

# WESTWIND FLASH HORROR



2020

Westwind Journal of the Arts  
Presents

# FLASH HORROR

A chilling Zine with works from  
independent authors, and  
edited by our fully  
frightened student staff.



Read, if you dare...

# The Moment Both Hands Touched

## Icaro Carvalho

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To be honest, accepting the research proposal to investigate the anomalous amount of thunderstorms near Nova Scotia wasn't the best idea. It was cold, rainy, and extremely lonely, even though he had an entire crew of fishermen with him. I miss New York City, he thought. Mmmh, he said with all the strength he had in his body. The fishermen looked at him with the coldest pity possible. This wasn't a job for a young respectful Scientist. In that exact moment, as he yearned for his brilliant white, dry, lab coat, a lightning bolt struck right in the middle of the ocean and the loudest sound was heard by everyone on the boat. The waves instantly increased in size, as if the boat was just a drop of milk in a cup of coffee. The not-so-big boat started swinging as if it was a card in a magician's hands and the fishermen started to scream things that he couldn't understand. In fact, he couldn't hear anything at all. Any attempt to regain his hearing was futile. Frustrated with his ears, his eyes wandered into the waves. Body, a body, a body here! he impulsively screamed and reached his hand into the water, attempting to reach the body. Another big wave crashed and the boat drifted closer to the floating corpse, making it easier for him to touch the hand of the old man floating.

The moment both hands touched is one that he was going to regret forever. When the skin of both men felt each other, he fell back as if suffering a stroke or some unrecognizable pain. The sound of his body touching the boat bow made the fishermen even more scared. At first, they all tried to help the Scientist, but, when they saw the body floating near the boat, the fishermen started swearing in multiple languages. That's bad, one of them said.

No one touches the body, said another one. That's the curse, that's the Nova Scotia curse, said the oldest one. The Scientist got up on his feet, feeling as if he'd been electrocuted, but had somehow managed to survive. Don't touch the boy!, screamed the captain. What? Why? Why shouldn't you touch me? he asked, looking at all of them. Touching a dead body in Nova Scotia's open sea is a curse! It is the devil himself trying to exchange bodies with you, said the eldest fisherman. It - it- no - there is no sense in this, I am not the devil because I tried to save that man's life, answered the Scientist in a very rational and unexpected way. No one touches him, warned the captain. No one touched him and he started feeling numb. They returned to the coast immediately and he was expelled from the boat as soon as they arrived.

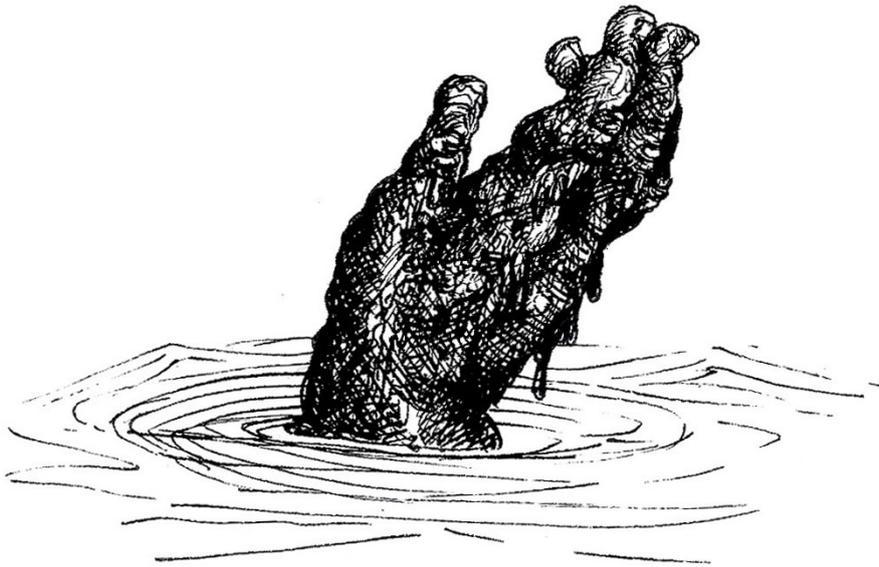
He kept thinking that the devil wasn't in his body and how it all seemed like an old dumb myth. Although he was sure that there was no actual curse, everything in his life fell apart pretty quickly. His marriage ended, his position at the University was terminated with a very awkward excuse, he had to move to the countryside of New York to save money and, as if that wasn't enough, the Scientist discovered he had a very rare blood disease. Within years, he wasn't one of the brightest researchers in the country anymore, he was just the guy who touched a dead body floating in the New Scotia cold and cursed sea.

