So much depends upon . . .

the

Red Wheelbarrow

glazed with rain water
beside the white chickens

Fall 2007
Edited by Irene Hofstetter & Malini D. Ely
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&
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I catch one but it breaks loose, rushing toward a place to take root, as the cattails watch, all nodding their brown heads in unison.
Art Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tilting Ladder</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Caitlyn Mattia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Blind</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Caitlyn Mattia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall with a Chair</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Caitlyn Mattia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fence Post</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Caitlyn Mattia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberry Fields</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Malini D. Ely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bare Knees</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Caitlyn Mattia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slumber 1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slumber 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Caitlyn Mattia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Malini D. Ely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Shadow</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Malini D. Ely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Michigan, Late September

I lean into the trunk of a beech and drink in the glazed rivers of late afternoon streaming between long shadows.

In the woods, the first yellow leaves are shatters of painted light. The trees clutch their own stained-glass prayers.

I find a sassafras leaf with all the sweet green eaten away: a fragile golden lace, edges curled and the wind breathing through it.

Wading into a river, it dawns on me that nothing in this world is perfectly still; unknown stones hunch and sink under my feet.

Everything shifts and pulses with small desires; even gravity hungers for the muffled comfort of an apple dropped into thick grass.

Today the trees are alive with blackbirds, crazy and chattering and restless for migration, for a change in the air.

All across a marsh, acres of cattails are sighing downy seeds into the wind. They tremble with generations not yet born.
boy when I’m not invisible. When I’m not on.
With a flick of the wrist, he shows that both sides of the wand now only have blue stones. I try not to roll my eyes, just as the little girl gasps in genuine shock. This is an old story to me, and I forgot why I keep doing this. It’s not an old story in front of the camera.

Erianna David

Creation Myth

I am running naked, pressing soft felt feet into mud and rock;
My brain like a fungus grown from trees; sewn into earth, and my hands, grubs, that burrow for the warmth.

I feel like Japanese gods, how my body drips like water from the halberd—where I land small islands form, and I will drool out language.

Trees and grass sprout on my islands, crawl up my bodies and rivers to become forest and tundra. It is here that I want to dip my hand into my skin like water.
I will pull my bones, bend them like willow branches; re-create myself as a frog, or a wolf.

It is then that I will be brought in with the tide, drag my seaweed hair behind me. Here I will draw out my ancients with a breath like geysers, and call out like the Harpy:

This is my Creation Myth.
This is my last wilderness.
Heroes

Front seat of your truck, we drive with the sun. This was the moment—keep with you or stay as I was. Heroes travel far, but write epics to return home. I greet you after two years of silence, finding your touch still familiar. Only Argos knew his master as something more than clothing and an entrance through the front door. As simple as a crossword, it just takes a few letters.

Years later than planned, we will make that trip to the west coast. I will fall in love with you again—heroes fight battles to prove their greatness. Stop on the road to pick blackberries. Remember that these vines are strong enough to break through glass and keep growing.

Follow me higher on the cliffs I climbed as a child. Afraid to take the last ledge, I was always looking up at my friends. Heroes imply weakness, the Achilles heel that makes room for new stories. Tides go out, water shifting. I trample through beached jellyfish, pick up mussels and throw them to the birds.

Midnight, I am calling you as always. If I speak slowly, sand will fill the bottom of this glass. Heroes expect someone to care for their actions. Ears hear stories, love writes them. Nights used to keep us apart but lately they are the only doors that open. I want you to

Across the room. I smile at him, but I'm one of the invisible workers tonight.

I know that when I get undressed tonight there's going to be a moon shaped print on the back of my neck from the camera strap and sequins on my stomach. When my friends get home tonight they might be with a boy, they might take off their clothes and not notice their hickeys till tomorrow morning. I wish that just once I had said no to my father, acted like a kid on Saturday night.

I snap a couple more shots, trying to keep my father and this table in frame. The action happens quickly and I have to get it at just the right moment. Only magicians can take pictures for magicians, the ones who know what's going to happen next and make look like a surprise on film.

"Four..." the little girl says.

"Four? F-O-U-R. Four. He counts to the fourth stone on the wand. You landed on blue!" He says to her.

"Wouldn't it be a good trick if we could make all of the colors disappear from my wand, and just have your color, blue?" He nods excitedly, so she does too.

I know what's coming. Bored, I zoom in, trying to concentrate on the reveal and not on how much I want to run to the cashier, ask for our paycheck, and get the hell outta here. Change into something normal, talk to that
Saturday Night

“Yousee, every magician has more than one magic wand, just in case the first one breaks or runs out of magic dust. This is one of my spares. It adds color to every magic trick because it has stones that are all of the colors of the rainbow on it.” I am standing behind my father in a packed T.G.I. Friday’s, on Saturday night, watching him show a magic wand to a nearby table through the viewfinder on our camera.

