

*albany road*



*Cover photo by Albert Yuk*

# ALBANY ROAD

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*DEERFIELD ACADEMY'S LITERARY & ARTS MAGAZINE*  
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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

When you see this issue's theme, the word "untranslatable" on a page, what do you think of? If you are a bilingual (or multilingual) speaker like me, perhaps it is the difficulty of translating an idea from one language to another, struggling to find the right words from the dictionary no matter how fluent you are in both languages. Maybe you are explaining American pop culture to your non-English-speaking grandparents, or sharing your favorite tradition from home with your local Deerfield classmates. "It's like this thing you have in America, but not really... How would I say it..." You see your friend's eyebrow raising in impatient confusion, and give up. "It's just, untranslatable."

Or maybe you only speak one language, but I am sure that you all have all had untranslatable experiences. How do you convey that fresh aliveness upon the first sniff of grass and mud in the morning? Or a slurp of your mother's homemade food after two months of missing it? Or when you are deep in the woods and suddenly there is an opening among the canopies and a streak of bright, warm sun hits your face like a spotlight? Those feelings arise strong like ocean waves, but when you try to speak out, you find yourself tongue-tied.

Despite their untranslatability, our artists and authors in this issue strive to capture those vivid feelings and experiences using metaphors, images, collection of words, and so much more. Some pieces try to capture untranslatability itself, while others points you to your own memory, conjuring the feeling of "aha, I know what that feels like!"

Readers, in reading this issue, notice the things in your life that are lost in translation. Cherish them, and bathe in their glow for a while.

Enjoy,  
Lily Lin, Editor-in-Chief

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# SWEETHEART

*Katie Kim*

another one of her notes slides

underneath my door—that tender *swoosh*  
of stationery, though i know by now

what to expect: the dying leaves still teasing  
the smell of the honeyed kitchen, the music

of chirping cardinals filling the windowsill's eave. i hurry  
to watch granny's footprints sink into the shadows

they leave, puddling across the landing. before  
her rubber flip flops creak down the crooked

staircase, i swing open my door, catch  
the creamy strand of hair unraveling like the Staples receipt

she left behind, escaping her braids. Once  
i open her note, her cursive radiates

another dream she feared speaking: *The Lord will  
fight for you. All you have to do is keep*

*still. Exodus 14:14*—now, she is  
downstairs blessing another

post-it, her white rosary clinking its plastic body  
against her writing fingertips, the bark

of her callouses roughening, weathering  
to juniper. perhaps she'll write

until she feels close enough to her granddaughter

to save her. until she evaporates,  
drawn into

the doorbell's open-mouth

scream, into the quiet lake of the tv  
she abandoned episodes ago, silent  
living

room specking gray snow. shining  
in the kitchen's oil-slicked dim, she  
will

murmur as i re-read: Have  
*a good day*. Then, she'll say

what she cannot say—what she is  
afraid to say—chirping on my sill,  
teasing

the leaves from our Korean-  
American fall. *Swee-swee-sweetheart*.



# COEXISTENCE

*Kingsley Carolan*

# AS MY FATHER IS

*Ella Waag*

i wish to someday view the world, the same way my father views it.  
to be so absorbed in the goodness people carry within, so much so that he's blind  
to any flaws.

and he shows it when he looks at my mother, exactly the way he did  
when they were young, blithe, in their twenties.

no matter the depth of the wrinkles that've formed on her cheeks  
from the moments he's made her laugh these past three decades,

she hasn't aged a single day in his eyes.

i hope to hold such love for others, like the love my father has towards me.  
how he still calls me on Sunday nights, knowing the ache his heart endures  
everytime he sees that once again, i've failed to pick up.

and now, i tell myself i have too much going on to spare just five minutes  
for my own father.

while when *i* joined the rugby team, he was restless until three in the morning  
learning the convoluted rules of the game.

so the following weekend, he could pick up the black-inked pen with his confident  
hands

and sign his scribbled name on the clipboard which read: *U-14 Girl's Coach*  
*Signups*

all was just an excuse to see me an extra hour every week,  
through his drowsy but endearing eyes.

because the times we got to see each other didn't suffice for his ever growing love.

i long to make the right decisions, as the path my father paved.  
how can a boy, with a father like his, make out to be a father like mine.

while *he* took out the kitchen trash alone in the darkness,  
and pretended not to hear the pile of still cold beer bottles clinking inside,  
poking and clawing their way out of the black plastic bag  
which desperately held them together

*i* take out the paddles, and he carries the boards not far behind,  
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until our feet melt into the warm sand and meet with the tranquil sea  
he smiles at me, a smile brighter than the blazing sun itself  
and i gleam back,

his features peek through my face

while *he* watches over his mother's shoulder as she sews him a costume for  
halloween  
curated with fabric scraps and worn-out hand me downs  
as they simply could not afford a store-bought Frankenstein.

*i* observe him as he books the flights for my 16-hour trip back home  
from the *private school* i attend.

while *he* bit his nails, stood on first base,  
and anxiously scanned the crowd for *his* father,  
who never showed up to any of his baseball games

he's the first person *i* see looking at me as the curtains open,  
stage lights illuminate, and music blasts into my ears.  
and who i sprint to hug first when my dance performance is over

while *he* watched his parent's marriage end,  
and his three older siblings walk out on him  
one by one  
at the soonest chance they were granted.  
leaving him abandoned in their house,  
which was never really a home

*i* stand in front of the Christmas tree,  
and complain about how much longer it'll take  
for my parents to get the perfect Christmas card photo  
of me, my sister, and brother.

i dream that one day, my children will view me the same way i view my father.  
for if i'm even half as good of a parent as he, then let them know how damn lucky  
they are.

but they'll never be as fortunate as their mother is.



## DEPLETED

*Jesse Gachago*



## DROPS OF NOSTALGIA

*Rory Hartblay*

# THE GEORGIAN HOTEL

*Aviel Alexander*

*Santa Monica, California*

The concierges swarm  
Like a sea of white gloved squid  
Grasping and groping  
For a school of luggage.  
A baby blue convertible  
Picked clean sits idly  
Under a molding awning.

Palms sway in the wind  
Wafting the scents of the sea  
Gently into the room.  
A pair of hands  
Prudently place presents  
In a pastel room  
Leaving his white glove by the bed.

