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Passwords, Spring 2012

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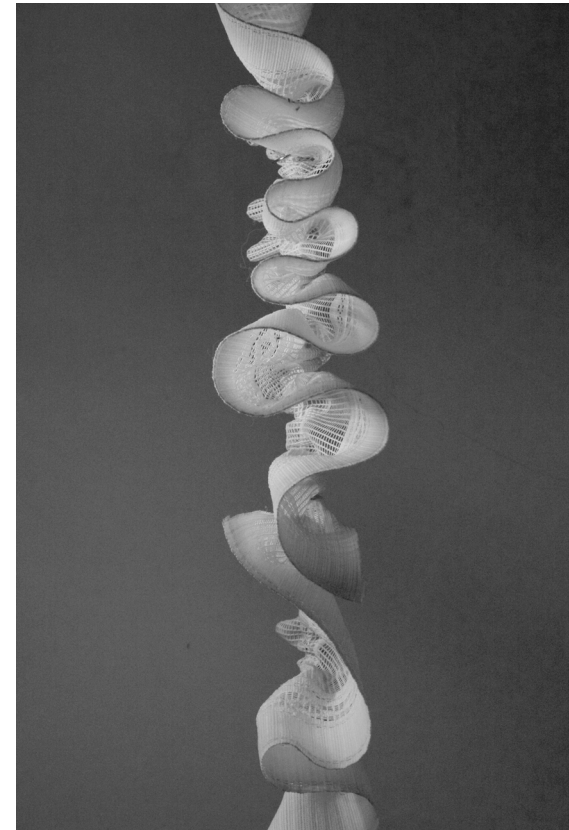
Passwords

Volume 12, Issue 2

Spring 2012

Passwords

A Claremont Colleges Literary Magazine



Nicola Parisi

Passwords
A Claremont Colleges Literary Magazine
Volume 12, Issue 2, Spring 2012

Cover Art by Nicola Parisi

Here is a package,
a program of passwords.
It is to bring strangers together.
- *William Stafford, "Passwords"*

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Editors' Note

Passwords, a five-college literary magazine of poetry, prose, and visual art, is published each semester. Our mission is to provide a literary forum for the community of the Claremont Colleges, and our editorial board is open to all students.

A word about our selection process: writers' and artists' names are omitted from all submissions before they are distributed to board members, and final selections are made through deliberation by the editorial board. Although the process is by nature subjective, we strive to make it as fair and collaborative as possible.

We would like to thank the Associated Students of Pomona College, the Pitzer College Student Senate, the Associated Students of Harvey Mudd College, the Scripps Associated Students, and the Associated Students of Claremont McKenna College for their financial support.

For more information about submitting to the magazine or joining the editorial board, please send us a message at passwords@pomona.edu.

Mirabelle Korn and Emily Miner
Passwords Editors-in-Chief

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Artwork By

Patrick Liu, Nicola Parisi, Julia Rigby, Olivia Weissblum



Patrick Liu

London, dear Jessica Stern

I fly back to California
on solid wings, on reaching-out-into-space wings,
with these words in my chest
sounding like Joni Mitchell with
Canada on her lips like
late spring in parks I used to
give my flowers to
so willingly like
a little water spilled around thirsty mouth.

But London—
having deprived me of my righteous springtime
with its melancholic heavens
and inexplicable wind tunnels
sweeping through the Underground,
having dressed me with a half-pint
of its cheapest ale and sent me to wind
and weather my way through
the mobs at Oxford Street,
having undressed me at the window
of the coldest academic building
so that the passers-by remarked upon
the nakedness of the American—

London, dear,
you came far from courting me, anyway,
and in my last glimpse of your shrinking suburbs I spied
a little dirt on your nose.

Tonight I will meet Los Angeles
in its full glory of smog and streetlights,
in its full regalia of frank colors and car horns,
and in pairs of indoor sunglasses with imported coffee;
I will meet Los Angeles
again and for the first time,
makeup-less
and in my plainest sweater,
without the right currency
or shoes.

But Los Angeles, by God,
has waited all these months to receive me
and in that alone there is love enough

for this child of purple mountain majesties—
knowing the smell of wet asphalt on her playgrounds
and knowing the sound of lonely dogs in her canyons
and knowing also the sublime geography
of that armpit of sand and tanned bikini-bearers
lounging between the hills and the Pacific—
and knowing now what it is to return to these
with hair windblown and skin paler from lying on other beaches,
with hands dirty from touching other earth.
But Los Angeles, by God,
for all her flaws and street noise,
welcomes her longtime lovers
in all their infidelity
with salty kisses on tortilla chips,
with the long embrace of its highways.



