Govern thy life and thoughts as if the whole world were to see the one, and read the other.
Thomas Fuller
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Scientists proclaim: “It is a marvel”.
I say it is a machine,
and a faulty one at that.
Surely the blueprints for such a structure
must have been stained and incomplete.
A loyal, yet treacherous beast:
body.
My makeup. My burden.
Alveoli, temporalis, meniscus, thoracic-
wrap your tongue around those terms,
listen to your larynx generate the sounds,
exotic names for blind, bulbous organs.
We are hideous creatures, really,
clumsy and nonfunctional.
Bulging white masses of tumors
always growing, excavating;
unwelcome busy builders constructing what they please.
Weak spider webs of blood vessels
rupturing messily in the complex sponge of your brain.
Jellied blood clots like corks in the plumbing system of your arteries.
And that unintelligent muscle, heart,
thought to be so sensitive and coherent,
the center of emotion, one’s excuse to be irrational,
keeps feeding the beast with its pumping
pumping, pumping.
My pastry of a frame – filled with thick visceral cream shrouded with an insubstantial flaky covering is so deceitful.
So unfortunate - the thought of my insides makes my insides turn.
It was soon twilight. It had been a long day. Miriam sat alone in the laundry room, eating a chunk of rosy-frosted cake, surrounded by aloof piles of clothing. Bert had taken the Volvo back to his house. It was his wife’s car. Molly left just as swiftly, her hair messy down the periphery of her face, stale with the stench of cigarette smoke. Miriam heard the front door slam, the gravel being crushed beneath striped stilettos. Her best guess was that Molly fled to the nearest bus stop and got on without looking where it went. Outsiders usually didn’t last that long here. Miriam struggled to remember if this was the first stranger to stay here. It evaded her. Ever-abiding, Miriam took another bite of cake, went downstairs into the kitchen, turned the lights off, and switched on the television.

“Do you have extra shoes? Toothbrush? And I don’t know about you but I’m bringing a pillow.” The boy stuffed the plush white sponge into his bag, struggling with the zipper.

“It’ll get dirty. They say it’s gonna rain again. Late tonight,” the girl warned him.

He glanced up, irked.

“It won’t rain. Weathermen are always wrong.”

The girl settled herself in a chair, folded her arms, and sat adamantly.

“It’ll get dirty and you’ll regret bringing it,” she said.
Kayla French

"Well, you'll have to get your hair dirty. I'll get to sleep comfortably."

"I'm not going to re-pack," she said, pursing her mouth.

The boy sighed heavily and looked up at the teddy bear tucked neatly between the sheets on his bed, its fake eyes soft with a crescent of pale honey reflected through the window. The girl, indignant in her throne, glared out the glass. It was already dim outside. Treetops swayed like cilia or fishtails in the breeze, and the sky was still watery.

"We'd better be going, I guess. Mom and Dad won't wait up for us, wherever they are."

She pondered but did not move. The boy hitched the bookbag onto his bony shoulders and nodded.

"They'll be happy to see us again."

The screen door slammed behind them as they trekked from tile to grass, both the girl and boy keeping their heads forward, down the slope of the hill. Feverish clouds still veiled what remained of the sun. Deeper in the heavens the first of many stars were beginning to click into place. Rain and mud seeped through the sides of their shoes and leaves spilled clear beads onto their expressionless faces, onto their tongues and into their eyes; the girl imagined fish swimming around inside her shoes. The world became myopic in the water, and before the moon could rise, the children were lost beyond a dripping
horizon of mossy stumps, the black tangled yam of another storm coming up behind them.
arms, light and hollow bones. The man who owned the bookstore did not care. He took me in his arms and laid me down under him. I thought he must have done this many times because he was so calm and his hands knew just what to do with a young body, his fingers long and bony as a pianist's. He kissed my forehead. It didn't matter that the marble cross perched atop the school building peered at me through the open window. The man who owned the bookstore said, "The girl and I made love on a broken bed with canaries watching. She had soft hair and eyes that questioned everything they saw. We mad love for minutes, hours, days, years; it didn't matter... it never really ended."

