

### ***He Once***

Michael Lanci

Text by Peter Mason

He tells me that he once crawled through a woman and didn't realize it until the way back.  
He tells me that he thought it was a pile of smoldering clothing—that he didn't think the  
stick on his air tank was anything other than burning polyester and plastic.  
He tells me he still smells her when he is alone,  
he thought the cracking under his palms was wood—he didn't know how  
easily the frame of her could break.  
He tells me he only saw what he had done after searching for over an hour.  
He tells me he gathered what was left and carried her out to the ambulance as if something  
could be done—the ambulance driver didn't know what to do with her remains-  
he didn't know if a bodybag was appropriate at this point.  
He tells me he can't smoke cigarettes anymore because he is afraid of becoming like her.  
He tells me he is afraid his lungs will catch fire and become a doorway.

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### ***Remade***

Michael Lanci

Text by Amanda Hollander

Who will I find  
If I unmake myself?  
Is history now helix-bound?  
Do not acknowledge this!  
A life holds more than breath,  
A heart more than a beat.  
What fool who holds Pandora's box  
Lifts up the lid?  
I don't ache to know a tragedy  
But...  
What secrets mark my bones?  
Which stories whisper in my cells?  
Who hides inside my skin?  
Dare I rewrite my life  
When others authored every page?  
A prologue not my own.  
Yet this choice is my own.  
Yes.  
I must know all my ghosts.  
I must name all the spirits haunting me.  
Learn whom I mirror when I see  
My face reflected back.

Do not avoid the truth.  
My history is helix bound.  
I will remake myself  
No matter who I find.  
Who am I now?

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***Of Your Fair Courtesy***

Alaina Ferris  
Text by Alaina Ferris

Time stops with you like I've never known the hour.  
Strange, but true. I knew the moment I fell in love was the moment I'd stay in love.  
If you let me, I vow to shepherd your greatest hopes. I'll be the mourning dove  
when you first wake up. No need for fame, palaces, rings of gold-what need for riches,  
you're my fortune.  
I promise to guard the very best of what makes us. I'll bury all the rest with a light hand.  
I'll tend that garden 'til it's full of hyacinth.  
For your fear and doubts, you have my safety and care. When you're caved in grief I'm the  
torchlight near.  
And when our souls are cast into the star-shorn sky, let the wind sing this song  
though the mountains clear.

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***"The Sun Rises, The Sun Falls"***

Alaina Ferris  
From *Simone de Beauvoir at the Museum*  
Text by Alaina Ferris

Oh, great summoner, the changing light  
When the choice has yet to be made  
She's a hieroglyph with two sides—  
Her gaze both force and grace.  
A great balancing act, this mind  
What is, what was, what could be  
Beautiful, terrible, dangerous  
Each path a species to study.  
Marbled with ambiguity  
I am the poet's friend.  
I am your metaphor for the "other,"  
Lover, unrequited fool, or monster  
Whatever suits you best.  
I am but one man  
Both your beggar, your king.

The fracture, the light  
The shadow you want to  
The arms that hold you  
The eyes that watch you leave.  
The sun rises, the sun falls.  
Its exquisitely warm, then painfully cold  
I'm caught in an infinite loop.  
Crowned for guilty excess  
Hung in my monk's robe  
Beautiful, terrible, gentle  
I'm many things at once.  
Natural depravity  
Is usually matched by ardent virtue  
in one , yes in one man.  
The sun rises, the sun falls  
Caught in an infinite loop.

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### ***Mortally Wounded***

Michael Markowski

Text by Federico García Lorca

#### **I. The Guitar**

The weeping of the guitar  
begins.  
The wineglasses of dawn  
are broken.  
The weeping of the guitar  
begins.  
It's useless  
to silence it.  
Impossible  
to silence it.  
It weeps monotonously  
It weeps as water weeps  
as the wind weeps  
over snowfields.  
Impossible  
to silence it.  
It weeps for distant  
things.  
Hot southern sands  
yearning for white camellias.

