

# The Blue Route

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## It Was Late Upon the Eve

After W. H. Auden's *As I Walked Out One Evening*

by: Robert Alderman

It was late upon the eve  
Of an embittered autumn night,  
And the timorous leaves did tremble  
Under the eaves of a paling light,

Casting her looming shadow  
Where the nightline met the trees,  
A darkling walk I took alone  
Surmising all I'd seen,

When I heard my lover's ghost  
Rustle a song in the leaves:  
"I'll love you 'til the morning,  
But after? We will see..."

"Like flowers long for east  
At beginning light of day,  
But as the sun crescendos  
West they fall away,

"Over hills and fickle rivers  
We thought would never end,  
Weaving through a wonderland  
Of dancing flower men,

"So blossoming and eager  
To pollinate with me."  
My lover was a fairy queen  
Of sugar plums and treats,

Her crooked nutcrackers  
Eating all they could eat,  
The clatter of crunching teeth  
Like the leaves beneath my feet.

And the waltzing winter devils  
Mocked as they recalled:  
"O how the grasses withered  
And made the flowers fall,

“On the day love cursed you  
The browning trees were stilled,  
And the pallbearers marched,  
Bearing a love she killed,

“In a suffocating box,  
Smothered in dirt, they did lay,  
With finger bones still clawing  
Through its earthen grave.”

Their icicle teeth gnawing  
Like frost upon my ears,  
I tried not to listen,  
But they were all I could hear.

“O long, long for your lover,  
Who loved so much to say,  
My love is not forever,  
But only for a day.

“O die, die in the winter  
With all you have known,  
For dying is forgetting,  
And forgetting leaves alone.”

And under the back and forth  
Of the frigid autumn breeze  
I watched the reds and yellows  
Weep down from the trees.

And I wondered how. “How  
Could this have come to be,  
My lover with another  
Forever gone from me?”

But the leaves no longer whispered  
And the devils were not in sight,  
For it was late upon the eve  
And no more voices in the night.

## Let's talk about me

by: Molly Lurie-Marino

Things I like:

Walking down the street  
at 11, lighting up alone  
with final vapors of butane  
singing *When I Fall in Love*,  
crooning in the middle  
of the sidewalk, never the  
corner, imagining Nat coming  
out from the alley to sweep  
my painted toes off the  
gravel and hoping to draw  
some Odysseus or  
maybe his friends who  
can fall into a trance of  
smoke and voices and walk  
with me

Going through the mall like an  
anaconda, store to store  
sliding in and out in aliases. First  
I'm Persian, door number two  
British, later Jane Austen British and  
in need of a strong man who doesn't  
necessarily have to be bright  
but I'm not opposed to the idea,  
then French and, well, je ne sais quoi,  
but going next door as a Chilean  
looking for boxers alone and being  
coy as to whom they are for,  
finally into Sacks as a 1939 World  
Fair patron upset at the rejection  
of Duchamp's fountain and not  
just casually browsing but buy-curious

and while I know you may not like running to middle of the woods behind  
the water tower for shining daffodil sprouts at the first April rain, maybe you will—and  
maybe

you will teach me how to change—and maybe we will grow dogwood trees and glow with  
out age, and somewhere, soon, I will meet you.

**and I don't even like animals.**

by: Anna McCormally

I.

In the beginning, she peed a lot.  
I bought her, took her home

and on the ten-minute drive  
she peed in her little cardboard box six times.

Why her? I wanted a fish,  
low-maintenance, a untroubled companion

and all hamsters are the same, effectively  
except she had the most beautiful fur, chocolate brown, the only one like it

and there was a boy who I thought didn't love me back  
and she was alone, and I was alone and there was no reason for both of us

to be alone.

II.

Michael said, "That is not a fish."

I was sitting on the pink striped carpet  
legs out, bent at the waist, arms forming a crude playpen  
and she was scurrying from side to side, this way and that  
in an attempt to determine  
what the fuck was going on.

Michael said, "What happened to the fish?"

I gathered her up, as I would every night from then on  
until the end of her little life  
and cuddled her furry self to my cheek. She nibbled on me  
gently, as if to say  
please put me down immediately.

Michael said, "That is possibly the cutest thing I have ever seen,"

and then he sat down on the floor  
(same stanza)  
next to me, and held out his hands.  
I handed her over:  
he looked straight into her bright little eyes  
and said, "Oh."

I said, "Yeah, she has that effect on people."

III.

I underestimated Molly.  
I underestimated:

the sight of her little paws up on the cage door  
when I went to open it

her willingness to crawl right into my hands  
when they were offered

and how every night she pattered around in her ball determinedly,  
confident, like she was actually going somewhere

Michael would ask me, concerned:  
"Did you remember to give Molly fresh food today?"

Like we were actually going somewhere.

IV.

It is awfully hard not to love somebody who loves your hamster.

V.

My father said, "What's that?"

It was summer.  
Molly was scuffling up and down the tubes of her cage  
and when she was like that we could see

the tumor on her belly.  
So we packed her up and went to the vet.

On the ten-minute drive, she peed six times.

The surgery to save her would cost three hundred dollars.  
The hamster herself had cost five.  
I had to shake my head. Minimum wage, and besides  
aren't all hamsters the same, effectively?  
The vet looked at me like I was enemy of hope.

On the phone, Michael was unsure of what to say.

My father stroked her chocolate fur gently, saying  
I guess there's nothing we can do but cuddle her, and coo.  
I did. She slowed and faded.  
I watched her lug her cancer-weighted body to the food dish.  
I moved the dish closer to her bed.

When she died a few weeks later, I was inconsolable.

