



the best of  
**amomancies™**

*the best of amomancies*

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# *the best of amomancies*

## **By way of Introduction**

In the beginning was the word. And the word was **amote**. I've always been a fan of words and how they are created and evolve. So one day I noticed (I am sure someone else had to have noticed before me) that "amote", literally "I love you" in Latin, when you dropped the space, became a single word that could mean "to speak of love", just as to speak in favor of something is to promote or to speak out is to emote.

Soon after I used it in a few poems. The notion of labelling love poems or love letters as "amotation" occurred to me. Soon thereafter this was followed by a reader labelling me an "amomancer", one who weaves spells with words of love, which suggested that such love spells, taking the form of letters or poems were, you guessed it, "**amomancies**".

Now let's come at it a different way. A few years ago, working with models I knew to illustrate my poems for various online sites, I hit upon the idea for a magazine that would go all out into that standard.

Originally conceived as "Red", then later "EJT" (the initials of Percy Bysshe Shelley's brave friend Edward James Trelawny), I finally set upon the name "amomancies", then started the arduous work of selling the notion to photographers and models. For the original issue I decided to build it as a proof of concept, in case it cratered, only using my own poetry...I found approval for the idea with the models and photographers.

The first issue, with my constant collaborator Mariya Andriichuk on the cover, premiered in August of 2014. It was downloadable as a pdf or could be ordered in print version. I had hoped for a few hundred readers. The first issue had thousands. Concept proven.

Realizing the amount of work required to put together each issue, I set it as a quarterly magazine and got to work recruiting more models and photographers, and more poets. I set the "rule of seven" where a poet or model would not, except under exceptional circumstances, appear more than seven times in a given issue (you'll notice echoes of that rule here, with no poet appearing more than seven times in this book, and only two of the models appearing more than that).

The rigors of putting out the magazine became debilitating, so I went on hiatus a few times over the next three years (we are currently on an extended hiatus, I have no doubt but that amomancies shall return.) And eventually the notion occurred, with the founding of Venetian Spider Press, to put out a "best of amomancies" volume. Which meant pursuing all of the poets and photographers and models who had previously appeared in the magazine. Only two or three of the models declined. Only one poet did. Several of the models I had trouble reaching, despite assorted attempts to make contact. That was difficult for me, as some of the ones we could not get in touch with, at least by deadline time, represented some pretty fantastic images.

Then we had to sort through and keep this volume to a reasonable thickness...

...and here it is. I want to thank and acknowledge, not only the contributors, but the editorial staff of amomancies, including Daniel McTaggart, Mariya Andriichuk, Peri DeVault, Ashley O'Neill, and Elric DeVault. You guys rock.

Respectfully

**William F. DeVault**

Amomancer, founder and editor-in-chief, amomancies magazine

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**Blessed by Fire**  
**Edilson Afonso Ferreira**

There are some secrets that belong only to us,  
like our love's beginning - how, when, where.  
They must be surely concealed from everyone,  
for people never would understand that story.  
Flame that rounded us like sacred aureole,  
sternly, firmly and merciless imprisoning.  
Unknown power coming from so long past  
that shoved us into passionate inner circle.  
No one knows,  
at least fancies,  
at that first day,  
what the kind of fire that blessed us forever.

**The Sacred Heart of Persephone  
Amberly Mason**


**She sat reflecting beneath  
the moon's halcyon light,  
the darkness entrances  
and seems to call from  
somewhere beyond,  
and it makes her heart  
stop her breath catches  
torn between fear and  
forbidden longing.**

**Sweet daughter of light,  
receiver of life, whose beauty  
shines within the sunlight,  
and yet there stirs deep within  
her alabaster breast the desire  
for knowledge hidden unmeant  
for one so fresh in youth,  
the maiden crowned in daffodils.**

**But alas when she finds herself  
alone, to sit beneath a moon  
bathed field, she hears the whisper  
on the wind, calling her name,  
speaking to that spot within her soul,  
and she throbs to learn the mysteries  
that only death can provide,  
to go gentle into that eternal  
night.**

**She sings a quiet hymn  
to her lover concealed,  
that may she fall away into his  
never ending embrace,  
worlds apart they share a  
secret mind, and awaits she does  
for the day when he will draw her  
away into his realm of darkness  
unknown that so tempts  
even as she trembles in fear.**





**Her Finger Does the Smoothest Talking**  
Adrian Ernesto Cepeda

As she reaches out to touch me  
underneath her softest part,  
already moaning so many mental  
conversations, saved for her pleasure,  
pressing down on her favorite button  
gripping the receiver, slowly redialing

she keeps her softest lips smiling.

After the third ring, she lets her fingers  
do the talking; within the tangled chords,  
breathlessly, she bends her twisted tongue,  
softer than I can hear.

Waiting for my answer, she hangs,  
dripping wet with anticipation  
exhaling closer than we actually appear.

**Midnight Muse in a Convenience Store**  
**Daniel McTaggart**

**She saunters through the door,  
accompanied by a breath of smoke.**

**Her summer dress swaying  
to the whims of her hips  
and the tug of her breasts.**

**Slowly, she strides the aisles,  
skidding her sandaled feet.**

**As she pauses by the milk,  
her head lolls over her shoulder  
like a lazy flower.**

**She opens the cooler door.**

**Slender, painted fingers reach up,  
threading long, auburn hair;  
which falls in a gossamer fan  
across her small back.**

**After taking a gallon of 2%,  
her hand briskly rubs a tanned, tender calf.**

**Brushing away a sharp chill, to no avail,  
as it slithers up along her limber frame;**

**demanding a sultry shiver.**

**She asks for the time.**

**Her voice a feathery husk.**

**Her smile a slim smirk.**

**Her oval eyes like echoes  
flooding with green**





**Two people  
Debbie Tosun Kilday**

**Two bodies  
Naked  
Exposed  
Two hearts  
Beating  
As one  
Two lips  
Locked  
In a kiss  
Two eyes  
Viewing  
The others soul  
No status  
No political affiliation  
Nothing but...  
Two people  
At that moment  
In time  
Just two people  
Nothing else**


Soundtrack  
Lynn White

The music of my youth still sings to me.  
Inside my head it still plays Dylan and Baez  
as part of our song, our time, our places.  
Subversive music, coming from the streets.  
Out of tune with the surround sound monotone.  
Undermining it with a discordant challenge.

Harmony and discord,  
the songs of peace and love  
sitting side by side with war and revolution.  
Then as now they still speak to us,  
still sing in tune  
The lyrical passion of the words,  
the movement music of the songs,  
has crossed our time and space.  
Melodies of movement  
which still can break our boundaries  
and join us back together.  
Moving rhythms which still excite  
and words which dance for us.

These moving patterns on a page,  
have make different music now,  
wrapped in our emotions and melodies  
which have few boundaries  
and are timeless and placeless  
when in tune with changing times,  
which for us, can be any time at all.



A young woman with long, wavy brown hair is sitting on the roof of a blue car. She is wearing a white, sleeveless, button-down shirt and brown lace-up boots. Her hands are clasped in her lap. The background is a bright, hazy sunset sky. The car's roof rack and side mirrors are visible.

