
WB

WRITER'S BLOCK



Issue #47

WINTER 2022

Colophon

editors-in-chief
Laiana Farias
Olivia Lucchesi

editorial board
Anne van Spaendonck
Marijke Ottenheym
Vivian van Klabergen
Julia Kaczmarek
Elisa Paci

final editors
Reinier van der Plas
Emilia Barriga

contributors
Lena Beckmann
Linn Berkvens
Kexin Huang
Richard Dinges
Rose Mary Boehm
Arthur Mulder
Maarten Luyten
Britta Brusven
Danae Spyrou
Jeremy Scott
Klaudyna Kaczmarek

cover photos
Laiana Farias
Klaudyna Kaczmarek

artwork & photography
Olivia Lucchesi
Laiana Farias
Ivonne Luna
Marcele Rimoli

layout & illustrations
Julia Kaczmarek

send us submissions!

submissions@writersblockmagazine.com

Essays
Short Stories
Poetry
Columns
Reviews
Artwork
Comics

Black & white photos

all skill levels welcome



UNIVERSITY
OF AMSTERDAM

- 3** PHOTOGRAPH • *artwork* • Laiana Farias
- 4** EDITORIAL • Laiana Farias & Olivia Lucchesi
- 5** ABOUT OLD FRIENDSHIP • *poetry* • Lena Beckmann
- 6** GHOSTS • *artwork* • Marcelle Rimoli
- 7** INHERITANCE • *poetry* • Linn Berkvens
- 8** GLASS • *artwork* • Marcelle Rimoli
- 9** PHOTOGRAPH • *artwork* • Ivonne Luna
- 10** LONDON WITHOUT MY FOOD • *poetry* • Kexin Huang
- 11** TOUCHPOINT & FINAL DAYS • *poetry* • Richard Dinges
- 12** PHOTOGRAPH • *artwork* • Olivia Lucchesi
- 13** WHEN IT'S ALL OVER • *poetry* • Rose Mary Boehm
- 14** BROOKLYN BRIDGE • *artwork* • Olivia Lucchesi
- 15** IF THERE WERE ONE THING THESE SHOES
- 16** COULD SAY • *poetry* • Maarten Luyten
- 17** PHOTOGRAPHS • *artwork* • Ivonne Luna
- 18** FLATLANDS • *poetry* • Danae Spyrou
- 19** THE ARILS • *poetry* • Danae Spyrou
- 20** ALGAR DE BENAGIL • *artwork* • Laiana Farias
- 21** CONSIDERATIONS *poetry* • Jeremy Scott
- 22** PHOTOGRAPH • *artwork* • Marcelle Rimoli
- 22** DESERT • *artwork* • Olivia Lucchesi
- 23** PHOTOGRAPH • *artwork* • Laiana Farias
- 24** YGGRASIL FROM FIBERGLASS
• *short story* • Arthur Mulder

WRITER'S BLOCK

W I N T E R

I S S U E



by Laiana Farias

an editorial by Laiana Farias and Olivia Lucchesi

*"Let everything happen to you
Beauty and terror
Just keep going
No feeling is final"*

— Rainer Maria Rilke

New Beginnings: the recurring theme that simultaneously defines our new editorial board and the evolving world around us. The small team that composes Writer's Block has been completely renewed, and we have progressively been working together to decipher the puzzle of our beloved magazine. Although the challenges faced throughout our journey resulted in a delay in the publishing of our Winter Edition, we are thrilled to bring you Issue #47.

Similarly, in the midst of the confusion and conflicting issues of the world, we see new beginnings in the silver linings. Although several issues from the beginning of the pandemic are still relevant, we believe that humanity must shift its mindset to a more pragmatic perspective. Life is gradually beginning to take form again in spite of the continuous fight against the world crisis, and we encourage our readers to delve into every moment of 'normality' that presents itself. Enjoy every breath of ordinary life and embrace every feeling of gratitude. We never know what tomorrow will bring, so open your heart to the new opportunities that emerge from these uncertain times.

