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ISSUE 01

THE SOCK DRAWER

LITERARY  MAGAZINE



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Founded in June 2020, The Sock Drawer aims to collect the voices of contemporary artists and writers. In a world as tumultuous as this one people need an outlet for their voice. With a current of feminism and activism running through the veins of the editors, The Sock Drawer seeks to be a place to release the tension of existence.

Letters & Comments: TheSockDrawerLitMag@gmail.com

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ON THE COVER
“Honey Glaze” by
Gracelyn Willard

Hello & Welcome

I am honored to present to you the first issue of The Sock Drawer. The Sock Drawer was created with the intention of creating a community of writers that are often ignored, marginalized, or 'pushed to the back of the sock drawer' by society and the publishing industry. We aim to raise up diverse and unique voices that tell stories that are not told often enough. I aim to use my privilege and platform to elevate these voices and bring to light talented individuals through The Sock Drawer. In the wake of ignorance, racism, and violence in the United States and the world it is of key importance that this space cultivates productive, honest, and genuine works. Here at The Sock Drawer, we stand with equality, Black Lives Matter, and many more movements pushing for positive, productive change. It is time to rise past the forced silence and scream. Change will come and we will be here to help facilitate it.

In Hope,

Gracelyn Willard
Founder/Editor-in-Chief

Meet The Team

Founder/Editor-in-Chief



Gracelyn Willard (she/her) is the founder and editor-in-chief of The Sock Drawer. She is a 2020 graduate of Hood College with a degree in English and a concentration in Creative Writing. She was a 2019 presenter at the Hood College Discovering the Humanities Conference. She had a nonlinear college career due to her battle with multiple chronic illnesses. She loves to read Roxane Gay, Valeria Luiselli, Agatha Christie, Terrance Hayes, and Wisława Szymborska. Her quest for the perfect gluten free madeleine is never ending and at times she wonders if she loves coffee more than her boyfriend. Her last job was as a cheesemonger and she identifies as bisexual. Her passion is writing, reading, editing, and bad reality tv.

Nonfiction Editor



Kerstin Holman is a 2019 Virginia Wesleyan University graduate. In order to get the most bang for her buck, she got her BA in three majors: English Literature, Theatre (with a concentration in dramaturgy) and & Women's Gender Studies. Some writers and voices who inspire her to not only speak but listen are Roxane Gay, Da'Shaun Harrison and noname. As TSD's non-fiction editor and contributor, she hopes to continue polishing her writing craft by bringing awareness to and discussing topics including race, gender, sexuality, and existential crises. She recently became a New Jersian and her interests include bowling, watching "RuPaul's Drag Race," and eating sushi.

Book Review Editor

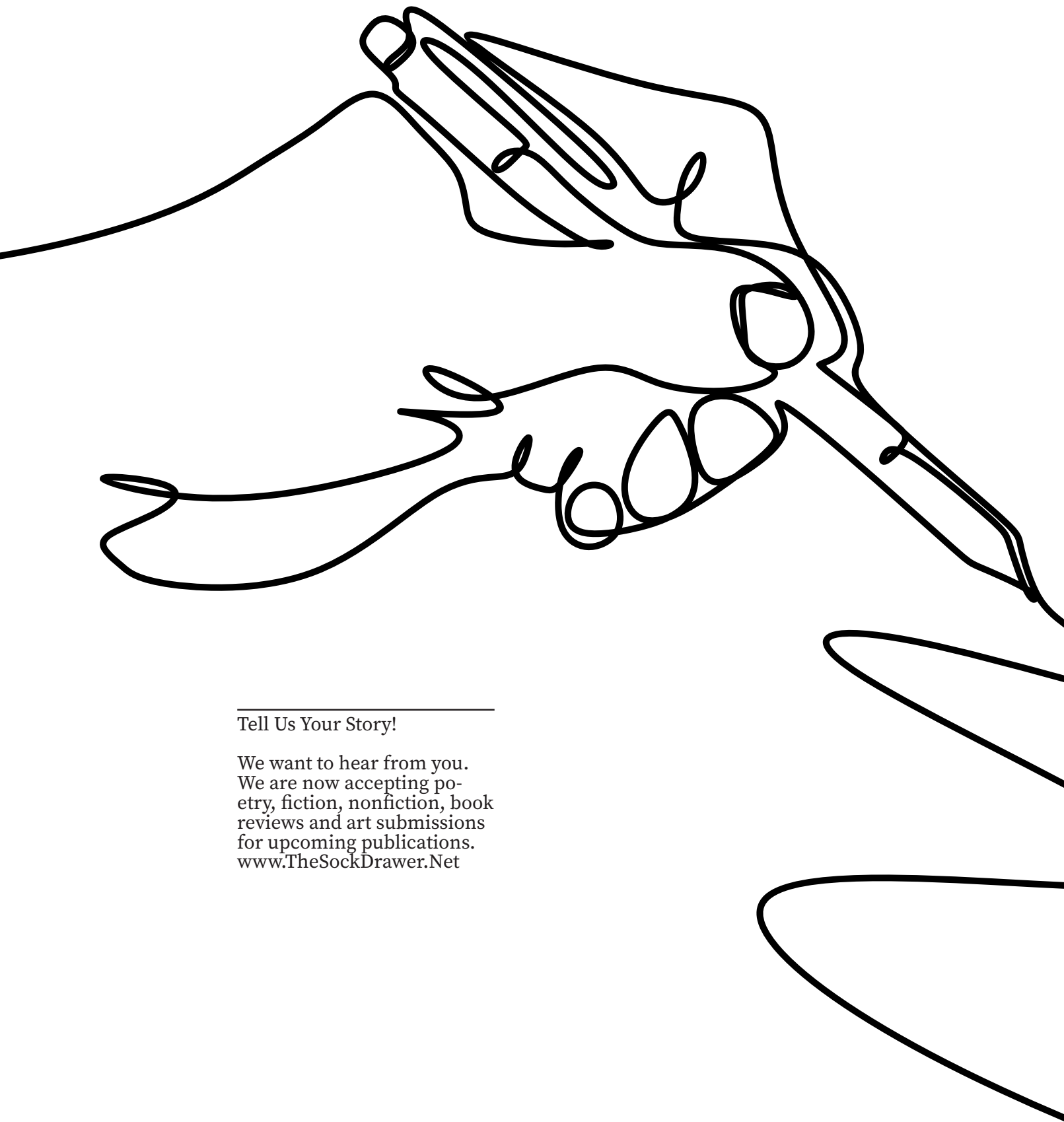


Izzy Peroni is the Book Review editor of The Sock Drawer. She is a recent graduate of Hood College, with a degree in English with a concentration in Creative Writing, and a minor in Studies in Women and Gender. Her main contributions to the magazine, as well as the rest of the world, will include poetry, fiction, and book reviews. The majority of the creative media she consumes is either horror or science-fiction, ranging from 70's slasher flicks to often non-traditional ghost stories, as well as practically anything having to do with aliens. She obsesses over the work of Elizabeth Bishop, and unintentionally imitates her biography. Her hobbies include video games and adoring her cat.

Art Editor



Julia Gonzales was voted "Most likely to become an Artist" in 6th grade and knew her love for creativity would never waver. Growing up, she competed and placed in several minor art competitions within her community and enjoyed experimenting with various mediums and techniques. She is currently pursuing a degree in Computer Animation at Full Sail University with the intent to one day produce children shows. She is inspired by works from Damien Hirst, Erik Johansson, Frida Kahlo and Leonora Carrington. Some argue that she loves her cat a little too much and her current drink of choice is iced chai tea.



Tell Us Your Story!

We want to hear from you.
We are now accepting poetry, fiction, nonfiction, book reviews and art submissions for upcoming publications.
www.TheSockDrawer.Net

POETRY

“If I read a book and it makes my whole body
so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know
that is poetry.”

- Emily Dickinson



"Floating Thought" by Gracelyn Willard

Sock Drawer

By Gracelyn Willard

I stuffed my voice in the sock drawer
thinking the wool and cotton
would mute the cherry soaked
screams.