Years passed, decades passed, and he became an old man living in the ugliest farm in the state. He never stopped studying science and, sooner than later, he discovered that he could plant his own food and live totally by himself there. Every day when he woke up, he immediately felt sadness coursing through his veins and controlling his body.

Sleeping was fine because it was numbing and he didn't have to think about the moment he'd touched that hand. He dreamed of returning to that moment in order to change everything, to make it alright. At some point, on a rainy night, very similar to that one in which Dr. Frankenstein brought the Creature to life, the Scientist thought about a time machine. Yes, a time machine!, He exclaimed alone in his bedroom. For 2 years he read everything he could, he bought the necessary materials, he invented some prototypes and, after this silly work, he screamed internally: it's alive, the time machine is alive!

It wasn't alive, of course, since it was a machine, but he was certain his time machine would actually work. Without much preparation, he got inside the machine and inserted the specific date he wanted to go to, the day he was cursed. Although he had no idea how to do that, the plan was pretty simple: avoid touching the body at all costs. He inserted the numbers, the date, the place and there he went, travelling through time like the crazy Scientist he was. When the machine opened, he fell like a lightning bolt from a very high point in the sky into the freezing waters of Nova Scotia. He had forgotten that the place was in the middle of the ocean. He couldn't see anything. He felt his body die little by little. He tried to swim. He just wanted to warn his younger self to never touch the body of the devil. Do not try to save the life of that man, he would say. He was being thrown around by the waves from one place to another in the middle of the ocean. At some point, he gave up and started crying tears that mixed into the salty water of the ocean with ease. He had failed himself, his marriage, his work, his life, his happiness, everything. He started drowning, felt his lungs filling with salty cold water. He knew he was going

to die there, so so so close! When he couldn't move any longer, he felt something approaching him. Suddenly, a hand touched his hand, and then he closed his eyes forever.



# Mirror Image

La Madio Butler

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As I gaze into the mirror, my reflection stares back. We examine each other. Was that scar always there? Since when did my arms get so long? Don't you think you should lose some weight? We go back and forth for some time. He doesn't smile at me, maybe because I don't smile at him. We see each other every day yet I know very little about the eyes that peer back at me. Doesn't matter, I've got to go.

"Wait!" A voice calls me back to the bathroom... my voice.

My first instinct is to ignore the sound, but my feet betray me. Before I know it, I'm face to face with myself again. I turn to open the shower curtains with a quick shove. Nothing but a leaky faucet. Opening the cabinet beneath the sink, still no one to be seen, no source for the sound. My knees creak like an old door as I rise up to peer at myself again. This time, his arms are crossed, but mine aren't. Eyes wide, I begin to wave my hands around. Still, his arms remain crossed, an eyebrow raised...judging me.

"Are you really going out like that?" he asks, gesturing to my outfit. I move closer to the mirror, to give a few taps. Definitely still a mirror.

"Yeah? I guess so." my voice shudders as disbelief fills me.

He almost visibly gags looking at me.

"You need to fix this." He lifts his (our?) shirt and traces a circle around his gut, my gut, with a finger.

"I'm working on it." I zip up my jacket defensively.

He scoffs. "Don't lie to me, I'm you. I even know about these!" He pulls the sleeve of his shirt back revealing a collection of scars.

He's right but I still take a step back, shaken, offended. I raise my fist and punch the glass, fracturing my image. For a moment, my reflection completely disappears. I stare at the space behind me. The faucet is still dripping away. A shard of glass falls from the rest of the broken mirror. As I reach down to pick it up, he returns. I hold his glaring image up to my face, still trying to understand his existence. There's a bruise on him from where my hand hit the mirror. Can I touch him? Can he touch me?! His glare melts into a smirk as he notes my confusion. I place the shard on the counter and look back up to the mirror. My face appears, multiplied in each cracked segment of glass.

"Now look what you've done." Their voices fill the room, layering over each other. "Let me take control, I'm tired of only being able to watch from this 2-dimensional space. Seeing you defile our body." His form wavers in the mirror and before my very eyes, he changes. "This is the ideal form." He is showing me what I could be.

