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Tide issue three

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Tide issue three

Abstract
Editorial - Ticka Ticka Ticka Boom, TIDE talks the talk, tops the pops, tells both truths and twists taboos, tattoos the tempo o/life on the temples a/humanity: TIDE is a tripped-out trick that trunks the funk at five bucks a thrash. Compiled by third-year editing students, TIDE is collection of creative writing and artwork solicited from University of Wollongong students and beyond. It is a publication showcasing a broad range of what creative writing has to offer; a publication which, in time, we hope will become an ongoing anthology of emerging talent. As writers and editors, our aim is to show how poetry, prose and script have the power to shape our perception of reality - to inspire, educate and emancipate. The production of TIDE, while trying at times, has worked to re-emphasise the importance of creative passion in an increasingly pragmatic world. We have learnt that brilliance is rarely achieved alone and our successes are owed to the effort and compromise of our fellow editors, writers and artists who have worked together to make this publication possible. You hold in your hands: TIDE 2006

Authors

This journal article is available in Tide: http://ro.uow.edu.au/tide/vol3/iss1/1
Editorial

Ticka Ticka Ticka Boom, TIDE ticks the box, says the pope, ticks both truth and twists taboos, tick the tempo of life on the temples of humanity. TIDE is a trip-out trick that ticks the book at its back a charm.

Compiled by third-year editing students, TIDE is collection of creative writing and artwork solicited from University of Wollongong students and beyond. It is a publication showcasing a broad range of what creative writing has to offer; a publication which, in time, we hope will become an ongoing anthology of emerging talent. As writers and editors, our aim is to show how poetry, prose and script have the power to shape our perception of reality - to inspire, educate and emancipate.

The production of TIDE, while trying at times, has worked to re-emphasise the importance of creative passion in an increasingly pragmatic world. We have learnt that brilliance is rarely achieved alone and our successes are owed to the effort and compromise of our fellow editors, writers and artists who have worked together to make this publication possible.

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Poetry Is
Lachlan Williams

not my friend. It's
never lent me cigarettes or cash.

Poetry stole my car, fucked
my dog, it got my grandma high.

It excites my sexual partners more than I
though it swears it never touched them,
I know what it's up to —
poetry, you lying prick, I heard you
stick your verb in her
subjunctive clause,
paw her
with your adjectives —
you called her nouns I'd never heard before
and when I asked you why, you didn't bother
to deny it —
"Thou art more beautiful than ... this or that,"
you said.

Poetry,
I want you dead.
I want you tied to stakes and raped by rabid
chimpanzees.
I hope you get diseases that haven't even
been discovered yet.

You should be covered in yak fat,
shat upon
fed to politicians,
and when you're gone,
I'll sleep at night,
instead of staying up 'til fuck o'clock

"Thou art more beautiful than ... this or that,"
you said.

Poetry,
I want you dead.
I want you tied to stakes and raped by rabid
chimpanzees.
I hope you get diseases that haven't even
been discovered yet.

You should be covered in yak fat,
shat upon
fed to politicians,
and when you're gone,
I'll sleep at night,
instead of staying up 'til fuck o'clock
to write these stupid lines.

Backchat Radio
Lachlan Williams

at 5am the poem explodes & what you could write next becomes
the vastest map free of topographical detail — a grey sphere
composed entirely of ducks & tales of Australia
drafted from 1955, when chicken coops were important, dammit!

& tho you think of the giant lie of cities
even these are in their own way quaint
(less poultry per capita perhaps the point?)

but when your poems start sounding like strungout
strung together cryptic crossword clues you know
it's time to go to sleep & dream of agriculture while behind you
australia all over reports the price of sheep

Lachlan Williams is a writer who lives in Wollongong. He is a member of The Bracket Creeps,
and playwright and a wannabe dentist's assistant. If he were an animal, he would be an aard-vark, so as to precede all the other animals in the dictionary.
Purgatory, 1968 (an excerpt from novel: ad hoc [sic])

Anna Popoff

There were five women in the room pacing incessantly. Back and forth, back and forth; you could already tell why they were there from the way they walked. With gaits that ran the gamut from trot to canter, they carried their burdens and obligations in perfect synchronized time.

First, the nun: regulation modesty haircut, brown blouse, habit. You will roll your eyes as I tell you, but I promise she was clutching some prayer beads.

The blonde woman: a Claire or Clarise or Chrissie, sporting a cardigan over an ill-concealed bump, walking back and forth to her own circadian rhythms, back and forth for two. She often imagined that her twenty-four hour day was now halved to twelve. That this parasitic child of hers was sucking away all the best years of the life. (She would be carrying for nine months, yes? Nine times thirty times twelve ... something like three thousand hours, she had worked out.)

It was pointless, as long as it was his spawn. She may as well just have the baby in prison: 'at least then he'll be prepared for the disappointments'.

The fifth woman went by the name of Mindy on Mondays, Therese on Tuesdays, Wanda on Wednesdays, Tina on Thursdays and Frankie on Fridays. On weekends, she stayed at home: minding her two teenaged boys. 'It's just too hard, getting a babysitter come weekends,' she would complain to the doorman at the club, '... and it's not like I have friends good enough to mind them every day,' making sure to stoop to something like his height so he could get a clear view of her painstakingly crafted cleavage. Today, she sashayed back and forth in a little black dress.

The fifth woman went by the name of Mindy on Mondays, Therese on Tuesdays, Wanda on Wednesdays, Tina on Thursdays and Frankie on Fridays. On weekends, she stayed at home: minding her two teenaged boys. 'It's just too hard, getting a babysitter come weekends,' she would complain to the doorman at the club, '... and it's not like I have friends good enough to mind them every day,' making sure to stoop to something like his height so he could get a clear view of her painstakingly crafted cleavage. Today, she sashayed back and forth in a little black dress. You see, she just couldn't remember if she was Therese or Wanda and her little getup seemed to suit both characters just fine. She couldn't remember who she was here to see: Ted or Jed, or Spider or Snake, maybe. She kept on telling herself that she was there for morale, but when it came to grogging time — when push came to desperate, brutal, bruising shove — she was there for the cash.
Left, right, left right, turn.

'What a mundane Thursday morning at the prison!' you think on the outside. Why take us here? What insight could we possibly gain from a description of a prison visitors waiting room: plain, unadorned walls; complete with desperate women; all potential, untapped heroines, harlots, brave hearts, villainesses! Characters, every one. Women that are the stuff of fiction! Women pacing back and forth, back and forth, treading out mediocre paths of inspiration for mundane lines in mainstream stories to cater for the grain-munching masses. Women that are — professionally, socially, psychologically, sexually — not your concern. You are here to witness the facts. You are here for truth.

The women, five of them, pace in the small windowless waiting room. Pacing in anticipation, or dread, for the go-ahead. Pacing left, right, left right, turn until the guard ambles his I’ve-got-all-day arse over to them, ring of keys in hand.

Here he comes now, limping as he shifts his personable bulk from foot to foot. Left, right... Left, right... And the jangle of seldom used, frequently fantasised about keys in his slack grip. Left, right...

Wait.

There is a third somebody: the guard, the keys and a woman. She is light on her feet, a girl with that audible skip in her step, a girl in sensible flats but an extravagant dress. A compromise outfit between mother and daughter. She is nineteen and healthy. A full head of striking brunette hair, long limbs tanned with summer sun wrapped in a silver shift. Yes, silver, the product of a short-lived sixties trend, an infatuation with the space age. In a year’s time, fashion’s affair with the cosmos was over: the dress was passé, out, as man stepped all over the moon and all over our televisions, through our collective subconscious.

The girl walks into the room. She sees women, five of them, pacing, and chooses to sit on one of the moulded plastic standard-issue chairs.

The women stop their pacing. The nun relaxes her grip on her beads. The pregnant woman realises she has been clutching at her stomach and self-consciously returns her hands to her sides. The sisters pocket their brother’s loose teeth. The woman now known as Tina remembers to smile.

'Are you here to visit family?'

'Or a friend?'

'You’re awfully young to be married,' states the cardiganed woman.

'Are you from the parish?'

The girl replies, without really looking or listening.

'I’m here because I want to be.'

The broad guard returns to the room.

'Sister,' he beckons. 'Shane, I’ll get someone to sign you out.'

The young woman leaves escorted by another guard.

She has the luxury of walking out by herself, through doors that remember more notable entrances than exits. She looks both ways and then enters the street.

The women remain still; the human pendulum is stalled, yet time continues to pass around and through them in great leaps and bounds. They stand, hands in pockets, around beads or over bumps, fondling what they think of as burdens, and we as guilty pleasures.

Anna put the 'Whack' in 'Whickety Whack'.
1. Distort simple breathing exercises by interpreting neutral actions as hostile.
2. Intrude Las Vegas's dream-sting with a huff of hypersensitivity.
3. Be a rucky, husky ride through nasty psychoanalytic sky, bound for the palace point of pleasure-principle night.
4. Necessarily lose it in a small explosion of adrenalin.
5. Arrive only to lose yourself in different kinds of brokenness.
6. Attention battered and battered types: you should fill the room only to get the prize for having inertia.
7. Know this: idiosyncratic porky pies are compressed of dense, unnatural coir fibers, everyone of their 'magic carpet rides' composed of bristles that eradicate truth and beauty from footwear.
8. Allow paranoid ideation four weeks for monogrammed delivery.
9. Borderline Personality discounts do not apply, if you resist being abused then plug your heart-start into the slipped one's cigarette lighter socket for a truly wireless experience.
10. If life's on-screen 'foreboding display' fails to uncork you, then walk right in like Pethidine wearing fishnet tights - the bittersweet sparks will be in your part that forgot about it.
11. Blackjack and the sparks are in you, Oh Medicino.
12. Little lime livelihood will feel you stalling with Moroccan wine, every muscle aching at his door.
13. Liquor? You don't even know her.

At needlepoint, Levi said Wonderland Avenue could smooth your mood.

He la-la likes it, elbow deep within the borderline downstairs and always god-damning strawberry fields, he's so 'Santa Monica Boulevard' right now, looking dangerous amongst the indie-nerd turkeys who rule the world.

So if you're not dying in his arms tonight on Xanax, then fucking swing it the other way and go for 'jazzy as pimp' guy—that bank robbing party dude who flashes fast money, hires tropical islands and never asks questions.
At least the curtains drawn and another slice of smooth paradise would keep you and Bermuda versed. There's always the lazy, diamond-studded Levi flunky to gitty-up and get away with down his many sharp shooting avenues, where wonder seals every casualty of the dice game.

Hiding out beneath Spanish Harlem sweat pants grinning like a shitty plastic toy you could stick to your dashboard. Bermuda's suede, thug head gets back once again for the renegade master with the ill behaviour. Sophisticated as a teenage millionaire lounging on Moet and Chandon's White Star reverie, he knows how to wear a devious, champagne-laced stare.

