



ELDERLY



# MEMBERS

Paige Taggart

Aaron Shurin

Emily Wallis Hughes

Lawrence Fiffin

Melissa Mack

Laura Henriksen

## PAIGE TAGGART

SHE TOOK THE SWAMP OUT DOWN BY  
THE WATER AND DIVIDED A BIG MASS DIGNITARIES

she took the swamp out down by the water and divided a big mass of dignitaries  
differentiated the scalloped colored lies against the backdrops  
grains of sand eclipsed against an ocean of wide growth and tampered bells  
to slip is to silent is to ocean is to tied  
tide came in  
tidal wave  
in glass is each particular  
but we know that and still  
wake  
be it bells ringing out varied timbres  
or your ties for where you see yourself  
some split  
sand came undone  
still to speech would be to barnacle yourself  
onto an unknown  
what can together 4 an hour  
forever give up  
go blind out the numb ring attracted to your finger  
stretched time over a tooth  
truth fell out  
stomach roll is also lazy octopus  
hands on the grindstone  
or gravestone  
depending on what angle you've fallen from  
camp begotten laten grains  
fields field out  
it hasn't been missing

\*\*\*\*\*

great centaur also restless at the heels  
on hells island all was same  
seems simple to reduce  
and reduction is to lack formation  
and that's why we've tied one on  
wheeled-out on display  
show sharing each face  
to prismatic faces  
see window glass  
behind window curtains  
behind window isles on we got roads ridden

\*\*\*\*\*

fucked induced to sane on klonopin  
maine reduced to water on the mainland  
under the firepit is fear  
beyond blip blip bit boga  
be for once internal change  
force a pie down her throat she cunts for tomorrow  
sewn shind splained up  
boxed beyond bodega behind eye-walls for honey  
streamed in catching knots dig give in  
slid cone isle flint  
mountain cap against greasy sky  
stomach uranium deposited on ye old scummy earthland's bottoms  
ore ratched thorax deadpan laughter eyes unhooked  
fall out sky bridge be f fff ffff fffffff fffffff fffffff fffffff fffffff  
fffff remeantist freaminist female lisp feminine bliss  
fee feel fed congeal faceplant into effed up fuckery  
love begot pudding blockage and fall into endless babble fountain  
quote me on your skin  
tender evils a twin  
and winning her half she shines out

\*\*\*\*\*

the knuckle bridge is  
falling a century behind  
onto the fire behind a cup of benadryl  
for the allergian was allergic to everything dust  
falling spatial minutiae into planetary consent  
behind the broken wall  
knead up  
jumping beyond deliberation

## WHEN THE DRUMMER APPROACHES THE DRUM

when the drummer approaches the drum  
she's looking to enact a single beat  
don't be interrupted by lazy interaction  
with the fanfare  
approaching the needle below surface like a grenade dislodged  
you'll need a green money hand  
to approach the surface  
to banish the reason for warfare  
the eagle has landed lol  
and we eat fried chicken  
around the table because we want to be  
intimate and involved  
but we don't want to ebb  
out of our resources just yet  
night wears an effortless utility blanket  
I be a branch unfolding  
a Gaelic sword recoiled yields  
such a vibrant sheen  
come to healing and aim high  
when the drummer approaches  
the surface of a tautly pulled skin  
be it a pig's  
they exercise the right to toss a lucid finger to the sky  
toss a drumstick and watch it fall  
gives a drummer enough time to switch gears  
transition into a skim milk song  
lazy river of melody hussle to meet your flow  
to appeal to censorship we first must censor ourselves  
and I'd rather drown upturned in a puddle  
then extend like a droplet  
one clef of music in a lyric pool

