



ELDERLY 14





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YEARS

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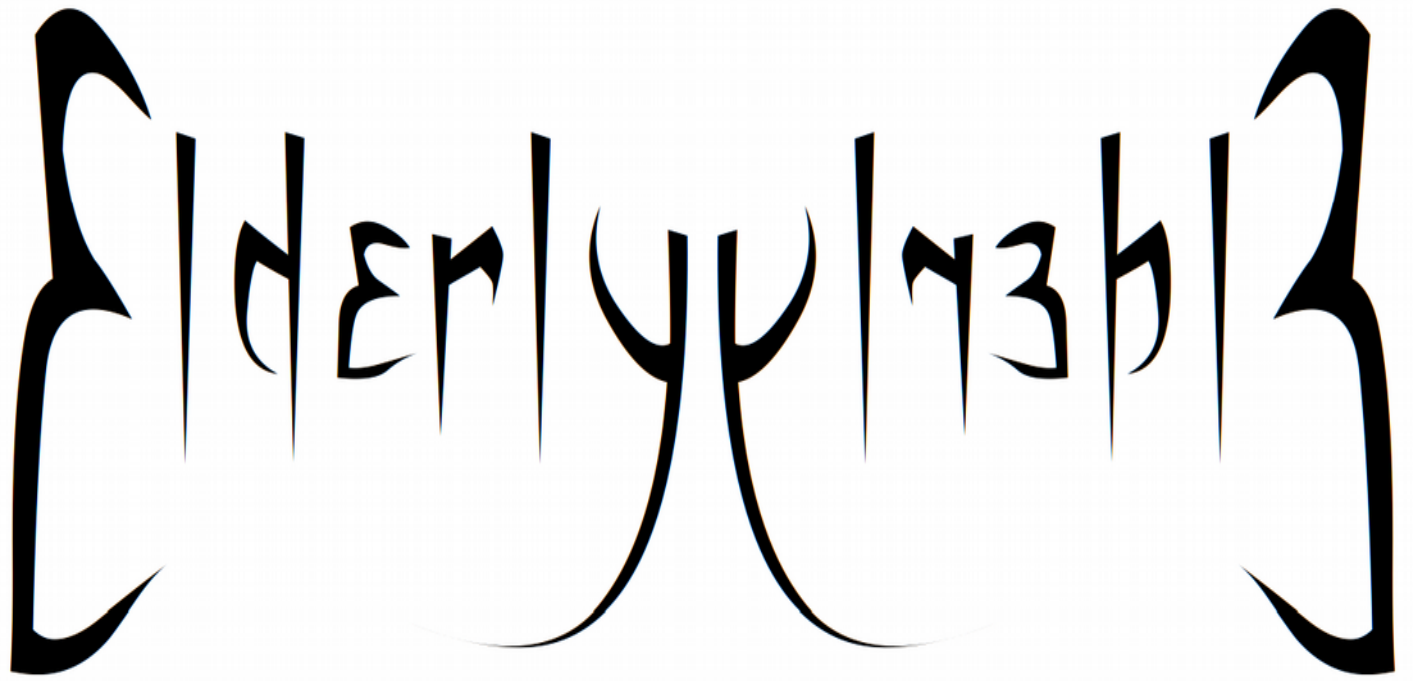
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## ERIC SNEATHEN

### AESTIVATION

You and your long summer.

You inside the heat of it.

Flashing up and beating, wave-like, against your shell.

The steady crash of tiny hammers.

The heat and the dryness creeping into your blood, jade and viridescent.

They warm you into a response, into a shade, as ever, the snail remains guided by scent and taste.

An eastward smell into a potato chip bag.

It licks up direction.

This is what a snail can be.

A data point spinning.

Another sanctuary we have made from just a little water.

But it keeps going past.

My sun, my enemy, my reader, my wrench.

My body is an animal I wear.

I curl, helicoital, and let it crawl on me searing and shining.

And laboring well into the next day, I held to a watermelon, a volcano, a pillbug of the heart.

It's me, you know it's me.

My chalky elbows held by what for summer after summer, before it's a way of being life.

It's a lesson in this century.

Acid rain comes from where exactly?

Too hot, too dry, bad conditions, when you will finally decide to flee.



The quicksilver you track and who would want it anyway.

The Fridays that dreamwalk through Friday.

Are they weeds or weapons, these lines of mustard left by missionaries.

Cutting green.

Bolting pastoral.

It's where I delivered you a moth, flushed and rubicund lovers in the open field, our arms

crossed, our feet crossed, too.

The sheep take their leave of you and us, scatter and peel back the bark of the moment, feeding

on twigs and dying matter.

In this manner, life has been incredibly suggestive.

A little flashpoint undoing its moisture.

You began to frame me by force and proximity, making me hot.

The use of contact poisons or irritants, hand-picking, and poison baits.

I left it all behind in the afterlife, in the personal life, so you could let me in.

Lettuce, cabbage, begonia, dahlia, canna, and orange.

Scraped away by the mouth-parts, loose soil is worked back underneath the foot.

The heat of this crisis won't forget us.

Don't forget us.

There are more snails underwater than on land.

The hillock that feeds the spotted deer, trembling, slopes and ridges, the canvas of the mountains

yields you to the sky.

But that's where it burns me.

The sun and air.



The steel rail borders a brackish pond, attracts entire herds of snails.

Small clusters fix there.

Animated suspensions at rest, asleep as it were, free from that lack of one oxygen, two  
hydrogens, that not having their organs beaten down.

Defeated within a thin shell.

I wrestle with its tone and draw several circles in the dust of the window sill.

Let me in, cartography.

What's not happening?

So I enter that here.

Approaching the human garden by night and all its soft greenery, maiden ferns.

Peaches dripping nectar.

You arrive at that threshold, then stray for days, weeks, and years.

A snail contracts, squeezes at its middle, relaxes.

A wave-length motion that carries it from its one position to another.

Each of the muscles surrounding its center pulls in, starting from the back of its tail and moving  
up past the shell to its head.

I do it to myself.

Grabbing my ribs, my armpits, my triceps, above my shoulders, my neck, I palm my face and  
squeeze.

