

orangepeel



issue 2.5

ORANGEPEEL

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orangepeel is a digital literary and visual arts publication.

Its objective is to showcase memorable pieces from around the world. More information can be found on the *orangepeel* website at **orangepeelmag.wordpress.com**.

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COVER ART: Fall Nostalgia
by Sophie Halliday

READ... IF YOU DARE!

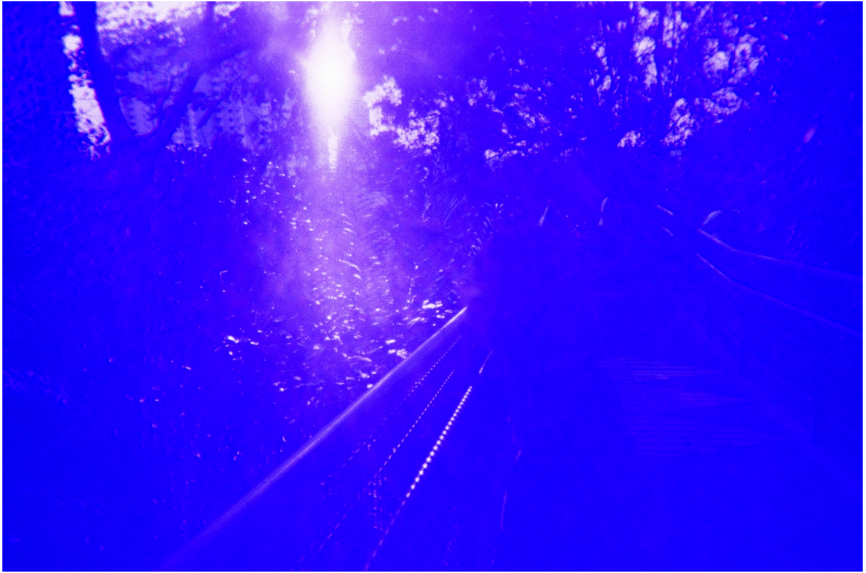
Maybe it's obvious, but Halloween is my favorite holiday. The wacky costumes, the crafty decorations, the sweets and treats, the horror movies... I can never get enough! Something that continues to fascinate me about holidays is their connection to memory. After all, we celebrate them based on memories of past ones. Because holidays are so closely tied to memory, I thought that a Halloween issue would be fitting for our publication. Based on the amazing submissions we received, it looks like I was right!

When approaching this editorial process, I had two things in mind: seeing decorations and costumes while trick or treating, and bringing the sweet treat haul back home at the end of the night. Everyone approaches the holiday differently. Some people deck their house out in scary decorations that older children have to lead the little kids through, promising the best candy in the neighborhood. Others sit in lawn chairs by their driveways, maybe playing "Thriller" or the *Halloween* theme song and asking, "Now, what are you for Halloween?" And there's such a wide range of costumes, from store-bought with squirting blood to creatively homemade with old clothes. This parade of difference can be seen in the ultimate event: the emptying of the candy bag. Out come sweet and sour treats, but also sometimes tiny toys like spider rings and Play-Doh tubs. Sometimes you get apples; others, popcorn balls. Maybe you get a load of your favorite treat, or you have a sibling or friend to trade treasures with. I had these memories in the back of my head while assessing works. How can *orangepeel* get this across, this excitement of seeing how everyone else chose to express themselves this Halloween?

These pages hold *orangepeel's* love letter to Halloweens past and present. In it, you'll find the sweet, the creepy, and the unnerving. You'll find an autumn breeze, skeleton hands, and a perfect pumpkin alongside wispy trees, some dead flies, and a curious coworker. At least, if you dare to read that far!

I'm joking, of course. While I love slashers myself, *orangepeel's* Halloween is low on blood, guts, and gore. We're keeping it a little creepy, but it's all in good Halloween fun. Even if you're easily scared, we think you'll love the wonderful works that are featured in this half issue of *orangepeel*. We've got pieces from Australia, Ireland, Italy, Russia, Singapore, the UK, the US, and Vietnam this time around. Grab some hot cider and your favorite candy, and get ready for an adventure!

GABBY
EDITOR OF ORANGEPEEL



Sean Wang
a vision

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Ormila Vijayakrishnan Prahlad
Otherworldly

SPOOKY...

