

The background of the entire page is a crumpled white paper texture. Scattered across this texture are numerous hand-drawn illustrations. There are several crickets, each with a red body and black outlines, some facing forward and others in profile. Interspersed among the crickets are various leaves in shades of orange and brown, some with detailed vein patterns. There are also several stylized flowers in shades of purple and magenta, some with multiple petals and long stems. The overall aesthetic is artistic and textured.

# STUCK IN THE LIBRARY

SPRING 2021 POETRY EDITION

CEASE  
AND  
PERISH

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# I'VE READ WORSE

*O. A.*

over tea,  
you let me know.  
hurt,  
yet i let go.  
my heart hurt,  
as though speared by a sword.  
still,  
your existence a reward.  
sprouting ills,  
i bloom with ignorance.  
to choose to leave unaddressed,  
as though impaled by invalidation.  
still,  
i love you.  
my love defeats feeling blue,  
which you know isn't something new.  
all the while,  
time ticks,  
intrusive thoughts run rampant.  
and yet,  
over nothing,  
you don't let me know.  
still,  
i love you  
through and through.

# AMITY'S FOLLY

*Michael Anchor*

Disaster!  
The death toll rises  
In the watery graveyard.  
Families run to me.  
Close the beaches!  
Close the beaches!  
The people demand their safety.  
I demand it too.

My pleas,  
The families' pleas,  
All go to waste.  
The mayor gives in.  
Reopen the beaches!  
Reopen the beaches!  
The people demand their party.  
The waters run red.

# LATE NIGHT IN THE PIZZA PLACE

*Shannon  
Addonizio*

I had a dream last night that I was picking  
up a pie for my family...

And you were there.

I passed by your table and waved. You  
got up and followed me, looking around,  
you quietly said

"I just want to know why. I didn't do  
anything to you. I wasn't like them." For  
what seemed like an eternity, but was  
really only a minute, maybe a minute and  
a half, I looked at you.

And the only response I could muster  
was, "I'm sorry."

I'm sorry that I took the lessons that they  
had taught me a little too seriously. I'm  
sorry that I got so caught up in bracing  
myself for a battle that I could not tell  
who I was fighting anymore. I couldn't  
tell who was hiding a knife behind their  
back and who was just trying to give me  
a hug.

So I decided to frantically cut the ties that  
I thought held me to the ocean floor in  
order to keep from drowning.

And in the process I cut you off, a  
disposable piece. No more necessary than  
a pair of jeans that wouldn't fit anymore.

You looked at me

Took my hand

And led me outside

Where everything disappeared

Except you and me

The world had turned white as snow  
quietly fell. Smirking, you raced me to a  
group of trees

And we laughed and ran and threw

snowballs at each other

Just like we used to

Then you stopped

Cheeks bright red

And held me against a tree

The snow falling around us

Quiet and peaceful

Gently you tilted my face up and pressed

your lips against mine

You tasted like regret

Like lost chances

Like putting your dog to sleep and feeling

like you didn't tell him how much you

loved him enough

Like losing all the pictures on your phone

and not having back ups

And I clung to you

I clutched at your back and pulled you

closer to me

Hoping that I could somehow bring you

back with me when I woke up.

But I can't.

Eventually I let go of you, turned around

and walked away

Back to the pizza place

Back to get my pie

And when I walked out

You were gone

The trees were gone

The snow had turned to slush on the

dirty street

So I turned and walked home

# AND IN THE END,

*Stayna Alexandre*

I am a rose that embraces the gaze of brighter eyes,

but I am also the painful thorns of my beauty.

I am the dandelion that many picked, blown and wished on,

but I am also their failed dreams as my seeds grow elsewhere.

I am the sunflower seed better roasted and seasoned for your taste,

but I am also the bitter one, angry for not being planted as I should.

I am the poison ivy that appears ordinary to the basic eye,

but I am also what my name says I am.

I am a garden full of flowers of different colors and sizes

but I am also the ones left behind, that might never be given as a token of love.

# LOVE POEM TO MY QUEERS

*Maikél Angeles*

Breathe in the air of the world  
The universe is your oyster and  
your divine is far beyond. Beyond  
this realm, behind the intricate aspect  
of your inner meditations, lies an essence  
of newly found hope. My beloved gays, heal!  
Heal! Heal and thrive! Heal!  
You're not just queer, you gap the bridge  
between the abstract and normality, behold!

My sweet little gay boy, your hands of love carry  
the balance of creativity, love, and lust. You embody  
the perception of an alternate reality in which your truth  
is nothing short of valid. Your unapologetic ways stir up  
your pride, even in the midst of healing those wounded scars.  
You're an everlasting rainbow, so share your happiness with  
the world.

My strong lesbian darling, thank you for your gift of joy.  
You're no menace to society, you're the backbone of this  
queer reality. Fight like the woman you are, a human  
of unimaginable force. Thank you for your poise, thank you  
for your grounded aspect the problems faced. Thank you for  
daring to abolish the patriarchal mold. Show them all there is no  
force in heaven, hell, or earth as strong as yours.