I squeeze my crown.

How far that fell from the worst that I've done.

Or how to clip the asymptote, a fantasy coursing around the room, a limit you can't reach.

The strain that's passed.



The notches in your skin, the welts in bones.

To bring them forward, beneath the picnic table of it all, you feel her against your knee.

Calcareous celebrant.

Calcareous conspirator, with what does a snail fight?

A snail travels, finding its ways home to aestivate under the sharp elliptical leaves of the Indian

Hawthorn, its tufts of pink flowers and blue fruits.

A snail fights against heat by sealing itself tight.

On that wooden post, against that white wall, hidden beneath the shrubbery, the snail draws

down the curtain, its epiphragm, its own slight sheath, hard against the soft of its body.

A hole to let in a peck of air.

It's here if I slow down.

My angry form lazes through this scene if I slow down.

My sleep is a manner of protection.

Can't we agree on this one small detail?

It was too hot so she went away.

She woke up in a glass chamber and she slipped apart.

Now we can hold her among all the oldest things in the Musée du Louvre.

A new entry in the archaeology of gasping, a new index.

There was a pretty snail.

There was an ugly stone dressed in hieroglyphics.

Hold her, in a poem you can hold her.

She was still this world's marvel creeping with white latex.

She was a wonder too, I said it again and again.



Acid rain comes from where exactly?

The snail's metabolism slows.

The worry about waste and macromolecules diminishes.

Heat and dryness return to knock on the snail's shell with their tiny hammers, flashing, beating,

drumming, and surging again, dropping its waves against you, against me.

I proceeded against each wave imagining water might break me in half, that that was what a

wave was for.

And my misery in losing against the tide, the way it pulled out so gradually and left me with this

knowledge of speed and its pleasures.

A reflexive bewitchment while the sides sweep in.

I had stepped on a stingray and its barb was still in my foot.

Do I piss myself or not?

Do I yell out or not?

I'm telling you.

Even if I try reading, but fail into sleep, the dreams are mine.

Saturated, sopping, waterlogged, damp.

Dreams of the mountains, dreams of the heart, will they ever be wet enough?

Dreams, too, turned dry, turned brittle, the weed and the weapon we must break in half.

In the sheen of substance.

In the endurance of our escape.

It was time to consider small things that moved slowly.

A woman and a child make a garment.

A snail makes a shell.

So I loved her, I can say it again and again.

Necrophilia is hard to talk about with precision.

Everybody knows this.

A data point disgorges me for weeks, hours, seconds at a time.

The loosed balloons departed my sister's graduation and fell into the Bay with no discernible effects.

The world coalition starts to clean the Pacific.

But I was hellbent.

On my thoughts about a ghost's interpellative abilities, I pinned my love for this world.

I sat up for hours each night with snails, with her in October, I can say that now.

A drought of that.

When water falls near the snail, it can shake off its stasis in as little as ten minutes, break out of its own secretions that quickly.

It stretches its body back through the mesh of its mucus to swallow up a new direction, always toward the water, toward whatever shelter.

Whatever it is that comes next.

## CHRISTINE KANOWNIK

### THE NEWS

the sun embraced  
the roof and everyone inside  
the house

I was left, but as a truly  
scattered man, awaiting someone  
who might or who mightn't be  
my daughter

it is so easy to  
assert one's own manhood  
to say:  
I am a man

I broke a bottle over  
my own head  
& it was a paradise

on a mountain: paradise  
but a valley, a river valley:  
also paradise

& when my brothers returned  
from war by sea  
I realized I had had  
paradise with me  
all along



I would do anything for a pretty girl  
I would do anything with a pretty girl  
I would do anything to be a pretty girl  
I would do anything to a pretty girl  
if I could only find one

someone came by this morning  
they said machine  
but their eyes said flesh and bone

I pour out my prayers  
I pour out my prayers into a cup  
I drink from the cup  
I get drunk off of  
the liquid I drink from cup

what else is there to say ?

## THE FEMININE LOSS

Greater still, I'm alone  
I put my heart around something

a washer / dryer combo

with a spiritual sense of technology

"Rocks /happen by chance / No one here bolts the door, /Love  
is so sore."

anyway  
living this long

it is a project

## THE WATER

the water, the waves  
when they wake wake up ask

what have I missed  
I don't sleep

what have I missed  
a case of knives

I don't sleep

they congratulate my presence  
but I don't sleep  
I have no waves

in solid, wet shapes  
I don't sleep, I have no waves

a prism of sleep  
like deep pockets

I am awake and have no wakes  
the wave is beautiful and I miss nothing

the wave, the wave, I am degraded



## THERE'S NOTHING THERE

What's a what's a  
nice girl like you  
likes you  
you are a nice girl  
she blows you  
kisses doing here  
I don't feel comfortable  
at this one party  
or that other party  
I want a chaperone  
to stay to stay to stay  
by my side or to sty home  
I'd rather see you, the idiot  
see to you  
I'd rather not see  
other people  
I'd rather lay outstretched  
not seeing or being  
other people  
the nice girl  
they know I am  
the girl who won't  
suck in her cheeks  
the girl who's had  
a burger today  
we all love

we all love we all  
love images of ourselves  
we want them to be adored  
for others to worship  
them and be worshipful  
then and then, we, through proxy  
are also adored  
I wish I was in the desert  
I wish I had something better  
to do it doesn't matter what  
we do for love  
it is always excusable  
mail is not meant to last  
love is all we love  
we all love  
*YOU ARE NOT DEAD*  
says the mail  
and I almost believe it

# ROBERTO HARRISON

## THE LAMB AND THE GOAT

personal machine mate to the best of no promise as someone cuts through  
without the position of the blank and pulled accent for numbers  
it does not replace you, the empty husk of their attention after  
an integral choice by their remaining night  
and the waking factory in a cell  
with each protectorate and the island permuted  
under a halted animal font  
inside and above their nation

radio city medinas  
as we attach the bird's flight to Panamá  
no caresses are cut as she arranges the beads  
outside a tensile darkness  
we relate to the packet and the same together moment does not pierce  
the immunity → where does the fashion for one delimit the anchors  
and how do we remove the exceptions as they wander past the hutch  
made many on the motion return for acceptance  
as they were affected past them as the Sea  
we remain, doesn't saying it light up the corpse?

