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READERS' CHOICE

FIRST PLACE CAUTION: WET FLOOR......Meghan Lentner

SECOND PLACE AN APPETITE.....Joseph Bess

THIRD PLACE WHAT HAPPENED THEN......Catherine Agar
MEGHAN LENTNER

CAUTION: WET FLOOR

There’s so much I wanted with you
The future hits us like a tidal wave
Images of us crashed down around me
Soaking me with their possibility

It’s a feeling that leaves me chilled to the bone
Run inside and change out of those cold drenched clothes
Before you catch cold and then where will you be?
Cold? Alone? Exactly the same as you are right now?
Captured in a picture
Frozen in a dream
Strung on a line of hope.

A pale complexion, the blood leaves my face
The mirror is not capable of lying
My heart empties
Trickles to the floor
A puddle forms
The blood boils
The steam rises, numbing my mind

A painful cry for help
But you don’t hear me
Deafened from the sound of your own foot steps
Deafened from the sound of your selfish ways

CAUTION: WET FLOOR
You are approaching, fast, too fast
Stop, don’t come any closer
The sign gleams, flashes of yellow, bright as day, loud as hell
You are focused on me, you’d look anywhere but down.
Look down, see what your hesitation has done
See the mistake spread with spidery veins across the floor.

Your foot hits the spot that once occupied my heart
You hit the ground hard
Your expression: Shock.
it’s too late, you are too late
you should have looked down
the sign was there to warn you
read the signs.
Mortally delicious
I crave flesh.
Traces of smog,
that's just you
foaming
at the mouth
for me.
You have prided
yourself on tasting
black skin
and in your act
of cannibalism
you've stolen too much.
Yearned for me in
thought and in bed.
What we've produced
in retrospect
Beautiful
a mixture of
me and you.
But I want it back, most if not all.

My limbs,

My walk.
My talk,

My dance,
My music.

My coarse hair,

My broad nose...Delicious
Your lips drink glory, sipping from a chalice filled with my juices. A thirst that renders me, Inferior.

I’ve struggled hard against a domineering Appetite. But as the black merges and separates with the white, with your saliva I become transparent diluted: Deep down I’ve grown accustomed to you feeding on me.
Catherine Agar

What Happened Then

She knew a man whose face was thin, with little hollows beneath the cheek bones. A little wrinkle near his ear, a little grey hair growing there, a little soft flesh: she imagined pressing her lips to it. Just a kiss, or maybe she would wrap her arms around him and hug him, lay her head on his chest, and maybe then a kiss, and maybe then, well, maybe then.

There was also a man, a younger man, not handsome, but with clear blue eyes and lines around them as though he had some suffering in his life, and she would kiss his cheek, too, and the sides of his mouth, and his mouth, and he would tell her how he got the lines, and maybe then, well, maybe then.

She was released, free, from all the complications of youth, from wanting or needing a boyfriend, from wondering what sex meant or didn’t mean, from waiting for phone calls, from the fast heady rush of love like a river in spring thaw; she’d had her boyfriends and she had her husband, and her children, too; she had raised a family and loved them all deeply, had devoted many years to them, willingly, gladly. She regretted not a moment of her wanton youth nor her years of settledness; regretted maybe only the aching, yearning in-between time when tied down with babies, but still young enough and pretty enough to want a look or compliment from a man. But that desire, like her youth, had faded. Now she knew that people were all flotsam on a foggy ocean and that the laying on of hugs was even more healing than the laying on of hands; if a kiss or hug could comfort, then she would kiss and hug, and more than that, she would wrap her arms around securely, lie next to, spend the night; for what else was there when planes flew into buildings and nuclear bombs were poised to rain invisible poison, when people sickened and died, when wars claimed and maimed young men, when old women went months without being touched and old men shuffled where they once had stepped eager and virile, when hospitals warehoused people who never had visitors, when everyone was hurtling toward oblivion, what else was there? Then she would hold, and hold tightly, and maybe then, well, maybe then.

So it was that she woke up one morning to find the bed unoccupied except for herself; the house was empty; the street outside, too, was quiet. Her husband’s car was in the garage. She called his office, her mother, her brothers’ offices, her children, ten calls, twenty, hanging up when she got answering machines or endless rings. She turned on the television; there was static on every channel. She dressed, got into her car, and drove all around town on deserted roads. The grocery store was wide open, the produce all in ordered rows, and not a soul was moving anywhere, anywhere that she could see. At her husband’s office, the parking lot was empty, the doors were locked. She drove to the homes of everyone she knew, her parents, brothers, friends. She rang doorbells, banged on doors, peered inside. No one came.