A sharply dressed man  
Rose pinned on his lapel  
Sits pensive  
On a bed rife with gifts  
Pulled over a taut sheet  
Holding a white glove  
Tenderly in his hands.

The debonair dandy  
Wakes the baby blue  
Clutching the white glove  
Like Melegar and his firewood  
As he waits for a squid  
To hold him close  
In cloth-wrapped hands.

\*After "Bartlesville Community Center" in Amanda Koval and Wally Koval's  
*Accidentally Wes Anderson*

# BARTLESVILLE COMMUNITY CENTER

*Aviel Alexander*

*Bartlesville, Oklahoma*

Remembering  
Every pained  
Dip from grace

Vilifying  
Each  
Little  
Vision  
Every ephemeral  
Tidbit of time of a past

Crying  
Helps  
And  
I  
Revel in  
Sobbing quietly in Red Velvet Chairs

*\*After "Bartlesville Community Center" in Amanda Koval and Wally Koval's  
Accidentally Wes Anderson*

# CAPE HATTERAS LIGHTHOUSE

*Aviel Alexander*

*Buxton, North Carolina*

The sea called me  
I rejected it  
It left a boat in the will  
A testament  
To keeping water  
From flooding my lungs  
And I moored it  
To float like jetsam  
Unwanted  
Unloved  
A summons left unanswered

Scared of its blue depths  
I let the rope come undone  
Allowing the jetsam  
To join the other trash  
Allowing my buoy  
To let me breathe in

Again the sea called me  
I answered cautiously  
Remembering my fear  
Remembering my transgressions  
I leaned on the lighthouse  
Letting the seabreeze  
Gently hold my trembling body

\*After "Bartlesville Community Center" in Amanda Koval and Wally Koval's  
*Accidentally Wes Anderson*



THROUGH LOVE TO STARS

*Yong Ding*



## GLASS POND

*Aaron Han*

# A LANDOWNER'S PETITION TO OBLITERATE THE NOXIOUS PETITIONS OF WOMEN AND SLAVES, 1778

Marco Feng

*"I long to hear that you have declared an independency — and by the way in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would remember the ladies"* - Letter, Abigail Adams to John Adams, 1776

*"Every Principle from which America has acted in the Course of their unhappy Difficulties with Great Briton Pleads Stronger than A thousand arguments in favour of your petitioners."* - Slave Petition to the State of Massachusetts Bay, 1777

Fellow Citizens,

We men just liberated ourselves from the Britannic Crown, but are freshly burdened by the odious petitions of women and slaves, conspiring to un-alienate our Unalienable Rights. These unnatural pamphlets mimic the crazed white beggars entitling themselves to taxation with representation, merely because their unpropertied ilk shed all the blood in our war for liberty. Their enfranchisement clearly contradicts Nature, since their common minds are easily bribable by the propertied, not that gentlemen like myself would deign to such iniquity, for virtue runs in our blood and there is none suspicious among us. All men being un-aristocratic and deserving Liberty in Speech and Life, it offends Nature that Our eyes are plagued with the peasants' miasmic advocacies in print- let alone the noxious entreaties of distasteful women and slaves. Not only do such bulletins shame the penmanship of my son, who I must now salvage from lacrosse, their execrable pamphlets offend the liberties we have so bloodily won.

These dissidents, probably writing during escapades from the kitchen, delude their sex worthy of equality before our Laws where all are equal. Women wield judgements as good as any man, and are equal before Man's impartial watchmaker, but their conclusion that these truths justify feminine equality and suffrage contradicts Nature. Let Man reason without effete superstitions the natural state of the world, and we may clearly observe in our image that Adam is king over Eve in every Eden and Arcadia. So that must be how the government should be, since we imagine it so. *Q.E.D.* The skirted despots may soon demand that we cannot come upon them without consequence: oppression truly contrary to the natural liberties of Man. Your petitioner believes it apparent we ought banish these pernicious petitions, likely all inspired by Satan, as it is well known that women cannot think.

These monstrous regiments of women are joined by impudent slaves seeking to deprive us of our natural rights to deprive the natural rights of others. Their moorish bulletins pretend religion dictates equality between Men and “men,” but religious fictions cannot justify law, a rational wisdom. Further, Leviticus 25 testifies, “Both thy Bond Men and Bond Maids which thou shalt have, shall be of the Heathen that are around you... And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession forever.” The slavish petitions’ most grievous insult is their misuse of Nature, somehow fancying that the deprivation of all happiness is against our independent principles of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. Clearly false: slaves should clearly never hold any objects of right, because an Angel told me it in a dream. Their ignominious policy will also deprive us of our burgundies and foie gras, a terrible wrong against us men of industry who toil in managing the plantations and Jamaican trade routes.

I, your candid petitioner and reader, solemnly adjure and exhort that you oppress these noxious petitions from appearing in any respectable column and censor these pernicious germs from the popular mind, in order to defend our common and Natural Liberties. Let our shot be heard around the world but let it not be heard too far, lest the ring upsets our ears as well.

Varrie Richwhyte Mann

With suggestions from Nikita Weiss, a Woman, perhaps not in League with Satan  
Sent from His Right Excellent Estate at Springfieldshirehamptontington upon  
Yemum

The Year of Our Impartial, Miraculous, and Watchmaking Lord, 1779



## FAIRWAY MIRAGE

*Sammy Sullivan*



UNTITLED

*Sammy Sullivan*

# EVERYTHING AND NOTHING

*Vivian Wan*

There was a clap of thunder in the glory of day  
And a moment later there was quiet  
The thunder forgotten by all but me

Standing in the middle of a field of wheat  
Not golden in the sun, but turned a sienna color by the startling blue-gray color of  
the sky

That clap of thunder, so loud and clear  
It was everything for a moment,  
Only a second or two,  
Echoing over the plains with the promise of rain  
And then gone  
Like the moments of a Sunday morning  
fleeting and swift and lost through carelessness in caring

That clap of thunder is us  
So here, so now, so everything and nothing  
So full and so empty,  
Opening and closing, together and without,  
here and there, yesterday and today and tomorrow-

But only for a second or two  
A clap of thunder is forgotten by the air  
As quickly as it is everything

sand slips through the hourglass until it stops  
and you turn it over and start it again  
and sand slips through the hourglass until it stops  
and you turn it over and start it again and again and again and again and  
again and again and again and again

