SYNESTHESIA is a neurological condition in which two or more senses respond to stimulus directly affecting only one of those senses (i.e. experiencing a color when hearing a certain sound). While studies show that only a small minority of the population possesses this peculiar brain chemistry, we at Tablet contend that everyone harbors some degree of synesthetic capability. Ultimately, each of us is an incredibly dense conglomeration of memory, imagination, and association, of which all are manifestly sensory. Thus, when a photograph of grandma momentarily conjures within us the texture of her wrinkled palms, the aroma of her kitchen, or the cadence of her bedtime lullabies, mustn’t we be synasthetes?

While the Tablet staff would like to imagine that the collection of words and images you now hold in your hands is quite a synesthetic experience in itself, the real synesthetic marvel is you, our reader. In the dialogue between these 32 pages and your own unique web of experiences, there is a lot to discover.

Jerone Hsu

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Picasso Was Told

Picasso was told by some shaman
that if he sewed together a pouch of perfectly dissimilar objects
and swung it at another person,
he could stimulate, in them, religious ecstasy.

So, he enveloped sweet cherry pits and caribou meat, lightning and a raccoon.

He tied them together with blonde hairs that he had drawn from his bathroom carpet
and a sailor’s knot.

Suspendered and hunched,
he swung his creation at his daughter,
fanning her laughs.

And when she had fallen to the ground,
he sang to her Navajo lullabies
and old Shaker hymns
in hopes that she would find God
(or at least a bit of gentleness)
by morning.

Caroline Elizabeth Robertson
Strumble

Strumble told a leaky pipe to take a hike.  
Dripping drove him nutty.  
Off the wicker wall.

Cloistered in his modern bamboo meditation alcove,  
He whistled Schoenberg,  
Immobile in downward dog.

Delicately munching petite spoonfuls of Grape Nuts,  
Small sips from his Orikaso mug, 
Voraciously he skimmed the Times with beady, orange eyes.

After phoning Miller Plumbing,  
Strumble, always OCD, arranged his ties,  
For the entire week.  
The theme was dusty pink.

A navy Parka for the rain,  
Strumble walked into development, bald head dry.  
Happy to find every blueprint, still scattered, neatly on the table.

Feet placed carefully on the Kosher leather footstool,  
Re-runs of Frasier droned on into the morrow,  
Until the crossword was completed.

Strumble TiVo’d Lost  
Then, scrubbed away the remains of the day.  
Cleansed, he slept quietly, half moon glasses and half a glass of agua  
Lay on the avant-garde bedside table.  
(he did not snore)

Katie Hathaway
UNTITLED
Leticia de Souza
ink

16 de Marzo de 2006
What I Remember

On the day you were born, jackfruits
cracked open to reveal the seeds of their fleshy pulps
rearranging; banana boughs

splintered in two as their russet silk hairs
were tautened into husks
(only a few shades lighter than your mother’s skin)
under swings of machete; a coconut mash

was smeared onto a row of expectant bellies
swelling under the sun
(scarcely hotter than your mother’s breath)
near a heap of residual ash; your mother’s anklets

chimed in unison as your father
cracked her open; and her lap arched
your flimsy body into a soft brown plantain.

Swetha Regunathan
Bound
Jerone Hsu
Digital Photograph
Strange Friends

In early February, during the full moon of the Thaipusam Festival Season, Hong-Kuan and I escaped school to watch Ramil go into a trance with his dad. Ramil didn’t feel a thing when they put the hooks into his back to pull the heavy, wooden cart full of milk jars, fruits, and flowers. Hong-Kuan and I watched Ramil parade up the 276 steps of the Batu Cave Temple to pay homage to Lord Subramaniam with the others who had similar hooks and loads laced to their bodies. The next day at school, we slapped Ramil on the back—as we always did when we played tag—to feel for holes or see if he would flinch.

In late October, during the Festival of the Nine Emperors, Ramil and I watched as the temple’s medium led Hong-Kuan and all the boys his age to re-enact the three trials of Emperors. First, they walked over beds of flaming coal without getting their feet burned. Then, they ran over bridges made out of the sharp ends of swords without cutting their feet. Lastly, Hong-Kuan put his hands in the large cauldron of hot oil then chased Ramil and me around with his oily fingers. We ran slowly so that we could feel if his hands were still hot from the oil.

