

ISSUE 01 // JUNE 2021

warning lines

NEBULOUS



ISSN: 2004-1063



warning lines magazine
issue 01, june 2021

ISSN: 2004-1063

Copyright 2021 warning lines magazine.
All rights reserved.

warning lines magazine holds first serial rights for previously unpublished work, non-exclusive reprint rights for previously published work, and non-exclusive archival rights for all the pieces accepted for publication. warning lines mag must be credited as the first publisher (for works to which that applies) if any work featured is reprinted elsewhere. All rights revert to the authors upon publication.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or resold without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

warninglines.com
twitter: @warninglines

Cover art and editing by Charlie D'Aniello (twitter: @beelzebagger)

Table of Contents

Editor's note // Charlie D'Aniello	2
FLOOD // Ellen Huang	3
Cloud watching // Francesca Duke	5
Here // Taiwo Hassan	6
has soil ever been the metaphor for // Taiwo Hassan	6
Our Sister Systems // Ellen Huang	7
Make Me a Saint // Erin McKay	9
Body & Soul // Francesca Duke	10
Of Aftertaste and Broken Records // Joshua Effiong	11
Split Attraction // Ellen Huang	12
Barbie Shows Her Workings in the Margin: But Still Scores Zero // Camille Lewis	13
Suburban ADHD // Matt Schultz	14
The Contortionist // Byron López Ellington	15
Strangeaversary // Gabrielle Roessler	15
The Atom Cloud // Lorelei Bacht	16
A Body At War // Precious Uwen	17
A Constellation of Pushpins // Lorelei Bacht	18
The Picture On The Shelf // Shaurya Arya-Kanojia	19
How Stars Are Born // Dimasilaw	22
The Cripple Buggy // Su Zi	23
pedal, i drown in the heat / my sapphires drown in my sweat // Kyrah Gomes	25
a man on fire running very quickly through [a house] // Aspen Marshall	26
Movie Night // Camille Lewis	27
july // Elizabeth Sallow	28

railway tragicomedy // Dimasilaw	29
god's rainbows // Dimasilaw	30
02/03/2021 // Phrieda Bogere	31
Portrait of mornings before a day is ruined // Lilia Marie Ellis	32
Portraits of surviving // Lilia Marie Ellis	32
what to expect when you are expecting nothing // courtney marie	33
a raindrop reflects on a burning plain // courtney marie	35
The Ghost of Gay Children // Sage Agee	36
The Drop of Water // Taylor Brunson	37
SPACE FRAME #2 // Taylor Brunson	38
Poster Side // Clem Flowers	39
THE HAZE OF TIME // Olivia Onyekwena	40
SHE TOLD ME SHE DIDN'T WANT ME // Rachael Crosbie	41
The Good Winter // Whitney Hansen	42
The half lives of past lives mirror what we watched as children // Whitney Hansen	42
My Chest is a Ghost Town // Whitney Hansen	43
Contributors	44

Editor's note

*"I did not err; there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove."*

-John Milton

warning lines mag was born from a need for space— for a place in which traditionally marginalized voices could be uplifted and valued. The world that we live in— no matter how much progress we may see— is still one that stigmatizes certain forms of existence, and which is based on colonialism, on racism, on capitalism, on queer and transphobia, on ableism. Yet, those of us who warn against that pervasive norm, even with just the act of being, remain standing.

This is precisely what *warning lines mag* is meant to do: to highlight the presence, the beauty, the feelings, and the words of those of us society tries (and fails) to push down— to have these pieces be mirrors upon which we reflect our truth. This endeavor would never be possible without all the astoundingly talented, hardworking, creative contributors who have given us the opportunity to publish their work. It is to them that *warning lines* owes its existence, and to whom I offer my infinite gratitude.

Issue one's theme is "Nebulous" — a theme I decided to leave purposely vague and, uh, nebulous. All in all, our inaugural issue contains 39 pieces from 26 different authors— all of which have left me in awe. Norm-breaking, colorful poetry, emotive prose, lines filled with imagery and feeling — these pieces will hopefully take your breath away, just as they did mine. Now, into the clouds you go, and in the best of company.

Yours always,

Charlie D'Aniello Trigueros (he/they)
Founder & Editor-in-Chief

FLOOD

By Ellen Huang

consider the oceans reclaiming the land

consider the wretchedness of man
consider the animals 2 by 2

male & female, destruction,

black-streaked skies

once blue.

consider yourself righteous

and seen in the world

consider six days,

forty days,

the hunger

that hurled.

when I consider the Flood, a folklore begins

a world that rages in pain where there is sin

when I consider the ark, a light in the dark

survival of good despite all that's torn apart

I consider the tale where coupled animals are called

to make love while storm-tossed, in a rollicking squall

where beastly love is as in the garden, though surrounded by fear

where refugee families cling tight

in this lonely room, for forty nights

the only life on earth here.

how strange it is, then, the onslaught of acetic words

that claim humanity relies on keeping tiny boxes of boy-meets-girl

clipped up and hedged in, into nuclear families we hide

as if the world continues to in only small spaces reside

because the world jump-started with complementary design

folks cling tight to roots without seeing growth over time.

you've stolen the rainbow, they rage and they shout

the covenant for everyone! you're making us doubt!

as if the colors aren't painted in untouchable skies
as if a spiritual vision were some material prize
as if the promise that creation shall continue all the more
& the pleasure of multiplying as an option to explore
and the miracle in the skies painted with rain, vapor and sun
were not an open door to a whole new world for everyone
as if the peace and diversity we are now free to make
would rob stories from the sky
and make the earth ache.

I consider the animals, the chosen beginnings, and their love

consider that I might be drowned then if I didn't have someone

that my bloodline grows cold, so there'd be nothing to save

in a world going under the righteous dark waves.

But their context is not mine, their ancestry and roots

are but one specific color in a spectrum of divine truth

I see
tale of tempest
of wrath & of rage.
I feel a witness of cultivating
tiniest of life in that age. I find a heart
of salvaging what we can, & from refuge.

become anew.

I know a heritage

of promise—I exist,

cuz God's will is

steadfast still: that

New colors come

from mixing two

Originally published in *Aze Journal*.

Cloud watching
By Francesca Duke

We were lying in the garden, my brother and I,
one summer's afternoon – our faces,
all eager freckles, upturned
to the clouds in all their blobbish shapes
roughly sketched on a pastel canvas.

“See, that one's a cat!” and I pointed
towards its wobbly outline:
the flyaway fluff that resembled a tail,
and the two random spots where blue peeped through -
a pair of watchful eyes.

A warming rustle of the wise old wind
swept the cat-cloud into change:
a metamorphosis into a heart,
a tiny part of a transient world
that made me feel so solid,
an eight-year-old lying still,
watching the sky shape-shift above her.

Of course, that's an illusion -
for now I understand
that it is we on Earth who move,
from north to south, joy to despair,
fresh-faced youth to frail old age,
and that, however far we stray,
the cloud-filled sky will still be there.

