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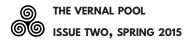
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BRITTNEY KNAUF THREE POEMS



The Clocks Start to Melt

After Salvador Dali's The Persistence of Memory

Bill got laid off, so we're all working late.

Steve's been here awhile, so he's gone through this before. "You know how, at three, time starts moving slower?" he asks.

"Well, at five, the clocks start to melt."

I laughed. I stapled three hundred documents, made photocopies, sent faxes, and made myself a slave to the boss lady.

Sitting at the computer task after task, the glare hurt. We made more coffee.

Five came, and sure enough the clocks were melting. By seven, I was on a beach and there was one hanging off a tree and one clinging lazily to the edge of my desk.

The Bus

I rode the bus home. I looked up from my book and took out a fine-toothed black comb that brushed the dandruff from a girl's hair.

I wished I could shampoo it.

I went shopping and I was alone – women on the other side of the aisle didn't see when I waved at them.

I smiled. "That wouldn't look good on you." *Nothing!*

Sometimes I wish I could sit with a book and take the bus, or sit in a café. Sometimes I wish I could just watch like the light bulb that lives in a dome glass case.

First Day

Silent flashes of striking light speckle the room, speckle the girl's new white curves; the pole is stagnant as a headstone for an empty coffin. She is a mouse to the hawks' pivoting eyes as she spins, like the sound of an empty room.

The others darken circles of experience under their eyes that allow them to smile and step up and ask. They are as haggard as their regulars who sit like businessmen, watching the window of yet another plane.

A man pays extra and, like the lone caught fish, the girl is taken; her eyes blank and nostalgic for the water.