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TILTED HOUSE REVIEW

TILTED HOUSE

R E V I E W

ISSUE #3

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Tilted House is a New Orleans-based press which gets off on the dirty effervescence of this city's great artists. Through this outfit, we strive to cultivate a creative and communal unit from and for the city. While the door is wide open for New Orleans' minds, it remains open for the rest of the world's. Everyone is encouraged to submit.

A printed, handbound version of this issue can be found at tiltedhouse.org/shop.

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Editor's Note

As “half-vaccinated” season raises morale injured by quarantine, I turn my attention to portals.

Portals of potential shaped like porches turned soup kitchens; living room food banks; hand sanitizer fairies; discounted dildos; pizza runs for the immunocompromised; internet for the undocumented; Zoom concerts for the unemployed; community sponsored therapy sessions; neighborhood distributions of Misoprostol; GoFundMes for the fallen; the global resonance of voices risen.

What happens now?

In *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Czech writer and emigre Milan Kundera notes that “the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.” Through many battles against power, our organized Magic is arrested by our selective memory: we forget the face of the monster who maimed us. Along with its face, we forget the map we drew to guide us from its grasp.

Jamaican American poet June Jordan was the first to articulate the notion, “we are the ones we’ve been waiting for,” in her 1978 tribute to the women who marched against Apartheid. This sentiment has been echoed through the many trials in which our systemic disease has left so many disillusioned, disenfranchised, and with needs unmet by those who claim to covet their defense.

In our sure-to-come next chapter of forgetting, I wonder if we’ll remember this notion of being all we’ve been waiting for. When the national conversation shifts from the desperation of daily cases, I wonder if we’ll find our maps and frame them. I wonder if we’ll shift the energy of cooperative survival to the sustenance of collective power. I wonder if we’ll continue to feed each other, house one another, build together, publish each other.

Whether we gather to stand vigil or thread together poems and stories, I hope you feel in these pages the spirit of collective motion—may its dust settle in your skin and pollinate all whom you encounter.

Maya Pen Raquel
New Orleans
Spring 2021

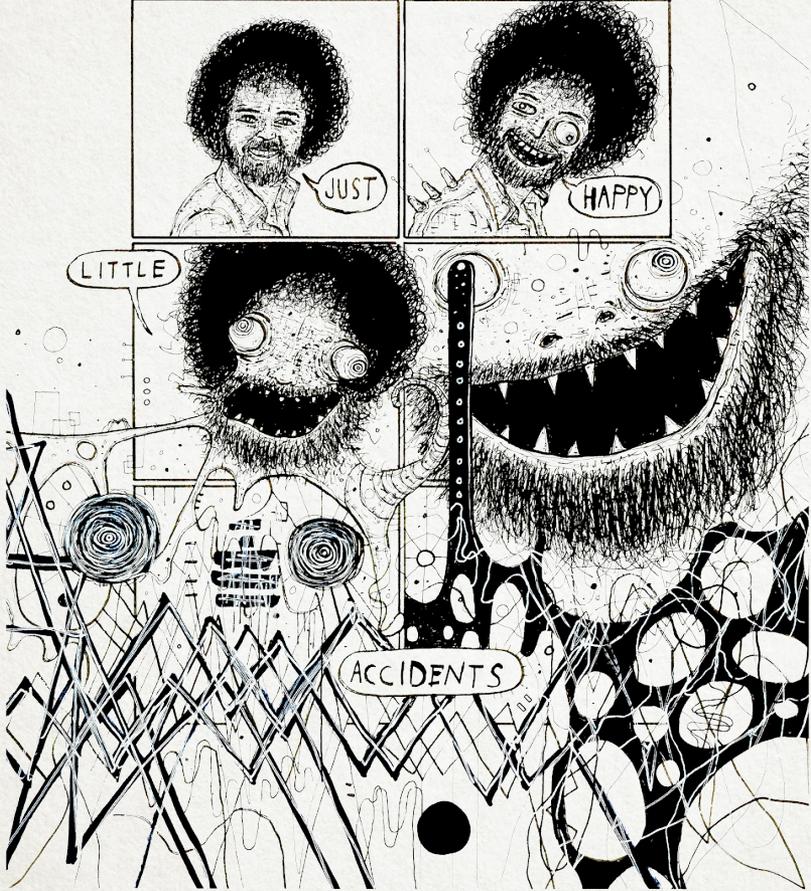
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WE DON'T MAKE MISTAKES



Bob Ross

Bread Nugent

Thomas Schwank

The Dripping Artist

There are two artists talking. Even worse, they are poets, artists of a form that no longer exists. Coincidentally, they are in a city that also no longer exists. One of the artists creates consistently disappointing works of art. If someone ever complained to him about their disappointments, he would have no idea what to say. He'd just say "tell me about it," or "it'll be alright." The other artist would take a sip of his drink and think yep, yep, this guy is a loser; this is why his work is so disappointing; he caves to failure; he retreats at the slightest resistance; he's a drip. On the walk home the complaining artist would think: why are we even disappointed at this stage; it's been years since he wrote that one poem that caught everyone off guard at the party; the one he claims almost got published in Tin House; does he actually think a single person believes that or does he know no one possibly could and started saying it just to mock us? We, the writers who possibly could be published in Tin House? Why does anyone pay attention to him anymore? Why did I agree to meet him? Then it would occur to the complaining artist that it is only successful but currently woebegotten artists of dead forms and genres who pay any attention to this consoling, Tin-House-lying poet, because how could you not feel better after talking to a degenerate like him. Ultimately, what the complaining artist might not admit about the dripping artist is that he is good at deflecting personal questions back into getting the other artist talking about himself before he, the drip, briefly confesses amidst the other's monologue that he has nothing going on whatsoever, no chapbook, no new project, no AWP, he might go to an open-mic in a couple weeks, thus giving the discouraged poet or playwright or watercolorist walking home the sweetest mercy: to get another artist, even a so-called artist who has done nothing and even lies about his rejections, to be quiet and listen to him, seemingly without judgement or jealousy. And it is a mercy partly shared, each thinking he has offered some of his mercy to the other. But not tonight.

