

miniMAG

issue115

coffee nymphs





Things I Remember When I Found a Lizard in Jane's Hair In High School

Cecilia Kennedy

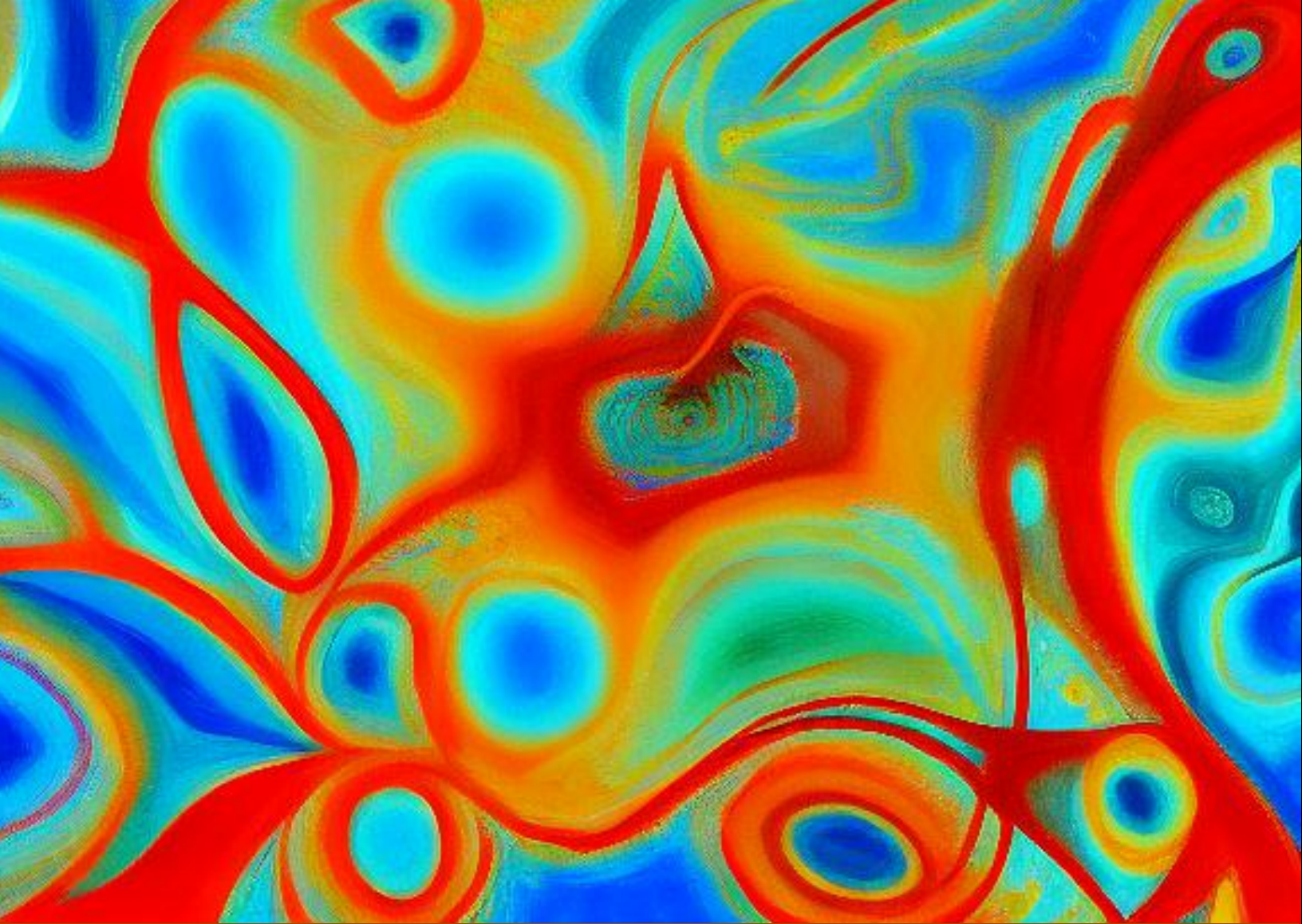
- 1) Not even rain or gym class could ruin Jane's hair. Her hair was legendary—to me—at least.
- 2) At lunch, she ate a sandwich, and I sat across from her.
- 3) I told her about the classes I hated and how I was worried I wouldn't get into college, while she searched the room with her eyes, looking for cute boys.
- 4) I stopped talking because she wasn't listening anyway, and other than lunch, we never hung out.
- 5) She needed someone to sit with because her other friends were in other lunch periods, and I was passable enough to be seen with.
- 6) She bent down to pick up her bookbag.
- 7) I saw two eyes peeking out from the poofy bangs of her hair.
- 8) She lifted her head really fast, and she looked pale.
- 9) "I feel something in my hair," she said.
- 10) She couldn't stick her fingers in and dig around because her hair was set for the day.
- 11) I was just going to go on eating my lunch, but then I saw the thing move, poking its head up over the top.
- 12) "It's a gecko," I told her.
- 13) "Get it out!" she said.
- 14) I could have reached gently into her hair and removed it without collateral damage.
- 15) Instead, I got some ice water from the sink and dumped it on the lizard, which tore itself from Jane's hair, creating a horrible dent.
- 16) Jane hid in the bathroom the rest of the day.
- 17) No one noticed she was gone, but me.



