

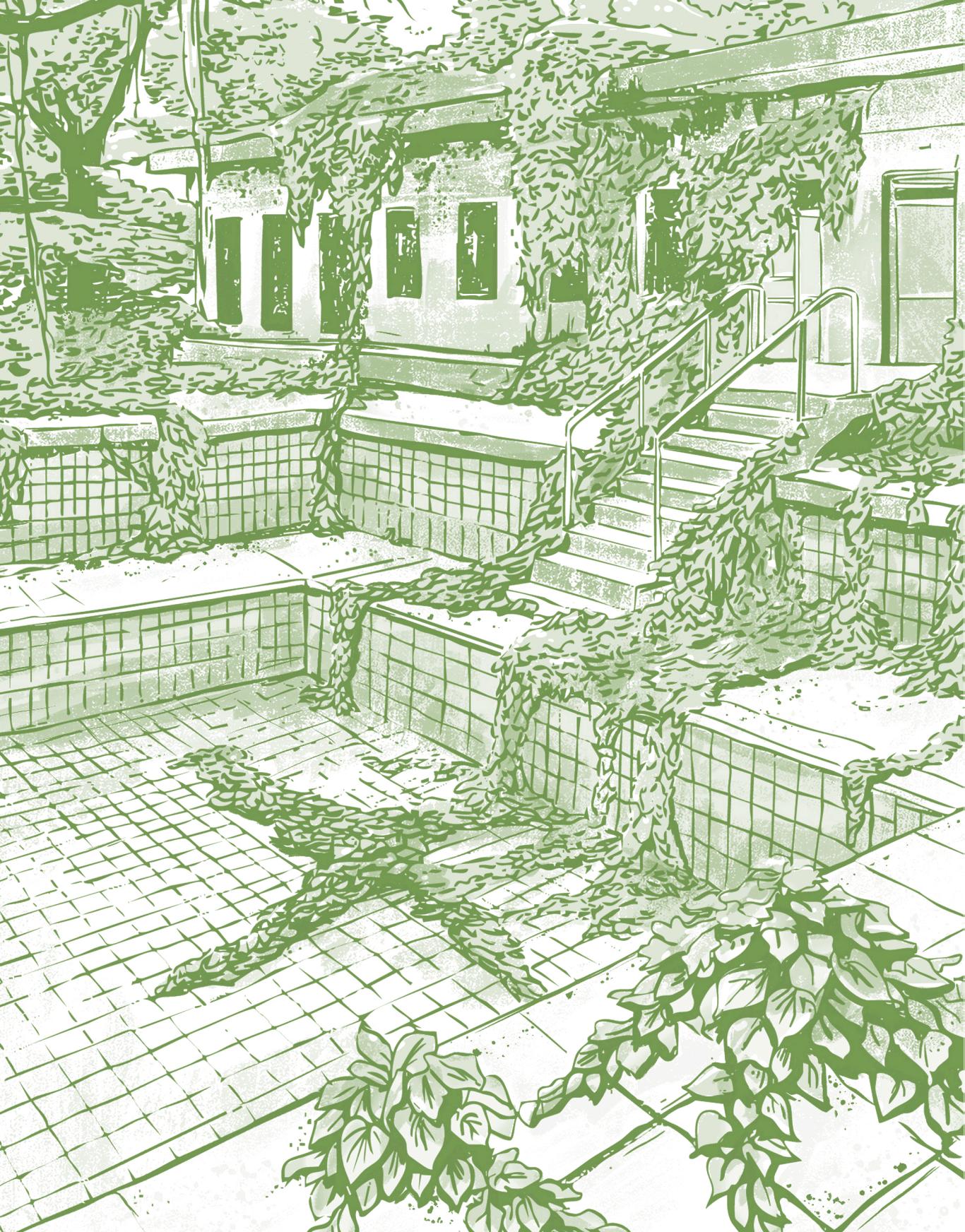


SWING

SPRING/SUMMER 2025
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New Writing That Moves You







COMICS

Janet Chong	Empty Hands	42
Kevin Reilly	The Great Cumberland Dandelion Sloth	82
Al Comfort-Wasnewsky	Accents: Identity Crisis #69	124

NONFICTION

Brock Clarke	Are You Like Me?	10
Jeffrey Utzinger	Unfettered	44
Derek Greene	Daddy Greene's Shotgun	59
Judy Holm	Mary Quant, Long Hair, and Pot	116
Lia Mastropolo	From the Edges In	138

FICTION

Erik Harper Klass	Phenakistoscope: An Introduction	30
Jeremy T. Wilson	Where Are You From?	33
George Singleton	Renovations	63
A. R. Liebig	The Existence of Wild Nuns	86
Jody Hobbs Hesler	Despite the Loveliest Distractions	98
Steven Vineis	In the Margins of Error	106
Meghan Proulx	Desert Lament	130
Ankita Chatterjee	Economy of Needs	150
Chidima Anekwe	As She Lay Most Likely Dying	159