To the bisexual kings and goddesses, you're as priceless as gold.  
Shine your diamonds in the light and embellish your astral power.  
You move through the tides controlling the waves of your life. Your  
sexuality is what you're true to and your beauty is majestic  
as a Hollow's Eve full moon. Just do what you do best and bloom.

Trans and non-binaries, the blueprint to our movements.  
Ignite the powers of Stonewall and live your truth like no other.  
You're butterflies in the night sky; your existence swells our hopes.  
You're more than you think, you're more than you feel. Who you are  
is greater than life. Majestic as the Phoenix, rise from ashes. Dust to dust,  
leave no stone unturned. Reckon your individuality and raise hell,  
giving life to all the unseen truths.



# RULER

*Kayla Ariana*

There goes your King  
All subtle and sad,  
While he barely pays  
You any mind.  
Why sigh and  
State your intellect  
When he barely listens  
Anyway?  
  
So pick up your crown,  
My dear Queen.  
There are no gender roles  
For a person  
To rule.  
Forget what you're told  
And do what you're  
Supposed to;  
Save your kingdom  
Instead of watching it  
Rot and die.

# CINDERELLA, SLAUGHTERHOUSE

*Kelly Bannon*

My body's made of spitfire and fairy dust

Sour ego, and sugary lust

I make you dubious, then gain your trust

I'm your risk, I'm your must

My words will stain

Your ego and your membrane

Red lips and Mary Janes

Save you from the violent rain

I'm so timid, and then I'm vain

Make you happy, cause you pain

I taste of satisfaction and regret

I only smile when I'm upset

Make you fearless, make you sweat

Garters off, take your bet

Your hands up my blouse

My fist to your mouth

Cinderella, Slaughterhouse

# IF I RULED THE WORLD

*Lordy Belance*

If I ruled the world  
The hate and madness would stop  
And there would be love.

# WEIRD AL

*Lordy Belance*

Weird Al

Talented man

I want to meet him soon

A hunk with an accordion.

Alfred.

**1:**

*F. B. Bennet*

I regret everything I've said and done,  
so now I don't say or do anything.  
I have become a ghost,  
even around my family.  
my presence at the dinner table does not matter,  
for I only move dust around with my breath.

# A STAR, A CLOUD, AND THE NIGHT SKY

*El Ian*

A serene emptiness  
Fills an overstimulated brain  
With restless desire  
To die, in vain?

To destroy  
To smash  
To annihilate  
To incinerate

A dark dance  
Arrhythmic  
And electric  
Puts me in a trance

A swing of a sword  
A swig of the world  
Bitter tastes and  
Acidic cuts

I wish that one day  
I will be able to  
Detonate  
The world

# BREAKFAST, BREAK/FAST

*Anakin Jackson*

The insane notion  
that my muffin,  
English

Should suggest to me  
to “wake up  
to  
what’s possible”

My coffee calls upon me  
best parts of the morning, informed

Consumer signaling surrounds me.

A daily paper clangs against the aluminum door,  
packed full of circulated ads  
Filtered through big corporate men.

Their eyes don’t see like yours and mine.

Ownership they declare.  
Possess to be possessed.  
Bought not sold.

Anchor desires to a physical  
counterpart.

Aspirations should avoid abstraction,  
don’t allow the mind to believe  
options of a better place.

Here,  
you can buy happiness, just sell  
your self.

# OLD BOOTS IN WINTER

*Anakin Jackson*

Snow has recently fallen.  
I decide to make something of it.

Eventually,  
there:  
the scuffed and knock-  
off tan-orange  
mounds,  
soles too  
thick to bend

I put on my old boots/  
out the door

the air is biting,  
the ground

damp...

Sun breaks  
the clouds

Turning  
solid snow into  
slush.

And I recall why I stopped  
wearing these things in the first place.

There's a slight bump  
on the front

of the right foot  
near the toes.



I stop in the middle  
of the road,

take it off,  
try to see if

I can shake  
out a rock.

Nothing falls

I smack the heel,  
feel

around.  
I'm reminded of the saying,  
bite the bullet,

kill yourself to live.

Enough discomfort to make it unenjoyable,  
but not painful.

I push a piece of gravel down the concrete.  
I watch the pebble dance.  
Reminded of  
years passed.

I see I left my laces undone,  
And that I'm walking perfectly within the  
Sidewalk squares.

# TOUT VA BIEN MALGRÉ LA NUIT

*Isley Jean-Pierre*

There was a distant cry  
In the heart of the night  
My errant soul trapped with little virtue  
And disregard for my earnest claim to life  
Like the last leaf on a lonely tree  
Holding still at the mercy of the wind  
Whose gentleness can shift into a hurtful blow  
In the dead of the night, none  
Shall look for me nor for my grave  
In the silver mist and under damped grasses  
I could hear those myriad voices  
That came to bid farewell but not to me  
To others whose lives embroidered their memories  
And whose tales have befriended time itself  
When the broken door swings open sans malice  
And the warm light cures my body and sews my soul  
I shall stand tall and unshaken  
To ponder the true nature of this instant

