



AMBER.

When the leaves turn amber
on these autumn days,
cherish what this season brings
as nothing always stays.

Eylul Oktay



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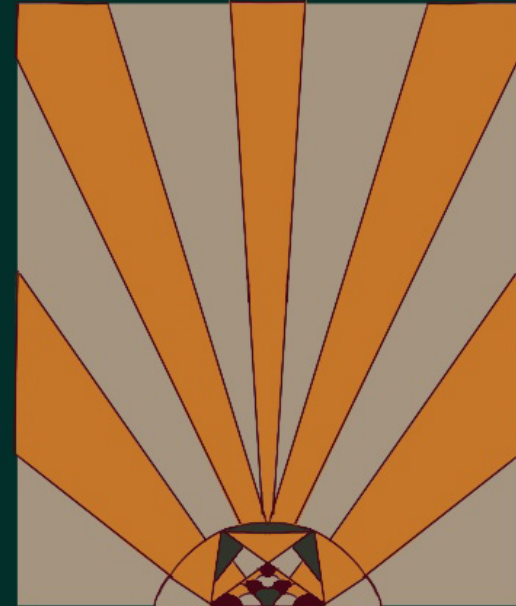
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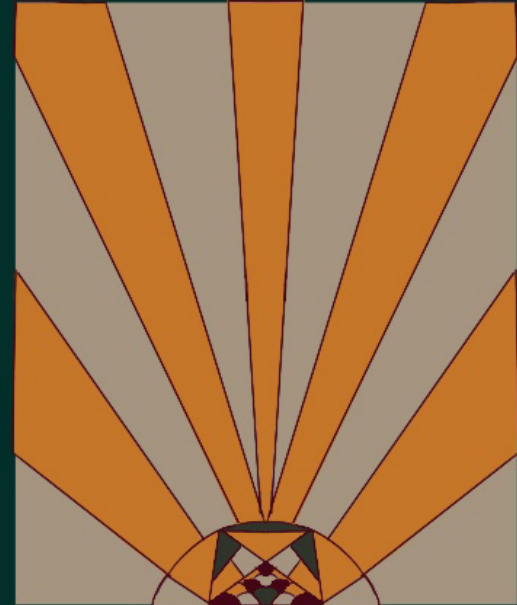
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Change Is Here

Nicole Arno

Fallen leaves
Breeze of a thousand fairies
Where must I look,
Change is here

A pattern
As they turn,
Green to red, red to yellow
A pattern,
Change is here

A time like no other,
Where one must feel
In the breeze of a thousand fairies,
Change is here

Devotion some receive
Others careless
The change is to be seen
Not felt by all

Feel in the air
As the sense turns darker
Feel it inside
Change is here

What is sensed
As a blown out flame,
Strikes upon oneself
And to everyone should it be received
Change is here

For the change is here for all,
Change is felt by all,
Change is sensed by all,
Change is here.

August

Drea Chakravorty

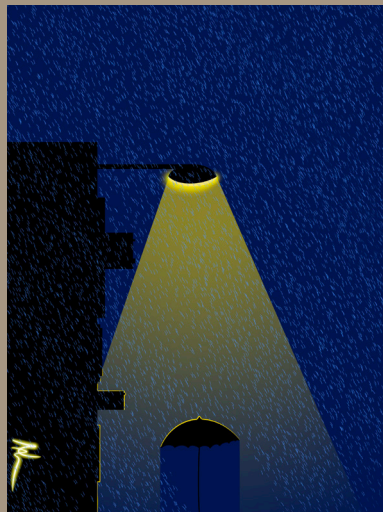
I want the leaves to stain orange
yet they boast their vibrant greens, spattering sunlight
on my skin, unaware of this heart
steeped in sentiment and sadness
for days long lost to the past.
I've been here for seconds, minutes,
hours, days, years, decades —
watching colors swirl and change around me,
letting people pick me, use me, throw me,
watching the scenery pass from thick glass —
the last month of summer laughs,
drunk on childish laughter
and the ache of change.



