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ISSUE III



☆ *Incandescence* ☆

THE ORIGAMI REVIEW



☆ Incandescence ☆

Incandescence is the story of light, the story of transgressing boundaries and daring to exist outside the confines we exist in. Incandescence is the state of freedom and androgyny of expression, unrestrained by social norms.

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Incandescent

Ananya Rustogi



Ananya Rustogi is a High School Student in Halifax, Nova Scotia , who has had a passion for art from a young age. She holds positions as graphic designer, public relations officer and marketing and design head in various non profits and enjoys watching (really bad) netflix reality tv in her free time.



Astraea

Andrea Gerada

BEHOLD, THE FETTERED STAR!

uttered with malicious glitter, they held the future
as Morpheus palmed his dust
captivity graced with moon-ritual
terror
gleam-legged creature under arched roof, waiting
for supernova

SEE HOW SHINY AND PURE? HOW ITS LIGHT
DANCES, ALL BOLD BALLERINA?

they mistake prophecy in my bones, heavenly body
for the conjunction of Athens and Andromeda—
but it is only fire and radiant
nuclear
light
loving visitor of solar paths, imperfect, waiting
for collapse

PROMISED NOT LIBERTY BUT REVELATION,
OUR OWN, OUR VERY OWN!

I am in a hurry to catastrophize, to weave gossamer
for all eyes watching, baring the destiny nestled
in the crevice of my spirit, refracted threads from my
maker
and their hands, patient and tender and waiting
for the bang

Andrea Gerada is an aspiring writer and creative living in the Philippines. She holds a BA in English Literature, and is particularly interested in works that explore food, nature, and light. They can be found @andiesburgers on Twitter.

Cosmic wanderer

Snigdha Garud

the sky is a swatch of navy
dotted with bright, silvery light,
a banquet for a starving psyche.
soft moonbeams, I tuck
into the void of my soul,
one by one those rays are scooped,
and poured down my yearning throat.
twinkling stars are a taunting elixir,
glimmering with faraway radiance.
desperately, I drift closer,
cherry-picking the brightest.
luminous vitality, I swallow those
sweet clusters condensed
into perfect
eternal
bliss,
branding a thousand pulsating stars
on my chest.
each star a heart, pumping
me farther every minute:
arteries ferry me around after twilight,
veins ferry me to bed before dawn,
the last tendrils of my dream sobering
in the golden sunlight.

please wipe that sun away—
even in this lucid morning,
darkness fragmented by light,
I want to ride the streaking tail of a comet,
back to my night.



Snigdha Garud is an Indian-American writer from Pennsylvania. Previously, her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Five South*, *Paranoid Tree*, *Beaver Magazine*, *CUTBOW Quarterly*, and more. In her free time, Snigdha enjoys watching sunrises, sunsets, and everything in between and randomly tweets @coniferousyeti.

When God Said “Hi” to Me at Pizza Al Fresco

Ave Goorbarry

Gold graces girl the way God graced angels when he sent humans to earth. /
Mightier heaven that spoke beyond bounds as she became sky in a night. / When
those lights shone down onto her / it became the halo he forgot to add as she was
on her way out of the clouds. / I watched the lights as we had dinner. / Lights
strung over the tin roof and down the side / so as she sat across from them each
eyelash could give blinks for thanks. / The lights were hung there. / The low-
bearing fruit meant to invoke her glance with intention. / Adam cried that night as
a reminder to Eve / that he shouldn't have bit that apple. / He missed the stars too
much from above. / He wondered why they were dimmed looking up from the
ground. / Until I reminded him that you paid them: the stars, the moon, the sun. /
So that you could be the brightest in the sky that night until dawn / when they
couldn't take your eyes as currency at daybreak. / Because then I couldn't speak of
all the ways gold found solace in your eyes. / I think the angels cried that night /
and I think purgatory was a refuge / as each glance you took blurred the lines
between heaven and earth.



Ave Goorbarry is a teenage writer born in New Jersey and currently lives in South Florida. Ave's writing has won awards regionally from Scholastic Art and Writing and has been previously published in *The Firefly Review*, *A Thin Slice of Anxiety*, *Words & Whispers*, *The Bibliopunk Lit Zine* and remains forthcoming in *Dead Skunk Mag*. Ave is an alumni of The Iowa Young Writers' Studio 2022 and Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Diet Water* magazine.

Lady of Fire and Virtue

Jessica King

Girl with hair of bronze
sleeping in a nightgown of firestorm
on a bed of copper and zircon

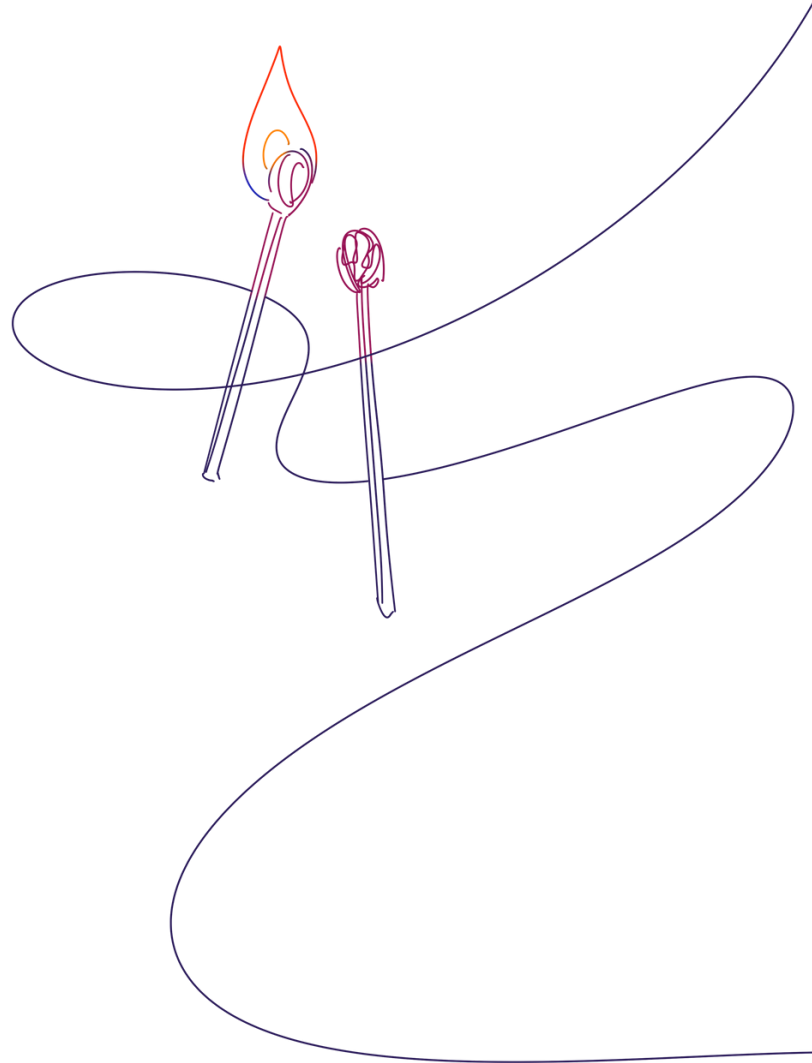
How dare you sleep so soundly
knowing that men will crave
the wealth of your moonstone skin?

