

Lotus



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We would like to say a special thank you to Jen N., our tireless club advisor, who will be dearly missed next year. We wish her the best of luck with this next stage of life post-Nueva. This edition of the Nueva Literary Magazine is dedicated to you. From the entire LitMag team: thank you.

Anonymous
GUARDIAN AINSEL

[I] lie with the Fae.

There is an archangel begging for his brothers—
 he cannot remember their number, but would know their blood
 by the taste, would guzzle into glut if [I] brought it to his lips.
 This much he has promised.
 Somewhere, a mouth is opening and a gush of gristle gags it.
 Somewhere, a hand is scalded by molten sugar, blistering past hard-ball.
 [My] grip shakes with the force of its own will.
 [I] pity it with abandon.

Foreign blood fillets [my] flesh from [my] body, [my] body from [my] bones.
 It tastes of goose-feather pillows,
 of Aperol Spritz and hungry teeth plucked out at the root, still gnashing.
 It tastes of cracked knuckles and ice-cream by the quart
 and three-dollar lighters sparking feebly against the cold.
 [My] hummingbird heartbeat begins and ends.
 [I] crush it, and go on dancing.

[My] iron heels are cooling, so [I] find a new, glowing girl.

the coals are red-hot.

the boots are white-hot.

your archangel abandons [me]:

[I], exaltation.

I, rapture.

Valerie B.

THE SUNSET IS A PRISONER

she hides beneath
the horizon
watching

perpetrators drive past
staring
they take pictures
burning flash
burns flesh

orange juice blush
smeared
across her body
blueberry jam
eyeshadow

she displays herself
involuntarily
pastels sprawled
for strangers

they paint her
tracing clouds
trapped in corsets
not-skinny-enough
wisps

she cannot hide
east and west
day and night





"SUNRISE" PAUL B.

Gabi B.

ONE DAY, FADE AWAY

One day, he knows he's going to look up into someone's face and realize that he no longer can recognize them at all. What used to be a carefully curated catalog of recognizing hair styles and clothing and eye colors falls onto the floor and scattered into disarray. The pages falling out of the folder, with the carefully determined order now spread haphazardly across the floor.

One of these days, he's going to try to eat something, and find that what strikes him most is not the taste but the texture, the flavors themselves near indistinguishable, all running together into a pale blur, where it had once been a vibrant symphony.

But those days are far from here, those days when what he knows to be true begins to fade are far in the distance, at least he hopes they will be. One of these days, and maybe it's already passed, someone is going to refer to him by his name, by words that he has used his whole life, and instead of the normality that comes with acknowledgement they'll feel the stirring sting of lack of recognition.



"FEBRUARY" ANNIE Z.



Anonymous

HAVEN

Death dangles from the flue, scythe shattered, grey dreams
dribbling.
volcanic motes of aftermath drift gently,
settling on once-banked embers
brine creeps deep, the martyr-mangrove
sickening
wind whistles, hinges
juddering against a cleaver-edge
knuckles harrow the slick of fish-bones,
dripping with grease
as the cavalcade begs passage:
gathers perdition,
trembling, into its arms.

Gabi B.

A SHERLOCK HOLMES PASTICHE **OR: SHERLOCK GNOMES BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN THE MOVIE, HAVE NO INTENTION OF SEEING THE MOVIE, AND AM MAK- ING UP THIS STORY ON MY OWN**

I did not see all the events leading up to or comprising this case myself, and yet I shall attempt to convey them without bias nonetheless. In fact, some of these events took place before I met the man that I can now hardly imagine my life without, one Mr Sherlock Gnomes. Mr Gnomes was a rather uncreatively named garden gnome who made his home one house over from my residence, and spent his days solving the mysteries that the other residents of the garden and patio area brought to his attention with the use of his extensive knowledge of all the various variables and constants that made up his world, which he had gathered through his years of experience.

The day that our story begins on began exceptionally (in that it did not fill the normal boredom-tinted pattern) for Mr Gnomes, with the news that the kiddie pool had broken and begun to flood the yard, and with the various residents of the yard calling foul play, pointing fingers left and right. Now I myself was not yet present that day, still residing in the neighbor's yard, but my sources have told me that Mr Gnomes's voice boomed over the ruckus, and that all the unruly parties quieted as he began to speak.

