

WB

WRITER'S BLOCK

*Students' magazine for
writing, film & literature*

#25



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UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

A CELEBRATION OF HUMANITIES

TESSEL RIJNEVELDSHOEK AND ILONA ROESLI

For quite a number of reasons, this *Writer's Block* issue before you has been a special one to work on. While having to say goodbye to longtime WB editors Ines and Yentl, we have been lucky enough to welcome two new, ambitious editors, Phoebe and Rivka, to our board. It is with the help of this hard-working group of editors that we are proud to present our 25th issue of *Writer's Block*.

Secondly, while writing this editorial, we cannot help but address the events at our university. With the resignation of CvB's chairwoman Louise Gunning, the efforts of numerous students and movements fighting for the quality of the humanities have been greatly rewarded. It does not feel like a victory— this is not a war, but a celebration of the humanities: something that lies at the heart of this magazine. That is why, in these stirring times, we are more than honoured to celebrate with you our #25 anniversary issue. **WB**



SELF-HELP POETRY

INES SEVERINO

Always more of an editor
than a writer,
more of a defender
than a fighter.

Of all the things
I have learnt and loved
in a moderate and lazy fashion,
the one thing
which has always returned
is the guilt for lack of passion.

So once and again
I raise my hand
to slap across my face
with an apathetic palm.

To find that I *do* pack a punch, after all.

READERS OF AMSTERDAM

JUDITH KROON AND ILONA ROESLI

Rose

Literary Studies Research Master student

What are you currently reading?

Let me think. Oh, *White Oleander* by Janet Finch, possibly for my thesis. Also *American Psycho*, for a different paper. That's one of those well-known cult books, so I was looking at the structure and the way that the narrative plays out more than the whole thing, because I want to write about unreliable narrators. I always read multiple things at the same time, but I think more people do that, especially with English students.

We're catching you in the poetry section of ABC right now. Tell us a little bit about your poetry interests.

I wrote my Bachelor's thesis on the confessional poets, so Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, and some current, contemporary confessional poets, because I'm interested in the interaction of psychoanalysis and literature. Right now, I'm buying some storytelling books, like *On Becoming a Novelist*, which I'm very curious to read.

So do you want to become a novelist yourself?

Obviously, yes. But I want to do a PhD and then become a professor who also writes. That's the plan.

Without giving away your entire future novel, would you like to share with us your ideas of what you'd like to write?

I'm thinking of taking an old novel, an old work by Ovid, and then adapting it for contemporary readers. It's called *Heroides* and it consists of letters by Greek heroines who wrote to their men while they were abroad and I think it would work really well if I put it in a contemporary setting.

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BUT I THINK
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DO THAT,
ESPECIALLY
WITH ENGLISH
STUDENTS.
ROSE



Farida

English Language & Culture student

Can you tell us a little bit about the literature courses you're taking currently?

Right now, I'm taking Literature 5, which is on Postmodernism. I like it, but I prefer the poems to the novels. In my spare time, I like to read poetry as well. Spoken word, basically sound poetry, is my favorite.

Would you consider spoken word to be very modern?

It looks like modern poetry, but it's different as well. In Modernist poems you wouldn't find certain words, certain curse words, but the rhythm for example is very similar.

And what are you currently reading?

Adultery by Paulo Coelho. It's about a woman, a journalist, who's depressed even though she seems to have it all—money, children, an awesome job and amazing husband. That's why she doesn't know why she's depressed. When she commits adultery, she feels happier for a while, but then she starts to feel even more miserable. She doesn't want to seem crazy, by swallowing

pills for example. Everything's too perfect, that's basically what the novel is about. I like it. The manner of thinking is challenging and I think a lot of people can find themselves in it.

What do you think of Paulo Coelho's style in general?

I've read *The Alchemist* and I loved it. His stories on their own might be a bit general or they might not make much sense, but then he adds this philosophical atmosphere that makes the story weird, but also special and interesting.

Dietke

Caught on the floor in front of ABC's Young Adult Fiction department holding Ned Vizzini's *It's Kind of a Funny Story*

Are you reading that at the moment?

No, I watched the movie and just saw it in the window, so I thought: why not buy it? My mother language is German, but I really love reading in English. I actually don't read anything other than young adult fiction.

What's your favorite novel in the genre?

