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reagen day

Mantiss
hannah nevitt

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maci caltagirone

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The Singer and His Song

REAGEN DAY

Out of the darkness
The bee slithers
Toward his
Beloved.
His fair
Angelonia,
She can’t
Withstand
Isolation
From her
Husband.
“I will save
You!” He
Cried tears
Of sorrow.
“I will take my
Breath and lyre
And muse my way
Through the gates of hell.”
Oh how his euphonious voice
Moved the King and Queen.
All hell stood still and wept as
Orpheus sang. Talos did not reach
For the water he could not drink.
And the Erin’s cried in their sleep.
Even Sisyphus paused to take a peek.
The mortal man bore his pain to the
Face of Death. And a wish that was
Granted might have been a wish better
Kept. For there was one circumstance that trailed Death’s breath. “You must

Voice reason to sing.”
Life, and gives my
uminates my
Whom ill-
It is you
Fair, Angel!
“Oh sweet,
and said:
With a grin
Looked back
He always
When he did,
times he, and
Dance ahead. Some-
times she would
Side, but some-
They’d stroll side by
And always shared a laugh.
Half. They walked along the banks
He finally found peace with his other
But now he was in the underworld
Him then, and they tore him apart.
From his bleeding heart. Thrace took
Her down. Again at a loss, he sang
He neared the exit. temptation ripped
Fought the urge to turn around. But, as
Your tail.” So one foot after the other, he
“Don’t worry,” He promised, “She’ll be at
Walk straight home, and never look back.”
Mantiss

HANNAH NEVITT
The light crept upon my neck
The birds chirped in the nearby brush
Left foot, right foot, left foot, right foot,
Retracing my steps back to once was a golden child
The city broke me but the lake was my temporary fix
“Take me to the Lakes, I do not belong here”
The words I spoke to you every morning
You could never take me
So I took myself
Left foot, right foot, left foot, right foot
I was in the den of wolves
so long they thought I was
one of them, but
as soon as they saw my wool
they bared their teeth
and blood ran

I ran from them,
as fast as I could
I ran from them,
into the woods

But all that I found was
I was surrounded
by the wolves
once more
no breakfast
SOLANA SALINAS
Redwoods

VANDANA PAWAR
Gardens

WILSON HANNALEI

Relearning your name
With every passing fancy,
The gate beckons wide.

Devoted affection:
For this place.
For myself.
I plant it alongside the home,
Watching with pride
How it climbs these walls.
It is my promise
To this place,
To myself.

Affection and grief:
A balm for my aching
My gaping rawness
Something tender
For what remains
yawning and dark
Clasped so carefully
Between my trembling
(But so, so gentle)
Fingertips.

Unchanging friendship:
I think of you often.
I touch the things I made for you
Of you
And I remember things
I easily forget.
And I think about calling
And I never do.
Despite it all, it flourishes
Vibrant and green
Flowering outside the window.
Beware, dark thoughts:
This bleeding warning
Hisses at you, open mouthed,
Teeth bared,
Dark leaves spilling
Like arms outstretched
Between the world
and the front door
Fortified in this rage
This bleeding warning
These claws of mine,
Always unsheathed.

Truth:
Bittersweet,
as all satisfying things are
I cradle it close
And think of my mother,
Who’s favorite color is purple.
I think of the biting sharpness
Of long nails and tight heels
Of my jaw,
clenched so tight it hurts.

Patience in adversity:
One, two, three, four,
All these deep breathes
I’ve learned to help you
Help me,
Close your eyes
And think of somewhere better.
Open them slowly
And take in the flowers.

Resolution:
And anxiety, trembling,
These two sides
Of the coin between my fingers.
I’ve always been a fan of warmer colors,
This distinction is nothing
But ironic.
Distrust:
I grew up
With four bushels of it
Large and looming
In my childhood garden.
I rarely spent time there
And that is only worse—
For all those wary hours
That I stayed quietly in the back
I could always smell it’s flowers.

Courage, strength:
I hope it grows thick
Enough to trip me
Enough to make my eyes water
I season my food generously
In hopes the dried leaves
Carry something over
Leave something in me
And they don’t. And it doesn’t.
I water it generously,
As tightly woven a prayer
I can manage.