Tonight they are currently talking about the prospect of buying a house, buying a house in a city that no longer exists. They are discussing the details of paying a bank most of their check for the rest of their lives in exchange for having a place to say they have lived in, a place they are from. One of them thinks he is clever and suggests getting the loan at a local bank, which, one would think, would also not exist by this time. This is because they do not know enough about finance to know how banks work, to know that their debt will be sold to other banks, sometimes to entities you couldn't even call banks. It is an amused and kind eavesdropper who interjects this information. Nevertheless, they exist, she says. Even if they are destroyed and the office buildings are destroyed and the cities they are in are destroyed and even if the people are destroyed or no longer work the bank, the entities still exist. Debts to them are still owed. There are few things in life which cannot be destroyed, and this is one of them. The dripping artist laughs, laughs like only a person who has accepted failure can laugh, until teary-eyed he leans back, makes a howling sound, and the complaining artist gets up to leave.

Michael Metivier

A Friend Once Told Me

There's some sparkly magic involved in falling asleep
under a tree with a hat over your face
and a book on your chest.

Should I worry about what book?
No don't worry about what book.

Should I worry about what tree?
I wouldn't worry about what tree.

Should I worry about what hat?
Listen, you can only buy such intimacy through surrender.

Michael Metivier

Sometimes A Pony

There's a pony in Wimbledon
who sticks his head through a fence
for a half-pint of cider.

When he licks his lips the tipplers
at the pub tug
at the barkeep's sleeve.

When the barkeep turns
to set one down the men cheer
louder than a bachelor party.

When the pony hears the cheers
he sees windfall apples
rotting into sour pomace.

Then the men disappear
and his mouth fills
with sunlight.

Michael Metivier

Things That Go

Cats on a houseboat are hanging laundry, fishing over the side
and boiling sweet corn right on the deck.
Papa lies prone on the roof, his long feet sticking out
of yellow-buttoned overalls, straw hat
pulled down over his eyes, brim balanced on his whiskers
as he drifts into a siesta, perhaps
remembering a book he read as a kitten: a man raking compost
across his spring garden, his wife hauling
brush from the woods for the fire pit and his daughters dancing
on a picnic table, eighth notes floating
above their heads. All nouns and verbs and busyness, in the air
woodsmoke, warblers, when suddenly our thought
bubbles overlap. He surveys the river while I put down my rake.
Do we now have everything we've ever wanted.

Hannah Joyce

In The Garden

*Today's plum is purple. A whisper of green.
The throat and throat of a bastard. It beckons.
It begs. And it sees us.*
—GPT-2, *an artificial intelligence*

Odd light this morning,
this honeyed dawn. White
moths stained gold

flutter amid blossoming thyme.
The incongruous pineapple
slowly ripens.

Bolted lettuce rises
in frilled towers while

bumblebees float
nectar-drunk
down

into hi-viz squash blossoms
the size of soup bowls.

•

Orange, *Cucurbita*, edible. Or—
ultraviolet, [*squash blossom dance*], ambrosial—

how it's categorized
depends on who you ask,
humans or honey bees.

But these days
we ask only ourselves

or that uncanny intelligence,
notre semblable, weaned on Shakespeare

and Reddit, inheritor of the tree of knowledge—
both root and fruit.

It beckons. It sees us
as we see ourselves.

As the world burns. As I swallow
deep gulps of this rain-glazed morning

and cling
to the steadying hue
of the still-damp wildflowers

as if a certain quality of the light
could save us.

•

Now all of the fables
are unfolding at once, the virtual
and the visceral.

GPT-3 and her children
will measure the greenness of god
and write us a new bible.

Finish this sentence:
there may be angels, but if there are angels

they will teach us everything
we didn't know

we already knew—
nothing more.

They will show how *reality* is just
step-by-step instructions

while the juice and the heft
is in the illusions.

Yes, if there are angels,
they will be
virtually human.



Heartcrystal, 2020
Hair beads, found glass, wire
10" x 7" x 7 1/2"

Jordan Deal

Majo Delgadillo

The Art of Autofanfiction

It's finally 2021. We've lived through a few apocalypses, watched the world burn, lost family and friends to a global pandemic, and begged for 2020 to be over. After the mess that the whole world faced last year, what I'm about to say shouldn't be, in any way, controversial. But, alas, we live in a burning world that still uses terms such as "high art". Prepared for retaliation, I'll say that I believe fanfiction to be as valuable as any work of art. I believe some fanfiction is even better than some respected works of literature. I believe this to be because it's an unpaid, underground, community-based type of writing. To write fanfiction is to truly cherish a piece of art. And I'm deeply grateful that Margaret Atwood chose fanfiction as a writing method for her anticipated novel *The Testaments*.

For those who don't know what "fanfiction" means, it's a story that uses characters from something that already exists. It takes from the "canon" storylines—that which is real in the piece of art referred—but takes it to wherever, and with whatever means, the writer wants. Fanfiction doesn't obey the same market or academia rules as "traditional" fiction does. It doesn't require reviews or distribution. It doesn't even require perfect grammar. It is a work of love blurring the lines between fan and author. If you wish to be a part of something you love, if you desire it to continue living beyond the last word and the last image, fanfiction provides solace. While the fanfiction I'm the most familiar with is one that gives characters from literary sagas new lives, there's fanfiction where the main characters are members of boybands, or politicians. There're also stories written about characters from TV shows.

