though she couldn’t see any fireworks. Soon a cacophony of whistles and bangs go off. She hides behind a boulder covering her ears as the bangs rage on. A rocket flies past the boulder, it was too quick for her to see, only hear.

As the bangs subsided, she hears some of the children laughing. She peers through the grass, but still couldn’t see. The kids call out each other’s names, and wave their hands to assure everyone they were ok. Masha climbs onto the boulder to get a better view. She shouts Vila’s name, soon the other kids joined along, and they call out all night to only one response: silence.

Stephanie Gandolfi



Pears



Lemons

Conclusion

Savannah Hayes

Seuss (Theodor Geisel) was a self-proclaimed master of logical insanity. In a lecture at a writers' conference at the University of Utah in 1949, Seuss laid out his philosophy in approaching the genre of children's literature: "This is the crux," he said, "A man with two heads is not a story. It is a situation to be built upon logically. He must have two hats and two toothbrushes. Don't go wild with hair made of purple seaweed, or live fireflies for eyeballs...Children analyze fantasy. They know you're kidding them. There's got to be logic in the way you kid them. Their fun is pretending... making believe they believe it." Selling over 650 million books during his lifetime, it is, perhaps, needless to say that Seuss knew what he was talking about; through his catchy rhymes, fanciful drawings, and unforgettable lessons, his nonsensical tales made a certain kind of sense. Seuss never underestimated children in their abilities to read, make connections, and think logically about the world around them.

As Seuss was nearing the end of his life, his biographers, Judith and Neil Morgan, asked him if he felt that he had left anything unsaid. His response, unsurprisingly, captured the essence of his notable legacy:

Any message or slogan? Whenever things go a bit sour in a job I'm doing, I always tell myself, 'You can do better than this.' The best slogan I can think of to leave with the kids of the U.S.A. would be: 'We can...and we've got to...do better than this'.

After handing the Morgans the piece of paper, he immediately asked for it back, and "then drew a line through three words, *the kids of*. After books with pleas against the arms race, prejudice, pollution and greed, and after a lifelong war on illiteracy, he was talking to everyone."

As seen in the examinations of the political and cultural ideologies instilled in his children's literature, World War II was a catalyst for Geisel, shaping him as both an artist and a person. According to Geisel, it was the only war that *had* to be fought, and it was his experiences during the war that ultimately shaped his moral and aesthetic values. During his *PM* days, Geisel was working under the assumption that it was the American responsibility to combat Fascism, and his concern with propagating democratic ideologies led him to vilify those who he believed to be a threat to the fundamental American values. After participating in an interview for the Dartmouth College alumni magazine in 1976, however, Geisel wrote a follow-up response; it being the sole reference made by Seuss in his later years to his early *PM* cartoons:



“P.M. Political Cartoons:

When I look at them now, they’re embarrassing [and] badly drawn. And they’re full of snap judgments that every political cartoonist has to make between the time he hears the news at 9 AM and sends his drawing to the press at 5 PM. The one thing I do like about them, however, is their honesty and their frantic fervor.

I believed the USA would go down the drain if we listened to the America-First-isms of Charles Lindbergh and Senators Wheeler and Nye. And the rotten rot that the Fascist Priest, Father Coughlin, was spewing out on the radio.

I, probably, was intemperate in my attacks on them. But they almost disarmed this country at the time it was obviously about to be destroyed... and I think I helped a little bit ... not much, but some... in stating the fact that we were IN a war and we’d damned well better ought to do something about it.

(N.B. To the younger generation: I’m not talking about Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia. I’m talking about the war that had to be fought. If my philosophy irritates yours, please write me about Justin Hoogfliet, the boy who stuck his finger in the hole in the dike, Foedersulied, Holland, 09037)”

Inevitably, Geisel was a flawed artist. His morals were forged in the crucible of a horrific war. Over time, however, his morals overcame his ideologies, and in his attempts to uncover the faults he saw in society, he corrected the flaws in himself. Dr. Seuss was a man who wanted to make a difference in the world; despite its ambivalence, he simply wanted people to be nicer to one another, whether that meant in politics, among different ethnic groups, or between children on the playground. Seuss’s ability to overcome the ideological limitations of a certain rigid perspective; the limitations, conceivably, of the Theodore Geisel of the 1940s; is unequivocally admirable.

A year before his death on September 24, 1991, Seuss wrote his final work, *Oh the Places You’ll Go!* (1990) with the beginning lines:

Congratulations! Today is your day. You’re off to Great Places! You’re off and away! You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the guy who’ll decide where to go.

Realizing his days were numbered, Seuss wrote *Oh the Places You’ll Go!* without ideological messages or corrective intentions. Instead, he aimed leave his young readers with one final piece of guidance to overcome life’s challenges and find success within themselves even after he was gone. Even in his final days, Geisel never gave up his faith in humanity, and, more importantly, never abandoned the children who wholeheartedly believed in the American icon they knew as Dr. Seuss.

from capstone project
Analyzing the Literature of Dr. Seuss as Political Propaganda

Souls
Anastasia Zubareva





- untitled -
Nausica Rotolo



A Walk of Memories on All Souls Day
Melanie Meier

Figs.
I hate figs.
But that is what I am known for now.
All that work. All that dedication.
All the perseverance and tolerance, and this is what it comes down to....
A silly story of figs and poison.
Tonight I walk.
I walk to the spot of my liberation.
The spot where my life became my own.
Now it is just a shadow of the great beauty it was in those days.
A few columns, some steps.
All covered with cats.
The souls of all those wrongly killed.
Caesar is there.
The silly people of Rome today build a sanctuary for him. Hah!
Like he would need that help from these chattering cat women,
who squabble amongst themselves and put cats before all else.
What would they think if they knew this stately soul, with sleek gray fur was
 once the great emperor?
As they try to coax him into their shelter under the street with smelly food and
 inane toys?
I still remember that day of treachery on the steps of this theater.
All the blood, all the wounds.
The men did not know what they set in motion on that faithful day.
Civil strife that led to my third husband.
My partner. My intellectual equal. My emperor.
His last words still ring in my ears:
"Live mindful of our wedlock, Livia and farewell"
As he kissed me goodbye;
A bittersweet moment, A farewell to a strong and powerful partner.



An opening of a new life of power on my own.
This full moon overhead lights the theater ruins.
The cats are gathering on that faithful spot that changed everything.
The souls that were so hateful, jealous and full of fear on that day in March.
I wonder if they still are, now, in their new forms....
Some of the larger males eye each other knowingly, keeping their distance.
The females sense my presence and nervously pace.
I was never one that fit in well with women.
I often wished I had been born a man, but at the end of my life
I had accomplished much more than a man could have imagined.
I made emperors!
I made them through planning, strategy and timely action, not like a man,
who just spreads his seed, so sure that greatness will grow from it.
They never did understand that greatness is carefully cultivated, groomed and
shaped.
It is not automatic, just because you think you are a strong and fertile man.
Sometimes, I envy the souls in these cats.
I know they suffered as they died, but they are reborn again and again,
to rebuild their relationships and their territories.
But then, to be a cat?
Perhaps my lonely walk this one night a year is my reward for a peaceful
death.
But figs!
Why do I have to be remembered for figs?

Maximillian Ironson: Vampire Hunter
Kelsey L. Connors

Chapter 1: Howlin' For You

Cat was just entering a particularly warm and comfortable state of REM sleep when a peculiar beeping slipped into her dreams like cold milk in hot, dark tea. She stirred, groaning, pulling her paper-thin pillow over her head and tried to drift back to sleep.

What the hell is that? She thought in half-groggy, half-sleepy amusement. The beeping persisted. She pressed her pillow down harder over her ears, digging the metal of her gauges into her neck. It sounded familiar, actually. *Almost like an...*

"ALARM!"

She sat straight up, pillow flying. Morning sun was streaming through the window, little bits of dust basking in it like miniscule fairies. Somewhere, far off in the disaster of her bedroom, her mobile was screaming relentless protest. There was a pile of dirty clothes to her left, near the door. She stood up, thin legs tangling in the masses of white duvet and fell straight out of bed, knocking over, as she went, her lamp and her grandmother posing in a frame.