In December, during Christmas, Ramil and Hong-Kuan came with me to church. They watched as I lit a candle beneath the large crucifix that hung in the entrance and chuckled when I sang in the choir dressed in white—the color of death. They knelt, sat, stood, and chanted with everyone in the congregation, just as they did at funerals. When the bread and wine were distributed, they watched me eat the body and drink the blood of a dead man. Afterwards, when the three of us played tag, Ramil and Hong-Kuan tried their hardest not to get tagged by me. It was bad luck if I caught them.

Melissa Yap
In a hotel lobby in Provo, Utah I listened to the sound of her voice in a telephone booth. It poured through sweet and warm. Outside I could see the mountains rise up right behind the strip malls and motels. She told me I miss everything about you and things are going well at work and you should call your mother because I saw her in town last week and she is worried about you and when you get home I will let you fuck me any way you want and would you tell me about fucking me just so I can picture it because I just can’t stand it anymore and my cousin got engaged and I love you and come home soon. We spoke every day and I would always tell her about the town we were in and when it was hot in the van at night and I couldn’t sleep I would walk around in whatever parking lot we were staying in and think about her and make up little movies in my head about coming home and picking her up like that famous picture where the guy comes home from war in the sailor’s uniform and picks up the girl in the street. I listened to her voice in a 7-11 in Dallas, Texas, and in a Mexican restaurant in Portland, Oregon, and in a gas station in Los Angeles, and even at a police station in Des Moines, Iowa. I listened to it in all these places and more and heard it in my head everywhere else. I called her when I was very drunk in Boise, Idaho and she came to the phone panting and out of breath and said Not now I can’t talk this is not a good time. I felt awful because I didn’t get to hear our usual closing lines, which I lived for on the road. Come home soon, baby, she’d say. I’m coming home soon, baby, I’d say. Come home sooner, she’d say. I’m coming home very soon, baby, I’d say.

But I did not come home for a long time and when I finally did I only saw her for forty-five minutes in an apartment building lobby in the Bronx. We have not spoken since and the one thing I never told her was that after I left that building I stopped in the middle of those long stairs down to 238th Street and got on my knees and prayed the Our Father and the Hail Mary over and over and prayed that God would make me up again and prayed that God would make her know I was still waiting and come out and get me and prayed that God would go back in time and make her be able to stand it and prayed that God would make me not know all of those dirty things and God would make them not true.

But they were all true, and that was a long time ago and God never did any of those things.

Bryan Miltenberg
UNTITLED

Katerina Vorotova
35mm photograph
Organic

your hair smells like fragrance-free shampoo. so everything that has no scent, reminds me of you.

Atossa Abrahamian
Rogaine

Lana Limón
Digital Photograph
Monk’s Foot

Jennifer Cheung
Digital Photograph
Together Again
Lauren Valle
Acrylic, Tape, and Organic Material
March 5th

Someone was jealous of my hands today.
An old woman, confined to a wheelchair, with little cognition, and even less hair, clutching them in hers to hold the little care she could find close to her.
“Soft,” she called them, over and over again,
her chapped, thin lips repeating the monosyllabic word with covetous fervor.
“You are lucky,” she said, unable to let go of them,
searching them with her dry, paper-like skin, and brittle, grooved nails,
her clouded, impossibly pale eyes searching for mine.
“What’s wrong with your hands?” I ask her, smiling out of nervousness.
She mumbles about their shrunken state
and although I wouldn’t admit it, she’s right.
Her cold hands look ancient: thin, bony, veined, dry, purple, beaten;
but adorned with beautiful, antique diamond rings, one on each fourth finger.
It is the irony of the diamonds that scares me.
My warm hands are young, soft, strong, fleshy, pink, beautiful;
but cheap, sterling-silver rings decorate each of my fourth fingers.
And when I notice them, tightened by typing, cold,
and try to warm them, I feel, with shock,
how sharply the knuckles already protrude.
Palpitating the bones of them, closing my eyes
they eerily resemble the old woman’s and
it is easy for me to see my life fly away from me.
See visions of a man replacing the silver rings with diamond ones,
and the years of children and work that will grind my hands down.
Easy to imagine myself old, hairless, in a wheelchair, understanding little,
clutching to a young volunteer’s hands for comfort and heat,
feeling enviously how supple hers are and saying feebly,
“Soft. You are lucky.”

