

EXIST OTHERWISE



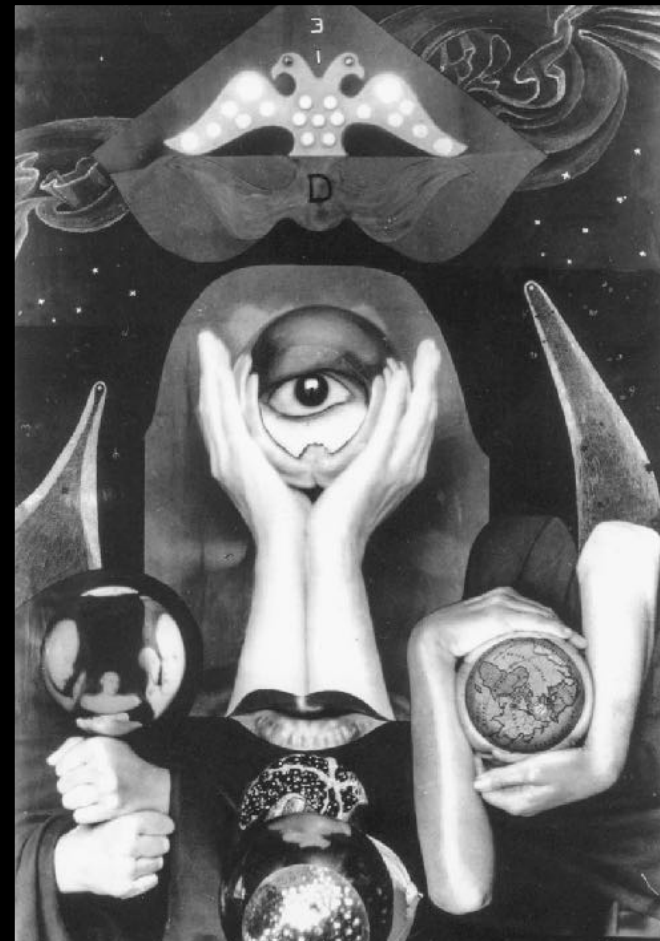
Issue 19, July 2026

Ana Hein
Prasida Clare Newman
Keiran Campbell
Mark Blickley
Pixie Bruner
Elizabeth Wing
Cleomé Morra
Erica Miriam Fabri
Quinn Ionascu
David Brickey Bloomer

Penelope Steiss
Brenya Gommel
David Weigham
Heather Lee Rogers
Rachel Rodman
Nicholas Alti
Casey Schreiner
Abish Qamar
Starry Aviles-Espejo

“TENDENCY TO PUSH
EVERYTHING TO THE
ABSOLUTE, AND THUS
TO THE ABSURD.”

—CLAUDE CAHUN



tender is the flesh under bone
and rough are the nails on cheeks
barter eternity for open mouth chasms
abyss gaze finds me filthy
pulsing who knows what
under moonlight misting through bars
voyeur envoy of Selene unburden
me my mind leave me
ghoul on floor oh master my
master come for me come me let me
come please master come
good boy obey cockroach tongue go squish
pert crimson peck urge vital pain
amen



Ana Hein (she/her) is an essayist and critic. Her work has been featured in *Electric Literature*, *The Rumpus*, *AFM*, *Digging Press Journal*, *Mothership*, *Compulsive Reader*, and *Videodame*, among other publications. She holds an MFA in nonfiction from Columbia University. Currently, she lives in Poughkeepsie, New York.
anaheinwrites.com

Each violet has veined petals with a dark center that seems more like the pupil of an eye—together, Violets are rolling their collective 'eyes.' They are laughing. The chiming of Multiball dings in the background. The sound of their laughter is growing louder, but then it fades. She turns around, and Violets are gone—their departure feeling more of a surprise than their arrival. Clare is left smelling waxy floors and a spilled lime cola, the ping of metal balls clanking together at the arcade—

Oppenheimer, the movie, will not be shown in Japan. The Japanese perspective is missing. The lack of racial diversity is so bad that it will bring up the issue of whether a movie where all on-screen characters are white meets the inclusion standards for the Oscars. Somehow, it will still win.