Girl with lips of rubellite
frowning with cheeks of garnet
beside the coast of fool's gold

Don't you know that your flame
attracts the most repulsive of moths
lured to devour your virgin warmth?

– inspired by Sir Frederic Leighton's "Flaming June" (1895)

Jessica King (she/her) is a self-taught writer of ten years whose publications can be found in Heart Balm Literary, Raven Review, Meditating Cat Zine, and others. She's currently enrolled in a dual-bachelor program in creative writing and comparative world literature at Long Beach State University. When she has time, she posts on Instagram (@thewhitedovepoet) and develops a future literary journal for new writers (@scs_literary).



Faerielight

Oliver Tang



Oliver is a digital photographer from New York currently studying film. He seeks to use photography to capture the magic in the world, and also is beginning to experiment with digital softwares and photo editing. In his free time, he enjoys travelling, going on hikes, and connecting with the beauty of nature.

Trip to the Greenhouse

Althea Downing-Sherer

1. As soon as I enter the greenhouse bathroom I am met with a row of lockers and a fluorescent lit shower. I can imagine the scientist who must use these facilities: a young man with no delusional inclination toward art, only devout commitment to these plants. To this vegetation tangible enough that he can study the nomenclature for its varying shades of green. With this image in mind, I am now fully prepared to dedicate myself to botany; longing for that academic passion toward something so spiritual yet so seductively objective.
 2. Twenty minutes in this greenhouse have taught me that if you can't become something, you might as well surround yourself with it. If I stare long enough at the nyctinastic flora I can embody their solar cyclicity and open my face to the tendrils mirroring me.
 3. I told myself death was on the arm of my ivy plant growing across the room to meet me, wrote that I was a wilting flower and you were the setting sun. Maybe if I can learn to hold these frail petals between my index finger and thumb without tearing them, I can learn to carry myself gracefully.
 4. My spine straight, my gaze over spotless rooftops. I don't hesitate. My hands are ephemeral confidence, launching recklessly out to touch the green growth. It's not an action I would describe as solar. I resent this Dionysian part of myself and hide it behind wool curtains and leather masks. These wardrobe choices still feel too predatory and as I walk into this glass-paned room the green is chattering all around me: We can smell the blood.
-

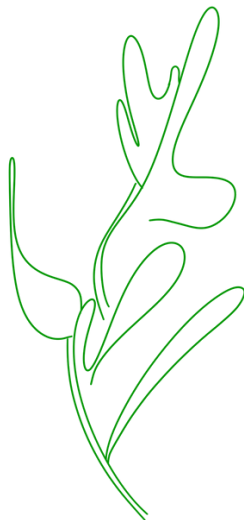
Trip to the Greenhouse

Althea Downing-Sherer

5. Do you remember my pale imitations of the sun? The yellow overhead light paired with the drapes drawn tightly shut? I would bruise my spine on hardwood floors, gazing upward as if I could blind myself with this artificial hope. As if I could photosynthesize holy connections. Praying for everything Apollonian.

6. The little mercurial charm I had left was waning, red blooming between my legs like a blood moon. Cursed again with predictability.

7. How I wished I could become an empirical species instead of a zealous and rabid one. Something solar and even, something desired for its four leaves. Something tangible and unexpectedly soft instead of unexpectedly thorny. Something botanists want to look in the face. To examine and dissect until they find a scientific name for the shade of green growing brighter behind their closed eyelids



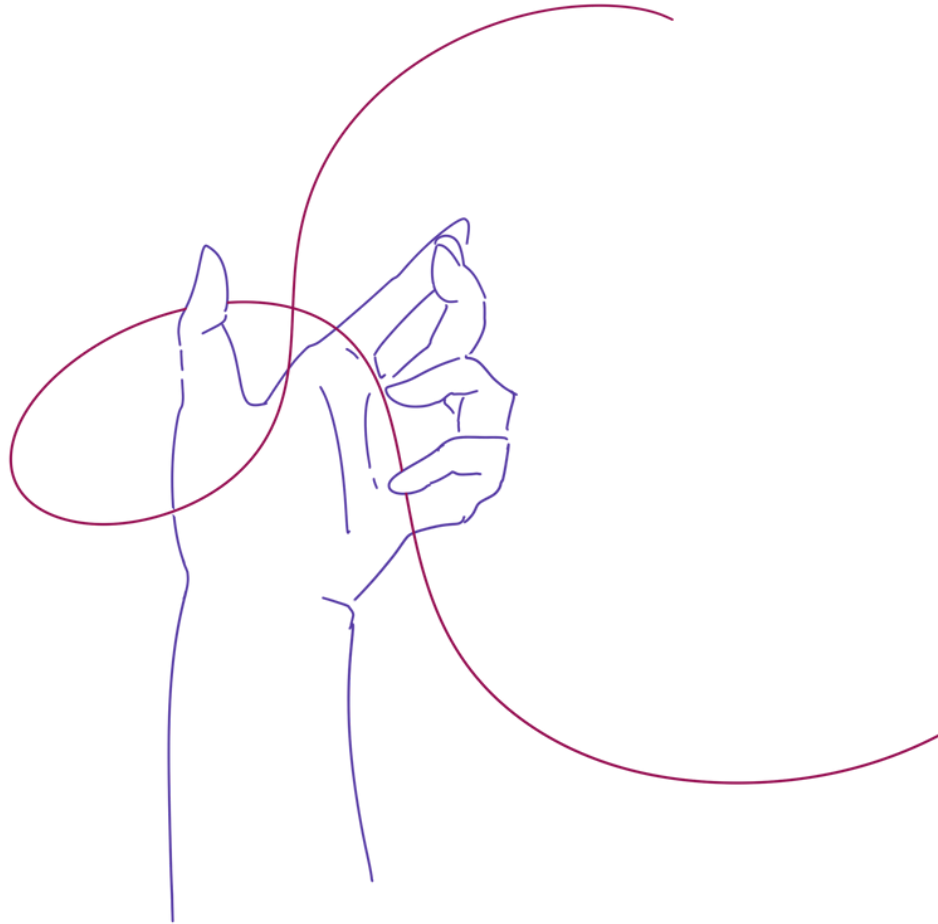
Althea Downing-Sherer is a high school junior from Iowa. She is an alumna of the Iowa Young Writer's Studio, an editor at Polyphony Lit, and was an international finalist in Coexist Literary Magazine's Metamorphosis writing contest. When she's not writing, she can be found creating elaborate Pinterest boards, listening to Taylor Swift, or preparing for Mock Trial competitions.

