

miniMAG

issue 188

farm elegy





Vow

Jennifer Molnar

Harvest comes late, after the first snow fallen
then forgotten. At the field's edge, crows strip

husks into shreds that curl like the husband's hair.
Machinery swallows swaths of brittle stalks,

spits out dust. The crows huddle on a black branch,
bear witness to the only promise not broken:

all that was given will soon be taken back.



Tether

Rebecca Faulkner

I will no longer carve
your name in bark

like you mean everything

gather shiny conkers
for your return

what I thought
was wrong with me

is not wrong

your swing is tethered
to the horse-chestnut tree

I watch the rope twist
back & forth

eager for newfound freedom



Camp

Caridad Cole

I could hear
the wind but I
couldn't
feel it. There was a

warmth
on my skin
that didn't quite match
it: the cool

air moving
around me.
I look up,
nothing's coming

down. To the side,
a feather,
trying
to tickle my ear.

If it could, it would
say, "stay,"
telling sleepy lies.
If I could,

I would
feel the cold,
unafraid,
unexpectedly

warm as it goes. I would
break every window
to be
a ubiquitous me; glass

as smooth as water.
Pain
for a pane. Warm veins
for weather vanes. But

a house is
a home.
A ceiling fan to
breeze over us.

I hear little
branches
fall on the roof
at night.





Annalee

Erin Matheson Ritchie

You fashioned yourself a black widow
and me, a benevolent god –

hands big enough to hold the universe
and small enough for pinky promises –

but Annalee, they weren't big enough to
catch you when your web snapped.



Celestials Know

Salvatore Difalco

Distant holiday flares redden
the grey sky. Victoria Day is
a thing here. Walking fast
accomplishes two things.
The country is nice but I miss
the burning barrels of trash
and the graffiti. For now I
throw dogs on the grill
and crack open Bud Lights.
Even we must watch our waists
or be condemned as unfit
to serve our relative countries.
In the midst of all this feathering,
let me open a beach umbrella
to block out the evening sun as it
blazes down in the dusty west.
The others stand around like
monuments to a decadence
exhausted by itself. Enough
is enough as they used to say
in the prefecture rose beds,
after someone had pricked
a thumb and suckled it like a teat.
Before long a verdict will come
and we'll know who was wrong
and who was right, or who
had pull behind the scenes.
Roman candles burst at dusk.
We sigh over warmish beer
and tong the hot dogs on the grill.

tomcat hunts swampland

airport

howling at the moon
wasn't it enough
it never was; swamps
are chill and safe and slow
and slow... weren't
piles and stacks of concrete
skyrises enough
it never is; wouldn't
it all sink into a swamp hole
felt good? ideal?
wasn't it enough, can't
i zone out, zone in, be
in the moment, and i feel
when the sun shines over
the cattails and reeds
and i lock-in for a whole
day, and know i'm
helping, have purpose, but
the moon will be
back again, tonight, and
tomorrow, with hardly a
break, with only the
feeble sun standing
between me and lovely,
lonely oblivion, wasn't it
enough? to be wild
and free and twenty?
i'm older now but
when will i stop
being twenty, howling
at the moon, regretting
myself, and feeling like
i've chained myself to
a bed; can't i just
read in bed and fall
asleep?
Someday, the tomcat
will age, let go of
the bird in palm,
sink into the swamp
and promptly
somnambulate.