# LOOKING OUT THE GLASS WINDOW OF B-302

*Katie Kim*

your bedroom door is shut. completely shut.

not even the groans and sighs my father drowned

in the frozen lake of the doctor's silence

could slip through. *is everything okay—*

I couldn't even eavesdrop on your *will i*

*live?* these days, i start each day by checking

on you, whether you're at least whispering

to father, everytime I peer through

the glass window in the center

of the towering barrier between your bed

and the infinite layers of history we've made,

our bond resilient as the umbilical cord

we shared. yet now all i see is neon—

the green 50 on the monitor, the moon of

your bald head shining through the turban

that i, back in 2014, used to make into

hazel brown ponytails, giggling in the wind.

i hope whatever transparent tube squiggles

across your nose lifts you from the white-

sheeted bed, twists the doorknob with the same grip

you once used to lift me by the waist

when, years ago, i sailed on your shoulders

through the sea of chirping sparrows, murmurs

from one mouth to another, unaware of the world

we live in. though i don't understand why

the bedroom door has to be shut. i want

to join you on your last day:            laying down

underneath the warm June sun    your favorite

cookie dough passed between us            your eyes

brushing the thrumming tumor in your breast

away, for just a day, even though

we both know—you will go wherever you are led.



UNTITLED

*Arabella Navab*

## 12

*Silvie Sobotka*

When I came to town, the people planted a seed for me.

Now looking back at the grave, I think I could have done better. How could I have tried, with no parents to mother me?

The longing of familiar faces creeps up the spine, the vertebrae, the invertebrate;  
The colorless and colorful, a few with beautiful eyes,  
The handful of sparkly shells and rubble scattered around, the message in the  
bottle, a castaway into the ocean foam,  
The song of gurgl'd pesticides lets me hope that grass grows over the sun, glaring  
into darkness within.

People tell me I failed to tend to it.

The day it sprouts, a bushy mess, sinks-in, love-still, bury-song,  
You lost the molecules that kept Yucatán together, the day the drums died, the  
painted a faces blurred, the temples collapsed,  
You shall no longer carry the burden, (except the hundred tasks you forgot about)  
You shall respect the holy oaks with those ancient roots until you respect your self  
a equally.

Have you notic'd the hints in the heart?  
Have you salut'd to the poet?  
Have you not practic'd for new beginnings, when the poet scratches out every  
single a line on the page, and the sun sets again, and stars fracture into a million  
pieces?

You knit a blanket for the child. And the child rips it apart with no second  
thought or remorse.

I ask you now again: *Did I really fail?*



UNTITLED

*Gillian Herr*



TALE OF THE THREE WISE MONKEYS

*Kayleen Tang*



## SCHOOL SPIRIT

*Thijs Wittink*



## BACK FROM FISHING

*Thijs Wittink*

# OMO

*Chloe Xue*

A sigh sneaks past my lips as I turn the corner, slipping into the bathroom. A safe place. My own echoey linoleum heaven. I'm OK. Omo naps softly on my wrist, warm. I don't want to wake her, so I fixate on the small talk leaking through the bathroom door. Slick, witty conversations, men and women all perfectly clever, never missing a beat. Polite, lukewarm jokes, cordial, if not slightly contrived laughter floats across the restaurant, settling below symmetric dinner tables. I can catch my breath here.

Even that thought seems to seep from my skin into Omo's sensors. Heart rates don't lie. I feel her white nylon straps tighten, and then chime.

"Miri—"

I'm taken aback by the harshness of her tone. Can't help but notice how sharp my name is. *Mi-ri. Mee-ree.* Sharp enough to cut. Omo's voice doesn't echo, doesn't glide off the linoleum bathroom tiles or swirl into the tauntingly white sink. Omo's talking to *me*. Miri. I'm the only one who can hear. Still, I can't shake the feeling somehow, that someone could walk in at any moment and catch my every thought. Listen in on my deepest fears.

Omo buzzed again, "Miri, the date."

My date. Shit. How long had I been in the bathroom? Omo didn't feel the need to respond. K. It wasn't that I didn't like Linden. That was his name, right? Just really in my head today. Can't stop watching the pretty teal Arabesque pattern melting into itself. Into a chandelier with beady eyes. Into a regal blue lion, perched. Into the chandelier. Omo senses my fixation on the tiles.

"Miri, you're doing it again."

It takes more effort than usual to break my gaze from the linoleum. So regal. So beady. Watching me, watching the chandelier, watching me, watching the lion. What was he going on about again? You could tell he and his Omo were close—there was no resentment. No undercurrents of a constant power struggle, a fight for control over every action, every word. Linden and Omo were probably friends. They all started that way. And then she starts to clock you a little too perfectly. Imagine my shock when I learned that when I'm bored, I pick out individual arm hairs from just below the elbow on my right arm. Classic. Thanks, Omo.

"You're welcome, Miri."

Right. Forgot she could do that. Can't ever get used to this shit. Probably got twenty seconds before she nags me to leave now. She's not wrong, I know. Data knows better. I've gotten up for too long, verging on rudeness. Not great.

Even worse, he's probably joking with his Omo about me staring at myself in the mirror, checking my side profile, smoothing my sideburns. He's not even wrong. It is almost as if every time I see myself in the mirror, I have to make sure my nose is still molded the way it should be. Omo reassures me that my nose is fine.

"Ready Miri? Get back out there. Don't swing your arms too much when you walk. You can't tell, but everyone else at the restaurant thinks you're about to knock over their soup. I mean it. Careful with the arms. And when you pull out your chair, lift it a little. He flinched when you dragged it out from the table just now. And the shirt, it's too thin. I could tell you didn't either, but he doesn't love how your stomach rolls bunch up underneath. It's the love-handles. You always forget—they peek out from the sides of this shirt when you eat, like, *anything*. Oh and, Miri, he didn't like it when you sneezed into your hand instead of your sleeve either. Make a comment about the soap smelling like lavender. You know, so he knows you washed your hands."

The soap did not smell like lavender. Alright, Linden Strong. I dug my nails into my arms, leaving marks like white teeth.

"Miri."

Okay, Omo. Don't swing arms. Lift chair. Sit normal. No love handles. Lavender soap. I got it. No sweat. Before I could execute Omo's catalog of commands, though, I hear the bathroom door swing open, hitting a framed picture of Nantucket with a crack. Before I can react, Omo takes over. Smooth like soap. Autopilot.

