

miniMAG

issue71
adored



Devils Tower

Miriam Sagan

Creation remains a mystery to me.
I saw my godson born
one night in early spring
out from between his mother's legs
looked into his newborn eyes
and wondered:
where did you come from?
Across ten centimeters of dilating flesh
Across a cervix
of eons?

Was I in search of healing
at Devils Tower, Wyoming
as if this was Lourdes?
I took my cane, my crippled self,
my shrinking
life expectancy
and for a few minutes believed I was whole
and could circumambulate
this whole huge stupa
of volcanic rock.

When I was a child, I saw it in a book
One of those Time/Life
series on the natural world
A volume that arrived by mail each month.
There it was, starkly rising,
My mother described it, half-accurately
as the core
of a volcano
something we lacked
in Bergen County, New Jersey.

But we didn't lack desire
like the two climbers
half way up that monolith
roped in
in the photograph.
What made it? Even the geologists
do not agree.
Some call it laccolith
that mushroom cloud of igneous rock
that swells but cannot
reach the surface.
The lines of hexagons
volcanic crystal
appear as scratch marks
of a gigantic bear.

Prayers hang in fabric knots
from birch, burned branches
like Jerusalem's kotel
the only standing wall of the temple
where every crevice is stuffed
full of prayers on paper.
An old man with a broom comes
and sweeps them away at night—
Looking like Charlie Chaplin
a survivor of the camps,
who lives alone in a little apartment.
Can my sweeper still be alive?
Maybe he is immortal.

At dusk dozens of vultures
roost in pine trees
their iconic humped shape
as characteristic as this Bear Lodge tower
turning pinker at sunset
in fields of yellow flowers
that suddenly smell
both sweeter and more sharply.

Vultures circle and float
along updrafts.
The day is hot, and fine.
These scanners may not be
heroic as hawks
but are divine.

After Party

Miles MacNaughton

After the party I was dazed with thoughts of you,
The way you moved your hips, the painted blue
Of your eyes, drifting and sublime, and I
Thought that we could have a hushed moment
In this tiny life

Of mine.

Where you and I
Would be so near
And let our touch be resonant.

After the party I saw you pass—that red car
A sandstorm of clay driven far and fast,
And a sighing moon draped over your shoulders.
Oh, if you would stay, we could sail so far

Away.

To a place
We'd call our own—
On cloud or boat, on windless days.

After the party I dreamed that we could love
Like little birds, like marbled twin kittens.
But no—you said goodbye and smiled and waved,
And I watched you fade

Into haze.

A forgotten face
Around the bend—
A graying dream, a memory's end.



IT'S NOTHING

Alan Berger

It's nothing, she said to her super-duper hypochondriac husband for the billionth time. And yes, that's billionth with a major capital B.

I think I have this.

I think I'm getting that.

Look at my eyes.

Glaucoma, followed by a coma.

It looks like herpes!

Have you been cheating?

Sorry, never mind.

What if I do go into a coma, and they think I'm dead and they bury me alive, and I wake up? I want to be cremated, but only if I'm really dead.

You do know I'm claustrophobic!

You're a phobic alright.

What did you say?

I think that I'm going deaf.

I said I love you

Oh.

I think I have a fever.

She put her lips to his forehead.
It's nothing.

Get the thermometer. The rectal one!

I'll get the biggest one on the planet.

What did you say?

I said I love you God damn it.

Oh.

It was so cute at first. The imaginary maladies, and she was in a place where she needed a man that was needy. It became like babysitting. She would not verbalize to him thou.

He couldn't take it she thought.
He is so very weak.

Still she loved him.

One night when he thought he was having an asthma attack, even thou he didn't have asthma, he went into the night alone to get some fresh air in the middle of the dirty city they lived and loved in.

He was waiting to cross the street to get to a bench in the little park he wanted to freely, get some free air in.

The light was red and he waited in back of a woman who he first thought was too loudly speaking on her cell phone.

After a few more overheard words, he realized that she was talking to herself.

A bus was coming by and the woman stepped in front of it.

Still, in her soliloquy heading from stage struck to bus struck.

He saw her future and leaped out and pushed her out of the way.

He was not that lucky, as the bus ran him over.

But he wasn't dead, even thou it sure as Hell looked like it.

In the hospital he was plastered from head to toes. Tubes out of his mouth, dick, nose, and ass, and if that was not enough, throw in some comical traction.

His eyes were covered too but thru his bandaged ears he heard his love crying as she was sitting next to his deathbed.

He mumbled something through the tubes in his mouth to her.

What did you say darling?

He whispered to her in the most positive whisper he was able to accomplish.



“Don’t worry sweetie, it’s nothing.”

