

The Beacon

Fall Edition 2025

Circadian Drift

A Boston University Beacon Publication

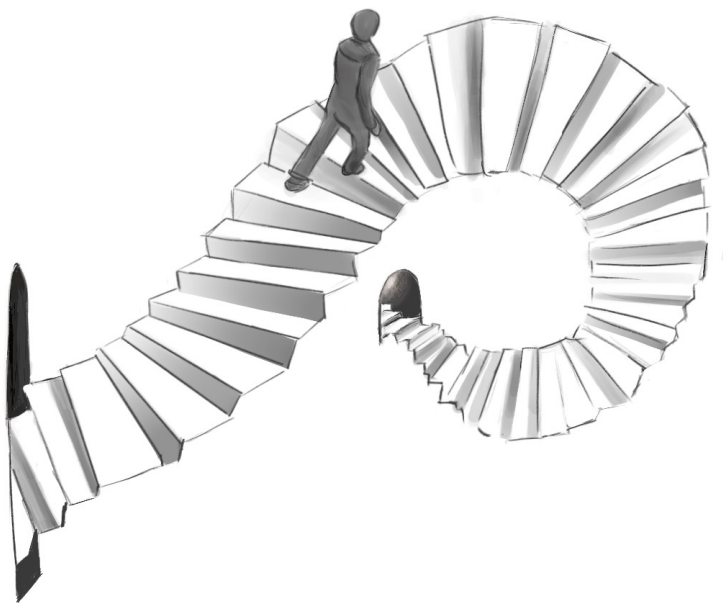
The Boston University Beacon

Dear Readers,

Cycles define us, and often we lack the directionality to drift away. The moments spent awake at odd hours, or a member of the flock venturing the 'wrong' way, encapsulate when rhythm is no longer controllable. We sleep, breathe, and live in cycles, and when those cycles end, a part of us ends with it. Collected here is The Beacon's remembrance of the selves that once were. In summation, it is an account of how endings have made us new cyclical renditions of the past, describing what we gained and what we lost in that process. These collected poems offer several distinct lenses for understanding this drift: that of nihilism, sorrow, and rebirth. They agree, however, that changes define us, and our drifting is as essential as the cycles themselves.

The Beacon is a student-run literary journal created with the intent to create a writer's community that uplifts student voices. A special thank you to everyone who made this edition possible.

With love,
The Beacon



Circadian Drift

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*The Beacon is committed to creating and fostering a space that uplifts young voices at Boston University. With that commitment, all contributors, regardless of their position within The Beacon, are subjected to the same anonymous review process. It is of the utmost importance that each piece is selected based on its content rather than the author at large.

Wake

Sarah Cohen

A sea of black floods the empty white streets. It looks like the other side already.

Blank shining light, softish words, reunion. They follow quiet behind me, hungry, piggish and hankering, beyond starving for just a sliver of my cooked-off heart. Fresh off the yard smoker, well fucking done.

They want me pink still, in the thick of it.

Sorry I'm all bone now, tight skin hiding beneath a midnight dress and family stones — pretty like her, and rests in a wooden chest too. I grip her box of sleep with an iron will. My violet fingers fail and she rises.

The buzzards in their suits really love it. They don't love me, they love it, this whole thing.



Beachfront Philosophy

Ju Derraik

I profoundly Accept
what I'm not meant to have.
Radical reception of empty-handedness,

rejection as protection as clearance.
It's a beachfront philosophy.
Old meant-to-me's become

not-meant-to-be's and I take the memory
over the wreckage.
And what would it mean to fight

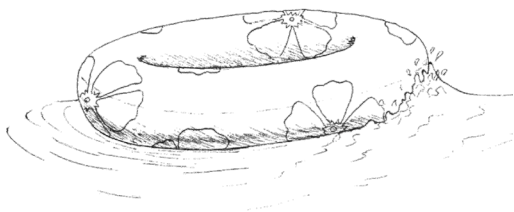
for someone? To thrash a rip current and win?
To turn inland affection up to the tides
in a game of sink or swim? I offer

my intervention:
Does not Acceptance tread water?
Is not Struggle admonition?