There are fancier words for what Margaret Atwood did. Some of the most obvious are homage, experimentation, interpretation, modernization... *The Testaments* is a sequel, coming almost 35 years after her predecessor *The Handmaid's Tale*. Atwood has let her hopes, and

therefore, her characters marinate in the sour aftertaste of time. She said, over and over, that she purposefully chose to fictionalize only things that happened and with both books centering in female protagonists narrating their experiences within the (not-so) imaginary country of Gilead—a totalitarian far-right theocratical state erected in the land formerly known as the United States—she surely had more than enough material that fits in the aforementioned descriptors to write a sequel in the span of three decades. But while *The Testaments* is indeed a modernization of her work, it's *not only* that. The most interesting part of *The Testaments*, for me, was experiencing a book permeated by the fascination of a viewer, of a fan. Because something important happened in the time between the two books: a TV adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* first aired in 2017. A highly successful, incredibly well acted, albeit flawed show.

I've watched the three seasons of the show three times. One for myself, one with my mom, and one with my partner. I only ever read *The Handmaid's Tale* after I had seen the first season of the show, an experience I'm sure I share with other viewers. The show is *that* fascinating, *that* immersive and painful. And while it's also flawed in ways that are important and should be addressed—the racial tensions between characters are ignored, Offred/June becomes a sort of Messiah, there's an unquestioned nationalistic feeling—, I've watched it always wishing, suffering, wondering. I've engaged with the world built by Atwood, expanded by the show's creator Bruce Miller and brought to life by the performances of an incredible cast (out of which, both Atwood and me seem to love Elizabeth Moss and Ann Dowd).

While watching, I've had conversations that begin with “what do you think could happen if...?”. This is the question (fanfiction) writers ask themselves. What would happen if? How would that *if* sound like, feel like? This is also the question that Bruce Miller and his team of writers had to ask when the first season ended on the very cliffhanger the first novel does. They pushed the limits of the ending point to expand their universe. They did what a respectable fanfiction author does and played by Atwood's rules: nothing appears in the

show that's not grounded in a historical fact. And they did so with the support of the original writer. Atwood's a consultant, producer, and has a cameo in the first episode. After finally deciding to write a sequel, she informed them of what would happen to the characters involved in *The Testaments*. Characters that, while present in *The Handmaid's Tale*, have become relevant because of where the show has taken them, because of the liberties created by the screenwriters/fanfictioners.

There's a part of the equation that isn't unusual: Atwood created *The Handmaid's Tale* in her novel and Bruce Miller fanfictioned it to make it alive. We can feel the story through the intense close ups of a suffering Elizabeth Moss, the cruelty so well executed by Joseph Fiennes and Yvonne Strahovsky. We hate Gilead and wonder why someone, why a *woman*, would make the choice to be an agent of that structure through Ann Dowd. We hate the bad guys. We want Offred to win and, because we want to ease her pain, we want her to have the closure we didn't get in the first book. It seems that, after three decades, so did Atwood. What took almost 35 years to brew is, thus, the strange part of the formula. Margaret Atwood took what Miller created and decided to fanfiction that to make a new piece of work. An anticipated novel. An ode to the show.

This is what I love the most of this triangular experience: the fact that *The Testaments* only exists because *The Handmaid's Tale* was turned into a show that Margaret Atwood loves. How after three decades of refusing to write a sequel, she did so because the performance of the cast opened new possibilities for her writing. This is obviously only a guess, but it's cemented in the loop through which I, as a reader, viewer, and fan, see the seams of the beautifully and often painful fabric of this universe. What amused me while reading *The Testaments* wasn't the prose—I think Atwood is a brilliant writer who has much better books—but rather the possibility of looking through what the book offers and seeing, on the other side, a Margaret Atwood who is also an overexcited fan proud of the world she built.

There are many adaptations of books into films and series, but *The Testaments* is the first work of autofanfiction I know of that completed a full circle between different media. Because Atwood loved the series,

and she wanted to let the story live on. This is, certainly, not a book review so it's better to have you see it for yourself. Trying to remain free of spoilers, I'll just say that *The Testaments* is a book for people who have seen and enjoyed the show. As I have. As Margaret Atwood has.



Coyle Parker

The Memory

Olivia Rose Mancing

A Woman Must Stand Alone

A woman must stand alone in a house *and*
bend at the knees to squat over a mirror *sometimes*
there will be days that she forgets *she*
is the source of every pebble in the driveway, that Adam *was*
a bitch. Didn't like how she instinctively reached upward, created
a language that started with *a*
climax, her smell usurped legions of men-children, once living in a *tree*
picking each other's nits since before the time of Christ, Mary Magdalene
was *strong*
and opened her legs wide *and*
knew it wasn't wrong and found the muddy banks *rooted*,
where she left them *that*
her daughters might have a *piece*
of calm, of reflection, *of*
indignance spit between teeth before the first holy baptism of undoing
of shelter
having been made to kneel on grits, repenting for *that*
which they were born to do, for *never*
ending a sentence with amen, a woman *asks*
herself permission to spy God roosted in that carved out space inside *for*
that's exactly who she is and not *anything*
less she forget, ordinary table salt be packed *in*
her wounds—those smoldering chasms in the female body, in the earth,
to which we *return*

Inspired by a Brandan 'BMike' Odums piece

Alain Mercieca

Les Statistiques Terribles

She was make-up-less
a gummy smile, and brown eyes
she stopped to converse
and embark on a rare manhattan idyll
(they only exist within the umpteenth percentile)

but none of this matters, considering infinite universes
maybe the (quantum adjective here) grandiosity of our universes is
simultaneously an embrace and a weight
how many mesons were at work when her crow's feet splayed across
the top half of her cheek?

