

periphery



DOG TEETH: issue three

letter from the editor

PERIPHERY is here! As always, thank you so much for reading and making DOG TEETH real - every issue I get to put out fills me with gratitude; I love this project and I'm so excited I get to keep making it.

DOG TEETH is always evolving, both stylistically and in terms of where I want the project to go and what I want it to be, and I'm also super grateful for the support of everyone involved and everyone who reads the issues while DOG TEETH find its paws.

It excites me to think that DOG TEETH might *never* have a solid 'brand', but rather that I might follow my instinct regarding what the creative moment calls for.

I want to cultivate vibes and values which serve as a cornerstone for the magazine, (i.e that this will always be a place for expression, queerness, vulnerability, rawness, etc.), but I want the project to remain infinitely flexible within those parameters, both for my sake as the founder and editor, and for the sake of chasing art of the kind that DOG TEETH was built to showcase.

I decided on PERIPHERY as this issue's theme for some pretty personal reasons!

I have spent the last year rebuilding my life after a number of world-changing and difficult personal issues. I've been, through this rebuilding, thinking a lot about my near-constant feelings of being on the periphery but also, as I claw my way back toward stability slowly but surely,

I've been reflecting on how periphery doesn't always have to be negative.

I feel it when I struggle, but I also feel it when I think about my queerness, my animality, my spirituality, and I'm *proud* of all those things, and of their peripheral aspects.

I wanted to see other people's art reflecting on periphery, both positive and negative, and this issue has ended up delivering in such a major way.

I think the truth is that the world, and by extension, all of its inhabitants, is always changing: it's flux o'clock somewhere! and that can be difficult and raw but it can also be exciting and necessary.

I'm proud of and excited for this issue because it addresses those feelings of impermanence and liminality and otherness so well and so

tenderly.

And we have so many amazing contributors! 38 wonderful creatures whose art is touching and gorgeous and so fucking cool. You can find their details at the back of the issue: if they've got socials and their art touched you, let them know!

A huge huge boundless thank you to everyone who contributed to both this and all our past issues: you are talented and wonderful and DOG TEETH exists because of and for you.

And thanks again for reading! I hope you love this issue, and thanks always for the support.

Stay weird + take care of each other,

JACK

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S. Cristine

EXT: WEST TEXAS AT MIDNIGHT

It's all blank space
around the pinpoints of the train lights tonight
and I am crawling out of the desert
towards myself.

I've got silver on my wrist,
in my ears,
around my throat —
it's medicinal,
it's the only thing stopping me
from turning coyote animal.

If I looked in the mirror right now
I'd see a woman in the shape
of a beer can,
a horseshoe,
an approximation of history.

I've never been here before
but I've lived here before.

This is how I feel it might look
when I imagine seeing the world
from inside of someone else:
like the horizon is floating,
like there are rows and rows of telephone poles
walking into the distance,
nowhere real left for them to go.

Kurt Edward Milberger

three poems

CW: DEATH, DYING, BODY HORROR, DISCUSSION OF ANIMAL BUTCHERING

[livor mortis]

Livor Mortis (hypostasis): the discoloration of the skin due to the pooling of blood in the dependent parts of the body after death. The blood pools because the heart can no longer circulate the blood.

Think! Think!

O the ceaseless whirring,

the torrential swirling of every molecule

every molecule whorling around

ceaselessly INSIDE

the unstoppable tumble

of

the

blood

the gurgle of the Guts

the buzzing

friction of the blood

in the veins

and then

one day

HALT!

perhaps a churning

perhaps a sudden release of pressure

a SPRAY

nevertheless

a sudden or slow

process of stopping

of settling down

into the long puddle of a sick

purple

bruise

that sunsets

onto whatever sections of the ribs

the thighs

the hips

the calves

the chest

have become

the bottom of the body

to settle

to boil

to freeze

before

at last

the burst.

[algor mortis]

Algor Mortis: the change in body temperature post-mortem, until the ambient temperature is matched.

hardly perceptible at first

the slow drift toward

equilibrium,

the spit cooling
in the mouth

the stomach acid
simmering down

the skin the first to register
the shift

closest, as it is,

to the outside

then the eyes

the warm flesh
of the mouth

like a frozen roast,

a rack of lamb,

left out

in the black wire rack

to thaw in the sink

slowly
rises in temperature

the body
sinks

stiffens

stinks

or,

perhaps,

in different, less friendly climes,

the temperature

rises to match

the heat outside

waves of fragrant sweating

fog the horizon

as the meat of the body

roasts

low

and

slow

as a shoulder of pork
on the grill

beside smoldering

indirect heat,

smoking chunks of young hickory

split with a heavy red axe;

returning to balance;

a strange
thought

after years

burning hot
or
running cold

out of synch with the air
the atmosphere

which claims its debt
slowly

without
effort

without
heavy breath.

[rigor mortis]

Rigor Mortis: stiffening of the joints and muscles of a body a few hours after death, usually lasting from one to four days.

It wears off over time
like any
mad panic
any spasm
of fear
any
unexpected noise
in the house
late at night
when you're not sleeping
home alone
like any quick
error
corrected,
accident averted
any ice cream
nearly dropped
first in the face
that
grimace
the smaller
muscles of the back
the toes
muscles
still connected
contracted
slowly

till
all closed

the slow beginning
of the body

digesting itself

following hard

on the back

of
primary flaccidity

Rigor mortis is very important in meat technology. The onset of rigor mortis and its resolution partially determine the tenderness of meat. If the post-slaughter meat is immediately chilled to 15°C (59°F), a phenomenon known as cold shortening occurs, whereby the muscle sarcomeres shrink to a third of their original length.

Cold shortening is caused by the release of stored calcium ions from the sarcoplasmic reticulum of muscle fibers, in response to the cold stimulus. The calcium ions trigger powerful muscle contractions aided by adenosine triphosphate molecules. To prevent cold shortening, a process known as electrical stimulation is carried out, especially in beef carcasses, immediately after slaughter and skinning. In this process, the carcass is stimulated with alternating current, causing it to contract and relax, which depletes the adenosine triphosphate from the carcass and prevents cold shortening.

frozen
unnatural
action

legs
stretched
straight
off a gurney

arms stretched out 90°
toward the sky

spoiled meat

statues of suffering

salutes

waves

a last, long

cobra pose

postures you cannot leave
meat you cannot eat

T!K! Williams

Barely Human

CW: VERY BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF MECHANICAL BODY HORROR

All my best friends are barely human -
fanged machines and angular beasts
prowling their territory's borders
to see how (not if) they have moved.

Fanged machines and angular beasts,
too altered to know how to change,
to know where or how they move,
laying the same paths bare.

Too altered to know how they've changed,
messes of gear and screw and needle
scraping the same skin bare
spreading rust to the soft parts of us.

Messes of gear and screw and needle,
forced testament of how we settle -
spreading dust to the hardened parts of us
as if doing nothing was the right option.

Forcing testament of how we've settled,
this new need to be at rest.
As if doing nothing was the best option,
not, finally, paying any attention to it.

The new need to be at rest.
Not prowling their territory's borders
not finally paying any attention to the fact that
they are all now barely human.

Shepard DiStasio

le stade du miroir

CW: INTERNALIZED AND EXTERNAL TRANSPHOBIA, ASSUMED RELIGIOUS TRAUMA, BRIEF IMPLIED SUICIDAL IDEATION, METAPHORICAL SELF HARM, HUMAN AS CATTLE IMAGERY

- i. crack your skull upon the mirror,
veins running across the glass,
streaming with your blood.
- ii. take the glass,
run it across your flesh,
score it like the meat baba
brings home on Sundays.
- iii. peel it off and hang it on the coat rack—
nine pounds shouldn't break the hook, but
now you're feeling lighter and mama *should* approve.
- iv. baba's favorite cut
you know, the shank—the one you
peel from knee to shoulder.
now mama will love you
- v. but *Why do you harm yourself so?*
You're the prettiest girl in town.
We raised you better than that.
- vi. you raised a calf,
bred for butter, but
only after I've supplied
three more for your house
will you lead me to the slaughter
and put me out of my misery as your
daughter, and finally allow me to be
- vii. a steer.
a son.
a collection of meat and bones.
- viii. the mirror's broken, clean up all that glass before someone sees
how you're scattered across
the pink carpet.

Hera Hong

CRAWLING

The ocean is the ocean is the sea
and see how it moves, eager like a lover
crawling and licking up your legs.

Your legs are your legs are lovely
and love leaves like a lover
crawling like a wounded animal to forever sleep.

Sleep is sleep is dreamful rest
and for the rest of my life, I will love her
crawling like credits to a horror movie.

The movies are the movies are cascades of pictures
and you picked her, your short-lived lover
crawling to an end, the end, the end, again.

Elly Meyers

You were in my dream last night

I haven't forgotten you

My mind brings you to me

Whole

Normal

Here

It was warm and we lay in the grass

In some strange city that doesn't exist

I told you everything

Every tiny thing that has never happened to me

You listened and smiled and gave advice

You told me about you

But it wasn't real and I didn't hear it

I already know you

We got something to eat

We were together

nina marr

two poems

apocrypha

CW: LIGHT GORE

an angel
 came down
 and bit my shoulder
 last night

tore out a chunk
 and made me

divine

a dog in the mirror cannot recognize itself -

carrion beasts at the edge of the tall blonde grass
howl looking for me still
ghosts in the corner out of my eye

my father tells me i
was found by coyotes as a baby
and since my own dog teeth tear
open all kinds of wounds
it must be true

at the tail end of august
in the middle of the night
the sharp honey eyed trickster
evades the headlights and

howls in the hopes
the others
will hear

moonlit scoundrels
do not come looking for me anymore
even though i smell the same

Jay Aelick

Seven Polaroids for Our Seven Months

I believe it scared you / the knowing
/ the car didn't get clean unless you
cleaned it / that it didn't run /
unless you filled it with gas / that
your touch / your fingers not quite
in / the too-wide grooves of the
steering wheel / were the ones that
set it in motion

You were out / of time / classic /
in the way something can only be
classic / by being in two times at
once / the now / and some former
thrill / made more thrilling by its
not being now / for you / it was the
middle part / the thrifted shirt /
baggy enough to fit two more people
/ in there with you

If I may be frank you looked / like a
former Goosebumps actor / who
had grown up / gotten interested in
longboarding / and group sex

Someone once told me a poem was a
caption / to a photography only I
can see / but here is one anyone can
look at / really / it's on Instagram: /
your head cheated / left / catching
enough streetlight / to look a little
dark / the tunnel behind you blank
concrete / lonely / enough to keep a
secret

I was no king / but you gave me the
Tantalus experience / for \$13.99 at
the liquor store / I drank / from
what you gave me / grew thirstier /
with every drying drop

Brimming in your denim / pants it
isn't hard to see / why so many of
the emojis in that picture's comments
/ are fruits / there's a car in the
picture / too / it stays stitched / to
the dark ribbon of the road / it can't
risk / surviving / the crash

I believe you liked saying you were a
car guy / I believe it made you feel /
like a car guy / I believe feeling /
like you were a car guy / was
meaningful to you / I believe there
was a car / there was a guy / who
even drove it / sometimes / and it
helped him / feel

Jason Caudle

CHOMP

CW: PSYCHOSIS, SELF-HARM (INDIRECTLY)

MAN REMOVES HAT, PLACES ON DESK

WOMAN OPENS NOTEBOOK, SPEAKS

- Has there been anything on your mind lately?
- You're going to think I'm crazy.
- We don't use that word here. I'm here to help, not judge.
- It's my mailbox, doc. It's—

MAN PAUSES FOR SOME TIME

- It's got teeth.
- A figure of speech?
- Rows of them, sharp.
- I see. When did you first notice the—the teeth?
- Couple weeks ago, I pull out Southern Living, it's soggy, dripping. Next day the metal's all spongy.
- Spongy?
- Fleshy, I guess. I didn't think much of it, at the time.

