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SUMMER
2021

Hecate

LITERARY MAGAZINE



BIRTH

A VIOLENT WORLD
DEMANDS A VIOLENT BIRTH

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EDITOR'S NOTE

It has been a truly inexplicable year. Between a global pandemic and persisting political violence, our planet has been an uncomfortable place to be. The threat of death hangs heavy in the air. Fear and panic, for a long time now, have reigned supreme. Life as we know has been lost to us.

Hecate chose to present herself to me during my personal lowest point of the enforced national lockdown (in the form of an oracle card, no less). I won't pretend to be a scholar on her symbology, but I understood immediately her embodiment of darkness and light and the finite line between.

And really, it never ceases to amaze me - just how quickly creation follows destruction; how clarity comes after chaos; how rebirth can proceed death.

I am careful now not to make this too much about me, when so many intimate and personal stories have been shared here, but this little magazine was born out of a particularly bleak period of my life. A time that found me gripped by heightened anxiety and a depression so dark and unrelenting, it left me bereft and grappling at any hint of hope or joy.

Yet, still - at the peak of my despair - I found myself reaching toward my most burning desire. Hecate literally breathed life back into me, the way passions can, and in this way, the theme of this issue is so incredibly apt.

Just as diamonds are formed under extreme pressure, so too can humans regain such unrivalled resilience in the wake of seemingly insurmountable change and challenge.

And that is exactly what you will witness between these pages. An anthology that simmers with suffering, shame, loss, strife and yet, unparalleled strength - all that makes us human in an increasingly inhumane world. A body of work that houses the inhospitable. A series of truths and fictions that cycle through beginnings, ends and rebirths in a phoenix fashion.

I could not have imagined the beauty and pain and sacrifice that this anthology would hold. As editors, we continue to marvel at the bravery and boldness and integrity of our contributors - and of every writer that submitted to this inaugural issue. Each opened their hearts and souls and wounds to let the light in.

To let us in. To let you in.

And just as a worldwide epidemic has changed each and every one of us in some small - or, sadly, catastrophic - way, I challenge you to proclaim that this anthology does not do the same.

With that, I will encourage that you go gently.

Welcome to BIRTH.



FOUNDING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, HECATE MAGAZINE

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creation with an axe

BY LEANNE MODEN

A blazing, sanguinary wound of light,
this reddish star – our sun – a brutal breach.
The viscera of moonlight bleeds through night
and stains the sky with triumphs out of reach.

While shoulder blade tectonics move beneath
the sinew soil of slowly shifting dunes,
Creation swings its axe and grinds its teeth
and softly hums an ever-changing tune.

A god can give their body to the earth,
their bones transferred to sediment and scree.
A violent world demands a violent birth;
the axe must bite the bark to fell the tree.

A god can give their body to the earth;
a violent world demands a violent birth.

the rains

BY SOPHIA MURRAY

The sky weeps on
hearts buried under earth deep.
You made the rains,
lover, creator of chains.

Stay fast, waters rise unhurt.
Winds carry sighs; heavy hearts
to he who is made of earth to keep
small pieces of you to preserve.

Seeds cradled in green
hands that caress between
roots, earth, clay and stones
opening up for life.

stone of a mandrake

BY LOUISE MATHER

How can you have forgotten
the place, where the amulet
shelled through the earth,
to midsummer?
If you cut the sun and crescent
of a violet moon, to stem
and roots, petals of bark,
laid them out like wild blood
to mandalas - would they not show
how to birth the alchemy
of blue flora, where the deer
last roamed
to swill its worn mouth
and hooves? You wrench them
through the earth, brandish
yourself with stars - to carry
the stone
of the mandrake, to the flesh
of your ribs - does it not bear
the memory - of Aphrodite?

eden

BY LUCIA LARSEN

I dream of a child- mine
Through some fluke of creation,
they will be made solely from my line
Wrestling endlessly against our relation
Eden, two bodies intertwined,
making each other in bruises and scars

I dream of a child- ours
Through two women, impossibly birthed,
they will be made from of the strength of our powers
Forging dissent that could shatter the earth
Eden, a foundation made of flowers,
braiding a home to cradle our wars

I dream of a child- yours
Through the conspiracy of your genetics,
they will be made behind locked doors
Breaking wood in my impassioned hysterics
Eden, new blood on pine-needle floors,
tearing out walls to enter my shrine

Re-making the earth with each ripple of the vine
Eden, a woman and a child- mine



day 27

BY AMY BOBEDA

The moon is the brain
between amygdala and pituitary
purple and soft, the
back of a cattail in winter

mother's body
dissolves particulate
low land waters
like octopus tentacles
sway into pods of kelp
as she dies to her children—

every vessel
a cosmology
disseminating nature.

In her body woman carries the secret knowledge of fertility and growing. Woman is like the field. The field and the woman both carry the seed. The seed is at home in her body and in the earth's body. The seed feeds off the moist nurturing food her blood carries and the earth carries. Her body naturally harbors the seed in her womb. The seed grows. The mystery astounds her. And she is the mystery. Wisely, the fields belong to woman.

-Betty De Shong Meador

conception

BY PRIYA LOGAN

I tug a tender thought,
through time
on a lemon breeze.

Kindling connection
I harvest unspent fire
from childhood rage,

Carry in palms
cradle soft with care,
to this moment

where it drips like honey.
Amber glistens as I massage
my swelling belly. Round

and unknown. My hand meets
resistance - rock in skin.
This hidden storm

brewing.

the face of the deep

BY ALICE WATSON

In the beginning
I dream and float in the rockpool
with its jagged incisors.
You have anchored yourself, drawing me
off course swirling
sea-sickness.
I press my face to the pale porcelain
and steady myself against your tide.

Later
luke-warm bath.
Tracing watery lines that
stretch across me
slithers of razored moon light.
I am sponge.
Filled up with blood and water, holy
sodden,
pulling tubloads with me.

Squeeze
and the deep falls out.

Except the squeeze is a scalpel
or a popping pin
and the fall collapses in and crashes over.

And then
there is darkness for a while.

After,
the room is white
and the lights too stripping.
I study the blood on my hands
half washed but caught drifted
behind nails.
Tidelines.
Yours or mine?

You are already dry and wrapped,
cleansed of chaos.
But with hair, tangled and still smelling
of the depths of my body
and my love.



safe harbour

BY HELEN SHEPPARD

You're yet-to-become

One cell collision

You flex and stretch

And wallow in water

All bump and tail

You tether then float

Wriggle to sea sounds

Your heart drum beats

Connects in shimmers

Your wet dough brain

You reach out to grasp

Tug your navel string

Crouch down to engage

Then kick out to begin

twenty

BY B. PICK

My mother claimed that giving birth during a tempestuous twilight -- beneath the glow of a full and bright moon, drowned out by fluorescent hospital lights and remnants of a hurricane -- was a sign that, since labour was challenging, my life would be anything but laborious.

Yet, without fail, every year, lightning struck wherever I was when the earth cycled around the sun once more. Each annum -- from birth, to childhood, to adolescence -- until I welcomed the third decade of my life, it couldn't seem to stop pouring.

I'd begun to metamorphosize into an anthropomorphic pathetic fallacy; a character Shakespeare might have loved to pen into a tragedy with the gentle flick of the wrist. The rain wouldn't stop pouring, and I would always end up with saline drip, drip, dripping down from my eyes, beading into pearls on my nose until they rolled over my body and to my toes. I shivered and shook in fear of thunder clapping in the sky.

