



PERFUMED PAGES MAGAZINE

IT'S RAINING OUTSIDE

ISSUE THREE. GET COZY.



**POETRY: A DAUGHTER
COMING HOME,
ABSENCE, AND MORE!**

Keep reading for heart melting poetry :)

**ART: MISTERIO N AND
IRINIA TALL!**

Discover art by some amazing creators.

**MUSIC RECS - INDIE
ARTISTS!**

Find your next fav listen <3

editor's note

No matter how many times it happens, I'll never stop being surprised when people reply to our calls for submissions. Honoured doesn't even begin to summarise the emotion that I feel when an artist trusts me with their work.

Thank you to everyone who submitted their pieces for "it's raining outside". After quite a whirlwind of a year, I wanted to choose a theme that is reminiscent of the dust settling. Rain has always been my comfort weather. Maybe it's the Indian my roots. I was always told that I would stop liking the rain once I moved somewhere colder, but I am happy to report that a weather alert declaring showers later in the day gets me as giddy as always.

The theme has been interpreted in such beautiful ways by the artists in the issue, and I am proud to step aside and leave you with the universes that they have created. Enjoy!

Taneesha Pradhan
EDITOR IN CHIEF



Loveburst

Every time I lay my head, seeking a day's rest,
it's you I wish to see in slumber.

Even when you have accompanied my side for the day past,
It'll always be you I find in the darkness under my eyelids.

It's comforting; blankets me in safety
and is somehow like walking into the sea in the depth of December.
It rises in me until I think it may burst through my seams.
Be careful not to smother.
Instead, I must pour it out to you day

by
day

Like the hederá over our home,
It grows so it's entwined with the strings of my heart.
Even if we were to live as long as this earth,
the days could never be enough.

By Aisling

On the surface

Hot sand on the soles of my feet and
grains between my fingers
reminds me this is real.

You wrote our names in the sand with a heart and 'forever'.
The boy in you smiled at me and the crone in me missed you already.
Our names will be taken by the shore and drowned by the depths.
I want our names carved in the earth,
in dirt only God can touch.

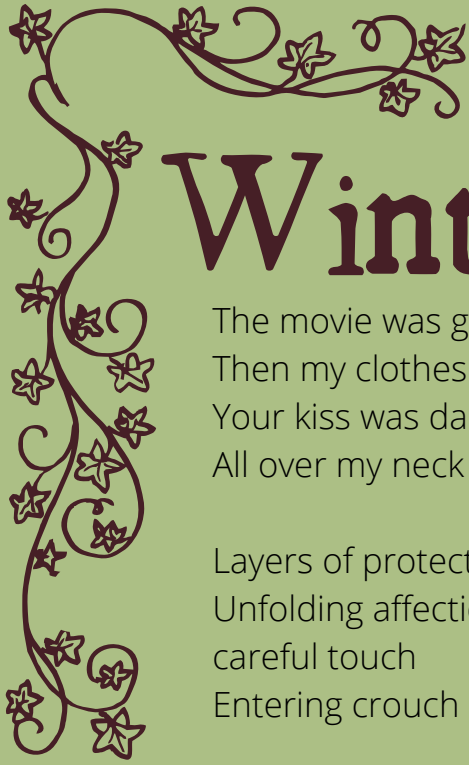
By Aisling

Greet me at my grave

I will love you even when I'm no longer.
Even when my flesh has melted away, the memory of your fingerprints
will dance like fire on my skin.
No longer will words be spoken from my lips, but my mouth will still
remember the taste of your lips on mine.
What use is a voice to me anyway? The only word I want to speak is
your name.
Until they crumble, my hands will always be ready to hold yours.
Even as I disappear, I will love you with all that remains.
Who knows what awaits me next?
I know heaven can only exist on earth as that's where you'll be.
So instead as a I cease, let it be known
That no one will love you like the dust of my bones.

By Aisling

Aisling (she/her) is based in Wiltshire and writes in her spare time. She has previously been published in Bloom, Blodeuwedd and Sunnies Magazine. You can follow her writing at [_aislingjk](#) on Instagram.



Winters Night

The movie was great
 Then my clothes were out
 Your kiss was dancing
 All over my neck

Layers of protection
 Unfolding affection
 careful touch
 Entering crouch

Asking for it
 Slow and deep
 Reach that point
 That makes me numb

Unlock the joy
 My body shakes
 Your river flows
 My veins overflowing

Round my legs
 Your arms are holding
 Pressure unfolds
 Paradise arriving

Hugging lust
 Pumping heart
 Release trust
 Hugging lust

by Anastasia Patsouri



Eruption

Your touch
 My chests lust
 Fire under the skin
 Volcanos bright Sins

Im luring up your spirit
 Im lingering to hear it
 I want to endure
 Heavens to ensure

Your kiss is approaching
 My body is now crouching
 Skins left alone to dance
 Passion in trance

Projections on the wall
 Scenes of the past
 Hunting us at last
 Escaping now together

Its us who choose
 Which movie each time
 To play is a ray
 Let the sun come in

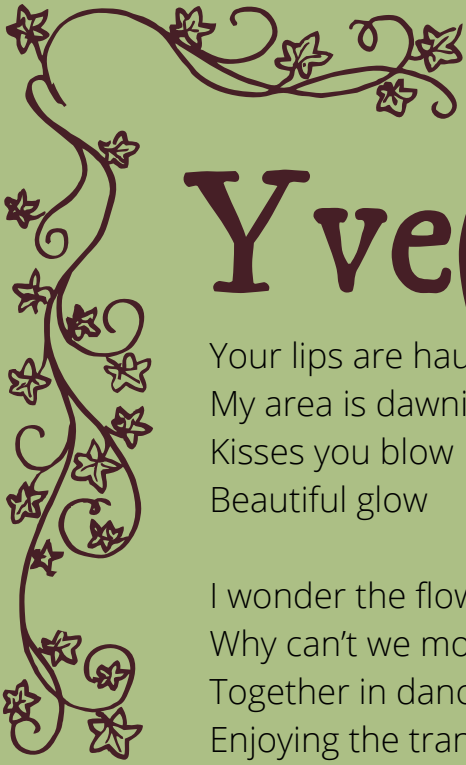
Its us who choose
 Which movie to play
 Each time is a ray
 Let the sun come in



Shadows to elude
Clarity now nude
Moments of caress
Keep away distress

Ride on those colours
All the shades of lust
Volcanic is the touch
Lets try a deep match

by Anastasia Patsouri



Yve(s) vol. 3

Your lips are haunting
My area is dawning
Kisses you blow
Beautiful glow

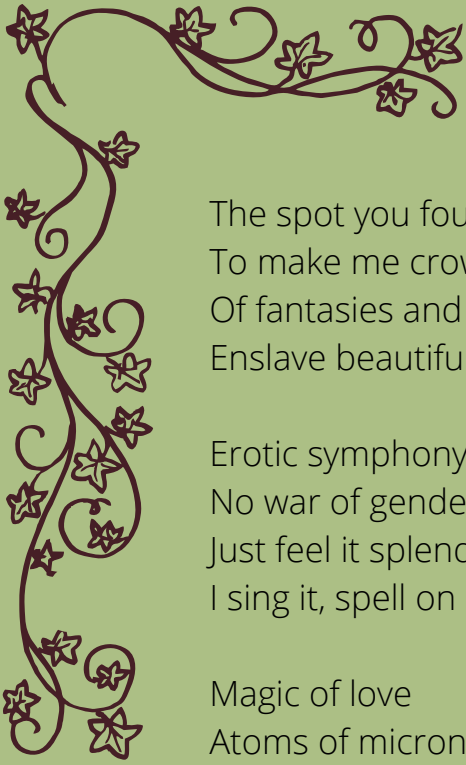
I wonder the flow
Why can't we move
Together in dance
Enjoying the trance

In bed you jump
I follow the hump
Together in dance
Enjoying the trance

Transmission of energy
Emission of love
Devotion of fear
Forever gear

My brain connects
Your soul erects
How you, dig into love
Deep feelings on top

You know how to make
My soul cry out
All lust of trust
Sensual crush



The spot you found
To make me crown
Of fantasies and memories
Enslave beautifully

Erotic symphony
No war of gender
Just feel it splendid
I sing it, spell on

Magic of love
Atoms of micrones
Connecting bodies
Exploding fountains

Mountains of peace
Beloved seas.

by Anastasia Patsouri

Anastasia Patsouri is an Athenian Poet and sustainable economist, residing in Berlin, Germany. She holds a degree in Economic Sciences and a masters in Interdisciplinary Crisis Management. She has worked for Startups in Berlin, Academia in Athens and International Organizations in Vienna. Through her experiences, encounters and jobs she gets inspired and writes poems. She has previously published her poetry in Greek and English books and magazines.