My favorite book might be *Looking for Alaska* or actually all John Green's books. *Looking for Alaska* is so great because the book has a specific structure. It's divided into days before and days after. That's the cool thing about it, because you never know what is going to happen in the middle. I started reading John Green's books because of a teacher's book presentation and then I just never read anything else. I like that John Green includes this realistic point of view from young adults. His books deal with cancer and death from a young point of view, and that makes it relatable.

Would you say that outlining life experience from the perspective of young adults is what makes the genre so important in the literary world?

Yes, I think that's why I keep on reading these books—because I can relate to them. I'm getting older, but I keep reading on. I don't care.



I KEEP
READING ON. I
DON'T CARE.
DIETKE



THAT MOMENT WHEN
YOU RECOGNIZE
YOURSELF. THAT'S
WHEN YOU REALLY
GET INTO IT.
WASSE

Wasse

History student

We catch you reading a book at Spui. What are you reading at the moment?

Haruki Murakami, it's amazing. I've read one other book by him, *Norwegian Wood*. I thought it was very beautiful how Murakami makes a distinction between the real world and an illusionary world, of which the latter seems to even be more real. Furthermore, I read a lot of classics and stuff, not so much contemporary literature apart from Murakami.

And what do you think is a classic novel we have to read?

I'm a fan of Russian literature—Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, *War and Peace* is fantastic. Especially with Tolstoy, for example, I think his writing style is very beautiful. I don't feel that way about Murakami, really. With Murakami, it's very spiritual at times, so I like them for different reasons. What I like with all writers in general is that recognizability, that moment when you recognize yourself. That's when you can really get into it. **WB**

MAD MEN: A VISUAL AND LITERARY MARVEL

JULES SCHLICHER

One of the most interesting American TV dramas of the last few years is *Mad Men*. The show is cleverly written with an unbelievably meticulous attention to detail, directed with a great creative eye, shot with a poetic vision and acted with wonderful believability and life. It is a drama that is a joy to watch and to follow, even for more than seven years.

Mad Men tells the story of ad men and women in the 1960s, primarily focalised through the character of Don Draper. He is a powerful man who charms and manipulates his clients and colleagues, as well as seducing every woman he lays his eyes on. His character is informed by his dark and murky past, which is revealed through occasional flashbacks. He smokes, drinks, cheats, talks, lives. Basically, he does what he likes, even though it is often self-destructive. His spiralling life (which can go in any direction) is fascinating to observe, and it grows in strength by repeated viewings.

Furthermore, watching *Mad Men* more than once allows the viewer to notice how many shots are built up like advertisements or like a painting. Sure, there is always an awareness and appreciation of those artful shots when they pass, but when the series is viewed in a binge, the aesthetic quality of the photography is seen as the marvel it is. Think of the ending shot of the very first episode, or one amazing shot in one of the later seasons of a character leaving a violin case lying in the hallway of a ruined building. Everything, from the lighting and composition to the colour and tone of the pictures, speaks in purest poetry. The director and the director of photography simply are poets.

Mad Men shines, though, in its detail. All locations are decorated perfectly for their respective times and places, each character is dressed accordingly from his underwear up to his hat, and every kind of prop and piece of music fits into the time period. There's nothing out of place. It even goes as far as the books the characters read or talk about, and the show's creator, Matthew Weiner, gives his characters some wonderful layers with these literary references. In a way, the intertextuality of the show – no matter how minimal it might be, like Don simply shown reading a book and not talking about it – enriches it immensely and elevates it above most of its contemporaries.

Virtually all of the books read in the series are modern or classic classics. Sally Draper, Don's daughter, for instance, reads *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, *Twenty One Balloons*, and *Rosemary's Baby*. She reads even more, and the collection is quite interesting. Why not have a little look at a few of the interesting books read by characters on the show?

***Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand**

This novel is Rand's final work, and also her masterpiece. It's a volume of about twelve hundred pages, describing a dystopian version of the United States of America. Don is recommended to read the book by his erudite boss, Bertram Cooper, because he believes Don might recognise himself in the novel and might benefit from reading it. *Atlas Shrugged* definitely is a work of art that is influential with its philosophical character and contemplative plot, but whether Don learns anything from reading it is unclear.

EVERYTHING, FROM THE LIGHTING AND COMPOSITION TO THE COLOUR AND TONE OF THE PICTURES, SPEAKS IN PUREST POETRY.

***Inferno* by Dante Alighieri**

It was a very pleasant and interesting surprise to find Don reading Dante's *Inferno* whilst lying on the beach in one of the later seasons. The fact that he only reads the first part of Dante's *Divine Comedy* suggests that Don will not learn from his journey through hell and confrontation with each and every sin and vice. *Purgatory* and *Paradise* are not on Don's mind, and the classic text by the Italian poet thus only shows him his possible wrongdoings and their punishments. How many of Dante's sins can Don commit?

