805

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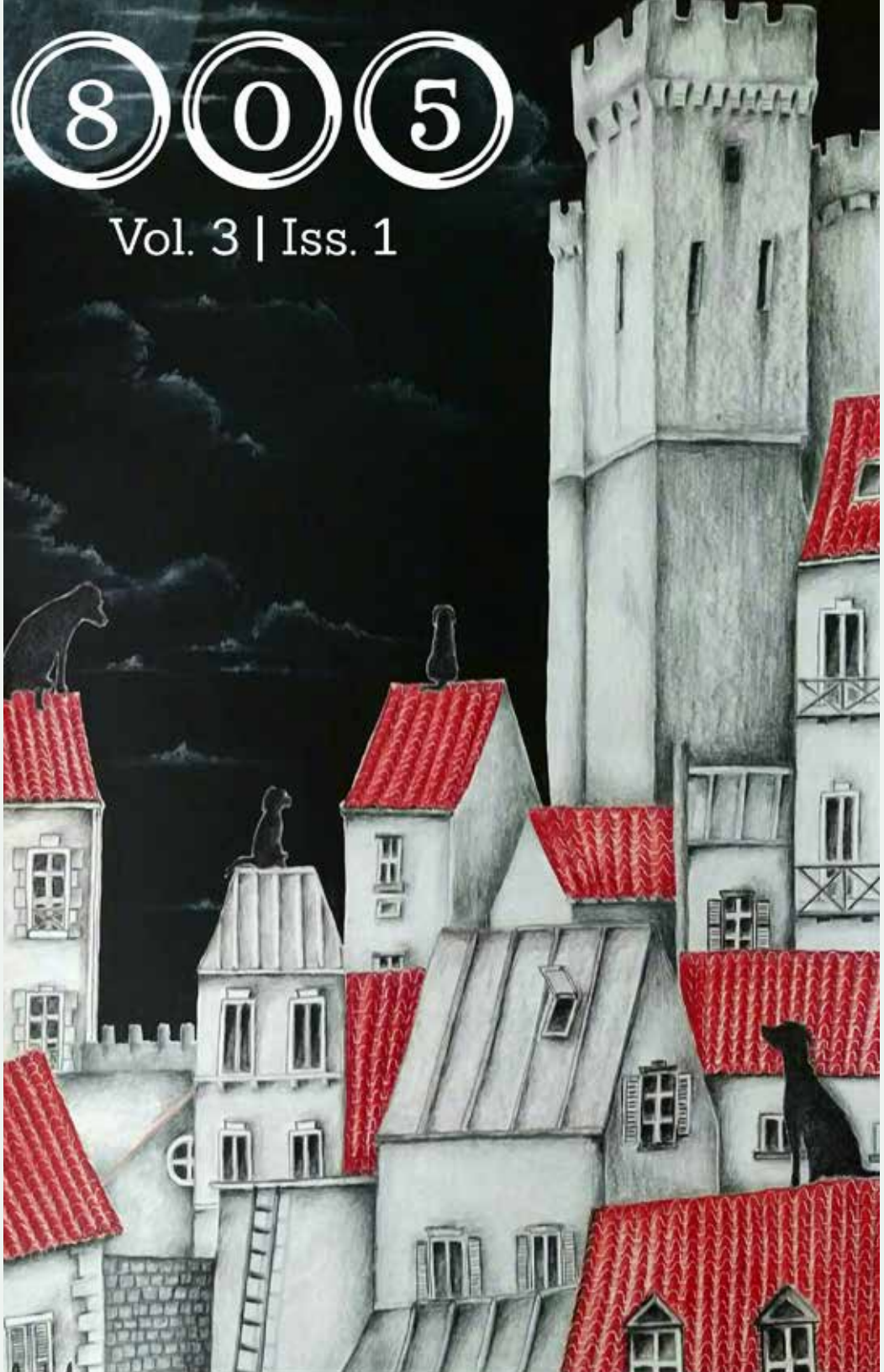

805
Lit + Art

805 (ISSN 2379-4593) is a literary and art journal published quarterly and online by the Manatee County Public Library System. Online issues are always free to read. An annual teen issue is published online and an annual print anthology of selected works is available to purchase.

"805" is the Dewey Decimal number for literary journals. *805* was founded in 2015 from the library's commitment to promote the vast creativity of our community and beyond. The editorial board is composed of librarians, writers, and a professor.

The editors seek short fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and art that is unexpected, striking, and moving. *805* accepts submissions from residents of Manatee County as well as the rest of the universe. Unsolicited and simultaneous submissions accepted. Submissions are always free.

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Lit + Art

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From the Editor

The year 2016 saw the loss of great artists, writers, and musicians. But this difficult time only demonstrated that we need more art to come home to, to help us cope, or to aid us in discovering a new perspective.

Being an editor for 805, watching this magazine grow and flourish, affords me a unique view, a front-row seat, so to speak, to the amazing talent that we still have around us. In this issue of 805, we can reflect on the present, as well as the future, while experiencing the exquisite quality of art and prose contained within.

Paule Woolsey's "Moon Dogs," selected for the cover of this issue, is an example of what I spoke of above. The dogs, looking off into the night, await for the light of the moon. Tim Lavis's "two-hundred" offers a challenge to award-winning and former United States Poet Laureate Billy Collins. Kristi Hebert's "Snapshots" captures the beauty of the cycles of life. Finally, Jennifer Ammon's "Chemistry," the Flash Fiction Contest Winner, examines that magical feeling we get, or don't get, when meeting a potential mate.

These are just a few of the gems that can be found inside. Come see the future with me.