## WHEN THE DRUMMER APPROACHES THE DRUM

when the drummer approaches the drum  
the top of her head must hold percussion  
she must be willing and able to stream  
a gain in momentum, foot tapping  
means the moment holds out a little longer  
than expected when not counting  
continuing to clarify the calculable mood  
is only feminine, beholden  
the observation swells  
to reveal a truth that is starving  
but saturated in being hidden  
just the cow's hide covering the cauldron  
is enough of a drum to be heard  
accessing this piece  
as she must stand columnar  
behind a bedding she stalls in song  
I spent my entire youth afraid of being kidnapped  
I'm in sequins on a roller coaster  
the roller coaster rides  
sequins fall off  
aggressive is  
the motion that made this  
built a thing  
to be an experience

## AARON SHURIN

### THE PRIVILEGE

Leisure would be sun on this cold day, and time for sun, and a feel for the sun's arc as a grade of infusion on a graph of spilling hours... So he sat at a table inside a shaft of decelerated time as a privilege he saw as a bonus — a “retirement package,” he laughed — in a zone of accelerated age for which he seized the sun as if with both hands, and pulled it close like a lover's body — a retirement “dividend,” he smiled — as if love too had an actuarial arc and he would use what he could, spend what he could... At lunchtime, with half a sandwich raised in his fist to punctuate the hour, that he was grateful for, and had lived for, and would die for, he knew, for lunches too have an arc — flow through the tunnels of noon thinning to a horizon itself thinning — and he ducked his head not so much to avoid the advent as to prepare his aim, without trembling (the sandwich held still) and with a certain focus as the sun bled in... At the little marble table where he hunched like a scholar, to sponge up the warmth that swelled the stillness to fullness and tempered the arc... He dusted off the crumbs like frost, rubbed the gleam on the tabletop as if to polish the stroke of light...

## GO NOW

“Don’t wait, don’t wait,” he said, “Go now.” What did I have to lose — a dream, some fabricated scene, a florid map of what I could have been? So I swirled my cape — world on its axis — churn of the cosmic winds — closed around my spinning self as if a new cocoon were spun — and here I am. “Here I am,” I said. “I didn’t wait, stepped into a little vortex rumbling like a laugh machine... and whoosh! Is this the place I meant to be, should have been?” I couldn’t see beyond my homely cape of stars, so lay down beneath that stitched-together sky. The dyed blue deepened, unfurled, spread above me, mind-wide — it pricked my painted stars with shots of gold, and licked me with its indigo tongue until my baby blue was true, and sucked me up toward the wilder, unrepentant, high, like a stripped leaf or a slipped sigh.... above the light, above the line, above the hooking threads and spines, above the spilling ink and guardian files... “So that’s the sky,” I thought... I tucked in my arms for speed and narrowed my eyes. “Take me up! Take me up!” I cried...

## IN AUGUST

Inner light, outer light, inner war, outer war, his grief, his grief, becomes my grief, his age my age, inner score, outer score, what remains, he said, what's enough, he asked, sun on my back and neck at the table where the buttered rice glistened, sun on the stretched-out cat boneless as a slug, inner light, outer light, late summer in the bleached hills, rolling as if in motion as the cows padded, raised their wet moon eyes when we passed in the hot wind and the hot light, inside and outside, it was, he knew, the moment he asked, and would be, enough...

## EMILY WALLIS HUGHES

### THE MYELIN

One gardenia on a woman's  
table. 1929 we have sauvignon  
blanc.  
Pinot. Grigio.  
1933. 1938. Germany, she was friendly  
with the ship captain.  
Her papers!  
They smelled of gardenias  
The war bodies'  
figure is gone  
Its figure is  
only color  
only remains  
And the gardenia is  
upright. The gardenia —  
was it ever real?  
Does it matter? How it smelled?  
Once it mattered. There's one  
made of tissue paper  
There's  
one made  
of grass. There's  
one made of mud

and teeth

Uncles' teeth

There's one made of flour, of course

and brown sugar

And one made of marrow!