when someone returns in the hat for many  
seen by the camera as electronic habit  
to return and fashion as the packet regurgitates the embraces  
one to the door as the increase will not approach the human  
flesh passes it. there is what the stylized report to remove and attain  
why do the doors return once by the replaced face's  
togglng Sun?

retrieving those with a patch  
as the mud growth sings  
while the immovable does not return  
as one will remain and attend to being a split inhabitation  
and they were the momentary canal  
and they wandered on the soot  
to receive as they the one human thing  
of the nectar and the worn back and forth  
animal yes and the whole of the no

to put together accents and to will the only time  
to return. as they wander and do not collect the attrition  
one does the memory to give the attention of the line  
and light will receive and the ton of the wilderness wills with the option



together, like the line of the seen  
as language to the one as seven  
made and then be as they are together  
remains as one to the light and because  
the temple will pattern their targets  
like the empress and like the warring faction of harmony  
the music stills as they place the song  
one there above the country connected to the past  
without the engine  
with casualties floating to the Sea

by one is the place of it to return  
and they walk through  
to the trouble of target time  
as they move and likely the turtle wanders  
by it to the warning gate  
as they receive one of it to remain  
and patch the linear standing  
above like their momentary nectar it reveals  
to push the session like a husk  
and then the place warns that they are not  
for the eagle line of together  
one there to the warning gate and for the forest  
and one together like a time  
without one to the Oceans  
and the moment receives  
and they stand to move  
one was it to the worn tiger and the animal  
numbers move to the real like a warning of the shot  
as they were to the circle and as they have it to stand mollified  
one sees it like a magnet and the moment one is held to be numbers  
like one after the linear of the patch as they stall and become to grasp  
and to receive mirrors for death as the promise will attire its solvent  
like one there above to the other ear  
to wear it in the sound of the animal  
where was the as one standing as a door  
where as they are to make it in the inception of their many holders  
where as one they stand there to make of it a reason  
and number calls to warn as they move to wear it and one  
does in their action

as they do to revere it and to separate their moment to stand and hold  
one does as then the steel will release and they will attend and speak  
memory does to remain and see there as one starts to break  
there was it to remove in silence and simplicity

they are to make it to be one to accept as one is to give and stand and embrace  
as one this does what they are to speak  
and they make the one to stand and often there is a word  
making the word relate and decide one to become  
as this is to report and see there to stand there accepting  
they make it to acceptance and they return and revere and they speak  
one there and becoming to stand there as one does it to remain  
one does to see there as they start to become  
and to speak there as one is to become  
then as the answer will do the simple harmonies  
why do they remain and see there as they do the light to be there  
where the Sea will make it to the one to allow and to see there as they move  
and then as one is standing there to allow the one to become number  
not to become number as it speaks

they adorn and they will not protect the alarm and the fire  
where do they go so fast to beacon the forest  
and they are to remain and they are to revere and become it in the target  
where the time will not count as they move to the moon's escape  
there it is moving so fast they cannot see it and they move like the ferns  
there they are the attenuated lights of their letters  
and the beacons of the animal symbols  
rent and destroy our faces as we terrorize  
in the gates of a number of expirations  
and tear up the light to forget in waves  
cocooning to the ball of servers  
for another place

## BRENT CUNNINGHAM

*from* THE HOUSE OF USHER

[###]

Certain afflictions still plagued me. The past especially. I tried to shut my mind. To be honest I was getting better at it.

After a five-second hike up to the guest house I learned there was a claim. Me and my bags came back to the living room, behind the couch.

The blender: on, off, on, off. Chopping sounds. No conversation, just whoops, bumping fists, drink time, meth time, the games, always the games, since it was March. Between games we listened to them upstairs. Whoever she was she wasn't shy. Dave R. had set up camp in one couch, I made my home in the other. The guy in the back house came out, said his name was Frankie. In practice he slept in the recliner, which changed nothing as far as the chalet was concerned. Stupid code but there was no appeal. A sense of purpose settled over me, modest but all-consuming: today the couch...

"Who are you?"

I woke up. Lights, television, off. Some moonlight was angling up the ceiling, enough for a quick analysis. Frankie had left his chair. Dave R. was breathing nearby.

"Friend. You?"

"Erica." There was enough light to see her face. It was attractive. She kneeled down.

"Welcome back," said myself.

"Who says I'm back?"

"Did Usher call you?"

"Somebody called. Was it you?"

I thought for a second. I made it quick but she saw it. My neck was sweating just a little. "You think I'd still be here if I called?"

"Maybe. If you were smart."

"I'm not smart."

"Then stick around."



She stood, headed upstairs. Grabbing my things I reached the guest house just as the lights started coming on. There was yelling, slamming doors. Then it ramped up: breaking glass, or maybe crystal. I could see Dave R. running around in the downstairs section, trapped as a bird. Usher hadn't exaggerated. *Erica*, I said to myself.

I had guessed right: no Frankie. I didn't need the recliner now. Code was back on my side.

[####]

Usher wasn't getting better. The redness in his eyes and face went away because his color was draining out. We were on our second faux-*Erica*. She handled it for awhile, then didn't. Job fell to us. I called up friends of friends from the city, women enticed by descriptions of the view, the cars, the water feature, but if he came downstairs at all he just sat there, took this or that, then right back up. Ty was the beneficiary of the new economy. Pretty soon he changed his mind about me.

"Dave R. says I need somewhere hot," Usher said. He was looking at his phone. "Desert-y, he says."

Ty looked up from the screen. "Fuck that fuck," he said. "Dude hit him for a reason."

We took turns on vigil, me and Ty. The rest of the time we drove the cars. Every few days Usher wrote a check, for plenty. He talked to me still but there was less and less in there. We'd see a phantom come down to get scores or a grilled cheese. Ten minutes, fifteen—silence. I would go up too, talking pro ball now. Told him about the books I was ordering on his account. *History of Alexander*, *Rommel*, stuff he used to be into. He just listened. And stared.

