



the graduate review

Front Cover:

Untitled 6

Javier Masis

Back Cover:

Untitled 7

Javier Masis

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Direct submissions and other correspondence to:

gsas.literary@gmail.com

or

The Graduate Review, Harvard University

Lehman Hall, 3rd floor

Harvard University

Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Esteemed Reader,

After 25 years and 25 volumes of *The Dudley Review*, this is the first edition of *The Graduate Review*: a new form for the tried and trusted zine the Literary Fellows publish every year with submissions of poems, short stories, photographs, paintings, and other artwork from Harvard graduate students in GSAS—and the first digital edition! Of course, this year has had a lot in store for all of us; but even more than in usual times, we are glad and proud to give you an account of the wonderful works of our student body.

Most of all, we would like to thank everyone who shared their writing and art with us in these uncertain times. We have been more than glad to read, look, and browse through all your wonderful works. We would like to highlight in particular Farah El-Sharif's marvelous text *Cerebral Motherhood*, which was accepted in last year's issue, but, regretfully, was accidentally omitted. Please enjoy Farah's text with us this time instead—and read it twice.

We—that is, Soubhik Barari (Government), Eleanor Ellis (Middle East Studies), and Christian Struck (Germanic Languages & Literatures / CMP)—will disband soon and make room for a new wonderful cohort of Literary Fellows: Sebastian Brass (Germanic Languages & Literatures), João Marcos Copertino Pereira (Romance Languages & Literatures), and Alex Creighton (English / WGS). We know you are going to be in good hands.

Enjoy the Review, let us know what you think, and submit your works for the next issue!

Stay safe and keep in touch,

Christian, Eleanor and Soubhik

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Cerebral Motherhood

Farah El-Sharif

Routine daycare pickups are such inconvenient times for existential crisis.
Why must the isolation of Western living overcome me,
as I recount groceries fretting about the dysfunction of modernity?

Why must I deconstruct traditionalist epistemes,
and critique Fukuyama,
all while I wrestle my croco-baby into the carseat?

Why must all meaning, complexity and irony,
descend upon me between a smartphone and a sand box,
as a metaphor for 21st century childhood?

I even turn my unassuming progeny,
into little oracles of accidental philosophy,
as they say the darnest, most profound things.

There is nothing quite as sublunary,
as to contemplate the fickleness of the human condition,
while wiping a baby's bum.

In cooking I throw a little Foucault into the pot,
and a whole lot of postcolonial angst,
as I lament this simplified version of my Arab mother's cooking.

Carrying expensive groceries as my buggers bicker,
I notice a stereotypically beret-clad Intellectual Old Man,
who probably reeks of tobacco and melancholy.

Of him, I am insanely jealous.
He can probably waste a day away alone in a coffeehouse,
with his books and the depressiveness of his thoughts.

Cerebral mothers know no such luxury,
as to sit alone all-grumpy in berets for hours,
and brood over broken dreams and big ideas.

In time "lost" away from books,
Cerebral mothers are found like treasures-touched,
Time and time again sought out, loved and needed.

I may never become an Intellectual Old Man,
But one day an Intellectual Old Woman I will be.
And I will sit alone (sans beret – what a cliché!)

And I will remember, with great melancholy,
the gift of life with my most profound teachers,
the Little Opener's of my heart's eye.

Study Break

Cambridge (MA), April 2020

Nikhita Obeegadoo



Cambridge

Ana Luiza Penna



Untitled

Rounding sounds
I sit by a whirling icy river
While I suck on my brittle tongue
That dances, trying to mimic the feeling of forgetting
As the fog entering the cracks of glassy eyes
Like the ones where that city lives
Where I powdered my lashes with zinc
And dipped my lungs in mercury
Which, once cold, formed the model that I brought
To this different grey
That I need to learn how to love

Recovered Journal Entries: 2049-2055

Arya Kaul

2019, Spring

January 14, 2049

According to ancient Hindu legend, the world and all of its inhabitants exist on the back of an infinite series of turtles all balancing on one another's shells. "Turtles all the way down." While not scientifically accurate, it is closer to the physical truth than one might expect. My research points to our experienced Universe being made up of infinitely smaller Universes, all existing in the 'empty' spaces of the atoms that make up our physical world. Tomorrow, I plan to inspect these Universes.

For I have been able to construct a device capable of providing me a window into these worlds. What wonders I will find! Advanced civilizations, wondrous fauna, spectacular creatures! We thought we had to take to the stars to see these, little did we know it exists all around us!

Tomorrow, I turn on my machine.

January 15, 2049

I have spent the day using my contraption, and I am proud to say that it works as expected. I have visited stars and planets indistinguishable from their larger brethren, yet too infinitely small to see. However, so far I have found only what our telescopes pointed outwards see: barren rocks. Interesting rocks no doubt, but rocks nonetheless. I have yet to find life in these infinite Universes.

