

miniMAG

issue 187

concept album





For Penelope Trappes

Savannah Manhattan

A requiem of cello
its maker, its source, its instrument
found face down
in the last snowfall of winter
The spring is uncertain
and the fates are impatient
A hatch releases a slow echo
followed by a rolling marble
navigating purposeless hallways
Even a red dove reverberates
and when you dream
you search for a way back home
and you always run for the train
Your tessitura is the search for the lost
and you are lost
You sleep as the wife of Odysseus sleeps
Followed by the mourning chorus
whose walls have mouths
and the mouths echo memories
Caro, the dirge
Caro, the dirge
Caro, the bane
Caro, the bane

This Commute is Someone Else's Love Song

Ewen Glass

Middle aged couple
hugging in the train station,
sw
ay
ing
to music we can't hear;
in memories maybe
or willing by rhythm
a future that runs as it's meant to.





Of Dew and Air

Kaetia Shayl

They were believed to be of dew and air. Born only to sing. Loved by those blessed enough to walk beneath the boroughs in which they perched. Loved by Apollo, loved by the Muses.

What it must be like, I wondered, to be born only to sing. To wait beneath layers of the cold until the sun hit its zenith. To emerge from the ground like a field of morning glory opening to the sun.

They sang about love. For love. Odes to the most sacred of human connection. The most corrupting. Only to fall to the moon and her frost.

To paint a melody using the glint of afternoon off the peaks of the Mediterranean. To dance along the flowers of olive trees, never knowing its fruit. To witness only which we speak of in myth.

When I heard their song in my youth I never thought this. I never saw them as a musically inclined harbinger of summer to come. Never heard them as the lyres of Elysium like ears of the past might have.

They are believed to be of mist and rot. Born only to warn of another presence. Cursed by those who open their car door to their ceaseless sound. Cursed by God, cursed by the angels.

What it must be like, I wonder, to be born only to die. To wait beneath rotting layers of sludge and oil until triple digit fahrenheit. To be wrought from an earthen grave to face Sonora and her endless concrete, asphalt.

They sing of pain. For pain. Odes to what this once was, and what it has now become. Humans. Humans. They finally join. Sonatas of pain as flesh is pressed against a burning ground.

To screech a dissonance using the spark of afternoon off the glass of Wells Fargo. To bleed against palo verde, falling with its last golden daughter. To witness what we choose to bear.

What we choose to bear. I wonder, when was the last time you've heard a cicada's song?





Tunnel Vision

Ghelia

I lie as still as the surrounding darkness –
in the confines of a medical tunnel,
of my own body,
listening to Tchaikovsky
and to magnets moving as ballet dancers.
This is a dance for survival.

Under my measured breath,
I wish for a body that is unrecognizable.
I succumb to a deadly, greedy sin,
and wish for more.
First, to be fluid,
the sun glimmering on the sea's surface.
Then, to be as light as ballerinas,
swaying to Tchaikovsky's *Intrada*.

Does a flightless bird ever gaze into the sky,
into the light at the end of the tunnel,
and wonder why it must battle gravity without wings?



