



*One Petal Row:
Jaimie Gusman.*



Tinfish Retro Series No. 8



*Here we go, here we go
The sun and the snails on the snow*

*Here we go, here we go
The masts and the rails down below*

*Here we go, here we go
With one from the one petal row*

Season

I put on the glove set sent from my mother. My hands are something like a frozen pudding pop; it's winter, unaware of time but bound by it: I am a sucker for the swirl of any claims to be distinct. I push the pudding pop through its wrapper and although this method keeps the hands warm and alive the sides of the pudding pop tend to stick to the sides of the wrapper, losing precious pudding. Therefore some skin. So I approach the pop with scissors, cutting the paper tip to reveal the cold delight beneath. I lick winter's ribs like my own spine is missing an integral part of movement. *Where shall we go today*, these gloves gesture. So many times I tried to leave the wintery dome only to find the doors never opened, the shoes never laced up. It is a cruel joke to be paralyzed in the mind. But a gift is a glove I suppose, even if taken from a strange hand. As if to say *I want to be here, I want you to want this*. In this way the gloves are really the perfect gift—the absolute disguise for a daughter. It is the answer to winter's sexless coat, why the snow covers everything but can't commit to the act, year-round. Like my mother asks for "her" gloves back, nods at them. Like his aching thighs around my knuckles forcing the thaw. Like I took the pudding pop right out of my mouth to reveal that the only magic holding us all together was a stick and the memory of feeling safely tucked between air and a plastic tomb.

Explode, expunge, but hold on tight

We woke tangled in wet dream.
I was wearing that sweater and you were undone,
sewing your skin to my thread.

Anyjar a spill, ship a swell.
All I remember is our rocking
was in sync, like a hagfish's five hearts.

The problem with our drowning is panic
reaches the surface too quickly.
We waded, then scattered from each other

tearing your skin, leaving me bare-chested
but speckled with goose bumps and needlework.
Of all the hurdles, the hardest was to gather our things.

(Our eyes met over the ocean but who could tell water from glass?)
(Our arms became baskets to carry sheets of paper, our photographs.)
(Our ears resisted waterlog; we maintained parallel swimming paths.)

There was disagreement in my thinking
that we would reach for the same possessions.
What makes us different from our extensions

is that they are supposed to remain outside of the jar.
But we both grabbed at the emptiness—never enough
for two—as though we would go our separate ways

as some do after a flood or a drought or a miracle ends.
You planned this shipwreck, this idea of breakdown and buildup.
But I accused him of planning the escape.

Anyjar, have you lost interest in our home? we ask
as our throats struggle for air, struggle for a language
we can agree upon using in moments of distress, of instress.

The silence has been putting us to sleep for years.
The roof tiles became lifeboats, but I didn't expect you
to float one over and cradle the Anyjar under your arm.

On genealogy

On his knees he was begging
Anyjar who lectured us on the art of collecting:
the bronze plated arm, the porcelain lid, the tin sheets,
and the glass eyes.
Scatter them about.
See where they gravitate.

You can tell by the curved lip—this jar is a bastard
getting in our business,
slamming doors
—there is no father (worth a know)—
keeping them shut.

(Someone must have left Anyjar
in the snow, on a doorstep,
or wrapped in newspaper afloat a river.
Someone must have stolen the keys
to an attic, where they stored the bones of a mother.)

*Remind me why we need fathers,
why we feel the need to replace them
or change and not erase them?*

For example,
you and I have been romantic since we met,
discussed musical instruments as we chewed pen caps.
We were shouting at each other, a road between us—
the punctuation for travel.

This new vocabulary is how you walked me home.
How the walking has sored us, has given us nicknames
to live by, to live up to *sweetie pie* *the apple of my existence* *the executor of will*
bitch-wife *bacon-maker, baby fryer* *tit-licker*
shirt-stainer *shit strainer* *love of my life*

And now we only speak in actions,
because *if you feel what is inside that thing*
you do not call it by the name by which it is known.
Everybody knows that by the way they do when they are in love

Things are occurrences:

<i>open to bake</i>	<i>blinding is as blinding doesn't</i>	<i>pull, make go away</i>
<i>kill/ejaculate</i>	<i>work hard, remove burning</i>	<i>wash with all of her</i>
<i>covet to clean</i>	<i>evidence you are waking</i>	<i>is ready, open for eating</i>

(The results are often displayed in charts or written as narratives.)