She disentangled herself and pulled last-night's jeans from the pile, fishing in her pockets and pulling her phone free. 11:15.

"Shit, shit, SHIT!"

Her bare-feet thundered along the thinning carpet of the hallway and burst into the bathroom. She fumbled to turn on the sink, scattering old, multi-colored bottles of hair-dye as she went, leaving it bleeding onto the grout... blue and purple and red. "Oh god," she whispered, wincing at herself in the mirror. A pale raccoon with grey, blood-shot eyes was staring back at her.

Cat scrubbed the previous night's eyeliner off, leaving her skin pink and raw, and pulled a paddle brush through the tangled mess that was her hair from scalp to shoulder. Now the color was almost natural, as natural as she let



it get anyways, her own black roots fading into hot, cherry red.

The alarm was roaring again, and she was flying back down the hall, strapping a bra on under her oversized PETA shirt at the same time. She dug in her dirty clothes, pulled out her wrinkled comic-book print midi skirt and grabbed her keys, grimacing at the pile of bills stacked next to them and ran out of the house in just her underwear.

She exited the apartment straightening the band of her skirt, the sharp-crispness of Edinburgh in fall freezing her lungs. She should have taken a jacket; it was just newly September, and the brief warmth of summer had almost completely disappeared. There was sun, glinting lightly through a layer of cloud cover, illuminating the pointed tops of the flat-faced brick shops and apartments.

As the church on the corner of Ocean Way and Tower St. loomed ahead, gritty and dark, a gust of ocean wind blew up and tousled her hair. It wouldn't stay sunny for long. Edinburgh was always *perfectly* spooky- every corner cut with Gothic architecture, gargoyles leering down from churches and castles. The grim weather, the architecture, the sound of faux-leather boots on cobbles- the consistently *autumnalness* of the place sent her bouncing to work.

But today the thought of Fiona made her grit her teeth. Fiona was Cat's boss, a sturdy lesbian with the patience of a shotgun. In Cat's head, she wielded Nordic armor, a hammer in one hand, a tattoo gun in the other.

The Risky Pixie was a tiny parlor just near the church. Leaning up against the front window, obscuring hand-drawn pin-up girls, gay-pride insignias and other various bits and baubles, was Michael, who owned the café next store. He raised an eyebrow as she came flying up the road.

"Hiiii Mike," she said, half-smile, half-wince.

He held up the black wireless house phone he had clenched in a knobble-jointed hand. "She's been calling me for an hour."

Cat pushed at the door of the Pixie with a crunch and an apologetic smile. "I'm sorry. Soooo sorry about that." She wiggled the key in the door. "Listen, can you bring me a double espresso on ice?"

He stared at her, deadpan, grey brow sinking as he narrowed his eyes.

The door slammed open, bells tinkling. "Again, so sorry. Like, really, really sorry. Thanks!" she called over her shoulder as the door banged shut behind her.

She slammed on the light, illuminating the neon outline of a winged, chubby fairy floating in the front window, and flipped the CLOSED sign to OPEN. There was a pile of mail underneath the door.

She flicked through the envelopes. "Shit," she said again. The largest and angriest had a red-past due warning stamped across the front. "Last time I use my work address..."

She tossed the bill in the trash and stacked the other pile on the back counter. The phone there was blinking red with messages- she clicked the play button, as one would test a hot plate. Or a time bomb.

Fiona's Scottish accent lit up the room.

"Cat, its Fiona, did the mail come? We're expecting that ink set. Call me back." *Delete.*

"Cat, Fiona. Its 11:02, where are you?" *Delete.*

"CAT, I SWEAR TO GOD YOU STUPID YANK THIS BE THE LAST TIME YOUR LATE OR I SWEAR TO FUCKING CHRIS-" *Delete.*

"Yeah, yeah, got it," Cat whispered to herself deleting the last five messages without listening to them.

Fifteen minutes later, she was behind the desk sucking down an iced-coffee and reading an article on institutionalized patriarchy and post-2000s suffragette momentum that had appeared on her Tumblr dashboard. She glanced at the calendar; she had a client at 2:30 for dot work but nothing else until then if there were no walk-ins.

Right then the bell on the door tinkled. *Way to jinx it, Cat.*

The cluster of underage boys gathered in the doorway made her immediately hold back an eye-roll.

Her eyes followed them as they pursued the walls of line art and flash templates, whispering together like a group of sweat-suit wearing pigeons. One of them approached the desk, swaggering, and Cat could guess what he was about to say before the words even exited his mouth.



“Eh, doyado them writing tats.”

“Um...what?” Cat hissed, barely looking up from her webpage.

He nodded at his group of friends, Neds, the Scots called them; wanna-be gang bangers. When he grinned at them his smile showed flashes of silver. “One of ‘em right here.” He gestured across his chest in an arc. “No regrets.”

“Well let’s see if we have any availability,” Cat said with faux-cheer. She pulled up the schedule, scanning it with a pencil. “Oh *no*. Booked solid!” Her perfect smile fell, dry, as she slammed it shut.

Baby Ned turned back to converse with his squadron. They glanced around the empty shop and then back at her. Cat glared at them.

“Right.” He lifted his chin at her. “We’ll come back.”

Cat had already swiveled around in her chair. “Bye now.”

She bookmarked her article on the Pixie’s dinosaur of a PC for Fiona and then pulled up the inventory book. The ink had arrived shortly after she did; she unpacked each piece and recorded them in her little-boy’s handwriting one piece at a time.

Behind her the door tinkled open again. She sighed. She sucked the last bit of her coffee up through its straw, jangling the ice around loudly to get the last bits. “I told you we’re booked...”

She swiveled around again, irritably.

An enormously muscular man was standing there, at least six-two, wearing all black and a utility belt. He was holding up a piece of white cardstock between his thumb and forefinger. He looked at her past it, one eye shut, and the tip of his tongue poking out the side of his mouth in concentration.

“Um.” She raised an eyebrow. “Can I help you?”

“Huh.” He peered down at the paper. “Your tits are way bigger in the picture.”

“Ex-CUSE me?”

“Way hotter in person though, points for that.” He held it up, running a hand through his thick, sandy blonde hair. “You sure this is you?”

Cat reached over the counter and ripped the paper out of his hand, face contorted with a combination of shock and rage. She flipped it over- it *was* a

picture of her, four years ago, wasted on her 21st birthday. She was wearing a tiara. "Where the fuck did you get this?"

"Uh, the internet?" He held out a massive, callused hand, as if this were completely obvious, digging around his right hand pants pocket with the other. "Ever heard of it?"

Cat's hands froze in the air in front of her, in complete shock, watching him rummage through the contents of his pocket.

"UGH damnit, all this shit... I really need like, a satchel or something. Or is that a bit gay?" He pursed his lips at her, questioningly. "Here hold that real quick," as he dumped a pistol on the counter.

"Oh don't worry! That one's fake." He said cheerfully to her shaken expression. Then he winced. "This one's not though better not touch that..." He placed a chipped black 9mm handgun gingerly onto the counter.

"Anyhow, here we are." He had seemingly found what he had been looking for, a tiny, bent top-spiral notebook. He flipped it open and cleared his throat.

"Caitrionaugh MacIntyre I presume?" his tone fancy. "Of New York, New York?"

"WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?"

"Classified," he nodded, curtly. He slapped a finger onto the notebook. "I got here you owe this bloke money. Name's 'Brandon Boyle?'"

A little shiver went up Cat's spine at the name. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"He says you owe him ten thousand pounds," he squinted at the notepad. "To be paid in full by...six months ago?"

"Is this still about the rent? I don't owe that prick shit," she sneered, crossing her arms over her chest, painfully aware of the gun sitting on the counter in front of her. "I wasn't on the contract."

"Well," he shrugged, scratching at the shadow growing along his jaw, "he wants you to pay. And that's why *he's* paying *me*."

Cat put her hands firmly onto the counter. "I don't know what to tell you, I don't have the money. And if you don't get that *weapon* off my counter in five seconds, I'm calling the cops."



He burst into laughter. "Oh I'm not a debt collector," he splayed a hand to his chest. "Silly mistake you made there, but understandable. Sometimes people confuse the professions." He held up a knowing finger and cocking an eyebrow.

"Then what the hell are you doing here? Giving me notice?!"

