









Editors     **Amanda Raczkowski**  
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Jenny has always been firmly convinced that a cheese is a cheese, a table is a table, and, *not least*, that a human being is a human being. This last conviction is one of the things she is forced to modify in rather a painful way when she realizes in a flash that she is a conglomeration of other people and of the whole world. Frankly, I don't know whether she will be able to bear her realization.

—Ingmar Bergman

As the flesh and bones under the skin had become water and drained out of the big toe and one was empty one had been forced to submit to bamboo rods which were forced through the tips of the fingers up the arms as through the toes into the legs. One tries to concentrate on the small effects which try to speak in a quiet way, small scenes like the corner of a room arranging itself to speak in symbol with its little table flanked by a meaningful shadow and some small colonies of dust.

—Russell Edson

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Jessica Poli

**Door in a Lake**

Some nights I dream  
of a door in a lake—  
I watch myself swim through it  
but never see where it goes.

## R o o m s

At night, the rooms  
rub against each other.

The house has teeth. It eats.

The house is a memory:  
heard in the creak of an armchair,  
seen in the settling of hands in a lap.

You are yourself  
and are feeding the house:  
a cake, a cradle,  
a song riddled with gaps.

You are the house and the house  
is a memory of the house.

## Past the Labyrinth

Horses shifting in a field,  
a rusted ax,  
a broken wheel.

A boy splits open a star  
out of which leaks a gray cloud  
that will slowly eat everything.

## W i t n e s s

Amid the ice floes  
you see her:

her head  
a box,

the box  
in flames,

a pack of matches  
near her feet.

She gestures  
with one hand: Closer.

You're there to witness,  
and when it's over,



to slide your fingers  
through the box's eyeholes,

report back  
what you feel.

## House

When you asked if you could stay  
I knew the sky swallowed the house  
just like the rain knows where it stood  
and bends around that empty space.

## First Hill

Here comes the bus, shaking its wires.

The young man from the group home pokes his head out of the shelter, tiles painted by some bright third grade. His inwardness seems near-total.

He goes for the garbage can, then checks himself, so not total.

A three-quarter-sized crow cases a candy wrapper on the sidewalk.

The sky is abalone with grease.

The crow one-twos off, heeding the nosy look-out in the red cedar.

The bus driver has the slab and vested torso of a man, but I suspect his lower half is the bus, like a centaur.

I don't bother putting my fare in the hole. All I have is pennies for eyes.

The downtown canyons are deep and dark. This day could be an expression of almost any sorrow.

Teenagers in bandanas like dogs—they can't all be from families who failed them. Whatever they're hooked on is failing

them better. I should know. Their hair is a form of civil disobedience.

Teenagers in retail shake sodas like dice. Their contracts say they have to buy their own khakis.

This day could be a narrow passage. I could be a ghost already.

I could be a great man or a straw man. I could have been Thoreau, it occurs to me, in another life: his dirge-like deliberateness.

The new leaves on the chestnut trees are oddly flaccid, apple-green. The wires shimmer as the bus climbs out of the canyon.

Ivy clutches the window wells of basement offices. River wands run through the carpet. Downstream, the examination room has mud-drab walls and a stomachy smell, like the belly of a whale, an atmospheric luminescence, though it must be warm inside a stomach.

Bahamian beach cottages line the walls, cheerfully corporate. The sink reminds me of survival: if I were trapped in here, I'd at least have water.

A rubber baseboard abuts rubble-colored carpet. How does the artist feel when he finds out his pictures are hanging in a doctor's office? Which is worse, to be a teenager or an artist?

Or to be inside the belly of a whale?

It smells like raw beets.

Is it really roomy inside or is it packed with jumbo organs?

The clock on the wall is stuck on the same minute. The minute must be sore from all that action. I've had all these thoughts before. They're like muscle memory, like the-chicken-or-the-egg, life strutting and spasming after dying.

There's no rule that says you can't get up off the examining table—although it might be best to admit I don't know the rules yet.

