A rushlight flickering and small, is better than no light at all.
RUSHLIGHT
SPRING 2017

EDITORS
CALEIGH GROGAN
FAHEEM DYER

CORE READERS
AUDREY DUBOIS
CAROLINE DYHRBERG
BRENDAN GEIGER
CAROLINE KENNEDY
HANNAH LYTLE
ALYSSA RUSSELL
CHRISTINA SMITH

READERS
ELIZABETH CROWLEY • TESSA DEMKO
CHRISTINE EVERS • EMMA FREEMAN
KATE HUMPHREY • CATHERINE NEVIN
FRANCIS ROSA • SENSEI PROVENCHER
REBECCA SPADACENTA

SPECIAL THANKS
PROFESSOR SUE STANDING
PROFESSOR KENT SHAW
DAVOL-TAUNTON PRINTING

COVER ART
“it’s a vice, at times a comfort”
CHARLOTTE HALL
# Table of Contents

1. **Maybe a Mixtape?**  
   Megan Alyson Barns

2. **Life Painting**  
   Charlotte Hall

3. **Spring Cleaning**  
   Rebecca Spadacenta

5. **The Sistine Chapel**  
   Jennifer Migotsky

6. **On Spanish Shores**  
   Aunyes Dahlia Hermantin

7. **A Short Play**  
   Audrey Dubois

13. **RED 3** (Digital Illustration)  
    Lian Yin

14. **Presentimiento by Dáina Chaviano**  
    Translated by Caleigh Grogan

16. **It Was a Mess**  
    Jimmy Russle

17. **Lakeside Dock** (Photograph)  
    Hannah Monohone

18. **I don’t need psychoanalysis to know that I have some problems**  
    Megan Alyson Barns

19. **Specimen #1**  
    Maggie Walton
20  **delete draft**  
Alyssa Russell

21  **Hey You There, Boy**  
Julia Daniels

23  **Danaäns**  
Nefeli Custer

24  **Xiu** (Photographs)  
Lian Yin

25  **Inheritance**  
Caleigh Grogan

26  **Taggy**  
Jennifer Migotsky

27  **Emotional Release** (Charcoal, Ink, Paint)  
Richard Blair Davies III

28  **Winter to Winter in Five Haiku**  
Faheem Dyer

29  **Side effects of excess copper include feelings of doom**  
Audrey Dubois

30  **The Erg Chebbi Dunes** (Photograph)  
Aunyes Dahlia Hermantin

31  **The Sink**  
Jimmy Russle

32  **On Writing about Race in 500 Words or Less**  
Hannah Lytle
35  **Untitled** (Photograph)  
Kate Humphrey

36  **Untitled**  
Rrose Selavy

37  **A First Date over Lobsters**  
Emi Demko

38  **Reflegghtion**  
Brendan Geiger

39  **Specimen #2**  
Maggie Walton

40  **My Feet Hurt**  
Caroline Dyhrberg

42  **how to make a murderer // saving a murderer**  
Vytoria Amiro

44  **New Depths** (Glass)  
Richard Blair Davies III

45  **For Carrie Fisher**  
Christina Smith

46  **Taxidermy 1** (Pencil)  
Claire Avril
Maybe a Mixtape?
Megan Alyson Barns

I’m making you a mixtape
and calling it “snow covered evenings”
or maybe I’ll call it “mixtape #1”
but never make more

I can’t tell if I want to make it
in hopes of you listening to it
or because I know that you won’t

I want to include songs that you mostly don’t know
a couple ones that maybe you do and maybe you love
and one that I wrote
“An Ode to You” I would label it on the back of the case
all nestled in with the other songs
like it’s not supposed to be special

That would be risky though
we both know I’m no gambler

I would only include my ode to you if I could be sure
that you would discard the mixtape before listening
and someone else would find it
or if I sent it to the wrong address
and someone else thought it was for them

I can’t stand the thought of you knowing
How extensively I think about you
Though the drunk text may have hinted at it
**Spring Cleaning**  
Rebecca Spadacenta

We share a room but not a bed,  
A stare, but not a heart.  
We share tension and silence,  
Although I wish I could have my own quiet —  
Yours is repressing,  
Heavy and unnatural.  
Mine has always been harmless,  
In nobody’s way but my voice’s,  
Which doesn’t like to interfere anyway.

