

With A View

Why does he always stare at me? Every day he sits there, looking over at me. Hand on his chin, or head on crossed arms, slouched down in his seat, he stares. God, he must be rooted there; he never moves. Each time I come home, he's in that chair. He's not even sly about watching me. No feeling at all. He never moves his eyes when I stare back at him; no glance downward, no quick movement to look like he's occupied with something else. He doesn't try to hide the fact he's staring at me. It scares me, the way he has no shame about doing it. I wonder . . .

. . . if she thinks I'm a pervert, the way I sit and look out of the window? Ah, she probably does. It's not like I'm looking at her, it's just that I like to gaze out the window, even if there's nothing to see. It helps me when I'm writing if I stop and meditate for a minute. That's all I'm really doing when I glance that way. It's not like I'm intentionally watching her, or anything like that; it's just something I do. Some people lie down, others pace, or eat; I clear my mind and contemplate for a while. I can't help it if my window and hers are in front of me. I know she must believe that I am a wierdo and that I get my kicks watching her. I wish I could explain to her why I look like I'm staring at her. Some days when she's there, I feel I should call over to her and tell . . .

. . . him to cut the shit and stop gawking at me, but that would probably make him do it all the more. Besides, it would doubtlessly please him if he thought he'd gotten to me, made me nervous and afraid. I don't want him to think that; who knows what he'd do then, like come over and stand by my door all day. God, he gives me the creeps! I know I could stop it if I shut the curtains; that would do it for his fun. But I like the sun shining in and, besides, with the drapes closed, the breeze doesn't come in. This room is hot enough with what little wind does make it in; it would be hell to close the curtains. If he would only shut his, but, no, he won't do that, it would ruin his fantasy. He'd have nothing to dream about, the creep. Oh, I wish . . .

. . . she would shut her drapes. Then there wouldn't be any problem. I would, but I can't think when the room is dark as a dungeon. It shuts me off, stops the flow. Writing is hard enough without making the conditions worse. Damn, she must really wonder about me. If she only knew that I don't mean anything by



my staring. I'm no pervert, or rapist, or anything like that; I never could be. But she probably guesses that I am. Women's libbers like her always do think the worst about every guy they see. I've seen a million of them, strutting down the street, real proud and sassy. That is, until they walk by a guy. Then you see what they really are; the way they cower, eyes averted, as they creep by. Radicals like her think all men are rapists. Oh, it's not hard to see that she's one of them. The stupid "Peace Now" poster on the wall, the clenched fist drawing (she probably made it) on her door, the way she's dressed; it all adds up. And, aside from that, she's not at all good looking, and everyone knows . . .

. . . perverts like him are ugly. Oh, but, even still, he's a real stud. Always dressed to kill, with his tight shirts unbuttoned to the navel, proper pants "with that look and feel to drive the girls crazy," and his high-heeled shoes. Oh, and that hairdo of his, all styled and blown. He's classy all right, all low class. I've come across a hundred like him. You pass them on the street and they leer at you, slobbering all over themselves; the way they ogle you, like they're undressing you in their minds. Those smart remarks, calculated to just turn you "on." What revolting pigs! God, how do such people ever get away from the Home. They're all so sickening, I wish they would all die. I detest his kind so much! Why doesn't . . .

. . . she just close the drapes. I hate to even see . . .

. . . him over there, staring at me. That kind, they . . .

. . . never understand.

I think I'll close the curtains.

Howard Grueneberg

Parkland College, Champaign, Illinois
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WMAAGLES

Mrs. Maloney stood slightly leaning over the bedrails, gently manipulating his hair, speaking to him softly but with control and a firmness that seems to come naturally to a mother. She kissed him, asking for a hello, a simple smile, or any sign of recognition, and turned towards the wall where his pictures hung. Silent for a moment as though she were pondering some thought, she spoke without turning towards me. "First Richard, now Rodney. A person's got to wonder why."