Spinning World

Hannah Healey

She vomits

In my bathtub and

Lies on the

Cold tiles

This late

Time is

Endless

Liquid

We are

Unspeaking

Cautious

Almost whole

There is this missing

Feeling

Familiarity

Resentment

And the rest

Like everything beyond

Touching distance

Sunrise is a nightmare.

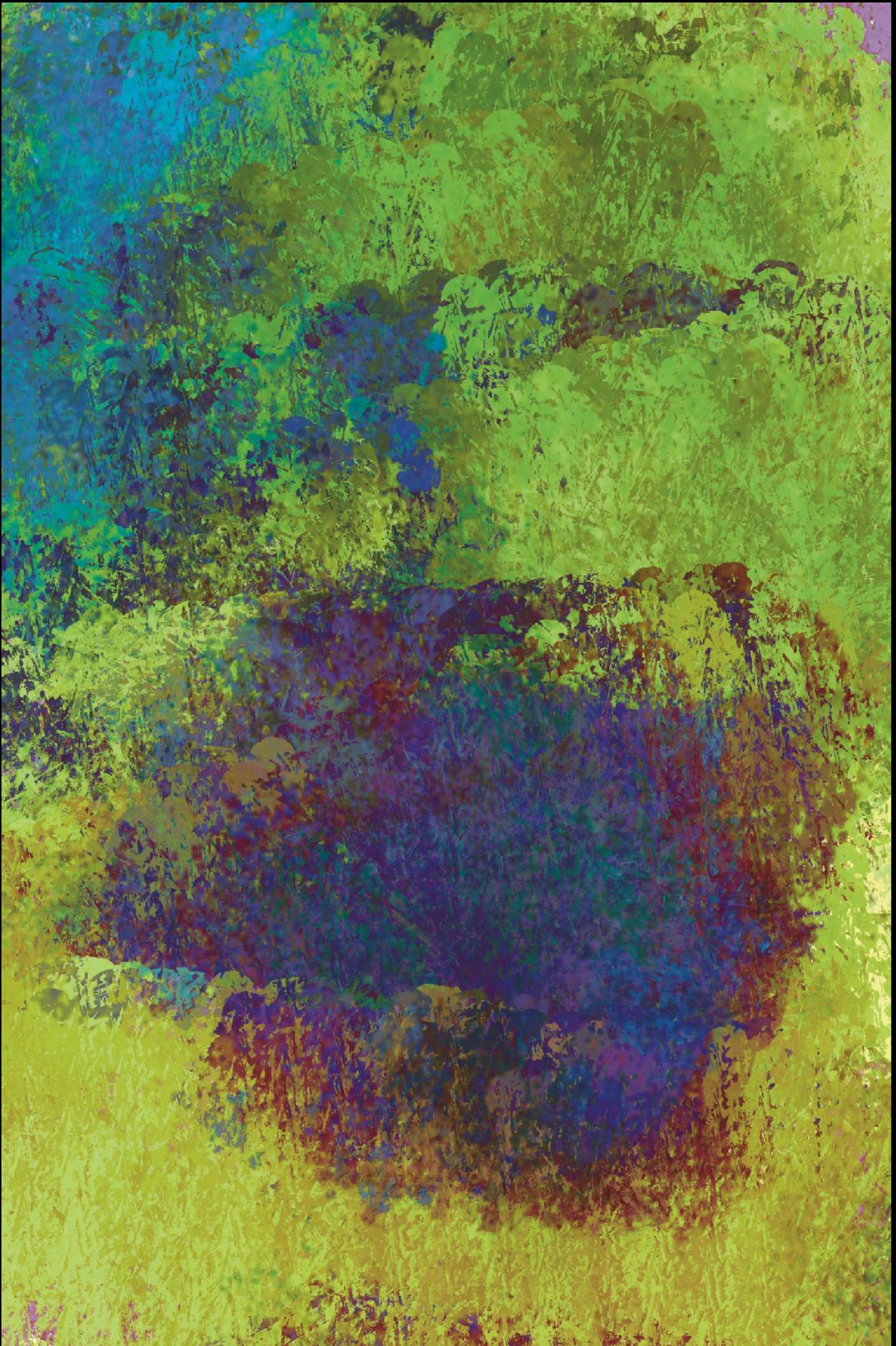
Quiet awful drunken now:

I am glad to share her

Spinning world;

I want to be the thing

She holds tightly.



Girl Field

Salvatore D'Alfo

Sunset
in the grass
with a bunch of violets or roses
blushing in a pink bodice.

Eh tomorrow's a holiday
you old spin you
fancy sunlight on the menu
Stairway to Heaven neighbours telling tales
on days dressed for festival
& still slim flaming hips
& all night dancing boys
zero companions but fairer seas ahead.