The servers and my family have managed to work out a smoothly operated dance where we can weave between tables without causing trouble. Since my father was hired to perform here the number of customers on Saturday night has increased by 40%. Even though we’ve created a system, the restaurant is filled and the sticky heat is starting to get to me. Sweat has caused my dress pants and sequined vest to cling to my skin and it’s only about halfway into the night.

“Now, I need help to do this trick, can you help me?” My father pulls at his tuxedo, wet from the heat, and smiles as he crouches next to a little girl. She nods. “Can you pick a number between one and six?” I bend down with my camera to take a picture for him. On my way towards the table I spot a cute guy...
Emily Pittinos

Ghazal for Lost Love

I'm looking for the humanity in your eyes, but you are more funeral than man, those cold calla lilies blooming from the pores in your face.

Give me a petal for each of your thoughts and I'll know if you love me, you love me not. Then maybe we'll get somewhere.

If Eve hadn't eaten the forbidden apple, would women still want to chase the bad boy, to want what's wrong for us?

I want to write a formal letter to the exes in my life: Dear sir, I would like you to know you have changed me and I cannot remember who I was...

There was a thunderstorm last night. It was quick and loud, but when I stopped to listen, it was gone. Maybe that means something.

Amelia Wright

A Reason to go Blind

When time finally forces my eyes blind, I stumble along with bruises and worries of where I will be now, if kitchen knives and table corners will remain sharper than they were before light left.

As color begins to fade and the winter sky becomes a thick film of dust looming over skeletal trees I say a prayer to bring the blue of rivers back, to keep the grays of clouds and rain away.

There is no cure to cleanse the milky marbles in my skull, the murk that forces me to feel for things I once had so easily grasped with a single glance- I feel a certain pause between my steps now.

I leave my home, the sidewalks' curbs fill my weaving path, and I know all eyes around me wander to mine and tear away, the sight of troubled clouds something they know will turn a man to stone.

When I find out there has never been a difference between soulache and heartache I begin to envy those who knew the same for sight and sound, the way a fox is only ever seen when it cries out for its young.

After everything around me has leaked into a pool of whites and grays I realize I never knew the sounds of storm wind or rain on rain, and I know now that the wind that
Amelia Wright

lost my prayers had reason to refuse them all along.

It was when I began to believe I had nothing left to see that the seasons left, leaving me only to imagine the summer sailboats rocking like troubled lovers, the waves licking their sides like the salted sea had never been enough.

Ines Pujos

You will be able to hear the hearts beating, his hands crumbling and the feathers of the doves coming out of his mouth, their cave.
Two Stone Figures

Inspired by “Archeological Reminiscense of Millet’s Angelus,”
by Salvador Dali

The two shapes of rock stand together.
The sky is too low, and their heads too heavy.
He is forced to look down into the sand,
then notices the shadow of their child,
who is buried every morning, noon, and evening.

At night the wind brings the bells, and the chanting of
the priests as they throw their hearts to sea,
from the other shore.

She hasn’t seen her lover who stands beside her; she
only hears the rust that’s gathering in her eye sockets made
from tin.

In her hands she cups a bowl full of human hearts,
that he has collected from the sea while she stood sleeping.
It is said that if you wait there with them as the bells strike,
half a century comes and leaves without a war.

Separation

The room is hollow, quiet as a crater
in the moon, and I am all alone.

Go on, press on through solitude, and later
I may go, return to people I have known.

But the nights are cold. I see how autumn clings
to the window, how fog collects around its frame.

I see how finches go in morning, their wings
cress the sky, not even knowing its name.

Return to me, not now, but not much after,
this room is nothing, nothing without your laughter.
I've done it again. Forgotten where it is I sit, or how to turn the key without fumbling as the engine falters. I'm stuck between driveway and road with nothing but a few water bottles and airheads tucked away between the seats and netting in case I get dehydrated or need to chew on something at high altitudes. If this were a class you could take I'd excel; spare maps, compasses and GPS. Thankfully I'm nowhere unfamiliar, and it isn't hard to lose yourself on country roads unless you've got real purpose. Between here and Saginaw Bay there's nothing but farms and trailers, back roads, and Deliverance cabins. I could see it all; drive through at speeds well beyond the limit and not worry about police or stray animals ready to be false birthmarks on the fresh pavement. I could excel, if only I could turn the key.

