

ISSUE NO 1



# METAMORPHOSIS



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Metamorphosis

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# ABOUT METAMORPHOSIS



Editors: Taylor Melhorn, Justina Petrullo, and Melissa Wu

Metamorphosis's goal is to publish short stories, art, fiction, and poetry from people who want to tell stories of growth, resilience, and transformation. Metamorphosis strives to provide a platform for artists of all mediums to come together, be heard, and be celebrated. Explore each section and see what the transformation and flow of life means to our artists.

Exodus Brownlow  
Alyssa Cruz  
Katherine DeGilio  
Johanna Kristin Ellerup  
Blake Francis  
Cary Horton  
Rachel Inberg  
Terrence James  
William Kofoed  
Aidan Martin-cox  
Sante Matteo  
Sudarsana Mohanty  
Sarena Pollock  
Sylvia Rodemeyer  
Gina Russell  
Spencer Séverin  
Kenny Shore

**FEATURED  
ARTISTS**





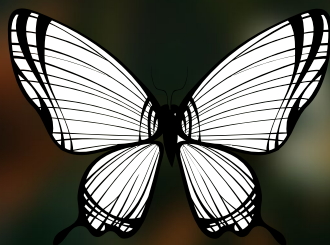
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Jupiter - Alyssa Cruz  
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# EPHEMERAL

ADJ. LASTING FOR A SHORT  
TIME





# LAST SPRING

WRITTEN  
BY **ALYSSA CRUZ**

I met someone who  
wears your glasses—

She closes my kitchen drawers  
when I'm tripping over untied  
laces on my way to the office

I wake from dreams of you  
& your curly brown hair,  
to her fingers on my neck  
tracing just beneath my jaw

She wonders if it was a nightmare  
from the *thump thump* of carotids  
& I worry my sleeping body is too tired  
to stifle the light from pocket-sized fires  
you set on every square inch of the garden

I know her eyelashes, like broken blinds,  
do their best to block you out— but  
she knows how my neurons fold themselves  
in an armchair, facing out the window, waiting  
(a synapse is always all or nothing)  
to fire only at the snap of your fingers.

# JUPITER

WRITTEN  
BY **ALYSSA CRUZ**

As an expert daydreamer, I've declared residency in my own corner of the stratosphere. My head's well acquainted with the neighbors— from a green hammock suspended between two trees, I wave hello to the nimbostratus next door to thank him for watering my garden while I was away.

Behind him, in the culdesac a block over, a backyard emits a brilliant red-orange. He notices me noticing that glow and raises his eyebrows to say, *Jupiter is not quiet, & her waves broadcast so strongly, you can detect them from Earth.* I'll admit I'm nearsighted, and often a lazy lover, content

spinning in place, to only romance luminous bodies already in my orbit. I sit up from my hammock, still barefoot, side-eyeing the glow. I swore I'd only taken two steps off the lawn, yet found myself commandeering NASA's Juno Orbiter to transport me directly to her front door. Through the

window is a room lined with shelves mounted from floor to ceiling, with a rolling ladder to reach every spine. I say I took the first step— but Jupiter's magnetic field is 20,000 times stronger than Earth's. I am thrown out of my own orbit, jaw unhinged, standing at the edge of the Great Red Spot.

Like the stars I adored before her, born out of a supernova shockwave, her surface mix of hydrogen and helium is familiar. But my fingertips fumbled to deconstruct the fragments of her core, logging each element in my lab book like, *pencil earrings* and *six-pointed star on chain around neck.*

The door swings open and a red blazer says *you think SO loudly, I could hear the gears turning from light years away.* She grabs my hand to pull me through the doorway and I am reminded of my gravity. Jupiter spins faster than any other planet, like a playful tornado, spitting me in and out

between columns of air. Her kisses hello are patient as PopRocks under water, & kisses goodbye are sugary sweet like Sunny-D. When work had me travel, I'd write Jupiter postcards to let her know how the upward curve of the corners of her mouth made me blush. Jupiter always wrote back— with

ink smudges & with handwriting you'd mistake for a doctor's. Her prescriptions were lengthy (most pages lacked the necessary real estate)



and I superglued myself to every word no matter where they went.  
though I'm terrified of heights, I couldn't resist their high— I learned to fly a plane.

*Of all 73 moons, I tell her, choose me. Beneath this layer of ice  
is a body of saltwater that promises to never let you sink.  
She agrees, you are the only one with your own magnetic field,  
pauses, but I am not ready for a singular satellite.*

I kept writing postcards— our neighborhood went through two mailmen  
before I finally stopped. That backyard's pitch black now. I still wave  
down every shooting star driving down the street to say, *hey, if you see her...*  
but they all tell me this galaxy never gave her a reason to stay.