Nevertheless, we understand that we are still locked in the rollercoaster of the new world taking us on adrenaline-inducing ups and downs. Issue #47 consists of hopeful undertones of relationships, personal reflections and insights, escapism, as well as a short story that considers the ability of nature to re-emerge in a place where the lines between technology and humanity have become blurred. We hope that the pieces in our new issue can temporarily provide you with a peaceful sense of detachment from the chaos we live in by offering a sheltered path into the world of literature.

We want to thank all of the wonderful writers who contributed to the making of this edition and our board members who strived to perfect it. Despite their wintery touch, we hope that you find warmth in our pages.

With love,

Laiana & Olivia

ABOUT OLD FRIENDSHIP

a poem by Lena Beckmann

i used to write poetry into the edges of your
body, your smile
sharp enough to cut through my paper-thin bullshit
the stories i tell about you are of
making me laugh and helping me climb fences at night, onto the football field and
back into the small town streets, but
i keep your tenderness to myself, want
to cradle your softness in my hands;
my hands in your hands, your hands in my hands—
soft and tired and gentle.

i'm singing songs like the plans we made that fell through,
that summer of beaches and the movies we never ended up watching;
but really i'm thinking about the riverside hugs,
the careful questions —
the homesick tears in our childhood rooms.

mostly, i'm writing about you,
or rather about all the parts of me i left within you; there's maybe a third of
you left behind in me, i think, lodged carefully inside my heart.
i keep telling them about me,
but really i'm talking about you,
about growing together,
and every time, i'm surprised to find all the ways in which we used to fit together.

i wonder, you know, if you notice the pieces i left behind;
like one might notice a new couch if they visited their parents for christmas.
people really do grow up, we might quietly think,
if we met again now; silently reaching
out for a handshake and missing the place
where we used to live within each other,
holding tight against the storm outside the orbit we once shared, hearts
beating together, just close enough to hear.

i paint binary systems out of the memories of your smiles,
i collected the letters of the hair strands escaping your braids
and now i rearrange them into poems about us, again.



GHOSTS *by* Marcelle Rimoli

INHERITANCE

poem by Linn Berkvens

You linger with my cold words
Your face and my name entwined
I know you mean well, I truly do
When you wrestle with the noise
And your hands hit the tableside
A life spent crawling out of the blue

You and I and the electric currents
We know each other too well
and it hurts to see so clearly how
I turned out of you, how we unfold
a hole in the hollow of my chest
where I thought I was just the one

I bleed and laugh in your colors
Your skin is rough and calloused
and if all is well, then mine will be too



GLASS by Marcele Rimoli



by Ivonne Luna

LONDON WITHOUT MY FOOD

a poem by Kexin Huang

light seems tasty when along some foreign roads dive
down the bread on windowsill floats my windy survive
better eat up my clothes with my chilling heart raveling
crawling down the lonely street into my world travelling
is my fragmenting a salt into a thousand pieces down
the wind yet still can't, can't feel the taste of hometown



RICHARD DINGES' POEMS

TOUCHPOINT

Wrapped behind drapes
closed against afternoon
sun, my two sisters
dine at my table
on chef's salads.
Between bites, we
touch on family
stories only we know
now, the last of our
tribe. We confirm
our common past
that only we share,
before my sisters
depart into their
two separate lives,
their brake lights
fading into
a setting sun.

FINAL DAYS

Ice cracks a hollow
echo beneath snow,
a pristine white
hole that opens
into nothing
except an ashen
face of ice
in a frozen stare
up toward a gray
sky where clouds
hide the universe
in a vain attempt
to convince me
all eternity weighs
down on me here
in this veil of winter
cold and a thin sheet
of ice cracks slowly



by Olivia Lucchesi

WHEN IT'S ALL OVER

a poem by Rose Mary Boehm

Perhaps mountains still echo our voices—
at least a whisper of the banter during the hike,
moments of fear on the sheer rock side,
a soft 'ah' or 'oh' of human wonder
at the majesty of the unforgiving peaks.