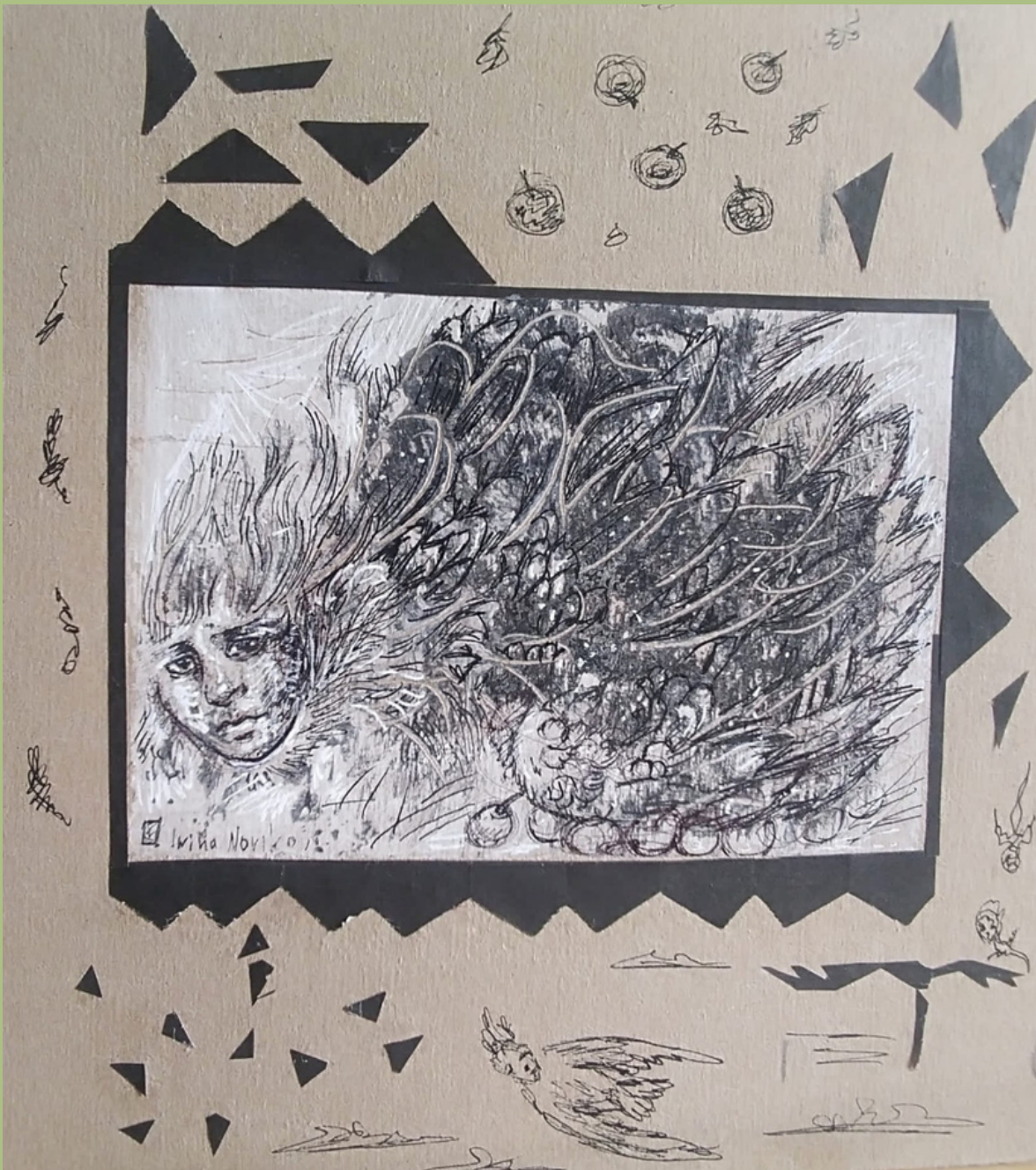
Instagram: [anar_sea_](#)



by Irina Tall



by Irina Tall



Irina Tall (Novikova) is an artist, graphic artist, illustrator. She graduated from the State Academy of Slavic Cultures with a degree in art, and also has a bachelor's degree in design.

The first personal exhibition "My soul is like a wild hawk" (2002) was held in the museum of Maxim Bagdanovich. She draws various fantastic creatures: unicorns, animals with human faces, she especially likes the image of a man - a bird - Siren. In 2020, she took part in Poznań Art Week.

Vist to school

The open, craggy field wore its black,
 of clod and stones and all things gay;
 the shine of ground on ballast track
 led cheerily to the classroom's way.
 The hallway-odour of building's date,
 with desk on desk; up wooden feet;
 the chalk board, dust cloth, off-white slate,
 and one unscribbled little sheet,
 met face to face, in sweetest bonding,
 so like the play penoutinglee
 to air and Window-Doves responding
 also the sky and to the tree.
 The fractured bricks of eatery laid,
 how walls, thin-scraped, ashy and pale
 the dull and dented pillars and shade
 the bags, the books and gauging scale.
 The Teahouse and the Staffroom called me,
 the wooden bureau, old and green;
 the flood-spate of their mem'ry thrall'd me,
 and very comfort of the scene.
 The snub plants and rusted yellow swing,
 the boundary around the field,
 were as lovely as the cloud-filled wing,
 as heaven there itself concealed.
 A boy uniformed, did passion girt,
 with necktie and his hair neat pressed;
 and a girl long-haired in flow'ry skirt,
 was too so well maidenly dressed.
 'That boy here I was once', I thought,
 yet when I was, matureness stirred;
 growth brings mastery, but knew I not-
 with age is lost the freedom's bird.

By Shamik Banerjee

MEMORY OF A NIGHTTIME RAIN

Many drops line along the hazel bars;
when out, heard is the squelch of padding feet
and, thin muck pools, mirror the glowing stars,
on the slippery footway and the street.

Here, I discover nature's nursery-
the rain-sheened leaves appear like corded lights
and, they scintillate and emblaze the tree
like on festivals of October nights.

Where, I am but their spectator, indoor;
yet, drabble on the ground to be aside
their beauty and touch, lest, if they are o'er,
and, from me, to a dateless time, atride.

By Shamik Banerjee

AWAY FROM HERE

Soon we will, escape my love!

We shall run beneath the cloud and moon,

then few steps of the dale above,

is waiting our new afternoon;

and there we will, put newcome blush,

fetch from all tilting boughs, the air;

and passion's new admiring rush,

will bring us to its gay affair.

A pretty brushwood there will be,

and so will be a cropping-ground:

all suitable for you and me-

where grains and millets much abound.

In rural dress, we will aguise,

brim buckets from the nearby lake,

I'll raise the pulses and the rice

and you for toothful repast make.