You have always been the one who interferes.

I step on your lies on my way to the kitchen  
For a midnight cup of tea  
When in my sleep I reach into a cold crumple of sheets  
And wake to the turn of the lock on the back door.  
They are stuck to the tile like raisins, between the toes of the dog  
That you once again did not put in its crate.

I push your excuses off the top shelf with the dust  
When I do my weekly cleaning  
Of the things I don’t want anymore.  
I am past paying true attention to  
Where you say you were,  
Or the fuzzy particles clinging  
Uncomfortably to my heart.

I wipe your demands off the mirror  
When I wake to a pouf of knotted hair  
That hides all my insecurities inside it.  
Each fingerprint on the glass is a tear you have not seen  
And therefore have failed to wipe away.  
Each smudge is what you would consider  
A “healthy suggestion”  
But not a demand  
(so you said).
I complete my morning
And do not see you
Until you enter through the back door
And greet the pile of dishes
In the kitchen sink.
The Sistine Chapel  
Jennifer Migotsky

Question:
Why does everyone think God is an old man?
—bearded, grey, wise—
as if old people
held a monopoly on wisdom
—old men, that is
—old white men, that is.

And why is the Father dressed?
as if the body were an indignity
His creation—
is He ashamed of it?
Or are we ashamed of it?

If God is eternal, infinite, spirit
How can he be confined to
a small skeleton, like mine?
trying to reach out
to lowly creatures

naked in birth and death.
On Spanish Shores
Aunyes Dahlia Hermantin
SILENT FILM ACTRESS FAY WEBB ESCAPES THE BURDEN OF RESPONSIBILITY WITH HER WONDERFUL PET GOOSE: A very short play
Audrey Dubois

CHARACTERS:
Fay Webb, 20-ish, an actress in silent films, smarter than her ditzy exterior lets on
Robert: 20-ish, Fay’s agent, who is in love with her and not too subtle about it
Goose: 2 or 3, Fay’s advisor/mentor/friend, is literally a goose, wears glasses

TIME:
June, 1925.

PLACE:
A living room.

Scene One: A living room.

At rise: Fay is lounging on a chair, decked out in furs and lipstick, reading an old copy of Motion Picture Magazine. A goose sits on the chair next to her, atop a beautiful embroidered pillow.

FAY
(showing her magazine to GOOSE)
What do you think of this one?

GOOSE
Honk

FAY
You’re right. I could never pull off a look like that.

(ROBERT enters with a telegram.)
**ROBERT**
(nervously, to FAY)
Ms. Webb? You have just received another offer for a film contract.

**FAY**
(not looking up from her magazine)
What’s it about?

**ROBERT**
It’s on the subject of…
(he reads off the telegram)
A beautiful timeless romance between star-crossed lovers, who come from very different backgrounds but fall hopelessly in love. You would be playing the role of Female Romantic Lead.

**FAY**
(noncommittally)
Hmm. That’s… something.
(turns to GOOSE)
What do you think?

**GOOSE**
Honk

**FAY**
(looking back toward magazine)
You’re right. It just sounds like a generic rip-off of Romeo and Juliet. It’s like, let William Shakespeare stay dead, you know? We don’t have to reanimate his corpse for every new motion picture that comes along.

**ROBERT**
(offended)
No it’s not. I think it sounds… rather good.

**FAY**
(holds out her hand, still not looking up from the magazine)
Well, then, show me the script!
ROBERT
I can’t! I don’t know how it ends yet.

FAY
You didn’t finish reading it?

ROBERT
No, it’s that… the director hasn’t… finished writing the ending yet?

GOOSE
Honk

FAY
(to GOOSE)
My thoughts exactly! Thank you.
(to ROBERT)
How can you know a script is good if it has no ending?

ROBERT
You would help finish it!

GOOSE
Honk

FAY
What?

ROBERT
Look. I can understand if you do not want to take this contract. It’s probably no good anyway. Probably the director was hopped up on bootleg whiskey or something when he wrote the screenplay.

