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LYRE MAGAZINE

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LYRE LITERARY MAGAZINE

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the first issue of *Lyre Magazine*. What is a Lyre? It's a bird, an instrument; it's someone who doesn't tell the truth. In many languages it is the act of reading. Whatever it is, it's open to interpretation - your interpretation - as is this magazine.

This issue showcases some of the talent found within Simon Fraser University's World Literature program which is responsible for its creation. It also goes outside these confines to include artists from other disciplines. The hope for future issues is to expand beyond these humble origins to include more international locales and artists.

The work within tends to explore language: its borders and boundaries, what's explicit or implicit, what it explicates or implicates. These works allow the reader to focus lenses previously overlooked or unknown. Some of them even attempt a dialogue with other work. Essentially, much of the content is attempting to engage literature through artistic expression.

The learning curve for this endeavour was steep. Success is therefore all the more delicious. This magazine could not have been realized without the support of the SFU World Literature program, and especially the assistance of May Yao, Dr. Paulo Horta, and Dr. Ken Seigneurie.

The magazine website (www.fass.surrey.sfu.ca/wl/lyre) will continue to see updates in the following months, so please pay it a visit for more information on the magazine.

We hope you enjoy it,

The Editors

Daniel Poirier

Sonya Ryou

Brittany Vesterback

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Mixed Media Collage
Tavia Shannon

NOTES FROM A SECRET ROMAN ICONOCLAST

Yvonne Reinhart

I) I am a sick man, I am an ugly man. My heart is full of spite. Of my own motives, I cannot speak clearly, but I will say that I am not nearly superstitious enough to think that the Gods would send explanation for my illness, not through prayer or by waiting for divine signs. While doctors might know the reason for my sickness, I will not go to them. This does not mean that I have no faith in doctors and other men of science, but rather that if my liver hurts, I enjoy my suffering in the most despicable and dishonorable way. Of my own spite, I am lying, but you gentlemen would find this joke to be in poor taste, and merely evidence of my impulsive bitterness.

II) One night, I forgot that I was a man, and I dreamt that I became an insect. Upon waking, I tried as hard as I could to become one, but I kept failing. So instead, I waited until nightfall to leave my estate, and I ordered my slaves to hush lest they wished to become intimately acquainted with either end of a stick. Roman gentlemen, you must believe me when I say that I did something most despicable. I visited a nearby brothel, although this is not the scandalous part my story - even the plebs and the foreigners know that we are the primary consumers of this service. As I was lying with a whore, it occurred to me that I should be enjoying myself, but I found my mind sinking into depravity, as if dis-ease was my most natural state. Here I shrunk inwards, enjoying the gnawing feeling of degradation, and yet all the more aware of the good and sublime and beautiful.

III) Such is how acute sensitivity of consciousness functions. How I envy those who

instead are bulls! The only creature which I have successfully become is a mouse - an occurrence which should be considered dishonorable in society, regardless of it being an accepted means of survival. Do not think otherwise - the bull's ability to act directly is also the cause of the animal's overpowering stupidity, because nothing but sheer blunt force will stop a bull from charging into obstacles, short of a brick wall. When finally this bull of a person stops, he sees this wall as mystical and almost therapeutic.

IV) Yet, how can an intelligent Roman citizen consciously enjoy debauchery and still think himself an honorable, upright gentleman? I used to grit my teeth in anger and my heart would flood with dis-ease, full of awareness of my own foolishness, until I finally sunk again into luxurious, calm inertia.

V) You dear educated noblemen, I sincerely regret that I have not had more moments of hot headedness, where I had not hid behind the guise of being "civilized", and punched the last drunken cur who insulted me with his presence - but then I would not be writing this letter now. Face it gentlemen, we are a violent bunch, certainly no more noble than the common masses, and hardly different than the civilizations preceding us. In my forty years of age, I have encountered few things as vile as the trampling of hooves in the Senate House.

VI) I wish I was a lazy man, for then I would have something positive to say about myself. I would lead a life of justified debauchery, and it shall be filled with never ending, carefully rationed portions of fine food, wine, and prostitutes, and people would look at me and say; "Now that is

a fine, accomplished Epicurean!”, and indeed I should have achieved something worthy of mention. I should be delighted to continuously respect myself, for consumption is a vocation! But this is a wild fantasy that is far removed from the practical. Among other things, the chatter of slaves and women are intolerable.

VII) Embarrassing choices occur due to our lack of self awareness. Why is it that we cannot simply choose either (or both) a hearty portion of self-control, or be satisfied with a moderate portion of pleasure? Clearly either of these options would be better than rushing headlong into danger, as if we went to battle remembering everything but sword and armour. Surely this is a death wish of ours, a self indulgent belief that there is some better choice.

VIII) Lately, these politicians and educated men babble incessantly about building this fantastic Gold Palace, one whose glory would rival the Library of Alexandria as it existed before some raging idiot of a bull ran through its walls and burnt it down (his name matters not). They tell us city-dwellers to embrace the endless golden dawn ahead of us, that we and our children shall be the privileged of this massive new world, for we bear the insignia of citizenship. Thus it is implied that we should appreciate the colonization of strange corners of the world, lest we run out of “Roman” beasts or barbarians to fill the arenas, I suppose.

IX) Now this Lucretius figure was one of the most brilliant Gold Palace thinkers that the nobles of Rome had ever seen, for he provided the material out of which this palace is to be built – literally round tiny particles. He believed that the Gold Palace could never be destroyed, no more than the subjects of his arguments, thus he wrote the rules of logic governing the body and soul.

X) This fellow had the decency to die shortly after

40 years - only fools and vile people live longer, and I no longer have the hesitation to tell this to those venerable grey-haired senators. What is to stop bored Romans from sticking golden pins into the flesh of the Palace architects, or will they accidentally burn this one down too? Nothing, and of course people will thoroughly enjoy the violence and burning. Merely one person shall throw all that is logical to the winds, and the rest will clamour and agree that this is a grand idea.

