



THE GRAIL

VOLUME I

FEBRUARY 20, 2014

ISSUE II

INSIDE

MUSIC AT REED

GARRETT LINCK ('17)

Abodes of Owls, Linck's new album, to be released on Friday, February 28, is reviewed by Erika Hurth.

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PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

THE PAB

The Performing Arts Building brings together the Theatre, Music, and Dance Departments. But whom is the PAB for?

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SNOW? HERE? WHAT?

SNOWPOCALYPSE

Snow comes to Reed and confuses everyone. School shuts down for half a day. Californians confused.

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www.reedthegrail.com

FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading our first issue. The articles from our first issue, as well as all those following, can be found online at reedthegrail.com.

The snow made it feel like a real winter here in Portland. Students adapted their attire (pg. 3), huddled for warmth (pg. 6), and reflected on the changing environment.

One semester in, Brendan Sorrell discusses the reception of the new Performing Arts Building with students and faculty who have intimately interacted with their own new space (pg. 1). Agreed on the beauty and relative utility of the new space, they voice their fears about the purpose of the PAB and

the effect of its presence.

Erika Hurth and Ruben de la Huerga discuss music near and far (pg. 4).

We hope you enjoy this issue and are looking forward to our Reed Arts Week Preview appearing in next week's issue.

If you do nothing else between now and then, read Blake Stewart's fridge-magnet poem on page 5.

We invite you to our weekly open meetings, Mondays at 8 in PAB 105.

Love,

Brendan, Clara, Jordan, Lauren, and Vikram

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Our Beautiful, Collaborative Fishbowl

By BRENDAN SORRELL

Before the Performing Arts Building (PAB) was constructed, the Music Department had been largely in Prexy, the Theatre Department in the old building in the canyon, and the Dance Department found places to practice in the gym. The new spaces are breathtaking, but the unification of the performing arts in one building should be seen as the greater achievement. As you walk through the atrium and see a class using the steps for a staged reading, past the Studio Theatre and Performance Lab being used for various dance and theatre events, and look through the large windows of the dance studio at a class's rehearsal until they all start looking at you and you continue on your way — all while some piano music drifts through the entire building from the student practice spaces.

"I loved the old theatre building," says senior theatre major Walker Holden, "for my design class last spring our final project was creating a requiem for the building. We created installation projects. I hung these strips of fabric and projected falling snow. You could interact with a full-size projection of an actor performing from 'Waiting for Godot.'"

Although Holden was fond of the old building, a nostalgic sentiment that many music majors hold for Prexy and even a few dance majors have for their old stomping grounds in the Sports Center, she does not deny the luxuries afforded by the new space. "[Black Box Theatre] used to mean something very different than what it means now. Now we have this beautiful new black box theatre that's huge and has a high ceiling and capacity to hang lights and can easily be transformed. The old box theatre was cozy but small and had a low ceiling and limited audience capacity. We've doubled the audience space."

Holden held the first thesis performance in the new Black Box Theatre when she directed "The Successful Life of 3" last semester. She faced the challenge of having to be the first theatre major to use the space; the technical staff was getting used to how everything worked and fit together as they were rehearsing. But sometimes the subtler changes, like the type of people who surround the work you're doing, take longer to adjust to.

"I think people that are coming here as freshman and are spending time in the building with other majors will have more of an opportunity to forge those bonds. I definitely think the school can do something to facilitate that, or at least the departments can."

"We're trying to have people that have a multidisciplinary approach," says Professor of Music, Virginia Hancock. "Hence the Meredith Monk event that involved everybody. It was a limited audience, but it was enormously successful."

Holden agrees, saying "It was the perfect way to inaugurate this building."

"The idea is that there can be interdisciplinary events with everyone in the same vicinity, in the same building," says Hancock. The communal energy of the PAB, if used correctly, has the potential to create an enriching environment for all three disciplines as they incorporate aspects of each in combined efforts.

The number one
goal of the design of
this building was to
entertain rich donors.

"Right now, we're just trying to get adjusted," says Hancock. "Particularly in theatre and dance, because of the new spaces they have."

