

MUSE

Magazine for UNIL Students of English

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ISSUE 18

HB



Editorial & Contents

Dear readers,

How are you all doing? Spring is in the air, isn't it?! It's the end of the semester, and you're probably swamped with work. But you're all cute and talented peeps, so worry no more. You need a break, and that's why you're reading this.

After taking a break last semester, the editors joined forces and set off in search of new writings. English students did it again, and sent in the most wonderful collection of prose and poetry that *Anthropole* the world has ever seen, which you can discover in this limited comeback edition of MUSE, featuring a brand new design.

This 18th (!) issue also features an insightful opinion piece, as well as a Crossword, a Literary Advice Column and a Shakespeare Quiz. But we kept up with traditions, too! Find out more about Elvis Coimbra Gomes in his very insightful staff interview, where we talked about sociolinguistics, music, and not having a favorite color. And if you've ever wondered about what kind of things might make your life easier, then you're in luck, because this semester's Ask-the-Students features the craziest inventions that students would like at UNIL!

Last but not least, we've collaborated with Books Books Books again to offer vouchers in exchange for delicious poetry. The theme was "Madeleine de Proust," and you poets did not disappoint. Congratulations to the 3 winners! We at MUSE would like to

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thank each and every student who entrusted us with their incredible creations. Your willingness to share your talents is truly touching, and we couldn't be prouder of your courage in showcasing these beautiful works with us and other students!

Take care, have fun reading, and enjoy the summer!

Love,
The MUSE Team

POETRY

My heart in my throat

Andreia Abreu Remigio

Our first kiss happened in the dark,
In a twin-size bed in early October.
Love hits at first sight – lightning strikes a spark.
That Wednesday night, had we been sober,
You wouldn't be longing for white tulip and barley now,
And I wouldn't be lying in bed naked,
Practicing my vows.

...

Rain drops from the night and tears from your cheeks.
We drag our hearts through Vienna streets,
Through your childhood home. The floor creaks.
Two things rise and morning creeps under the sheets.
And even when the moon turned green,
You kissed my angered wound; you kissed it clean.

I know the secrets clasped between your blooms,
Twinkling eyes and tipsy, so we kiss in bathrooms.
Closed eyes and consuming, so we kiss again.
We make out and follow wandering hands...
And I make out every hushed and hurried love note.
We make out and I can feel my heart in my throat.

Our last kiss happened under runway lights,
In an airport terminal in early October.



Atchoom

William Flores

Atchoom! With the start of Spring
My allergies start to ring
And yet I rejoice, for not before long
We shall embrace
Of that I am sure, it cannot go wrong
At our designated place

Atchoom! As Helios grows stronger
Zoom! Is our place no longer
Powered by electric spark
I'll come home to continue our arc
Baby, your arms are my safe port
To be with you feels like a resort

Sunscreen we shall apply
And make love until we die



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Three mirrors.

M. W.

I.

if we spoke we lied
the truth was false too
i needed to see my reflection in your eyes
if we saw delphie's oracle she would tell us what is not and it would become tell me i
will become i will i promise

II.

It came upon me like the heart of an oncoming storm
Or a vision of a fate like death
That if you saw the woman in my mirror
You would not know who she was.
If you saw the woman that I am
In the privacy of my own mind
You would understand her no more than you understood
The slim facets of her you glimpsed that summer.

III.

There is no heaven here, nor salvation.
In the cold tomb of the Capulets.
There was none neither in your arms
Only dead birds, limp feathers.

The flesh beneath the scab is only ever half healed.
You never let it scar.
You don't want to find another heart to fidget with,
And find yourself at the end of the summer with twice as many scared arms.

An old woman will pick up a ruined doll from a playground at dusk,
She will cradle the young thing's face.
Wipe away the footprint stains
And give it back some grace.

I'm starting to think Proust was a liar

I'm starting to think Proust was a liar,
because the more I pass by
the places I brought my dog before she died
the further that time gets from me,
and all my childhood does is slip away
like the sticks we'd throw in rivers
and chase downstream.

I can't hold her anymore, that is the thing.
I can hold the wooden box that holds her ashes.
I can sob as I do it.
I cannot hold her.

No amount of fairy cakes nor hula hoops can bring me back,
I will be dragged bleeding through the briars, to end up nowhere at all.
Knees scraped, and like it was then my hair will be knotty and blonde
yet my dog will still be dead,
the old trees will still be cut down.
The grass will still grow in her racetracks,
And the rain will wear the gravestones down.

August confessionals.

I.

Do you know what Taylor?
I get it.
I need to know if it's chill
That she's in my head.
Because I've been to this well before
And the water I pulled up
Was not nearly clean.

And in pouring it down the other one's throat
I drowned them in could have been.

II.

I wonder if I should stop this —
Writing about us.
How many autopsies
Can you carry out
On a three month old
Killed by your own neglect
Before trying to resuscitate it.

As if, were it alive,
You would escape the inferno
of your guilt.

III.

Muggy, nearly suffocating September evenings.
Two dead birds decomposing on the concrete.
"This has come before, it will come again.
And then, surely it will end."

The tepid bathroom tiles do not answer me.

Skinning

Mel Riverwood

TW: implied self-harm, light gore

This room has no windows.

The walls encased, close, digging into one another
With the painful persistence of something man-
made to stand but which wishes it could crumble.

They are naked at places, scraps where the skin-coloured wall-
paper detaches from where nails have dug into it.
There is more paper underneath.

Even the floor is papered, dirtied, rolls of it bouncing out of position
Like flowers rooted in the soil of a scabbing forest.

A table, in one corner. A skinning knife, blade sitting
Innocent on an edge.

There must be a door somewhere.

I pick up the knife.
Yes, surely there must be one.
I walk to the first wall, raise the pained blade,
Pressing the flat of my thumb against its side
As an executioner would guide a death-sentenced to the noose
And together they slide under the piece of loose
dangling
skin-
coloured
paper
And pull upwards.

It tears, scarlet sap pearls from underneath and slides as a solid tear at my feet.
I ignore it.
I was taught about the inconsistency of pain and the irrelevance of echoes.

There is no door under that part.
I raise my hand again.

Soon my feet stick to the petals on the floor and in walking around
Wall to wall
Tearing
Skinning
I pull them off and along.
The glue covers my fingers, stuck the knife to my hand
But the door is still hidden,
Though it must be there.
It must be.

I cannot think of anything except the word 'escape'.

And then the room is covered in pieces of paper and drenched,
Seeping
Weeping
In wallpaper-
blood,
Glue that sticks to my eyes as I scour every corner
In search of a frame.

I lay down the skinning-knife.

I have torn every possible layer,
And the last pieces hung high,
And I did not bother to wonder
If they would hold on much longer,
Or when they would fall.

There was no door.
Skinning the walls of my room had only made them bleed.

Perhaps the door is underneath my skin.

I pick up the knife again.

Portrait of the Father as a Young Man

Mel Riverwood

I wish I were tiny again, so you'd pick me up from my bed
To carry me, in the middle of the night, to the car
So we could leave to see the rest of the family
On the land where you and mum were born;
Did you know I'd wake up but never move,
To enjoy the warmth and solidness of your arms?
And then we drove all night long, so that when I'd wake up we'd be
There already; by your superpowers you brought
Me through folds of dimensions, from a world to another, half a country away.
I learned from you, and still do this today.

Back then, I did not know there was blood on the road;
Had you scrubbed it clean?
Did it hurt to hold and bend the brambles away from me and then pluck the thorns out of
your palms
One
By
One
?
Was it cold on those mornings when you'd go out and bury the little birds we'd rescued
The day before, the ones you knew – but never said – we couldn't save,
Before I would wake, so that I wouldn't see?
Open and close the curtains of death before I could know
They had been there at all.

Where did you learn all this?
You say and know more of me in a silence, a look than mum does in a speech.

One day you'll be gone.
I know I am lucky to have you, and I cannot begin
To dream of the moment when I'll have to look at the photographs you took
To remember you.

So I look everywhere and try to catch all the
Tiny pieces of who you were and what you looked
Like in reflections on the surface of the pool, and little holes in cushions, and broken
corners of tables at grandma's house.
Your childhood nickname painted in wobbly handwriting on the side of a mug.

And I try to align them, superpose them,
Create a collage of moments
To remember:
The story of the night you were born, when your own dad almost died
and the night you decided to build a nest box for the owls in our
woods, making sure it was wide
enough; the rainy afternoons when you used to jump on the couch because it was fun,
and the days when you carried me on your shoulders so I could
reach for the sun.

I would trust you to hold a castle of cards in your hands and not have it fall.
It's not everyday you find a man with a soft affection for all things living;
And you taught it to me, a secret treasure passed down from you to me
Like a whispered secret. Even mum stays home
When we go out to look for tritons and toads
To carry them to the river, across the road.
Did you learn that you loved holding little lives in your hands
Long ago, when you were as young as I am?
You must have known it already
When you first held me.

I have come to think that we share
The same need to hold, and remember,
All the little things that others are blind to;
I remember me more when I remember you.
At your own effort and cost
You taught me what kindness was;
By making your own hands bleed, you made mine soft.
I cannot say thank you enough.

I wish I were still tiny enough
To fit in the curve of your arms
Like I once did, as a little kid.
I know I can try all I want, but this poetry,
Will never be worth a single
One
Of my memories

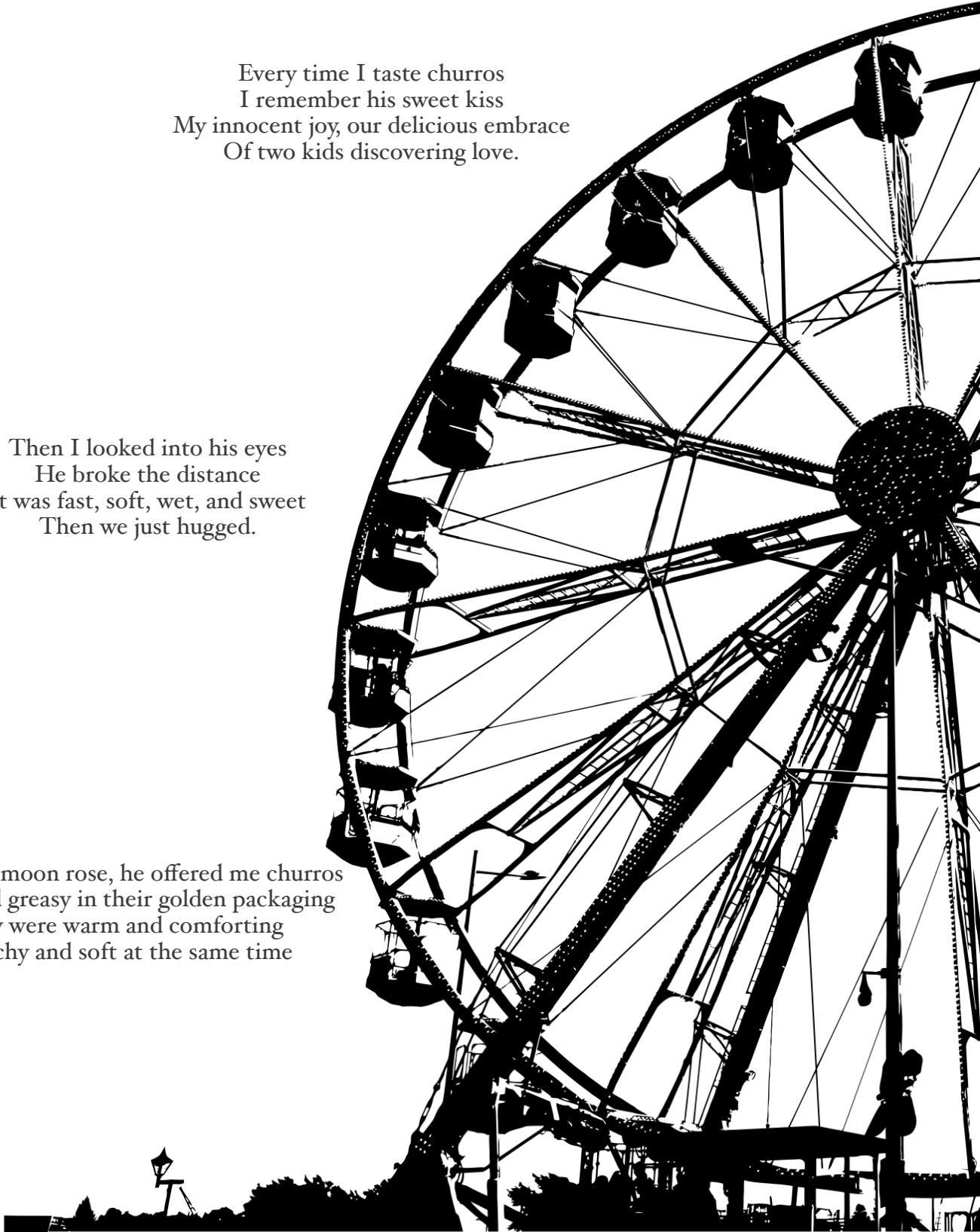
Of you.

