

The Oakland Review

Volume XLVII

Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA

2022

The Oakland Review
Volume XLVII

The Oakland Review was established in 1969 as Carnegie Mellon's literary arts journal. Edited by students, and published in the spring, it serves as a collection of high quality literature and art. Submissions are evaluated anonymously.

For back issue listings, subscriptions and submissions, please contact:

Editor
The Oakland Review
University Center, Box #7
5000 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15232

Find out more at oaklandreview.com

Inquiries may also be sent to oakland.review@gmail.com

Copyright © 2022 by The Oakland Review

The Oakland Review reserves the right to reproduce the works published in these pages in special issues and anthologies. All other rights revert back to authors upon publication.

The Oakland Review is funded in part by the Carnegie Mellon student activities fee. The opinions expressed in or by The Oakland Review are not necessarily the views of Carnegie Mellon University.

Cover art by K.G. Ricci — "No. 482"

Cover design by Jennifer Bortner, Ellis Jones, and Ashni Mathuria

Book design by Jennifer Bortner

Oakland Review Staff

Co-Editors-in-Chief

Leila Berger
Matilda McDougall

Poetry Editors

Ashni Mathuria
Cameron Monteith

Prose Editors

Leila Berger
Matilda McDougall

Editorial Board

Jennifer Bortner
Dylan Rossi

Faculty Advisor

Lauren Shapiro

From the Editors,

Dear Readers,

After two years of virtual meetings, *The Oakland Review* editorial board was finally able to build the magazine together (in the same room). Our Spring 2022 issue received the most submissions we have ever seen and we had the pleasure of viewing hundreds of poems, prose pieces, and art submissions.

The Oakland Review is a journal defined by the community of dedicated readers that made this issue possible. Every meeting, we had the privilege of discussing and celebrating art from across the world. We've laughed, we've screamed, and we've spent hours agonizing over a single line. Every year we get to see the incredible variety of pieces that show what's possible when artists commit themselves to their craft.

Art can never exist in a vacuum. Every issue of *The Oakland Review* is a conversation and exhibition of what we loved reading. This magazine is as much made of what gets printed in the final copy as it is made of all the moments we spent pouring over every piece. We would like to thank every contributor who sent us their work.

The Oakland Review would not be possible without the guidance of our advisor Lauren Shapiro. We would also like to thank Jane McCafferty for her generosity and support of this magazine and our editorial board. To every reader we had, whether they came for one meeting or all of them, we would have no magazine without you.

For the past four years, *The Oakland Review* has been a part of every semester. The friends I have made through this journal (including my co-Editor-in-chief Matilda, who sits beside me as

I write this, editing my grammar mistakes) have shown me the greatest joy is when a group of passionate people get together to talk about everything they love and why they love it. We hope you get a sense of the community we have built in a dusty room in Pittsburgh as you read this magazine.

Sincerely,

Leila Berger & Matilda McDougall
Co-Editors-in-Chief

Contents

pastoral <i>Emily Murman</i>	8
Late Bloomer <i>Rebecca Alifimoff</i>	10
Flâm Shower <i>Olivia J. Kiers</i>	11
A Sort of Heartache Over a Bowl of Cereal <i>Jamie Rabideau</i>	12
antipode <i>Jaden Bleier</i>	13
My Pink Tongued Liberation <i>Abigail Campbell</i>	15
Rocking Horse <i>Steven Van Pelt</i>	16
“I Feel Good About Myself,” or A litany for the Absurdity of Trying <i>Derik Roof</i>	17
My Oldest <i>Ann Hudson</i>	19
A Routine Procedure <i>Marc Meierkort</i>	20
In the Spring, the Dog and I Share Mangoes. <i>Evelyn Olmos</i>	21
Memoirs of a Privileged, White Humanist <i>Derik Roof</i>	23
Know-how <i>Max Heinegg</i>	30
An Ordinary Evening in New Haven <i>David Capps</i>	31
Love Story at The Prytania <i>Soleil Garneau</i>	32
Bent Glose for Leaving <i>Soleil Garneau</i>	33
Come and Go <i>Oskar Peacock</i>	36
Omaha <i>Andrew Petrucci</i>	37
Elegy on Each Cell Lost in His Stem Cell Transplant <i>Sara Dudo</i>	39
Birth Day <i>Lindsey Clark</i>	40
Philosopher’s Stone <i>Ernst Perdriel</i>	42
Sunday Kind of Love <i>G.J. Gillespie</i>	43
Virga <i>Mark Rosalbo</i>	44
Art Appreciation <i>Michael Waterson</i>	46
Eat <i>Andréa Ferrell Gannon</i>	60
You, Me, Dim Sum this Saturday is What I Will Say to Harry Styles When We Finally Meet <i>Stephanie Choi</i>	62
Now that I’m forty <i>Liz Holland</i>	63

Emily Murman

pastoral

those evenings when only our screens
lit up our rooms. I wanted you w/ me.

glowing slightly I grinned
at you & you grinned back.

the dissonance was overwhelming:
inside jokes, yoked memories, photos.

a meeting that began somewhere in
another suburb, in another decade.

it went on like this for weeks.
I made room for you on sundays.

printing out poems to recite, I devoted sheaves
of them to not-so-hidden meanings. for example,

if I read you "o mistress mine" I meant
time will have its way w/ us. forgive me.

I have spent all spring thinking,
I mean daydreaming.

I know when the time comes
I'll stand up, smooth my skirt,

march past the driveway,
floral, floating, laurel green,

past the dead patches of grass
& all those pesky gall gnats.

I'll come back to you. I'll come back
like I'm caught in a sheep-crook.

