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A City Under Sea

We still have mountains to climb
and it isn't for any sense of conquest
or the need to surpass the limits of our strength

It is for nothing but our preservation

We go to higher ground
because the rivers are rising beneath us
and we have no alternative

None of us know what we are coming back to

The city is broken.

And when the waters go down,
they will take so much from us,

but what the waters leave behind...
will be so much worse to bear

In an instant our world has been ripped back in time,
our city has become a part of the developing world.
The streets no longer exist,
they are awash with rivers of mud,
and we cannot find our way back.

An entire town is gone;
it no longer exists

we are drowning in the ruin of our photographs and furniture

~Jenn Galambos

My Pandora's Box

“Believe me, darling,
When you're grown, you will
have sex when you don't want to.
You. Will.

It's what is done.
It's how you keep men happy.”
And I feel indescribably sorry for you.

What did he teach you,
the monster you married?
I know full well
What you both taught me.

What he taught me was that
I could not trust you
Nor him
Nor me, myself.

What you taught me was that
You would not protect me -
That women were always second
To men who would break them and take them.

Without love.

And what I learned from that lesson
Is the Pandora's Box
That defined my
fledgling adulthood.

So many years of rage
Of broken trust
Of wanting to say,
wanting to tell,
But mute.

Finally
At the bottom of my Pandora's Box,
A short but full lifetime away,

If not understanding

Compassion.

~Rena Roussin

The Fly and the Flight

I drank a fruit fly

That found its way

Into my wine

Fuck, I said

Then

Extra protein

Just to spite it

Tremor hands

Relentless

Beathumpthumping

Electric

Lubricated

Terror

They're watching

Pinprick fingertips and pinhole vision

The whatifs

White

Calm under the tongue

~Jamison Hall

The Lists

Today I wrote a list, you know
In fact, I've written four
And there are many lists around
All scattered on the floor
I write one in the morning
Then more throughout the day
And there is no real difference
In what all of them say
And when I finish for the night
All snuggled in my bed
I am not surprised to find
The lists are in my head
I try to write everything down
But not all of it fits
Like one thing that bugs me the most
Which is 'stop writing those lists'

~Sam White

Crawl

sometimes I want to crawl all over you
most days I want to crawl all over you
always I want to crawl all over you

but your skin burns
and your mouth burns more
with the things you've said
and the smoke
and that whore
in so many ways
that I think I'm going to die
I know that you lie
just to get what you can from me
my body agrees
that I'm going to die

but only if you don't go first
you're so much worse
that's why you can't let yourself see me
the way that you do actually

I know.
I've known.
It's fine.
that's why I can't let myself see you
the way that I actually do

L-O-V-E is way too much
the only thing we know is touch
and I just want you to realize

that sometimes I want to crawl all over you
most days I want to crawl all over you
always, I want to crawl all over you
but you're much too broken
to fix me too

but I can feel your loneliness
with every kiss
it sits between your teeth
but sometimes it slips through
when I crawl all over you

~Anonymous

Poems From the Other Room

Divine Mother and Father

Beauty in balance, that Holy creature
With a radiant flame above its head,
Black and white, a smooth curve flowing through.
That sweeping line divides, defines an Androgyne.
It has horns and hooves, wolf's teeth and wings.
Together and separate, two parts the same being.
Dissolving and congealing, a never-ending dance
Lamplighting the way to Paradise.

Dogma

The Witching Hour under lamplight.
A steaming creature sits on a park bench,
An easel before it, a brush in the strange hand.
Horns, hooves, and damp shaggy fur.
The glowing marks burn into my eyes,
I am mesmerized.
“What are you painting?”
“The Devil.”
“He looks like you.”
The air smells sweet, like hay.
We run together into the night,
I am not afraid.

