



don't be a bummer...





3moon Magazine

ISSUE 8

“Don’t Be A Bummer”

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A Letter From The Editors

Dear Reader,

Greetings and thank you so, so much for picking up 3 Moon Magazine's eighth issue, "Don't Be A Bummer."

In brainstorming this theme, our editorial staff was very adamant about bringing sexy fun back to summer after spending last year indoors. We were thinking about cut-offs, about popsicles melting sticky onto fingers, about running around in warm summer storms, about peach and eggplant emojis.

We know that our timing for this kind issue might be just a tad late, but we hope that this little message in a bottle will help you bask in the afterglow of the season for just a little longer.

Sincerely,

The Breakfast Club

Kit, Efren, Frankie, Alyssa, and Sarah



Irina Novikova

"Drawing began to interest me from an early age, the first subjects for me were Fantastic birds and animals. I do illustrations, invent various creatures and stories for them, draw nature and portraits. I like to do the whole line drawings, forming the composition first in my head. I am inspired by baroque music and black and white films. Recently, I have been leaning more and more towards symbolism."

Prose

The Influencer

by Susmita Ramani

On a warm, seasonable Bay Area day, Katie, Mauve, Jack, and John, all sixteen years old, were at their parents' country club for a game of tennis, males against females.

Mauve peered at her phone while kicking a foot and wedging one of her designer tennis shoes into a clod of dirt. "Katie, where the hell is EMMA? I haven't seen her all day. It's been over six hours. She's never out of touch for more than three."

Jack raked a hand through his short blond hair. "I also heard she's missing...you know...because everyone follows her for financial advice and stuff."

John did leg stretches. "She'll pop back up like a happy little golden toaster strudel, you'll see. She always does."

Katie shook her head. "Get a grip, you guys. You're so silly, like a bunch of sheep. EMMA's an influencer. She doesn't know you, or even *of* you. You don't know her. She owes you nothing in terms of entertainment or inspiration."

After another glance at her phone, Mauve dropped it at the edge of the tennis court. "I'll serve."

They volleyed for a while, then John hit a long-court shot on Mauve's side, but she couldn't make it in time.

"Fifteen, love," said Jack.

Mauve knelt to re-tie her shoe. "I'm really off my game. I keep waiting for my phone to ding with an update. Did I ever tell you guys that EMMA and I have the same birthday?"

Katie smiled slightly. "Cool beans." She paused. "Who has an all-caps name, anyway?"

"It's because she lives her life like a shout!" said Mauve. "That's why everyone in the world loves her so much. Kids, young people around the world, and plenty of middle-aged and older people, too. I don't know why you insist on being immune to her charms."

Katie shrugged, served, and they continued playing.

After the game, the four sat by the pool on chairs in the sun, sipping iced tea.

Mauve peered at her phone. "Still no sign of EMMA."

"Where does she live?" Katie raised her hands. "Oh god, I take that back. I don't care. I...don't want to know."

"We couldn't tell you if we wanted to," said Mauve. "No one knows where she lives. It's the biggest secret."

Katie tipped her head to one side.

Jack raised his eyebrows. “Yeah. It’s what everyone wonders, and no reporter has nailed it down yet. Plenty have tried. EMMA posts constant pictures and videos, gets spotted with local people at identifiable locations...and then, like a magic trick, poof!”

Katie laughed. “I’ll bet she lives in a trailer and some friend of hers parks it in a different spot every night.”

“Hmm.” John looked skyward at wispy clouds. “That’s an interesting theory.” He glanced down at the table. “Paper magazines are making a comeback around here. Isn’t that cute?”

“Wow,” said Katie. “Speak of the devil...this magazine has a piece on EMMA.” She felt compelled to flip it open. Appallingly, the tagline was: “*This reporter finds that EMMA has *je ne sais q’uoi* on steroids, and a fleet of accomplishments to rival the number of stars in the sky!*” Wincing, Katie continued reading:

“16-year-old EMMA is even more charming in person than her well-known, much-adored online persona. We’re simply in awe of her undeniable perfection. She’s posted photos of herself in 147 different countries, not to mention photos of herself scaling buildings, redwood trees, mountains, running in races, hiking, and biking. She sings and dances beautifully, paints, writes poetry, cooks, bakes, sews, knits...you name it. I asked her to show me how to do

an Irish step dance, and she did, and then she showed me how to make the most remarkable bouillabaisse and baklava. If you want proof of how smitten the whole world is with EMMA, look out any window and you'll likely notice a bunch of jagged haircuts, the direct result of last month's live feed where EMMA gave herself a jagged haircut."

Katie put down the magazine with a snort, though not before allowing her eyes a cursory once-over of the photos of EMMA herself, on horses, mountains, a hot air balloon, and so on. She had to admit she saw the allure. EMMA was slender, athletic, and looked vibrantly healthy, with skin like a glass of milk untroubled by ripples, rosy lips and cheeks, and honey-gold waves of hair.

Glancing over at Mauve, it re-hit Katie how jagged Mauve's hair was. Katie had noticed that the month before, but hadn't remarked on it so as not to risk making Mauve feel bad, guessing some aesthetician-droid had made a mistake. And why had she guessed this? Because it was the excuse her own mother had used to justify *her* jagged haircut! Now Katie realized that attention was likely what Mauve had wanted; perhaps she'd been disappointed that Katie hadn't mentioned it. Katie opened her mouth to say something about Mauve's hair -- she hadn't decided what -- when Mauve screamed shrilly.

“Look!” Mauve thrust her phone before them. “It’s a process called ‘greening,’ and it’s...beautiful.”

They gasped, part of the collective gasp of everyone at the club.

EMMA’s skin was now a vibrant, shimmering emerald green. Her hair was the same honey-gold color as before.

Katie wanted to say, “EMMA looks like the child of a human and a dino kale.” But she stayed silent...and weirdly, the longer she stared at EMMA, the more beautiful EMMA seemed to her.

EMMA was doing a live video, showing herself walking in a field of flowers, then a forest, winding her way through old-growth, ancient trees. She was so green, she practically blended in; yet she was beautiful.