Sometimes, when clouds cover my eyes, I walk toe-to-heel around  
the Milky Way just to get soaked, trying to catch a glimpse of her. I leave  
my front door unlocked and take my radio with me, just in case— because  
I know better than to underestimate the strength of those broadcasted waves.



# LIMINAL SPOT

WRITTEN  
BY **TERRENCE JAMES**

There is a threshold between now and the hereafter  
a cusp where concerns of the present give way  
to the uncertainty of what is to come  
where anchors of the past  
no longer hold and  
vision dims  
a  
liminal spot  
where the aging body  
seeks rest, mind finds peace  
and spirit soars unfettered to find  
itself in nebula where self becomes soul  
and consciousness transcends the mystic veil.

# SUNSET

WRITTEN  
BY **TERRENCE JAMES**

Sky, tapering to the horizon, blazes

with the nightly dub of Sol's

orb. Dusk, comforting

Day's end, flushes

warmth and

settles.

Horizon, a softened smudge in the afterglow, distally dies

as

Nighttime,

wearing a charcoal

cloak with sparkling buttons,

embraces me. I snuggle with the

affection of Nightfall's transformation.

# UNWRITTEN

WRITTEN  
BY **RACHEL INBERG**

0: You have driven me home after your third Jack on the Rocks & I have blacked out because antidepressants, something, something. You have been idling in front of my apartment building while I stand in front of the door & fumble through my purse for the keys. We are strangers who have exchanged messages.

9: You are tall enough that I get to feel dainty & I am from New York & have the real-life Long Island accent. You are a guy with a car, a job, & a one-bedroom apartment & I'm a girl who is able to wear high-waisted jeans since depression last claimed thirty pounds. We are blueprints in the ether.

34: You like that I am dynamic & I like that you are stable. You like that I am well-travelled & I like that you are not visibly damaged. We are opposites who should be attracting.

115: You are increasingly grumpy & I am failing to see a connection. You are staring at the ground & saying you don't know & I am making the decision to cut you loose. We are good on paper but dead on arrival.

141: You have sent me a message with your feelings squeezed out like orange juice & I have since been berated by my best friend for dumping a guy who seems *perfectly* nice. You have told me that you were about to say the love stuff & I have reflexively told you I was *also* about to tell you the love stuff. We are back together, I guess???

360: You have begun to leave our cocoon of blankets to do "work" on your computer & I have become so worried of abandonment my muscles tense each time you shut the bathroom door behind you. You always want to be alone & I am keeping you close by scrolling through apartment listings. We are about to be roommates in a neighborhood you think is lame.

551: You are frowning more, reaching for me less & I am addicted to sugar again & swinging from high to low like a rollercoaster. You are tired, tired, tired & I am crying each time I orgasm alone. We are shareholders of the same denial.

780: You have turned into a cube of stainless steel in front of my eyes & I have progressed from sometimes smoking pot to always smoking pot. You have edges that are cold and sharp & I have a heart that is squishy and susceptible like a lychee fruit. We have not made love in seven weeks.

1220: You are barely making eye contact anymore & I am arming myself with the silent treatment. You are saying that you're *not* saying that everything is my fault & I am bringing you tissues you when you cry, which seems to be all the time & makes me feel like a man-eating monster. We are people who realize the sunken cost is already too great.

1243: You have been turning down the dinners I make & I have been struck down with listeria poisoning, the flu, & a manic episode all in the span of two months. You have let the cat litter sit for so long the whole house smells like ammonia & I have an appointment with a new psychiatrist. We have absolutely no shared language anymore.

1261: You used to call me your love & now you call me —. I used to think we would find that pesky puzzle piece & now I think we were both sold incomplete.

1269: I am separating my books from your books & I am able to wear the high-waisted jeans again & I am a girl without a car, a job, or an apartment. I am a constantly growling gut.

1280: I am unwritten & returned to the ether.

# WINDOW GAZING

WRITTEN  
BY **SANTE MATTEO**

Out the window  
wedges of geese  
fly across my gaze,  
seeking a pond,  
a flooded field  
after a storm,  
a winter puddle.

Inside the window,  
swarms of thoughts  
spring up, hover,  
find nowhere to land,  
digress and fly away.



# IN THREES

WRITTEN  
BY **SUDARSANA MOHANTY**

I am ripped from a moment,  
by a glancing thought of friendship.  
My face temporarily lost,  
in the place I spend most time.

I am drawn with discrete symmetry,  
to a whispering arch.  
For a moment, my fingertips flutter in rhythm,  
with the vision of what, I think, is supposed to be.

A manifestation of your face appears.  
I want to talk to you about coincidences:  
the ones that come in threes.  
Those subtle shifts of what orbits in our gaze.

You murmur,  
standing over her sculpted visions.  
I look up wondering where they are.

We walk in our own heads,  
in our interpreted world,  
often lost in translation,  
re-framing experience by placing truth on trial.

