

Jersey Devil Press



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Editor's Note

There is something magical about putting a new issue together. After months of combing the beach, we finally get to dump our buckets on the kitchen table, brush the sand off the treasures we've collected, and arrange them in a shadow box. Ideally, the end result will showcase each writer's unique charms while creating a transcendent whole in which individual stories and poems are enhanced by each other's effects.

One theme that emerged in Issue 112 is vision, both in the literal sense of sight and in the deeper sense of perception and an artist's imagination. There are people gazing inward and peering outward, people regarding the traumas of the past and the possibilities of the future without blinking, people looking in the wrong places and seeing too much or not enough.

With this in mind, we invite you to ogle at the wonders on display. But watch out, because some of them might be staring back at you.

— Laura Garrison

Stasis

Ian Goh

No moons in orbit meant there was no tug on the heartstrings, no pull of the unknown for the natives like statues stirred in the light of distant suns. There were no migration cycles, just a lone city spun out in concentric circles, those in the outer rungs prone to sharp pangs of homesickness, and the great adventurers made pilgrimage inwards, scarce discovery of themselves, as they sailed to the edges of still, mirrored oceans. There, they ebbed and flowed, hypnotised by their own reflections, diving into each other's eyes instead of the shiny beings that swam across heavenly skies.

IAN GOH is a writer and teacher based in Singapore. His work has appeared in *QLRS*, *Star*Line*, *Eye to the Telescope*, *The Tiger Moth Review* and elsewhere. He attained his MA in Creative Writing from Goldsmith University of London.

Fangs

Marc Tweed

She's never seen anyone take their leg off before. It's daybreak and the guy from Ultimate Bacon Explosion stands down at the end of the dock when Little Sandy comes out of the cabin Dad built before he got dead. She's got Dad's old, scuffed binoculars around her neck and she takes them up and her mouth hangs open as she gets a good look at the guy. From inside the cabin, Mom's muffled snores. So the guy's back is to her and he's wiggling his arms out over the dark water of the lake. He's small, a slim little guy. He puts his arms to his sides now. A long braided rat tail spills down his back and that's how Little Sandy's pretty sure it's the guy from yesterday at Arnold's Park. Ultimate Bacon Explosion. She wishes she could see his face but he won't turn around.

Something scratchy scrambles over the cabin roof and she notes the electric lanterns are all lit, twined around the deck railing like vines bearing hand grenades or little severed heads, a Warning! She unplugs them, pulls out her notebook and stubby pencil and writes *Clue > Psychic Messages > Dad. Little lights around deck are on. Who did? Why??*

She slips the notebook back into the pocket of her big maroon sweater and squints down the dock through curly red bangs. She pulls up a deck chair, takes up the binoculars again and rests her chin on the sagging railing, watches him stretch, touch his toes, pull his t-shirt off. Whispers of soapy waves lap at the pebbled shore, congregate and conspire around the beams supporting the dock. Two finches argue in the poplars dotting the lakeside, their shrill

voices like little broken machines. The sky is dark-gray with stripes of watery sunlight violating the horizon here and there and she feels slightly secret as he dresses down to Speedos and sits to fiddle with something she can't make out for the distance.

It's not strange to find some early bird going for a swim before the sun's up and she likes to watch them in the dying moonlight while Mom sleeps off her own lake of liquor. The cabin really needs a lot of maintenance work. Dad would be so disappointed to see...

Little Sandy audibly gasps. The guy from Ultimate Bacon Explosion unbuckles something and removes one of his legs, which he places casually off to one side. The fake foot hangs over the edge of the dock and he rises on one leg and launches himself powerfully, arched like a porpoise, into the lake. He breaks the water and disappears.