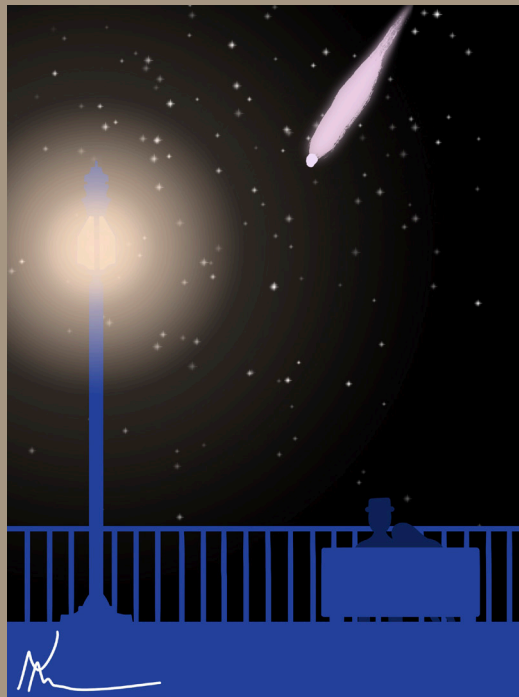


Sunset
City

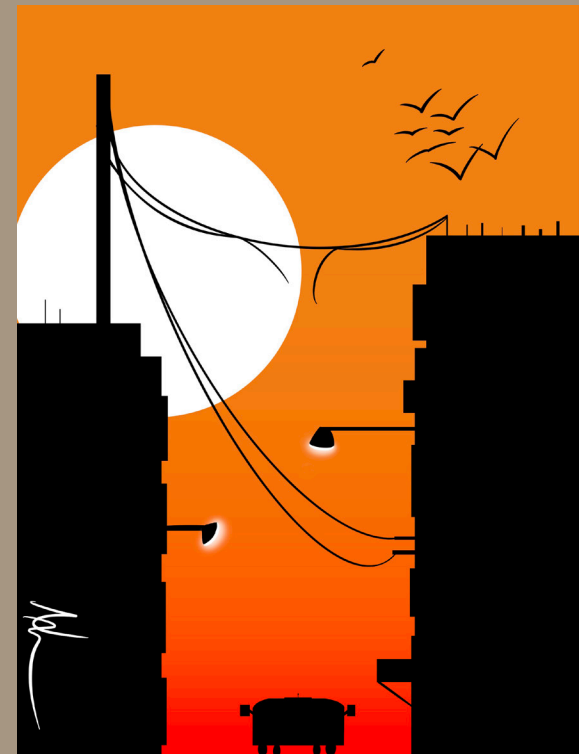
*Franco De La Matta
Santiago*



Empty
Street Full
of Life



Starlight
Love



Broken
Engine



3 A.M.

the comfort of constancy

Natalia Howard

i sleep in the color green.
the symphony of vibrant life, natural abundance, and
serene whispers.
the hue that embodies the organic nature of the world
that matured us.
the nature that is a constant aspiration, defying the gift of
constancy.

the constancy that brings comfort to my mind.
the safe constant feeling that assures i have regulation
over my fate.
but if fate is so eternal, why was i cursed by free will?

each night i dream, in green, the suffocating shroud of my
decisions dull the verdant natural world of my mind.
but these dreams leave the natural world of my brother
remaining untouched.
it remains just as green.

my brother's fate is his own.
the fate that casts a coat of protection from my free will.
my decisions may change his path, but his fate remains a
step ahead.

so my free will corrupts my fate, but never my brothers?
doesn't that make it no longer fate?

it just makes it a future, lacking any constancy.
my future regulated by my free will.

and by the natural world?
no.

i regulate my decisions.
the verdant natural world regulates the fate that no
longer exists in my mind.

the verdant natural world regulates the fate of my
brother, that constantly exists in my mind.

color

Kirsten Marcelin

the days are monotonous.
wake up, go through the motions,
tire, sleep, repeat.

the days are simple,
and everything looks the same.
nothing ever changes.

the days pass by with little meaning.
but when no one breaks the cycle,
why would there be?

the days are heavy.
the days are smothering.
the days are quiet.

Until they aren't.

On the day you wake,
To a world changed,
You see something you have never seen before.

The sun looks different, the sun *feels* different.
Like a hug, enveloping you as a loving mother would.
Like a cup of hot chocolate on the coldest of winter's days.

As you venture outside, you realize your sweater looks like a
swath of ocean,
Your hair, the same as the bark on the trees creating the
comforting canopy over the path,
And the grass, the same as the leaves, exhumes a calming
sensation you want to cherish.

The days aren't monotonous.
You wake up, make friends, cry, laugh, get hurt, learn, and
Live.

And as you live,
Those around you name what it is
That has dug into your surroundings, changing everything.

Color.

Breakfast

By Victoria Gazda

6:00 am

Oatmeal or cereal?
I lie in bed,
Eyes not quite open.

6:04 am

Do I want it warm or cold?
I turn to the side,
Eyes squinting at the light.

6:07 am

What would be healthier?
I pull the sheets over my face,
Eyes beginning to droop again.

6:23 am

What would be quickest?
I rush out of bed,
Eyes crusty and awake.

6:35 am

What do I need?
I grab my supplies,
Eyes darting the room.

6:39 am

The bowl remains empty on the counter.
A box of cereal stands next to it.
A packet of oatmeal is thrown on the other side.
A kettle sits on the stove, water unboiled.
A gallon of milk stays in the fridge, untouched.

6:40 am

I walk out the door.
I have my bag.
My clothes are on.
My hair is done.
My face is clean.
My stomach churns against itself.

8:00 am

“What is your favorite meal of the day?” he asks.

“Breakfast.”



Breadcrumb

Eylul Oktay

If love is a loaf of bread,
then I'm a full-time baker,
baking fresh batches day and night,
but you're not a giver, only a taker.

A cycle that repeats over and over,
to madness, I'm being driven,
when I find myself begging quite often,
for things I should already be given.