"Now there, I cannot tell why you all insist on throwing such wild accusations, when the truth of what occurred is so clear before your eyes," he stated, and then paused for a moment, waiting to ensure the eyes or eye-adjacent features of the residents of the yard were on him, waiting to ensure that everyone else was waiting with baited breath, hanging on his every word. "Quite clearly, Mr Pink has no motivation to burst the pool, but what he does have is the means. All he need do is simply dip down for a sip of the water, and if something were to have moved his base back without him noticing, his sharp beak would puncture the pool, leaving it to deflate and flood the yard as we clearly see."

At this statement, a ruckus broke out. "Now listen here sir! You may know many things about this garden, and you may think yourself all knowing, but I had no reason at all to do such a thing, as you yourself admitted! How dare you throw such unfounded accusations at me, sir!" the Flamingo, also known as Mr Pink, interjected, audible above the buzz.

"Indeed, sir, as I said, that is the case," Mr Gnomes calmly responded, powering on. The others quieted as soon as they realized he was speaking again. "In fact, I said myself that you have no motivation whatsoever to do so. But what interests me is that you yourself said so, when we first began this discussion before I stepped in. You said that you have no reason to have done so, and were the first one to bring up a need for mo-

tive. So that would lead us to believe that someone had positioned you in such a spot in order to frame you. But such a sloppy attempt at framing would never have worked with me present, and any prospective criminals here would have been aware of that. So there would have to be multiple layers to this. And this leads to our final question, how would any one of us go about moving Mr Pink without his knowledge, in such a way that he would not question it?”

Here Mr Gnomes paused again, and a faint murmuring picked up amongst the assembled crowd, as they tried to puzzle out this latest mystery. “It’s quite simple,” Mr Gnomes finally answered, “you couldn’t. One could not have moved Mr Pink, so it is quite clear that he must have moved himself! Any criminals here would know that they would have to try something clever to get by me, and what is more clever than making it seem as though the true criminal has tried to frame you, with the knowledge that I would surely discard the most obvious suspect! But not so, as I have clearly proven that it was, in fact, Mr Pink who popped the kiddy pool, flooding our fair lawn, and—”

At that very moment something very unexpected happened. Imagine a photograph, as I believe this is the easiest way to convey all the small details that Mr Gnomes noticed in this moment, which he later shared with me. All the various residents of the yard were facing Mr Gnomes, intent on hearing the resolution of his deductions. The water from the pool was still seeping across the grass, forming muddy puddles like moats between many of the residents. Mr Pink was looking down, ashamed at being exposed in such a public manner. Above Mr Pink was the tree that carried over the fence at the end of Mr Gnomes’s garden into my own, with a large branch offering Mr Pink the only spot of shade that was to be found in the blistering midday sun. Now that photograph fades into reality, as time begins to progress again, as that large, leafy, and healthy branch falls. It falls directly downward, plowing through the slightly rotten tall white fence that it crept over, and continues falling until it impacts the ground with an earth shattering thud. That thud is what awoke me that fateful day, that thud and the suddenly changed horizon of the neighboring yard, and the sturdy tree branch that had fallen directly onto the deflated pool and one bright pink flamingo.

In all of his years, seated comfortably with a clear view of the garden before him, Mr Gnomes had never encountered something like this before. The second that the shock had worn off, the denizens of the increasingly decrepit yard turned to him for answers, and for the first time in his life, I imagine, Mr Gnomes found himself without a simple answer. It was very lucky indeed that I chose that very moment to step through the remnants of the fence (nearly tripping over the discarded shovels on the way), the first of the occupants of my yard to gather the courage to venture into this new and unfamiliar landscape.

“And who might you be, sir?” Mr Gnomes asked me, none of the fear or worry that I would have been feeling visible. In fact, he seemed so calm that I checked the other fences to look for any sign of this having happened before, only to find nothing there.

“John Watson,” I introduced myself, a slight quiver in my tone. “I live in that garden over there, beyond—”

“Beyond the fence, yes,” Mr Gnomes interjected. He was silent for a moment, before seeming to remember the need to introduce himself with a start.