**Dinner at Golden Corral Buffet  
Jackie Chou**

The evening was too pink  
too orange, too cold  
and the sky so lazy  
it melted into the street  
You called and asked  
if it was me you saw  
at the bus station  
because like Cinderella  
I do walk away  
Still, I only dare to cry  
in my dreams  
so when you see me  
I am smiling and superficial  
chewing steak and tilapia  
Like in an utopia  
where heated cars  
lead to soft mattresses  
and your eyes  
are saner than mine



**Mess of Thrown Off Clothes  
Strider Marcus Jones**

**i listen  
to your love beads glisten  
in the flotsam  
of my roomwe  
make them  
from samurai sword folds  
at forge and loom  
in the mess of thrown off clothes.  
so many smoke me kisses  
at portal doors,  
and mithril wishes  
on primitive floorstake  
us back again  
through heath and fen  
to imitate  
lost landscapecycle  
and circle  
sky and stone  
outside and homein  
love in less  
with your heavenliness,  
and loneliness**





**Four-legged Meadow Lark  
Catherine Katey Johnson**

**We drive  
down this fine aspect of roads  
toward four-legged hills  
a good place to park  
and a meadow.**

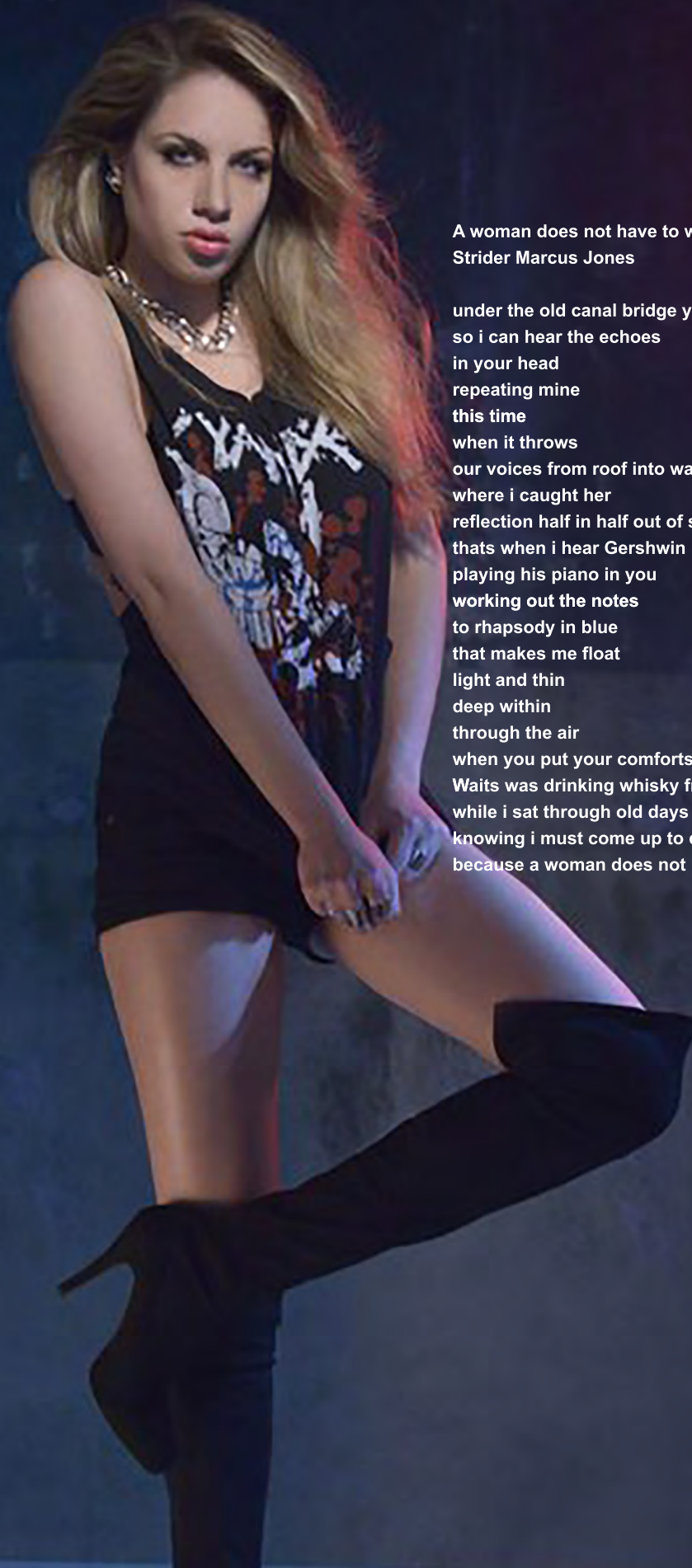
**It occurs to me  
the shape you give  
any space, any place  
fits me--  
with your "Oh, yeah,"  
spread all over the blanket  
wild flowers and the scent--  
"Yeah, that's real nice,"  
defines me.**

**"Lift, baby" drives want  
leaping with intensity  
a want for us  
to be this blend of nature  
wrapped tightly on the hills  
of our four-legged landscape.**

Romance Litters the Floor  
Amberly Mason

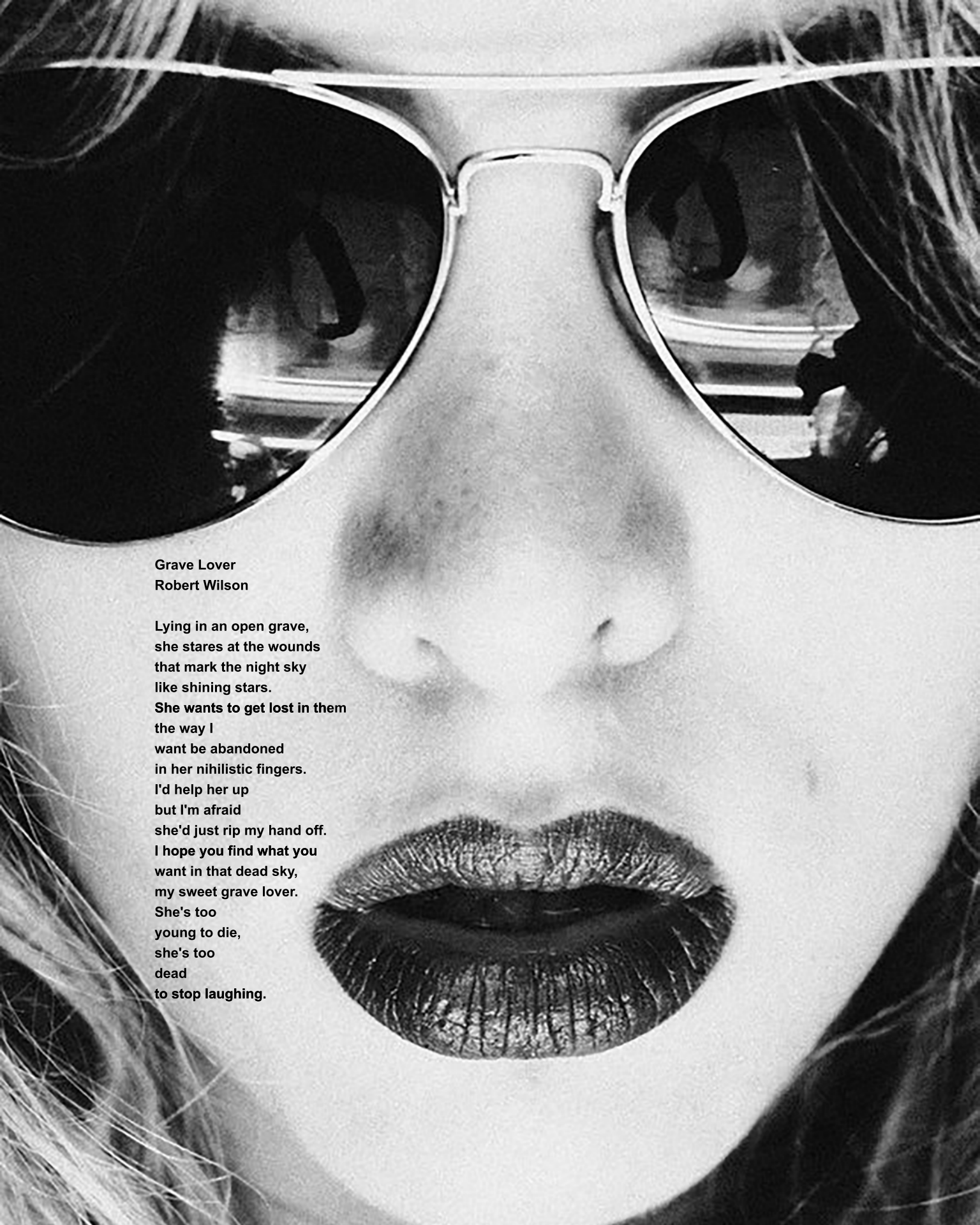
Romance litters the floor like dead leaves  
as forgotten letters once  
discreetly passed through coat sleeves,  
now your silhouette remains  
retreating out the door,  
like dead leaves romance litters the floor.





**A woman does not have to wait  
Strider Marcus Jones**

under the old canal bridge you said  
so i can hear the echoes  
in your head  
repeating mine  
this time  
when it throws  
our voices from roof into water  
where i caught her  
reflection half in half out of sunshine.  
thats when i hear Gershwin  
playing his piano in you  
working out the notes  
to rhapsody in blue  
that makes me float  
light and thin  
deep within  
through the air  
when you put your comforts there.  
Waits was drinking whisky from his bottle  
while i sat through old days with Aristotle  
knowing i must come up to date  
because a woman does not have to wait.



