

The
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Review*

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“Love & Longing”



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Cover art “casita amarilla” by Angel Kuo



Dear Readers,

In this season of transition—from pandemic life to new normal, from winter to spring—we treasure the relationships that ground and inspire us. We ask a deceptively simple question: what, exactly, does love look like? Can we find it in the brilliant roar of a city, in a quiet moment of grief? Can we find it in the arms of a song, a smile across a courtyard, or a long-distance phone call? What does it mean to truly love someone—our families, our friends, ourselves?

This is the question the narrator of Esther Levy’s “Two Women Bump Into Each Other in the Hallway of a *Mikveh*” asks as she considers the changing shape of her love for her friend Tzippy. In Cathleen Weng’s “Unknown Faraway Origin,” the speaker crosses empty fields with an unidentified “you,” looking for UFOs in the dark. The search ends on a luminously tender note when the speaker falls asleep while “you / etch a crop circle into the dirt around us / to convince me they came and they tried”.

This atmosphere of waiting and almost ethereal solitude is shared by Angel Kuo’s “A seat in the trash,” whose empty pink armchair and plastic chair seem to await an unseen visitor to the right of the frame, the heap of discarded furniture both reminiscent of an earlier time and introducing the domestic into the scorched field. Claire Schultz’s “*Belfast* and the Power of Escapism” explores yearning for our pre-pandemic past and the glorious, moving, immersive cinema that lets us slip out of the present, at least temporarily. Schultz writes, “I left the theater aching for what I’d lost, yet in awe of the magic to be found in the world around me, waiting to see what would come next.”

Beginning with this issue, *NLR* will feature another window into the past with our ‘From the Archives’ section. This issue’s selection, chosen by Historian Rachel Brooks ’25, is Jeanette Beebe’s “SILO” from our Fall 2013 issue. “SILO” evokes the rhythms of rural life, scented with corn kernels, rough from stored grain, and laden with a complicated familial bond. A similar sensory vividness emerges in Emily Yang’s “Blue and pink run circles in my mouth,” which radiates several hues—“Sappho passes / notes in pink pen between the school bell / and parent pickup.” Nemo Newman’s “Plot a Course” reflects this poem’s shades in its swipe of indigo, lilac, pink, and mauve across a starry backdrop.

We are thrilled to bring you this issue highlighting the work of undergraduate writers and artists. As you enjoy the sunshine and warmer weather, we hope that these incredible pieces bring you the comfort and joy that they brought us.

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table of contents

poetry

- 10 **Blue and pink run circles in my mouth** — Emily Yang
14 **Fumes** — Enrique Zúñiga González
16 **Unknown Faraway Origin** — Cathleen Weng
42 **A Quality of Light** — Daniel Viorica
57 **Ways to Eat an Animal Cracker** — Emily Yang
65 **OUR SMALL ROOM** — Meera Sastry

- Plot a Course** — Nemo Newman 11
a seat in the trash — Angel Kuo 15
Two Heads of St. John — Juliette Carbonnier 18
the old diner — Angel Kuo 24
Hannah Wilke — Juliette Carbonnier 28
A Natural Portrait — Nemo Newman 30
union station — Angel Kuo 35
Remembrance — Audrey Zhang 41
Vivian Maier — Juliette Carbonnier 44
À la Carte — Emma Mohrmann 56
lunch in the sun — Angel Kuo 64

art

- Fortissimo** — Ina Aram 12
On the Death of My Fish — Sabrina Reguyal 20
Granite Love — Jane Castleman 25
Wanderer — Thia Bian 36
**Two Women Bump into Each Other
in the Hallway of a Mikveh** — Esther Levy 45

prose

- Through the Eyes of Two Climbers:
“Early Decision/Late Bloomer”** — Colton Wang 31
Belfast and the Power of Escapism — Claire Schultz 59

essays

- SILO** — Jeanette Beebe (*Fall 2013*) 29

from the archives

Blue and pink run circles in my mouth

Emily Yang

Blue and pink run circles in my mouth,
dripping cotton candy phenolphthalein floss
into off-set fluorescent lights.

I could lie on this bed. I could lie
to your face,

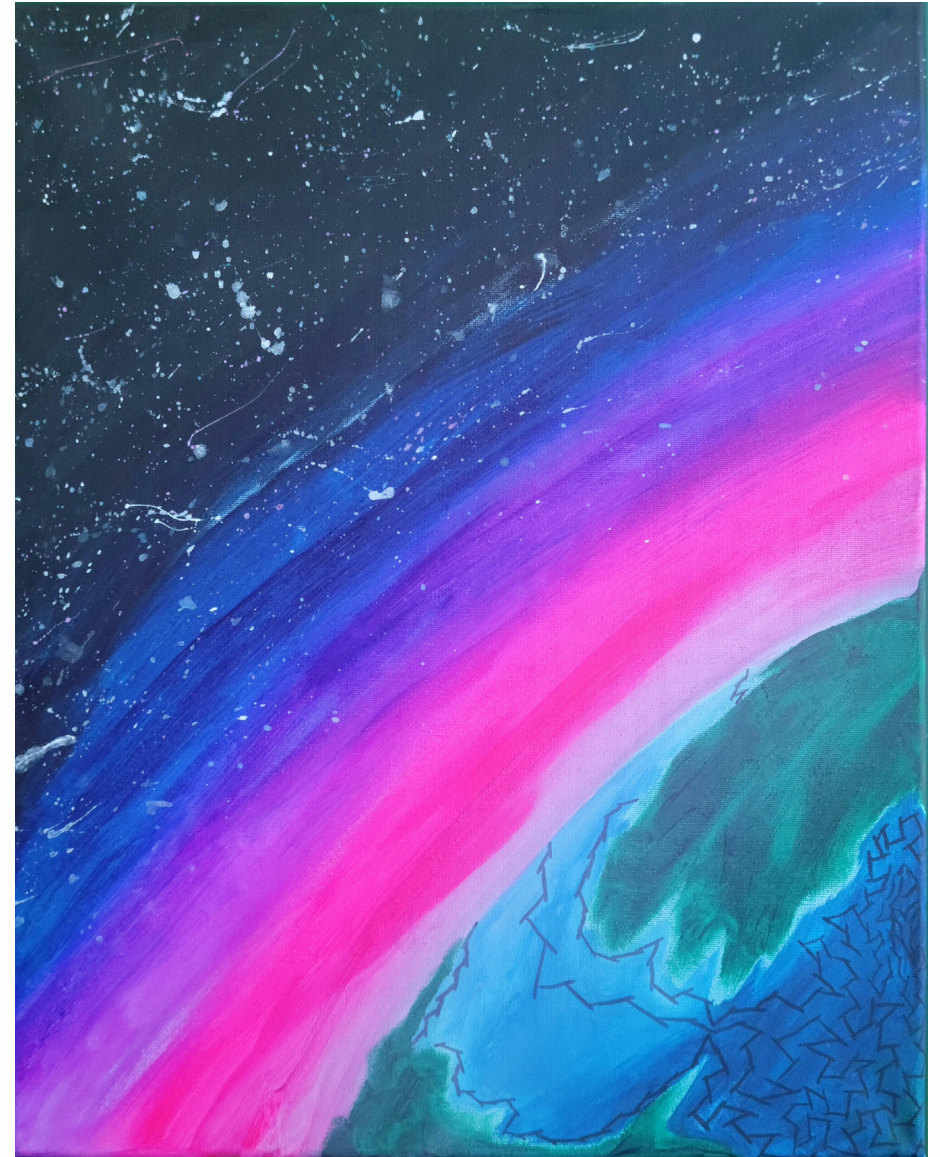
tell you it's April in autumn
at the almost-north of my heart.

Not that I remember any of our Novembers.
Not that all black dots aren't extrapolated
into ant plots in my eyes.

Are you bored yet? I dreamed of white strings
and keys turning. Sheen of gold,
cold shower. And Shannon on the keys,
and Abraham Lincoln penning Tang poetry
in bed —

I crunch candy hearts between my teeth,
pressing paper flowers on the roofs
of cymbal sets. Sappho passes
notes in pink pen between the school bell
and parent pickup.

We didn't know it then. We didn't
know. Sing me marmalade, napkin,
cereal, cheesecake bar. Blue light
shining in my eyes,
asking me to see again.



Plot a Course

Nemo Newman

Fortissimo

Ina Aram

At the forefront of her body, you will find her lips. Behind her lips are her teeth, eighty-eight of them, black and white and straight and gapped. This is what I'm thinking about as he plays the piano. This, and kissing him, though I'm not sure why. I do not like him. He is a friend. And yet I'm thinking about his lips and her lips and fantastic crescendos, musical and other.

It's just him and me in this room, which is a piano practice room just a few paces long with an upright piano against the wall. We came in here to show each other our songs. At home, I tried to teach myself three pieces from three films I love. I would feel euphoria as my fingers drummed the black and white keys during the loud parts. But then my neighbors complained that the sound was intolerably loud. She is now forbidden, a piano I allow myself to play just ten-second snippets of song on so my neighbors don't come knocking on the door. She is forbidden, someone I seem to only catch in glimpses and fleeting moments. Thus, my piano mostly collects dust. Thus, I come here to play.

I'm no piano player, but he is. His hands are advantageously bigger than mine, big enough for his

thumb and pinkie to stretch to two A keys. When he plays with fluency a classical song I say I recognize, the song's grace is amplified as it contrasts with the solid bulk of his body. He's taller than me and larger than me, so when he plays, his arms rest at right angles on the piano while mine are inclined at a slight degree. His legs are coarse with hair, which is irrelevant to the piano but on my mind still. He is a boy. Just a boy. When he plays the piano, he plays it straight. There's no swaying or emotional bias in his body—just the notes as they are. A boy.

Hearing the earthy hum of the piano eases me amidst the clutter of the school day. He asks me what he should play, what mood I'm in. He tells me he needs to play me his very best. He stiffens on the keys just slightly when I walk behind him, my hand grazing his back on accident, on purpose.