“My name is Sherlock Gnomes, and it is my job to determine what could have caused such a tragedy to befall the fence. And our dear Mr Pink,” and at that I gave a start, as I noticed the vibrant pink flamingo that had been crushed by the branch’s descent. I gasped, and those members of the congregation that were able to move under their own power flocked around the branch, dragging their more stationary peers with them. I hung back with Mr Gnomes, as he sat, and turned his gaze directly to me. His eyes were a startling shade of blue, and I could not bring myself to turn away.

“So,” he started, and there was a tone in his voice that I could not discern, “what happened?”

“Why sir, what makes you think I would have seen a thing? I awoke at the sound the branch made as it abruptly fell to the earth, so I have no idea what may have caused its descent,” I explained, confused as to why a man that I would later learn for certain knew so much was asking for my opinion.

“Well there must be a reason that this tragedy has taken place, and from your reactions I can assume that this is not a common occurrence in your yard. As you are a primary source as to what may have occurred to lead to this happening, and as I cannot move back and forth to see any evidence myself you may convey it to me. As such we can figure out what truly happened while the masses are occupied.” As Mr Gnomes explained this, I at once wondered how I could not have noticed this myself as it seemed so obvious, and also found myself marveling at how this came so naturally to him.

I conveyed to him all of that I had seen take place over the last few days, and from me he pried the smallest details and labeled them important evidence. After I had told him all that had happened over the past few days he nodded, and fell silent for a minute before I asked him if he would do me the favor of telling me the same. He obliged me, and so I came to learn the details that I have listed above as to what Mr Gnomes spent his morning doing.

“So, although it pains me to say it, I think it is clear to say that the culprit must have been on my side of the fence, as those are the only people who cannot be accounted for right before the branch fell,” I said after a pause, and looked to him for approval.

“Well, of course you would think that to be the case, but that is not in fact the detail that stands out most to me. You see, you mentioned that right by where the branch fell on your side was a bright green shovel. Now would you say that shovel is the brightest thing that

could be moved in your garden?” he paused, and waited for me to nod before he continued again. “And on my end was placed Mr Pink, who was undoubtedly the brightest in this yard. This leads us to the final question: who moved Mr Pink?”

“But didn’t you say that you had deduced that he had moved himself for the purpose of deflating the pool earlier this morning?” I asked, recalling the story that he had told me.

“Indeed that is what I said, but I now find myself wondering if that really was the case, or if perhaps both your green shovel and my Mr Pink were moved in order to mark where the tree branch would fall. Which means that the true target was in fact the fence!” He declared this, and paused, as if he believed that explained everything. In his head, I expect it did, but I needed more guidance, and when I indicated this to him he sighed, but a gnome with as vast an intellect as his becomes used to explaining his genius to others.

However, he would not explain the rest of his solution to me until I moved him towards the neighboring garden, so that he could determine the evidence with his own two eyes. So I slowly and carefully dragged him over to the gap in the fence, and he smiled, for he had apparently proven to himself that his theory was correct.

The other denizens of the garden began to approach, having determined that there was nothing they could do for Mr Pink, hoping for an answer. Mr Gnomes was happy to supply one, which I have summarized but not transcribed exactly here, as I could never hope to truly capture his eloquence. In fact, I found myself so enraptured by his story that the words themselves eluded me.

He explained the important similarities between the two yards: the two brightly colored items, the tree branch, and the children’s toys. In his yard was the kiddie pool, and in the one I represented, clearly visible from the fence, was a sandbox (which the shovel usually resided in). Two children lived in the house connected to his yard, and one in mine, and they had decided that if they were to knock down the fence it would be easier for them to move between the two. As Mr Gnomes concluded his story, I found myself in awe, and in that moment decided to work with this man in the future to solve any mysteries that we may come across, for as long as I could find a way to cross the fence that no longer separated us.



Anonymous

AUTOCANNIBALISM **(EAT YOUR HEART OUT)**

Home is a crime scene. And by home I mean body and by body I mean mind and by mind I mean corpse without the corporeality I mean beastly thing that was never mine I mean conflagration of missing pieces I mean teeth and the gaps between them I mean eyes where things get lost I mean lungs that breathe in and in and cannot let go.

