

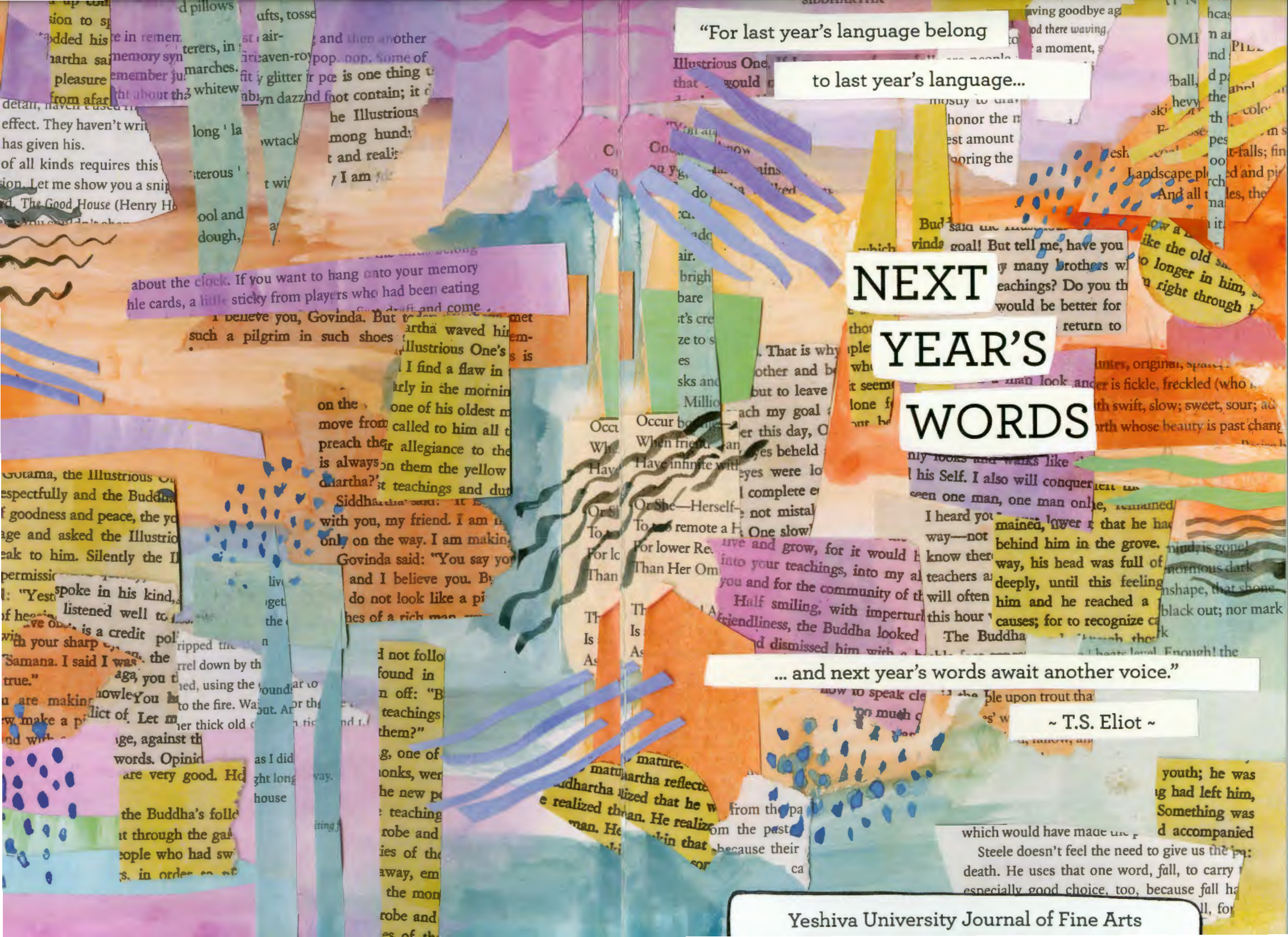
"For last year's language belong

to last year's language...

# NEXT YEAR'S WORDS

... and next year's words await another voice."

~ T.S. Eliot ~



“Last season’s fruit is eaten  
And the fullfed beast shall kick the empty pail.  
For last year’s words belong to last year’s language  
And next year’s words await another voice.  
But, as the passage now presents no hindrance  
To the spirit unappeased and peregrine  
Between two worlds become much like each other,  
So I find words I never thought to speak  
In streets I never thought I should revisit  
When I left my body on a distant shore.  
Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us  
To purify the dialect of the tribe  
And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight,  
Let me disclose the gifts reserved for age  
To set a crown upon your lifetime’s effort.  
First, the cold friction of expiring sense  
Without enchantment, offering no promise  
But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit  
As body and sould begin to fall asunder.  
Second, the conscious impotence of rage  
At human folly, and the laceration  
Of laughter at what ceases to amuse.  
And last, the rending pain of re-enactment  
Of all that you have done, and been; the shame  
Of things ill done and done to others’ harm  
Which once you took for exercise of virtue.  
Then fools’ approval stings, and honour stains.  
From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit  
Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire  
Where you must move in measure, like a dancer.”  
The day was breaking. In the disfigured street  
He left me, with a kind of valediction,  
And faded on the blowing of the horn.”

~ T.S Eliot ~

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## The Eddington Limit

Jacob Stone

Last night, I read about the Eddington Limit,  
As natural of a law as  
Inertia or the passage of time.  
There must be an equilibrium, it states,  
Between the outward radiation  
And inward gravitation  
Of a star.

Dear Eddington,  
Would it not have been more  
Beautiful if stars could  
Flare brighter and brighter,  
Until their light blinded you  
Like the light that police shine  
In the eyes of drunk drivers?

The limit can be broken, though.  
When a star gets too bright,  
It can keep shining, converting  
Its mass into energy to emit the  
Extra electromagnetic waves.  
It can consume itself like a  
Cannibal whose throat  
Has been bone dry for days,  
Pining for his own atrophied flesh.

## Evidence of Art

Chana Weiss



## Faces

Rachel Herschmann



## The Galaxy's Tempo

Gabriella Englander

Beneath the humming gaze of Galaxy,  
Clouds shed their summer slumber  
Into thunder, twined as sterling spores,  
Albino powder, winged oars,  
Which stir nature's umber bed  
Into a woolen terrace, white-wed.  
Moonlit stardust ponders air,  
And sheaths silver poplars bare  
Skeleton in lace veil.  
When gust-chimes through willows wail,  
Vines spooled with ice-dripped pearls  
Graze lakes' glazed swirls,  
En-marbled with crystal fossil, fixed-foam,  
Alabaster alchemy, metallic-chrome.  
Frosted fields of ferns unfurl,  
Snowdrops and crocuses uncurl  
Into a pale-draped tableau,  
Beneath the Galaxy's tempo.

## Little House on the Prairie

Aryeh Korman



## Spirits of Another Sort

Elana Luban

Swing open, shutters! Shed upon me rays  
of amber. Sunbeams amorous shall gaze  
into my window as I dress in morn,  
as night is torn apart, and day is born.  
So drag away the drooping cloak of death,  
and let me hear the summer's whispering breath.  
And if I sing, and spring like springtime's sprite  
into the brimming brooks of love and light,  
and if my laugh rings loud, or if I free my hair,  
please keep away your stony, specter's stare.  
For death is endless-long and life is short -  
let us be spirits of another sort.

