

Imaginary Photo Album

by John Olson

That's me on the couch, sewing a piece of gravity to a piece of space. Notice the needle. It's a long white river ignited with revelation. The thread is green. It has been soaked in paradise.

Him? Joseph Stalin? No. He runs the bakery. The woman to the left is the one who does all the actual work.

I can smell it when it's about to snow. It gets dark in my brain. That's why I like to share these moments. With you. A total stranger.

It's true. I like to manipulate images. I like albums. Musical albums and photo albums. It just makes sense. The weight of a predicate demands that it be combed. Stroked. Appreciated. An album is a collection of predications. When I say that my needle is a river I really mean that it's a sidewalk. Which is a river of people.

Let me swim into your eyes. Let me show you my world. My album. My Albania. My albumen.

You can't go very far in life without biology.

This is me cooking the sound of a foghorn. Waterfront airships nudge the window. I can hear them tapping the glass. When you see a picture of sound you must imagine the sound.

Look at that guy. What a jerk. I hate sandals on men. The feet of men are not like the feet of women. The feet of women are gracile and pretty. The feet of men are brutish and ugly.

That guy? That's Bob Dylan. He's wearing the robe I bought him for his birthday. As you can see it's black and peppered with stars. We're at the age now where dishcloths are revelations and memory gives the illusion of being able to visit the past. It's taunting. This is that part of reality that boils.

Here we are in Scotland. Winter in Edinburgh. The momentum of my nose is a hermitage of perfect chemistry. It goes around on my face like a blemish of fists in a bathrobe reverie.

Them? Old wasps shaking hands. And over there is a ladder to the moon.

This is just a sentence, but it is teeming with sensation. Kayaks laminated by rain, mugs of green tea rendered in courtesy, an Icelandic night trapped in the window. The folds of a rose beginning to glitter with early precipitation. If you oil this sentence with pine resin, particles of sound will become letters.

I'm surrounded by things. I jump out of my eyes and crawl back into my mind through the apertures of my nose. This is how living is done and perceptions are made. This is how an album is made. Without a camera. Just the smell of the garden and the hose in the mud of its own creation.