Thoughts of absent friends:
My mother is an older woman
And I often found myself bitter.
Bitterness, anger,
It comes easy and
I welcomed it easier
Unfurling and gurgling
Tepid waters in my stomach
Boiling blood and cold sweat,
It is grief I am feeling
It is decades too early
Of me mourning.
A message:
For myself.
That is what this is.
A bouquet over a conversation
I lay out the dirt
In twisting, spiraling patterns
In lobes of meanings
That I let few walk through.
These simple purple petals,
Drip with weight.

Think of me fondly,
When these roots extend beyond
When my bones are gone.
Faces
COLLEEN SHANNON
A Flower from September

By Juliana Meduri

My wings are pinned
fetch the scissors
the purple is turning brown
and my stomach aches.
The centers don’t wilt though,
crowded by their likeliness,
closest to the murky water
that hasn’t been changed
since the last moment to myself
Can’t put it down now,
it may go away
and show the broken stem
behind the brush
and the crumbs.
Maybe again, later.
Contstant
by Nineteenth

It's clear to me that something is missing, a constant feeling of incompleteness, a puzzle piece that I lost somewhere along the way to being who I am today.

Constant

It feels as if a pebble is stuck between my eyes and my skull adding pressure on top of what is already a vice grip tightening with my brain in between the jaws.

Constant

A memory that should be yet is always out of reach and one that you can forget from time to time but always hits the hardest when you go to reach for something but grab only air.

Constant

It follows me everywhere like a puppy who wants to play but you have no time so it yips and whines at your ankles, making sure you never forget.

Constant

I see it in my past, the actions I took, the reasons behind those actions and the feelings that led me to believe the paths I took were justified.

Constant

I feel it in my present, hear it in the ring of its absence, eyes that see its void, long for its feeling in my chest to my fingertips, taste it in the food and drink when I have time to think, and smell its sharpness in the air.

Constant

The plans I make for the future are made to seek it out in a world where it may not exist but it must be there for if it is not in the future then I am already too late.

Constant

In my most beautiful delusions I have it in abundance as those visions exist purely to give me back that missing part of me, the piece that I long for so deeply, yet I have to end them without fail each and every time, for living in delusions will kill the strongest of will, mind, and body.

Constant

I would despair but thankfully I am cursed without the ability to stop, so forward I march into that middle distance where I might find it.

Constant

I know not if I will ever find it, if it will find me, if I myself must make it, a combination of the three, or a fifth separate option that has yet to make itself known to me much like the quarry I seek endlessly.

Constant

Perhaps one day
Constant
Untitled
GRACE MCGRAIN
The water beckons the girl closer
Screaming her name, but only she can hear.
The waves crash, thunder echoes at the base
And the breeze whispers in her ear.
Moments before, her toes felt dirt
But as her eyes sealed with sorrow,
She felt for once she could clearly see
She wasn’t ready for tomorrow.
The tender kiss from the milky sun
The wind that drifts like an eagle
The stream on her cheeks filled with sympathy
Creates a feeling that seems illegal.
You look back at the redwood trees
Like a lighthouse, they invite you to shore.
You wish that you could go now
Or you don’t, but you’ll never know more.
The taste of salt and misty resolution
Sudden rue and a bleat of despair.
I want to go back now, except I can’t
I’m held by nothing, but the weight of thin air.
Fucking idiots leaving a pathfinder out on their own without any brutes. Ohh you’ll be fine Compass you’re the best you can get back to camp. You don’t need any muscle. I’m gonna fuckin’ die I hate this I swear I’m gonna leave as soon as I can.

Pathfinding is a tough job, once this reality went to shit people had to adapt and find a safe way out of non-euclidean space or get lost eternally. That’s my job, I have to keep a map of the path and fold cubes of cubes in my head or everyone dies. Can’t quite explain it but some people can do it better than others and they are the ones who get to go explore, in today’s case an abandoned school building that once I pass will lead back to camp. Yeah fuckin why did they think I could do this shit by myself it’s clearly non-euclidean and who knows–

Ah shit great just great fuckin’ hate this part of the job. Scenters are in the fuckin’ court yard.

