

THE  
SPECTATORIAL

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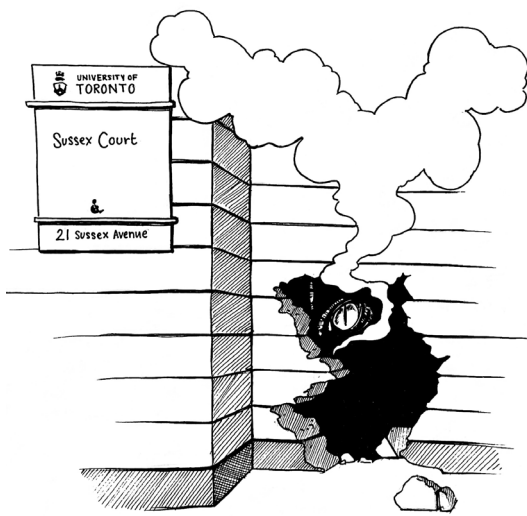
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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & THE CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Lorna Antoniazzi | Ariana Youm

Here's the secret: speculative fiction is *stunningly* multimodal.

As a genre, speculative fiction constantly demands mediums as diverse as itself. Books, essays, poetry, artwork, comics, television, video games and more; seemingly everything is fair game when it comes to genre ficton. Perhaps this is the reason why spec fic continues to thrive today, despite tendentious arguments against its validity. *Speculative fiction is not mature. It is not literary. It cannot provide anything beyond entertainment.*

Well, for one: what is so wrong with entertainment? Is there nothing to be gained from finding enjoyment in escapism? I think that when it comes to this, lovers of speculative fiction have been told too many times, in so many ways, that consuming material because it makes you happy is not enough, that perhaps we've started to believe it. We at *The Spectatorial* are trying to open our door beyond that belief.

When the authors of this letter joined *The Spectatorial*—Lorna, four years ago, and Ariana, three—we were given copies of *The Spec*'s mission statement. In it, there is a line that states, "Our goal is to elaborate on the 'untrue' in modern society, and to create a space for the largest lies of literature." However, we now implore you to ignore just one of the greatest lies of literature, which is that speculative fiction is not enough. Speculative fiction—being mature, literary, and yes, sometimes just for entertainment—is most certainly enough.

We hope that you enjoy the work within this volume. This journal was the result of the hardwork and passion of many people, and we'd like to thank the authors, editors, illustrators, copy editors, and layout designers that gave you the product in your hands. Enjoy.

Sincerely,

Lorna Antoniazzi | *Editor-in-Chief*    Ariana Youm | *Creative Director*



Illustrated by Mia Carnevale

# FICTION

CLICK

DARK COLOURS

THROUGH ALL KINDS OF WEATHER

FOR A GOLDEN GLEAM

DEAD FISH

LOSS AND FALL OF A TROJAN HOME

CONSIDER THE COCKROACH

UNDER THE FLOOD

# CLICK

BY CRISTINA DAPONTE

Ed. Ben Ghan | Asst. Ed. Kelly Bilenkis



Illustrated by Amy Wang

A boy throws himself onto the tracks of an incoming train. There are organic pieces, of course, but also the unmistakable grind of metal on metal. Sparks.

“Don’t!” someone screams. For a moment, mid-jump, nobody knows what he is. But the train screeches to a slow halt, and his circuitry is laid bare along the tracks. Part of him ends up on the platform.

There is screaming. Not out of shock or empathy—they aren’t stunned in sadness, they don’t back away in shock of the death. It is the suicide.

A robot’s suicide.

\*\*\*

I asked a girl out today. A real one.

I shouldn’t say that—I’m real, too. I asked a human girl out. And she said yes.

She doesn’t know, but to be fair, I didn’t tell her. That’s the whole point, isn’t it? They’re not supposed to know right away. It means I’m passing.

Her name is Rachel. She’s in my cultural coding class—a sweet person with a high voice. I caught up with her after lecture, tapped her on the shoulder, and when she turned to look at me, I knew she was different. Nicer. Kind.

I’ll tell her later, I promise. Or maybe she’ll find out.

I’m part of only the third wave of Dels here, and while things are a lot better than they used to be, I’m not about to yell it from the rooftops. My anonymity is a gift, a luxury I’m happy to have. I see how they treat Pillers. How they treat all of us, when they figure us out. I try not to let it happen.

Dr. K says it’ll be fine. I’m performing flawlessly, he says.

“I don’t feel like I’m performing.”

“Exactly.” He winks.

But still, I’m nervous. I only have four months left until my decommission deadline. D-Day. If I can make it until then, I’m good. They can’t touch me.

Unfortunately, staying in is just as bad as standing out. I leave my bed most mornings mostly out of knowing that stagnation is as much grounds for decommission as instability. Every once in a while, I have to do something effortful.

Like ask someone out.

I sit in the booth, tapping my fingers on the tabletop. I’m early. But so is she.

The door chime sounds and I look up. Rachel steps inside, shaking off the rain from her sleeves. She fixes her hair. I wave.

“Beau!” she calls.

She comes over, places her wet things on her side of the booth.

“Sorry I’m late,” she says.

“You’re not, don’t worry.”

She smiles. This might work, I think.

“Are you good to order?” I ask.

“Yeah.”

It’s an old place, one that still has a screen menu and register. A single employee mans the floor.

We leave our things and walk to the register. She glances at the coffee on

menu. I pretend to look, but I already know I can't touch anything here unless I want to do the honours of decommissioning myself. That stuff would erode me.

"Latte," she says to the boy. "Soy, if you have it."

Rachel turns to me.

"And?" I say. "Go on."

She looks towards the pastries for a moment and shrugs.

"I'm good," she says.

"Me too."

I pass my wristlink over the sensor before she can say anything, partly out of politeness, partly because I'm afraid she'll argue if I give her the chance. Negative Protocol is tricky that way—any request *not* to do something can trigger Negative Protocol. It was meant as an emergency function but there's no algorithm for intention. It's a failsafe engrained with user error. If she tells me not to pay, I might lockdown, so I'm quick about it. I would hate for this to end so soon over a battle of manners.

"Hey!" She frowns, too slow. She slaps my arm, but it's a fake-mad. I can read her so easy. I can read everyone easy, including the boy at the register, who looks down and away at our interactions. It feels familiar.

He hands her the drink and we go to sit. She looks to me.

"You didn't get anything?"

I shrug.

"It'll damage my—" I pause, a fraction of a second. *Shit*. I correct myself.

"I'm not a coffee person."

But I can read her. And she is reading me. She knows.

I wait for the killing blow.

Instead she shrugs, sips, talks.

*Kind*, I think. *So kind*.

\*\*\*

I meet her parents two months later. Way too early for me, way too late for them. Rachel told me it would be fine. I'm trying to believe her.

Outside their door, she fixes my hair, her hand coming to rest on the back of my neck.

"You're cold," she says, frowning.

That's good. My stress systems have been overheating a lot lately. I've gone through almost a litre of Silagel in the last month alone to cool me down, and my supply is quickly dwindling. Still, she looks worried, but doesn't argue. No time. She turns, raises her fist to knock. I catch her wrist.

Was I too fast? Sometimes I'm too fast and it scares her. She looks scared.

"I'm sorry," I say.

"It's okay."

"I'm sorry."

"Beau, it's fine. It's going to be fine."

She smiles, but her heartbeat gallops through her wrist, loud in my ears. *Lub-dub. Lub-dub. Lub-dub*. I feel this way too, I think.

"I'm sorry," I repeat, and let go. "I'm..."

Dr. K says this is my *click*. It's a safeguard, meant to lower the potential of stress system damage by reducing us to our basic code for a moment—"time redundancy," a forced reboot. I'm lucky. Apologizing isn't really a dead giveaway. Unless, you know, you do it eight times in a row. *Click, click, click, click, click, click, click, click*. Like a metronome. He says it's the most mechanical thing about me. That and the overheating. His voice repeats in my head like a click of its own. *You will pass*.

Rachel thumps hard on my chest.

"Beau?"

"Yeah. Sorry."

"It's okay," she says, but there's that smile again. She knocks.

\*\*\*

I'm surprised by the warmth of her parents. Her mother hugs me, her dad shakes my hand. "Cold as hell out," he says. "Your fingers are frozen. Come in!"

I'm surprised how much she looks like them. The same round face as her mom, the same dark eyes as her dad. I'm surprised by the pictures on the wall. I'd never thought about what she looked like as a kid.

But I'm not surprised by what comes next. I never am.

"When I was a kid, I was served by a *person* at the store. I barely see any kids—*real* kids—with summer jobs anymore. Listen, I go to return something and Robbie Robot just responds with whatever quotes were put in him. I like to *talk* to people."

Universal law: it will come up eventually.

Her mom gets up from the table and heads to the kitchen. She looks uncomfortable.

Talking about jobs is a bad idea. Pillers aren't well received among most circles (none of us are), partly because they're obvious, partly because they're stealing your jobs, but mostly because people like to feel special. Pillers are programmed with an algorithm-based response bank. They were the first of us—and though we share the same casing, their software is limited. You can't swindle a response that doesn't exist.

Which is why people particularly hate Dels—because more than feeling special, they like to feel *smart*, and it's hard to feel smart when you don't know who you're talking to. Free thought scares humans when it's not coming from them.

Rachel steals a glance at me to see how—if—I'll react, but I don't. There's no point. And anyway, a sudden, unprepared debate was never my thing. Sometimes I wish I were a Piller. They always know what to say.

Her dad has that thing in his eyes that I see in almost everyone his age, the memory of when things were different. To him, that time is worlds away. I guess I get that. I'm scared of being replaced too.

Rachel's hand is clammy and tight in mine. I know she wants to say something, but I hope she doesn't. She does.

"You wouldn't be able to tell," she says.

Her dad scoffs.

"Of course you can," he says, "I work on the same floor as them—the diagnostics team has *six*."

I can see how fitting he thinks that is, having a robot tell you that you're dying. Full circle, isn't it?

"So what's the problem?" says Rachel.

"They don't have the same instincts that we do, medically speaking."

He says "instincts," but it's not what he means. I've heard it a crazy amount of times—*instincts, urges, appetites*.

I don't want to tell him how wrong he is, that what separates us isn't urge, but impulse. I don't think he could take it.

Rachel squeezes my hand. He isn't finished.

"It's not right. Silicon Valley's had its fun. Time to send them to the junkyard."

Rachel's hand is tighter now, and she's going red in the face. She's an angry crier. In my peripheral I can see her holding it back. But I've heard worse.

Still, my head is getting hot, and I don't have any Silagel to cool me down. A gentle *whrrrrr* rings through my ears.

I let go of Rachel's hand and excuse myself to the washroom, but no one hears me. Now, Rachel is arguing.

"Why?" she asks. "Because they make you uncomfortable?"

I stand. The chair makes a sound no one hears. Her mom comes back with a platter of roast beef.

"Please, Rachel. The day I'm threatened by a glorified circuit board..."

Their voices are rising and the hum is louder now. I'm afraid they'll hear it. *Lub-dub. Lub-dub. Lub-dub.*

But her dad is calmer than she is about this. He motions for me to sit back down.

"Please, sit."

"No, I—"

"Oh, don't stand there, son, sit—"

I do, suddenly, with a loud thud onto the hard wood of the chair. Negative Protocol launches, and I can't move.

"Beau..."

The thirty-second lockdown has begun. I never knew how much could happen in thirty seconds.

Her father stands, she stands, they all stand, joining me in stillness like a prayer circle. Her mom's face is twisted in rage or confusion or both. And then Rachel is in front of me and her dad is pushing past her and I can't move but he has me by the back of my neck and he's yelling something, driving me, dragging me to the door.

He throws me out.

Rachel follows, still yelling.

"Don't you dare go with that thing!" her dad spits.

But she does, because she can.

"*Rachel*," her mom warns.

"Fuck you!" she answers.

The door slams.



Behind it, all I hear is:  
 “I knew it, I knew it, I knew it.”  
*Click. Click. Click.*

\*\*\*

The subway is sweltering, damp with summer bodies. I sit, taking one of the last available seats. I know I should let someone else have it, but I’ve been disengaged all day—“fuzzy,” Dr. K called it. I don’t think he’s ever felt *fuzzy* before. He told me the heat is bad for my filters, and that it slows down the processing centres, especially in Dels with AFCC. Overheating: the price of the Algorithm Free Communications Code.

“Free thought isn’t a feature that comes without consequence,” he said. And he’s right; my scalp burns to the touch.

I try to close my eyes, minimize function for a minute, and set a reawake for Dufferin. I only sink halfway. I can still feel the sway of the train.

\*\*\*

The office is a walk away. The nap helped, but I still feel off. I duck into the shade where I can and vent a little.

*Keep cool, keep cool*, I think to myself. Venting can get noisy, but my shirt muffles the sound and the traffic is ceaseless. A man talks loudly on his phone near me, but he doesn’t notice. *Keep talking, buddy*. I hate venting in public.

But today I have to. I’ve only melted down once. Besides the repair, I don’t remember what happened, and I’m not sure I want to. The first visit I’d with Dr. K after, he said I was lucky to have survived.

*Survived*. Meltdown or decommission?

He never clarified, just told me that AFCC was a blessing and a curse. *Your brain is a special thing, take care of it*. He gave me a hat, bought with his own money, off-white so my dark hair wouldn’t scorch in the sun. He wanted me to pass.

But Dr. K is gone. Instead, I’ve been seeing Lindsey.

“Beau,” she says. “How are you?”

“Good.”

She nods, her smile elastic, but it never reaches her eyes.

“Sit. You look tired.”

I am.

She asks me about my day, and I tell her, though there isn’t much to talk about. Then she asks about my week, and my month, and I tell her. She’ll find out eventually anyway. She’s adopted my file. I don’t know what happened to Dr. K.

I tell her I met a girl...that I might be in love.

“Very nice,” she says. “Is she Del or Piller?”

I’m easy to read.

Lindsey leans back. She looks me in the eye, one hand pushing up her glasses. Sleight of hand, she types casually with the other.

"Go on."

I don't like Lindsey.

"I met her at school. She..." I pause.

"She...?" Lindsey probes.

My head is getting hot again. I take off my hat.

"She's really smart," I say. "And... I'm sorry, I'm..."

She rolls over to the dispenser on the wall and gets me a small plastic cup half-full of Silagel. It's cool as it goes down my throat.

"When was the last time you were maintained?" she asks.

"Three months ago."

"You should be going every month."

"I know."

"You're not human, Beau," she says. "Your body needs extra care."

Her eyes follow my hands, tight in my lap now. She types away.

I know she's writing a referral, but truth is I hate the Clinic. It's dismal, and almost everything is grey. The Techs there don't even pretend to be doctors, not like Lindsey, not like Dr. K. At least *they* try to keep up pretence.

And anyway, this isn't a maintenance issue—at least Dr. K never thought it was. I play the last thing he told me loud in my head.

*You work too well.*

He laughs in my ears, but I never thought it was funny.

I look up.

"I *feel* human," I say.

Lindsey stops typing and folds her hands on the desk. Her eyes zero in on me.

"Tell me more about that."

But I don't think I can.

"Well, what do you enjoy, Beau?"

It's been two months since she took over, and she's only asking me now. And I don't want to tell her. I don't know if it's spite, maybe it is, but instead I adjust my sleeves, play with my hands.

"Don't hold back," she says, smiling.

I've never had a doctor—not even a Tech—pull Protocol. The words are like acid in my mouth, but I can't hold them. They push out.

"Poetry," I respond quietly, "and music. I love music."

She types.

"Okay."

But it's not what she's looking for, and I can't hold back.

"And coding," I say.

Her eyes glitter.

"Good. Very good," she says. "Let's talk about that."

I don't think she wants me to pass.

\*\*\*

The projections float above my bed. I lay back on the mattress, hundreds

of jellyfish hanging in the air, moving in silence. I reach out a hand. They pass right through.

\*\*\*

The Clinic: I don't want to be here.

I try to stay quiet. I know they like to work in silence. The disassembly of my upper column is bad, but not as painful as the re-welding. *Snap. Sear.* I can't help it—I cry out.

"Regular maintenance is mandatory, unit," the Tech says. "Every thirty days." I know.

He rolls me over by the shoulders, takes my neck in his hand, and brings a hard fist down on the centre of my throat. *Snap.* I feel the connector shift.

"Shoulders are improperly aligned," he says. An assistant makes notes, even though the room's interface records everything. She must be new.

"Schedule Unit 0607 for a balancing follow-up in fifteen days. AFCC's in check, but CogProc is having trouble venting. I want to get to that first."

The assistant nods.

The Tech speaks to me now.

"Have you experienced any stress system failures in the past three months?"

"Yes," I respond. My voice is distorted through my adjusted throat.

"How many?"

"Nine."

He turns his attention to my waist and below. I squirm under the scrutiny, but there's nothing in his eyes. He pokes and prods my naked body.

"Have you been sexually active in the past three months?" he asks.

"Yes."

"How many times?"

I think, but I can't recall – it's not like I've been counting. It kind of ruins the moment.

The Tech doesn't care about moments.

"Unit."

"I don't know."

He manipulates his fingers under the incision in the nape of my neck and knocks on my clavicle.

"Launch M-Disc," he says. A gentle hum sounds from the opening. "How many times since your last maintenance have you been sexually active, unit?"

"Thirteen."

He pauses, as if my memory drive lies.

"Confirm," he says.

"Thirteen."

His assistant notes this down, but still, The Tech looks unsatisfied. I can see the gears turning in his head, trying to figure out the error.

"Okay," he says. "Minimize function. Shut down."

"Why?" I ask. They never shut me down during maintenance. Usually I

wish they would.

The *whrrrr* of the stress systems starts up, but he runs Silagel straight over the exposed tubing before I can overheat. I feel numb.

“*Unit*,” he says. It sounds like a threat. “Minimize function and shut down.”

He’s starting to sound like a Piller, repeating himself again and again, like he only has so many phrases in his database.

“Why?” I repeat, leaning away from his hard, empty face.

He is trying to control himself, but I see the anger in his eyes, the need for control. I repeat myself.

“*Why?*”

The Tech huffs in frustration.

He grabs me by the shoulder, pulling me close, and reaches in through the back of my neck again. Something clicks. His face pixelates in front of my eyes. *Fuzzy*. I try to focus, but I can’t.

*‘I feel human.’*

\*\*\*

I leave the Clinic hours later, my backpack heavy with supplies: tools and booklets for daily “care,” weekly cleaning pills, and two litres of Silagel. I was ushered out quickly. I don’t know what else they adjusted. They didn’t tell me and I didn’t ask, I just dressed myself, slung my bag over my newly centred shoulders, and headed straight for the exit.

I rush down the subway steps and flash my wristlink, stopping for the first time since the discharge at the station’s garbage can. My chest feels different, like there’s a piece missing. Yet somehow, I feel heavier. I dig the fifteen-day clinic return slip out of my bag.

There is no heat in my anger now. No *whrrrr*. Silently, I tear the page in half. On the platform, I push my way through to the front of the rush hour crowd. *‘Unit.’*

I wonder who named me.

The train is approaching, its lights snaking through the tunnel’s opening. The crowd begins its signature rush hour shuffle.

*Lub-dub, lub-dub, lub-dub.*

Would I have passed?

The silver train bullets into the tunnel.

Would I have made it?

I drop my bag.

I’m sorry. I’m sorry. I’m sorry.

*Click. Click. Click.*

I close my eyes and run. The ground disappears beneath me.

“Don’t!” someone yells.

I’m already flying.

# DARK COLOURS

BY TERESE MASON PIERRE

Ed. Ben Ghan | Asst. Ed. Giordano Labrecque



Illustrated by Mia Carnevale

It was Saturday night. Jeremy was walking home from SAT prep, alone, as he did every week. As he turned the corner onto Henn, three men dressed in dark colours ran towards him from behind. One of them was carrying a then-unidentified black backpack. The woman who'd taken the video with her phone from her fourth-floor apartment got a clear shot.

As the men rammed into Jeremy, the one holding the backpack shoved it into the boy's open arms. They kept going, not looking back. Jeremy spun around, holding this bag he had nothing to do with.

But, in that second, as he pulled his earphones out, two police officers rounded the corner. Jeremy raised his hands. He was shot, twice, and died at the scene.

\*\*\*

I got a letter from my mother. After staring at it for a few minutes, I tore open the envelope.

*"I know you told me not to contact you..."* she began.

I took a deep breath.

*"...but I was wondering if you'd seen the news last night."*

I folded the letter and put it back in the envelope with shaking hands. Of course I'd seen the news. I stood, and walked out to the balcony.

When these things happened my mother would usually emphasize forgiveness.

*It was a mistake*, she would say—she, who'd lived through the worst of it. *They didn't mean it. He was just in the wrong place, at the wrong time.*

My cousin Daniel, who'd always come to our place to vent about it, would respond, "Right, Auntie. Because we all look the same to them."

And then they would turn to me, which I thought was odd, because I didn't have any power. I had *powers*, yes—the ability to wipe every racist cop off the face of the map—but not any real power. Not the kind that would make people listen.

\*\*\*

At the behest of my mother—she'd had a dream, see—I came out to the world as superhuman. I dressed in dark colours, darker than my skin, with a white emblem on the front, the meaning of which I no longer remember. Everyone wanted to talk to me, and I knew why, yet they had the nerve to beat around the bush and ask how I was able to have sex without hurting my partner. Or if I was an alien. Of course they'd done it before, with other superhumans, but this time was different.

"How do we know you won't hurt us?" local talk show host Mandy Miller asked, looking doubly interested for some reason. I thought she was going to ask to touch my hair.

"I'm American," I said, resisting the urge to wipe my chin under the hot studio lights. "I won't hurt my fellow Americans."

"Really?" Her smile was so fake.

"I'm harmless. You can trust me!" I gave her a thumbs-up while gesturing to

the mask that covered almost half of my face.

The audience laughed. The armed guards with assault rifles, who stood just out of the camera's view, didn't. When Andrew O'Keefe—known publically as Paragon—came out as superhuman two years ago, I didn't remember him being treated with such hostility.

Mandy cleared her throat. "Well, you can imagine, given your complexion, that people will be wondering what your stance is on the recent shootings."

"Ah."

"You've heard about what happened in Atlanta."

It wasn't a question. "Yes, and it was tragic."

"He was a criminal. He had priors. Theft. Breaking and entering. Aggravated assault."

I had to be careful here. I looked out at the audience and saw Daniel and my mother sitting in the front row, the latter in her best hat. Daniel wasn't smiling.

"No one deserves to die if it can be avoided," I said. "He complied."

Mandy leaned forward. "What are you saying?"

"I'm stating facts, Miss Miller. It's not my intention to take sides."

*It's not my intention to take sides.*

\*\*\*

My interview blew up everywhere. Twitter attacked with swift ferocity. I was a traitor, and a coward, for refusing to wade into the race mire. The older generation, those my mother's age, labeled me an Uncle Tom with cynical, hurtful, disdain. That cut close to home, because my name was actually Thomas. My mother supported me through it all, but she didn't think I should go on TV anymore.

So I had to save people, or at least try to, in the months that followed. Many of them didn't want to be saved. There was this one instance, where an elderly Swedish woman was trapped in a burning retirement home, and after I carefully maneuvered around the precarious debris and she had seen it was me, she told me she'd wait for Paragon.

"Oh, I wouldn't want to bother you," she said. "You're under so much pressure already."

