

Worth a Thousand Words: Integrating Visual Elements into Creative Nonfiction

Chelsea Biondolillo, Lilly Dancyger, Grace Talusan, Megan Culhane

LITANY FOR THE LONG MOMENT

Oct. 24, 1973

Dear Mr Mrs Arnold

I received your nice letter and \$25.00 check
on 22nd Oct. I am glad that you received
mi jin's pictures. also I am happy you are
happy to see the child mi jin's picture.

I also received the package of mi jin's
dress slip, vitamins, Doll, socks which
you sent for her, these things she need
when she goes to new home, she do not
understand what for, but she is happy.

Please don't send any more package
before she is reach to your home.

Thank you every kindness to her

Sincerely yours

On Son Whang

MARY-KIM
ARNOLD

MARY-KIM ARNOLD

I, the undersigned, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS of the

Republic of Korea, hereby request all whom it may concern to allow Miss, MI-JIN KIM

a national of the Republic of Korea, proceeding to THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

for the purpose of ADOPTION

to pass freely without let or hindrance, and to afford the aforementioned person such assistance and protection as may be necessary.

The validity of this certificate will expire on JANUARY 4, 1977, or upon the bearer's return to arrival at ////////////////////.

Date: JANUARY 4, 1974

Mingjo Kim

DESCRIPTION OF BEARER

Place of Birth: SEOUL, KOREA

Present Address: 106-17, CHO-DONG, SEOUL.

Date of Birth: OCTOBER 12, 1971

Occupation: NONE

Height: 82 cm

Weight: 10 kg

Visible Peculiarities: NONE

Signature of bearer
PHOTO





Mary-Kim Arnold

Solomon-Godeau says that when Jacques Lacan said, "La femme elle n'existe pas," what he meant was that the category of woman is socially constructed and that subjectivity and meaning are all created in language.

The idea of woman can only be understood in relation to man and defined, therefore, by lack:

And to the extent that the category woman is understood to be a wholly discursive production (and within patriarchy, a differential one; a being defined by her relationship to lack), conceptualization of the "real" woman is logically both unknowable and unspeakable.

I think about this in relation to Woodman's work, but also in relation to the category of orphan.

An orphan is understood to be without parents, defined by the relationship to lack.

Is orphan then similarly unknowable? Unspeakable?

The unspeakable orphan, defined by the lack of parents, can remain an orphan indefinitely, or become an "adoptee." The transformation can occur only if action is taken by others.

What actions can the adoptee take? What can the adoptee become?

VI. THE CHILD

Physical appearance: The child looks cute with round face, dark brown hair, ordinary back of head, thin eyebrows, black eyes, low nose, small mouth, round cheeks, olive-colored complexion. Her body has balance. She has 8 teeth on both sides.





Mary-Kim Arnold

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to the referral information sent by the directress of the Orphans' Home of Korea, on June 20, 1973, the child was found abandoned at the Dongdoochun Babies' Home. And so, on June 26, 1973, the child was placed at Orphans' Home of Korea, trusted by Dongdoochun Babies' Home.



The child's name was given by the Orphans Home as Mi Jin KIM, which means: Mi—beautiful, Jin—true, KIM—a most common family name.

