

THE END IS THE BEGINNING

ISSUE.15

GINNING IS THE _____

yanyun chen ~ salamander



WHAT IS AN EGG

by Juli Crockett

Very nearly but not exactly or entirely

Very near but not quite

Almost but not quite

Nearly not happening

Yet happened

No longer possessed

No longer known

Taken away or beyond reach or attainment

Denied

Unable to find the way

The opposite of dismember is remember

What is an egg?

Reward

Rudiments

To retain in the memory

GET IT ON

by Michael Kearney

The end of times – my times. And its fucking frustrating because I suspect I never began: missed the beginning; played it safe and never actually started doing what I always knew I wanted to do. Can't see much of a future unless I am willing to lose what's bad for me. What's worse: possessing what kills you or never holding what moves you?

Ah – this is such shit – I have to SCREAM!!!

Where are the good lines?

Why won't they come?

I have tried to woo them.

I am failed!!!

Exodus Exodus Exodus

*Remove myself, cap a bottle,
remove myself from this seductive suburban bliss of easy food and hundreds of
channels.*

I need to fall into a ravine and scrape my way out to find the edges.

I must

to cling on to, in order to grasp, what I want me to really be.

My duality,

blue-collar-hockey-guy & pseudo-scholar-artist

is taking its toll.

GET IT ON

*Should I choose?
Do I have to?
Who is imposing this?*

*I must become a weasel to get both before it all crashes in upon me;
and it will,
it always does,
and must.*

Even the universe will crash back in on itself – so I have been informed.

But this is crap – Max Frost was right: “Nothing can change the shape of things to come.”

*So I sit and shrink in place.
Better off to sedate my mind with situation comedies,
booze and whatever I can get my small hands on
than to face the possibility of maybe being able to
do something.*

*The end of the day,
the sunset,
marks the onset,
the beginning
of my nightly debaucheries.*

GET IT ON

*Only in drugged,
alcoholic hazes
can I gain release
from what I was programmed to be
and resort
to my illicit nature.*

As I was in the beginning, before being encultured, so I will be in the end:

*a lout
a glutton;*

*ah – a burger and garlic ships!
Breath be gone to hell!
Yeehaw!*

a lush

*Go on, kiss me Kate, or whatever they decided to call you;
I have a beautiful blend of ale, burger, and garlic vomit –
a culinary delight.*

*We rarely perceive what others perceive of ourselves.
I wonder, just how intellectual men with
a librarian-ponytail-glasses-pullout-from-the-blowjob-and-spew-on-the-glasses-fetish
actually are when you get to know them?*

The End is the Beginning is the _____

by Alice Renex Tay



Love
the beginning
to an end,
nowhere in sight

Freedom
the beginning
of an end,
that sheer weight

Gaze, fixed
Words, lost
Desires, locked

Silence, that silence

Relentlessly,
Like a drumbeat

The end is merely the beginning,
is an end nowhere in sight

IT'S THE WRONG KIND OF PL

Are you just a mirror standing in front of me?

Am I blind? Can my eyes really see?

— Ozzy Osbourne

Is this the day to kiss her?
said the man, standing next to me
watching her stand

dressed in white —
hair bound,
waiting; awaiting time.
To walk down in line
— vow away her line.

Perhaps he always knew
the day would show;
even if up she did not.
Can one be said to be walking,
if already walked down.

But how I did wish he would kiss her.

ACE TO BE THINKING OF YOU

by Jeremy Fernando

*and then there was light
and so there was beauty
and there was all
and so there was loyalty
and then there was rest
and so there was always
and then there was turn
and so there was right
and then there was remnant
and so there was chance
and then there was time
and so there was extent
and then there was reach
and so there was touch
and then there was pull
and so there was nearness
and then there was safety
and so there was shelter*

*and then there was rest
and so there was use
and then there was more
and so there was joking
and then there was laughing
and so there was feeling
and then there was loving
and so there was you
and then there is you*

FRAGMENTS
OF A LITTLE LOVE
STORY...
OR, DES MORCEAUX
D'UNE PETITE
HISTOIRE

DES MORCEAUX
D'UNE PETITE HISTOIRE
D'AMOUR...

Je t'aime

...

