

VOLUME 2:
TESTAMENT
AN ATTESTATION TO THE PASSION,
DRIVE AND SKILL OF
A GENERATION

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TESTIMONY

writers

"...being able to see both sides of the coin has been beyond rewarding and truly an experience I wouldn't have been able to get anywhere else"

~ *Selene Muñoz*

"It's the first time in which I feel like my poems are actually read, understood and cherished"

~ *Eleonora Papotto*

"Personally working with Ta Voix was both fun and professional. The feedback was superb and our editor who was a good guide didn't hesitate to be a friend when needed!"

~ *Jay Appoh*

editors

"I really love how inclusive and encouraging Ta Voix is"

~ *Sarah Goosem*

"[Ta Voix] proves that there are so many talented and enthusiastic people wanting to get into this industry that can work together to create something truly fantastic"

~ *Hannah Beeson*

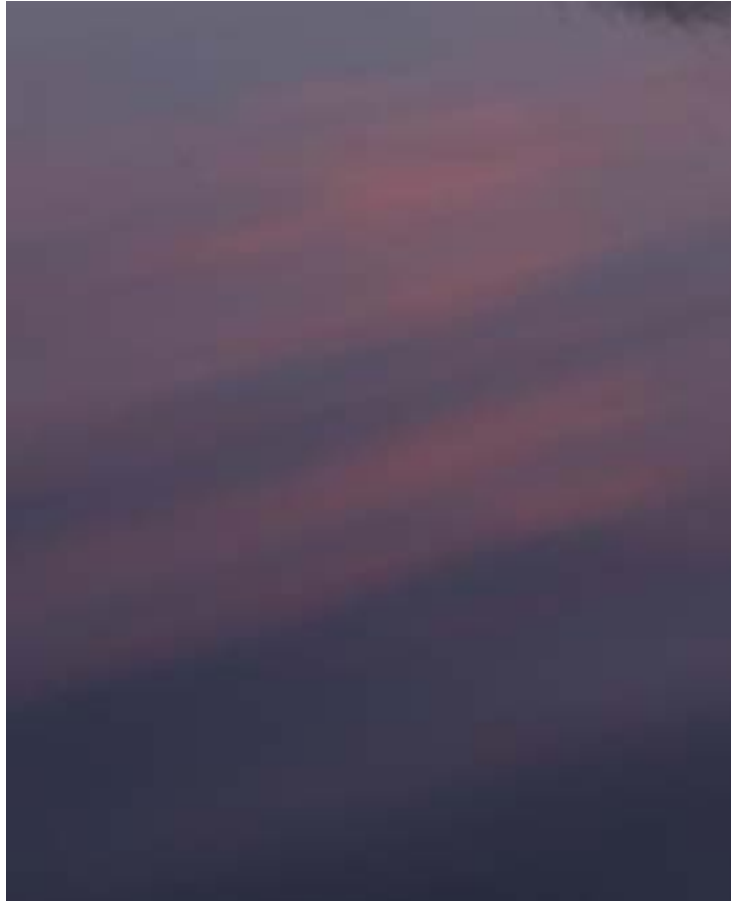
"Ta Voix has given so many aspiring editors an opportunity to prove employers, and themselves, that they are skilled"

~ *Jane Link*

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Sarah Goosem



01; POETRY

The day is almost over,
the journey is almost done.
I see you beyond the horizon,
untouchable, for you are above the stars.
You are now higher than your hills,
Certainly, we know you've conquered them all.
We both started this journey
with similar dreams,
to rise, and then set in the West.

“Small is beautiful,” they say,
if only we would listen and stay,
we could make the best out of today.

It must be beautiful
how you rise to shine,
no one would ever imagine the work
you put in at the other side,
no one values your worth
when you're down,
they forget you can turn gold
over time.

You're now at the peak,
and might have gotten ahead,
but there's one thing I know;
Everything that rises goes down
in the end,
and if you happen to get there before me,
know I'll be right behind you,
always.

CHASING THE SUN

Jay Appoh

I can't get my knife through this ivy,
climbing onto my roof,
I've hacked at their slender bodies for days.

Bowing to the sun,
they sacrifice bricks from my house
to look so green.

I envy their shadows,
for they have sprouted in my room.

*you are outside,
you are inside,*

sleep against my cheek,
watch me dress, and undress.

Because I can't get my knife through this ivy,
climbing into my roof,
I've hacked at their slender bodies for weeks.

Now reaching their leafy arms
up to the stars
to bathe their aching limbs.

I feel the weight of my axe
against my palm,
and hear the silence of their leaves.

But I cannot pick
the black night from the black stems
to aim.