On his knees he was begging.
I was there with his kneecaps.
Pathetic lovers, Anyjar contends
there is nothing between these two but a three.
A structure built by that which falls apart.

Later, we are instructed as the action of construction:

Line up against the wall.	<i>Are we being measured?</i>
Two convicts guilty as ever.	<i>Command that we close our eyes.</i>
We shut up, reach for each other.	<i>Bang! Bang. Bang,</i>

I feel his hand jump. Mine still.
We don't blow that easily, our bodies bound in rosy glue

but mind-fucked by the position of a few words.

My own father would be running for the door.

The grandfather paradox

When Anyjar gets mad
the earth gets low on herself,
stuffs the dress in her mouth.
Nervous habits are acquired
from years of erosion.

All other affects require
the tongue rolling over the lace
covered roses, a classic embroidery.
I wore the same, as I prepared
for my own eruption as formal disguise.

Like a pewter fork
she slits each bud bloody.
Bouquet on the counter,
apron soaked with delicious flowers.
Anyjar on table as vase holds it all in.

The earth feeds under our feet.
While we eat our meals, I think
we must find them, the Creators
of all if all we are to do is wander.
Lover chews, wonders how.

I try not to break the dishes awhile
or tear the rug to rind.

Madness is transferrable by air—
any space is exposure.

He coughs in the corners,

folds his lungs in leniency.

He thinks I'm making a joke
by making a joke out of choking.

Some days our pains breathe too easily—
if you can imagine being still for hours.

I am unable to count or measure time.

We fog the glass, write our names
with fingers only to cross them out.

Our gloves cover up our temporality.

But for the Anyjar life is best

without wingspan, without wind.

In a secret telepathic conversation

Lover and I decide in a moment
that we must know where we came from.

And by doing so we are willing to lose.

We drew up the plans with pencils
and protractors and thought of translating
these two dimensional images as an easy task.
But there was a period of revision, of taking
away and re-placing, of argument and agreement.

This was difficult to do with two, and became
distracting to do with three.
Although all our books spoke of the necessity of a synthesis,
of a third voice in the process of composition,
conception seemed like a singular idea.

And so the thing was built, a two-seater
and a cup holder (extra-large, per request).
It was made of recyclables, of others' goods
and some of our own replaceables.
The rings those things left behind are ours.

By the time we finished, the sky was not ready
so we decided to take a nap inside the thing.
And for a while we felt like a family,
three herrings in a neatly threaded net—
how many others were asleep?

We were trying to find the first woman,
the first man, and the first idea
to come between them, to find that idea
and force upon it a mysterious death.
But the garden was empty.

Perhaps we needed to travel further.

But where will I find you?

The two lovers ask *when we wake up*

what will become of us?

Perhaps we will be, forever.

The statue was here before.
It was cemented in sand,
made from its own memory.
It may belong to us all.
The sand disappears
& the sea replaces our
one petal row.
Today you looked limp,
letting the anchors fall
to your feet, turning ocean
floor to garden

Can you see me?

Picking roses
for our funerals,

I am always cultivating.

so we begin to grow back in.

Do you remember the hotels in and out of them old luggage
scrapping walls with our thumbnails
leaving a pillow—no money for a tip
Anyjar filled with change—we are mobile as well.
The constant *do something*,
the jar demands so much already.

*

Picking up after this thing on the couch
makes me aware of my composition

(the one who sleeps the soundest
but monitors my sleep).

*

He manages to let blame manifest in a backpack,
to become a river
swollen with sentimentals:
a braided rope, a picture of our mothers,
a musical instrument—
these things only half-work.