***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain**

In one episode of season three, both Lane Pryce and Henry Francis read Mark Twain's aforementioned classic works. These are grown men reading children's novels, but then again, everyone needs a good adventure story once in a while. One of the adventures in the actual episodes is the riding of a lawn mower in the office, which leads to a tragic accident that leaves a young man crippled. Each adventure has its own perils.

***The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon**

As said before, the young Sally Draper reads this important historical work. The title pretty much sums up the content of the book, although it does not communicate the grandeur of Gibbon's thesis—his effort to explain how the Roman Empire came to an end. Don's

daughter reading it is a precursor to how she undoes the power of her father later on in the show, but also a sign that *Mad Men*'s opulent and perverse world can only end in ruin. The causes for that end may come from the characters themselves or outside events. Who knows?

***The Group* by Mary McCarthy**

Finally, a book read by Betty Draper, Sally's mother. *The Group* is a collection of stories about a group of women set in 1933. They experience pretty much everything *Mad Men* is known to show: sexism, family crises, sexual relationships, and much more. It is significant that Betty reads this book, as she seems to be rather oblivious to a lot of things happening in her life, and in the particular episode she is seen reading *The Group*, she discovers something about Don that shakes up her world and starts seeing her world for what it is. From that moment on, Betty is unshackled from Don and starts to become a stronger character.

These are just five novels out of the many books featured prominently or quietly on the show. Each book speaks volumes about the character that reads it, as well as commenting upon the world the characters live in, or what may transpire in that world. This kind of intertextuality is wonderful to see in a television drama like *Mad Men* and, as said before, it enriches the material greatly. And who knows, it might even inspire viewers to pick up a book. **WB**

LITTLE REST ASSURED

AÏSHA DAW

What stays, stays behind.

Its priority is resolved – it has none

The rest is planes and the sky, trickling and pipes, twitches, eyes, cats and night time.

When the good flavours are taken

what is left?

The remaining, its remainder

Grease on the walls, obstinate.

It is the twelve and now there are three

It's additional, additive, adding to,

each day.

It is the adder that lurks continually

The rest is here and it is no rest

The rest came and was and is becoming

twelve.

It is the yelling,

the yelling, there was the yelling

The rest is all

and it swallows us whole

EDITORS OF YORE

TESSEL RIJNEVELDSHOEK

Lester Hekking (30) is the founder of Writer's Block. He studied at the UvA from 2004 to 2011 and holds a BA and MA in English Literature. Nowadays he works as a literary agent.

Writer's Block's 25th edition – did you ever expect that?

Not really! In the beginning I don't believe we were ever thinking ahead for more than one issue at the time. But near the end of my period as editor-in-chief I was glad to pass on the torch and have other editors try their hand at WB. It's so amazing the magazine is still there and it's doing so well and it looks splendid! I hope it will be there for years to come.

In which period were you editor(-in-chief) at WB?

I was editor-in-chief from 2009 until 2011 together with co-editor Daria Meijers. Later on Godelinde Perk and Stefanie Rosenboom joined in and slowly but steadily, I handed over all responsibilities to them, one step at a time, until I was no longer involved in any way. But I am an avid collector of the magazine and I've been following the progress of the magazine online. I'm glad to say I still own a copy of every single issue so far.

What did you hope to achieve when you first started working on WB?

The UvA's English department had no magazine at the time, which I thought was a shame. I noticed that a lot of students were into creative wri-

ting of different kinds: poems, short stories and all that. Some of them were more or less hiding it. I loved to call those people "closet writers" and I basically wanted to create a platform for those who wrote in English. I didn't want to be exclusionary and decided to allow people from outside the English department to submit too – even people who were in no way related to the UvA.

Why did you name *Writer's Block* *Writer's Block*?

Because I love irony and it was so much easier to be ironic before the hipster age. Ha, ha.

What did you find to be the biggest challenge when making WB?

The real challenge was always gathering enough stories and poems to fill another issue! I had to resort to various unorthodox strategies to achieve this, including publishing my own stuff (some of it really makes me cringe now) and having the same people publish multiple stories under different names.



*Lester, founder of
Writer's Block Magazine*

**IBASICALLY
WANTED TO
CREATE A
PLATFORM
FOR "CLOSET
WRITERS"
WHO WROTE
IN ENGLISH**

Do you have an interesting behind-the-scenes anecdote from your time at *Writer's Block*?

