

THE CANDLE

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT EDITION

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Sitting on a Bench
by Matt Munkittrick

Sitting on a bench,
not a person but
snow, just sitting.

Assurance
by Samuel Yuly

Years have passed
In no time at all,
Yet it has seemed like an eternity.
I try to tell you
“My life is futile,”
Don’t worry, it’s just my insanity.
My mind is stuck,
Yet still its racing,
Is there anything I can do?
But hold you tight,
Two hearts embracing,
And hear you say “that’s not true.”

on going home for the summer
by RMH

pack up the room of pulsating anxiety.
these walls that are seeped with your hatred will bleed into your delicate spiderweb nightmares no longer

pack up your clothes, books, shoes, hundreds of papers marked with ideas of how your mind operates
pack up your soiled, tired sheets covered in mascara and aching disappointment
that hatred that lies on everything like a film of dust
pack it up,
put it away.

and as you fold and pile and scrape
forgive yourself.
forgive the objects.

lay the knife in a box and apologize for the way you used it
whisper sweet nothings to the underwear he removed from you in his
bed

tell them it will be ok.
tell them that you won't let him touch them anymore
that you won't let him touch you anymore
that he will not be able to reach you anymore
that all the filmy hatred that left your pores and entered into everything
that makes up who you are
will be brushed off.
will be left behind
in this room of crushed bones and rancid insides.

you are going to a better place.
you are putting to death the you that lived in this room
that cried in this room
that died in this room
stake it through the heart
cut off the head so it cannot return
mutilate the frightening, hideous, trembling manifestation of
yourself that labored in the night
in this
room

in going home for the summer,
return home in your mind.
find that place again,
find it and make a home there.
remove him from you like the parasite that he is.
go home for the summer.

go
home.

A Response to Joyce

by Hannah Stright

She tilts her head – inquisitively.

The white-grey scarf
clothes her head and
flows towards her back.

The corners of her lips
upturn – slightly –
minimally –

The soft reds and blues
of her chalk skin blend
to create the perfect color,
perfect texture,
of hard-won beauty.

Her kind eyes search
the soul for depths
of meaning no one else
can see – assuring –
You are beautiful.

Please, Mom
by Tory Bonners

Please Mom,
Just leave him, Mom.
Leave him and be done,
Done with all the pain.

The Cardinal

by Matt Munkittrick

Stark red against a
backdrop white, is there a more
delighting contrast?

blue shorts
by RMH

still wear your shorts to bed sometimes
fingering the hole in the side.
i don't connect them with you anymore
except for the few times i catch myself in the mirror
and remember staring at myself in your sliding doors
wondering when i would be brave enough to get away from
you.

the pain is dull
like all the white ridges on my arms and thighs
but the boy in class
wears your cologne
and monday, wednesday, friday
every breath i breathe
is
frightened.

Enlighten

by Colleen Shannon

Know when it comes

this bright does not happen every day.

I want to be there for all its worth but hesitate at the thought of similar rare happenings.

Like getting struck by lightning.

Lightning making false daylight shoots veins across my sky. like defibrillator to my chest it awakens me.

The shock forces my heart to beat with it,
my lungs to breathe in it,
my blood to circulate it round 'til I know nothing
more than that charged taste of life. forgotten once
but renewed in that electric friction so intense that
reverberations rock me back and forth for days in the
sound of it. the sight of it.
the feel of it. depending on how you look at it.

Lightning, bright but fleeting in the storm clouds it brought with it.

Lightening, uplifts and enlivens whether it brought the clouds or not.

Light me not with brief rods of static but with enduring rays of sun. like moon in want of sun's light that we shine together. We push pull the earth in orbit, walking through a crowd of footsteps in the dust, going comers and coming goers, our rhythmic tide illuminates their blind sight.

The eyes of glasses look directly as if the time and space between us didn't exist. We are our own dimension beyond the earth, bending stars to grant each other's wishes. With one smile my sun rises and so when I am with you I know there will always be a tomorrow.

This bright does not happen every day
but maybe it can. maybe it can.