## Haunted

Shoshy Ciment

My father is having an affair with God  
Last night he picked up his phone and whispered to the other end that  
he would be there soon  
Shoved his keys into his jeans and slammed the door  
Left my living room pregnant with cologne scented silence

Three hours later I knew he was back because  
his headlights danced on my bedroom walls and cast  
phantom masks on my knick knacks  
He sat in his car for twenty minutes before the lights went off

I imagine he emerges from His chamber each night  
tangled in white shrouds  
the star kissed linoleum tiles,  
reminding him to get home  
He has another life

Before God came into the picture my dad was  
the first act of a Greek tragedy  
He had it all figured out and I knew him well  
I thought  
I knew him so well

The Rabbis teach you to admire those people  
Preparing the dead is the kindest deed you can do  
they say  
My father, I guess  
I admire him  
Mom says "It is not easy to do His work"  
while she prepares his dinner

She says she is proud of him, when I ask  
but  
she doesn't say she tried once and  
couldn't stop hearing voices  
Seeing their profiles beneath white sheets

When I was seven, my brother and I saw a movie where  
a man's face melted off like jelly  
We held our palms on our eyes and screamed but my dad just laughed  
and then I noticed  
his eyes colorless and sunken like  
a corpse  
regarding death with ease  
a rendezvous, a lover's bed

## Little House on the Prairie

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## Coffee

Michal Neiman



## Permission to Write

Neta Chizhik

O'Hare:

"Now I am quietly waiting for the catastrophe of my personality to seem beautiful again, and interesting and modern"

I should have been born earlier  
If not earlier than more pronounced,  
My birth should have been shouted from the rooftops,  
Suburban ones, no less,

I should have known to grab the pen sooner,  
I should have used the power of that pen and gave it my all  
Whatever that would mean

But these words were not mine to use,  
And they had not been mine to share,  
Who was I to write them,  
to break the code I held so dear,  
And dare to share them

I kept saying that I also need a story,  
a voice to bring it all along  
I had them both  
Everyone told me so  
but I knew not how to find them and quell them  
Who was I to enter the scene  
And try to dabble in what was reserved for the greats  
I was not living in the Village,  
Nor some provincial town,  
I did not live under a dictatorship, did not fear for my life,  
My father had not abandoned my family,  
Nor write blank checks  
to support nights out in Montmartre

what my father did share were the stories,  
of widows left weeping after the war,  
a child left hungry, abandoned,  
The chestnut trees on the boulevard,  
In his home, his Kiev,  
Those were his to tell.  
To romanticize,  
They were not mine to share,

Late at night, my father would sing to us,  
And I would see the child, the pained woman,  
Her husband never returning, her prodigy left orphaned,  
My father's voice would crack,  
In his accented English he would try to explain,



To his American daughters,  
Daughters who only knew these stories from his tales,  
Safely tucked into bed, we'd listen,  
Never knowing that in the East,  
Children were still busy playing war in the playground,  
And hearing their parents weep late into the night,  
Unable to sing to their little ones,

The immigrant story had been his, had been theirs,  
America had heard this narrative before,  
She did not need one more voice crying to her,  
She grew tired of being serenaded, pleaded with,  
She did not need my story,  
And I could not give her one she wanted,

I thought I could disguise myself,  
Or dare to share despite this being not my own,  
What if I forged it all?  
Pretended to take it and mold this piece into what I could say I had done?

I could hear the voice before they came,  
Loud, with an almost accusatory tone,  
They'd point at me, skepticism dripping from each word, each syllable;  
"why, she's too young to know of the Soviet days"  
and I would laugh, glad they couldn't see my jumper,  
the long braid my mother managed to force my hair into,  
they wouldn't see the sandwiches kids would tease me for,  
lunch was the best way to blend in, and at that, I failed too,  
or the words they heard, a language they had not known,  
they said it sounded harsh,  
I told them it was out of preservation, survival,  
We didn't have time to speak softly,

I'd weave my yearning into a  
Poem,  
Pour out all my wrath,  
As a divine power once did in Egypt,  
Freeing a people that had not known anything beyond their enslavement,

I would try and try to write them,  
Some parts would stick to the papers,  
And then I'd toss these words, all crumpled,  
into a trash can,  
or the closed bag hanging off a door handle,  
just to scrawl a new one  
A better one a bit later,  
Someone would come upon my waste basket  
and go through the crumpled Magic, claiming it their own,  
My words uttered by a foreign accent,  
An intruder,  
Taking my words, they would shove these papers into their

Pockets, look up and smile at me, patting at my head,  
Their dog to patronize

Back at home they'd uncrumple,  
their finding, iron it out

events, cocktails shared after work, email  
exchanges,  
things I lacked the confidence to pursue,  
they would pursue, with such vigor,  
how easy it was to be so engaged with the work,  
to promote it and stand confidently uttering each sound,  
when it was not your own,

who was I to publish my own writing,  
who was I to project my voice,  
to weave stories and present them as mine,  
Mine.

I would try to share,  
I would show up to an open mic,  
A non-boyfriend boyfriend would invite me,  
Bringing his friends along for some, unexpected, unwanted reason  
And I would see these poets and singers and actors  
And someone would get up  
A shy man  
He would describe the cold Moscow nights,  
The chestnut trees,  
The liberties stripped from him  
And I would raise my hand,  
Say me too!  
Or, more accurately,  
that's my story!  
I have that too,  
Sticking my hand in my pocket,  
Thinking my hand would fall upon the paper,  
But it wouldn't,

I would find an eraser,  
With blunted edges,  
having been used more than the pencil,  
And realize that paper had been neglected  
I was quicker to erase what I wanted,  
never letting the ink sink in,  
I didn't have time to process the words,  
They had to be erased before they were seen.

## Bruce

Rebecca Kerzer

Every Monday, I stride by the floral shops on 26th and breathe in the greens. I call it Monday Therapy. I sniff the plants and peruse the jungly aisles. My favorite are the succulents -- these little colorful cacti -- because they look like they belong in another world and I like that. They are magenta, turquoise, orange, and light green and they defy the norms of Earth's planet playbook.

Almost like clockwork, Bruce the florist in Buckwood Flowers just near Buffalo Exchange greets me every time with his awkward eyebrow raise. Sometimes he even flashes that horrid thumbs up and nods as if to mark his approval (always unwanted by me) that it's me in his shop today. I'm starting to get that prickly feeling, squinting and averting inwardly because I realize he may think that I partake in my plant shop prancing just to see him! And if that even was the case (which it most definitely is not) what kind of flirting technique is that thumbs up?

It makes me imagine terribly cringy scenes of Bruce striding up to women in local bars and flashing them his symbol, as if such a mating call is humble but forward enough to make a dent in the woman's heart. As if she'd entertain it. Did he expect a reciprocated effeminate thumbs up in return for his gratuitous greeting? In all honesty, he probably didn't think that far, I'm compelled to say. He'd advance so eloquently to the slinky dressed women. What a dimwit! Why'd he choose them? They'd laugh like hyenas: "That is absolutely hilari-OH!" red slinky would say to black, with Bruce still in ear shot slumping on his slow walk away.

His upturned smile looked like what would be if the Pillsbury Doughboy sported a little pelican neck, soft, sweet, but hanging unfortunately low. His shirt creased in the back, just where he couldn't see to fix it. Clumpy sneaker companions nestled on his ill fitting feet. But he wouldn't even notice, just pull out his flip phone to text some girl, "What are you up to tonight?" because maybe she'd answer and spend some time with him. He'd sit there sipping his drink, baby face sulking, waiting patiently. He just wanted to listen.

If I was there I'd tell him (I couldn't just watch) that if he was planning on going for that eyebrow raise, the little caterpillars could use some helpful grooming. Maybe then I could slip in wardrobe makeover.

But. What if..

What if one morning during his mirror once-over Bruce would try and use some gel. Something to spice things up. Anything. Amidst the jungly aisles of Buckwood Flowers he would grin extra pearly (were those white strips?) and motion me over and suggest the green one with the orange tips. How would I react if he asked for my number and said, "We should go to the Raines Law Room, a speakeasy down by Union Square." He'd smile warmly and wait. It'd definitely be strange, to say the least. I mean, how'd he know? What swayed him? And why now? Did he hear my thoughts? Perhaps, despite his strangeness I'd give a second glance.

Maybe I'd forgive his horrid thumbs. Maybe I'd let his eyebrows slide today. Maybe I'd even consider it. But as I felt the soft-to-touch leaves, or shall I say, nubs of the "Lady fingers," a certain breed of succulent, I watched Bruce.

Another woman walked in. Another painful thumbs up. He's trying, at least. At least, he's trying.