# SUPPRESSION OF SELF

*Hannah Lazerowitz*

i'm looking at a skeleton  
in the mirror,  
telling myself that a body  
is supposed to appear this way,  
ignoring the wailing grumbles of hunger  
or the weak feeling of malnourishment,  
and pretending that i've been treating my body  
well

is this my way of self-sabotage?  
burning the vessel that houses my existence?  
destroying my body—  
despite the fact that it's been here for me through  
it all,  
keeping me alive through the most painful times  
and fighting to flourish under my oppression  
my body;  
the home to my soul,  
vibrant daydreams,  
and seemingly endless string of insecurities  
is slowly withering to bones  
and being mislabeled as beautiful

# CRACK      OF      DAWN

*Anna Matskin*

The crack of dawn reaches my soul,  
I turn my body around;  
I lose control;  
My thoughts shift to the sky above;  
I start to think of the angels I love  
The sky light blue grass so green;  
The wings of morning set the scene.

# THE END OF A TALE

*Eliel Mizrahi*

You were my peace, serene like the view of the sea.  
Thoughts of you howl in my head just like a late summer  
breeze in September.  
And your touch, divine like that of an Angel.

Alas!  
I carve this poem out of an oak tree,  
Centered in the middle of my mind;  
And choose the words as I would delicate flowers.

O thy melodies fill my heart,  
Sweeter than that of a bard playing in the grasslands,  
Or a musician on the street.

Remembering your smile illuminates my night.  
You were a ray of light that made the darkest days of the soul  
bright.  
Your Vermilion eyes brought a new dawn;  
A new life to the sails of my being.

Like a wonder of the world,  
I devoted myself to your internal beauty that captivated my  
soul.  
You were an enchantress, that let my emotions out of a cage  
And let them run rampant across the Seven seas.

But now we must bid farewell,  
We must say our goodbyes,  
As fate  
Does not favor the both of us.  
As G-d  
Has a bigger plan for the two of us.

Sayonara I say,  
Au revoir I repeat,  
But deep in my heart I shout;  
Stay.

# MOTHER

*Melissa Morales*

cooking in the kitchen  
stirring a big pot on the stove  
creased hands, timeworn with ignorance  
she serves me a big plate of steaming  
oblivion,  
burning my hands with the heat  
I drop it on the floor and it breaks into  
pieces  
broken porcelain fragments  
and I see her in the reflection  
see her wrinkled skin and tired eyes  
her calloused palms reach out for me  
The lump in my throat  
turns into a slab of ice  
and it rises to my eyes,  
moistens into a lake  
I turn away and am careful  
not to cut myself with the pieces,  
careful not to jab my skin or else it'll  
bleed  
into the fire of truth that  
the pot on the stove is getting old  
just like her creased hands  
just like her wrinkled skin  
just like her tired eyes  
just like my mother.

# YOU DON'T KNOW

*Leysan Nigmatova*

You don't know  
Nor does the Moon  
that we are traveling around the sun  
on a spaceship named Earth

You don't know  
Nor do I, my friend  
What is the true and beginning of All

You don't know  
Nor do I, my dear  
What is waiting for us after death

You don't know  
Nor do I, my friend  
What is the best life decision you've made

You don't know  
Or, maybe you do  
that I think of you more often than I want to

## SPRING HAIKU SET

*Avery Poerio-Tripodi*

Toxins surround us  
While air thins, but earth grows through  
Cracks of filthy towns

We fall like the leaves;  
Hieroglyphs on subway walls  
Prepared us for this

Uncertain weather  
Ever changing hot and cold  
What will happen next?

Dreary windy days  
Can not shake what lies within:  
Unchangeable might

For what becomes of  
The snow when it melts away?  
Why, it becomes spring



## STATEMENT PIECE

*Mariyah Rajshahiwal*

Dear Director,  
I am writing  
To ask you to review  
A grave matter  
That has come to my attention.  
It is regarding  
The decision to hire me.  
You made the right choice.  
I am quite qualified for my position.  
But, you can't really see that  
Now can you?  
Sir, I am respectfully asking you,  
When you asked me those questions  
In my interview, did you  
Hear my responses? Or were you  
Mesmerized by my hijab? The  
Oh so obvious symbol of my  
Exoticism, my  
Color, my  
"Uniqueness." Your  
Perfect addition to a diverse work team.  
Mr. White Man, I appreciate your  
Attempts at recognizing me.  
But what part of me?  
Did you read the portfolio I submitted?  
Did you actually appreciate my humor?  
Your eyes skipped straight down  
To the languages I'm fluent in.  
But don't tell me you tried to learn Sanskrit because  
I speak Gujrati.  
Dear sir, I, kindly, urge you  
Don't make me  
Your statement piece.  
To stand on the center table.  
For all to gaze at,  
appreciate,  
compliment.  
I hope  
You take  
No offense.  
I would appreciate  
Your momentary attention  
On this matter.  
Sincerely,  
With the utmost regard and respect

## (NO)

*V Ritchie*

never                      acquainted myself with (no)  
                                 she seemed so      impolite  
   not at all ladylike  
i whispered her name                      a few times  
                                 when she should have been a scream  
                                 deaf ears              held her down  
hollowed              her                      out  
  
   left our carved smiles  
   on the porch to rot

# UNREQUITED

*V Ritchie*

foolish        really  
to think it divine or planned  
ignoring scarlet flags waving in naked trees  
warning: you'll be nothing more than  
a        warm        body  
abandoned once his lonely winter has passed  
a breathing cadaver robbed of last heat  
in december's bite can never last  
the flame he reaped  
never        to return  
praying    through bitter frost keep  
my favorite thief warm, i'll never learn  
stripped again        left alone  
my once warm body chilled to the bone

# CONSUMED AND FORGOTTEN

*Carina Rivera*

I am abandoned in your labyrinth.

