

RUCKUS

Spring 2020

The Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts

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RUCKUS

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Mission Statement

The Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts provides a unique environment that fosters a creative, rigorous academic approach to learning and a development of talents in the arts. Built on passion, discipline and a commitment to excellence, this integrative educational experience inspires all students to believe in who they are and in what they can accomplish.

The works contained within Ruckus are the artistic expressions of the individual members of the Literary Arts Program. This collection is not intended to be viewed as a statement about the views of Charts as a whole. Some readings and other content in this magazine may include topics that some readers may find triggering and/or traumatizing. We apologize for any content which may be viewed as offensive.

Email **RUCKUS**: chartsmag@student.charterarts

until the raisins float to the top of the jars

Trinity Affuso

living is drunk on lemonade mead
from the one mason jar that didn't blow up
into a million honey covered
pieces on the porch,
lapped up by the cats tongue,
lacking structure,
dripping from the cracks in the wood,
falling into the mud.

It's the blood of the chosen families,
the hand bindings and proclamations
of platonic and romantic love,
and gold from the harvest of the wheat fields.

It's the sun in the sky pouring nectar into the earth,
cakes and ale for every ascent,
and deities pulsing below the dirt.

i do not believe in a world of brimstone
but i do think there is nothing more
fiercely powerful than the core of our home;
life is heaven.

and heaven is in head kisses from friends,
hugging in bed under colored LED lights,
and the breath against your skin
of someone who
makes you feel at peace again.
It's in running in an unexpected summer rainstorm
mascara dripping down your face
laughing
hand in hand.

It isn't eternal, but It's enough.
Heaven is imperfect



Complexity of Definition

Samantha Lowe

skating through streets shoplifting from corporate stores
that won't notice missing tv dinners that were roughly
shoved in a backpack.

hunger.

sitting on curbs of empty parking lots at one in the morning
because there is no where else with clean air.

solitude.

one earbud in an ear while the other bud is broken because
there is no one to talk to in a room full of people.

loneliness.

drums beat splintering mindspaces as bodies shake from
lack of nutrients and medicine.

sickness.

swollen eyes spiked red and yellow as pupils dilate and lids
close repeatedly with shaky steps and ghostly pale skin.

fatigue.

dissociated fingers poke numb limbs as a brain overthinks
and under thinks about smashing minds into guns.

sadness.

watching love dissipate in water as it dilutes into transparent
nothingness.

loss.

nowhere to go in the brightest daylight or in the deepest
midnight when cold and in need of physical and emotional
safety.

Homeless.



i and you only was there

Makii Smith

april,
the prelude to summer,
the showers soothe some but sadden me.

“crowds of people” have never been my thing,
it makes me uncomfortable.
the thought of being

watched.

like being inside of a fish bowl,
or a stain on your jeans.

this poem i write, the pen to paper,
it all feels “fake deep”
like my others.

pi c

k ing

the

m

ap

art. each time. word by word.

and hold each hour,
just as tight as the
loved ones you spend them with.
time, in its essence is
precious.



Good mourning, mo(u)rning, morning

Amelia Turek

in my body I have bones and bones and bones.

little bones and big bones and also I have organs, and they
are my lungs and they breathe breathe breathe

breathe looks funny like a French word You don't quite
know how to pronounce but you try to anyway

Good mo(u)rning.

You say to me but I can not read this because speech
bubbles live in comics and I am a real live person with bones
bones bones

little bones and big bones and also I have organs, and they
are my heart and it pumps blood to my veins

I have a stick out vein it is blue and on my right arm I don't
think it would be hard to draw blood but needles scare me
as you once did as you sometimes still do

and it is good that vampires don't exist
I don't think I would last very long if they did

Good mo(u)rning.

You say again and I *still* cannot read it because You say it to
me and I cannot read sound

but it is *good morning* because You do not know that there
is pain and that there is mourning and it sits in my bones
where my bone marrow should be and it makes them hurt
my bones bones bones bones bones bones

Bones.

and it goes through my heart like the blood that I can see so
clearly when I am bleeding it is red and it is not thick like
people love to say it is runny and it is slick and I could slip
on all of the blood that You have tainted

my blood is tainted now

my heart hurts and my bones hurt and my heart heart heart
heart heart heart

Heart.