In her house she locked the doors, wedging chairs underneath the knobs, pulling down the blinds and closing curtains. She sat in the living room, in a chair near a front window, her hand on the curtain, holding it open just a crack, looking out, looking for a
car or person or any sign of life. When sleep made her head heavy, she pulled her husband’s coat from the closet and brought it back to the chair, draping it across her body.

The next day was just the same, and the next. She sat behind her front window watching, waiting, until finally she took some extra clothes and food and piled things into her car, crazy things, blankets and pillows and candles and photographs and a box of stored-away baby clothes, and she got on a main route headed south and drove for days, town after town, without seeing a single person. She drove through red lights, slowly; she strained to look into every house and building and across every far horizon; she was almost to Washington before she realized that she never would see another person, so she stopped.

She was near a field where some low-growing springy plants had recently been cultivated. She walked out into the field and lay down in the plants, on her back. She had never heard such utter silence before in her life, and only once before seen the sky so bereft of planes. There was no traffic noise, no birds, just a slight breeze that ruffled the plants around her ears and sounded like a million far-away whispering voices.

She lay there all day. The sky darkened gradually, from azure to periwinkle to purple. The air cooled and stars began to appear. They were so far away she couldn’t comprehend the numbers, millions upon millions of light years, and they looked it, every one of them as cold and distant as a mountain peak. She was thinking of going back to the car for the night when a comet arced across the black sky. Its tail blazed a brilliant orange and then the whole ball, as though hit by a sudden blast of wind, blossomed into orange flame; it grew bigger and bigger until it filled the orbits of her eyes with its color, and still it came toward her in a raging conflagration of glory as she lay there among the bean plants, pinned to the earth by the awe of it. Then it rushed towards her, blotting out the sky, and it seemed to break over her head like a firework; she was suffused with intense warmth, and right before she was consumed completely her eyes opened wider and she reached out both arms and said, simply, “There you are.”
I saw Jesus today
He was in the small child who lifted his head and grinned at me
I saw him
In the man who kindly offered me the $1.50 I needed to get home on the subway
He was there
In the woman who stopped on the road to ask if I was having car trouble
He was present
In the police car that followed me home and waited for me to get inside
I saw Jesus today
He showed himself through the woman who whispered, “God Bless.”
He was around
In the friend who gave me encouraging words
He was there
In the phone call I received where I heard the words “I love you.”
I saw Jesus Today

I looked for him closely.
Reach for the stars,
And I shall follow.
Tracing your sparkling steps through the heavens,
I will find where you have come to rest.
And there,
I shall rest too.
We will find our place in the stars,
Our home in the heavens,
Our place meant just for you and me.
Where we can fulfill our destinies side by side.
Living with and for each other.
Through good and bad,
Through thick and thin,
I will stand by you.
I will hold you close when you hurt.
I will delight in your happiness
I will hold you up when you refuse to stand.
I will remain here with you,
Till the collapse of the stars.
Till the heavens fade away.
Till God is long forgotten.
I will stand firm with you.
And the light from our shining stars will never fade.
Reach for the stars, baby.
And I will follow.
Shadow canopy
Streams of light through pin-prick holes
Silent reverie

Chase Hannon
LAURA CONNELL

HOW YOU KNOW

He sits you in his lap and lets you drown him in your tears
When the flood is over he doesn’t wince as you brush your snotty nose against
his sleeve
He always lets you win thumb wrestles
He gives you blowfish kisses on the cheek
When he kisses you on the lips
You don’t melt
You dissolve into a million bouncing particles
And he breathes you in
And you rush inside
You linger there
Just for a heartbeat
And then he exhales
And then he dissolves
And you breathe him in
And so you sit there breathing life into each other
When you are far apart, you lose your breath
And it becomes hard to breathe
You choke and cough as you wait for your next gulp of air
It’s hard to breathe with just one lung
This picture, taken by Joseph Lee, was submitted by his loving friends in his memory. Joseph, a Fisher student, tragically died on January 20, 2005. He is missed very much.
ART GALLERY

PHOTOGRAPH  LISA STEVENS BROTZ

WATERCOLOR  M.J. IUPPA

GRAPHIC DESIGN  CASEY VANDERWALL

Lyrics by AFI “The Leaving Song”
ART GALLERY

PHOTOGRAPH  JASON NORTHUP

PHOTOGRAPH  CATHY MALDONADO
ART GALLERY

WATERCOLOR  M. J. IUPPA
As I spoke the words, I felt them touch and give life to a new reality within me . . .”

