

pearl press



# ISSUE NO. 20: ELEGY

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Will Baldwin

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Julie Fowells

Grace McGory

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Ava Mack

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Cover image: Amanda BernSohn

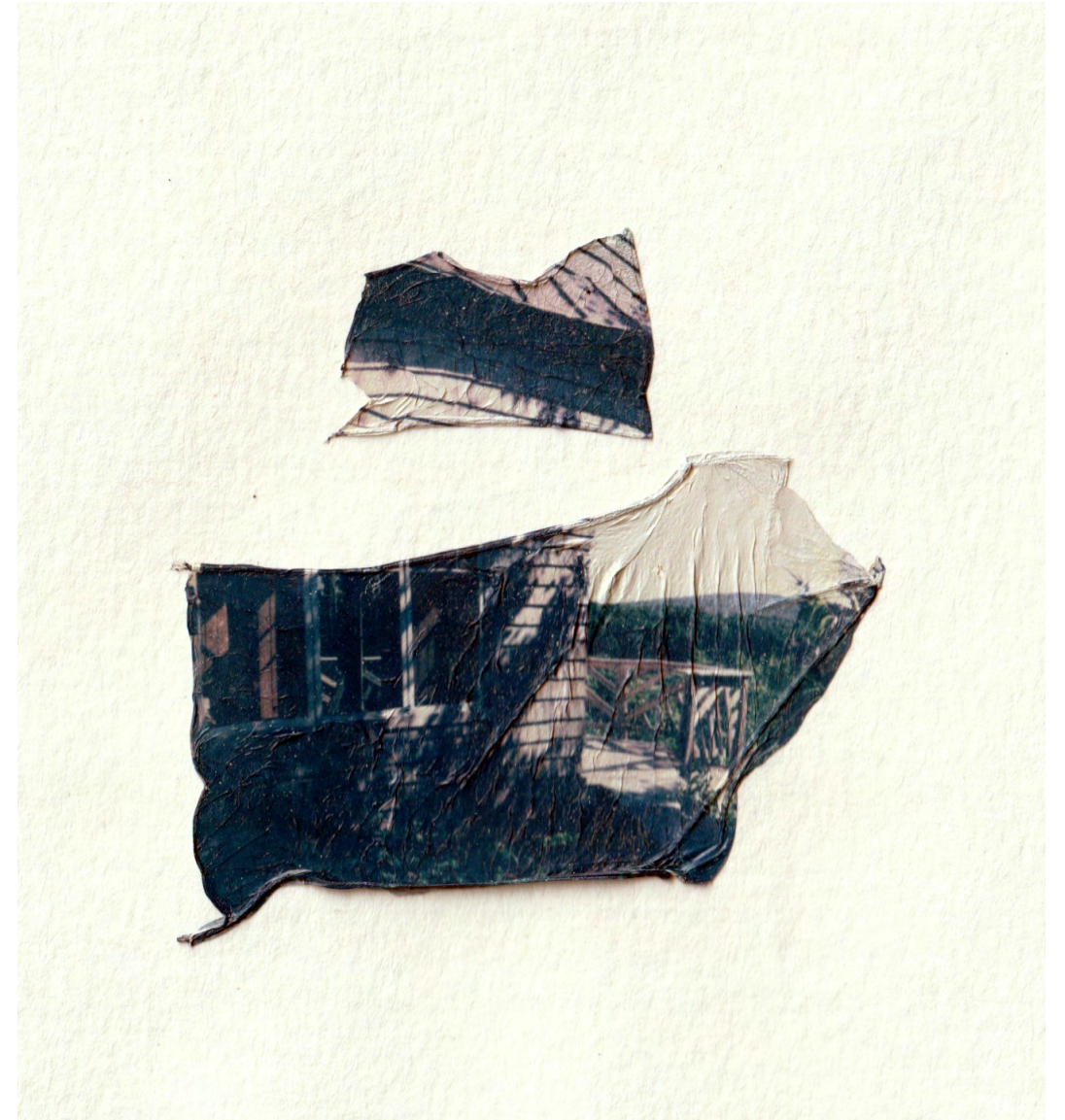
Curated by: Delilah Twersky



Mel Driving: Amanda BernSohn



PLACES I'VE BEEN WITH MY FATHER: Kaitlyn Yates



PLACES I'VE BEEN WITH MY FATHER: Kaitlyn Yates



The Lodge: Will Baldwin



Preserved Presence: Colleen Fox Breen

# CLOCKS

How was I to know that the living  
room of clocks told different times?

