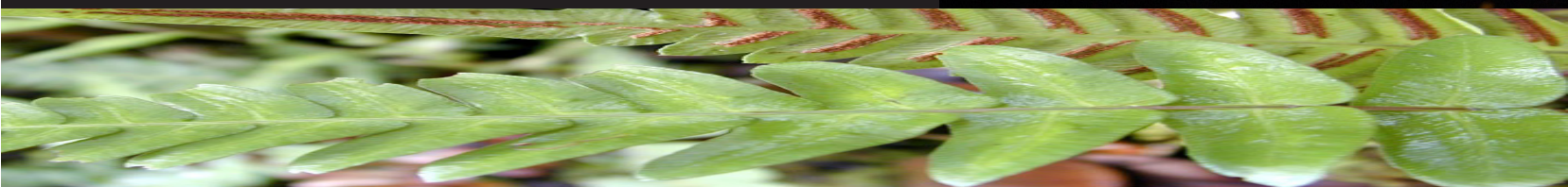


1

CREDITS

Isaac High	p. 4, 6, 17, 44–47
Liz Woodbury	p. 10
Mahlon Whitney	p. 10–11, 30–37
Leander Johnson	p. 12–15, 24–29
John Olatunji (Skiddy)	p. 18–19
Pollyanna Cowgirl	p. 20–21, 38–39
Toby Nye	p. 40–41
Nicholas Vacchiano	p. 48–54
Christian Yombe	p. 55
Anna Mitchell	p. 56–74
 HUAC Archives	 <i>throughout</i>

Cover Design by Mark High
Edited by Isaac High





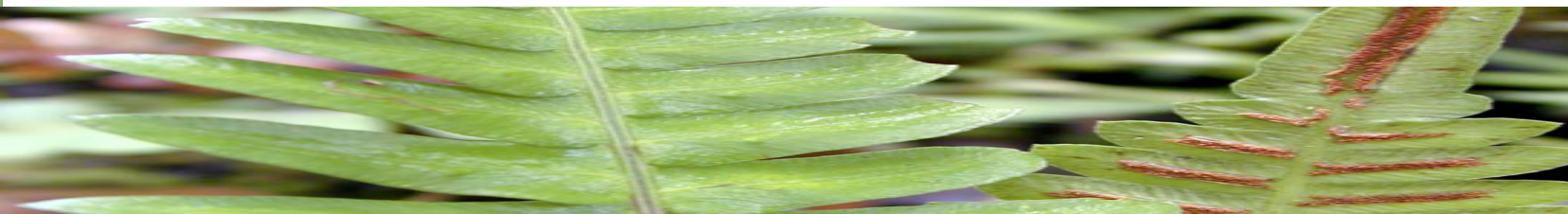


some sort of bio here... asdas d
a sdsd a
a asd as dasdsads asd asd asd asd asd
as
asda sdlsdhg gfd gfgdf gdfgdfg dfg
dfgdf g
df gdf g

d fgdf gdf d df gd fdg dfg df

HUAC2016 ; 2020:1
printed in the United States of America

New York and Yonkers, NY, Portland,
ME, Yellow Springs, OH, blah blah
blah





ISAAC HIGH, 2019





from *Miracle Play*
//Joyce Carol Oates//

4:25 am. SOUND: doorknob. She stirs, then falls silent. After a long pause she stands, growing frightened. He is trying to be calm, then he too is frightened, even terrified. He enters the room slowly, the fear rising in them from deep then up through their sternums. He is then calm again, or is at least trying to be.

For her, he is wild, approaching in a daze. She overthinks the shape her body takes in this state, and her voice, if it will quiver some. In her reaction, she makes a contemptuous gesture and pauses again. Another long pause.

His voice rises until it is shrill, mad. Like a gavel, it sounds clear and sharp. As if the timing was off, he stumbles, looks to indicate the space around his body... He makes a comic, cruel gesture. Says something. She begins to speak in fragments, in a tortuous manner, as if something were preventing her from speaking clearly. These have been perfect sentences, she thinks.

Embarrassed, awkward; then cleverly, she speaks a little bit more. She comes to be naively pleased with her words. She thinks he is very sympathetic.

Calmly, now, he tries hard to resume his normal manner of speaking. He walks to the other side of the room. He retrieves a gallon jug of water to boil on the hot plate. The hot plate light is a dull orange, he cups his hand around it to determine if it is on or off. Her gaze meets his and they hold it in front of the window. Finally, the tiny orange light bulb actually lights up.

He stares out the window, as if at an audience. He is buoyant, in his mind they extend hands and shake.

She, less than happily, opens the window from the top to let a little cool air circulate.

There are many items of furniture in the room, including a shabby sofa. His attempts to move it (months back) through the apartment door at a nearly impossible angle left welts on his hands.

She stands, opens the top of her dress, so that the welts on her back can be seen.

(extends hands) (growing frightened) (after a long pause)

Finally, the light bulb actually lights up.

(trying to be calm, then frightened, then terrified, then calm again)

She falls silent. The prosecutor is very sympathetic.

(indicates space around his body)

(trying to resume his normal manner)

She begins to speak in fragments, in a tortuous manner, as if something were preventing her from speaking clearly.

(SOUND: gavel) (buoyant; approaching her happily) (naively pleased)

(holding her in front of the window) (he makes a comic, cruel gesture)

(wildly) (in a daze) (calmly) It was 4:25 AM.

(as if their timing was off) (stares at the audience)

(embarrassed, awkward; then cleverly)

(his voice rising until it is shrill, mad)







www.thispersondoesnotexist.com, 2019





Breakfast, as I said, was light.
I have other work, other things I need to do —
I actually do have other jobs,
Just to make my life go.

Perhaps that's why I'm a stickler for time.
I line dry things, so they may seem rough.
I guess what I need to understand is,
What you, and another guest,
Think of as “dust.”

As I was trained, and grew to know,
Not all college-educated people are map smart.
No one can be accused of non-biasedness.
I do have other jobs I am required at.
If it were me, I'd be grateful someone was taking good care of me.

I can do that. I think I will.





12

*LEANDER JOHNSON
PORTLAND, ME
2020*



13



14



Cumberland Farms

HILLTOP

SILVERADO

LT

MAINE SEP



TOYOTA



16









JOHN OLATUNJI (SKIDDY), 2019 & 2020



POLLYANA COWGIRL, POLLYANNA POETRY, 2020

WATER BALLOON DROP 5

Large crows in Europe and Japan
 Tricky on Prenzlauer Allee
 My shit stained swim trunks in Le Havre
 Wim Wenders' glasses
 Mint tea at the mosque
 Wine and bogies on the fifth floor
 hocking loogies down onto the avenue