At five, I heard the door of the bookstore open and the clack of my mother's black heels on the floor. I got up from the bed and put my clothes on, pulled up my knee socks and brushed down my hair. The man who owned the bookstore sat up and kissed my hand. "Thank you," was all he said. I went down the whining stairs and saw my mother, looking around her arms folded. "Where have you been?" she asked.

"Upstairs," I said.

"Why? What were you doing upstairs?" she asked.

"Reading."

"What were you reading?" she asked.

"History," I said.

My mother nodded and turned quickly to the door. She had to get back home to cook dinner for the heart surgeon. Then she would get on the phone, spend the rest of the evening in her den, sitting and talking and biting the end of a pen. I followed the click of her heels on the wood floor, while the man who owned the bookstore lay on the bed by the oval window and smoked his pipe, and a man and a woman walked happily along the banks of the Seine. We left the bookstore while a woman lay naked on the deck of a ship, her hair spread about her like a halo, and in an orchard in Madeira, a canary was breaking from its shell.
Helen Spica

"Do you have a wife?" I asked. I could not see him as having one.
"No." He said. "I have never been married. Once, in Pakistan, I fell in love with a woman who had black hair to her knees and bright green eyes. Her bones were thin like a bird's, and she stood always as if she were about to take flight. I would have married her, lived in her hut made from ridged sheet metal. One morning I turned over in bed and she was gone. I stayed for weeks and looked for her, but she never came back, and I took a boat around Saudi Arabia to Egypt, where I lived as a farmer on the banks of the Nile."

I laid my head on his shoulder. He kissed the top of my and then stood up. The man who owned the bookstore took off his clothes and then sat back down. He looked at me, and the wonderful wrinkles around his eyes returned. I felt braver than I ever had, and I got up and undressed as well and sat back on the bed next to him. I felt small, no lush opera singer from Paris, just a small catholic school girl with freckles on her nose and
In a dream you trace a finger down the valley of her breastbone and her ribs open like a canopy, dark green with slants of gold. The air is hot and damp, a breeze making the treetops sway as you weave between trunks with bark smooth as bone, and high above the elusive red bird still beats its wings.

Sitting back in bed
The fields appear before his eyes
Meadows of his home country, tall, green
Where his family has toiled generations
Amidst the hay and wildflowers.
And he sees the man he called Dad
Breaks a smile, shakes his hand
His brothers grab him in a hug
Arms embracing with the sinking sun
"The cows are penned, the dogs are fed,
You’ve done good, boy,” his father says.
“The fire is warm and the beds are warmer,
And the cooking’s good as it ever was.”
In the yard his mama calls out
“Hello, son. Blueberry pie?”
He smiles and cries and laughs all at once
All the years of hard work,
Those exhausting days,
His 84 years have led to this.
Now the sunset he’ll always see
Will set on fiery fields of gold,
As the man he was born to be
And his wife’s whisper of “Welcome home.”

In loving memory of Edwin Hugh Jalufka

In Loving Memory

Jessica L. Jalufka

Eileen Jacob
I have seen your hands move silent
in the evening.
Two moths, blue and yellow and red
in the sunset come down cold and
your hands don't sleep all night.
They are hummingbirds and they tremble,
no God could calm you through the callous.
Yes, I have come back to your hands
and let them save me, all the small moles are doors
that I have opened and never closed.
Yes, I have touched them, I have sinned
and I confess it
all before your hands, pressed against them;
Could I get closer to your Lord?
Yes, I have read them, two books open
in your sleep. All the lines crossed
and re-crossed, six thousand rivers on a map
that can take me nowhere.

I learn how to own my knuckles
and turn them to knots in the serpent roots of trees and keep watch
as my fingers unglue themselves and spread,
all the blisters,
all the other women, all the curved spines
and open lips and breath like fog in between the cold grass
and your body.
I will not,
I have not washed them.

My shower is now a lover,
A hot and passionate lover
who you spend time with to tell your problems,
to get over an old love.
These relationships never last long.

If only these lovers could talk,
what would they say?
Not only do they know my personal secrets,
tattooed on their walls for a short time;
but they know all of the contours of me.
They know the shape of my calves
and they know how I like the temperature.
They know that I cannot sing worth a damn
and they know that I dance goofy when alone.

