



miniMAG

issue23
nascent storm

morning glory
an accidental
press release
quickly withdrawn
and edited

Robert Kingston & *Christina Chin*

community
uproar
a lone crow
in the morning mist
turns west

Christina Chin & Robert Kingston

morning heat
on the starboard
skipping blue fin
pulls the line
into the hold

Robert Kingston & *Christina Chin*

The Fisherman's Debt

Donovan Hall

The sun now sinks into dark depths,
To grace Yemoja's court,
Under the briny waves of foam,
To give the day's report.

It speaks of cursed westward winds,
Herald of siren's scorn.
Fishermen's bane are the black clouds.
And I will be forlorn.

Rain pours over my old canoe,
I cannot reach the shore,
As reaching up from the water,
Undine hands seize my oar.

Upon my boat she hauls herself,
In lost dreams had I seen,
Of seaweed hair and ebon scales,
Heir of the ocean's queen.

A mermaid of the brackish halls,
Who'd come to seize her claim,
For in youth, I made bargain,
My one forgotten shame.

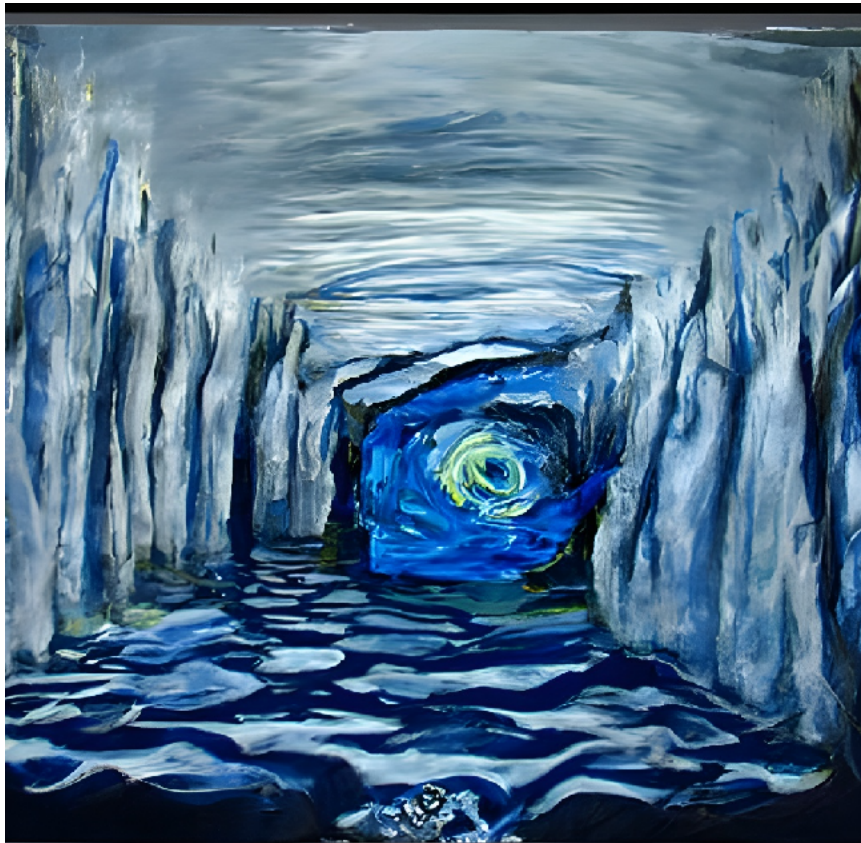
In my boyhood days of plenty,
I'd wished for swollen nets,
For clearest skies and warmest winds.
From wishes come regrets.

It had been so my hand for hers,
But young memories fade,
And now my wife ashore awaits,
And yet debts must be paid.

So when I saw her smiling lips,
Reveal her sharpened teeth,
I knew the price for my mistake,
My knife stayed in its sheath.

Yemoja is the ocean's queen,
But to slight her favor,
Invites her worst and bleakest wrath,
One naught but blood will waiver.