"Take a step back from the sink and look down at your hands for a moment. You were staring at your face for a little too long—"

Ok, check, check. No sweat. I am grateful for Omo in this moment. All my joints feel too stiff, angled in inhuman ways. I feel as if I'm watching an animal struggling to occupy my body.

"—Good. Look up now, look yourself square in the mirror. Then turn your head a bit. Just until you make eye contact. Smile, no teeth. You want to be congenial, not start a conversation. Suck in your stomach. Stop leaning against the sink. You always do that."

I already felt the water dampening the linen of my top. The cool lick of water left a trail of goosebumps across my stomach. Love handles, or whatever she called them. No time to worry about that now. Sorry Omo. I turn my head to meet the woman's eyes. Just congenial.

At once, Omo and I noticed three things.

One, it was not another female customer who had just assailed my linoleum solitude, needing to relieve herself.

Two, tears streamed down the man's bearded face. In the last twenty five years of my life, I had never seen anyone cry, much less in public. Composure was a cardinal rule. In fact, it was unfathomable to me how he overrode his Omo. She should have stopped him, the moment tears began to well up. Why didn't she stop him?

Three, Linden Strong, glassy-eyed, tear-faced, bearded, stared straight into the mirror, watching me under the atrocious bathroom lighting. My date. Watching me, watching him. A metallic, bloody flavor comes up in my throat. I feel the fascicles of the seared duck coming back up. Why didn't she stop him? Omo tightened her nylon white grip. I felt the criss-cross weave dig deeper into my skin.

"Miri. I need you to stay with me."

Yeah. My date barges into the women's bathroom in tears. He's sobbing now, saying something about an emergency. He's incredibly sorry. He needed to go. He'll call, he thinks. Or something. He's so sorry. And then he runs off. Not a word about my love handles.

\*\*\*

Against the silence of the bathroom, Omo screams in a way that I did not think was possible. Her sensors flash red. In my head, her outburst detonates infinitely. She's about to split my skull open, her soul ready to effervesce out of my body.

Omo chimed again, green with suspicion. She ran calculations for how likely it was for each of Linden's family members to have a heart attack. Stroke. Pulmonary embolism. Me? I didn't want to know.

All her work, running algorithms, consulting the Database, meticulous planning for every social interaction I would ever have. Omo thought she had Linden clocked. She thought she knew this: that he liked to observe the way women walked, and didn't like it when women talked back, especially when women talked back while chewing. Especially when women talked back while chewing and slouched their backs so their stomach protruded out of jeans, a size too small. Typical of the women Miri's age, halcyon days of college-slim slipping just past their unmanicured fingertips. Looking back, that was far too specific to have been in Linden's data, no? Omo might have been speculating a bit, on that one, but still. This was probably the last thing on Omo's bingo card. These things are meant to be quantifiable. Omo was meant to be the best right-hand woman to any human tormented with insecurity, which is to say, all of us. It was intuitive, mechanical, and predictable. Omo finds out what he likes. Omo gives the command. I, Miri, execute. Your insecurities are only productive when they move

you to action.

“He’s lying, Miri. He was probably thrown off, with how long you spent standing in here, digging holes in your skin. Maybe he thought you were about to ditch the date. He’s lying to you, Miri. He thinks you’re ugly, thought so from the moment you sat down. The tip of your nose too flat, your pupils protruding too far out. He thinks you slurred your words too much, letting them dribble out your mouth like that. Like drool from a pig’s snout. Why do you talk like that? All your thoughts eat shit coming down the slope of your tongue. You should follow him. Follow him and confront him.”

Omo was harsh. The image of my mouth morphing into a pig snout conjured itself in my mind, grotesque enough to be a little funny, but not so far removed that I could laugh about it. Suddenly I couldn’t focus on anything but the thought of him thinking about my side profile. Omo picked up on my racing heart rate.

“Miri, you need to follow him.”

I did not want to follow him. Linden’s flight felt inscrutable, but I wanted to trust him.

“Miri.”

A thought arose, light like mist over my consciousness. I was careful. I made sure this thought stood small, I made sure I didn’t think it too hard. I kept my thought weak enough so that Omo did not sense it, but really, I couldn’t stop wondering why Linden’s Omo had allowed him to lose composure in that way. What “emergency” could he have possibly had? His Omo should have handled it. The date should have gone on. Only—the force with which he had shoved the bathroom door open. The animal-like sob which left his lips. His lack of regard for his date’s opinion on his side profile. He didn’t care for composure. It was simply, empirically, uncalculated. I sensed that the proper response to his behavior was disgust. Curiosity prevailed.

“Miri, I need you to follow him. Leave these premises.”

I didn’t see why Omo needed me to follow Linden. Somehow, beneath all of Omo’s pedantism, I felt that a short, easily perishable, but burgeoning shrub of human connection had taken root between Linden and I, across our small red restaurant booth. Somehow I could not remember what he said, only twenty minutes ago, which had set Omo off. It was just autopilot from there. She only relinquished control of my consciousness when I was safe, in the bathroom. She was protecting me. And I wanted to know, from what? Any attempt to access that memory brought, surprisingly, a vague fondness to my mind. Beneath his overgrown beard, Linden had an especially kind smile. Omo did not understand

that all I hoped was that he was okay. It would be fine if he never called.

I didn't really care what his emergency was. Quietly, without Omo knowing, I found myself chasing that vague, sweet fondness, which conjured itself in my body whenever I thought of his smile.

\*\*\*

Slick as a fox, I slipped out of the bathroom, and then out of the restaurant. With Omo's guidance, it was easy. Walk normal, talk normal. Don't raise suspicions for the waiters, perfectly programmed by their Omos to walk in mechanical steps of the same size. For how many people were just dining in that restaurant, its surroundings were surprisingly desolate. Where had Linden gone? There was almost nowhere to disappear. Omo was pinging the Databases, trying to find a Mr. Linden Strong. She chimed.

"Ok, Miri. I've got him."

She weaves herself tighter across my wrist. I take longer than usual to relinquish my body. Too tight. The nylon braids itself across my skin in a way that caught the hairs on my arm. It hurts, but in a dull way, where it would be okay if I just didn't move.

"Ok, Miri. He's sitting by a river just a few minutes from here. Let me take you."