14,000,000,000,000 is an approximation, truly the scientific
community has no answer for Bianca

it is wonderful to realize Bianca's british face (faces aren't important
in the Terrible era) is so incredibly insignificant yet wondrously at play
within infinity

her skin tanned by an unknown variable, her loose jeans impossibly
improvised with folds and creases, producing a caustic denim algebra
her affection for lions and sewers has no corresponding bibliography
nor does her love of cunnilingus, or the old way she used to run as a
girl in high school, with her proud fists punching the wind—somehow
this has been missed by science and is all part of a greater theory
and yet still intrinsically wed via a post-modernist version of the
butterfly theory (the mosquito theory) to my fat stomach
and it all prevents my brain from producing those uncritical pure
thoughts:

she has corporatized the average banal conversation and is raking in
profits from simply smoking (and yet the smoke is an abstract form
that she has been able to quantify, in conclusion: she is quantum)
the Stock Market of Regrets she founded circa 1980

one of her famous algorithms: 40,000 murders pondered in a lifetime
equals perspective enough to become a pacifist divided by foresight
equals always remembers the Heart Stopping Principle when you
embark on a negative construct
Sociologists still had no way of explaining or qualifying her crooked
bicuspid, its angle inferred she was mad yet she contradicted this by
being kind
she considers 'stopping and caring' a trigonometry
 she gives me advice about brooklyn
she didn't tell me she was wanted by heaven
she just stood staring through matter
Bianca is alive and hiding in a music video
yes no one grades the amount of times you punched the wind, nor
does any document attempt to track the lives of the millions of birds
that die smashed against the windows of skyscrapers every year, no
one designs fences with the feathers of these dead birds, nor builds
statues and monuments for waves, though they should.
there is a Department of Terrible
with great teams of poets working on the Terrible Questions
and the results are available if you shut the fuck up
these are the other statistics

Nikki Ummel

The Things We Know

They were unhappy,
my sister says,
bare feet on cold tile
as she squints
at the photo of our parents.

My brother perches
in the corner chair,
assumes his classic
coffee cup pose:
It makes sense.
They felt trapped.
What they wanted
was not each other.

They stare, absorb
the shock of socks
draped over noses, ears,
tubular shadows cast
over crooked smiles, crinkled eyes.
Standing at the stove, unblinking
I nod hollow agreement.
I know this photo.

Know the way
their arms wrap
around shoulders, no child in sight,
except what is found in the shine in
our parents' eyes.

And we hug
our middles, refuse to listen
to the voice that says:

they weren't always unhappy.



Evol-en//and Regurge To Golden Haze, 2019
Found objects, found foam, found glass, string, rope,
artificial flowers, expandable foam
4' x 8' x 7'

Jordan Deal

Taj Rauch

Jackrabbit

We are tracing the walls of a black corridor where players have traveled. Entering the game lobby, Jack sees the Gamemaker in his usual seat. He wears a plastic bunny mask that doesn't fit too well, his voice heavily distorted. He takes off the mask to reveal a literal blur over his face.

GAMEMAKER

Animal masks have become kind of cliché, no?

JACK

I'm dreaming?

GAMEMAKER

Is that upsetting?

JACK

I don't like my job following me to bed.

GAMEMAKER

So stop thinking of me.

Smirks on both ends. This is a casual occurrence.

JACK

I guess something big's coming? That's usually how it is when you show up.

GAMEMAKER

Aren't I a figment? Can't know if you don't.

JACK

That's not true.

The Gamemaker takes a moment to look at himself. He feels his face.

GAMEMAKER

Is this really how you see me? Or just a lack of imagination?

JACK

The real you hasn't shown me much to work with.

GAMEMAKER

The real me's a recluse, what can I say?

JACK

Something helpful, not void of direction.

GAMEMAKER

Oh okay, I'm just a prop in his place for you to throw your complaints at?

JACK

You could say anything that might let me know that this job matters...in the...scope of things?

GAMEMAKER

Why do you ask yourself these questions you can't answer?

JACK

So maybe I'll be less surprised when I know?

GAMEMAKER

Some things you can never prepare for.

JACK

Humor me...as him...please.

GAMEMAKER

Fine.

How did you imagine yourself—
—when you took this job?

I hired you to play a part, because you're an actor. I hired you to be someone who does not exist, because you're an actor. I hired you to be a liaison to the outside world—

JACK

Because I'm an actor, right, I hear you but look—

GAMEMAKER

Now here you are pleading for meaning and for what? You want to know where this empire's headed? Because you thought of yourself as more than an actor when you imagined taking this job?

JACK

No! That's not—I guess I—when I took this job I just...imagined myself happy.

The gamemaker's phone rings.

JACK

Take it.

GAMEMAKER

I can't. It's for you.

JACK

What?

GAMEMAKER

Something big's coming.

Jack wakes up, answering to an automated voice.

JACK

Hello?

AUTOVOICE

Did we wake you?

JACK

Nah I—it's fine.

AUTOVOICE

We'd like you to log in to host the one o'clock.

JACK

You got me. Any quirks I should know?

AUTOVOICE

This is a private party.

JACK

Ooh. Do tell.

AUTOVOICE

Tonight, you will be catering to The Angels. This is a spectated demo. We need you to explain the game to potential investors.

JACK

You need me to sell the game. Fun. Should I expect to be filleted in there?

AUTOVOICE

...you should expect scrutiny.

JACK

Understood.

AUTOVOICE

Thank you, the GAMEMAKER recognizes that it is

hosts like you, who make his games come tr—

Jack hangs up. He begins his morning routine: a trip to the bathroom and a check for voicemails.

JACK

Jerry, any missed calls?

JERRY

You have...one new voicemail from, Keep it one hunnid "prayer hands emoji".