## 42nd Parallel

Aryeh Korman



## Winter Village

Eliana Shinefield



## The Trip

Masha Shollar

She was seventeen and desperately bored. Philadelphia grew around her like a second skin and she wished to be somewhere, anywhere else. She dreamed of roaming marketplaces in Tangier, the sky a decadent cobalt, smudged with the snowy-whiteness of clouds haloing a lemon drop sun. She pictured herself in Paris, clad in a tawny trench coat, sitting outside a cafe in a vague, disinterested drizzle, smoking a cigarette while the crowds passing by swirled into a miscellany of humanity. Or perhaps India, barefoot on the banks of the Ganges, the mud cool between her toes and a feeling of peace resting on her shoulders.

But she had no money to visit these places, and soon, the pictures in the library's almanac weren't enough. She spent her days at Philadelphia High School for Girls, and her evenings at home with her father. Already taciturn, he had grown even more withdrawn in the months following her mother's death. It seemed that every day, he drew into himself even more, until one morning, she looked up to a featureless face, just a smooth blank, like an empty canvas on a stretcher. First, she'd tried coaxing him out of that blankness: smiles and questions, a hesitant word or two stretched beseechingly across the breakfast dishes. When that didn't work, she tried to provoke him into a response. She smoked clove cigarettes, blowing ostentatious rings across the table towards him, ashes drifting down onto her watery scrambled eggs. She recited Ezra Pound cantos in fervent, mournful tones, as though she were saying kaddish -- her father had once told her the poet must never come into the house, anti-Semitic as he was. Once, she thought she saw his eyes flit towards her over the rim of his coffee mug, and she felt a small flicker of spiteful triumph. But when she looked again, he was absorbed in his newspaper, and she wondered if she'd imagined it.

So she was here in this basement because she wanted him to show some emotion, anything. And she was here because it was the only way for her to travel, to escape from 18th Street and her oppressive life. Sharon had said that her older brother Michael was back, dropped out of college and living in the basement of their three story home, the one with the small turret that had made her believe, the first time she'd visited as a little girl, that Sharon was a princess.

Now, sprawled on the floor of the basement, which Michael had turned into "a mecca" -- his words, not hers -- she wondered if her father might be angry if he knew where she was now. Or perhaps he wouldn't care, and would just present that blankness that was now his face and shrug away from her. Would he -- could he -- care that his daughter was sitting in a room with posters of the The Kinks and The Byrds and The Stones all papered over each other, the very bands he'd declared too loud, and banned from their home. When she would plead and tell him it was normal teenage behavior, he would say that normal meant nothing, and again he would tell her about hiding under the bed during a pogrom, crawling out in the morning to find his father dead in the front yard. "And that was my normal," he'd finish.

But that wasn't normal, and she'd always felt it, that sneaking suspicion that perhaps her parents, her life, were odd and strange. Nobody else's parents thought hunger and penny-pinching were virtues. In other homes, parents kissed each other before leaving for work in the morning, and birthdays and holidays didn't whisk past like smoke. Other children's parents told them "I love you." Befriending Sharon

all those years ago had confirmed for her the peculiarity of her life. Sharon watched American Bandstand and had a father who golfed and worked at some nebulous job downtown. Sharon's mother wore big pearls and a thick layer of rosy lipstick and went to a lot of garden club meetings. She spent most afternoons clipping pictures of flowers out of the seed catalogues that she accumulated in ever growing piles in an immaculate living room. Michael and Sharon were apple pie-normal too. At least, Michael had been before he went off to college two years ago. She didn't know him well, but assumed that his years in the big, bad city had made him sophisticated and worldly.

Michael had dropped out of Columbia, he told her proudly. It was a waste of time, and he had lived in the city for a while, sleeping on a friend's floor in a ramshackle apartment in the Lower East Side. But he'd run out of money, and so he was back. When she asked, idly, what he planned to do now, he told her that perhaps he'd become a travel agent. Then he laughed until he coughed and took another drag on his cigarette, the smoke curling and curving slowly into the air, melding and entwining with the music; "And I Love Her" was shimmering out of the record player in the corner.

It was her first time dropping acid, but she wasn't nervous. He scooted closer and held out his index finger. Perched on the tip of it was a thin square. It was grey and had perforated edges and she looked at it doubtfully. "Will it be enough?" she asked. He let out another laugh-cough and, instead of answering, extended his finger even further: an invitation, but also a dare. She thought of her father's blank face and how he never spoke of her mother, only just buried, and she took the tab, smaller than a postage stamp, and placed it on the tip of her tongue. "Just close your mouth," said Michael comfortably, settling back on the floor to sift through the teetering pile of records next to him.

She slumped against the wall, waiting to feel different. Her bare toes wiggled slowly next to a banana peel, sprawled facedown on a Supremes record, the pith smeared into the grooves. Half-empty boxes of Cracker Jack were strewn among dirty laundry and cheap paperbacks, a particularly battered looking copy of *The Hobbit* peering out from a tangle of blankets on the floor. Half filled notebooks tipped off the desk next to her, and, if she squinted, she could see that they were filled with bad poetry and all the ideas he'd had while high. One of the pages closest to her said only, "There are twelve eyes," the word "twelve" underlined so emphatically that the tip of the pen had torn a hole in the paper. And everywhere, cigarette butts: Michael appeared to be using every surface and object as an ashtray. They floated in half-drunk cups of water and tea, filled a glass vase clear up to the brim, and studded the carpet, limp and tired looking.

Michael pulled the record needle up, cutting off the music with a yowling screech, and, turning to the pile next to him, rummaged through records, most out of their sleeves, squinting at the labels in the dim lighting. After a few minutes of silence, he found the record he wanted, placing it on the player with a little flourish. Plaintive guitar and harmonica oozed out and into the room. Around his cigarette, Michael said, "New Dylan. It Ain't Me, Babe." She nodded like she knew the song, though she didn't. There was no money for records at her house, so all the music she knew came from friends, or the listening booth at the music shop on 25th and Green. She and Sharon would cocoon in the padded cubicle and gorge themselves on all the new music they could, arguing about whose turn it was to choose the next song. They'd stay until the sales associate, prematurely balding, his eyes always squinting behind Buddy Holly

glasses, would rap sharply on the window and jerk his head at the front door. "Go melt back in the night, Everything inside is made of stone..." She closed her eyes and felt the words wreathing around her, a garland of silvery script that rested on her brow. "No, no, no, it ain't me, babe, It ain't me you're lookin' for, babe..." She felt the words growing up out of the record, stretching as they rose, leaping gently down to the floor, where they pirouetted and waltzed among the pencil stubs and the empty record sleeves, light and lithe as ballerinas.

She opened her eyes, but still saw them there. And now, as they danced slowly across the floor, they left behind trails of color; lavender and emerald and a velvety, dark blue that bloomed in the wake of the dancing words and spread outward in a slow pinwheel, covering the dank room in soft color.

She flapped her hands at Michael, trying to get his attention. He looked up from his book, eyes amused. "Look," she whispered, and she swept her hand towards the walls, now almost covered with a tapestry of slowly undulating color. He glanced at the walls for a moment, and she wondered if perhaps he couldn't see it. But that was ridiculous, for the room was now awash in a kaleidoscope. But then, as she watched, the colors began to intensify from soft swaths to harsh splotches, layering onto the walls, covering the rock posters in thick sheets of pigment, growing heavier, until the walls seemed to creak and concave with the weight. Now she flapped her hands ever faster, but in a panic. She scrambled across the detritus on the floor and grabbed Michael's arm. "Outside," she told him urgently. "I need to be with the trees." He smirked a little, but peeled himself from the floor and hoisted her to her feet.

Outside, Michael bundled her into a green and cream trolley under a muddy-grey evening sky. As streets and cars blurred past, she was sure that the buildings were stretching, like taffy being pulled up, up until it melts apart and slowly sags back on itself. The tiny, old woman on the trolley looked like a bird, with a downy coat of feathers, bright yellow and cashmere soft. But as she watched, the beak grew long and skinny and vulture-like, and the bird-woman's shoulders became more hunched, feathers now bedraggled and matted. She gasped and tried to stand up. "What are you doing?" Michael asked her. She gestured frantically at the bird-woman hybrid, who now looked more shriveled and sinister still, but couldn't seem to talk. "Here," he said, pulling her back into the seat. "Why don't you read until we get there?" He pulled *The Hobbit* from the pocket of his pea coat and handed it to her. "It will help you relax." It was one of the books she had read so many times in the library, as a way to escape.