Dance-Sociology senior Olivia Jensen says of the new Dance Studio, "I don't know anybody with a studio that incredible, and it's extremely functional." The Dance Department, the only department without a corresponding major, is often marginalized, with its previous primary space being the Sports Center's Gym 2. "I didn't have a problem with Gym 2, except it ostracized us from the rest of campus," says Jensen. The problem was not with the practicality of the space itself, but in the constraints on when it could be used by dance students and where they would have to practice otherwise. "Even if you don't just want to dance

on your own, you have actual academic work [in the Dance Department]," says Jensen. "When I would be working on choreography for class I would have to go into a racquetball court, which was fine in some respects but not in others. It worked, but it felt like you were in an institutionalized insane asylum, and the floor was unsafe."

Apparently one of the first things that other performing arts majors have learned about dancers is that they care deeply about the floor they're dancing on. "I can't describe how important it is," says Jensen. "Not just for comfort but for safety." The racquetball courts had been concrete based underneath the wood floor, providing no give for dancing, making it a potentially hazardous space.

Beyond the practicalities of practice space, the PAB has also granted the Dance Department much needed visibility—maybe even too much. "People know we function and are part of an academic setting," says Jensen, particularly within the performing arts community. "Putting all of the performing arts in one building just makes so much sense. It's what made me able to collaborate with as many people in my thesis show as I did. I think the PARC is an important place for the performing arts' broad solidarity. You can just hang out in there and figure out what everyone is doing, you can hear the music majors ranting about their compositions. I know everyone that works in the PARC, it's just a nice space to have."

Jensen has become the poster-child of the type of collaborative effort that was brought up when the idea of putting the three branches of the performing arts under one roof came into being. "I somehow pushed myself to be as collaborative as possible. I had three music majors who composed my entire sound score, Madeline Vallano, Dylan Richards, and John Pape. I've never heard of the music and dance departments working together so closely before on such a large-scale project, but why not? Aren't they meant to go together?"

However, Jensen is worried that the PAB might be misleading, especially in regard to the Dance Department. "My fear is that this building will attract interest that the College doesn't have the resources for or is not willing to put the resources into in or-

der to sustain. [The PAB] makes it look like we support the arts in a really concrete way. Structurally, the Dance Department is still incredibly under-resourced. Having this crazy nice dance space is nice, but I'd much rather have my teachers have tenure."

The Dance department manages to keep only one full-time professor, Carla Mann, while Minh Tran and Hannah Kosstrin remain at the school on a part-time visiting basis, although their time here goes well beyond that allotted to visiting professors in any other department (Minh's been here for six years). The technical support is non-existent, with Jensen and others hoping to put on dance performances having to out-source help in lighting, staging, and sound to the Theatre Department. While the technical staff would have been able to receive pay for working on a theatre production, music majors have to rely on their goodwill in order to have their shows set-up.

The building can be seen as a facade in other ways as well. While the spaces are functional and often beautiful, some over-