Rest is hard to find
in this darkness
aching against my limbs.

I turn my axe to the moon.

GROWTH

Jemma Gillespie



S₁C₃R₁A₁B₃B₃L₁E₁

Maria Omena

I try to live
one
word
at
a
time
like poetry.
But the truth is
life is more like
a game of Scrabble,
meanings formed in all directions
and all I can hope is to get
the highest score.

You came. Like Sirius in the winter,
Scintillating, with the brightest white light.
Your very presence is a deceiver,
That illuminates our platonic plight.

I ponder. Why do I cry beneath you?
I am incapacitated by stars.
Oh! How am I to know that you are true?
The melancholia is like guitars

Bewitching me. I am pensive and seem
To be taken in by an endearing
Façade. I am Venus, and coyly gleam.
This is short-lived. I am disappearing.

Galaxies are overpopulated
But my love for you is unabated.

THE TRANSIENT STAR

Olwethu Mfeka

ROSES FROM EVRON

Jay Appoh

I think back to your last words
etched on the postcard you sent,
a simple remnant of your ardour
botched in blue ink, capturing the
entirety of its essence in one sentence
“love with your head, not your heart”.

Come/
Come, now go.
Everything comes and goes,
if only it could stay like this
forever
I like the sound of that,
but good songs never last,
like the wind

it's all blown away
in search of freedom.

Sometimes, you can hear them sing
as the leaves rustle to their song,
“enjoy it whilst it lasts”
it seems to say,
but it doesn't work that way,
for you never know when you
may lose yourself in finding
a good song.



BRICOLAGE FOR REJECTS

V. Littlewood

Dear Applicant,

Apologies for ~~the~~ delay in getting back to you — we had an unexpected large volume of applications, combined with staff holidays. Unfortunately on this occasion your application has not been successful. We wish you all the luck on your ~~job hunt~~.

We regret to let you know that we are unable to take your application further on this occasion as, unfortunately, the position ~~is~~ no longer available.

We have had an ~~overwhelming~~ response to our vacancy (over 600 applicants), as you can appreciate we are unable to provide detailed feedback to every individual who applied.

After careful consideration ~~I~~ regret to inform you that on this occasion your application has not been successful and will not progress to the interview stage.

Unfortunately, there was another applicant who received a higher evaluation at the end of the process, so please ~~don't feel~~ there was something missing in your application.

Yours sincerely,

~~Human~~ Resources Department.

If you do not receive a response within four weeks, please consider your application unsuccessful, however do look out for ~~any~~ future vacancies that are of interest to you.

Despite meeting the requirements there were other candidates ~~more~~ qualified and we have invited those to interview.

Please note: this email is sent from an unmonitored mailbox. Please do not reply to this email.

KPETEKPLE*

Jay Appoh

Not everyone's got the sparks,
some of us are calm and reserved;
though we burn fiery red and hot,
we don't crackle or break up.

Not everyone's got the sparks,
some of us are broken and misshapen,
beautified by our ugly scars;
trophies won from battles against
our fiercest fires.

Some of us lost our sparks;
we were too busy fighting
battles with ourselves.
Constant rejection and pain,
swords of hurtful words
pierce our sides daily,
leaving our souls wet from tears,
making it impossible to ignite
a flame.

*Lest we forget
we are children of the sun,
stars which burn brighter than tomorrow.
Unfortunately, every day is a rainy day.*

Not everyone's got the sparks,
some of us have burned out;
flames of love, fear, hope and rage,
and though we might be ash,
embers of our dying flames still burn.

Not everyone's got the sparks,
but some of us do,
and we who do really let 'em sparks glow,
flaunting our perfectly imperfect perfections.

* sparks

My fear is the vase I broke,
hidden
underneath the sink,
hoping you won't find it.

It is a drop of metal
that slits the exact
middle
of my tongue.

It is invisible feet
creaking floorboards.
They dance between my breaths
and silence.

It is the power cut,
snapping its fingers,
that sends the house into darkness
again.

You come in,
with a lit candle.
Tell me I don't need it.
Blow it out.

WHAT'S HIDDEN IN THE DARK

Jemma Gillespie

I let the monotony of the world,
stain the most precious thing
I have ever had:
my imagination.

I let loneliness,
sadness and pain
steal the best thing that
has ever belonged to me:
My creativity.

Once, this feeling of loss
helped me reach the darkest,
most poetic, corner
of my soul.
And every poem I wrote,
every word I spoke,
was like summer
to my winter thoughts.

Now, as the coldest of storms
suffocates my last glimpse of warmth,
the helplessness of this desolation
suffocates my last glimpse of hope.

