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transcend

something is welling up in that place between my stomach and my heart

something i cannot define.

something i cannot locate, though i know it exists.

i am craving something.

this thing is a beautiful something

something begging to be captured. captivated.

something waiting to be enlightened.

this something is longing to be brought to life.

brought to new life from something old

this something aches.

this something nudges and nods uncomfortably.

freedom for something.

freedom from something.

freedom to be something bigger than this.

this is not the something that i imagine.

this is something more.

~ *Courtney Harris*

I Stepped Away to the Middle of the Night

I stepped away to the middle of the night
out of the closet or out the door
to meet with the hobo crying in the street
on a bed of his money and his booze
there could always be number two
there could always be the
unspoken, unwritten connection,
unanswered messages
Flagpoles left unbannered,
bare simplicity of grey matter,
Aluminum, the gaps of the earth, rock particles,
the sobbing on the concrete, splat,
the resting bet and when the clouds calm to fog,
we will be resuming our journey,
and your hands dry my tears.

~ *Thibault Jacquot-Paratte*

The Roommate

“I don’t really know a lot about lies”
I just said that. To her. Across the room.
Me master, swimmer, controller,
Maker baker of lies

I believe my own lies now
Lay down in bed at night with them
Guess what?
They keep me warm.

~ *Abby Lyon*

La Lune

Write of the dissonance and consonance
Of day and walk and night and stroll, pen the
Euphony and cacophony of those
Cosmic portraits below.

Write of pools and streams and grave starlit dreams,
Annotate those loons and moons, sweet creatures of June,
Of they who may seem to have lost their themes, their schemes,
Their greater schemes of themes, under this one, la lune.

Write of the haven and dystopia,
Or of dimm'd myopia, bright white dove,
Chaos and tranquility, Utopia!
Deep space canvas above.

~ *Lucas Oickle*

The Thunder of the Earth

The first dawn rises over the world. The sun shines down on the stones and through the trees of the forests, washing the pine needles with golden light.

The sound of a birdlike flute flits through the open air; the first song. It moves between the branches, brushing against the brown ridged bark and passing through the thin shivering membrane of green leaves. The sound of the flute floats through the sunlight, catching the shadows with its delicate movement.

The flute song fades from the air, the last wavering note passing into stillness. A slow heartbeat begins to pulse through the ground, the deep sound resounding like the earth's steady breath. The drums of gathering begin their call.

Inside the mountains, still fresh from the earth, their drums mark the beginning of time. Clothed in animal skins, their bare feet coated with dust, they stamp a rhythm upon the ground. Firelight flickers on the stone walls as they dance, the beat of their drums echoing around them. Their bodies glow from the heat of the fire, their glistening limbs moving to the beat of the drum.

Hand prints and buffalo are smeared into the cave walls around them, memories etched into stone. Their voices call out to the night, adding to the music of the drum. They beat their palms against the smooth hides of their drums, the firelight casting shadows upon their faces as the wild rhythm rises around them. Dust clouds the air as their feet join the drumbeat; the thunder of the earth.

At first glance, the girl dancing in the bar looks care free and happy. She's not dressed like most other girls in the bar; instead of a tube top and a short skirt that barely covers her underwear she's wearing a semi-formal dress that swings around her knees. She dances differently too. Instead of the sleep, sexy hip movements of everyone around her, she dances with her arms flailing all over the place, stomping her feet, spinning in circles and jumping around. And from the huge grin on her face and the way she throws her head back and laughs at something her friend said, you would think she was having a grand old time.

~ *Jennifer Galambos*

The Footwork of Snowdancing

Freshly fallen snow greets her as she retires from classes for the day. It coats the ground, marred only by a few sets of footprints from two or three other students who had also left their studies recently. Her eyes light up as if the falling flakes were a beloved person to her, and a curious smile touches her weary face. It's time for the dancing game to begin.

Left, right. She carefully places each foot in patterns as she makes her way up Highland Avenue. After a certain distance, it becomes automatic, giving her time to examine the prints of her long-gone comrades that run parallel to the path she herself creates. In their wake, she seeks clues as to the personality of their owners. Here, smaller feet took tiny, careful steps on shoes that clearly had no sort of grip. There, a confident male had even enjoyed skidding down the hill, his tracks littered with intentional slides and spins. Ghosts of people she reconstructs within her own mind begin to walk along with her, one at a time, each displaying quirks that only footsteps could so easily show.