Taiwo Hassan

Here

in this poem, i'm a vessel adorned with a strange shade of blue. touch this skin, wring all that's left of these unburnt memories and watch me morph into words. i want to write about butterflies, how they form a knot in this belly when i hear him call me by his name. how my words melt into an irony of my thoughts & once again, we wade in rivers of hushed tones and careful conversations. on days like these, his presence perches on my lips and i taste nothing but hope and darkness. & paper. once again, i'm a feather in the hands of a stray wind, carrying promises in my heart, that one day, nestled in his arms will be a new dance, a fire that'll burn bright and not be another colour in the walls of a closet. that some day, i will see him in the whiff of a stranger and my nose won't latch on to every smell. every phone call won't be diluted with silent fears in heavy sighs & i won't be a house on fire. here, scents are not scents they're a reminder of dying dreams, of fingers that'll never get to sing an ode to love. dark corners/stolen kisses/brief hugs. boss/buddy/bestie. here, that's how i give him flowers, how we soar on moonless nights & fly with high hopes our wings will be doused in the colour of the skies .

Taiwo Hassan

has soil ever been the metaphor for

your hands?
yesterday, i held a blown blunt between my fingers &
i watched a flower bloom, its petals shedding tears of freedom and questions. there's
something about carrying that feels loaded yet wearing the weight of dust that makes you a bat.
i wonder what scales tip when it's caught in between those fleshy gates & what breaks when a puff
is finally begotten.
mâami, there's a mirror in this picture, slowly birthing reflections through those scattered scars on
your face, those dry tracks that do nothing but leave me in chains.
i taste this fruit and my lungs become a house, with walls that balance answers as their echoes - i
want to be covered by the colours of the wind too.

Our Sister Systems

by *Ellen Huang*

My sister's system
is the blip of thank-god-for
pacemaker heart
layers of surgery, successful
spoons for meds, silver and color
experience of crackling old age
stirred and trapped in a young body
wrapped up in cellophane of invisibility.
Her heart ticks and beats
ticks and tocks, ticks and
talks on, authentically.

My system is
nebulous, not quite witchcraft
but not quite a science yet. My system
is numbness under sitting on my own feet
silver-white hairs gifted from anxiety,
plucked with innocent pleasure,
a painting of pigmented scars
and neurons of the past snapping
speed-of-light to flash me back to
what it's like to be young and helpless
in the elder child's body.
Yet the chemical reaction you speak of
that makes life all worth it
does not course through me.

Her system is a tangled yarn ball
of haywire dysfunction. My online dictionary
doesn't yet recognize, squiggling red lines under
dysautonomia, *autoimmune disease*
among others. Her system is fever,
fog, constellation and zigzagging lines
to the doctor appointments
experimental, cautious living.
Diets and pills like a prodigy witch's cabinet
dressing her body's health in the dark
like an expanding inner wardrobe.
Her tiny body stretches and wins and loses
sometimes a bite means transformation
belly like balloon
the preview of pregnancy
in a virgin.

My system is the situational cloud of
dampness of thoughts that do not deserve
to be called the brilliance of blue. My system
is a head recovering its neurons and trying
store-bought dopamine. My system otherwise is a satisfied lack.
Lack. Lack. My Google searches warrant the question
do you mean a sexual? But with fullness outside,
why would I want another in me? My style is
childlike until called childish
long black hair dying at the ends, trimmed
washed soft like silk
wild with sweat and tossed like joy
caressed by my own fingers as a child.
My system is genuinely wondering
if I would want another
to touch me in this way.

My sister can dance
despite everything
in a body born destined to be
confused how to fight for her.
She is artistry in invisibility
Light pink heart sticking to life like mochi
in a dark cosmos with pacemaking satellite
sent on a mission to keep her.
In between days of pain and panic,
my sister finds amazement,
choreographs her own map,
spoonful of sugar after medicinal drug
fashioning love in the world
lace by lace by scissors by lace.

I can feel this world
despite everything
in a body immune to the electricity
between everyone else.
I am poetry in motion,
in between types.
A silver spork savoring supper
despite whatever slips through.
I taste in the light
and don't miss a thing.

Originally published in *Rogue Agent*.

Make Me a Saint

By Erin McKay

What feeling is this?
It pools in my bones like ichor
and I feel it in my ribs, pushing them
outward like wings unfurling.
My body a temple to confusion;
I think I could lick the divinity
off the pads of my fingers,
if only I could understand why
my palms are overflowing with it.

Yes, I look in the mirror and I envision:
Taller, sharper jaw; it's a desperate plea.
But why? Heaven above
open your gates, and answer me.
Why did you make me this terrible thing;
half god, half girl -

No, not half girl. That's it, isn't it?
Not girl at all, half something,
something I now know, on my knees, praying
to my hands that build this body as it walks.

If there is a holiness in taking yourself
back from a God who never knew you at all,
Make me a saint.

Body & Soul

By Francesca Duke

When I fall in love,
it will not be with a man -
strong steel flesh pulled tight
over carefully sculpted muscles,
wire tufts on chest and chin,
and a voice that holds me fast
in the grip of its pulsing bass.

Nor shall it be with a woman -
vanilla-scented, silken curves,
all billowing lace and softness;
a pair of velvet cushion lips
into which I simply melt.

Instead I could give myself completely
to the feet that point towards adventure,
to the mind that whirs as frantically as mine,
to the smile that spreads across a face
like butter on a crumpet,
to the heart that beats a little faster
when its sparkling eyes see me draw near.

I shall not love an idea, a trope,
a fantasy
but rather the hand
that feels right in mine.

Originally published in *The Blueprint*

Of Aftertaste and Broken Records

by Joshua Effiong

it rains snowflakes here. the impatient
wind romanticizes with my sexuality &

i watch me become fluid. in this universe,
i swim in the atmosphere of nonconformity.

come, cut open the flesh of this house & view
how lilies spring from my sternum. on most

days, i become a pack of weightless things. &
gravity becomes a tasteless gospel. this impatient

wind elevates my soul into a haven of ecstasy.
i crave your presence as receipt for days when

you would melt into another's shadow & request
of me forgiveness. you see, i water the roses sitting

beside my window daily, awaiting your coming. soon
my heart would readjust to your ephemeral presence.

here, i stitch these memories into my skin. of rapture
through orgasmic gratification. when we were high up

in this blue ocean hanging over our heads. praying.
wishing that those snowflakes could freeze time.

Split Attraction *by Ellen Huang*

I cannot fathom where in the sea of spirits and cells one ends and one begins. /
When the alien, the prophecy, the mermaid / loses its tail and in transformative
flash / and becomes what we call / human.

Another thing is love. / Is love already in the heart, before we could love ourselves? /
Is love an implant into our clay and dirt, or original light? / Is love tied to our mind,
or the foil to our brain matter? / Is the dark starry night of love that calls us / tied to
our ends, where life begins? / Is separating love from our inside out / our work to
do?

