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Passwords, Fall 2011

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Passwords

Volume 12, Issue 1, Fall 2011

Passwords

A Claremont Colleges Literary Magazine



Patrick Yu-Hao Liu

Passwords
A Claremont Colleges Literary Magazine
Volume 12, Issue 1, Fall 2011

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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Robert Bodor, Ariel Bloomer, Brett Erspamer, Nicola Parisi, Patrick Yu-Hao Liu



Ariel Bloomer

In this semester's writing contest, contestants had one hour to write a poem or prose work incorporating one or more of three objects: a scarf, a painting, or a knife.

Teeter-totter teeny-bopper

Anonymous

I was in the desert under the red red rocks
shade in the shadow beyond
the far field, waiting
under the sparse cosmos, tethered.

So I sat there, decaying
in psychaedia, hanging
by my loose ends, rotting
cables and brass threads.

I saw strobe lights in the afternoon, two stars
in the red sky at night, neon faces
in dark caves, cobwebs
on every cactus.

One day, a little boy with a knife
on each finger tip climbed
into the web and cut me
free.

Unhomely

Madeleine Wolf

We sat at the table
fork and knife in hand.
Hours fell before us as
we gobbled up Time.
At last,
the moon led us back
so kindly
to our car.

I must have forgotten who I was on the drive home.
Because when we arrived, it was as if
my skin was too small for me and was no longer my own.
Inside the house
we felt odd.
The floor groaned
to hold our weight.
On the walls,
our pictures,
but maybe
not our faces.

Below the Waves

Ariel Bloomer

I sat on the beach, wrapped in a blanket, watching the spotlights of the coast guard helicopters scan the waves for you. I imagined that I had dove into the waves and swam out to you. I could've pulled you to safety, and we would've sat on the rocks while you caught your breath, and we could have been naming new constellations as we listened to the waves, and you would've been in my arms and warm and smiling. But your eyes were so wide, when you screamed my name. I thought that I would never see you again.

I woke up with a tail and scales, and my skin a grey pallor. I touched my face and my neck. I breathed in and out. I felt the water push through the flaps of skin on my neck, opening and closing like the gills on a fish. I am fish. Where are you?

When summer ended, I had to go back to school, but it didn't feel right without you. I took picked classes and sat in lectures and filled out bubbles A,B,C, or D even though they didn't mean anything. They never found you, and when I stared at the posters of the ocean floor, I wondered where you were.

I learned to use my legs again even though they were no longer legs and instead felt as if they had been strapped together and restrained. I used to try to separate them again. If I thought hard enough, maybe my tail would break to reveal two perfect legs underneath. And then one day I stopped, and learned to move my legs as a tail, and I could swim as far and as fast as I wanted.

It snowed at the beach this December and my friends and I had a bonfire there on the rocks where we watched the flakes disappear into the roiling black. You would've liked this, I thought. I wanted you here. I wanted you still. I never wanted to stop looking for you. I decided I wouldn't.

For a time, I explored the water. I swam through kelp forests and open-ocean and found coral reefs there on the other side. I followed pods of dolphins and sometimes they followed me. I saw sharks that were not all that interested in eating me, and a few that were. I swam under boats, and around submarines. I swam deep, sometimes, just to see what there would be, but the light only goes so far, and maybe I don't want to see the fish beyond that after all. Eventually, I came back to haunt the places where we used to go. It's strange to see them from below the waves.

I took a job on a boat and the rope felt hard and coarse and thick in my hands. Unwieldy and strange where pen or pencil should have been. But on the deck there were no walls and no posters and when we left the dock I could see water and water and somewhere there you would be. Maybe. One day.

You would eat your lunch on the pier, staring out, and I would watch you from below. It filled me with yearning to be there with you by your side, holding your hand, and also with hunger, because eating fish felt too cannibalistic and seaweed just wasn't that filling. Perhaps I would've been better off to leave and say good-bye and live a life of swimming with whales and eating fish and being free. I couldn't leave you here, alone on the pier. So I watched you, but didn't know how to let you know I was there.