A workroom short, I will purchase;

place feet on desk and cheroot smoke;

so by and by, herewith the days,

to sweetest living will evoke.

Nowhere to quest; no grief to look,

two spirits' rest; two lovers' hand;

there we will bind our versing book

and Poetry is all gainand.

Away from time; away from drear,
we'll fly to love's unbending call;
we'll thrutch away thro' men and fear-
away from here, away from all.

By Shamik Banerjee

FOR SONIA (My earliest and final love)

When we talk, I always frair about how much you love me,
although there is this vast world beneath a firmament blue
with many beauties to talk of- a bird, a combe or sea,
yet repeatedly, I pose about love's measure to you.

But then I smile to myself on this ironical play,
that despite knowing you feel a lot but cannot express
and knowing all the heartfelt answers you would softly say,
your silence does not attune with me and I turn restless.

I know the reason why these questions disconcert your heart,
for in the past, all have traduced your love, did hardly trust;
said- 'she is too gullible; too interim to dispart';
buy o' my dear Sonia, think not I too am unjust.

Like you, I had been a victim too on love's battlefield;
having drunk warmthness from me, all left after ransacking;
we differ only here: for me, love shown is love revealed
and for you, love interrogated, is one's faith's lacking.

And, although, untrained spirit of mine sole ownership seeks-
of you, your secrets, passions, sorrow, happiness and care,

but how can it selfishly debar you from touching peaks
of life meant for growth, though your heart it does not want to share?
Hence, my Sonia, let this testimony to you tell,
that for a Poet, words and expressions, his strength define,
and so to his faith; for, when in future, far you will dwell,
I'll know you are thinking of me and will always be mine.

By Shamik Banerjee

A SONG FROM THE TELEVISION

Song, I know you; I have heard you ago
when you were newly born,— a child, like me;
I heard your tune today; its symphony
delighted my ear; gently and slow.

You are the friend my Television had
when he was younger in my old home's ground
and you were the only inspiring sound
who told us to cheer away; to be not sad.

How his little characters smiled and cried;
the many roles they played and we believed
their stories real, so with them, laughed and grieved
and silenced brokenhearted, when they died.

You are a song, but more, a reason's bond
with gone men who, when alive, kept us near
while the ones now are remote view unclear,
above my tearful eyes; far and beyond.

By Shamik Banerjee

THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

Run! run! boy, the eve hour is fleeting!

With outstretched arms, embrace your best-friend's heart.

Run! run! boy, we will not soon be meeting,
this time we spend together; then depart.

Walk with your close comrades,— shoulders married;
let parting love fill you foe's bosom too;
at final repast, the days you carried,
let of both joy and resentment, review.

To each pedant, bow and take his blessing,
in remembrance, all they have efforted;
to each worker, this moment witnessing,
revere love for the love they comported.

Run! run! boy to your lover's famous lane.
She awaits your epistle near the grass!
One love-sweet letter 'cross the window-pane;
one last expanded arm to make it pass!

Be sad not boy; wash that tear on your face.
New varsity welcomes you in the town.
Their hearts are in your heart; like parents' grace;
life's education by them, on your crown.

Run not, boy, for eves are ever fleeting;
and this is the greatest of all sorrow,—
when dear friends part, never to be meeting
to be the new masters of to-morrow.

By Shamik Banerjee

Shamik Banerjee is a poet and poetry reviewer from the North-Eastern belt of India. He loves taking long strolls and spending time with his family. His deep affection with solitude meddles well with peace and Poetry provides him an ageless harbourage of happiness. He has recently founded a poetry journal and aims to contribute immensely towards its future future.

Reading Rich

If poetry were a slightly seedy bar,
Papa would sneak in for margaritas
get trashed with Thomas

Burroughs and Ginsberg toast Jack in the corner
D.P. and E.B. down shots, debate survival
Confessionalists sing karaoke in the back room

The bouncer went out for a smoke
sixty years ago and never came back
fluorescent flicker sign still draws a crowd

The pomos ignore me, busy
swiping left, huff air shots
while modernists pontificate over wine

I'd hit on you
writing your life by inches
bathed in yellow bar light

by Keri Withington

If love were currency

We could live like the Kardashians:
shop in excess, tip extravagantly,
spoil ourselves rotten.

We could buy that beach house:
skinny dip, sun bathe, show off
our soft rolls in bikinis and kaftans.

We could shop at the farmer's market
and expensive grocery store, feed
each other figs and fancy chocolates.

We would never have to worry
about bills, mortgages, small change;
never have to budget, hold back.

We could imagine we somehow earned this,
somehow deserved this excess, pretend
we could hold this moment forever.

Author's Bio: Keri Withington is a poet, educator, and aspiring homesteader. Her poems have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, recently including anthologies from White Stag Publishing. She has published two chapbooks: *Constellations of Freckles* (Dancing Girl Press) and *Beckoning* from the Waves (Plan B Press). Withington lives with her husband, three children, and four fur babies in the Appalachian foothills. You can find her teaching for Pellissippi State, planting in her yard, or on FB (@KeriWithingtonWriter)

The Gentle Guerrilla

Being tender in such a brutal world is a sign of rebellion.

{Softening every time you're expected to hard}

Being tough is overrated.

Chuva

If your being rained on

Embrace it,

Let it soak you,

Let the cold water clean what the usual shower can't,

Let it take away all the things that are not yours to carry,

Let nature find its way.

It's just like my grandma used to say -

"You are not made of sugar, darling, it is just a little rain"

By Duda Herani





Creation

“You were never meant to be in this world”

I claim this as the highest of compliments.

It is a bit like greek mythology;

Gods shine too bright in their natural state,

So, earthlings cannot look at them when they appear that way.

Human eyes cannot sustain such enlightenment,

Such etherealness.

You're not too much.

Perhaps you just ended up in the wrong sphere.

Perhaps you were supposed to be shining with all the other angelical beings.

Olympus, Heaven, Nirvana, whatever you call it;

Perhaps that is where you were supposed to be.

However, as a meteor that enters this planet's atmosphere,

You transformed into a shooting star.

An everlasting shooting star.

...

Maybe you were never meant to be in this world.

Maybe you are too good for it.

But Mother Earth is glad she can bear such a beautiful soul in her womb.

And so am I that I could witness a slight bit of your blazing light,

Even if that little glimpse made me go completely blind.

Untitled

All my messes matter.

All this chaos counts.

All the hopes and challenges will be worth it in the Grand Finale.

by Duda Herani

MUSIC REC

Green by Avonlea

“Green” was written in my bedroom and produced by award winning producer/songwriter Mark Nilan Jr, who’s produced countless hit records (Lady Gaga, Zedd, Trey Songz and Rico Nasty), to name a few. The song has an incredible origin story. Including getting dropped from Atlantic Records in the middle of the pandemic and the untimely, devastating death of my 41-year-old manager, Damian Hodge just months before the song was released.



A confession of jealousy, the song was written in 30 minutes. Avonlea says “The song was inspired by this guy I was seeing who was sleeping with his ex at the same time. I found out she had bigger boobs than me and had long, blonde hair, too. That kind of sent me over the edge.”

Avonlea is a 22 year old singer songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist from Northern California. Accompanying herself on piano and guitar, she sings her raw, conversational lyrics that honestly address subjects most people are afraid to say out loud. Her effortless, relatable charm shares an intimate look into her deepest emotions about her own body image, mental health and emerging womanhood.

At age 18, she signed two records deals with Atlantic Records and Artclub International. During her time there, she released 6 singles and accumulated over 11 million streams on Spotify alone. She opened for Jhene Aiko on the European leg of her Trip tour and has collaborated with the likes of YBN Cordae, Childish Major, G-Eazy and more.

In other lives

I see you at Thanksgiving. We play Blackjack again. I'm a sore winner in every timeline though,
sorry.