It's more funny than really interesting but I'll tell you anyway. The first few issues of WB were printed in various sizes and on different kinds of paper. People were assuming this was because I was experimenting to find the right format for the magazine (I may even have lied about this at the time) but in reality it was all because somehow there was this dude working at the printer's and I just couldn't communicate with him. I'm not kidding, every time I went to pick up the new magazines I just didn't know what they would look like with that guy.

Do you have any advice for potential submitters?

Yes, definitely. The most important thing is when writing and submitting something is to overcome shame. There should be no bounds to self-expression and there is enough censoring in daily life. This is the age of fan fiction and independent net literature. So don't hold back. Maybe the magazine will not publish you – but who cares?

Where would you like to see *Writer's Block* in 2020? And 2100?

I would already be over the moon if the magazine is still going strong in 2020. As for 2100: I will probably not live to see that year but if printed literature still exists by then I'd like to see it evolve into a big fat, full-colour monthly of 64 pages per issue with a holographic spot varnish hardcover or something fancy like that!

Godelinde Perk (29) majored in English and Psychology at the UvA between 2003 and 2011. Currently she is a PhD student at the University of Umeå, Sweden.

***Writer's Block's* 25th edition – did you expect that?**

Of course!

In which period were you editor(-in-chief) at WB?

I was editor at *Writer's Block* from 2009, editor-in-chief from 2011 to the summer of 2012, so for only a few issues.

What did you find to be the biggest challenge when making WB?

Word messing up the lovely layout I wanted to create. Also, squeezing as many words as possible on a page while still keeping things legible.

Are there any magazines / other forms of media that were a source of inspiration for you while making WB?

Well, it was mainly Lester's inspiration that I followed, and I just tweaked the layout a bit. I stole the idea of the little WB logos at the end of an article from some of my parents' opinion magazines, I think...

Do you have a few favourite poems/short stories/reviews/columns/works of art/essays from the ones that appeared in *Writer's Block*?

That would be like picking a favourite child, because I was extremely happy with each issue of WB.

AND WHEN IT COMES TO A VERY SEVERE WRITER'S BLOCK: CREATIVITY AND INSPIRATION AREN'T MAGIC, THEY'RE JUST A COGNITIVE PROCESS DEMANDING ALL SORTS OF COMPLEX PROCESSES AND ENERGY.

Still, as an editor-in-chief, I was really delighted with Joanna Morris's interview with Laser 3.14.

Do you write yourself? What do you write? And what helps you beat the writer's block if you do?

Yes I do, I write poetry and prose (and academic stuff of course, being a PhD-student). My first novel was published two years ago.

And, well, beating writer's block: it depends on the kind of writer's block. If it's only a brief lack of inspiration: putting down that pen or turning off the computer and going outside. It just helps to do something entirely different, like going for a run or cycling somewhere. When you have a mild writer's block: it helps to read more, to tell the story or whatever it is I want to express to a friend, or trying to turn it into another medium such as a drawing, photos, or drama.

And when it comes to a very severe writer's block: creativity and inspiration aren't magic, they're just a cognitive process (a higher executive function, to be precise) demanding all sorts of complex processes and energy. If you suffer from very severe writer's block, this could be a signal that there's more going on which you

may need to address first: stress, lack of sleep, unhealthy eating habits, or even depression. Look after yourself and read a lot, and the inspiration will show up by itself. Then again, sometimes simply watching people, going somewhere new or falling in love works best.



Godelinde, one of WB's first editors

What do you advice potential submitters?

What are you waiting for? It's great to see your work in print! (But please, do proofread. And when you've written something, put it away for two days, re-read what you've written, edit, and then submit.). **WB**

