

The New Lycanthropy

by Noah Friedman

Who remains after the aching night has departed into dawn
and left us to week-old sleep
slouching from lofted beds and cartons of Ramen
rocked by finals week.
Books languish
beneath half consumed pints of chunky monkey, lips chapped,
beneath the fortune of the take home test, jaws open,
and beneath the mistaken ease of plagiarism
whose impetus sprang from empty dimebags
like racehorses in Dzungaria.
To comfort is merely to procrastinate.
But even still, we manage.
Trekking savage expanses of blue books,
rows of votive Red Bulls
Indulge God in exchange for the salvation of a full stop;
 the most sanctified well in the world.
The sighs roar through the Great Hall
and though we tremble, we still put up a fight
to exorcise an ellipsis
that's sneakier than all of the Sylvias
and hungrier than all the Hoaglands
it will get us all,
 that is, if the scantron hasn't beaten it to the punch.
But whom can I charge overnight
with potential pizzaz?
who will run beneath the weary morning banner
without so much as a groan
and still let me push its buttons;
Mac. The apple of my eye.
Who zips tirelessly from rapid auctions
to neon microfiche without having tasted
the mystic jolt from the holiest grail

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of cardboard and corporate imprint.
Who captured the blaze of Alexandria
and reconstructed the ashes
in thirteen and a half inches of
miracle mystery and authority
that once belonged to marble-bearded professors
shackled to print and pocket-protectors.
Not me, though.
Mac conquered far and wide for me
as if Ghengis Khan met Lebron
and together balled up all the world's triumphs into one,
with the cavalry circling
from baseline to baseline in a flash
while with solemn fondness
they recall the wild blue incantation that locked
the entire city of Cleveland
under the key.
Because after all
even Khan was no Superman,
Lest we forget that even he too
once bent to a final bow in equestrian free-fall.
Not Mac, though.
Mac's got 'em all cornered
beaten into binary
and packed neatly away in cyberspace

along with Casey and Peter and Ricky
and the rest of our pledge class
where we once would have met
in coffee shops or roof tops
above the bronze pennants of our neighbors.
There is still one missing.
The campus,
a place Komunyakaa fought for
and loved harder than any tenured faculty member,

his temple, our coliseum.
I used to love U.r.
before the angels forgot America's favorite son,
whom you loved,
letting the dagger through his letterman jacket
to carve a silver star out of his cardinal heart
leaving the shelved hills of Arlington to question their superiors,
wondering whether or not they'll be held accountable in court for
their participation in
the greatest cover-up
since Amazon rewrote Plutarch, having originally stated that
"The Kindle is not a vessel to be filled,
 but a mind on fire,"
a smear of history that buffet Bishop and Lowell
into a fox-trotted retreat through the library stacks
where they disappeared like black sox through cornstalks.
Together, they'll be safe there
and can do old fashions justice
hand-in-hand, face-to-face
for these methods that are not allowed
belong in my burn folder with Cam and Shortbus
and Cupid, who stung arrows across the Great Provide
right through his girlfriend's behind and into her inbox,
reminding us that its Hard To Miss Low
with a homunculus so huge
as it charms us all

one
 by
one

with open lips,

"Welcome to the New Lycanthropy.

Mac's got your back.”