Untitled

by Hannah Makin

Little girl with knotted, wild hair
and twinkling fairy eyes
wears an old, moth-eaten blanket
as a queenly cape
traipsing about the forest
commanding the wind from her
mossy, tree-stump throne.
It is here in her hidden kingdom
that she may finally close her weary, wet eyes,
rest her head on a pine-needle pillow,
and sleep safely.

regret

by RMH

your razorblade tongue ran across my forearm
my breasts
my thighs
i know it isn't right
but make a mistake enough times
and it no longer feels like one
i am always fine
until i am alone
in my room
thinking about you
and your
quick
cutting
tongue
on my skin

forgive me lord

i have sinned

Lost and Found

by Crystal Zuver

Freedom isn't free. It comes with a price. Back in 2002, I met a man online and we hit it off. (At this time I was a single mom.)

When it came time to meet, I got cold feet.

I met someone else and got pregnant. I broke things off with the online guy.

Things progressed with the other man this true Jeckyl and Hyde.

Even though I finally saw the real him, I still chose to marry him.

He would beat me and push me around when I was 3 months pregnant.

I called the police and he was put in jail. I should have left then, but I was scared.

I wasn't even allowed to visit my family. We had another child together. The

abuse continued. So many times I wanted to leave him. Years went by, the abuse and rape continued. He forced me to move across country several times a year. If I didn't, I'd never see my children again.

I lost custody of my oldest. I had enough and planned to move out. He told me he would rather see me dead than raise our kids. So, I left, without my kids, away from him.

I can still see my little babies crying, "Don't leave me here."

I couldn't take them with me. I knew I'd get them back. I filed for divorce on my birthday 8 years later and was granted custody of my kids.

I found the "online guy" and we began talking again. The kids and I moved to New York to be with him, and I am pleased to say that we are going on our fifth year of marriage! Don't give up if you are in this situation. LEAVE.

Don't look back.

I had to make sacrifices, but in the end, they were well worth it.

Midnight Meeting

by Sophia Ross

“One need not be a Chamber - to be Haunted -
One need not be a House -”
Emily Dickinson, Poem 670

She seals her corridors and closets,
she locks her house of doors.
Pools cement between the bricks,
in ceiling plaster cracks. Blows out
the candles with one breath,
bolts furniture to the wall.

Gaps in the floorboards are covered
with carpets. She pads
through her remaining rooms,
peers behind a bookcase
and under the bed.

Every cranny illuminated,
all shadows searched, I settled
into my own nook. My eyes closed,
she tapped me on the shoulder,
and only then I knew
I could not forget.

Grandeur, Yet to Come

by Elizabeth Modesto

Gentle

He kissed me like he meant it

Soft but with a delicate ferocity

Greedy

At the time I didn't mind

But now my body quivers at the idea of his touch

Good

He called me by my name

Not like others had before, but rather with a sweet courage

Gone

He left me with out explanation

He hurt me with no real words to tell why

Untitled

by Juliana Evans

Sometimes I feel suffocated

in my own skin.

Something scurries within soft layers

Nails scratching - burrowing beneath

Setting - solidly - a home within my body.

I claw at the surface

Stretching the birthgiven armor, begging

the beings to escape - yet -

Sanctuary! - it must be - for those creatures

but why not for me?

One Night at a Time

by Theresa Patnala

A mystery, are you

Like an ocean

With a depth unknown;

Beauty undefined

Vast, are you

Like a wide sky

Drawing attention;

Where eyes can't get around

A gem, are you

Hidden beneath the ground

Like a spring that feeds the creek

That requires a search party

To find you

Pages, so many

They carry your soul

So read to me

A part of yours

One night at a time

Boston

by Alyssa Rogan

winding brick roads

send me in circles

because street signs are tucked

where i cannot see them.

my feet tread an hour

and the cold air

is freezing my hands.

gray clouds dim the sky

and my eyes are flitting

from life to life -

but their eyes point downward

where i cannot see them.

they plug their ears

with their headphones

and hug their dark coats

close to their chests.

for all the life

abounding in Boston

there is none at all.