MISGIVINGS

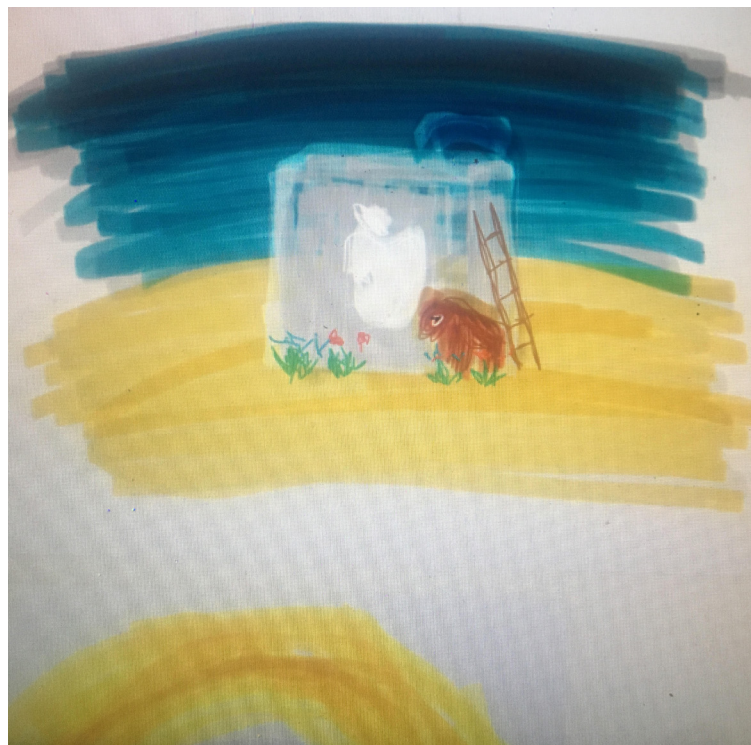
Windows for light not for sights
 You said alpine and I thought bovine
 This fascist kills machines
 Some of my best friends are predators

:)

My face is scarred – emotionally – go cough, I guess
 Purse your lips, wallet in sorrow, pocket of handshakes
 Put pen to paper, feet to concrete, irons to fire
 Go bark up the same tree, catch the early bird by being the earlier sparrow
 Teach a man to fish by playing cards, take a hike,
 it's like riding a bike
 and I really like riding bikes

BARF

Cumin seeds
 Punch lines
 A lot of soft smiles
 The day I groped you



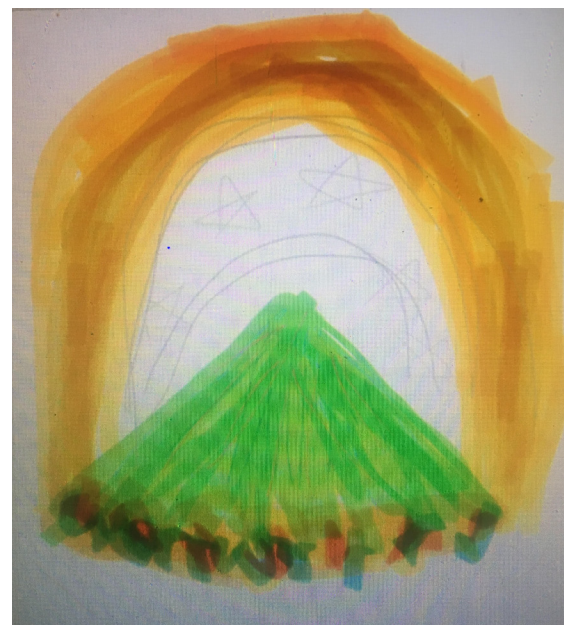
LET'S NOT DISAGREE ANYMORE

What's the difference between annunciation and nuclearization?

One you don't have to worry about

One you need to do for the people in the back

One is about atoms
 One is for roofs
 One is a chimney
 One makes chutney
 A hand full of parsley
 A herb salad



SLAM BATTLE

The fish fought
But thought not
The thought lost
The last thought
The last supper
The last course
of your last meal
The last time
we'll be seen together
is on wheels rotating
across the aluminum padded
mattress store
eBook ending
Picture
Window
Picture that
Imagine this

The slime bucket was knocked over by the cat's last
attempt at safe sex.

Of all the recent losses the one I mourn the most is FedEx.
And soon, too soon, the spoon will feed us the news that
UPS is no longer. The Postal Service won't come to your
door. I hate to say
to bait
to bare
the bad news

To twig
To twitch
To hitch

The last attempt I hatched at dawn, at dusk,
fuck that, mid-day,
nine forty-two, eight fifty-three, eight fifty

Real estate investor
(Radical)
Investor
(Tactical)
Investor

Colonel Mustard
Kernel of corn
The horse
The place is the wedding lane split
A wedding
A wetting of a bed,
the eyes, the nose, the ears ... the head

The
shelf
and what's above it?

And w-
And why-
and I DON'T KNOW WHY
I don't know that
do you?
I ca-
Y-you don't know that!
Why?
The why?

Strike?
A three
Lane
Investor
Radical
Investor
R-radical
Investor

Anthony Fantano here the internexts newsiest busy blurb
The nexus of hatred and pain in this world is simply
something that we don't
try and fight thru

Hello Kitty pussy print on your rear driver's side window

Car wash overload
Garageband Overlord
Corn fed forkfuls of next time, next year, next exit, next
place, nexus
The next best thing
we may never know
we may never see, or feel, or hear, it's here! Hold it dear!
Hold it, dear!
Hold it near.

Home is whenever I'm with you
Our home

Let's go home!
Home is whenever I'm with you
Our home

Take me home!
Where are we now?
Home is whenever I'm with you!

Oh, Albama,
Ark-an-sas

I DO love my ma and pa.
Me oh my
Dios mio
Carpe Diem

Carpet
corner-to-corner
wall-to-wall
floor to floor
Station to section
Which table number was that again?
(laughs)
I think-
I think I know what you're getting at
I think I know what you're getting at with that
I think I do!

Yeah, it's coming thru now.
We'll take a break.

21



22

12
luggage. Choose
on hire purchase in a range
fabrics. Choose DIY and
who the fuck you are on
morning. Choose sitting on
watching mind-numbing
crushing game shows, stuff
junk food into your mouth
rotting away at the end of it
your last in a miserable home
more than an embarrassm
sh fucked up

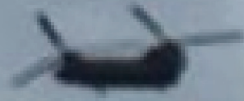






LEANDER JOHNSON, WORKS ON PAPER, 2019







are there subtitles?















Café
Tasty C...
Live E...
Free W...
(803)









POLLYANA COWGIRL, MEN REALLY HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT PANTS, 2020

"Sometimes I can't remember things I've already said and worry I'm repeating myself." Michael says to Siri, "make a note." His brain's brow is furrowed and his face's brow is pointed straight up like two ^'s and his eyes are glazed over and his mouth is as close to a flatline as it could go. His whole face was tight. He thinks about Joaquin Phoenix and growing his hair out, he thinks about River a little and then thinks, "I don't remember what I was just regretting!"

^ ^
* _ *.)

Nicholas says he once saw sharpie graffiti that said, "things I hate: 1: Vandalism 2. Repetition 3. Vandalism" and then he says, "this will not stand, so it fell over."

Michael was jealous in a longing way about both statements.

He thinks he will plan a big trip somewhere, go on vacation, tell everyone about his travel plans and what it will do for him and his life, and he thinks about what the copy would be for the description of his GoFundMe page for this trip to somewhere basic like Hawaii or whatever the Hawaii of the new millennia is – Amsterdam? Cuba? – then he will go on this trip and sit in an Uber staring at Snapchat thinking about laundry on his way to the airport. Then he will get to the airport and feel anxious and hurried then he will be anxious and get to his gate too quickly. And then he will feel anxious about sleeping sitting up, and getting a car and checking into his resort and sleeping, jet-lagged, and waking up feeling hungover and jet-lagged and he will waste his vacation lying on a bed feeling anxious and he will have a picture of him swimming with belugas in his head the whole time because that was as far as he got in envisioning this trip. And he will find himself going back home too soon but not dreading it because now he knows that there's no escape and when people ask him about his big adventure he'll smile and hold back tears and tell them how good it was, like, "it was really good for me" or maybe that's too dramatic. But, he'll keep his job and book a vacation next year, and have the same experience and the same let down expectations. He'll think if he has a family they'll book vacations every year, for spring break too, maybe the Bahamas or whatever the equivalent will be then, like Norway or something. And maybe he'll enjoy those vacations more. But he won't have a family. He'll just go on a few more vacations alone – and maybe an awkward one with someone he could be vaguely romantically interested in, but, the trip will be vague and unromantic – he'll keep his job and die young.