"I'm a *bounty hunter*, princess."

Suddenly she was looking down the barrel of his gun.

"And I'm here to collect bounty."



Figure sketches
Anastasia Zubareva



Virginity

Robert Davis

he spits out after his second tasting of my virgin blooded body.
i gift him another spoonful of this terrifying magic.

he bucks off the plastic mattress
rubber with my *you're welcome* in it

still halfway on and gripping.
i never got the talk

never got told that sometimes beautiful boys actually aren't beautiful at all.
my body, still on the bed, still face down, still dark and giving

too tired to shapeshift into a memory so quick,
rolls over, muscle and blood re-fitting.

i peel my body from the offering table, leaving too much residue
behind on the sheets. i hear the buckle-calling of his belt.

"i um — i was um gonna go study
with a friend."

later, he tells the ears of the campus how my insides felt.
how they were so hollow, so not his cup of tea.

but, in front of me
he says he had a great time.

he thanks my openings.
i nod my head and he nods at my clothes

threads about the floor still steaming.
part of me never left his bed, his room.

the other part has been chasing itself to find the next.
i know i'm still swirling in his mouth like a stingy hocus pocus

when he spends his study breaks with others.
he thinks this magic exists elsewhere.

ha, silly boy



Face Canvas



Couple and Child

Silvio

Hannah Clark

When I returned to Rome for my second semester at university, I rented a two bedroom apartment from an Italian man named Silvio. Silvio frequently graced my roommate and me with his unwelcome presence, usually so he could water the plants that curled around our gated door. These visitations unfolded in a ritualistic manner, with Silvio abandoning his white Smart car in the middle of the street and leaning all his sturdy weight onto the apartment's buzzer, which pulled either Emma or me reluctantly to the front door. One of us would open the door and find smiling Silvio wearing a knitted hat that framed his wrinkling face with long tassels. Every time I cracked the door, Silvio's brown eyes brightened as he greeted me with a cheery *ciao!* He lifted and jiggled the green watering can that he gripped in his left hand, as if to remind us of his mission. Before the door was even fully open, he charged into our ground floor apartment and traced a determined beeline for the bathroom in a split second. I must say, I did not expect such a short, stout figure to move through a room so quickly. After a moment, Emma and I would hear the shower filling Silvio's watering can and some muffled words that couldn't be heard clearly over the sound of running water, but he continued chattering away anyway.

Even into mid-February, Emma and I were not *too* heavily burdened with Silvio's visits since he seemed to take immense joy in them. He only bothered us once a week (or once every week and a half), and at least he kept the plants alive. It seemed to be one of his highest priorities, even though he sometimes went about it carelessly and flooded our living room floor with water. We didn't see Silvio on any other occasion, even to pay rent. For that unimportant errand, he would send his twenty-eight-year old son, Giulio, who properly parked his motorino on the sidewalk and out of pedestrians' paths. Unlike his father, Giulio would send Emma a message on WhatsApp, allowing us to prepare mentally and physically for his arrival. He couldn't have known how much we appreciated this small consideration, but honestly, I think he found this responsibility quite annoying. Giulio would saunter in, helmet in hand, collect our cash without counting it, and be on his way.



Even though Silvio's appearances did not increase in frequency, they began to irk Emma and me more and more. After three months of anxiously anticipating Silvio's unsummoned visits, the apartment still didn't feel like ours. Was this a cultural misunderstanding or was Silvio overstepping his bounds? Since Emma's family usually returned home to their Neapolitan landlords cooking lunch and hosting parties in their backyard, Emma was less sensitive to Silvio's intrusions. She had reason to believe that Italian landlords were more invasive (but in a harmless, tolerable way), but I was uneasy and sought perspective from my Italian language professor. I told her about Silvio's frequent plant-watering activities, admitting that I wondered if he deliberately left Emma and me unprepared for his arrival. My professor gasped, claiming that landlords should never arrive unannounced and that that behavior is reserved only for very old friendships.

"Perhaps he just likes the company of pretty young girls," my professor offered.

On one occasion, Silvio arrived without his watering can. Instead of darting towards our bathroom to fill it or marching into my room for the ladder, Silvio parked himself in our living room as inconveniently as he parked his Smart car in the middle of the street. The weather had been warming up, and so his thick, tasseled hat was gone, which was a shame since it made him look friendlier—like a cute, Italian grandpa. He stood in our living room and ordered Emma and I to get our shoes on. *Andiamo*, he commanded. Emma was cooking lunch, and I was lounging in bed studying for an exam in my pajamas, but he wasn't about to reschedule this outing. He radiated an impatient, agitated energy that prompted us to get dressed and get our shoes on without dillydallying.

Emma and I walked a few paces behind Silvio, giving ourselves the distance to ask each other what the hell was going on without Silvio overhearing. Silvio's car sat in the middle of the street like always, but thankfully he was not leading us to it. Instead, we walked a few minutes down the street and around the corner to a coffee bar, where the owners cheerfully welcomed him, and Silvio's eyes brightened like I had seen them do before. We stood cautiously and uncomfortably at the bar as we shot the bitter espresso down our throats and waited for Silvio to explain this excursion. After chatting amicably with the barista, Silvio turned to us and asked when we would be leaving the apartment for the summer. Emma hadn't decided if she would

stay in Rome for a summer course, and I was in the interview process to be a teaching assistant in China that June.

We tried delaying the issue and told Silvio that no matter when we left in the summer, we would not be using his apartment in the fall because we were gaining a third roommate.

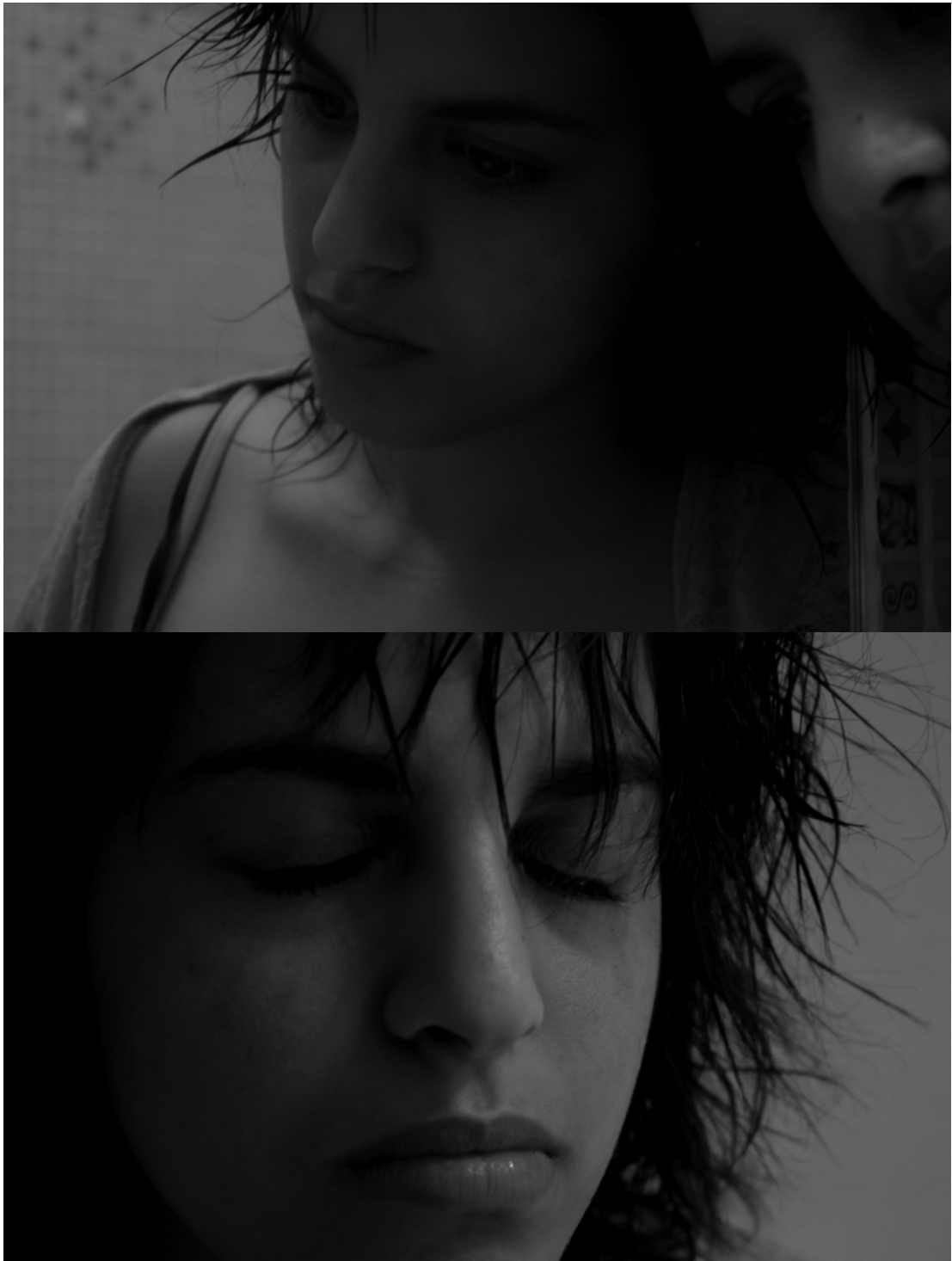
“We LOVE the apartment,” I told him, “but unfortunately, it’s too small”.