(ROBERT rips the telegram in half and lets it flutter to the ground)

ROBERT cont’d
But I implore you to reconsider. You’re smart and pretty and your haircut perfectly frames your delicate gorgeous face. I don’t see why you let that duck make all your decisions for you.
**FAY**
That goose taught me everything I know about show business, Robert! If you don’t respect him, then you don’t respect me.

**ROBERT**
That’s not true at all! I love you…
(catches himself at the last moment and changes his sentence)
…r dress. I love your dress. It looks really nice on you.

**FAY**
Thank you! My goose picked it out for me. He says the color brings out my eyes.

**ROBERT**
(putting his face in his hands)
Ohhhhhhh my god.

**FAY**
It doesn’t?

**ROBERT**
(a little too eagerly)
No, it definitely does.

**FAY**
What’s the problem then?

**ROBERT**
If you constantly give your agency to something else, how am I supposed to know if you really like m…
(once again catches himself before saying “me”)
Marlboro cigarettes?

**FAY**
It always comes back to the goose. Without him, neither of us would have jobs! I was a nobody before he showed me the secrets to success. And look at me now! I’m a movie star, who puts on makeup even in the comfort of her own home and wears fur coats in the middle of June just because she can.
ROBERT
You owe him nothing! You would have become famous anyway. You have eyes that sparkle in the light and a smile that exudes pure beams of radiance. Objectively speaking. All I’m saying is, I don’t think you should listen to everything the little birdie told you.

FAY
Why not? What does it matter to you, whether I make a choice myself or whether I defer it to something else?

GOOSE
Honk

FAY
(to GOOSE, shocked)
Is… that really so? You really think he does?

GOOSE
Honk

FAY
(picks up the pieces of the ripped up telegram)
Robert… in this contract… did the director happen to say who would be playing the part of Male Romantic Lead?

ROBERT
Me.

FAY
Did you happen to be the scriptwriter as well? And the director?

ROBERT
Yes.

FAY
And if I say no to this contract, will you hold it against me?

ROBERT
As long as it’s you making the choice, and not that goddamn goose.
FAY
Why does it matter, if both those options lead to the same conclusion?

(There is a moment of silence as ROBERT realizes that this is a rejection.)

FAY
We... I think you should leave.

(FAY lifts up GOOSE on his pillow. GOOSE and FAY exit.)

ROBERT
(sighs for a moment, then goes to sit down in Fay’s chair and dials a number on the phone on the side table)
Hey, it’s me. Yeah. Your little gambit didn’t work. I did everything you told me to, I asked her out with a fake movie contract, I was super suave about it, and she still didn’t bite. You were so sure that it would work. And I believed you! I listened to everything you said, followed your instructions down to the letter. What do you have to say for yourself?

(On the other end of the line, we hear a sinister series of quacks.)

THE END
RED
Katherine Zeng
Presentimiento
Daína Chaviano
Translated by Caleigh Grogan

Hace apenas cien minutos
—tal vez menos de una hora—
jugaba entre sábanas a reinventar el sueño.

El silencio de la isla
el polvo de un cometa
rasgaron suavemente los cristales cerrados.
Y entonces salí del lecho como quién sale del mar,
desnuda y enferma de frío.

Un minúsculo sonido creció desde el jardín:
cierto roce involuntario
la caída de un espectro
o tal vez no fuera eso.
De todos modos, algo.
Y la colcha me ha seguido con reptilíneo paso
de trazo diminuto hasta la yerba tibia.

Heme aquí sin sueño en medio de la noche,
completamente sola desde el centro del misterio,
seguí mirando y palpando
los débiles sonidos del viento planetario
el grito de una huella
o tal vez no fuera eso.
De todos modos, algo.
Y una voz rozó mis ojos
furtiva cual sombra de fiebre:
los astros son los minutos del espacio.
Entonces me senté sobre el pulso de la noche
a escuchar
uno a uno
sus latidos poderosos.
Premonition
(Translation)

 Barely one hundred minutes
 —maybe less than an hour—
 I played between bedsheets to reinvent sleep.

 The silence from the island
 the dust from a comet
 gently ripped the window closed.
 I got out of bed like someone gets out of the ocean,
 naked and sick from cold.