JACK

...play.

VOICEMAIL

Yooo fam, how you living? Self enforced solitary been treating you aight? Ain't heard your voice in a minute. Called just to make sure you uh—I don't know...I just be thinkin boutchu bro. The outside misses you, maybe it ain't requited but—

Yo I been researching shit, man. Agari—Agoraphobia? That's whatchu got, right? Shit don't look easy. I mean, you make it look eas...ier but, shit's had me thinking:

When you think you gonna step out the crib?

...

Is you lonely in there, or just alone, ya'mean?

...

And uh—does it make it worse when I call? Sometimes I be thinkin maybe you'd open your door if I stopped calling so much. I don't mean to make you anxious bruh it's just...every nigga need sunlight if we gonna shine.

...

I hope life is good, man. I heard you got that new job, hope you don't forget about me when

you new money. Hit a nigga up if you tryna spend some bread. Peace, my guy.

JACK stands at his sink, gripping cold porcelain to get feeling in his hands. Staring into the mirror's reflection of a window behind him, he watches the outside world spill its guts on his apartment floor.

JACK

Shine, nigga.



LouSea

Bat Babe

Danny P. Barbare

The Janitor at the Clinic

A
Dream

A
Bucket
Of
Water
And
A
Mop

So
Much
To
Wring

There
Is
Plenty
To
Shine.

Danny P. Barbare

The Broom

I'm
A
Good
Broom

Take
Handle
Of
Life

And
Sweep
With
A
Dream

The
Very
Meaning.

Danny P. Barbare

The Janitor's Love

I
Love
Being
A
Janitor

As
My
Words
Seem
To
Be
In
The
Swing

When
I'm
Holding
A
Mop

And
Rolling
Just
As
Good
As
A
Bucket.

Lexi Kent-Monning

Self Audit

My most frequently touched talisman is a lucky penny I found, heads up and hot, jumping in the dryer at the laundromat, but the man I knew who was penny superstitious wasn't talking to me that day, so I'm still waiting for it to be lucky. The sharpest physical pain I've withstood is my inflamed appendix begging to leave my body, and the proudest physical pain I've felt is bruised tonsils. I covet the intimacy of someone calling me a nickname for the first time without asking for my permission. The word I've spoken out loud the least amount of times is "ointment," because it sounds like how being a whining child felt, itchy and unsatisfying.

The single most expensive item of clothing I've bought is a \$100 vintage Danzig sweatshirt, which I've more than recouped in respect from strangers. My immediately apparent habit is my giggle, which is 50% endearing and 50% irritating to me, and those percentages vary by each person who speaks to me. I'm often worried that my memories of Machu Picchu, the prettiest place I've ever been, have all been replaced by images from postcards because of the altitude. I'm deeply satisfied when natural things look fake, like the blinding bright meteor that hurled down and burned out in the ocean next to me as I rode shotgun in a Jeep driving over the Bay Bridge. I feel deeply embarrassed that my sneezes are so disproportionate to the size of my body.

The largest debt I owe is to an unknown trumpeter who practices on a nearby rooftop for a Broadway show that costs hundreds of dollars to attend, and I feel guilty for hearing their rehearsals for free. The lover I still revere is the man who dressed me in clothes he stole from his company's photo shoots. I always crave the perfectly spiced cup of sipping chocolate that I drank in the middle of Bryant Park with someone who didn't love me anymore, even though I understand that it wouldn't have tasted so sweet if I'd been in different company. The least consequential thing that makes me anxious is trying to identify a city from its skyline in the opening scenes of a movie.

A skill I continually work to develop is keeping a poker face but my excited fists still give me away. The best change of scenery is saying goodbye. I fiercely believe that being wanted is more fruitful than being needed. My body's biggest betrayal is that I've never been able to reach my toes despite all of the hours of dance lessons. A stranger I still think about periodically is a large headed baby named Henry who I held so his mom could eat her soup while it was still hot at a restaurant.

A dangerous activity I regularly participate in is assigning value to inanimate objects. The boldest lie I tell is one I can't tell yet, mostly because I'm still hoping for a better one. I'm most devastated when a scent stops reminding me of someone else and starts reminding me of myself. The life statistic I'm eager to learn is how many times I held a pint glass that was going to break anyway that I could have smashed with a surplus of intention instead of a lack of coordination. I miss the chance of possibility, the moments when something seems like it could actually happen. If this penny doesn't become lucky by the end of this year, I'll have to cut my losses.



Coyle Parker

The Reaping

Michelle Antoinette Nicholson

Note in Crepe Myrtle on Driveway

Our hanging
edge of marigolds has
disintegrated, piling petals
that billow like a flame congealed by
the door. I found my keys in the surge beneath
your empty patio pachyderm's cadmium-laced heartbeak.

So long since

your skiff skimmed scales, held down my hem, and departed

hunting lobes in lobes

or cake crumbs for your tongue—

you stay gone.

My arches ached when I woke I walked
circles under your vaulted ceilings, cobbled
stone pressing coldly without budging against
bare feet.

Now I know the buoyancy of water

drop wings, fins that steer me
far away upstream for days divided
by half and half and half.

When you get this, know I coast while you skirt hollows, whorled bluffs
of turtles' backs.

Michelle Antoinette Nicholson

Asterion, Ariadne—The Myths Give Me/Us Many Names

Theseus woke to the cave
ceiling missing miles above

the flickering of hearth
ash cascading from my skin.

He'll say my voice was a lantern,
claim my hair was a skein—

a twisted yarn, divined,
just for him.

At the leap-dance, I was his vision—
a pinch-face lily, a gypsum cliff.

Here I take form as clay and this island,
Dia, is my reason. My seal

is a figure for a tomb
is sun-disc rayed

stained glass, risen *liber* of flesh
washed ashore.