Water may still remember our form,
the caresses when it opened up to let us in,
then closed after we passed.
An ephemeral reminder of what was solid once.

Air formerly made room for us, entered us,
only to leave again bearing a souvenir of our DNA.
A whiff of particulates of skin and laughter,
of young witches dancing on soft grass in the hollow.

Alien archaeologists may find fossils of a jawbone here,
a femur there, a child's skeleton perfectly preserved
in post-apocalyptic mud. How will they know us?

Our poems carried on the wind, storms lifted
the crescendos of our most passionate symphonies,
pompous oratory hung from pillars left standing
after giant waves thundered in and flushed sand,
plastic, concrete, and stone, perhaps
exposing two lovers embracing,
bone on brittle bone.

BROOKLYN BRIDGE
by Olivia Lucchesi



IF THERE WERE ONE THING THESE SHOES COULD SAY

a poem by Maarten Luyten

I am going, dear, even if I am tired of it
Broken toes myself, that's what I am
Damp cloth furthering worn souls no more than
Sweat and blisters opening over and over
But I have seen a future
For I carry it one step at a time even if I will never arrive
I am the road, not the ending

I am owned once then discarded
For someone's white savior complex
I am nameless to them, yet I know the names
Of every dirt road, railway system, seashore and
Secret crossing across half this planet

I have drowned many times
In my own mind, dropped dead picked up again
By hands that were passing the generations
On the road to Evros
Beaten the life out of me by a thousand
Trampling feet, they said they were border police
But when you spend a lifetime walking fences
You learn to understand: no one belongs
Anywhere

What we are is a perpetually transforming crossroad of
 The history our steps trace back to, the voices
 Speaking through us, what our body is doing
 In this very moment
 And the gap between who we dreamt ourselves to be
 And the skin draped on us like damp cloth

I am eternally falling deeper
 In me but always losing what I was
 In becoming

I am the road
 The in between yet already
 This forsaken past has reached my grandchildren
 For they too will wear separation in their names

I am dirt
 Bruises and rocks, mud covering mud
 Drenched in the rains of Idomeni 'till the rains became me
 I am that stiff crackle you hear on the snowy mountain tops
 Between Iran and Turkey, I am the soil of my home
 A silent memory to everything that went wrong on this planet
 And I am going, even if I'm tired of it
 I am writing my existence in this earth by the meters
 Every worn step a heartbeat, thudding:
 I am here
 I am here
 I am here
 I am here



PHOTOGRAPHS BY IVONNE LUNA



FLATLANDS

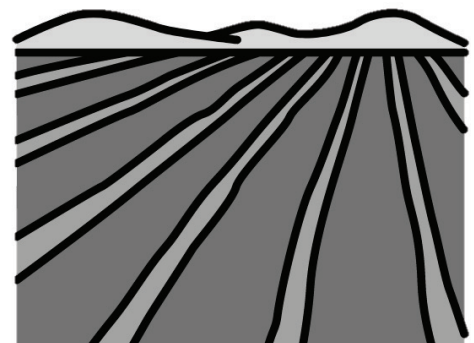
a poem by Danae Spyrou

I'm walking through a flatland that is never flat
Breathing the heavy moist of the moss
touching the rainy pine needles
touching the leaves,
touching but not touching at the same time,
breathing the rain;

A flatland is never flat;
it's only a word that describes its absence.

And we walk through these flatlands
That signify the loss of this world
And the vast love we feel but
Cannot put into words.

We live within the absence of this world.
We know this absence better than anything else.



THE ARILS

a poem by Danae Spyrou

I silently watch the arils
as they fall
scatter, be

I keep walking
but
I can't stop thinking of the pomegranate.

How it fell and was.
How I fell and am.

