

*If you like the cut of our jib,  
consider donating so that we  
can keep doing that voodoo  
that we do.*



*i*

# HYPertext

## MAGAZINE

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### EVERYTHING I DID THAT DAY

BY RE'LYNN HANSEN

Dear Rena.

I know you will understand this letter because it is about everything. It's homage to our talks—which are also about everything, the two-hour ones where we try to connect everything—to everything.

The day started with you. An early morning phone call. We talked about Doreen's mother, who had just passed away. She had been an opera singer—captivating at parties with her cheeks flushed, eyes rolled to the ceiling while she let loose with a powerful soprano riff. Her voice always seized me at bone level, lifted my skin, then roped my thoughts into the force that wandered with the voice. *She was charismatic*, I said at one point, and so now we had to pull that apart. What is a charismatic? The possession of self so thorough, so saturated, that one cannot be anything but?

*You are a charismatic one*, I said. You didn't deny it—thereby proving our theory that the charismatics are unaware of ego, sort of an egoless form of being egotistical. At some other conversational point, we had posited that charismatics don't have the pathology of narcissists. I lamented my own lack of charisma.

*Perhaps*, I wondered out loud, *my lack of charisma is due to my exhaustion in overextending myself as I try to become more charismatic. It's my hyperawareness. It's a firewall against charisma.*

You let me go on like that because we come from that old school of friendship. We are friends who let each other drive drunk.

*It means you'll never be a politician, you said. That's not lamentable.*

It was great to talk about everything with you. Just to see where it all went. I watched the birds at the feeder as I lay there in bed with the phone at my neck. It was spring, a few vagrants arrived. *In every conversation, I wonder if I should have said something more—and if I said it all, and then did I say it right? Was there a better way, a wiser way, a shapelier way to say this? I wonder about these things. I am overwhelmed by my own triple-think-thing. It's infinitely triangulating in my head. I co-opt ideas from myself.*

*And that, is why you are not a charismatic, you said. But better, you posited, even better, you exist behind the scenes. You understand the charismatics.*

*Haven't I heard this before? I asked. Isn't this what they say about apostles and sycophants? Every god needs a scribe.*

*No, no, you have it wrong, you were rushing to get this one out: It's every scribe needs a god.*

Okay, so we exhausted ourselves with the charismatic talk. But there you were, the charismatic alternative health practitioner. And there I was, your friend with cancer.

*Cancer is unreal, I said. I cannot believe life is now tacked down by my thoughts of my mortality, mitigated by my cancer to-do list, including clinics to call.*

*But we all feel unreal, you said to assuage me, or maybe just to try out the thought. Every morning I go outside and stand there with my cup of joe and wave to people who pass the fence and wonder who they are. They seem so solid standing across from me, and I feel so vaporous while looking at them. We can only, you know, give these waves to each other to acknowledge our separate worlds.*

Neither one of us wanted to untangle the thoughts of the vaporous vs. the solid world. *I know you will figure this out, you added ... what it's like to have cancer.*

*That's because I have to, I said.*

*I just trust you. You have it in you.*

*That's just you being charismatic, I said.*

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**Re'Lynn Hansen's prose poem memoir, *To Some Women I Have Known*, is published by White Pine Press. Her work has appeared in *Hawai'i Review*, *Prism*, *Rhino*, *New Madrid*, *Water~Stone*, *New South*, *PoemMemoir Story*, *Fourth Genre* and online at *contrary* and *Slag Glass City*. She is the recipient of the New South Prose Prize and the Prism International Creative Nonfiction Prize. Her chapbook *25 Sightings of the Ivory Billed Woodpecker* was published by Firewheel Press. Her Novel *Take Me to the Underground* was nominated for a**

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