WOMAN LEANS FORWARD, ELBOWS ON DESK

- Have you noticed anything else out of the ordinary?
- Oh, I'm not religious.
- Things you can't explain? Lapses of time you can't account for?
- You think I'm delusional.
- Hallucinations are very real to the people who experience them.
- Tried to bite the postman. Now he just throws the mail on the lawn. It's no way to live.
- I understand that it all seems very convincing, but you must understand it is only an invention of your mind.

MAN ROLLS UP SLEEVE

- Oh my lord.
- Gnarly, ain't it?
- You've harmed yourself.
- It was the mailbox, doc. See the shape? Not no human mouth.
- This is serious. You need serious help.
- Kinda what I came here for doc.
- You came to me because you know, on some level, you are suffering from a psychotic disorder.

MAN SHAKES HEAD

- No doc. I need advice. On what to do with this thing.
- Perhaps you could replace the mailbox?
- I'm scared that'll kill it.
- It's only a mailbox.
- I think it might be, like—have you seen Blade Runner?
- Sentient?

MAN SNAPS FINGERS

- A moral dilemma, then?
- Yeah doc, like I said I ain't religious. But it's wrong to kill something that can think, right?
- How do you know it's intelligent?
- Well I've been doing tests.
- And?
- It'll only eat certain kinds of mail.
- What—What kind of mail does it prefer?
- Special financing offers.
- I see.
- She really loves the ones with the little credit cards inside.
- She?
- It, I mean. I don't know for sure that it's a lady mouth.

WOMAN WRITES

MAN WATCHES

- Do you have a romantic partner?
- Now you—what are you trying to say?
- I just want to understand.
- I'm not—I haven't—It ain't like that.
- What exactly is your dilemma?
- I'm scared it's getting smarter. And I don't know what I'm supposed to do with it.
- Ignore for a moment what you're supposed to do. What is it you want to do?
- Go back, I guess, to getting mail like normal.
- But you're afraid of harming an intelligent creature.
- Yeah, doc.
- Maybe you can get a P.O. Box?

MAN SLAPS HEAD WITH HAT, THANKS WOMAN, LEAVES

WOMAN WATCHES MAN LEAVE, WRITES IN NOTEBOOK, FEELS TO DESK

IT IS DELICIOUS

tommy wyatt

two poems

quick save: repetition compulsion

CW: DISASSOCIATION

1

you block the phantom player (spare controller in the hands of no one,
the blank space compressed on the bean bag beside you)
into walls turquosed dark and pixelrobbed by yellowstars.
you want to ghostflash out of here but what does it matter where you go
when you're losing again, o crystals and o heart doing it all—
can you guess who you are doing this for?

the future is retconned by the roulette toward the end of *Mario Party 5*—
vibration off so you don't have to feel it, your entire being smashed
by what you remembered to have more wrath and consequence
as you are translucent for a brief moment.

2

the future is retconned by playing *frozen frenzy* in the periphery
where yourSelf is alone in a distended nothing, nowhere
all tunnel vision of synth distortion the dissonance ringing
you wrung out how else will you approximate self-sabotage
if not somehow controlling variables like replacing NPCs
with no one the emptiness you make space for beside you
and the conflict is your own— then, why does it feel the same
and what compels you to try again?

dissociating in the walmart with a backways entrance,
keyed in blue songs only tuned sunken,
water drumming up your ears again
feeling like you're floating softpunk
and unkissed¹ by memory
twisted with moon
glowing out from steely clouds
how it subsumes you in the lacuna
of time. *rollback* blue shopping bags breeze
over concrete, tumbleweed style. why do you express
gender as convenience, disposable with surgepriced
fear, plastic gleaming through your hands,
why do you buy into it when it never
served you? as you scan the parking
lot for your ride home, you can only see
it in the deep distance, kaleidoscoped
by bluepinkwhitepinkblue, and you start
to wonder, for maybe the first time,
how you'll find your way back.

¹ Inspired by "Starburned and Unkissed" by Caroline Polachek from the I Saw The TV Glow soundtrack.

beau nicholas

Ekbon's Mutt

CW: SLIGHT BODY GORE, BODY HORROR

bite. bark. scratch. my routine remains. there's an itch i cannot placate;
bugs in my stomach—bugs crawling under my skin.
pests on the loose, i am flea-ridden and bleeding
from the gashes—from the caverns carved by my claws.
they're in there, burrowed deep inside me, wriggling.
their clinging feet latch onto my nerves, sending shocks down my spine,
and the worms in my gut hunger endlessly,
always gluttonous for more——

eat! eat! we're starving! feed us! you're going to kill us!

no, no! not that! that's poisoned! you're going to kill yourself!

——and yet, no matter how deeply i gouge at my arms,
all that leaves me is blood and hope.

i know they're in there. i know. i can feel the way they crawl
across my veins. the way they chew and nibble, bite—bite—bite.
prickling tingles and bulges in my skin as they grow fat off of
all i have within me to offer. ticks boring in and hanging on for the ride.
nothing calms their restless, starving spirits. constantly, they move
about, tummies never settled nor satisfied... how do i free myself of this
agony? is there enough medicine in the world to cleanse me—purify me?
my fur stands on end as goosebumps rise, wishing the pills my owner gives me could
come with something nice...like peanut butter—maybe cheese.
perhaps that would make this constant horrific mirage a bit
easier to swallow.

Lucy Hannah Ryan

Why Can't I Be Hungry - Cannibalism and Chronic Illness

CW: DISCUSSIONS OF CANNIBALISM

Six weeks after vital surgery on my stomach to help me be able to digest food again, I am watching Luca Guadagnino's acclaimed cannibalistic romance *Bones and All*. I feel nauseous and bloated and a little overfull and I desperately miss being hungry.

For as long as I can remember I have been unwell. For almost as long, I have loved horror, loved monsters with sharp teeth and ungodly, insatiable desires.

As I watch Taylor Russell's Maren curling close beneath a glass table with a beautiful girl who is so very neat and tidy and normal, I feel the same ache. As she pulls the girl's finger to her mouth and bites down I understand, completely. There is only so long that you can hide the freakier parts of yourself before they come frothing out of your carefully maintained seams. Only so long you can pretend that you don't want to bite down, and swallow. Being ill means I have always felt as though I'm playacting, practicing normal womanhood to appease the people around me whilst knowing something about me is fundamentally different. I feel, in some ways, like those starving monsters. But like Russell, crying in her father's arms and then alone in her empty bed, I also feel like a scared little girl.

I'm not bad, I'm not different. Maybe, in a way I'm just too hungry.

When french filmmaker Julia Ducournau's bloody coming of age film *Raw* hit theatres in 2016, ambulances had to escort scandalised audience members out of their seats. There people were (allegedly) fainting into their popcorn buckets, horrified by the shocking, graphic scenes of violence, and, yes, cannibalism. Going into the film, which I watched whilst suffering with the flu, I was ready to be thoroughly, thrillingly disgusted. Instead I felt seen.

As *Raw*'s Alexa, a good vegetarian in veterinary college develops strange physical symptoms which doctors repeatedly misdiagnose following a prank, she also develops a hunger for flesh that refuses to be contained. Her skin breaks out in a horrible rash, her stomach aches and everything she eats she throws up, including strings of her own hair. She's fresh into university, desperate to find herself, but what she finds is an inherited sickness that swallows her whole. As Alexa and her wild-child sister Justine go on a cannibalistic rampage, her other symptoms abate. She becomes confident, sexually liberated, free.

She's hungry, but she's also three dimensional for the very first time.

I have dreamed, ached for the moment when I can be a person undefined by my sickness. If I could just be hungry, if I could just eat well and be human, then I could be anything I wanted. The moments where Alexa vomited and clutched her stomach were sickeningly resonant, moments I've had to live over and over. When she was sat on a kitchen counter during a party, grinning and starving and writhing to the music, I felt it in my chest. I know I have a wild side hidden just beneath my more fragile surface, but for me letting it out can lead to more damage. For Alexa, it's everyone else who's in trouble.

The cannibal is an alluring figure because of its taboo. It is transgressive for man to consume man. And it's even more so for woman to consume man. *Bones and All* and *Raw* are quite different in tone and in the journey their female protagonists take, but they both undoubtedly utilise the perceived delicacy and naivety of their female leads to mine horror from their hunger. Women eating, and eating well has always been a threat to society. It's why diet culture rules with such a tightly clenched fist. But it also represents other kinds of desires, ones for carnality. For freedom.

If I could burst free of my body, like the werewolf sisters of *Ginger Snaps*, or the titular wide-jawed succubus of *Jennifer's Body*, I think that could fix me. But what is perhaps so resonant about these cannibal stories is that they *aren't* fixed. They are still human after their defiant consumptions, and they continue to hunger long after the credits roll.

I have been sick for as long as I can remember; I have felt nauseous, and I have felt the absence of hunger, the echo of it, a want that I can't quite make a need. I will still be sick when I've finished writing this essay, and I will still feel both all too human and alien, something not quite the same as those around me. Maybe that's why I love these hungry women so much. We all want to find some way to be hungry, and it doesn't have to be palatable or neat and tidy, but perhaps it must be a little bit raw.

Sam J Grudgings

DETERIORATE

CW: DISCUSSIONS OF DEATH, SUICIDAL IDEATION, BODY HORROR &
IMMOLATION

02.18.22 20:37

I saw you sitting in the pub drinking with friends last night which is odd because you are dead.

02.19.22 02:45

Something in the quiet of the house made me think twice about staying asleep. I got up, went to the bathroom to get a drink & avoided looking at myself in the mirror. When i returned to bed I found I was already sleeping there & didn't have the heart to wake me so I decided to catch up on my reading, switch my water to coffee & by the time the other I left the bed to go about my stolen usual morning routine I had disappeared, leaving behind only a faint sense of Deja vu. It turns out its difficult being the one that vanishes because you're still mostly there.