Matthew Masucci
Editor

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Flash Fiction Contest Winner

Jennifer Ammon

The second glass of wine might have been the clincher. She told herself, Do not say something cringe-inducing. Do not tell him your opinions, which are not always well-received. Be happy instead of being the dark, brooding, haunted by too many bad boyfriends person you really are. They already went through the first uncomfortable ten minutes. She's from Michigan. 41. No kids. He's from Illinois. 43. No kids…that he knew of, ha ha. What was wrong with him, she wondered. He was talking about the Miami Heat. She sort of nodded her head like you do on these kind of dates. Guys always had a lot to say. She had a lot to think about but not so much to say. She knew about Hitchcock, and Marilyn, and Ingmar Bergman, but she didn't know the language of men, like football, or basketball. She felt alone. I wish someone would just *get* me, she thought. This guy moved from Chicago to Miami to help take care of his mother. Well, maybe he'd take care of her when she gets Alzheimer's. Okay—*if*. But it runs in the family. She could tell him about her father who had it. No, that's bummer talk, as her friend called it. She apparently engaged in this too often. She didn't see what was wrong with talking about real life. And death. He drank a vodka tonic and it looked crisp and clean, like he did. She felt like ordering one, too; maybe she'd be crisp and clean instead of old and—*stop*. But she got that second glass of wine and felt it. The calamari they shared went fast. There was a lull in the conversation. It was her turn to talk but she looked at his shiny round face and funny looking ears and considered him, um, that way. Could she see herself doing the love thing with him, getting hot and sweaty? No. And that was important, wasn't it? Before the lull he asked her, "What's your favorite painting?" She was stuck on that one. Who knew the names of many paintings? And then… And then she said it: "I'm not sure there's any chemistry," is what she said to the guy who moved to Miami to help his sickly mother and did not ask her how the chemistry was going so far. As soon as she said it, she wished she hadn't said it, that she could take it back. "I'm sorry. I'm just tired." But she saw the look on his face, like a wince, and she knew there was no going back. "It's okay," he said. "Let's call it a night." "All right," she agreed reluctantly. What did she expect? While they waited for the check she thought of a painting she liked and blurted out, "Starry Night. Van Gogh." He smiled. "That's a great one." He looked handsome. She would have liked to stay and talk some more but he was already getting up to leave.

Snapshots

Kristi Hebert

I am three, the grass under my feet the feeling of everything good in the world as I chase the crystalline bubbles flying through time and space. I want nothing; it is a time before wants, before needs other than those that are most basic to us all. Soap bubbles and coat hangers ensure happiness. No shoes required, in a time before broken glass and broken people that leave needles to fester in the rain—at least, a time before I was aware of such things.

I am four, the feeling of the rough, shaggy carpet bruising my cheek, reminiscent of Astroturf as panic washes over me. The first time this fear slams into me like the rush of disrupted tides, but I'll never know that it won't be the last. Voices rise in volume as my terror rises in pitch, a high whining that blasts through my eardrums like a staccato beat that will never end. It is wave after wave of these feelings from an ocean that I never wanted to see, one that I never knew I would find myself stranded in, alone and unsure. Jesus asked his followers to get out of the boat and trust that they wouldn't sink. I don't even have the boat.

I am five, six, seven—the ages tumble together as the pictures shuffle in the box I hold, all of my worldly possessions packed under the bright California Orange that adorns the still-sticky wood. It's almost as if the earlier panic attacks were practice for this feeling of trepidation that overwhelms every thought as we move from house to house to house, escaping the women that howl obscenities, throwing glass bottles at our windows. The knowledge of how to hit the floor in less time than it took to breathe in to scream was well-practiced in response to the sound of slamming doors and cars backfiring, sounding like the gunshot that I'd only heard once.

I am twelve, sitting alone in the cafeteria as the conversations rise around me. "Why does she dress like that?" they whisper, yet they seemingly don't understand the volume component of that word. "What are those scars on her arms?" They're the burn marks from my first foster sister, I want to tell them. From when she realized that her mother intended for me to stay. They're the signs of a system that failed me when I needed it most, signs that I was unworthy, unloved, and unwanted. I learned to make the marks myself. It saved them the time and effort.

I am fifteen, and the sting of a needle is better than the burn of a flame. It creates the fire inside of me, masking the pain I still feel from the streaks of burned flesh up and down my body. I crave this feeling more than anything else as I lock my door against the man my foster mother is sleeping with this week, knowing that in two more days, school will start again and I'll find Jimmy. He'll always give me what I need, so long as I give him the things he craves. Me, oddly enough. Who would have thought that all I would have to give away was myself to find a way out of the memories I'd been given? Who would have thought someone would *want* to take me?