I always looked for you, and couldn't shake the feeling that you were there, somewhere, if only I looked hard enough. I would stand aft and watch for you among the dolphins in our wake, until someone would gruffly hit me upside the head and I would resume work—casting and hauling and dumping fish into the hold. I would yank the fish from the nets, the ones caught by their gills, and feel so alone and angry with the sea.

I couldn't just watch you anymore. I needed you to know I was here. I needed you to see me and grab my hand and know you weren't alone. I watched you scream madly at the ocean until your shipmates pulled you back from the edge. You were growing a beard and I imagine had I been next to you, there would've been rum on your breath. I knew it was stupid. I just wanted you to see me, and understand. You cast a net and I swam into it. I wrapped my hands into the netting and held on, waiting for you to pull me back above the water.

I stood to the side and thought about the swells. They could take me, I thought. I could end this. I could find you down there myself. The boat lurched sideways and a loose pulley swung, and caught me in the back of the head. I stumbled forward and over.

I was wrapped in the netting and felt the tug that meant they were starting to slowly pull the net up into the boat. I heard a splash and looked to see you face down in the water. I tried to let go of the net, but it was wrapped too tightly around my hands, and my tail was snagged. I thrashed around and felt the net drop slightly before the men regained their grip and began to pull me up faster. I watched you sink into the dark, until I was pulled back into the air.

Tired

Kate Kennelly

When I walked into the room,
she was looking at me.
“Is something wrong?” I said.
I stole the question quickly,
afraid she’d ask it of me.
“No,” she said.
“You just look really tired.”
I was looking at her sideways now.
Heavily, I dug for the magic inside me,
summoned the small smile,
laminated my eyes with light and levity.
“Yeah,” I said. The only word I spoke
was supposed to be warm like honey,
but it came out as brittle as bone.
There is nothing young or magical
about being tired. I wonder how long
she thought about me, after she told me
I looked this way, I thought a long time
with each and every heavy step I took
towards the sullen desk, breaking inside
I wanted to tell her: I’m exhausted.



Ariel Bloomer

My name in Haitian Creole

Catherine Sweatt

Teeth crack open the canape
A green smooth egg

In the street, a market woman cries
Gade tit blan la kom li laid

I never knew I was white
No one ever reminded me

Until now. Have white eyes
Forgotten black mouths?

How unlike it’s shell, my tongue
Says. Sucking apricot flesh

Tit blan la, li fille ou garcon?
I never knew I wasn’t a woman

Until now. Is my peachy skin
A shell I have to shed?

Being Blan here
I’ll never reach the canape pit.

*See the little white one there, how ugly she is!
Little white one there, is it a man or a woman?

Six Colorful Saturday Mornings

Erica Bellman

I.

Saturday morning yawned and bared its pointed teeth at the girl's bare shoulders, rising and falling beneath the iris' violet-eyed marble of the peach flesh daybreak.

II.

Saturday
 morning broke
 into the room while
 darkness lay in
 velvet folds
 embroidered day
 stitch by silver
 stitch upon
 blue midnight.

III.

Sat
 urday
 morning came
 late, they slept in
 with limbs entangled
 under the green bower's
 trellis of vines, leaves, bare skin
 bathed in the gold-green light of
 day glowed through their stained-glass, prismatic.

IV.

Saturday morning: egg yolk eyes, greasy bacon grin, coffee brewed black iridescent, bread toasted brown, butter not jam, yellow sun sliced with a silver edge, speared with silver tine, taste daylight, chew, swallow, INDONESIA'S VOLCANO ERUPTS AGAIN! Saturday, November 6, 2010

V.

Saturday morning was an ember
 in the east
 a charcoal still-life
 of the earth enlivened by
 a clementine seed
 the artist
 sowed in the horizon
 an ash field, a garden
 of pixilated gray, dark
 gray, light
 orange.

VI.

SATURDAY MORNING
 RED



Nicola Parisi

Untitled

Emmett Radler

Like a tourist in my own city,

or a houseguest in my own home, uptown with you
still has the gilded aura of one hundred years ago;
the air is still crisp as an ancient McIntosh, and nearly
as gold. One hundred years' quiet march, one hundred
earnest groundhogs burrowing the dirt.