These showers are those types of lover
the ones who know all of your secrets
and all of your passions
and all of your habits.
The ones you fall hard for
and leave easily.
The lovers you dump feeling cleansed.
Not thinking what you have left behind:
A shadow of you on their wet walls
a whisper of your secrets only they have heard.
Ode to My Shower

Kiley Harrison

I

Profound personal truths could be found
on the walls of my shower,
my deepest thoughts.
Perhaps something written on those walls
could cure death by being read.

But no one will read them,
and not even I remember them
as they wash away before they get
the chance to change the world.

Perhaps if I could keep these poems
I could reach Palin or Bush,
and maybe save a few polar bears.

II

These poems may be awful.
Perhaps as bad as the child writer
dying of multiple sclerosis whose books of
poetry my shaman uncle keeps buying for me.
And one of these profound truths:
the only reason this kid has a publishing deal
is because he is dying slowly.
And still he persists in believing that God
has granted him his life.
But it seems on top of the crippling disease
He gave so generously, he probably could have thrown
some talent in there.
Truly, the poems are terrible.

If Only I Could Tell you

Ann Richardson

I dreamt that you were asleep
while my cat cried out
somewhere in the dark down the hall.
Awake, the long grass outside my window
rippled in the downpour, and I
almost expected fish to burst forth,
blooms of sunspots through the rain.
Streams of blue light crept across the walls,
painting my face with luminescent tongues
that bum out, but if it wasn’t far from civilization
I’d swear they were headlights disappearing
seconds before connecting, anxiety
somehow beating out survival yet again.
Possibly this is a waking nightmare but
I cannot discern the difference between sleep
and consciousness anymore. Spindly fingers
tug at the hem of my nightgown
just like they did when I was small and alone
while I pray that you’ll wake to the
thought of me and I won’t be crying, won’t
be filling up with filtered moonlight,
glowing and white and pure and gone
before you can reach out to me.
Amelia Wright

Outside I hear coyotes howling. It's the first time they've spoken here in weeks.

At morning I find my dog lying in a pool of her own blood, life emptied out.

I imagine it was two, maybe three that dragged her down at dawn, teeth gnashing at her knees as she offered them her committed, nervous smile.

Standing over her frost-calloused coat I can’t help but to wonder how long she had them careening madly after her.

Kayla French

The breath left my lips but I felt incapable of breathing. Burning water scalded my legs one scar at a time; the drops ricocheted off my skin.

I left a surreal environment. I was leaving my body, entering a soul I had never encountered.

I looked down at my naked flesh and the anger hit me.

I exploded into parts that were pinned back together by the person I thought I was, It was the person I’m not, It was the person I could be-wanted to be.

My legs are shaking. The lights are flickering and my mind is spinning.
III. Closing your eyes, you caress the edge with your finger tips, unfold the metal and trace the outline of your hand, slowly, one digit at a time. It becomes part of you. It becomes an index finger and by the way you keep your eyes closed and never flinch, I know that you must know that knife better than you know my body.

IV. Sometimes, you let me play with it. I feel powerful flicking out the blade like I’m ready to skin some small animal. Maybe I could learn to love your knife. Maybe I could run it down my own tongue, and hold it between my own teeth, so I can taste what you taste in the silences. Maybe I’ll kiss it and it’ll be like I’m kissing that small part that you only feel with your eyes closed.

Five minutes, eight hours—was it quick, or hell?

I forget the logistics of it all, but can prairie wolves and broken dogs be mates? Now I find myself wondering if it was all just another lovers’ ugly quarrel.

Her ribs lie plundered of all sinew, the wind rushing through the slats of bone.

She was too used to the warmth of life to understand she should’ve bared teeth back.
Maps

Chris Cichon-Kelly

If you were to lay me out in the light you’d know.
know what kind of thing I was.
Where my rivers were, what was my capital... the sights of recent impacts.
Gorges, chasms, tributaries, roads, avalanches...
cuts scrapes, gouges, slashes bruises punctures...
How the rocks in water vale gave my ankle a switchback a mountain pass, dug through trees and tendons.
Or how, when the bb gun went off it shattered the lamp which fell and cut my nose to the bone.
Or when the wood burner slipped a star was born in wrist flesh.
And when the box cutter gave me wings.