Michael was mystified.  
Who can blame him? Even I didn't know  
why I was crying.  
It was just a hamster, and I  
don't even like animals

but

that hamster saw me drunk  
probably more times  
than any other individual  
on the planet. Also naked,  
and she never said a word.

## Choking, Dry Freedom

by: Zeta Moser

Here I am,  
deposited carefully in Chicago  
from parted, cupped hands  
like a fragile, jelly tree frog  
funneled, puzzled, into a mason jar.

I am  
safe now?

with airholes  
keeping me alive  
twin branches to climb,  
going nowhere to the same place  
like false staircases  
confusing ghosts.  
But you cannot confuse a jiggling-flesh and rushing-blood tree frog.

Given no options,  
at least I am free  
to stay as I please (or as I don't),  
gulping the dry air  
in moist, froggy lungfuls.

The pads of my fingers press  
double-glassed, oval panels  
before I am shoed down the aisle  
into my glass-jar country.

## Brooklyn Rooftops are no place for us

by: Scott Polhemus

Brooklyn Rooftops are no place for us  
sneaking around, double-clutching 40s  
with our summer soaked hands, palms tired of charred tile  
fire escapes just offer one more spot  
to live, hide, and die  
cut-out and cut-off from the rest  
on roped off roofs, areas unfit for Brooklyn bums  
scrounging for cig butts and leftover bagged booze  
a zone where rats dare not tread  
won't stop you  
kicking off heels  
leaping over choked up chimneys and steamed glass  
windows warmed by cooked garbage and furnace-burned  
newspapers telling stories worth no one's time  
but, with you I can be  
content to be a target of vermin and rust  
of potential, very probable, roof collapse  
maybe a quick slip off the unguarded edge  
into ghetto'd out intersections full of sun-spotted junkers  
and strung out junkies  
if the fall wouldn't kill us, the traffic would  
and if rimmed-up wheels don't cut the cord  
those stragglers will come lurching over for dead man change  
and shank with shivs til blood spills like dimes  
out of a trashed parking meter victimized near the south corner

I guess I can give up some blood, bones, and dimes so long as you're around

## The Nightstand

by: Allison Siana

His watch sits on the nightstand,  
cold and retired.  
In the dim moments before sleep,  
you count the uniform ticks of the second hand.

In the morning, before anything else,  
you see its face.  
An oval reflection of light,  
flickers on the ceiling above your bed.

You wake up and notice, something different,  
the reflection absent, the watch gone,  
or missing, for optimism's sake.  
You call out, then listen,

walk into the kitchen,  
still and clean enough to induce worry.  
You look for a note,  
an explanation of sorts,

The yellow, legal pad floats on the cool granite,  
held under by your best porcelain coffee cup,  
*I'll call soon.*  
Remember his watch on the nightstand,  
not gone, but missing.

## **And In Stormy Weather**

by: Kimberly Stoll

Put your hand right  
through the canvas,  
where the oak tree would have been  
had the wind not torn it up last spring.

Your tooth chipped on  
the desk's hard edge,  
an excuse to drink brandy  
all night, sulking.

Play with the BB lodged  
between your two knuckles,  
slipping back and forth underneath  
the skin your brother accidently shot.

I'll listen to mice scratch behind  
walls I hung the painting on anyway.  
Wait for the rain to start  
and leak through basement floors.

## Contributors

**Robert Alderman** is a senior at the University of South Florida. He has published fiction and poetry in *Sphere Literary Magazine* and *Thread Literary Inquiry*. This year, he was a finalist for the Undergraduate Scholarly and Creative Excellence Award at the University of South Florida, and was the recipient of the Thomas E. Sanders Scholarship for Creative Writing. He lives in Tampa with his beautiful daughter, Chelsea, and his Saint Bernard, Sir Walter Wally.

**Molly Lurie-Marino** is a twenty-something eternal student who questions the practicality of decisions rather than making them. With a background primarily in science, she often wonders why we can't all get along and finds the answer from an experiment disproving the existence of altruism in nature. Previously published under a name she could easily slip into, her writing has been in *Chronogram*, *PANK*, *Metazen*, and others. She writes when she should be doing everything else, and measures time in the length of her lines. Extending the moment with a long couplet is easier than anywhere else.

**Anna McCormally** is a junior Economics major, Creative Writing minor at Earlham College. She grew up in the plastic suburbs of Northern Virginia and is currently studying in Amman, Jordan. Right now, Anna is torn between wanting to go to law school and wanting to hike the Appalachian Trail and write all the time.

**Zeta Moser** is a senior at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Graduating in the spring, she will leave for Denmark to get married. Learning a new language, not to mention culture, through immersion has inspired a small collection of Danish-themed poetry, but more in the direction of Denmark as her future home, not as an exotic or fascinating tourist location. Her transition from the academic world to the "real" world as well as a shift from American to European culture mark her poetry and worldview at this time.

**Scott Polhemus** is a junior writing/English major from New Jersey. He hopes to someday redeem the reputation of New Jersey.

**Allison Siana** grew up in Chester Springs, Pennsylvania. She is currently a senior at Gettysburg College, where she studies sociology and writing. Siana draws inspiration from the work of Elizabeth Bishop, Joyce Carol Oates and Joan Didion, as well as from her own peers, her childhood memories, the relationships in her life and her recent travel experiences in Florence, Italy and Nosara, Costa Rica. She especially enjoys writing poetry, fiction and non-fiction and plans to pursue a career in the publishing industry upon graduation.

**Kimberly Stoll** is a class of 2012 Creative Writing major at Susquehanna University. She grew up amongst the ever-growing suburban sprawl of Collegeville, Pennsylvania. Most of her time is spent reading through the never-ending submissions for the three literary magazines she is involved with. When she is not doing that she cultivating her neuroses or thinking of snarky comments to say. Her poetry has previously been published in *RiverCraft*.