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Segue is published once a year in August. We accept submissions via email of high quality fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction between January 1 and April 30 (closed May through December), and writing about writing year-round. Before submitting, please read past issues to understand the sort of work we publish, then read our submission guidelines.

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Letter to a Wife from an Almost-Wife

This deserves a letter because we’ve met twice IRL. First, your wedding day: Greenpoint, chorizo, clams. Sweating through a dress I didn’t foreshadow to ruin. Second, coastside, December: didn’t know a soul and dominated the bread basket. Shit: thrice, or maybe the third is imagined. My last smoking weekend though I hadn’t planned it. We will always need mothers because we can’t sew zippers ourselves, will always love thrifting for romantic salvage & rescue vibes. I’m writing on your two-thirds anniversary because every month needs fresh champagne. I’m hungry for Hugo’s pocket of towns, five daily whiskeys, street cred of a Boeing job. I’m so bourgeoise I mark books with gift cards, so laissez-faire this tattoo sits unfinished as the moon. Your town’s fountain blooms like a jellyfish; my town has static cloud. Yesterday I blanched at the Paleo bar. Today, blisters from imitation huaraches. Tomorrow’s reserved for Pucci and TI wisef. I burn candles from both ends but haven’t seen a candle in years. Each day a new disruption lesser than the last.
Author Notes

Kate Garklavs is a writer and editorial analyst living in San Francisco. Her work has appeared or will appear in Tammy, Two Serious Ladies, The Tusculum Review, and Thrush. When she’s not writing, she’s most likely broadening her taxidermy collection.

About the Work

For the longest time I was intimidated by poetry. I studied fiction as an undergrad and grad student, and during my course of study I convinced myself that poetry was off-limits—accessible only to individuals deeper or more worldly than I. Slowly, intentionally, I debunked this awkward formally-focused myth and began writing a series of epistolary poems inspired by Richard Hugo’s 31 Letters and 13 Dreams—to date, my favorite poetry collection. My own work has always hovered in that space between comprehensible narrative and big-old collection of images, and I found (and find) Hugo’s work accessible in a way that many poems aren’t. I fast latched on to Hugo’s focus on place—the comparative fixity of its physical elements and the transience of the people who contribute equally to its emotional resonance—and invariably my writings find their beginnings on the side streets of underpopulated Midwest towns, on highways, or in neon-bleached dives where a beer and shot will set you back five bucks.

“Letter to a Wife from an Almost-Wife” is addressed to an acquaintance that I someday hope to count among my good friends. I first met Lauren at her wedding—my fiancé grew up with her husband—and met her again at another wedding we attended last year. None of my close friends is married, and I’m fascinated by the bonds that spring up among partners and plus-ones at the nuptials they’re invited to and (sometimes hesitantly) attend. On the brink of wifedom myself, I wrote this poem from a place of transition: of deep nostalgia for the almost-past and anticipation of a new role, a modified self.

I’m also rabidly aware of my cultural surroundings and love to incorporate time- and place-specific markers into whatever I’m working on. I’ve been warned against this practice (and reasonably, I think), but I can’t dismiss the knowledge that our cultural identifiers—fad diets, textile patterns, slang and emoticons—are central to our shifting identities. As much as I like to rail against the Paleo diet in conversation, I realize that my stance speaks to larger truths about myself. Therefore, the references stay.

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