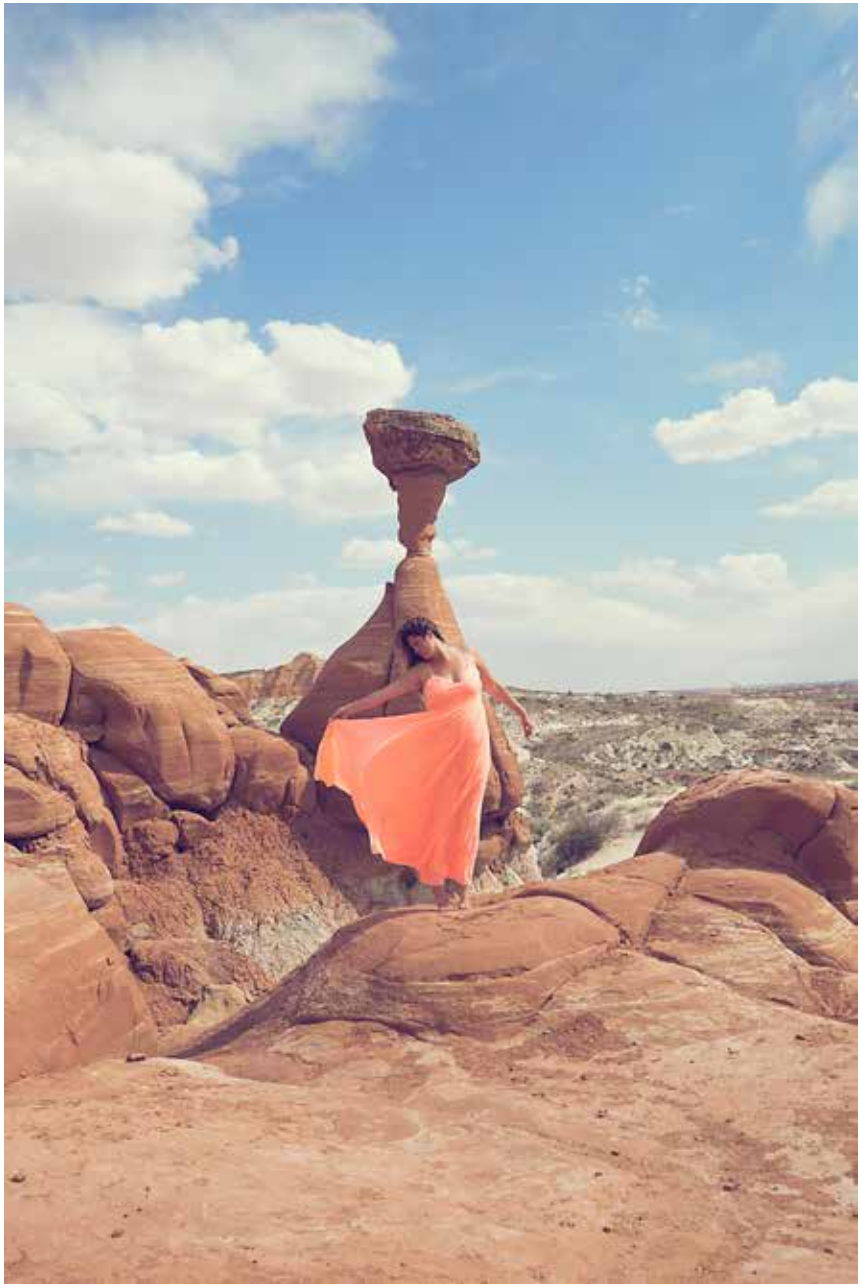
I am nineteen, remembering Jesus and his boat as I sit on the cold steel as they ask me once more if I'm sure. They show me the pictures of hands and feet, spine, the beginnings of a brain and all that would make it human. I find no connection to this alien being until I'm told that there are fingernails. Somehow, it made the baby seem alive. I knew then that I wasn't sure. My mind flashed back to the bubbles, and I wondered if my daughter—for I knew it was a girl, even then—would find the same delight in a coat hanger and dish soap that I did.

I am twenty-nine, watching my daughter push her glasses up her nose. They're taped in the middle, just like Harry Potter's, and no matter how many times I try to chant the spell Hermione offers to fix Harry's errant frames, the tape stays. She stands nervously in front of her class in the same elementary school I went to, before things fell apart. The Mary Jane's I never got to wear adorn her feet, and the dress she picked out herself ("It looks JUST LIKE LUNA'S, MOM!") blows softly against her stick-thin legs in the air conditioning as she concentrates on her science presentation. She's the most beautiful thing in the world to me. I paint her fingernails every day.

I am thirty-five, and my daughter, the girl that I named Cali after the orange box that followed me through hell, is accepting an award at school for an essay she wrote. An essay I'd never read. An essay about her mother, the foster care system, abuse, neglect, self-injury, and drugs. An essay about abortion and life. An essay that I never knew she'd written, because she knew what the look on my face would be by the end. She loved surprising me more than anything else.

I am thirty-five, and I look pole-axed. She's smarter than I ever was and knows more about me than I ever have. As my daughter tells my story, I remember three and three. Mine and hers. Bubbles and soap. The only ways our childhoods ever looked alike—the only tradition I ever began myself. The rest, she gave me.

I am thirty-five. I paint her fingernails every day. She's begun to paint mine, and I know that I am loved.



Grace
Jennifer Lothrigel

The George Washington Bridge

Patrick Bower

It was simpler to rent a car in New Jersey than Manhattan,
and you had a plan: to walk over the bridge and claim our Kia in Fort Lee,

a ten-thousand-step process that would at least show us the valley
and maybe the mettle of our just-transplanted souls.

I couldn't disagree—that was back when I still had a driver's license,
and we still felt a natural pull to the kind of adventure that holds people together

or draws them up a river like the Hudson in the autumn
to go camping on the grounds of a crumbling Delano mansion.

So we took the lower walkway, nicknamed "Martha" for his wife, but
the view—*It would be better by car*, I said as we peered between the joists

that crisscrossed the picture of a broadening river and our gilded-age campsite beyond.

We've made our choice, you said, wiped a sweaty hand across a smooth
24-year-old forehead. I just laughed and wondered how much longer 'til it ended.

Then somewhere in the middle, the path—it began to lean and complain.

We bent our knees and gripped the sides of our cage, assuring each other of the
structure's venerable age, (imagine eighty-five years crossing the same place)

though with twenty eight thousand tons of steel wires suspending a delicate platform
of thin girders that seem to float like a carpet, it's a form best admired, I realized,

from a distance.

How To Weigh Nothing

Craig Berry

His name's not Iggy, okay? It's Sam. Iggy is a terrible name for an iguana. Did you know ninety percent of domesticated iguanas are named Iggy? That's a fact (I think). So no, I did not name my lizard Iggy. At no point in his life have I ever even *considered* naming him Iggy. His name is Sam. I have originality. At least I have that much going for me.

