ODE TO ISOLATION
Cabin Fever Dreams
Owen Meade

Stuck here to protect everyone
And now I can’t tell the moon from the
sun
It seems I left time so long ago
I breathe in air from a lost tomorrow
Recycled like nostalgia for
comfort
I’d blow a kiss but my mouth
is covered
I resent the windows for
what they tease
The animals too for they do as
they please
Social creatures
An engine lost in a blizzard
Our brains will soon be
Decaying then become
withered
Being of lights once dance on
eyelids
Now they’re here with me on
this island
I grabbed onto the vapors of
friends
Crushed with a rose to turn
into a lens
Protect me from cataract
Filling in with the wrong
letters
Self-taught doublethink
And I’m scared it won’t get better
Sleep’s useless now that the unreality is
free
Free from the un
Free of cannot be

Terror
Alexandra Blackwell

Is it reasonable to hate terror more than
what causes it?
It twists and turns you
It’s a horrible pain
The times when you worried about
being sick
The waiting for something that
may never happen
Sometimes worse than
the events themselves
Terror leaves you frozen
Terror leaves you aching
Sometimes more than what
I’m oh so scared of
Nervous stomach aches
An aching throat from
a scream
Terror is horrible
Terror can keep you alive
Terror can make you want
to die
Terror flips you upside
down and turns you blind
Terror shoves you out of
the way of the moving car
Terror is unreasonable
Terror is normal
Fear scares me in of itself
The idea of pain worse
than what I’m scared of
To answer your question
I think it is perfectly reasonable.
SYWD (This is Us)
Owen Meade

Here we are staged to close the curtains
With thoughts that began to resurface
I know when I see you, I see a smile
But it goes away after awhile
I wonder if you were ever happy to see me
A cycle of amnesia and apologies
Closure never came to our front door
I’m here at the window, waiting for more

I’d still eat the cancer
That poisons our hearts
And tears ourselves apart
I’d still share with you,
the pain we call age
If only to prove
That we are meant for change

The soul of yours
The heart of mine

Sometimes I feel like the naive little brother
Completely unaware as we’re ignored by our mother
So you, the eldest, decided to go the distance
To run away and discard this feeling of indifference

I’d still eat the cancer
That poisons our hearts
And tears ourselves apart
I’d still share with you,
the pain we call age
If only to prove
That we are meant for change

The soul of yours
The heart of mine

A picture framed limits the scene
I want you to remember all of me
I want this one run to last long
Sometimes you gotta go left to right your wrongs
And you ask why I want to go

And though I know we’re broken, minds like misspoken
We’re little droplets falling from the top
But what’s an ocean, but a multitude of drops?

I’d still eat the cancer
That poisons our hearts
And tears ourselves apart
I’d still share with you,
the pain we call age
If only to prove
That we are meant for change

The soul of yours
The heart of mine

The soul of yours
The heart of mine

Will create a love that never dies

She Didn’t Drink Coffee
Maria Elena El Moore

She didn’t drink coffee until she was sixteen.
She Drenched it in sugar,
And Drowned it in cream.

He met her at the shop where he took his coffee bitter.
He used no honey,
And he mocked her with a snicker.

He fascinated her with his own maturity.
His taste was sophisticated,
And he enjoyed his intellectual superiority.

He pushed her to renovate her tea-tray.
He insisted on paying,
For she can’t buy it anyway.

He pushed her to drink it straight - no chaser.
His order was forceful,
And whiskey had a burning flavor.

Her sugar was lost when he followed her back.
Her mocha left cold,
And her tea turned black.
The Escape Will Lead Us On
Norah Schramm

Like the wings of a bird—
Soaring over the sea—
Flowing as the written word—
Can someone hear my plea?
Deep in the mountains
Quiet and full of life—
The echo of the caverns
From the quarantine.

The heart and soul of the nation
Fits into a cage;
The courage needs an escape,
From the fear we have made.

Down in the forest of deep desire,
Our better angels left to guide,
We must hire
Imagination before the tide.

Sea glass shattered
And wind battered,
Rounded by the tempest
A North pointed compass—
For the escape will lead us on.