Maybe I annoy you with Christmas songs the morning after, because Christmas starts the day after,
when *Love, Actually* starts.

I pray you've seen it, otherwise, we have work to do.

I tell him on my sixteenth birthday and he doesn't feel the same.

And it hurts like a bitch.

But I let the dream go.

I meet the guy I talk to every day on Twitter.

And he has fat hands.

I put myself into his fingers.

I cry when it's over.

I cook the recipes in the book by the microwave.

They digest in the belly of a man who really loves me.

I step out in front of buses.

And I just held the knife wrong.

And they're good people, my flatmates,

but I scrub blood from the tiles alone.

I drink on the day he said I shouldn't.

I drink and let the sad feeling bloom like a weed.

I have sex for the first time in

a candlelit American dorm room

and John Mayer drowns out our noise.

I don't make friends with depression.

Or search bookshops for stories about Lost Girls.

An angel boy watches me huff in my decongestant steroid with round, adoring eyes.

Maybe we talk.

Maybe we get an agreeable go-between.

I learn to keep secrets.

My brother asks how I'm doing.

I don't respond.

I get a fish.

I stand tank-side and stare at it.

I read the news and I don't shake like I've just drunk a can of Monster.

I drink *Relentless*, because I am.

I own professional clothes.

I pull off pencil skirts.

I leave ripped stockings in my boss' office.

I make soup while my angel boy sleeps off a fever.

He wears long checked pyjama pants.

He keeps them on, pushed down, when I fuck him in the small hours, and I enjoy the friction.

I stand under streetlights in the middle of your road

and hold up my speakers.

You turn off the lights.

By Clara Dunn

Untitled

After C__.

I am in the weeds this morning - it's after 12, I slept late, call it morning though - and my voice is clotted in my throat and the sun is hot on my stubborn mess. I stayed up to watch the leaves glint with the moon I couldn't see for the steeple across the way. And all because everything is bigger in the small hours - the *s e l l s* of wind outside, the **thunderclouds** blooming in my ribs, and the miles between us .

See, thoughts of you come like water from a broken tap; not at all, all at once, too much, burble and thunk and clank and burst, dirty with decay in a steady and bothersome drip

drip

drip.

I am in bed and you are in agony - aren't you? - over the absence of me, turning your head to look over an empty shoulder, looking at the rumpled duvet and filling it with the lines of my body, the pretty dip of my waist or the ungainly spread of my one raised leg. And do you miss the press of my knee on your inner thigh, the gangly bruising nudge of my desire? And do you think of me when you face the grimy bathroom mirror late at night? The way I sweep my hair off my neck inside a pink little fist when I brush my teeth. The buckle of my knee from seventeen hard orgasms and the slip-slide into stupid dreams. The shock of our winter sea-blue eyes locking above the soap-scum and my hands on the tap and your hands on, well, me. I am in bed and my sheets smell like cum, smoke, cigarettes, and an old dream. This is me *in the corner* under the bare light *losing my religion* and crowning my sunburnt once too much cheeks with saltwater that doesn't promote healing. Have I crumbled, ground myself into ash? Does the twist and roll of my sleep leave soot and stains? If we spread the cotton flat would there be a chalk outline and would someone play detective, call out gentle cause of death?

It has been three and some months since we *knew* each-other and I find myself the stalker in the street below your window, the ghoul peering out of your closet.

Everything I hold, I hold with white knuckles, especially you - and the others - who let me be the loon dancing to no music at all.

I know I'm not really writing this for you. You see, there's a boulder in my throat and citrus on my tongue and blood in my mouth from chewing the inside of my cheek while I pace the ceilings of my blank little not quite home. You see, it's a nightclub at peak time inside my head tonight, and I'm not always as good with my words as I claim to be.

I'm not writing this to hurry you back. I do other things besides burn and pine and perish. I can think of other things than the chain you wear, or the spread of your legs in your old heirloom of an armchair. I can. I can hear song lyrics without conjuring your image or his or his. Okay, you got me. Not right this second. But then, I've drunk all the beer in the bottle and it's falling blue-black inside, so it's the moment for self-indulgent headlong-fucked-up-love country music.

Even in the doorbell daydreams, it's awkward when you claim me once more. We sit with tea and crossed knees and drum our fingers through the time-between-catch-up. I will be a teenager again, looking anywhere except at you, and you'll look through me to the cavern in my ribs and the riptide within.

You left and could leave again.

And I said I would behave, rein in the black-cloud scribble of my needing puppet-master. But we're only inches not feet apart and your lips are blood-red and cracked and has someone else bitten on them?

I shouldn't care.

I don't care.

I remark on the long-limbed plant by the window, was it always there?

And I am not in love with you, but still the words want to trip off my tongue - a flimsy bandaid - and really I ought to learn how to address love poems to myself, put the pink haze on my own potential.

We could kiss. I know plenty of ways to shoehorn it into the script, talk about that last kiss - *Soft. Quick. Kind of like a habit* - and we could kiss and you could pretend not to taste

poison on my lips and -

Ugh, this is hopeless, and I am sick.

By Clara Dunn

Clara is an unfulfilled lit and publishing grad who writes away her feelings and enjoys airing dirty laundry (watch out boys). When not scribbling dirty stories, novels and poetry in Google Docs, she can be found playing solitaire, drunk dancing in her kitchen or binging a series she's definitely seen before. She shares inane thoughts and snippets of work on

Twitter under the username @author_dunn.



We met at the park round noon. I didn't mean to get there early and wait but I did. She brought an umbrella; it was expected to rain.

We started with coffee from a nearby café. We sat out on the terrace and talked. We moved on to the used book store, also nearby. I checked out the books and films; she flipped through the records. I decided to pick up a short story collection by Haruki Murakami; I'd heard some mixed things but I'd make my own opinion.* She managed to snag Casiopea's Hearty Notes and Thundercat's It Is What It Is. Both great records. Outside the wind picked up through the trees, as if the rain was thinking about it.

We went to the arcade. We played some games; she won most of them. We went bowling; it felt like she was holding back and letting me win. We finished with a light dinner and drinks at a pizzeria at the opposite end of the park. We talked and laughed. She poked a meatball off my plate and ate it and grinned. The whole thing tinged nostalgic. I felt like I was in a music video. At this point the rain really started to come down. We walked back toward the park entrance; she forced me to get under her umbrella; my shoulder brushed against hers; the hem of her dress dappled wet and so did my skirt.

We stopped. It was getting dark now. I got out from under her umbrella. I said: Well.

Yeah.

I'll...

Yeah.

Not bad for a last first date, right?

The arcade was closed the first time around.

Hm. Oh. Yeah. I guess it was.

Yeah.

So. I'll see you later.

She gave me a funny look but neither of us laughed. What?

I blinked. Oh, right.

Yeah.

Then—maybe I'll see you around?

She looked at me. Her look said something like: Are you trying to piss me off? She blinked. Rain in her eye?

Right. I shook my head; I blinked again. Rain in my eye for sure. Right.

I nodded, almost bowed to her. She did the same. We parted ways. I tried not to think about it, about anything: it is what it is: the rain fell like rain.

* I liked it. It was minor Murakami, but in a Deleuzian kind of way. Do some artists really get worse, or do they evolve outside of our expectations, and where our disappointment stems from is our inability to follow? Who knows.

By CX

CX (A.K.A. NH), is a U.S.A.-based writer, originally from another country, ethnically something else. They are still trying to pick up the pieces of this fracturing, with new configurations each time.

Self Love

One day my sun will not burn from the energy you
gave me. I will be bright
all on my own.

Losing Myself

You spoon me gently
like sugar in your coffee turn me inside out, and stir me
in your bitterness,
until I dissolve
into sweet nothing.

