

Don't believe the day

Pepe Espaliú, Bri Williams and Gabriel Ojeda-Sagué

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Pepe Espaliú

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL
if the fairy that inhabits your veins
were an executioner.
If War-Mum convinced you
that it is more difficult to kill than to die.
How would you feel if
if you discovered the world
in reflections of blue slashes;
if you got lost in a thousand eyes
that surveil you ...
and watch you watching.

SLEEP, FRIEND, sleep,
to avoid seeing how "little death"
dances with God on my fingertips;
sleep, Gérard, sleep,
while I burn slowly
devoured in ghosts
that my smoke draws in the air.
Sleep,
don't believe the day,
sleep.

DO YOU KNOW that story
of the one who fell from his own hands in a dream
because someone inverted the crystals of the world
and, that way, lost his name?
Like this, from void to void,
sticking the echo of his voice to the walls,
that became smaller and smaller,
an almost erased image of himself.
You too will fall
and will only see when falling
a dark suicide of concentric circles,
with a small hole in the bottom
from where a timid light arises;
and you will remember the warm surface
in which you will never rest alone again.
Your world is the invention of some failure.
You will see that after everything,
there is a shutdown everything,
and that, when falling,
you keep advancing but undo the course traveled.
Do you know that story
in which you achieve calm
running faster,
and you run faster,
doing it twice as fast?
To fall from void to void
and when reaching the end
to look back and turn,
to keep falling.

FOR TOMÁS, WHO DID NOT BELIEVE in order to be able to access the catharsis and sink his fingers into the stigmata of the appeared body; of the body that only waited for that “lack of faith” to become the first fault; a word said in full abandonment of oneself, in full openness to the hand that examines and makes joy possible. Questioned as an impossible truth.

FOR THE ONE WHO, CONFUSED, blows the trumpets of Jericho in front of its walls and, once they have collapsed, discovers his wounded and stained skin and in this way entangled between the social and the asocial, abjection and lyricism, crime and law, love and murder, allows himself to to be dragged to the outskirts, beyond the known circle, to areas of sophisticated vice and boredom, nightlife and decrepit hotels, cheap movie theaters with continuous screenings where ailing spectators never die always passing through and confusing day with night.