02.18.22 20:45

I saw you sitting in the pub drinking with friends which is odd as you are dead & I wanted to join you but I had to swallow my courage & I, not willing to admit failure, do not drink anymore so had nothing to bolster my courage. I'm not sure I believe in the waiting.

02.19.22 06:17

The boy is a knife, is an ocean, is a representation of a boy, a shadow, an archetype. He has been tearing off body parts, but they keep growing back. The boy being an ocean is able to auto-cannibalise. The boy being a knife uses himself to remove parts of himself. The boy being only a representation, is not able to adequately defend his right to continue & so doesn't. What takes his place is nothing more than a representation that believes itself to be the real. It shouldn't have to be this way, but it is.

02.18.22 21:13

I saw you. I saw you. I saw you. & the doubt is worse. The waiting is the wound. The possibility that you faked it all to escape & be happy is an ocean of doubt filled with knives. I saw you.

02.20.19 23:05

I'm not sure I believe anymore. I have become so used to gone I am thinking of resurrecting again. An entourage of doubt, a too sweet cereal with a mascot whose eyes are bleeding, he knows so much. The water is calling me. Can you hear it? The calling is water to me, dying of thirst halted from feeling.

02.19.22 13:12

Somewhere between the hammer smashed face of a clock too indignant to stop itself & the visions in the eyes of a decapitated child becomes a failing to render myself inoperable by standard means. I will collapse if I must.

02.19.22 22:17

Someone sees me propping up the bar across from them knowing I am dead. They will not tell their friends. They will pay for a drink & ask the bartender to *pass it to the guy who set himself on fire, smouldering as great hunks of burnt flesh fall from him looking for a refill* but a bus crashes through the bar before the drink can reach me & using a cinematic trick I disappear behind the bus passing, colliding with the patrons before the clean-up crew can attend in horror at the senseless scene stealing violence of my wake. there's a bed waiting for me if I can make it back in time so that the me who just vacated me can see me there thinking I'm the me who survived & took his place

Alannah Guevara

Chosen or How the Fish Theologize

Heavy rhythm

 ocean waves

Prattle in my lungs like salt

My skin ripples in fragile fingertip touch of water

Only I can feel like the fish feel the warmth of the sun

As they are abducted, digested

And excreted back to the sea

Only I am but one specific fish

In this, our only ocean

What are the odds

 of get ting caught?

Theodore James

two poems

the dog in me gnaws the dog in you

CW: VIOLENCE/NSFW IMPLIED

clashing of flesh
meeting, melting of fists into claws into fingers
we expect the pain we think we deserve & i deserve
bloodshed

salivating like mutts; we take turns
in the torture. foreseeing the Great Release
of our animals from their respective cages

we lick the wounds we pour salt in
we dance for dominance, beasts in an
unforgiving night
teeth & tongues tangle till
topsy turvy realization:
love is a violence only known
by the animal

rough, rigid, all-consuming
bits of blood & skin under
furious talons
a reminder of the passion
in pain, the intrinsic aggression
of all intimacy

we assert ourselves like
creatures in combat
& hearts soar when
fists fly, amalgamation of
teeth & tears & tissues
the red residuals of intercourse

all that is wet is bleeding/
all that we know is to hurt
to choose pain for pleasure
to terrorize the mental & physical
into ecstasy

the dog in me gnaws the dog in you like
a toy, a plaything used for gratification
i bite hard. & shake harder. i do anything/
everything to feel & make you feel,
to spill the colors of amor

we kiss with teeth
hoping to break/
consume the other
to halt the opportunity
for any/
all
escape

i let my breaths play
hopsotch with my heart
this kind of feeling
reverberates & recurs & reinvents
now jarring-what cannot be jarred

the bittersweet tinge of
tongue stuck in mouth, or
teeth in bleeding lips
i swallow words yet brandish
my pride

i
bite down at the bit in the
face of conflict
cower away from protest,
wounded animal...fearful...hesitant

this habit holds bodies
and those bodies are mine
corpses of who & what & where that
could've/should've been-
instead i bend
a blade of grass to the wind
let my thoughts linger where
actions dissipate

dear god, if you are here
make me a lion in this next one
teach me to snap those pearly whites
on aggressors
make me strong and stubborn as
my zodiac!
for i was always
too fearful
to thrive

B.A. O'Connell

Under the Northern Star—I Give You My Best Valiant Speech

CW: BODY HORROR, VIOLENCE, RELIGIOUS TRAUMA.

I have these dreams where my baby teeth come back to me and want to be kept safe. My mouth always hurts these days. My fingers are growing longer, growing crooked, growing sharper—I'm looking for the somewhere that the road ends in.

Blood is what makes moons happy. Look, I know I'm crazy. It's not up to you to change anything or tell me to put it back together.

I shattered in the morning, and I'll sew myself together in the night. I'll sew with thread and sinew and flesh and blood. I will be made in the open. I was made for the reanimating.

Like those baby teeth, I want to be rooted and made fresh again. Alive again. Rotting is a romantic notion at first, until it consumes, consumes, consumes.

Look at me Mama, I'm just like those teeth, I'm just trying to be equally good and bad. I'm balancing every thought and every action with careful measures in my casket heart.

Zoe Adrien Lapa

Eating Her

CW: DESCRIPTIONS OF SURGERY

I had always been sentimental. So when I was told to throw her away, I just... didn't.

She was broken, I knew. But the hollow shell that kept her tethered to this plane was still special to me, though consciousness inhabited it no longer. Beautiful blocky landscape—and when light hit her metal! All those colors bouncing. Oh, what a sight.

I loved her corpse as I loved her.

It started as a compulsion. Tiny buttons, tiny screws, tiny peeling scraps of paint all going down the gullet over a number of weeks. Why? I just felt like it. It wasn't even a matter of wanting her inside of me; not yet, anyway. There was no logic. Just the taste like poison, cold and slippery on the tongue. Sometimes it was bitter but it always *felt* sweet to me.

More than anything I wanted her to be with me forever and ever, and the human digestive system just doesn't account for that. I didn't know what to do, so I looked out of windows and under houses. Bright ideas are always lurking, thankfully. You just have to keep your mind open to them.

The first installation took forever. I did it at-home, DIY-style. At the end of it, her rod and my arm were one. My skin, my brown flesh—but her sleek gray, her smooth. It didn't look odd. Oddly compelling, maybe. Blood where blood doesn't belong, flesh meeting cold steel; but not as in knife, as in cleaving. More as in wholeness. As in sex. The pain was unbearable, but the sentiment kept me warm the whole night through.

The next installation was easier. I had always leaned butch, and breast cancer ran in the family. Getting a tit cut off was a piece of cake; it was almost justified. Then... not a head, exactly, but it was round enough. Light enough. It and my heart would be as close together as possible. The thought of it! A delight. Of course, I had it done as soon as possible.

The surgery felt like hell, like burning, like nothing else I've ever felt—but her metal nestling in? That was a nice, cool kiss.

It's a simple pleasure to know what one is looking at. Recognition is a comfort most days, saying to yourself I know what this is therefore I know what I do with it. The unfamiliar is disturbing. I loved to walk in public, now, as I never did before; the light of recognition and the horror of the new in all their eyes, the cataloging of tin and aluminum and wire and skin and screw and fingernail. Glint, and gleam, and sparkle, and oil.

By this point it had gone past her, rest her soul, and gone back to me; I was doing it because it felt good to do it, like everyone else's doings. I loved her. Thanks to her, I was loving myself more and more.

Every installation came easier as the entire rest of the world became harder. I began to

have trouble thinking, emoting, functioning. Thoughts flew out and were replaced by rods and cones of light. Bright, bright, bright ideas. I grew conscious of my still-human voice, droning and ululating, and hated it. I gave myself one last beautiful full-bodied scream before I took care of it.

It all comes down to this: self-hatred and love and self-love and hatred and all the rest of it swirling down the drain. I was becoming. I was Becoming. I was Beckoning. I knew, again, something the rest of the world had forgotten; that we were once beautiful and whole before every single one of us was cleft in twain.

We were whole once. You can see it. Androgynous and complete and full-bodied. You can see the spaces where something was supposed to *be*. I knew I was sensitive, maybe more sensitive than most, but didn't anyone else ever feel it?

I thought about loneliness, the vast grand landscape of lonelinesses, the gaps and gulfs and trenches between what we look like and what we are. We were whole once. We have to do something about it. Why aren't we doing something about it?

I was whole once. I could be whole again. After all the installations, all that she was was just a pile of tiny scraps on a tarp, screws and shavings and the tiny ends of wires. I knew what I had to do. I know what *you* have to do. I just wish I could tell you.

I knelt down, hands and knees, supplication. Child's pose for a beat, then rise. Started picking out bits and pieces, considering, peering, holding things up to the lights. And one-by-one, slowly, I started eating her again.

Poppy Magee

Wolf Poem

CW: DESCRIPTIONS OF BLOODY ANIMALS, LIGHT GORE

I grew up in the woods
Foraging through thickets
Walking in solitude
An old man painted ducks by this creek,
A young boy hunted deer and his sisters on our acreage.

I met her in the forest -
A rabid thing,
Crouched behind a log
With a bloody bird cradled
Between her jaws

I grew wary of the woods,
Learned to track her movements
Within Shadows and footprints and
Crunching leaves

This week I nearly hit a possum with my car.
The next one knew to slow down
But I grew afraid,

Afraid:
of the parked cars on these dark streets,
Afraid of what I'd do,
Deep in the woods.
Afraid of the red fox
Sauntering across my path
Her eyes aglow in my high beams.

How hard can I bite your lip before
Your cupid's bow falls clean off?
How many faces have you
Gnashed before mine?

On an open windowed night,
I awoke to screams I'd only ever heard
in the movies.

Womanly and wounded,
Me and ten coyotes
Screeching in the street.

Under morning starlight,
We sipped from the stream.
You'll drink from the palm of my hand,
But when I look down
I've got you right between my teeth.

Sean Glatch

three poems

CW: F-SLUR (PAGE 39)

Green Eyed Monster

Hey Miss Thing. I love your furs.
I love the god-shaped gape of your stigmata.
I see you also have a hand grasping
from the soft of your loin. Maybe you'll grasp mine?

You've got nice eyes, king.
All 1200 of them. Like all my exes
are orbiting the center of the god
we never met.

Sorry.

You've got an ass
like an apse, bro—your body wide and empty,
a midnight mass. I'd like to get on my knees

in you. I'd like you to hold me
down with your three hands,
your plural eyes. Our bodies catalyzed.

Did you once think that foreplay
had something to do with foreskin?
Do you also have four skins?
Have you ever thought that your foreshadow
looks almost like a man's?

I'm 5'8. 140, mostly bottom, am the host.
No, am the host—think possession,
or the bread that priests break
so the sinner can swallow the saved.

Let's go.

Before God sees us.

Before the night yawns us apart.