I love listening to him, my friend, play. I want to say so. I want to say, "I love listening to you play. You're wonderful." But the word "love" is sticky. Boys like him fall. So I change my language to a neutral, "You're so good." Because the truth is, I probably should not be in here at all, sitting next to a boy, making music, leading him towards a place

where I do not want to join him. But it is fun being with a boy, where tension like this is fun and normal. It is okay to be a boy and a girl with skin close in a cramped room. He's sitting on the bench and I'm sitting on a separate chair, but it's like our bodies touch when he plays the A keys that he can reach but I feel physically unable to. It's like we are pushed together by song, like my lips and his lips will kiss during the song's forte. And this would be okay.

And it would still be okay when we're almost late to class, standing, shutting the piano's lips, grabbing our bags and opening the door. Forte heightens to fortissimo. He holds the glass door for me as we sprint, already late now, and I'm laughing as my legs pump and my hair flaps. I know I can tell anyone who's angry by my tardiness, *I was with a boy*, and they'd know and roll their eyes and forgive because it's an okay thing. We're running and I thank him mid-laugh and mid-pant for playing the piano so beautifully for me. We're running and running. A boy and a girl. And when he calls out to me as we approach my class in the hall, "Wait!" I stop.

He asks if he can ask a question. But I already know his question. It's a good question, valid and normal. "It's about the dance tomorrow night."

I sigh a little, quietly, pianissimo. I already know what my answer will be. I knew my answer to his valid and normal question from the moment he opened those glass doors for us to run through, from the moment my hand brushed his back shamelessly and with full and knowing intent, from the moment we opened the piano's lips together and first touched our fingers on her teeth. I knew my answer to his question from the moment I first

set eyes on her in the halls knowing she thought of me. I knew from the time I walked with her through the streets of our pitchless and cacophonous city. I knew it whenever she'd say my name in her voice's unique melody. I knew my answer to his question because I knew her.

At the forefront of her body, you will find her lips. Behind her lips are her teeth, something like thirty-two of them, imperfect and not all straight and real and beautiful. I wish I could tell him about this, that there are lips I find more endearing than his, than even our piano's. That on the piano's keyboard I see black piano keys and white piano keys and wonder if there is space for gray. That the symbol for "fortissimo" is two letter "f"s placed next to each other, curvy and elegant, and that there is something about this typographic parallel of flowing, feminine "f"s that I love and can't help but love.

That this is all to say that it is not him, it is not me, but it is her.

"I knew my answer to his question from the moment I first set eyes on her in the halls knowing she thought of me."

Fumes

Enrique Zúñiga González

My
father never
taught me
how to smoke

Yet he always
did it after
getting home,

right at 8:30 PM

like clockwork.
He made the house reek
of cigarettes and
managed to fill the little
garden we had—

a garden that once had
beautiful red roses—
with nothing
but buds.

My father
never taught me

how to smoke, yet smoke was always present. In the smell of his clothes, which my mom washed right at 9:30pm, like clockwork, while the news was on in the living room. Or in the once-white now-yellowish-walls. Or in his once-white-now-yellowish teeth. My father never taught me how to smoke, yet I always saw him, and his expressions. As I now try to emulate them, with a lighter on my hand and a cigarette in my lips. I wonder if he'd be proud of my form, or maybe ashamed that I picked up his habit. Either way, my father never taught me how to smoke, yet here we are.



a seat in the trash

Angel Kuo

Cathleen Weng

Unknown Faraway Origin

I said I wanted to escape to Mars so you
said okay then let's find a UFO let's
commit to abduction in the purest sense

Something like the countryside we
drove out there through tracked dirt roads
car following car on old tire imprints

No light pollution, this is where I watched
that meteor shower last year that night on the side
of the road when I thought the world had ended

We say nothing we step out we step
forward onto those yellow-yellow weeds where
imagination insists a snake is waiting teeth bared

We only know the field color from speculation it's
so dark we're seeing in blue-and-blue we
in horizontal meet the dirt beneath our shoes

My fingers crossed for alien encounter
every moonbeam pass we think our
meager offering of us and the wheat has worked

At the end of the night I fall asleep and you
etch a crop circle into the dirt around us
to convince me they came and they tried

Two Heads of St. John

Juliette Carbonnier



On the Death of My Fish

Sabrina Reguyal

My pet fish died on Monday. My girlfriend left me on Tuesday. I don't think the two events were related, but regardless, I wasn't doing too hot on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. So, on Saturday, I decided to take past and future into my own hands, and visit a fortune teller.

These days, there is no dearth of options when it comes to fortune tellers, or for that matter, all sorts of magic workers, witch doctors, and techno-mysticists. These occupations bloomed from the soil of a devastated planet, wracked by climate change, environmental spoilage, and scarcity-driven wars.

And so, in coming to terms with the twilight years for civilization, people sought some means by which to find hope and meaning in a world devoid of meaning.

Our salvation was magic and data.

♦♦♦

The Oracle's shack is located three hours from my city by steam train, in a cluster of old aquaponics plants that produce rice and trout. Today, I'm practically the only human passenger, and as my train car rocks slowly back and forth, I stare listlessly at the bland, ashy clouds

that sit heavy in the sky, and the rainbow oil-slicked water that will soon submerge the tracks.

I'm at the station before I know it, lost as I am in the haze of my environment, the haze of the future arriving one miraculous minute at a time. A twenty minute walk through barren streets leads me to the aquaponics plant where the Oracle's shack is attached ten meters up, like a gall to a tree. Instead of stairs, there is a scaffold with some dangling frayed ropes. I look up at the metal bars, stern and rigid against the desolate sky.

The first bar is just within arm's reach. I grab it and hoist myself up. As I pause to balance, a gust of wind hits me. The bar becomes a bit slippery as my hands moisten. I sigh. This is my third time here, and this never gets easier.

When I finally get to the top, the Oracle is sitting cross-legged on a rug in the center of the room. A fireplace on the side of the room casts a low, warm light. I set a red bean bun down in front of him, which he acknowledges with a slight nod. He looks mildly amused.

"So you're here because you're sad about a girl..."

"Also my fish died."

"I see," he says, smiling, mocking.

I stare at him uncomfortably, wanting to leave but knowing it's worth it to stay.

"Well then, let's get started." He stands and pulls a wooden chest out of the corner of the room.

"Take your pick. Today, pick three," he says, opening it. Inside is a hodgepodge of memory chips. Solid state drive, read-only memory, EPROM and EEPROM, I even spot a floppy disk as I start rooting through the chest, searching for the ones that speak to me.

I pick three small chips. One SanDisk, one Samsung, one Kioxia.

The Oracle takes them from me carefully and disappears into the back room. I sit alone with my jumbled haze of thoughts.

The Oracle appears again.

"Listen carefully to these memories. They are not yours, but they will help you in the coming years."

♦♦♦

An endangered vulture chick sits in a small, plastic box on a bed of leaves. A discolored yellow hand puppet appears, gloved human hand clasped in the shape of a mama bird beak, with a red painted eye on the side. It shoves a small box of raw, pink-grey meat forward. As the chick begins to dig in, biting and tossing bits of flesh back into its throat, the puppet moves back and watches, then begins patting and affectionately nipping at the bird.

Zoologists adopted these practices to try to raise rare species of animals in captivity without allowing them to imprint on humans. The hope was that the animals would be able to return to the wild, survive, and mate semi-naturally.

"I am in the haze of my environment, the haze of the future arriving one miraculous minute at a time."

This bird, absent a true parent, would be connected with the rest of its species by threads as thin as the nanometer width of a DNA strand.

After finishing the meal, the vulture chick craned its neck, then settled again in its bed of leaves. The hand puppet caresses it, stroking the gentle bend in its neck, its foot, its beak. As if saying with its motion, “Look, I love you, little bird. I am here for you.” The chick blinks and nuzzles the puppet back, with just the slightest hint of reluctance.

◆◆◆

A little boy sneaks out of his house, into the dark, wet, humming tropical night. The moon is new and the air smells of the mountains, of orchids. The boy walks into the forest for a few paces and finds the banana tree he knows well. Positioning himself directly below a banana bunch, he tilts his head skywards and opens his mouth.

He waits for the heart of the banana to drop from the center of the bunch, onto his tongue. He is excited for the magical powers it will grant. He is not afraid to fight the demon that will emerge from the forest once he eats the banana heart.

◆◆◆

On a mild night, many years ago, the first snowflakes of winter fall on the city of the girl that you love. Electric lights blink cheerfully, overwhelmingly, and children catch the snow on their gloved hands.

◆◆◆

The Oracle sets the memory chips down in a stone bowl and carefully grinds them down with a rock. He then takes a small glass bottle and

fills it with a bit of the powder, then gives it to me to keep.

“These are your memories now.”

I take the bottle and carefully place it in my shirt pocket for safekeeping.

◆◆◆

It makes sense to explain our lives in terms of technical superstition, if you think about it. Computers allowed for the collection of so much sheer data—everything about our body, mind, and the world beyond, broken into gobs and gobs of bits, overflowing and spilling everywhere. There was so much sheer information that some came to believe that it was the modern incarnation of an omniscient god. Well, those people were on the more extreme side of things. But really, all of us believed this data *had* to be meaningful somehow. Because even in the most abstruse, most useless looking dataset, a pattern *must* emerge if worked hard enough.

And where there was pattern, there had to be meaning, right? What else is our world if not a collection of patterns? Down to our life trajectory, our conversations, our psychology, our DNA and component atoms. Down to the waveform of the tiniest particle. If we could grasp these connections, leveraging our computational abilities—or what was left of them—maybe, just maybe, we could stop feeling so lost.

◆◆◆

After my audience with the Oracle, I stick around and catch up with him over a glass of moonshine. By the time we finish telling each other stories, it is quite late, and I have to rush to catch the last train back home. On the way back, the haziness

of the window view is increased by the darkness, and the blurry clouds are reflected by the rising waters, so all I see is a mirrored cloudscape.

I remember peering into my girlfriend’s pretty, light eyes, so close that I could just begin to make out the landscape on her iris, and the mirroring of my iris on her eye, and back, and forth, and back, and forth.

◆◆◆

I fall asleep and dream of my ex, who sits in my apartment and glares at me, holding my dead fish in her hands.

“You’ve been drinking,” she says.

“Can you blame me?”

“Nevermind. I have two messages for you.”