But this year, the downpour stopped.

The sun shone bright, and yet, my shoulders are still burned. I try to remember what my mother said, the thunder roaring outside her window, while she pushed and bled for twenty hours, meant that my life would be illuminated with sunshine. Bar the blisters contrasting soft, freshly forming freckles, an emotional eclipse might finally fall into flux.



raising astaroth

BY LAURA THEIS

I sang you into our lives with three secret words
from a spell-book I sang you lullabies backwards
I wept as you rose from the flame

You are not my flesh not my blood you are my child
so what if your milk is raw meat
and your day is my night and your kiss is all teeth

For all intents and purposes you are my baby though
I never thought I would live this life that wakes me
in the night blue-bruised blood-marked sore

We are your family until your last sulphur breath
and we will live to give you all we can give
even if that means friends turn on the threshold and we are no longer welcome at parties

You are a child who will never grow up a child
that never once said the words I'm hungry, all you ever say is I love you
I love you in all the ways you can think of over and over

and I will never tire of it although this is a love I know will kill me
my fanged angel

breath(less)

BY JP SEABRIGHT

Three short weeks and one day
that's all it took to break our hearts
 as they took you away to be punctured
so small and snail-like
 our piccola cucciolina.

 You returned smaller, paler, subdued
none of your usual squeaks and superman poses
 we held onto you like life itself.

Three weak breathes and one huge cry
that's all it took to mould our hearts
 to fashion them out of iron and blood
and placenta spilled
 on the hospital floor.

 Our hearts were formed that day
forged around your tiny hand
 caught in amber
 held in breathless awe
 around the shape of your name.

a little number

BY KATHERINE SHIRLEY

Before I was born
Just a twinkle
In the universe
Of possibilities

Reflected in eyes
Both bluest grey
And olive green
Did you know me?

Or was the I of me
And mine all one to you?
My seedling promised,
But unplanned

Was a meeting of
Hearts and minds
Foretold in song
To bardic strains

Or merely Cast
Upon the plain and
Simple lines
That sprang and pranced

This two-fold dance
Of fire and ice
Your foreign couplings
Kept apart

By Mother Earth
Who did not dream
Of feelings torn
From the widening

Womb-like walls
And shallow shores
Of an underground
Kingdom

Nuts and Colonels
Carried away
With crowns of pine,
From slender hopes

To careful, caring
Tender traps in
Wadded cotton
Whose snoring sheets

Wedded Pluto's
Darker dreams to
Persephone's Oblivion
Before there was me



a childhood memory

BY REBECCA HERRERA

just as the chariots rose over the horizon
like the gears of a music box, my mother
found me buried in the sand by the shoreline.

the cotton filled summer sighed over new york
and would end in dreams and haze.
on a mystic morning the moon set underneath
the earth, and there i am.

i was peach-colored, and my hair was stained
from the clay sediments of the ocean floor.
my eyes hadn't opened yet, but i'd recognize
her airy steps anywhere, the lavender scent,
a warmth as ancient as apollo.

i was small enough to fit in the palm of her hand,
like a terracotta figure. she pressed gold between
my eyes, and the silk voices of our grandmothers
rose and fell with the ocean tides.

its august again and the cycle closes.
its august again and we keep forgetting the candles.

birth day

BY JESSICA HUDSON

I walked to you as I walked out of my mother:
head first then one leg at a time, one hand

on the polished cherry bannister, stair
by stair down the spiral case—

no directions except to breathe
in someone else, out someone new

—so I dove into the shallow
end of their bedroom, out of her, her

knuckles on his as defined as the California
hills on the horizon, cloaked sentinels in the dark,

our hearts pouncing on the sweet
oxygen like untended sparks in the air









(s)mother

BY TAHLIA MCKINNON

i know where you start

blushing under lips, black and blue
dark marks from the fire skin smarting in the smoke.

i know where you end

bloodied red, between my legs
doused in liquid love beg to smother; force a choke.

the mantle passes

BY AUDREY HOWITT

This is the year
your feet left earth behind.
A lion's mane in your fist, muscled ribs
take you to destinations uncertain,
even as we talk

your hand flutters
a butterfly, distracted
honey-sweet-milk smell,
your tea leaves settle into the bottom of your cup,
pollen pathways will take years to unravel.

This is the year your heart
grew too big for your chest
reaching out to pull us in.
You fold us tenderly, finding
a spot for each of us under your steady gaze.

As the afternoon passes
I watch winter light tinge your eyes.
This morning you unwrapped boxes
put them on a shelf
for us to retrieve in time,

None contain maps.

leaving

BY LUCY HOLME

I hail from a place I can't return to.
A space soft and strong,
constructed from the toughest
material known to man.
It helped to grow my bones,
shuttled blood.

Shaped a face and kept it safe,
for viewing only
in ghostly white and violet shades.

No one could get in,
to tear at my fragile walls.
She made sure I didn't leave
until I was ready.

And when I left home,
began the long journey
of finding my own,
in a rush of energy and force,
I felt the deficit of support.

That un-remembered time
when I was so expertly held.
In suspension.
Weightless, spinning.

I try to recreate the space
she lent me.
The sense that I belonged.
And though I can't call to mind
the warmth and comfort,
still I search.

The home that made me who I am,
is still inside my mother.
She reminds me sometimes
what I was like
when I lived there.

open child's pose

BY AYSHE-MIRA YASHIN

never did I show you the lemons and figs
blooming on the branches of the trees that were planted in the corners of
my Nicosia Garden, that were watered by my dead grandmother, or slice
them for us
into two segments each

never did I leave you with forehead kisses
and with lavender buds underneath your pillow and with almond milk
and honey on your nightstand and (crouching by my dead
grandmother's bed) sing to you *noumi noumi ni*

and never did I trace the Lefke meadows
or the Athalassa willow trees, with my hands across your back up until you fell
asleep, just before I left

so I'll see you when I'm stoned and in
my dead grandmother's bed
you placed the needle there mid-stitch
just before you left
you gave me a terracotta pot
and seeds for me to sow
but when you're not here
they never grow

I'll see you when I'm dreaming
on my dead grandmother's bed
our three pink candles melted out
just before you left
I extended my legs out to you
open child's pose
I never left,
they never closed



when the roses pulled the house down

BY KATIE KALYANI NESS

Ki shan i Romani, Adoi san' i chov'hani

The house smells like honey, crickets and sweet-dark treacle. Descending the curvaceous stairs, the warm air hugs my toes as the mahogany floorboards creak in the golden heat like cicadas. As though moaning for a remedy. Perhaps a little mugwort will heal the wound?

The deliquescent roses pull the house down, arching like a delicate, swollen shelter of lava; lymphatically, for hundreds of years.

The perfume of them is so insatiable, it soaks the air. Foxes gather at the gate, whilst older women dressed in black believe it to be the sign of god and walk by whispering prayers and blessings for lost souls caught between heaven and earth.

Khalëah sips splinters and willow bark from the glass. She felt a thick, meandering siege cramp up inside her, as her heart slithered away from her body and into the swimming pool of drowned insects. Its hands pulling along the grass like a crocodile desperate for the water.

Back at the coffee shop, she drinks sombre bottled concoctions of belladonna and whiskey to commune with the perished in the daisies.

The dogs howl at mountain wolves whilst a strange woman buries herself in the garden patch with growling vegetables and beetroot leaves that unfurl from her black hair.