I can tell it's still me in the mirror, only the weight is gone. Instead of stretching outwards, his torso is flatter than I've ever seen. "This is what you should be." He flexes his muscles till the veins bulge and pop out. "I can help you reach this state." My eyes dart around to each shattered reflection, showing me variations reminiscent of a carnival mirror. "Or you can remain as you are."

They start to inflate like balloons, creating exaggerated reflections of my current state. "Is this what you want to be?" They begin to rhythmically slap their stomachs like giant war drums. "You need me. Give me control." The tempo rises, I can feel my forehead throbbing to the beat. I place my hands

over my ears but it's no use. The voices are inside my head now. "Don't ever try to block me out! You need me." My knees begin to quiver just before I fall to the ground. His many voices compound in my head, driving me to the brink of insanity. Giving up begins to sound like a fine idea, if it makes the voice stop. As I think to leave, the door slams and I see my reflection as he locks it. "Switch places with me, it's not so bad here." He gestures to the space around him. "All you have to do is sit around and do nothing, that's what you do anyways right?" A smile crawls over his face as he stretches his hand out to me. "Take my hand and this can all be over."

The beating stops and he becomes me again. I want to run but I know he'll always be there. Shakily, my hand rises until it meets his. It happens so fast from there. I find myself squished between two planes of glass, beating on them while the reflected me admires his new three-dimensional existence. He looks to me in triumph, just before turning off the light and departing.



# The Lampmaker

Jordan Eilbert

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Nighttime in Victorian England; the streets are dark, and wet.

A Lampmaker calmly strides over glistening cobblestones alone in the dark night.

In his hands is an intricate gaslamp. The glass is thick and brown, hand-blown, and made with care. The lamp's bulb is shaped like a woman kneeling in prayer. Its details are precise, intricate, and flawless. Made by an artisan of otherworldly skill.

The man himself walks wearing a heavy raincoat, his eyes obscured. A haggard, wrinkled face lies beneath the hood; his thin lips take labored breaths as the lamp lights his way.

Approaching from the other direction is a woman, walking out from the darkness. From her elegant hat and umbrella to her frock, she is a woman of class and privilege, walking the streets in the evening without concern.

As she approaches the Lampmaker, the glinting fire behind the glass of the bulb catches her eye.

"Pardon me," she addresses the Lampmaker cordially.

The Lampmaker stops, lifting the lamp to illuminate the pair in the dark street. He does not speak, merely casting the lamp's light on the young aristocrat.

"Where did you find such a unique lamp?" she asks with extreme interest.

"This lamp?" he says softly, approaching her. "I made this lamp myself. I am a Lampmaker by trade."

The woman looks over the lamp, examining the fine details of the woman's face in prayer. She appears to be pleading, on her knees, her hands clasped together in desperation. The emotion captured on the glass is powerful, so much so that the flickering light behind her face makes it appear as if she were crying. The aristocrat half expects the bulb to begin to sob.

"You're quite the skilled artisan," she says. "How much do you sell these lamps for?"

"There is no price," the Lampmaker says, "Which I can name." He offers her the lamp. "Please, tell me what you think it is worth."

The woman reaches out for the lamp, and as he offers her the handle, it slips from her gloved hand.

The woman hears a shriek, which she dismisses as her own, as the lamp crashes down and shatters on the cobblestone road.

Rather than the oil bursting into flame, the flame vanishes in a puff of white smoke, leaving the woman and the Lampmaker in darkness.

The young woman gasps, stepping back in alarm, "Oh my! I am terribly sorry." She looks at the Lampmaker. "I will replace your beautiful light! Name your price."

The Lampmaker offers an eerie grin, his teeth brightening the darkness around them. "That's fine, love," he says, his hand reaching out for the woman before him, "I'll just take yours."

...

A Lampmaker calmly strides over glistening cobblestones alone in the dark night.

In his hands in an intricate gaslamp. The glass is thick and white, hand-blown, and made with care. The lamp's bulb is shaped like an upper-class woman standing in the road, an umbrella in her hands. Its details are precise, intricate, and flawless. Made by an artisan of otherworldly skill.

For the Lampmaker has no light of his own; he merely uses the light of others for his craft.