Her mood changed quickly, and Mrs. Maloney turned towards the bed sparking a smile, clasping his hand in hers. She told him of his sister's birthday, his pets, and some other relatives he might remember. Stopping momentarily, she gazed at his eyes. In the awesome silence, neither he or she seemed aware of anything but one another.

Sharply turning away, she bounced across the room where a tall-backed chair sat covered in towels, linen, and gowns underneath pillows stacked upon one another that looked as though someone had tossed them there without a thought. Fumbling through these objects, Mrs. Maloney pulled out a large brown sack. Her voice was somewhat higher and more radiant when she announced that she had purchased a

new clock-radio. After struggling with the box, she pulled out a beautiful brown radio that was wrapped up in its cord like a newborn entangled in its umbilical cord. Placing it on the bedside table, she plugged it in and began fiddling with the various knobs. He watched closely, his eyes following her busy hands as they searched for the tuner. "Ah, there it is, WLS. That's what he likes, isn't it?" Not knowing, I shrugged my head uncommittedly. "Isn't that what you like, old Rod," she questioned him with hopeful eyes. Stroking his forearm, Mrs. Maloney gave a proud and beautiful grin as she spoke, "Rod's always listening to music. He and his pets would sit out in the sunshine listening to the radio and horsing around. Didn't ya, Rod?" She bent down closer; his eyes opened wider, and his ears seemed to perk up as if called to attention. "All his sisters would chase after Rod, teasing him and pulling on his tail. It made old Rod so mad. Didn't it, Rod? You didn't like people doing that to your animals, did ya? He loved animals . . . and nature. He'd never hurt anything. Would ya, Rod," speaking to him and me alternately as she squeezed his hand. "Well, this will keep you company for a while, anyway," she said submissively.

Leaving the radio and the conversation, Mrs. Maloney slowly walked 'round the bed, watching his eyes follow

hers till she stood up against the bed rail where she was originally. Her face tightened. The tone of her voice lowered and grew serious as she drew her face towards his. "Wink at me, son," she pleaded, growing more intent. "Come on, wink at me old boy . . . pretty boy." The two stared at each other in silence. Leaning farther forward, her hair fell down almost touching his chin and blocking part of my view. "I wish you would get out of this bed. You can't lie here the rest of your life, son," she said firmly, but lovingly. "Now son, you've got to get out of this bed some day. You've got to try, hon. Your poor old Mom's a worryin' about you every day, and lying in this bed isn't helping you any, Rod." With no more response than the clear, blank stare of his empty eyes, she paused—her faced strained and tense in anticipation—and then sighed heavily, lightly patting his head.

Turning towards the table where her coat and purse lay, she glanced back as if she thought she'd catch something by surprise. Recognizing her foolishness, Mrs. Maloney grinned at her son, clutched her things, and slowly walked out of the room, gazing at the floor as she went.

Marcie Langdon

Rialto

(a Two-Step)

Island mansions
White yachts
Grecian fountains
Black coupes
Moonlit gardens
Top hats
Satin slippers
Jazz bands
Broadway bistros
Gold rings
Champagne glasses
June nights

But . . .

(Written from *New York Movie*,
Edward Hopper, 1939)

Howard Gruenberg

Sea Island

Turning across the pale marsh, the long road
winds before us,

Like a silver snake she charms the way across the
waters to that hiatus.

The twenty-five cent crossing is pressed into the palm
Beneath the bridge the ghost of the sun is left
hovering in the sky to paint shadows on the creaking
wood.

Buried out there between emerald trees and colorless
skies

Empty mansions wait for their masters to return.

We feel like children, peering over a wall trespassing
some other's domain.

We wonder if the fountain flows lemonade or the
frog is not really a king.

We talk in a whisper with only the swaying pines to
hear.

How we once saw all this in picture books many lives
ago.

But now our fantasy is reality, and this world we judge
by the past.

Sarah Duerr

In Your Sleep

Light brown hair laced with gold
looking like a maple in autumn
softly carpets your shoulders
in the morning light.

