



# Grounds

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*Argotist Ebooks*

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# Grounds

**Materialize the Moirae:**  
*In Preparation for Olivia Cole*

*The Fates, or Moirae, were the goddesses who controlled the destiny of everyone from the time they were born to the time they died. They were: **Clotho**, the spinner, who spun the thread of a person's life, **Lachesis**, the apportioner, who decided how much time was to be allowed each person, and **Atropos**, the inevitable, who cut the thread when you were supposed to die...The Moirae were supposed to appear three nights after a child's birth to determine the course of its life.*

It extends  
a measure of illumination

a wick  
exalted in transition  
inducing conversation engorged with misconception

Eyes fixate  
then follow

An exchange of pleasantries  
the harbinger  
abridged  
to an innocuous advent

With less than urgency  
utterings dissolve into noise  
saturating orifices  
under the pretense of importance

Inspired by disregard  
the wick withers  
light embarks on a journey  
unhurried  
to a nameless terminus

and this begins  
the reasoning of your infamy

I am a bystander  
a forced role

unfamiliar nonnegotiable



and it has to do with this picture

when

a noisy blink from the corner  
arrests the motion of the goings on  
Kept in a catalog  
you stare without a blink  
aging before our eyes  
We seek reinforcements  
to replace these heirlooms  
having outgrown  
being accustomed to

Your hairdo is vaguely menacing  
and you stand just a bit out of place  
inching your way to an escape  
Your aversion to authority  
you attempt to keep hidden  
but emerges as we spiral away from

those resting adjacent

The  
columns  
are  
telling  
as  
they  
catalog

what was            is            shall become

Emptiness will be occupied  
with syllables  
of  
multiple meaning  
the vehicles of discourse

portrayed in a dim light

allowing for ambiguity

The route to you was empty      less than scenic      thought to possibly be barren  
arrivals in droves were disappointed      turned away      sworn to secrecy  
though not *deterred from entrance by their owlsh aspect*  
but rather urged to a marathon of a joust with perseverance

*Clotho – the spinner*  
**PRENATAL**



sustaining  
sustenance

Patches of hair

reveal

patches of skin

you subconsciously announce to attention

The most remote of exteriors  
align

conceal

reveal

the places they will soon become

territorial indifference troubles  
by  
condoning losing

I packed a persimmon

but it spoiled  
the surprise in store

for when you retrace

trails seldom traveled  
in permanent ink

And so she just floats away

Touched

is the result  
of the journey  
yet

we resurrect a wall

which just over

the pole of a pool-cleaning contraption  
is visible

Vines crawl from left to right  
and  
roots reach  
in search of sanctuary  
from the shadows

The receipt of the scene  
is with fervor  
and  
this optical infiltration  
would be reciprocated  
if not for the lack of the tapetum lucidum

So it stays  
finds a home  
wears out its welcome

That pole reaches up from the sky  
vines crawl from right to left

And you speak to me

in unattainable lyrics

muffled

due to my lactose intolerance

To you clear  
until clarity

so you continue

What will be cast away  
now retains its power

a lure of convenient

blindness

you articulate

so I can articulate

This probation of your dialect

is given over  
in isolation

with the permanence of ache

and  
you begin to awe yourself

with narcissism

You sit centered

surrounded by

nothings

Presenting itself in intervals

is your voice

Utterance of the void

renews your substance

while

you repress the scene  
within the frame of an enigma

*Lachesis – the apportioner*  
**PERINATAL**



The Polaroid taken  
captures what is now  
twice removed  
The vertical white lines  
dispatch her eyes  
to seek out the light between  
a terrible love  
and a place  
seldom seen

These two pillars of vines  
barnacles  
ivory  
enclose what was once sacred  
only to become public domain

She remembers her home  
standing in the front doorway  
hoping the approaching headlights  
were those of her father's  
Ford Festiva  
that had standard headlights  
but  
she knew  
she always knew

She was once woke staring  
at the framing of the door  
to him sweating

his face

sweating

his hands

sweating

the glass holding his brown liquor

sweating

the salty fumes permeating a being

once of pleasantness

That now sits  
quietly quiet on the edges of

a world succumb to those who  
employ the tripod versus the free hand

The map has unfolded and  
a once highlighted place  
has lost its presence

She will run amok through the gauntlet  
and come out dry

—hands offering towels will be  
shunned with a cold shoulder—

she will be too experienced to  
pick up bad habits

The misshapeness of the attempts  
of the avidly avid  
wounds these places by accident  
that resists the healing purposely

