

NO, DEAR

No, Dear

Issue 16 POPULAR

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EIGHTH GRADE

Emily dared me to dig my nails into her arm until she said uncle. She never said uncle. Her mouth, a grim line. "It doesn't hurt," she said. "I can barely feel it," she said. She started to bleed. My nail, white. Her skin, pink.

Chialun Chang

The weirdest girl dies first

on the sixth floor the oldest grade where everyone would arrived eventually

if we all go to hell, you would not be happy in heaven alone the louder i sing, i sing louder i sing with the maximum volume the dreamy song made me forget what i look

the mirror ate my eyes but no one was scared of a short hair ghost

one day i would be as deaf as the moon wailing in the playground

i wish you came to chat with me so i would not pretend that i fell to sleep during the 10 minutes break

if i held an erase to bully about i could make to the next round

since honesty drove my classmates away i only talked to the toilet where palms would presented tissue paper for ass and eyes

when there was a thief i would wander around to make sure that i was no longer the most hated person

the asphalt playgrounds have been weeded over and sown with flowers So did my body

my tattoos came from a knife, sharper and cheaper the weirdest girl came to school she situated inside my scarlet umbrella

i came to learn getting attentions and failed

on the way from sixth floor to the basement my youth got locked down and maimed

i never made it on the list where everyone wanted to sit next to

in the yearbook there's always a faint voice looking for her seat

Chialun Chang

i was well tame

The only private space i had was a window between my pee and the bathroom

i told everyone he bought a new watch in case no one was curious of time

when the computer felt vomiting i would have a cup of black tea to dance in the shallow

i drunk from a pen-made fountain i sat on a fatty chair and slept on a rice blanket my stomach grew a rainbow on Fridays

the documents fled from the window by my pee arrived in a deserted yard i dreamt of I've jumped yet

snow flakes and the water heaven are one step away

My habits: shake feet, hum songs, breathe air in the hallway and recollect the heat

i transport as a cockroach with a legal license continue hiding from the sun

my colleague has to wait for the next April The lover, H1B visa will take care of her for 3 years

next decade, the population in North-East China will demolished "there are lots of people in China still" She said to one Singaporean they are immortal, fearless, like permafrost and call back home every week

i was well tame
i drunk from a pen-made fountain
a paper-made bridge, a salad-made airplane
where grows a open to the public garden at the netherworld

Socialization

Rounding a pond after a raft of ducks

the rifle reports in the valley and again in the clouds

in our inadequate shelter of nettles

dear journal
i'm 18 and smart phones
and nanobots do not exist
dan and I are hungry
hopeful children

thoughts in the margins albert pulido, remember, you can only grow younger by becoming more social move to a city

day 2 carrying little else but a gun the rain can't weigh us down we sing 99 bottles of beer

we peel wet bark to get to dry firewood and a knife cuts into my finger

dear journal, there's no more food
The future is a fantasy do not invest in oil
but trade it if you can ask yourself
why are you committed to writing if not
for lillian and now
that she's gone

what

on day 3, we come upon cayuga nation men with berry pie & cooked meat

& their smiles & their voices & I don't want to be with them.

dan tells me Are you kidding

Lighten up. We need this pie.

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

I was drinking purse wine in gridlock on the George Washington when I got ur email Don't come back Suddenly a pleasure smoked out like diesel the smoke just lifted up into a holiday movie Thanksgiving is so pleasant in the performance Lifted into a landscape painting of a blasted tree What does this mountain make you feel It makes me feel hungry A bright sun U psycho U enter the lonely farm-house What son do u worship I keep shouting down the train When it rains When it rains the tunnels flood and we romantics multiply Ahorita, a gift of happiness Milky Way, a gift of happiness In this open world we flood in private

WHEN I SEE ANDRE 3000 BUYING BANANAS AT TRADER JOE'S

I say, Everything you've ever done has meant so much to me.
He says, I've done PCP.
I say, That meant so much to me.

He says, I've lost my keys and took it out on a waitress. I forgot to brush my teeth last Tuesday and I do commercials for Gillette Razors now. I say, I saw that commercial. So much to me.