Now, only these feelings
mark my soul,
steal my summer blink
And make me nostalgic about a time
when they fueled the dearest thing
To ever occur to me:
My creativity.

But that no longer belongs to me.

STOLEN CREATIVITY

Eleonora Papotto

THE MARCH OF THE LITTLE STRAW DOLLS

Kai Double

The little straw dolls, they gather most quickly!
‘Scurry! scurry! scurry!’ they cry.
For the little straw dolls know nothing of lateness,
Even if you try to pry.

‘Tardy?!’ they yell in shock, ‘whatever do you mean?!’
‘We straw dolls don’t know the meaning of the word.’
All the dolls around them agree,
that dawdling is quite absurd.

Rivers, hills, and gardens, all pristine-clear.
But, the straw dolls, with little time to spare,
many wondrous sights pass on by--
Still, no time to stop and stare.

And when the little straw dolls scamper through your town,
you might be tempted to yell.
‘Hey little straw dolls! Why don’t you slow down?’
But still they cannot stop, cannot dwell.

‘Slow?! What an odd thing to say!’ They turn their heads and holler:
‘We straw dolls only have one speed!’
A truly chin scratching response
As to why they cannot concede.

So, you might just shake your head
As those odd straw dolls pass you by...
but have you ever stopped to wonder,
how those little straw dolls got so spry?

As the life of a little straw doll
Is not one of simplicity.
Their speed and want to keep things moving,
conceals the truth of their duplicity!

The little straw dolls,
(While harmless to me and you)
Are not without their hunters
With a love of little doll stew!

They chase the dolls
Through those gardens and hills,
Creatures of bloodthirsty intent -
Oh, they do give me the chills.

Though we cannot see them,
Boys and girls of mine,
If we knew the plight of the dolls
It would send shivers down our spines.

Snarling mouths and gristle-flecked teeth,
And eyes of all shapes and sizes,
These creatures hunt straw dolls for sport
With flesh the first, second and third prizes!

So these little dolls run on
From dark creatures we cannot grasp,
Uneven claws and welt-riddled spines,
the frothing hunger of their clasp!

Every so often a straw doll might slow,
tempted to peer behind.
But that straw doll will be no more,
Devoured by what they find.

If you see a little straw doll
I would not cheer them with a cry.
For if that little doll slows for just one second
They will surely die.

Some people seem unbreakable,
Until you see them shatter into little pieces.
Some people seem strong,
Until you discover their weaknesses.

When this truth bleeds,
from your eyes,
like blood from an open scar,
you will know
you are no longer
an unknown bystander
of your own life.

You,
an incredulous witness of the crime,
will understand,
how those you least expected
are so weak and breakable.
Your Father, your Mother,
the heroes, and the antagonists
of your childhood,
They will end up harmed.

This day,
when your life seems bright
and your soul no longer dark,
You will learn how truly dark
Someone's soul is.

How deep their personal hell is.
How little you know the people
You trust and love.