That old saying goes  
but is never quite gone

The wind passing through  
failed to secure a grip  
but  
the table totters from that stilt  
the folded subscription  
card has slipped from under  
Loudly  
these edges form new edges  
and shavings gather scatteredly  
in the corner of the page  
reminding her to be confidently  
confident in her early choices  
When the first real presence

is the awareness

of absence

The false bottoms

conceal  
the hunger she represses  
to be quenched yet again

the dichotomy is presented

though it is easily refuted

An inside pivot  
allows for reflective revelation

while  
she  
concedes

to peer pressure with pleasure

and in perfect isolation  
stimulation surrounds grievance

The  
descent

lengthens

almost wantonly

in spite of the firmament

now hued in gray

in an attempt to

keep the lawn dry

in a desert's vein

as she sweats

drinks

soaks

The Fiero parked here  
trains the eye

to divert from the leaking oil

This oasis may catch fire  
reddening with its reach

how long will it stay ablaze?

There's more sky  
in the sky  
than usual

the one cloud

lends to this vision

though she tiptoes  
closer to midnight

and

a reverberation  
leads the way  
to the division of sheep

There are lessons to be learned  
around all corners  
but these lizards scatter around the garden  
like they own the place  
damaging those fragile

branches not prepared for their weight

live and learn.

Landscapeers work loudly on hedges  
the muffs they wear only come in bright colors

The blaring electric keyboard  
tangles with the  
one and two cylinder engines

and that hummingbird hovers in mute over  
the pink hued hibiscus.

If she could close this space she would  
with a mere reach  
for an embrace  
from a loving father  
who uses this vehicle for pride

Sleeping under a tent  
will provide minimal security

not like a rock would

The bite of a mosquito  
a sting of a bee are  
administered happily  
their appetite heightens the senses  
making it okay for solitude

the life we live in dreams.

On cold days these lizards go into hiding

The chime of the neighbor dog's collar keeps  
an undeciphered rhythm  
the sun uselessly stands still

and she sits surrounded by vacancy  
telling her it's okay to move

Doors shrink to smaller versions of themselves  
when days get cold  
All huddled and moving slowly  
people dismiss people  
making chances to meet  
frequently missed.

She will look up upon contact  
since  
once having that dream  
when someone else was there.  
They sat together  
staring  
though not at one another  
before they stood and walked away

She often wonders  
what those lizards are doing  
when she doesn't see them

Are they stuck behind shrunken doors  
anxiously waiting for expansion?

Does an assassin know how to add?  
Multiply?

the silence holds still

mocking the silverfish

parked above the television  
She may have dreamt it

but

she may have experienced

this world before  
the vision was immediately

forgotten

but

she collects it again  
out of the corner  
of her eye

the swiftness with which this night dissolves  
subtracts the days at an alarming rate

and

I have to wake without getting any sleep

*Atropos – the inevitable*  
**POSTNATAL**



Life moves with an artifacts artifice

but now  
this pulley system may be too  
complex to work

and

the extension cords in the closet  
seek an outlet to hold on to  
for dear life

Who under these soft

white  
fluorescent  
lights

can recollect

or

manipulate

a trebuchet

The weight may be too light

too heavy

to close the spaces  
we will soon pass through

Under the floorboards

are more floorboards

cosmetically conveying this cold place

To what shall we set the degrees?

You are a keyhole  
but I long ago misplaced my keys

The postal annex – closed on Sundays –  
has the only working Silca Matrix S

and a locksmith  
*will only feed me for today*

There's no glass to break

or  
screen to remove

but the tragedy is

these stitches are sewn in upside-down  
roots are due to go underground  
there's no "E" in that word  
knitting is a different beast altogether  
sprouts are the newness  
that we bank on for the amazing  
that we boast about to our neighbors

and those fine drops of water

split twigs in two

then

split twigs in two

then

split twigs in two

Before the cycle  
comes a realization

and I exercise the demons  
in the folds of my neck

muttering factoids  
under a breath invisible  
in freezing temperatures

In an ageless time  
the adhesive loosens its grip  
when the pillows horizontal stripes run vertical in repetition

There's a rupture in my post-existence  
which functions with spontaneity

dormant quakes  
erupts

obliteration obliterates obligation  
The toll has been taken  
sending shockwaves  
for again