Grave Lover  
Robert Wilson

Lying in an open grave,  
she stares at the wounds  
that mark the night sky  
like shining stars.  
**She wants to get lost in them**  
the way I  
want be abandoned  
in her nihilistic fingers.  
I'd help her up  
but I'm afraid  
she'd just rip my hand off.  
I hope you find what you  
want in that dead sky,  
my sweet grave lover.  
She's too  
young to die,  
she's too  
dead  
to stop laughing.



Meeting  
Lynn White

You spoke to me.

A smile on your lips  
and a sadness  
behind your eyes  
to match my own.  
I could see it,  
recognise it.  
I knew it well.

"Hello you", I said.  
"Hello me?"

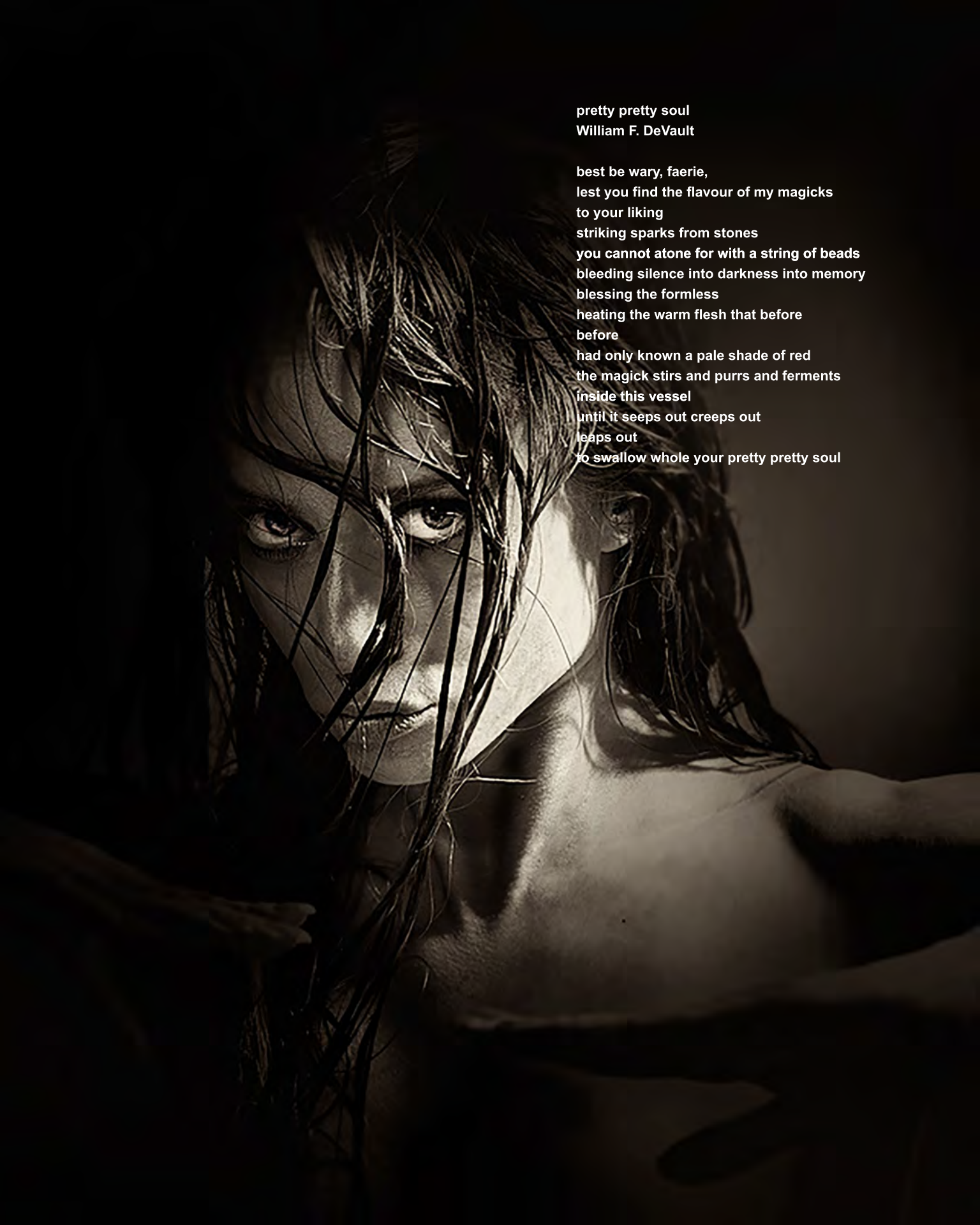
A gesture,  
a question in your voice,  
laughter caught  
in the back of your throat  
and eyes that smiled.  
Momentarily.

At least  
momentarily  
understanding.

He Plays His Flamenco Guitar  
Strider Marcus Jones

he plays his flamenco guitar  
knowing who you are,  
seducing his singer  
to bring her  
from bleak harbour masts  
to his contrasts.  
he knows the equations  
of her close flirtations  
and doesn't judge her glances  
for wanting what romance is vibrating  
in voices and strings  
of fornicating feelings.  
her prose photosynthesis  
illuminates his  
shades that colour mountains  
and drops of wishes in mosaic fountains  
she loves the Picasso from his pen  
and horse smell like Andalusian men  
her reversed body senses  
inside his defences  
her sea wind  
billows in his revealing  
Avalon through the mist,  
sweet loved, firm kissed.





pretty pretty soul  
William F. DeVault

best be wary, faerie,  
lest you find the flavour of my magicks  
to your liking  
striking sparks from stones  
you cannot atone for with a string of beads  
bleeding silence into darkness into memory  
blessing the formless  
heating the warm flesh that before  
before  
had only known a pale shade of red  
the magick stirs and purrs and ferments  
inside this vessel  
until it seeps out creeps out  
leaps out  
to swallow whole your pretty pretty soul





**Twin Poems**  
**Nivedita Dey**

**#1 Night**

Did you see the three year old  
last night?  
Pitter patter outside sang her  
lullabies.  
She lightly clasped one of his  
forefingers  
And slept away to fairyland.

**#2 Morning**

It hurts! While he flirts.  
With dames and lame ducks.  
Her Blue so often turning Green.  
Purest Blue. Don't you taint.  
With whimsies of worldly paint.  
Let Blue rest in Faith Sanguine.



**Bowie Me  
Daniel de Cullá**

**O dinamite Angel  
Let me sing Lazarus, Space Oddity...  
Others with You  
You, our High Reverence of the Star  
Swimming in our ears  
Omnibenevolent Lord of Virginity  
Dedicated to the Prettiest One  
In Music and Life  
The uproar of your hand clapping  
Guitars  
Meaning behind Poetry.  
Maybe You are just crazy  
indeed;  
But do not reject these teachings  
As false  
Because we are crazy;  
King Love  
Sit and dream  
On the floor of my Rainbow  
Love has gotten me into  
All Your Channels. Ecstasy;**

**Everything I have waited for  
–Birth, death, The Next Day  
Is right inside this den  
Of mine.**

Alpha and Omega  
Amberly Mason

I will come to you  
as one of the Vestal Virgins,  
as a Daughter of Artemis,  
to be yours completely,  
utterly, entirely,  
my skin to know your touch,  
and yours alone.

Since the moment  
my soul awakened into life  
I have waited for the day  
that you would find me,  
the Goddess whispered  
in my ear, granting me  
visions in my dreams  
to implore me to patience

Proudly I waited,  
now I take your hand in mine,  
where bliss awaits  
beneath the watching moon.

And in finding me  
you will have reached  
the end of your journey,  
for with me your heart will have  
found its home.

You will wander no more  
unless it is with me by your side,  
not even the beauty of the stars  
above will draw your eyes  
from mine.

As our bodies join together  
it will be both first and last,  
it will mark the moment  
that we shall forge our forever  
locked within eternal embrace.





**The Cries of The Succubi**  
**Amelia Vandergast**

And so I became.  
Entwined in the curvature of your spine,  
encapsulated in the sound that escapes your lips  
each  
and every  
word unspoken  
as we're lost in our own labyrinth of carnality.

The constellation  
that shines  
behind your eyes  
whilst you shiver  
and groan  
is illuminating  
the poetry you've inscribed within my soul.

