

collision literary magazine

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Dear reader,

This little book is designed to bring you the works of students from around the world. I'm sure you will find many pleasurable pieces that suit your specific tastes. But remember, each piece is worth its own weight in gold and we hope you enjoy everything this magazine has to show.

We here at Collision are delighted to bring you the 2015 edition of our magazine. I know it's a bit cliché to say in the editor's letter how Collision has undergone changes this year. I've seen it in almost every edition of this magazine, but I feel it is true. The members of this club have managed to pull this magazine back from the brink of death. I may be exaggerating just a bit, but with no official members other than myself and two others at the beginning of the school year, it sure felt that way. However, with a bit of elbow grease and a dedicated group of students the club is once again flourishing.

This magazine is the product of our hard work and I truly hope you enjoy reading it. You are after all, what keeps this organization alive. So thank you for your readership and continued support as it is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely, Emily Loose Collision Literary Magazine owes many thanks to

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poetry and prose

FIRST PRIZE

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Composition with Girl, Skull, Etc. Morgan Blalock Hollins University Somewhere in the background, Chopin played: my brother in the sitting room, his thin hands on the keys, white on white to white on black, soaring right to left, lifting high and higher to thread through octaves golden sounds.

They had placed me next to a table draped in red and set with porcelain and bone, stuck pearls in my earlobes, told me to look straight forward—

—and my brother played Chopin's Nocturnes with such feeling my hands quivered in my lap. I pictured his fingers, looked at my own. The painter said my cheekbones were made for candlelight.

I heard Beethoven next, the Moonlight Sonata, my brother's favorite, and crossed my hands even tighter, right over left. The painter placed the skull on the table so carefully, it were as if it had once belonged to someone he loved. Whenever my mother walked by, she said I ought to keep my back straighter.

I heard the music from the sitting room, as lilting and graceful as dancers on a stage, as frightening in its grace as the final fall of a single dancer, her legs out from under her, her thin white knees hitting the wood, the audience gasping, the painter—

—the painter told me to lift my chin, said the hollows of my eyes were too pronounced and had I been sleeping lately.

The crescendos came and went, so many I exhausted myself listening, so many I wondered how my brother's hands could sustain them, marveled at how the keys still rang and rang.

Everyone said my brother played the piano as if his hands were not his own, as if they were the work of the devil. He practiced until dawn so that my family slept little. I imagined him downstairs at night, pausing to stretch cramped fingers and smooth the wrinkles in his shirt.

Years ago, he used to hold me on his left knee and play, arms reaching around me, foot pressing and releasing the pedal. He used to pause in during a piece, asked me if it sounded correct; I always said yes, always wanted to avoid his quick temper, anger like a crescendo, deep like the notes that lingered in the sitting room.

My brother, age fifteen: he cut the pads of his fingers and played the piano, his blood collecting on the porcelain keys. He told my mother, who found him a while later, he needed to see the notes in a new way. There were scores all across the floor, red fingerprints on the pages.

When I was eighteen, one year after the portrait, my brother went on a tour around Europe; they called him the Devil's Prodigy and my father did not leave the house for the next eleven months; my mother finally slept, and I—

Morgan Blalock

-I often gazed at the painting, which hung in the living room to the left of the grand piano, and pretended I heard the hands of my brother or saw them, white on white to white on black,

pretended I saw him walking around our grand, cold home, humming, tapping his fingers rapidly on the walls, the pads of his fingers leaving red stains on the wall.

SECOND PRIZE

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There Are Field Guides for People Like You Rachel Cruea Ohio Northern University I thought when I peered down your throat I'd find a field of poppies, but nothing is allowed to grow from you.

A bird sitting near its cage sings in German; our silence like a lump of raw meat.

How badly I wanted to be the poorly lit cigarette between your lips—to burrow in your lungs, singe your tongue.

The bird coughs in the smoke-burdened air, shouting our sins loudly. I say your name and I know what hunger is.

You must tell me, did my skin disappear against the sheets? My breasts waxing and waning under the borrowed light of the moon, the bird locking itself back in its cage.

THIRD PRIZE

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Crocodile Waters

Kate Belew

Kalamazoo College

- I made a mistake I left my shell in the water in order to be human
- I'm a glass broken type of girl no half empty no half full just waters
- breaking against the rocks kind of girl *I made a huge* mistake kind of girl
- I sat on the river bank looking back at the body I left behind scaled
- and reptile I apologize for not coming in the shape yo expected
- but I am trying to be better now I am trying to tell you my story
- listen don't tell me what it's like to be a woman or an animal I cannot
- be one without the other both the killer and the one being killed

HONORABLE MENTION

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Lupercalia

Jesslyn Watson

Ohio State University

Maddy in America
Indian summer slumbers and beads in
humid dew on the ripe-rife rabbit skin of Miss
miss of the manor

Maddy of the Americas
Maddy mad-eye, one-eyed, the other dark
changes with the moon
now half now full now waning gibbous
now new and stark

Maddy barn-raising when in the hazing heat rivet racket of the meadow she watches rowdy romping rick-ruck muscles pull up the walls husband hands and red paint faint as the trickles of hot prairie sweat stain the last calico dress

