

PINDELDYBYE  
PINDELDYBOZ  
PINDELDYDIE



hey kids.

P I N D E L D Y B O Z

**Volume Seven**

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Pindeldyboz, ISSN 1534-7869  
is published in the United States of America by us  
printed by you  
and distributed by you  
you have more responsibility this time

**Web submissions are always welcome.**

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'Pindeldyboz 7', 2007  
Stabilo Fiber Tip Pens on paper, 8.5" x 11"

1 3 5 7 9 0 8 6 4 2  
ONLY PRINTING (IF YOU PRINTED IT OUT)  
DECEMBER, 2007

## Acknowledgements

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to:

Jami Attenberg; the entire Balcomb family; Rebecca Berg; Tonya Canada;  
Cedar Tavern (RIP); Chris Dorment; the valiant and brave members of  
the CLMP; Kate Garrick; Seth Herzog; Jen Huh; James V. Jordan;  
Lester Mark Lenoff; John and Eileen McGonigle; Krista McGruder;  
Michelle Orange; Chris and Red Pastorek; Beth Redden; Michael  
Showalter; the Slipper Room; Mandy Stadtmiller; the staff at E-Dubs;  
Joyce Steensrud; Jack Swenson; Adriana Valencia; Alison Weaver

and all the believers, wherever you are. don't stop.

please turn to the back for a list of 2006-2007's internet contributors.

p i n d e l d y b o z

# SEVEN

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We have to talk.

We really like you. We do. It's been seven years now, and you've been with us through a lot, from the beginning when we were an earnest web operation offering short but compelling works of fiction to now, with our fancy, futuristic, digital incarnation. You bought books, you came to readings, and you played along with our auctions and raffles. You bought t-shirts; you bought the Poetry Edition. You've been really great overall. We wouldn't be here to offer you this new version of sharp prose if it wasn't for you.

But here's the thing.

We're thinking it's time to move on. Literary magazines are hard-ass work. Seriously. When you are not connected to a university where funding is almost an afterthought or a well-heeled, literature-loving rich person, well, it's kind of like swimming in pudding. Or at least trying to. We are a group of dedicated writers who love literary magazines. We love presenting the great voices you maybe haven't heard yet but definitely, totally should. We also love corn, but that doesn't mean we should be farmers.

We've been really lucky to attract some really talented, die-hard folks to help us out over the years. We've gotten a lot of great people to offer their time in reading through the piles and piles of submissions. We had a great deal of support from our own families and our urban families, the other literary magazines and writers both in New York and throughout the country. We've pulled off some really cool shit. But books are expensive to make, expensive to ship and expensive to distribute. And the crazy part is—don't get me wrong, we're not criticizing you here—people rarely buy them.

So we want to do other stuff now, namely the stuff we've been ignoring. Whitney is going to move to the West Coast and become



some kind of surfer or singer or some such thing; I don't really know because I plug my ears every time she talks about it. I am going to finish my damn book and figure out what I am going to be when I grow up. Maybe.

We've had a great time together. We've had a great run, we've burned down the house, we've partied with lampshades on our heads. We've laughed and cried and read stories aloud along with musical accompaniment featuring the hits of Journey and George Michael. And we'll always have the website, which is chock full of new stories by great writers every couple of weeks. You will most certainly find the same excellent quality and same amazingly unique voices.

We're not really breaking up; we're just changing the nature of our relationship.

So this is the last print edition of Pindeldyboz. The last dash at hand-held literary fun. Read it any way you like. Go crazy with it. Print it out and give it to everyone you know as gifts. Sit at your desk and lament what once was. It's a bold issue full of weirdness, fun, lies and truths. Plus a story by me, so you know there will be a lot of cursing.

You'll always be our first great love. But it's time to move on. Listen, it's not you. It's we.

Keep in touch,

Kristin McGonigle  
Print Editor, Pindeldyboz  
2004 to 2007

**Pin'del•dy•boz** (Pin' dl dĕ bôz), *n.*

1. A feeling of confusion and/or anxiety,  
when ingeniously anesthetized by obese amounts of levity.
2. A situation of confusion and/or anxiety,  
when tampered with in the same manner as above.