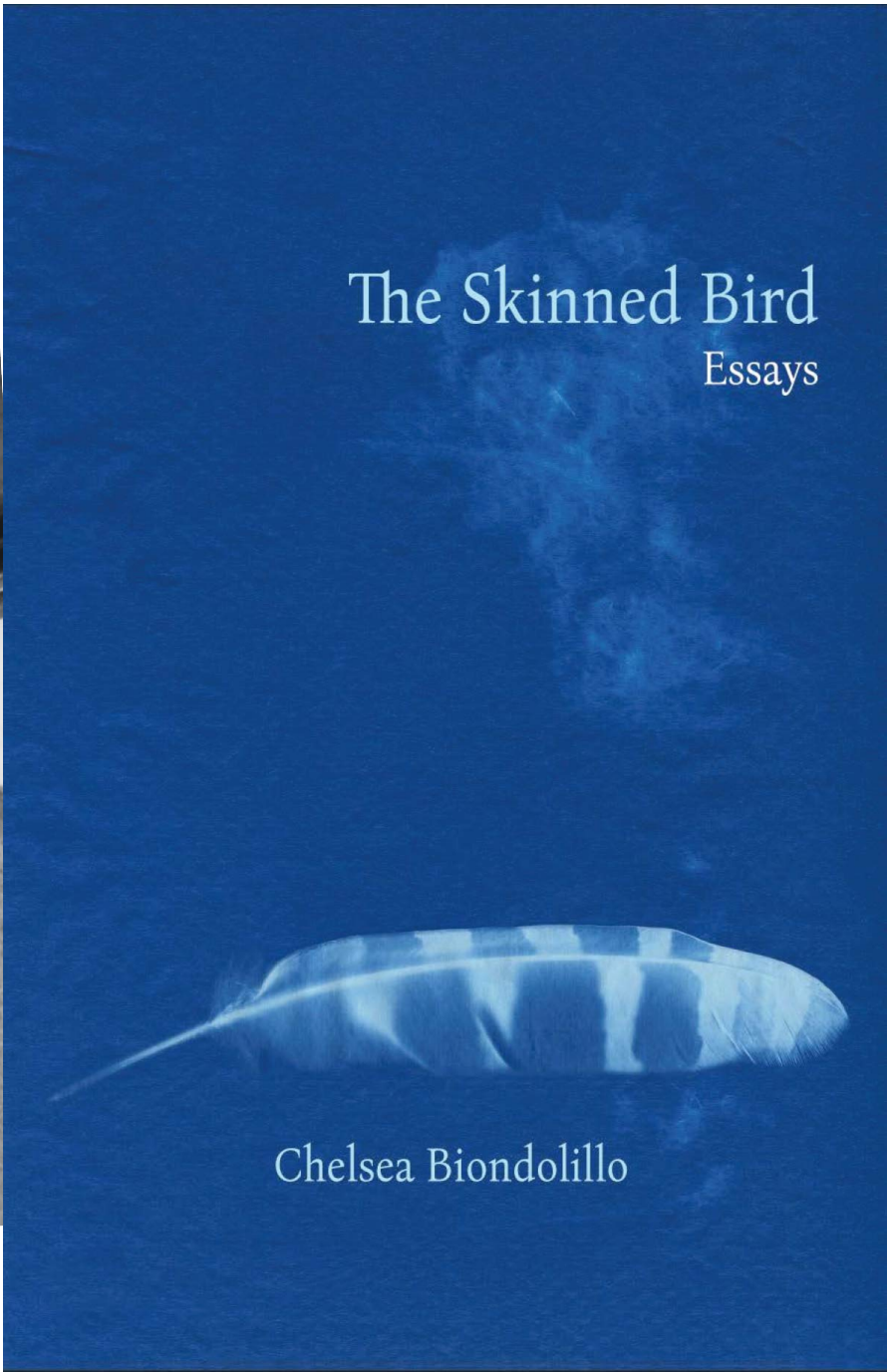
DAY 7: KOREAN LANGUAGE VII

* Write your own name in Korean, Hangŭl.

