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www.signaturesmag.com
enjoy.
my own therapy with you // matt shand

tonight
white sparkling light
danced on cold black water
and i let everything go
into the falls

the quarter mile // justin saldo

Blue rain patters down on cold bricks
A cool wind dances in-between the tall buildings
Umbrellas pass each other by
The only words are spoken by the wind
Breathless moments between strangers
All as indifferent as the gray sky above

popping room // andrea romansky

We spoke in honeyed articulation of
Matters undefined by the inadequate limitations
Of idiom and expression, over the
Resonating Falls; tumbling, golden, bursting portions.
this is not a love poem // nubia hassan

love poem consists
of a tame vocabulary, a god,
a mile of ink or paved roads of graphite

a lady drips consonant and vowel
from lip to hand to pencil

the dance begins
a gliding twirl of lust
a twisting thrust of penmanship

an undying monologue
like an infant tongue
or the bruised petal of an aged lily

the milking of nature’s potent warmth
curled into a bath of letters

the unkempt earth
unraveled upon a piece of paper

the love poem is universal
decaying the walls that wish
to keep all our mother’s jewels
housed in a glass jar,
buried in a black sea

a love poem;
fruitful art tree

each letter is plucked and settled;
the papyrus basket nurturing her symbol

young letters in a textured womb

crafted and painted in the heat of
a moon-lit swollen heart
mexico // erin snyder
Terracotta roofline over
Paisley prints in stiff cotton
Breathes warm summers heavy
Upon my neck
Your neck
Your tongue
Under dirty ceiling fans
Spinning.

groundwork // erin snyder
Damp floor tiles
in your old house
sink
toward dirty earth
like weary feet
pressing cold
in weathered shoes
bent
and buckled.

cheeks // erin snyder
patches of bleary pink
under wilting eyelids where
dark circles
rise purple
beyond
crests
of flesh
There's a rabbit's skull in a big green field
garnering secrets in its empty sockets.
It's seen owls eating mice,
dogs chasing turkeys,
men shooting big, bold bucks,
and me as I approached from the woods.

I found it yellowing alone in the field
amidst crickets and grass and dirt.
Not even a skeleton to lie with it.
Not eyes to see with
nor ears to hear with.

Given such an opportunity, I did what any man would do.
"Alas, poor Rabbit! I knew ye naught!
But perhaps you'll get to know me!

"I lied on my resume,
I cheated on my taxes,
I stole from my work,
I slept with a whore,
I burned my house down for insurance reasons,
and I didn't cry when Bambi's mom died."

I placed him back down,
hiding him in the ankle-deep grass.
I wished him good luck,
thanked him for his time,
and I left with my conscience wiped clean.
sweaty palms pull at the fat
of my thighs
like taffy to stick
in your teeth and
rot
t them from the inside
don't dream of girls like me)
the stench of your breath burns
holes in the nape of my neck
as you pull me in from behind
(you could never lie
to my face)
the wind from the air
and the sounds of the road outside are
no comfort
for your company
(kiss me with your eyes as i leave)
stains heard // dia allen

there is this echo, an echo
an echo of
repeating before my
mind, thoughts echo, the same word
the same words, the same
thought, walking, then skipping
skipping words, skipping thoughts
running thru my mind of echoes
images don't fade, they stain
like echoes of colors, blood red,
then rose, lily pink, some type of orange
an echo, repeating, an echo
noone heard it the first
time, The first time it sounded
like an echo and again,
thoughts, walking, skipping
running around in circles of endless color
those thoughts, they echoes, canyon-like
mind of holes, thoughts roll into, out of
echos of lives not mine, stories, dreams
the soaps never moves on, just echoes
of weeks past, again, that pause
wait for it,

an echo.
glass lamp // stephen shachtman
complexities // patrick tribble

karma and dogma coconspire
to inspire the justification
for naïve rejection
of the broad common logic
stated then stricken
from the courtroom records

like a perfect parable
this story must come
to an imperfect ending
the structure of instruction
catalyzed the demolition
of the freestanding supports

tremulous swaying backed by
torrential downpours
pour down the remnants
of a fractured calendar
months fall apart
leaving days to flutter down