 A tiny sound grew from the garden:
 certainly an involuntary touch
 the fall of a ghost
 or maybe it was not that.
 In any case, something.
 And the bedspread has followed me with reptilian step
 a small trace up to the warm grass.

 I’m here without sleep in the middle of the night,
 completely isolated from the center of the mystery,
 I followed looking at and feeling for
 the weak sounds of planetary wind
 the cry of a footstep
 or maybe it was not that.
 In any case, something.
 And a voice brushed past my eyes
 furtive as fevered shadow:
 the stars are the minutes of space.
 So I sat above the pulse of the night
 to listen to
 one on one
 its strong beats.
It was a mess
Jimmy Russle

It’s just gonna be me
Writing this
Alone on my bed

I have dvds
To show people what
I really am

But there’s no director
I want to invite everyone
To tell them

I was almost named
Mary Beth
Lakeside Dock
Hannah Monohone
I don’t need psychoanalysis to know that I have some problems
Megan Alyson Barns

My body edges itself towards half-frozen ponds
With intent to jump in, fully jump in
But I stop myself out of fear
Like when my body edges itself towards orgasm
And I just have to stop it and stop it and stop it
Until my body no longer wants it but my mind still does

I jump into ponds and cum only when I’m intoxicated

Only under that condition is when I text you

Some of those things are mistakes
Some of them I don’t mind making
Specimen #1
Maggie Walton
sifting through your thoughts until
  there’s nothing left but mine –
reducing millions down to maybe one
[no its ok haha i really don’t mind]
sent at midnight when i’m already half blind,
then deleted in the midday sun –
[reading through your thoughts until
  there’s nothing left but mine]
nights spent writing shit that wasn’t assigned
and like it isn’t even fun –
[but its ok haha i really don’t mind]
prescribed pinot noir but my card got declined –
i guess i let my cost overrun
[counting out your thoughts until
  there’s nothing left but mine]
i feel like all these words might be
  too much to read combined–
next time i’ll go with none?
[oh its ok haha i really don’t mind]

oh well i mean what did i really think that i
  would find?
sifting though your reasons
and there’s no thought left but mine
[yeah its ok haha i really don’t mind].
Hey You There, Boy
Julia Daniels
based on “Negro boys on Easter morning, Southside Chicago” acetate negative by Russell Lee

Lil Black Boy
Why so bold
Leaning on that car like you own the world
Slick suits and slick talk
As you jive and rhyme
The younger ones follow your lead
Chest puffed out
Swinging their limbs so carefree
Creating their own blue notes when
They slide down the street
think you a man so you put on a grave face
So we don’t see your mouth is full of
More ebony than ivory

When your mama passes by
you hop off the car stand up straight
Hope that’s not your daddy’s car you sitting on
If he catch you
He’ll tear that ‘hide
That goes for y’all too
Every son has a community of fathers
Making sure y’all become respectable enough
for their daughters
Making sure you make it
to become men

Not another face
On a missing poster
Don’t want you buried in that suit
Tell me are you kin to Emmett Till
Smell the burning of flesh coming from the South
Getting closer to your home
This is not a dream but your reality
Even when your parents fled here to be safe
Good ol’ Jim always come around
With his dog wrath
No matter where that Mason-Dixon line
Once lived
just like you
lived
Danaäns
Nefeli Custer

Maybe, my dear Agamemnon,
Troy wasn’t yours to take.

Maybe, my noble Menelaus,
Helen wasn’t yours to begin with.

Maybe, my long-haired Achilles,
Hector’s life wasn’t yours to end.

So, why is it, greatest of men
That you take what is not yours and put it to an end?
Xiu

Lian Yin
Inheritance
Caleigh Grogan

My grandmother gave me a ring, or, I should say, my grandmother left me a ring. Not “me” so much as “us.” Her wedding band and engagement ring were left to the only granddaughters yet unwed. My cousin was older so she got to choose: golden wedding band over diamond engagement ring. “Give this to your dad,” said Kathleen, my father’s eldest sister and keeper of the family jewels, the morning of the funeral, “so when someone asks for his permission, he knows right where it is.” At thirteen I did not yet have the words to express just how repulsed I was by this tradition, but I didn’t need to think about it for long. I managed to lose the ring on our way home – somewhere between Oneonta, New York and Bangor, Maine.