By crime, though—by crime I mean love. What else? I mean peach pits shattering on the tongue and green potato peels settling in the stomach and nutmeg swallowed whole. I mean bloody handprints of Zinfandel reserve on the hardwood. I mean why don't you just leave, then. If you find us so awful. I mean giving myself over, heart and soul. I mean getting nothing back. I mean—what is there left to say?

I mean that home is a crime scene. I mean rooms filled with rippling honey where I gift my body back to myself, tender and hopeless. I mean the reclamation unique to consumption. I mean it is mine, you cannot have it. I mean pull this life from between my jaws. I mean try it, and I'll tear into yours too.

"WOODPECKER" PAUL B.



Abby P.

AS YOU FALL APART

I watch you as you fall apart.

Pieces begin to dislodge themselves from your mind and land on the floor like dust—
 silent in their descent they litter
 the ground around your bed,
 a fine powder comprised of bone fragments and sea salt.

It swirls into a cloudy mist under the surface of your over-steeped tea
 and mixes with the quarter-cup of milk that you add to cut the bitterness
 while you slowly
 slowly
 unravel.

I run my finger along the surface of your desk.
 The dust
 shimmering like glitter
 sticks to my hand and stays there,
 locked within the creases of my skin
 as tiny drops of blood begin to pour from my fingertips.

Your heart continues to beat as you crumble under the weight
 of broken bottles
 and motherly love.

The powder coats your lungs and you choke on your own
 need to be
 more
 to give
 more
 to love until there is nothing left and the strings
 holding you together have been snipped.

Seventeen threads for each year of hazy memories that turn to mist as you try to grab
 them
 and tie them back together.
 You lace your fingers through mine—palms touching—

and allow your body to fall, our entwined hands bringing me tumbling alongside you.

A youth and a lifetime lost to the flecks that separate from your arms
and land at your bare feet.

The limp
stranger
now lying before me has your eyes—
but glassy

and blank,
they stare back.

your mind pours from the empty pupils.
The dust now turned to mud as it drips down your cheeks,
leaching the color from your face.

So I grip your wrists in earnest and watch
as your body
dissolves between my aging fingers.

"SPIRAL STAIRCASE" EMILY L.





"APRIL" ANNIE Z.

Charlotte A.

LONG SHADOWS

When the wispy cirrus clouds show up onstage,
When the sun starts rising long after you woke up in the middle of the
night.
The mourning dove ceased its low sad song long ago,
back when you could still see the cotton-candy clouds over the old oak tree
out the window in front as you woke up.
But that's just a memory now.
It's getting to be that time when
you wake up nostalgic in the middle of the night,
And your old friend,
With the red and white stripes,
Comforts you with a whistle, but not a shrill one,
Just the perfect tone of someone who is alone but not lonely
In the middle of the night,
And knows what it's like to share that experience with you.
(Maybe you are a bit lonely after all, and you see the blinking lights
Of your other friend, the more mystical one,
Glistening through the treetops, and you forget if it is dusk or dawn, and

You remember all those things you loved back in those old wonderful times...

For a while.)

The calendar may say "October", but really, you know it to be that time when the bandstands pop up every weekend afternoon in the park, the holiday lights go up on trees, the ivy on the grocery store wall goes from drab olive green to a brilliant yet unimposing, cheerful yet slightly sad, wispy and welcoming and warm gradient of yellow with a tinge of red on the edges.

It's still 85 degrees out,
maybe a bit more wind,
less heat of the sun on your forehead,
more temperate,

But now every day as you walk home from school
You see those long shadows of the trees on the sidewalk.
They were never there before.



Anonymous
BACKUP PLANS

Certainly, the dawn is prayer and you are singing with me!

And when the soil's stopped to bear the icy ash of pity
Then silently the wall falls down among the shifting meadows

And leaves by them the song, the gash, the sickly smoking yellow

Beneath the needle-grass, the clear of imitation green
The darkened glow of incandescent black from there between

The nails, to child's wails, which jut to endless blackened grain

The oxidation of the soil bleeds out red and thin as rain.

Remember, now, where we last camped when starlight ruled above?

I think I heard your song from there, the fire called out, like a dove

It took its wings and cleansed them in those thousand shining eyes

You deadly bird who turns the stars, your love is in the skies!