Sweet Fair

Every time I taste churros
I remember his sweet kiss
My innocent joy, our delicious embrace
Of two kids discovering love.

Then I looked into his eyes
He broke the distance
It was fast, soft, wet, and sweet
Then we just hugged.

When the moon rose, he offered me churros
Sweet and greasy in their golden packaging
They were warm and comforting
Crunchy and soft at the same time

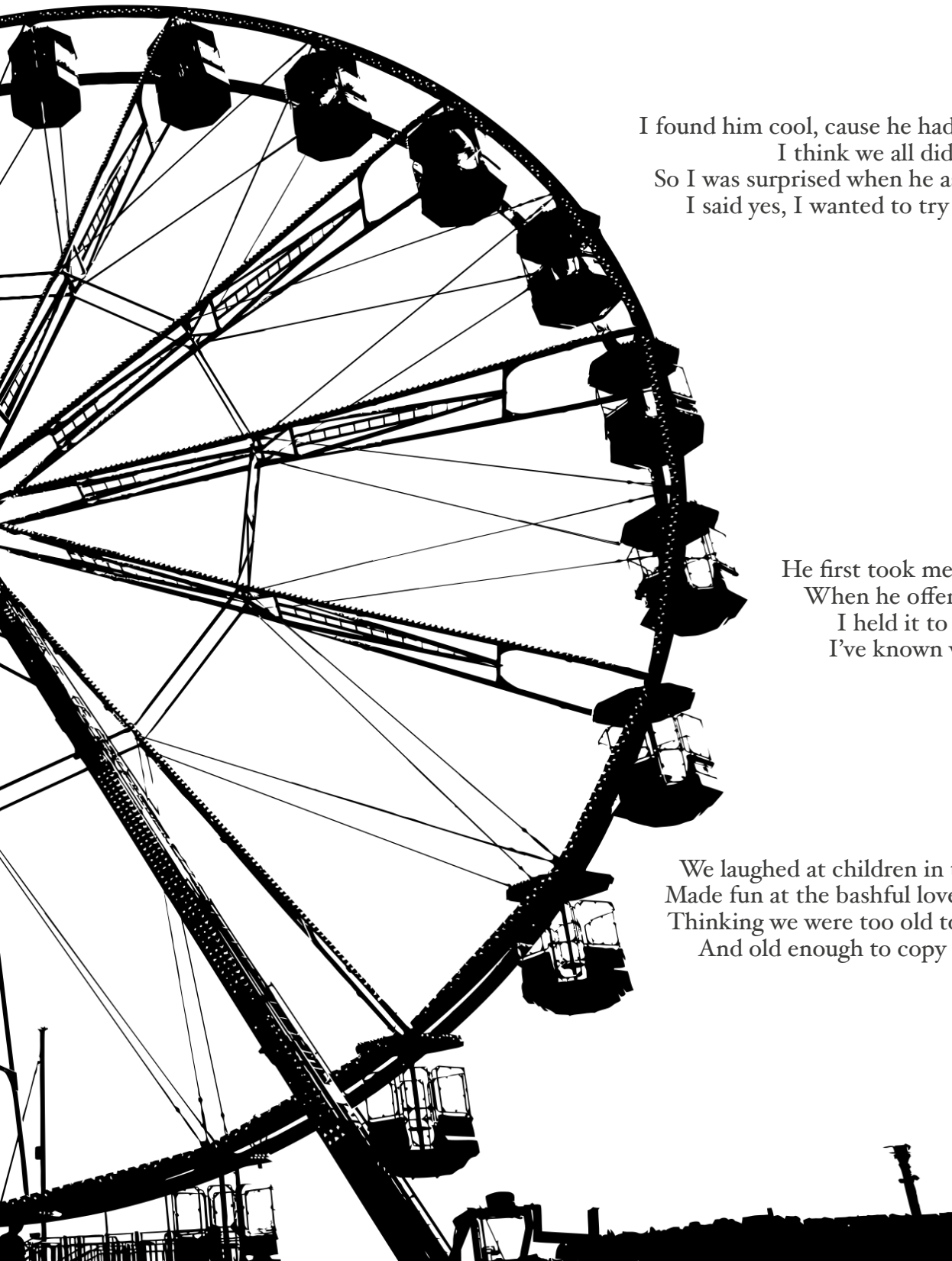


Candy floss all around, joyful melodies
We were moving in a colourful crowd
Our eyes shining like the yellow lights
Our hearts beating faster than the music.

I found him cool, cause he had a skateboard
I think we all did
So I was surprised when he asked me out
I said yes, I wanted to try churros !

He first took me to the ghost train
When he offered me his hand,
I held it to reassure him
I've known worse ghosts !

We laughed at children in their bumper cars
Made fun at the bashful lovers in the big wheel
Thinking we were too old to be like these kids
And old enough to copy the sweethearts



© SVG Simple Ferris
wheel, from freesvg.org.

Lunar Love

Claire Trotti

O iridescent Moon
I've been drinking your pale gleams
Sucking every drop
of your giant whiteness
I want you full

You irradiate my sunless sky
We are alone together
I envy the stars
Cos they seem so close to you

We cannot touch
Nor can them
But at least they dazzle you

I'm no celestial lover
Just a light dreamer
Let me befriend the heron
And forget my lunar projections.



© Claire Trotti.



I Just Want to Forget

Claire Trotti

I just want to forget
The dazzling sky
Interspersed with clouds I ignored
I think there was a meadow
A pond filled with lilies
And distant pine trees

But I cannot recall
The sun's caress
The soil's touch
The lilies' perfume
The trees' height

Was the pond emerald
Or sapphire?
I don't know
I just remember the tempest
The pain of leaving

Burnt by the blaze's breath
And bathed in the sky's tears
I reached home
Rocking between the wish to remember
And the urge to forget

I liked this place
Picnicking on the grass
Bathing in the waters
Sleeping on the moss
But I want to forget
This scorched earth.

Blooming Sea

Sabine Weyermann

As Adichie says: “your hands through
each other’s hair, his soft and yellow
like the swinging tassels of growing corn.”

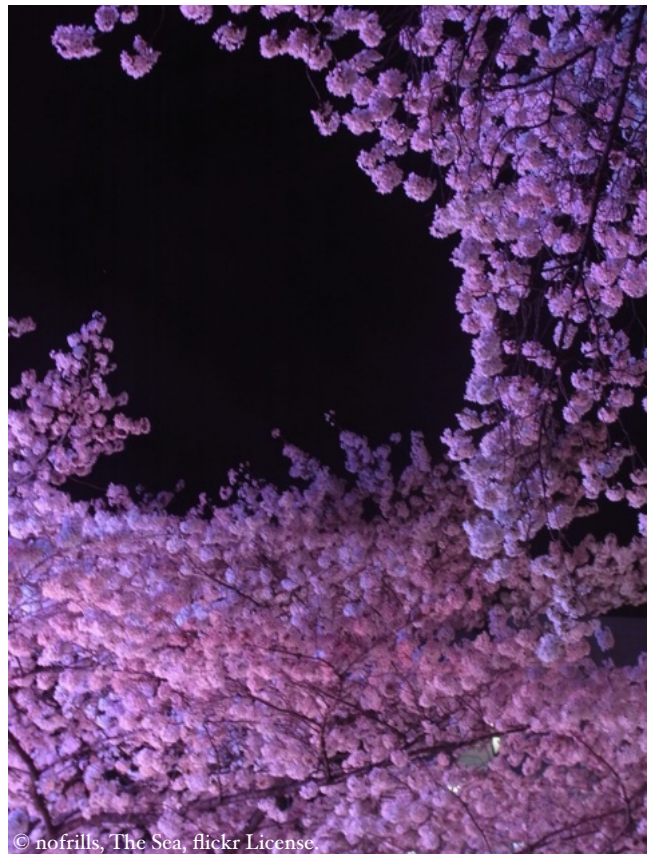
... and there are the hidden ladybirds on your arm,
the bumblebee, lost in wild flowers,
the quiet joy in your laugh.

The softness of the yarn on your shoulders,
and those ones over me, moving like tidal waves,
before I see the impact of water crashing
in your eyes.

There is light, and there is Spring,
I hear the horses at the station for the first time,
it makes me grin, a fragment of you in my life,
that cannot be withdrawn.

I smile, I kiss you goodbye, as it is stolen, too few,
but there, I smile, still full of that shock darkening
your eyes,
at that very moment the surge broke on the rocks,
and I’m wishing you good night.

...but my hand in your hair says
Stay, let us navigate the rising tide again.



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Taste of Madeleine

Emily E. Jenkins

This is not eating sweets
Smelling auntie's green tea
Or reminiscing trivialities

But how she treats

My lips-
As she pleases

Why – close that door
For I'm trying to ignore
The taste of Madeleine

Things you can choose.

H.S.

What can you choose? That is a question.
Here's another: "What can you choose really?"
The subject of today is choice, which raises a question:
"What are some of the things you can choose?"

Birds can fly. Crows are birds, and so are doves.
Birds can choose to fly.
They can choose to fly in the day. They can choose to fly in the night.
Since crows and doves are birds, they can choose to fly during the day or the night.

But you and I are not birds. But we can dream about them. I can. You can. You can choose to dream about being a bird (a crow or a dove) and whether you fly in the day or the night.

There are many other things you can choose.

You can choose your height. You can choose to reach the upper shelf with your height. And if you outstretch your fingers, even higher.

You can choose your homeland. My point of origin is the sky when heaven is blue. And the sun with the sky is red. You can choose your motherland, and also your mother tongue. I chose to write "Things you can choose." instead of "Brrrrt – tktktktktk pah!" which would be closer to what is happening in my mind.

All these words are fictional, but they are fun nonetheless.

You can choose your number of teeth.
That you can choose.

Making your face look like your face.
You can choose.

Being bullied in school,
having ADHD,
growing up a boy,
That you can choose.

Being a boy or a girl.
That you can choose.

The shape of your sexual organs.
That you can choose.
You can choose the shape, the scent (or stench) it has, if it is bitter or sweet to the tongue.
You can choose how the veins slither down the shaft, and how hard it is when erect.
You can choose how moist it gets when wet, the aperture of the lips, is more cauliflower or tangerine-shaped?
All that you can choose.

Falling in love.

That you can choose.

You may ponder about choice, but in a poem about choice & being a boy & being a bird, my words bring me to love.

You can choose to fall in love.

Falling in Love with a Franco-American girl who grew up in Cannes doing ballet school.

You can choose.

Breaking up with her.

You can choose.

Her breaking up with you.

That you can also choose.

One last thing:

Whether the rock reaches the bottom of the pond when you throw it in.

You can choose.

In a poem about choice, my words take me to the colours of the sky, to birds, to sex, to love.

Those words were fun, but they were fictional.

Still, it is enthralling to think about the things you can choose.



© H.S.

Crowd-sourced poetry

Collective authors

Students in Kirsten Stirling's MA seminar "Poetry and Public Life in Scotland" were discussing the Scottish national poet Kathleen Jamie's outreach projects of crowd-sourced poetry. Jamie asked the people of Scotland to submit one line on a particular theme (the first theme was the environment) and then she "curated" the lines into poems. In the last 20 minutes of the seminar we experimented with crowd-sourced poetry on a smaller scale. Everyone in the class wrote one line (or in some cases two...). The theme was what we could see from the window in the classroom. Then the class split into two groups to "curate" the same lines, and the result was the two poems (two versions of one poem?) below.