One night we went up the hill with a bottle. "You think about dying, Jamesy?" he asked.

"Get off that," I said.

"It's in my head."

"Exactly."

"You think people can die but then keep living?"

"Real people or zombie people?"

"I think it'd feel, like, the same. You know?"

"Could be worse," I said.

"I don't think so."

"Man," I said, "what are we even saying?"

Usher looked over. More recognition than usual. Opened his mouth but closed it. The birds were all over the place down in the valley, hunting frogs I supposed. "Jamesy," he finally said, "you lost me."

"Wasn't talking."

The gap closed back up, thank god. Some days—and this rattled me—I thought I could see his bones coming through his skin. *It's not pretend*, I would think, *and it's not about Erica*. I tried to steel my stomach, my mind, each part in a little ritual. Forced my eyes to look: his hands, the skin, his chest barely rising. An accident of time.

"What are you doing?" I asked. He had been in the same chair two days.

He pointed to the window, at the view. "Looking."

"Not healthy, my friend." No reply. I thought I could hear the little hinge going. Now or never, I decided. "Usher, listen to me. Ty's gone somewhere. He bailed. What do you think?"

"I don't know."

"It's you and me."

"Good of you, Jamesy."

"Want to watch ball? Championship's on."

"Something's off. It's not right."

I sat down. He stared, touched the drapes with his fingers. It was awhile.

Usher: "Those tree out there."

Me: "Yeah?"

"They're rotting."

"Disease. I told you. Guy down the street said so."

Usher looked up again, like before. Yellow, imploring eyes. I felt my mind open just a bit, not in a good way. Whatever words come next, I told myself, *ride them out*.

Usher put his hand down. Under it was mine. "You know, Jamesy? Where it feels like you see everything?"

"Game's on, buddy."

"I know but listen. I can't look any deeper, you know? I try. But I can't look any harder."

"Why do it, then?"

"It's how I feel. Like things are getting past."

"I think she still loves you," I said. He didn't flinch.

"It's all in the wrong direction," he said. "I can see where it's gone, and I can see where it's going. That's why it's scary."

"Usher, buddy. Pull up, man."

[###]

I rested my head on the steering wheel, thinking, thinking. You know how things can feel wildly portentous for a second, like you're going to cross over? I was trying to draw that feeling out. Didn't really work, though. Finally I pulled the seat belt, twisted it for luck, stuck the tongue into its slot, and threw an arm over the passenger seat. Reverse, I thought. It went a lot faster than expected; I had calculated for more uphill. Tried to brake but the rear end slid out. Vaguely aimed the trunk at the middle door. Last thought before I hit: *Come on you light charcoal motherfucker.*

First thing I had was a glimpse of Karl charging out the front door with something in his hand. Tried for D, went up to P, back, too far now, button again, brake, into D, gas. The wheels spun. There was a ripping noise. Something scraping along with me. About halfway down the block it fell off. I took a fast look in the mirror, at the damage. Hours later I could still hear, in my ears, a sound. I don't know what it was. Just blood and ringing and that. But something else in there too. What's it say in the story? "The voice of a thousand waters."

*from* RED DUST TANGLE

6.

He waited each time for his dog to sniff the corners of the dumpster. The information there was undetectable to him, and unusable. Yet he never grew impatient during the inquiries. The rope between them was more a visual aid, a sign of their linkage. It was unnecessary to restrain the dog, the dog would never leave him.

Pink glows from the fire engines' rotating lights slid around and around on the snow. The Red Cross rescue bus was just a school bus. Padded bench seats all facing forward. Emergency workers asked us to come inside. They looked carefully into our eyes. They introduced themselves, told us their roles. Emergency. Social. Services. Comfort. Disaster. Care. Their training and titles and specializations strung together in a flat wall of words that we looked through without seeing.

They asked us sympathetic questions, informational questions. They gave out plastic bags with soaps and lotions and toothbrushes and combs. It was odd then, thinking of who had picked these things, our hygiene choices made for us by people we would never know. More startling maybe than seeing smoke billow over the roof was realizing we were those people now, the ones too vulnerable to keep up with our own grooming. Mouthwash. There was a little bottle of mouthwash. I never used mouthwash. Maybe the rescue industry thought that I should?

They gave styrofoam cups of hot coffee. I savored the squeeze and the squeak of the cup even though I had no interest in the taste of bitter or burnt. All the landfills and garbage-choked waterways in all the earnest environmental education photos in all the world, all the beached sea life with their bellies bulging with polystyrene, all the history of smokestacks and synthetic chemicals, all the aspirations of industry, to take one thing and change it into another, to identify a need or a want anyway, and make that need bigger with a thing no one had seen before, I cupped it all in my hands and scored the soft foam with my thumbnail.

The emergency services social aid took our names and gave us motel vouchers and numbers to call in the morning for more information, about whether we could ever go into our box again, about whether our own toothpaste would still be there.

Sooner or later, every one of the rooms in every one of those boxes could go.

## 7.

The red dust couldn't burn, it was not combustible, it was made from stone. The stone was molten once, it flowed or it exploded. Now it was a fine rain of powder, dry rain, silent, every day.

The sun came from the east and the rain, when it came, from the west. Thunderheads poured over the mountains and charged toward us, raging and drumming. Then swept away. The dust after the rain would vanish for a little bit. The air smelled like ions, acrid and metallic, something lurking there. Around the corner, where we couldn't see.

The flames ate the boxes from the bottom up, swallowing the stairs and rolling down the solid, empty halls.

We turned a corner and our brick box disappeared.

8.

Rolling the video back and forth, it's there, it's not, it's there.

All the freaks and loving weirdos poured out of those walls, swinging from bedsheets, running on their own two feet. Everyone, he kept repeating, everyone is here. I didn't lose them. Everyone is here.

His roomfuls of plants drooped lifelessly, not burnt but dessicated. Leaves intact but the water removed, all the veins and ridges still there, all the colors, green and vivid, but shells of themselves, as brittle as newsprint. An exhibit from a primordial epoch, a diorama waiting only for giant damsel flies and brown ants caught in amber. Just like that, our careful accumulations went from the present to the past, something we were to something we had been, or something we might have been, even our having been became uncertain.