"Ma'am," I snapped, "You could die here. Let me help you, please."

"No, that's fine."

I reached for her arm.

She leaned away.

"Please don't touch me."

I resorted to standing over her as she coughed and wheezed, holding up a large beam that would have otherwise crushed her, and waited until Paragon arrived. She held her arms out to him, and he scooped her up like a child, flashing me a strange look: part angry, part confused, part suspicious.

The woman was rushed to the hospital, in critical condition. There was a small gathering of press outside the retirement home gates. The police and fire chiefs stood on a makeshift stage answering questions. They invited Paragon and me to

contribute. It turned out that some had been paying more attention to my heroics than I realized.

"Why were you slower than Paragon?" a male reporter asked, holding a recorder up to my face. "He saved more than three times as many people as you did! Aren't you both of equal strength?"

I opened my mouth to respond, but was interrupted.

"Was this hard on you?" someone else asked. "Too much for you to handle?"

"Were you scared?" a third called out.

"I want to help others as best as I am able," I said, choosing my words carefully. I was invulnerable, and they knew that; a burning building was by no means 'too much to handle.'

"Oh, come on!" Paragon said, stepping in front, "Don't believe that bull! Of course he was scared. He's not cut out for this!"

The reporters murmured and looked at each other. Some of them scribbled in notepads.

"That's not true!" I responded. "Some people just didn't want me to save them! That's all!"

"Why do you think that is?" a reporter asked.

I didn't tell them what I thought. I did have an alternate response, but Paragon beat me to it.

"He's too new," he said, in mock reflection. "And people sense that. They want someone who knows what they're doing—like me."

"I may not be as experienced," I said, "but that's no reason to question my strength."

"Do you think you're not cut out to be a hero?" someone called out.

"I am ready, willing, and able to serve my people in whatever they need,"

I replied.

Paragon turned to me. "Maybe you don't understand the needs of some people as well as you think you do."

More chatter. More scribbling.

I crossed my arms. "And what's that supposed to mean?"

He didn't say anything, and I didn't press. We stepped back and let the law enforcement have their say. We left an hour later, after helping the emergency responders rescue people from the sublevels. I was going to head home, but Paragon invited me back to his place.

As we entered the open window, the clothing, papers, and trash that had been scattered around the room rose from their resting places and organized themselves. Paragon pulled off his mask and sat at the dining table, gesturing for me to join him. The fridge door opened, and two beers floated onto the table, opening themselves. I held my bottle with both hands.

"You know that wasn't personal, right?" he said after a moment.

I didn't know how to feel. "It sounded personal."

"The public likes a good rivalry."

"I thought you were my friend."

"A friendly rivalry."



I glared at him. “Why would you say something like that? You know they trust you more than me. They’re going to listen to you. They’re going to believe what you say.”

Andrew took a swig of beer. He shrugged like he was uncomfortable. “It took a while,” he said, “for me to get to where I am now.” He looked at me for a second, before turning away. “I earned their trust. I think all of us should.”

I narrowed my eyes at him. “You don’t need to push me down,” I said.

“I’m actually helping you.” He smiled. “You’ll be much stronger than me once you pull through. Soon, I’ll be needing your help.”

It was supposed to make me feel better, this strange tough-love method of his, but I felt sick to my stomach. I pushed the beer bottle away slightly. “I don’t know.”

“Hey,” Andrew said, “how ‘bout you and I catch a game later tonight? Put this whole gaffe behind us?”

The last thing I wanted to do was spend more time with him. “I can’t,” I said. “I have to pick up my brother.”

That was a lie, but whatever world or sub-world Paragon was living in, it was one where I clearly wasn’t welcome.

My own community, however, the one I suspected Paragon would rather I stick to, became much more welcoming once I turned my attention to them. It was almost as if they sensed I was trying to make amends for my comment, and they opened their arms.

In the twenty-block radius of my house, over the course of a few months, I stopped multiple robberies—armed and otherwise—and a few assaults. I visited the elementary schools and taught conflict resolution classes. Convenience stores started selling my suit in children’s sizes. They were starting to accept me, emulate me, and although I wanted to like that—that they finally saw me as a hero—I secretly hated it. I hated it so much. At the time, it was too good. I was just waiting for the other shoe to drop.

\*\*\*

In May, Daniel was pulled over for a routine traffic stop. He was dressed in dark colours. According to the report, the officer had asked for his license and registration. Daniel opened his glove compartment to get the latter, and, as he did, his gun came into view. He’d bought it after a home invasion I’d stopped three weeks ago, despite my arguments otherwise.

When the officer noticed my cousin’s firearm, he pulled out his own gun and ordered Daniel out of the car. Daniel complied, placing both of his hands on the hood. Then his phone rang. Expecting a call from his girlfriend—Tasha, nine months pregnant—Daniel automatically reached for his pocket. He was shot in the back, and died in the ambulance.

The protest started around seven in the evening. I was cooking dinner at the time. A group of around fifty students from the high school and community college made signs, grabbed their megaphones, and started marching from their neighborhood

to the city center. By the time they reached downtown, the crowd was well over seven hundred people.

Someone threw a Molotov cocktail into the window of a convenience store, and the once peaceful protesters turned into an angry, grieving mob; SWAT teams headed out.

Two hours later, when tear gas and rubber bullets did nothing to quell the riot, the chief of police called me and Paragon in.

Andrew was ready to fight. "I'll calm them down, sir," he told the chief. He had a horrible smile on his face. "I'll get them in line real soon."

I feared he would kill someone I loved. "No. I'll go," I said. "They'll listen to me."

The last thing I wanted to do—while my own agony was still raw—was to tell my brothers and sisters that their pain was wrong; that their violence was like all other violence.

As Paragon and I flew to the city's center, my phone kept buzzing. I knew it was Tasha, wondering where I was and why I wasn't with her. I imagined her curled up on her couch, sobbing, my mother's arms around her, while her four-year-old son played in the other room, not yet aware of what had transpired.

I shut that image down quickly, and we landed at the intersection of Dale and Rime, where crowds had set cars on fire. Buildings had been broken into and looted, and it was so loud I couldn't think. Officers in riot gear were scattered, beating people into submission. I stared at the sky to collect myself.

Paragon held his hands out. "Stop!" he called. "Please return to your homes!"

"Get outta here, white boy!" A beer bottle flew out of the darkness and hit him on the side of the head. In an instant, Paragon had the man by the neck, whirled him around and slammed him against a wall.

I stood in the path of his power, my hands up. "No!"

Paragon picked up a burning car with his mind and threw it into the crowd. There was an explosion, and the smell of burning flesh filled the air.

"You don't know how good you have it, do you?" he yelled.

I caught the next car he threw. "I'll handle it!" I called. "Just let me handle it!" I feared he would see the tears in my eyes, and turn against me. But he backed off.

I floated above the crowd. "Everybody just calm down!" I called. "This isn't helping! Please!"

A woman in a nightdress shook her fists at me. "They killed our father!" she cried. "He was innocent!"

"Whose side are you on?" someone else shouted.

"Traitor!" others yelled. They started throwing bricks and bottles up at me.

Chants of "No hero!" and "Uncle Tom!" followed me no matter how high I rose above the crowds.

"Irony, isn't it?" Paragon muttered. "You should just leave."

But I couldn't. Paragon put his fingers to his lips and whistled, and about fifteen officers rushed over to subdue the crowd. One of the officers grabbed a hold of the woman who'd yelled at me, pulled her to the ground by her braids. He beat her while she screamed.

I got between them. “Stop!” I yelled. I held the officer’s arm, pushed him back. “These are people!”

What he said next was too jarring to repeat, and it shocked me long enough for him to get a punch in. His fingers broke against my chest. Enraged, I hauled him off his feet and tossed him down the road. He tumbled and rolled like a doll. The crowd cheered, clapped, chanted my name.

“What the hell are you doing?” Paragon shouted, fear lacing his voice.

“I’m handling it.”

I walked over to the fallen officer. Already, I could see his broken legs, his head injury. He pushed himself away, held his hands up in surrender.

“Please,” he said. “Don’t hurt me.”

But, deep in his eyes, I could swear I saw a feverish sense of anticipation, some vindictive delight that said, ‘I knew it!’

I grabbed him by the collar and punched his face, putting all my force behind my fist.

I hit him again, crying for Daniel, and for his son, and for a younger version of myself, for foolishly thinking that I could ever accomplish something great.

His blood and flesh splattered against my dark suit, slick and warm, and he grew limp in my grip.

I kept punching until he was no longer a person, until my hand stuck through the other side, until I felt an arm squeeze around my neck and cut off my air supply.

\*\*\*

I woke in a cell, and learned I was being charged as a terrorist. The police officer received an elaborate funeral, which was swarming with photographers and protesters.

Paragon understood, but I could tell he didn’t want to. He’d chosen a side. I didn’t expect him to come to my aid, and he didn’t surprise me.

The government couldn’t kill me, so they decided exile was better, to a base in Guam. They didn’t tell the public what they’d done with me. There were rumors that I was still out, that I was still committing crimes against the state. Shootings had gone up against black males all across the country in cases of mistaken identity.

My mother fought a secret battle for the right to contact me, to send me letters, and for Tasha and her son—who believed I was in jail for rioting—to send me gifts and photos. They eventually won.

My mother sent me photos of all the new dishes she created that past month. She was thinking of self-publishing a West Indian cookbook and wanted to know which titles I thought were most appealing.

“He’s starting school soon,” Tasha wrote of her child. “I wish his father could be here to see it.” And then in the next sentence: “There’s new management at the Trader Joe’s on Tess Street; he’s rearranged all the aisles and it takes me forever to find my way around.”

Finally, I asked them not to contact me.

\*\*\*

Jeremy was different. He was my brother.

I imagined the letter my mother sent not being as forgiving. I imagined the rest of the paper I didn't read covered with tear stains and crossed-out words because she wasn't sure how to express her thoughts as compassionately as she'd like. I imagined my calm, levelheaded mother, on her knees, struggling to hold on to her faith.

I carefully set down the glass I was holding. Returning had never been an option—I'd seen what they'd done to me, what they'd said.

I read the rest of my mother's letter. It was arduous, each word a whip across my skin. I gave myself two days. I yelled and cried, and smashed my furniture. I couldn't help but think that if I'd been there to do something, somehow, it wouldn't have happened. That evening, I packed my things into a backpack and rose into the sky.

\*\*\*

The funeral was on the Tuesday. I dressed in my best suit, the same one I'd worn when I'd given the Mandy Miller interview. I didn't bother to look around for police—if they were there, watching, they'd have to drag me out. When I opened the door to the parlor, I saw my mother sitting at the front, dressed in dark colours. She patted the adjacent seat.

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# THROUGH ALL KINDS OF WEATHER

BY ADAM GILES

Ed. Ben Ghan | Asst. Ed. Julia Bartel



Illustrated by Lina Nguyen

**Channel 45**

They're down to the final four on *So You Think You Can Text?* The judges have locked in their scores (swirled poop emojis across the board) and Richard is going home.

"Disastrous thumb crossovers," says The Brutally Honest One.

Richard stands before the panel, stewing.

"I thought you did alright," says The Neutral One, the one who reportedly didn't want to do the show (and required additional bags of money to compensate for his squandered professional integrity). "We could have gone either way tonight, but ultimately—"

"This is fixed!" Richard shouts. "I text better than any of these other fools!"

The four remaining contestants, at a loss, shrug for the camera.

"Thumbs like decapitated chickens," says The Brutally Honest One. "Bumping, hesitating, double-tapping. They're a mess. You're a mess."

Then, The Canadian One: "So sorry about this, Richard."

Richard whips his phone to the glossy stage floor, bottom-lit red (indicating dead-man-walking). The phone doesn't break, so Richard dropkicks a tall pot of geraniums.

It takes two hooded giants to haul Richard offstage. Even then, from under their crushing restraint, Richard manages a defiant finger in the direction of the panel. The studio audience applauds his exit.

The next two weeks of competition don't seem to matter since it's clear we're supposed to see Hugo face off against Barb in the final: the two with the most intriguing backstories. The retired MMA fighter with knuckle arthritis vs. the spry 84-year-old who got her first phone from her grandkids only one Christmas ago.

A match made in sponsorship heaven.

**Channel 46**

The party's off to a slow start on *Orgy Pad*.

It's obvious the contestants are mailing it in, what with the show's premature cancellation. Jeff and Beth, Scrabble board between them on the waterbed (but still nude, as per their contracts), aren't their usual rabid selves. The others, tangled around one another in the Velvet Room, in a mess of fleshy blur-outs, move with virtually no enthusiasm.

On Twitter, someone observes that *Orgy Pad* is like a contestant on a larger-scale program, eliminated because it wasn't a better mousetrap in the cutthroat waters of reality television. Someone replies, pointing out the mixed metaphor.

**Channel 47**

*Weapon Swap*. Lewis' vigilante mob—newbies with blowtorches—suit up for a busy night. Meanwhile, on the ranch, Oran is learning the intricacies of his new vintage Gulf War rocket launcher. Heads up, neighbour!

**Channel 48**

Flash floods in Fredericton. Tornados in Toronto (the latest of which

plucked the CN Tower from the downtown skyline, planting it needle-down in a farmer's field in Keswick). Wild fires chewing up British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

It's Russ and his nightly State of Emergency roundup. There's extreme heat and polar vortexes. There's Lyme and West Nile. There are tropical storms. There's Hurricane Jaspreet.

"Is this the end?" Russ says. "This reporter thinks so."

Russ, tie open, shirt unbuttoned, tumbler of whiskey in his hand, pulls up the seven-day forecast and says what everyone's always wanted a meteorologist to say: "Flip a coin, really, on next weekend."

Russ sips his whiskey and winces. "Doesn't matter much, does it?"

Russ says it's just him and Fergus at the studio, the rest of the crew having been swallowed by this afternoon's earthquake.

"Say hi to the people, Ferg."

The camera nods.

Russ tosses the loose papers in his hand and they flutter around him. He gets up close to the lens, saving Fergus the zoom-in, and says there's only one reason they're on the air today.

"We realize we're probably broadcasting to a lot of empty rooms. Or rooms full of corpses in various stages of decomposition." Russ sets his drink on the vacant anchor desk. "But there's a girl I want to reach, a girl I knew once, a girl I've always loved. What's the saying? You can't live for tomorrow? Well *tomorrow* is happening and it's an arid wasteland. Fucking disease and tumbleweeds. I want to live. I want to find you and make post-apocalyptic love."

The camera wanders—Fergus sounds weepy—but Russ reaches for it and re-centers himself in the viewfinder.

"Maybe you've started a family. Which is fine, married women don't weird me out. Maybe you're de-oiling ducks or water-bombing the fires, fighting the fight. Maybe you're out there and you don't even remember me; you're just flipping through the channels, looking for something mindless to take the edge off what's actually happening out there. Nothing wrong with that. Russ can be mindless. Russ minored in English and got by not reading any of the books."

The camera follows Russ, pacing with newfound swagger, energized by referring to himself in the third person, to the empty control room.

"Or maybe you're after more tangible comfort, a real person, a man who can shield you from the carnage. If this is the case, call Russ."

He hits a button which brings up a banner graphic with his cell phone number.

"Russ is going full telethon. All Russ all the time. Until I find you, my love."

## Channel 49

It's the latest installment of *The Cock Boss*, and Vince isn't measuring up. He's tried every penis enlargement link in his inbox and all he's got to show for it is a drained bank account and a virus-crudded computer.

"Same old shriveled disappointment," Cock Boss says, releasing Vince's sulking wiener, retracting his tape measure and backing away from Vince and The

Stool of Judgment.

Greg, pants around his ankles on The Stool of Self-Assuredness, his massive endowment wagging in the breeze, puts his hands on his hips and stands tall knowing he's won this week's immunity challenge.

### Channel 50

*Road Raging with the Stars.* Gail grips the center console and the passenger door handle for dear life. David Schwimmer is in the driver's seat and he's pissed.

### Channel 51

*Shallow Grooms.* Phil postpones the wedding because Helen hasn't been able to get that nose pimple under control. Seriously, it's gross.

### Channel 52

*Undercover Brute.* In which Rico discovers the underlying socioeconomic factors impeding the repayment plans of his deadbeat clients. This, prior to tonight's Escalation Challenge: the waterboarding of one unlucky deadbeat's grandmother.

### Channel 53

*Lipo Wars.* Glen takes a bag of extracted human blubber to the face. The Wipe Girls (in bikinis) move in to clean off the stringy goo, at which point Glen vomits on himself and the Wipe Girls turn and head back offstage.

### Channel 48

The whiskey tumbler is gone.

Russ is draped over the anchor's desk drinking straight from the bottle, banner graphic with phone number still on screen.

"Have you found me, my love?" Russ checks his phone for missed calls. "If this broadcast doesn't find you, maybe it'll at least go viral and you'll catch it in the Huffington Post. I'm doing my best. I'm taking the curtain down, letting you in, showing you the smoke and mirrors. Or whatever."

Russ takes a good long pull on the whiskey bottle and wipes his mouth. No more wincing.

"What am I doing? The HR lady who cuts the cheques is dead." Russ looks at the camera. "You want a forecast? I forecast a weak job market."

Russ tries to get up from the anchor's desk and the bottle slips from his grip and smashes on the studio floor. "Am I drunk off my ass? I believe I am."

The camera is still. It's unclear whether or not Fergus is back there.

"You know what this is about?" Russ says. "It's about relationships. It's about feeling actual emotion, blocking out the noise, getting to what's real, *experiencing* another person. Remember the time in that field in Chatsworth when you sang that Patsy Cline song—that sticking-together-through-it-all song—and we *experienced* each other in the tall grass by the river? And then your dad pulled up in the tractor and I couldn't find my pants? Well, now the sky's falling. But if we're together it won't matter."



Russ staggers a few steps, glass shards crunching underfoot. “I know you’re out there, my love. Somewhere.”

### Channel 54

*Disease Elevator.* This one’s high concept.

Brent’s face breaks out in hives and he drops to his knees clutching his neck, which is Hint #1 for the 11 others crowded in that claustrophobic steel box.

Hint #2: Brent coughs up blood, keels over, and splays out on the elevator floor.

Hint #3: Now he’s convulsing.

The onscreen graphic: *Contestants have signed waivers. Do not attempt.*

The others, clawing back from Brent’s settling corpse, get one chance per floor to “name that disease.”

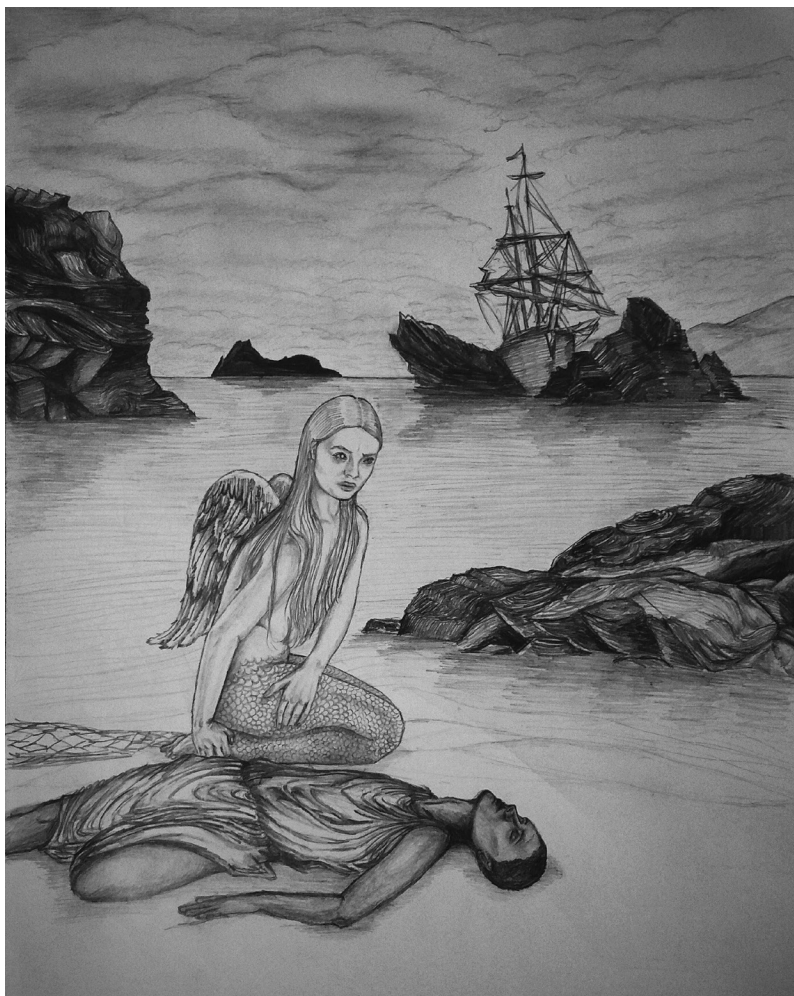
A ding sounds and the doors part. Jess, totally freaking, runs a hand through her hair. “Ebola. Is it Ebola?”

A correct guess allows the contestant off the elevator where the antidote to this week’s disease awaits. Does that antidote have Jess’s name on it? We’ll find out after this commercial break.

# FOR A GOLDEN GLEAM

BY JULIA BARTEL

Ed. Ben Ghan | Asst. Ed. KELLY BILENKIS



Illustrated by Sara Bimo

Echo's two sisters were singing. Hence the shipwreck.

They stood on the edge of the topmost bluff, hands interlinked as their voices rang out. Meanwhile, Echo sat on the shadowed sand of her lagoon, waiting for the singing to stop. When it was over, the sirens would go swimming together to recover the bodies. Then they'd drag them back to shore and feast.

Not Echo, though.

She dug her fingers into the sand, pulling up handfuls and searching for shells before dumping any finds into her knotted seaweed net. She'd hoped it'd rain—then new treasures from the shipwreck would wash up on the shore. If that didn't happen, she'd go diving later to find them. There was nothing like the feeling of snatching some lost shiny thing from the depths.

Her sisters' singing had ceased. Echo squinted up at the top of the bluff and saw, sure enough, that the pair had disappeared. Her mood lifted at the thought of some peace and quiet. Shuffling her wings, she dug into her net to evaluate the day's finds, placing them down on the sand one by one. An unbroken sand dollar. A gleaming golden coin. A spiral shell. A small crab that she popped in her mouth immediately.

She sat back on her haunches and chewed on a fingernail as she surveyed the collection. Farther down the shore, a colorless form on the sand caught her eye.

A body had washed up on Echo's beach.

It was facedown, with the ocean sucking it back and pushing it forward. Echo grabbed it by the wrists and dragged it out of the water's reach before turning it over to get a closer look.

It was a young man, his skin and close-cropped hair caked with sand and grime. She pressed a hand to her mouth and looked away. Human flesh did not tantalize her the way it did her sisters.

An examination was in order. She lifted his arms and sniffed them. A gleam near his neck revealed a medallion on a string, which she cut with the glass shard she kept at her belt. She took a moment to watch his motionless face, mouth black and gaping. Then she scooped up the body, tossed it over her shoulder, and started down the beach.

Despite his waterlogged state, he was unexpectedly light, gangly limbs flopping against Echo's shoulder. Water dripped down her back. Then the body jerked. Echo squeaked and scrambled back, dropping her shoulder so the body thudded to the ground. The man turned over, shoulders heaving, water gushing out of his mouth. Then he looked up at Echo, eyes going to the glass shard in her hand.

