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*Late at Night* (cover)
*Nude Dry Point* (6)

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We find it. A wormhole. The most timeless place on this sinking planet.

A pier breathing and heaving
each wave like an artificial lung.

I say exactly the words
I’ve said to you before

while we look for shark fins. I imagine
that they swam all the way from Paibia.

I notice how little we smell
of salt, how yes, we’ve changed,

but hands rarely do.
Yours are still tiny and mine handsome,

and we find new, old uses for them.
I recall swallowing each of those
fingers, their flimsy joy. You sink into the night-cooled sand that gives
to your new 40 pounds, your new, ten-year beard, your new, checkered Vans.

*Let’s never get older than this* I say, and it seems we’re doing something right—
because I think I could stay here forever and never love you. And never want to leave.

Ten years, then two hours pass and you lay me onto the leather car seat.

We do what we do best—unravel each other in the four a.m. half-light. A man emerges from his house where, outside, we’re parked. We freeze, my nipple escaping my sundress, our stale, borrowed Audi full of late-night whiskey heat. I imagine him shaking his head and smirking to himself: *crazy kids.* And I’m in love with that.
I think it’s pointless to get older
unless some night you take an old lover

back to bed and discover the expanse
of daylight. Unless some night

you walk a beach at dawn and know
to inherit the brine. Unless some night

you just say yes and park and relive the thing
that almost killed you once,

but didn’t.
from

‘book of blue water’

Denise Jarrott
light cone where we are moving or not moving
or the light entered the light became light

past is light future is light we can only see through a point on a line
move upward I watch you cross watch you
walk towards or behind but so much closer now
I have seen you
in a state such as reflex as reflect-

ion from the eye’s corner from the eye's way of
rolling like a wave like a line that has the possibility, at least of going on
the edges
uneven time (where
ever does it go where
it goes ever do I go) I wanted
blue lights on the edge of the house
wreath’d in a unearthly light
as to inspire silence or open-
ness, of sorts

twelve automatic reindeer
blue light automatons bending
near the earth to touch their
faces to the ground, some look behind
themselves as if some kind of prey there
but everything is silent and blue except
the wind and except the moon
which is hidden completely as it was
the night I was born the darkest night
of the year the night I
met you the night we met and rose alongside
ourselves as an asymptote, or a strand of lights strung
upon a roof line into every window of
the house:
for the formula to work
it must be a poem about
it must be a heart tugged
out before the blood meets
oxygen it must enter in
the moment before breath
turns inward to blush the vessels
red we must save a few moments
to witness that quiet blue.
lapis scarab crawled blue out
onto pillow plain to see, plain
as day saw it through a window surround
placed square light into light square

a beetle is a codex open
thin wing folded folio bound
and led into heavy sleep
I wake up on this periodic table and recognize nothing. I memorized my times tables through 10 in the 3rd grade, every other class learned them through 12. Some things you never forget. The old cat always finds the litter box. My pen always finds words for the page. After mom died, I returned from the cemetery to find a crowd haggling over her stuff on the lawn. I can tell you what I’ll take a nickel for. And what I won’t.
Spoiled
Geoff Anderson

The man stabbed near the corner store
could’ve been my father passing

by for two percent and Wonder
Bread if he’d taken my shortcut

past the garages empty as a mine,
the donation box dripping sleeves

from its mouth. Before I learn how
to imagine blood on his shirt,

I am prone to pointing
    at shoes knotted on phone lines,

    a condom in the gutter. Once,
my mother batted my finger away

from the blankets thrown across a vent,
a long spirit of steam exhaling around them.
The car rocking on the bass
it floats on. She pulled me harder,
hers pace a blindfold, almost a run.
It takes a city to raise a child
faster. Before he comes in,
she blares news of the murder
on the radio, waiting for a loaf to
make French toast for dinner
because I asked for it, and not once
have I heard my father say no.
I have never been able to decrypt
the melanin in me. The night I passed
into the earth, my father didn’t care
how light I was. My mother tells me this
out of guilt I am so fair. In kindergarten,
I make a circle to draw her. To draw my father,
I fill one in. I am a ring with loops for hair,
my face the color of paper. Everything has a color.

5th St. is black. Our roses are white. Hair
pick black. Census black. Blue eyes white.

