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Poem by Shaw Patton



Frasier 2099

It's the future and

NBC has rebooted *Frasier* the title sequence shows
an aerial shot of Seattle,
now dots of islands in a swollen Elliott Bay,

all the coasts of the world trimmed to a bad haircut, the Gulf of Mexico
daggers what's left of Louisiana—New York, Houston, LA are no more.

Kelsey Grammer's great-grandson
plays the lead drowns in slow motion
over an entire season, tied to an armchair at the bottom of the sea,

behind him the blurred but familiar Seattle skyline, upper halves at
angles like straws in glass, the Space Needle missing entirely,

wrenched from the ocean floor
during the 230th World's Fair reassembled outside Nashville
alongside other cherished coastal skyscrapers,

dull sounds play as though underwater in a bathtub, canned laughter
puncturing—it's been so long that laugh tracks seem fresh again.

Each episode ends in a cooking segment,
the dish always a variation on tossed salad, scrambled eggs,
hosted by whoever's the hottest celeb of the week—I've made it to

Episode 9, where the face is covered in bubbles, and the guest cook
is a man inside an iron lung, voluntarily there, who subs ketchup for ranch.

Shows are beamed straight to your eyeballs
if you wish, though a filter of some sort is required to avoid
hyper-targeted ads, for they are always watching, noticing when your

bionic eyes linger a fraction of a second too long on the hot barista during
your morning stop at McStarbble Bees—and now that same barista's in

your peripheral vision,
waving you to come back sometime a distraction from
whatever you're trying to watch, you dream of her that night—

there's a trend to project stories onto your eyelids, episodes across your
vision, until your vision's not vision but dreams with commercials breaks,

yourself a part of the cast, in the case of *Frasier 2099*,
drowning beside him on a couch or you choose to never sleep,
they have the technology, but three out of four who stay awake transform

into Elvis impersonators, mall Santas, or Times Square characters, and no
one can explain why—cancer's been cured, but the future has its mysteries.

I'm about ready to go back to my own time,
whatever that means, but before I leave I visit my gravesite,
once a lovely cemetery in a field outside Dover, now a coastal wetland of

stunted trees and sunken stones, but I'm lucky, and my marker sits just at
the water line, the surf lapping at the side of my stone during high tide.

Though I directed in my will for them to carve
He was loved I can see that the weathered inscription says
He loved, which supports the possibility that no one loved me in the end

and as I picture myself buried beneath the sand, brackish water seeping
into my coffin, myself up here breathing, somewhere down there drowning,

I have an urge to start digging,

but I don't act on it, instead turn to leave the sky's too gray for a
clear summer day, but everyone seems used to it or custom filters their

vision to make it bluer, even superimposing birds against the horizon, and
it appears there's little pride in hashtagging #nofilter on your feed anymore.



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Shaw Patton is currently pursuing an MFA in fiction at Florida State University. He is a Japanese American who can barely speak Japanese. Since high school, he has lived in Florida. He co-owns a restaurant in Tallahassee and lives with his long-time partner, two dogs, and a flock of chickens. He was once runner-up in the *New Yorker* cartoon caption contest. Along with various pieces published in newspapers when he thought he wanted to be a journalist, his poetry has appeared in the *Matador Review*.

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