

maybe

by jacqueline valencia

MAYBE a chapbook

by Jacqueline Valencia

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*For Richard, and all the loves who have supported me along the way,
even the unrequited ones.*

“Impress not. Exist.” – your calculator

1. maybe as statement

Maybe.....

2. maybe as static, travelling without moving, the inbetween

Selwynn...

Limbo...

Streetcar...

3. maybe as negative, denial, rejection, isolation

Ready...

MIMO...

4. maybe as possibility and hope

How do you see it?...

google image patoum...

Lake Ontario carp...

Clara....

5. maybe as an instigator

My three provocations

1. maybe as statement



Maybe

maybe

be may maybe?

may be maybe.

me ay maybe?

ay me maybe.

be ya maybe?

ya be maybe.

am by maybe?

by am maybe.

ba my maybe?

my ba maybe.

ae by maybe?

by ae maybe.

be my maybe?

my be maybe.

ma by maybe?

by ma maybe.

am be maybe?

be am maybe.

me ya maybe?

ya me maybe.

ab my maybe?

my ab maybe.

...

1 0 maybe?

0 1 maybe.

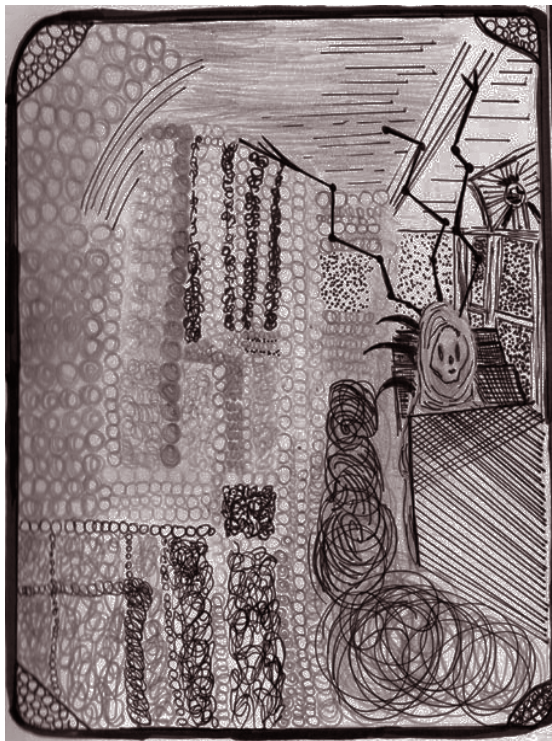
yes no maybe?

no yes maybe.

maybe maybe?

maybe maybe.

2. maybe as static, travelling without moving, the in-between



Selwynn

We were travelling on an unknown road among a sky filled with stars. I was at the front with Debra, while Johnny and Mary were quietly whistling in the back.

We drove by scores of others, some of them slow and others too fast to make out among the celestial terrain. I was grateful for our current course which had us in the middle of a giant expanse where we could be lost in our thoughts looking towards the lights in the distance.

"Sel, I have to get off soon," Debra said.

"I know."

"You still don't know where we're headed, do you?"

"No, I don't care," I replied. I stopped thinking about it a while back.

"But it's cold and the ice keeps melting. Don't you think we should stop somewhere or meet up with the others?"

"No. I go where the path takes us and the path says keep going. If we hit something soon, then we hit something soon. I have no power over it, you know that."

I could feel Debra shudder and part of me knew she was preparing to let go. The door had been opened for her departure a long time ago, but I didn't want to say goodbye. In fact, as our speed increased, I could also feel Johnny and Mary fading. Their whistling became shrill, as if the melting ice was a sign of everyone bailing on our adventure. We'd been together for so long that we'd become different and grown into separate entities.

"I can't hold on any longer, dear. As you say, I have no choice. I'm sorry, but it's time."

I heard her soft voice fading and felt her part with us in a giant roar. A few seconds later, Johnny and Mary's whistling became loud screams and giggle of excitement among the ice. They too had let go of my back.

I watched them fly off in different directions. Their lights shot off into the sky and I lost sight of them among the rest of the stars.

I am alone and my back has become smooth now, but hunched with time and travel. I see a giant fire in the distance and a giant blue planet up ahead. I wish I could tell Debra about finally knowing where I'm going. I am whole with a sense of purpose.

Twitter status. @ravensee: December 12, 2012.

“Running along St. John's Rd. just saw a fireball disintegrate in the sky! #dlws”
from Toronto. 2 retweets.

limbo

feet pounding

knees exploding

my mind gets lost in the pavement.

Streetcar

Unbidden visitors seek to sit on
worn uncomfortable seats
compacted into the red streetcar
to be shielded from
blizzard winds
(and having to walk).