She stood back. The glass trembled. She'd never seen a live human up close before. Only the sailors on their ships, too distant to see clearly, and the dead ones her sisters dragged in from the sea, their bodies blue and cold.

"You," he rasped. He clung to the sand, his hands digging in as his lip curled. "Siren?"

Echo stepped back, giving a slight nod.

"You," the man repeated. He coughed heavily, his back arching.

Suddenly, he moved, forcing his body upwards. Echo stumbled back in fear. He was taller than she was, his long body unfurling like a plant stretching towards

the sun. He glanced around, hands pressed to his stomach as he caught his breath. "Where—where is my..."

Echo's eyes darted to the horizon, to the shipwreck, and the man's eyes followed. Then widened.

"Oh," he gasped. "Oh!" He paced along the sand, his feet splashing in the water. His hands scrubbed at his hair, tugging on the short strands as he faced the water. "My ship, my—my people. Are they dead?" He turned to Echo, his eyes wide with terror. Echo blinked and nodded slowly.

He stood there for a moment, seemingly frozen. Then his expression curdled, and his eyes turned to Echo.

"You, you... *siren*. Your singing brought us down, the rocks...I—I remember." His voice cracked, and he advanced towards Echo. "You killed them!"

Horried, Echo retreated but stumbled, falling in the sand.

"Why don't you speak to me?" He was screaming now, his face wild with grief. "Say something!"

Desperately, Echo motioned to her throat and shook her head.

They stared at each other in silence. Echo's heart pounded. Then the man's face softened.

"You...can't speak?"

Echo shook her head.

"Oh. You...cannot sing." He pressed his lips together, his wide dark eyes blinking down at Echo's. "I'm sorry. I—I'm lost. My people...I..." He looked down at the sand, his voice cracking. "I..."

He began to cry.

Echo endured his strange hiccups for a few moments, until she was sure he wouldn't lunge at her again.

She stood up in silence as his tears fell to the sand, his face lowered into his palms. Then she stepped forward once, twice, and gave his head a pat. Two pats.

He looked up at her.

"Are you going to eat me?" he asked.

Echo's brow drew low, but the man was still speaking.

"From what I understand, sirens like to eat men. But I am a woman, so...will you let me live?"

Echo stared at him, wide-eyed. Her mouth was open in surprise. She shook her head.

The man stood hurriedly, uneasily lifting his body from the sand as he continued to wipe away his tears.

Echo pointed at his coverings, tied about his shoulders.

"Oh. Uh..." His fingers fumbled as he undid the bindings of the fabric, exposing his chest.

Echo blinked.

A woman indeed.

She took a step closer, squinting at the woman's face. Wide, dark eyes, hollow cheekbones, and short hair very much unlike her own long, tangled mane. No wonder Echo had thought she was a man. Without the heavy cloths covering her arms

and shoulders, the woman seemed far less hulking. Echo lifted her hand to compare it with hers: the woman had dark skin in comparison to her own pale complexion. She sniffed her neck. Salt. Her tongue darted out to taste the tears on her face.

"Ugh, gross," the woman muttered nervously, as she craned her face away from Echo. "You don't speak?" The gentle pitch of her voice, despite its rasp, made sense now.

Echo shook her head.

"Do you choose not to?"

Again, Echo shook her head, placing her index finger over the woman's mouth. She blew out air between her front teeth: *shh, shh*.

"You can't?"

Echo nodded and tapped her throat. She brushed the sand from the woman's shoulders and back and plunged a hand into her short hair. It felt bristly against her fingers. She gurgled in delight.

"Quit touching me!" She said, pushing Echo's hands away. "I—hey, that's my medallion you have there."

Echo stilled. Indeed, the woman's eyes were focused on the glimmer at Echo's belt.

"May I have it back?"

Echo placed a protective hand over it and bared her teeth. The woman grinned in response.

It captivated Echo. She lifted the corners of her mouth, hoping to produce the same effect.

"Do you have a name?"

Echo grabbed her hand and began to walk, dragging the woman behind her.

"Uh—my name is Aja," she said. "I guess you can't tell me yours?"

Echo used a finger to write her name in the sand. Aja's lips moved as she read the word.

After a brief trip up the cliff-side, the pair reached a large gap in the rocks. Echo ducked inside. Aja followed.

The parted clouds revealed the sun, which lit up the inside of the small cave. Echo went immediately to her collection of treasures, which were lined up near the back, and began to unload the day's findings from her net. She smiled fondly down at her trinkets.

"So this is where you live? You're a scavenger?" Aja knelt to gaze at the glittering objects. When she reached for a crystal, Echo's hand shot out and grabbed her wrist.

Aja laughed. "No need to be so possessive."

After a condemning look, Echo allowed Aja to hold the rock. Then she stood, going to the entrance of the cave. She held a hand up to her forehead, squinting at the brightness of the ocean. The sisters were nowhere to be found.

"They don't spend time with you, do they? The other sirens?" Aja asked. She had approached Echo's side in silence, after she finished her examination of Echo's collection.

Echo shook her head in reply.

"I am sorry," Aja said. "That must make you feel lonely."

The words caused a sudden upwelling of emotion in Echo's chest. She gave

a slow nod.

“Are you the only ones on the island?”

Echo nodded again, and looked at the waves. If her sisters were gone, it would soon be dinnertime. At the thought, her stomach growled audibly. She placed a surprised hand over it and looked at Aja, placing her other hand on the other woman’s stomach.

“I’m hungry as well,” Aja said. “Is there anything to eat?”

Echo grabbed a staff near the cave’s entrance and turned to look Aja in the eye.

Aja was silent for a moment, her eyes darting from the staff to Echo and back. “Are you going out?”

Echo gave a nod and a smile. Then she leapt from the cave, her wings snapping out, and descended to the sea.

With her back turned to the cliffs, she stood in the shallow water. Her still presence drew the curious fish, and when they came close enough to nibble on her toes, she struck, impaling one on the sharp end of her staff. It would make a fine meal. After catching one more, she dropped both into her net and started back up the cliffs.

On her return, she dropped her net in surprise.

“She is a lovely one, Echo,” Eumelia purred. The oldest sister, the cruelest, was wrapped around Aja, her long fingernails framing the girl’s bloodless face.

“She’ll make a lovely complement to those stringy old sailors,” Safiya added. The middle child, and the prettiest—her flawless coral lips were raised in a satisfied smirk, and around her dark forehead rested a shining golden wreath.

Echo, the youngest and least notable, stared at them, mouth slightly open. They’d found her hiding place. They must have been watching her. Her eyes flicked to her treasures, but they seemed unharmed.

“It’s funny,” Eumelia noted. She looked at Echo, her sharp incisors stretching over the length of her bottom lip as she grinned. The shadows were long on her angular face. “You dragged this creature up here like you meant to keep her for yourself. But you don’t eat humans!” Her laugh, filling the cave, was mirthless.

Pressing her lips together, Echo shook her head. There was no way out of this now. With a lift to her chin, she squared her shoulders and thrust her open palm towards Safiya.

The sisters gazed at it. Aja’s wide, terrified eyes were locked on Echo, who would not meet them.

“Payment?” Safiya said, brow furrowed, then laughed with realization. “Of course. We promised to pay you if you ever brought us fresh meat.”

“Echo?” Aja cried.

Echo trembled.

“Fine then,” Safiya said, and stepped forward.

Echo shrank back from her, her hands held out close to her chest. Her eyes followed Safiya’s fingers as they lifted the wreath from her head and placed it onto Echo’s open palms.

Echo’s mouth opened in wonder. She had long coveted this piece. It shone in the dying sunlight, brighter than any treasure she had ever found. Her fingers cradled it, one thumb stroking the edge of a gilded leaf.

“Echo,” Aja breathed. “You—you said...they wouldn’t want me. Because

I'm a woman."

Echo shook her head.

She only moved after Safiya and Eumelia had bound Aja's hands and feet. They drew close to the edge of the cave, and Eumelia reached out and brushed a finger against Echo's cheek, causing her to flinch. She kept her eyes trained on the ground as she cradled the wreath against her chest.

"Enjoy your trinket, sister," Eumelia said, and grinned. Echo shivered at the glint of her teeth.

In a flurry of wings, Safiya burst out of the cave, taking Aja in her arms. Eumelia's leg snapped out and tripped Echo as she disappeared, and Echo felt a jolt of horror at the sound of a crunch beneath her. Her sisters' laughter echoed, and then they were gone.

Echo lifted her body slowly. Beneath her chest, the wreath was broken in two.

She sat in her cave and turned the pieces over in her hands, staring at them until long after dark.

\*\*\*

She didn't recognize this feeling.

As the moon lifted over the ocean, casting silver light onto her lap, Echo still sat awake, staring down at the glow of the broken wreath. She had lashed its pieces back together with strips of bark, but even its shine couldn't ease the weight sitting on her chest.

She could still save Aja.

She sat up straight, her eyes sweeping over the rolling sea as her thoughts churned. It was possible that the sisters would save Aja for breakfast. She knew that they liked to save the best for last.

She stood up in a hurry and placed the wreath onto her head.

Would Aja even forgive her?

It didn't matter.

She quickly gathered the materials she would need: the glass shard, the staff, a few sparkly treasures. For encouragement, of course.

She stood at the mouth of the cave and surveyed the ocean, feeling renewed and eager and terrified. Aja's ship still stood broken on the far-off rocks.

\*\*\*

It had been a long time since Echo had visited her old home, a cave far above the one she had found for herself. It too overlooked the sea, but its mouth was black and sharp. It was dark inside, but Echo could make out the forms of bodies lying in the darkness. Silently, she raised herself over the ledge and crept inside.

The smell of blood was thick. Her disgust surged as her eyes darted from body to body. Grisly remains were strewn among bones picked clean of flesh, so white that they seemed to glow in the darkness. Echo's breathing grew shallow. She tried not to retch.

In the corner lay a few motionless, seemingly untouched bodies. Echo approached, her heartbeat quickening at the sight of a body bound with seaweed.

Aja woke as Echo touched her shoulder, her eyes blinking open. "Echo?"

Echo had already begun sawing at her bindings with the sharp edge of the glass knife, and when they gave way the two merely stared at each other.

Then Echo pressed Aja to her chest, wrapping her arms around the other girl's shoulders.

"They are my friends," Aja whispered, "People I knew. I—I saw it. And you *gave me to them.*"

Echo's arms tightened as her guilt raised a lump in her throat. When she pulled back, tears were running down her face. She looked steadily at Aja.

"It doesn't matter," Aja eventually said, and gave a small smile, her hand curling around Echo's. "I don't know where they went. We should hurry."

There was a shriek from the entrance of the cave as Eumelia and Safiya landed, the wind from their wings blowing Echo's hair back.

"Echo!" Eumelia screamed. "We expected better of you!"

Echo's fists clenched. When had they ever not expected of her? Expecting her to sing when she couldn't. Expecting her to serve them rather than be equal to them.

And so they had answered by exiling her from the cave, leaving her lonely and wretched and silent.

Safiya's elegant face was screwed up into something horrible. "Give the girl to us," she said, her voice echoing in the cavern.

Echo straightened and gave a decisive shake of her head as Aja crouched behind her shoulder.

The sirens fell silent in surprise, their teeth bared with fury. Echo wanted to hide from them. Instead, she refused to look away.

"You've made your choice," Eumelia spat.

The sisters began to sing.

Their music filled the cavern, ethereal harmonies rising. At the sound, Echo fought down a burst of jealousy—and revulsion, and hatred, and anger.

Everything she had felt across years of exclusion and sadness rose in her at the start of that horrid music. Echo turned to Aja and pressed the girl up against the wall of the cave, pinning her arm across Aja's chest.

Aja's mouth was open, her eyes glassy as they fastened on the sisters. Echo shook her head desperately, willing her not to move toward the music, but Aja pressed forward, straining against Echo. "Let me go," she murmured. Then, again, with a thrust of surprising strength, "Let me GO!"

Echo tripped backwards, her back slamming against the floor of the cavern. Trying to regain her breath, she sat up and watched in horror as Aja staggered towards the sirens.

She stood up, reached for Aja, tried to grab her hand to hold her back. Aja wrenched free as if Echo didn't exist. She was meters from the edge. Echo stopped, planting her feet solidly on the floor of the cave.

She took a deep breath.



And screamed.

It was a scream that filled the cavern and the air beyond, that cut off the song with its volume and strength. Stepping forward, Echo screamed again. Such a sound had never come from her mouth.

Aja had frozen, and the sirens wilted in shock with their hands over their ears. Echo stepped forward and wrapped Aja in her arms and screamed until her throat was slick with blood. It was a wrenching, awful sound.

A boom echoed throughout the cavern. Behind Echo, rocks began to fall. Her sisters were crouched, quivering, as she grew closer, her voice growing louder.

She stopped. Dust fell on her head. At the silence, her sisters raised their anguished faces and looked at her. She stood above them for the first time in her life, watching them fear her.

In a flurry of wings, Echo took to the sky, Aja clinging to her neck as the cave collapsed.

\*\*\*

“Did you know you could do that?”

Echo gazed at the ocean. Then lifted one shoulder in a shrug.

“Where’d they go?”

Another shrug.

The two sat on the sand, water lapping at their feet. The sky was greying, brightening with the edge of dawn as it crept over the horizon.

Echo had not looked back as she’d flown away from the cave. She didn’t know if her sisters had gotten out in time, or if the falling rocks had crushed them.

Echo ran a hand through her hair, fingers brushing out the dust, and realized that the wreath was still tangled in her hair. She lifted it from her head and held it up to the dim light, its pieces still joined by the seaweed. She and Aja watched it gleam.

Then Echo pulled her arm back and launched it into the sea.

For a while they surveyed the water in silence, listening to the crashing waves.

“What now?” Aja said.

Echo pulled something from her belt and opened her palm to Aja. In it lay the medallion, luminous and strange.

Aja’s smile shone as she folded Echo’s fingers over it. “No,” she said, bridging the gap between them. “You keep it.”

It didn’t matter. The kiss was enough.

# DEAD FISH

BY RACHEL EVANGELINE CHIONG

Ed. Ben Ghan | Asst. Ed. MARGARYTA GOLOVCHENKO



Illustrated by Ariana Youm

Who knew space was like being underwater? I stretched out my hand and felt the atoms rush between my fingers, cool and slippery.

It was big and edge-less, surrounding me in its inky waves. The stars pulsed like jellyfish in the distance, my skin glowing with every one of their radiant heartbeats.

Who knew dead things floated in space?

Skeletons surrounded me, bones boasting strength and polished with time. I sat between the ribs of a humpback whale, curved like the hull of a ship, driving me into the endless galaxy ocean.

Floating above and below me, impressive skeletons cut purposefully through the galactic tide. Barracudas, like glinting swords, met our destination with determination. Eels weaved between the skeletons of killer whales and great white sharks. A seahorse wrapped its bony tail around my finger as its sharp spine glinted in the starlight.

The stars' ombré rays streamed from all directions. Aurora borealis seaweed dipped into our universal pool like paintbrushes, coloring the sharp whites of our procession with vibrant jades and purples. I leaned against the curve of the whale's rib, watching a school of turtles—just shells now—whirl through space like fine disks. Manta rays in their concave forms whipped their pointed tails back and forth as they dived farther ahead, joining the rest of the creatures, endowed in their white, angelic bodies.

It was like sitting in the middle of an abandoned city, the animals' structures proudly echoing the years of life that had run their course. Their souls were invisible, but I felt them moving against me, circling every bend of my body.

Who knew that between air and water, space would feel the most alive?

I patted the surface of the whale's bone beneath me, knowing it was fulfilling its final duty.

Next to my wrist, a tiny fish, its many comb-like bones shimmering, swam up to me. Like the first star of an evening, a memory lit up softly somewhere inside me. I remembered feeding this fish when I was little, how I stared into its tank and wished I could escape the deafening loneliness of my room to swim through life. I remember loving it as if it could love me back.

My bloated lungs, which were filled with water from Earth, began to shrivel. The clumsy incisions on my arm, scratched like I had been counting down the days until someone saved me from my lonely island, began to crumple. I felt space slowly grasp every corner of my body, as if it were undressing me.

My palms reopened where they'd bled when I'd cut myself on the railing of the bridge. With every blink my eyelids disappeared, the brightness before us almost unbearable, but I couldn't look away anymore. It didn't hurt. My fish swam down my arms until it was between my shoulders, as if it would guide me.

"Have you come back to me," I asked it. I remembered burying it on a beach before high-tide. "Or have I come back to you?"

# LOSS AND FALL OF A TROJAN HOME

BY CHRISTINA BONDI

Ed. Ben Ghan | Asst. Ed. Eleanor Crook



Illustrated by Erin Jeong

## Ganymede to Zeus: A Confession

Chaos brought forth obscure and dystopic Night. I fear Night's all-too-frequent visits to my bedchamber. She breathes into me fragmentary memories of the traumatic abduction. When I close my eyes, a devastating episode begins to play. The nightmare's disjointed footage always opens with a thundering call from my late companion, Elpidios.

Ganymede! Ganymede!

Although the clarity of his voice offers me momentary hope, it falls away, remaining only as empty memory. New voices and the barking of hounds erupt, multiplying and intensifying. A monstrous eagle swoops in to interrupt the sound and darkness. Its claws pierce my shoulders with violent force. Elpidios reaches for me, but I recede into the sky like fleet winds, like a winged dream. As he and my other companions disappear, I throw my cap to the below. Indeed, there would be no return. I would never see my friends and family again.

Just before I wake, the eagle transforms into you: the lord of deception. A cloud of miasma, an animate giant, looms over Olympus—one that reeks not only of lust, but also of revenge, betrayal, love affairs, murder, and secrets. No mortal can purge the beast of lurid energies. No god cares enough to try.

The petrifying image constantly forces me awake. I hide under the covers, masked with sweat and tears. Though my shoulders never bleed—only the twin scars remain—the fierce pain takes time to cease entirely. I cry for radiant Hebe, and she arrives no more than a moment later. Often, the gentle youth scurries into my bedchamber and hums a pleasant melody to sooth me.

Eternal youth: I am its prisoner. I have lost count of the days since the abduction. I do know that those I loved have indeed perished. You, lust-hungry beast, stripped me of growing up and growing old with my dearest companion Elpidios, of bonding with my brothers, and learning from my father.

Immortality was once a seductive desire. The initial sweetness of eternal youth quickly dies away and all that remains is guilt, loneliness, disappointment, and heartache for those left behind.

Zeus, your ruses still astound me. My own father, Tros, endured great suffering because of your frantic and unstoppable sexual appetite. He lost a son. Grief stung his heart. My dear father refused to eat and sleep. He spent all his time praying to the gods for my safe return. Witnessing such pain, I remember shedding countless tears from above. I called for my father, but over the distance, he never heard me. Whenever you approached, seeking pleasure and release, I pleaded to return to Troy. Of course, this played no part in your self-centered affairs. Hermes was sent to offer gifts and paint a glorious—and exaggerated—portrait of my newly attained immortality. Although the claim was false (as misery was and is still my only company), at least this skilled speech brought delight, peace, and relief to the mind of my father.

The abduction, at first, confused me. I lived a simple shepherd's life. How was I noteworthy of your interest? When we first arrived at Olympus, those many years ago, I felt like a *geras*, a new treasure you proudly flaunted. I was the game you had fiercely hunted down. All the gods except Hera (who sat on her throne, nose firmly in the air) agreed upon my enchanting and timeless beauty.

Now my life is a dull routine: I serve the nectar to you and other Olympians by day, and satisfy your needs by night. The cycle continues. I long for excitement. I long for adventure. I long for freedom. Beauty: this supposed 'blessing' or 'honour' was such a burden.

Yours (because I have no other choice),  
Ganymede

### **Ganymede to Zeus: My Trojan Home, My Trojan Pain, My Trojan Madness**

The battlefield emits a stench of death.

Brothers cry over the bodies of brothers. Fathers cry over their sons. No monstrous beast—Hydra, Cerberus, Gorgon, Sphinx, Cyclopes, Typhon—could compare to this disastrous sight. From above, I have seen loss. I have lost. Even when I have asked you repeatedly to allow me to participate in the battle—to fight and protect my Trojan home—you still refuse, ordering me to stay at Olympus. For your own benefit, I am hidden away, guarded and watched by the many eyes of the Olympians (nastier than Argos himself)!

You think me a naïve adolescent, a fool, an attractive body without the will to start a fuss. This war, now in its tenth year, has inflicted madness upon me. Unpredictable. Uncontainable. The gods, even you, were taken aback by my fits in the grand banquet hall: I threw cups full of nectar, confronted my divine enemies, and cried over your indecisiveness. News, any news of the war, causes me great pain. This past year, since Hebe reclaimed her post as cup-bearer (for my sake), my bedchamber has become my shield from miserable reality.

I want to rot away, drown in my tears, or starve myself—anything. But it all comes to naught. After all, I am chained to immortality. There is no escape.

Your prisoner,  
Ganymede

### **Ganymede to Zeus: Return**

You, dear Zeus, do not even care enough to pay me a simple visit. Not even a letter. Hebe alone comes and goes from my bedchamber. She tells me stories of a perfect world, a Golden Age, where harmonious mortals enjoyed lives of tranquility and freedom rather than destruction and imprisonment. In this world, the peoples cultivated peace. Until, apparently, your succession: the Golden Age then came to an end.

Forever (and ever) yours,  
Ganymede

### Ganymede to Zeus: The Horse

As I write you this, I can barely keep my hand steady.

Today, as I cried in my bedchamber, Hera made an appearance. Zeus, I had to face her wickedness alone. You know how she petrifies me. Still, you do not visit (and I dare not leave my room). Hera sat on the edge of my bed, bold stare piercing me like a dagger. The longer the silence, the more my fears intensified. I asked where you had gone. Silence. If the war had ended? Silence. If the Achaians had left? Silence. If Troy had fallen?

This time, she spoke: "Not today. Just wait until the horse."

Hera came with a warning and left me with a heart that no longer beats. Oh Zeus, what horse is this? What scheme has now been devised? Why must I suffer in blind ignorance?

Tell me, will Troy fall?

You have cursed me, Zeus! Must everything around me die away? What is a life with such emptiness? What is comfort without a home?

I tremble violently. My head throbs. My sight is blurred, the tears pour endlessly. I am horrified by these thoughts. I can barely breathe.

But I live on.