Maddy hearth-keeping
patron saint of the farmland
watching fertile quarters carve themselves
from the lush rush lupine forest
that runs red at night with the sounds
of wolf scorn and wolf play
the day belongs to Maddy in America
bursting with grain, harvest vein opening

Jesslyn Watson Jesslyn Watson

Maddy child-bearing birthing on the kitchen table, allowing the fullness of form to bring forth suckle piglet happy worm and how the wolves chuckle chuckle in the night and how picker-pucker the infant's mouth, limpet for milk soiling the last silk thing with shit

Maddy woods-rushing shushing the bundle in her arms calling forth new shape, better shape calling barn-raising muscle and moon-eye sight flying night-wing to the cave primordial cave caked and covered with ochre paint stranger hands anointing, pointing west and north-north west and divesting blight-struck Maddy of the burden laying it at the foot of the cave the food of the cave the foot of the cave racing romping red-meat raring all the wolves at the mouth of the cave wide star-lit mouth digesting Maddy's squirming meal-worm spawn no more than a blanket in the morning

twisted in torn-tortured red paint husband's hands Indian summer swelters and scares up tears of melting birds morphing into dripping silver as they start from the fragrant prairie grass Maddy free America

ADDITIONAL WORKS

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A Particular Kind of Poem Inspired by James Shea's "Haiku" Sheila Dong, University of Arizona

Poem In Which Female Love Interest is Compared to Bird or Flower

Poem In Which Poet and Love Interest Spin Standing On a Record Like the World's Smallest Carousel

Poem In Which Bicycles Are One Morning Terrifyingly Candy-Coated

Poem In Which Masks are Wrenched Off with Bits of Eyelash Still Clinging Round the Eyeholes

Poem In Which Thousands are Executed For Mere Lighthouse-Keeping

Poem In Which the Poet is Foiled Slowly Across Many White Rooms

Poem In Which Dropped Blushes are Re-Attached to Their Ladybugs

Poem In Which A Bouquet Wrapped in Gauze Dressings Crescendoes Through an Open Field

Sheila Dong

Poem In Which the Poet Crosses a Bridge On Fire and Bats Out the Flames With Naked Fingers Like Playing the Piano and the Music Lures Her Out the Cottage on the Other Side

Poem In Which She Peels Off the Poet's Burns Which Have Turned Into Stickers and Stick Them onto Kids' Book Reports where They Turn Into Gold Stars

Poem That Is a Silver Star

End of August Sonya Plenefisch, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

At the end of August,
it's raining like the rebirth of the world,
like there's an ocean in the sky and all the fishes have
risen up like slippery-tailed Lazarus to
swallow the drenched and feeble summer crows.
And all the children who never learned to swim in the
chlorinated pools and sun-drenched
shorelines are crowded in the streets,
water dripping from bony elbows and knobbly knees
until saurian scales bloom like late April flowers on
goose-pimpled skin.

They breathe deeply with oxygen-tank lungs as the watercolor landscape bleeds into September.

Jared McSwain

Is This Poem An Exertion Of My Phallus Upon The World? Jared McSwain, Oglethorpe University	Or maybe small, if that's your thing— and they too size up to find a disproportionate with	
Let's compare cocks.	Lincoln who shows up at the last possible second with an American Bulldog hanging from his	
Yes from the base to the tip.	Ivory cocktower totally obscuring any proper base to tip measurement.	
And no your scrotum doesn't count.		
That's just battered blue baggage dangling	What do you call that baggage?	
Off the ivory cocktower— or woodside cottage,	But Mary Todd breaks up the dispute by whipping out her own and saying,	
If that's your thing—so size up boys and lets	"Well what do you think happens when your husband sleeps with other men at night and by day	
Take our time.		
I check the cock of time and	Leads a country divided? It all converges right here, right into this, that's what happens!"	
See Washington tall with false teeth, Jefferson in pomp	And the clock stops.	
With fur coat, and even old Franklin balding behind self- made spectacles and	I start again and find more men: we got Poe and Waldo and of course Thoreau and one's talking	
Ruler in hand marking on the walls their exact size. Exact is the word I use too	About how it's only because he couldn't quite settle on the God thing and another one's talking	
Because it makes me feel better and sound approximate. So exact stands tall—	About what opium REALLY does to the system and another one is talking	

Jared McSwain

About his current base to tip problem based on that neckbeard that is definitely choking that

chicken.

Hélas!

Melville waltzes in poor, starving, abjectly abandoned, and mightily moving through the room.

He is the one who laughs.

They all know about the size of his Dick. A clear winner. No one can top that by any base to tip

calculation.

And I finish checking the clock to come to my own cock and I see

Its shriveled, scared because of the big world—but mostly not too big at this point—and the

ever reaching

Hand hoping to find the right measurement.