Her bulbous, purple lungs wheeze in time within the heavy stomach of soil.

Her broom, pitch-fork ready to puncture demons and preserve their essence in bell-jars, and bake them into midnight blackberry pie.

Under the rising seal-skin moon, sunflowers cut the sky with their teeth, drawing blood from the clouds like vampires and the slate walls cough up dark blue thistles; clay-heavy and secret-scented.

I watched my reflection rebel against the beasts being born out of the water of the wishing well; spreading their bodies across the grass, over the violets to feast upon the doves in the dovecote. And a swarm of ants are summoned in the thunderstorm to honour dead honey bees with funeral bed rings of petals and *martenitsas*.

That night I saw a fish that wasn't really a fish as much as she was a nymph, with stories on her tongue. Ghosts in her eyes and cigarette stained memories on her fingertips. Fireflies float about her; golden oracles carrying messages from the otherside.

The honey-coloured days are left behind and a few passing trees blush scarlet, I see autumn's flame is ahead in this rotten fairytale that threatens to tear the moon like a cat butchering butterflies; their paper wings, a collage stuck to the kitchen window.

And she can't see...How everything she touches turns to ash. Her bitterness consumes her, the way a fig devours a wasp.

Her violent, crayon brown eyes are scribbled with sorrow and transmit the sparks of sadness onto the shining rain;

With a flick of her frown, she lights another cigarette, pulls out her liver and stabs it with shards of black mirror to divinate an answer...

She tells me;

*"I don't know how to love. I've got nothing to offer, except my bones to make into chimes?
My past haunts me too much to love you...."*

Čuckerdya pal m're per

Čáven save miseçe!

Čuckerdya pal m're per

Den miseçeske drom odry prejiál!"

Romani translation into English:

****Ki shan i Romani Adoi san' i chov'hani***

"Wherever gypsies go, There the witches are, we know."

****Čuckerdya pal m're per, Čáven save miseçe! Čuckerdya pal m're pe Den miseçeske
drom odry prejiál!***

`Frogs in my belly, Devour what is bad! Frogs in my belly Show the evil the way out!"

phoenix

BY AUDREY L. REYES

What happens right before you hit the switch,
during that split decision to put yourself
through the hell of your own making?

Raking yourself, naked,
down a coal-strewn porch, then,
an altar where you wed yourself to damn regrets.

Why do you make a cave
out of your cold hands
to feed the fire they've lit in you?

They are free to leave
after they've run down your shelter,
but there is no door for you.

And leave, they do,
with as much fanfare as you're deserved,
while you're left to draw straws on what's to come.



coatlicue

BY NATALIE SIERRA

I don't want to be the
pretty girl out alone,
my keys clenched
through my fists to
protect myself from
you. I want to be
Coatlicue.

A woman whose scarred
breasts hang low.
Flayed serpent face split
in two. At war with
each other.

Giving birth to the cosmos
under skirts of glittering snakes.
Around my waist sits
a belt of withered hands.
For I am mother; see also
goddess of war.

My blood will be spilt
and from it rises a night
sky pinpricked with
a billion spores of light.
My daughter's head
becomes the moon.

I don't want to be a victim,
your victim; the body
you follow through the alleys.
I want my face to be the kind
that startles a gasp from your
center. My grin to be one
your psyche cannot bear.

There is fear in your heart.
I can taste it.

My knife begs to
seek out the worst in you.

nature poem for the man that followed me home last night

BY MADELINE AUGUSTA TURNER

crawl out of the water. i want to see you
covered in sphagnum and algae, you
long-hair swamp-rat creature, you
live in the river. and there is a body
inside of me that is not my body.
it is everything i am reflected in the murk,
mirroring something stagnant
until i can't tell what is left
or what is right or if
i'm stuck somewhere between.
like me, you are hungry.
it has been days since you tasted
anything real. my fear becomes a heron
with me always, playing alive
some place impossibly high and fragile.
behind you, he follows me everywhere
and with each dewy-eyed glance i wonder
who he is. someone i know,
knobby knees legging towards the water
or towards all of the things in water
that are larger than water. the rot
of things, green and pulling and waiting.
i catch your dead gaze and molt
my feathers, coming unhinged
to tell the body (the body under my body)
that i'm sorry for not knowing
what it was - a chance,
wings beating and gone
as soon as we touch.

lifelines

BY HAZEL SALT

At fifteen I was told I would marry twice, by a girl too old for her years who swore she could read the lines on my palm.

I don't believe in prophecy but I do believe in second chances. I didn't believe her but ten years on I see the worn marks that snake across my hands that have touched too many men and loved far too few and I know that for whatever reason, she spoke the truth.

I stood beside her as we buried a baby. A gaping hole in the earth mirrored the hole in her heart and a rift between us. Since then I have seen too many babies buried, too many tiny coffins, too many broken parents, and siblings who are overshadowed and overforgotten.

Each spring, when the first flowers push up through the ground I remember them all. Somehow that feels like my burden to carry. The load of your loss. I will be there for anniversaries and birthdays and I see ghosts in every sunrise and sunset. They don't haunt me like they haunt you. I am their steward, a guardian of names and memories. I carry them when you can't.

I did not cry for the baby that day, I cried for the girl who had already seen too much loss. I should have held onto her harder. I should have protected her. I loved her like a sister but I still don't know if she knew that.

And now it doesn't matter. Because time moves on and lifelines twist and wind and come to rest in other places. I couldn't have predicted this.

Not long ago I travelled across the sea. I left behind the two halves of my own heart so I could meet the man from another world who had become so entwined with mine. I'll marry him one day. We're more than fluid bonded. I want to tie my life to his. I don't think I could sever those threads, even now. Even if I wanted to. Some people cross our paths and leave ripples through time.

Ain't it funny.



phantom limb

BY SARAH TREANOR

Clotho tells me you're
on your way already
inside me and
all around me
my phantom
limb

you were haunting us playing
pranks laughing to yourself
tumbling cartwheels
in your crimson cocoon
soon you will
be

but now we are both stretched and short of
air and somehow I have forgotten what to do
with my legs my arms my entire
being is contorted to you
my internal extremity
each time I think you're here
you're not

between tides I suspect we are all Eilithyiae in these
moments drenched and burning and brimming with the
elements my feet push down through the bed to
floor through the floor to the
earth though the earth to
a blinding
core

and you see the rays of the sun

severance

BY KATIE OLIVER

Animal snarl
of gristle nestles
in a box of trinkets,
held in place with
plastic clips: the
outside world
clamps down
on what was ours.
Scissors chewed
this erstwhile
piece of me
and you like
bacon rind, spat
it out. They
dragged you
from me,
made the
final cut:
Your first
breath the
beginning of
our end.

the last baptism

BY MARS STARS

i'm forced to stand
and look back as smoke hangs heavy in the air,
but it doesn't hide the silhouettes of the firing squad.
where are you now? —
there's no new beginning as we shuffle to a halt, trapped.
still, despite my fears, the world turns.
skin sheds, eyelashes fall, life evolves and demands space.
a compression of something — the squeeze and release of a heartbeat -
i place my hands on my fluttering chest, skin on skin,
second best now your arms are illegal.
my prayers beg for that one last leap,
to feel the water engulf me, to scream underneath it,
submerged -
to stay forever in the corner of the ocean, a vengeful mermaid.
i could cling to the floor of the world as my body fights.
is it easier to taste a dying breath than a living one? perhaps.
sometimes being born again feels like dying.
as i gasp and thrash, i see you on the shore, fearful.
well, you can't swim like i can.
do you see me? what would you have me do?
surrendering is foreign, but i surrender to you now.
make the choice for me, sweetheart.
maybe this time i will listen.



