BLUE MIRROR
FALL 2015
## LIFE GOALS
Natalie Sherman-Jollis

## The 15 Minute Summer
Loulou Batta

## Serenade
Self Portrait
Vibha Puri

## Values
Canzada Friday

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Murali Saravanan

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Darith Klibanow

## Waiting for the Teacher to Enter the Classroom
Natalie Sherman-Jollis

## Guts
Natalie Sherman-Jollis

## Barre
Arianne Marcellin-Little
goals
by natalie sherman-jollis

reach
grow
hurt

and
Then slip to the ground.
Hearts faint green on the
I step to the ground. But what
Is a peach's inner, secret purpose?
Surely there must be something to
A peach's world more than just to make goals
And sacrifice to being for the slim possibility of edifying?
Such simple goals are taken for granted by producers at the bottom of
The food chain: survive, procreate, and die. To be unable to think, or do or
fail at attempts towards extravagant, elephants expectations such a
pgh? (Or does a poor who's still be able to turn itself into a peach?)
"15 minutes, that's all you get."

"Anything."
1 2 3
Go!

You know when you get those ideas in your head, the ones you can’t shake? They seem to latch onto you forever. They start to appear everywhere. You see them in your walls, on the bathroom floor, in your food. That was my summer. The unshakeable idea of doing something great, unexpected, spectacular, magical.

I wanted to go out and see the world, to be the world, climb a couple of trees and sleep with the world. You know when you get those ideas you can’t shake? And how they never seem to come true? But you can go away in a book. Escape into a movie. Not all of your adventures have to be in person. That was my summer. The kind you see in the mirror. When your shoulders sag, and your face wrinkles. When you try not to cry when the disappointment hits,

"Why. Can’t. I. Just. Go!"

You know those ideas that just don’t seem to go away? They’re there for a reason.

Live vicariously as long as you live.

"End of time!"

"Are you serious man! I’m not finished!"

"That’s the point. No one is."

Leave your stories wide open.
Asymmetrical.

Her face is tilted to hide the scar
On her right eyebrow, covered
By hair like blades of grass shyly peeking out from cold, restricting concrete.
Eyes piercing, inquisitive, darting back and forth, here and there-- watching
But seldom speaking with her
Small, closed lips. Concise
Words, but a smile that stretches and bends, urging you
To mirror-- her eyes squint and eyelashes blossom,
Sharp nose forced into submission as it crinkles and retracts.
Prominent cheekbones that break
Smooth curves, trains of thought, on them rest
Long, tangled eyelashes--
The type you would find days later, never noticing
It has always been there, her beauty
Mark above her lip.
If you look closely: worry
Lines trace her forehead. Dark shadows of yesterday
Fall under freckle-stained eyes.
Unsure.
How I wish I could tell you the things in my heart.
Woe is the mind that thinks in riddles,
That forges words in images and vice versa.
In my heart, you are like hot chocolate
Made with milk and not water,
Heated in a pan and not the microwave,
Mixed with syrup and ovaltine,
Piled high with marshmallows,
Never cutting corners.
You shook your head to swear words
And loud music and premarital sex.
You turned your nose up to boxed cake mix.
Because I am worth so much more than what I can find
In a cardboard box on a supermarket shelf,
And you knew that. You taught me that.
I am worth the effort of buying ingredients,
Of painstakingly measuring one cup,
Or even two tablespoons,
Of waiting for the butter to thaw.
I am worth it.
late night solutions
working to get it right, I
hate AP Phys C

my introspective
writing lacks what I need, I
hate college essays

I need to sleep more
a dull pain overhead, I
hate being tired

two tests tomorrow
worry and study more, I
hate the constant stress

but life is more than
getting into college, I
will miss all of you
UP AND DOWN

by madison zehmer

1. Down
knots in back and knots in hair
hands as light as paper,
brain heavy with fog.
keys pressed against wrists,
pills shaped like bullets,
memories coming out of hiding,
making their homes in hands
held out in front of chests, in
eyes that are clenched shut.

2. Up
remembering doesn't feel like suicide
and neither does breathing.
color in cheeks and color in chest
hands as light as air,
brain is clean and here.

3. Going down
I forget I ever felt that way until I begin to feel it again.
the sun burns my skin.
i can't convince myself to stop sleeping my life away.

4. Going up
I forget I ever felt that way until I begin to feel it again.
I see the sun and I feel its warmth.
I begin to rediscover that staying awake doesn't always feel like drowning.

5. Staying down
atrophy of hands, of skin, of mind -
Bleach burns everything away.

6. Staying up
appointments and lists,
learning words besides “I'm sorry”,
family and family and family.
reading poetry and seeing it in friends’ eyes,
realizing that I have a bit of it in myself too.
My home is the sky where I fly freely. 
Where Mother pulls the aba off my back
and Father leads the way while we soar.
Where Sister’s wings are soft and vibrant
and we chitter and chatter and twitter
until Mother and Father wish us flown away
to chitter and chatter and twitter elsewhere.