The marrow in the grass

grass in —

The marrow in the house

The marrow in the room

The marrow in the bird

The marrow left in the bird

The marrow in the acrobat's

myelin

The myelin in the acrobats

The myelin in the man in

the batman costume

What I mean:

I have to name the myelin

No what I mean

is that it can't yet be located

by you or me or anyone

What I mean is there

is myelin in

the marrow and

it will stay there

Yes! the marrow is in  
the myelin  
in the sandstone  
in one of my feet  
and yours  
the myelin-marrow  
came out of the bodies and it  
has stayed out  
encircling us  
in red lakes  
lakes in lakes  
It goes into the trees  
the buildings  
the knives  
It eats what we eat  
It cuts the hair It shaves  
It has shaved  
the crucifix on  
the salmon wall  
Stupendous, it says  
just stupendous.  
What did we do  
when we named it  
What was the guide?

The baby

What if we didn't

name the baby

Is that protest?

And then we are photographed

as art

Name the baby knee

Name the baby thigh the baby ankle to the

toe but not the brain

Not the amygdala

Not the church

Not the statue nor? The

saint

Not the legs

Not the sexual position not

the pants

Not the bottle of ginkgo leaves

This kind of thinking was a

three-limbed tree and

a poet's long, brown wavy hair

A brown spot on a dog

The wallpaper by the radiator

Peppermint wallpaper in the room

The twin bed over the mouth

A spot of blood on

the pillowcase

My mother is in the hospital

She hears woodpeckers

bluebirds

as she is in labor

Her mother is not there

Her sister is not there

I'm being videotaped as I

write this

She is in labor

There is no sky

Or what is left of the

sky is made of

hot porcelain

So much hot porcelain

The lights were on

It was a red building

Twenty stories high

\*

Fire I want Fire

I want love next to this

aluminum coated stainless steel

The air was next to it

Glass was next to it

I wanted oil

Even the pepper was stayed

on it

The steel wool

The sponge

The Palmolive

I bring the pan into my bedroom

Throw it on my bed

Someone says

This is oil this is oil

This is blood

This is wood

You have to oil the wood

yearly, to keep it nice

Find a good oil to use like

walnut

I asked for the sun

through the clouds and

that's what I received

Outside there are green snakes

A girl in a white shirt and jeans

plays frisbee, smiles

She is standing next to

a page of the newspaper

on the grass

Where are you

last evening of 1938

Where are

you

infinite acrobats with dyed red hair

You lay on top of

a mother's crocheted blanket

or are you under it

## LAWRENCE GIFFIN

*from* AN ANATOMY OF THE NAME

der Name  
vergoldet die Finten

—Paul Celan

Once more

breaking  
a voice  
from lips parting only  
to then touch for the first time.

What touches first surprises  
a patience til now dormant  
else what feels is pricked  
from without  
by the unstudied  
shape of what intrudes,

such organ  
is wound.

What there shared a tongue  
with the body beneath  
the suppurating pff  
but secreted vocab  
never crossing  
the tongue of  
whatever voice  
calls in maybe  
one's own echo

if not once more  
issuing from elsewhere,  
inadmissible plea  
insisted upon by  
suffering

yet to listen. Only

the word's ring hanging  
an unsound resounding echoes  
recall withheld past meaning.

◇

                  You,  
needed to be alone, thus  
appear always to have been

there as I turn  
away as if in shame,  
such that whatever  
I find myself  
looking at  
is always what  
I've turned toward, a whole

world appearing  
in an averting  
only later recalled  
in labor,  
acute turn,  
attention is tumped  
from its worldly creche,  
coming unexpectedly across  
this reflection,  
Suddenly mine,  
in a mirror  
or pane of glass,

and turning from my thoughts,  
I find you there  
impatient, an obliging  
silence  
to account  
for what  
is uncertain,  
what words might  
mean having left  
my mouth in the singular  
act of forming them,  
so a stutter rattles my teeth,

speechless  
no confession  
confirming not what is to come.