Thrashing makes you pulpy to the beasts below
the tension by drawing in their vision:
needless exposition.

Throw in the towel.
You'll wipe out.
Make the buoyant decision.

They call me passive
but the love I choose
does not survive attrition.



DEAD DOG

Owen Steck

I hope dogs smell
death a mile away
I hope the scent of irony
and pentobarbital
breach the ammonia
trapped by sawdust
and shedding hair

I hope the bile
on the floor
is not foreign
not failure to dig out
with chattering teeth
not hidden in shame
or quiet compulsion

I hope the wood
buries sound
in its grain
tracing the grooves
warped by their cadence
etched in the walls
and floorboards

I hope nothing takes
the space they leave
the mattress imprinted
with patting hands
I hope something
follows the kissing teeth
and curls up at
the foot of the bed.

four, get the picture

Simran Kaur

small hands around the Crayola—
along the way to a portrait of the unit,
title missing but they insist: my family—
yield three figures, aloof ovals

surrounded by the corner sun.
neighbors pass, calling us the model—
letting go of the evident mistake,
expecting a response to my depiction of you—

underneath smudges of thin lines,
seated across from me, evidence in hand—
demanding me to answer:
“why is my mouth a four?”

remnants of her future flash through,
hitting the fractured barrier to her eyes—
she never forgot her path handed to her, an unbreakable contract;
tracing two smiles and the *four*, she will have an answer herself—

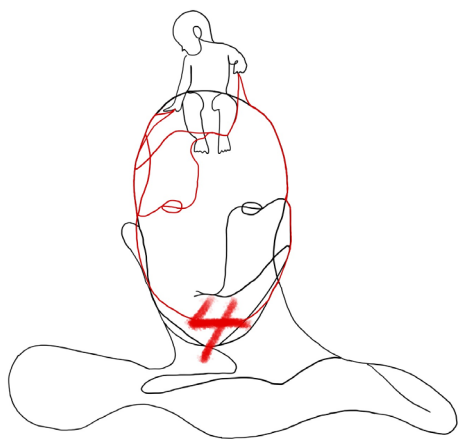
for the Novembers she will always fall to her knees before the leaves,

for the desperate pleas with the dog to take us far away from here,

for the moment she wished the car crashed—so your fists weren’t the only reason for the dents on
the dashboard,

for the run next door, Paul Revering the coming of your temperament—

trying to forget what is bound, but no marker covers the *four* on your mouth.



Stage Fright

Adelaide Tolley

people watching.
something like a half-remembered dream.
the sickly sound of cars screeching along the path,
innumerable ballerinas just a touch out of sync.
one man sitting uncomfortably on the phone,
another just beyond peering too close for comfort.
the entrance opens and jangles,
the clear sophisticated indication of visitors.
a forgotten house key dropped in the corridor,
covered in dust grime.
a young girl picks it up and places it in her pocket,
admiration for the simplicity of discovery.
so childish and predictable.
churlish, am i,
for observing the masses in their feeble livelihoods.
mother said it's rude to stare at the
people watching me.



The Businessman

Daniella Parkinson

The businessman sawed through the uterus
With sharpened ballpoints and NASDAQ peaks.
Swaddled in 90-degree shoulder pads,
He is handspun from bespoke mohair and Chanel Bleu.
His mouth is red and wet with ambition,
Pressed to dampened phone receivers and cognac-dipped cigars.
His lips are set at a jagged uptrend atop
Soft jaw, proudly bisected by a sandpapered clef,
And his salted hairline gleams slickly in meticulous pompadour.
Between Midas-goldened fingertips
Dangles his tar-enveloped refuge,
Drawn to meet the topaz enamel that brackets sharp tongue,
Cheeky and stained with
Robust espresso and Franklin vignettes.
He is bourbon-jolly and swollen,
A dull cufflink-puncture from deflation,
And his head lolls with the heavy bloat of hot air,
Woozily perched atop grizzled folds of neck.
He is confined solely by a single thread-strained mother-of-pearl button
And he oozes through puckered seams,
A thick, viscous sludge.
Come five o'clock in the evening,
Glistening mucus gurgles behind each homebound step,
Leaching onto every footfall
Until a sticky finger may freely peel off his bulging exoskeleton
And release him to dissolve,
A wet mass spilling across the threshold.
He is hot bile seeping into the floorboards,
The splintered grain, the Persain rug, the
picture-strewn mantelpiece, the Crayola-clad refrigerator, the
Sweet little womanly thing of plush capital filed between Italian linens,
Until he thrums in satiety.
The dawn greets an engorged acquisition
Folding himself pocket-square small once more:
Tuxedo-molded liquid currency.

