

miniMAG

issue47

grown



A nice organized block of text.

Ian Hudson

Beautiful beautiful the gray sky, slapping red rubber with your nikes and looking down at them alternating under you and closing your eyes and half sleeping. You stop counting after the first lap and you feel your congestion leave your face through the back of your throat so you spit it out and you keep going. Your left hemisphere is buzzing and your snot is salty so you wipe it off with your dry hand and keep going to warm up. You're so fucking fast no the curved parts of the track are not shorter than the straight parts that is an illusion. It's so beautiful life is so beautiful. It's so beautiful the clouds can see

me now. I want to die I want
to kill myself and watch
my amygdalae
slap against
the
wall



Orange Ohio

Marc Isaac Potter

A mentally disabled person writes this piece.

As I'm getting much older I do not remember my native Ohio. There were no Orange trees but one set of Orange flowers I think they were tiger willies down the country road from our house.

The older people especially the ones who owned yachts in the lagoon ... we really had a lagoon in our town

The people who own yacht is yachts would slowly turn Orange

Is some of the signs around town Orange

I went to the zoo and the charred baboon was no longer Orange

TWO MALAKAS AND A CUP OF COFFEE

Michael Tiffin

Nico barely recognized his dad. The man sitting across the patio table wasn't the man he remembered. Gus was balding and looked more like Nico's papou than his dad. A few things were the same. Gus wore a heavy, gold signet ring on his right hand and an evil-eye necklace around his neck. Both pieces of jewelry had seen better days; they were scratched and battered like Gus had sent them into a washing machine.

"So, have you drank anything yet?" Nico asked while taking a sip of his coffee. Nico and his dad had been sitting in silence long enough that the coffee was lukewarm.

"No 'Hey dad. How are you?' What kind of man do you think I am?" Gus's expression was a common one from Nico's childhood. Gus's bushy eyebrows were drawn up into indignation, and the twist of his mouth and the hard glint in his eyes hinted at rage.

If Gus was expecting an apology, he was going to be disappointed. Nico didn't say a word.

Gus rolled his eyes. "Fine. I haven't had a drop," he said.

"Are you sure?" Nico didn't want to waste his time. His fingers drummed a beat on the patio furniture.

"I swear on your mother's grave. Believe me now?" Gus's hand shook as he drank his own coffee.

Nico relaxed a little when he noticed his dad's shaking hands. He was telling the truth. It was an old survival tactic left over from his teenage years. Nico associated with getting picked up from soccer

practice on time and a smoother ride home than normal.

“Why did you even ask?” Gus frowned at his son.

“That’s what I want to talk about. I’m worried about your drinking,” As Nico spoke, he prepared himself for his dad’s typical response.

“Oxi.” Gus’s frown deepened and creased his old face even deeper.

“No?”

“Good to see you’ve finally picked up some Greek. But, no. I don’t have a problem.” Gus broke eye contact and stared at the table instead.

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Nico was going to continue, but his dad cut him off.

“Don’t take that tone with me. Have some goddamn respect.” Gus pounded his fist on the table as he spoke.

“Respect? When was the last time you did something to warrant some respect?” Nico’s veins were on fire. He could feel his normal shield of cold politeness fall away.

“Was raising you all by myself not enough for you?” Gus’s frown had twisted into a snarl.

“Oh, shut the hell up. You call passing out while watching soccer raising me?” Nico was shaking as he yelled at Gus. Years of repressed emotions drove their way to the surface of Nico’s brain.

“I put a roof over your head, didn’t I?” Gus’s voice had raised to match Nico’s volume.

“You were always more focused on putting beer in the fridge.”

“Oh, get off your high horse. Do you think raising you was easy?” Gus asked. He didn’t look old anymore. He looked like the same dad that would scream at Nico if he didn’t empty the dishwasher after he got home from school. “I had just lost my best friend, the love of my life. So, I’m sorry if I wasn’t a perfect father.”

Nico softened slightly at the mention of his mom. “Dad. Mom would want you to get some help.”

“For the last time, Malaka! I don’t need any help.”

“Dad, be realistic. You can’t keep drinking like this.” Nico took a deep breath to try to slow his heart down.

“So it’s just a coincidence that you’re trying to ‘help me’ right before you start your new job?” Gus shook his head. “Admit it, you just want to ship me off, so I’m not your problem anymore.”

“I’m here because I still give a shit about you for some reason.”

Nico stood up fast enough to knock his own chair over.