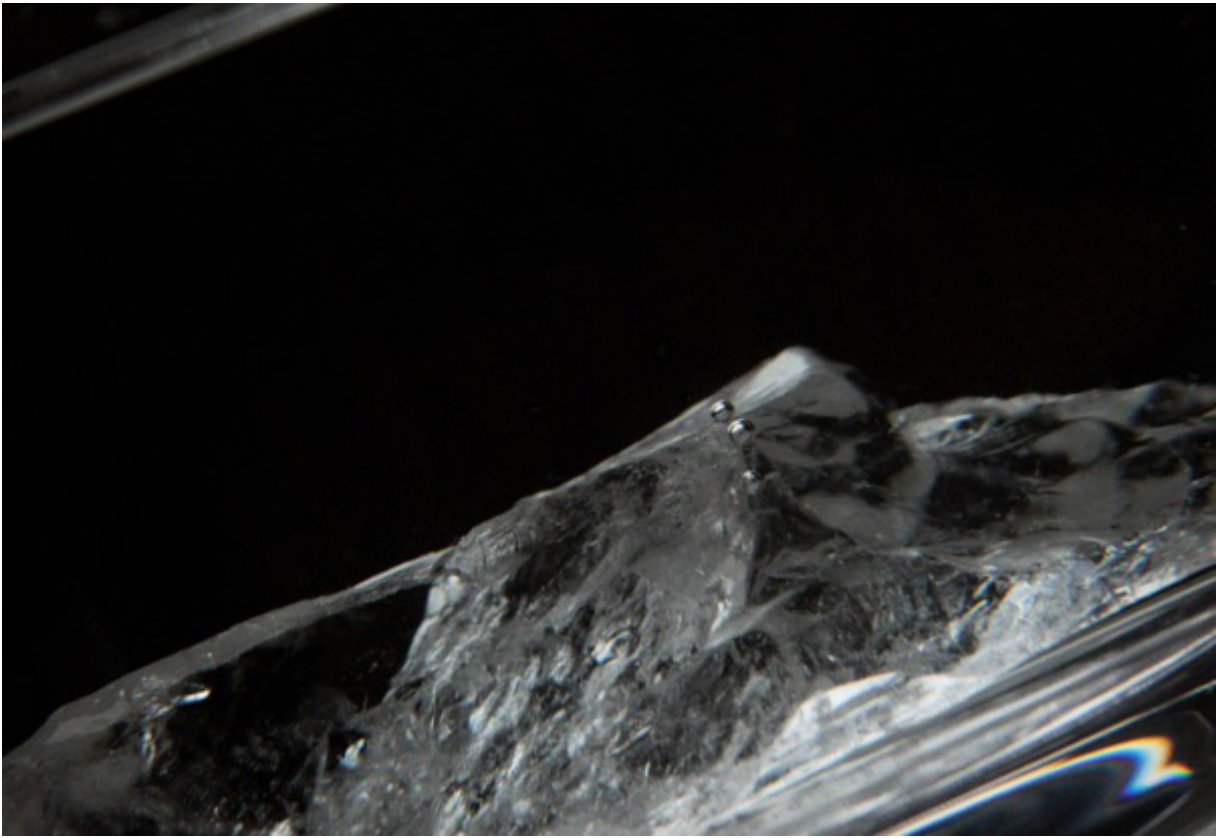


ALGAR DE BENAGIL, PORTUGAL
by Laiana Farias

CONSIDERATIONS

a poem by Jeremy Scott

Stop to consider
that time is mute,
death is behind you,
life is now, that
you are beyond
comprehension,
like water that
refuses to become
ice, like fire that
doesn't burn, like
air that breathes.