It cries for an arrow without target  
for an evening without a morning  
for the first bird dead  
on the branch.  
Oh, guitar!  
Heart mortally wounded  
by five swords.

## **II. A Star**

There is a star,  
A tranquil star  
A star that has no eyelids  
Where?  
A Star....  
In the water,  
In the sleepy water of the pond.

## **III. Trees**

Trees!  
Were you once arrows  
Fallen from the blue?  
What terrible warriors cast you down?  
The stars?

Your music springs from the soul of the birds,  
from the eyes of God,  
from perfect passion.

Trees!  
Will your tough roots know  
My heart in the soil?

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## ***On This Island***

Benjamin Britten

Text by W.H. Auden

## **I. Let the flroid music praise**

Let the flroid music praise!  
Let the flroid music praise,

The flute and the trumpet,  
Beauty's conquest of your face:  
In that land of flesh and bone,  
Where from citadels on high  
Her imperial standards fly,  
Let the hot sun  
Shine on, shine on.

O but the unlov'd have had power,  
The weeping and striking,  
Always; time will bring their hour:  
Their secretive children walk  
Through your vigilance of breath  
To unpardonable death,  
And my vows break  
Before his look.

## **II. Now the leaves are falling fast**

Now the leaves are falling fast,  
Nurse's flowers will not last;  
Nurses to the graves are gone,  
And the prams go rolling on.

Whisp'ring neighbours, left and right,  
Pluck us from the real delight;  
And the active hands must freeze  
Lonely on the sep'rate knees.

Dead in hundreds at the back  
Follow wooden in our track,  
Arms raised stiffly to reprove  
In false attitudes of love.

Starving through the leafless wood  
Trolls run scolding for their food;  
And the nightingale is dumb,  
And the angel will not come.

Cold, impossible, ahead  
Lifts the mountain's lovely head  
Whose white waterfall could bless  
Travellers in their last distress.

### III. Seascape

Look, stranger, at this island now  
The leaping light for your delight discovers,  
Stand stable here  
And silent be,  
That through the channels of the ear  
May wander like a river  
The swaying sound of the sea.

Here at the small field's ending pause  
Where the chalk wall falls to the foam, and its tall ledges  
Oppose the pluck  
And knock of the tide,  
And the shingle scrambles after the sucking surf, and the gull lodges  
A moment on its sheer side.

Far off like floating seeds the ships  
Diverge on urgent voluntary errands;  
And the full view  
Indeed may enter  
And move in memory as now these clouds do,  
That pass the harbour mirror  
And all the summer through the water saunter.

### IV. Nocturne

Now through night's caressing grip  
Earth and all her oceans slip,  
Capes of China slide away  
From her fingers into day  
And th' Americas incline  
Coasts towards her shadow line.  
Now the ragged vagrants creep  
Into crooked holes to sleep:  
Just and unjust, worst and best,  
Change their places as they rest:  
Awkward lovers like in fields  
Where disdainful beauty yields:  
While the splendid and the proud  
Naked stand before the crowd  
And the losing gambler gains  
And the beggar entertains:  
May sleep's healing power extend

Through these hours to our friend.  
Unpursued by hostile force,  
Traction engine, bull or horse  
Or revolting succubus;  
Calmly till the morning break  
Let him lie, then gently wake.

## **V. As it is, plenty**

As it is, plenty;  
As it's admitted  
The children happy  
And the car, the car  
That goes so far  
And the wife devoted:  
To this as it is,  
To the work and the banks  
Let his thinning hair  
And his hauteur  
Give thanks, give thanks.

All that was thought  
As like as not, is not  
When nothing was enough  
But love, but love  
And the rough future  
Of an intransigent nature  
And the betraying smile,  
Betraying, but a smile:  
That that is not, is not;  
Forget, forget.

Let him not cease to praise  
Then his spacious days;  
Yes, and the success  
Let him bless, let him bless:  
Let him see in this  
The profits larger  
And the sins venal,  
Lest he see as it is  
The loss as major  
And final, final.