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Mary-Kim Arnold



CHELSEA
BIONDOLILLO



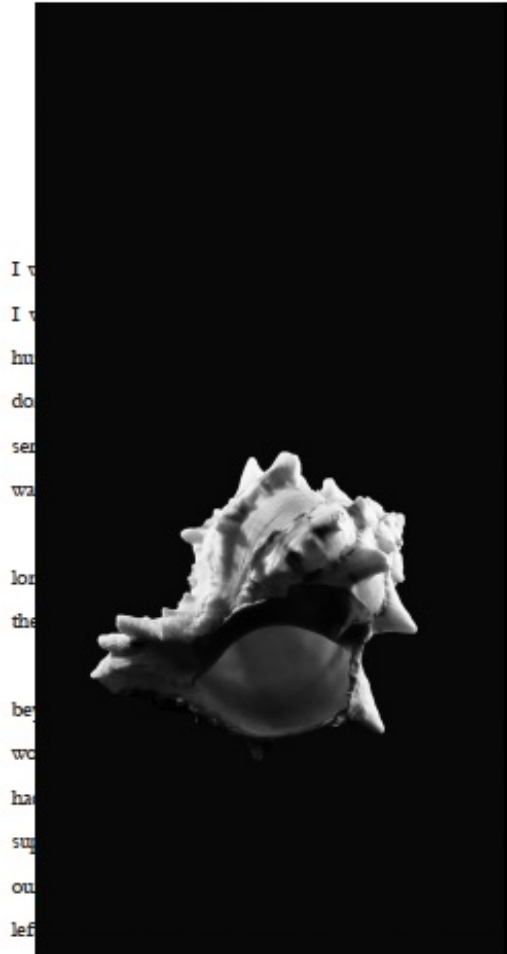
there are no words to describe how i missed thee

G, 2009

“Broken men are easier to leave later,” I
answered.

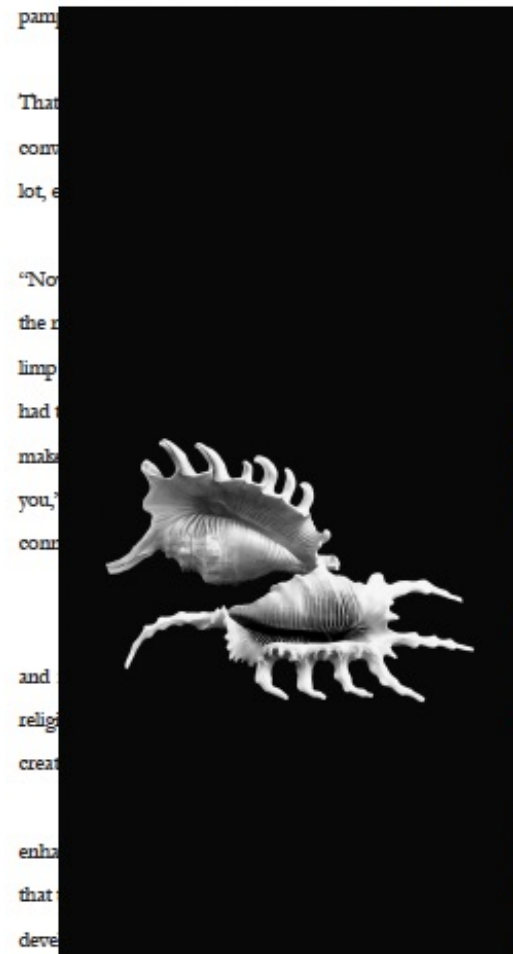
Though he hadn’t asked.

THE STORY YOU NEVER TELL



us all into the room and we sat in a circle on plastic scoop-

shaped chairs and she handed us each a glossy, over-sized



to describe other components of the cellular organization.

shore crab

Do you remember the first time you lied? The first time you held something small and hard and clawed to your belly, clasped inside a make-shift cage of mussel shell halves, even though you knew you weren't supposed to? Even though you were specifically told to leave it behind?

But once you'd held it, it became yours—to steward or ignore as you saw fit. It was delicious and terrible, this skittering responsibility, this sin.



Figure 3

Weeds and wildflowers have taken over my grandmother's old garden beds. The house and grounds are now mine, and so each spring I labor to tend them. Tansy is pulled, as are thistles and scotch broom (even though my grandmother liked its bright yellow long lived flowers), but I ignore the tiny trefoils and many of the moon-pennies.

Every year I say I'm going to keep a journal about the comings and goings in the yard: the birds, wildflowers, the tide of weeds, so I can predict better next year when I can work and when I can rest. My grandmother wrote down every bird she saw in the last half of the '80s. In 1977, she wrote down every wildflower she photographed.

Meadow hawkweed, woolly lamb's ear, kittentails, slender speedwell, perennial candytuft.



Ulex europaeus

If I'd been more careful, more considerate. If I'd had more compassion for myself and the blackberries... I scold myself over the rerun.