yet an unended novel
questioning all it ever could be
finds an epilogue to justice
in justifying everything
while two imperfect persons
play unaware in a desert
‘Goddamn, it’s hot.’ As soon as she pulls the cohesive beads of saltwater from her forehead, a thousand leap up to instantly take their places. ‘Fuck me, it stinks.’ It’s as if every oppressive odor in the city had congealed in the alley, metamorphosed into a giant boot, and commenced kicking the shit out of her senses. She’d been watching the mouth of the alley for ninety-five minutes. For not the first time, her hand reassuringly spooned with the nine-millimeter in her coat pocket. ‘Tonight will be the last night I spend waiting around in this shit sty.’ Long shadows flicker on the bleeding alley walls, shapeless guises flitter past, silhouetted in the hazy orange spill of streetlights. One form pauses; in slow motion it turns, approaching. Squat, bow-legged, ponderous. Heavy boot falls reverberate off the crumbling brick. ‘Goddamn, it’s cold.’ She’s shaking, damp clothes stuck to her. Holding herself.

“Let’s make this quick.” The voice seems disembodied, gross, revolting. She shifts her weight in an attempt to settle her turbulent stomach. “I haven’t got all fuckin’ night, sweetheart.” The figure stopped just short of her. Though it’s diminutive, she feels one-eighth its size. She realizes she’s stopped breathing. Inhales sharply, squeezing the pistol now, attempting to juice it for all its courage.

“I don’t have your money.” The words leave her mouth, but she doesn’t hear them. “And I never will again.” The figure barks a short, cruel sound of mirthless humor. “Are we really doing this again?” He’s closer now, and she can smell him. He beats the alley. Shuffling backwards, she is startled by a cold, waffley press against her back and the rattle of unyielding metal. She’d been retreating since she first saw him.

“I’m through.” Weak words falling from trembling lips; lips split two seconds later by the heavy rings on the back of his right hand. Reeling, the fence holds her up. Her face is on fire, hot, puffy. She tastes her blood. Tears burst the floodgate. Tries to say something tough, but only produces a whimper.

“Still through?” The question droops in the dank, stagnant air as the figure cocks its top to the side. Her finger cuddles with the trigger, pistol pointed at the center of the looming mass. She can barely nod. He lowers his head. She pulls the trigger. Click. His head snaps up, eyes wide. Freeze. This is what rigor mortis feels like. His shocked expression is replaced by one of disappointment. A gleam flashes once, twice, across her throat. Gasping, red stuff fills her lungs. The concrete rushes up to meet her, and is surprisingly warm. Her blood sucks at his boots as the alley swallows him whole.
As I intake the thoughts out of your closet,
Your Secrets become something more,
They become Our Secrets.
I Inhale every word that escapes your lips,
Taking them in like the precious air we breathe,
But never once exhaling the things you uttered.
I have become the Father of Your Secrets,
Your Jack trapped in a Box,
That has no handle to turn and reveal your Skeletons.
I will hold these secrets behind my horizontal doors,
Even when my face turns purple from not leaking a breath,
I will not exhale what I have vowed to Inhale.
My eyes will roll behind my head,
And my body will drop to the floor
Before my lips part ways to release a final breath.
Even after the passing of my time,
Your secrets will stay secrets,
And maintain custody over their integrity and confidentiality.
By Inhaling and never Exhaling I reach out for your Trust,
To establish that bond that Earth & Time possess-
Only they share the secrets of secrets that know one else knows about.
I’m willing to devour all your past wrongs, your present sins,
and your planned future crimes
With an open ear and a closed soul,
And I will never entertain the idea of bending the Rule of Loyalty.
I will hold the secrets You divulge to me within the contents of my heart,
Just Exhale every secret you want me to know,
I will sit back and Inhale every secret You entrust me with.
Crawling through a bed of purple dahlias, I look up to the sky, and I see their purple heads swaying far above my own.

Petals divide quietly beneath the sun’s dimming glow, *Dignified* but heavy, resting only on a tall, slender stem.

From up here, on these pretty purple heads, The earth is a far away place, and I am frightened by my *instability*.

I am swinging from leaf to leaf, clinging to the threads in between, My vision is thick with vines, sticky webs and bumblebees.

Searching for the sweetness held deep within, I recall my *good taste* I bury my head inside the purple, suck out all the pretty, and I jump.
konstantin kurtovic // leaves in a window
another color // joshua horn

On the street corner
Alone
But not unaided
Before dark hallways
Between steel walls without ceilings
On a green and blue canvas
Against backdrops of black
Each stroke swaying the scene
Just one dab
And everything changes
screened sky // sarah woodruff
The security door closes at 2 A.M.,
on an American military base in Kandahar,
Tired soldiers on their side asleep.
Lonely wisps of sand floats from the ground.
Not even the 'copters are up this early.
This soldier could take a inch, fall upward
and give his life and never call in missin'.