I let it nestle next to the
beige bra, twisting the underwire
into a lock pick.

It planned its escape as
carefully as I had planned
its imprisonment.

The moment of freedom,
an explosion of pairs.



Tears of a Protestor

By Andrew Proshan

These tears are not of pain, though we are in pain,
are not of fear, though we are afraid,
are not of anger, though we are angry,
are not of misery, though we are miserable.

They are of power, though our power is challenged.
are of hope, though our hope is challenged,
are of love, unchallenged.

They are of unrest, of discontent bubbling, of grief for our everyman.

They are for those behind us in the polling station,
the concert, the boardwalk fry stand, the grocery store check-out:
unaware that home is a dream they won't have again.

These tears we spill in place, in tribute,
Are not of joy, though we hope to feel it someday.

They are of a canister at our feet, forcing the strong to weep for the weak who've stolen
every soul by a chokehold on asphalt.



full filled?

By Jordan Tunzi

at twenty-two every path is to failure
as jagged is to abysses
and ending to depth
at the frosted window
will the heat shatter it?
I wonder what the ice
found between the cracks
meant when the space I rubbed lotion
into the cracks between my fingers
sounded like asking trees speaking with their creaking
like my ankles ask the same questions
when I walk upstairs



poolhouse

By Izzy Peroni

its your first poolhouse summer

can you imagine— having a poolhouse
having a pool having pool floaties having
earwigs on the pool floaties you pull out of
storage—

can you imagine holding an earwig in your hand not
fearing its sprawling feet its burrowing pincers
can you imagine the decadence of pool floaties
and a shower in the poolhouse

can you imagine drowning earwigs or maybe
setting them free

can you imagine yourself and her in the
shower and towelling
off—

can you imagine screaming your head off
over earwigs and her keeping you calm

can you imagine going headfirst down
the slide— can you imagine having a slide and
diving board and poolhouse and
drowning with the earwigs

its your first poolhouse summer
she can tell—
youre afraid of earwigs



noose tied wind chime

By Jordan Tunzi

next what was when did it
grow so big you were a string bean on a vine

to little old ladies
the hip pain isn't worth the trip
so grandkids should come to them

to them now is or never will be
so why spend the minutes rubbing worn feet
when fresh ones can walk so far

be so gone so soon
blow out for now but quick to reignite
but the burn out

wicks we have only one of
drips of wax into other candles
smells of past lingers

we don't realize this-
that our flames have lit the curtains



butterfly man

By Gracelyn Willard

faded wings settling
on dusty stars
leaving butterfly man behind-
liberating,

(r)evolution.

erected on top of sheep,
sugar beets, mice,
one turtle dove.

london(e)

new york—
a deconsecrated church
of limelight.

(no)

more lambing season
bats and flora old
bottles of wine
labels of estate

(rot)

the.
fucking.
rain.



Maybe on a face tastes different off a tongue

By Jordan Tunzi

haven't decided whether a room is a casket
or the mason jar with my starbursts.

I've been running through hoops lately
only now I've noticed they're halos
above posthumous songs;

have you noticed that when things seem naked
it's when we look at what's bare?

nowhere else but there



drowning earwigs

By Izzy Peroni

she, the
hero of
earwigs

you pull your chest to the pool floatie and
it saunters into view and you
wail and despair

you, the
coward

she wont let you hurt
each other she
will carry one or both to shore

if it means neither
drowns

you duck underwater to drown
tears the earwig burrowed
into your brain and
burst into the
light of
her
hands the earwig enjoys and
traverses

you, beneath
the surface

underwater lest you drown
the earwig



what do you produce?

By Jordan Tunzi

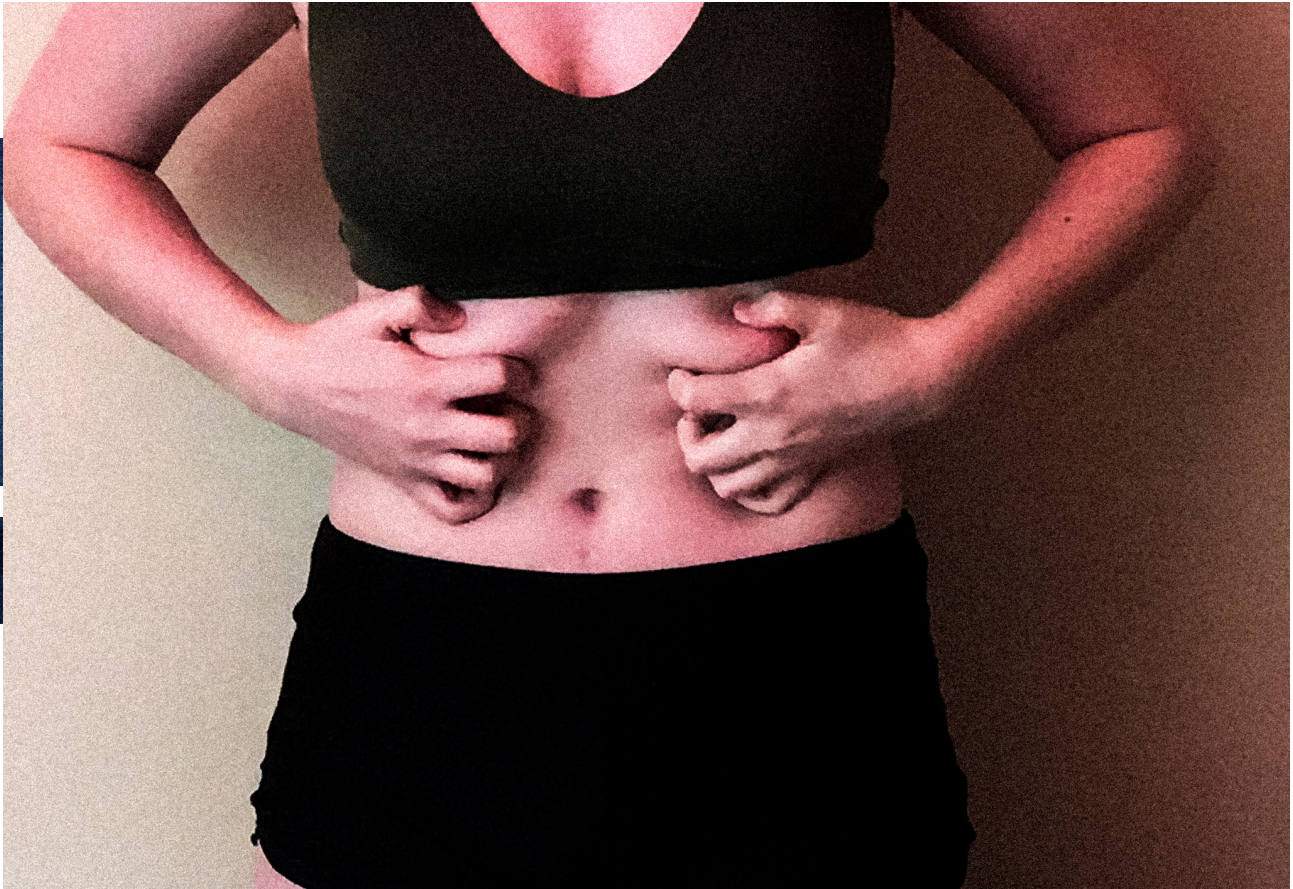
a hundred pages spent
no money earned in significance
thousands of lines filled empty
and every day my hands look strange to me
suddenly aware of how a word looks on the page
everyone can deconstruct art until it becomes a house
so earthquakes and groundhogs and termites destroy,
true art makes even the trunks look like trunks.



FICTION

“What I try to tell young people is that if you come together with a mission, and its grounded with love and a sense of community, you can make the impossible possible.”