Small *was* a generous adjective. Only one person could cook comfortably in the “kitchen,” since the tiny rectangular space allowed for only two people to stand shoulder-to-shoulder. Beneath the counter, our mini-fridge mimicked the life of a college dorm room. The compact bathroom contained our washing machine, sink, toilet, and shower and already lacked shelving space for all our toiletries. Silvio, on the other hand, believed we had room to spare. He tried telling us that a third person could live in the living room, Emma could remain in the loft that she couldn’t even stand in, and I could keep my bedroom.

“Everyone will be happy,” he explained. We tried to disagree.

Without any resolution, Silvio finally disengaged from the conversation and leaned in to bestow two quick kisses on my cheeks. Like always, I awkwardly obliged. Then he leaned towards Emma and held her face in his hands as he kissed her cheeks, but lingered and tightened his grip to direct his lips towards hers. Emma turned her face away and stepped backwards, bumping into the bar behind her. Silvio stood in place for a moment, dropped his arms to his sides before he stormed towards the door. At the entrance, he dispensed a curt “ciao” and walked into the street, leaving Emma and me standing at the bar, speechless.

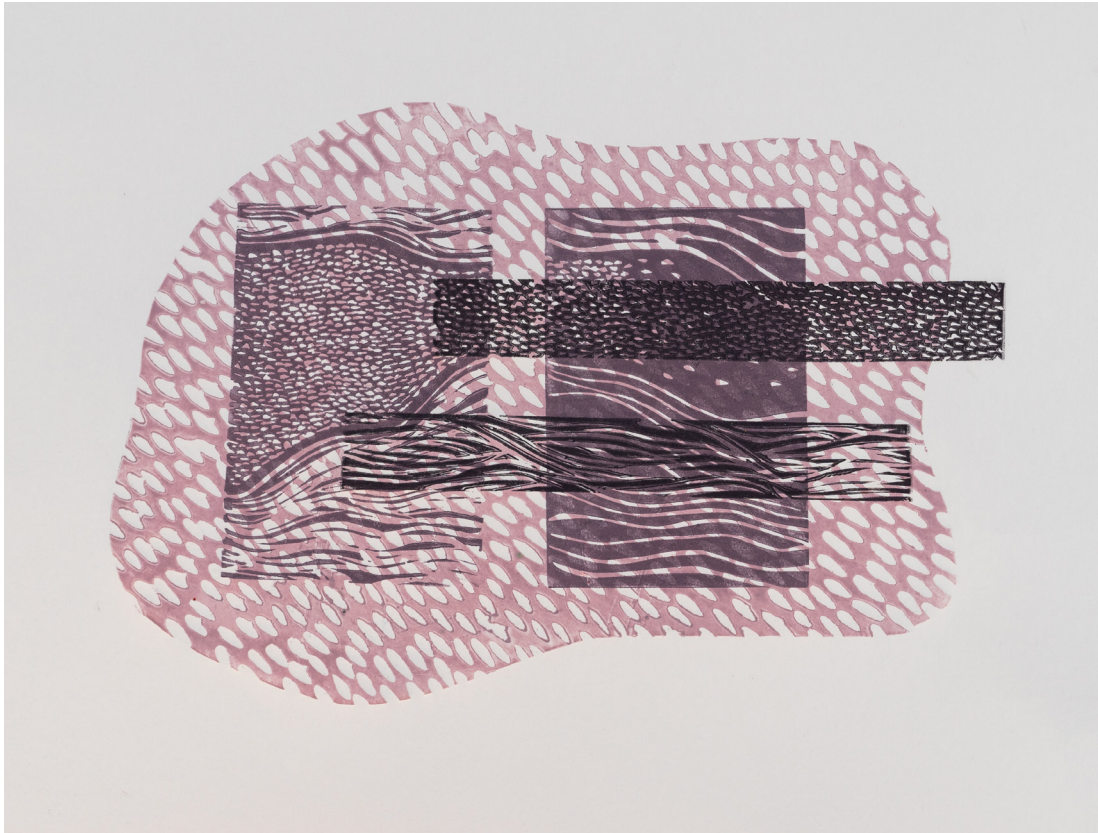
We couldn’t predict whether Silvio’s future visits would unfold like this one, and we didn’t want to stick around to find out. So during the next week, Emma and I devoted all our free time to finding a new apartment. Our ideal landlord was out there—one without passions for botany and unnecessary contact with his tenants—and we were determined to find him.



Depression
Khadija Abulhashab

- abstract -
Anna Hultgren





Tradition Turned Spectacle

Tori Dickson

Venice is full of heartbreak. A slow, drowning heartbreak disguised by visitors who swirl and decorate a city that can no longer speak. I think there must be an elaborate and enticing story composed of hundreds of years of confetti and dancing. Instead, I learn The Carnival of Venice was reintroduced in 1979 as a way to resurrect the sinking city and bring back the culture of Venice. The result is a contrived sense of culture. The Carnival is a tradition not for the residents, whom there are not enough to even hold the tradition, but instead a tradition for cameras, for commercials, for empty celebration.

The crowd of people, thick and seemingly impenetrable, only shifts when the painted and costumed figures come forward. Their faces are hidden by design and their etched expressions show cool complacency. I watch in disgusted awe as a small circle forms around these fanciful Venetians and their gaze is indiscernible as they pose like statues. Phones held high, the spectators push their way in for a chance to capture the archaic and vibrant decadence of a tradition turned carnival.

I walk through the streets of Venice for the first time during The Carnival of Venice's closing weekend. The city is alight with festivity and the giddy energy of tourists in glittery masks. Alive through the blue, vein-like canals that pump visitors in and out of the narrow streets, the city holds an artificial enchantment. Everything is meant to entice me, from the glass-blown trinkets to the colorful gelaterias. The places where real Venetians live seem uncanny and more out of place than the long beaks of plague-doctor masks. Sheets waving in the breeze and gardens over balconies cast nostalgic shadows on a place that was once home to many but now survives on an image of the past.

Wading through the crowds, I feel a growing sense of the surreal. The brisk air and bright light of February highlight the waters, turning them a sparkling blue. Between the apartments, the buildings rise high and create a maze-like structure where the light cannot fully reach. Getting lost is inevitable so I wander, crossing bridges and winding my way through cobblestone.

On the streets the costumed people twist the clock back to when Venice was a merchant haven. Their corsets are tugged tight, their dresses jut out at the hips, and stiff lace embellishes every seam. Their faces are not faces at all but porcelain, made into artwork gaudy and delightful and grotesque.



Annecy
Emily May



I Am Asking to Be Left in Stillness (Оставьте меня в покое)

Ekaterina Utesheva

I'm asking to be left in stillness.
I'm surrounded by the bustling of those
who continue to battle around me,
And I will not suffer anymore.

Оставьте меня в покое
Крутом лишь одна суета
И бесконечные войны в округе
Одна лишь тоска.

I'm asking to be left in stillness.
I'm asking to rest on this sinful earth,
Where people are living in hustle,
And constant darkness of their souls.

