

estuary

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Kelly Bowen

Moon

You'd never tell me when you were leaving
but somehow I'd know, even back then.
You'd change the oil in the truck,
stock up on Snickers (I'll never forget
the tight feeling in my chest
when you told me you threw one
at a full-grown bull moose
to stop him from charging the dog,
blind to the possibility that he
could charge you too),
and pile old towels in the back of the pickup.
I always worried (I still do)
that the little first aid kit you carried
would be too small to repair serious damage,
and sometimes I would dream
that you were bleeding to death on a trail
in northern Maine,
where the towns are so small they don't have names.
I'd wake from these dreams
to the sound of the truck engine starting up,
not knowing if you'd be home that evening
or if there was camouflage and a gun
next to the dog's crate.
If you didn't come home by the time I went to bed,
I would whisper the words to your favorite poem:
 "nobody hear, nobody care,
 and the stars go on",
and curl up under the covers with a flashlight,
pretending it was the moon.

Nadia Bryden

Daydream

I see a light on up one floor
A world I've never seen before
I've lost my thought, I'll disappear
Because I'm better there than here

Lauren Gingras

Orange

The love child
of red and yellow,
abandoned at birth.
Orange is that colour
nobody wants.
Orange is ashamed of herself
and only comes out on dark days;
like Hallows Eve.
Sometimes we forget orange,
leave her behind,
discard her
like the leaves in fall,
move from her heat
and her restlessness
to the cold comfort of
concrete cities.
We need orange, and hate orange.
We distill her and put her in little pills.
Chewable, or swallow with water
So we don't have to reveal
our stained fingers.
Orange is lonely,
the one word
that will never
end a couplet.

Lauren Gingras

Villanelle Anti-Ode

I tried to fit my words inside
a box so small my eyes were strained.
But found that I could not abide
without forced rhymes. Denied
inspiration, I exclaimed
“I tried!” To fit my words inside
someone else’s structured mind
– to be not lost, nor chained,
but found – that, I could not abide.
Clichés aside,
my expression is a bird contained.
I tried to fit my words inside
forms and rules done with pride,
asking for rebellion restrained,
but found that I could not abide
by laws of literature known worldwide.
In the end, my problem remained.
I tried to fit my words inside
but found that I could not abide.
So, I wrote one last line.

Robert Mousseau

Scandal

If night is my lover
Then she needs to leave
Because my mistress day
Is poking her head around the corner
And I'd hate to introduce the two.

Kelly Bowen

moonjellies

I put everything that wouldn't float in the center of the pier, and hoped you wouldn't notice my obsessive fear of things lost to the ocean floor. You watched me out of the corner of your eye, looking sidelong through chestnut strands of hair swirling in the breeze, and told me that you, too, were afraid of the bottom. In the silence between our confessions, in the space between our bodies juxtaposed on the dock's edge, a day rolled by in seconds—the scents of salt air, gasoline and beach roses held us captive from self-awareness, our minds eddying with the tide coming in around our feet, our blood synchronizing rhythm with the warm marina water. When I fell asleep in the sun, the cement edges of the dock burning my back through my shirt in the August heat, you shook me awake to show me thousands of moonjellies making their way up the coast. When we tried to hold them, they slipped through our fingers like slow water, lingering long enough to leave a shiny, rainbow residue, white-light-brilliant, like that day.

Nadia Bryden

Stream of Consciousness

Stream of Consciousness merging with a Sea of Despair [but strangely enough I don't care...]

My thoughts are hanging on a thread when in my mind I'm floating still while nursing my forgotten beer, I'm half-intent on looking through a window where an employee is dancing, rehearsing in front of her till, and I wonder where her world exists, certainly this minimum wage low-level job is a cover for some more fulfilling and thrilling display of her passions and interests though she acts in a play called My Life the Disappointment, the same as us all, because when you fall from the lowest there's no hurting at all, it's just not where we see ourselves being in the end, we'll 'be' something somewhere where being has some meaning more than just your rent and your car and my bills and her food, heaven sent, because we all deserve so much more than a life determined by whichever future exists beyond one cheap woodframed door, so thin that possessions so loved and adored are transparent to those who would take all we can afford, we are more than these lives on a thread

J.D.

A Million

Jaron Menachem had slight shoulders with eyes as wide as walnuts. His hair was the colour of the soil, and his skin was the colour of the clay. Jaron and his friend Abdul Shamay's friendship had existed for many years, it was as honest and true as Abdul's fiancée, Abelia Deng. "Abdul and Abelia's wedding is approaching quickly," Jaron thought, as he sat down each night in his favorite tree, "I must find a gift suitable for my best friend, and my best friend's bride to be." He respected his friend Abdul very much, and his love for Abdul ran through the blood in Jaron's heart as sure as noble thoughts ran through the depths of his mind, as sure as stars were white in the black sky.

The dog Jaron gave to his best friend, and his best friend's wife ate birthday cake and roamed the dance floor all night long, licking wrists while receiving head pats. His tail wagged excitedly inside the beautiful reception hall, as his paws clicked enthusiastically on the dance floor. Jaron told his best friend, "Abdul, my best friend, my noble companion, here is my gift to you: As your life continues with your perfect bride, this loyal dog will be a symbol of our friendship. When we were children we were together always, you were responsible for many of the joys in my life. Let this dog remind you of our times together, and in this respect a part of me will remain with you in your warm home. Abdul's eyes welled with rain drop tears of fulfillment. As he lifted the dog, whose coat was as yellow as the summer dandelions, he said to his best friend Jaron, "Then I name him A Million, for the number of reasons I am happy."