“One. On the day the world ends, a fisherman mends a glimmering net.”

“Two. To the past, your dreams are an outstanding debt.”

◆◆◆

I awaken with a start when the train blows the whistle, signaling its terminus again in my home city. Completely confused, my bleary eyes roam around for an explanation until I see my jar of memories and remember. I groan, partly for my headache, partly for my fish, partly for my ex, and stumble out of the train, in the process almost tripping over an old-fashioned tarot card reader set up with a low table at the platform. This type of magic worker doesn’t incorporate any new technologies into their practice, but they are still fairly popular. I don’t feel like returning to my empty apartment

immediately, so I decide I might as well get one more consultation.

“Would you tell my fortune for two sticks of pork jerky?” I ask the little boy behind the stand.

“Sure, I can do a three card reading for that much.”

I hand over the pork jerky and sit on the small plastic stool next to the boy as he begins shuffling his cards. He is so young, but wrapped in a faded purple scarf with intricate designs that speak of many ages past.

“It was my great grandmother’s,” he says when he notices me staring at it. “Her best friend gave it to her when she was a child, and my family valued the remembrance of things past... textiles are among the least valued in this respect, because people don’t expect them to last, but they hold so much meaning. Especially when you consider how many textile arts have gone extinct. Look, there is love in every stitch of this fabric.”

I feel a burst of vague longing.

“Pick three cards—these represent your past, present, and future.”

I pick them, and he flips them over.

My cards, in order, are The Tower, The Devil, and Death.

The little fortune teller gasps. “Your cards are the worst!” He starts laughing.

I can’t help but laugh as well. And right then, my jar of memories somehow slips from my shirt pocket and shatters on the station platform.

Granite Love



the old diner

Angel Kuo

His name was Timothy. She called him Alfalfa, even though his hair wasn't slicked into a brown peak at the crest of his head and her name wasn't Darla. Instead it sat inky black, sticking out in 360 different directions, casting stranded shadows down his forehead while he sat next to her at the soccer game. Her name was Georgia, even though she was born in New Hampshire and hated peaches. The sun grabbed the horizon and tucked itself under the mountains, spreading gray and purple over the turf. Her hand was in his and they fit comfortably together; neither of them were clammy after six months of togetherness.

In truth, Georgia's hands had never been sweaty and she had never felt nervous. She'd always liked him, not in a love-at-first-sight way but in a could-talk-for-hours-on-a-bench-in-some-park-with-no-view kind of way. It was easy to lure Timothy in, flinging half-insults-half-jokes at him and finishing them with a smile. After all, he did show her his computer science assignments, earnestly pointing out which lines were especially *fascinating* (an oxymoron in her opinion).

They were friends at first, which was how she liked it—she couldn't

imagine going on dates with someone she had just met, couldn't imagine giving someone pieces of personal information that they could scatter wherever they liked if things soured. They found themselves sitting next to each other at parties, Timothy asking her to entertain him at functions that he claimed to be disillusioned with (too cool, since he always brought homework and spoke of leaving early to watch a movie he said was obscure but was probably produced by A24). But Friday would come around and he'd still leave his dorm.

He didn't really drink, asking for orange juice when she got up to get a rum and coke, but wanted a red cup to fiddle with and use as an exit when it got close to empty. She'd have two drinks to give her the confidence she didn't need to sit close enough to him so that their sneakers would knock against each other, to his dismay (*they're suede!*), and she would hit him on the shoulder and pretend to get up so he'd have to give in and tell her to stay. She'd have two drinks to fill her chest with something bordering on emotion. Somehow, the alcohol was able to leak through the pores in her limestone ribs and force its way into her heart, confounding warmth with affection.

After enough parties, enough nights when he had walked her the quarter mile back to her dorm, tipsy on bad mojitos made with convenience store lime juice and mint flavoring, he kissed her, awkwardly leaning in by the bike rack beneath her window. It was cut short by one of the bikes tipping over, landing on the cobblestones with an angry clang that forced him to pull away and lean it back against the metal rack. He was nervous and his voice threatened to waver when he asked if she wanted to go on a date sometime if she wasn't busy, but it's okay if she was there's no pressure. She laughed, biting a joke off the end of her tongue, and said of course she would if he wasn't cooking.

Georgia dated him because it was easy. It was easy to have someone to eat meals and watch movies with, to have someone who was the first and last person she texted, to have someone to go home with on the weekends and take their t-shirts the next morning, to be able to introduce

herself and say, *bi, I'm Timothy's girlfriend*. The spent every day together, but when he went home for Thanksgiving, after the New England leaves turned brown and powdered under her boots, she didn't miss him. She walked on the gravel path by the river, the one they would walk down hand in hand, both wearing his sweaters, and she still felt full. Maybe not full, but surely not empty. She didn't really feel anything.

She remembered, once, they sat on a bench tucked into the forest next to the river and looked out at the crew teams. The boats beat the water, cutting through the sunburnt mist. *Let's play that question game to fall in love* Timothy said, pulling out his phone, and she tried to protest, *do we really need to? Aren't you already in love with me?* and he replied *Of course I am but I need you to fall in love with me*. She knocked his sneakers with her own and wished she could cry out to the river, *I love you!* but the words weren't even on the tip of her tongue or lodged in her

throat, they were even deeper, lost somewhere in her lungs.

Maybe if she closed her eyes and squeezed her fists and said Bloody Mary in a mirror three times she could free the words from stone. Maybe she wouldn't have to lie anymore when she said I love you too.

The questions were surprisingly morbid, speaking of death and regrets and family and the wood beneath her turned hard and she couldn't get comfortable no matter how much she shifted around. *When's the last time you cried?* She couldn't remember. There was once, a couple weeks earlier, when she had biked down the hill behind campus so fast that the wind ripped tears from her eyes and they streamed past her temples. Or, when her eyes teared up when she went to the campus health center with a fever and they stuck a cotton swab down her throat. For Timothy it was the week before, when he watched *Marley and Me* for the thousandth time, which makes him cry regardless of iteration but he says he watches it when he's empty and catharsis won't come without prompting. Georgia thought to herself that watching Owen Wilson for an hour and 55 minutes would probably make her cry, too.

She told herself they stayed together for him; she was the good guy for not breaking his heart, as if stringing him along a laundry line of lies could be branded as heroism. Timothy was a victim to her selfish tendency to sweep up her emotions and dump the dustpan in a corner of her brain, the dark one where the light's burnt out, and refuse to deal with any of it until it went away. Most often it ended with an *I'm sorry; I don't know why I always do*

this. And he would hug her, kiss the top of her head, and say *well, we'll figure it out together*. Each time he hugged her she grew less convinced.

She always wondered why saying *I love you* carried so much significance. She couldn't free the words from her lungs, or maybe her lips hadn't learned how to form them. They were broken, mumbling, jagged *thank yous* that failed to fill the expanse between them. Almost unknowingly, she'd built a moat in defense of nothing, complete with a drawbridge and alligators and a knight peering over the top of the castle wall. The drawbridge never raised. The alligators never snapped. The knight never signaled an intruder. She sat in the castle alone and convinced herself she liked it.

Georgia broke up with Timothy six months and two weeks after his stuttered proposition to get dinner, outside his dorm this time. She explained that she was overwhelmed with her classes, that she'd fallen behind and her parents kept calling her and her dean of studies even asked for a meeting. He knew it wasn't true but he went along with it anyway. She pressed the lie into his palm while her eyes were locked on the uneven cobblestone under his loafers. The conversation was long overdue but she still couldn't bear to watch the tears slip down his cheeks and drip off his jaw. *We'll still be friends*, she said firmly and meant it.

Maybe the space, the distance, the time to herself would be the miraculous remedy she needed to figure out the permutation lock on the castle door. There were only four numbers, she reasoned; how long could trying 10,000 passcodes take?

“the words weren't even on the tip of her tongue or lodged in her throat, they were even deeper, lost somewhere in her lungs.”



**Hannah
Wilke**
Juliette Carbonnier



SILO (*Fall 2013*)

Jeanette Beebe

Outside the grain bin across from Frank's field, I jumped in to join my brother, the steel threshold catching on my skirt. It sounded like it hurt, the flower print unraveling like the distance between us non-kin swimming in that bin full of vegetable eggs, more and more corn kernels separating our voices. Reverb waved out like the path of an object in air without Iowa's influence: we flowed. I pinched the thread with my thumb, a snap that cracked like popcorn would if either of us allowed the kernels to get that far. He floated on the edge, finally bound by the circumference of the same silo as me, the adopted, the duckling swimming in a pool of dryness. There was no cut, no fluid, no mother matter, no drip at the bottom. We were the same crop all the way down, only tasting our own mouths.

Nemo Newman

A Natural Portrait



Colton Wang

Through the Eyes of Two Climbers: *“Early Decision/Late Bloomer”*

Self-actualization is a concept we rarely think about, yet is inevitably a subconscious desire we all wish to fulfill. We are often told to follow what our hearts desire and pursue what makes us happy. As the humanistic perspective of personality development states, we all possess the capacity to realize our human potential as long as no obstacle intervenes. Yet drilling deeper behind this theory, we recognize the all-too-familiar tension between our true values and values commonly introjected by external forces (like family) with regards to

our dreams and ambitions. This tension that tears at our self-concept is known as incongruence.

From November 5th to 13th, the Lewis Center for the Arts' Programs in Theater and Music Theater showcased two exhilarating short musicals collectively titled *Early Decision/Late Bloomer*. Performed by undergraduate students, both pieces creatively took viewers through the immigrant narrative, where the audience was able to delve into themes of sacrifice, family tension, and ambition. In many ways, this

play is a brilliant silhouette of the immigrant experience captured in the Princeton '25 pre-read *Moving Up Without Losing Your Way: The Ethical Costs of Upward Mobility*. This book largely focuses on “strivers,” a term for first-generation, immigrant-family college students climbing up the social ladder. Author Jennifer Morton posits:

“[For] a low-income or first-generation student, the end of high school also marks the beginning of a new phase in your life. College holds the promise of self-transformation, but also the possibility of transforming your life circumstances. You are, as I will call you, a striver. Your parents might not be entirely sure of what lies ahead, but they hope that you will be able to take advantage of opportunities that weren't available to them” (Morton, 4-5).