Оставьте меня в покое
Оставьте на этой грешной земле
Где люди живут в суете
И бесконечной тьме.

I reject your ideas completely,
And it is hard to explain to you why;
You are spilling the blood of others,
Continuing this massacre.

Мне чужды ваши идеи
И мне не понять почему,
Вы кровь проливая чужую
Продолжаете эту резню.

There isn't much left of my patience;
I lost myself in this stir.
What should I tell my children?
I don't want them to suffer from fear.

Иссушилось мое море покоя,
Что я детям своим расскажу?
Я устала, буду изгоем,
Но этот злой мир я не приму.

I'm asking to be left in stillness, I beg!
There's no one who can understand me.
My heart filled with distress
will never be calm again

Оставьте меня в покое, прошу!
Ведь всем меня не понять,
Как много в сердце боли,
Которую на века не унять.

English Translation by Ekaterina Utesheva, Kiryll Kalino, John Martino



Snow in Rome
Kyla Manlangit



Longer

Benjamin Hild

I had him bring in lamps. He was reluctant at first, my roommate. We argued, but I insisted it couldn't be dark. He thought I was crazy, and told me so. He told me I was sick, that I needed to see a doctor. He was scared. I could see it in the way his eyes darted from me to the door to the bundles of extension cords and power strips tangled and twisted on the hardwood. I was saving him, but he couldn't see that. I had seen it right in front of him, threatening to swallow him, but still he wouldn't listen. He refused. He just went on insisting it was all in my mind. I knew it would be back though, as soon as night fell. The sun was the only thing keeping the lighting bright enough that it remained hidden.

My shadow was growing now, at a rate of one meter a day, and stretched like a shroud across any room I entered. It was a shambling, horrible thing fastened to my ankle by an invisible chain. Sometimes I thought about cutting it off, but I knew only light could banish it. Why couldn't he see that it had grown? Why couldn't he see that what had once been an innocent, ordinary thing had become so malevolent, so all-consuming? Everywhere I walked was swallowed by it. I feared that soon it would be too late to stop its growth. I needed the lamps.

I wrestled with the cords on the floor, frantic, sweat rolling down my forehead. My roommate was on the phone talking to someone, eyes wide and staring at me. No doubt he was talking about me. I'd worry about that later. I had to finish with the lamps. The sun was setting too quickly. My roommate chatted away into the telephone.

"Uh huh. Yeah, he just started talking about it a few weeks ago. He won't shut up about it."

I listened in to my roommate's conversation as I plugged lamps into one of three beige power strips, praying they still functioned.

"No, never. I mean, he's always been a bit eccentric but... What's that? No, no history to my knowledge."

I'd untangled the cables now. The lamps were spread evenly about the floor. I plugged the first strip into an extension cord and flipped the switch. The lamps flickered to life, flooding the room with light.

"I don't know. I've seen him take something, but I think it's just a probiotic. No, I don't think so..."



I plugged in the second strip into the last extension cord and got to work on the third. There were no more available outlets. Well, there was one.

“No, of course I don’t have them. I just live here! Look, I’ll ask-hello?”

I unplugged the phone from the wall and plugged in the third strip. He could talk on his cell. I needed power.

“What the hell! You can’t just unplug the phone like that. Why do we still have a landline anyway?”

I told him I needed the outlet for the lamps, which didn’t satisfy him. I knew he’d thank me someday. I flipped the switch on the strip and the lights came on. I felt myself relax as the room was bathed in a glorious incandescent glow. I could hear the hum of the electricity as it coursed through the cables like blood. It was beautiful. It would protect us.

Federica D'Alatri



From *Catching Dreams* series



Clarissimus
Derek Cebrian

The room haunts us. The mutated shadows of the objects portray many scenes: a beast rising from the seas, snakes coiling around heads, and even wolves devouring victims who trespass. The wallpaper, the beautiful wallpaper, tricks its watchers as if it were a mermaid. So beautiful mermaids are, with smooth, clean skin, until they drag captains and sailors to the depths of the seas where bodies implode from the pressure; bones break in half, organs suffocate, and the groins of men squeeze with excruciating pain. The couch looks as if it could devour any who sits on top. The dragon with brick skin stands against the wall, spewing fire at anyone who yearns for it; the fire of the chimney-dragon burns all alive.

I have been chosen to endure this room for an hour as soon as the moon reached its highest point. It was a dare from the bigger kids in the playground. Not by the swings where children injure themselves by jumping off, nor by the monkey bars where young girls dance around, but by the slides, where children, through their widening hips, face both the dissatisfaction of growing up and the friction of wanting to stay in childhood. The big kids knew they could not slide down anymore, for they must face their responsibilities and unsavory relations. They thought the only thing else to do in the small playground was to trick little youngsters with fear, just as their fathers do unto employees of their businesses.

The kids tricked me, a twelve year old boy, who began to have difficulty going down the slide, to enter the house adults saw as just another rundown building, but children saw as hell on earth.

The windows were broken, and the curtains shoved away light with their deep purple hue. The walls heaved when the house settled, and the cats, having no fear, littered the yard with their feces. The roof shingles fell from time to time due to wind and rain.

The living room was the only accessible area because the rotting wood of the floorboards would twist and turn a child's neck when they broke. An arm or maybe a leg would snap in half with bones protruding outward. Tendons uncoiled, and ligaments would tear, too.

The older kids had me cover my face for the entire hour of my temporary residence. They threw wood at me, telling me a ghost had been released by my presence. They did not help me when the splinters got lodged deep into my skin. They shoved me onto the couch and suffocated me with cotton and pillows. Claustrophobia was a curse, for they then shoved me into a cabinet under where I presumed an old television set sojourned. The banging of the bigger kids frightened me, and I screamed, scratching against the wooden walls. I realized then that I could take off my head covering, and it was then that I could see why the bigger kids were doing this.

The growing adolescents then freed me from the wooden cell, and I only caught a glimpse of the wallpaper before they threw me into the dragon and locked the chimney screen, forgetting that no one had a key.



Lake Como
Stefanie Gandolfi

Salvation
Tessa Garcia

You never really know what your salvation is until you're down on the ground, the life slowly bleeding out of you. You're broken, you're bruised, you think everyone is against you. You're in so much pain. God, does it hurt. Life slowly seeps from your veins and arteries, collecting in pools around your body. You try to get up, but the life in you is draining. The fight is gone, the will to live and breathe is no longer within you. You collapse on the ground, desperately trying to breathe. You try to get up again, but still the same result. There is no one around to help. You're in a dark place, where the shadows blend in with your surroundings. No way to tell up from down, left from right. You're drowning in your own despair as the reality of the situation hits you. You pray to your gods, you pray to your demons. You never truly believed in anything, but the last minutes of life have got you believing in something. You believe your demons could possibly be your salvation. Your god has left you, abandoned you, left you for dead. Your demons, however, at least watch you while the life fades from your eyes. They have not turned their back on you, not unlike the god who swore to protect and love you unconditionally. They watch you suffer till the very end. They do not pretend to be saddened; at least they have the decency to stare at you and rejoice while you drown.

It is then, you realize, your demons are your salvation.



Chapter 1

It didn't take long to realize I felt differently than everyone else. Not to say that I was a special kid necessarily. I was always the socially awkward kid in the back of the class, never knowing how to properly make friends. I was the last person to get picked on every team on the playground at school, but I had myself and the friends I created in my head. I played with them on the swings at school, all five of them. Jesse, Frank, Danny, Elliot, and Esmerelda. Jesse and Danny were identical twins. They had light blonde hair and brilliant hazel eyes. Frank was a redhead with the cutest freckles on his face. Elliot had cancer and was bald, always wearing a blue cap.

Esmerelda was the dorkiest of them all, but the one who shared my sense of humor. We both liked daring each other to eat bugs. She was definitely the most interesting of the five. She wore mismatched socks. Her buck teeth protruded from her mouth, with the biggest green eyes I could have possibly imagined for her. Her glasses also magnified the size of her eyes humorously.

