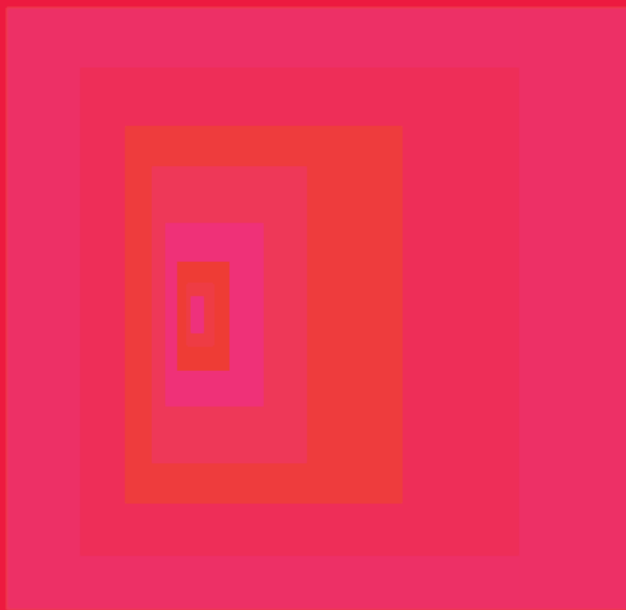


the plum creek review



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The 807

desmond hearne-morrey

is opening its doors, and the winds
are back: I step and am pulled along, going
somewhere, in a labyrinth which clicks
too smoothly together, pulls, and sees. Everything
is split second, but I would always
have stepped this hissing threshold, become
integrated into its gravity, gently

pulled

by eyes, which are embedded in city.

I meet some of them and we oscillate
so quickly that we blur between ourselves:
toes thicken into crusted salt, face into glass pane,
voice flattens, shivering, reflected in five hundred
thousand tones, and I am looking at myself, city
into my own darting eyes,

our interlocked

stare, which we can neither hold
or gracefully let go.

The Ohio Sky Won't Stop Being Gray

kate luke

I fear change
still in a storm

an umbrella
time has passed

because it
still trying

in the first place I fear
which means we are closer to being

moving and I am standing
ed up

frazzled and without
change because change means
gone

Stroll
milo ono





Craving Cold

rose rasor

I want to be the blue-white prism, the knife's-edge
cold

against a bare palm. I want the depths, opaque and
shot through

with something less than light, the cracks melted
and refrozen, a reminder

of endurance. I want the slick and the black, the evil
queen's mirror underfoot,

the delicate fur of frost-crystals, the spindly dagger
descending from above.

I want the frozen footsteps, the trapped memory of
heel and arch,

the world settled still and empty as a painter's new
canvas.

—

I am tired of waiting for things to be
okay. I want to stack myself away
in the back of the freezer
for later. For now, let me be ice—
I will know the thaw
by the whisper of sunlight
on the back of my neck.

Red Glow
chloe casdagli



To Spring, To Dad

fiona warnick

The harmonica of someone singing far enough away
that the words congele. A motorcycle, a jet trail—
an exercise in crescendo. A picnic out of earshot.

Dear Richard, I've butchered your song. But your song
butchered my fingertips.

The breeze belongs to my forehead, to the backs
of my hands, to the strip of skin
three inches up the jeans, above the sock.

I must have learned it by the fire.
Everything began with a marshmallow in hand.

It doesn't smell like you, yet. The earthworms
have not reached the air. It's a silence
waiting to be filled with woodsmoke.

Chocolate to graham cracker. E minor to G.
I obsess over these changes—faster, faster.

Does a woman wear a sundress, or does a sundress wear a woman? It is a season for picking up and leaving.

If only I had said: teach me. Curve my fingers, make me immune to coiled wire.

This blanched bubble next to the nail bed is an attempted time travel. Can I call these chords inheritance? The ones I'm only learning now.

Disdain for Spring

ember carrera

The plaster holds taut
to the art, in the quiet studio,
which is still and cold
like a five AM snow.

On the art in the quiet studio
dry glue looks like mounds
formed after a five AM snow
that left earth's curves covered.

Dry glue looks like mounds
as the radiator kicks into gear.
The statues' curves were left covered,
but the stiff surface starts to melt like ice.

As the radiator kicks into gear
the wire netting releases its posture.
as the surface melts like ice
from the figure's diaphragm.

the wire netting releases its posture
as paint gushes from the piece into slush.
The figure's diaphragm is
losing the fight to stay upright.