This description precisely defines the young protagonists starring in *Early Decision* and *Late Bloomer*. Through the lenses of two first-generation Princeton students, the audience is able to vicariously experience the realities of entering the gates of Princeton as an incoming freshman. In contrast to the narrative that an acceptance to Princeton brings immediate prosperity and success, the musicals poignantly emphasize the darker realities that many children of immigrant families face.

The first musical, *Early Decision*, brilliantly weaves these struggles into the plotline by juxtaposing childhood ambitions with parental sacrifice, pulling at the heartstrings of an audience composed primarily of current students and Princeton alumni who can relate to similar experiences. Through the play, the audience embarks on a beautifully subtle and dramatic series of

unexpected events, whereby the protagonist, an Asian American boy, finds his life flipped upside down by his acceptance to Princeton.

To capture the emotional essence of each scene, the instrumental and musical lyrics were strategically placed and developed. For instance, jovial piano keys complemented the beginning scene where the protagonist's friends want him to get ready for preppy Princeton life by buying new clothes, throwing a party, and getting drunk. On the night the drunk protagonist vomits, the mother's disappointment is expressed through the slow, somber voice of the keyboard. She needs to drive her son home. Silence. The suspense leading to the climax is exacerbated by the darkness of the stage, as the mother and son are pulled over by police. “I need your driver's license.” Upon hearing these words, the climax is realized, whereby the authorities find that the mother has an expired green card and must return to her home country...

In this moment of crisis, one can almost hear the boy's torn emotions over his future as he urges his mother not to leave him along the harmonically appropriate piano ballad. Furthermore, the mother's emotion is conveyed through her sentimental lyrical stanzas about “dreams,” where her wish for her son to stay in college captures the politics of her sacrifice as a mother. When the mother leaves, the audience is compelled to yearn for resolution... to this piece (“peace”) grounded on one's coming of age.

Many similar tensions were well woven into the second showing: *Late Bloomer*, a title that wittily embodies both the metaphorical significance and botanical props used in the musical. The cast features four members of a Latino family, in

which the Dad is currently battling a health crisis. Unlike in *Early Decision*, the protagonist in *Late Bloomer* is a current undergraduate student at Princeton studying CEE; the initial dialogue and musical interchange establishes that this is largely because the Dad wants his son to become an engineer. Quickly, the audience recognizes the internal incongruence of the boy in the beginning scene when he finds himself inspired by a friend who has landed a gardening, landscaping, and art internship in the Bronx.

This scene is dramatized by the lyrics of the boy's solo performance, in which he declares that his dreams are of a different “mold.” Here, the lyrics serve a double purpose— not only to advance the exposition, but also to creatively convey his emotions through metaphorizing his unique aspirations as a plant. As the narrative progresses, the

audience finds itself entranced by the climactic scene where a verbal altercation breaks out between son and father over the boy's career goals. Unlike in *Early Decision*, where tensions are established upon sentimentality and sorrow within a mother-son dynamic, the climax of *Late Bloomer* is realized through a cathartic release of anger and frustration built up within a father-son relationship.

This emotional release conveyed through the jumpy lyricals and distressed expressions of the family members is fully realized in one brazen act of the father when he breaks the plant pot of the boy: an act that may symbolically signify the shattering of the boy's dreams. However, this tension is gradually diffused through the reflection of the father, who expresses his regret for his actions. Like the Mom in *Early Decision*, we realize that the Dad only

“In contrast to the narrative that an acceptance to Princeton brings immediate prosperity and success, the musicals poignantly emphasize the darker realities that many children of immigrant families face.”

wanted the best for his son. After the father and son reconcile, the two men quickly get back to work and “get their hands dirty” in an act of gardening. The father professes support for his son. The ending is met by a bout of comic relief where the boy declares he will finish his CEE degree (but pursue gardening and landscaping afterwards)—talk about a late bloomer!

From these two pieces, we learn that incongruence is a common struggle for many “strivers,” and is often resolved in different ways. As exemplified by the pre-read and these performances, these young adults have to negotiate

familial and personal conflicts and education simultaneously. All the while, they are presented with a series of challenges: adapting to new norms in college, being expected to give back to their past communities, and developing dual identities. By watching these challenges play out, we come to realize that the road to self-actualization is not smooth but often bumpy and rugged. As depicted by the unique narratives of the boys in *Early Decision* and *Late Bloomer*, self-actualization takes different forms and often involves components all too familiar to the human experience: suffering, growth, and integrity...

“By watching these challenges play out, we come to realize that the road to self-actualization is not smooth but often bumpy and rugged.”



union station

Angel Kuo

Wanderer

Thia Bian

Mina's morning routine has long since become familiar to her (one: unlock the shop and ignore the gratingly cheerful sound of the bell; two: flip the sign on the door to *open*; three: stare at the peeling letters that read *PSYCHIC* on the storefront window and promise to herself that she'll fix them someday) and these days, she no longer bothers paying attention, stifling a yawn instead as she goes through the motions. Outside, the sun is beating down mercilessly. The air is sticky and still. Tourists hate lingering in this kind of weather; only a few will dare to amble down the cracked sidewalks and peer into storefront windows today.

She'd already settled into one of the overstuffed armchairs, resigned to a day spent doing nothing but watching dust motes dance in the light that streams through the window, when the door slams open. The bells jangle violently at the impact.

It's just a boy: high school age, maybe. He hovers over the threshold, giving her dusty little store the same reverence most would save for church. The air coming in from the open door is heavy and still. It makes her skin prickle unpleasantly. "In or out?" she crabs.

He inches in.

"You've never been here before," she observes, watching him gawk at the cluttered shelves. He jolts to attention, looking at her like he expects loaves and fishes to follow this pronouncement, as if it's a miracle in and of itself.

"No," he says, and it sounds like a confession. "But – I thought maybe you might. Remember me, I mean. Do you?"

"Am I supposed to remember you?" Mina asks back. The boy looks utterly unfamiliar, utterly bland. He could be any one of the sea of tourists that've passed by over the years.

"My family's been coming here for years. This shop has been here as long as I can remember. I thought – I thought maybe you'd know me."

The words strike a sour note.

This—the shop around her, with its peeling paint and faded walls—was always supposed to be temporary. Or so she'd told herself at first, back when she'd been fresh out of her first year of college, lungs gasping for a reprieve from the crushing weight of her mother's dreams. A few months, a year at most. And now she's twenty-six and already past the prime of her life, according to the headlines of the

magazines that sit above the only self-checkout machine of the only grocery store in town, the same place they've always been.

The same place they'll always be.

Mina pushes down the bile rising in her throat. "A lot of people come through this town."

He opens his mouth as if to argue. Pauses. Then presents her with a wad of crumpled up bills, mostly ones and fives. "I need your help. Is this enough?"

Mina pauses. Then pushes his hand away, partly because she doesn't know where those hands of his have been (teenage boys are magnets for grime), partly because his eyes are wide with desperation and her spine feels stiff with guilt.

When she'd first opened her shop, it had been easy to convince herself it'd all work out. Telling stories, that's all it is, she'd rationalized. That used to be a dream of yours, that you could wake up and go to work and all it would be was telling stories.

That dream has long since worn paper-thin. Stories, she's realized, have a certain weight, especially when people cling to them as desperately as she suspects this boy with his hungry eyes will.

The responsibility of it all sticks in her throat. She thinks about choking. "What do you need?" she asks, speaking through a throat pulled tight.

"I need you to find my brother," he says.

People fall through the cracks all the time, is what she wants to tell him. The world still keeps spinning. "Why not go to the police?" she asks instead.

"He left four weeks after his eighteenth birthday," the boy tells her. "They said legally, they can't do anything."

"And your parents?" she asks, then considers the boy, with his wrinkled clothes hanging off his body as if he's been wearing them for the past few days, with a backpack hanging off his skinny shoulders and a train ticket stub sticking out of his pocket, and answers her own question. "They don't know you're here, do they?"

It's not a question, but he shakes his head anyway. His eyes, when they meet hers, are wide with worship. She wonders if he really believes in the peeling letters outside, if no one had ever bothered to sit him down and tell him the truth about Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy and all the other lies you're meant to grow out of.

The idea sticks to her worse than the humid air outside. She wishes, not for the first time, that she could shed her skin, crawl out of it like a snake and leave everything behind.

"Please," he says, voice edging towards desperation. "My parents – they say he's an adult, too. That he can make his own decisions. He used to get into fights with them a lot, before he left. He wouldn't have told them anything. You're the best hope I have."

On the third shelf of the bookcase furthest from the door sits a worn deck of tarot cards. Mina had ordered them off a seedy website years and years ago, back when she'd first opened the store, and had spent the better part of a week drilling herself on the cards until she knew their names and their meanings better than she knew her own. One of them, though, she'd discarded, folding it into a compact square and throwing it into the dumpster out

back, listening to the hollow *thunk* it made against the metal walls.

The Wanderer. A journey awaits. You stand at a crossroads. Have the courage to leave, to abandon burdens of the past and move on.

Before, perhaps, the card would've seemed fortuitous – a reassurance that Mina was right for wanting to leave, that the world was changing, turning on its axis, and it was only natural that Mina itched to leave along with it. After she'd torn up her roots, though, after she'd somehow ended up here, where the ground was too barren to ever even dream about putting anything down, she'd looked at the figure on the card and seen nothing but a reminder of her own selfishness. Of the mistake she'd made in leaving: a mistake big enough Mina doesn't know how to even approach it.

Mina thinks about that card now: about wanderers and this boy's brother and herself, about three stories she knows all too well. She thinks about the Latin class her mother had pressured her into taking, once, back when she'd still harbored hope that her daughter might someday be the type of person who found a dead language useful. *"To wander in Latin is errare,* the professor had said. In modern English, *it became the word error.*

Even now, the words are seared into her mind. Some days she rolls the words around in her mouth and wonders how she could've failed to understand something so important.

Mina says none of that. Instead: "You thought I could help you... psychically?"

"Yes." He leans forward eagerly. "And

my brother thought you could help me, too. Look."