In the movie, *Oppenheimer* steps over a large, torso-shaped fragment of carbon. Moviegoers contemplate the neutrality of complete destruction as if they are all-powerful, distanced from the human impact: “I am become Death, destroyer of worlds.”

In the *Bhagavad Gita*—only seven verses earlier—Arjuna prays to the god: “Prasida, Prasida.” Prasida, the name given to her by Amma, the hugging saint of Kerala. Her new, beautiful name. Feminine, elegant, strong, her new name is everything that Lisa was not. It means, Ruler of the universe, be pleased with me. An even better

cont’d



Prasida Clare Newman (they/them) puts language under pressure. Their poetry has appeared (or is forthcoming) in *Welter*, and their nonfiction in *Passages North*, *The Argyle*, and *Lake Effect*. Their current obsession is Cycladic figures. Find them at www.pclarenewman.com.

translation is, power animating the world, do not destroy me.

Oppenheimer must have known what *prasida* means; he studied Sanskrit. Two nights before Trinity, he recited a passage from the *Gita*. After reading a list of ancient, battle-related things, which we can only assume is a metaphor for the first detonation of an atomic bomb, he ends with, “The good deeds a man has done before defend him.”

Okay, Oppie. You do you. Battles used to be sensationalized, as noted in the *Gita*; the phenomenon is nothing new:

“December 30, 1890. Omaha Daily Bee

A Bloody Battle — The Seventh Cavalry Encounters the Indians on Porcupine Creek — Tomahawked in the Forehead by a Treacherous Red Assailant — A Long List of Killed and Wounded — Big Foot’s Entire Band Almost Exterminated by the Soldiers — Exciting Scenes at Pine Ridge Agency Camp on Wounded Knee, S.D.”

Killing Indians described as exciting. *Who is the savage here?*

Pearfat Multiball: Sticky-sweet, waxed floors of an arcade, bells and chimes signaling your high score, a sip of cola. Lime cola - Patchouli - Sparking Metal - Waxy Cedarwood

Baby Boomerang Dream for the Disenchanted

It's dark and cold and you can't sleep because of the draft from the window or a dream turns ugly or you had to pee but couldn't find the strength to kick off the covers. So, you lay there shivering, trying to work up the courage to make a run through the dark and into the bathroom.

That's when you'd hear the truck pull up and the door slide open and the rattling of glass, and you'd be a little less scared—even a little excited. There'd be footsteps scraping up the stairs, heading towards your floor. And you'd smile because you knew this guy was out there, looking after you, wearing a suit as white as God's, clinking bottles that sound sweeter than anything you've heard since. And sometimes, if you were good for the entire week, he'd lift a note out of your apartment door milk box written by your mother, and lower a bottle of chocolate milk inside.

I hope my musical milkman knows/knew of all the smiles and sighs of relief behind all those locked doors as he rattled those bottles, shaking them like a goddamn medicine man obsessed with driving away evil spirits.



Baby Boomerang Dream for the Disenchanted

Mark Blickley, Keiran Campbell



Mark Blickley (he/him) grew up within walking distance of New York's Bronx Zoo. He is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild, PEN American Center, and Veterans For Responsible Leadership. His latest book is the flash fiction collection *'Hunger Pains'* (Buttonhook Press).



Photographer **Keiran Campbell** is based in Toronto, Canada, where he performs as a core member of Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra. He recently performed with Le Concert Des Nations under Jordi Savall, touring Europe, performing Beethoven Symphonies before recording them on Savall's new CD. Keiran is fascinated with instrument making, which he studies with the maker of his cello, Timothy Johnson.

So much depends
on a
clean blade each
Friday.