After porcelain head-crack, Levi smokes a fatty lumpkin, threatening you with a carpet cutter like some goombah dickhead who wants to kick your ass if you don't have a light. But then there is something Bermuda asks and you have to leave.

Is there some karmic-triangle love thing happening here or what?

---

**Her queen sized set like a mattress for a car thief**

*Alise Blayney*

Miss 'Adult Whirlpool' claims she bounced Ariel's grotto, can splash a wealth of promiscuity, can spring on delivery. Her sex is in mint condish, hanging hypoallergenic as a satin striped pillow face, more durable than a new generation stateroom pillowcase. Her sex is a special laundry promotion collected by the steward at 10.30 am like hours for undershirts, like stockings for washing powder.

Her sex is 200 thread expensive cotton count, freshly folded, but not ironed.

To harbour dirty linen she gets the sex to have mess, star struck on the rocks for the joker like a clepto for promiscuity like delivery.

*Alise is peachy keen for pina coladas and Mother Superior jumping the gun. She reckon's it'd be righteous to get off hard knocks and live on Revival Street, eg — it would rapture her to kick it with Sinatra on stage, if he were still belting out tunes today.*
Almost Still

Justin Davis

The sheer height and constriction of the mountain's apex should make the presence of a house impossible. Yet here one stands. But maybe it's because of my exhaustion I'm not seeing things as they are. Something deep within beseeches me not to enter but I'm paralysed, my gaze transfixed on some unnameable aspect of it.

I go to pull away but I'm paralysed, I want this more than anything. There is nothing else that matters. I marvel to the point of nausea.

From my prostrate position I see a pair of small, bare feet. I look again and there is only a vacant doorway. Climbing through the doorway, I catch a glimpse of a near-osheman little boy climbing through a windowill on the opposite side. By the time I reach him, he has ascended to the next room and is crawling out the next window. Going through a nearby doorway as a shortcut, I find myself not where anticipated - in a different room.

A girl, younger and more pallid than the boy, runs past the adjacent doorway. Through a myriad of rooms I keep going but am unable to catch her.

Driven by an all-consuming desire to catch one, I trail their shifting figures, switching when I lose sight of one. I don't know how many children there are in this house, they seem to converge into one another, each of them possessing the same emaciated, deathly ill features and broken bodies. Yet there is no sound. Some children look as young as six. My efforts are fruitless. All the children have vanished. Directions, thoughts, I continue to run.

I run until I can taste an abundance of blood, and curl over. My lungs reach out and are met with hot coils of wind tearing through them. And now, for the first time since entering, I can hear, though only from within; unearthly sounds, sounds of archaic machinery. Every window and door leads to the same room. I'm lost. Confusion sets in until I am on the verge of blacking out. And I realize I do I will never wake up. It's the children who have been chasing me. I need to get out or I am going to die.

Windows, doorways, walls - endless repetition. Somehow my boundless path returns me to the front room, the safety of outside just through the foyer.

Only now there are pictures adorning the foyer walls.

On my left side are faded family portraits, each showing a different family, everyone smiling from ear to ear, surrounded by an artificial background. I recognize some of the children in these portraits to be the same wraith-like shells that are still inside this place.

On my right side hang three drawings that make me wish to close my eyes even again. The first depicts the back of a house, situated dead along a cliff face. The walls are missing as if burnt off by the wind. Scattered earth over the cliff face are the remains of the house's inhabitants, an enmeshed cadaver of every conceivable luxury and convenience, hauled over the jagged rocks below. A
The second picture is in saturated layers of red pencil and crayon. The canvas is torn and moist in some areas. A giant plastic bag overflows with blood in the middle. Small children reach upward from the base of the bag.

The medium used for the final picture is unrecognisable. But it's cold to the touch and of a room identical to the one I now stand in. Rather than leading outside, the door opens to a chamber. The dimensions of the chamber are unknowable as darkness surrounds the edges. Suspended from the ceiling are human-shaped cocoons. Although they appear wound too tight to ever be opened, they're moving just barely. It's as if whoever keeps what's inside alive. But to be soundless, almost still.

I try to scream but I don't know why your parents did the things they did, but gallons of blood pour out in place of words. Maybe I can't say it because really I do know. I also know what now awaits. Overcome with sadness, I open the door where my slow, eventless disintegration will take place. But it's not home. The children are huddled together at the opposite end of the hallway. For the last time this door will close.

In Canada, Justin Davis fractured his skull and spent two months in a hotel room in the Rocky Mountains where he came up with an idea for a novel but never wrote it. He then attempted a creative writing course but never completed it. Today he cares more about Jesus' return than anything else.

Receipts and Postcards for 'S'
Tanya Bennett

I met her on the edge of Things. She smelled of vinegar, wore a blue raincoat over red stockings and called herself Delilah.

She smelled of vinegar. The hair in her left hand wrapped my neck like a scarf. She chewed cigars and called herself Delilah.

I asked about Samson but she only laughed. The hair in her left hand wrapped my neck like a scarf. She led me behind a wall of mirrors.

We smoked awhile then I saw the scissors. She smelled of vinegar. I met her on the edge of Things. She led me behind a wall of mirrors. We smoked awhile then I saw the scissors.
Thoughts on your leaving

Tamryn Bennett

I kept thinking
I should have shown you all the shapes
I could make with food
salad, especially
because you can do a lot with beans
and lettuce, cucumbers and beans.
And maybe you wouldn’t be leaving,
staying instead
and not leaving.
I was supposed to be
a warm spot beside you in the morning,
a half eaten slice of toast,
a note wrapped around your toothbrush,
as you’d made me up.

A fictional character in a
three minute
excerpt from a film called ‘You’.

A character that wasn’t meant to be
emented in circumstance
and begging you
to stay.
Maybe I should have pulled the line
about shopping trolleys
that go where you want them to
or how to save light in a box.
But the street directory was missing page
twenty-eight
and your suitcase sticker said ‘fragile’.

I could have told you what the mould conglomeration
in the bathroom spelled
and about the dripping tap
at the Henley Mills when I was four.
Except my mouth was full,
the fridge was empty
and you liked to wear car muffs.

“Strangers do the most damage. The ones you never get to know.
Seen in passing cars, mirrored in windows and remembered.” — Rod McKuen
Road-Kill

MAN 1 is hanging upside down from the car's ceiling. MAN 2 enters and walks past.

MAN 1: Excuse me. A little help?

MAN 2: That's it. What do you think you're doing up there?

MAN 1: Sorry. It's just that I've been hanging here a while and I think I'm starting to go numb.

MAN 2: Right. So, why don't you get down?

MAN 1: I can't.

MAN 2: What the...? Don't startle me like that.

MAN 1: It's not what it looks like.

MAN 2: What kind of man carries around a knife, anyway?

MAN 1: A psychopath.

MAN 2: I was just imagining the mortal peril I saved you from then, was I?

MAN 1: What are you doing up there?

MAN 2: I'm almost through. Get ready.

MAN 1: I didn't!

MAN 2: Give it here then.

MAN 1: Man, I don't know!

MAN 2: Put a knife on it.

MAN 1: Then what happened?

MAN 2: Oh, right then, fair enough. I think I've got a knife here somewhere.

MAN 1: Then you go.

MAN 2: Couldn't you cut it for me?

MAN 1: You keep begging.

MAN 2: Jumps up and waves the knife about.

MAN 1: I can't reach.

MAN 2: Right. So, why don't you get down?

MAN 1: I can't.

MAN 2: A little help?

MAN 1: Sorry, it's just that I've been hanging here a while and I think I'm starting to go numb.

MAN 2: What's the matter with you?

MAN 1: I was just imagining the mortal peril I saved you from then, was I?
MAN 1: That was hardly mortal peril. At most I would have blacked out from the blood rushing to my head.

MAN 2: My uncle died from high blood pressure. It counts as mortal peril.

MAN 1: I'm still not a damsel.

MAN 2: Whatever you say, lass.

MAN 1: I'm a man.

MAN 2: Prove it.

MAN 1: What? No, I won’t prove it!

MAN 2: So you're not just a damsel, you're a prude too. I thought you were supposed to put out for the prince who saved your life.

MAN 1: You're not a prince, you didn’t save me and I am not a woman!

MAN 2: Trust me to save the snarky damsel.

MAN 1: Well, why don't you try it and see how you like it?

MAN 2: Prove it.

MAN 1: I reckon you’d make a worse damsel than I ever did.

MAN 2: Dream on. You’re a terrible damsel; anyone would do a better job than you.

MAN 1: Prove it.

MAN 2: I will, then! Tie me to that pole and leave me to be ravaged by wild animals.

MAN 1: We’re in the middle of the suburbs.

MAN 2: Wild children on bicycles then.

MAN 1 ties MAN 2 to a pole in the slide.

I’ve to see if the man who comes along and saves me thinks I’m the perfect damsel in distress.

MAN 2: Trust me to save the snarky damsel.

MAN 1: Whatever, mate.

Heh, self-righteous damsels: always gotta be proving they’re better than the rest of us.

Kristie Davis is an Em chord gone wrong. She can’t be bothered being paranoid and instead passes time in the most obscure niches of the world searching for the perfect pair of boots to match her bookcase.
Haiku
Jimmy Andrews
A schoolboy short and me
with an empty box of juice
in its straw the barrel.

Jimmy Andrews is a fourth-year student
at the University of Wollongong (simple but true).

Areole
David Brown
She takes me in hand and starts pulling
pushing the beige star into my mouth as
though murder -
the irony is.

Wide expanse of lawn, flap of tent between
us; my own devices;
everything about this moment, now, seems
impractical.

Her hair, which climbs both up and down
up and over him -
she could be so heartless.

I pull myself apart, reaching over
dare to shake him
as she laughs,
folding me back in for cunnilingus.

Db that the act could have been subtle.
secret, or better yet, avoided.

Up in the hours
fooling around, and when she asks
small graces
I refuse to fuck her.

This outrageous act.
You can see why I might be
One such Homosexual —
KINGS CROSS, 2001
Daniel Brown

I was but one hot thing
In the city, walking the
curious streets
in awe and
discernment — laughing like a drain.

Night comes on
like an evangelical on a
doorstep,
and you can see why I
might be 'one such
homosexual':
I sway
with the bottle —
watching the
boys in the bushes,
muttering, chucking,
moving about
desperate to find a friend.

He's a fountain, not some flashy Archibald,
he is loose,
is hard
to swallow,
and then this: the sky confetti:
bouncing down, a red face of
moving colours
for us onlookers.
Coke, the world turns and ends now, and
so I was born, so I am created.

there's the use of it:
there's
no going back, the world
is alive now, in motion.
You are ready, you are immovable —
Boy, are you ready

Daniel Brown is like a school of tropical fish:
not one no no no no no no no no no.