Before we go to sleep, you murmur,  
how weird it is that we exist in individual universes:  
immersive and deep, yet crackling with energy  
that brings us to each other.

# SNAPSHOTS OF A FATHER

WRITTEN  
BY **SARENA POLLOCK**

self-reflection: acrostic

they tell me I  
look like you. I don't see it, but  
I get the feeling you're staring back at me in the  
mirror, clustered in the  
kaleidoscope of freckles on my forehead, trying to  
escape through the glass when I  
focus on my complexion. Maybe you never left  
after all. Maybe you were always  
there, buried in the gaps of my teeth,  
hidden in the cracks of my smile—  
except you did, you did leave, and you still expect  
reconciliation when you come back. I used to  
look through old photos of us every night before  
I went to sleep, and I still  
keep your shoes hidden in my closet like an  
exit wound refusing to heal. I always feared you'd  
disappear if I didn't hold tight enough, so I grasped  
any shard of your presence I could find to recreate  
the illusion of  
unity. I tried piecing you back together, but  
glass draws blood when picked up with bare hands.  
Now, all I  
have left of you is crooked teeth and a bad  
taste in my mouth, as if you made home on the tip  
of my tongue after  
exile, an apology waiting to drip from your lips to  
mine. I spit in the sink and tell our  
reflection I refuse to be your rebirth.  
I deny your chance at redemption.

### **i am no longer your token to reclamation**

I am the torn-up photograph taped to your concrete wall, the one plastered right above the bed frame. I am your reminder of a childhood you missed out on, a glimpse of the father you could've been. *She's beautiful* you beam, trying to close the distance with corporeal compliments, but your cellmate just says *Your daughter is hot. Think I can have her number?* I am your comfort in daydreams, the precursor to *Once I get out of here* and *If only I hadn't fucked up that day*. You don't ask if the concrete is comfortable. You don't realize if you leave me taped up all day, there's no room to grow. You never stopped to think your pocket-size companion would get too heavy to pin up on a wall, your crumpled-up photograph waiting for exposure. When I ask for air, you just flatten me down with the palm of your hand, trying to fit me back into *I'm so sorry* and *I'll be out in no time*. You told me *I'll never leave you* but you never gave me the choice of leaving. Now, I'm the one who's fading right before your eyes. You either replace the photograph or throw me away. I can no longer watch you shrivel away when I've already outgrown the room.

### **learning by example**

I'd like to imagine a life  
where you'd wake me up every day,  
where I'd come out to the kitchen and smile  
as you cooked eggs on the stove.  
You'd kiss me on the cheek  
and hand me a bagged lunch  
before I got on the bus, and maybe  
you'd be waiting in the parking lot  
to pick me up after school.

But wishful thinking is just disillusionment in disguise.

I'd like to think you'd finally learn  
how to be a father,  
but the truth is, you didn't even know how  
when you were here.  
The only difference is,  
you took away that chance to find out  
when you left.

You once told me  
*maybe getting arrested was a good thing*  
as if your absence was self-sacrificial,  
but maybe this was an attempt at fatherhood  
through the only way you knew how.

Maybe prison was your way  
of making sure I never follow in your footsteps.

### **the letter i'll never send**

There will come a day when you are here,  
when home is no longer a jail cell  
but a memory you yearn to relive,  
and you will show up at my door  
asking for your second chance,  
a final attempt at redemption,  
but I have already made my home  
in the dust you've left behind.

I do not yet have the heart to tell you  
fatherhood is no longer a void  
needing to be filled but  
a fragment I no longer desire.  
I grew life from the ashes, built  
a sanctuary out of your ruins  
and now,  
there is no more room left for you.

I'd like to think there will come a time  
when I am ready to open my arms to you,  
a time where I no longer beg you to stay  
but I give you the choice of leaving

and this time, you will change your mind.  
Maybe I'll be ready to receive you,  
but when a god returns after exile  
he is never who he once was

and neither will I.  
For now, the absence of my forgiveness  
is not from malevolence but  
an act of self-preservation.  
I have become my own god  
and have rebuilt my temple as one  
which will never forsake me.

There will come a day when you are here  
but I am here now.





# TROUVAILLE

N. A LUCKY FIND





# CHARACTERS IN DEVELOPMENT

WRITTEN  
BY **EXODUS BROWNLOW**

I think of how eggs are placed in cartons, the beautiful ones set in the front for all to see, and the unfortunate ones, the ones that are hopefully met with indifference, placed behind them.

There is one single child in the very back, in a corner that is a tad darker, a tad bit colder than it should be, a personal request made by his very own parents.

No human who has manifested something unfortunate into the world likes for the knowledge of that misfortune to be displayed. It is much easier that way, so that if a stranger comes along and asks, "Which one is yours?", the parents are able point to them comfortably, because the distance enables enough doubt to convince the stranger that there is nothing suspicious, or tragic to witness. That their child, like the others, like the ones in the front row for all to see, is a pure bundle of joy.