all the king's horses couldn't, but i could

BY LAUREN ANNE CASSIDY

there is an incantation running loose on the moors today
teeth bared like a feral cat

but a heart the shape of an egg here
i still recall the touch of your palms
wide grip on waist, drawing me in

sometimes you lose yourself
in the fall for someone else

i clench – and shell like shrapnel scatters
blood the shade of romance

and wander this wasteland
ice air wafting through caverns
i embrace breeze like a one-night stand
give *it* the cold-shoulder in morning light

soon i am blue and reek of death
return to soil and sender

i lie in earth – peace the shade of sleep surrounds and tucks this body in – i slumber with
wisteria and wild daisies and though i wait for night it never wanes
an incantation vaults above, sly and snarling
sometimes you lose yourself in the fall for someone else – so indulge in the descent
germinate, embrace the growing pains
i rise from soil with flowers like hair, bark like skin, roots like limbs
my love, evergreen – sprouting again

crisis

BY KATIE GILGOUR

everything is made beautiful in its time, but time makes prisoners of us all
and i am crying out, begging to be free of this
suffocating infinity.

nobody wants to die, but we are ghosts of the children we once knew,
holding tightly to dreams that
slip away.

life is either a revolution or a haunting; the end still
untouched by fate.

*have courage, dear one,
and be.*

an inkling of what i could be

BY GERRY STEWART

To lie asleep in the poem, curled in the warm gut of it.
Unknotted from bone, ligament, hair and teeth,
to float unformed, its universe tight around me
until I push the syllables wider, crowning.

I fly against a sound, its flicker
pulling me from my shelter
like the stories bound in constellations.
A tether back to my mother tongue,
the slippery tug of a comet's tail
I ride through the darkness.
Its cold spark jump starts that first heartbeat.

Flowing into motion, the stars will dance
if I can put mouth to their tune.



MAHATMA GANDHI 1 1/2

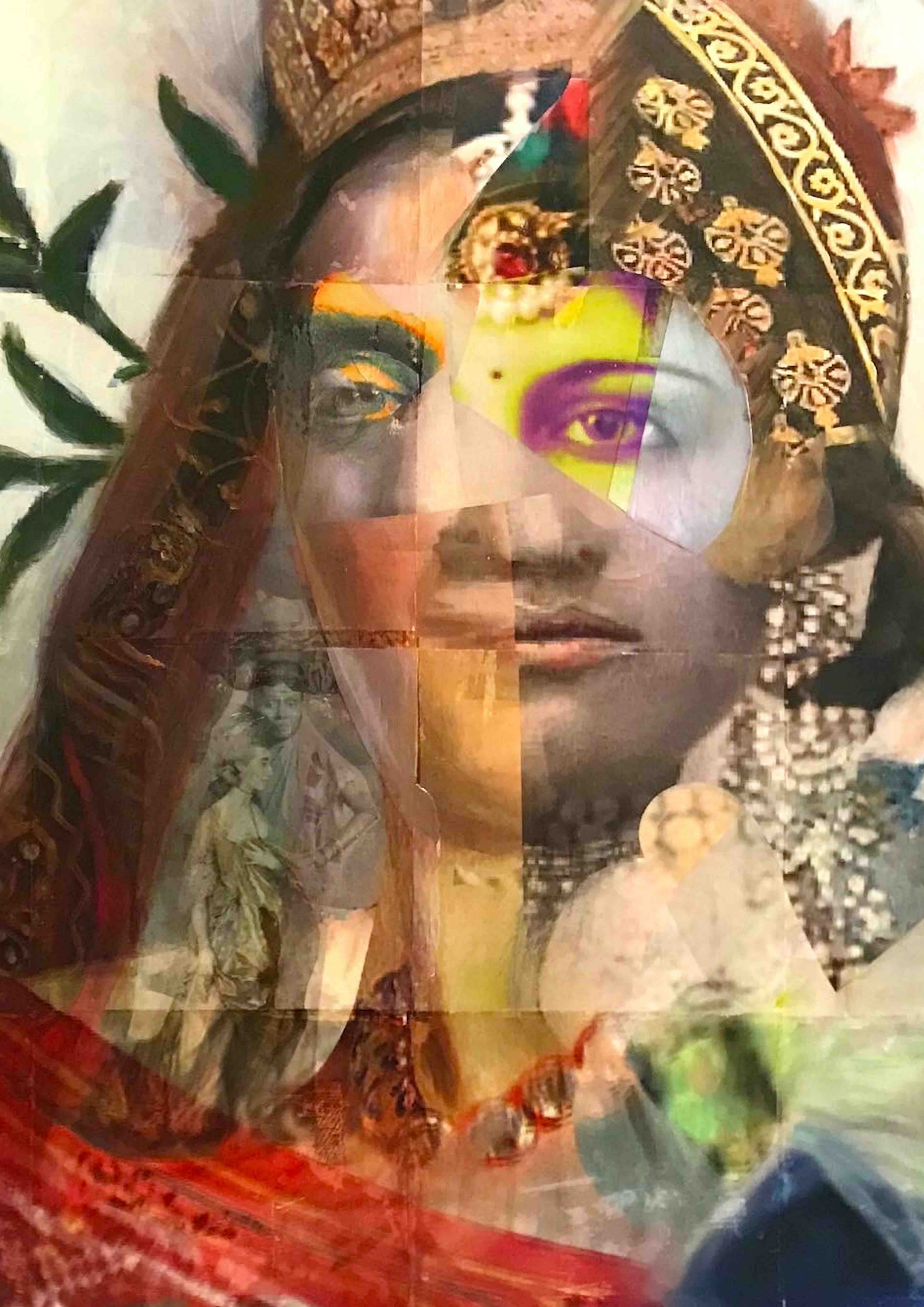
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rib/born

BY PASCALE POTVIN

i've been reborn from many different ribs

into fiancée fantasies / onto bound pages

survival is a wanting

or monologues for mutual friends / manifestos for a cupid-bowed pixie

survival is a wanting

to be known barely / is to be made bare

to keep breathing inside of me

you / they'll have to cut me out of you

wild

BY AMANDA WILLIAMS

Sometimes I feel like the woman who lived
at the edge of the world
shouting
into the void

I can feel a brighter version of myself
white as a wraith

slipping
through my fingers
like sand cascading
hopelessly
through a sieve

and I miss her

Looking back
at the women who came before me
and wondering
if they, too
ever felt themselves slip
away
like water
through river rocks

with quiet ferocity

did they feel the sunshine brush their skin
fleeting
moments of renewal before
they feel their essences
shatter across multitudes

with empty platitudes
and broken promises

ready
to dispel
at a moment's notice

splinters

BY DEVIKA MATHUR

It's that time of the month
when the earth blooms like a bride,
and a thumb of life splinters.
Fragments of the earth, the moon
like a mahogany autumn kiss,
divides my body into two beautiful halves.

I am a blossom now,
a dew on the foreheads of Gods.
Those gods who created a dimension of soil inside me.
Blueberries that speaks a truth about springs.
I give births, i take births
a circle of life.
effeminate blisters chiselled onto my hip.