I asked you once, I asked you twice.
You say things, but you always deceive.
My heart grows tired of being let down,
as I give and give but never receive.

I told you of love languages,
and said "all of the above."
Yet, somehow, you're still confused,
when I tell you I need more love.

"You're just busy, you don't have time."
Excuses I make to believe your love is real.
But people who truly love you
care about how they make you feel.

You were once the hope in my dreams,
but now it's my nightmares you haunt.
You always ask, "you want all that?"
when it should be, "that's all you want?"

I guess change takes time,
but at this point, I've waited so long.
I learned you can still be exhausted,
even if you're strong.

I loved the person you once were,
but all you do is make me feel dumb.
I no longer want to get hurt
by the stranger you've become.

So don't ask why I licked love off knives,
when you refused to give it on a spoon.
For now I feel myself drifting away;
my heart is going to give out soon.

You're the one I wished to make memories with,
but in my memories you'll have to stay.
Tell me, what happened within these months?
What made you treat me this way?

I used to feel nothing but love,
but now I only feel numb.
And if love is a loaf of bread,
you can barely give me a breadcrumb.





Pandora's Box

Melissa Park

dawn

Ji Echo Qiu

slim sun-light reflects
dew, fixed.

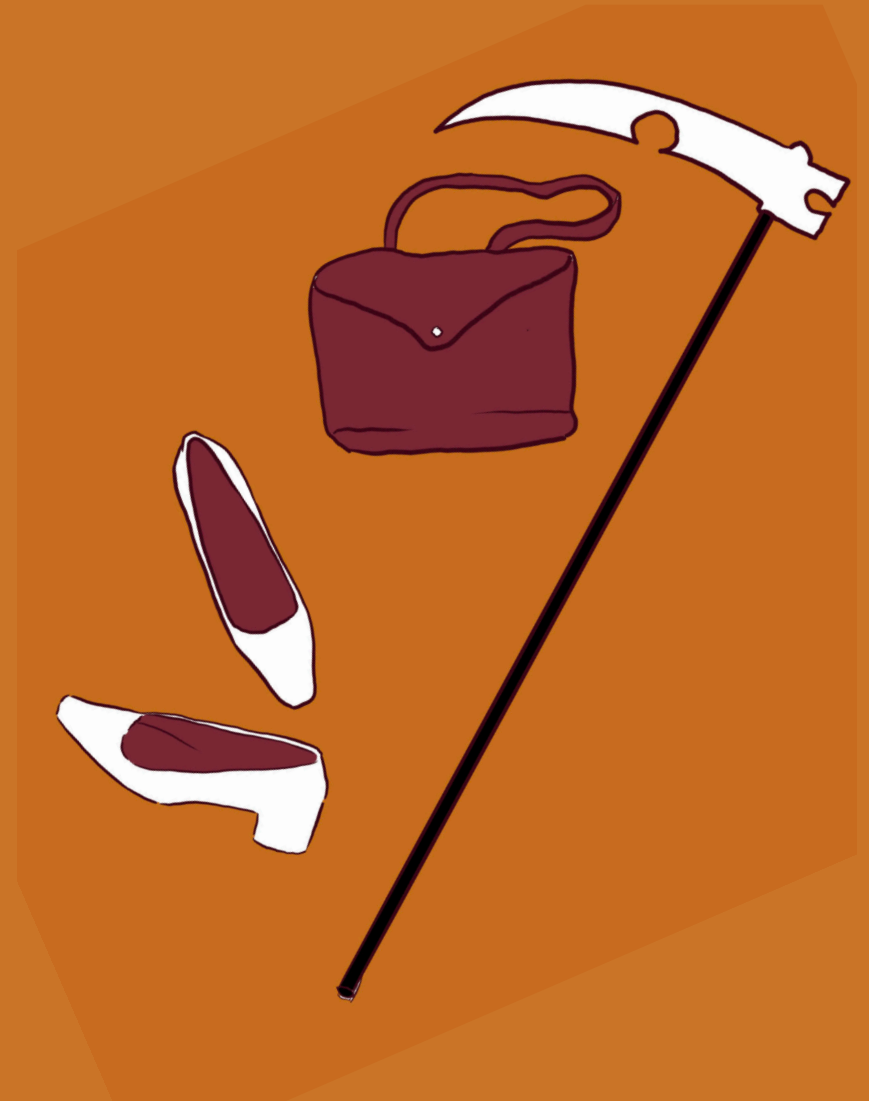
apocalypse
iced. in river time,
will You
finally bite the saline blood & bind
each
left leg.

between the cicada's beating wings:
another heart in a hollow
sounds the tidal scene. sky pure green —



Death curse

Erol Sonmez



Death feels so proud that she's finally allowed in the liquor aisle that she's lost in thought when she fumbles and drops a bottle of merlot in the middle of it. Her face goes red as the wine as she apologizes over and over to the worker mopping it up, who tells her over and over again that it's alright. Death goes to grab paper towels from the bathroom, but the mess is gone before she can help. She sheepishly goes back and grabs another bottle of the same merlot, with both hands this time.

