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The Lady of Shalott

The Lady of Shalott weaves cat fur, crystals, text messages, methotrexate, green smoothies, blown veins, spring snow, falling hair and the natal charts of everyone she's ever met into a tapestry like some kind of climax.

Saturn is rising in the 8th house as roses bloom all-over her skin: petal explosions awakened by new meds (the side effects leave her languid).

Her body makes finely tuned machines sing with the sound of wind rushing through elms. Healthy bodies are silent. The world mistakes this for holiness but she knows that hush is a lull. The Lady of Shalott longs for the hurricane, the howling stones, the other bodies that were never meant to survive.

The sickness slowly unravels her sex. She is tempted to weave the threads into the tapestry. Instead, she twines her sex onto a spool that she keeps in her sock drawer. One day, maybe, she can sew sex back into her body.

The Lady of Shalott swallows pills, injects chemicals, scrolls through TikTok and waits—growing half-sick of simulacra. She tries to transform her solitude from a quarantine into a temple but she's just too lonely.

In her isolation, time becomes viscous. It fills her room like honey. It oozes over her bewildering the present moment. She is certain only of nostalgia. If she spooned honey-time into her mouth, would she eventually eat herself backwards into those other days?

Bored, the Lady of Shalott takes a fluttering buzzing aching Past out of her rib cage. She holds its shivering body in her hands. The Past tells her she is monstrous. The Past tells her she is fragile. The Past calls her once wild and then whispers *self care*. So, the Lady of Shalott snaps the Past's thin neck and sets it on the ground to run around like a dying chicken.

Surrounded by MILFs at Taco Bell

Hands, fingers, mouths, which autocorrected to mother—I don't want my mother, but all my mommy issues, my mouth wants everything.

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◆ **Special Folio: Indigenous Voices**

Joe Balaz	Kalehua Kim
Billy-Ray Belcourt	dg nanouk okpik
Abigail Chabitnoy	Arianne True
Mackenzie Ground	

◆ **with additional work by**

Hussain Ahmed	Randy James
Talia Bloch	Melissa Kwasny
Katherine Heimann Brown	Youngseo Lee
Jack Christian	A. C. Lippert
Alan Elyshevitz	Peter Mishler
Cody Ernst	Adrian T. Quintanar
Patricia Gao	Megan Snyder-Camp
Maria Hardin	Kelly Weber
Kirsten Ihns	Stella Wong

◆ **and translations of**

Marie-Andrée Gill, by Kristen Renee Miller
Virginie Lalucq, by Claire McQuerry and Céline Bourhis
Liliana Ponce, by Michael Martin Shea
Melissa Sauma, by Ariel Francisco

◆ **and cover art by Natalie Ball**

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