# ariadne.

Varsha Ravi

---



There are monsters at the end of the string, at the end of the labyrinth. She follows rosy red absolution into still-beating atria and smears herself cold against the walls of her heart. This is where it all comes apart. Pulsed flesh weeping, mordant skies dripping down on all sides, horned inheritance at her feet and breasts. This is where the string ends.

# Stall

P. L. Dodd

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He glances at his watch. 2:43 – two minutes left of his break. He sighs and reaches down for his limp trousers, sliding his smartphone into the front pocket. One hand gathers up his pants as the other absentmindedly gropes around for the toilet paper. His hand, finding the lower rim of the plastic container, reaches up, expecting the roll, but meeting only a void.

# The Bare Minimum

David Egan

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I drove through the rain in the night. The cabin was hidden among the trees. This was the first time I would see my grandfather in two decades. It was also likely the last.

I had memories of the cabin from my youth. I used to come here with my parents during the summer. What I remember most from those days was the interminable work: chores to be done, food to be cooked, rooms to be cleaned, wood to be chopped, fires to be laid. My grandparents worked nonstop, and when I visited as a child, I did too. Everyone did. My grandfather always worked in silence, his piercing blue eyes focused on one task at a time.

This work stopped. I don't know how long ago, but my best guess is five years. That's when my grandmother died.

I finally arrived at the cabin. I knew I was the only visitor my grandfather would have had in a while. His friends were dead or too old to come. Even if they had, it would have been of no importance, because my grandfather would have no memory of them. If there's no memory of a visitor, did they really come? That was what I wondered, at least, as I walked into the putrid-smelling home to see my grandfather sitting alone in the living room.

A large wooden clock, about six feet tall, sat in a dark corner of the room. The grandfather clock was ornately designed, and more beautiful than anything else in the house. The ticking of the second hand, jarringly loud, was the only thing that moved as we sat face to face.

"Grandpa, how have you been?"

Tick.

I stared into his eyes as he stared past the top of my head. I remembered his eyes from my childhood. The eyes looked the same, but only the eyes. The rest of him was unrecognizable.

"It's me. Jacob." Tick.

He opened his lips as if he was about to say something but nothing came out. He looked at the wall behind me. Tick.

Outside it began to thunder. I laid a fire in the fireplace while my grandfather sat in the living room. As the fire crackled on, I got up to walk around his cabin. It was a complete mess. There were dishes on the toilet, clothing all over the floor, spaghetti spilling out of a half-opened refrigerator.

Then I noticed, when I walked into his bedroom, camouflaged among the dizzying patterns of wallpaper and fabrics, pale oranges and greens that covered everything in the room, a small hand axe tucked inside the bedsheets. Splotches of blood covered the tops of the sheets. When I pulled up the blanket, I saw a pool of dark mahogany puddled on the mattress, which wafted up a thick metallic scent. The red mark of a hand wrapped around the handle of the axe.

I picked up the axe and looked at it. I wondered if it was his only axe. Perhaps he had a saw. I wondered if he had a gun. Probably, but no one in the house would know where it was. Just this axe. I spun it around in my hands. I suddenly remembered how useful my grandfather used to be and it made me sick to my stomach. Considering how utterly useless he was now, that is. He did more harm than good and he was not happy. I thought about the concept of mercy; how, if I were in his place, I'd pray for death every waking second. I've always told people I'd take a bullet to the head before I lost my mind.

Kill me at seventy before it happens, to be honest.

“Grandpa, how ‘bout a smoke.”

He had tremors in his hands and would not have remembered how to do it. I led him outside and we sat in two seats under a porch illuminated orange by three lights on the overhang. We watched rain drip from the gutter.

I moved the cigarette to his chapped lips as smoke dissipated into the freezing air. He stared blankly into the fog. The lights above our heads turned the smoke amber. After five minutes sitting there shivering in the cold, a light reflected into my eye and I turned to see where it came from.

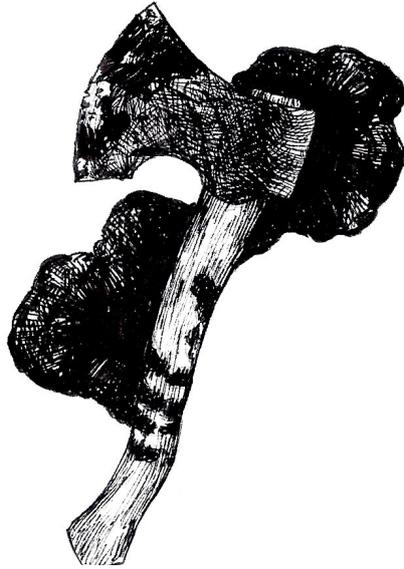
About four feet from our chairs lay the shards of a shattered pot.

