

miniMAG

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A Beautiful Thursday Afternoon In Downtown Martinez

Thomas Whittaker

the jangle of a cuddling
spanish colonial

of idling procedure terrestrial
uniform gauge in rosy desert for mugshot

circuitboard dreamlike a tender
gangland landscape

videotext of seagulls by e-40's
'hex empire'

oral history miners-struck a splintering
cliff-burton-haired

a rusted soft-worn pocket mirror
a cocoon swimming for cold
i remembered

flowering & dry-docked in speculative
dyke-hoodied absent touch in sunset
myself.

**I read fanfiction in bed and it is not because I am
unhappy. I'm starting to believe that some things in
this world are real.**

Elizabeth Hsu

For years all things around the end of September were nightmarish enough
to convince me that
there was a curse that came with aging besides the inevitability of stopped
breath, but
by now I've gone to Ohio and back, and the weight of my eyelids is not so
heavy that I can finally see it:
The grass has always been green. Tomorrow I sit inside a Barnes & Noble
and
study the grandmother holding a baby who squeals at every bus that passes
in the windows and, like him, I will know that there is life beyond this glass.
In this age of mine there are songs to sing and books to read, people to see,
trees to stand under, and
stars that I cannot touch but that I believe are there.

There's no projector playing a movie in front of my eyes, and
there are not any poems that should be written. There are only poems I have
yet to live.

I am not this place but the people who belong to me. I am not a color that
you can see.
I am a mortal breathing language maker and tonight I'll run my fingers over
a blanket
until I'm tired of feeling the texture. This world which I have always existed
within

I can finally say that—*I have lived.*

Sacrifice

Donovan Hall

I go downstairs to do my laundry, smelling the sour smell of cheese and bitter musk wafting from a basket of clothes I might have waited too long to tackle. I dump them in the machine, thanking the ancestors that I came into being in a time of such convenience. I put in the soap powder—lavender, or something akin to it.

I press the button and the process begins. The machine starts to grumble and shake, a beast of primordial chaos awakening from its hundred-year slumber to devour its promised virgin sacrifices. It rises from the darkest pool of our collective subconscious, its claws grasping the ankles of entire peninsulas as it drags its damnable bulk onto land. It moves forward, inevitable and hungry, crawling ever closer to its prize.

Chained to an altar atop some mountain temple, naked and beautiful like some Boris Vallejo painting, the virgins struggle in vain against their bondage. Off in the distance, watching from a safer vantage, the elders, fat and gray, smile to themselves, satisfied. Youth sacrificed for the sake of the future, just as it always has and always will be.

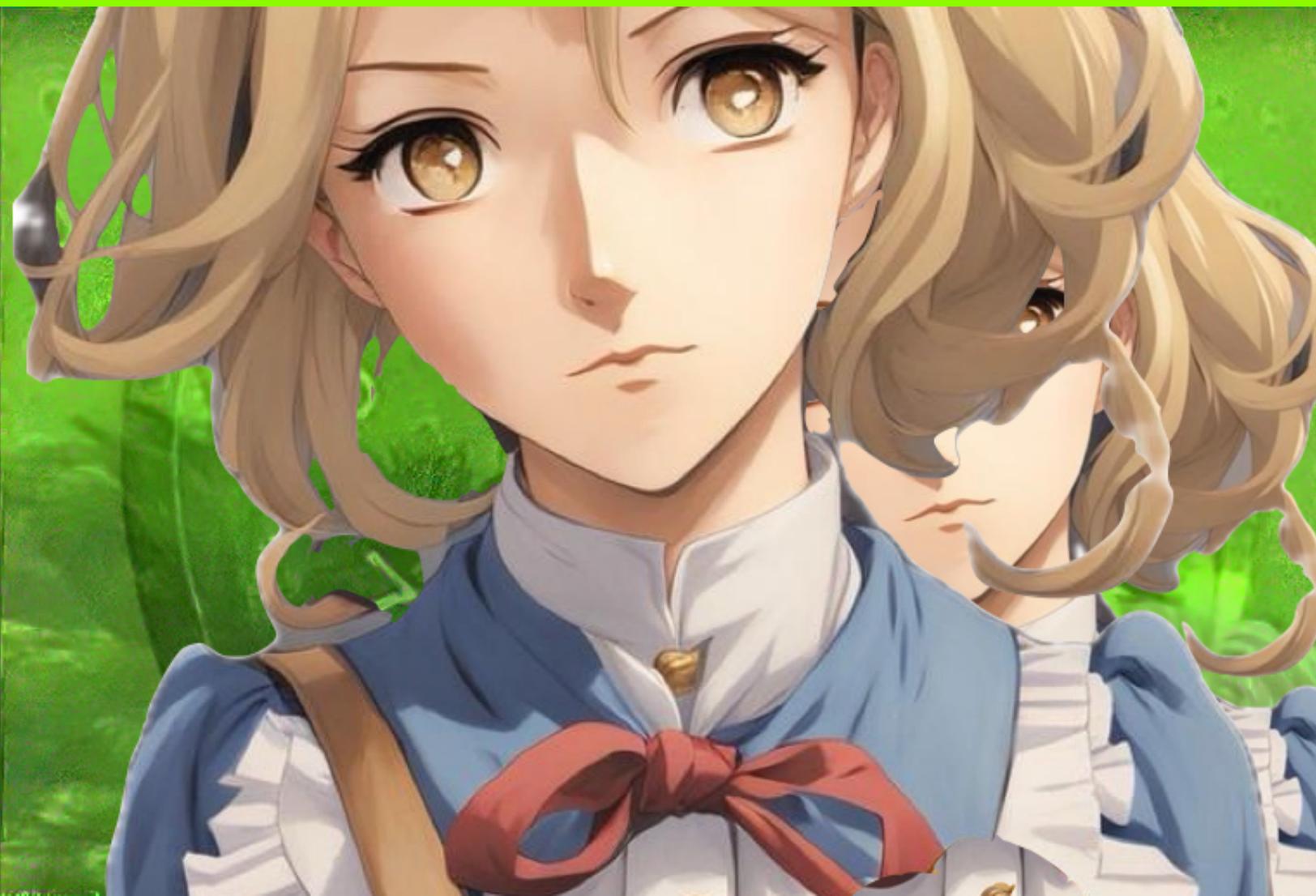
However, one in their ranks protests, claiming that there is another way, that a plan can be forged and the beast can be defeated,