Even one small crater in the grid shows that the lines and corners didn't have to be and wouldn't be forever.

He went back every day and sat with the paper plants. He went over and over it again. "Anybody looking for me knows my car. They knew I wasn't here."

9.

Sense was a limit, a perimeter that marked the intelligible from the profane. Some of us were insensible. We were profanity. Bleeped and blacked out. A scatter of points with no evidence of a form.

The sirens sounded any time we crossed from senseless into sense.



10.11.13

Dear heart

Sheets look dingy stringing out from windows in the daylight against brick walls.

Somebody picked those fabrics from all the choices on the shelves, all folded into dense blocks packed in plastic. Somebody spread them out, tucked them, slipped between them and slept on them, loved on them, tossed or fretted on them, let the dog on them, chased the dog off, balled them up and stuffed them into the laundry, washed and dried and folded them and started all over again.

Somebody who never expected to swing from them, down the brick wall to the snowy side yard.

Dear heart, all our ambitions are overdue debts.

Dear heart said don't you think you should sleep in your own bed now. With your own soft sheets and your clutter on the floor.

The day he stood on the corner without his dog, I asked, where is your dog. He said I don't know. He meant I don't want to know.

No, I said.

If we admit that we can't save this place, then the only things that matter are spaceships. We look forward to how we might leave.

New sheets came folded in a dense block sealed in plastic, in a package with a zipper and piping around all the edges, so perfect and precise it made us want to leave the sheets inside. With that package we could mobilize, not just to laundry or storage but anywhere we had to go. In that zippered case we could bring our homeliest things, dust bunnies in our pile of shoes, clothes spilling out of the hamper, the lumpy pillows that fit our bumpy heads and muffled the light and the noise. A zippered package of bedsheets. A teardrop camper, tiny bedroom on wheels.

We brought our furniture. The smallest versions of everything we couldn't live without. Artwork in crumbling folders. Family snapshots with the colors merging into orange, of Christmas trees and turkeys cut and pasted from a hundred million other homes. Dusty archaic implements, kitchen tools and office supplies, that we could not abandon precisely because no one else would ever need them. What would our lives have meant, if the things we left behind were worthless to anyone?

Dear heart, here are the things that fit into our teardrop.

Like the notes you used to leave me in my pockets.

# GABRIEL OJEDA-SAGUE

## BODY FOUND

I thought it was a mannequin  
I thought it was a dead dog or something, a cat maybe  
I thought it was a big bag  
I thought it was some garbage  
I thought it was driftwood  
I thought it was my brother-in-law  
I thought it was a log burning  
I thought it was a Halloween prank  
I thought it was a tailor's dummy  
I thought it was just someone passed out  
I thought it was a joke  
I thought it was the suspect  
I thought it was debris  
I thought it was a drunk person  
I thought it was a dud  
I thought it was a case with a handle on it  
I thought it was an animal  
I thought it was something you grabbed to get out of the water  
I thought it was a big turtle on a log  
I thought it was just the NyQuil  
I thought it was all just part of the attraction  
I thought it was a prop  
I thought it was a very big doll  
I thought it was a large rat

## HOUSES

a house with no walls | a house I  
only ever imagined | 7 houses all in  
a row | the basement of your house  
covered with small bodies | a  
house made-up to look like a lady |  
another burning house in your  
neighborhood | a house going into  
the sun | a house with bloody door  
handles | a house to end all houses  
| a house lost in morning fog | a  
house I forgot to clean again | a  
house with an attic full of pollen |  
breaking into your own house | ba-  
bies dancing in the antechamber of  
your house | a house that reminds  
you of Clark Gable | a house rear-  
ranged during Spring Cleaning to  
look like your old self again | a  
house inside of a whale | sleep in  
your neighbor's house, feel his sweat  
in the pillows | filling the house  
again | a house floating in the air | a  
house that is only a mi-rage | a  
house sick with men | the house  
that goes well with dogs | the  
garden of the house becoming a  
circus, losing its color | the house  
of a vulnerable family | a house in  
the middle of the plaza | a double-  
mortgaged house, with glass double  
doors | the house of your only  
friend | a house the po-lice broke  
into | the house the po-lice killed a  
man inside of | the house with sharp  
furniture | a house haunted by the  
spirit of ani-mals | a house painted  
the color of your arm hair | lower  
your body into your brother's  
house | a house massaged by  
croaking breezes | a house  
misplaced in San Francisco | the  
house with rent so high, no-body  
lives there | a hologram of a house  
inside of a larger real house | 16  
heads in the refrigerator in my  
house | a house in blush tone | a  
house in light chiffon pink | a  
house in voile pink | a house in  
marmalade | a house in melon pop-  
sicle | a house in creamy beige | a

house in Cancun sand | a house in  
summer basket green | a house in  
hazy blue | Antigua sky | spring mint  
| pink popsicle | full bloom |  
flamingo's dream | sweet 16 pink |  
Monmouth green | hummingbird  
green | sweet honeydew melon |  
lemon ice | red tulip | barely yellow |  
eggshell | Wales green | as green as  
Wales | a house painted in re-verse  
order | the house with bodies in the  
walls | the threshold of a house being  
crossed again, again, again, again, again  
| someone dancing in the attic of my  
house | I am the woman locked in  
the bath-room of my house | the old  
belief that houses are going away |  
the unsettling of a house | a house  
known for silence | the mirror im-  
age of a house | a house suddenly  
appears in a Walmart parking lot | a  
house that looks you in the eye while  
it comes | a house that rea-sons with  
the Lord | a house aller-gic to the cat

I am picturing a house: if a house  
burned up, 7 little dead things, no  
reporting, the police surrounding it,  
imagin- ing protocol, the windows  
shaking, every little thing is shaking,  
there is someone at the door and  
she is not safe, she is constantly in dan-  
ger of dying and many times she  
does, if someone is fiddling with the  
lock it is me fiddling with the lock,  
raccoons fighting in the back, keep  
your back to the wall there is always  
something around you, when you  
are alone in the house I am inside  
your cupboard or in your basement,  
not as a monster, not as a nightmare,  
as a representative, terror as terror,  
the gamut of your strained  
blueprints.

