

Late Summer Night's Dream

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Our Intertwining
By Megan Grumbling

Under the forest, under the sea
we entangle, we entwine
our fronds and feathers, fingers and fins.
We spool, wind, interweave
in sloughed skin, scales, and leaves
in strands of eelgrass, of mycelium, of our own hair black or brown or silver-blonde.

Untethered in our underworlds, loosening our selves
in salt and soil, silt and sand,
we ticklingly mingle our talons and nerves,
tentacles and gills, our trails of microbes.
We trade fibers, chemicals, blue-bright electrical thrums.
We trade breath.

Entangling, we undo each other's bounds and grow our bonds.
Entwining, we become less self, less any single spoor or eyelash, whisker or stem,
and become more *we*, a flickering whorl
of beings dissolving and restoring,
cells never same or still, ever a rush of prism and rinse.
Sloughing and spooling, entangling and entwining,
we are many times alive.

In the pink we say, and what we mean
is *in the flush*, the pulse, the hum,
a warm and shimmering synchrony of selves.

Under the forest, under the sea
amidst our fronds and feathers, fingers and fins,
we braid and bestow, borrow and become
each other.

Walk Cycles
By Zina Mohamed

Contact, Down, Pass, Up

Animate your movements

Tiny legs jerk side to side shifting my weight lower & lower in the past position

Jarring to look at districtly fumblin with there legs like an animated characters from The Dover Boys at Pimento University

Short on time smeared for movement

Contact, Down, Pass, Up

I held her hand that grasp of noise

I moved with the hold of my colorless Heim

I look around my wonders towards a destination unknown

Contact, Down, Pass, Up

Pose to Pose

These positions determine my walk they bear the weight of my confusion on my knees

My arms were like the black laces at the sides scraped and tied

The traction of my shoes clung thick like lard on bread

Contact, Down, Pass, Up

I aimed to catch up

Slower than my parents faster than the noise itching from the open door I

am Here

Up, Pass

There walk is a difunctional cadence

Forward facing never dipping down the perspective points guideline

Down, Contact Weary

of the destination

Higher & higher each bounce presses them forward

Tire towards the sordid representation

Contact, Down, Pass, Up

I wait for the summer light peaking through the door to ring an echo of linear time

I hold my latest relic tight

Tighter and Tighter till my hold is no longer needed until the intensity of relic is my admission of my acceptance

Filled with whispers and like a blanket of unheard echoned lines

Contact, Down, Pass, Up

Discern a language with no lexicon

An amalgamation of time plays

Unfazed this tune is familiar

Contact, Down, Pass, Up

I am Here

Beneath the Sea

Beneath the sky

Beneath the Boggy Ground

I am Here

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Pinky & The Pinks

By Jefferson Navicky

In the pink gloaming, their chosen family of three frolicked in an ulterior mode of time. To frolic is a pink thing.

Filly or hairy, their bones were discovered to be collaborative. Never before had scientists found an animal made by 5000 other animals pieced together like a living quilt, so many hands helped to breathe life into the pink muffin creatures.

And then just when everyone had gotten used to the presence of their magic, the creatures ran away and disappeared for millennia. Sometimes to vanish is a sudden storm of grief. Sometimes relief. And sometimes, in order to remake yourself, you need distance. A lot of distance.

The pink frilly things walked out of the White Mountains and started a band together. The rumors started immediately: some said, they're the offspring of Big Foot & a Giant Hair Scrunchie; others said Big Foot & A Huge Mop & A Pink Bath Bomb. Some said there's a giant pink mold mushroom hidden deep in the forest and one day during a picnic a young girl dropped a cupcake on a mushroom and a dog promptly ate both the cupcake and that mushroom, got very sick, pooped everything out, but...this story isn't really appropriate.

I love you, Pinky & The Pinks. They play the only-audible-to-the-subconscious songs of the spheres and among those who know such things, they're like the Pink Beatles of Quiet Drone. Where did they come from? Where are they going?

I love them.

Shaggy Friends.

They sing a silent humming hit single that goes like this, Don't listen to your parents, Forget the onset of doubt, Don't listen to the old knowledge, Forget the dumb stuff and the old ways of doing things just because they've always been done that way. They call their hit single, "Be Your Own Frilly Pink Thing."

They're ruthless.

Pink mothers who always side with the kids and the babies and the dogs and the cats.

Their songs are the soundtrack to my abandon. And listen, to yours too. Won't you have a listen?

Elephant Seals

Muffled thunder like clouds rolling over
in sleep, and mirrored underneath—
such gray sodden bodies, enormous slugs

with Spandexed buttocks and thighs.
One, with his long dangling nose
like something lunar, tumorous, lumbers

across the sand, nudging through others who arf,
who rise on fins, then belly-flop down.
Easy to argue from nature anything

at all—dead end in evolution's maze,
or evidence of God's wild earthy wit.
But the bulls argue over their harems,

one youth galumphing toward a battle-scared
alpha who rears and roars, till the upstart
backs off, biding his time. Around them

the sea sputters, rain pocks the sand, the pod
piles up. If this is the utterly other,
still, when one drowsy-eyed mother,

lolling as her baby nuzzles in to nurse,
lifts a fringed, finger-like fin to scratch,
everyone watching feels an itch.