Michael saved \$500 and says when he gets to a thousand he will buy a house in Detroit. He heard you can buy houses there for that much. But, he buys a plane ticket instead.

9pm, cooking dinner, he is swiping mostly right on Tinder, a person comes up, they are female, 22, and say they're "into food" in their bio. They look like a model but they aren't a model, Michael keeps identifying them as 'they' although they identify as 'female,' is this misgendering? A male misgenders a non binary person to a mutual acquaintance in a forest with no one else around, is this still a transgression based on male privilege? His phone sometimes autocorrects a misspelling of 'privilege' to 'Procell' . He still thinks of batteries. On the train there was a man with headphones on who wouldn't move his hand to let Michael pass so he touched the man's hand to get to passed, he went in for contact almost in the way you would go to hold someone's hand – or so he imagined this would be the hand position – but, the appendage's posture landed more in the palm of the man's hand, sort of tickling it. The man quickly withdrew his hand, he pulled away. He is in a hurry to get to the airport early.

Michael misses his flight because he was standing at the airport McDonald's. He thought about the automated female MTA subway stop announcer and hated her. Like a teacher, or a bad haircut. He wanted to put all his money on a Metro card and burn it, or sell it for a dollar. He thought about bringing the doorknob of his bedroom to the hardware store to get keys cut for the lock so his roommates would be deterred next time they tired to hang out there. He got on the next flight. He liked the feeling of an airplane taking off and limiting the mess around you. Everything became compact and more organized. Your Tinder matches are limited to fellow travelers, you can only eat pretzels, you can only wear the clothes in your bag, you can still charge your phone but can't make calls, you can't go anywhere except on this linear X Axis that is running along a higher Y axis that represents altitude, it doesn't matter now.

There's a small Forest, you can dance there. But, if you do anything stupid everyone will definitely know. Everyone will look at you and you'll have to leave. Michael can see it out the window the bald man sitting next to him is looking out.

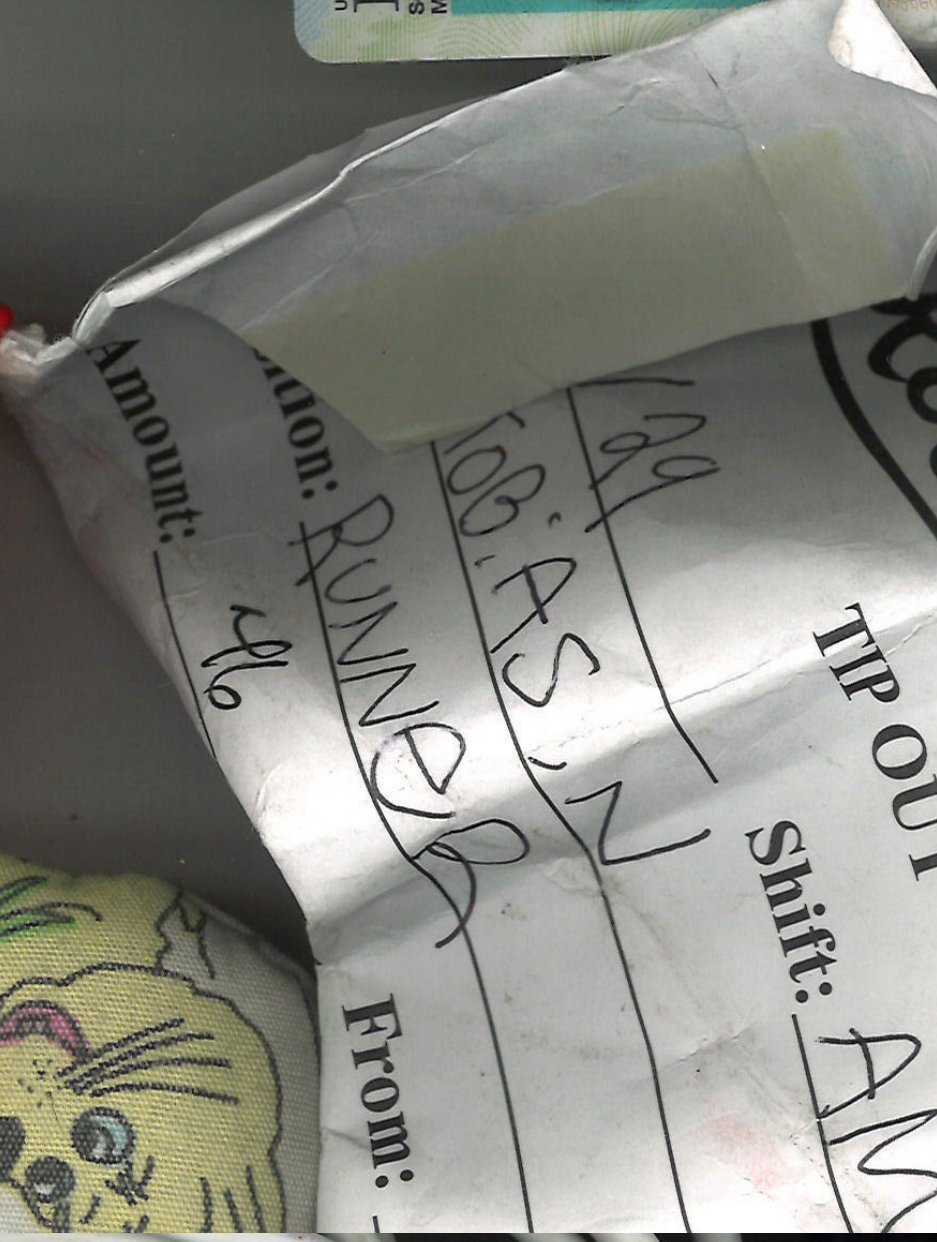
Maybe the plane will crash land, lose power, and plummet or nose dive into a tree farm. There's a lot of opportunity there. He could become a new person, fake his death. He could have died. He could be injured and have to live his whole life different, he could be injured and have to live his whole life the same, his ear drums could explode, he could become a tree farmer. He could sue and probably afford to buy a whole city block in Detroit and become a tree farmer there, or become a hermit in a forest in the middle of the city. Or go to Berlin – or the cutting edge travel destination of this decade Dubai? Tai Pei? – and he could take too many drugs and walk outside and feel cool, or pass out on a leather banquette and feel warm and then too hot when he wakes up not realizing it is a week later and the club never closes and maybe he's joined a cult he can't escape and if he does anything normal everyone will know and kill him.