No matter! There are infinite worlds to explore, and I am certain some contain the life I am searching for. To speed up the process, I have set a machine to automatically trawl these spaces for life.

January 16, 2049

Despite running overnight, my program has yet to find any evidence for life. Given the number of regions searched, I have calculated the probability of life developing on any world capable of supporting carbon-based life to be 10^{-200} .

January 17, 2049

Still nothing.
 $P(\text{life}) = 10^{-500}$

January 20, 2049

$P(\text{life}) = 10^{-4,000}$

February 1, 2049

I have turned off the program. I do not have the strength to continue watching our loneliness be mathematically determined. At last calculation,

$$P(\text{life}) = 10^{-1,000,000,000,000,000}$$

In the 1960s, Dr. Frank Drake proposed a probabilistic equation to determine the number of civilizations we might hope to communicate with. It contains a number of terms; however, my work demonstrates that the dominating term is f_l , the fraction of worlds that could support life that actually develop life. Given my work, f_l may be approximated to 0. This implies not only is Earth the only planet with life in our Universe, but also it is the only planet with intelligent life in the Universe. *Homo Sapiens* are alone, and we are dying... I am too broken to continue, I will return when I have a coherent thought to share.

February 12, 2049

I have determined a course of action. The next two entries will serve to formally prove it is the only rational option.

First, I must establish immediate action is needed. Since the 1950s, and the very first plotting of the Keeling Curve, scientists have known that human activity was leading to profound changes in the ecology of our planet. Since then, human-led ecological destruction has only accelerated at a rapid pace. The people in power chose to ignore the collective calls of our youth, scientists, and rational observers; instead selling our very world to the oil, plastics, and agricultural lobbies. Out of 1 million atmospheric particles, 500 are now determined to be carbon dioxide. This is the highest level in recorded human history, and the trend shows no signs of abating. There are now more megatons of plastic in our oceans than marine life. Extreme weather events are increasing in accordance with a power law, while worldwide biodiversity is declining at a similar rate. Today, scientists anticipate that in 50 years the outside atmosphere will be too toxic to support any known form of multicellular life. Can you guess what the proposed solution is? Instead of halting pollution or cleaning up the planet, we plan on constructing artificial atmospheres for future generations to live in. While the technology exists to save our planet, we plan to live in fishbowls.

Before I was angered by these facts; but, I remained placated by the notion that though our planet was doomed, life existed elsewhere. But life does not exist elsewhere. This is it. My anger has tempered to cold, calculating resolve. I refuse to stand idly by as the last vestiges of life self-cannibalizes itself in this fetishizing cycle of self-interest. No matter what, life must go on. Not just the microbial life that will adapt to the noxious world humans leave behind, but self-aware life. Life that creates art, life that constructs monuments, life that asks questions, life that *lives!*

Now, consider the following thought experiment:

If you were an omnipotent, omniscient, *rational* Being. Would you provide your Creation with free will? If so, how much?

We can imagine a one-dimensional graph with free will on one end, and predetermination on the other end. I would argue the most rational approach would be to simulate infinite Creations with differing levels of free will. Empirically, one would be able to determine the optimal level necessary to sustain compassionate, humble life. If this is the case, and we are a manifestation of such a Being, then I believe we are one of those simulations cursed with an excess of free will.

We are too quick to promote the interests of the individual over the long-term interests of our species and our lived environment. What angers me the most is that the solution is so profoundly simple. We can collectively choose to respect our natural environment. We can collectively choose to treat our fellow Man with compassion and kindness. We can collectively choose to humble ourselves. And while many do make these choices, far too many prioritize self-interest. It is this selfish rot that has brought human civilization to its knees.

Consider the now extinct species, *Coptotermes formosanus*. Known as 'termites' by past humans, they belonged to a group of insects who exhibited 'eu-social' behavior. Such eusocial creatures co-exist in a society ('colony' in the parlance of *Coptotermes*) with a division of labor between all members of the society. Each individual termite performed a set of low-level actions that by itself was negligible; however, the aggregate sum of the individuals cooperative work served to promote the survival of the colony as a whole. It was their cooperation, their selflessness, their desire to put the needs of the many over the needs of a few that made them so successful. It is not just them.

Every major jump in life's evolution has been marked by cooperation. Multicellular organisms arose when individual cells realized that working together is more advantageous than working individually. Our earliest human ancestors were able to settle the world when they chose to cooperate, forming the first human civilizations. We did not require a radical altering of our physical selves, merely a change in our way of thinking. If we hope to survive, we must begin choosing the selfless route. This cannot be a choice, this *should* not be a choice.

February 13, 2049

Allow me to clarify. reconsider the one dimensional graph described yesterday. My goal is not the eradication of free will; indeed, our individuality is part of what has made our species so successful. However, I believe the notion of the Individual must be expanded to include extant members beyond the Individual. To expand the notion of the Self to encompass our fellow Man.