But for some, there is not even an inside-out / to twist or break / merely an
awakening into the love / we already wear on our sleeves. The glow of all the
seasons of the world / working in our winging arms, our delicate fingers / our body
types of hearts or diamonds or spades. Our grounded weights, sitting beside you in
the shade on the edge of the bed / without so much as a crossover of beings. Our
lifting feet, / fleeting across the dance of time / running to embrace every friend like
the end of the world. Touch, / and static, and butterflies, the flow of souls without
fluid exchange.

What sword splits / the private from the extension of self, the affection from the
intimate, the blush from the rush? What words cut / the overflowing domestic
dreams / from the platonic youthful fantasies? What light pries apart the held hands
/ to the held bodies, the magnetism of minds / to this apparent gravity of wandering
creatures? I hardly know where one ends and one begins, but why does it matter?
Our hearts beat the same, listen carefully, and that is compassion/satisfaction to me.

Originally published in *Yes Poetry: The Queer Body*

Barbie Shows Her Workings in the Margin: But Still Scores Zero

by Camille Lewis

1) First adds up all the things that are wrong with her

[If your borderline barbie is within warranty, you may be eligible for a return or a refund, if there is no physical damage. The emotional is to be expected and if the crying bothers you then you shouldn't have taken her out of the box]

2) Multiplies it by all the reasons she doesn't deserve love

[If you pull the string in the back of your borderline barbie: Please come back, please come back, please come back. If you pull the string the noise will not stop for some time, so please pull it sparingly]

3) Then she has to put her hand up with shaky, inky fingers to ask the invigilator for more sheets of paper and a new pen.

The workings are getting quite convoluted now like in films, where a genius hunches in front of a blackboard with a piece of chalk and writes number after number in quick succession before yelling EUREKA and throwing some papers into the air with reckless abandon.

[Your borderline barbie is limited edition because a new hair colour or change of clothes changes everything and affirms the new identity chosen for herself, so look after the one you have purchased because it is unlikely to be in stock ever again, in fact the makers hate it and never want to see it again please just burn it at your earliest convenience thank you.]

178 faults multiplied by 234 shortcomings =????

Therapists asked: 14, boyfriends lost: 12, calories consumed in four hours: 2800.

She wonders if they might use the exam question this year on the GCHQ website where they upload complex puzzles for Mensa minds.

If you know you are hurting people and yourself, why won't you stop? Why won't you stop? Show your workings.

Suburban ADHD
by Matt Schultz

Along the drives and pale fences
hedges pruned into stout spheres,
the same kind up and down the street.

A welcome mat, like all the others,
roosts atop small stone steps--calm
before the storm door and terracotta pots
that overflow with mums the color of
all the other mums atop these stoops.

A dog creeps beside the fence, charting
his way through bothersome raindrops
that fall upon the sidewalked street.

Perfectly splendid that sniffed-sought
patch of high grass. A keen place to
watch storm clouds gather above houses
until one gets stuck upon a clothesline.

I'll get it! But then remember once stepping
on the shadow of a sparrow that flew away
over backyard gardens and in-ground pools,
ripples going on forever: a kingdom without end.

The Contortionist

by Byron López Ellington

She stretches upward and out,
joints turning in unknown ways.
Her arms are most elegant,
her fine fingers maneuvered
into alien positions.
Yet nothing about her is unnatural;
her legs themselves are but
twisting extensions of the earth,
her hair a wild nest.
LIVE OAK is her name.

Strangeaversary

by Gabrielle Roessler

It has been a year
~~since falling down,~~ relearning
~~to stand myself up~~

The Atom Cloud
by Lorelei Bacht

His face is not blue with fire –
It is poked full of black. How could
I have missed it, his fingers crooked.

He walks his daily commute, not a faun,
leaping, but crawling, spider-like. He is
full of braces and not much else inside.

What did I see that was not even there?

He sits not at, but under the table,
his only application is to the shifting
of blame:

calls me a panic bird, a red,
a too big for this cage.

If I drowned, he might consider –
only to walk away, and when found
in the wrong, he will call it a cathedral.

What shall we do with a traitor,
any time of the day, who spits and barks
at the hand, undeserved? Is it a cry

for help, to understand? I thought
I could read it, the nebula, but can't.

What more than me does he want?

A Body At War

By Precious Uwen

/everything is nothing without you. i cannot trust my arms to fight back this silence. there is no rest for a restless heart. all of my life i have been treating my body as an empty canvas waiting on its painter to make meaning out of it. is it choosing to be free when they say spread your wings and fly, or is that a subtle way of escaping? the scars on my body are all imprints of survival. they signify the injustices we are served with as humans and the agony therefrom. your silence is loud in my soul. you are a sinking sand when silent, and i am what falls prey. it is not truly love if you are in control of it. do not come to me hoping to have a peace of mind on a platter. i am the rising and falling of a turbulent ocean. love is for the strong and brave. i am the dark sky. look at me and you will find an aerial view of the forest, where what you see is lovely but in it lies an uncomfortable wilderness, filled with your worst nightmares. do not come to me in the name of love as an emotional feeling. i will break your heart. come at me like a brave lion manning up to a fight. come at me with your chaos so we both can calm it together. iron sharpens iron. chaos meets with chaos and becomes war/.

A Constellation of Pushpins
by Lorelei Bacht

He parks the troopship on the kerb,
We roll out, hipshot mom and all,
Garland of flesh in all sizes of clothes,
To the cashpoint, to the supermarket.

He thinks himself a sharpshooter.
Deadbeat, deadpan, he has devised
A way to slide wedding rings on and off -
A pushpin in the heart of his first half.

All is well that looks well to the community:
She cleans dishpans, he builds fish ponds,
Their too many kids stuff their teeth
With greasy hushpuppies.

Funny, how my life has become
My own private peepshow of pain -
Like princess Diana, minus the snapshooters.

In parallel, he builds a home-improvement empire,
Clip-sheet in hand, inspecting garage doors,
Hinges, padlocks: all visibles shipshape.
I am no engineer, but I have learned:

If you push pins all the way in,
Only their shiny heads will show.

The Picture On The Shelf *by Shaurya Arya-Kanojia*

A layer of dust sat on the shelf. On it, among other collectibles, including an hourglass, a globe lamp, a set of encyclopaedias, sat a picture frame. Staring out of it, in a sepia toned setting, were two kids. Two shabby, silly, ridiculously happy kids. And behind them, the minivan. The minivan I remembered so well, with its peeling turquoise colour, the shine of its chrome hood, its gleaming handles, and the sun reflecting on the clean windshield.

And we, the two kids, with our uncombed hair, pimples of our cheeks, and wearing fat smiles, looking straight into the camera. “Stand straight and quit it!” our mother yelled; but we knew, and we saw, how she smiled that warm smile as she took our picture. “Say cheese,” she said. I screamed cheese. But my brother – the elder, taller, handsomer, more mischievous of us, the one who spilled his glass of milk in the drain every day, the one who forced me to eat his greens – shouted, “No please!”

We laughed so hard, me and my brother, but we didn’t see, our mother, who, despite asking my brother to “watch your mouth,” sniggered behind the camera herself.

She pushed the button, and the joy of those two shabby pre-adolescent boys standing under the spring sun – the sky above them blue as the ocean, the air smelling of fresh oranges - was immortalised forever. And as I, now a thirty year old man, stood opposite the picture, the rag I had thought of dusting the shelf with in my hand, I lost myself in the memory of the day.