Rebecca Alifimoff

Late Bloomer

I love men and by this I mean I want to kiss the girls
they kiss. It took me so long to realize this
I'm embarrassed. I've always just thought everyone wants
to put everything in their mouth. We were stealing from Wawa
when you said—*that's called an oral fixation*.
I mean you were stealing while I was leaving change
on the countertops. You've always been so cool, baby.
I'm too old to learn something new. I think
if I had left you for dead one night you would have liked me more
or at least there would have been a kind of posthumous respect.
Call me dependable. I'll kill anyone for you to like me more. It's
embarrassing
to realize things at this big age. I missed the big reveal
while kissing boys in the bathroom. I didn't realize
this was for someone like me. By that I don't mean *religious* and
from Indiana but just *kind of boring*.

Olivia J. Kiers

Flâm Shower

From your elbow, a thin rivulet
drops down sheer
and midway, is lost in steam.
You are reminded
of cascades.
Honed by rock. Mist,
tympanum of the valley,
absorbs and releases
a glacier's delicate boom.
The sky cradles
baby blue
past sunset.
A primrose
offers itself to a bee.
Impulsive,
you forego sleep.

Jamie Rabideau

A Sort of Heartache Over a Bowl of Cereal

This morning, I glimpse my old cat stretching older
In the November snow, but bright in her bed of leaves
Behind my shadow house. Her heart does not ache,
She does not miss us out there.
Her cat mind is content. The wild whispers to her.
Sun rises over wrinkled leaves and caterpillar trails.
She shakes the stiffness from hind legs,
Sheds dreams with bird songs,
Stalks the unlucky insect, warm and unknowing
Against the gray and stealth, camouflage and intellect
Of Autumn, the cat. Flurries touch her worn fur, soft heart.
Bowl of cereal cradled round in my palm. I stretch older, too.
November snow will melt, and she will be gone.

Jaden Bleier

antipode

attempt one

i got back from underwater a few minutes ago,
where the rift valley lives in the breakup of the indian ocean,
and now there's mud under the fingernails i should've cut last night,
i put a sweater on instead of going outside into the storm because
i was worried about exposure, so i stayed indoors and unpacked a shoebox,
but now with noon breezing into crickets, there's death piling up on the grass.

attempt two

should've done this yesterday

but the rain was cold and i didn't want to catch it

being underwater with the whales seals and seagrass

where the icebergs

stop moving north

mud still under my fingernails

crickets at noon and overhead planes

once lost still missing in my search corner of the ocean

neighbors busy about the yard

and my self-conscious self sitting on the grass
staring at the brightness away from the sun
into the tropical waters' diurnal tides
watching seasonal death
gather with the breeze
on the surface and beneath
the depths of the world.

Abigail Campbell

My Pink Tongued Liberation

is a cold December night situated
between him and me: his black fleece

sweater zipped to his chin, his hood stuck
down to his forehead. He's holding a joint
in his left hand, between his first and third

finger; his eyes test me with a glance to the baby
blue lighter in my hand, as me if I'm
going to give it up – like I've got something

to gift him (my body, his body, his cheeks
like pillows). How large he was, shaking
his tail next to mine. I know his ceiling

was white, walls grey, his television
reflections flickered above the dark stairwell.
I could see them if I craned my neck from

my home on the couch, his subtle hands crafting
a map of my legs. The color of memory is
deep violet when bright morning strikes, an hour

of lightning; its bluntness nonsensical
with forgetful foreground eating my
periphery. I empty myself in the

bedroom, forgive myself with the shower
head — my blemishes shimmering in
exposing dawn.

Steven Van Pelt

Rocking Horse

Child, your words climb
to his waiting ears

as your feet surprise
the broken grass.

You shout the perfect sun
and birds freshly born.

Dunking in the breeze,
you return butterflies

to the punctured moon.
Come, lead him

to the fields. There
white horses of evening

run their terminal race.
And time rocks,

the unmoving chase
of an eternal rhyme.

Derik Roof

“I Feel Good About Myself,” or A litany for the Absurdity of Trying

I drew a dead man with crayons
I sit here and I drink my beer
I type prisoner’s poetry and I think
I feel good about myself

I drew a dead man that I knew, he was homeless,
 In blue, in green, in make-his-memory-bright orange and red
I scratched the wax into garbage-wood because
“I’m making garbage pretty” right?

I heard they found him, his body, on the street
 Insofar as a life on the street goes, why not?
I was still surprised

I just finished my beer and
I want another

I’ll go to prison for poetry
(I said that like a man with convictions)
I’ll sign in and pretend the sally port
 Is an airlock and
 I’m going into outer space just like

I’m a dinosaur or
I’m a tortoise when
I eat raw spinach
I’m a child and
I feel good about myself

I'll go to prison to "teach"
(I'll talk to men about life and
I'll debate the best way to write it down)
I'll wonder at the blue-on-blue
 Institution-beauty of buildings blending into blank desert skies until
 I realize the effect is just to make the orange pop
I'll wonder why there aren't dorms for men
 I know who are dying in the street—dead on my wall
 In blue and orange Crayola
I'll wonder at our lust to pay to punish
I'll pay to prevent
I'm a dinosaur or a tortoise when
I pay my taxes
I have theoretical nostril balloons in artist's renditions
I'm a triceratops
I'll pretend
I think
I feel good about myself
I need another beer.

Ann Hudson

My Oldest

is how I often refer to them now,
between names, between the name
we named her and the name they
chose but won't yet let us call them
aloud. *My oldest*, because *my kid*
sounds younger than I mean,
and somehow flippant, and *my child*
sounds too precious, and *my*
non-binary child is just way too much
to say over and over when telling
a story about them, and so *my*
oldest is the thing I can say, pointing
to one of the only immutable things
about them, that they were born first,
breaking through me just after midnight
on a clear July night, the moon
nearly full and balanced in the top
pane of glass in the hospital window.
Nothing has been the same since.