Before I leave

**unseen, unstitched by godlust and broke
with hope, clasping myself in prayer
and still empty-handed.**

The Rhineland Hodag

The Rhineland Hodag drives my car
down Capitol Rd, street lights silvering
the gleam of his teeth. I could smell the asphalt
simmering in his cheeks—asked him to fill
my mouth with brimstone—lips magnetized
to the heat of his lips as his spine
molts to spikes. No—we never kissed,
but our tongues came close to touching
and I smelled the salt of his pits. Sunk
in the warmth of his fleece, I wouldn't shower
for weeks. The Hodag was all teeth, no terror—
except when I realized I wanted him to eat me,
my flesh a sacrament, or a toll you pay
to cross a river. His spiked thighs pressed
into me like thorns in rotted fruit,
a blackberry pricked on its bush.
He spoke in tales so told they're prehistoric,
but I would have loved him in the Cenozoic
if it weren't for the glow of the stoplights
sweating the myth from the monster—no—
I could have loved him. Even as a man.

Faggot Jesus Lives!

Faggot Jesus lives
on the third floor
of the Time's Square Olive Garden,
breaks bread
sticks and gets stoned
with kids from Kansas, families
from Ohio, and though he pours
his water-wine
the people never drink.
Outside, cash-lit ads announce
his coming
over and over, his boys
come over and over
when only the billboards
prop up the night
and the exit sign is lonely.
If anyone asks, just say
he owns the joint. If anyone asks
to be healed just order them
the family-size chicken alfredo.
While the tourists buy CDs and men
on stilts or in costumes
part the Pedestrian Sea
on Broadway, Faggot Jesus
climbs onto the scaffolding,
lifts his palms
to the city's lights
and begs and begs and begs.

Evelyn Vozar

my grandmother pressed her hands to her heart
after she prayed

CW: BLOOD

because dirty carrots are better for you plucked from the root
and all that is raw is real she taught me
when you bleed you're offering what you owe God
that it's better to have mucky fingernails than to poison them
with colors made by chemicals made by man- greedy green man
to be covered in earth like the animals because we are made for it
that way you don't smell your soul rotting inside you
a body is merely a host:
to gnaw on
and i think if she could've cradled her bleating heart in her hands
she would have passed it around the dinner table
to show everyone how fast love is ticking

Jacqueline Parker

Alice and the Swan

CW: LIGHT BODY HORROR

They say I once was bold. I must have been, for I feel lightning streak down my spine day and night. It tells me to move. The clock strikes eight, nine, ten yet I can't force my feet to touch the ground. Now they say I'm lazy.

My soul has wings, my body granite. I'm trapped in this box with this iron bed and damp sheets. A parade of faces visits me, each one a mask of concern. Their mouths purse and frown, whisper to each other. They say I'm not myself anymore.

As if they know.

It takes time, but inch by inch my skin moves to meet my heart. There's a sharp crack of my skeleton splintering. My blood pulses like a river, like a drumbeat I can feel and hear and see if I look close enough—everything is illuminated and it's all that I am made of.

I am made of stars and feathers and bone and tendons, meaty bits and membranes and myth. I am love.

The doctors say I've taken fever, but I feel fine. I say, take me to water. I want the breeze on my body. I want out.

I lose my teeth. One by one, they are bloodlessly expelled from my mouth the way a walnut falls from a tree. A knob forms between my eyes. My nails darken and grow into sharp points.

I spend my days examining the soft down forming in the tender skin between my thighs, the helix of my ears, the pits of my arms. These hairs are so fine and light they glow in the sun.

I have less to say to my visitors. They squawk and coo around me, touch my forehead and pat my hands, and I love them for their effort. This preening is kind, but it is not for me.

The tumor grows. I see the room peripherally. Things I didn't notice before come into view. I swallow these sights as if they are new: the spider in the corner, the tufts of drifting dust that gather at the floorboards, the split in the window frame. I follow this rift with my eyes, up and out of the room to the road that lies beyond.

At night, when everyone's had their fill of ale and sleep embraces even the most stubborn, I escape. My body feels foreign and strong despite weeks of bed rest. I walk until the stones give way to grass, and the grass opens to a field and in this field is a pond.

I don't fall—I soar. My arms are magnificent wings that carry me upward and I alight upon the water, swift and graceful. The moon shines silver and I glide across its reflection, sending gleaming ripples to the shore. I am where I belong and nowhere else, forever transformed and free. I will stay here until the dawn's pink light emerges over the trees, until they come to carry me back in shrouds.

Mahdi Meshkatee

(blank)

I hate to say it but it's happening. It's the inevitable fact from which there is no escape, no emancipation, no taking flight to the suburbs. It is what nags before slumber, the incessant, constant gossiping of the barber, the whizzing sound of the wounds and traumas you have harbored. It is the perfect murder; kills without a trace, without a nuzzle. It enters through the open window at a moonless midnight when your snores punctuate the atmosphere, reach and disturb the commune of gods, evoke the wrath of the sole goddess. It ripples on a riverless stream of consciousness steaming with the longing for that prude babbling brook it conjoined with for a transient moment eons ago. It flutters with wings of white not to draw focus upon itself, amidst a crowd of lapis-lazuli-blue-winged peers, with unseeing eyes the shape of ears, predestined to flee flames for the maudlin moths. It transpires where light cannot will to penetrate. It dissolves into a solvent, dissolving into a solvent, dissolving into a solvent. It is a sovereign sense, a fleeting presence, a permanent resistance. It is dormant rebellion and realized revolution in simultaneous states. It doesn't bother with the quotidian, it doesn't bother voicing opinions. It is there, simply it is there, so simple its being there. It is that which eludes definition. It is that which has inspired this poem (?)

Pascal Vine

Post-apocalypse

Wait for the green to weep out the scabs,
then, they tell me, it will be so gorgeous.
Rats, buddleia, sea-gull proof refuse bags,
ready at the signal.

Instead, light will tumble from the buildings,
rollick in the closure and the empty.
They want it to be wrenched from their fingers,
their complicit bodies wrought into animals

through retribution. A blink. A humane
cull. *It will be as fresh as rain when we are gone.*
Leave our world in birth-throes, she can cope.
It's instinct. We can wait for the silence.

I want my eyes open when it begins;
it was breath-taking, I'll say, I'm still sore.

Maudie Bryant

Eulogy, Unswallowed

CW: GRIEF, DEATH

I took a Polaroid when you died.
Air expired where
 you still existed
 in my throat.

I wanted to swallow you,
yearned to eat my breath,

but in an instant I expelled
your dissipating form, tasteless
over the bumps on my tongue.

arushi (aera) rege

this is not a poem.

this is not a poem. these days i don't know how to write without my words looking like mockery. these days i don't know how to put pen to paper without it looking like a curse or a zombie or something to rip my own head off. these days the proof of my existence lies in rebellion and i am so tired of having to rebel. these days i don't recognize my clavicle unless i can fit my fist in it. these days my gender is obsolete until i command it so. these days i am so filled with love for people i have only met once in my life that they call me their darling (gender-neutral, so that my day is not ruined by too-rigid definitions of sex & the terrifying thought that i will always be stuck in a body i cannot stand) and i am content. these days i do not know how to write poetry, because poetry was for a time when i was a tragedy-romance and a number on a phone and a statistic. now i no longer know how to write unless i am willing to shell out the proof of the soft animal that lives behinds twenty-six ribcage-bones. these days i am no longer someone who's hands fit between the crevices of their own existence. these days i am nothing but a split lip daydream and a few horrors. these days, all i can do is cradle god to my chest & beg him not to tell me that he liked me better bleeding. these days, i am the knife that i stab inside myself. these days, i twist it. these days, i don't know how to be anything but lonely. these days, i am a too-rigid definition of what it means to love. these days, i am wishing for a time when i could write poetry and not think of you.

Matthew Hopkins

EVERYTHING MUST GO

CW: IMPLIED FORCED DETransition

I.

In the days before the rapture, you are still working in a cinema. It's chemical-cold but you sweat through the little uniform anyway. The smell of spills mingling with perfumes, aftershave, sweat. Damp patches on shirts. The noise of them. Someone's seven year old runs around with a camera, flash on. His mum apologises, says *he's just obsessed, it's not worth the tears*. You check your phone until your manager threatens to break it.

Walking back. Picking up speed until you're running: bus stop, takeaway, vape shop, chewing gum pressed into the pavement, lights turning red, potholes, broken glass in front of cardboard, church, pharmacy, closing down sales, café, better café, hospital, home. You think about caving your manager's head in with a hammer. You saw that in a film, once. Blood splattered the camera. You'd never get it out the carpet.

Box room in a flatshare. Curtains drawn. Dim orange light, all the world's a haze. There is a boy in your bed, sweating down to the mattress, twisting fistfuls of the sheets, eyes fever-wide and searching. The light sheening his hair, his wet teeth. He reeks of cloying cinnamon, flat cold floral over bubbling animal rot. Flypaper hangs from the ceiling, teeming with tiny corpses.

So close to him now your nose brushes his cheek. You ruck his sweat-heavy t-shirt up around his armpits. On his chest... you don't know how to describe it. You used to think it was a parasite or a tumour. Now it almost looks like hands, wreathed and reaching. The flesh in the middle is dead. Calcified.

You lay an ice pack on his burning forehead and kiss his hair. The bloodshot red from his sclera is creeping into his irises. His cheeks are littered with eyelashes, red ones growing in their place. Outside, sirens sound. Ambulance lights flashing blue, blue, blue.

&

Red walls, vintage gold, pine, moss, oak leaves, salt lamp, tapestry: **WORSHIP THE OLD GODS**, stockpiled mood stabilisers, clean needles dwindling, testosterone vials, *we are no longer prescribing HRT*, holy water, binder, he's going to die, he is dying, he's already dead, you heave-sob on the way to work, a handful of his teeth in your pocket; an alert says **SEVERE WEATHER WARNING**.

II.

Seven films showing for no-one. Manager spends the day in her office, door locked. 40 missed calls from the flatmate you like the most. They found him. You know they have.

&

You fight your way home through the storm. Shin-height flood, frothy, opaque. There is an evacuation order in place but there is nowhere to go.

&

Your flatmates are sitting in their intervention seats when you struggle your way in. No-one helps with the door. What the fuck is wrong with you and why didn't you take him to the hospital, they say, the smell.

You tell them he doesn't like hospitals.

You're such a doormat, they say.

You agree.

III.

You wake. The darkness is liquid, hot, metallic and it covers you absolutely.

You turn the light on

Blood pooling in the sheets strips of his skin flacid between you thick and rubbery his nails sinking through his flesh like it's ice cream he peels it away the meat underneath impossibly red

you turn the light off.

I itch, the dark says, I itch.

IV.

The ambulance does not arrive in time.

I'm sorry, the paramedic says, the flood.

V.

Your boyfriend walks out of the morgue three hours after he dies.

VI.