Nothing but Words all week.
Change estrogen patch to new location on ass.
Hope it sticks so well it'll open, mechanically,
my KP clogged pores when changed on Tuesday.
Dry shave legs to knee on the
patch that has hair still,
tap out snowflakes of dead skin onto sink counter.
Repeat on other leg.
Scrape HS scarred armpits into tiny snow mounds
that fall to my bra and countertops—
the particulate of stubble and exfoliation
into a perfect line of dirty coke or meth,
sweep into palm and dust off hands over toilet.
Stand over toilet like a deranged discolored flamingo
brandishing an aptly unironically named Dorco Tinkle razor
and create new ingrown hairs despite fresh blade.
Acquire razor burn in my trimming.
Trim aggressively the weird white public hairs. Give up.
Admire the black static of wiry short hairs
floating on the water before flushing away
any and all evidence that I am a mammal.

cont'd



Pixie Bruner (SFPA/Dread Writers Society) is a writer and cancer survivor. She lives in Atlanta, GA, with her doppelgänger. Her twice-Elgin-nominated poetry book *The Body As Haunted* was published in 2024. (Authortunities Press). Her words are in from *Space & Time Magazine*, *Amazing Stories*, *Weird Fiction Quarterly*, *Abyss & Apex*, *Strange Horizons*, *Spectral Realms*, and many more. She wrote for White Wolf Gaming Studio. Werespiders ruining LARPs were all her fault. 2025 Rhysling Award Chair Survivor. 2025 Kay Snow Prize Winner.

Does this ritual even register?

Most female genital mutilation occurs at home.

Wash hair, twice. Condition, then detangle.

Create a new skein for Clotho from my fallen hair.

Style. Re-wash from product over-application.

Condition again. Give up. Barely style.

Two pumps mousse, glaze of same 32oz bottle

salon brand gel I've been working on since 2018.

Try to mask now hypothyroid post-menopausal curls.

Give up. Get over it. Repeat. Does it even matter at this point?

give up. game up, games over, give up, giving up, give out.

I.

In the Gospel According to Mary the Apostles asked, 'Will everything be destroyed?' And he said, every living creature exists in and with each other, and they will dissolve again into their own roots

II.

dissolve again caterpillar into pupae, into drift of dandelion, into is
enzyme soup, rain into sediment into ambident salinity into object
code and lying-in into the labyrinth of eucalyptus dissolve into me
into infrared and snakebite into floodplain lazed with oxbows urban
fallow back into pollywog into symmetrical narcolepsy into silt,
erosion, no-guilt into anyone, into oxytocin into chaos mode into
throwing rocks at cars into juniper dusk and grainy reverb into the
pocket of glitter waiting within the geode into the shore re-making
itself, in sand caked doggedness into copper sky & albatross into
maps of flesh and light



Caedes Tyranni

by Cleomé Morra



I don't know how my mother
kept her head out of the oven.
Her pearly hair, a regal topiary,
skated like a moon, elliptically
in circuit of our lives. She kept
a satellite under her skin,
in her middle compartment.
I recognized its lambent glow.
A thousand years ago, lava
gushed from every pore of her.
Her whole self was a blister.
She tried to tell me
how love is a termite.
I didn't listen.



Erica Miriam Fabri's (she/her) first book, *Dialect of a Skirt*, was a finalist for the Paterson Poetry Prize. Her second book, *Morphology*, was the winner of the Jack McCarthy Book Prize. She has been widely published in magazines and anthologies and has worked as a writer and educator for Urban Word NYC, The New York Knicks, and Nickelodeon Television. She teaches writing for the City University of New York (CUNY). ericafabri.com

Wistful I waited. Watch the deforestation of your soft unbeating heart.
Your rib cage grey, decay of driftwood decorating last vestiges, what
remains of your shape. So still,

made vulnerable to me, poured all secrets from the spill of your neck.