I become invisible to myself

yet you have educed from a shadow at night  
to satiating my field of view

You move over the top of receding buildings  
as you grow

engulfing gloomy visions  
in your iridescent glow

There is now an open window

allowing you passage unattenuated

You are more than a thing

more than a pale thing

you are the world seen from my window

cows buildings mountains clouds

obstruct my view of the horizon

interruptions  
obstacles in its path

attempting to negotiate their

interface

of source and destination

This combative

for my feelings

is coupled with

a retreating

to each's opposite

You are inserted here

between the lines

of this loose leaf

a less than ample  
space for you to roam  
there's a spontaneous expansion  
as you shape-to-fit  
in an act of accordance  
a precession

to your arms  
tied in a knot  
and you standing in the way of a B-boy  
bent in dismay

The pregnant pause precedes  
you asking if I can roll my tongue

But which do you mean  
the one with or without sound?

I can do both  
my mother can do both

I leave you with a blemish  
to remind you to find me  
under the ficus  
where the cat sleeps

the blowfish suckles

I lost my way

in a wordy wind

walking parallel  
to lines of longitude

you couldn't follow

nonetheless you request an audience

**Sphered:**

*What is the only way to accurately represent the true shape of the earth?*

*Located in the northeastern portion of the San Francisco Bay Area in Solano County. The city is nearly half way between Sacramento and San Francisco on I-80. The city was founded in 1852 by William McDaniel, on a part of the 1843 Mexican land grant Rancho Los Potos purchased from Manuel Cabeza Vaca. The city was a Pony Express stop and was home to many large produce companies and local farms which flourished due to the Vaca Valley's rich soil, including The Nut Tree. At one time an Onion Festival was held annually. This stopped in 2000 due to the onion processing plant being closed down. Two state prisons are located here: California State Prison, Solano and California Medical Facility. The latter prison houses inmates undergoing medical treatments.*



The path to this place

is coarse

resistant

and you travel

because you can't get back to your feet

After a loss of traction

you have grabbed for a meaning

The word

*memory*

may be too heavy

the opposite of forget

misplacement

loss

We often lose the paths we travel

then retrace our steps

Migration begins with a destination

to and from

a new frontier

a detached entity

Porcupine Creek maybe

where the search will begin

end

There's a barge leaving at 2pm that you might want to be on. The next one comes next month.

When you consider the small place you occupy, there must be more than the one *pay streak*.

The infinite immensity here hides what you've come for – the man across the river says, *look there*.

This place knows nothing of you, and the fixed-wing you passengered on the second leg is now inoperable.

You take fright in the amazement of here, now – just as a grizzly wanders into your line of sight.

The faux presentation of an emptiness of life you realize with the urgency of urgency.

Is there a single word for this place?

A rationale sits  
listless  
on a park bench

unassuming  
waiting  
for your return

The populations of  
rodents  
birds  
break from this grandiose arena  
having grown out of being patient

Rationally speaking  
you too  
sit there

The bends start to set in  
upon your rapid ascension

you find shade

is dearer than none

as if when sun hit  
I didn't provide shelter

There's an alternative to this consumer imperative  
which navigates its way diligently

suggesting a potential for failure

In a solitary stance

you move

providing fodder  
for the expanse of the generic

You emerge in a historical context  
a unique subject of repetition

irreducible

and down to the spinal  
of a said place

Over the horizontal you trip  
with the expectation of summering well  
potential seasons awaiting anxiously

adjacent to stigmatic

translucent skies

It rains here

only when the sun is away

You speak to me

only once eye contact is lost



There's water

less than clear

blue

leading to geographic blind spots  
securing your visible obscurity

longing

writhing

pulling us into the deepest core  
of liminal abandonment

*Its latitude at 64°08' N makes it the world's northernmost capital of a sovereign state. It is located in southwestern Iceland, on the southern shore of Faxaflói Bay. The location of the first permanent settlement in Iceland, which Ingólfur Arnarson is it said to have established around 870. Until the 18th century, there was no urban development in the city location. The city was founded in 1786 as an official trading town. It is often dubbed "the nightlife capital of the north."*

There's an interconnectedness realized as we arrive

Your Speedos on display

under your pea coat

places

you

on

a

pedestal

that screams at those who pass by

and doesn't turn away

upon eye contact

You should have lied down

to disguise

your disgust

while black-eyed angels

sang a pyramid song

yielding the weakness you attempt to conceal

less than honorably

under the guise of an outsider

You are forced into  
the diction of alienation

an estrangement from our community

The tradition of climbing                      standing

dominates

while we sit as the minority

Adrift you are ambitious

your experience

our hindrance

The world is dying  
as you attempt to live  
leaving footprints on its decaying crust