I do not take rest like the sun, the moon.
I am a supernatural flower of crumpled anxiety.
So, I gather and gather, sunbeams, lilies
a soft thorn, honey, raindrops.
as much as I can,
to slip it all into my jaws, running
through the streams of loneliness of this fish-shaped eye.

how my grandmother became the town witch

BY DEIRDRE DANKLIN

My entire life, people whispered about her. Long hair, long dresses, secret murmurings. She was beautiful for far too long, the fathers said. She smelled like blood, said the mothers. To me, she was perfect. She raised me after my father ran, and my mother died mysteriously, but she never told me how she grew into her power. I called her forth from the dead, just to ask. Her shade shivered in the crackle of candlelight I arranged on my bedroom floor. But she looked past me, into darkness, and opened her mouth. The words came tumbling out without her having to move her lips.

She said:

I will never be Lucrezia Borgia, I think, stirring honey into my husband's tea. Deep gold honey from the poor collapsing bees, into the tea he never asks for but expects me to provide. A pope's daughter, she wore rubies at her throat, gaping wound rubies red as blood shining, I think, as he takes his tea without looking up at me. Inside my womb, the baby is restless. Today, I think, my son will make his appearance, the pain foreshadowed by tremors of anticipation. I have no jewels in my old sandalwood jewelry box, only a sterling silver cross, plain and inexpensive, leftover from my dead powerless mother. Lucretia Borgia wore brand new bejeweled headdresses, and she tipped her poisons into drinks out of a clever hollow ring. The first wave of labor pain hits me as my husband takes a sip of his honeyed tea, and I think there won't be time to get help. My son will have to be born here, on the floor, a room away from his father, convulsing, foaming at the mouth. In the kitchen, I hear the teacup hit the floor and crack, and I hold onto the counter and breathe through the pain. My husband's body hits the floor with a thud, a dull thud like the silences he inflicts on me - *inflicted* - he is now in the past tense. I will never be Lucrezia Borgia, I think, so fine and fancy, protected by cat-clawed brothers. I am on my own. My son allows himself to be born easily, a bloody miracle, and I cut the cord with a kitchen knife.



the burning bird

BY JULIA RETKOVA

You see your loves and their brightness burns your heart to gold.

But what good is that for? It's an old word, an overused word.

Who doesn't cringe at what they rejected.

No, the only way out is to disappear.

Completely, and, maybe, even a little irrationally.

A mouth hungry with yearning- a mouth which has

gone by and brought nothing, left nothing, yet

walked away with arms overflowing.

Dewdrops as coagulated light: slipping them

one by one along your tongue until your whole body

glows golden. This is how you stay warm.

This is how you grow along the grapevines of all that loves,

my burning bird.

stealing kisses

BY SHIKSHA DHEDA

Start off. Early in the morn. At the bosom of the sun-the border of the horizon. Confidently surmounting power. Fish. Shells. Pieces of coral- all slave to my enthusiasm-my fury. Carried powerlessly by my momentum, my prowess, my might, my beauty.

Fascinating the fearless. My power diminishes.

Dragging myself to the shore

I kiss it in reverence.

Survival-growth- Is evident

in my on-going

legacy. I

won't have

to steal

kisses

any

m

or

e

through intervals of light

BY MAYA REBECCA FIDELIA GARGIULO

For my Grandmother

From room to room I am carried
Until I am no more

A creature

Half undone; Likeness that forgives
Itself as it speaks a voice that dawns
From the past. Softly, the light falls backwards
As in a dream where I stand in its shadow,
My mouth veiled as I walk through the door.
It is time that overcomes me, dust
Upon whites.

*

Her thin braided hair lies on the wooden floor
One morning before remembrance slits through
Intervals of light.
A half-closed window, awaiting
A stillness of hours abiding the room, as the earthy grains
Of plums ripen untouched: the last unmouthed
Devotion. I slice the fruit into tiny pieces, and feed her
The parts I have saved. Soon it will be autumn
Again and I will marry and learn to pray, and make
A nest out of hair for the birds that sing
In the morning, resting in geraniums that once
Faced the sun.



newness

BY AMANDA OFFIELD

After 'Spring' by Gerard Manly Hopkins

What is all this juice and all this joy?
new ways to greet each other greenly
old ways to check books out from the library
What is all this lemon and all this laughter?
it is pennies at the bottom of a fountain
copper heads and tails and shoulders
What is all this dandelion and all this dancing?
three circles of a rotary phone, dial tone hum
through a wall, it could be laughing or crying
What is all this corn and all this clapping?
the smell of cut grass and the first bbq after winter
I've put prisms in all the windows and in every drawer
What is all this shadow and all this singing?
A bunch of pearlescent shells collected in a jar
the crunch and stick of honeycomb in our teeth

the year of the butterfly

BY ABIGAIL MITCHELL

After 'To a Butterfly' by William Wordsworth

)

When Spring came we hopped into an SUV and drove north into the mountains. It was hot for March; we stopped for water at a wooden lodge and I poured it down the red of my neck. That night we stripped down to our swimsuits, popped a cork in the tub, and toasted each other, steam silhouetted against the hills. My cheeks were sunblushed, my head was light from card games, edibles, and the bluest sky I'd ever seen. We wore short sleeves at midnight, built a fire, flames licking air as my skin prickled in the breeze. The next morning I awoke to fresh coffee on the back deck and breathed in lake air without smog. I was twenty-three; we were all so happy.

)

In a kinder world I might be lying in a clawfoot tub beside a wall of glass: verdant greens, pale sky all around. Mug on the wooden table full of tea and honey, bills paid, no tension in my neck.

In a kinder world I might be humming a love song and tracing my fingers through the bubbles after sunrise, body sore from walking in the brisk dawn or tender from a lover's touch. My arms pink beneath the water, pebble as I shampoo my hair.

In a kinder world this morning I would not have read the news before I left my bed, or it would have been a balm. The planet would be in safe hands and we wouldn't have to bear more than we could carry.

In a kinder world I could scrub it all away.

)

I've been writing the same line over and over lately. About stones sinking through bodies. "Life is alternately, inside you, stone or star," Rilke says. For me life's no more than a garden of thorns. We're all making our way through this labyrinth, wading through mud with pens as swords, cutting through the branches; we're princes fighting through the brambles in red capes. I think we're all trying to unravel ourselves. To free ourselves from the tangle to see the sky, the way that stars look without all the smog. This is freedom. But the truth is that we can't always see the roses through the thorns. The mud is thick, and sometimes we sink, instead of soar.

)

I am yearning for it.

The river that flows and ebbs. Sat in the fifth seat of an eight shell, learning how to move in time so that each stroke feels like a haiku in calligraphy. In the morning the world is silent but for the birds and the catch of the blade in the water, the breaths of the girl I love, the creaking motions back and forth as we row past the meadows.

We slip through the water like butter through knives, winds whipping our hair around our faces. Past the cows on the common and the little dogs being led along the muddy path, we soar, past the daffodils growing wild and the blossoming trees on the banks. Lean back, tap down, rock forward, slide up. Catch, push, pull, finish. Again. And again. And again.

)

I've heard that in the future, life will be very beautiful. There will be a thousand paths for people to stray from, freedom to forge new ways through old weeds. I say we are already walking the roads our parents never traveled. Our grandparents' maps guide us, but we are marking a new route, carving our names into trees that bend to let us pass.