The small white scar on your chest
rises and falls with your breathing
tracing a fine line across the
tanned skin above the sheet.

Lying on your back, your hip bones hover
gracefully flowing into your legs
so silent in repose they disguise the muscles
that ripple whenever you move.

Stretching my toes, with our hips even,
I can barely reach your ankle
and it makes me feel smaller
than I know I am.

And I watch, cat-like,
how you begin to stir
as I lightly caress you
to bring you awake.

Linda M. Linchester

Child's Play

I stood confused, my mouth not responding and my mind neglecting to send the commands. A mere child, scarcely half of my age, had thrust his immature hand down between the layers of my yellow rain slicker and the rest of my clothing. He was attempting to squeeze my too small breasts, grasping and pinching and laughing at my inability to function. He ran away, his classmates giving him a pat on the back for work well done, while I walked on, slowly, without direction, painful tears stuck somewhere between nowhere and nothing.

It was three in the afternoon and I was half a block from the Catholic grade school the boys attended. How could this happen, to me, dressed in scruffy old clothes, on a street I walked every afternoon? The boys were so young, where did they get the idea to invade a woman's private body? I looked back; they were far away by now. I was safe. There were only four more blocks until I got to work.

The patter of footsteps behind me. I whirled around. It was too late. They were upon me again, slipping sweaty palms over my young flesh and I had no protection. I was almost a bystander, looking on in horror. Buttons were spinning and fingers that had been playing jacks not so long before were awkwardly and hungrily probing my bare chest. Reality shook me and I reached out, but the boys were gone and I had no desire to pursue.

It was as if in not reacting, I were condoning the actions. As if I were enjoying this little adventure. Eighteen years old, nearly a woman by all standards, and I might very well soon end up raped by a group of sixth graders.

Choices swarmed into my mind. I might have been able to run to safety, but then I would have no chance to get my revenge, to teach them a lesson they ought to know by now. I felt anger surging, power coming to my limbs. Mentally I prepared myself for another attack, hoping they would come back and give me another chance. I tuned my ears to the slightest noise and readied my muscles.

There was a voice beside me. I lunged and took hold onto everything I could. The boy was fighting as a wild animal might, but I myself was a lion and would not release my grip. We were alone now, his comrades had deserted him, ignoring his terrified cries, fleeing from this half-mad woman. Down we went in a flurry of books and contents of my purse, the high school chemistry text along with the elementary speller. A lady in a blue Falcon drove on past us, in spite of the obvious predicament we were in. A cloud of dust was swirling around, stirred up by two vicious bodies, one a grown female and one a young boy, rolling over the sidewalk, through piles of pinecones and patches of gravel. My stockings were torn into shreds, his jacket

had one sleeve mostly pulled off, and blood and blood-dirt mixtures were visible on both of us.

Then a noise pierced our world and the boy froze in my grasp. A woman was calling his name. In the midst of the dirt and humiliation, she looked like an angel. Her hair was piled softly around her face and she had her arms folded around a bundle of notebooks. I gathered from the words they exchanged that she was his school teacher. Suddenly my tears began to flow and the soft, kind lady took me into her home and led me to the bathroom and a set of clean towels. I washed off the grimy blood and smoothed my hair and tried unsuccessfully to pull the borrowed pair of pantyhose over my sore scabbing knees. Nothing could have cleansed or covered up the ugliness I felt in my heart and my crying continued after the arrival of police and parents. Ashamed and ugly because of what the boys had done and because of the desperate way I had eventually tried to stop them.

It's over now, long ago. The boys were given a lecture and I wrote them a letter about my feelings. They were just children. Maybe someday they will understand why I behaved the way I did. I'm all right now. I hope someone will tell them that.