XI) When I tell you that what man really wants is independent choice regardless of cost or direction, you devise tricks and traps disguised under the cloak of the rational, and you laugh at me, arguing that science has already determined the nature of the human mind. Could it be that your belief that man can and will choose the most justified, self-preserving decisions as nothing more than mere logical exercises? You Stoics laugh at the idea of free will, but does it not ever occur to you that harnessing our passions instead of annihilating them might be the most important thing mankind will ever do, and that this might even be praiseworthy? And you, Epicureans, do you not think that man loves nothing better than his own wellbeing and pleasure?

XII) Gentlemen, I am jesting, but again in poor taste. I have made up all the things that you say here, but I have merely been listening to you through cracks in the floors...

Perhaps I am a coward wanting to appear more dignified by creating this audience of mine, but this is for a good cause: The Public, or merely to cure my own boredom through my years of being trapped.

XIII) They say work makes one more honest and noble in spirit.

Borges's Library

and the man who came from nowhere

Daniel Poirier

the last thing I remember before coming to this place is the feeling like I was floating through space. It was more complicated than that though. My body was feather light, yet it rocked with the feelings of the ocean current. I can still, at this far forward point, remember the sound and cradle of the sea.

What I cannot remember resides outside of details. I can remember the incessant yap of a neighbourhood dog, the smell of grass, and innumerable other things that pose no real, tangible significance. Of true memory there is nothing, not a whisper of a dialogue in that other place, and when I close my eyes there is no image in my mind that can penetrate the uniformity that constructs this place. What I can remember is that there is another world, apart from this one, and that is the root of my madness. I often think that if I could deny myself the knowledge of that place, or banish its sensation from my mind, perhaps I could remain here in happiness. If not in happiness, then perhaps contentment. I know now that those fragments and senses will for eternity remain, for my torment is the reason for this place, and its allowance of these fragments is a parcel in that torment.

My eternal torment is the binding material of this world. Not metal, nor wood, nor glue, nor flesh and bone. While those materials do reside here, my suffering makes up the fibrous tissue. Once in a while I will make the suggestion of it to one of the librarians, but usually I am not taken seriously. I am a bit of a celebrity anywhere I reside, THE MAN WHO CAME FROM NOWHERE, but most associate

it to a celestial will. I know better than all of them though, the reason they are, is because I am. Just like the library itself, they are bound together by my suffering.

The library itself, this world, is made of galleries that spread endlessly out in a spherical pattern. Each gallery is made up of three and three walls, four of which are mounted top to bottom with books. The floor and ceiling are nondescript, bare and solid. Two spherical lamps hang from all ceilings by an electrical cord that disappears beyond, and they supply unending light, always insufficient, yet ceaseless and undying. In the early days, I obsessed myself with finding a switch to these lights, some release from the perpetual dim. I can assure you that there is no such switch. I tried to rend the lights from their position, to grasp and propel one single gallery into night, but they are too high. An age ago I knocked down a librarian and used him as a step, but when I grabbed the lamp it remained firmly attached in position, and all I managed to do was badly burn both of my hands. Before this I threw books at the lights, but they are encased in a material that is unyielding to the written word.

The two walls which are free of books lead to adjacent galleries. One is an air shaft with frightfully low rails. From here you can see other galleries rising and falling in all directions. The only light comes from the gallery doorways, and in between is nothing but darkness. The other free wall leads to a hallway and also has two small rooms. In one of the rooms there is a small porcelain bowl, impossible to sit upon comfortably, for the disposal of bodily waste. In the other room there is enough room to sleep standing up, but I cannot find one that seals efficiently and light always seeps under the bottom. I cannot acclimate myself to sleeping on my feet and so I can only slouch uncomfortably, and sleep only comes when my body is pushed by desperation. I always tried, and still do, to

curl up in a hallway or in the corner of a gallery to sleep, but the librarians always interrupt and prod until you depart. There are always more of them than there are of me. In the hallways, made of the same uninspired material, there is a spiral stairway that leads up and down to other hallways. There is also a mirror. The mirror accurately refracts the image of any librarian perfectly, but my face is distorted. I always look in any mirror I come across and while some inspect me differently none of them show me what I know myself to be. I do not see my reflection in this place, only cursed representations.

Though I think I understand the nature of my relationship to this place, I am always confronted by the reality that it appears to be a physical space. I can see and touch, I can interact with. The librarians are cognisant and react to input, spoken or physical, gentle or belligerent. It is this truth of real space and its inhabitants that injects madness.

When I was first deposited here I was confused and took time to acclimatise to new surroundings. As time passed certain elements came to be problematic, as described prior, and I suffered as a result. It took time for my epiphanies to occur. There was a period of about twenty or so years that I spent running down staircases. The librarians told me that the library was infinite, but I did not see this as possible. It was the physicality of the space that confronted this description. I walked into the hallway and went down one staircase, and then another and another. At first I would stop for sleep and bodily matters, but I will admit that my wits left me after the first few years. A space that is built must end. Soon I only stopped when my body faltered, and I would collapse and pass out on the staircase. The librarians would usually come and stuff me in a closet, but a few times I was left. This started to become more common when I began to neglect my bodily

functions. I would continue down the stairway with a trail of wet and solid waste trailing behind me. One kind librarian tried to dissuade me by telling me that the library was not infinite, but cyclical in such a way that you could journey on and on and ultimately you would be circling back to where you were. As he put it, if I were immortal I would in due course return to the beginning of my fecal path. This was just a theory, and unsubstantiated. I continued my descent, awfully slowly now, as both my will and knees were in rapid decline. A while later I happened upon a librarian, a scholar I suppose, and while I think I was searching for a way to stop my maddening fall, I needed something strong enough and imbued with logic to halt me. He told me that what I was doing was ridiculous, the library is nearly, if not fully, infinite. I asked him if he had any proof and he told me, the proof is in each book.

