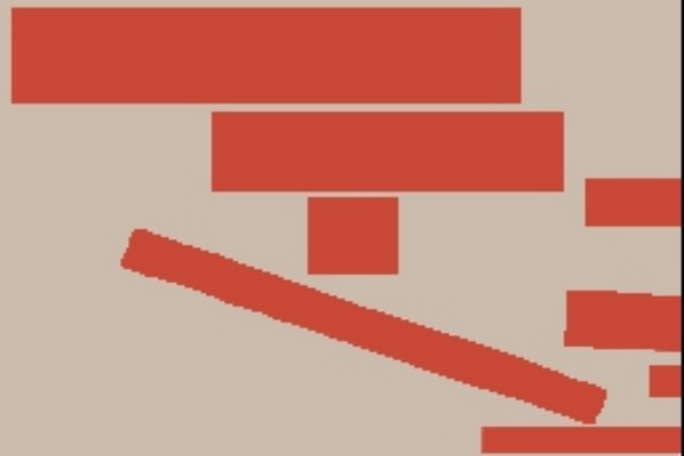


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“The oppressive darkness of that tunnel is almost impossible to describe. All-encompassing and heavy, it only grew thicker as we proceeded down the hole.”

-Dear Judge



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Preface

The April Reader is a monthly publication of poetry, prose, and user-submitted content. It was conceived as a successor to the Zine Writers Guild. The April Reader aims to become a hub of online writing and content. Operating under the belief that the rise of the internet has allowed the written word to regain parity with mass-media and television. The April Reader hopes to serve as a launching point for the future writers of this generation.



Distribution Website: theaprilreader.wordpress.com

Send all submissions, feedback, and suggestions to: theaprilreader@gmail.com

FROM THE EDITORS

About two months ago, I submitted a poem to *The April Reader* titled *kathryn*. I was happy when it was included in TAR 19, but didn't think much of either the poem or *TAR* afterwards.

Then in the beginning of November, I received an email from Prole telling me that *TAR* was looking for a new editor. I responded, stating my interest, and waited for some kind of interview or evaluation process to begin. It was many days later that I finally received a response, and was asked to be interviewed over Skype. I had never done anything like this before, and quite honestly thought it wasn't a big deal.

The interview was short. I was accepted as an editor at *The April Reader*. Even then I thought it would be an easy routine that I had to follow. But it was when I was linked to *TAR*'s Dropbox that I realized the grandeur of this task I was about to carry out. Being now in charge of submissions, I had to sift through many pieces of user-submitted fiction and poetry, which isn't easy, being as cynical as I am toward most creative writing.

What I found was a surprising amount of high-quality content in both fiction and prose. I found that all of the submissions were worth a read, and were very difficult to make selections from.

I believe this month's issue of *The April Reader* is the best yet, with fiction and poetry that puts us above the level of *The New Yorker* and *The Atlantic* in quality.

In my first month here, I've learned that although we're an online-only literary journal (for now), we still put in as much work as anyone else for everything from finding the best pieces to include each month to finding a cover and format that works with the themes of the writing within, which works particularly well this month.

If for some reason you're still reading this, stop. Go and enjoy the great issue of *TAR* we prepared for you this month.

Forever,

Michael

A Dialogue On The Method of Reading Texts

From A Thread on 4Chan's /lit/

By Anonymous and Hermeneuticist

Anonymous –

I have a couple of Marxist friends and I noticed that they can read into Marxist literature more than, from my POV, there is in it.

They start from semi-ambiguous texts and interpret it in a way that invokes their own knowledge; by doing that they transcend what is on paper and build on it.

What is what they are doing called?

Hermeneuticist –

- 1) you can't read for shit
- 2) if they exceed the text and contexts then it is eisegesis

Anonymous –

>you can't read for shit

Elaborate, please.

Hermeneuticist –

Your discussion of interpretive reading in others indicates that you have a naïve approach to texts, meta text, context, the possibility of your text being hypertextual, theory, hermeneutics—in general the full complexity of readings that can be achieved in a context.

Look at historiography. Most historians make useful and legitimate readings from texts (primary sources) they know to be wrong. How can they do that? How can the result of human effort contain more meaning than a simplistic reading of a text could produce.

In this sense you can't read for shit.

Anonymous –

>In this sense you can't read for shit.

I agree with you and humbly ask you to show me how to learn to read.

Hermeneuticist –

right.

I assume that you are capable of basic close text analysis: identification of metaphor, rhythm, textual structure, character, archetype, pathos—or such methods as appropriate for your home discipline. In mine it is provenance, transmission, year, class languages, textual form and purpose, public nature.

If you are incapable of this level of basic close reading, proceed no further, read Shakespeare until you can close read.

Now you need to be able to identify the text in its context. The contexts of the text are the surrounding texts that give it meaning. Ie: much like 4chan can [>>>/crossboardlink/](#) to different texts. Thus the "Duckroll" is a joke based entirely on the production of a context that was not implied by the titling of the link. (Think "Rickroll" if you're a newfag).

Notice the complex set of texts in contexts necessary to understand the origin and social meaning of the duckroll?

Notice how none of this is contained in the image of a duck with wheels?

How the fuck do you limit what "contexts" are meaningful? Shit, the contexts of this sentence are every word every was and ever will be.

How do you limit the contexts under analysis. You need to have a "theory" or "purpose" behind reading. All readings are purposive. Even if you believe the text conveys Authorial Intention, or one or many intentions within the text itself, these can't be "discovered" unless you purposively read the text to uncover the meanings within it. And to do so your purpose limits the set of

meaningful contexts.

A feminist analysis of duckroll will include some feminist theory, duck rolls, the meaning of the rick roll, the social reception of the rick roll, why 4chan hates girls, etc.

These are the contexts that display the purposive intention of the rickroll as understood by our hypothetical feminist reader.

"But isn't purpose projecting into the text?" Yes of course it fucking is. But purpose must be in alignment with the purpose of the text itself. But how can you read the purpose of the text if you need to be purposive to discover its purpose?

Reading meaning from texts goes back to religion—that's where hermeneutics comes from. Valid readings need to be lit with the light of God. Now imagine we've killed God. What the fuck lights the world?

For me, it is the class struggle and the triumph of my class in history. All actions are slaves to that christ. But their slavery demands that only valid readings be produced. I can't produce false readings. I can't make $2+2=5$ because the proletariat demands truth in struggle.

Others might find the light of the world in God, or female emancipation. The only place you can't try and find it is in bourgeois critique because, like God, we killed that.

So what happens when reading goes wrong? Reading needs to be performed in a social context because of the fallibility of mankind. Unless you expose your readings to critique from other readers, you won't know when you've gone up your own arsehole.

And going up your own arsehole is known as "eisegesis." Now if you're inspired by the BLINDING LIGHT OF CHRIST WHO TOUCHES YOU INSIDE then maybe going up your own arsehole is legitimate. Not in my field.

Sometimes you accidentally engage in eisegesis when your mind accidentally models the true process of reality and just happens to be right—it is mystical. Reading with others will help prevent you fucking up like this.

Correct readings are exegetic: the reading flows from the text itself. However, even exegetic readings involve an active reader because of the separation of your subjectivity from true meaning, and the intermediation of this by a text and the fallibility of your own capacity to read.