Mina smooths out the piece of paper he gives her, tracing a finger along creases worn smooth from unfolding and refolding, over and over again.

"It came a week ago," the boy adds. "On my birthday. It's from him."

"He left me a clue here," he says before she can finish reading the letter, jabbing a finger at a paragraph without looking down at the page. "Something for you to find."

Do you remember the shitty little tourist town we used to visit over summer vacation? the paragraph reads. *There was a psychic store that opened when you were young. I remember you always wanted to go in and have your future read. You used to stand just outside, staring through the window, too intimidated to go in. That's okay, though. I've always known that you were destined to have a bright future, psychic or not.*

Wordlessly, Mina passes the letter back to the boy, who takes it with a near-laughable amount of care. Her chest is too tight to speak.

Once, three months after she'd left home, Mina had been hit with a sudden craving for the *zbajiangmian* her mother used to make, the one whose recipe she'd never gotten around to learning. The weight of her want had slammed so abruptly that before she'd even had the chance to think, she stumbled over to the phone at three in the morning, dialing a number even her sleep-thickened fingers knew instinctively. No one had picked up – Mina had remembered, belatedly, her mother's strict bedtime. The

"Even now, the words are seared into her mind. Some days she rolls the words around in her mouth and wonders how she could've failed to understand something so important."

phone clicked over to voicemail instead. At her mother's voice urging her to *leave a message, please*, Mina's throat had gone dry.

Paralyzed, she'd lingered on the call for nearly a full minute before hanging up.

Mina wondered, at times, what expression her mother had worn when she'd listened to the voicemail, whether she'd recognized her daughter's breathing echoing down the line. She thinks now that her mother might've looked something like this boy does, clutching a letter that says nothing at all with bone-white knuckles.

It is not a letter of clues and ciphers – there is no mystery begging to be solved. It's a letter from a boy who misses his brother, a letter written as they stand on opposite sides of a chasm that he'd clawed out with his own two hands.

"I can't read anything from that," she says, not quite the truth but not quite a lie.

"What? No." His voice is sharp. "You have to be able to. There has to be something there."

"There's nothing there," Mina says, as sincere as she knows how to be. "Look – sometimes, people leave. You can't throw away the rest of your life just to look for him. He's not going to come back."

The boy looks at her with anger and perhaps something approaching pity. "Why would he come back if he knew I hadn't been looking?"

He slams out the same way he'd slammed in. The air that oozes in to take his place is heavy and damp and still.

Mina tries to make herself more comfortable in her chair. The seconds drip by.

She waits until five on the dot to start her closing routine (one: flip the sign in the window to *closed*; two: lock up the shop and ignore the

cheerful chime; three: stare at the peeling letters in the window that read *PSYCHIC*, the ones she thinks she'll probably never get around to fixing.) On her way out, Mina pauses on the doorstep. The sun is setting: the same sunset she's seen a million times before. She takes a breath of the stifling air outside, watching as blue bleeds into purple bleeds into red bleeds into pink bleeds into blue. The town around her is the same as she'd left it that morning: same dilapidated buildings, same faded storefronts and near-empty streets. Her phone, in her pocket, burns a hole through the cloth. Mina pulls it out, feeling its weight in her palms.

She thinks, as she holds the phone tight enough that her fingers threaten to cramp, about its signal radiating outwards, over other forgettable towns with other forgettable people, until it reaches a home-turned-house. About a pair of hands, too similar to Mina's in all the wrong ways, picking up the phone. About her mother listening for something Mina doesn't quite know how to give.

Her free hand hovers over the numbers. She hesitates.

Around her, as it always has, the town lingers.

Remembrance

Audrey Zhang



A Quality of Light

Daniel Viorica

So the moment begins, as most things, in a place

I didn't expect. North, where the cold is wet and reddens your hands. It rains here, and I see snow falling from my desk, on long evenings when streetlights catch it in the air. Like fireflies. I saw them my first day here under lanterns, flowers, near the tops of stone walls.

That's what I would tell my mother: the world looks so much more vertical from high up — tautological. But where we come from there is only the sky, and from the sky comes the rain, and the air changes, wakes. In the morning, the desert

is tinged in green. But on those other nights in the winter, I am told not to drive down the canyon, for the ice. My aunts, in their best wishes. Do we listen? I wear my black button down and the sweatshirt you gave me; from the oven a heart-shaped pan. Raspberries.

In the mountains, in those towns marked only by their monasteries and their tangled streets. Perhaps a castle or two, a sculpture garden. The old women stand, scarved and waiting, with baskets of mountain fruit. But the baskets are red, woven with gold, and we ask ourselves —

what is being sold? Will I still be sitting in this room, lit by electric votives? Another. They were Christmas presents. From my mother. There is snow outside my window and in the print above my desk. It makes me wonder if I'll see what it reminds me of again, or if I'll wait

a year or two, for something in the light to change.

Two Women Bump Into Each Other in the Hallway of a *Mikveh*

Esther Levy

Juliette Carbonnier

Vivian Maier



Over here, I whisper to Tzippy in the crevices of my mind as I watch her make a fool of herself. She is standing in the white robe they gave her, further down the hallway, staring at the wall. I am pretty sure she thinks that's what she's supposed to be doing. *But it is a wall.* For God's sake, Tzippy, it is not a secret door. Over here, I would gently say aloud, letting the words slowly wrap their way around her body, turning her ever so slightly to the left, if only I had the courage. The thoughts at the tip of my tongue stay there but she turns. Maybe it was the stare of my eyes on the back of her head that did it or maybe she could really hear the inner thoughts of my heart. *I miss you*, I say, to test it out. Can she hear me? I can never tell. My heart is no longer hers to hold but she turns.

"Tzippy," I say aloud this time in a soft whisper, as though we are whispering in the women's section during *davening*. As if we are back snuggled under the covers in my dorm room, whispering under the cover of the night about running away, and she is rummaging through

her brain for a joke that will calm me down, that will lessen the fear in my voice, and remind me that for now all I need to worry about is pretending I remember that very important footnote she needs to add to her paper on Roman sculptures. No—not Roman sculptures, Roman marble copies of Greek bronze originals.

Tzippy walks towards me. Her hair is shorter now. I can see dry blood buried underneath her nails. She probably scrubbed too hard.

I can't say: *I missed you*. Or, *I miss you*.

"You'll need to clean that before you dip," I tell her, instead, as if it mattered.

"I know," Tzippy responds, not meeting my eyes.

"The door's here," I tell her, gesturing towards the door I am standing in front of. There is a small silver plaque just at eye level. "MIKVEH #1" is engraved largely on the plaque. In smaller lettering below it reads "Dedicated in honor z"l Chaya

Goldman, beloved Wife and Mother, by her husband Chaim Goldman and sons Yitzi and Yossi Goldman.”

“I know,” Tzippy responds. This time, she meets my eyes.

This time, she smiles.

I don't say: *I miss your smile*. Or, *I like your haircut*.

I smile back.

We stopped seeing each other after Tzippy got married, over a year ago. We see each other sometimes at the supermarket, I pass her house on my morning jogs, and we wish each other “Good *Shabbos*” when we see each other at *shul*. But it means nothing. We are nothing.

We aren't supposed to see each other. Not like this, in towels standing in the hallway of the *mikveh*. Usually, when a woman is done in the “PREP ROOM,” showering and removing anything that could be considered a *hatzizab*, a barrier between her body and the water, she is supposed to call the front desk, using a phone that hangs on the walls of the preparation room. The *mikveh* attendant who answers the call tells you which *mikveh* to go to. I guess they gave us the same room number. Or maybe Tzippy just forgot to call.

Tzippy got married this past June, so she's only been here a handful of times before. She is probably still figuring it out. She doesn't know yet that there are no secret doors here. There is crying and washing and scrubbing your skin until you bleed. There is feeling like you are being poked and prodded, having your naked body inspected by the *mikveh* attendant. There are the new

wives like Tzippy, wide-eyed and nervous, carefully creeping along the hallway as if anything they touch could crack and somehow destroy the foundations of the building. As if suddenly the water from the *mikveh* would be spilling out, along with the white robes and cotton swabs, along with the tears and the blood, and all the secrets that lined these walls, lined these baths, and lined our bodies, all the *hatzizot* that should have invalidated our dunks but didn't, would come crashing down, spilling over out towards Sussex Street, into the butcher and the grocers and maybe even the wig store on the corner. But it would take more than creeping along in the hallway to bring this all down.

I turn away from Tzippy. I hear the door open and shut and wonder if the *mikveh* attendant will notice the dry blood beneath Tzippy's nails. I wonder if it matters.

I make my way to a door further down the hallway. This door has a lopsided laminated piece of paper taped to it with “MIKVEH #2” written in an obnoxious cursive font in gold. No dedication. I've dunked in this *mikveh* before. I've probably dunked in all six of the baths here. I've been going to this *mikveh* for two years now, since I married Avner.

Now I am the one who probably looks like a fool. There is no one else in the hallway, but I have been staring at the gold lettering for too long. I open the door and try to get the image of Tzippy's smile out of my head.

◆◆◆

“So, you're *pure* now?” Tzippy said smiling ridiculously and trying to be seductive. It was the Thursday

before my wedding, and I had been to the *mikveh* for the first time earlier that day. We were in my dorm room, sitting on the floor against my bed. Rebecca had gone home early for the weekend.

Tzippy brushed her hand against the side of my face, tucking one of my dark curls behind my ear. I thought she would kiss me then. I thought she might ask me not to marry Avner. I thought she might say she liked the scent of my new lilac shampoo or that she wanted more romance than eating take-out boxes of Chinese food or reheated week-old pizza on the floor, surrounded by brown cardboard boxes containing most of my worldly possessions. I thought she might want to talk about what would happen after I no longer lived down the hall. When we could no longer do this, do... whatever it was we were doing.

“So, *nu*, what was the *mik* like, Dasi?” Tzippy asked, her hands still brushing the side of my face.

We were alone for the first time in what felt like forever, what felt like might be the last time, and all Tzippy wanted to do was talk about the *mikveh*. The *mik*, as she called it. That was her thing. Tzippora to Tzippy. Hadassah to Dasi. *Mikveh* to *mik*. She used to force me to leave movies with her if they got too sad, never got around to finishing any *sefer* she started, didn't bother painting all her nails the shade of lilac she loved so much, and let go of my hands before it could mean anything. Tzippy cut everything short.