Extract from NERO'S LOVE
Scene Two
Bridget Price

OCTAVIA: He suspects me for cheating on
him.
AGRIPPINA: Paranoid.

OCTAVIA: Why is he constantly suspicious? I
would never betray him.
AGRIPPINA: It is usually the accusers that
are the unfaithful ones.

OCTAVIA: I know about his orgies
with men,
but I think it's a woman this time. He has red
spots all over his penis.
AGRIPPINA: He has red spots all over his
body. That boy could never douse himself.

OCTAVIA: He smells different.
AGRIPPINA: He never bathes.

OCTAVIA: The odor is not poor hygiene this
time. His stench is disloyal.
AGRIPPINA: That's because he's cheating on
you. He's cheating with Poppaea Sabina.

OCTAVIA: Now I have her spots.
AGRIPPINA: I'm sorry (Pause) I should have
aborted him.

OCTAVIA: His Empire is going to crumble.
AGRIPPINA: His Empire is going to crumble.
OCTAVIA: (scaring at herself) Everything
is so itchy.
AGRIPPINA: Do you think I was a bad mother?
OCTAVIA: No. Do you think I am a bad wife?
AGRIPPINA: Of course not.
OCTAVIA: It hurts.
AGRIPPINA: What does?
OCTAVIA: Inside. I wish the pain would stop.
AGRIPPINA: It rarely does.
OCTAVIA: I feel heavy.
AGRIPPINA: Don’t love him. Look at your sores. Don’t waste tears on someone who has issue.
OCTAVIA: I’m pregnant.
AGRIPPINA: What?
OCTAVIA: It already has a spinal cord.
AGRIPPINA: Have you told Nero?
OCTAVIA: No. Not yet.
AGRIPPINA: Don’t.
OCTAVIA: Maybe he’d treat me differently if I did.
AGRIPPINA: Get rid of it.
OCTAVIA: No.
AGRIPPINA: Do you really want to have his child?
OCTAVIA: I refuse to kill this baby. I want to be a mother.
AGRIPPINA: Why? So you can watch it grow?
OCTAVIA: Yes and so I can have someone to care for.
AGRIPPINA: They don’t always turn out how you envision.
OCTAVIA: I have no expectations.
AGRIPPINA: Children are a burden. Think of the crying, the constant demands -
OCTAVIA: I’m having this baby.
AGRIPPINA: Just imagine Nero as a father. He’ll be cruel. He’ll beat the child.
OCtavia: I can do it alone.

Agrippina: I'm trying to save you.

Octavia: From what? From a chance at finally finding happiness in this empty palace?

Agrippina: From disappointment.

Scene Three

Nero: Are you watching me? Watch me! Watch me! Watch me!

Octavia: Yes

Nero: This one is titled "Burn the Little Bastards" (shakes thread) hear then, hear then. (grabs crutch) Dare you go against my power?

OCtavia: Is it finished?

Nero gives her a threatening look. Octavia claps with superficial enthusiasm.

Octavia: Encore! Encore!

Bridget is a vegetarian who enjoys writing, theatre, travel and animal liberation. If there is an afterlife she would like to share a pot of tea with Princess Leia, Nonna Jean, Harry Leonard and Janis Joplin.
Call This Then:
an Imposition
Tried feet

puck & moose & joy

pink & sweet & eager

your eyes
inkpot drawing
salt rings your feet
the moth is dead
was dead and then alive and
I let go
you need to let go
get what you may while
there is time

yours

ending or meaning rules
you or yours
they or them
who has struck legs from your body
you keep
you keep
beartime
a moth or Lazarus

but I to

discrimination and daylight
shiffla little cruelties

for once

you live (d)

I am asking you
better to strike out and end
what
insects and clockwork will live forever
( if given the choice )

but your tongue though
Complicity
Desire love.

I know in every woman there is the image of another one I desire more.

That is why we watch movie stars, or car crashes depending on your outlook. I say all this, she doesn't reply.

Right now she is a poster it's absurd but I think we can make it work. She's selling prescription frames in a brown one piece house and belt.

Her legs are impossibly long designed like a deer or bell bottoms but there is nothing in her pictured falling away, and her green eyes flat silent.

Somewhere called Horizon.
In this muddier world the clouds have turned the pavement purple pink. The poster is selling she looks cold. I want to buy her coffee. Or a coat. A warm coat.

I want the ants the sun everything to live and love out.

Her lips are the gun metal blue a starless sky crashes.

That is why I love her not for the bare, gawd from half a dozen body parts not for how weak and distant she is present and failing. 

People suspected I'm crazed and keep an eye on the traffic lights instead.

I admit freely this is not my world. Here, nothing reaches us profoundly as the pavement without the woman-drum the poster is selling she talks cold. I want to buy her coffee.

On a coat. A warm coat.

I want the ants the sun everything to live and love out. Her lips are the gun metal blue a starless sky crashes.

That is why I love her not for the bare gawd from half a dozen body parts not for how weak and distant she is present and failing.
Daniel East is a spectre haunting himself. His doubled image is cast by the silvered moon and Apollo’s faded glory. He is wracked with doubt and least of all ownership in question.

Bel Heather Dixon
Bel is a parasite that lives in my brain. It’s always been that way — as far as I can remember, glancing down to see pink child’s toes with crescent nails. Bel floated around my mind, bathing in fluid and playing in the tissues that held my every thought.

When I was seven, he made himself a palace out of brain cells: creating flesh turrets and spires that brushed the white sky of my skull. A domed ceiling flecked with capillaries was his favourite — a piece of living marble.

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Bel.
"You're being very unfair."

"Yeah."

"Will you stop it? You're giving me a headache, precious." "Yeah."

"I'm serious. Every move you make..." "Sony."

"Well, we are here now and..." "Fme."

I wonder if, when they cut me up, they will find a dream palace or just a sad, empty cavity. The woman's hand is long and narrow in my grip. The skin sliding under my fingertips is wrinkled and milken; blue veins snake their way toward her wrist. Despite the fragility, there are no tremors, no hint of age. Her fingers are stretched out, resting on my hand. Her thumb brushes my palm and she smiles: all I can do is stare. "Hello," she says, with a slight wave. "Hi." I realise I spoke too softly when she leans forward. "Hello!" This time she hears and lets me go, her arms go back to her sides and she clutches the skirt of her thin cotton dress with one fist. As the woman's knuckles tighten, I glance at the wounds hanging at her side. I trace the white creases of skin and the shadowed crevasses between her bones until they end. Abruptly. A jagged ball of red scarring... It should be. The red turns to fine pink streaks that reach towards her elbow. She sees me looking and hides her deformity in the folds of material. "Sony fm staring," I say. The woman looks up from the ground and curles her lips: not exactly a smile. "It happens." She pauses as if waiting for me to say something, when I don't she continues. Welcome to Lemon Tree Creek. I follow where she points. Of the creek, there isn't much: a thin stream that winds its way between black mud banks. Trees, two I can see: gums, with large dirt patches underneath the branches. The rest is field. Yellow-green pasture that houses three caravans: their corrugated surfaces painted in equal parts of cream and rust. "Morag." She smiles as she hears my name and I recognise it: a slight tilt of the mouth that doubts what I have said. "Morag." I repeat. "Yes. Unusual." As she speaks, I notice a sound in my head. It starts inside my brain, then moves outwards until it is clear: a giggle. "Stop it Bel," I whisper, glad that Vera seems a little deaf. "This is where you are staying." She points to a caravan on the left. A huge hole has consumed half the thin, dark lines of fly screen and its tiny windows are turned opaque by dirt. "The rent's twenty-five dollars a fortnight. Tubs down the back, but bring your own paper and there's a toilet in the van but..."

"Well this is it." The laughing raps and my thought maroon themselves around its absence. "Real high class," I try to ignore it. The babble is Bel's voice tangled up in my thoughts. "System's always been a bit dodgy... Very rural... Generator has shut down now and then--" "You and me, Baggie..." She nods as she hears my name and I recognise it: a slight tilt of the mouth that doubts what I have said. "Yes. Universal! As she speaks, I notice a sound in my head. From inside my brain, it turns outward until it is clear: a giggle. "It's not Bel," I whisper, glad that Vera seems a little deaf. "This is where you are staying," she points to a caravan on the left. A huge hole has consumed half the thin, dark lines of fly screen and its tiny windows are turned opaque by dirt. "The rent's twenty-five dollars a fortnight. Tubs down the back, but bring your own paper and there's a toilet in the van but..."

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Heather resides on planet Earth.

"It's okay. I'm sure it will be wonderful," I reply and then ask, soft, as she leans forward watching my lips form the words, "What happened?"

"To this?" Vera lifts her deformity from the cotton and holds it right up to my face. The tartaned flesh sticks out in lumps — flakes of skin fused to the uneven surface.

"Well," she says and covers her arm with her dress over more. "I was in the circus, working with the tigers."

Already I can see her in a sapphire suit with sapphire eyes. The tiger's stripes are black against white. The crowd is silent. His paws are invisible — paws or claws across sawdust. She walks, the carpet of thin wooden curls parting at her feet.

The crowd is silent. But when teeth latch on they scream — scream as the muscles tear and bones snap and magenta fur. "And one day I was chasing fifty pounds as we set up, I was on my knees picking the note up... It was a truck."

The Tiger and Vera are swallowed by laughing. Not mine. It all echoes around my skull.

"I'm sorry."

She responds, though the words are torn away by others before I can comprehend. "Stupid Moggy. Stupid, stupid, stupid." He is in my fantasies again. Burbling, bursting, and destroying my thoughts.

"Shut up, Bel. Shut up." I yell. Air brushes past me as Vera steps back: her fingers extended, making the movements of a priest warding off evil. I spoke too loud.

"Will you be alright?" She looks at me like I'm insane, but it's okay, she only has one hand.
New Year’s Day
Emily Finlay
At the river's hip you swallow my heart in mouth
calveent while fish
suckle my toes, brown
wind exhumes my eyes: rubble
in sockets. RubeKe-shaped vats.
Touch me, I'll pull out dust, think
like flies for barbequed pork.
Touch me. RubeKe puff out dust, thick
like flies for barbequed pork.
Touch me. Slake me in hip's
mud: tepid souffle, hair
grit-pasting your shoulders
with coffee-grains on freckles, on skin.
Your voice following me like the
riYel' before the bend,
before the mud.

Housewife for a Balding Icon
Emily Finlay
Her Welsh-love-spoon curves goosepimple like tongues on ice-cream beneath a fur-leaved Jacaranda.
She's sleeping in the shadow of her hip - brown across the soot above her bowels, well puckered at the seam of a brain, the scene of her child's
entrance, perhaps.
Sleeping naked on the banana chair, silt-coloured string for hair and to look at her you'd think she'd fallen there, like milk, like ice or teeth fall-
and dust, onto carpet-textured pith.