Paint slush gushes from the piece to
my hands trying to reclaim
the sculpture, losing the fight to stay upright.
Hours of work vanish as the head falls

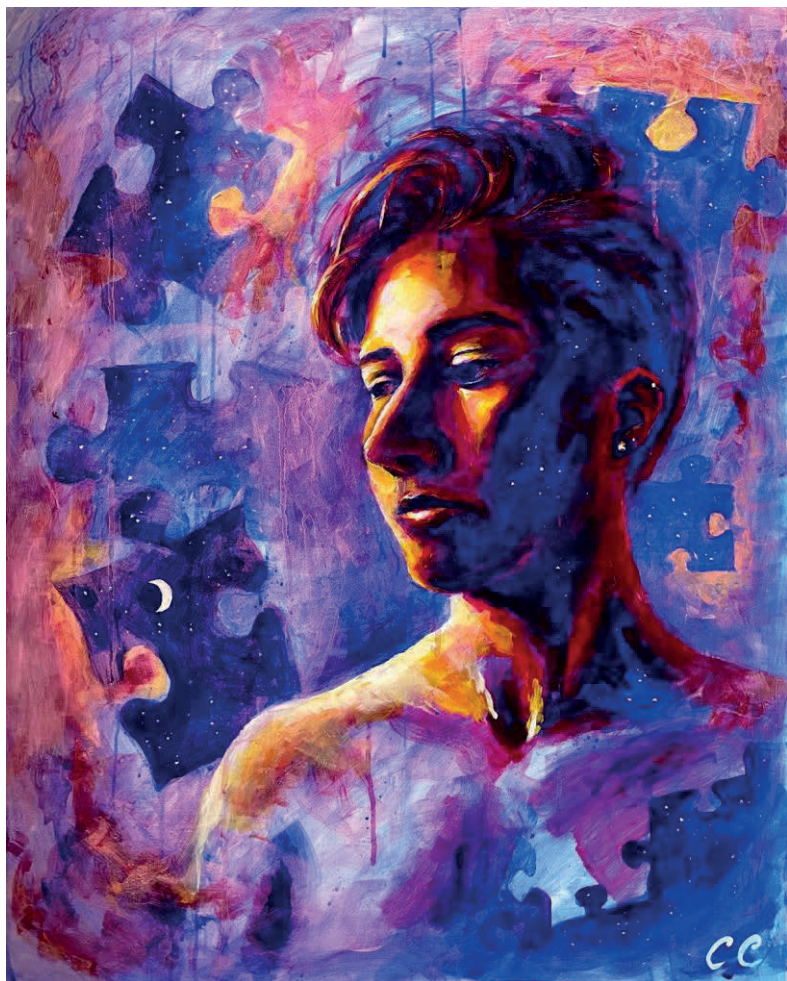
in front of my hands trying to reclaim
the best artifice they ever made.
Hours of work vanish as the head falls
into the mucky puddle where

the best artifice I ever made
is laid bare with no clear future.
A heaping puddle forms where my
tears fall like petals mocking snow.

The wire is laid bare with no clear future.
"Was that the sculpture I wanted to make?"
Tears like petals mocking snow
leave as soon as they come.

"Was that the person I wanted to be?"
All possibilities melt in this heat
and leave as soon as they come.
No plaster feelings hold taut in my brain.

Piece of Me
chloe casdagli



We Were Always A Long Drive

kate luke

* emotional abuse and sexual content

i knew there was a reason
his entrance from behind
felt wrong and ill-fitting
a backdoor break-in, maybe
with an easier lock to pick
the pin [he claimed] more
naturally found

my back always hurt
usurping form
to bow [like 'no'] like a too-saddled
mule a cat
repelling from touch
cartoonishly contorting, avoiding
its wet reflection

you feel furthest
from someone— all consumed
in the most tactile of
loneliness; profoundly close to—

semantic space overwrought,
semantic sense overwrote
with wires bloodied and nerves
inked, into creaking bones—
imagining eyes could ever meet

no touching

How to Construct a Tumbleweed

logan shainwald

First suction a leech to the foot of a little boy wading in a Piedmont pond his grandfather, now busy across the farm with his cows, told him not to go into because *there's leeches in there*. The boy won't recognize the pinch and will be sucked dry enough to float on the wind, his body will wrap around itself like a faulty parachute, his bones will snap like windchimes an old woman having coffee on a front porch will hear and look around for. There aren't supposed to be tumbleweeds in humid South Carolina, only the smell of the nearest body of water, which will evaporate and form a thunderstorm around you—but make a tumbleweed anyway, because thunderstorms are not all the wind carries. First a sweater crocheted by a grandmother leaning into yellow lamplight, wearing reading glasses and bathrobe and slippers, fingers shaking. Unravel it because something has to hold everything together.