You held me cycling, circling, gasping for air, up unraced streets
past the red lighthouse beacon of before. I wore a gold watch smaller
than the current day's fashion and I checked the time twice as we
scaled the cliffs over the Hudson, saw the land Astor kept still,
walked up nearly marble steps to a canopy right on the cusp of gleaming

For a small supper meal of late summer / early fall fruit
in the time of boats and of forts. Something about a harbor,
something she said. Clean as a forest is clear as a bell,
and candlepower fences call out
for trespassers of time.



Nicola Parisi

Is that what you meant?

Mia Cooledge

Did I hear you say you love me?
I know you didn't say it, but
language is so confused these days.
It could be what you meant when you
glanced up at me when I
wandered into the room.

Did I hear you say you love me?
I know you didn't say it, but
life goes by so fast these days.
It could be what you meant when you
paused to wait for me when I
followed you out of the room.

Did I hear you say you love me?
I know you didn't say it, but
rumors always lie these days.
Perhaps that's what you meant when your
hand skittered off my waist as he
walked into the room.

Did I hear you say you love me?
I know you didn't say it, but
my fear makes me doubt these days.
It could be what you meant when you
pulled my blanket close as I
felt a chill pass through the room.

Read the Fine Print

Alexa Carrasco

Here's the thing about school. You wake up, you sit, you walk, you keep walking, you look around, you wake up. Here's the thing about school. You wake up, you walk, you wake up, you wake up. Here's the thing about _____. I can't wake up.

The walls of this high school are lined with baggy jeans, tight tank tops, bitter smirks. You think you know something because you go here. Because you are: The System. Because you are everything they talk about on TV, in the newspaper, in the big rooms at city hall. Because you are: The System.¹ Here's the thing: you wake up, you pour a bowl of corn flakes or maybe today you don't because maybe today drinking coffee on the corner during 1st period will be your way of saying fuck the system, the system isn't me. This is besides the point. The thing: you wake up, you eat something, you pick up your backpack (unopened since period 6, 2 days ago), you are 4 minutes late, so you forge the 3rd please excuse my sleepy little girl note and become 1 step closer to Saturday School.²

1st period: US History. I love you America you are my soul the inner implications of my stroll my step my swag. I love you because you are red white and blue because one day that will make green grass white fence benjamin franklin duplicated all over the yard. The System, Why America is Fucked Up and Not Talking About It, How to Evade the Situation, How to Cross an Ocean only to Fall Asleep (alternate class titles). The thing about The System is sleep. You/I/We are sleeping. You + I = We, We = Us, Us = They. They, who teach us to sleep.

2nd period: Statistics. There are 3,681 students attending this high school. Of those 3,681 students, 32% consider themselves "white". 56% will attend a 4 year college. 78% will graduate. 33.3% will be happy. 45.7% will be sad. 15% will be undecided. 9% of this group labeled "undecided" will never decide. 96% won't forget why. 4% will be dead.

The thing about The System: you wake up and when I say wake up I mean open your eyes and let your body exist in the action while your mind hides away from the Why. The thing: you wake up, you pour yourself that cereal, you sling your backpack along one shoulder, the right one (the right one), you show your ID card at the gate, you put down your number. 955610, stapled on your forehead. 1995, the year you entered the Los Angeles Unified School District. The same year that 647,611 students entered the same don't give up on us district. The thing. The System.

Listen up. There will be no tangents here only some small print at the bottom you won't be expected to read and even if you are you'll probably just skim over it like fine print, like the facts behind the story. In this instance: "%", "4", "dead".

3rd period: Marine Biology. Johnny's pissed off. He's angry because Mr.Harris told him to reach into the trash bin and grab that bottle of Sprite he threw in there casually and put it in the recycling bin. Help it go where it belongs. Johnny doesn't like Mr.Harris because Mr.Harris cares. Because Mr.Harris looks him in the eye in a wake up because I see you sort of way. There is only one thing we need to know about teachers who care. Fear them. Break them. Look at the ground while they chat with you. Smile at the most inappropriate times. Make a loud exit.³

Here's the thing about school. You wake up. You wake up only to close your eyes again, you close them because something in the air says you best be closing those eyes, son, there's nothing here to see and there's no sense in the dream and the dust could turn you blind, anyways.⁴ You want to like Mr.Harris but you won't. You can't. You+I=We. We=Us. Us vs. They. They, who teach us to sleep.⁵

1. System: A regularly interacting or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole and under the influence of related forces.

