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

Est. 1855

Rushlight Literary Magazine, Wheaton College, Norton, MA
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the kids I might
have someday are going to see
this photo of me, snapped
in a sad-about almost-twenty
face. I wonder if they will
demand proof that I even
have teeth, if I will smile for
them to quiet the nagging, if
they will tell me that I am
prettier when I indulge. of course

the look might not
even survive that long. I tell myself that I can
demand its erasure, that I can delete my
zits, that I can force myself to
smile forever, but even
then there’s no guarantee that these
moments of casual weakness won’t
slip out of the trash and find their way
back to me one day. besides, my kids could

always hate the dentist as much as I do. they
could carry luggage
beneath their eyes, and if so,
I hope their friends will at least
joke with them about it. I wonder if they’ll
smile anyway, if they’ll see this gawky face and laugh, or
if I’m just wasting my time imagining
myself, their lives, as yet unlived.
The Moon is a Black Woman
Angel Bird
Girl Seeking God
Petra

19 year old female seeking good things in life other than long walks, drinking milkshakes alone in a New Jersey diner, and scientific papers. Emotionally stunted and having experienced a midlife crisis at 15, not-so-young girl hopes to find a bandaid that will stick more than booze or that weed she smoked one night that left a terrible taste in her mouth and no virgin thoughts in her mind except ‘maybe I’ll skip classes tomorrow.’ Wants to find joy in the little things but doesn’t quite know how, wants to try something big but always too scared, wants companionship that doesn’t talk back but people these days can’t seem to keep their know-nothing mouths shut. Well-read and well-fed but these days can only stomach 1970s Woody Allen essays and their edible equivalents—dry rye toast and even drier white wine. Must like the slightly off-key music of her prematurely arthritic joints, spotless kitchen counters, avoiding tall blonde men and tall brunette women, and sarcasm even in the most dire of situations. No preference to religious persuasion. Philosophy professors and true believers need not apply.
The Frozen Leaf
Christopher Stack

The frozen leaf
Snaps between my fingers.
Delicate. Now broken.
One made two, and still the beauty remains.
It shimmers under the cold gaze of the moon,
Torn from life
Yet still as vibrant as ever.

What drove the universe to make such beauty
Only to rip it from the vine
Before even the first petal sheds?
Shards of glass coat its dying form
And they melt and they mix
With the tears I have shed

No heart deserves this coldness
That hides the warmth beneath it,
Hinting at the soul, but never reveals it.
At a touch, this prison could be broken
But the bars at the windows keep eyes away.

Now frigid petals lie upon the unwelcoming ground
Pierced by the spears of grass that were beneath them.
They were once whole but now are mere remnants
Of the kindness they once knew.
Perhaps a stranger might wander and see them
An oddity among dirt and weeds.
They might bend down and remember
The joy these flowers used to bring.

Perhaps this stranger picks up these pieces,
One by one with care and grace.
Perhaps they take the shards home with them
To treat them and turn them
Into an art more beautiful than the rose.
Was it chance that this stranger saw them?
Were they looking for the shards?
Did they mean to pick them up
And rebuild them
Into something the rose had never dreamed of?

No, I say it was fate
That brought the blushing red
To the artist’s eye.
Nothing is done that cannot be undone
For a loving heart can hold up the sky.
Fern Fantasy
Lily Fiore
rose-colored sky
Sydney Evans

tracing worn paths and
grazing up the catch the
swathes of pink swallowing
the blues in a rush of rose dashes
the slate clean the freshness of the
clouds hands crushing words
to wine pressed hearts pale
gaze is warm within blue-green
touches paint still on your
fingers a printed photograph with
tangles of coffee colored hair soft
sunday night branches of lungs cool
with the melodies of crackling
trembling mouth strums of
capricorn and when can you
sit by me with your ukelele
just to be with you is a
sunset
Pitchforks
Shannon Connolly