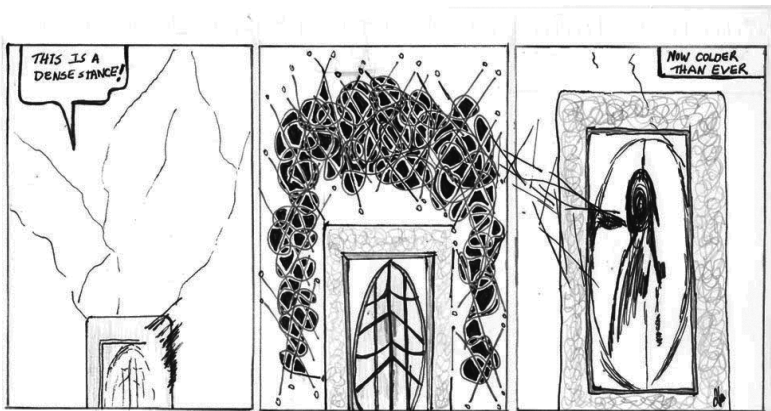
Collected

The wheels lurch forward being pulled
by electricity, powered by the bustling
city. Its passengers hide behind papers,
checking cellphones or staring at inappropriate
advertisements that scream
out like mothers telling their children
to behave.

The children
try their best to follow, but miserably fail
when they look away
and reach for the shiny button
or pull the signal
that alerts the trusted driver
(they see every day)
they want the streetcar to

stop even when it isn't moving
so they can get off at the next stop
as most of the passengers
do too.

3. maybe as negative, denial, rejection, isolation



ready

there are fractured patterns in the sunlight
barging through my front door window.
they bring with them a cavalry, a charge for
brightness against the dense
stance of my clouded
universe.

there's green tea steeping in my take-out
mug (there's nothing green about it though),
jingling my house keys in between
my fingers; ringing them like a
dinner bell on a distant planet.
HD209458b probably.
actually, right here I'm not that
far from a cosmic war; you could
say I'm in the middle of it.
expostulating window, my hand
reaching out for the doorknob
and my feet waiting to transport
me into a galaxy of soul vessels, skins,
and hostile random objects
a rhetoric of streets await me
they're built up

dreams ready to crash
into a yielding newspaper box.

I'm a device, a diffusing oscillator of
thought and paranoia
with a torrent of language of
my own making
to navigate these pre-selected
streams.

I lift off only to be conquered,
but when I'm struck by the calls for
the shinier version (I)
(I) fucked up, (I) jailed up, (I) jacked up,
(I) jack off.

five point oh ; serious smarts
don't do that code.
you'll find me in a stiffly winter coat,
calculating the spurious sequences of
light, dust, colour and madness;
a static position at the ready.

now my tea is as
tepid as the impotency
inside.

my keys sit quietly in my pocket

I'm sweating and

I'm feasting on the

dialectic of sour planets

by my door.

MIMO

Mimo, or rather, classification XY-8769 Mission Specific robot, had become self aware.

Mimo's last objective was to deliver a package to a Ms. Clara Morris in the suburbs of Richmond Hill. At 6:36pm, after undergoing a maintenance sweep, Mimo delivered said package to Ms. Morris, a brunette in a green dress. After signing for the package, Ms. Morris regarded the robot in his black suit and his human like features. His posture was impeccable, while his eyes were made kind by the smooth complexion that housed them. Ms. Morris was impressed.

"They sure make you tin cans look like one of us now!" she exclaimed.

"Have a pleasant day, Madam," he replied and made his way back to the docking stations where he would await his next orders.

He reached Yonge Street and Lawrence at the exact time a solar flare hit the phone of a passerby. It then bounded off a trash can and right into Mimo's head circuitry. Mimo was just steps away from his station when he felt one of the wires pop out from the back of his neck.

He stood there for a few hours awaiting his next orders, but they never came. They never came because he couldn't hear them. The disconnected wire had severed him from the main control matrix which tried continually to connect to him, but this time to no avail. After a while, this poor mission specific robot decided that the best thing for him to do would be to retrace his steps and see if anything could be done to remedy his situation.

Ms. Clara Morris answered her door again, this time, wearing a red dress, and said, "Hello."

Mimo felt a tinge. He wasn't sure what that feeling was, but something about the way the light hit her delicate cheek and the bigness of her eyes, made something inside Mimo flutter with anticipation. He would have smiled if he had known how to smile.

With no objective then, Mimo took longer than usual to respond to Ms. Morris, but eventually found an appropriate answer in his internal database, "Hello."

"Can I help you?" said Clara.

"I want you," replied Mimo. He meant to say more, but couldn't find the words to complete his thoughts.

"What?"

"I...I...I," he stuttered. He was transfixed by her face and wondered what it be like to be closer to her, so he leaned in.

That's when Mimo yelled out, "I want you!" Perhaps he yelled it a little too loudly.

"Go away you jerk!" Clara, visibly perturbed, slammed the door on him.