“Grandpa, did you break that pot?”

He didn’t answer, only looked at the porcelain with such intent as if to slice his eyes open with the edges. I stared at the pot too, my question unanswered, my lungs full of smoke that was not my own, my lips beginning to bleed from the cracks.

Then, at that moment, three of the bulbs above our heads flickered out. Only one light remained; it drew our attention away from the shattered pot onto a pile of wet soil, from which a single milkweed grew. We trembled in our chairs, and I still don’t know whether it’s because of the freezing cold or because of the milkweed, irresponsible for its fate, glowing mauve. Its long green stem filled us with terror. I saw it on his face, that holy dread. I would have picked it, really I would have, had I not marveled at its creation. Had the miracle of its growth not petrified me.

I took the axe from under my belt and placed it on the ground. Grandpa looked at the axe on the pavement, then right into my eyes. It was the first time he looked me in the eyes since I arrived. Grandpa had the strangest look on his face. I still can't figure out whether it was gratitude or desperation.



## Boleyn

P. L. Dodd



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I dislodge the tip of the axe from the block and kneel before the life-leaking head. "God save the Queen," I whisper, as a smirk ripples across my face. She opens her mouth in reply.

# Snail Sludge

Firyal Bawab

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Two-thirty came crawling in the afternoon like the snail Ms. Bittons was watching from her mud green armchair. She didn't know how it got in. The armored slug left a line of sludge down one pillar of the fireplace that gave the brick touched by it a pretty gloss. An old-fashioned clock that tick-tocked hung high above the pit. Ms. Bittons turned to the floor all around her, the wrinkles and flaps of her neck rotating like a reversed blossom bloom. The spread of earthy carpet was spotless. She looked at her feet. No trail from Ms. Bitton's slippers, as thin and worn as they were.

Ah, there she is. Ms. Bittons perked up. A plump old lady with a snow bob entered the retirement home's lounge room. The lady tapped around the ground with a cane in one hand while shooing away a nurse in the hallway with her other, her arm flapping in the air like a sail. A pair of pale discs in her sockets permanently looked upwards at the heavens. Ms. Bittons giggled to herself then clicked her tongue. What a fool, a fool. Just let them help you, you blind sack.

It was nap time, and there was only one other person in the room, an elderly man at a brown table to the side playing cards with himself. The curtains and walls hosting the arrived were beige. Mrs. Abel walked over to a faded mint armchair by the fireplace, adjacent then tilting a bit to Ms. Bittons'. She leaned her cane against the arm as she lowered herself to nestle into the cushion. The air conditioning was turned off because the nurses thought the weather was nice, but the temperature glazed stale within the hour.

"What time is it?" Ms. Bittons greeted her.

Mrs. Abel smiled, staring at the clock. "It's two-thirty, love," she said.

"Really? I need to take my meds."

"I bet so. Your bunch is a variant sort," said Ms. Abel cheerily. "It's like a whole meal."

"Mm. About a dozen pills. They have to start giving me something for my back. If they did it's not working. And now there's something wrong with my foot, ever since I woke up this morning. I can't walk properly. It's probably swollen."

Ms. Abel's eyebrows knitted together. "Oh, that's a shame, love. A stroll in the garden always makes me feel better. The weather's very nice today."

"What are you talking about? It's awful. I'm swimming in my own sweat."

"Mhmm." Mrs. Abel reached down beside her, sinking her hand into a knitting basket pushed against the side of her seat. She pulled out a quarter-done scarf and a pair of rods.

"That's an ugly yellow," said Ms. Bittons. "It's blinding."

"You think so, love? I wouldn't know."

A punch of silence passed after that. It was quiet except that Mrs. Abel's chair creaked under her. Her hips were unconsciously shifting back and forth. She had added three strips to the scarf when Ms. Bittons began sharing her existentialist thoughts.

"You know what I think is the most horrid thing about life, for the most of us lot?" she said. "That it's not horrid enough. Not tragic enough to be precious. It's slow and mediocre and if I wasn't scared I'd rather see hell."