We were raised on farms
    one where nothing was planted or grown
    the farmers simply searched for their crops
    and found them.
Our parents were monster farmers.
    Our soil was dead, and yet things grew
            somehow. Things grew without farmers
    and that was no good.
On our land, they were created
    on our land, our ancestors raised their pitchforks, their kids,
            on our land
    The monsters had to pay recompense.
Our parents did not get money from this job, so we went on malnourished.
    Us children had to scrape by with what our parents could provide
            and books were just expensive toilet paper
    but pitchforks were family heirlooms
and family doesn’t cost much, unless they die or disagree
    family doesn’t cost much when you all work your end of the farm
            reaping what work when you sew
    dared the monsters to fight
That makes it hard. The monsters hide.
    Farmers on dead land can always find monsters.
            If they look hard enough for monsters, they will find them.
    With pitchfork in hand, the fire starts the flood
and the foul trowel digs the grave-drain where the monsters flow out
    those tears flowing down down, soaking into the soil
            that grows nothing.
    And yet, monsters are found.
Nothing good grows here.
    Monsters plague the farm
            Pitchforks are tools.
    And children are future craftsmen.
We were raised as pitchforks from a young age,
    with farmer numbers dwindling, pitchforks dwindling, but
            it is a new age for the farmers and of monsters with allies
    so it falls to us now.
the wooden pole is heavy with its talones, so we drag it. It drags up the soil in crooked lines.

Our new lines match the scratched out history of past farmers, until they raised their pitchforks before an attack only leaving footprints to follow.

We ran with the farmers
dug in their dirt, heads in the dirt, eyes filled with dirt and followed
those footsteps of our forefathers until we found monsters.
We weren’t farmers, but seeds. Pitchforks ourselves.
The white bald dome of the sun raises us each morning
an eagle scouring over the farm to reap the crops we search for
and its heat made us children sweat
We were raised this way, but this heat tires us.
When the bald sun sets, we run inside and wrap ourselves in blankets cus farmers are creatures of harsh light. They must hide away from the
dangerous dark-skinned sky. For the cool night air might
taint the pure heat of their skin, of the children. Their precious pitchfork children.
Monsters are children of the night, and farmers the children of the sun.
But what of the sun’s son’s sons?
What of us, the farmer’s children who sweat in the sun?
We that secretly stargaze in appreciation of the soft light of the galaxy,
what are we?
The night sky takes us tenderly by the cheek and
a gentle thumb brushes the dirt from our eyes. It’s cool touch, refreshing against our skin, a stark difference from day to day sunlight
Just a taste of what the night could be as we stare out the open window
that is slammed shut by the talons our parent’s pitchfork
Perversion!
Corruption!
Shut the window! Pull the blinds! Burn a candle instead.
Burn a dim candle instead. A child might be burned, burn the family house down,
if they play with a burning wick, we could use that fire against our own sun,
a flame our parents burned on sight of Darkness
Calling it safer than stargazing upon the monsters of Darkness.
A wick, given to a child, is for safety at night.
   A wick, given to a child, might remind them of the stars
   A wick, on its own, will burn out.
A wick, given to a child, might be blown out of curiosity.
A wick never lasts, and never do children, but pitchfork, children, flames
which one will burn out first?
   Which one has the power to blow out the other or keep them all burning,
who has the power to extinguish what their families started?
We grow restless with our flame.
   We tire of hunting your monsters, following your tracks, carrying your pitchfork.
   This tool is too heavy to carry.
   Why give us this heirloom when the air looms so heavy?
Cold at night, blistering under the oppressive sun, something has to give.
   Our arms will not give, too strong from fighting your battles for so long.
   We may be tired, but our arms are strong enough to raise your pitchfork
and throw it away.
Intentionally Random
Bailey DeBaise
Untitled
Faheem Dyer

The heavy sunlight
parts snow for something pleasant.
A feast for the dirt.
Temptress
Gracie Vicente
serve god, love me, and mend
Mazie Starratt

I am trying to sew myself back together
But my stitches are clumsy
My hands shake
Some days a thread will come loose
And the hole in my stomach opens once more
First kisses and happy memories spill to the ground
And fear comes flying in
Dark and buzzing and relentless like mosquitoes through a screen door
And I try to scoop them all out before I fix my needlework
But some of them are still there
I can feel them
I can see them flying just under my skin

There are pinpricks on each of my fingers
My stomach aches from its constant embroidery
From the constant stings of mosquitos
And it’s clearer than ever that I am no seamstress

Do you know how to sew, my darling?
And would you be so kind as to teach me?
Wilted
Emily Gray