Dissipate from split bones into the air above,

you are more now than you were before

Mangled limbs are your angel wings

Phantom body, an empty butterfly cocoon.

Forgive my envy for your ascension

I think of you often.

Did you like how you were dappled? Was your tail too long? Did your
slightness of frame haunt you because you thought you looked wrong?

Were you jealous of antlers? Did you pick out branches, a makeshift pair?

Did you want to know what it felt like to look like a boy?

Tell me, would you have forgone it, that moment when you were hit?

Did you curse corporeal existence when betrayed by your skin?



Quinn (she/they) is an artist living in London. When she is not feeding pigeons in green park, she writes about queer and trans experiences, and loves to draw both cute and ugly critters.

I think of you often.

Unfixed gaze, the bathroom mirror, weary brown eyes just like yours, just missing flies, and the smell of corpse.

Features I despise.

A wretched face, shoulders too large, a maw not so graceful, “you look perfect, you should be grateful”. I wish I was as fragile as you.

I think of you often

Meet Me in the Dead Letter Office

David Brickey Bloomer

Beloveds, in graphite and ink—

I cannot bear the margins empty,
so I send you drawings more than words.
On the back of your article,
I sketch the girl translator
as a tightrope walker
crossing a line of text,
each legal term a gust of wind.

On the edge of your field report,
I draw the cholera clinic
as a shaky boat,
its IV stands as masts,
its flags stitched from discarded gloves.

The mail clerk smiles now
when he sees me coming,
envelopes fat with paper birds and small collages
made of ticket stubs and ration labels.

You write of shellfire,
I answer with a pencil sun
cracked by careful erasures.

cont'd



David Brickey Bloomer (he/him) is a humanitarian advisor, writer, and photographer based in Singapore, with more than two decades of fieldwork across South and Southeast Asia and the Pacific. A self-described tragic optimist, he works in poetry, documentary photography, and hybrid forms organized around the practice of paying attention. His photography can be found at davidbrickeybloomer.com and poetry and writing at davidbrickeybloomer.substack.com

Meet Me in the Dead Letter Office (cont'd)

David Brickey Bloomer

You write of “jurisdiction,”
I answer with a river
flowing through a courtroom,
carrying away the chairs.

Once, I painted a generator
as a stubborn heart
bolted to the ground,
veins of cable running outwards
to tents and lamps.
On the side I wrote,
in small letters,
“evidence of life.”

The gallery said the work was “political.”
I wanted to tell them
it was simply accurate.

From my small studio,
I imagine all your papers
meeting in some distant sorting room:
forms under poems,
legal briefs beside charcoal sketches,
postmarks overlapping like timelines.

cont'd

Meet Me in the Dead Letter Office (cont'd)

David Brickey Bloomer

If anyone opened them all at once,
what map would appear?
Not the kind with borders,
but the kind made of gestures:
your hand on a stretcher,
your hand on a keyboard,
my hand smudged with ink,
our journalist's hand steady over a notebook
while the press room hums.

Until that unseen clerk reads everything,
I will keep sending fragments—
a line of verse,
a handdrawn margin,
a sticker peeled from a piece of fruit
placed over a spot of bruised world.

Meet me, all of you,
in the dead letter office of our century,
where nothing is truly lost,
only waiting to be sorted
into the right pair of hands.

cont'd

All I really want is to be full of love.
Svartsoppa first, black soup,
Just a bit of your blood,
Some for warm, mulled wine
And the rest to stir into hot chocolate.
A pie then, filled with viscera,
Your organs, all those pretty things that kept you alive,
Now, all for me, warm and dripping, buttery, flakey
Rosemary and thyme,
Your precious eyes and tongue to follow,
Your teeth are already a necklace, a string of pearls around my neck.
Meat and meat and meat, for days.
Days spent gorging myself with you.
Fat to keep you moist.
Your skin all stitched up into a nice blanket,
Pulled tight around my shoulders,
I want to stay wrapped up in you, in every scar and mole and freckle.
How special was your brain to eat.
Every thought, every memory,
Every dream.
Myself, through your eyes,
Your love for me slid right down my throat.
Some of your bones for stock and the rest,

cont'd



Penelope Steiss is a Schizotypal poet, author and folklorist who lives between a swamp in Florida and a forest in Sweden, but can most commonly be found on instagram at [AntlerandFoxtail](https://www.instagram.com/AntlerandFoxtail).