At 3am

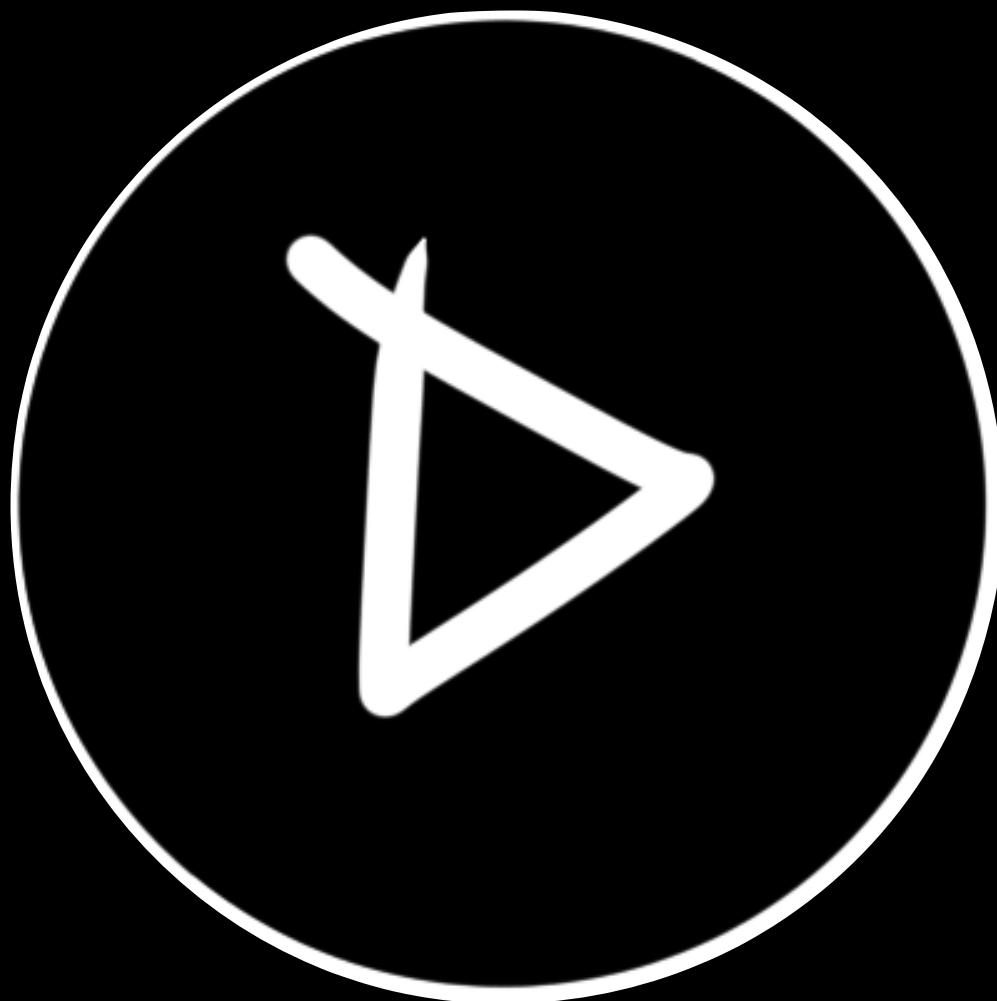
Rebecca Faulkner

the room contains no sound
but the rattle of a loose pane
wind nodding yes to the shimmy
of security lights weeds gather
in the alley giggling & pointing out

your shoes unlaced on the carpet

I know you meant to tie things up
before you left the night washed
tall & clean but in the hurry of endings
we forgot the crocuses trying so hard
iced in a gray dawn





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“Annalee” by Erin Matheson Ritchie