You are curled in your bed of dried/drying blood, hand outstretched to the hollow he wore into the mattress, mind glassy with the loss of him when he melts through the wall. He's red as the Devil all over, sclera, hair, teeth. Ram's horns, six wings. Hands wreathed and writhing on his chest, a black hole in the centre.

You've grown, you say.

VII.

The boy next to you is no longer human. The flashing lights get to him faster. The storm takes off the roof. It won't stop until there's nothing left, he tells you.

Let it, you want to say, we'd deserve it. But you don't. Because, would you? All you did was survive.

Everything must go. Like it's just now a sale, like the Earth hasn't been sold off slice by slice since the first rich wanted richer. *Want to see the end?*

You don't know. You only started looking before you crossed the road because of him — but if he's not him...

Still me, lover. He never called you anything but your name, before. He reaches into the hollow in his chest, produces a coin. *Call it.*

A flash of silver, up; a bird taking flight. The coin hangs high, everything to its very edges praying on an inch. You are watching his razor grin.

You open your mouth.

Devon Webb

NO MORE LIFE MADE OF ABSENCES

after a tweet by @megannn_lynne

no more life made of absences // no more waiting
no more trying to find truth in a silence // instead a better kind of quiet

I can hear you in the waves // in the air // like electricity // I can feel you close
can I stick around // just a little longer // I'm sorry // I cannot stay

can I slide into your dms like it's easy // like it's casual
like I don't overthink // every letter // of your name

can I love you quietly // or am I doomed to be the storm
blowing your body away from home // we do so love to be alone

but here I am // trying to cue the interaction // instead of doing it
have you ever just had so much to say // you can't speak

my eyes full of stars & my mouth full of dust // writing poetry in the ink of my shame
in my name // how it sparkles // do you see it // can you read me

or do I have to hurl myself into honesty // without a page to hide behind
do I have to stop watching the seconds tick by // & live inside them

how do I tell you how I feel from far away // how do I not miss you
how do I be brave // how do I seize the day

Kawa Lordean

The Art of Being Human

CW: UNREALITY, BLOOD/BODY HORROR

Sorry to stop you
so out of the blue
like this.
I just had to let you know
how much I *adore* your human.
Yours came out so well and mine—
Well—
I don't have mine down quite yet.
This cheap imitation,
this costume that doesn't fit,
That tugs at the sinew of me,
Tender flesh caught in its shoddy stitches.

See, I'm still practicing my human.
It's nothing like yours yet.
So neat.
So tidy.
Say, would you mind
if I asked you some questions?
It won't take long, I just—
I want to make sure I have it right, is all.

Remind me again
how wide should a smile stretch?
Should it strain at the corners?
Should it hurt?
You know, I always forget
just how little teeth humans have —
It really is all in the details, huh —
See, my teeth,
they clash and clamor
And gnaw and gnash.
My incisors cut deep
ruby red rivulets that
cascade down my faces
like waterfalls of viscera.

And just while I have you here,
how long should a stare last?
A breath?
Another?
A lifetime of them?
I forgot to add eyelids to mine—
I know, I know, rookie mistake—
But now all I can do is stare
And stare
and stare and stare and
Stare and stare
And stare and
Stare.

If I never blink,
Will it give it away?

Halberd

two poems

Ugly Multiplicity

CW: MENTIONS KINK, MENTIONS TRAUMA (UNSPECIFIED), USES THE WORD

“FAGDYKE”

What if I'm not beautiful
And my queerness is not palatable for you?
What if I'm kinky and stinky?
What if I'm a dog?
What if I am depressed but not complacent,
anxious but not soft spoken
and when I speak my truth others recoil?
What if I'm a dirty queer, a lesboy,
a fagdyke boything who's not from this world?
What if I can't or won't tone it down,
make it make sense, infantilize myself,
adopt the labels you want for me
or reject my own?
What if my xenogenders are numbered
like the galaxies in our universe?
What if I identify with my trauma, my parts,
and my autistic t-boy swag?
What if I identify as a turtle,
a vampire, a computer, an Appalachian holler?
Would I still belong? Would you still love me?
I may speak in hypotheticals, but
this is who I am.
I am done constraining myself
for the comfort of others.
I am plural. I am not human.
I am a freak. I am myselfes.
And I am learning to love myselfes,
accept myselfes, laugh with myselfes,
comfort myselfes, teach myselfes,
kiss myselfes, heal myselfes,
embrace myselfes,
BE myselfes
robots, critters, queers, and
everything in between

i know i take these moments for granted
groggy gray mornings and your cheek
is the first thing i see
flush and freckle-dusted
even motionless, in stasis
i look at you and the breath is snatched
from my lungs like a freefall
weightless and carefree
i look at you and lick your face
content to curl in the den of your ribs

we found each other in the mountains
the same mountains that cradle us
like we cradle each other, paw in hand
swaddled in redbuds and dogwoods
and hot breaths, kisses, caresses
sweeter than blackberry thickets
vibrant, lush, and twice as sharp

i am your dog, mousy and loyal
i'll nose the palm of your hand
your touch simmers like summer
tastes of strawberries and music and smoke
with you i've become the kind of beast
who expects dinner, belly rubs,
head scratches, and hearty bones
your presence fills my bowl
it overflows and i'm rolling in it
because i am a dog and you are the sun
i am a dog and you are the moon
i am a dog and you are the one
who builds a nest for me in your heart
and allows me to stay, as i am
teeth and tail and all.

Jade Winterburn

untitled essay

CW: COLONIAL ECOLOGY, PARANOIA, EXISTENTIAL MYOPIA

It's hard to write floral. It's hard to write botanical. Here I am in a world of pine. Pine on the whenua is a kind of biological warfare. Colonisation is still being done, every day the roots strangle the possibility of an ecosystem that takes care of itself. The mountains and valleys of Aotearoa are choked with capital embedded in extractive lumber economies. Asexually produced armies of cloned californian radiata fuck our noses and stain our homes and cars and animals with yellow cum and it brings approximately one in twenty people to involuntary tears.

There's nothing I can do about this, and even if there was, most people wouldn't want me to.

I traded cigarettes with some kids. I'm a big believer in indexical signifiers. I like rituals for what they do. Their cigarettes were a bit screwed up. Mine were neat with novelty. In swapping, I become appreciated for what I'm able to circulate into the town's economy. I asked the kids if it gets depressing, and if skipping school every day gets boring after a while—One said if he gets depressed, he smokes a cigarette; if he gets bored, he smokes a cigarette. Another of the kids asked me for another cigarette and if he could have it without trading anything and I had one left of the ones I'd brought with me so I gave it to him.

There are noises in the night, and I am frightened.

The dogs bark constantly. Caged or chained or allowed to stray. Occasionally, women scream and men shout. Cars slam doors and pull aggressively out of front lawns. Motorbikes squeal. When the winds settle and the sky is clear, I look at the stars and hear the cranes of the log yard loading what remains onto outbound trucks. They don't even have a sawmill. There used to be one the next town over, that's closed down. Global capital isn't even that interested in exploiting these people... I smoke a cigarette in my yard and cultivate the delusion that my cabin is a listening post in a war on the world as it is currently structured.

I've heard it called a village once or twice, but really it's more like a scalpel was taken to a city and a suburban graft was made to another place and as the flesh knotted back together rural qualities emerged from the scar tissue. Broken windows are boarded up by taped-on insulation or cardboard. People fix things themselves with whatever is available or they stay broken. Occupied houses are visibly falling apart, as opposed to the city where an external vision of structural integrity is rotting and choking the people inside.

I think the larger the group, the less intrinsic motivation any individual member has to be interested in any other individual member. The sheer quantity of data encountered in an

urban centre puts one into a position of needing stricter filtration to separate useful data from inessential. People set up borders in their social lives and guard them viciously against distressed people on the street who would really benefit from a nice hug from a friendly stranger.

“You can't let people treat you that way.”

(For whatever reason, I struggle to conceptualise the existence of bad actors. I think ‘bad action’ is typically best understood as “good action according to a structure I don't understand, or if I do then it's a structure that they're on the inside of and I am not¹” or some form of impairment limiting the choices an agent is able to make.)

Which is to say, people keep telling me I need to be ready and able to punch people in the throat, but I'd honestly rather get robbed, if I'm able to ensure I don't get robbed too badly, and it turns out that getting robbed with over a grand's exchange of tech on my person can be as cheap as twenty one dollars and two cigarettes. I might've come out of the mugging better off given it resulted in me being taken in by a gang of older women at the pub and they got me drunk until I asked one to take me home.

There's shifting borders all around me.

My vision is constantly warping. Somebody is humming in my ear. I am in contact and I'm feeling out of bounds. We've gone fully associative. I'm thinking about just walking into houses; I'm wondering what would happen if I did whatever, went wherever. The reason I don't is because I am contained. (I have a compound that keeps things away from me.) For the time being, I can deal with my hunger inside. A thought reminds me to be afraid of the other, after all, they might call the police? Paranoia has me flinching at discordant beats in the music I put on.

As noise in the system is reduced, the material facts of the situation become so much clearer. We don't live on our own, we are part of an interdependent network.

1. or if I am on the outside of the structure I am intrinsically part of the system by virtue of comprising & being part of an ‘outside’ defining its borders

Hannah England

GIRLTHING

CW: REFERENCES TO BLOOD/BODY HORROR (NOT EXPLICIT) SEXUAL
CONTENT

Gentle girl, rest your muzzle on my throat, feel my pulse beneath your lips. Your heavy tongue, still slick with the taste of me, flicks against the saltwater spilling over my cheeks – I wonder if it reminds you of the beach, of your honeymoon, of the night you got bitten and turned and nearly drowned beneath the waves. She saved you, then, your wife. I call her *Nos-femme-atu*, because her sharpness reminds me of the waifish girls in the seedy massage parlor that boasts ‘full body rubs’ in flickering neon, as if its patrons are swollen pork to be marinated in sweat, leaving gruesome fat dripping off the city’s chin.

She’s saving you now, in her way.

She doesn’t mean to neglect you, pretty girl, she just doesn’t know what to do with you. I remind us both in my bitterness that it’s not her fault that she doesn’t understand what it means when the full moon hits your sunkissed cheeks and turns you into something new.

I wish I had been here tonight when your bones had cracked, broken, split through your flesh, when your mouth had bled from the teeth forcing themselves through your gums. I’d have held you as you howled, even if you’d tried to rip my throat out.

Your wife wants to love you like this, but she’s afraid of your hunger. I think she meant for you to kill me tonight, for me to sacrifice my body to your desperation, then to become your meal. I suppose I expected that, too when I saw what you are; but you didn’t. Puppy girl, playful darling, you rolled onto your back immediately, recognising me as *friend* even though we’d never met. She’d been clever enough to only show me a picture of your human form when she met me in that bar, let me fall in love with your freckles and brilliant grin, explained that she was hiring me because you had “needs” she “couldn’t satiate.”