Death forgot to pay her water bill, so the utility company cut her off the grid for the month, so now she has to walk to her house which is two miles from the laundromat. When she first moved into her apartment, she got these huge houseplants she saw in her interior magazine's catalog. The leaves of the pothos hanging from the ceiling wilted and scattered across in the living room, but with the next quarter's report due in a week and she still hasn't had the time to vacuum. Maybe watering them more would help.

She rummages around her dinky closet and picks out a little black dress to match with her kitten heels and her bag. She ties her hair back so it's not in her way, pops in two sticks of cherry flavored gum, and crams the entire bottle of wine into her carry bag. She puts on a little bit of eyeshadow to bring out the gray in her eyes. She doesn't bother with full-face makeup anymore. She knows how the night's going to end. On her way downtown, a creep catcalls her from a window. She gives him a death glare and a middle finger.

She hasn't been on a date in years so things are awkward. Or they would be if she had to talk. Luckily for her, the date's doing the lion's share for her. She thinks his name is Doug but isn't sure. Maybe she should excuse herself to go to the

bathroom and check on her phone. He's telling a story about a lawsuit he won. Death smiles politely and stirs her sweet tea with her straw. "How about you? What do you do for a living?" Maybe-Doug asks. "Oh," Death says, caught off guard. "It's complicated. I don't work for anyone else." "So you do freelance?" "You could say that." Death smiles. Doug smiles back. Death likes his smile. "I've tried freelance before I was a lawyer. I did music." This guy's full of surprises, Death thinks. "Really? I didn't take you for the artsy type." "I loved music all my life. When I was a little kid I used to make my own instruments out of trash. I used rubber bands and cardboard to make this shitty little guitar before I could afford my own. I wrote these stupid little songs for it that I probably still have lying around somewhere." Doug's eyes light up with nostalgia. "But music didn't pay the bills, so I went to law school." "Wow. Just like that?" "I mean, yeah. Music is fun, but law keeps the lights on." Death takes a sip from her straw and stares at her reflection in her tea. She thinks for a minute before looking into Doug's eyes. "I think you're stupid." Doug blinks. "Excuse me?" "I think you're stupid. Life's too short to not chase what you love." Doug laughs. "You really believe that? I think life's too short to be homeless." Death puts her hands on the sides of the table and leans in like a hawk. "Do you love music?" "... What?" "Do you love music? When you sleep, eat, talk, are you thinking about music? Do you love it so much that you can't live without it?" Doug thinks for a minute. "Yeah." "Then you can make it." Death says, matter of fact. Doug sits there dazed. "I've never met a girl like you." Death grins. "I get that a lot."

Later Doug – who's name she confirmed when he signed the check – walks Death home, even though she insisted she could have gone by herself. Death walks on the sidewalk and Doug walks on the road so they're at eye level.

In the post-sunset hour the city is calm, with small pockets of life bubbling out at low story windows for them to see. At one window a man and a woman sit opposite each other enjoying dinner in a room with an egregious number of cat paintings. In another a little boy plays with a Labrador Retriever puppy while an old man sits in a rocking chair reading a newspaper. Eventually they reach Death's apartment.

Doug looks at Death and smiles. "Well, I had fun tonight."

"I did too." Death drinks in his smile. It's infectious.

"I'd love to spend more time with you sometime."

"I'd like that too."

"Wh-" and in that second Doug is devoured by a gray monster ten miles and 0.15% over the legal limit. Death steps down onto the road and squats by Doug's body, shaken.

"L.. oh my god... I... I'm sorry, Doug." She didn't think it would happen so soon. A part of her hoped maybe, just maybe, this time, it wouldn't happen at all. Her eyes sting as tears stream down her face.

"I'm so sorry."

Nova

A flash fiction by Wyatt Remegio

I am dead.

Gone and lost to the cold, indifferent void, a billion clicks away from home, and two hours of air.

From my vantage point in my bulky spacesuit, I can barely make out the faint specks of what remains of my ship, the *TUNV Pangasinan*, drifting through the black like a meteor shower breaking through earthly clouds. Around the debris field is a fog of superheated plasma from a high-yield nuclear weapon. Had the detonation occurred on a planet with an atmosphere, the damage would have been far worse, though humanity's first weapon of mass destruction still suffices in a vacuum. I spot the enemy ship in the corner of my eye - its four engines bringing light to the darkness as glowing blue dots I almost mistake for stars, and it starts to cruise away at a leisurely pace.

Even with the clunky fingers of the suit, I ball my fists. Rage blooms in my chest, an overwhelming desire for vengeance against those who killed my ship, crew, and home for the last five years, and my breathing quickens - until I realize that I'm using air too much, too fast.

I close my eyes, fighting the urge to cry, and the beginnings of tears bud off my eyes and float into my visor. Instinctively, I bring up my right arm to wipe them away, and my arm is blocked from my face by the thick layer of glass and radiation shielding protecting me from the dark and deathly void of space. Remembering my low air supply and drought of resources, I try to pack up my emotions. I slow my breathing, shut my eyes, and begin to think.