Victoria St.
Emily Finlay
Buxom's flawless shells, kidney-shaped pebbles a lover oon turned in his palm as though they were stone after all.
Perhaps we're the same. Even seated we glitter, watching waiter's torn trousers, ragged, French flag stitched at the rump -
your fallen capsule blisters, tepid and powdered between my fingers. Tell me those floured shells are her husk.
The waiter siphons out the bottle. Don't look for her number plate: in me with phrases. Perhaps we're the same.

Emily n'est pas un petit éléphant. Emily Finlay is not a small elephant, but she sometimes enjoys searching for nuts. She studies a man who made it his life's work to die as though falling off the end of a weak sentence, and admires him for it.
Life Has One Hump

Patricia Lentox

Life, I've found, is full of small disappointments. A fairly standard discovery, you may think. We all realize that huge disappointments have a corresponding impact on our lives: the death of a loved one, the failure of a dream, getting your leg amputated from the knee down. Hmm, the knee down - why do they make that distinction? You are hardly going to be amputated from the knee up, and left with a miracle foot and shin. Anyway. I tend to become distracted when I think about amputations - it's one of my personal Huge Disappointments in Life. I'm not going to turn that into an acronym, because that would remind me of the military. The military is another Huge Disappointment in my Life - or perhaps the cause of them all.

Tangent aside, the mathematical among us may try to make the leap that because large disappointments cause large impacts - like a meteor perhaps - small disappointments cause small impacts. Wrong: a small disappointment can be like a small coin dropped from a tall building. Surely, you are saying, if the small disappointment is so violent, doesn't it in turn become a large disappointment? Allow me to give you an example.

The sun shone like you might expect - the rolled-up newspaper slapped in the face of sheer baking heat it provided wasn't a surprise. What was unexpected was the way in which the sun infiltrated every crevice and corner of my fatigues. Bouncing in every direction off the sand's miniscule crystals, it singed under my chin and nose and between my fingers in less than an hour. You don't realize until some time after your thirtieth birthday - or your first amputation - just how horribly fragile we are. Unlike machines of course, which really have it easy. Just say a toaster has to have its dial amputated, it can easily be reattached. While this is happening, it doesn't fear infection, or the look on its master-wife's face when it comes out from the procedure.

In my unit, there was a communications officer by the name of McGee. He really liked machines. When we came home from work to our welcoming test and backbreaking bunk, he would tell me about machines. By this stage McGee was clammy, pale and desperately in need of something to believe in. This was mostly because our work involved shooting at people and, in turn, getting shot at. McGee wasn't all drama though, and we had our jokes. Here's an example of one we kept going until the day a helicopter fell on him:

MCGEE: Honey I'm Home.
ME: How was work?
MCGEE: It's a rat race.
ME: Damn violent rats. I think you had to be there. One of McGee's favourite machines was Deep Blue, the machine crafted solely to play chess. He could talk for hours about Deep Blue, and I usually let him. Certainly best thinking about my wife or my dogs. It got to the stage where McGee was pale and clammy all the time, and was telling me - hushed and feverishly - that the US Military, or 'the boss' as we affectionately joked, had bought Deep Blue.

ME: Why would the Military buy Deep Blue, McGee?
MCGEE: Because they can't afford to pay the Generals any more.

ME: Why would they say that?
MCGEE: Because that's what they said.

ME: What annoyed me about McGee was that he never could remember his previous comments.
known whether Deep Blue beat the human champ.

No, it was hot, and various parts of our were being burned by the sun's rays. The traditional proper consisted of a bunch of drums — often used in a Blackhawk, they stippled upwards like a fingerprint. On this day, when a small disappointment hurt me so much, there wasn't the individual music for tranquilizing through the desert. The General — or perhaps Deep Blue — had decreed that we could have a day in the Iraqi desert for 'Training and Acclimatisation.' This seemed odd to me, because all the real fighting was taking place in Baghdad, which Deep Blue had already bombed, and we were now preparing. Nevertheless, I was excited despite the hot weather and mind-numbing task, because I'd never been in a desert before.

McGee was absent; as excited about Blackhawk helicopters as he was about Deep Blue. I thought Blackhawk helicopters would have made for more exciting than Deep Blue, considering Deep Blue could play chess, which must humans can do to some extent, but Blackhawk could fly, which no humans can do at all. I once asked McGee why he wasn't an engineer, considering he liked machines so much — he told me why I wasn't a geometrist, considering I liked women so much. He was a funny guy that McGee. On a side note, I really did love my wife, and I never want whoring on my trip. Turned out I wasn't as worried, because my wife would never touch me again after my leg was amputated. Still, one morning a woman walked over in a suspended Blackhawk helicopter looking unassuming. With large disordered eyes, he began to explain to me why the water of the helicopter was such an exciting extracorporeal. Turned out the helicopter, which was and still is a remarkable machine, wasn't secured properly and crashed that moment to fall on McGee and crush him to death. The damage McGee's body sustained was fatal, whereas the damage the Blackhawk sustained was easily fixable.

According to the crux of yet another chasm, the recruit next to me pointed to the right, looking more exhausted than interested.

"Camels," he exclaimed, drinking from his canteen.

When I was a small boy, I went on a trip to the zoo for school. Each kid was given the task of picking a stamp next to each animal he saw. The only stamp I was unable to get was that of the camel, as it had died a few minutes before. It seemed that the roof of its habitat had given way with neglect, and fell on the camel's fragile head. The rest of my life I remembered that look of camel, but I was always too busy smacking and distant girls and joining the Military to see a camel. So when I learned into view of the camel, I was excited enough to forget how much I was burning at once. The animals were chewing on small thorny scrub, and looked profoundly disinterested in everything. I, in turn, was feeling profoundly confused. Turning to the recruit sergeant, I asked, "Don't camels have two humps?"

This sergeant was a friendly fellow, and may have been a teacher at some point in his life, because with a lecturing tone he corrected me.

"There are Emperor camels, which are the most common type of camel they're in hot deserts like this one and only have one hump. The other one is the Dromedary, which are small and may have two humps, but are small and aren't the type you're looking at."
Mariantonia Cara is a poet leaning towards madness, like all the great poets. When not inscribing verses on toilet doors, she likes to read science fiction and watch bad TV. When she grows up she hopes to marry James Spader — or William Shatner — whichever is still alive at the time.

Incest Whore

Mariantonia Cara

6 years and a lida
with your mother
when you turn
6.

Does your mother know?
"Call don't know me..."
Well she does now!

Do they know their
kids could have 6 eyes?
Is there such a thing
as being too close?

apparently not.

My Melancholy Jesus

Mariantonia Cara

The wine,
blue serge suit and white tennis shoes,
but flapping wearily over eyes,
Spectacles,
wire-framed and steady.

Twist his expletive
"The one piece of Ireland"
he has left,

My Melancholy Jesus
appeared at the Stein's,
mingled with Ezra

destined to drink.

Maryantonia Cara is a poet leaning towards madness, like all the great poets. When not inscribing her verses on toilet doors, she likes to read science fiction and watch bad TV. When she grows up she hopes to marry James Spader — or William Shatner — whichever is still alive at the time.
The Stories cannot make themselves. You seek them out - ferment, distil and process them. You wrap them up in secure hygienic packaging and serve them gently to your consumers.

The woman who never serves you without a scowl: blank-eyed victim for your hack/slash killer. And the train guy, possible pocket: man for those mad, bad Russian boys. That pack of youths, sideways hats and big bright bling: the eager hatchlings of a Manic-mom attempt to take back innocence. And that chive smelt from the pathway beside the shopping centre.

They spurt into your eye and mouth, choke you as they wriggle inwards, always inwards: Story sperm, wanting to make Story sperm tumours, to fill, immerse you. You, the hunter, now spreading your legs and taking it for the Story.

Close your eyes. Submit. It is your place to incubate the Stories, your place to breed those reservoirs, attractions, disappointments and mysteries. How she to create?

When you wake, confused at the narrative bulging inside you, it takes a moment to remember that protection sometimes fails. The Stories are the germinated seeds of what you are. You bring them to fruition, nurturing them in the bloody cavity of your mind-womb. Sprouting and mingling together, they split and knot, yours and nothing like you've ever dreamed. They grow inside you, breaking your sleep and disturbing your bowels. You nurture Stories through the faltering steps of logic and the teen-angst destructive urges.

Your approval becomes more vicious. Suddenly slave to narcissistic things, responsible to the reader (no matter how pitiful), you come to know your own inadequacies. You long to be the perfect breeder, impartial as you spurt forth faithless recollections. Poetry, prose: cease what the world ejaculates upon you and turn it on the spit of your creation. Your appraisal becomes more vicious.

Each pain as you deliver will remind you that you labour not for yourself. The words are not yours. Not in ways worth any more than money. The road to hell is paved with good intentions but your intentions don't mean shit. Do not take offence at the Story. It does not have to be pretty. You cannot even eat it: the Story will become what it will.

Trapped in the inescapable web of narrative production, Angela Williams struggles constantly against the desire to give up writing and instead clean toilets as an outlet for her creativity. Writing, mothering and studying take their toll however, and the porcelain receptacle often suffers insufficient neglect.
Impossible to Know

Amelia Mangan

The wind blew through the thin, waxy fronds of tree, silver light stabbed over the scaly green bark, dead leaves lay on dry and rough as dead skin underfoot.

Far away, I heard a dog howl. It could've been a coyote. I had forgotten how far outside the city limits I had driven before I'd crashed the car; couldn't remember whether I was still in tame farmland or approaching the vast, unknowable wildness of the desert.

Snarled amid the crospse of trees, the wreckage lay smoking: a heap of twisted metal and dripping fluid and warped, smoking chrome. The red paint was scorched black; the smell of burning gasoline crawled through the roots of my hair, turned my vision to water, smothered my brain.

She lay there, broken, under the mutilated car; she seemed a part of it now, her blood turned as black as brake fluid, her shattered white limbs extended at angles only buffering disjointed machinery, her hole, light as a breathing wheel, spilled across the remains of the steering wheel, turning down and ending around glinting shards of screamed windshield. Her eyelashes were fluttering, silver butterflies. She couldn't even moan. It was possible she'd be dead soon: just as possible she'd recover, given the right treatment.

The Derringer was cold and hard: in my hand. I shot her twice in the head, twice for each breath she'd let out. Quick and clean. There wasn't any need I could see to make her suffer.

I left her there and started up the hill towards the deserted blacktop lane where I'd forced her off the road. The grass was wet with dew and murky as black water in the night; it sank under my skinning feet like a carpet. There was blood in my hair, and I wasn't sure if it was hers or mine. I gathered my coat around me, buried the gun in my pocket.