Stumbling blindly in the dust you left behind,  
the thickening cloak of smoke in the air  
from the bridges you burned in your path.  
I gag on it, soot lining my esophagus  
and ebonizing my insides.

Look at what you've done to me.

I was once a figure of light and now  
blackened bile seeps from my pores,  
the toxins of your breath, the poison  
of your tongue. The razor-like thorns  
of your touch have etched cuts  
so deep into my flesh  
I am a fragmented statue of the girl  
you once knew.

Distorted reflections of myself mock my virtue.

A shattered-looking glass stands  
in the center of this maze, the overcast  
of soft rainfall and floating burning  
embers set an ambiance of sorrow  
that does not elude my heart.

I do not wish to leave.

Settled into the cobblestone pathways,  
I mold myself to find comfort in the cracks.  
I have been polluted and will not pollute  
the hope that lives outside of this trap.

I am alone here, aside from the voices in my mind.

We will wait for you.

We will wait for the time to be right,  
for the tide of the moon to draw you  
back here to us. Where you will walk  
the stone pathways, trace the verdant  
walls of ivy with your fingertips, and  
find us in the center.  
That is when we will tenderly place a kiss  
upon your lips.

And with all my love,  
I will draw in your essence and leave  
you lifeless and discarded to the side  
like you left me.

Consumed and forgotten.

# NAUGHTY AGAIN

*Emalisa Rose*

gone are the day trippers  
the lords of manhattan  
the frats and the debutantes  
the silver hair gents with  
their bleached over blondes  
sipping sex at the tiki bar

it's just you and me  
'neath the scarlet soliloquy  
and i swirl in your sands  
shed of my skins, your  
breakaway blues, your  
waves that roll over me

into your water world  
nakedly free—and we  
can play naughty again.

# TO DEB WITH MAI TAIS AND MARLBOROS

*Emalisa Rose*

She pined over Paul. I went  
for Ringo. She was crazy for  
Brian; my guy was Carl. Both  
of us battled for Peter. We were  
rubber souls, pet sounds, lava  
lamp luses, hurdy gurdy girls  
dancing the hits to the old 45s  
in her pink polka dot palace,

tempting the boys to come play  
with us. I was skinny and pimped.  
She was buck toothed and braced.  
But I poemed and she painted,  
never knowing the gifts we'd  
been given back then.

I was probably in love with her;  
both of us awkward but beautiful.  
We just didn't see it. At the time  
we were art—undefined.

## CHARON & OTHER STORIES

*Bren Tawil*

i want to tell you about the oaks, the valley, the  
veronica flowers, the wisteria wilting over frankie's  
cowlick, frankie's withering fever dreams,  
frankie's mercantile multiverse which i reach for  
like a glossary, like penance, lo-fi like frankie's  
spider lashes, like elephant 6, like his cask or  
my flask or all my friends medicating the right way.  
so over on bedford avenue frankie trades depth  
for distance, his pearls for a taxicab in which  
i am moonlighting as a mid-term middleman, a  
memory, a multiverse, a mouthroof, a monologue.  
frankie knows i'm scared. square one, in a lake, in  
a cabin, in a multi-purpose room, in a decrepit house  
stilted over a pottery studio across from a canteen  
with rusting chandeliers & retired rubber cushions  
where i rehearsed a prayer like an accusation, never  
noticing the flowers, only the propaganda. frankie is  
like al-ghazali the sufi who would like to think  
i am stalling like a station wagon, "pure nonexistence,"  
"extinction of extinction," but i would like to think  
i am contiguous like a lava lamp. frankie is only  
candid on the subway. frankie would like to think he is  
stoned immaculate but bon tells him often that he is  
only a felon. i want to tell you about 119 woods road,  
an innocuous omission, somewhere between  
inkwell & virginia, which i can only recognize when  
frankie spends sunday humming about a floundering  
youth 90 miles from home, huddled with the robbers  
by the radio in oslo, acclimated to that profuse,  
formidable feeling that something is coming to an end,  
i remember a cardboard box on my lap, red-rimmed in the  
windshield, telling frankie, you are nature too. his jaw  
clenched. bon diagnosed him over a walkie talkie,  
t-minus several decades until bedford avenue &