Marc Meierkort

A Routine Procedure

Bob's nine when he dies. It's a routine procedure.
A simple tonsillectomy. A murmur undiagnosed.

It's a routine procedure. Small cells undetected.
A murmur undiagnosed. This is 1942.

Small cells undetected. Doctors don't have a clue.
This is 1942. The world is at war.

Doctors don't have a clue. Uncle Bob never knew.
The world is at war. He dies on a table.

Uncle Bob never knows he's the older brother.
He dies on a table. We don't have a Bible.

He's the older brother not meant to *suffocate*.
We don't have a Bible. A gap in the family tree.

Not meant to *suffocate*. A simple tonsillectomy.
A gap in the family tree when Bob dies at nine.

Robert Meierkort (1933-1942)

Evelyn Olmos

In the Spring, the Dog and I Share Mangoes.

I get them 2 for \$1 at Sprouts. I buy so many we only get through half of them before they go bad. The house smells of fruit past its prime. The dog rests her chin on a couch cushion, she looks up while I shrug and take out the trash. I leave her at home and drive to the store. This time I only get 4 mangoes. This time we finish them all in one day.

In the summer, the dog and I share French fries. I am too hungover to take the dog on a walk, so I let her lick my face in between naps. When I have the strength to get up and shower at 6pm, the dog follows me into the bathroom, lays patiently on the rug. I shut off the water, towel dry my body from the knees up, stomp over the tub and let the dog lick the water dripping down my calves. Her tail wagging into the bathroom door. I wonder if it hurts her. All this uncontrollable happiness.

In the fall, the dog and I share apples. We prefer Fuji or Pink Ladies. We avoid Gala. It reminds us too much of the man we once loved. The man we don't live with anymore. Sometimes the dog growls when children crush the leaves outside our bedroom window. Sometimes I get so stoned I cry in bed. The dog stares and I wonder if she feels sorry for me. I turn off all the lights. We sleep back-to-back through the night.

In the winter, the dog and I share huevito con jamón. She gently asks me for some by nudging me with her wet nose. Doesn't know I'm making enough for the two of us. She hates it when I

give it to her on the stainless-steel bowl, but the ceramic one is dirty. She's afraid of her muddled reflection at the bottom of the bowl. These days I think about death. Not any more than usual. Just the right amount.

Derik Roof

Memoirs of a Privileged, White Humanist

I'm reconsidering myself this morning—who I am and what it means.

I'm at work, hungover, going through the motions—wipe an old man's ass, feed him lunch, take him out of one chair, set him in another—with my head so fogged from lack of sleep, so raddled from fading booze, yet so keenly obsessed, so redundant with anxieties: *that poor woman. I put her out on the street. She's not my responsibility though. Why is she my burden? Because I took her in; I helped her and then decided I didn't want to help her anymore? I'm free to change my mind. I wonder if she made it to the homeless shelter.*

The old man points hard at the television, jabs at it with his good hand, and says, “oooh, oooh, oooh.” That's about all he's been able to say since the stroke. This time, I can tell by his hand gesture, and the urgency in his eyes, he means: *get my goddamn program on right now, or, so help me, I'll...*

“I got it, man. One thing at a time. Price is Right isn't on for another five minutes and I need to get you situated.” I pull him back in the recliner with the chuck under his butt—slide him so his stiff anatomy will correspond with the chair the way a body is meant to—and place positioning pillows under his effected side. I click on channel five and turn up the volume. I put the remote in his good hand and he looks satisfied. He'll watch for about fifteen minutes until he's out for his first nap.

I sit down with a coffee and try to clear my head—enjoy a bit of down time before moving laundry and then moving the old

man. He lives with his daughter, and this house is like a cabin/mansion hybrid. The back wall of the living room is about thirty feet of window opened up on piney hills beyond a golf course. Make the view a landscape painting and it's a perfect representation of Flagstaff titled "Well Maintained Wilderness." *Right? It's Flagstaff, but it's summer and it's beautiful. Why do I care that she's out on the streets? What's she suffering? Nice weather?*

*

I met Nomi at about 10:30 last night, walking south on Beaver Street—already south of the tracks. I had met a friend that afternoon for a beer. He's in town for work, staying in a cheap motel, drinking and eating with his saved per diem. So, afternoon beer turned into evening beer turned into beer with dinner and beer at every bar we walked passed in downtown Flag. We parted ways on Butler—he headed east for his motel and I continued south to cut through the university campus. As I crossed Butler I heard a voice call to me. A young woman was walking toward me. She had on a loose dress that looked like gypsies could have made it out of scraps of lace and thick twine—the lace bunched about the string in billowy frills. She had short, black, greasy hair and she drew the bangs to a peak between her eyes. "Can you point me to the homeless shelter?" She said.

"Yeah, just continue the way you're headed and take a left on San Francisco. It'll be a couple blocks down on your right—can't miss it."

I must have walked on for maybe two minutes, hazily, drunkenly, confounded by the curiosity of her, before I turned and ran to get her. Two minutes of walking in opposite directions can put a surprising amount of space between two

people. I was hard for breath when I caught her, but I tried my best to speak clearly: "Couldn't imagine you staying in that place... I've got an apartment to myself... plenty of room."

She accepted surprisingly readily given that the invitation came from a complete stranger, but I guess just one stranger would be a relief considering her options.

As we walked the mile and a half to my place, just south and east of campus, she told me she had been traveling Greyhound, trying to get to Phoenix to see her wife and child, but Flagstaff was as far as she could get for now. I asked about her family and she said they had been apart for some time. She asked if I was married. I said I was, but my wife's a biologist and she's gone—studying nudibranchs in tide pools in Panama.