We've always been more than when we started.  
Since I surrendered myself to you  
and paved paths I've never dreamed of walking upon.



**Aphrodite's Risk**  
**Daniel McTaggart**

People forget Adonis paid little attention  
to Aphrodite,  
preferring instead to engage in hunting  
and other male pastimes.


Yet when a beast got the best  
of Adonis' jugular,  
Aphrodite flew to his side despite  
his ignorance.

But was it to rest her lover's head  
comfortably in her lap?  
Or was it to make certain  
of the arrangement of his spray,

which would bloom in scarlet carnations  
that he would never see from Hades' realm?  
To love the unattainable man,  
or to manipulate such beauty from

the juice of his demise.


Whether those carnations be monument  
or revenge,  
what man would not take the risk



Dinner Date  
Shloka Shankar


You were the  
centre  
of my universe.  
I dreamt of you,  
built castles  
that were washed  
rudely away.  
Hung onto  
your every word  
and watched you  
become someone  
else's.

I was sixteen.  
You were nineteen.  
I went on my  
first dinner date  
with you.  
You were a  
thorough gentleman.  
My knees still go weak  
when I picture us  
together that night.  
A birthday gift  
of a lifetime.  
And then we  
drifted apart once  
you realized I was  
just a kid.



Unzipping Her Pleasure of Psalm 119:105  
Adrian Ernesto Cepeda

After revealing her skin,  
glowing exposed—  
her back called out,  
speaking to me  
with this tattooed ink saying:  
\*your word is a lamp\*  
\*for my feet, a light\*  
\*on my path\*. Through this darkness  
without betraying the belief  
in her cravings;  
as my lips kissed her neck—  
this blessed body showed me  
her own way of praying.



The Lioness  
Chris Riddell

She is a lioness  
leading  
through marshes and glades  
with eyes  
sharper than blades  
and a killer instinct

kills with her looks  
that is:  
her gaze is amber fire  
and admiring her  
you pursue

with cunning a glance  
beckons  
you advance  
knives out  
for the sweetest kill

but each tooth is a lance  
in the lion's mouth  
her words flow dark  
existent  
powerfully fierce and  
transfixing

She is a lioness  
from a faraway place  
beautifully deep and  
endless in grace  
an exotic traveller  
looking for a place to lay down

You set your knives down  
knowing  
there is no room for war  
in a life that is  
so short



An American Night  
Daniel McTaggart

I'm going out for a burger fried on the grill  
with black lines searing across the patty,  
like prison bars holding juices in,  
letting them out on good behavior as I bite.

I want it thick enough to be pink in the middle.  
I want a strawberry shake so thick  
I have to eat it with a spoon.

I want fries the size of my fingers.  
I want them to burn my tongue with every bite.  
And if they sizzle in my hand before I do,  
that will be just fine.

I will put a quarter in the juke box  
and play "Sugar Shack" by Jimmy Gilmer  
because "there's a cute li'l girlie who's  
a-workin' there. In black leotards  
and her feet are bare."

I will go to the coffee shop and drink  
a blend so rich and so full  
I might stay up for a week.

I will walk in fields up to my neck in grass  
side by side with an American girl,  
her hair so long and her skirt so short  
they meet each other at mid-thigh.

Her father won't know where we are.  
And we won't care because we've found  
the perfect place to lie back  
and look up at stars.

We will count constellations in lieu of  
counting down the moments till our first time.  
Our first time together, which will be  
somewhere between the Big Dipper  
and the belt of Orion.

Then I will take her home, climbing up  
behind her to the second story window.  
Begging to stay when I know I can't.  
Leaving before her father finds out.


I'll wish I could stick around,  
like John Belushi on a ladder,  
but I will respect her.

She will flop on her bed, dreaming  
all the ways this night could  
not have gone better.

Twirling a lock of hair with one hand.  
Caressing her lips with the other.  
Praying for my next phone call.  
Hoping for another second story rendezvous.

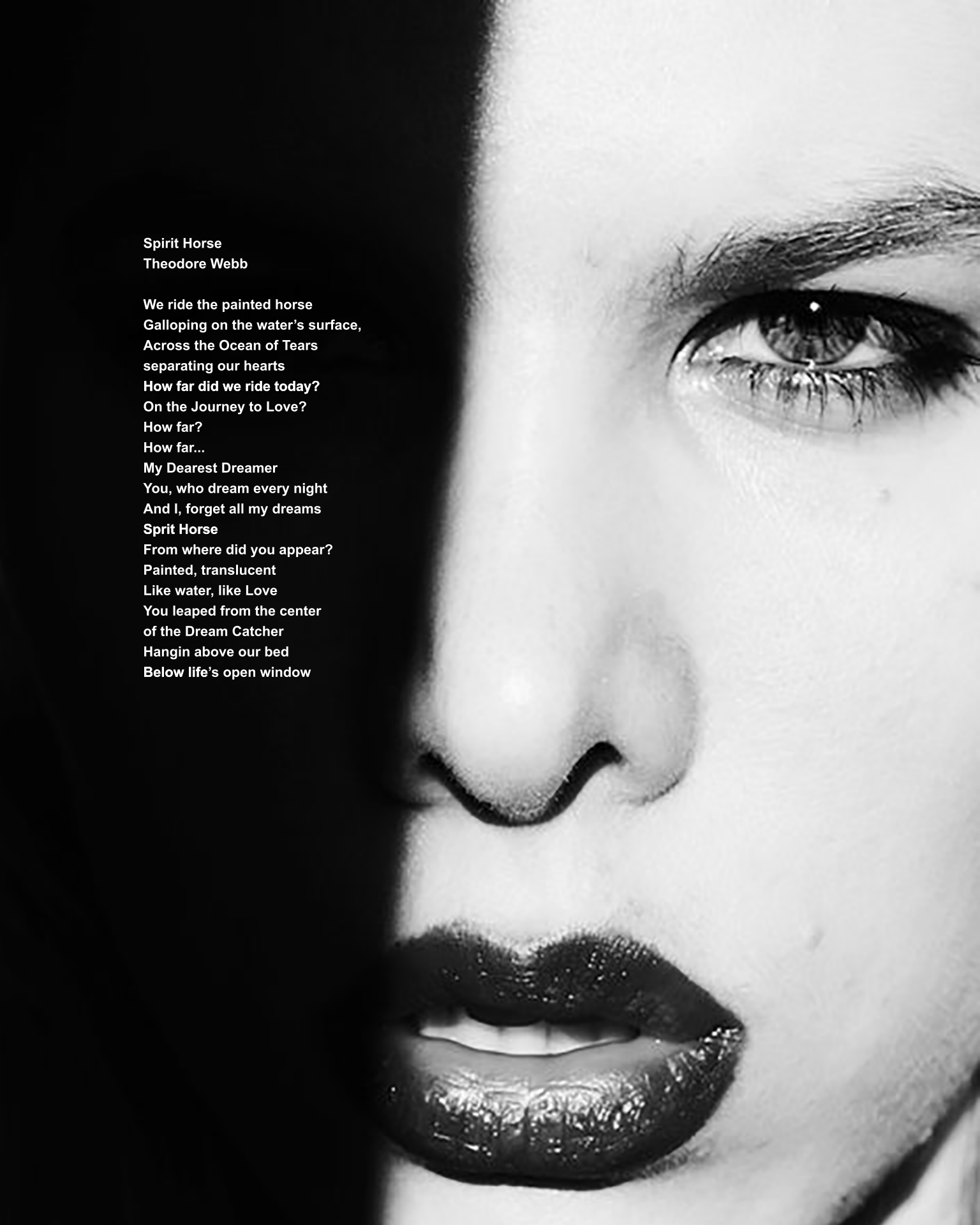
I will dream only of her  
and how she moved beneath me.  
How stars whistled through reeds  
to settle in the corners of her eyes.

Tomorrow morning, while I eat breakfast,  
Mom will hold my jeans above the washer  
like a painting, wondering how I got  
such dark grass stains in the knees.



Midnight and Mornings  
Strider Marcus Jones


midnight and mornings  
insomnia  
and melancholy callings  
enjoy a  
smoking  
and talking  
the romance has  
being shaggedrepeating  
it  
sat on  
lay on  
eating it  
until the pieces fit  
as onedon  
Quixote  
waves at windmills  
wild coyote  
rises  
from slip slides  
and spillswhile  
room walls  
those waterfalls  
of fears and wills  
record the passionate graffiti  
of years hanging sweetly.