Forty-nine of my friends, all people I had seen and talked to not even two hours before, were dead - consumed by the blinding white light made from the splitting of atoms, a new star in the sky.

My comms are down, as the suit communicated through a relay array onboard the ship - I can't talk to anyone, try as I might.

Out of all hands aboard the *Pangasinan*, I had to be the one they sent outside to repair a scout probe, and I was the only one who survived. So I might be lucky, but that initial luck won't matter if I suffocate to death on the float.

I look down at my wrist terminal for resource readings and watch as the air I have left steadily decreases.

With no one coming to my rescue and not enough air or backpack propellant to get to the nearest allied ship, I stared blankly at the crippled probe I was tasked with bringing back to life.

Damn you; I think as I maneuver towards it.

I could have died on board my ship with my crew, and that would have been perfect.

But no- I will meet my end alone, on the float in the black of space, suffocating on my breath, with no way to bring the enemy to justice. We weren't even at war, but because of them, we sure as hell may be.

Then, a circular yellow and black emblem on one of the probe's many service panels catches my eye, and I begin to formulate a plan.

Rapidly reading the text on the panel, I draw a drill from my utility belt, undoing the screws holding it in place and revealing the mess of wires and tubes within- the probe's reactor. I power on the spacecraft from my wrist terminal, and with new purpose, I begin my work augmenting the power output of the probe's fusion drive.

Inside me, the rage has returned, stronger now, like a fire made more immense by kerosene. The anger built up inside my chest- for my friends, fate, and home - will soon be released. I swivel my head around, scanning the vast expanse for any sign of the enemy. After

five minutes of searching, my eyes flick towards a glint in the darkness growing larger, the vessel returning to the destruction it had wrought, like Tybalt returning to challenge Romeo once more.

That's it, I think.

That's them-

the people who needlessly killed my friends and destroyed my home.

They think they've won.

I may lose, but I'll make this the last fight they ever win.

Using my suit's orbital computer, I map an intercept course with the enemy, watching as the vessel circles my position like a vulture over a carrion. Bringing up my wrist terminal, I double-check my connection twice to ensure I won't lose remote access to the probe's systems. Finally, I float backward, examining my work in what will be the last hour of my life- a makeshift atom bomb.

Starting the probe's engine from my terminal, I secure myself to its side, letting the spacecraft pull me toward my final destination.

Peering at the screen, I watch anxiously as I close the distance between me and my target. Then, preparing myself mentally and physically, I make peace with my fate and hover my finger over the detonator.

Speeding closer and closer to my target, a proximity warning blares in my helmet, but I tune it out as the meters tick down.

6400.

3200.

1600.

800.

Ed's Box

David Szabo-Dery

Edward has a box in his room.

It's a little box, eh tall and eh wide, just imagine me showing it to you with my hands.

The box is on his desk, buzzing away at every hour of the day. You can pick up the box, but it will always find a way back to its spot, like a wandering cat that whines in your ear and claws around your neck every time it sneaks home through your bedroom window. The box is inevitable. Sometimes I feel as if the box is in my room, on my desk, but I'm not Ed, so it couldn't be there.

But what I am telling you now is most definitely true. Others don't believe the box is there. Some buy into it when I first mention it, but as the yarn spins on and on they can't seem to take it seriously. They find it funny, theatrical; they say me and Ed could be actors, or narrators in some absurd stage play. We recreate "Waiting for Godot" talking about his box, but the discussion is always the same, and the wait just kills you.

The box is small, I've established that already. It's a tiny metal cube, after half the size of the GE toaster that the home phone converses with, as one chokes out bread and the other waits to relay messages from Ed.

The phone is ringing. Ed!

I pick it up and the all-too familiar voice of a scammer's jabber comes through. Not Ed.

Apparently my kid Sam just died in a car crash. Those poor elderly; hell my grandma probably forgot my name by now. I could just as well be Sam, and then she'd have a name to call me when I cut chemistry class to give her soup at the home down the road. I hang up the phone, disappointed.

What's the time, then?

12:50 pm.

Welp, his house is ten minutes away; might as well go and check in on him.

I find my shoes lying around in my room, strewn across the floor, laces carelessly untied. I don't even put socks on; I better go.

So I go on down the hallway from my room and open up the front door, and the leaves look a bit darker than before, sort of orange, like rust. Fall was coming and it felt a bit nipier now, and a part of it was refreshing, the same way a cold shower is refreshing, but it also reminded me of many things, some good and some bad. Say, when I was a kid, maybe five or six years old, I would dig through the piles of fallen leaves at the park like I was digging for gold. A couple weeks later, the leaves were all gone, the trees were bare, and I would go to my mom and dad and cry that all the trees died, and they'd pat me on the head and call me a silly little child.

12:51 pm.