In any case, no one's watching. I step up to the art to read the signature of the artist.

It hits me: have I done all I could do? Did I ever hold a paintbrush? Did my mother stand behind me, once, as I laid colors down on newsprint?

Pots of bright flowers perch on the windowsill in a patois two-dimension—a folky, poppy-colored mosaic, not unlike the tiles at the bus stop from which I started out this morning.

I could be Jonah, the navel gazer.

He had to, all curled up in the belly of the whale.

Is that voice outside the door for me?

From the perspective of death, the focus keeps shifting. With a free pass to every heart, death is more like life than life is.

Airplanes lumber through the white marbled sky. There's a small herd of daffodils in the courtyard of the clinic, a Japanese maple with new leaves like seaweed. A male nurse accompanies the young man from the group home and the automatic doors sense the bodies.

The neighborhood streets are quiet. Who lives in the gentlemanly old apartment buildings with names like The Sir Lancelot?

I don't remember where I lived. I'm not like a dog who can find his way back to the old place where he was unquestionably happy.

The city is built over and under the line of water. People sleep beneath cathedral bridges. There are discreet encampments in the dragon-green ravines where moss drops from tree branches in beards and ferns split the crotches. I've seen garbage bags of belongings in scrambles of Oregon grape and English laurel.

I climb up past modern view homes with long front legs and terraced gardens. I pause on a landing like a raft in the sky. The gray is bright. The roar of the freeway is gravity's gullet.

Puget Sound is turtled with islands and distant mountains with skim-milk slopes. I don't really know how Planet Earth fits in yet.

The stairs are an ascending tunnel of sheered laurel walls. Blackberry runs up the hedge-fronts. I'm not out of breath,

because I'm not really breathing. Is there logic to my ambulation? Has someone thrown up obstacles for me?

I raise my eyes to the perpendicular street. Where am I?

I pull up short. We've almost collided. Face-to-face is an understatement. It's as if I'm the sudden mirror: grass green hair, pinwheeling eyes, heavy nose, and a wreath of raw, ruby mouth sores.

I lean away as one juddering hand describes a cigarette.

At first it doesn't make sense that the green-haired person is rocking.

Then there's another, smaller head: dull brown doll hair like spun petroleum, a beard the same color, the whole job cracked over at a sickening angle.

The green-haired person is riding the smaller person in broad daylight. A bundle of clothes soaks beside them in a slick of vomit.

I find myself inside a coffee shop. I make my way to the back near small wooden tables and a community bulletin board with postings for guitar lessons and therapy.

A girl with a diary under her arm collects her cup and saucer. She bypasses the milk and sugar table and weaves carefully toward the windows.

I could be her father.

Later, I pass the Don Todd, a mid-century brick apartment building. Did I live here? I remember walking two little girls to the public library. My heart is a sieve, a sharp silver crosshatch. Were they my children? Someone else's?

Walking home in time to start supper: was I the wife, then?

Later—over spinach salad, red onions, olives, feta cheese, an apple—those same girls dance through the living room. Who chose the music? Was my wife dancing with them?

A man in a wheelchair rides the ramp off the city bus, a dry cigarette (it's raining) already in his teeth and already patting himself down for his lighter.

I act as if I were a therapist of observation.

Everything has become one-sided.

At some point there was an intervention, counseling that took place in a clapboard house in disrepair on the Queen Anne side of the ship canal. I remember walking past the old colony of houseboats, their hanging baskets of flowers. I found that I was the one being counseled. I left feeling vampired, thin-blooded.

The first day is the longest.

Night: all the bedroom doors are paneled. This isn't particularly my apartment, or is it?



The Laurabell, the Sheffield—I long to ask someone if I should be frightened—the Viceroy, Amity Court, Quinault.

I can't find the same coffee shop. The Dakar has a decorative belt of cricket-bat-shaped shakes painted menthol. Salt-and-pepper Tibetan prayer flags wither like forgotten laundry. I never noticed how hard it is to describe things.