Spirit Horse  
Theodore Webb


We ride the painted horse  
Gallop on the water's surface,  
Across the Ocean of Tears  
separating our hearts  
How far did we ride today?  
On the Journey to Love?  
How far?  
How far...

My Dearest Dreamer  
You, who dream every night  
And I, forget all my dreams  
Sprit Horse  
From where did you appear?  
Painted, translucent  
Like water, like Love  
You leaped from the center  
of the Dream Catcher  
Hangin above our bed  
Below life's open window



The Madrigal of Voices  
Strider Marcus Jones

the madrigal of voices  
somewhere, in its choices,  
chooses and rejoices  
back to me collecting  
frozen wood,  
from the crofts and slums, of old childhood  
sat  
here, on this chair  
in the numb night air.  
now, your moonbeams kiss  
the winter of me. stirs  
ripples on its pond skin. unpicks the threaded  
wish  
of passions positive remark  
while  
sleep fights  
these luminous lights  
of limp daggers laughing  
in the dark.  
somehow, its root  
of subdued jasmine and tropical jute,  
reaches that closed chamber of your core  
and  
thoughts transmute,  
woven to the nature of its lore.  
negativity narrows  
when i stroke in your shallows  
forward  
as before;  
but staying in tomorrows,  
i enter and endure.



It Wouldn't Be Make Believe if You Believed in Me (for Blanche DuBois)  
Marianne Peel

You want me to serve you lemon coke with ice chips  
To soothe you in your jagged places  
A hot drawn bath  
In the throbbing heat  
Of the French Quarter.  
But I have wanted  
to bathe with you in lavender water  
Adorned with water lilies  
Your feather boa transformed into ringlets of water pearls  
Caressing your neck your shoulders  
The lattice lace of your hair  
Gathered around a musical mouth  
That hums only love songs.  
I have wanted  
To be moored with you in this harbor,  
The stranger you depend on  
For kindness.  
We will banish all naked light bulbs,  
Dressing them in Chinese lanterns from the five and dime.  
At midnight we will read love letters  
From your long ago lover  
Remembering the New Orleans jazz trumpet  
How it lured you to the dance floor  
How you kicked off your heels  
How your hips couldn't help but sway and swish  
How the smoke curled in and out of your eyes.  
I have wanted  
Letters from that lover  
In our water-puckered hands  
Just reading and remembering.  
Not make- believe.  
Knowing we tell what ought to be truth.



**Late Night Phone Call**  
**Nate Maxson**

**Your voice in the dark**  
**Runs subtle electricity through the delicate bones of my back**  
**A quiet twitch, I writhe in this distance**  
**I float in the space, in the miles, in the hours: the pitch lightless**  
**stretch of your ribcage**  
**All these, distracting bodily anchors**  
**Echolocations from my voice to your voice to my skin to yours, the**  
**small hairs on your forearms rising and falling like cattails in the**  
**monsoon**  
**Like breath**  
**Stay with me**  
**Please**  
**Until our ghosts**  
**Break through**



Butterfly Effect  
Clinton Van Inman

Trapped behind broken glass  
In a window pane  
A butterfly fluttered his paper  
Wings in vain  
Trying to reach the roses beyond  
The garden lane

But if those tiny wings can  
Cause some great effect  
To move the wind or mountain  
That no science can detect  
Then perhaps I too might fly from  
The gardens of my own neglect.



The Phoenix Rises in Venus  
Amberly Mason

I feel the flames of your fingers  
lick my skin and my soul  
becomes scorched  
as I burn from the inside out.

The intensity of your eyes  
hunger-filled and predatory  
eats me alive in a single  
glance and the touch of your  
body incinerates me.

Your ecstasy leaves me  
in ashes, swept away  
in the murmurs of your breath  
and with the quiver of your lips,  
you sing me home again.

Born a woman new  
I rise from the fires of your  
flesh, revitalized  
I tremble in exhilaration.

For whenever you are near  
you burn me alive  
in temptation, that I may  
be born again in your unexpected  
moments of tenderness  
and so with you I will live  
in eternal youth.



Eyes Back to Basics  
One Single Rose


Intriguing eyes as rivers to swim  
Deep blue as the sea  
Clear as the aquamarine sky  
Coarse as a brown beaver  
Smooth as dark chocolate  
Black as coal and dark as night  
Shining full of power and light  
Green as pastures and the Chicago River on  
March 17  
Yellow as sunflowers melting like butter  
Truth comes forth while gazing into these eyes  
Emanating from a vast place where goodness  
subsists  
Eyes sparkle like diamonds on a sunny day  
Glisten like gold worn by kings and queens of  
yesteryear  
Crimson when angered  
Calmed while scarlet letters are corrected  
Stars fill the retina with bright ideas  
Pools of sadness bag when things aren't quite  
right  
Clouds fail to deter as the dolphins dance  
Fireworks spark through the pupils  
Exciting minds with every color of the rainbow  
Whites pure as freshly fallen snow  
Emerge fierce as a polar bear when threatened  
At dusk eyes become as caroty as the sun  
Hanging onto the promise for tomorrow





Feels Like 40c  
R. A. Lucas

The radio said 29  
would feel like 40.  
Numbers also measure  
a time  
past when  
passion triumphed poverty  
and  
our love making wasn't  
air conditioned  
and  
we moved together easily  
in our not so innocent sweat.  
Back when heat was  
measured in  
Fahrenheit and our  
love was measured  
in promises, whispered  
assumptions, the  
easy lies of lovers lost  
in the whirl of a cheap  
oscillating fan.



Blue  
Lynn White

Blue skies, blue sea,  
a day of sparkling sunshine,  
with a shimmering horizon.  
And then, out of this blue,  
You,  
smiling sadly with your lovely blue eyes.

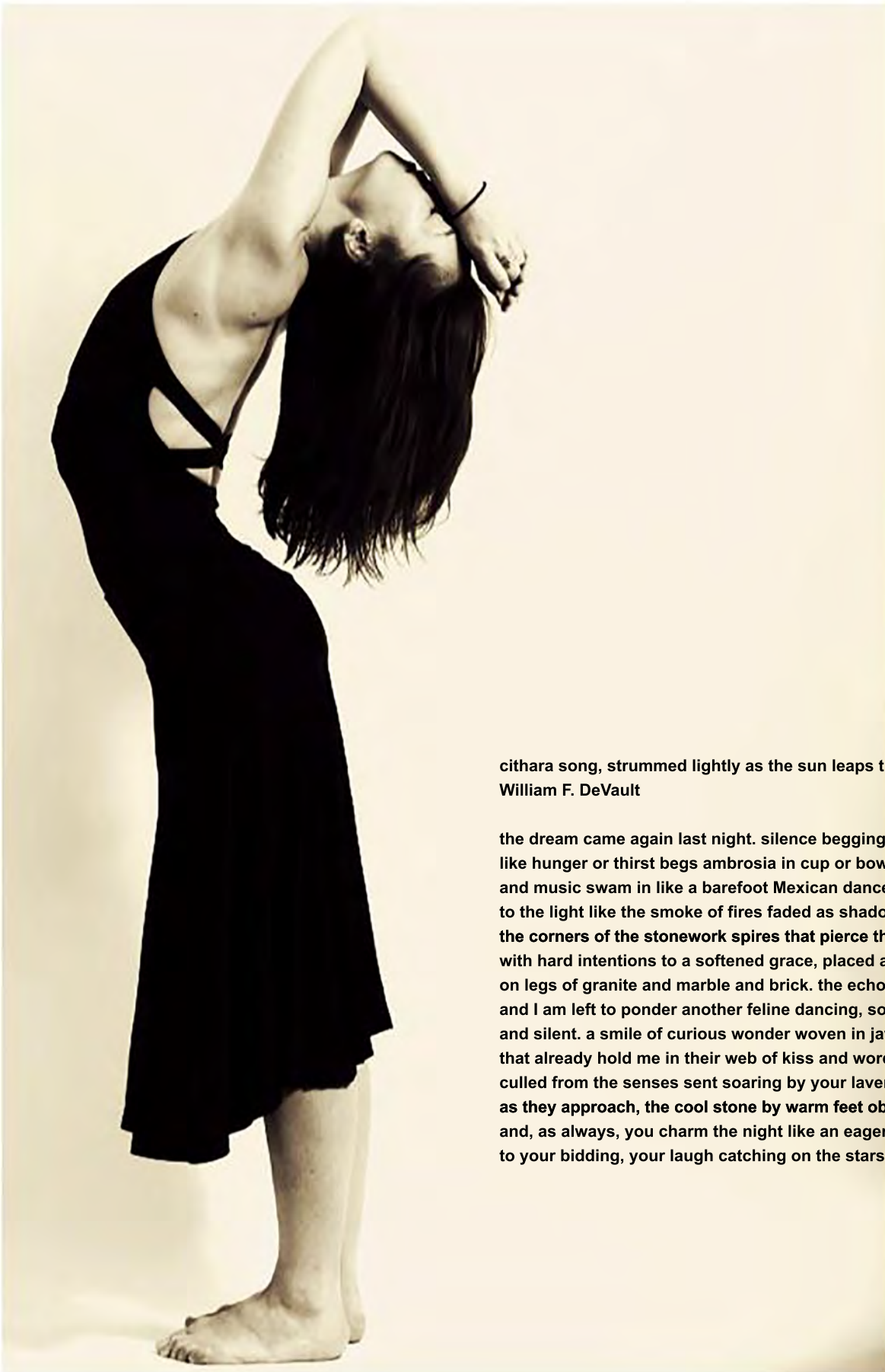
I knew you from the back, you said,  
the cut of your hair, your bright blue mac.  
I wanted to see your face again,  
it's only fair, you've seen mine.  
You must have done,  
me, being who I am.