Rough colours

Kelechukwu Samuel, Ojile

these contours are not mine to straighten,
I have trodden many paths to get here.
if you are not loving me like this
show me babel, show me Jesus, or
prophecy, I need the miracle of language
to make you understand

that I am not the apocalypse
you have been waiting for
to happen.



Kelechukwu Samuel Ojile writes and edits poetry at THREPOSS, a new magazine and a growing community of writers and artists. Although he studies Chemistry at University of Nigeria, Nsukka (very tough stuff) he ventures more into the arts; makes graphic designs, researches, enjoys listening to Tatiana Manaois, Billie Elish and Asa. His works can be read on Rough Diamond Poetry, Firebrand magazine, Itanile and elsewhere. He plays chess and twits @KelechukwuOjile.

Hatch

Olivia Choi



Olivia Choi is a high school senior who has fallen in love with painting, surrealism, and East Asian literature. Her artworks and short stories have been recognized by the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and the in:cite journal respectively. When she isn't sketching or painting, Olivia likes to spend her spare time doing her nails and watching true crime documentaries.



WHAT DIED IN VENICE

Claire Sims

will not die for me,
will kick in its coffin and claw at the earth for i saw a silent language in his eyes i
never learned
yet knew by heart

beautiful girl

boy

girl

on a tightrope, tiptoeing over a border you call it pride before the fall
i don't really say much at all but

what i wouldn't give
to find fluency in this,
to get on my knees and tell your god

i am as i was made

oh god,

i am as i was made

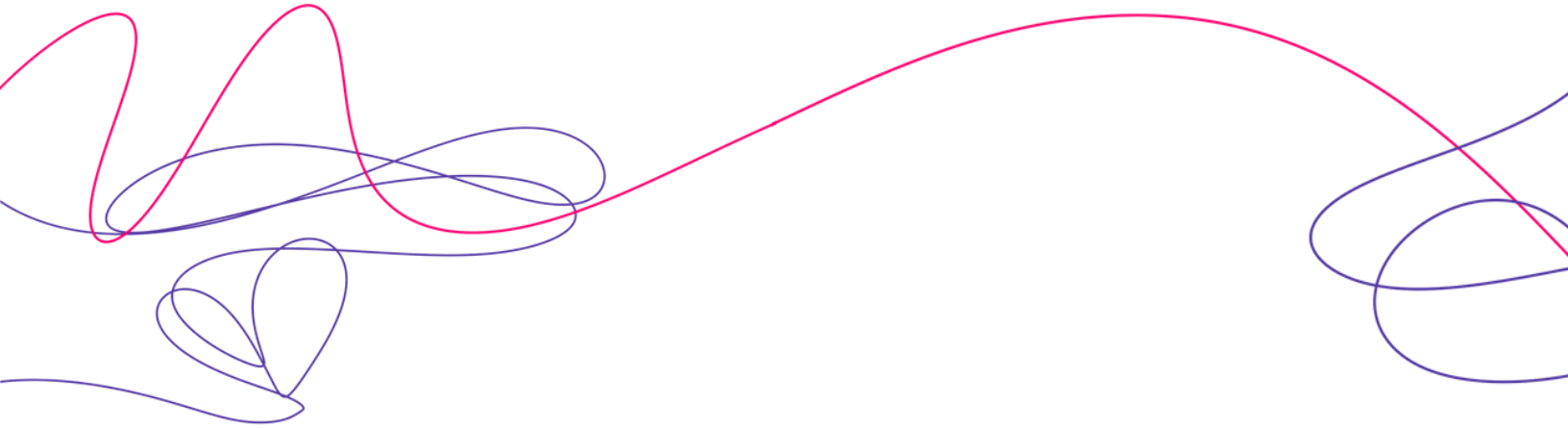
Claire Noelle Sims is a working-class writer from Swindon, England. Her work has most recently been recognized on BBC Radio Wiltshire. She primarily writes about memory, sexuality, and waterslides (for some reason). You can find her on Twitter at @ClaireNSims.



Lemmings at Heart

Jessica Vance

The garishly lit Love's sign tells me that gas runs at \$3.33, and experience tells me that you are equally as costly. Even so, I answer when you call. Now at dawn, maple skies melt into the crowns of trees, becoming glistening halos against sable silhouettes; a beautiful yet shoddy imitation of the way your hair splays around your face in the wind. The Wild Cherry Freeze, along with your shoulder, is the coldest thing you've ever given me. It's a charming crimson like your cheeks and dewy like the iridescent oil streaks that stain the pavement, which, like you, have likely killed many things. I can see the slick spots in my mind even as we leave, and know that it will spend its nights smothering surrounding plants and strangling animals with its film. As we blink past a field of cows not so far past, I wonder whether they'd eat those befouled flowers; accidentally letting it coat their tongues and throats before the suffocation set in, and praying that the sludge would melt away, leaving only a red stain. My heart hurts for them and myself, a known victim of sympathy pains. Though I am comforted by the new knowledge that I, at least, am not afraid to be taken out to pasture along the I-90. How could I be, when I've seen you this way? When I've known you for so long.



Jessica Vance is a writer from South Texas. She recently graduated with a BFA in broadcast journalism and is an editor of the literary magazine *Tiny Molecules*. Her work can be found in *Ashamed Magazine*, *Antifragile zine*, *FilmDaze*, and *Black Femme Collective*.