Charlene Morgan

*Hey, Colorado, some day you may be
Snow-capped mountains by the sparklin' sea.
Two bright moons
Shinin' down on my lady and me.**

Now that's hardly the way to begin. I mean, maybe you can get the mountains and Colorado OK, but the sparkling sea is utter nonsense at this juncture, and as far as the two bright moons, even I haven't been able to figure that one out yet. But in order to include the rhyme with the lady, I had to leave it in there, so maybe you can figure it out later and then tell me what it's supposed to mean.

1968

Sitting in the back of Richard's plant store, because that's where he lives. Velvet couch, tassled antique lamp, mist from the vaporizers drifting in through the space over the loft, framing the Maxfield Parrish prints. You'd never guess to look at him that he's gay. Nothing in his mannerisms or voice would give it away. Unless maybe you went back into the

The Outing

Anchored out somewhere ten miles from Key West
struggling with too many drinks and no sleep.
Probably drown before I'd ever find land . . .

No horizon. No People. No buildings.
Just water.
Deep blue, sea green.
Rolling, swaying, tilting green.
Can't walk . . .
The deck's always slanting
hills into valleys under my feet
moving away just as I arrive.

Strip to the waist and hope for a breeze.
Body's 98 and head's at 110
as I inch, groping sideways, towards the rail.
Just enough room to lay myself down
carefully, so I don't lose my balance.

Oh, that's much better.
Now the rigging's rocking to and fro
like a huge, slow-motion metronome
marks time for the throbbing
that courses my body—
shooting pain from my head to my toes.
Except for my hand, dangling over the side
rhythmically dipping down into the brine
as the ledge meets the ocean,
then swings its way back
to the clatter of all that we didn't tie down.

Try blocking the visions that sway with the sounds.
Can't hurt. (*Says you.*)
Try going below.
Flat out on the mattress,
no air (*but no sun*).
Try closing your eyes
(*no, that's wrong—makes it worse*).

The bottom is painted a translucent white
blocking the ocean like a giant dixie cup.
Just watching the water—up four feet, back two.
The radio sputters and spurts with each surge.
First static . . . then music . . . then static . . . then
music . . .
then static . . . then Cuba . . .
Then sleep.

Linda M. Linchester

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Randall Grussing
Editor

apartment and saw the meticulous luxury. Or the camp music. Or met Tom. I enjoy sleeping in his loft occasionally, safe and secure in a guaranteed hassle-free sleep. So long as I don't think too much about what's going on at the bottom of the ladder.

We're watching a Mick Jagger movie to satisfy our mutually prurient interests when this commercial comes on: it's a cartoon caricature of San Francisco, with the birds singing as a rosy-cheeked, smiling run rises over the R. Crumb-type skyscrapers. As the sun surveys us, then turns its gaze downward, a rumbling sound drowns out of the chirping and the buildings begin to topple and crack. Before long, the dust settles and the sun, still beaming placidly, turns back to us as a voice breaks in: "San Francisco. The city that listens to KSAN while it still can." JESUS CHRIST!!! WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

1969-1976

Nothing particularly interesting or exciting has happened since 1968, so I've decided to just skip it.

Enclosed Is A Clipping Regarding My Son

Modern Mothers can't be allowed
To snip out clippings when they're proud
For, according to psychiatry,
Kids should remain little nonentities.

Freud and Adler, through complex diagnosis,
Proved Moms caused sex complexes and runny noses.
But if it weren't for*maternity
Just where would Freud and Adler be?

Who knows what started the old boys flipping?
Perhaps their Moms didn't snip their clippings!

Pat McGinty



Linda Alexander

1977

It's June 10: 9:17 a.m. The birthdate of some obscure historical figure has just been obliterated forever as the tremor courses its way through the faults that underlie half of the West Coast. From California east to Arizona, Nevada and Utah, the western quarter of the United States crumbles into the Pacific. The country—indeed the world—is overwhelmed by the shocks.

It's September 1. Still 1977. The recovery has been swift, despite the enormity of the catastrophe, and life is beginning to resume its normal patterns. Ciudad Juarez has been re-named Neuvo Tijuana, while the streets of Las Cruces, New Mexico, are white with the uniforms of sailors and Grand Junction's wharf is doing a landslide business.