Heart and bones.

lungs, I forgot my lungs but they are full anyway of words
full of words full of guilty regretful guilt words like *sorry* like
ends like *don't think it's a good idea* MY lungs full of your
words

I breathe them and I cannot breathe air can only breathe
you from my lungs lungs lungs lungs lungs lungs

Lungs.

Lungs and heart.

Lungs and heart and bones.



my lungs and my heart and my bones hurt and they are
bleeding bones do not bleed and they are bleeding and You
are under my skin still and I am trying to get You out

Good morning

i'm seventeen and the world is mine

Leonna Griffith

it's difficult:

to think about how the flow of time
makes everything feel right again.

i'm used to not flying down highways
with angie in the sky's gift wrapped nysa,
to the absence of the emanate sun,
to existing on the edge, tippy toed,
bracing myself before the rye;
used to all the ones who came after me
with half anomalous faces
and squirming beady achy hearts-
to my double dichotomy.
pedagogy to slap me across the face
with how everything really, truly works.

i'm used to the ones i call my own now,
to my superficial final station with the girl i love most
who has a heart like rubbing alcohol
and a mother like fire.
i'm not used to my lungs' new fragility,

but i will be soon.

in a passing glance,
freshly dried watercolor unnerves me,
but i feel easily familiar
with every life purpose i've ever come up with,
because once i feel one way,
i've always felt that way.
i'll never remember how i felt before.

i'm used to being awake,
though it only took all my life,
but i'm not used to winter months
nor impending burdens that will weigh me
against god, leave me with nothing
but my withering guts and my own two feet-
to the place where i'll recount my youth,
my loathing for the truth,
and what fear feels like.
the cold kind.

when i'm eighteen, everything will turn black.
eighteen is the age where the cogs have had enough
of the girl who's refused to age.

i'm scared of waking up forty years old,
but one day i will.
and one day i'll be dead.
and the sun will be too hot for life,
and the universe will freeze over,
and all of space will continue expanding,
on and on and on...

so it's hard to find full comfort in time
when she's just another one of man's
prized arts and crafts; just another alibi,
but she hasn't failed me yet.

so i'll stage dive my seventeen years into her
and hope to hell she takes care of me
in the way she always has.



A Return to Form

Skyler Kimock

Rainy days breed odd contentedness
Staring out of bedroom windows,
At oppressive cast-iron skies
Crying their woes to the people below,
Belating snow and berating trees,
Whipping at the branches in a mad frenzy

Taking the mind to places of dejectedness,
Explored only in the cold reaches of space,
Or the dreariest of asylums,
Drab and grey stretching out to infinity,
Long past barbed wire fences
Taken in not by misery,
But by a longing for choice, babbling
And gurgling just as a babe
Struggling to escape her mother's arms

The rain in the wind, and I in the rain,
Drifting over roads, paved and cobbled
mixing together in an abstraction of color

Seeking nothing but to express their power, bastardizing
pleasure,
With smoldering ruins and ash left at the base
Buildings, all flat-roofed, cut roughly with shears and
scissors
Marrying grey and beige in inconceivable combinations,
Abominations unto the world, set glibly on roots long dead,
Factories churning what should not be made, cannot,
Baubles in mockery of the truth, gladly expressed
Justifying itself with the illusion it has created,
Out of a mirage of smoke and plastic,
Hiding gleams of silver on the factory floor

I drift through and through, dips and turns highlighting
A particular dread gnawing at the back of my skull
Rebelling against my eyes, overthrowing my senses to install
senseless euphoria,
As the shops line up like little soldiers on the side road,
And I march to spite their cheery smiles,
My soul corrodes to the beat of their music,
Crumbles under the weight of their bootheels

Somewhere between now and eternity, I sit in a forest,
Teardrops dried, puddles formed,

While clouds are moving to greener pastures
Leaking dregs of darkness in their somber march
Drinking in the creek and the rocks on the creek bed
The sticks on the shore and leaves in the trees
Strewn like so much tissue paper,
Over a shag carpet floor

What beauty disregarded, in our haste for progress
What wonders tamed, broken before we really find them
Replaced with behemoths of stone and concrete
Like fae in the night, stolen, destroyed
Beauty on the sideline, existing yet barely acknowledged
Beasts die, flowers wither, trees groan and snap and fall to
earth
Yet more cars on the interstate fly by on wings of ignorance
But what is beauty, if not in the eye of the beholder,
Beholden only to the whims of a mind suffocated by an
overwhelming grey
Beheld only to the whims of a contractor, finding the
sublime only in the sheen of a coin,
Arbitrary numbers rising, while souls and spirits tumble
The great expanse of imagination used only as a tool for the
greedy,
A wrench to discard greater purpose,