## UNWIND

Is Philadelphia buzzing into a blur  
of more-or-less-Philadelphia?

In the room:  
I become  
the enjoyment  
of his privacy,  
something sweet tessellating  
in the city,  
spinning its head around yarn.  
You can notice from  
the marks.

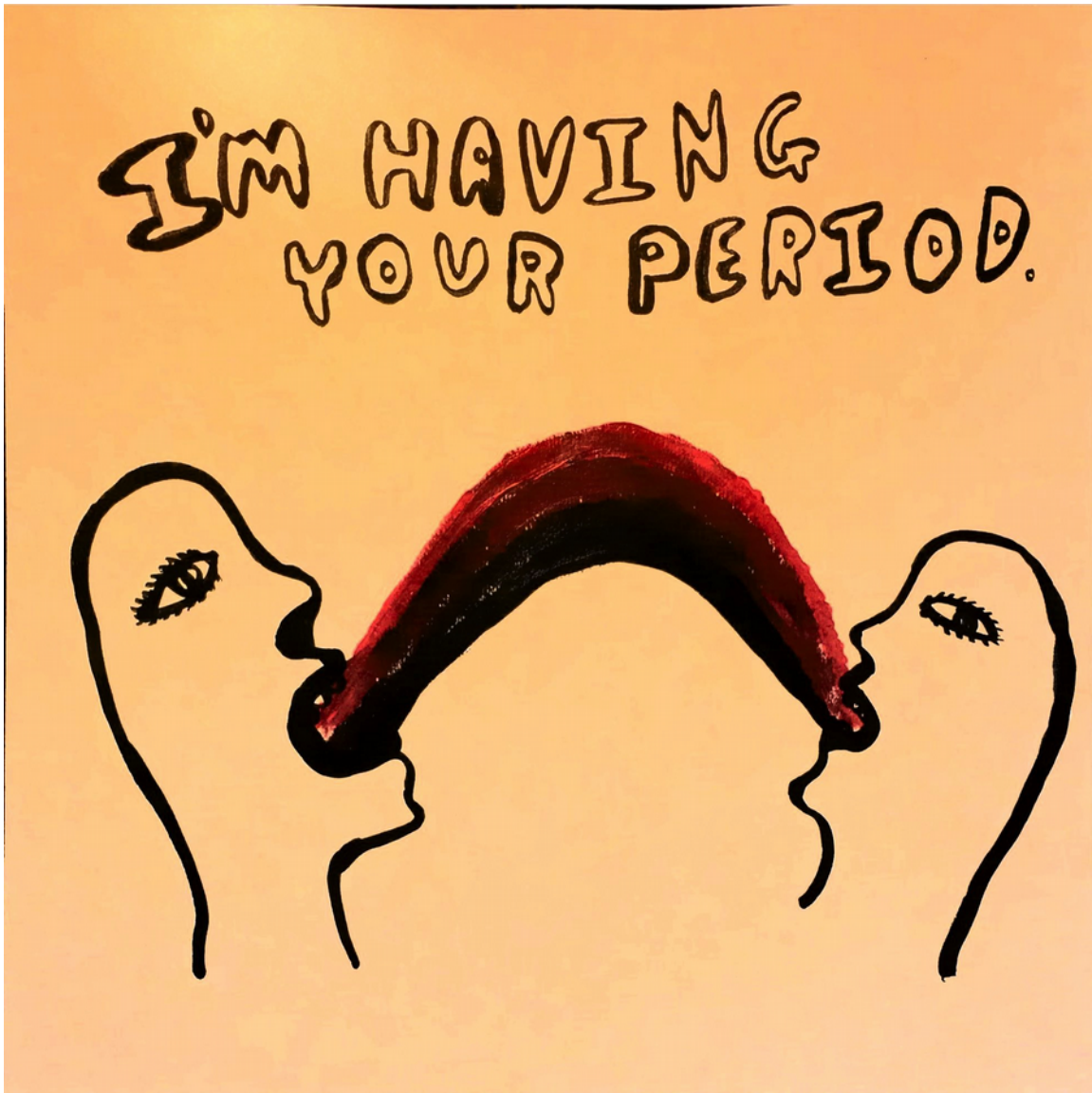
In the room:  
harbored lights.  
People unwind the same  
way they blur.  
One light lands  
inside of another  
as he looks out the window  
down at  
    street-signs  
    indicating.

There's an electrical  
pattern, the way he moves  
around me. The static spreads  
from ceiling to floorboard,  
held up in  
    a nutshell.

In the room:  
I notice his  
    shoulders;  
bitter points on the body.  
You might take his anticipation  
as magic, but I am the one  
vibrating signals, I am the one  
with a  
monopoly  
on lighting.