I believe that tomorrow is already here and happiness is not a future tense. I don't need to hope for the future because I am here in it, watching beautiful people do beautiful things. A man is writing the most beautiful song. A woman builds the most beautiful bridge from impossible to real and then crosses it. Somewhere somebody is laughing in the passenger seat of an old car on their way to nowhere, is dressing up in fishnets or pearls or both, is telling somebody else their truth for the first time and being taken by the hand: I love you, I love you, I love you.

*

I've been thinking about it, anyway.

When the year of the butterfly ends we will emerge, cautious, padding from the door in socks and slippers. We'll peek around the frame, pink-cheeked and golden, then step into the world, embrace.

No, we can't be young again. Of course not. But we can be reborn; we can shave our heads and paint our faces and burst through the surface for air. We'll drink sweet wine at the dockside bars, shuffle heel and toe on sticky dancefloors, sing, sing, sing together on train platforms and in football stands and in church pews. A stranger will meet your eyes on the street and you'll see their smile. Your shoulders will brush and neither of you will get out of the way. Can you imagine it?

When the year of the butterfly ends it will be Spring again at last. We will blossom together, turning our faces to the sun, and I will finally take you by the hand.

*



CONTRIBUTORS

Amy Bobeda holds an MFA from the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics where she founded Wisdom Body Collective. Her work can be read/is forthcoming in Entropy, Vol1 Brooklyn, Denver Quarterly and elsewhere. Find Amy on Twitter @amybobeda

Lauren Anne Cassidy studied for her undergraduate degree in English and History, and Masters in English at the University of Limerick. She is currently pursuing a PhD at University College Dublin, analysing mythological motifs and queer representation in contemporary Irish feminist novels. Although she spends the majority of her time analysing texts by other authors in an academic context, Lauren is also deeply passionate about her own creative writing. You can find her on Twitter @Laure_Cassidy

Deirdre Danklin holds an MFA from Johns Hopkins University. Her work has appeared in Hobart, Cease, Cows, Pithead Chapel, The Jellyfish Review, Longleaf Review, Typehouse Literary Magazine, The Nashville Review and others. She has been nominated for Best Small Fictions '21 and The Best American Short Stories '21. She lives in Baltimore with her husband and orange tabby cat. Find her on Twitter @DanklinDeirdre

Shiksha Dheda is a South African of Indian descent. She uses poetry (mostly) to express her internal and external struggles and journeys, inclusive of her OCD and depression roller-coaster ventures. Mostly, however, she writes in the hopes that someday, someone will see her as she is; an incomplete poem. Sometimes, she dabbles in photography, painting, and baking lopsided layered cakes. Her work can be found/is forthcoming in Mixed Mag, The Daily Drunk, Visual Verse, The Kalahari Review, Brave Voices, Glitchwords, Versification, and others. Find her on Twitter @ShikshaWrites

Nimisha Doongarwal is a mixed media artist. Her conceptually layered pieces combine painting, photography, fabric, and digital prints which explore varying relationships between past and popular culture, by referencing social issues such as racism, immigration, and gender inequality. Each image tells a unique story, creating visual links to current and historical events in time. Through her work, her goal is to give a voice to social issues faced by women and people of color; to encourage viewers to embrace cultural diversity and step up for equality for all. Nimisha has been featured in publications such as Forbes and has exhibited in museums and galleries including the De Young Museum in San Francisco. Find her on Instagram @nimishart or via her website www.nimishart.com

Maya Rebecca Fidelia Gargiulo lives in Naples, Italy. She has graduated in European and American Languages and Literatures, and she is pursuing a major in the same degree. She is interested in intersectional feminism, portrayals of womanhood in prose and poetry, and cinema.

CONTRIBUTORS

Katie Gilgour is a twenty-something writer who loves tea, cuddling cats and buying books faster than she can read them. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia with her husband and their two cats. You can follow her on Twitter and Instagram @katiegilgour or visit her website at katiegilgour.com

Rebecca Herrera was born and raised in New York and is second-generation Salvadoran. They completed their undergraduate degree in Art History at the Fashion Institute of Technology. They love museum trips, reading, and animal crossing. Much of their writing centers around culture, identity, art, mythology, and history. Find Rebecca on Twitter @strawberry.img and Instagram @strawburrymoon

Born in Kent, **Lucy Holme** has a BA in English Literature and Language from Manchester University. After spending twelve years working and living at sea she now resides in Cork, Ireland, raising three young children. Most recently her work has appeared in *Opia Lit*, *Ó Bhéal XIV*, *Porridge*, *Dreich*, *One Hand Clapping*, *The Honest Ulsterman* and *Wrongdoing* magazines and is forthcoming in *The Liminal Review*, *Crossways*, *Tír na Nóg*, *The Cormorant*, and *Indelible AUD*. She will commence her MA in Creative Writing at UCC in September 2021.

Xanthe E. Horner is an eclectic artist, witch and poet residing in East London. Her visual practice explores and articulates an inner symbolic language, synthesising multimedia collage and illustration through both analogue and digital processes. Xanthe clusters symbols, objects and ideas in dialogue, seeking to articulate the arcane within the mundane, drawing on her knowledge of tarot archetypes and interest in alchemy.

Audrey Howitt lives and writes poetry in the San Francisco Bay Area. When not writing, she sings opera and teaches voice. She is also a licensed attorney and licensed marriage and family therapist. Ms. Howitt has been published in: *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Total Eclipse Poetry and Prose*, *Chiaroscuro-Darkness and Light*, *dVerse Poets Anthology*, *With Painted Words*, *Algebra of Owls* and *Lost Towers Publications*. She continues to find new ways to explore diverse aspects of herself as she moves through her life.

Jessica Hudson is a graduate teaching assistant working on her Creative Writing MFA at Northern Michigan University. She is an associate editor for *Passages North*. Her work has been published in *The Pinch*, *Fractured Lit*, and *perhappened mag*, among others. Read more at jessicarwhudson.wixsite.com/poet or on Twitter @JessicaRWHudson

Rosie Jackson is a visual artist who lives, loves and works in south east London. She works mainly in ink, watercolour and other media on archival cotton paper, exploring themes around gender, mythology and human experiences that are not easily put into words. You can find her on Instagram @rosie_anne_jackson

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E.P Jenkins is a poet and artist based in Kent, a recent graduate of Royal Holloway's Poetic Practice MA, a founding member of the Crested Tit Collective, and editor of Coven Poetry. E.P's work can be found in Streetcake Magazine, the anthologies Harpies (2018) and Rewilding: An Eco Poetic Anthology (2020). Her debut collection Rituals will be published with Broken Sleep Books (2022). She is a big witchy weirdo inspired by folklore, contemporary and historical medicine, and crafts as a method for poetic generation.

