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JUSTE MILIEU

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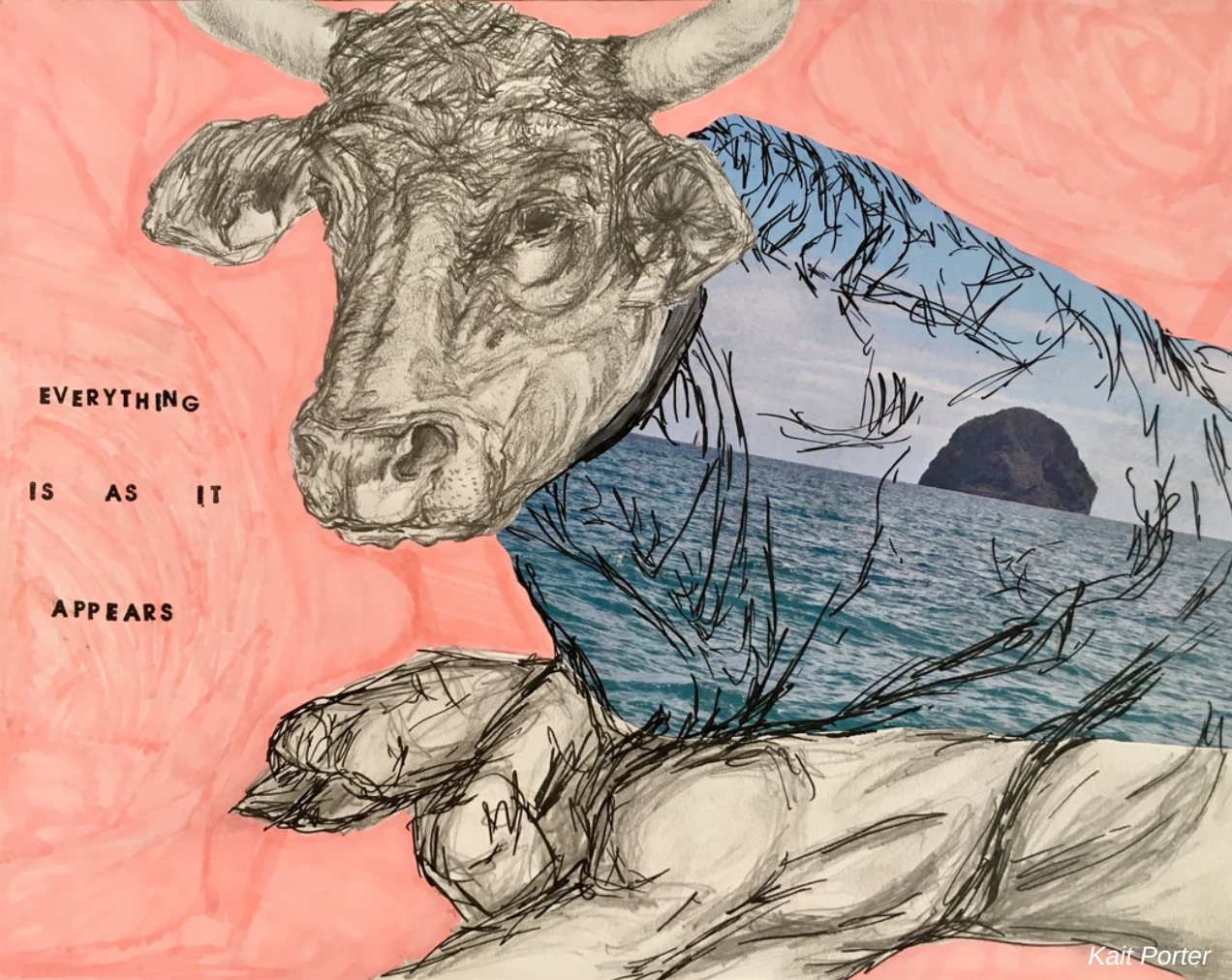
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Kait Porter

remnants of families scattered
shattered
shards of glass slice photographs
of those who once were

but gardens bloom in the eyes
of children who still know the skies...
who feel the weightlessness of air
when the breeze reminds them to breathe

breathe
or heave
swallowing dust as they reach into Africa's pregnant belly
and pull out diamonds

-- we kill children for jewelry. how can we call ourselves civilized?

