

**miniMAG**

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modern monastic





## Post Panic Attack

Anna Lesnick

I am exhausted.  
Drained.  
Gone out of my head.  
Am I back in it yet?

Fallen to the ground.  
Dizzy and numb.  
I'm done.





## The blue sky on a Tuesday

Richard LeDue

traps all the cloud animals  
like a make-believe zoo,  
but our own bars are created  
from two feet  
stuck to the same ground  
that gives birth to graves,  
and our necks seem sorer now  
than sleeping in on Saturdays,  
when we have time  
to envy all those geese soaring  
with the urgency of winter and spring,  
while our own seasons pass  
like someone dying in bed.



## Imagine This Building Is A Temple

Kushal Poddar

A bone bare man  
dares the corroded stairs  
vericose in the expired house.

The sky afloat midst the clouds  
form a continent caught in  
a tectonic shift.

"Are you reaching for it?"  
The man squints, finds me,  
says, "Climbing up defies gravity,

and the effects of time  
are different above."  
His voice wrinkles around his thinning.

Above, a sakura isolates this winter.  
"Good luck." I shout because  
I cannot see him.



# In The Order of the Continuous Interim

Pixie Bruner

**S**ister Kleio Urania of The Order of The Continuous Interim did as she did every night, she read from some of the Holy Scriptures-Gaiman, Herbert the Elder, Zelazny, Ellison, Eliot, Grimoires, and Marcus Aurelius. Tonight, she even did some needlework, darning darn things she wanted desperately to have someone take off of her.

Her Orders orders was to be patient, useful, intelligent, wise and in rare circumstances, vulnerably human. Those human tasks were becoming quite rare and while sometimes Sister Kleio Urania would pray to an antithetical orders master with the words “Lord, make my heart a stone”, she really did not want her heart to turn to gneiss, or shale, granite, jade, limestone or any actual stone. Blood is life and well those hearts that move it- they need to be muscle, not stone.

She just wanted to feel wanted and that she was more than a brain in a jelly jar on the bottom shelf and that she was not becoming the dreaded invisible woman that came with that age she'd reached. Women become intangible and ghosts when they reach “a certain age”. That exact age was debated and of course, news sites ran comforting articles saying “30 is the new 20”, “40 is the new 30”, “50 is the new 30”, “45 was the new 13”. There were also contradictory articles like “20 Things a Woman over 30 Should Own (and she owned none of them), “20 Things No One Over 30 Should Have in Their Home” (she

had many of them and wanted the 7 she did not already have), and 25 Items NO Woman Over 30 Should Have in her Wardrobe (and she owned and wore them all or variations of them and wondered if people saw her as “black mutton dressed as goth lamb” and if so, at least she was too old for slaughter and being roasted with mint and garlic and grilled as a chop, as Americans eat lamb, not mutton. America is a young nation, even in its diet), but that “certain age” was seemingly upon her.

Over 35, especially over 40, you became more insubstantial and real and soon you stop existing as a woman entirely, and she certainly felt she was both substantial (she was not only a woman of substance but quite tangible and complete) and real, she certainly still appeared in glass windows and mirrors, had not entered into perimenopause even, and hated the creeping doubt that perhaps her time as a corporeal being or as a woman even had finally passed her by combination of her birth year and a series of other vows that kept her from the world for many years.

(She wanted to be wanted. It was a silly little thing.)

One of her hobbies was collecting rain checks (or were they rain cheques, based on whom had issued them?) She had 3 in hand and a fourth one issued just today because of chrono-shortages and microbes. There truly was never time for her. Time is important, and we’ll get to it soon. Nor the feeling or desire that inspired the desire, want or need to create any time for her was present in her life, or if so, it was not enough to be noted. Time can be made. She knew how important it was and was a gift that could never be returned. Sometimes it was even necessary to make it. The rain checks were reminders of things undoing. The microbes were just inconvenient.

Three rain checks was a few and four was certainly able to be quantified as a few. If she got another, she’d have 5. 5 would be a handful, enough for a booklet and she wondered if they should be stapled and put in a perforated form, given a faux leather or quirky printed booklet cover and become a rain checkbook (or should it be “chequebook”?).

When she made light of it, the issuer proposed that multiple rain checks were “Chekhovs”. Check offs—she desired to be in someone’s “To Do/Plans” list and be checked off occasionally.

