Plot and Its Discontents
Instructor: Aurelie Sheehan

Plot: Is it an alien creature that swoops in to wrench and sever your story to bits? Is it the antidote to sleep? Is it just a fancy word for story and structure jammed together, easier to pronounce than structstory? In this class, we’ll read novels that are interesting, confrontational, or just purely accomplished in the way they unwind a story. Although our primary mission will be to analyze overall structure, we’ll take time to consider sentence and scene—a revealing microcosm not to be severed from the whole. My hope is that the semester’s readings and conversations will help us “see” plot and story structure more clearly, loosen up preconceptions, and foster more confident wrangles with plot in future writing. Critical and creative exercises will be assigned in moderation.

Reading list:
The Forgers, Bradford Morrow
We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves, Karen Jay Fowler
The Third Policeman, Flann O’Brien
Duplex, Kathryn Davis
Welcome to Braggsville, T. Geronimo Johnson
The Unfortunates, B. S. Johnson
NW, Zadie Smith
The Shelter Cycle, Peter Rock
Outline, Rachel Cusk
Pedro Paramo, Juan Rulfo
Orlando, Virginia Woolf
The Hour of the Star, Clarice Lispector