Patrick Liu

Eighteen

Shayna Citrenbaum

Dirt is made for the skinny skin-kneed
 child in my heart, the child who
 does not cry out but whimpers
 as she watches me wade through the
 awkward bog of waking, of becoming,
 dappled by in-between dreams in
 the limbo between present and future, in
 the tension between hope and despair.
 Along the absurd string tying me to things now unknown.
 I feel her ragged breathes with every
 impossible splitting of my heart down the sides
 (reassuring, though it is.)
 She whimpers for tall grass
 For four mile an hour sunset skies
 She whimpers for sweet dinnertime light, sorry bedtime light
 (only sorry that the sun had set.)
 She whimpers for times when dirt was just dirt
 When it was just covered me and did not infect me.
 Did not turn me ugly from the inside out.
 But here I am, in the achingly clear air
 East of the sweet golden haze of childhood.
 East of sunburnt lemonade flavored afternoons
 East of innocence, oh but to take me west again
 would claw out the blighted line between innocence and ignorance
 So take me east, out into the naked places where
 the stars don't come out and the wild geese aren't made for chasing.

Art After Hours

Rachel Brownell

Paint-stained fingertips,
 Fruit-stained nailprints,
 Laughter melted on our lips.

Candy hearts pool red & white
 On rough denim cuffs
 Turned stiff by the acrylic night.

Tables topped with milk-swirled cheese
 Tight grape skins, canvas-stretch,
 Yield to fresh wet color-bursts: seize,
 Release, let thick pigments swarm with peace.

We held and stared and moved with ease
 Among those silvery drips of so many minds
 Which, when combined

Let sing spontaneity to make magnificence of time.

A National Tragedy

Olivia Weissblum

On the day the sky wept
 blood over Texas
 we stood together
 a little apart

Bad posture against the criss-cross
 chalky aluminum fence
 braids pulled tight
 and neat beneath the sometimes

Clear and lying blue infinity.
 She turned to me
 with a whoosh of plaid
 and a little skip

Fixing me in a tepid gaze –
 I don't really care at all, she said,
 It's not as if I knew them.
 My conscience relaxed then

Exhaling through my shoulders.
 Me neither, I whispered.
 Then she told me a myth
 she had heard that morning

About a human head then
 that fell from Heaven
 and onto the roof
 of someone's Toyota.

I aligned my toes
 with a crack in the ground
 and leaned all the way
 forward until nothing

But the very tips
 of my fingers clinging
 to the metal twists
 kept me from falling.

a Catch not Caught

Nissa Gustafson

More bass please,
 And the Vibrations are ruining my teeth.
 Wil'st thou speak me tender yonder and snatch a drip of sleep?
 The crazy maiden who stays here stole all of
 My Mirrors!

Slowdance blue pants and foxtrot to the moon.
 I thought you just yet might join me.
 Or did you call and say sorry
 you just couldn't make the date?

Spin spun alone. Slide sap trombone.
 Wil'st thou call later?
 And I can listen to her tell you that you're too nice to me.



Henry V, Julia Rigby

Collegiate Love Letters

Anonymous

I.

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm sorry we had sex.

Well actually, I think what I mean is

I'm sorry we'll never have sex again. Because while it was happening it was too dark to really see you, arms a little thin and hands a little rough with the weather and the air where you're from. I didn't get the chance to know every inch of you, subtle muscles shifting under skin and hair and smile flashing. It all went too fast too sweet too dark too much but it was over just too fast to give me the time to

Enjoy

Admire

Feel

Wait, no. That's not really it. What I mean to say is

I'm sorry you never want to have sex with me again. I'm sorry that I want to be your Elaine Robinson and I want to make you care, not only about where you are going but also where you have been and I want to rudely interject myself in between and hope that you will let me stay. I'm sorry that you'd rather count stars climb trees shoot hoops bake cakes pet cats swim laps write songs eat burgers kiss babies, anything but have sex with me again. I'm sorry that I want to touch you but you don't let me because you're all the way across the room and you flinch

When I step nearer

Like don't come closer.

I'm sorry I'm your best friend she's very nice very smart very beautiful very close but not enough sort of girl.