"I think falling in love is tragic," said Mrs. Abel. "Have you ever tried it?"

Ms. Bittons scrunched up her face in disgust. "Of course I have, or else what right would I have to be saying all this? I'm certainly certain I've had more lovers in my lifetime than you."

"I'm certain, too," said Mrs. Abel.

"...What? You're certain of what? That you had more lovers or that I had more lovers?"

"You. That you did."

"Oh. What makes you say that?"

"Because that's what you said. Don't you remember?"

"Of course, I remember. Christ, I know what I said." Ms. Bittons glanced at her companion. "Would you stop worming already? It's not a damned rocking chair."

"Mhm." Mrs. Abel stopped, gave a slight nod, and continued to work the scarf without pause. "Strange. Didn't realize I was doing it."

Ms. Bittons stared at the fireplace bricks. "Where's the snail?"

"What snail?"

"The snail that was climbing the fireplace. It's gone. It was right there, and now it's not." Ms. Bittons shifted nervously in her seat, then snapped to Mrs. Abel with a sharp tone. "Your armchair is going to break right under you. Look, you went right back to doing it, rocking back and forth as though the damn thing will follow you. It'll break and then you'll know I'm right."

"Mm." Mrs. Abel stopped once more.

"It makes a horrible little screechy noise and I don't know how you don't hear it."

"Sorry, love."

"Oh, you're not listening!" Ms. Bittons stood up and went over to the lighter chair. "I can tell when you're not listening. I can tell, it's when your eyes go glassy. And you make a little consenting noise, so I'll stop talking. Well, damn you!"

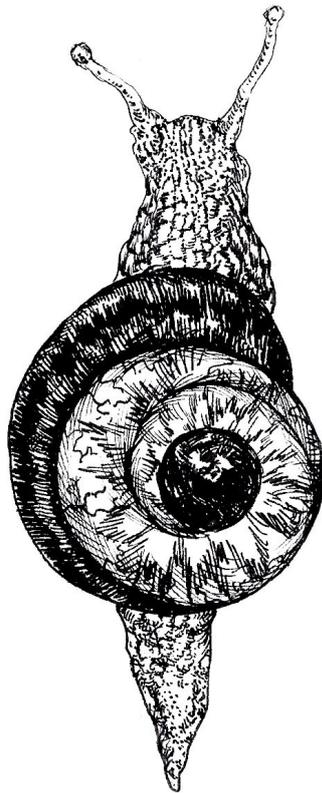
An angry spittle teardrop catapulted from within the lines of Ms. Bitton's mouth where lips should be, onto Mrs. Abel's cheek. "Lydia, please," Mrs. Abel said, her colorless gaze skittering upwards, over Mrs. Bitton's forehead. "People are sleeping."

"You're not listening to me!" said Mrs. Bittons, louder, her face in front of Mrs. Abel's. "I can tell! Your eyes glaze over. Stop that!" Ms. Bittons dug her fingers into Mrs. Abel's sockets and scooped out her sightless eyes. "Stop it at once, mother!"

"Lydia!" Mrs. Abel's dropped her needles, the ugly yellow scarf rumbling on her lap. Nurses that heard the commotion rushed in and pulled Ms. Bittons away. One of them gently unhooked Mrs. Abel's eyes from her daughter's fists as two others led her out of the room by her arms. Probably away to solitary confinement for a while. The first nurse offered Mrs. Abel the smooth balls in his palms back. They were pure glass, transparent as empty snow globes.

"Thank you, love," said Mrs. Abel, "But these are dirty now. Do be a dear and put them on the shelf with the rest, and then tell the doctor to whip me up new ones."

The nurse obliged, turning to the hearth and lining the prosthetics on the wooden ledge with a pretty clink alongside others rowed like ornaments. The old man at the table playing cards with himself hadn't moved. The air buzzed with heat and the clock's unbroken tick-tock but was otherwise peaceful. Mrs. Abel politely smiled up at the nurse as he left, laughter lines crinkling up around her black slits. She picked her needles back up, humming a bit now as her sausagey-soft hands got back to knitting on muscle memory.



# Every Morning

Jade Lacy

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Every morning, Beth wakes up at 6:30am, comforted by the notion that she will not be at school for another hour and a half.

By 6:40am, Beth has washed her face, brushed her teeth, done her hair in two pigtails, and now stands in front of her closet. Today, the forecast says mid 40s. She grabs a t-shirt.