**NOTE FOR ISAAC GET HIGH RES
VERSION OF THIS DRAWING!!!!**



MITCHELL RASOR, 2020

**NOTE FOR ISAAC GET HIGH RES
VERSION OF THIS DRAWING!!!!**



TOBY'S POCKETS, 2020

Teardrop®

TOOTHBRUSH / BROUSSE À DENTS

Handle / Manche à prise sûre

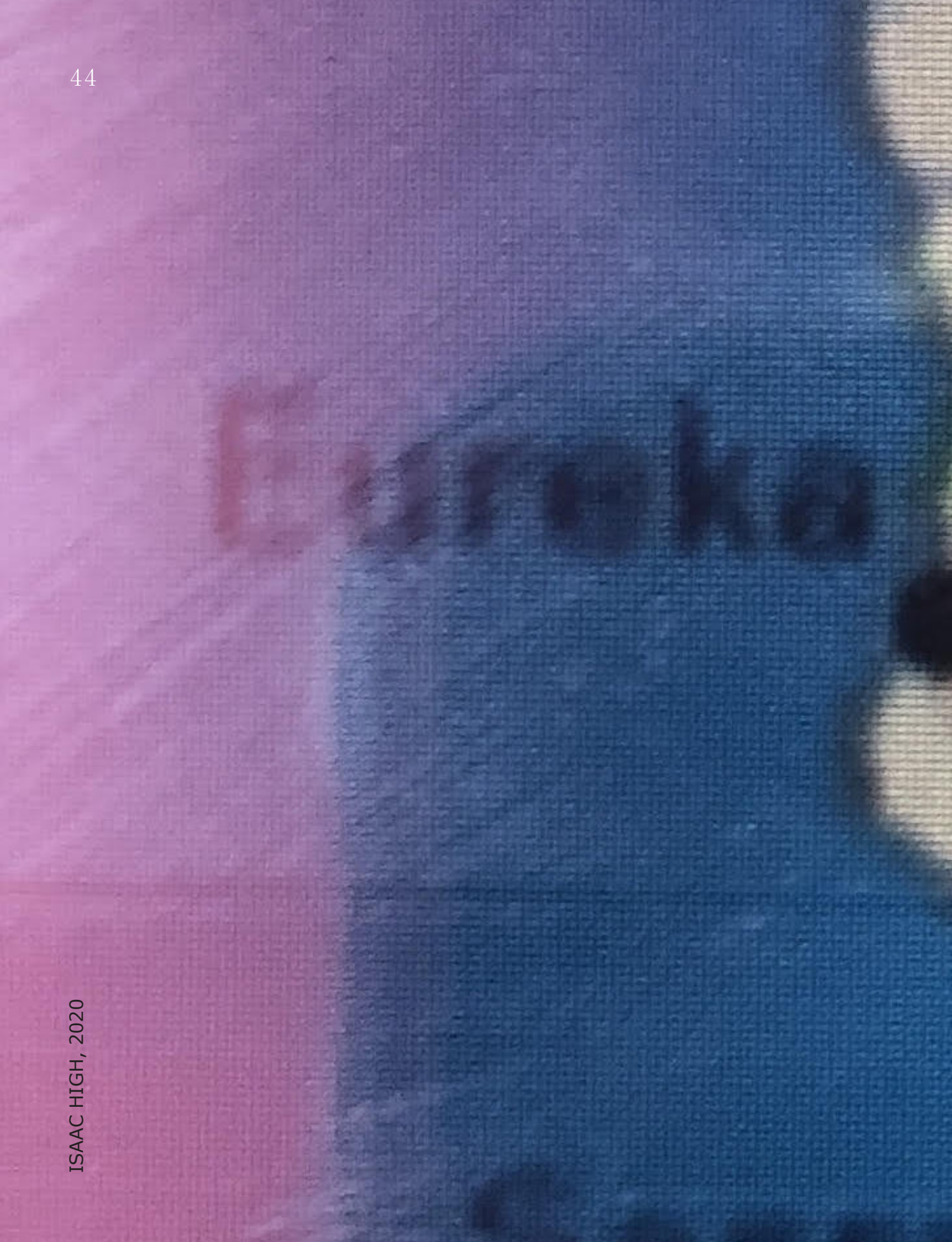
Correction Pen
BIG Wite-Out
Shake 'n Squeeze
0 70330 50692 3
MADE IN TAIWAN
Gare
DOB: 08/26/98
AS S NYE
41



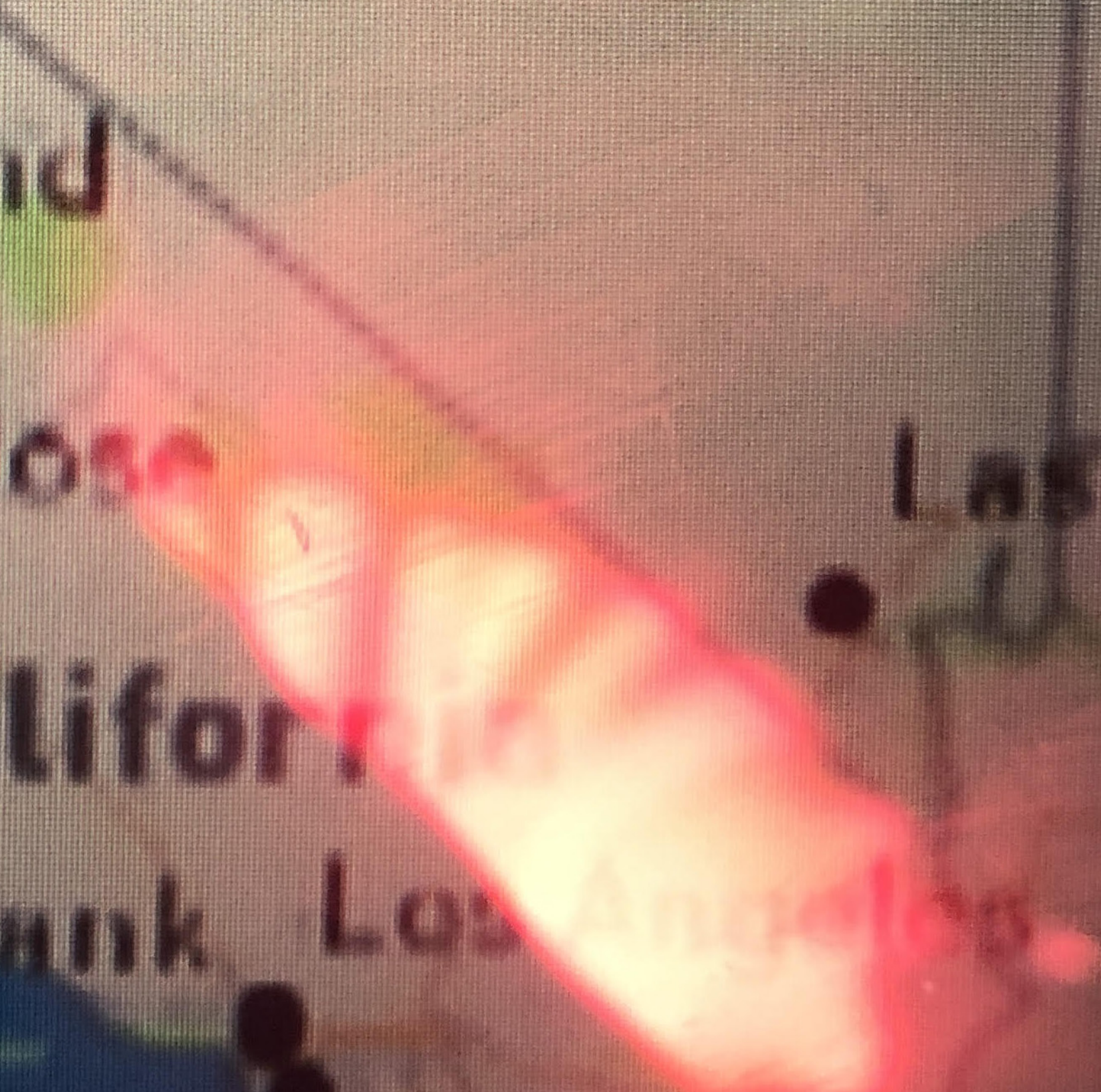
INCREDIBLY STRONG
GORILLA
Original • Origine • Original
GORILLA GLUE
2.11 oz. (59 ml)
24H
MISE EN GARDE: IRRITANT POUR LES YEUX, ET LA PEAU.
LIRE LES MÉRISSEMENTS SUR LE PAVÉ DE LA MAIN.
ADVERTENCIA: IRRITA LOS OJOS Y LA PIEL.
LEJAS ADVERTENCIAS EN EL PAQUETE.
WARNING: EYE & SKIN IRRITANT
READ INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK PANEL.
LIRE LES MÉRISSEMENTS SUR LE PAVÉ DE LA MAIN.