He is enjoying himself.

How about you, Tex? He says. And I can't believe no one has ever called me Tex before! I say, Okay.

I've been wearing the same undershirt for a week and a half.

I pose for every photograph.
I masturbated this morning
picturing a woman I made out with two years ago.
I am preachy and self-important
when I talk about race with my family.
Sometimes when I'm not listening
I make my face look like it's super listening,
and I might be incapable of romantic love.

He says, Did you hear my song about being incapable of romantic love? I say, It meant everything to me.

He says, This isn't working. I say, I write poems? Would that help? He says, I'm scared if you read one it might suck. I'm not ready to risk having to say something. I say,
What
if I
just
stare
at you?

We are walking now.
I say, Say something only Andre 3000 would say.
He says, I'm lonely.
I say, Oh
my God.
That was so brave.

My trauma kept me out of the Ivy League Or T.V. and giving my mouth to the
Aggressor on a Tuesday at 2pm when I am 14
When I am only a magazine image hanging in a TLC video Unpretty and know
well that we wear lip gloss for the imagination Of the aggressor
who we met at Fridays
Fifteen years go by and she is now Saying with some mixed Eastern European
Accent that she is 'having a baby with you' And 'is it true that
black men all? like
The baby inside of her will also since
Someday
he is going to be a black man
too
Like I should know the answer to her hate
Or aggression for that matter
This is why Eboni told me in the car 'It won't ever work' and she was glad
To know when she googled my face At least I was cute and not blaming
The girl for his and not
Claiming ownership over a man That could not be owned but
Really like
But who can be owned
And wasn't I Still white too
And who is the Aggressor
after all these years Of driving and skipping school
And opening my mouth wider like a gapping O over the bad thing
in silence
Wasn't it that girl From Hunger Games who said
'i wish americans liked black people as much as they liked black culture'
europeans sexuality
And someday in the park The Baby will be there in a stroller from Amazon.com
and
I won't have ever
answered her question
As she pushes her son around like she knows something

that I won't ever know

about it

Still white despite admitting to it

COURSE IN GENERAL LINGUISTICS

passing by, the vantage point gliding on a conveyor belt, the center of focus stands still. There are pentagram power games being played out on-a tree or horse, as if the branches, the tail wagging swatting flies were war game mock-ups, every time a picture of tree/horse is labeled in-Latin? (arbor/equus)-or French. There really are—but English, that loose shingle, taught in state-run schools can't be Yves Saint Laurent neutral. It doesn't have it in it. Metal detectors won't catch implants under the skin. Police with shiny badges might as well be doing the teaching, covered in chalk, dressed in state trooper uniforms as they distribute turkey outlines to be colored in with waxy Crayolas.

Can tell it's heavy and weighs a lot by how what's beneath it sags at the middle.

Doesn't matter what it is,—
it's in front of me. Generally, the visual impact.

The senses take it in
—don't have to look at what you're *shown*, what's held out, placed in view, set in line of sight, revealed.

Talking to someone (plural) is like *hitting* them with a blunt instrument.

The Chicken Dance

Everyone was out on the dance floor, doing a dance called The Chicken Dance. Do you know this one? It was pretty popular during a particularly uninspired era of American choreography. They used to play it at the roller rink, and people would do The Chicken Dance while skating around on laced-up skates. Just dancing and looping in circular swoops, going nowhere. That feels like too obvious a metaphor, so I'm gonna leave it alone. Anyways, at this new party, everyone was doing The Chicken Dance once more. I wondered how it had made its way back into the dancing vernacular, and why people were so accepting of an ugly past. Nostalgia was to blame, of this I was certain. And yet I knew this meant that a grunge reprisal couldn't be far behind, and was pleased to have saved all my flannel shirts and mustard-colored corduroy pants. The Chicken Dance. The Chicken Dance - people were doing The Chicken Dance. They looked ridiculous. But slowly they began to win awards. Graduate schools in Chicken Danceology started popping up; a whole wing of Chicken Dance Theory anointed itself as necessary to the betterment of the culture as a whole, and for some reason everyone believed this to be the truth. I'll admit, I joined in - I was just a novice but it was fun to hang out on the periphery of a growing movement. So that's how it was, until the one afternoon when these armored guards showed up and just started shooting at the black kids. Just putting them down, one by one. It was terrifying. We should do something, some of us said to others of us. Yes, others of us replied, we need to Chicken Dance harder and faster than we've ever Chicken Danced before. And that's what we did-we Chicken Danced all through the night and into the day. What a pointless exercise this all is, I remember thinking to myself, my hands and arms flapping at a furious pace, but if I'm being honest, I didn't know what else to do, or rather, I did know but it seemed a lot more difficult and time-consuming than merely flapping along with everyone else. Also, too? I really wanted an award.