I wonder what it's called when you look forward at yourself looking back, the windshield becoming the looking glass as that sense of nostalgia grips at your skin. Years ago my brother used to hold onto the strings of my bathing suit while I put the bait on his fishing line. He hated the thought of stabbing something so small and watching it wither away after countless times being cast back and forth into the waters. Locked between a
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I haven't noticed that there's been a car in front of me for the past five minutes of my trance, or that my brother has taken back his body and what I thought had been slow down in the metaphorical sense was in fact literal. Road construction has started up on the bridge, and the jumper suits wave me bye with a friendly smile while I'm correcting my posture behind the driver's wheel.

It's just another few miles before we stop now, taking the car down the keyhole to see the harbor. I still wonder how it is myths are made, or if my Jeep could suddenly take off with me and my brother in it. Maybe I can burry myself in the mud and hibernate like a bear, plug my butt with deer moss for the winter and wake the following summer with my hair matted and gnarled like roots for the trees that sprout from my fingers. Maybe I'll

leather wrapped wheel and cotton seats, I'm starting to feel that sudden wither as if my skins become too loose and I'm waiting for minnow kisses to fill the hollow spaces in my bird bones.

Eventually my brother crawls into the passenger seat beside me, releasing my thoughts in a sudden breath of Axe. I roll the windows down to keep another headache at bay. He's clumsily put his body deodorant on, again, white clumps like snow in an old mans beard sticking out of his armpit hairs. Looking at him I realize my brother's grown up, his legs still virgin white but covered in a thick and curling mass of black hairs so startling I try to repress the tug on my lips. I can't remember when it was I first noticed my brother's facial hair, or why it is I go back and forth with the ego game only familiar to siblings. But he's been shaving for the past year, stubble that can't even be ten o'clock shadow, poking out from his chin and upper lip.

"It's my Jack Sparrow-tee," he'd said proudly, stroking absentely at his jaw.

It isn't long before the usual movements take over my brother and I. Absently I've started the car without any thought, and he's rolled down his own window ready for the hand surf. Idling out of the driveway and onto the street I feel my stomach rock like a tire
swing—I've forgotten to tell my parents, “I'll see you later,” since it's never, “Goodbye.” It won't matter, they wouldn't have heard me. Moving past the empty lots where we've yet to build a house I can see the same water they're looking out at. They'll be barefoot down there, on the beach, walking close enough that their shoulders will rub and their bare feet will nudge. Whatever anger or annoyance that was felt earlier will float away with the surf if they haven't rubbed it absent like whales rub against stone. I envy my parents for what I fear I'll never have, even when they are mad at each other. Couples are like battering rams—words like tangled horns after the head smash—and there is little more that can be said to untangle them. Thankfully it only ever takes a rueful chuckle. “How do you live with her?” I'll ask, grin at the indoor joke before my dad will say, “You tell me,” more like you would say, “How could I not?”

With the house left behind we take M-25 as far as we can, Northwards and to the tip of the Thumb. There is a movement that happens on M-25 unlike most highways, a constant shake from left to right as you take in dense forest, farm, and lake on either side of you. The road meanders with the land instead of through it, passing up and down small hills and hugging the steep bluffs that

It's for reasons like going again, and moving that I hate to have clocks in my car. I purposefully take off my watch when I drive, put my phone to read off the date, and make sure the minutes are too fast on the radio clock. I like to think how it is that people discover or create mythology. If I were to completely eradicate time I could crawl out of this car and move without worry of being tied down to obligations and responsibility. I wonder if native women actually did disappear and marry lightning gods, or if the truth is that the ones they love had come and gone so fast, that lightning was the only relating term. There are days when I will sit by the lake and wait for the sudden gurgle, the surge before a Waterhorse will climb out and take me down with it to follow the setting sun.

Alongside me I realize my brother is looking more and more like Jim Morrison, how his hair has started to wave more uniformly, and all the zits and stubble have become the long and well boned face of a man. The cow and horse manure must have gone too long through my lungs, because I swear he even starts to sound like Morrison. He's got a sudden slow drawl, pausing between sentences or comma splices as if the meaning hasn't sunk to the bottom like alcohol cubes in a chemistry beaker. I start to wonder about the rock myths my brother
factories, but there are horse stables and pastures for grazing cows a plenty along these parts, and the rich smell of manure and hay comes up your nose as thick and potent as backing brownies. My brother disapproves of it, turning up his music, and then turning down mine as if he weren't violating that unspoken rule between passenger and driver to never touch the radio without permission. Before my brother can roll up his window, I lock it, keeping the ancient smells of farm circulating through the car so that it sticks to my clothes and sun stained hair.