Karisa T. Chappell
Ostrichman and the Writer

why do my letters never arrive?
it is the post, which is by African elephant
but they’re rather reliable; it’s really because
those gray fatties creep into my ear at night
main source of writer’s block
ok, here he goes again
shrill savage!
want share drink, o’ kohkanut nectar?
he scales a tall tree
no, no fall all ok
and cuts green elephant kohkahnuts
hey, you stand fa ova dere ok.
they drop like comets--
crack!
the rain here is nutrient-rich with sunshine,
always damp and icky full of sun
my shirt is always wet and
at dawn the first wet raindrop to land in my eye is
like

rains always here though, running the grease off
words
i neva luhnd all wuhds come from dat mouht
he’s always drenched and dripping,
and comes through the window with straws impal-
ing kohkahnuts
some walking kohkahnut tree he is and
drips
i rheely sorry bout dat friend
all over my papers so I start over, plus
I am slightly disoriented by poor infrastructure,
plus
with ostriches,
dawn to dusk he scouts them out,
day to day, routs them
sees one he runs
twice his mass, thrice as fast
raging war cry shakes stick ostrich runs for life
an ostrich eyes me through the window
is my head an egg?
at the end of a day
he unfolds his palm and
always a ravenous butterfly flutters forth
flies after ostrich
you. goh afta dat ting.

Abhijit Nagaraj
THE PATRONESS

Do not come down the ladder unless first you have someone
To steady it. If not, just wait there a the top and holler
To the children playing in the grass, and one will run to spot you.

I’d hate to come home
And find blood
On the pavement.

I only ask that you not go inside the house;
It’s only the outside we pay you to paint.

I know I’m awful, dear.
It’s not that I distrust
The working class.

You should ignore the telephone if it should ring,
And please stay out of the garage.

And Z is a fine, fine painter,
Upstanding,
Churchgoing.

And the children aren’t to go inside while I’m away.

But – and I’ll be blunt,
My dear – he somewhat
Gives me a bit of the creeps,
With those cold, soft hands,
Not like a normal man’s,
And all those heavy tools,
And perhaps it’s all just in my head,
But I think I’ve spied
Him leering at women.

And here I’ve set out lemonade for you; drink it all,
And eat the homemade pastries, too.
See how the bright cherry jam matches the house-paint!

You are a fine, upstanding man.

Last night, I dreamed
Something vile
About him; we’ll have to give
The guy a big, fat tip.

ABBY ROSEBROCK
Backwoods Off-Roading.
Easton, Maryland

Lawrence Sulak
Digital Photograph
Ninth Symphony

The sun melts over the meager view
of New Jersey now, bleeding fire and flamingoes
into the midsummer humidity.
I lose it, though, behind a container truck as we
round the turnpike, while, on the radio,
finally something familiar – the strings
and timpani, dense and confident, in
eight thrusts of glorious unison.
It is the beginning of the second movement,
the furious energy of a deaf man
slapping me awake on the face,
and when I awake again, for real,
this time, the only color I see
glows from the noiseless cars
growing distant in the darkness.

Elise Castillo
**Not as Cruel as She**

she woke me, again
from the dead
she wanted to kiss
her question skated
the window
already frosted over
you don’t mind do you
I need to
know your guard is down
she tasted like wilted
spiders and
another man’s sweat
her reptilian tongue
and her lips
like gizzards or bark
strange, two years ago
we would have
slept to Astral Weeks
instead, I almost
asked her to
leave my apartment
but the night was cold
and I am
not as cruel as she

Daniel Aaron Magariel
JACKSON LAKE

Grace Zhou
35mm Photograph
Selections from Folk Wisdom of Mexico

Cada quien puede hacer de sus calzones un papalote.
[Each can make of his underwear a kite.]

Treading through the forest, chewing crepe.
Who is in control?
The tongue
is the strongest muscle
and often misspelled.

El que es buen pato hasta el aire nada.
[He that is a good duck swims even in air.]

What thoughts we would have if we switched all the words!