Pourquoi?

Il doit y avoir une raison?

Il n'y en a pas?

Je ne sais pas...

... Moi non plus

...

C'était par hasard...

Je sais...

Tu me comprends, n'est-ce pas?

Bien sûr...

Je t'aime ; c'est assez, oui?

Oui...

...

Mais ça me fait peur...

Pourquoi ?

Tu peux dire qu'il
ne va pas disparaître,
par hasard?

...

FRAGMENTS
OF A LITTLE LOVE
STORY...

I love you

...

Why?

Must there be a reason?

Is there none?

I don't know...

... Me neither

...

It just happened...

I know...

You get me, don't you?

Of course...

I love you; that's enough right?

Yeah...

...

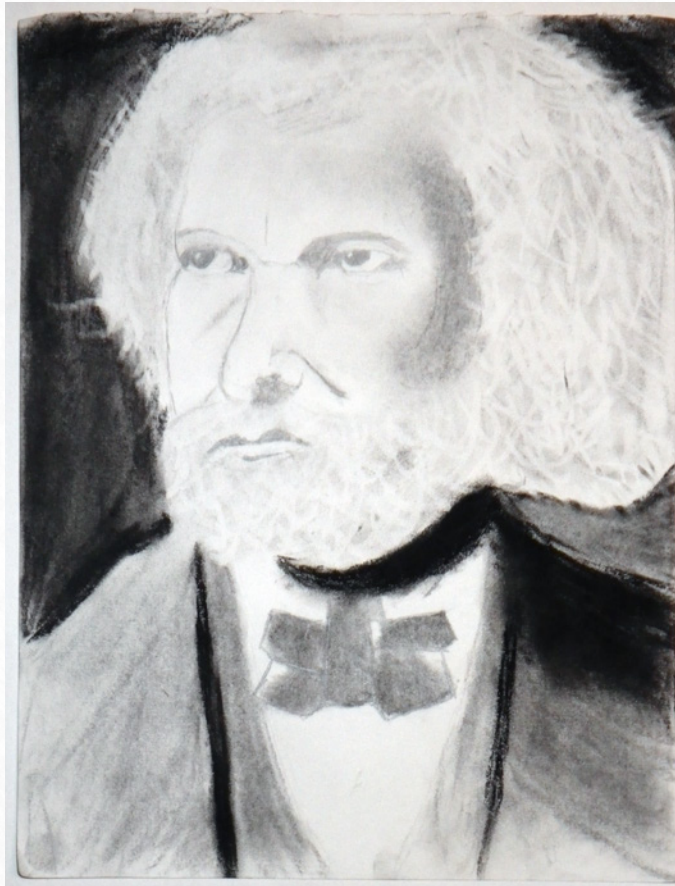
But it scares me...

Why?

Because
who's to say
it won't just vanish?

...

FRAGMENTS OF A
LITTLE LOVE STORY
OR, DES MORCEAUX
D'UNE PETITE
HISTOIRE D'AMOUR by Pavan Mano



michael kearney jr - **Frederick Douglas**

Some Footnotes. Excerpted from Void Creation: Theater and the Faith of Signifying Nothing, Atropos Press

by Juli Crockett

In the beginning...*

* “Real beginnings are like a fanfare of trumpets, like the first notes of a jazz tune, cutting short tedium, making for continuity...” [Sartre, Nausea] The majority of people may consider the beginning for a play to be the lowering of the house lights, a temporary blackout, and then the illumination of the stage lights. There are plenty of cases in which this order of things is violated, to sometimes comic, ironic and dramatic effect, and, in effect, if the Quixote in this case was in fact on stage from

the time the audience entered, then the play has, in effect, already begun. Struggling to begin, as we shall see, is a recurring theme of this play. Every theatre production can be viewed as a philosophical and ethical treatise on the theater. By creating theater, the authors are saying that this must exist; that this is the theater and the theater is this. To create is to choose to put into the world that which has not yet been, identifying all else as that which it isn't (its not) and thereby referencing everything in one gesture; the creative gesture, which is the welcoming of the gaze.