Towards this end, I plan to create and release self-replicating nanomachines capable of directly interfacing and modifying the complex biochemistry of the human mind. These machines will not only be capable of mediating interactions between themselves and their host; but also between each other, and thus, between hosts.

The pain of the individual will no longer be relegated to the individual, but will become the pain of all. The joy felt by one will be meaningless, unless shared by others. In this way, it is my sincere hope that with this new expanded consciousness, mankind will be able to suppress the

agenda of self interest and pursue that option more conducive to the long-term betterment of the Society. To suffuse mankind with that sense of selflessness found within *Coptotermes*.

There are those who would argue that my proposal is draconian and immoral. To an extent, I am inclined to agree with them. But what choice is there? When confronted with the extinction of all life in all Universes, is not *any* action justified?

My decision is final. This is the only option I see to preserve life.

June 20, 2055

I have spent years feverishly working towards my plan. In the time since I last wrote, humanity has driven itself even further along its lonely path of annihilation. If not for my solution to guide me, I am certain I would have joined the countless who have chosen suicide then continue existing in this hellscape. Famine, war, and disease are rampant. If organized religion still existed, they would point to the current state of affairs as evidence of their predicted apocalypse.

But I have done it. I have engineered the nanomachines in enough quantity to infect the remaining human population. I plan to release them tomorrow.

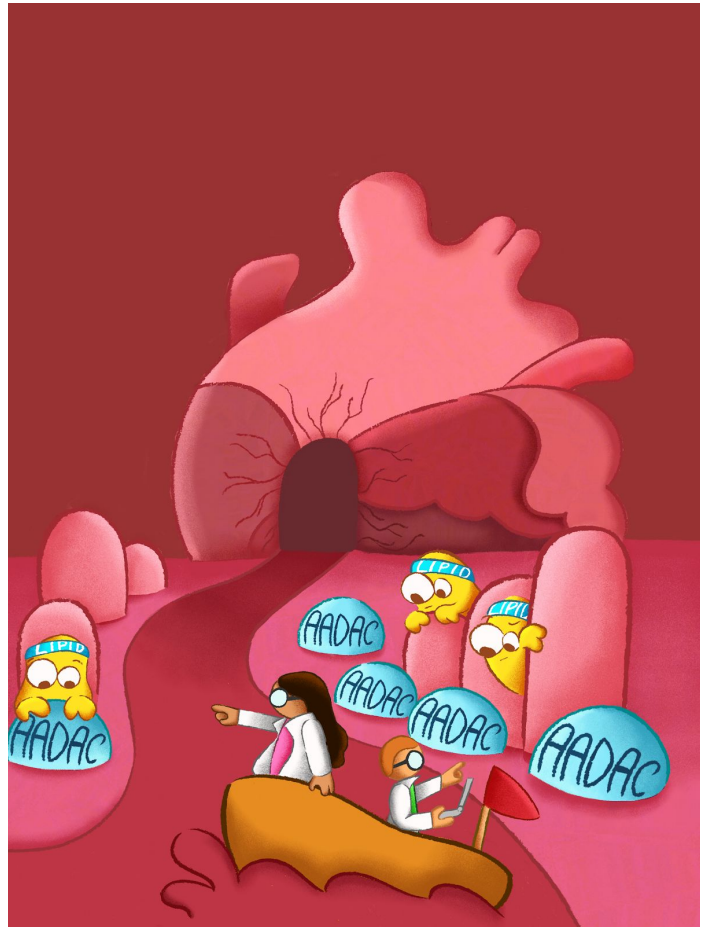
I have taken pains to ensure the machines are safe, but there are no guarantees. If my machines wipe out humanity, then I will have saved the remaining 'natural' non-human life that exists. If my machines save humanity, then I will have preserved the only vestige of self-aware life in the Universes.

I am at peace with my decision. I do not ask for your understanding, nor your support. I will be vindicated in the eyes of my Maker, for I will do what He should have done initially.

A look into a sweet heart under the microscope

We identified a novel gene, AADAC, that protects diabetic patients from cardiovascular disease.