POETRY

Melissa Jean	Where Have You Been	24
	In a Dream Half-Lucid on the Couch...	25
Nicholas Pierce	A Picture of a Chair	26
	Birthday Poem	135



Contents

Michael Bazzett	The Twenty-Seven Volume History of Snow	29
	My Brother and I Were Walking	145
Josh Luckenbach	And Old Story: The Father as Orphaned Appendage	57
Matt Poindexter	Yes, And	58
Scott Weaver	When He Dies, I Wish for My Father to Be Reincarnated . . .	62
Cecilia Woloch	Green Kitchen	74
	Wisniewska	76
Kelly Cass Falzone	Privacy Glass Doorknob with Victoria Rosette . . .	77
	Pangaea	158
Amy Mariaskin	The After	78
	Justice	79
Sara Cooper	The Line	80
	Dispatch after the Reign or Goodbye Emperor of Ice Cream	81
Caki Wilkinson	Persistence of Vision	94
Amy Arthur	W Barry Avenue	95
Gerald Yelle	It's Been a Time of Holding Hands . . .	96
Ryan Varadi	Epithalamion with the Oxford English Dictionary	97
Philip Kenner	Smoke Break	105
John Gallaher	Soon to Be a Major Motion Picture	110
Rachel Hadas	The Poetry Clock	111
Barry Peters	Aplomb	114
Jacob Schepers	Vasectomajestic #5	127
Kelsey D. Mahaffey	Dog Days	132
	The Truest Papaya I Ever Meet	168
Carson Elliot	The Future Will One Day Ask Me about the Rain	133
Will Compton	Esau	136
Christopher Bakken	Notes for the Invasion	137
	Gnocchi	174
Michael White	North End	142

Joy Moore	Sunk Cow	144
Lily Greenberg	My Mother's Mouth	146
Mark Hendrickson	The Beginning / The End	148
Kate Lebo	Since Kary Wrote a Plum Poem (with Celan in Mind)	169
	Nest (with Hurston in Mind)	170
	To Get the Milk (with Heaney in Mind)	172
Anna Lena Phillips Bell	Wooden Spoon	175

The WRITERS

178

SINCE KARY WROTE A PLUM POEM (WITH CELAN IN MIND)

What I had to do I've done
with my plums—

a crowd too cold
for wasps. My plums are bitter—

because they were free?—
nor is Monday new.

I've heard this purple before.
I've liked this kind of glower.

I've seen this tree in person
but not in dreams.

Here I am, back to take it in my teeth.
I remember tomorrow too.

The plums are there—
piled in a pink colander, in a silver

fridge, in a beige kitchen,
in a gray house, on a block that's losing

grass but gaining children.
It did rain yesterday. It did rain.

To need shelter for a new reason
is a species of relief.

Time for alleys to relinquish their light,
for lightpoles to insist.

Time to cook what won't keep.

NEST (WITH HURSTON IN MIND)

I could tell a story that leaves the house,
finds a red shoe and puts it on,
finds a brown shoe and puts it on,
finds a blue shoe and leaves it
in the dirt between the sidewalk and the pines
where women who bathe in the river live.

An old story.

This one doesn't end in marriage.
Reader, you are not yet tired of my things,
and you are not yet tired of me,
and you do not know our meanings
because I have not yet described them.

I could refuse.

I could let shampoo bottles bob in the rushes.
Rivergrass does look comfortable
should one be comfortable with blending
one's body with the shore.

When I was a child I made mud in milk
cartons I carried to my mother
who called my mess good work.

Now I fill my home with soft materials
to ease my passage as I lie about the house.

I'm a good woman.

Only my tailbone knows how long
I've been sitting here. It tells me
Go—
find new minor pains.

Stand awhile
in thick black nonmagical shoes
until a book falls off the shelf inside you,
until you accumulate fresh refusals,
until the house unmakes itself in your son's image,
until on your behalf each room flattens into a picture of itself
and becomes a catalog of good living
where strawberry pie cools forever on the table,
and you remember each thing's worth
and each thing's description,
through which you'll build a nest
and return to meaning.

TO GET THE MILK (WITH HEANEY IN MIND)

I gather jars I washed before cream
could make them stink.

I unlock the car,
sling the jar-bag inside and drive

to the house where the milk lady
lives. With my bag I pass

her splendor of squash,
her Solomon's seal and hollyhocks,

the coral jazz of her trumpet vine,
and the little free library

she built to remember
her eighth-grade girl who loved books.

I climb the stairs,
place each jar on the porch with care

because my name is on them,
and write a check.

Four dollars a half-gallon.
Four half-gallons, sometimes eight.

Then I lift the cooler's broken lid
and lug new milk from the depths.

The jars
are white as you'd imagine,

heavier than you'd think,
full of what I'll sour,

cut, heat, hoop, and salt
until what I make is solid as I am

and looks like a moon
worth landing on.