Sturdy as it may seem  
the scaffold is a transient

Place

behooves constancy  
with incessant still  
ness

There's an unspooling  
a lengthening  
defenseless

backed by an infused fatigue  
a derivation of  
your chase for sturdiness

Pinched from a piece of clay  
the asphalt



an unconscious recipient of a

place

acts to regulate temperature

as the attendant author

ity

You pose as a figure of entry

poised

in

brevity

a marker for shelter  
from the pounding

tracks

in search of a view

of potential landscape

*Located in the northeast portion of the state, it is situated on the west bank of the Missouri River. As of the 2010 census, the city population was 35,251. Founded in 1854, was the first incorporated city in Kansas. Beneath the city appears to be another one entirely: a recently publicized underground series of "vaults" is thought to have been used for commerce, fugitives, or slavery. It is home to University of Saint Mary (Kansas), operated by the Sisters of Charity. Is sister city to the city of Wagga Wagga in the Australian state of New South Wales as well as the city of Omihachiman, Japan. Home of Leavenworth Federal Prison.*



on the back of the third  
shelf of the pantry  
next to the Italian Vegetable Progresso

Our home  
a two-way mirror  
its beauty polluted by emptiness

*A military airport in Spain, near Madrid. It was used by the United States Air Force until 1996. Now it is used as a military airport by the Spanish Air Force and as the commercial Madrid-Torrejón Airport. During the Cold War the facility was headquarters of the Sixteenth Air Force (16 AF) of United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE), as well as home to the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing (401 TFW). It is now a major Spanish Air Force base and a secondary civilian airport for Madrid.*

*I like being the only stranger*

you proclaim in a voice slightly strained

*I can be anybody I want*

You            the perpetrator

Yourself        the victim

waiting to be found

Your memories of yourself

accumulate randomly

not correlating



Would you be conversant  
if the ground shook  
and I appeared suddenly before  
you in a crowded foyer?

Would you ignore me  
like the phonemes that are a necessity  
in the construct of your world?

In praxis  
circuitously seeking a freedom  
you deem essential

An adventure  
funneled as abortive  
creates in its wake  
a radiance  
bordering on obscurity

a diphthong  
leering at your hiatus

An emblem

masking absence

shackles your grief

just as I

again

become audible

and speak to you

in unimportant tones



*The capital of the region of Campania. Known for its rich history, art, culture, architecture, music, and gastronomy. Located halfway between two volcanic areas, Mount Vesuvius and the Phlegraean Fields. Founded in the 9th-8th century BC as a Greek colony, it is one of the oldest cities in the world. Part of the Roman Republic as a major cultural center; the premiere Latin poet, Virgil, received part of his education there and later resided in its environs. Beneath it sits a series of caves and structures created by centuries of mining, which is in part of an underground geothermal zone.*

You are center less

as you go out on your own

reads only

The compass you employ

East to West

North has been eliminated  
from direction

and South has been scratched out  
with vivid prescriptiveness

A run-on commentary

overlays as equivocation  
with the size to replace a vernacular

*A population of 66,194. The principal city of the Portland-South Portland-Biddeford metropolitan area, which includes Cumberland, York, and Sagadahoc counties. The city seal depicts a phoenix rising from ashes, which aligns with the city's motto, Resurgam, Latin for "I will rise again." The first European settler was Capt. Christopher Levett. Was first permanently settled in 1633 as a fishing and trading village named Casco. An independent film studio called the Maine Studios, located here, is home to the largest green screen in New England.*



A weeping  
with an encompassing magnetism

I incorporate into the day to day

Your instantaneous aversion  
to the laboriousness  
of my personal struggle  
with your absence  
resides as socially cathartic

I acknowledge your absence

with enormous complexity

filling this nothingness with indefinites

and move under  
a canopy of fragments

Outside of myself  
in consequence

I linger

I should have  
given you access  
to roam  
across nomadic crossroads

without a body

while staying within the limits  
of normal human mobility

Calvin Pennix lives with his wife and daughter in Mission Viejo, CA. He has holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Chapman University and he currently completing his MA in English. Calvin is currently an instructor at Everest College, where he teaches Composition, Literature and Algebra. His primary interests lie in the intersections of the production of music, visual art and poetry. He is in constant pursuit to portray that imagination, art, and literature are as real as experience. Calvin's poetry has appeared in *UCity Review*, *A Few Lines Magazine*, *Unlikely 2.0*, *Counterexample Poetics*, *Ishaan Literary Review* and *Truck*.