All of the books in the library are uniform, four hundred and ten pages, forty lines per page, eighty letters per line. This I knew before I began to spiral down. He told me that these books contain all imaginable combinations of the twenty four orthographical symbols. The comma, the period, and twenty two letters. There is also the space, which is the absence of a symbol. According to this principle there must be one book that is made up of nothing but commas, one with nothing but the letter b, and so on. I agreed to follow his logic, for the sake of argument and because my feet were aching. He said then that if the library, which he termed the cosmos, were finite, one could still certainly not reach the end, if there was such a place. For all books written, say the book of nothing but the letter b, there are as many replicas with nothing but b other than one c. This book would be somewhere again and again, transferring the c from one digit to the following adding up to thousands of combinations. If one swells this number, it is so near infinity that it is not worth

calculating. I conceded the point, but countered with the possibility that if one happened to be born in an outer region of the library, it would be a simple matter of reaching the edge. He said that if this were so there was an incredibly small chance that this person would point in the right direction, and journey deeper into the cosmos with the error. He stopped my rebuttal and said that if this end were possible, there is no report of any doorway other than the ones leading to the hallways, so if the cosmos did end, one would not know and just cycle back the way one came. The cosmos, at the magnitude it is, must wrap around itself, therefore, if not infinite, and if not cyclical, it must be something like a spiral, wrapping around and cycling back. I had no refutation to this.

It was shortly after this that I began to understand the nature of this world and why it was. I had to deny the sensation of a physical space, because it was not really, it was just a logic based system. It was like the inside of my own mind, a series of logical elements that, sewn together, seem to represent a physical space. Without this representation, this world would be a jumble of nonsense. But it was not a physical space, and therefore it could be without a physical end. Once I denied the physicality of the space I found that my bodily torture was a small matter, and that the torment of my mind was the true aim.

I can pick up any book in any number of galleries and they will be complete gibberish. It seems that the scholar was correct, and the result of that is the number of books that are actually legible, for more than a word or two, are outnumbered by the rubbish in the millions. More than this though, is that I know there must be books out there that are legible from beginning to finish, with brilliant stories and characters, but there is no way to locate them. I could wander for the rest of my time and not find a single book with anything worthwhile

inside. This is my eternal torment.

I can remember from the other world. I can remember that there are more than twenty four orthographical symbols and the space, but I just cannot remember what they are. I can remember adoring the feel of pages and paper in my hands, the pleasure of turning a page. I think maybe I used to create books, with unlimited letters and symbols, and obtain joy from reading. I remember sufficient lighting, simply because I am in a perpetual dim. There is no point to any of that in this place. I consider the fact that there are books out there that I simply cannot reach, but there is also the fact that all the books are out there. The reality of it dawned on me recently, which persuaded me to begin writing as I am now. The real fact is that if the library contains all combinations of the orthographical symbols, any book possible has already been written. Which means of course, that what I am writing now is somewhere in the library. This is the truth of my agony. Anything I can access is unintelligible. Anything that is legible, a word here or there, can only be obsessed upon in incessantly poor lighting while fatigued from sleeping upright in a closet. Yet I know that there must be galleries that contain beautiful, fully crafted books, but I could spend a hundred lifetimes trying to find them. Anything I myself write is already in the library. All of that and there is no way out of this place.

The librarians tell a different story. They attribute the nature of the cosmos to a holy will. The library represents the sum total of knowledge and therefore is the same as the kingdom of god. This is the nature of my celebrity. I am easily identifiable as an outsider, and while I am not sure why this is so easily detectable, I can only imagine that as primary inhabitants of this place the librarians see me in the same way the mirrors reflect my image, distorted and different. To the librarians, the otherness that I represent makes them more

pious in their worship of the library. I present to them the thoughts they continuously ask each other, and in finding a solution to clarify for me, who knows nothing, they are forced to seek internally and find peace with their home. Some go so far as to call me the son of the library, or progeny of the cosmos. Many scholars spend a number of years after learning of my presence searching for a book about me, of which there must be many. Perhaps some holy tome, distinguished from the rest, which tells of my purpose. There are tales also, from far away galleries, which describe others like me, men that just appear one day and do nothing but annoy. Yet, according to them, I also bring enlightenment.

I am old now. My years of running down staircases make it difficult for me to get around. I am spending the last of my days confined to a few galleries, and I send out certain faithful librarians to collect tomes for me to flip through. I hardly find anything of worth, but in my possession are three and three books with pieces that I find worthwhile. Around these gems is nothing but nonsense. I will record those pieces here.

grabbed a bit of paper and scribbled
picture relief

I put the dime in.

Yes, that was her name.

Sheep.

another loud, fateful rap on the door of
my undoing.

I wonder now what will happen when I die. The librarians and the library will continue on for eternity, of that I am certain. It seems though, that the nature of what I claim this place to be makes the idea of my death seem odd. If it is what I imagine it to be, then I should not die, but carry on through time and be subjected to this land of merciless anti knowledge. When a librarian dies they are tossed past the edge in the hallways with low

rails and fall for eternity, breaking apart in space. I can only assume that this is what will happen to me as well. I wonder what that sensation would be if I were able to feel it. I sometimes am tempted to fall for precisely this reason, darkness and release, something other than endless galleries. It will be my turn soon enough. I can only ensure that the last thing I know is the feeling that I remember before I came here. I will close my eyes and imagine that I am floating through space and rolling along the current of an eternal ocean. I will fall and fall and fall and

A GLIMPSE OF PRAGUE

Caszie Schoeber



Prague Castle and Charles Bridge continue to attract visitors and locals alike

*"Your heirs will live here evermore,
Secure and strong and safe for ages,
As long as they shall hold it holy,
Blessed and hallowed by their fathers
Who gave their blood and toiled united,
As long as they bow not to strangers,
But keep in mind the ways of yore
And stay devoted to each other."*

The Czechs have a unique mythology that glorifies the gifts and power of a single woman. The "grounding figure" of the Czech Lands is Libuše, a prophetess who ruled Vyšehrad, the first castle of Prague according to myth. The land saw great peace and prosperity under her rule. This period of tranquility was evidently too much for some people, one of whom exclaimed: "What kind of justice can we expect from a woman? Long-haired, but short on brains! Let her sew and spin, but not be ruler and a judge! Where else does a woman rule over men, except here? We are the laughing-stock among nations, and we cannot stand for such a judge any longer!" The outburst resulted in the search of a Duke to rule over the land instead of Libuše. Upon Libuše's recommendation, the people "chose" a man who would rule with an iron fist:

Přemysl. Libuše continued to "rule" the people alongside Přemysl through her gift of prophecy:

I see before me a large city, whose glory shall reach the heavens! I see a spot above the river, where the brook Brusnice makes a bend. A steep cliff rises above it. When you come to the woods above this cliff, you will find a man there, cutting a threshold for his house. There you will build a castle and call it Praha [Prague]. And just as people stoop when they enter a house, so will they bow to the city around my castle. It will be a noble one, respected by all the world!