Oublié

Servilleta del dos mil once, marzo. Lapicero del dos mil diez, agosto. Asi asi

Vengo olvidando mejor dicho trasnochando Y QUE fuíste cuatro días sin dormir—osea—"noventiseis" horas no seas exagerado.

Imagine the neighborhood in South-modal modal modal—San Francisco white wrought iron bars on windows with ornamental pretensions. Imagine the neighborhood where I finally forgot you/maybe you can't because that is finally the point anyway I didn't forget you.

Imagine!: A dog like that. Imagine!: A day so long.
Imagine!: All that time. Imagine!: So many malachite owls.
Imagine!: Her surprise. Imagine!: I forgot.
Imagine!: Light bulb in your cup. Imagine!: Your cup.
Imagine!: Lisa Frank folder. Imagine!: Crucifix sticker on Lisa Frank folder.

Heart of bone heart of auto supply heart of of.
What is of? What is is?

Anyway I didn't forget you— For you a diploma For you a heart-shaped clock For you *da noive* For you, ah, it'll come to me

Studies show that it'll never come to me. Studies show that if you run Bob Dylan lyrics through google translate it's just the word "penal" over and over in Esperanto.

I am sorry. No I am sorry. No no I am sorry. So sorry I am sorry. Sorry. Sorry, I'm sorry. OK sorry I'm, sorry. I'm sorry. Sorry.

Souvenirs of middle-spring:

Seamstress drew string around my chest while you waited leg propped on the knee, hand on mouth seamstress not the same as tailor still the only word I knew was "Schneider"—hand on mouth.

Deutsche hailstorms killed some birds.

Blumen! I tucked them little ones daisies no dandelions no daisies no who cares into your shirt buttons your shoelaces your hair—Berliner Mauer—no red Mauer in Azerbaijan no coins in Azerbaijan no cold water—Daisies into daisies—Ich! Ich!—hand on mouth.

In Zaragoza: tall green buildings? Tall as the letter.

In New York: "Are you late? Are you going to be late?"

Killer, too, they say it is killer—dark of constant light—quiet my most precious quiet the most hexagonal. Baby in periods of constant baby and light the darkness of baby

Areyoulate? Whereareyou? They'relockingup.

Imbecilic auto-cap: I am out of Ctrl. There is always a gray sweater slug unconcernedly around you. I emerge after the film I'm the caps I'm the babyhead.

I didn't want you to know that I'd waylaid self-preservation because there was no word for it where we'd gone.

Or if there was which there was it was too long had thirteen consonants. If there was no blue there either which there was I sought it far away from us & god it took me so long to find most of the colors but I found them.

Are you late? Are you going to be late?

Kickstarter for me to disappear for six months. GoFundMe to pinch my face on the phone screen. Indiegogo to play the aria backwards

The most reckless moment is digital

is a webfoot warm-up

Is no way now tapping of

Is the titillating click of seeing soon to be the same as liking

liking inherently wound unto myself in the cold with Liking there, liking me liking something

Joshua Kleinberg

Selfie

I'm enjoying nothing so much as the breadth of this bleakness, and I suppose that's what

you sign on for when you put down the razor at sixteen or eighteen or hang up your cleats

or whatever men do, with their rumble of voice—their THX systems of conquering light—I berate

myself in this badly lit room. The lights are like bones when I look for them. I stutter through

coverage of my recent defeat. The economy, jostling outside my windows, begs me to better

my lot. But there's another upheaval underway. How dare I bequeath you the filth of my name.