by Marcele Rimoli



DESERT *by Olivia Lucchesi*



by Laiana Farias

YGGRASIL FROM FIBERGLASS

a short story by Arthur Mulder

Hugh wakes with the rest of Timezone 3. His sore feet barely fit in his ladder-laced boots. His head thuds violently. A colleague from the room next to him grins at his grogginess. He tries to smile back. In two straight lines all thirty men of Hall A3F march to the mess-bay. The eggs and baked potatoes help with the hangover. All A3 Privates are there, all two hundred mechanic men, pouring in from their holes. White lamps welded into the ceiling fail to replicate sunlight, their sole purpose. The last few men trickle in as the breakfast-bell quivers. Its shy ringing is followed by the captain's daily speech, soft cracks from the speakers betray it's a recording. Hugh shovels the air-tube-dispensed-breakfast into his mouth as fast as he can. The captain's recording is still talking as Hugh finishes his juice and water. The monologue ends mentioning the number of days since the Nidavellir and its hundred-thousand inhabitants flew into unmapped space like an afterthought. Hugh stares ahead, trying not to hear the conversations around him. The bell shivers again and all A3 Privates march to their Cannon-Station-Units, CSU's. Hugh's neighbor asks him about something. Hugh answers dully and ducks into his globe. After it became mandatory for CSU's to be manned, they were quickly dubbed 'globes' by their new inhabitants because the glass wall on the far side of the room curved outwards. The room contains a chair, a cannon and a black box. Hugh drops himself into his seat and gazes through the rounded glass into space. Beneath him the Nidavellir stretches out, floating in the wilderness. The outside of the ship is a highway of shields, pipes, and sensors. Rounded windows reaching into space are sprinkled over the chrome mass. Four cylinders involuntarily spin around The Hull, holding the world-computer as it carefully guides them through the nothingness. It radiates cold white light, making the protrusions of the ship cast geometric shadows. The end of the spacecraft reaches so far away from Hugh its edges blur into the blackness.

Oceans of plasma-dots roll over the unending sky like foam on brazen waves. Colored dots that must be whole galaxies blink in and out of existence just for the entertainment of onlookers. Suns exclaim their dominance with furious brightness, moons bid obedience with endless cartwheels around their masters. Between every wonder of pure energy hanging aimlessly in the unending day, night, sunset and sunrise is a darkness that made most eyes assume they had simply gone blind.

Eight work hours roll past without anything to report. There hasn't been anything to report in 578 days. A beeping sounds and Hugh the turret-gunner exits his globe in unison with the rest of wing A3. Two straight lines march out. The lines break as they arrive at Crossing A. Some gunners head for their rooms, some for the Garden-bay, most for The Mall. Hugh joins the largest stream and meanders with them for a while. He splits off as Vanaheim-Bar comes into view. Its signs playfully dare you to drink yourself to death. Hugh accepts the challenge with a vacant smile and orders a neat gin. The bartender addresses him with his full name, Huginn, before asking how his day was. Hugh replies. The conversation dies with the fourth drink. Hugh examines The Mall just as it begins to roll and blur behind his eyes: neon signs bolted above useless shops; dim white light refusing to let it be evening; glass railings with men hanging over them like dying vines.

A loud conversation at the end of the bar pulls the turret-gunner out of his gin-induced trance. One of the younger men, still wearing his dark-green beret despite being off-duty, is mouthing off a well-dressed but deeply drunk girl. They are illuminated by red signs exclaiming 'Every hour you drink is happy hour' and 'Many things that seem not to exist are simply in the Dwarf's; safekeeping' in bold but bland letters. She had asked him why the turrets aren't just controlled by machines, they make our food, our clothes, wash us and heal us, why not protect us? The soldier responds, confronted with the futility of his work, as all gunners are once in a while, when some drunk broad starts yapping away about robots this and that, without thinking about The Platoon of Heroes! Hugh rolls his eyes and tries to ignore the young man whose venom-stained spit flies from his lips as he talks. He fails miserably and returns his attention to the couple after ordering that seventh gin he'd been thinking about. The boy is ranting about how the platoon was gunned down by a malfunctioning turret, how the rotted machine killed more than three-thousand good men that day, heroes, real goddamned heroes, unarmed men, doing repair work on their Hull. Hugh was about to ask why they were called heroes if they were just doing repair work, fuck, he did repair work once in a while, and he didn't go around calling himself a hero or anything, but he didn't feel like fighting. After that incident, The Platoon of Heroes Law was instituted, making the presence of a human in every turret room mandatory. The boy praises the law loudly, bemoaning the brave heroes that fell so that this virtue could prevail. After the fourteenth gin, Hugh finally called the boy a blabbering idiot who wouldn't understand what a hero is if he shoved three up his ass.