I Worship You, Darling

Anngelina Minnittee



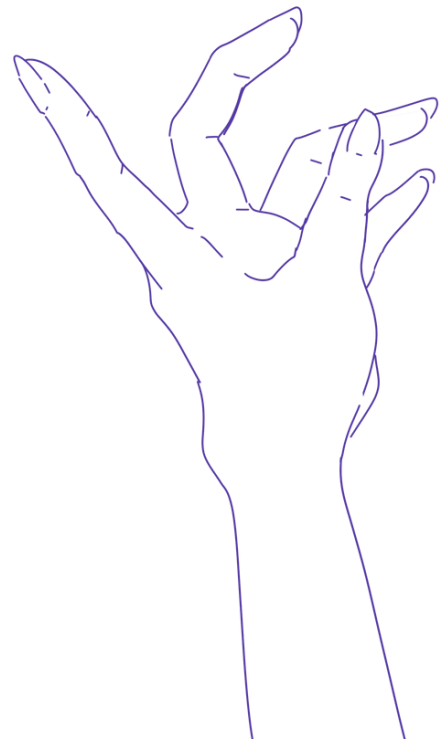
Anngelina Minnittee is an illustrator and writer from Miami. Her work can be found in publications like Grain of Salt Magazine and Worm Moon Archive. When not writing or drawing, she enjoys reading graphic novels and cooking.

I Worship You, Darling

Anngelina Minnittee

The cold ache of my bones is akin to
pins and needles pressed through my skin
skewering the cartilage of my joints.
Frost begins forming at the edges of my hands
luring me to sleep, the deepest of releases.
The winter consumes every part of me,
ice running crisp and jagged across my face.
Numbing every sense like novocaine
until I think nothing, feel nothing, am nothing.

Like a feverous dream,
I see the blurred visage of a savior.
Her soft arms become my safe haven,
skin melting away under her velvet touch
as she strikes a match atop
the rough surface of my heart.
Burning bright, stocking coals,
steam blowing out of my inner furnace.
And again, I think everything, feel everything, am everything.



Anngelina Minnittee is an illustrator and writer from Miami. Her work can be found in publications like Grain of Salt Magazine and Worm Moon Archive. When not writing or drawing, she enjoys reading graphic novels and cooking.

Dripping Bruises

Rory Frasch

It's storming out when she arrives. Odelle's hair is streaming colors of blue, purple, and pink all across her neck. I can't see as well as I used to these days, glasses only do so much when you've lost sight in one eye. I almost mistake the colors for a bruise stretching across her skin. I hate that the first thought of mine is relief because this is how I know us, scars still forming red-hot across our flesh and bruises ripe.

This is familiar, this is how I know we are. Aching but never crying, hand in hand tight enough to keep each other present. There is a strange sense of nostalgia that comes with growing up in warfare, when the memories of your childhood are both tinted rose with naivety and blood.

We're 25 now; both of us know better to mistake violence for adventure. At least that's what I tell myself. My first thought is relief because some part of me is still longing to go home to the world beyond the borders of this realm. A place that now only exists to me in the fantasy section of the library down my street.

Her injuries would be the sign of a new calling, perhaps. Odelle would take my wrist in her palm and drag me out of here. We'd drive out of New York in a rental car that we'd never return and into the woods of Vermont, searching the place for any sign of the magic I'd grown up with. We'd return to Vesta the same way Odelle had arrived initially. Through some chance rift in the way space and time typically functioned.

Then I spot the way the color is dripping, not stained and it all falls apart. She'd shown me how to change my hair when we first arrived here, on Earth. We'd been injured from battle, from traveling across dimensions and yet, she had priorities. Not that they made much sense, after six years, her face was no longer plastered on the news; her parents teary-eyed begging for her to come home. She still insisted on disguising herself.

Dripping Bruises

Rory Frasch

You had to do it with this sort of paste, there were no tailors who could shift your appearance with a few murmured words and a bribe. She tugged pink into her blonde and wore so much makeup that she was barely recognizable.

It took me a few years to finally search up her name — it'd taken me a bit to learn how to use the internet — the pictures I'd found seemed like a distant relative rather than the girl I knew. She smiled differently now, held herself in a way that was off from how we'd first met. I'd almost forgotten how she'd looked without scars, like I'd forgotten how I looked. Odelle hadn't been lying about wanting to disguise herself, rather, just hadn't told the full story.

Things hadn't changed too much since then, it seemed. I shouldn't be surprised, I am anyway. We just stare at each other for a moment, really studying one another. She has this look in her eyes that I used to mistake for determination; in truth it was desperation. The longing in her eyes was something I knew all too well.

"You're back," I say first. She encompasses everything I hate about myself, therefore there is a fight gripping my muscles. I love the shape of my sins when they're braced on her shoulders, sheer and balanced on the jutted bones of her collar.

"Shut up," she's kissing me before I have any room to complain. I lean in as though she is a lifeline.

I raise a hand to wipe at makeup smears, to press back her coloring onto my palms so it stains and I'll have something to remember her by. This her, not the one with blonde lashes who gasped when sparks started in her hands as though it wasn't magic so simple toddlers could manage it. I am reminded of her humanity with how tight she's gripping onto me. This is no savior, this is just a woman. My memories are fading with the stresses of shitty roommates and taxes and wages that come too late to be anything useful. There's a box stock full of journals in my closet detailing every little thing I could recall.

Dripping Bruises

Rory Frasch

I haven't been home in a while, long enough that I've stopped missing it. It aches here, with this clutching and grabbing because I remember my childhood bedroom. I remember the strange girl who stumbled through a crack in reality and the way she clung to me when I let her. I remember stroking back her hair, I remember the way she shone when they told her she was meant to be someone. I remember running with her when we found out what that someone was. We won't cry. I'll just pull and pull until we are both undone to string; only our hands left over to tie our leftovers into knots strong enough to hold bodies. We'll discard the rest into the trash bin by my kitchen and hope my roommates don't notice the excess of humanity melting out of the takeout bag we use to collect garbage.

The heat is streaking through the windows despite the five or so fans we've placed around the impossibly small apartment. It sticks to my skin and hers as well, a humidity that smells sweet and riveting.

I draw my hands across her hair, down the wetness and to the back of her neck. There's a scar there that goes almost straight across. I run my fingers along it only to remind myself, to remind her, that I'm the only one that'll ever be able to do such a thing without her flinching back. That I'll be the only one she's ever able to kiss without imagining someone else. That it is the same for me.

"You remembered my address," I speak in rushed words, not wanting this to be a conversation. We can speak after my hands have touched every bit of her, until I become the girl I was when I was a teenager. Angry and alit with a hope so bright it blinded me.

"You sent it to me," she answers, breathless. She's run here, I realize. She is like me, so I know that the speed was not due to the rain but trying to outrun her upcoming hatred of me. There always must be someone to blame and with the instigators halfway across the multiverse, we look to each other.

Dripping Bruises

Rory Frasch

“You remembered,” I repeat, as though this is something precious and not expected.