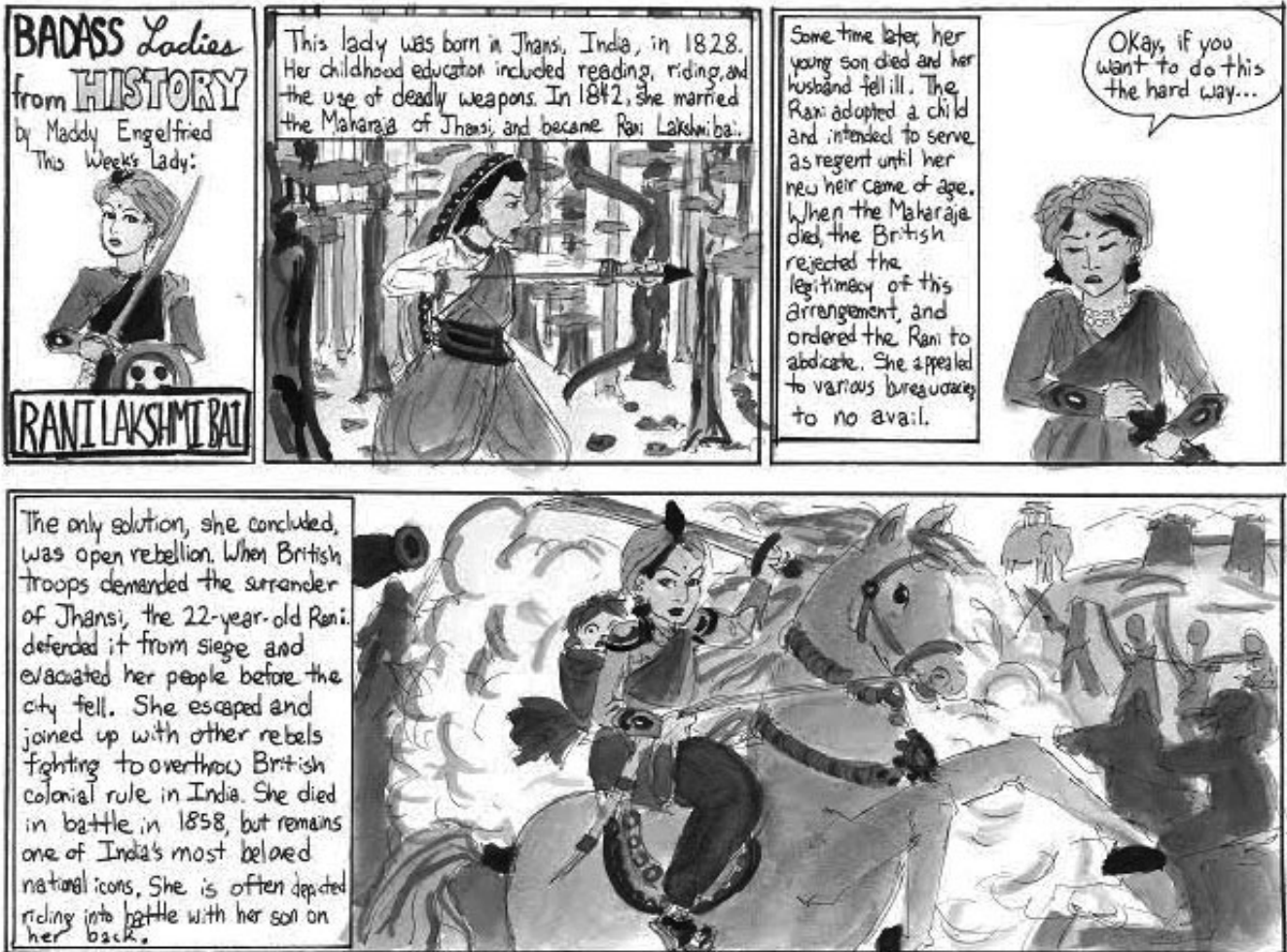
sights and incongruities in its construction suggest the primary motive for it being built is suspect. "I feel like a lot of the design of the building is for rich people walking through to see kids doing performing arts and be pleased with it," says Jensen. "We are here for the trustee gaze."

"Obviously I want people to fund the arts, and the performing arts specifically, but it is a huge fishbowl. The number one goal of the design of this building was to entertain rich donors. The extent to which that is true and for dance specifically, makes me uncomfortable. The observation windows are common in children's dance studios but would never be seen in a theatre space. There's coverings for all the windows so you can block outside light, but there's no covering for the observation window. You can't stop people from looking at you, which I find non-consensual and objectifying."

While many of these idiosyncrasies might appear easy to brush aside as relatively inconsequential, or seen as signs of ungratefulness—meager arguments

against the construction of this beautiful new building which is a vast improvement for all parties involved—everyone I spoke to was incredibly pleased with having the new spaces to work in, but felt strange in how they felt they might be utilized by the College for publicity and financial gain. The objectifying nature of the space is apparent enough, without taking into account the ways in which that focus detract from the building's functionality for the performances for which it was supposedly built. "It's not just that I don't want people looking at me when I'm figuring out some weird choreography, it's that I couldn't shade the interior window in the performance lab and it caused light pollution."