We had driven along the lake. Us two kids, our heads sticking out the window, the wind ruffling our already ruffled hair. We screamed at those driving past us, screamed how we were going to rule the world one day; the ambitions of the over-ambitious. We bumped our fists in the air, revelling in the excitement of all the opportunities that, just like the open road, lay ahead of us. Our mother, behind the wheel, screamed at us to come back inside, “or else you’ll find yourself kicked off the van.” But then, she smiled her motherly smile, the one that seeks all happiness for her children.

The road was long, and the trip memorable. The sun gleamed on the lake’s surface, and my mother, obsessed with her camera, made her two boys, the darling of her lives, stand in front of it; so she could capture us, with our shabby hair and our big smiles,

and freeze that moment in time. “Say cheese” would again be followed with a “No please.” And the two of us would, again, break into a laughter that would melt her heart. On the way, she bought us candies and chips, and all the junk that was unhealthy for us.

We accepted it all, our arms filled with goodies, not questioning why we were so lucky today.

We made a brief pit stop. “Sorry boys. Lady emergency,” she said, as she pulled over the van along the curb. “Ugh,” my brother replied, a flash of red spreading on his face, “we didn’t need to know THAT!” She pulled his cheek and ruffled his hair, knowing how he disliked

being treated like a kid. The smile returned on her face, and we, her two sons, saw a bead of tear run down her face. She tore herself from the moment, and rushed to the ladies room.

And we, the two boys with a mother who loved us more than the world, sat in the van; looking forward to an exciting journey planned ahead.

Halfway through our candies, our hands sticky, our mouths sweetened, she returned. “Sorry, boys,” she said, heaving herself into her seat. I saw her checking herself in the rear view mirror, and noticed her noticing something on her lips. A red drop of something, it looked to me. But before I could nudge my brother, she wiped it away; and, seeing me see her, smiled. Her eyes were moist, but before the tears would start rolling down, she snatched herself away. “Here we go!” she screamed, the excitement feigned. *Like the makeup she uses to hide her blemishes*, I thought.

Meanwhile, my brother, unbeknownst, unaware, thumped his fist in the air, and repeated after her, “Here we go!”

We lunched at a café called Grilly’s. Standing at the counter, the menu written on the wall in dazzling greens and blues and pinks, our mother allowed us to order chicken and gravy; while she stuck with a salad. “Are you okay?” my brother asked her, “Didn’t you say you only eat salads when you’re weak and sick?”

She patted him on the shoulder, and, embarrassed in front of the waitress, said, “I don’t feel like it.” And then, she looked at me, and she saw in my eyes that I knew. But maybe I didn’t. Maybe, I thought, I was as clueless as him. She only shook her head, and mouthed the words, “Don’t tell him.”

We ate heartily, laughed plentifully. At the next stop, we stopped by the beach. She let her boys play in the water, roll around in the sand, chase each other; while she, who I could tell by now was sick, sat a fair distance away, watching us play.

We’d run a fair distance. He carried on into the water, but I turned to look back; and I saw her, my mother, coughing into her handkerchief. I want to imagine it wasn’t terror that I saw on her face,

as she looked into the cloth before folding it and putting in her pocket, but I knew what I saw. What I saw, from a distance, was my ailing, my possibly dying mother.

We went to the museum next, even took the guided tour, which she'd always said was too expensive for us. We took the trolley up the hill, to see the magic show that she knew we, her two boys, loved; she let us buy ourselves the costly, autographed magic pack we'd always wanted. And we'd accepted the gifts with a smile on our faces and unadulterated happiness in our hearts. But we didn't see her standing in a corner – as my brother and I tore the plastic off the pack, jeering and shouting, all exhilarated – crying her silent tears, crying because time was short, and her boys had a long way to go.

It would only be, a year from then, between which we made several rounds to the hospital, saw her coughing more and more blood, swallowing pills that made her weaker, disoriented, that brought out the worst of her, before I would learn what the word “cancer” meant. But she had prepared me and my brother for the eventuality. And, as we saw her, burning on a pyre – she who always wore a bright smile, who cared for her boys more than the world, who took us on an unforgettable trip even though she was struggling – we knew she was in a better place.

And, now, I stand facing the picture on the dusty shelf, a sepia toned portrait of two ugly pimple-stricken boys, with ridiculous smiles on their faces, the boys who had all the happiness in the world, because they had a mother to look over them, I feel the bottomless void in my heart open up once again, and out comes the pain, the sorrow, the cries, but, with it, also a smile, as I feel nostalgic, melancholic, of our last trip together.

Originally published in *All Ears*.

How Stars Are Born

by Dimasilaw

Murky violet heavens sigh when nebulae collapse.
That's when everything
 becomes nothing.
Foggy clumps become so massive, so heavy
 that we crumble under our own terrible weight.

Weight means imitating
mercurial faces
and lyrical voices
Weight means clenching
fists at our sides
until gestures become arbitrarily appropriate.

We come from silent galaxies and are thrust onto loud planets.

We collapse when the noise burns us.
Falls on us like grains of ash. Again and again and again and
again. Until everything falls apart and

it's too much
it's too bright

and turbid heat ebbs from explosive release.
Kicking and screaming
 into shutdown.

All alone until the empty dust is dotted with golden light.
Tiny spots emerge one after the other.
 Exhaustion sings for fresh life.
Collapse swims into rebirth.
After the fall
 we become stars.

The Cripple Buggy

by Su Zi

When we are very young, we learn that someone we like is our friend. As time passes, we learn about the various qualities of friendship, connection and reciprocation, the effects of time and distance upon these affiliations, and maybe we learn of the true gift of an authentic friendship. For those who become ill, friendships surely have their metal tested. For those who endure long years of disability, friendships may be our sole window from the rooms of pain and isolation which can become our torture chambers. The recent years of civil unrest and pandemic have taken a toll on every kind of relationship, and while friendships ought to be a source of solace, oftentimes this is not the case: our social fabric is shredded more and more as a fad of narcissistic ruthlessness becomes numbingly ordinary.

Occasionally, we might hear of random acts of kindness, or perform one ourselves—a gift of a meal, jumper cables to another vehicle, even a bowl of water left for birds; however, intentional acts of kindness for a specific being are the way of peace and of an authentic friendship. Thus, it was that I came into possession of my first mobility aide.