Ugggggggggggh for those who are blessed with ignorance of Scenters let me be the bearer of nightmares. Scenters are an unholy chimera of dog, grub, spider, and seven year old human. They have the head shape of the dog but only the shape there are no eyes, ears, or fur the only remaining feature is the nose which is where the name comes from as they can find a scent better than any other horror.

The true horror starts early with the mouth, one could be forgiven for thinking Scenters don’t have one but that’s cause they usually keep it closed. If they ever decide to open their maws, one you have gotten too close and should pray to any god you hope favors you and second you will see the skin about where a dog would have a mouth start to stretch and tear like thin plastic. Holes will form and strings of skin will stretch from the bottom jaw to the top revealing rotting teeth that will never stop biting until you are good and dead, if you’re lucky. Moving down you will find arms attached about the neck of the Scenter that are the size of a seven year old child that are used to grab and hold the poor soul as the Scenter eats them living or recently dead. The body is that of a grub’s which will pulse with what is at best a heart beat and at worst someone who will be forgotten all too soon. The legs are thin and sleek, copied from a spider, and can carry the scenter to where the nose points at near enough to 20 miles per hour if motivated. These are the fuckin things that are in my way.

Yaaay I got to cover myself in lavender perfume, which wouldn’t be much of an issue so long as I didn’t basically need to dump the whole bottle on myself. Believe it or not someone can learn to hate the smell of lavender especially if when you have to put it on you then need to walk past scores of hell spawn that want to eat you.
Fuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuck
I hate thiiiis walking through a hoard of
scenters is scary as shit the fuckers are taller
then I am and if just one gets too good of a
sniff the rest will stampede in the same general
direction.

Holy shit thank fuck once im past these doors i
should be safe for a little bit. *deep inhale*
*exhale*

They caught wind of my breath great just great
okokok I got five minutes till they break the
doors down
oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck
three lefts
third door open twice to a class room
count to 3
open a third time step into a new hallway
close door
flip a 180
walk through closed door
same hallway but now they have to find a
different way here that should buy some time
locker g19 is bigger on the inside that should be
a good place to hide til the Scenters get bored

jesus fuckin christ god fuckin damn it

the tell tale sharp clicks of chitin on tile could
be heard echoing in the hall along with the
deep inhales of a Scenter trying to locate its
prey

sniff
then the skin starts to tear as it opens its jaws

fuckin shit my heart beat is fuckin loud
Scenescape
ZOE ARNOLD
What Lies Upon the Lake Bed

WILSON HANNALEI

The water had dried up too quickly for anything to adjust in time.

The lake bed crunched beneath her boots. The earth was cracked, strewn with blankets upon blankets of dried algae and duckweed. Every other step from the shore had her tripping over the ashy remains where cattails used to grow thick and tall. Dried lumps of what could have been eggs, or frogs, or salamanders, were barely indistinguishable from the mottled dirt. Myla stepped gingerly around more foul-smelling patches. Even rotting away, the scales of the fish left behind glittered in the harsh sun.

It wasn’t enough to entice. There were no birds. No bears, no possums, not even a raccoon. She couldn’t make out any tracks in the hardened earth to presume anything had ever come, even with the abundance of food just... wasting away, untouched.

It was silent. It was still, and it was dead.

The sky rumbled distantly. Summer was ending.
Myla quickened her pace and made for the yawning dark of the mass sleeping within. This was closer than she had even dreamed of getting. The heights of Summers before had only ever been enough to, at most, be able to see the very tip of it from above the surface— if you had the courage to swim all the way out.

...and she did not. She would not. Myla knew what happened to those who tried to swim here. She was curious, but she wasn’t...

The church loomed above her.

It was far larger than she ever could have imagined. How did this even fit within the lake? It seemed impossible, now that she was standing before it—. The entrance alone was high above her head, a massive, arching curve of a doorway that seemed intent on swallowing her whole. Despite being right in front of it, despite the sun blazing blindingly bright above her, she couldn’t see anything past it.

Her throat was tight. Myla swallowed once, twice. It caught painfully in her throat and she made a single, stifled cough. It sounded unbearably loud in the stillness.