Sandra Lamy is a Montreal-based artist, who found her artistic voice by surprise. After graduating with a degree in Criminology and Psychology, she worked in psychiatric hospitals for a few years, and later became a yoga teacher. Her appreciation for the human psyche was always apparent, but it was through art that Sandra discovered her ability to truly connect to the subconscious. In 2017, she started taking art classes for fun and was accepted in Studio Arts at Concordia two years later. She quickly began assimilating her past studies and interests through her art. She employs symbolic imagery, flora and fauna, and figurative body language in an intuitive manner as she explores recurrent themes of the wild woman archetype, the dream world, and psychic fragmentation. Find her work via sandralamy.com

Lucia Larsen is currently studying for her MSc in Environmental Management at the University of Stirling. Her published work can be viewed at linktr.ee/lucialarsen. Find her on Twitter @mslucialarsen

Hanna Lee is a self-taught photographer from the US. She began taking photos when she was young, inspired to both create ethereal visual worlds and to document her life. Her work ranges from the dark and magickal to the light and mystical. Find her on Instagram @enchanted.forests.photo

Priya Logan is an artist, writer, trained birth worker, garden lover and mother of three perpetually growing children. Priya writes and draws incessantly (and has done over the past thirty years) to declutter the strands of thoughts that get intermingled with hers. Living by the North Sea in Scotland is also a powerful reminder of the planet's elemental forces. She loves connecting with people, learning about divergent ideas and pottering with discarded objects. Poetry is an exciting landscape that she is sometimes intimidated by but always draws her in. Find her online at priyadoula.co.uk or on Instagram @priya_doula

Olivia Mansfield's paintings are figments of fantastical imaginary worlds. They serve as portals to strange distant realms which allude to and echo our own existence. The intuitive nature of Olivia's process allows her to engage deeply with the forms which manifest organically in the works. Each of her works has roots in classical and historical painting, iconography, theology, culture, ritual and symbolism.

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Louise Mather is a poet from Northern England. You can find her on Twitter @lm2020uk and her work is published or forthcoming in magazines such as Fly on the Wall Press, Streetcake Magazine, The Cabinet of Heed, Versification, Crow & Cross Keys and Dust Poetry Magazine. She is currently writing about rituals and endometriosis and putting together a cat-themed anthology.

Devika Mathur resides in India. Her works have been published or are upcoming in Madras Courier, Modern Literature, Two Drops Of Ink, Dying Dahlia Review, Pif Magazine, Spillwords, Duane's Poetree, Piker Press, Mojave heart review, Whisper and the Roar amongst various others. She is the founder of surreal poetry website "Olive skins" and recently published her surreal poetry book, *Crimson Skins* (available now worldwide). Find Devika on Instagram @my.valiant.soul or via myvaliantsoulsblog.wordpress.com

Lindsay Merlihan is a Michigan-born, Galway-based collagist and writer. Intrigued by the unconscious, her artwork is a surreal blast from a dream - archetypal, wildish and empowering. Her recent diploma in Jungian Psychology & Art Therapy has attributed to her parallel career as a yoga teacher and facilitator, where she hosts journaling & art-making workshops to explore personal development. Find her on Instagram @holistica_wild

Tahlia McKinnon is a wild writer, myth-maker and the founding editor-in-chief of Hecate Magazine. Her work is placed in The Daily Drunk Mag, Wrongdoing Mag, Nymphs, The Radical Art Review and others. Tahlia's prose commonly centres on haunted love, exultant spirituality and her experiences as a trauma survivor. You can find her online @tahliamckinnon or via her website tahliamariamckinnon.co.uk

Abigail Mitchell is a London-based writer and PhD candidate at the University of Southampton, where she works on speculative and queer histories of the English witch trials. She also holds an MA from the University of Cambridge and an MPW from the University of Southern California. As well as her contributions to illustrated nonfiction books for Dorling Kindersley and others, Abigail writes creative memoir, fiction, and poetry; her work can be found at *pigeonholes*, *Paper Nautilus*, *The Nervous Breakdown* and elsewhere. Abigail tweets about life and lit as @_abbimitchell, and about her PhD at @hextorian

Leanne Moden is a poet, performer and educator, based in Nottingham. She's performed at events across the UK and Europe, including recent sets at WOMAD Festival, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Sofar Sounds, and Bestival on the Isle of Wight, as well as shows in Estonia and Spain. Leanne performed at the TEDx WOMEN event at UCL in 2016, and was a semi-finalist at the BBC Edinburgh Fringe Slam in 2019. She is currently working on her first full-length theatre show, *Skip, Skip, Skip*, which is about identity, music and belonging, and her second pamphlet of

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poetry, 'Get Over Yourself' was published by Burning Eye Books in 2020. Find her on Instagram @leanneymu or on Twitter @LeanneModenPoet or visit her website leannemoden.com

Echoing Multiverse creates art and blogs under a pseudonym because she told her daughter never to use her real name on the internet. She began painting during the first covid lockdown in 2020, exploring stories, history (and herstory), and beliefs through art. She is a big fan of the Goddess in all of her many manifestations. Besides painting, she enjoys golf, paddleboarding, and blasphemy. She can be found in the suburbs of Philadelphia, on Instagram @echoingmultiverse or on the web at echoingmultiverse.com

A northern witch/teacher in the cold depths of the Northumberland surrounded by animals and children, **Sophia Murray** uses her spare time to write about the earth, love and loss, usually translating her scribbles into songs. Find Sophia on Instagram @sophia.is

At a glance **Katie Kalyani Ness** is a mermaid, in our world she is a writer, artist, belly dancer, ayurvedic yoga teacher, women's circle keeper, Cacao ceremonialist and ectopic pregnancy survivor. Dancing makes her bloom. She thrives along quirky edges, roving with the rippling rhythms of shadows and light that we call life. As a practising hedgewitch and Magdalene priestess she teaches of the sacred feminine and goddess archetypes in her workshops. Katie has essays and articles published with Rebelle Society, We for Women, Kindred Spirit Magazine, Yogi Approved and Elephant Journal. She is also published in an all women's collection of memoirs entitled "Phoenix Rising" and she is working on publishing an illustrated poetry book. Find her on Instagram @katie_wild_yogi

Novraka (Magdalena Żak) is an artistic soul, born in Poland while her heart resides in Costa Rica. Her main method or artistic expression is through digital collage. She is inspired mainly by nature, the cosmic flow of sexual energy, psychedelic experiences and all kinds of dreams and magic. Find her on Instagram @novraka

Ianna Offield is a disabled, queer, Chicana from New Mexico, USA now living in Northern Ireland. Her work has appeared in Abridged, Dodging the Rain, Rust+Moth, and Porridge Magazine. She can be found on Instagram @alannaoffield or at alannaoffield.com

Katie Oliver has been shortlisted for the Bridport Prize and the Bath Flash Award, and was awarded an honourable mention in the Reflex Fiction Winter Competition. She has further work published in various places, such as Dust Poetry and Lunate Fiction, and is a first reader for Forge Literary Magazine and Tiny Molecules. She can be found on Twitter @katie_rose_o

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B. Pick is a lesbian poet and creative non-fiction author based in small town Canada. b.'s work focuses on self-growth and trauma healing, gender[ed] troubles, and the American Midwest. They are an Hon. BA candidate in English and Cultural Studies at Western University, where they work as a Copy Editor for the Western Gazette. They have most recently been featured in SAPPHIC, Tipping the Scales, and Grubstreet Journal, among others. When they're not writing, b. can be found cuddled up with a cup of herbal tea and their French Bulldog, Colette. You can find them on Twitter at @_bpick, or Instagram at @b__pick

Pascale Potvin is Editor-in-Chief of Wrongdoing Magazine and an Editor at a few other publications, including CHEAP POP and Walled Women Magazine. She's also Staff Contributor for Hecate Magazine, The Aurora Journal and The Jupiter Review and has placed further work in Eclectica Magazine, Maudlin House, BlazeVOX, Witch Craft Magazine, The Bitchin' Kitsch, and many others. She has a BAH from Queen's University, and she is currently sending queries about her book series. Find her on Twitter @pascalepalaces or via her website pascalepotvin.com

Julia Retkova is a King's College London graduate student with two degrees in Literature and Digital Studies. When not working on an app that connects foreigners with their family overseas, she's running a small literary journal called Nymphs. She was born in Ukraine, but grew up in the south of Spain. She loves reading books in the sun and writing when everyone's asleep.

