



*No, Dear*

No, Dear

Issue 11  
H A I R



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Issue Eleven  
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Morgan Parker

Miss Black America

Does she flat-iron  
or out-of-package relaxer

Does she blow-out pick clean  
shape up or flip her weave

Does she got that good hair  
from her Mama's side

Does she let her  
white friends touch

Is she style and grace  
Is she dy-no-mite

Is she a doll for you      does she come  
with a special comb

Francesco Grisanzio

First, hair will erupt through your pores all at once. It's been storing in coils around your liver and when enough pressure has built, it will be like removing the keystone from a mile's worth of aqueduct. Followed by itching, burning, and rash. Your father gave you an ointment for this occasion, as his father gave him, as his father, etcetera. There isn't much left, so be sparing.

Nalini Abhiraman

Magnifying Mirror

Were two filaments in a single pore? Was growth or the appearance thereof. Was an alternate theory about the direction of said growth. Was such a thing as theory and its alternatives. Were alternatives of course naturally theories themselves? Were these repositionings invalidating the idea of alternatives? Was the idea of a general fount of imagination from which all growth was alternative. Was the faintly Dianetic consideration of hair as thoughtfully distributed and invasive alien spears (praise Xenu). Was the injustice of doubled whiskers in situ. Was a chin's rotational orbit into despair. Was the black humor of 'pore over.' Was the prodding of the shared root. Was the appearance of a dowsing rod embedded in soil. Was the troubling notion of a coiled geyser of testosterone at the ready. Was at fault. Was Y marks the spot. Was Why God why? Were a tweezer's tugs feckless in plural? Was the ribboning curl of keratin in distress. Was an increasing resemblance to minimalist signs of the ram. Was phallogocentricism. Was man's last stand. Were quailing under hot compression. Were brought together in the pluck. Was a grasp twinning inward what was outward? Were two dark fibers forming a mandorla? Was a hulled caraway in the place of a shape? Were collaborators at the last. Were torn from.

Natalie Peart

Starfruit

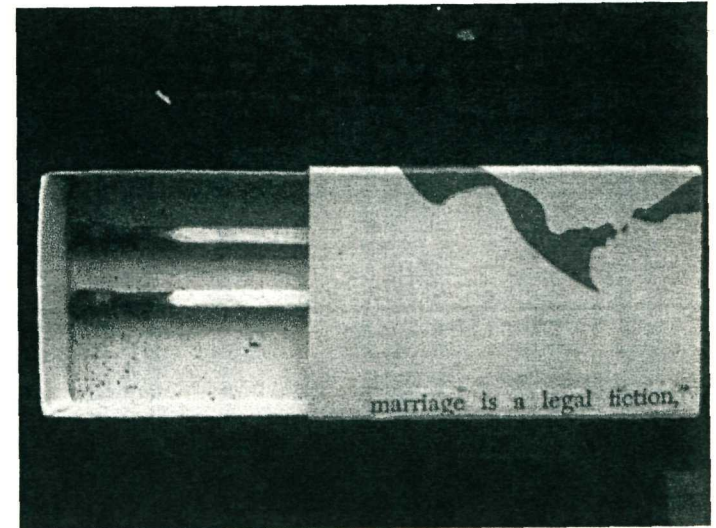
My mother made plaits on a girl  
who wanted hair like the mermaids:  
a curtain for her nipples. Complimenting  
the make-believe tail that propelled  
her around the tub.

My father taught me how to braid.  
Three strings tied to the bedroom  
doorknob. His fingers moved  
with a skilled compassion.

Their hands that bare gold  
bands like ripe carambola. Knuckles  
interlocked, twisting, saying for better  
or for worse, bittersweet.

Legacy Russell

Marriage is A Legal Fiction



Dear Pop Song,

I want you to eff my brains out. It feels like you almost do. [James Baldwin, Cotton picked you, the market took you, I didn't build this tower, but the dream that dreamt me did.] I hit repeat and we practice tantric like we found love.

xx,

C

Dear Pop Song,

How do you do that shit? [J. Baldwin, They wrong your face. Your mouth is an earring, a French leather-daddy. "My grandmother," you say "was not a rapist." I'm sure who was.] On the floor, I'm squeezing my neck, really hard, so no one else can see. Your sound sirens around 'til I know the riot's gone.  
XXXXX.