I can't find the same coffee shop, but the streets are even more the same than they were this morning. Rain puddles in the same craters. Sticks and butts clutter the bases of the same marled sycamores.

Should I be frightened? When I open my eyes I'm inside the coffee shop. I remember no alliances. I don't complain when I'm handed a paper cup even though I plan to stay here for a while.

There's the girl at the table under the dark window, writing about me in her diary. So this is how it works. Where was I that all the bedroom doors were paneled? How did I get in here? My whole life stretches out behind me.

Some wide-legged firemen go out and the door jingles. How did they get in here?

The humorless diary girl has hair like ropes and a raging bladder infection.

When I see the young man from the group home, I rise with ineffable happiness, although I know now that the idea of

happiness is what made me unhappy. The young man and I leave the coffee shop together. We pass The Bellemoral, The Bellfoil, Belmont Arms, Belle Manor. The feeling of being born is like falling in love. I would do it over and over.

Alyse Knorr

**Golden Record: Sounds**

music of the spheres  
through hardship to the stars  
a kiss

mother's first words  
life signs pulsar  
tools footsteps

whale greetings whale  
screeches whale  
song

earth rumbles bubbles  
in small pools rain  
calms raging soil

rivers form carry life  
waves teeming  
crickets sing the stars on

outside noises    nighttime  
noises    amphibian chorus  
bird chime soprano

hyena laughs    elephant  
bellows    chimps  
mutter and scream    all the not-us

two low notes of wind  
a howl so lonely    we send this  
out    this lonely

## First Transcription of Our Friends

witajcie everybody

spacefaring starfruit

perhaps many cosmos világegyetemen

inhabited message

immense [trumpet wail]

go go go Johnny go

billion billion billion [birdsong]

هاسمان ماورای س اکن ین بر درود

on behalf of the humans of the planet earth.

[hyena laughter] [heartbeat]

flower of the teak tree

scattered all around the house—

are you well? bonjour hope  
still divided—

thinking of the flower  
I become wistful.

**안녕하세요** goodwill

vastly boils

## Conversation: Future

*NASA:*

lifetime L of any  
great people

*Our Friends:*

if we are called upon

lonely speed  
of rays call it c

if we are fortunate

to plot an L to chart  
path and shades

I had my bell  
with a purple ribbon.  
With a purple ribbon  
I had my bell.

limits of L a timeline  
no endpoint

[volcano earthquake rain]

to estimate to cast  
predict as basis

[viola] hälsningar [wail]

how long an L  
how great

Chân thành gửi tới  
felicidade a todos

O how we L  
and not

[birdsong] vastly

to know L  
and its zeroes



Здравствуйте please  
teak branches

cast me measure me  
scale me by twos

wistful cotton  
I become graceful

take x and given L,  
squander—

## Golden Record: Outtakes

a dog with no legs

woman raped in the back of a bus

children standing in the rubble of a school

two women kissing near a ship

all of which we are capable

motorcycle dragging a person by the legs

a man sectioning his wife into pieces

the books we believe in

and all of their pages

smog choking the trees

boiled oceans frothing and us—

## Golden Record: Congress

Adlai Alan Albert Anthony Bill Birch Bob Bob  
C.W. Bill Carl Charles (Jr.) Clifford Dale Daniel Daniel  
Don Donald (Jr.) Doug Edward Edward Edward Edwin  
Eldon Elford Ernest George George (Jr.) Hamilton (Jr.)  
Harold Harrison Harry Gary Barry Larry Henry  
Howard (Jr.) Hubert James James James James James  
James James (Jr.) Jerome John John John John John  
John John John Joseph Lawrence Lou (Jr.) Louis  
Manuel (Jr.) Max Mike Monnie Olin Patrick R.M. (Jr.)  
Richard Robert Robert Robert Robert Robert Robert  
Robert Robert Russell Stephen Ted Thomas Thomas  
Thomas (Jr.) Timothy Tom Walter Walter Warren  
Wendell Wesley William William Marilyn Corinne

## Lake Mouth

The lake was ready to eat us alive, and we were ready to let it.