She laughed into the camera, showing her still-white sparkling teeth. “You guys, I’ve been greened, and I’ve never felt better! It’s a DNA enhancement process. You can also change your hair color to whatever you want, though I’m keeping mine as is for now. Look for a Greening Box near you, and join me up here, breathing the rarefied air!”

Katie shook her head.

Mauve’s eyes shone. “Oh wow, you guys. This is the answer to race relations, don’t you see? The four of us have always been part of the privileged and entitled layer of America...yes, even you, John, though you’re part African-

American. But now everyone will look the same, and so beautiful.”

Katie squirmed. “I just...don’t know. We don’t really know what it is, and how it might change other--”

“Oh my god!” Jack pointed. “No way...there’s a Greening Box!”

In the center of the club’s immaculate central swath of grass was what looked like a dark green box, the shape of an old fashioned phone booth but without windows. Above it was a sign that read: GREENING BOX. FREE. Robots flitted around it, apparently operating its controls.

“No!” shouted Katie. “Don’t!” But she felt a tide of people churning around her, rising up, and heading like a wave to the Greening Box -- Mauve, John, and Jack among them. Katie didn’t feel ready yet, and it was all she could do not to be swept along with everyone else. She held tight to a table that was cemented into the ground.

Twenty minutes later, Mauve, John, and Jack were green, respectively with mauve, pale blue, and purple hair. When Katie got home, her parents and siblings had already been greened, too.

Soon, practically everyone in every part of the world had been greened. Every person in every country, regardless of religion or culture, was a matching, lush green.

Katie held out for a few days, but finally succumbed -- and it felt painless and good, actually. Then she finally gave in and started following EMMA's feed, along with everyone else; after all, EMMA had been right about greening, right?

One morning, EMMA's feed said:

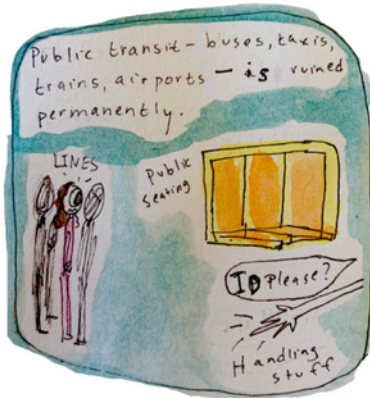
Continuing to lie makes us queasy. We have been deceiving you. We are a group of extraterrestrials from a planet over one hundred light years away. EMMA is a humanlike manifestation of our entire civilization. Typically, several of us simultaneously wear EMMA's body like a shell, and make her day-to-day decisions by committee. EMMA became an influencer because we believed that many of your planet's problems could be mitigated by making humans' skin color uniform. In addition, we invite some of you to venture into space with us, to alleviate your overpopulation.

Katie went to see Mauve, who at first was crying so hard that Katie couldn't understand what she was trying to say. Hugging her, Katie noticed that even Mauve's tears were green...and beautiful. "Can you say that again, Mauvie? I didn't catch that."

Mauve blew her nose. "I said, EMMA and I don't really share the same birthday."

Katie hugged Mauve. "Reality's what we make of it, girlfriend."

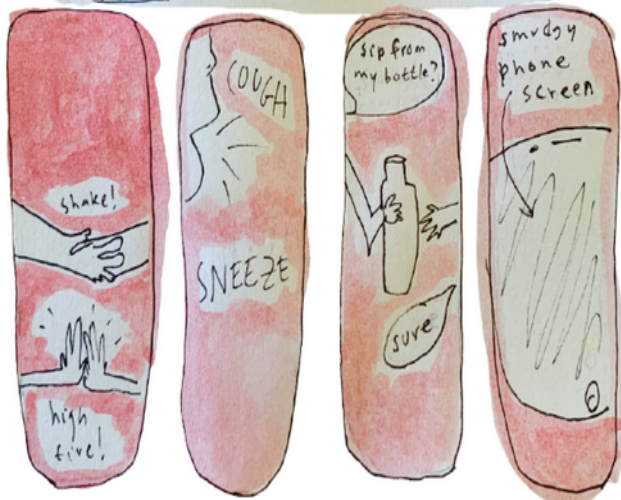
Susmita Ramani's work has appeared in Pure Slush, 365 Tomorrows, The Daily Drunk, Secret Attic, 100 Words, Six Sentences, 50 Word Stories, Vine Leaves Press, and other publications. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband, two daughters, and eleven pets.

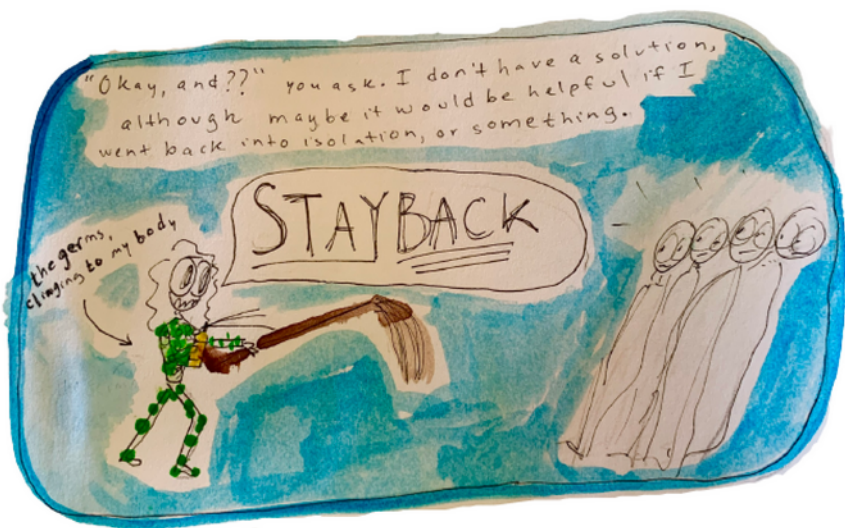


Gyms were gross before the pandemic, but these days, I can feel the individual germs.



And I'm not saying this to be superior, either. I know I'm disgusting, too.