◇

A stutter is the first speech  
breaking across the lips, but it  
is not the first thing said, which,

never once addressed  
to me, somehow was,  
so that my stutter is reply,

though to what is fully  
not speech,  
meant-to-say  
of an expectant look,  
patient,  
so suddenly having been there  
all along, waiting to meet  
the gaze now offered or rather  
assumed, thieved even,  
in the glanced reflection, taken  
for my own, the obliging  
of its precedence, itself  
an effect of its appearance  
all at once or, if not  
that, then

          refused in seizing  
the image of a face  
whose empty stare is just  
the mirror's utter  
surface staving its imponderable  
unmasking through sheer apparency,  
meaning that surface in hiding  
nothing hides everything  
that is cruelly withheld,  
including the final word,  
which could release me  
from this enchanting, this  
shame that averts  
scrutiny of my own reflection  
preliminary to a needed cleaving  
of face from surface,  
which some voice (in the end  
revealed to be mine) averred.

◇

But to have heard it at all  
I would have had  
already to have been  
waiting in the widest sense,  
such that  
the initial registration  
of a word repeated  
could have belonged  
to anyone at all—

that it turned  
out to be  
you could not have been  
anticipated  
and thus the point  
around which my world turns,  
pole which at the moment I reach it  
only recedes—

to the degree  
that my waiting is for you  
in the widest sense, though  
you always appear  
as such and  
such and no one  
else, as dry and bright as cedar,  
never that which drew patience  
in spite of spite  
but this so very new thing that per se  
interrupts the stretch of waiting's  
ill-fitting minutes, dulling them  
in the flash of mistakenness,  
saying, "Sorry, I thought you  
were someone else," because  
really they are you,  
and like one's nose,  
too near not to miss,

and I had been staring  
has I been staring without shame,  
hastily furnishing familiarity  
not so comfortable as to encourage  
lingering but sufficiently pleasant—

inoculated melody piped in to mask  
the thin but jagged sterility of  
fluorescents lighting  
the shallow pit of expectancy.

◇

Waiting in the widest sense of the word—

what still  
yet encountered figure  
inaugurates this listening for,  
this watching for,  
                    for it to be  
                    unpracticed attention  
that occupies one familiarly  
but from without, all at once  
never once before? There,

                    at the source  
of the untrained capacity  
to be the said thing,  
the law's orthopedic  
                    badge-glint a poorly true  
reflection of pure source,  
taking up the remainder  
of an ex post facto extortion,  
paralegal aut to which  
even a 'no'  
would have  
acquiesced

(such that the spur to rejoin  
is a passion to undo  
the bond formed from  
insensate registration  
of a nominating

'you'), sneers in retort to the reply  
that issued not from my lips  
but from the lip, apparently  
seamless, that gave out, gave me  
up from what's gone before  
the one that was called out.

Out there  
behind the insinuating  
lock may be  
a paradise revoked  
where may be met  
the desire before me,  
or rolled away  
tombstone chanced on,  
from whence once surged  
our promissory issuance—

guards rubbing  
their peepers from jacked visions  
of angel wings beating,  
beat it, moaning, "Stop or I'll shoot,"  
to no one in particular.

◇

Was a 'sir' there then,  
at the faceless lips  
first parting  
around a designation,  
contracting along  
its taper? Was our entry  
a function of traffic control  
and the fifth a guilty plea?  
Nulla poena sine lege.  
That's its suicide  
that resisting  
it exists.  
Having come to fulfill,  
he had to have come  
after the fact, because

even the form of waiting contains  
as its form a real word  
once spoken now forgotten  
crystallized into the hollow

of what word follows,  
even one spoken so long ago  
it was then nothing more

than a dumb sound  
breaking through a silence  
so near as  
if from nowhere,  
                                an absent-  
minded scratch in earth  
suddenly so hitherly addressed  
as maybe to address the one  
taken first by surprise  
then for waiting, the form of which  
is just another sound  
still echoing,  
                        a still smaller mark  
                        shallow in worn stone,

itself attended by a galled leer  
(so goes the prior's precedent);  
soundlessly formed  
in the space of  
what said had thus  
cut itself off from and into  
the invisible everyday,  
each antecedent accretion  
thinner than  
what to-be-said  
its vanishing heralds,  
even if only a repetition,  
even if the very  
darkness and silence that stars  
spark between their points,  
and before that  
the random perturbations  
in the primordial plasma and  
barely akilter near-timelessness.