When I’m old enough to take notes,
my pen becomes a spade beneath my desk,
digging for roots in my skin, a blackness
temporary in the shower. It inks down

the vertebrae of the porcelain tub, my arms
bleached, my face a cloud of steam, no matter

how hard I wipe the mirror.
I fell asleep on the couch against the wall of the venue while the band played and you screamed along with them. You stroked me awake and we were on the train going home, tall plastic cups of beer in each of our laps, a single melting ice cube in mine.

I remembered last night I dreamt that men were releasing balloons onto the surface of a pond where pilot whales lived. I gave you my cup to finish because my mouth had begun to taste like copper pennies.

When we got under your covers, the sun was almost up and we'd have to go to work soon. It was the last day of the old year and I thought that things would be hard, but overall, we'd have a good new one. You tucked your pinky into the band of my underwear and we slept for a few hours. When we opened our eyes at the same time, I saw your pupils dash down into their own tunnels, the blue of irises expanding like freezing water.

New Years

AnnaLee Barclay
Dear Carole, In my dream last night  
Sarah A. Chavez

We brunched. Your word, not mine.  
I walked into a glass-walled lanai  
with flagstone flooring and a two-person high-top bistro.

Not expecting anyone to join us?  
I ask, looking around, realizing  
there are no doors. How did I get  
in anyway? I say. I willed you  
here, you say. What do you think  
about my hat?

It’s a floppy, wide-brimmed, white  
sun hat, like middle-aged ladies  
wear on vacation or maybe like  
a boring Southern church hat.  
It doesn’t look like you, I say.  
You spit, narrow your eyes,  
say, You’re not the only one  
who gets to change.  
Shut the fuck up and eat.
This makes me feel better.
I do, we do. Silent save for the sound of chewing and gulping.
Blueberry muffins, croissants, rich pats of real butter, fruit preserves in individual-serving jars with thin spoons. Frittatas in yellow ramekins with sharp cheddar and broccoli and mushrooms. Pathetic portions of roasted red-skinned potatoes, silver-dollar pancakes and dollar bill rectangular waffles.

The mimosa glasses just kept filling. Not too sweet. Refreshing. A just-right balance of champagne to juice.
This is actual, real Champagne, isn't it, I ask. Mmmhmm, you nod while taking dainty bites off a dripping pineapple ring.
Damn, woman. If you get to eat like this every day dead, maybe I should die too, I say. Maybe you should, you say patting your mouth with a cloth napkin.

A car wreck might be nice, I speculate, sipping from the wine flute, wondering how I knew to think it was called a “flute.” It could be quick. Death on impact.

Yeah, or a burglary gone wrong, you say. A shot to the chest or head? I don’t know, too much room for raping in those scenarios, I say. Those home invasions are unpredictable.

Plane crash?

Bike accident?

Struck by lightning?
Drive-by?

Poisoning?

What about drowning? you
ask slowly, sitting back as if
this way of death
is new, something you
invented.

Sure, but ocean drowning,
I consider. No bathtub drowning.
I don’t want a neighbor finding
my bloated body four days after
someone has finally noticed
I haven’t shown up for work.

We laugh.

You’d look all grey

Super gross.

We laugh again.
How about stabbing? I ask, popping a strawberry whole into my mouth, like they do in movies and T.V. shows—stem and all—I lean back, propping my bare feet on the edge of the table. I am perfectly balanced.

That’s definitely better than choking, you say. Choking is embarrassing.

It sure is! I start to laugh, but no sound comes out. My breath feels trapped like my throat dropped a panic door. My chest tightens.

Especially not on a strawberry, you dumb bitch, you say, all at once your body receding into a growing darkness, your voice sounding very far away and the lanai began to crack, all the glass spidering, the floor splintering. Funny, I thought death would bring us closer. Breathe already! Your voice is a whisper from the ether, Breathe!
Dear Carole, I just filed my taxes