It’s something that’s been ingrained in me by all those self-help books Odelle and I read at 18. Back when we’d first arrived on Earth, or rather, in Odelle’s case — returned.

We were trying to parent ourselves between the words of being grateful for every little thing. I’d written lists upon lists of gratitude dedicated to Odelle, back when we had nothing else. Or rather, back when we didn’t pretend we had anything other than each other. It’s only my instinct to repeat the ways I love her, hushed under my breath while she’s pretending to be asleep.

“I remember everything, René,” she smiles, lips tugging at the marks on her cheeks. I whisper back, “Liar,” because she’s tattooed labels onto her scars just so she won’t forget the way they came to be.

She kisses me again as thunder crawls out my window, hips upon hips. She pushes closer, this time I hold her. Not because she needs to be held but perhaps because I want someone to hold. I don’t let her go until lightning strikes. I don’t pull away until I can count how many miles it is away from us.

My body has rounded out with stability. I can feel Odelle’s ribs beneath my fingers and I’m scared for a moment that I’ll break her. This thought is so terrifying for a moment — that she could be fragile — but then I remember that I don’t need her to lead me anymore. Without magic to kill myself over, I have become strong. Odelle needs something to fall into.

I pull away at this, reality striking me with a heavy hand. There’s a reason we only exist to each other in the temporary lapse of our judgments. We become fools in one another’s existence. My hands release from her form, I will not be infected with her destruction.

Dripping Bruises

Rory Frasch

“Let me get you a towel,” I say. Something across her gaze clears up, the eye of the storm, and she nods.

She’s seated on my couch when I get back, still soaking wet with rainwater. It’s so much that I wonder how long she’s been traveling out there in the cold. It’s not out of concern, I promise that, just curiosity. I’ve learned by now to stop caring about her safety, it’s a useless task.

Then again, Odelle is not the girl I once knew. She’s a woman, half-starved and dripping bruises in my apartment. My apartment, I recognize for what must be the first time, I’ve been here for a year. That’s probably the longest I’ve been in one place.

If Odelle was to bring herself up and drag me back to Vesta, I realize, it would have to be through dragging. This was home now, wasn’t it? I push the thought back before it nauseates me. I pull the towel over her hair first, we both always dry our hair first, and throw another around her shoulders. She used to whip her hair around like a dog when we were living out of motels on lucky nights and shelters on any other; just because there was no one to stop her, she’d said.

It’s one of the beach towels, not the good ones. I regret it at the moment, will she think wrong of me? Impolite? Though, who am I to be nervous now? I am behaving like a preteen of a woman; acting as though she is a stranger I am inviting in. As though Odelle hasn’t formed her identity off of impoliteness. Perhaps it is because I had been living with the strength of an adult at such a young age that I am falling into my youth just now. I never got an unstained first love, it’s hard to not remember that. I scramble her hair until the towel is damp and take her chin in my hand. She pulls the towel close like a blanket. Her paleness stands out in the cold. Her eye bags do as well. Black smears around her tear ducts, leftovers from poorly removed makeup.

Dripping Bruises

Rory Frasch

“I don’t look too pretty, don’t I?” Odelle says, grinning. There’s a thrill in her tone. “I’ve never cared for pretty women,” I say in return.

“Yet you made yourself one,” she says. It’s not a flirtation but a question, an acknowledgment of how I’ve changed.

I smile back, it means nothing to me. She loves me in the way that no matter how rough I look, she’d find me beautiful. It’s the movement of things, not the structure of them. As much as I notice the hardship written across her face, I have to say it’s mutual. I want to lean in to kiss her, but it feels wrong now. We’ve ruined it.

I move to pull away but she leans into my hand, “We’re a wreck, aren’t we?” she says. I hum in response, “Speak for yourself,” This position is uncomfortable, I hold it regardless. Comfort tends to be disconcerting. You must hold on either way, who knows when I’d feel it again? “I don’t believe we’re built for much of anything at all, to be fair,” she continues on, “Not anything that lasts. Is anyone, though?”

“Others don’t build you up, it’s something you do yourself,” I find myself pressing my palm to my side, wiping it off.

She meets my eyes in a way so forceful that it almost scares me, “Maybe,” she pauses on the word, “But I like existing like this, though, without purpose. Like a dissonant note.” I ponder her words, “I know,” a silence hangs between us, “That’s your choice.” “Not yours,” she plucks the words, “I get it,” her tone is practically a sigh.

“Forgive me for trying to live, Odelle,” I keep our eye contact.

She pulls the towel around herself tighter, “There’s nothing to forgive.” Existing around her hurts, this riveting homesickness stirs through me. Feeling her touch, her voice, it’s like being alit with magic all over again. Sour in the crevices of my skin, rot in my heart. “I’m not upset, I’m simply observing.”

Dripping Bruises

Rory Frasch

I don't say anything for a long moment, staring out the window and trying to think about anything other than her, "Are you going to stay?" I ask. It's not so much a question as an offer. "I can't."

"Rephrasing the question won't change the answer," she says.

"It's a different question," I let myself slouch a bit, not realizing how tight I'd been holding myself until now. "We could make things work."

"Just because we love each other doesn't mean you love me," she's looking at me, I can feel it. I don't dignify her by moving.

"What's the difference?"

"We loved each other," she intertwinds her pinkie with mine, I allow her to. "And it lingered, yes, but you didn't fall in love with me like this and... I didn't fall in with you like how you are now. This is leftovers."

"Could you love me like this?" I ask. Something in me is breaking, a floodgate of my parents' rules and ideals clinging to my skin in a chorus of how I'm wrong. How foolish was it for me to fall in love with destruction? No matter if your lips have blued with chill, it is foolish behavior to set yourself on fire.

"That's not the question," she holds my hand tighter. "It's not about us, it's about how the world is."

"You always focus too hard on the big picture, who cares about the world, Odelle? It's always changing, always going to shit. Why do we have to as well?"

"Because I care," her voice breaks. I still don't look at her. "I can't stop caring. I'm not able to be like you, René. Stuff sticks to me, nothing fades, it hurts the same every morning as it did when it happened."

Dripping Bruises

Rory Frasch

“I wonder why that is,” I say.

“Hey,” she replies. “You know I can’t stay.”