"What's a nudibranch?"

"I barely even know myself. They're like a sea slug, but they have ornate frills waving off of them colorfully."

"Sounds beautiful. When is she coming back?"

I didn't have any reason to lie to her. "She's not coming back this time."

"I'm sorry."

"No, don't be. It's a good thing, trust me."

My bit of sharing seemed to open up a flood of information in her. By the time we got to my apartment I felt like I must know everything about her, but new, strange things kept coming up. She mentioned that her wife had a husband. I questioned her

and she told me that her religion considers her mother to be her wife because her mother is raising her child. She's never had custody of her daughter and hasn't seen her for much of her childhood. "But I've continued lactating ritualistically as long as we've been apart. It's important to maintain a sense of the mother-to-child bond." This is another influence of her religion.

"What's this religion?" I asked.

"I'm a member of a covenant that worships goddesses—mostly ancient Egyptian, but there are living goddesses too. We also practice Blood rituals."

We sat at my kitchen table and I thought I should maybe be concerned at this point, but I just opened another beer and continued on.

"Blood rituals?"

"I can show you. I do it every day. It revitalizes my energy. When I'm not with my covenant I can use my own blood." She took out a pin and drew a small bead from her fingertip and rubbed it on her gums. "When the blood enters the mouth it satisfies primal urges in the soul."

It was harmless. She was harmless and strange and honest and, even though I thought her beliefs were bullshit, I was open and excited to learn about her.

I offered her a beer, but she declined. "Anything else? I have whiskey, water; you want something to eat?" I brought her a peanut butter sandwich and a whiskey, neat, in a shot glass. She ate and sipped and told me about her artwork. "I mostly just sketch because I travel so much and can't carry supplies." She had a small bag with some folded sketches of nude women—

goddesses—that looked like monsters or superheroes.

We moved into my room so she could pull up old footage of living goddesses on my computer. They were all belly dancers in lace attire that must have been the inspiration for Nomi's dress.

"I need to lactate. I couldn't do it on the bus. Do you want to see?" She took out one of her breasts and began to massage the nipple. A thick, off-white milk trickled out into her empty shot glass. "Do you want to taste it? Breast milk has many healing properties." It was rich and sweet and fatty, but not surprising. I don't think anything could have been surprising at that point.

I needed to sleep, so I told her she could either take the couch or the other side of my king bed. She showered and joined me under the covers where we continued talking until morning came. I was going to paint her nude; she was going to draw me. She thought she could help me keep my messy place clean. She'd stay and earn her keep. I fell asleep facing her, heads on our pillows, a few feet between us in my oversized bed.

I slept for a couple of hours and woke to Nomi already up and moving.

*

"Oooh, oooh, oooh." The old man is dropping the remote and pulling at his pillows. This vocalization now means: *goddamnit I have to piss and it's already too late.*

In the bathroom I tear the bloated disposable brief at the seams and drop it in in the garbage. I clean his undercarriage thoroughly with wet wipes and reapply a barrier cream, but he seems to have forgotten the accident and he's pretty upset

that I'm touching him in uncomfortable places. I have to do it though. I have to do certain undesirable things for the benefit of his health—for greater good. *I had to turn her away right? I didn't want to abandon her, but how can I leave a stranger alone in my home?*

Old man back in his chair, I'm on the sofa thinking now of the Native I met a few months back in the bar—what he said to me. “Take this from a Hopi Indian who is at the center of the world. I'm here to remind you that you are at the center of the world too, and you are part of everything.”

*

The Hopi gave me a gaudy silver ring when he said it. I refused, but he insisted over and over, “so you will remember.” He was drunk out of his mind—already cutoff by the bartender. He tried to get me to buy a beer for him, but the bartender was wise and she threatened to cut me off too. He covered a song by The Doors as a Hopi chant—pounding the beat on the bar. When I told him I liked it he did the whole song over again. “I am at the center of the world and I am part of everything.” *We're all connected right?* I thought as the modern rhythm of a people's heartbeat vibrated visibly in my glass of beer.

When it was time for me to head out he asked me if I had a place for him to stay—said it was cold out. I told him, “sorry, man, I don't.” I told him I was staying with friends and I didn't have a place of my own to offer. He asked for his ring back and I handed it right over.

*

So I'm reconsidering myself today.

My concept of dignity, humanity—Am I the humanist I've called myself. I help those in need. I'm open minded and accepting and willing in the experience of life. Is my outlook congruent with my reality? Do I act on my beliefs? In an ideal world I'd answer yes, but in an ideal world I wouldn't have to ask the question.

I'm almost off. The old man's daughter will get home soon and she'll take over for the evening, until the overnight shift. I'll go home and sleep all afternoon.

I need to take him to the restroom one more time, but he doesn't think he needs to go. “Come on, man, don't give me a hard time. Keeping a schedule is the best way to avoid accidents like earlier. You don't want to go through that again.” He kicks my shin and slaps my hand away when I reach to lift him out of his chair. His daughter walks through the front door and intervenes. “Come on, Dad, it's time to go.” But the old man's not going to budge this time. She tells me I can head out. She'll try again in a few minutes.

I motorcycle home—only six miles on I-40. *Maybe if I cut through town I'll see Nomi. Maybe I can do more to help her.* I ride straight home.

I turn off the bike and I can feel my pocket vibrate—a message from the old man's daughter. “Dad's on the floor. He's not hurt, but he slid out of the chair when I tried to lift him for the bathroom. He's like dead weight down there and I can't lift him up by myself.”

Six miles back on the 40.