The anonymity of the game is precious. She makes sure to twist and twirl, initiating a silent challenge to whomever may be following. Her dance defines her.

At the crest of the hill, all individual tracks are lost; arrays of prints coming and going from the meal hall begin to overlap each other. She bids goodbye to them, her invisible dance partners, and steps similarly into the fray.

~ *Margot Hynes*

Krentenbrood

Every morning when Hank woke up he would climb out of bed, pull on an old housecoat and tie it loosely at his waist. His bare legs were pale, the veins visible and bulging, trapped and pulsing beneath the skins surface.

Stumbling into the kitchen, he pulls out a chair, seating himself in front of a candle that's frequently lit. With the creamy vanilla smell just under his chin he inhales the familiar and comforting scent. It reminds him of his wife, her back to him, hands at the oven. She pulls a steaming loaf of krentenbrood out. The Dutch currant bread is a familial recipe having been passed down for generations.

She turns with a plate of the warm bread, the butter melting, mingling into the sweet and zesty flavors. He reaches out his hand and his wife quickly slaps it away.

"Do gentlemen grab?"

He grasps her, twisting her backwards and pulling her down into his lap. He took hold of his wife's neck and drew her face into his own, smothering her with a kiss, deepening until she is left breathless. Faces pressed up against one another, he reaches for a slice and pulls away. The crumbs from the warm zingy bread fall into their laps and they laugh together. He hums the Anniversary Waltz in her ear, his breath tickling her.

Hank sets the candle down. It has now gathered a small pool of liquid wax at its short wick and is drowned at the shaky movement of his hands. The smell of Krentenbrood seems to linger with the smoke of the candle.

~ *Hayley MacLeod*

Cell

I lie awake in my bed. It's dark out even though it's only 9pm. Being in bed makes me feel weak. Everything about this room reminds me of her. The high thread count sheets against my skin. The smell of the detergent that she picked lingers in the air, it smells like her. Her pillow is still here in her spot (although if people come over I hide it). Thankfully I've finally taken all of her paintings off of the walls. All of her furniture and even some of her clothes fill the room. Our room, but not anymore, now it's mine, there is no her. It's my personal torture chamber. All I want is to avoid thinking about her. My phone starts buzzing, breaking my trance. It has been ringing non-stop for two days. This time it's my brother. "Hello?" I try not to sound groggy.

"Hey man!"

"I'm fine dude, really" I reply. I know why he's calling I wish he would cut the shit and get to the point.

"You know she's leaving today right?" Here it is.

"Yeah I know. You know I'm not going to go run after her, and so does she. This is what's best for us both." I've had this same discussion with everyone who knows she's here. I tell my brother goodbye and hang up. This girl will never stop dictating my life. I'm not going. I've put myself to bed to ensure that I don't go. We've tried this before, I can't keep running and she can't stay still.

I grab my phone again and type, "Have Fun! I hear Paris is a blast!" I stare at my message for 10 minutes and delete it. I turn my phone off and roll over.

~ *Meaghan Smith*

Atop that Hill

Jessica's stomach looks like that of a child. It's pale and bloated and when you touch it, it feels she is hiding a balloon under her skin – there is hardly any give. She doesn't look like an emaciated African child, but it's pretty darn close. Worst of all, though, her belly button stands out. When she's in bed, flat on her back and looks down, right there, there is someone's grave on top of a hill, on top of her body. It feels like she is somehow still closely connected to her birthmother, carrying her grave.

She wakes up and looks down. The grave is gone and the hill covered with bright red, angry roads, stitched straight into the surface for her skin. A network of lines is pulling her skin taut across the balloon. The grave is back, sunken into her stomach at an angle, not quite in the middle anymore. A second burial place has joined it, a gathering of skin, not as neat at the first. She has again selfishly taken a life to trade for her own, again survived where another had died. She had nearly gone her mother's way but turned the tides, turned the world upside down and outlived her own. And she recovers, she always recovers.

Now, when she's feeling particularly vicious, Jessica is sure it looks like the place the first people on the moon have planted their flag, pierced straight into the pale earth, unaware of the consequences and wonders whether her mother could ever be proud.

~ *Anneke Vande Stege*

Holding On



~ Breanna Keeler

The Ties that Bind



~ *Breanna Keeler*

Primavera



~ Cailen Smith