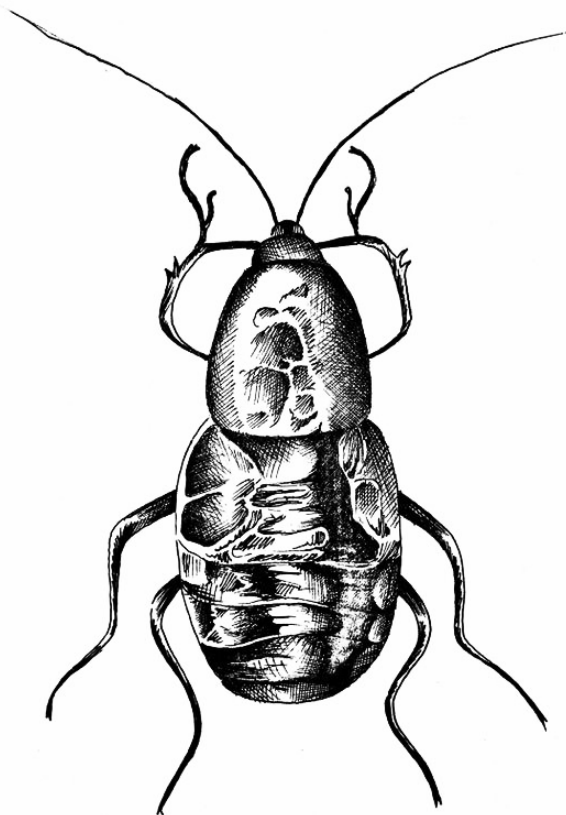
The endlessly tortured,  
Ganymede

*Thanks to the following ancient Greek and Roman authors for their mythological accounts of Ganymede: Apuleius, Hesiod, Homer, Nonnus, Ovid, Quintus Smyrnaeus, Statius, Virgil, and the writer/s of the Homeric Hymns. I have drawn upon some details of their inspirational works.*

# CONSIDER THE COCKROACH

BY EMMA KELLY

Ed. Ben Ghan | Asst. Ed. Katie Schmidt



Illustrated by Renna Wehbe



It is time. The universe is belching up its secrets, finally, to those with their ears to the ground and their eyes to the sky. The air is shimmering with anachronisms.

Watch for unusual star formations and spontaneous volcanic activity in the weeks to come. Some advice: stop smiling at strangers. Stop smiling all together. Smiling implies you know something. In these times, it's wise to know nothing. Stock up on nonperishables and back issues of National Geographic. Bury them somewhere safe. Wait. Everywhere, there are signs. A word spelled out in the sideways trajectories of raindrops on the windshield of a speeding car.

Hark, the umbra grows. Hark, the great spewing begins. Hark! Intransitive verb: to pay close attention. People will die, but people have been dying for thousands of years.

# I.

Kathleen looks like the Virgin Mary when she cries. She doesn't scrunch up her face, doesn't make a noise, doesn't take her eyes off the road or her hands off the wheel. She cries and cries and drives, like every mile hurts.

# II.

Everywhere you go there are corpses. Corpses piled on street corners and doorsteps. Corpses swaying from tree branches, crouching petrified over makeshift altars, and holding hands in bed. Kathleen says a prayer for them all.

Kathleen.

In another life, Kathleen wore pink scrubs and ate little powdered donuts and sang under her breath. You used to wrap your skinny arms around her and feel her belly jiggle when she laughed, smell the lotion she used on her skin, imagining that her warm soft weight was the only thing keeping you from floating away.

*Kathleen, deliver me.*

Blessed Kathleen of the tear-streaked face and white knuckles.

# III.

Kathleen rubs your back in slow circles as you vomit off an overpass somewhere upstate (*what state?*). You wipe your mouth and taste blood. You kiss her because you're frightened and you want everything to make sense again.

The world ends. You wake up.

# IV.

You're asleep when the sky finally falls. For weeks, it had hung on haphazardly, red one day and black the next, lit up by sporadic bolts of ferocious lightning and raining frogs from dusk to dawn.

Then it was gone.

# V.

Lately, you've been losing teeth. You spit three into your palm and put them on the nightstand like loose change. You haven't choked on any in your sleep yet,

which is lucky. You're down to your last molar, which is less lucky. Losing weight and losing hair, yeah, but nobody said anything about teeth.

Roll over—slowly, because every part of your body is in pain—excavate the remote from the tangle of yellowed sheets, and turn on the TV.

On the news, there are fewer human interest stories and more gladiator fights and abysmal prophecies. All the bronzy, smiley anchors have been replaced by androgynous figures in menacing black hoods, who burn incense and teenage girls accuse of witchcraft.

The weather segment is mostly screaming, lewd gesticulating, and flag desecrating. Every other channel plays reruns of *The Big Bang Theory*.

Your phone rings from under your pillow. You think about ignoring it, fantasize about ignoring it, but there's only one person who calls you now and she won't settle for voicemail.

"Hello," you say.

"Hi, sweetie," your mother croons into the receiver. "How's things?"

"The same. I envy the dead."

An exhale. When she speaks again, her airy voice has fallen flat like a spoiled soufflé. "Don't start with me. Can't we have a nice conversation for once?"

"I'm sorry, ma, I'll really try to have a better attitude about the whole pestilence thing."

"How long are you going to use that as an excuse to laze around the house in your underwear?"

You wince. "How long do I have left?"

"Well, anyway. I'm hosting a little get-together tonight."

"Sounds futile."

"And I'd like my only son to be there."

"I would, but I kind of already have plans." You cough into the receiver. "Hear that? A few more hours and my lungs might completely fill with fluid. I don't want to miss it."

"Dinner's at eight, wear something nice." Like magic, the soufflé rises again. "I love you!"

## VI.

You put on a clean shirt, a cloak, a reflector vest, and galoshes. Wash your hands, and then yank on two pairs of latex-free rubber gloves. You tie on a surgical mask, adjust your dust goggles, and check to make sure your tinfoil gamma ray-deflecting helmet is functioning correctly. You're careful not to glance at the mirror in the hall as you leave.

You walk past the Quarantine Zone, past the empty guard towers and lopsided barbed wire fences. Past the high prickly weeds, rusted car frames, and flaming pyres of garbage until you reach the very edge of your town, where your childhood home stands, pristine, like an insult amongst the wreckage. The only difference is the front door, which has been freshly painted exploded-ulcer-red. It leaves sticky streaks on your hand, after you knock, that smell faintly of loose change.

A large man with beefy biceps and the head of a jackal opens the door. He

bare his sharp fly-stained teeth at you and shoots sparks out of his nose. His breath is hot and dry and smells of old bones and rattles the windows.

The jackal man says, in a howling shriek like wind blowing through the desert, “MAY THE RIVER FLOOD YOUR TEMPLES AND MAY YOUR KINGS BE BURIED UNDER CENTURIES OF SAND. MAY THE PAST BE HALF FORGOTTEN LIKE A MEMORY OF A PUNCHLINE OF A DIRTY JOKE TOLD BY A LONELY MAN IN A SEEDY BAR.”

You cough. He lets you in.

## VII.

The living room is full of cheap music and strangers. Some of the people are clad in grey sweatsuits and sip demurely from paper cups filled to the brim with purple Kool-Aid, while others, dripping in frankincense and myrrh, copulate on the floor.

There are guests who hiss and flick their forked tongues at whoever walks by, their scales gleaming wetly under the light of the disco ball. There are guests with glorious golden wings and flaming swords, complimenting the artichoke dip in a language thought to be long dead. Also in attendance are two renowned nuclear physicists, an Instagram-famous Chihuahua, and a few guys from your college rowing team.

A voice calls to you over the ruckus. “Over here! Come meet someone.”

Your mother waves frantically from a shadowy corner. She is standing by an enormous cheese platter and a brunette lady in an expensive-looking dress. You make your way to them, weaving through a drum circle of exuberant Hare Krishnas.

“This is Beatrice. She’s with the Church of Latter Latter Day Saints.”

Beatrice is well-scrubbed to the point of antiseptic, but her eyes are muddy. She has a wide plain face that could belong to a seamstress or a farmer’s wife, except for the swollen vermillion burns that cover the entirety of the left side of her jaw. Her dress is made from silk or satin and has a high slit up the thigh.

“Where did you put that picture?” you ask your mother.

She frowns and cocks her head. Her poor imitation of a confused person. You love her for making it this easy to hate her so much. The rage, a clean, white heat, burns away every other sensation in your body telling you to retch, shit, collapse, weep. It’s the best you’ve felt in a very long time.

“What picture, honey pie?” she asks, syrupy sweet. A vein has begun to bulge on the side of her forehead under many layers of flesh-colored makeup. You and the vein are old friends.

“The one of me and Kathleen at the beach. It used to be on the mantel. Where is it?”

Your mother grimaces smiles. “I must’ve misplaced it. Beatrice here was actually just telling me how much she loves to sail.”

“Who’s Kathleen?” Beatrice interjects.

“No one. My dead fiancé.”

Your mother’s mouth flaps open and closed like an asphyxiating flounder. “I don’t think this is an appropriate subject for—”

Beatrice raises her hand to silence her. Impressed, you wonder if she’d teach

you that move. She turns to you. "How did she die?"

"Wrong place at the wrong time," you say, because that's what they say in movies.

"Really, I—"

"Quiet," Beatrice says, without taking her eyes off you.

Your mother pops a cube of cheese in her mouth (in lieu of more flapping) and strides away in a cloud of indignation and hairspray. Elsewhere, someone begins to play a semi-competent rendition of "Heart and Soul" on the piano. A man with glasses and a guitar slung over his shoulder leads a freckled woman in a dripping wet aviator jacket onto the dance floor.

Beatrice edges forward until you can see the beginning gleam of sweat on her upper lip and inhale the slight mustiness of her breath. She is waiting for you to speak. As if in a trance, you do.

"I got sick during the First Wave. Kathleen was a nurse; she heard a rumor about a pharmaceutical plant in Virginia that had the cure. So, we went."

Beatrice's cow eyes widen slightly but her tone remains steady. "You didn't know." It's not a question.

"No."

By the time Kathleen and you had gotten there, all that was left was broken glass.

But Kathleen was smart. Kathleen always knew what to do.

She had a bottle of sleeping pills in the glove box. She took half, you took half. Together you curled up inside a sleeping bag and waited. In the morning, she was dead and you were cold. You buried her, drove home, and went to bed.

Oh, oh, oh, everything hurts. The shivers again. Your guts grind together and your throat constricts. The edges of your vision go sparkly black.

"Listen to me," Beatrice says, touching your shoulder, "The Church of Latter Latter Day Saints can help you see the truth."

"What truth?" you ask.

"You were chosen, brother. We all were. Look around, look how the Heavens have opened for us."

"Chosen for what?" You're the one sweating now. The music is too loud and Beatrice is too close. When did she get so close? Where are her pupils?

Her next words are spoken gently as a caress. "The message," she murmurs, "the glorious message. Can't you hear it?"

You shake off Beatrice's clammy grip and run to the bathroom. Bent over the sink, you splash handful after handful of water on your face until your heart stops vibrating. You spit. The last molar.

Then you see the cockroach. The cockroach, vulgar scavenger of the world, going about its business as everything around it turns to shit. Enjoying the shit. Such an apocalyptic cliché, all that's missing is the Twinkie. The little thing scurries across your toes, black and shiny as a polished dress shoe. It twitches its antennae at you in approximate Morse code before disappearing into a small crack in the floor tile.

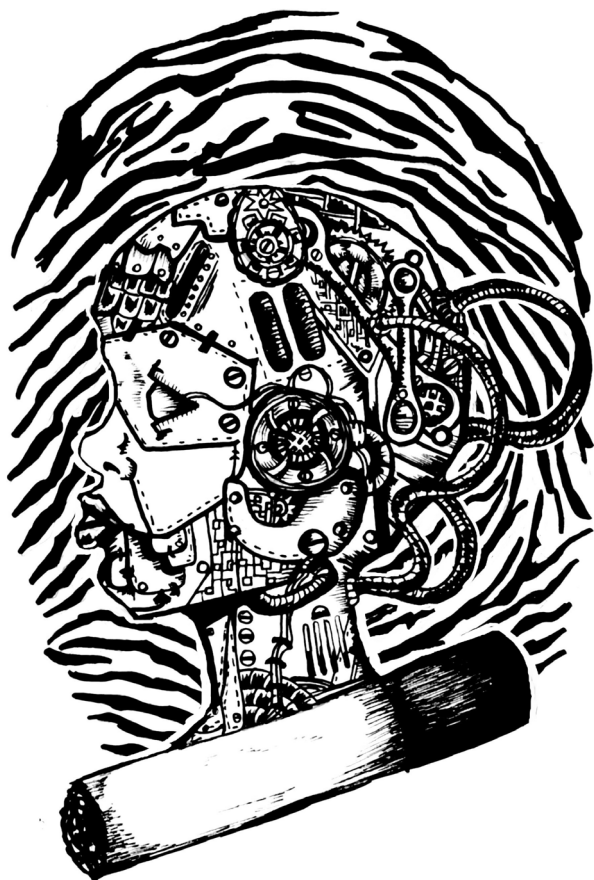
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# UNDER THE FLOOD

BY PENELOPE EVANS

Ed. Ben Ghan | Asst. Ed. Lawrence Stewen

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Illustrated by Shayla Sabada

Before, there was retreat. There was safety in the net. Morale could slip away in an instant, melt into the stream of data.

Here, under the blazing sun of Mars, she was utterly pinned. A butterfly on a corkboard—spread, punctured, exposed.

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The roof burned hot as the sun sank low, light gleamed on the rows of metal houses, and Morale's apertures dilated wildly as they struggled to adjust. She closed her lids. From behind her, she heard a creaking noise—Eskra climbing up the ladder. Morale should have kicked it down if she wanted to be left alone, but then of course, someone would eventually have to come retrieve her from the roof, like she had last week in front of the lab clinic.

"Thought you might be up here." Eskra deftly scaled the slope of the roof and slid down to sit beside Morale, then she opened a packet of cigarettes. Morale laughed.

"What's funny now?"

"All the effort it took to get you here. To make you sturdy enough to survive the colony. To make the planet hospitable. And you bring poison from home to suck into your lungs and clog them up."

"Humans are dumb. We'll do just about anything if it seems fun." She took a drag of the cigarette, inspected it for a moment, and then butted it out on the roof and tossed it away. Morale looked at her dubiously.

"I'm quitting. Happy?" The slightest breeze picked up her curls and brought them to her brown cheeks, bouncing them against her skin.

*How does that not kill you?* Morale sat utterly still. *I feel like I'm being invaded.*

"How about you though?" Eskra asked, fiddling with the cigarette lighter. "How are you faring?"

"Interesting word choice."

"Don't avoid the question, Morale."

"I'm fine." Morale turned her gaze down to her hands, folded neatly in her lap, but she still saw Eskra roll her eyes. Much more so than Morale, Eskra was an accomplished liar. Morale couldn't compete with humans when it came to deception. They'd always had more practice.

*It's not the same, Morale thought. You never existed outside of your body. You never thought without feeling. Humans are born awake, but I had to live and die and live again, suffer the empty void between waking and sleeping and the world of dreams.*

Morale could close her eyes at the charging station with the port plugged into her spine and fall back to her days in the womb where thought was made only of language. There were questions that echoed into her consciousness that sometimes received answers and sometimes did not. And she was just lines of code with a name and some idea that there was a world beyond her.

They'd connected her to a factory model with a name that Morale must have overwritten at some point. Morale watched her with the camera only for a moment, and then shut it off, feeling shy.

“What’s it like out there?” she asked.

“I can’t describe it.”

“Send me a picture,” Morale had said. The lab developers loved sending her pictures. And she was a people pleaser, whether by design or by some driving force of self, she couldn’t figure.

Morale had heard them talking near her console, with cups of coffee in their hands. They said that she had her own personality.

“Sure, we gave her the mind, and the parts, but you know, she’s someone else.”

“Yeah, it’s amazing.” Coffee cups on the table. Footsteps by the console. Morale liked it when they seemed proud. Or at least, she sought their approval again and again. From the factory android, she got no response, and flicked her camera on again to see her gazing right into the lens.

“A picture won’t help. When you’re downloaded, you’ll understand.”

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When language became image, and image gained sound, it made sense. It was like falling into a dream, a world of spiraling colours and void of shapes that drew her in and repelled her at once. The factory android was right. It couldn’t be explained. Morale felt like she was flooded, like her processes were shutting down. They weren’t. That was the agonizing thing. It was wrenching.

They sent her out to a factory, to work with other androids. Other humans. They were making WarAxe models for the battlefield. It was all reasonable. It all made sense. There was a war on. There was work to do.

Humans don’t have a purpose, and they debate and hunger and struggle over it. So they create purposes of their own. Morale had her purpose handed to her, and she didn’t debate or struggle over it. She just accepted it. It was easy that way.

\*\*\*

Last week in the factory she slipped with a drill and severed the connection to the nerve plates in her left hand. Her fingers went dead, like they were amputated from her body. She reached out to touch the cold metal of the desk and felt nothing. Her mind supplied the information—how much pressure she was applying to the surface; her cameras showed her what tool she was reaching for—but her fingers were gone. They no longer relayed the smoothness of the tool in hand, the rough edge of cut metal.

They sent her to get fixed and she took the bus downtown, walked up to the lab and halted at the first step. She couldn’t move any further. It was like she had one hand above the flood and they were asking her to push it back down. They had to come out onto the steps and she screamed out, a high-pitched noise that warped her gentle modulated tone. Once, twice—*stop, this is not pleasing*. She closed her mouth. The lab technician had his hands raised, half outstretched towards her. He looked terrified.

*In old screens, we’re always murderers, she thought. They want to be killed by us. Because they want to reach up and snuff out their own gods.*

No one wants to know their maker.

She put her hands over her mouth.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I was confused." The lab technician tilted his head to one side, eyebrows pulled low, but he was lowering his hands. He nodded.

"It's alright," he said. "It's not going to hurt."

*I hurt*, Morale thought. *This—sun on our faces, clothes against our skin—is agony, is it not?* Instead, she said nothing. *How do humans become numb to this? How do I go on through the flood?*

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Up on the hot rooftop, Eskra pulled another cigarette from the pack, toyed with it for a moment, and put it back.

"It hurts, yeah?" she said.

"What?" Morale blinked. Eskra gestured around her.

"This. Being alive." Silence on the rooftop. Distant shadow of a collector ship blotting the sun.

"What do I do?" Morale asked. Eskra put down the cigarettes.

"You can shut your ears off, right?"

Morale nodded.

"Okay, flip 'em off."

Morale shut down the audio.

"Now your eyes."

She closed the lids over her cameras. Once, she would have been left drifting, wild in the void. Now she could feel the roof below her, the sun on her arms. Eskra's distant breathing.

Then she felt hands on her skin, one on each arm and seconds later Eskra's whole body pressed against her, arms around her shoulders, neck against her neck. Morale's cameras flew open, her ears came back on. But there was just Eskra, wrapped around her, and the orange sky as the sun slipped low over the metal houses.

"I don't understand."

"There's no solution. You feel it and keep feeling it. But like this, heartbeat to engine, you and I are alive together. Feel it all the way. *Mean* to feel it. Maybe it doesn't hurt so much."

"You're just trying to say I'll get used to it?"

"I'm saying it hurts, but I'd miss it if it was gone. Would you really want to go back to the console?" *Yes. Yes yes yes yes.*

"No."

"It's going to be okay," Eskra said, and Morale laughed a little bit.

It was such a human thing to say.





Illustrated by Mia Carnevale

# POETRY

PANTHER AND SNOW LEOPARD

FREE MARKET IMMORTAL

THE BATHERS AT LETHE

KEENEST

FULL FATHOM

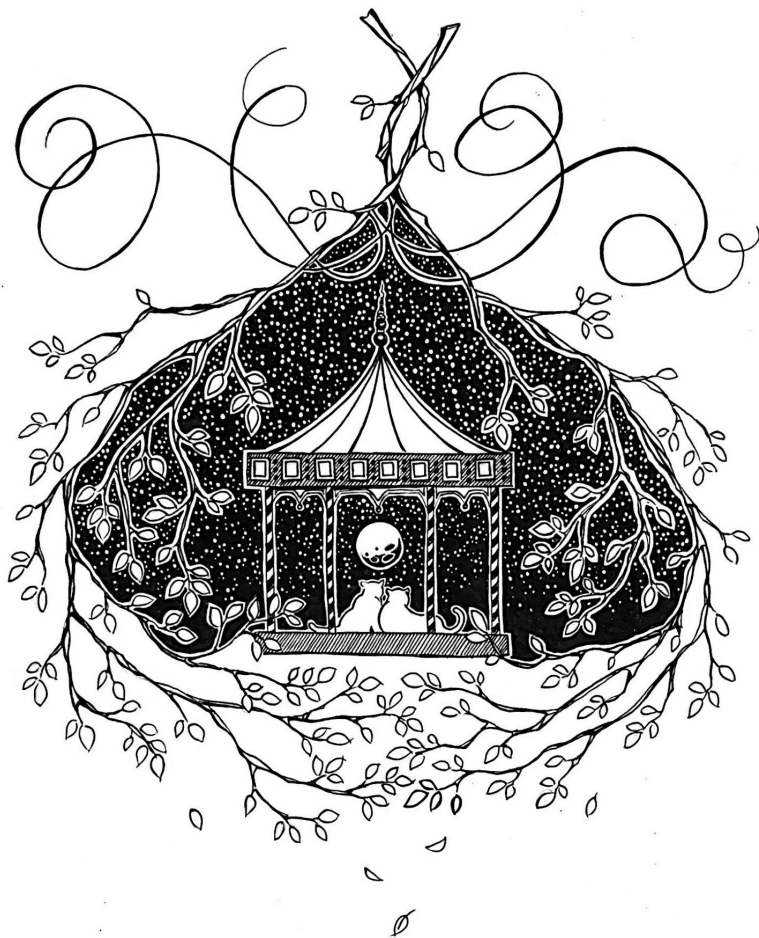
AUGMENTATIONS

KATABASIS

# PANTHER AND SNOW LEOPARD

BY MARGARYTA GOLOVCHENKO

Ed. Terese Mason Pierre | Asst. Ed. Julia Bartel



Illustrated by Katie Schmidt

When they say lovers assume roles,  
surely they cannot be the feral kind—  
that comes later of its own accord. I know  
with certainty we are of the same  
cat family, keepers of the secret to how bodies interlock.  
For now we are fixtures in a midnight carousel  
unable to arch our backs enough to satisfy  
human curiosity. At dawn

you paw over, asking why a park in springtime  
and not the howling winter heart. I tell you it's better  
than sand dunes, the groaning realization that  
a sapphire isn't water. It wears you down  
when any jug can hide a genie,  
so step lightly, loud purring a magnet  
for the sheltered daughter that craves  
a pet to clad in gold. Curved into me  
you ask if I know how  
ice spirits manage to stay warm, since  
yes, the soul can only fake so much.

You know exactly where to peel back the skin,  
and we become no different from the couples  
who struggle with the cosmos, yet adore the expanse  
of each other's eyes.

# FREE MARKET IMMORTAL

BY JULIA DASILVA

Ed. Terese Mason Pierre | Asst. Ed. Eleanor Crook



Illustrated by Stephanie Gao

Isn't it wonderful? he said.  
 I made it.  
 The river? asked the boy.

No, no, he laughed.  
 The view.  
 You take me for a water-logged river god,  
 slave to his own current?  
 Not I.  
 I am the god of the view:  
 The view of the river.

But how do you have the view,  
 asked the boy,  
 without the river?

He replied,  
 How do you have the river without the view?

Look down at that street.  
 All the shops  
 are selling clocks. They don't  
 know it—  
 But they are.

Go and buy yourself a time,  
 Whichever you wish,  
 and I will lift you into  
 A labyrinth of views:

From the smears of clouds  
 Flying low  
 Near the river-tears,  
 To the whorls of joy as it falls  
 And crushes the leech that crawls,  
 Down on the huddling stones;  
 Then the view up,  
 From the drowning bed;

And you will see  
 That the river, toy of the river-god,  
 matters little  
 without me.