Phoebe Ward is the cartoonist for her college paper, The Carletonian. She enjoys running, cross country, drawing, eating, watching Rick and Morty, and lying on the kitchen floor. To see more of her work, follow her on Instagram (@phoebecomix).

A Summer Storm at Stonewall Inn

by Emily Sierra

There is a thunder rolling down your spine.

You had felt it before you heard it, registered it, and then you savored it. You shift your body to feel every wave, lean into every crescendo, relax into the decrescendo. She is still looking at you, had been ever since you had wiggled past drunken strangers to the back of the bar. She is standing up on a table, side by side with her friends, looking down at you like a goddess, like an archetype, like she was always meant to be there doing just that: looking, observing, evaluating. And there you are at her feet, thankful, like a maiden looking up to stained glass fixtures, yearning for something that you have no name for.

In other words: she is so hot, and you are so small.

It's one of those humid thunderstorms one that woke the whole world up. One that no website could really alert you of, one that nature simply breathed life into. Summer rains— they are never predictable. You and your own friends order drinks, loudly laughing over the whole ordeal while you pretend not to be melting under her gaze. You'd all have to be here for a while; you'd have to find refuge for the rain somewhere anyway. What better place than this? Another

clap of thunder blooms throughout your whole body, like a spank from a ruler jolting you awake. She is still there; you already knew she is still there. She sees you, you think, really sees you. Your insides feel like fireworks, bursting with bright excitement only to settle down into a hushed, demure whisper. The boom settles between your inner thighs all the same.

With a parting, knowing glance, you leave your group behind. You don't need another LIT; you're already on something completely different.

Instead, you descend downstairs, to the dance floor, knowing and hoping that she will trail behind you. The rumbling of music leads the way for you, a wordless promise that electrifies every inch of your exposed skin. Like water, you slip into the crowd of dancers, melding easily with them as they naturally let you in. The heat of their bodies, the scent of booze and sweat, and something sweeter, something unnamable, all mesh together. It takes little time before you're no longer aware of whose hand is whose anymore, of whose hips are pressing against yours. There's a collective, excited gasp as more thunder cuts through the vocals of Lady Gaga. Your voice is swept away by all the others— a perfect harmony. You're a spectator and participant all rolled together— swept in with the masses, and yet it is as if you are above it all, observing and yearning.

In other words, you are completely overtaken by the music as strangers grind into you and urge you to grind into them.

Her hand is different than all the others. Her hands on your waist are intentional. They are electric, like lightning, like a warning sign. You turn to face her as more thunder shakes the speakers around you.

“Do you want to dance?”

How can you hear her so clearly? How is it that it feels like you’re all alone surrounded by so many people? Suddenly, you are a fish out of water, suspended in the fisherman’s net. If you wiggle enough, you can dive back in.

“Please, yes.”

She asked because she knew your answer already, could feel every atom of your skin itching to collide with hers. Her dark skin looks blue in the lights of the club, her wistful eyes almost illuminated like dying candles. The rouge of her lips comes off as purple in the haze of the room; you can only look at them as you draw your hips closer and closer, your hands working on their own— a fish not moving towards the water but towards the boat. You feel her thighs on yours, feel her fingers threading through the loops of your tight jeans. Her touch is a reward, her smile sweet as sugar.

“We’re going to be here a while.”

As she speaks, thunder shakes the walls of your skull more than any Jersey Club remix could. It's as if she commanded the air to produce it, to shake you, and you want to thank her for it.

"I want to be here a while. If it's with you— if you'll take me." The words slip from your lips without much thought.

You don't need to see the lightning splitting open the sky to know it is there.

"Take you?" she laughs; every cell in your body wants to make her laugh again. "Yeah, I'll take you, baby. I'll take you."

Thunder rolls down your spine, shifting every part of your body closer to her as she takes your bottom lip between her teeth. Her hand is on the back of her head, guiding you, as thunder settles between your legs. You don't need to see that the rogue of her lips is all over you, marking you, smearing into your skin. Like a child with paint, you want to drag your fingers over it to worsen the mess. Instead, you kiss her. And kiss her. And kiss her.

You feel every wave of her, lean into her crescendo, relax into her decrescendo. Over and over, lips to lips— you will be here for a while.

Emily Sierra is a queer, nonbinary writer that recently graduated with honors from New Jersey City University in 2020. Currently, they work as an English tutor and teaching assistant at NJCU, and you can find their work in Hype Magazine.

By Phoebe Ward

By Phoebe Ward

SO HEALTHY

ex. \rightarrow Save Your Tears
is just too
basic.

everyone will
think you are

you are so different!

everyone will think you are very cool and interesting.

A hand-drawn diagram of a shoe, possibly a boot, with a curved arrow indicating a motion. The background is red. The text "Honking & applause" is written in the upper left, and "BEEP BEEP" is written in the center.

"Never
chase a
bitch." ✨
- Future
Hendrix

Future
Hendrix

They will
fall in love
with you
immediately

To find
yourself,
think for
yourself :-
- Socrates
xx

- Socrates

A hand-drawn illustration of a smartphone screen. The screen shows a text message conversation. At the top, there's a status bar with "10:08". Below it, a message from "DAD" says "I love you". Then, a message from "ME" says "I LOVE YOU HAVE MY CHILDREN".

climate crisis ☒



“A Guide To Re-Entering Society”

Phoebe Ward is the cartoonist for her college paper, The Carletonian. She enjoys running, cross country, drawing, eating, watching Rick and Morty, and lying on the kitchen floor. To see more of her work, follow her on Instagram (@phoebecomix).

Pebble

by Joe Ray Woodhouse

I can't remember when I started haunting this beach pebble, the storm just woke me from a seemingly eternal slumber, washing against my pebbled face. I'm a rough holey pebble, the sort you wouldn't want to pick up and take home. I'm surrounded by smoother brethren, and I know they just hate it when they brush up against me as the tide comes in. And the tide is the only time I feel much of anything, for life as a pebble is as steady as a rock. I sit in my spot and wonder why in death I had to possess such a thing.