I was making conversation
With hushed friendly tones
In the public library,
Putting away a self-help book
Filled with superficial sighs and words that must be said
To assuage a drowning thought
Or to sew together your average shattered cardiac organ,
When I saw a little boy,
With maybe six years to his name,
Approach a ponytailed, frizzy-haired woman
Perseverating in front of her blue screen with her cursor bouncing a constant “hello” and “wake up”,
And the little boy with the big brown cow eyes gave her purple daisies
Maybe from a dying bouquet that someone didn’t have the heart to throw out into the December sting,
And the woman broke her staring contest with the bleating blank page
And looked down at the boy
At first startled by the dark-haired little person
Then her expression softened and she took the purple daisies
Saying “thank you”
The little boy said “merry christmas”
And he darted off in between the shelves
Just as swiftly as he had arrived
And the woman sat there with her purple daisies
She took a picture of them
She smiled for a while
She had tears in her eyes
And I shelved the self-help books I cradled in my arms
And when I looked back at the woman
The purple daisies were sleeping on the table next to her computer
And her head was turned
And her back returned to being curled into an unintentional burdened question mark.
A Love Poem
Anonymous

Dear Ophelia,
It’s hard to explain how much I love you.
Think of an owl,
Coasting through the dark night
Like snow on a blizzardy breeze
Effortless, circling around and
Around and around and around and
Around until all I think about is you,
Ophelia,
The owl in my eye.
Love runs like a river
Gentle below fruit trees
Serene and quiet until it is high tide
And then, Ophelia, I love you
Like rapids scooping up dirt
And tangling it in your hair.
I love you rough and I love you calm
I love you stormy and I love you dearly.
Dear Ophelia,
You wash away your sins, sins you have none of
But perhaps you swallowed mine,
And I kneel by your river bed, your bed
You have made your resting place
And baptize my madness in your name.
Ophelia,
I love you with all the madness I possess,
I create and possess,
In your name, Ophelia,
In your name.
Salvation in a Highway Motel
Caroline Chaffiotte
A Poet’s Sunrise
Christopher Stack

The Blinding light of the world conquers me,
Each beam stronger and sturdier than an army.
The walls of my city will fall in seconds
To the rising glory of the sun.

It is said Apollo used to ride across the skies.
Some people say Apollo still rides.
He chases his sister around the world
day after day like a song with no end.
Yet now he has left us to lament
and the oracles and their gods have fallen silent.

It is said that the Fates are the caretakers of life,
And that they work with the mighty Hades.
They weave every life a blanket and
they remind us that life is easily cut short.
The finite time we have is our mythology to make,
A story fitting of the gods.
To boldly stand in the face of Zeus and Ares,
We sing our enchanted songs.

Who was the fool to say magic does not exist?
Every moment is living proof that they are wrong.
From science we understand the heart,
But no formula can explain the soul.

Athena goes to rest her hunting eyes
And we steel ourselves for battle
As the cock, like ever, cries.
The Stories of Strangers
Gracie Vicente

As soon as we turned the corner it was as if we were transported into a strange but beautiful world. The streets were narrow, the sidewalks covered in intriguing designs. The buildings were all seemingly squished together but the height of the buildings made the world feel giant. The different bricks and rocks of the outside of the buildings somehow meshed so well together. Each window had wondrous frames of different shapes and dimensions. The window shops were all brightly lit despite it being almost midnight. Colorful lights flashed from many of the stores and shops, inviting you to enter their doors, or at least gaze upon their magical beauty.

After our long drive, my family slept peacefully in our foreign hotel beds with the tv humming gently in the background. While they slept, I was compelled to sit in the large windowsill and gaze down upon the street from the fourth floor. From this view I could see just over the adjacent brick buildings and get a glimpse of foreign flags flying in the wind. While music hummed in my ears I observed strangers as they walked down the sidewalks. A group of wobbling friends threw snow balls at each other playfully in the cold, without a care in the world. I wondered these strangers stories. I wish at times with a simple button I could follow their stories, see where their path would lead them.