First a little boy's body. First snakeskin found on walks around the farm's perimeter. First a scarlet flower patch. First a leech. Expand, leech, with all you take from the little boy and the snakes and the grandmother and the flowers, the flowers whose water you will soak until they die and crumble endlessly, dusting off the tumbleweed as it bounces across a busy street searching for emptiness and sticks in a lone girl's eyes. Last the curling bodies of all the leeches at the bottom of the now-dry pond.

Koi
evan swanson



Brochure

chloe casdagli

Welcome to The Museum. You can live a whole life here. But first, a little history:

I spent my life building the museum. The walls are made of bricks, crushed leaves compacted, glass bottles full of rotting fruit, and sheets of water. I've built too many walls to count. On each wall is a series of paintings. Though you might call them doors, for they exist in three or four dimensions, the artists refer to them as paintings. Some are movie theaters with crocheted popcorn that goes stale, some are classrooms after dark with bottomless pits in the center. Some are childhood bedrooms drowning in tears. Some hang in decaying frames. Some aren't visible at all.

A full list of the paintings and the artists are provided on the back. It may not be accurate—the spaces change too fast, and sometimes I lose track.

Sometimes I have to take a break from counting to clean the salt water floors.

The artists tell me art always has to have a meaning. Death, rebirth, the inevitable loss of joy to routine. I'm supposed to see it in the bookstore's empty shelves, the painting of wilting plants, the long wooden dining tables serving plastic food. I don't see much. I see the empty shelves and think of lost history and burning books. I see insects and I think of the time I lose to building, the natural, non-manufactured moments I've missed. I don't regret it. I can't.

Each painting is signed with the name and date of the artist. Some paintings are so large, the top looks like sky, and the signatures are out of reach.

You, visitor, are advised to look for signatures, but not enough to waste time. My life is infinite, but yours is not—there will never be enough time to see

it all. Moments will be lost, even if you choose to return to the museum as a ghost.

Enter with care. Touch, break the frames, smash bottles, change the surface. Contribute to the rolling wheels. This museum is for you, after all.

The museum currently takes up the entire surface of the Earth and Moon. Watches, maps, and compasses will be provided upon entree.

Applehead

eoin schnell



a small needful fact

dorothy levine

inspired by Ross Gay

is that my grandfather
would like to live another life
as a seagull

that in between lectures,
loud phone calls, and
ears closed with “lalala”
I listened long enough to learn this.

which means that underneath
his scientific jargon
and defensive state
that comes creeping like weeds
with age, he still knows
the magnificence of birds

and means that, in all likelihood,
we stood on rocks by the ocean
together scattering

stale challah chunks,
and handfed french-fries to
grateful ducks
against the admonishments
of aquarium security

that somehow
me and him provided sustenance
—albeit unhealthy—
to creatures of the earth,
birds who can be
(almost) as loud
as Zadie's needs
when he is feeling
a tad bit hypoglycemic

and that perhaps,
one day, when he is gone
I will get to feed
French-fries and bread
to his screeching, magnificent,
winged, memory too

Bigger Worlds
chloe casdagli



cc

What I Have Decided About Facts

desmond hearne morrey

I can't help crying about the fact of robins, the fact of dirty white painted porch railings, the fact of violets closed and slouching on a cold morning, and the fact that they will straighten and open themselves as the world warms, the fact of the warmth of human bodies, the fact of buckeyes, the fact that I am bringing you a buckeye because I think you would like to have this buckeye that I found today, that I found and think looks quite striking and beautiful as I often think when I find buckeyes, the fact that I am bringing you a gumball too, the fact that it looks like it is made of many open beaks, which insects swarm out of, the fact that there are many more gumballs on the ground than people I think I could love at once and many more in this gumball tree, the fact that there could be enough gumballs and buckeyes for everybody if I decided to pick them up, the fact that I have decided

that there are enough for us, at least, because of the fact that you are the person I think about when I think about gumballs and buckeyes, and how beautiful they are even before I have picked them up and polished them put them in my pocket to bring to you.