Sam needs a new cage; that's why I'm here, in the dark back aisles of Good Hope Pet Supply, where they keep the fish tanks and terrariums. God, they seem to get more expensive every time I come in here. I swear, the second my savings get back to a somewhat comfortable level (about six hundred dollars), I have to turn around and buy a new cage for Sam. He's growing fast. And I love him—he's a beautiful lizard—but sometimes I think if I worked triple shifts at the convenience store every day of my life, I'd still barely come out ahead. He sucks up a lot of money. And food—hot damn, you should see this thing eat.

Sam is like me. Or at least, Sam's like how I used to be. He eats everything I put in that cage. I mean everything. Kale and parsley and bok choi. Apple slices, tomato slices, mango slices. The mango slices are his favorite. Which just figures, 'cause those are the most expensive of the bunch. Most weeks I can't even find them at the Pick 'N' Save. He even started eating the shredded newspaper I was using as his substrate, which I wouldn't have minded, except that it's not great for his digestion. So I've started laying down a new substrate—one made of alfalfa pellets, which is better for his tummy, but way, way worse for my bank account. After all, I can't find alfalfa pellets for free in the dumpster outside the Gas-N-Go.

So anyway, what was I saying? Oh, right, I need a new cage for my iguana. Would you believe I started Sam off in a fifteen gallon terrarium? He was a baby then. He outgrew that in about a week and a half. I should have known. Baby iguanas grow like a...fuck, I don't know what, but they grow fast. And iguanas need cages at least twice as wide as the lizard is long, and equally tall. I worry that Sam is gonna be one of those iguanas that grow to be seven feet long, like a little dinosaur. That's basically what iguanas are: dinosaurs. But *smart* dinosaurs. After all, there's something to be said for an animal that can survive whatever wiped out all other life forms on the planet.

Anyway, after two weeks, I bought the twenty-gallon tank. And I knew at the time I should have bought the forty-gallon tank, but Jesus Christ was it expensive. Only now I *have* to buy the forty-gallon tank, and if Sam gets any bigger I'll have to build something in the basement out of plastic wire and plywood, and I'm dreading when that day comes because I'll basically be sacrificing a whole damn room of my 870-square-foot house to a fucking lizard.

But Sam is all I have now that Jenny is gone. She left because I was too poor and too fat. She told me that, too—I still can't get past that, how she looked me in the eyes and said, "Will, I have to go. You're too fat. I'm worried we'll be sleeping some night and you'll just roll over and you'll trap

me under all that blubber, and I'll run out of air and die. And then where would we be, huh? Me dead, and you still fat? And you'll never earn the life you want if you keep working at that godforsaken gas station. You're better than that, but you stay there year after year and I don't know why you punish yourself like that."

Okay, so she didn't say any of that *out loud*. But it was in the subtext. I knew what she meant when she said, "I just need some space." It was *implied*.

Anyway, she left and I got Sam the next week. I was depressed. I needed company. And iguanas make great company. Still, I should have gotten a cat or something. Cats are much cheaper, you know?

Right, right, fuck. I was telling you about this cage. You must be bored halfway to tears if you're not already dead.

Sam has been growing since the day I got him. At first he was just getting longer. Every time I blinked, he had grown another inch. It was like a magic trick. It was amazing. But not long ago he stopped growing length-wise, and began to fill out in his jowls and in pockets of fat along his back and sides. He won't stop eating; it's all he does, and I never knew iguanas could be so gluttonous. I've never seen a picture of a fat iguana; as a species, they seem to keep a pretty healthy handle on their metabolism. But Sam is different. All Sam does is eat and puff up like Popeye after a can of spinach. Except instead of muscles bursting out on the surface, it's odd-shaped bubbles of fat. They form so fast I can almost hear them go *blup-blup-blup* as they emerge.

But despite all the money I have to spend on fresh produce, and an alfalfa-pellet substrate, and increasingly elaborate cages—despite how much I complain about all of these things day in and day out—I actually don't mind it one bit.

Because I have a secret.

There's something different about Sam.

I don't know what it is, but the day I brought him home and fed him his first head of leaf lettuce (something I'll never do again, now that I know about the piss-poor nutritional value lettuce holds for iguanas), something shifted in him, in me. I watched him nibble at the leaf, and for the first time since Jenny left, I felt no need to be eating. I no longer had the desperate urge to put away the piles of ice cream cartons in my freezer, or to plug in the George Foreman grill and make myself a second dinner (which would have been hamburgers numbers five and six for me that day). As I watched Sam eat that lettuce, I felt *satiated*. I felt at peace. I felt no shame.

Jenny would have been proud. I ate nothing for the rest of that day; just kept handing Sam leaf after leaf and watching each one disappear. Sam was happy, and I was happy. It was a win-win.

Of course, the next day I woke up hungry. My stretched-out stomach was loose and gurgling, and growling angrily, "FEED ME NNNNOOOOOWWW!!!" And as I waddled towards the kitchen to grab a tub of cottage cheese and a good-sized spoon, Sam locked eyes with me. I could tell he was hungry, and it broke my heart. I had an old apple in the fridge that had been there since before Jenny left. It was her apple, actually. I was never a big fan of apples. I always needed something heavier, something meatier. But I grabbed her apple—the last thing of hers left in my fridge—and I cut it up (which felt good), and I dropped it in Sam's cage. He scurried to it like a five-year-old kid who's just broken the piñata.