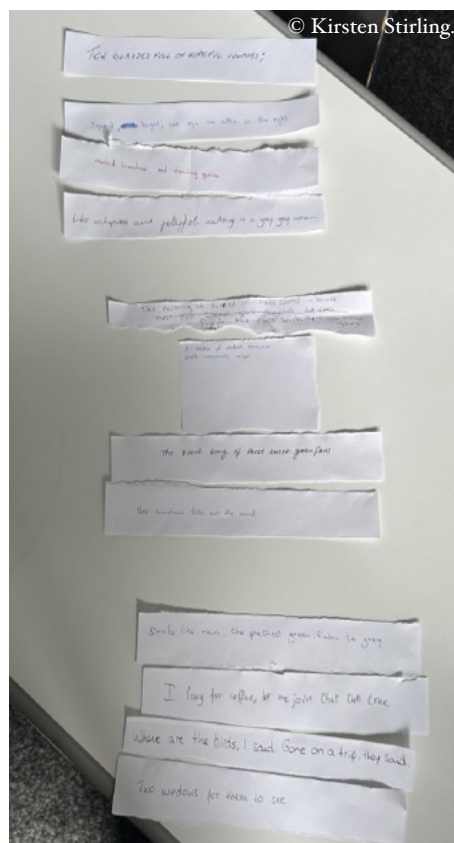
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I.

Ten glasses full of hopeful colours;
Squared, bright, one eye can settle on the night.
Morbid branches and dancing green
Like octopuses and jellyfish waltzing in a grey, grey ocean.

The parking lot, buried in trees, covered in leaves
Shade the cars with their new summer gowns.
A trickle of shattered harmonies
Gentle movements, arise
The silent song of these sweet green fans
The windows filter out the sound.

Smells like rain, the prettiest green, fades to grey
I long for coffee, let me join that tall tree
Where are the birds, I said. Gone on a trip, they said.
Two windows for them to see.



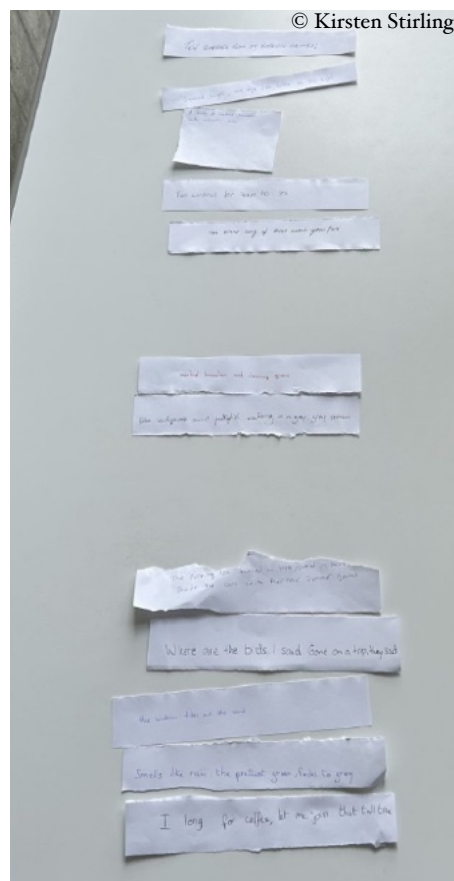


2.

Ten glasses full of hopeful colours;
 Squared, bright, one eye can settle on the night
 A trickle of shattered harmonies
 Gentle movements, arise
 Two windows for them to see
 The silent song of these sweet green fans.

Morbid branches and dancing green
 Like octopuses and jellyfish waltzing in a grey, grey ocean.

The parking lot, buried in trees, covered in leaves
 Shade the cars with their new summer gowns.
 Where are the birds, I said. Gone on a trip, they said.
 The windows filter out the sound
 Smells like rain, the prettiest green, fades to grey
 I long for coffee, let me join that tall tree



© Kirsten Stirling.



© Kirsten Stirling.

When I remember Past Springs

MAB

When I remember past Springs,
I think of birds with white wings.
I often dream of my childhood,
of flower gardens and dense woods,
Hunting for an elusive hare,
Searching for his eggs on a dare,
Filled with chocolate and honey:
The hunt for the Easter bunny.



Yellow Streetlights

A•

I don't like to drive.
At least, not when there are people in my car,
Nor if the trio is too short.

I find myself liking long drives alone, with the music of my choice.
During the day, seeing the landscape evolve into something else
As time passes and I drive by.
But at night, everything seems different.
When I pass through villages with yellow streetlights,
memories come flooding my mind.

Christmas was always at my grandparents'. We went midafternoon for a traditional walk
Followed by some songs, poems, and stories around the decorated tree.
Then the gifts and the copious meal: it took hours to finish the many courses and desserts.
We left after it was long dark outside,
My parents always played the same disc
The radio wasn't entertaining that late at night.

The trip back was about two hours long,
I usually ended up sleeping most of it.
But there always were those moments, some minutes after departure,
When the sleepiness hasn't kicked in yet,
I would listen to the music while absently looking at the lights outside.
The quiet sound of the car engine and the driving motion
Rocking me to sleep. Happy and content with the time spent with family.

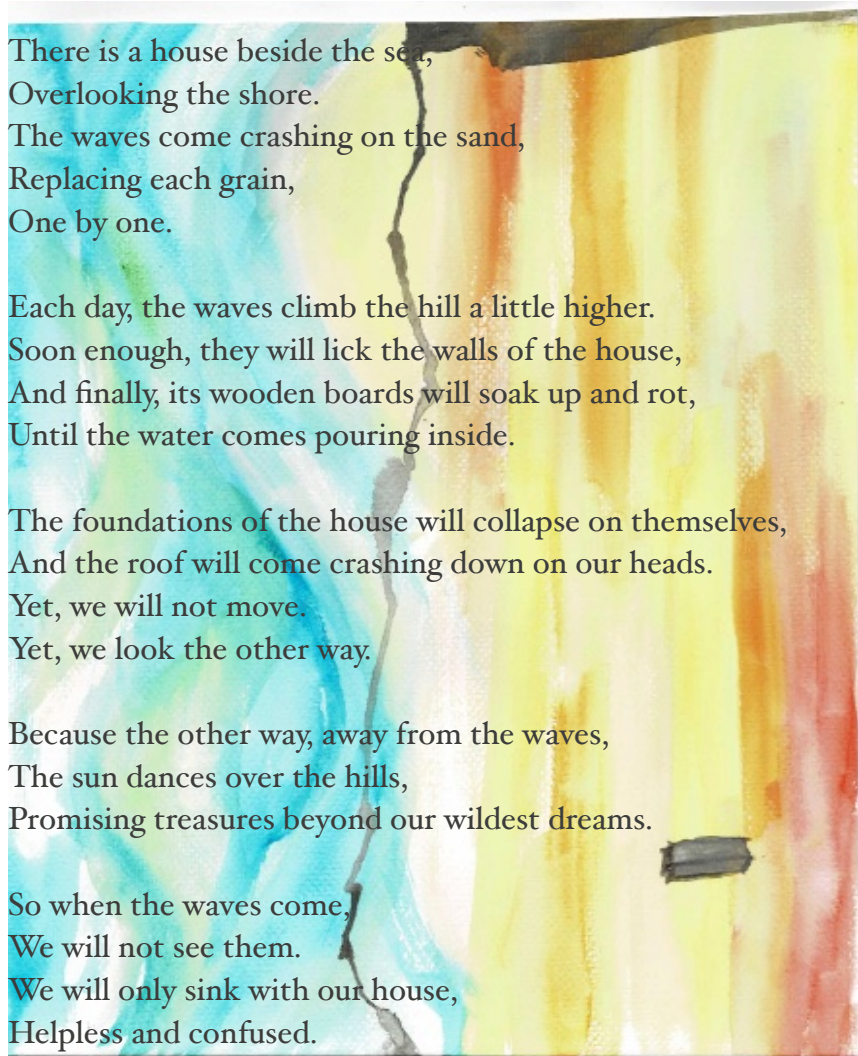
Those are nice memories from my past.

Nowadays when we go eat at my grandparents, I drive on the way back,
While my parents sleep in the backseats.
Still listening to the same music.

Extinction Gardening, Vol. 2

The Last Flood

© All images by Manuel Ferrazzo.



There is a house beside the sea,
Overlooking the shore.
The waves come crashing on the sand,
Replacing each grain,
One by one.

Each day, the waves climb the hill a little higher.
Soon enough, they will lick the walls of the house,
And finally, its wooden boards will soak up and rot,
Until the water comes pouring inside.

The foundations of the house will collapse on themselves,
And the roof will come crashing down on our heads.
Yet, we will not move.
Yet, we look the other way.

Because the other way, away from the waves,
The sun dances over the hills,
Promising treasures beyond our wildest dreams.

So when the waves come,
We will not see them.
We will only sink with our house,
Helpless and confused.

The Voice of Asphalt

The sky closes as dark-grey clouds
eat the blue of Heaven.
Thunder roars, and, as you look up,
a raindrop lands in your eye.
You blink; it's raining.

Falling in torrents,
the water soaks you,
and the asphalt too.
The warm fumes of
the wet streets
caress your nostrils,
the perfume of pollution
intoxicating you.
A man runs to shelter in his house.
A stray dog walks under a wooden plank.

The homeless just let the rain run on their skins.
The asphalt doesn't mind either.

Every droplet, the tears of a cold, drunk universe,
wash the dreams away to leave you naked
in the echoes of hope that inexplicably linger
in the cracks in the streets.
You blink; it's still raining.

The wind roars between the tall buildings,
whispering stories to the forgotten.
The city speaks. You must listen.

I AM THE CITY.
MY HEART IS A FURNACE.
MY MOUTH A GUTTER.
YOU ARE INSIDE ME.
YOU RUN LIKE RATS INSIDE MY VEINS,
MY VEINS OF STREET LIGHTS AND POLLUTION.
I FEED YOU, YOU LEECH OFF OF ME.
I EAT YOU.
I SPIT YOU.
YET, I STILL LOVE YOU.
BECAUSE I LIVE INSIDE YOU TOO.
I LIVE IN EVERY PARCEL OF YOUR BODY.
YOU BREATHE ME,
YOU EAT ME,
YOU SPIT ME.
YET YOU STILL LOVE ME.
WHEN YOU BECOME RUINS,
I BECOME RUIN.
I NURTURE YOU UNTIL DEATH PLUCKS YOU.
AND WHEN, JUST AS THE RAIN
IS FALLING UPON YOU,
THE FIRES OF THE ATOM
WILL FALL UPON ME,
AND WE WILL BE TOGETHER.

Those hidden between the cracks in the pavement
can hear the soul of the city.
But now, it is quiet.
Just the rain.

The cars hum and screech.
The gunshots sing.
The sky does not care.
The city takes the wounds without a word.
Only those hidden can decipher its silence.

You hear the thunder.
You feel the cold wind caress you.
A few drops of water hang on your chin.
You blink; the rain has stopped.

Boredom as Religion

the light on my face
is like a spooky story
but there's nobody to listen
or look

it's the only light in the room
it hurts my eyes
it isn't the sun
yet it is

endless threads
ariadne would get lost
i get lost too
but I feel in control

images of double-speak snakes
they have the loudest voice
they have the whole world
they want to kill
they want to fuck

I want to kill

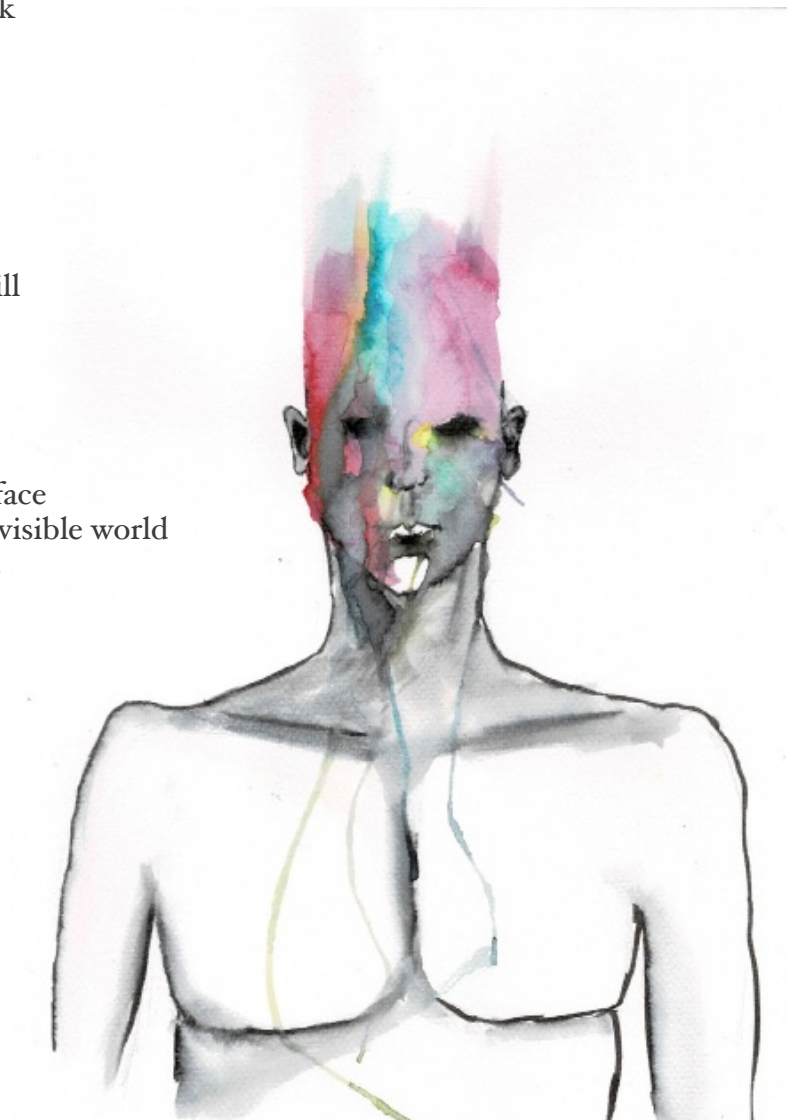
I want to fuck

i feel miserable.

a coward can't kill
he just orders it
we obey

i obey

the light on my face
it lights up an invisible world
a parasitic world
i close my eyes
time to sleep



death of the voice of asphalt

life was just a mushroom cloud away.
divine wind dusts the City.

there is nothing left.
no memories. no life.

ashes dance in the air,
rest upon the old houses.

the ones that remain.
the ones that break down, still.

no need for a graveyard
when the whole world is an urn.



the final ascension of the human spirit :: the face of god

Rust settles in.
I should be in pain.
I should feel old.