But here's the mud, the battlefield
I know, the iron gates. Across the sunflowers
to the far edge, the scarred trees
magnificent with fury, cruel
like bullets hittin' the ground.

There's a van in Kabul that the priest rents
to collect money. Tonight it overflows
dollars spilling on the ground.
piled in the moonlight like ancient wars.
I got in and made a spot, slipped
down deep and they sheltered me.

It's September 11 in '01, full moon
I sit back as it turns the color of
blood red, an ancient color.
Soldier in a weary cold, I watch
this tank of ours, how its manners
and frantic dirty roads, all its destruction
is just a cover of murder across the sun
rolling to Afghanistan.
While all around me lies the world I know,
my fortress bound with chains.
The wind cuts through a heart.
One headline might break loose,
make its way to freedom.
But in these chambers, all the goals
ever dreamed have become dust.
Every victory, all the dead, caps and uniforms,
boots that said we could be proud.
Medals look up to the sky.
All the shooting and destruction is done.
An eagle flies the news from Afghanistan; 
it's cries are fresh in the feathers.
A dial turns in the dark, tells of war
in a flurry of static. Cadillacs and Chevys
under acres of flags, all of them are babes,
they'll take you there, are tied down
in the arctic; their journeys stretch out
behind them and the battlefield has forgotten.
All the millennia it takes to be happy then,
half asleep, riding the great Constitution
that turns war forward. I walk home
as the day sounds start, the moon
floating in firs and the lights of America.

In the Red Room, Bush gashes through the pain.
I go and knock. I see him coming
in the trenches. But when the back door opens
there is only the world before me. How far it goes,
no dirty road in the intensity. That is a sorrow,
but the secret sauce is so sweet, used silverware
shines on the plates, such things are true,
America in the brutal cold mud,
the fir tree leafless at dusk.
but the world, the world lies so unbroken
and is so shattered.

September 11, my partner is alive.
On the camper stove, a steak cooks with spices.
Saturday leaves and cold mud in the backyard.
emergence // neil laperriere
reflections // jennifer rivera
untitled // steve shaw
I am roughage.
cooked bowl of oranges.
in your mouth.
bitter banana leaf in your stomach.
I am raw straw.
thick tree bark.
acorns, apples, dapple color.
I am grand

canyon of honey.
you are roots of onion carrion.
the stench smears molasses slow.
your wet seed,
ripe vine water.
in my mouth.
silos warm wheat heavy.
I am roughage.
I am grand.
it was // matthew erhard

For the novice it was
An impossibility,
A trick of the mind,
A headache for hours to come.

For the expert it was
A piece of the puzzle,
A hint at the possibilities,
A beam of light into the shadows of my life.

For me it was
A parting gift,
A way of saying you were wrong,
A hint to what you let slip through your fingers

Revenge served over time.
chimney bluffs // coco walters
spent // jennifer rivera

Three morning glories
Dots of water almost dark
Blended colors run.

choir practice // jennifer rivera

Rustle in darkness
of praying insects waiting –
Kneel to listen close.

the birds and the bees // jennifer rivera

Sweet primal urges
the timely journey complete –
First taste of nectar.
valentine – moment // nai wang
moving out // ornella santoni

I am moving out
Out of all fantasies
Out of naivety
Out of my friends out of my room
Out of the pain

I'm moving out
Into liberty
Uncertainty
Excitement
A new promise
My own true self

I'm moving out
For my own self
I am going to be free
Free from you
Free from them
Free from myself
I'll be new
I'll be different
I'll grow

A new one
Of many different lives
A new other story
A new beginning

I'll try everything
At least once

I am moving out
prismic // joy e. johnson

Pleasure slides smooth on slick butter yellow
Melts into throbbing magenta waves
Pours hot and thick over raw sienna dunes
Dripping sweetly into apricot caves

Going drip, drip through baked burnt orange cracks
Engorging dry laser lemon walls
Falling syrup aglow on golden mounds
Pulsing under warm electric lime scales

Gushing forth from volcanic torch red fissures
Spraying blow-away blizzard blue clouds
Steaming from atomic tangerine springs
Panting over long screamin' green fields