My mobility issues are a frustration, as it didn't used to be this way; nonetheless, I am now easily exhausted, an ugly joke played upon those who are chronically ill. It was a borrowed mobility scooter which enlightened me to the possibility of being able to cover the terrain desired by my restlessness and denied by my illness. First, I got to see one being put to use, while traveling:

Chris and I are physical opposites with a shared youth of mutual friends in a mutual city—he is a giant of a man, while people most frequently have applied to me the adjective tiny. Time elapsed. We spoke over the years. Then, we were together in New Orleans. Chris is still a giant, but age rusts the joints lubricated with youth, and he had this three-wheeled mobility scooter he had bought second hand and which he called the Cripple Buggy. The last time we had been together was also in New Orleans, at a tattoo convention that had featured the band GWAR. Chris hadn't seen much of the city then, and that included Bourbon Street; so, we set out for Bourbon Street—Chris riding his mobility scooter. The uneven cobblestones of old cities are the anathema of drunks and those with mobility issues, but good-natured drunks will hoist you up if you crash in front

of them. Later, after The Cripple Buggy was in its mesh nest behind the truck and we were heading home, Chris debated four wheels instead of three. Mobility scooters have been redesigned a few times since the Buggy was made—they can fold, they can recharge lighter batteries, some have four wheels in various configurations of axle width. Chris would upgrade to a four wheeled scooter, and eventually a wheelchair.

For me, the exhaustion of chronic illness would increase in impact—giving me only a few hours, on good days, in which I could command some energy. Nonetheless, I persisted, I persist.

I found myself at a state park in South Carolina, camping with another person, and noting the extreme dryness of the terrain—campfire sparks caught the dirt on fire. And then, here comes Chris, having driven a few hours from North Carolina, toting The Cripple Buggy in the bed of the truck. He had removed the batteries, seat, and printed most of the owner's manual: it was mine—he had driven all that way, stayed an hour to chat without transferring out of the truck, and driven back so that the Cripple Buggy would be mine.

After adding a sugar skull sticker, I took the Cripple Buggy for its first test of usefulness. It is heavy, literally more than twice my weight, and even in a few pieces, the main deck weighs about as much as I do; therefore, I got help hoisting it into a truck and bringing it out for use at another state park, where a memorial was being held. I sat on the Buggy in line to the park, and noted how much space I was allowed. I wore a mask and a dress, both unusual among the visitors that day. Because I had to pee, because I have to pee fairly frequently, I rode the buggy straight into the restroom—as if I couldn't hardly take a step without it, but also testing the angles of the ladies' room for wheelchair accessibility. It was possible to ride the buggy straight into the handicapped stall, so that transference could be done with a shade of privacy. I rode the buggy the mile down the boardwalk and paved paths to the wooden overlook where the memorial was being held, and I rode it up the ramp to the lookout point. I sat on the Buggy while my friend's ashes were hand flung to the river by my friend's son and a bestie from her past. I rode to speak and sat down again. When it came time to exit, I rode the Buggy back to the front of the park, where there were a lot of people, and it was later in the day.

When one rides a mobility scooter, the view of other people is of their hindquarters and how much room they claim on public thoroughfares. On that day, my progress was hindered by too unmasked women and a child who felt that their hindquarters required the entire sidewalk. I did not use the horn; I just coasted some ten feet behind them and

waited for the unmasked oncoming pedestrians to leave me room to pass. At no point did these women endeavor to allow room for others. Since the majority of the crowd was unmasked, the hope of enough social responsibility to make way for the Cripple Buggy was a gamble that didn't always pay. If all I saw was booties and crotches, I wanted to see them moving away from me. It is true that when I borrowed a friend's mobility scooter for the New Orleans Gay Easter Parade, I had crotches leaning over the steer bar, which resulted in my chain-smoking as a self-defense. It seems that seeing junk first is common to mobility aid users.

Eventually, I hope to make the mobility aide more mobile and more of an aide—a truck ramp maybe. I was told to flame up the paint job, and the scooter needs a basket. I was very pleased that the mile walk from the parking lot to the event didn't cause me the usual multiple pauses to slow my racing pulse. I could do something else even—I had a shred of strength left. What still stuns me is the gift of it—the difficulty Chris endured to get me the Buggy, the genuine help the Buggy has shown me it can give. Here is a disabled man who lives hundreds of miles from me, who knew me when I was young and strong and who I knew when he was a bouncer, a leather maker, a tattoo shop assistant; here is a disabled man who went to some trouble on my behalf in the hope of helping. Here is my friend, my authentic friend, and undeniably so.

pedal, i drown in the heat / my sapphires drown in my sweat

after biking by frank ocean

By Kyrah Gomes

frank's biking uphill, burning his quads,
& the full moon is a pockmarked face,
darkness smeared across its cheekbones.

& our palms sit tilted upwards, yearning for
a chance to *open the sky, get a handful*,
to remake a black box with needle fists,
implore light to lunge through pinholes.

constellation made synonymous with
puncture or *torso marked up like a*
vandal or perforated lung or collection
of apertures littered across the night sky,
shards of clarity revealing stab-wound stars.

life goes in cycles, violence reincarnated
breeding easy on our sweat-damp skin.

a man on fire running very quickly through [a house]

(after anne carson)

by Aspen Marshall

racing against
time and time again he
checks the time again it's
17:93 which is
not a real time
at
all
but
the sun is setting the
moon is rising in the sky, (is that better?)
the birds are singing a seasonal song
the mice and the geese are playing baseball in the forest
and you are singing along

is this what you wanted for me to be?
is this what you wanted today?
is this who you wanted your soul to bring
into this new life, this new spring?

Movie Night

by Camille Lewis

[cw: suicidal thoughts, childhood trauma]

I buy overpriced popcorn and eat it all before the main feature begins. (I've seen it before, after all.) As the lights dim, I lick kernels from sticky fingers.

I am seven, in an Austin Mini Metro on the way home from my grandma's house. I squint at the lights of passing cars and play the number plate game with my dad. I ask him why sometimes mum does things like yell out of the windows, and he doesn't take his eyes off the road. He tells me the adults have got this; I don't need to worry about it.

Maybe I believe him.

I am eleven, in school, and I get my period for the first time. I know what it means, and what to do, but my teacher is male and I'm embarrassed to ask him. I go into the toilets and wrap paper round and round my arm like a mini mummy, a makeshift solution. I pray it works.

I am thirteen, and this is the first time I have the thought that I want to die. It isn't for any reason. The notion is as passing and mundane as a drifting cloud.

The sky is blue, my nail polish is chipped, my science homework is due and I want to die!

My mum is making pasta today, which I really enjoy, and I would hate to waste it. I briefly entertain the idea that a family member could have my portion, but then realise that they likely won't feel like eating it that evening... if I have just died. I consider sticking around for the pasta.

Present day, I am now twenty-nine. It has been around seven years since the phrase *personality disorder* was added to my medical record. I sit in front of a psychiatrist who asks if I mind if he takes notes, and if I have experienced any suicidal thoughts.

I answer honestly. They are a hail of arrows, daily. At times, hourly. Almost every time something goes wrong, for the last sixteen years. But I have made it this far. I still stand. I own these thoughts; *they do not own me*.