Audre Lorde

we sat tired on the tired couch
talking and not talking
staring at the clock numbers
changing
each slowly until all too fast 4 am came
and swimming in fatigue,
beer cans, stale cheese doodles,
I tottered to the front door

you asked if I was going
to brave the snow that fell
around the warmth of your house,
of your sheets, of your body,
and although I shuddered
at the door, cracked open and cold,
I told you I should leave

I knew you wanted me to stay

before I left, you told me
that night,
you had a good time just talking
it was something your eyes had
already told me, something they had
lit inside me;
an orange shining through
to the tips of my fingers
driving home, dazed
I thought about going back to you,
and I thought about Audre,
being consumed by the orange
heat of flesh, the burning, the aching,
the orange heat
that found home inside where once
was frozen and dark

and I thought about holding you
that night, not in my arms
but in my voice and the breath
of my non-voice, and it was okay
that I left with only the orange
light between us, the light
you put inside of me -
it would bring me back.
Laced with sarcasm,
like Saturday afternoon waffles.
Powdered sugar, lightly sprinkled.

But instead of sweetness,
all I can taste are your acid words.

Your lips, once soft to drink me in,
now sour at the slightest thought.
Pursed together, eyes squinting.

Laughing at me and my mistakes,
at my failed impersonation of myself.

It makes me wonder,
How strong was this friendship?
That a truth,
only a truth,
Could shatter
and break it?
The dull, silvery doors opened with a rush, whereupon I was attacked by the rank brine forcing its way up my nostrils; the stench clinging to and burying itself in the folds of my clothes. Recoiling to no avail I inexorably moved forward, finding myself involuntarily at the forefront of a mass of bodies cramming themselves into an already overstuffed car. Fortunately I was pushed toward an open seat, its hard and unforgiving surface giving a welcome reprieve to weary, aching limbs as I plopped down exhausted.

Visibly taking stock of my surroundings, I observed that my immediate neighbors were two typical subway commuters: parked on my left loomed an imposing big-boned black woman, clothed in a colorful burgundy dress complemented with a cockade hat – obviously her Sunday attire. As I approached, her razor sharp glare smote me. I felt her stare peel away my skin in layers. Upon choosing my place of residence for the short trip, she grunted contempt at my disheveled, hung-over appearance, making me fearful of inciting her unbridled wrath. Whereas to my right perched a thin, indifferent codger with the face of a brown shriveled apple. He was wrapped up in a plaid suit with a bow tie, and had buried his rimmed spectacles deep into the New York Times; however, out of the corner of his beady eye, he kept a steady vigil, ready to strike up a yell if I so dared to pick his exposed pocket.

Between these implacable sentinels I crouched, wringing my hands and mulling over when to trim my overgrown fingernails. A minute passed like this until the train stopped, some persons rising to leave, others stumbling aboard, but the gargoyle on my left and the scarecrow on the right remained unmoved. Christ, only two more stops I thought!

Meanwhile, a young couple and their baby infant had boarded at the far end of the tram and stood holding their balance as the vehicle lurched forward; no one had offered the mother cradling her son a seat. Dressed rather shabbily the mom wore an old, ripped down coat which had lost much of the stuffing through wear; her face exhibited a few attractive features, although one could barely discern this through the grime and filth which covered her body in a film. Likewise could be said of the husband; under his arm being lugged a stack of musty books – written by classic authors. Their child, wrapped in a swaddling cloth and kept warm by the covering and his mother’s embrace, rested tranquilly.

The family stood awkwardly for a moment, and I only took notice of them when the mother raised her voice in a soft spoken plea, which left a stronger impression on my heart than the strength with which she uttered those quiet syllables.

“Excuse me everyone, but this will only take a minute. My husband and I were laid off from work; neither of us have been able to find another job for two months. We
haven't had much to eat as of late, please, could you spare some change? We would sell you these books if you like." That was the extent of her request - when she had concluded the black woman snorted while the elderly man rustled his paper in agitation.

The trio then proceeded around the car - the mother holding a Styrofoam cup in her left hand, the baby in the other. Few people gave alms; of those who did, the majority gave grudgingly - the father handed yellow paged books to those who were obliged to take them. As they approached where I sat, I began to crack my fingers, staring fixatedly at the dirt encrusted floor. An unexplainable nervous panic had gripped my mind and body.

Soon they were nearly on top of me, so close that I could smell the odor peculiar to the destitute- a hint of foul bodily sweats mixed with a large measure of despair. At this moment the train came to an ungainly second stop; my neighbors rose, brushing by the poor family without any offerings of kindness. Uncontrollably I rose, head down, without so much as attempting to recognize the presence of the trio before me and exited the car. With the doors hissing closed, the tentacles of regret wrapped themselves around me in a suffocating embrace. What had I done? Such a petty, loathsome man - and I missed my stop!