As I sat in the window I had the thought of another stranger watching me as I sat here. I stared blankly at the windows across from me and saw a figure walk by the dark window. Was there anyone out there who saw me and wondered who I was? Did they wonder my story? What if someone walking on the street noticed the girl in the window? The mysterious girl lying on the windowsill. How many people had passed by me on the street and wondered my story? Did anyone wish they could fall in love with me, or fantasize of a life with me? Or a chance encounter?

Or was I the only one who pictured my life with strangers at times? To be whisked away in a dreamlike fantasy by a stranger and taken to beautiful locations?

Would I ever have moments so wonderful they felt like day dreams? Or would I have to imagine these stories through the eyes of others? I could easily create stories from listening to songs, but would moments in my life ever be worthy to be sung about?
I glanced at the dark windows across from mine and couldn’t locate the stranger who dreamt of me. The street was pretty barren by now, but lights still shined from shop windows, the snow still fell from the sky, the tv still continued the hum in the background, and the world continued as the city slept.
Traveling Monster
Timothy McCormack
hot takes from the Target changing room
Christina Smith

i’m not so sure if this garment bosses my chub around in the way that I want it to be bossed around as in not like angry since I don’t want my body to feel as if I did not enjoy the sips of bubbly cola that bore it but on the other hand this high-waisted number makes looking in the mirror less pinchy so perhaps love unseen can be self-love too. of course I myself me am the boss of my own chub so I say how I like or dislike it on any given day dammit and I’ll tell you something else I would really enjoy a big floppy hat to top myself off the floppiest hat they have a teal one that way it’ll flip gazes up and away from my more unflattering parts but again I say how I dislike my parts me this thing that forges my burn lines is a surefire streamliner yep this might just be the purchase that makes me feel most like Marilyn yet. she was the ultimate master of her shape you know some say how she had the radio on and she rocked it. but again I don’t need to keep her in mind because she is her and I am me and she isn’t around to tell me that she is not me and that I will never be her and that I will probably never get married and I don’t even think I want to get married so why should I even care? it’s not on sale so why should I even care? i might just get it anyway though y’know what I’m just going to get it anyway. this is the one and i like it a lot.
A Grievance from One Burdened by the Knowledge of an Ever Present
Sense of Oblivion
Caroline Chaffiotte

Fuck.
The Anatomy Lesson
Hannah McIssac

I cut my hair over the bathroom sink and stop caring that it is uneven, I learned long ago that my anxieties leave consequences and that there are worse things than what my shaky hands can cause. It has always been cathartic to know that there are parts of me that will die and parts of me I can leave behind at will.
I see brown eyed boys like beads in a kaleidoscope and wonder why I have never studied my own in the mirror.
I wear the people who have loved and left like scars and at night I count them instead of sheep, make do with the fact that my skin cannot regenerate to what it once was. If there is anything this body has taught me, it is that selfless love will leave you bare boned, that my ribcage is not a coffin but a bed. I have spent a lifetime treating my body like an imperfect vessel, but I will spend the rest making more flaws just to repair them again. Maybe I will learn how to cut my own hair in a straight line, or maybe I will love myself with all the jagged edges intact. Hair grows back after all.
Tchaikovsky
Nadia Joan
I wandered lonely as a fish
Rebecca Spadacenta

I wandered lonely as a fish
That swims down low o’er sand and weeds
When all at once I saw a boat
An omen, of more dangerous deeds;
Beside the ripples, weighing a ton
Rocking and swaying in the sun

Continuous beacon to the sky
And twinkling in a rusty way,
A chain stretched in never-ending line
Up to adventure far away:
Gentle whirring and bubbles saw I,
As if inviting me to fly.

The waves beside it danced; and they
Shooed from mind my father’s plea:
A fish could not but seize the day
And such an opportunity:
I gazed--and gazed--but little thought
What may lie above is being caught:

For oft, when father warns me of things
That seem at a glance exciting and fun,
It is for the sense of peace it brings
Which is the bliss of him having won;
And came o’er me I don’t know what
And I swam up and touched the butt
Rule: Night Bed Start Prowl Floor
Caroline Fournier Dyhrberg

there were night terrors in the air last night
//it couldn’t not be with who’s ruling//
men slide and stretch after a long night of prowling
getting ready to slink into unconsciousness, restart
the next day and pretend that they weren’t on the floor,
are worthy enough to be on the bed.