I learned how to fold a fortune teller  
at my grandparents' coffee table.

I sat cross-legged on the shag carpet,  
my sister on the recliner, the couch empty.

The grandfather clock sang its song  
down the hall, dinner, but I could not

Read its hands, only folded scratch  
paper with promises I prayed to.

Grandmother collected clocks, antique  
and analog; four on every wall.

My grandfather died on the empty  
couch next to the coffee table.

I saw him in his last days, unable  
to turn his head towards mine.

My grandmother told me he asked  
god for more time in his sleep.

The grandfather clock still sings,  
and I still do not know the time.

Courtney Heidorn



Thomas: Naomi Liechty





Pursed: Nanci Miltron Fitterman



Untitled: Nic Anselmo

# DO GRAPEFRUITS GROW ABOVE GROUND?

I remember the earth  
being tart and pink,

with the wind shuddering  
around my shoulders

like a shot dog; run over  
with so many rememberings

that the memory begins to bruise.  
So many empty breaths I didn't want

to take. So many hands looking for God  
inside of me. Digging into the rotten tree

with cut up fingers. *Where have you been,  
my Lord?* Where does god go when

I'm sleeping and my mother is in the next room,  
being killed? Her blood down the drain

like sun into grass. I remember  
the man who killed my mother

trying to wrestle a seed into the ground  
and how I begged for God to swallow him

whole. Take his salted eyes, take his sagging shoulders,  
take his woes and his troubles; grow a tree

I can remember. So that, one day, I can memorize  
the curves and the color of the bark and

the sap on my jeans can be a memory  
that is not a memory because it never dies.

Not here, not in the Louisiana heat, not

in the country that taught my mother

the way of burying her body above ground.

Jude Armstrong



Cyclamen #17: Julie Fowells



Water: Naomi Liechty

# A DISAPPEARING ACT

175 pounds even (on a good day)  
does not look like it should when  
measured in cellophane candies

in carnations *lip gloss* rose quartz in a pocket  
in earrings *sunshine* lazy susans in the yard  
in ivy *street signs* empty bottles of wine

technicolor time-killers meant to be  
only two things: briefly enjoyed and  
entirely gone

slumped against the wall with the legs  
sticking out, slouched like a gangly child  
there is the ghost of a person in that hot  
white corner, and he's the brightest thing  
in the room

encouraged to take, unsure if you should  
the becoming is born from the loss, a  
honeyed paradox ever-adjusting— a  
bit to the left. then fall out of sight. 175  
even (healthy weight for an adult man)

the pile is a portrait and  
the pile is dwindling and  
the pile is whole again and  
the pile is called ross. a

memoir by a man who had to watch  
as people stole pieces heedless of the  
disappearing act they created, the only  
art in the gallery they want you to steal,  
a grieving man's tiny agony,