His expression gives nothing away: but he scribbles faster.

july

by Elizabeth Sallow

it's another summer night where we stay up too late,
smoking on the hillside. the constellations illuminate your
cheeks in the shadows. away from the city and you're blushing:
peach and crimson. heaven kisses you and you're cosmic.
we're talking like we've never heard of a secret so
i tell you i love you, and we get lost in the iridescence.

kaleidoscope heartbeats echo under the stars, your hand
tangles with mine. i look at you and you're glowing, you're
radiant, you're lighting up the night in neon.
there's a lavender haze and you're beautiful in the moonlight.
in the grasslands i can spell out forever, but
you tell me you love me, and let go of my hand.

clementine lamps on the roadside, it's four in the morning
and we're floating back into the city. you're divine:
pixie wings and a feathered heart. it's a fairytale but
'happily ever after' only exists in my dreams. we run out of
cigarettes and remember who we are. two young hearts
that won't make it out of the city, without burning it down.

railway tragicomedy
by Dimasilaw

self is trapped as an echo between puzzling clouds.
don't remember. hazy brilliant pink bathes me in flashes.
i resist wind flitting between my fingers. don't move.
how beautiful it would be to live outside of melting. clouds.
clouds. i was talking about clouds. a cruel god
authored this railway tragicomedy. fingers tap on handrails.
whose fingers. don't remember. plastic bags crinkle. rustle.
the train hurtles toward an inevitable conclusion
at a dangerous speed. i realise i am flapping again.
rocking. shifting into vague pressure. like rain coming
through the mist. a lady with a sweet voice asks me
what's wrong. it's loud, it's loud, *it's loud*, i say.

sounds grow overwhelmingly indistinct.
the lady crosses her arms and looks straight ahead.
i want to scuttle free between electric blue constellations.
put on the wrong planet. i am a deathless pillar of dust and gas.
the train station whirs past me and i know i was not meant for earth.

god's rainbows
by Dimasilaw

swollen, incandescent rift
 forming between me and the god
 everyone hoped would cure me
without feeling him i would fall on my knees
and pray for him to change me
 god wouldn't let me live as a man,
 die as a man
well, the government of the philippines
wouldn't let my passport say *male*
and every day people called me a name that sounded like static
and every day i existed unblurred elsewhere
 anywhere but on the scraping asphalt streets of manila
mama always said
 go ahead and sin,
 it's your life
papa always said
 he, she, it?
 god never let me say my name like i owned it
 so i hid
told i was possessed by the devil
rocking back and forth in constant motion
 noises like satan shrieking
then they said *quiet hands, quiet hands*
and i folded them into prayer
 my knees against the bedpost
 and my elbows on the mattress
father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me
felt more like christ weeping at gethsemane
carrying two amorphous rainbows i never asked for
until mama told me god gave me autism because i sinned and i just laughed and
 my clasped hands removed me from existence and mama called me her most
 beautiful daughter and i existed in a world where i didn't and i buried my fading self
 into god's unclear embrace and hoped he would eliminate it entirely and hated every
 murky day of wondering whether someone would call for an exorcism today and
 hoping i could emerge again out of nonbeing and thinking about curing myself

02/03/2021

by Phrieda Bogere

piles of snow cover the pavements,
cold chills run down my spine.
i'm running late, it's 7:15am
feeling overwhelmed as I defrost my car,
contemplating if i should stay home or
brave the brutal weather.

it seems like my mornings
are rarely calm.
i find myself in a trance of
overthinking and worrying
about what's to come.
uncertainty sits in
the back of my mind
and i fear the idea
of change, again.

Portrait of mornings before a day is ruined

by Lilia Marie Ellis

Thin as a kiss or a tea-kettle. Shadows just a kindly presence, day an unmet future nonetheless to be loved. Every possibility remaining, burdens lifted by lunchtime; outdoors a mere eternity, nearby cinnamon and love and the absence of thought; a life at last deserved; when ever so suddenly, creeping across,

Portraits of surviving

by Lilia Marie Ellis

1.

Seasons which otherwise would wilt; who told them to pass by at a speed both cruelly right and perfectly wrong; (day dimmer for the bright embalming snow);

2.

Kneeling; built and recoiled down; even wick, fume; having made of collapse an act of holding still; skyward hope, in vain, or so it seems;

3.

Pooled in toes like stale coffee grounds; left from a morning less kind; selves half-remaining; to molt in the long and silent afterhorror; in which nothing happens;

what to expect when you are expecting nothing
by courtney marie

there will be chairs
so many empty chairs
& whole rooms sparse and sprawling

there will be a glass of vodka swaying as if held by an invisible hand,
[hypnotized /
dancing /
transparent]

a shadow speaking its own language
begging to go home

there will be the car running
and your exoskeleton in the driver's seat
refusing to leave
refusing to let anyone inside

sometimes this is how you keep the peace

you keep humming the tune of a song you don't know the name of
one we used to dance to

keep waking up (there aren't many options)
keep deadlines (no one must know)
keep commitments
keep standing upright
keep smiling
keep it in

a record skipping over and over and no one in the room to stop it
(maybe soon the needle will grow tired and silence itself)

*until then
keep up the performance*

*keep the glass balanced delicately between two fingers
while twirling and laughing at something no one else can see*

*keep telling yourself
[to breathe /
that no bad dream will last forever]*

*keep billowing
[a curl of smoke trapped in a bell jar /
a flameless moth at twilight]*

*keep telling yourself there will be a tomorrow
(the worst that can happen is you will be wrong)*

*keep wondering how long you will get away with this soft existence
keep counting the minutes down to nothing
keep telling everyone you're okay
everything is fine*

a raindrop reflects on a burning plain
by courtney marie

so when they set the family's fields on fire
do you imagine we will run or stay?
have they forgotten we have [everything / nothing] to lose?
do they not remember how we stood our ground before?
[where our seeds were born? /
where every fruit was gently named?]

& when the blaze meets the shingles of our homes
there will be no time to waste
we will leave the pebbles gathered on the window panes
& in a heartbeat
take stock of all that will be lost

with only ourselves left to save
we will fall heavy and all at once
sacrificing the first and last of
everything we'd become

& though i am very small
merely a teardrop

i will remember that together we become river
together we can be ocean or storm
calm or furious
warm or cold
danger or safety

i will remember we are cleansing:
glasses full & hearts breaking

i will remember the power the people hold
& the way a canyon floods in a flash

& while the sound of one raindrop is never heard
the strength of many can drown
even the most vicious fire burning on the plains

The Ghost of Gay Children
an erasure poem of *Queer Time* by Sarah Jaffe
by Sage Agee

I am the Queer Child.
An expendable narrative clocks my sense of self.
At the playground, I explore retellings of the past:
Dorian strives to feel anything at all,
Black Wave pansexual sport-fucking— the late 1990's a life goal.
My gender is a yardstick growing sideways,
I play and dance,
reject the heteronormative dystopia,
do not perform conventional understandings of time.

I am the Ghost of Gay Children.
The premature death of pleasure.
I board the bus, self-conscious conversion,
unable to occupy self-realization.
The bus driver greets me
with a rescue-animal look.
Casual disappearance of dignity,
forgotten at the dance party.

I am the Sexuality Epidemic.
Queer bodies colonized,
made to be a product.
Scholars suggest commentary
on age-appropriate behaviors.
Shun lives for a lack of
childhood.

Am I a Grown Up yet?
I explore
the shift
in temporal thinking.
The world is literally about
to end.