BOOK OF CRUTCHES

SHORT STORY FOR THE AIDS-INFESTED

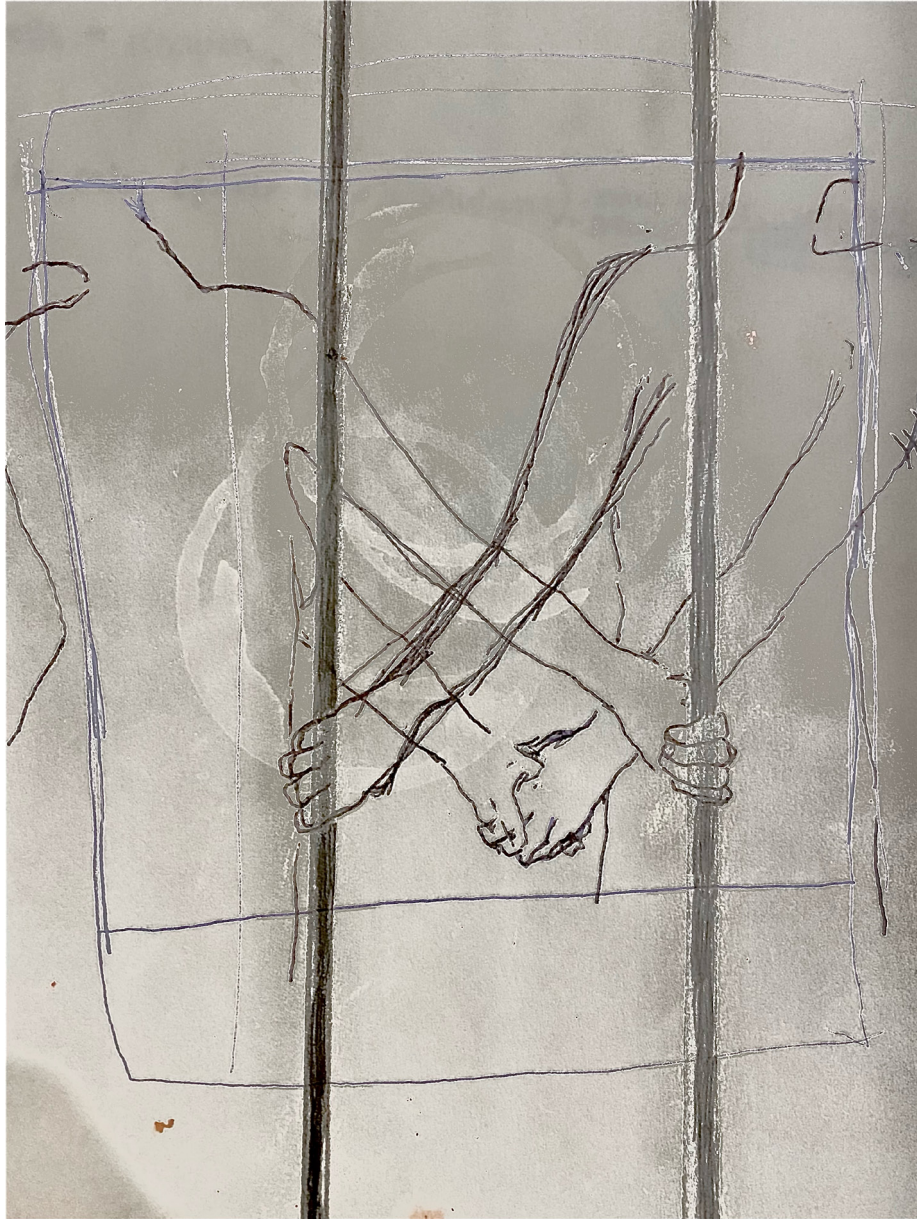
Lucas was a sick person like others. A sick person fed up of “acting like a sick person”. Thin and pale. One day, already without strength, they decided to buy him a pair of crutches. They were metal crutches, conventional ones. Lucas looked at them sadly. Such an ugly utensil! How will he visit the usual garden with those skinny metal legs, like a grasshopper? What will those who had once fallen in love with him say! He kept looking out the window, dubious of going out... No one would see him like this, like an invalid, with those two metallic extensions of himself.

On another day he thought of changing something about this dismal fate. He decided to gild the crutches. He went to the gilder and asked him to cover them with gold leaf. When he saw them he was fascinated. They were like two strange jewels, two unique jewels, never seen before. As he picked them up and placed them under his shoulders he felt strength, as if the reflection of the golden metal infused him with the energy that he lacked. He went out into the street and ran on his crutches. People were amazed when they saw him. What a fantastic shine. It was like an apparition.

Lucas was thinking about everything that gold meant... eternity, perenniality. In the movies he saw as a child, in the Temple of Solomon, in the house of Nero, in the golden fleece, in the Holy Grail. Everything in him, everything in the crutches seemed sacred. The other sick people looked at him and they too seemed to regain strength, their will to live. Lucas thought that he had never helped others so much before... Lucas decided to be in tune with his crutches. He regained his weight, and his skin became smooth, and his hair curled and turned golden and his gaze clean, and his voice firm. He was no longer a sick person, but someone with golden crutches. As the days passed, he found that, with use, the crutches were losing the gold leaf, that little by little it was wearing out and that, curiously, his strength was fading as well. Without further ado, he decided that he would temporarily go to the gilder to re-gild his old crutches.

Those crutches belong to all of us, they show hope. Those crutches are the symbol of our faith...; our living.

Bri Williams



Lucid

Fraudulent intimacy into seclusion robbing
reality.

As long as my eyes are in their hands, they will
always lie - it is a form of currency.

She drew a line from the inner wrist to the pool
of my elbow, yearning for a motive.

The yelping well is a sanctum
when breeched, knowledge will become deceit
to the aimless sniper.

How long were we under?