Out at night to watch the stars—
Crawling across the vines—
An echo of our soul—
Sleep deprived but survived.

Out across the endless night,
Where dawn turns into day,
For it is there
In the unconscious—
The best and glorious place.

Blue tinted screen—
White painted house—
A fragment of our past—
Like a shell upon the shelf.

What would we give to pounce like a cat?
To charm our way out of the storm,
To leap across the world like a raindrop,
Or skip across the road like a stone—
To be as tall as a tree—
Wise as an owl—
Beautiful as a butterfly—
Loud as a canyon.

It is in all of this,
The escape will lead us on.

Ode to Grey
Maria Elena El Moore

Grey has a salty smell.
It creeps in—
On a Hot Summer’s day.
It darkens the sky
And dampens the air.

Grey sounds like the melody—
Of a seagull’s cry.
Waves crashing
And Sea Lions lamenting.

Grey tastes like the
Dry feeling in your mouth,
After spending Hours
Splashing in waves.

Grey feels like a Cold Hug
It wraps you In a
Dewy blanket and places
Soft kisses on your cheeks.

People say they hate the grey
For it takes the warmth away.

But Grey pushes past
The filtered air of the night
And brings the Salty, Fresh
Air of the morning
That rises from the Tides.
Ode to my Friends
Owen Meade

Hello Hi Hey
Ain’t this a little strange
The adults finally admit that they’re afraid
And I think I’m using that as an excuse in a way

I want to apologize for being an accidental haunting
Thoughts become daydreams where we’re actually talking
I feel like my hand in the ironies as it’s becoming molten
It’s a pain I know too well but I no longer burn so it’s compulsive
And I think about you all the time yet I never make the call
Instead of reaching towards your hands, I always take the fall
For this broken part of my photograph that hates the rest
Shuts down the functions that let my love for you be expressed
So technicality make it so that it’s really not my fault
But I would give myself some wounds so I could bathe them in salt

So now these words are in a way a sign of desperation
This bottle’s a last attempt at communication
PS: Tell me everything that you are owed
I buy it all by the end of this ode

You are artists making these worlds come to life
You make these ghosts of giants envious every night
They’re so far away and you’re here putting on a show
When you’re all on, the past becomes like tomorrow
When were all together there’s this unique energy
That makes me so happy when it enters me
And you were the reason I was able to find myself
Lost in the woods, finally found people like himself
I’m glad to see you gain the heights you deserved
I keep on cheering even if I seemed reserved

I hate this disease picking at my brain
And now what stops me is this guilt and the pain
I mean how am I supposed to fix this disastrous mess?
It feels so one sided, so I just keep on adding to the stress
I’m scared to talk to you and simply confess because
What if your eyes reflect the same thing that my mirror does?

Perfect People
Taylor Castellon

I believe humanity is stuck inside a maze.
Walking around in a dreary-eyed haze.
As if the world ends just beyond their comfort zones,
In their perfect little towns and perfect little homes.
These narrow-minded people
With their narrow-minded ways,
Couldn’t fathom a world
Where they wouldn’t stray.
From their perfect little houses
In their perfect little towns,
Where everything is either Left or right or up or down.
They think if everything’s so perfect,
Why would you want to leave?
But freedom of a chosen choice Isn’t really free.
But stay inside your box
And let yourself drown
In your perfect little houses,
In your perfect little towns.
There’s a better world out there To see and to feel.
But you refuse to touch it
Or acknowledge that it’s real.
Colors and Vibrance and experience,
Outside your freshly painted white picket fence.
There is greatness out there,
Just give it a try.
Cause what’s the point of living
If you only live to die?
I know this world is different
And I know this world seems odd,
But just because it’s different
Doesn’t have to mean it’s wrong.
This is truly living,
If you know what I mean.
Cause the definition of living
New York City
Maria Elena El Moore

New York City: A city oozing with life. A Place where life cracks and bursts at every seam. A place where you look two feet behind and three feet ahead.

A clashing, clanging of clustered cars, Which come crawling down the street. Where stop lights are optional for pedestrians fleet.