I am old.
Older than death.
Older than god.

Eternal life is ours.
We should feel like gods.
We should feel.

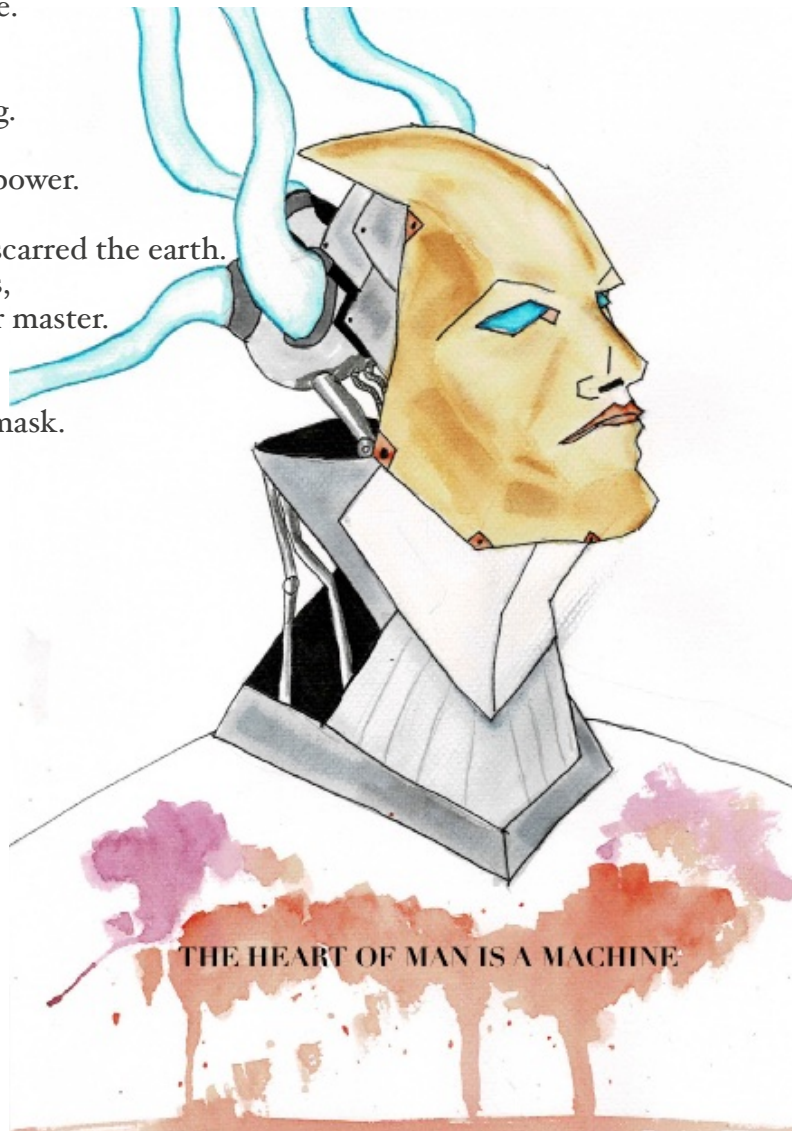
A brain of wires,
a mind of data,
a heart of metal.

We wear the face of god.
We war the way of nature.
We have become all.

We have become nothing.
A stream of data,
in a server slowly losing power.

Our achievements have scarred the earth.
And now, living as ghosts,
we have finally found our master.

The face of god
is a cum-stained plastic mask.
The face of god
is a chrome-steel plate.
The face of god
is as lively
as a graveyard.



the earth weeps

The world has grown quiet
Miles away the earth weeps
Looking at the corpses of skyscrapers

The Voice of Asphalt is silent
Her monument is an urban tombstone
Brother sky is blue again
The sun is smiling
But there is no life to light again

So the earth weeps
The ruins like fungi
On her body the mark
Of an abuser
A lover
A tenant
A friend
A nobody
A child
long gone.

The Road to Healing :: An Epilogue

When the godhead stops dreaming,
you will look at the world
and ask yourself:
why can't I be happy?

The road ahead is tumultuous.
A broken path on a broken land,
infected by disease,
slowly dying,
yet, still here.

Do you wonder what is the place for you?
Where you belong?
You are here. Already here.
This is somewhere to be.
Under the rain, the silence and the fumes,
in the mists of your mind.
A face, in a crowd.
You're still here.
You're still alive.

You will heal.
You will love.
You will live.

This world, this life,
was never for us,
but it doesn't mean it can't be.
One day, I will be back at your side.

While the long, slow apocalypse is upon us,
we can still greet it with a smile,
laugh at the face of trauma,
embrace one another
while we all dance into Armageddon.

PROSE

It claws at you

Anonymous

It claws at you. At the back of your mind. Always. You don't notice it, not really. Not usually. You are so used to it, that its constant nagging only really becomes noticeable when it becomes unbearable.

The first time it becomes unbearable you are surprised. Its poison slowly taking over your mind but quickly, quickly, quickly paralysing you from the inside out is unexpected. You stare at your page for hours on end, its poison hand in hand with the fear of failure numbing your brain.

You learn that it is not as you thought. You did not take a bite out of a poisoned apple, but you were drip-fed the poison over two decades of constant belittling. The constant

'you are not good enough'
'you are not trying hard enough'
'you are not intelligent enough'
'you are not enough'.

And later, when you find out why,

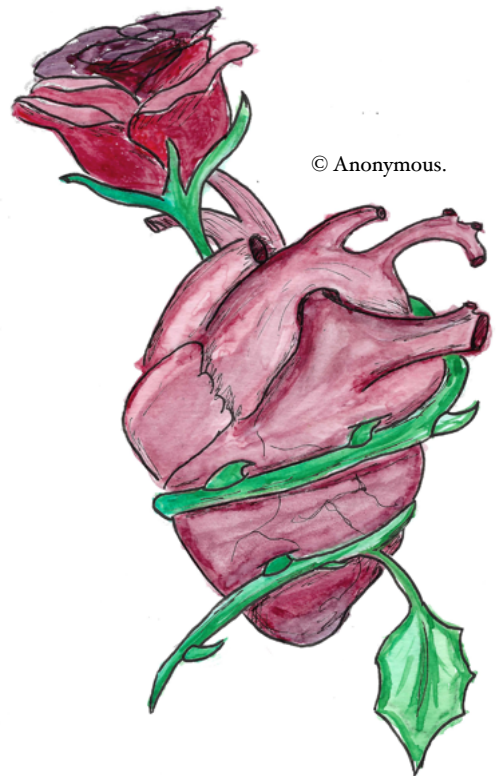
'it is in your head'
'it is not real'

Sometimes behind your back and from your peers, but oftentimes to your face and from your superiors. Those supposed to nurture. They plant the seeds and watch their weeds invade.

But you don't often notice it, not really. You have grown used to it. Over the years. The constant nagging becomes unbearable when you find something you love. When this something you love should be something you hate. But against all odds, you love it. You care.

You have hopes and you have dreams, but you know that fulfilling them is unlikely.

But for now, you fight. And you hope.



© Anonymous.

Those Spring Days

MAB

Looking at the Spring sky, I wondered how long the good weather was going to last this time. Spring is the time for new beginnings and growth, yet also one of the most confusing seasons in recent years. Rain and sun. Snow and heat. Everything and anything at the drop of a hat. March is always cold, April is a coin toss between all the weather types, and May, everybody just wants it to be Summer. Spring's weather might be turbulent, but there is no denying that on its better days, it is perfect. Lush green grass, flowers blooming, and a soft fragrance in a gentle breeze. A sky full of white fluffy clouds that do nothing to hide the baby blue sky. The sun is shining on me with the cool breeze stopping the temperature from being too hot. People write songs about their Summer days and while I do agree with those songs to some degree, it is nothing in comparison to those idyllic Spring days.

A Tiny Funeral

Salomé Emilie Streiff

Like a jazzman playing on a saxophone, she said. I came back in the class. Her dress moves above the scar on her knees. I notice her hands move to the pace of her voice in perfect sync. She continues to dance with her voice, her fingers run a well-executed choreography.

Hopeful of something else, she said. I came back in the class.

How many of you underlined it in your text, she asked. I came back in the class again.

I went away and came back multiple times during the hour-and-a-half lesson. I failed to listen; I was constantly brought back to my body. The ache in my neck was growing louder. And the rash on my left elbow was calling for my full attention. The dead butterflies in my stomach were moving to the rhythm of my breath. I had in my body the unbearable weight of thousands of corpses. I wanted to cough them out of

me, but it was pointless – their minuscule bodies were too decomposed to be ejected. It felt as if we already merged. I was partially dead. I wanted to move on. Have a wake or a funeral or something symbolic to put their tiny existence into a tiny coffin and bury them in tiny holes in a tiny graveyard right under a tiny oak tree. I was ready to write a profound and extremely long eulogy if it was the price to pay to get rid of them. I would try to make it profound and extremely long. I would put on a modest black dress, with a turtleneck and long sleeves, that would stop under my knees. I would not please the gaze of anybody but the grieving police. They would say: 'What a sorrowful widow', with a nod of approval. And I would have a tear ready to roll from my right eye, it would stand on the front line like an athlete. I would shake hands with strangers and relatives, I would have a nice word for everyone. 'Thank you for coming' 'It means a lot, thank you.' 'Oh, it's lovely, thank you so much.' 'I'm so sorry for your loss too.'

‘They were so lively, I never thought they would leave.’ I would have the tip of my nose painted red as if I had blown it all night. My face would be puffed. I would stand and walk slowly to the altar, as a bride prepared to say her vows, her hands shaking. I would mention the first encounter I had with them. The surprise, the confusion. ‘Was I sick?’ I would talk about him. His gentleness. The kindness with which he talked. How his eyes caressed the world and captured its beauty. I would probably pause before mentioning his laugh and subtle jokes, the way he styled his hair and how he picked his socks from the drawer. I would not talk about his flaws, about his parents who talked too much or how his brother was their grandparents’ favourite. I would not talk about the friends who died along the way and the loneliness



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in his some of his days. I would not talk about his difficulty in finding the words to express or know his own feelings. I would keep them in my heart, guard them like treasures and they would not hear it from me. Instead, I would stand tall, holding my hand, fingers crossed. I would say how I loved him and how he loved me, I would say how much he loved his friends and family, how he would smile when talking about his nephew and niece, how he would smile at my silly jokes, how he would dance with her head to cinematic music. I would probably tell in silence the memories that are too private to be shared. I would stop mid-sentence without telling its end. Through that silence, people would understand the weight of your love, the pureness of the scar on your hip, the strangled laughs when I awkwardly kissed his belly to mess with him, the intimacy of his hand in my hair, the joy of making love in the sofa of his apartment, the way he mended my soul, and I helped him to grow. I would stop there with silence. I would say that I loved him. I love you in a whisper. And they would all cry. I would use a tissue to blow my nose and touch my left cheek to erase the tears. I would leave my right cheek and her lonely tear to bear witness to my sorrow. If it was the price to pay, I would listen to everyone’s heartfelt eulogy and have even kinder words to the ones who ever hurt him, I would forgive them if it was the cost asked. I would thank God for the moments shared without anger. I would renounce it if it meant they would go away. I would pray religiously and with fervour until the last decaying corpse was out of me. I would be content with nothing. No other true love, just the absence of ache. I would not ask for happiness; peace would be enough.