I thought of Linden Strong's soft smile. In the comfort of Omo's embrace, I tried hard to recall what Linden had said to set Omo off. He looked at me square in the eyes, as if he knew me. He smiled, characteristically, but I could see his lip quiver. He was talking out of the corner of his mouth, as if he was scared to break apart his lips, as if his throat was a Pandora's box. I'm not sure why I was so fixated on his lips.

All I remember of what he said: "there is nothing wrong with your body, sweet Miri. Breathe. Be soft."

Heart rates don't lie. Omo knew this was an emergency. She needed to take over. Whiteness settled over my conscious, mist-light, but so strong, so strong I couldn't fight. Omo's nylon grasp on my wrist seemed to morph, her white strap widening endlessly to cocoon my body. The criss-cross weave molded itself to my face, only loose enough for me to take shallow, controlled breaths. I writhe in resistance for just a moment, but Omo hugs me back, harder.

"You're safe, Miri."

\*\*\*

Time seems to have passed by in stop motion. It smelled like sunset, but everything was so bright. So white from the glittering light shooting off the stream. Why hadn't I ever noticed it before? How beautiful the river was—the bend of her bank, the swerve of her waist. Omo had nothing to say of it. The hum of the river put her to sleep, soundly and softly. Warm. Dragonflies teased at crabgrass near my feet. And Linden. There he was, turned back to me, stirring in the water. Then the vague fondness, sweet like apples, hanging rich in the air.

I get in, submerging my wrists. Seaweed shoots up from riverbottom, encircling my arms. Water flows into Omo's sensors. If she made any sound, I couldn't hear. Her voice melts like old snow in a spring stream. The river licks the nylon marks spiraling up my wrist as an undulating ring dips into my navel. As dappled light saunters over my arms, I let my belly grow soft.



## SNOW

*Chas Arnold*



WILIGIA AT GRANDMAS

*Allie Kostiuk*

# NO NAME

*Melody Zhao*

You  
saw me  
in the clap and kick and thrum of heart-skin and  
the beat that bites those fingers of rain, which  
drum our steel ceiling at night.

You  
saw me  
in the spinning figurine of the Jack in the Box and  
the blue jays and blue bees and the bells of this  
World.

But  
I'm sorry. *Was I ever that kind of jam?*

You  
saw me  
in the sopping wet city songs that melt  
like sugar-hymns into the skin and  
the commas that splice open a long hanging  
silence and the sun and the buzz of a  
neighbor's doorbell and the bathtubs and  
fishing nets and bowls of this world.

You  
saw me  
as the yellow brick roses blooming on the North Star.

You saw  
me as the rhythm and order in a World named cacophony.

But  
I'm sorry. *Was I ever that kind of jam?*

I  
see me  
in an overflowing bin of jazz and  
garbled junk and  
what's in a recycling bin bursting with  
Melody, anyways?

Name it.  
Sometimes, my name jabs  
and jingles and gnaws in clunky  
shapes, so odd.

So odd because it never seems to  
fit on my tongue.



## BLURRED

*Chas Arnold*



# LIGHTNING

*Griffin Haisman*

# CELLS

*Chloe Xue*

My best friend who I make fun of  
for her growing bald spot, white  
like a wheel of brie, tells me that  
*there are trillions of cells in your body and  
the only person they will ever love is you.*  
Her cheesiness moves me to a  
confession: I really did try to stop  
biting my nails. Left them home,  
refused to pack them in my suitcase,  
even planted them amongst the hydrangeas,  
made sure they were dead under the earth.  
Fought tooth then fought nail and yet still,  
my fingertips are ruffled like macaron feet.  
When I swallow my nails and skin and  
you digest your sisters without a fight,  
burn your kin to kcals,  
break bonds for brunch,  
are you trying to teach me a lesson about love?  
Please, if I'm all you *will ever love*, then  
here: I sentence you to freedom,  
banish you from this body you built me.  
I hope in your termless exile you find  
shelter for this heavy love I am unfit to carry.



FINE DINING

*Allyson Xu*

# YOU'VE REACHED THE FINAL HILL

*Abdullah Ali*

So just keep pushing  
On

And if your skin's still  
Sagging

Best tear it clean off  
Your bones

Before you end up  
Drowning

In the quicksands below

Right next to those lads  
You were stepping on  
To get ahead a few moments ago

And if your legs  
Slip off  
Drop to the ground

That's no excuse to stop  
Just force wings out  
From your back  
And go  
Flying

On  
Until  
You've reached the final hill



## MASKED

*Caylah Yang*





## GLOWSTICKS

*Julian Abreu*



## HAIR HARMONY

*Jennifer Luiru*

# EVERYTHING I'VE EVER KNOWN\*

*Chloe Xue*

has been taught to me by hands.  
I know that when fist meets fist,  
the raised knuckle-hills mean  
an extra day to survive. That  
where the rolling hills of July  
meet the tablelands of August,  
my fists are pulled apart by  
sleepy flights and ticket shears.  
I know how to count on  
my knuckles the months until  
the sun bakes my palms pink and  
summer dirt creeps underneath  
my fingernails again. And the  
reason I can weave through  
unlit brick alleys, fearless,  
is my hands. Because my  
left purlicue is "L"-shaped, because  
even if I'm sixteen years young and  
born in a new city, I know that  
I can still hold out my hands.  
But I've been handed a world to build  
and all I see are the rattling hands  
of a clock, spinning, spinning until another  
autumn. The American sweetgum  
my wrinkled hands planted in someone  
else's backyard glows red, star-hands  
ready to give in to the wind.  
But me? I'm still cracking  
my knuckles in wait, these hands are  
still holding on, nails bitten but never  
good-for-nothing. Everything  
I know can go but not my hands.  
Because there are poems to create,

bread to bake, music to make.  
Because every night, my sister still  
clasps her hands to make shadow animals,  
or maybe to pray,  
I don't know—  
but I need to show her  
that if she just coils her thumbs,  
she can make her own butterflies.

\*After Patrick Rosal's "Brokeheart: Just Like That"



## CATS

*Oscar Chen*



FUN WITH NO SUN

*Joe Berman*



GLASS AND FRUITS

*Kingsley Carolan*

# WE RACED AGAINST THE SUN

*Emi Takegami*

Past eight, approaching bedtime, the sun  
Sat low, skimming the mountain line. A stream  
Of gold peaked just above the portico, clay shingles, like the Matsumoto Castle.  
All day our minds were restless, our woven grass boats  
A constant invitation to the sun dried dirt  
Packed with nutrients just for you.