Conversation With Todd

Murphy Fisher

I spent most of my life finding things to complain about. This is how you got happy on earth. We were so glad to have something to complain about; without it, good wasn't good, it was just another thing that happened. Too much money was called inflation, too much water was called a flood, and too much fresh air was called a tornado. God here, it seemed, could never catch a break.

There was a giant University where I lived, employing half the town and giving us all endless things to complain about. It was responsible for most of the parking lots, it was the logo on posters lining the street that read things like "DARE TO: repair cleft palates," and, employing both of my parents, it was most of the reason I was alive.

Once, I started a conversation the same way that high-school adults often do: I asked Todd what he will do next year.

Todd had the same answer that ends many conversations among high-school adults: He did not know. He was thinking about lots of things.

What you were doing next year meant how good of a school you were going to, if any, after you graduated. "Why?" was the aching question. It was avoided at all costs.

I thought it might be fun for me to say something. I told him that "The University really isn't that bad." I told him what he had just told me, that "it is cheap." I often told people things I did not want to be told myself.

His parents had been tied at the hip with The University for a long time, just as most people in the town were. They owned a store where all of the people at college got healthy on Sunday mornings. High school adults mostly became university kids.

Todd's name was never really used anymore, and it was lazily made up, without much regard to how that might make Todd feel. So, I think, were most of the names of buildings around here, a few of the sentences, and probably the town.

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I think we were raised mostly for fun, our names and setting decided on the same way that I responded to his question: I thought there should be something to say.



love, in every way

Adelaide Tolley

love was hushed.
a flicker at the wick,
wax weeping slow at the rim.
not patient, but still.
a shadow in the next room,
a breath held between pages.
love watched,
barefoot and breaking.
it paced the hallways
like a memory retracing its steps.
it curled up in corners
where light couldn't reach,
and waited for no one.
love will stammer,
love will swell.
a tremor, a lull.
it will be stormy,
lightning in the belly,
the echo after.
love will not ask permission.
it will arrive half-formed,
mud on its boots,
a laugh caught mid-sentence.
it will make a mess.
it will stay for tea.

love is a letter, finally released,
creased and smudged at the edges.
knowing without asking.
it is the silence after music,
when you realize you were listening all along.

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love is the lilies on the bedside table,
opening slow in their own soft rebellion.
it is the smell of skin on cotton,
the ache of being seen.
love is worth the bloom,
and worth the quiet after.



Shattered

Sarah Cohen

You shattered a dish in the kitchen.
I prayed you'd been cut
badly enough to want me.

I tiptoed past the hallway doors
standing like glaciers:
isolate rooms of promise and excuse.

My gown drifted in the arctic current
of your opaque silence,
just waiting to be peeled and thrown.

I knelt before you in the dusted shards,
your mess reshaping me.
I wore the fragments, let them mold my skin.