In an English class that takes place in one of the PAB's glass-walled rooms, this phenomenon is non-detrimental but still apparent. Holden says, "I'll be sitting in Ibsen-Shaw and a tour of trustees will peer in at us and be like, 'yes...the students are living the life of the mind.'" ▼



A bitch in the boardroom, a bore in the bedroom, an ogre at the orgy

There is a lot to be scared of nowadays. In 2013, 8.3 million identities were stolen, approximately 36,171 Americans died from the seasonal flu, and wives-to-be on TV competed in challenges to win a dream wedding and unlimited plastic surgery.

I might as well have been watching “Bridalplasty” on my way to Commons last Tuesday, for it was a melodramatic sight indeed. Smack in the middle of the vinyl floor stood *three* cadmium yellow caution signs each depicting a lone black figure who, not long ago, lost balance while taking a stroll in their en-

closed triangles probably on the way to the enclosed rhombus, or the DMV, and without warning were knocked unconscious, plunging headlong towards death, before they could even say goodbye, or grow real feet. What was so dangerous? A very small, rather contained, coffee spill.

Caution signs are really a bit much. Did I actually need to be heedful of that dribble? To be ironic and make a point, I shrieked and fled the scene as fast I could. If you chance upon something truly hazardous, like a rhino made out of dioxin, throwing fire-spitting jellyfish, wouldn't you know better than to go on ahead? And also, what are you doing walking around—probably in inappropriate shoes for this setting—where there are toxic, athletic rhinos? You just

want to be famous. The caution sign, too, is an attention seeker, no better than Allyson, season one champion of “Bridalplasty.”

Caution signs cause life to lose its element of surprise. They give everything away, and not in the philanthropic sense. If people stop slipping, what will happen to the witticism, “Have a nice trip, see you in the fall?” That's my second favorite wisecrack. My first is, “What's brown and sticky?” A stick. A stick is brown as well as sticky. ❧

GRACEFUL GROUSINGS

Grace Fetterman

The Cloudiness of Reality

Dear Miss Lonely Hearts,

I have a huge crush on this boy in my Hum conference and I just don't know what to do. He always wears the best flannels and the most perfectly beat up jeans and boots and no one knows how to talk about Plato's Republic or the cloudiness of reality in Herodotus' Histories like he does. What should I do? Should I slip a Sappho poem in his

mail stop? Or maybe drop a hint about meeting sometime to talk about those star-crossed lovers, Helen and Paris?

Please respond ASAP,

Lovestruck in Hum Conference.

Dear Lovestruck,

I hate to quote Reed Relieves here, but have you ever talked to this hipster Hercules? If going up to him in Commons is a little bit intimidating, why not try walking out of conference with him? “Hey, what Jan was saying about German philosophy vis a vi Medea is totally whack, right?” and boom, you've started a conversation. At this point, try gently steering him towards the Paradox — “I'm gonna grab a cup of coffee. Wanna come?” If he declines, don't worry about it! You guys totally just had a conversation and now he thinks you're funny and clever.

If he does take you up on that coffee, maybe try slipping Helen into the conversation and see where that gets you.