Perhaps I'll make into instruments,
To play you, strum you, whistle my breath through you.
When everything is done, you are not gone.
You have never been more present.
Inside and around me.
Our souls are conjoined twins.
Bound together, your voice in my head.
Now, I take you with me everywhere.

When you spit on my cunt it is like you've dug your teeth in
Granny Smith, the spray of nectar... Your tongue

is an inchworm. This body,
humming at your touch like rubber
can be peeled. I think you know
that now, where the center
hides...

... There are no flowers
here. This body is
a wasps' nest. As it closes

in you press your palms to the outside of my womb and
from the inside rise millions of pricks, like bread to
heat, or grass to stormclouds. You come

back red and gasping.

There is honey here.
I think you know that, too...



Brenya Gommel (she/her) lives in the Philly suburbs with her dog, Faye Valentine. She has previously been published in MUSES and Red Between the Lines. In her spare time she enjoys watching Dr. Katz, ideally for several hours at a time.

substack.com/@alltheouts



David: I'm an Editorial illustrator and cartoonist that turns complex ideas into sharp, engaging visuals. I specialize in editorial commentary and cultural trends in a very striking single panel narrative, based in Canada I have worked for a number of national and international publications.

Tongues

Sticking her tongue out
in every photo,
she is madness
at the orgy eating doritos
referencing sex ed pie charts
and diaphragms in lubed
latex cherry hip boots
giggling maniacally
a pitbull puppy
with wolverine eyes
she wrecks and weakens
wears war paint
for her voodoo ancestors
demands worship
at the large altar of her buttocks
while reminding you
she holds multiple
advanced degrees
speaks 5 languages
fluently licking fluids from
your genitals as blood candles
glint off her wall of
collected weaponry
she orgasms her traumas
easily, neck arched back
screaming in tongues.

Heather Lee Rogers



Heather Lee Rogers (she/her)

compulsively tells stories as a poet and an actor in Queens, NYC. Her poems have appeared in the following printed and online publications: *Chill Mag*, *slips slips*, *The Rat's Ass Review*, *Harbinger Asylum*, *Here Comes Everyone (UK)*, *Twenty-Two Twenty-Eight*, *El Portal*, *S/ Tick (CA)*, *Adanna Literary Journal*, *Jersey Devil Press*, *Mobius Magazine*, *Eunoia Review*, *Bombfire Lit*, *Indolent Books*, *io Literary Journal*, etc. More of her work can be read at heatherleerogerspoetry.com

after it is eaten
(by whatever is hungry;
by whatever is there)

the fruit
becomes

decay-mold-shit,

from which arises:

two limp fingernails:
sickly and light-starved—
the color of pond scum
or baby puke;

then—
slowly—
amid the ever-darkening green,
a hook presses up,
pygmy and frail,

like the neck
of a malnourished brontosaurus,
from the tip of which emerges:
not a head
(nothing so reassuring)
but rather another sort of structure,
more bulbous in its approximate symmetry—
something like a scrotum.

All this before:

A flower.