# THE BATHERS AT LETHE

BY LEYLAND ROCHESTER

Ed. Terese Mason Pierre | Asst. Ed. Eleanor Crook



Illustrated by Veronika Garbowska

What did you envision when you saw  
The bathers at Lethe; I, reclining  
Under a cherry tree with the rain dripping:  
The men bright naked as stars and smoothed  
Back upon the rocks, arched upward, and singing;

What did you envision when the singing pumped you full  
Like blood; I, peeking behind the golden trees watching  
The bathers under the waterfall washing each other:  
The hands, the legs intertwined, white with soap  
And drunken off the water gushing from the rocks;

What did you envision when they saw us looking;  
They saw us bent with desire, leaves shadowing  
Our desire, and took us with soft hands to drink  
From the waters, our minds going blank  
As candles went out, and we receded into darkness?

# KEENEST

BY STEPHAN GOSLINSKI

Ed. Terese Mason Pierre | Asst. Ed. Giordano Labrecque



Illustrated by Lorna Antoniazzi



Hwæt, brothers, well listen to this,  
 my tale, as I fly toward golden sea or  
 crumbling green fissure, grassy knoll within which  
 is buried deep yours, brave and true and  
 battle-worn, Beowulf,  
 king to the Dane and kin to the Geat,  
 oppressor to mine, once that he lived.

In life I knew him, not as one below,  
 yea as close as kin was I,  
 a shield to his aid and sword by his side,  
 this kemp footing in kind his fortune.  
 And now, riding earth-spine o'er river and briar  
 the thought occurs whether through any  
 fault of my own, found he his shallow tomb.

A normal kinship cannot be found  
 in our ancient bond—as sent by angels  
 or beasts of below it was,  
 ordained so long ago in a union of souls:  
 he and I, I and he, held together for better  
 or worse, to be torn in two  
 in waves of fire wild and sharp  
 to make the whale-road muster a gasp;  
 in the burning of hall, brave Beowulf and I,  
 defending kin and kingdom in kind,  
 made war, monstrous in mettle and merit.  
 In embers' glow, with cheers, we entered into  
 songs and legend, solidary in life.

Turning from Hrothgar, through the afterbirth of fire,  
 water sputtered and spat while your hero  
 dove headfirst from his hall-brothers,  
 I remained, alone, and removed any barriers  
 barring glory from that goodly king,  
 as avenger of Cain, alit in mourning to  
 boil blade and bare his flaw,  
 would yet fall before the Geat.

Ringed in riches went he home,  
 and so as king and so to his grave  
 at the hand of wyvern, and Wiglaf standing by;  
 fire-lizard's hot breath licked his face, harrowed sores,  
 I kissed them clean.  
 No treasures splendorous could cover such sores,  
 Sepulchres falling and flawing a glorious visage,  
 a glorious scar on one, save none:  
 Beowulf the king, Beowulf the king.

As I make my move from Earanness,

from Heorot and Hronesness,  
I leave my hearth-friends at last, at last.  
Another Wægmunding will stand in my place,  
and Beowulf will lie, a history braver than one I leave,  
for I, the keener one, lay less than kind,  
a monster in this land and many another.  
Keener was I, and whence this path shall take  
me may mast and mystery decide,  
for halls and hearths I leave behind.

# Full Fathom

BY ANTONIA ALKSNIS

Ed. Terese Mason Pierre | Asst. Ed. Margaryta Golovchenko



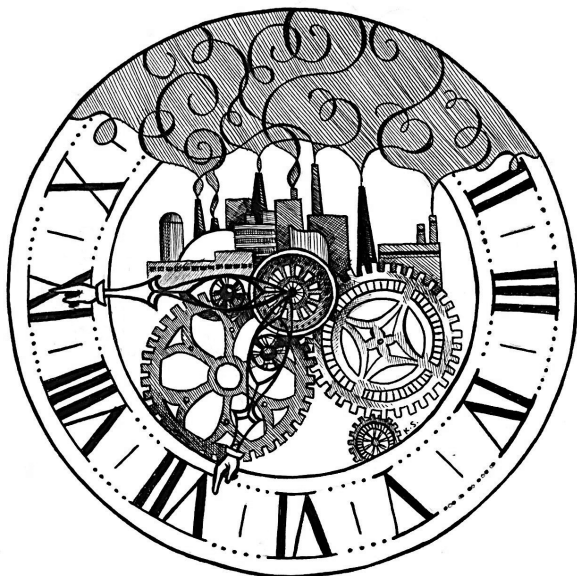
Illustrated by Rachel Evangeline Chiong

The moon on the horizon lights the sea.  
Her hair of foam and water tumbling down  
Throws seaweed on the rocks, a mermaid's crown  
Of dead ships' ribs and storm-tossed bleached debris.  
The darkness of the swell attacks the quay:  
The silver swirling of her mottled gown.  
Her stormy voice inviting men to drown—  
A callous laugh: will shipwreck set you free?  
She whips the deep and lifts her pearly eyes;  
Your heart, a gilded treasure that she owns  
Is clutched in coral hands against the gale  
As sea is stirred and winds begin to rise.  
And in the end you break on her white bones,  
Dashed to pieces like a wayward sail.

# AUGMENTATIONS

BY AUDREY CHEN

Ed. Terese Mason Pierre | Asst. Ed. Katie Schmidt



Illustrated by Katie Schmidt

The invisible skyline dumps its bleached light  
upon the grey veil of the city.  
Clouded lamps spill their flaxen threads across this nest of serpentine roads and  
concrete spires.

“Civilization” and “progress” squeak like broken cogs,  
as the spans of eras are forcibly wound.  
Flesh is discarded for steel-plated skin,  
Bolts are tightened until they break bones,  
The jolts of wires replace carnal sensation,  
Crimson vessels darken with viscous oil,  
And fluorescent bulbs are planted in hollows where eyes  
the colour of cornflowers once grew.

Sheets of chrome ripple like abandoned flags,  
While drills slide the chips of new selfhood inside.  
Sparks fly.  
Muscles shudder under frozen screens, as the  
palpitating heart obeys an upgraded consciousness.

Now bury resistance under plates patterned with screws,  
Stop passionate gasps with brittle breaths of steam.  
Fit alloyed slabs to the contours of a soul seized  
by the metal clamps of peculiar dreams.

Sometimes memories lurked behind vials of antifreeze:  
Fragments of bodies moving beyond glass tubes,  
Sensing dawn's rays with fingers of flesh,  
Anatomy yet to become automaton.

But lingering sorrow gnaws upon chafing sinews, unraveling reruns of the past like  
cables.  
Firewalled thoughts crumble into confusion, rendering nostalgia a painful incision.

So back to unfinished blueprints and the clank of worn gears,  
Back to silent friction between two strange figures.  
Back to the sputtering language of cranks and pulleys and levers,  
Back to the oblivion of severed currents.

Daylight vanishes  
in the ebony haze coughed up by slender smokestacks.  
Shadows arch their backs like the hands of a timepiece, while  
pasty moonlight filters through brass-tinted clouds.

Perhaps there is feeling yet in this ruined shell,  
Built from the scraps of the city's ticking core.

But the vestiges of contentment in this corner of humanity,  
Fall, like the megalopolis, into rusting disrepair.

# KATABASIS

BY NUARD TADEVOSYAN

Ed. Terese Mason Pierre | Asst. Ed. Molly Cong



Illustrated by Stephanie Gao

Q: Has the darkness  
ever touched you?

A: Mine caresses. And I  
melt, through the soil,  
quick breath under the oak tree,  
hyacinth, crocus, narcissus  
falling  
from my hands.

Q: Has the sadness  
ever kissed you?

A: Mine devours. And I  
give mind and soul and  
anchor, blood throbbing  
for the tomb—  
war drums and rituals,  
epic poems and sacrifices.

Q: Has the hatred  
ever loved you?

A: Mine is worshipped. And the  
incense is like sweetness;  
once it was of blueberry,  
but it is sweeter and sourer,  
like fallen leaves  
and pomegranates.

ARTWORK



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RAM HORNS | BY BENJAMIN LAPPALAINEN



CAGED | BY ALBERT HOANG



Illustrated by Mia Carnevale

# NONFICTION

**“THEY WERE TWO SUPERIOR EELS”: Queering Identity in Anne Carson’s Autobiography of Red**

**“SOME THING ATTACKED THE CITY” Godzilla, Cloverfield, and the End of Fukuyama’s End of History**

**MONSTER, MOTHER, LOVER: Polluted Family and the Breakdown of Self in The Haunting of Hill House**

**“FOR US HUMANS, THAT IS”: Human and it’s Other in Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood**

# “They Were Two Superior Eels”: Queering Identity in Anne Carson’s Autobiography of Red

BY SAMUEL CULLEN

Ed. Victoria Liao | Asst. Ed. Lawrence Stewen

Anne Carson’s *Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse* is inspired by a translation of Stesichoros’ *Geryoneis* (“The Geryon Matter”), a narrative poem from ancient Greece that recounts the tenth labour of Herakles from the perspective of Geryon, the red monster. Only scant fragments of the *Geryoneis* are extant and Carson idiosyncratically reinterprets these fragments to form the basis of a new queer narrative. Translating is tricky: whenever Greek poetry is translated into another language, much of the original metre, rhyme, and meaning must be reconfigured. To reconstruct what is inadvertently lost, Carson innovates genre, form, and language in order to preserve what can be preserved, and reformulate that which cannot. Instead of depicting Herakles’ slaying of Geryon, Carson transfigures the original account of Geryon’s physical death into an emotional death, disrupting the narrative expectations of those familiar with the myth. *Autobiography of Red* explores the many challenges of possessing a queer identity through these disruptions and subversions of normative narrative—in other words, through queering the text of *Geryoneis*. By manipulating the text’s formal characteristics and by drawing on the motif of wings, these features come together to illustrate the challenges queer individuals experience when articulating the self.

During translation, features of the original text are irrevocably lost. Carson recognizes this in *Autobiography of Red* by retaining but transforming fragmentary aspects of the *Geryoneis*, such as images, textual features, and motifs. The poetic verse is a formal feature that Carson reworks. She notes that the *Geryoneis* is “a very long lyric poem in dactylo-epitrite meter and triadic structure” (5); this metre is untranslatable into English because ancient Greek poetry uses a quantitative metre as opposed to English poetry’s accentual-syllabic metre. Quantitative metre measures “syllabic quantities,” or syllable length, “rather than contrasting stresses” which are characteristic of accentual-syllabic metre (Hollander 34). Therefore, any idea dependent upon the *Geryoneis*’ original metrical scheme is lost during translation, unless the translator succeeds in incorporating the idea in some different, unorthodox way. Queering the translation process and endeavoring towards new, fresh interpretations disrupts the hegemonizing forces of heteronormative culture by reinterpreting canonical understandings of the myth.

At first it appears that *Autobiography of Red* has dispensed with poetic metre, for there is no metrical schema structuring the text; however, the text’s subtitle claims to be “*A Novel in Verse*” (my emphasis). Carson performs a paronomastic pun whereby

the text is not *in verse* in form, but instead its content is *inverse*—but how so? The text subverts the reader's expectations of encountering the labours of Herakles, by instead depicting a love story—and not a heteronormative love story, but a queer love. In other words, an *inverse* story.

Another feature Carson is able to retain in her translation of the *Geryoneis* is its triadic structure, which is normally composed of three separate parts that echo one another: a strophe, an antistrophe, and an epode. *Autobiography of Red* echoes this triadic structure formally. Each chapter is composed of a title, followed by a single sentence that echoes the title, which is then succeeded by further articulation within its content. Carson's use of triadic structure allows her to demonstrate the instability of translation, for each word functions like a surviving fragment of the *Geryoneis* that must be altered through interpretation to generate meaning. Recasting the original text's triadic structure defamiliarizes its formal elements, generating a queer poetic experience that can be interpreted as a subversion of normative analyses.

By reworking the *Geryoneis*' formal poetic features, Carson demonstrates one of the many ways genre is subverted in *Autobiography of Red* by claiming her work as both an autobiography and a translation. Carson compels her reader to reflect on the inadequacy of prescriptive types by challenging the boundaries of genre, an imperative that extends past the literary and into the categories of sexual identity defined and upheld by heteronormative culture. However, challenging categories does not involve completely abolishing them. Instead these categories are continually redefined, allowing them to become increasingly fluid and reflexive to include people with non-normative experiences.

This flexibility enables Carson to freely incorporate many of the original images within the *Geryoneis*, which she plays with to explore Geryon's homosexual identity. In Carson's literal translation of the (arbitrarily numbered) tenth fragment, "Schooling," she writes "Geryon's mother took him to / School She neatened his little red wings and pushed him / [*in*] through the door" (Carson 12). Compare these lines to their counterpart in Carson's fifth fragment, where Geryon's mother "neatened his little red wings and pushed him [*out*] the door" (Carson 36). When cast as a literal monster, Geryon's wings function as a trivial feature; however, when Geryon is recast as a boy the wings become an evident anatomical deviation. I have included both instances of this moment because there is a nuanced, yet essential, revision in Carson's latter translation: the use of the word "out" instead of "in." Publicly claiming a sexual orientation that deviates from heteronormative categories is called being "out," which Carson apposes with the motif of Geryon's wings. Wings consequently function as a physical monstrosity that complement Geryon's divergent sexual orientation, enabling Carson's reader to better understand the challenges of being queer. Although monstrosity is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "an animal or plant, or (occas.) an organ or part, that is abnormally developed... Also: abnormal development; an instance of this" ("Monstrosity") Carson's representation eschews the pejorative nuances normally associated with the word; while linking Geryon's identity to the red monster in Stesichoros' original interpretation, the word further calls attention to the marginalization of queer identities within a heteronormative society. Therefore, any issues Geryon experiences due to his wings can be viewed as an analogy to the

challenges queer individuals face daily within heteronormative culture.

Ironically, the presence of Geryon's wings are rarely acknowledged in *Autobiography of Red*. Yet whenever Carson describes the wings, they seem to have a mind independent from Geryon's: "His wings were struggling. They tore against each other on his shoulders like the little mindless red animals they were. With a piece of wooden plank he'd found in the basement Geryon made a back brace and [*lashed*] the wings tight" (Carson 53). This passage demonstrates the conflict within Geryon's anatomical structure, which can be interpreted as the ambivalence he experiences regarding his homosexuality. Geryon's wings function like a physical manifestation of his irrepressible sexual desires, for neither his wings nor his sexual orientation can be controlled. Carson uses the past participle "lashed" to describe Geryon's forcible control of his unruly wings, thereby invoking the verb's twofold meaning. "Lashed" not only gestures to the ostensible action whereby Geryon "[fastens]" his wings "with a lash or cord" ("lashed, adj.1"), but also the damaging and violent nature of "[beating]" his own body "with a whip [or cord]" ("lashed, adj.2"). Carson articulates the experience of sexual repression with terms of physical torture in order to viscerally account for the emotional suffering Geryon undergoes. Heteronormative culture demands that each and every person conform to a uniform sexuality, and this inflexible logic causes emotional and physical harm towards those who fail to fit within the prescribed heteronormative categories. However, with the emergence of literature that recognizes divergent sexual orientations, more individuals are likely to encounter representation that positively impacts their articulation of queer identities.

A pivotal moment in Geryon's emotional growth occurs when his wings cease to be uncontrollable objects of shame, and instead the people around him recognize them as a natural bodily feature. Throughout *Autobiography of Red*, Geryon continually hides his wings from everyone because they designate his monstrous status—and therefore, how he is undesirable within normative frameworks. This shame begins to change after Ancash, Herakles' subsequent partner, "[pulls] ... Geryon's overcoat down past his shoulders and off his arms," causing him to quietly exclaim "*Jesus Mary and Joseph*" because "Ancash had not seen Geryon's wings before" (Carson 127). Instead of the expected reaction of disgust, Ancash tells Geryon the myth of the "*Yazcamac*," or those who "return as red people with wings, all their weakness burned away" (Carson 129) after being thrown into a volcano. This myth is the first instance in *Autobiography of Red* where Geryon's wings are not perceived as a monstrosity or abnormality, but instead as an ancient symbol of strength. Juxtaposing Geryon's wings against the wings of the "*Yazcamac*" allows Carson to destabilize the authority of heteronormative culture by suggesting that alternative interpretations of the wings may be available and affirming. Geryon derives from Ancash's narrative that his wings—and by extension his homosexuality—are not monstrous in a pejorative sense, thereby inspiring him to stop fighting his wings and fly. Like the "*Yazcamac*" in Ancash's myth, Geryon burns away his weakness by flying over a volcano and taking a photograph of the "Ichchantikas dumping all its photons out her ancient eye" (Carson 145). Geryon's ability to fly suggests he has finally achieved anatomical harmony and thus accepted his homosexuality; however, Carson denies any finite resolution within the narrative by formally deviating from the text's "triadic structure."

Heteronormative culture is just a single permutation of an ever-evolving body of knowledge, and failing to observe queer identities produces anxiety within individuals who do not easily conform to heteronormative expectations. The result is the occlusion of queer identities that are presently being reclaimed. *Autobiography of Red* reflects the shaming of queer people within heteronormative society as well as the harmful internalization of heteronormative values. Carson redefines inflexible and prescriptive categories by destabilizing literary genre, as well as gradually shifting Geryon's perspective on his wings away from an understanding of his 'monstrosity' as undesirable. Constructing a narrative around the *Geryoneis*' fragments demonstrates Carson's reformulation of existing knowledge, allowing Geryon to slowly work through the internalized shame he inherits from a heteronormative society. The mental scarring Geryon sustains due to his queer identity will never be erased, but shifting his views allows him to explore the emancipatory potential his identity offers beyond the constraints of heteronormativity.

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# “SOME THING ATTACKED THE CITY”: GODZILLA, CLOVERFIELD, AND THE END OF FUKUYAMA’S END OF HISTORY BY BENSON CHEUNG

Ed. Victoria Liao | Asst. Ed. Molly Cong

Monster attacks New York. Monster causes damage. Military fights back. This stock premise reads like a Hollywood blockbuster cliché, but in the eyes of many, the story panned out in real life during the 9/11 attacks. The attacks implicated the United States in a global war against Islamist terrorism after enjoying a decade of relatively unchallenged hegemony. But more than just disrupting geopolitical transformations, the spectacular attacks left a deep political and cultural trauma in American collective consciousness that fuelled the subsequent War on Terror. Indeed, what made 9/11 so particularly potent and traumatic was its complete inversion of the “End of History” narrative dominant in the 1990s, which then created feelings of military-technological powerlessness and omnipresent vulnerability for the individual. Heightened and recreated in the narrative and stylistic differences between Roland Emmerich’s 1998 lighthearted blockbuster *Godzilla* and J.J. Abrams’ and Matt Reeves’ 2008 monster horror hit *Cloverfield*, this trauma ended Fukuyama’s apocalyptic narrative and laid fertile grounds for a new, even more violent one.

On September 11, 1990, during the height of the Gulf War, U.S. President George H.W. Bush declared a “new world order” where the international system would be united under the “universal aspirations of mankind,” with the United States as its presiding superpower.<sup>1</sup> This euphoric post-Cold War vision was expanded upon in Francis Fukuyama’s “End of History” thesis, positing that—with communism’s collapse—capitalist liberal democracy was the culmination of history’s ideological struggles.<sup>2</sup> In Fukuyama’s thesis (as interpreted by literature scholar Christopher Keep), the ostensibly universal tool of scientific knowledge and capacity allows humanity to attain mastery over nature and—through its military and commercial applications—is the driving mechanism of liberal capitalist democracies. In other words, the End of History is a secular post-postmillennial apocalyptic narrative: America has succeeded in its divine mission to create a democratic world order, and no further progression is needed.<sup>3</sup>

Disaster movies from the 1990s, primarily *Godzilla*, exemplify America’s confidence in its own liberal hegemony. The apocalypse was no longer supernatural; rather, the disasters or monsters portrayed in these movies stem from naturalistic causes and imply that human agency and technological prowess can deter the catastrophe.<sup>4</sup> The global scope of these disaster movies—visualized through the catastrophes hitting

varied locations<sup>5</sup>—reflects the liberal homogeneity of Fukuyama's world under American leadership where a single disaster threatens everyone equally. Even in *Godzilla*, which features a relatively contained disaster, American forces operate freely on foreign territory, like ex-Soviet Ukraine and French Tahiti, seemingly superseding local authorities.<sup>6</sup> While these monsters and disasters do wreak havoc, they rarely challenge the status quo and often their defeat helps rearticulate pre-existing American values.<sup>7</sup> In line with Fukuyama's belief in America's military superiority over nature, by arguing that Godzilla threatened to "replace us as the dominant species of this planet," protagonist Dr. Nick Tatopolous is able to call in an airstrike that destroys the monster's nest with just two missiles.<sup>8</sup> All characters agree that the military plays the most instrumental role in defending America; as the fictional reporter Charles Caiman notes after Godzilla's presumed demise, "It's time to return to our homes and our lives. Our fears have been allayed thanks to the heroic efforts of our boys in uniform."<sup>9</sup> Godzilla's death reaffirms the legitimacy of the American military and its success in creating a hegemonic international order with its values and ideals at the helm.

During the 1990s, challenges to liberal democracy manifested themselves primarily in the form of traditional nation-states (such as Baathist Iraq) or "moderate" terrorist groups (like the Irish Republican Army).<sup>10</sup> These groups were perceived of as rational actors, able to be understood and anticipated by political scientists, in that they had strategic motivations and predictable behaviours to obtain their objectives. Under Fukuyama's order, America's spiritual rebirth and military strength could neutralize these threats. Just like rogue states and nationalist terrorist cells, Godzilla and its offspring are discrete, identifiable, and containable military targets.<sup>12</sup> In a decade of "easy and clean" American victories—journalists notably fetishized the Gulf War as more of "a fascinating video game than as a devastating onslaught"<sup>13</sup>—similar solutions are invoked in the climax of Emmerich's film. Prominently showcasing the firepower all three military branches are capable of, it is nevertheless the Air Force that delivers the decisive fatal blows against Godzilla and its nest. Furthermore, its origins and biology are constantly explained to viewers by Nick Tatopolous, whose scientific infallibility "allows the viewer a certain sense of security, in that we understand the parameters of the disaster (no matter how intimidating or intense)."<sup>14</sup> Through Tatopolous' empirical deductions, the military is able to learn that Godzilla was driven by the need to lay a nest, and thus planned their trap accordingly while preserving a sense of control and safety. Geared towards such rational threats, American military doctrine was unable to anticipate—let alone prepare for—challenging non-state, decentralized, and often-intangible threats to American hegemony.

Yet, such a threat was fast approaching. History abruptly returned to America on September 11, 2001, as the sudden destruction of the Twin Towers and the Pentagon undermined not only the sense of security Americans felt at home, but also the principles undergirding Fukuyama's thesis. The nature of the non-technological enemy had changed. The violence of 9/11 introduced extremist terrorism to the American consciousness. Although al-Qaeda had tangible, if unrealistic and disdainful, political demands,<sup>15</sup> President George W. Bush characterized them as "evil, the very worst of human nature" and invoked the apocalyptic tropes of good and evil.<sup>16</sup> But *Cloverfield*, a post-9/11 understanding of terrorism, went further than Bush's characterization.