The highlight of each day is when a flock of seagulls come to play. They sit, sometimes peck at the sand, and I often spend time watching them twitch in their sleep, wondering what it is they dream about. To me I always imagine they dream of battered fish swimming through gravy, because I knew in life that's what they always desired from me. The most exciting moment I have with the seagulls is when one of them takes a good look at me, its beady eyes staring into my soul, and at these moments I pray the gull will snatch me up and take me away. I'd even settle for the bird to reach out its wing and touch my face, cause I'm slowly disappearing from the world as I know it. Instead they often just take a shit as they watch me, and I know one

day they're more likely to do that on me, like the time they let one drop on top of my pizza delivery box.

Otherwise, life as a pebble is pretty darn quiet. The sea can rage, but we all have bad days. New pieces of rubble can fall off the cliff from behind, but they never land on top of me, to feel and embrace other rough batches would be sweet, you've got to take anything you can possibly receive, that's what my mum used to say at wakes as she filled her plate with potato pasties. And whilst I'm complaining, I do try to make the most of my untimely demise, but being a ghost ain't half boring, no wonder they try their best in horror movies, because you only get to truly haunt once or twice.

A gloomy man stomped down the narrow path one rainy morning, his face shrouded by an untucked collar, billowing and slapping his features in the wind. I was half asleep, spirits get tired too, why else would you ever need to lift them if they didn't?, so I merely watched as he dragged a large sack with a sailing rope. Humans don't often visit this secluded old beach resort, the paths down are precarious, and the ground is covered in discarded plastics, another thing I like to do is try and match bottles with brands, how did Coca-Cola take over the sea as well as the land? But sometimes such men would come down to think as the waves brushed up against their feet, at least that's what I used to do.

The sack fell short of smothering me, it landed just inches from my rugged self, and I could easily see that the

material up close was polyethylene, double bin bagged. The contents of the sack appeared to be rather lumpy, and whatever was inside made for comfortable seating, as he sat down on top, shuffle free. He pulled out a cigarette from his pockets, lighting it first time, despite the heavy rainfall. I watched as he smoked it, completely unaware of how much company he really had.

I thought about levitating my pebbled possession to give him a good haunting, but the way he smoked looked too sad, the sort of smoking I used to do in that very same spot. So we both simply watched the stormy seas , waves brushing against our feet, to think how interesting such a sight was in good company, that was enough for me, just to be in close proximity. The waves were increasingly powerful, and they pushed me against the bin bag sack, my rugged body cutting the material, both bags.

I looked into the slit I had made, and saw someone staring right back at me. It wasn't like the beady seagull eyes, but a real human eye, cool grey. We looked at each other as if waiting to see who would blink first. The only one doing any of that was the man sat on top, who flicked his cigarette in with the rest of the deep sea pollution. He stood up, stretched, then took a good look at his double bin sack. As he looked down I saw his face for the first time, how ordinary, how sad. With a blink then a sigh, he kicked the body, it rolled with the waves, leaving behind the soul in the sand. She was attached to a smoother pebble than mine. I felt

horrid for thinking how much better my beach life would be as she smiled in the way my feathery friends couldn't. She was transparent in how sad she was, I could see right through her smile, just how I knew she could see through me.

'I was always a fan of the sea, anyway.'

Before I could reply the man had lifted me into the sky. He studied my craggy sides, his hands felt ticklish as he rubbed his thumb over my eroded corners, then he flicked me in with the body, as if he knew I was witness to his body bag. I moved through the sky with more grace than a pebble such as myself deserved. I tried to look back one final time, to see the place in which I used to lay, but I was spinning, the world was a blur, we've all been there. I skimmed five times before I sank, and for the second time, I wished I could swim.

Joe Ray Woodhouse is a writer of objects brought to life, in hopes of understanding himself and others. Joe regularly updates his blog at channelstatic.wordpress.com, and has recently written about his own personal struggles due to his disability for a SICK AF feature at clarrisaexplainsfa.com.



Irina Novikova

"Drawing began to interest me from an early age, the first subjects for me were Fantastic birds and animals. I do illustrations, invent various creatures and stories for them, draw nature and portraits. I like to do the whole line drawings, forming the composition first in my head. I am inspired by baroque music and black and white films. Recently, I have been leaning more and more towards symbolism. "

Poetry

give me cherries

by Lorelei Bacht

give me cherries give me lamb make it
a point of honour to break my back

roll me between your fingers like the sea
does the sand we have millions of years

in turn delineate contours and endeavour
to make them utterly irrelevant.

show me your blueprint straight and/or
convoluted lines coursing through

advance and retreat all at once we need
to test the limits of reality

melt us in a crucible we come out impure
an alloy of gold and pig iron

together we are the arc of blue between
the wolf and moon the pure electric jolt

Lorelei Bacht (she/they) is a person, a poet, queer, multi-, living in Asia. When she is not drawing sad little sketches, she writes – too much. Her work has appeared / is forthcoming in Visitant, The Wondrous Real, Quail Bell, Fahmidan, Abridged Magazine, Odd Magazine, Postscript, PROEM, SWWM, Strukturriss, The Inflectionist Review, Slouching, Beast Journal, Hecate, and others. She is also on Instagram: @lorelei.bacht.writer and on Twitter @bachtlorelei

The Earth is a Bottom

by King Llanza

A large water pipe==/==you placed inside me
broke. City,
I am fed by everything
that breaks in you.
Nobody notices my loss
under all this pavement.
My dormant, crystalline nourishment
wheeze and laugh brown
out of faucets, shower heads,
flush tanks and hoses.
The walls
are wet and warm
with the scent
of petrichor.
All the water mixed with dirt
has made me hollow.
I exclaim a hunger:

the city is in
for a surprise.
Any minute now, I
will show my gaping hole.
The concrete on top
will collapse, and I
will swallow cars
and lampposts and people.
It might take a few
days for the city
to cover me up. After all,
my relationship
with all things urban is purely transactional.

I open where too much water is taken
from me, or when failure happens by design.

The city thinks my hole needs
filling, and I concur.