The snake writhed in the weeds, twisted over and upon the place I'd cut it. My heart hammered imagining how I might staunch my own bleeding with no hands no arms only trunk trunk trunk to tail. It was no thicker than a finger and had every right to hide in the blackberries I cut back each year. I cut them, because the alternative is to be taken over by them. Because I want to imagine order here. Because order suggests that my hands know what they're doing, that the garden, its roses, its peonies, its dahlias are growing as designed.

But order calls for cruelty that pink peony heads belie.

The brambles, shorn. The tansy stalks, toppled and burned. Over and over when I walk by the spot, I see the snake, still on the path, the pink crescent of its meat attracting flies.

Hairy bittercress, forget-me-not, bull thistle, groundsel, creeping woodsorrel, leafy spurge.



Pipilo maculatus

What I often felt as a child was frustrated, lonely, and always just out of step with my peers—I laughed and cried at the wrong things, which mortified me every single time it happened. I was praised at home and at school for getting answers right, and so I strove to do that. I had friends, but I was often anxious that I'd make a mistake and get kicked out of the circle. Later, at a new junior high, PE class was so terrifying (I didn't know how to play a single sport, even passably) that some days I'd hide in the bathroom before the bell, my stomach cramped so tight I'd break out in a sweat. I felt safe inside of a book or my room or playing alone. Later, the roar of live music was a comfort. When everyone was looking at the stage, I could dance or laugh or cry and no one would notice.

I remember happiness, then, as the absence of anxiety.

"Joy" is lyrically spare. As Williams' wrote it, each line is repeated twice, and then the whole thing repeats between guitar solos.

I don't want you anymore, 'cause you took my joy
You took my joy; I want it back
I'm gonna go to West Memphis and look for my joy
Maybe in West Memphis I'll find my joy
I'm gonna go to Slidell and look for my joy
Maybe in Slidell I'll find my joy
You've got no right to take my joy—I want it back
You took my joy; I want it back

She's never hemmed about the song's meaning. An article from a 2008 *Rolling Stone* about her latest release, *Little Honey*, titled, "How Lucinda Williams Got her Joy Back," includes the lede, "Done with 'bad boys,' the singer-songwriter found a good man — and crafted her most upbeat album ever."

Her love life was in a shambles after a long-term relationship she describes as "really destructive and really difficult" came to an end. "Then I had this brief, uneventful rock & roll fling — just oil for the motor," she says.

The entirety of the article focuses on the impact her troubled love life had on her music career, and how she met and fell in love, finally, with a good guy, leading her to write this latest and greatest record. She tells the reporter, "I've finally found the right relationship where I can blossom as a writer and grow with somebody and be happy... I had to wait until I was in my 50s, but, you know, I'm a late bloomer anyway."

I feel euphoric during the early stages of a romantic relationship. I've never thought of that euphoria as being joy.

When I'm at the end of romantic relationships, I often think about "Joy" (the song). I know well the sensation of tamping down my excitement for someone else's comfort. So, whenever I'm making my latest plan to leave, I imagine having *had* joy and being just about to rediscover it, around the next corner, say.

Joy must be a lightness you feel with your whole body. It's got to include laughing, and maybe goosebumps.



"...a lovely and heartbreaking book."
—Carmen Maria Machado



LILLY
DANCYGER

lilly dancyger



"Ow Pin:" Rusted beer bottle cap, razor blade, with a safety pin set in putty on the back so it can be worn on a lapel

Joe and Cathy snuck into construction sites at night and left big sculptures for the workers to find in the morning—guerilla installation art. I pictured them on a chilly night, the traffic lights reflecting on dark streets, quiet except the occasional newspaper truck or scurrying rat. He'd be wearing a leather jacket, of course; maybe she would too, looking like Debbie Harry with her short bright hair. They'd have tools with them, and materials, probably in a canvas Army surplus backpack, which he called a knapsack. They must have scoped out the site during the day, knowing exactly where they were going. When they arrived at the chain link fence, he'd chuck the knapsack over first, looking around to see if anyone noticed the loud thud as it hit the dug-up dirt on the other side. A gentleman, he'd kneel down to give her a boost, weaving his fingers together into a step for her and helping her hike her weight over until she landed with an even louder thud. She'd laugh, the thrill of trespassing too much to stifle. Then he'd heave himself up, the fence jerking with his weight, making way more noise than it had when she went over with a boost, as the black steel-toed boots he wore every day, scuffed and creased, angled for a grip. When I pictured him