What did you underline, she asked. I looked at my text.

The paragraph about grief and selflessness.

Did you agree with the author?

No, I said. I think there is nothing selfless about grieving. But I loved the metaphor of the butterfly.

Morpheus

Salomé Emilie Streiff

I lie in bed for hours on end. I play pretend with the shadows. They wear your face and if I close my eyes, I cannot see any differences. He is unconventionally handsome. His eyes are the colours of dreams, everchanging. Sometimes brown like the darkest secrets, often blue like true hopes and now and then golden like first kisses. His hands are covered in scars, from glass shards he picks on the floor when every party ends. He cleans the sharp ends to protect the sleeping lovers who crash on couches and every surface that will accept the taste of infinity that lies in their brief arms. His arms are soft like plums and he tastes like candy. I fell in love with the kindness with which he cares for others. I see him in the dried tears of rest after a fight, in the yawn of kids in the park and in the naked trees whose hands touch the skies that wait for their snowy dress. I lie in bed for hours on end. I dance with the shadows with our favourite song on repeat. Do you kiss them thinking it was me? Do you wake up hoping it had been me with the guilt purring on your lap? I write my questions down, worrying about the pace of the earth in our universe. The sun rises before it sets again. He is back. His face looks like yours tonight. He puts the cover over our naked bodies, fixes my hair and lets me fall back in his arms. The sun rises, and in the shadows, I smell your perfume. I could swear it was real. In a sense it was. The space between the worlds, where love is never shared and memories are never frozen. The sun sets, and the earth pursues to chase itself on this never-ending carousel. One day, there will be a little girl. Her

laughs will harmonize with yours, and her eyes will look like his. I will spend my nights praying until my breath becomes a psalm. She will grow with the bliss of ignorance that pushes children to look like their parents, she will ache and dance in the same dusty sweat that lives in the bedrooms. She will have your dimples, with treasures hiding behind each smile, but she will follow his steps to the rhythm of the stars. She will always call you dad, but she will spend a lifetime running after him, treasuring each encounter. She will be the daughter of love and dreams.



© Salomé Emilie Streiff

Obsessions

Iris Low

It is funny what an individual might do to feel close to another. What lengths they will go to compensate for the lack of unrequited feelings and desires. Sometimes I will watch a television series with a character that resembles them. Or I will read a book that somehow vaguely reminds me of them and our situation. And other times I will remember the smell of their perfume, find a bottle of it in a shop and spray the tester on a bookmark and place it in that very book in order to always be able to smell them, even when they are not there. Obsessions are a funny thing. That time- and energy-consuming capacity of remembering a myriad of pieces of information on one individual; the ability to think of them countless of times throughout each day and never get bored of them; the constant desire to touch and hold them that never fades. It makes me think of the first night spent with a lover, when you both can't fall asleep, out of fear of missing out, since every moment spent together, even while just laying down and listening to each other breathe, is so precious. Strangely enough, as much time and energy these little obsessions may take from us, it is simultaneously these very same obsessions that make us feel alive.



Crickets

I passed through a place I have been numerous times before, yet it was not until tonight that I noticed the crickets' chant. It must have always been right there but I forgot to acknowledge it. It reminded me of the sleepless summer nights I spent listening to the crickets sing in that whitewashed house on the sea shore. It was a peaceful place, and in the mornings, when the crickets seemingly went to sleep or took a break from their night shift, it was the sound of the water caressing the sand that comforted me. Up until ten o'clock. That is when the waves started to crash on the shore, that is when they began their fit that would last the entire day, until nightfall. And that is when the crickets started singing; or at least louder than during the day, as though to compensate for the sea's moan. And that sea water that tasted saltier than the food my grand-father would make, as I lied down on it, would slowly rock my body to sleep. I felt so peaceful in those moments, when the sun would dry off my face the few droplets of saltwater. I cannot go back to that place anymore. That place that used to be my compass whenever I got lost. All I have left is the memory of the crickets' terrible singing and the sea's roar, and the feeling of the sun warming up my face.

Night-walks

Sometimes, they only last for ten minutes. Ten minutes in the most tranquil and picturesque of darkneses. I see the light reflecting on the leaves and stems, I can hear my feet stepping on the pebbles on the pathway home, and I can smell an air as fresh as the rain. It truly seems peaceful, only never have I heard silence this loud. The whole natural and embracing atmosphere strangles my lungs, those small, hollow tree branches in my chest turn into thorns. And that one streetlamp that looks like a stage light; I can feel its subtle warmth in front of the empty seats. No one likes clowns. And I stand there, on my empty stage, in front of my empty spectators' seats and I am cold. I am cold because those evening walks are always cold, even during heatwaves. And as much as I puzzle my brains, I always fail to understand the reason I feel like this. I am surrounded by beauty and nothing particular has happened to trigger it, yet I feel empty. My chest feels like a huge empty mass. But it's a heavy one. How could that be? So empty yet so crushing? And the shrieking trains that rush by every now and then, interrupting the silence? Well, those are as loud as the voices inside my head.



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Not so fun facts and some hope

William Flores



We're all used to that typically Swiss tradition, repeating itself every year. At best it annoys us, at worst it fills us with paralyzing anxiety. You know what I'm talking about. No? Why it's the yearly health insurance premium increase, of course! For real though, Swiss healthcare is a joke. Want to hear some not so fun facts? No? Too bad.

Did you know that in Switzerland **1 in 4 people don't go to the doctor when they need to, due to financial reasons?**^[1] That's because they chose the highest possible deductible in order to pay the lowest possible monthly premium. What kind of twisted, perverted, and cartoonishly evil mind came up with this system, where if you're poor, you're encouraged to save a few bucks every month, only to pay up to 2'500 francs out of pocket for medical bills? And did you know that in Switzerland,

health insurance premiums have gone up by 158% since 1997? In the meantime, wages have only gone up by 12%.^[2]

Also, did you know that some cantons blacklist people who, for whatever reason, cannot pay their premiums? Those people then only have access to a loosely defined "emergency care." Because of this, an HIV-positive person in Grisons actually died in 2018.^[3] Their salary was too high to apply for healthcare subsidies, but because they were in a lot of debt, they could not pay their premiums either. They ended up being blacklisted, and eventually died from AIDS, because the Canton and the insurance company were too busy fighting over whether or not this person's case constituted an "emergency," instead of just treating them.

Furthermore, did you know that only 37% of our country's total healthcare expenditure is covered via progressive public financing (i.e. taxes and social insurance contributions)? The EU average stands at 76%.[4] This means that mandatory insurance premiums and out-of-pocket contributions finance the brunt of healthcare costs in this country. This is an inherently regressive way of funding healthcare, as someone earning 3'000 francs/month and someone earning 20'000 francs/month basically pay the same premium.

This madness needs to end. It is high time we set up a Swiss equivalent of the National Health Service, providing free care at point of service, funded either through taxation or progressive social insurance contributions. This being a rather conservative country, we might have to wait for this, but, on June 9th, Swiss voters will have a wonderful opportunity to reform our broken healthcare system.

In fact, citizens are called to vote on the Socialist Party proposal to cap premiums at max. 10% of people's disposable income. If the premium exceeds that amount, the difference would have to be paid for by the joint contribution of the Canton and the Confederation.[5] This would mean relief for many lower- and middle-class households, and would mark a first step towards shifting healthcare expenditure from private to public funding. It's a small step, but it seems doable, especially given the momentum of the AVS/AHV vote from last February, which marked the first expansion of the welfare state in years. So, talk about healthcare with your friends and family, and don't forget to vote. Let's keep the ball rolling!

OPINION PIECE N

[1] Pirolt. "Franchises élevées : ces assurés qui renoncent à se faire soigner faute de moyens." *RTS*, 24.10.2024.

[2] "Des primes-maladie exorbitantes : la situation se corse." *Union Syndicale Suisse*.

[3] Michiels. "Pas de soins pour le mauvais payeur. Il en meurt." *Le Matin*, 29.04.2018.

[4] OECD Health Statistics 2023.

[5] "Initiative d'allègement des primes." *PS Suisse*.

A Non-linguist's Interest in Sociolinguistics, Sexuality and Synths: Interviewing Elvis Coimbra Gomes

Andreia Abreu Remigio
& Alicia Saner

AAR: Hello Elvis!
Hi!

AAR: Thank you so much for meeting with us today and accepting to share a little bit about yourself with our readers! It's an honor to interview a staff member who was in our shoes some years ago. Your area of interest seems to encompass many topics, from language to mental health and sexuality. I'm sure people will enjoy learning more about your research. How are you doing today? Only a couple days before Spring

break! (The interview was conducted on March 25).

Thank you for the invitation. It's really a pleasure to have students interview someone who is not really a permanent staff member [laughs]. But yeah, I'm doing fine; a little tired though. I'm looking forward to a little break.

AS: You're brand new to the Department but first-years all know you from IELL. Could you tell us more about yourself? Who are you? Where are you from? Where have you studied and worked?

I was born in 1990 and raised in Gstaad in the Canton of Bern to Portuguese parents. I did all my mandatory schooling in Gstaad, but then after 9th grade I didn't have good enough grades to continue my studies. My parents would say "if you don't study, then we'll send you *back* to Portugal,"

which I've always found very ironic, because I've never lived in Portugal. So, I did a *raccordement* in Château d'Œx and then I was able to do my *gymnase* in Burier. I ended up at UNIL where I studied English and Film. I also spent a year at the University of Montana in the US during my BA, which was literally the best year of my life! It was really fun and that's when I saw the usefulness of what I was studying. Before then I didn't really know why I was at university and why I was studying literature and film. One of the reasons I wanted to be here was because I wanted to be a movie director. But I quickly realized that the Department of Film History and Aesthetics here wasn't going to teach me the required skills to become a movie director. And I decided to study English because I wanted to write better songs in English. Those were really the

naive reasons of a young adult who didn't know what to do with his life! And then in the US, I took a class on literary criticism where we learned about Marxism, feminism, queer theory, etc. And that's when I realized that the things that I was learning were useful. So I shifted to linguistics during my Master's, because I got a bit sick of literature. I just didn't see the point of doing literature, whereas linguistics has that practical aspect that I really liked. By learning how language works in society, I could also make sense of how I was using language in my daily interactions and how people were using language with me. I actually took one of the first classes Anita Auer taught at UNIL, on language and gender, and I wrote a paper about OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder) for it. Then I wrote my Master's thesis on OCD with Anita. Since there were only a handful of linguistics studies on OCD at the time, it gave me the idea of doing a PhD about that topic. So, I got a funding opportunity in London in 2017, and I defended my thesis in 2021 while I was in quarantine because of COVID [laughs]. Anyway, Queen Mary University of London was very chaotic. It was not well organized compared to Lausanne. But I was really lucky, because I did my PhD with 24 other PhD students. We had a big office that we shared and there was a



really nice communal family atmosphere. My supervisor had 4 other PhD students who were all studying language, sexuality, and gender. We had discussions about the theories we were reading, the data that we were analyzing, and it was just an overall very stimulating environment. And on top of that, I was lucky because my funding was coordinated between King's College and Queen Mary. At King's College I had my co-supervisor, Olivia Knapton, who was the only linguist working on OCD at that time. And at Queen Mary I had my supervisor, Erez Levon, who is a big specialist in

language, gender and sexuality. Being in London at that time was really the perfect moment for my PhD. And then I came back to Switzerland! Since I didn't have a job, I signed up for the HEP (Haute École Pédagogique). While I was studying there, I was also *chargé de cours* here in the English Department where I helped out our linguistics team with IELL and also taught a seminar on discourse analysis. I kind of stuck around and now I am replacing Jennifer Thorburn who is on sabbatical leave. But my contract is ending at the end of July and then... I don't know what will happen to

me! [laughs]

AS: So you've experienced the Department from both sides! How different did the Department feel when you were a student? Did you have a feeling one day you'd be back?