On the best of days, father soars low and
we all ride his slipstream, easily and aimlessly
as we twirl and dance and soar and I,
I feel free for the first time in a long time.
Familiar arms hold me safe while I sleep
and when morning comes my wings spread wide,
and gravity cannot touch me here.

Until, once more, my delicate toes fall prey
to the many nooses of your Bal Chatri, promising things
your plastic decoy can never once provide.
The aba, a new aba, returns to my shoulders
and I cannot even pretend to have missed it’s hold.
Even as you nestle and coddle me into it
as though it could ever replace mother’s embrace.

Once again I am ensnared by your Aylmeri
and you press the suede of it against my ankle,
as if to punish me for ever dreaming of flying and freedom.
Release me from this hellish cord you name creance!

**BIRDCAGE**

by canzada friday

**BLUE FOG**

christopher alvarado
photography
connecting the dots

nishma vias - photography

I waited
And watched
The amorphous
Black
Liquid
Slide up my throat
Onto my tongue
Down, onto my pants

It formed a puddle around me
And burns my throat
Drowning now
Liquid taking its revenge
I leave it
Sit above it
Covered in it

ATTENTION
FEAR THE YEAR 2112
ATTENTION

The
Liquid
Slug
Burns my initials
On my forehead
"be mine"
And hearts collective
In my car

ATTENTION
FEAR THE YEAR 2112
ATTENTION

My eyes
Find tongues
Shriveled in the dark
My people
Cling to me
Dripping
Down
Down
Down
Down
Down
No chance to
Parcel myself out
They bore me whole

ATTENTION
FEAR THE YEAR 2112
ATTENTION

research
by joe wiswell

20 21
life is not organic,
its geometric;
full of boxes.
for every category definition gets more
toxic.
the need to define
between You and yourself, it draws a line
You are the one the world sees
You are the one the world questions.
always observant,
doubting your actions.
a need to understand leads to a need to
restrict
over time You yourself becomes a label
addict.
yourself gets lost in You,
it’s unclear which is what.
identity is ever changing;
it’s not clean cut.
but that’s dishonest
Unclean
Indecisive
In-between
so you remain defined
by those who need that understanding.
look inside yourself
are You yourself?
or what the world is demanding?
The man in the crowd could barely see the speaker, who was surrounded by highly paid bodyguards. A cameraman worked from above, perched on a slender platform in order to see the speaker through the circle of guards. A giant screen loomed behind the stage on which the speaker stood, since that was the only way the crowd would be able to see the politician’s face. The man in the crowd shifted slightly, cursing his inconvenient five feet and two inches. If that one bald man would just move a little to the left... There! Now he had a clear view of the screen and the stage in front of it. Just as the man in the crowd was getting adjusted, the man on the stage launched into his speech.

“My fellow Americans!” His voice echoed through the open space, and the crowd quieted. “As you all know, our country is being torn with strife. Racial tensions are higher than they’ve ever been. Perhaps even higher than they were in the civil rights movement, almost one hundred and twenty five years ago!” The crowd muttered its dissent at this proclamation. “However, I will not let this continue. These acts of hate against certain groups of people, this distrust, this discord, it is inexcusable. If I am your next president, I promise that all of this will come to an end!”

In the large office building beside the rally, a woman watched the speech and bit down on her tongue to stifle a sigh. Shadows of the room blended with her dark skin, and she was almost undetectable as she lay on her stomach. The building had been closed for the rally being held outside, and her seventh floor perspective offered the perfect vantage point. She shifted her weight slightly. She hated elections, but it was how she made most of her money. Even so, watching all of these speeches through a sniper’s scope grew monotonous. This politician wasn’t even a target; she was just supposed to guard him from other snipers with deadlier plans. Yes, she thought to herself. Elections really are lamentable now.

She wasn’t listening to the speaker. She had heard it all before. ‘If I were the president...’ ‘I will prevent civil wars...’ ‘I can change America...’ None of it made any difference. The one with the most money usually won anyway. What was the point of these speeches, anymore? “Do they simply enjoy flaunting their money in their opponent’s face?” She muttered to herself. Shaking her head, she readjusted her eye on the scope in front of her and continued to watch for threats.

The man in the crowd was passionately scrawling notes, writing down the politician’s points with eager enthusiasm. This is perfect material for class, the man thought excitedly. We can discuss his political views, and then analyze his current standings in the polls! Then I can tie the lesson back into... The man was so caught up with his thoughts, he had momentarily stopped paying attention. Irritated at himself, he resumed scribbling notes. The impassioned speaker’s voice boomed through the sound system: “Citizens of America! Do you want this world to change?” The crowd cheered in response, but it was almost as if a recording had been played. Their cheers were rehearsed, banal. “America, no, the world, doesn’t have to wait any longer!” The politician’s hand shot up, and the camera zoomed in with interest.
In his hand he held a small, white pill. The woman squinted at the pill through her scope. The man’s pen slowed its writing, then stopped completely. Whispers rustled through the crowd. “This is what I will bring to this country and the world as your next president. This pill has the ability to alter the pigment in someone’s skin!” The declaration cast a heavy silence over the crowd.