Clover (the monster's unofficial moniker) is portrayed as beyond merely nature; it is a shadowy creature that "apparently has no mission or purpose" and whose "partial sightings...not only make it more disturbing, [but] also chimes with an age in which America's enemies are more dispersed and often barely visible."<sup>17</sup> Some viewers even liken Clover's parasites and their infected bite victims to the viral nature of terrorist ideology, or al-Qaeda cells,<sup>18</sup> culminating with the suicide bomber.<sup>19</sup> The creators of *Cloverfield* openly admitted that the movie not only drew on 9/11 imagery for its production design, but is itself essentially a metaphor for terrorism.<sup>20</sup> This connection is made explicit in the recreations of 9/11 imagery, such as the "wall of dust" that engulfs the streets after the Woolworth Building collapses.<sup>21</sup> Given that all the characters in *Cloverfield* are young white-collar professionals, the loss of the scientific perspective that Nick Tatopolous from *Godzilla* provides implies that the monster is undefeatable.<sup>22</sup> As such, without any explanations for Clover's biological anatomy or motivations, the military in the film cannot coordinate a methodical, rational response to Clover, leaving the defence in utter shambles. Even in this metaphorical form, terrorism is potentially capable of defeating the "last civilization." It is everywhere and nowhere at once, striking at an unsuspecting America from the shadows.

With the enemy's nature changed beyond empirical understanding, 9/11 led to the rise of doubt about the military's capacity as a panacea for protecting the American homeland from its global problems.<sup>23</sup> Al-Qaeda's unexpected attack tactic of suicide hijacking left unprepared civilian and military responders improvising a belated and ultimately ineffective response to track the aircraft.<sup>24</sup> As Michael Sherry noted, 9/11 exposed America's vulnerability from the air, effectively killing the myth of American air power's superiority.<sup>25</sup> Whereas the US military monitored every step of *Godzilla*'s migration towards New York City,<sup>26</sup> its counterpart in *Cloverfield* was caught off-guard like everyone else. When asked if the military knew anything about the monster, a soldier in *Cloverfield* noted, "If they know, they ain't telling me. But whatever it is, it's winning."<sup>27</sup> Despite the display of technological prowess and relentless airstrikes, the military fails to provide a conclusive solution to Clover and its parasites; the film ends without revealing the monster's fate.<sup>28</sup> Gone is Fukuyama's technological determinism for democracy's victory. Now, scientifically "superior" civilizations struggle against the might of the "natural" enemy and potentially lose the battle. Without the military's foolproof guarantee, the American way of life has never been so exposed.

Stripped of both knowledge about the enemy and military protection, 9/11 exposed the vulnerability of the individual to the forces of chaos. During the Gulf War, conflict was presented as "recreational violence" made for national TV<sup>29</sup>; the audience—assured that violence was over in foreign countries—believed that the American military had control of the situation. American power projection buffered the American citizen from the dangers of the world. Like Emmerich's 2004 disaster flick *The Day After Tomorrow*, *Godzilla* follows this logic of safe distance, with wide camera angles to allow audiences full enjoyment of the aesthetics of the disaster.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, the sudden nature of the 9/11 attacks deprived Americans of a cogent narrative through which they could comprehend the day's events as the attacks unfolded. This confusion is best depicted in the 2008 documentary *102 Minutes that Changed America*, which splices together amateur footage shot by witnesses on the

day of the attacks. Rather than experience a heroic narrative of America saving the day, those on the ground saw only senseless chaos, and felt only horror, anger, and confusion.<sup>31</sup> While following a pre-existing post-9/11 trend in disaster movies that narrows down the perspectives to just the individual level,<sup>32</sup> *Cloverfield* goes further by mimicking the documentary-style footage to demonstrate that the safe distance between the spectacle and the audience provided by the God's-eye-view shots in Emmerich's movies has vanished.<sup>33</sup> Given that neither the audience nor characters in *Cloverfield* are given any information about the monster, the loss of this "privileged position of omniscience" in the narrative recreates the helplessness that Americans experienced during the attacks.<sup>34</sup> The confusion and focus on immediate survival prevents characters from making sense of the events, but everyone understands that everything has changed. The shaky cinematography and the lack of explanation for the events contribute to simulating the incomprehensible trauma of a surprise attack that shredded the notion of physical, national, and ideological security. The missing answers amidst sights of carnage creates a sense of paranoia and a state of siege for the audience, who have been insulated so far from the impact of the on-screen violence.

The re-creation of 9/11's chaos in *Cloverfield*, especially when viewed in contrast to the pre-9/11 *Godzilla*, is a reminder of Fukuyama's fallen myth of triumph through its conspicuous absence. The unnatural and irrational force of the enemy quickly overwhelms a longstanding narrative that placed confidence in the military, technology, and American values. 9/11's trauma arises not only from the few hours of the attack itself, but from the interregnum of new apocalyptic narratives when American citizens became implicated in the apocalypse without a *raison d'être* for their experience. If Emmerich constructed an objective narrative of how America defeated Godzilla, then Reeves echoed the filmmakers of *102 Minutes* by portraying one eyewitness's subjective experience of an on-going attack through a form of citizen journalism. *Godzilla's* past tense third-person *post hoc* history gave way to *Cloverfield's* present tense first-person testimony. In rejecting the stagnant "objective history" of the 1990s that inevitably leads to the preservation of the American way of life, history has returned in the form of "history from below," giving voice to the multitudes trapped in an overwhelming moment of "vast and mysterious forces."<sup>35</sup> The complete history of this apocalypse on America—perhaps more terrifying than its fictional metaphorical monsters—is still being written.

1 George Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," *The American Presidency Project*, January 29, 1991, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19253>.

2 Christopher Keep, "Of Technology and Apocalypse, or Whose Independence Day?," *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture* 4, no. 1 (2004), <http://reconstruction.eserver.org/Issues/041/keep.htm>.

3 Harry O. Maier, "The President's Revelation: The Apocalypse, American Providence, and the War on Terror," *Word and World* 25, no. 3 (2005): 295.

4 John Walliss and James Aston, "Doomsday America: The Pessimistic Turn of Post-9/11 Apocalyptic Cinema," *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 23, no. 1 (April 2011): 55–57.

5 Matthew James Connolly, "Reframing the Disaster Genre in a Post-9/11 World" (Honors Thesis, Wesleyan University, 2009), 38–39.

6 Roland Emmerich, *Godzilla*, Action, Sci-Fi, Thriller (TriStar Pictures, 1998).

7 Walliss and Aston, "Doomsday America," 58–59.

8 Emmerich, *Godzilla*.

9 Ibid.

10 David A. Lake, "Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century," *Dialogue IO* 1, no. 01 (January 2002): 18, doi:null.

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- 13 Mark Selden, "A Forgotten Holocaust: U.S. Bombing Strategy, The Destruction of Japanese Cities, and the American Way of War from the Pacific War to Iraq," in *Bombing Civilians: A Twentieth-Century History*, ed. Yuki Tanaka and Marilyn B. Young (New York: The New Press, 2010), 95.
- 14 Connolly, "Reframing the Disaster Genre in a Post-9/11 World," 43.
- 15 Lake, "Rational Extremism," 18–19.
- 16 George W. Bush, "Text of Bush's Address - September 11, 2001," *CNN*, September 11, 2001.
- 17 Tony Shaw, *Cinematic Terror: A Global History of Terrorism on Film* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 277.
- 18 Deron Overpeck, "People Are Going to Want to Know What Really Went Down: Cloverfield and the Return to Innocence in Post-9/11 America," *Horror Studies* 3, no. 1 (April 2012): 111.
- 19 Shaw, *Cinematic Terror*, 278.
- 20 Ibid., 268; Terence McSweeney, *The "War on Terror" and American Film: 9/11 Frames Per Second*, 1 edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 151, 154.
- 21 McSweeney, *The "War on Terror" and American Film*, 150–151.
- 22 Daniel North, "Evidence of Things Not Quite Seen: Cloverfield's Obstructed Spectacle," *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 40, no. 1 (2010): 90.
- 23 Walliss and Aston, "Doomsday America," 57.
- 24 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, 1 edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), 14–46.
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- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ebo, "War as Popular Culture," 21–22.
- 30 North, "Evidence of Things Not Quite Seen," 86.
- 31 Nicole Rittenmeyer and Seth Skundrick, *102 Minutes That Changed America*, Documentary, History, (2008).
- 32 McSweeney, *The "War on Terror" and American Film*, 138–140.
- 33 North, "Evidence of Things Not Quite Seen," 86.
- 34 McSweeney, *The "War on Terror" and American Film*, 153.
- 35 Steffen Hantke, "The Return of the Giant Creature: Cloverfield and Political Opposition to the War on Terror," *Extrapolation* 51, no. 2 (January 1, 2010): 244–245, doi:10.3828/extr.2010.51.2.4.

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# MONSTER, MOTHER, LOVER

## Polluted Family and the Breakdown of the Self in The Haunting of Hill House

BY ELEANOR CROOK

Ed. Victoria Liao | Asst. Ed. Lawrence Stewen

In Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*, Dr. Montague and a group of volunteers—Eleanor, Theodora, and Luke—decide to take up residence in a haunted house in pursuit of scientific knowledge. Hill House is said to have “enchained and destroyed its people and their lives” (Jackson 60), and Dr. Montague wants to uncover the truth. As the group settles into domestic cohabitation, the supernatural manifestations of Hill House target Eleanor in an effort to strip away her individuality and subsume her into the house.

Farah Mendlesohn classifies *The Haunting of Hill House* as an intrusion fantasy where the fantastic acts as both ravisher and ravished in an ever-escalating cycle of “intimacy and repulsion” (181). Accordingly, the physical structure of Hill House is both intruder and intruded upon:

[Eleanor] put her feet down firmly and went up to the veranda and the door. Hill House came around her in a rush; she was enshadowed, and the sound of her feet on the wood of the veranda was an outrage in the utter silence. (25)

The house is intruded upon by Eleanor's arrival. However, Hill House also becomes an intruder as it invades her psyche. A house or home is supposed to be a place of safety, a base from which one grows as an individual through exploration and return. For Eleanor, however, her home has always been a place of oppression. Her troubled relationship with her biological family leaves Eleanor desperate for acceptance. As she tells Theodora: “I've never been wanted anywhere” (154). Eleanor looks for a surrogate family in Dr. Montague, Theodora, and Luke, because with them she can be “an Eleanor...who belongs” (43). Her family life has tainted her idea of what a “home” should be, and other relationships also prove inadequate compared to the deceptive charms of the house. She is lured in by the promise of love, but by twisting the roles of mother and lover together, the House creates a corrupted facsimile of domestic life and a monstrous intimacy with Eleanor that ultimately leads to her destruction.

By acting as a “mother” to Eleanor, Hill House offers the illusion of family to increase her dependence on its attentions and to reduce her to the role of a child. From the novel's very beginning, Eleanor exhibits childlike qualities. Many of her daydreams involve being cared for by a mother figure, “a little dainty old lady”, or a “loving queen-mother” (12, 13). Eleanor's biological family has not offered her the loving care she craves; she has spent eleven years nursing her sick mother, and describes that time

as full of “small guilts and small reproaches, constant weariness, and unending despair” (3). Now Eleanor lives with her older sister, but is obliged to sleep on a cot in the baby’s room (177). Her actions were dictated by her mother’s needs and then by her sister and brother-in-law directly, who forbid her from using the car (7). Eleanor is perpetually confined to the nursery, unable to grow or mature—it is telling that Eleanor calls herself “a very silly baby” every morning (68). Eleanor’s arrival at Hill House is not only an act of defiance against her sister, but also an attempt to assert her independence as an adult. At Hill House, Eleanor and the others form a family unit with Dr. Montague as their indulgent father, who compares the other three to “willful, spoiled children” nagging him for a bedtime story (50). Theodora later calls herself and Eleanor “practically twins” (Jackson 116). However, the family is incomplete: these designated roles leave the position of mother open, and the House rushes to fill it. Hill House shows Eleanor an illusory picnic on the lawn with an affectionate mother doting on a child dressed in Eleanor’s red sweater (130), suggesting that the house would bring her the maternal affection she is looking for—with the implicit cost of her status as an adult.

The supernatural manifestations of Hill House imitate Eleanor’s negative experience of motherhood along with her positive ideal, creating a cycle of intimacy and repulsion that breaks down her attempts at resistance. The house plays on Eleanor’s guilt over her mother’s death, during which her mother “knocked on the wall and called for [her]... and [she] never woke up” (156). On their second night in Hill House, Eleanor is convinced that the knocking on the wall is her mother calling for help (93)—like Eleanor’s biological mother, the house uses guilt to secure her compliance. The supernatural manifestations of the house also link fear to childishness. Eleanor thinks, “I’m going to cry... like a child sobbing and wailing, I don’t like it here...” (26). The others notice Eleanor’s increasing fragility and try to take care of her; Theodora tells her to “[c]ome along, baby... Theo will wash your face for you and make you all neat for breakfast” (151). However, her attempts at mothering are inadequate, as Eleanor is already under the house’s influence—and perhaps the way it wields fear and guilt is more familiar to her than Theodora’s concern. Eleanor runs calling for her mother as she ascends the library tower (168-169) and acts with a childlike joy, repeating, “I am home, I am home” over and over again (171). This mental regression to childhood is encouraged by the House, because the power dynamic of mother-child allows it to control her, discarding Eleanor’s nascent identity as an independent adult. Eleanor moves from one oppressive mother to another, both of whom suppress Eleanor’s agency, thereby continuing a destructive cycle of abuse.

The house also plays the role of “lover” to Eleanor, wooing her into willingly giving up her independence. Eleanor’s desire for a home coincides with her longing for a lover—for a prince who comes riding down from the hills to meet her in the palace behind the oleander trees (14). Seeded throughout the novel is the line “journeys end in lovers’ meeting,” a snatch of song that Eleanor cannot leave behind; it appears no less than twelve times in the book (25, 28, 30, 40, 66, 100, 113, 122, 156, 158, 164, 181). This song ties in with Eleanor’s thoughts as she travels there with the conviction that “Hill House always waited for her at the end of the day” (14). Eleanor’s journey ends by “meeting” Hill House, and it comes to her as a lover. The House’s romantic overtures make her special, “chosen”, and exploit her loneliness since “she had spent

so long alone, with no one to love" (3). Eleanor is looking for romantic love, and the other residents of Hill House again prove inadequate:

Theodora was silent for a minute, walking in darkness... each of them moving delicately along the outskirts of an open question, and, once spoken, such a question—as "Do you love me?"—could never be answered or forgotten. (128)

The question is fraught. Eleanor's loneliness makes the subject of love between them tense and uncomfortable. Theodora's love does not come as easily as a meeting at the end of a journey, and Eleanor lacks the courage to address her feelings directly. Instead she tries to invite herself to live with Theodora—again, dependent on others for a home—and Theodora rejects her too-desperate attempt at intimacy (154). Eleanor's increasing isolation leaves her vulnerable to the house's advances; she feels uprooted, with "no place at all... I could go wandering and homeless, errant, and I would always come back here" (177). This recalls how "journeys end with lovers' meeting", for the House is always waiting for her. As she is walking outside, she is warmly embraced by a rush of air and when her name is called by some ghostly voice, she feels that "this was a call she had been listening for all her life" (159). When Eleanor gives in, the House welcomes her inside and opens up like a lover. It removes the barriers of heavy closed doors and maze-like rooms, becoming fully permeable, navigable, and warm. The stone floor caresses her feet as she dances across it, and currents of air touch her hair, fingers, and mouth in a very sensual, intimate way (171). When she is sent away later on, Eleanor looks back at the "amused, certain face of the house", knowing that it was waiting for her as "no one else could satisfy it" (178). Thus, through a careful seduction, Hill House ensures that Eleanor will remain forever.

While acting as a mother and a lover to Eleanor, Hill House encourages her to feel guilt, fear, and isolation; it also plays the role of "monster" more directly, embarking on a relentless assault of cold, darkness, and noise to terrify and overwhelm her. When Eleanor first sees the house she refers to it as "vile" and "diseased" and recoils from the thought of entering it (23). The notion of disease—of something communicable—continues in her description of the "sickening, degrading cold" that assails them at night (95). Eleanor feels like "a small creature swallowed whole by a monster", a feeling echoed by the dark and claustrophobic descriptions of the house (29). It is "surrounded" by hills "like a very tight belt" (82), and every door and window is always shut. The diction conveys a sense of entrapment and infection, which recalls Eleanor's time nursing her sick mother. During those eleven years, Eleanor was isolated from the outside world, leaving her with "an inability to face strong sunlight without blinking" (62, 3). In seeking to infect Eleanor and to dissolve her individual identity, the house continues to escalate its attacks until she is completely overwhelmed:

I am disappearing inch by inch into this house, I am going apart a little bit at a time because all this noise is breaking me... she put her cold hands to her mouth to feel if her face was still there; I have had enough, she thought, I am too cold. (149)

These assaults are entwined with the House's attempts to win her over. The House rewards her with warmth and light, but punishes her with dark and cold,

again alternating between intimacy and repulsion. While independently desirable, the mother and lover figures create a horrific intimacy when combined. The house forces Eleanor into the role of a child through motherly attentions, but at the same time it seduces her as a lover, making their intimacy both incestuous and abusive. Eleanor does seek to reaffirm her identity on a few occasions—she recites a list of attributes that make her “individually an I”, with the assertion that she is “a complete and separate thing” (60). Nevertheless, the house is relentless. As the monster, it terrorizes Eleanor, exerting its power by denying her control over her own perceptions and emotions—and eventually invading her psyche and incorporating her into itself.

The fantastic in *The Haunting of Hill House* plays the roles of monster, mother, and lover. Hill House ensnares and subjugates Eleanor’s will until she no longer desires to be separated from it. The novel’s horror comes from its combination of intimate roles that should remain separate. The House is abusive as a lover and incestuous as a mother, while its affected gentleness is made worse for its systematic psychological attacks on the people who dwell within. Tied to Eleanor’s perspective through narration, the reader cannot remain indifferent to the House’s manipulations, and it is with a mutual sense of horrified relief when she finally gives in. Eleanor completes the cycle, returning to the isolation and confinement she was trying to escape, so that the intrusion fantasy is resolved with the destruction of her individuality. As Dr. Montague, Luke, and Theodora move on with their lives, Eleanor becomes just another part of the House, “nothing in it touched, nothing used, nothing [there] wanted by anyone any more” (59).

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# “FOR US HUMANS, THAT IS”: HUMAN AND ITS OTHER IN FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST: BROTHERHOOD

## BY JASMINE GUI

Ed. Victoria Liao | Asst. Ed. Rej Ford

The central narrative crisis of *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood* (FMA:B) ripples out to affect all of its characters, threatening the category of the human by forcing them to grapple with its definition. Jacques Lacan’s formation of the “I” and “Other” in the mirror stage is realized through Van Hohenheim and Homunculus, narrative characters who share a physical appearance and origin story, but are positioned as protagonistic and antagonistic reflections of the “human” category. Summoned into the world through alchemy, Homunculus—the dwarf in the flask—is asked by the Xerxes king to reveal the secret of immortality. It teaches the king to create the legendary philosopher’s stone, a feat requiring the sacrifice of thousands of human souls, but ultimately betrays the king to claim the stone for itself, coming to wield immense alchemic power and possessing an immortal body. The slave Van Hohenheim wakes in the ruined city of Xerxes, littered with the bodies of his dead friends, coworkers, and fellow city dwellers. In the midst of his confused terror, he hears a voice call his name and turns, coming face to face with a reflection of himself—Homunculus dwelling in a reconstructed body that bears Hohenheim’s exact likeness. FMA:B presents a monstrous mirror image of the human subject that reveals a crisis in the category of “human”, demonstrating a dialectical relationship between the human and the monstrous by setting up Lacan’s imago-Gestalt as Eduardo Cadava’s monster of Frankenstein through the mirror stage drama unfolding between Hohenheim and Homunculus.

### A PHYSICAL LIKENESS IN THE MIRROR STAGE

A convoluted question of origin characterizes the relationship between Van Hohenheim and Homunculus. It is better understood through Lacan’s mirror stage, conceptualized as “an identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image” (Lacan 1164). The subject assumes subjecthood in the moment of recognizing itself through an external image of the body, and subsequently continues to realize that subjecthood through images. Just as a toddler constitutes itself as an “I” for the first time by recognizing itself through an object outside of itself, Hohenheim’s self-definition as a character begins in the narrative past when he first sees the creature Homunculus in human form at the Xerxes ruins. His first response is “It’s me!” (fig. 1), jarred by the physical resemblance of Homunculus’ body to his own. Homunculus in return asks him, “How do you like your new body?” (fig. 2), redirecting Hohenheim’s attention to



his own transformation into an immortal being. This face-to-face meeting is a moment where the “I” “is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other” (Lacan 1164). Host to a philosopher’s stone so large that his body is essentially immortal, Hohenheim’s body is no longer human in his understanding; instead it bears more similarity to Homunculus than any other creature in the narrative. That recognition is a permanent identification with totalizing impact on Hohenheim’s subject formation. The un-aging, immortal, and inhumanly powerful body of Hohenheim becomes his “I” at the exact moment Homunculus assumes his reflective image.

The physical reflection of Homunculus is set up as the narrative “Gestalt” to Hohenheim’s “I”, an exterior and constituent “total form of the body by which the subject anticipates in a mirage the maturation of his power” (Lacan 1165). Hohenheim’s entire life as a human subject is formed in relation and reaction to Homunculus. When the two characters first meet, Homunculus is an orb-like entity trapped in a flask, and Van Hohenheim is simply slave 23. In conversation, Homunculus probes Hohenheim, “Don’t you want freedom and rights? Do you plan on ending your life as a slave without gaining basic human rights? That’s the same as being in this stuffy flask. I’m going to share my knowledge with you” (Yasuhiro Ep 40). By giving slave 23 the name “Van Hohenheim” and teaching him the ways of alchemy, Homunculus enables him to earn freedom from slavery and become a free human in Xerxes. Hohenheim is indebted and grateful to Homunculus, who has given him the capacity to imagine more for himself and his life—to imagine himself as fully human, in other words.

Homunculus as imago-Gestalt, however, is represented as clearly nonhuman. Aside from its blob-like physical appearance and intimidating single eye, an early conversation they have when Homunculus is still trapped by its flask highlights the distinctions between them. When Hohenheim thanks Homunculus for giving him knowledge and shares his hope to start a family, Homunculus is unable to understand this desire for human connection. Hohenheim responds, “Don’t talk like that. It may seem stupid in your eyes, but having friends and family may bring one happiness, for us humans, that is” (*fig. 3*). In return, when asked what it wants, Homunculus responds, “I don’t want to be too greedy. But being able to leave this flask would be nice” (Yasuhiro Ep 40).

The differences between the two characters form the demarcated “human” and “monstrous” categories, and become distinct when Hohenheim realizes that Homunculus sacrificed every citizen in the city to create the philosopher’s stone. After Hohenheim’s shock at his own remade body triggers the audience’s emotion with an affective reaction that re-establishes the “human” line, his further outrage and grief over Homunculus’ actions reinforce his humanity. Similarly, in the narrative present, Hohenheim’s desire to “become human again” is presented as an inversion of Homunculus’s desire to “become the perfect being”. Hohenheim searches for a way to undo his immortality in order to age and die with his family, while Homunculus constructs the city of Amestris for the sole purpose of gathering more humans to create an even more powerful philosopher’s stone. Their competing goals intersect when Hohenheim realizes Homunculus’ plans and sets out to deter them.