So she opened to a page at random and squinted, trying to focus on the words, which seemed to be rippling across the pages. And then the words turned into pictures, and the forest that Bilbo and the dwarves were wandering in grew up out of the pages: tall trees splintered through the book, branches thick with leaves stretched up towards her chin. She could see the hobbit and the dwarves running over gnarled roots that arched up out of the dirt. She leaned closer to see what they were running from, her eyes right up against the book's pages, in among the leaves of the trees. Suddenly, a hairy spider's leg burst out from the tree branches, followed by an enormous, black spider, scuttling up from the pages, scrambling up her arm. She shrieked and tried to brush it off, sending the book flying across the trolley, flopping at the feet of the bird-woman, who turned her beaked head slowly around. "What the hell?" Michael demanded, grabbing the book. "Spiders, spiders," she wheezed, her voice constricted by panic. "Ok, breathe," he told her. "There are no spiders. Look -- we're here anyway." "Fairmount Park," the driver announced listlessly.

Michael led her down a path to a small field. Here, all was blankness, but it

looked soft and warm, as though she could lie down under that stooped tree and draw the snow right up to her chin like a blanket. So she did. Flat on her back with her arms and legs spread out, she gazed up at the slate colored sky.

"Woah," she whispered reverently. "Michael, you have to -- you have to come see this."

So he lay down next to her and looked up. "What?"

Her eyes widened as she watched the sky, slow in the cold, begin to vibrate and speed up. The stars and the moon faded to a vague silver. The sky paled to the same faint blue as the designs that ran in veins across her mother's old china, and she could suddenly see the plates so clearly, hear the soft clunk of one placed in front of her at dinner. She could smell the tsimis that would surely be huddled next to a lean piece of roast, the tsimis she used to hate so much: the knobby carrots never had enough cinnamon on them. But when she would complain, her mother would say, "It doesn't need to taste good. Just eat it." And then she would lean back in her chair and blow smoke rings at the ceiling, which would be swatted away by the slowly rotating fan... She swallowed the lump in her throat and stared up at the smudgy blue above her.

As rosy gold dawn was towed across the sky, she saw the branches of the tree begin to change. Skeletal fingers stretched imploringly across a smoky sky, and they too, trembled as though caught in a sudden gust of wind. Their crooked digits made her think of the sinister bird woman on the trolley and she shuddered. But then, dense green buds began to push their determined way up from the bark, slowly expanding outward, stretching and sunning themselves in little pools of warmth.

As she stared, the buds grew enormous and relaxed their leaves into sprawled flowers, shading to delicate pink and white, as though an invisible hand had taken a pencil and begun to darken each petal. The blooms expanded into riotous bursts of color, ecstatic, faces turned up to the sun in adoration. The sun became a Roman candle, exploding and sending little drops of shimmering heat falling to earth, and the snow beneath her snapped into emerald grass, as abruptly as if someone had thrown a switch. She felt the grass, soft and pliable between each finger, and she gripped it to keep herself tethered to the ground, because she felt some unseen force tugging at her, trying to pull her up, up into the whirling star clusters of space... The petals began to detach from the branches and dance through the wind, so many of them that it looked as though pink and white snow was falling, bedecking her face and head and arms. Caught in the currents, the blooms danced; a slow motion pas de deux through the air, the skirts of the petals twirling and rustling.

Now the branches looked as though each had been dipped and coated in fiery oranges and pale yellows and deep reds. The sky behind them lit up with an orchestra of soft purples and blues and pinks all swirled together. And it was so beautiful that she began to cry. She felt herself at the center of it all, as though the roots of the tree sprouted from her stomach and her lungs and her heart, as though the leaves and the flowers grew from her fingertips and the top of her head. She felt like Mother Earth, the cradle of all creation. She was not alone anymore, as she so often felt she was, sitting in the corner of the public library dreaming of someday and someone. Now, she felt all of life throbbing and tingling in her fingertips.

As she felt the immensity of the universe, its boundlessness and vastness, she felt how small it was too, how close she was to every plant and rock and person. Michael still lay beside her, and she felt his heartbeat in her chest, knew his secret dread and hopes. Though she sometimes felt anger and loathing curdling in her belly,

she suddenly realized that she couldn't hate the people walking by on the path, chuckling about the teenagers in the snow, because they were her and she was them and she could not hate herself.

She felt her father nearby too, as though he were hovering just above her, and she could no longer hate him, because now she stood next to him in the dirt outside his home in Ukraine and sensed his grief and fear as he cried over the father lost to him. She realized suddenly that it must have hurt, those pebbles and sticks digging into his knees, and she felt the precise moment it happened, as they knelt there: part of his heart slowing and hardening to flint. Lying in the snow, she realized that, long ago, a piece of her father had gone missing. But he had not felt it leave him, or did not remember it departing, and so he never knew to search for it.

And now, with her mother gone, he hid the remaining scraps of his heart too, because it was easier than confronting the pain, the way it squeezed his heart until he choked, how it siphoned into his lungs like smoke. He tried to smother his grief with a shroud of blankness and pretended he did not notice the wrinkles at the edges, the corners trying to creep up. Sometimes she thought she could glimpse his sadness in the way his feet dragged as he left for work, in the tiny coughs that punctured his sentences. Perhaps grief was the mismatched socks he wore or the books he left unread on the shelves. But then again, perhaps not. Perhaps she only saw the emotion that she herself felt -- her pain, made manifest in him.

Once, she had wished to see his grief laid bare before her, writhing and brutal. Now, she wished she could be certain that it existed at all. But the more she needed to see his sadness, she realized, the less he could show it to her.

And now she cried, not for the beauty of the world, but for the part of her father's heart that had gone missing, and for the barriers she saw him and everyone else constructing, bricking themselves off from the world. The tears tumbled sideways and down to her earlobes and hung there until they stretched and fell to the ground.

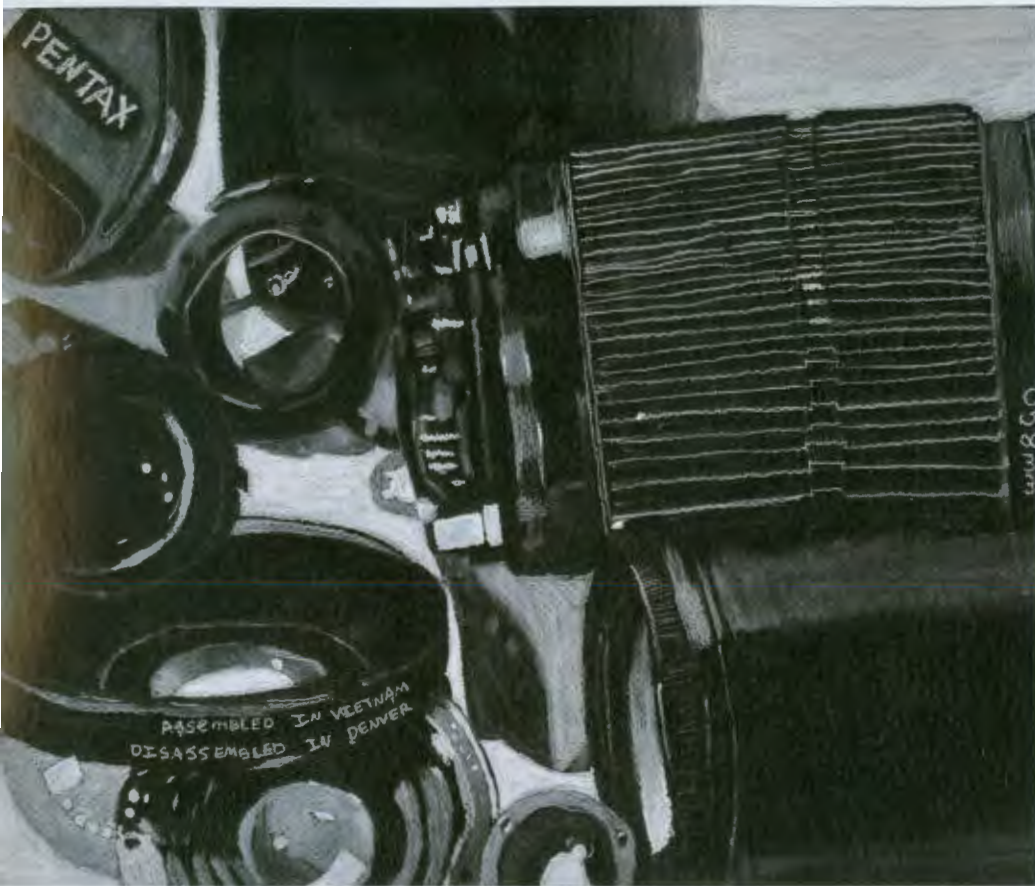
The universe felt infinite again, but now it made her dizzy and lonely. She felt herself begin to shrink, like a flower reverting to a tiny seed, then crumbling away. She folded into herself as she confronted this infiniteness, and it reminded her how irrelevant she was, how soon she would be gone; even her imprint in the snow under this tree would soon be covered by fresh flakes. She wished that she had another human to anchor her, to remind her that she existed, to remind her that she had a form and a face and anger and joy. She wished for her father, for his crooked glasses and his trembling hands and the way he snorted when he read the morning paper. She wished for his faint smell of lemons and tobacco and his tuneless humming. But he had turned inward. All she could get from him was blankness. Perhaps he was lonely, she thought, behind that wall he'd built for himself. But she couldn't climb over it and he would not come out. So she closed her eyes and tilted up her chin, felt a few snowflakes drift to a stop on her eyelashes and cheeks, and longed for the bliss to come back, to swaddle her up in a cloud and bear her away...