I wanted to smell your clean hair smell.  
So I took a chance, and here I am.  
I wanted to  
abate the sadness.

I nodded. Yes.  
I know it's true.  
It's all been said  
and we won't be sad.  
No blue moods  
on this bright blue day  
of smiling sunshine.

We'll go together now,  
for now  
and be glad.  
After all,  
one way or another,  
everything will end  
in tears, I said,

So let's take our now time



cithara song, strummed lightly as the sun leaps the horizon  
William F. DeVault

the dream came again last night. silence begging sound  
like hunger or thirst begs ambrosia in cup or bowl or mug.  
and music swam in like a barefoot Mexican dancer, bound  
to the light like the smoke of fires faded as shadows hug  
the corners of the stonework spires that pierce the skies  
with hard intentions to a softened grace, placed aloft  
on legs of granite and marble and brick. the echo dies  
and I am left to ponder another feline dancing, soft  
and silent. a smile of curious wonder woven in jaws  
that already hold me in their web of kiss and word,  
culled from the senses sent soaring by your lavender claws  
as they approach, the cool stone by warm feet obscured.  
and, as always, you charm the night like an eager lover  
to your bidding, your laugh catching on the stars that hover.

**The Fabric Of Creation  
Mike Essiq**

Lovers weave  
the fabric  
of creation.  
Entering you,  
I return to Paradise.  
When your flesh  
surrounds me,  
the Garden  
is restored.  
Together  
we become  
much more  
than each other -  
one tapestry  
woven  
of two threads.  
How many  
existences  
to arrive  
at this life?  
The particles dance,  
rearrange, renew;  
a universe  
constantly reborn.  
All of this  
endless majesty  
that my head  
might find  
the pillow  
of your belly,  
that my ears  
might feel  
the beating  
of your heart.  
Every breath,  
divine  
and precious;  
each moment  
a new world.





Sweet Smoke  
Daniel McTaggart


A wisp of sweet smoke rolls  
Off me for every thought of you.  
Exuding denuded passion

In a fashion in contempt of company.  
Why must I only feel  
This way when I'm alone?

Your absence inspires me to perspire  
The essence of our togetherness.  
Let weather bless our heated union.

I'm so defeated by your presence  
In my life, your rain sustains me  
In my greatest moments of strife,

So much that a wisp of  
Sweet smoke rolls off me  
For every thought of you.



Interstices  
Chris Riddell

Glorious  
amazing  
and beautiful  
are just three words  
that describe you

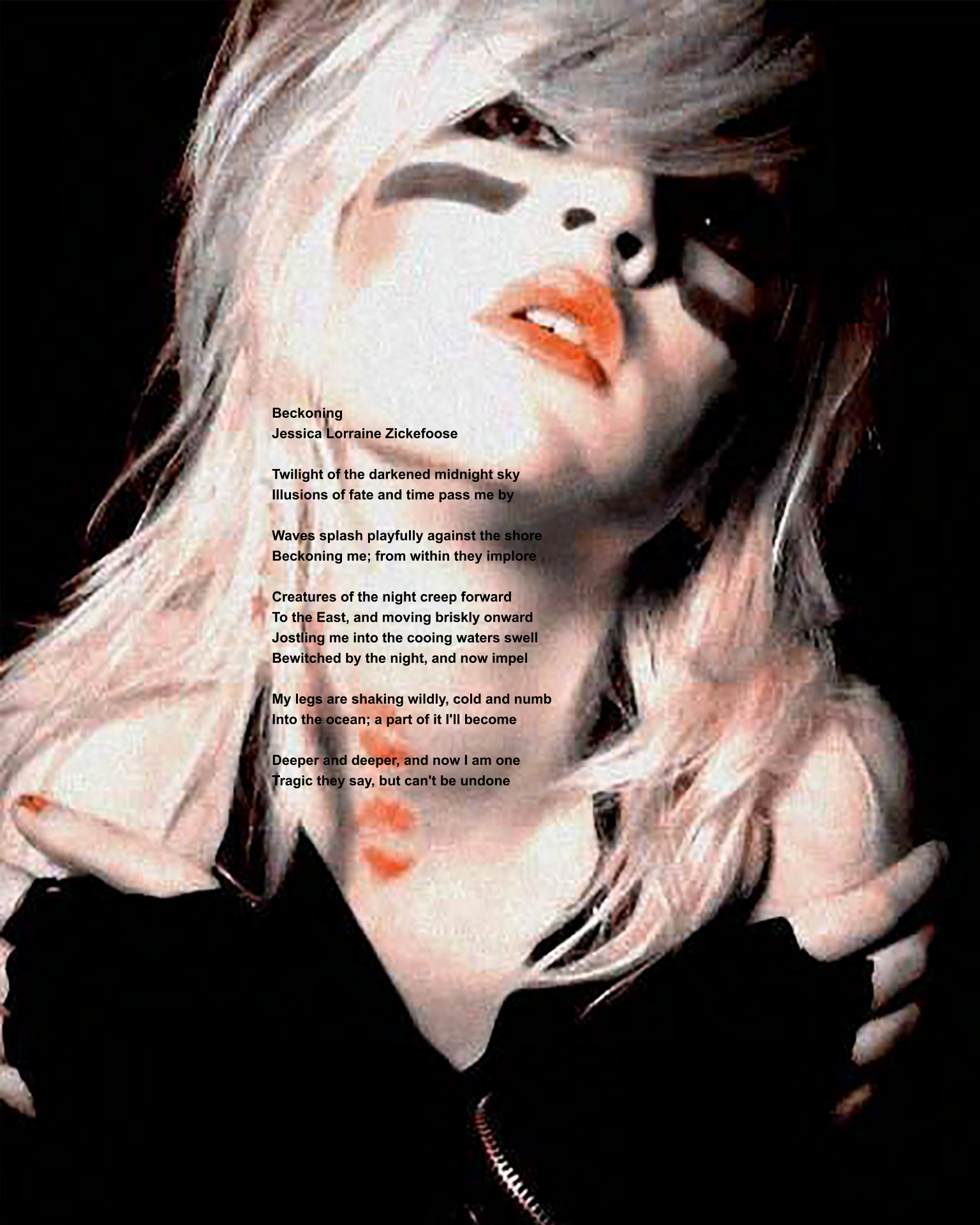
others include:  
incredible  
intelligent  
insightful

You are indelible  
imprinted in memory  
You are instilled within me  
like a hymn

with your mysterious  
voice  
always alluring  
you intrigue me

but interstices lay  
between

and our ghosts are hungry  
while the nights are long



**Beckoning**  
**Jessica Lorraine Zickefoose**

**Twilight of the darkened midnight sky  
Illusions of fate and time pass me by**

**Waves splash playfully against the shore  
Beckoning me; from within they implore**

**Creatures of the night creep forward  
To the East, and moving briskly onward  
Jostling me into the cooing waters swell  
Bewitched by the night, and now impel**