Most of these rides my brother and I take are silent, we don't speak much, and nothing needs to be said. We've already made sure the other is alright by glancing while the other isn't looking, and in our age we know there's never been any true way to answer how school is or what it is you've learned. The questions like, “are we there yet,” or, “how much longer,” are answered when we pass by the red farm with its cow and quarter horse pens—fifteen more minutes. He'll occasionally pick up his cell phone, though, and chat with friends about when he'll be in town, or explain to them that I still won't let anyone else into the car when it's the two of us and I'm ferrying him around. Neither of us speaks it but I'm sure he knows this is our time, and that soon I'll be gone again.
drops and lightning that jumps your stomach
and brain freezes you down to the basement.
The middle has spongy rain that hovers in
one spot like bad luck clouds. The tip of the
Thumb gets the best of everything; lightning
that stays for long stretches of time, and rain
that steams the second it shatters itself on
shingles, raising you up with it. That steam is
coming off the toasted black window wipers,
and I'm wishing I could pull the car over and
just roll in the grass like a dog.

For the past half hour we've been moving in
and out of the rain storms. I haven't had
enough of an urge to stop the car, and so I've
turned on the CD player to "Nickel Creek." I
can see my brother agonizing in the corner,
his fingers burying into his bag where his
ears can't follow. Bird-like, he pulls out a pair
of headphones—they fit into his ears like
worms and make me squirm as if my sweaty
legs have started to stick to the seats if they'd
been something other than cotton.

My Bluegrass Shit.
I turn it up to annoy him as well as to
engulf myself. I've been using the Cruise
Control for ten miles, and am now starting to
tap a foot along to the music while the best of
the mullet rock comes over to me from my
brother's headphones. I'm starting to
remember the songs my roommate played
back at school, mash-ups of the worst and
best music, Gwen Stefani put along with
Johnny Cash or AC/DC.

Thankfully the stretch of land we've
reached is farm, and I open the window again
with just a light mizzle of rain hugging my
skin like drops of water on a penny. My music
is obnoxiously loud, blaring out the windows
and onto the rotation of soy, wheat, and corn
crops. I've grown careless and am hanging
out the window with one hand on the wheel.
Thumb Michigan is known for its sugar beat
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Muddy Hymnal

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---

Sam Hinkle

Separation

The room is hollow, quiet as a crater in the moon, and I am all alone.

Go on, press on through solitude, and later I may go, return to people I have known.

But the nights are cold. I see how autumn clings to the window, how fog collects around its frame.

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Emily Pittinos

Ghazal for Lost Love

I'm looking for the humanity in your eyes, but you are more funeral than man, those cold calla lilies blooming from the pores in your face.

Give me a petal for each of your thoughts and I'll know if you love me, you love me not. Then maybe we'll get somewhere.

If Eve hadn't eaten the forbidden apple, would women still want to chase the bad boy, to want what's wrong for us?

I want to write a formal letter to the exes in my life: Dear sir, I would like you to know you have changed me and I cannot remember who I was...

There was a thunderstorm last night. It was quick and loud, but when I stopped to listen, it was gone. Maybe that means something.

Amelia Wright

A Reason to go Blind

When time finally forces my eyes blind, I stumble along with bruises and worries of where I will be now, if kitchen knives and table corners will remain sharper than they were before light left.

As color begins to fade and the winter sky becomes a thick film of dust looming over skeletal trees I say a prayer to bring the blue of rivers back, to keep the grays of clouds and rain away.

There is no cure to cleanse the milky marbles in my skull, the murk that forces me to feel for things I once had so easily grasped with a single glance- I feel a certain pause between my steps now.

I leave my home, the sidewalks' curbs fill my weaving path, and I know all eyes around me wander to mine and tear away, the sight of troubled clouds something they know will turn a man to stone.

When I find out there has never been a difference between soulache and heartache I begin to envy those who knew the same for sight and sound, the way a fox is only ever seen when it cries out for its young.

After everything around me has leaked into a pool of whites and grays I realize I never knew the sounds of stormwind or rain on rain, and I know now that the wind that...
Saturday Night

“You see, every magician has more than one magic wand, just in case the first one breaks or runs out of magic dust. This is one of my spares. It adds color to every magic trick because it has stones that are all of the colors of the rainbow on it.” I am standing behind my father in a packed T.G.I. Friday’s, on Saturday night, watching him show a magic wand to a nearby table through the viewfinder on our camera.