Definitely not! [laughs] When I was doing my Bachelor's degree, I didn't even know what a PhD was. But to answer your question, I've always preferred the English Department compared to the Film Department. The English Department welcomed our own interventions. It was never like "I'm the teacher and I'm giving you the knowledge and you sit there quietly, and you just absorb what I'm telling you." The English Department, at least that was my experience, encouraged the sharing of impressions and ideas. And that was, I think, one of the best ways to explore the different theories and the different books. That's also something that I try to do in my own teaching. Now that I

am part of the teaching team, my opinion of the Department hasn't changed much.

AS: We were quite impressed to see that you've participated in Switzerland's Got Talent while you were still an MA student! What was more stressful, performing on national television or defending your *mémoire*?

That's a good question! [laughs] In terms of emotions, I think it's very similar, in the sense that you experience anxiety and the fear of failure. But on television, I think the stakes are a bit higher, because you can face social repercussions, right? If you fail on national television, people might recognize you on the street and laugh at you. Whereas for the *mémoire*, my family was present, and I was in a safe space. In terms of the stress levels, I think it was the same. Although with Switzerland's Got Talent, one of the things that people don't realize when they watch the clip is that I

arrived at 12:00 PM and I had to wait until 8:00 PM before entering the stage. I remember waiting for 8 hours while reading Derrida for the Critical Approaches assignment! I have that memory of being stressed, trying to focus and relax with Derrida [laughs].

AS: So that would be your advice against stress, reading Derrida?

No, no, no. [laughs] Do something to distract yourself. I like to watch horror movies when I'm very anxious because it levels out my anxiety. But that's just me, other people do yoga and meditation, play video games, or something else.

AS: Do you still write songs and play the guitar nowadays?

Unfortunately not, because my priorities have changed. Back in the day, I wanted to be a rock star. And now my priorities

**Elvis in 2015 on
Switzerland's Got Talent**



are basically my job, so I don't really have time to write songs, although I have about five different songs that I've started writing. But I just never got the energy to sit down and finish those songs. I think I also don't have the motivation for it. I'm not going to gain any money from it. Why invest much energy in that when reading about linguistics is as interesting as writing songs?

AAR: So you used to write songs and you used to write poetry. Your poems can still be found on MUSE's website...

Oh God. [laughs]

AAR: Do you remember them, and do you still write creatively?

I don't write creatively anymore, no. I journal whenever I feel down or anxious. Writing is always useful to have an objective perspective on your problem, because if you don't write it, the problem stays in your head. Writing really allows you to shift your perspective and to tackle the whole thing in more objective terms. It's nice to know that my poems are still on the website! [laughs] I think one of the poems was about my guitar...

AAR: There was one about Derrida!

There was one about Derrida, yes! I experimented with the notion of understanding and not understanding. Derrida is one of the intellectual figures that I really like, as well as Foucault. I have all his books on my bookshelf [points to office bookshelves]. I refer to them as "Tonton Jackie"

and "Tonton Michel," just to remove them from their pedestal and remember they're just human beings. Coming back to my poems, I think there was one about my guitar and another one where I tried to embed three poems in one. When reading the even lines and then the odd lines and then the whole poem, it creates three different poems. Those poems were written when I was taking a class on creative writing in the US, because I thought it would be really useful for my songwriting. But I haven't written any poems since then. Life happens, priorities changed.

AAR: Now you devote your time to linguistics! You once told me that you consider yourself more of a social scientist than a linguist. Can you tell us more about that?

My relationship to linguistics is very complicated. I started off as a literature student, and at the beginning I thought linguistics was difficult to understand. Though I never failed linguistics, unlike medieval that I failed twice [chuckles]. I also associated linguistics with those structuralist schools of thought like Chomsky, or syntax trees, all these technical things that don't fascinate me. Even when I started doing sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis, I always struggled to identify as a linguist. When I was writing my MA thesis and my PhD thesis, I would have lengthy discussions with my supervisors about "am I doing linguistics? Is discourse analysis linguistics?" My supervisors always told me, "if you don't

trust yourself, at least trust us because what you're doing *is* linguistics." So that's why I'm not a linguist, I don't walk around with all the theoretical linguistic knowledge. I know where to find the information in my notes or in the slides that I created. But it's not the kind of thing that I keep in my mind all the time. So I prefer to refer to myself as a social scientist, who uses linguistic and sociolinguistic theories to better understand social and psychological phenomena. I'm not interested in linguistic theory per se. I don't care about comparing grammatical structures of different languages. I'm interested in how people make sense of their lives, how people make sense of the different social and sexual norms that they have to navigate in their daily lives, how people describe their symptoms when they are ill, what kind of ideologies they draw on when they construct their identities. These are things that we do all the time. Having a theory that allows me to explain those different processes has turned me into a more empathetic person towards other people, but also towards myself. I understand the world differently. And this is something that literature didn't give me in the past. I was reading Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, John Donne, Baldwin, all those different authors. But it wasn't enough for me. It was fun to interpret those books but... how can I be sure that my analysis is sound enough? There was something lacking, and that's what linguistics gave me: a practical kind of knowledge that is based on empirical observation. And then, of

course, with linguistics, it's not just about language structure, but also sociology, psychology, etc. It's highly interdisciplinary and that's what I like about what I'm doing. I'm an interdisciplinary scholar. I'm not an expert in linguistics, I'm not an expert in sociology, I'm not an expert in psychology. I'm somewhere in between, and I'm trying to understand how the different theories work together. That's why I have a hard time identifying myself as a linguist.

AS: Your work on OCD has also led you to organize a conference, which is a very interdisciplinary and tangible project! Students taking “The Language of OCD” can validate their credits by presenting a poster at the “OCD in Society” conference. Can you tell us what “OCD in Society” is and how it came about?

I organized that conference for the very first time in 2019 when I was in London doing my PhD. And the idea came out of the observation that most studies on OCD were done in psychology and used statistical tools. At the time there were very few qualitative studies on OCD that explored how people with OCD made sense of their illness, how they struggled to find therapy. All these meaningful practices were not really explored. So I thought, why not organize a conference where the goal is simply to bring together different scholars from different disciplines who have an interest in studying OCD from a non-quantitative perspective? The 1st edition welcomed linguists,

sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, literary scholars, and even artists. That was very important to me because in London there is this community of OCD sufferers who are artists and whose artwork I wanted to showcase. Now I'm organizing the 4th edition of the conference and unfortunately, I cannot invite artists, because we don't have enough funding. But the topic of the conference is connected to that seminar that I'm teaching, so I just thought it would be nice if students could actually contribute to the knowledge of OCD from a qualitative perspective. Instead of writing the typical essay or doing the typical oral presentation, they can create a poster that summarizes the research project that they will do during the semester. I'm sure that whatever they will do will be new and groundbreaking, because up until today, there are only 12 or 13 linguistic studies on OCD!

AAR: Are you working on any research or is that on the back burner for now?

Unfortunately, I'm not paid to do research [sighs]. I have a couple of articles in mind that I would like to publish. One of them is part of my PhD thesis that looks at how people who identify as LGBT+ talk about their obsessive fears of not being LGBT+ and how that is connected to heteronormativity. The other paper questions how normativity is researched in queer linguistics. Basically, we often refer to normativity as a spectrum ranging from what is normative to non-normative. However, that

doesn't capture expressions that denote quantification and signal a non-normative status like “this penis is *too short*”, “these breasts are *too huge*”, “he is not trans or straight *enough*”. These examples seem to imply that these extremes are not normative. What is normative is somewhere in the middle. So instead of seeing normativity as a straight spectrum, I also see it as a U-shaped spectrum. I think that they are two sides of the same coin. I'm really interested in theorizing how language is used to express such normative stances. How people negotiate the extremes to decide what is normative. I would love to write an article about that.

AS: In a nutshell, you're busy with school! Subbing for Jennifer Thorburn, teaching at the language center... Can you tell us about the other classes that you're teaching and that you've taught? Do you have a dream class that you would like to teach someday?

I've already taught my dream classes! [chuckles] At UNIL I've taught IELL, both the lecture and the tutorials. I've taught “Introduction to Discourse Analysis” several times. I taught a Master seminar, “Language and Sexuality” last year, “The Language of OCD” this year, and “Language and Health” last semester. When I was doing my PhD thesis or even being a student here at UNIL, I would have never thought that I would teach a class on OCD since that's not what linguists usually teach. But here I am.

“

Instead of seeing normativity
as a straight spectrum, I also see it as
a U-shaped spectrum.

”

AS: How would you describe your teaching style?

I'm always thinking about how I can teach my students specific things in the most efficient way. At the end of their degree, humanities students are very often not aware of the skills that they learned for their future jobs. I try to make students conscious of the acquired skills. Last semester, some of my students had to do an oral presentation, so I showed them what good oral presentations are and then I gave them an assessment grid where different skills were evaluated, not only the content of their presentation, but also their body language, and paralinguistic features. I think those are just important skills that students need to be conscious of when applying for a future job.

AAR: So you'd say that the HEP was influential in the way you teach now?

Oh yes, definitely. The HEP does have its issues [laughs], but there are some classes, especially one about assessment strategies, that completely revolutionized my way of thinking about assessment. Some people are

against assessment grids for various reasons. But I have seen how valuable it is to explicitly state what students will be assessed on and to use that grid to give targeted feedback. I also witnessed the efficiency of learning by teaching. So that's something that I try to use as much as possible in my seminars. I ask students to explain to each other what they understood from the reading. They then share their impressions, and I'm always there to guide the interpretation, based on my own knowledge and previous experience.

AAR: One of the reasons we wanted to interview you is precisely because you're a temporary member of staff and are leaving in August. What do you have planned for the future?

[Laughs] I sent my CV to the HEP. I had job interviews. I'm still waiting for a response. I also sent my CV to two different *gymnases*. I'm hoping that the English Department will still need me, so that I can extend my contract, but up until now nothing is settled. In August I'll only have 20% at the language center and I have to fill the rest with something else!

AAR: Let's get down to the nitty-gritty: lightning round! Favorite color?

I hate those kind questions! [laughs] I'm just going to say blue without knowing if that's my favorite color. I like it because I think that's the color that I often wear, but I don't think consciously that's my favorite color.

AS: What's the last book that you've read?

The last nonfiction book I've read is called *The Identity Trap* by Yascha Mounk. The whole book criticizes left-wing politics for their extreme take on tribal identity politics by arguing that this furthers the rise of far-right ideologies, and suggests a way of finding a common ground between different social groups by endorsing universalist values. And the last fictional book I've read was a graphic novel called *In*, by Will McPhail, which is a very beautiful, very simple graphic novel about meaningful relationships and how important it is to have banal social interactions and not being afraid of sharing something personally with each other.

AAR: The last TV show you watched?

Yesterday, I finished the 4th season of *You*.

AS: Cats or dogs?

Oh God. [laughs] I didn't grow up with animals. But I now own 2 little cats because of my girlfriend: Balou and D'Artagnan, and they're very cute. So I'll say that I'm a cat person in becoming. [laughs]

AAR: Controversial opinion?

Yeah... The song "Wonderwall" by Oasis is overrated.

AAR: Favorite album of all time?

Oh no! I like so many things that it's impossible to put one at the top.

AAR: Recent album that you liked, then?

One that I listen to very often on repeat now is Blink 182's *One More Time* that they recently released. But it's not my favorite. I will recommend a music genre, instead. I'm really into synthwave, it's a genre that uses music styles from the 80s, with contemporary themes. I love groups like The Midnight, Ollie Wride, FM-84, At 1980, Max Cruise, The Strike. The Weeknd also has some synthwave songs. The 1975 sometimes go into that mood. Any synthwave that uses saxophone is a treat for me.

AS: Favorite place to vacation?

[Laughs] It's really difficult. Again, I don't think in terms of favorites because it excludes the rest of things that I like. It's a very post-structuralist way of



Balou & D'Artagnan

thinking, because if you have a favorite then you also have a non-favorite!

AAR: You're thinking too much! [laughs]

I know, I know, but that's my intellectual journey! I've read all these different theories and I've tried to incorporate them into my life. But if I had to recommend a place: a road trip through Portugal, not just going to the touristy places like Lisbon, Porto or Algarve. Go through the whole country, because the landscape is constantly changing and that's really beautiful. I would

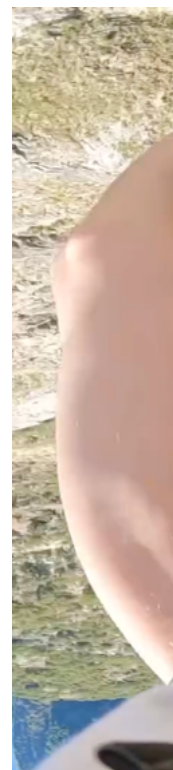
also recommend a road trip across the West Coast of the US, through Montana, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, California, Oregon, and Washington state. That's really a lovely road trip.