While branches crowd the side road,
And pebbles fall from a dam

I weep, from my perch in the heavens
Carnage and massacre below,
An unknown eternity above
Crumbling with the leaves, withering in the wind
I give my last hurrah, my last plea to an uncaring world
encompassed by apathy
The world keeps turning, birds chirp and cars hurry past
And soon, like so many others,
I am forgotten



**you're the cold and warm air setting me off into a
tornado that they warned me about**

Jamison Butz

you are the storms Inside my Little body

burning bOiling blazing

with eVery single

Touch

it sparks a new

beautiful disaster

Thrown up

Spinning

Whirling

around You

i want to come

back to earth

into yOur arms

safely

the sUn

after the

sto

r

m

.

and i love the feeling more than i should



Senioritis

Rory Pelzel

There's a bug going around that I can't quite catch

A restlessness that seems

To have invaded everything around me

Rotting, honey-sweet, from the inside out

Buzzing in the air like static electricity

It's not the distance I fear

Not the 3,000 miles of ocean between me

And the twisted steel skyline of my hometown

Not the change from Fahrenheit to Celsius

Or imperial to metric

Four-way stops to round-a-bouts

Neighbor to neighbour

Dust to dust

It's the jetlag that I'll never fully shake out of

The fact that whenever I hear the word home

I'll think Bethlehem

Not Cardiff

It's the way I blunt my t's
And cling to my r's
The invisible threads that tie me back
To my first breath, my first word, my first life

And as the months peel away like old wallpaper
Yellowing and fading
I find myself wishing
I'd fall ill



Topsy - Turvy

Amani Jones

Even when my skin is dry and peeling and my jaw clatters
and there are goosebumps on my arms

Once

Twice

Three Times

I pull the metal string by the bead at the end

Three times

So that I can't feel the air on my skin

But the buzz is still there

There's an empty space

Silence

Where the gentle pitter-patter of tiny feet used to keep me
up

I use the fan to fill it

Sometimes the buzz swells

And it's spinning faster than it's supposed to

And the fan is making me cold

And keeping me up at night

Because I can see it rocking back and forth

And I can hear it

Kathunk

Ka

Ka

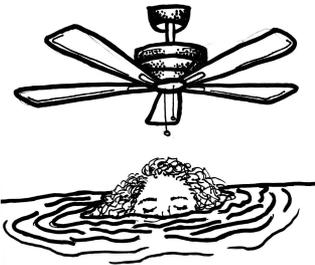
Thunk

Thunk

Kathunk

On the third pull, I can see the individual blades; I count
five as they go in a circle
And I should clean the fan to remove the caked-on dust
So that my lungs can breathe clearly
No breath uneven
None shallow and quick

The fan is poised above my head
A little to the right of being centered
Same as my thoughts
Same as my mind



My 46th November

Adiah Siler

It's tedium!

And there are little flecks of gold and gold paper and glitter
in the monotony still.

And with a crunch, with a crunch I've left my body like a
spindley snake crab (spider)

And one day I'll wake up and the monkey in my brain stem
will be dead.

He'll rot and it'll smell sweet and

I'll move my arms higher than they can usually go!
without his digging fingers under my skull.

And if I was younger (older?) and if the confetti had cleared,
I'd make up a new way to show love.

I'd invent it and it'd be not mine, not mine, not anymore.

Love is for the many and the many and the many

Nose clogged, clogged, clogged, and yes

I'd build you a house. I'd cook you clean vegetables
and noodles in peanut sauce

and I keep a frog in my stomach now and he sleeps under
my bladder and I don't mind.

I don't mind.

And November is cold this year,
global warming a fifth of a degree hotter than last year, but
still cold this year.

But it's warm in your bedroom, bonehead against
bonehead, dry morning glow, stretching and yawning,
yellow light is it the sun, is it the lightbulb,
is it maybe just the feeling I get when I look at you,
exploding from my chest in rays of orangey light to cast
sharpshine shadows down your cheeks.