If I Was A Rich Girl

If tears were money
I would be so rich.
If they fell from my eyes
as pennies into a wishing well,
I don't think I'd ever go broke.
If time wasted was time actually spent
I'd have enough dollars to turn back the clock and
begin as if we never met.
This is not to say that I regret you,
or regret us,
but it is to say
that sometimes I wish I could have it all back, all the
pennies for your thoughts
that I had to shake you loose for,
all the quarters that fell from my eyes
making so much noise as they crashed to the floor
watching you try to catch them before they hit the
ground, all the nights turned into mornings
that turned into mourning.
I wish I could go to the nearest bank
and exchange all those memories
into sometimes that would actually last.
(unlike us)

By Laurel Galford



Long Distance

You had a birthmark
the shape of Europe,
I wanted to travel my fingertips across the world of you.

Cavity

Like candy
lodged in my teeth,
you created a cavity inside me so painfully sweet
I do not notice
until the ache
is unbearable.

Self Portrait As A Flower

But not the part about the bloom or the beauty,
self portrait as the open petals over-exposed to the light, their color bleached.
Self portrait as the pollen pouring out of itself,
the stem growing thin,
wilting in the night.
Self portrait as the seeds
falling to the ground,
awaiting to be reborn.

By Laurel Galford

An Undoing

Do you ever peel the orange slow,
pluck the seed from the raspberry hive or remove the
skin of the grape
and revel in the undoing?
Does it amaze you to separate
the juice from its mother,
each teardrop of sweetness a world of its own?
How does she do it, Mother Nature, protects us, as if
anticipating
we will all one day
be separated from our body.

With You

I place a wish on each vertebrae, kiss the length of her
spine in the dark.
A whisper to not let go,
a hope to stay this way
forever.

By Laurel Galford

Laurel Galford (she/her) is a queer social worker, aspiring writer, and likely in the middle of reading three books at one time. She has participated in online writing workshops with Andrea Gibson, Megan Falley, and Buddy Wakefield, poets that greatly inspire her. When not writing, Laurel can be found rock climbing, talking about astrology or adding more books to the pile next to her bed.

A Year of Capricorn

In January, I first met you

In February, I never felt blue

In March, you drifted away

In April, I wanted you to stay

In May, you begged for forgiveness

In June, I was happy nonetheless

In July, fireworks flared in the essence of love

In August, you had to part

In September, thou broke my heart

In October, my soul was torn apart

But in November, it made me remember

That in December all this time we were nothing more than just friends.

By Ashlyn Jurena

A Year of Capricorn is a poem about delusionality, heartbreak, and realization from the speaker's point of view on the person they met in January and their one-sided connection within a span of twelve months. I feel that the speaker deals with the typicality of life and towards the end of the poem finally understands that from the beginning that their 'friendship' was never meant to be.

Ashlyn Jurena is an emerging young writer and musician born and raised in New York, USA. She has been writing creative short stories independently solely for entertainment purposes and to engage family and friends for the past ten years. She hopes that allowing herself to submit to literary magazines will enhance her writing skills and finally see if she can get her work published for the first time. However, If Ashlyn's not seen writing she's either watching movies, supporting local artists, or practicing her bass guitar or cello. You can find her on Instagram: @ashlynnnj

A sentence with semicolon never works

There's a semicolon between us.
You're a full sentence & I a half;
we both together make sense.

Though you have started it,
I made it stop,
like coming a full circle as a full stop;
yet so little that even without
catching anyone's notice, it can disappear.

Seemed to me now, it never existed in the first
place
and it is better that way.
With carrying cancer, I had no choice
but to end it thus.
You might have not forgiven me,
still, all this forgiveness I can smell in the air;
being in ventilation I looked after them as
Goodbyes!

BY SAPTARSHI BHOWMICK



Does Time care for Love?

Last time I checked my watch,
it was in the middle of my exam;
The air was as silent as the sea,
While the controller waits
like the waves wait
for the nearest shore.

After that I have fallen in Love
with time of course, cause I
never need to depend on a watch to see her.
Day after Day, Season after Seasons changed
and Years started to go by.
But I followed the same routine-
waking up, eating - working and sleeping,
spending time with Time,
never bothered to look at my watch again.

I remember once, I was able to smell Time
as she kissed me on the nape,
reminding me of those first grey hairs.
Sometimes she smiled on occasions,
a crooked but beautiful smile,
pointing the seconds left for us to enjoy
Together_

Suddenly I was caught in my dying breath:
I am awed and amorous,
surprised to see how unpredictable she is!
But then I remembered why I loved her so much -
Time so exotic and untraceable,
left me chasing for the whole of my life,
only to come in realization of that
I have fallen in Love.



Fluorescent Memory-lane

There is a sense in remembrance, or is it called an
essence
to reflect upon the past.

Be it an incident or a distant memory,
that fluctuated like a fluorescent lamp
when it had aged.

The more I recollect, the more it dims
as the mercury vapour is sucked in,
into millions of electron wavelengths.

But the memory, like it was relived,
left asunder;
palpitating as it was neglected
for a long time,
stored in a soft corner of our hearts.

Then,
it had its rebirth from the ashes of our evocation;
and like a phoenix with fiery wings
they float aback into our minds
in the nights, we spend
commemorating erstwhile trepidations.

Though ample electricity can save a fluorescent
lamp,
but a memory-lane is more than a dead-bulb.

BY SAPTARSHI BHOWMICK



Midnight Sun

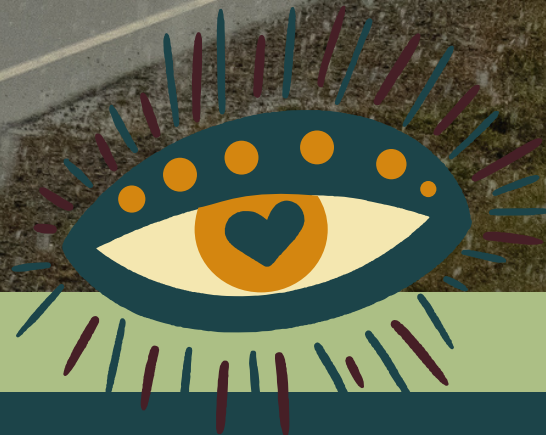
Blink

My limbs doesn't move,
the fingertips are damp
and it chills my spine to recollect
that I was sleeping in a brothel.
Beside me, a body, heaving with a sleep
so foreign to me,
and I wonder how I was able
to gallop that girl of an uncertain ghetto.

The room was cosy:
for me it was cosier than the residence
where I live in.
Sharing a bed with loneliness,
spending days in absence of a lover,
I sniffed the stale life out of urbanism.
While outside it always rained,
I ridiculed life with living:
into an inexistence I started to eat senses,
for them I indulged into sex;
day after day, beyond the nights
I found myself, lingering on the red light district.
Certainly it was the neon lights
that draw chasm between the past and now.

I noticed_
Outside the window,
an owl burst into a sudden laughter,
and I realized all this pretence
is just for a mere touch,
poised upon a dream that never comes true.
Cause the woman on the next pillow,
presents herself as a commodity;
and till the rising of the midnight sun,
it will always be the same.

CURATING THE SOLID IMAGERIES TAKEN FROM REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES, SAPTARSHI BHOWMICK MAKES HIS SANCTUARY OF SUBLIME POEMS. EACH OF THEM TOILS TO TELL YOU A DIFFERENT STORY. CAME FROM THE OUTSKIRTS OF A TOWN NAMED BERHAMPURE, SAPTARSHI STRIVES TO WRITE EVEN WHEN EVERYONE IN HIS LOCALITY CLAIMS WRITING AS LETHARGIC. ASIDE FROM BEING FAMOUS FOR HIS BILINGUAL POEMS, SAPTARSHI GOT PUBLISHED IN MANY INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINES, INCLUDING THE RAINBOW POEMS, TOFU INK ART PRESS, THE ANTONYM, WINGLESS DREAMERS, SPARKED LITERARY MAGAZINE, MOIDA, THE COMPASS MAGAZINE, SEAGLASS LIT, ASTER LIT, FIREFLY_ARCHIVES, THE GRAVEYARD ZINE, THE DRIED REVIEW, MEADOW MOUSE, OVERTLY LIT, MEDITATINGCATZINE.