After the "normal" kids stopped seeing their imaginary friends, and I continued to see mine, my parents said it was a coping mechanism for me not making any friends. But to be fair, I didn't want any friends. Not only was I greatly misunderstood, but their opinions did not matter to me. The only opinions I cared about were my five friends who I never had to fight with, who never argued, and who always listened to me. Great ideally, but never a great idea for adulthood where no one knows the true meaning of happiness.

Fast forward about fifteen years and you get a somewhat educated young man who is trying out being an adult for the first time on his own. Still a little awkward, still a lot shy. I've been advised to grow up and get a real job. "Be an adult," I was constantly told. Terrifying thing, adulting. Who knew mundane things like bills and a job could be so fucking soul-sucking? I sure as hell didn't. Got a damn degree on the wall that I'm never going to use or even care about. I just did it cause that what was expected of me.

Worst fucking decision ever.

When I graduated college and got my useless degree in a fucking picture frame, I woke up every day around 7 AM, punching the alarm clock to get myself out of the hazy fog of sleep. I took a shower, put on a bland suit, and walked to work every day. I only had one tie, and that was the one my dad gave me for graduation. He patted me on the back and bellowed, "You're a real

man now." I always put the tie on last, a constant reminder of the life I used to lead before the introduction of manhood. I never told my dad how much I hated that fucking tie. It was skinny and plain gray, which only added to the blandness of the rest of the world. It had no character.

I hated the city. Sure, there were things to do, but nothing which interested me. I longed to be in a field of flowers with my friends, basking in the eternal glow of the sun. Very hippie of me and the imagination I once had. Ah, yes, the best time of my life was behind me. Now, I had to be an adult and do the things I hated the most. Every day was a constant reminder of the awesome childhood I once had. The colors of the world seeped away as I aged. Nothing pleasantly surprised me, and nothing was new. The city reminded me of a decaying tree, rotting from the inside out.

There I sat, day in, day out, pounding away at keys on a keyboard. I played them like they were a piano, hammering away trying to make a melody of my own. I entertained myself somehow; the madness of working a dead end job descended, and the "same shit, different day" bullshit wore on me. I became the thing I hated most--a human machine. I worked like a drone, void of thoughts and feelings.

As I finished my shift, I exhaled a long, audible sigh. I shut off the computer as I gathered my leftover lunch from the refrigerator. I shrugged, imagining it as my dinner for the night. Wordlessly, I nodded goodnight to my coworkers, who all went out for a drink after office hours. They were all the same, just different faces. Same cars, same houses, same white picket fences. Not for me though. I lived in a tiny apartment, just me. Monotony was not my style, so I decided not to follow. Besides, I could not give two magnificent fucks about what they thought of me, anyway. I turned off all the lights like I usually did since I was the last one to leave. As I exited the gray building, I glanced around me. Fog dismantled the sun, casting a dismal gray color into the world I lived in. The city's lights reflected onto the pavement but didn't penetrate the infinitely thick smog which engulfed the city. I used to gag on the stench, but I'd grown accustomed to the smell.

The highlight of my day was stopping to hear a child playing a cello in one of the apartments as I walked home. The deep chords of the instrument often played a solemn melody. I could find myself reflected in the notes as the sound washed over me. The kid practiced at the same time every day, and sometimes I would hear the end of his songs. In that moment, the clarity of the



song dispelled any unfulfillment I held.

One evening as I started to walk again, I heard footsteps behind me. No one was usually out this time at night. I trekked forward anyway, wary of every step I took. As I walked, my heart's pace picked up speed. The footsteps grew louder as they caught up to me. I turned around to face my stalker.

No one.

I blinked. Still no one. I exhaled and was about to turn around when I heard, "Hey dude. Down here."

I glanced down to see none other than Esmeralda staring up at me. My eyes grew wide. My mouth opened to say something, but I was quickly cut off. "Yeah, dude. It's me. Surprised, ain't ya?" Her buck teeth stuck out especially now. She didn't look any older, and she wore the brightest-colored clothes I had seen in a long time. They almost blinded me.

"You're not real," I managed to stammer.

Esmeralda rolled her eyes at me. "I don't have time for this. Yes, I'm real. Yes, you're going to help me figure some things out. Clear?"

I blinked, taken aback. "What? Uh, no?" I was still in shock.

She glared at me. "Did you get dumber as you aged? Come on, let's go." She grabbed my hand and started to pull me in the opposite direction. I pulled my hand out of hers and folded my arms.

"I'm not going anywhere until you tell me what the hell is going on."

"Where's the fun in that?" She started to walk away from me.

I shook my head. "Look, I have to go home. I'm an adult now. I have things I need to take care of. I have friends I need to hang out with." I pretended to check my watch. "They're expecting me any minute now."

I thought of the empty prescription bottle on my dresser.

"Oh, please, spare me. You and I both know you just go home every night and do nothing."

That stung. "Are you watching me?"

Esmeralda sighed and looked at me with great impatience. "It's a lot to explain. Come on. I don't have all night." She continued to walk away from me, humming a tune I didn't know. I jogged to catch up with her. She held a glowing stick in her hand, walked up to one of the apartment buildings, and drew what seemed to be a doorway. A blinding gold light protruded from the stick as she drew, as if it were rays from the sun. She glanced back at me after she was done drawing, a mischievous glint in her brilliant green eyes. "You

ready to see where I come from?" She pushed the door open.

My mouth dropped in awe. Colors erupted everywhere in my field of vision as I glimpsed a whole new world. The trees and ferns were all different colors of red, instead of the green that used to be in my world. The sky was a bright orange, with a sun that was purple instead of the bright yellow I remembered. The brown paths I was used to were instead a cyan color. A gentle breeze gently shook the tops of the trees, giving me the first breath of crisp air I haven't breathed in for a long time. I drank in the new clean air. Intoxicating. I immediately stumbled through the door, eager to see what the rest of her world was like. Esmeralda pulled me down to reality again. "Not so fast, cowboy." She pulled out a pair of scissors.

"What are you--"

She cut off my tie that dangled down in front of me. "You won't be needing that anymore." She held it out for me to see. Anger scorched through me for a second, then eroded into relief that I no longer had to worry about that fucking tie anymore. She threw it down on the ground, which immediately engulfed it. The fear must have shown through my face. "Don't worry. As long as you go barefoot, you'll be fine. Anything that isn't living tissue gets eaten." She looked me up and down. "Make sure you roll up your shirt and pants." I did as she asked, not wanting to be gobbled up in an instant. She did the same, rolling up her pants and shirt. "You ready to go, Mycal?" I nodded, and both of us strolled through the doorway.

My feet sloshed in the blue path. I wriggled my toes in the thick substance, reminiscent of the mud I used to play in when I was a kid. I laughed hysterically, the barking sound echoed around me. I reached down to feel the mud-like substance when Esmeralda grabbed my hand. "You can play later. Now, we have work to do." She trudged through the mud, which reached her mid calves. My face contorted into a frown, then I smiled as I followed her.

Behind us, I heard the door shut. And with it, the world I once was a part of no longer existed.



Serpente in Armonia
Anastasia Zubareva



The Village

G. Szafir

The thin white sheet lay in a crumpled heap at the foot of the bed like a rejected thought on paper. My half naked body lay sprawled on the thin mattress, glowing with sweat and dust in the morning light and the heat of the humid Indian air.

There had been a war in the night. We had barred the doors and locked the windows but to no avail. The battle had lasted until exhaustion took me, and I surrendered to sleep as they continued their blood-lust frenzy. The bodies of their casualties lay smeared and bloodied in the palm of my hands and the walls of the small room. Ironic that the blood they shed be my own. Fucking mosquitoes.

The cement powder blue room stood silently in the pause just before the sun breaks through the horizon at dawn. Its skin peeling itself away from the heat saturated walls. A lone fly flew wildly at the dusty cracked window beside my bed, flinging himself again and again into the illusive glass surface.

An orange morning of dung fires, dust, and mist dawned beyond the window, casting its hue in inconsistent patterns on my body, the floor, the walls.

I pushed myself to a sitting position, breaking the gritty cast molded in the night by the light layer of dust that had collected in my pores. My eyes met and stared through the window thoughtlessly to the orange world beyond.

I glanced over to John, who lay blissfully sprawled out on the other bed breathing slowly and rhythmically, his mouth slightly open. He had not been spared from the attack. Along his exposed arms and legs red bumps glowed in contrast to his tanned skin.