With a black eye and half a bottle of gin Hugh stumbles into the Garden-bay. Long lines of perfect palms, birches, pines, and willows are interrupted by explosively colored beds of immaculate marigolds, irises, primroses and foxgloves. In front of every cast iron pot holding one of the plants hangs a small screen projecting how the trees or flowers will look in a week, a month, a year. The machines are never wrong. They control growth with small injections done automatically every seven minutes and forty-three seconds. As a boy all this amazed Hugh, but he lost that pretty early on.

The turret-gunner wakes in his bed smelling like tobacco and puke, he must have ended the evening smoking in the ventilator room before an assistance-machine escorted him to his quarters. His sore feet barely fit in his ladder-laced boots. A colleague from the room next to him smirks at his unsteadiness. Two straight lines march to the mess-hall. Soft cracks from the speakers betray the recording. The bell shivers again and all A3 Privates march to their Cannon-Station-Units. Hugh ducks into his globe. Hours pass staring into the abyss with its marvels floating in the wilderness.

Solar systems shift their borders, pulling back layers of blackness dotted with lively lights to reveal more of the dazzling sameness. Constellations in every shape imaginable perform perplexing plays climaxing in hard white lines being drawn by comets. Movement and light crescendo in what must be black holes, infinite destructions contorting existence itself in incomprehensible displays of endless-

A blue light suddenly catches Hugh's attention. It comes from a small crack in the floor, just over where the black box stands. The harsh white lights of the station, only ever interrupted by the green and red neon of The Mall, were the only lights he'd ever seen inside the Nidavellir. He returns his attention to the wonders outside his little snow globe and lets time slip through his fingers. In the evening he drinks and doesn't see the proud soldier again. He strolls through the Garden with the same drunken strut as last night but manages to reach his bed on his own this time. He dreams of floating in the wilderness. Hugh wakes with the rest of Timezone 3. His head thumps viciously. The tube-delivered breakfast helps with the hangover. The captain's recording is still rambling on as Hugh finishes his juice and water. Hugh's neighbor asks him something. He ducks into his globe. Again his retinas are violently overwhelmed by the stars and the black.

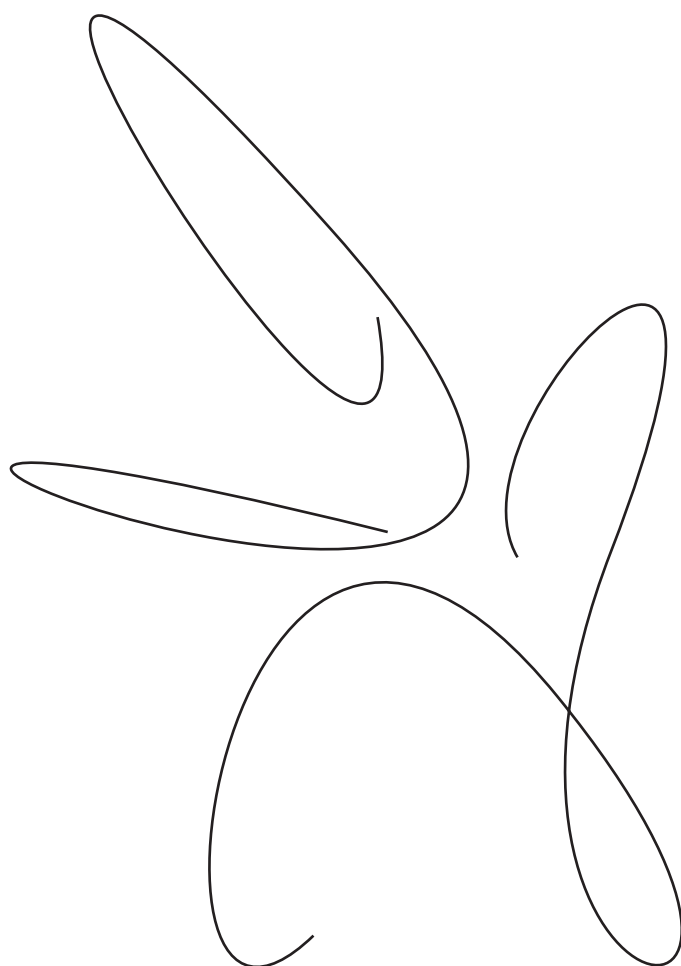
Long lines of smooth light glimmer and shiver, beckoning the red and blue planets to dance in their shine, among the other curiosities of the unknown. Untouched systems rotating, having never been seen by human eyes before but moments ago. A deep calmness rushes between the rings of debris curling around planets and into swirling vortexes, fighting aimlessly to maintain their unending-