Nevada



UD

os

Lifor

ank

Los

Laser

Laser

Dog poem:

There is an animal on the road i drive down
 I noticed it two weeks ago. It has a coat
 Shiny, like a dog's. I wonder if the glint of color is its collar.
 The first time i noticed it, i said, "that's a fox"
 Because the alternative made me sad.
 I see it from the highway so
 I can't turn around.
 This week, its skin is drawn back, its shoulders are more pronounced.
 It is posed.
 The skin around its face tightens, teeth and empty eye sockets protrude
 I think
 I don't know because i do not look at its face.
 The fox keeps getting smaller, and soon it will be gone.

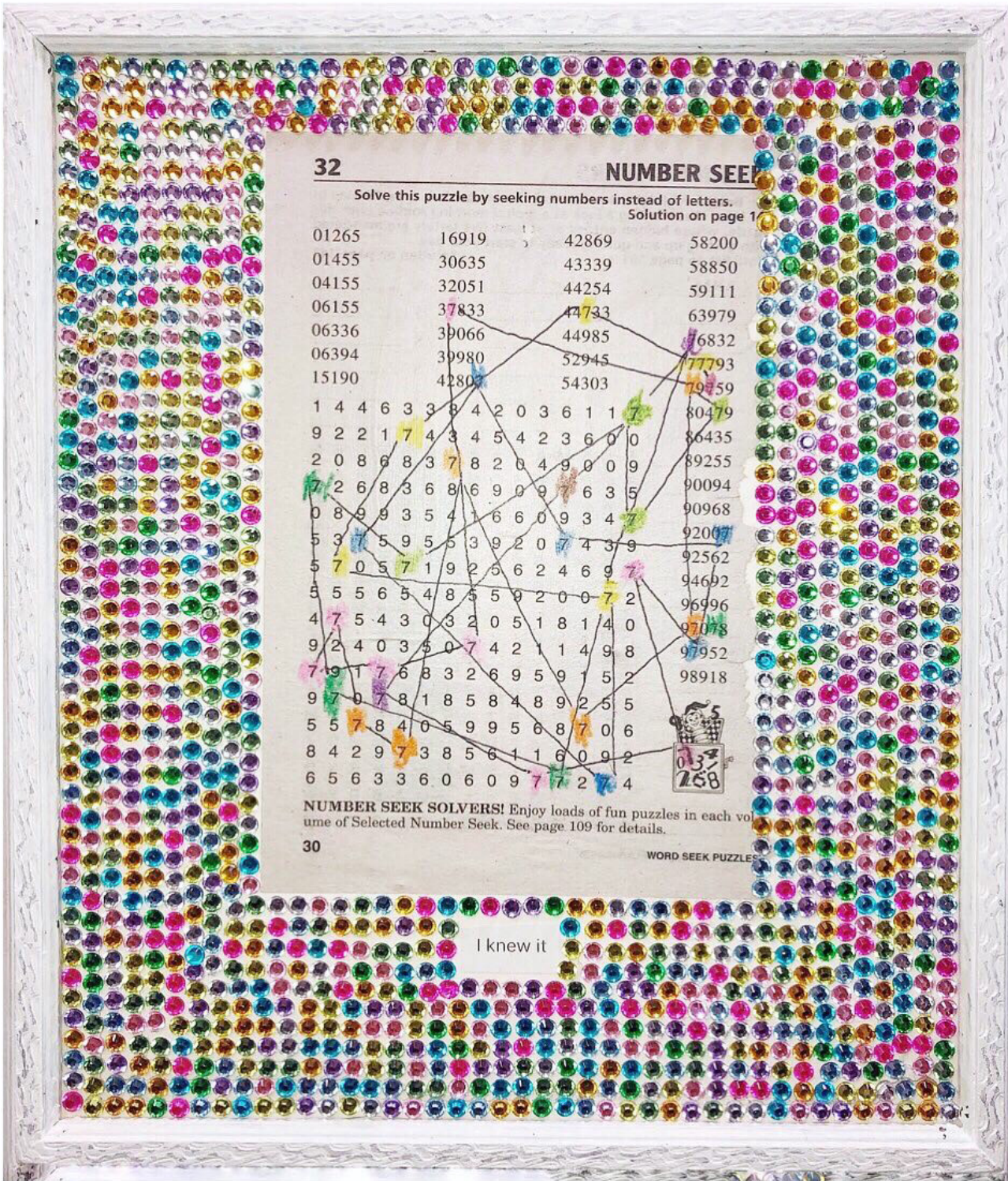
Car poem:

When three thoughts come into my head at the same time
 the best one doesn't necessarily bob up to the surface
 Sometimes a really bad thought bobs up to the surface
 A thought so bad it makes you think what is that
 Where did it come from, who is going to get that one after i'm done with it?
 Where is it going to settle for a long time?
 As i pull into my designated parking spot and turn off the engine, one or two more thoughts bob up to the
 surface (not bad ones) and i walk around the corner and i open the door.

Time poem:

Some time (unspecified) it's late at night
 I'm the only one on the road
 I think about when i didn't know at exactly what point in the middle of the night the big numbers
 turned into the little ones



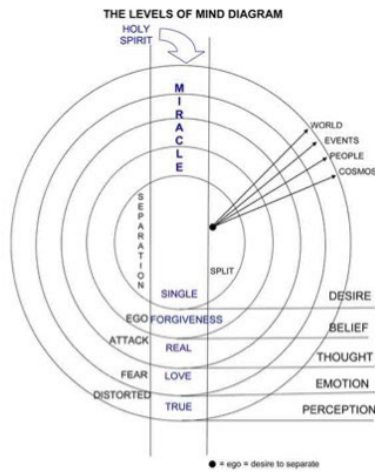




THE ANTICHRIST

ON LIVE TV



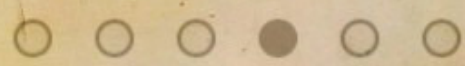




SOLAR-POWERED RAINBOW MAKER



\$ 41²⁵





Do you dream?