I bought a mattress topper for my bed
in the hopes that it would better ease me into the night.
sometimes, if the night is hard, I feel like I am on the floor
and I remember what happens to unconscious queer fems as a rule
they belong on the floor so that when cis men start
their masculinity prowls

eyes can kick us and say that it was because we were prowling,
trying to find their beds
to violate their innocent bodies. I start,
remembering that I am imagining things that have not yet occurred. Some nights,
I need to trace straight lines with a ruler
to get myself off the floor;

to get my mind to stop thinking that all dirtbags are already on the floor
of my mouth, prowling
down my throat, rulering
the opening of my legs to see if I am tight enough to bed.
the back of my neck always has night
lodged in it, making sure I start

every time someone touches me, start
panicking every time I feel like the floor
boards I’m standing on are loose, so that at night
all of the prowlers
can steal into my bed
and misconstrue all of the rules
we have told them over and over again. Rules
are made to be broken only when the breakers get a free restart,
when the bed
is not made to floor
them, while the men prowl
and seize the fallen oppressed, drag them into the night,
torrent them a nightcap, before they take rule
over the body, any body, our body, then prowl our neural circles for
years, until we start,
realize we are able to get off the floor and into bed.
epiphany at noon
Emily Gray
to the person looking at the same painting that i am right now
Mazie Starratt

I’m trying very hard not to make eye contact with you
Because even in my periphery I can tell that you’re my exact type
With soft colors draped over a tall and elegant body
With messy hair just barely hiding eyes that have worlds of stories to tell
And if this were an indie movie we would make eye contact right about now
And you would ask me some stimulating question about this painting
And I would smile shyly and say something that would end up on the back of the DVD later
But I can’t look at you because I don’t know anything about art
All I know is that I can spend hours in the impressionist galleries if no one drags me away
There’s something so awe-inspiring about

a

cluster

of
dots

That somehow come together to make a sunset, or an ocean, or a field of poppies
A scene of idyllic bliss made up of a thousand tiny circles
But there is no room on the back of the DVD for “a thousand tiny circles”

So instead I stare in silence
Let myself get lost in Monet or Renoir or whoever this is
And hope that on the other side of this field of dotted flowers
You are staring back at me
Canty Bay
Maia Hay
Continental Drift
Eliza Browning

All the trees in New England are branching into each other & I am walking further into the old growth, seeking woods becoming stub trees becoming fields.

There were forests here once, branches with their fingerlike spindles, & ancestors cutting down the trees for fences & ships & a church with darkened lunettes, the changing land hemmed in all around by the churning sea. These landlocked plots were once foreign ground & now we are expatriates from it, the compact broken, alien from these farms and roads we once called home. The shores erode with this imagined tide, magnetism pulls poles into uncharted orbit & now the map is rearranged, islands drifting against each other, the river from your city flowing into mine. What is this feeling? Lately, in darkness, I find that I miss you more than before, your pale hand in mine a crescendo of longing. We must dream the forest, the entanglement of limbs. We must dream the rush of rivers, those vast exiled coasts, remembered and unremembered, clamorous and still.
The Matador’s Lament
Eli Teitelman

Do you remember that summer in Los Angeles?
When fear picked and pried like fire at the 405,
When calamity seemed inevitable,
What was it that you did?

While smoke clouds rose,
You ran away and hid,
A convent in the southern hills, but
Dust still blew through that paradise of yours.

O’ brave Partisan
What hurt you so?
Was it the war you never fought?
The love you never won?

In an anonymous bed,
In an anonymous room,
In a barrack that could have been anywhere,
You almost fell into the sky.

Do you know how close you were to slipping
Out through that window you so loved.
Messerschmitts flying high above,
Engines roaring like wounded bulls.

White walls, white halls, pure and clear.
Purgatory, you used to call it, but
We both know that’s a lie.
Coward, how could you not see her eyes?

Foolish man, how could you forget
That to be brave is to be vulnerable.
And to give a girl a try.
It doesn’t always end in tragedy.
You could never admit,
That anything there was real or true.
They were just lies, facades to you.
The falsehoods of youth so soon set to expire.

Blind man tied himself to the pyre,
Of his own self-doubt and loathing.
A matador goes up in flame,
A sacrifice before the row of gunfire.