Kenneth Baker
Whirlwind

On this, the last day of fall,
Small brief flurries of breeze
Stir the desiccated pile of leaves
A macabre version of vegetable stew,

Wafting rich smells of mold, decay, and wet earth.
The breeze playfully twirls
My carefully combed hair
Leaving it a bit of a mess, I guess,

As I cannot see myself reflected.
The breeze eagerly pulls at my sleeve
And I consent to watch
Its childlike gamboling through the park

As it stops to briefly explore a branch or leaf.
It momentarily pushes a swing,
Then runs to the park's edge
And before I can call its name, it's gone.



Natalie Bradford
Pumpkin Head

Gerard Sarnat

I Knew Mellis See & Jay Reese Loved Sandy Koufax

Saturday night the pumpkin patch turned out surprisingly empty: folks were watching our World Series Dodgers.

Elliot & I spent this afternoon lugging humongous candy bags plus picking out my barely-qualifying costume.

At his insistence we counted half the old Twix, Reese's Pieces, Hershey's, and new Snickers into each bucket.

A son-in-law brought creativity into the fam, made Star Wars/Trek outfits, carved Jack O' Lanterns with both boys.

When I was a zitty kid Halloween booty from working the hood seemed a treasure, but now I consider it poison.

By the time anyone reads this at their earliest convenience, Houston's Astros may have won the Fall Classic --

Which they might, by winning the deciding game seven tonite. In the meantime, since there is no school today...

Three of us (including big brother Simon) looked over swag, traded for faves – mine's dark chocolate Mounds

which aren't here so I grabbed two milk chocolate Almond Joys plus a Three Musketeers, which my little sister loved.



Natalie Bradford
Baby Pumpkin

Leah Mueller

Tempting Fate

Two girls sat cross-legged on the attic floor, a Ouija board pressed against their knees. The room's only illumination was from an uncovered ceiling light bulb. A lone moth attacked the glass repeatedly, singeing its frail wings.

"Did you push the indicator?" one girl demanded.

"Of course not." Her friend's voice was scornful. "I think you pushed it."

Wind battered the grimy, bite-sized windows. A sudden deluge of rain shook the house. Water streaked across the panes, running in rivulets down the glass. The two girls stared at the indicator as if they expected it to speak. It remained stubbornly quiet.

"Ask again how old you'll be when you die," the first girl said. "No one lives to be 150."

The second girl closed her eyes and placed her fingers on the indicator. Her friend followed suit. The piece of cheap plastic twitched left, then right.

Both girls always snuck peeks at the board even though such behavior went against the rules. The game frightened them, but they loved it. Its shiny surface featured an arc of block letters, topped by a sun, a moon, and the words "YES" and "NO."

The sun seemed devoid of fire. It grinned from the board like a neutered cherub. The moon stared at the word "NO" as if daring it to interfere with destiny.

Suddenly, the indicator went wild. It zoomed to the bottom of the board and raced across the word "GOODBYE." Then it reversed, like a car that had gone out of control, and skidded backwards across the letters. It lurched forward a third time for emphasis.

After the plastic twitched and went still, the second girl sprang to her feet. "What-" she stammered. "Does that mean I'm not going to live much longer?"

Her friend shrugged. "Maybe it was a mistake. Who knows?"

The second girl put her hands on her hips and pouted. "I'm going home. My mom says this game is stupid. I think so, too."

Her friend could tell she was bluffing. Despite her attempts at bravado, the second girl looked terrified. Her eyes were huge as she backed away from the board, trembling. After a final glance, she raced down the attic stairs and out of the house.

The first girl couldn't believe her good fortune. She would be alone with the Ouija board, free to obtain whatever answers she wanted. No pesky interference. Her fate was literally in her own hands.

She placed her fingers on the indicator and smiled.

"Will I be a millionaire when I grow up?"

The plastic piece remained immobile. The girl repeated her question. Still, the indicator didn't move.

She slid the board back into its cardboard box. Some questions

weren't meant to be answered. Besides, it was time for dinner.

After she left, the indicator began moving by itself. It crept first towards "N", then "O."

Finally, it spelled out the words, "NOT A CHANCE IN HELL."

Some people are doomed to discover their fates while they live them.



Irina Novikova
Crow

Lorelei Bacht
Monsterling

Baby holds her toes and tumbles: when she grows up, she will join a circus and make the children laugh.

Baby hopes she will find white cottontails to chase, but they are hiding in taller grasses.

Baby stuffs a stone in her cheeks before other babies get it.

Baby has been asleep all January, but soon enough the tender crocuses will plump her up.