In the end...**

** The way in which the life story is told is replete with “beginnings that are decided upon ever anew, “ [Schirmacher, ‘Human Flaw’] as each story, even posthumously, is ever engaged in the process of revealing itself and being impacted by new information, new consequences, new understandings, and new discoveries. For humankind, creativity is a way of life, it is

the very truth, process, and the the of life itself. Life is the act of creating; the art of living, living itself this art, this act, in which life produces us and we produce life. Unavoidable and inevitable, of course, one can be in denial of it, suffer through and from it, and rebel against it. The artist acts as a channel of their own work, with the work's “true meaning” understood in a liquid/gaseous, transmuting/evolving state, not a solid/set form; the meaning of things permutational and changing over time. The artist/author of a work is not by any means in possession of its ultimate meaning. They cannot be because the work is incomplete until it is received and built upon, and even then it has not found its resting place, for there is truly nowhere to rest one's head, as they say. Great works and ideas, like great questions, are those that can be mined and mined again, possessed and possessing, enthusiastically engaged, again and again, never ending up in the same place twice at the end of the ride. A Choose Your Own Adventure book with page numbers ever changing so that it is, in fact, impossible to come to a single, same, conclusion.

FAT FUR

written by Wesley Leon Aroozoo
illustrations by Ho Shengjuan

FAT FUR

To be sterilised is not the end and nor do I try to reassure myself by fooling you that it's some kind of fresh beginning. When you have nowhere to go, it doesn't matter whether you're beginning anew or reaching the end of your journey. Now, I wouldn't say I am happy. How would I describe how I feel?

I feel...

Okay, there is space.

Lots of space.

Too much space?

No. Space to breathe.

I can breathe. That is good. Breathing is good. Space is good.

Floating. Yes!

I feel like I'm floating. Floating in the middle and to be honest, I enjoy being here in the middle by myself. No looking forward and feeling afraid. No looking back in regret. A comfortable place of balance in the middle where it's all me, awaiting my turn at the vet in Tampines with Shamsul and his fringe.

Sometimes I get irritated with him – just sitting down; idling by himself, with his stupid-looking curly fringe swaying back and forth as the desk fan rotates.

Wait.

Why is it so cold here?

My fat fur is not doing its job. I know I'm not the most attractive feline. It would be nice for life to at least have one thing. Just let me be warm.

Pregnant? No. Why would I want to get pregnant? Do

you see a line of eligible cats queuing up behind me? They are avoiding my non-existent queue like I'm the slow cashier at the supermarket who has trouble with even opening the register. That being said, there's nothing wrong with me, my registers are wide open. Just, no business.



It's not really my choice. No room for any kittens. In the four room HDB flat I'm in, there's me, Shamsul and his sister Nurul whom I share a room with, a room for his parents and the Master bed room for Nenek.

Nenek swears that when her right hand is itchy it means that money is coming to her, whilst if her left hand is so, it means that money is leaving her. She also gets emotional when eating really good Mee Rebus.

Soon, I'll be like Salmon, a white squinted Persian living two doors down – the first to get sterilised. He is a Malay feline whom is well taken care of by a slender Malay lady and her expat husband who plays in the local league. He is always wearing his team jersey with his name proudly ironed-on. I think no one can bring him or her self to tell him that nobody has a clue which team he belongs to. That's about everyone I know in the neighbourhood. Until the day a stray cat walked past my door. It was skinny, white and patchy. He leapt onto the edge of the window – right onto my comfy spot. He had these distinct sharp ears that seem to be watching you. It almost felt like he had four eyes. He spoke first.

