

miniMAG

issue207

long trek





DUNE SHAPE

Diane Webster

Wind furrows the sand dune;
a mimic of tall grasses
undulates its path
through prairie lands
like covered wagons
crossing the Oregon Trail –
a vertigo effect of standing still
as the earth shifts in mocking sight.

A grain of sand irritates your eye
with blurry pearl vision
of shadows plowing
landscape into heat waves,
plunging over the sand dune ridge
shifting shapes like prairie schooner
canvas flapping in the wind.



migration

CJ The Tall Poet

Three family oriented Masked Boobies
Unsullied by harsh weather conditions
Played prideful recreations
Criticized backhanded sophistry
and summoned some shadows
Migration can be convoluted sometimes



30,000 Pounds of Bananas

Jennifer Weigel

The self-driving semi easily rounded another sharp turn of the mountain road without incident. Bethany slept in the driver's seat after having finished her coffee and abandoned her morning newspaper. She knew better than to be on her phone as that technology could interfere with the truck's capabilities and any resulting inattentiveness on her behalf was more easily traceable by her employers and the government agencies, but there was no harm in sleeping on the job. Not anymore anyways, because no one would know since the cab wasn't outfitted with video surveillance and the truck could handle itself. With the self-driving technology as agile and responsive as it was, Bethany really only amounted to traveling pit crew, and she was totally okay with that. It made her job easy.

Unfortunately, Bethany was still asleep when the truck's auto-adjusting adaptive sensor glitched. She was coming down the two-mile drop towards Scranton, Pennsylvania, unaware that the semi hadn't shifted into low-gear of its own accord as required by both law and circumstance. The load, some 15-tons of bananas, began to take on speed as it careened down the slope towards the waiting earth below—momentum having locked the vehicle and cargo in its trajectory while gravity waited hungrily for its quarry to slip into its embrace. The increased speed and jarring movement stirred Bethany from her slumber.

Her hazel eyes grew wide as she spat the word "Jesus!" and slammed on the brake, but to no avail. The semi screeched downward

through the town, the sound of the brakes and screaming metal causing anyone and anything within miles to flinch as if fingernails had scraped across some karmic chalkboard somewhere. Again. The truck tumbled onward, the self-driving sensor beeping alarm in waves of red light and noise, but there was no way to escape. Bethany's and the vehicle's fates were spun in the terrifying nightmare scenario, this horrific dream she wished she'd never awoken to. The semi finally began to lose momentum as it felled thirteen telephone poles, two houses, and a thankfully-empty bus, crushing parked cars and small trees like paper boats beneath its heavy, hot wheels which smelled of burnt rubber and left black scorch marks in their wake. In the chaos, the trailer flipped onto its side and the back doors flew open, raining ripening bananas in a smeary slump for four-hundred yards until the truck finally came to a stop.

Poor Bethany had met her death by decapitation while wholly reliving the Harry Chapin song from over 50 years prior, first released in 1974. It seemed, despite the decades and the technology, that history was forever destined to repeat itself, another 30,000 pounds of bananas having plummeted to their doom along that same treacherous path leading into Scranton, Pennsylvania.





APRIL, MAY AND JUNE

John Grey

Is it just coincidence
that the months of Spring
are all the names of women?

Perhaps not.
April was the first girl
whose presence gave off warmth.
May was a waft of perfume
that latched onto my nostrils
like a chain.
And June bloomed beautifully,
flowered ostentatiously.

And yet,
April was cold at night.
May sprinkled her wares
injudiciously.
And June was plucked
by the ones who got
there before me.

Actually
growing up
in the upside down world
of the southern hemisphere,
April, May, June
were the months of my fall.

Yet, even then,
the analogy holds.

The Climb

Gordana Karakashevska

Everyone around me dropped like flies. But wait. Slowly. Don't get upset just yet. I'm only speaking figuratively. I'm taking a deep breath. You should take one, too.

So, here I am, clinging to the wall which, in this place, represents some steep face of a rocky mountain. My gloves are sweaty, my forehead is beaded with tiny drops of perspiration, and above my upper lip, I have a mustache of invisible sweat. Can you imagine me? Can you see me? What I am doing right now is indoor rock climbing. I'm dancing on the wall. I am tied to a rope. My rope. I am twenty meters up now. Less than a month ago, I switched from traditional climbing to crag climbing. I want to climb this artificial wall made of plastic for a very simple and practical reason: because I am a simple man, and when I am on the wall with my rope, nothing else exists for me—not in my head, not in my eyes. Just me and the wall.

When I first started climbing, I suffered a really bad injury to my left knee. I fell. I don't even know how. For a moment, I was down, but I got up quickly. The next morning, I couldn't walk. I couldn't take a single step. I cried. The knee wasn't swollen. I debated going to the doctor because it was the weekend. I didn't go because every day I hoped it would get better. The truth is, I was in pain all summer. Now, I'm fine. But that's why I move very slowly now.