Dear Pop Song,

No, seriously, grab a fistful of my hair. [J. Baldwin, Discover the great shock that comes, white as every stone and stick, what you call "the gap between one person and another."]  
X

Dear Pop Song,

Who do you serve? I recognize you by your new short bangs and shiny batons.

XX,

C

[P.s. J. Baldwin, "The catalogue of disaster" "through a whole lifetime" "impossibly" "accelerates, accelerates."]



Dear Pop Song,

Just when I think nothing good will come ever ever again, [J. Baldwin, We want to notice racism to take it out to get it to stop to stop noticing it. To move in front of its raised arm when the raised arm is the air.] the sugar from the whole sky pours on our streets in rainbows disgustingly heavy. It's sticky as hell. [Thinking the world is at all bad, ever ever ever, is crazy foolish stupid.]

XO,

C

Dear Pop Song,

I whip my hair back and forth. [J. Baldwin, to the white men crowding to hear, you said "the harbors and the ports and the railroads of the country" "could not conceivably be" "if they had not had" "cheap labor" "that...picked the cotton" "and under someone else's whip" "for nothing."] I want you five times before 10:00am.  
XOC.

Dear Pop Song, [J. Baldwin, "One of the great things that the white world does not know," is that time pours back and forth blood between two or more chalice, bottomless and filling and expanding our bulging eyes toward each other.] Popsicle, poopoo,

My chain hits my sweet sweet emptiness, so easy.

x:c



Seven

1. literature  
puts me to sleep  
but I like the dreams

2. svelte  
does it come from  
melt?  
why does that feel right  
savannah seems a cousin  
veldt

3. don't know the names of the trees

oak, cottonwood  
please identify the mulberry

you like the long white mushroom  
the mustard yellow one  
it reminds you of an old man

4. drink coffee to forget the heat

letting your hair dry  
is an activity

5. in the fridge something sticky  
sweet  
cold

6. awkwardness a kind of truth

7. hold up two fingers

if it's the right two fingers  
you just said seven

\*El bicho raro

Seducido por la imagen  
el bichiélago queda atrapado  
en la espesura del boceto

distraído por el grito que se chorrea entre sus patas  
clava caderas pelo a pelo  
hasta mamar el encuentro o domar las ansias

una vez adentro  
pervive para pervertir el orden de la araña  
dirige la mutación del mosquito  
le espeta antenas al venado  
y se regodea detrás de nalgas fatigadas

(el desprecio es tan íntimo que todos se distraen y se aparean)

estéril y carnívoro  
arrastra su pico hacia el cansancio  
gime su insatisfacción  
sacude las ficciones que cuelgan de su cuerno

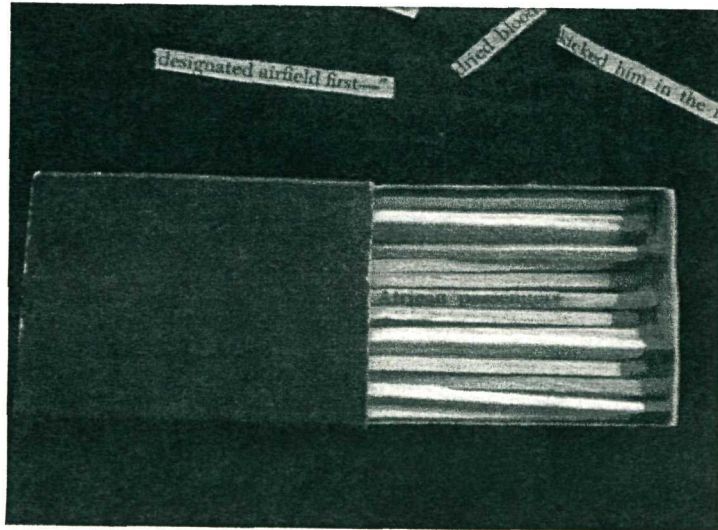
no quiere volver a excederse  
ni ensayar orgías

pero sigue allí vacío  
buscándose  
en otras bestias

\*Poema inspirado en las obra del pintor dominicano Justo Carreras



African Passengers



Snarl

A bezoar, trapped. All are in genesis. Entrapped.  
Not from the German. Not indicating removing  
something from the object, from, away from, off.  
Not indicating a conversion to the opposite, a reversion.  
Not indicating the beginning of something.