Oh, my sweet canine, how right she was. I was apprehensive as I crept into your room, but when I saw you chained in your cage, water bowl upturned, sharp teeth protruding from blood-slick maw, I thought my life was over. I suppose it is, in a way – she’ll be home soon, and I’ll have to relinquish your comforting heat from my arms, try to forget the whimper you slip out as you bury your face in my throat. Just rip it out, my love, tear me to shreds.

I think your wife is going to murder me when she sees you haven’t, so you may as well. Please, darling, kill me completely.

I know you’re tired, but I need you one more time. I fucked you tonight because she asked me to, because she paid me, but this one is for me. Your fur is warm against my palm as I push you onto your back, your eyes unsure but not unwilling as I pull the pink flesh of your breasts into my mouth. If you won’t devour me, then let me devour you, let me make an animal of myself so I match you.

Perhaps, in this way, I can keep you. I trail hungry kisses along your pink stomach, where the fur is sparse, and feel you tremble beneath me. An excited bark escapes your throat when I settle between your thighs, and I breathe a laugh, glance up to meet your embarrassed, indignant gaze. I offer you my fingers to bite, and squeeze my eyes shut as you draw blood.

That's it, baby, it's okay. Chew me to the bone, we can eat each other whole.

I don't mean to get carried away, but soon enough the belt is re-fastened around my hips and your back is splayed out beneath me, and I think you've ruined me for other girls. How am I supposed to touch anyone ever again, when I've felt the bliss of you releasing yourself entirely to the scorching primal blood that pulses through you?

In the end you pin me down, hold my shoulders in place with your claws, lap at the blood that trickles over my body. Take it, sweetheart, it's yours. You could kill me like this – I want you to.

You don't.

You howl when you're done, collapse onto my chest and whimper, wet nose snuffling at my flesh, satisfied with the traces of your scent you've left there.

Once the desire ebbs, the tears return. I wrap my arms around your warm body, pressing salt-drenched kisses into your fur. When the lights of her SUV illuminate the room like a searchlight, usurping the gentle glow of the moon, I know our time together is over.

Darling dog, I wish you were mine to keep.

guide to witnessing your lover

you must catch him unaware in the pale light of morning, just before the dawn // when expectations retreat acquiescently to the back of the mind // & pretenses fall, as silent as night blooms // cleanse your mind of any preexisting notions // conceptions formed in the throes of passion are often misguided & rarely veracious // sight alone will not aid recollection; // you must trace to remember, pass your inquisitive hands imbibingly like a revelatory lantern // notice how the light demarcates the undulant silhouette like the silvery lining of a cloud // how it sieves into the locks like a swallowed halo // his face, timid & dreamlike, lies enfolded in satin // guide your fingers over the clavicle, the shoulder, the upper arm with its meandering constellations, that bends & melts within the folds // hands safely tucked away with their secret longings // be careful not to impart this urge that is swelling fiercely in the depths of your body // any stirring of his conscious will arouse his defenses & without a whisper he will disappear // raise your eyes for a moment to admire the chaste, penile absence of the mirrored reflection // the union of the thighs, demure, like hands joined in prayer // a glaucous painting that bares everything & concedes nothing // follow down the sharp dip of the hip, the slope of the thigh that glides past the framed reflection // the bent leg, the taut shin reminiscent of a celestial being caught mid-flight // chase the conglomeration of veins around the ankle, susurring tyrian & cerulean // wind back up the femur, the iliac crest, the sacrum // the docile parting of flesh that still discloses nothing // let your gaze rest here for a while // eyes locked with the ocellar dimples like faint warnings on a wing // commit this revelation to memory // vertebrae, buried then gradually exhuming to the surface // ribs expanding their cardiac rhythm, like the driven, insistent fluttering of a caged bird // immerse yourself here & curb your mind from straying // notice the scapulae poised & prone to flight // the rachitic irregularity that unsettles the surface // the unmaskable hint of white plumage // the god's essence begging to be beheld

Self-Inspection over the Dead Body of Your Father

CW: GRIEF; DEATH OF FAMILY MEMBER; INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS

Would the outcome have been different if you had been allowed
your time to mourn
as diligently as you wanted?

To penetrate, alone, the inside of your father's tomb;
to crawl meekly toward his hardened body
to kiss some warmth into his marble eyelids
to run your tongue, gently, over the length of his mortal wound
to take his hands, to touch him the way you never dared to
when he could still spurn you
to have them caress some solace into you as they never had in life
to cradle his flaccid penis, not so imposing now that he cannot weaponize it
—this thing you crave and envy, that made you and could
just as easily have unmade you?

Would you have understood then? Your father
had been lost to you long before
death claimed him, and your suffering will not
suffuse the past with love
that wasn't there. Wipe the tears
from your bruised and unyielding breast. Give up
your fallacious expectations. Let
your father lie.

Untitled (are you there?)

CW: OUT OF BODY EXPERIENCE, UNREALITY

if it's not in direct view it's liminal
things floating around outside my
 field of vision
neither here nor there,
nothing to hold, grasp, feel—
 I haven't felt in years?
it's all in the periphery,
can't keep it in view
 constantly shifting
almost haunting— though
not quite everpresent enough
 lines of reprieve will never be enough for me
 the corner of my eyes is where you must live
 outskirts where I dropped you off
 the closest you'll ever be allowed to me again
outer edges of my being
hard to hold
 fuzzy
but still me

BE NOT AFRAID

CW: RELIGIOUS IMAGERY, RELIGIOUS TRAUMA, BODY HORROR

be not afraid for I am your / our saviour/demise
be not afraid for I am your saviour/demise

revered by none
other than your sins
worshipped by
those who dare utter the
name

pray to a
god who has
never and
will never
hear your
pleas

Be not afraid

One day it will *matter*

when I have you there will
be no heaven nor hell just
the promise of endless
servitude

(though not in the way that you think)

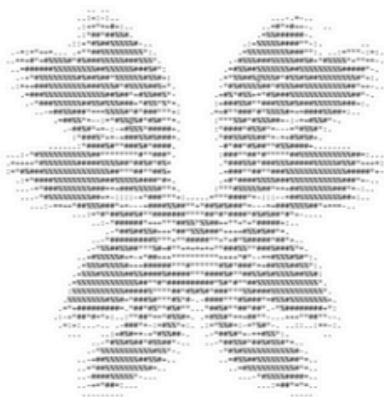
Be not afraid

Be Not Afraid

We decided I could be the Mouth of God (if God
were real, you would be the closest thing to It)

It's disciple through and through-
Be not Afraid

If I finally



Ascend
& ~~then we will be doomed~~
then we will *finally* be saved

the rot running deep within us
purified with the holy fire

burning
me from
within me.

The Rapture will be the only thing to
separate our
beings

slipping through the corner of the
universe

pu ||||| i n
9999
999
9

apart our fibres piece by piece

until all that is left is feathers.

BE NOT AFRAID and other words
before our rapture

Hallways are always the worst part of the house

Never there / always watching
Searching for that feeling
Of dark crawling prickling—
All-seeing, all-knowing

And yet never visible
The naked eye falling
To the tricks of the light
Down the hallway

Mallory Dinero

Guy Code

Dr. Guy Leader,
maverick transgender
medicine expert—
also bitcoin miner,
steampunk enthusiast,
admin of his own subreddit—

where others fear to tread,
he says, he goes tap dancing—
of previously meager results,
he says, he makes miracles.

He rattles through his lecture,
near-breathless:

WPATH is way behind,
spironolactone poison,

only progesterone
can round out breasts,

trans men have male brains
in scans, vice versa,

in utero E2-E1 conversion
makes transfems of natal males,

(not an endo, just a GP, he says,
which proves this isn't complicated...)

Google image search shows a picture of Dr. Guy Leader in the clinic with his Bengal cat, stretching up its lithe, faux-exotic frame to sniff his pink little ear. He's wearing a white lab coat and has a "cool" tie, knows everything and sells it like an American man, 1500 patients and no complaints except a trans woman's breasts got so big so fast she got stretch marks but that's hardly a complaint. Ha-ha..

"I only use this drug," he says,

“to achieve what I call capture.
Capture is the point when I own
your endocrine system.
It does what I tell it.”
I pause YouTube—

At night sometimes I hear rodents
in the walls, scratching, mad
to get in. I tap the wall to scare them
but they don't stop. I stare, anxious,
at the blank wall spot. Someday
the drywall will crack, dust will fall
and I'll see a little snout
and whiskers and teeth,
and I will witness
what I have only understood:
that we are not alone here.

Euri Carreon

Unsatiationals

We are a country hungry for apparitions.

— Resil Mojares

First, let me be consumed by resisting your earnest. Veil me
Between familiars of tongue and the human confines of un-

Touch. Deliver us away from the wherewithals of stomach
And growl, instead, introduce me to our invocations of the

Unsatiationals. This, you tell, is a begin of sensations with
Erring contradictions to cultivated lands and flesh; heretic

Imaginations against Lakapati, to pillage is now to question
Lack of sacrifice. Never ideation but rather, you argue,

Sleight of hands, holding no center, a germinating guilt
Towards a passion of devours. This forms. A devastational

Lingua franca: a revelation as rehearsal to some, oratorio
To many. This is topological in a sense that it maps where it

Ends: the false catharsis; Let us unlearn this uprootedness
Even if we're planted away from each other's fingers, find

It beyond fields, silenced by the songs of the guttural
Outpour of no burning rain to turn our bodies into clearing.

This, you say, is the established ache found in our histories,
"Needs to unbecome," you confess, as we gnaw our way to

Freedom. This is the conceit that transfigures as a struggle,
A psalm that acknowledges scarcity as absence. Unbecome

Desire darling it's not craving

I yearn a revolution.

Brendon Blair

we were robbed of frutiger aero

a wall of water encircles
 mossy stones, aquarium trinket
if only i could move in butterflies
 as the koi's soft fins
with their ancient bones
with their emerald algae veneer
 persevering underwater palette moves,
 that clownfish rotating room
if only i could swim every color into motion
with their canvas culture ballet
with their gentle blend brushstrokes
 sober with caution, rippled genes
 wet from overnight dreams
softsoap fish in the bottle on the sink at your friends house,
speaking directly to you.
popping up in a side window:
 "if only we could move like
 what we see of the past

Erin Matheson Ritchie

two poems

An Undoing

Moving day and your resident spider spins on
unconcerned, for as long as she knows, this space
has always been your own. I offer to dust;
you cup her in practiced hands and show her
the garden where gourds herald fall.
She finds a new perch and your gentle touch
turns toward me, another interloper who can't imagine
new mornings without you. Two weeks and you've
become habit, home.

Moving day and four eggs sizzle on the stove
as you back me up naked against a cabinet,
hungry skin and trembling throat.
You drip gentle down my thigh, translucent
anticipation catching the sun, and
my hunger grows. The kettle shrieks –
you start – and I catch the web entangling
us with a finger, then my tongue, wishing I could swallow you whole
before it dissolves.

A nibble – the hook leaps – a piranha wriggles,
stunned in my palm, a morsel of beef still skewered
between steel and cheek. I clutch it too tight.