The Wondrous warm Joys of Central Park juxtaposed Against the cold harsh steel buildings. Where a screeching train accompany an unknown Talent-- A city where fashion lives and art reigns king.

New York City: the City of Dreams and shiny faces, And streets filled with people who never got a chance to make it. Where the rush of sound and whirling noise Create an anticipatory roar excited and unexplored.

“The Big Apple”: A perplexing metaphor. Instead, see the city as a subway car, always on the go. With the daily exchange of people both new and old-- The city lights always flickering like the trains below.

To Reputation:
I swear you are a religion,
But no one would thrive
Without a doubt of it

And Karma,
I don’t want to write about you,
Because I’m afraid
Of what will come out of it

And Doubt,
You’re annoying
Just leave me alone

And Fear
Is the devil who
Just sat on his throne

I hope that The Pattern
Won’t haunt me again
It shows up like
Black and white on my skin
Immortality
Taylor Castellon

My bones are weary.
My eyes are glazed.
My body is old and tired.
I have lived a thousand lives.
I have buried a thousand friends.
I have only one last soul, my own.
I made a wish to watch History being made,
I regret that every day.
Each time history becomes worse.
I am forced to watch.
Look on from a window.
See it all go by and do nothing.
I have been here too long.
I have lived beyond my time.
My bones are weary.
My Eyes Are glazed.
My body is old and tired.
It is time for history to be made alone.
It is time for me to go.

Excerpt from Tuesday at Noon
Taylor Castellon

For a moment Maya was silent. Her eyes unfocused and she looked at something off in the distance. When she returned to herself she began talking again, this time moving forward and walking right through Ethan.

He sighed in despair, he always forgot reality when he was with her, but of course, she couldn’t hear him. The thing about Ethan and Maya was that they had been dating from 8th grade until their junior year of high school when Ethan died in a church fire. Ever since then, his soul had been confined to the rotting corpse of the building. The only relief he got was when Maya came to talk to him every Tuesday at noon.

He watched as she touched the charred pews. He began to feel an overwhelming feeling of dread. He loved Maya more than anything, and seeing her was the only thing he had to look forward to. Though the thought of her being five feet away and not being able to hold her, kiss her, tell her how much he loved her, it killed him. Instead, he just followed her, mirroring her moves with his own. He stepped where she stepped and turned where she turned. They were caught in this beautiful silent dance, and for a moment it was like they were one again. Like Ethan was there with her and, deep down, he believed Maya could feel him there as well.
Excerpt from Candle Queen
Josephine Jenner

I was pissed off. She had really done it that time.
The sun beat down on the market street, and I stood in the middle of it.
Shifting foot to foot on the dirt, arms crossed tight over my chest, locked in a
staring contest with the stained glass window above the big doors of the brick
church. I didn’t want to start a fight in front of the house of God, but I would if I had
to.

Behind me down the market street, I could hear the men commanding in
their loud voices as they made their workers set out their vendor’s goods. I could
hear the wagons with their creaky wheels pulled by trudging feet, owned by people
with only one white scar on each of their wrists. Somewhere behind me the people
chattered while they put out their food and clothes on wobbly wooden boxes to be
bought once the hour was out. I just knew the loud men and their workers were
shooting dirty looks at the back of my head.

I picked at my nails with my thumb and scowled at the two sets of scars
shaped like plus marks on my left wrist. The sleeves of my baggy cotton shirt
slipped lower on my tan freckled arms.

Whatever, I thought, because the men weren’t the only ones watching me.
From the bushes around the church and from the dark alleyways, sets of eyes
peered out at me.

I practiced my mean faces as I looked ahead, scrunching up my nose and
making my face wrinkle. I’d tied up my dark waves that day, too. I kept my hair in a
tight bun like a boy’s because she didn’t deserve to see me looking ladylike.

Ding dong. I averted my eyes from the grain of the doors to face the sky.
The big metal church bells started ringing back and forth. My squeeze on my sides
loosened up when the doors swung open ahead of me.
The men and women flooded out of the stuffy building into the sunlight.
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