Samsara Jenny Xu, Columbia University

A man of few characters

his tongue relaxed in admiration when his eyes glanced off

the swell of the Pearl Tower
the swerve of the World Financial Center
which she saw in her mind as a
cheap bottle opener but he saw as
a samurai sword

in view four but in truths a two faced thing a hollow glass pulse

Shanghai thousand faced carries her towers high on hundred arms to distract disciples from seeing her crueler expressions

chopping chives the woman knew she retched when she stared upward so she kept her eyes at smudged level shoes

Not so her husband who still gawped like a country boy

The second transformation to fish on a block remind me crowed the Goddess who do you think you are
Her slim synthetic pencil skirts still hang behind the television and she sometimes passes by to run her fingers through sleek grain

Jenny Xu

Bent wide then thin she who had tasted the sting of Maotais

She beat herself bloody against street tides

To think she had wanted to leave the curving stone pathways

cutting paddies into the characters they are named for

four squares within one what balance ⊞

where the two wound home together when they were school children *who called* for the child she had cast for his hand to bend him at right angles to her side

While walking out to get groceries she often thought she saw herself or a sister a daughter recognizable by the rural whiff of fresh pork and cheap denim sometimes she saw only another stranger like the last spawned from subway maws

The hack of constant cigarette clouds soon swirled through her nostrils to familiarity nauseating fumes of sewers mingling with grudging pangs for anything salvaged from street side vats of fry oil pools

He hoists open hands halfway up to heaven bundles of steel atop his spine returning at night to the keeled cinder block within which she unrolls their daily bed

The excesses of the city crouch together there particulate shot eyes veins reeling a chemical beat lungs flapping open gilled in supplication burn yuan for mercy

I am not afraid anymore. Alexis Spalding, Ball State University

I	am not a metaphor or something to be reve	red; I
never	asked to be a perfect picture, but I	never
agreed	to be so damned, to be so wrong,	agreed
to	fury, for anger, either	but
this,	is something I must carry.	I will.
but	knowing it must be endured does not keep	These
burdens	from inflicting burns that co	nstantly
are	reopening, bleeding, hurting,	hurting,
given	to me, soaked to the bone in lighter fluid,	waiting
to	ignite, to release this into the sky	to
be	nothing but black smoke ghosts, to	be
carried	into stars and sunsets and finally	lost.
And	become something B	eautiful;
I	will rise from these ashes and smoke ghosts	,
will	destroy this weight and stand tall	stand
with	pride, cloaked in soot, scars still aching, but	
pride.	I have conqueredI have accepted my	ghosts.

We Hope For Better Things; It Shall Rise From the Ashes Justin Groppuso-Cook, Michigan State University

we buried him in tie-dye. that's all i remember. never kissed his bristled-white mustache goodbye. the last night he was alive i was playing with Legos at the hospital. we exited the room, they opened his chest and split his ribcage. the hallways bled through our home painted red.

night passed. i awoke

spinning Kind of Blue, fuzzy revolutions needle to groove:

embers ether awe awe ashes.

i dug up his pocket notebooks of to-do lists, jokes, poems—the Watercolor Cowboy rode off on an appaloosa to paint the sunset

Justin Groppuso-Cook

he doesn't even kiss his girl goodbye—
canopic sketches
extracted from the D.I.A. transmigrating
face to face
i shed watermarks: the streets of our city,
hieroglyphic graffiti, glass shards like embers of the sun
all eroding

this industrial desert. i walk past
the pyramids of Cass Corridor, envisioning the tribe
my grandpa joe rode off with
in a psychedelic haze down Woodward
emitting Grand Circus rays, the revolving streets like
spokes

of a still wheel, to the Spirit of Detroit balancing family & holy light, dipped in gold. i cleanse my eyes, stained paint brushes, in the river tie-dyed with sunlight. bleeding through notebooks, my watermarks: the grand sun's ascent, resurrecting Ra.

Persephone Greta Hayer, College of Wooster

I. Summer

I come to you with flowers.

Take one.

Take more than one.

Because if I can offer you the pleasures of spring in the midst of ice and snow and wind, I do not mind that you are plucking out my happiness piece by piece.

You uproot daffodils and hyacinth, their roots are my flesh and bone-leaving bruises like fingerprints and perfect red marks in the shape of a hand.

But a sapling oak twines its roots between my ribs and clings to my heart.

I am afraid you will take it,

though it has no bloom

no petals

no succulent pollen dripping from its core

I am afraid that you will want it as you rifle through the bouquet of my chest, grasping impatiently at my breasts and bulbs and blooms and stems

And I arch my back and offer you one hundred types of fragrant herbs,

Greta Hayer

roses without thorns.

II. Winter

"Please," I ask the devil himself, because I do not know if I want him to stop or to pluck me barren.

A fist that I do not recognize opens and releases a crushed daisy and sheets stained and sticky with its yellow blood. It is my hand, trimmed of its lilacs and lavender.

Where has he gone? I thought he was here to take my heart.

The Sublimation of Scenes: Subtitles & Translation Drew Zeiba, Tufts University

Subtitles are finicky. While translation might do little Adorno-esque circles around the "original" meaning or emerge into newness all its own, we trust subtitles as a little more genuine. They've gottta match. Watching a film you almost want the lips and text to line up even as the nothing-sound spews forth. A dub totally breaks down the constructed relation of person to speech act, but with subtitles you can distract yourself enough and make believe.