Kelsey Arrington

Once I limited miracles to lightning bolts
The beauty of the red even sky
Making my heart strum chords of awe
Heaven knows the full silver moon
Draws my soul to tabernacle among the stars

Well these days, I see that
There are also miracles in broken vessels
And music in raging storms
Tears can sparkle in love
And our fears birthing boldness
Tearing from inside like claps of thunder

Our lives burst out in colors as dynamites break the
rock to pave way for hidden waters

Miracles are what we see
When we truly see that
God is in the midst of her
And she cannot be moved

Inconditionnel

j'ai voulu écrire « aimer »,
finalement :
faire un jardin

Mathis Juan

Seye Maj





Amy Donnelly

Red and Yellow Look Good on You by Zuri

I had a best friend, Emile'. She smoked cigarettes and complained about simple things: the snow, her hair, her plants. She had a basic opinion of politics and religion. She spoke of her immense talents, but I never saw or heard anything special. She was funny, in a very slow way. She was my best friend, but she was also very dissatisfying.

There was nothing left on the list. We had mapped the rocky trail quite well, for a couple of kids. I was in a hurry, she was limitless. We were stubborn. It took 10 years to navigate the hate from our friendship. That stretch of time seemed to activate a new testament, a power that neither of us could have expected.

I spent a while back in Tucson after graduating college. I picked lemons on the family farm. For months, tart winds tainted my sense of smell; I could barely stand anything yellow. My teeth were becoming see through from the enamel stripping citrus. But inside, I felt fresh.

A scolding breeze brought Emile' back to me one morning. She had walked the wrong way down Eustace Road after spending the night with a farmer's son. I'd heard that she would get glassed with them. She wasn't running from anything, she was just bored.

My favorite thing about Emile' was her desire to go ghost: to disappear with no trace and no sign of coming back. She wasn't afraid of lonely; I was. When I saw her, I ran to her. She wanted to sleep with a lot of men and wanted to have a job that wasn't very hard, like a secretary or a showgirl. She couldn't sing and she couldn't keep up with anything.

And when she died, I couldn't even cry. She took a man with her, so I knew she wouldn't be lonely. She would finally be still, and I could get back on the road. It never took long for her to fall, but it took years to get her up again.

Mathis Juan

Winter in Thailand

ADRIAN PHILIHERT

I didn't get used to being washed by the cold thin air of November. My tropical-blooded body would usually scream for a cup of warm ginger tea. But not that time.

The anti-thief fence in front of me had turned into his pale face with his nose darker than his cheeks. He was the typical stranger who got Bangkok's sunburn. I, on the other hand, was naturally tanned, although still distinct compared to the locals.

Each one of the evergreen trees behind the fence was dancing with the rain. Reminded me how his fake blonde hair swayed between his fingers every time he brushed it. I still don't know why he had to cover his calming deep brown wood colored hair.

Even the wind didn't bring the smell of the rain anymore. I could only smell his skin overwhelming the room every time we met. Yet we never talked. Never really did.

Still. Nothing was ever colder than his polite smile.

Not until I stood up to leave the rain washed my delusion away.

He was there. He had his real hair not dyed. Not in the most polite manner, but we talked in a playful silence with a smile. With a different pair of eyes painted in snow-ish blue, he electrocuted my body and overfilled my lungs. When he blinked, his power broke. As I exhaled, my chest melted. All the ice he covered my skin with turned to water as I breathed. Even more... I was defenseless.

To every season I marked on my calendar, I'll let winter lingers on my fingers.

Dim Fairy Light Effect

Jv Oquendo

Under the small dim fairy lights, people swayed to an 80's disco song. The breeze was light and cool; the sounds, surreal. And the people: they all danced as if in a trance. Slowly moving closer and then far apart, the people danced as one. Like drops of water on an uneven glass table top, they all eventually came together as one. Except for them. As the people gathered in the center, she caught sight of someone standing on the far end of the court sipping a drink slowly. And as he drank the last of his iced tea, he saw who was standing directly across him. And then they vanished among the dancing swarm of people, lost in a vibrant disco song. To be brought in the center with eyes fixed upon each other. And then a hand asking for a dance and a hand accepting. And so once again, under the small dim fairy lights, we can see people sway to an 80s disco song. But the breeze was warmer, and the sounds were brighter.



