

Defense Mechanisms

By Linn Næss

I threw up again this morning. I had to run to make it past the carpeting.

I was fine after that. I walked between classes. I ate lunch. I sat on the hard-backed chairs in the lab with Sarah, talking under the professor's chatter in low voices intended only for the two of us. He had nearly reached the newest part of evolutionary human biology, the part where everything went to hell, when the transitory chime sounded, and I felt the contents of my gut force themselves up into the back of my throat.

up into the back of my throat.

If I press my fingers into the slight swell of my stomach, right in the centre -- if I ignore the sting of my nails trying to push through my skin, I can feel a sort of hardness there. I can't explain it, but then I'm trying instinctively not to think too hard about it. I can't explain that, either.

I have a blank document up that's supposed to contain a ten-page assignment, on why the last decade's inexplicable loss of fertility in females means we're all fucked in a decade or two. But every time I try to type I feel like I'm about to throw up again, and I hate throwing up.

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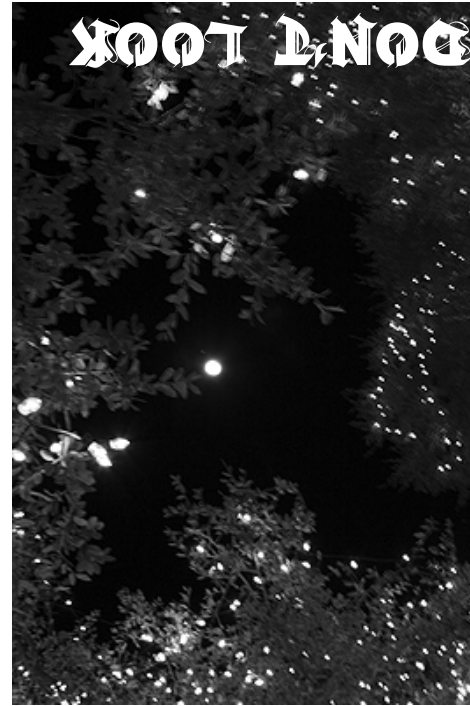
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Cut Here

A Song of Waiting

by Lars Riisnaes

Wearily waiting,
Wandering, watching
The thin, little twig twirls around and around
Attached in the centre
To a larger branch that
Marches
steadily
onwards
The massive trunk is sneaky, yet steadfast
Never budging
Yet never standing still
Moving only between glances.
Moving,
But rarely far enough.



After the Apocalypse

By Mary Lewys

The first night afterwards, I dreamt of purple mountains and quiet towns. An old woman beckoned, calling me towards the rays of light streaming down from the low slung clouds moving across the valley. She promised hardship and hard work, but claimed it was all for the right reasons. I woke in the morning in my bed with a start.

The second night afterwards, I dreamt of dry dirt and drier air. Glistening lights of a gold city sat far from everywhere. His smile was sweet. His voice was low and smooth as well-aged whiskey. He never made frightening demands or empty promises, but anything I wanted would be

mine. Coming morning, I shivered underneath my covers.

Each night, one or the other came into my dreams. One or the other begged, pleaded, commanded, shouted, or cried. But every morning, I woke and did the same thing I had come to do afterwards. I picked my fishing pole and headed down to water. The vast, never-ending ocean licked at my ankles until I remembered nothing more than the taste of last night's catch.

Maybe my new neighbor needed a fish. She was the only other person for miles. I would trade it for a tomato or two growing in her yard.