Today we can see the Prague that Libuše envisioned centuries ago. Her prophecies came to pass and the city of Prague grew into the noble and respected city of her visions, one that is completely different from Vancouver's natural monuments and disordered hustle and bustle. For one thing, pedestrians are simply bowling pins that take their lives into their own hands when crossing the road. Also, while

I fortunately refrained from falling flat on my face, the cobblestone streets offered an everyday challenge for me to stay upright and practice my balance.

Although the cars may be faster here, the everyday pace of life is extremely relaxed. If someone does not feel like working, the store will close and they will head down to the pub to meet with friends and enjoy a leisurely three hour meal accompanied by bottomless pints of the Czech Republic's finest beer (*pivo* in Czech). I, for one, couldn't taste the difference in quality between what they have in Prague and what I've tried back home...but I never said that I was a connoisseur.

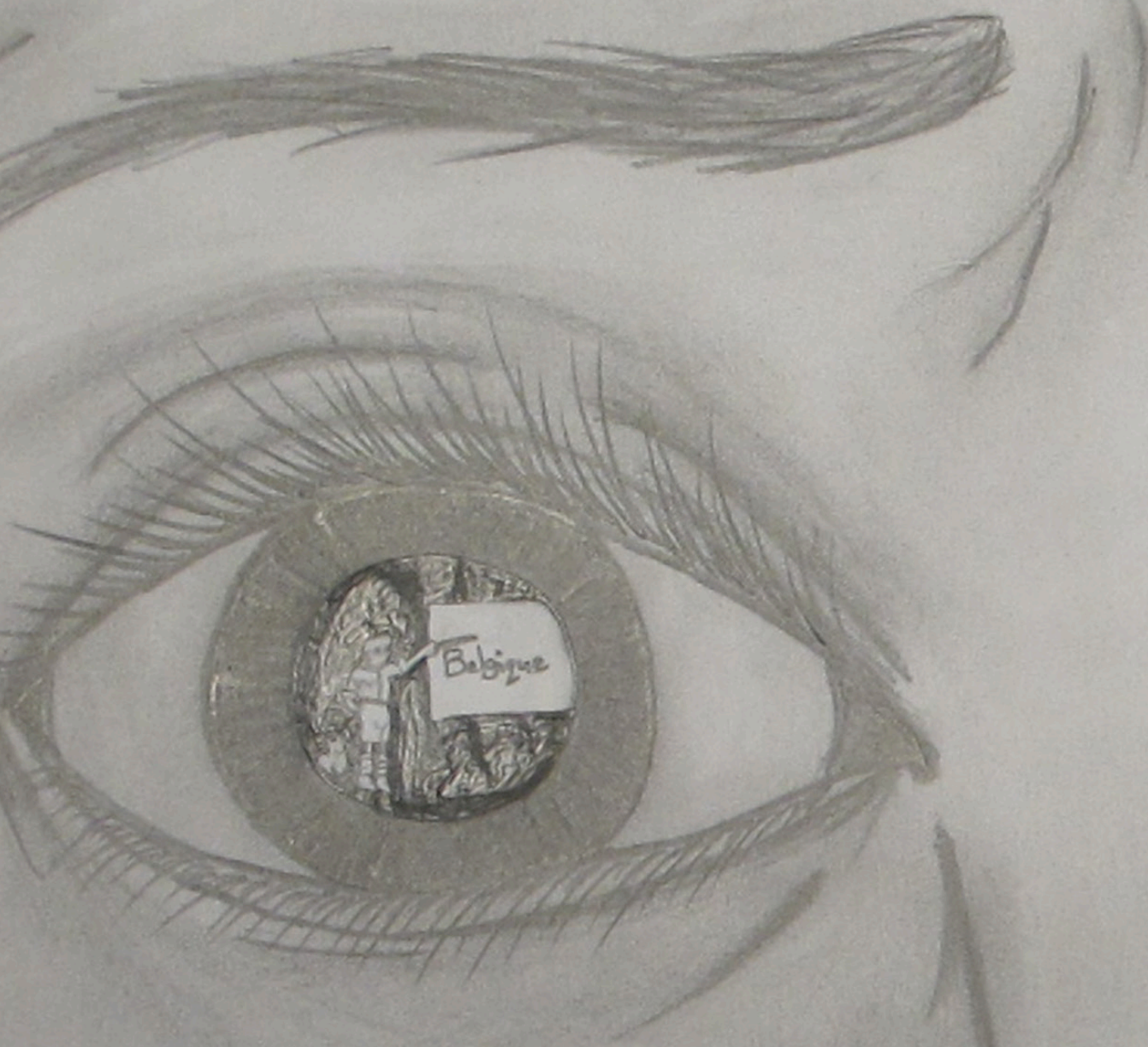
My initial experiences with Prague have supported everything I have heard about the city: it really is as beautiful as they say. At the beginning, I kept turning corners expecting to find the modern, grungy looking buildings that one usually finds in the large cities of the world but I rarely saw anything of that kind. I constantly found myself gazing up at buildings that seem to have been frozen in time and unaffected by the ever-changing world. It was almost fairytale-like, although sometimes my interaction with the locals quickly jostled me out of my conscious reverie when they were less than helpful because I couldn't speak their language. I tried to use my limited Czech vocabulary but it was a difficult language to learn! That said, the sights of the city more than made up for this traveler's reception into it. Even the towns and villages outside the city center of Prague remain pristine and unchanged. Kutná Hora, a town located 2 hours outside of Prague, houses the Cathedral of Saint Barbara as well as an ossuary that contains the bones of approximately 40,000-70,000 human skeletons arranged in various designs throughout the chapel. Again I found myself transported into a different time and place where a glorious cathedral was the center of town and of the lives of the inhabitants. The Ossuary was a different



