

# miniMAG

issue175

why them/there/that//then



## 3-4 ACT II HUB ZONE A

airport

overheads are turned-off  
and the rain is muted  
by “hard times will pass...  
relaxing zelda music & rain outside” (2:25:59)  
but for the fog  
and the rain  
it is warm  
I’ll do it later

questions: what are we doing today  
do I have to  
is it graded, when will white  
walls come down;  
they’ll out live you, the walls, by many years  
time here is fast and you  
fade out the minute you leave  
it’s this way everywhere  
I’ll outlive the memory of you  
I’ll do it later  
it’s cozy,

but for the fog  
on a tuesday  
let it rain

I’ll do it later—when  
I’m better, and awake  
you’re asleep again  
and it’s warm because above  
swamp is fog  
and cold, and rainy,  
fog, so it’s warm, and I’ll  
sleep, and I’ll do it later



# Smears of Makeup

Lucia Quiros

I wear the makeup as a mask. As something to hide not only the flesh that lies beneath, but also the lines of myself nobody quite knows—like a vault of treasure hidden in plain sight.

Scrubbing off makeup feels like washing off the version of me people like. Who's that in the mirror? Cause it sure isn't me.

Fear, and despair traipse through me, not giving me adequate time to breathe—let alone to recover. Every cell in my body screams with longing, as I hit send to another job application. I long not just for the money, but for the thought of having somewhere to go—day in, and day out. Something stable. Something certain.

I put heaps of makeup on, hoping it will do something to the imperfections, and worn-down dark circles under my eyes. But I don't smear anything onto my lips. What's lipstick do to a pig, right?

Makeup covers every inch of my bedroom, leaving nearly no space for anything else. Eyelash curlers, and different brushes dig into me, and sometimes I wish they could mold me into something I'm prouder of showing. Morph me into somebody new—to carve me into a girl that the boys would want.

Disappointment follows me like an undeserved shadow. It never falters, its gaze never falls, and it's somehow always lingering in my

rear-view mirror. He is me; I am him—we are not separate. No, we are the same person.

The only way to distinguish us. To tell us apart is that: Disappointment wears himself out like he's got nothing to lose. I wear a costume, because I know firsthand that I've got *everything* to lose.

He knows what he's worth, he tells me every day. And even though he's declared that he doesn't think he's good enough, (on multiple occasions) at least he knows where he's going. I just close my eyes, shoot my shot, and pray to God that it will make it in.

And sometimes, when it's late at night, and the stars are my only company, I feel as though Disappointment is disappointed in me. Not because I failed, but that I didn't really try at all. That I would shun myself and drag myself so far away from the crowd, running for no other reason than the cowardly fear that lurks beneath my surface. He looks at me with those eyes, and I know I let the truth show through too many cracks.

I wish that people could see me as more of a person rather than just a nerd who likes different things than they do—who likes things that are real. That they could see me as not a sort of shell of a person, but one who gets up, and tries even after she's failed. I just wish that people could see past the facade makeup throws over me. I wear it as a mask, and people don't see who lies beneath.

I turn away from the mirror, smearing the makeup over my bumpy face, and smearing the mask right off. Why keep punishing it with a view like this? I know *I* can't bear to love the view, so I know the mirror won't be any different. Maybe makeup doesn't have to be a mask—but a memory of who I was before, and who I am now.



# Lacuna

Eric Kong Angal

The frayed nerves from the day's end. The sour taste of sleep. The triangle of sky from the couch, the blanket that's too small. A finger cinched by a bandaid. The distant malodor of wellworn boots. Limbs hanging numb and bloodless and slack. Every once in a while the sound of a car's suspension working against the speedbumps, and then the chirp of the car as it's locked. The percussion of the wroughtiron gate, the rattle of the chainlink as it quivers. But nothing to follow, silence again. Eventually, the zipper of the key in the lock.

I'm not yet awake. The day's lacuna, the nap. I'm caught in the low tide of dreams, at some interstice between conscious and not. They say that every face in a dream is one you've seen before and yet I've never seen any of these people in my life. I would know, don't piss me off.

Your voice through the door is an analeptic. The room comes back like I'm falling into it. Putting the pieces together, guessing the time.

A dream is a world divorced from the senses. In my dreams you're the only face there is that I can understand. The only face there is of whose every detail I could recreate with absolute surety. How could I fuck it up because look at you, look at you. I think that it could only be you. The groan of the doorhinge. The stirring of the cat at my feet. My eyes move in my skull. There you are. I was just talking to you. I was just thinking about you. I carry you everywhere I go. Even when you're away, you're still here. Even when I sleep, I look for you, I seek you out, and you're always there for me. You've burned into the back of me somewhere like an afterimage. It could only be you.



## SHOVELING

John Grey

Take a shovel to these grassy plains  
and you may unearth some old buffalo bones,  
or the skull of a horse, or the artefacts  
of the Lakota Sioux who rode him.