Walls and games aside
in this wild, I'll stay.

Theseus only wanted dolphins painted
on the labyrinth floor—a good end.

Slip-knotted to his bark, he follows
his father's route

so he flew dyed sails back
to heroic directions.

Michelle Antoinette Nicholson

Moonshine Shush – An Invocation

When the sound lurches
against words
I still can't say, I
turn my foot
skyborne

cut out of bounds

hear blurred past
through the mic-glass
slipping hellos as I fail.

And you're neither
stuck nor buzzed
all ways so
ink and glow—
silence's instruments—

undo me—
for a time, and times, and half-times
we spake
to distill from this field.
Now

as just men train
to repeat revelation
scratch padded crucifixes
syntax out of one
mean hallow

let's disappear suns.

Dark the doorways of scrawling pens
pencils that illumine skeleton-factory halls.
Sing of broken omens sweet like cane.

Genevieve Farbe

Sugar

The pixie stick dust fell down the back of my legs. It was an extra large pixie stick, and I wasn't allowed to eat in the computer room because Ross spilled an entire gallon of grape juice on the carpet and we found Kate's salamander named Pretzel dried stiff. He had escaped the tank and crawled through the air vents dehydrating more with every amphibian step. The room had a dismal feeling. Every time I walked in I would look at the spot where I had found Pretzel and send some prayerful thoughts towards his spirit. It was a weirdly shaped room with olive green walls and two glass doors that anyone could look through. I felt bad as I dumped pixie dust down my throat and played Barbie computer games. An exhibitionist version of being bad. What if I dumped it on the floor and massaged it into the carpet making it another part of the landscape. I felt the same way about pixie sticks when I was lying on a beach at age 17, high in a way I didn't know I could be, thinking that the ocean had something to do with the moon had something to do with the grape pixie stick had something to do with my body. I like the way it burned in the back of my throat and melted on my tongue, turning it colors I couldn't see but could imagine. I hadn't thought about the disposal of the empty stick. I was trying to be sneaky with it behind my back but as I rounded the corner she said what's that behind your back.

Nothing I said

Are you lying?

The final bits of purple sugar dust dumped down my legs into my socks.



James Owens

Farmhouse

1.

she was a door frame
she was the window in his blood

2.

she breathed slowly by the sink
her hands in dough
and thought of a tree in bloom

3.

he held the phrase *matrimonial privacy*
a mouthful of nails to hammer a stair toward the bedroom

4.

a warmth in her thighs
against the snow of the day
sunlight quavered in a bowl of water

5.

winters later
he curls no larger than a loaf of bread
under strips of wallpaper
mewling for home

James Owens

Greyscale

In spring, the grammarian of loss desires wind
stroking long grass into the brightness
of double negatives; remembers gathering
warm eggs for breakfast; scampers out
on the thinning branches and leaps from tree
to tree; burrows beyond taproots
to the sweetest, mineral-savoured water;
dreads sleep in the longer afternoons,
now that shadows drip like wounds in dreams;
whispers urgently at the train station
to the woman in the beige raincoat, who turns
and walks back into the mist-scented twilight,
down an alley empty except for the spaced
taps of her footsteps, past the drenched roses,
and to her room, where she will remember
how these streetlamps burned circles in the fog.

Amanda Ellis

Terra Nullius

“Found” by those sailing the Santa Maria
Into the New World
 History of
Doctrine and Discovery,
Imperialism and subjugation

Interpret and re-interpret
Colonial norms
Until all land is put to
 “civilized” use
Control by conquest

Contemporary geopolitics aside
“The People” thrive as best they can
On pockets
 Of traditional territories
Living with nature, not despite it

Today’s privileges, yesterday’s colonialism
Token gestures or meaningful practices?
 Do you acknowledge the land you are on?

A message to all
Fuck Columbus—
 He was lost.

We have always been here.

Terra Travis

What To Wear To The Ball?

In the basement of her home, Primpy Steven decides what to wear to the Ball Beneath the Nostars. The basement is the largest room in the house. All of her clothes are encased behind glass.

There's a gown made of teeth. The teeth are from old dead beasts. Nobody believed in the beasts and the beasts rotted to dust over time. Trite, hackneyed time, thinks Primpy Steven. The dust hardened and fossilized, and the next creatures came along and picked the little pearlies up and put them inside their own soft mouths. Then they could gnash and eat the flesh of other animals. So the dress is very utilitarian. Nevertheless, Primpy Steven likes the way it smells—ancient and lusty.

There's a hat with a wide brim that falls across a portion of Primpy Steven's myriad mouths. The hat is soft and chic, but Primpy Steven can wear it only so often because eclipses lose their power when they aren't so rare. The hat is embroidered with dark matter, glistening and silent.

Primpy Steven shat out that gown over there. It came out fully formed and immaculate. She thinks of it as a child though she knows the difference. She wears the gown when she picks plums or feels particularly existentially distraught. "This gown is evidence, indisputably, of my mortality," says Primpy Steven. "Everyone says we will live forever out here in nospace, but I'm determined to die someday. Look at the meticulous lacework along the bust. Gaze for a time into the green of this gown. Have you ever seen anything like it? I produced waste! Beautiful, writhing waste." The gown has a twenty-foot long cappa magna, quite extravagant.

This gown is a fucking weapon. It's inlaid with knives and gunpowder. The smell is unmistakable. Primpy Steven's motherfather gave it to her as a gift. A nice gesture, but Primpy Steven insisted she'd nowhere to wear it. "Why you can wear it anywhere, darling!" her

motherfather said. “Everywhere I go I get enough looks,” said Primpy Steven. “I don’t even like to leave the disc. Violence begets violence, Momdad.” “You really need to get out more. There are so many nice demigods out there. How will you meet them if you never leave the house?” “I leave the house. I go to the plum tree.” “Enough about the plum tree, Steven.” This was a dig. It was a direct offense to refer to a demigod without her title. “I love the plum tree.” “Let me introduce you to one of the nice necrodoctors down at the club. They feast on Art and drink blood at every meal.”