“I tried everything I could think of to pick him up. Dad's been laughing at me. Maybe if you get his arms and I get his legs?”

“Let me try real quick.” I stand over his waist and hook my arms under his shoulders—scoop him right up and set him in his chair. His daughter is all smiles and appreciation, and the grumpy old man's even giving me a smile.

Max Heinegg

Know-how

At camp, a counselor said
tongue the alphabet.
Others, having seen the VHS, said flicker
like a snake. One cocksure
said, eagerness is near enough,
no one's that bad
of a singer in the shower. But
a woman was with us, a friend
from the island, & she said,
if you would know, your captain wants a steady oar
not a mate who steers her ship, & if you can't row the way she
wants you to, understand,
she'll drop you on the shore,
& get there on her own.

David Capps

An Ordinary Evening in New Haven

The tropical trees on my shirt, stars under the streetlight to someone on heroin,
roll like Venus off a tongue nebulously drunk, prompting a personal connection,
a piece of night speech as I'm yelled through someone's car window, someone
parked on a side street waiting to tell me all about falling stars, or really anyone.

But the stars cannot be given eloquence, any studied speech this time of night.
When against the spruce-dark sky their city seems to throb, to burn dull lights
in muted tones, like embers strung on the massive Christmas spruce tree dying
in the middle of the green, then all you hear is the distant stifled guttural crying.

But yeah Yale.

Soleil Garneau

Love Story at The Prytania

after Yusef Komunyakaa

We made love in an empty theater and left it there.
But our drunkenness followed us around for days.

There was a time we'd never say no. When I loved you
like I loved the night.

Remember the worn carpet and how limp, I melted
into the floor. Your arms were long and heavy as a live oak.

Each breath felt like a year.

We left the theater, tripped over cracks in the pavement,
listened to the train, clacking in its steel and rust. Remember

walking the levee, how those nights stuck to the skin
like a whole season of sweat,

like something we didn't want to wash away—when the air
was syrup thick, swamp thick, we smoked a million cigarettes.

Time slowed. I wore my drunkenness like bewitchment and
my bewitchment like a sheath.

I grinned. I disappeared.

Soleil Garneau

Bent Glose for Leaving

some day

some day sometime

I will leave without staying

I will leave like one taking leave

- Alejandra Pizarnik

Heavy

with hair

splayed out like a web,

like ten thousand jellyfish

floating.

I whisper tomorrow in bubbles

I eucalyptus soak

I whisper milky water please

loosen me.

I sing

wet

flight paths,

I slide seat back,

eyes closed,

I sing

some day.

I sing tree frogs

bubbling pond

back porch

throat song.
It's storming.
I puddle
slumber
and stay.
I choke
sometime
some day.

I jump out of my skin,
and drunk, I cross my eyes
when I watch you speak,
so I don't feel you
steadying me.
But what night becoming morning.
But the quiet.
But your arm
around me.
But the low clouds cotton ceiling
wisp quick flying.
Remember those clouds?
I remember your hair tied up tight
curls and skinclose and sweat
I wanted the cloud ceiling moving
fast as it was
like I wanted to slow
those hours.
I will leave without staying.

I will hold time.
Squeeze it like a halved
orange.
Tongue the juice.
I cackle overgrowth, elephant ear and
friends laughing.
A quick downpour
and morning shakes.
I squeeze today
like yesterday
like the day before
and the day before
and the day before.
But today
I will leave
like one
taking leave.

Oskar Peacock

Come and Go

I'm not trying to get
anywhere fast
– not trying to get

a lukewarm fried catfish to go.
Friends will pass through
the cities I live in.

Only ever without
me. Me – one leg oozing
in front of the other –

just picking away
at these ancestral cities. All these
carefully grown lichen –

beautiful formations
of formalized bacteria
under all but one

of my finger nails.
and finally, my own
odorless scum –

is finally, finally coming
and going. I could be
a good friend
if you'd let me.

Andrew Petrucci

Omaha

Normandy, not the siege but the beach. Omaha, at low tide,
seashells melting into sand, small footprints
imprinted like residual deposits
of calcified memory.

My wife, pregnant again, prefers coconut milk in the mornings.
She swears it staves off swelling. My daughter, stranded
in placenta, soon-to-be sea-born,

knows nothing about sword, gold, or amphibian
landings. She will arrive someday soon –
no shingle, no wall,
no cover.

She will cry, not on the inside, grin at the slightest
turn of the tide. I will show her Omaha on a map –

not the beach,
but the city.

We will walk through purple poppy mallow
and share Butter Brickle ice cream
one lick at a time.

Eventually I will succumb to her smile and admit
that, yes, you were born in a storm,
in Omaha,

not the city,
but the beach,

not this place, but the memory of a place where women
still wear pink hair curlers and, no:
no one ever dies alone.

Sara Dudo

Elegy on Each Cell Lost in His Stem Cell Transplant

a body is a body is a body is a body is only
a body a body is not revengeful a body is not
petty a body does not care for its flesh a body is
breaking anyways is a body giving up on itself
is a body of internal sunburn of cells gleaming,
cells folding like spring daffodils a body lies and
lies and lies a body lies and gets up, a body is
made new completely new a clean body is away
from mine away from mine away from mine
a way for mine to heave water from each crater
a clean body is I don't know this body this body
is a stranger with a ring, clean scalp with my name
a body is back a body is back finally finally
doesn't know itself finally never comes a body
is back from the grave, a body is trying again
a body is breaking back into life into baggy jeans
into milky ways breaking back is not back is not
ever back all the way, a body is $\frac{3}{4}$ itself a body is
not an iceberg a body is new is untouched is clean
say clean over and over and over clean is tin
striking against a palm, a needle pounding anti-
septic tile floor a body clean a body clean of my
hands my tongue the lines of my life of me and me
and me and me from Montana '19 and acoustic
Applebee's a body forgets what the mind keeps
a body is a bison walking straight into the storm
it has created a body tastes like self-sabotage I want to
taste if it tastes any different a body is ravenous
to live only a body is mine but a body is not mine.