Yeah, I think that's right. That's what I mean. It's so hard to find the words I

mean to say I'm sorry I said we were on the same page just please let me explain: I lied.

I know, I know. Lying is bad. But the thing you don't realize is that

In these bodies on this bed in this room on this island in this little town in the United States of America on Google Earth we are here but not existing. So many nights we just had nothing to do but sit around and talk and lie down and hold hands and kiss.

You see? Everything begets everything else.

What you don't understand about us is that so many days we were too close together with nowhere else to go and no one else to talk to

So we were fascinated with each other

So bored we decided to do whatever

Except now I love you.

Yeah, I know that doesn't sound quite right I mean this is supposed to be a love letter! But if you think about it, you know what I'm saying is true. If you don't get drunk and you don't study like you want to become rich someday, the time seems never to pass

So we had sex

Except now I love you.

And lying is bad

You told me so

Now I know

You really don't love me I'm sorry we had sex.

II.

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm glad we had sex.

Sure, all my friends say you look a little too much like Kevin Federline to be

tasteful and maybe your golden days you left far behind you in high school, but I always thought you were pretty cool.

I wonder, though, what exactly are you going to do for the rest of your life? You can't keep picking girls up at the corner bar forever. They close up at 3 am and by then you might be balding or look down to discover that your varsity abs have turned into a beer belly I mean you never know.

Well, I guess that's all beside the point. I think what I'm trying to say is

I'm glad we ended up having sex. The probability that it would've happened is somewhere around .025 because I'm like 34 percent babysitter 28 percent text-book reader 16 percent capitol hill indignant 12 percent fingers on piano keys 7 percent mountain goat and only 3 percent sex kitten. You can't even deny you know that's the way it is because you never would've noticed me in high school. You were too busy

Floor Captain

Prom King

Lord of the Underworld

By the way, maybe you should think about getting a real job because being Lord of the Underworld won't really feed your children or give them health insurance or protect them from

The wind rain snow sleet

The toll-road salesmen SAT heartbreak

Sorry. I know it is none of my business. I just have this nervous tic where I try to make things turn out the way they are supposed to because I hate loose knots and lost shoes and I think you are probably one if not both. But that is neither here nor there I mean this is supposed to be a love letter! God, where was I?

Oh, right.

You keep me up at night.

Hoping that maybe if I love you enough, things will turn out all right for you and your strange thoughts and your mom who is dying but still wishes you would stop smoking so much weed. Because you see maybe if I love you enough, somehow you will hear me and understand that you don't have many chances left. Please understand, Lord of the Underworld

I can't sleep eat sit walk blink without thinking of you.

You are my responsibility now because

You are lost.

Hades so heavy a duty it is to love you but

If it will save you then

I'm glad we had sex.



Nicola Parisi

The Heron

Catherine Parker Sweatt

I happed upon a heron,
 who showed for lack
 of winged company.
 We were both loners
 on the quiet side of lake:
 I, trudging without seeing,
 a house arrestee on escape,

and he, craning as if spying
 brandied each feather like a key,
 narrow neck above fallen tree.
 We were both wardens
 in the lungs of winter gust:
 I, musing while I ambled
 had myself yet to flee.

But then he started, claw on log
 and leaped ashore towards me.
 I stopped and all was laughter
 in the empty wood.
 “The locksmith’s dead,”
 the Heron said.

“Sister,
 can’t you see?”

An Old Moon and a New Moon

Tessa Jacobs

This poem is a conversation with a piece of poetry found in the Kojiki (711 a.d) which deals with the adventures of Yamato the Brave. A translation of the original text is quoted within.

Dressless as I was the moon rose on the white hem of my thighs
 On the white cotton of the sheets

A woman in indignation once told her man:

*As the years one by one pass by
 The moons also one by one elapse
 It is no wonder that while waiting in vain for you
 On the cloak I am wearing the moon should rise*

I in indignation can only think

The years passed by but I am young in ways
 I wear my innocence like a cloak that I cannot take off
 Did you really think that when stumbling toward you in the dark
 The moon would not rise, guilty, over us both?

Surreal Self Portrait

Gabrielle Kelenyi

No creo en las coincidencias:
Thus, half Puerto-Rican-half
German-and-Hungarian exorbitance.
I am a cultural experiment—
For I was raised by too many white folks
In a plush neighborhood of ignorance
And bliss
And boredom.