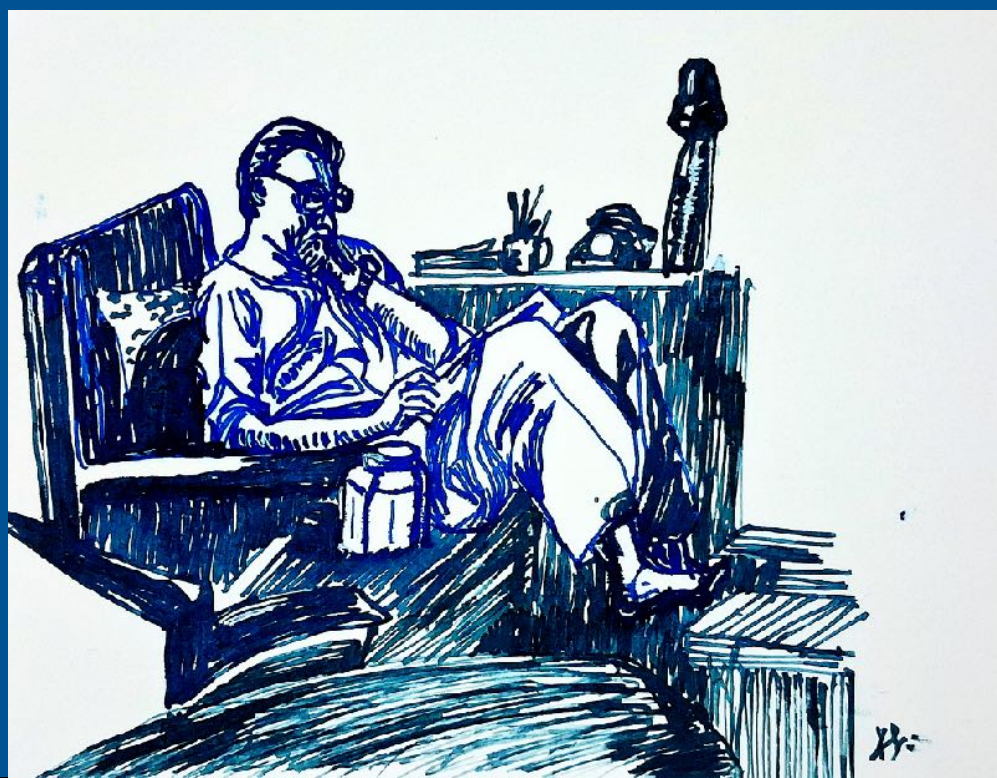
As I am splayed out there on all fours like some giant spider, I tend to think slowly about everyday life and the smallest details. About

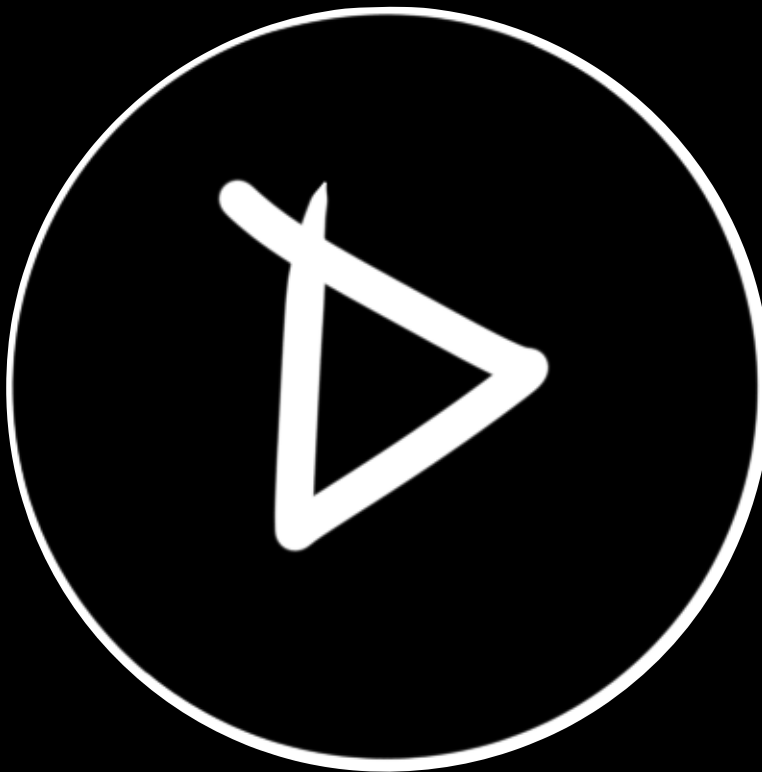
Teresa. She is my everything... Does that sound banal? Some of you won't even believe me. And why should you? You don't know me; you don't recognize me.