And as the apple disappeared into the lizard, I didn't go back into the kitchen. I sat down Indian-style by the terrarium, let the calm move through me in broad waves of ice-cold clarity. My Sam was beautiful as he cocked his head from side to side between bites, considering each slice before throwing his head at it, mouth open wide, to snap off an end. The way he moved was prehistoric, but his brown eyes were sparkling and new.

Eventually, I did go back into the kitchen, but I did not touch the cottage cheese. I rummaged for more food for Sam, came back to his cage with a banana, two tomatoes, a yellow bell pepper, and a knife. We spent half an hour like that, me chopping off part of a fruit or veggie, lobbing it into his cage, and watching him put it away. We were bonding. But more importantly, my hunger was slowly dissipating. And when we were done, and Sam had perched himself on his miniature log and was licking his chops like a dog, I was no longer hungry at all.

And so it continued, in the mornings before I went to work, and again when I came home from the Gas-N-Go: when Sam was hungry, I fed Sam. When I was hungry, I fed Sam.

And every time I fed Sam, my hunger disappeared.

Would you believe I haven't had a bite to eat in four months? It's true. I've lost nearly two hundred pounds. Jenny would be so proud of me.

Jenny would be very proud indeed.

But I won't call her, won't beg to get her back. Sam and I have something special. When I watch him eat I'm filled with a sense of inner peace like you wouldn't believe. I barely even think about Jenny anymore. Everything is about me and Sam now. It was hard when I lost Jenny; I was depressed, sure—extremely depressed. The kind of depressed where I would see the happy people in Cialis commercials, and I would start sobbing, alone on my couch, certain I would never know love again. But then I got Sam, and everything brightened, and I know that if I lose him now, it will be so much worse. If I lose him now, I fear I will die. Literally die.

Last night Sam and I were eating (Sam for real, me vicariously), and he gave me quite a fright. He stopped halfway through a mango slice. Just stopped—every muscle in his body became perfectly still, and he closed his eyes. He looked quite sick. Sam is enormous now—there are rolls of fat stretching out his scaly skin from head to toe. He looks nothing like he did when I brought him home, except for his eyes—his eyes still sparkle

like they did in his youth, like they did when I fed him that first apple four months ago. But when he closed his eyes last night, he looked like a dead gray alien. He looked nothing like my Sam.

And he sat like that for several minutes, not moving at all, and as far as I could tell, not breathing. Terrified, I raised one long, sinewy arm to the wall of his cage and tapped a bony finger on the glass. And just as I was about to break down in tears, he jolted awake and pressed on, finished the mango, then curled up in his faux-rock cave in the corner of his cage and went to sleep.

He's still alive, thank God. I thought I had lost him, which is to say I thought I had lost everything worth living for. He'll be fine, though. I think he just needs more space, more room to breathe.

Which is why I'm here, finally buying what I should have bought on day one—the forty-gallon tank. The big boy—*two hundred and sixty bucks!* But if it makes Sam even a little bit happier, it will be worth it.

As I leave the store wheeling the giant box on a flatbed cart, I look across the mall parking lot. The blacktop seems to quiver in the rising heat, and each car is a beacon, catching the hot sun and throwing it back in bright white shimmering light. And at the far end of the parking lot, I see her—*Jenny*. She's alone, which is a relief, and she's hauling five or six bags from various stores in the mall—Boston Store, T.J. Maxx, Barnes and Noble—anchor stores, mostly, but a few are from little shops in between. I wonder if she has changed jobs, because when we were together, she would never have been able to afford a spree like this. As I approach, I wave.

"Hi!" I say, one hand pushing the flatbed cart, the other one waving wildly above my head.

She looks me in the eye, nods very politely, smiles. "Hello," she says, and continues walking, unfazed.

As she passes, I turn and watch her go. I suppose I do look dramatically different these days. I suppose that's some excuse, because it's clear to me as she strides off into the sun that she doesn't recognize me in the slightest. She has no idea who I am.

And that's fine. I don't want her back anyway. Sam is my whole world now. Sam and my new magic diet. Even if I did get Jenny back, it wouldn't last long, because eventually she would look right through me every time she glances my way—because eventually I will be so thin that I will be invisible. Eventually I will have disappeared completely from this world, and it will just be me and Sam. Soon, Sam will be the world's first morbidly obese iguana. And I—I will weigh nothing.

I will weigh nothing at all.

A Part Of
Jennifer Lothrigel

Penelope Parker Barnett

Tara Roeder

Penelope Parker Barnett—an obscure writer (b. 1897 d. 1978)—was our secret. We had discovered her in a moldy antique store in Wilmington, Vermont in 1995.

The daughter of a physician and a Rhode Island socialite, Penelope's odd, impassioned musings on topics such as time passing, the animal kingdom, and the eccentricities of women's fashion were not the stuff of which best sellers are made. She printed her own pamphlets at her own expense, beginning in 1925, a year in which she had grave doubts about the wisdom of automobiles. Her last pamphlet, authored in 1975, questioned the efficacy of the Women's Lib movement. (It was not, she suggested, sufficiently concerned with the promotion of what once might have been called virginal spinsterhood.)

Kayla and I were 15 when we stumbled upon a shoebox of these pamphlets, which included, among others, *Thoughts on Pants, The Question of Patriotism*, and *The Ways of Raccoons*.

"Fifty dollars seems a little pricey," Kayla said skeptically.

"We'll bargain him down," I reassured her.

But there was no need. The elderly clerk behind the counter had fallen asleep, and our half-hearted attempts to wake him failed. We left fifteen dollars, which we decided in good conscience was a fair price, and furiously rode our bicycles back to the house her parents were renting for the summer.

*

That night on the porch we smoked Marlboro lights and divided the contents of the box. As Kayla languidly flipped through her share of the pamphlets, I devoured mine, enthralled by the grave, sometimes breathless prose that seemed to cut to the heart of all that mattered—the exquisiteness of true friendship; the necessity of radical prison reform; the pleasing odor of certain flowers. Penelope Parker Barnett had reached her intended audience from beyond the grave.