Could be you'll unearth a graveyard,  
a hundred years old or more,  
with the scratched stone of someone  
called Ebenezer who was married  
to Clara and had an unnamed baby  
who died at birth.

Might be the fencing of failed farms.  
Or some bullet casing.  
Or a much-rusted hunting rifle.  
Or the remains of a dog.

Anyways, this poem is a kind of shovel.  
It was written to save you the trouble.

# Sister Mary Augustus

John Atkinson

She adjusted her wimple, veil, and headdress to hide the grey hair only she knew flowed down her back, uncut for twenty-seven years, smiling with pride at her still wrinkle free face, while hidden under her flowing nun's habit, her stomach was flat, taut like an ironing board, with no stretch marks, mainly due to fasting for days in the convent, and in those occasional periods when eating was permitted, the meagre food consisted of a thin soup of vegetables and scraps of meat, and of course the fact she was never pregnant helped her muscle tone, which was not a surprise as she was a virgin, the original stereotype of a Catholic nun.

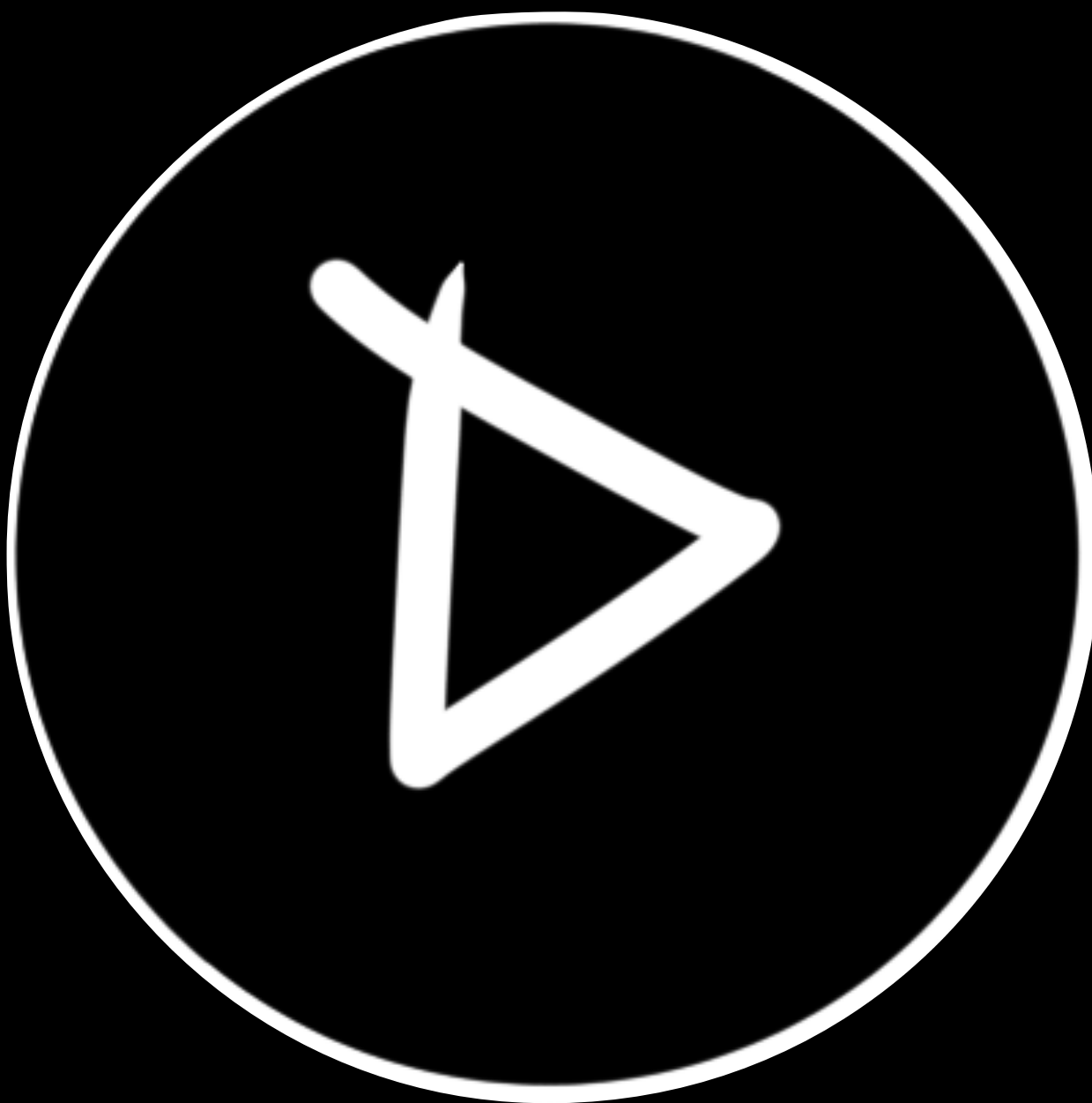
Out in the body of the church forty schoolchildren filed into the front pews, hands folded in a prayer-like attitude in front of them with their eyes intent on looking holy and good. She sighed, measured herself a safe distance away, checking them for tell-tale signs of deformity. She knew all the imperfections, the long bones and slender fingers of Marfan, the tight skin and trident fingers of children with Achondroplasia, the flattened features and single palmar crease of Down Syndrome.