I am permeable and in excess;
Thus, I am myself y mi otra,
(a)live like ideas in auxiliary masks.
Hay una ineficaz de palabras de contenerme
Because I am ambiguous—
What does it mean to be exceptional?

“It’s a condition.”
Or is it a duration—
What does it mean to be recognizable, identifiable?
Words are (as) inaccessible, unacceptable.
Yo estoy terriblemente bendecida;
Or maybe I am inadequate.

What is a sense of self?
It’s a way towards exits.

But am I defined by mis sueños, their dreams?
I am the production of happiness
From my parents
For my parents

On the mañana cálida I was born
The sky splintered into stars,
Watched me,
And dazzled,
As breathtaking as shiny knives.

My insides still tremor like poppies in the breeze
Es decir, con una maldita manía.

My windswept mind:
Betrayed by deviance,
Saved only by the intervention of words
Spewing from absent eyes
under veils of sombras rotas.

The other day, I wanted to draw
A picture of a girl without the language
Of my brother in her ear,
Without the discrimination of dirt
Underneath her fingernails.
I wanted to arrange her outside
The confines of her names
Full of dubious hollows

(Like the worlds I write)

The savage shadows under my eyes never die
Por que todo lo hago bien
Except when my ravings burn into my genius
Then I just write.

A Letter to a Pretty Girl

Remy Sutherland

To the Elderly Woman who operates the Duty Free kiosk,

I wonder if you see me here, lounging in the black leather seat bank of Gate A9, gazing at you as you fiddle with your iPhone. I wonder jealously if you are texting your decrepit husband back home or trying to forward some innocuously annoying chain mail to unappreciative grandchildren. Curiosity gets the best of me. I gingerly stand up from my recline and saunter coyly past your post, inconspicuously peering at the minute screen you hold in veiny glass-like hands. Only to find, the screen is completely black. My immediate confusion and dismay concerning your apparent senility soon turns to relief and pride as I realize an alternative rationale that quickly becomes unmistakably obvious in my mind. You were completely aware of my peeping-tom perch in the camouflage of Gate A9 and were simply faking outside socialization in order to perk my interest. Just as I remember doing in middle school upon going to see Pirates of the Caribbean2 for the third time with, among others, that girl whose legs came out of her knee-length plaid skirt so nicely and whose highlighter-pink bra showed through, insistently it seemed, her white polo. One might think I saw your flirtation techniques to be juvenile and off-putting, but honestly I was relieved. As I felt about it, it simply leveled the playing field that you inherently dominated, due to your septuagenarian status. The fact that you had lived through eight American wars (compared to my measly three) was counteracted by your ineptitude in standard flirtation. Now my grand vision of you accompanying me to that new black and white movie about an actor of the silent cinema coping with advancements in audio technology seems all but tangible. I envision you striding along myself in sexy six inch heels usually reserved for younger women, but that you occupy like a seductive flamingo. But Oh No, I suddenly have a potentially catastrophic thought: the temptingly svelte body that you occupy, and for which I anguish, is one commonly found on taller ladies. I could not stand to be a Tom to your Kate. I walk once again by your domain, daring an outright look in your direction in order to measure the relative locations of our heads, my sickeningly young piss yellow compared to your holy crown of aged silver. This being maybe my fifth pass by your kiosk in the past minute you finally address me, "Anything interest you hon'?" you ask mischievously. I leer at the little bit of tree bark textured cleavage peaking through your uniform, chaste as a catholic schoolgirl. I smile awkwardly and shake my head like a twitch. "No cigarettes?" The phallic symbolism is certainly not lost on me. Unable to make eye contact, I glance at the tourist advertisement to your right. I wish it were you and I on the beautiful beach pictured, the brilliant waves softly lapping at our toes. I look closer at the image

just to have anywhere to look other than your sweetly fermented face. It shows a small girl running on a sunlit sand dune, waves in the distance. I realize somewhat shamefully that it is an advertisement for the "Make-A-Wish" foundation that is the instigator of my sexual fantasy. I've hesitated a moment too long. You, silver-headed nymph, are back to toying with her dead phone with all the inane boredom of an Alzheimer's patient. I shuffle off to glean shameful peeks of made-up 20-somethings headed for MTL, who will at the very least grant me a rejection that is a little more familiar.

Yours.