Yes, certainly the dawn is here, the rosy-fingered prayer
The column sits in smoke now and it waits for us to bear
All fear upon our shoulders and our sorrow shared between

As once in joy we watched the sunrise on the sacred green.



Abby P.

THE BODY IN CONFUSION

17 years old

the mirror stings. it stings and i run my fingernails up and
down my arms—tickling my sense of being.
the reflection is feminine. i like loose fitting t-shirts
with band names and tags that say “boyfriend.”
the reflection is not-as-feminine-as-before. i wonder:
is it the growing pains of queerness or the
sprouting roots of doubt?

13 years old

i learn to write with my left hand.
i am not queer enough. queerness is a waterbottle
with a fill-line and you must fill up the bottle with the shimmery
acceptance and the non-conformity
and the lifelong non-belonging. my right hand slips through hers
and i am just queer enough for her.
i am still not queer enough for me.

8 years old

boys with long hair are pretty and
in third grade Hebrew school, the
boy-who-doesn't-always-look-like-a-boy is the prettiest.
a girl in my class writes poems and i think they're beautiful; i want
to be her friend more than anything and her praise is the
sun and the moon and the world.
i call myself boy crazy.

5 years old

the dress cinches at the waist and i like the way i look with white knee socks.

the cape is lined with uniform trim and i can wrap myself within it.

i get lost and find home in the mirror

i am a fairy and i am an adventurer and

i am embodied and i am smoke and i am pretend.

i am skipping across the roof watching the fog roll in.

i wonder what it would be like to be a boy.

"CLUTTER" MEL C.





Abby P.

A STUDY IN MIXING COLORS

i press my palm into the mirror's surface; it reflects back at me in a young girl's color palette—her pigtails bouncing, just barely touching her shoulders, leaping from the play structure in an attempt to fly. then gravity takes over and she scrapes her knees on the rubber ground. she buttons her plaid dress, a headband to hold her hair, and hair ties on her wrist—she slips into her skin; her muscles can move easily within it—it fits for who she is and who she is becoming; her hair does not burst into flames when she stares into the mirror. rather the ends sing so only she can hear it. her friends at school are the same as she is. her friends at school are obsessed with One Direction, her friends at school want a Boyfriend. her friends at school paint their bodies with different hues of the same colors but she doesn't know if she is colorblind or if the paint burns as it burns her. he kisses her and it melts the skin around her mouth like wax. it stings and she doesn't know why. she kisses her and it leaves her whole body raw and bleeding but unconfined and with only questions that she believes will never have answers. and when her parents ask why she says i don't know and when she tries to paint her new, fragile skin, no colors are right and she flips through photo albums holding up paint chips but all she sees is the body of someone she has long since abandoned and she has tried so many colors so many shades that when she lifts her hands to trace her veins she can't find the pattern anymore and she tries to define love but the letters are warped and twisted—she can no longer recognize the difference between dreams and reality and— the mirror has warmed under my fingers from the sweat of remembering and i ache as the little girl again attempts to fly. she lands on her feet and turns to face me; she reaches up, aligns her palm with mine, and laces her fingers through my own.

Kate E.

DANDRUFF

Sitting at the bottom of the ocean the other day, the walls shattered. The bathroom tiles went disjoint—the showers after nauseating kisses shook my hand. I smelled my sister's abandoned citrus soap like she'd left yesterday, like I had to watch it melt all over again. If I looked, would I see new scars, a half-healed sunburn, in long-cold water? Strangers with my birthmarks stared at me as they kicked the walls in.





"DRAGONFLY" PAUL B.

Eug X.

L'ETOILE DE MER (STARFISH)

The world is dark, the starfish is awake.

The asleep man is dreaming. He is smoking a cigarette and holds up a jar. He inspects the creature locked inside. Its five arms wriggle. Smoke wafts between the man's spectacles and the starfish in his hands. The spectacles crack. The spectacle-cracked man can no longer see. A sword unsheathes itself. A starfish dances. The world is dark and he sees two starfish dancing a violently neptune dance. The man takes off his cracked spectacles and the world blurs. He sees the lady's eyes, and they are filled with warmth. He is surprised, for he is used to hail. Her eyes are unfocused. Her eyes are glazed. Her eyes look past him. The man turns around and sees the gentleman. The lady walks past him and locks arms tightly with the gentleman. Her arm is not an arm. Her smile sharpens, her teeth melt, her stockings rip, her knees bare. Her hair grows. Her smile lowers and widens into a frown. Lady starfish removes her arm from the gentleman. She slithers towards the man. His face is calm, his hands are clenched, yet he cannot move as the starfish wraps spindly limbs around him, pushing his heart into its mouth. Thick blood oozes out of his overcoat as the man remains motionless. He feels the suction of a thousand tiny muscles pulling apart his ribs and reaching for his pumping heart.