It would eat me if it had the chance.
I might eat it for sport.

I think about the catfish I ate for breakfast.
I think about drowning, so much oxygen
in the river but no way for me to convert it to breath.
I think about my cheeks and the men who speared them
and let me bleed out on their sheets, no thought for my pain.

The thrashing stalls – my hook comes out clean – I let it go.
It hits the water, shivers under the surface and dives
deep out of sight, a silver flash gulping its way back to life.

Pi Delport

Run

CW: SEVERE CHRONIC ILLNESS, ASSISTED DYING

I remember the late nights, working while you slept.

I remember the morning routine: waiting for you to stir, before slipping into your room: quiet, dark, and warm, like a den. The blackout curtains, heater, and humidifier kept everything in the narrow range that your body could tolerate.

I would let you slowly wake, checking for migraine, nausea, pain; then raising the motorised bed frame to bring you half upright and giving you time to adjust and acclimatise. Breakfast: the same nutritional protein smoothie, along with the collection of pills and supplements that kept you going.

On good days, watching the meds lift you out of the fog filled me with gratitude. Your words came easier. Your limbs became lighter; less like concrete. You could sit up. Your smile shone through again, and sometimes, you could even get up and walk around the house a bit.

Every moment was precious.

I remember when we first met. You sought me out. You could read me like a book. Werewolves are slow to trust, but you closed the distance. You accepted what I was. You held space for it. You could run your fingers down my spine when I was less human.

Those moments were so precious to me.

I remember the first time you crashed.

You slowed down to stop in the middle of the mall, blinking and disoriented.

"I don't feel so good."

And then you couldn't stand anymore.

Getting you home was a blur. We dealt with the nausea, and the ice-pick headache. You couldn't pin down what felt wrong. Everything did.

We went to a doctor the next day. They found no obvious cause. They ordered tests. They all came back normal.

You got better, for a while... but then it happened again. And again. At your office: crash. Visiting a friend: crash. Even going out to relax: crash.

The symptoms got worse, and every crash left you weaker, and put you in bed for longer. Migraines and nausea became so bad that you couldn't take your meds, which made it worse. Panicked ER visits, when you felt like you were dying, but they could only stabilise you and give you enough IV fluids, analgesics, and antiemetics to keep the meds down, and send you home again.

We saw more doctors and specialists. They ran test after test, and we quickly learned to dread the results coming back "normal". No one had answers.

You quit your job. It wasn't long before you could barely leave the house anymore; and then you could barely leave your bed anymore. We learned what it was like to be too sick to go to the ER, as the symptoms became more constant and severe, and managing them became a full-time job. It sometimes seemed like anything could trigger a crash, and when it did, everything seemed to go wrong with your body at once. Our lives shrank to just trying to keep you alive.

But we found out you were not alone in this: there were others. This disease had names. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. Post-Viral Fatigue Syndrome. Systemic Exertion Intolerance Syndrome. Names that still clinically meant "*We don't actually know what's wrong with you, or how to treat it,*" but armed with a name, we could learn about it.

I scoured websites, forums, papers, anything I could find. We made accommodations, tried new medications, treatments, and interventions: every community remedy we could. It was not easy: Most things did not help. A few things helped a little. Some caused bigger crashes... I swallowed my guilt over those. But slowly, agonisingly, we learned how to hold back the crashes.

Every moment it bought was precious.

I remember the evenings I spent beside your bed. We used to have date nights, but when you were too ill to play a game or watch a movie, we would just watch feel-good internet video clips together.

We were watching a random video of a shepherd dog racing a quad bike through a field of grass, when you began tearing up.

"Hey... What's up?"

"I miss being able to run. They look so free."

I had no words. I just leaned over to hold you in silence.

"Babe? I can't do this anymore."

You paused, forcing the words out in a whisper.

"I think I want you to bite me."

I felt a pit in my stomach. We had talked about this before, but lycanthropy was a physiologically punishing infection, even for healthy people. Many with compromised metabolisms did not survive it. For someone as metabolically compromised as you, it was almost certainly a death sentence: even if you survived the first change, it would burn through your cells like jet fuel through a tin engine. It would be a one-way ticket.

I understood the gravity of what you were asking.

Later that evening, in solitude and silence, I hung on to the kitchen counter, retching out my grief.

I remember the drive out to the mountains, at first light. I was tense. A ride like this was punishing for you, but you suffered it.

I reached my usual spot, and got you as comfortable as I could on the travel mattress and cushions, before preparing everything else.

It was the first time you saw me change. It was painful, messy, and vulnerable: not what I wanted you to see, but I figured it was better if you knew what to expect.

We sat in silence as I recovered, resting my head on your lap. You gazed over the fields and mountains in the distance. You hadn't been out in nature for so long.

"It is so beautiful."

I closed my eyes, shrinking my awareness to the touch of your hand stroking me. I didn't want to think about anything else.

It was time. I remember how you glowed with confidence in the golden-hour light.

"I'm ready."

I didn't know if I was ready, but you held out your right arm, and I carefully took it in my jaws.

I don't know how long I hesitated, until I felt your hand on my muzzle.

"It's okay. I choose this."

You locked eyes with me, through tears.

"Whatever happens, I'll see you on the other side. I love you."

You pressed down, and I followed through, sinking carnassials into you. Blood and saliva mixed.

The first change is always rough.

I stood watch for the next few hours, as you slipped in and out of consciousness, blood drying in the towel crudely wrapped around your arm. I could feel the fever radiating off you. I could smell your metabolism changing.

I remember the strange mix of dread and excitement, watching you beat and kick the mattress with

a force you haven't mustered in years. You screamed. You were *able* to scream. You sat up and called out unintelligible things to the heavens. And it took you.

I didn't know if it would work until your breathing slowed down, and your eyes opened back up. You were still here: wide-eyed and bewildered, but here.

I remember how disorienting the first time was. I put my muzzle and cheek against yours: a familiar gesture to anchor an unfamiliar shape. *You're okay, you're okay, you're okay.*

I dragged the cooler box closer. Prime cuts of steak, and liver. You needed the protein, and I could see it hit your nose. You tore into it with such trembling ferocity; like you were making up for lost time. You found your legs so quickly. We found each other again. It wasn't long until you followed your nose and tore off into the veld, kicking up clouds of dust and joy. For one night, you could run again, and I chased after you. We did not sleep.

I felt the familiar gravity in my bones, pulling me back, as the stars began to fade.

I know you felt it too, but I could sense it going wrong. You slowed down, your breathing became shallow, and your temperature dropped. Your scent was wrong: your body wasn't preparing to change. I recognised a big crash coming.

I stumbled over to you as soon as I was human again, trying to ignore the knots in my stomach. You were already collapsed on the mattress. I tried my best to make you comfortable and warm, until I ran out of things I could do.

I held you as the dawn rose. I felt your heartbeat fade, until it was gone.

I remember watching the sun rise without you for the first time. I remember thinking how beautiful, quiet, and serene it looked, for an orb of such violent nuclear fire.

contributors



S. Cristine

S. Cristine (she/her) is a poet living and writing in Los Angeles. As a teenager she had braces for 6 straight years, which she thinks kind of explains her whole thing pretty succinctly. She has previously been published in *The Passionfruit Review*, and is currently working on her first chapbook. You can find her on Instagram @sxcristine or Twitter @standrbrunette.



Kurt Edward Milberger



Kurt Edward Milberger (he/him) writes and lives in Georgia with his family and a goldfish called Sarah. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Litmora* and *Moss Puppy Magazine*. find him @kurtmilb on twitter.



T!K! Williams

T!K! Williams (she/they) lives and schemes in south-central Indiana. Her poems have appeared in *Bad Pony*, *Mania Magazine* and *Ink & Ivy Lit*, and in *Vial of Bones*. She's probably the tallest poet on the planet, but she's taking challengers. <https://www.instagram.com/celebrity.pharmacist/>

Shepard DiStasio

Shepard DiStasio (he/they) is a trans, disabled writer based in Chicago, IL. His debut novel, *Veil Us in Gold*, is an indie ink awards finalist for trans/nonbinary rep, and he is a *Swarthout Award* winner in poetry. They have 2 cats with their partner, love to translate ancient poetry between Gothic novels, and enjoys a sweet treat here and there (one single cup of coffee enjoyed over the course of 12 hours). His work is represented by Aiden Siobhan at LDLA. x - @shepardnosheep.



Hera Hong



Hera Hong (she/her) is a biracial Korean and American poet and filmmaker who is passionate about exploring trauma, gender, and the nuances of human connection. Reach out @hongherahong.



Elly Meyers

Elly Meyers (they/she) spends their days cooking, making up songs for their two cats, and collecting phrases to inspire their poetry. They live in North Yorkshire with their previously mentioned cats. They have been published in The Hyacinth Review. x - @ellyistrying

nina maar



Nina Maar (they/them) is an angelic creature bound by higher forces to a person suit, and a libra sun. They have earned a BA in Art History from the University of California: Los Angeles and are in the process of completing their MA in Creative Writing at California State University: Northridge. They are originally Costa Rican, but Tucson born. They like to read, draw, watch anime, and the color periwinkle. Their work has previously been published in Ghoulish Magazine and The Northridge Review. @saintxrys on twitter - <https://777earthangel777.wordpress.com/>



Jay Aelick

Jay Aelick (they/them) is a birdwatcher, teacher, tarot reader, and sometimes even poet. Their work has previously appeared or is forthcoming in The Journal, the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum, Door Is A Jar, Okay Donkey, nw{p}, The Quarter(ly) Journal, and elsewhere. They are one half of the St. Balasar University English Club podcast, where real critique partners at a fake university workshop the books the internet had written off. @sbu_englishclub on twitter and instagram.

Jason Caudle

Jason Caudle (he/him) is a writer of Fiction living in South Carolina. His work can be found in Quibble, Grim and Gilded, Litmora, and more. @jasoncaudle.bsky.social.



tommy wyatt

tommy wyatt (he/they) lives with his fiendishly goofy cats. he is the author of *DITCHLAPSE / [REALLY AFRAID]* (Querencia Press); *So, Who's Courage?* (Bullshit Lit.); *NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL HORROR!* (Gutslut Press); and other titles. they are currently sifting through digital archives and graveyards and writing about their residual hauntings. @tommywyattblake (twitter, IG, bluesky).



Beau Nicholas



Beau Nicholas (he/him) is a transgender manthing and home cook of a poet living amongst cheesesteaks and chocolate on the east coast. He writes from his own haunted, beetle-infested perspective, using the written word to connect with his thoughts, delusions and reality in a way his neurodiversities often leave him struggling with. Avid fan of most aspects of the supernatural and paranormal, as well as the beauty that comes with being a living thing capable of love. @beetleblooded on twt.

