

# CITY LIMITS

**Norman Amygdala**

**Morgan Mandalay**

January 7-February 5, 2017

Opening reception: Saturday, January 7, 7-11pm

Ok. It starts when I was 15, or was it 17? Ok, so I'm yea...whatever and I fall asleep at his house and it's a big house. He's Kevin and he's big and he's strong but he's kind of ugly but people think he's funny so I do, too. I remember being in his kitchen, him making fun of me, me getting upset. One of the first times I had to claim my identity from someone trying to take it from me. Call that a blocked memory. Anyway, you take it from here: pitchfork-knife-Subaru. Least culpable. But, alas, what's in a name?

Father sits smoking cigarettes in a worn black leather recliner. There's a mini disk player purchased before a DVD player because we often chose wrong. Mom sits on brother's chest as he hurls insults and spits venom. Dad's out to sea. He was always the smart one. They swirl around like a zone defense. Someone's always in the same wrong spot.

I stayed in my room, afraid of what lay beyond these walls. I had a race car bed and a sad clown painting, a gift from a grandmother I barely knew. When I left, I drove away with tears in my eyes and learned to laugh towards the past. I laugh a lot now. People tell me I have a strange laugh. It's really loud. It's a way that people know I am coming — like a car horn, but for my face.

You want to go to the snake, man? We're driving through the desert. Alan and Ernie seem to know a good time and when we pull up to the single wide they let us know to walk just as they do. Inside, snake man is fat and dirty and has stains all over his white shirt and

briefs. He pulls out his snakes. They are hissing and rattling and I swear I think I'm gonna run out of this damn trailer but then there's the dogs and what the hell am I gonna do so I sit there and he's starts speaking in tongues. He tells us never go do this, never go find a snake in the desert. These things will kill you. He looks at me and says, "One day I sat down on the toilet to take a shit and when I flushed it, nothing but the shit remained." I thought it was poetry and one of the saddest things I'd heard but consensus in the car was that he had faulty pipes.

My brother wrote today. In long and winding notes, he explained that he had been the one to interpret tears for fears correctly. That I had never learned to shout. Mama let him know it's not healthy, fixating on the past. We're all about the future, here.

It seems like a really bad system. A faulty one. This is a really bad year for self examination. The clowns are taking over and they're sad and angry and whatever like a 15 year old. Not like they don't know anything, but like they don't know how to instrumentalize that knowledge, where to channel that sadness. Pack that in your pipe and smoke it. There are some pipes you just don't want to go down. Those pipes ignore one another's humanity and when you flush...well, you know the rest.

**Morgan Mandalay** lives and works in San Diego, CA where he is completing his MFA at the University of California-San Diego. Mandalay received his BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Solo exhibitions include Yautepec in Mexico City and Helmuth Projects in San Diego. Other recent exhibitions include Le Domaine Enchanté curated by Domenico de Chirico at Galleria Acappella (Naples, Italy), The Originals s01 e 01, Galerie Tatjana Pieters (Ghent, Belgium) and Figuratism, curated by Jens Hoffmann for ArtBo (Bogotá, Colombia.) He's represented by Yautepec in Mexico City. Mandalay is also the founder and director of SPF15, a beach-based curatorial project based in San Diego, USA.

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