

miniMAG

issue101
and the hero will drown



Parade [Art Installations]

J Kramer Hare

The wind is over-strong and so
balloons are left half-inflated—
Snoopy’s nose caves in, and his paw
drags feebly along the pavement.
On either side: bodies pack in,
retained by frosty rent-a-fence. [

Imagine an installation:
a wide wall painted black, a grid
of porcelain noses affixed,
as if cold bodies are ghosting
through the wall, but only make it
nose-far before their magic’s spent.

] Here comes a float (we call them floats,
but really it’s a truck, and there’s
no gap between the rubber and
the road), decked in flowers and bows.
Red hyacinths. White orchids. Blue
(but they’re really violet) lilacs. [

Imagine an installation:
a miniature city map,
3D, emerging from the floor.
Hung on fishing lines, porcelain
flowers float above the buildings
that are no longer where they were.

] The megaphone man stands atop
the slowly rolling flower float.
His gloved hand holds the megaphone.
“Is it working?” he cries. The crowd
cries “no!” cupping their gloves around
chapped lips. “Will it continue?” “Yes!” [

Imagine an installation:
a room filled at random with busts
on pedestals of varied heights—
the faces of serious men
frozen in cold, white porcelain.
From ears and nostrils: flowers grow.

] The wind has blown a child’s hat
onto the road. He’s small enough
to slip between the metal bars.
He crouches down before the float.
He does not hear his mother’s call.
Those flowers will gobble him up.



PLANET FIRRAZIM

Stephen Philip Druce

Urchin pyramids scamper
scarlet in soliloquy stitch,

jigsaw sparrows tiptoe
tapestry in a rendezvous
of regatta resin,

shrapnel semitones mangle
in squalid scuffle,

polecat prophets varnish
rabble dragons in a fortress
of grubby mania,

stilted kestrel offshoots
gargle prickly perch quintets,

as rhyming balcony pests
decay in hypersonic gluttony.

Looking Down

T. J. Nagamos

She was bored most days, allotting most of her time to watching her citizens clamor below. The markets bustled beautifully in the spring, and after the winter freeze it was heartwarming to see her people escape their houses to travel and finally eat fresh produce. Children clamored for bread and sweets, their mothers attended to them fretfully, woefully unprepared for their children's outbursts of excitement and wanderlust.

Mrs. Bauer—a name she'd learned by reading lips—sauntered along the pathway with her brood of seven boys following close behind her. Like ducklings, she thought to herself amused.

Her husband Mr. Bauer presided over the vegetable booth down near the village fountain, a big, husky man with a formidable mustache. She never understood mustaches; she always thought they looked like thick caterpillars, nestled on a man's upper lip. Not that she ever saw one up close. Perhaps they were more appealing in person.

Mrs. Bauer now stood at Mr. Bauer's booth, her once-organized

now falling away from the family line—as if they were potatoes falling through a tear in a sack.

The eldest—or the presumed eldest given his towering stature—fraternized with a group of tall boys, all sitting on crates and barrels



gracelessly and amusing themselves with a single lighter. Meanwhile, the other boys were scuffling in the middle of the pathway, drawing glances as people passed by.

Then there was Mr. and Mrs. Bauer.

Mrs. Bauer placed a dainty platter on Mr. Bauer's table—a pie. She swayed a little as if she were shy before leaning in for... a kiss.

A kiss? She'd never seen them kiss before.

She observed as he placed his hand on her cheek, leaning over the table to kiss her back, reciprocating the affection.

Something within her withered.

She couldn't discern why, but she withdrew from the window, mindlessly rearranging her books—a useless endeavor as she'd rearranged them thousands of times before. She wondered what it was like to kiss. Her hand drifted up from her side, grazing her chapped and dry lips.

The cold air from this height always parched her lips. She couldn't imagine anyone willingly subjecting themselves to the discomfort of kissing her.

Yet how would it feel to kiss someone else?

Her eyes trailed back to the window, but this time she couldn't bear to look out, instead focusing back on the books, rearranging them by color now.

Preferably not a man with a mustache or a beard. Someone who smells clean and is smooth-shaven.