As I returned to the road, returned to the world, it occurred to me to wonder: had she really been, as I'd supposed, one of the Girl Scout Bandits - those shadowy young highwaywomen, turned feral out here on the empty country roads and byways, who donned themselves in the innocent garments of Girl Scouts and murdered those fatally kind motorists who stopped to aid them? Or had she been a real Girl Scout, clinging towards a late meeting, perhaps, or lost, trying to find her way back to her parents' farmhouse in the moon-eyed still of this cold, cold night?

Impossible to know.

Amelia Mangan is a 22-year-old third-year student completing a double degree in English and Creative Writing. She lives in Sydney and commutes to Wollongong for her studies. She has written a number of short stories and is currently working on her first novel.
Meet me at the tunnels.
Billy Hyde was thick and freckled; I never showed.
Hear he's sells skins and symbols now.
Wonder if I could get a discount?

Used tissue under your pillow.
Miss me?

Kate Fitzgerald is a third year creative writing student at the University of Wollongong. She enjoys classical, relatively bad films and good music.

Extract from “The Lost Girls”

Scene 18

GIRL1: I was sitting at home
GIRL2: On the bus
GIRL3: At the bar
GIRL1: Alone
GIRL2: The guy next to me twitched
GIRL2: I heard this noise
GIRL1: There was something funny about my drink
GIRL2: He stared at me with bright eyes
GIRL1: I got up
GIRL2: They were almost Lovelace
GIRL1: But I drank it anyway
GIRL2: To see what the noise was
GIRL1: This seemed
GIRL2: Didn’t really think
GIRL1: There was in the bathroom
GIRL2: I looked around me
GIRL1: I was
GIRL2: ALL TOGETHER: Alone.
GIRL1: He stabbed me in the leg
GIRL2: I don’t remember
GIRL3: Dragged me back inside the house
GIRL2: I remember screaming
GIRL1: I don’t remember any more than that
GIRL2: Someone else was too
GIRL1: I didn’t scream, I cried
GIRL2: Sicerca, that is
GIRL2: One we ever talk about this
GIRL1: I would have stood a chance if I screamed
GIRL3: I really don’t want to
GIRL2: Somebody helped me
GIRL2: But I was frozen
GIRL1: I can remember the toilet
GIRL3: There were people suddenly all around
I remember throwing my insides outside.

Before they took you.

I don't remember.

There was something in the syringe.

For drink was expensive.

It was still sticking out of my leg. That's why I drank it.

It was a Cosmopolitan.

It was a Cosmopolitan.

They fell on my sheets.

Sparkling white and clean.

Maybe it was a Cosmopolitan.

I'd reached them earlier, hung them out on the clothesline, and when they were dry, I made my bed and put all of my pillows on it.

It's best that way.

I didn't wake up.

I did, but then I never did.

They told me I'd be fine, they told me they'd test us as a precaution.

Nobody ever found me.

They told me to have some orange juice after they were done.

My Mum found me.

A policeman found me.

They were all check on me.

She told me to have some orange juice.

I don't even know what was in that syringe.

Would someone would find me.

She was worried because I wasn't picking up the phone.

Then I would know for sure.

That you weren't forgotten.

That you were remembered for more than that.

They all look at each other.

We are the stolen girls.

Alexandra Cullen is a toothy ray of star shine that spends her time being screamed at by children in her drama class. She longs to campaign for a non-cancerous cigarette so she can smoke it up and look cool like all the other kids.
It's Bohemians have these long-time love affairs, not us'

For Alan Wearne

Lamar Leo

so without further ado,

...present you with this a painting

that only looks like a heart on a sleeve-
looks like. If you're going to make me
tell the switch-killed bloody truth.
It's not even paint.
just dust from unused letters
and unread books.
I've been saving for a time like this,
that catches light.
in a series of ways that
by coincidence, have a kind
of aesthetic.
I'm unsure of it, i admit.
better dust the top-shelf stuff that
covers all my poets and framed photographs.

you can do whatever you want
and it'll be fine, refined even,
perfectly non-cringing without difficulty
and never mind that
It's not teeth grinding
or paper tearing
or my lighter

...the kind that's all happy endings and
mood-dipping eau de toilette
that tastes of

...a kind of aesthetic.
I'm unsure of it, i admit.
but when shown to some people i met
at the bus stop they agreed.
It was Art.

so here it is, all for you
for the approximate duration of the average pop song.

Despite all attempts otherwise, Lamar Leo was born in 1982,
and now he is not he's pro-choice.
Between hangovers, he
writes prose and poetry,
 answering his
fan letters with photos of
his rippling washboard abs,
paintings, and
inserts outrageous lies into
his conversations to see if anyone is
paying attention.
Danielle Shening

Being A Tutor

Mauve hair tinted with Macquarie Fields

1. Write over your five uniform
2. Wait and try to solve fractions with our
3. Im so tell because you can't write stories.
4. You can't write stories without spelling family
5. You're forgeting to write the ending last
6. Sometimes your Auntie watches Oprah in
   such troubles.

and you scream swear words so she'll turn it
down

She never does and you say "she don't love you"
and that dividing decimals won't help
but I need you to divide so that I can help you
escape from the growing riots in your fields

I teach you synonyms, homophones and antonyms

Antonyms, so you know the opposite of this life.

Danielle is in, completing a double degree in
communication studies and creative writing.
She spends her time commuting from Sydney
to Wollongong, teaching kids to punctuate
sentences properly, and pouring beers for
senile grandparents.
The 19 Things You Need To Know About Me
Sally Evans

(1) Dear John, everything in the world that can be done to the human body I want to do to yours, sexily, and preferably by candlelight. (2) I just want everyone to love me, even volunteers at second-hand shops. (3) but not telemarketers because I'm not sure I can handle people forcing me to face the idea of the pervasive consumerism haunting my life while I'm trying to watch The Simpsons. (4) That's what ads are for. (5) I'd probably eat Soylent Green if someone served it to me and (6) I'm not currently engaged in saving the earth, so (7) yes I do think I'm lazy and morally bankrupt and while we're on the subject, (8) who was a cheapskate first, me or you? (9) Because the reason I don't buy things for you is that you don't usually buy things for me. (10) Yes, I'm poor. (11) No, I'm not lower class and my parents have money but I am poor nonetheless. (12) I spent my teenage years wondering who the first man to discover cheese was, and whether he ever got the recognition he deserved. (13) Denying the Holocaust shouldn't be illegal but to make up for it (14) I think everyone should be put to death. (15) Algebra was not a waste of time. (16) I'm being sincere when I say I want to hold a love-in. If John and Yoko (17) why can't I? Is it because (18) I'm not a world-famous musician or a beautiful Oriental conceptual artist? Is it because (19) I didn't know the Beatles? I wish you could get people to answer rhetorical questions.

Pinot Noir
Sally Evans

When moving shadows at tables,
I watch shadows as a couple in black
watch two boys play chess,
pawns hopping in candle flickers.
Perfection until both light and game break.
Each conversation a louder version
of the last.
I put the cat with one hand as I write this poem
In the hallway, alone. I stare.
Excerpt from ‘Ether’
April, 1986.
Mariko Lees

The walls meant blood. Hacienda is a wet, shimmering sensation. Darkness is illuminated by endless bursts of light, with a roar of pointless conversation, as the flushed bodies and dripping water envelop us. I’m choking on everyone else’s smoke, on their breath as they exhale and I inhale a part of them.

Cecelia, clad in tight jeans and that ill-fitting maroon jumper, prattles on about shit I can’t understand. ‘Jacob Over Here!’ She beckons me from below the dance floor and into the cavern underneath it. Philby and Burgess stare down from the walls of the Gay Traitor’s Bar. I remember The Factory years ago, Joy Division... before Curtis hung himself. My youth. Justine. Lawson seems so far away from us. On stage, his voice is cracking as he shouts into the microphone over pre-recorded electronics:

‘I wept rain for you. It dripped into your dark hair, and you shook droplets...

‘Is that you? I mean, is the poem?’

I watch Cecelia shrug before placing smooth hair behind our shoulders. Her blue eyes shine like icebergs in the darkness. They fell onto another’s shoulders leaving me empty inside...

‘Probably his mother.’ She points her chin at me. ‘He only knows what he thinks about her. Fed up with that fucking girl, you know. I feel like I’m trapped between a myth and a hard place.’ Bitter laughter.

‘Sons... Lovers...’

I feel like I’m suffocating. ‘That’s you?’

She doesn’t respond. Then...

Cecelia purses her lips, ‘Should we... get out of here?’

You discarded my love just as... sily.

We push our way through the crowd, outside: it’s raining and as the drops fall my shoulders shudder. The factories loom. Cecelia lingers and twirls as we slip down the side streets watching the ripples in the canal. She falls into me and kisses me impulsively. My lips burn as she runs along the edge tempting fate. ‘He’ll drown if she’s lucky, Cecelia. How do you want to die?’ I shout to her. She laughs again.

‘Quickly!’

It’s like a game. When I catch her my fingers trace the line that burns in her face: a murderer’s scar. I think of what might have been. Cecelia dead on the streets and her father searching, searching. I read that Hindley might tell them where the others are. I kiss Cecelia’s thin lips and her fingernails dig into my scalp. We stumble under a bridge, I appear on her breast, smile secretly.

We stop. Her breath comes sharply and I know she wants me more now than ever before. Cecelia leaves the old stone with her fingertips and see myself, years before, opposite: a little younger but always the same, on the other side of the canal, Justine with her arms wrapped around me while I remember every hair on the back of her long neck.

Is this guilt? Lately I can’t escape the past - it catches me when I repeat myself. But Cecelia is here now and tomorrow doesn’t matter. I’ll try to extract a promise from her.