Again, the blue light pulls Hugh out of his concentration. His upper lip briefly rise towards his nose in irritation and he pushes himself up from his seat. Prying his fingers into the crack from which the strange light spilled, Hugh violently yanks. The rusted boards let out a metallic shriek and snap open. A small airshaft whose walls were entirely obscured by softly glowing cables stretches out underneath him. He looks around carefully, like a child about to take a piece of candy intended for another, but soon realizes the foolishness of this. He is alone. An animalistic shuffling proves him wrong as soon as he finishes the thought. He sticks his head into the opening just in time to catch a glimpse of the galloping creature disappearing into another vent. Without knowing why, but being very sure of his decision nonetheless, he throws himself into the vent and pursues the sound.

Cables sprawl out underneath him, sparkling with blue light, flowing from shaft to shaft like the brooks in the Mall's movie-bay. He wades through the stream, following the shuffling sounds that play with their own echoes in the shafts. He instinctually takes a left and a right and a left, probing ever deeper into the sprawling system. The shafts grow wider till he can walk hunched over, pushing the cables that slope down from the ceiling away as he does. The budding cables grow thicker and begin to split and multiply in spots, looping around and ducking over and under one another. Some cables end, burgeoning out into small bulbs of lively light. He creeps closer to the sound still. In some spots the cables grow apart to reveal the mechanics of the ship toiling away; bustling, buzzing cogs and cylinders frolicking around their axles gleefully. Pulleys and pumps hum vibrant tunes inside their confines. Hugh could walk upright now and does so smiling. Around him the ship breathes, thumps, and grumbles sporadically. The hall ends. A girl sits cross-legged on a glass floor in a small room bordering space, the shimmering cords lay curled around her feet. The blackness and the stars surround her silhouette, she is floating in the wilderness.

Hugh steps into the chamber and opens his mouth, but the girl shoots up and darts away. Again without thought, the turret-gunner pursues. The cables now furl around sensors that sprout out of the metal, blossoming into flickering scanners. He delves deeper and deeper into the ship, into the wilderness. The halls get bigger and bigger till even his fingertips can't reach the ceiling. The cacophony of mechanic sounds the ship hurls through the halls drown out the girl's footsteps. Hugh's eyes hurry from hallway to hallway, desperately trying to find a sign of her. She lets out an earthy scream, daring him deeper into the beast. He dares. After what feels like hours, the lush halls disembody into an enormous cavity. At the center, all cables swirl together, rising upwards to a ball of light suspended in the air. Hugh knows what it is before he can see all of it. The mountainous world-computer. The true helmsman of the Nidavellir. From its curved peak spring more cables, even brighter than the others, flourishing into even more thriving blue bulbs. Draped over the rising cables are torn sheets of plastic, swinging in the breeze. The light and life of the machine dazzle. The girl was standing in its regenerating neon-light and her green eyes reflect all the blue floating in the wilderness.

'You'll stay a while, won't you?'



want more *Writer's Block*?

Read more on
writersblockmagazine.com

Follow us on social media:
Twitter: @writersblockmag
Instagram: @writersblockmag
Facebook: @wbthemag