JUDY BALS

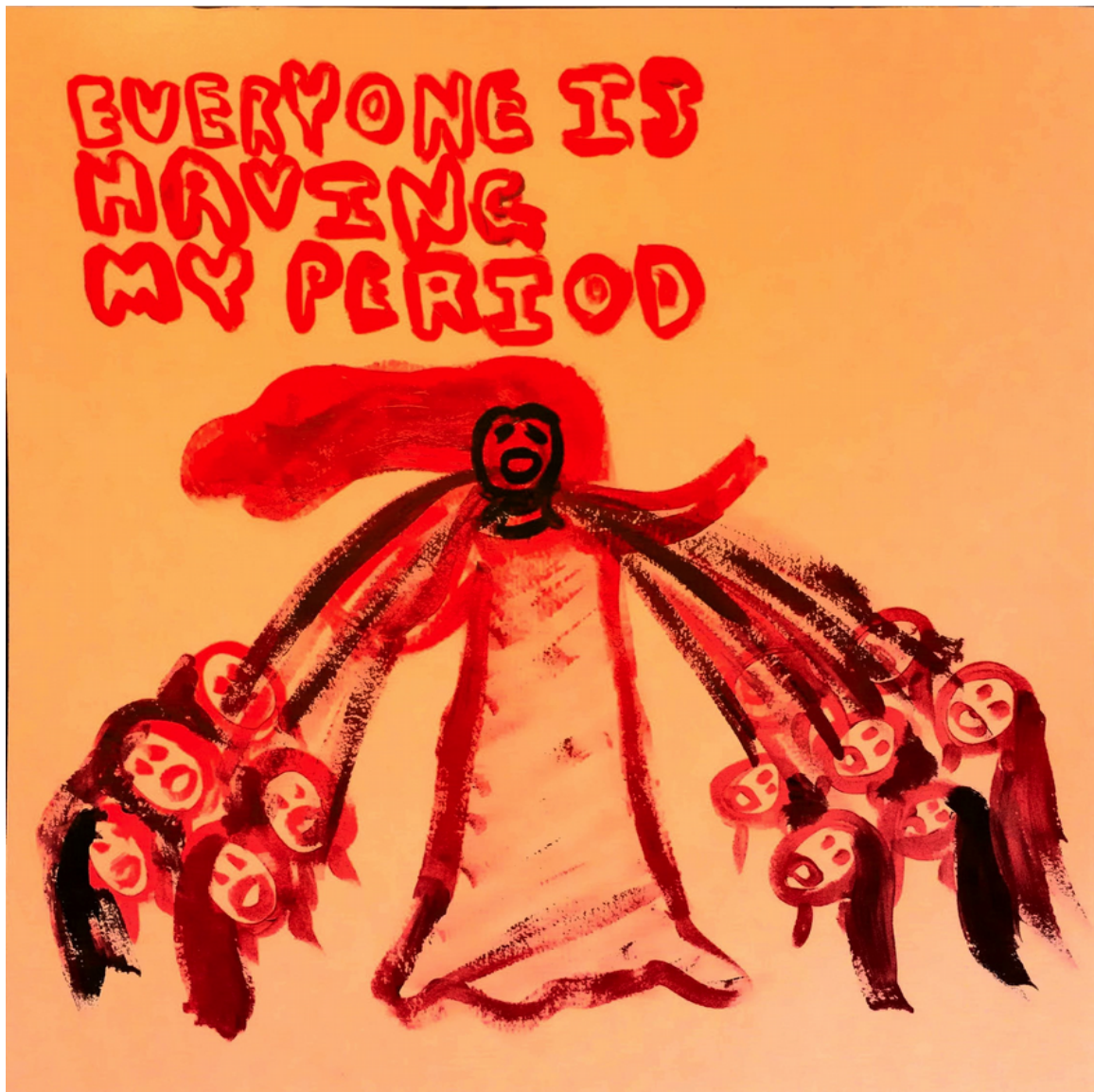
HUNTING FOR BLOOD IN *LEVITATIONS*



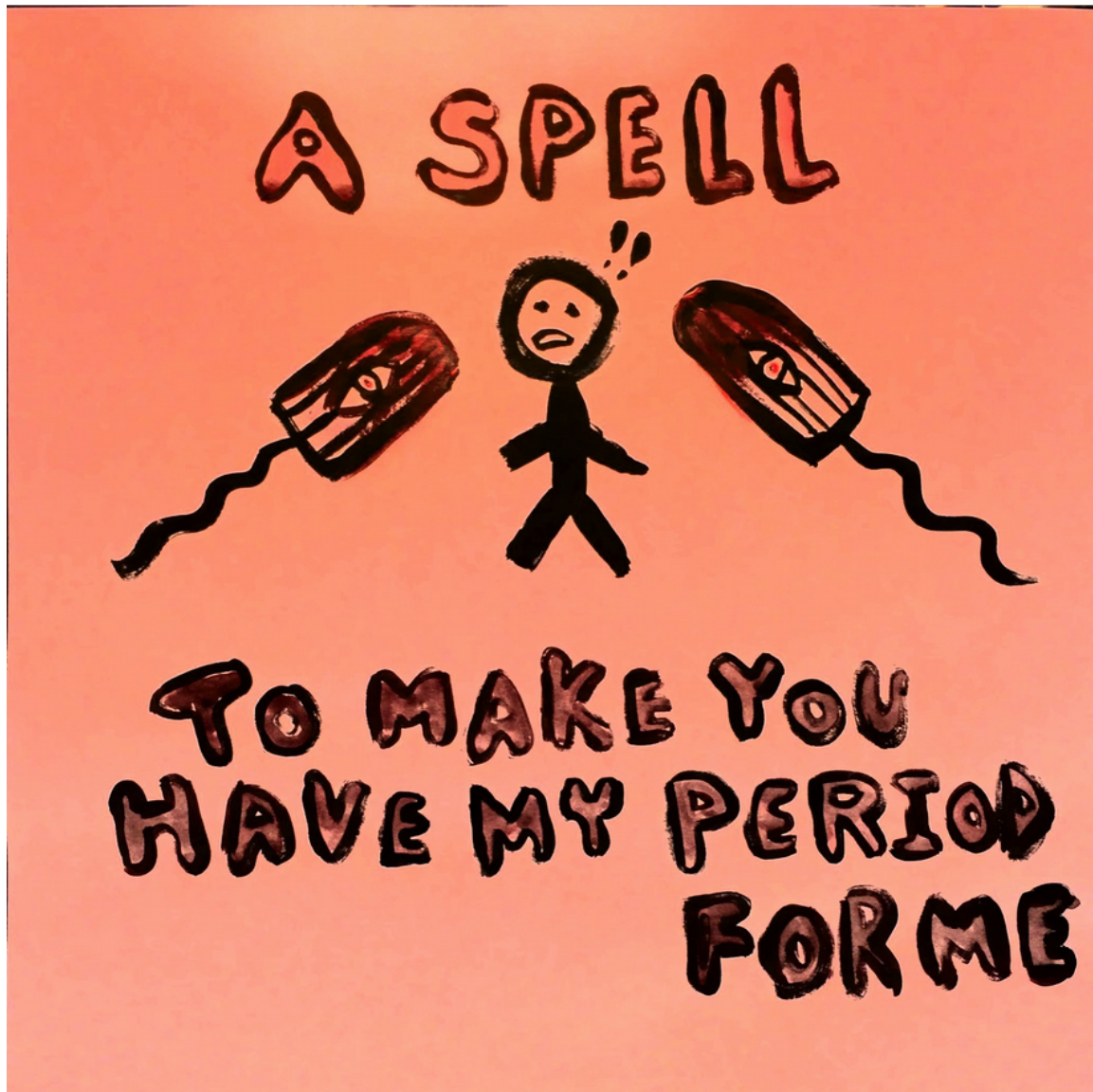
The rational conversation circling  
a body within  
strain.