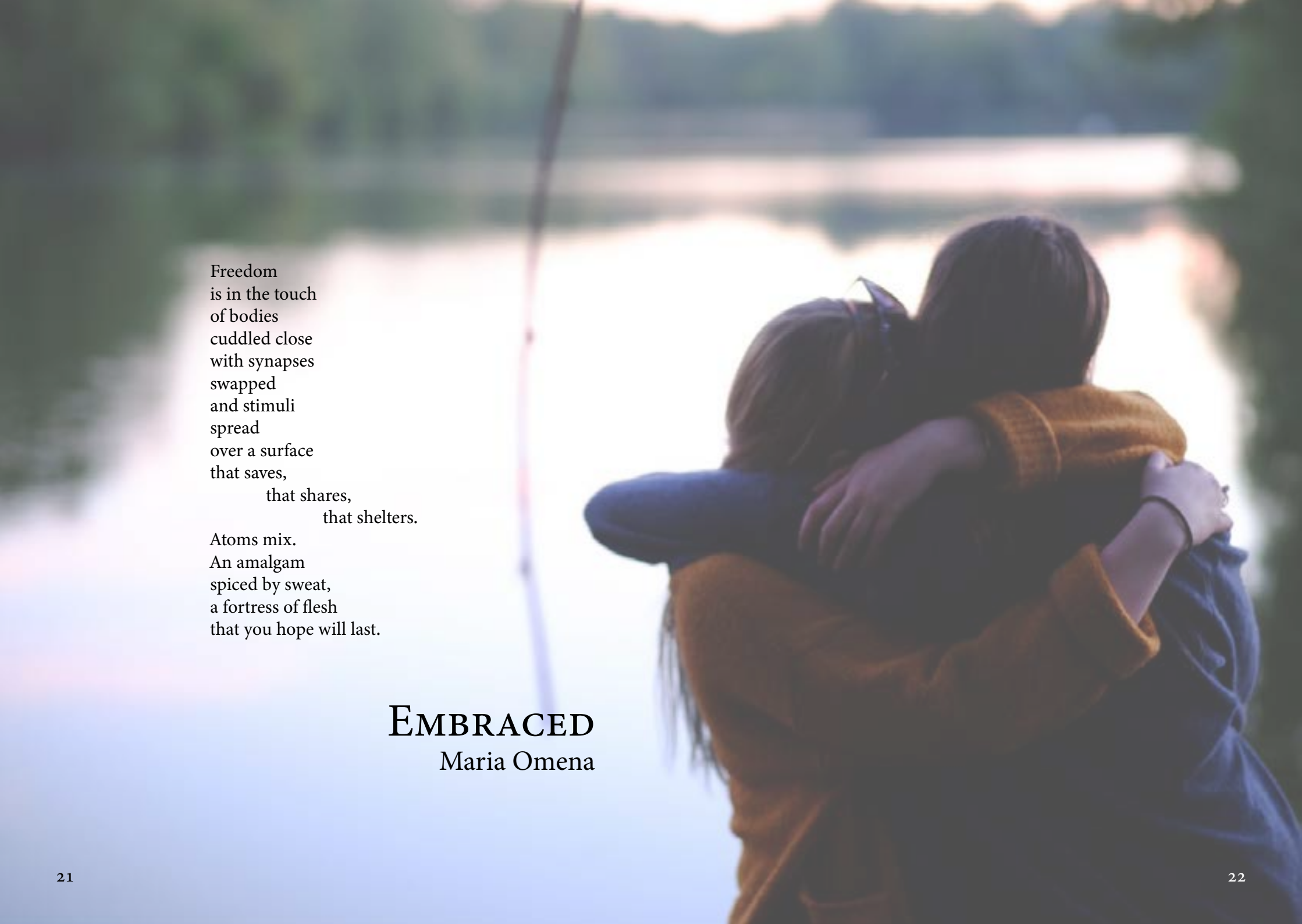
UNBREAK-
ABLE
Eleonora Papotto

MY WORLD IS FLAT

Maria Omena

I always land
in this world
where a pen stands tall,
90 degrees as a flag
full mast with ink.
Where my hand
is naught but wind
pushing, pulling,
guiding a line
in twisted trails,
understated,
shifting understanding
of chaotic circumstances
to conquer what lies
within.





Freedom
is in the touch
of bodies
cuddled close
with synapses
swapped
and stimuli
spread
over a surface
that saves,
 that shares,
 that shelters.

Atoms mix.
An amalgam
spiced by sweat,
a fortress of flesh
that you hope will last.

EMBRACED

Maria Omena

My old mistakes and all my shortcomings
are snakes
that once seemed to be worms.
They slither into my brain,
hissing with one voice,
their masquerade ball is too loud.
I was never asked to be the host.

3am.
The ball rages on and
I'm desperate for sleep.
Snippets of years ago
collide with those from moments ago,
distorting themselves into one movie

replaying all at once,
convincing me
that I am the mistake.

I search on Google:
How to kill snakes?
There is no easy answer.

Mum's the guest who says,
I don't take care of my looks.
'Laziness,' she calls it.

Yet I'm just life's painting
of me
and my snakes.

Weariness on canvas.

MEDUSA

Aysel Dilara Kasap

Love,
I used to call your name
When I felt lonely
Hoping for an answer,
Giving you limitless power.

The power to destroy me.

To have my entire happiness
In your hands.
To have my entire existence
In your hands.

You could have destroyed me
But you did not.
You could have left me alone,
breaking me
And all that we had
But you did not.

THE POWER TO DESTROY ME

Eleonora Papotto

That gave me limitless power
Over you.

I now know your soul,
I now know your kindness and caring.
I relied on you and you sustained me.
You cared so much about me
You would not destroy me
And our love,
Even though I was poison to you.
Even though I was poison to our love.

I was not as tender as you.
I wanted to destroy my strongest weakness
You

I took my chance
To destroy our love.
The worst chance:
I betrayed you
Just to be unbreakable.

She stood there staring at me,
her face wet from dewy tears
quickly dried by the scorching sun,
the heat bent her sideways with ears drooped.
She loved him/
yes, she loved the sun,
but this torture was unbearable;
all she hoped for was a drop of rain.
They say the grass is greener on the other side,
well not here, everything is parched up;
there is no sign of green,
The calabash is empty today.