- John Lewis



"Skin" by Gracelyn Willard

Quarantine Love Part 1

By Diane Culp

Janelle had been wanting to break up with Stanley for weeks now, but could never seem to find the courage to do it. It wasn't that she was afraid of breaking his heart, in fact she suspected that he would be as relieved as she would be. It was more that it just seemed so difficult. If only she hadn't moved in with him, then she would have some place to go once she broke up. Now she was faced with having to find a new place to live and aside from the money angle, that was hard work and a real drag to have to do. The good news was she was certain he would let her stay at his place while she looked for a new abode, but that would probably be very awkward, and who would sleep on the couch? She would feel bad if he did since it was technically his place, on the other hand, he would probably insist that he be the one on the couch.

She should have listened to her friends when she first moved in with him. They all warned her this would not end well, that Stanley would slowly suffocate her with his demands all while slowly boring her to death. She thought they hadn't seen the depths

FICTION

of Stanley like she had, but it turns out he really didn't have any depth. He was a creature of habit and if there was a topic that excited him, Janelle had yet to find it. Sports? No. Politics? No. Work? No. Books? No. Religion? Only if worshipping himself counted. Looking back, she couldn't even remember what she had seen in him. Oh sure, he was cute, and he didn't let her forget it, but cute only took you so far.

No, life with Stanley was definitely no picnic and it was time for it to end. "Tonight," she thought, "definitely tonight."

Janelle peered at the calendar. It was Monday. That meant meatloaf for dinner. Tuesday was of course, tacos, made from the left over meatloaf. Wednesday was vegetarian night, Thursday was chicken, Friday was fish, Saturday was pizza, and Sunday of course was dinner at his parent's house. Stopping to think about it, living with Stanley was like living in the 1950's except for the tacos and the vegetarian night. Once Janelle had not made it to the grocery store and so they had to have pizza on a Thursday and Stanley hadn't talked to her for two whole days. Once he did talk to her, it was to tell her his whole week had been thrown off by the switch.

Thinking all this through, Janelle wondered how she had lasted this long. It wasn't just food either, his clothes had to be folded just so, his socks lined up in his sock drawer by some pattern only he could make sense of, his ties hung in the closet so that they all lined up to the same length. Lots of little things that at first seemed kind of quaint and were easy enough to overlook because at first things had been fun and there was a comfort in some of the routine. For example, every Saturday, Janelle knew they would eat pizza and watch a movie. That was enjoyable and even romantic for a while, but one Saturday night Janelle wanted to go dancing. There was a band playing at a place just down the street, but Stanley said it was Saturday, they couldn't go and he called her crazy for wanting to. In order to make it up to her, they watched, "Dirty Dancing" which Janelle thought was a stupid movie and not at all like going dancing. When she told this to Stanley, he got mad and didn't speak to her until they got to his parents house for dinner the next night. There they resumed their normal relationship and ate the pot roast that Stanley's mother put on the table and talked about work and tv shows and all the things that make up conversation at lots of dinner tables.

During the week, Stanley went off to work as an accountant for a small firm. He crunched numbers all day and when he got home, he liked to have Janelle rub his feet while he lay on the couch. If she asked him about his day, he always replied, "I don't want to talk about work. I'm here with you now" and that would warm her heart. Janelle worked

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at a nail salon giving manicures and pedicures all day so when she got home the last thing she wanted to do was rub anyone else's feet, but sometimes you did things for love. Now she wondered why.

She also wondered exactly when things had turned south for them. When did the routine become so stifling? Well, that didn't really matter. She would tell Stanley tonight and would leave within the week. Surely her sister would let her stay with her for a bit, or she could go stay with her parents and grandmother if need be. After all, surely she could find a place to live within a week or two. Thinking about all this Janelle felt better already. Stanley would be home at 6:05 exactly. He was a man of routine if nothing else. Janelle had already packed most of her things by the time he came home. He walked in, laid down on the couch and took his shoes and socks off, ready for his evening foot rub. This time Janelle just stood and looked at him.

"We have to talk, Stanley," she said. "I can't do this anymore."

"What?", said Stanley? "Well, I guess I can get used to not having my feet rubbed, but it's pretty rude of you to just spring it on me like this."

"No," said Janelle. Not just the foot rubbing, none of this. I think we should break up. No, I know we should break up. This is not the life I want." Just saying the words made Janelle feel lighter. She would leave immediately.

Stanley, didn't say a word, but just stared at Janelle like she had lost her mind.

"What are you talking about? What do you mean this isn't the life you want?"

"I don't want routine, Stanley. I want to get out. I want to do things, I want to travel. I want to go dancing. I want to play tennis. I want to go out to eat. I want to go to a play. I'm leaving now."

"You haven't put on the news today, have you?" asked Stanley, giving a chuckle.

"No, why?" asked Janelle.

"Is the meatloaf ready?" asked Stanley. "I'll fill you in while we eat. The whole city is under quarantine for at least two weeks, maybe longer due to the virus. No one is allowed on the streets."

Janelle turned on the tv. Her eyes grew wide, then she turned towards the kitchen to go serve the meatloaf.



hermit crab

By Izzy Peroni

Angel tugged at the strap of her bikini top, grimacing at how, if she shrugged or tilted her shoulders too suddenly, the strap would lay right across the furious patch of sunburn above her collarbone. Her mind wandered dreamily to the moment when she'd be able to cast off her clothing, back in the hotel room, where she could stretch out on the pure white linen of her bed, smothered happily in aloe vera and feeding herself grapes until she passed out, or puked.

Of course, Monica noticed her fiddling with her top and reached over to adjust it as to a way she deemed fit; she slipped her fingers under the elastic of the cups and stretched them to cover as much area as the little bikini top could, and wordlessly pushed her girlfriend's back to make her bend forward so she could check that the knots holding the bikini to her body were secure. Angel, of course, took Monica's firm handling of her body with the utmost patience, feeling much like a polished rose quartz in the palms of a scrutinizing, satisfied gemologist, or a prized Turkish Angora being groomed before the most important competition of its handlers career. Handled, groomed, scrutinized- what romantic ways for your girlfriend to interact with you, especially in the public privacy of a beach towel and umbrella.

With more wordless assertion, Monica pushed Angel over on the towel to sit next to her, leaning back to place a hand on the other side of her thin hips. A whole head taller than the mousy brunette, Monica had to bend somewhat awkwardly to place firm, dry kisses on her girlfriend's neck, which Angel accepted with nothing more than an "mmm." The kisses continued, and went on frankly far too long, with no movement of reciprocation from Angel, who gazed out at the rippling waves the ocean cast onto the shore with languid interest, wondering with half her mind if anyone on the crowded beach was watching them commit the heinous crime of PDA in broad, burning daylight.

"Hey. Romeo and Ophelia, move so I can get my fuckin' water bottle out of my bag, yeah?" Lindsay barked as she stomped up the sand, interrupting Monica's continuous attempt to coat Angel's jawline with her stoic kisses. Monica huffed and reached behind her to produce Lindsay's bag from the base of the umbrella pole, tossing it to the front of the blanket. Lindsay dove her hands blindly into the tote, looking sweaty and toned in her rash guard shirt and black bikini bottoms.

"Am I Ophelia?" Angel asked, furrowing her brow in half-hearted offense.

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“Oh, no, Angel, of course you and your pretty face and curly hair and wimpy piss-baby voice aren’t sad little fucking Ophelia,” Lindsay quipped mercilessly. “No, you get to be Romeo. Feel better that way?”

“Eat shit, Lindsay,” Monica snapped in her traditional monotone, aiming a kick towards her sister’s arm, hoping to give her a good scratch with her perfectly pedicured French-tipped toes.

“You do it to yourself, Monica, you dumb dramatic baby. Chasing after girls who double as faux fur throw pillows.”

Angel didn’t get the chance to ask what the hell that meant before Monica took a swifter kick at Lindsay, this time getting her in the chest. Lindsay, of course, gripped her older sister’s calf and tugged hard, pulling all of Monica, half of Angel, and a good portion of the beach towel towards her. Lindsay descended on Monica in a flurry of slaps and scratches, and Monica deflected with the ease of an older sister who has grown accustomed to raging temper tantrums. Angel let out a small, annoyed squeak as she moved away from the catfight, scooting back enough to lean against the umbrella pole.