Marisa Crawford

Spring is here again

I wave to you from inside the 90s
You want me to be a phenom or you want
me to wait until I'm older
You wrote on my Facebook wall on
my birthday, "here's to aging gracefully"
I wanted to reply "fuuuuuuuck youuuuuuu"
Buy me gold jewelry
The Misfits lead singer should have been me
You call your commute to work
an "odyssey" / it's not an odyssey
It's a picture of your newborn baby
Boys I wanna hate in bloom

I think about the sea-green dress with the poppy-red flowers on it, the one that got away / how A told me it looked "just okay." Maybe she was right. Maybe I'll drift down with the undertow I'll gasp for air. Chloe. I'll never know.

Balcony scene
First-season Miranda
Gotta send the invoice gotta change my tampon
Maybe he hates me for not being nice enough
or maybe he doesn't hate me at all
My face flanked by Only Ours symbols

My nose won't stop bleeding
I haven't been partying. The Big Wind Blows
for whoever partied last night
I need a job so I'm not alone when the world
is ending. Hey guys I'm here I'll just sit over here

I can't work here anymore. I collapse in a glass coffin. How do you make your skin look youthful without being young Expressing myself joyously through fashion Wearing whatever the fuck I wore yesterday When I started my job I made my password 96tears. Now it's 113tears Everyone around me is smoking
Lean against the wall like you're one of the flowers
That's called "personification"
or maybe "objectification"
Embodying the statue
of the saddest girl on the block
Turning passers-by to stone
w/ my bald eye

I love my country

The jackdaw cries until sunrise. The people wait for a white man to speak. I throw up my breakfast. All morning, I pull out

my eyebrows and read Kristeva. My dying friend is rollerblading on Instagram. Some cops shoot a rabid swan

and a 10-year-old. I am not waiting for love to come. I'm waiting for happy hour. Love is a transaction. Breath is a bargain. I'm not

waiting for my dad to die. Some poets sit on a black rock in the sun and talk about the moon. Asterisks accrue between my teeth.

Some men cut down a diseased elm. Their boots look sturdy. If I sell a poem, does anyone care? If a slowly dying

person finally dies, does anyone hear? I throw up an apple and go to a reading. Each false note hums sweet.

I eat the swan. I throw up diamonds. We're all breathing tree spit.

My country is coming for me. Its pointy teeth shine.

Tiffany Sings to Us

A raw patch flares near her eye. Brie is kind of pretty when she doesn't wear makeup and pulls her hair into a ponytail,

but she tries too hard.
Lipstick is stuck to her crooked teeth, her hair's teased-out in stiff clumps.
I try to brush it behind her ears but she pushes me away.

It's her birthday.

Plastic is spread across the kitchen table, helium balloons float above us.

The only people at the party are the family and me, even though Brie invited the entire neighborhood.

Could Have Been by Tiffany plays on the boom box. We drink flat Pepsi as her voice comes through the speakers— Could have been so beautiful, could have been so right.

Brie is fat and says fuck every other word, but right now she's crying husky, drowning sounds. Every time I get my hopes up, they always seem to fall.

Ricky didn't come to the party even though he let her suck his dick. Brie's mom tells her, "Forget it. The boy's a scumbag." The kitchen is fluorescent with faded, flowered wallpaper.

We sit around eating stale chips. Brie waits for Ricky as the sun goes down. Her father lights a cigarette, Brie wheezes as she lights one too. Tiffany sings to us: What could have been is better than what could never be at all.