“Celestials Know” by Salvatore Difalco
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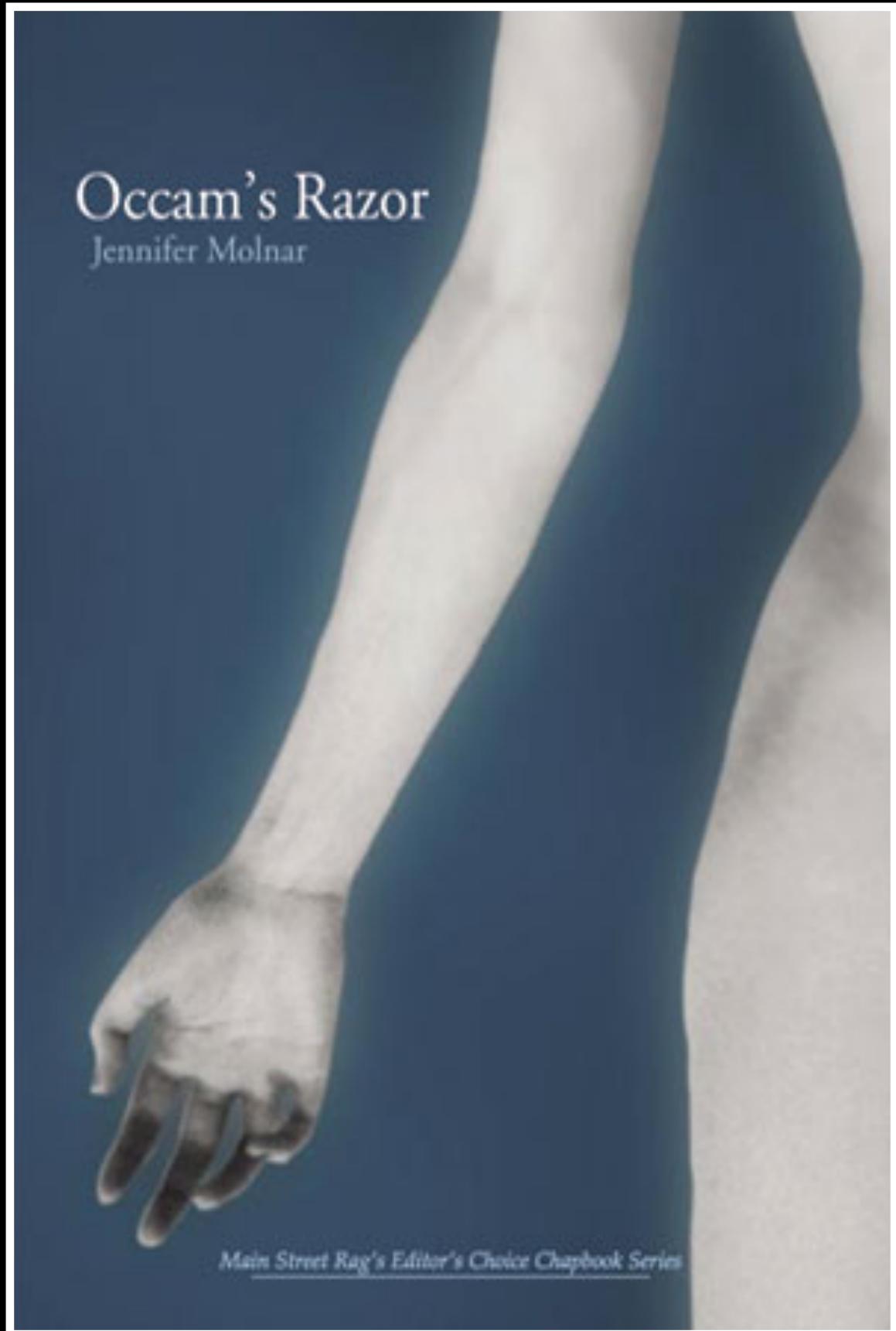
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