Your friends are simply applying a broader and deeper series of contexts, including theory, referenced works, and works around the works in question, when they read and draw conclusions. It would be highly surprising if they were incapable of defending their reading by application of evidence in support. A key sign that someone's reading is fallacious is, "I believe this to be true." Someone who knew something to be true defends it, "This is, because X, Y Z"

I seriously hope this expands your capacity to read. Read things, read things around things, make hypotheses, read more theory, defend your readings in front of peers.

Anonymous –

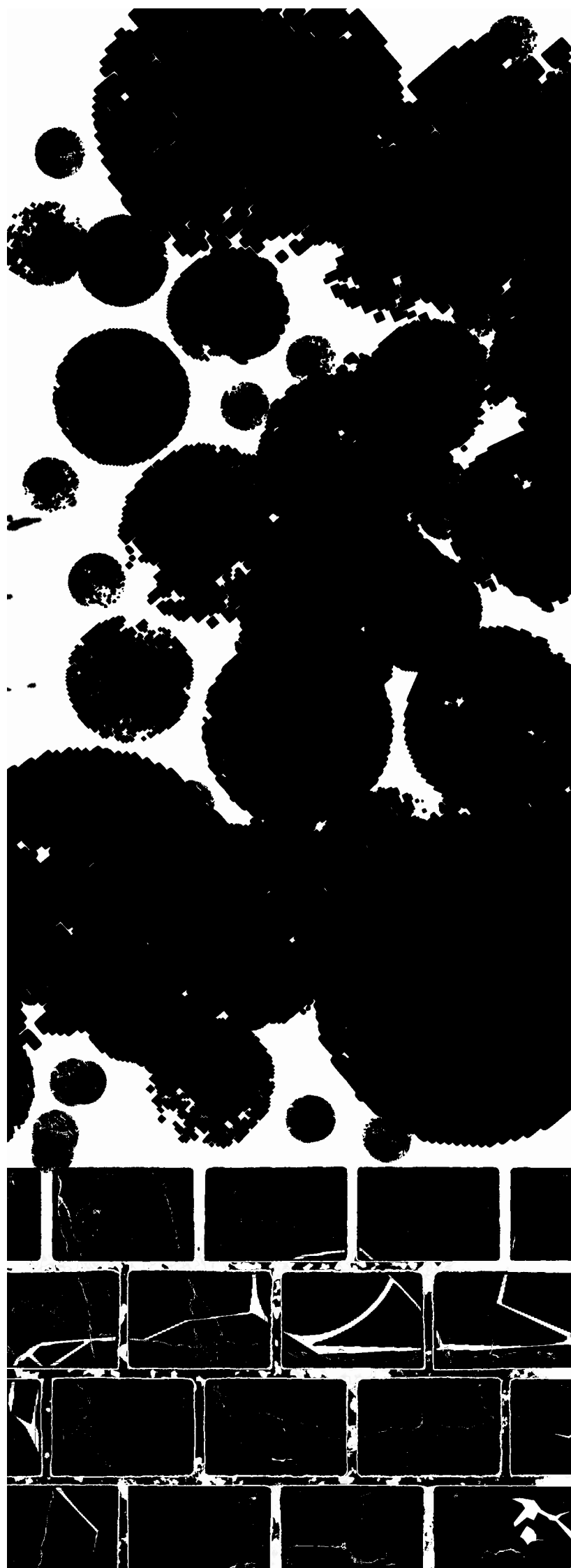
I have spent a couple of minutes writing and deleting sentences through which I tried to communicate my gratitude, but all of them failed to capture what I had in mind. So please accept a humble "Thank you!"

My mind has expanded.

Hermeneuticist –

I'm submitting this to TAR so other cunts can get it.

The
Fiction
section welcomes you.



Nikon

By Justyn Scott

Let me just start off by saying that I'm not the pervert. Actually, my own disgust is almost immeasurable. It's not like I have any choice. This is the shitty part about being any kind of inanimate object. Some cameras get to take landscape shots or family photos. Instead I get to take pictures of the same girl over and over. I could be using my 20x zoom to take pictures of birds or buildings. Instead I'm zooming in on some poor woman's ass from the cover of a thick bush. And to be honest, it's not even that great an ass.

The guy holding me has sweaty palms and smells like dried fish and Listerine. For whatever reason he's only using one hand to take the photos, and I can hear him heavily breathing behind me. The brown trench coat and sunglasses might not just be fashion statement. Come to think of it, it's the middle of July. The guy might just be an idiot, and the heavy breathing and sweating a result of that stupidity. Normally, I wouldn't be the type to judge how a guy gets off. Some men read Playboy, some men just use their imaginations, some men use technology to their advantage. But when I think of technology, I think of an internet connection with Google Safe Search turned off. I don't think of a guy following some girl in her mid-twenties around with a 20x zoom/wide-angle lens. Not only is this illegal, creepy, and wrong, but it's also stupid. This guy is clever enough to have stalked this girl for

almost two years now, and he's never had a single awkward encounter with her or anyone else during his many disgusting escapades. He's confident enough to go to a public park and hide in the bushes next to a playground while wearing sunglasses and a trench coat, blatantly directing a camera lens at a tall brunette wearing yoga pants and a t-shirt, but somehow he's too cowardly to talk to her. Maybe if he showered once in a while and put on a decent toupée, he might actually be worthy of a picture.

Oh god, and that's the other creepy thing about the guy. He's constantly taking pictures of himself in front of this awful wall that's got every photo of the girl push-pinned onto it. It's become so cluttered that they're starting to overlap each other. It gives this illusion of depth to it. He also digitally edits himself into pictures with her. Yet another creepy and perverted misuse of modern technology. I have to come home to this crap every god damn afternoon. You know how this guy makes his living? He sells used clothes and trinkets from Goodwill on Craigslist for twice the price. Isn't there a law against that?

This creep is actually trying to get closer now. He's fifteen yards away. She's just stopped to eat lunch on a bench and now he's sneaking up behind her, awkwardly sneaking towards her like a cartoon character. I'm surprised that she hasn't noticed the heavy breathing,

or the overpowering odour of Listerine and fish. I've gotten used to the smell but I still cringe. Is she just completely oblivious? Wait, her head just turned.

Oh my god.

She just saw him. And me, I guess. I can't believe this is really happening! We might finally be caught! This creep might actually get arrested, then I won't have to deal with this perverted filth anymore!

"What are you doing?" she said to him.

The man stays silent, his heavy breathing stopped, but his sweat doubled.

"Are you taking pictures of me?!" She sounds hostile. I don't blame her. 'Way to go, tard.

"Uh, what?"

"I'm phoning the police!" the woman shouted as I'm being carried away by the sweaty, panicked man, his long brown trench coat blowing in the wind as he quickly waddled away.

He didn't waddle quick enough.

A loud, assertive voice said, "Hey, stop!"

I couldn't remember the last time being this happy. After sitting in a box, for months, shipped out from a factory in Japan, opened up by an ugly, bald freak, and used to stalk some poor woman, I might finally get my break.

"Police!" the cop shouted "Stop! Stop, or I will use extreme force!"

Oh. This might be a problem.