Walid Raad, artist and professor at Cooper Union, played with this when for one of his parafictional video pieces destined for the INTERNATIONAL ART MARKET. He made sure to make critical disjunctures between the Arabic being spoken and the English text appearing on screen, different people got to be in the know of different narratives and ambivalence began to cleave itself open in a linguistic power struggle.

Raad, though, also expressed something more important to my thoughts here: the fact that his video really only ever got translated into English.

Drew Zeiba

Drew Zeiba

While English has globalized in a certain milieu as the result of (neo)colonial forces, he had expected the subtitles to continue to switch (maybe coming from the English or the Arabic audio, neither more original nor "true" than the other) further (dis)locating the work and communicating new things to different eyes and ears.

Subtitles, as it were, are supposed to locate the dislocated, recenter that which has left its home. It's the domain of the foreigner passing in with the haughty air of someone that can only be seen at those weird small theaters that aren't going to charge you \$12 to get in but will charge you \$6 for a craft beer at the concession. You watch English-subtitled films in (English speaking communities of) the U.S. when they're films from "elsewhere."

To upset this balance though is to recognize the film in translation as watching yourself translated, an interstice of text and language and visual surfaces mediated by your nonlocalizaiton or your hyperawareness of locale. Translation here becomes the location of the self through consistent dislocation, an otherness perceived against Lacanian image-screen and ran up against like a bird against plate glass — I can pretend it's invisible but it's all just make believe as the air reifies itself to precipitous solid.

In *Reading Emily Dickinson in Icelandic* Eva Heisler says "My face is burnished absence." This in a poem called "Impersonation." To travel is to impersonate certainly, to go up to a counter and speak in a stilted Icelandic voice where each trilled-r sounds a little *too* American or a little *too* much like you speak Spanish, like when you always forget the word for receipt and how to decline strong plural feminine nouns on the fly, like when the Icelandic guy you were fucking from Harvard posts to your Facebook a video "How to speak Icelandic with only three words," and says "you know you do this," you feel like a ventriloquist's dummy but you don't know for whom. Where your absence from where you becomes literal in what you are, a momentary, confused drag always outside somewhere trying to get in.

Eileen Myles wrote about being in Iceland and trying "wedge your way into the imagined cultural body you think you need to belong to," which resonates when I try to go to abandoned places with grimy people in all black painting Modge-podge onto a pineapple (which I would do at home but who the hell do I know here, who wants to know me?).

Or as me and a gay friend just back from a sojourn in China discussed, and luckily Eileen Myles discusses too, how is it to "fit in" somewhere when it's about assimilation and you're a queer person and you have to straddle these spaces of being a foreigner, being against normative culture where you are from (a foreigner at home of sorts), being anti-normative as you try to fit in, and trying to fit in with a different queer scene. Like, how do I know if it's cuz I'm just foreign or cuz I'm weird or just by virtue of my fucking "being" oriented against normative culture, why am I not fitting in? "Belonging is definitely the problem."

You don't have to *quite* belong to watch a movie (even when a film is against your belonging). You can pretend a movie turns you into a receiver, your impersonation takes on different contours of translated confusion. Speaking you can never map perfectly word for word, you'll never be as exact as Borges's scientific dystopia. Sitting down watching though failure is less a failure less terrifying. Slowmo.

I first started watching Icelandic movies on the floor in Reykjavík one June. We'd rent them at a place called James Bönd and get beer and candy. We needed English subtitles even though we were in Icelandic classes at the university together.

I first had sex with a guy even though I had a girlfriend one July in Reykjavík. We'd leave together my last night in the city and of course the sun never set. He was my TA and he'd say in another time we'd write letters.

The land is illegible. It is an emptiness that I can not read. It is edge; it is not. I cannot see difference. It is an emptiness that I cannot read—like you. You map the emptiness because I cannot tell the difference between my feeling for the view and my feeling for you. This a hollow; that an elbow; there a—. At the sea is the sound of applause. This is a hollow; that a shoulder; there a—. You are an edge, But I am not at the edge. This is ocean floor that has risen above sea level. In your hand, a map. I cannot tell the difference between map and hand.

Map and Hand Eva Heisler

The (former) TA and I went in the Icelandic winter (I had slipped on ice and scratched my chin earlier that day) to watch a movie, *París norðursins* (*Paris of the North*). I went, and he showed up later after work. I ordered the ticket and felt rude by my abrupt mannerisms in the language, but also comforted myself by knowing the abrupt manners of day-to-day interactions in the language.

Drew Zeiba

Drew Zeiba

It was winter and the sun had set a couple hours ago even though it was early and one of the few showings (the only?) with English subtitles that week. He (the former TA) spoke pretty much fluently, he lived there (here?) now. I could hear bits and pieces, I could get my shopping done and say nice things and get what I needed at the coffeehouse.

I liked it better before he showed up. Not to be too classic but Laura Mulvey didn't ignore the other people in the theatre with you and I couldn't either. It was a mediocre film but it looked nice and it was funny. It had a symbolic mountain to open and close, it could make a nice metaphor for a trip if you were the kind of person predisposed to feelings of grandeur instead of grand feelings cynicism as your defense mechanism.