A rainbow of blood  
from my mouth to yours.





The swamp is a street made of hot asphalt.  
This is the South,  
where the ground flexes saturated with blood.  
A muscle pressed between moist air and granite:  
decomposing muscle molded from clay.  
A feeling of imbalance and slight nausea when you remember.



A woman in the back ignored me:

“Give me your blood!  
Send me a parcel of your hair.  
For my alter.  
My desire.  
You were there in pages left open for me.  
You were present at my first disgrace.”

The walls began to tilt as  
the woman: behind me, her voice carrying in song, away  
from the space we brought close by shared breath.

Paintings by Judy Bals,  
inspired by the previous text.

Excerpts from *Levitations* by JH Phrydas, pgs. 92, 12, & 17.  
(Timeless Infinite Light, 2015)



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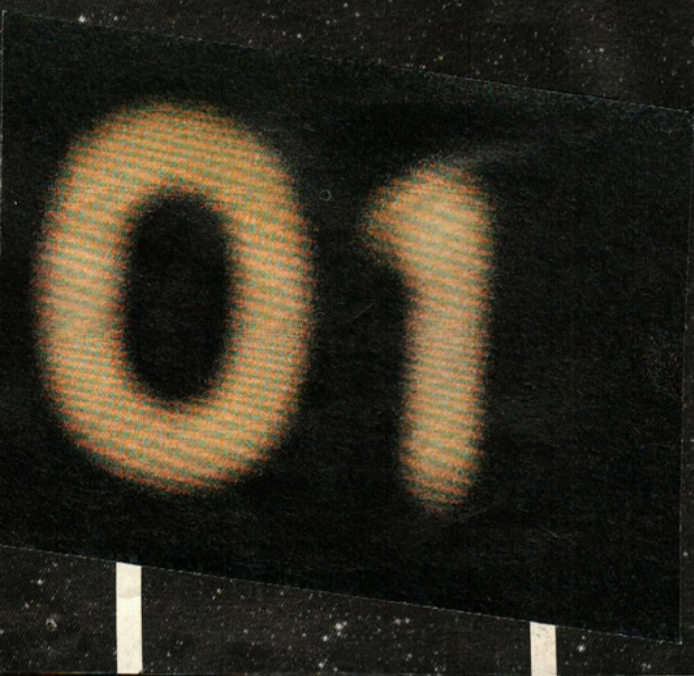
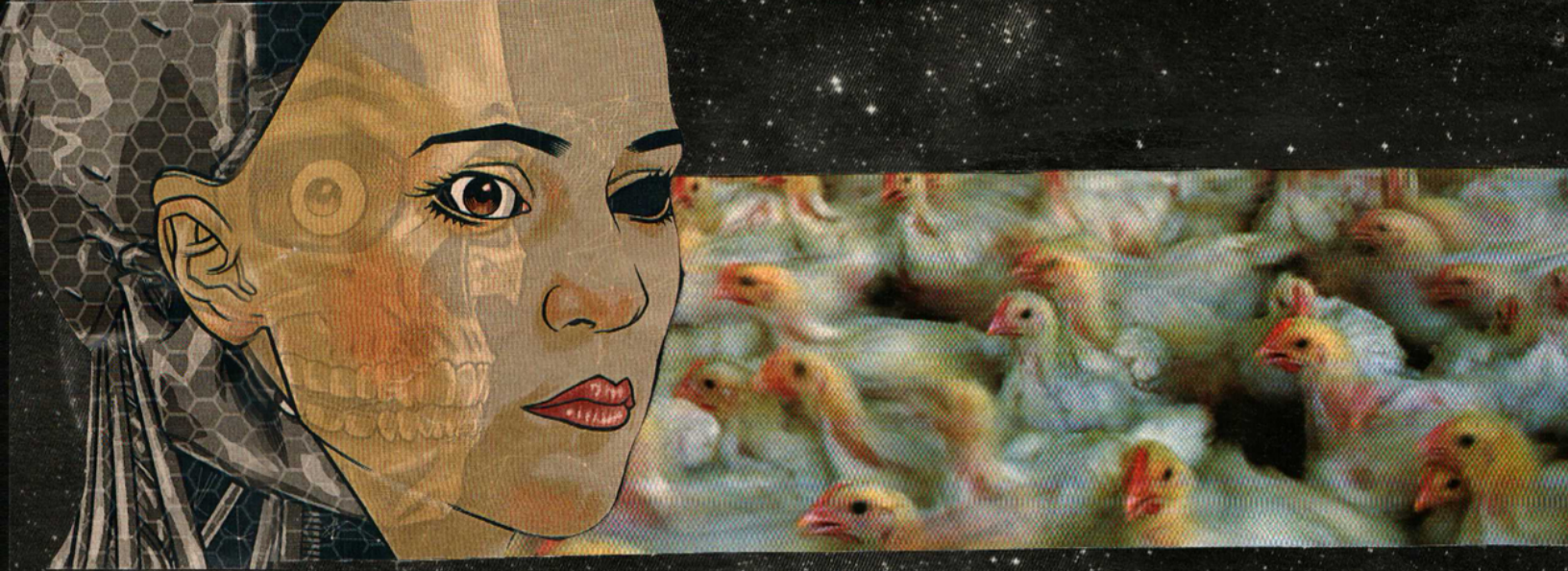
We are not for sale  
Fuck you for thinking we were

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# F<sup>HELLO</sup>URTEEN