The Mackintosh civil war ended as quickly as it began, on account of Monica giving Lindsay a hard enough shove into the sand that it killed Lindsay’s fighting spirit and a small portion of her dignity. Lindsay got back up onto her knees with a huff and a brush of the sand off of her ass, watching Monica adjust her towel and her precious Angel back into their previous position of optimal relaxation.

“You’re such a bully for no reason, Monica,” Lindsay snarled as she continued her search for her water bottle.

“You started it, you gross little brat,” Monica retorted. “You’re always the initial aggressor. It’s why Mom and Dad can’t stand you. They have to cast you off onto ME to fucking babysit.”

“Mom and Dad don’t like either of us, Monica. You think they like having half the family be total queers?”

“At least I’m not the dyke.”

“You can’t call me that!” Lindsay threw the water bottle she had just opened in a burst of anger, spilling the water into the sand. “If you’re not a dyke you can’t call other girls dyke!”

“What would you rather me call you?”

FICTION

“I dunno, just not THAT.”

“How about ‘cunt’?”

Angel gasped, delicately appalled.

This time, Lindsay dove for the throat. Angel rolled all the way off the beach towel and into the sand, struggling to stand up and avoid the violent conflict of Mackintosh proportions that was now drawing attention from strangers. Angel shuffled out and away towards the ocean, where Chelsea and Jazz were emerging from the glittering navy water in a manner not unlike the unreasonably hot lifeguards from Baywatch. The two strutted their way to the umbrella, seemingly unaware of their own incredible attractiveness, and sat on either side of small, uncomfortably sunburnt Angel.

“Look at these feral idiots,” Jazz sneered, leaning in close enough to Angel that their shoulders nearly touched. Angel, feeling the onset of lesbian panic sweeping over her, scooted over more towards Chelsea, who very rarely acknowledged her existence, and now was no exception.

“Can’t resist making a spectacle of yourselves, can you?” Chelsea mused, pulling her blonde hair up into a bun that somehow looked good despite how wet it was. “Letting Lindsay out of her cage is always a mistake.”

“Hey, get up, you two,” Jazz said, hoping either of the sisters could hear her from inside their sphere of violence. “We’re going up to the boardwalk to shop!”

Without waiting for a response, Chelsea stood and gripped Lindsay by the waist, yanking her from her position of straddling Monica and tossing her clumsily into the sand beside the towel. Lindsay took a few strands of long, black hair with her, but otherwise, Monica seemed unharmed. Chelsea took no time at all in sweeping up her bag and beginning to take down the umbrella, moving with a stoic confidence that almost rivalled Monica’s, but not quite. Jazz followed suit, pushing Monica playfully off the beach towel so that she could shake the sand out of it, and though bickering continued between the sisters, the group of girls cleaned up their spot with mild ease, most of them eager to get to the surf shops. Angel kept her disappointment to herself, as she had been hoping to take a brief dip in the ocean before moving on for the day. Monica prevented this, of course, because she herself didn’t feel like swimming, and worried that the waves were a little too high today, and Angel wasn’t a strong swimmer, and saltwater made her hair frizzy. Angel did not protest at the time, and wouldn’t protest now.

“Make way for the lesbian brigade!” Jazz shouted as the procession moved up the

THE SOCK DRAWER

beach, Angel and Monica in the back, holding hands.

The girls approached the surf shops with chattering excitement, as if they hadn't been visiting this boardwalk their whole lives. Jazz and Lindsay scampered into Bethany Surf Shop while Chelsea became occupied by the Sanuks display outside. Monica half-heartedly tried to keep up with her sister but focused more on her phone, liking photos on Instagram of her classmates at other beaches along the East Coast. Her grip on Angel's hand loosened, and Angel pulled away momentarily, becoming entranced by a display to the right of the storefront.

There, under the intense light of a heat lamp, was a damp cage full of hermit crabs, each with their own decorative shell painted with beach scenery or pirate-esque imagery. Angel leaned in and observed the clusters of crustaceans that seemed to be sleeping, all amassed together in corners on the bottom or even up the sides of the cage, clinging with their little orange legs. The smallest ones were maybe the size of a bottle cap- the biggest could still fit into the palm of her hand. As Angel stood and stared, an employee of the surf shop came out with a massive, soaking sponge and placed it into the center of the cage, not making eye contact with Angel for most of the process.

"What's the sponge for?" Angel asked the girl, who seemed startled, for a moment, to be spoken to. The employee blushed red, and Angel felt guilty immediately, but still immensely curious. "It is for, uh, for moisture, in cage," the girl replied with a thick Slavic accent. "Keeps them, the crabs, wet. We keep them wet and warm." She gestured also to the heating lamp above the cage.

"Ah," Angel smiled brightly, hoping to be encouraging. "Thank you very much!"

The employee smiled back and nodded, then disappeared back into the store. Monica, having wandered off in search of a momentarily lost signal, came back and took up Angel's hand again.

"If you see a young girl working, you can usually just assume she doesn't speak English, honey," Monica muttered before turning her attention to the cage. "Why were you asking about these... things?"

"I just wanted to know about the sponge," Angel replied, sheepish for no obvious reason. "I didn't mean to embarrass her. Is that really a common thing in Bethany? Every store?"

"Wow they really are so creepy," Monica said, bending down to peer at the hermit

crabs clinging to the side of the cage. “I wonder what they look like without their shells.”

Angel frowned, annoyed at being ignored but not entirely surprised. She looked down at the sign on the table below the cage, which read: ‘BUY CAGE, GET ONE HERMIT CRAB FREE!!’ in big red text.

“I want one,” Angel said abruptly.

Monica looked up at her. “One of THESE?”

“Yeah. For a pet. They’re small, right? It’ll be easy for me to take home with me next week.”

“Angel... honey,” Monica almost smirked, gripping her girlfriend’s hand ever tighter. “You can barely take care of yourself. How could you take care of a hermit crab?”

Monica dropped Angel’s hand and turned back to her phone, wandering into the surf shop where Jazz was purchasing a pastel pink romper that matched her hair exactly. Angel stood silently next to the hermit crab cage, staring into the space her girlfriend had previously occupied. Her head swiveled away from the store almost too abruptly, as her instinct to hide the tears forming in her eyes from her companions took over. She clenched her fists and felt an involuntary shake begin in her arms, trying her best to smother the little voice in her head that reported to her the exact dimensions her roaring inferiority complex had reached at that moment. Her vision became blurred with tears for only a brief moment, then without thinking much, she marched off into the store to the right of the surf shop her companions were in. A toy store.

‘Fitting,’ the voice in Angel’s head sneered at her. ‘Because you’re a stupid baby child.’

‘Redundant,’ Angel thought back, and wandered further in. It was crowded, for sure, and being a lone seventeen-year-old amongst the crowd of children and their parents was rather undignified. She veered to the left, trying to avoid the crowd and the cashier’s saccharine, expecting smile.

Something like kismet led her to the display of overpriced plastic figurines of marine animals. The first thing she picked up was a heavily detailed orca whale figurine with a tag of information about the real-life animal it was emulating. She placed it back down, disinterested, and continued to search further down the shelves. The octopi, seahorses, manta rays, and out-of-place mythical dragons interested her no better than the orca, and just as she figured she should move on and out of the store, she spotted a set of orange legs on the second-to-last shelf.

THE SOCK DRAWER

Angel reached for it, and her hand brought back up to her a plastic hermit crab with glossy black eyes at the end of thin eye stalks. It was much, much bigger than the living hermit crabs in the cage next door, but could still fit in the palm of her hand. Angel gazed into the plastic eyes for some time, feeling something inexplicable stirring under her skin.

Minutes later, she emerged with a shiny blue bag labeled 'Tidepool Toys and Games,' and headed over to the surf shop where Monica, Lindsay and Jazz were waiting on Chelsea to finally purchase the pair of sandals she'd been deliberating on for far too long. Monica spotted Angel, and before any greeting could be exchanged, she spotted the bag.