Holes

So what they were saying was, is what I knew they thought was, is that metal heads were stupid. They didn't even use headbanger which I thought sounded cooler, they said metal heads which sounded vaguely sexual and I was still geeked out by the sexual in 8th grade and didn't want to say metal head because some slimy guy would say yeah, head and make a look I didn't totally get because I wasn't 100% sure what head was but it was something adult I should've known in my stupid head and I didn't totally. Was I making this all up in my head? Look even tho I was in 8th grade and learned the word stupid from way before when, I'm not stupid enough to think that I'm assuming I know what kind of stupid you mean. Like what kind of stupid? We read H.P. Lovecraft and you didn't, so there. And it was Metallica's bassist who knew about Lovecraft anyway and he was reading for fun and you just read Hawthorne just 'cuz the teachers told you to. I knew they thought that about us and I knew it wasn't true and made me feel all horrible again but what could I do instead of fucking them off with my middle finger. It's not my fault I had to walk home with my worst looking Lee's that weren't really the metal kind, these had the back pockets that were girlylike, not the big pockets, but I had made a hole in the middles of the knees - my best friend Rhonda said I could do whatever I wanted with them, she basically gave them to me. So when I ripped holes in them she asked me what did I do that for and I said well you gave them to me, aren't they like mine when that happens? But I gave them to you she said, and you made holes in them? It's like you didn't have to buy jeans! But you didn't want them anymore, I said, so they weren't valuable to you I said, and that's how I wear my jeans 'cuz I like heavy metal. Well if my mom knew she'd be mad. But you don't own them anymore and your mom isn't my mom. Well I can't believe you did that, Rhonda said. Whatever, I said, feeling weird. So I walked home thinking well maybe I really did do something wrong, did I not be thankful enough for the new used jeans that were too small for Rhonda cuz she was the first one of us to get like real hips and stuff and she felt sorry for me and my old jeans but that didn't really work cuz I made a hole in them? I thought it would be ok to make a hole in them cuz then I could say it wasn't the jeans I bought with my parents' money who would have said that I wasn't being very nice by making holes in them when people didn't have clothes in other parts of the world, but I always said I'm making holes in the clothes that were so old I wouldn't wear them unless the holes made them more exciting so that was better than giving them away to the religious donation place. But they said that someone else would have been able to wear nicer jeans, my jeans without the holes and more would come of that than me wearing them with the holes which made it seem like I was ungrateful or something or didn't understand what money cost and what money had to be used for. Plus it looked trashy they said. It didn't matter if famous people did it.

But I said that since I'd rather wear the jeans with the holes because I was a metal head, that meant they didn't need to buy new jeans for me because I was saving them money, I was doing which is what they said to do which is to not throw anything away or be wasteful. But they said I was being wasteful because I was putting holes in the knees and I said that can't be wasteful if I was still wearing them. Nothing was wasted, I saved the denim in case my denim jacket ever got a hole. That was one hole I would definitely sew up. It was not cool to have holes in your denim jacket but if you didn't have holes in your jeans you were not a real metal head and I was not about to let that happen. So when the cool girls said we were stupid with our holes and I knew I wasn't stupid but I didn't really know what they meant I just said they were stupid for following what everyone else was doing which meant their head was full of holes. Sure my knees also had holes but every one knows you see with eyes at the back of your head. If you don't get this then you don't belong in my w(h)ole universe.

#evachenprose

i.

The velocity of gold sneakers in an Uber has been determined. Themeasurement requires the use of amagnetic Eva; it requires a commute on a Thursday; it requires the use of one's own eyes in determining the distance between a magnetic Eva and a pair of golden go-tos; it requires an hypothesis: I never thought I'd get soooo many wears; it requires a yasss yasss; it requires that an Uber travel with infinite rapidity; it requires that there be no doubt about this figure. Metal formed when a body roughly the size of an Eva struck and merged with the earth.

ii.

A degree of uncertainty in the mandal. Excuse my ugly feet, Eva! A degree of uncertainty reduces the repetitive impact in the back of an Uber. My ankles are crossed, Eva. The eye travels over the repeated features, the ankles on ankles. The eye travels over, from one mandal to the next then on to the next mandal and so on. The symmetry of the mandal ensures that I am synthesized to a degree with every Eva. Every Uber has an Eva. In every Uber are slight variations in the spacing between the repeated Evas. Every Uber has space where I cross my ankles more than once. I repeat, every Uber has a mandal.

iii.

And Eva created Evakind in her own image and came before the throngs to say, Be fruitful and fill the taxicabs with everything Sonia Rykiel. Rule over the Sonia Rykiel in the sea and the Sonia Rykiel in the sky. Everything is Sonia Rykiel except the apple. And when Evakind saw that the apple was desirable for obtaining wisdom, she ate it and wore Sonia Rykiel.

iv.