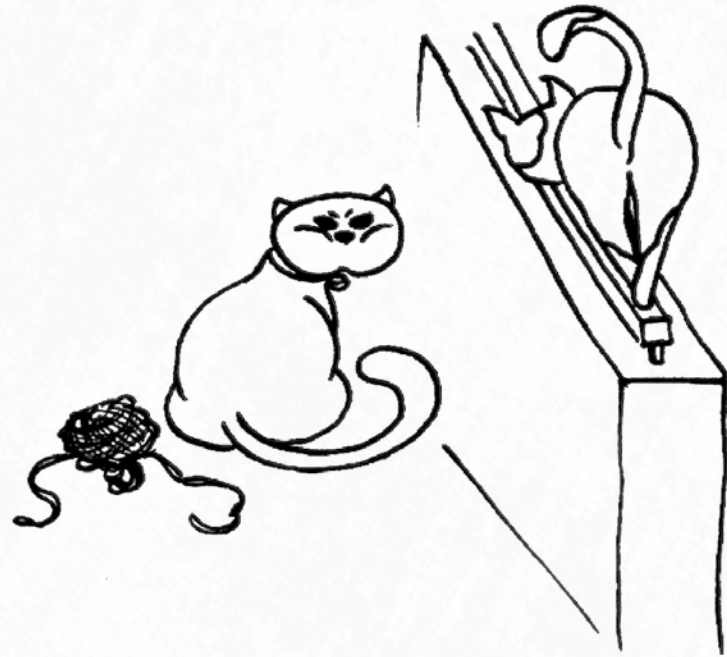
“Hello you.”

Interacting with this stray blew my mind. Not only did he not have a home to live in, but he was Chinese. He said his name was Ah Ren. I'd never known cats could be non-Malay. Bam! Ah Ren just flipped my world upside down. And shared so much knowledge of things he had experienced in the world. How he escaped from the SPCA when he was only two weeks old. Was living the hard life on Tampines Street 12. How he kept it real and how it's all about respect on the streets.

As he captivated my heart with all these tales, I felt like I was ballooning. He must have thought that I'm some obese cat who just stays at home, ignorant of the world – who is getting fatter by the minute. Which is true but wait, maybe If I licked my fur, it would take the attention off me. No. Maybe, If I just mewed a tune.

“Why do you mew a tune?” he asked.

“What? Me? Yeah. It's the theme song to Who's The Boss.” I answer.



“What’s that?”

“Television show. Tony Danza.” I reply.

“Why do you mew that?”

“Oh, you know.”

“No, I don’t” he replied seriously.

I must have sounded like a total stay-at-home cat.

“I like your fur” he says without flinching.

“It looks soft,” he adds.

I wave my fat paw hypnotically in front of him.

“Anything the matter?” he responds with concern.

“Sorry, just felt like stretching.”

Ah Ren is not blind.

The veterinarian finally came into the consultation room. He looked like he dealt with many cats before. How do I know that? Well, he didn’t need help with each finger. The surgical gloves slipped on effortlessly.

“Doctor, can I double check that it costs twenty dollars to sterilise a female cat?” asks Shamsul.

The veterinarian replies, “No, it’s forty dollars”

“Oh. I only brought twenty with me”.

“Oh ...” replied my charming knight.

“That’s twenty more than what I have”.

Luckily for Shamsul's face, the veterinarian then explained that the procedure would take some time, so he had ample time to withdraw the cash. Shamsul leaves the consultation room as the veterinarian goes to a clipboard and glances through.

Now, I've been reading up about sterilisation and know every step of what would happen. First, let me explain to you the advantages of sterilisation. The most obvious one being the prevention of unwanted litters. Honestly, I'm in no favour of having little ones. Who am I going have them with any way? Ah Ren? That would be a joke. Rebel cat like him, I'm sure he has many beautiful lady felines out there ready to pounce on him. Although, he didn't say he did. But, let's take it as a given. On the day we spoke he didn't mention anything about a girlfriend though. The only thing he did was sniff me. Twice.

He sniffed me twice.

Is that normal?

Is that flirting?

Does that mean anything? It's just a sniff.

No, two sniffs.

Two sniffs. Two sniffs.

I loved those sniffs ...

No, wait.

God, I must have smelt like kitty litter. But, even if I smelt great, so what? Do I go and search for him on Tampines street 12? And say I find him. Then what? Have kittens with me Ah Ren?

"Nurse, please prepare the sedatives" orders the veterinarian.

Reality check – he’s probably sterilised too. He’s so cool and calm. I read that sterilised cats are usually calmer than others. Wait a second. The needle the nurse is holding looks a lot bigger than what Google said.

Get a hold of yourself. Come on. You should be happy. Being sterilised lets you live longer, healthier and with less diseases. But, Ah Ren is gorgeous. Doesn’t matter, he’s probably sterilised so there’s no point. He does have lovely eyes though.

“Hold her down,” says veterinarian as he approaches with the sedatives.