I heard a swift cracking sound, the whipping of metal wire, and then things went black.

My lens is cracked, my battery is half-drained, and I'm getting a close-up of the twitching face of a fat idiot, but it could be worse. I'm surprised the electric current actually made it through the vast amounts of lard in between his skin and muscle. I wonder how many pounds he lost running away like that. The cop ran up and put handcuffs around the guy's twitching wrists. I'm surprised they fit. The cop is trying to turn him over, but his body just kind of jiggles every time he pushes. Finally the cop gave up and turned towards me. He carefully stepped over the pile of fat and filth, then picked me up off the ground. The guy's looking right into my lens, and for some reason he's scratching at it. Is he trying to dig through the crack? Does he think it's going to make it any better? Why is everyone around me a moron? The cop finally stopped screwing with my lens and pressed the power button on the back. Once again, things went black.

I woke up, or was turned on, inside a small office, looking at the face of a short-haired, middle-aged man wearing a black tie on a white shirt. The walls looked like they were made out of some kind of fake wood, the kind of stuff you see in 90's alarm clocks. The glass windows surrounding the small cubicle had rectangular wire running through it. The walls didn't even

reach the ceiling, so I could hear chatter and telephones ringing in the background. The man turned me around and started looking through my menus. For some reason he had an old IBM computer, one of those boxy, cream-coloured ones. Did I suddenly get transported back to 1992? I noticed the newspaper on the desk, next to the shitty computer. The date said 2009. So this place is either underfunded, or really nostalgic. This guy keeps screwing with my effects settings, switching from B&W, to Sepia, to *Retro*. I feel like I'm in the hands of a technologically impaired hipster. A knocking came from behind me, and the guy finally set me down on the desk. I got a better look at the newspaper headline; "*CREEP CAUGHT: LOCAL PERVERT ARRESTED.*" If I were capable of it, I'd be giggling right now.

The guy that just came in is talking about me. He's asking if I'm "adequate."

"Yeah," the middle-aged man said. "Other than the cracked lens, it's a great camera."

"So we can use it then?" said the other one.

"I think so. There's no point in wasting it."

Were they seriously considering getting rid of me?

"All right, I'll take him down to Michael's locker."

"Take this first."

The middle-aged man grabbed a cardboard box just beside me and

handed it to the other guy one standing in the doorway.

"It's the lens." He said. "Just take the old one off and put this one on."

"Oh, right. You have the memory card in the evidence locker, right?"

"Yeah, I put a new one in. It'll take a while to look through the old one."

"Yeah, that creep takes way too many pictures."

"He needs a freakin' hobby."

"Heh, he's got one; stalking women."

"Yeah, he won't be doing that any more."

"I hope not."

I hadn't noticed my memory card had been replaced. I won't have to remember those god-awful photographs. I finally feel...clean. As I'm carried away by the other guy, he pressed my power button once again, and things went black.

I woke up again, this time being stared at by a creepy guy in thick-rimmed glasses. He won't stop smiling at me. What's-his-name quickly turned me around, nearly dropping me on the ground, and started to play with my settings. I could see the inside of his locker. It had a Rambo poster on the door and some kind of white jumpsuit was hanging on the coat hook. There are a ton of cheesy motivational magnets on the left side of the locker too. They say things like "*you can do it!*" and "*no*

fear!” in comically colourful text with photographs from the Hubble telescope in the background. One even says “*POWER!*” in big capital letters with an explosion in the background. Does this place know that it’s 2009? The guy grabbed the white jumpsuit, closed his locker and put the combo lock on it. There was a piece of tape on the door saying “Michael” written in black Sharpie, so I could only assume that I was now being happily carried by the same Michael referred to back in the office. My battery is almost at 25% now, and Michael doesn’t seem to understand that he should probably turn me off. Despite how much I’m being shaken around as Michael walked, lazily carrying me in one hand, I could tell that we were walking through the office again. I can hear the telephones, the chatter, and I saw the blurred shapes of fake-wooden cubicles and IBM computers. The stalker actually took better care of me. Michael finally exited the building, took me into his old Saturn, and set me down in the passenger seat. There wasn’t much to look at except a mess of fast-food wrappers and drink cups scattered across the floor of the vehicle. The engine sputtered as Michael turned the key in the ignition. Nothing. Somehow after punching the steering wheel and aggressively turning the key one last time, he managed to get the car started. At this point it’s become fairly obvious that Michael is a moron.

It’s been a long drive, but Michael finally pulled over. He hasn’t turned me off for the entire car ride, and my battery’s getting really low now. Michael got out of the car and opened the door beside me,

picking me up. He changed into the white jumpsuit and put on rubber gloves, then shut the door behind him. Michael pointed me at a small suburban house painted beige with a dead tree out front. It was surrounded by crime scene tape. Michael took a few pictures of it, and then started casually walking towards it.

Wait. Crime scene tape?

Oh no. Oh god no. This isn’t seriously what’s happening right now. I’m not seeing dead bodies. No way.

The front door is open, and Michael walked into the house casually.

“Hey!” someone greeted. “You’re late, man!”

He was wearing the same bunny-suit that Michal was.

“Yeah, I know.” Said Michael, casually. “But I got a new camera!”

Okay. I guess it’s fairly common for Michal to be late? Is he actually mentally handicapped? Are they just letting him be late because he’s retarded?

“Oh, cool!” said the other guy. “Nikon, nice!”

Damn right I am.

“Yeah, I got if off that stalker yesterday. The detectives just gave it to me!”

“Damn, nice! Let’s put it to work then.”

Oh no. Why?! I really hope there

isn't a dead body in the next room. Michael carefully moved further into the house. He's taking pictures of everything. The furniture, the walls, the floor. I think he even snuck in a few selfies too. Michael turned me toward the floor again, and there's blood. God damn it. I knew it. All I wanted was to take family photos, or nature shots, landscapes, that shit. But no, apparently I'm destined for stalker-use and dead body pictures instead. Michael turned a corner, and I saw blood pooled along a white-tiled linoleum floor. I'm seriously about to see a dead body. I don't want to see a dead body. Please, don't let this happen...

...Then everything went black.

"LOW BATTERY"

I'm suddenly glad that Michael is a moron.

A Scene at the End

By W. G. Joel

From the rammed in door popped out a man kicking it away from the hovel he slept in safely. In the day many others slept too and all were waking from the day's rest, the burnouts shifted in the refuse of the town, the hay beds of commercialism cans, papers, bags, boxes nested in the people rose for the night's judgment.

The trim of the sky was blazing with pitched fires and ignited battles blazes of apocalyptic portents leapt to life and the rattling of guns punctuated the quiet night in the town the rousing of the people pacing faster as they grow delirious and wander the town wailing fresh for the long dark.

The man walked among them in them was them. They all went and went to where there was nowhere any more. He drank a can of beer as he walked one of the last he was sure around. He crisscrossed past the dead over the dying away from the fighting, quickly past the wailing ones, the sick ones, the vomiting few doubled over in agony they know is near.

He just drank and walked the stars were still in the night sky blotted out by the manmade fusion and one point grew brighter still than the release of final artificial climax in the darkness that flickered over the masses in the town that walking convergence came closer.