"clouds"
Gi Batres

The Entire History of You

Sherille Williams

...Nowadays, I stare at blank pages. I can't help but wonder what love once felt like. I only felt it when I read you. The spine of you was formed so brilliantly. I couldn't help but wonder why you weren't straight up with me.

Your tears of how your life went was the pages and your heartbreaks were the context. So I wanted your preface first. I had to figure out your worth. I remember meeting you, and as I stared at your cover, I smiled. This book hasn't been touched in awhile. Since the pages were fragile, I turned the first ever so slowly and began to write the *entire history of you*.

Your eyes told me the introduction. It told me you were more than welcome to be loved, but a skeptic. It told me the last person broke your heart and kept it. As I skimmed through chapters, I began reminiscing on us, on me loving you-inside and out. This is why you had trouble loving me; because people removed the love out of you.

I loved the way my pen wrote about all of you. My pen flowed into a sea of your questionable doubts. You never loved yourself like I loved you. We argued because I had an answer for everything; that's only because you doubted us, too. You left me to figure out what our love was like. Looking at me with your scared soul was the only thing that kept me whole...



"Hell's own gymnast"

And she can tell the weather with her hands; the mixed connective tissue wasting; and that corroded patulous thing beating in her chest. Her neurons crossfigured: it could have been any place but it wasn't. Heaven was a sliced distance that night. And she was on the grass in various unrealistic realities. She swayed with no music. Each appendage about to become too legitimate for its own locality. That flaming red scorched moon which shines so differently. Gilded. Peering out of frame; almost finished. Her premature memorial so obvious so ecstatic so slow and not so accidental. And she sauntered through it opening doors and locking all the exits. All the long gone faces stoping at nowhere places. Careening towards dives we all take. There may be some discrete connection that can or can not exist between reality and language. Or maybe she is chaos. Concrete chaos. Then rhapsodically-it's done. Sprawled on the land: I think we all knew best.

Stephanie Dean



Emil Ian

(Scenario) Dusk fashion.

On those period when the sky fell asleep,
When her dear sun needs some rest,
Drunken wind staggering upon the earth,
Gentle breeze dancing ballet with the waves,
Shadows loyalty and boldness to spy,
So dusk carefully brightens her dark',
When weather could have been tricked,
Grizzled eyes too tired to glitz shine,
Worked out souls begging for sleep,
Soaring spirits quietly asking for dream,
A bed where fantasy cuddled reality,
Mystical seduces wasted illusion,
Scenes out mellow lingering tryst.

Joseph Nzube O.

Today I bought another poetry book.
Another book that fills me with words
and images and hope that someday I might write
as beautifully as my favorites, both living and dead.
My brain fills with thoughts that when that day
comes you might catch me
in your arms and smile your
moonshine smile
and tell me that you're proud of me.
That's the only thing I long for.
And each time I write another poem
I pray that you will somehow see it,
even though I know you won't.
Maybe then you can learn to love the girl
who lives only in her words.

Eliza Jay

Disconnecting by Taylor Yeomans

The rain winds down the windows. The clouds hang muggy and gray. I am grateful, because it washes me away. Clearing all the sounds of repetition that have been triggering my mind, to dance off on worry, to tangle in a furry upon miseries, like webs. Caught and glued with fear.

Nothing seems like what was anticipated when we laid in our beds at 3. The world seems more polluted now, dreams seem less likely to be real. Expectations begin to gnaw at what we'd foreseen as true. Distracted by conflict ancient and new. The revolving door of who we are. A menagerie of experience. Yet are we experiencing at all?

Do you see the way the liquid morphs a hard granite rock so delicately into silk, as it rushes magnificently powerful and magnetically graceful over the edge of the cliff.

Or does it miss your glance, as you run through with your phone plastered to your hand, filtering you between the world. Catching glimpses of beauty. Pressured by preservation and broadcasting of information. Curating the history of self.

Are we really alone? Or have you been hacked? And somewhere they're watching you now. Checking in to see if your behaving unusually, or quite profound, or are in fact naked.