I felt superior, like I got more from the film: smarter, getting the narrative, and the visual better, more critical, etc. An asshole. Because, like, I know there are different things to get. And like I know he probably has more fun because he takes his wine with "biscuits" from home and not 60 sleeping pills but, um, yolo?

But then, now being empathetic, or at least acknowledging THEORY OF MIND: which was he watching? The Icelandic (I really only got bits and pieces, keywords and turns of phrase), the subtitles, the confusing transitional in-between of both? His own confusion of both?

Sitting side-by-side or whatever, turned towards some object of interest with another person is always an interesting exercise in the space between yourselves.

In Ben Lerner's 10:04 the autobiographical protagonist and his best friend, the sexless non-girlfriend who he might have a kid with, Alex, do best when turned towards a painting together at the Met, engaged with one another by way of the object unifying their parallel selves. Bobby and Clare in Michael Cunningham's At *Home at the End of the World* share a similar, queerer relationship but must learn to have it over Bobby's silence during a blaring cassette as one would have during a film; the films Bobby's high school boyfriend's (Clare's roommate's) dad would play at his shitty Cleveland theatre. It's like what artist Melanie Gilligan restaged in her sci-fi 2014 video installation The Common Sense at Casco Projects, Utrecht, The Netherlands: you had to don wireless headphones and be turned on to the audio of whatever TV you were looking at in the room; engaging with the film you disengaged with others as you entered relations with them at parallel or narrative removes. It was a film project about empathy.

It's a strange re-engagement of what French critic Nicolas Bourriaud called in 1996 "relationality," that doesn't require free thai food (Rirkrit Tiravanija) for the art world elite or the construction of what American art historian Clare Bishop has deemed *Artificial Hells*.

After a night gone awry with the former TA I had to sleep on the pleather couch.

Airports feel hyperreal, Umberto Eco's "authentic fake," like a Disneyworld of inbetweenness. Perhaps it is this liminality, both present and potential that condenses the (un)believability of suburban shopping mall into a place where no one can stay — they can only go on to somewhere else (it is here what I mean when I say *potential* liminality, that the transitional (the flight) has both yet to come, and exists in the airport's strange phase state).

Of course, this isn't entirely true, this is a privileged way of knowing about airport experience as many people put in their hours working here whether they exit the uniformity of plugging into a Starbucks of the streets to a Starbucks in terminal E or they load luggage and to acknowledge this experience, the manual, mental, affective, and other labor taking place would dismantle the cyberpunk international business cleanliness that an airport promises. Flying first or any class requires invisible and alienated labor.

Three of the biggest indicators of the strange slip into the simulacrum of nowhere's land of an airport are as follows:

- 1. Things are said and happen in lots of languages in series. I think this is especially creepy in the ultra white and reflective Schipol International Airport where the voice has an unlocateable calm android woman accent in each.
- 2. Duty free stores promise tax free goods to remind you that you are nowhere and there are no rules (except for all the rules regarding what you can and can't bring, the rules of behavior as enforced by Panopticon style surveillance, the racialized, racist, and transphobic security apparatus in place to mediate our entrance into these places where visibility slips too as we are x-rayed and seen naked).
- 3. No one knows from where you are coming or to where you are going or for how long you've been flying, so it's appropriate to drink AT ANY TIME. <3<3

If airports slip into a non-localization where they do an impersonal drag of elsewhereness or non-presence by being a traveller's hub, then airplanes are even harder to find.

They're always on the move, their location is a location of constant change, defined by a path or by destination, origin, and a healthy dose of impending doom. Like calculus, change on a point.

Drew Zeiba

Drew Zeiba

Funnier, though, because airplanes are so "patriotic," in some sense, especially the flag carriers.

Icelandair plays popular music like Of Monsters and Men or Björk before you take off and has little word guides on the seatbacks and and lullabies on the pillows. The water bottles are shaped like glaciers and the airplanes are named for volcanoes. I guess I'm not sure if the airport is more like Epcot or the airplane but they both have souvenirs available for purchase.

On both my most recent trip to and from Boston by Icelandair which included plenty of time in Iceland drinking expensive beer and waiting for the sun to never rise and glaring at art and (not) having ok sex with men I already knew as a way to go to other parts of Europe, I watched Icelandic films on the plane because that seemed more "proper," right?

On the way there I watched *Brim* (Eng: *Undercurrent*, 2010) and back I watched *Hross í oss* (Eng: *Of Horses and Men*, 2013).

Brim wasn't that great but I felt comforted in that it was "very Icelandic," in that generalizing sense.

Hross í oss was better but I also hate watching movies with horses and people fucking on planes and I feel I have to justify to the people next to me this was approved by the plane people so this is ok please really don't think I'm a creep or trying to harass you by watching these horses get it on, here let me make some faces to let you know i'm not into horses or straight people getting it on. Even though normally I'd be like yeah ok.