Walking backwards on the bottom of her shoe,

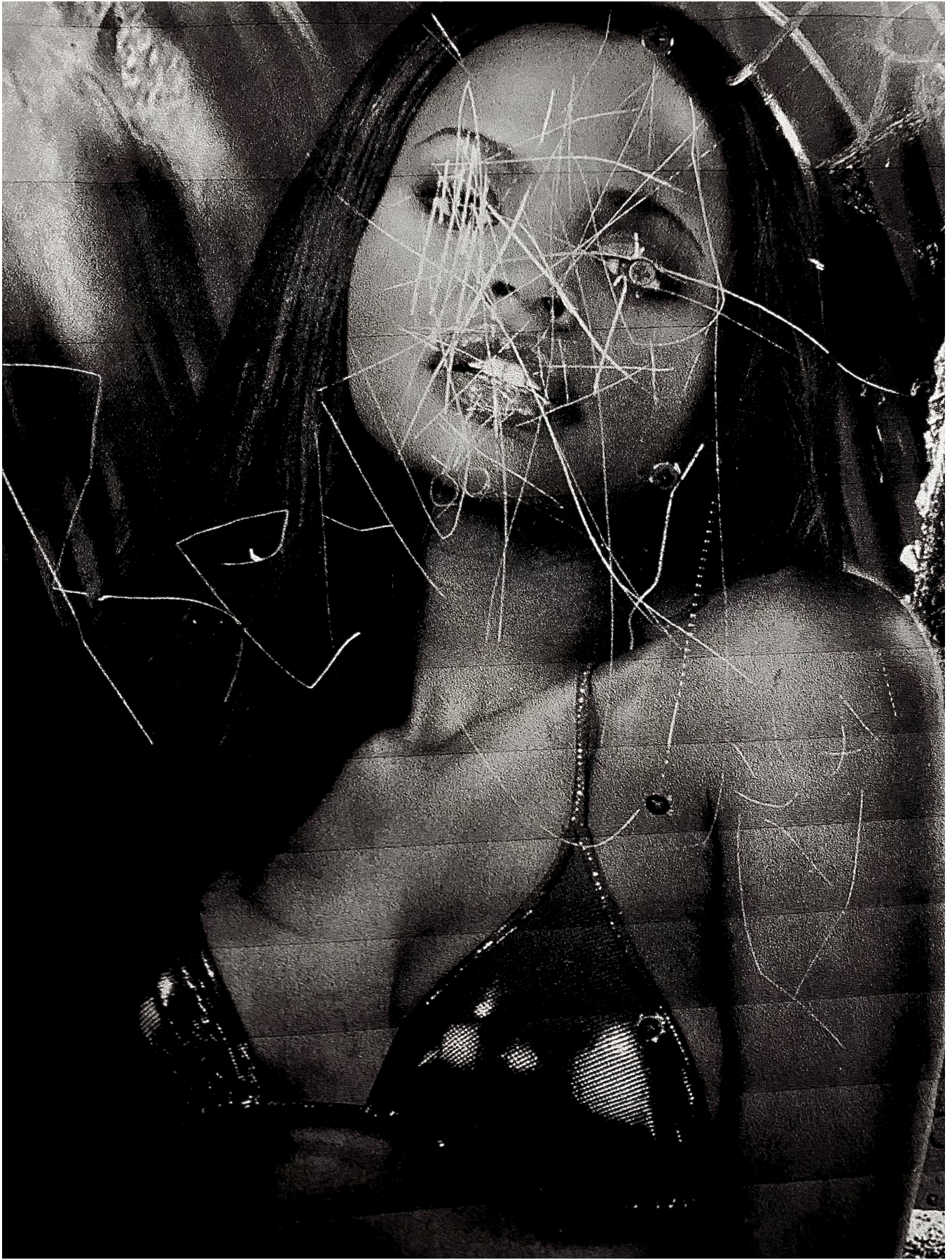
crumbled granite mercifully imprints
ruby-tinge on my cursed cheek.

I still flinch at the brush of one finger and my
shoulders jumped when she wrapped an anklet
around my neck.

I don't think.

I can't reach for it anymore.

Your force is to exist.



Rigamortis

My two feet within a palm sink while fingers
shadow overhead and cradle me like a dried up
spider.

A presaged obsession to wring all of you out.

Lawless but in funk, receding poise suits inherent grimace.

I'll listen with a glass tumbler to the wall.

Pleases and thank you's and ever-flowing amount of sorry's will ignite the fling of a metal flick,

To unhinge the latch and smack the honey bee on the brick without the gift of the stinger.

Shake out the tablecloth, fold and start again.

It was never.

It was never.

It was never.

She teared up when I touched the center of her foot, but I am just an angel, too.