**fiction.**

## 23A

Porter Fox

1

The elderly man sitting beside me on the plane isn't well, isn't moving, like *dead-not-moving*. Wispy white hair covers the sides of his head. Wrinkles run in every direction from the corners of his eyes.

The woman in the aisle seat is dressed in a black skirt and black blouse. She smooths the fabric over her knees quickly. Her lips glisten red. The engine roars. The runway falls away as the wing slices us free. I look out over the Oregon scrub. A red LED light blinks on the starboard bulkhead. The stewardess told us to walk the wing if we land in the ocean. I wasn't aware of an ocean between Oregon and Wyoming. I'm an infrequent flier. It's the thin skin of the fuselage. I'd rather land on a runway any day. Maybe in a place where...

The plane banks to the left and the old man's head flops onto my shoulder. His skin is gray and his lips blue. He could be my dead grandfather. I feel the urge to jab him.

Your friend's stomach is like Styrofoam, I say to the woman.

She looks at me fiercely.

He's not my friend.

Whoever.

Steam escapes the galley. The ceiling lights flicker. The old man falls onto my shoulder again.

There might be a problem, I say.

No problems here.

Over here.

She leans in, steadies the old man with her hand and smiles her nasty smile.

I'm not sure he's okay, I say.

Neither am I.

I touch the old man's face and feel his cold skin. Then I look out at the clouds, like heaven above heaven.

Is everything all right? a stewardess asks.

It's a lovely flight, the woman says, scratching her chin.

Her friend is dead, I say.

He's not my friend.

The stewardess half-smiles, inspects the man, the woman, me. She smiles again and walks away. I can smell him now. He really is dead. It's a plastic smell, another reason not to fly.

We couldn't afford to have him shipped, she explains.

People don't do this.

It would have been four thousand dollars.

The stewardess returns. Two men in suits stand behind her. She points to the old man and continues to the front of the plane.

Sir? asks the larger of the two.

The old man has a look only attainable in airplanes and elevators. The woman crosses her legs, touches her forehead. Two passengers peer around their seats. I begin to speak but before I can the old man's hand slips off the armrest and lands on top of mine.

You're awake, one of the men in the aisle says, a smile spreading across his lips.

Who are you? the old man asks.

Air marshals. You're all right?

Right as rain.

I look at him the way I might look at the sun.

Coffee or tea? the marshal asks.

Coffee.

And you? he asks me.

I try to nod, but my head doesn't move.

Sir?

I say nothing. The marshal leans over, wraps his fingers around my wrist, pokes my neck and chest. I'd like to say yes, I'm fine. Nothing going on here, it's just this dead man next to me. And, y'know, these fuselages are really...

Sir? he asks again.

The marshals confer and the larger one shrugs. They squeeze into our row and curl their forearms under my armpits. They are polite and careful in their movements. The woman and the old man watch as the marshals lay me out on a stretcher. The LED flashes.

There's only a few things worth dying for, Neddy, the old man says as they roll me away.

The sheets are cool and the pillow soft. I'm very comfortable. Passengers peer into the aisle as we roll to the aft of the plane. Then everything is quiet and white. The pilot cuts the throttle and speaks through the intercom.

*There's been a slight problem. Nothing to worry about. Please fasten your seatbelts. We'll be landing shortly.*

The old man walks down the aisle and stands over me. There's color in his face. He's wearing my grandfather's fishing hat. He scratches a liver spot on the side of his cheek.

You're dead now, he frowns.

Look who's talking, I say.

It's not the end of the world, Neddy.

Who *are* you?

I'm me.

And we are...?

In a plane, he says, spreading his arms.

I'm beginning to understand. We're screaming through the air, unconnected to anything, with a destination but no end. Everything is in motion, all is lost. Then it's there—a distant red strobe. It's something recognizable, rushing your way. Ease back on the throttle. Now you get it, turn it back on the old man. Remember his warm breath on your wrist.

*We're landing now*, the captain says.

The ground rushes up. The stewardesses take their seats. The LED blinks. When it's solid red, we will walk the wing.