MUSIC REC

Babygurl by Cooper

Cooper is a Dallas based Pop/R&B/Rap Recording artist signed to Dream Media, LLC. His style has been described as a "mature Justin Bieber with a message". His music combines pop, house, rap and R&B to create a unique yet relatable style that is groovy, yet positive. Cooper takes us on a journey of Love and Loss with his 1st cd to be released this December 15, 2022. With hits like "Babygurl" and "Innocence", this star is born to shine.

Soundcloud Public Link to single "Babygurl":

<https://on.soundcloud.com/H9E8F>



A Downpour In Summer

Anayis N. Der Hakopian

There is something bleak about a dry summer
Where the air is stale and the grass is scorched
That the heat makes the tarmac melt and crackle
Leaves the city in draught and us void of H2O
Asking for a raincloud to stain the blue sky's gaze

A heat wave brings many things with its despised visits
An excuse to hunt down ice cream that has long sold out
And pull out fans that only know how to blow hot air back
Leaving skin glued smack to furniture you can't escape
Wondering if autumn will arrive early for a change

I'd say it would be great, to sit rested unmoving for a day
But it turns to days, to weeks without a single break
Even pages of a book become sticky and strained
And the computer knows to stay asleep than buzz awake
Not like there is much choice when it is dead anyways

It feels like a loss of time when the humidity sits
When it affects you anywhere you decide to brave
In the shops, the mall, the cinema screens or shaded trees
And what was meant to be cool waves by the beach
That are overrun for only this melting month's scene

Yet it all drastically changes when there is a peaceful stillness
Before a static fills the air and makes things even denser
It brings with it a spell of a spirit that is hard to capture
Just before the clouds roll in and the rain begins to splatter
But this is no simple rain drop - but a complete cloudburst

For the streets drains are clogged with summers dust
And have not known rain since the past springing days
So when we call it to rain in the driest of the seasons sun
It brings not just a breeze, but a flash of a flood
Engulfing the town with its full storming embrace



This in my words may be the best of summer days
When you can run in the streets, sliding along the way
To be coated with the freshest of rain
Free from the hot blazing warmth
Making the most of its mercy
For we do not know when it may rain once more.

Anayis N. Der Hakopian is a British Armenian Director, 2D/Mix Media Animator and Writer based in London (UK). When she isn't stuck behind a computer screen she spends her free time writing poetry in the park whilst being mobbed by dogs.

a daughter coming home

by holland tait

I forgot, in a sense, what it's like to like a girl. It's not easy. It's not like riding a bike. With boys, you can twirl your hair and tell them you had a dream about them and they'll be wrapped around your finger, but girls are smarter than that. They know all the tricks because they use all the same ones. Friendship is so intensely embedded into the lives of women that a relationship-like affection is a common trend in the friendships of women. That makes it incredibly difficult to pick up on social cues.

Physical touch is entirely different. Everything is a question, not a statement. Is she so touchy with me because she's my friend or does she want to hold my hand while we walk to class? Did she hold that hug a little longer with me than everyone else? Are our knees touching because she wants them to or are we just sitting close? If that, why are we so close? Did she link her pinky with mine while walking through a crowd so we didn't get lost or does she want to keep me around her like a promise? Does she insist on sitting next to me all the time because we have fostered a lovely friendship or does she want to kiss in the rain and go on Friday night dates and spend all of our lives together? Social cues don't transfer over to liking girls.

It's not entirely physical, though. It's the words she says, the things she does, the looks she gives. Everything looks and sounds and feels like a subliminal message. She says she'd honestly date anyone right now; define anyone. I'm anyone. When her eyes find mine across the room, I can't help but wonder if she was looking for me. She confides in me, but that's just what friends do, isn't it? It's all just a friendship thing.

I used to be great at liking girls, one step away from getting my Ph.D. in the topic, but I've lost my touch. Where I once had confidence, I'm nervous and flushed. A pretty girl sighting used to be a walk in the park, but lately, it makes me weak in the knees like I'm in middle school. It feels like a warm hug. A warm, suffocating, tight-ass hug. It's thrilling, like a rollercoaster that makes you nearly vomit. It's all so confusing, but it's a comforting confusion. A return to queerness is not one for the faint of heart, it's taxing and emotionally draining.

Through the rain

I ran through the door of the café to escape the buckets of rain as I look out the soaked windowpane. I find it comforting that nature is displaying my feelings.

Today I lost my job, I guess you could say. I'm not sure if "lost" is the right word as it implies that I loved my work enough to feel lost without it, but I was going to quit anyway. When they beat me to the punch, it broke my soul more than it should. Years on end trying to win them over... trying as best as I could to shoulder the load for people that never appreciated my hard work, and they still win. Because in the end I stopped trying, so they pulled the plug on my career. I should have ended it years ago but instead, I'm left here, feeling worthless.

I glance around to find a place of solace to sit down as I await the storm to pass. Everyone must have had the same idea as me to flee the threatening clouds, now pouring down more than they were a minute ago. The scent of wet grass flows through the door as it continues to open and close.

I shuffle around, bumping limbs as I pass, overhearing their crass conversations and watching egocentric hand demonstrations of the people without patience waiting for their caffeinated drinks to be ready. Baristas sweating as they explain, "the café isn't usually this busy."

Plates crash to the floor as the door opens once more. He always knew how to make an entrance. Dennis, my co-worker of 5 years, now staring through my soul. Why have I never noticed how handsome he was before?

"Julie! I quit!" He exclaims to me. Suddenly noticing what happened as he quickly helps pick up the broken plates and the nametag of the waiter he hit with the door.

An artistic display of my heart on the floor.

"I'm sorry," he whispers to her, as she blushes and rushes away to help the millions of people cursing as they wait.

He makes his way over to me as a beautiful woman in her twenties gazes down his body.

"I hate it there without you." He tells me

"I've been gone for 5 minutes!"

"5 minutes too long."

A familiar song plays on the radio. It was a song we've sung before. Bad karaoke at an employee get-together after too much time at the bar. He gave me his sweater when I told him I was cold, and the next time we took a shot, I spilled tequila all over it.

He laughs, and I know he's remembering as I try to understand why it feels more embarrassing now than it did then. Dennis is my friend. Not even a friend, a co-worker. A former co-worker... with nice arms, good shoulders...

"Do you want to get out of here?" He asks

As I imagine saying "come home with me" but instead I say, "yes, there's a restaurant down the road."

Five years later, I'm working from home, writing for the newspaper. The column of my dreams. Dennis sits down beside me to finish writing his novel. He places coffee beside me and leans in for a kiss as I rest my hand on his face and my wedding ring glistens in the sunbeam through the window.

By Jena P. August

Before writing poetry, Jena P. August received her Education Degree at the University of Alberta in 2016. Later that year, she married her husband and they had their beautiful daughter two years later. During the lockdowns of the pandemic, Jena decided to pursue her dream of becoming an author. Her first poetry collection will be available this summer, 2023.

Sheets

I want to be under the sheets with you.
I'm not talking about sex.

I'm talking about
All the quiet in-betweens
Warm firewood skin
Morning eyes dipped in green

A hand drifting upward
A kissed lock of hair
A playful soft whisper—
Oh! I didn't see you there.