Lindsey Clark

Birth Day

He once worked with a homesteader on the Tozitna
who woke one night to his dogs barking.
A black bear had broken into the cabin
so the man shot it and went back to sleep.
In the morning when he woke and went to make coffee,
the man tripped over the dead bear,
having forgotten the visitor in the night.

As he tells this story,
a rough-legged hawk speeds low over the tundra.
Geese squawk on the frigid, just-melted water
of a pond alongside the Dalton.
He tries to record the song of the first sandpiper he has seen this spring,
but the whine of an eighteen-wheeler bound for the gravel pits
at Innuvait sullies the silence on the North Slope.

This highway is an emotional roller coaster, I tell him.
The landscape! And the pipeline.
Sometimes when I turn my head from some stunning vista and spot
the enormous tube on stilts, gleaming silver snaking south,
my breath catches: its strangeness approximates beauty.
Then I remember: it is a scourge upon the environment.
And then I remember: if not for that scourge, I would not be here.

I am part of the scourge. I am unbelonging.
Muskox rest plopped like black, lumpy rocks on a bluff.
Standing near a rare patch of low shrubs, we hear the call of a shrike;
back in the truck, I play him Hozier's song of that name.

He traces its lineage back to Talk Talk, tells me to listen to *Spirit of Eden*.
Later I do and think: it sounds like Pink Floyd and Kate Bush
had a love child who grew up to be on the spectrum.

He does not know it is my forty-fourth birthday.
I fly under the radar as a short-eared owl skims the tussocks.
Somewhere nearby, I imagine, wolverine kits' new eyes catch the sun.
Everything here is novel to me, too, and that is a gift.
Ahead of us on the road, motion within a dust cloud:
A caribou gallops toward our vehicle, tongue lolling, as if being chased.
He pulls over and it passes by without slowing or looking back.

We wait for the pack of wolves that must be in pursuit—
or perhaps a bear, grizzled and hungry from hibernating?
But the road ahead is empty.
Can ungulates, too, be chased by their own demons?
The life of any being creates more questions than answers.
He has driven this road hundreds of times, but turns to me, baffled.
I remember, gratefully, the surprises in what we see, and what we cannot see.

Ernst Perdriel

Philosopher's Stone



G.J. Gillespie

Sunday Kind of Love



Figure 1 Sunday Kind of Love.

Mark Rosalbo

Virga



Michael Waterson

Art Appreciation

CHARACTERS

VERONICA KUNSTLER: Art gallery owner, 30s or 40s.

CASEY FISCHER: Female or male art broker. Middle-aged.
Business attire.

KIRAN HARTMANN: Female or male. A twenty-something.
CASEY's intern.

SCENE:

An art gallery, possibly created by the expressionistic use of lighting. When the characters examine a work of art, we see the work as a "reflection" through the character's lighting and facial expressions.

TIME:

The present.

SYNOPSIS

Noted art broker, Casey Fischer, along with her (or his) protégé, Kiran Hartman visit Veronica Kunstler's gallery. While there Casey discovers a copy of a lost Van Gogh painting that she finds intriguing, to Kiran's puzzlement. Casey offers to buy the work, but Veronica is reluctant to sell, claiming sentimental value. Besides, she has another interested potential buyer. Casey wins the bidding while giving Kiran a lesson in buying and selling art.

At rise CASEY and KIRAN at opposite ends of the stage facing out to the audience, examining (unseen) paintings. Each of them moves, one work to another, toward center stage. As they examine a new painting the lighting on each remains cool, bluish-green. They reach center stage, still examining works apparently suspended over the audience.

KIRAN

Is this an art gallery or a garage sale?

CASEY

Hard to imagine she's making money.

KIRAN

There seems to be a lot of work from one artist: "V. Kunstler."

CASEY

Yes. Quite the Van Gogh copycat.

(CASEY crosses to a place KIRAN had just be standing. Light on her changes to warm color.)

This one's kind of interesting, though.

(VERONICA enters)

VERONICA

Hello. I'm Veronica Kunstler, the owner. You must be Ms. Fischer.

CASEY

Please call me Casey. This is my associate, Kiran. I must say, Ms. Kunstler, you do have an impressive collection. Some lovely works.

VERONICA

Thanks. It's Veronica. I'm very honored to have a broker of your reputation visit us here.

(CASEY goes back to studying the "warm" painting.)

KIRAN

We noticed a lot of the paintings are signed "V. Kunstler." Are those works yours?

VERONICA

My grandfather's. His name was Vincente. He's deceased.

KIRAN

I'm sorry.

VERONICA

Thank you, but he's been gone quite a while. Surrounded by his paintings though, I feel he's still with me.

KIRAN

He was quite a fan of Van Gogh.

VERONICA

Yes, Van Gogh was his idol. He said he always felt like a namesake. In fact, my grandfather curated a museum in Germany with some Van Goghs, so he got to study the artist up close. This was back in the first half of the last century, before Van Gogh began skyrocketing in value.

CASEY STILL STUDYING THE PAINTING.

CASEY

How interesting.

KIRAN

Extraordinary for an artist who only sold one painting in his lifetime. Van Gogh, that is.

VERONICA'S PHONE RINGS. SHE CHECKS THE CALLER ID.

VERONICA

I've been expecting this call. I'm sorry. If you'll excuse me for just a minute. *(To the phone.)* Hello, Robert.