PAPERWORKING

yuan changming

Our entire adulthood is expended to fill
In the blanks left in our teenager dreams



Self-portrait as garden gnome

after “Atlas Moves the World” by Emma Johnson-Rivard

Rue Huang

In a letter hidden by the strawberry bush, ghost girl realizes / her lover has
been brimming / with something neither of them / can know, his form / tee-
tering at the edge of her world. / The thing was, she built this garden out of
laughter and bits of words, / shards of music and green glass bottles, /
thought it to be home. / So she turns to the thorns, asks each rose if she will
be a poet, / but instead finds cold / that lingers between her thighs. / What
do you find, lover? / How do you lie / when you stop spinning with the world?
/ The birds forget the feeder, / they peck at her hands with bladelike beaks, /
pluck / marigold from between / her ribs. When it becomes / too hard to be-
gin at all, / she stops planting more flowers, presses / the weight of soil
against her, tries not / to let the weight of her want / crush their beating
bodies. / She will sleep when they do not leave, / hair still soft / with night, /
wake to morning / leaking through windows and / sun aching in her face. /
She will remember / how she did not ask for this, / his words which run
through her like a leaf. / How like the wet shirts flapping / in the warm wind
on the clothesline, they both lost, / and the things she wanted to say clung to
her, freezing / and shapeless. / She will think / of the remnants of the per-
simmon tree, / the rattling sunflowers in her belly, / the chlorophyll on her
eyelashes, / the churning of the great blue sky right above her, / how / de-
spite / it all, her hands still reach for the light, / each photon passing
through her skin, / looking for home.



Letter
and
every
word
is
a
deep
sleep

Jerome Berglund



Smoking cigarettes to shoo the mosquitoes away

Patrick Harley

Sitting on a half burnt log half forgotten
By last years winter.
Lunch time in may, warm
And feels like Spring.
Smoking cigarettes to shoo the mosquitoes away

How cool the silence
How soft the ground

Smoking's not working; I'm too happy
To hold my blood.





Powerstation

Tempest Miller

Decommissioned power station hooked onto grid. Penis cooling towers like concrete and steel prongs pump out white gas, hot and cold. Seemingly an extension of the grey landscape which is nothing but flatland, a lake, no one allowed near. The workers, on tape, for documentary, admit they would rather work in mountains, gorge out a bit of ancient rock and rest in a cleft. They work all day in white gowns, twisted wheels, grinding around boilers. The ceiling very high, their voices echoing like around a courtyard. There is always one who gives sermons, who is mad but respected, his head big and hard like kept in a freezer. In the shark teeth of dark industry, water waste spewed into duck pond. These looming electrical places that feed millions, they are held up very few – bookkeepers, men who work with screwdrivers and hammers, anvil. Fragile electricity, flaccid industry. Dildo-like petroleum refineries, inflammatory clouds, thick power juice spat, hundred miles an hour. Man is diminished in places like these. To go home to husband, tired, no time for kisses, no time for kids – too old anyway now. Sits at home in vegetative state, watching the clock and drinking booze, face cracked like roof tiles, tuned into leaky faucet and humming microwave.



Without a Net

Nancy Machlis Rechtman

Pieces of words dangle in the air
High above me
With no net to grab them
Before they drop.

They laugh as they taunt me and flit away
Like impish children daring me to catch them
While my hands reach out frantically
Hoping to grasp them
Before the silence lasts too long
And I end up falling through the rabbit hole
Landing with a thud onto the piles of unfinished manuscripts
That lay at the bottom.



The Pitch

Margaux Williamson

She woke abruptly to darkness, breathing heavily and blinking rapidly to sharpen her vision. She recalled no visuals from the dream, only a cacophony, continuous and piercing. She felt it was a signal, a warning, yet it lured her. It filled her with nervous tension and edge, but piqued her curiosity. Alarmed at this duality, she sought a distraction. She reached for her phone, the screen's soft glow usually a well-lit path into a familiar, infinite oblivion. The sound persisted. She inhaled, then exhaled, inviting a calm that wouldn't come. Too tense to rest, she rose and flipped every switch from the bed to the pot—filled, filtered, and brewed until the machine declared completion with a beep she barely heard above the din. She stirred in sugar at the counter, clockwise, and watched the spoon's circular route, absorbed yet remote, a mere onlooker, as if the motion had nothing to do with her. The tinkling scrape of metal on ceramic harmonized with the sound from her dream to create a winding siren song—frighteningly tempting, large and loud, impossible to evade, invading her. She continued to stir at the same languid pace, staring into the small black sea below, sinking toward the merciless pitch.