We had arrived in the late afternoon of the previous day, after a 15-hour bus ride from the North. The bus dropped us off at the beginning of town and sputtered away in a frenzy of dust and white smoke the moment our bags hit the dirt. Afterwards, my body still swayed with the rhythm of the bus. Exhausted, we had collapsed in the little room of the guesthouse and only rose to eat dinner in the evening.

The land beyond the little blue room hummed. My feet met the concrete floor, and I wrapped myself in the white shawl that lay over the little wooden chair in the corner. Quietly, I shuffled over to the door and stepped out into the morning.

Across the little courtyard and the hanging mango tree at the center, I found a set of stairs. I leaped up, jumping over several stairs at a time. Crossing through to the roof from the tunneled stairway, the world around me exploded with sound, color, and smell. A humming symphony of shuffling rice farmers, school children, insects, cows, water buffalo, chickens, stray dogs, goats, geckoes, temple bells, rickshaws, and bicycles. On one side of the building, rice patties extend as far as the eye can see before they meet the foothills of the mountains. The other side of the building faced the main street of the village. Somewhere large pots of chai simmered over large outdoor kitchen fires and spiced the air with clove, ginger, and cardamom.

All around me was the land of Lumbini, once a part of India it is now part of the Terai plains of southern Nepal and is the historical birthplace of Prince Siddhartha, who later became known as the Buddha.

The guest house stood along the main dirt road in a line of crooked cement buildings in the center of the small village. You could walk from one end of town to the other in one hundred steps or so before the road led out to the fields and small communities of huts.

I walked to the edge of the roof towards the road and peered over the edge. A barber shop with a purse-lipped man getting a morning shave. A small general store, directly across the way, rat-packed, full to the brim and spilling out the door frame. A woman with a deeply lined face emerged, yelling at a stray dog that had wandered in. "Challe jao!" her whole face morphing with each word. A travel agency with no door and faded poster advertising travel to Paris with a washed-out picture of the Eiffel Tower. A metal-welding shop, burned black, glowed with blue light as the welder, with no skin or eye protection, soldered a metal base to a Ganesh statue. An outdoor kitchen with

steaming fresh rice, dhal, and vanaspati or vegetable curry - the small kitchen boy leaning dangerously forward as he stood on a stool stirring the contents of a pot that was bigger than he was.

Scattered about the road, women with hard and beautiful faces in strikingly colorful saris walked with jugs of water slung on their hips. School children paraded and skipped in their white and indigo blue uniforms, the girls with little white bows in their braided hair. A lone and holy cow stands in the middle of the flowing river of motion unacknowledged.

I turned away from the main road and walked to the opposite edge of the roof. Endless rice patty fields organized into neat little green and brown squares covered the land. My eyes drew upwards, and my breath caught itself mid inhale. In the distance, along the far horizon lay the Himalayan peak Annapurna, raw and towering. Usually shrouded and consumed by clouds, she stood bare, exposed, and imposing. Her rock face glowed a light pink in the morning light. There she was, one of the world's high Goddesses of rock and snow, an uncompromising force. She is the mother of the valley, steady she watches with a kind of wrathful compassion, holding a balance between being rooted in the earth and heavens. My eyes strained and grasped for details of her surface. A veil of white streamed from her crown of snow at her peak.

A shrieking sound pierced and interrupted the humming air. Across the way a speaker burst into playing loud Bollywood tunes heard throughout the endless fields to add a soundtrack to the rice patty field workers as they began their day. I stood there in the wake. Still. Watching the world wake up in its chaotic harmony, I felt timeless, free, invisible, like a ghost on the roof of the world.



Walking in Venice
Anna Hultgren

Medusa and Theseus

Andrea Shorn

The blindfold she wore may have made it impossible for others to see her, but this was a gift from Athena. When put around one's eyes, not only could someone see straight through it, but also it enhanced the vision of anyone who wore it. This was how she saw the undeniably interesting scene of the two figures before her. The man on the right she recognized instantly as Adrastos, one of the many that lived within her protection. He, built like the Minotaur, was wrangling with a smaller figure who appeared to very much dislike the headlock he had been placed in. Adrastos straighten up, bringing the boys trapped skull with him.

"I found him lurking around in the kitchen. He had one of those army-distributed swords, but honestly ma'am, I think he's a bit young for the army. Probably up here trying to win some glory or whatnot. Can't imagine how he got past that damn chimera--"

"I killed it! I killed your stupid beast, and--"

He never got to finish that sentence. Adrastos flexed his arm and the bulk of his muscles immobilized the boy's chin. She and Adrastos silently watched the boys face turn pink with rage as he scabbled to wrench his head free.

She cleared her throat. "What happened to the weapon?" she inquired in a soft voice.

"uhhh.... I think its still in the kitchen ma'am."

"Would you go and put it in the cupboard with the rest of the weapons please Adrastos?"

"But what about him?" he bobbed his shoulder, bouncing the boys head up and down like an apple on an ocean wave.

"He will remain here with me in the garden, and help me with the baking."

Adrastos raised an eyebrow, but she had already turned away. She came to stand at the broiling oven, opening the wooden door and throwing a few



more logs into the greedy fire. By the time she spun around to face the door again, Adrastos had left for the sword. The boy stood in front of the door, bewildered, but with his normal face color at least. She cleared her throat. His attention whipped to her, and she watched with amusement as he realized his mistake a moment too late. He looked right at her, into what would have been her eyes if the crimson slash of the blindfold hadn't guarded them. Horror and fear contorted his face. He immediately zipped his eyes down and nailed his gaze to the ground.

"I am on a quest to kill you. Why are you just standing there like I'm not a threat? Like I'm not going to murder you the first chance I get?!" He snapped. She took the time to examine him. He looked to be about twenty or so, with a big nose and what looked to be light brown hair that had been arranged by a nesting sparrow. That was to be expected since he could be mistaken for a sapling in the right circumstances. He *was* tall and extremely gangly. It was no wonder the resident minotaur Adrastos had had no problem with him.

She took her time arranging her skirt, and sat down on one of the stump stools resting beside the stove.

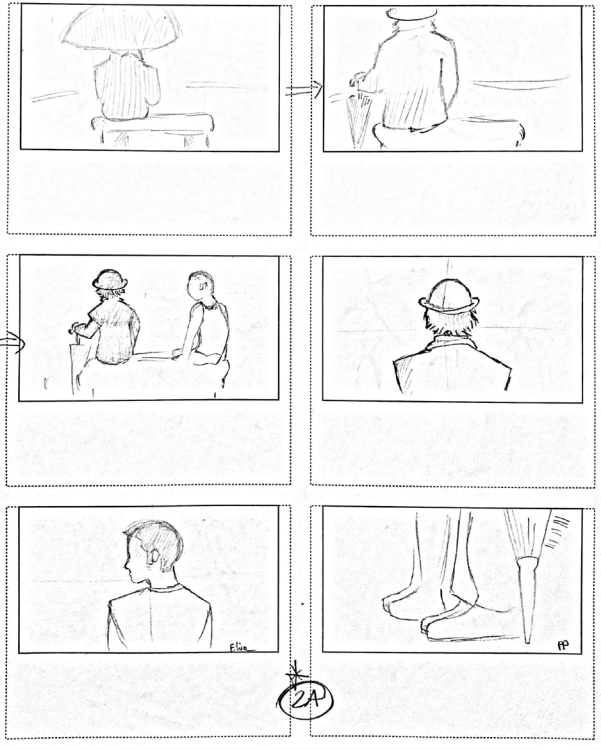
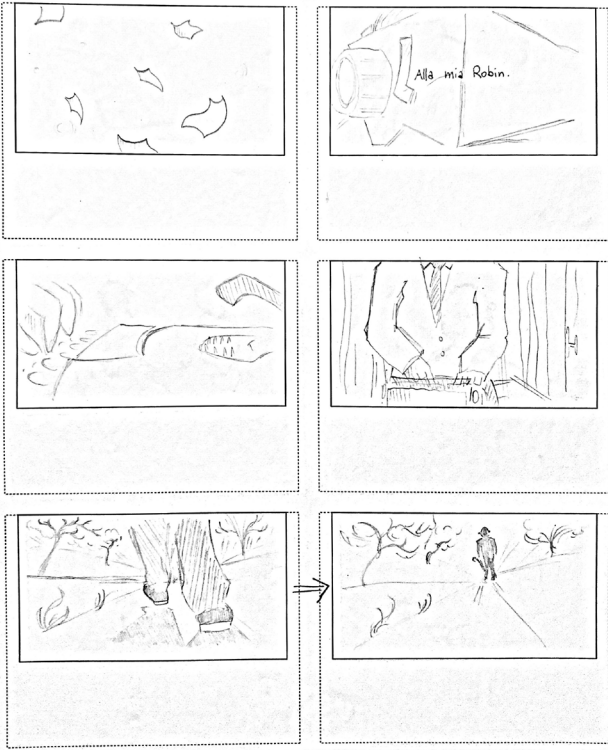
"You want to know why I am not jumping up to run, or preparing for a fight, even though you are here to kill me? It is because I have no fear of you child. Oh don't get all red and affronted, I don't imply that I don't think you couldn't kill me if you really tried your best. I am simply trying to say that the threat of death doesn't scare me as much as you would think. In addition, it would seem that I have the upper hand in this situation at the moment." She reached one hand behind her head and wrestled the bundle of her hair over her left shoulder. "You could try to run and that might save your life, but you wont have accomplished the task you set out for. You could try to fight me, but you are far enough away that should you advance on me in a threatening way, I will simply pull off my blindfold and your fate is sealed as a statue. Or you could sit peacefully and help make some bread, and no one has to die. Which choice do you pick?"