Patrick Liu

1/2 of a sonnet

Remy Sutherland

For the past six months, my bed unmade,
So does my life undo, where you once laid.
For memory believes before remembers knowing,
I'll do half; my heart's backward growing.

You thought I'd come through, I'd finish well,
But I would never claim to do the best I can.
And though no one will see and no one will tell,
Here lies half a sonnet, by half of a man.

I Wrote You a Fish Once

Liz Lyon

I used to write you letters, remember?
Long, sprawling spidery lines of letters and words.
I would take three days for one letter,
Fill it with drawings and nonsense-thoughts
And everyday occurrences.

Do you remember what you said
When I wrote you about the fish?
I was cleaning the tanks; and one
Had sunk to the green gravel bottom.
It wasn't quite dead yet—this I didn't know.
It had probably been sick a few days, a cancer
In its eye, growing larger and larger.
The lens remained intact.

A dry test tube, and the sickly-sweet smell of ethanol—
No, we didn't use formaldehyde—and the fish
Was girdled in death-juice.
Its mouth twitched,
A premature burial
More like pickling
Did you know what? Its eye
Stuck to the side. It stared, wet and round
Against that dry surface.
That luminous globe, that viscous eye seeped blood.
Tainted, orange-red, the eye was a dying sunset.

And now, when I see blue fading
Into rusty orange, smeared across the sky
I think of the eye of a dying fish
And how you asked me not to write you
Such things anymore.

Madness & Language

Rachel Brownell

"The possibility of madness is therefore implicit in the very phenomenon of passion." - Michel Foucault

His billowing words
I gather
Together
Like an oversized sweater.

The sentences bunch in just the right way,
Thick woolen threads fuse together at smarting, snapping synapses of wit.
The collective warmth of burgeoning knowledge
Accompanied by the slightly scratchy feel of a derisive tone—
The fabric's electrified, fuzzy halo.

His letters are...tangible.

I wish I could wear his inky flourishes,
I wish they could envelop me
So I could become a fixture in this beautiful, solid world.
Instead they are trapped in these thin, dire pages,
Silenced without volume,
Without my fingers to smooth and knead them.

Stick Your Head In Gravy (1995, Autumn)

Olivia Weissblum

I'm still cute with my hair pulled back in a frizzy halo, white wool and jeans and little sneakers. I climb up on top of the bookshelf to show off and feel deeply ashamed when someone figures me out. I decide not to talk for the rest of the day.

I cried in the morning when they dropped me off, although I'm no longer sure why. When they take us to see the animals, I cling to my snotty tissue, trying to keep the tears running as long as I can stand. It's a struggle not to giggle and sacrifice self-pity when a sheep eats the nasty rag right out of my hands.

The turkey is a formidable beast, its proud chest puffed and its ugly head jutting with dumb curiosity as it waddles my way. Don't Stick Your Finger In The Turkey Cage, Megan! The teacher reprimands my friend, and I know right away that I have to do it. I tentatively poke a tender finger toward the fat bird. It pecks, as is its nature, and I cry, as is mine.

Catgirl and Other Details (1996/7, Season Unknown)

Olivia Weissblum

At four years old, I am a cat. I wear my ears day and night. They are perky and cardboard. Sometimes I also wear a tail and whiskers. I meow and walk on my knees. I don't understand purring yet.

The teacher is an older, stout, frowny woman with cropped gray hair and lines around her mouth. She says garbazz because it makes her sound French (or so she jokes, perhaps, I cannot tell at this time) and once advised us to hold our scissors inward when we run with them, so as to stab ourselves instead of others in the event of a collision. She runs snack-time on a strict capitalist basis – the big kids always get there first, but You Get What You Get. It's her cross-armed singsong chant. Orange slices, hot dogs, dirt in a cup, nothing. You Get What You Get.

I'm not a cat anymore today. The teacher told me that I have to be myself, and I'm not sure what that is, but I guess it's not a cat.

Bella vista Natalie Dunn

His poems of love bring you to his house of collections
sea-glass bottles
little ancient lakes
spill puddles of light onto the floor
Neruda's blue-green ghost
playful and sad
is folded into a parched landscape
a piece of lapis lazuli concealed in the brick wall
a horse from India robed with round mirrors
Russian nesting dolls still in place

small things— perpetual
repetitive
true
remind you of a loyalty you have not found yet

he knew of smallness
whispered about it to you in breaths between words

and you feel loss because he introduced the moon to you

he taught you to live like seawater
(Loose and alone)
Salmon fishing—your father
Coral-red flesh swims
He catches it (in a whisper)
He and it become a handful of earth and sea

Slender moon
Stay in place—small thing

Camel Girl

Robin Xu

They all say she must be crazy.
With that wild hair and those hazy eyes
She sits on the grass, rain or shine, and taps
The nonsense from her mind into words on paper

Camel Girl.