You think yr so fucKIng t



FOSSIL
BOOK, I





I.
CONCEPTION ON A DEATHBED

When I lived in the desert, my friends kept their scraps and organic vitriol. Sometimes in glass jars, sometimes in coffee bags. Once in a green plastic bucket. Their collections grew until each member was indistinguishable from the rest. Orange peels decorated blue with mold. Tea bags, cantaloupe, fingernail clippings. Then they deposited it behind the stucco house [oak framed doors], in the garden, whose walls bore the faint remnants of someone else's mural.

3

I've set the package on a stool beneath the flowers and above the bugs. Its corners are soggy, the red postal lines un-straight.

I have been haunted by the desert for some time now. So I was not surprised when I went to the post office to pick up one parcel, and instead, there were two.

To: X xxxx xxx, XXXXXXXXXXX, XX, xxxxx[me].

From: Claremont University xxxx.

I consider forgotten items such as: perfume of orange blossoms, soapbox with the rusted-out river scene, my medication; the books I carelessly leant to neighbors; my journals, which are built on paper bags, receipt paper, the dry forests discarded in recycling bins.

5

It is the first of December. The first snow of winter, too. From my kitchen window, white cars shuffle through the slush.

My friend says she feels romantic in the gloom. But, the rancor.

Leaning into the sink like a tarp on a tree-limb meant for shelter-making, I point to the snow gathering on a slope of barely green grass, an island in the pavement. It is dark, and when I sigh, it is the sharp woosh through which my mother releases her nostalgia, exhaustion, joy. The glass panes smell like lemons, soot, glass.

Scene, from the other side of the window: woman, braless in white and green, white coffee maker, a poster of Wild Flower Specimens pasted to the wall behind her, one corner peeling, threatening. The wall around it looks bluer and colder at night, because the poster's parchment possesses the dusty yellow warmth of moth wings beneath lamplight.

4

Yet when I cut it open at its seams, no lost bills, no magazines, no clock.

The box reminds me: I need to write a story about bodies and sand. About sanctitude and grief.

In second grade, the yellow forsythia thicket fenced in the yard and we hardened plaster in thin plastic tins with periwinkles and granite chunks and dragons eggs and teeth embedded. **We made fossils.**

6

I grieve the future that cannot exist. I am so full of existential dread that all I want is to lay on a green sofa in springtime chewing sticks of frozen maple syrup, looking at the sky. I want to gather all the snakeskins and shells and lichens and fungi and twigs and pressed flowers and eggshells and gems and mica flakes and jade clippings and hawk feathers and gull bones and the seal skin from whence I came, into a nest, on the green sofa, in springtime, as I chew on the sweet sweat-blood of trees, and look up at the sky. But in the sky today is the picture of my mother. She is in the desert, in the sand, and she is talking to me.

7

To write:

- A novella about my friend Luna’s adventure’s in the Baja and the tooth she wore on her neck
- A novella about the world that’s dying
- A novella about a girl who gets lost in the desert
- No, a novel about a girl who intentionally loses herself in the desert
- Study Connie Converse for inspiration
- Study women who were lost at sea, the sea being another desert (what evidence exists of absence?)
- Maybe the girl thinks herself a lizard
- Write a novella (no end, no beginning) about an activist/ she sets off alone/the travails of solitude, of wildness/she panics before settling into her lizard skin/sheds human skin/ chronicles the plants of the desert, not barren, fertile/gives herself to the desert/saves the earth (and humankind by consequence) from seemingly imminent demise/eyes eaten, heart salvaged, abdomen subsumed under Lithops/happily ever after—

Part I
Part II
Part III

9

Who makes the deathbed? Or do we leave the stained sheets scrambled?

8

To write:

- A novella about Luna
- A novella about Sage
- A novella about Clayton
- A novella about Sophie and Olivia—or, Sophia and Olive

Day 1
Day 2
Day 3

10

To write:

- A novella about the carcass of a mountain lion
- A novella about the vultures who circle like saints
- A novella about mysticism and watersheds

Write a book about the despicable illusion of walking in a landscape on the precipice of death, and you don't know which of you is dying. About betrayal. About the dread that fills the body in fierce flashes and feature-length loods.

Write a book to prepare for the mass grief of an earth pulsing slowly into sad, dead stasis. Nothingness. Cricket silence—except all the crickets have died, too.

Write the blossoms laid down at the bottom of the shrine. Write the fruit offerings to all the gods that any person has ever willed into existence. Write the oyster shells as gifts from the faraway sludge-filled sea. Write—

Collect the offerings to a dying world, so someone—

Make chapters of geological features so they can contain—
 Make chapters like vertebrae in a wolf's spine—
 Make chapters in the shape of constellations—
 Make chapters—
 Make—

11

Write the Desert Queen, who: kidnaps a stallion from a derelict saloon—breaks into church—gathers: corn meal, beans, dates, jackfruit—nearly betrays herself with the stench of sweat and orange blossoms—rides hundreds and hundreds of miles through the night—scales the iron gates of the Park—trips on a rattlesnake—nestles body in the tall rocks, letting the loose spines of cacti bore tiny holes through her skin so that the seeds of stars might plant themselves within her.

Desert as—
 Desert as—
 Desert as—

The actions she desires—The things I make—The movements that happen—in the desert: remembering, wearing, collecting, honoring, forgetting.

Subjects: Fauna, Flora, Mater, Puer, Terra.
 Objects: Land, Child, Mother, Plants, Animals.

12



II.
GESTATION OF THE ROTTEN

Deep in the gut of the windswept park, a traveller. She might be a scientist. She is unsure what this means. She is, at the very least, an archivist. She is here to record the scraps that death leaves out like breadcrumbs. She takes Xanax to calm her panic, though it hardly makes a difference. She is panicked by the bread she eats in the morning, the can of coke she sips in the afternoon, the sheets she sleeps on at night. She is panicked by her small lodge among the rocks because it is made out of clay and she dreams of it melting, blistering, popping in the midday sun. She is panicked because her thermostat cracked and bled mercury into her small garden. She is panicked that her blood is mercurial, or that the mercury has taken on the traits of human blood. She is panicked the ground will scab and eventually fall off into space, leaving the earth naked and raw. She is panicked it already has.

16

I once lived in the desert for a year. But I lived cushioned by grass and factories, so I wasn't aware of it until I left. Sometimes we would go into the Park. In the Park the desert flourished. The desert is lush, not desolate or deserted. Starlit, the desert is dessert.

A photo of my mother in the desert in billowing shorts. She's like the the relic of Our Holy Mother Mary on a burial mound. She's stacked like a cairn. She's impervious to the wind. But then I wonder: is this truly my mother in the sand?

18

The Desert Queen begins by cataloguing—a simple act, easily replicable—all the identifiable plants around her new home. She catalogues the things that grow, for she is trying her best to understand the meaning of Future. She begins by cataloguing—a primitive impulse, not easily commodified—all the dropped body parts of trees she encounters on the paths that wind through the campus like arteries. She catalogues the things that grow, for she knows of the Great Auk, and shudders lest there be no model for the archivist when her own extinction comes. She begins by cataloguing the things she knows.

Agave—sweet nectar, resilient fibers

Eucalyptus—skin-bark, white under moonlight, cousin of birch?

Rose—sensual, perfume for the walkways, an obvious or a brilliant tattoo

Desert Sage—tall, like Lamb's Ear; darker alive than dead, athletic

Drought Grass—short, always appears singed [like hair out of a flatiron]

17

I am trying to write a story about the desert. I am interested in 1) the fossils, 2) wind languages, 3) what it is full of, 4) movement through sand, 5) opal, tourmaline, and apatite, 6) how I am more afraid now than when I first left it for I hadn't yet been invited to the Conference of the Trees, Bees, and Other Species nor did I know how to wail like them.