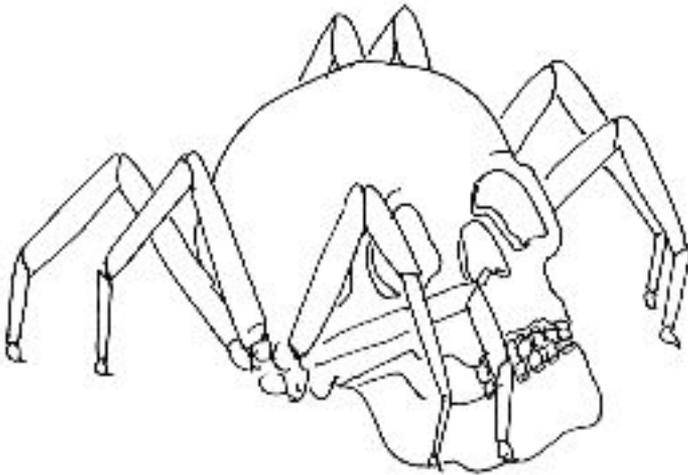
I've never in my entire life written something profound and
I hope I never will. Take a break from Kierkegaard and
chase a cat with me.

I hope I'm never so old that the smell of a new car
-now it's an old car but then it's a new car-
no longer excites.

by the time it's rainy November, my 46th November,
I'm huffing and waving the foggy air out of my face

-like there could ever be anything prettier than foggy air in
my face-

I don't wanna get older, and if I do, I wanna die with my
turtleneck on backwards, with my eyebrows untweezed,
with my nails bitten short and my lips licked red,
eat my mortgage paperwork and nap on the space needle.



apollo 11

Madelyn Chase

when man became the wretched god;

the swarming, beating beady eyes
of nations fell upon us now
and dripping with the brute divine
we stepped across the disavow
of what is ours, of flesh and turf,
and theirs to call a swell,
of waters when the wave breaks,
and it rings the final bell

when man became a weightless form;

in streets and on their linen sheets
the people watched the river styx and all it's growing pains
as crawling grew a weak affair
we left our listless grains
our stretching legs and palming hands
took hold of stars and sky
and the weeping, drybone grave of Earth
was puddled, drooling lye

when man approached the last frontier;

breathing in his sulking air

he stepped into a shadowed haze
and took a leaping sweep of legs
to land us in our infant days.
our grabby hands were heaven met
in red, white, black, and blue
that night a meteor streamed down
with knowledge, dark and new

when man was homebound;

he was met with mother tongue
the fireworks had gone and blown
and left with us the matter
of a land we'd never tame, and shown
the bleeding, brutal power
of knowing when you're first that there's a target on your
head
to see the beady eyes of nations
that would always want you dead.



A Compilation of Suns

***A Good Way to Pass Time While Driving is to Write
Poetry in Your Head***

Melanie Quackenbush

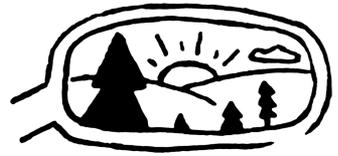
The pale pink sunlight clean
clinging so desperately to the edge of the horizon
it dusts there
against the darkness.

A rainbow in the sky
ruddy red by the horizon
indigo in the swaths of sky overhead
a thousand colors in one square foot of vision
no words to capture the varied hues
just emotions in my heart my soul
singing at the sight.

Dull blue ahead of me but
in the rearview mirror
the glory of the sky
more amazing than language itself
feather-striped clouds painted, glowing by the sun
pinks as bright as hope
oranges as warm as flame

yellow slashes
cutting up the pale sunrise sky.

Dull blue clouds fade into a purply pink
dark in the cloud, florescent near the sun
a thick orange band at the horizon
thousands of thoughts and phrases flit through my mind
like grass on a wind
each perfect, each restricting
one word passes through the mind
“beautiful”
a word to mean all words.



Green splashes faint at first
growing in number as I look for more
they blend into the blue sky, the red, purple
layering the clouds
the other colors stand out
demanding my attention
but these small slices of green are a rare sight
proof that anything can happen.