"What's that?" Monica asked, and Angel felt that sweet giddiness she had indulged in moments earlier morph into buyer's remorse.

"It's uh..." was all Angel got out before faltering under Monica's gaze. Jazz and Lindsay paid no mind to the couple, moving past them and leaving the two in their own bubble of tense non-conflict.

Angel pulled out the hermit crab and let it rest in her hand, facing Monica. Monica stared down at the beady black eyes, unsure of what to say for maybe the first time since Angel met her.

"You spent money on that?" Monica grimaced, anger very subtly hiding in her voice.

"Yes," Angel replied. "I liked it. So I bought it."

"You're so... Angel, this is stupid. SO stupid. Are you ever responsible with money? How can you actually justify getting a plastic fucking, uh... a fucking-"

"Hermit crab," Angel finished, her voice smaller than she wished it was. "It's a hermit crab. You said I couldn't get a live one because I can't take care of it. So I got a plastic one. I can take care of something plastic, can't I?"

The two girls stood in absolute, unbelievable silence, looking at each other with their best poker faces. Angel understood anything could happen at this moment; Monica could laugh this off in a show of rare but relieving joviality, or she could go absolutely apeshit and make Angel wish she'd stayed in stupid fucking Ohio. Something new and terrifying was passing between them, something that gave Angel tunnel vision for such a long moment she was sure she might black out. All she could see were Monica's eyes. Her brown, endless eyes.

"I want FUCKING ice cream, Monica, come ON!" Lindsay barked, and Monica stepped around Angel as if nothing had happened.

FICTION

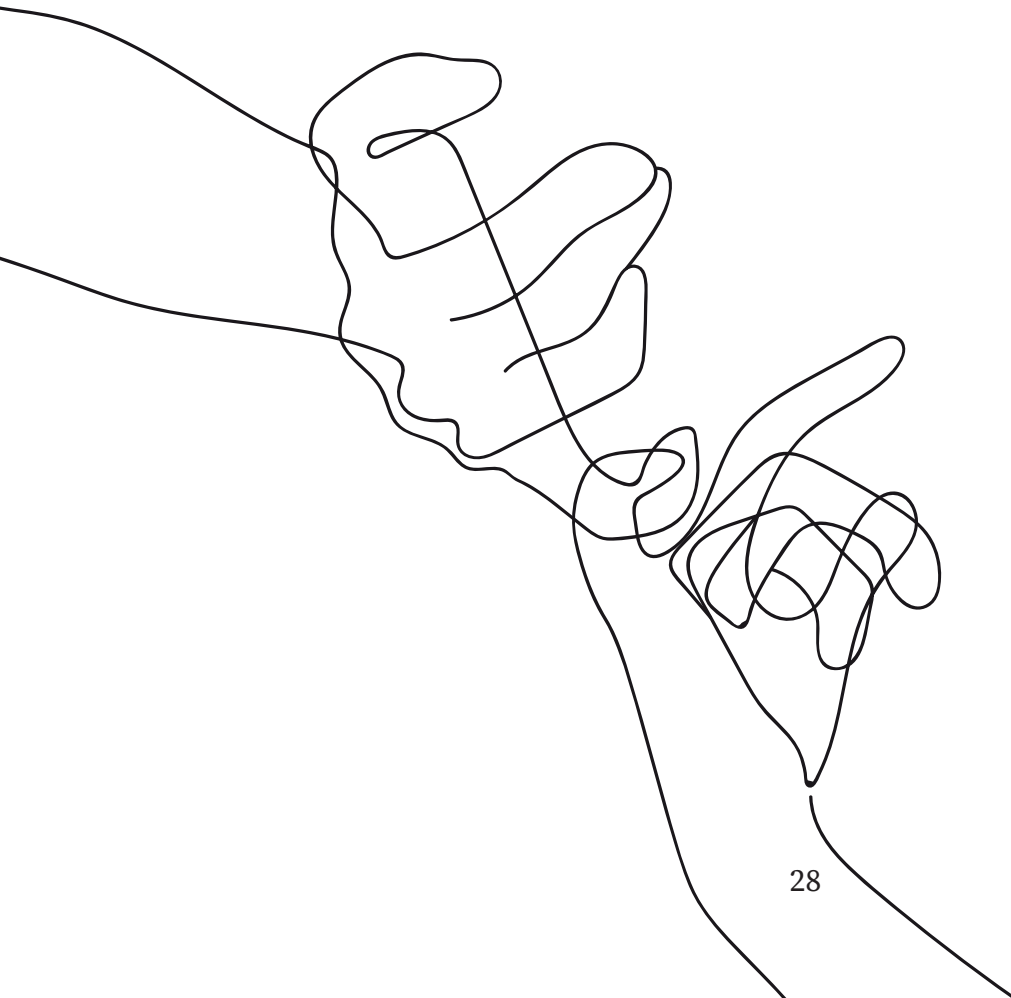
“Do you have any actual idea how loud your voice is,” Chelsea snapped, “like can you hear yourself. Do you know how much your voice fucking sucks.”

“Suck my shit, Chelsea! Give me a piggyback ride!”

“Do not touch me.”

Angel stood with her hermit crab figurine, watching the four girls proceed down the boardwalk towards the ice cream shop in the loop. The hermit crab rested heavily in her palm, and eventually she tucked it away into the little blue bag and followed her companions, quickly catching up and falling into line next to Monica, allowing her to catch her free hand in a grip only as tight as it had ever been.

The ice cream they got was actually frozen custard. Angel got a swirl dipped in jimmies. On the drive back to the hotel in Ocean City Angel sat in the back right seat with the window rolled all the way down, eating her ice cream as quickly as it melted. She took her hermit crab figurine out of the bag and placed it on her lap, feeling the weight of it on her thighs. She kept her free hand on its shell, and gazed out the window.



Dr. Dino Fabio

By Gracelyn Willard

There it was on the dresser, mocking me. Orange and purple, full of plastic intensity. Dr. Dino Fabio. Two inches tall, how did something so small, so orange, and ridiculous come to mean something so significant? It was all because of Cecilia.

On our first date, we went to the county fair. It was August, the humidity so thick you could suck it with a straw. Senior year jitters mixed with first date butterflies culminated in uneaten cotton candy and half-finished sour lemonade. We had just gone on the ferris wheel, me panicking when it stopped with us at the top.

“We’re gonna die up here. What would you do if we died up here? Would our parents sue the fair? Can you even sue a fair? Who even owns this thing? Is it a private company? What’s the death rate on this thing? Oh, god I hate heights. Seriously, oh god we’re rocking. Oh god!”

“Claire shut up,” she said, leaning forward cupping my face in her hands. Noses bumped as she kissed me. She tasted salty and sweet. Her hands were sticky from the cotton candy. It was clumsy, sticky, and beautiful. It did nothing to lower my heart rate.

“You okay?” she asked when we came up for air.

“Yeah, yeah. I am, now.”

She smiled as if I had just handed her a block of gold and an ice cream cone.

“Good.”

When we got back to solid ground my heart stayed hovering in the air.

“Let’s play some games, take a break from the rides,” she suggested, taking my hand and tugging me towards the darts booth.

“I’m going to win you that inflatable monkey. Cause I’m bananas for you,” I said, handing the dart’s guy twenty dollars. She laughed, and it sounded like a flock of geese running into a window.

“Hit five balloons you can have any prize, hit three you get one of these smaller prizes. Good luck,” the dart’s guy said, stepping to the side.

I lined up my throw. Thwump! Straight into the stomach of one of the stuffed

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animals lining the booth. The dart's guy looked at the stuffed animal and inched closer to the wall, not taking his eyes off my hands. Taking a deep breath I took careful aim. Thwack! Straight into the wall between the balloons. Cecilia was beginning to turn bright red, from containing her laughter. Pursing my lips I set to throw again. Thumph! Another stuffed animal down. Cecilia burst, screeching and doubled over.

