

True Fear

by Matt Kang

1.

A sixteen year old, seeing her, barely, save for the moonbeam glistens from her hands and the length of her legs. She unravels, and you pretend to know what you're doing. You grasp the knobs of her knees, like the knobs of her shower: always way too hot and there was little to do to stop it because the *C* was turned all the way open. She says, "Let's do it."

2.

A slightly manlier sixteen year old, seeing it, completely, in full-on blue-on-white. An arithmetic symbol stares back. You blink, she blinks. Eyes stare at you now.

3.

Wonderful night capped into a stay at her place. Nature calling from both the bedroom and the bathroom; each equally pressing. Flush, a sputter, and the water level rises, slowly. Flush again.

4.

In these days, the anger subsides and the sadness grows. You realize how much you poured into her—and now that she left you, carried away with her a piece of yourself. You are strangely aware of your age, your height, your teeth. You pass by the park and see children playing and smile; it fades into a frown as you walk by. You, the best man, next month. You, alone, maybe forever.

5.

She coughs, she coughs, she coughs. Each time, you feel a bruise forming. Somewhere within, you aren't sure. You take her hand, so light, so light. Now's not the time for tears; there'll be time for that later. Her jaw is slightly ajar, her head turned slightly inward towards the pillow, one eye fixed on you, trying to say so much in so

little, failing to, so you feel the spasm of her grip. The ill-fitting gown, the protracting silence between beeps, the beige serenity of the walls; it all falls down on you. You gasp at her, at the nurse, at the world, in a voice as feeble as her breaths, "what about me?"