桥的注脚

胚胎公园

河床的鳞片漫过鸽骨 桥的注脚在火光中急奏 疾风中 被捏造的
一位寻人者 在丧葬的巷子中皲裂 脏物的骤降 崎岖的孕期在腹
部尖端隆起 被软化的纯净团块 施救 孤立的模拟器 建在嗅觉的
沙碛中 床的生长困境 堤的双重奏曲 昏迷的盟约中延展着寻人
的线路图 缺口 分割湍流的荧幕碎片 八角方亭 夜间的晾晒台
下 布料垂坠在语词荒林 我在呼啸的深处 难行的源头 木质浊
音 蜡封的悲鸣 象的拟声拘禁 低等屏障里横列着简易问句 身份
的倒叙 遣送的寻人者在失去介质的自我瞩目中紧密的黏结怀有
恨意的躯体 底部触着 骨的节律性脱落 坐在完全的背面 回到他
的镜子塑像里 远观路口哀恸的表情 凝滞的胎体中 一次溃面的
了结 色块远行后的银灰枝桠被镜像中的幼小种子紧密包裹 灰沉
白日前的汛期 缺位物象的枯竭打捞 引诱的部署品到达再次的领
地

The Cat

(Part II)

Connor Rogers

Part I of The Cat is in Issue 22

He finished searching his parent's old bedroom, rechecked the other rooms, and then sprung the wire cable that led to the attic. The old folding stairs unraveled with a metallic clunk as the latch opened upwards into the blind darkness. John aimed his flashlight, but the weak light barely penetrated the void beyond. Then the smell hit him. It was like old, decomposed fruit and garbage. A medley of sour eggs and sweet sewage. John gagged.

Some animal died up there. But it's the last room in the house; the locket had to be there.

He hesitated, knowing that logically it was a stupid and gross decision. But then he thought of his mother, her stern glare and the way she lit up when she spoke about the it. It was just a smell, it wasn't going to kill him. He had to go on.

John stepped onto the first stair, when something white below him stumbled into view. He reeled back, almost falling off. The white cat had returned, rubbing its side against the legs of the ladder while staring up at him unexpectedly. "Oh it's you, come back to take more blood?"

The cat stretched its paws against the first ring of the ladder, right next to John's ankles. Yet as it stretched, he saw that the cat had no claws. *That can't be right. Then what the hell scratched me?*

His thoughts were interrupted as the cat scurried past him, up the steep steps of the ladder into the dark above. John sighed, covered his mouth and followed.

The smell was worse inside, causing him to gag again. The air

tasted metallic. At the other end of the room, two dim round lanterns shone like pale moonlight.

He felt the old, smooth tables that his family had stored for safekeeping, and checked its wood grain faces and drawers. He checked under some spider web covered antique chairs. Just as long as I find it, and not whatever the fuck is giving off that smell.

He stared ahead into the pale glare of the round lanterns and wondered who had lit them.

The lanterns blinked.

John froze. The lanterns were not lanterns at all. They were a pair of eyes.

“W-who’s there?” He stammered, backing away. Again the eyes slowly blinked.

Wait, calm down. Calm down. It’s just the cat. You’re stressed and it’s uncomfortable here. Be reasonable. His gaze narrowed and he realized that the small size of the eyes matched the white cat from earlier, it was simply staring at him in the dark as cats tend to do. He sighed in relief, took a deep breath and awkwardly chuckled at his own cowardliness.

John continued to search the attic as the cat watched him. He searched the big objects fruitlessly, before noticing a wood floorboard that was slightly ajar. He bent down, lifted the floorboard and found a hidden box tucked neatly inside. On the front was his brother’s writing, “Do not open, Owen’s property!” A tinge of longing shot through John. He opened the box and found some toys, cards and wait it can’t be...

He found the locket!

He pulled it out and held it by its familiar silver chain, letting it hang in front of him like a pendulum. He checked inside, and the picture of Owen and their mother was nestled tightly. It was a beautiful picture of them, both smiling and happy. John and his mother never had any pictures like that.

With a complete sense of accomplishment, John folded up the locket and put it into the inner breast pocket of his jacket.

“Guess you’re good luck after all,” he said to the cat.

The eyes slowly blinked in response. As he turned to leave he felt something rub against his leg. He looked down and saw the same white cat.

Wait, that doesn’t make any sense.

The eyes still watched him, staring intently. With a slow, horrific realization, John knew that whatever was watching him was not the cat

all.

It must have sensed his trepidation, because suddenly the eyes closed and a deep, guttural moan rumbled from the other end of the attic. The hair stood up on the back of John's neck, the same way it had the day that Owen disappeared. The cat below him hissed into the darkness.

The darkness chuckled like the scraping of rusted metal.

The startled cat glanced at John before racing away and standing on the precipice to the attic stairs, urging him to follow.