Fortunately for me, and for what I've been created to do, whether a child is beautiful or drastically otherwise, is unimportant.

Learning what will happen to them as they grow up, and away from this place, makes my job a little easier, sometimes. That if they are not blessed with favorability, or intelligence, or even a devotion to a greater good, that at least, and perhaps, they will be rewarded with a quick death. This plane of existence is only temporary.

We have covered the entire group of children.

Stood around as grandmothers, and uncles, and godmothers have tapped on the outside glass, claiming their own proudly.

We have covered every child except for one.

He is the child with the rosiest checks, and favorable rolls of fat on his legs, and hair so blessedly black that it emulates a sky too distant to be swayed by a sun's influence.

He is also the happiest child out of all the others, and I let that feed into my own beliefs, and fantasies that I have personally fabricated to take for as solace.

Learning what will happen to them as they grow up, and away from this place helps me.

Sometimes, I ask to learn this knowledge for myself.

Most of the time, it does not matter whether I have asked for this knowledge or not.

Every time, the knowledge is feed to me anyway.

"So, this is the one that we're left with, huh, Raphael?" Michael says, seeing. "Well, let us have a look." Michael caresses the dark-haired child's hands, and its body becomes bathed by a soft yellow. "This one, this one will lose both his mother and father at the age of eight. But his fortune will remain intact. His family's legacy, and his mind, will be almost unchallengeable. He will gain skills that are rarely possessed by mortal men. He will have the devotion, and love of a servant, a caretaker more than anything else, who he can trust wholly."

The child grins, and giggles at Michael as he speaks, seeing us both fully, but oblivious to the meaning our words.

At this sudden sound, a nurse comes towards us, for the child, watching him, and witnessing his peculiar joy, and rather than taking it as a reason to be suspicious, she internalizes the moment as a miracle, as a good omen of the child's future.

There are plenty of children that are, and will be, more afflicted by this world than he will. Children that will have no financial fortunes to claim, or intelligence to utilize, or even a decent caretaker to turn to for guidance, but there is something in the way that Michael talks that makes me push the topic further, rather than leaving it be as I had done with the others

"How necessary is losing *both* of his parents?"

Michael frowns at me, it has never been in my character to question him, or anything, really. "I should say extraordinarily imperative. Am I to understand that you believe that there is such a thing as purposeless pain?"

"You misunderstand me," I say, holding my hand up gently. "I merely wanted to know if there were ever a time when the trials...well, if ever the trials were too much, sometimes?"

In the corner, a slight flicker of light briefly touches the other child as he sleeps.

Michael shakes his head. "Every living being, creature, and entity, is made to endure the trails specifically catered to service their personal completions. Even children are expected to suffer these tests. And no, there is never such a thing as too much, for He knows the strength of His children, and what they are able to endure, and what they aren't able to overcome."

From where I am standing, next to the dark-haired child, certainly a good distance from the child who had been discarded to



the dark, I can feel the slight rise in temperature from the flickering lights above him. There is a sudden comfort from his otherwise callous introduction to the world, and during this momentary warmth, this alien onslaught, he begins to stir

“And what about him?”

Michael has already told me his story, all versions of them. I fully know what he is meant to become. I have seen the faces, and learned the names of everyone, and everything that he will lose. I know that in the end, he will never be who he is now, as he lies, wrapped in white blankets. “Was it not too much for him? Should we not alleviate some of his pains, so that he can become something better than what awaits in his destiny?”

“You know better than He does, is that what you mean?” Michael laughs at this, taking my words for the young rantings that they are, the questions of a severely under-experienced servant. “Don’t be so unfaithful, Raphael.” He looks at both children, the dark-haired one, the discarded one, back and forth. “These two may need each other more than anyone else in their lives. Just as they are meant to become, and as nothing else. They will serve each other’s purposes in numerous ways.”

Many children will go on to lead rather ordinary lives, with miniscule problems, and things that can be fixed in a moment, or after several years of attempts. They will not do anything extraordinary enough to beckon the world’s adoration, or fear, but there is a beauty in normalcy, in living in ordinariness. Simplicity, as an availability, is a gift.

Desperation begins to overcome me. “They do not have to serve each other in that manner, in that way. Their fates do not have to be sealed yet. Some things we do not have the liberty of changing, but a few of them we can. They do not have to become anything, if they do not want to. They can live normally as the rest of the children in this room will.”

Michael’s lips become thin. “Have you ever considered that it is because of these two that the rest of them will even have that luxury? Do you think that ordinariness would even be recognizable without chaos? Come now, Raphael,” he chides. “This conversation is becoming tiresome, and I am now convinced that you are fully abandoning your faith in Him.”

And how can I admit this? Me, a creature who should have not the slightest dip in his beliefs? I cannot bring myself to confirm this out loud. I cannot even bring myself to nod at his inquisitions of my obvious shortcomings.