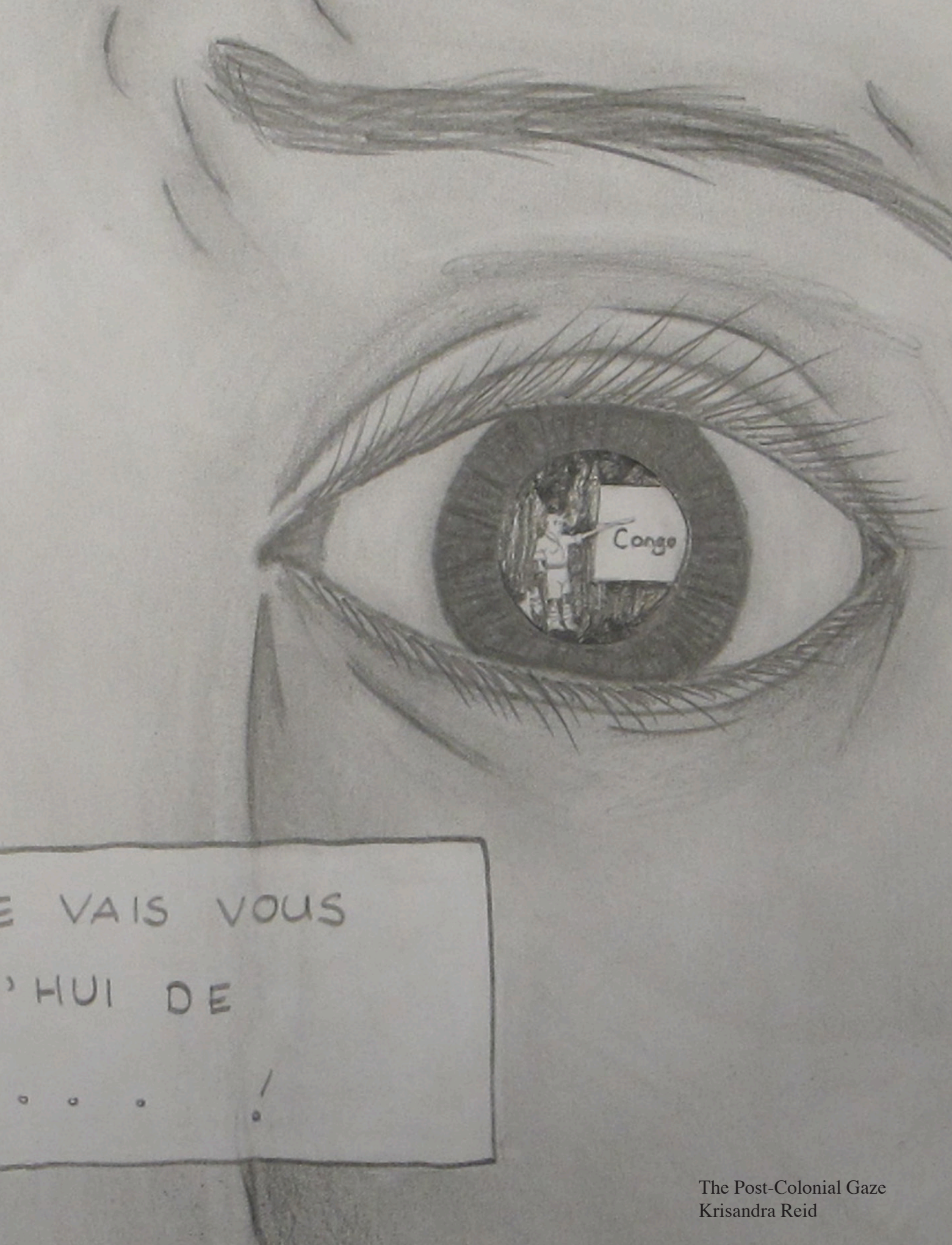
The Prophecy of a City: Premysu sits while Libuse sets her sights on the future of Prague.

experience altogether! I could look up and find myself beneath an enormous chandelier made up of all the bones of the human body or turn by head and see a towering bell shaped pyramid consisting of rows and rows of skulls. Apparently they sell some of the area's best wines at the ossuary so I bought one to try. I am not sure how good wine from an ossuary tastes but I guess there is only one way to find out...

Prague and its surroundings can barely be described by the words of a traveler who has only dipped her toes into the hidden treasures and enticing histories that this part of the world has to offer. Even photos scarcely capture the strength and glory Libuše foresaw rising from every corner of the city and reaching to the heavens. Prague, Kutna Hora, even Krivoklad, Cesky Krumlov, Lidice, and Libin cannot be glimpsed through someone else's eyes. They must be experienced through your own. But don't take my word for it; go and see for yourself.



MES CHERS AMIS, JE
PARLER AUJOURD
VOTRE PATRIE :



E VAIS VOUS
HUI DE
... !

HSENSUAL

Bryan Patterson

We tried Morse code,
didn't we?
But only so much can be explained
with the tapping of fingers.

We were too far apart for light signals,
and too deviant for letters.
Because ours were always
burned
in public squares,
next to other deviants.

In heaps
in public squares
our words, exchanged, were always
burned. And
you laughed
when I once suggested we use the word
Hsensual.

But I only did,
so that in public squares we won't be
burned.
So that in public squares
we can hold hands,
drink coffee,
eat croissants,
exchange poetry and
smoke filterless cigarettes
in public squares...

EDGES

Nina Maness

My lover has no edges
she is all curves and softness
When I'm enveloped in her folds
I can feel all the angles of my body melting.
It has taken years for me to become this sharp.
To reduce my body into lines and edges.
Years of work undone in a moment
by the floral scent of her moisturizer,
the feel of her cheek against mine when we dance
the way she brushes the hair out of my eyes
In these moments, I think maybe,
just maybe
I'm a girl after all.