King Llanza (he/they) is from the Philippines. His poems have appeared in bind, amberflora, Voice & Verse Poetry Magazine, SAND: Berlin's English Literary Journal, and Cordite Poetry Review, among others. He holds a MSc in Environmental Science and Ecosystem Management and is currently working on his first poetry collection.

2 Poems
by Charlotte Newbury

Golden Hour Yearning

come be sugar-syrup with me,
cloying, cloying, make my teeth ache
all post-date fuzz —

god, to press my thumbs to your hips
like I'm harvesting honeycomb,
your sweet honey slide —

when you tilt your head back and laugh
fuck it —
so much blossom you confuse the bees

Tuna Sandwich, Boba Tea. We Kiss

like a time-lapse candle burning — by which I mean
from hollowed centres. Give me the romance

of a picnic rug in the afternoon sun, a tupperware
of cut-crusts and the sweating plastic cup of tapioca tea

warming between my thighs. Give me the taste of salted
fish

and cucumber, lychee on your breath,

the cake batter of your perfume sweet enough
to warm us while the sky turns sea-blue to orange —

and at home the candle on the table sits waiting,
vanilla frosting scent, dual wick.

Charlotte Newbury is a poet from South East England with an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Exeter. She likes witchcraft, ecofeminism and spider plants. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in LandLocked, Perhappened, Rejection Letters and others. You can find her on twitter @charnewbpoet.

2 Poems
by Betsie Flynn

Breaking a dry spell

I've got a new dress that's dying
to try out your bedroom floor.
Being your new obsession, the one
you do laundry for, tastes like

a cherry cola idea. Like something
sweet and bitter at once, fizzing
on my tongue but staying sticky
for hours, dizzying my back teeth

until my sweet-tooth clenches
my jaw. I want to drown
the daydream that repeats
on and down from my bellybutton.

Your button-down might as well
have velcro for all the good
it'll do when you get your teeth
in my shoulder. Blood might not

be drizzling but bleeding mascara
is going to stain my pillowcase again.
My ticket's in my purse, I'm waiting
for the train in my blue cotton dress.

I'm on the floor before you blink

I shouldn't light up when you call me Beauty
like it's my name. I'm a feminist,
I am. Really. I want you
to see

the set of my jaw. To think I'm pushing
boundaries, not biting back suave,
half-lidded come-ons.
Not blushing

when your accent hits me. Grappling hooks
clinging, stomach taut. Your slow,
deliberate wink still uncoils
my intestines.

There's moss unfurling onto my thighs,
cloying and close. I'm uncomfortable
when you see me and though

I wish, I do wish,

you weren't looking at me, still something deep
in my heels bounces. My feet can't stay still
or flat on the floor with you
in the room.

I eat the air around you, tasting my favourite
cocktail: your sweat and charisma.
I've never even noticed
eyelashes before

but shit, licking yours sounds divine.
I don't need you though,
don't think that
I do.

Betsie Flynn is a Kentish transplant to the Brecon Beacons where she lives with her husband, children, and cats. Her words are forthcoming or appearing in a few places, including *The Odd Magazine*, *Ample Remains*, and *The Wondrous Real*. She has been known to tweet @betsieflynn

Summer Love & Moonflower Vines

by Pernoste

Summer brought her
seeking dreams in the city,
a striking stark beauty,
this black-haired girl
with violets in her eyes.
She was a sweet talker
of such beautiful lies,
in love with heartfelt poems
that talked about Angels
and living in loneliness.

Everything was good,
and everything was bad,
and she cried and laughed
and let herself fall in love,
walking softly among flowers
and so hard on my heart.
But she loved me, loved me,
and it all felt so right,
as she sang the moments
that composed my life.



Summer night, we breathed
scents of morning glories
bloomed on moonflower vines,
helping her to forget awhile
the day of poet's laments.
We knew the times to hide,
and to live, or regret and cry,
but also how to lose ourselves
in silent mists of reverie
and long dreamful kisses.

I held her in the dark,
hips slowly swaying,
soft feet in rough sand,
loving the silver moon,
its crescent of smiling eye.
Later I found that thin sliver of
bright, silver moon
in her waiting, watching eyes,
as she lay naked in my bed,
warm in her smooth skin.



Summer morning, so early,
to catch the window's sun,
she became to my eyes
a golden ship on quiet water,
at the edge of turbulent seas.
Her faraway gaze was unheeding
of a memory's tears, dripping
into her forgotten teacup.
For her the sun was only hot
through the bright window,
seeming so cold outside.

Her soft hands and warm lips
were the heart of my summer,
her poems breathing music
into wanting, waiting ears.

But no poetry I wrote
ever captured her at all,
as though difficult to cage her even
with pretty words.

I heard the echo of her absence,
long, long before she left.



google. migraine get rid of in summer

by lukas ray hall

i steady kiss the summer.

indulge in red wine & chocolate.

skin drips on concrete.

dehydration balances

the afternoon sun in the palm
of its hand & thumps my forehead

with the other.

where have you been

all my life?

we ask ourselves,

like a meadow asks for rain.

wash me like the meadow.

rinse away the insects & twigs
& dead grass & trash,

the heat, the fumes, the time
it takes to cleanse. so much time.

at the edge of the meadow,
the rain pools before it evaporates.

lukas ray hall is a queer non-binary poet. They are the author of 'loudest
when startled' (YesYes Books, 2020). Their poems have appeared in
The Florida Review, Moon City Review, Atlanta Review & Raleigh
Review, among others. They live in St. Paul, MN.

Meant to Be Spoken

by Aleah Dye

a Golden Shovel after Skin by Mac Miller

A poet is their pen, and
I only write in pencil because all
my lines are cheap—no fountain ink. But I
still want to do
whatever this is.
All I do is make
these
words try to fit, but it's fuckin'
difficult when all of Hozier's songs
already said everything in my head. So,
I sit in silence alone until finally,
he touches the small of my back, and I
feel electric instead of wrong. He made
me a woman of few words, a
woman of many sounds, fuckin'
to a Mac song.