until then, frankie will be falling out of love, frankie  
will black out my poetry, frankie will moonlight as a  
ferryman, bon will moonlight as a demigod, & i  
will moonlight as a passenger. frankie chastises me  
because sometimes i disorient myself, because  
i filled bon's pillbox with cinnamon, because i forget  
sometimes that he is so entrenched in melancholy.  
i remember frankie through the keyhole pleading,  
"when will you come home?" pleading "wait,"  
pleading "please," pleading "stay,"  
medicating the right way, aimless in the attic,  
stacking his words to compensate for his lack of  
dialogue which only became frankie once he realized  
"dear diary" was easier than intimate & unrequited.  
in truth, this is all we know, chlorinated castles,  
sprinting in the rain, self-sedating & masquerading  
in the filmy twilight of a vestibule, frankie humming  
a lullaby & bon screaming until his throat grows raw,  
parsing & piercing & polarizing & pleading &  
trying to convince each other that it will get better  
when the thunder stops but suddenly it's summer  
& i am sailing like a consolation prize over styx with  
seaweed like currency for frankie to trade for his zen  
on bedford avenue. i would like to think i am not  
only writing to be read but frankie tells me otherwise.  
when he gets like this i try to remember that he is  
disillusioned, & that time he told me, "maybe  
i'm not even looking for an answer. maybe i'm  
just looking for an excuse" but still i am unable to  
absolve him or even myself & so all i can do is remind  
the both of us that bruises are beautiful & people  
are porcelain & it will get better because it just must;  
breathe it & you will know; you are nature too.

## TYLER EP. 8

*Bren Tawil*

radio silence

tyler says open like the sky/ oh god please go on

in wyman's rugged slum/ but old habits die hard

mull it over/ tyler says

ready the butcher/ that kills me

i get in touch.

if i glittered like the land / i would blister before your tall eyes

sour with someone/ ill at the base of the oak

if the soil swelling on my mouth/ blissed my bandaged wrists  
with sugar

i would want you lapping it up

goddamn it i should know better/ tell me i was bad

take those tonsils out the turnstiles/ i will be going where the  
birds go

open like the sky/ wavy like liquid love

milky like the sky/ tyler says i'll be bren

you be tyler

clear as day i felt it falter

pale before the lord/ freshly minted

there is no novelty in the way you pulse/ not in this flavor of dew  
or in the glamour of the golden gate

grandiose girls/ settle down  
tell me what you want

how high is the sky/ floating very spare  
fold me in

tyler says i'm testing him  
does somebody need to watch you  
with that gun/ careful where you point that vitriol

you are glossed with guilt  
jawline pressing in/ old fashioned and alarming  
i don't know how to clean this up  
though you stick the landing/ i am haunted like a house

cater and convulse/ tyler says i make him cold

mollify me/ stone me  
set down your harps

i only let you drink me  
because i didn't see the harm in it

## DROPS ☹

*Rukhshona Uktamova*

Rain reminds her of you  
Because the memories live within rain  
Forgetting you is not difficult  
But forgetting the memoirs is killing her

She used to love when it rained  
But now, rain hurts  
Like salt in a wound

They say time will heal  
But no, it does not heal anything  
As time passes,  
We get used to living distantly  
And maybe it's better to be a-part

# MARCH 11TH: REVISITED

*Matt Denaro*

Same route, as I  
always did,  
down  
Flatbush Avenue, and  
then to Bedford.

The golden clocktower  
shined to me,  
A forlorn lover  
abandoned overnight  
with necessary  
cause.

The mirroring  
lecture halls  
smiled to  
one another,  
their steps like  
chalky teeth,  
grinning.

What does it  
mean to return?  
    It won't bring  
    them back.

But still I'm here  
waiting, sitting  
at the bus stop,  
wishing to walk  
from end to end,  
past the clocktower and  
the trees in  
Spring bloom with  
koi thriving in  
the sun.

What does it mean to return?  
    The only true  
    return is of nature,  
    when Life springs  
    back into form, only  
    for the sun to set  
    on the day.

## STORY MAGIC

*Mariam Esa*

Stories have a kind of magic that can't always be explained.  
They heal in manners we don't always understand—  
                dissipating the aches in our hearts, clearing the  
melancholy in our souls.  
They touch us in ways we didn't think possible—  
interweaving their way into our beings.  
       They make us smile and laugh when we're down,  
       They make us cry to alleviate the tension within us,  
       They teach and inspire us—  
opening our minds to new possibilities.

They give us hope.  
They give us validation in our dreams  
and determination to make them a reality.  
They make us believe anything is possible.

"The stories we love best do live in us forever."  
And it's true.

Stories are magical, but only if you believe them to be.  
They live within us and guide us along our way.

They are riddled in stories of vibrant colors;  
of shades of reds and oranges and blues  
and pinks and greens and more.  
Every shade telling a tale of its own.

But all stories are golden.

We all love to hear stories.  
It's a universal rule across all of mankind,  
and it's because of this simple fact:  
Stories heal.