I whisper and it particles her ear, ‘here... just let me move you’.
Cecelia is scared. She shakes her head and sighs. She shakes her head and lies to me. 'I couldn't, really. Not really.' I want to see her naked. I want to see her die. 'You need me: She does. Her fingers, that grip my head, release and trail down my cheeks like hot tears. 'I can take your face and place it on the wall. You're the ... Mona Lisa of the twentieth century.' Cecelia buries her head in my chest. 'Not really.' It echoes. I watch Cecelia as she sleeps on my bed: long hair wisping around her face like black flames. I'm lying beside her, too bored to sleep yet too unnerved to stay. She puts too much of herself into empty pleasures. Her face twitches slightly in her sleep and my hands shake, longing to grip the brush in my fingers, or the charcoal staining the tips of them as I sketch and shade. I can't stand the silence, with her chest heaving and my limbs aching. Reaching back to the bedside table, I feel for something, anything. My fingers find a red felt-tip pen and I swing my arm back, the sensation seizeing my body. I stop shaking. I draw. There's no paper, instead I stretch the white linen sheets of my bed taut then let the red ink stain it like blood. I'd forgotten how felt-tips bleed into cloth. I'm sketching her arm, her head resting on it, those thin lips without a glimmer of a smile around the edges. My veins pump mercwy. I scratch my face with the pen when I lift my arm to wipe sweat away from my temple. I ben I'm in the kitchen searching for scissors that I used to keep in the second drawer. That sound .. you know, it's one of those things you never forget, a sound from childhood. Metal cutting through fabric, the slice and pause. It always makes me think of my aunt cutting out dresses from coarse, cheap cotton when I was young. Maybe these sheets were hers, I can't remember now. When I pull the rectangle away from the bed, leaving the mattress peeking underneath, Cecelia stirs. I wonder what she'll think of me when she wakes. I enter the studio holding the makeshift canvas before me like a child I don't want to touch. There's no wood left. I spot a dusty easel in the corner with a portrait poised atop it (Justine, who left me standing in the rain at Salford Quays). I pull the scissors from my toubor pocket once more and open them. I slash Justine's face vengefully so she falls to the ground in triangles. Cecelia covers the sides and I find that old staple gun from art school when I made my own canvasses. Bang, bang, bang! (I almost giggle to think of the real Cecelia finding me, stapling her face over another's). I stare at the sketch - it's beautiful, bloody and pain­fully executed. 'This one deserves its justice,' I mutter and reach for my oils. 'This one is here to stay: I see the tiny scar that crease her forehead. The old rust is fast, I smile. Cecelia sleeps on.

Marta is an aspiring novelist/screenwriter/film director who enjoys reading, curating and watching morally suspect characters whose desires are never fulfilled. She currently spends her time watching episodes of Freaks and Geeks over and over again to convince herself good tv is still being broadcast.
You speak to me of truth as though it were self-evident, absolute.

You find it in simplicities, rather than intricacies. What is obvious may not be luxurious—but it is undoubtable.

And there you stand wrapped in your woollen blanket screaming to the night for something real.

It makes me wonder if you've been screaming these 41 years past ... makes me wonder if we'll both die waiting for answers.

Tiffany O'Brien is a certified poet—she drinks and laughs and has been known to look into the foreground as if it were a background. She is currently la dolce vita in Berri.

Tiffany O'Brien

The way my skin looks when I turn my cheek so slightly and you see my sears lit up by the morning.

Sad

How sad it is to be stoned watching cooking shows alone at eleven in the morning.

Marlee Jane Ward

I stare at you across this crowded room and my heart swells with something (blood, most likely) but it feels like love.

Glimpse

Marlee Jane Ward

Marlee Jane Ward is a writer, waitress and weirdo who enjoys body modification, shameless exhibitionism and chocolate milk. A founding member of the Hurstville School of Poets, she is a non-smoker and hopes that if she says this enough it will eventually be true.

Picture Imperfect

Marlee Jane Ward

The way my skin looks when I turn my cheek so slightly and you see my sears lit up by the morning.

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My boots do offense to the silence, which whispers to me about history and tells me I don't belong. This was a girls room. There are four round, deep scars where a single bed must have been. The walls are the colour of a sunburnt body and studded with picture hooks. I prise one off with the tip of a crowbar. It ducts a peeling of paint along the perimeter, dragging a sledgehammer in my other hand. Knifed on the floor is 'Melanie -1986'. I haven't been here but I have. We have removed the roof and Melanie overflows with sunlight. I have just dismantled her parent's bedroom. Constrained bricks and leathers spilled secrets — intimate conversations, prayers. I stand and jam the crowbar right under her inscription and wrench it skyward. The old groans and pops out of its gashes, houses over onto its belly and nape, rolls up. I shuffle over each one, performing this dissection. Sause splinters and I throw them against the wall. The perfume is thick, like when you crush eucalyptus leaves. I have used rooms like this, used people like Melanie.

I am standing in a wasteland of rubble and dirt. Outside Melanie's room is hot and I look at my shoulders glistening in sweat. Her wall stands. The first hammer-strike pounds into her masonry — and booms off. We had both enjoyed it. I swing again, but the wall splits open the handle. I read and strike again. The impact is sweet and a split wholes through the brick joints. I feel atomic and swing again — harder. Sharp and dust fly. I swing again, and again, and again and again, like a dachshose. She falls at my hand in a fury of brick shrapnel and white powder that sticks to my skin.

Charles Butcher

Demolition
Man buys a dinner shirt with his mistress

Nita Green

Younger women don't want your money. They want love.
Most people can't tell when you've slapped her up with expenses and sex—but when she's looking at you with her heart even the waitress can tell you're having an affair.

Ian and Jessie

Leah Franenfelder

Ian drove home by the Housing Commission. At the Keiwa Street roundabout someone's windshield had cracked on the corner, little pieces of glass lying on the asphalt, homeless.

Ian walked down the hall and knocked on his sister's door. She was in her room with the light switched off. The cement that stretched from her room to the kitchen was cold on his bare toes.

Shower,' he said.

'STDs' she wrote in her diary with red nail polish. Next to it in black she wrote, 'I was screaming and nobody came', and used a razor to make five matching cuts down her forearm: five little Indians marching in steady rhythm— their feet making loud snapping noises—down her arm. She looked in the mirror. She looked at her hands. She looked back in the mirror. She
looked back at her hands. 'They’re not mine,' she thought. It was eight o’clock; and there Jessie Hunt is. curled in a hall, crying so much she’s almost vomiting up the badness inside of her. She’s hanging tight to the iron bedrails so she doesn’t get dragged away, back there, that place where she’s stunned, lying on the tiles and the Virgin Mary’s looking down at her, the Virgin Mary’s looking down, she’s looking down and she’s not stopping it – she’s not stopping it from happening.

Ian’s mum was in the kitchen, one-legged, like a stork, twirling one ankle around the back of her opposite knee. She smelled like a florist. Her smile at him was bright and cool. It reminded him of dropping a snow-globe. She was shouting into her mobile. ‘She looks so faded,’ Ian thought. ‘Hey, love, howya going?’ Kristel asked him, flipping her phone closed. ‘Yeah, all right,’ Ian replied, watching the yellow lino. A fruit bowl sat on the kitchen table; inside, two rotten bananas, a multi-coloured apple and a head of garlic. On the door a photo of Ian holding his baby sister Jess. He put it back with a happy carrot magnet.

‘Tommy’s off now, got to work at six. Phil rang, give him a call. Oh, and I haven’t seen Jessie all day. Check on her, would ya?’ Kristel said, stuffing his fingers in his hoodie.

Two years ago. A sunny day in November. Dying Jessie’s hair. Jessie’s friend Bee is addicted to Video Hits. Ian looks at his sister in her high-school uniform with a plastic bag over her head and mini-lace clashing. She laughs as chocolate drops of dye spatter the carpet. Ian and Jess look away from each other – laughing so hard – then back again.

Ian always grabbed her hand on the way to primary school. That small brown collection of strange fingers. Ian could feel the blisters and cuts, even though it was Jess swinging on the monkey bars or cutting herself by picking up a piece of glass that looked like a dove. When she was seven, Jess’s white socks had netting ripped around the ankle, and every ten minutes she looked down at them proudly.

‘I-I-I…-i-i-i all right! My feet hurt!’ When Jess was ten she was dragged along Jamison Street to the skate-park. One Ian-step equaled three jumpy-Jessie-steps. Jazzy had got some smokes and Ian wanted a try. For Jess, she remembered her childhood as her brother, a cousin called Debbie who wore green tights, and cake shaped like a Chinese dragon. Family meant no one going to the parent-teacher meetings, sitting cross-legged by the brick wall near the bubblers, the cheese and tomato sandwich on white bread caught in her throat. That dark feeling closing
A man with prickly cold arms grabbing her in a bear hug. At her primary school Jesus was everywhere. Crucifixes made a lump rise in her throat. Jess thought about it every night: 'I don't want to die, please Ian, please don't let me die.' Some days Kristel was home, some days she wasn't. Jess used to wait, every night, hoping one day she'd come home and, like Stacey McDonald did, find a Barbie doll on the end of her bed, an unopened Barbie doll in all her clean, plastic perfection. A Barbie doll could have matching ribbons, she could have a pony, she could have new shoes. If she was cold a Barbie doll could have a nice jacket and scarf.

'Jessica!' Ian's voice splintered her concentration as he walked down the hallway. Quickly, she wrapped five Band-Aids around the cuts. She slipped on twenty pink, purple and yellow plastic bracelets and used a tissue to wipe away her raccoon eyes. He spoke through her closed door.

'You eaten yet? Want me to get you something?'

'Thanks, but I'm OK.' She controlled her voice and zipped up her jacket. Her stomach hurt in that pleasant grinding way. At least she knew she was still here. She heard the door slam when he left. Jess turned off the Portishead, and counted sheep with broken hind legs. The ache in her chest was going to split her in two.

Leah Frauenkufer is from Albury. She currently lives in the beautiful city of Wollongong. She likes painting and being near the ocean. Her dream is to publish a novel, but we'll see how that goes.

The Hatchery
Jodie Magee

Staggering chickens roll their heads to the sky green vaccine spilling from one neck - how much? and I wonder why I'm here, then think of that fat pay cheque.

Green vaccine spilling from one neck as another toe bleeds I can't believe I'm here, then think of that fat pay cheque - there's nothing else to make me want to leave but then another toe is bleeding. Why do I believe the soft-feathered chickens aren't in pain? There's nothing else to make me want to leave: the people are nice, everything else I can feign.

The soft-feathered chickens aren't in pain? Yeah right - I can hear their shivering cries. The people are nice, everything else I can feign like detachment when one of them dies.
Yeah, right. I can hear their whispering cries: they're still warm, jumping in my hand there's no detachment when one of them dies it happens so often it's easy to understand.

They're warm, jumping in my hand there's no detachment when one of them dies it happens so often it's easy to understand.

Another falls, stepped on, eyes pop from the head except it happens so often it's easy to understand no-one's at fault, yet the floor is still red. Another falls, stepped on, eyes pop from their head 'how awful' and I start to wonder why no-one's at fault, yet the floor is still red.

Stargazing chickens with their beaks to the sky.

Jodie is studying a double degree with Creative Arts and Law and works part time as a hatchery assistant. She is a long distance runner and spends a lot of her free time training and competing.