Aleah Dye (she/her) primarily writes poetry, tending towards topics of morbidity, love, mental illness, social justice, and philosophy. She is dreadfully afraid of imperfection and spiders, in no particular order. She has a one-eyed cat named Ivy and a one-track-minded (food!) cat named Rosebud. Aleah hopes to make hearts grow three sizes with her words. She is a 2020 Sundress Publications Best of the Net nominee and the graphic designer for perhappened. Read her latest work via Pen and Anvil Press, Feline Utopia Anthology, and Southchild Lit. Follow her @bearsbeetspoet on Twitter.

Mother Divine

by Barbara Hughes

Our Mother is abused with
reckless abandon
suffering daily assaults

Our beautiful Mother
exploited with her bones laid bare
scar tissue contaminated

Our Mother plans her days
Keeping in tune with the
rising and setting sun

Our Mother has always been symbolic in a literal sense
our physical bodies that are made up of her
elements, earth, air, and sea

Our Mother looks to the darkness of the moon
to anchor and guide her through
natural cycles in tune to her femininity

Our living breathing Mother is
reduced to a faceless abstract being
ripe for the taking — robbing her of dignity and
supreme power crushing us

Our Mother is ravished by evolution
by careless and heartless pillagers
there is no pity for their plundered souls

Our Mother is fading in the elongating shadows
She is reminding us of the inevitable
failures of the human heart

Our mother is broken she stands
at the precipice contemplating a fabled
redemption and fears the inferno awaiting her.

Our Mother is sickened, she spews
lava and ash to cleanse her rage
her seas recoil brutally drowning us

Our Mother has become a filthy
silhouette of what she was

For I am Mother Earth, and I am dirty and desecrated

Fuck Climate Change Deniers.

Barbara Hughes is currently studying english and creative writing as an undergraduate at Rollins College in Orlando where her poetry has been published in campus magazines, Brushing and The Independent.

She also won the American Academy of Poet's prize for National Poetry Month. In her spare time she likes to drink coffee, hike, and look at the moon.

*2 Poems
by Clem Flowers*

This Dead Person is Very Alive

Temporary blindness
In the gentrified lilac hills
& though the scummy haze
Of factory town dawn
Hangs like dust
On a hand me down gingham quilt
We still drunk the starlight
Like debauched heathens
On a two day pass
& we collapsed
among sugared bumpgrass
Throwing shadowed arcs
Up along the abandoned model homes
While the hymn of the synthetic hydrangeas
Douse every inch of our skin
& the crickets remind us that
Beauty

Can come from the belly
of bedlam
& I slip a bouquet of volcanic pearls
Out between us
& you give me a hug so strong
I feel our bodies melt into one
Like two swigs of half and half
Coalescing
In your coffee
(Just the way you like it)
And it's roman candles and
Pop rocks and pure gold and
Glazed donuts and maraschino cherries
and birdsong and confetti and streamers
and champagne and perfect
Every sunrise to sunset
With you

An Occasion of Sin

Lake waves lapping at our feet
Shadow walking
Beneath the salted heat
Cresting off the moss- cooked waters
As we sit huddled together
Sharing cigarettes & stolen wine
Watermelon- homemade- stick to your tongue & teeth sickly
sweet

He leans over & I breathe him in

Menthol-- patchouli-- musk
Laying back, knees trembling, excited panic in the throes of
lust

Lips on mine & it is explosions & fire & heat & raw bloody
fuck knots

Music is the katydids and cicadas intertwined with our
tongues tangled

Like the kudzu vines

Tightening their death grip on the shore

Gentle & kind as I lose my mind

Lean back slowly, panting, as I feel his hand trace along the
waist of my jeans

And every Sunday service

Promising eternity by a

Broiling lake of fire

& damnation

All drowned out

By the song of fireflies

Swelling along the grove

Of pepper trees

Clem Flowers (They/ Them) is a soft spoken southern transplant living in
spitting distance of some mountains in Utah. They enjoy cooking,
watching old films, and frequently visiting a local bird sanctuary. Nb &
bi, they live in a cozy apartment with their wonderful wife & sweet
calico kitty. They can be found on Twitter at @hand_springs777

Escape from Lockdown

by Ceinwen E Cariad Haydon

Indoors, locked-in with him.
She sniffs her walking socks –
just wearable. Relieved,
she pulls them on
over bruised soles.
Her legs extend, feet
tread a steady rhythm.
Each footfall stings
blistered relief,
gains height,
Sweated out, seated
breathless on a grassy peak,
she surveys the valley.
Its tumbling capillaries
of mountain streams,
steady her. She forgets
the toil of her morning climb.

As her heartbeat revives,
her phone pings, I'll make supper.
Perhaps their deep-veined love
will survive. At least
until tomorrow.

Ceinwen lives near Newcastle upon Tyne, UK and writes short stories and poetry. She is widely published in online magazines and in print anthologies. Her first chapbook was published in July 2019. She is a Pushcart Prize (2019 & 2020) and Forward Prize (2019) nominee and holds an MA in Creative Writing from Newcastle University, UK (2017).
She believes everyone's voice counts.

Welcome silence

by Morgan Boyer

After Nancy Krygowski's "Welcome disappointment"

Welcome concrete pool floors on display in the heat of early
July,
empty chairs around vinyl-clothed tables and ghost-ridden
trains.

Welcome silence, your fierce glares at strangers across the
Giant Eagle
parking lot like it's the set to a Jennifer Lawrence remix of a
Western.

Each of you reaching for a pocket-sized vanilla bean-scented
hand-sanitizer
in your faux-leather off-brand purses filled with forgotten
receipts.

Welcome silence, you greet the groom into eternal
matrimony
by stomping on his lifespan like a mouse being trampled by
an elephant

carrying the bride covered in henna for a wedding bound to
be followed

by quiet, dusty streets where sound once boomed and feet
bustled.

Morgan Boyer is the author of *The Serotonin Cradle* (Finishing Line Press, 2018) and a graduate of Carlow University. Boyer has been featured in Kallisto Gaia Press, Thirty West Publishing House, Oyez Review, Pennsylvania English, and Voices from the Attic. Boyer is a neurodivergent bisexual woman who resides in Pittsburgh, PA.