72 - Lilly Dancyger



ink drawing on paper

Lilly Dancyger

114 - Lilly Dancyger



Top: Woodcut and leaf print on paper

Bottom: Woodcut and leaf pochoir on layered paper

Lilly Dancyger



"Daphne;" Carved wood; 20"
(Photographed at the home of
Heidi O'Donnell, Phoenicia, NY)

more around the edges, but what had always been at the center stayed the same.

The more I thought about it though, the more I wondered if it was less that this new part of the story didn't alter what I knew of my father and more that I simply couldn't reconcile the two. Something in my mind protected my memory of my father by walling it off from this idea of him as an antagonist; created a whole other version of him, like a separate character, distinct from the father I loved.



"Rabbit Contemplating X:" Woodcut on paper

I needed some way to test my memory, something physical and tangible I could measure it against to help me understand what was real—or



"The Pink Lady:" Carved and painted wood, approx. 72"
(Scan from the original artist slides. The Pink Lady deteriorated beyond repair and was left in the woods in the Catskills)



“An extraordinary collage of motherhood and a moving journey of one woman’s search for wholeness.”

—Jill McCorkle, best-selling author of *Hieroglyphics*

Megan Culhane Galbraith

*The Guild of the
Infant Saviour*

AN ADOPTED CHILD’S MEMORY BOOK

MEGAN
CULHANE
GALBRAITH



Image RT-AB-49
Year unknown
Topic Resident Teaching > Apartment Babies
Text A student "mother-of-the-week" living in one of the homemaking apartments prepares the days formula for the "practice" baby for whom she is responsible.

While mothers are constantly changing the core remains constant and unvarying.



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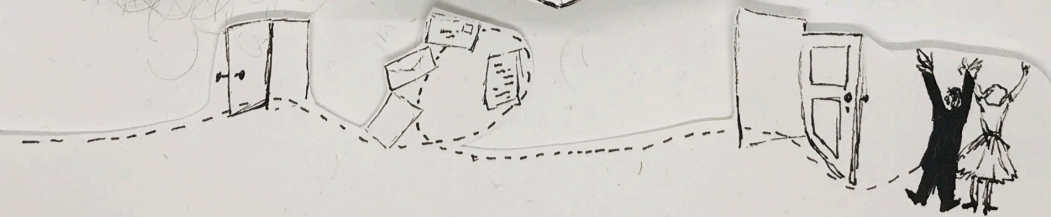
An Adopted Child's Memory Book



THAYERSWOOD ROAD
THAYER WILLIS, M. D. APR 15 1967
OFFICE HOURS: BY APPOINTMENT NORWALK, CONNECTICUT 06851
EXCEPT WEDNESDAYS