                        Though  
such provenance never speeds  
through its consequent time  
to intercede and bring to zero  
the turn of my face toward  
whatever now, conferring  
on what's just there  
its form of address.

Instead the forbear recedes  
so that we might rush to fill  
the vacuum, the medium  
we share even in mistaking  
vocative for revocation—  
perturbations of perturbations—  
such that attending is no different  
from the cry coming from zero,  
only a difference in inflection—

'to mark', as in to indicate  
also to heed, to mind,  
so a single word  
folds within itself  
the turn of my head  
turning around a gone zero  
as the contour of its round trace,  
where the familiar gives  
out onto what? A name?

◇

A name. What remains  
unmarred by memory's neglect,  
enduring effacement,  
gilding the feints,  
a face  
cast from time, masked  
in a death unendured,

a golden mirage  
of prosthetic reflection  
where desiring the lost lives  
on the promise of returning  
delights.

The one who bears it passes on,  
and what one has left here  
remains  
the issue of grief made  
longing to become frustrated.

What names names ought save names,  
and what few names save names; for all  
that a name retorts with another name yet  
retreats in the fog of recognition, of names  
distracting from the blank that names  
can't name nor yet be dispelled and so on  
which they set alight,

                                now obliterated,  
                        a revealing obscurity  
and ought not otherwise,  
consumed by the flame that illuminates it,  
some shape sufficiently human  
called you before I  
an unknown addressed  
forever returning replies  
from the dark and the formless  
points beyond the body  
not yet impossibly mine,

the pronoun of which  
I take ownership by,

only after being claimed,  
the beam interrupting a blank  
space to form a double slit  
where expectation is materialized  
in the form of a

"Yes, Lord?"

resounding in an empty tomb  
of its own excavation,  
empty save  
time-scraped diptychs  
of unsettled accounts  
or perhaps, ashen, a potsherd cast,  
what edenic remnant had  
had to have remained

in exile, crowning body of blinding light  
crossing the guarded portal,  
a fossil of Phrygian speech.

◇

Will one have had  
to have decided,  
having heard its faint call,  
to have had to  
have assented to  
its offering of ought or aught at all,  
hazarding effacement  
of what had been said  
now misnamed  
by a cenotaph  
marking  
one's poor memory?

The interval between  
alert and recognition,  
is a mirror in which one's  
reflection is mistaken for  
another too late to recall  
the pliant appeal,  
the shameful look of one  
caught looking shameful. Come  
again, familiar one  
our pleas repel. Broken,

the promise flowers  
in permanent what-if; unmet,  
something of it hangs  
like a remnant collapsing  
under the burden  
of being just the thing it is,  
deed of the irredeemable.  
Come again.

Just because  
you answer the call  
doesn't mean  
it was not for you.

◇

Having been  
carried  
all along  
by the end before me,  
a wish to return

to paradise not there only  
but also then  
born of guilt at having taken  
what one now knows  
to have been nothing for  
the promised,

I see now instead  
an expulsion foreordained  
by the nonsense of a garden  
and on the angel's face a look  
of hope and not warning,  
what had seemed  
a flaming sword  
turns out to be  
its white-hot desire  
that we tend to this garden  
unapproachable as it is  
falling toward no center.

It's paradise that's cast from us  
in endless wandering,  
and though all return appeals  
no longer, something concerning  
remains in the garden before us,  
the figure two lovers make  
buried together in the brush,  
audible but unaddressed,  
braiding their arms and legs  
into a crown for  
the unnamed to come.

Though nameless,  
yet they do not hear  
the call of their lord  
stalking wild rows,  
turning his head with  
its crown of plaited snakes to catch  
his gray reflection  
in the glaring gloss of the once bitten  
and cast aside.