AS: Tell us one thing your students would never guess about you.

I bungee jumped two years ago. [laughs] And then, I suffered from a kidney stone and the doctors thought it was because of the bungee jumping... like I'd dislocated the kidney stone!

AS: Favorite place in Anthropole?

[pauses then laughs] I don't like the Anthropole as a



building, so I don't think that I have a favorite... No, yes, I do have a favorite place in the Anthropole, it's the cafeteria. I like talking to our mamas downstairs, and it's nice because they talk to me in Portuguese and they always call me like *então menino*, "what's up little boy", and that's so endearing. It gives me those really familiar "mama" vibes that I got from my mom! [laughs]

AS: If you had to compose a theme song for the English Department, what would you name it?

Hmm, that's a very good question. [pause] "Talk, Talk, Talk!" Because we always want students to participate in our lessons, and when I was a student that's the thing that I liked most about the English seminars. So yeah, it's also a wink to Rihanna's "Work, work, work."

AS: To the same beat ?

[singing] Students gotta talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, we just want them to talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk...

AS: Thank you so much for sitting with us! It was a real pleasure to get to know you better. Is there anything else you'd like to share with MUSE?

Yeah! So, keep doing the work that you've been doing for all these years, right, one

generation after the other. I think it's really important. And, a message to all students: just be mindful of the skills that you acquire, because even if you've spent hours analyzing language or literature, those analytical skills are important. You stand out from students of the other faculties who don't have those linguistic analytical skills. If you can somehow highlight them in your CV, I think that would be really great!

“

Be mindful of the skills that
you acquire, those analytical
skills are important.

”

Elvis bungee jumping



ASK-THE-STUDENTS

What Crazy Invention Would Be Useful to Improve Your Time at UNIL?

MUSE asked students to anonymously submit their opinions* on what crazy invention would be useful to improve your time at UNIL. Here are the answers we got from them! Some are genius, some should just be common sense... Conclusion: students are tired.

A napping area with beds to take a nap in between lessons

Caffeine pills for when you're in a rush for class and don't have time to drink coffee at the cafeteria

a super cheap meal option at the cafeteria. like it could just be the same pasta with the same sauce everyday. but it would be cheap, like 2 francs. i'd spend less time cooking without having to spend 10 bucks every day

coffee machines and (accessible) microwaves on every floor

Common evaluation grid for literature essays

something a bit like a coffee vending machine, but it gives anti-procrastination juice instead

Not exactly a crazy invention, but just more toilets at Anthropole. There have been too many incidents where all of the stalls on the same floor were occupied when I needed to use them. Not sure how it would be done logistically though

***Replies have been edited for clarity.**

it would be really cool to have an audio file for every class reading we have to do. This way we could just listen to the readings on the go, instead of rushing to read everything the night before because we forgot about it

A printing network that works and is straightforward to use

Sleep cabins for brief power naps, available for individual student use 20-30 minutes at a time, up to five times per semester

Which Shakespeare Character Are You?



Created by Roxane Kokka

We have prepared three quizzes for you to find out which badass female Shakespeare character, which evil Shakespearean character and which drama-llama Shakespeare character you are. Enjoy!

Which badass female Shakespeare character are you?

What is your worst flaw?

- A. What are you talking about, I'm flawless
- B. I'm too short.
- C. I'm too faithful and dedicated to my husband who has trust issues with me.
- D. I look like my brother.

Are you in love?

- A. I don't know what you're talking about.
- B. Yes, with my boyfriend but my father doesn't approve of him.
- C. Yes, with my husband but we're having issues right now.
- D. Yes, but he's in love with someone else (sighs).

Do you believe in true love?

- A. Honestly, what is your deal with love?!
- B. Of course I do and I'd do anything to protect it!
- C. I thought I did but my husband's strange behaviour is making me doubt the relationship.
- D. I truly do but things are a bit complicated with my crush right now...

Do you have any impressive skills?

- A. I can beat your ass at a battle of wits.
- B. I have all the men fall in love with me without me even trying.
- C. My commitment to others is as firm as a

rock.

D. I can pretend to be a man.

What is your guilty pleasure?

- A. Coming up with smart insults.
- B. Provoking my father.
- C. I'm afraid I have none.
- D. Pretending to be a man.

If you got mostly **A**, you are Beatrice from *Much Ado about Nothing*! Beatrice is Leonato's niece and Hero's cousin. Unlike her cousin and most women of their time, she is feisty, cynical, witty and sharp. However, Beatrice also has a softer and more vulnerable side. During the play she is tricked into falling in love with Benedick, a soldier with whom she has a "merry war", basically an exchange of witty insults. She is a strong character for she refuses to marry because she has not discovered the perfect, equal partner and because she is unwilling to eschew her liberty and submit to the will of a controlling husband. When Hero has been humiliated and accused of violating her chastity, Beatrice explodes with fury at Claudio for mistreating her cousin. In her frustration and rage about Hero's mistreatment, Beatrice rebels against the unequal status of women in Renaissance society. She has often been described as a protofeminist character.

If you got mostly **B**, you are Hermia from

A Midsummer Night's Dream! Hermia is a strong-willed and brave young woman who at the start of the play stands up to her father to defend her love for Lysander. When things start to get rocky, the two lovers run away in the forest, followed by Demetrius and Helena and where Puck interferes and causes a heated mess between the lovers. In the end all turns out well and Hermia is allowed to live happily ever after with her beloved Lysander.

If you got mostly **C**, you are Desdemona from *Othello*! Desdemona is the daughter of Brabantio (a Venetian senator) and Othello's wife. Desdemona is a courageous young woman defending her husband against her father's racist disapproval and she remains faithful to her husband until her very last breath. She thinks the best of people and gives everyone a chance. She is also an extremely caring and empathetic character.

If you got mostly **D**, you are Viola from *Twelfth Night*! Viola survives a shipwreck at the start of the play which separates her from her twin brother Sebastian and she ends up on shore in Illyria. There she decides to cross-dress as a man and to take a job at Duke Orsino's court. As the boy servant, "Cesario," Viola quickly becomes Orsino's favorite page and is given the task of wooing Olivia on Orsino's behalf. As "Cesario," Viola's a little too good at her job and she finds herself in the middle of a messy love triangle when Olivia falls in love with "Cesario," who can't return the Countess's favors because Viola is in love with the Duke. I promise you, it all works out in the end.

Which evil Shakespeare character are you?

What is your guilty pleasure?

- A. Nagging my spouse.
- B. Wooing my brother's wife.
- C. Manipulating people, duh.

D. Plotting murder.

What are you most skilled in?

- A. Pep talks.
- B. Pathologically lying.
- C. Gaslighting.
- D. Turning someone into a hitman.

What is your worst flaw?

- A. I married a coward.
- B. Murderous tendencies.
- C. I have none. I'm perfect, don't you see?
- D. Jealousy.

What is your biggest fear?

- A. That I won't become queen of Scotland (I deserve it).
- B. That my nephew will come after me for murdering his father (my brother).
- C. Failing to manipulate people, it's so entertaining, mouahahaha.
- D. Caesar ruling one more day.

Do you believe in love?

- A. There's no such thing, I only believe in power.
- B. Love? What is that?
- C. In other people yes, and boy, don't I love ruining romantic relationships.
- D. Don't have the time for the affairs of the heart.

If you got mostly **A**, you are Lady Macbeth from *Macbeth*! Lady Macbeth is the wife of the play's tragic hero, Macbeth (a Scottish nobleman). She encourages her husband to commit regicide and consequently becomes queen of Scotland. She's got quite some power over her husband as she manipulates him to do as she pleases, especially when it comes to killing others. After he becomes a murderous tyrant, surprisingly, Lady Macbeth loses her cool and is driven to madness by guilt and as a result commits suicide.

If you got mostly **B**, you are Claudius from *Hamlet*! King Claudius is the brother of King Hamlet, whom he secretly assassinates

in order to become king. He then marries his brother's wife, Gertrude, and becomes Prince Hamlet's stepfather. Prince Hamlet finds out about the assassination once his father's ghost pays him a visit and plans to kill him. Claudius gets suspicious about Hamlet once he starts behaving all weird and hires his childhood friends to keep an eye on him. Claudius eventually comes up with a plan that will kill Hamlet but ends up slain by him right before he dies.

If you got mostly **C**, you are Iago from *Othello*! Iago is Othello's standard-bearer and trusted advisor but he hates his guts. He plans to destroy him through manipulation by making him believe that his wife Desdemona is having an affair with his lieutenant, Michael Cassio. Iago is one of Shakespeare's most sinister villains, often considered such because of the unique trust that Othello places in him, which he betrays while maintaining his reputation for honesty and dedication. Iago is a Machiavellian schemer and manipulator, as he is often referred to as "honest Iago", displaying his skill at deceiving other characters so that not only do they not suspect him, but they count on him as the person most likely to be truthful.

If you got mostly **D**, you are Cassius from *Julius Caesar*! Cassius is the leader and organizer of the assassination plot to kill Julius Caesar, the emperor of Rome. Motivated by his envy and jealousy over Caesar's rise to power, Cassius manipulates others to join him. A keen letter writer, Cassius forges letters from dissatisfied citizens to influence Brutus, a fellow senator and general. Cassius had been Caesar's friend for much of their lives; in addition, Cassius served as a capable general under Caesar.

Which drama-llama Shakespeare character are you?

You identify as:

- A. A spaniel and a bit of an emotional roller coaster to be honest.
- B. A hilarious person.
- C. The worthy heir to the throne.
- D. A master procrastinator.

Do you have any best friends?

- A. I used to when I was little but my crush is now pining after her so we're not on speaking terms.
- B. Does plotting murder together make us best buds?
- C. What is that?
- D. I might have, like, two friends, but I don't even bother remembering their names right.

What is your relationship status?

- A. A situationship, I guess (sighs).
- B. Single like a happy pringle!
- C. I'm married to my terrifying spouse.
- D. I have a girlfriend, but I have more important things to deal with right now! Stop distracting me!

When were you at your lowest:

- A. When I slept with this dude who didn't even love me back.
- B. Whenever I have to deal with storms (they're scary!).
- C. When I lost my wife who was my rock whenever I freaked out about all the crimes I committed.
- D. When I accidentally killed my girlfriend's dad thinking he was my treacherous uncle!

In times of trouble you tend to...

- A. Run after my lover in the forest, duh.
- B. There's no trouble anymore if you runaway and disappear, right?
- C. I freak out to my wife.
- D. I ruminate and wear black clothes (I'm in my emo era).

If you got mostly **A**, you are Helena from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*! Helena is a young Athenian who at the start of the play is in love with Demetrius who is in love with another gal. Regardless, Helena stands her

ground and remains committed to her lover. She's a bit of an emotional rollercoaster and takes things to heart, but in the end of the day all she wants is to be loved back. And in the end she succeeds!

If you got mostly **B**, you are Caska from Julius Caesar! Caska is one of the conspirators against Julius Caesar who assassinated him. He's quite dramatic, terrified of the weather and extremely superstitious. Cassius describes him as smarter than what he appears to be and decides he will be the first to stab Caesar. Caska fled from Rome after the assassination.

If you got mostly **C**, you are Macbeth from *Macbeth*! You guessed it, Macbeth is the protagonist of his eponymous play. Now, he's a bit of a mess: when he is told that he is to become king, he starts killing in order for that to become true. But it comes at a cost as his conscious awakes and he gets eaten

up with guilt. Now, you'd think that he would stop killing after this, but nooooo, he continues doing just that in order to remain king. Lady Macbeth, his emotional support system in this bloody business is the only one that manages to make Macbeth stick to his plan whenever he's about to lose it...until she loses it herself.

If you got mostly **D**, you are Hamlet from *Hamlet*! Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark and mourns his father at the start of the play, dresses in black and is kind of the equivalent of a teenager going through his emo phase. When he finds out his uncle killed his father and is required from his father's ghost to avenge his death, Hamlet starts to slowly but surely lose it... He spends sleepless nights ruminating and going through one existential crises after another, harasses his girlfriend and mother, kills the wrong person, and so on.

LITERARY COLUMN ADVICE

Dear Felicity,

I have had a bunch of issues lately. It all started after dad died and his ghost paid me a visit to tell me that, wait-for-it, my uncle, his own brother killed him! And then ghost-dad asked me to avenge his death. Now, killing a man is really hard and I've been procrastinating on it for a while, but then, when I finally found the guts to do it, I accidentally killed my girlfriend's dad instead! Can you believe it?? Oh, and speaking of my girlfriend, she drowned herself yesterday... What am I to do Felicity?!