The servers and my family have managed to work out a smoothly operated dance where we can weave between tables without causing trouble. Since my father was hired to perform here the number of customers on Saturday night has increased by 40%. Even though we’ve created a system, the restaurant is filled and the sticky heat is starting to get to me. Sweat has caused my dress pants and sequined vest to cling to my skin and it’s only about halfway into the night.

“Now, I need help to do this trick, can you help me?” My father pulls at his tuxedo, wet from the heat, and smiles as he crouches next to a little girl. She nods. “Can you pick a number between one and six?” I bend down with my camera to take a picture for him. On my way towards the table I spot a cute guy...
Heroes

Front seat of your truck, we drive with the sun. This was the moment—keep with you or stay as I was. Heroes travel far, but write epics to return home. I greet you after two years of silence, finding your touch still familiar. Only Argos knew his master as something more than clothing and an entrance through the front door. As simple as a crossword, it just takes a few letters.

Years later than planned, we will make that trip to the west coast. I will fall in love with you again—heroes fight battles to prove their greatness. Stop on the road to pick blackberries. Remember that these vines are strong enough to break through glass and keep growing.

Follow me higher on the cliffs I climbed as a child. Afraid to take the last ledge, I was always looking up at my friends. Heroes imply weakness, the Achilles heel that makes room for new stories. Tides go out, water shifting. I trample through beached jellyfish, pick up mussels and throw them to the birds. Midnight, I am calling you as always. If I speak slowly, sand will fill the bottom of this glass. Heroes expect someone to care for their actions. Ears hear stories, love writes them. Nights used to keep us apart but lately they are the only doors that open. I want you to

Across the room. I smile at him, but I'm one of the invisible workers tonight.

I know that when I get undressed tonight there's going to be a moon shaped print on the back of my neck from the camera strap and sequins on my stomach. When my friends get home tonight they might be with a boy, they might take off their clothes and not notice their hickeys till tomorrow morning. I wish that just once I had said no to my father, acted like a kid on Saturday night.

I snap a couple more shots, trying to keep my father and this table in frame. The action happens quickly and I have to get it at just the right moment. Only magicians can take pictures for magicians, the ones who know what's going to happen next and make look like a surprise on film.

"Four..." the little girl says.

"Four? F-O-U-R. Four. He counts to the fourth stone on the wand. You landed on blue!" He says to her.

"Wouldn't it be a good trick if we could make all of the colors disappear from my wand, and just have your color, blue?" He nods excitedly, so she does too.

I know what's coming. Bored, I zoom in, trying to concentrate on the reveal and not on how much I want to run to the cashier, ask for our paycheck, and get the hell outta here. Change into something normal, talk to that
boy when I'm not invisible. When I'm not on.

With a flick of the wrist, he shows that both sides of the wand now only have blue stones. I try not to roll my eyes, just as the little girl gasps in genuine shock. This is an old story to me, and I forgot why I keep doing this. It's not an old story in front of the camera.

Erianna David

Creation Myth

I am running naked, pressing soft felt feet into mud and rock;
My brain like a fungus grown from trees; sewn into earth, and my hands, grubs, that burrow for the warmth.

I feel like Japanese gods, how my body drips like water from the halberd—where I land small islands form, and I will drool out language.

Trees and grass sprout on my islands, crawl up my bodies and rivers to become forest and tundra. It is here that I want to dip my hand into my skin like water.
I will pull my bones, bend them like willow branches; re-create myself as a frog, or a wolf.

It is then that I will be brought in with the tide, drag my seaweed hair behind me. Here I will draw out my ancients with a breath like geysers, and call out like the Harpy:

This is my Creation Myth. This is my last wilderness.
Michigan, Late September

I lean into the trunk of a beech and drink in the glazed rivers of late afternoon streaming between long shadows.

In the woods, the first yellow leaves are shatters of painted light. The trees clutch their own stained-glass prayers.

I find a sassafras leaf with all the sweet green eaten away: a fragile golden lace, edges curled and the wind breathing through it.

Wading into a river, it dawns on me that nothing in this world is perfectly still; unknown stones hunch and sink under my feet.

Everything shifts and pulses with small desires; even gravity hungers for the muffled comfort of an apple dropped into thick grass.

Today the trees are alive with blackbirds, crazy and chattering and restless for migration, for a change in the air.

All across a marsh, acres of cattails are sighing downy seeds into the wind. They tremble with generations not yet born.
Rebecca Chou

I catch one but it breaks loose, rushing toward a place to take root, as the cattails watch, all nodding their brown heads in unison.
So much depends upon

The

beside the white chickens

glazed with rain water

Red Wheelbarrow

Malini D. Ely

Edited by Irene Hofstetter

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