He glanced up.

(capstone fragment)

1

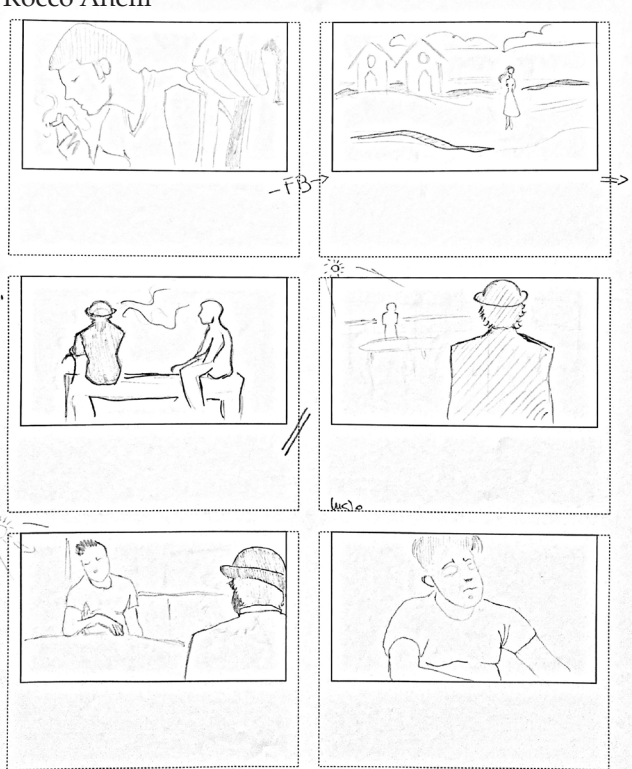
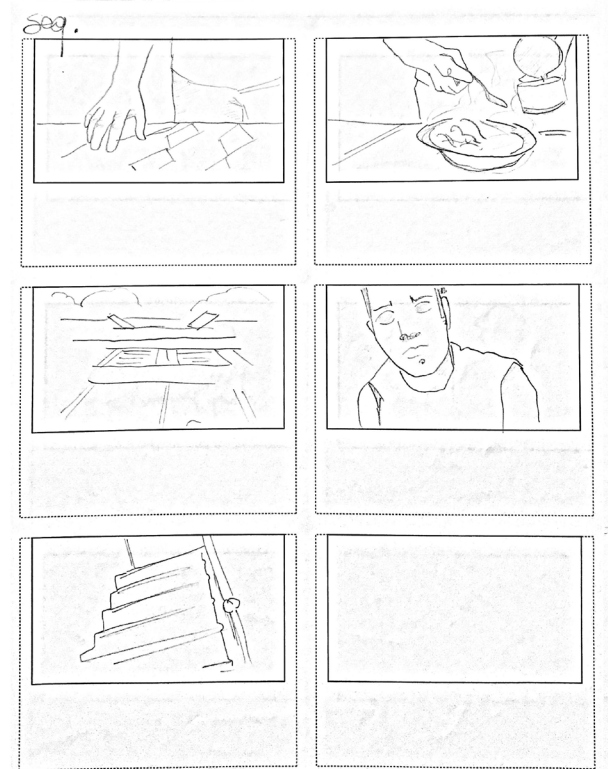
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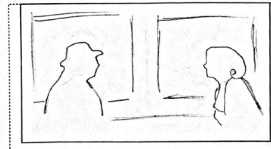
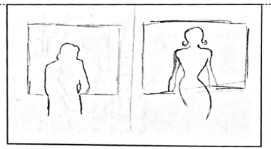
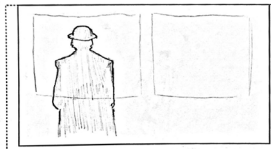
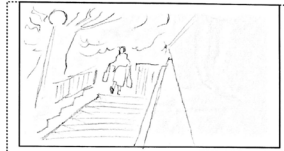
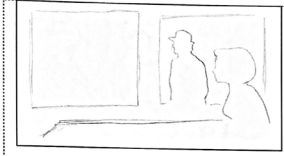
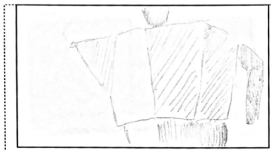
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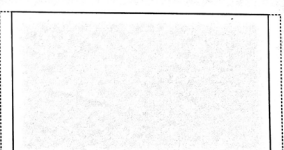
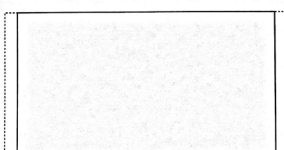
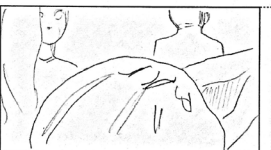
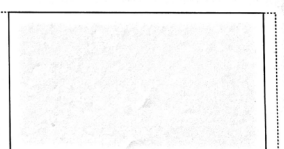
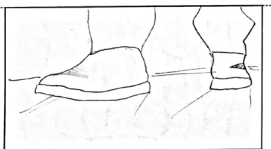
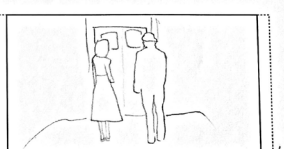
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(Storyboard)

Conclusion

G. Szafir

Embodied mythic narrative plays a crucial role in the evolution of an individual's consciousness as well as the progression of collective awareness of cultures and societies. While written or oral mythic narrative is widely considered to be the main form of myth, Jung's work reveals that the mythic state may be expressed in other ways as well. Mandalas, like literal forms of narrative, are structures through which humans have sought to project the summation of complex, multidimensional, and often contradictory experiences as human beings. Like stages in a story, the layers of a mandala reveal abstract stages of a narrative, a revealing of our psychological process from ourselves to ourselves and others. Abstract geometric forms, like the abstracted forms of characters and archetypes found in the world's mythical stories, give form to aspects of our experience that are solid within a particular space-time but forever simultaneously open and fluid to morph and change into another perspective, communication, teaching, or awareness. Mandalas, like myths, created through the unimpeded union of the conscious and subconscious mind, allow for freeform communication between the two sides of our mind that stands consciously or subconsciously as witnesses to our experience. As within mythic narrative, mandalic structures give space to an infinite number of approaches and interpretations and there within lies its significance - its openness and fluidity. Symbolic form contains no limiting doctrine that could constrain the passing of the pure form of human knowledge from one generation to the next. Instead, imbued within its structure, is the space for progressive relationship where, those that receive its communication, are at liberty to project their own consciousness upon it, and discover a new paradigm that pushes the human intelligence and awareness forward.

from capstone project

Myth, Image and Human Being: Myth as a Form of Symbolic Narrative Mandala



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