The man is asleep, the lady is up. The candlelight illuminates her delicate teeth. The lady lies awake in her white silk slip. The lady crawls up. Now she's in the street, dressed in black. The starfish walks beside her in the night.

The starfish crawls into her palm as the lady meets a gentleman. The gentleman tips his hat. The lady takes the gentleman's arm. The streetlamps are off, the moon glares. The ground is alive and moving, rushing by the pair, whose arms are locked tightly. The starfish has captured its prey. The spare newspapers tumble. The violin screeches. The starfish spins happily in its jar.

The man wakes up and stares into the dark. His nightshirt is soaked with sweat; for a moment he wonders if it is his thinned out blood. His ribs are sugary, intact for the time being but ready to snap at an instant. A lukewarm candle smokes, the air tinged with the scent of wax. The bed is cold. The man reaches over to the lady and finds air. The smoke is wet, the pressure is high, the air is salty and deep. The man reaches over to the lady and his hands land on broken glass. The world is dark, the starfish is awake.

The photographer sits and watches the lady and gentleman's spindly embrace. He feels a suction on his heart, a brutal oceanic muscle tearing at his flesh. The lens cracks and the pair flinch.

The world is dark, the starfish is awake.



"MY MOTHER'S DODDER" ALYSSA L.

Anonymous
BOUNDARIES

The convergent is the crash. The wave breaks onto a lonely beach; sand bites hot and vicious into water, water bites cold and violent into sand. Screaming sound sparks from where the lithosphere grates into the continental plate. Something has to give—the tulle of the ocean crust, the accretionary wedge—and something will, by force of mountain, of sea, of a door slamming a floor away, a grinding closeness that begs surrender. The ocean will always bend. My father would always win. I could not attempt to stay afloat; I could not raise my stubby hands or yell, as though his screaming had severed my nerves, rendering me a frozen and fractured thing of a child. The buoyancy of the continental crust is too much to drag under, and so the coastline will always submit. I could do nothing but take it and cry and cry, in a swan-diving subduction or a terrane accretion. The latter puts up a fight, leaving bone fragments of crust and islands to cling, limpet-like, and climb into a mountain range of resistance.

The divergent is the aftermath. It isn't, really, but it feels like it. The chasm opens hungry: two plates pull away from each other, leaving magma to bubble into the between, minerals and sulfur and water vapor spooling wide like cotton candy between the driver and passenger seats of the car. I had not seen him in two months. We slipped through the gritty underbelly of San Francisco, winding into and around traffic with reckless apprehension, not wanting to keep the psychiatrist waiting. Rhyolitic heat cauterizes the open wound. Iceland cracks like lightning over years, years, years—the world forms anew, centimeters at a time. Reykjavik sits on a half while Krafla sits on another, clumsy slashes widening the gap between the couch and the chair, my father and I. A mouth widens, mantle cracks. The new earth is nothing but old earth, coughed up in hairball spews of bleeding lava, oozing repair while the ground shakes.

The transform is the mundane. The shattering, relative motion of the plates is horizontal. Sometimes in the seas: the water will still with great heaving breaths, untouched by the magnitude of the change below it. Sometimes on land: the earth will warp in a melted-plastic way, tupperware left near a stovetop, as the bones of it slip and slide past one another. The friction of two scooping masses like shoulder blades against one another is deafening. Sometimes the threshold is crossed: energy spills over in spikes of quaking release. He rages and denies me dinner, he sends me to my room hungry. The plates cannot simply shift. They will fight. They will tear apart the things above them just to progress, strike a hand through cities and towns, wounding trenches and fields, for a microscopic drop of moving forward. Nothing new is born from their destruction.