The Ballad of Bippy and Cole

Alex Prestia

Tacoma

Tacoma grunt-moans as she sinks in. Mud. She's bent. Her axle. Bogged in bog with 500lbs of bricks in her bed. 500lbs crushing down on her back and driveshaft. Pistons fire, pistons firing, haven't/won't stop. Egged on by his foot. Her rear tire spins, throws mud, throws herself forward. Back left tire, too. Finds traction, too. She's crawling forward. Got some good traction and crawls forward under the weight and over the soft mud. Gains speed, she's gaining speed under the whip of his foot until crunch, snap, rustle, sapling crushed, crunch snap leaves in grill, rolls over another, little trees bend, snap, bend. Pass under. Pass under her and her weight and the broken bodies make for a better path than the mud. She's being egged on, not her fault, her face is being smashed into the path, gogogo, by the foot, Tacoma, gogogo, hauling 500lbs through mud over saplings. Forward forward, the pistons forward choke and forward pistons popping her forward under foot and clutch and forward and choke.

Fallen sapling tickles her drivetrain; scrapes her bent axle. She crushes it under her back tires and bricks. Sapling pushed into the mud, Tacoma on top of sapling, bricks on top of Tacoma, him pushing down on the pedal causing the punch punch of the pistons. Runningtraincar, cartrain drivetrain smash the car. Content. Bump weightless bump as she goes up and down on a bump and comes down hard, full weight of bricks smash through back window back on back bed, breaking glass crash. Cash grab. Rips the grip off the back bed. Bumps and bumps and she's so beaten but her pistons keep firing and she keeps trudging forward and going on the crunch of the little saplings. Wood on top muddy ground underneath. Through brush at a steady forty. There goes a headlight with an awkward snap but it's daytime because daytime is better for filming.

Out of the little mudforest, almost, ridgeline ahead, and they don't slow down, and she careens towards the thirty degree dirt ridge. Crash—the hood bends but the tires keep pushing forward but the brick pallet plastic rips and lets forward a few bricks and one smashes the back windshield a bit more, there's a bar over the window that prevents it

from hitting camera guy 2, and the driver, damned driver, is still safe and he hoots and pushes the pedal harder. Pistons fire fire fire. Inside boom; outside crash. Tacoma's drowning in fuel, heaving heaving heaving it through her and then the piston fires and her front wheels grip good good, and she's a 4x4 so it's ok as she gasps forward out of the muck for air. Back tires mired in mudbog, Tacoma gasps and tries to pull up all the brickbrick in the busted bed with the broken window and the busted axle and the broken headlight and the broken saplings and the busted foot on her pedal that lets the pistons fire and keeps her going forward when stop would be preferable but she's climbing the ridge just fine. Bricks tumble out down the ridge but that wasn't the point.

The other side of the ridge is all mud no tree, and she hears a laugh and knows knows knows what's next. They don't need no more footage of treebog. And it's 5ft sheer drop from ridge to mud and she knows knows 5ft sheer drop is lots and bricks in the back and the bent axle. Yeehaw from the cabin. Clutch down, shift first, shift neutral, shift reverse, clutch up, gas down and she nudges backwards and first bed and bricks hit mud but the front tires push off and all of her follows down down. She goes in deep and a mix of water and mud floods floods the engine, drivetrain, transmission; gas mixes with mud and her bent rear axle's no good, not good under the brick, and most of the brick has fallen off the back but not enough and she's drown drown drowning drowned. Foot pressed down on pedal, no, not shallow mud, and she's had it and knows it and pistons don't fire and the key comes out.

“Well hell yeah!” Cole hollers out the window towards the camera setup on the ridge. Clammers out into the mud, “I'm giving this 2004 Tacoma a 6.5 out of 10 on the stress death test. Subject dead, ain't that right Taco? How bout that Beef?” And he pats her hoodhead and grill but it does not matter, she does not feel it, she is part of the mud now. Cole pulls a Deagle from his hip and blasts away as a bit.





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Art by Edward Lee

Page 1: A Gentle Delight

Page 4: There Is Magic Here

Page 6: A Sonata Of Harsh Times

Page 9: The Silence Asks and Answers

Page 11: The Blame Of The Land

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“Devils Tower” by Miriam Sagan

Book: Border Line (Cholla Needles, 2023)

Book: Castaway (Red Mountain, 2023)

“GIVE ME A MOMENT” by Nathalie Paulino

Insta: @illgiveupthesun

Substack: <https://substack.com/@dumbpoetsociety>

“After Party” by Miles MacNaughton

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Substack: <https://milesowriting.substack.com/>

“IT’S NOTHING” by Alan Berger

“Spinning World” by Hannah Healey

“Girl Field” by Salvatore Difalco

Book: The Mountie at Niagra Falls (Anvil Press, 2010)

“The Ballad of Bippy and Cole: Tacoma” and editing by Alex Prestia