Change of Seasons  
Avi Lekowsky



# Disassembled in Denver

Chana Weiss



# Cobblestones

Jason Schneider



## Bellflowers

Karen-Lynn Amouyal



## Horses Plowing

Ari Hoffman



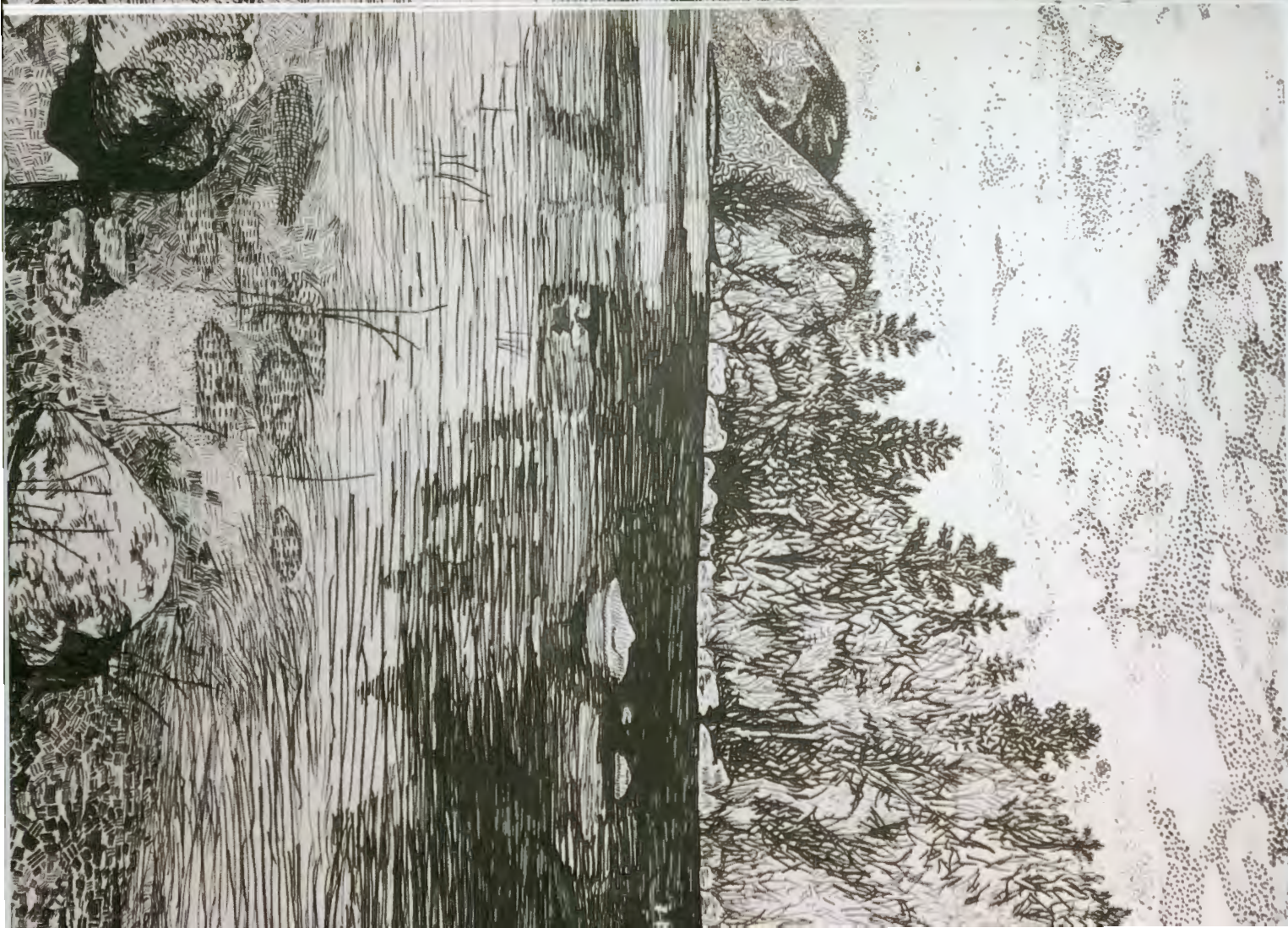
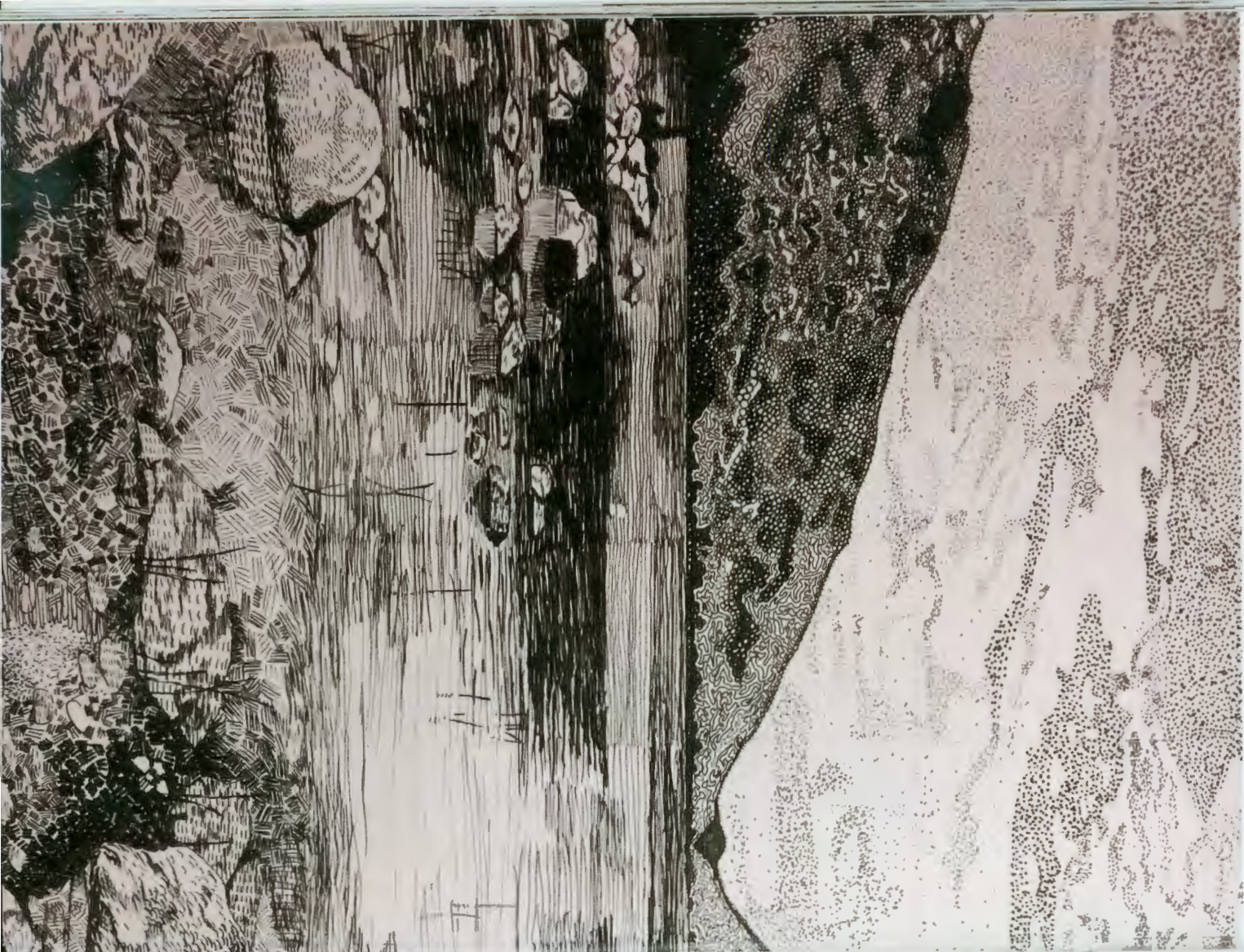
## Constructing Meridians