WHAT BECAME OF THE SUN?

Sonya Ryou

From out of the sixth day oozes the sun, the first light,
And he tumbles through countless lives

He is
drowned when the waters rise and swallow
everything,
torn into indecipherable scraps by starved tigers,
incinerated when the clouds spit fire,

A syphilitic god overrun with lesions
He is a fiery mass of vigorously bubbling,
Syrupy pools of yellow and red

He is an eternally burning cast-off
From a divine bonfire
He devours fresh human hearts
To quiet his bone-curling pains
So that he is able to roll across the sky each day

A mischievous crow,
Wishing to punish those who allowed him to starve,
Releases the sun from its imprisonment
In a wooden box

With this sun's appearance
Is the annihilation
Of darkness, of secrets, of sleep

Night never comes
Until people steal it
From an unsuspecting armadillo

Each morning the hummingbird
Lovingly floats greetings to the sun
And dons the rays of his warm response
As a radiant cloak
Over his dull gray plumage
On occasion,
The sun borrows
The hummingbird's feathers
And having disguised himself,

Gracefully courts the moon
Who is charmed by his beauty

The sun eagerly embraces a wooden girl,
Slyly crafted by a crocodile and woodpecker
To escape his rage

Wiracocha, self-formed creator,
Commands the sun to send his children
As guides to those existing blindly in holes

All that the sun's children touch
Is imbued with fertility and promise

Daughter and son, the first Incas,
Draw their people from chilled darkness
Into illuminated being within Cuzco

In a different world
The sun, father of all Incas
Is pitied for his stagnant life

He must never stray from his appointed schedule
Must never meander off his path in the sky
His children imagine the pervasive weight of
boredom
that he must bear for their sakes

Don Mancio, overwhelmed by the sun's brilliance,
Kidnaps him from his defiled home,
Quickly crumbling underneath greedy hands
Mancio later gambles the sun in a game
And loses him

An archbishop forbids communication with the
sun
And renders all native instruments to ash
Punishments and death are hurled upon
Those who disobey him

And then little is known of the sun.





OCTOBER MORNING

Ruby Sall

Cold feet stand frozen,
underneath a lemon dawn.
And the sun whispers silently
a stream that slips swiftly
through cool creaking fingers,
lingers... and then falls
like silk onto the
damp sodden soil,
in handfuls of morning dawn.

MAYBE

Ryan Faliszewski

If you had
never seen
a marble before, one
might think it was
some thing
more than a
lit-tle glass ball,
maybe. one
(might think)
would be
a glorious
Orb, crystall-in
e the sky floating
(the) marble (clouds)
gleaming with moisture
The Sun glinting
off it ' s
impeccable
smoothsurface.
If one
had (never been)
never seen
a .
before
then couldn't
such a thing
might be,
the tear of an angel,
maybe.

I WROTE THIS ONE A Michael Despotovic WHILE BACK

Go to sleep
but do not dream.
I closed that door,
when I walked through the gate
and threw away the key.

I do not boast.
Instead I am fortunate
but scared,
Do not dream another me.

HAVE YOU EVER EATEN WORDS?

Bonnie Tulloch

Have you ever eaten words,
That did not taste quite right?
I found this out myself,
When I ate a few last night.

I sat there at the table
With the words there on my plate.
I sat there and I listened
As I ate and ate and ate.

The first word that I tasted,
Did not taste quite right,
I chewed it for a while
Then I took another bite.

This bite tasted worse
Than the first spoonful did,
I swallowed it with patience
Trying not to blow my lid.

But one by one I swallowed
Each and every one,
I ate every single word
Until the words were done.

Then I sat there in silence
As I gazed on empty plate.
And processed all those words
That I, myself, just ate.

And then something began to happen,
Words digested deep inside.
Something began to happen,
That my face just could not hide.

The words began to bubble, boil
And start to rise.
Then one by one out they came,
Much to my surprise.

I spat them all back out
Into the heavy air.
I spat them all back out
And I did not even care,

That all the people were now watching
The words tumble on the floor.
Every time I thought I'd stopped,
Out came some more.

I needed to get rid
Of that horrible, awful taste,
Gutlessly eaten,
In a stupid haste.

I couldn't rest my mouth
Until every word was gone,
Then after I finished,
I stretched and gave a yawn.

I got up and left the table,
Ready to end the day,
I got up and left the table,
Having said all I could say.

Ryan Faliszewski

How fine it is to feel
the Sand, sliding light
between your
earth-bound toes.

(singing so bravely its brightest glow
a star dies and
shatters :',,: a milky wake
of ashes.)

Hold (honey) hands on a
shore shifting soothly
and
kiss, a closest knowing
of what it
means to be star-crossed.

(What more is the sea
than moonlit mortuary?
Kind priestess who catches
comet-beaded remains
and lays hands
full to the Beaches-
beds of jupiter jewels.)

Lie
tranquil, near the tides
In touching
with cosmic glitter. know
the swirling of
creation – a constellation with your feet.

Oh Sigmund Freud where do I begin to express
The issues which you often address
With your spectacles and cigar in either hand
While you teach us how to understand
What our unconscious self seeks to confess

Your Interpretation of Dreams with its many schemes
Introduces what we call psychoanalytic themes
Where the mind becomes a large repository
A sort of desires, feelings, and memories depository
And sexuality and violence are the source it seems

Repression is part of civilization you say
Where a double is often created to play
And a method you would often use
To access the mind from the patients' shoes
Is to tell them to speak of words that weigh

The unconscious expresses itself in dreams
And distorts the material we wish to scream
In neurotic systems we displace our desires
Fixation, splitting, and projection we aspire
And even as adults the unconscious will stream

The tension between the ego and the id
Dedicated your life to it, is what you did
You found the primary process of life irrational
And the secondary processes on the other hand,
rational
And in addition sexuality that we can never rid.