Zeal

I am running through a cave, through a jungle.
I am small like a mouse, racing through the Library.
I don't know who is chasing me, or why the books are so huge.
There is a tasseled silk rope.
I begin to climb up to the ceiling, up to the sky.
Everything is orange and soft and clouds.
I sit, panting, safe at last.
There is a fox.
“Who are you?”
“God, the Librarian.”
“Why don't you help people, or answer their prayers?”
“Listen.”
“I can't hear anything.”
“Exactly.”

~Asia Forbes

Be Bad

Be bad,
Do voodoo,
Get together,
Leave Timbuktu.
Climb an afternoon,
Cry by our sea.
Wish from the heart,
Know only time.
Unite earth, fire, and water with yourself.
Black is dearest.

~Asia Forbes

Why Isn't It Raining?

I looked for the Moon,
But all I found was Sand.

I looked for a Clue,
And I found a Paintbrush.

I stood in the Faerie-Circle,
And I felt my Wings grow, and ache...

I want to go Home.
~Asia Forbes

Knock

Alyshia's two quick gentle taps pull me from my daydream. "You're going to be late!" she says through the door. I groan in fake exasperation, and hear her small footsteps as she walks away. I've been awake for 10 minutes but pretending to be asleep so that Alyshia would have to wake me. I love knowing that she cares. Even though I hate mornings, I do it because earliness means seeing Alyshia before school. "Do you want cereal or toast?" Alyshia calls from down the hall.

"I think I'm feeling peanut butter toast!" I yell back as I pull on my jeans and frantically search for a clean shirt on my floor. When I open the door Alyshia is standing there with that adorable smile on her face, fist at the ready to knock again.

She giggles and lowered her hand, "Your breakfast is waiting, Madame!"

"Oh wow, so fast! Thank you! Sorry I was so late getting up." I respond trying not to trip over my words. I used to be so cool around her, but now I can barely form full sentences. I followed her to the kitchen where she had set out toast, juice, and my coffee. I pull out her chair for her and she sits. I plop down in front of my breakfast and take a bite. "This is delicious!" I say, mouth full, "You're becoming quite the Holly Housewife!" I compliment.

"You take that back!" she threatens jokingly, "you know I'd only do it for you, Zoe! I don't even make Brent breakfast like this, and we've been dating for like 8 months."

"Well I certainly appreciate having a roommate who is willing to look after my dietary needs like you do," I smile, "How about I cook us dinner tonight to pay you back for the last few weeks of unbelievable laziness on my part?"

"That sounds good! Can I expect spaghetti?" she asks with her sly smile.

"What the hell else would it be? Coq au vin?" I joke. She laughs and her face lights up the room. I don't even need the coffee, but it tastes so good when she makes it. I sip away and smile back over the mug. "Let's plan for 6pm, I'll have everything ready, and the table set and the dishes done! I promise to redeem all the roommate points that I have lost while working on this thesis."

"That sounds delightful," she says. She checks her phone for the time, and stands looking for her bag, "oh shit! I'm going to be late for bio. I will see you at six, and I will make sure that I have such an appetite." She grabs her bag and winks at me. "I will see *you* later!"

I wait for the door to close and let out the breath that I'd hadn't realized I'd been holding. This will be the night. I will tell her I love her. I have to. I won't back out this time. I can do it! She has to know!

~Meaghan Smith

These Days

I opened my eyes to the pounding above and surveyed the blurry clutter scattered around the room. Empty bottles and wrappers from convenience store meals. I flinched when a fly buzzed past my ear. No piss, stomach settled, everything was good. There was a mostly-finished cigarette on the table. Mostly finished and mostly inviting. I stood up, dizzy and abrupt, someone was beside me. There was no one. Smoke filled my mouth again. I found a box of Campbell's Autumn Carrot soup, best before yesterday, and ate it with leftover hardtack I found in the oven. The fly buzzed in the corner. The soup was palatable and the hardtack was burnt. It wasn't a bad meal. I came to a bit more. The last three weeks were a blur. My clothes smelled like old beersweat, but they were good enough. I thought about going outside, but decided against it. My hands seemed to tremble more and more as my fingers approached the lock. My stomach unsettled itself.