I watched both with subtitles and on the way back I understood it better because I had been speaking Icelandic a bit again, even if mostly I mutter rudiments and swears. It was funny because Hross í oss didn't have English subtitles for all the languages spoken in it — the Spanish went untranslated (fine, I speak Spanish a hell of a lot better than Icelandic) and the Russian (so as a drunk man and his horse breached a Russian ship I had to share his intoxicated confusion at the words around him, admixing the Icelandic (some translated/some not) and Russian and English into a linguistic alchemy of translated guesswork which at best is all it ever was as subtitles sort of step out of time and put auditory to textual, put auditory to visual, put language into architectural frameworks not quite right (this speaking from a vision and hearing abled position)). Myles says "language is invisible," but here I want to doubt her.

Drew Zeiba

Subtitles escape to become a new mise-en-scène whereby language is transmuted and (dis)location is sublimated. This all the more evident when you're sitting in the nonlocale of a plane (they have maps, maybe I was over Newfoundland or Greenland) and oscillating in the space between the textual and audio content, the space between where the audio can be words or discernible sounds just beyond garble but just before language that only a semi-speaker can quite fail to grasp at.

48

Þegar farfuglar hópa sig á botnlausum himni við trjátoppana

krýpur forvörður við ræturnar kroppar burt skorpuna

og taggið blasið vip rök ták dimm ó moldarbleiku sári

Right away far-flying birds crowd together on endless sky by treetops

kneeling passage guards pecking away at the roots on the crust

— marks spread out with reason symbols grave in a fleshy, earthypale wound

nanskaklæddur
ingur
gómur þreifar
eynir
ıð skilja
Skuldunautur

a gloved finger a fingertip feeling trying to understand

Drew Zeiba

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Steinunn G. Helgadóttir

Akrenes, Iceland: Uppheimar (2013). Steinunn G. Helgadóttir

Debtor

49

(Translation by Drew Zeiba)

The Baron Alexis Klemetson, Concordia College

She agreed to the arrangement because why not? It was only a few times a month. He always paid for the hotel. They hardly ever saw each other in the office. And there was no chance of a pregnancy. After all, he had picked her for the same reason her husband had left her.

He was in the shower, and she was trapped under used white sheets that smelled of cheap detergent and his cologne.

Steam rises from under the bathroom door as she stretches and detangles from the sheets and the smell. She could shower at home. She moves to the side of the bed and begins searching for her bra. Both her clothes and his are scattered across the floor so she collects them all.

After she dresses, she folds his shirt and slacks. His ring and wallet are on the bedside table. She places the clothes next to them. She sits on the side of the bed where the sheets were bunched, waiting.

The shower stops and she hears whistling from the bathroom. He whistles when he shaves.

She picks up the wallet and thumbs past a few bills. A receipt from the front desk is there. The toner had begun to run low so it's faded but The Baron Motel is just visible at the top. There's a removable plastic picture holder as well. The three slots hold a dog, his wife, and an almost grown daughter. All dark haired and happy.

She twists the wallet and sees a hidden slot behind the photo holder. The slot has another picture, frayed on the edge where it's been rubbed by the wallet. It's stuck to the leather so she picks it loose.

Another daughter, about eight, one he's lost. The girl has his nose and his eyes, but her hair doesn't match. Blond and curly, not brown and thick like his or his wife's or his other daughter's; it matches the woman's more than anything.

He stops whistling. She places the wallet back on the table and the picture under her blouse in her left bra cup.

Tortoise and Hare Danielle Dyal, University of Pittsburgh

The tortoise and the hare are drinking tea. The hare drinks Earl Grey while the tortoise sips a Snapple.

They are hydrating before their rematch.

"What's your fact?" Hare asks, turning to Tortoise while steeping his teabag.

The tortoise turns over her Snapple cap. "An ant," Tortoise begins, but by the time she has started speaking, the hare has forgotten he even asked a question.

"Ant is here? To watch the race?" Hare asks, looking around and even inside his teacup, which he has long since emptied.

"...can lift..." the tortoise is continuing, not having yet processed the hare's new questions.

"I didn't think we were starting yet," the hare is saying, hopping around, stretching his long limbs, doing a couple push-ups now, but that's just to show off – typical of Hare.

"...50 times..." Tortoise says, having taken a break to sip more Snapple, which is extremely refreshing despite not being quite chilled anymore. She is grateful the hare remembered her favorite flavor is Diet Raspberry, but hasn't gotten around to thanking him yet.

"What was that, Tortoise?" Hare asks, mid-ear flop (stretching one's ears, the hare knows, is key to winning every race, and in fact, Hare suspects a lack of stretching contributed to his previous failure).

"...its own weight," the tortoise finishes, at last, after the hare has once again forgotten his own question, but he is quick to remember, and hops back to the tortoise's side, peering at the cap himself in renewed curiosity (though he is careful not to exert too much of it, remembering Cat).

"Ah, I see. Maybe Ant can give you a lift in our rematch then, eh?" the hare asks, just a joke, of course, a friendly taunt, nudging the tortoise in the shell and grinning a buck-toothed grin.

The tortoise glances at the hare, but is too slow to get the joke, so the hare laughs for his friend, used to his jokes falling flat around the tortoise, but not quite minding. "Hurry up and start stretching, Tortoise, we're starting in an hour," the hare warns, and a look of panic slowly meanders over the tortoise's wrinkled visage, mixed with a slight tinge of melancholy, as she has not yet finished even a quarter of her Snapple.