The Drop of Water

after *René Magritte, 1948*

by Taylor Brunson

To opal air with sea spray, opal sea
with oil. If this is what will be, I pray

what ships you sail surely sink,
still ashamed to hope you mist me
in your descent. Give me your flotsam,

so easily mistaken in this light. Like any fish,
I can swallow what you have to offer

when I am hungry enough—what do I become
when I cannot stomach myself? All that is left
is to make a life of this debris. Your jewel,

I am plastic in your wake. Shroud me
in what rises from the sea, and trust

that I will mourn what you have
made of us. Through the bezel
of my tears, warp a world no longer

holding any sense of me. I can accept
what you do to every body you love.

SPACE FRAME #2

after Untitled, Francis Bacon, 1954

by Taylor Brunson

does it split you
open the way it does me
I could spend the rest
of my life hiding / no
version of myself
to return to / yes I am spread
to find and refuse to reach
out for what I need
I no longer know / is it
a kind of arrival to recede
from a time I was blue / open
to your sound when all I wanted
was to be alive

Poster Side
by Clem Flowers

Our spikes of sugar gold
Collapse into the red dust falls
Stardust outlined by the long out of service
Payphone coral
Battered shoulders of the strip mall
Snake bit orange crush sign
Like a holy beacon
Reverb of streetlights in the midnight fog
Branding irons over the Wilson Beltway
Quivering summer wind
Pause- rewind- pause
As we ride & try to find
Slivers of feeling
In the old songs again

THE HAZE OF TIME
by Olivia Onyekwena

for now, it's unclear what we are
borderline soulmates interlacing
fingers underneath the moonlit sky
we keep an open tab to heartfelt
twitches as the full moon fades

beyond this infinite horizon
farewell chants from fireflies
that wish to bid us home
before the clock strikes twelve

but you and I, we're not done
unsaid words linger
dancing around the fireplace

the illusions of requited love
spelt out in black and white
behind vague memories in the distance.

SHE TOLD ME SHE DIDN'T WANT ME

a reductive triptych

after It Follows

by Rachael Crosbie

she sold me
to sweet slumber
under fuchsiabright skies
scorching with heaven
she brought me
afraid and crying

summer sunsets
lucid and
pulsing
or blinding heat
cheap holograms
in torched light

soaking yellow and
overwhelming warmth
rabid and hungry
in a flea market
for my birthday
consuming me with whispers

//

she sold me
scorching with heaven
soaking yellow and
in a flea market

to sweet slumber
she brought me
overwhelming warmth
for my birthday

under fuchsiabright skies
afraid and crying
rabid and hungry
consuming me with whispers

//

she sold me
in a flea market
rabid and hungry

scorching with heaven
under fuchsiabright skies
consuming me with whispers

soaking yellow and
afraid and crying

//

she sold me
soaking yellow and

in a flea market
afraid and crying

rabid and hungry

The Good Winter
by Whitney Hansen

We buried this together, but you
are the one pulling up roots, asking how long I've been holding
rotten stems. You told me *This was one of the good winters*, & I pretended
like I won't remember this, how you looked as the water
pooled in the bed's divots, snapdragon skulls caving in —
You, with a pouch of tulip seeds in your
garden but nothing in your hands.

Whitney Hansen
The half lives of past lives mirror what we watched as children
[cw: mental illness, death]

where nobody told me about the Big Sad Thoughts at the school bus crossing, or
crying on birthdays, or googling which animals can feel love. Nobody told me
about cowboy philosophers blowing your mind with "Have you tried
going outside? Have you tried to exercise?" Nobody gave it a moniker, this divorcing
of one's self, this double funeral in the most violent nonfiction. No, this was
entertainment, vacant converse with spectral and imaginary objects on the walls,
reading confessions to my Uber driver, googling how cremation works, wondering
when distance becomes hiding.

Nobody told me about the pills in the medicine cabinet with labels I was too young
to read. Nobody told me that I am the aftermath of an aftermath.

Whitney Hansen

My Chest is a Ghost Town

& I've been surviving on memories of a cancelled birthday party, still sweeping crumbs of
a
cake never eaten, tugging at the calligraphic curls of an invitation never sent & I hope

hope

hope

you'll retrofit this rusted home, a shelter
for an age that might be imaginary.
I'll spend the rest of my days here: haunted
& with you.

Contributors

Sage Agee

Sage Agee (they/them) is a queer, nonbinary poet and parent living in rural Oregon. They are currently inspired by the works of Billy-Ray Belcourt and the unbelievable evolution of their brand new baby, Otto.

Shaurya Arya-Kanojia

Shaurya Arya-Kanojia authored his debut novella, *End of the Rope* (<https://amzn.in/eZ0EUss>), in 2019. He likes sports (cricket, mostly), eating out, and watching reruns of *The Office* and *Everybody Loves Raymond*. His social media handles include @shauryaticks (Twitter) and @main.hoon.ek.sharara (Instagram).

Lorelei Bacht

Lorelei Bacht (she/they) is not an interstellar cloud of dust, hydrogen, helium and other ionized gases, although she does feel that way, sometimes. Her recent work has appeared and/or are forthcoming in *The Inflectionist Review*, *Proem*, *Harpy Hybrid Review*, *The Inflectionist Review*, *Visitant*, *Quail Bell*, *The Wondrous Real*, *Odd Magazine, Abridged*, *The Riverbed Review*, and others. She is also on Instagram: @lorelei.bacht.writer and Twitter: @bachtlorelei

Taylor Brunson

Taylor Brunson is a poet living in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Her work has recently been featured in *Non.Plus Lit*, *perhappened*, *Interstellar Literary Review*, and *Miniskirt Magazine*. She serves as an assistant poetry editor for *Four Way Review* and an assistant nonfiction editor for *Nashville Review*. Taylor can be found on Twitter, @taylor_thefox.

Phrieda Bogere

Phrieda has written poetry for years before making the decision to share her work with a wider audience. Her work has been featured in *Brave Voices Magazine*, *The Beautiful Space*, and *Writing In A Woman's Voice*. When she isn't writing, she loves exercising and getting lost in a good book.

Rachael Crosbie

Rachael Crosbie (they/she) tweets things about She-Ra and The Princesses of Power, cats, and their fiancé. They have written work forthcoming or published in *The Augment Review*, *Wrongdoing Magazine*, *Pink Plastic House*, *A Drunken Midsommar*, and others. Also, they have two poetry chapbooks: *swerve* (2021) and *MIXTAPES* (2021).

Dimasilaw

Dimasilaw (he/him) is a trans, neurodivergent, and Filipino artist and writer. His biggest special interest is Biblical exegesis, and his work is published or forthcoming in *The Hearth* and *Pollux Journal*, among others. He can be reached at @dimasiilaw on Twitter. He hopes you have a good day!

Francesca Duke

Francesca is in her fourth year studying French & linguistics at the University of Oxford, and is a lover of all things artsy. She was a member of her school poetry club aged 11, but soon decided that writing wasn't "cool", and so took an almost decade-long hiatus. However, the past couple of years have rekindled her love of poetry, and since the first lockdown, she has decided that being creative is the best form of therapy! Find out more about Francesca on Twitter (@francescaduke98), or go to www.francescaduke.co.uk.

