

Spring 5-1-2015

Pug

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Recommended Citation

Andersen, Mary (2015) "Pug," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 37: No. 2, Article 58.
Available at: <http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol37/iss2/58>

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For a second, I thought I should stop—not go over until I had an audience to witness my achievement. I feared that my body might not be able to perform this feat again. But, the momentum kept me pumping anyway. Then, a woosh of wind pushed at my back and gave me all I needed for that extra lift. I was over!

I gripped the steel links until I thought the calluses would burst and bleed. My head reeled with the upside-down sensation, and my feet that once pushed against the wooden seat were now flapping in the air. I held onto the links. The pull of my body's weight strained my arm muscles and shoulder blades, stretching every sinew and tendon. Air pressed against the canals of my ears, and I heard another thud as I was yanked down to the gravel. My heart thudded in sync with the thud of the links. My legs, clad only in shorts, raked through the gravel and slid the full length of the landing strip. Suddenly, my body and I came to a complete standstill.

My hands, still gripping the links, burned as I slowly released each finger. Through half-closed eyes and complete stillness, I looked at my thighs, then my legs, then the mix of red blood and gray gravel. In that silence, I lifted my eyes to the top of the swing, to the bar that had been my challenger, and beyond to the sky that had been my flight path, and I smiled, victorious.



MARY ANDERSEN

pug
scratchboard drawing