

miniMAG

issue61

oh, the places





Townsville, winter.

Jack Norman

Birds fell that afternoon.

Dead of chill in tropics?

One shot down by BB gun.

And lodged behind the barbecue.

Had not been cleaned for how long now?

Gap Year

Jowell Tan

I am in Japan, snapping a Polaroid of the countryside. While waiting for chemical reactions to reach completion I imbibe a green field of short grass, a train moving across the horizon, a man on a bicycle pedalling alongside as if in a race with said train. The air has a lavender scent.

I came here because I wanted to leave.

In the middle of a grassy field an ocean and an aeroplane away, a Polaroid photograph is slowly coming together. Greyscale first, the colours are inching, snail-like, towards their places.

I was tired of towering apartment buildings, each prefabricated unit a carbon copy of the other, just rotated enough to make it seem unlike their neighbour. Elevator lifts packed to the brim with bodies shouldering silence.

In my hand, a white-bordered photographic paper slowly draws a landscape. Colours, shapes and shadows have found their place within the paper's exposed space. In my hand, the photograph is ready for viewing.

I wanted to leave because the window was open. The window was open, and it was closing, and it would never open again.

I look at the photograph. For a second, I don't see what I was expecting to see. Instead, I see myself. In a button down shirt and business pants, crammed into the middle of a tightly-packed elevator cabin. Staring down the barrel of the camera. Staring at myself.

My present meets my future, for only a brief moment.

In the next, I see greenery, purple sky. Countryside.

Time to leave.



A Caricature of a Country

Rumaisa Maryam Samir

The swollen air stifles me, clogs my throat,
lumbers into my lungs fat with smoke.
The sun beats down on foreheads, sweat-beaded.
The country is sticky and the walls are peeling,
the pockmark of a lizard in one corner so you keep to the other.

Yes, the country is sticky and so are our fingers,
curry-crusting cuticles and oil-slicked hair.
The swollen air is garish with their scent,
a miasma of grease and henna-heavy hands.
A kaleidoscope of redorangepinkyellow trucks,
someone's maa ki dua* rips into your eardrums
with its braying horn. There is no saving this country
but welcome, nonetheless. We apologise for being offensive.

**maa ki dua: an Urdu phrase often written on vehicles in Pakistan, which translates to "mother's prayer"*

VILLAIN

Alan Berger

Got tired of her
And the marriage
The loopy-loop holes
The boredom the clauses
They all were convinced
She died of natural causes
The wedding contract
Done expired
Once again
I was out for hire

Left with nothing of mine
Except for all her money
Spent every last dime
On the pretty ponies

Rented a room
From a woman that let me belong
After that song ended
She too
Didn't last long

Hit the highway
With my thumb out
What came my way
Went out with a shout
Nobody heard
She didn't breathe another word

Joined The Navy
To see what was left of my world
Got into a fight one night
Man overboard
Splish splash
He took an Atlantic Ocean bath

Deserted in Paris
As soon as we hit shore
By the time they figured it all out
As cruel and unusual
I was around no more

Took a vacation
Down Venice way
Rented a gondola
As soon as I met
Another lady to slay

What can I say?
Who is to blame?
It makes no difference to me
At the end of their days

Then soon again
I met a woman
Too soft to touch
And too beautiful to kill
She slit my throat one night
As I lay sleeping on under a full moon
She allowed me
If you will
To pay my long over-due bill

Now I'm down here
And I can't buy a thrill
It's hot as Hell
And I ran out of pills

The moral of the story
Is I was born without any



A Bitter Coffee and a Fire

Reznov Tarkovsky

Alone dwelt in the lonely forest
Drank a bitter coffee and lit a fire
The rest was taking a deep rest
The silence was a good starter
Thus i could fly so far away
And found my precious key.

black lily, grey decay

Erik Plet

a city unreal but real
surreal

you told me
promised me
we would be alone here

last night i dreamt again
i was there again

someones here

there was nothing there the streets
led to buildings their ruins
led to stairs the stairs
led

make them look away
i feel bare

and down there
a dead land slumbered
the abyss hungered

i want out
stop looking
please
theres nothing in here

stay inside
round the outskirts
a great horror roams

why wont you hear
why cant you see

i dont want to see
i saw it once
a grand mass of flesh shifting
in the walls twisting
in the darkness of the halls

they will tear it all away
strip me of all beauty

the mute thing talking to me
collapsing yet always returning
creating a whole from the fragmentations
i dont want to see
yet i long to see

its all i had

its all i want



Who Sees the Sun as a Prison

Colin Dardis

The unbuttonedness
of his shirt
a testament to the weather;

but no,
the chest hair
on untanned skin

a testament
to his adventures
staying indoors.

The sun remained
ziplocking him
into [enter place of residence here].

Cautionary sign stating:

"Retreat barred beyond this juncture, tread with care"

Yet, you persisted,

Careless of my delicate crops,

Heedless, Trampling tender blades of grass that whispered of composed
patience.

Further along lies my untrodden no-mans land,

Fragile terrain,

Oh, how effortlessly you turn,

The fruitfull banks along the river Nile

Into the cruel desert land of mount Sinai.

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