Hot Girl Summer

by Rachel Small

Today I am dipping fingers
in neon pink and orchid blush

trying to renew joints, pulling
the screen back to rediscover.

Everyone keeps talking about
their first moments of being

alive. Raw, unseen. They scroll
back to capture the flip. The

day tomorrow will be hot. I
plan for it, a slice of birthday

cake to be devoured before
nine. Bubble-gum pop playing

from the plastic radio. I can
already feel burnt pink skin

blistering from first June sun,
a bit of lawn crisping under

naked toes. I'll spend thirty
dollars on a reusable cup that

I'll forget by the water, blinded
by the pink of my hands. Of skin.

Of all the places the sun touches,
trying to fast forward ahead to

the next season, for the next body.

Rachel Small is a writer based outside of Ottawa and is exactly one half of Splintered Disorder Press. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in magazines including Anti-Heroine Chic, the winnow magazine, Ample Remains, and Northern Otter Press. You can find her on Twitter @rahel_taller.

Bartender

by Alicia Cara

Told my friends
I was going to the bathroom
But I only lingered in the off-shoot corridor
Waiting on you to turn the corner

Forgive me if I'm a little bit forward
But I've been chewing my lip all night long
Praying you would notice
And follow my lead

I'm not saying
I want everything at once
We can always break it off
With the promise of later

And when I tell my friends
I'll see them later
I'll tell the driver to turn the corner
Meet you out front

Asking '...your place or mine...'
As if this is something I do all the time

Alicia Cara is a Scottish writer and artist whose work centres around desire and conflict. Her writing can be seen in The Unpublishable Zine, Eye Flash Poetry's Break Pamphlet, The Daily Drunk Mag, Orange Blush Zine, and Green Ink Poetry. Find her on twitter: [@aliciacaracreat](https://twitter.com/aliciacaracreat) or at aliciacaracreat.com.



Irina Novikova

“Drawing began to interest me from an early age, the first subjects for me were Fantastic birds and animals. I do illustrations, invent various creatures and stories for them, draw nature and portraits. I like to do the whole line drawings, forming the composition first in my head. I am inspired by baroque music and black and white films. Recently, I have been leaning more and more towards symbolism. “

Love Me In The Small Hours

by Imogen Smiley

My body is thrumming with static electricity,
Passed from bodies bouncing under the strobing lights.
Ears are ringing, my hair is tangled
And I look forward to meeting the embrace of the
morning.

The doors swing open and I stagger outside,
Swaying to the beat of our song in my head;
Teetering on my heels and leading a charge toward the
takeaway
With the broken, flickering 'Open' sign.

I order a pool of greasy food and douse it with salt and
ketchup,
Tip my server with a handful of coins thrust from my
bra,
And make sure they put your nuggets in the bag.

Because you'll be roused by hunger after your trip to
the pub

Hazy drunken minds remember favourite foods,
Leaving our hungover selves love notes in nuggets that
taste like polystyrene.

You've tried to wait up for me;
But you'll wake up on the sofa as I fall through the
door.

We come together on the sofa,
One of us sitting on the remote;
Watching infomercials in Spanish,
Scoffing sweet chips and greasy nuggets.

We're laughing in the artificial glow of our TV screen,
Until you fall asleep in a weighted drunken haze.
I trip over my heels again and cover you with a blanket,
We'll complain about sticky fingers in the morning.

You are my 4am thoughts.

Imogen. L. Smiley (she/her) is a twenty-three-year-old writer from Essex, UK. She has anxiety, depression and an endless love of dogs, especially big ones!

You can support her by following her on Twitter and Instagram at @Imogen_L_Smiley.

Three Dots . . .

by Ranjith Sivaraman

Three dots were left wounded
awaiting the 'inevitable sound of death'.

Till recently these three dots were our lifeblood
Now see, the poor dots are bleeding to death.

The dot in the middle, melted two souls into one
and we were more than happy to be dots.

I remember the days we fought for these three dots
'where are my three dots', 'I need more three dots'

But Darling, now these three dots are left wounded
awaiting the 'inevitable sound of death'.

I know the first dot is me, my ego
and the third one is you, your ego
and of course the second one is 'Love'
and they say 'God is Love'.

.

Bio: Ranjith Sivaraman is an upcoming Poet from Kerala, a beautiful state in India. His poems merge nature imagery, human emotions, and human psychology into a gorgeous tapestry. Sivaraman's English Poems are published in International Literature Magazines and Journals from various locations like Budapest, London, New York, Indiana, Lisbon, Colorado, California, New Jersey, etc.

<https://ranjithsivaraman.com/selected-work/>

The Backyard

by Kalisse L. Van Dellen

I watch him turn soil.
His hands are relief paintings
of dirt and deprivation
on the wooden handle.
I'm drinking tequila.
The sunshine is lime.
His skin is salt.

I watch smoke prow
through the grass, crawl
up his legs. It weaves itself
into his hair. Later, when I tug
his head down, I will smell
charred sin and wood.

“Life tastes better here.”
The billboard is right.

Kalisse L. Van Dellen writes about where she's been and what she's lost. She is a graduate of Belhaven University in Jackson, MS, currently residing as a Canadian expatriate in Greenville, SC. Her work has been featured in *The Brogue*, *The DuBois Review*, and *Mississippi's Best Emerging Poets*.

2 Poems
by Robert Beveridge

Beach

The sand, abrasive,
shifts under your back
as I brush your throat
with my lips.

This would be more
comfortable in the water,
you say. But then
we'd be a cliché, I
respond, even though
we both knew we'd
abandon the towel
and get ourselves
salty, wet.

The sun behind us
is almost down,
only glimmers of light
from the masts
letting us know
the sailboats are still there

You finish the last beer
up on one elbow now.
A whispered breeze
strokes your hair
shivers your bikini-clad body.