Mimo's chest stung and he regarded this new wave of feeling for a moment. He looked up and noticed a line of other mission specific robots on their way to their docking stations. He thought that it would be better if he tried to communicate with another robot just like him instead. Mimo made his way to the line and greeted the first one in line.

"There is much work to be done," it replied back. This was a standard default answer. Mimo went on to the next one and said, "Hello."

As he made his way down the line, he got the same reply back, "There is much work to be done."

Mimo soon became frustrated, gave up and wandered south. Eventually he sat down on a green bench in the downtown core. He blended in with the crowds of robots and humans making their way to their homes or stations. Mimo felt low and solitary among a world he couldn't navigate alone without instruction. As the sun set in the horizon, he heard the droning beat coming from a club in the entertainment district. He peered into the windows where lights bounced off the black interior and made his way inside. All around he found humans dressed in black, matching his black suit. The ones on the dance floor reminded him of how lost he felt with their slow and languid movements. The music pouring out of the speakers reached his ears with lyrics that spoke of isolation and pain. Mimo felt his confusion and despair lifting in the soothing drone of the club.

He turned and addressed the robot tending bar.

"Hello."

When XX bartender robot Molly's eyes met Mimo's the wire in the back of her neck popped out and she was suddenly disconnected to the main control matrix.

4. maybe as possibility and hope



scenarios: how do you see it?

A

perhaps there's time
for the mellifluous songs
of our youth today.

B

wine glass is half gone,
she pours me another one;
my tears are half dry.

C

click "like" on status.
this moral technology;
an easy cake walk.

D

in heavy doldrums
reading a book can comfort
like sweet desert rain.

google maybe image pantoum

maybe written on a piece of paper
maybe it's just yes or no
maybe life is existential playdoh
maybe comically she looks for more

maybe leave it up to chance
maybe it's just yes or no
maybe comically she looks for more
maybe it's simply circular.

maybe it's just yes or no
maybe written on a cube
maybe it's simply circular
maybe all I can do now is sign this here for you.

Lake Ontario carp

Today I saw a giant carp loop over
the crest of a small wave
by the waterfront.

I ran over to an open space.

There was a school of them
just under the surface, waiting for dragonflies
or mosquitoes to skim past.

Carp in the summer are like
Resnais film characters
scattered, but together
just so; a formation of carp floating at attention,
like me captured in the moment.

Life and death, insects and fish
I'm a single spectator
a quiet
interlocutor in time,
caught by the mysteries of
this space.

I turn to run,
spending a few milli-seconds with
both my feet in the air.
I have no wings to fly with

yet I propel myself against the forces
of gravity,
extrinsically defying them.

I will flock wherever the wind takes me.

the carp have swum over
to hide under a nearby boat
and the waves are now small
ripples of vagueries.

The possibilities beyond death,
the possibilities beyond failure
are like leaping with a feeling of
infinity.

Clara

On the plane, Clara already had a feeling of euphoria. She'd said her goodbyes, settled her affairs and sent an anonymous note to the person she'd always longed for. This was her umpteenth jump, and she was planning on it being her last.

The idea had come to her a few years ago. Her parents had bought her a skydiving lesson for her birthday after she had bugged them for so long.

"You asked! And I'm going to be 18. It'll be something different," she explained

"I don't know, honey. I guess you're off to college soon, so we'll think about it," her mother replied.

It took a lot of begging, even at 17, but Clara finally got her wish. Her parents had known that life wasn't especially ideal at school for her. She was often the brunt of bullies because of her weight or whatever the popular thing to pick on teenagers was at the moment. Her parents just believed she was a strong girl, silent, aloof, but with lots of support.

Clara didn't really have many friends, though. She'd pretend for her family because then they'd plan friendly meet-ups with their friend's children, or try to get her to socialize more, if she didn't. She hated meeting new people and always felt anxious in those settings. Putting herself out there for ridicule was worse than just being lonely. She kept her distance even with Emily, the closest thing to a best friend she had then. They were high school lab partners and, but they'd shared a few lunches together and some walks home from school. Emily often invited Clara over to her house, and gave her the number so she could reach her for assignment. Clara always wanted to, Emily had always made her feel good, but thought it was just a courtesy. She never believed that Emily wanted to be friends outside of the school.

Clara's first jump was incredibly scary. Although the instructors were very nice to her, she almost left the class before the actual jump. She was so nervous. However, when the plane door slid open and she was thrown into the freefall with her tandem instructor, she felt strangely at peace.

The thrill was nothing like she had expected. Instead of being terrified of the ground rushing towards her, she felt ready for the impact. She found herself wondering what her bones would feel like being pulverized upon impact. She wouldn't have to feel pain anymore, she thought.