*We're gonna make love when it's dawn
On the coast of Colorado
When California's gone.*

But still, you have to feel sorry for Rand McNally.

Linda M. Linchester

Dandelion

My teeth are razors now,
Of course; I've nibbled dragons and betes noires,
I've bitten bullets, hands that fed me, and, playfully,
babies' buttocks.
I've ground up doubts, dilemmas (horns and all),
Jawbreakers, jujubes, and gelid capsules of
antibiotics.
I've gnawed on Gordian knots, crow, my words,
my hat, my fingernails.

My teeth are razors wearing out and down.

Sally F. Wallace

The July sun had climbed, bringing with it the midday heat. The air was still, without even a breeze to momentarily wash over my sweaty, dirty face. A breeze would have been as welcome a relief as a mouthful of water to wash over my pasty tongue.

As I rose from the tractor seat, now wet with my perspiration, I looked down at my strong, healthy body, dressed in a red swimsuit top, blue gym shorts, and old white tennis shoes. In spite of the still, dry heat, I felt a surge of self-satisfaction. God had blessed me with a well-contoured body, one which as a gymnast I had learned to command, control, and discipline into performing routines on the sidehorse, trampoline, and floor mat.

I stood on the rear axle of the tractor and for a moment watched my father and brother as they continued to pick rocks off the hot, dry earth. Compassion welled up within me, a lump forming in my throat, as I saw that they, too, were tired and sweaty. The weight of the rocks, which filled their old, rusty buckets, slowed them down. They walked towards the wagon to empty their pails, not saying a word, each in his own world.

In an effort to mimic a routine I had accomplished on the sidehorse, I lifted my body from the rear axle, employing the large rear wheel and the arm of the seat as a substitute for the wooden grips. I swung my legs back and forth, feet together, body in control, strength rippling through my arms. Again, a surge of self-satisfaction filled me.

I decided to let go, to fly through the air and land on the bare field, in all my glory. I thrust my feet forward, forcibly this time, to give me that extra momentum, as I relinquished my grip.

Clumsily and crazily, my body sprawled out of control, as my head dropped down, pain shooting through my left thigh. I reached for something, anything to break my fall, but wait a minute . . . I'm not falling! I'm hanging upside down in mid-air . . . I heard fabric rip as I began to fall. I threw my right arm out to break my descent as the ground, hard and unyielding, seemed to come up and meet my hand, the impact causing my arm to snap inward at the elbow. I saw my upper arm hit my forehead and snap back out as my body collapsed in a heap, pushing my face into the loose soil, dirt filling my nostrils and coating my teeth and tongue.

Pain ripped through me! Pain so excruciating, so intense, that all I could manage to do was fill my lungs to holler. I saw my brother and heard a strange, hoarse voice yell out his name. Suddenly, I realized I was the one yelling.

As I sat in the dirt, cradling my arm in my left hand, I saw the men drop their buckets, rocks spilling on the field. They ran to me and knelt before me, reaching their hands out to help but not wanting to touch me. I heard myself still yelling his name, unable to cease. Suddenly, he bellowed out my name and somehow, I stopped.

I looked down at my arm and was nearly overwhelmed by the urge to vomit. The bone from my forearm and the bone from my upper arm were forming a T. Panic seized me, and I pulled my forearm so that the elbow looked normal. I began to yell, "Daddy! Daddy!" My body was so wracked with pain that I felt faint. My father gently helped me up off the dirt and lead me to the tongue of the wagon where we sat. He put his arm around my waist to support my weak body, and with a

gloved hand, he gently brushed the dirt from my face and neck. I felt nauseated and didn't want to vomit. In a trembling and faint voice I asked him to help me lean forward so that I wouldn't throw-up on his knees. He said it didn't matter, and with his hand, pulled my head to his shoulder and began to rock me ever so slightly.