We first made a feast for the bugs, bared the flesh of our torsos to be nibbled and sucked until welts bloomed in rings on our shoulders and bellies and breasts.

“I feel good,” I said.

“The bugs went bananas,” said Lis.

The bugs kept at it, their nibbles giving way to gnawing. I still liked it fine. I wanted my skin gone. I wanted things raw so the nerves could give up and then nothing would hurt.

The lake had a mouth that began to speak under the sun.

“The welts invite me,” it hummed. It sounded metallic.

“Do you want to get in?” Lis asked. We had been friends for years, she and I, but what did that mean?

She was nice. I still wanted to die.

“Hello, lake,” I said and the lake nodded, pitching the gleam of itself at my chest, becoming my friend, drawing me to it and dazzling me.

“Are you my soul mate?” I said to the lake.

“Of course, in a way,” Lis said.

The lake again nodded, its glow moving everywhere.

“We aren’t soul mates,” I said then to Lis, turning my head from the lake so it knew who I meant.

“What about when we went to the pier and walked through all that broken glass?” Lis asked. “Wasn’t that nice?”

That day was a day filled with sound, the tingling crush under our feet like fall leaves but brighter, and all of me felt alive then, but lately the death has been creeping back in: torpid organs, plugged guts, black sludge run amok in my blood.

“That day, we were soul mates,” I said.

“That’s not how it works,” Lis said. “Soul mates is a thing that spans time and space. It’s like matter. It can’t be created and can’t be destroyed.”

I was sure she was wrong and the lake licked my toes to confirm I was right. I could do it myself, barehanded, take matter apart, shatter molecules, ripping so hard that the pieces would never be mended again.

The lake began laughing, mouth opening, rippling and gaping and pulsing.

“I’ve always loved you,” Lis said.

I looked poor Lis up and down: the puny, blistery tits of her, the pear-shaped tummy, parted lips, pocked cheeks and dumbstruck eyes. She was nice, so nice, and meant it, but she

was never going to touch me like this lake or kiss or lick me like this lake or fuck or save me like this lake would do, I knew.

“We should just get in,” Lis said, but I knew she would back down for fear of drowning. I would have to do it alone. There were tears on her face. *All of the tears of the world should return to the lake*, I thought. It seemed just and good.

The lake nodded, glinting, wanting desperately to take me in its silver mouth, to suckle every reddened inch of me. The whole of the world was grinding around us, the sky and the land and our bodies churning, and the lake saw my sickness and offered relief, and my whole heart knew that once I was inside, entwined in my body with the body of the water, I would break apart and wash away for good.

I stepped into the lake and the lake let out a moan. I stepped deeper into it with my selfish wants and my stinging welts and my withered mind and my useless heart, and readied myself to give up everything, down into the mirror and ever further, which the lake had always wanted, which the lake would take.

Jacqueline Kari

Nocturne

*What a sweet tart*, he'd murmur. And she was. And for the sailors.  
And in the water. And on the land. Where the bead of her black  
eyes became her, where his fingers trailed into her downy dark.  
No pretends. In the nighttime, in the water. While little sister  
slept nestled in bed, he'd take her, Aginny, plucked from the  
bevy, away from watches, the deceit the fall the flight the spring  
to the. Held her under, helpless vague bobbing, lovely long neck  
near broken, and she'd face him quivering, long slender and  
*deliciously*ate, and she'd see herself in his eyes, in the water:

where the fishes swim. Around her knees, skirt  
of sea green tucked up as her lustrous hair.  
Grown from the see, long and fair downy. A  
lone lee, eyes locked in the gaze. A thought stirs  
her tender foot in the watery trembles at her  
breast double rose aye the redder. Worship in  
his soft light: *Hither and thither, what I wood for  
your eyes.*



And she'd drink up milk from the water. And she'd eat up his pearls. But his pearls, only words, became air, empty air, drove the wedge in to her wade, ashy wanting, in the water.