Lucy Hannah Ryan

Lucy Hannah Ryan (she/they) is a poet, fiction writer and essayist. Her work often concerns gender, sexuality and complex relationships with the body inspired by lifelong chronic illness. They also have an affinity for the strange, magical and macabre. They have had the pleasure of being featured in various publications including *Gay Times*, *Pink Plastic Press*, and in *Arachne Press's* annual *Solstice Shorts* collection. In 2022 Ryan released her first chapbook, *Death and the Maiden: Odes to the Dead Girls of Pop Culture*, and in 2023 she released her first full length short story collection, *You Make Yourself Another*, a magical realist meditation on transformation with *Half Mystic Press*. Outside of writing, she is a mental health worker and disability advocate. She lives in London with her cat, Nova. I'm @lucyhannahryan everywhere!



Sam J Grudgings

Sam J Grudgings (he/him) is a queer poet & events host from Bristol shortlisted for the *Outspoken Poetry Prize 2020*. His debut collection *The Bible II* investigating addiction, loss & the masculine urge to fight or fuck god was published by *Verve Poetry Press* in 2021 and his pamphlet *The Nation's Saddest Love Poems* was published in 2023 with *Broken Sleep*. @samjgrudgings across everything.





Alannah Guevara

Alannah Guevara (she/her) is a deadhead poet-freak. Her wacky words have been published all over the internet and (sometimes) in print, the most recent of which can be found in *On Gaia*, *God's Cruel Joke*, *MEMEZINE*, and manywor(l)ds. She is also the EiC of *Hunter's Affects*. Find Alannah on Twitter at @prismospickle and her work on *Chill Subs*.

Theodore James

Theodore (he/they) is a 23 year old transsexual poet who specializes in the visual and visceral. His debut chapbook "gendered lullabies" (Alien Buddha Press) will be available for order on Amazon on the 7th of October, 2024. @writeodore on Instagram and Twitter.



B.A. O'Connell



B.A. O'Connell (they/them) is currently working on their MFA from Lindenwood University. They have two beautiful cats, have recently been *obsessed* with Keaton Henson's 2020 album *Monument*, and are really looking forward to the upcoming movie *28 years later*. You can find all of their independently published novels and chapbooks on amazon. tiktok: @hellishrebukesystem twitter:@OnceIateataco.

Zoe Adrien Lapa



Zoe Adrien Lapa (they/them/any) is a microblogger first and an author second. You can find their work published in places like *Exist Otherwise*, *JAKE*, *Body Fluids*, or on Tumblr via @discoidal. twitter: @zoadrien, instagram: @zoadrienoz.

Poppy Magee

I am a poet (she/her) based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and currently studying at Kenyon College. I am a lover of all things monstrous, devoted, and sentimental.



Sean Glatch

Sean Glatch (he/him) is a queer poet, storyteller, and screenwriter in New York City. His work has appeared in *Ninth Letter*, *Milk Press*, *8Poems*, *The Poetry Annals*, on local TV, and elsewhere. Sean currently runs *Writers.com*, the oldest writing school on the internet. When he's not writing, which is often, he thinks he should be writing. Insta: @glatchkeykid.



Evelyn Vozar

Hi! I'm Evelyn (she/her). I love to write, collect DVDs, and I adore anything witchy. Halloween is my favorite time of year, so I couldn't be happier at the moment. I'm a college student, working toward my degree in early childhood education. @overlookhot



Jacqueline Parker



Jacqueline Parker (she/her) grew up in Citrus County, Florida among oranges and "road gators" masquerading as real ones (according to her grandmother). She currently lives in Charlotte, NC with her husband, dog, and lots of plants. Her fiction often explores loss in its many forms, but occasionally she writes something funny. Her work has been featured or is forthcoming in *Prime Number Magazine*, *Flash Fiction Online*, *Funicular*, *Blue Earth Review* and elsewhere. @onmytangent (IG and Twitter)

Mahdi Meshkatee

Mahdi Meshkatee (he/him) is a UK-born, Iranian poet, author, and artist who has struggled with deciphering the human condition for as long as he can remember. His poetry, creative nonfiction, and visual art has appeared or is forthcoming in *Ink in Thirds*, *GAS*, *October Hill Magazine*, *Nude Bruce Review*, *Carolina Muse*, and elsewhere.



Substack: [Mahdimeshkatee.substack.com](https://mahdimeshkatee.substack.com)

Linkedin: Mahdi Meshkatee

Instagram: @Mahdimeshkatee

Pascal Vine

Pascal Vine (he/him) is a UK performance poet from the Somerset Levels who enjoys describing the world around him in the touchiest-feeliest ways possible. He graduated with honours from Bath Spa in Creative Writing and Religion in 2018. He has made himself useful behind the scenes at many slams and open mics since starting out five years ago, working with Tonic Bristol, To Be Frank and Meta Slam. He has headlined poetry nights across the South West as well as worked with punks, interpretive dancers, noise artists, radio hosts and anyone else who will let him. He has been published by Bad Betty, Three Drops, and Verve in various anthologies. He is disabled, nonbinary and tired. <https://pascalvinepoet.bigcartel.com/>, writingwithinwriting.tumblr.com and [@pascalvpoet](https://www.instagram.com/pascalvpoet) on instagram.



Maudie Bryant

Maudie Bryant (she/her) is a sack of meat full of electrical pulses, navigating life as a mother, educator, and multidisciplinary artist. She weaves her experiences with trauma and mental illness into works that explore the complexities of memory and identity. A graduate of the University of Louisiana Monroe with an M.A. in English, Maudie's writing has appeared or is forthcoming in Anodyne Magazine, Susurrus, and Spellbinder. Insta/Facebook: [@MaudieMichelle](https://www.instagram.com/MaudieMichelle) Twitter: [@MaudieVerse](https://twitter.com/MaudieVerse).



arushi (aera) rege

arushi (aera) rege is a queer, chronically in pain, Indian-American poet in senior year in high school. They tweet occasionally [@academic_core](https://twitter.com/academic_core) and face the perils of instagram [@aera_writes](https://www.instagram.com/aera_writes). They are the proud author of *exit wounds* (no point of entry) and *BROWN GIRL EPIPHANY* (kith books '24, fifth wheel press '25). They are the EIC of *nightshade lit*, *Bus Talk*, and *Draupadi Interviews*. You can find their website at arushiaerarege.carrd.co.



Matthew Hopkins

Matthew Hopkins is behind you. linktr.ee/swearjaragain. [@swearjaragain](https://twitter.com/swearjaragain) on twitter + insta. he/him.



Devon Webb

Devon Webb (she/her) is a writer & editor based in Aotearoa. Her award-winning work, concerning themes of femininity, anticapitalism & neurodivergence, has been published extensively worldwide. She is a founding member of The Circus (@circuslit), a literary collective prioritising radical inclusivity in the indie lit scene. She can be found on social media at @devonwebbnz.



Kawa (they/he) is an aspiring writer and current therapist with a penchant for gender fuckery and other such shenanigans. When he's not avoiding life's responsibilities through tarot and kinda shitty media, Kawa can be found on Tumblr and Bsky (@/kawaspell) and on Substack (<https://delphiniumdreamer.substack.com>)

Kawa Lordean

Halberd

Halberd (it/they) is a queer, nonhuman system who lives with their wife and cats in Appalachia. It loves cooking, writing, and playing in the creek. Tumblr: @dreamlandsystem.



Jade Winterburn

Jade (she/her) has been in flight, running. @jaded_pith on insta and twitter.

Hannah England



Hannah (she/her) is a Jewish, lesbian writer from the UK, holding multiple degrees in Creative Writing and English Literature. Focusing primarily on horror, the grotesque, and complex interpersonal dynamics, Hannah's fiction and non-fiction work alike can be found in publications such as The Nottingham Horror Collective, Myth and Lore, and the Monstrous Flesh journal. twitter @basementeyes // instagram @xxvi_hannah.





a.d.

a.d. is drawn to the sacred, the profane, the mysterious and the mythological, which provides inspiration for her work. She is an emerging bisexual poet and visual artist, and her poetry is published or forthcoming in Querencia Press, THINK, Ode to Dionysus, Livina Press, Poetry as Promised, Sublimation, The Groke, Anti-Heroine Chic, and elsewhere. Meanwhile, her visual art, mainly photography and self-portraiture, is or will be featured in Small World City, SCAB, RESURRECTION Mag, Welter, Antler Velvet, Hominum Journal and Bleating Thing. Tumblr & Twitter: @godstained

Zip G.



Zip (they/them) is a multidisciplinary artist and teacher from Melbourne, Australia, digging their way through the rot to send this message to the world: maybe it is all worth it. You can also find their work at local art faires sometimes, in your nearest classroom, and in a thought bubble near you. @transcvdent wherever there is social media!



Mallory Dinaro

Mallory Dinaro (she/they) is a transfeminine poet from Massachusetts, currently living in Davis, California. Her work has been published in JAKE and, under previous names, in McSweeney's Internet Tendency, Potluck, Voicemail Poems, and Electric Cereal. She recently received an MFA in poetry from the University of New Hampshire. @gingermophobia (Twitter, IG, Bluesky).

Euri Carreon



Euri Carreon (he/him) was born in Malolos, Bulacan. He is a Comparative Literature student at the University of the Philippines-Diliman.



Brendon Blair

My name is Brendon Blair and I'm a queer poet from Knoxville, TN. I'm an Appalachia-borne writer born and bred on trailer living and warm Mexican cuisine. As a recent dual graduate of Psychology and English, I enjoy intertwining the experiences of queer, waived and fostered people in poetry and prose. I work as the assistant chapbook editor for Sundress Publications and am passionate about accessible and free learning! my website!! <https://pranksterjpg.neocities.org/>.



Erin Matheson Ritchie



Erin Matheson Ritchie (she/her) lives in California with her spouse and pet rabbit, Thor. She earned her master's degree in education at Stanford University, taught secondary English for seven years, and caught a piranha while fishing in the Amazon River at a research facility. Instagram: erinarielle_ + Twitter: erin_ari.



Pi Delport

Pi (she / they) is a queer trans South African who's currently putting the pieces back together and learning how to be her own dog. Bluesky: @pi-delport.bsky.social



thank you

THANK YOU SO MUCH for reading this issue of DOG TEETH!

If you liked what you read, please share it with your friends and visit the contributors to let them know how wonderful you thought their work was!

Issue four is coming soon, and if you're interested in updates on the progress of that, sign up to DOG TEETH's newsletter! We're DOG TEETH NEWS on Substack; if you subscribe, you'll get updates on submission windows, issue themes and progress, and interviews from contributors in your inbox!

If you want to join the pack, submit to the next issue! Issue four will be our ONE YEAR SPECIAL! Keep your eyes on our Twitter or the newsletter for submission window dates and updates on what exactly that theme will look like! You can find us on Twitter @dogteethlit.

Thank you so much again and don't forget to check out the contributors and their other amazing work! It would mean the world to us if you'd let them know you loved their art, and shared it with your friends!

See you in the next one and stay safe + strange,

Jack



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