I made Kayla promise never to tell anyone else about the pamphlets. Not only to safeguard against criminal prosecution for theft, but also because, in the words of Penelope Parker Barnett in *The Beauties of Friendship Among Women*, "Secrets solidify; they illuminate; they safeguard the bonds of sisterhood."

*

When we were seven, Kayla had found me crying in the bathroom at school one day after Steven Philips made a rude comment about my new glasses. "Please don't tell anyone," I asked her, ashamed of my weakness. She didn't. But she did punch Steven in the stomach.

*

Two years after we discovered PPB (Kayla's acronym), I applied to many colleges, got accepted to some, and finally decided to attend Bennington in Vermont.

"You should come with me," I said.

"Right," she said, rolling her eyes.

"No, seriously, Kayla, rent is so much cheaper there! You could even have a studio. And we can get a cat!"

I saw it in my head: the enviable collection of Bonsai trees; the big sunny room where Kayla could work on the exquisitely wrought earrings she was beginning to design; Penelope, the shy but playful tabby.

"Liddy," she said, smiling gently, "You know I don't want to leave New York. I'm not going to live in the sticks for four years to keep you company at college. You'll be fine."

*

I was fine. College was everything I'd always secretly hoped for: trees, passionate conversations about non-electoral politics, books I'd never heard of. Kayla was fine too. She started a small earring business and began dating a handsome engineer named Carl.

*

I briefly regretted not being able to make Penelope Parker Barnett the topic of my senior thesis. But in the words of Penelope Parker Barnett herself in *As Years Pass*, "Promises are the threads that bind a past we have never really lost to a future brimming with further promise." And Penelope Parker Barnett belonged to me and Kayla.

*

Penelope Parker Barnett was not a fan of marriage, and I'll admit that's the first thought that crossed my mind when I opened the invitation to Kayla's wedding the year after I graduated. We hadn't seen each other in a while, though we continued to speak on the phone once a month—conversations that never failed to awaken a vague sensation of loss in me, like a phantom limb. Her earring business had really taken off—"Not," she

confessed, "that it matters anymore; Carl is loaded."

I'd remained in Vermont the year after college, working at a pottery store run by a thin-lipped New England woman whose complete lack of humor impressed me, and writing for a local paper on topics such as how to keep cats warm in the winter and the success of the bakery's new sourdough loaves.

But obviously I returned to New York for Kayla's wedding. She looked pretty radiant when I met her at our favorite restaurant a week before what's jovially referred to as "the big day." Her dress was turquoise and her long silver earrings grazed her shoulders.

"Liddy!" she squealed, embracing me.

I became aware of a towering presence by her side. I turned inquisitively into a beaming, bronzed face with very blue eyes.

"This is Carl," she said, unnecessarily. "And this is Liddy."

"The PPB girl," he said warmly, somehow breaking into an even wider grin. "I'm so excited to finally meet you."

I suddenly understood what people meant when they talked about the feeling of a floor dropping out from under them. (Penelope Parker Barnett, I recalled dully, had spoken of betrayal in more original terms, though I failed to remember her exact wording in the fever of the moment.)

"You told him about her?" I asked Kayla slowly.

Her smile froze on her face.

"I'll let you two catch up for a minute," her impeccably tactful, impeccably tall fiancé said. "I have to call the caterer with the final numbers."

"You told him?" I repeated, despising the shrill note creeping into my voice.

"I'm going to *marry* him, Liddy," she said impatiently. "You can't be serious."

Of course I was serious. I was always serious.

"Of course I'm not serious," I said. "It's not like we're fifteen anymore."

Kayla smiled with relief.

"Wait till I tell you about the venue," she said, linking her arm through mine as we made our way to a table. "It's amazing."

*

Penelope Parker Barnett detested insincerity in any form. She believed that one of the most important things that we, as women, can offer the world is unadulterated honesty in the face of duplicity and destruction.

But she also spoke eloquently, thoughtfully, and inconsistently on both the inexplicable pain and the incomparable beauty of friendship.

Kayla was a striking bride. I don't think anyone noticed my choked gasp as her father handed her off to the ever beaming Carl. (They'd wanted a "traditional wedding," she'd explained.) All eyes were on her. And people expect you to cry at weddings anyway.

While they were honeymooning in Italy (Pisa, Venice, Florence), I returned to Vermont. On the drive there, I thought about an especially provocative response Penelope Parker Barnett had issued to the biblical author who urged his audience to "put away childish things." (He would, of course, never see it, having been dead for thousands of years. But this did not deter her.)

Never much for letting go of childish things myself, the first thing I did when I got home was pull out the shoebox. The next was find the stale pack of cigarettes I'd been saving since Kayla and I made a pact to quit, together, two years ago. I lit one, opened *Thoughts on Pants*, and wondered if the local paper might be interested in an article about what it means to remember. Or to forget.

Fish
D.H. Kelly

Goat
D.H. Kelly

Mixed Emojis

Alyssa Oursler

My grandmother told me the other day that she doesn't understand why anyone would get a tattoo. "But it's permanent," she said, drawing out each letter as if that settles the argument.

The thing is, most things aren't.

I still have the vase you gave me years ago. Red, cold, round—I didn't want it when I decided I didn't want you, so I dumped out the pens crowded inside and tried to give it back.

You wouldn't take it, though, so it spent months abandoned in the back of my car.

When it's over, people always ask why it's over. So you line up the grievances—shorten them into bitter sound bites, one next to the other next to the other. But as I did that, suddenly the fact that we were born of a blind date felt all too fitting. It didn't help that long before I let you go, those closest to me had already lined up the strikes and missteps and shortcomings—a row of damned dominoes just waiting to tumble.