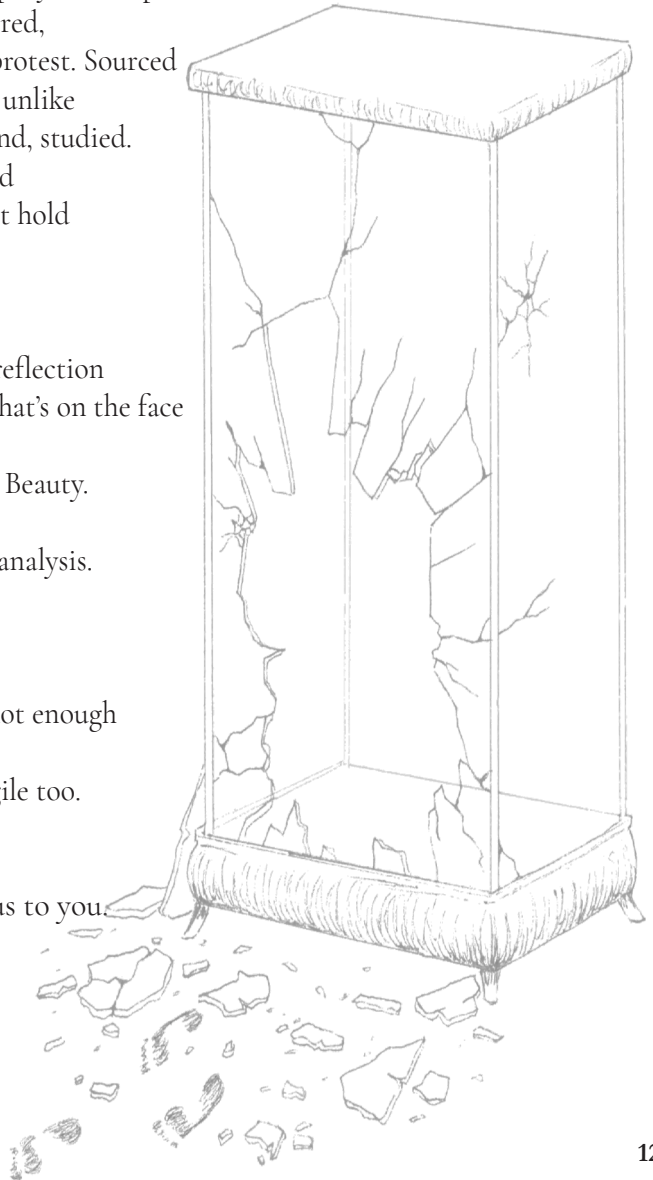
Finally, you cradled my gown in a knuckled grip. Stained red, it hung
like memory,
watching me gather your fine mosaic.

While you had me, glass kissed my knees.
To love you is to be the wound and the hand that opens it.

Make Waste of It

Ju Derraik

Sculpture encased; glass faced
mask made after Myth. Art,
grace, brow high framed,
embossed behind red rope; yellow tape
ticketed entrance. Restored,
having been the site of protest. Sourced
painting from antiquity unlike
ubiquitous. One-of-a-kind, studied.
Divine, pine from behind
demarcated lines. Do not hold
me in your hands
as to not damage
the print. See yourself
in the encasement, self-reflection
masturbation to deny what's on the face
of it. I mean too much
to be touched; name me Beauty.
Make waste of it.
Admire, paralysis, para-analysis.
Blink hard
self-efface, sigh relief
at the cage. You cared
enough to be kind but not enough
to be brave. Far off
veneration calls me Fragile too.
One copy survives
alone.
Wish I was less precious to you.



When the Apricots Ripened

Max Buonincontro

Smell me the color rose,
Sticking skintight to your floral lips,
Trapped in velvet walls,
As you wrap your legs around.
And taste me the sweet song,
That the young sparrow sings,
In Spring when the apricots ripen,
Oozing telestic liquids of love.
From this would you bring me a sapling,
And plant it deep in my soil,
Let us watch the wildflowers fray in the wind,
In the thick fields,
To push the day by.
Yes, my back is weary love,
Yes, my bones have lost all hope,
Let me mend them with you,
For soon you will be gone.
*(For a moment the stars form a path,
For a moment the trees have faces,
For a moment the tears from heaven,
Look like diamonds to our eyes.)*



Migration

George Brown

The things you've seen
since last you saw yourself:

how have their little deaths
changed the way your long wings
move in circles
that you then fall through
as you must,

you, who did not understand
when the others fled
to warmer shores
and stayed in the frigid
of this: our winter.

You, the last call
of the last magpie
frozen in mid-flight
yet the gaudy trophies
of which you've heard it all

are nowhere,
gone like many legions
of birds descending
into an October sunset.

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