She figures there must be someone else awake at this hour, some other family vacationing here who is watching this? I mean, what the heck, she whispers. But everywhere around her is empty of human beings. This is quite a development. What the heck, she says again. It was a surprise to see his leg come off like it was nothing. She waits for him to emerge for a breath but he doesn't, not that she can see. She steps off the porch and walks over to where she has a better view of the shoreline. Did he slip out over where her view is blocked by bushes? She again takes up the notebook and stubby pencil and writes *Guy from yesterday (Bacon Experience) took off leg > rat tail > must be professional swimmer > possible military?*

Five minutes later she writes in the same entry *He is gone?*

* * *

The guy from Ultimate Bacon Explosion's been gone for almost two hours. At the end of the dock, Little Sandy gets a good look at that fake leg. She crouches and runs her hand down the length of it, feels the little places where the lacquered paint chipped off. It bends where it's supposed to. It's well-used, the leather straps are soft to the touch.

The fact she never saw him come up for air is worrying. Meanwhile, the sun is up and parents are emerging from their cabins along the shore, gazing into the brightening sky, teasing their sleepy kids whose peals of laughter skip and squeal across the water. No one seems to have noticed her or the leg on the dock so far. She wants to wake Mom and tell her or no...call the police or...she needs to think it through. She worries someone will take the leg so carries it with her back to the cabin.

She fears the guy from Ultimate Bacon Explosion has drowned and scolds herself for sitting there for so long, thinking he'd appear at any moment. She feels somehow responsible for his leg and maybe even his drowning. She's usually on top of things, counting and keeping score. Mom hates it.

In the cabin, Mom still breathes raggedly in her sleep. She usually sleeps into the afternoon when they're out at the cabin, stays up late drinking in one of Dad's ratty sweatshirts, swatting away bugs and chain-smoking in the lantern light. Little Sandy drags the leg inside and puts it on her cot. Slits of sunlight slice the room up. Mom's face is light-sliced, too, gray and unhealthy-looking as she lies flat on her back in bed. It smells like smoke in there and Little Sandy takes a moment to empty ashtrays and tidy up last night's glasses and dishes and liquor bottles (there are three). She fishes in Mom's purse for her cell phone but finds the

battery dead. She thinks about that for a minute or two, pursing her lips and twisting a ruddy curl around her forefinger over and over.

This could be handled in a few different ways, she whispers to herself in an accent she's concocted from various television programs.

She goes into a closet and comes out in her diving gear: snorkel mask, Strawberry Shortcake swimsuit, flippers. Mom stops breathing, starts again with scary gasps and turns over in her sleep. Before leaving, Little Sandy decides to cover the leg on her cot with bed sheets so in the unlikely event Mom wakes up while she's gone there won't be a big hubbub about it. She slips carefully out into the bright, mid-morning roar of jet skis and jubilant screaming.

Visibility is low in the yucky green lake. Little Sandy glides along the deep, weedy sediment at the bottom like a seal or the Man From Atlantis. She has gills and a dorsal fin. She keens into the murk, fine-tunes her sonar sort of like eyes getting used to a dark room. Her keening pings off various obstacles and objects. It's a topography of garbage and rocks and slimy tendrils of freshwater kelp rotting on the floor of the lake. She finds one dead body, two dead bodies, three dead bodies. All have two legs. She explores the twisted wreck of a Chevy Celebrity station wagon rusting in a cloud of minnows. Nothing inside but empty beer cans and a human skull, clearly antique. She scours the entire lake for the guy from Ultimate Bacon Explosion but comes up with nothing but driftwood and questions.

* * *

"I'm not sure I understand." The ticket taker at Arnold's Park wrinkles his forehead and squints suspiciously at Little Sandy standing there on the hot pavement in hot pink flippers. She's out of breath, trying to convey the seriousness of the situation.

"There's a guy. He works here. At the Ultimate Bacon Experience..."

"Explosion."

"Right, explosion. He's the guy with a rat tail, I think he might have got hurt. I have his leg."