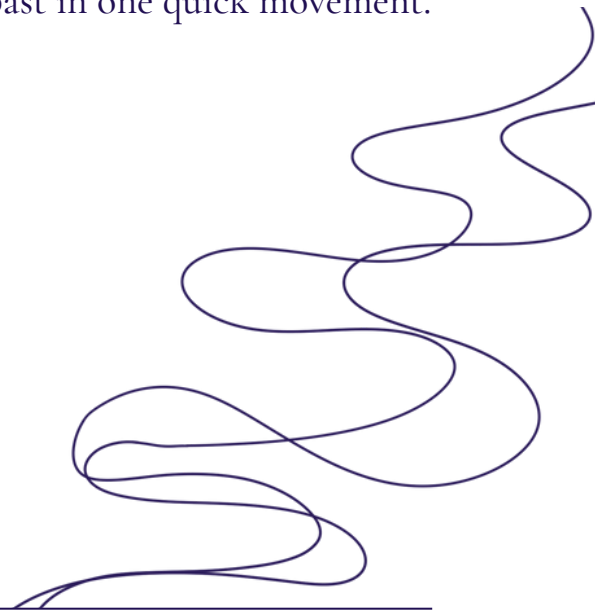
I duck my head, “I know.”

“We’re past our prime,” she says. “Maybe that’s why.”

“Maybe,” I don’t agree. I pull my arm around her, rough and desperate. She falls into it. “I’m not sure if we ever had a prime, though.”

Odelle’s hair is beginning to melt patterns on my shoulders, “I did,” she says.

I do not know how to explain to her how a prime is meant to be a point of happiness, not ruin, so I don’t. I try not to think about how easy it would be to let her bring me down with her. Or perhaps how easy it would be to wrap my hands around her neck and wring out all the other ties to my past in one quick movement. I hold her instead.



Rory Frasch is an aspiring author who enjoys character focused writing and superheroes. They aim to create poetry and prose that connects with other people. When not writing, they spend their time reading comics and doodling quite poorly. You can find them @roryphobic on Twitter.

The Second Bathroom Sacrament

Andrew Korizno

Thank you for teaching me your skincare ritual.
Or rather, allowing me to observe in the mirror
as an apprentice on the bathroom floor.

It is my second bathroom sacrament—
consecrated in oils and serums.
Morning communion and nightly confession.

The only other—a baptism in my father's sink
who sculpted my first beard from Barbasol
and anointed me in his aftershave.

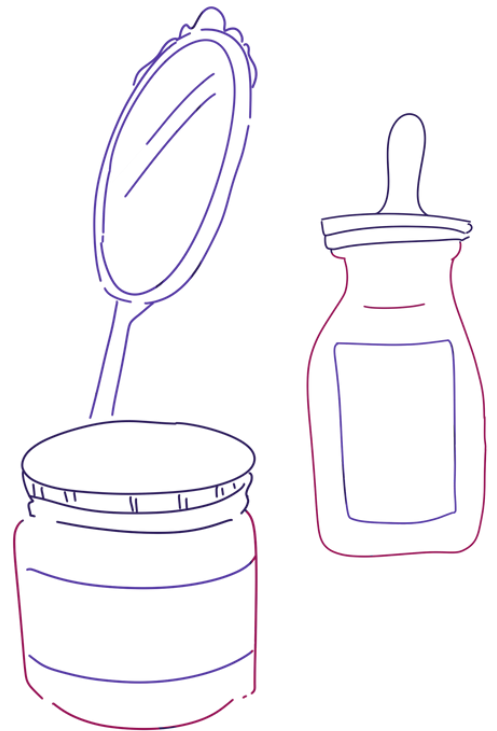
I still try to conjure your same magic
but this isn't my mother tongue.
So each day brings a new failed experiment.

You would laugh at the sight of it all—
my hair tied up in your old bracelet
painting my face with a pinky that I've never used.

I know it's all wrong—
it is meticulously and religiously
out of order.

But that was never the purpose.
Thank you for bringing my hands to my face.
Now I can read my skin like vinyl.

Each new crease carved by long-gone smiles
gives new tears have a familiar path
with your name on it.



Andrew is a writer based in Austin, Texas, and most of his writing has been about unconventional receipts of grief or love or epiphanies that are on our bodies (his first piece in healthline was about retinal scars as constellations of memories).

Sweet Angel

Asher Watson

Let the air frame your face
like it was made just for your lungs.

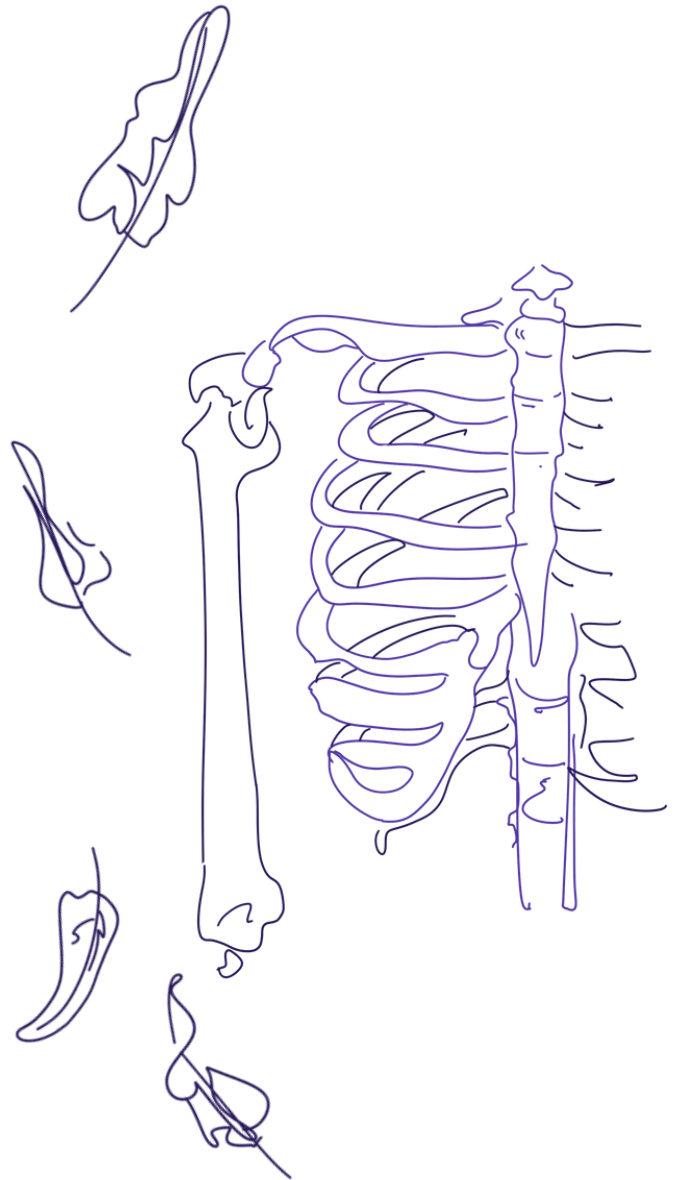
Let the clothes fall off your body
in elegant white heaps.