After that day, everything felt different for Clara. Her awkwardness continued in college, but her life felt a little more doable, and a little less grey. For three years she struggled with her studies. Her professors always told her she had potential and the smarts to be

an amazing writer one day. She just wasn't putting the effort into her work. When she'd try put her thoughts to paper, she'd sit there for a while thinking she just wasn't good enough, and abandon her work to daydreams. "I just want to get by," she'd say to herself.

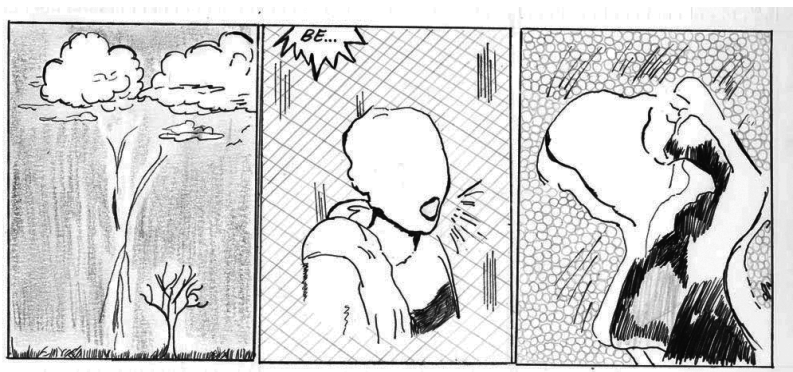
Clara found a way.

She funded her solo progression skydiving summer course with her part-time coffee shop job. She passed it quickly and was now a certified solo skydiver. Each jump along the course she had gone through the same ritual: cleaned up her room, settled her affairs, called her parents, and sent the anonymous note. Each time she tangled up the parachute and untangled it again when no one was looking. She'd imagine what it would be like to just not be.

This time Clara pushed off the plane. A big blue-green world stretched out in front of her. She laughed as a familiar feeling of ecstatic sparks popped throughout her body. She thought of those she cared about: her parents and that one person that made her feel like the sky was hers. When she noticed the ground approached, she thought of how Emily had told her once that she often made her laugh in class.

"I think I'll call Emily tomorrow," she whispered. Her spirit soared, as she turned her head, and looked up at the distant sky.

5. maybe as an instigator



mayhaps

it is a shrug or

a narrative that has no place

to land.

butterflies of ambiguity and uncertain

conclusions

all possible

in anxiousness or vengeful malice

in expectation or a glimmer of hope.

why is maybe left as an option?

why not give a plain yes or no?

maybe is the tool of both the lackadaisical

and the android

to put off, dismiss or skilfully

carve out some time before

committing to the dream

annihilating the heart

or freeing the soul with the bells

of validation.

The poet as maybe

A:

A poet is never free even in their
solitude;
a fighter, a speaker of unwelcome truths
isolated in a crowd
of flowery meditations
and clawing realities
they walk on
and write
existing
by the funeral pyre.

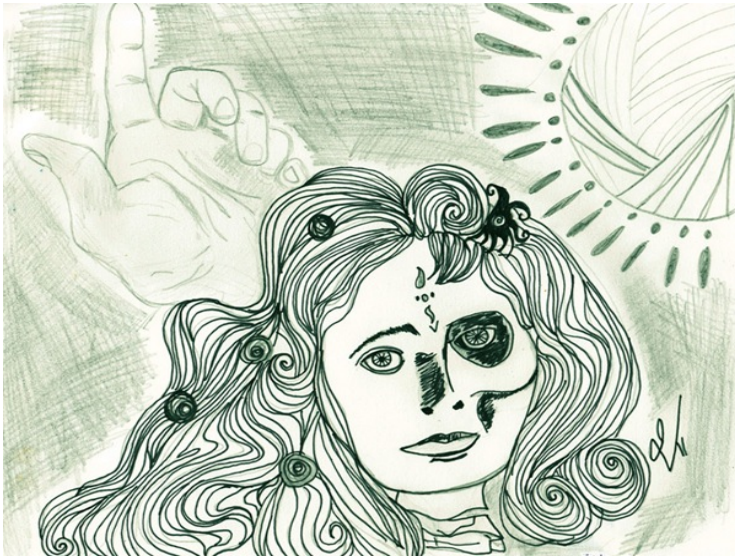
B:

the poet is the world's unpaid politician

C:

this is not the space to stop and
play the part; this is place
to think
to fuck, to sleep, to drink,
to get out the muck.

I adjure you
write
stop putting yourself on hold





Jacqueline Valencia is a poet, writer and freelance illustrator living in Toronto. She is a graduate of English Literature at the University of Toronto. Her art has appeared in Amelia's Magazine and art exhibits. An award winning poet, her short story, "Picky" was CBC's Pick of the Day for Canada Writes. "Maybe" is Jacqueline's second chapbook.

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Photos by Jennifer Valencia <http://jennifervalenciaphotos.tumblr.com>