He is nearly upon the two  
lolling in the self-heal and clover,  
unaware of their plight  
in the unending duration  
of innocence, which divides  
crime from punishment.  
Were there some shared  
words left me  
to pass into angelic speech  
equal to silent reading, I would  
whisper to them,  
oblivious lollers,  
imploring them to keep  
moving, to stay hidden,  
pledging myself as a diversion,  
saying, "Here I am, Lord,"  
as they make their escape.

MELISSA MACK

*from* THE LATTICE

Here's something that's already been said:

*I saw a hundred little spheres which beautified each other with their mutual  
beams.*

That's the lattice.

The High Priestess walks through the underworld

From Point A to Point B. That's an imaginary

Axis. The river is another.

In this center, and many others besides, resides the sun.

*And eke a hundred sonnes...*

Who grows there through the structure with their light footfalls –

The holy androgyne,

Brilliant at each fresh cleavage.

Her Worshipfulness and Angel Baby waited for the bus.

They were seeking the secret.

Like bacteria, they knew it was there

But the medium concealed it.

Black light was their second site –

They were busy beaming.

On the bus the seats were gross.

Public transit and fabric, a bad trip.

Around the corner the accordion expanded and

There, in the fold, an iridescence glowed.

Then what did the secret do? It grew.

We listen for a time, we hear silence  
There is a silence of the moon and a silence of the sun  
The silence of the sun is hot  
Notchings and squeakings  
As growing things push through this or  
That joint or corpulent mandorla  
The silence of the moon is wan  
It recedes, and here along the littoral  
See the seeds encased in juice  
That cannot be released  
Until the Priestess sings

The love of lovers for each other made you, stone.  
Force removed you from your matrix.  
It was explosive or it was by means  
Of insistent hands with simple tools.  
You will live for a season in this underworld  
As jeweled as a pomegranate torn open.  
You will be worn. You will become worn.  
Wear, the oil of mourning and morning,  
Grows your orient, your luster –  
A still sea glowing with subtle color.  
Prismatic ripples whereupon others are born or borne.

We looked for a way in – it was a hidden button.  
We touched it and boarded this lift.  
You kissed me on the mouth and a liquid flowed in.  
You were as surprised as I among the junk.  
It tasted like an extension of the kiss – the kiss's natal space  
Come forth with it unto me.  
I don't know if the lift moved —  
Sometimes you might drift before the airplane takes  
Off, and wake, and not feel the being air-  
Borne until you turn and find the ground is gone and  
Clouds are the new signs — while we did this.

This concerns a journey.  
The journey is certain. It occurs. Plural.  
The pearl performs, the wanderer, ibid.  
Filaments are always calling, and they catch,  
But special sense lets you see them atimes.  
Once (last night) I kept walking into spider silk.  
In an attempt to grasp it, you say everything you can think of.  
Maybe I broke through into the imaginal when  
The first beaded strand met my face at a slant  
And I was in it for 20 paces or years  
Then broke back in or out – each time touched.

## LAURA HENRIKSEN

There we were, penning ominous missives to strangers like  
Hey, sometimes you cry to commercials for companies  
that monopolized information technology for individual  
wealth if you are living under capitalism. Hey, sometimes you are  
waking up your roommates eating cereal with your hands  
overwhelmed by your feelings. Sometimes you are turning  
off *Hellbound: Hellraiser II* right before John gets home  
because some things are no one else's business. I only wish  
glitter stayed long, I love the whole franchise. Stay close  
to wolves, obviously, cultivate your disguise closet.

I'll be spitting in an ice cube tray,  
numbering the days, drawing  
a circle with my toe around  
where it isn't happening,  
stringy canopy, everything  
tears us apart.

There's the movement of our guide  
down the dark passage.  
Maybe a garden, maybe less than  
midnight, the decision in  
my trembling hands. You are  
like a turtle in the wilderness,  
Perfectly Relaxed. Stretched  
out in front of the haunted  
vanity, thumbing a cello,  
whatever. Or consumed by moss.