I may have been more devastated by the loss if I didn’t have, in my pocket, a better treasure from my late grandmother. While cleaning out her house, the day before the viewing, I found a small mirror in a velvet green, drawstring bag. I asked my dad if I could have it, he said I could have anything I wanted. I didn’t want anything beyond this little bagged mirror. The faded gold lettering on the velvet might have borne the name of a distant relative, or more likely just the name of some forgotten cosmetic company, either way I was delighted.

I took the mirror in and out of its casing repeatedly, examining it and myself as I hoped my grandmother had. I thought about watching myself put lipstick on in it. I thought about how my grandmother had always worn lipstick even though she didn’t have anyone to impress. I looked at my thick ringlets of hair, at how they looked like my Aunt Kathleen’s. I remembered her telling me how we got our hair from my grandmother. I was given many gifts by my grandmother: my hair, my eyes, ten-dollar bills palmed during goodbyes, and the silence that tends to find me in a crowded room.

In the car, when I realized that the engagement ring was missing, I also realized I didn’t know who had given it to her, my grandfather or her first husband. I didn’t like that the thought of this ring being from someone besides my grandfather made me like it less. I remembered playing The Game of Life with my grandmother, how when she got to the “STOP and get married” space, she asked me if she had to. She said twice had been enough. I had been stunned, shocked: “Who doesn’t want to get married in a board game?” I thought at age eight or nine. In the car, at age thirteen, I didn’t notice how appropriate the mirror was. I didn’t think that a reflection of myself made a better keepsake than someone’s future, potentially fleeting, expression of love. I did think that I wasn’t sad to lose the ring.
Taggy
Jennifer Migotsky

A ratty, rectangular baby blanket
a bland yellow color like strained sunlight
without pattern or decoration except its holes and stains
found at a yard sale in its prime, now dying of old age.

he, she, it?
You.
you were my sedative, my pacifier;
sucking on you like a thumb,
breathing you in.
playing dress-up, you took the role of cape or skirt
clasped together by a safety pin.
nights, you next to me under the duvet, I would wonder
if the house burned down
what would I grab to save?
Could I leave you behind?
Anthropomorphizing in my child-brain, I couldn’t let
you burn alone.

I remember the day mom said I was too old
to bring you with me outside,
or in the car,
or downstairs.
The day mom stole and hid you,
I cried til she gave you back.
Afraid of growing up
loving to be little,
a little immature.

But I clung to you too much
Like a parent,
Like an idol,
Like my childhood.
and now I am growing up.

Now you wait on the bed,
tangled, ripped ribbon border in the bedside stand.
the ribbons that accidentally came off
bit by bit,
saved to sew back on.

Do you doubt me?
I’ll sew them back on.
I promise.
Emotional Release
Richard Blair Davies III
**Winter to Winter in Five Haiku**
Faheem Dyer

A homey woods fire
crackles and spits its embers
so far up for us.

New spots for smudges,
strange sensations on the ear.
Pines have needles now.

The evening rainstorm
hurls itself against our home.
Never-ending noise.

Smokers by the grill.
Wisps dance delicately up,
and ash hits a tray.

Autumn extinguished
as the men rake leaves away
and the breeze flies in.
**Side effects of excess copper include feelings of doom**
Audrey Dubois

there are gaps in my memory. i can’t tell how big they are.

all these beings are moving around me, all of them have different objectives, none of them are experiencing the same reality as me, I have so many perceptual filters. they pay attention to the direction that everyone else is going, but I only pay attention to the walls, and if you focus on the walls too long they look like they are closing in because usually a wall is just one barrier but if you look at them all at once a hallway is just a narrow tube of bodies.

you can’t be too careful about conversations you overhear “by chance.” some of them are probably seeds of ideas, planted subliminally, hoping a root catches hold in your dirt mind.

i don’t know why i feel like i need to “test” my friends to see if they really love me. i leave the room and they don’t say anything, not so much as a wave goodbye. “they don’t miss me at all,” i think. “they wouldn’t miss me if I was dead, either.” i overextended the metaphor.