Soon, dinner, blackjack,
a bad lounge singer maybe

but content for now
to walk into the tide,
to wrap ourselves together again,
to watch the last pink fade
from the horizon

Edgewater Park

sounds arch from your lips
like rain on paving stones.
Here on this blanket, the puppy
circles us, a yappy satellite,
a guard. A bottle
of merlot between your thighs,
the maple above us. Wind
makes waves on rock, ripples
your hair against my neck,
smells of lavender and soap.
You shift, your freckles
dance against the light, slide
farther away from your sweater.
My watch at the bottom
of Lake Erie. Yours in the car.
Another glass of wine, two pairs
of eyes, lazy, on the setting sun.

Robert Beveridge (he/him) makes noise (xterminal.bandcamp.com) and writes poetry in Akron, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in *Throats to the Sky*, *FEED*, and *Sublunary Review*, among others.

Glowsticks

by Olivia McCann

You bring a handful of glowsticks
to bed with us
and place them over my body
each one lighting up a different part of me.
The spongy ridges of my chest,
the goosebumps rising tiny over my arms,
the smooth hill and crevice of my belly
and you find my lightning buttons—
your lips aflame with burnt whiskey.

I feel you doing a deep work
and I think I'll bring you poppies tomorrow.

You break open one single glowstick after kissing me
and sprinkle the glowstuff over my skin which melts
neon and slimy
and then you turn away,
looking like a hunk of driftwood nestled on the beach.

Tomorrow I'll bring you poppies and a case of beer
and maybe a hat if I find a good cowboy in town to sell
me one.

Olivia McCann is an artist, poet, freelance videographer, and Depop seller based out of Denver, Colorado. Olivia often includes themes of love, solitude, heartbreak, and healing in her work and sometimes adds a little grunge and grime to her poetry. She has submitted and had work accepted into The Fat Zine, Coffee People, Drip Zine, Osier Root Zine, and P Magazine. She enjoys experimenting with language and collaging together poems out of singular random words.

axilla unnumbered

by Richard Leise

my favorite t-shirt is was black

and across the front there are three rocks

and upon each rock there is a face

and upon each face there is an expression

and across each expression there is an approximation – of ecstasy

—eyes

vacant—

and glassy

and See how beads of sweat burst from foreheads smooth

and round

and Read above the rocks in

a Gill Sans Ultra Bold The Rolling Stones. It

has in the one armpit a tear_a hole (!)_because

last night you wouldn't take my "No."

Richard recently accepted The Perry Morgan Fellowship in Creative Writing and the David Scott Sutelan Memorial Scholarship from Old Dominion University. While completing a MFA, he has a novel out on submission, and is finishing a collection of short stories. His work may be found in numerous publications, and was recently awarded Pushcart Prize and Best Small Fictions nominations.

Release

by Diana Fedorak

He steals bites of me
Shivering after his blanket of warmth
It always ends this way
His departure
My tears
His return
My screams

The whiff of his pine iron scent
I let him steal me again
Like a temporary salve
Goose down whispers against my skin
And I take the plunge again

This end is real
I'm better for it
Yet the emptiness disembowels me
Like piercing shards of glass

When I close my eyes
I inhale his briny musk on my sheets
But I can't move
And numbness is setting in

The rain patters on the windowsill
Washing my tears away
The memories of us linger
And the pain recedes

I know more now
He taught me that
I'm better for knowing him
And leaving him for good.

Diana Fedorak is a fiction writer from Las Vegas, Nevada. Born in Saigon, South Vietnam, she grew up in an aviation family who frequently traveled overseas. She enjoys the ocean, dogs, samurai warriors, and Thai pineapple fried rice. She is also a host of the Sin City Writers' Group, and member of the Henderson Writers' Group. Her hopes can be found at: <https://www.dianafedorak.com>.

2 Poems
by Niki Brennan

that summer hex is

coming| oh| yes| that thing no one knows how to hold|
vibrating inside| the tuning fork struck against a hard
edge| filling nostrils with almond evenings| hatches in seeds
on arms that become a| diaspora| of honeybees|
tumbling forever| tuning up the hive| landing on sticky fingers
gripping| passion| fruit| ice lollies| it's in you| that thing| oh|
yes| it's in the shape of your mouth| when you suck|
peach stones into troll dolls| giving them a throat| filling it with
gasps| it's in your feet| excavating Venice in the sand|
on both sides of me| your hands| conducting| catching notes|
then smearing them| in pastel colours across the sky|
I like the way we keep it between us| the licks|
of our bodies| trapping what we can| letting the rest
go| that's how you know| it's not in what you have|
but in what you can let go| the sea makes a wish and chases it|
I hear it behind me| and between my ribs| that's how you know|
I feel it when I look up at you and| your thighs| cut off the thought|
that summer hex| you sigh| I hope no one can hear|
yeah
that's how you know|

sheets

how we find

where

ends

meet:

wrapped in sheets

and

around fingers,

linen

touches

linger

with

those lips-

lost the sun

(or is it now the moon?)

your legs are now
the bracket

I wrap around

the day

making

this bed:

a crucifix

the crux laid bare

on climax's cusp

oh

how quickly

morning

comes

again.

Niki Brennan is a writer and poet from Glasgow, Scotland. He has publications in Fahmidan Journal, Sledgehammer Lit and the Kalopsia Literary Journal. He has an Mlit in Creative Writing from the University of Strathclyde and you can find him on twitter at @NikiBrenn

Valentine

by Cheryl Aguirre

The sweat is licked from my shoulders.

Do my freckles come off on your tongue?

Is your mouth stained?

(How do they taste, V?)

Kiss like raindrops

Dapple the skin.

Let my touch move, snowflakes

Across the breadth of your lips

The piney woods of your eyelashes

(Sweet velvet thick)

I want to drink deeply.

Every inch of you poised

I am rapt with anticipation

Nestled, caressed,

I want to lay laurels at your feet
(I love every inch of you)
Build a shrine to your power.

Cheryl Aguirre is a queer biracial poet based in Austin, Texas. You can find their previously published work in Ghost City Press, decomp journal, South Broadway Press, Pine Hills Review, and The Whorticulturalist. You can follow them at @drowsy_orchid on Instagram and @Wheat_Mistress on Twitter.



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