“Did your soul feel *revived* by the primordial waters? Do you feel connected to the chain of women in our tradition who have been dipping since the dawn of time? Did you think of our grandmothers dipping in below zero temperatures in

Russia?” she asked, without meaning any of it. She was mocking the way everyone speaks about the *mikveh*. Our mothers, aunts, the authors of books called things like *The Mikveh and Me* and *Secrets of the Submerged*. (Avner's mother had gotten me a whole collection of books like that at my shower.)

Tzippy snorted. “Okay, I'm kidding, but really Dasi, how was it?”

I hesitated.

“It was exactly what you'd expect getting naked and dunking in a pool of water in front of a random woman, your mother, and future-mother-in-law would be like,” I answered, not meeting her eyes.

Tzippy gripped my hand.

I continued. “It was...cold.”

“At least next time it'll just be you and the *mik* attendant,” Tzippy remarked, drawing circles with her thumb on my hand. It was customary for a bride's mother and mother-in-law to attend the bride's immersion before the wedding, but after that you went alone. Rebecca told me that when her Moroccan cousin got married, all the women of both families attended. Grandmothers, cousins, sisters, aunts, everyone went to celebrate with the bride, to celebrate the moment she would become eligible to be with her future husband. Having my mother and Avner's mother there was...enough. Later, after I had finished dunking and was back in my clothes, while my mother was chatting with the *mikveh* attendant, Avner's mother told me I should have planned to lose a bit more weight before the wedding. She told me if I really put my mind to it I

still could. “Just five or ten pounds. Wouldn’t that be nice, Hadassah?” I had nodded.

“Next time it’ll be nice and intimate,” Tzippy continued. “Just you and some random other woman who gets to see you naked. *Hey*, should I be jealous?”

I focused on the circles she was tracing on my hand.

“Tzippy,” I said, staring at our hands.

“Dasi,” she answered. I could feel her eyes on me.

This time, I was the one who pulled away first.

“What are we doing, Tzippy?” I asked, crossing my arms over my chest.

“What we always do, Dasi,” she answered. She was smiling but it looked forced. Or, maybe, I just wanted it to look that way.

“What we always do,” I repeated.

“Except this time, you’re *pure*,” she added, her smile real this time.

I rolled my eyes and let her pull me in for a kiss.

◆◆◆

I glance at the *mikveh* attendant greeting me and try to clear my head, clear my heart, clear my thoughts. *Focus*. Think about that gold lettering. Why don’t all the doors have the same sign? Wouldn’t it be easier if they were all the same?

My *kallab* teacher told me before I dunk I should think about Avner and the *bayit naaman be-yisroel* we were building. She told me I should think of what it means to be a

wife, and after I’d given birth to Mordechai, about what it means to be a mother.

I don’t need to think about what it means to be a wife or a mother. I know what it means. Being a wife means compromise. It means compromising your integrity, compromising your sense of self, compromising your heart, each time you walk through the door, each time you nod and smile, and say *I love you* and *Let’s have another kid*.

I met Avner my freshman year at Yeshiva University. He was a senior and noticed me in the women’s section during *shachris* one *shabbos* morning. He asked around and heard I was studying Biology, that I was from Teaneck, and that my grandfather ran the *Freundlich Yeshivah*. He asked me out a few days later.

Avner was quiet and awkward and showed up to our first date with a coffee stain on his white button-down shirt. He forgot his wallet sometimes, didn’t know how the subway system worked, and never asked me how I was doing. Dating Avner was easy. His parents said I helped him come out of his shell. It was hard to feel sorry for yourself when you were dating Hadassah Freundlich; the *yichus* itself was an ego-boost. And I wore these tight sweaters in navy blue, his favorite color. He liked thinking a girl like me, or any girl, really, could smile when he said something he thought was funny. He liked thinking he was interesting. He liked thinking he was in charge. So, slowly, he stopped being so quiet and feeling so awkward. I went where he took me, drank the red wine he would order for me, met his parents when he asked, and cried when he asked me to marry him. I took his mother’s advice and stopped wearing

turtlenecks and started jogging every morning. I took his mother’s advice and decided she was right; med school really wasn’t for me. *That would be poor planning, Hadassah. All that money and for what? Once you get pregnant it will be haval, for nothing. Hadassah, Avner works hard for his money. You know that, right?* I did what she wanted. I changed and adapted and planned for Avner, planned to be a wife, planned to be a mother. I did what he wanted. I smiled, I blushed, I agreed with him. It was easy. *I was easy.*

It was nothing like dating Tzippy. Dating Tzippy was hard and complicated and terrifying. Dating Tzippy was figuring out where to go, figuring out what to do, figuring out what we were, all the time. It was screaming at each other on the F train late at night and silently staring at each other in the mornings, Tzippy’s face crumbling each time I told her I wanted to marry her, my heart breaking each time she told me to be serious, realizing that maybe she was right, I didn’t mean it. Dating Tzippy was

denial and fear and pleasure and pain and forbidden, and dating Tzippy was what kept my heart beating and head racing. She was what I thought about as I nodded along to Avner, nodded along to my mother, nodded along to his mother, nodded along to my professors droning on and on about enzymes. Dating Tzippy was smiles and stolen kisses and second chances and forgiveness and dating Tzippy was pretending all the time that we were just friends and wishing, hoping, praying that we were more than that. I dated Tzippy because I loved her. I dated Avner because he asked me to.

I took my *kallah* teacher’s advice, though. I always try to think of *something* before I dunk. I find it easy to focus on something, anything, that means nothing. Sometimes on the coldness of the water itself or the feeling of the water hitting my body. Sometimes it helps to ignore all that and think instead about whether I would drive home using Sussex or Winthrop, recite the steps for making apple *kugel* in my head, or even ponder the lack of uniformity of signage.

“Dating Tzippy was pretending all the time that we were just friends and wishing, hoping, praying that we were more than that.”

The *mikveh* attendant clears her throat. *Focus.* The *mikveh* attendant has warm eyes and shoulder length (dyed) black hair. She looks like her name is Chani or Shoshanah and like she bakes cinnamon *babka* every Friday morning.

She smiles at me and asks, “Nail polish?”

I shake my head, showing her my nails.

“Jewelry?”

I shake my head again.

“Contacts?”

I shake my head.

She turns around and on cue, I remove my robe, draping it over the railing, and walk down the steps of the pool. The water feels colder than usual. The water wraps around my feet, my knees, my stomach, and then my whole body. I’m standing in the middle of the pool. The water reaches my neck, and I am supposed to dunk now. Then, I am supposed to recite the *bracha* written in that familiar gold lettering on the wall in front of me. Then, the *mikveh* attendant will turn to watch to make sure every piece of me, every part of my body, every strand of my hair, is submerged. Then, she will say *tavor*. Pure. I will dunk a few more times and she will turn back around. I will walk back up the steps, wrap myself back up in the white robe, and head back to the “PREP ROOM” to change into my clothes and drive home.

But I’m not doing any of that, yet. I’m standing in the middle of the pool and all I am thinking about is Tzippy’s smile. Two women bump into each other in the hallway of a *mikveh*. It sounds like the start of a joke. Only, it’s not funny. The room is silent and my cries echo off the

walls. The *mikveh* attendant will think I am infertile. She will think I am one of those women who is having trouble getting pregnant, for whom each dunk is a reminder that they menstruated, that they aren’t pregnant. She will smile a bit more gently when I leave the room. Maybe she’ll offer *bracha* or maybe she’ll just give me a knowing look. I will nod back at her later, but I don’t care. I don’t care. I don’t care. *I don’t care.*

I am thinking about you, Tzippy. I am thinking about your hand laced through mine and I am thinking about what it was like *before*. Before I entered this room and we were just standing in the hallway, before I married Avner, before you married Benny, before we were two women who just passed each other by, before all I gave you were directions. I am thinking about what you are thinking about right now as you dunk. *Are you thinking about me?*

I need to stop. *Gold lettering, gold lettering, gold lettering. Sussex or Winthrop? First, you peel six apples. Sussex or Winthrop? Sussex or Winthrop? Sussex or Winthrop? Sussex usually has no traffic this time of night. Winthrop was probably the way Tzippy would be driving. She and Benny lived closer to Bergenfield—No. First, you peel six apples. Then mix together the brown sugar, eggs, and vanilla—No. It’s not working.*

The *mikveh* attendant clears her throat again. Women are allowed to take their time to pray before dunking, but there are limits to these things. We are allowed to pray, to think, to feel, only as long as it doesn’t hold up the line. The line of women, each waiting in their own “PREP ROOM” in a white towel. *I don’t care.*

This is... cold. This is distant and foreign.

“Women are allowed to take their time to pray before dunking, but there are limits to these things. We are allowed to pray, to think, to feel, only as long as it doesn’t hold up the line.”

I told Tzippy it would be like this. I feel the tears falling down my cheeks, mixing in with the water from the *mikveh* and I know that we are nothing. We aren’t dating. We aren’t married. We aren’t in love. We aren’t friends. We aren’t anything. We are just two women at the *mikveh*, at the *mik*.

We stayed together after I got married. Tzippy used to spend the night whenever Avner was away for business. When I got pregnant, I told her I would leave him. *We could run away*, I’d tell her as she read through my pregnancy books laughing. *We could leave together. You, me, and the baby.* She’d smile, twirling her finger around my hair, never believing me. Then, she met Benny.

I told her not to get married. When she first started getting set up, I told her to be careful. When she started dating Benny, I told her to stop. I told her to stop. I asked her to stop. To say no to her mother when she suggested dates, to say no to Ruchie the *Shadchan*, to say no to Benny. I told her she would regret it. I told her she would be unhappy. I told her it would get harder. I told her I loved

her. I stopped telling her anything after she met Benny’s parents. A month later they were engaged. Soon after that they got married. It was quick. It was easy. It was heartless. She told me to think. She told me to be serious. She told me to think of Avner and Mordechai. She told me Benny wasn’t like Avner. She told me she loved Benny. I begged her to leave him. She told me she’d miss me.