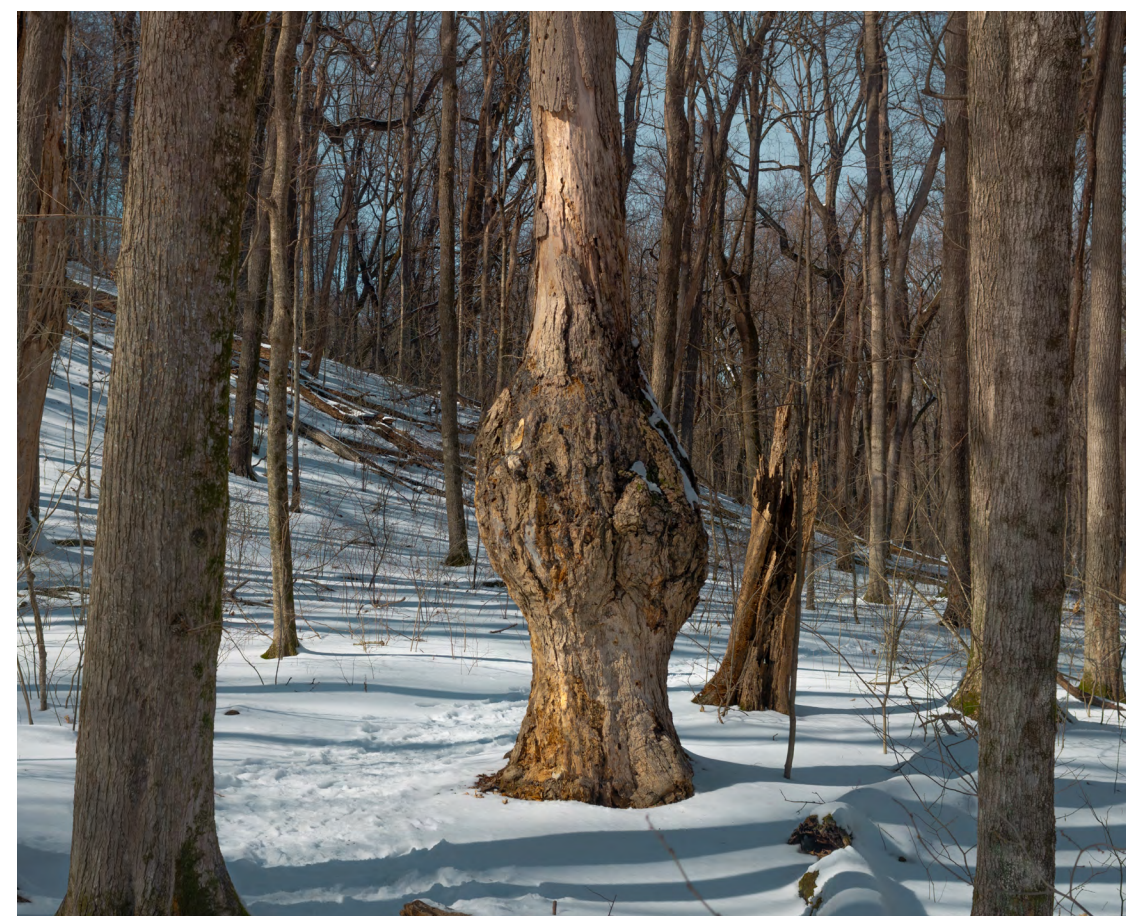
and if a perfect likeness takes  
your place did anything really change  
at all? count out the people who would  
be able to tell the difference. wonder  
if you are one of them.

taste pink gold green (a beating heart)  
know you are taking and becoming  
(all at once).

Grace McGory



Five Decades on the Coast: Elizabeth Hopkins



First and Final Winter: Will Baldwin



1976: Elizabeth Hopkins



Preserved Presence: Colleen Fox Breen





Moonrise, Brooklyn: Amanda BernSohn

# COONAMESSETT

*In memory of my grandmother on the third anniversary of her passing.*

You left some notes I stumbled across  
I don't know if they were meant for me.  
A few iterations each they said,  
*When you see a sunset, think of me.*

So westward I have tacked my gaze, but  
alas, how mystified I have been -  
nothing reminds me of you so well  
as the way the moldering foyer smells at The Coonamessett Inn.

A foyer no bigger than a phone booth, but  
big enough to be the musty waiting room  
for the next life. I thought for a moment I  
found you here in eternity's anteroom.

For a moment - dead in my tracks - I thought,  
let this be the next life I've stumbled into  
and let me see your burnished red head bobbing  
up from the parking lot and into view.

Come, come into the vestibule beside me  
and tell me it smells like home did even in  
a puritanical Podunk town like this  
where you never would have been caught dead in –

but caught you were and dead you are, and I don't  
get to choose what reminds me of you. I wish  
it was more to phone home to you about than  
some lacquered wood, but then I realize this:

You're not a sunset distant.  
You're alive here in this room.  
The smell does more than remind  
me, it resurrects you in

this place you've never seen, never been to  
our wedding rehearsal dinner venue.  
Here I was, thinking you would miss it.  
Here you are, waiting for me