The thing with Ed's box is that it's kind of like the Schrödinger's cat thing: every second it might just blow into smithereens, and Ed would blow up too, logically, and I don't know whether he's intact or his brains are all over the wall. Odds are, it might not, but every time I put my ear to it I hear the box buzzing as that little bomb stutters and sputters its way to ignition, and the sparks inside rain over the metal inner walls like pins tumbling out from their box and onto the floor, all in a razor-sharp torrent. And just imagine having to walk over all of that, the pain in your feet... probably about as bad as the stab in my ears every time I put them up to the explosive box and hear the ear-piercing screech of grinding steel on flint, and every now and then a little boom! like a firecracker going off under a stack of pillows.

12:52 pm.

I checked the watch.

So maybe I let myself ramble a bit too long. Let's get down to brass tacks: Ed is my friend; Ed has a box in his room; the box is on his desk (always, as it cannot be moved); by mechanisms beyond my knowledge, the box may explode any minute; and here I am talking about it.

You believe me, right? Ed's box really does exist. It may be insensitive of you to think otherwise. You should see the way he mopes and groans about it; that type of thing kills a man. Just imagine you had a randomly explosive, murderous metal cube constantly in your room. Maybe I'd leave the room. Hell, Ed doesn't even leave the room, except at one in the afternoon. I usually take him on a walk at one.

12:53 pm.

Maybe, I feared the box might decide to give up at one. It had been weeks since I'd last seen him; I'd been down at the shore. I took a picture there. I was with my Mom and Dad and dog, and we were all posing in front Morey's Piers with massive, turd-eating grins on our faces, and in other picture we took I was neck-deep and strangled by snot-green Atlantic water, as I tried to wring out a smile, but the water was ice-cold and just inches from taking me whole. I could say I had fun, but now I don't have fun. It's more or less the same. Even the shore; we go every year. But still, back here in normal-town, Ed keeps me occupied.

Ed.

12:54 pm.

I've been out here having fun at the beach and Ed's over here dancing with death in his own bedroom. Do better.

Anyways, statistically speaking, whatever odds the box may have of going off, the chances are pretty low for it to not have gone off at all for this long, and with my being away, I may have missed out on the grave news. No calls from him either, and I don't bother calling anymore. Last time I did, I got a whirlwind of a cussing-out for interrupting his fourteen-hour nap and he hung up on me. Needless to say, I was impressed with the cussing the man could do. Then he called me once at 3:00 am, begging to talk, and I gave him an Edward-inspired cussing-out, because what kind of bozo calls at that time of day?

12:55 pm.

Talk. Talking is always a good thing, I can imagine. Sometimes bad. Edward tried to talk about his box to some of our other friends. They laughed at him (what an imagination he has!). You would laugh too, I bet. It's so ridiculous, isn't it. But

Noah was also a Patriots fan so he complained about that, and they had to change topic again. Noah didn't find anything funny. They sort of started to hate him, and that took their minds off Edward being a bit of a prick.

12:56 pm.

I'd talk to Edward a lot about how to deal with his box. I'd suggest just leaving the room, sleeping somewhere else, or taking a walk every day while the box ticks away. Just spend as much time as possible away from it, forget it even exists maybe, and then he'd fear the box less. But he claims it isn't that simple. He says that the more he spends away from it the more he feels it about to go off, and that some sort of alarm in his head tells him that it won't go off the more time he spends near it, and further he gets from it, the more the bright sun and faint hissing tick of the incendiary box make his hair stand on end. Sort of like how they say, "a watched pot never boils." A watched box never explodes. When I go to his house, I let us take shifts watching it, while he goes outside to tan his pale skin or maybe grab a bite of chips or chocolate to eat. He'd drink some water, then brush his teeth, and change his clothes in the bathroom as I kept my eyes on the box in his room.

12:57 pm.

Of course, discussion won't kill the box. He'd taken more drastic measures. Once he tied a rope around it, lugged it outside, and hung it from a tree, so if it were to explode it would just blow up a patch of grass, and it wouldn't even graze the house. So he let the rope and box hang around outside, until he woke up the following morning and the box was back and neatly coiled on his desk, with the box beside it. Everytime he hung the box, it would always return, and the rope would untie itself. He could swear on his life he didn't untie it; that would be foolish of him. Once he stole his father's six-shooter, slipped the silencer on, and set the box up outside. He put it on the ground, a good distance away so the ricocheting bullets won't hit him or the box won't blow up in his face, and he fired away. He said it was hard to hold. His hands shook on the trigger. But he hit it as many times as the gun could fire and the box survived the firing squad, unscathed. His father found the gun safe unlocked, and figured he must have done it. He gave him a good whooping before Ed took a swing at his face and called him an unfeeling schmuck, and then ran over to my house where he stayed the night. I told him to go speak to a mechanic, maybe one could figure out the box. So he brought it to a mechanic, but the mechanic just went on for hours breaking it apart and rambling

about all the little bits whirring around in there, and when Ed told him he didn't understand, the mechanic said it was simple, and he just had to behave and sit and listen. Ed told me that he tried other mechanics, and they were the same. They wouldn't fix the box, but they just wouldn't shut up about it. They all kind of talked down to him, so one day he called one of them an unfeeling schmuck and took a swing at his nose. He doesn't trust mechanics anymore.