2. Saturday School: Capital Punishment.

3. Our senior year, Johnny's best friend will be killed on Pico and 27th. People will look at him in an I'm sorry and you know this isn't fair kind-of-way but they'll never say it. We'll be in Mr.Harris's classroom when we find out, and we'll look deep into our desks like they are more than the etchings of a bored yesterday. He'll stand up there in front of us like always but for the first time have nothing to say because he knows the 2 most important things at play here: 1. He is our They. 2. He is beat. The System has beat him. All 3,681 students will gather in the quad for one day and let 10 years of tears fall onto the screen of KTLA and NBC and for once, people on the other end will see why we are broken and not outraged why we are gone and not together, why we have packed our bags to go to sleep. Kids these days and that rap music, never thought there could be a generation more lost than we were on 7 tabs of acid. At least we were saying something about it.

4. The System.

5. Sleep: the suspension of consciousness, state of torpid inactivity, the act of not-seeing.

Static Jane

Erica Bellman

Jelly jar from somewhere
Upstate, circa 1978
weeps onto the patio
table that should be
outside
but is instead
inside
56 Jane Street.

Brown mouse surveys
the inventory, judging from
the spider-veined porcelain.
Cactus arm headlocks
the studio, a giant's limb or
a boa constrictor
with rows of teeth.

She shifts
only to lift
a pounds-heavy page.

I am Helen
I am Rapunzel:
don't ask me
to throw down my hair—I
haven't washed in days.
I am elephantine and
microscopic,
dynamic in my
ecstasis.

September

Paolo Baeza

comes alive in the rusting of trees,
the fickle sureness of fall, the auburn beauty of still landscapes
inciting the heart to speak its mind in the indeterminacy of autumnal change.
it's my birth month and i'm watching baseball players talking about the weather
with slick optimism. nature shares its gifts so subtly, the growth of trees
in abundance, all fire but so subtle in the way it predicates hibernation and
the death of leaves. september is a month of cognition. children migrate to
school and everyone is celebrating the death of hedonism through barbecues
and lacing their shoes in eager readiness (if only because august gets stale) for
the novelty of intellect. the sky blossoms, but it, too, has wizened,
caressing the earth dutifully, as if time, in spite of transience, consists
of an eternal stillness, and so there is a knowing shyness, a stillness,
too, in the depth of my spirit - august is proud and november sings with
tension, but september glorious indeterminacy collides with quiet faith -
i speak for september! i speak for unstoppable change! i await the tidings
of fallen autumn leaves so surely, with such devotion, my heart is falling
over itself to please, to move, to dance in the wisdom of year's eve and
the possibility of waking dreams, and i know the unyielding beauty of a
moment in waiting, a glimpse of what we mistakenly,
all too often, call conclusion,
as my birth rite.



Nicola Parisi

Untitled

Emmett Radler

“Get your hands off my daughter. Get your. Get your. Get your hands off my daughter. Get your hands off of her. Get your hands off of my daughter. Get your. Get your hands. Get. Get your hands off of her, son.”

Pick up truck’s matte white. Flat bed’s got three toolboxes pushed up against the walls, the entire contents of the shed behind his childhood home. He doesn’t live there anymore, but still he could’ve gone there. He could’ve gone anywhere.

“I said, get your hands, get your fucking hands off of her now. Now.”

“Get up.”

Last week they did it on the beach, up past the thick swaths of dune-grass on the side of the dunes that bracket a house whose owners were on vacation elsewhere. The shingles greyed by years of salt, a kind of salt and pepper tint to them, like the father’s hair. The father is now pulling at her hair, which will never be salt and pepper because it will always be dirty blonde, which is not far from what the father thinks as he tugs.

“Get up.”

He doesn’t know if he should punch or run or

He just stands there, his dick still kind of hard as he fastens his boardshorts up. His body is tall and tan and lean and as hard as his tongue in her mouth. He’s been doing construction work this month because now it’s headed toward fall and the lifeguard season’s about to end and he’s got the pick up truck and the wetsuit and the board and sometimes he buys his mom’s groceries and sometimes just sometimes he would like to take her for more than \$2 Buds at Nardi’s when they’re playing live music. He took her to Raimondo’s and still, after they had sex on his mother’s couch while the mother slept, still she watched him eat an entire sleeve of English Muffins, buttered on both sides but then sandwiched together.