## Aginny's Dream

A house erected on, faeces, the earth, a welt—on the skin patched whole. Hole in the flore, boards a gape, o' well, pool the tears torn from the dirty. Thousand mouths. Even the rocks cry out *lonely*: Mother, earth demands a daughter, a pretty fledgling fille. It is a large house, emptied of daytime, enclosed by lush, always just. Rained. Keeping you inside. Where every the other one else? Princely Death comes to collect again. A night fillies people: silly girl, afraidest of your own shadow!

A house dissevered, cracks burp a sinkhole, gulching tears in the satiny Ginny puckers pulled to dirty coral. Greedy Earth opens her jaws wider to swallows, whiter and tunnels caverns, plumbed rank on boys and girls twisting inside their praises protracting a recoil disgusting. On terror. Opens wider to devour her choicest daughter. A flail song sung, earth humming pulls closer in a sweetly, a malison lullaby:

Oh come home to me, dear Aginny  
Oh stay at home with me,  
And the very best cock in all the roost  
For your own supper shall be.

*(Awake, Aginny! Peer into the well and see her drowning)*

A house trap for all the skittering fingers. A run in stalking feet won't lose your trail ever, downward. Always sink. Kitchen floor distends its tile jaws, a bathy laugh glistens its fillings overbrimming its porcelain teeth and in the bed, room edges felled away in heavy, sudden strokes. The holeway dematerializing its paper walls into nothing then the hole house shuddering closed, ground collecting its jowls 'round a final greedy gulp and, holy satisfied, belching smooth silky wisps of grass and velvet moss over the mounds of her face, a body interred unwillingly stifled and buried so quietly, decomposed forgotten in the backyard.

*(Aginny awakens for/to the really)*

Riley Bingham

after "The Islands" by H.D.

*What is Bloodsport (1988) the clasp / on the white necklace.  
Is this what it's like, Madonna. The black cruise-  
ship at the wharf some celebrate,  
molten of Earth itself. Roof wet with  
sky, I sweep the feathers, a glass perched like a sun  
on the chimney, & horn flares  
on the far river // I fed Robert Frost to Google Translate  
yesterday, through ninety tongues: a mistblack creeps low dust  
is but refined you / in the dark insurance  
follow us now. Trilling was right. This wood &  
water—where a tree falls there are toads. True, bell,  
& king toads, in the wet spring lust;  
like the old guard, croaking surly. Slowly. Low. //  
Will I board? Would I ride toward Ecuador,  
and cold splendor of song / and its bleak sacrifice?  
What is the NBA, and what / if you are gone / is blood  
what is our bed in the TV's light / our bath / the brown  
& broken arrow of my chest*

Freddy Ruppert

## Exterminator

He told me I had called the right place.

Should a problem, he said, be left underfoot?

Shouldn't a problem be dismantled in bitter sluggishness until it accepts that the very nature of pestilence harbors suffering?

His voice was leaden, his words surfacing one by one as if dredged from a thick mire. His tone made me unsure whether he was espousing a philosophy or asking for answers.

That night, I dreamed of brayed carcasses, scurried antennae, body casings peeled away by needy tweezers. I woke to a parched throat, nose cocked to an oil-slick smell. I puffed out my chest. I followed.

I followed the smell to the kitchen area, where it bled into the cabinets, molested my dishes, fondled my food. I found legs and wings dropped off and wedged at the most hideous of angles, remnants of the horde scrambling into cracked baseboard shelters.

The next afternoon he was stepping through my living room like an old dog. He slid off his fumigator, dropped his toolbox, and joined my furniture.

Well, I said, aren't you going to leave them sputtering and twitching out of life?

He sighed, then droned in his deadpan tone: They are always coming back, no matter the brutality. They always come back. I'm done. I'm finally done.

Sometimes the failures pile up until they smother you.

I gathered up the fumigator, clacked open the toolbox and went to work.