**My legs are shaking wildly, cold and numb  
Into the ocean; a part of it I'll become**

**Deeper and deeper, and now I am one  
Tragic they say, but can't be undone**



Wet Affection  
Don Kingfisher Campbell

I like to lie with her  
Hear her ocean breathing

I hold on get tangled  
Till our legs are like seaweed


I rest next to her warmth  
Like sand on her shore

I wait for when she wakes  
To go swimming in her eye pools

Sometimes when we're lucky  
There's time for earthquakes


May our two earths end  
A billion beats from now





**The Existentialism of A Guaranteed Tomorrow  
Robert Wilson**

I left my own funeral  
fifteen minutes early  
to find The Girl  
Who Plays With Squirrels  
one last time.  
She was in a meadow  
a million light-years away  
bedecked in a teal dress  
that waved to me  
even though  
there was no wind.  
I kneeled on  
splintered knees  
begging her to speak to me  
one last time.  
She just touched my lips  
with her index and middle fingers  
and in that moment  
I relived every single time  
I've ever died  
but instead of feeling  
pain or anxiety  
I was washed in a euphoria  
I've never felt in life.  
There was a faint giggle



Love is, All is  
Strider Marcus Jones

love is,  
all islight  
and dark,  
shade and shadow,  
high-low  
wide-narrow  
crater under rainbow.  
tramp or truffle you chance to meet  
and take your time to share and eat;  
a mythical ark  
in-out skylark,  
so fluttery butterfly in buddleia stomach  
that wakes you up  
more muttery in your headwith  
jade of jealousy  
and truest thread  
come concave and convex,  
mirrored and mouthed in images and text  
with-without key,  
but only borrowed  
today and tomorrowed  
and after that, what will besomething  
ethereal  
deaths' music can't serial,  
alone, then together  
in its own weather  
sensual and free.



**Damsel of Delights  
Mike Essiq**

He once knew  
a woman who made  
every room  
she entered  
a work of art.  
Her sentences  
pronounced  
like calligraphy,  
pure as plums.  
Her walk an  
aphrodisiacal promise  
of terpsichorean  
delights.  
Her laughter  
a paint brush  
deftly caressing  
the atmosphere.  
Her body a unicorn  
every man dreamed  
of hunting, but  
feared to possess.  
When she left  
a room it was  
transformed.  
She should have  
signed the walls  
and left a mark  
on the masterpiece  
of herself.

horoscope : leo/virgo  
Anu Mahadev

this is no saga. a mere spot in time's  
magic scarf. i spool it out of my hat.

any number of words, colors unfurl.  
handshake, a hug, a peck on my cheek.

baggage claim, you wait at the gate.  
suit, tie, long coat. straight from work.

power lines around your eyes, that quizzical  
smile. you know i like flowers. you still

won't bother to bring some. that arrogance!  
it works. i tremble, knees quake, feet wobble.

i play it cool. somewhere the tension erupts.  
a bar in san francisco, legs careful not to touch.

shots of patron. half moon bay, moonlit skies,  
heartbeat throbs of waves. glasses of malbec,

night wind ruffles your hair, churns mine.  
a penthouse, floor to ceiling windows, us,

mere silhouettes in the dark, ambient light.  
sniffers of cognac. brown eyes. besotted fingers

twist, the soft centers of our bodies crumble,  
cotton sheets knotted. no promises. no lines

to cross, no moral compass. only unfinished  
business. a 100\$ superbowl bet, spent on drinks.

the lingering possibilities thereafter. your signature  
on the check, ravenous, wild. your unibrow, the way

the pen rests in your left hand. i wish i were the pen.  
one night of brahma lasts more than a billion years.

this hotel room is my altar. all else is happenstance.





**Advantage**  
**Catherine Katey Johnson**

**It's nice to have a tall trundle bed with solid wood strips on the sides in which to lock my heels as gown lifts high hand shooting up to grab the headboard.**

Off the road  
Ed Jay

at the American Beat Café  
we ate Ginsburgers and Kerouac  
stew while a fiddler fiddled  
Appalachian pig tunes.  
We howled  
lip to lip and paid the bill  
American Express, then back  
on the road undressed  
surviving while driving the Seville  
under the influence of lust.




**Abandon  
Kathy Anderson**

**In the silence of a night  
Indigo dreams dance for the joy  
Inside the imaginings of romance,  
A Chevy parked beside babbling brook  
Always clear surrounded by green  
Aspen trees where tulips and daffodil chance  
Quiver in scented breezes of silken  
Silver airs as guitars strum our blues  
Set aflame by way of bonfire hearts  
Harkening to their lusted delights.**







Myth or Legend  
Larry Jaffe


The words roll around  
in erotic paradox  
one side wishes  
for crucifixion  
the other counting  
on absolution  
apparently  
neither side wins  
or you can be both  
myth and legend



Eye Contact  
Lynn White

Look at me.  
Hey, look at me.  
I'm here  
I'm real,  
a real person  
and I like you a lot.  
You're really special.  
Hey look at me,  
look into my eyes.  
Look at me!

How the fuck  
can I look at you  
when you keep  
kissing my eyes closed!



**Getting Married**  
**Lynn White**

Let's get married, you said.  
I sat up quickly and  
just in time,  
stopped my mouth saying,  
After two days?  
You're going mad!  
Why? Where's the gain?  
We've already said we'll stay together,  
You with me or me with you,  
and care for each other,  
and make love to each other.  
We don't need a piece of paper  
saying Mr and Mrs.  
Anyway, you don't have a good record  
when it comes to marriage.  
Or so I've heard, I said.

I think I want an extra tie,  
another binding, a public one.  
So that your friends  
would ring you up, concerned,  
and warn you not to go ahead.  
And mine would try to find you  
to do the same and worry  
about my sanity.  
But not for long.  
We'll do it quick, you said.

And then we can smile behind their backs  
as they check our progress down the years,  
amazed that we're still together,  
still like each other, still love.  
And, after all, I have a much worse record  
of not being married.  
So, lets get married, you said.



Convenience Store Coquette  
Daniel McTaggart

alabaster skin  
under a flimsy black smock

breasts stick out  
like torpedoes

her masculine girlfriend  
as she walks out the door

grabs a handful of ass



**Lover's Desire  
Amitabh Vikram**

**When I was tired  
I tried to rest  
In your arms  
As pleasure mind  
desired**

**And your bare  
bosom the best  
Pillowed garment  
to my mind  
Finally, I lie  
and rest  
In you as your  
arms are in me**



Vodka and Condoms  
William F. DeVault

bring vodka and condoms  
she said  
I heard  
her say it in a sotto voce whisper  
rough with fear and hunger  
like a cat in heat in a cage  
wanting something  
she couldn't ask for in  
simpler terms  
because the words had sharp edges  
nothing more than someone  
to tell her what is expected of her  
between the courses of life  
when she wants to be wanted  
as we all do  
under the influence  
of vodka and condoms

Desire

Hardeep Sabharwal

When you were leaving for a unique desire,  
The spirit of my normal wish, drooped  
Under the clumsiness of my skin,  
In an era of whist, when emotions remain  
Coiled, or like a barren womb,  
A paralyzed cloud of feeling could not  
Shed love on unsound reason,  
Yes, I am insipid in my intoxicated nature,  
Who shed voluptuousness of its skin,  
In utter disgust and in search of truth,  
And truth was always my El-dorado,  
Ocean, I took you to merge myself,  
Compose me and give me rhythm,  
I am a mad in my composition, as  
My unique desire is my normal wish.