“Oh, cut the bullshit. You never cared about your family. If you did, maybe you would know something about being Greek.” Gus stood up and marched around the table to stand chest-to-chest with Nico. Gus was a few inches shorter.

“It always comes back to that, doesn’t it? I’m a disgrace because I don’t know anything about ‘our culture?’” Nico made air quotes while yelling. “You were always too drunk to teach me a goddamn thing!”

Gus had taken a step backward during Nico’s tirade, but he wasn’t backing off. “Like you would have listened even if I tried.”

“I was a kid!” Nico’s voice turned shrill. “You were supposed to be the responsible one. But, no! I had to walk to school, cook my own dinner, and do my own laundry starting in the first grade. Do you know how many times I burned myself trying to cook Mac and Cheese?”

“I never even wanted to have a kid!” Gus yelled, and then everything went quiet.

Nico stared at his dad, an unbridled hatred in his eyes. The silence lasted a few seconds longer. When Nico spoke, he wasn’t yelling. He sounded calm. “I wish you died instead of mom.”

Gus’s only response was shoving Nico. As Nico stumbled back, Gus advanced and raised a hand to slap Nico.

Nico was faster. It sounded like a clap of thunder when his hand made contact with Gus’s face.

Gus gave up after that. He cowered there, holding his face and groaning.

Nico looked at his dad for a few moments while shaking his head. Then, he turned in place and walked back to his car. Nico started to pull out of the parking lot and his eyes drifted to his rearview mirror. Gus hadn’t moved an inch. He was still standing there and holding his face. He looked small.



Student of Life

Ayla Bayli

Childhood bedrooms and long nights rolled into smoke

I'll share with my adult friends later

Over a glass of wine under the starlight in a body and a city so far away
from who it once was

The lines blur under the suitcase wheels and goodbye hugs

and all the times i want to stay get wrestled and knocked out the blood spill
spelling 'you asked for this'



Scene at the Lido

Christian Ward

The old lady, splayed like a gecko
on a sunlounger, gets the deal
of a lifetime: two for one on choc ices.

Stacked like Tetris blocks inside
the cart's chiller, they wait patiently
for her coinage, a chance for liberty.

But the seller is a blind goat
who only accepts Turkish delight
arranged in a Q*bert level. Soon,

night will slam shut the coffin of daylight.

A deal must be reached. Either this happened
in between late-night infomercials or an AI

is hallucinating and we're all background actors.

There is something important about the old lady,
the ice creams and the goat, but I can't figure out,
for the life of me, what that is.

I DO THE BEST I CAN

Smrithi Snethilnathan

I'm 17 years old and I don't know how to describe myself.

If you ask my parents they'd say I am an excellent daughter- I study well, I help out at home, I'm not too rebellious, and I don't have any major bad habits. Sure I'm not a perfect daughter but no one ever is. I do the best I can.

If you ask my friends, they'd say I am a nice friend- i'm fun to be with, i'm not too much of a buzzkill, i vibe with people well and I listen when they want to vent or rant. Sure I sometimes mess up and do something stupid but nothing too unforgivable. I do the best I can.

If you ask my teachers or mentors, they'd say I am a diligent student- I actively take an interest in learning, I engage with academics, I do well on my tests, and I am always thirsting for knowledge. Sure I sometimes make silly mistakes but doesn't everyone. I do the best I can.

If you ask my books, they'd say I am a wonderful host- I take care of them, I read and absorb their stories, I pass it on to other people to spread the joy of reading, and I treasure them like my heart. Sure I don't always finish every book and the older ones are yellow with age but that's only natural. I do the best I can.

If you ask my electronic gadgets, they'd say I am a marvelous user- I spend enough time on the devices without going too overboard, I use them to their fullest capacity, and I regularly get them checked up. Sure I sometimes drop or damage them but I always make sure to repair them. I do the best I can.

If you ask my musical instruments, they'd say I am a talented artist- I treat every instrument like the divine, I make sure the beauty of its sound is brought out, and I maximize their use. Sure I sometimes get frustrated when I practice for hours and I don't get the desired sound but any musician would be able to relate to that. I do the best I can.

If you ask anybody I've ever interacted with or anything that has ever passed my hands, you'd probably get a response that I am a nice person. A good human.

How does this describe who I am?

How do these fragments of information, these adjectives that are nothing but sounds we made up to represent the neuron firings in our brain, translate to an entire human being?

If you had only these scraps of information obtained from other people, these seemingly random words- excellent, nice, wonderful, marvelous, talented - would you be able to piece me up whole?

