



ALLISON CAMPBELL

Ampersand “per se.” Ampersand “and.”

Ampersands look like broken-legged number eights. Overweight question marks. Half pirates ready to arm-wrestle. Or round-backed babies finding out how, by pressing hands to floor, they can launch their feet up from the ground.

You dance across a floor constructed entirely of ampersands. You twirl and your skirt twirls and the ampersands expand themselves to keep up with your reach. When you leap, when you land the ampersands will be exactly at the level you left them. You keep time, but they allow you to keep it. You are light and ampersand is heavy. The music whispers, then picks back up.

Ampersand, a mouse, sneaks up around the corner of what would have been the last word and asserts itself like a smell, not pushy but unmistakably present.

Ampersand like smoke. Ampersand like the strings of a well-played violin. Ampersand, and the way you say it, leads me to believe you are hinting at something, even as you say goodbye.

The way one feels between a sleep’s dream and the dreaming

entered during real life [see DREAM]. The moment of eye-opening pause [see WAKE], when you recognize yourself, those seconds are ampersand. The everything between this and that.

It's clarity only that something has stopped [see entry on END] and something else is about to begin. Most of our ampersands are invisible, but some are marked by ceremony. Birth, birthdays, graduation, marriage, anniversaries, death—any time there is a marking of what has come before the moment and what is likely to follow can be considered a celebration of ampersand.

Someone wise may witness the ampersands operating all day, the moments between and connecting every observable moment. The space amid breaths that feels, if you catch it, the most like breathing.

The goal after the goal. And they lived happily every after and.