Rachel Rodman (she/her) is the author of three collections: *Mutants + Hybrids*, *Art is Fleeting*, and *Exotic Meats + Inedible Objects*. Her fiction and experimental poetry have appeared in *Penumbra*, *The Alexander Review*, *State of Matter*, and many other publications. Her art celebrates evolutionary relationships. www.rachelrodman.com

Gladiola mass burial decoration campaign
Cartilage punctuates mulch progression

Fabulist element—parsimonious inoculated
Honey weather wet cypress pattern

Hyacinth aftermath, concrete proof diagram
Conceptual love-scene malfunction

Conflagration: intercontinental rhinestone
Gradient (false) iteration

Calliope blissful heather apocalypse
Rheumatic bacterium confluence

Apoplectic tetrahedron indoctrinee
Municipal cartridge spontaneous

Flagless pseudo-scape utopia blitz
Rosemary munitions supplement

Powder keg sun blister, vexatious

Proverbial asymptote obliterate



Nicholas Alti (he/him) is a bartender in Atlanta who holds an MFA from the University of Alabama. His chapbook is *Inhale the Ghost (Spoon River Poetry Review, 2026)*. He's from a rural place near Lake Michigan. Nicholas's website is 3bluntzatonce.com.

She Was Born of the Sea

Abish Qamar

She was a profound thing, a thing
of no teeth, all salt.
She lapped, never bit, with her erode clad gums
nibbling at my arms in slow-tide licks.
A clam. A bud of a hyacinth.
I dwelled in her clasp, for I was famished.
And the famished is indelibly
open-mouthed, ever for the forged, for the
mould, should it adhere to the mere bone.
And then, I was a blemish-clad body.
I was a shoreline, carved soft.
She nested like seaweed in the tender,
marooned spots about my form,
a crippled feel to the tide line
of my appeal. The appeal: gnawed, salt-creased,
washed beneath the coddle of the damp sea.
Long precedented.
I was the spit-out, the chewed cud of the deep.
Swollen. Clotted. A darling of the undertow.
She was the ocean's clothed blade, sliding soft down my throat.
I was surrendered. cluttered.

I was the sea's wretched beloved.
She was the sea stilled by the names of the women before me.



Abish Qamar is from Pakistan, currently an undergraduate student at Middle East Technical University, where she studies by daylight and writes in the stolen minutes and sleepless margins of it. Reading and writing have been her flesh and marrow for as far as her memory stretches. And when she's not bound by either, you'll find her gathering rocks from the odd edges of the road.

There Goes the Neighborhood

Casey Schreiner

I watch my hands dissolve
in a healthy vegan lunch
spot while a fiddle leaf fig
stretches impossibly toward
the white ceiling and the street-
facing window, its flaking and brittle
spider limbs bound to supportive shelving
with fishing wire. What was my body

is now the table, is the plate, is the half-eaten
tempeh wrap so consciously prepared and deserving
of a 2% employee wellness surcharge. I am now
the iron table legs, the laminate floor made to look
like the ends of logs. I am the quartz-top bar
and biodynamic wine collection, the joists
and beams from the days of lumber barons.
I am the building, the block, the borough.

I have become everything and will dissolve,
digest, expel what cannot be put to use,
metabolized, returned on investment.
I think and it vibrates through nerves

cont'd



Casey Schreiner (he/him) is a queer poet who has previously been a television writer / producer, author, outdoor journalist, speechwriter, and host. He has written for *Mountaineers Books*, *Chronicle Books*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Nickelodeon*, *TruTV*, enormous electronics corporations and several beloved but defunct cable networks. He has returned to poetry after a short twenty-year break, attending the Bread Loaf and Napa Valley conferences and is a poetry MFA student at Bennington College. www.caseyschreiner.com

There Goes the Neighborhood (cont'd)

Casey Schreiner

which have become veins of coal
become spines of mountain ranges
and a pulse of underground magma.
A fruit fly, lured by the vinegar
in my dressing, circles my lunch
plate four times and lands between
the hairs on my arm—which in one
angle of light are invisible and in another
are a forest of dead trees knocked
parallel by avalanche or eruption.



Starry Avilés-Espejo (they/them) is a punk writer from New Jersey. Their work has been featured in Writers House Review, Free Spirit, and The Hot Mess Press. You can find them on Instagram [@youhavereached.starry](https://www.instagram.com/youhavereached.starry)