Fluttering eyelashes
Sleep-ridden smirk
Brown freckles scattered
like abstract artwork

That feeling I get
when drinking warm tea
Like maybe this is
what happy should be

Do you mind if I stare at you
as you wake up?
I don't if it's limerence
or falling in love

All I know is I'm waiting
for the next moment when
You pull my waist in
just like clockwork again

By Kira Morrison

Sacred nothings

You leave precious hints

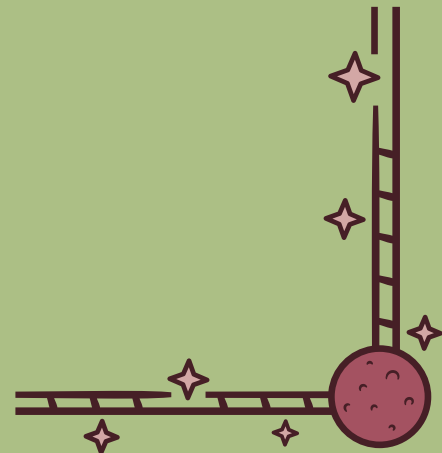
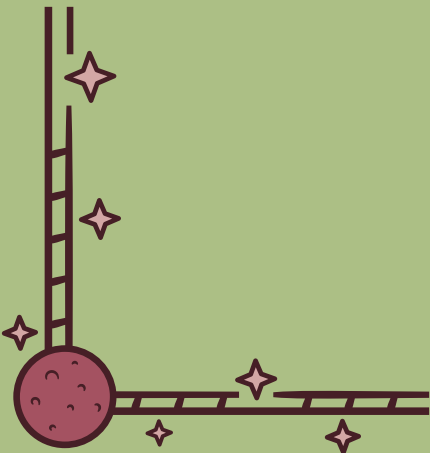
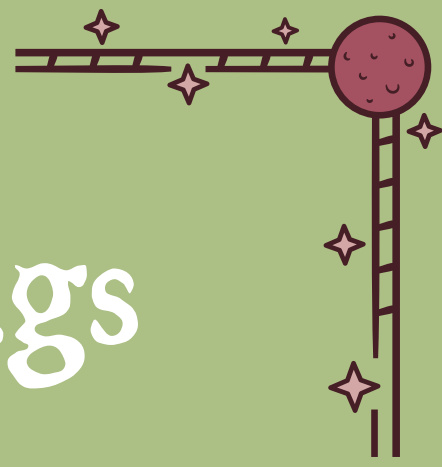
in lingering smiles
and soft pen marks

flower stems in hands
warm coffee in my mouth

All the sacred nothings
speak in sweet boldness

Louder than spoken confession

By Kira Morrison





ODE TO MY MUNDANE FANTASIES



When I daydream about a life with you,
I don't picture a 2-story house
or tidied desks
or satin sheets on king-sized beds.

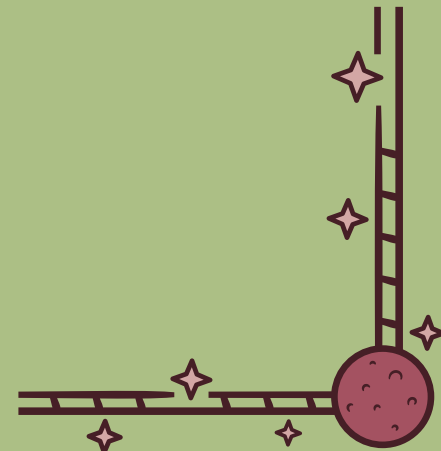
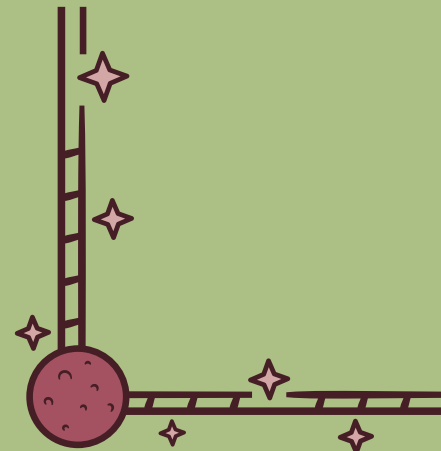
I want to love you in your faded t-shirt
and tease you to take off my sweatpants in the morning.

I want to love you with the kitchen table covered in books and coffee cups
and ask you to add more milk and sugar for me
just because I'm feeling lazy today.

I want to love you in small rooms and unmade beds,
pull the covers over our eyes because the sun is too bright.

It's too dark to see under all this cotton
but I can feel your hands
and hear you whisper good morning.

By Kira Morrison



Absence

In coffee cups
and empty passenger seats

I feel your absence more in the moments
when I hold the steering wheel instead
of your hand

When I hear the hum of bee's wings
instead of your voice

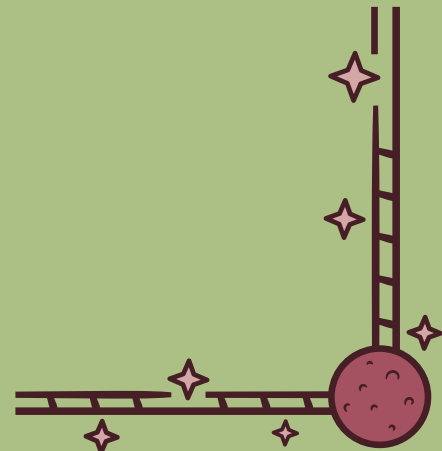
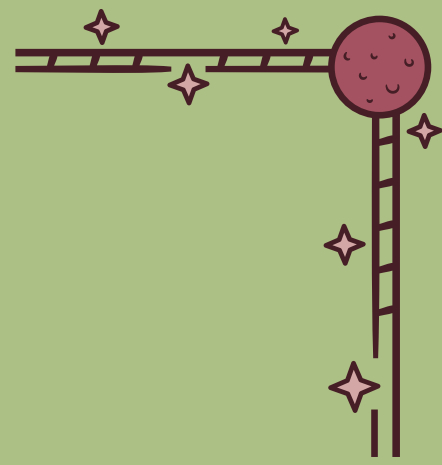
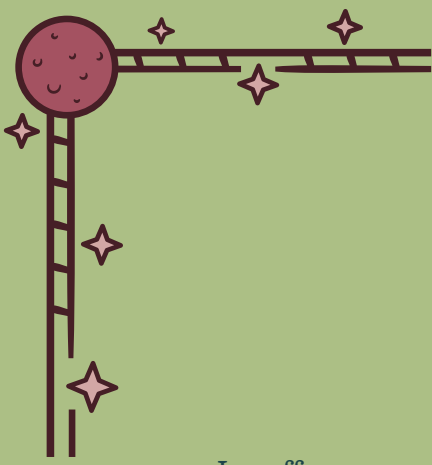
When my hair is brushed by the wind
instead of your breath

In notebooks
and silent streets

Every emptiness
becomes a memory of you

And every memory
becomes a reminder of the emptiness

By Kira Morrison





By Misterio N



By Misterio N



Gizem Nadir a.k.a Misterio N. was born in Istanbul / Turkey in 1990. Graduated from the Painting Department of Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University in 2014. Between 2012 /2013 she studied Universidad Politecnica de Valencia/ Bellas Artes with Erasmus. She took courses from Yıldız Technical University Art And Design Department in 2013. She also graduated 2018 from Istanbul Bilgi University, graphic design department, which she entered in 2016. She opened two solo exhibition in Spain and participated in many group exhibitions domestically and abroad. In 2022 she started to study in Hacettepe University Fine Arts Faculty, Ceramics and Glass Arts. She lives and works in Ankara/Turkey.

A season

We had our first kiss in a drizzle.
It lasted ten minutes but it felt like ten seconds.
The spring was just starting,
and in the haze of our first days the drizzle passed.

