

# miniMAG

*issue79*  
*the new me*





## Alternate Lives

Jess Whetsel

i.

I am a sea witch on the California coast. I take many lovers, but live alone. My little white-fenced yard is bursting with life: stray cats and succulents and sky lupine. The flower garden has survived every season of wildfire – a miracle, or perhaps just a spell.



ii.

I trust the nervous whispers of my heart, the lick of fire in my belly. We marry young, make a home for ourselves in the country. I build a trellis, train a rose bush to climb it, bring her cuttings of creamy orange blooms just like her daddy used to do.

iii.

I am loyal to a fault. While my first love snores, I lay awake and think of all the exits I've passed on this highway to hell, turning up the radio to drown out the sound of my soul crying for escape. Now there are no more off-ramps, just one lane of asphalt stretching through the desert. The roadside wildflowers reach for me, but it is too late.



iv.

I almost board the plane, but at the last second, I turn around. I rent a room on my favorite cobblestoned street, the one the wisteria took over, lavender sequins dripping from winding vines. The ghost of my American accent only haunts me when my mother is on the phone.



## A Reacquaintance

M.P. Powers

That thing you see in the mirror  
every day that flesh-and-bone  
miracle

is not really you;

it's just something for you  
to keep a little while and discard  
like an empty tomato can.

It's not you.

Not your hair, your nose, not your throat,  
your genitals, feet.

It's a loan, a metaphor, a means for growth.

Nothing to grow too attached to.

Nothing to do  
with the real you  
the lying alone you  
the dormant you  
lying in bed at 2:30 a.m., listening to the night  
creatures and gongs of thunder

Your tongue tastes of something raw.

Your breath catches.

You have forgotten about your job,  
your family, your responsibilities & goals.

It's just you here. A theater with echoes  
and no audience. A god  
born into darkness.

An old friend  
who knows.



## Vignette 1

Johnny McIvor

It is often said that the eyes are the windows to the soul. This is perhaps because the eye is quite literally sculpted by that which is seen. Every setting, every selection is mediated through the eye. When you look into her fair eyes, you see her selections — and by extension you see “who she is.” Who she is, burned onto her irises. And my they were beautiful — pale and holographic like two fish scales.

I remember standing over her nose and looking down into them as we talked about autumn and the mast year — when thousands of acorns dropped and poked against the tin roofs of houses. I don’t remember where we were, but it was raining. The streets filled up with cold water, and a wave came under the bridge and washed out the shore where we were standing. Crabs the size of buttons tumbled through the swirling purple.

## WHAT'S NEW

Alan Berger

Was In AA for a long while

Was sucking up drink like The Loch Nest Monster

Went back eventually to my new old ways

When I learned my wife was fucking my sponsor

I don't have too much left

I am not a candidate for identity theft

I only drink now with someone sexy and blue

Then as always

I only think of you

But what is not new and what is not that painless

The sooner guys like me die

The sooner we become famous



## This Year I'll Try Not To Feel Sad In The Winter

Elinor Serumgard

In this space and time liminal  
between end and beginning  
the winter air wet  
and cold

not yet filled with the vigorous vital vexing  
greens the promise of life and soils and  
the promise of longer warmer days  
this walk on the precipice of  
the new year one step farther into futures unknown  
the breath of the wind tinting every  
thought with the golden edge of nostalgia

and I imagine when the transatlantic, mid-century  
talk show interviewer said:

“what’s it like living in the most  
beautiful place on earth?”

and the 60’s era starlet gave

a wink and said “I hear places with the sun are *much* more beautiful”  
and all the locals knew the wink  
is for them and the safety of  
our secret gem

All the beauty of the wood and the  
salmon and ripe berry stained  
hands across my heart.

I remember sun dappled day-dreams in  
the back of a car, watching  
the sun bleached firs bleeding into the  
bright sky

but winter's oceans crash indigo into rocky  
bluffs, rooted trees, the slope of the  
mountain wild flowers up a hill  
into  
velvet dark sky piercing stars that  
settle in your heart.

I determine you can inhabit any year of  
history in this wide open wilderness  
of the upper left.

this year i'm trying to feel hope—despite  
i'm trying to clutch what is mine, what is ours, but what was never ours.  
No matter, we'll return  
we can always return  
to safe and sound in silence  
of trees and rivers and the  
sword fern's frond



## The Resounding Silence

Claudia Wysocky

The silence was resounding—  
Stifling as it crept into my every thought.  
The silence was all consuming—  
Reshaping every crevice of my imagination.  
The silence was foreboding—  
As the thoughts of my mind seemed to echo off the walls.  
I wanted the silence to break,  
But it seemed to gain on me, twisting around my heart—  
Wrapping its chilled fingers around my throat.  
I was powerless to stop it—  
But something sounded, a bang, a crash—  
Piercing through the shroud of endless silence.  
—My heart?  
Was I finally falling apart,  
At the thought of my own silence?  
No—  
It was the door.  
And with it, came a flood of noise—  
Tumbling into the room, overwhelming every thought I had.  
A bang, a crash —And smoke.  
Was it a fire?  
Was I wrong about the silence?  
Or had it only been hiding,  
waiting for this moment to consume me?  
No—  
Oh—  
My dad's smoking again.



## **The mirror/water**

Kushal Poddar

Through the glass door of water

I see as above so below.

The world there although, holds a shiver,  
a little ditty and dance for the still life trees.



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“WHAT’S NEW” by Alan Berger

“Vignette 1” by Johnny McIvor  
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