He sent my brother home to get the pickup truck for the trip to the hospital. While he was gone, I noticed that my shorts were torn on the left side, ripped, pulled, and stretched out of shape, through layers of heavy fabric, hem, cuff, and all. My upper left thigh was bruised, and covered by a somewhat less offensive scrape.

I pulled my weak, anguished body off my father's side, and began to rock back and forth, pain from my arm shooting through me in spasms. Groans crept up from somewhere deep within me and surfaced uncontrollably as nausea swept over me in waves. I took short, shallow breaths, making my mouth and throat dry and sore.

"What happened?" I asked as I looked at the place on the tractor where I had been standing. "What tore my shorts?" He studied the tractor from where he was sitting, and after a moment, he got up and went to the spot where I had fallen. He reached up and clutched a lever, about two feet long adjacent to the seat, and looked over his shoulder at me. "Your shorts got caught on this." And as a constant reminder of my carelessness, during my eight days in the hospital, pain was a faithful companion, radiating from my torn and distorted elbow.

S. Jeanie Worley

Little Brand A For Jim

Ever wake up mad in the morning?
I mean really angry,
first clenching, lung expanding, blurry eyed mad?
It's a good indication you've been
with a soul-killer the night before.

He has an eight by ten, neatly dime store framed,
original acrylic.

He's proud to announce he watched its creation
from birth to finish.

He admits to not being an art critic
but he KNOWS what he likes and expounds upon it.
You are not at all impressed and would like
to tell him so,
instead you nod and smile.

He enjoyed the wine so much
he returns months later to
inquire where he can pick up some
for friends he is having in.
Through clenched teeth and a forced smile
you gleefully inform him
it is imported German '72
and can't be had except through your cellar.

You're dressed in white, two pieces
lying on the patio pads,
covered with scarf, glasses, oil and nail polish,
you and the sun have been having this thing for
the last twenty minutes or so,
the timer races along nearly finished.
He strolls across the bluegrass lawn
to impress you with today's dull experiences

and as you roll over to give him
a view of your perfect rear end.
You know if in addition to everything else
he is good in bed, it will finish you.

Next morning, when you walk
to the bathroom mirror,
your eyes tell you it's gone.
You think about his wife.

Barbara Mealer Smith

My brother, you sparkle
Like diamonds you shine
You're a man-child forever
No captive of time
You blaze in the night
Like the moon on its climb
And the stars are just ghosts that surround you.

Your friends all admire
The shape that you're in
They leap with desire
To tear at your skin
And who will be hurt
If one bids you come in
Then leaves you the way that he found you?

You once grasped at straws
And then tossed them at me
You once wore a mask
So that no one would see
And when it had fallen
You raised up a plea
To the God who was dying above you.

But brother, I see you
Through eyes of a man
The tears that you give
I will clutch in my hand
For all of your life
I'll continue to stand
In the shadows, and silently love you.

Michael Wilson



Linda Alexander

The wet bottom of my jeans clung around my sandy ankles. I hated that feeling so I stopped to roll them past my knees. Rick flew by laughing and shouting something about beating me and I retorted, 'Who cares?!'

As soon as my pants were fixed I took off after him. He was far down the beach now. From this distance he looked like Malibu Ken! The moon made lights in his hair and it all could have been very romantic. Then he stopped and was studying something in the sand. Circling around a couple times with hands on hips, he motioned for me to hurry.

Running through dry sand is like trying to run through water; you can't get up any speed. Wet sand is firm so I hugged the edge of the waves where they foam to a stop and roll back out. Tide was out so there was quite a distance from where I ran to where he stood upon the beach. When I got even with him there was a huge tire track that led from the water right to the black blob at his feet. Strange, because they generally run in fours and generally don't drive out of the water and onto the beach. My friend urged me on. I thought of what it could be, (undoubtedly something slimy that crawled up on the beach to die) and decided dead or alive I wasn't going near.

