

A word from the fat
lady gabrielle
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It isn't how we look up close so much as in dreams. Our giant is not so tall, our lizard boy merely flaunts crusty skin- not his fault they keep him in a crate and bathe him maybe once a week. When folks scream or clutch their hair and poke at us and glare and speak of how we slithered up from Hell, it is themselves they see: the preacher with the farmer's girls (his bulging eyes, their chicken legs) or the mother lurching towards the sink, a baby quivering in her gnarled hands. Horror is the company you keep when shades are drawn. Evil does not reside in cages.

Road Signs of Pigs Eating Pork Frank Montesonti

If a cynic were asked why the world was created they might say it was so the goddamn car could break down in this small, Texas town with a clapboard sign of a pig taking a bite out of a ham hock; hell, they might claim Texas itself is a cosmic joke to turn urban sophisticates selfless, stuck five-hundred miles from the real world for eternity. For the cynic, any sort of hell would suffice, I suppose, as long as it was properly unpleasant, not some shadowy, un-signified underworld. That shit doesn't fly in Texas. No Hades or anything found in a textbook. And no loud wailing or self-pity. You take your punishment like your own signature pitched you off the world. On the cracked television in the repair shop were more commercials where animals can't help but plead to be eaten.

They are noble examples. Helping after helping they confirm their texture, their flavor, until I become queasy that there may be some slipped logic in myself that dream-world uneasiness where the signature turns to consume its signatory and I start to suspect this waiting room is hell— the vending machine of red-hots, the old World News and Reports washed out by the <https://assignbuster.com/a-word-from-the-fat-lady-gabrielle-calvocoressi-essay-sample/>

Texas sun, the smell of fresh tires, the landscape itself, twisted and alien, almost too unreal to be a temporary stop, too unreal to be a place where they just let you sign the bill and drive away, self-congratulatory on your journey through hell also known as West Texas also known as the wide wicked world, without starving, without the world being joyless Where the optimist might even reflect, though in its own personal hell, even the sign in Texas is eternally fed.

Pomegranate Eavan Boland

The only legend I have ever loved is the story of a daughter lost in hell. And found and rescued there. Love and blackmail are the gist of it. Ceres and Persephone the names. And the best thing about the legend is I can enter it anywhere. And have. As a child in exile in a city of fogs and strange consonants, I read it first and at first I was an exiled child in the crackling dusk of the underworld, the stars blighted. Later I walked out in a summer twilight searching for my daughter at bed-time. When she came running I was ready to make any bargain to keep her. I carried her back past whitebeams and wasps and honey-scented buddleias.

But I was Ceres then and I knew winter was in store for every leaf on every tree on that road. Was inescapable for each one we passed. And for me. It is winter and the stars are hidden. I climb the stairs and stand where I can see my child asleep beside her teen magazines, her can of Coke, her plate of uncut fruit. The pomegranate! How did I forget it? She could have come home and been safe and ended the story and all our heart-broken searching but she reached out a hand and plucked a pomegranate. She put out her hand and pulled down the French sound for apple and the noise of stone and <https://assignbuster.com/a-word-from-the-fat-lady-gabrielle-calvocoressi-essay-sample/>

the proof that even in the place of death, at the heart of legend, in the midst of rocks full of unshed tears ready to be diamonds by the time the story was told, a child can be hungry. I could warn her. There is still a chance. The rain is cold. The road is flint-coloured. The suburb has cars and cable television. The veiled stars are above ground.

It is another world. But what else can a mother give her daughter but such beautiful rifts in time? If I defer the grief I will diminish the gift. The legend will be hers as well as mine. She will enter it. As I have. She will wake up. She will hold the papery flushed skin in her hand. And to her lips. I will say nothing

What the Last Evening Will Be Like Edward Hirsch You're sitting at a small bay window in an empty café by the sea. It's nightfall, and the owner is locking up, though you're still hunched over the radiator, which is slowly losing warmth. Now you're walking down to the shore to watch the last blues fading on the waves. You've lived in small houses, tight spaces— the walls around you kept closing in— but the sea and the sky were also yours. No one else is around to drink with you from the watery fog, shadowy depths. You're alone with the whirling cosmos. Goodbye, love, far away, in a warm place. Night is endless here, silence infinite.

The Future is an Animal Tina Chang In every kind of dream I am a black wolf careening through a web. I am the spider who eats the wolf and inhabits the wolf's body. In another dream I marry the wolf and then am very lonely. I seek my name and they name me Lucky Dragon. I would love to tell you that all of this has a certain ending but the most frightening stories are the ones

with no ending at all. The path goes on and on. The road keeps forking, splitting like an endless atom, splitting like a lip, and the globe is on fire. As many times as the book is read, the pages continue to grow, multiply. They said, In the beginning, and that was the moral of the original and most important story. The story of man. One story. I laid my head down and my head was heavy. Hair sprouted through the skin, hair black and bending toward night grass. I was becoming the wolf again, my own teeth breaking into my mouth for the first time, a kind of beauty to be swallowed in interior bite and fever. My mind a miraculous ember until I am the beast. I run from the story that is faster than me, the words shatter and pant to outchase me. The story catches my heels when I turn to love its hungry face, when I am willing to be eaten to understand my fate.