Nothing is born and nothing dies: no crust is crushed or made. I am not someone else, nor is my father. The mantle is the same. Humanity grieves and cries, but the earth does not change in its composition, in its bones or skin. Civilization rips like wet paper, and nothing is done, and nothing changes, but slowly, slowly with a screeching cry of lithospheric collapse, I begin to call his house home again.



Abby P.
SENNA

Ayrton Senna died in 1994 after crashing during a formula one race. They made a movie about his life—rated ages 14+ for death, through the gore was incomparable to the rated R films and orbiting insomniacs.

Incomparable to that one alien face in the glowing TV screen; never again did I trust someone whose face I could not see.

I was convinced that if I watched Senna's movie, the police would arrest me, pick me right up off the couch. It wasn't jail—not the alone-ness or the sirens or the taking-away—it was the eyes of fear and the mouth-crease-failure. What scared me was my neglecting to press my fingers into your back until you forgot my face.

Two days ago we watched a formula one race. Senna was long dead. The asphalt and gasoline and sweat and Heineken and sweat faded into each other until the single memory divided—a mitosis of moments and the dreamy dark. In the glow of the TV screen, your receding hairline matched your father's and you stared through me, a ghost of your former daughter.

Isabella X.
ICARUS

you came to me in the dark
yet no shadow could shroud the light i
saw in your eyes

when i saw those eyes i knew i would
follow you
even when i no longer remembered my
own name

i'd lay my pale body across your golden
altar to see you,
glisten with flame as i fall from the sky

these burns that paint my flesh ache
but never as much missing you.



Adams

Anonymous

KITCHEN SINK REMEDIES

I.

I have stolen a lock of my mother's hair & it grows vicious
inside me.

The orchids in the window are in a constant state of decay
Sum ded, and sum awedde.

We gorge on orange slices, the peel in shreds, fingers drip-
ping.

II.

There is a litany in the ceramic basin:

Hands,
four: tangled,
untangled.

III.

Holy—holy the world with you in it. Holy the split lips. Holy
the acid, holy the discard and discarded. Holy the shatter and
slice. Holy the warble of a winding road. Holy this echo—
holy, perhaps, its answer.

IV.

The mortar falls, as it must.
I dip your lips in India Ink and devour you through them,
devout.

The oracle praises me for it.
Patroclus becomes a cobbler.
His lover, immortal, leaves.

"EPIPHANY OF THE DODDER" ALYSSA L.



Emma M.

LOVE SONG TO THE LAND

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. - Aldo Leopold

We do not know yet, you and I,
 What the world loses in the death of one fly,
 How many plastic apparatuses birthed of convenience
 Destroy where instead is required obeisance.
 The concrete cap atop our heads
 Insulates our intellect from the crumpled treetops
 Which, in their limp and silent state
 Do so predict our future fate.

Perhaps we visit a National Park, where trails abound,
 On mountains and canyons, wound all around,
 Compacted by Vibram soles newly purchased in the ranger store
 To be used on this lovely trip, and not once more.
 These rubber corpses rest in landfills,
 Carbon dioxide ascending gracefully to the stratosphere—
 Then global temperatures soar, and sear.

In the room the teacher writes on the board,
 Talking of the Paris Climate Accord.

And indeed, there will be lives
 Spent protesting BP in Times Square,
 Waving their cardboard signs, asking “Do you care?” and “Do you care?”
 Imploring weary high school students
 To challenge mighty oil companies, lest their actions become ruinous.
 The children of today are covered in wildfire ash, not hearty mud,
 Knowing nature only as a threat to escape, rather than embrace.
 How can they accept that this is their challenge to face?

For we have failed them, failed them all—
 Have failed to change our habits and our votes,
 Have sighed, and left divestment for another day.
 The endless scroll of turtles enmeshed in six-packs twines about our hearts,
 But how can we lament, yet never start?

And they have seen this failure, seen it all—
 The stale buildings in which they spend their days
 Learning how to solve a derivative six different ways,
 Removed by mortar and glass and stone from the very slopes they seek:
 Hillside ecosystems that change at an ever faster rate, day by day, week by week. Psychology
 cautions that children without adult mentors lack social morality;
 Is not the same true of the environment—that children who grow up amidst smog and brick
 In turn will lack land ethics?