Now where do I begin to attempt to describe
The diagnosis that you will often prescribe
The Oedipal Complex in which a boy loves his mother
I think most of us would often feel other
And it is safe to say most do not get that vibe

Literary texts are like dreams to you
They show unconscious material too
And displace unconscious desires and drives
So they bear no resemblance to our everyday lives
Yet an eye can be a substitute for a penis ... ew

Now we come to the end of this Ode to Freud
And I sincerely hope that you all enjoyed
Perhaps next time when you're about to read
Think of the displacement of the unconscious indeed
And don't forget about our resident Sigmund Freud.

ODE TO FREUD

Karina Chan

JIM MORTONS

Brittany Vesterback

(FRED sits at the counter of the coffee shop, drinking a coffee with Jim Mortons written on the side. Hanging in the background is a sign that says "Turn Up the End to Spend!")

CODY stands at the counter, back turned to FRED, talking on the telephone.)

CODY. Hey. Yeah, I know. We'll have dinner ... Tuesday? Tuesday. What? Oh, well ... Fred's here. (In the background, FRED looks up. CODY smiles at him and waves, then goes back to the phone, talking more quietly.) I know. Yeah, well, it's gotta have something to do with him. I don't know. I know, but what am I supposed to do? You don't get it, do you? I don't know. Okay. I'll talk to you later. Bye.

(In the background, FRED is looking into his coffee cup, distracted. CODY picks up the coffee pot and walks over to him, not seeming entirely sure if she should ask.)

CODY. Would you like another?

FRED. Thanks. *(Holds out the cup, CODY pours some coffee.)*

CODY. No problem. What're you doing here at this time of day?

FRED. Danny's meeting me here.

CODY. Oh. *(CODY takes off the wedding ring and puts it in the pocket of the apron, after glancing around her quickly.)*

FRED. Thanks. I know this can't be easy for you.

CODY. Don't worry about it.

FRED. Cody ...

CODY. I told you not to worry about it. You need more time. I get it. If I can make this easier for you, I will.

(DANNY walks in and the FRED turns to look at him. CODY doesn't notice.)

CODY. How've you been?

FRED. What? Oh, yeah, fine.

CODY. *(Smiling a little)* And how are you, Danny? It's nice to see you again.

DANNY. Nice to see you, too, Cody.

CODY. *(Glancing at FRED)* How're your kids?

DANNY. With their other family right now. Joint custody.

FRED. *(Startled, FRED stares at DANNY, not noticing the look that CODY gives him.)* I didn't even know you'd gotten a divorce. When'd it happen?

DANNY. 'Bout two months ago.

FRED. Sorry. Uh ... why'd you two split up?

DANNY. There were ... problems. Could I get an Earl Grey, please?

CODY. Sure, Danny.

(*CODY disappears offstage and DANNY takes a seat.*)

DANNY. You know, one of these days you're gonna come in here and there'll be a ring on Cody's finger.

FRED. (*Startled, FRED jerks around to stare at DANNY.*) What do you mean?

DANNY. I mean, get your head out of your ass and ask. It can't hurt to ask.

FRED. (*Dejected.*) Sure it could.

DANNY. How? All she could do is reject you, and what if the answer was yes?

FRED. Rejection's a lot scarier when you really care about someone, Danny.

DANNY. (*Looks aside, not noticing that FRED is looking at him.*) I guess you're right about that.

FRED. I know I am.

DANNY. (*Silence for a moment.*) You haven't turned up the end.

FRED. Yeah, well, I figure people winning things always seem to get the urge to jump up and down like morons. I don't want to spill coffee on myself. It would suck to win a million dollars but also get facial scars because you were so excited you threw coffee on yourself.

DANNY. Though, you'd have a million dollars. You'd always be able to get that fixed. You could even tell Cody then.

FRED. How do those two thoughts coincide?

DANNY. Everything else will have changed. May as well take the chance. Plus, after the whole face burning business, you would want reconstructive surgery anyway. You could make

yourself unrecognizable if Cody turned you down. No one would know. Even she wouldn't know. Seriously the face burning isn't a bad idea. It's not like you're a model or anything.

FRED. Thanks. Anyway, suppose I burned my eyes? Oh, man, an eye burn. It hurts to even think about.

DANNY. I don't know, my eyes getting hurt has never scared me that bad. I don't like the idea of hand injuries. Or brain ones.

FRED. Wait, brain injuries? Like ... getting hit in the head or ... what?

DANNY. No, like, when you're walking in the woods and you think, "What if a tick fell on my head and just started burrowing?" (FRED stares at him.) You've never thought about that?

FRED. (*Shaking his head slowly.*) No.

DANNY. Okay, but ... like, when you see earwigs and you think of them crawling into your brain and (*Sees FRED's smile.*)... really? You've never thought of this?

FRED. ... I guess I don't spend as much time in the forest as you. And if it means getting this weird about woodland creatures and my brain, I don't think I want to. I don't like woodland creatures to begin with.

(*CODY returns with the tea.*)

DANNY. Oh, yeah. The squirrel thing. Thanks, Cody.

CODY. No problem. Sorry to hear about you and your wife. Relationships can be tough.

DANNY. Yeah, and thinking about it now, I tend to think ours was doomed from the get-go.

CODY. You seemed happy.

DANNY. I was happy. That's not the point.

Something was just ... missing.

CODY. *(Seeing DANNY's discomfort, turns to FRED, whose been pretending to ignore the entire conversation.)* So, what's this squirrel thing?

FRED. *(Suddenly awkward.)* It's nothing.

DANNY. Fred's afraid of squirrels.

CODY. Squirrels ... why?

FRED. Thanks, Danny.

DANNY. You're welcome.

CODY. No, seriously. You're afraid of squirrels? But that's like being afraid of ... moths, or something. Why are you afraid of squirrels?

DANNY. *(Grinning.)* Yeah, Fred, why?

FRED. *(Taking a deep breath.)* I moved to B.C. when I was eight, from Saskatchewan. I'd only ever seen a squirrel ... twice, maybe. We didn't live by any trees where we lived in Saskatchewan, cause, you know, Saskatchewan's basically flat. There's actually a saying about how –

CODY. Nodding off.