**The answer to a rough-tongue man-mouth asking
about *What kinda girl you are***

Eden Bailie

I'd never be his *kinda*.

who when you touch her there's a handprint like
weak dough
supple structureless unready food
kissing him through the vintaging soap in her teeth

I stand up.

the mouth will grow up to cheat on his wife
he'll blow smoke and say he's *not scared of death* until a
neurofibrillary tangle erases the memory
of his daughter's daughter's cilantro-shaped bangs
and *Who's in all these pictures?*

(while he's forgetting I'm rising --- Satellites
around three tangerine-planet children.
my father raises his eyebrows when I tell him their
names
their citrus voices warm the cold)

The proteins of each memory

wriggling like surviving halves,
their stomach soil spilling out
as he comes to for one last moment
to realize that women are not bread.



Home is not a place

Trinity Jefferson

Ever since you left,
The lighting in their house seems to be off
The walls are no longer warm taupe
but covered in eggshell
The sunshine no longer seems to shine
through the beige blinds
That is now mixed matched
The chestnut carpet between my toes
is now scratched uneven hardwood floors
The walls empty of family portraits,
but glass tables full of pictures that are not yours
Why'd you have to leave so soon?
With you, it was so much more
- it was Home.



Lady Liberty

Madeline Foster

Drowned woman

- Tea in a harbor

Glittering sea glass, broken

Embedded in skin, blue puckered, starred and spangled

- An EMT's nametag gleaming Betsy Ross

Sirens echo in the cold, dead morning

Knife through corset strings,

Full coral lips, twisted, yanked open -

Hollow scream,

Scattered pearls

Her body is taken from the sea,

Shreds of kelp, tangled in her hair,

Tatters of a grand old flag

Her tulip smile, rose and golden skin

Glassy eyes, twilight fever, faded star ripped from thread

Her body twirling through the air,

Falling from the ramparts, as she ran from herself

Reaching

Reaching

Reaching

Her wings fail her -

Should've done better

Should've been cut from Pennsylvania steel



Old Honey

Julianne Tyler

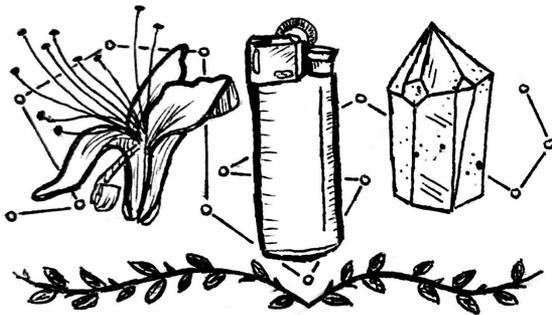
I talk to the shadows on my wall; on nothing,
as the flames from a three-wicked candle
dance and twist around each other -
stretching over themselves; stretching toward me.
Echoes ripple between smoke streaks

How could you go off like that?

How could you go and let your life turn simple?

It's getting colder.

I wonder if the flames would have
just frozen over - stuck in time like old honey -
if it hadn't been one degree warmer than
it was supposed to be tonight.



Assembling Shards

Shannon Cerruti

Cold begins to seep in from under my windows
The air dampening my pages which sit stacked next to dim
glow of candlelight
Hot breath bounces back from my raised mug and fogs my
glasses
My blank page becoming more apparent as it clears
I stare ahead, impatiently
Waiting for my hands to type
As if my mind will play no part in the words formed

I can feel their expecting eyes upon me
Their judgemental stares and offensive thoughts
Which they mask with a facade of kind words
That was a good effort, poet
I really liked that second line
If you were anxious you didn't show it
Now here's what you will do different next time

If only writing were a physical task
That my hands could complete with ease
My fingers would type their assigned words

Dot their I's and cross their T's
It's much simpler to complete tangible things
With set rules from beginning to end
But to unlock the mind
Unleash the thoughts
Pour out years of piled up knowledge
Unsure of where to start
Is like assembling a puzzle
With blank faces and smooth edges
Endless pieces of all different size



Is it the cold that freezes my thoughts?
Making ideas into dry branches that splinter
Pointing in all different ways
I bend my knees and jump to grasp it
My fingertips touch, but it's not enough
And I slip away

Maybe it's that knowledge is forever growing
Words that are pushed together begin to clash
And as these vast and twisted gyres become more apparent
Our minds become rotten with realization
And slowly begin to decay

november 1st, 2002

Ashley LeBron

I am born while the sun rises
On the first day of November,
A Friday.