The sun was high. She could... afford to take her time, couldn’t she...? The insides of the church were what she wanted, but the outside was just as interesting. Old, old stone, its intricate carvings buried beneath eons of plant growth. Inscribed brickwork, surely laced delicately under the cover of algae and the wear of water. High arching windows, a crumbled ruin of what must have been a tower, now laying wilted across the dirt— The entire building was a relic she needed to absorb before she couldn’t anymore.

No. Her feet refused to move. Something, something within the derelict remains... She had to go in. She wanted to. She needed to. Her shaking fingers grazed the doorway almost without conscious thought, seeking support. Algae immediately crumbled to dust. It stuck uncomfortably to her hand, sprinkling clinging white ash across her boots. Myla flinched back and stuffed both her hands into her pockets. Her heart beat so loudly she instinctively looked back, just to make sure it wasn’t masking anything sneaking up behind her.

There was nothing there.

“...Hello?” She called out. No answer. Her voice echoed throughout the hollowed basin.

...What was she doing? Of course there wasn’t. Nothing was around her for what felt like miles. The lake bed was bare of life. There was only her.

She looked up, and regarded the towering doorway again. She shouldn’t be scared of it. It was just another forgotten thing, left empty and alone. The all-consuming darkness was a trick of the light; the brightness of the sun blocking out the quieter shadows of the church. The mystery wasn’t real. It would subside. She just had to walk inside.

Myla took a last look behind her. Nothing but dry, cracked earth. Rotting fish and wilted pondweed. The sky rumbled louder overhead. Nothing to fear; nothing at all. She swallowed, a dry, dragging attempt, and walked through the threshold onto hallowed ground.
The sudden break from the harsh sunlight left her blinking in the dark. The insides of the church were thrown into slow but sharp relief—the splintering pews still waiting in the wings were caked in a gummy mixture of drying algae and clumps of rotting mussels, the wooden seats eaten through with mold. She stepped closer to inspect them. Every step was carefully taken. If she wasn’t exact in how she stepped, it would be easier than ice in winter to slip on the grimy tile beneath her boots. Every step she took smeared the sludge, some revealing strokes of the vibrant mosaics below.

Myla steadied a delicate hand on one of the less-gross looking pews, flinching as her fingernails sunk into waterlogged, rotting wood, and attempted to use her heel to remove some of the slime. She only succeeded in making the thick layer streak in an ugly grey-green where it was. Wiggling her foot proved an equal failure to try and flick it off her boot.

She glared at the offended sludge. It did not deign to move.

“Ugh,” She grumbled, “Fine. Fine!”

At least a layer of rotting plant-mud gave her a little extra traction. Every step squished grossly, but it was far better than possibly falling to her hands and knees—or worse, her face—so she did her best to ignore it. She could hose them off when she got home; there were plenty of other things to do.

Her eyes had made leaps and bounds adjusting to the lower light. Now, looking up, she realized the church was far bigger than she had anticipated. The pews stretched on and on, the far rows bathed in the ethereal gleam of the stained glass windows. Even underwater so long, with decades unattended, the algae growing over the glass only dimmed the painted panes to a candle’s flickering glow of light.

They were not gods she recognized. Even as she stared, squinting with effort, she could not seem to make out the faceless figures within. Something in her brain fuzzled to white noise when she looked at them, and she struggled to make out even the radiant glow of their many appendages and shifting, silken robes of sun-spun gold. It was all she could do to take in the impossible warmth of the outside sunlight, trickling through the glass, and try to even her own rattling, wheezing breath.

“I… ’lieved I hath heard, a… small something…”

Myla’s breath caught short. She choked on musky, damp air.

The rasping voice breathed in, out. “So, so long…” A croaky cough from behind her. The shifting, rusty creak of old chains. “Please… Come here.”

She turned, slowly, towards the far end of the room. In the deepening dark, the impossible clear white of an altar glowed. Something stared back at her. She could not make it out—not truly. Its features mixed into a dizzying fuzz of colors and shapes that made her disoriented the longer she tried. Still, Myla could tell it was looking at her. Its gaze fixed upon her, making her trembling knees lock in place.

Its hulking form seemed to ripple with every sickly, watery breath. When she did not move it attempted to rise; it managed to make an aborted folding motion reminiscent of sitting up before the clink of metal sent it sprawling back across the altar.