Kiwi Florida



13

Jiayin Lu



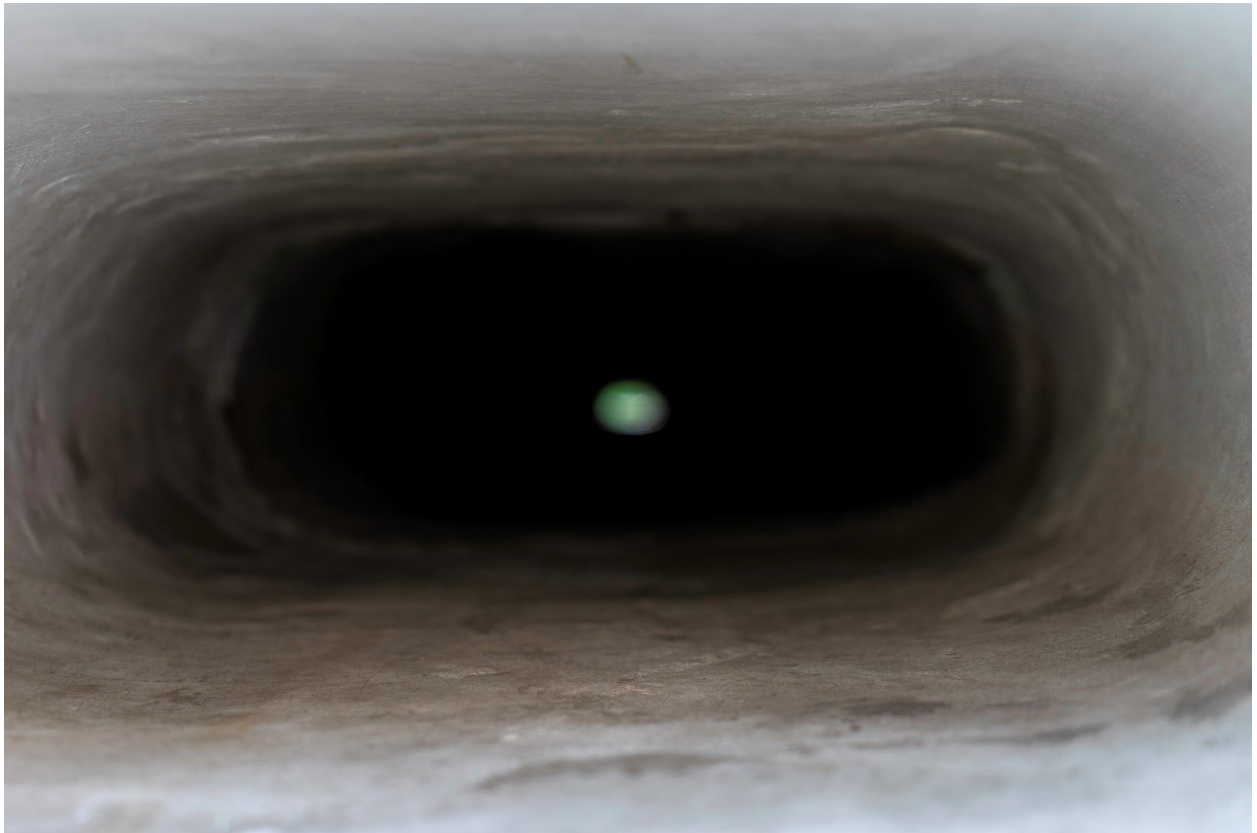
The Cleanest Air in the World

Katherine Irajpanah

started off dirty. We couldn't even see
the snow on the mountain.
Only smog.
I could barely
breathe. The tightness in my chest
glowed.
Were my lungs soaked in toxic waste.
Are they still. My nose generated mucus
to keep it out. But what. or who.
was *it*. It makes me wonder—
that smell when I smelled flowers—was that real.
Like the oil we poured in the ocean.
Like the bombs we dropped in the desert. Yes—
we did that.
Not the cows. Or the volcanoes. We did.
We did it together.
We painted the sky black.
& without us, it washed away.

Untitled 1
Javier Masis





The Burning Tongue

Nikhita Obeegadoo

One day, I wake up and my tongue is burning with the need to speak my mother tongue. The word “burning,” here, is not a metaphor. My whole mouth feels like a volcano awakening after years of dormancy, and my tongue is already beginning to writhe under its first slivers of lava. The twisting, however, is not random: my tongue is struggling to spell out the well-worn patterns of the language I have grown up speaking, but haven’t tasted for longer than I can remember.

How long has it been?

A year.

My eyes widen at the realization, and despite the pain that is slowly encroaching upon my mental faculties, I force myself to go back in time and assess the veracity of that duration. Has it really been that long?

It can’t have. I would have noticed.

But, as it turns out, I *didn’t* notice, not until I just woke up feeling like my mouth was on fire.

You want to speak? Then speak and make it stop! I order myself in exasperation.

I open my mouth and twist it into the familiar pattern of *korek*, the word that is both a question and an answer, and undoubtedly the island’s most used adjective. To my utter dismay, however, no sound escapes my mouth. I begin to try again, but clamp my lips shut immediately as the lava flow spreads across my jaw and up to my ears, until my entire face is cupped by a single flickering flame. My eardrums begin to vibrate, like sega drums heated up before a night of revelry.

You want to be listened to. You want a conversation.