So we kissed in the sun,
our skin salty,
adorned with tiny sweaty beads.
That final night where I didn't feel temporary, we were oppressed by the heat,
the pressure broke
and the rain woke us.
The cold hit through the open windows and we huddled together,
as the rain thundered on.

And I imagined cold winter nights,
warmed in your embrace.
That never came,
unlike the rain.

By Bethan Keogh

I'm a 34-year old technical writer from Wales, living in Paris for the past 12 years. I once stopped and sat in a bush to write a love poem and promptly stopped writing for ten years afterwards. I started up again around the same time as covid hit and haven't been able to stop. I still get bursts of inspiration where I end up stopping to write in the street but not yet in any bushes and my favourite theme is still love, heartbreak and everything in between. My Instagram handle is @welshgirlinparis.



You travel south

BY ROBIN MCKNIGHT

where November is younger
just rain ripe with winter
and the farmland lay
hand in hand with the mountains
unyielding and cleaved together
Tethered down to earth the air freezes in the night
and he enters you like he's running a finger through the first frost on a leaf
shaking the decay off a fragile thing
sacred and saved for another day.

Robin was born and raised in the forests and fjords of coastal Alaska. Most recently, she attended grad school in the Westfjords of Iceland. She is a lover of romance novels, rain boots, and road trips. Robin is currently working in the mariculture industry in Alaska.

revival

rain runs down the windowpane
coffee spilt over edges into
sticky, gritty
 worlds beneath the seat
endless fields stretch out
an eternity
 of grain and grass
the thud of the door
engine chokes
 back to life

by Fes

bonus! keep
reading for
some works by
the team

Two boys touse in their mother

by Natalie Chan

Two boys touse in their mother's flowerbeds, faces scratchy and mottled with sores, the tips of their fingernails lined with specks of dirt. They laugh, joyously, as the church bells ring in the foreground, their hands crunching against the leaves below them.

The buzz of their mother's radio rings, faintly, from within their home. Sounds colliding against one another, creating a cacophony of noise. The boys hear nothing, see nothing. In this very moment, they are alone. They see the sun setting along the horizon, purple inking into radiant yellows, night conquering day. They see each other, amongst the flowers, and they laugh.

A gunshot sounds itself from the bay. The radio resumes its incessant howling. Women grab their children by their shoulders and weep.

Time stops for no one.

As the boys step through the door, their mother shuffles through a shelf of antiques, cramming them into a paper-thin box. They'll leave tomorrow, she says. When asked of their father, she simply shudders, a harsh winter brewing within her veins.

He's a hero, they said.

That's all that was said, between them.

And so, dinner continues, as all things do. Their mother refrains from eating, the warmth of hunger, of desperation, bringing solace to her quieting mind. The boys, however, eat cheerfully, ravenously. Talking, singing, laughing, congee dripping off the edge of their mouths as they jest. They shove one another playfully, exchanging bits and pieces of town gossip caught from neighbouring homes.

And as their mother huddles by the radio, listening to the fractured voice of reporters, a smile, faint as it may be, graces her expression. She returns to the table, collecting the scattered plates; running her fingers through the boys' frazzled hair, talking to them about her meetings at church, about their father's many ventures through the nation.

And when they are found, the next morning, crushed under the weight of debris, their mother's antiques buried underneath the dirt, history will commemorate these insignificant vignettes of peace, of hope. Let them remember the sound of children giggling between the stems of their mother's flowerbed, even as these memories fade into obscurity, trickling down the river of time.

I'm angry with my mother

by Violet Payne

I'm quite angry with my mother, even though I'm probably quite like her. I want to be more like my dad, but I'm too far gone. I watched my dad get married to a woman who adores him more than anything, whilst thinking about how my mum was on her fourth try of dating the same alcoholic from two years ago. When my parents split up, I lived with my mum and saw her date three Steves, one Mark and now Benny. I hate Benny.

My mum set the best and worst example for me. Growing up, I had absolutely no idea that two parents were supposed to love each other, or even sleep in the same bed. I was raised by two people that were friends and not lovers. Though I now know it's important to be friends with the person you're in a relationship with, I wish that I had seen any kind of real-life demonstration of romance. Not even just for myself, but because it hurts my heart that my parents spent so many years in a relationship they probably would have left sooner if it wasn't for having children.

I got my first boyfriend right after my parents split up and we were on and off for five years. All I knew about romance was anything I'd seen in movies and read in books; I didn't know what it was to be a couple. He wasn't very nice to me, and I don't think I really liked him that much, but I was still infatuated. For all I knew, that's how real boyfriends were supposed to act with you. I'm very relieved to now be with someone that has taught me what it means to be in a happy relationship.

I think I'm angry that my mum chooses to make herself unhappy. She tells me things about wanting my brother and I to end up with good people; she wants us to be happy and healthy. She's been on and off with the same alcoholic that treats her like utter shit for four years. I'm not even allowed to approach the subject, which I can only suspect is because she already knows everything I would say – and that I'm right.

"The heart wants what it wants". Yes, it does, but you'll have to forgive me for feeling irritated that a grown woman is choosing to be with someone that doesn't respect her and in the same breath giving me unwarranted advice on my relationship.

I hate that I feel like the parent in this situation – I'm mad about that, too. I'm mad because I care. I hate seeing someone I love not being treated the way they deserve, and I hate that my dad is so happy with someone because I just know that my mum could be happy like that if she wasn't so blinded by her love for something that will never work out.

It's weird feeling like you know more about love than your own mother. Even when I'm completely infuriated by her, I know her advice is what I need when I have a problem. However, I am at the point where I wouldn't choose to go to her if I needed to talk about my relationship. In my head, I just feel that it would be useless to ask for help from someone that doesn't know how to help herself in that situation.

I feel guilty for being angry, especially as I know that romance isn't straight-forward, and that love can all but ruin your life. I just want her to hear her own words and demand the respect she is worthy of. Ultimately, I have faith that she will one day realise how much happiness she deserves, regardless of whether that's being with the right person or on her own. I think I need to be done with being angry, now.

Scrunchie

by Violet Payne

He keeps my scrunchie in his car. Every time I see that pink scrunchie below his radio I'm hit with butterflies. He takes a piece of me with him wherever he travels, and he likes it. He wouldn't give it back to me, and I wouldn't have let him anyway.

Nobody really wants to hear about it when you're in love. And I mean the really sappy, gooey, ultimate-romance-movie-love. My friends definitely don't want to hear it, which sucks because I have it. I'm not trying to brag, but I have that kind of love. The love that makes you believe you were the first one to ever find it.

When I hear about other people's romantic relationships, I just don't believe it's as good as mine. I don't mean anything negative, but when I'm lying next to him looking into his eyes, it's impossible to conceive that anyone loves each other more than we do. I don't feel it in a smug way, but more of a this just feels so special how could it be like this for anyone else way.

I'm four years in and still in the honeymoon phase. We don't get sick of each other, we never say "I love you" too much, because no amount is too much for us. It's disgusting. I love it. He totally changed me, and I changed him too, I think.

I never considered soulmates until I met him. I mean, it's bizarre to think that someone who only grew up an hour away from you could be your soulmate. The likelihood of that is extremely low, but when those green eyes are looking at me, I don't care what the chances are, because I know he's mine.

I am scared, though. I have so much to lose now. My relationship is the best thing in my life, and I want to protect it. Sometimes I'm paranoid that I will sabotage everything, because I know I don't deserve this. There's no way I did enough on this Earth to deserve to be this happy with someone so wonderful... it makes me want to start making up for it. I want to do better, be better.

My relationship isn't perfect; we annoy each other and disagree and miscommunicate a lot. But those small moments are in between laughing until we cry, doing things that would make anyone else cringe, and being the most supportive person that we can for each other. I have a good thing and I never want to take it for granted.

He keeps my scrunchie in his car.

PERFUMED PAGES MAGAZINE

thank you for
reading issue
three <3