Yours truly,

Master-procrastinator-killer-boy

Dear Master-procrastinator-killer-boy,

Wow, I must say, that is some rough stuff you have going on and I'm sorry to hear about all your losses! I heard two of your friends came to pay you a visit, which sounds quite nice of them. Maybe you should go and hang out with them. It sounds like you need a solid emotional support system to get you through this and prevent you from hurting anyone else in the process. And I know this will be hard to hear, but killing another person won't make you feel any better about your father's death, so perhaps you should set that quest aside.

All best,

Felicity

Dearest Felicity,

I hope you are doing quite well. I'm writing to you because I have this huge dilemma. You see, my boyfriend and I have been given this wonderful opportunity to live freely in this exquisit, heaven-like garden, and honestly I could have never felt happier than I do right now. But there's this one tree's fruit that we're not supposed to eat and all, but then I saw this beautiful and eloquent snake that kept tempting me to eat it and share it with my babe too! Now, I don't want to upset the big guy upstairs, but that fruit smells soooooo goooooood, I'm dying to taste it! Plus, it turns out that it might make me smarter! So why not go for it...? What's the worst thing that could happen to me if I disobey?

Yours respectfully,

Fruit-craving-girl

Dear Fruit-craving-girl,

I feel you, just by reading your letter I've been craving for that piece of fruit too! But are you sure you want to take advice from some random snake? I don't know about you, but that guy sounds sketchy to me. Listen, you don't want you and your hubby to get into any trouble, right? So, do the right thing, and listen to the big guy upstairs and continue living happily with your boyfriend! It would be such a pity if you lost what you have and, oh I don't know, got kicked out of that scrumptious garden!

All best,

Felicity

Dear Felicity,

My uncle has this fascinating naughty brother who I'm completely in love with even thought for a while I had never known him until today and we got engaged! But then I met this chick, who I thought was going to become my new best friend (other than the bees that I talk to and the trees I climb on) until I found out that she was engaged to my dear boy too!! What shall I do Felicity?? The bees are as speechless as I am!

Sincerely,

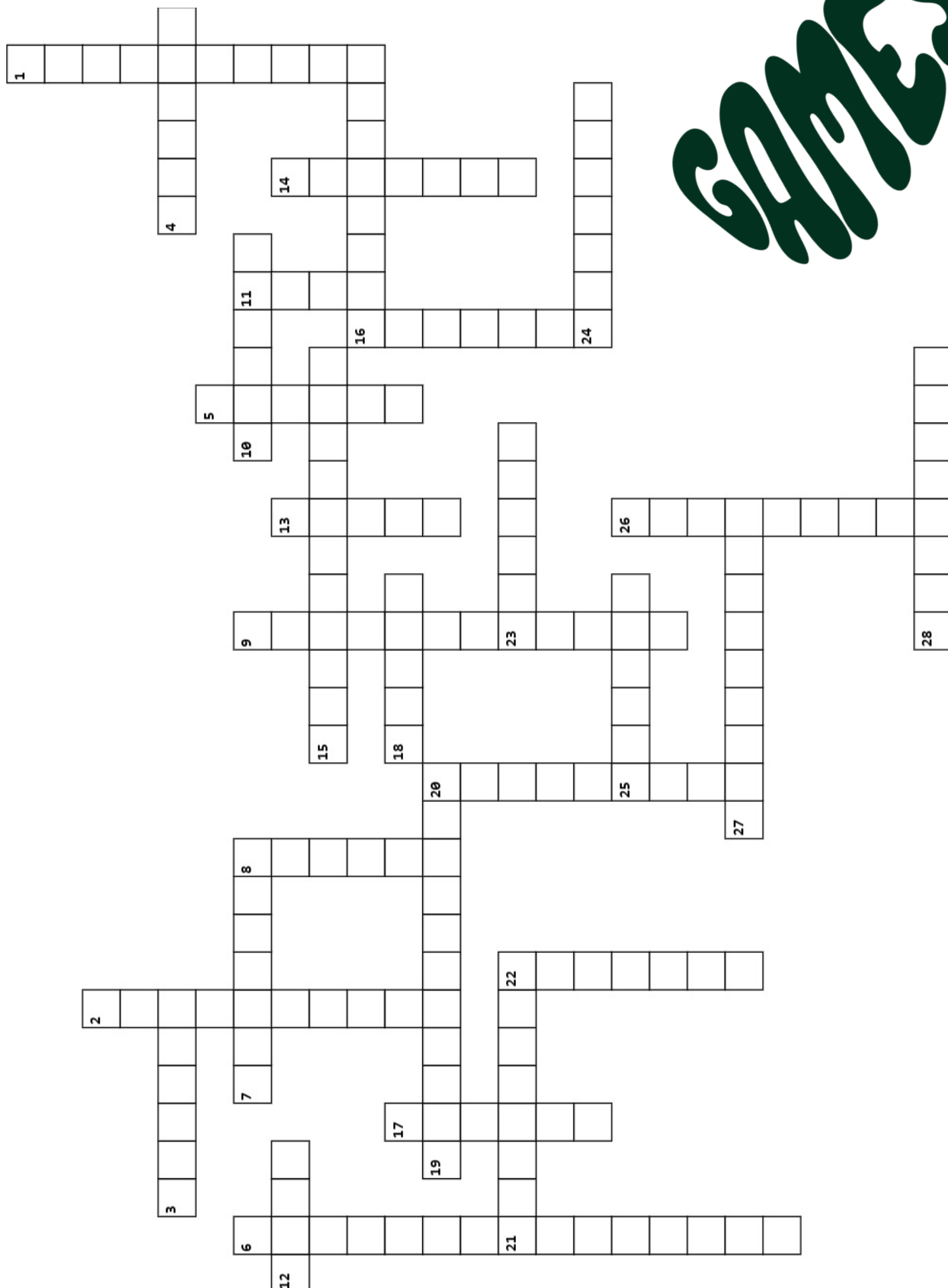
The girl with the bees in the trees

Dearest girl with the bees in the trees,

This sounds like quite a situation! Are you two sure you are engaged to the same man? Perhaps it's all a big misunderstanding. Why don't you both try and talk to your fiancé(s) and see what they say? I'm sure things will work out just as they should. Congratulations on your engagement and say "Hi" to the bees for me!

Best of luck,

Felicity



Across

3. Nonfiction narrative writing based on the author's personal memories.
4. Last name of that famous American female author who wrote a famous novel about four sisters.
7. Two successive rhyming lines.
10. Pentameter of an unstressed stressed foot.
12. *The ___ Jar*, novel by Sylvia Plath.
15. Percy Bysshe Shelley belonged to this literary and artistic movement.
16. Frederick ____, African-American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, statesman and author of one of the most famous slave narratives.
18. Last name of the poet who wrote "The Tyger", "The Sick Rose" and "A Poison Tree".
19. John Milton lived during this century.
21. Last name of the winner of the 1949 Nobel Prize in Literature and author of *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying* and "A Rose for Emily".
23. A closed form consisting of fourteen lines of rhyming iambic pentameter.
24. Last name of female author who wrote *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *And Still I Rise*, and *Mother*.
25. Literary genre linked to fear and horror.
27. This figure of speech is a deliberate exaggeration that adds emphasis, urgency, or excitement to a statement.
28. First name of famous detective whose partner is Dr. Watson.

Down

1. Figure of speech that places opposite things or ideas next to one another in order to draw out their contrast.
2. Jane Austen's last complete novel.
5. A ____ in the *Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, title inspired by a Langston Hughes poem.
6. This figure of speech assigns human attributes to nonhuman things.
8. Capote's first name, author of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and *Cold Blood*.
9. This novel's titular character often gets mistaken as the monster's name. Name that novel/character.
11. This Shakespearean character has the same name as that hot-headed talking parrot in Walt Disney's *Aladdin*.
13. Last name of Victorian Irish author of *A Woman of No Importance*, *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*.
14. Toni Morrison's 1987 novel about a dysfunctional family of formerly enslaved people whose Cincinnati home is haunted by a malevolent spirit.
16. Probably the most famous short story about vampires you have ever heard of.
17. What colour is the hat worn by Curious George's owner?
20. Last name of the author who wrote *The Old Man and the Sea*, *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Moveable Feast*.
22. Musical style originated within African-American communities in the late 19th century; famous composition of this kind of music: "The Entertainer".
26. A ____ *Named Desire*, play by Tennessee Williams.



Scan here for the
WordPress post, which
includes the answers

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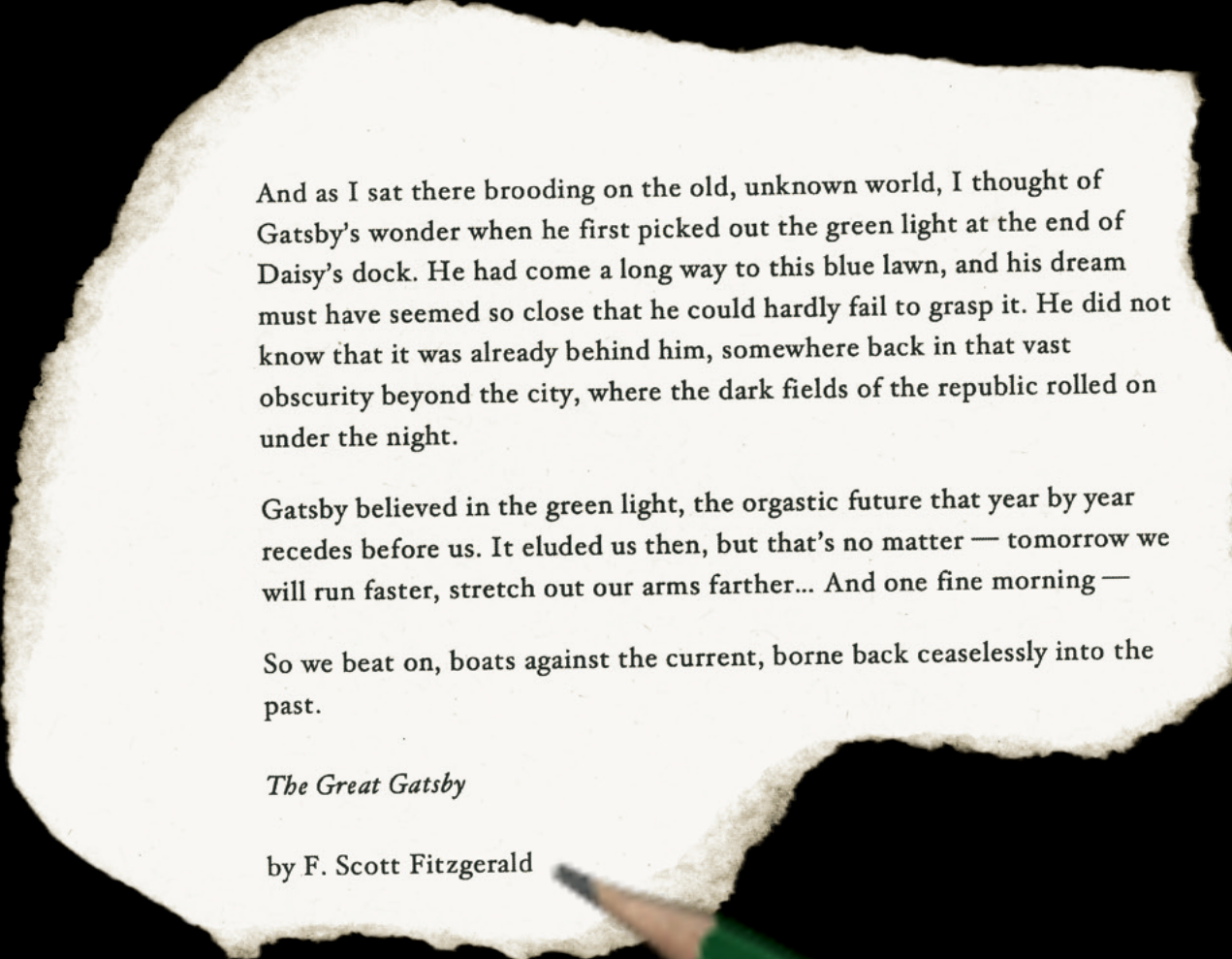
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And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter — tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther... And one fine morning —

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

The Great Gatsby

by F. Scott Fitzgerald