## COMMON ROOM

*Mariam Esa*

A room of rich reds and tans and touches of ember  
Intricate designs on rugs of similar colors,  
Massive portraits and tapestries littered throughout the room  
To complement and aid the aesthetic  
Comfortable couches and cozy armchairs near the fireplace  
Smells of a comforting heat and cinnamon  
As we curl up in blankets by the fire  
I conjure up some tea to soothe the chills within your bones  
To chase away nightmares through warmth of friendship  
Storm howls on outside but we are safe in here  
We are safe in here together  
In our little Common Room

# STRUCTURALIST'S IDIOT MANIFESTO

*Jasmine Elazm*

i would say that i agree with chomsky's notion  
that children are pre-wired with a universal grammar  
because when i was a kid installed in the the fresh faces of makeup—no, made-up  
homes  
a dolled-up resident to the window-side stool of an  
imaginary apartment complex that looked out to the nature of language,  
the bleak park and wet trees with dripping i'm sorries and coarticulations  
where there i didn't have to look out for mother  
where i didn't have to pack my bags ever again or kick my brother down the  
middle of our two-story hallway for an argument i can't even remember, but no  
longer this story of two i opted to sit up to move out of my own mind, my own  
words, those structure-dependent rules and into the motion of  
maybe god himself or just my dad unplugging this mask of a family from his own  
face and it revealed  
he was actually shut-eyed in a casket and the silence of the memorial climbed the  
walls  
like vines of applause or a phatic whimper of a girl just looking for the right  
creative outlet,  
a sign, saussure, anything, come on  
that is a phonological phenomenon that no one  
in the world ever really forgets it is assimilated it  
echoes deep inside the heart of the down to earth flower that pretended to be sick  
and  
soiled her bed on days she didn't realize would not be a good riddance but  
actually more like bad penance and they weren't resurrecting on the third day, it  
all wilts away  
swept up as a fly that i saw drowning in the ocean of waving windshield wipers,  
whooshing tires on a rainy day, a stethoscopic  
a final word because you know those things were in the beginning of this guilt  
and road trip  
i think jesus said all that once as a freudian slip or maybe roman jakobson actual-  
ly on the day he wept  
but the poetic function and i guess the gist of this poverty of input just makes me  
say to myself  
that we would sacrifice anything for what we innately have, a child is never  
wrong, just built that way, and  
were words all i've ever had? no—all i've ever had were words.



# GRANDFATHER CLOCK

*Daniel Deronda*

On autumn day, we searched the house for remnants of you  
The baseball case, the flower vase, the fat phonebook  
You never used

On winter day, the trees were bare  
With deep malaise, we stood and stared  
No cell in us could find its warmth  
This place had Death, we saw Its sword.

With Spring's behest, no due rebirth or budding bones from  
beneath the dirt  
The seeds you sowed have grown mold, and perished,  
forgotten by those you owed  
Your flower wilts, untouched by air, your visage in mind  
less than vague  
If there's one thing left to add it's come visit now that you  
have the time.

# SOULMATE

*Clifford Time*

Why must I be alone?  
As I grow old with fragile bones  
Broken heart and soul in half  
Why must fate be so cruel and laugh  
To see the world in splendid view  
To find myself away from you  
This is my reality  
Of such absurd irrationality  
I curse and scorn my wretched fate  
Of this fate I will most definitely break  
To finally find my missing piece  
And grasp you tight and not release  
To finally join together as one  
As our path unfolds and fate is undone  
Rising heat from bottom to top  
Pounding heart, it just won't stop  
A feeling so powerful as I touch your chest  
Together as one, I feel so blessed  
Like a dream on fluffy clouds  
As fate continues to stare and scowls  
Is this now my reality?  
To be with you for eternity  
I certainly hope forevermore  
To be in your arms forever yours

# EBONY DIAMONDS

*Abraham Harris*

I remember someone asked me "What is the most  
beautiful thing you ever saw?"  
And my answer was painful  
The most beautiful thing I ever saw was a pair of  
ebony diamonds  
I was a breath away from their gleam  
The sun reflecting off them was paralyzing  
A luster I was blessed to behold

I was a pirate voyaging the sea for the most precious  
treasure  
Only when I got to the island  
It was more beautiful than the dreams I dreamt those  
years drifting  
I always saw this treasure, this goal  
Never like this

I saw those ebony diamonds dance for me in the  
sunlight  
A dance for two as the pair of diamonds were gifted  
to me  
The movement seemed eternal  
Until the music ceased to play

## 20 QUESTIONS

*Omar Husain*

Is the question mark really necessary  
Like who do you think you are  
Do your eyes match your face  
What was the question again?  
Know any good jokes?  
What's a panjandrum?  
Sleep solves everything (Li Po)  
If I were Lady Murasaki and you were Fujiwara no Nobutaka  
Would you find me attractive (not a question)  
Mark Murasaki is a software developer  
What am I trying to say?  
Why did you okay the 2003 Iraq invasion?  
How do I follow current events and not be jaded?  
I'd like one of those almond croissants  
Did you know that there's always an answer  
I should be good, I could be good but gee...  
Bottom is how far down?

# HOLIDAY

*Omar Husain*

Florence

A skinny man in a linen suit and loafers  
Fits nicely on Via Romana  
My shoulders are too broad  
For Florentine sidewalks  
I get bumped into the street  
Why am I in Pitti Palace square?  
The sun is brutal

Venice

I look at a painting  
I start at the edges  
And work my way in  
La Tempesta  
In the far distance a white bird  
And lightning  
Do you know the man?  
Is he a soldier?  
The woman feeding her baby  
Looks at me  
Do I know myself?

