

from Juked #4
Fall 2006

SPENCER DEW

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Pregnancy Test

1

Remnants of grits, hardened in a half moon at the edge of the bowl. She kept waiting for her period to come.

2

The Jewel-Osco bag dangles from the naked tree branch, edges tattered as meanwhile, always, the mechanical kitty in the window of the sushi joint waves its hand up and down, wafting good luck, good luck, all the goddamn day.

3

Thirteen American flags fly through the snowy night outside the gas station where that soldier got shot last week, home on leave, which is also where, by coincidence, I bought a pack of cigarettes, a carbonated herbal energy drink, and a pregnancy test.

4

One day the sidewalk is littered with tiny white tampons, like bullets, and then it rains and they swell, like dead laboratory rats.

5

The line between installation and performance is so vague, permeable. Everything is a membrane this season, or can be described through membranous metaphors. Is it possible that infidelity, too, fits into the function of the gallery? "That's what openings are for," someone says, and someone else responds, receptive.

6

A display window where the mannequins are draped in string lights, flashing, blue and white. Across the street a clerk on a cigarette break screams into her cell phone.

7

At the Golden Angel Pancake House, 3:23 am on a Wednesday, the waitress is crying as two cops — one male and one female — tell her how her daughter was discovered.

8

It is hard to read about the ambulance accident and not laugh, at least a little, at least silently, at least on the inside.

9

The red onion found, a week after she threw it, in the little closet that is called a pantry and that is full of empty bottles that she

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plans one day to recycle.

10

The last thing you scream at me before everything falls down is that you are trying to urinate in a straight line.

11

History is formulaic, all stories determined in advance by the characters involved. While you sleep on the couch, I lie in bed awake, for hours, thinking about your sister.

12

The decision never to consider lost options, never to regret . . . It is like New Year's every instant, with these stupid resolutions. The best I can ever do is write letters that don't get sent.

13