Baby has grown so tall that she has to bend down to stay in the picture.

Baby dances over the hills and growls like her mother: one day, she too will devour.

Baby has hopped away from mother's side; her eyes are wide open; she will go no further.

Baby never makes a sound; she can swoop very fast; she sleeps on a high branch at night.

Baby is playing dead; she is waiting for the big bad to walk away.

Baby has just caught her first flesh; she will split it open; show it to her mother.

Baby never eats anything without washing it first; she washes silverfish in the river.

Baby asks the full moon, "Who is awake? Who is asleep?"

Baby walks very well now, and she can go for days without sleep; she is feared by small things.

Lorelei Bacht
10 Little Ogres

1 little ogre, sitting in a corner
of an empty cowshed – calling, calling.

2 little ogres, expecting their mother,
but the big bad, but the big bad.

3 little ogres, imagining a home
of water-thyme and reeds, shortly before dawn.

4 little ogres, in coats of charcoal fur,
flour-white paws all declawed, sitting nicely under.

5 little ogres, one empty stomach each –
one stomach fits twenty rabbits, but you feed them biscuits.

6 little ogres, hatched one april morning,
but the big bad, but the big bad coming.

7 little ogres, waddling to the pond:
the first six make a line; the last one limps behind.

8 little ogres, swimming along the brooks,
eight little gleaming mouths, all avoiding the hook.

9 little ogres, scarring the winter sky:
black skin instead of feathers – and yet, they fly.

10 little ogres, in shadows of cattails,
but the big bad, but the big bad wants them.



Oormila Vijayakrishnan Prahlad
Luminescence

Robert Beveridge
Matryoshka

the scars on, around
the spine communicate
the ability to choose—
as if a vertebra could be
pulled out like a drawer
in your favorite eccentric uncle's
overstuffed rolltop, examined
for errant pages from articles
published in disreputable journals,
magnifying glasses, the obscure heat
of salts harvested, he told you,
from the calderas of volcanoes
ready to bathe the world
in the blood of the lamb.

We exited the window,
crawled onto the roof
to brainstorm the kinds
of hypotheses that lead
to beliefs in the Cat People
of Monterey Bay and their
death grip on the entire government.
After all, why would a mummified
corpse have a chest of drawers
for a spine, even if they're minuscule
drawers? And who funded
the archaeological dig at Thirty-Fourth
and Rowan to uncover it?

"Maybe we just need to add
some quicksand?" I asked,
but half a pack and a bottle
of Thunderbird later, we were
no closer to something
the Weekly World News would snap up.
We decamped to Leonardo's
for bagel sandwiches and coffee.
The air was steamy, the newspapers
all a few days old. In the corners,
I swear I heard hisses. I felt
dozens of eyes on my lox.

Christina Hennemann

Hotel Samhain

The journey

My getaway begins here, in Niemandland,
After an endless journey through the dense pine woods
Of long frosty October nights coated in smokey coal.
I arrive at a remote castle, once protective of
The clans, knights, warrior kings and queens;
Now standing mossy, moist, melancholic.

The lobby

Through ancient metal doors I walk
Into a dusty, run-down smell of rotten.
The paint is chipping off the walls.
The chandeliers are tarnished, lightly swinging.
The suited receptionist bows terribly politely.

The restroom

I drop my mask and look up
At the merciless flickering neon light
To spot hundreds of tiny flies lying dead,
Captured in the dull glass of the lamp.
I turn to look at my smiling grimace in
The misty warped mirror, blinded,
And my red lipstick kisses my canine tooth,
As I get dizzy from the bizarre silence,
Haunted only by the sizzling of the flies.

The salon

I step out onto the red velvet carpet
And sit down in a black gigantic armchair,
Observe crumbles on the carpet, the mouldy walls.
With awkward grace, I sip my pumpkin spiced latte,
Which grins at me with horrible glee, and thickly fogs
My tongue with cinnamon, foams my muted mouth.
The cup is bloodstained with my crimson lipstick.
As I look around with caution, I find
The pallid waitress eyeing me suspiciously.

The castle suite

I enter the once lavish bedroom.
A spider is crawling over my white bedsheets,
Its frail legs I tear apart in horror, because
I must as part of the exorcism -

Before I lie in the smell of chlorine and decay.
I fall asleep with my eyes open wide, fascinated
By the shadowy twig dance over the dusty curtains.