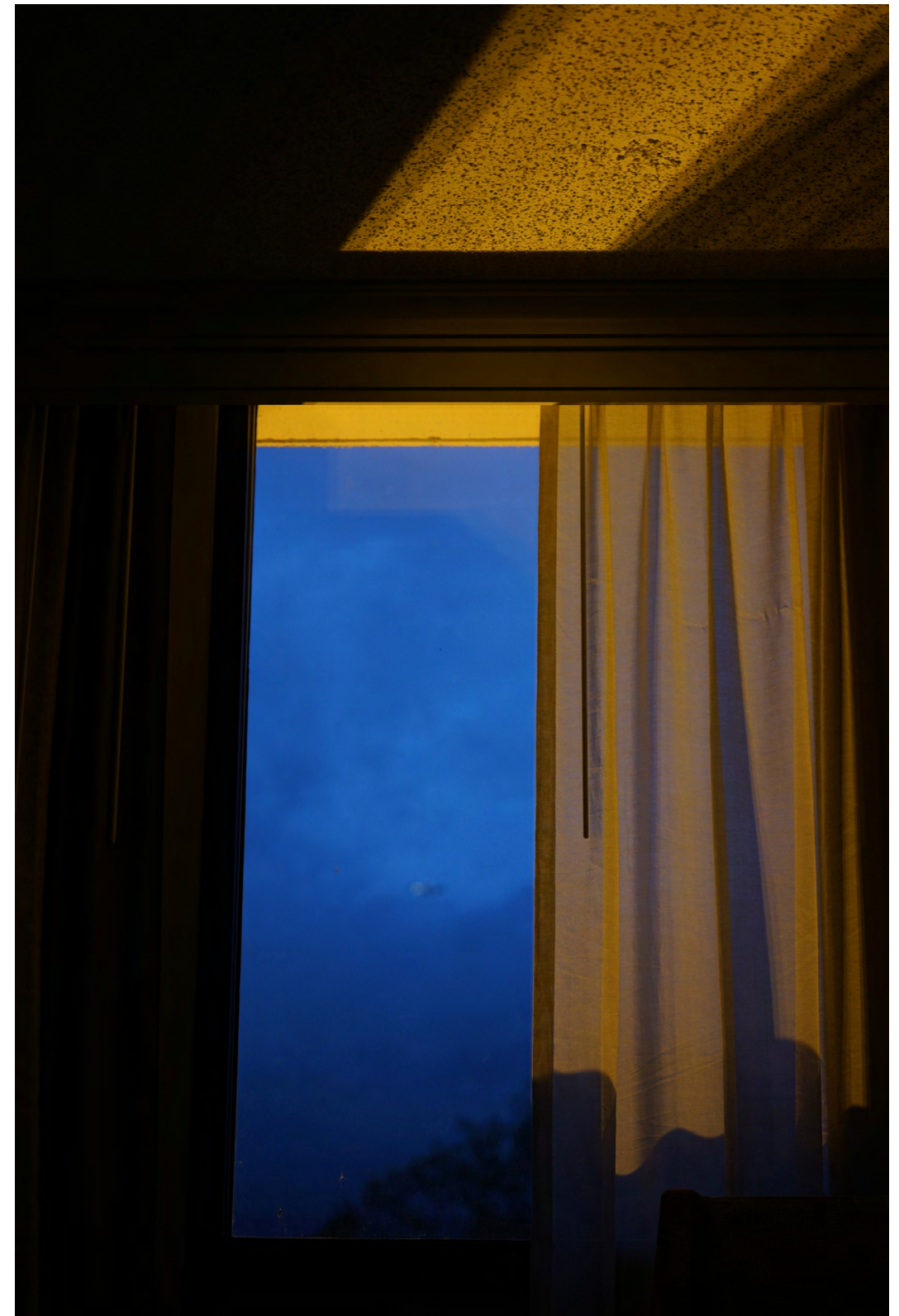
Ava Mack



Suz 2: Naomi Liechty



Moon: Naomi Liechty



Untitled, Hotel: Amanda BernSohn

# ELEGY FOR EINSTEIN'S BRAIN

My founding father / Albert Einstein / ground zero for me  
For him that was Ulm / Final Destination New Jersey / where his brain was stolen by  
the pathologist despite the stipulation that it should not be studied / for Einstein was  
not fond of fanboys / whose fervent adoration might find reason to keep his body parts  
as souvenirs / a relic for the Church of Science

The pathologist's wife was grossed out / by the human remains in the pantry / she said  
she'd deep-six the brain / if he didn't move it by a given deadline / careful what you  
wish for, the pathologist's ex-wife / if you think you can compare / to Nobel Prize Lau-  
reate Albert Einstein

For thirty years the thief kept the brain / segmented into two-hundred-and-forty parts /  
rehomed into two jars / pickled in cellulose / in a cinder box / under a beer cooler / in a  
basement / in the American mid-west

His neighbour & friend William S. Burroughs / in gross misconduct of his professional  
duties / never wrote a single poem about it / and wasted words in poetic malpractice /  
bragging to his buddies about it / Einstein's brain / in the pathologist's ex-wife's ex-hus-  
band's basement / just next door from him

The thief took the brain to California / where all celebrities end up dead or alive / there  
was a study / most findings were discredited / for lack of academic rigour / but the  
fascinating conclusion that stands was that / Einstein's brain was in fact / abnormally  
large.

Beatriz Seelaender

Thank you for reading.  
For more updates check @pearl.press on Instagram.

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