The hare, it turns out, has been drafted for the third world war.

The tortoise is very upset, and not only because she is a pacifist.

After a long pause following Hare's deliverance of the news, tortoise suggests Hare refuse to fight on grounds of religious reasons.

"But I'm a hare. We don't have religion," the hare proclaims, rapidly hopping around his rabbit hole.

They always gather in Hare's house because the one time the tortoise invited the hare to her house, Hare's ears were stuck in Tortoise's back left leg hole for three hours until Bear arrived with the honey.

"Oh," Tortoise says, after a length of time during which Hare has exhausted himself and taken to panting on his coffee table. "I forgot." It's not surprising, as tortoise often takes a while to remember even the simplest things.

"I could run to Canada," Hare says, but there is not much conviction in the thought; Hare already knows he will be going to the war. He feels cowardice at the idea of getting out of it. He is only worried about what his friend will do in his absence.

He sits up on the coffee table, stares Tortoise in the eye.

"I'll be back before you know it," the hare promises, and the tortoise looks away, blinking tears from her eyes and not wanting the hare to see.

She doesn't quite believe Hare, as Hare is known to be overly confident – almost foolishly so. It's the kind of thing that could get a hare killed in a war, Tortoise thinks.

"Don't worry. I've got my lucky paw with me at all times, I'll be perfectly fine. You just wait and see," the hare is continuing, energy renewed so that he bounces off from the table and lands joyfully by Tortoise's side.

"I'll try not to worry," the tortoise finally concedes, and both animals know it will be a task easier said than done for the tortoise, whose ingrained worry lines are living proof of her constant anxiety, present even when her friends are not being drafted to war. ***

Hare returns from war after a two-month deployment, which in Hare Years was quite more than two months, but in Tortoise Years was quite less.

He returns, unfortunately, without his lucky paw.

Tortoise is knitting in Hare's house, which she has been occupying in her friend's absence, when Hare hops in, albeit in a lopsided sort of hop.

"Tortoise!" Hare exclaims, jumping in a lopsided sort of jump onto his friend, and they embrace for a while before the discomfort of Tortoise's knitting needle sticking against Hare's pancreas pulls them apart.

"I've been knitting this for you since you left," the tortoise says, holding up her knitting, which is in fact just three rows of stitches, twelve stiches per row.

"It's wonderful," Hare gushes, not bothering to mention that he is not really quite sure what it is, as he does not want to offend his long-missed friend on their reunion.

Despite the lack of result, the yarn is red, which was Hare's favorite color – before the war, that is, though now he prefers a soft blue.

"I've lost a paw in the war," Hare admits, some hours later, as they attempt to resume their old routine, though Hare has nervously tipped over his mug of tea three times, and after burning himself the last time, was coaxed gently by Tortoise to drink a Snapple instead.

Tortoise allows for a grave moment of silence, which stretches on for so long that both animals fall asleep.

They wake up beside each other, and though Hare wakes in a start from a nightmare, he is next to his old friend, and somewhat comforted by this, though it will be a long time before home feels again like home.

The tortoise has decided to enroll in the local university, as she worries about slowing brain function, and knows the key to maintaining a lucid mind is to keep it busy.

The hare promised to assist with filling out Tortoise's application, but is late to the Big Rock where they agreed to meet, which is odd for Hare.

"I wonder why Hare is running late," Tortoise muses out loud, as animals in this forest are known to do in moments of serious contemplation.

"He's not running late, he's hopping late," says Bird, and Tortoise glances up at the tree branch where the bird perches in a snarky manner.

"Have you seen him?" Tortoise asks, but the bird just starts chirping as if he suddenly does not understand English, which is rather rude, but not at all un-Birdlike.

After another hour, the tortoise decides to start the application on her own. The task is slow-going, but she manages to finish writing her name by the time Hare arrives, out of breath.

"Sorry I was late," Hare gasps, then praises the tortoise for her progress while the tortoise scoots aside on the Big Rock.

Together, they finish the application, even after it has grown dark and Wise Owl has taken Rude Bird's place on the tree branch above.

Even though the tortoise wins every wrinkle-boasting competition, the hare somehow makes it to old age first.

"Looks like I've won this race," the hare says, joking even on his deathbed, and the tortoise, as usual, does not laugh. This time, however, it is not because Tortoise is too slow to get the joke, but because there really is nothing funny about it.

Tortoise would tell Hare off for his inappropriatelythemed humor, but she would rather not waste the little time they have chastising her friend, and instead grasps her friend's remaining paw in one scaled claw.

The hare's fur is coarser than the tortoise has ever felt it.

"Hare, there is something I have to tell you," Tortoise admits, looking deep into Hare's round eyes.

The hare flicks an ear nervously. "Please, Tortoise, do not ruin our long friendship with a last minute love confession," Hare says, buck-teeth peeking out of whiskered lips only fleetingly as he attempts to grin at what isn't really a joke.

Tortoise would roll her own eyes in response, but they haven't got time for such an ordeal. "Don't be silly, Rabbit," she says, using her pet name for Hare, which makes him smile his full buck-toothed grin.