The restroom, 3am

I twitch and dream of dead flies and a warped mirror.
I rise and sleepwalk the empty corridors,
Until again I stand before the neon lit mirror.
I stare at my smiling grimace once more,
Then run from myself in awful horror, screaming,
Lost in the labyrinths of my own gut, but there's -

No escape from the ghosts inside me.



Rona Karp
Into the UNKNOWN!

George Fisher
Haunted

strange, this game of death.
with all the many skeletons
locked in my closet,
these haunted feelings
scream louder on moonlit paths
of self-dug graves
than in tortured life.



Elaine Nesom
Bouquet of Bones

Robert Beveridge
The Moon (reversed)

When the final girl climbs
from the hole in the ground
collapses into the arms
of the firefighter who
lowered her a ladder

she knows the slasher is dead
because she buried that blade
in his chest with her own two hands
but she also knows
the last scene in any horror movie
sets up a sequel that may never come



Irina Novikova
The Story of a Girl and a Wolf



Oormila Vijayakrishnan Prahlad
Blood and earth

Benjamin Enoch

Smiley's Sad Night

In 1994, when I was in high school, I worked in the kitchen of a restaurant with a guy nicknamed "Smiley" who was a couple years older than me. One evening while aimlessly driving my car, I saw Smiley walking along the highway and offered him a lift.

He got in and immediately began to tell me that he'd been living with his girlfriend and they'd just broken up, so he'd stormed out of the house and went walking down the road to collect his thoughts. He didn't want to go anywhere in particular, he wanted someone to hang out with. He wanted get his mind off the breakup.

I hadn't expected this when I offered him a ride. I wasn't particularly feeling sociable or looking to hang out on a Tuesday evening, but I felt sorry for him and agreed to keep him company. We rode around in my car together, cruising around our small town, drinking beer from cans, listening to music, and talking.

We drove through the parking lot of another restaurant, not to eat but to cruise—a common form of entertainment for teenagers at the time—and a guy named Chris came from the backdoor of the place and started yelling and cursing at me. We'd gone to the same grade school, but I didn't know him well at all. He tossed his cigarette on the ground as he approached the car angrily. The fact that he was angry was a surprise to me.

I wanted to drive away but Smiley told me to stop the car and ask why he cursed us. The guy said he was "considering" beating me up because he'd heard I called him a skinhead. It was true that he had that hairstyle, but I didn't think about him enough to gossip or have an opinion of him. I barely knew him.

My depressed passenger was already a little self-destructive because of the breakup and he yelled at the guy, and said he would fight him for threatening me. Chris seemed surprised that he was threatened. He shrugged and said his shift wasn't over until 10:00, but if Smiley wanted a fight, he would meet us at 10:30.

We drove around to pass the time, now on a mission. Smiley was getting pumped for the fight and banging his fist as we listened to hard rock. He was ready.

I wasn't ready.

I was nervous about the whole thing and I suggested maybe we should explain that I didn't call him a skinhead and he would be cool about it.

"He won't be cool and we'll look like punks if we try to back down now. I'm gonna destroy that guy."

At 10:30 sharp, we arrived at the park and there was a gang of dudes waiting. Six or seven big guys were standing around.

"Let's go. He brought a bunch of friends. They're planning to jump us," I said.

"No, I got this."

As I was putting the car into reverse, he took a deep breath, then grabbed a tire iron from the floorboard, jumped out of the car, and ran into the crowd, swinging it with purpose.

They didn't attack. They started screaming.

I heard clearly, "Oh my God!"

I can only imagine the terror they must have felt as a maniac sprinted towards them, tire iron in hand, shouting curses in a rage.

They scattered in all directions. Smiley chased after them, swinging and kicking, yelling war cries. Luckily, he was out of shape and was never quite able to get close enough to land a blow.

"Why are you doing this?" someone yelled from a safe distance.

"Because you wanted to fight me!"

"But you're the one trying to attack us," the other guy yelled back.

"Because you wanted to fight and now you're trying to jump me, you cowards."

"We ain't trying to jump nobody, we're just hanging out."

"Are you with Chris?"

"Who?"

"Oh. Sorry."

Realizing that he had the wrong people seemed to deflate him, like someone let the air out of a monster balloon.

He got back into the car and was even more depressed than before.

"Just take me home," he said.

When we arrived, his ex-girlfriend was waiting for him on the porch. He was looking at his feet as he walked to door, with her yelling something at him the whole time.

I think that was the last time I saw Smiley, and the guy with the shaved head never threatened me again.

**AND
SCARY!**

spooky



scary