Once, she was checked off at least once a calendar quarter and before a new acute (but now had become chronic) chrono-dearth, an agreement to make the time coexisting in intellectual stimulation and pleasantness temporally and tangibly more frequent was spoken of as the year was freshly changed. Perhaps it was tentatively agreed to only as she was under the impression time was finite and she would be sent to a convent in California, which fell through or maybe it was not even agreed to. She’d forgotten the exact words and details now. Over half a year had passed anyway and the other party was very sleepy during that conversation, so it probably did not even matter a bit.

Since then, she was on a never-ending list and one list was, of course, survival related and non-negotiable and encouraged. However, if there was an “Optional” list, she was probably there on it, in fine company, she assumed, and just not able to be gotten around to, even if her human capacity and joy as a Sister of the Continuous Interim was

sometimes giving slow head to those she chose to bless and administer sacrament to and/or/with, along with her many other gifts. Asceticism pained her, not hers, the asceticism of others. Her asceticism was an innate default setting that alternated with sybaritic phases which were few and far between. It was balanced, with temperance and rational behavior, ensuring the scales never went anywhere to the extreme ever.

Rain checks occasionally made her impatient and occasionally, foolishly sad and slightly lachrymose. It was microscopic paper cuts of



disappointment and nano-rejections. Small, no scarring really, but they still stung when they occurred. She wanted to give of herself so much but it seemed no one wanted to take.

There were times she felt the rain checks may possibly not ever be able to be honored, they were just blank checks or holding placards—empty spaces. Or she felt they would not ever be honored or deemed worth honoring, and even if honored, they could bounce, like bad checks, and that sense of meaninglessness, the deep knowledge that words can bring about nothing or even worse, bring about sorrowful things—that thought and feeling would cause how that last paragraph started (with a moue, an internal tsunami of self-recrimination, and some brief downpours of tears, always silent, this was not a sobbing thing).

(Did I mention the wanting to be wanted, the wanting, the mutely falling tears? They were silly little things)

You doubt the Order exists? It's quite real. Here are facts about The Order of the Continuous Interim then:

The Sisters of the Continuous Interim always wait, dedicated to those they have seen magic, wonder, joy, sorrow, honor, and beauty (defined as “something”) in. They remain faithful in their fashion, even abandoning outgrown obligations and vows when it is time, to follow the mind that leads their hearts having chosen those they deem worthy to accompany and desire. They almost never change their minds because of their thorough process of deliberation. If chosen, and it may take years before the chosen know they were chosen by a member of the Order, they are secretive things, and knowing how things change so much over time, it is never a passing fancy. It is a thing that lasts provided a single copy of Bullfinch's Mythology exists on some shelf, somewhere, or so it is said. They are always the ladies who have waited and will wait.

The Order has many odd, random, or unusual treasures within the dark wood-paneled walls of its chapterhouse. Teaspoons shaped like skulls, a phallic turquoise faience amulet of protection from the early

CE, a mysteriously dwindling supply of stainless steel rainbow colored chopsticks and serving pieces that are giant sporks in the same psychedelic titanium, vintage opera gloves and driving gloves from the Mid-20th Century, fur coats and carnival glass bowls, iridescent milk glass vases, an expansive pharmacopoeia, lotions and potions that do either something or nothing, a coin of Sol Invictus from the reign of Constantine the Great, noctilucent objects, a great deal of art that either hangs on walls and that once hung on walls in chapterhouse prior, a Hello Kitty waffle maker, several teapots, bookcases full of other people, worlds, and dimensions, a herd of surge protectors, yards of reflective tape, an excellent computer with no hard drives at all as they were broiled, an uncirculated 2000 lira note with Galileo Galilei upon it (pretty printed pocket change), 200 bottles of nail lacquer, a late 19th century wardrobe with a full length real silver backed mirror and a lovely wooden inlay design and the original brass hooks inside, and the house also holds a fallen angel, a common ghost or two, countless unsaid words, the normal dark secrets as well as a display of many pretty stones and semiprecious gems. It's a time-travelers jumble sale.