The vomit was a multicoloured oracle to the last twelve hours. It reeked of cheap beer and cheaper gin and a burger from the place down the street. I had spent too much money again, but at least I had made it out the door at some point. I looked in my wallet. No receipts, too much cash. Well at least I made it out the door. I grabbed some new smokes from the drawer in the other room. There wasn't anything to drink.

The neighbours upstairs started pounding on the ceiling again.

BAMBAMBAMBAMBAMBAMBAM. They must be fucking. BAMBAMABAM. Definitely fucking. Maybe they're running a sweatshop. Maybe they've got a – BAMBAMBAMBAMBAM. Dust fell from the ceiling. I thought about going upstairs and pounding on their door, getting angry, yelling in their faces, throwing them off the balcony. I thought about that before remembering that the balcony was only six feet off the ground, and they'd probably just start telling their captive child textile workers to work louder. No, confrontation was definitely not the answer. I ordered some beer and tomatoes from the grocery deliverer.

Dinner was five types of noodles and stewed tomatoes. Some of the noodles cooked better than others. The beer was filling. I watched an old rerun that I didn't hate. I smoked another cigarette, and I pretended to relax. It was hard to hear the rerun over the pounding. I was frustrated. I ate five of the pills from the bottle on the nightstand and masturbated. An hour later my legs felt like jelly and my breathing was relaxed.

I went to sleep. The neighbours pounded.

~Jamison Hall

Steel Yourself

The alarm buzzed at 6AM and I slapped the top of the cheap clock. I threw off my blankets and swung my feet down to the floor. Cold tile shocked my toes. My feet were awake but the rest of me wasn't. I hated waking up at six. I had a hard enough time getting up at 8:00, before the regulations changed, and 6AM was almost impossible. But I needed the extra time.

I took a perfunctory shower, feeling my skin sing under the hot jets. Back in my bedroom, I stared at the suit. It gleamed a deep blue in the low morning light. 6:27AM. My hair dripped coldly onto the back of my neck and legs. Time to put it on.

The leather gloves went on first. The gloves were cold, rigid and tough on my cringing fingers, but they eventually sucked up enough heat to be pliable. Next, the long johns. Rope-ribbed and rough, they made walking difficult enough on their own without the outer layers. Without them, though, my legs would be chafed and running with sores within a couple of hours. Next, the padded bra and soft cotton shirt under a leather jerkin. I was beginning to warm up. Next, the thigh plates. The gloves made me clumsy and the second plate slipped and I flinched at the ringing crash of metal on tile. 7:05AM. I couldn't let any of the jerkin or long johns show. Against regulations. What with the new studies... they said that they couldn't control themselves if they saw. People in white coats with sharpened pencils and surgical speech told us how it was for our own protection: "don't go outside in that, you'll provoke them;" "women wearing high-heeled shoes are twice as likely to be assaulted as women wearing sneakers;" "45% of men between 25 and 35 have contemplated assault, 20% have acted on the thought." The packages arrived in the mail soon after. Government seal. Heavy as stone blocks. The ubiquitous letter:

Good day, female citizen. In light of recent studies we at Parliament have deemed necessary the issuance of new protective dress. This is for your safety, and for your contemporaries' dignity and health as productive citizens. We know that you will undertake this sacrifice of personal preference for the greater safety with forbearance, and we thank you for your cooperation.

I buckled the forearm plates tightly. The breastplates shrieked against the metal shoulder-cops as I reached for the last piece. I slipped the helm over my hair, which was still damp. I was too hot now. Snapped the visor shut. 7:59AM. I clanked into the day, carefully peering through the slits.

~Ceileigh Mangalam

Cornwallis Entrepot



~Alexandra Sidorenko

Clare Bleu



~Alexandra Sidorenko

Spring Derelict



~Alexandra Sidorenko

Icicles



~Melanie Pos