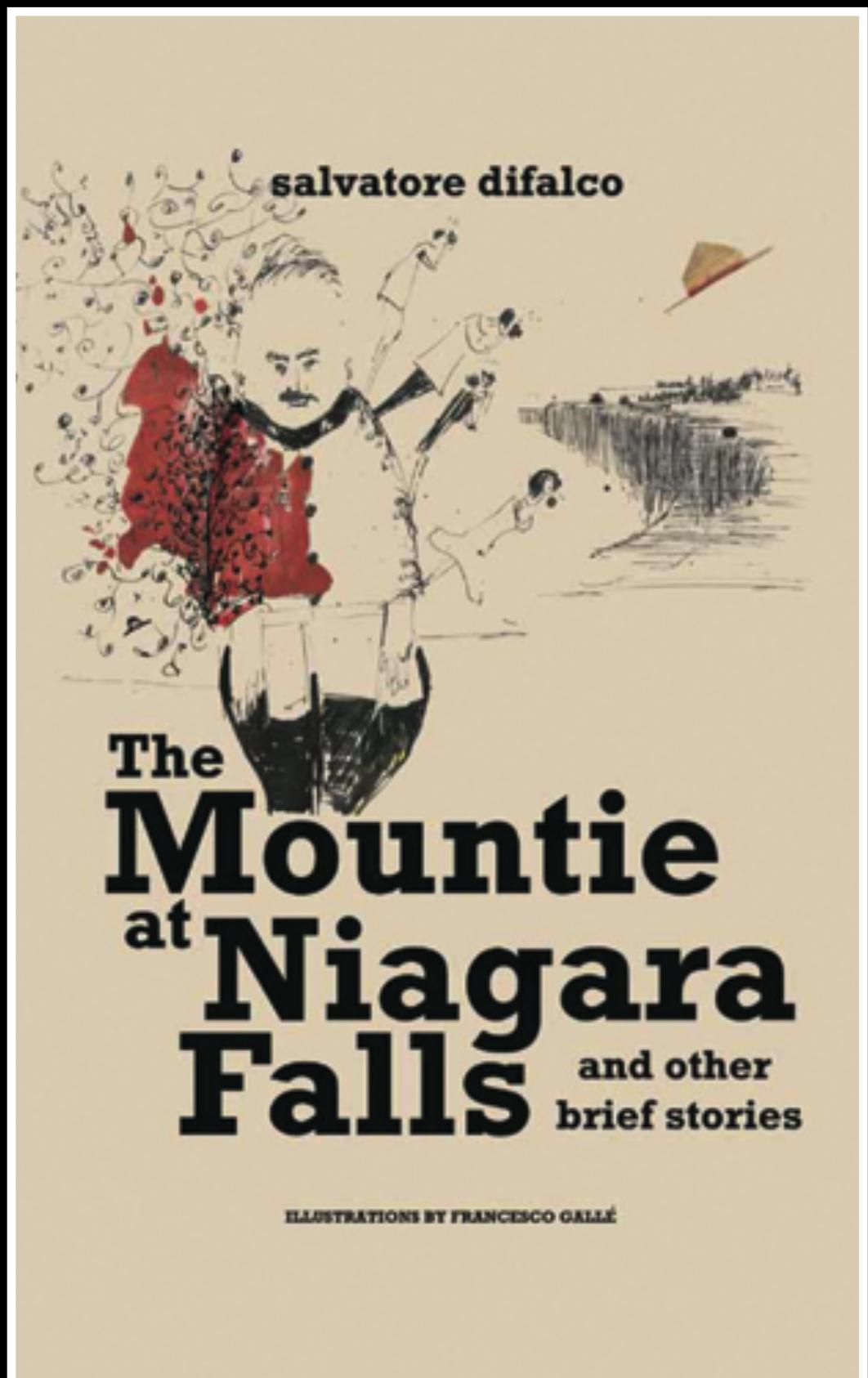
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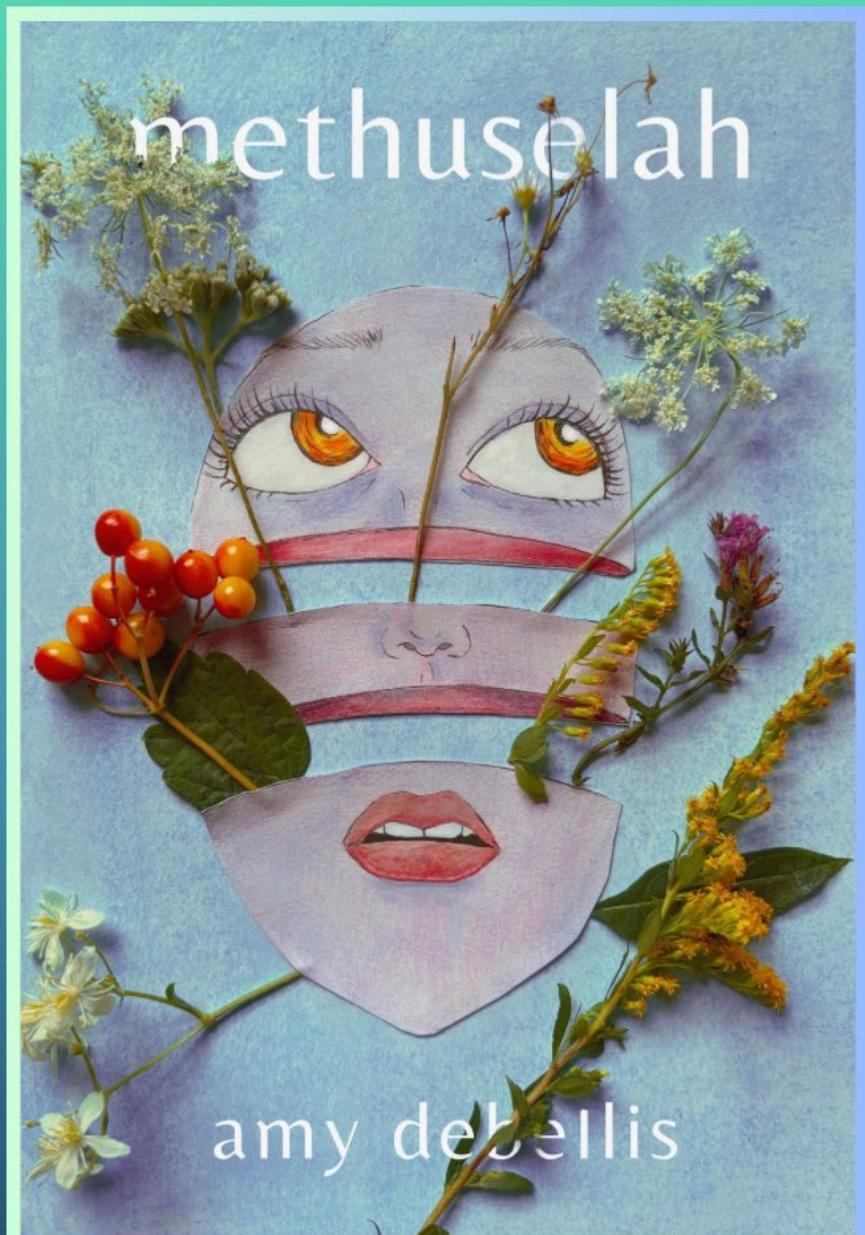
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