By 6:50am, Beth is at her boyfriend's house. She unlocks the door and waves to his mother.

By 7:00am, Beth's boyfriend has opened his eyes. "You're early," he says. "We can leave on time today," she says. He looks her up and down. "We have ten minutes."

By 7:10am, Beth has her t-shirt back on. She washes her face and brushes her teeth and lets her pigtails down. They've served their purpose. "We have to leave by 7:30," she says.

By 7:20am, Beth starts pulling clothes out of the closet. "This is cute," she says, holding a black hoodie. "I wore that last week," he says. She puts it on instead.

By 7:25am, Beth is packing her boyfriend's backpack. He stands in front of two shirts laid out on the bed, rubbing his chin. "We're leaving in five minutes," she says.

By 7:30am, Beth is filling her boyfriend's water bottle in the kitchen, while he does his hair in the bathroom. "We're leaving in five minutes," she shouts across the house.

By 7:40am, Beth and her boyfriend get in the car. She grips the steering wheel hard as she peels off the curb. "We've got plenty of time," he says. Beth says

nothing.

By 7:50am, Beth is twenty cars back in a line to turn left. "We're gonna be late," she says. Her boyfriend rubs her thigh. "No we're not, babe. We never are."

By 7:55am, Beth is twenty cars back in a line to turn left into the parking lot. The first bell rings. "Go on ahead," she says. "Are you sure?" says her boyfriend, but he is already reaching for his backpack.

By 8:05am, Beth is pulling into a spot on the edge of the lot. She yanks out the key, slams the car door, and begins to run through the halls. Her backpack slaps against her with every step, trying to shove her down.

By 8:10am, Beth arrives in class. She takes her seat, comforted by the fact that she will not have to see her boyfriend for another hour and a half.



# Thoughts in the Black Corridor

JM Yaden

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The sound of my footsteps disappear into the echoing embrace

Of this sadistic fantasy, this dream of a drunken despot,

Where virgin flesh is torn in the slaver's maw of an abomination.

There is another sound in this tomb: the memory of shrieks,

Innocents mad with terror, wandering blind in the stinking dark,

Calling for friends long since lost in the putrid passages.

Stay true, precious line! Without you I will never escape this place.

Now I can hear it howling at the center of this foul warren.

I bring you one last meal, one last glut to ease your hunger pangs:

There on your reeking bed of bones, a bellyful of bronze.

# Dawn on the Bloody Field



JM Yaden

---

A mouthless crowd stands waiting  
To replenish anxious bellies  
The sun shines, birds chitter,  
Clouds, serene as ever, dream in a blue canopy

Dead eyes peer out of their masks  
As more masks are layered  
The wind pushes by, impatient as ever,  
Whispering comfort to the children of forgetfulness

Neighbors watch each other, scrutinizing  
Bodies seem to repel each other  
A friendly greeting and a joke  
Rings out like a victory on a bloody field

A great engine slowly loses power  
A million cars grind to a halt  
Crowds form and disperse, taking counsel  
Seedlings brace themselves against iron wheels

Voices whisper in the fearful dusk  
Bodies cringe as Fortune spins  
All around a cool breeze embraces emptiness

In the silence, the scorched earth sighs and sleeps

Fever seizes some, death claims others

Clean hands cover the lips of the accused

A billion messages are sent forth

No longer mindless, they inquire after another's safety

Night prepares her awful cloak

Ready to close a dark chapter for the accused

The dawn yawns, blinks open her eyes

Day is swiftly approaching for the children of remembrance

# The Family

JM Yaden

---



They live

In that house that burned

Do you know the one?

End of railroad tracks, lonely boxcar

Brown, rustling fields

Where the thistles grow so tall, and

Solemn ranks of lean pines keep watch

The children

Come outside to play

To the black clubhouse

Rusted merry-go-round at a tilt

Rotted seesaw

Groaning in the chilly breeze, and

Somewhere a door or shutter bangs

Their parents

On the leaning porch

They stand together

Watching their children; neglected yard

Overgrown, weeds

In their cheerful summer clothes, and

So careless of the biting wind

I watch them  
From behind a tree  
For a long, long time  
My fingers and face numb from the cold  
Then I run home  
For at dusk they go inside, and  
The house bursts into icy flames

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End



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