Michael sees, though, he always sees.

“Do not be so unfaithful,” he reiterates. His hands in prayer, his eyes gentle, and his mouth removed of sternness. He separates his hands now, letting them travel their way back down to the black-haired child. “*Solace*, right?” He places them on the child once more. He snakes his fingers over its body, pinning but not pressing. “Belief that what this child will be subjected to is not as bad as I have made it out to be.” He says without asking. “Well, I can give you that, Raphael, for I am the shield, and the weapon of Him.” And as he talks, the baby begins to glow again, drifting from the soft yellow, to something more silver. “And I can do what must be done to ensure His victory.” The silver deepens further, growing white, feeling unbearably hot. I hear the insidious cries. I can taste the beginnings of burnt flesh.

I quickly act, but Michael halts me with his eyes. “And I can let this be as it is, Raphael. I can let him keep his parents. Let this be his only affliction, but if I do, you cannot do anything to alleviate this. I will take away the other tragedies that will befall him, but you will not be allowed to comfort this away. Life, will have discomfort, some more than others, and Raphael you cannot protect them from every one of them. That is not His plan.”

I push Michael aside, removing his hands, and replacing them with my own. Not even a second passes before the child is returned back to his previous state, all physical evidence of the happening erased, all memories removed. Sleep and sweet dreams take both of their place now.

“And you, are His healer,” Michael whispers, as the child rests. “For He is aware of the plans that He has for you. Plans to prosper you. Plans not to harm you, but to secure you of a future that is blessed beyond your wildest imagination. For from the birth of villains, heroes are created. Out of chaos, peace eventually comes. And when in pain, relief is administered” he preaches, smiling.

We leave after this, and in the background, the other child begins to cry in his little cold, dark corner.

I look back, capturing the hints of his strange chartreuse-blond curls, and cherry-red lips.

There’s a deep need to comfort him as well, to let him dream the sweet dreams of an infant who is still innocent enough to do so, but I let it be.

The crying, almost sounding of laughter.

# PCT

WRITTEN  
BY

**ALYSSA CRUZ**

When you swallow my sweetheart whole, promise you'll spit her  
out at the Northern Terminus for her mother, Jane, who pledges

allegiance to the double-rainbow's silicone-coated 30d fabric  
(I, too, slept sheltered by these tarp walls) and sealed seams.

For 2,650 miles, Ali will wake up and have nothing to do but walk.  
Her nighttime routine will swap her allergy filter's white noise with

raindrops tapping on tent-zipper teeth, and the breeze will run  
fingers through her hair as she tucks herself in. Softer than I could.

For 2,650 miles, she'll measure her joy— in peanut butter tortilla wraps,  
in evenings cowboy camping on her beloved Neoair sleeping pad,

in blisters by trail runners, in hitchhikes to town. I hope when she looks  
down at her dirt-caked fingers gripping the cork of her trekking

poles, she remembers she has done what so many of us find a  
plethora of excuses to never do: claim our life's grand adventure,

and begin. You know— Al's going to summit Mount Whitney. Al's  
going to hop & skip across the Bridge of the Gods' beams. Al's

going to be engulfed by thickets of ferns & her favorite series of  
alpine lakes and know that in the Cascades, she's almost home.

*She's going alone? How could that be safe? Aren't you worried?*

Questions no one would ask if she were a man. (But of course—yes.)

Holding her hand is like trying to tie a rope around the sun, an  
adventure that leaves my jaw unhinged daily— I'd worry if she stayed.

# PATHS

WRITTEN  
BY **KATHERINE DEGILIO**

I used to believe in moral dichotomy — a dark and light lane,  
but I am finding true morals lay between the sun and the moon —  
a trail of freckles down past her keen eyes —  
speckled across her lips —  
the path I will take.



# TRYPTIC OF THE ROCK

WRITTEN  
BY **AIDAN MARTIN-COX**

## **The Climb**

Muddy, Ponderous  
A winding, broken trail of dirt and trees  
Of challenges and obstacles and fees.  
The uphill battle to an ethereal goal  
The metaphysical trial to cleanse the soul.  
You may fall, you may scrape your knee,  
You may even feel your strength lull.  
Push a little harder. Ignore your muscle's plea.  
The view down here is dull.  
Onwards, to The Rock.

## **The View**

Vast, Wonderous  
A stunning look across the wooded bluff.  
A reward to the eyes for a journey so tough.  
The joint's relaxation, the muscle's rest,  
Respite from the climb's arduous test.  
To sit on the edge, to gaze, is enough,  
To forget the trek you had to best.  
Before you return to the trail, so rough,  
Let the air fill up your chest.  
From high upon The Rock.