"Okay, little girl, that's Raj, okay? Hurt? He looked fine to me, come in late this morning, still here as far as I know." The Ticket Taker is tall and thin, with a greasy comber that sags down his forehead. There's a sharp bump on the bridge of his nose. Little Sandy feels a surge of relief course through her and jumps up and down, her flippers make a splatting sound on the hot pavement. He's okay! She takes her notepad and stubby pencil from her canvas shoulder bag and starts scrawling a note, perhaps someone would give it to the Ultimate Bacon Explosion Guy for her. What a relief. *Hello friend, I saw you go diving this morning and imagine you're wondering about your leg. Don't worry, I have it safe for...*

"What do you mean you have his leg?" The ticket taker seems aggravated, even alarmed.

Little Sandy considers turning, running into the woods that surround the park but the Ticket Taker comes out of his booth and snatches her by the arm.

"Now what's this about his leg?"

Little Sandy asks him to let go of her. He says something quiet into a two-way radio clipped to his collar. He won't let her go.

A serious-looking teenager with a wispy mustache and a name tag reading Rusty comes over and says, "What's up, what's up with this little so and so? Hey, I have a question about my timecard. When I took break yesterday I forgot..."

The Ticket Taker ignores him, turning to Little Sandy and saying things like *Where are your parents* and *Weren't you here yesterday?*

A bright purple Park Security golf cart with two identical middle-aged men in Park Security uniforms rolls up to the trio. They struggle their big bodies out of the golf cart with humongous eyes, serious looks on wide curly heads. One is out of breath and the other is not. With them comes a strong smell of manure. Like pig manure and Drakkar Noir and something else. Potting soil?

The Ticket Taker tightens his grip on her arm. "Girl says something about having Raj's leg. I don't know."

The security guards have name tags, too: *Hickory Bill* and *Stoney*.

Little Sandy shivers as they hitch their pants up and drag their big butts over. They lift her like it's nothing.

She guesses it's the maintenance shed? It's a big, corrugated metal pole barn or something.

It's sweaty in there, smells like fresh-cut grass and gasoline, plus the grossly distinct pong of the security guys. Ick, manure. Outside is late daylight but it's dark in there, a fluorescent light shines on a workbench littered with lawnmower parts and beer cans. One little window frames the actual sun, bright enough to make her squint when she looks in that direction.

Hickory Bill asks her if she likes music, specifically Anne Murray. And does she like Anne Murray's version of *Amazing Grace* or Jim Nabors' better? He is carrying a little boom box as he walks toward her with a bent-up smile on his face. Like a weird, icky smile. Stoney is staring at his cell phone, detached by the roll-up door. It's weird how much they look alike.

"Are you guys identical," Little Sandy says.

"Now let's talk about Raj's leg a little. A little about his leg," Hickory Bill says.

Little Sandy says, "I want to talk to Raj directly."

"Well, alright, that's not gonna be possible. Raj has a lot of responsibilities. You think it's all free and easy runnin' that Ultimate Bacon Excursion?"

Stoney corrects him. "Explosion."

Hickory Bill continues. "He's busy with that...those responsibilities and can't take the time to talk to every little girl come around saying nonsense."

Stoney puffs on an inhaler.

"Not even about his own leg?" Little Sandy asks.

"Now, little girl, how do you know he doesn't have dozens just like it," Hickory Bill says.

Little Sandy looks around and imagines the shed full of fake legs. A damp cloth goes over her face.

Before Dad got dead, Little Sandy had it pretty good. They ate all kinds of interesting dinners, went to all manner of places. He taught her words like *somnambulance* and *emesis*, gave her a microscope for Christmas one year. He wasn't one to be all

affectionate and say things like *I love you* but he was good to her and tried to be good to Mom, who won't let anyone be good to her, especially her own self. Then, not long ago but long enough she can't quite remember his face in fine detail, Dad got dead. Just like that. And Mom just got worse.

Little Sandy wakes up in the maintenance shed, tied to a chair. Well, dammit. She wonders briefly, ridiculously, if Mom is looking for her. She imagines Mom, dead-eyed and disheveled, shuffling through the empty liquor bottles and cigarette butts, confused but not alarmed by her absence. I mean, she and Little Sandy have all kinds of conversations she never remembers having. And Little Sandy is very independent. Mom is figuring she's off somewhere drawing bugs in the woods or at Arnold's Park riding the Zambezi Zinger or Mouse Trap, lips pursed, never screaming. Making friends or something. Making friends with a family that's taken her in as one of their own, sending her to college and attending her eventual wedding to a Brazilian aristocrat or German hotelier. She's fine, Mom knows it.