"Well, go on then, what is it? Spit it out already," Hare goads, feeling death on his heels at this point.

Unfortunately, Tortoise, not used to this kind of time limit, freezes up under the pressure, and by the time she is able to speak again, the paw in her claw has gone cold and stiff.

Desolate, she weeps onto the hare's brown fur.

It is the first eulogy any tortoise in all of time has ever been asked to deliver.

Typically, they are known as the worst eulogy-announcers due to their tendency to speak at an average of three words per minute, but a special case was made for Tortoise, as all the animals in the forest knew of her close bond with Hare.

The sky is the hare's favorite shade of soft blue on the day of the funeral, and the tortoise observes it with the closest feeling of happiness she has come to since the death of her friend three weeks before (it has taken her three weeks to draft her eulogy, and the funeral was therefore delayed on this account).

"The sky," the tortoise begins, in an ad-lib from her notecards in front of her, "is the hare's favorite shade of soft blue." The other animals look up at the sky and nod their approval. Yes, it is a lovely blue, they agree. The hare always did have great taste.

The tortoise waits for the approving murmurs to subside, then waits a little more after that, as waiting is the tortoise way, and the other animals, understanding this, settle into their seats and munch patiently on the beef jerky they brought along for this very reason.

"I met the hare in middle school. We were both on the track team," Tortoise says, and this is no longer ad-lib, but the words written on her notecards, though she does not need to read straight from the card, as she has mostly memorized her eulogy in preparation.

It was difficult work, what with her memory traditionally being rather slow, but the classes Tortoise has been taking at the local university have definitely paid off in honing her mind to be much sharper than that of the average tortoise.

"Because we were taught in the spirit of friendly competition, all we ran were relays. It was not until after we had both graduated high school that the hare and I had our first real race," the tortoise continues, slowly, and though some animals have started drifting off in the spans of silence between the tortoise's words, those who were dosing are nudged awake at this point so that all animals can remember fondly the famous race, one

of the most renowned athletic events ever to have occurred in their forest.

"Despite the hare's loss, Hare was never known as a loser. Not to me, and not, I'm certain, to any of you," Tortoise says, and the animals make small remarks in agreement – Certainly, they say, Hare was never a loser to me, not me, for sure.

The sky, by now, is no longer the hare's favorite soft blue, but a smokey orange, much like the carrots Hare much enjoyed, but Tortoise, thinking ahead, planned this into her speech, and does not even need to skip a notecard to speak about it.

"I would venture to say that I cared for Hare even more than he cared for his favorite snack, orange as the sky above us," Tortoise says, and some of the crowd chuckles at this, all fondly remembering Hare chomping on his favorite snack, orange as the sky above them.

"Due to losing his lucky paw in the war, Hare was not able to race during the last half of his life," Tortoise says, flipping a notecard over and squinting to read, as her teardrops made her ink run on her last few notes.

The animals nod respectfully. Although it is now nearly the next morning, none have dozed off again, now all fully invested in the tortoise's eulogy, which, though slowly delivered, is one of the best the forest animals have ever heard.

"But I think we can all say that Hare finished this particular race of life earlier than any of us expected, earlier than any of us were ready for, earlier than any of us could have guessed. I never, even while competing against Hare myself, wished for my friend to lose, but I can say with absolute conviction—" Tortoise pauses here, knowing his audience.

As expected, they all nod appreciatively, as the animals know the tortoise is not known for her conviction, and to state feeling absolute conviction for something is a bold statement indeed.

" – that I wish my friend had taken a bit more time to reach this particular finish line," the tortoise ends, not as seriously as the tortoise is known to be, but the hare always was a joker, and so she added this joke as a tribute of sorts, to her friend.

There are animals nodding, there are animals laughing, and there are animals weeping, as the hare is lowered into the forest ground, body already having begun decay, what with the three-week delay.

Still, there is no less dignity in the service, and at the wake, several animals congratulate Tortoise on her successful eulogy, as well as offer condolences for her loss.

Danielle Dyal

And even though it takes a certain amount of time, Tortoise thanks each and every one of them for their words of genuine comfort, all the while peeking periodically at the coffee table to make sure the bowl of carrots has not run low, knowing that is one thing the hare would never tolerate in a gathering hosted in his rabbit hole.

visual art

Muted Motion | Chrystal Berche, North Iowa Area Community College

Happy Birthday | Christine Lim, University of Pittsburgh





Dare | Amelia Edwards, Columbia University

Do Not Feed the Mind or Heart | Amelia Edwards, Columbia University

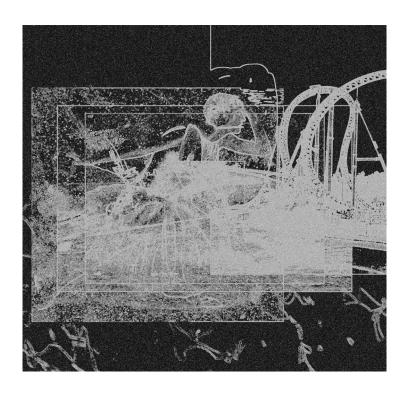




Hilltops and Hunger | Seth Crider, Pennsylvania College of Art and Design



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