"Holy shit, Claire. Holy shit. You're terrible at this. Let me try."

"No, I got this. Just needed a few flops. Fourth times the charm."

Thunk! Whap! Thumph! Thwump! Thwonk! The next five throws missed so spectacularly that the dart guy climbed out of the booth and stood away from me and the booth.

"Let your girlfriend try, please, you're killing my merchandise," he said, rubbing his shin where the plastic feathers of the mishandled dart had hit him.

"Fine," I begrudgingly handed the remaining twelve darts to Cecilia.

Pop! Pop! Pop! Poppop! Pop! Pop! I stared at her. What couldn't she do?

"I'll take the two plastic dinosaurs, please."

"What about the monkey?" I asked as dart's guy handed her the smallest prizes in the stand.

"This way we both win. We can commemorate our first date forever. Now, what are you gonna name yours?"

"Dr. Dino Fabio," I said proudly.

"Why in the world are you going to name your dinosaur that?"

"The first day we met, you were reading one of those ridiculous romance novels with Fabio on the front, and then during the ice breaker in Ms. Whitney's class, you said you wanted to be a doctor. So, Dr. Dino Fabio has to be the name of this little guy if he's going to commemorate the best day of my life."

Cecilia smiled, "Then it's a perfect name."

Three years later and all I wanted was to simultaneously forget and relive that night. Laying in bed, surrounded by tissues, chocolate wrappers, and half a pizza box I couldn't tear my eyes from Dr. Dino Fabio.

"What?" I glared at it. "What do you want from me?"

Kicking out with my left foot, I knocked the dresser hoping to dislodge it from its

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perch of judgment. My stomach clenched as it wobbled but remained upright. Smothering myself with the comforter. I threw my arms over my head and in an effort to become one with the bed; I pressed myself into the metal springs of the mattress, letting them pinch my back and thighs like tiny claws.

“Fuck you, Dr. Dino Fabio” I muffle screamed.

“Claire?” came a soft voice from the door.

“What?”

“Are you-” the voice paused, “going to be okay?”

I didn’t move, of course, I was not going to be okay, the love of my life had dumped me. But you can’t just say you’re not going to be okay.

“Yes,” I mumbled.

The door to my room creaked open.

Tugging off the comforter I sat up and met the gaze of my roommate Brittany.

“No,” I sighed.

“Oh, boy,” Brittany said, gazing around the room. “Okay, Claire, I love you, you’re my friend and my roommate. So I’m going to tell you this for your own good. You need to shower, everything looks better after a shower. And while you’re in there-” she paused, looking at the war between the floor and wine bottles, tissues, takeout containers, and clothes. “I’m going to clean your room. Because you won’t feel better until this place is clean, and I don’t want roaches. Okay?”

“Ughhhhhhh.”

“Great, here’s a towel,” Brittany held out the towel that lived on my desk chair.

Flopping to my feet, I took the towel and lumbered to the bathroom.

“Take your time! Enjoy the steam, it’ll be good for your pores,” she called, nudging a pile of dirty clothes with her foot.

“Throw out the toy dinosaur,” I called pulling the bathroom door shut.

When I got out of the shower, I felt like a soggy piece of bread, wet and falling apart. Brittany had left a note taped to my door saying she was going to the grocery store because she “threw out eighteen takeout boxes and too many chocolate wrappers to count, you need vegetables.”

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My room suddenly looked like a functioning human lived in it. Clothes put away, floor clear, and new sheets on my bed. Dr. Dino Fabio was nowhere to be seen. A wave of nausea rose up in me. I hadn't been in my room without his beady black dinosaur eyes staring at me, welcoming me, and mocking me at the same time. The room felt alien without him, just like going about my life felt alien without talking to Cecilia. Why had I told Brittany to get rid of him? What if Cecilia and I got back together? What would Cecilia think if she knew that I'd thrown out Dr. Dino Fabio? Oh, god. I had to find him, immediately. I looked in my wastebasket and saw that it was empty. Shit. What about the kitchen trash? Dashing to the kitchen I dove for the trashcan, nothing there either, empty. Fuck. Back to my room to pull on a pair of jeans and a hoodie, there was the only option left. The dumpster. Stupid, stupid, stupid Claire. What the hell had I been thinking? Half falling, half leaping down the stairs to the dumpster out back, my heart hammering faster and faster.

The rusted blue dumpster stood in the alley, looking innocent of eating my singular prized possession. It had to be in there. It had to, I would lose my mind if it wasn't. Levering myself off the wall and into the dumpster took all the muscle strength I had. Landing in the dumpster with a thur-crunch, I began to wade into the sea of stink, sticky, crunchy, and gooey things. If Brittany had just thrown out our trash then it should be on top somewhere, I reasoned. I began ripping open every black garbage bag in sight. My hands were soon covered in egg, slime, salsa, used condoms, and grit. Where was Dr. Dino Fabio? Hurling empty bags out of the dumpster, I dove deeper and deeper into the trash of my apartment building. God, please let me find Dr. Dino Fabio. Please. PLEASE.

"Claire?"

Startled, I jerked up, still clutching a bag of trash.

"What are you doing in the dumpster?" Brittany asked, holding two bags of groceries.

"Dr. Dino Fabio, I'm looking for Dr. Dino Fabio. The tiny dinosaur. You threw him away, right?"

Brittany looked at me as if I was standing in a dumpster looking for a gift my ex had given me.

"I put the dinosaur in your desk drawer, I figured you didn't actually want me to throw it away."

"My desk...Fuck." Why hadn't I checked my desk? Of course, Brittany hadn't

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thrown it away, she knew how much it meant to me. When Brittany and I had first moved in together I'd put Dr. Dino Fabio on the mantelpiece and proclaimed him 'King of Apartment 24,' Brittany had been less than amused but she was moved by the history of cheesy romance that resulted in his presence. She still insisted I not leave him on our mantle though.

Brittany also knew that two years ago when Cecilia and I broke up the first time and got back together three weeks later, we had used the dinosaurs. Dr. Dino Fabio and Dr. Carla Dino. Cecilia had named hers after the waitress on Cheers. It had been a rough summer, Cecilia and I hadn't been able to see each other for over a month and she was transferring to yet another school, this one even further away, so we decided to break up. It had been the logical thing to do we thought, but we had agreed if we found ourselves closer, geographically, in the future, we'd try again. For three weeks I kept trying to convince myself that breaking up had been the right thing to do. We still talked everyday, but kept biting our tongues to keep from saying, 'I love you.' Then, one day Cecilia facetimes me. On the screen though instead of Cecilia's purple hair and honey-colored eyes was Dr. Carla Dino.

"I miss you," squeaked the dinosaur, "I want to try again."

So we tried again.

Now two years later it was all over again. Except worse, because Cecilia had met someone else. And even worse than that was the fact that she drove up to see me to break it off in person. Brittany had answered the door because she thought it was the pizza she had ordered, instead, she was greeted by a guilty-looking Cecilia.

"Hey, Claire," Brittany had called, "Cecilia's here."

I sprang off the couch and sprinted over to her like a human-sized puppy.

"Oh, my God! Why didn't you tell me you were coming to visit? Do you need help with your bags? Wait, where are your bags? You always--"

Cecilia cut me off, "Claire, we need to talk."

I had known as soon as those words left her perfectly shaped lips, that it was over, but I wasn't ready to give up what we had.

"What is it?" I asked.

Brittany went and hid in her bedroom, while Cecilia led me to the couch.

"Claire, you're amazing. You're funny and talented. You're a great artist and you're

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going to find the right person someday. But I'm not that person for you."

"Of course you are, Cecilia. You brighten up my day. You make me feel like I'm made of cotton candy. We even have matching dinosaurs!"

"Claire-"

"I know the distance is hard, but you're here right now and once I graduate from school I can come to Toronto and we can be together every day and-"

"I met someone else."

It felt like an eighteen-wheeler had just rammed into my chest.

"What?"

"I didn't mean to. It just," her eyes searched the room looking everywhere but my face, "happened."