Mom isn't coming for me, Little Sandy whispers. She can't tell if anyone else is in the shed with her. It's so dark in there. She listens for breathing, dreaming.

If not Mom, then who?

The roll-up door at the far end of the maintenance shed rolls up and the sun rushes in, filling every crack and crevice with daylight. Little Sandy is temporarily blinded. She's worked herself into a

fever straining at her ropes in the dark. Sweat pours down her forehead, her face is hot and sticky. A truck backs in, beeping loudly. For a moment she's concerned it will back over her but it stops a few feet away and the driver kills the engine. Little Sandy squints through the glare to find a long, hooded man in silhouette against the blinding world outside. He comes closer. It is the Ticket Taker, his breath like cigarettes and onion rings.

"Now let's figure this out together, okay?" he says.

The Ticket Taker forcefully shifts gears and the truck speeds up, sprinting beneath the high flashing Arnold's Park sign, swinging out onto the road that rings Lake Okoboji. He goes in the opposite direction of where she knows. The world is hot and bright.

"I told you, I just wanted to return that guy's fake leg. I don't understand what all this is about." Little Sandy looks out the side mirror to see if anyone is following them. There is a dented Toyota with a family inside directly behind them. Further back, a box truck.

The Ticket Taker removes his hood and pushes his comb over away from his eyes. He is wearing a long, black robe and leather driving gloves. For the first time, she notes the spider tattooed on his neck, the lolling, faded script that says *Fuck It*. She wonders what would happen if she simply jumped out of the moving truck. Would she die? She counts eleven discarded hypodermic needles on the floorboard.

"Well, see it's kind of a complicated situation. What's your name again?"

"Sandra."

“Okay, Sandra. Let me ask you a question. Do you believe in other worlds?”

“Like what?” she says, turning to get a better look at the car behind them. A dad and his bored, angry kids. Would they see her if she waved her arms? Would they know what it means?

The Ticket Taker stretches in his seat, looks over at Little Sandy seriously. “Well, okay. So how about other worlds you can’t see with your eyes, that you can’t walk to with your legs. Other worlds you can visit with your mind. Know what I mean by with your mind?”

“My mom is definitely looking for me,” Little Sandy lies.

“So, there are all kinds of worlds like that. Good and bad. Just like people. Right?” He reaches over and opens the glove box, fishes around in a jumble of papers and miscellaneous objects, finally producing a small metal contraption that looks a lot like a can opener.

“Now see, this is a...think of it this way.” The Ticket Taker steers with his knees and unfolds the little contraption so it resembles a giraffe. Little Sandy has her hand on the door handle. She watches the trees and scrub brush and roadside garbage go by in a blur.

“In one sense, this thing here is right here with us in this truck, posed like a wild animal. But what if it could be somewhere else at the same time it’s here with us? Somewhere unlike our world. Now watch when...”

Little Sandy screams as the truck is jolted off the road.

It happens at once, the grill of another car explodes into the cab, crushing the Ticket Taker, whose blood sprays Little Sandy’s face before she’s tossed out through the passenger window in a blast of

glass and metal. She finds herself sailing through the air, almost like in slow motion, as if she has time to take in the scenic view from 15 feet off the ground. She can see the lake full of boats and jet skis, birds skimming the lake surface or disappearing into it like the guy from Ultimate Bacon Explosion, the mangled marriage of the Arnold's Park truck and a drunk lady's Volvo station wagon. Little Sandy falls, lands face up in the ditch with a great, visceral crack. Her eyes are open, her mouth is moving, but nothing else is moving. There isn't a cloud in the sky. A little seaplane drags a huge banner behind it. The banner says, *You Could Be Home Right Now.*