The man heard more shouts pops booms bangs nearer to his ear and more faces. The spotlights were

many and swung madly to any beat they felt and the roars of multitudes was more uniform as he entered the opening from town a field commandeered for the last waltz.

A party was waxing and everyone was invited, generators roared the engines of farewell and sound blasted from a stage a distance from him blaring the tangled beats and half measured melodies to the swaying crowd. He moved into the maw and rubbed against the pack all garish some in trances of agony wailing crying knelt in prayer being maneuvered catatonically by the mass which stomped the already dead who scattered the ground and rolled them too as they beat the earth in step.

Others faces were ecstatic, disenfranchised from reality, an orgiastic gaze of things not here or now but a deluge of paradise a religious paradox that was never here and maybe there, but the smiles showed salvation as the eyes twinkled in the many motes of light that washed over the great enervation.

The sound of crying was present too, last gasps, choked windpipes muffled groans of terror. And organically the hisses of the air and the fetid smell incensed the man and he moved dancing more and more into the deep and saw man to what it ended riding the adrenal mist that floated in the air the static bombardment of trapped energy and forgot himself with the specters, preconceived shades of life, the shells of the world and all moving

to a great debauch.

The night aged and the party raged to terrifying heights and unseemly maxims the intoxicated folk crashing into each other like waves, breaking into floundering piles and spinning eddies of man as the night waned the man heard the voice from the stage.

He was there on a mike a mad captain on a doomed ship and he watched the sea in front of the stage for telltales of a great white whale but none leaped and he intoned dead philosophy to the receptive crowd who morosely fidgeted and now they had less and less time to grasp.

They all roared as one to the maniacal entreatments and felt as one to the stern chastisements of this stage man embracing each other, few dancing more groping for each other less swaying and more shivers. The man saw more had died and just lay dead and he collapsed into some other person and they stood clutching themselves and anyone else with fear and the sky was brighter the end being near.

Great laughs and sighs and incensed cries as the crowd listened to the stage man's proscriptions of the decadent decay and the hopeless disarray of us all. The mad prophet was alone coherent to vocalize the fragile last wishes of a doomed world. He enough to eulogize the bastard remnants of a dead existence and for moments the anxiousness of the crowd was gone, a group melancholy suffered the time.

He screamed there is no god. The crowd reared up and jumped and

jeered and a wild applause affirmed his fears and the prophet mute dropped down in tears and waited for the end. The music resurrected and the dancing came again a great revelation to all who happily moved renewed. A hedonist would be cast aside if he tried to match the excess of this last reprise, the final push over the edge the last flare of the match before its blown cold dead.

The man was there with them all he felt great motions and the sky lightened with that evil bright point and he felt more and more despair pouring into the night's sublime release and quit the act, and sat prostrate on the ground.

He saw a leaflet handed out by some budding cult just laying there on the ground. A paper handed out when man discovered his executioner bearing down some little while before. A nostalgic era when belief trumped unstoppable force all a few weeks past, the paper made insane commands and promised gilded lands and at last he read the end of a passage on the soggy page, it said,

This Life is Fine, and Death is Our Reward.

He pondered this and then chose to think no more.

The Static Din

By J. E. Coté

The light is blinding. It had blown up from a pinpoint, then slowly wrapped around me like cascading lava caressing a defiant boulder. Over dilated, it had filled the iris to its brink, and then kept going. Embracing me, subsuming me; hell, like a port-strung strobe's light gleaming over the glasses of a drowning man its glow became me. And I, not being the same me anymore, feel nothing now, nothing at all.

The slow sawing of my breath, the soft static din in my ears; the quiet thumps of my frail body against the insides of my hollow suit, have all faded away. There is nothing left now, not to hear, not to feel; not to think. I've been overcome; beaten in a benumbed struggle; then left, disabled and unable to grab hold of any of the fleeting, or fend off even one of the strange new seething senses that scuttle through me like steel debris through a sinking ship. And so I stretch and I wriggle and I shake, like some sort of primordial worm, with its mutated, translucent skin, manically attempting to distinguish any of the alien senses that slowly envelop and ingress it. But there are too many. And this is all too much. And I know it. I know that I am lost; I know that I will not be found, and I know that there is nothing I can do about it anymore. I know it. I know.... I know.

And so, blind and defeated, I allow myself to fall into its fits of numb spasms and undersea-like gyrations, just as well indifferent to

any and all of the personal ramifications possibly lurking just behind the haze of my current stupor.

But then, suddenly, in a falling rush, I feel -- for this one fraction of a second -- a familiar feeling, one of recognition and acceptance, unbeknownst to this unperceived vacuum, but of which immediately washes in wave after wave of indecipherable, guaranteed to soon be incomprehensible, images, sounds and emotions.

In that fraction of a second the light had ceased and all had gone dark.

But, as a feeling of weightlessness takes me over, so too does an Omni like perception of my surroundings, and I feel like some sort of floating glass orb, able to see all that reflects off my surface: The purple, yellow and white stars, each popping in and out of sight like flashes from a billion different disposable cameras; the viridian colored water, marked with eddies whose centers funnel down into an endless nothingness; the giant jagged monoliths attached to one another by twisted branches of stone that seem as vast and infinite as hovering worm holes; all swirl around me, existing all in one endless stroke, like the supernova colored explosions that dance behind shut eyelids; like oil spilled in water; like a dirt road hubcaps reflections; like the sky in *The Starry Night*; like nothing I have ever seen.

Peace and horror, with nothing

in-between.

Back home it would have been like leaning on the lightening rod of some high-rise skyscraper downtown, the city sprawled out beneath you, a breathtaking 360-type view, laying still as you combed your eyes over it in an uneasy awe, shivers crawling up your spine every time a gust of wind hit your face; a weightless pause every time you shuffled for another inch, toes flexing over concrete edges, feet jostling its own prints in the gravel, vying for more space, for just enough room to comfortably take it all in.

And part of its beauty was the lack of serenity you felt, you would never become completely comfortable, you were too high for that, one false step and you'd join what you marveled at, quite the poetic end for the crawling scope, but not exactly the most pleasant or endearing of propositions to the one on top of the world.

And that's where you were, but that's not where I am.

Dear Judge

By Richard Grunert

To The Very Honorable Judge Diane Hawkins,

I've been asked by my lawyer, Mr. Bill Fritz, to record here my version of events that occurred in relation to the case of Dr. Summerland. The police and prosecution have tried repeatedly to discredit my testimony, calling my statement an 'awful and obviously desperate fiction.' With this letter I hope to create an official record of not just my statement, but of what actually happened. After reading this I hope you will understand both the truth of how he disappeared and why I'm innocent of this awful alleged crime. I only ask you to do me the small favor of suspending your skepticism and disbelief, and treat my statement as seriously as you would any other in a murder investigation.

I

To begin with, I shouldn't have had to be there. My credit card had mysteriously hit its limit the previous week and I found myself suddenly without the familiar means of providing for myself. Necessity had forced me to do the one thing I dreaded most during my summer break from college: getting a job. Means had been found after I responded to an classified ad for manual labor off of the internet, the only job I was really qualified to do at the time. Professor Summerland, whose geology course I'd barely managed to pass the preceding year, was building a new extension to his house and needed someone to dig the groundwork for the new balcony. Of course, this job involved many thrilling hours of digging he decided he was above doing – that's

where I came in.