## **The Descent**

Steep, Treacherous,  
A swift return to the way things were.  
Forever changed by a journey so pure.  
The journey was rough, but you came through;  
Proof to yourself of what you can do.  
You know the way, you can be sure:  
Whenever new is just too new,  
There is, of course, one proven cure.  
Just clamber up into the blue,  
See clearly from The Rock.

# FLOATING ANCHOR

WRITTEN  
BY **SANTE MATTEO**

.I have harvested your smiles  
for many seasons;  
watched them bud  
at the corners of your mouth,  
expand and flower  
and illumine your face,  
our world, my life.

I hear your smiles  
playing in your voice,  
nectaring your speech.

Your smile's glow  
lingers in my thoughts,  
lures my own smile  
to come out and play.

Your smile is like you:  
too fleeting to seize,  
too lasting to lose:  
like the red flutter of the cardinal's wings,  
the press of soft lips on my eyelid,  
the smell of just-peeled tangerine,  
the echo of a tune that makes my heart dance.  
A flash, a blur—a constant beacon:  
evanescent, revenant:  
the fugitive horizon I reach for,



# BLOOM

V. TO FLOURISH OR THRIVE



# ONCE LIMBLESS

WRITTEN  
BY **BLAKE FRANCIS**

Soon enough the branch  
breaks off down into the grass  
and begins again

# FLOWER GROWS

WRITTEN  
BY **WILLIAM KOFOED**

Rich warm soil  
    dark and brown  
in light of sun  
    and under rain

a small green leaf  
    on a stem  
begins to grow  
    a flower will be

gives no thought  
    has no cares  
of today  
    or the next

does not try  
    what to be  
to control  
    how to be

just a flower  
    growing here  
just will be  
    what it is

# INTERLACED FINGERS

WRITTEN

BY

**JOHANNA KRISTIN ELLERUP**

Two hands clasped together with interlaced fingers,  
A lifetime contained in two,  
Each finger a decade, each finger a day.

The first is brave and determined,  
To burst forth on instinct, on command,  
The decades of youth in a fleshly fold,  
To scold or grasp, aim or hold,  
As a pair, twice bold.

The second is long and steady,  
Anchor of the set,  
The passion of youth has tempered with age,  
To learn or act, create or engage,  
As a pair, twice sage.

The third is where commitment stands,  
Tether to the heart,  
The ending of youth's last battle is here,  
To accept or judge, deny or bear,  
As a pair, twice dear.

The fourth is shorter still, completion of the set,  
The twilight of two lives,  
It recedes as the passing of time is nigh,  
To rest or lie, laugh or cry,  
As a pair, once die.

Each finger a decade, each finger a day,  
One lifetime contained in two,  
Two hands clasped together with interlaced fingers.

# RECIPE

WRITTEN  
BY **SYLVIA RODEMEYER**

INTUITION

Servings: 1

## Ingredients

1 Scoop Insight (fresh or frozen)

½ tbsp Trust (may substitute Experience)

Pinch of Empathy\*

1 heaping teaspoon Perspective

\*For best results melt Empathy on stove over low heat before combining with other ingredients.

Directions: Combine all ingredients in glass bowl. Drop bowl on floor. Find Intuition among the shards of glass. Try not to get injured. Gather as much Intuition from the mess as you can. Strain into large mug. Add lemon to taste.

Drink in one sitting. Let it absorb to your core. Learn to trust your instincts. Tend to your wounds.

# SETTLE

WRITTEN  
BY

**SYLVIA RODEMEYER**

Houses settle

People settle

After a few years you instinctively avoid the cracked kitchen tile

You know that there are exactly six minutes of hot water in the morning

Four if the dishwasher is on

You stay out of that one bedroom in the winter, the heat doesn't reach it

Houses settle

People settle

You know not to bring up her father

Sometimes, out of spite, you do anyway

She will always be ten minutes later than the text says

But you will still slow dance to your own laughter while cooking dinner

Houses settle

People settle

You know which floorboard creaks in the hallway

Where the cats hide when it storms

And that the smoke detector always goes off when you fry bacon, so you bake it now

Houses settle

People settle

There are fewer love notes and more to-do lists

Petty arguments crop up during rush hour, they're never really about the traffic

You still pick the tomatoes out of her salads and sandwiches

Houses settle

People settle

You don't talk about that one girl

The texts

The pictures

The emails

The hurt

But like the broken tile, sometimes you forget, step on it mindlessly, and feel it shift under your weight

Houses settle

People settle

You know the distinct sound of her car in the driveway

And the way the front door whines when it opens

The house feels better with her in it. Your heart feels better with her in it

So you settle

# MY HANDS ARE MADE OF ICE

WRITTEN  
BY **GINA RUSSELL**

When I touch your palm, I melt  
Into a puddle  
And forget how to exist.  
Life in a new form  
Displaces my gravity. I am floating  
In myself. I am rising  
To the top.