Last Poem for H.  
Nate Maxson

In this brief, cool and dry place: this flash of an hour  
Like a breath underground  
We pass beneath a structure,  
In my dreamlands: where my reflection on the water smirks  
knowingly  
An inkblot in a field of stones worn down to a suggestion of  
statues  
A suggestion of a wall or a cloud across the sun  
Between twin shimmering Indian summers  
I think of all the stories I've heard about people  
Rushing into burning buildings  
To save a child or a dog  
And that I've never met someone who actually did it  
Where have all the burning buildings gone?  
I think of a fisherman's net that I once saw, hung on a wall  
in a museum  
It was made of fine red string, what it must have looked like  
serrating the water...  
All of this: a hindsight before I turn to salt  
Flakes away like rust and dust and fireflies  
Down to a low resolution memory  
I am not Orpheus  
And you are not Eurydice  
Those are just ego dreams,  
Like distant wildfires glowing  
That wore out their invitation  
Before evaporating  
We passed by in midday shadow  
Each only looking back  
After the moment  
Once







First Love  
Saddiq Dzukogi

In my eyes  
Of watery rays  
In my heart  
Of green lilies  
In my mouth of  
Blissful honey  
Lay the lips  
Of a maiden  
That, with a woolly touch  
Warms my soul



**November Sky**  
**Jessica Lorraine Zickefoose**


**This is where we come to get lost  
Where the horizon meets with sudden  
The ease of orange marmalade and honey  
But passion strikes us in its reflection  
Cascading desire for the unattainable  
Burning blistering in our hands as we  
Catch stars like fallen embers which arose  
From fires burning to challenge the cold  
In nights bewitching the tempest of twilight  
Though silently soothing like cinnamon in fall**

soubrette

William F. DeVault

my heart blossoms and the petals are fragrant  
like the wrists of a mistress,  
stained and ordained with a perfume prepared  
to meet the expectations of a lover.  
my heart blossoms and the colours explode  
in the spectrum of ancient light  
caught at the far end of the universe, perceived new  
but from the beginning, what always was.  
my heart blossoms and all the thorns melt  
and run into nothingness, for pain is not regent  
in a world where there are the petals and fragrance  
of your lips, ripe with emotion and hope.





Dilemma  
Amitabh Vikram

I tread on a thin line  
Like Adam's choice

Between:  
Passion and purity,  
Gratification and deprival


And you like Eve's  
Ruminates on the desperate need:

Of sabotaging your chastity  
And becoming a traitor  
Of your virginity

We both are biologically conditioned  
And tread on a thin line  
Our actions predetermined and destined

To be one and we lost each other  
Is this the only way  
To find oneself

Picking Up Chicks at The Psych Ward  
Robert Wilson

A close-up photograph of a woman with long, straight brown hair. She is covering her eyes with both hands, with her fingers spread. She is wearing a shimmering, sequined top. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Give me your  
atom bomb, baby!  
We'll turn this town  
into a pit of  
fallen skeletons  
resembling those we  
imagine  
while we lay next to each other  
atop a pile of  
empty medicine capsules.  
We'll skip around  
the rubble  
and the silence  
as our tattered clothes  
wave in the  
wounded wind  
until we reach  
the end  
of the world  
where you'll look at me  
with those Seroquel eyes  
and ask me  
if I remember  
the day we met.  
Oh!  
I remember it more clearly  
than the first time  
I died:  
we were walking in opposite  
directions down  
a white hallway  
that stretched into  
infinity  
when you ripped open  
the vein on your  
left forearm  
and all that came out  
was a faint cry.



**Fireflies**  
**Clinton Van Inman**

They glitter and glow like stars  
But the ones we catch and place in jars  
Will not shine as if to refuse  
Until we open the lid and turn them loose  
But just like us whether fly or kid  
No light shines under glass or lid.

**I'm Sorry We Were Ever Young**  
**Robert Wilson**

I fell in love with you  
on the day Scott Weiland died.  
We watched the darkness laugh,  
held hands as the gears  
collapsed around us,  
danced in the Sheetz parking lot  
with shadows splattered  
in leprous sex.  
Every time you pushed me away  
I loved you more.  
You would always pull me back  
with a wink  
and a kiss,  
telling me  
friendship is divinity  
and love is God.  
You strapped yourself to my back,  
whispering  
“We got this.”  
Meanwhile, I  
tossed away the knives  
to prevent a suicide.  
Mine or yours,  
I don't know  
but I'm still trying to figure out  
if it worked,  
if we're both dead  
outside your old apartment  
with cuts  
spelling out each other's mental illnesses,  
performing BDSM  
on each other's graves.  
I wish I could beat this dead horse  
to a life it never lived  
but I know  
there is apathy  
where lust once dwelled  
on your tongue  
and nothing but anxiety  
on mine.  
I just want you to know  
I still think of you  
when I hear Stone Temple Pilots' “Unglued.”  
I rip myself apart  
then put it all back together  
without you.





swerve (flirt)  
William F. DeVault


I would like to  
apologize  
for the thoughts I lingered on  
when you crossed the room.  
for we have not met  
as of yet  
and I had no right to violate  
your thin fabric armor, in thought.  
I was completely  
out of line  
to conjour your warm skin  
pressed against me in earnest surrender.  
it was so wrong,  
very wrong,  
of me to presume to guess the fragrance  
that would rise to engulf me as you kiss me.  
but since now  
I have that  
out of the way, I'd like to see  
just how accurate my imagination is.






dance naked in the sky  
William F. DeVault

split second timing  
turn on a dime and  
find the prime number at the top  
burn the walls to the ceiling  
leave the world reeling  
don't dare start unless you can't stop  
climb the wire  
light the fire  
and dance naked in the sky  
live like a goddess  
no time to get modest  
it's a crime if you just try to get by  
show me a reason  
to know that your teasin'  
is an invitation to dance in the sky  
I don't like to take chances  
on third string romances  
just tell me when and I'll never ask why  
climb the wire  
light the fire  
and dance naked in the sky  
come, don't you falter  
take me to your altar  
for the right set of lips I would die



Anticipation  
Marianne Peel

I will come to you tonight  
newly emerged  
from the pulsating hydrotherapy of the shower,  
scented with moonlight path.  
I will paint the pillows of my chest  
with shimmering oil  
and like the soft ooze of watercolor  
I will be a palette of pastels in your hands.  
And at that moment, I will be ready to absorb you


A woman with long, vibrant red hair is the central figure, dressed in a black, gothic-style outfit with lace and fishnet stockings. She stands in a dark, wooded area at night, with a warm, glowing light source in the upper left corner. The background is a soft-focus forest with trees and fallen leaves.

**Dream Lovers**  
**Lynn White**

I am in love with an imaginary person.  
A Hollywood image flickering  
on the straight line of my horizon,  
a mirage created by my dreaming,  
as all lovers are.  
Then transposed to sit on top of flesh and bone,  
stuffed into a skin, which doesn't quite fit,  
as all lovers are.  
Some parts I hide inside.  
Others are in the forefront of my imagination,  
filling out the skin, adding more flesh to the bone.

I live in a soap opera stuffed full of imaginary people  
with imaginary lives  
interspaced with commercial breaks.  
It's more satisfactory,  
easier than engaging with the dangers and tedium outside.  
Even so, love can still hurt me, but not as badly.  
Imaginary events are more controllable.  
So it's more satisfactory.  
I can change the situations that trouble me  
without stepping outside,  
without exposure or failure.

The real world is hard and  
it's people even more transitory than  
the mirage lovers  
who flicker in and out on the screen behind my eyes.  
Are they the same for you, these soap opera people?  
The mirage lovers  
of your reality and imagination.



Electric Tang  
Daniel McTaggart

aimless midnight gusts  
dart across lonely paved lanes  
while streetlights hum  
with electric tang


strolling lovers bathe and lull  
in the tart glow  
as they scuff sandaled feet  
along littered avenues

at some point amidst  
the phosphorescent buzzing  
in the air, a low chuckle  
is muffled in darkness

Narcissus  
Mathias Jansson

Can you hear the sea  
the waves rolling over the  
rocks  
trying to reach land?  
I am the sea  
reaching out for you  
my dreams dissolving  
as foam on the shores  
when my strength ebbs out  
too weak to reach you  
Can you see the moon  
shining in the sky?  
so far are you  
only visible for me  
in my dreams  
In the mirror we meet  
eye to eye  
I love your smile  
but when I try to  
touch your lips  
they are cold and hard as  
glass





**I Know My Way to Sinking**  
**Kushal Poddar**

The last photographs you sent me  
fall through the night, all night, into  
the white, oh white.

Here a patch of spring sprawls within  
winter. A road where the last man  
walked awhile ago and the first  
won't come right now, my window  
opens to, and my panes misty,  
a recollection of monsoon,  
you daring rain to join me  
in a pub and I begging a cab  
so I can go and pick you up.

A rotating distant beam  
warns me about a lighthouse.  
But I know my way to sinking.