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## REGARDING THE TENT

John Grey

So I leave the front door open  
when I come in.  
and my mother admonishes me  
with "Were you born in a tent?"  
Once again, I'm asked a question  
by the only person  
who would know the answer.

## **in my dream I am asked to give myself a rating on a scale of 1-5 for being a decent human**

Bharti Bansal

I remember stuttering, then asking questions  
I ask them if I can use decimal numbers  
If the wholeness of my being can be reduced  
To a period  
And the numbers after it  
I wait for my turn  
Recollecting all my mistakes in this catapult my brain is  
Readying to ricochet back to my past  
I ask them about love  
And they do not answer back  
They say remembrance is a sin  
But I have always been nostalgic  
They laugh  
Isn't laughter a moment of quite remembering  
One by one, we move ahead  
On a train track, our feet ,the wheels in this slithering motion  
Falling and steadying ourselves up  
As the time saunters, we sing along  
Until it all collapses down to a single number  
I say I am a 2 maybe  
And they ask  
Did you speak up for your people  
I do not nod  
I do not answer back  
Woken up by my mother,  
Asking me to have my lunch  
I rub my eyes  
And pretend that as long as love will win wars,  
as they convince us  
I will be a good person  
Sitting silent  
Watching everything fall down  
Through my window on a Sunday morning  
I rate myself a solid 3.



## Answers to Reptilian Questions

Bryce Johle

My father opened the refrigerator the day we celebrated Christmas as a family,  
and bet there's a lot of crime being perpetrated where we live in the city.

I bet back, there's a lot of crime being perpetrated where you live in  
nowheresville,  
and what, perchance, caused this idea to enter your mind whilst preparing  
coffee?

He shrugged, sat in the recliner, and mumbled something as the old police  
scanner  
hissed white noise, piercing beeps and elongated tones from the dining  
room.

When my stepdaughter asked who he was talking to, my father said,  
*the floor*                      *the dog*                      *nobody,*

then set down his finished bowl of cereal and offered milk to the cat.



# Genealogy; A Quiet Conversation

Jerrod Schwarz

Always, pulled into the water:

pulled back into the wood panel room  
with little brass crosses on the wall  
and a dusty Daytona 500 table lamp.

He's here. His pearlimbs jut and clip through the ceiling;  
his face is out of focus but I can tell he's crying.

*a happy young man*, he coos::

there are no doors or windows,  
but the carpet gurgles with groundwater.

He rocks the wave of his face  
through my shoulder blades  
and asks, *I'm a father, aren't I?*

When I rest my ear on his sternum:::  
a lost child screaming at a dog.

When he rests his ear on my sternum:  
cows headbutting an electric fence.

Waist deep and lukewarm::::

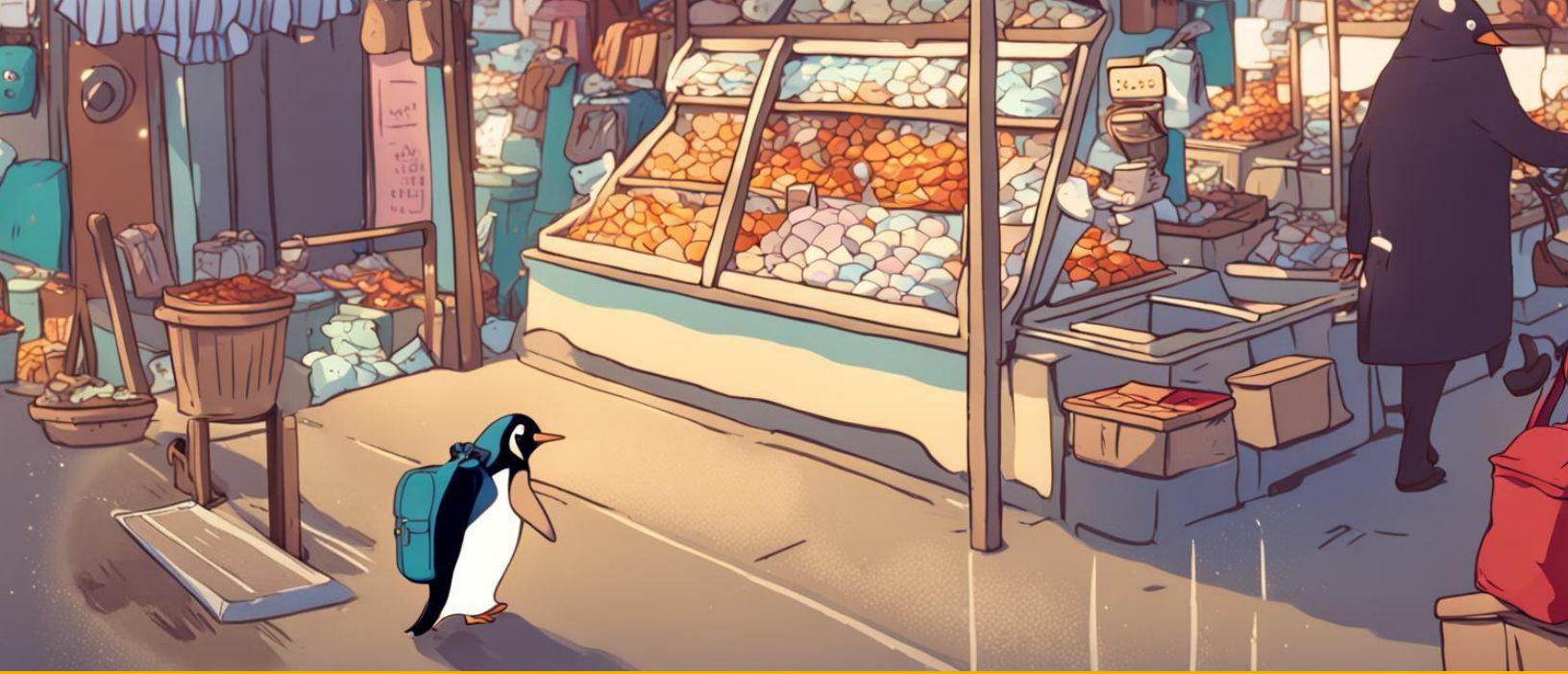
He tells me a riddle. *If my son  
has a daughter and the daughter  
has a twin, how many grandchildren  
will bear the yoke of my sin?*