Now, this will be something harder to achieve. It isn’t like I can just go walking down the corridors of my residence hall until I reach the door of the next Mauritian who lives there. Or like I can hop into an Uber and find the next Mauritian family in the city. Oh no. This isn’t London or Paris or Melbourne or Toronto. This is Fergus Falls, Minnesota, USA. Literally the other side of the world from the country where I was born. There aren’t any Mauritians in the entire state, let alone driving distance. Truth be told, for all intents and purposes, Mauritius doesn’t even *exist* here. The name itself, “Mauritius”, registers as nothing more than blank stares on peoples’ faces. At first the looks didn’t bother me, but by now I’ve received so many of them that sometimes, sitting here among the shoveled-up piles of snow and icy pavements, it’s hard to believe that Mauritius is a real place, not simply a make-believe world conjured out of my own imagination on the days when I most need a respite from coding assignments.

The coals in my mouth definitely feel real, though, and they’re heating up—so I need to figure this out. *Fast.*

OK. Let’s think rationally. If I can’t find a flesh-and-blood Mauritian, then I’ll just find someone online. That can’t be too hard. Who was the last person from home that I spoke to?

The answer is obvious: my parents. I’m very close to them, actually. There are times when we speak almost every day, and even during midterms and finals we still talk at least once a week. Having never been to college themselves, they don’t *get* most of what I’m going through, but they love listening to me talk about it, and their reactions always help me put things in perspective, even if that wasn’t their starting intention.

Why are you so upset that the immigration officer was rude to you? What's going to happen in the worst case – you'll be deported? Free ticket to Mauritius! Is that really the worst that could happen? You haven't been back in three years, we could do all the things you used to like, but please don't tell anyone that you've started eating beef...

But—and here's the hitch—my parents and I, we don't speak Creole to each other. We never have, not since that one day when I came back home from school with red and peeling ruler-rapped knuckles. They were explained by a note from the teacher—itsself written in very approximate French—that I kept asking questions in class—already a questionable action in and of itself in the Mauritian classroom—in *Creole*. I remember being scared that I'd get scolded again, but they took one glance at the note and exchanged a look that I still, to this day, don't have the words to describe, but that will remain seared in my mind forever. It was some combination of helplessness, guilt and resignation, a kind of *we knew this day would come* coupled with *what are we going to do now?* As a child, it was the first time I saw my parents, with reactions and personalities usually as different as night and day, react in exactly the same way, and later act in perfect accord. It was perhaps the only glimpse I ever got into what their relationship might have been like as friends and young lovers, before the pressures of parenthood forged it into something else.

I swear to you: since that day, they never spoke a single word of Creole to me. Our conversations rotated between the “proper languages”: French one day, English the next, ad infinitum, right through my childhood and adolescence and early adulthood, right up to the last text message from my mother lying unopened in my inbox. I was initially glad about this linguistic rule, because it saved me from a lot of tongue-lashings. You see, my parents themselves weren't very comfortable in either of the “proper languages”, so they were often at a loss for words when, furious over a childish mishap, they tried to explain why my most recent action was unacceptable. By the time they *did* find the right word, the heat of the moment had often passed, and everyone's dignity—especially mine—was salvaged.

Later, once I was a teenager and doing well at school, I felt embarrassed by this habit. Why did they refuse to give it up, especially since both my French and English had surpassed theirs by this point? Granted, it had probably been a good idea when I was in primary school, and I was grateful for the care they had poured into my linguistic education. But what was the point of keeping this up, even—sometimes *especially*—in front of other people?

Now, as I enter my twenties and begin to discover for myself the unending complexities of adult life and relationships, it is sadness that I feel, more than anything else. There is so much more that my parents, especially my mother, and I could share, if not for this additional barrier every time she parted her lips to speak to me. Or maybe not—in Mauritian culture, there are many things that mothers and daughters will never talk about. Nevertheless, it might at least make the jokes funnier, the details sharper, the nuances clearer?

But every time I think of broaching the subject, I remember that look that passed through them that day across the kitchen table, and I know better than to contest their decision. And so over the years, this linguistic oscillation between French and English has become part of the very fabric of our relationship, so much so that now I barely think of it anymore.

Until this heat in my mouth—still rising, always rising—reminded me of it this morning.
Let's stay on track.

Who else have I recently spoken to from home, who belonged to the in-between spaces of my life in Mauritius between the broad swathes of home and school and other “respectable” venues where I was consistently, insistently encouraged to speak French? I think of the other kids living on

my street, with whom I would sneak out to play catch, running around with the neighborhood dogs and clambering up mango trees. I think of the *gato pima* vendor outside the school gates, who was unfailingly there throughout my thirteen years of primary and secondary education, gap-toothed and grinning. I think of my grandparents, who stubbornly refuse to relocate from their big ancestral house and orchard in Vallée des Prêtres, even now that they are too old to take care of the property and it is falling into ruins.