I am
New to the world
Born to a dominican immigrant
Who went through everything- and beyond
All by herself

I am born to a mother
Who would do all in her power
To make sure i am okay

Treated like royalty
Pain masked with new opportunity,
A 'privilege' lives on through me

Not everyone made it here.

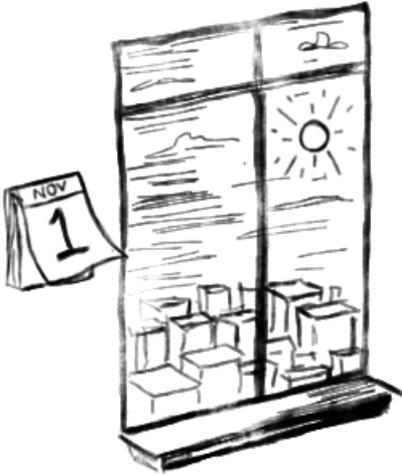
I am brought out of a ruined city
And into pennsylvanian glory
A tide had swept me from my roots,
And planted me in a new land,
Fulfilled with nature.
The kind of nature seen in *el campo*.

I am born into opportunity.
a foreign opportunity
I would have never believed in.
Not understanding was never the challenge
The challenge was not being understood.

Con el tiempo las cosas cambian.
over time things change,
Pero esto no,
But his doesn't.

I am born with a dialect that wasn't enough
Brought into a place where
One was okay
But Two was weird
And knowing was not knowing at all

I am born into a life
Of expectations and
Fulfillments that I must make
To fulfill myself.



Sew Me Together

Sienna Gallus

You snipped away your past

within the fabric of your mind

calling it mine

so I let you feed me lines

like twine

stitch, stitch, stitch

into my mind

a crime of my time

now, less divine

Speaking words like lime

in fresh papercuts

Papercuts all mine

and twine- *stitched, stitched, stitched*

into my heart

has ever since been ripped apart

Though, ever since been ripped apart

and pieces hard to find

and doubt intertwined

and to logic we were blind

and the truth was seldom kind

The past still reminds
of what was better
left behind

and twine

no

longer

unwinds

No longer are you tailored to my design
and I have edges you can never refine- though you try
No.

Now, the needle

Is mine.



Blood Stains

Emily Hojnoski

Blood stains

it stains her white tennis shoes

it stains the tiled floor

it stains the bullet

it stains the haunted, empty eyes

now to forever stare

at those lights that always flickered during class

Blood stains

it stains the pavement

it leaves footprints as she is ushered to her parents

it stains her mother's cashmere sweater

it stains the once comforting embrace

Blood stains

it runs in the water from the showerhead

Blood stains

it stains the bathtub

it stains the towels

it is a stain no laundry detergent can wash out

Blood stains

it stains the white cotton sheets

after a long night of no sleep

because Blood stains the dreams too
Blood stains
it stains the car window
as she rests her head against it
Blood stains
it stains the plush chair in the office
it stains the therapist's notepad
"i understand exactly how you're feeling"
and
"i know exactly what you're going through"
flit about the room like gnats
on a warm summer's day
Blood stains
it stains the signs
begging for the politicians to do something
anything
it stains the chants
that don't quite reach capitol hill
it stains the cries of those
wondering why it was *their* son
or *their* daughter
the bullet found
Blood stains
it stains the flowers

and the pictures
and the condolences
from strangers who care
Blood stains
it stains Brenda Spencer
who didn't like Mondays
it stains Eric Harris
and Dylan Klebold
who hated people who were different
it stains Nikolas Cruz
who was just
“a kid with disciplinary issues”
until he wasn't
Blood stains
it stains the nation that does nothing



crescent caldera

Lars Clavier

salt streams from soda ice / bergs; from my forehead / my
eyes my pores and folds of / skin and funnellin / throu'
pottleneck / n'sigh into my collecting pool / my panic room
my mudpit my bed / lunglike bulblike; soffee adobe / where
i am splain and starfished willow frond / and blue grasses
peek noses / nubs bustlin' in / pokey-brushing my pruney
fingers and toes / mmm the salt's eating me up / please do
not tell me to be rational / holding tightly to pink / baby
powder bear / circling the hosp-lot / too-hot mint / tea
steam breath / a little calm (i have to go back in) shave the
skin raw / a hill of stumps and sickleshape craters / machine
exhaus tion / kiln god smashes it all flat / i'm served up on a
plate / the world ends



THE
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