“Yes, this medicine is still in development. However, if you elect me, I’ll secure more funding for this monumental project and we’ll be distributing these pills within two years.” The crowd was still quiet. The man’s pen had stopped moving completely.

Beads of sweat ran down the sniper’s dark skin. She swallowed hard, and had to remind herself repeatedly that she had been hired to protect this man. This white man, who knew nothing of this pill’s power. He knows nothing, the sniper thought, and his ignorance is going to ruin this world. If I killed him now... Her finger trembled on the trigger, but it didn’t move.

The man wasn’t taking notes anymore. He was staring in shock at the pill, giant on the screen behind the stage. The man wondered briefly what tomorrow’s discussion would be like if someone with dark skin were enrolled in the class.

A single pair of pale hands in the crowd began clapping. Soon, others began echoing it. A wild, raucous cheer started up, picking up speed and momentum as the idea began to click into place. “This pill will end racism!” The politician shouted over the roaring crowd. “As your next president, I guarantee that this world will change!”

The speech concluded shortly after that. The bodyguards huddled around the politician as he made his way to his armored car. The crowd buzzed and dispersed slowly, many lagging behind to talk about the applications of the pill. Her job done, the woman stood up, packed up her weapon, and quietly left.

Twenty three days later, the man was back in his place in the crowd with a new note pad. A new politician shuffled onto the stage this time, still surrounded by hired bodyguards. New, but not different, thought the woman, who had once again appropriated the seventh floor of the office building. Once the crowd was large enough, the politician leaned toward the microphone and commenced his speech. “My fellow Americans! We are all aware of the injustices of this age. We are on the brink of another civil war!” The politician was enthusiastic, but he didn’t say anything new or groundbreaking. He was, after all, one of the poorer candidates. Parts of the crowd were quickly becoming disinterested. Perhaps, the woman wondered silently to herself, they’ve never been interested. A strange, unreasonable disappointment stole over her. What it was that caused her pessimism, she wasn’t sure. She felt that the cause was too large for her to comprehend. Reminding herself of her current task, she put her finger on the trigger.

“If I am your next president, I promise that I will—” The politician was cut off as a bullet passed through his skull. Blood flashed across the large screen behind the stage. The man in the crowd swallowed a lump in his throat, however this wasn’t the first time a candidate had been shot. This wasn’t the first time the man had been present to witness it. Still, he always felt nauseous whenone of them died. Biting his lip, he reminded himself that an assassination was always great class material. He scribbled a few more notes before the crowd began to shift.

“Everybody, please clear the area.” One of the bodyguards had taken charge. “The rally is over. I repeat, please clear the area.”

A woman turned her child’s head away from the stage, her eyes flashing with rage. A couple clasped hands, the only show of support they afforded each other as they shuffled through the crowd. A man’s eyes were red, but his back was rigid as he marched away. The man held his notes close to his chest in a reflexive desire for comfort. He saw jaws clenched in disgust and eyes that studied the ground, refused to look anywhere else. He watched the person in front of him lift her shoulders in a heavy shrug. Her voice was thick, but she spoke calmly to the person next to her. “That’s just how these elections go.”
GUTS by natalie sherman-jollis

Writing a poem is like attempting
To peel yourself upside-down and inside-out,
Like an inside-out watermelon scraped clean.
So many lines to fill with so many syllables
So that you must keep carving down, into the rind.
First pink, then white, then green with yellow stripes,
Until there is nothing left but a sacred hollow.
At the very least you might have granted the smear
Of sticky sweet juice one or two hard, black seeds
(And not just a few disappointingly-fake-and-flimsy see-through 'seedless's).

Waiting for the Teacher to Enter the Classroom

by natalie sherman-jollis

(Life status: college, relationship, Nutella craze,
Offspring's college, SAT score, bucket challenge,
Hip replacement?).
The state's best and brightest
Brought together, looking downward,
Entranced by bright screens.
Self-imposed cubicles, too-white,
Too many. Closing in like the walls of this classroom. Myself: a marble ping
along/between/within/outside resisting the urge to look down, to step inside my own box. But the walls build themselves.

Even the Brightests' pixelated tunnel vision
Requires more than a blurred, colorful intention
To voluntarily disrupt the ever-entrancing scroll.

HAPPY

photography by robert fisher
"Shut up. Stand up. Alright class, let’s begin."
In the mirror she sees the self-loathing within
Gracefully intertwined with her milky skin

Bulging, spilling over, pouring down her lithe frame
She creates her exterior out of interior shame
From the words of a teacher who can’t remember her name

Learning the choreography of her civil war
Force-fed insults on a resin-covered floor
The only thing she eats anymore

BARRE
by arianne marcellin.little

AUTUMN LEAVES
tiffany tang.digital art
and your feet on the ground
—Theodore Roosevelt