Little Sandy navigates the sweaty Bud Light crowd, winding her way through gangs of stoned teenagers, portly grandfathers in knee-high tube socks, gasps of disappointment at the various game booths. She's been at Arnold's Park all day, watching the interesting people, taking notes, spending most of the fifty-dollar bill Mom gave her in a stupor thinking it was a ten. Now it was twilight and she'd ridden the Zambezi Zinger six times, Mouse Trap three times, and spent hours trailing an obese tow-headed family who seemed to be having the time of their lives. She'd taken notes: *Father lifts smallest daughter onto rotating horse > daughter screams > possible acrophobic > recommend confrontational therapy.* Stuff like that.

Now she's following them to the food court. The timing is good, she hasn't eaten all day, so consumed was she by the chaos and cheap fascinations of the amusement park. They come to the lake every year, this is the second time without Dad. She wishes she had

a small sister. Each visit is a little different. Each time Little Sandy is less little.

She stands about a dozen paces away as the big blonde family gathers in the middle of the food court, surveying all the possibilities and discussing them seriously amongst each other. Little Sandy writes in her notebook, *Why not each go to wherever they want > togetherness*. They seem to have made a decision! The whole group heads toward Ultimate Bacon Explosion, which is the newest food stand and has a long line because people come here year after year and something new is always going to be exciting. Brand new this year!

Little Sandy lets a few people get in line after the Big Blondes before she joins the procession. She likes the atmosphere at twilight. The food court is decorated with colored lights strung between the various stands. Purple, orange and light blue. Tall oaks just beyond the food court silhouette against the blue-black sky, define the horizon's lower boundary; she thinks she sees a bat dive through and scoop a chicken wing up off the cooling asphalt. It all seems so exotic. Little lights at night, the air so comfortable. Like a movie set.

She's so absorbed by the beauty of it all she doesn't even notice the blonde family get out of line with their food. SHE'S UP! The guy behind the counter is animated like a cartoon, with taut, exaggerated features on a wiry frame, silky black hair swept back. "What you like?" he says in a voice much lower than she expected. It kind of stuns her. She realizes she's neglected to peruse the big billboard menu for even a second while she was in line for so long. She stammers the first line from the menu, "I'll take the Reason for Living Explosion" without knowing what it is.

“You’re hungry!” he laughs.

Little Sandy blushes.

“How you want the egg?”

Little Sandy shakes her head, embarrassed, not understanding. The man behind the counter looks over her shoulder, taking in the seemingly endless line of customers. He looks at his watch, says “Okay, twelve dollars,” and turns to prepare her Reason for Living Explosion. Little Sandy watches him work. He’s thin and precise. It’s just him in there. He’s sculpting something surreal out of partially fried bacon and scrambled eggs. He puts it under a little broiler for a second while he readies something else. He pulls the sculpture out of the broiler with metal tongs. He uses a little blowtorch on it, plants a little plastic flag in it that says *WE LOVE EXPLOSIONS*.

The man behind Little Sandy huffs impatiently.

The Ultimate Bacon Explosion Guy has a long, braided rat tail. It whips around and around as he rushes from cutting board to fryer to fridge. Someone behind her mutters, “look at him go.” When he turns around with a platter of something Little Sandy isn’t sure she can eat, he laughs at her wide eyes. He gets a big kick out of it and laughs a loud, deep-throated laugh, mouth wide open and that’s when Little Sandy notices and says to herself as if in a trance, *This man has teeth like a snake.*

MARC TWEED’s writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *NOON Annual*, *Bending Genres*, *New World Writing*, *The Normal School*, *X-R-A-Y*, and more. Marc is completing a collection of short stories tentatively titled *Seasick on Land*. He lives in Seattle and also makes paintings and music.

Tanka in Half-Light

Ashley Crout

This screened porch, its mesh
angling shadows on my face,
my circles of sight,
where the hawk each dim dawn flies
nearer to me than my name.