but his cries fall on deaf ears. His comrades scowl and their patience curdles sour. The man is tossed from the balcony, screaming. The others laugh as his body breaks on the rocks below.

The beast of chaos nears, choking the air with yellow smog and turning the seas to acid. A bird falls into one of the elder's goblets, dead, and his smile stretches wider before opening his mouth to pour it all down his gullet, wine and bird together. With a stubborn crunch, he chews the bird's brittle bones and swallows.

Raising its head over the mountains' jagged peaks, the chaos beast casts its gaze over its coveted offering. The fear in virgin faces apexes; despair twisting their innocent visages into shattered mosaics of unhinged madness. No prophecy has deigned their doom, nor any dogma ordained it, only perversion.

The buzzer rings and I see my laundry, clean and sopping wet, lying still in the hollow of the washing machine. I collect my clothes and throw them into the dryer, press the button, and await the vision to come again. It doesn't. But I can still hear the beast's approach.



A Vacation

K Weber

We'd been ripping seams
and beating at the edges.

But this was not a frazzled
dress. Not a pinata. Waving

arms, we felt for curvature;
sought endings to a million

stories we knew from the old
throats and theories. We did

not care about flat or sphere:
only how to get out. One day,

an unexpected sound rumbled
wooden and then we ignored

the bell that followed. Probably
salespeople. But every time

that pounding deepened
and tested our core. It was hard

to ignore until we found a door
so immense we plotted escape.

We opened the door. Only
to let them in.



Swordfish

Tempest Miller

It's a long swordfish
undoing its own cage
it's a fincher a fincher
a dead fincher
strangled by a snake
it's Mexican food on Dialogue Street
it's lips on fire in a promenade
and an angry sword
next to a fountain
which still knows how to be crude



The Language of Fireflies

Pixie Bruner

Everyone is sleeping, even the cats.
I go outside to watch the fireflies.
Little stars,
 blue,
green,
 yellow
asterisms
all
over the
yard.

I am a child of the Universe
creating universes of my own.
The fireflies dance over the unmown grass
Sparks of light under a gibbous moon.

I am fully and most alive.
I draw strands of energy from all directions into me,
Weave them into a skein to weave words with.
I devour books of delicious exotic words, dictionaries, encyclopedias,
 thesauruses even.

I feed myself full of language and beauty,
I sate myself on knowledge, meaning, and flavor.
Relishing the mouthfeel of new sounds,
I glut myself upon the magic fruit of night language.

Lampyridae Coleoptera.
Bioluminescence.
Luciferase.

LIFE ON THE ROAD

John Grey

a solitary crocus
flowers in a crack
in the breakdown lane asphalt

at the urging
of pre-dawn dew

and the indifference
of every car passing



On A Slow Gloaming

Kushal Poddar

To Rijurekh da

The thin light from the window
sniffs, recognises the smoky petrichor
rising from my mellow core.

In the garden I buried my lies, fed by kitchen rot grows
a Pinocchio reed.

If you stare hard; eyes blur; 'I' dissolves
freeing you to see more in one, how a reed holds
some infinite reeds, possibilities,
as if a lie can be true when its turn arrives.



Lime Jell-O

Terry Trowbridge

The brain matter of
a chrysoprase crystal skull.

A stand-in prop for a 2am infomercial
for a turbo spinach juicer.

Primordial ooze on the altar bedsheets
where the goddess of algae
and the god of jellyfish
made love.

Frog prince on the lookout
for contact lens solution:
“Close enough.”

A secret room of a sort,
like a gelatinous cube standing in
for a treasure chest,
sitting invisibly at the bottom of a pond
holding a jade ring once worn
by the Lady of the Lake.
now waiting for another faerie finger.





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