Audrey L. Reyes is a Filipino poet, digital content specialist, and former early childhood educator whose favorite workplace activity is raising hell. Her work appears or is forthcoming in QUINCE Magazine, NECTAR POETRY, Anti-Heroic Chic, and several other literary magazines. She resides in Manila, Philippines.

Hazel Salt lives in a quiet village in the Scottish countryside. When she isn't writing poetry she can be found taking long walks in the moonlight, or teaching her two daughters about the old ways. Find her on Instagram @h.zel.s

JP Seabright is a queer writer living in London. Their work can be found in Babel Tower Notice Board, Fugitives & Futurists, Full House, Untitled Voices and elsewhere. Occasionally they can be found blogging about music via randomrecordreview.wordpress.com and hanging out on Twitter @errormessage

Helen Sheppard's poetry explores the themes of birth, life, health, loss and those whose voices are often unheard. She co-runs Satellite of Love Word events and loves the alchemy of being involved in community poetry and mentoring new poets. Her work has been published widely in: These are the Hands NHS Anthology, Under the Radar, Literati Magazine, Lyrically Justified

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Volume 3, Ink Sweat & Tears Webzine, and commended in Hippocrates Poetry and Medicine Prize 2017. Her debut poetry collection 'Fontanelle' (due out September 2021 with Burning Eye Books) is her 'take' on the complexities and joys of caring. Find Helen on Twitter @HelenSheppard7

Katherine Shirley is a native Londoner and constant scribbler on buses and trains. Katherine's poems have appeared in the Best New British and Irish Poets Anthology 2016; the Snakeskin e-zine; the Gold Dust calendar; Soul Vomit; and the Rochdale Canal Festival Poetry Trail. Katherine has featured at the Stockwell Festival and the Ashmolean Museum's 'Poetry in the Galleries' series.

Natalie Sierra is an author and artist from Southern California. Their work has been featured online and in print, including Dryland, Westwind, and the Los Angeles Times. Natalie is the author of Medusa, a feminist reimagining of the popular myth. Her first novel, Charlie, Forever and Ever is forthcoming from Machete Books (Spring 2021). In addition to her own work, Natalie is the Editor-In-Chief for Disquiet Arts, an online literary magazine that publishes gothic poetry, erotica, flash fiction, and more from underrepresented communities, including BIPOC & LGBTQ+. You can follow Natalie on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook @pandorademise

Daphne Smith is a musician and writer from London. She is currently studying English with Creative Writing at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her work has been shared at Bare Lit Festival and The Bunker Theatre. She thinks a lot about snacks and death. Find her online @daphneplease

Mars Stars is a poet, storyteller and spiritual psychologist based in various locations (the joy of being a nomad) across the UK. As a working class, neurodivergent, queer trauma survivor they explore themes of trauma, grief, hope, spirituality, attachment, difference and classism through their work. They combine spiritual teachings with contemporary psychology to research and practice forms of emotional, spiritual and psychological healing. Their PhD will be published in 2025. They can be found writing and appreciating nature on Instagram @marsbarsandstars_

Gerry Stewart is a poet, creative writing tutor and editor based in Finland. Her poetry collection Post-Holiday Blues was published by Flambard Press, UK. Totems is to be published by Hedgehog Poetry Press in 2021. Her writing blog can be found at <http://thistlewren.blogspot.fi/> and @grimalkingerry on Twitter.

Laura Theis writes poems, stories and songs in her second language, and has been published in places such as Strange Horizons, Abyss&Apex, AE SciFi, Lucent Dreaming, Mslexia and Asimov's

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(forthcoming). An AM Heath Prize recipient, she has also won the Mogford Short Story Prize, the Hammond House Literary Award and was a finalist in over twenty other international writing competitions including the Acumen Poetry Prize, the Geoff Stevens Memorial Poetry Prize and three consecutive Live Canon International Poetry Awards. Her poetry debut 'how to extricate yourself' (Dempsey&Windle) was selected as the winner of the 2020 Brian Dempsey Memorial Prize by the Poetry Society's Paul McGrane. Find her online at lauratheis.weebly.com

Sarah Treanor has an MLitt in The Gothic Imagination and has had poetry previously published with Haunted Water's Press. Her gothic musings can be found at horrornews.net and in Popcorn Horror's online magazine. She lives in Scotland with her family and enjoys thinking about all things other-worldly while perfecting her mac and cheese recipe. Find her on Twitter @cansarahtweet

Madeline Augusta Turner lives in Northampton, Massachusetts and writes in pursuit of fruit blossoms, shaped by her ever-growing community and her life at the intersection of industrial decay and endless cornfields. Her work can be found or is forthcoming in DEAR Poetry Journal, Rejection Letters, and Crow & Cross Keys. Find Madeline on Twitter @soilslut or on Instagram @madelineaugusta

Meagan Viken is a film photographer whose work focuses primarily on the connections that she has built with her surroundings. Themes of nostalgia, memory, and the juxtaposition of life and death are all foundational building blocks that lie beneath Meagan's work and processes. Much of her work draws on the relationship between man and nature, exploring the energetic and spiritual kinship that develops by immersing oneself in that relationship. Find her online @mvikenexperimental

Alice Watson is a feminist, a mother of young children, and a priest. She is a new poet, and is inspired by nature and the wild, as well as her own spirituality. Her academic work focuses on pregnancy and childbirth, and rooting a sense of the divine within it. She has written recently for Earth and Altar and has upcoming work to be published by Dreich. She is on Twitter @alicelydiajoy

Amanda Williams is a freelance writer with a passion for writing through trauma and discussing mental illness. She has a degree in Creative Writing from Drake University (in the USA) and now lives in Berkshire. She has been previously published in Periphery Art & Literary Journal (<https://peripheryjournal.com/>), Rising Issue (risingissue.co.uk), Medium and BuzzFeed Community. Her passions in writing revolve around symbolic representation of complex emotions and stories. You can follow her on Instagram and Twitter @amandainengland

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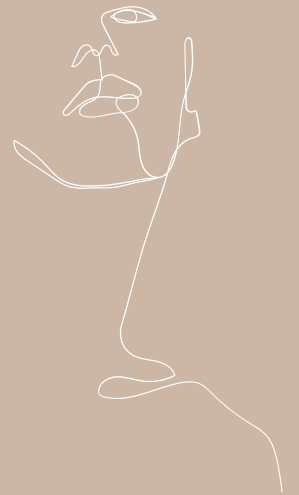
Ayshe-Mira Yashin is a lesbian artist and poetess from Istanbul, Turkey, and Nicosia, Cyprus, currently based in Cambridge, England, and planning on studying art in London in September. Her poetry and art focus on themes of sapphic intimacy, healing and spirituality, with large ties to the occult. She is currently working on her illustrated poetry zine, to be published by Zines and Things, and is also completing her 78-card Tarot deck. She independently runs the Illustration Witch Shop (www.ayshemira.com/the-illustration-witch-shop) where she sells handmade crafts and her major arcana Sapphic Enchantress tarot deck. Find her on Instagram @illustrationwitch

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