Someone compassionate, she ruminated. Someone to keep her company. Perhaps someone who will let her down from this tower.

She shook her head; it wasn't good to entertain thoughts like those. Instead she tried to focus back on the books. Red, orange, yellow. She'd seen the way others would touch each other, hold hands, kiss. Green, blue, purple. The warmth they must experience, while she sat alone in her cold, stone tower.

It was better like this, though, superior to the peasants below. It was better they had a person to revere than for her to be on the ground and bereft of their adoration. That's all she was. A muse, a symbol of hope.

Is this what God felt like looking down upon His people? If so, she concluded that He must feel quite lonely.

L-o-n-d-o-n London Stop!

Hibah Shabkhez

Knife slicing through green watermelon rind,
Poised to cut into the pulp, to reveal
All, the blade stops moving. It can still steal
These ten precious seconds of waiting. Sinned
Against and sinning, it idles its way
Into bliss and torment, under the sway
Of the supreme spell, the not quite -



Found Wanting

Kevin MacAlan

I tried to unlatch the door in silence and gently swing it open,
but the uneven floor jarred the kicking board, it rattled noisily.
You were peeling off the skins of an onion, digging deeper,
crying when you reached the heart. “Come in,” you said.
I wanted to, so in I came, and there you found me; wanting.

The Western Sun

Parker Wilson

They flew my friend Rex's body back to Phoenix in a helicopter, which I suppose was a sign of respect for how far he'd walked. His muscular chest probably shook through his shirt—the one they'd torn in their efforts of resuscitating him—as the flying hearse cast a cruising shadow across cacti-filled desert. I pictured its steel blades swinging through the hot and dry air, radiating waves of heat.

He used to tell the kids on the psych unit where we worked that when he first started pushing barbells, he did it to get his anger out. He said he threw the weights from his body, stressing his tendons as he exhaled sprays of spit with every red-faced repetition, every sweaty pump.

He said he traded those manic intervals for calculated precision. He'd demonstrate, lying down with an invisible bar connecting his fists, showing us the proper form of a barbell press, his big forearms and biceps flexing and twisting slowly as his muscles contracted, then extended. He taught the kids how to lift steel.

As a nurse, health was important to him. The way he treated himself with the steroids and the adderall, though, it was like his own unstoppable core against everything in this world. Even though he

failed out of med school, I never imagined him internalizing that to a point of personal danger, of pushing his body to such extremes, of sweating himself to death in the desert.

We never talked about how easy it is to get lost in the desert mountains, under the western sun. We probably would've laughed at the idea of dying out there. The steps of stone climbed in all directions, with no way to tell which direction led to the steel of the city, and which led to a gravel-strewn death.

Rex had gone ahead to find help after his wife overheated. They were out for a hike as part of a holiday from Michigan's winter.

He was alone, hiking through mesquite long cooked by the relentless sun. If I knew Rex, he thought he could make it. He was young and strong and the path was shallow. I picture him in his final moments. I see he started out carefully with good control of his body. He calculated each step and looked before he placed his right foot down, and then the left, focusing on the feel of his quads and calves. He breathed with purpose. The Phoenix heat started creeping in and soon the sweat that rolled off his shirt darkened the soil beneath him.

Maybe he noticed the drops of sweat and knew he was in trouble. Maybe that got his heart rate going. Maybe, panicked, he started pushing himself harder than he should have through the rugged terrain, and his face reddened. Maybe he looked up at the tense sun and spit in its face.

Maybe they buried him in a box of steel, one deep underground, in the dark, cool soil.

Congress Hotel

Daniel Andrée

A new dawn spawns life.
Light, darkness, and with every dawn comes dusk.
Renewal, life from the ashes.
The phoenix rises, just to fall again by vices.
Life sure has it's own devices.
For now, I just hope. Hope suffices.





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Digital Photography and “Found Wanting” by Kevin MacAlan

Page 01: O’Brien’s Tower
Page 03: Bulmers Orchards
Page 05: O’Brien’s Tower View
Page 07: Dungarvan at Low Tide
Page 10: Crookaun
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