Every time she clocked the signs of ailments, she thanked God for her vocation. Her time with her little sister and brother years before they died, and her mother was taken for psychiatric care were where

where her worst nightmares groaned through the darkness of her childhood. The idea of giving birth and having to nurture such a baby put her into a state of anxiety that only drugs—strong psychotic drugs, drugs administered at the highest doses—could calm her shattered emotions and stop her from crying long after her parents left her alone.

She opened her palms to face the children, inviting them to pray, ‘Hail Mary, full of...’ She closed her eyes, the children vanished, she inhaled deeply as the words *full of fear* filled her mind.





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“Smears of Makeup” by Lucia Quiros

“SHOVELLING” by John Grey  
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“Sister Mary Augustus” by John Atkinson  
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## In Wexford Orbit



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John Atkinson

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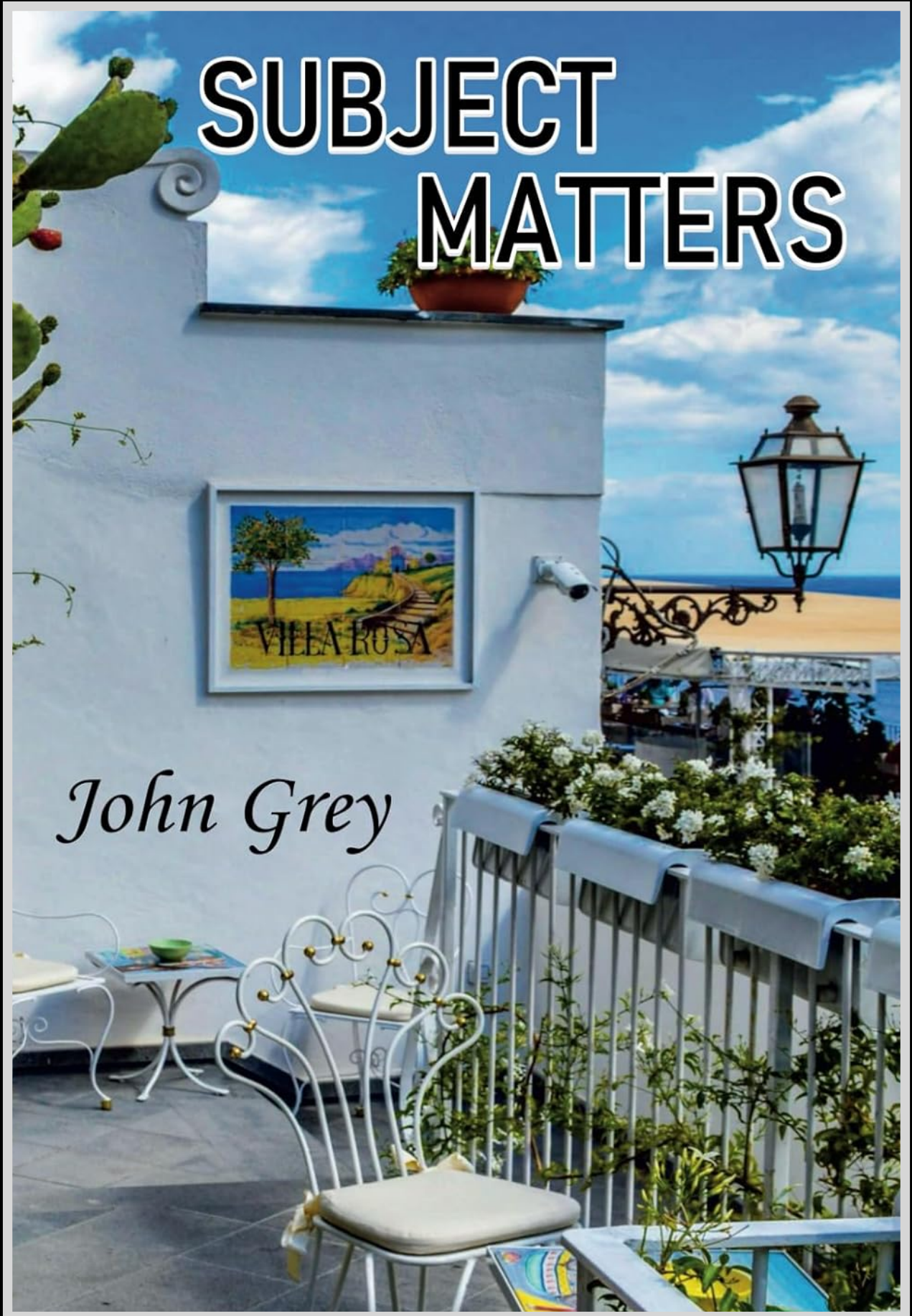


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