Love,

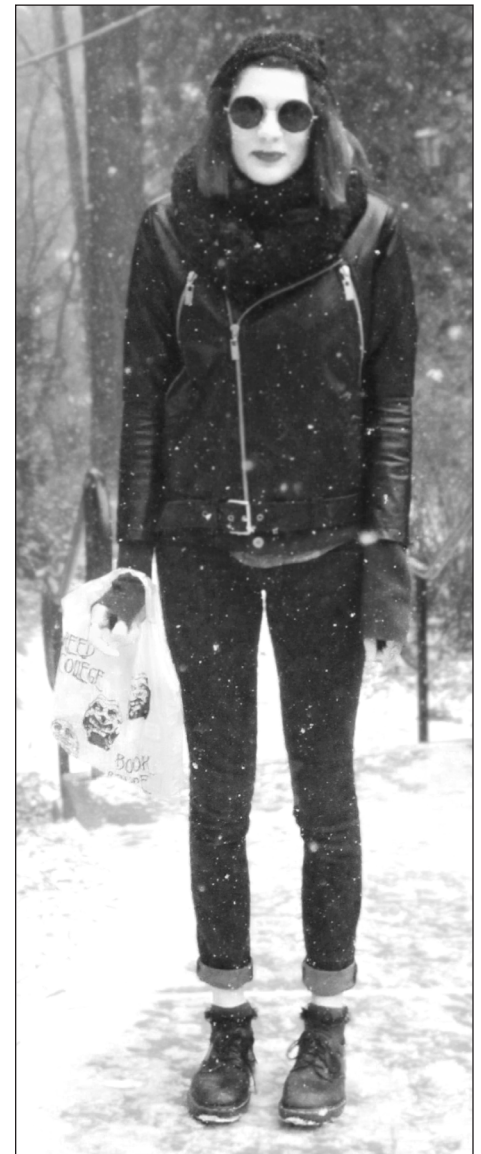
Miss Lonely Hearts. ❧

Have a crush on someone in your conference? Or something else you want to ask Miss Lonely Hearts? P.S. She gives more than just love advice.

Socks to Beat the Weather

Last week's winter wonderland left some Reedies wondering what to wear. Not Sasha Jones '16, inspired by her Bordeaux socks, she

coordinated her lips and sweater to match her cozy fashionable feet. Craving some color? Check out our blog, dosdesastres.blogspot.com for the full color photo of Sasha and another Reddie dressed stylishly for the cold! ❧



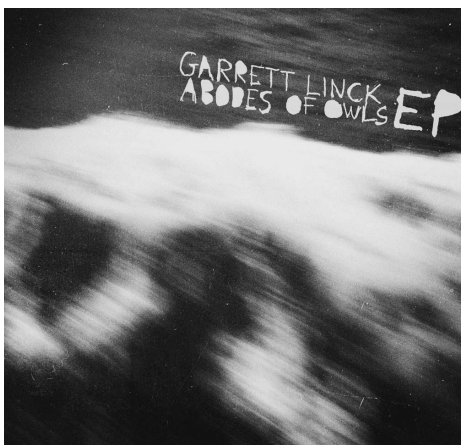
Alexis Angulo & Mia Uribe Kozlovsky

“It's the socks, I got the socks at Forever 21 for \$2.50 and just thought I had to base an outfit around them. So yeah, it all came from the socks.”

—Sasha Jones '16

DE SASTRE

Alexis Angulo
Mia Uribe Kozlovsky



Abodes of Owls



Sun Structures



Bad Debt

Singer-Songwriter of Our Own & an Ode to the '60s

By ERIKA HURTH

Abodes of Owls — Self-Released by Garrett Linck '17

Drawing on influences such as Stephen Malkmus, Isaac Brock, and Elliot Smith, it's no wonder why freshman Garrett Linck decided to expand his musical endeavors here in Portland. After splitting from his Vermont-based band "Wolcot" this fall, Linck came to Reed with a 1977 Fender Mustang strapped to his back and high hopes for life in Portland's music scene. Recorded back in the green mountain state by Ryan Power, Linck's debut is laden with heavy guitar riffs and the muted honesty characteristic of his late '90s influences.

Linck has gotten considerable media attention this week from both the Burlington magazine *Seven Days* and coverage closer to home in *Portland Mercury*. The articles applaud Linck for his ability to combine an familiar indie sound with explosive, hypnotic enchantment. *Abodes of Owls* will be officially released on February 28, but until then the EP can be streamed on his Bandcamp page: <http://garrettlinck.bandcamp.com>.

To celebrate his release, Linck will be playing a show on campus later next week. Godspeed to you, Garrett!

Sun Structures — Temples

Released last week, *Temples'* *Sun Structures* is a dreamily harmonized ode to the late 1960s. Tracks such as "Test of Time" and "Mesmerise" sound as if they could be tucked into something like Pink Floyd's *Piper at the Gates of Dawn*. Admittedly hackneyed at some points, the album could use a bit more of the experimentalism that motivated their psychedelic muses. But, if you're just looking to get groovy then this English quartet should do the trick. ♣

Taking a Chance on Bad Debt

By RUBEN DE LA HUERGA

Bad Debt — Hiss Golden Messenger

Mossy stones, wax-covered candlesticks, a harvest moon. These are but a few of the images the acoustic folk album *Bad Debt* conjures upon listening. When it reaches its final note, it is about God and love. In the artist's own words, which are far superior to any rock criticism about the album, "the record is about my God: that is, whether I have one, and whether there is a place for me in this world. I don't go to church, and I am not saved. I can party too."