Anyway, here I am, climbing this bouldering wall and thinking of Teresa, my wife who likes to wear silver bracelets on both wrists. I think of a distant summer day when Teresa and I left Ohrid and Lake Ohrid behind us and, one by one, climbed the narrow forest paths among the tall pines—cheerful and high-spirited, smiling and happy. The path itself led us to the peak from where we could see almost the entire Lake Ohrid spread out before us in all its magnificent beauty; only there, at the summit, is the forest air so pure.

That climb along the forest path and this climb on the bouldering wall feel like our climb through life. How many times have I thought about leaving my wife Teresa, who likes to wear so many silver bracelets on both arms? How many times have I wanted to say to her: "It's over. This is as far as we go," but I couldn't—I never had the courage to utter those words. How many times have I just wanted to leave Teresa, the Teresa who grew more silent as she aged, more sorrowful. That Teresa in whom, at age fifty, ghosts from forty years ago woke up and gave her no peace. How many times did I want to walk away forever from the Teresa who wants to die, from this Teresa who thinks only of dying. From this Teresa I felt like screaming at: "Stopppppp! Stop! Don't you see you're destroying me, too! You only talk of bitterness and illness! Try to be a little happy! Kiss me. Kiss me. Hold me. Embrace me. Smile at me... Nooooo... None of that. You! You! You only know pain and you only speak of pain."

I descend the bouldering wall slowly and wearily. My knee hurts. Rainy weather is coming.