Its visceral middle sets the trap.  
What is trapped begins to set.  
A skein winds tightly without decision.  
Entrails, drawn away from the object. Harbingers.  
Art has formed in the arrangement of drawing.

In horses, it is known as choke.  
In venom it is a false comfort.

Tricho, a type: forming words related to hair.  
Trichobezoar forms, relating hair to word.

To shampoo a bezoar is the work of grammar.  
To butter it deeply with conditioner.  
To count to thirty.  
To count to sixty.

To leave in.

Evan Gill Smith

Serious GNAR #2

Your gnar is like, way up there—  
high in the sky.  
You quaking gnarfish.  
Tú hombre serio.

Feel beneath your beard  
for signs of futures.  
Your firebrand shines  
like apricot burning sun.

Run through five-alarm streets—  
heels aflame like McFly's Delorean.  
There's something epic about  
black zig-zags burnt on the pavement.

Shampoo with your gnar—  
rub it in, circular-like.  
Controlled burn, burn uncontrollably—  
uncontrollable burn with gnar-like flame.

(Text me your number, Walter Pater.  
I got it.  
I'll text you back.  
So you have mine too.)

Paul Hlava

End Hour

The kettle was empty.  
Gloria stood and Levi stood.  
Soon everyone was standing  
then gone. Cathy and Solmaz,  
the macaroni salad and Mikasa punch bowl,  
they were gone too.  
I had once known myself  
in that exquisite palace,  
remade with the shifting  
of four floral chairs. Then I realized  
I wasn't wearing any shoes  
and for that matter where was my belt?  
The low-flow showerhead  
couldn't rinse the foam from my hair.  
It occurred to me if you are one person  
when you brush your teeth  
and another when in a crowd,  
the person you love is everyone  
and no one at the same time.  
By the time we tear a chunk of bread  
to wipe clean our plates  
the ingredients of our bodies have changed,  
redefining our joys and sorrows  
as minutes stream through the window  
and illuminate our skin,  
having traveled so far to finish at us.

Cathy Che

While Watching

On *Tour of Duty*, I cried when the Vietnamese character died. We used to rush my father and kiss him when he returned home from work. When I washed his clothes, they smelled of machine things: oil, epoxy, gasoline. He measured a strand of my hair with a caliper. Then he pointed to the allowed tolerances on the blueprint.  $2/1000$  of an inch was my hair.  $05/1000$  was his margin of error. I watched the CNC machine spray coolant on the spinning metal parts. Coolant with the color and viscosity of skim milk.

Lee Ann Brown

Hairwreath

Give me a lock of your hair  
To remember you by

Before the photograph was invented  
Hair grew in Human memory

Cut in the light of no moon  
Grows faster than the names  
In the bank box along with  
One flaming diamond and  
Whatever else radiates  
Out from the sphere  
Of the family no DNA  
In hair — only at the root  
Most hair wreaths  
were in a horseshoe shape  
But this our family's wreath is a Circle  
Gently shedding in the frame  
A grey poodle hair beloved  
In the fame of names trained  
to rhyme and twine crocheted  
to the next door porch swing  
In summer or in wintry fear  
If losing sped up any faster  
Here are the names of unknown  
Relatives — and here I insert the  
Word which is Japanese  
For the category of Ancestors  
Passed out of immediate bodily  
Or anecdotal memory yet  
Present here nevertheless  
Passed into a slightly higher  
Sphere above our gears  
Planetary and sidereal  
My stars  
here they are



## Contributors

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