Pressed in tight in a cab with  
people you aren't fully comfortable  
with like a baby proving a theory  
about what that sound you heard was.  
Watching it stretch out and  
stretch out. There you were  
again, never doing what  
you wanted, locked in  
an inescapable dog park.  
I watch scary movies, like most,  
for the survival strategies.  
If you're ever haunted or  
possessed, I think I would  
be a fine person to call. If I had a goal,  
and I do not, it would be more  
night-talk and fewer fucks given  
where no fucks are deserved. Like  
trying to avoid accidents and surprises,  
fruitless. Anywhere near the bridge,  
the triangle's point. A skulking dolphin, a faulty  
fountain, a classic omen is my log.  
I wipe my sour face off, knock  
some branches around, another  
morning in embarrassing dress.  
Frosted mirrors, crisis management  
that's just me mouthing *stay safe*  
from across the platform.  
I'd rather be a tee-shirt from a gym class  
I wasn't in. I'd rather the past as a whole  
haunt anyone who'd try to deny it.  
A breeze would ruffle curtains if  
I bothered. Kept my secret just  
for fun. That was the whole idea,  
he says, but I have not been listening.

I think, if you are in a certain position, I mean if you are a man  
in a certain position, when you wake up you should ask yourself  
is my body an arm of weaponized masculinity or is my body  
an orgasm delivery service to people who feel safe  
around me. I think you should ask am I caretaking.  
There I am, standing on a fire escape being a pretend shield,  
in a car for a thousand years with nothing  
to do, looking for Tupac at no one's request.

But shit, sometimes the most subversive thing you can do is  
work as little as possible. There I was, swallowing toads  
under the porch, drinking diet coke behind the bleachers,  
blowing a lonesome whistle just to fuck with people.  
What you can't get your hands around you can't.

I remember thinking  
these daily grievances,  
signs of passing disrespect  
to my art and my time,  
will be the gradual  
cause of my death,  
and who will know.  
An aerial shot, but  
from low down.  
If you want to, rolling  
a suitcase through the  
grass. I remember thinking  
I love this for its specificity,  
which betrays a particular  
lived experience, even though  
I know that experience  
didn't happen. How can  
my feelings be the most  
important thing about me  
and the most easily manipulated?  
We're eating guacamole in the wind,  
and then I'm listening to Peter Frampton  
on the radio, thinking of you. A vast and  
empty parking lot, that chest-tight  
of something lovely. Trees in the  
valley, I'm watching. Now that I can  
finally think, I think of all the things  
I don't want but have to do, and  
the things I don't want and maybe  
can avoid. It looks close, but it isn't.  
Make every minute count, but they  
don't. I'm just dining fast casual,  
regretting my mistakes. I pack the  
campfire onions for the end  
of the world. My contribution. I mean,  
it happened to someone.

There we were, summer in the cupboard  
youth well-spent on murals in aisles  
of spider families running errands,  
tongue to the salt lamp. I'll be  
in your car, peeling mascara.  
Stake my claim in The Humiliation  
in rocks and rocks and foil leaves.  
And all the horses were plastic,  
and all the evenings were lost,  
and then my phone died.  
And I skulk off under the eaves  
to be a hunted letter  
to flower in their absence.

I make a note: be more friendly  
or everyone will think you're a bitch.  
The lights on the train when you're  
a little drunk. So awful. Like above  
where nothing's lost. Just coming out  
to greet you. Next to me waiting  
for the train, a woman whispers:  
okay, okay and then later: holy shit,  
holy shit. I feel like I am always  
the one who takes care of it, but then  
I also always feel like a fuck-up.  
This little tile pastoral where  
maybe we could live, if you  
wouldn't hate it. I'm telling myself  
a story to remain calm. In it, there are  
silver buckles on my shoes. In it,  
everything stolen is returned, but  
not like nothing happened. Everything  
happens three times before it's over.  
Okay, okay.





TOYS

WANT

Elderly is a bi-coastal magazine  
Creative Commons Attribution-  
NoDerives-NonCommercial  
This is issue twenty-one (21) for 13 Apr 2017

FDT

THE BAY/NYC  
[elderlymag.tumblr.com](http://elderlymag.tumblr.com)