She wished she could move
to a more fertile ground,
but fate rooted her to that spot;
all she ever prays for is a drop of rain.
Life is a bitch, every dog's got its day.
Fate happens to us all,
and she's had her share,
all she hopes is that her world would be green again,
that her leaf-like hands would dance with the wind again.
She was crippled, for she lacked green,
and
all she hoped for is a drop of rain.

MAIZE IN THE HARMATTAN

Jay Appoh

AN INSIGHT INTO THE DRESSMAKER

Kai Double



02; PROSE

NOW, I AM VERY MUCH AWARE THAT BEING REGALED WITH a ghoulish tale on such a night may seem entirely too cliché to be of remote interest. Granted, it does not help my case that my own introduction to this evil, fell on this day dedicated to such follies and farcical superstitions. Instead, I will ask you to consider another context, one that is a lot closer to home.

The life of a dressmaker, a seamster or seamstress, a tailor and the like may seem rather mundane to you. Not just to you, but to the world as well. Conventional silvery needles and thread on their own are rather dull. The skill of those in this profession is often incontestable. Whilst they meld fabric into the most practical, most gaudy, most impressive garments at your simple request, their work can often seem boorish and dripping with tedium. For a moment, think how numbing it is for them. Pincushions packed with pointed occupants that always go missing when you need them most, a thimble here or there, and there or here. And, of course, that trusty pair of scissors, the ones that appear only two more uses away from snapping, but which will still not be replaced for quite some time. And it goes on, day after day with the same equipment, same patrons, ratios, requests, prices. And on and on, and on some more. You might assume, therefore, that the laborious pragmatism of which the dressmaker becomes an expert remains the total of their profession. They peak with each new 'special' project or commission, collect their wage and the cycle is repeated. Surely there can be nothing more to one of history's most fundamental professions? One passed down through generations for necessity and not necessarily interest.

But indulge my curiosity for a moment, if you please.

Especially on this day, the 31st of four Octobers, a time practically ripe with macabre. Consider your own personal dressmaker, or the equivalent, wherever you might reside, and ponder for me if you truly know them. Not their clear-cut work, the products in their windows or behind their countertops, but what else they might do. To cope with the tiresome routine, one must have a rather fantastic outlet for all those stifled emotions, the wild creativity, curbed vexation, and feverish passion; those feelings and emotions which would simply not be professional to exhibit during business hours. So, when the last stock leaves the shelves, when the all too familiar wooden sign, finally flips to closed, hangs on the door, dressmakers, from the freezing mountain villages to the sprawling desert trading paradises begin to seek and strike quite different deals. Please bear in mind it is still the same store you know, their store. The forgotten tufts of unused fabric remain dangled over the old wooden beams, the floor stays littered with scribbled notes detailing the desires of the customers from the day before. Nothing changes. It is still our world. But the atmosphere is decidedly divergent. It might be dreary, or overly energetic depending on the mood of the day's work; there might be an overpowering smell, or sheer silence.

If an onlooker were to squint into the window, they might gaze upon the sight of the outwardly still-ordinary owner conversing with something decidedly unordinary. They might spot the works of that day pushed aside and replaced with other 'materials' that they would never believe the sight of! They might even see the dressmakers themselves, sharpening tools that look remarkably more honed than your average fastener or pin. This new style of vigorous motion and overly animated expression is a far cry from the small curt nods that you would have been accustomed to. They would swear that the things they saw were not of this world, far removed from anything human, but those things did not seem invasive to our reality. Could this madness be contained? Confined to the dressmaker and their quarters only. Harnessed or requested by them and expertly weaved into our world, like thread with the newest of needles.

"Curiosity kills the cat," you might reply with a shrug to their ghost-faced ravings. Dismissing such things as the concocted tales of a maniac, you would walk away as they shout desperate warnings after the trail of dust you kick up in your wake. But somewhere, in the back of your mind, amongst all the thoughts of hunger, renting responsibilities or medicine, you would feel unease. Relaying the very finite specifics of what you had just been told with a filter of 'what if?'

What if there was horror that could slip into this world? Who was to say it was bound by the cover of night? Or the underside of children's beds? What if such horror was being let in plainly as a remedy for boredom? As you look down at the scruffily scrawled words all over the back of your hand, marking your shifts for the next few days, a grizzly gummy grin might form over your entire face as you think to yourself, *how might I get in on this?*



THE LIGHTHOUSE

Lisa Levytska

DAWN, DAY, DUSK, DARKNESS.

I was reliving the same day, going through the same routine, rowing the same old boat. No changes, no anomalies, no difference.

I was a lonely traveller — too inexperienced and clueless to determine my final destination, but curious, and also, extremely anxious to get lost in the vast plain of the sea. And yet, I knew I was already lost, so from day to day, I was guessing the right path — the way out of confusion, murk and insecurity.