CAKE POEM #4

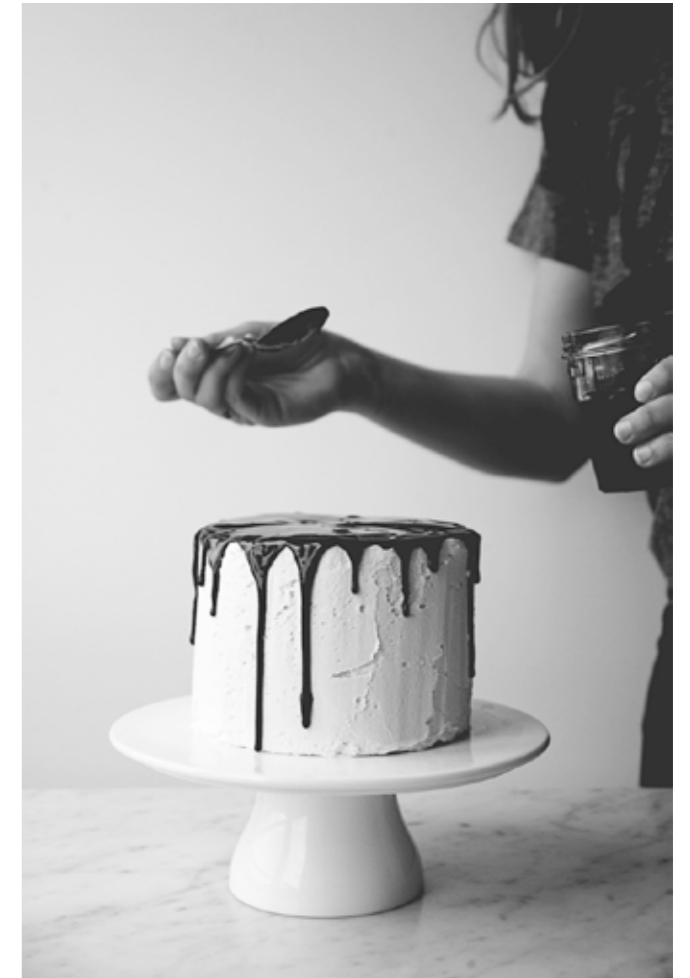
PAUL HOFMA



I feel myself being covered
In layers of sweet, sweet ganache;
Creamy white sheens cover me up,
Hide me from view –
Hide me from the world.
Their delicacy soft as satin,
Their creamy textures
Luscious as lust.

Oh, what I would not give
To once again revisit
The heat of your hearth,
The fires of your oven
It is you who made me
Into who I am.

No longer shall I remain insipid –
I have risen.
Like the humble flour, eggs and milk
Ascend to become something
Greater.
No longer ordinary, but
A grand resolve;
A tart of magnitude.
A will, manifested under the hands of
The baker, forever unseen.
Yet in the end, only
The guests, and the crumbs,
May be left behind.



LAYERED VANILLA CAKE WITH BUTTERCREAM FROSTING AND GANACHE

PHOTOGRAPHY AND RECIPE BY RENÉE KEMPS

Ingredients

For the vanilla cake

375 gr butter, room temperature
500 gr granulated sugar
5 large free range eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla paste/extract
374 gr all purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
125 ml milk
125 ml sour cream

For the buttercream frosting

250 gr butter, room temperature
500 gr icing sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla paste/extract

For the ganache

130 gr dark chocolate chunks
125 ml cream
1 tablespoon butter

For the cake

1. Preheat oven to 165 C.
2. In a bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt.
3. In a standing mixer, beat butter until light and pale, about 8 minutes.
4. Add the sugar to the butter and beat for another 4 minutes.
5. Add the eggs, one by one, mixing in between.
6. Add the vanilla.
7. Add the flour mixture to butter mixture in thirds, alternating with the milk and sour cream, beginning and ending with the flour mixture.
8. Grease two small sized baking pans with butter and divide the cake mixture evenly.
9. Bake for 1h and 40 minutes, or until fully cooked through and golden brown. (Test with a tooth pick: if it comes out clean, they're done.)
10. Let the cakes cool completely.

For the buttercream frosting

1. In a standing mixer, beat butter until light and pale, about 8 minutes.
2. Add the sugar gradually.
3. Add the vanilla and beat for another 10 minutes.
4. Store in the fridge until ready to layer the cake.



For the ganache

1. In a small saucepan, heat up the cream until it comes to a simmer.
2. Pour over the chocolate chunks.
3. Stir until everything is combined and add the butter.
4. Set aside until ready to layer the cake.

To layer the cake

1. Trim your cakes so that they're the same size.
2. Give both cakes a crumb coat: a thin layer of buttercream frosting to help the crumbs stick to the cake instead of your outer layer of buttercream.
3. Place in the fridge for about 30 minutes to set.
4. Place one of the cakes on your serving plate. Place about 4-5 tablespoons of buttercream frosting on top and spread it out a bit. Place the other cake on top.
5. Cover the whole cake in a generous layer of buttercream frosting.
6. Try to make the sides and top as smooth as possible.
7. Put in the fridge for about 30 minutes to set.
8. Take the cake out and warm up the ganache a bit if necessary. Pour the ganache over the cake, letting it drip down the sides a bit.
9. Once again, let it set in the fridge for about 30 minutes.