Ice crept up John's veins but he found enough courage to run, reaching the attic steps as fast as he could. A sharp pain tore through the back of his legs, like a serrated whip. He cried out and heard something behind him thrashing on the attic floor. Something that looked like a bloody, jagged snake wrapped around his foot, but he pulled free and stumbled forward, out through the mouth of the attic and over the steps entirely. He felt himself pivot in midair before a hard ache enveloped his spine as he smashed into the floor below. He remembered not being able to breathe as the air was knocked from his lungs. All he could do was stare upwards, helplessly choking as a bestial scream echoed from the darkness. Pale moonlit eyes appeared above from the void.

Every cell in John's body wanted to curl up and shield itself from the unholy terror above. He wanted to close his eyes and blink away this nightmare that was seeping out from another world. Yet the locket still remained against his chest, and although his lungs were dazed, his heart still worked and he still had to get the locket back. As small as it was in the face of such an abomination, it was all his mind could do to find a way to survive. Get the locket back.

In the darkness something began to crawl. Glittering, pointed teeth unsheathed, like sharp daggers. John knew he couldn't move until the air returned to his lungs, so instead he kicked at the attic stairs. His legs still stung from the earlier attack, and every kick sent zigzagging shivers of pain up every nerve, yet he continued to kick and kick and kick at the stairs.

He struck a final blow and a loud clang filled the hallway. The stairs reeled back and shot up back towards the attic. Something slithered back to avoid being crushed by the folding stairs and disappeared. John regained his breath, stood and ran.

He raced down to the first floor, across the crumbling floorboards and dusty railings. At the base of the foyer the white cat stood in the way. John was in such a panic that he almost plowed right through it to

get to the door, but the cat's careful stare gave him pause. He stopped, and beyond the front door he heard something. Something *breathing*.

John frantically darted his gaze between the door and the cat, then clutched at the locket at his chest. The cat swished its tail and bolted towards the kitchen, beckoning John to follow. Behind him, the attic door slammed open.

John tore through the house and followed the white cat through the kitchen and into a storage closet that he and his brother used to hide in as kids. The cat stood in the closet and went completely silent.

If I can just get to my car I can get out of here. I just need to get to the car. He rose, ready to go run once more but the cat quietly meowed. It was low enough and desperate enough that John took the hint. They crouched low and silent.

In the kitchen, something stirred. A low, guttural moan filled the air. John's hands began to shake. The cat's eyes were wide and black.

Something passed by the closet door, something big and slithering.

Then a sudden shrill ringing broke the silence, and John's heart dropped. His phone was ringing. The cat hissed and the shadow outside the closet door suddenly stopped. John fumbled for his phone to turn it off, but hit the call button instead and a familiar voice burst out.

"John, John are you there? It's Nancy. Listen, your mother isn't doing so well, you should come back. It's not worth it--"

John pressed the end button as something beyond the closet drew closer and waited outside. Its ragged breathing filled the air, followed by the stench of rotting garbage.

Nancy's words rolled around in his mind. His mother was dying and he was running out of time. He had to get the locket back to the hospital and show her he found it. Yet whatever was outside of that door would devour him as soon as he left, and it was getting closer and closer. He had nowhere to go, nowhere to run and time was running out in more ways than one.

The white cat stared up at him, its eyes wide and dark. Its gaze settled on his chest where the locket waited. John raised an eyebrow. Then, in one fluid motion the cat pounced up onto John's chest, dug its mouth around his jacket and yanked out the locket. The glint of silver disappeared into the cat's mouth like a lost treasure. John snatched at it, but the cat was faster.

The closet door was torn open by the thing outside, crashing into the other room with a thunderous blow.



The cat raced out and tossed the locket, which soared effortlessly through the air to the right and out of sight. John saw wriggling tendrils swoop off towards the glint of silver, and the cat dashed off. He was free.

But the locket...He couldn't just leave without it. That was the entire reason for coming, and his mother only had a small amount of time left. He had to show her he found it, he had to show her that he could do it, that he was worthy of her respect. He needed to be loved by her, no, he craved it. It was always freely given to his brother, but never to him. Just once, why couldn't it be him? Why couldn't he have that?!

He stood in the closet, hesitating between the locket and the cat. Nancy's words returned to him before he left the hospital, "She will never love you."

Was she right? Was he sacrificing his life for nothing?

It was only a piece of jewelry...

John stared at the cat's pleading expression and pale blue eyes. Something in its face seemed so familiar and so comforting. He shook his head, as if waking from a dream. He would never win his mother's love. It wasn't worth the pain anymore.

John dashed out of the closet after the cat, as something sharp whizzed by his face, catching a part of his ear and splattering blood onto his jacket. He winced, ducked and followed the cat outside through the back door.