Today was just another one of those days. And yet, it wasn't the same — something was off.

As the darkness of the rapidly falling, moonless night began to besiege me, I became devoured by it; surrounded by its static, stiff air, suffocated by its essence. I had to keep going but I couldn't imagine accomplishing it in such pitch-black gloom.

I stopped. I was struggling to breathe.

It might have been the air. Moist but cold; I had no choice but to inhale it. The iodized scent of the sea: a mixture of dried seaweed, sea lettuce and rockweed... I felt it so strongly. Every salty drop that the sea splattered in my face, I felt beneath my skin. I heard the sound of the waves brushing against the rocky coast, rising, falling, dancing on the pebbles. So chaotic, so alive. How could I fail to appreciate the briny air or the cold caress of the breeze? For the first time, I didn't relish it.

Was it my fear, enveloping me so slowly and painfully, or my loneliness, engulfing me so hopelessly and inexorably? Alone, I was standing up to the murk with nothing but the sea behind me.

*

As a child, I used to wake up at night, wishing for the sun. The darkness would worry me, my thoughts would smother me, supplying my imagination with many demons and mystical night beasts that my mother used to tell me about when I wouldn't sleep. They used to terrify me. But as I grew older, I learnt that darkness wasn't an infinite black blanket that hid all the beasts and demons. It was the cloud of unknown it brought.

Back then, the sea would make me just as nervous.

I couldn't swim. I knew the know-how, but I was scared to approach the water. Every time, I'd spend an eternity sitting on the shore, brandishing my feet in the inexhaustible flow of waves, becoming more and more confident about stepping in. Then, I'd submerge, feeling a flood of air bubbles tickle my skin, as I let my head sink in — blinding rays of light would cut through the water and imprint their light on my face. At moments like these, I'd close my eyes and kick off the underwater rocks, quickly joggling my feet to keep myself afloat. Unconsciously, I'd take myself away from the coast, forgetting about my worry. But suddenly, just as my feet would finally stop feeling the sand, I'd feel like I was drowning. Warily opening my eyes, but being unable to see through the dark seaweed-loaded water, I would shut them again, immediately imagining that there was something underneath me — something huge and fatal that would drag me down into the boundless depths. Because I wouldn't dare open my eyes again, I could never persuade myself otherwise. And so, I grew up, studying the sea — startled but still scared of it.

I feared the unknown. I feared what I thought I knew about it, and maybe I feared that the known was coming to an end.

*

Often, I'd row at night — some days my panic would boost itself so abruptly, making me feel so ceaselessly strangled by it, I'd have to stay awake round-the-clock to calm myself down.

Today, it seemed like I'd keep rowing past the sunset — though the sea was still and there was no sign of storm, I was afraid that the

boat would turn over. Alone against the dark, I was drowning in fear. I could feel the sweat drench my skin, the throbbing of my own eyes. The ringing screamed, vibrated in my ears, and my heart thumped against my chest. The hurt paralyzed me, spreading through my body like ice-cold, liquid metal. I just wanted to finally reach it, but it seemed so distant, so unattainable.

I was helpless.

And yet, I kept moving forward.

Another heave of the oars, drifting further into the darkness.

By now, my eyes were already used to the gloom, but since I never saw anything other than the plateau of the sea and the occasional dim, lackluster stars, I couldn't believe that what I noticed ahead of me now could be more than a mere hallucination.

In the charcoal obscurity of this stinging autumn night, I could just about descry its mighty outline. I could feel its cooling, soft warmth stroking my skin, welcoming me, like an old friend. It was standing sharply against the night-sky, freshly painted in red and white stripes against sinister charcoal clouds. Suddenly the light came from the top, a wide beam that swept across the wild waters in arcing sweeps, unwavering but so amiable and compassionate. And as I watched it spread its lustrous luminescence around me and close in on me, blockading me from the darkness, I felt I could breathe again. Finally, I realised, I have found my safe place. Here

I'd always be shielded by the protective rays of light. Here I would always be free from fear. Some of us would travel the whole world to find 'somewhere like this'. I was facing it.

Instantly, my now-normal feeling of lethargy found itself replaced by another, tender and familiar, though long-forgotten sensation: hope. I grabbed both paddles, leaning over them with all my might, and pushing my boat with an inexplicable surge of everlasting energy. Minutes later, I was clumsily climbing out onto the sand, eager to nudge my face into the field of moist, salty pebbles. I cried and laughed and thanked the universe for allowing me to step a foot on land again. And as I stepped out of my boat, I stepped out of the dark, leaving my fear behind, as my journey has come to an end. I stood up to the murk, strong and self-assured now that I knew the lighthouse was behind me.