Sarah A. Chavez

For the fourteenth time.
That's fourteen years of paying
into Social Security, Medicare,
state and federal and despite
all this time having worked,
I'm in the exact position I was
at nineteen waiting at the bus stop
outside the downtown public library
clutching the large 11” x 9” envelope
with copies of W-4s, face turned
toward the sun, smoking and checking
my watch, worrying about the bus
being late, sighing deeply, smoke
curling obtusely around my head.
The difference being I guess
that instead of cigarettes my jaw
is working a pen, and my job,
though it deals with the public,
is not making them coffee or apologizing
for room temperature fries.
I don’t even know how to explain
graduate school to my family,
let alone to you. Just know,
it’s not better, but different.
You thought when I went to college,
I would leave you. That’s
what you said while I sat
on the floor of the apartment
your mom got you kicked out of
using that enormous cordless phone
that never stayed charged
to keep redialing course
numbers for spring registration.
You’re being ridiculous, I said
at the time, giving you
one of my, what you called,
think-you-know-everything looks.
In the end, I guess you showed me,
which of us would be
doing the leaving.
A stranger on an escalator kissed me bending down because she stood on the step above. Strange as she was to me, the feeling is always the same winter rain of my waking life, lawn chairs spangled with teardrops of spider eggs, my newborn son crying in the next room. Last night, I fell asleep reading *Phaedo*. My wife sidled up to me in the dark for warmth. She bent her body down: The gods who guard me know that no one will ever love me the way my mother does.
I practiced at night in bed,
setting a Kleenex
on my nightstand. I would stare
so hard my eye would stop
focusing on anything at all
except the white edges
bleary tear-outs, white on black
the swirl of rainbow swift
in the vitreous humor
I love the frailty of tissue
the way it curled
towards a center folding
inward on itself
as I folded inward
around my belly
a nest, a need
to light faces on fire
and see teeth melting to wax

If I could be Drew and singe
the fingerprints off of boys
destroy everything that asked

for the peace of destruction
if I could harness
that spark behind my eyes and hurl it

outward, then I would be safe.
I could be whole. I could let myself
unfurl, a spark against the curtain of sky.
I dreamed of a plateau
called diaxura
when I woke up I wrote it down
in the notes on my phone

The weeks passed by at the same speed
a climbing moon
in the airport bar I told the man beside me
about how long I had dedicated my life
to ruining my life

when he went to the bathroom
I lifted the tissue
and sipped his drink

when he returned
I told him about diaxura
he was surprised I had it in me
to dream up something so beautiful
I never knew
R.M. Fradkin

I never knew my aunt was an alcoholic, until she teetered on the edge of the grave, and, knocking bright dirt onto the coffin, nearly fell into her father’s grave.
Imagine your loneliness
is a room with shadows
of leaves projected onto
whitewashed walls.

It’s easier for you
to picture your feelings
cinematically, to project
them outside
of yourself and watch
them reel by.

As if they never belonged
to you, as if someone
else has trouble finding her
footing in the world.
My hands are cold,
you replied when a man

said I love you. Or,
I'm not sure I understand the

question, when a friend
asked what you desired most.

Project, from *proicere*
to throw or hurl.

In this room, there's an empty
birdcage with bent bars.

Did the bird, like you,
try to hurl itself out

of this domestic scene
in search of something

else to care for?
Look, in the foreground,

there's the outline of a boy.
If you had been more
maternal, you might have
loved him—his rounded

cheeks and soft nose. Yes,
that might have been enough.

But don’t leave. Wait.
Listen: something will shift

and out of his half-open mouth
a cardinal will begin

to sing. Rough. Tender.
Sounds you won’t yet

understand, but will hope
one day you might.
Weston’s Cabbage Always Makes Me Cry
Shannon K. Winston

Edward Weston, Cabbage Leaf,
Photograph, 1931

It’s something about
the way the leaf
droops onto the floor.

The gelatin silver:
black on black. I want
to console it. To lift

up its leaves, to heal
the spot where a vein
broke. This is not about

personification,
although some days
the cabbage looks like

a crumpled prom
dress, which makes me
wonder where the girl
who wore it has gone.
Does she even
remember this dress?

The one she put on
layaway and later bought
with a jar full of coins?

To most, the fabric’s white
flocking resembled flowers,
but to her they were birds.

Big, whooshing all
around her, they lifted
her higher and higher

above the dance floor,
transforming her
clumsiness and shyness

into confident grace:
this is what love must feel like,
she thought, twirling.

Love, like the distant
flapping of wings
against blue taffeta.
I had watched her dance.
Watched shadows skirt
the wall as she threw

her arms over her head—
a gesture of joy or drowning,
I could not tell which.

Even now, looking at Weston’s
photograph years later,
I wonder:

were those birds
detaching themselves,
stitch by stitch from her dress,

sinking their beaks
into the ripest, most tender
part of her flesh?
Mother, I am tired of tearing napkins
into animal teeth—
piles of sharp and glaring un-saids.
Mother, if this table must have a centerpiece,

here is my hand.

