

miniMAG

issue99
tangerine

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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 pearl limbs 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
subs: minimagsubmissions@gmail.com
substack: minimag.substack.com
twitter: @minimag_lit
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
Website: <https://ko-fi.com/pixiebruner>
FB: facebook.com/pixiebruner
Substack: [Pixie Bruner](#)
Website: <https://pixiebruner.wordpress.com/>

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

“The Celebrant” by K Weber
Insta: @midwesternskirt
Website: <https://kweberandherwords.com/>

ISSUE99 edited and ai art by Alex Prestia
inspo: LALA THE CHILL PENGUIN THAT THINKS IT’S PEOPLE
<https://youtu.be/11xs9mFKObs?si=NGMkAq5m7jXoYU1>