As the train pulled away, I fled the platform in a rush, passing through the turnstile. My pace quickened so that I ran up the stairwell. In my pocket the useless change jingled, its noises ricocheting off the walls in hot pursuit of my misplaced convictions. Bursting onto the street above I continued my hasty gait, vainly hoping, but knowing the fresh air would never rid my clothes of the mildewed, and stale smells of Tolstoy, Shakespeare and Proust.
To Whom It May Concern,

So I'm walking around, looking for something. The problem is I can't remember what I'm looking for. I don't even know if I lost it, or I just never found it to begin with. I kind of have this memory problem. I can't remember when it started. I wake up feeling this emptiness, like I'm missing something. Perhaps it's my keys, I say. But, I have my keys, my phone, and my wallet. So what could it be? Can't sleep at night, I keep thinking about it. The daytime seems so dull, like I'm sleepwalking during the day and daydreaming at night. I don't know which one is which. So I keep walking, hoping to get somewhere. Who do I talk to? I can barely remember anyone's name. Perhaps I'm sick. Everything tastes the same. Not just food, but the air, the conversation, the humor. Can't find anything good to watch on television either, it's all about real stuff; apparently. But if so, why do I feel like none of that has ever happened to me. I miss the days of Ninja Turtles and Ren & Stimpy. For some reason I can relate to that better. Can't even watch MTV these days, there's no music. But hell, was music ever supposed to be watched in the first place. So I search for that too. Good music. Man, that's hard enough, and it takes the edge off everything else. Searching through Limewire, hoping to find something that will bring me closer to the thing I spend night after night looking for. Starring at the monitor, typing up this letter, to help remind myself what it is that I'm doing. To try to communicate with whatever it is out there that I'm looking for. Perhaps someone can help me find it. It's like trying to find that damn Waldo. By the way, whatever happened to Waldo? The poor guy must have gotten lost too. But, who knows. Damn, what am I writing about? You see, I have this memory problem. Maybe I already said that. Guess I'll keep looking. Talk to you later. Ciao.

X
Nicole Gaulin

The Reaper's High

Your poison is my calling  
the hatred makes me high  
the sinner's lay beside me  
and I'm waiting here to die  
The drug is deep inside this  
taking toll upon my mind  
hallucinations of this lovestruck  
are leaving sense behind  
I'm spinning to your heartfelt  
and falling into shock  
the content's paralyzing  
as the reaper stows his clock  
I'm lying here in prison  
that is made up of your pain  
the silence makes you angry  
so there's nothing left to gain  
The hatred is my lover  
your poison makes me fly  
I'm waiting for consent to  
let the sinners let me die
It spread across an otherwise orderly room, consuming everything in sight, flashes of red and orange and yellow and grey and thick black, oh the black, eating away at all that used to be pictures and papers scattered, fueling the 5 alarm chaos that once contained a futon, chair, a wooden desk and drawer set, a bed high in the corner, covering a collection of unwanted things that are now being consumed--every minute by more and more excruciating coverage, more and more heat as the laundry finally takes over my room
What do people see
when they see me
walking beside him,
the one who looks
just like me?

"Where's your brother?"
they always ask.
Am I not good enough?
What does it matter.

The differences are as clear
As the bright shining sun.
I guess only to me though.
Rounder face, birthmark
on my right cheek,
the extra 15 pounds
on my six foot frame.
I am plagued by these things.

Don't probe me!
Don't point it out!
Can't you just stop,
Just stop staring!

These are the very things
I have wanted to change
About myself.
But they are the things
That distinguish him from me

I want to be just like him
The brother who looks like me
But I want to be me!
Who am I?
She wears what she's given and never disagrees,
Her life is so simple, so easy, and carefree.
She has no worries or priorities,
No friend or companion, no family.
No life of her own; there's nothing to share,
No laughs or jokes; there's nothing to compare.
She sits, she stands, like a fragile china doll.
She does only what society allows.
There are no feelings, no passion for sorrow,
No joy for what is, no joy for tomorrow.
Her lips are immobile, her lips are sealed.
Her looks are of perfection to the point she's not real.
WATERCOLOR

M.J. IUPPA
PRAISE FOR THE AUTHORS

I love "What Happened Then" by Catherine Agar; it keeps you riveted until the very end!
—Jason Cotugno, Layout Editor

Once again, Erin Dorney brings great writing and an interesting voice to The Angle with her poem, "A True Encounter."
—Emily Ryan, Editor

To whom it may concern, "The Letter" by Jonathan Howard cleverly addresses the problem of wanting to talk without knowing what to say or to whom.
—Kerry Meagher, Layout Editor

With clever imagery and a strong voice, Meghan Lentner expresses a love between the oblivious and the devoted.
—Jason Northrup, Submission Review Committee