If you saw me you’d know.
where my elbow got tangled in his braces.
where my finger broke when I broke his nose.
where the rocks of the desert churned my palms to pulp.
where razors made rivers of repentance.

can you see me now?
Does X mark the spot?
Here is the map.
The map of my skin....
The map of my life... The map the world made of me.

Learning to Love Your Knife

Emily Pittinos

I.
In long silences,
you pull the knife out of your jean’s pocket.
When I lay my head in your lap, you take it out, cut away stray strands of my hair.
You flick your wrist, snap it open so quick I wonder how many times you’ve done it.

II.
I have never been so jealous of an object before.
When we’re alone, you pull out the blade and hold it between your teeth. You suck on the metal, run your tongue down the edge, but never bleed.
You kiss the handle when you think I’m not looking, or maybe you know I am and don’t mind a witness.

Fibers 1

Liana Li
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Fibers I

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My legs are shaking. The lights are flickering and my mind is spinning.
I

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on the walls of my shower,
my deepest thoughts.
Perhaps something written on those walls
could cure death by being read.

But no one will read them,
and not even I remember them
as they wash away before they get
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I could reach Palin or Bush,
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These poems may be awful.
Perhaps as bad as the child writer
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And one of these profound truths:
the only reason this kid has a publishing deal
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And still he persists in believing that God
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He gave so generously, he probably could have thrown
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If Only I Could Tell you

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and consciousness anymore. Spindly fingers
tug at the hem of my nightgown
just like they did when I was small and alone
while I pray that you’ll wake to the
thought of me and I won’t be crying, won’t
be filling up with filtered moonlight,
glowing and white and pure and gone
before you can reach out to me.
The Guest Bedroom

A.C. Muir

I have seen your hands move silent in the evening.
Two moths, blue and yellow and red in the sunset come down cold and your hands don't sleep all night.
They are hummingbirds and they tremble, no God could calm you through the callous.
Yes, I have come back to your hands and let them save me, all the small moles are doors that I have opened and never closed.
Yes, I have touched them, I have sinned and I confess it all before your hands, pressed against them;
Could I get closer to your Lord?
Yes, I have read them, two books open in your sleep. All the lines crossed and re-crossed, six thousand rivers on a map that can take me nowhere.

I learn how to own my knuckles and turn them to knots in the serpent roots of trees and keep watch as my fingers unglue themselves and spread, all the blisters, all the other women, all the curved spines and open lips and breath like fog in between the cold grass and your body.
I will not, I have not washed them.

III

My shower is now a lover,
A hot and passionate lover who you spend time with to tell your problems, to get over an old love.
These relationships never last long.

If only these lovers could talk, what would they say?
Not only do they know my personal secrets, tattooed on their walls for a short time; but they know all of the contours of me.
They know the shape of my calves and they know how I like the temperature. They know that I cannot sing worth a damn and they know that I dance goofy when alone.

These showers are those types of lover the ones who know all of your secrets and all of your passions and all of your habits. The ones you fall hard for and leave easily.
The lovers you dump feeling cleansed. Not thinking what you have left behind:
A shadow of you on their wet walls a whisper of your secrets only they have heard.
In a dream you trace a finger down the valley of her breastbone and her ribs open like a canopy, dark green with slants of gold. The air is hot and damp, a breeze making the tree-tops sway as you weave between trunks with bark smooth as bone, and high above the elusive red bird still beats its wings.

In loving memory of Edwin Hugh Jalufka
my mother and father in their bed, taking for granted its close comfort, not knowing that soon it would vanish like lipstick on a mirror and that space would rip open like a skinned knee.

Helen Spica

“Do you have a wife?” I asked. I could not see him as having one.

“No.” He said. “I have never been married. Once, in Pakistan, I fell in love with a woman who had black hair to her knees and bright green eyes. Her bones were thin like a bird’s, and she stood always as if she were about to take flight. I would have married her, lived in her hut made from ridged sheet metal. One morning I turned over in bed and she was gone. I stayed for weeks and looked for her, but she never came back, and I took a boat around Saudi Arabia to Egypt, where I lived as a farmer on the banks of the Nile.”