I turned red after my boyfriend hit me,
not because of the force,
but because of how it made me feel
like a little cherry,
stem in his mouth,
pitted.

Boy put me in a jar with coke and rum,
wanted to make my body softer,
said, Take off your shirt,
said, I’m so afraid you’re a lesbian.
Mother, don’t you remember that decade married to my father?
How he made you a red-eyed rabbit,
in the burrow with your baby?

Mother, will you please hold my hand?

I forgive you for calling me selfish
that night you saw me dance with a woman.
I think you meant to say free,
still so red, but this time, with rhythm.
The way I moved
    like not even the cardinal,
    but the heart of the cardinal.

Mother, no love is toothless,
but know that now when I sleep,
no jar lid spins above me.
I sleep, nose pressed into my girlfriend’s back.
Mother, I just sleep.
I <3 Mixtapes & Other Things I Think During Sex

Roseanna Alice Boswell

Tom Petty died & then everyone
listened to Free Fallin’ on repeat
it’s so sad—it wasn’t even his best song.

I’ve developed a lot of empathy for colanders
&/or condoms lately. Really anything
that has to filter potential catastrophe

for a living. I like making flower arrangements
but mostly spend my time learning how
to fold a fitted sheet. My boyfriend likes

a crisp corner & I like it best when he’s in bed.
If any girl is home with a broken heart
it’s not me.
We are out at the elbows again
half a loaf of bread from Tuesday
and it is raining in Ohio.
If I can’t make it in my field
perhaps I’ll become a rent-a-cop
or a florist—someone who thrives
on occasion.
My mother says if you’re sad
you must not have enough to do.
My grandmother was abused and no one talks
about it, even now. I am still lying
in bed with you, listening to the rain.
Fake niceness is the original sin
of the midwest—everyone here
says thank you and hangs up
the phone without saying goodbye.
We are moving but not soon enough
for you and I never say need
because I wasn’t brought up that way.

Maybe I Am Just a Late Arrival
Roseanna Alice Boswell
Breakfast residue & no good news in the local paper
it’s getting to be winter & the wind roughens my skin
like apple peels. My lover’s arms are warmer
than our furnace ever gets. We are not going to grow
old conventionally if I have any say & I probably won’t
—everybody becomes somebody’s mother.

I tell him they don’t make good bagels this far West,
he tells me he will marry me & make everything alright & I
believe him but can’t stop killing houseplants

—over-watering is just as detrimental to roots
as under. All my leaves turn yellow & fall
onto the breakfast table, floating pond-like on coffee.
Abracadabra (from the Aramaic languages, meaning *I will create as I speak*)

*Amber McBride*

I.

Selma has a locus cocktail, ciphers blood
into her fish tank, even adopts frogs.
   She turns off all her lights to study bleakness.
She thinks that marking doors,
   the intention of sacrifice will be enough.

II.

   Angry battalions
swing the time as 3, 2, 1.

   There is no godmother—
so we kneel for god.

   Prayer rubs soft, gives way to clouds—
skulls crack and crack.

   The prettiest girl, Selma,
wears her feet proudly.
   Leaking with blisters
and beaten so badly
watermark bruises blossom.
    Each toe turns to coal.

III.
Selma carries herself home
in her own cupped palms.

Her spirit falls through the gaps
leaving a trail, an arrow pointing
to her front door.

She places herself on the kitchen table
pours Epson salts, soaks, waits—
    opens her Bible
adds *Sunday* to the plagues.
Elementary Nostalgia

Adrian Potter

We spun radio-friendly tunes out of the wreckage of childhood. Reluctant hosannas echoed over birthday cupcakes and lunchtime's tater tots. Aspirations tarnished. Bullies shoved kids off swings, hoping fear would make sheep of all of us. At recess, constellations of girls in pink dresses chose between hopscotch and double dutch, while boys played tackle football, ignoring concussion risks and safety. Once a week we discovered new rips in our school clothes, leaving mothers to ponder the irony in the stitches used to make things whole again. Everyone mouthed a different pledge, some to a flag, some to themselves. Pain was a fable without a moral, how it left us cowering in corners until we learned to inflict it on others.
Cinnamon is named for her crimson curls, the heart tattoo just above her backside. An audience gawks while an entire narrative loosens its buttons onstage. Cleavage shoved forward at tempting angles while wrinkled bills are tossed like confetti. Her limbs are symmetrical, polite. Ask her a question and she will answer in her milk voice, will know all the right words. See how she’s stitched from the fabric of the night, soul torn from spiked drinks and misplaced ethics. The pretty ones all have aliases. Diamond and Candi are favorites among the regulars who loiter in dark webbed corners. These glittered women with honeysuckle breath whisper flirtatious phrases in our ears and we forget caution, hear only the discordant hum of arousal straining against discretion. There’s a name for the way I embrace this proximity fetish, this counterfeit intimacy. Some terrible vulnerability in the way I say yes.
CONTRIBUTORS