He eats a lot and he surfs a lot and he’s fucked a lot of girls on this island, the father knows that. He can drink a six pack in sixty seconds flat and was a pretty promising hockey player in high school. He had bleach blonde hair until he was 12 and it started to grow out, and it grew out long and brown and curly around his bright bright eyes.

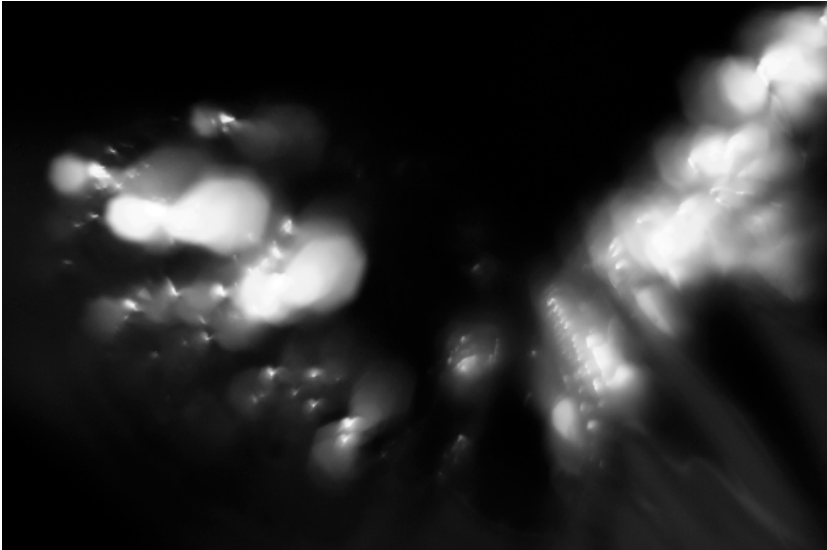
Well I have brown curly hair and I have bright bright eyes and if I am going to go to sleep but stop myself first, these are the kinds of things I’m going to think about.

The white middle-class American male, a primer: There is no object without its other. No white American middle-class male without the white American middle-class father, or the mother.

Recourse to objects? Wood shingled house, German car, Grandfather watch. Are they always just given or can they ever be properly gotten? These things all have lineage, and, in my dream, I place myself on the outside of them.

Father helps son off on American dream and son thinks: fuck you. But not before son thinks: woman. My dream is stupid, too, because just this summer my girlfriend and I biked all the way through Brooklyn to the pristine nature beach. It’s a nice ride—along the way you can see gorgeous gutted townhouses on shady side streets, many of which houses are shingled, many freshly so. You will also see strollers pushed along by very young white couples on their way to Saturday’s farmer’s markets. At the farmer’s markets, you can buy things from farms that are not too far away. I feel a certain kind of white when I pass them, because my bike and my clothing and especially my shoes remind me that I am not the kind of white that I was in before I fell asleep. But this kind: I buy my girlfriend too expensive food, and half the time I let her pay. I work like a dog but sleep in my mother’s house, and put what would never be considered rent money towards a brand new car that’s not even quite the dream car, because matte white pick ups get shit mileage and, my dad also likes to remind me, are just asking to be jacked.

The beach was quiet that day, though a touch more crowded than I thought it would be, so after we swam in our white bodies, and ate our \$16 eggplant parm heroes, we too had sex in the dunes, in broad though bounded daylight, unplanned, and a hell of a lot more consensual than it had seemed in the dream. And I am sorry, to the girl in the dream especially, but also to my father, who has a daughter that likes to get too drunk at lifeguard parties and go home with the tall tan unwitting types on weekend nights, and to my mother, who still pays for my groceries with her share of my father’s mountain of money. So really I am not sorry to my father. On a bad day I am sorry for myself. Mostly I am sorry to the girl. To be this kind of a straight white male, the muscular fatherless maybe kind of dumb sort, is a no joke genuine desire of mine, sometimes, but only when I’m getting into my king sized white sheets all alone.