12:58 pm.

And then, once, he simply tried to pry it open with a steak knife, and he swore he was being as careful as possible. The knife was sharp, the lights were on, the room was quiet, and so he set to work. He was whittling away at it and managed to get a crack in it. But all the while, his mother had been calling him downstairs to eat dinner, and she got worried. On top of that, she needed the steak knife to cut the pork chops. So, she went up to his room and saw him hard at work on dismantling the box, but the knife slipped and he says he accidentally sliced across his wrist, and so she called 911 and Ed spent the night in the hospital. He came home the day after, by insistence of his parents, and his mother gave him a scolding slap on the face and left him home alone to cook dinner. They were making steak and salad.

12:59 pm.

But there is one known way to get rid of the box once and for all. You may be envisioning a plain, metal cube right now, but this box has a big, glaring, ugly, can't-miss-it, red button on the top that if you press it, according to Ed, it would blow up, and be gone. He said that if the damn box doesn't vanish someday he might just press it, and he chuckled to him and I chuckled too, and we had a good laugh as I agreed that I would do the same. Then I took him downstairs and we both ate Pop Tarts and he forgot about the box for a moment, but his eyes seemed to keep on darting back toward his room.

1:00 pm.

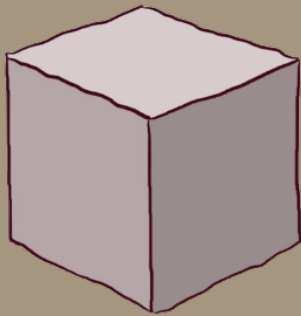
Edward's house was just within sight, so I took off, as fast as I could, and at a certain point it felt as if my legs were hardly skimming the sidewalk, and just slipping and flying behind me. The houses blended into a brick-red continuum that grew brighter as the trees above vanished and more eye-piercing sunlight poured in. And then I reached his home, and all was still. Not a footstep marked the front

yard. Both parents' cars were parked in the driveway. The wind didn't even blow, so there was no rustle of grass or shrubs or trees. It was quiet and the smell of animal shit coming from the jaundiced grass below my feet gave it a smell. I got to the front door and knocked, but the knock made no sound. I heard a little pitter-patter of steps inside and then heard nothing because by then my ears were filled with that hollow screech that you hear when you tune out everything else and your mind just needs something to hear before it all starts to feel eerily empty. I closed my eyes, and took a deep breath, and counted to ten, but I couldn't hear myself count to ten. I might have just counted to eleven, or twelve, but I kept counting and then checked my watch again.

1:01 pm.

And then I heard again, and I whispered "60" and the watch's hand ticked into the next minute as the empty screech grew into a pained wail. A fleet of footsteps drummed toward me. The door opened.

I felt a gentle hand on my shoulder, and a weight lifted off my back.



Eat Yourself

Yael Blaiberg



Bruises.

Eylul Oktay



How dare you.

It's already been a few days,
but I can't stop thinking.
I refuse to believe,
you've done it once again.

A pain that shattered my heart,
and caused an ache in my soul.
A lesson I tried so hard to avoid,
but was forced to learn.

Replaying all the scenes,
regretting every moment,
rewriting every storyline,
runs in my mind on repeat.

Everything you should've done,
everything you could've said.
Your name is now taboo on my
tongue,
A bittersweet taste in my mouth.

Gut feelings are always right.
The pit in my stomach,
the voices in my head,
see everything my heart cannot.

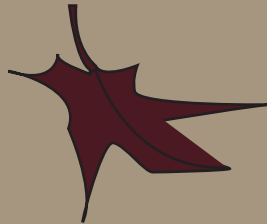
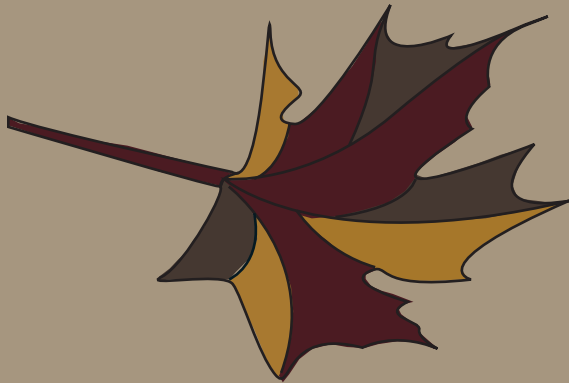
My eyes are permanently stained red,
my pillows drenched in days worth of tears,
my blankets tired of giving me the warmth,
that you no longer can.

The comfort in your hugs,
was only suffocation.
The heat from your kisses,
were actually burns.

But maybe this just proves,
that my skin is far too soft.
For every time you touch it lovingly,
I get bruised.