SLICE, SERVE AND ENJOY!

KALD TRUST

C.G. HUFF

The court says I've gotta explain how I got here on paper so I can see it before my eyes, maybe learn somethin' from my actions. What the hell they know about me? Huh? The judge is just caught up in her six-figure salary tryin' to act like Claire fuckin' Underwood. There ain't nobody who wants to hear 'bout the life of Kald Trust. Ain't no one that gives a damn 'bout a 10-year-old with a habit, man.

It started when I was workin' as a doorman for my daycare: a pint-sized bouncer obligated by my Twixed-out mother to search the patrons for contraband. Course they all had it. Some I let in, some never came back. It was all the same to me. Problem was, I started usin' the stuff myself. Had to when the rich kids came through: only way they were gonna keep comin' back. I started small, like most everybody else. A few peppermint sticks at night when no one was lookin'. From there it just progressed: got in with the kids in the back, started comin' into work sugar-high, ended up bumpin' Smarties every time the old lady wasn't around. Shit, brother, sometimes when she was, too.

That's how Mama found me the first time: passed out in the ball pit with powder all 'round my mouth and a fuckin' 8 ball of Pop Rocks in my Heelys. I looked like the fuckin' Gerber Baby OD'd, man. Mama rolled my ass straight downtown. Prison or rehab, she said; now I was gonna be someone else's problem.

We get to that stage where we've gotta choose the life we'll lead lest we relinquish the fleetin', miniscule control we have over our lives to begin with. Thang is, what's it matter

when the game only lasts 90 minutes and then the fans go home? We're all just doin' the same thang: tryna get that next fix before we crash so hard we ain't gettin' back up. Don't matter what it is. Squirt guns and Slip 'N Slides, pacifiers and games of peek-a-boo: it's all addiction, brother. And we all addicted to somethin'. We're hooked on anythin' that distracts us from what we know ain't there, from that void where we think "Meaning" ought to be. Repression's just a syrup-coated Band-Aid for an amputation.

THE JUDGE IS JUST CAUGHT UP IN HER SIX-FIGURE SALARY TRYIN' TO ACT LIKE CLAIRE FUCKIN' UNDERWOOD

This is what ya learn durin' ya first stint up on the hill. My joint was Wonka's Chocolate Factory. Ya know, the one they made that documentary about years ago, with the kidnappin' and unregulated slave labor? That hillbilly Wonka was a psychopath, let me tell ya. Honky thought I needed to clean up my act, get my shit together and wash the Butterfinger outta my life. He had me by my undropped balls and knew I was fucked. Religion, he thought - that'll do it.

So there I sat, every damn mornin' for two years in the pews of WCF's United Church of *Barney & Friends*. Listenin' to Barney preach the "Super dee-duper word" day-in and day-out is the kinda shit that dements a kid, ya know? I never was a fan of the church, but now I had a vendetta against it. A bunch of men huddle together in some fuckin' office back in

**WE'RE HOOKED ON ANYTHIN' THAT DISTRACTS US FROM WHAT
WE KNOW AIN'T THERE, FROM THAT VOID WHERE WE THINK
"MEANING" OUGHT TO BE. REPRESSION'S JUST A SYRUP-COATED
BAND-AID FOR AN AMPUTATION.**

TEARGARTEN
FRED MELNYCZUK

the early '90s and now their damn dinosaur's a saint? Barney's not the path to salvation, brother, he's a one-way ticket to a cult gatherin' where everyone's wearin' purple robes and sugar-high off some shit Barney's been cookin' up in the back. He's just a man in a suit with an identity crisis. I'm not the one who shoulda been locked up - that motherfucker should be. You tell me who's got more problems: a little boy with an affinity for the sweet stuff or a grown ass man who spends his days with other people's kids as a false, Jurassic prophet.

When I got out, thangs had changed. My addiction wasn't aimless and thoughtless anymore. Now I streamlined my energy; took a hit of frostin' and tapped into somethin' crystalized and infinite. I tried to find somethin' to replace my old habit, find a new thang I could fixate my energy on to keep from slippin'. Problem is, a mindset like mine don't lend itself very easily to the mundane and trivial. My mind wanders. It's a nomad tryin' to pose as a farmer; stays 'round long enough to be named but starts walkin' again by the time you've worked out where he's from.