Robert Bodor

Not Quite Perfect

Mia Cooledge

I hardly think you're perfect,
and my faith in you is small.
I don't know if you're the one for me,
or if there's anyone at all.
But as you walk away from me
when I long to have you near,
I know that there is just one voice
that I wish to hear.
Your voice is not so stellar
as the angels on their clouds,
but my heart still skips a beat
even when you speak too loud.
Your smile is rather crooked,
your hair is rather dull,
and I'm sure your stubble's scratchy,
like a piece of steel wool.
Even though you are not perfect,
hardly my heroic knight,
you sometimes know just what to say
to make my day go right.
and while that's not enough
for me to want to be your wife,
I want you here beside me
for this small part of my life.

To my collegiate libertine

Catherine Sweatt

To be scorned for lack of skill
in the bedchamber
is as if to be blinded for
counting sheep,
when all I wanted was
to lay awhile
in serenity, at ease
in all my finery.

A skin—
my milk and honey—woe!
'Tis never
enough for thee. Then drink
of whores
like Byron, savvy, you think,
but crummy
in one lonely capacity:

They'll never
let you stay the morn
your chin
upon my bosom sweet!



Brett Erspamer

Annuity Coepris

Ben Fish

Mottled in vine green slogans
Of Latin promises long forgotten
Fought over by water
Through washer and dryer,
Tucked in pockets,
Changing hands.

Statues of dead men
Stare stonily from their engraven images.
Yet those who stare back are not stones
But the white water flowing over them.

I reach down and check my pockets
But there's not even a wet penny
For the pay phone
And my thumb cannot help me
On an empty road
So I shrug my shoulders
And push off from the bank
Back onto the winding river.

The roar of a battle cry
Signals the war against the granite
But somehow they find themselves
Stuck in place:
A very existence
Owned by the rocks that form
Their endless curves.

Rock gives way
To the placid timbres of a lake
And I find myself
Spun out into a blue expanse
As the encroaching darkness
From the wooded shore
Finds my kayak –
Novus ordo seclorum.

From Whence Emmett Radler

At the apex of the bridge the evening following the hurricane
when the sky was orange the wind was strong the city was
calm, every man crossing the bridge was trans like me,
like some sort of flocking,
like some fledgling falling off the map--

In hurricanes we are reminded that we are a precarious island always poised--
Most days I push my way to the top of bridge and race down, using
pedestrians and cyclists alike as my gates,
mere obstacles in my
stupid slalom.

But I ran three miles into the wind that day
with nothing but traffic cones as my hurdles. And when the sun set on top of the
bridge,
I had passed more trans men than I knew lived in the entire fucking metropolis.
And I was also remembering the ways in which I had hurt her--

Of course I cried.
As if the harder I get my body to be,
the more you can see I'm
too soft. I told my dad about it
off-hand in an email to check in about the storm,
to see how the house I too used to live in had weathered it,
and if and how well he had slept, for once. I made some meek joke
about being such a wussy boy. For being too soft. In return, from a man
so prone to pragmatic narcissism: *I often find a good cry to start day assures
pleasantries all day long which underscores these views of choice*

And what of these views?: to rise with the sun and the skate ramps that pump
clean calm fluid blood
in an attempt to synchronize my pulse. To dive into a pool I can lap barely once,
and do so again and again until it is rote. Until it is fane.

Every man was crossing the Williamsburg Bridge of their mind that day--
Ferlinghetti's Sunday Subways were dark in the station,
because Rockaway was torrent, was beast.
So finding the nearest water to lap, to cry.
The city was the city

only and just and
hearts were introspect, but hearts were not unkind.

In the city I am really white, and I am liberal arts student besides. That's easy.
But
In the city I am sometimes but not always a slightly bookish sixteen year old boy
who still gets the raised eyebrow, the odd wink, buying cigarettes
and at the wine shop again and again to pick something nice up for his thirty-
four year old lover.
Sometimes but not always the two of us draw blank stares,
masking maybe incredulity maybe even ire
from elder gay gentleman who want to know, I'm sure, what in the world kind of
business this woman has with me.
My father is not the only reason I am prone to pragmatism, or to narcissism.