She's been an insomniac since she was four.
Worse, she's felt somewhat like a Beast of burden
And cursed at least since seventeen
When she and Daddy-o first met.

(Whenever she gets upset
She wishes she were less transparent
Or maybe just that he were a little more so.)

Camel Girl loves her Daddy-o.
She knows he's a genius, though she's not sure why.
Sweet like a gentleman, he opens her door
But he is impossible to please.
Sometimes she pokes her tongue out to tease him
But the closest she gets to a smile is a sigh.
Camel Girl is tired of all the lies.
Daddy-o is kind of like a Father but not quite.
She cries when he leaves her easily
Like please, you love me, please, please

(Camel Girl has had four humps
Three of which she enjoyed
But only one of which she is still in Love with.)

They all say he drove her crazy.
With his dark stare and his hazy lies
She wants him only day and night and
There is no relief in her mind but putting words on paper

Camel Girl hides her camels in the closet.
There they lie, nearly too close to handle.
Their noses poking out and teasing
Like please, you need me, please, please

She only gives in on late night walks
When his lights are near
And the tears begin to fall



A Sunlit Night in Cloud Forest, Olivia Weissblum

Untitled

Jenna Tico

1.

Sometimes I see myself as a skeleton

Just a pile of spine

2. Resting blood pressure: 90/60 mm/Hg to 120/80 mm/Hg

What she should have told us was that she was dying *soon*. She was dying yesterday, and the day before that—dying while She measured hazelnut coffee onto a tablespoon, using Her toes to propel a rocking chair back and forth back and forth as She raised the hot liquid to her lips. Just because there are beepbeepbeeps coming out of Her does not mean She'll die any sooner than I am here, crosslegged, moving so fast (thousands of miles above the middle of the United States) that I swear I'm not moving at all.

I'm looking at the man directly across the aisle: a mullet balances atop his head like a piece of raccoon that got tired on its way to the cockpit. I want to find a way to bring it up in conversation, to begin (perhaps) with the tiny star inked beneath his left eye and then find a way to touch his hair, because I'm overwhelmed by the feeling that—at one point—he considered it to be a good idea. His wife is tracing her lack of eyebrow with what looks like a felt-tip marker. I want them to look at each other, for her to hold me in her torso like a cough and keep me there as the landing gear stammers out. I want to touch my cheek to her face and to the window, and I want to scream underwater until bubbles shoot out my nose.

Ding.

3. Breathing: 12-18 breaths per minute

A twentysomething from Seville seduces my friend, and then phones his wife. My uncle drinks the mouthwash when he thinks no one is looking. Meanwhile, She is a surge protector at the center of a dozen beepbeepbeepings, small eyes staring forward and up like She can't believe that She is the common denominator. Other than the connection between pencil and post-it, Her eyes are the only things that move. Four blue ones meet and She drinks me in *Treasure tiny sips of water*

And when I say that I will, I am lying. There is only something green that has the texture and temperature of vomit. While we stand in a circle, crying, my face is pressed into my mother's clavicle; a sharp pain flashes against my cheekbone, and I close my fingers around it. Finally, a pain that reveals itself FACE FIRST instead of the one that crawls up through the box spring of a bed

that I slept in as a child that smelled like summer at the beach and the sex that I didn't even know I wanted to have and the idea that my neck was free,

would ever I can understand.

My mother, suddenly a daughter, and an uncle who smells like a combination of Glade Plug-Ins and flood damage. I wish I could get up in the middle of the night

But I thought I wouldn't feel Her illness in my body until She was done with it.

4. Pulse: 60 - 100 beats per minute

Fade in on a girl eating cereal out of a flowerpot, hips resting against the sink, eyes focused on a point somewhere on the other side of the snow-crusted window. Actually, that's a lie—probably straight out of some TV show I pretend I don't watch. What I'm really doing is eating cereal out of a perfectly normal plastic bowl. With a fork. What are dreams except a Technicolor vision of what we think we've already seen, only minus the smell?