There was nothin' left for me at home anymore, so I went abroad. Kept bringin' it all with me, though: the deceit, the habits, the Reese's. It's easy to develop a sweet tooth

when you're surrounded by foreign imports every day, man. Stuff's cheap and you can get it on the street; done a lot of shit for a Klondike bar I can't take back. Yet everywhere's basically the same; ya got kids cookin' gummy bears in Paris and Portland. Geography aside, they're still surfin' the cosmos durin' recess.

Me, I ended up on Palmyra Atoll tryin' to get away from all the bullshit. Built myself a nice Lego fortress on the beach to self-medicate in seclusion. I don't bother anyone, and ain't no one bother me. It's a peaceful life. No girls allowed. Yeah, thangs have changed for me, but I plan on endin' this game like I started it: between some thighs, cryin' my eyes out. All time does for us anyways is provide a different façade we use to survive in a world as indifferent as this one. Black hair or grey hair, my eyes are always green.

And, superficially, my life's fine now - found a groove here on the island and, shit, even started kickin' it with the bartender who makes a hell of an Oreo Blizzard. If the judge is gonna have me explain how I got here, let her read this and see I'm not buyin' her deal; I'm not gonna play house when we built a home on stolen land, false promises, and delusion. I'm takin' this life one gumball at a time, brother - just my way of gettin' through the day. **WB**

Prickly grass

like shaven legs,

in my palm

clumps of earth,

are flesh,

warm

and naked;

trees branch

through limbs, it leaves

light

drifting down

as hair upon me.

SUMMER READING

WB BOARD'S TO-DO LIST

RIDDING MYSELF OF A LONGSTANDING SCIENCE FICTION PHOBIA - GET THROUGH THOSE LONELY NIGHTS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MOUNTAINS - PLUNGE INTO THE FICTIONAL WORKS OF STEFAN ZWEIG - READ A BIT MORE OF A DIVERSE REPRESENTATION OF HUMANITY - TURN WINTER READING INTO SUMMER READING

PHOEBE

Over the last few days I have been trying to read David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004), but such a hefty book requires more of a concentration span than I have to offer right now. So I am going to save it for the summer days during which I am unemployed and in need of escapism. Once I'm done with *Cloud Atlas*, I intend to read some China Miéville, thus hopefully ridding myself of a longstanding science fiction phobia.

ISABEL

I've been on a Roberto Bolaño reading spree lately and I think I'll finally tackle *2666* (2004), his terrifying magnum opus with a plot that best resembles a labyrinth of homicidal frenzy, this summer. I'm also very much looking forward to reading my very first Margaret Atwood this summer and plunging into the fictional works of Stefan Zweig after having just read *The World of Yesterday* (1942), Zweig's tragic autobiography (hopefully while I'm in Berlin, the city where the Austrian author spent his student years).

ISADORA

HOPEFULLY, by this summer, I will have graduated, and thus have all the time in the world to read, now my 'to-read' list on Goodreads is growing embarrassingly longer than my 'read' list. First off, *The Summer Book* (1972) by Tove Jansson. Then Donna

Tartt's *The Secret History* (1992) and *The Goldfinch* (2013) which I both for some reason haven't finished. All of Siri Hustvedt's novels and essays (love her!), Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (2005) and finally, the one and only man, and recently published novel, I'll read this summer: *Quick Sand* (2015) by the great Steve Toltz. (If you haven't read his first work of staggering genius, *A Fraction of the Whole* (2008), shame on you). Good times ahead!

PAUL

This summer I'm going backpacking, and I'm really looking forward to spending some more quality time with Brandon Sanderson. I immensely enjoyed *Steelheart* (2013), which was an insanely gripping ride, as well as the books in his *Mistborn* series, which were amazing as well. As such, I've decided to try and pick up *Firefight* (2015) (the sequel to *Steelheart*), both books from *The Stormlight Archive* and *The Rithmatist* (2013). Hopefully, that'll get me through those lonely nights by a campfire in the middle of the mountains.

JUDITH

I always read a lot, no matter what time of year it is. There is a considerable difference between my reading throughout the year and what I read during the summer, though. Whereas the school year is all about classics and literary fiction, during the summer I like to branch out and read some contem-

porary authors, as well as other genres. This year, I'm especially excited about continuing my Melina Marchetta binge – I have been very impressed with her books since I discovered them earlier this year – as well as reading some epic fantasy by Scott Lynch, Brandon Sanderson and Cinda Williams Chima.