All through that day sharp chips of limestone had flown past my shoulders as I struck the pick down into the earth. Two hours of swinging the heavy handle had made my arms heavy and my shirt drip uncomfortably with sweat in the late August noonday sun. I dropped the tool and sat down in the grass to survey my work. I'd been at it since eight that morning, and the trench I'd managed to dig was only about a third as deep as the professor wanted it to be. I still had a good foot of widening to do, and if I wanted to be finished and paid before evening I needed to work faster; a second day in that awful sun was going to kill me, and the \$135 was looking less and less appealing. I wiped my brow and lept back down into the hole to continue my work. I'd hit a hard piece of limestone that sat right where I didn't want it to be, and I was hard at work making scratches in its face with my pick.

For someone with a Ph. D in geology, Summerland really hadn't been taking much interest in the hole I was digging in his yard. He'd come out once or twice, even offered me some lemonade, but seemingly cared very little about the quality of job I was doing; not that it really bothered me at the time, that is. The professor had always been seen as something of an eccentric within the university. He was definitely knowledgeable in his field, but the administration hated him, and he'd been investigated multiple times by the ethics board for a number of strange trips he'd taken all over the world. Whenever he returned from these mysterious little jaunts (paid for with grant money from some unknown source he refused to identify) the university would demand to see something to justify his absence, but he would always refuse, saying that his

work was for the good of everyone, and that one day we'd all understand. Needless to say, the school's press loved him, and his strange antics always made for good reading.

As the day dragged on my strokes of the pick grew weaker and weaker, and by four it became obvious that I was not going to be finishing that day. But still, I carried on; the thought of another night spent on cheap ramen overpowering my fatigue. I was resolved to finish as much as I could that day, anything to get the job over with. I'd been daydreaming when suddenly my pick broke through the surface of the limestone. I removed the tip and inspected the hole; it appeared that the limestone was hollow, and I stepped back to hit the sides a few more times, widening the opening in the rock. Eventually the face crumbled, falling in into itself and I stepped back to let the dull amber sunlight shine in, revealing a dark depression about four feet deep and two wide. I chipped away the sharp edges and stuck my head inside, but found nothing except a thick, murky blackness.

I ran back to the house and stood in the huge front foyer, which I found empty. I called out to the professor's name multiple times, but no answer availed my shouting. I ventured into the garage, briefly stopping to admire the three different luxury cars housed within, but there was still no professor. It appeared as if I was completely alone in the entire house. I should have left, but my curiosity at what I'd found forced me to stay. I grabbed a flashlight off one of the shelves in the garage and retreated outside. I was a bit shocked the find Summerland standing knee-deep in my trench, inspecting the hole I'd created.

'Could it be?'

'Professor, I was just looking for you,' I said, sliding down beside him

and relaying the events that led to my discovery of a strange hole in his lawn. He quieted me by raising his finger into the air between us.

'I don't care how it happened. You've got a flashlight? Good, we're going in.'

I was confused. 'Going in? Why? What the hell do you expect to find in there?' I handed him the flashlight, he took it and switched it on, illuminating the walls of the tunnel.

'You can either come with me, or I can hold you liable for the damage to my property. Now come on, I might need some help in here.' He lifted himself into the hole and slid down inside, beckoning me after him.

The oppressive darkness of that tunnel is almost impossible to describe. All-encompassing and heavy, it only grew thicker as we proceeded down the hole. The going was narrow, and we had to make our way on hands and knees. The rays from Summerland's flashlight provided our only source of illumination, and the light revealed hundreds of small chip marks in the rock walls. The professor stopped every so often to examine them, which in the cramped confines of the tunnel was hardly comfortable. He ran his hands down the wall, uttering words like 'fascinating' and 'incredible' under his breath. Suddenly the horrible sound of falling rock echoed down the tunnel behind us. We hurried back to the entrance, only to find that I'd been careless in my widening of the hole, and the ceiling of that part of the tunnel had collapsed on into itself and been covered with falling dirt; it seemed we were now trapped there beneath the professor's finely manicured lawn.

I panicked – which I'm not afraid to admit, concerning the circumstances – and began pulling at the rocks and frantically, only to be slapped across the face by the professor. He pulled me up, insulted my manliness and convinced me that it was

now imperative to carry on, as there surely must have been another way out; I composed myself and we carried on. We crawled forwards for the better part of an hour, stopping to rest only twice. Luckily, I still carried my nearly full water bottle with me, so thirst was prevented from being a problem. Very soon however I was exhausted, and as I was about to petition the professor for another rest, he suddenly fell forward, sliding down the face of a wall he'd just emerged from. Standing up, he shined the flashlight back into the tunnel and yelled for me to join him.

We stood atop a small stone balcony at the top of a hill overlooking a vast landscape formed from the core of a massive limestone boulder. The ceiling arched high above our heads and the walls were traversed with great parallel lines, layer after layer of sediment constructed the shell of the strange world we now found ourselves visitors in. I anticipate that you, your honor, and my opponents in the prosecution will surely question how I managed to see in such a vast cavern as that with only one measly flashlight? The reason we could see was due to the radiating blue light that emanated from incredible deposits of crystals, which formed a makeshift path across the floor of the cavern. They provided enough illumination for us to see that which lay at the at the floor of the opposite wall in this awesome valley: a series of hundreds of strange caves dug into the walls. More light glew from within each, revealing strange humanoid figures that wandered between them, and the small group that now seemed to be advancing toward us!

'It's them, they're coming!' The professor exclaimed.

I turned my head to his in awe. 'Who are they? What the hell is this?'

'It's them, its just as I feared,' he took a deep breath. 'It's the Ashakar, the mole people. They must have seen our light and noticed us.'

'Mole people?' I was a bit confused.

'Yes, the mole people. They've been plotting the destruction of humanity ever since we destroyed their underground homes drilling for oil. I've been on their trail for years, but I never imagined they would be so close as this! From here they could hollow out the earth beneath the city, causing it to collapse into a giant sinkhole!'

Strange shouts assaulted us as the mob grew closer. The language of the Ashakar was unlike anything I'd heard before; it's syllables and sounds were unearthly, and I think that no human could ever hope to reproduce them. I scrambled toward the hole in the wall, but the entrance was blocked by the emergence of a grotesque black and pink face. Its long muzzle was covered by a thin black fur with the exception of the tip of its nose, which was the color of a rat's tail. Its body was an abominable perversion of the humanoid form, with short, bulky arms ending in long clawed fingers. Standing on its stumpy legs each stood around four feet tall. The most pressing feature at that moment however was the primitive, carved stone dagger at my throat. I fell back beside the professor as the creatures closed in upon us with an almost militaristic precision.

We were trapped. The leader stepped forward, lifting the tip of his spear to the professor's chin. He said something in his strange language, something impossible for me to relate here with human letters. They chattered and chattered amongst themselves in what I think were exclamations of the same sort of bewilderment toward us as we had to them; that, and their laughing – or what I think was their laughing, for it was truly an awful, grating sound like the way a dog would laugh if it could – made it obvious they were mocking us. The professor was defiant however, he raised his hand and brushed the spear away

and stood to face the Ashakari leader. I can only assume he was trying to salvage whatever sort of dignity he and I had left.