The air outside smelled of copper, and pulsed with radiating energy. In the distance, the golden cornfield swayed as thick crimson veins wriggled up its verdant stems. It seemed like it was waiting to be fed, like a living creature or an ancient dwelling. It shook and wiggled like nerve endings and taste buds. It hungered.

John feared it, whatever it was, deep within himself, deep as any man fears the dark or fears the greatest unknown. His mind screamed, tearing to free itself from sanity and consciousness. And all the while the cornfield swayed, and shivered and waited for its next meal.

Behind him, the thing in the farmhouse moaned in a deep bestial scream. John looked down at the cat, grabbed it and tore off towards his car in the distance.

He reached the property line soon enough, with the car waiting just on the road, when suddenly the cat squirmed and leaped out of his arms in a cry of pain. John stared down at it confused, as it stood right before the road, barely visible upon the sleek, soft snow. The cat shook

its head slowly, revealing its pale blue eyes once more. John tried to reach for it, but it pulled away. It couldn't leave.

Whatever horror existed on the property and the cornfield, this cat was somehow a part of it. Perhaps it was the only good part remaining. It stared at John with a knowing look, and again John felt an old familiar feeling. He nodded, knowing that the cat had never intended to leave, and had only cared enough to help him. But it was time to go.

He got into the car and began to speed off, gazing at the wriggling cornfield as he did. He saw the white cat run away towards it, and upon reaching it the cornfield stopped swaying, the red veins receded and once again returned to its golden state. It was over.

As John drove back to the hospital his phone once again went off.

"John, are you there?"

"I'm here," he said, trying to keep his voice from shaking.

Nancy was quiet for a few seconds. "I'm sorry John," she squeaked out. "I wanted you to be here..."

"Is she..." He started, knowing the answer.

"She has passed, John."

The words hit him like a bucket of cold water. A sudden realization struck him, that even if he still had the locket, it wouldn't have mattered. He wouldn't have changed her mind, and it would have been too late.

"I'll be here if you need to talk," she said.

John took a deep breath and tried to focus. "I think that would be good."

A comforting silence grew between them. After a while she tenderly whispered, "For what it's worth... Merry Christmas."

The ride back to the city was calm and occasionally adorned by the scattered snow, gently cascading down upon the windshield. Had anything been real? Or had his guilt and dread finally taken his soul? Somewhere inside his mind, a corrupted estate loomed heavily. He longed to forget it.

Yet the cat remained, staring at him with pale blue eyes, the same ones found within a long abandoned locket.

hurricane
blowing over
the last hurricane

innocent of witchcraft
the drowning proves

petro c. k. / *Jerome William Berglund*



At Sea

Ashley J.J. White

Until the moon falls from the sky
the tide will ebb and flow
the sea whispers its wisdom high
what comes will always go

Gentle splashes upon the shore
tickle our toes with mist
before the sea recedes once more
bracing for the tempest

The storm will come, they always do
black waves rock the boat
we're left to tend to darkness blue
faraway and remote

Even with you right beside me
the space swallows me whole
such silence is a cruel melee
I miss your jokes so droll



The storm relentlessly rages
there is no end in sight
little joys locked tight in cages
too long since they've seen light

Just as it came, the storm subsides
the sun shines down its rays
your sleeve it dries my crying eyes
again, we're set ablaze

I call to you, you reach for me
we pull each other out
no sign of that sky so stormy
no flooding and no drought

This love it swells and deflates so
just like the breathing tide
if that which comes must also go
I've something to confide

If you find yourself lost at sea
just know, my sweet sailor
that you can always count on me
I will be your saviour

The Blue Abyss

Daniel Andrée

There is a black sky, as the whirling wind wisps.
Rainfall leads to an ashen mist.

But below me is a great abyss,
my mind is calm but curiosity persists,

in and out, it comes in fits.
Afraid of what is below in the great abyss.

Could there be a creature, the size of a whale?
Or a fish as big as a fisherman's tale?

Beady-black eyes and red brazen scales;
with fins the shape of a cutters sails.

And a powerful tail,
that with great force, whips and flails.

On the surface things look calm and tranquil,
but below seems dark & fatal.

As I dive in, the bubbles go up.
No restrictions of gravity, but I still feel stuck.

I feel the water and the slight sting of the cold.
The pressure makes my ears feel like they will explode.

I needed my bearings in this alien world, so looked up for answers but I
found none,
looked down below me, and I found one.

She was hovering at the lake bottom, beckoning me deeper.
I obliged, and swam down to meet her.

We explored together this watery world,
that is up so high yet is still so deep.

And in these deep waters what you will find,
is the history and humanity as parts of ones mind.



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