So brave Partisan,
run away again.
Let blighted bulls trample
The place you once called home.

Run, brave Partisan, run.
Shield your eyes and look away.
Let your bastion burn.
Let your cowardice seal its fate.
Nautilus
Min Bae
Seagrass
Eric R. Pfeiffer

Surely you see how the seagrass grows?
Up, up between your toes,
Or far away where the watery things go.
Surely you see how the sunlight shines?
Down, down, in brilliant lines,
Or bright on the sand, warm and kind.
Essential Foundations
Shannon Connolly

CHARACTERS:
FATHER, an older, wiser fatherly figure. Father to SON
SON, the young, moldable child of FATHER. He ages in the play from child to young adult
BYSTANDER, a curious young adult, preferably female

TIME:
SON’s life

PLACE:
Unknown.

SCENE: Unknown.

AT RISE: FATHER and SON have a stack of boxes. SON sits or kneels to appear smaller and is wearing a ballcap. The boxes are all different somehow.

FATHER
Now son, make sure you remember this exactly, okay? Unless you want your stack of boxes to collapse on you, you need to have them in this stacking order, alright?

SON
Mmhmm.

FATHER
You first have to begin with a strong box foundation. Morals will be what helps you decide what goes next. Would you put a smaller box next and then a larger one atop it?

(SON shrugs.)
Well, you like to ride on my shoulders, would it make sense for me to ride on your shoulders?

(SON shakes his head.)
Right. You might end up being strong enough to do it, but that wouldn’t be fair; I’m grown! I can carry myself with my own two feet.
SON
But it also wouldn’t make sense. I’m much smaller than you and your body would squash me.

FATHER
Ah, what you speak of is logic. Think: logically, I am much too heavy for a young boy to carry, but strong people aren’t just older. A young person with a well-stacked set of boxes can lean on them in times of need to make them stronger. If I swap one for another, it might make the stack weaker in some way. I might think logically first but think of morality second. A benefit might fall to me first before I understand the moral consequences if you even choose to have a box for such a thing.

SON
Are morals important?

FATHER
They are to me. It’s something I value and hope to pass to you.

(SON holds out his hands to receive a gift. FATHER grins.)

I cannot hand morals to you, but perhaps with this lesson, I can help you find them. Will you help me stack these boxes?

(SON starts stacking, FATHER corrects the alignment. The stack is completed.)

There, look son, absorb what we’ve built. How does it look?

SON
Tall.

FATHER
For now, but perhaps a growth spurt will make the work seem fathomable. Come, help me carry these boxes, I’d like to show you how they work together.

(They work together to carry the boxes away. The work is happy and easy. The lights dim. Beat. The lights up and SON reappears dragging in with great difficulty. SON is older. Some of the boxes look different or are missing. He stacks them up a few times but is frustrated then starts again.)
SON

Faith. Start with faith to have a set of rules to live your life by but...bah, where would logic go after that?

(Moves the boxes again.)

Logic is the foundation so you can always know not to put your father’s weight onto your son’s shoulders...or did empathy tell us that? Agh! What did you say, father?

(Echoing voice of FATHER comes from distant offstage. SON pauses to listen.)

FATHER

You must remember, this is the key to understanding any event in your life! Remember to start with bwa b-bwa b-bwa b-bwah ba. If bwa isn’t first, then bwaba will bwab your entire bwah.

SON

Curses!

(Kicks a box, is hurt.)

FUCK.

(Grabs his foot.)

Stupid boxes. Why aren’t any of you labeled “bwabab?”

(Muttering as he moves boxes. SON always keeps “logic” box at the bottom. Beat. BYSTANDER enters, carrying their own stack of boxes, placing them on the stage and watches SON. BYSTANDER approaches SON.)

BYSTANDER

Having trouble?

(SON flinches.)

Forgot the order?

SON

(Speaking like a bad liar.)

No. I’m just trying out something new.

BYSTANDER

This box is upside down.
SON

(Loudly.)
I know that! I like it that way. I think it looks better that way. Sure, it doesn’t look anything like what I remember my father’s stack looked like, but,
(Beat. Fists clenched.)
It’s mine.

Bystander

Hm. Seems to me like you could use some guidance. I have my stack all figured out, and in mine, my boxes were ordered like this.
(Picks up SON’s box to rearrange. SON looks appalled and draws a finger-gun.)