AN OPEN LETTER TO BOOKLOVERS

Lauren Steele



DEAR BOOK LOVERS, AVID READERS, AND ONE-TIME SHOPPERS,

I write this, having been back at work for a couple of weeks now, unveiling our treasure trove to you again. It's a different world we live in now, and it's taking some getting used to, both for us and for you. And, having reflected on this new world, I have a few things I would like to say.

Firstly, thank you. Thank you to those who have come back. Thank you to those who are following these new rules. Those tinges of pleasure are more poignant in my day than ever before: a small child saying 'Mummy, look, all the books are still here,' two friends giddy at the smell of pages, or someone stocking up on hundreds of pounds worth of spirituality books. It truly is wonderful to see that your love of books hasn't been defeated since we've been gone.

Yet, I have to reach out and speak to some of you. And although we agree that it's good to be back, this may only be a half-truth for me. For the half you don't see doesn't come until later, when the lights are off and I've started to make my way home — a new 16km cycle or a train (no more going underground for me) — and only then do the new realities set in. What we're going through isn't over.

Only once I come to rest do I realise that I am truly exhausted. Perhaps I have spent the whole day running on adrenaline and hyper-vigilance, as I try to protect you, my family, and my friends

from this thing we call Covid-19. My own safety is last on this list, because I care less about being ill myself than I do about passing it on to those who might not recover. It is an enormous weight to constantly think that you could be infecting hundreds of people in the space of a day. I do not want to be responsible for spreading this disease; that is a huge burden to bear.

So I have a plea, to those of you who are coming back to our bookshops and those of you who are emerging from your homes again: do everything you can for those of us who have to interact with people from all walks of life. Learn to wear a mask on public transport (too often have I seen them pulled down, taken off, or just not worn at all). Keep your distance — we try to step back when you're too close — don't take offence, we are following our guidelines. Don't use cash if you can help it; if twenty people give me cash in a day, I have to sanitize my hands as many times and it's painful after a while. Even the small things — don't make me touch your books to put them through the till (barcode up, please!), because I worry about giving this to you, too.

And I would be lying if I said I wasn't scared. The nastier side of this is something I thought I would never face working in a bookshop. You imagine peace, rustling pages, and maybe the smell of coffee. But the threat of people who don't take this seriously is very real. This week I was instead met with insults, aggression, and ridicule for trying to protect you. I know it wasn't you; it was someone who wasn't even planning on coming into our space. I was left crying and shaking, for what? So a rude man could feel powerful? It could have been so much worse — and I was preparing for the worst — being spat at, physically assaulted. I go through these scenarios before I go to sleep; it's no wonder I'm so tired.

Breaking these rules that so many are adhering to is not just scary for me, but a sign that you do not respect me. If you don't

wear a mask without a reasonable exemption, you prove that you do not care whether I, or anyone else, gets the virus. I've had money thrown at me, people ignoring the Perspex screens designed to keep us apart, coming too close. And really, working in a bookshop, I'm probably coming off quite lightly compared to others in retail. Respect them, too. It will make the difference.

Continue to love books. Love them passionately and share them with all the enthusiasm I know you've always had. We will continue to welcome you with (metaphorically) open arms. But I do not want to be a spreader of this virus, a carrier, or the cause of a new infection. So please, don't make me one.

Love always, and keep reading,

Your local, friendly Bookseller



THE DEADLY HAM

Selene Muñoz



03; SCRIPT

INT. SMALL LONDON APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Late afternoon in the int. of a small London apartment. OLIVIA, a woman of around 25, tall and thin as a stick insect with sarcasm as her mother tongue; MAEVE, her roommate, also around 25, robust and wide as a rugby player but delicate and naïve. They have been best friends for as long as both can remember and fall under the classic stereotype of 'the muscle' and 'the brain'; CAMILE, upstairs neighbour, pretty, and curvy blonde girl, a bit of a prude but always sweet.

OLIVIA hums happily while preparing a cake mixture

OLIVIA

Two cups of sugar, a cup of milk...

MAEVE

(slams open the door)

OLIVIA!

OLIVIA turns away from her baking, startled by a heavy thump on the floor.

OLIVIA

What the... is that...? Maeve, what the hell have you done?

MAEVE

No, listen, listen to me... I was just there and he came and I was like "What?" and then he did

that...

(exaggerated arm flicks)

MAEVE (CONT'D)

...and I didn't know what it meant
so I got scared and I had just
bought this wonderful piece of ham
and I was holding it... Next thing I
know he's on the floor.