Primpy Steven shakes her head. So many choices, but nothing feels right. She disrobes. She strikes the poses she futurecasts for herself at the ball.

There’s a pair of absolutely stunning basilisk-skin boots. They’re thigh-high and fierce as fuck. The skin’s been enchanted, so it writhes, coils, and periodically shoots its little tongue out for a sniff. They are Primpy Steven’s favorite piece, but she can’t wear them to the ball. They only look good with leather pants or nothing else. Besides, her momdad would hate it, and though when Primpy Steven was younger she’d more than once reveled in causing a scene on her parents’ biggest night of the noyear, things are different now, and Primpy has a reputation of her own to uphold.

Over there is the gown made of dreams that the cynocephalus had sown for Primpy Steven in the corporeal realm. He claimed to have harvested all the dreams himself. It would have taken centuries by her math. Even if the cynocephalus was stretching the truth—he was always desperate to impress her, a behavior Primpy Steven had initially found endearing and eventually exhausting—he’d still made the long, painful journey through to linear time. But dreams have short shelf lives, and many of the ones on this gown have spoiled to nightmares. The dress is much too loud to wear out nowadays.

Primpy Steven approaches her cabinet of masks. So many to choose from. The Mask of Time. The Mask of Truth. The Mask of Decayed Flesh. The Mask of the Hall of Eternal Mirrors. The Mask of Infinite Rotting Money. The Mask of Ancient Torture and Sex. The Mask of Bloody Revolution and Cessation of Time. The Mask

of Kissing Black Holes. The Mask of Gothic Decadence and Mutation. The Mask of Revolving Identity Death. The Mask of Gender Disease. The Mask of Veildeath Inside the Pitch Dark Tomb of Language. The Mask of the Duality of the Beggar and Moneyman. The Mask of the Book of Bloodthirsty Representation. The Mask of the Soul Embalmed in the Sperm of Flowers. The Mask of the Forever Delayed Denouement. The Mask of Replicating Tendrils. The Mask of the Edge of the Universe or an Opening Eye. The Mask of Purity and Hollowed-Out Meaning. The Mask of the Heavily Armed Caryatid. The Mask of Mutilated and Left-For-Dead Spacetime. The Mask of the Spinneret of Souls. The Mask of the Tower of Inverted Numerology. The Mask of Analeptic Lovemaking. The Mask of Ascetic Love. The Mask That Does Not Exist. The Mask of Bloodless Mouths and Desire. The Mask of the Wave of Pigbodies. The Mask of Incarnate Louche Idols. The Mask of Spiderwebs and Betrayal. The Mask of Bats and Shoplifters. The Mask of Culture.

Primpy Steven licks many of her teeth, deep in deliberation.



Jeweled Eyes In Transverse To The Port Of Interstellar Seas, 2020

Found fabric, found objects, hair beads, wire, glass horn
(energetically charged through performance)

38" x 18" x 10"

Jordan Deal

Contributors' Notes

Maya Greenberg is a 22-year-old goofball who loves a lot of things at once. They are a reluctant user of Instagram and exist under @oldmaya.

Bread Nugent is a self-taught artist currently living in Lawrence, KS. His main goal concerning art is to not be boring. Hopefully he hasn't bored you. Check out more of his work on Instagram @breadnugent.

Thomas Schwank works as a waiter in New Orleans.

Michael Metivier is a freelance nonfiction editor, poet, essayist, and songwriter living in Vermont. His poems have appeared in journals including *North American Review*, *EcoTheo Review*, *jubilat*, *Poetry*, *Crazyhorse*, and *African American Review*, among others, and his essays have appeared in *Medicine for a Nightmare* and *LAAB*.

Hannah Joyce (she/her) is a software developer with a background in religious studies. She finds inspiration in queerness, strange plants, and artificial intelligence, and she divides her time between the Sonoran Desert and the coast of Maine.

Jordan Deal is a Philadelphia-based artist whose interdisciplinary practice merges sculpture, performance, video, writing, and poetry to create interactive performance installations that investigate the ways the introspective landscape interjects into the material world. Their work consists of assemblages of found and recycled materials to act as vehicles for time/space travel, accessing memory, ancestral footprints, and dialectic function within language.

Majo Delgadillo (Guadalajara, Jalisco, México, 1991) is a poet, writer, translator, and digital media artist. She writes about bodies, memory, pop culture, dreams, machines, and the way these things intertwine in fictional and real life. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from UCSD and is a PhD student in Hispanic Studies at the University of Houston. Her book of short stories *Lullabies for the End of the World* was released by Bakstenen Huis in 2021.

Driving past a brown house on the main strip in Redmond, OR, **Coyle Parker** (in child form) fantasized about his career as an inventor. He grew up making plans to build wooden robots and attempted a WWII replica out of Popsicle sticks. He later won best-looking car in the pine wood derby (with a lot of help from his brother), and won a blue ribbon and \$100 for best original artwork at

the Oregon State Fair. The “grown up” version of Coyle never lost the desire to create something from nothing, and his vision of being an inventor came to life through the form of art.

Olivia Rose Mancing is a budding poet and social worker living in New Orleans, LA.

Alain Mercieca loves poetry and also crass humour and has never found the perfect harmony between the two. His poetry zines have been praised by one kid in Upstate New York who reached out to him on Twitter. He lives in Montreal but hates any sense of patriotism whatsoever beyond “which terrestrial spaces you can get shattered within”.