Is the general public numb on vice. Turned up too hot to see or feel, burnt and pushed. Triggering dominoes. Out of curiosity perhaps, with no way to refill. The eyelids feel like dumbbells. Dropping to my cheeks. The pitch darkness makes me slightly uncomfortable.

Actions, lists, memories, numbers, dates, people, objects, dreams, needs.

The third eye reopens like a black hole, and I melt deep within. Tumbling through enchanted colors. It rises back up, the beating pulsates and magnifies from center. My heart, pumping life force. Through my veins out into my muscles. All releases pressure. An exhale, and the thought that anything can change.

I bow to the cauldron of alchemy. Where all the feels become crystallized wisdom. The place to begin again. Where I am rhythmically hardwired to inception. The magnetic force which I have grown from. Roots feeling through the soil towards the heart of the earth.

I dream to crawl upon her, roll in her grasses, and swim naked in her rivers; pulsating and alive, mesmerized by the potential of her greens and blues. Heightened by her purples, always pausing in her breeze, open to digesting her dance. The rise and fall of the moon.

The leaves seem more dense this year, growing large like elephant ears. Now they curl in crispy golden, orange, and fire reds. Softly turning in the wind, falling to the ground. As the wild Pacific NW churns darker, beckoning the king tides to commence.

The kings are the highest of the tides, the strongest, and deepest swelling; rising when the nights are their longest, and the moon holds the stage shining in all her glory.

We pray for the king tides to usher in the wet season. May we be abundantly drenched. The rains bring destruction, mudslides washing away chunks of mountains, trees, trunks and dead branches, and roads traveled roll out into the ocean. Soaking and floating along, cleansing and purging previous existence.

The tides will bring what remains upon the shore. Where old worn out branches will become anchors to new and curious innovations. Revealing a forest of birth from what's been let go. Like the cycle of our cells.

Dividing, multiplying, destroying, replacing. It spirals right along. Constructing itself out of stardust. We are brilliant nothings. The shepherds of space. Bound by time, uncomfortable by non existence. I try to look within.

First by looking out upon a wonder until it dissolves, and then I dissolve apart until I am deep dark space. I notice the way space feels. Peaceful, evolving, empty, comfortable, flowing, calm and orderly, yet completely undefined.

I look at what is looking. For a flash I see that which is consciousness; rhythmic, vibrating, divinely present. An invisible force, magnetic in nature. I hope it's invincible, and when I leave the earth I float out through space still a magnet to dreams. Like the force of the moon tugging the ocean to surge.



Raquel LeBaudour

JINGLE JUNGLE.

On the port of unused ships,
I watched half-baked angels,
Strip-
For the men, with barking pasts,
That always wounded up
On the wrong side of town
With
Baseball hats and shades.

Lervneie .S. Chenge

How does one write the wind?

While darkness folds in upon itself
Layered by a language known only to the wind
Ushering in change,
Intense and aggressive,
It whips 'round, and 'round
Rustling like crisp sheets,
Whispering through canopies of trees,

Draped in greens, and browns, and black of night.
Umbrellas of leaves discuss;
A conversation held by nature.

Green crowns bathed by gentle moonlight,
Dissolved by the sky's canvass,
Etched by the stars that take their place, one by one.
Evidence, a new moment has now begun.

A Season moves out;
A Season moves in.
Yet, how does one write the wind?

Raquel LeBaudour

House

Machines tumble
Like a house's heartbeat,
Curtains breathe
Like a house's lungs,
Pipes pump water
Like a house's veins
But people reign like parasites

Emil Marty

Truth

I shall never lie when I write down;
a writing stays,
a saying flies.

Mathis Juan





Dylan Farenger

Kahuna

The little volcanoes
that smoke up our sky
never leave much to be desired

Molten reds ooze and
break into veins,
sending decay
every which way

The ash is a coat, a thick grey mink,
delicately deadening
the light over the horizon
infusing the lonely
back into the sky's end

Sarafina Syracuse

Erupt

I want you
As wild as high tide
Push and pull against my sand
Caress my island's curves
I was born out of water
And melting rock
When I met you

Jasmine D. R.

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the happy medium,
between reality and art."

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