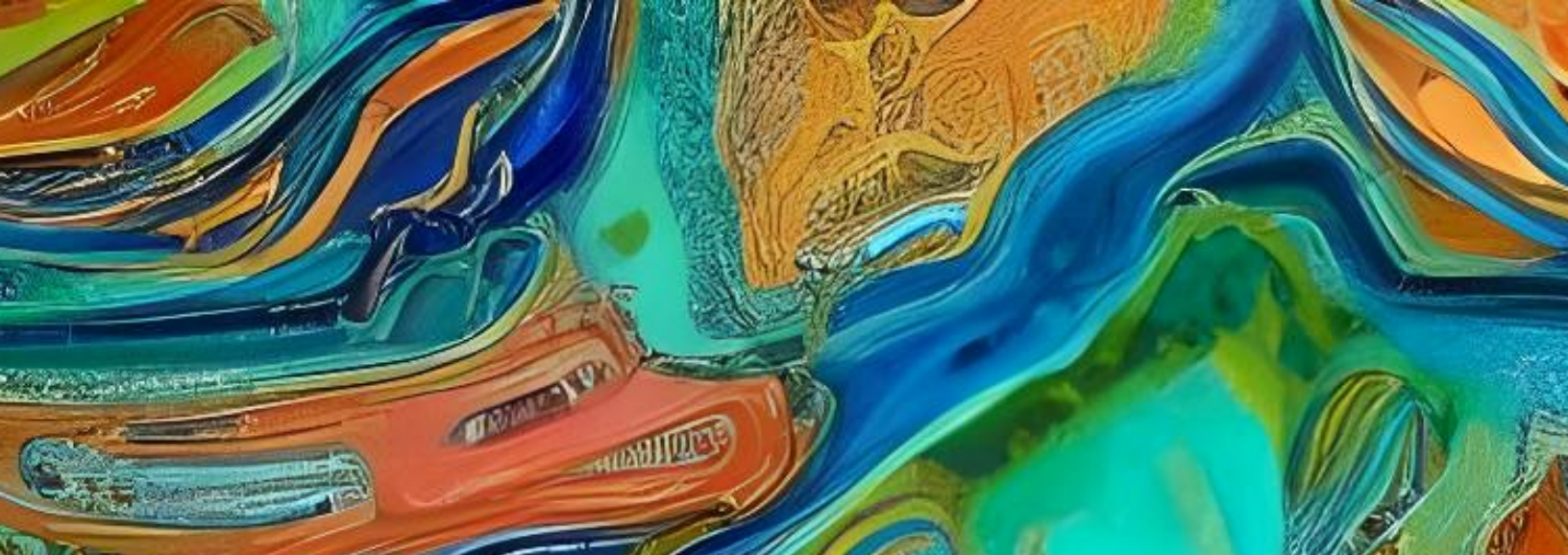
Wings Off Flies

Sameen Shakya

The boy is crazy, I tell you. The boy is mad.
He rips the wings off flies, and licks them while
They're still alive. I've seen him do it, I swear,
But the parents don't care. And the teachers don't
Believe me. So, it's up to me to punish the crazy kid.
Don't you understand? It's really for his own sake.

And if you think about it, we're friends. I mean I am
His friend. Only I have noticed he's off the deep end.
The boy is crazy. The boy is mad. Whenever I see
A fly buzzing in the room, I hit his head. A reminder
To keep his cool. A reminder not to be so weird.

And yes, he's cried. Asked me to stop. Even complained.
But no one else understands. Not the teachers, parents,
(His or mine) or even him. But I do this for him. I do.
This is because I care. I don't want my friend
To grow up to be a weirdo, a loser, or a creep.
One day, he'll look back at this and thank me.
Till then, I do my duty.



Blackbird Sidestep

D. C. Nobes

I wonder sometimes
about the birds.
Is my reflective dome,
the by-product of my
testosterone heritage,
too tempting a target?

I saw him, perched
upon the wire overhead.

I paused.

And stepped to the left.
The sidewalk splat
where I would have been
had I not thought
“What if ...”
But he missed me
today.





you can't ask

airport

how someone's doing
through social media. she seems ok
like she's got customers every night, but she
gave you a toss for free in
2018
and that's not good business.

so like,
is Inner Mongolia getting
a lot of travelers
in the summertime?
can you ever really know
if someone is good?
I hope she's good.



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“Things I Remember When I Found a Lizard in Jane’s Hair in High School”

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“Smoking cigarettes to shoo the mosquitos away” by Patrick Harley

“Powerstation” by Tempest Miller

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Books: [Post Roe Alternatives: Fighting Back](#) (B Cubed Press, 2022)

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