A taste of this.
For long your salt I.
Tongue it my burns.

Sólo el que carga el cajón sabe lo que pesa el muerto.
[Only he that carries the coffin knows what the dead weighs.]

My sixth birthday came with a clown.
She made a mouse appear then disappear.
Bring back the mouse, I cried.
Bubbles was whitefaced.
Haven’t you heard?
Panem et circenses:
ever do the same trick twice.

Shadows are harshest when there is only one lamp.

My favorite painting is by Picasso—
Woman with a Chignon;
a large hump of hair.
It has convinced me that women cannot believe in God.

I watch the painting.
I am waiting for the woman to begin to drool.
She, too, is a lopsided artifice—
see how her lips smear?

Anna Corke
Atossa Abrahamian is a junior majoring in Philosophy and Creative Writing. She grew up in Switzerland. She speaks excellent Swiss.

Elise Castillo, BC’08, is a third culture kid.

Jennifer Cheung was born in Los Angeles but grew up mostly in Hong Kong. She enjoys running around Cambodia and taking pictures of monks’ feet. They now give her strange looks when she approaches.

Anna Corke is from Bainbridge Island. She likes birds and their close relatives the dinosaurs.

Jerone Hsu is still thinking.

Taeyoung Lee accidentally coagulated and slowly dropped a dan.

Lana Limón is a little girl with a big camera. She likes her men like she likes her coffee: drunk. She doesn’t have patience for small children and finds spirituality through cashmere. Lana’s not a vegetarian but loves her tofu buffalo wings and enjoys getting down lower than Atlantis.

Daniel Magariel, GS ’08, suffers from amnesia after quite an extraordinary debacle (picnic, lightning, Nabokov). In turn, his mother opted to write this bio, and she loves her “Bubba” very much.

Elena Megalos, CC’08, is in the bathtub and she won’t get out.

Bryan Miltenberg is a senior from Long Island. He enjoys Hemingway, singing in a hardcore band, and New York Mets baseball.

Abhijit Nagaraj, CC’10, frightens ostriches for a living. His work is largely autobiographical.

Phil Rabovsky was born in Moscow in 1987, and moved to the US in 1991. Currently, he is working on a double Visual Arts and Philosophy Major. Future plans are somewhat undefined at this point. If nothing else, he’ll be going for his MFA.

Swetha Regunathan, CC ‘07, is from New Jersey and Mississippi. An exhausted English major, she is ready to face the world and continue writing.

Margie Abigail Rosebrock, Abby to her friends, can be found this semester at the University of Bologna, where she busies herself with books, sight-seeing, and the love affairs requisite for her memoirs. She wants very much to write professionally.

Leticia de Souza is Brazilian and has lived in Washington D.C., San Francisco, Lisbon, London, Brasilia, and Miami. She likes feeling nostalgic.

Ren Shujoe, CC’07, does not exist.

Lawrence Sulak, aka CountChillout, has spent many an hour of the day traipsing around with his 1.8 megapixel Panasonic D-Snap. He regrets not currently having a means to capture the day’s miracles, and every image missed is a lost part of his soul.

Sonia Tycko, CC’09, is a history major and sometimes watercolorist.

Lauren Valle is a sophomore studying religion. Painting is her form of prayer. In a past life she was a humpback whale and she still would rather be underwater than not.

Katerina Vorotova, CC’07, is majoring in Comparative Literature and Society and is graduating this year. She’s figuring out her future life.

Melissa Yap was born in the Year of the Monkey, in some kampung in Kuantan, Malaysia. She will finally be graduating from Columbia University this year (2007) and dreams of owning an intern someday!

Grace Zhou is a first year at Columbia College studying Linguistics and Anthropology. She grew up in Hawaii, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. She is a writer and occasional photographer. She likes traveling to wild places.
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### Salads
- *Cesar Salad*
- *Coleslaw*
- *Potato Salad*
- *Pasta Salad*
- *Tomato & Cucumber Salad*
- *Grilled Chicken Salad*
- *Cabbage Salad*
- *Sweet Plantain*
- *Corn Bread*
- *Cinnamon Raisin Bread*
- *Steamed Broccoli*
- *Green Bean Almondine*
- *Mixed Greens*
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- *Creamed Spinach*

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