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***Summer 2020 Issue***

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*o*[***Emil's Magic,****by Jim Bates*](https://www.thezodiacreview.com/)

*o*[***Bruiser****, by Robert Boucheron*](https://www.thezodiacreview.com/)

*o*[***Happy Memories****, by John Dennis Clayton*](https://www.thezodiacreview.com/)

*o*[***It Was 1951****, by Chella Courington*](https://www.thezodiacreview.com/)

*o*[***A Special Place In Hell****, by Craig Grafton*](https://www.thezodiacreview.com/)

*o*[***Waiting Room****, by Anita Haas*](https://www.thezodiacreview.com/)

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*o*[***Creation: A Flash Epic****, by Fred D. White*](https://www.thezodiacreview.com/)

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***Hey Bear***

***by Kathryn Holzman***

*Courting*

At the visitors’ center at Denali, the ranger sells bear-proof containers and tell us to watch a film about bear safety before heading out into the tundra. Sitting in the dark theatre, we watch a triad of campers brandish their hiking sticks while repeating “hey bear, hey bear”, as they cross a rocky stream three abreast

puffing themselves up to appear larger than they are.

*The honeymoon*

The plane drops straight down from the sky. Below us, the blue green Caribbean Sea yawns. Flight attendants scurry up the aisle, shaking loose the bilingual pleas of passengers. Your cold hand squeezes mine, cutting off circulation. The steady voice of the pilot fills the cabin: “Sorry about that folks, we’ve hit some turbulence.” After landing, we drink margaritas and dangle white feet in the pool.

*The writing on the wall.*

We never seriously consider naming our son Compromise, although we tell friends it’s a possibility. You, the poet, have no desire to have children. I make it a condition of staying in the relationship. We for debate for a year. After our son is born, I return to work half-way through my maternity leave.

*Watching the grandkids*

“You can’t control me,” the 5-year old, limp on the couch, dares me. As usual, her hair is a mess. The four neat braids her father tied in the morning half unraveled. The lock of hair she’d cut with scissors as she hid behind the couch falls across her face, too short to be restrained. When I try to take the scissors away, she mouths the words: “What the fuck?” Her brother giggles.

*The virus*

Despite the scientist’s warnings, tourists queue up to board the cruise ship. At a pharmaceutical meeting, conferees shake hands and jockey for position at the bar. Underpaid nursing assistants go from patient room to patient room offering comfort to elderly patients no longer able to care for themselves. We, their grown

children, wave through the windows.

*Staying home*

Funerals are replaced by parades of cars, waving goodbye.  We sit on the couch, zooming with our son and his family. A truncated limb here, the top of a head blurring there. The girl makes goldfish faces and the boy launches paper airplanes over a pile of sofa cushions. Our son says his signed divorce papers languish somewhere in a queue awaiting the re-opening of the courts. Before the screen

goes blank, a message flashes: Weak internet. Connection lost.

*The air clears*

No one hugs their sons or cuddles their grandkids. Pollution levels drop. A record-size hole in the ozone layer closes. The pyramids appear out of the smog and fish swim in the canals of Venice. In the afternoon, we play gin, just the two of us. One day, our president tells us, we will wake up and this will all be over. We wait

for our miracle.

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***ABOUT THE ZODIAC REVIEW***

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***The Zodiac Review was launched in 2011 by writers/editors Daniel VanTassel and Brian Wright to provide a quality magazine for new, emerging and established writers of “literary/genre" fiction, the merger of literary fiction and any genre that cares to join it. You may know this blend of writing as "slipstream," "hybrid," or "genre-bending" fiction.***

***Among the many themes and sub-themes you may find in stories here are fate vs. free will, cosmic irony, and some of the many fascinating ways in which humanity and human relationships are understood by the characters who populate the stories.***

***A unique quarterly literary magazine with free, meaningful feedback***

***Here new and emerging writers will find a studio of sorts as well as an especially receptive venue for publication. Editors provide free, meaningful feedback for submissions by way of personalized comments.***