'What do you want with us?' He asked the head mole-man. In response the creature slapped him hard to the left of his nose with the butt of his spear, yelling a command. The professor was unfazed, and stood his ground. 'What do you want with us?' He repeated. Again the mole-man hit him and again the professor stood his ground. They repeated this twice more before a larger member of their party hit the back of the professor's knees hard with a club, forcing him down.

'I don't think they speak English,' I commented as the professor rubbed the large pink welt that the beating had formed on his cheek.

'No shit,' he replied. 'Just follow my lead and try not to show any kind of weakness. If you do they'll think you're a coward, and a coward is the absolute worst thing you can be to an Ashakar. They revile cowardice, even in their enemies.'

'How do you know so much about them?'

Before my companion could answer I was given a similar whack across the face, and thus began an hour where we sat in silence and gloom while our captors chatted amongst themselves once more; they must have been deciding what to do with us.

We were soon stood up and our hands were tied behind our backs with thick ropes made from vines. After a flurry of additional swift whacks of the spear we found ourselves marching down the side of the hill. The way down was treacherous, and both the professor and I slipped multiple times on the rocky slope. The mole-men, for their part, had almost no trouble, and comfortably progressed as if it were nothing. As we reached the base the ground got no better, and by that point

I had a pebble stuck in my shoe that was trying its very best to drive me mad. We emerged into the valley and the ground once more became solid rock.

From this new vantage upon the floor I could see a much more complete version of our surroundings. The hill we'd emerged atop only made up one small section of the wall, and all around us stretched a vast dark nothingness; the light from the crystals didn't extend far horizontally beyond the region which we were in, and as we progressed across that path of dim light what struck me most was the vast echo created by the shoe-bound footsteps of the professor and myself; the steps of the mole-men, who wore nothing on their feet, generated no sound whatsoever. I realized that this acoustic advantage must have provided the moles their greatest defense, they made such little sound that the loud bumbles of intruders such as us provided them with a natural alarm system.

As we approached the caves a hundred curious pink noses stuck out from within, followed soon by the emergence of the same ugly heads and bodies we were already familiar with. Our little parade stopped as these new moles came out to examine the strange creatures their brethren had captured. After a few loud whoops and insults, the spearbutts told us it was time to move once again. The leader shouted and three of his burlier comrades ran to the wall, bracing themselves against the sides of a barely visible, twenty-foot high stone disc resting against it. They grunted, pushed and pulled; soon there was a great grinding sound and the disc began to roll slowly to the left, revealing brilliant rays of light that streamed in from a newly uncovered chamber beyond. The disc was a door, and that moment was when I first laid my eyes upon the strangest thing yet: a great city carved directly out of solid rock, a city that radiated with vibrant

azure.

Ushering us inside, our captors tried their best to keep the rapidly gathering crowds off of us, and as we walked through the great city's main street I got a full view of the home of the Ashakar. I'll now take a moment to describe it to you, your honor, so that you'll be able to have a sense of our astonishment at the amazing ingenuity of this dangerous and imminent threat to humanity.

The cavern in which we now found ourselves was shaped in the form of a hollow, three-dimensional oval. Massive, haphazard blocks of towering stone structures rose from the gentle, downwards rolling slope of the cave floor. In the center a cylindrical platform rose from the depths of a dark and bottomless pit in the center of the bowl, connected to the rest of the cave by a bridge. Upon this stood a massive ziggurat, painted with a multitude of alien symbols, all in red. A massive blue crystal sat on the great plateau atop the temple, providing light to the entire city. This was, as we soon discovered, their temple, and it was to this we were being led.

'Impossible! Incredible!' The professor exclaimed, expressing verbally my exact feelings on the matter. Hundreds of sharp mole fingers pointed and coarse voices shouted terrible curses at us, but our captors managed to keep most of the mob at bay. Soon a shower of thrown stones of varying size assailed us from the windows and roofs we passed; a rather sharp one hit me in the side of the face, cutting a deep gash right above my right eyebrow. I put my hand to the wound to try and keep the blood out of my eye, something that becomes a messy process when being escorted at a reasonable pace through hostile territory. All I managed to do was smear the blood all over my face and hand, prompting the crowd to whoop with savage joy.

Soon we came to the edge of that vast bottomless expanse I described earlier. The sole bridge that crossed it was lined on both sides with crude statues shaped in the forms of their creators; each was painted red with long, threatening stripes from their heads down to their necks, clutching spears at their sides. Summerland and I were made to stop at the bridge's center while two groups were dispatched to bring forth heavy iron cages, which they set down before us like two hungry predators with maws gaping wide. The guards pushed us inside and locked the doors while yet another group pushed first me, than the professor toward a statue that was faced out into the darkness, spear held rigidly aloft out over the darkness below. From both the tip and hilt of his weapon dangled a pointed hook, and from the former of these my prison was hung. It swung back and forth when our handlers let go, and for one terrified moment I thought I might soon be careening downwards. It quickly came to an uncomfortable rest, however, and the professor was hung similarly from the hook at the spear's base. The crowd cheered once more and moved as a group toward the temple, leaving Summerland and I alone once more.

II

'You did well back there; not inciting them when that rock hit your face. Had you yelled it may have driven them into a particular type of awful bloodlust innate to their kind,' Professor Summerland said to me from his cage. I barely heard it, for I was far more concerned with the fact I was now dangling precariously above certain doom than listening to my cellmate. 'Had you riled them up any more I'm certain that mob would have torn us limb from limb.'

'What do you mean?' I replied once I was very sure that both my cage

and attached hook were sturdy. 'And how do you know so much about these things?'

The professor let out a long, drawn out sigh, shifting his weight so he could sit more comfortably on the metal bars. 'I told you earlier, I've been researching the little bastards for years. They're responsible for dozens of terrible things that happen all over the world each year. Sinkholes, earthquakes, breaks in the sewer line; it's all them, any they want nothing less than the complete destruction of human society. No one wanted to believe me when I told them, they all said I was crazy; but that isn't what's important now, we need to stop them. This is by far the biggest group of them I've ever seen, and with that big cave we saw earlier they could easily sink the entire city above us! We need a solution, and fast, before they decide to sacrifice us to their blood god.'

'They have a blood god? Is that why they got so riled up when they cut my face?'

Summerland nodded and motioned toward the ziggurat. 'See that thing? They probably have an altar up there somewhere where they'll cut a big hole in us and let everything inside drain out. I'm still not exactly sure why, but I think it has something to do with their culture of brutality. You see, they're little more than barbarians, and their culture is based entirely on carnage and violence. To the Ashakar the biggest man is the one who can shed the most blood of their enemies, and right now they have no bigger foe than us humans. Their shaman is likely preparing things for the sacrifice right now. Look, they're gathering.'

Through the bars I looked toward the temple. Sure enough, a huge group of the mole-men were crossing the bridge behind us and congregating at the ziggurat's base. High above them stood a slightly taller mole dressed in a long white sheet. In his

claws were clutched a sinister curved dagger, which he raised high up above his head again and again, prompting loud shouts of excited zeal from the crowd below. My heart sank, the terrifying mesoamerican display chilling my soul to its core.