Wait. Hold on. I’m thinking.

The nurse asks, “Do we need to tip the ear after?”

“She’s not a stray,” replies the veterinarian confidently.

Great. My ears won’t look they went through a

teenage rebel phase.

“Relax, kitty” says the nurse serenely.



I could feel the needle finding it’s way through my fat fur, then slowly pricking on the surface of my – Wait. Ah

Ren's ears are not tipped. They stared at me like four eyes. That mean's he's not – In that split second, images of Ah Ren sniffing me by the window flash in my mind, out of control.

“Nurse, get hold of that cat” the veterinarian commands.

I dodge the arms reaching out for me, jump and escape through the window left ajar and sprint off. The neighbourhood I ran through looked the same, block after block – matching the loop of thoughts overtaking my mind. Great. Here I am running like an idiot. All because Ah Ren's ears are perfectly in place and he is eligible to have kittens with me. Strangely, it feels therapeutic. As I run, I try to match my breathing with the coordination of my steps and breathing.

Red man. I stop and pant, exhausted. If I take a slow jog back, I could reach in twenty minutes. It would be like a funny incident of how the nervous cat ran away and then returned. The vet would probably have a good laugh with Sham-

sul about it and they would continue with my sterilisation. I hope they didn't allow another cat or dog to cut my queue. You know what? I think they probably did.

I feel like I'm falling. I don't like feeling this way. My floating is all gone.

I feel like I have started something. A beginning. An ending.

I don't like endings. I feel heavy. Confused. What have I done?

The green light flickers.

As I retrace my steps back to the veterinary, the neighbourhood seems a little different. I don't really remember running through these alleys. I smell pee next to the green dustbin.

Speaking of pee, Nenek shares with me repeatedly how Shamsul went for a medical check-up a year ago and instead of peeing on the litmus paper and placing it in the transparent plastic bag, he innocently took a pee into the transparent bag with the litmus paper floating inside and handed it back to the nurse. It was a bag that was about to burst with pee. Funny how some stories are hilarious the first time you hear it but on consecutive hearings make you feel like vomiting.

Finding my way through the winding alleys as the sun set, I am strangely not feeling afraid. I turn right. I know what I did was wrong. But for the time it lasted, it felt liberating. I felt alive. I turn left down the narrow alley.

I hear a mew.

No, It can't be.

There it is again.

I take slow meek steps towards it. Could it really be? With it's back facing me, busily rummaging through thrash. It is skinny, white and patchy – just how I remembered.

He turns, immediately stops mewing to the theme song of Who's The Boss and hides his embarrassment so suavely.

“Hello you” he says gallantly with a half eaten chicken bone hanging from it's mouth as I feel like I'm floating again.

Floating in a space that smells of pee though.

AN HOMAGE, OF SORTS

by Michael Kearney

*It begins with a scrape,
 upon a scrap.
Too much pressure on the point,
 tears in the fabric.*

Revelations

degenerate oligarchy tyrannical

*It's a Machiavellian form
 of writing.*

*All art,
 the arts of state,
 the state of arts,
 begin in the void.*

*Artisans we all.
A charcoal revived sake jug revives my vibe –
 I will riff on it.*

*The void of my creation is the void within.
There's something down there that I just can't get to,
 but it wants to come-up,
 come-out.*

*I try to help, but am useless;
A Bukowski pencil and a bar napkin –*

*the tools, fine tools,
 operated by a fool.*

*It will have to work itself out –
I am but pulleys and levers
 writing blindly:
 wondering at realities that unfold; then
fold-up and move-on –
 never to be read again.
Cesare Borgia emerged from the Papal void
 to be swallowed-up by the swamp.*

*My void, hmm, wish it would swallow me –
let me swim through it –
view its reefs –
marvel at what it might hold, what it hides,
 but it rejects me,
 pushes me off,
 teases me,
 leaves me alone to finish off.*

*Why, why –
The Muse of the void does this to me.
I know not why, nor do I know how,
 She pulls-off Her craft –
 But I thank Her for Her shadowy gifts.*

tan jingliang - **blue gates**

**ONOMICHI, HIROSHIMA
OCTOBER 2014 (EARLY AUTUMN)**