--Betsy Sholl, from *Rough Cradle* (Alice James Books)

Wildflowers

And it was commanded them that they should not
hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing...

—Revelation 9. 4

Consider the way they shudder in the aftermath
of coal trucks, farm trucks, the fast red car,

the way they sway in the backwind
of passing's vacuum, bending into the void,

the small rustle of what's left in the wake,
whatever is said on the edge of our leaving—

chicory, ironweed, aster, thistle, Joe-pye,
poorest of the poor—the way they stand

as if anonymous, knowing themselves
to be the blur passersby barely see,

the way they disappear when winter storms in,
and then come crowding back in spring,

the ground loving them the way it does not
love the golf course with its sleek chemical green—

coreopsis, milkweed, bittersweet, goldenrod,
sumac, wild carrot—

the way they bow to the passing waves
that release their seeds, needing only a little wind

to lift them across the field, a little rain,
a small crack in the hardpan to grow,

to possess the earth, as scripture says
they will, don't worry.

--Betsy Sholl, from *Otherwise Unseeable* (University of Wisconsin Press)

“In the pink”—

is a phrase I feared was just another of those horribly blatant old sayings, this one assuming health belongs only to those with flushed fair skin. But happily I was wrong or partly wrong, because the phrase is from the 1500’s when pink was a perky flower and didn’t name a color for close to 200 more years. What we call pink was a shade of red and because all reds were strong it was liked by men, perhaps until the Nazis used pink triangles to designate certain brothers and sisters, who now years later can openly proclaim bright pink banners of freedom and delight. Meanwhile there are those flowers we call pinks which grew in my childhood garden, where I’d lie sniffing like Ferdinand the bull. Later, pink once predicted anemia when in high school I exploded a test tube, and the teacher said my pale blood meant I needed iron. As a color pink needs red and white the way flamingos need shrimp. Google “101 Pink Things,” and you get gems, flowers, fruit, then starting with # 60: pine grosbeaks, pink-headed fruit doves, pink robins and katydids, Southern carmine bee-eaters, small elephant hawk-moths, amazon river dolphins, roseate skimmers, the great queen conch, manta rays, scorpion fish, pigs, shrimp, purple harlequin toads— Oh friends! what a remarkable world, what an astonishing, marvelous and varied world, we with our pink tongues and innards have been given to walk on lightly and share.

--Betsy Sholl

On Eagle Lake

There used to be rivers of butterflies.
Now there are years with none.
This is a village of ghosts.

Homer Aridjis, Naturalist & Poet
Contepec, Mexico

Peel time off the blue air of morning, or sunlight off the lake's surface.
That's what I did, drifting so easy you could hear pickerelweed
brushing the sides of the canoe. The gods are like that sometimes,
no credit to me. One moment oxygen pressed out of my heart, the next
some angel slips a feather of light in my hand.

Who knows why

I wanted to be swallowed in that dawn mist. And I don't give a whit
anyone says finding reasons after the fact is like predicting
yesterday's weather. I was meant to save one butterfly, this monarch
an early frost put in my hand. None of the monarch orange and stars
dressed over velvety wings and black, twig-like body had paled.
In cupped hands, lifting its ounce of brilliance, I breathed
over the petal-like wings. Breathed. And breathed again.

I could tell more how I did that, drifting through lake smoke
most the next half hour, occasionally paddling, sometimes breathing
over a knee with the monarch, till mist started thinning and sun
warmed on my cheek. Wings were trembling now like harp strings.
Yes, it flew—

I'd like to tell to that forest in Mexico they migrate,
hundreds of thousands filling the trees, their wings folding, opening
like small fans, every tree limb covered in monarchs. What I've got
is morning sun, this lake, breathing in my hands.

Martin Steingesser

Tremolo

Light wind in a hidden pine—
Listen close—the sound gets better.

Han-shan, 700-780 a.d.

1.

Stand still. Wait
under the bowed limbs
of a great father pine.
Forget perfect knowing—

watch for the slow lift
and fall of branches,
a tremolo in pine needles,
how limbs sign,

inviting air, wind
for voice.
I don't expect you to believe
this elder conifer

alongside a two-lane blacktop,
rush after rush of cars
speeding past,
would speak.

Sorry,
I hear myself
softer than a whisper
address the tree,

I do that,
meaning
how I drive by
or walk forest paths

without a word
or thought for them,
and it comes to me,
for all our engines

and speed
I too am rooted
here
in an inborn longing

to flower
not unlike a cloud
of dogwood
or apple blossoms.

2.

Walking out into new fields
through lush, high grass,
scattering
a flash of blackbirds,

suddenly
there is wind—
the cicadas
lift their bows,

there is a low moan
as from a cello,
a clear
wild cry

beyond the woods.
Whose hands, what fingers
travel the keys,
lightly skipping

slender branch
to branch, what breath
among leaves,
reeds of grasses?

Martin Steingesser