On Things I Probably Should Have Mentioned Earlier
Adam Norris

The book you hold in your hands - not the title, ingenious as it is, but the very book - is the only one of its kind. It is wholly different from every other book, even those that share its name, sitting front-to-back on the bookstore shelf, or newsagent counter, or flea-market for even in flea-markets numerous copies of this groundbreaking narrative are kept cooling in specially designed receptacles ready to be bartered over by heavyset old Greek men in gauze aprons and butchers gloves who stalk amongst their wares with extendable metal clamps to save them the pain and indignation of having to stoop down and retrieve what the clamps can secure in roughly the time it takes their customers to open their mouths and draw breath! Progress, man. But still, we're going to need some characters if this story is ever going to find its feet (though I must concede, setting here on my lovely throne of crushed velvet and apple cores, that in a work so short characters are redundant. Why describe those brash Hawaiian shirts Eddie wears, or the snatched David Bowie look he strives to achieve when in a few more moments - just a few! - you'll be on your way to the next story in this ultra-hip collection, and the words I would waste describing his two year junk habit could instead be used to dazzle you with images whose gratification is far more instant, like coy smiles, or exhaust fumes, or reflections). As such, before the neurons in Eddie the telemarketer or Sarah the fireworks-factory-saboteur's heads have gathered the necessary majority vote from the other distant hemispheres that operate inside them to come together and decide on a purchase the mechanical claw has dropped a porcelain shepherdess into Eddie's hand and
snapped up the two dollar coin that seems to have just appeared between his thumb and forefinger at approximately the same moment. Sarah the fireworks telemarketer decides that a five-inch porcelain shepherdess with blue eyes and rosy cheeks beneath a quaint Dutch bonnet tied with a bow is exactly the thing their relationship needs and the claw retracts with the disgruntled ease common to every market vendor here who wasn't able to set up store somewhere closer to the show-bag emporiums or baby animal enclosures so instead they shuffle pointedly between belligerent teaspoon collectors that bellow to each other through the vendor's ears across a patchwork of tarpaulins (that from the air resemble something like the bastard offspring of an acid high and a chess board) anchored down by ancient crates of unmovable LPs all scratched to shit and faded reams of sheet-music for second-grade piano students and just as you're about to throw your hands up in exasperation and walk away you spy your vendor again – Christ, those old bastards can really move – weaving in and out of a maze of decrepit car parts to reach into a shimmering blue cubicle hidden behind a rusty carburetor to present you with this, a limited edition release – this one! – the cover of which is slightly damaged by previous owners and whose sentences are already starting to melt in the dusty midmorning heat, so that if you were smart you would have remembered to bring along your own method of preserving the text between the sweltering market and your home instead of rushing back towards your car, dashing through the crowds of people and their dogs, noticing Eddie the junk factory and Sarah the Bowie saboteur riding the Ferris Wheel to allow their smiling little shepherdess to see for miles and wave down at you as you run, pressing the book between ice blocks that are already mostly just bags of tepid water, and as I have seen on far too numerous occasions many ignorant folk don't even seem aware that the second-edition Wilkie Collins held casually under their arm has already suffered through damages irreparable – your book is fucking leaking, man – and they stop at Dugwood Dog stands seemingly unaware that the story they thought they were getting is even now being mistaken by a frowning drove of splastners as a rivulet of piss staining the leg of their trousers. But as I say, it's one of a kind (especially if water-damaged) and a wise investment indeed, because as you shall see it will allow you entry into many places that are usually off-limits to you and I, for example, there is –

A girl who just walked past my window, so thin I feel I could easily grasp her slender spine and navigate her through the world so that no harm would ever come to her, pants tiny and star-spangled and only just covering the nonexistent curves of her buttocks and her front just as smooth as her back, black hair that really does look like it wants you to run your fingers through it, coax it a little, white singlet, moving too fast to notice the outline of a bra, which is fine because either way we know her breasts would be teeny-tiny, nipples like a certain part of a strawberry, the way she walked and did not turn her head to mark your perusal obviously an indication she wants you to run outside now and stroll casually behind so that she could glance back at you demurely and give you one of those little French half-smiles suggesting that as soon as we turn this corner up ahead, yes, there, where the branches of the willow tree offer enough cover, you could, say, slip your hand down the front of those tiny red pants and feel the soft curls sticking up through her floral underwear, preventing her emergence from the shade of the willow so that you may kinda roughly gently pull her closer and tear those petals and buds down the front, let
them fall away, which you don’t mind at all, because she is now completely at your mercy, thighs breaking out in gooseflesh, breeze shaking the boughs, clutching your shoulders, and you just wish your friends were here to see this, ‘cause they sure would think you were King Shit today— but that is just a part of this astounding collection, a mere one thousand and twenty-six words, and while several people have already thrown the book down into cane waste-paper baskets in disgust that doesn’t worry me at all, because each and every one of those liberal-minded Almost People will be dead within the next fifty pages or so, and besides I don’t really focus in this book after the hallucinatory introduction you are reading now (ah, such a deceitful author, bet you thought you were reading a section of the actual book already. One of many subterfuges I have been privy to during my long dialogue with the author, which bolsters my opinion of him even more and causes my fingers to clack away at a tremendous pace to embellish His name, He who remains nameless and lives below the earth with the things that gave birth to the first cats, but he likes a drop of port now and then and ho-ho, THAT is a clue) so even if you do stop reading it’s no skin off my back, I have a job where I scan Things through other Things and they sometimes produce noises, which is enough for me as I am small of stature and don’t mind being idle, unlike this book which, as one reviewer penned, “Is like a rocket trip to the moon! Ka-Chooooow-eeeee!”

Before I leave though my mind does wander to the girl who walked past my window, waiting there with the sounds of a receding Ferris Wheel, waiting for me in the shade of the willow tree; exposed; fretful; terrified that she can’t remember how she came to be here, or where this leaf-strewn path behind the willow may lead.
Here's a cross-toothed bare-tyred pot-hole of a place
corrugated houses, satellite dishes, yellow skinned sewage smell,
sweat seeds trace rope-burn neck-tea trickle slick
trails of last night's liquor

deck-veined kids ingrained with one plus one is three
lick dusted lollipops beneath peppercorn trees,
fly screen door bangs about on red-skied days, wide sleep at vacant wakes,
wired, dry, eyes leak sodium into Tupperware

Here's a
rattle-lunged shuffle-brained you,
two time winner of the Christmas lawn ornament contest,


don't think jus' 'cause people are watchin'
I won' smack ya'
a queue outside mcdonalds there's a cheeseburger in the pram
and another one on the way

Bridget Lutherborrow

2.5 and counting
Bridget Lutherborrow

slouched white jeans
and prax patterned vest, rocks baby to sleep
with a bottle and a box of saladas
big sister three feet high
and squealing
bear's mama's fury

Bridget Lutherborrow- I'm a bow legged chicken. I'm a knobble-kneed hen, never been so happy since I don't know when. I walk with a wiggle and a giggle and a squawk, doing the Tennessee Wig Walk. (Call me.)
Swoon

Arcadia Lyons

I'd like to punctuate grand spirit
-need encounters with you
-shot surrender while one
-three tears stream into my heavy
-heated lip.

I'll lap it up, baby. It was grand grand grand
of you to come while I smushed heavy metal and got by happily on chilled spirits.
You're just the one. You're gen.

I dig you gen
-strings me down. May it into my lip,
I'm even pursued by the Alnegley One, wowed from a contiguous grand

-stand. Smarmed with fragrant spirit and heavy
in the full armour of God. His heavy artillery == the Lord's ad guns
Lover of my spirit
lets me slumber in his lap of heavy and grand refuge. I may have put God in one
big box but he hasn't put me in one.
I'm heavy on worship with a grand piece and penetration like gun fire, just lap spilling up the spirit.
And in the spirit of Divine effusiveness. I'll be one.
Let's overlap.
I'll shake off this heavy gun

—total depletion for a grand

—anticipatedovsky with the one I delight
in. I'm basking in your blazing grand
-one. I'm spirited and heavy
with wonder as I lap against your throne.
Swooning beyond translation has began.

Arcadia Lyons is the lovechild of Katharine Hepburn and a mountainous region on Mars. She is a neo-obscurist who is so post-modern she makes alphabet soup, dyes it purple and vomits it on the lawn. Her third favourite number is eleventy hundred and opposite her word is favourite.
All that's left of democratic socialism
Bede Payne

All that's left of democratic socialism is a cunt in a Che Guevara shirt. Come on, mate, tell me about your policy on public ownership; what's your theory behind the employment/interest rate balance? Oh, you aren't sure? That's because you're a shmuck who thinks left wing is smoking pot and not showering. Fuck you, his name was Ernesto.

Dead cat
Bede Payne

Dead cat, curled up, tail bent, coat all wet and dirty. Stop looking at me with your closed eyes. I didn't hurt you so stop blaming me. 'You owe me,' she says and I do, I do. For all those nights I left her alone not really knowing where she lay. So I kiss her mouth just once, softly. I place her in the ditch and give her my love. Dead cat.

Bede Payne – Every time you see a fish deep-fried in tulips – Bede. Every time you think a dog is talking directly to your soul – Bede. Every time you stumble with a simile, I will be there, the wordsmith of masked avengers, the hero with half rhyme, swinging on a free-verse rope through a haiku battlefield.
Threads
Victoria Thomas

The bedroom. CDs are stacked higgledy-piggledy in piles against the walls, some in more organised ranks in tall plastic stackers. White doors conceal a wardrobe so large and deep that you could shut yourself in, surrounded by dark curtains of crumpled clothes. The bed lays unmade, purple sheets skewed, and posters wilt from the walls, blue-tack melted to useless gum.

The girl by the window is surrounded by city noises and the teasing relief of a faint breeze. She leans her pale face against the fly screen, its woven texture leaving faint criss-cross patterns on her flesh. Far below, cars beep and the distant wail of a siren can be heard, along with the sounds of smashing bottles and drifting laughter. The girl's face glistens with flushed cheeks and beaded skin, dark hair pulled up on her head in a mass of damp curls. Sweat runs in rivulets from her temples, from beneath her eyes and down the curve of her spine, and she moves to tear her shirt over her head and pull off her shorts in frustration at the humidity. Her body is milky white in the dusky haze of the room, almost a child's frame, with its small breasts and tender limbs.

Soon footsteps may be heard climbing stairs outside, and the girl scrambles to the bed to cover her body with sweaty sheets. Her face, wide-eyed and still, turns to the door where a boy enters, shutting it softly behind him.

He has blonde hair and brown eyes, and is wearing a towel wrapped around his hips, water still dripping down his face. He glances at the girl in the bed.

'I thought I told you to get out, Sarah.' Sarah picks at the stitching in the blanket. 'I thought you might have changed your mind. It wouldn't be the first time,' she says, watching the way he avoids her eyes.

'This is different.' She looks down at the hole that has appeared in the fabric, pokes her finger through it and wiggles it around. The hole gets bigger. 'Why? What's wrong?'