Though we may not all be religious, I think there is a universal sentiment within the songs here, one simultaneously of love and doubt toward life and how the world works.

During one of the most ear-grabbing moments of the record (in "No Lord is Free"), Taylor achingly cries out, "But why pledge my mind, my body and soul / When they don't give a shit about me?" This beautiful confused ambiguity is contagious. The shyly blasphemous "Jesus Shot Me in the Head" is another ear-grabbing standout. Taylor desperately claims that, "He loves us all / But the ones that fall / Hold a special place in his ranks... Least I hope this is how it goes."

The way he finds grace and elegance in the most precarious and uncertain of times is one of *Bad Debt's* greatest strengths.

The most convincing part of this lyrical power is the attractiveness of the music. *Bad Debt* is intimate: Taylor quietly performed it to a cassette recorder in his kitchen while his newborn son slept in the other room — a lullaby of sorts. There's a sting in Taylor's voice that drains away my worries. It interests me in his stories, his pain. In short, I really, really like his voice.

The guitar playing can be exquisite too, like the lucid chords at the end of the chorus on "The Serpent is Kind." The album functions fantastically as mood music with a few truly arresting moments. When looking to steep yourself in music that is relaxing with a touch of pain, *Bad Debt* is the place to go.

To me, this album represents the glory there is to be had in taking a chance. ♣

See more of Ruben's reviews at ravedeaf.com

Hysterical Realist No Longer

NW

By Zadie Smith

Penguin, 401 pp., \$16.00 (paper)

Zadie Smith's most recent novel, *NW* returns to the streets of NW London. This is the setting of her first novel and where she has lived most of her life, which she populates with characters whose colloquial British English differs greatly from her prose in diction, but not in rhythm. Her most stylistically ambitious novel, *NW* makes widespread use of unattributed dialogue and free, indirect speech to make the similarities in her prose more apparent. As self-described "sentimental humanist", she does not shy away from the fact that she was born to these streets herself, not trying to hide her personal connection.

She goes so far as to create a caricature of herself, Natalie Blake, née Keisha, a black woman of Jamaican descent who changed her name in high school and worked her way through college before becoming a successful lawyer. Smith herself was born to a Jamaican mother in NW London and changed her name from Sadie to Zadie at the age of 14. This is perhaps the best example of how Smith distances herself from the model of hysterical realism, the term critic James Wood coined for her style of writing. The high moralizing and attempts to order the chaotic streets of Kilburn are taken on by characters like Natalie and her

best friend Leah, while the flow of the story follows a realist pattern which matches up with what Smith terms her own realist outlook.

The story opens within the dreamlike mindset of Leah as she walks home. While mostly chronicling Natalie and Leah's lives, including a string of flash-fiction pieces—taking us from their childhood together up to the time of the story—that make up a large portion of the second half of the book, Smith intersperses their narrative with the much grittier lives of the neighbors, for whom niceties are merely things to be exploited.