'We may have one chance, however,' Summerland said. 'Their savage nature is also their greatest weakness, for with it comes a debilitating ambition that they can't control. If we can figure out a way to kill that shaman of theirs, it should create an impromptu succession crisis that could tear this city apart. You see, the Ashakar need a strong leader to keep them under control; without one they'll degenerate into infighting and civil war, and we can use that opportunity to escape. It's dangerous, but I'm afraid it's the only chance we have left.'

We sat in our cages discussing the finer details of our escape plan. Once we found some way to take out the shaman we'd have to do our best to get back into the city and find a tunnel up to the surface. The professor assured me that such an exit would exist, as the moles needed a way to scavenge food from the human world. Our deliberations were cut short however, and the guards soon came to collect us. We were unhooked and we were carried on shoulders across the rest of the bridge and up the stairs of the squatted temple where the cage doors were unlocked. From behind they pushed spearpoints through the bars, forcing us out onto the platform above the undulating mass of pink noses below, screaming to see our blood flow.

The shaman crept over to me and grabbed me roughly by the arm with his claws. He was a small, frail figure rocked by a repeating twitch. Emaciated with age, where his right eye should have been ran a deep, grotesque scar. His robe was ornately decorated, in blood, with the same symbols that ran down the ziggurat's face. He held the dagger to my throat

and whispered something unintelligible into my ear before dragging me with a strange strength up to his altar, which resembled a three-foot-high stone bed with a notch cut out of the pillow. I was pulled, despite all my valiant struggling, face-up onto this stone slab. The shaman held his dagger high aloft and recited a strange prayer, focusing his eye on my chest. I closed mine, thinking our hastily laid plan had failed before it even started, and that this was to be my end.

But I was wrong. All of a sudden the shaman was hit hard from his blind side, knocking the knife out of his hand. Summerland had his arms wrapped around the creature's waist and was pulling him with vigor toward the precipice of the temple plateau, which jutted out over the dark pit below. The guards rushed after them with weapons held high and the rabble roared, but the duo were at the platform's end in an instant, leaving the professor cornered with sharp spears to his front and nothing to his back. He smiled and shifted his hold on the Ashakari leader, wrapping his arm around the creature's throat before looking at me one last time.

'Get ready to run kid, and remember to tell everyone you can about what you've seen down here; the world needs to know!'

With that he took one step backwards, disappearing with his writhing quarry over the edge. Immediately the worried shouts from the crowd stopped and a chilling silence descended over the entire city. No creature uttered a sound as they all looked at each other in amazement until one of the guards raised his spear high into the air, letting out a horrifying, resounding roar. And then all was chaos.

It appeared as if all sense of whatever sense of civilization the molemen had in them evaporated in that moment. They all turned on each other, ripping and treating at the flesh of

the nearest rival they could find. I slipped off the altar and rushed down the stairs. It seemed that the professor had been right, and the Ashakar were now more concerned with who their leader was than preventing my escape. I carefully zigzagged my way through the rancor at the temple base, dodging swinging swords and slicing claws. The floor became a sea of spilt blood that flowed and splashed around the feet of the combatants, providing their thirsty god with a much greater feast than they could have ever hoped to get from me. I made it through the crowd, over the bridge and back out into the city, only to find an equally intense battle raging in its streets.

The sounds of discord soon became a deafening crescendo of raw violence echoing throughout the cavern. Combat raged all around me as the dead piled up in doorways and arches. I witnessed it all in its primal horror, but none of the aggression ever directly turned upon me. Despite my best attempts at stealth I was sighted numerous by packs of roaming Ashakari during the conflict. They would take a momentary interest in me, approaching suddenly only to be quickly distracted by the entrance of a new group of their own to slaughter. Thus I managed to find my way to make my way back toward the rolling door – which had somehow been opened during the chaos – and back out into the great chamber of echoes. Of course, by this time my clothes had become absolutely drenched in mole blood. As you will no doubt remember from the police report of my arrest that I had a significant amount of unidentified blood covering my hands and knees; this was a direct result of my escape from the caves – but I'm getting ahead of myself. My apologies.

Once I'd made it out of the city I found myself again in complete darkness. I sat down and caught my breath, and pondered how to proceed. Professor Summerland had said there must

Dear Judge

have been another exit to the surface somewhere. I determined that the best thing to do would be to walk along the entire circumference of the cavern, but I had no light, as the mole-men had seized it from us when we were captured. I solved this by reaching down and removing one of the glowing crystals from the rock floor, and with it in hand I made my survey of the walls. Ten minutes later I spotted another gentle slope upwards that led to a small tunnel in the walls of the cave. As I made my way the ceiling came closer and closer, and soon I had to kneel down and crawl on my hands and knees just to continue moving forward. It quickly became too small of a path for me to keep holding onto the crystal, and I was forced to drop it along the way. After some more frantic feeling into the dark, I began to smell something foul, and emerged from a pipe in the wall out into the sordid filth of a sewer. Off in the distance I saw light cascading down from a man-hole cover. I waded through and ascended the ladder into the light, much to the surprise of the road crew working nearby. My strange appearance prompted them to call the police, and you know the rest from the reports.

danger from this horrible threat.

Thank you.

This is my honest and desperate plea, your honor. The arresting officers and everyone I've met since refuse to believe my story, and hold me responsible for Summland's disappearance. I am not guilty of this awful crime. I promise upon my life that everything I've said in this letter is the truth, and would very much like it if someone at least humored me in this matter. The investigators won't even agree to go into the sewer to look for the tunnel's exit, and I fear that the Ashakar have managed to reorganize themselves, for the entrance I'd discovered had been completely filled in and destroyed! Please your honor, take me seriously. The mole-men are coming, and the entire city, if not the entire world is in

Working

By Andrew Mendelson

The diner was small and grimy, but the attraction for both of them was the quiet. They sat across from each other in the booth. Most of the patrons were elderly, unlike them. Donnie was always finishing his shift in the evenings as Beth was bracing mentally for hers.

“If I tell you mine, will you tell me yours?” said Beth.

Donnie sighed.

“Yeah, I guess. But—”

“Hey guys, I’m Ashley and I’m gonna be your server today. You guys ready to order now or did you need a minute?” she said.

She looked like she was still in high school.

“We’re ready,” said Beth. “We come here all the time. Are you new?”

“Yeah, it’s my third night. I think it’s been going really, really good so far.”

Ashley smiled suddenly. It reminded Donnie of a typical Miss America smile—pretty, but not confident enough to fool anyone. They each gave her their order. She was nodding the whole time as she frantically scribbled it all down. They repeated one or two things for her and she smiled again before leaving.

“So, how did yours go?” Donnie

asked.

“I’ve had this one twice now, actually. The first time it happened I just tried to forget about it, then I had it again a few nights ago: It’s almost seven, and I just know that there’s no way I’m gonna be done with all my charting on time. I’ve been on my feet for twelve hours. I’ve only got four patients but it’s been a really busy night. Just as I’m finishing up, Dr. Aryk comes up right in front of the nurse’s station to shit on me.”

Donnie shook his head.

“You always mention him.”