For a moment Joseph looks irritated, but then he turns away, sighs to the dusty corner. 'Whatever, stay if you want. But I'm going out.'

The end of the blanket has a frayed edge now. Sarah pulls at the threads, weaving backwards, bringing it undone.

She always found it hard to blame other people when it was so easy to find fault in herself. But someone once told her she was beautiful, and even now, she thinks it has the potential to be true. She remembers the schools bus when she was seven, split-cordial sticky and pungent lunches, crammed—three kids to a seat!—and the division of blue and green: public school kids down the back and Catholic school kids up the front.

'Poo-brown, poo-brown!' the children chanted, fingers pulling at her limp ponytail. Flailing fists and one small voice:

'It's ash-blonde!' At the time it had seemed perfectly logical to scratch and scream over the definition of her hair colour. Brown. Sausages were brown. Mud was brown. But her? No, she was not. Her mother had said so.

'Look at your hair in the sunlight, Sarah, look at all the colours!' And she had, sitting between her mother's knees on the faded back steps among the limp geraniums, while cicadas clamoured deafeningly. The afternoon sun shot its last ray of light, as bright as burning magnesium, to set Sarah's head to flame. They had stayed a long time, her mother drawing stray threads from daughter's hair, and it was blonde, as white as you
were a baby; oh, and Jerr, and the end of atmosphere until the sun sank too low in the sky and the light became no more than a pale ghost in the air.

Joseph moves about the room, slams the window shut, lights up a cigarette and inhales violently. Sarah keeps quiet and looks at the silver bracelet encasing her wrist. The links are fine, could probably be broken with one firm tug. She remembers the day Joseph gave it to her. They were lying in the park, up on a hill of scratching brown grass, while children pedalled furiously along the path below.

Sarah laughed as the rain began to pour. She wasn't afraid of storms, but ran down through the electricity to join him anyway. To her surprise, he was angry.

"You got a death wish or something? Don't you know lightning always strikes the highest point?" Her pale hair stuck to her face with rain, and he grabbed a fistful at the back of her head and shook her a little. 'Don't ever do that again!' Tears started in Sarah's eyes, but didn't overflow. She jerked away, but his clenched hand still held threads of her hair, silvery blonde and red. He dropped them to the ground. Her hair is dark now. One day last winter, when they ran out of movies and pot and ideas, Joseph said "We need a change", and so they ran outside into the pouring rain and over to the pharmacy across the road. Sarah stood shivering, her hair plastered to her head and excess raindrops licking down her neck, not realising that 'we' meant 'you'.

Joseph pulled the packet of Natural Black hair dye off the shelf, and they had counted on their change in sweaty palms.

Later, with chemical glues plastered over her head, Sarah felt a brief twinge of sadness. She couldn't understand it, but the twinge soon turned into a tingle, which developed into a raging, burning rash all over her head. She had screamed until Joseph came running from the bedroom next door and threw her into the shower, clothes and all. She climbed under the spray, divorce of black running into her clothes, into her gaping mouth, replacing the tears which for some reason still didn't come, while she tore at her head and cried 'it hurts! I'm hurting!' over and over, but he just watched her in horror until the water ran clear and her wails stopped.
forehead against the finely cracked glass and looks closer; her face splits, the cracks dissociating one half from the other. Joseph's razor is lying by the sink.

Sarah takes up the blue plastic razor. It has a green moisturising strip behind the blade, and there are fine brown hairs caught between the joining. She slides her finger along the slick metal, feels the cold thin edge inside her flesh and the hot humming pain that follows.

She unfastens the bracelet around her wrist, laying it carefully beside the spots of blood. Then she takes up the razor, grabs a lock of hair, and cuts. A snaking black tendril falls into the sink. Sarah picks it up, looks closely. Her roots are growing back, ash-blonde points at the base of black threads.

Sarah leaves the hair beside the bracelet. She turns to walk away, down the stairs, through the lounge room, and out the front door.

Victoria Thomas is twenty years old. She enjoys thunderstorms, playing music and being surprised. Victoria hopes to one day develop her mind to the point where she is able to wrestle the upper hand from Life. But if all else fails she would settle for sunshine and a chocolate milkshake.
You walk differently when you're like this, speak words that I don't usually hear, like you are a person that I've never met before—but I love you all over again, in awe like it was years ago before I even knew your name. Your face seems to have realigned itself, your bones more delicate underneath your eyes, and there's nothing tired about you at all. I am the same, leaning my back up against the old hotel doorframe, talking to the bass player about san francisco, where you can't drink after 2 in the morning unless you have gone to the safeway at 1.55 and bought the party to take home with you. We talk about the mission, eating at tacqueria canenn, the west coast versus the east, and I hear you in the background. Beautiful, amongst the small crowd of us circled on this floor space: inviting girls to come paint in our garage, watching the faces of all of us.

She won't tell you what the songs are about—except with her eyes, but you know how to read between the lines (and later, in the car, I wonder what it is about you that makes everyone fall for you, giving their trust like that. Even though I am the most smitten there is I still can't put my finger on it: you are impossible to pinpoint, and it makes you perfect)... She gives you her whisky to drink, and after you have passed the tiny bottle around and back to her, she pushes it back towards you...

'Keep it...'

There's a dark-haired boy leaned up against the wall while she played, and he's covered one ear so he can't hear the noises of the drunk, trendy people at the back of the room (who'd only come because they heard it was 'cool' to be there tonight, and didn't give a shit). I remember when he used to be a punk kid, drunk in the backyard at a show, and I admire the way he has changed his life.

I wish I could master it myself, the art of shape changing, fitting to the contours inside yourself that only you see. I think about this with a hundred lines going through my head while I watch, my face bent down into your hair, and it's remembering everything that was important before I got caught up in the driftwood of life: work. But then real moments like this... standing in the dark with a tequila sunrise, warm inside the wooded walls of the building, watching something beautiful unfold before me... This woman who can hardly bear to sit in front of us with her guitar, half her time bent before the piano, long hair in her face. A voice like a f*cking angel: one who's scared of people and knows too much of breaking inside.

I could stay here.

She moves again, shifting to a chair with her guitar and pounding the floor with her foot to keep time—like a horse stamping in the dust. The chord changes and my heart clicks over. Stay here. Stay here. Stay here. You reach your fingers underneath mine in the dark, smiling at me, hair curling out from under the edges of your beanie. This is here.

We never even left.

Kristy Newton is a bass player with her heart firmly in the 'gong. She enjoys long sentences, good beer and loud rock 'n' roll. She is also partial to finding random objects in children's magazines and disguising herself as a functional member of society. She dislikes hypocrisy, scenesters and commercial radio.
When In Doubt, Phone An Enemy for a Friendly Chat

'Hello? Is this the office of Jack Wagner?'

'It's her, the slut, I know Jack's shaggin' 'er

'Janet, I'd like you to pass a message

'to your

'boss, and please don't think this is at all your loss.

'Tell that fucking idiot the next time he's

'bored

'He's free to have you or Julie or Mandy

'or anyone else not named Leanne Wagner,

'which

'I might note will not be the name of this bitch

'for much longer. That's Leanne, dear,

'with two 'n's, just like in 'adultery', or near

'that. You'll have to forgive me if I'm

'acting a little hostile, but that slime

'you're banging inspires all sorts of rage.

'I probably should have emailed this in a page

'full of smiley faces and censored shit

'like "fuck you Janet" and, oh, that's about it.

'You're a bit quiet there, darling. Are you sure

'There's nothing you want to add? I could say

'more

'and if you marry him and last ten years

'(but you won't, Janet, so save those tears

'for when you'll need them - trust me, you

'will).

'If you marry him you'll learn your fill

'of Jack's shortcomings and wrongdoings...

'pardon?

'Oh, you want an example? How about his

'hardly-on?

'Is he there now? Hmm... you can pretend

'it's one of your silly friends on the other end.

'And I am your friend, Janet dear. When the

'office hears that Jack Wagner is single, then

'the

'roost will be afutter with ruffled feathers!

'Who do you think will feel the leather's

'lash, hmm? But such a shame, I don't doubt

'that Jack's already tired of you, out

'for something else, something younger,

'fresher. Less... Janet. That's his hunger,

'or perhaps thirst would be more accurate,

'because only a lot of booze can cure it.

'Is he still there? No? What a smart man...

'Then again, look at who he ran

'to when I figured out what a dick... he...

'can... be...

'...'

'*click*


In a world where poets really did save cities,
The Fallen Angle would be better known

as Wes Chung, who was in fact not actu­

ally voted Most Likely To Seceede in 1995.

He is currently held in Wollongong serving

a three-year Creative Writing sentence for

rhymes against inanity.
TornadeMe
Annette Jaimi Williams

His delightfully insouciant arse just kills me.
He snaps paddle pop sticks to break my pigeon hole.
In a city I despise he pulls my stitches to make me cry.
I try to paint his portrait or the last night we had but two more strokes and I’ll ruin it – I’ll wring his sexy neck.

Tide expresses sincere gratitude to:
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Ben Effeney
Marli Rickelman
Becca Walshie
Tyler Freeman
Aaron Deane
Lloyd Hughes
Hannah Beasley

Annette Jaimi Williams is a twenty year old writer who lives in Sydney with two cats.

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Marelle Burnum Burnum

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Bronwyn Price

“...all of life comes to me with ease, joy and glory.”

Darryl and Julene Rich

“...destroy all of your limitations and receive you.”

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ACON is a health promotion organisation based in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities. Our services include:

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- Sexual Health Clinic – appointment only www.acon.org.au
Oinic Hours: Tues to Sat
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Marelle Burnum Burnum
Member of A.N.T.A.
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Does Uni make you feel like this?

The Maze of Alienation:

WUSA was formed by students to collectively identify and address student needs. Some of the activities that we fund and support include:

- Advocacy
- Free University
- Student Loans
- Book rack
- Triangles
- Free BBQ
- Crime and Socialities
- Childcare rebate

At this university profit comes before students and their needs and rights when decisions get made. The uni does not etc. cannot know what students' needs are or provide for them free from their agenda of profit. WUSA only concern is your needs, the needs of students, and who is in a better position to identify free from other agendas the needs of students than other students?

WUSA is the organisation that students have to defend their rights as students. It gives students the ability to wage campaigns and to have a collective and powerful voice that can oppose existing conditions and further reforms that are not in the interest of students.

It is the position of the students association that all people have the right to an education and one in a safe and discrimination free environment. As such the students' association fights to defend and expand these rights.

Through its collectives, Free University and the Triangles, WUSA also campaigns against the commodification of education, against sexism, queerphobia, racism and its conceptual rollability.

To find out more about WUSA and its activities you can pop in and see us between 9-5 Monday to Friday in building 11, check out our website, read the Triangles or give us a call on 4221 4291.

www.wollongongnightlife.com.au
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