Joshua Effiong

Joshua Effiong [He] is a Nigerian writer and a lover of literature. His works have appeared in *Eboquills*, *Kalahari Review*, *Rough Cut Press* & *Shallow Tales Review*. He is an author of a poetry chapbook *Autopsy of Things Left Unnamed*. When he is not writing, he is reading, watching movies and listening to music. He is an undergraduate of Science Laboratory Technology. He lives in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria, and here he writes from. You can find him on Instagram @josh.effiong and twitter @JoshEffiong.

Byron López Ellington

Byron López Ellington is a 17-year-old mestizo writer from central Texas. He is the founder and editor of the radical literary magazine *Rulerless* (rulerless.org), and has poetry published or forthcoming in *Grand Little Things*, *Juven*, and *Black Cat Magazine*, among others. When not working on his YA fantasy novel and other writings, he enjoys playing with his kittens, reading books, and watching cartoons. You can find him at byronlopezellington.com, and on Twitter @byronymous.

Lilia Marie Ellis

Lilia Marie Ellis (they/she) is a trans writer. Their chapbook *Love and Endless Love* was published this year by *gallo lit*. Follow them on Twitter/Instagram @LiliaMarieEllis!

Clem Flowers

Clem Flowers (They/ Them) is a queer, nonbinary, soft spoken southern transplant living in spitting distance of some mountains in Utah with their amazing wife & adorable kitty. They make a mean omelette, but their scrambled eggs need some work.

Kyrah Gomes

Kyrah Gomes (she/her) is a student from NYC who loves literature, fashion, and authentic self-expression. She is currently writing her debut chapbook, and her poems have been published in *Cathartic Literary Magazine*, *LEVITATE*, *Velvet Fields*, and are forthcoming from *Paper Crane Journal* and *Outlander*. You can find her on instagram @kyrah.isabel or on tumblr at @reveris3s.

Aspen Marshall

Aspen Marshall (they/xe) is a disabled, autistic, trans writer, hockey fan, and rabbit enthusiast based in Bloomington, Indiana. They're currently hyperfixating on OOTP Baseball and Pokémon GO, and procrastinating a short story xe needs to revise. Xe can be found online @aspenkmars!

Whitney Hansen

Whitney Hansen (she/they) is a Midwestern writer and teacher who would fight God for half a sesame bagel. Their work is published/forthcoming in *Olney Magazine*, *Variant Literature*, *Nightingale & Sparrow*, *Sledgehammer Lit*, and more. Twitter: @whitneyhansen_

Taiwo Hassan

Taiwo Hassan is a Nigerian student, poet and writer. His works have appeared in *Shallow Tales Review*, *Liminal Transit Review*, *Second Skin Magazine*, *Praxis Magazine* and *Ice Floe Press*, to mention a few. When he's not writing, he's either listening to music or watching TV series. His social media handles include @iamtsoul on Instagram and @symplytaiwo on Twitter.

Ellen Huang

Ellen Huang (she/her) is an aro/ace 2nd gen Taiwanese American speculative fic author. Much of her work is grounded in themes of progressive faith and platonic love. She has all kinds of content published/forthcoming in *K'in*, *Wrongdoing Magazine*, *miniskirt magazine*, *Lucent Dreaming*, *Sledgehammer Lit*, *Sage Soup*, *Lanke Review*, and *From the Farther Trees*, among others. She lives in San Diego with her pan roommate and his pet gecko, with hopes of getting a chinchilla named Totoro. Her cat named Cthulhu, dog named Beowulf, and future legalized hedgehogs named Poker and Hedwig have not been born yet.

Camille Lewis

Camille Lewis is a writer and avid reader who lives and learns with borderline personality disorder. She can be found indulging heavily in the works of Plath and crossing off days on a calendar until the next instalment of the 'A Song of Ice and Fire' series is released. Camille resides in South West England.

courtney marie

courtney marie is a writer & artist based in denton, texas. they are the author of *don't get your hopes up* (2018, Thoughtcrime Press) and have a forthcoming full-length poetry collection to-be-released in 2021 with Goliad Media. cm enjoys making weird & sentimental art with/for their community, exploring the world, and playing pinball. they live with ~~two~~ three cats, cry all the time, and are forever writing letters & sending snail mail in a desperate attempt to connect with the outside world. cm is the co-founder & director of the artist collective spiderweb salon.

Erin McKay

Erin is a sixteen-year-old writer. She has been published in *Stone of Madness Press* and is forthcoming in *Crunch Ion August Review*. She enjoys long skirts, watching video essays on Youtube, and ballet. You can find her on Twitter @erintmck.

Olivia Onyekwena

Olivia is a writer from Nigeria. When she's not reading poetry and fanfiction, she's having football centric conversations on twitter.

Gabrielle Roessler

Gabrielle is a creative sprinter – she writes poems, short stories, and essays that prove she made great returns on her therapy investments. She is the winner of Storyteller's 2021 Poetry Writing Contest with her piece "Rx for a Dream" and was awarded recognition for literary excellence. She is inspired by myth, magical girls, a healthy fear of space, and overheard conversations that never happened. She can be found on Twitter @gabbyiswriting

Elizabeth Sallow

Elizabeth Sallow (she/her) is a queer nineteen year old who lives in a small village in the UK. She believes in the universal and connective power of literature and hopes that she can make people feel understood in a way that she did growing up with her head in a book. Her work has been published in *Interstellar Magazine*, *Dust Poetry*, and *Paracosm Lit*, among others. You can find her on Instagram @elizabeth.sallow or Twitter @lizabeth_sallow

Matt Schultz

Matthew Schultz teaches all sorts of writing at Vassar College where he directs the Writing Center. He is the author of two novels: *On Coventry* and *We, The Wanted*. His poems have recently appeared in *Rust + Moth*, *Thrush*, and *Juke Joint*.

Precious Uwen

Uwen Precious resides in Calabar, Nigeria. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in numerous places, including *Eboquills*, *Kalahari Review*, *Rough Cut Press*, *DoteofFlane*, *The Madrigal Press*, *Fiction Niche*, *Okadabooks* (an anthology titled Christmas and Candlelight), *Aceworld Publishers*, *Paper Crane Journal*, *Brittle Paper*, and elsewhere.

Su Zi

Su Zi is a Poet/Writer/ Artist; editor and book designer for the handsewn, poetry chapbook series *Red Mare*. Art media include printmaking, fiber arts and ceramics. Disabled Equestrian; feeder of wild birds and their friends.

Charlie D'Aniello, Founder/Editor-in-Chief

Charlie D'Aniello (he/they) is a Latinx, trans/queer, neurodivergent author. They are featured or forthcoming in the NoSleep Podcast, *Magpie Review*, *Hyacinthus Mag*, *Sledgehammer Lit*, *Querencia*, and *Tealight Press*. Their novel, "The One and the Other" is out now. They are EIC at warning lines magazine. Twitter: @beelzebadger



al

warning lines mag
issue one // june 2021