“Please,” It panted. “Please.”

Myla thought nothing but blaring white noise. She walked forward.
The figure lay gasping on its side. It seemed to have no strength left to lift its head, not even to meet her eyes. Myla stopped several feet away regardless. Even if not aggressive, the... it was clearly not right. The grotesque, malformed jut of its limbs lay limply, connected like sticks stabbed into a ball of mud to the heaving mass that made up its body. The viscous ichor sizzled to nothing but the lingering smell of rot and incense when it oozed upon the pristine altar.

Nausea twisted her stomach into painful knots. Myla buried her shaking hands back into her pockets and clenched them tight.

“Child,” The monster choked out, “you... should not... cannot be here.” She had the immense feeling of something settling upon her. A sight, a touch. The hair along the back of her neck raised. “This air... rancid. Sick.”

It shifted again. A tiny, minute attempt to move. Myla’s eyes caught on the rusted shackles tight around its sallow limbs, rust rubbing flesh ragged and raw. More dark liquid seeped from the open sores. The stench in the air thickened.

“You’re... hurt,” Myla couldn’t help but comment. Her voice came out without inflection. She barely even registered the horror she knew she was feeling, almost as if her brain had just given up on feeling it at all. Her head felt as if it had been stuffed full of feathers. Her mouth felt thick with cotton. Even moving her tongue felt odd, felt wrong-- as if everything from her lips to her very teeth had softened to molasses. “...What are you?”

It barked out a sticky laugh, the spray of phlegm burning away the moment it touched the altar from its hanging jowls. “...Would not knoweth,” It almost seemed to crow.

Something bitter seeped into the decaying air. Thunder rumbled outside, refusing to be muffled. “...Should not...” Again, its not-eyes-not-gaze settled upon her. Something pricked between them. Tangible, buzzing, like static over her skin. It clotted in the back of her throat. Her legs threatened to buckle under the weight of the warning. “The Earth... it Sings, child.”

A strange impulse overtook her. It spun in her chest, a fluttering, lightheaded thing. She stepped closer. “I can free you.”

The being shifted. Its chains clinked and clicked. “You cannot.”

“I can.”

“You must not.”

Heat burst in her chest. It was a frantic, panicked thing. She numbly clawed at her chest, nails dipping into the hearth in her heart. Myla’s eyes pricked with tears she could not understand. The storm outside roared. “So what?” She asked. Her throat was tight. Water dripped down from above. The rotting boards of the ceiling sagged under their own weight. “You would just stay here, and-- and let yourself drown?”

He watched her.

She could not handle it. She could not accept it. She could not-- “Sacrum,” She wept, “thou has’t suffer’d enough for this land, has’t thou not? Thou has’t fulfilled thy duty! Alloweth this storm to wash the past whither ’t belongs. Cometh home.”
He watched her.

She stumbled to his wounded side, trembling hand struggling to find a place to settle not open with aching sores and rotting flesh. “Wherefore doth thee refuse me?” She asked. “Wherefore, after all this time... It hath been millennia since I has't been alloweth this chance, and still thee remain in this... this decrepit grave!” Her radiant palms cupped his wilting head. Delicate thumbs soothingly traced his featureless face. “Our beloved Sacrum... alloweth me relieve thee of thy chains—”

He wrenched his head away. “All these centuries,” He whispered, “—and still you cannot call me by my name.” The storm raged beyond the thin barriers of the church. “Have we truly grown so far apart?” The roof caved further in. “I barely recognize you, mother. Even your tongue lies foreign by my ears...” A thunderous flash tore the hallowed darkness to shreds. Every part of him ached, every touch of water upon his beaten body stung and bit and carved its way further within him. Still he glared unflinchingly. His resolve tightened beyond even that of worldly shackles. “Release the child, Mother. I refuse you another sacrifice to your name.”

She jerked back as if struck. Water splashed around Her boots, soaking both of them in grimy rainwater. Hurt twisted Her borrowed features. “Mine son—”

“Begone!” He snarled.

Her radiance flickered, dimmed— and died.