How do you maintain these relationships—hinged on a cup of tea, a piping hot fritter, a half-eaten fruit—from a world away? Everybody has Facebook, yes. It's not a logistical issue. The issue is rather, *what do I say?*

That I miss them? That I wish we didn't live in a world where the price to pay for the best education is to leave an entire lifetime behind?

How do you put words on emotions like that? In any language?



Untitled 2

Javier Masis



The last Englishman

Chloe Merrell

If he were the last Englishman
left—what would he be?
A gentleman—polite—
Offer his arm out to me?

Would he be stiff lipped
Averting—never quite honest,
Judgemental—sarcastic
but no—he promised.

Perhaps he would bumble—
Awkwardly fumble
Or more likely deny
The truth of the lie
Of Empire—

He'd also remind
—although now no one to find—
His bit he did
When no one else would
But never admit
That no one else could.

His vision of his island:
Alone—and refined
He set against everything else
That's how he'd define.

So it's solitude he chose
Partners gone now
Long ago—

It was his will—he assured me
Certain—no jest!
So alone we left him—
At his behest.

Blue Solitude

Rodrigues, July 2018

Nikhita Obeegadoo



Untitled 3
Javier Masis



My Ink in the Walls

Marie-Emmanuelle Thomas Hartness

I open the closet in my office and I close it right away. It is filled with my writings and I placed them there; an endlessly growing pile of shapeless notebooks that I accumulated over the years. Will I ever read them?

Journals, stories, anecdotes; a maze of my meandering past, slices of my life, journals filled with fear, notebooks tattooed with my hopes and dreams. What is this ritual of covering paper with ink? What am I trying to catch? Why do I keep them enclosed? I see this ink as a contagious disease that spreads from one vessel to another and ultimately drives them all to eternal darkness.

I open the door again. In the series of colored composition books, I pick the yellow one— before the lined notepads before the Moleskine before the dotted Minimalist Art that I currently favor—In a splash of black ink, I find a list of films I watched, notes on a script I was writing and a quote from Robert Bresson: “Créer des attentes pour les combler.” Is that what it is all about? Am I “creating expectations in order to fulfill them”? If I enter this exploration, will I be eternally fulfilled?

Many questions come to my mind; how would I reach fulfillment with threads referring to a long gone me? What would I discover? What does it mean to fill up space with ink? Do notebooks weigh more after having been inked away? And by the way, what’s with the black ink and ballpoint pen? I am a fountain pen writer, blue cartridge please! When did Bic roller pens steal my soul?

“You should digitalize your notebooks”, says my friend. Does she fathom how much time it would take for me to digitalize thousands of sheets, one by one? Not to mention the overwhelming number of pages left in Paris. Why do I need the past? Why do I keep it safe?

I crave paper and ink. There is a relationship, a physicality that I don’t experience with the computer screen and keyboard. My blood flows down my fingers down my pen down my ink down my paper. There is a gesture, a gracefulness to the cursive, a flow of connected ideas, a reverence for the thought. Handwriting is visceral. It mirrors life, emotions, moods... My writing differs from a day to another, the size of my letters, how my words bend forward like rebels or hold straight like soldiers.

I have always seen my mother with pen and paper as she reads. She tells me she writes quotes from the books. I am wondering why. She fills her notebooks with words and I don’t know what they hide.

My neighbor told me that she burnt her letters to her mother when she passed away. What did they contain? Should words have such power that they need to be burnt to ashes?

As I place my dismantled yellow notebook back on the shelf, I pause: maybe I'll burn you someday or I will just visit; or I will let you melt in the walls of my closet while I stamp a fresh page of my life, soon doomed to the neighborhood of the forgotten; right on top of you.

Current

Tica Lin



Move towards the light,
Or just hang around in the dark?
Moving forward,
Or just staying and drifting with the current?
Won't know the answer unless wait for a little.
Just wait for a little.
And you will see me in my current.

“Central Square, doors will open on your right.”

It was around 8PM, just after the evening rush, as the Red Line slowly ground to a halt at the platform. Synchronized streams of people made their way in and out of the train car, their wet footsteps revealing that it had started raining. Just as the shrill beeping sounds announced the closing of the automated doors – unbeknownst to any of the passengers – a tiny, invisible camera was silently hovering above their heads. After a few moments of scanning across the car, its lens finally fixated on one of them.

Sitting near one of the doors, Harry Kellerman’s expression seemed tired and disinterested, as his gaze wandered from passenger to passenger, staying just long enough to avoid prolonged eye contact. Protruding from under his dark blue hoodie were two thin wires connecting his headphones to the phone in the front pocket of his jeans, though no music was playing, effectively making his headphones no more than glorified ear plugs.