Megan Gabriella
half whole
half skim fresh milk
All strawberries
test egg
Add

by
Megan Culhane Galbraith





Megan Culhane Galbraith



Megan Culhane Galbraith



Megan Culhane Galbraith



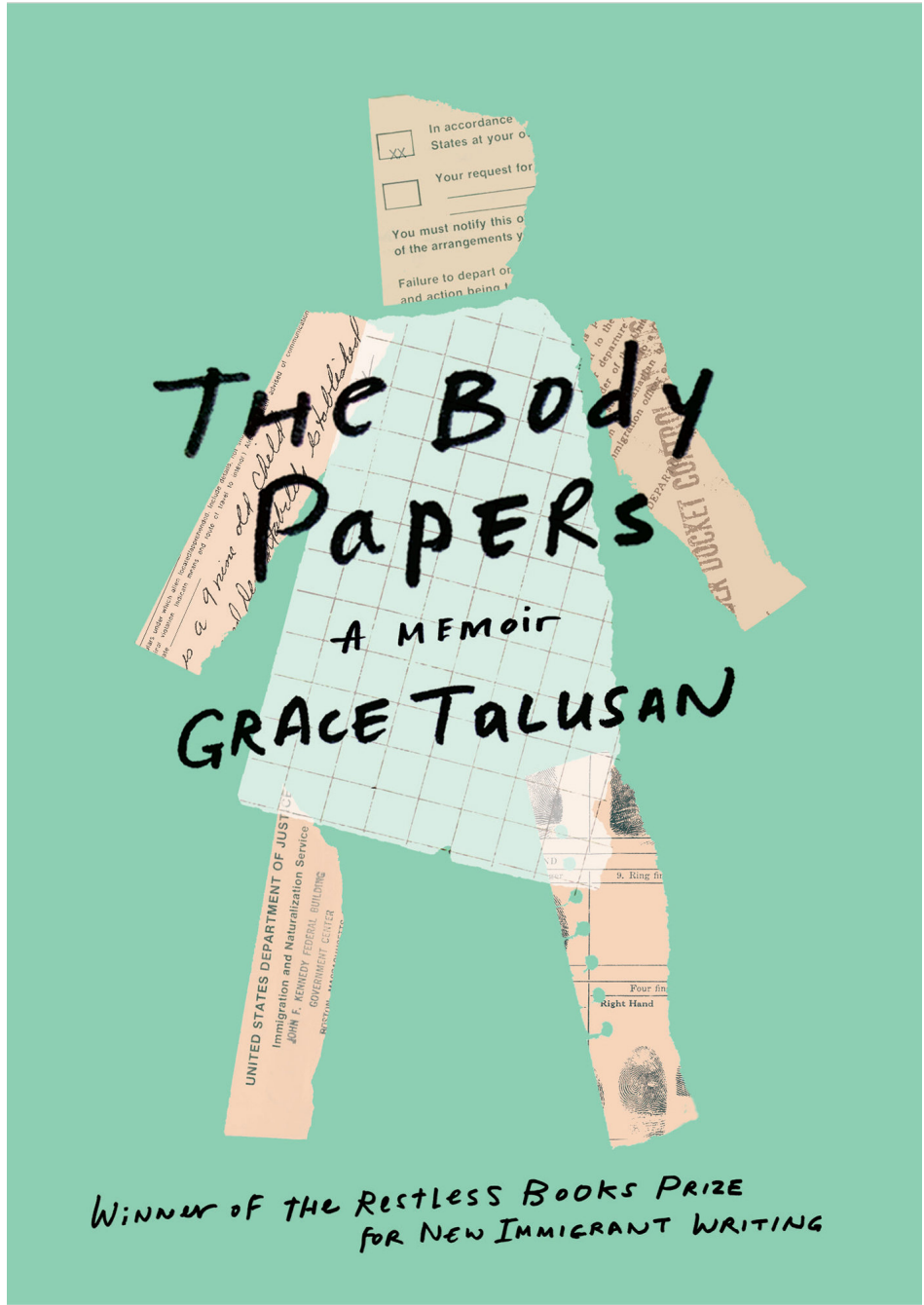
BOTH PICTURES ARE OF THE SAME BABY, FIRST WHEN HE WAS POORLY NOURISHED, AND LATER FOLLOWING A FEW MONTHS OF GOOD FEEDING

Image STAB-17
Year unknown
Topic Education Teaching - Apartment System
Text Both pictures are of the same baby, first when he was poorly nourished, and later following a few months of good feeding. This is one of the babies that came to live in the machine house at Cornell. His name was Babby. When Miss Winchell first saw him, she was advised not to take him because he was so under-nourished that he probably would not live. After a few months at the machine house, cared for by the nurse Economics students and their other Miss Murdock's supervision, he became the baby you see in the lower picture. The arms, the stiff back, and the strong back are all signs of good nutrition.



BOTH PICTURES ARE OF THE SAME BABY, FIRST WHEN HE WAS POORLY NOURISHED, AND LATER FOLLOWING A FEW MONTHS OF GOOD FEEDING

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