The Sisters are peculiar and infamous for being temporally cursed. Not temporarily. Temporally. Downright accursed. In the later part of the 20th Century, before the advent of mobile phones, the Order was known to sit at home on Friday and Saturday nights waiting for the phone to ring. This was, in fact, part of the exercises to strengthen their minds as they played quantum games with the phone. They would explore quantum states and the phone receiver would be like a box or an orange tabby cat that would exist in two states simultaneously. They awaited calls that never came, calls that were said they would be made alongside calls they longed for that did not come. One call with the words they'd had once longed to have heard came, but the phone rang and was answered by a Sister. The call was stuck in the curse and was 15 years late. When they choose someone, because of the Order's curse, which none can break and no Sister has ever escaped, the time is never right for that person for any number of reasons and when that person is in the right headspace or were ready and available, the doomed Sister is playing house, contributing to the gene pool or acting in a long-term primary capacity and is not available.

The curse of always being in and existing at the wrong time has taught them to make Time. They have found a way to endure the curse by Making Time, from scraps, knitted together, and this is important and essential. It's a work-around and not a banishment at all. They know the importance to craft time and create temporal spaces and bubbles, else Nothing can happen and then potential moments of happiness, pleasure, laughter, trust, and other things not as kind leading to personal growth and connections are lost forever to entropy and apathy. Entropy always wins. And so, the Sisters make time by some esoteric means, as the cost of not doing so is higher in its emotional, mental and karmic cost. Regret simply costs too dearly, they are not a for-profit or wealthy order at all, have no corporate sponsor or church tax shelter, and therefore they place more value on the small things others forget about and take for granted.

Another wondrous and strange thing about the Sisters of the Continual Interim was their ability to subsist on scraps. The surviving

on just scraps thing is a miracle they all can do. Leftovers, half a slice of pizza, a pita crust, an individual piece of chocolate, an hour of time, a one sentence benediction (even a single or few kind words!), a show of affection, a single shared orgasm, and things tossed at them, the cherished indulgences, the table scraps themselves, can sustain them and keep them full and sated for about an entire month. They do some seriously mystical (and mathematically impossible) loaves and fishes thing with these scraps that keep them going. But after a month, they become hungry again and within 2-3 months, they are needing sustenance and supplement. It is without fail. Scraps sustain unnaturally. All scraps eventually provide no further aliment.

Without scraps, and in a few months' time, there's the magical backlash. They are touch-starved and starving, they are filled with the hunger of emptiness of their lack. While they are all cat women, they are loyal as dogs for their scraps. Some Sisters had debated at a Conclave on addressing the problem with their curse, which in many ways turned out to be a blessing—it allowed them to survive on scraps. Temporal curses mean a small speck, a morsel, anything thrown at them, keeps them going for a while.

Once, the Sisters debated, after a long time without scraps, that perhaps they should go out dancing: get out, getting drunk, stupid, and having some random hookup with whoever was willing to feed them for a few months, but decided it was not going to provide the right nutritional values for their immortal souls which descend to Cervatori upon death. They no longer even need scraps to survive in Cervetori., where they mop the steps with their hair. Plus the night out, it would have emptied the Maneki Neko piggy bank they kept all the money in the world that the Order had in, and there was no guarantee that it would turn out right, and that any of them would return safely to the convent afterwards. The Order unanimously voted that they would wait for the next scraps. They would mend and make do. Mother Superior poured more tea and they sat in hungry silence for a week after voting.

Sister Kleio Urania was strong,-willed. Some even called her “stubborn”. It pleased her, a satisfying scrap, a compliment to her. It is a silly thing. She kept faith. 11 years now, beyond novice and now probably an acolyte, she remained patient because hope is a thing with wings, and nothing is heavy to those who have wings.

Alis Grave Nil, or so it is said.





## Not a Political Poem

Bharti Bansal

A god will take birth  
With his birth certificate sitting beneath the idols  
People will chant his name  
Loud and clear  
Every tea stall with the poster of their God  
Will give free chai  
What is birth if not a discounted celebration  
A new God, an old name, a rebirth  
People will bow down  
Remember this new God's name  
Remember this new home  
As the remains of history lie buried





## waitings

D. C. Nobes

she waits  
at the church door,  
her pink blouse standing out  
from the grey-shade stones around her.  
she waits.

he waits,  
the old comrade  
looks for old companions,  
silhouetted in the doorway.  
he waits.

waiting,  
we are always  
waiting, or so it seems,  
for life, for love, for friends, and so  
we wait.





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