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“Upstairs,” I said.

“What? What were you doing upstairs?” she asked.

“Reading.”

“What were you reading?” she asked.

“History,” I said.

My mother nodded and turned quickly to the door. She had to get back home to cook dinner for the heart surgeon. Then she would get on the phone, spend the rest of the evening in her den, sitting and talking and biting the end of a pen. I followed the click of her heels on the wood floor, while the man who owned the bookstore lay on the bed by the oval window and smoked his pipe, and a man and a woman walked happily along the banks of the Seine. We left the bookstore while a woman lay naked on the deck of a ship, her hair spread about her like a halo, and in an orchard in Madeira, a canary was breaking from its shell.
horizon of mossy stumps, the black tangled yarn of another storm
coming up behind them.

Lover's Rest  Danny Rothschild
"Well, you'll have to get your hair dirty. I'll get to sleep comfortably."

"I'm not going to re-pack," she said, pursing her mouth.

The boy sighed heavily and looked up at the teddy bear tucked neatly between the sheets on his bed, its fake eyes soft with a crescent of pale honey reflected through the window. The girl, indignant in her throne, glared out the glass. It was already dim outside. Treetops swayed like cilia or fishtails in the breeze, and the sky was still watery.

"We'd better be going, I guess. Mom and Dad won't wait up for us, wherever they are."

She pondered but did not move. The boy hitched the bookbag onto his bony shoulders and nodded.

"They'll be happy to see us again."

The screen door slammed behind them as they trekked from tile to grass, both the girl and boy keeping their heads forward, down the slope of the hill. Feverish clouds still veiled what remained of the sun. Deeper in the heavens the first of many stars were beginning to click into place. Rain and mud seeped through the sides of their shoes and leaves spilled clear beads onto their expressionless faces, onto their tongues and into their eyes; the girl imagined fish swimming around inside her shoes. The world became myopic in the water, and before the moon could rise, the children were lost beyond a dripping

The edge of my paper smiled from the shadows, silhouetted against the dark blue lines. My hand, it scratched the paper. We were dancers together, and I was infinite.
Jackson Rollings

It was soon twilight. It had been a long day. Miriam sat alone in the laundry room, eating a chunk of rosy-frosted cake, surrounded by aloof piles of clothing. Bert had taken the Volvo back to his house. It was his wife’s car. Molly left just as swiftly, her hair messy down the periphery of her face, stale with the stench of cigarette smoke. Miriam heard the front door slam, the gravel being crushed beneath striped stilettos. Her best guess was that Molly fled to the nearest bus stop and got on without looking where it went. Outsiders usually didn’t last that long here. Miriam struggled to remember if this was the first stranger to stay here. It evaded her. Ever-abiding, Miriam took another bite of cake, went downstairs into the kitchen, turned the lights off, and switched on the television.

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“It’ll get dirty. They say it’s gonna rain again. Late tonight,” the girl warned him.

He glanced up, irked.

“It won’t rain. Weathermen are always wrong.”

The girl settled herself in a chair, folded her arms, and sat adamantly.

“It’ll get dirty and you’ll regret bringing it,” she said.
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Scientists proclaim: "It is a marvel".
I say it is a machine,
and a faulty one at that.
Surely the blueprints for such a structure
must have been stained and incomplete.
A loyal, yet treacherous beast:
body.
My makeup. My burden.
Alveoli, temporalis, meniscus, thoracic-
wrap your tongue around those terms,
listen to your larynx generate the sounds,
exotic names for blind, bulbous organs.
We are hideous creatures, really,
clumsy and nonfunctional.
Bulging white masses of tumors
always growing, excavating;
unwelcome busy builders constructing what they please.
Weak spider webs of blood vessels
rupturing messily in the complex sponge of your brain.
Jellied blood clots like corks in the plumbing system of your arteries.
And that unintelligent muscle, heart,
thought to be so sensitive and coherent,
the center of emotion, one’s excuse to be irrational,
keeps feeding the beast with its pumping
pumping, pumping.
Don't Forget To Vote!

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Govern thy life and thoughts as if the whole world were to see the one, and read the other.

Thomas Fuller