Pan to a hospital scene, beepbeepbeep, and a parade of saltine crackers lining the arm of a plasticky chair. It's my seventh hour here, and they still haven't touched Her feeding tube. Milky liquid pours out of the tracheotomy and onto Her chest, the same place that I used to place my head. I think this thought, I eat it up, and am acutely aware that The Melodrama has placed it there; not me, that it is not my thought, it belongs to this room and the fluorescent light buzzing overhead. But I swallow it anyway, and wonder if airport security can smell broken hearts the way they can drugs and Gatorade.

How much can they see with that x-ray machine?

I can see Her heartbeat beneath the cotton sheath on her chest. Thump. Thump. Thump.

Zoom in on a girl standing in the hall, phone pressed against her ear, hear, with a melted face. It's absolutely unbelievable how long it takes someone to die; it's unbefuckinglybelievable with all the beepbeepbeeps and the nights spent awake and the diapers and the needles and the numb, the numb, when a relationship can end in the time it takes for tiny waves to travel from a phone in California to one in New Jersey. Roger that. The Melodrama throws its head back and cackles, because surely in this moment I am not alive, *How unfair, How horribly insensitive, How could this Possibly have Happened to YOU what did YOU do to deserve this WHO DOES THAT how could this possibly you won't make it, you won't make it, you won't.*

And much to my surprise, the floor does not open up and swallow me whole. My feet walk me back to Her room, past Her roommate with the stain trickling down her starchy sheets and onto the floor, and Past. Present. Future.

5. Temperature: 97.8 - 99.1 degrees Fahrenheit / average 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit

Optimist, pessimist, narcissist.

One, two, three.

There are different types of knowledge: the things you know, the things you know you don't know, and the things you don't know you don't know. I've heard it said

That bad luck comes in threes.

I've muscled myself into this position

Optimist, pessimist, narcissist.

6.

Ding. Flight attendants, prepare for landing.

You feel things too strongly, like the delicate skin under your eyes. The mountains below look like veiny hands, gripping onto California for dear life. You understand, quite suddenly, what alone feels like—grief is something you do alone. Losing someone is something that only you do. There is more than one position for the neck, and sometimes forward and up feels more like a whispered ah than a freeing of the head or back. The muscles lengthen and widen, but they do it in the weird half-place between sleeping and waking where you can't leave for fear that you'll miss something.

There's a feeling, just a feeling, and the engine hums beneath your spine; and your palms, they are wet. And the delicate skin under your eyes, it is wet.



Nicola Parisi

If I Were to Meet You Again

Rachel Grate

Sometimes I can almost
taste
what it would be like to see you again.
Perhaps on a Sunday,
bustling on errands until shuffling
into our old errors and
taking a moment
to sit at a local café table-
round, built for two,
with no room for laptops
or whatever the latest contraption
built to block conversation with a screen.

You would order your usual-
iced tea, unsweetened-
and I would order a
skim soy mocha, with whip
(if such combinations even exist)
to show you that I've changed.
I've matured.
I drink coffee now,
I know the business-woman lingo
but I haven't forgotten to indulge
in frothy fun from time to time.

I would hide my grimace
while trying to drink coffee undisguised
by cream and sugar
and you would rub
the tip of your nose, freckled
as it always is by late summer.
We would listen to the barista bark orders
and look out the window
until you'd slowly bring your hands together
in the universal symbol for
awkward turtle.

We would laugh, then
and I would push my coffee away
remembering suddenly
that you never were the one that judged.
So I would ask the clichéd questions
but listen genuinely as you answered honestly,
telling me how your dog is,
how you finally stopped worrying
about how nerdy your passion for robotics is,
and how your little brother got his first girlfriend.

I would wonder if they reminded you of us
at the age where we still classified "lip kisses"
and my dad drove you home after dates
and you accidentally scratched a pimple at my house once
and I pretended not to notice the blood
but you turned bright red,
stuttering to excuse yourself to the bathroom.
But I wouldn't ask those questions
because we would be two mature individuals
grabbing coffee and talking about the future
while politely avoiding the past.

Until finally, I would open my mouth
to release the "I'm sorry" it caged for four years
only to realize, as you lean down to hug me
our final goodbye
that there is nothing to be sorry for.



Henry I, Julia Rigby



Hilf Mir, Olivia Weissblum
Based on text by
Rammstein and Hoffman

Passwords

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