where is everyone? those bundles of straw, tied up at the top, look like people who were caught out in the snow, walking to the new observatory. did anyone else make it through the storm? it feels alone out here.

maybe this is all a hologram. everyone is just a simulation, putting me in exponentially more absurd situations. it’s not all holograms though. someone real must be watching through the cameras, to see if i react the right way.

i’m walking along the side of the road at dusk. why is the stop sign pulsing yellow, like it’s hit with the light of a turn signal? is there a car behind me? i don’t see any cars.
The Erg Chebbi Dunes
Aunyes Dahlia Hermannin
The Sink
Jimmy Russle

Have you seen it
Yellow.
I turned it on again
I left it on

Have you seen those commercials
When
He doesn’t even talk
You and Kate Hudson

It’s doing nothing
For me.
On Writing about Race in 500 Words or Less
Hannah Lyttle

I have this inkling,
This unique temple press,
Suggesting a self,
Other than my own.
Reflected in an echo,
Traced out in these
Lines in my palm,
These wrinkles that suggest
Ticks of time
That I do not own.

It’s like another life
Pulses beneath my sun stretched skin,
In the blue railroad tracks
Winding between
My forearm bones.
You can trace them exactly,
Under my pink porcelain flesh.

I was gifted this able body,
Two good hands,
And centuries of privilege
Rest in my pores,
Revealed in my complexion.
And today I am reborn as fluorescent lights,
Keyboard clicks,
Dog-eared page corners.

I read in books pressed neatly on
Cotton white paper,
Stories of black bodies
Strung up on data plot points,
And dry academic musings.
They cannot articulate
Damage conducted only by the
Wrenching of white hands,
Knuckles cracked as they grip
The whip, with too much conviction.

I sit in the front row of each class,
Write down the names of these bodies.
Emmet Till whistled,
Found at 14 years old, body bruised,
Swollen in the pull of the Tallahatchie River.
Tamir Rice played, like boys do,
His body, age 12, bruised,
Swelling for four whole minutes
Before feeling the river’s continuum leave his lungs.

Medgar Evers spoke,
Was shot in the chest,
Piercing a hole through his shirt,
Which read “Jim Crow Must Go,”
And a Jacksonville hospital would rather he bleed out
through his throbbing heart than
Allow a black man entry to their white
Hospital walls and bleached linens.

I map out the patterns
Twisted in a circle sick like a noose
So many black bodies,
Are crucified, over, and over,
by steadfast white trigger fingers,
I do not remember all of their names.

I had read Sojourner’s words,
English broken into ah’s and n’s
Though not like how she spoke,
And I read it,
Age 8,
New England sun
Warming the waves in my blond hair
And asked my mother if all Black People
Come from the south.
Here I spend years making up for my transgressions,
The ignorance worn like hoop earrings,
Or braids in my hair.
I dominate classroom conversations about the subversive use of dialect,
But yet cannot read these stories aloud.
Write about southern plantation tradition,
As if I do not benefit from it
Every time I step foot in a classroom,
or welcome my brother home.

Decades of cruelty sit neatly
In the spaces between my fingers,
And I type essay responses
To books about black bodies
Swinging from poplar trees.
I tell myself it’s not appropriation
So long as you properly cite your sources.

I fit the commodification of their pain,
Centuries of mothers mourning,
Into single spaced paragraphs.
There is no room to convey
The way blood has dried
Under my fingernails,
Left there by every insipid white liberal
Who sat in this classroom before me.
The word count is too small
To show how heavy my heart is,
Confined to 12 point font,
Margins one inch thick,
Lines neatly pressed
On paper,
Cotton white.
Mais c'est toujours la tendre guerre

Requirement

SAILS: "I have become most happy.

Monarchy must

PIANO Winter

Anatomies

grape AVAILABLE

Amsterdam Sur les femmes infidèles

Individual among hand serves Dans un bruit de tempête

CherryMarccontents to Cillian Valley opening: Grays

preliminary Greens

Hermitage Plus Theory

single blues

you: Parmi quelques ivrognes Director Yellow Barn,

Wind Colonial package

International area

finality

Rrose Selavy
“Lobsters are not actually red, but they are red after they are cooked to be eaten.” Hannah looked down at the bottle cap she clung to rather than look at the lobsters.