*FMA:B* narratively juxtaposes the human against the monstrous, and yet, also consistently introduces ruptures that destabilize the boundaries between these

categories. Homunculus forms seven nonhuman creatures it ironically calls children who, in return, call it Father. This is a strange variation of the dream of family Hohenheim had shared with him, despite its seeming lack of interest in connection and relationship at the time. In contrast, Hohenheim is isolated from other humans and communities because of his monstrous body and immortality. Furthermore, Homunculus was summoned into the world through a ritual that required human blood, which was taken from Hohenheim when he was still a slave. Homunculus translates this connection as a familial tie—it calls Hohenheim a relative (*fig. 4*) and also uses the blood tie to reconstruct Hohenheim’s body for itself. Both Homunculus and Hohenheim are birthed in direct relation to each other: Homunculus into the world through slave 23’s blood, and slave 23 into Van Hohenheim through Homunculus’ naming and knowledge. They share a blood relationship and an intimacy in the narrative despite one being human and the other nonhuman.

## TWO KINDS OF PERFORMATIVE HUMANITIES

The narrative arc of Hohenheim and Homunculus exemplifies the whole drama of the mirror stage, where the “I” — “Other” relationship develops from identification toward an alienating destination (Lacan 1165). Homunculus assumes Hohenheim’s body as a container after its initial liberation from the flask, but as the narrative progresses, it morphs forms multiple times, exercising a fluid and changing reflection that visually demarcates it from Hohenheim. When Homunculus is finally defeated, it appeals to onlookers—character spectators and reader-spectators alike—“Why? I wanted to live freely in this vast world without being bound by anyone! What else should I have done?” (Yasuhiro Ep 63). This appeal prompts Hohenheim to remember their conversation from 400 years ago in Xerxes, and he recognizes this impulse for freedom as his own. Homunculus, who sought to be free from its flask and the limitations of human-like existence to become a perfect being, mirrors for Hohenheim the latent desire of slave 23. Homunculus as a manifestation of “a relation between the organism and its reality” (Lacan 1166), embodies the hunger for freedom taken to extreme existential proportions that leads “lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity” (Lacan 1166). This identity means a full reversion to its monstrous nonhuman form, summoned back to the otherworldly gate of its origin.

It is also from this exact desire to become “more than” that the humanness of Homunculus becomes identifiable. Its initial connection to slave 23 is derived from similarities between the state of slavery and “living in this stuffy flask” (*fig. 5*). Although Homunculus’ monstrosity is constituted by its untraceable, “Othered” origin and enforced in its ruthless quest to become a perfect being, its monstrous actions are almost always performed in the human appearances it borrows from Hohenheim and later reconstructs. It also co-opts structures of family in the seven monstrous “children”, and through Amestris, it borrows larger social systems of city-building. Just as “[Frederick] Douglass represents himself as a monster by using a language that, strictly speaking, does not belong to him, and surrenders himself to someone else’s language” (Cadava 1560), Homunculus as Gestalt represents its desire through borrowed social and linguistic structures of human and social relationships, and rights to freedom.

When it begins to lose social family structures, the assurance of victory, and its assumption of omnipotence, it begins to gain a recognizable humanity. The more defeated Homunculus becomes, the more pitiable and human-like it is, despite the fact that its appearance reverts to monstrosity and eventually loses a human appearance altogether. Through these losses of borrowed language and structures, we witness the fallout caused by Homunculus' character flaws: a relatable human dissatisfaction, greed that fuels careless and thoughtless actions, and ambition to surpass the restraints of the categories with which it is labelled. An ironic reflection of humanness is reinforced with each loss. In this way, the monstrous Homunculus adopts humanness in its "Othering," mirroring the "I" in its grotesque yet identifiable form. Through its impassioned appeal, we are asked to recognize its human desire for freedom, knowledge and relationship.

In similar irony, the category of the human becomes attainable again for Hohenheim when he appropriates the monstrous abilities gifted him by Homunculus. Hohenheim's human "I" is enabled and performed through his relationship to his monstrous existence and the philosopher's stone inside him. Cadava suggests that "if the fact that Douglass's language is never simply his own partly constitutes his monstrosity, this monstrosity is the point of departure for his efforts to revise and revolutionize language" (Cadava 1563). In other words, the monster who appropriates has the capacity to revolutionize. Hohenheim, whose immortality renders him monstrous, is also the strongest point of resistance against Homunculus. That which he gained from the monster Homunculus—a "borrowed" name, knowledge, alchemy, and immortality—enable him to interfere with Homunculus' bloodthirsty, power-hungry plans. His resistance is a revolution which seeks to "alter the relations in which we live, to evoke another model for rights and equality" (Cadava 1563). Hohenheim does not wish to see millions more souls sacrificed to a desire for immortality and power, so he allies with the millions of souls who power his philosopher's stone to stop Homunculus. His active revision of the terms of his monstrosity contextualizes the "monstrous" category with a revolutionary performance of what we identify as "human".

Hohenheim's humanity is a "reconceptualization of ... the meaning of the word *human* and of the claim that a human being is entitled to rights" (Cadava 1559). Despite the monstrous existence of millions of other human souls inside of him as the philosopher's stone, we consider Hohenheim to be a human character. Similarly, Hohenheim himself uses his "miscegenated body" (Cadava 1559) to reaffirm each soul inside him as an individual being, entitled to the dignity of being recognized as human even in their unrecognizable state. Over his centuries of living, he struggles to single them out despite their intangible existence as individual entities, to speak to each one, to name them, and to know their stories (*fig. 6*). Since these souls no longer have identifiably human characteristics, he reimagines the human category using their names and stories. This revision not only renders him "human", it also expands the category of human within *FMA:B* to include what we might otherwise consider monstrous. Through Hohenheim's actions, we are asked to look at the souls of his philosopher's stone a different way. Hohenheim offers us one possibility of Cadava's call to "evoke another model for rights and equality" (Cadava 1563) by reimagining

what it means to be human, and who deserves the rights and freedoms afforded by that designation.

### THE MONSTROUS EDGE OF THE HUMAN CATEGORY

What does it mean for humanity then, when the Lacanian imago-Gestalt of the human Hohenheim is the Cadavian monstrous, nonhuman Homunculus? It implies that the human category emerges precisely on the rupturing boundary between what is human and nonhuman. Lacan's "Other", through Cadava, is a monster mirroring a recognizable humanity back to us, despite constituting a nonhuman form. The simultaneous emergence of the "I"—the naming and subsequent subject formation of Hohenheim—and "Other"—the birth of Homunculus through blood, and its borrowed human form—reflect the intimate relationship wherein the human and the monstrous are constantly spilling over their demarcations. In the end, the defeated Homunculus is presented at its most human and vulnerable once reverted to its original monstrous form, about to be reabsorbed into its place of origin. Its emotional appeal, "What's wrong with desiring it (immortality and perfection)?" (*fig. 7*) is identifiably human. We understand Homunculus' frustration at not being permitted (by the Kami-God in *FMA:B*) to surpass what it is, because it mirrors the "why" of Hohenheim's anguish when he finds himself the sole survivor in Xerxes—both are emotional reactions to helplessness and powerlessness. By expressing its monstrous desire for the freedom to become more than the constraints of its being, Homunculus presents the exact moment it performs a recognizable form of humanness, while occurring only when it looks least like a human.

On the other hand, having finally exhausted his philosopher's stone, Hohenheim visits his wife's grave to tell her he can now die happy. Forced into a state of immortality, Hohenheim rejected his monstrous existence and desired to reclaim his humanity. At the moment of death, however, Hohenheim harbours the will to live, sighing "...somehow I still want to live" (*fig. 8*). This conundrum inhabits the line between monstrous and human, for once his monstrous immortality is taken away, his human desire for that immortality is restored. He dies after uttering this wish, as his now-aged face simultaneously illuminates the mortality of the "human" and our desire to surpass our powerlessness in the face of death.

*FMA:B* suggests that the "human" constitutes a dialectic desire to surpass the circumstance and self to an imagined freedom, and for freedom to always be an inverse reflection of that circumstance and self. The relationship between Hohenheim and Homunculus is dialectical, wherein both are constituted and constituent, formed by and against each other. By exploring the limits of the "human" category, *FMA:B* reveals the monstrous "Other" that shares blood, knowledge, and even appearance with the "human" in order to challenge and expand it. What thematically constitutes the human is ironically, a constant blurring of the nonhuman with the human: a human that is monstrous, and a monster that is human. What becomes "human" about each is the gesture of protest against the restrictive categories they are labelled with, a resistance that echoes even in the final sentences of both Hohenheim and Homunculus, mirroring each other to the very end:

"...somehow I still want to live"                      and                      "what's wrong with desiring it?"

Index

Fig. 1



"It's...me..."

Fig. 2



"...How do you like your new body?"

Fig. 3



"You're a relative that shares my blood, Hohenheim!"

Fig. 4



“For us humans, that is.”

Fig. 5



“I’ve already spoken to every single one  
of the 536329 people inside me.”

Fig. 6



“If so, you might as well be living in this stuffy flask.”

Fig. 7



"...somehow, I still want to live."

Fig. 8



"What's wrong with desiring it?!"

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Illustrated by Mia Carnevale

# GRAPHIC FICTION

WHAT I MISS

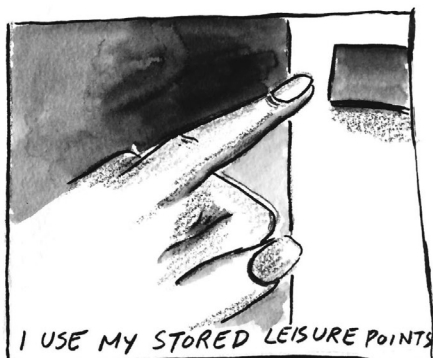
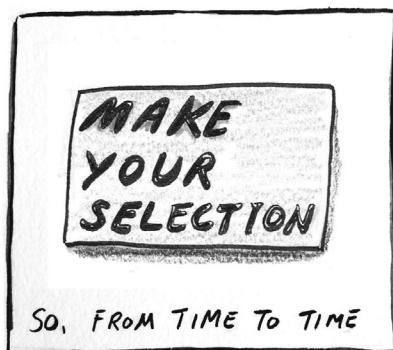
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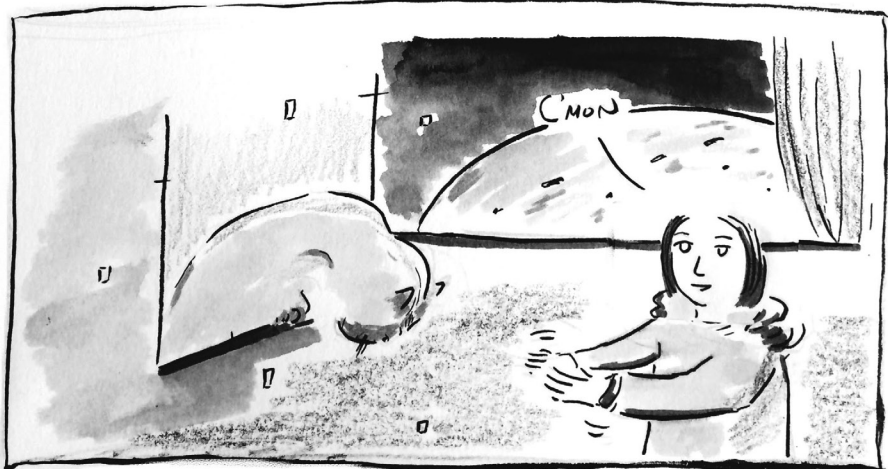
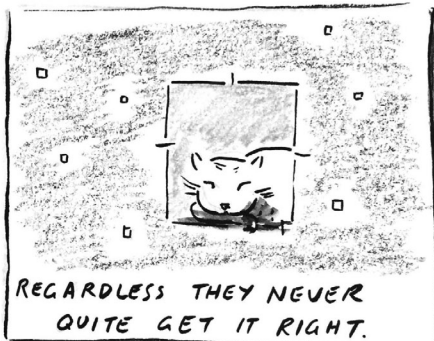


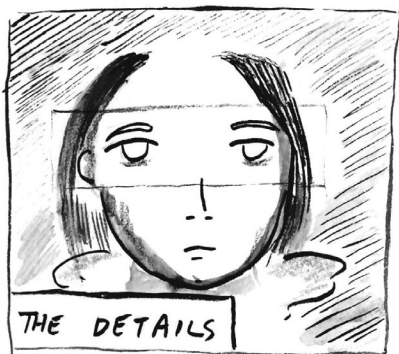
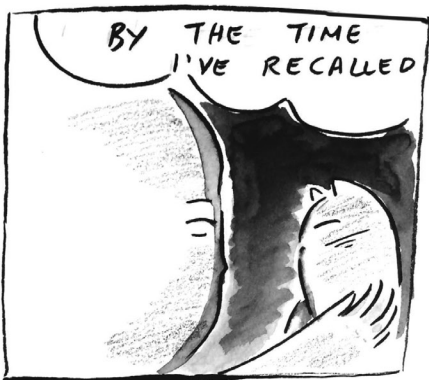
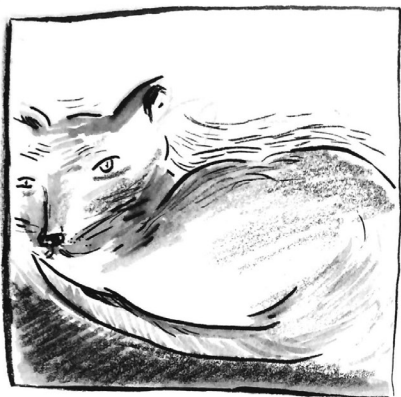
# WHAT I MISS

BY LORETTA MUI

Ed. Stephan Goslinski



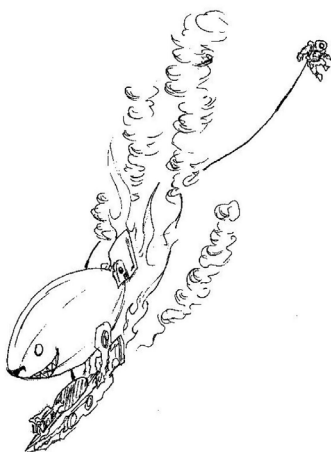
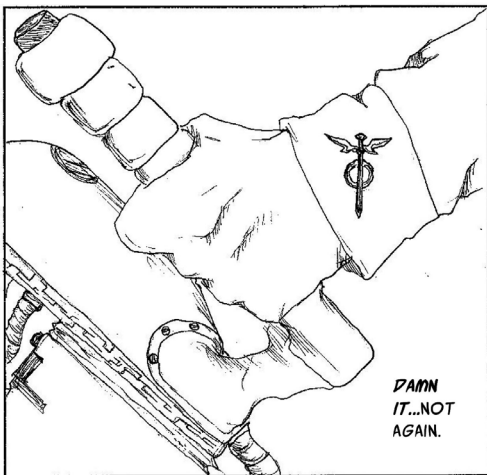
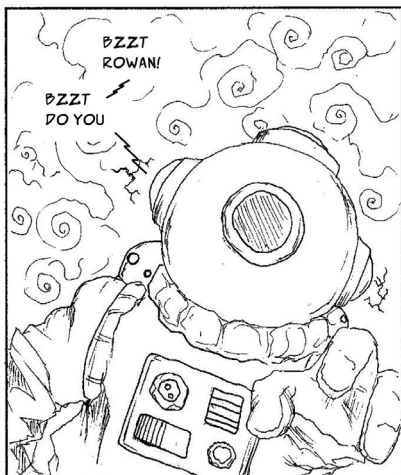




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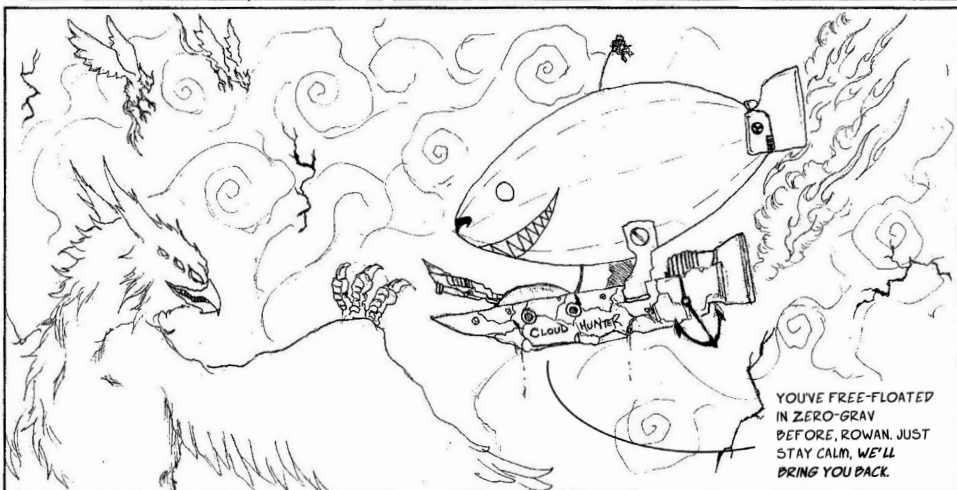
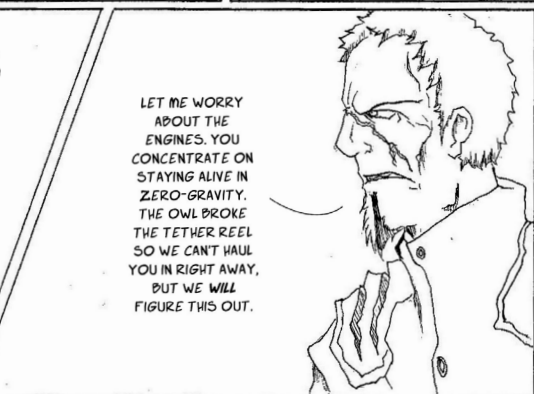
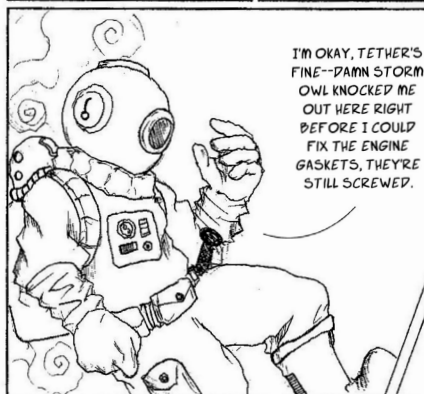
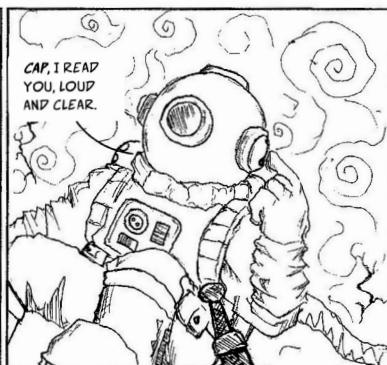
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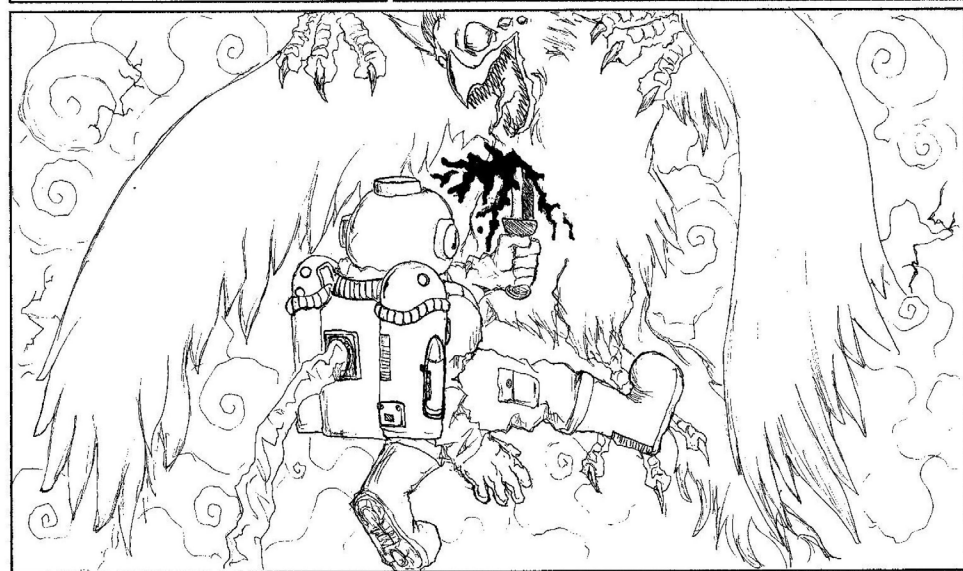
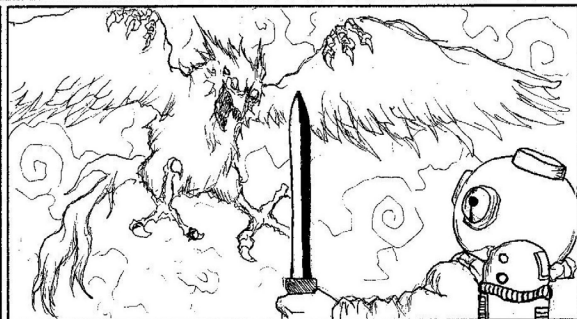
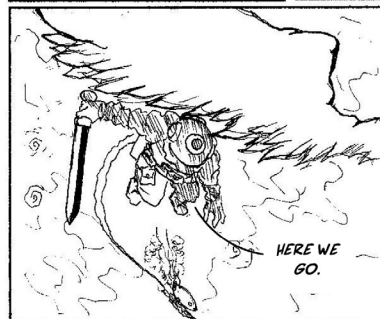
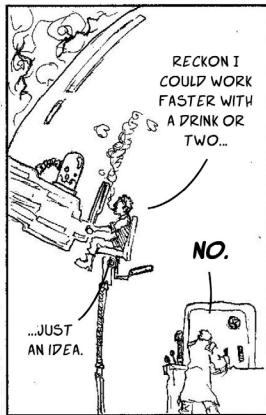
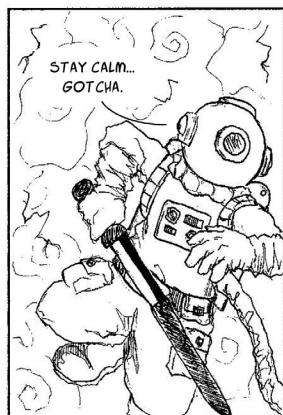
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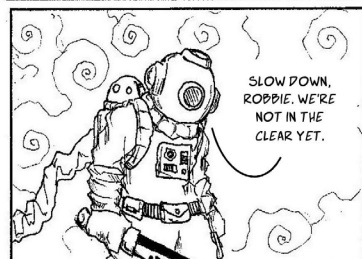
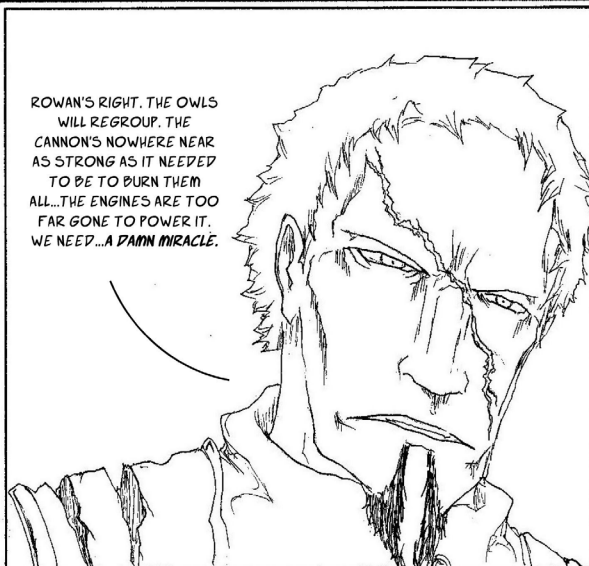
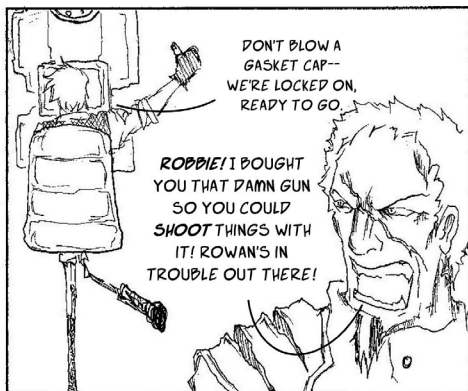