Micah Pava

The rain has been coming down hard for weeks. From dank apartment, I enumerate each droplet falling through atmospheric blueness before streaked windowpanes. In its inimical untidiness, my ever-growing hair tangles more & the least of the cockroaches shudder with pleasure as they slip unnoticed through cracked plaster in the kitchen where wall meets floor. Tally marks multiply & the clouds portend no imminent cessation of the rain.



Pointillism  
Ayelet Schechter



# Monday

Masha Shollar

I.

At 6:30 I walk to Andrade Shoe Repair Corporation on 2nd Avenue  
to get taps put on my boots  
(Chelsea; black and brogues; brown)  
but the man with the red cap in the store that smells of polish  
(I breathe deep)  
shakes his head and says -they'll need a new heel first-  
(Chelsea; rubber, black)  
-but they're new- I point out  
and he shrugs as if to say  
-I don't care-  
so I buy new rubber heels and taps and he says  
-twenty two dollars same time tomorrow and we'll shine 'em on the house-

II.

On the way back I listen to Gloria Allred fight  
with her daughter Lisa Bloom about Harvey  
and Allred says that yes she would oppose her in court  
and Bloom says -noiwouldneverdothatfamilycomesfirst-  
as a man asks me if I want to buy a Christmas tree  
and I think that Matthew could be a toxicologist or a forensic scientist or a balloon artist or a  
movie critic maybe  
and how I would like to be lying in bed finishing Go Tell It On The Mountain or The Idiot  
but I cannot  
and how I wish Clifton Fadiman were my friend  
because he loves books like I do  
and because I think Clifton Fadiman would have understood me  
and we could have drunk Cabernet Sauvignon together  
and I have to look up the word -gavage-  
which is force feeding with a tube through the stomach  
and that's how they feed geese for foie gras

III.

Jelani Cobb interviews Harry Belafonte and he says that once  
he went south with Sidney Poitier and they thought the police were following them at night  
and then someone said -that's not the police, that's the damn Klan-  
and I think how Jelani Cobb's voice sounds like honey slowly pouring out of the bottle  
like it would if you twisted the cap off and tipped the bottle over  
and the honey folded on itself again and again  
and the bottle is one of the ones shaped like a bear like Winnie the Pooh  
and in the Russian version there was always criticism of the Soviet Union hidden in the  
episodes  
and he is on the birthday card that Neta and Estee gave me holding balloons  
and happy birthday in Russian is **с днем ражденья**  
(pronounced S Dnem Rozhdeniya, so Neta says)

IV.

Later I have to look up who Marino Marini is  
because he sounds like a Maira Kalman character  
and there is a man in Next Stop Grand Central named Marino Marini  
who makes oyster stew  
but he is someone else  
because Marino Marini was an Italian sculptor  
and his wife was named Mercedes  
like the character from The Count of Monte Cristo and so  
maybe Stephen Dedalus falls in love with her  
and he and Marino Marini get into a fistfight over her  
Because they think they are chivalric knights or something  
but then she says -fuck this- because she doesn't want to be fought over  
and she leaves  
\* and Stephen Dedalus and Marino Marini go get a beer together  
(IPA for Marino Marini, Guinness for Stephen Dedalus)  
and become friends and  
meanwhile Mercedes has moved to a little cottage in the woods and makes cheese  
and has a sheepdog and is happy and paints all day  
like Lily Briscoe  
and refuses to give sympathy  
when men demand it

V.

Neta and Estee and I sit at the drafting tables on the art floor  
and Estee sketches her dog's nose and listens to German rap  
while Neta plays with the ends of her hair  
as she tells us about the one-time life expectancy of Russian men  
(forty-seven because they drank so much)  
and a green chair is wound with hula hoops  
and there is a rainbow splashed on the wall  
and a nearby painting has a background that looks like Klimt with all the gold leaf  
but the smiles remind me of Ensor's Comical Repast  
and they make me unsettled and I have to look away  
and the table edge cuts into my forearms through my grey sweater  
and it is marvelous to be sitting at the drafting tables with Neta and with Estee  
and I feel that warmth in my stomach that I get  
after eating a bowl of Italian wedding soup on a snowy Friday night  
and I want to say so  
but I don't.

Surrealism  
Gabriella Kafash



Heart of Gold  
Karen-Lynn Amouyal



## Manhattan As the Sun Sets

Judy Leserman

The world bows slowly into shadows as the last ray recedes,  
bidding each cement square and red brick farewell. The smog  
whispers and hums, the asphalt rises and falls, breathing, pulsing.

Below, trucks groan under their loads and rubber tires ease  
the pavement in a rapid halt. The machines urge forward.  
No wheel plans on working overtime on this nine-to-five.

Above, the eyes of the grid ignite and wink. The walls are alive  
with people in repose, paper walls divide one or two backs  
hunched in place over illuminated screens.

Enclosed by the confidence of a window, a reflection of her  
countenance is revealed to him. There are pieces of her everywhere.  
Every pixel, a monument to her likeness.

They are smiling, lips pulled into their cheeks by the same joke told  
at 4:17 PM on December 17, 2013. There are shadows and curves,  
arms mold around shoulders, head in the crook of a neck,  
each freckle kissed by light.

They are buy and sell.  
They are black and red.  
They are ones and zeroes.  
They look so life-like.

Twelve stories below, before pilgrims' eyes scanned the fresh horizon,  
this place was a balmy isle of leaves and greenery.  
Now, towers shape the heavens,  
they watch the streets  
and keep them  
sterile.

191st Street Tunnel  
Aryeh Korman



## An Outstretched Arm

Matthew Haller

Can't you see that the entirety of your existence is only a test? I am only eleven years old, but I know this much for certain: the end of days is nigh. The horn of Elijah will sound any day now, and the Jewish people will be raised to certain glory in their eternal homeland. Of course, the apocalypse entails a bit of discomfort -- nothing short of the complete uprooting of my American existence, abandoning what came before in all its lavish excess.

Can't you see that the dawning of a new age is something to cherish? It is Sabbath eve in the camp dining hall, and I am caked in sweat. Rabbi Fleischer is leading some several hundred boys in song. "Rebuild the Temple!" we scream in Hebrew, "Refill the city of Zion!" In this moment, I realize that my abject fear at the prospect of Messianism leaves me in quite the paradox. After all, Maimonides commands the observant Jew to both believe in and yearn for the return to Zion, yet my unwavering faith in its eventuality induced this all-consuming dread. "And there we shall sing a new song!" My face turns as red as that of the screaming, pudgy Rabbi at the front of the room. "And upon its ramparts we shall ascend!" I can't breathe. Maimonides would consider me unfaithful. My chest locks in place. I need to get out of here. I spill a bowl of Matzo Ball soup on Jacob Greenberg's white shirt.