In the city I disobey traffic laws and pedestrian laws alike.
In the city sometimes but not always I used to be a dyke of indeterminate age
who may or may
not have considered herself butch. It must've been hard to tell
because I am so small and so soft
in the face, if not the eyes. If anybody in this city looked at my eyes (or better
still, my hands)
they would know what underlies what seems,
what underscores these views of choice.

Every man that day had aimed for the heart of what makes time
over money,
what slows down on a corner already
turned: run into yourself sipping a cup of coffee, being seen and so having to
leave immediately.
Cross the street and find yourself buying fresh pasta, fresh produce
for a dinner you will almost certainly not clean up until
the morning after the hurricane leaves the ocean glassed like lacquer, slick like
liquid has always
been in the back of your mind.

Pieces of Me

Alana KO Murphy

And desk light reflects from glass-covered postcards,
to frame my warped face in the handwriting
of those I love.
And you are the only one
whose finger prints are not pinned
among a pile of color and ink.
But I am strewn across your room:
stickers, temporary tattoos, and crinkled folded paper strips,
all scribbled with my cursive initials.
Mismatched earrings hidden in among
week-old cups of coffee,
crumb-covered plates,
and deserted novels:
piled-up, half-broken-in spines.
Your sheets reek peaches,
rubbed raw with my skin.
Your bathroom cabinet
hides two toothbrushes:
one pink, the other blue.

And nervously I wonder,
how many painful excavations
will fail to uncover
all the pieces of me
you have strewn across your life...

Untitled

Daniel Carlton

warm day blues, dulldrums, melancholy
afternoon nap, sinking into warm skin,
encapsulated, safe. Cigarette smoke lingers,
hangs, stays. Ash accretion, little dead things
collecting in piles. Sunshine, barbeque-baseball
weather. The sense of sitting w/a book,
curled up, warmed through glass.
Summer weather, winter feelings, snow storm lonely.
After school lethargy, couches, snacks, cartoons;
mind blank, subdued. Different, fleeting,
glimpses, uneasy, unsure. Time accumulating,
weight, waxing, immobile; sitting solitary; inactive,
tired. Mental recourse: availing nothing, dead-
ends, powerless. Waiting.



Nicola Parisi

Rosehips

Catherine Sweatt

I dead-headed my mother's roses today
that is to say, for those of you who aren't familiar,
cut off all the curvaceous rosehips in the garden;
they are chaffy once they bloom so
we cut them so to breed more show.

I used to rhapsodize: I was one among
none, a many-petaled flowering,
each day a surprise even unto myself
but unlike the red, red rose, of which poets of yore
sing, I emerged in late May.

Keen among the skyward glances of the
smarting rosebush green, I found myself lost
among a multitude, wandering in a throng
thorns not bitter and death not fearful
for there were stars, hundreds of them

each proud to bear a small sac, soon crimson
a birth, a resurrection once the blazing petals
had brought all the bees a-frotting.
Mother never told me there would be so many;
she never told me that I was not special.

For here they were wasting whimsical
whispering to preserve with naive temerity
when their maternal stock would make do just fine
with earth instead of air, craftily quieting
through the dead of winter, strumpet of the spring.



Patrick Yu-Hao Liu

Goldfish have seams (Things I learned in college)

Christina Boardman

Goldfish have seams.
 I like pears.
 Lindt truffles, apparently, also have seams.
 There is a particular art to biting a goldfish, so that it comes apart right at the seams, and you have two fish shaped halves.
 The tails are the hardest part in seaming a goldfish.
 Lindt Chocolate truffles seam relatively easily, when compared with goldfish
 Then you are left with their rich soft centers
 The white ones are too sweet and after the first few moments of pleasure,
 You regret eating them
 I eat them anyway.
 The clitoris is not a hole that babies come out of
 It is not a hole
 If you find that yours is a hole, you should consult a doctor.
 There is no causation, but spheres of observation and those trying to connect them
 God looks after fools and children
 Rabbles was a Dadaist
 I do not consider Rabbles very charming.
 People rarely have seams,
 I'll amend that and say that they all do actually have seams, but these are not in lines
 Seaming a person seems quite difficult.
 People are not like goldfish.
 Not a small thing to be done with the teeth, to seem a person you must use the whole body and risk seaming one's self instead.