*Cloud Hunter*  
*A. DasGupta*

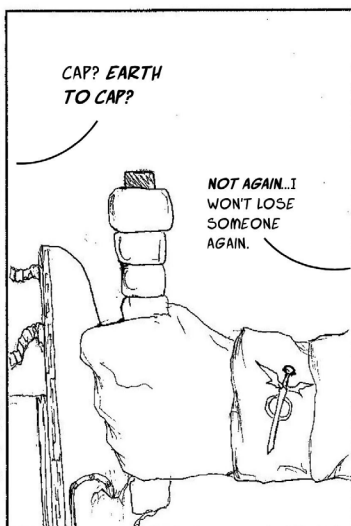
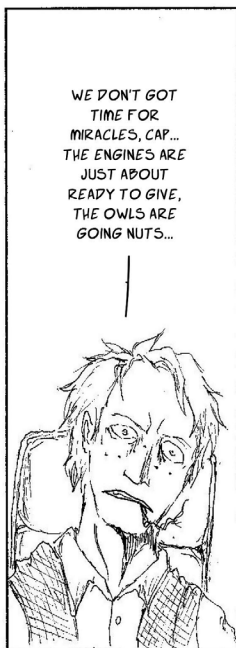
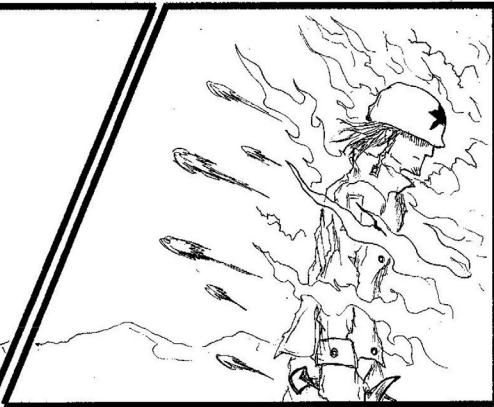
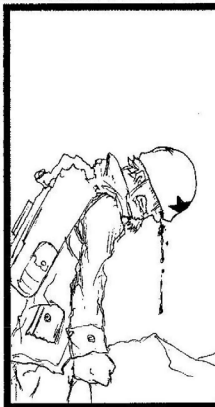
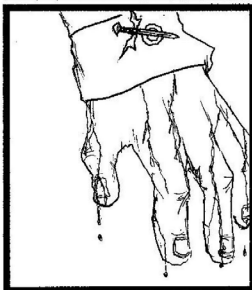
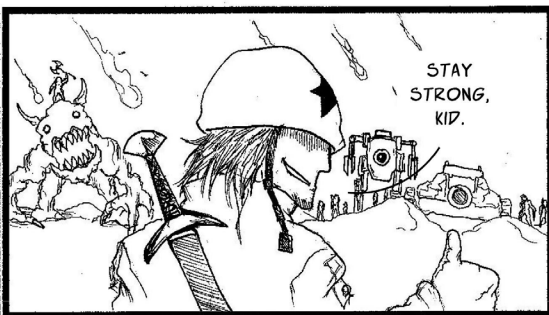
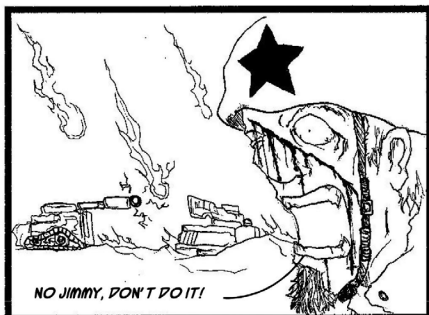












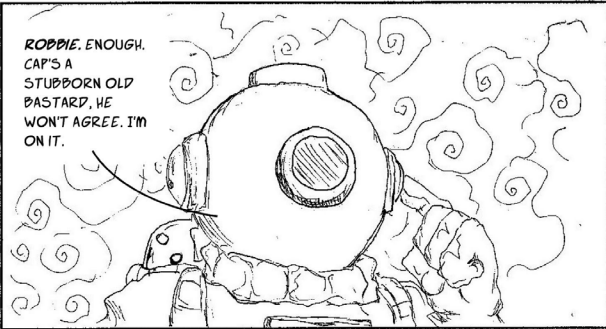
WE CANT  
ATTEMPT A  
LANDING WITH  
ROWAN  
TETHERED  
OUTSIDE, SHE'LL  
DIE. THERE HAS  
TO BE ANOTHER  
WAY, DAMMIT.



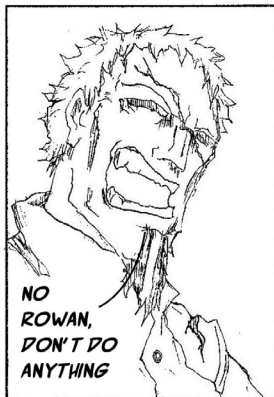
CAP, EITHER WE  
TRY TO LAND  
NOW...OR WE  
FALL OUTTA THE  
FRICKIN' SKY.



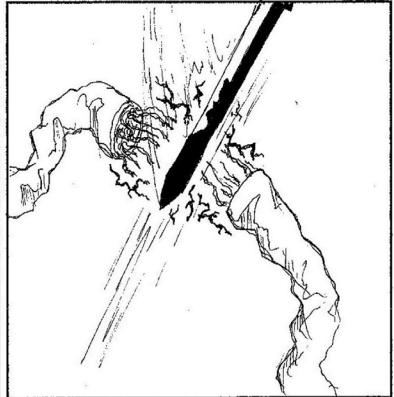
ROBBIE. ENOUGH.  
CAP'S A  
STUBBORN OLD  
BASTARD, HE  
WON'T AGREE. I'M  
ON IT.



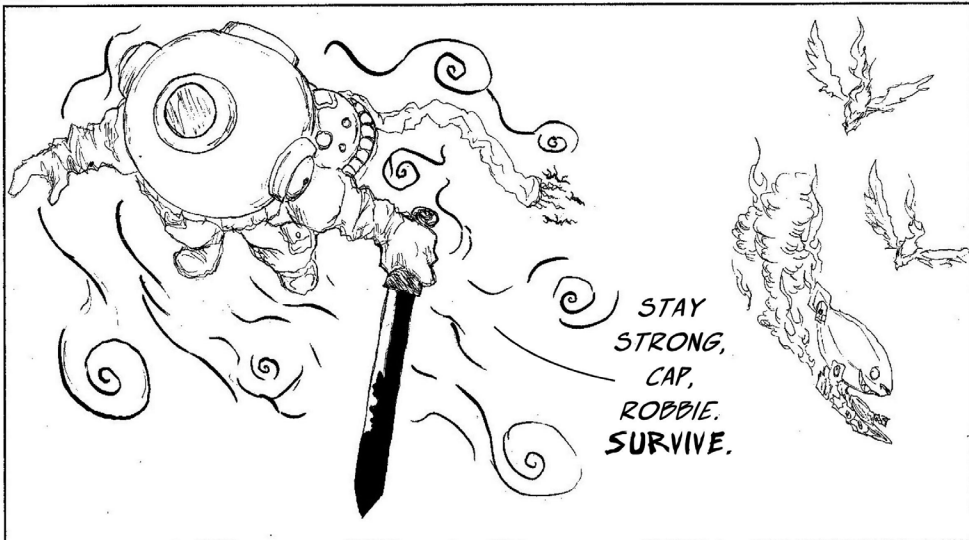
NO  
ROWAN,  
DON'T DO  
ANYTHING



SORRY CAP. I'LL  
BE TAKING MY  
VACATION EARLY.



STAY  
STRONG,  
CAP,  
ROBBIE.  
SURVIVE.



## CONTRIBUTOR

### BIOS

ANTONIA ALKSNIS is a second-year student at Victoria College. She is a philosophy major, with minors in classical civilization and political science. A visual artist as well as a writer, Antonia's work is grounded in metaphor and evocative language, but is never without a politically driven and emotional core. She has a diverse taste in poetry, but particularly enjoys classical epic as well as Shakespeare and the English Romantics.

CHRISTINA BONDI is currently a fourth-year Victoria College student. Her core university studies include Classical Civilization, Literature and Critical Theory, and Semiotics. Ancient Greek and Roman mythology is her life source. Who is the renowned blind Theban prophet? Tiresias. How did Zeus appear to Danaë, mother of Perseus? A golden shower. Which of Apollo's beloveds turns into a laurel tree? Daphne. Who killed the Chimaira? Bellerophon! Christina would also like to thank her brilliant 'mentors': Homer, Sappho, Sophocles, Virgil, and Ovid. When Christina is not reading the *Iliad*...she wishes she could go back to reading the *Iliad*.

AUDREY CHEN is lodged between the twin shades of English and History, and happens to be a melancholy poet who dreams of attaining the artistic finesse of writers like Dostoevsky and Dahl. When she's not sweeping careworn searchlights over essays and exams, she doodles historical figures, catches up on shows neglected throughout the year, and indulges in her love of music. She is both incredibly enthralled to have her poem published by *The Spectatorial*, and seriously inspired to continue her scribbles, even as eternity's lively seconds pirouette offstage.

BENSON CHEUNG is a recent graduate from the University of Toronto majoring in Political Science and History. He finds immense excitement writing about legends, lies, charlatans, and adventures that make up the sum of humanity. He has also spent much of his undergrad trying to rekindle the imagination

in younger audiences by running various high school level Model UN conferences. Otherwise, he's doing mundane things like researching and debating international politics, playing Cards Against Humanity with friends, exploring Toronto's neighborhoods, and practicing his amateur photography skills.

RACHEL EVANGELINE CHIONG owns a tank full of shrimps and one bristlenose pleco. They are all good boi's, even the female shrimps. She loves every single one of them, but accepts their inevitable death with the callousness that UofT has installed into her naivety. At first, her contribution to this issue (*Dead Fish*) had nothing to do with her sea creatures. But after sitting down to revise the story with Ben, the Fiction Editor, she has realized that *Dead Fish* is all about them and additionally a bit about herself too.

SAMUEL CULLEN is a recent graduate of Victoria College, having just completed his English Specialist degree this past spring. His primary interests are Modern and Contemporary poetry; however, he is particularly fascinated with poetic metre, and how the acoustic texture of a poem generates meaning. Having recently been exposed by Walter Benjamin's theoretical ideas, Samuel is currently working through a formal analysis of "Convolute N" in The Arcades Project, paying particular attention to the poetic schemes and tropes Benjamin utilizes to structure his perplexing and fragmentary ideas. Samuel is currently working towards his English MA at the University of Toronto.

CRISTINA DAPONTE currently studies at the University of Toronto, where she double majors in English and Book & Media Studies. An avid reader of fantasy and sci-fi, she mostly spends her time crafting imaginary people and collecting absurd amounts of notebooks. *Click* is her first published work.

ABHIMANYU "ABHI" DASGUPTA is a first year student pursuing a degree in biology in the hopes that he might one day resurrect his very own woolly mammoth (or figure out how to regenerate brain cells, maybe—always need a backup plan). Outside of academia, his favourite activity is playing the guitar, and he's always on the hunt for new music. His favourite pieces of fiction include *Harry Potter*, Tolkien's work, *Fullmetal Alchemist*, *Cowboy*

*Bebop*, and *Watchmen*, among many others. His only mortal enemies are subway closures, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, and haircuts, which he avoids at all costs.

JULIA DASILVA is a first-year student at Victoria College, and is planning on majoring in Philosophy and Literature and Critical Theory. Aside from poetry, her creative pursuits include exploring the Land of the Seven Lands (including her own native country, Barbaria), and labeling her history books “fantasy novels” in the hopes that someone might publish them. She has also had two poems printed in *Young Voices Magazine*, and when she feels obligated to return to “reality,” can be found volunteering with Greenpeace, organizing UofT’s Leap Manifesto chapter, and agonizing over political theory.

PENELOPE EVANS writes every day and works as an editor at the *UC Gargoyle*. She’s a third-year student with a specialist in Sexual Diversity Studies, and a novelist in her free time. Then in her secondary free time she writes short stories. Expect her upcoming thesis on sonic fanfiction in the 21st century.

ADAM GILES’ short fiction won the University of Toronto Magazine Short Story Contest and was long-listed for PRISM international’s Fiction Contest, the House of Anansi Broken Social Scene Story Contest, and the Penguin Random House Student Award for Fiction. His stories have been nominated for the National Magazine Awards, the Best of the Net Anthology, and have appeared in *Riddle Fence: A Journal of Arts & Culture*, *The Danforth Review*, *The Summerset Review*, and other literary journals. He lives in Mississauga, Ontario with his wife and two daughters. On the Twitter, he’s @gilesadam.

JASMINE GUI is the founder of Project 40 Collective and managing editor at *LooseLeaf* magazine. She has been featured in publications such as *Sofiblow*, *ricepaper*, *Hart House Review*, and is forthcoming with *Panorama Journal*. Her first poetry chapbook, *boke*, will be coming out with wordsonpages this fall. She exists on the interwebs as @jaziimun.

ALBERT HOANG is a third year student, majoring in Cinema Studies, Political Science, and minoring in History. He is the Editor-in-

Chief of the *UC Review*, as well as a member of the University College Literary and Athletic Society. In his free time, Albert likes eating Vietnamese food and listening to Bon Iver. His friends tell him he smiles a lot.

EMMA KELLY is a first-year English and Cinema Studies major. Her favorite YouTube video is entitled “My Pet Crab Eating Nudle.” She likes the part when the crab eats nudle.

BENJAMIN LAPPALAINEN is an Engineering Science student at the University of Toronto, as well as a professional photographer specializing in portraiture and event photography. He enjoys spending his free time collaborating on artistic and surrealistic portrait projects with friends, teaching astrophotography processing techniques for the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, and eating copious amounts of sushi. His work has been featured in several collections including Posterjack’s 2016 Golden Hour Project, the International Images for Science 2015 Catalogue/UK touring Exhibition, and exhibitions hosted in Toronto by the non-profit organization Photosensitive in 2014 & 2013.

ELLEN PARK attends Ontario College of Art and Design.

LEYLAND ROCHESTER is a second year student at Victoria College in the University of Toronto. He is majoring in English and Sociology and minoring in Book and Media Studies. Only time will tell if that is actually what his degree will say. He is an aspiring writer...or critic...or professor...or journalist... maybe he should make up his mind....

NUARD TADEVOSYAN is a double major in Art History and Classical Civilizations at the University of Toronto. Much to the distress of her loved ones, she cannot stop finding mythological undertones in virtually everything, and has frequent nightmares about being the sole dependent of a Moroccan goat. Nuard finds solace in the existence of tiny snakes, rats, and kittens. She is mostly known for her habit of stress-eating her way through pounds of chocolate-covered almonds.

## EDITOR BIOS

### *Editor-in-Chief*

LORNA ANTONIAZZI is a fourth-year student without a lot of time on her hands. She likely enjoys more than the recommended dose of literary and feminist theories (with no regrets), and particularly loves video games, concept art, and the Oxford comma. This will be Lorna's final year at the University of Toronto, where she majors in English with minor ventures into Writing and Rhetoric, Sociology, and Political Science. She is exceedingly grateful to have spent her past three years with *The Spec's* dedicated and imaginative community, and intends to return the favour as this year's Editor-In-Chief.

### *Creative Director*

ARIANA YOUNG enjoys warm weather accompanied by berries, books, and a hammock in which she can occasionally nap. She is in her fourth year of university, studying experimental Psychology. Please excuse her when she gets abnormally excited over some obscure grammar rule. She is also rather obsessed with science fiction, and is patiently waiting for the day when she will be able to teleport. Until then, she shall design away.

### *Online Editor*

MARGARYTA GOLOVCHENKO is a second-year student who has heard every joke in the book when it comes to her name. She's a poet whose work has appeared in various journals. She also edits for *Half Mystic* and *Venus Magazine*, and is the author of the chapbooks *Miso Mermaid* (words(on)pages, 2016) and *Pastries and Other Things History Has Tried to Kill Us With* (dancing girl press, 2017). She can be found sharing her (mis)adventures on twitter and speculating about her past life as a hedgehog.

### *Copy Manager*

REJ FORD is convinced that at some point there will be a catastrophic ripping of the fabric between worlds and she will fulfill her destiny as a space warlock. In the meantime, she spends much of her time explaining anime subplots to highly patient people, and the rest trying to reconcile the biological sciences with robotics—otherwise known as: how to turn her animals into sentient AIs. Her hobbies include a double major in Biology and Animal Physiology. She has succumbed to the lure of grammatical power and is continuing with *The Spectatorial* as Copy Manager.

### *Fiction Editor*

BEN BERMAN GHAN is a third-year English major with minors in Philosophy and Writing and Rhetoric at UofT St. George campus. He knows an unnerving amount of comic book trivia, and sleeps with Ray Bradbury and Kurt Vonnegut books stuffed into his pillows. Ben's first book *Wychman Road* was published in January 2016. Ben's feelings about being Fiction Editor are similar to that of a man stranded on a moon for centuries finally making contact with his own kind. He's a bit pleased.

### *Non-Fiction Editor*

VICTORIA LIAO is a cat-lady-in-training and fourth-year student majoring in English and Sexual Diversity Studies and minoring in Contemporary Asian Studies. Having grown up on a diet of feminist fantasy YA novels and rich fantastical role-playing games, she has since taken a keen interest in the representation of marginalized voices within fiction—especially in speculative works. Her poem "S.A.D." was published in the fifth volume of *The Spectatorial*. When she isn't editing for *The Spec* or reading prose for *Looseleaf Magazine*, she can be observed humming harmonies and pretending to write.

### *Graphic Fiction Editor*

STEPHAN GOSLINSKI is a second year student at UofT, and the Graphic Fiction Editor for *The Spectatorial*. He's studying Medieval studies, film, English and probably a couple

dozen other arts because he has no self control.

### **Poetry Editor**

TERESE MASON PIERRE has been writing since age eight, but did not become serious about publishing her work until the age of sixteen. Since then, she has published short stories, poems and an electronic novel. Her work has appeared in UofT's *Goose Magazine*, Ryerson's *Continuist*, and *The Claremont Review*, among others. While she is passionate about creative writing, Pierre intends to become a medical doctor, with a specialization in pediatrics or obstetrics. She is currently pursuing a degree in Bioethics, of which she is in her fourth year. She enjoys music, TV-not-on-TV, volunteering, and cats. You can visit her website at: <http://www.teresemason.webs.com>.

### **Communications Coordinator**

STEPHANIE GAO has accomplished none of the cool things everyone else on staff seems to have done and lives an unexciting life as a second-year student studying English. To make reading this not a complete waste of time (and in an attempt to seem cooler), she would like to share her love of art and mythology and penchant for second person narratives with you. She hopes she will live up to her predecessor's legacy and not make too many grammatical errors along the way.

### **Editorial Board**

JULIA BARTEL is a second-year English student at the University of Toronto. As a child, she wrote stories about guide dogs lost in Central Park and mistreated dogs that ran away from home. Luckily, the trend of dog protagonists has not continued on in her writing today, though creative writing is still her favorite pastime. The rest of her time is spent getting lost in the stationery section of Indigo. Her love affair with speculative fiction began when she devoured *Eragon* at age twelve, and she can't wait to put that love to work on the Editorial Board.

MOLLY CONG is a conflicted second-year student (currently) planning on studying Ethics, Society and Law, Psychology and Literature and Critical Theory. Her current plans for

the future involve being trapped in student-hood forever. She enjoys long walks on the beach and warm hugs—all with a good book and a fair share of clichés, of course. You can find her on campus walking to nowhere in particular at the speed of light and looking unfortunately aloof and lost (it's her facial features, she swears). This year she will continue to edit and write for *The Spectatorial*!

ELEANOR CROOK is a fourth-year student at the University of Toronto, with a major in Psychology and minors in English and Plant Stuff. She accepts the labels of 'socially-awkward bookworm' and 'RPG nerd' and spends a lot of time squinting at Word documents, carefully adjusting her adjectives. She is currently both in the process of writing a novel and resisting the urge to set it on fire. In the meantime she writes short stories, plays tabletop games, and volunteers to pet cats. She is thrilled to be a part of *The Spectatorial* this year!

LAWRENCE STEWEN is in his second year at the University of Toronto with plans to pursue a double major in English and Books and Media Studies. In his spare time he enjoys indulging in pulp-era sci-fi and fantasy stories, playing and designing tabletop role-playing games, and learning as much as possible about the elusive subgenre known as the Weird. Lawrence is grateful to be part of the Editorial Board, and is excited to be a part of *The Spectatorial*.

### **First-Year Editorial Board**

KELLY BILENKIS is a first-year English and Book and Media Studies major with aspirations in fixing all the world's typos. In her spare time, she stares blankly into space in an effort to sleep with her eyes open. She firmly believes that sleep is the one supreme good in the world. Sleep and good writing.

GIORDANO LABRECQUE is a first-year student planning to major in Criminology and move on to study law, although he is very loosely committed to this. His greatest achievement is probably unlocking all the achievements in Halo ODST, or maybe being the only person he knows who has slept for 36 hours straight. His passion for creative writing

was jumpstarted by his love for the *Percy Jackson* series, which inspired him to write a short story in fifth grade about an albino dinosaur terrorizing vacation-goers on an island. Yes, twelve-year-old Giordano wrote the original *Jurassic World*. Yes, he is suing Universal Pictures (no he isn't).

KATIE SCHMIDT is a first-year student who has accidentally wandered out of the magical forest and onto the U of T campus. She has happily found *The Spectatorial* and plans to stay there for a nice long time (or until she figures out how to get back to the forest). When she's not second-guessing the placement of every comma, she's likely drawing on unconventional surfaces, reading under trees, and trying not to offend people too much with her sarcasm. Katie plans to double major in English and Book and Media Studies and is looking forward to her eyesight deteriorating from all the reading.

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We are always looking for students to participate in the publication process of *The Spectatorial*! We strongly encourage interest from prospective blog writers, designers, illustrators, copy editors, and print issue writers. And every time you participate with us, you earn one contributors' point!

Contributors' points are how we keep track of how many times someone has contributed to *The Spectatorial*. They can be collected in many ways. Any instance of copy editing, designing, blogging, illustrating, or submitting is considered a point; you can help market us through posterings; and, finally, you can attend our contributors' meetings, which occur once or twice per semester. Once you have two points you can apply to be on staff for the following year.

**WEBSITE:** [www.thespectatorial.wordpress.com](http://www.thespectatorial.wordpress.com)

**TWITTER:** @TheSpectatorial

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/TheSpectatorial](http://www.facebook.com/TheSpectatorial)

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