*

The Anyjar is not the other half.
The Anyjar is not even a part of.
The Anyjar is not an invisible point.
The Anyjar is not a remarkable dot.
The Anyjar is not anything not all at all.
The Anyjar is not a beginning or an end.
The Anyjar is not a negative or positive of that.

Father had you me in mind when you met the earth for the first time?

Father had you me had you minded me the earth was first when I was in you

on the ship you crossed the sea in the wind

*never get to me,
never get to me.*

On repetition

We playback our reactions in the bedroom.
Hand goes there on a scrunched up face.
Other hand goes here in bucket seat of the hip.

At this point in the book our house is roof-deep in water (ruins the book) the jar cannot contain it we have searched for its family for ours our regions are deep but is not religion the paper fray mold from the water has spread You ejaculate I exterminate (or attempt to) We come back *let's try this again* On our mattress is an album, some pictures, some words, some pasts which we think we gain by watching our tongues roll around a simple bedsheet the prop a good show how many times our neighbors watched or let them

put in the tape, still own a VCR.

The water has dried up— a miracle / we own such a thing—
we've been gone for months, but time is arranged also
by memory, by what we might mistake for memorization ("the most uncreative act") /

factoid: shallow water blackout
can occur in a water bed
on a rocky surface
i.e. a coral reef
i.e. the moon ponds of the moon
or imagine your sister
went diving with her father
and almost drowned
had an anxiety attack
imagine the fish were hysterical
as she moonwalked
the ocean floor
not with a dance instructor
or your father
but a man no one knew
but when the story was replayed
your father was on the deck
absently thinking
about fishing
about how many hooks
were left in the tackle box
there were as many as 3000
in any given ocean plot

But the memory fizzed,
creating those fuzzy grey lines
between blackness and empty image.

Do you want to fool around?
He hits the TV,
I think we need an upgrade.

I think I understand the Anyjar
is not only a decorative or an alembic
but a systemic approach to the epistemological discovery of collective remembrance.

For instance, I was born underwater.
My muscles recall
how to catch a starfish,
how to live below a ship, and not breathe.

On how to perform chiromancy

To modernize the Anyjar you mustn't make it new you must make a stunning replica of a replica then destroy that replica of a replica using an uncommon weapon such as the hammerhead shark or the frayed bathrobe tie that keeps one's breasts to one's chest you must not use glue to repair the Anyjar because the world is not beyond repair but is not ready to be stuck or unstuck for that matter it is not about manners the way you lift the Anyjar to the light which might be interpreted as invasive (as a super hero power structure) or to hide the Anyjar under your dress (as to expose it to some x-rated film) or to diagnose the Anyjar (as to poke and wonder) but it is about respecting the angles because you see from a distance the Anyjar might be tall and thin and as you move closer as you want to take the beaker into your hands put one palm on one side and the other palm on the other side you will find that the Anyjar will remove your skin completely as you shake it as you scream for it to tell you where its hiding your skin the Anyjar will notice what you cannot but is trying really *trying* to be a new thing for the sake of breaking what is already broken the Anyjar will open you will breathe you will be distracted by what is inside and suddenly the Anyjar will shut and as you look down you can see your hands are now stuck inside yet you are holding one palm on one side and one palm on another.

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The Tinfish Retro Series began in April; here's a rundown:

April. *Say Throne*, by No'u Revilla, 5.5 × 8.5, 16 pp. \$3.

May. *Tonto's Revenge*, by Adam Aitken, 4 × 6, 32 pp. \$3.

June. *The Primordial Density Perturbation*, by Stephen Collis, 5 × 11, 12 pp. \$3.

July. *Mao's Pears*, by Kenny Tanemura, 8 × 8, 28 pp. \$3.

August. *Yellow/Yellow*, by Margaret Rhee, 8 × 5, 24 pp. \$3.

September. *Ligature Strain*, by Kim Koga, 5 × 6, 12 pp. \$3.

October. *Yours Truly & Other Poems*, by Xi Chuan (trans. Lucas Klein), 8 × 8, 28 pp. \$3.

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