**AnnaLee Barclay** is a young writer from Long Island, NY, whose work has never been published. Barclay is currently in Lidia Yuknavitch and Chuck Palahniuk’s fiction workshop, The Lie Factory.

**Guy Biederman**’s stories have appeared in over thirty literary magazines including Carve, daCunba, and Blue Fifth Review. His collection, Soundings & Fathoms, Finishing Line Press, arrives this fall. He and his wife Phyllis live on a houseboat with two salty cats. Guy teaches writing workshops and walks the planks daily.

**Roseanna Alice Boswell** is a poetry MFA candidate at Bowling Green State University. Her work has appeared in: Driftwood Press, Glittermob, Catapult Magazine, and elsewhere. Roseanna is currently acting as Managing Editor for the Mid-American Review. Follow her on Twitter @swellbunny posting about feminism and her love of exclamation points.

**Sarah A. Chavez**, mestiza, lost Californian, tricked the world into publishing two poetry collections: “Hands That Break & Scar” and “All Day, Talking.” Most recent work appears in Atticus Review and on the sharp ends of local tree branches. She teaches and invites other people to read at Marshall University.

**R.M. Fradkin** studied writing with Bret Johnston and Amy Hempel and has previously been published by Cherry Tree, Cleaver Magazine, Theaker’s Quarterly, and Tincture Journal, among others. One of Rebecca’s stories was recently nominated for a Pushcart.

**Ana Jovanovska** was born in 1991 in Macedonia. She got her Master’s Degree in Printmaking from the Faculty of Fine Arts – University Ss.Cyril and Methodius, Skopje in 2016. She spent a semester attending École supérieure d’arts & médias de Caen/Cherbourg. She had 9 solo and over 80 group exhibitions.

**Denise Jarrott** grew up in Iowa and lives in Brooklyn. She is the author of the chapbook, “Nine Elegies” (dancing girl press) and the forthcoming collection “NYMPH” (vegetarian alcoholic press).
Amber McBride is currently a professor at Northern Virginia Community College and is the former media assistant at the Furious Flower Poetry Center. She received her MFA from Emerson College in 2012. Her poems have appeared in Ploughshares, Provincetown Arts, Barebands Poetry, and others.

Cameron Morse, diagnosed with a glioblastoma in 2014, is currently a third-year MFA candidate at the University of Missouri–Kansas City, and lives with his wife Lili and newborn son Theodore in Blue Springs, Missouri. His first collection, “Fall Risk,” is coming out from Glass Lyre Press.


Jessica Server is the author of the poetry chapbook, “Sever the Braid,” and her work has appeared in Best American Poetry (blog), Proximity Magazine, The Good Men Project, The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, TABLE Magazine, and elsewhere. She holds an MFA from Chatham University and teaches at Minnesota State University, Mankato. www.jessicaserver.com.

Jonah Simonak has been writing for several years, having studied comparative literature and creative writing at Hampshire College, where Simonak graduated in May of 2014. In 2015, Simonak was awarded the Henriette Reiss Award—an artistic grant—for writing. In the time since, Simonak has worked in the editorial departments of Bloomsbury Academic and Melville House.

Jen Stein is a writer, advocate, mother, and finder of lost things in Fairfax, Virginia. Her work has recently appeared in Cider Press Review, Menacing Hedge, Red Savina Review and Nonbinary Review. Jen is assistant editor for Rogue Agent Journal. Her website is jensteinpoetry.wordpress.com.

Jess Turner has a B.F.A. in Creative Writing from Chatham University. Her poems can be found in New Delta Review, Rogue Agent, HitchLit Review, and Pittsburgh Poetry Review. Besides poetry, she has interests in food studies, hiking, music, and the French language. She is currently applying for her M.F.A and reading for Autumn House Press and Pittsburgh Poetry Review.