*Silence falls between them as they stare at each
other for a bit, until Maeve sighs heavily, while
dragging the body to Olivia's feet and closing
the door.*

OLIVIA

MAEVE

So...

I...

OLIVIA

Oh, you go first.

MAEVE

No, please, you go first.

OLIVIA

*(her voice is exasperated, though
she appears calm)*

Why is a seemingly dead man on the
floor of our kitchen?

MAEVE

*(looking down at the pale, motion-
less figure at her feet)*

I just told you!

OLIVIA

You just mumbled a story about a

ham, which was, in fact, not
clarifying at all!

MAEVE

I was very meticulous...

OLIVIA

No, you were not...

MAEVE

...about what happened... it was all
so fast...

*With the initial state of shock beginning to
fade now, OLIVIA's face starts to turn red with
anger and confusion.*

OLIVIA

SHUT UP!

MAEVE

DON'T BE SO RUDE! I'M GOING THROUGH
A TRAUMA!

OLIVIA

(taking a deep breath)

Could you explain to me what
happened in more details, please?

MAEVE

Okay, so, I had just got off the bus
on my way home with my newly bought
ham for tomorrow night's dinner when
this man approached me, and you know
it's quite a dark winter night and
I forgot my glasses so I saw a dark
blur coming towards me...

OLIVIA

(pause)

...I see where this is going...

MAEVE

...and he did some gestures like he was swimming butterfly style at me and tried to touch me so I hit him with the ham and while falling he hit his head on the bar of the bus stop and dropped to the floor all unconscious...

OLIVIA

(pause)

... and you had no better idea than to bring him home.

MAEVE

(bluntly)

Yes.

OLIVIA

(circling around the body)

And what did you even think of doing with it?

MAEVE

(scratching her head)

I don't know... hide it? Maybe... destroy it?

OLIVIA

(silently screaming)

Are you stupid? Have you not learned

anything from all the CSI you've binge-watched since you were 15!? You DON'T bring the body into the house.

MAEVE

(screaming, but less discreetly)

I didn't know what to do! You're the smart, cold-hearted one!

OLIVIA

What do you want me to do? Put it in the fucking oven?

MAEVE

I have no fucking idea, Olivia!

OLIVIA

How can you be so stupid?

Someone knocks on the door, OLIVIA and MAEVE jump in surprise and stare at the body.

OLIVIA

(whispering)

In the broom cupboard! Quick, you stupid, clueless asshole!

MAEVE

(swinging the body over her shoulder and shoving him into the cupboard one limb at a time)

Don't insult the poor dead man!

OLIVIA frenetically looks at both the cupboard and entrance door, steam coming out of her ears as she tries to make a plan.

OLIVIA

Maybe if we stay very quiet they'll go away...

CAMILE

(rambling from outside the door while knocking again)

Hey guys, I can see the light through the door! Open up please, I know it's late but I've got my niece's birthday tomorrow morning and I forgot until now! I am so desperate, please?!

OLIVIA sighs and scrubs her face with her hands, hoping to get the astonishment off. She goes to open the door to find CAMILE standing nervously in the doorway.

OLIVIA

(trying to block any view of the flat)

Camile! Hi! What did you say you need?

CAMILE

I was just wondering if you'd let me borrow some cake moulds really quick for my niece's birthday tomorrow morning?

OLIVIA

Yeah, sure let me go get them for you...

MAEVE

(appearing in the background in an attempt for normality)

Hey, Camile!

CAMILE

(pushing past OLIVIA and running to MAEVE's bear hug)

Oh Maeve! It's been so long, how are you?

A loud crash comes from the broom cupboard. OLIVIA and MAEVE quickly look at each other.

CAMILE (CONT'D)

(stepping cautiously back from the hug)

What was that?

MAEVE

(laughing nervously)

I'm sure it's just the foxes!

OLIVIA

So you needed moulds, yes, stay right there. I'll bring them to you.

CAMILE

(still puzzled)

It's okay I know where they are, I can grab them myself.

MAEVE

(quickly positioning herself in front of CAMILE)

NO DON'T! That's okay, Olivia will get them.

The cupboard door swings open and a pale hand

drops to the floor.

CAMILE

(screaming)

What is that?

OLIVIA

(screaming at MAEVE)

You know you have to push the top of
the cupboard to close it properly!

MAEVE

(screaming)

I'M GOING THROUGH A TRAUMA.



VOLUME 2: TESTAMENT
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VOLUME 2: TESTAMENT is the second stand-alone anthology produced entirely by the Ta Voix team of aspiring professionals, which now stands at around 300 contributors from around the world. This work is a testament to the skill and passion of the team, and of their voluntary commitment during one of the most difficult times through which many of us have ever lived.

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