

# The Angle

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## Blood Anxiety

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## Blood Anxiety

### Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"That nervous anticipation, itching the palms of my hands as I sit grimly in the back right corner of the city bus, watching the rain slide down the windows. Nothing could be worse than this feeling of being trapped and unable to see outside. And, my body being propelled by something other than my legs, creating a nauseous stir in the pit of my stomach, and rising up to my throat. If only I weren't surrounded by strangers."

### Cover Page Footnote

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## Blood Anxiety

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prose by  
Destinee Paynter

That nervous anticipation, itching the palms of my hands as I sit grimly in the back right corner of the city bus, watching the rain slide down the windows. Nothing could be worse than this feeling of being trapped and unable to see outside. And, my body being propelled by something other than my legs, creating a nauseous stir in the pit of my stomach, and rising up to my throat. If only I weren't surrounded by strangers.

The sound of a siren echoing down the street, fading into the headache, already throbbing deep in my temples, thumping in beat with the rushing of my heart. Blood is pounding quickly through my veins. Unable to focus on the blurs of green foliage and the dusty cement of block after block of nothingness, I stare at the bus itself. Graffiti sprawled in every space imaginable, from the dingy blue felt tapestry on the chairs, over the posters hanging from the ceilings and even fine print in the less than an inch of white space that connects the chairs to the floor. Glaring at the assortment of smiley faces and initials etched into the blue fabric of the chair on my right, I run my fingers through the letters over and over, imagining what instrument could have done this? A pen, a knife, a fingernail even. Memorizing the curves of the different handwritings, the different stories they tell, focusing on anything to get my mind off the dread settling in my gut. The shape these letters begin to take on, past relationships, long lost friendships rising from the fabric like ghostly silhouettes, lost, being devoured by their own nostalgia. Or perhaps not, perhaps being scorned from old regrets—perhaps these same people sitting on the bus right now, as far as possible from these etchings, in case they are reminded of a memories best left lost. The dull echo of sirens less noticeable as the screeching of the monstrous bus, coming to a brake, easily over-powers them.

Glancing out the window, as we're stopped, I see police blocking off the road near my bus stop. Defiantly, I stand and walk up to the front of the bus, refusing to go down the side street and use the bus stop from over there because I'm only a few paces from my house and it's raining. Reluctantly, the bus driver lets me off and I walk further down the street.

## Blood Anxiety (cont.)

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The sirens from the police vehicles are troubling me as they cause a certain disconnect between my brain and body. The ringing echoing in my ears makes me dizzy and my glasses grow foggier from the rain and suddenly the commotion of cameras, lights flashing, angry voices surround me at once, blinding me, forcing me into a panic. The sound of my own footsteps quickening confuse even myself until the realization that I'm running hits. Then suddenly it goes quiet and there's a shift in the crowd and I can't tell you if it started in waves and spread like dominoes, or had been going on the whole time, but got muted by the high-pitched sirens, but the crowd is weeping, the onslaught of tears making me uneasy.

And then suddenly it's there, in front of me. A large van with a smaller motorcycle crushed underneath it. A massive puddle of red liquid in the middle of the street. So fresh (it's too bright) that it can't possibly be real. But still it's spreading, like it's taking on a life of its own. And it's being shattered into smaller puddles from the rain striking it. And the blood is coming at me, making its way around the pair of brown boots that were separated from the body during the impact; standing upright as if there's still a pair of feet to claim them. And still the rain falls with such ferocity and I panic, not knowing what to do, but I can't look away and suddenly the tears strike me too. And I'm lost, standing only a few paces away from my house, trapped within thoughts of my own mortality.