Now there were a few people gathering to look and curiosity got the best of me. I inched up wary of sharp shiny teeth or long tendrils. There were none and the vast threatening

thing was its head that someone said could snap off my arm if I put it close enough. The shell was covered with moss and crustaceans and had nicks in it. Wrinkly and leather-like skin revealed its age. Every few minutes the neck would tighten up, the front flappers dig into the sand and then it would relax again.

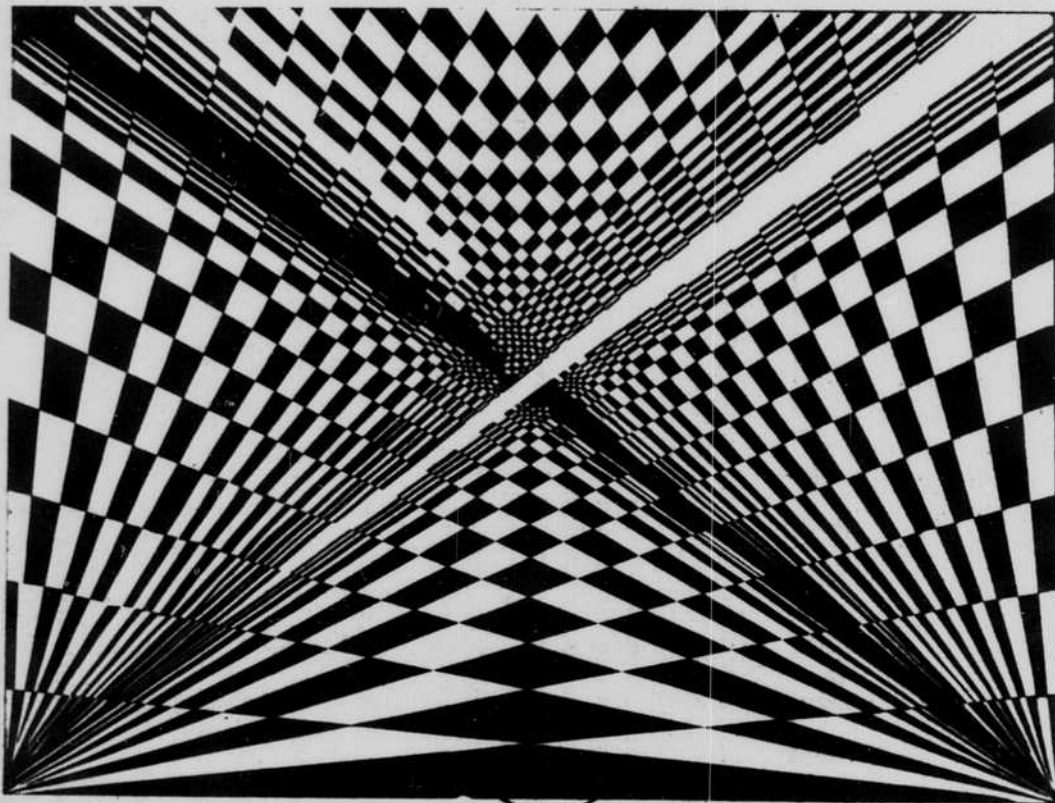
"Is it dying?" I whispered.

"No! She's laying her eggs," he whispered back.

We sat there for hours listening to the sea and the turtle's raspy breath. Eventually the people dispersed, leaving Rick and me and the turtle behind.

Rick put his arm around me a couple times but I couldn't take my eyes off the turtle. Now tears were streaming from her eyes and rolling down her face and neck. I was wondering if she knew the possibilities of her babies surviving or if it was just the straining that made her cry. When I thought she would surely have a heart attack she suddenly heaved herself out. Pushing mounds of sand with seemingly awkward flappers she buried her eggs. Then with an acknowledgment of us or a second thought of the eggs she turned with great effort and crawled back out into the dark sea.

Bambi Kelly



Christlane Wakim