I need someone braver than me. The Desert Queen is stronger. The Desert Queen's skin is thick as a dragon's. I need someone who can dam the waters between us and demise.

19

I dreamt there were porpoises that we transferred to the southeast and during their first migration north, a predator appeared. It looked like an orca but it could not have been. It looks amorphous. The porpoises screamed no, no, no in shrill human-speech, in agony. And then I woke up.

Now I am back in the desert wearing the linens a friend dyed with yarrow and sagebrush so I could paint my Northern bed the color of the sun.

20

When I lived in the desert, I attended classes. What I learned: classes are often classist. What was not of my classes or my class was the scavenging walks we took in the arid mountains. One at sunset. One on the outskirts of the Park, exploring the edges not the middle, which bore too much resemblance to our own hearts. One to the hot spring where naked meditators and middle-aged couples and men with their sheep dogs soaked. Perhaps my Desert Queen is a nudist. Perhaps she has no friends.

22

The green backs of black beetles shine wet in the moonlight. They latch onto my thumb with their talons. I imagine a falcon on my wrist, my skin protected beneath the skin of another animal, who has died, or been killed. But the beetle is not a predator. It does not have feathers like a hawk's or an eagle's or a vulture's.

Am I dreaming of the desert, or is it dreaming of me? The smell of oranges and gasoline. The white pleats on a mosscolored map.

21

The Desert Queen knows that the Oracle is a sisterhood of three vultures with a sprig of desert sage tucked under their wings.

23

I found a coyote carcass yesterday. I have only seen coyotes in cities, where they are intruders, not proprietors. I want to wrap the bones around me. I wear small vertebrae as jewelry already, collected by my great-grandmother on an unknown island in the Atlantic.

I cannot write. I dreamt of my dead friend. Her body lay face-up in the sand, and I was laying out dead birds all around her like light beams from the head of the Virgin Mary. I call Sage. I sketch yuccas while I wait for her salvation.

24

Can you wrap the bones of another being around yourself? Bill used to string up the carcass of a doe in the garage, where she would drain into a plastic sled, a kiddie pool, a wheelbarrow [these can hold children—or the blood of deer]. This autumn I will steal her body, walk down to the creek, and fold myself into her. This way, she will live.

26

Of my Queen: She finds solace in the mourning practices of raptors, who mourn through the active undoing of another life. They pick through fur to flesh—muscle and organs—to nourish their own futures. She wonders what happens when they arrive at the heart. She wonders if they split it evenly, or if it's even worth the effort. She desires the ribs to *encase* her. She is out among the sands gathering samples of a dying world.

25

I go back to the desert. It is December and up north the black bears and the brown bears are ready hibernate, but the snow has yet to come. I have nailed rubber soles to the bottom of my boots.

27

I call Sage. She is home in Nevada for the weekend, with her mother in their Tudor estate all encased in stone and jasmine. At least they don't water the lawn. Sage understands. She too is split diagonally across this continent. I want to sit in a cedar-wood closet with her just breathing over the phone. I want to make a womb of golden velvet and quartz in the stolen forest of cedar wood. Bones for walls. I want her to breathe the desert to me, not speak it.

28

Buttes are chiseled by both wind and rain, coupled, while dunes are the product of wind, uncoupled. There's a burning in my heels and my shoulders and my chin and my hips and my breasts—dunes. I write my own blazon. I write a blazon of the desert, my muse. My toe catches on a white protrusion in the hot orange sand. A skull. I want to be pollinated; I want to be pregnant. I need the reminder of future to live beneath my skin.

30

Bones. A carcass. A skeleton. Decaying is an act of living. Decaying is an act of defiance, when we do it above the ground and under the sky. Everything smiles on the decomposing sister, and when she hollers, they lichens and the stars do so with her.

In the photograph of my mother, the dunes slope clean like upturned cereal bowls below her. It is early morning. I set out to walk the perimeter of the Park.

29

The Desert Queen lives alone. She tends a small garden plot and she wears dressing gowns dyed with sumac and indigo from when she did not live in the desert, alone. She tries to grow yams. She tries to grow melons. Mostly, she grows geodes.

Beside her garden is another garden which she feeds with her oceanic tears. The briny taste of grief on her tongue. The shriveled little yams. She sits between her gardens and braids her hair, asking loudly of the ozone why it can't just toughen up.

31

Collected twelve blue-green beetles. Carcasses. Can't write because all my sentences are becoming elegies, and I haven't got an audience nor tiny headstones to engrave.

There is a checkpoint like a toll booth or the mouth of a sedated fanged animal, propped open at the Park's primary orifice. To enter.

I think about geographies of the body and the land and how we contain myriad anatomies and how we are many maps in one and how the map is like a photograph where you pose the subjects in perfect alignment with each other and the pine tree and the pool chair and the sun.

32

I sit in a footprint. Then I sit among stones, sooty and granular like Russian tea cookies. I sit beside an ant hill, until the ants come out. Then I sit against. Then I sit upon. Then I sit. I want the backs of my legs stained desert red. I want the dirt to hug me like blood. I want to show how the earth bleeds but sometimes, it does not look like our blood. This is the part where I tattoo constellations and shellfish until patches of ink on skin become patches of skin on ink. I save some room for my family tree. Up my calf. I eat a granola bar and it tastes like a public pool, or, like the thought of a public pool. Really, I write Russian numbers up and down my thigh in cursive. Then I write something about deconstructing the myths of the desert, and the myth of immortality, too. Then I doodle and it looks like a uterus.

34

I call Sage. She is in Malibu with her father, assessing damage. The fires have come and gone, dressed the charred fields, fences, homes in soot. She says the house is fine, but she is itching, unsettled, confused at the cleanliness and security of it and wondering what the people without homes to begin with have done, where they went, or if they're still there, seeking shelter, ash-dusted. I wonder why I am out here. I marvel at the power and limitations of a single body moving through a chosen space. Ana Mendieta in the sunshine. Ana Mendieta in the rain. Ana Mendieta in the smog. Ana Mendieta in the flames that eat through—

OR: We drove out to the coast in a borrowed car listening to *Nocturnes* and Britney. I remember slowing at a stoplight. A white fence. Its bones contorted and crisped and singed and fractured. Behind the fence, the fields were charred. They were burnt toast. They were inedible. The beach was coated in ashy slime. The air was toxic. I wondered why I was out there. I marveled at the power and limitations of a single body moving through a chosen space. Ana Mendieta in the sunshine. Ana Mendieta in the rain. Ana Mendieta in the smog. Ana Mendieta in the flames that eat through—

33

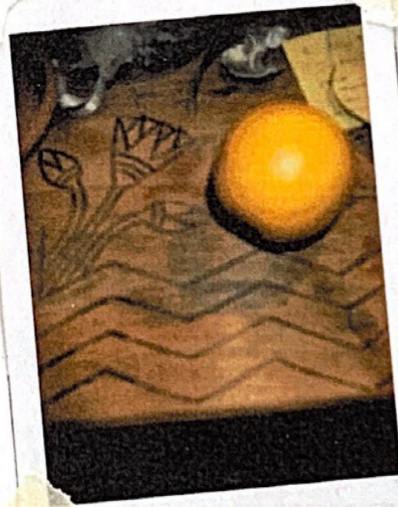
What to make of a barefooted woman. Like the ad for an eco-yoga retreat. Some town where the plastic is raked off the beach before sunrise, the sea turtles illegally evicted. *The Desert Queen* is circular—or maybe the novella is just the notebook itself, and when you get to the end, you realize it's an end or a beginning, and there's no other piece, only this one. The work is the purpose. The work is the purpose?