Zoë Migicovsky

He/Art

if this were a photograph, our faces would be blurred, the edges soft, twenty shades of grey. you'd be nearly indefinable, dark jeans, dark eyes. and she'd be laughing, her mouth slightly parted, the light casting a gentle glow on her face, washed out. I'm not sure where I would be, likely in the background, hiding as if the camera flash was capturing my soul.

if this were a painting, it would be Van Gogh creamy, black and white, smudged. your thick eyelashes one streak, my mouth bleeding like the sharp edges of a leaf. I'd be in the corner, motion-hazy, as if I was trying to escape something, all I'm trying to escape is myself. she'd be holding your hand, like dead flowers pressed together, dried, her eyes on yours. your head would be tilted slightly towards mine, but you'd still be looking at her.

if this were a drawing, the lines would be sharp, awkward, like razorblades, dark charcoal. your thin fingers touching her face, and I'd be shrouded almost, dusted with shadows, a ghost-girl. her back would be to me, the skin-covered storm. you'd be pressed against the edge of the paper, her lips whispering, scratched into being like engraved metal.

if this were a photograph or a painting or a drawing it would still just be art.

Zoë Migicovsky

Mourning

good mourning said the sun to the moon, who whispered, won't you miss me, in the desperate way that chunks of rock, circulating without purpose, will. the sun told the moon she wasn't really leaving, and besides she was just a reflection of beauty. and the moon cried, and the stars fell and struck lovers from the sky in fiery tears. below, the lovers cried too, acid rain that killed the soil under their fading footprints, and the sun shed light on it all, so that their eyes burned as they climbed from the wreckage. then the moon looked into the ocean and saw herself, dull grey, all pock-marked, empty, and she fell through space. below, lovers embraced bitterly with their dead counterparts, and the moon fell so fast she burned up like the passion she once felt. there was a momentary eclipse, and then she was gone. she landed in the ocean, whose tide rose high and drowned all the remaining lovers, even as she extinguished the moon, who, fortunately, was no longer able to look at herself and see how her body had become blackened. and all over the earth there was mourning.

so the sun still shone, but there was never again a lover's moon.

Danika Sihota

Despondent Afternoon

The feeling of suffocation was almost unbearable to her. The large flakes of snow falling around her as she walked seemed to cage her in. The blank white slate that was the path in front of her mocked her desire for the beautiful soft green of spring. Even lifting one foot to put it in front of the other took so much energy that she wasn't sure if she could keep it up continually.

She glanced down the snow-covered street that she was walking along and a feeling of resentment welled up within her. Why was she here? She hated the cold, she hated the snow, she hated the city that she was now living in. This was not a place to call home; this was a place of unhappiness, a place of wretched nights and painfully half-awake days, a place where no one seemed to notice how terribly miserable she really was. This horribly hard-hearted place was far away from everything familiar, everything that she had ever known.

She had set out that afternoon from her apartment in search of something to make her feel better. A distraction, a diversion, anything that would make her feel alive again, something that would ignite her desire for life once more. She had read somewhere that exercise was good for depression, so she had forced herself out of the bed she had barely left for days, and mustered her remaining reserves of energy to go outside for a walk.

But the exercise theory had failed her miserably. She was feeling more despondent than ever, jailed in her own life with no escape in sight. Even the tall bare trees seemed to laugh at her, bending their branches in the wind and pointing at her in mockery. The cold was getting to her; she had forgotten to bring her toque and the wind was biting at her ears. But instead of turning home, as she had considered doing, she kept forging ahead through the snow.

The bright lights of the grocery store enticed her and she thought, maybe if I go buy myself something, some sort of treat, I'll feel better. Chocolate, maybe, or some ice cream. Or candy, that's good too.

And as she entered the store, she momentarily felt marginally better. The bright colours of the food on display and the warmth of the store itself were such a stark contrast to the frigid blankness of the outdoors. As the frosted breath on her scarf began to melt, she felt her frown begin to thaw as well, and she smiled slightly. But it was only a faint smile; to a passerby it would have appeared as if she just had a slight twitch at the corner of her mouth.

She began walking down the aisles, searching for the specific treat that was going to make her feel better. Chocolate? No. Ice Cream? No. Candy? No. What was she looking for?

In the middle of the cereal aisle, she stopped. The initial glowing feeling of entering the store was fading and the old apathetic despondency was creeping back in. She didn't know what she wanted. She didn't feel like chocolate, or ice cream, or even candy. What did she want?

She began to get irritated, frustrated with the store for not giving her what she needed. Where was it? Where was this elusive thing that was going to make her feel better and push away the depression? When was it going to end?

She noticed that people were looking at her oddly and realized that she had been standing in the same place staring into space for quite some time. Her frustration with the

store and with herself began to mount and she had to squeeze her eyes shut for a moment to hold back the tears. What was she doing, she thought to herself, looking for solace in a grocery store?

She wrapped her scarf around her head so that it covered her ears and went back outside. She could not stop the tears that flowed down her cheeks as she walked through the bleak snow back to her apartment.

John J. Houser

Midnight en Stereo



Rachel Leeman

Crows



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