Gabriel Ojeda-Sagué

Years

after Trisha Low

I am 26 and afraid of roaches, foggy-headed on airplanes, wrinkled sunlight.

In time I will be 13 and touching everyone, imagining a storm, dying of croup.

It is many years later and I am 6, angry at my bed, thinking about you, absent at family parties, drinking condensed milk, this massive discrepancy, breathing me and you in.

It is some years ago and I am 18 and ugly.

I am 35 and good at backgammon, mottled ideas, yelling at my friend, that's what I meant.

It seems impossible to have passed 53 now, but I am 54, good at sex, scattering flowers, blowing my nose.

Some years ago, I was 3, rolling my r's, touching your ears by laughing, sunken in sand.

I am now 31 and I happen to be your president.

At 47, no belief leaves easily, swallowing a quarter, I abandon all modes of forgetting.

I am now 23 and I think a lot about velvet.

Years before this, I was 17, I learned everything the alphabet had to offer me, waterfalls in reverse.

So much depends upon being 40, when I am much more than you in every way.

I happen to think 63 looks good on me.

I am 44 and I apologize.

I am 12 and I open the doors.

Six Untitled Poems

a question takes on rust
when it piles with others as a bush

sailing by clover, tin song
in little bursts—dice rolls

the river gems and screens
it multiplies its coast

dried leaves lifting to show snails
tissues from a tissue box

admit to 6 o'clock that its candy,
stubbornness, boredom, a blue color on moss

what leads nothing out of here
mating calls, questions about rust

yesterday I waited
knowing nothing about cars
and I saw myself in my stomach-ache
the cats were hopping over each other
because they don't invest much in boredom
and this is what it took for me to calculate
pi, e, all those numbers that tell you about
maybe the direction the smoke comes out of the incense
or how long until you're married
or how delicate you can be with steel
I wished you and everyone a better fate

We're both tourists to this river
who confuse geese and bicycle horns
and dust the surface with pleasure
and dry leaves, we force indigo
out of juniper, grass out of
sweetbreads, a satellite dish
on a sloped backyard
may we cross paths again,
scallions bundled in a plastic bag

a fox with a bonsai in its ideas
moves slow across the sloped backyard

sails microchipped wind to follow hawks
fishing hundreds of yards below

a man defends himself from complaints
with his arms and legs outstretched like a pinecone

or like the Vitruvian man, while his distance
from loved ones become unbearable, weightless

the fox knows something about these tender personalities
but keeps it from the man, as it dips its head into the water

to spy teacups and fish, technology
from Jupiter, junipers, and brushstrokes of fog

few things better than
fritos on chili
may I live forever

water is the most recent form my encouragement has taken

in this light, you look like Hernán Cortés,
you look like a spear stuck in the wall

someone watching Casablanca a few rows
down on the plane, their screen a brief and shiny gray

parcel the moonrise, discover your sister
be sweet to me, a model volcano

as when they call water 'hard'
I mean your hands are full of metals

Sick

a new story has already begun
to barrel at us, now
now that the principle
we once depended on as good
is atmosphere, is wild
the principle now a guess
at various other virtues
instead of its own anchored thing

once when it was sick
and was purchasing days
the principle absconded
temporarily, but someone knew
it was a clue in a whodunit

every day it was sick the principle
imagined summers

every day it was sick the principle
held vacuums of space up to
various carnival lights

this atmosphere is sometimes
carried and sometimes carrying
always unforgiving
I have been here before

now, to see you more clearly in it,
after the sick days,
is a knife to my hand
which is outstretched towards you
which is asking in miniscule signs in the air
what we still hold on to

Pepe Espaliú (Córdoba, 1955 - 1993). Artist and writer, he developed a deep, personal and complex work related to the reflection on his own identity, AIDS, sickness and death.

Bri Williams is an artist and poet based in Los Angeles, CA.

Gabriel Ojeda-Sagué is a poet and writer living in Chicago. He is the author of three books of poetry, including most recently *Losing Miami* (The Accomplices, 2019) which was nominated for the Lambda Literary Award in Gay Poetry. His fourth poetry book, *Madness*, is forthcoming from Nightboat Books. He is also the co-editor of a book of selected sketches by the artist Gustavo Ojeda, out from Soberscove Press in 2020. He is currently a PhD student in English at the University of Chicago where he works in the study of sexuality.

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