Can't you see that this world is a pale shadow of what lies beyond? I volunteer to accompany Jacob on the dark, wooded, hike to fetch a clean shirt, partially out of an overwhelming sense of guilt, but mostly because I need to get the fuck out of that room. As we pass the arts-and-crafts building no one ever seems to use, I begin to see the demons that I know pervade every inch of space on earth, lying just beyond human perception. I know that I don't really see them, that I'm melding my own anxieties with my rabbi's teachings and projecting them onto the empty space, but that doesn't make their blood-soaked fangs any less real.

Can't you see the breadth of His insurmountable might? I'm paddling a solitary kayak along the perimeter of the campus's limp excuse for an artificial lake. The water is thick and dark, rendered inhospitable by lurking creatures of the deep. As I navigate through the freely blooming masses of algae that coat the surface, I begin to understand: only that which He wills can truly thrive.

Can't you leave your rationality behind? Rabbi Feldman is in the midst of one of his near-daily mystical ramblings, describing biblical codes indicating imminent apocalyptic war, the uprooting of Western civilization, and of course, the inevitability of reincarnation. Past and future lives, it could be said, are something of an obsession amongst the campus rabbinate -- tales of autistic children babbling ancestral wisdom are par for the course. Yet today's lesson has particular relevance to all fallible individuals -- as it turns out, speaking a single word of ill will toward another individual without begging his or her forgiveness could lead to one's eventual return as a tree, rock, or even a goat. I can't breathe. Again. One might think I would have built up a tolerance to this sort of discourse by now, but before I know it, I'm running along the stony path up a neighboring hill. I don't know where I'm going, I don't know what I intend to do, but I know that I need to be as far away from that lecture as possible. Proximity is pain.

By late summer, the panic attacks are a staple of my daily life. I look to the skies, and I see messages in the clouds indicating destruction. I don't look at the sky

much anymore. I hear the rural prop-planes descending overhead and my heart skips a beat or three, mistaking the din of engines for the roar of Elijah's horn. I can't listen to the sky much anymore, either. The camp higher-ups have decided that I need to meet with the senior-most Rabbi, Rabbi Schwartz, who will dispel each of my countless anxieties with textual evidence. I arrive at the Schwartz cabin, alone, shivering with fear. The venerable Rabbi, an older gentleman with a wispy grey beard and nothing but love in his heart, welcomes me into a kitchen. Laid out on the wobbly table are host of sources for me to peruse, each discussing Jewish mysticism -- from the Messiah to reincarnation and beyond. He does a decent enough job at refuting some of my major concerns -- the coming of the Messiah, he says, will not be sudden and startling, but will be ushered in by any number of overt signs (he neglects to mention that this, in most conceptions, includes the prospect of world war). "But what about the clouds?" I ask, blissfully unaware of my own psychosis. Rabbi Schwartz's response was not drawn from any of the ancient texts strewn before him, but instead slipped out as the sort of rabbinic freestyle that makes you realize that you are not truly respected. "Can't you see that these strange cloud patterns mean that they're having a party up in heaven?"

\*all names have been altered for this piece

## Spilled Milk (with Cereal)

Chana Weiss







## Spring Training

Avigayil Rosensweig

When Shmuel walked out of school that afternoon, the day still felt new. He waved good-bye to Spitz, high-fived Perlstein walking in the opposite direction, and turned down the block. The sun beat down warm on his shoulders, his knapsack was light on his back, and what few clouds wisped across the sky only served to make its vast blueness seem even bluer.

It was baseball weather.

Down south in Port St. Lucie, Florida, where the New York Mets practiced away the late winter months into thaw, spring training was well underway. In fact, it was almost over. Soon they'd be coming back to New York, back to their home turf, back to their real ballpark.

For Shmuel and his friends, spring training didn't start until it was actually spring, when the days were long enough that the sky didn't look like night when they came home from school.

He was still young enough that there was little in his life that could seem very wrong when soaked in that much sunlight. His sneakers hit the pavement with an extra spring, and he tilted his hat farther back to catch the sun on his head. He felt only a sliver more.

"Error," he muttered good-naturedly to himself. "That was an easy pop-up straight to left field, Schwartzbaum. How'd you lose it?"

"Sorry, coach," he continued. "I'll do better next time." He whipped off his hat, feeling the full glory of the gentle spring sun blooming on his head. He held his hat out towards the sun and sprang up off his toes, as though the stiff black felt were well-worn cowhide and the glowing sphere were small and white, with red stitching down the side.

The birdsong seemed to take on a purposeful beat: cheerful, fairground style music, or maybe an anticipation-building fanfare.

"What are you doing, Shmu?"

His sister, walking in the opposite direction, paused with her arms crossed beneath padded knapsack straps, her head tilted to one side, her ponytail hanging over one shoulder.

He dropped his hand. "What are you doing, Dina? I thought you finished school ages ago."

"I did. I was working on an assignment at a friend's house. Because we actually have homework."

"Because you don't actually have school until forever o'clock," he grumbled, as she pulled a chain with a key from under the collar of her uniform shirt.

Inside, she watched disapprovingly as he took a bottle of Coca-Cola out of the fridge.

"What?" he said defensively. "Aunt Suri's not here."

"Just because she isn't here doesn't mean we shouldn't listen to her," Dina said, taking an apple from the fridge.

"Tatty doesn't," Shmuel pointed out.

"Whatever," she said, biting into her apple and flinging herself into a seat at the kitchen table, loath to let her brother score a point in any argument. Shmuel took a swig of coke. It was sweet and cold and tasted just mildly of rebellion.

"Hey, did you get that Gemara test back yet?"

"Yeah." He looked down, swirling the coke bottle.

Dina caught the bottom. "You're killing the fizz. So, how did you do?"

He shrugged. "Not great. Well, not good. Well, pretty bad, actually. And my rebbi said I had to get it signed by a parent." A new teacher, clearly. Anyone who lived in the community and all of the veteran teachers at his school would have known to say "by your father." Both of them turned their eyes automatically to the wall that adjoined with their father's study.

"So? He's not going to be mad or anything."

"Easy for you to say. When's the last time you brought home anything under a ninety-five? You and all your smart friends hanging out together doing homework in your spare time."

Dina frowned. She liked scoring points against her brother. She didn't like seeing him miserable. "Well, I wouldn't say they're all too smart. Someone asked me in school if we were identical."

He laughed. "Man, your friends are dumb."

"No dumber than your friends. You know how many times I've answered the phone and they asked me if Schwartzbaum was here?"

"What's wrong with that?"

"Well, which one? There are four of us!"

Shmuel twisted around to take a look at the kitchen clock. "Yeah, there are four of us. So where's Mordy? He should be home by now." And it was only about an hour and a half until sunset. Mordy promised they could play baseball together if the weather was nice when he got back from school. He had a great arm for baseball, for all he spent so many hours studying. Mordy went to the combined yeshiva and boys' high school just blocks from their house, so there was no reason he shouldn't be back as soon as the day ended. It was the same yeshiva their father taught in, where he taught the top Gemara class in the high school and ran a small, informal class for some of the students who stayed on in the beis medrash program in the years after high school.

"It's Thursday. Mishmar. Mordy won't be back for ages."

Shmuel scowled. "Sure. Wouldn't want Mordy to miss mishmar. The whole world would stop turning if Mordy Schwartzbaum didn't learn a few more hours of Torah on Thursday nights. It's not like mishmar's mandatory or anything." And he'd promised. How had he forgotten about mishmar? How had he forgotten about Shmuel?