Unfathomable,  
Feeling like liquid, but now  
I am a full glass. Wait—

I am not the glass,  
I am the water.  
I am liquid, morphing to caress your shape,  
I am touching every piece of you.

I remember how to exist  
Through your warmth.

I remember that you melted me  
Away from the sturdy block I once  
Was.  
I remember that you melted me,  
Permanently changed my genetic make-up that once  
Was.  
I remember that you melted me. What once  
Was  
Does not matter.  
I am melted.

But through this metamorphosis,  
This transformation,  
This progression of shape,  
I can rise.



Your heat, your impact,  
Gives me strength to  
Rise.

I rise to the top like the full  
Woman  
I am.

When you leave, I must freeze again, mold  
Myself into my past shape of comfort  
After learning to love freedom, to wander,  
To explore.

I must return  
To myself.

My luck, exactly.  
Ice  
Tastes so much better than  
Water.

The background of the entire image is a soft-focus collage. It features several butterflies with orange and brown wings, some with black markings. In the bottom right corner, there is a large, vibrant orange flower with many petals. The overall color palette is dominated by greens, oranges, and browns, creating a natural and serene atmosphere.

# EUNOIA

WELL MIND; BEAUTIFUL  
THINKING



# MAKING IT

WRITTEN  
BY **SANTE MATTEO**

To make a life, make time to make plans,  
make do and make good, make it right, make it through;  
make news, make a name, make something of you.

You can make money, make hay, make it big, make a splash;  
or make a statement, a difference, make a stand, if you can;  
make an impression, make a case and make sense,  
make a sound, make some noise, make a peep if you want;  
or make music, make poetry, or just make merry all day.

You can make a decision, make choices, make sure,  
make bold, make both heads and tails of things;  
make like a bird, make after that fox,  
make progress and headway, make the grade, make it in,  
make tracks, make good time, make the bus or the train;  
make ready, make the ship, make sail, make the trip;  
make the team, make the shot, make points, make the goal,  
make the hit, make the score, make captain and more;  
make it good, make the rounds, and then make a bow.

You can make mistakes, make haste and make waste,  
make a mess or make trouble, but don't make excuses.  
Make yourself useful and make yourself proud,  
make an effort, a claim, make a gesture or wish;  
make something of your life, make a good husband or wife,  
make a home, make it last, make a good mom or dad;  
make coffee and tea, make cookies and bread,  
make a fire in winter, make her breakfast in bed.

(Now don't make a face and don't make with the frown,  
don't make an issue of it, make no bones about it,  
don't make a row, don't make a fist, don't ever make war,  
don't make off angry, but make way, make a detour,  
make a reply, make an offer, make up if you can.  
If you can't make the scene, then just make believe,  
make as if you're glad, make out that you're happy;  
make amends, make nice, make eyes, and make moves,  
make sparks when you can, make whoopee now and then!)

Love too, like war and like life, must be made.  
You can fall in it, be in it, want it, or fear it,  
but it's the love we make that makes us whole.  
To make lasting love make a vow, make it fast,  
make a bond, make a marriage, and then make it last,  
Make a child, make it grow, make it strong,  
make all our lives happy, make our hearts glow.

# YOUR PITIFUL FLOWERS WILL NEVER BLOOM

WRITTEN  
BY **GINA RUSSELL**

I have always been a  
Heavy woman.  
When I arrive,  
The world hears me.  
I wake with the chub of my  
Stomach & the width of my  
Hips & the stomp of my  
Feet: hitting the floor  
Harshly, hitting the floor  
Loudly.

I sing  
Until the thin twigs surrounding me curve towards my voice & understand  
What they are not.

I have always been a  
Heavy woman,  
But the ticks of a measuring tape  
Squeezing my hips do not control me.  
Rather, I control them, demanding they  
Fit to my bends & fit to my curves.  
I wear them like jewelry—  
Embellishments of confidence.

My size defines my  
Soul—that which sings  
Melodies molded for me, orchestrated with winds & strings to match  
My virtue.

I have always been a  
Heavy woman,  
But I do not repulse at the sight  
Of a looking glass—that which accentuates the faults in my creation.  
When I observe my figure,  
When I cherish my shape,  
I admire & obey.  
For I see: my creation has no faults.

My lips are immobile, but my  
Reflection sings to my soul—  
*You are strong.* You are strong.

I have always been a  
Heavy woman.  
When I grow,  
You may bloom flowers of pity &  
Leave them at my roots,  
But your twigs for thumbs cannot diminish my  
Presence, even with your disguised  
Dignity hidden in fields of pitiful daisies.  
I enrich the earth that feeds me and  
Entertain your pity plants,  
Growing & growing &  
Growing  
Before your eyes.

I have always been a  
Heavy woman.  
Loud & dense.