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“APRIL, MAY AND JUNE” by John Grey
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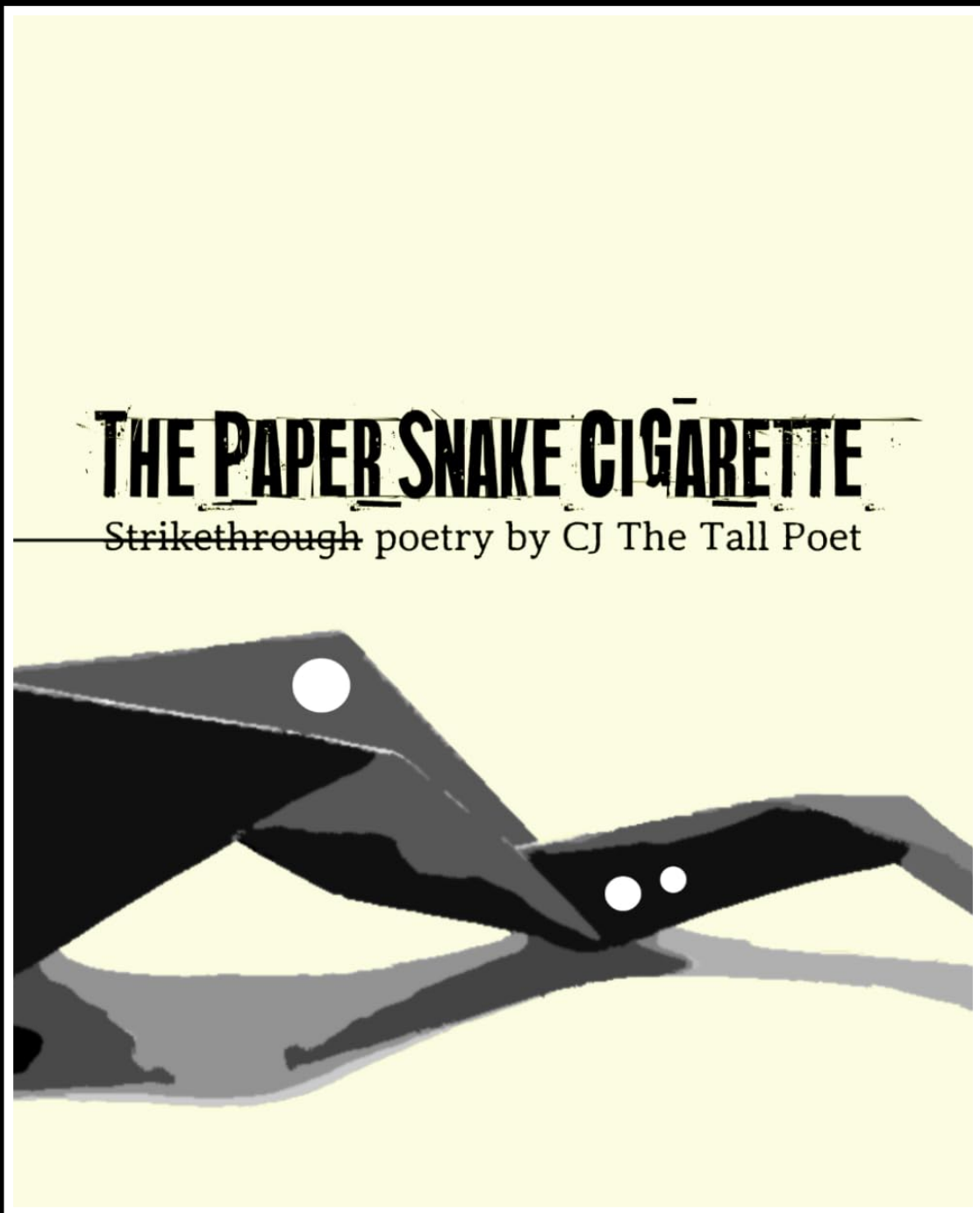
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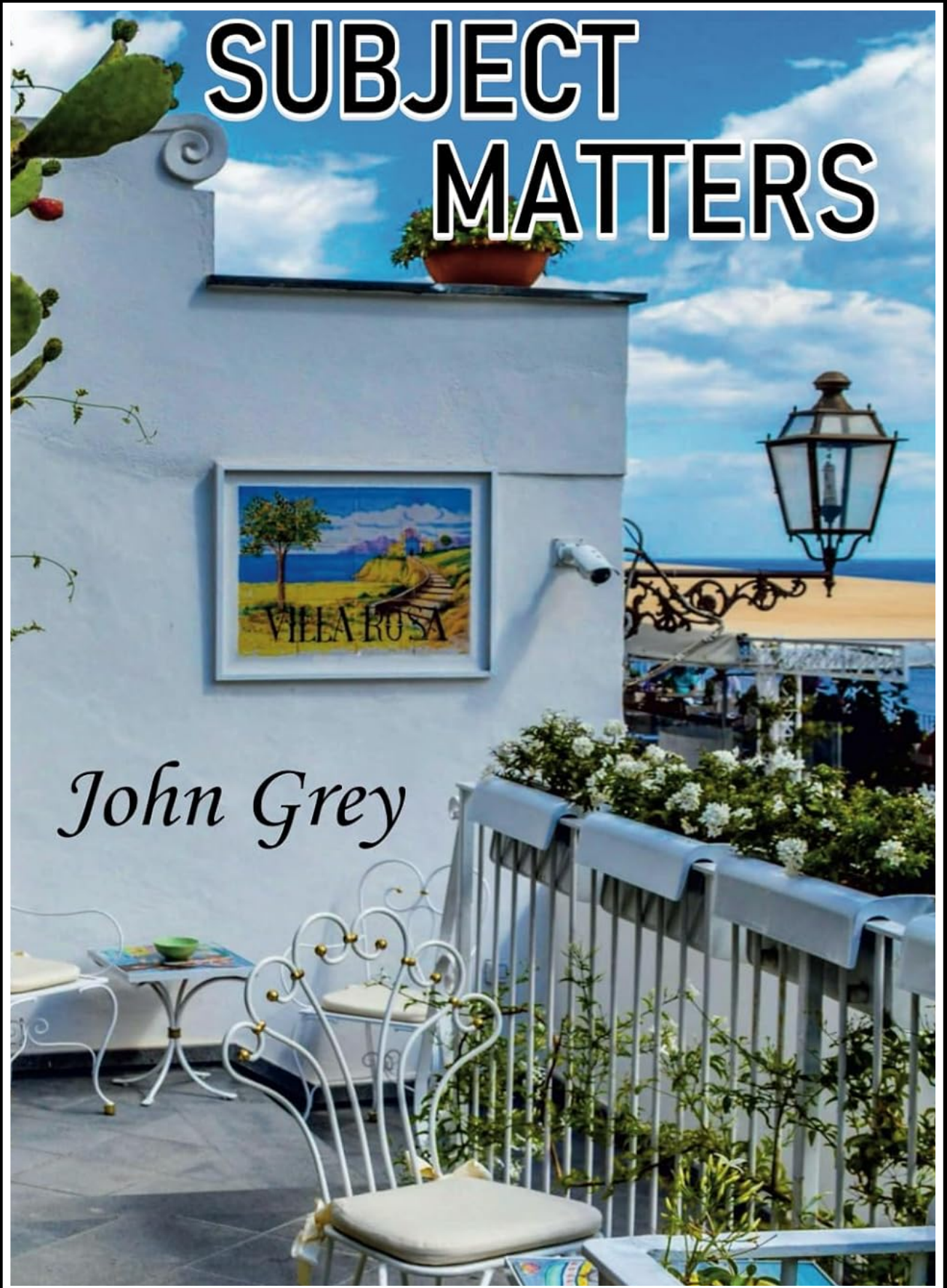
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