“Yeah, they look more grayish-greenish to me.” Megan also did not look at the lobsters, but at Hannah.

“When lobsters migrate across the ocean... they make one single file line across the ocean floor...” Hannah continued, as though unaware of the comment her date had made or the floor to ceiling tanks that reflecting turquoise light. The lobsters paid no attention either. “Lobsters have teeth in their stomachs and noses in their feet.”

“You’ve mentioned.” Megan had always truly loved the passion that Hannah had for collecting lobster facts, when others didn’t understand. “I guess you like lobster facts more than actual lobsters though, huh?”

“Lobsters communicate with each other by peeing at each other…” Megan grinned again at her date and one of the most endearing qualities about her.

“...Different scents of pee mean different things…” Hannah said as Megan took her hand and led her out of the aquarium. “…And they pee through their mouths.”
Reflection
Brendan Geiger

That week that I became excellent at frying eggs
over
easy.
And that same week I burned myself on the pan,
searing the skin white between the joints of my ring finger.
I ran it under cold tap water while the kitchen steamed with morninglight,
and thought
what a gentle reminder.
My Feet Hurt
Caroline Dyhrberg

It is cloudy, and humid,
and my feet hurt, like when my mother
would come home after her morning runs,
and my sister and I would fill a bucket of water
for her to rest her souls. I wonder
if you can peel the sickness from a body,
if you can trip from someone else’s discarded skin
and laugh, or twist an ankle.
Can you discard this colorful outer layer
protection
eat the flesh? What happens
when flesh is gone?
Does flesh ever truly run out?
When the naked banana lies out in the open
for a day, a week, what happens to its white body?
Does it bruise from the wind,
does it shrivel, letting all of its sweetness into the air?
Sometimes I imagine peeling off all the layers of my skin
so that I can finally be perfectly smooth
but I think if I did I might fall into a puddle,
like this skin is the only thing holding me together.
My cuticles tear, and I can not stand them
so I rip them off.
But then, my skin is open,
and I can feel the breeze on the open cells of my body
imperfect
Sometimes it bleeds,
and the iron in my blood
tastes like some sort of lie on my tongue.
My bones seem like a masterful deception,
like I am not actually really solid,
like I am all an imagined farce,
some sort of anonymous rosé,
I think you could buy me pretty cheap.
The bags under my eyes weigh me.
I am filled with blood and sand.
If you buy me, I think you buy a desert.  
This humidity does nothing good for me.  
My body just oozes out of itself a little more.  
The sun is nowhere to be seen and  
my feet hurt.
ten years ago my mother killed a
snake whose name was
my father

she forced her forked tongue into his
scaly SKIN SKIN SKIN SKIN

and waited for
blood

my baby eyes drunk in the ugly scene
my baby mother only twenty-
seven years old
collapsing into a fit of emotions she had
dug up at the gravestone
and kept in the metal in her
molars

i understand now why she never liked to
smile with teeth
---saving a murderer---
Vyectoria Amiro

philosopher aristotle says that
evil men can’t stand to be
alone

with themselves.

why do you pick at the skin of your thumb
every time your baby
  walks out the
door?

how delicately and silently and
you destroy
  purposefully
  yourself
New Depths
Richard Blair Davies III
For Carrie Fisher
Christina Smith

The princess’ final word might have been “hope,” perhaps so she could leave this world upon that feathered thing, that elusive four-pronged proclamation of the otherwise unwell.

Of course, few can confirm her certain stance, not even those at bedside could quite tell, but I’d like to think I understand the feeling of a bird’s heart fluttering inside one’s chest just well enough to recognize it in another, even without ever having met.

So I can say I know one certain thing about my ruler; whatever four-lettered word she uttered at the end, hope stuck to her with brittle resolution,

and thus I’ll go on singing its occasionally painful praises, for that dreamers’ state remains a faithful crutch for minds so heavily concerned with being good.
Taxidermy 1
Claire Avril