She said yes. I told her, *mazal tov*.

I wore a lilac dress to her wedding and told her I thought the floral arrangements looked lovely. She smiled and thanked me for coming. She forgot I hated peonies.

Chaya or Shoshana, or whatever her real name is, clears her throat again. One, two, three. *Dunk*. “*Tavor*.” I make the *bracha*.

וְיִשְׂדָּק רְשָׁא, סְלוּעָה, דְּלִמְ וּנְיָהֲלָא יְנִדָּא הָתָא, דְּרוּבָה
הַלִּיבְטָה לַע וּנְוָצוּ וּתְזַמְב
Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the immersion

The *mikveh* attendant responds, "Amen." One, two, three. *Dunk*. One, two, three. *Dunk*. One, two, three. *Dunk*. I don't think about whether our grandmothers, dunking in ice, ever thought about not holding their breaths and letting the water slowly and surely fill their lungs. I decide to take Sussex.

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It's the dead of winter but I have fruit flies. Avner has left for work, I dropped Mordechai off at daycare, and our kitchen has a small family of fruit flies flying around. I call Tzippy. It's been a week since I saw her at the *mik*.

"I have fruit flies," I tell her when she picks up.

"Hadassah?" She sounds surprised.

"I have fruit flies," I repeat, as if it explains anything.

"I didn't know who else to call," I add, hating myself for calling.

"I'll be right over," she says, before hanging up. She sounded a bit amused.

◆◆◆

Tzippy arrives, true to her word, a few minutes later. We live a few minutes away. She smiles when I open the door and the first thing she does is tear off her scarf. We stand in silence and then I follow suit and take my scarf off, too. We leave them crumbling into the cushions of the couch, not bothering to fold them nicely like we should. *They're going to wrinkle*, the voice of Avner's mother in my head tells me. *It's irresponsible, poor planning. Now, really Hadassah, nu? Avner works hard for his money, you know.*

Tzippy walks to the kitchen and it's

as if she never left. Everything is just as she left it. She pours herself a glass of water and then gets to work making a fruit fly trap. She fills a bowl with red wine vinegar, covers it with saran wrap, and pokes holes in the plastic with a toothpick. We watch as some of the fruit flies gravitate towards the bowl. They fly through the tiny holes in the saran wrap and we watch as they slowly (and surely) die. I look away.

"You should mop more," she tells me, still staring at her creation.

"It's not working," I tell her. There are still some fruit flies flying in between us. I am trying and failing to swat them away with my hands. They're too fast. Tzippy gently takes my hands into hers. Warm against her skin, I freeze. The fruit fly I was trying (in vain) to kill is no longer in my line of sight.

"It takes time," Tzippy says, trying to meet my eyes. "Besides, they have eyes on the back of their heads. They can see you coming even before you attack," she adds, smiling.

I wonder how she knows that. I wonder what that would be like. To plan, to see, to know. I focus on the smell of red wine vinegar. I wonder if I should look at her. I feel her eyes on me but I force myself to pretend I don't. I allow my eyes to dart around the kitchen, searching, waiting, longing for that fruit fly. *Where is it? Where is it? Where is it?*—It's sitting on the faucet. I pull my hands away from Tzippy's and she starts peeling at her lilac nail polish.

"Dasi," Tzippy says. Dasi, my name, her name for me, floats through the air. I feel it cut through the stench of the red wine vinegar and make its way over to me. I don't quite hear the rest of what she says at first. I am

hanging on to the way it feels to hear her say my name, to see her leaning against my kitchen counter again, to be with her again. She is staring at me and I don't care anymore.

"Dasi."

Finally, I stare back.

"Dasi. Do you think Avner would want corned beef for dinner? I got two from Moishe's the other day, half-off. I could give you one."

She says this in a way that brings me back to the *mikveh*, in a way that makes me feel like I forgot to hold my breath.

I nod.

I plan what I will do next.

I won't say: *You seem different*. Or, *Are you tired?* Or, *I'm tired, Tzippy*.

I won't say: *I miss you*. Or, *I love(d) you*. Or, *What are we doing?*

I won't say: *You broke my heart*. But it's okay, because I realize now that I broke yours too. *I'm sorry I married Avner*. *I'm sorry, Tzippy*. *I didn't know*. *I didn't know how to love you in any way that*

wasn't silent and secret and shame. *I asked you to run away but you knew I didn't mean it*. *You knew I would never leave Avner, leave this life I was building*. *You knew I couldn't do it*. *I didn't believe we could run away until I married him*. *It wasn't you who didn't believe, it was me*. *I'm sorry*. *I'm sorry I cut us short*.

Or, *do you remember that day you took me to the MOMA? I was pregnant with Mordechai and spent the whole day feeling sweaty and tired*. *I didn't go to stare at any of the blank canvases or abstract expressionism*, *I went to stare at you staring at paintings*. *I stared at your frizzy blond hair and the hole in your tights by your ankle and the smile you had as you traced your eyes across each canvas and told me all about Hilma af Klint and Kandinsky*.

Or, *do you remember the first time we kissed? We were on the floor of your dorm room, it was 3am and we were arguing about J.D. Salinger*. *You were lying down with your head in my lap telling me I had to read Franny and Zooey and I couldn't figure out how to keep arguing with you with your head in my lap, what was I supposed to do with my hands? Pet your hair? That felt weird*. *But then you sat up and smiled and I smiled and then—*

"I am hanging on to the way it feels to hear her say my name, to see her leaning against my kitchen counter again, to be with her again."

No. Poor planning. I won't say any of that. I know how this ends.

Instead, I say, "Avner likes corned beef. He loves anything he can eat with spicy mustard, really." (He never realizes that it always stains his mustache, and I don't bother telling him.)

Tzippy smiles.

"I remember," she says.

Tzippy gets up to get her scarf from the couch. She leaves some nail polish pickings behind, scattered on the counter. I brush them to the floor. I have to mop later anyway. Tzippy is tying her scarf back on, staring at herself in the mirror in the hall. As she ties the knot in the back to secure its position on her head, she asks if Avner likes potatoes and suggests I make roasted potato wedges with paprika. She tells me Benny *loves* those. She can't stand paprika but eats the potatoes anyways.

I put my scarf on too and go to open the door. Tzippy stops me.

"Wait," she says. She pauses, as if unsure of what she is trying to tell me.

"*Dasi*," she says.

"It's never just about fruit flies," she says, smiling now.

I know how this will end:

I will smile back at her and nod when she takes my hand and leads me up the stairs to my and Avner's bedroom. I will let her undo the knots of my scarf for me. I will let her throw my scarf on to the bedroom floor, where it will wrinkle a bit more. It's not bad planning if you plan for it, I will tell the voice of Avner's mother in my head.

But this isn't a love story. I will kiss Tzippy and hold her in the discount-navy-striped-sheets Avner's mother picked out. I will let the day pass by. I will let Tzippy help me tuck my hair back into my scarf when it is time for me to go pick up Mordechai. I will let her help me make the bed. I will walk her back to her house in silence and I will let her fingers linger over mine for too long when she finally hands me the package of corned beef. I will let myself say goodbye. *Tzippy*, I will say finally. *I missed you*. But I can't let myself love her.

I will pick up Mordechai from daycare and hang the drawing of scribbles he made on the fridge. I'll give him some leftover mac-and-cheese, give him a kiss on the forehead, and then put him to bed. I will cook the corned beef and I will make the potatoes like Tzippy suggested but without paprika. I will wait for Avner to get home and when I hear him opening the door, I will check my reflection in the hallway mirror and smile when he walks in. He works really hard, you know. I will smile at him as though I missed him, and I will tell him we should really invite his parents over for dinner this *shabbos*. I will laugh at his jokes and ignore his spicy-mustard-mustache. I will apologize when he says the potatoes are too bland. I will wash the dishes as Avner asks about the bowl of red wine vinegar at the table. I will mop the floor. I will fold the laundry while Avner calls his mother and she asks him about dinner.

I will go to bed with him when he calls for me. I will keep my scarf on because that is what he will ask. We will keep the lights off. He will keep his clothes on and take mine off for me. He will fumble with my bra but

I will not help. I will feel his sweaty hands on my body. I will lie there, and I will not think about anything or anyone at all. *First, you peel six apples*. When he is finished, he will go back downstairs for some more corned beef and I will slowly undo the knots of my scarf that Tzippy had tied so gracefully. I won't think of her hands twisting through my hair or wonder if she is throwing up paprika potatoes right now. I will yell back down the stairs to Avner that the spicy mustard is on the bottom left shelf of the refrigerator next to the margarine when he asks, and then I will hang myself from the ceiling fan.

Avner will call his mother when he finds me. She will tell him she always knew I was a *masbugana*. She will tell him to put clothing on me before he calls the paramedics. *Not that jean skirt with the ragged edges*, she will insist. *Something nice*. Something becoming of a nice *bas yisroel*. Or, maybe, Avner will just go back downstairs for more corned beef. We wouldn't want it to go to waste.

Or, maybe, I will just shake my head at Tzippy and say, "Sometimes it is just about the fruit flies, Tzippy." She will smile and pretend she believes me.

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I thank and acknowledge my friends Neti Linzer '22 and Joseph Rubin '22 for helping me talk out and think about this story.



Ways to Eat an Animal Cracker

Emily Yang

À la Carte

Emma Mohrmann

i.
Place in mouth
and let sit.
Wash of saliva over cracker crust,
wait for the inevitable erosion.
Not ground to dust. Not whetstone and willing
steel. More the slow death of
fly in Venus flytrap, metamorphosis
into mush. To taste every
speck is to alter the state
irrevocably. The body sits
like a slower sugar dissolving
between my teeth. Every molecule
decomposed,
a coat of flour on my tongue,
lolling out
in golden waves.

ii.
Ponder the smooth curve of paw into stomach
Ponder the indent of ear, eye, fur
Ponder the nature of the flesh,
the cracker-colored, the not-skin and bone,
more vestigial image than alive,
before opening wide
and biting down.

iii.
I've never seen a black bear
except from the other side of the tele

scope

little smudge of dark in the binocular glass
— maybe the real thing, maybe a wish taken form,
gone by the third blink. Cracker,
between thumb and forefinger:
split in half
with pinning force.
Flash of white teeth,
bone-crack,
swallow

and gone.

iv.
My mother eats the legs first
so they can't run away. Maybe a small mercy, this,
to lose the capacity to try
in a fruitless struggle. Then again,
maybe there's the only hope
they have left,
to run. The limbs taste different
from the body
if you let it.