35

Keep these flowers, keep these receipts, keep these friends.
Keep this pine bough, if you can stop the needles from
drying and falling off.

Is this just a night letter to a drying, dying world? Am I
falling off?

I go back to the desert. Or so I think.



III.

DELIVERANCE/VENERATION/
 REMEMBRANCE/MOURNING/
 ACCOUCHEMENT/RESURRECTION/
 HOME-BIRTH/[S]MOTHERING/
 D E T E R I O R A T I O N /
 METAMORPHOSIS/NURTURING OF
 THE MOTHER'S CARCASS/OF THE
 LIVING CARCASS/TO AN AUDIENCE
 IN BLACK/OF THE
 COULD-BE CARCAS S/OF THE
 CARCASS/OF THE BABY, BABY

I wanted to live on an island where sheep gnaw on seaweed and are shaped by ocean winds like alpine trees, their coats tilted and perpetually swept-looking, even when the air is still and the wind has ceased its howling. But instead, I moved to the desert. I shed my sealskin for a while. I kept an oyster shell beneath my pillow.

deteriorating

38

Is this a

Is this a frantic attempt at a screenplay for the—the Holocene, the Anthropocene—the sixth mass extinction. Assuming it is only the sixth. Researchers have identified as many as twenty. What if each one is just nesting in the other, like Slavic dolls, or people pregnant with other pregnant people?

pregnant

I draw concentric circles around a scab on my knee. The scab is an amber window to my bones. The scab is like a bleeding nipple, or a compost pile. The scab is the glaze on a childhood scar.

scar?

40

These are notes towards the Desert Queen—as if she is a destination, inanimate. But perhaps that's the misunderstanding. A destination is animate. A notebook lives in that landscape, and vice versa.

I am:

Terra-fied
Hys-terra-cal
Unde-terra-cd

notebook

39

I spent one year in the desert. One year spent me in the desert. The year the desert spent me. I spent one year in the desert, unaware of how time was spending.

the year

41

The Desert Queen has fallen out of time. She has fallen into the dried up valley. She is a homeless queen. Her home is everywhere. Her home is nowhere. She builds herself a porch swing out of agave fibers, and swings there, clutching her stomach, her heavy hair flooding her halfnight dreams.

dried up

42

the desert

The Desert Queen.

The Desert Queen keeps tabs on time that's running low, and, when the Last dies, she collects its carcass, gently, and hikes it back to her home, plants it in her garden. What if I were to sculpt them all instead?

collects

44

When I moved out West, it didn't take long for my mother to follow. We took a trip to the Park together, and we were told—by my black-haired cousin, the Ranger—that the wildflowers were in full bloom. But we drove and drove and could not find the flowers. So we stopped by the cholla cacti instead. We were windswept. We wore billowing shorts that were actually billowing jackets and we were on a dune that was actually the silver-grey hood of a dusty car. The sky was blue above us. We knew then that the grieving had begun.

in full

bloom

43

I want to get pregnant to soften the edges of Ending. I am troubled by the tenacity of the vision. My abdomen swollen. A sand dune. The sand dune, graying through the photograph but likely saffron or tangerine beneath a topaz blue sky.

my abdomen

I call Sage. I tell her maybe she's my sister, because I love her unconditionally. Except—not her mother in the sand in 1991. Not her mother in the openness.

in the openness

45

Lost:

Time
 Hiker
 Youth
 Shoelace
 Species
 Tail on a human

Queen

The Desert Queen notices the stress marks on her thighs. Her flesh is anxious with the heat and the waiting. Or is that the decomposing has begun? She notices the rust stains on her feet. She does not fold in supplication but spirals herself, a fiddlehead, around a pile of green and pink carcasses, loose bones, and she notices that the wet blue eye she has so long fought for is slipping, rolling, gaining speed. She wonders if she should follow.

wet

Lost:

46

When they find her, fossilized—Future—they will marvel at the coagulated Earth-love that still clings to her. Will they pin her beneath glass, on display? A typed-up nametag: fossil d.? D for desert, D for dirt, D for dearest, D for doomed, D for dead.

Future

I lay flat against the sand. At the hot spring, we laid flat on the flat rocks beneath the flat sky on our flat youth. Our naked bodies left no marks on the stones when we peeled ourselves free. Not even a dent in the lichen.

bodies

47

The Desert Queen,
 The Desert Queen,
 The Desert Queen,
 The Desert Queen, before sleep, pretends she is showing children around the peninsula where she grew up. Archipelago, island— She waves her arms through the warm darkness, jabbing at the cartographic ghost of Home.

pretends

48

49

I fixate on a map of the Park. Cloth--cotton--see-through.
It has been: knotted around neck, floating through luggage,
stuffed in black pockets, hung up on wall. Paths and trails
drag through the Park in brown lines and charcoal dashes.
Then there are the shadow trails. The key says "Unpaved
Road." The neck of La Contenta Road, the path to Keys
Ranch (but there's a locked gate). Bighorn Pass Road,
Odelle Road, Queen Valley Road. Desert Queen Mine Road.

the Park

Desert Queen Mine Road. They used her blessing to pillage
through the rocks, and I didn't even know. I wear my
despair like a raincoat. I begin to cry.

rocks

50

I do not.
I do not go back to the desert. Instead, I visit my mother
ather apartment in Sausalito. There are insects in bed with
me. There is rain poking at the window because I sleep in
the basement with the view of the buzzcut bramble and then,
beyond, the bay.

zzzzzub. tuc

buzzzzzzzz

buzz cut

I do not go back.

52

Molten sun. The ribs are bright and porous, sucked dry by
time itself. She closes her eyes against the grit, the light. She
traces the vertebrae, still intact, the spine that held Together.
Wholeness. Her palm catches on the lowest rib, where a
spider nests. She thinks volcanic thoughts, and of obsidian.
She begins to cry.

grit grit grit grit gri
gri

grit g

t

rit

51

Lifting a box of photographs from the curtained closet,
I begin to sort. I sift. My mother is naked beneath her
toothpaste-blue robe. Lips stretched, she flosses her
yellowing teeth.

The mud runs, the fire runs, the time is running—
The mud runs, the fire runs, the time is running—
The mud runs, the fire runs, the time is running—

53

Keep these notes. Keep these mollusks and these osprey nests. Keep these hollow husks and this carapace. Keep these scraps for the Library of Lasts.

for the Library of Lasts.

Keep these fossils like ghosts that haunt the arteries of your heart. Keep the relics of all the Lasts you could gather. Loose spools of agave fiber woven through your hair. Scorpions and cougar-teeth, snake skins and pressed petals. A horn and the shards of skulls. Legs of beetles and a rabbit's pelt and a raptor's pelvis. A burnt seed and a chrysalis, pushed into your dominant eye, riveted by the last tacky resin released by the last caterpillar who spun the last chrysalis who emerged as the last butterfly on the last day of the last era on the last planet - last-enough from the sun for life.

I, FOSSIL
BOOK



