

Andra Nicolescu
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The Dead

Romanians have this weird thing about the dead, you see. Until the twenty-first century, we kept them in our living rooms. We couldn't let them go. Who wants to let go of their dead, anyway?

Gabe Herron

Gabe Herron
*An Incident at the
Bell Museum of Natural History*
I mean, Jesus Christ...this was his life.
His very own life!
He could do anything!
And he hadn't ever stopped
to think about that before.

Maxime Kawawa-Beaudin

Maxime Kawawa-Beaudin
Waiting for Fireworks
There was the brotherhood of long
friendship between us, a channel that was
open without any need for preamble.

Ethan Chatagner

Ethan Chatagner
Dentists
It was as if all of the intricate and detailed
Pakistani designs I'd expected to find
suffusing the house had been concentrated
into the teapot, hidden there under its cozy.

Arianna Reiche
Arianna Reiche
Archive Warden

Maybe she wanted me to come join her
for a little gossip, or to warm our fingers
on the photocopier like some of the ladies
do. What can I say, women get cold!

Jeff VanderMeer

Interview by David Naimon
What I really wanted to do was wed
the epic and the personal in a way
that I don't think is that common.

Randolph Thomas
Randolph Thomas
Heir Apparent

Taking care of it was beyond my dad's
abilities, and this wasn't even really his
fault. Keeping up a house just wasn't
the kind of thing he could manage.



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*"In two straight lines they broke their bread
and brushed their teeth and went to bed."*
Madeline by Ludwig Bemelmans, 1939

Amy Koppelman
Amy Koppelman
The Moses Basket

I couldn't shut my mind off. Didn't want to.
Even then I understood it had something to
do with a lack of control. If you let yourself
relax, anything can happen.

Chad Schuster

Chad Schuster
We Work in the Dark
"Where'd you get the gun?"
he said to my mother.
"Oh please, Tony," she said.
"It's not that hard to get a gun."

Petey Nathaniel Malae
Petey Nathaniel Malae
El Camino

But as this youngest one believed that
you had no say in his affairs, it was
therefore perfectly safe to include you in
whatever he'd decided he'd do. He was
only letting you know as a courtesy.

Ajit Dhillon

Ajit Dhillon
Waiting
As we searched, I wanted to tell you
something, but for the life of me, I couldn't
remember what. I think it was a joke tinged
with profundity, you know how I like those,
something to set our minds at ease.

Kristen Hamelin Tracey

Kristen Hamelin Tracey
A New World

Perry didn't know what to do with
those first few minutes. No boyfriend.
No relationship with God to speak of.
In the end she sent a text to Sophie.

Corey Flintoff
Corey Flintoff
Early Stages

Haley. Hydrangeas. Chickadees—those
are the birds. Chenille—that's the
fabric of the bathrobe. He feels buoyed
by the memory of so many words.

Gregory J. Wolos
Gregory J. Wolos
Boy Strangling Goose

But the terrifying, breathtaking span
of those spread wings had stopped
Reilly dead—he couldn't even raise
his cane against the wild thing's attack.