Breathing sighs out of carnation pink rays
Sleeping soft and quiet on sunset orange horizons.
how lovers talk // coco walters

i can’t sleep
light seeps in through my curtains and whispers to my eyelids
“no, not yet”
flickering candles make my eyelids dance and shadows move on the wall
he’s up late talking to her, i want so badly to have that
it gives me that feeling that i want to cry but can’t force it out of my throat and into my eyes
i walk into the hallway, creaking
and curl up on the cold wood floor
and press my face down to listen under the door
just to hear how lovers talk.

lips // jessica thurber

between your upper lip
a slight rest, in the shape of V
cutting soft and loose;
bleeding feminine.

the curves of protruding skin,
smooth than untouched stones
in streams; constant.

a subtle pause when touched;
harder, crumbles i.
wrap // erica eichelkraut
Every Word that you utter, I get closer
Closer to making that connection.
With every action you take
I become more sure of my thoughts
As your almost snoring breaths
Enter the air and irritate my brain.
I want to make that connection

Of my fist to your face.
coffee shop girl // patrick saturno

The dust of ground beans
spackle her dark roast hair
She carries the scenet of her trade
the awakening of morning blend

I wonder how many beans
have met their powdered demise
and scalding torture
at her chai hands

I order a small genocide
She complies with an half & half smile
Her yellow fuzzed sweater
blocks the deed from view

I pay her for the atrocity
and her chair hands
motion to the table of cover-ups
that sweetens the liquid corpses

A spoon of sugar and bit of milk
make the remains bearable
I look back to those espresso eyes
and wave 'bye' to my latte love.
February 26th, 1993: I found this with its edges singed, the last few lines exposed to water, under the overturned, burned briefcase in the rubble of the brick building over there, a golden band of roses in the ashes next to it.

will it happen while I'm here?
a man in the hallway
with eyes – flat like stones
his dark pebbles watching, scanning
his carhartt like a glove
simple almost nondescript
wavy dark hair close not cropped
after-five boldened jaw
arms outstretched
carrying a red GBC-bound book
talismanic
those eyes, those eyes
look through me, a woman
make me wonder
why waste what little time I have left
getting an education

that day I saw him again more pale
he whistled an odd song
unknown notes that floated behind me
followed me through the breezeway
there then gone
His carhartt was smaller, so was he
His eyes were dull too
they didn’t meet mine.
iggy pop, the passenger // erin mccallum
A woman's work is never done until her name is called to the grave.
He can never love someone if he is still fixated on her human being.

It is pitch black but one lonesome light brightens the day of night.
The tribute is soon but my heart and mind are not phased.

The hall is loud but not one voice do I hear.
He never sees the signs in front of him.

Look into my eyes and everyone can see the plights and triumphs of my life.
Tomorrow the sun will peak out from the clouds and bless us with heat.

A picture with him I never got and the night was so young and new.
So many people there yet I only saw his number one.

A multicolored leaf blows and dances lifelessly in the wind.
Not a breath of wind touches me and brushes me of my soul.

They can never break me down with jibes of insecurities and flaws.
Those things that held fear are as loose as a gazelle in the free plain.

No matter how hard I try I will have to read his page again.
The reigns never freed those in his web from the start.

They imagine the chocolate that I am yearning for: white, almond, milk, or dark.
Feeling the touches of the legends that past warms my fingers to the fullest extent.

Writing will no longer be a lament but a joyful serious jubilation.
The wait is not long until one calls my name and we start a blissful,
stressless journey till death due us part.
sometimes // helena fruscio

I like to make myself uncomfortable sometimes
Like when one pant legs is a little shorter than the other
And hangs at a wrong angle
And lets the cold air hit me stubble legs.

Like when the words stick to the back of my tongue
Get caught between the bumps of words that aren't mine
Filling my mouth with the juice of mistakes squeezed too harshly

Like when I interlock fingers with a chubby companion
Or catch the eyes of an awkward stranger
Or eat ice cream with a plastic fork

Like when I sit cross-legged for too long
Or not long enough
Or when my thoughts are too big to comprehend
Or too much to put in words

Like when the wind blows my tangled hair into my face
Covering my eyes that are shut against the cold
And still walking at a hastened pace

Like when the inside of my thighs slowly wear away the denim
And my stretched skin exposes the claw marks of my sweet tooth

Like when something is so right that the tears must come
And they just watch, and cannot understand
Like when the awkwardness just cannot hold it closed and together
But flips and flails for everyone's own awkward memory to see.
identity crisis // jesse maleh
swing me away // sarah woodruff
birds // iris chamberlain
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