Davy Knittle

**b u m p r e p o r t**

answer me this, angel

is bird-wise singing

if it's vector radiant

basic to the day

is singing folded over

if brake lights offer shape

that's light shaking a house

wake as

an owl on the pitch

a truck in the grey

bird-wise it's a lifting

it's altricial

rest here is a visit



as is join the masons  
you're old enough  
and build a boat

theft is an egg  
dispersal an egg  
eggs are attendants

can you wish—two questions—

yes, and to touch is a visit  
angel, operable  
as matrices in sets

**press on**

If she wants she's something  
want's a boat, a donkey  
throughline to every one

to reach is bond and a key  
that she's made up of water

to keep is so much  
I enthuse at a pond  
forever stars and digging

**t h i c k e t**

you can call too much  
“starting over” but it’s just  
dudes under the skytrain

up on the platform’s  
a separate currency

someone’s there then not  
and gone pulling around

when we try to lab little  
skytrains we make mice  
who squeak and hum

engines and supine wheels  
and handsome even  
switch and window chiefs

all train bridges run  
operations on a track

our mousecars, even together  
are concrete nesting  
are eight ways full of pines

## Fishing

You move the dead mouse and the dead lizard out of the hot tub. You arrange them so it looks like the mouse is riding the lizard.

You pull fishing line like it is heavy with something fragile. You reach back to cast again. Your line grazes my right shoulder three times before it hits water.

You carry beer in plastic bags down eleven spiraled stairs before tripping over the twelfth. The bruise jumps from your thigh to your arm.

You bring the dead mouse and the dead lizard to the kitchen counter. You claim that you found them like this. In this together position.

## Appearance

It is awkward for Pachycephalosaurus to ride the bus. He has no skin, for one, so no one wants to sit next to him. He leaves the seat moist even though he brings a towel to sit on. He apologizes for the dribbles of blood that inevitably reach the floor.

Small talk is difficult. When a man in a tipped hat or a woman in a pencil skirt asks “What do you do?” they expect him to say scientist or engineer or doctor or chess prodigy. His skull is that big.

“It’s mostly just bone,” he has to say. “It’s solid straight through.” It’s difficult to admit that, other than being a dinosaur and skinless, he is utterly average.

## Offensive Adaptations

Pinacosaurus is a real woman. Built. She has osteoderms in all the right places, doing her some real flavors. She has hips deep enough for dipping sauce, an ass like a loaded baked potato. Her legs go on for mouthfuls.

She's up to her thighs in a nice, warm, moist mud, and there are dudes all around her, thrashing for her attention, but she looks at me with her pearl onion eye and she tosses her head and I plunge in after her.

But the mud gets thick, thick as gravy, thick as her body, thicker, and now I'm one of the dudes thrashing, trapped in the mud. She is stuck too. The mud gnaws up her leg, close to her belly now, but she doesn't care. She looks at a new dude, has him licking his lips. He paces on the sand. He coils his legs for the snap.

## Origins

Music and light pump from the club like blood from a torn artery. The light and sound run on two pulses—the pulse of the beat, and the pulse of the swinging door. The club is for dinosaurs only.

Tiktaalik isn't allowed inside because Tiktaalik isn't a dinosaur. Platform shoes and plaster teeth aren't enough to help him. All it takes is a glimpse of his ankle bone, his single fenestrae, and the bouncer knows. He's seen creatures like Tiktaalik twenty times already tonight. All of them wrong.

When Tiktaalik gets to the front of the line, the bouncer lets the door swing closed and surveys the street as though it is empty and no one is waiting to go inside. Tiktaalik feels he should get at least an apologetic smile or a scowl or a shrug, but he gets nothing.

“You guys full?” he tries. “Need a few to clear out?”

Dinosaurs shift on their perfect hinge ankles behind him. The bouncer says nothing, and the grumbling in the line grows until Tiktaalik steps aside, worried things might get dangerous. They are dinosaurs after all.



The bouncer opens the door, and the dinosaurs stream in. He doesn't brush Tiktaalik aside. He doesn't swear at him. His eyes never fall on Tiktaalik at all.