Starfish Eleanor Lerman This is what life does. It lets you walk up to the store to buy breakfast and the paper, on a stiff knee. It lets you choose the way you have your eggs, your coffee. Then it sits a fisherman down beside you at the counter who says, Last night, the channel was full of starfish. And you wonder, is this a message, finally, or just another day? Life lets you take the dog for a walk down to the pond, where whole generations of biological processes are boiling beneath the mud. Reeds speak to you of the natural world: they whisper, they sing. And herons pass by. Are you old enough to appreciate the moment? Too old? There is movement beneath the water, but it may be nothing. There may be nothing going on. And then life suggests that you remember the years you ran around, the years you developed a shocking lifestyle, advocated careless abandon, owned a chilly heart.

Upon reflection, you are genuinely surprised to find how quiet you have become. And then life lets you go home to think about all this. Which you do, for quite a long time. Later, you wake up beside your old love, the one who never had any conditions, the one who waited you out. This is life's way of letting you know that you are lucky. (It won't give you smart or brave, so you'll have to settle for lucky.) Because you were born at a good time. Because you were able to listen when people spoke to you. Because you stopped when you should have and started again. So life lets you have a sandwich, and pie for your late night dessert. (Pie for the dog, as well.) And then life sends you back to bed, to dreamland, while outside, the starfish drift through the channel, with smiles on their starry faces as they head out to deep water, to the far and boundless sea.

To Dorothy Marvin Bell You are not beautiful, exactly. You are beautiful, inexactly. You let a weed grow by the mulberry and a mulberry grow by the house. So close, in the personal quiet of a windy night, it brushes the wall and sweeps away the day till we sleep. A child said it, and it seemed true: "Things that are lost are all equal." But it isn't true. If I lost you, the air wouldn't move, nor the tree grow. Someone would pull the weed, my flower. The quiet wouldn't be yours. If I lost you, I'd have to ask the grass to let me sleep.

The Alien Greg Delanty I'm back again scrutinizing the Milky Way of your ultrasound, scanning the dark matter, the nothingness, that now the heads say is chockablock with quarks & squarks, gravitons & gravitini, photons & photinos. Our sprout, who art there inside the spacecraft of your Ma, the time capsule of this printout, hurling & whirling towards us, it's all daft on <https://assignbuster.com/a-word-from-the-fat-lady-gabrielle-calvocoressi-essay-sample/>

this earth. Our alien who art in the heavens, our Martian, our little green man, we're anxious to make contact, to ask divers questions about the heavendom you hail from, to discuss the whole shebang of the beginning&end, the pre-big bang untime before you forget the why and lie of thy first place. And, our friend, to say Welcome, that we mean no harm, we'd die for you even, that we pray you're not here to subdue us, that we'd put away our ray guns, missiles, attitude and share our world with you, little big head, if only you stay.

Ground Swell Mark Jarman Is nothing real but when I was fifteen, Going on sixteen, like a corny song? I see myself so clearly then, and painfully-Knees bleeding through my usher's uniform Behind the candy counter in the theater After a morning's surfing; paddling frantically To top the brisk outsiders coming to wreck me, Trundle me clumsily along the beach floor's Gravel and sand; my knees aching with salt. Is that all I have to write about?

You write about the life that's vividest. And if that is your own, that is your subject. And if the years before and after sixteen Are colorless as salt and taste like sand-Return to those remembered chilly mornings, The light spreading like a great skin on the water, And the blue water scalloped with wind-ridges, And-what was it exactly?-that slow waiting When, to invigorate yourself, you peed Inside your bathing suit and felt the warmth Crawl all around your hips and thighs, And the first set rolled in and the water level Rose in expectancy, and the sun struck The water surface like a brassy palm, Flat and gonglike, and the wave face formed. Yes. But that was a summer so removed In time, so specially peculiar to my life, Why would I want to write about it again? There was a day or two when, paddling out, An older boy who <https://assignbuster.com/a-word-from-the-fat-lady-gabrielle-calvocoressi-essay-sample/>

had just graduated And grown a great blonde moustache, like a walrus,
Skimmed past me like a smooth machine on the water, And said my name. I
was so much younger, To be identified by one like him-The easy deference of
a kind of god Who also went to church where I did-made me Reconsider my
worth. I had been noticed. He soon was a small figure crossing waves, The
shawling crest surrounding him with spray, Whiter than gull feathers. He had
said my name Without scorn, just with a bit of surprise To notice me among
those trying the big waves Of the morning break. His name is carved now

On the black wall in Washington, the frozen wave That grievers cross to find
a name or names. I knew him as I say I knew him, then, Which wasn't very
well. My father preached His funeral. He came home in a bag That may have
mixed in pieces of his squad. Yes, I can write about a lot of things Besides
the summer that I turned sixteen. But that's my ground swell. I must start
Where things began to happen and I knew it.