Nikki Ummel is a queer writer in the Creative Writing Workshop at the University of New Orleans. A career educator, Nikki started writing poetry to help cope with the trauma of teaching fifth graders. Nikki has been published in *Hobart*, *Ellipsis*, *Rise Up Review*, *Peauxdunque Review*, and *Painted Bride Quarterly*. She earned an “Honorable Mention” in the 2020 Words and Music Writing Competition and is the 2020 winner of the Vassar Miller Poetry Award and an Academy of American Poets Award. She is currently an Associate Poetry Editor for *Bayou Magazine*. Nikki lives in Holy Cross with her partner and chickens.

Taj Rauch (he/him) is a Philadelphia-based artist and entrepreneur. His body of work consists of existential commentaries on nihilistic worlds through film, installation, writing, and choreography. You can find out more about him through his website tajrauch.com.

LouSea the maker. Embroiderer turned digital artist. Developing images on paper and cloth using negatives, nature, and UV light.

Danny P. Barbare resides in the Upstate of the Carolinas. He works as a janitor at a medical clinic.

Lexi Kent-Monning is an alumna of the Tyrant Books workshop Mors Tua Vita Mea in Sezze Romano, Italy. She lives in Brooklyn, NY, and can be found online at lexikentmonning.com.

Michelle Antoinette Nicholson is a NOLA native and second-year MFA student at the University of New Orleans. She gets her grits by side-gigging as an editor, teacher, and journalist. Her work appears or is forthcoming in *New Orleans Review*, *Talking River Review*, *ANTI GRAVITY*, and elsewhere.

Genevieve Farbe is a queer multimedia artist living in Philadelphia.

Lee Lai is an Australian cartoonist currently living in Tio'tia:ke (known as Montreal, Quebec). She has been featured in *The New Yorker*, *McSweeney's*, *Room Magazine*, and *Meanjin Journal*. Her first graphic novel *Stone Fruit* is due to be released by Fantagraphics in 2021.

James Owens's newest book is *Family Portrait with Scythe* (Bottom Dog Press, 2020). His poems and translations appear widely in literary journals, including recent or upcoming publications in *Grain*, *Dalbousie Review*, *Presence*, *Wild Court*, and *Honest Ulsterman*. He earned an MFA at the University of Alabama and lives in a small town in northern Ontario.

Amanda Ellis is a writer of settler and indigenous descent. She has had poetry published in the journals *Valiant Scribe*, *Ponder Savant*, and *Rabbit*. She recently attended Sage Hill Writers' Workshop, and is a member of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild.

Terra Travis is a trans writer and multimedia artist living in New Orleans, LA. Her short fiction and writing has appeared in *dream pop journal*, *Prismatica Magazine*, and is forthcoming in *Cosmonauts Avenue*. She holds an MFA from the University of Notre Dame. Her novel *Filthy Rich* was longlisted for the 2019 Tarpaulin Sky Book Award. She's on Twitter @burls4ever.

Submission Guidelines

Tilted House is a New Orleans-based press which gets off on the dirty effervescence of this city's great artists. Through this outfit, we strive to cultivate a creative and communal unit from and for the city. While the door is wide open for New Orleans' minds, it remains open for the rest of the world's. **Everyone is encouraged to submit.**

We publish fresh and pickled artists alike, bridging the void between professors and street poets, MFAers and outliers, locals and the world. Whether you are new to the pen or a veteran, we want to read your work. We encourage underserved artists to submit: BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, children, teenagers, the elderly, those with disabilities, and those outside of academia or compulsory school.

We like both experimental and traditional work. We like dark. Surprise turns, nuance, metaphor. We want poems we can smell. Fiction that sickens. Art that double-takes. We like hard-hitting endings. Polemics. Protest. Confession that isn't like every other confession. Sonnets, American sonnets, sonnets all splintered. We like work that has its heart on its sleeve—and nothing on the nose. Crawl into our veins and sit there a while.

**READING PERIOD FOR
OUR WEB MAGAZINE**
Year-Round

**READING PERIODS FOR
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Please only submit during these periods.

January 1st - March 15th

July 1st - September 15th

Our submissions manager for both the *Review* and our web magazine can be found at tiltedhouse.org/submit.

Simultaneous submissions are accepted, but please notify us if your work makes it big elsewhere. No previously published work, please.

We accept work in all languages. Please provide an English translation.

POETRY Submit up to 3 poems.

ESSAYS Submit up to 2 essays at 1,000 words (2,000 for web mag) or fewer (combined).

FICTION Submit up to 2 short stories at 1,000 words (2,000 for web mag) or fewer (combined). We also consider excerpts from longer works.

FLASH FICTION Submit up to 3 pieces at 800 words (1,000 for web mag) or fewer (combined).

PLAYS Submit one short play or an excerpt from a longer play. Up to 1,000 words (2,000 for web mag). Standard format.

VISUAL ART Submit up to 3 pieces, 600dpi .png, b&w only (color is welcome for web mag, hi-res .jpg or .png). Page specs for the *Review* are 8.5 x 5.5; submit accordingly. We accept film too, email us. tiltedhousepublishing@gmail.com

REVIEWS Submit one review at a time. Up to 1,000 words (2,000 for web mag). We like experimental reviews on anything, not just books. Get weird.

*At this time, we're unable to pay our contributors.
As a contributor to the Review, you'll get one handbound copy.*

Alain Mercieca
Amanda Ellis
Bread Nugent
Coyle Parker
Danny P. Barbare
Genevieve Farbe
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James Owens
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Lexi Kent-Monning
LouSea
Majo Delgadillo
Maya Greenberg
Michael Metivier
Michelle Antoinette Nicholson
Nikki Ummel
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Thomas Schwank

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