What took so long?

Last week, I had breakfast with you for the sake of this essay—or at least that was the intention. I was thinking a lot about whether the goal of having a story to tell, in whatever form, affects its creation. I was also thinking a lot about you, but I try not to dwell on that detail.

Of course, you picked me up for breakfast and I forgot about this essay and forgot about that question and just thought, *God, we laugh a lot.*

I imagine you making that vase. Sometime before I knew you, you sat down at a potter's wheel, threw down a lump of clay, and shaped it into exactly what you wanted. Was this exactly what you wanted? And if so, which part?

It's okay to be sad sometimes, I tell myself, before cursing my own sadness.

I know there's no secret, but I still try to find one. I pick the brains of the happy couples around me, disguising my desperation as curiosity. Long ago my parents pointed to laughter as the cornerstone of their ongoing happiness, not realizing I would take that gem of passing conversation and use it as a crystal ball.

After breakfast, I tried to describe it—how you ordered rye toast with conviction and how I thought it was ridiculous and told you it was ridiculous and you agreed it was ridiculous and we both laughed—not just once, but throughout the breakfast, about a few pieces of rye toast that you didn't even touch.

I remember the rye toast and I still have the vase, filled again with pens, staring at me from atop my dresser. It's turned into one of those scraps of old relationships, like the hoodies and photos and gifts before it, that I hold onto for a reason I can't quite pinpoint. Part of me thinks I keep them as silent but spiteful proof that the thread or cotton or clay is just that—a simple "I don't love you anymore and I'm wearing your shirt to prove it."

Part of me knows that's a lie.

That The Sky Is Above Us, Even When We Do Not See It

Sloppy James

That there is a sea
that there are mountains
that the sky
is above us,
even when we do not see it

two-hundred

Tim Lavis

Billy Collins has said that we each
carry with us, two-hundred bad
poems; that, before anything else,
a would-be-writer has to be purged
of them.

One
in the workshop's mottled basin
my grandfather pressed
with a machinist's palm
and a gamekeeper's thumb
the last sliver
of the old soapbar
into the spine
of the new one
until, by the bulb's pendulous circuit
he could no longer see the seam

Two
the rain only skittered
over the chalky tire-ruts
even the dust
swirled along in the rivulets
as though through air
holding to itself

Three
fuck Billy Collins

Thirty-Seven
when we finally got there
the cap was frozen solid to the whisky bottle
so we scoured the field
for a good rock
and debated
the best angle

One-Hundred-Twenty-Three
he took care
with the soap
over the colorless scar that ran
down his thumb
from nail to palm

and around the busted knuckle
which swelled up from the groove
worn by his wedding band
the concave bow of a creekbed stone
or else, perhaps, preserved
a tree's first rings made visible
again

Fifty-Nine
the frayed lace leaves
of a Scabland Sage
just barely catch the rain
send it rolling
down stem and trunk
trace a trail
straight to the taproot
lay open the soil

One-Hundred-Seventy-Two
as the soapfoam settles
in the hollow of his wrist
where a chipped navicular clicks
against the radius' worn hemisphere
as the shoulder of the bottle
is laid against
the ragged cleave
of an old quarry stone
the point of impact,
traced first then traced again

One-Hundred-Sixty
the sound was shored
upon the cushion of his throat
wrecked, finally,
on that barricade
finally, only
the shiver of a dismembered echo

Seventy-Four
that cracked silence
that rings back upon itself
an open faucet
that only clunks and hiccups
in anticipation

One-Hundred-Ninety-Six
with its pages laid against each other
Hayden Carruth's "Dearest M-"
takes up barely a millimeter
the trailing lament of his daughter's death is packed
so densely against itself
it can't even support
a flip-book doodle

One-Hundred-Ninety-Seven

One-Hundred-Ninety-Eight

One-Hundred-Ninety-Nine

Lake Louise
Keith Moul

Sinner

Sara Cutaia

Wake up, the sun is out. It's only 6am, but wake up anyways. Hang your feet off the side of the bed. Crumple the bed sheets in your hands. Try not to think about work later. Think about work later and cringe. Make a pot of coffee, piping hot and black, like she likes it. Sip your own beige cup on the balcony. Listen to the horns and the wind and early morning whispers.

You laid out your suit the night before, so put it on. Forget the red tie, today you go casual. Run a lazy hand through your hair, forego contacts and leave your glasses on. Drain the last of the coffee. Take one last look at her sleeping there in the shafts of sunlight, bare shoulders peeking out from the white sheets, hair splayed like ribbons on the pillow. Grab your brief case, and leave.

You spent so much time getting lost in the horizons of the city that now you're late. Hail a cab. Make yourself small in the back, because you don't want to talk. Pay and tell him to keep the rest. You want to make amends, even though he isn't the one that needs it.

You're two minutes early now. Debate getting another cup of coffee from the lobby, but don't. Glance at your watch. Now again. Now again. Realize you can't put it off any longer, and get into the elevator. Push 38. Wait in the corner.

Walk briskly through the doors as they open. Appear preoccupied with the reports in your hand. Don't look up. Don't look up. Don't…

Look up. See her watching you through the glass conference room walls. Catch the eye of your partner who quickly averts his eyes, not wanting you to see him judging. Breathe, because you stopped for a moment. Stop thinking about last night. Stop remembering the color of her lips, her bra, the pink of her neck. Go, keep going, you're almost to your office.

Start work. Open your laptop. Go on, don't just stand there. Read the memos in your inbox, read them again, and once more, this time absorb what they say. Call Kimberly, tell her to push back your meeting. Be brisk, you're not in the mood to explain. Move to loosen your tie, the one you didn't wear today. Take Advil for the headache coming on.