My Feelings for You Blew Away with the Leaves

anonymous



I liked a boy
But I don't know if he ever liked me

I liked a boy
But I don't know if I still like him

My feelings for you blew away with the leaves
They may have dried up and crumbled
But maybe they'll grow again
When the spring comes in and I'm reminded of

When you came to see me perform at the musical
When you helped me get through chem
When we spent hours texting each other until late into the night
When we'd listen to love songs together

To me, fall reminds me of a steady decline
A descent to death
But you reminded me that spring can be found
In the strangest places

Like a chemistry class.



Show and Tell

By Elena Gergis

*Show me everything you have
every crack,
every flaw,
every tiny imperfection of yours*

*And in exchange
I'll tell you about
every failure,
every defeat,
every downfall of my own*

*We can no longer hide in broad daylight
Our nakedness is exposed before all
Every one of our shortcomings –
Uncovered,
unveiled,
displayed*

*Because after all
Isn't life one big act
of show and tell?*



temperature

anonymous

Black clothes hang off the sink.
My hand reaches for the steel handle,
turning it until I feel resistance.
I undress.
I shiver.
I step inside,
the hot droplets of water shocking my skin,
until the gray goosebumps finally disappear.

His body lies somewhere
cold,
and motionless.

I crank the handle to make it hotter.
I don't want to get out.
I want this sensation to last.
But it is only temporary.

His body lies somewhere
cold,
and motionless.

I crank the handle to its highest temperature.
My skin burns,
but only for a second.

His body lies somewhere
cold,
and motionless.

Maybe if I knew him well enough,
my skin wouldn't burn.

I turn off the water.
I get dressed.
And I leave.

I light a candle:
the only warmth I feel
as I stand amongst bodies
shivering in the wind.

His body lies somewhere
cold,
and motionless.

But his soul flies somewhere
warm,
and full of life.

Because he is loved,
and he is remembered.
LLJP

frog eyelids,
\$1.75

Tai Nakamura

presently, old man Lucien
made me an offer. “frog
eyelids” he slurred. “one
seventy-five.” “one seventy-five.”

they were peeling off. the
wax paper underneath shone
a pallid color like one of
those smiley stickers. it shone,
impudently.

the moonlight could be sifted
through the eyelids’ meshes.

“it’s a symbol of fertility,” Lucien
mentioned, the last word tinged
with misogyny. caged frogs
purred from his stale wooden
shelves. I tilted.



Way Home

Bethany Zheng

Tulpa

Erol Sonmez

Magic is not real but loopholes are, and he read the fine print. All that energy, just barely repressed. Like a suitcase you need to step on to close, water clinging to the rim of a full glass, a body with too much blood. Poor thing. I will carry its load for a while. But I have to give it back sooner or later, darling. I am the wind during a heatwave, a flowing fountain on the dryrock, an embrace where my head fills the longing between his head and shoulders. But the sun keeps pounding and wellsprings run dry and film reels keep spinning. And if he stays too long past the intermission he's going to get a nebula screen printed on his insides, all black purple and blue. And there's a good chance he will sink below the floor to somewhere lower, somewhere darker, for a while. But he will be okay. That I can promise both you and him, darling. He will be okay.

Pumpkin Spice Lattes

Drea Chakravorty

It's the pumpkin spice lattes, I fear —

I could drink the creamy treat from your eyes —
would your tears taste nice?
would they taste like pumpkin spice?

Not that I'd make you cry, but —

It's a bit of manic energy,
some curiosity, some kind of sanity
that coffee's stolen from me.

But I still drink it, the texture's too good;
If I could drink it as water, I would!

And I know I'm going crazy!
It's obvious to see
how the world's become so colorful
and its spinning around me
like a merry-go-round!

I use simplistic rhymes because my brain is whirring too fast,
High on caffeine and happiness that I know won't last —

and i write and i write and i write and i sing and my fingers tremble in fear
and i don't know what to do anymore because i can't think outside of this
freaking caffeine and i don't know what to do but it tastes so good i need
to keep drinking these pumpkin spice lattes i won't get them again these
three months will fly by in a haze of color and dreams and i need to savor
everything —

And then you look away
and the moment breaks.

yet the memory of my delusion remains.

It Changes with the Seasons (It Doesn't Change At All)

Gian Plata

I felt your warmth in the fall,
It burned, feverish,
So I jumped into the ocean — in vain —
It evaporated, leaving behind something
red and beating and bloody in the sand.

I felt your warmth in the winter,
So I sprinted out into the cold
In my crewneck tee and worn-out jean skirt,
Collapsed onto the snow and watched
As rose-colored water pooled around me, over my eyes.

Still, I felt your warmth in the spring,
So I decided to dance in the rain,
Let the drops pour down my resigned face,
And looked to the sky,
as I saw your rainbow eyes bloom on the horizon.

And then it was cold in the summer,
I shivered in the wind,
tossing me to the clouds, a weightless sheet of paper,
So I flew to the sun, reached out to grasp it —
It extinguished in my fingers, crumbling from the sky.

It is cold in the autumn,
And I embrace that chill like a long lost friend,
Yet even now, I sometimes look to the leaves
And their red-orange burn,
And I remember the warmth of yesterday.



the end.



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