I slam his head into the mildewed wall  
over and over. I swing my own head  
into the new dent:::::

There is no approximation of bloody water:::::::  
*I made you sleep in a guest bedroom.*

There is no approximation of drowning:::::::  
*I let you cut the animals from their own bones.*

*Do you know what they call a basement in Florida?  
A poorly made pool!*



## Once We Were Mermaids

Pixie Bruner

We were mermaids once,  
floating on turquatic seas,  
we looked forever shoreward.  
Or rather merfolk,  
forgotten naiads,  
cast off spawn of Poseidon  
who chose to bifurcate  
our Selves to walk on land.  
Some of us lost our tails,  
took on human forms without larynxes,  
while others chose to go deeper  
burrowed in anemones  
and thermal vents on the sea floor,  
crushed to microscopic scale  
to remain whole,  
but a few of us  
chose the other option,  
now we wash up on the beaches,  
muscled legs, genitalia,  
with the iridescent  
bodies of fish,  
our gills sucking at blue skies,  
trying to extract the  
air that completely surrounds us  
and are unspoken of,  
shame of land and sea alike,  
Neither fish nor fowl,  
but foul monsters,  
fish out of water,  
floundering to exist,  
our petrified bodies ore-veined  
semiprecious stones  
landlocked over the epochs.

## OPHELIA'S e-DATING LISTING

John Grey

of a good family

untainted, innocent and righteous  
compliant, faithful and submissive

lacking in agency

slim and attractive  
not as mad as people say  
would make a good corpse



## AFTER WRITING MY GREATEST EVER POEM

John Grey

I said to myself  
that Emily Dickinson  
couldn't have said it better

but then  
everyone who read it  
said she did.





# Open Noirs

Lee Hammerschmidt

“What do you mean you won’t take my case, Shade?” Lola Tepezza said, “This is right up your alley. It’s what you’re famous for.”

“I’m sorry, Lola,” I said. “But I’m thinking of hanging it up. Retiring.”

“You can’t! I need you. If you can gather evidence of Whack’s infidelity, I’ll be able to divorce him and get the big fat settlement I deserve.”

“I’m burnt out. Too many stakeouts, seedy motels, dive bars, thugs, pimps, bagmen, dirty cops, snitches, faithless women, beatings, shoot-outs, hangovers...”

Lola reached across my desk and put her hand on mine, softly caressing it.

“You know,” she purred. “I wouldn’t mind spending time with you after this is all over. I find you very attractive. So masculine, so virile. You could help me spend Whack’s loot in Cabo or Fiji.”

“Okay,” I said, trying to get my breathing under control. “One *noir* for the road.”





## The Celebrant

K Weber

Will you love them  
through thrush  
and thrust or rush  
and rust? Trust  
and hush their tryst  
despite the hiss?

Would you miss  
them much if they  
do not touch? This  
mush is no must  
for everyone; there's  
mussed tress and mess.

Can you confess  
less or more as fast  
as this might last?  
Can you both sow  
and sew a lot or a few?  
And if so, say I do

or adieu.



url: minimag.space  
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insta: @minimag\_write

“REGARDING THE TENT”, “OPHELIA’S e-DATING LISTING”, and “AFTER  
WRITING MY GREATEST EVER POEM” by John Grey  
Book: Between Two Fires

“In my dream I am asked to give myself a rating on a scale of 1-5 for being a  
decent human” by Bharti Bansal

“Genealogy; A Quiet Conversation” by Jerrod Schwarz  
Insta: @iambic\_art

“Answers to Reptilian Questions” by Bryce Johle  
Bryce Johle hosts Arcade Bookshop, a video game and literature podcast.  
Insta: @arcade\_bookshop

“Once We Were Mermaids” by Pixie Bruner  
Twitter: @MokeyGrey  
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Website: <https://pixiebruner.wordpress.com/>

“Open Noirs” by Lee Hammerschmidt  
Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/MrLeehammer>

“The Celebrant” by K Weber  
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inspo: LALA THE CHILL PENGUIN THAT THINKS IT’S PEOPLE  
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