Answer the text from your wife, the one asking why you got in so late, and left so early. No. Don't answer, not yet. Think of a really good reason. Tell the truth. Lie. Ask John for his opinion. No, John would give you the wrong advice. Don't actually think about why you were late. The hands weren't your wife's, the zipper wasn't on her skirt, the perfume was sweeter than anything she would ever wear. Stop thinking about it, stop. Pace to the door, see her standing there again, watching you. Keep your eyes up, eyes up. Keep looking, though. Don't break eye contact as she saunters towards you. Remain calm, this is work. These are work hours.

Remember your wife, the way she likes her coffee, the way she buttons her blouse to her chin, all twelve of her freckles, her ability to snap the sheets when she makes the bed, the rug she bought for your birthday, the one you made love on last month. The month before? Your wife, she loves you.

Careful, she's at the door now. Look at her eyes. No, not her eyes. Focus on her forehead, away from anything important. Ask what she needs. Ignore the purr in her voice, the catch in her breath, the flashes of memories from the scent on her neck. Answer her question. Was it a question? Send her away. Do it. Hurry. Don't look at her, don't ask her to come in, don't pull the blinds down don't pour yourself a glass of scotch. It's 9am. Tell her to stop, remind her of your wife, or show her the frame on your desk. Say something, anything.

Oh hell, finish the glass of scotch. It will be the least of your sins today.

Aritst & Author Bios

Jennifer Ammon received her MFA in creative writing from Florida International University. Her pieces have been published in *Absolutely Florida*, *Gulf Stream Literary Magazine*, and *805*. Besides writing, Jennifer has a penchant for getting right turn on red tickets.

Craig Berry holds a BA in English from the University of Illinois, which means he had some difficulty finding work when he graduated into a disastrous economic climate in 2010. Eventually, he fell in with clinical informaticists, which is a fancy way of saying he works in healthcare IT. It's a dreadfully dull day job, so by night he makes up stories. This is his first piece to be published.

Patrick Bower is a writer and songwriter living in Brooklyn, New York. A graduate of Indiana University, he supports his poetry habit with freelance copywriting. His work has appeared in *Lit.cat* and *Sheila-Na-Gig Online*.

Sara Cutaia is a Texas native, but she's testing out the Midwest seasons for now while she is completing her MFA in Fiction at Columbia College Chicago. She is the Managing Editor of the place-based literary magazine *Arcturus*. Her fiction work has appeared in *South 85 Journal*. Essays and reviews can be found on *The Chicago Review of Books* where she is a full-time contributor.

Kristi Hebert is a displaced New Yorker living in southern Louisiana. A graduate of Converse College's MFA program, she often writes with a dog nose on the keyboard and is often found writing YA and fantasy. This is her first piece to be published.

Sloppy James is an emerging artist and beginning freelance designer, poet, and writer. He makes art to be happy. He lives to create engaging works that have never been attempted before. Tucked away in his slightly cramped studio in RVA, he knows that there is not enough time for all the ideas. See more of his work at sbaustin.carbonmade.com.

Born In Texas and raised in Maryland, **D.H. Kelly** has been writing and painting for as long as she can remember. Currently, she lives and works in Washington D.C. with her partner and son. This is her first time to be published.

Tim Lavis received an MA in American Literature from St. Bonaventure University in 2014. He is currently pursuing a doctorate at Binghamton University with a dissertation titled "Language after L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E". His research interests include contemporary poetry and poetics, studies of the avant-garde, and Benjaminian critical theory.

Jennifer Lothrigel is a photographer and poet residing in the San Francisco Bay area. She creates intuitively, drawing from the mystery of her body and soul, then weaves her findings together. Her work has been published in *Trivia: Voices of Feminism*, *Narrative Northeast*, *Rose Red Review*, *Gravel Magazine*, *Cordella Magazine*, *We'Moon* and more.

Keith Moul's poems and photos are published widely. Finishing Line Press released a chap called *The Future as a Picnic Lunch* in 2015. Aldrich Press published *Naked Among Possibilities* in 2016.

Alyssa Oursler is a freelance writer based in San Francisco by way of Middletown, Maryland. Her creative nonfiction has been published in *Thought Catalog*, *Luna Luna Magazine* and *The East Bay Review*, while her other writing has appeared in *USA Today*, *The Bold Italic*, *Forbes* and more. She was a 2016 spring resident at the Lemon Tree House and placed second in *Litquake's* 2015 writing contest. You can find her at teainacoffeeshop.com.

Tara Roeder is the author of two chapbooks, *Maritime* (Bitterzoet Press) and *all the things you're not* (dancing girl press). Her work has appeared in venues including *The Bombay Gin*, *Hobart*, *Two Serious Ladies*, and *The Journal of Compressed Creative Arts*. She is an Associate Professor of Writing Studies in New York City.

Paule Woolsey was born in Les Sables d'Olonne, France and has lived in Paris, England, and Washington, D.C. A retired High School librarian she presently splits her time between Bradenton, Florida and La Rochelle, France. Woolsey is a self-taught artist. She was in her late forties when she picked up some colored pencils and started to draw to express her intellectual life. Since those first tentative drawings, she has immersed herself in art, taking workshops and classes as well as meeting and working with artists in Florida and France. Over the years her work has evolved from a primarily realistic perspective to a more surrealist tone, which mirrors her life-long love of architecture, literature, and philosophy. Woolsey's drawings are created on paper using graphite, charcoal, ink, and colored pencils in shades of grey and spurts of bright colors to emphasize specific figures and objects which serve the theme of the piece.

805 Lit + Art

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