"We can work this out," I said gasping for air and grabbing her hands. "We've been through a lot, we can work through this."

"I don't want to work through this Claire. I'm sorry. I thought coming here and telling you face to face was best. We can't be together anymore. I don't love you anymore."

Before I could respond someone knocked on the door.

Cecilia looked down, "I should go."

"No, wait-" I began, interrupted by another knock. "Just hang on," I said getting off the couch and going to the door. Outside the door was the Domino's pizza delivery guy. Cecilia slipped past me and the pizza guy.

"I'm sorry Claire, but it's for the best," and then she was gone.

The pizza guy didn't move as I broke down crying and slid to the floor. Brittany, however, hurried out of her room, paid for the pizza, and sat down next to me.

"Pizza?" she asked, opening the box.

Now Brittany was staring at me as I stood in a dumpster covered in God-doesn't-even-want-to-know goo and grim.

"I think you're going to need another shower," she said, putting down the groceries. "Come on, I'll help you out."

Back in the apartment Brittany shooed me back into the bathroom and began to fix 'real food' as she called it.

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“You haven’t even seen a vegetable in weeks,” she said when I emerged from my second shower bundled in a bathrobe clutching Dr. Dino Fabio.

“I’ve seen vegetables, I ordered stir fry and a veggie pizza once.”

“Doesn’t count. Come on, eat this salad, while I finish making the chicken,” she motioned to the kitchen table with her spatula.

Once the food was done and I had consumed my weight in salad and chicken, Brittany took my hands in hers.

“I know this breakup has been hell for you, Claire. But you are stronger than this. Cecilia is not worth it, she is not worth dumpster diving for, she is not worth clogging your arteries with cheese for, and she is most definitely not worth the destruction of your mental health. Especially when she cheated on you.”

My chest tightened, I hadn’t been able to admit to myself that Cecilia, perfect Cecilia had cheated. I had pushed that thought away again and again but now clean and full I acknowledged it for the first time fully.

Brittany squeezed my hand, “It will get better. And I’m all for keeping the dinosaur but maybe attach some new memories to it. Don’t just cling to what was, okay?”

I nodded, tears rolling down my face, taking a deep breath I smiled for the first time in weeks. Clutching Dr. Dino Fabio I got up from the kitchen table, walked to my room, and placed his orange and purple figure back into the desk drawer that Brittany had placed him before.



NONFICTION

“I write for those women who do not speak, for those who do not have a voice because they were so terrified, because we are taught to respect fear more than ourselves. We’ve been taught that silence would save us, but it won’t.”
- Audre Lorde

Blackness

By Kerstin Holman

i don't become fully aware of my Blackness until i step outside of my house. it isn't until i am around a group of white people when i feel like the words "I AM A BLACK PERSON" are written on my forehead in bright, bold red letters for all to see.

it happens when i am with my father at a restaurant filled predominantly with non-black people, and even though it may be all in my head, i cannot help but feel like there are spotlights on us from the moment we enter to the moment we leave the property.

i realize my Blackness annually at the family reunion with my mom's side of the family, who are predominantly white. there are a handful of white-passing latinx family members. i have two other cousins who are half-black like me, but for some reason this makes me feel more alone. my Blackness may be shared at these get-togethers, but i learned very young that Blackness is not so much shared as it is understood.

i felt my Blackness in the most uncomfortable of ways from pre-school to 12th grade in my overwhelmingly white school system in an overwhelmingly white city. i felt the pressure to fit in by straightening my hair every single day in high school. in middle school i was made fun of after getting my first relaxing treatment—the second i got home i ran to the shower so i could scrub my hair until the curls came back. i had to bring my own makeup for plays and musicals because the school didn't carry any makeup in my shade. it's the littlest thing that remind of my Blackness in the most taunting of ways.

despite being the first-born grandchild to my mom's parents, i cannot help but wonder if they both felt relief when my mom's sister and her white husband had their children. my Blackness never made me doubt so much until the day my first cousin was born.

college allowed me to explore and finally embrace my Blackness because i was finally taking courses about black history, black writers, black struggle; with my first and only black (female) professor. i was no longer the only black student in the plays and in my classes and on my sport teams. but still, i was the only representative of Blackness in my all-white friend group. the uneasiness would find me soon again.

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my Blackness has been amplified in 2020 during a pandemic of murders, in which black people were the victims. many would argue we never really stopped being victims. the rightful riots and protests that followed have reminded me in the worst way of my race. the urging for our community to be more vocal and more active has been met with our silencing through our murders and lynchings. i want to be proud and unapologetic of my race so badly. i want to erase the internalized racism from my being and join the frontlines of the protests instead of just hiding behind my computer screen and donating to causes here and there out of both solidarity and a dash guilt.

what I wish i knew all those years ago is that there is a learning curve that is affected by so much that is out of your control. now and then i feel pride. i feel energized by the ones who are literally risking their lives for a cause that should not have to exist but dwelling on the fact that we are in this position will only stall change even further. i look up to the ones who live life unapologetically as black people, while i am still stuck down here just trying to learn how to both love me and be me. and part of that includes learning to love my Blackness.



The Great Indoors

By Gracelyn Willard

For the past three months, Americans have been stuck inside. No going to work. No drinking with friends in a bar. And no escape from the confining walls of their homes. For many Americans, these past three months have been a dramatic change from their normal lives. But, for the chronically ill, who have to stay indoors with or without a global pandemic, a new freedom has emerged in our isolating lives. With Zoom calls, online concerts, and the stress on reaching out and connecting over the internet, for the first time in a long time, the chronically ill are getting to interact socially on a scale previously impossible for them. As a chronically ill individual, I have spent months of my life pre-pandemic isolated within my home. During my time in pre-pandemic isolation, I was not given the gift of Zoom calls, check-ins, or readily available 'live' entertainment. My friends went out and on with their lives, and the world did not pause to ask me if I was okay. The world ignored me, as it ignored the many other chronically ill individuals in the world.

Now the world has stopped. Suddenly, everyone is dealing with a lack of escape and in that confinement, I and many others have found more freedom while staying indoors. It feels surreal to have more freedom in a pandemic ridden world than before. In the past when my health problems flared I was stuck watching reality tv and Instagram. I felt loneliness watching people going about their day to day. Right before the pandemic, I was speaking to my therapist about my fear of going places. It scared me to go shopping alone, to go out into crowded spaces where I might have a severe allergic reaction if I wasn't wearing a mask. I was terrified of fainting in public and having to go to a hospital, where I would have to explain the twenty-odd medicines and supplements I was on. But I was also scared of missing out. I was in a place of health that was teetering between getting worse and getting better. Now the world is getting an inside look at the health anxieties of the chronically ill. There are resources popping up to accommodate those in quarantine, to help quell loneliness that not six months ago I felt with glaring certainty.

NONFICTION

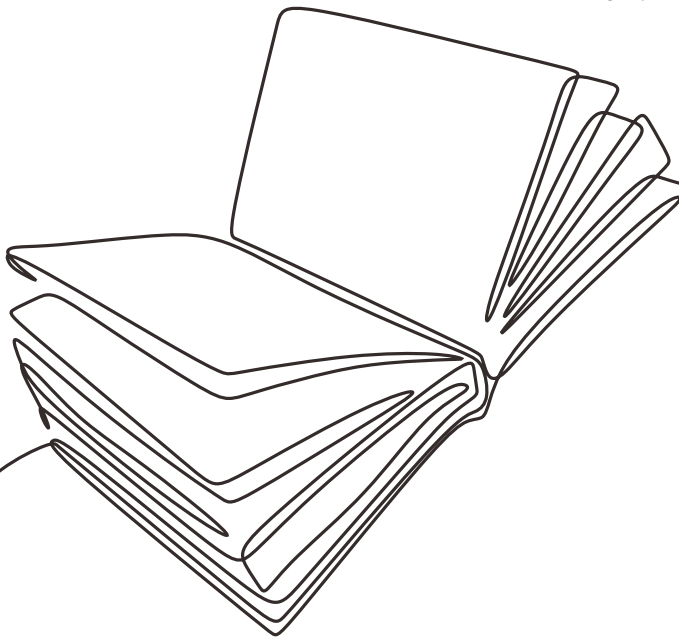
As an immunocompromised individual, I still don't go outside except for occasional walks or drives. But, I don't fear missing out on life or friends. I have had more connections and conversations with people in the last three months than I have in the last two years. Suddenly my time spent alone, healing but trapped, is an asset. A skill that I have honed over the years, that is benefiting myself and those around me. I'm able to be the lifeline for my friends who have never had to trap themselves inside. I get to be the person I needed not so long ago for the people I care about. A pandemic is a scary and stressful time but, perhaps there is a silver lining in it for the chronically ill. Maybe now, people will take the time to pause their lives for us and check-in. Maybe now, instead of being ridiculed and mocked we will be treated as people who need support and love during our time locked away from the world.