A fox

with its legs and head lopped off
looks the same
as a lamb.

v.
Head-first
so they don't feel any pain.



Image courtesy of wbur.org

Belfast and the Power of Escapism

Claire Schultz

When I sat down to watch *Belfast* at an independent theater in my hometown, the room was nearly empty. I couldn't help but think that the last time I had been inside this particular theater in 2019, the seats were completely full. Almost two years into the pandemic, empty space now seems at once welcome and haunting. Paradoxically, because of all the time we've spent fearing physical closeness to others, that closeness is precisely what we crave. As the film began, I caught my mind

wandering as I tried to remember what it once felt like to sit in this theater surrounded by strangers, united by the subject of our viewing. Yet as the film's opening shots of modern Belfast abruptly shifted to black-and-white, my distracted thoughts melted away completely.

Belfast is set during the Troubles, a decades-long sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland. A semi-autobiographical portrait of childhood, the film comes strikingly

to life through its selective use of color. The film centers on Buddy, a young boy from a tolerant Protestant family that is torn between staying and leaving their home amid rising violence beginning in August 1969. As viewers, we see the plot unfold through Buddy's eyes: the film rarely leaves the space of his small, close-knit neighborhood. By centering on Buddy's limited understanding of the events, this setting at once simplifies the film's treatment of the Troubles and reveals the nuanced nature of the conflict.

In this space, neighbor can turn against neighbor, friend against friend. In the same vein, families can be torn apart by their internal struggles between leaving and staying in Belfast. Yet despite financial and marital trouble, as well as mounting threats to their safety, Buddy's family strives to protect the boy's childhood innocence. Because of this,

we see only glimpses of the political and nationalist conflict unfolding around Buddy. The film's real plot remains on a micro-level, depicting his relationships with his parents, brother, and grandparents, as well as his school activities and his crush on a classmate. The intimate plot does not seek to provide an answer to the deadly, complex conflicts unfolding around Buddy. Instead, this lens of childhood shows us that even in times of great hardship, there can be small, sacred joys.

The vast majority of *Belfast* is filmed in black-and-white, placing the viewer firmly in its time period. The stark visual experience is enhanced by the artful cinematography, which utilizes extreme close-ups and upward angles to hone in the viewer's focus and literalize the film's childlike perspective. Yet *Belfast*, otherwise an often subtle portrayal of familial devotion and conflicting conceptions of

home, flourishes in its color scenes. Excluding the brief opening and closing shots of modern Belfast that reflect the city's progress since the Troubles, the film's only uses of color occur in the performance scenes, uplifting the power of healthy escapism in times of struggle.

Buddy's family, although financially struggling, takes him to the theater to see movies. When *Belfast* shows us these scenes of performance, they appear completely in color, although the audience remains in black and white. The characters' viewing of the 1968 musical *Chitty Bang Bang* is made particularly compelling by the filmmakers' choice to linger on the family's interactive experience with the colorful film. Unaccustomed to the film's daring camera angles, they gasp and duck in their seats at a tense moment in the film. The camera lingers on the musical's lurid color, its noise and excitement.

The saturated Technicolor glow is seamlessly incorporated despite its stark contrast to the monochrome audience: in one blink-and-you'll-miss-it moment, we see the color reflected on Buddy's grandmother's glasses as she watches the film.

Belfast triumphs in its outright celebration of cinema and performance in itself. The color scenes work so well because they revel in the power of imagination, both as an integral part of the childhood experience and as a vehicle for escapism. Personally, I know this need for escapism well, as I'm sure many others do. I have always loved going to the movie theater. There's something truly magical and almost absurd to be found in suspending your disbelief and turning off the constant influx of information from the outside world for hours, allowing yourself to experience the storytelling power of film without interruption.



Yet during the early stages of the pandemic, when we most needed an escape, that wasn't possible. Even though I streamed movies and shows endlessly during months of quarantine and online education, I continually craved the real experience of going to the movie theater. Returning to my local theater to watch *Belfast* this fall brought me an intense awareness of the time we have all lost. All the same, I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for what we can have again. Theaters still aren't the same as they were, of course, with masks, smaller occupancies, and hesitant feelings everywhere. But I sensed

something coming back to us all when I sat down to watch *Belfast*—a reclamation of our time, of the promise the future can hold.

Watching *Belfast's* scenes of performance—of film-within-a-film—in a theater created a meta viewing experience worth further reflection. As I watched the characters of *Belfast* seek escapism through film, I realized how badly I had needed the simple joys that the cinema brings. *Belfast* showed me how film can urge forth our common humanity, how it can connect us regardless of the events that divide and challenge

us, whether it be the Troubles or the COVID-19 pandemic. It made irrefutable a fact I already knew: that film makes life richer.

Belfast's ending brings both optimism and melancholy, leaving us largely satisfied yet with some lingering questions. The film closes on a poignant message, slowly returning to color. As the credits rolled and the lights went up, I felt a prickly return to awareness. The world was around me again. I left the theater aching for what I'd lost, yet in awe of the magic to be found in the world around me, waiting to see what would come next.

“Returning to my local theater to watch *Belfast* this fall brought me an intense awareness of the time we have lost. All the same, I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for what we can have again.”



lunch in the sun

Angel Kuo

OUR SMALL ROOM

Meera Sastry

I'm sitting here trying to either write something true about my body or make something up about someone else's. But how am I supposed to write anything true about my body when I gave it to you in so many ways, when I slept on you the one time we got high in the small room, deadweight until you got up to make cookies—to feed me—which I trusted because I trusted the things you gave me to be good for me, which my body trusted because it knew you would never betray me, I mean it knew you would never betray me again, at your birthday party your dog ate the rest of a chocolate cupcake off the table, and you would always tell me you felt like my dog but really I thought I was yours—how many times did you leave me in the car?—I'm sorry to all the drivers in Oakland for trying to turn it around, I could never turn it around—how many times did I wait for you, I'm always staring out the window waiting for you, you fed me in so many ways, but okay, maybe I'm being unfair, maybe we're both each other's dog, and if we're both each other's dog that means that there is no owner, that means that we gave each other nothing at all, well, maybe not *nothing at all*, but maybe not our bodies, because we're just two dogs, and dogs are entirely themselves, like I would like to believe that there are no dogs at all who have heard the phrase *mind-body dualism*, and so instead of cooking, trusting, or driving, we just run around doing the things dogs do: sniffing the same leftover bits of the world, sleeping in a soft ragged pile.

contributors

poetry

Emily Yang '25 is a first year from the mountains of western North Carolina prospectively studying Ecology & Evolutionary Biology. They can usually be found in the rehearsal room for theater, eating noodles with much joy, or writing poetry wherever. She enjoys em dashes, sunshine, the color blue, and the concept of geese.

Enrique Zúñiga G. '22 is a Senior from Til Til, Chile, majoring in the Spanish & Portuguese department. There are some things he just won't shut up about. This is one of them, and the list goes on...

Cathleen Weng '24 is a Classics concentrator hailing from the great state of South Dakota, where there is nothing much but wheat. There, because everything is so flat, she is considered incredibly tall. Cathleen is also a known liar.

Daniel Viorica '25 grew up in a two-room house on a construction site in the middle of a forest in the mountains outside of Albuquerque, New Mexico. He likes books.

Meera Sastry '23 hails from Los Angeles and studies Comparative Literature. She is fully immunized against rabies.

prose

Ina Aram '25 is a freshman from Tokyo, Japan. In another life, she would be an astronaut so she could fly to space and float among the stars. In this life, she writes and creates to feel something like that infinity. She likes her tea with milk and honey.

Sabrina Reguyal '22 is a senior from NYC, studying Electrical Engineering with certificates in physics, history, and German studies. She is also a radio DJ at WPRB. She likes Cat Soup.

Jane Castleman '24 is a sophomore from Pennsylvania studying Computer Science and environmental studies. She enjoys playing rugby and is too optimistic about how many books she will read each month.

Thia Bian '25 is a freshman from a small town near Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She's a prospective Chemistry student and an avid semicolon user; although she still doesn't know how to use them correctly.

Esther Levy '22 is a senior in the Religion department who fuels herself on sugar. She would've made a great governess if she lived in the 19th century.

art

Angel Kuo '24 is a sophomore from Southern California who studies Neuroscience and Mandarin Chinese. He also enjoys making espresso, tending and multiplying his houseplants, and capturing moments with his camera. Also, he loves froot, especially tropical ones.

Juliette Carbonnier '24 is a sophomore from New York City studying English, music, theater, and creative writing. She enjoys long walks in the rain and has recently reconnected with her passion for fingerpainting.

Emma Mohrmann '24 is an artist from St. Louis MO. One of her favorite phrases for art and life is "trust the process" and she enjoys finding beauty in everyday moments.

Nemo is a Black, non-binary, autistic artist who utilizes a number of disparate media. Their works frequently comment on gender politics, reproductive rights, human rights, race relations, and concepts of community. They're currently prepping for their multimedia show surrounding mental health titled "988 (1;800;SUCIDE)" set to open in late April.

Audrey Zhang '25 is a freshman from New York hoping to major in Art and Archaeology (Art Practice Track) and earn certificates in Creative Writing and Robotics and Intelligent Systems. She loves spending time with her friends and family, baking, painting, making music (she can play the flute, piano, and ukulele), and learning new skills such as break dancing, knitting, and sewing.

essays

Colton Wang '24 is a sophomore from the suburbs of Cleveland studying Molecular Biology and global health. He thinks that chalkboards are better than white boards. In his free time, you can find him watching adventure and history shows, playing card games, and taking hikes in nearby parks.

Claire Schultz '24 is a sophomore from Ohio studying English. When she's not staring wistfully out of a window, she enjoys buying coffee, playing the clarinet, and getting lost in Wikipedia rabbit holes.

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