The camera began zooming in further, first on Harry’s upper body, then face, then forehead, until finally it was able to peer inside his mind and detect his thoughts. For reasons that are still not entirely clear, it began reporting them to the reader:

“Can’t believe it’s raining again. Just this morning the app was saying it would be clear. Is it really that hard to make a good weather app? We can send people to space, but somehow *this* is too much?”

A large man sat down on the adjacent seat, causing Harry to instinctively lean forward to avoid touching shoulders. “Ugh, just what I needed.” Harry’s mind continued rattling on, his eyes now occasionally taking brief sideways glances at man’s face. “Who takes the train in sweatpants!? What a worthless human being.”

The large man readjusted his position, now spreading his legs further apart and lightly bumping against Harry’s left knee. “*Ugh!*” Harry audibly sighed, just barely concealing it with a cough. The chorus of ‘*Toxic*’ by Brittany Spears began repeating in his mind, though he wouldn’t notice this for about three more minutes. Eyes scanning across the car once again, Harry’s focus now shifted to another man sitting near one of the doors, partially occluded by other passengers. Something about his appearance made Harry pause and dwell on him – he felt as though there were a certain nothingness about this man.

“What a worthless human being. It’s like you look at him and think – ‘what could possibly be going on in his life?’ Nothing, that’s what.” The unprompted judgement made Harry feel a bit better about his boring commute and his unfortunate seating arrangement. He resumed: “I can’t begin to imagine him doing anything anyone would find even remotely interesting.” He then pictured this man get

off the train, enter his apartment and just sit there motionlessly, like a docked Roomba.
“Worthless.”

The train shook and shifted, and the standing passengers swayed and moved along with it. Harry could now see that the man he was so shamelessly patronizing had a guitar case by his side. The internal monologue seamlessly shifted. “Oh, that’s an acoustic guitar, right? Yeah, too bulky to be an electric.” Harry had just recently started learning to play the guitar, so far only strumming along to instructional YouTube videos. “I wonder if he’s better than me on guitar.” Around the same time, halfway around the world, a series of wildfires was starting in Australia. “Nah, I bet this guy is more or less on my level.”

The train kept moving, as did Harry’s gaze. This time his eyes landed on a woman standing to his right, holding onto a pole with one hand and typing on her phone with the other. Harry found her attractive, which automatically disqualified her from being a ‘worthless human being.’ His boredom and her appearance coalesced into vivid images – he imagined her noticing him out of the corner of her eye and putting down her phone.

“Hey,” said Ruby – in his mind, she was named Ruby.

“Hi,” he replied.

“Can I ask you a weird question?” Ruby asked, now taking a step towards him.

“Sure, go ahead.”

“Have you ever looked around and thought about how everybody seemed like mindless zombies, just going through the motions with no real point to it all?”

Harry’s lips contorted into a sly half-smile, both in his mind and outside it. “Yeah, sometimes.”

“Well,” she continued, “I was just asking because I looked at you, and I had a weird feeling, like you weren’t like that.” Ruby bashfully tilted her head away, now looking at her feet. “This is super weird, you must think I’m crazy...”

“No no, I don’t think you’re crazy!” Harry reassured her, “To be honest, I actually had the same thought about you.”

Chelsea Huang – this was the woman’s real name – was reading over a particularly angry Slack message she had just finished writing about how she was tired of having to do both her own work *and* Carol’s work every week. She corrected a few typos before sending, completely unaware of Harry’s staring.

“Look at all these people,” Ruby was now sitting next to Harry, inexplicably taking the place of the large man currently seated there. “I bet they can’t even name a single proto-punk band.” Harry could in fact name several proto-punk bands.

“Hey, I get off in a couple of stops, wanna come over to my place?” Harry’s heart rate started increasing, both in his mind and outside it. “I have a few Velvet Underground records I could show you.”

“Yeah, that actually sounds really nice!” Ruby replied enthusiastically. “Which song are we gonna play first?”