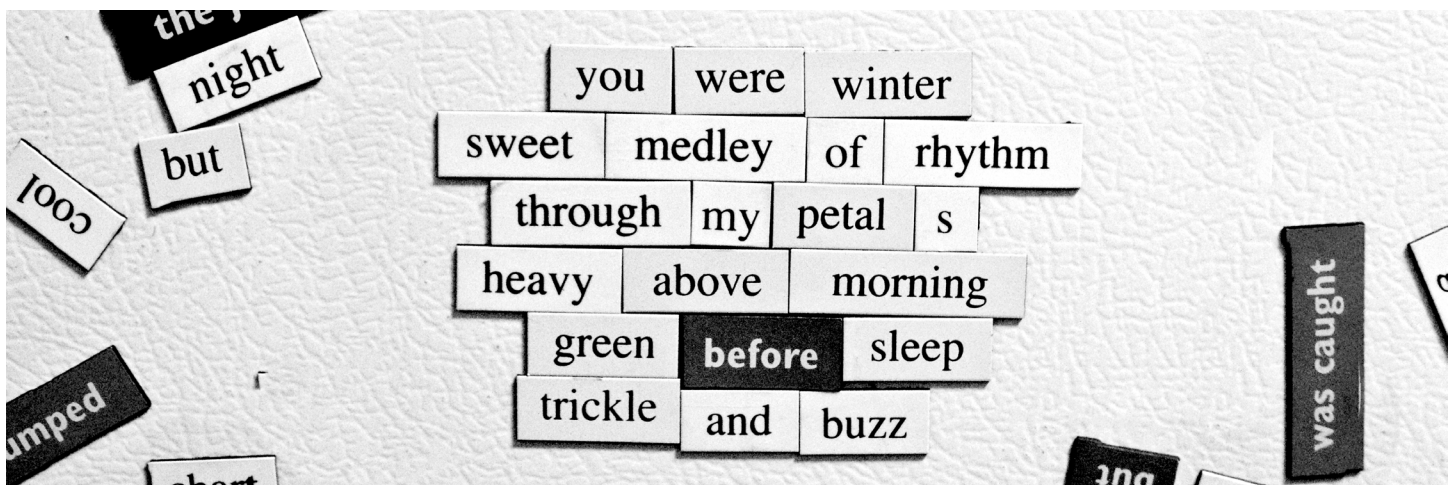
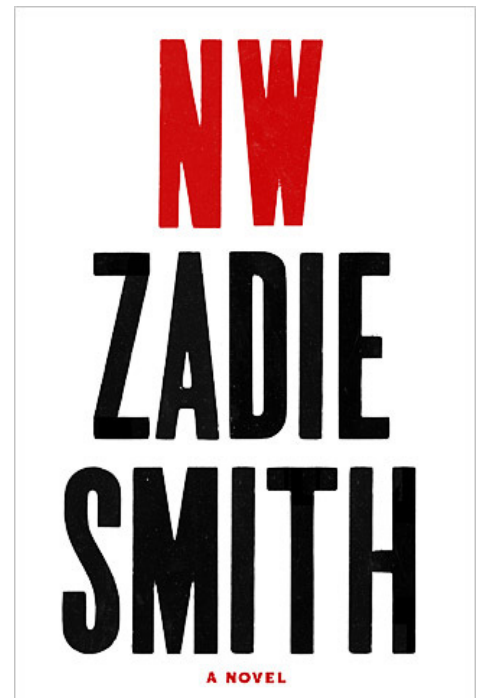
Felix, the other major focus of the novel, is also in his 30s but lacks forward moving social momentum. Part-time mechanic, former head chef, one-time entrepreneur; he's tried many ways of life but has found himself defeated by the world around him. Although he claims to be in love with his girlfriend Grace, he continues to sleep with his beautiful friend Annie and they imagine together the films he could direct given the opportunity. He is a drifter, and his part of the story is told stream-of-consciousness style in one prolonged chapter. Leah, a former philosophy major, might at times find her thoughts floating, but for the most part the prose is delivered in concise sentences, meant to be read at a breakneck speed—resembling more the action of traveling over choppy water in a motorboat than than the smooth flow of a river. Within NW London, this is the manic way in which you live and think.

With Smith the sentimental humanist saying, as she did in the *New York Review of Books* that, she believes "art is here to help,"

realism seems to be an odd genre choice. In Smith's world the people who achieve success in life weren't seeking it and don't know what to do with it, while those who are too benevolent are taken advantage of; the world is a cruel and unforgiving place when you're in one of its most tempestuous precincts, then existentially fraught if you ever manage to escape. Often exhilarating, it is never an uplifting book: the sentimentalism is bleak but strong. It is a success, however, due to its humanizing demonstration of the flaws belying its characters that, even as their external forces differ and change dramatically, continue to wind themselves in ever-tightening coils around them. ▼

BURN AFTER READING

Brendan Sorrell



Untitled 1 — Blake Stewart



Above: Naito surrounded by snow. Below: Students huddle for warmth over steam vent in front of Eliot.