Let the sun dance on your skin,
highlighting every angle of you.

Sweet angel,
let me hold your hand

skin to skin,
bone to bone.

Let me open your ribcage
and take your heart for my own.



Asher Watson (they/he/she) is a queer, Latinx student poet. They are an adoptee through foster care and lives in Durham, NC. Along with writing, they enjoy art, music, baking and cosplay. Their poetry appears in *The Echo* and *The Origami Review*.

Stillness

Hana Park



Pounds of flesh

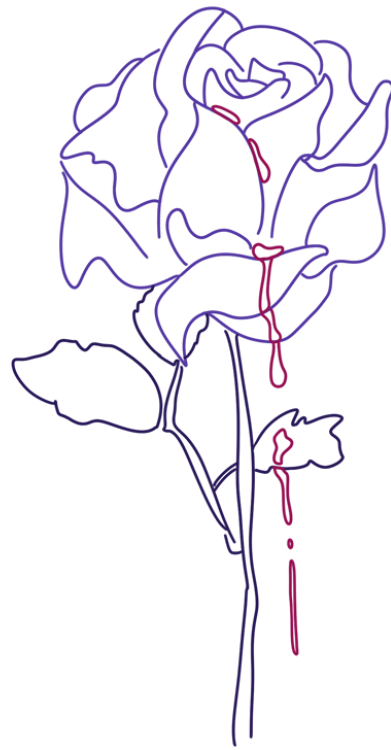
Andrew Korizno

With every pact that we enter
and every sin I concede—
you carve a pound of my flesh.
A token of a pyrrhic victory
where tears can't be trusted or kept.

“Our blood is thicker than water”
I'll repeat every lazy aphorism
that helps steady your hand
with a knife
to these willing limbs.

I know you'll take only what's needed.
So you can mold that pile of me
in your vision—
tied together with leftover tendons.
There, you can witness the love you deserve.

Someone else will embrace
what is left.
And I will let them split my bones
because marrow was too rich
for your taste.



Andrew is a writer based in Austin, Texas, and most of his writing has been about unconventional receipts of grief or love or epiphanies that are on our bodies (his first piece in healthline was about retinal scars as constellations of memories).

my mother's name

Kelechukwu Samuel, Ojile

Mama told me not to talk to strangers:
today, I dined with one – and she
has asked me for the name of my mother.
she has asked me for what my mother loves,
how a spy plans a siege.

Mama is steel and I am her lustre;
a stranger's touch could be a carnage,
or insane warmth. if this one breaks me,
Mama will know the stink of my guilt,
how brittle I have become to self-tyranny.
this stranger has looked into my eyes,
and in order to make her familiar
I gave her the name of my mother.



Kelechukwu Samuel Ojile writes and edits poetry at THREPOSS, a new magazine and a growing community of writers and artists. Although he studies Chemistry at University of Nigeria, Nsukka (very tough stuff) he ventures more into the arts; makes graphic designs, researches, enjoys listening to Tatiana Manaois, Billie Eilish and Asa. His works can be read on Rough Diamond Poetry, Firebrand magazine, Itanile and elsewhere. He plays chess and twits @KelechukwuOjile.

COUP OF LOVE

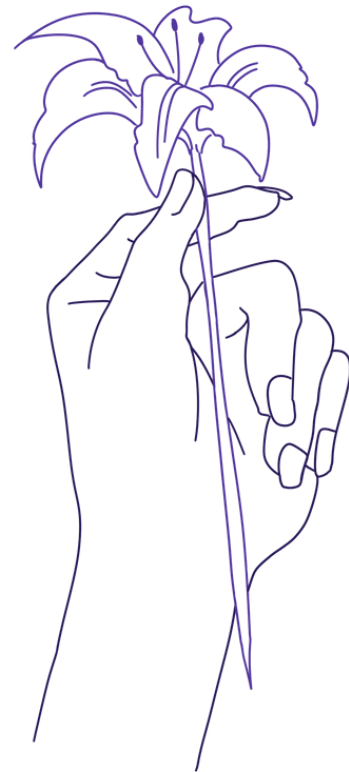
Ruchi Acharya

The moon grows half-naked tonight
The colour of the rain is turning black
and lilies in the pond are all dying
while I am talking to your ghost
by staying up in the shadows of moonlight.

I was drowning in my dark crimson blood
beyond the universe reach
waiting for you to come and lift me up
to keep me afloat,
teach me how to breathe
in the buoyant force.

Little owlets are sombering deep
Poets are using golden threads
to weave their dreams.
I am burning my poison ivy
not my desires till morning comes.
I'd love you more and outgrow you
Reverse the clock to go
where we're originally from.

I wonder,
How do I love again?
When will my life begin?



Ruchi Acharya is the CEO and Founder of Wingless Dreamer Publisher. She has garnered much acclaim for her poetry book, *Off the Cliff*. She received her summer graduation in English Literature from the University of Oxford. Her work has been applauded by multiple publishers such as *Borderless Journal*, *The Publishing Room*, *Overachiever magazine*, *Detester magazine*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Rhodora magazine*, *Mulberry Literary*, *Seaglass Literary*, *Flare journal*, *Analogies and Allegories*, and *Maythorn magazine* among 100 others. When not writing she can be found exploring historical buildings and ancient ruins. As of 2022, she resides in Chennai, India enjoying the coconut water, palm trees, sandy beaches and sunkisses.

You can visit her online at ruchiacharya.com

"All worries are less with wine"



Too Much

Adenah Furquan

When I was a kid, I wrote 46 paragraphs for my research project when only five were required. A whopping 46. I don't have much of an explanation for this — not one that would make sense anyway — except for the fact that I wanted to. I had to. The vehement urge in my belly grew fiercer by the minute, daring to consume me entirely and ultimately giving me no choice but to give in. Suffice to say, I then won Grand Prize. And that was the first time I realized I might be Too Much.

This is not to say that being Too Much is a bad thing. In fact, for the vast majority of my childhood, I considered it a valuable asset — a secret superpower of sorts. Sometimes being Too Much won you grand prizes — caused your teachers to marvel at you as if you were extraterrestrial, sing praises of your awards and accolades to every human in the vicinity. Then it meant your classmates would deem you Too Smart — a label you'd store inside your baggy denim pockets for rainy self-esteem days.