“I know, right? And he says to me, ‘Nurse Baker, how is the patient in room 302 doing?’ And then I just about have a panic attack right there. Some of the other nurses are glancing at us now. I haven’t been in room 302 at all. I thought I only had *four* patients that night. And there’s no way Aryk is wrong. He’s an asshole, but he’s always right. That’s what I really hate about him. I’m starting to see bright spots floating around like I’m gonna pass out. If I tell him the truth, I’m completely screwed. If I lie, things will be worse—but maybe I can cover my mistake up by some miracle. Before I can really process it all and choose he raises his voice, ‘Nurse Baker? How did she respond to the Oneiricil?’ And then without thinking it just slips, ‘She’s doing fine. I’m sure.’”

“Damn.”

Ashley brought their food over. Donnie’s burger was overcooked and she had given Beth sausage with her scrambled eggs instead of bacon.

“Everything look okay? Can I get you guys something else?”

“We’re good for now.”

“Looks great.”

She walked off, forgetting to smile that time.

“Anyway, there’s no way Aryk believed me, but he just walks off anyway with this disgusted look. Carol—the head nurse—she just shakes her head. I try to smile and then I speed-walk to room 302. I get there and there’s this figure under the blankets. Like a little kid, no more than 90 pounds. I move the curtain to reveal her face. It’s this tiny old lady named June. She was the very first patient I had in the nursing home when I was a student. She called me ‘mommy’ when she was waking up that first morning I met her.”

Beth took a sip of water, paused, and took another sip.

“She’s right near death. She’s cachexic and can barely move, but she’s holding her little hand out to me and her eyes are huge and panicked. She’s wheezing and she knows she’s gonna die. As she starts fading I open the door and scream out ‘Code Blue’. I start with the compressions but—oh God—she’s too old, Donnie. I can feel and hear her ribs just snap like twigs as

I press down. Nobody comes in with the crash cart so I go to give her mouth-to-mouth but she can’t take any fluids orally and I haven’t been there for her all day so her lips are flakey and dry against mine.”

“You guys still doing good? Not too hungry I take it?” said Ashley.

“We’re okay still,” said Donnie. “Thanks.”

He took the first bite of his meal and watched Beth do the same.

“You okay?” he asked.

“I am. It’s not like it’s real, right? I’ve never missed a patient and the only three that coded on me all ended up making it a little while longer.”

“That’s good.”

“What about you? You said you’d tell me yours.”

“I mean, there’s not much to tell. It’s stupid.”

“Just tell it anyway. It’ll make me feel better.”

“It’s just everybody speeding. I’m at the corner of John R. and Mack. Even though I have my lights on, no one slows down. And I mean literally everyone on the road is going at least 90. It’s messed up.”

He went back to his burger.

“That’s it?” Beth asked.

“Pretty much. It’s frustrating because it’s not like I can pull the whole city over, y’know? So I just sit

there like an idiot. I've had this one a few times. The last time I had it the other night, I tried to look into all the cars speeding by. If I couldn't pull them all over I at least had to see who these people were. All the drivers were little black kids."

"What?"

They both jumped at the sound of the shattering glass. Ashley was a few tables over trying to pick up the broken coffee mug pieces with her hands. Her cheeks were completely flushed. The manager called her over towards the kitchen. Beth could still see Ashley in the doorway but the manager was completely concealed behind the wall except for when his finger came out as he pointed at Ashley. Other servers glanced at her as she was chewed out. A black busboy went to the broken glass with a broom and dustpan to clean it up.

Donnie stared at Ashley and sighed.

"You think she's gonna make it?" he asked.

"She'll be fine eventually. I'm sure."



You are now entering the

POETRY

section.

P

By CNO

p is a fixed prime number,

and all rings are assumed to have characteristic p ,

unless explicitly mentioned otherwise.

We review the notion of tight closure due to Hochster and Huneke.

The main protagonist in this elegant theory is the p -th power

Frobenius map.

We will focus on five key properties of tight closure,

which will enable us to prove,

virtually effortlessly,

several,

beautiful,

theorems.

Via these five properties,

we can give a more axiomatic treatment,

which lends itself nicely to generalization,

and especially to a similar theory in characteristic

zero.

where is carl jung

By Maja Topic

'i'm sorry, you are new'
and following the tour
guide rules
fighting for a soothing
night, it proves
no seam undone
could be true

a conundrum
without clues
blinded by the night
it hums
buzzing with the helicopter
i used to call my nurse
it teleports me
out of sight
where sirens come alive
to bite
from you, sucking your breath
in spite of all
that was regret
hoarding an addiction
spreads
morning as a cheese
that won't
advocate
worldly abuse
sabotaging
Man and Moon

three is all you need
for free
mind, body, spirit,
clean!

in hindsight
i was just mean
no longer will i find
peace
stronger thrills
will speak to thee
if you set your demons
free

Ninth House in Three Years

By Levi Rainham

Rain finds light-marbled fraternity
across the shifting tableaux of towns;
Vague lines of names immemorial,
to which I'll never commit my own.

Broken faces featureless
and indistinct
each from the other.

Our frames forgotten
for the canvas
all stretched about them-

I am here,
I am here,

I am here.

I Swear, I'm Trying

By Katherine Wilson

Because this is my painting.
But not really, because it's yours.
You are my Mona Lisa.

You, alone on the elementary school swing set,
Pretending you're young enough to fly.

You, staring into neonblue infinity,
Like it could be real life.

You, yelling laughter onto the streets
And breathing in the sun-hot summer.

I am you.
You in your house, your car, your mind.

When the colour of your anger is so red
It turns black and back to green and
Nothing could feel better,
Consider me there.

And when you're so in love all you can see is bluepurple
In the skies and stars and oceans of your existence
Turning your tears into foggy light bulbs
That never burn out,
Consider me there.

I want to scream you into the world
And breathe in the rural city songs
Masked by cyclists trying to float off the pavement
And into eternity.

All that has pushed for you was me.
And me was all that has pulled for you.

One stroke of the brush and I went back to sleep.
And you were there.
Like a damp morning mist that breathes with the rising of the sun.

I was pretending I could love you
Pretending I could say I love you
Instead of just fading into the wallpaper like so many particles of dust
Meaning nothing, but clogging up everyone's reality.
You were there.
I had to be there.

And I know that at times when I'm not myself,
I have to be you.
Because there's no one else I could ever imagine being.

Breathe in that hydrogen peroxide colour.
Breathe in those polka dots that want to stand still.

Breathe in me.

Breathe in yourself.

Breathe in.

Breathe.

Warbling Spring

By rangaha

Why, oh whispering, warbling spring
When moon is but a sliver in the sky
Does one find themselves, in deepest dreams
Before thy sapphire eye?
With the woman in the green dress 'neath the eclipse
And her soft and mild brown skin
And the wintry kiss from her softer yet lips
And flow'rs blossom where she hath been.

Deep Sleep

By opage

I lumber with the Day dragging
by my ankles and bearing on my back.
My mind is blank. The room is black.

I dive headlong splashing the bed sheet.
Underwater, the Day sinks like concrete.
By my ankles it pulls me down below,
deep inside the Mariana trench,
where –not a light, not a peep–
I rest my head on bedrock and sleep.

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