SON

Pew pew!
(He shoots at Bystander’s feet, making her jump and drop a box.)

Bystander

What the hell was that for?

SON

(Still with his finger-gun drawn.)
You moved my boxes.

Bystander

You said you needed help stacking your boxes.

SON

I did not.

Bystander

Well just look at how you have your boxes stacked.
(Reaches for another box.)
You have logic as the foundation instead of…

SON

Pew pew!
(SON shoots and kills Bystander. She spins and knocks over all the boxes.)
You tried to move my boxes. You can’t do that.
(Beat. **SON** looks at the way **Bystander** fell, moves them on top of his bottom box and stands back to look at his work.)
Hmm. It looks better this way.

**END**
King’s Sunset
Sierra Proft
Cloud Creator
Jessica Heberlein
a poem for the mist and my morning tea

Emily Gray

The steam swirls
Particles break and wrap themselves around each other
    highlighted by the sunlight through the library windows
They puff themselves into O's
    a breath from my lips will contort them in on themselves
They break on my face,
    The moisture granules dispersing
        dancing in graceful curlicues

In a shadow world
(or a light world), after we die,
I hope this is what the world looks like
    smokelike pinpoints of elusivity
        existing for a moment in beautiful splendor
    dispersing in a divine diaspora the next
I cannot tear my eyes away
9:06 am in the school library with a sliver of sun illuminating the nor-
mally invisible particles
    Art of the air
Light
    and
b
    r
e
    a
t
h
    sculpting in rapid form an instant beauty if only for
        an instant.
Lost in Thought?
Bhavika Dugar
The Streets of Quebec
Gracie Vicente
Sana, Sana, Cultio de Rana...
Tessa Demko

“Well, is it working?”
Pero no puedo ver si
está working, no puedo feel un thing.

“It’s a while that you’ve been taking these,”
y pues ellos preguntan a mi,
“Do you think it’s working?”

Los doctores no me creen,
que no entiendo qué está pasando conmigo,
pero I really don’t know what’s happening.

There’s answers they keep expecting
pero no es fácil para see,
y pues they ask me, “Is it working?”

Me pregunto si I’ve just been faking
the way me hace sentir,
since if it works I wasn’t noticing.

I’m not sure I’m really recalling
cómo siente to be healthy,
pero still, “Well is it working?”

Mi mami me da la “sana sana,” singing
to make me feel better, y sí,
claro que esto está working for me.

No sé por qué ellos keep asking.
They expect me to know if it brought relief,
pero if it works I had no way of knowing.

My symptoms are always changing,
¿o es solo que no puedo percibir?
Which is why they ask “Is it working?”
Every day I feel like throwing up, pero maybe esto es normal para me, so if it works it wasn’t showing.

I wish they would stop wanting to ask me the question que sienten es key, “Well, is it working?” Pero if it did, no puedo feel un thing.
Almost Like Home
Bailey DeBaise
**field notes**
Sydney Evans

smudges on a chalkboard
small white sky letters
light flourishes
hot glass and burns
thick heat of one
blue star like when
you leave cold sage havens
and let the summer
take you

throw out your tiny
secret books into the
river let the soaked
pages go back to the
earth. one stands
alone in a crowd i
wonder what she is doing
everything is far away
you’re so tired but
your veins run blinding

stars the color of her eyes clouds
in your cheeks the ocean
on your tongue like when you
feel a hand on your shoulder and
no one is there revolution evolves

knocking on her arm
she catches my hand and
holds it like a book
red shirt exposed throat
thirsty but thinking about volcanism.
what’s my chemical formula
just want to lay down
in the sidewalk
and forget that i was ever nervous
let it run away like easy rainfall
looped handwriting why is everyone
so loud

brown eyes blue jeans squared in by plaid and hiking boots and
the lumbering black bears wandering up just to
find out who you really are
i think they might know more than i do
painting stages and growing plants and
you want to come with me to
“cal-orado”
blue pines aspen trees where’s that coin you buried?
can’t stay in the valley too long because the thunder is coming
if i could learn to navigate the crumbling slopes where we saw the ghost of a car
i’d take you
one day when the snow is falling