Mothers, Giving and Taking

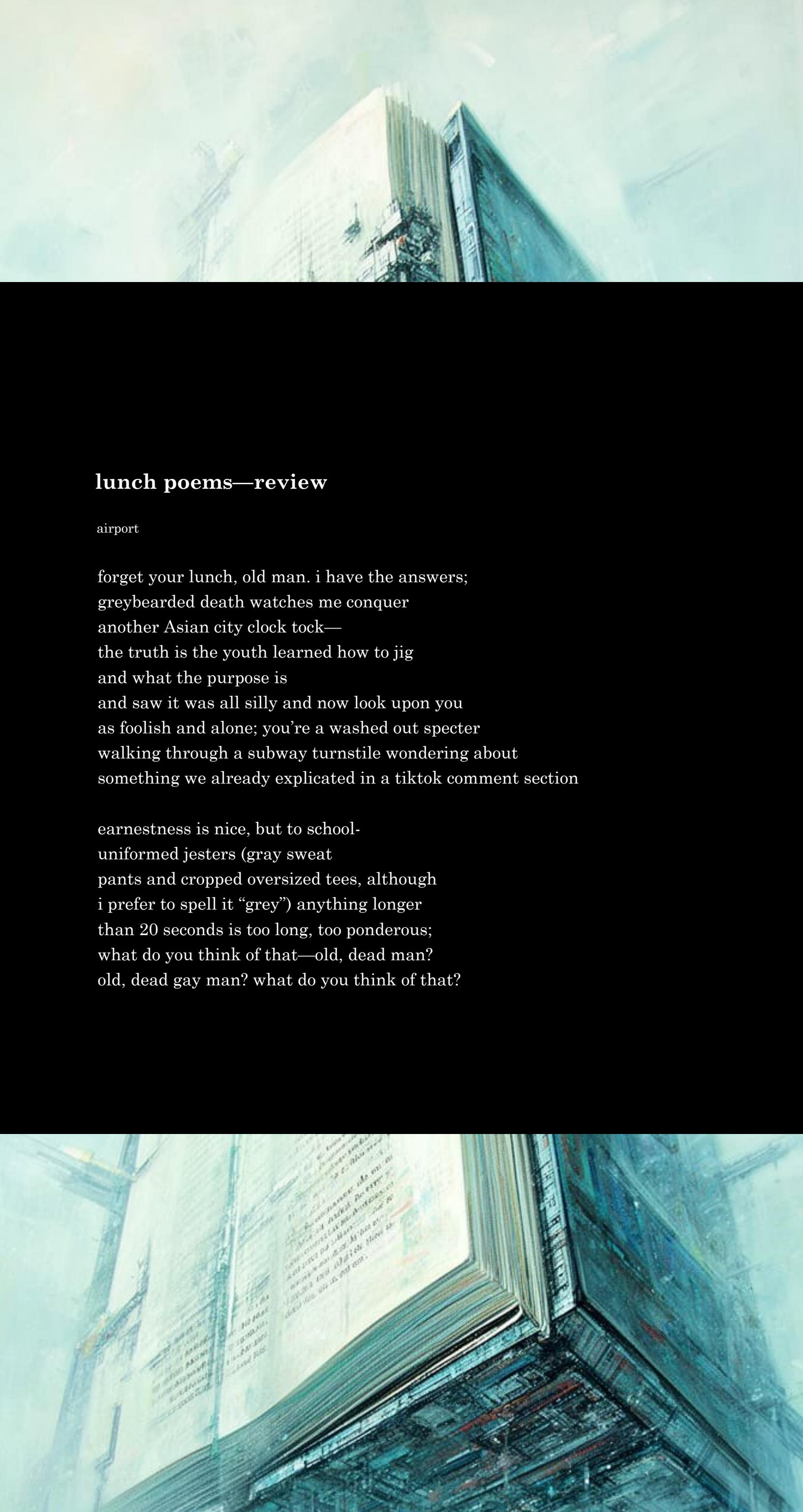
Allison Guan

In the eighties her mother
raised her right: put her in
piano classes. Pinched her sides
when she made mud pies.

Twenty years ago my mother
left for two thousand miles away.
Put me in piano classes.
Made me pies to eat and words to mold
from whatever tongue we shared.

In the twenty-twenties mother's mother
came to us, a whole language away.
Mud-flies stir beyond the window
as she rocks: front—back—
to the marred music that is
mystery to us both.

I know only the songs
piano classes have pressed into me.
She knows only tonal melodies
stolen from the sixties Chinese streets
beyond the four-story factories.



lunch poems—review

airport

forget your lunch, old man. i have the answers;
greybearded death watches me conquer
another Asian city clock tock—
the truth is the youth learned how to jig
and what the purpose is
and saw it was all silly and now look upon you
as foolish and alone; you're a washed out specter
walking through a subway turnstile wondering about
something we already explicated in a tiktok comment section

earnestness is nice, but to school-
uniformed jesters (gray sweat
pants and cropped oversized tees, although
i prefer to spell it “grey”) anything longer
than 20 seconds is too long, too ponderous;
what do you think of that—old, dead man?
old, dead gay man? what do you think of that?



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“For Penelope Trappes” by Savannah Manhattan
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Book: [The Deadname Triptych](#)

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Book: If You Stand in the Corner of the Spare Room
You Can Just About See the Sea

“Of Dew and Air” by Kaetia Shayl

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Insta: [@bibliophilistine](https://www.instagram.com/bibliophilistine)

“Mothers, Giving and Taking” by Allison Guan

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*If You Stand in the
Corner of the Spare
Room You Can Just
About See the Sea*



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