Sienna

It's always 5pm here  
I sit down in the shade near the Fonte Branda  
Eating saltines  
Although I'm an atheist  
I still won't eat ham  
For shame  
St. Catherine what do you make of this?  
My family has many Catherines  
Ask them

# ON THE 7TH DAY

*Hannah Bodek*

On the 7th day god created rain  
Water on the 2nd  
Fish on the 5th  
Saving rain for day 7  
God held the droplets in his eyes  
Clenched his eyelids with the willpower  
Only humans can possess  
And created all the world in dire straights  
And on the 7th day he rested  
And at sunset wept at creation  
And its inevitable destruction  
Wept as the loss of sun ushered in the new day  
Wept at the fleeting state of life  
He cried  
And it rained  
He no longer could hold  
the water pressure consuming him  
As it filled his bowels  
His kidneys  
His heart  
In exasperation he let go of the burden of the unknown  
It was done  
And it had just begun

Adam's shoulder felt the drizzle first  
He felt a tingle  
And animalistically craned his neck in its direction  
He stared at the droplet intensely  
What is this?  
It isn't vast like the sea  
It isn't populated like the fish  
It was alone  
And angry  
And full of confusing pressure

Is it my body that created this  
I haven't created biology just yet  
What of the one drop  
Oh wait  
Suddenly there's two  
One on each shoulder  
A chip  
God, is this your vengeance  
Your weight  
Have you given up  
Am I too much  
God this water makes me feel so insecure  
Enlighten me  
So I may abolish the burden drifting from my scapula to my spine  
It started raining  
More intense  
More direct  
More intentional  
Eve ran a hand through her hair  
The short buds that were growing  
And saw that the water was aiding its progress  
Somehow this nuisance garnered growth  
It feels so strange  
Like a rash that spreads  
A memory that never fades  
What if this  
She looked at the sodden ground  
Saw how mud covered her toes  
She was naked  
But alas  
She was now wearing a raincoat  
Dew sewn into intricate webs of release

## WHEN ASKED WHERE THE POETRY IN MY LIFE IS:

*Mia Carranza*

in me / in soft waves and crashing speakers / the way my mother tells  
me she loves me / the way the sun sets into moonlight / in the cracks  
/ the particles we cannot see / what goes unappreciated / sourdough  
bread / my father's tears / the second yoga sutra ringing in deaf ears  
/ laughing at each moment that passes us by like red cars we count in  
the back seat / code switching / light switches / switching from who I  
am to who they think I am / women I find beautiful / staring into each  
other's eyes / blue eyes / his eyes / holding hands in public / being  
myself in public / falling in love in front of everyone / not caring  
who knows it / not caring / floating when I should be drowning / soft  
cookies / soft hearts / soft waves and crashing / crashing into you / in  
you



# ON HOW I WEAR TRAUMA

*Mia Carranza*

I wear my trauma  
the way one wears an expensive,  
antique wrist watch.  
It's likely been passed down  
through generations. It will likely be passed down  
through generations yet.

And I am not the only one who has worn it:  
I've inherited it from a scarred father, bleeding for 40  
years,  
and a mother who has carried her heartbreak in her  
fist.  
They've made traumas of their own,  
does ripping something apart not cause tears we  
cannot see?

I wonder if it makes me more interesting.  
It's certainly a talking point,  
but how many times does it take  
of telling your story—taking everyone  
on the grand tour around the grounds of your life—  
until you reach the taxidermy of your trauma—a  
haunted prize—  
and no longer see its value?

I wonder why holding onto things for centuries  
makes them more precious,  
why I can't take it off sometimes,  
leave behind what I'm supposed to pass on.  
Throw it in an unassuming river,  
hope no one else ever finds the cursed thing.

I wonder if letting go could be that easy.

# IMMANENCE: AN ALLEGORY

*Sean Carey*

In the thicket, I remembered  
Fairy's songs now mum forever  
Echoed through the woods whenever  
Wandering therein I endeavored

Crying out, "Why have you left me?  
Faithful steward of your stories  
Devotee of your grace glories  
Fairy of the hollow tree?"

As I cried, I heard the rustle  
As of wings, and saw the glitter  
From the hollow tree out fritter  
Fairy's form in furtive hustle

"I have not long, my forest child  
Before he sees, and I'm defiled  
By Reason raped, he roams these woods  
What sees, he takes, and keeps for good.

"But do not think I have forgot  
Your cherished heart, my love for you  
We had to hide, and inward flew  
For Reason's blade cannot be fought.

"We are within, an immanence  
That occupies, is bounded by  
The four dimensions and the sense  
We don't transcend, we've become shy.

"But don't lament our loss but look  
Across the world of things, the book  
At surface, form, and shape, and free  
A showing forth: Epiphany!

"Then when you think you are alone  
Seeking inward validation  
By going into forms, as shown:  
The strangeness of the soul's relation."