TESSEL

When standing in a bookstore a few months ago, I found that every time I grabbed a book that is considered 'real literature' and read the blurb, the book would have a white male protagonist, or would be written by a white man, or both. And I realized that, honestly, I've read enough of that genre to know that I like a bit more of a diverse representation of humanity. So this summer I will read Zadie Smith, Haruki Murakami, Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and besides that, I'll make a fourth attempt at reading Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847).

ILONA

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* deserves a prominent spot on your bookshelf. After publication in 1960, Lee never published a second novel. However, the novel was also a consequence of the rejection of her first written book *Go Set a Watchman*. Unfortunately the manuscript got lost and we never got to read more Lee. Good news though: they found the manuscript last year and it's getting published this summer. *Go Set a Watchman*—read it.

JULES

Summer reading is always complicated, because it's just like any other period of reading: it has many, many outside influences. I can buy a book in October that I want to read in December but because of one or more things (study, mostly) I don't get around to it. That's why my winter reading will probably be my summer reading: *De Harpij* (2014), a grand Dutch novel about a devil's recollection of, well, basically everything, is the one novel I must read. Other works I'd like to read: Goethe's *Faust* in its entirety, the collected stories of Edgar Allan Poe, Christopher Hitchens' *Letters to a Young Contrarian* (2001), and Guy Deutscher's *Through the Language Glass* (2010) and *The Unfolding of Language* (2006).

RIVKA

It is almost shocking to believe that it will be summer soon, as I still feel a bit stuck in my hibernating, series-watching mood rather than feeling white wine Vondelpark jitters. For the summer, I plan to finally read *The Great Gatsby* (yes, I know, what an undertaking!). Lately, I've been drawn to American literature from the 1950's and 1960's, a desire probably spawned by fostering my Mad Men-craving soul. I'll be reading more of Richard Yates' work, kept company by the novels of Joan Didion and some Updike to top it all off. **WB**

I WISH THERE WAS A SHAZAM FOR SMELL

ISADORA GOUDSBLOM AND ISABEL HARLAAR

Lilting (2014), the first feature-length film by Cambodian-born British director Hong Khaou, is about the death of Kai (Andrew Leung) and his conflicting identities as both boyfriend and son. After his death, Kai forces an unlikely relationship between his Cambodian-Chinese mother Junn (Cheng Pei-pei) and his British boyfriend Richard (Ben Whishaw), who don't get along and don't even have a common language to communicate in. Junn isn't aware of her son's homosexuality, and doesn't feel any need to connect to this young man claiming to be her son's best friend. Meanwhile, she is being wooed by an elderly English Casanova who lives in the same nursing home. That they cannot understand each other isn't an issue. He brings her beautiful flowers every day and they sheepishly kiss and cuddle.

A HEAVYHEARTED FILM THAT IS AS MUCH ABOUT BUILDING BRIDGES AS IT IS ABOUT BURNING THEM. IT IS A MASTERFUL DEBUT THAT SOOTHES AND CRITICIZES WHILE RHYTHMICALLY CROSSING (CULTURAL) BOUNDARIES

It is Kai's ghostly presence that brings together the film's main characters and blurs all logical manners of narrative flow. The film painfully plays with flashbacks, keeping Kai fresh in memory, and a kind of haunting time results from this: the past interferes with the present, and repetitions and patterns keep alive long lost embraces and recount former happy days. We sometimes witness scenes in which the characters speak and yet they already



scene from *Lilting* (2014)

spoke before we see them do so. It is as though image and sound are disconnected, showing how memory is separated into different spheres, of which smell and touch are also important parts.

Strikingly, *Lilting* takes place in rooms, a metaphor for the containment that is omnipresent in the main characters' lives after Kai's death. The restraint posed by their grief provides a platform for posing larger questions about other forms of containment, hereby tackling questions of identity, differences in culture, sexuality, and ageing. Trying to come to terms with his grief, Richard, the unacknowledged, grieving boyfriend, tries to break down the wall between Kai's mother and himself. He cooks her Chinese food and hires an interpreter to mediate between Junn and her admirer at the nursing home (providing some comic relief in all the heaviness brought forth by the film) and slowly Junn and Richard find a way to both communicate and lessen their grief.

With *Lilting*, Hong Khaou has created a heavyhearted film that is as much about building bridges as it is about burning them. It is a masterful debut that soothes and criticizes whilst rhythmically crossing (cultural) boundaries and stirring all of the senses with its lilting chamber music. **WB**

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