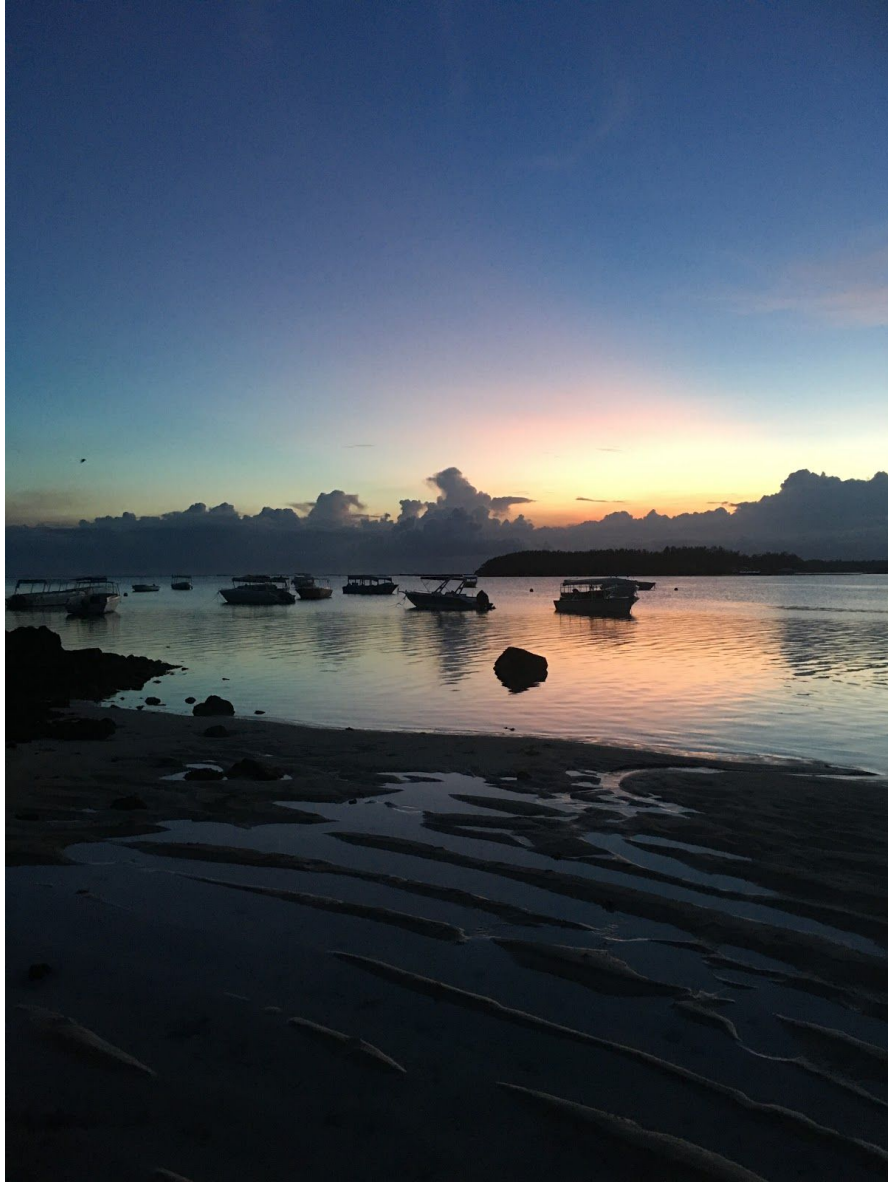
‘With a taste of a poison paradise, I’m addicted to you, don’t you know that you’re toxic!’ Harry finally noticed the music that had been looping in his head. “Ugh, I hate that song!”

The train was once again grinding to a halt, though it was not yet at a station. After a few seconds an announcement was made through the car speakers. “Ladies and gentlemen, due to train traffic we’re going to wait here for a few minutes. The train will be moving again shortly, we apologize for the delay.” Upon hearing the message, approximately 82 percent of the passengers felt that this was a particularly bad time for such a delay to their schedule, which was around the average percentage for this line. Now somewhat bored with Harry Kellerman, the camera slowly turned its lens around to face the reader.

Fishing Boats Return

Mauritius, December 2019

Nikhita Obeegadoo



Untitled 4
Javier Masis



Enduring Freedom

Elena Rykova

//

Event horizon

Immune to freedom

lock the truth

inside a pupil

ears

glued

to the floor

breath,

muscles

contracted

palm lines —

a sketch

performed by time,

not a notation

//

fear | freedom

upright

resistant

they talk

perpetual life, simulation

dice and bones to the side

||: no more :||

a gulp of air

back to the wheel

a circle,

maybe a habit

//

falling apart
without a shell

out of love
out of order

imprisoned thoughts
in revolt

//

wrap the space
start with a corner

translate the gesture
into arteries

magnetic art

to follow
to grow
to disappear
to listen

Surrender

a canvas, rolled

//

EAR

//

ESCAPE

Escape into a version of yourself:

- the one you preferred
- the one they found convenient
- the one that is silent,
 assumes things until they are not anymore anything

Listen to the locks

Tune in to the chains

Immerse

Untitled 5
Javier Masis



De Frutas

S.....	\$.900
HELADO O GELATINA..	\$.1100
HELADO Y GELATINA..	\$.1600
GELATINA.....	\$.1100
3: -CORRIENTE.....	\$.900
O HELADO.....	\$.1500

HELADERIA

BANANO
MANGO
PIÑA
SANDIA
FRESA
MELON
LIMON
NARANJA
PAPAYA
GUANABANA

Batidos
en Agua
Batidos
en Leche

Batidos
Frutales

ENERGETICO
CONTROL DE PESO
MUSCULOSO
GRUPO

PROHIBIDAS
LAS VENTAS
AMBULANTES

LECHE