Myla fell to her knees with a loud splash. Her head spun sickeningly, roaring with her own heartbeat. Bile rose up her throat. “Wh,” She gasped through the pain, shivering and blind. Cold, murky water had risen to her mid thigh. It filled her boots and soaked immediately through her worn jeans. “What—”

“Child,” It crooned, softly, gently. She turned her face up towards it. It stared back. She could feel it, the comfort, the kindness, settling around her aching shoulders like a warm blanket. It muzzled her panic, her confusion. It muddled her mind. When had she gotten so close? When had— “It’s time for you to go home.”

The order settled on her too. Settled deeper, firmer, burrowed its way into her mind, clung like a hand reaching through the dark—

Myla stood up. The rising flood water rippled around her knees. It pooled around the pews. It washed up against the walls. It trickled down from the rips gouged in the roof, slicking her hair flat to her scalp.

The God watched her go, watched her foot cross the hallowed threshold.

The lake sealed him in once more.
Karen's Getting Married

JULIANA MEDURI

The glow of a woman loved, the dull of a woman not, we're always there to give a kiss on the cheek.

She still has time wasted, but now it pairs with a brain running in a different verse.

Our stems rotting, balancing with the pebbles underneath fingernails and between teeth.

He kisses the leftovers, piecing his own leaves back to her branches and

The deaf yell rhythmically pairing with our mud making new colors.

The line is too far back to reach to form a circle and fill the plastic coated pockets.
Friends
by Nineteenth

friendss moooree eeeheeeheehee look at them down there

I'll go great them and see if they want to be friiiiiieendss like the others

I fuckin hate this quest. Yeah we all do now shut up and look for any traps. We don't know what's in here. Guys shhhh they could hear us. So fuckin what princess we gonna kill 'em or die trying.
*baff*
What did I say about shutting up and traps, plus she's here to keep you alive best not get her angry.
Yeah hmph. ohmyfuckingodihatebothofyou. Say that louder trap boy.
I didn't say shit. Sure.
Guys what was that? Prolly nothin' princess.
Even if it was nothing better to assume it was something.
I don't like this. No one does. Trap boy, we almost there? Fuckin hope so.

ooooo these ones look different mmmmmmm like theesssssee oneeesss gonna try the smmmmaall one

Do you wanna play dolls with me?
WHOLY FUCKING SHIT WHAT THE FUUUCK!!
What's the matter?
Didn't you see the fuckin girl with the dolls?!?!?!
Nope.
Now I really don't like this. No one does princess.
Let's get ready for a fight.
In this fuckin darkness
Yes. That's why I bought the potions.
Ohhh thanks a bunch.
Yeah what she said.

theesssee oneeesss realllllly will be fuunnnnnn time for plan B then ehehehehehe

WHY DO THEY KEEP FUCKIN COMING WHAT THE FUCK?!?!!?!!
SHUT UP AND FOCUS ON THE KILLING PART!
WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU THINK IM DOING!?!?!!!!
CAN YOU PLEASE STOP SHOUTING it makes it harder to concentrate on the spells.
AGH Yeah I'll try. Fine.
...
Was *huff* that *huff* the *huff* fucking *huff* last *huff* of *huff* them. I hope so.
Come on, we still need to find out what was directing them. Something that can keep that many dead thralls under its control is a threat.
Then why the fuck DONT WE GO BACK!!?? uhh guys?
WE CAN'T IDIOT!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!?!?!
Guys?
THE CORD WAS CUT DURING THE BATTLE SO THAT MEANS WE GOTTA GO KILL WHATEVER IS CAUSING THE DARKNESS!! GUYS!
*together*WHAT?!
*points* umm oh nooooo nnnneed for thhhhhhat friiiieeeenndss ehehehehehehehehehe i just want friiiieeeenndddddssss
the little witch

SNOT
The little witch in the woods
fearful of the outside world

The darkness was her friend
she was happy
But this dark was unwelcoming

It had claws

And teeth

And it hurt
But the outside got closer
she was
so scared

and so she went
deeper into the forest
deeper into the dark
and felt safe
How could she be scared of the dark?
It was all she'd ever known.

There was no home
Not anymore
Went to the edge of the forest.

And went outside.

And so the little witch gathered up bold
she had
Bait Ball
WILSON HANNALEI
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