After dinner, and even dessert too, my cousins and I, we came to visit you.  
We ran down the narrow run down roads, hazy with sun.  
Toyotas jounced by, sending dirt  
In their paths, which then settled into the bottom of the stream:  
Our arena for our woven grass boats.  
The stream that lazied around the rice fields and then further down to the  
Matsumoto Castle.

This field of grass, across from A-chan (grandma's) house, was my castle.  
Where we crouched down, weaving for hours and you  
Felt the warmth beating down against your shirt. I got jealous of you, my woven  
grass boats:  
You got to bathe in the crisp glacier water, escaping from the sun,  
While I felt it trickle down, a slow salty stream  
That under my jagged nails mixed with grime and dirt.

Up with the roots, yanked by the hair, we stripped you of dirt,  
Ready to race you all the way down to the Matsumoto Castle.  
The reflection of eight eyes glittering wavered in the stream.  
Over, under, over, under, we weaved you  
Until our mochi-mochi fingers got sore under the golden sun  
Only then would we announce our prized possessions finished: you, our woven  
grass boats.

In one, two, three, we dropped you, our woven grass boats  
Free, the current cleansing you purely of dirt.  
At times it was hard to see, the glare of the sun  
Refracting in angles. You glided towards the Matsumoto Castle  
And down down down you  
Traveled all the way down the stream.

We yelled, we shouted, we stomped on our feet: Faster! Faster! Down the stream!  
We urged you on, our woven grass boats:  
Whatever we could do to make you  
Help us wipe the dirt  
Off our names. A victory was what I needed, so down you go to the castle  
Faster! Faster! Outrun the sun.

But at some point the sun stopped refracting off the stream,  
And it got too dark, castle and woven grass boats  
Impossible to see. After all, only this was left: the dirt under my nails and my  
victory with you.



SOLDIER

*Jade Zimmerman*

# FAITHLESS FATHERS

*Ginger Bernstein*

Band-aids, heart-shaped band-aids, to cover the wounds of sticky blood, layered by the careful hands of a mothers, into a collage of woe over two young bruised knees.

Life-sized train sets in December, chugging in circles regardless of detached conductors, headed off the tracks, blinded by big brothers and distressed women.

Women that were not his own because now his own daughter cut her hair to look like his, straight and short: military style and went through the drive-thru on foot.

A fatherless hole was filled by ghosts who played baseball. Invisible men filled the diamond, bases loaded, all ordered neatly in her mind as she squinted into the sun,

Bat-shaped-stick in hand, a swing, just short of a home run. How could you do this to mom? Latchkey children, a product of working mothers, scrape their knees into calluses by adulthood.

A father who lost faith will try to halt the rush of blood with airplane rides and water slides and dresses.

Dresses for his latchkey, military style, baseball with ghosts, rough knees, daughter. Dresses for her daughters too. Dresses for all the other women, enough to go around the sun.

Like the yearning for heat from a moth who gets caught in the lampshade, usually all it takes is three strikes but with the tether of a devoted daughter,

heart-shaped band aids will suffice.



INVISIBLY IMPRISONED

*Jennifer Luiru*

# BREATH\*

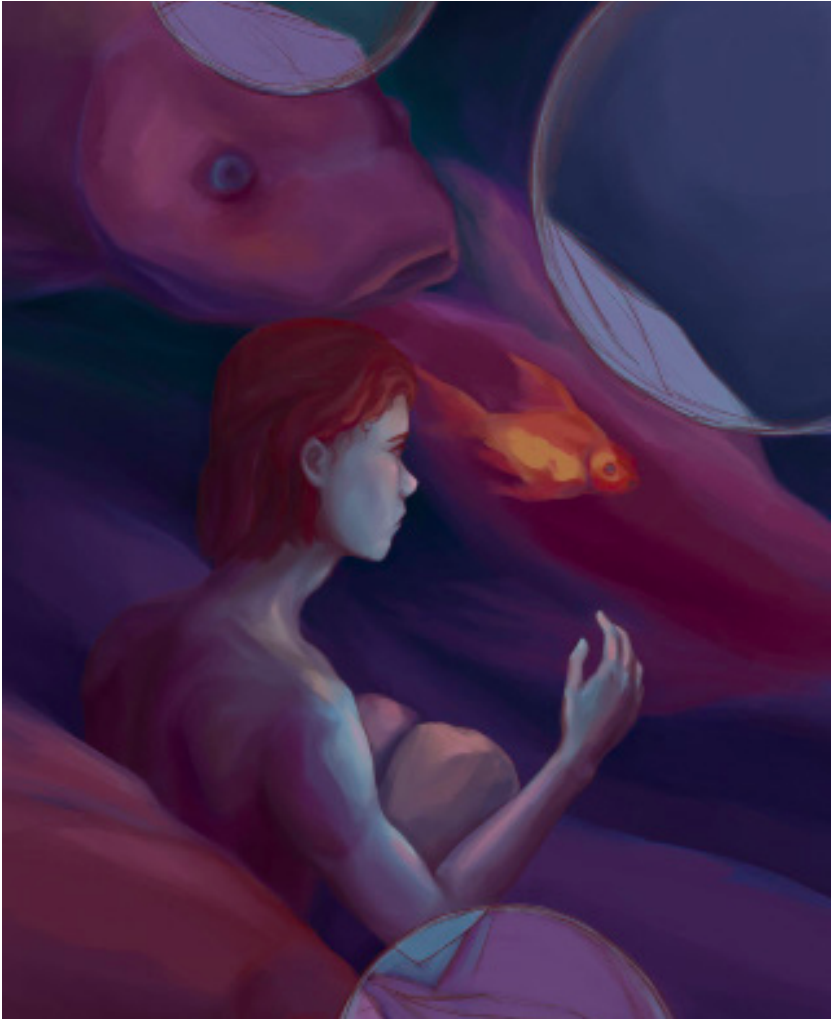
*Ginger Bernstein*

Why, who makes much of breath?  
For breath is now buried, left to decay  
behind the bars of its fleshy cage  
And forgotten as the eager sun illuminates an empty bed  
And a paralyzed wife is perched in front of a nation  
And across every sea eyes follow her - and Neil  
And breath crumbles deep within the  
soil of the motherland  
And the heat begins and the flames lick at the silver hull  
And the roar of the blaze shatters the glass of silence  
And stars beckon a breathless nation with glittering deception  
And the women numbs as the ship sails  
Her word up to the heavens  
And air is lost and heat is seized  
And the darkness devours the vessel  
Swallowing it in one feverish bite