FRED. So, there was this big tree outside my house, and nearly every night that I was living there for the first month there was this weird squeaking coming from outside.

CODY. Oh?

FRED. So, one night I gather my courage and go and look outside and I see these two eyes glowing at me, and I freaked right out. I ran down the hall to my parents and they came to look and they almost died laughing, but they wouldn't tell me why, so I had to ask my sister later.

DANNY. Hearing squirrels having sex outside your room can be very traumatic when you're eight. I guess.

FRED. It wasn't the squirrels so much as the having to ask what was going on.

CODY. All animals do it, Fred. People do it.

FRED. Thank you, I'm aware of that.

DANNY. She's right, you know. There's no need for embarrassment.

FRED. Shut up! You're afraid of ticks and earwigs.

CODY. You're not afraid of earwigs, Fred? But they're so creepy. They have those scuttling centipede legs and they look like a cross between a caterpillar and a rat's tail. And they crawl inside your ear.

DANNY. Do you remember the first time you saw one?

CODY. Yeah. I was at school when I was little, and at recess one of the older boys showed me one. He told me it was a centipede, and I was still grossed out, but I picked it up anyway 'cause I didn't want to seem afraid and it started crawling up my arm and then he told me what it really was.

DANNY. Kids are sick.

CODY. I know. When'd you first see one?

DANNY. I was camping and I woke up with one on my pillow. *(DANNY and CODY both rub at their ears.)*

CODY. Seriously, Fred, how are you not afraid of earwigs?

FRED. Shit.

DANNY. I think someone at that table wants you, Cody.

(*CODY leaves.*)

DANNY. You should tell Cody how you feel.

FRED. How are we back on this? Listen, telling people how you feel isn't always a good thing. Especially if it'll mess up something that's fine as it is.

DANNY. Loving someone from afar isn't fine. Believe me.

FRED. Are you telling me you always tell everyone exactly how you feel about them? No, you don't. You don't want to mess things up. It's not great, but it's better than it would be if everything got messed up.

DANNY. I guess.

FRED. I know. (*He looks away from Danny, down at his cup and, after taking the last sip of coffee, turns up the end. He goes very still, and then takes a deep breath and rolls the end back down.*) You said that loving someone from afar isn't fine? You have some experience with that?

DANNY. (*Quietly.*) Can we not talk about this, Fred?

FRED. I'd like to say yes, but I need to know. Did you tell this person that you loved that you loved them?

DANNY. (*Pause.*) No.

FRED. Why not?

DANNY. I couldn't. The timing was never right for either one of us.

FRED. And how long did you know this person?

DANNY. Years.

FRED. And an opportunity never presented itself? Not in all those years?

DANNY. I was married.

FRED. And now that you're not, will you tell them?

DANNY. I don't know. Maybe.

FRED. So, never.

(*CODY reappears, and, seeming to sense the tension, tries for to lighten the mood.*)

CODY. You know what I was thinking about? Names I could never name my child.

DANNY. Why?

CODY. Like this topic is any more random than you two with your ticks and squirrels. Just hear me out, okay?

DANNY. Okay, go ahead.

CODY. So, I could never name my kid Jack because my last name is Jackson. And I could never name him Michael because, much as I like the name Michael, it would just be too mean.

DANNY. You should probably cut out Latoya and Janet, too. For girls.

CODY. I'll keep that in mind. I could also never name them one of those place names, or car names, or one of those made up names that are really just collections of sounds.

FRED. I agree with all your naming rules so far.

DANNY. I thought your last name was Murray?

CODY. (*Startled*) It is. That was just an example of bad ... naming practices. (*FRED gestures for her to leave.*) Oh, I hear someone calling me.

(CODY runs off, casting a nervous and apologetic glance over her shoulder at FRED.)

DANNY. No one was calling her. What's going on, Fred?

FRED. I don't love Cody.

DANNY. Bullshit. If you don't love her, why do you spend all your time mooning at her?

FRED. When have you seen me "moon" at Cody? And what the hell kind of word is "moon" for something like that, anyway? What are you, from the eighteen hundreds or something?

DANNY. The fact remains that there is no reason for you to be here all the time if you don't love her.

FRED. I don't love Cody. I love someone else. I've loved someone else for years.

DANNY. *(Forcing a smile, even though FRED can't see it.)* Yeah? Who is it? Someone I know?

FRED. You could say that.

DANNY. *(Dreading the answer.)* Who?

FRED. *(Squeezes his cup in his hand a moment, crumpling it a little, then consciously relaxes.)* You.

DANNY. What?

FRED. You. I love you.

DANNY. I've known you for... why didn't you tell me this before?

FRED. Why didn't you tell the person you loved how you felt about them?

DANNY. Because I thought he was in love with someone else.

(Dawning realization among the two of them, and they look at each other. Tentatively, DANNY leans in and kisses FRED. FRED kisses him back, and they draw back from each other after a moment. Neither one notices that CODY has come onstage, and they don't notice when she leaves quickly, so they won't see her.)

DANNY and FRED look at each other, then DANNY finishes his coffee and they leave, FRED throwing his cup towards the trash can, but missing.

CODY comes back onstage, sees that FRED and DANNY have left and takes her ring out of her pocket, putting it back on. Noticing the cup sitting on the floor, she goes to pick it up, but seems uncertain what to do. In the end, she goes to the phone, the cup still in her hands. She dials.)

CODY. Hey, hon. Yeah. Yeah, I did. Hey, remember Fred and Danny? Well, they finally told each other. I know. *(Smiling widely, CODY looks at the cup in her hand, and turns up the end. She freezes, her eyes going wide.)* And ... I think I may have just won a million dollars. I picked up one of the cups off the floor and ... I just won a million dollars! No, it was just on the floor, near the garbage can. Someone must have thrown it out and missed. I don't know why. *(She looks in the direction that DANNY and FRED exited in.)* Maybe whoever it was figured they didn't need it.

(Blackout.)

CREATIVE RESPONSE

This is the place where you can respond to what you have read, whether it's with a story, an image, or something else entirely. Feel free to send us what you come up with, for possible inclusion in an upcoming "Reader's Write" section.

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