Untitled
emerald goldbaum



A Beekeeper's Glossary

sophie pipik

Infection

is the word for the frost that sits like stone under a
weak heart,
for Bible paper lungs like flowers withering,
for this trickle of cold dark dirty water filling a skin
slowly with rot.

Terminal

is the word for far from home in the winter.
Now colony collapse
is coughing and crying,
is clenching and clawing,
is quiet, is finally
catatonic;
night rises, ties down eyelids,
alone in the dark there is shivering, and
stilling,
and sinking.

And sleep
is the kindest word by far

for this heart like lead
cold heavy and poisonous.

Infestation

is the word for a little itch opening lips,
sweet taste tickle on the tongue,
buzzing whisper gentle in the night.

Open up, Sweet Tooth:
wax-capped cavity,
little egg tucked
like a pebble in a pocket and
carried in the corner of a jaw.

Scavenge

is the word that makes a broken tooth a bug's
cradle
and lullaby means the soft song of a faltering
heartbeat.

And sugar ache sleeps squirming
in the shallows of the dark,
swells and leaks septic
and tosses and turns;
marrow grows a garden grub, pearl-white worm,

fills a
tooth like a
cup like a
socket like a
skin,

like a pit in a cherry like a crab in a shell.

Tremble twitch awake and hatch,
hatch which means breaking

means breathing
means wax blood honey and a mouthful of crawling
then it chokes down the throat like a little gold pill.

Defibrillate

is the word for climbing into a heavy hollow heart
and humming heat back into it,
for filling with the murmur of buzzing bodies,
for the ache, the quake, the sharp shaking awake—
to a pattering pulse and sugar veins,
to thrumming flesh,

flesh which means skin and bone are shelter from
the storm.

So in the sweet wet warm of a lung

wings crinkle open and drag in shuddery handfuls of
breath,
patch holes with sticky scales of skin,
and like clouds like canopy like creaking canvas
lungs flutter,
flex,
fill, and

inhale

is the word for opening
tender and helpless.

Honeycomb like hungry fungus builds inside,
and wax on wax and hex by hex a hive between the
ribs.

Exhale

is the word for little legs up the larynx,
over tongue and teeth or out the nose,
but soon back in the other nostril,
small bodies warm heavy sun-sticky with pollen and
nectar
and on every breath more.

Some
crushed.

Panic

is the word for flailing hands

That smash small bodies,

for an animal that dies when it stings,

for a mind waking

to a body busy and hurting and loud,

swarm cloud crowded mouth

and nerves dancing with bugs,

no voice but the buzzing no taste but the sweet and

no air.

No air.

Suffocation is what happens

to a hive wrapped in skin.

Cohabitate means keeper and colony both must

change.

Repair

means learning not to hurt each other,

which means bandaids

and soft voices

and time, and

adaptation

means the next brood is planted between sheets of
skin,
means sponging the muscle with hexagon tunnels
and
each egg curled like a baby fist
in its little flesh nest and growing,
soon goosebumps,
each one twitching a tiny pulse,
and a keeper's aching body is breaking
out in hives.

Rebirth

means growing pains,
groaning bones,
shuddering thrumming and hatching,
hatching which means healing
which means opening,
which means skin splits,
sloughs off,
and finally:
wax bone sinew and honey
make a tender hexagon lattice,

heaving and wheezing and blood washed away
it is even beautiful.

Pain ebbs

wings spread,
and carefully a colony finds its feet—
walks through the world
in a dancing yellow cloud
and a new easy breathing body made of wax,
smells of sugar sunshine,
holds onto hopes
and hums a honey song in many small voices.

A resurrection
means learning a new vocabulary.

Respiration
is the word for watching honeybees
crawl gingerly from buzzing skin,
for spreading a sweet breath across the air
and for running a hundred hungry tongues out
through the flowers,
for opening and coming home and filling up with
pollen.

Synthesis

is the word for a thing singing
in harmony with itself,
and together

is the word for someone who steps carefully around
an anthill.

Symbiosis

is the word for feeding each other
for carry you to wisteria poppy
honeysuckle and mint
and for hum soft and steady in your chest,
for shelter you through the winter
and for sing you to sleep in the dark.

Infestation

means a warm winter cluster
huddled in a heart.

Love is the only word left for a beekeeper,
and hive is a word that means home.

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