ASHLEY CROUT was born in Charleston, SC, and graduated from Bard College and the MFA program at Hunter College. She is the recipient of a poetry grant from The Astraea Foundation and has received awards from The Academy of American Poets and the Poetry Foundation. Her work has been published in *Sojourner*, *New Orleans Review*, *Atticus Review* and *Dodging the Rain*, among others. She lives in Greenville, SC, with her hound, Stella.

To the person who stabbed me while I was sitting on my fire escape

Jane-Rebecca Cannarella

Freckled scars
are imprints of dears or deer—
exit wounds over my body:
abstract art, spatters of color
patterned like lace and the feeling
of raised grapefruit-colored kisses
—and just as tart. I run my fingertips
over the stitched pieces held
together by hasty needlework—
a framed magic-eye
needlepoint; home
decorations that greet friends’
fingers with welcoming artwork
that they can touch.

JANE-REBECCA CANNARELLA is a writer and editor living in Philadelphia. She is the editor of *HOOT Review* and *Meow Meow Pow Pow Lit*, and a former genre editor at *Lunch Ticket*. Jane-Rebecca is the author of *Better Bones and Marrow*, both published by Thirty West Publishing House, *The Guessing Game* published by BA Press, and *Thirst and Frost* forthcoming from Vegetarian Alcoholic Press.

Over the Board

Davis MacMillan

Jesse decides to get good at chess. There are a few reasons for this. A big one is that it's out there, in the culture. People are talking about chess. It also, to him, has always seemed like a smart people game, a game he should be good at as a demonstration of his intelligence and seriousness as a person. Plus, it's a pandemic. There's nothing to do and nowhere to go. That means plenty of time for the internet.

He's not the only person with this idea. According to the chess website he uses, he's one of about three million. So it's competitive, even at the beginning.

Jesse has a plan though. He's got a training regimen. More than that he has the willpower to play 100 games a day, and to chase these with chess puzzles and YouTube videos on strategy. He's got the willpower to force his brain to focus on a board game all of the time. He spends his nights bathed in clips of wan and skinny men talking about the Sicilian and the Nymzo and the Dutch. He plays through old games. He convinces himself (like so many others) that he can find something new in a 100-year-old sequence of moves.

There's a thing that experienced players say: the more you know about the game the more it reveals itself as unknowable. Jesse hears (or reads) this a lot. For a while it seems woo woo and then one day it doesn't. He has spent 18 straight hours running through the shadows of moves in his head. It's not enough. He doesn't know anything.

It's at this point that the offer is made. He's down a YouTube rabbit hole, listening to some GM or other walk through the possibilities of the Vienna gambit. The next video loads. It's clear from the beginning that it's not a video. Or it's a video and more than a video. A shadow appears in the shape of a person. It's black, and the background around it is black as well, but in a way that seems to buzz. The video comes on with a sound like breathing. The figure speaks. "Hey Jesse," it says. "Seems like you like chess."

"I do," is all he says. Three letters, two words. It's a phrase that's changed lives before, but it still seems unfair that it should have the power to destroy his.

What's the cost? What's the usual cost in moments like these? His mind, his body, his soul. I'll have to possess you, the figure says. To get the job done. It's perfectly safe. You'll be able to watch. You'll be able to learn. You can see everything in my brain.

Jesse tries to wrap his mind around the offer. In a certain sense he's already possessed. Isn't learning about something, at least something this big, an act of possession? The knowledge comes in and shapes the brain to its needs, pushing everything else aside. The internet is the perfect vehicle for such possession. It's a funnel of information: amoral and gigantic. Just like fucking chess, Jesse thinks.

The figure goes on. It's not that I'll make you better, it says. It's that I'll help you understand. Jesse thinks about the fact that the first chess computer was a man hidden inside a box, writing moves on a piece of paper and beeping and booping with his mouth. He thinks that he can become that box but in reverse: a computer inside of a person.

“OK,” he says, condemning himself with one less letter. The figure tells him that they’ll start in the morning. Say your goodbyes.