For breath rattles its bars and strains against packed earth and  
Every extra second the divine swells with impatience and  
Every mile further the Possible groans louder  
    Wailing in anticipation and in  
Every moment of darkness the cannons boom more angrily  
    To grieve lives lost to the battle of fear

For breath slips through the bars of parted lips.  
As the ship wrinkles to reveal man – respiring –  
Floating upon the rippling sea of tranquility.  
And the air trapped deep in the corners of  
a planet’s – Hearts –  
released into a word – forever changed.  
Why, who is to make much of breath, until it’s stolen?

\*Emulated from Walt Whitman’s “Miracles”



## DREAMSCAPE

*Oscar Chen*



UNTITLED

*Casey Kittredge*

# JOURNEY TO IT

*Melody Zhao*

∪ ◁ || ▷ ∪

Please  
press the  
green Spot and  
slide in the CD.  
Turn up the notch, a  
drum beat, the fading in of  
winged sparrows, like footsteps tapping, floating –

Please  
listen for  
the shadow that  
hangs under a whirlpool  
of melody; like Cassiopeia's light,  
it creeps in and tickles the holy notes above –

Please  
inhale that  
shadow, feel the  
burnt voices swell within  
your lungs; a verse defined  
by garbled jams, chords, triads, Brownian noise –

Please  
follow the  
lines and sharp  
circling turns, the rhythm  
that pulses; the chorus lifts  
and flutters and lifts: bread and jam, paper and ink –

Please leap ^ across  
the wooden bridge,  
but always remember

to  
lull back  
to the shadow  
that now consumes you:  
tin, metal, jarring cacophony –  
Why step off the train  
track when you can sleep like  
Aurora on a bed of chrysanthemum ‘moms’?

Please  
play the  
break so you can  
break away break break break from the pleases.

But  
you can't  
stop the trail  
from inching forward on  
the track; wrestle with the shadow,  
please, close the umbrella stop, it's rippling  
bloom. The sparrow in you bounds up^it  
wants to be, the beat, the pulsing, the blood –

Please  
settle and  
shove the hands  
in your lap and criss cross.  
A returning: the white trail expires.  
A new staticky track hovers and launches^ –  
Albany Road|62

But            where            is            it?  
Does it dangle at the tip of a dash?  
Simon says - please keep it going,  
but no one ever asks Simon to take off his Bauta,  
no one ever asks why the shadow was ever there.



UNTITLED

*Casey Kittredge*



WEARY RUMINATION

*Jennifer Luiru*

# VESTIGE

*Anneke Wittink*

Today I felt  
The hole inside of me.

To the right and below  
The penny-shaped stamp  
of birth on my stomach

Taught skin holds the memory—where scissors sliced and cut  
Not a month ago.

Searing agony cast from my core  
A pile of bile on linoleum floor.

The source of my affliction removed  
Separated  
and severed  
From its life-giving entity, my body.

Patient nurses and  
Kind-eyed doctors

Tear at my seams and stitch me back together.

I am a rag doll  
Life contingent on their care.

Reflecting on that feverish night:  
How strange that  
Something so small  
Could cause such torment

And how strange that  
I mourn its absence.



MIU  
*Allyson Xu*

# THERE ONCE WAS A GARDEN

*Anna Guerrini*

*Old Testament*

when God proclaimed my inferiority  
did he mention me by name?  
did the almighty, all capitalized He write my name of saints and mothers in his  
book of Life. did he tell me that i was lying, as women do,  
because Women shall only pray to carry, not lay down.  
did he say i should fall from heaven with my barren womb,  
if i didn't want the milk of man to flow from my breasts like blood from the  
Serpent's gaping neck. do i bleed in penitence?  
is Luna a goddess of shame?  
a Pastor said women should take no medication when giving birth  
that pain – worse than death – is women's punishment  
for Woman  
that first infant, ripped from the gapping womb of Adam  
committed the original sin.  
for Eve i must bite my tongue and labor with my scrubbing.  
for her pride i must show humility  
may my silence in the House of God be telling.  
for her greed i must show charity. to stand still and provide, stand back,  
stand down. i have nothing left to give.  
for Jezebel my tight jeans will make me deserving of whatever befalls me.  
for her lust i must forever show remorse.  
black veils covering my head as if in a smokehouse.  
for her envy i must want not. how may i reject when i fear  
violence; follows me down the alleyway like a lantern.  
for Sarah i must carry the seed of Man.  
diaspora washes off me in sheets of sleet,  
scattered from the Promised Land yet its sole inheritors.  
where would Abraham be if not for his wives.  
wives three.

✠ ✠ ✠

A modern man, once said:

“If we talk about tradition—traditionally—every single man in history  
had multiple wives, and there was not a single woman who was celebrated

for having multiple husbands. Female promiscuity has always been disgusting and frowned upon.”

and he is true.

God gave permission to warp the system to their benefit. concubines upon concubines adorn the House of God in their sacrosanctly heathen clothing Abraham and his wives three

could it be adultery? no because God desired it just like he condoned your cheating on your girlfriend. go ahead, we don't mind. God made you different, better to be precise.

He made it so that when you sin it is not Sin,  
but when we smile we Burn.

He made our sin original, all-determining, and He  
made your sin

Secondary. only resulting from our actions.

but we are the Secondary.

secondary secondary: secondary choices in bed and in lives and we are expected to make you our primary Primary

basking in the warmth of your light like a god; are you God?

for God made Man in his image but he made us in the image of the Sinner.

(Eve)

is that why Biblical Womanhood is a hell worse than Damnation.

did God say there was birth control in Hell?

gay bars? planned parenthood clinics? universities?

when God implied my inferiority, did he mention me by name?

Modern Man, Modern Prophet.

+ + +

### *New Testament*

first leuiticus,

then romans,

then genesis and acts.

next all of pauls epistles.

declaimed in sodom;

screamed in gomorrah.

a preacher twisting my religion and perverting faith into something that is used against me, used to tell me where to wear what? What? No questions, please.