I have always been a  
Heavy woman.  
Though I used to despise my volume in  
Voice & size,  
Though I used to cover my eyes with your petals to keep my-  
Self from a looking glass,  
Though I used to reach for your poorly  
Planted pity—

I now crave the opposite.

# RELAPSE

WRITTEN  
BY **SPENCER SEVERIN**

The colours across my skin  
Bleeding into my life,  
Once again unwelcomed  
Are not a show of weakness  
Nor a display of repeating failure.

But the ability to heal  
When given compassion from yourself.

# GROWTH AND PROGRESSION

WRITTEN  
BY **SPENCER SEVERIN**

Rushing by in a cerulean wave—  
Salt tickling my cheeks  
Raised in a silent smile,  
Mirroring the sunset illuminating the shore.

Maybe I am capable  
Of so much more than failure.

# CEREBRAL CORTEX BOULEVARD

WRITTEN  
BY **KENNY SHORE**

I run down the streets of my mind  
Like a crazed person sometimes  
Billboards and neon signs line the alleys  
Full of sayings that cut me to my knees  
"That'll never happen" says one  
"You're not good enough" screams the next one  
"You don't deserve it" cries yet another  
It's a noisy street full of midway barkers  
Barking that I don't know my ass from a straw hat  
What a cacaphony of cussedness  
What a hoo-ha of hatred  
A racket of rancor  
Time to turn down a different street  
A sharp left turn into acceptance  
Easy Street is just one block over  
Who knew?







# CONTRIBUTOR

## *Notes*

Rachel writes poetry and nonfiction from the unique perspective of a healthcare professional who treats mental illness and also experiences it herself. Rachel's nonfiction and poetry have appeared in the Huffington Post, The Rumpus, Panoply Zine, and the Narratively and Tin House collection "Memoir Mondays." In 2018, she was interviewed by HuffPo Perspectives.

Sarena Pollock is a junior at Susquehanna University majoring in Creative Writing and minoring in Sociology.

Gina Russell is an 18 year old, and they am on a journey of self-discovery through poetry.

Terrance James is a retired educator and rehabilitation consultant living on Vancouver Island, BC. He is the author of books on education, social science topics, and local history. His poetry appears in several Canadian anthologies and is concerned with place and the human condition.

Sante Matteo, born and raised in a small agricultural town in southern Italy, is a retired professor of Italian Studies at Miami University, in Oxford, Ohio, where he dabbles in creative writing and tries to learn the secret of happiness and love from his and his wife's dog Zoe.

William A. Kofoed was born in Logan Utah. He now lives in Magna Utah. He has been published by Poetry Quarterly, Utah Life, Dual Coast, Door is a jar and Encore 2018. He began writing in High School.

Spencer Séverin is a Canadian writer who has appeared in the Dime Show Review (2019). You can find more of their work on twitter at severinsspencer, and on Instagram at spencerseverin.

Aidan is a linguist and poet, hailing from Los Angeles. He is inspired by scenes of nature, and many of his poems are snapshots of scenes or moments in nature; he has a particular fascination with thunderstorms, having written several poems about them. He also has a soft spot for wildflowers.

Exodus Oktavia Brownlow is a Cruger, Mississippi native whose writing aesthetic includes purposeful horror, character-driven fiction, and nonfiction writing that aims to create a healthier world for us all. She is a graduate of Mississippi Valley State University with a B.A in English, and Mississippi University for Women with an MFA in Creative Writing. She is published with Electric Literature, Barren Magazine, Anti-Heroine Chic Magazine, Valley Voices, Luna Luna Magazine, Jellyfish Review, X-Ray-Literary Magazine, and more. Exodus has a healthy adoration for the color green.

Blake Francis is a writer who is currently obsessed with about three things: Haiku's, working out and dungeons and dragons. His work can be seen at Beautiful Losers.

Sylvia Rodemeyer writes and podcasts from Portland, Oregon.

She specializes in queer history and pop culture (and often the intersection of the two). She can be found as @not\_plath on various corners of the internet.

Alyssa Cruz is a Filipina-American poet, born and raised in the suburbs of the Pacific Northwest. When she isn't analyzing healthcare data or browsing infographics, you can find her at a happy hour, daydreaming, writing poetry, or all three at once. Her work has appeared in Bricolage & The Atlanta Review. She lives in Seattle, WA with her puppy Berkeley.

Sudarsana Mohanty is currently a graphic designer based out of LA, who has worn many hats in her life from archaeologist to preschool teacher. Writing and photography are the constant love (and hate) affairs of her life.

Kenneth L Shore is a Buddhist mystic poet, singer/songwriter/guitarist, independent film composer, visual artist, and psychotherapist, based out of Winston Salem, NC. He is a graduate of Campbell University and UNC Chapel Hill. He has had several poems published in NC State University's literary magazine, Windhover as well as Havik - literary journal of Las Positas College, Dublin, CA. He performs as Kenny Shore in the South-eastern US.



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