Just then we heard a roar: "It's he!"  
"Goodbye," She said, into the tree  
She disappeared, and with a thud  
Fell vicious Reason in the mud.

His wings were singed with sun and smoked  
His eyes like lanterns red with rage  
"I must new fairy's wings have yoked  
To these, of far too old an age."

He seized me with his rending claw  
And told me: "I can see the awe  
Of fairy magic in your eyes  
I'll have them out, and then you'll die.

"So tell me where the fairy's hid."  
His claw grew tight and blood was drawn.  
"Please stop!" She said, and then he rid  
Himself of me, his worthless pawn.

"I'm here, as you can see, my wings  
They lift me over everything  
Take them, Reason, have it be known  
With stolen wings you've always flown."  
He raged at this and tore them off  
Her little body blood out poured  
She dropped and with a feeble cough  
Observed him, lying on the floor.

He lifted up into the sky  
And left the fairy there to die.  
"I'm sorry," I said, bending low.  
"It should be me who has to go."  
"Hush," she said, "Leave off your crying.  
You're not alone, although we've hid.  
Go tell the needy world of flying  
The humble forms, anchored amid."

Years have passed since that sad moment  
Vow unbroken, I've committed  
Never have I false remitted  
Beauty's chase through mundane torrents

Lonely, wanting fairy's face near  
Looking close into the surface here

# WRAPPING PAPER

*Hannah Bodek*

What incestuous call  
Causes you to befall  
The liquid weight of logic  
With the yoke of religion  
Sturdy yet dense  
Bricks of prayers never answered  
If life is the pursuit of freedom  
Or we've conjectured it so  
I heave mortality on my right shoulder  
My self-awareness on the left  
Where is there room but my sensitive back  
To hold theory  
Deity  
Holy

Holy should be lightweight  
Perforated  
Why is it so compact  
I can't squeeze within its mass  
How do I contribute when  
Hole in the wall  
Only allows men  
Life is a gift  
With thick wrapping paper  
With religion as a tightly wound bow  
I don't know if I'll ever  
Open my present

# CHANGE

*Charlene Catalano*

Sometimes we must shed what was once dear to us  
What was once safe  
To make that jump  
Stepping into the darkness  
To rediscover the spark that has been long gone  
As we let go of the past in the hopes of our future  
Are we losing ourselves in the transformation?  
Sometimes we have to rebuild ourselves  
Redefine who we are for the better  
And that's okay  
It's okay to lose yourself for a moment  
To stumble and trip  
That's life  
One crazy, wacky, tv drama  
That you can't stop watching  
That you mustn't stop watching

## WE STILL ARE ARABS

*Dorette Dayan*

I am a Jewish Arab.  
Arabness isn't a bloodline;  
To us,  
it is the center of our world.  
We are a reminder  
of the cosmopolitanism,  
the pluralism,

where we are from in North Africa  
is not in an imagined East  
of an imagined West;  
For many,  
I'm a curiosity or a detestable thing.  
Some say I don't exist,  
or if I did, I no longer do.  
it is the weathering of harsh elements,  
a defiance of subjugation.

She'd modeled herself on her—  
with such beauty  
in a way that no other language but  
Arabic can convey.  
an Arab woman trying to present as European.  
They'll recall how  
Arab  
was used by European Jews in early Israel  
and the colonial degradation of that time.  
"No one was afraid to declare their  
Jewishness in this time."

for our men to have Godly or potentially Godly names  
(men prayed for their families)  
and for women to have whimsical, poetic, or cultural names.  
(women prepared Shabbat or holiday meals at home)  
This comports with our traditional practice of religion;  
to undermine our faith and  
our humanity.  
Males interceded to God  
on behalf of women  
in the way that priests represent Catholics to God.  
Only there are no intermediaries in Judaism,  
or there aren't meant to be.

Excerpts From: Massoud Hayoun. "When We Were Arabs." Apple Books.

# LIFE

*Antonio Coleman*

i know you  
the man that overstayed  
& you know me  
from how we went to sleep, alone  
in this life  
all that remains is what we don't have  
& i just hope that  
true love will find us in the end

now, see me  
the worst friend of sorrow  
& i see you  
a long goodbye from the drafts  
locked; in this life  
we're spinning every week into a golden suit  
& our other dreams  
this is not enough, this is not enough

the tough luck  
you wish you could change me  
& i know that's your way-of-saying  
in our life  
there's a certain death  
against the pursuit of happiness

but oh those special days  
i burn my bed & go out instead  
'cause it's surprisingly okay  
when my gut hurts from the people faded

**ADDRESSED  
TO  
THE  
VILLAGE  
IDIOT**

*Matt Denaro*

what a fool you are,  
gargantuan lunatic?  
All the best, from me.





# calling talented students to join our staff!

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HERE

content editing

format editing

photography

graphic design

event planning

The background of the entire image is a repeating pattern on a crumpled paper texture. It features stylized red and orange insects, possibly cicadas or crickets, with black outlines. Interspersed among the insects are orange-brown leaves with detailed vein patterns. The colors are vibrant and the overall style is artistic and hand-drawn.

GET STUCK.