In other cases, however, I found that being Too Much didn't quite mean what I thought it did. For example, Mama always told me that I was Too Nice. On paper, she'd said, this was a wonderful quality to possess — but in reality, it was everything but. She claimed that the world would eat me alive someday, that the wrong people would take advantage of it, that the mean boy in class would break my heart (he did). But I, a self-proclaimed know-it-all, paid little heed to these declarations in what I thought at the time was an ode to teenage rebellion. I didn't think I was a saint or anything. I just liked telling pretty girls that they were pretty, that I like the hazel in their eyes or the red in their hair. I wouldn't realize until one-too-many heartbreaks later — until the naivety of my youth finally bid me farewell — what she really meant by that. And by that point, the damage would've been done.

But she'd pull me in her lap and let me cry there anyway. And that, in a nutshell, was motherhood.

Sometimes, being Too Much meant you were Too Sensitive, Too Emotional. It meant that you had to apologize for crying at the end of every rom-com, for finding that silly little joke just a tad bit Too Hurtful. It meant that you had to Grow Up

Too Much

Adenah Furquan

And Get Over It — to shrivel and deflate into a being far too small for your gossamer body. It was the cusp of yet another rebirth, the harrowing dawn of a novel epiphany: I felt Too Much. It was both a blessing and a curse, this realization: half-monstrosity, half-wonder. But how was I to ignore the cosmic waves of ardor that always seemed to rush to shore? How was I to ignore the brisk beatings of my heart at one glimpse of your honeyed silhouette?

There is a hunger inside of me I can't seem to fill — a ravenous beast that claws inside the pits of my bitter belly until I am all gore, all grime. Am I Too Needy? Maybe? Too Much for you? Is that why you can't seem to look me in the eye anymore? Over time, I suppose I've also grown to be Too Resentful. I resent the youthful folly with which I anticipate your call — a fairytale return, a dreamlike homecoming. And I resent the facile nonchalance with which you've transfigured me into a placeholder — a trivial, barren abyss of nothingness. At night, I envision a glittery melange of velvet kisses and silk sheets, a collision of two bodies and souls that can't get enough. Come morning, I am the sum of my own wretched expectations. But you're the one who said it, didn't you? Too Naive, Too Naive.

I don't remember you as much as I miss you. Some days, I forget what it is I even miss. You chip away like nail polish, fade into dust like the remnants of my *mehendi* (henna)

— a testament to the eventual deterioration of all good things over time. It's a shame, really — always is, the disintegration of a good love. And I suppose not even I can romanticize the evanescence of your saccharine gaze. Ephemeral, you and I. Your love is loneliness — a plunge headfirst into a bottomless chasm, the fervent yearning for something impalpable. And your devotion, a drunken monologue slurred in the middle of the night and forgotten by the dusk of dawn. And for someone who's always been Too Much, I'm afraid I've become Too Little.

Adenah Furquan is a 22-year-old with an earnest passion for writing and feminism. When she's not brainstorming ideas for new pieces or trying to dismantle the patriarchy, Adenah can be found listening to indie rock, watching or reading psychological thrillers, and gushing over scented candles.

plant me on mars

Sean Nguyen

at dusk, I unfold like
a flower. for just a moment, I think I hear
a bird—but it's just an old memory leaving.
mist of red. soul of fire. I'm
trapped in a body that I don't recognize. a home
that isn't mine.



Sean is a Grade 10 student attending high school in Massachusetts, a place he still can't spell correctly half the time. He has a passion for photography and capturing the beauty of the natural world.

Plenilune Moment

Olivia Choi



Olivia Choi is a high school senior who has fallen in love with painting, surrealism, and East Asian literature. Her artworks and short stories have been recognized by the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and the in:cite journal respectively. When she isn't sketching or painting, Olivia likes to spend her spare time doing her nails and watching true crime documentaries.

Dented

Angelia Miranda

My father bought me a pre-owned
Corolla, its fenders
busted in.

He said:

“We can fix it.”

So we bathed her in
boiling water.
Pushed out cavities
and soothed her dips
until still-imperfect metal
waved hello.

When people ask me:

“What did you do?”

I do not answer. No, I
am merely a caretaker
of craters, pits, and
metal dimples.

Bring me your damaged, brightly
dented and reverberating
metal, more beautiful
than a rainbow.
No questions will be
asked here.

Angelia Miranda (she/her) was born in the Philippines, grew up in Seattle, and finally moved to the best NYC borough: Queens. She is an athlete, corporate recruiter, and constantly remembering how to be a writer. Her pieces have been recognized by Bricolage Literary Journal, Brooklyn Public Library, and The Nation.

THE STARS WE LEAVE BEHIND

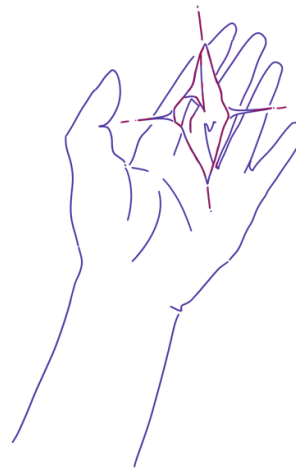
Claire Sims

With you, love was not a gunshot
but a gathering,
a constellation of moments
drawn together over time.
You kept my scribbled notes and
I kept your scattered smiles and
we collected each other slowly,
keeping secrets ever closer
and we might have stayed friends
if not for gravity,
if not for the confessions at the tips of
our fingers.
After that,
out of nothing,
there was us.

Like you, I became someone else
in the heat of it,
clinging to lost nebula
as we turned into a star.
I savoured my silence and
you wasted your wanting and
we grew into each other, then beyond,
learning loss over the distance

and we might have stayed friends
if not for gravity,
if not for the beauty and necessity of
burning.
Now, after
everything,
we are not
quite
gone.

New stars will blossom
in my once-vacant sky,
born in part from our debris.
I will watch them and wonder
what we almost were,
and what, in time, we will be.





Thank you !



writers and artists

Adenah Furquan
Althea Downing-Sherer
Andrea Gerada
Andrew Korizno
Anngelina Minnittee
Angelia Miranda
Ananya Rustogi
Ave Goorbarry
Asher Watson
Claire Sims
Hana Park
Jessica King
Jessica Vance
Kelechukwu Samuel, Ojile
Oliver Tang
Olivia Choi

Rory Frasch
Ruchi Acharya
Sean Nguyen
Snigdha Garud

& masthead @ the origami review

Elizabeth Li
Ananya Rustogi
Faust Zhang

Olivia Choi
Angela Luo
Carina Solis



the origami review