VERONICA EXITS.

KIRAN

Well, seen enough? Shall we make our excuses and grab some lunch?

CASEY

Hang on a second. Take a look at this. *(Indicates the painting she's been studying.)*

KIRAN

(Crosses, studies painting) What about it? It looks like the others.

CASEY

Look closer. This one's different.

KIRAN

I'm not seeing it.

CASEY

Look at the brush strokes. Look at the pitch of that yellow.

KIRAN LOOKS AGAIN.

CASEY
Do you see it?

KIRAN
(*Doubtful*) Maybe.

CASEY
This one's not like the others. The others are signed "V. Kunstler." But look: no signature.

KIRAN
Maybe someone else did it?

CASEY
Maybe. Van Gogh didn't always sign his work, only the ones he was fond of. If I'm not mistaken, this is a dead-ringer for his "*The Painter on the Road to Tarascon*."

KIRAN
You're not suggesting this is a real Van Gogh, are you?

CASEY
No. Not yet.

VERONICA ENTERS

VERONICA
Sorry about that. I had to take that call.

CASEY
That's quite alright. This is interesting. Tell me about this painting. Did your grandfather paint this one?

VERONICA

Yes. As I said, he was a huge fan of Van Gogh his whole life. He liked to paint copies of his works, right down to the signature sometimes.

KIRAN
(*Joking*) You didn't mention your grandfather was a forger.

VERONICA
It's only forgery if you sell it as an original. Painting copies is a common learning exercise for many young artists.

CASEY
He seems to have done a good job on this one. Hasn't the original of this work been lost?

VERONICA
You know your Van Gogh. That's right. It was on display in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Magdeburg, Germany during World War II. My grandfather was the curator there. I believe that's where he copied it, in off hours, when the museum was closed. Just before the original was destroyed in an Allied bombing raid.

CASEY
That's a fascinating provenance. What are you asking for it?

KIRAN LOOKS STARTLED.

VERONICA
How odd. That phone call I just took was from a gentleman who is also interested in that same painting.

CASEY

Really?

VERONICA

Yes. He was in yesterday. He spent a long time looking at it. Studied it for well over an hour and said he'd be back. He called to make sure I still had it. He said he was coming right down. He wants to purchase it.

CASEY

How much are you asking?

VERONICA

As I told him, the painting isn't for sale.

CASEY

Why is that?

VERONICA

It's got great sentimental value for me. It reminds me very much of my grandfather. This was his favorite. I only display it because I enjoy looking at every day.

CASEY

That's too bad. I'd be willing to pay, say, four thousand dollars.

VERONICA

The gentleman on the phone said he was quite taken with it. He offered me ten thousand.

KIRAN

Ten-thousand? And you turned him down?

VERONICA'S PHONE RINGS.

VERONICA

It's Robert again. Excuse me, please.

VERONICA EXITS.

CASEY

I think maybe I'm on to something here.

KIRAN

On to what? You can't think that painting is genuine.

CASEY

You have to admit, it has an interesting provenance.

KIRAN

If it's original, if he stole it, why didn't he sell it?

CASEY

Where? To whom? That's how art thieves get caught. Besides, money probably wasn't the motivation. The important thing was he owned a genuine Van Gogh, his idol. After painting all these knockoffs, he could hide it in plain sight.

KIRAN

You've only looked at it for a couple of minutes. Take some time and have it evaluated.

CASEY

What am I going to say to her? "Veronica, I'd like to have your grandfather's painting evaluated to see it's a real Van Gogh." Besides, she may have already done that. There is no such thing as profit without risk.

KIRAN

Well, I wouldn't buy this pig in a poke.

CASEY

Noted. Here she comes.

VERONICA ENTERS.

VERONICA

I'm so sorry, that gentleman is very persistent.

CASEY

Veronica, I must say, I understand his fascination. The more I look at this, the more enchanted I become. Would you consider twelve thousand?

VERONICA

That's what the gentleman on the phone just offered.

CASEY

Alright then, fifteen thousand. Final offer.

VERONICA

Well, Robert is a good customer. *(Pause)* However, you are such a well-respected broker ...

CASEY

... and the highest bidder.

VERONICA

I'm torn, but ... alright, deal.

THEY SHAKE HANDS.

CASEY

Excellent! I'll need a certificate of provenance from you. All the details about your grandfather and so forth. Once I have that in hand, I'll wire the funds and schedule the pickup.

VERONICA

It's a great pleasure doing business with you, Ms. Fischer. Casey.

CASEY

Likewise, Veronica. Thank you. I wish you much success.

CASEY STARTS TO LEAVE, TURNS BACK.

CASEY

Oh, and please give the other bidder my condolences.

VERONICA

It's just business. I'm sure he'll understand.

CASEY AND KIRAN EXIT, STAND OUTSIDE THE GALLERY

KIRAN

So much for sentiment. I have to say, I'm suspicious. Do you really think there was another buyer?

CASEY

Not a chance.

KIRAN

So you just bought a fake.

CASEY

Just because it's fake, doesn't mean it's worthless. British painter Thomas Keating sells his forgeries as forgeries for thirty-thousand a pop. He even got his own television show.

KIRAN

You're going to sell a forgery?

CASEY

I'll sell it as a forgery. But a forgery with a question mark.

KIRAN

What does that mean?

CASEY

What is art? Why do people buy it?

KIRAN

Pleasure. Contemplative beauty. Status. Lots of reasons.

CASEY

Art is mystery. All art is mysterious at its core, a prehistoric heard of buffalo painted on a cave wall. People buy art because they feel it gives them mastery over a little bit of mystery, a sense of control.

KIRAN

What's the mystery here? And is it worth fifteen thousand dollars?