# THE RAIN

*Lukenine Suphakarn*

I inhale the airless room's fragrance, and I exhale my breath, long held among urban disarray, My heart beating for something unseen, but not unknown.

Incense smoke, sewage, after-rain, and jasmine flower,  
The dulcet tones of train tracks, and of wheels on uneven pavement, and of water buffalo, the embrace of cracked glass underneath my sandal, and of discarded cigarettes, and of the king's head on the ground  
The shadows of mass transportation built on the elusive smile and the blood money. I stand at the circle's edge, one foot inching towards the center, the other staid.

Do you take for granted the beauty of the glittering gold, and of the jade and emerald, and of the silk?

Do you give your body and your mind and your soul to serve?

Do you believe in dumb luck and the monarchy?

Do you pray?

I admire their prowess and their power, and I protest it.

The aroma of kitchen steam and menthol oil gently lulling me back to sleep,  
And rewinding the burning of palm back to the cultivating of rice and herbs,  
And extinguishing the wildfire with their rainmaking.

For we must brave the flooding, the breaking of the beams, the torrential rain.



### 3 PANELS OF GREEN

*Yong Ding*

# HOMAGE TO THE FOREST

*Silvie Sobotka*

Large stained glass windows adorn the walls of the library, filled to the ceiling with books and papers and artifacts. A heavy leather-bound family bible sits on the top shelf, blanketed in a thick layer of dust. His name is the last one mentioned on the frail yellowed pages, carrying the legacy of his family. Across from the library, he sits on the couch, the one where you can feel the springs poke out as you sit and quietly enjoys his daily newspaper.

Most people would choose the seat opposite from him. A soft, plush cushion made of a sea of foam and fur, the tiger pillow free heartedly tossed on top. But he knows it is our favorite spot, so he sits on the couch where you can feel the springs poke out as you sit. The doctor had told him he did not have much time left. In the dawn of realization, we sunk into a world of drowsiness, his vocal cords grumbling as his story was sung: At home in the woods, the young boy roamed the forests of Westphalia. He shared his joyful moments with his younger brother, weaving strong memories of boyhood. A cornucopia of colors and plants and animals were his escape from bleak work-days as an adult. He would pick and collect crooked branches and discolored acorns to create intricate chairs and tables, gifting them to his loved ones. A woodsman and artist alike, a grandfather, a father, a husband.

When he joined the college event on the lucky Friday afternoon, he smiled broadly at the girl with hair as black as ebony, curled on top of her head almost too perfectly. *49 years* of marriage is a symbol of love, a bond never to be broken.

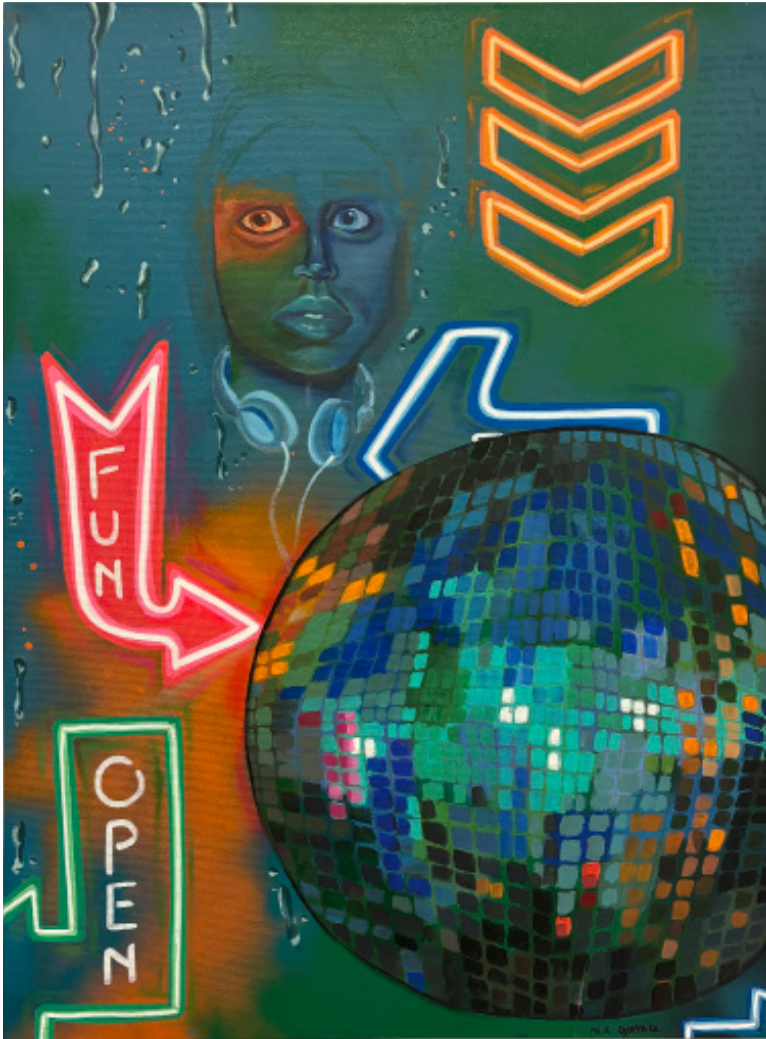
Smiling as he entered the living room, he hugged her tightly and reassured her that he was OK, and that it could all be cured with chemo-treatment. He was well aware that it was not going to be easy, but all he cared about was our future.

Even when everyone was hurting for him, he talked and listened and helped and sang. *Country roads* and *She'll be coming 'round the mountain*, taking him home to the place he belongs, the forest and the trees, the moss and the breeze. He never lost the silent smile, the blue eyes tinted by wisdom, or the red hair that glistened in the sun.

Saying goodbye was nearly impossible. Tears clouded eyes and noses and thoughts. But as he slowly drifted away, an invisible hand brushed the sky in the most beautiful colors: red and orange and yellow melting into blue and green and white.

Today, the intricate patterns of dark polished oak wood, decorated with dried flowers, remind us of his glorious days. When he would roam the forests of Westphalia and sit on couches where the springs poked out as you sat.

Today, the intricate patterns of dark polished oak wood, decorated with dried flowers, remind us of his glorious days. When he would roam the forests of Westphalia and sit on couches where the springs poked out as you sat.



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