What was with Mordy these days anyway? He was always in yeshiva, always learning, always spending time with new yeshiva friends from out-of-town, high schoolers who had never played on their block, whose brothers weren't in school with Shmuel, always too busy for baseball. And he dressed differently too -- well, that was only to be expected, now that he was in high school, but his white shirts and dress shoes all week round made him seem so much more distant. No more polo shirts or sneakers for him. There was something different about his face too, it wasn't just the new glasses... Shmuel's fingers lifted to the sides of his own face and brushed against his sideburns.

"Did something happen to Mordy's peyes?"

Dina chewed the last pieces of her apple and tossed the core into the garbage. "He wears them longer now, tucked behind his ears. It makes his hair so much more complicated to cut. Good thing Tatty doesn't cut our hair anymore."

They both suppressed a shiver. Haircutting was not within their father's skillset.

"Why?"

Dina leaned forward and giggled. "I think he's imitating Moishy Landau."

"Who?"

"You know--one of the beis medrash guys. In Tatty's chaburah. The really skinny one with the blond hair."

He shrugged. He might know who she was talking about, but why would Mordy go around trying to look like some older guy? What was wrong with looking like a Schwartzbaum? People in the neighborhood always said that Mordy and Shmuel Schwartzbaum looked so astonishingly alike, you would have thought they were twins, except, now that Mordy had grown six inches and started wearing glasses and tucking his peyes behind his ears and dressing differently no one ever said that anymore.

"Why would he want to look like Moishy Landau?"

"Because he looks up to him. Obviously. He's probably the shtarkest guy in the whole beis medrash. Smart guy, nice guy, very religious, good learner." It sounded almost like she was reading off a list. "Tatty's a big fan of his."

"How do you even know all that?"

"I've overheard Tatty answering tons of shidduch calls for him. You would think the whole world wants him to marry their daughter."

"Huh." So Mordy wanted to be like this Landau guy. Well, Shmuel supposed he wouldn't have to work too hard. Mordy was a pretty shtark guy already. Shtark enough to drive a younger brother crazy. Who cared how many blatt Gemara he got through a day if he couldn't even find time to play a measly game of catch with his younger brother? So much for family loyalty, except, well, surely his scholarly disposition wouldn't be a disappointment to everyone in the family. He pictured his father and brother sitting side by side at his father's desk, heads bent low over one Gemara, their voices mixing, his father's proud face, his hand on Mordy's shoulder. Of course, he offered to learn with Shmuel all the time, but Shmuel didn't want to, not when there was baseball to play or to talk about, not when Gemara was so boring and difficult and the words impossible to understand.

He would never understand what it was that made his father hold Gemara so close to his heart, why he always looked so at peace and so happy when he studied, why he maintained -- as he always did -- that it was a refuge that had saved him from despair many times in his life. He could accept that his father was a mystery to him, but what business was it of Mordy, or Moishy Landau for that matter, to have insight into his inner world?

Shmuel got up.

"Where are you going?"

"To study." Dina raised an eyebrow but said nothing.

Shmuel sat down at the dining room table. He took his pile of books and laid it all out carefully on the table, his Gemara with its long pages and clear print, an Aramaic-English dictionary he'd teased out of his father's shelves, his notebook and pencil, his test paper full of slashing red marks. The light was bright and glaring, the words precise and sharp on the page. He tapped the eraser of his pencil beneath the words, frowning down at the page. He alternated between hunching over the dictionary and tipping his chair back on its hind legs, staring at the ceiling and experiment-



ing with how far back he could go before the chair was thrown out of balance.

He would never be that perfect image he saw sometimes in paintings in Judaica stores, full of cheder boys in an idealized Eastern European shtetl, boys with placid, innocent faces and curly peyes, receiving wisdom from sharp-eyed rabbis with long grey beards. He would never be that picture-perfect image of Mordy, and probably Moishy Landau too, sitting at a table with an open Gemara, shoulders stooped and torso swaying.

What a wonderful son Mordy was. A little clone of Tatty. What a wonderful son Moishy Landau would make too, for all that his blond hair would stand out in their family. What had Dina said? That their father was "a big fan" of his? Shmuel would never be a fan of his, not if he played shortstop for the Mets. Stupid, perfect Mordy, and stupid, perfect Moishy Landau. Shmuel felt a sudden and violent anger towards his brother, towards himself, towards his studies. He slammed the books shut, tossed his notebook to the other side of the table, crumpled up the test paper in his hand and burst into his father's study.

Shmuel and his siblings never burst into his father's office. Though none of them had ever been admonished for entering the study uncalled for, they each felt the slightest trepidation to squeak open the door and disturb the quiet Aramaic sing-song. Each had a tendency to tiptoe over the threshold into the small room crammed with overtaxed bookshelves.

Rabbi Schwartzbaum's study was his sanctuary. He was a reticent man with an exceptionally quiet voice, except when teaching, when it projected easily through the room. At home he was less taciturn, but even so, he spent many hours holed up in his office, preparing lessons for the yeshiva and studying alone or with his children. Even late at night he could be found sitting at his desk, the light still on, large Hebrew or Aramaic tomes open before him, his head hanging sideways off the back of his chair, his mouth slightly open, snoring softly, or else quietly muttering to himself, weighing thoughts and insights.

Whenever one of the kids wanted something, or they wondered something, or they were worried about something, they quietly swung open the study door. He would always smile when they disturbed him, and they always left with the answer to whatever they asked about and an explanation of whatever it was he happened to be preparing just then: Gemara, the week's parsha portion, or some rabbi's discourse on the importance of Torah study.

One night, Shmuel had woken up well past midnight hungry for potato chips. He'd tiptoed down the stairs to the kitchen only to see the light still bright in his father's study, his father sitting at his desk, books open. A pried open picture frame lay on the desk next to its glass protective sheet. He was fingering a varnished-looking photograph, staring at nothing in particular, his eyes rimmed red with fatigue—or something else. Without looking at Shmuel he said, in Hebrew, "If not that Your Torah was my delight, I would have been lost in my affliction." He switched to English. "Dovid HaMelech was a wise man. Thousands of years later his words are still true. How else does one survive loss?" His expression cleared, and he seemed for the first time to realize who he was talking to. "Shmuel, what are you doing up so late? It's a school night. Go back to bed."

Now, Shmuel slammed the door open and marched into his father's study, dropping his crumpled test paper onto the desk.

"Here's my Gemara test, Tatty! I failed it! Totally failed, and you gotta sign it so I can give it back to my rebbi and he can know for sure that you're disappointed in

me! Mordy's coming home from school probably eventually so I hope you're done in time to learn some precious Gemara with your precious oldest son and answer some shidduch calls for stupid Moishy Landau, unless you want to adopt him instead. I'm sorry I'm not smart like Mordy and we don't learn together but at least if I had a little brother I'd make sure to keep my promises to him, even if we did say bli neder so I guess he doesn't have to, and I'd bother to make it home to play baseball with him at least once in every hundred years."

For a long moment Shmuel stood shaking with anger and his father sat with his mouth slightly parted. His expression began to change and Shmuel looked at the floor before he could see. He shouldn't have done that. Now he was a rude disappointment. He stared at the ground. The carpet was a dark grey.

He heard a creak, as though weight had been lifted off a chair, a shuffle of footsteps muffled by carpeting. Before he could look up, he felt the pressure of an arm behind his shoulder, a hand cupping the back of his head, and he was pulled forward until his face pressed against his father's shirtfront. He felt the scratchy material against his forehead, his head mashing flat the layers of button-down, tzitzis, and undershirt. It smelled faintly of sweat and strongly of fabric softener.

A bristly chin rested on top of his head, making his yarmulke slide forward on his head. He felt his father's chin moving against his head as he spoke. He spoke in his non-teaching voice, the words barely above a whisper, almost right in Shmuel's ears.

"Oh, Shmuel," he said. "How can you say that Shmu?" He was silent for a moment, his heartbeat loud in Shmuel's ear. "If not that Your Torah was my delight, I would have been lost in my affliction," he said in Hebrew. "I delight in Your words as one who has found a great treasure." He kissed the top of his son's head. "If these words are true about talmud Torah, Shmuel...they are infinitely true about you."

He pulled him closer, and Shmuel only realized he'd been crying when he felt his own tears dampening his father's shirt.

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