CASEY

What would the painting fetch at auction if it were genuine?

KIRAN

A hundred million. Two hundred million. Who knows?

CASEY

Who knows, indeed? Look, there is a story behind every work. And the stories behind fakes can be as good as or even better than originals. In this case we have a painting of inestimable value plundered by the Nazis and presumed destroyed in a bombing raid. Or we have a copy of that work, a fairly good copy. In this case the painter was, coincidentally, the curator of the work at its last known location.

KIRAN

(Pondering) Okay.

CASEY

Let's suppose grandpa's intention was forgery. It's near the end of the war. The writing is on the wall for the Nazis. But grandad has a plan. He'll swap his forgery for the real thing and in the chaos of the Reich's last days, get away with the genuine article before anyone's the wiser.

KIRAN

That's a great story. You should write fiction.

CASEY

Truth is stranger. And just suppose he got away with it. Granted, that's unlikely, but we'll know the odds of that much better once we can examine it closely.

KIRAN

I still don't get it.

CASEY

Look at it this way: We have a work here of dubious origin, a fake, but a fake with a great story behind it, a mystery story.

KIRAN

So, you're going to push this story as a selling point?

CASEY

Not push, suggest. Let people draw their own conclusions. Everyone craves a good yarn, the wilder the better. The remotest possibility that it's genuine, and the starting bid will be a hundred times what I paid for it. But even if there's no chance it's real, it's still a unique work. The romance of the story will give it value.

KIRAN

Are collectors that easily enticed?

CASEY

Do you know how many masterpieces out in world today in collections and museums are fakes? Estimates run as high as fifty percent.

KIRAN

I knew it was a lot, but ...

CASEY

Michelangelo started his career as a forger, passing off his copy of a Roman sculpture as the real thing. There is a joke in France: Jean-Baptiste Corot painted two thousand canvases, five thousand of which are in America.

KIRAN

Well, when you look at it that way —

CASEY

Buying and selling art is a poker game. Whatever mystery is in this hand, I'm betting its value will appreciate.

KIRAN

The other kind of art appreciation.

CASEY

Now, there's one more gallery I'd like to check out. It's rumored to have some questionable Francis Bacons. "Fakeons," as their jokingly called in the trade. Maybe there are some bargains.

KIRAN

They never teach this stuff in art school.

(THEY EXIT. General lighting fades as warm special comes up on the mark where CASEY viewed the Van Gogh, holding then fading to black.)

CURTAIN

Andréa Ferrell Gannon

Eat

Too many observe the Sabbath from a pew
entered laden, petaled, fine jewelry-draped, velvet

curtain drawn. Eve fallen me, I'll model
for you, I'll fling my cathedral doors

open for you to belt, bruise bloom, welt,
burnt umber bracelets and amethyst knots

wooden double doors crash
against saints' portraits, gold-rimmed

suck stale air and reseal for you, since you insist.
Others rush away from pleasure

faster than toward it
and the sun rises, and my lord

I flick mud cakes from my feet's soles
wipe my toes down pant legs pulled

open to puddle on stone, kicked to a pew
I'm satisfied and foreign. My sin is reasonless.

You may still peel off gloves and nail varnish,
realign baubles in boxes, snuff candles, crack wafers—

come fast, come feast.
Smell that warm rosin? That's me.

I eat my master's desire in the after mass of condemnation
he crowns me in ecstasy open mouthed,

bare, iridescent, frothy it's no simple
lustration this, and prudes recover, shut up

in confessional, re-hiding in street clothes, galoshes. I writhe
in early richness, earthy and boundless

nothing left
but holy water flesh

I devour all that and
my God

Stephanie Choi

***You, Me, Dim Sum this Saturday is What I Will
Say to Harry Styles When We Finally Meet***

Let me order tea in my off-tone Cantonese—mut lei cha (only the best for you)
With hand gestures and all, waving down the best carts
Har gow, siu mai, beef trio, and chicken feet
(don't worry, I'll show you how to eat it)
You just sit there in your pink velvet jumpsuit and diamond earrings
Sparkling almost as bright as your green eyes—searching
For cha siu bao—you say, *I love cha siu bao*
No, you sing! *I love cha siu bao*—and I watch the way
Your dimples dance as you do—sweet as red bean soup
I want to bathe in a tub of it with you & lick you clean afterwards
Take each of your hands, each finger (nails painted sky blue) into my mouth
& Suck

Now your mouth, as gut juice and shrimp paste slide down to your chin
And a piece of your golden brown hair falls onto the cheong fun
(don't worry, hair on food is normal here)
Nevertheless, I lean forward to pick it off and wipe your chin
With my index finger and thumb
And you pull me in for a kiss—long and hard
A symphony of soy sauce and meat grease
And it seems we stay here forever
The steam from all the little dishes below us
Making a silhouette of our faces
& The whole room cheers

Liz Holland

Now that I'm forty

I give too many fucks. Long live the echoes—
like wings of fat bees, trapped hummingbirds,
my mother's voice. Xylophone ribs, everything a mallet.

My therapist tells me it's a process, she is close
to fifty. She meets with me weekly, waiting
for me to finally *get it*. I have never felt

whole. I find joy in a paper calendar, slicing
through each finished day, celebrate restraint
of tongue and pen with others. I get Botox

to erase the lines on my face. I don't want
the reminder of how they got there. Folds of neat
paternal genes and constant surprise. Crinkled

feet of blackbirds around green volumes of iris,
where delight lingers, those I earned. Perhaps
I'm halfway done, fighting to make it to this volta.

Fatigued, I can let the bees rest as I grow parentless
and heavier with stories, their buzz fading to soothe
a honeycomb chest into a great softening.