There’s no one to say goodbye to. There’s not even anything to do. Normally he’d spend the night learning. He’d spend it playing. But he’s about to learn everything. And the thought of playing as himself – with his flaws and failings and the glaring holes in his game – makes him sick. He tries to sleep. He can’t sleep. He sits in silence. He watches the sunrise.

Then it happens. It’s gentle at first, like a glove sliding over his entire body but from the inside. For a while he can still feel himself. Then he can’t. His hands go first. Then his feet. Then even his eyes are someone else’s.

“Ready to begin,” the figure asks. Then it laughs. The computer starts up, the game opens with the gentle pop of a notification. He’s black. White moves its e pawn. The piece clicks into place. He barely has time to consider it before the moves flood in. They come first individually and then in lines. They spread out like the roots of a tree. The possibilities explode like a supernova: not outward but inward with a force that crushes him. They move faster. Pawns and knights and rooks and bishops and the queen all in a blinding glare. There’s no possibility of keeping up. He wants to tear out his eyes. He wants to go deeper and tear out his brain. He wants to go back to knowing nothing.

White moves. Black moves. The options explode in front of him again. If he had control of his body he’d pass out. He can’t. He’s trapped. “Enough,” he says. “Please.” The figure ignores him. It keeps playing.

DAVIS MACMILLAN has had fiction in *Wigleaf*, *Jellyfish Review*, *JMWW*, and elsewhere. He lives in New York.

Futuristic Funerals

Dante Novario

Gold Package

The inherent romanticism of an untouched grave, of a private
Little palm of dirt carved lovingly just for you. Imagine centuries
Of ghostly rest nestled in the quiet Earth, decomposing in peace
And a guarantee that your skeleton will be enviously spotless
When eventually excavated.

Diamond Package

A straight shot into the constellation
Or black hole of your choice. Every time Alpha Centauri twinkles
It'll be your corpse showered by meteorites, exploring new
galaxies.
Every time a star collapses you'll be there to personally greet it.

Silver Package

Your soul will be pressed and digitally converted
Into code, then downloaded onto one of our signature hard drives.
The precision of the transfer for both your thoughts and personality
Is not contractually obligated. We promise the transformation
Will be indescribable, profoundly different from your experience
As a human. This is the closest offer to everlasting life
That we currently provide.

Sponsored Package

Ground into delicious coffee beans

Sprinkled throughout only the best Guatemalan blends, light or dark

Roast to your preference, if selected your family will enjoy

A 10% discount on all of our select java products.

Multi-Dimensional Package

We throw your body through the portal

And honestly we're hoping you'll somehow let us know

What's happening on the other side.

Flung into the Ocean to be Eaten by Sea Monsters Package

This one is self-explanatory.

Soul's Gonna Burn in Hell Anyway Package

Our hottest seller

Gingerly dropped down our signature shaft directly into the equator, a semi-

Reincarnation, you'll never be chilly again and rest easy

As fuel for our wondrous world, all of its bountiful goodness.

Standard Package

Our professional team will claim you faked your death
And escaped dastardly, living a double life as a wealthy eccentric
On a private island cooking up another wild scheme.
We then dump your body in a randomly selected hole.

Transcendental Package

Toss the flesh and emerge
As a force of the forever, unbound by the tediousness of time, thrive
Pure as a breath of the universe, as a myth of mortality, the lessons
Of your humanity transcending into something delectably
Divine, as a culmination of the wonderful
You secretly hoped was always possible.

DANTE NOVARIO currently lives in Louisville, KY, where he studied writing at Bellarmine University and works as a behavior analyst with special needs individuals. His work has previously appeared or is forthcoming in *Firewords Quarterly*, *Strange Horizons*, *Thin Air Magazine*, *Still: The Journal*, *Ghost City*, *The River Magazine*, and others.

On the cover:

“Window Girl Alone”

LUCIJA RASONJA deals with visual communication and graphic design and with everything that includes creative segments in the visual field. You can find her work at lrasonjadesign.wordpress.com.