In the room the teacher writes on the board,
 Talking of the Paris Climate Accord.

For will it have been worth it, after all,
 When rising oceans close over our heads like the dreaded hood of a kidnapper—
 And we are torn from the land of our thousand-year cultures
 With nary a word left behind on hurricane-ravaged cliffs?
 Will it have been worth it, after all,
 When species after species is declared extinct,
 When the delicate balance of predator and prey collapses, ashamed?
 And what shall we say we have gained?

Will they have been worth it—
 The millions of people without reliable clean water, second to nothing as a human right; The
 birds coated in sticky oil, unable to fight;
 The generation coming of age beneath a polluted sky, devoid of light;
 Will these stolen futures be worth the extra dollars of our time?

No! I will not be contented;
 I will cry, and scream, and rage,
 For those whose childhoods were dominated by concrete and rebar
 Have had no opportunity to see and know nature's beauty thus far. To preserve a place without
 loving it is impossible;
 This is the climate movement's greatest obstacle.

Like all things, this moment will expire.
 Action must be taken, or our planet succumb to the forthcoming fire.
 Though damaged, this land is not yet beyond repair.
 My question once again remains, "Do you care?"



Charlie D.

OCTOBER FROM WITHIN THE KINDLING

the roads choke with police. your father holds your hand in the 6am
 dim. fire breaks egg-yolks, drips over hills bleeding runny orange,
 screaming trees into charcoal toothpicks. throw your handful of
 matchsticks. wait a beat until the flame licks. relish in the smell of cara-
 mel-sweet burning flesh burning burnt houses, throw your belongings
 in the back of the car, throw your lonely to the gaping maw of the blaze
 gnawing hungry at the valley. the sun sits sedated-heavy in the belly of
 the smoke-dark sky. undigested. your house slinks away in the rearview
 mirror, green-gray-red memory captured in reflection, reflective death
 speeding, bleeding distant reminiscence. home becomes a headline.
 home becomes and stops becoming. home waits two ticking weeks
 to crumble wholly standing. home survives. you drive like orpheus
 through the graveyard that was once a valley and pay your respects to
 the cremated and you count the wooded bodies and you linger on the
 image of a burnt lot cradling nothing but a metal fridge melted like a
 salvador dali clock placed floral on a kitchen's headstone and you
 inhale only to find the air too thin, too clean, too lacking of ash.
 home survives. the property kitty-corner is nothing but
 charcoal draped with warped steel. home survives. home
 survives until next year. your tithe is still due—the campfire
 smoke smell of burning rears its head in reminder every fall
 when the wind picks up: that ugly month when
 the house shakes down to its tinderbox bones:
 carries the ache of fear and
 the phoenix, with it.

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The past year has been strange, for lack of a better word. Even though this is the second year of publication during lockdown, there's something different about beginning and ending the process from home. Most of the Litmag team has never met in person. We had a new faculty advisor and a new approach entirely, but armed with determination and too many spreadsheets, we've emerged victorious: with Lotus, the 2021 Nueva Literature & Arts Magazine.

The main goal of the Nueva Literary Magazine has always been to provide students who turn to art and writing as an emotional escape a place to share what they've created—to share a piece of themselves. This year, we've needed those escapes more than ever. Being alone leaves far more time to reflect, to think, to process. The hardships of this year are reflected in the works featured; while perhaps darker in tone than previous editions, darkness lets the current of optimism and perseverance shine through even brighter.

The title of this year's magazine, Lotus, gives that darkness and optimism an image. What all of the pieces surrounding these themes have in common, regardless of how difficult their subject matter, is the creator's ability to examine their own connection to the topic and shape it into something beautiful. While the outcome of artwork does not negate hardship, it does allow beauty and new life to rise from the complications of inter- and intrapersonal ordeals.

Lotuses are often synonymous with rebirth, re-creation, blooming into a better state. "Lotus" is an exercise in remembrance, resilience, and optimism, a collection of the future and the past—a school year carried out virtually, a magazine created in the shadow of a pandemic. We hope in reading this year's Literary Magazine you are able to take time away from Zoom, from emails, from the reality that we currently inhabit, and find the beauty in reflection.

Thank you and enjoy,

Abby and Charlie

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