The mirror is the threshold of the visible world. To it, I bring the fruit of the day, I bring the persimmon. Eva! Do you not see the Givenchy Antigona medium leather shopping tote, in Bambi print? The humanoffspring, atanage when she is outdone by Evain instrumental intelligence, can already recognize the image of Eva in a mirror. In the mirror-phase, Eva and I rebound in a series of espadrilles. Eva and I rebound in a kaleidoscope of canvas Chanel. The sight of six Chanels and the fruit shakes the whole of human knowledge. The sight of six Chanels is a cultural go-between, as exemplified by the Eva complex.

V.

The presence of the original Eva is the prerequisite to the concept of YSL in a taxicab confession. Eva can capture images that escape natural vision. Eva enables the ripped denim. Eva enables the reproduction of a menagerie of leopards. And the beholders ask, Where u get them shoes? and Hey, where's your apple? The taxicab confession is the secular cult, and YSL is elevated as the blessing of the Eva. If there be YSL, there be the aura of the Eva.

vi.

Clusters fill the Ubers today. This one's for you, Eval Clusters of Ubers and glitter shoes are the only way to travel. In the Uber clusters, my glitter shoes produce shockwaves. My cloud joggers are hot, young stars. My cloud joggers accelerate the creation of new Eva clusters. In the Uber, gravity is opportunistic. In the Uber, an accretion of glitter shoes. My cloud joggers are thermonuclear ash. In the Uber, immense hordes of glitter shoes in mutual gravitational embrace. My cloud joggers produce more nascent Evas. There is some hint that the Uber cluster contains tens of thousands of sample sales. I experience gravitational collapse.

The Debutante's Ball, 1999

Governor, hold my bubblegum while I ransack your dreams, bruising my shins on your oyster shell parking lot, sweating my little girl sweat between your knees.

You don't know me, but I see your fantasy death maidens in tubesocks, horny snow whites dipped in blood, electric milkmaids pulsing under their skins.

You don't know us. We say *fuck* and are gigantic, straddling your sawn-off giggle stick, then stomping around the train set city,

but soon we are alone with our bigness and firecrackers, eyeliner and moonbeams.

Powder Free

I also described them like that Almond alabaster asperger trinket in glass casing cut my hands dropped it slammed it told me not to touch it Felt enormous guilt this year perhaps every year even when we were in the hot springs getting our hair wet untarnishing our silver and relishing the soft stamina Gifted pink underwear with polka dots and a long letter that made both of your lesbian mothers cry We were walking through a thicket wishing silently I could smoke without you telling on me She was a white cream paste in a log cabin but she was 30 and you were 8, 13, 21 At the time I wondered if in spite of being weird she might have the right temperament to be a school teacher and then John and Vernay wouldn't have to worry so much Imagine handful upon handful of dulce de leche happy birthday marzipan food fight shuddering waxy almond paste mouth shoulders mouth I cannot bear to hear about your sex life I maintain a solid fear of ICP and group therapy and anything flavored with anise You'd think I'd have gotten over it Hearing the most gnarled cleared throats for the eternity of 15 stops but I remain I remain I remain Marveling at the waxy sheen of rich lady's skin has always been my favorite pastime they have mastered the art of dipping a single finger into

the lit thing and then a head sternum ass heels pristinely performance art they would never be stupid enough So carefully so imperceptibly a wax animal ate you and molded and grew nice blond hair and small graceful breasts in the meantime I spend 45 dollars on a tub of primrose cream coat myself kick myself remember 200 boxes XL powder free I am trying to become myself I have now conceived of a destination humming farther and farther I am so sorry I did not call

DIAMONDINE

She grew her hair long like a sentence nobody wanted her to finish and none could make her brush. I liked listing weaknesses. I studied popularity for 31 years. I copied down a simple spell: Under the weight of disinterest, cast as so much water, the only recourse is to slicken like a diamond, to borrow off the glossy. Eating cotton-candy is like spitting on a whisper. A sorry revelation of status will only be solved by rapture, self-induced.

Contributors

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