"You guys having a good night?" Tiktaalik asks. "You guys pretty busy?" The line empties. Only Tiktaalik and the bouncer remain, and the bouncer's eyes wander up and down the street.

"You got the time?" Tiktaalik asks. The door isn't quite shut, and escaping light and music play across his skin. "Hey man, hey," he says to the bouncer. "Hey man, you got the time?"

Tiktaalik waits, watching the bouncer's gaze. A flicker would be enough.

"You got the time?"

## Claws

Shuvuuia nubs around the bowling alley. No one wants him on the team. He's got one claw on each hand; the balls have three holes. The math goes badly.

He's at the bowling alley until close. He sidles up to a team, laughs at half-heard jokes. He starts a story tangentially related, but someone else starts talking before he finishes.

He is amazing at the stuffed animal grab-game in the corner. Confident and sure, he snags the toys with their goofy faces and neon fur and drops them down the chute. Girls will gather around and compliment him, fishing for free toys. He strokes and nudges the controls, an expert with the three perfect, silver claws.

## Pastel Days

On the first day, the redheads pop their hips and swing their heads, toss their candy floss hair, arch their backs. They prop themselves up against expensive cars and look provocatively over their shoulders. Your boyfriend's job is to spray champagne on the redheads while they dance, until their lamé booty shorts cling wetly to the thickness of their hairy thighs.

He sprays the champagne liberally; each redhead gets saturated, glistens, until eventually the day manager comes by and says slow down, buddy, this isn't a champagne factory, and after that your boyfriend has to ration out the champagne, spraying just a little bit on each of the redheads, making one bottle last the whole day.

There is a new sign in the break room that says THIS ISN'T A CHAMPAGNE FACTORY.

On day two, the redheads show up in cut-off sweatshirts hanging off one shoulder, leg warmers, the curliest wigs they can find. They take turns splaying dramatically on metal office chairs and dousing each other with buckets of water.

Your boyfriend chases the redheads around the factory with a bottle of champagne and every time he tries to spray one they move out of the way at the last second. Corks bob around in the foot of water and champagne flooding the factory floor.

The day manager comes out, finally, in the mid-afternoon. He hands your boyfriend a stack of conical bras and says try these, but they don't float either.

On performance review day, the redheads run around in half-tuxedos and fishnet stockings, kicking their muscular calves into the air, flailing around with top hats in hand. Your boyfriend sits in the corner and drinks champagne from the bottle.

The day manager comes around with a clipboard and says hey sport, what do you think this is, a champagne factory, and your boyfriend says yes, I do think this is a champagne factory, and gestures at the automata spraying champagne into empty bottles, corking them, covering the tops with foil.

The day manager looks around and says well what do you know.

## Of Course They Are Very Poor

The wife decides to give the husband a gift, goes in secret to a barber and asks him to cut off her hands, cut out her tongue, pluck her teeth and eyes. The barber places the parts in a long white box like a box for roses.

The wife stumbles home, the dripping box secured in her stumps. When the husband opens the box he says oh, he's perfect. Just like we've always wanted.

The husband takes his boy fishing. The white box quickly becomes saturated with gore and falls apart, so the husband carries his boy around in a Mason jar. He loves his boy; after fishing they fly kites and throw baseballs.

He's growing so fast, the husband says insistently as the wife cuts away parts of her body to add to his boy. Soon his boy outgrows the Mason jar and with a little work the husband teaches his boy to stand on his own, walk, run, make touch-downs. His boy has the wife's eyes, and also her hands, skin, hair, heart, liver and kidneys.

For his boy's fifth birthday the wife, who is little more than a skeleton, gives his boy her nose, her ears. While the wife rocks in a chair, swaddled in furs, the husband gives his boy roller skates, a tennis racket, soccer shoes. The wife tries to smile but she has no lips, no muscles. Her jaw hangs slack.

You look more like your mother every day, the husband says, and of course he does. His boy looks just like a mother.











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