REVIEWS

“You cannot reason with people who don’t recognize the humanity in all of us.”

- Roxane Gay



Learning How to Keep Afloat in the 21st Century: A Book Review of *Build Yourself a Boat* by Camoghne Felix

By Izzy Peroni

“Assembly of self is not voyeuristic,” is a potent reminder from the poem “DISCLAIMER” of Camoghne Felix’s *Build Yourself a Boat*, a title in the BreakBeat Poets series, which showcases poetry, literature, and art that “brings the aesthetic of hip-hop practice to the page.” Felix herself takes the labels of poet and cultural worker; identities reflected in her prestige as the recipient of fellowships from Cave Canem, Callaloo, and Poets House, as well as being listed by the Black Youth Project as a “Black Girl from the Future You Should Know.” Felix assembles her identity through her poetry in the defense of the confessional, exploring— and in many places, explaining to a dissimilar audience—the overlap, as well as the individually tailored struggles, of each part of her lived experience of being black, being a woman, having depression, and growing up in poverty.

Build Yourself a Boat was published in 2019, but contains narratives spanning decades, back through the speaker’s childhood and the cultural and personal shifts that occur for a black girl growing up in the 2000s. Felix expounds broadly on the topics of the times, then narrowly centers on individual experiences that reflect both the external and internal fluently; the external being found in poems recording, day by day, the

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Zimmerman trials, and the speaker communicating with her little sister and mourning her innocence; the internal, laced throughout each poem, but especially found in a set of poems all named “Cutting W/ JB,” similarly tracing the loss of innocence in the speaker, as well as the impact of a friendship between two girls on the speaker’s suicidal ideations.

The sheer range of emotions stands up to the range of forms Felix takes on to modernize themes that are as old as America. Our speaker tackles childhood and life-long poverty through reflection in poems like “Tonya Harding’s Fur Coats” and “Beer Pong,” the lines shaping their story on the pages and folding over themselves. Clinical depression and intergenerational trauma collide with the mind-numbing detachment of the internet in several poems titled “Google Search Keywords,” relaying the universal Millennial experience of Googling topics too horrifying to discuss with adults you are told you should trust. The music of Felix’s poetry fills this book in a way that is always rhythmic, and at times, orchestral and overwhelming. The words on the page demand to be read, as the events of the narratives demand to be acknowledged and understood.

What stood out most to me, as a reader, is what the speaker attempts to push to the back of her psyche— a memory Felix cuts into fragments and places discreetly into footnotes attached to lines or sentences that, when observed closely, all seem to lead into a vague recollection of childhood sexual assault that has since fogged from time and repression. The story requires a trigger warning, and I wouldn’t dream of spoiling it for anyone, though it is not the only place where these themes arise. As she does in “DISCLAIMER,” Felix challenges the culture of shame and silence often faced by those who refuse to talk around their pain in “Mirror Talk,” asking without needing an answer; “am I allowed to disrespect the form. am I allowed to instead proclaim that he just raped me.” Felix and her speaker require no answers, and no permission, to share their truth.

Build Yourself a Boat lives in 2019 as much as it lives in 2013, 2016 and 2020— a seemingly endless decade of continuous struggle, heartache, and change that this book dissects and reassembles into an attempt at internal mitigation. Not every wound can be sutured with words, but this book finds moments in between the pain that show that healing is worth it— like dreaming about your little sister becoming an astronaut.



Bodies Wronged by Society: A Review of Roxane Gay's Memoir *Hunger*

By Kerstin Holman

Roxane Gay's 2017 *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body* bluntly and bravely lays out many of her struggles, successes and sorrows her body has experienced from an incredibly traumatic incident in her early childhood up to present-day. Told in six parts, Gay's *Hunger* lays bare all of the uncomfortable, heart-breaking and at many times relatable situations many readers of any size can identify with.

Gay's voice is not only extremely relevant and important to be heard because she is a black woman, but because she is fat. Despite our country insisting we are the most advanced in every level of society in terms of equality and inclusion, it is a fact that our society still refuses to both embrace and consider fat bodies as anything other than diabetic, unhealthy, and inhuman. In Chapter 33, Gay even discusses the failures of modern medicine due to the legitimizing of harmful terminology and diagnoses of fat bodies, as well as the various methods used by doctors to measure the "health" of bodies: "The definitions of 'obese' and 'overweight' are often vague and obscured by arbitrary measures like BMI or various other indexes...What matters most is that too many people are fat. The epidemic must be stopped, by any means necessary (124-125)." While laying out harmful terminology used by medical professionals, Gay also brings awareness to the lack of proper care that fat people receive from medical professionals reaffirms that fat bodies do not receive the same humanity as thin bodies.

As someone whose body has been slim her whole life, this memoir has helped me reflect on my internalized fatphobia and how myself and many others should make it a priority every single day to be present and uplift fat people. This can include changing and removing certain language that is considered fatphobic and offensive, calling out fatphobia (either within yourself or others), boosting the work of fat folks while making sure to listen and incorporating fat/body politics into your politic. Gay's memoir is incredibly important because it gives a voice to a group of people who are rarely ever given a spotlight and can hopefully make others reconsider and fix their bias towards fat people.

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Although hunger is a feeling every human (as far as I am aware) is capable of experiencing and likely has experienced at some point in their life, the subject of hunger as it relates to our bodies and the images we have of our bodies is a concept we rarely address publicly; Gay's novel smartly disregards that notion and serves readers a story that may be hard to swallow at times, but will end with you asking for seconds...and maybe even thirds.



Let's Discuss Silence

By Kerstin Holman

A person can contribute to a cause in two simple ways: positively, or negatively. This statement may seem too open-and-shut, too dismissive, but when it comes to advocating for human life, there is no time to debate on the gray matter in something that is so easily identified as black and white. One may believe that their choice—yes, it is a conscious choice—to remain silent during times when using your voice and platform and privilege that many others do not have is just as bad if not worse than being on the wrong side of history. In fact, your choice to remain “neutral” by not posting, retweeting, donating and showing up to protests ironically speak volumes to the people who know you. You are screaming right in their faces that you do not care for those who are suffering at the hands of those who have way too much power. Your decision to continue living your life like everything is normal as if the world isn't burning to the ground is like taking the world's largest megaphone and vocalizing to everyone that you are comfortable with people being murdered left and right as long as you remain unaffected. You may think that because there appears to be an endless parade of loud voices consuming the air that your silence will go unnoticed. But our shouts advocating for change and mercy are not enough to distract us from the deafening sound of you choosing to do nothing to help our cause. Your silence means our arrests. Your neutrality tolerates our pain and our deaths. Your indifference equals racism, homophobia, sexism, ableism. Our voices and actions may lead to our demise, but your insistence to remain quiet is just as deadly. Your complacency makes you just as culpable.



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"I decided it is better to scream. Silence is the real crime against humanity."

- Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope Against Hope*

"Learning disability" by Julia Gonzales, 2020





At The Sock Drawer we aim to raise the voices of those who have felt that their voices have been placed in the back of the sock drawer. We welcome all art and all artists, while giving special notice to those who are often marginalized by society.