I don't think a human could ever be completely described by another human. It is in this one situation that I believe words - which have always been a great solace and comfort to me - fail us. These words could never be used to entirely build up a human from scratch- after all we humans take pride in our complexity and each one differs from the other in terms of their intricacies and individuality. No matter what we know about someone, no matter how well we think we know them, there is always something we don't know - that they don't know themselves - that we omit, causing our description of them to be incomplete.

And yet.

And yet.

As a writer,

I do the best I can.

So let me begin again.

I am 17 years old.

I don't know how to describe myself but I'm going to try anyway. I've always been fascinated by words and the worlds we create from them- and yet how inconsequential they are when we try to use them to capture the entire universe. I love stories and disappearing into worlds unknown. I love unraveling the mysteries of the world and I am driven by a constant desire for knowledge.

I sometimes mess up and incur the wrath of people around me. I sometimes make hasty decisions that I end up regretting later. I sometimes act out and push away people because I'm too scared that

when I let them in, when they glimpse my vulnerabilities and darkest secrets, they'll see that I'm nothing but a collection of adjectives put together. They'll see that the traits that make others human, that make us complex and intricate, are absent in me. That they'll know I'm nothing but conjoined words, emotions and feelings absent.

I sometimes feel like I'm not human enough, feel like I don't know what it's like to be human, feel like I've never been human in my life.

But.

For the sake of it.

For the fleeting moments where I feel alive, where I feel like there is nothing more human at that instant.

I do the best I can.



Onions

Alex Murphy

Coarsely or finely
Chopped no matter
Pieces of onion
Kiss each other,
Whirred by fancy
Or wooden spoon
Sweating and touching,
Letting out more sting
Just as my tears were drying.

Limerick

Jerome William Berglund

little John's love of pickups seemed fishy
for a chunky, effeminate sissy
caught stealing a toy
so pa belted the boy
but still let him take rides as was busy

Triolet

Jerome William Berglund

Millions of kids are beat from time to time.
I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream.
Backyard wrestling, amateur hour pantomime.
Millions of kids are beat from time to time.
Schooled applying sleeper, early bedcrime.
You cream, I scream, we burst seams for nice scheme.
Millions of kids are beat from time to time.
I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream.



A Song of Flat Duo Jets

David Harrison Horton

The sky looks like Indiana,
and I am convinced
the flowers in your eyes
will not bloom today.

A video plays in another room.
It's always another room
with you.
Interiority and tiredness.

There are no pillows on the sofa.
There is no sofa.

The video plays on repeat.
A child screams and screams
and screams
his head right off.

MOBILE CABIN: 5

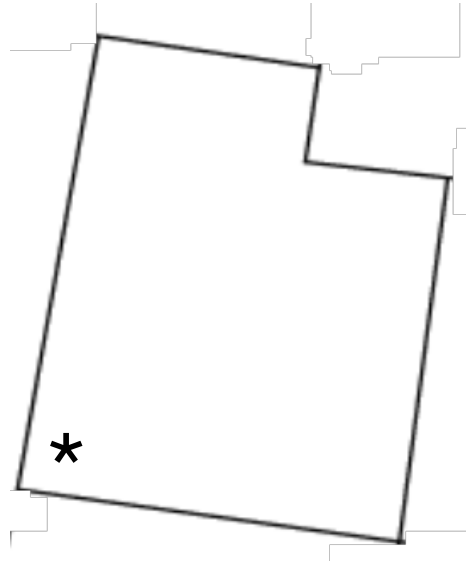
Alex Prestia

Normally I don't drink, but it's Newport Beach, and this little bar feels real, and I really made it from one coast to the other, and all the tables are made of real wood, and the sand is real, and the beach is real, and California is real and not just a story people were telling me.

And "skateboarding" is illegal on the boardwalk, but I brought it all this way, and it's a "longboard", and, like, human law or natural law, man?

So I order a few Coronas and read and probably stick out because I'm not in beach clothes, or even shorts. I just don't like shorts. But I've got on white Sambas and took a shower for the first time in a week yesterday, so whatever, I'm sticking out in a good way.

Everyone gets a tip in America. They put it on other humans, not managers or bosses, to treat them fair. And, generally, the people oblige each other in this. It doesn't work economically: it's a circle of middle-class money, with an occasional hundred and a wink from an upper-class prick who's "slumming it" at the local watering hole. But tipping does work. It works as a constant trustfall that we put to other strangers, and, what I love, is that we usually catch each other.



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