

issue one: white

guest editor: [sarah] cavar

the gamut mag



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meet the guest editor

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issue one

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founder's note

A collection of issues themed by colour for queer writing and art.

The idea came from *fourteen poems*, where not even in their issue with the blue cover, blue poems had naturally congregated: bruises, bluebells mistaken for "blueballs", queer love under the super blue blood moon, Icarus' oceanic fall as a metaphor for embracing queerness. 'Blue' didn't mean the same thing for any poet here. Queer creatives were finding colour in and of themselves, understanding themselves through it, and with so much variation - I had to know more.

So many of us find something embracing in the loudness of the rainbow flag, in all the colourful flags. There's a comfort in having to be loud about who we are, even in the tiniest pin badge on a shoulder strap. Colour - even the white of dominant/political culture, and Black queer peoples' struggles, which form the backbone of queer history - is familiar to us. We congregate or break away from it: sapphics to violet, agender folk and aros to green, transmascs from pink, to pink. Colour can be a lump in our throat.

If you open this issue on your phone and your laptop, the colours might be slightly different. One's grey might be rustier. Those devices have different *gamuts*: a different set of colours they can display. Queerness displays in that same way among us - none of us are the same, none of our colours, our experiences with colours, are the same. Each of us, each of you, is a gamut.

Within these pages, someone wishes to be fog. Another sees the swan of themselves. One reckons with a White God. Another, their own bones. I'm already so excited to show you a segment of the gamuts of each of "white"'s contributors. I can't wait to show you more.

—jesse smith, founder/poetry reader.

editor's note

Editing is always rigorous and frequently joyful work, but doing so in support of loved ones is particularly special. When I learned that Jesse, a previous contributor to *Stone of Madness* and beloved writer-friend, was planning to start their own literary magazine, I knew I had to take part.

It seems lately as if a new literary magazine springs up every day — for all our quibbles with social media, easy access to twitter and site-building software has facilitated the emergence of youth-driven and radically-inclusive venues to host writing and art, especially by those of us whose perspectives are devalued by institutional gatekeepers: queer, trans, and disabled people, and particularly queer, trans, and disabled people of color.

For me, this inaugural issue of the *gamut* emblemizes small lit mags' ability to push against the elitist literary grain, not only by centering queer and trans intimacies, but also, in this "white"-themed issue, to provide space to interrogate the overvaluation of whiteness in the creative world. Instead, contributors think beyond the white page, the colorless default against which dissenting perspectives are violently Othered. The works I chose thus carry an urgency, a keen insight into the violence of "normal life," and an awareness of our collective capacity to imagine new wor(l)ds.

In the months since I joined the *gamut*, I've been delighted and overwhelmed by the enthusiasm that the community has brought to our colorful little venture, by the quality of work creators are sharing with our brand-new publication, and by the camaraderie I've found with Jesse and the team. While all magazines are labors of love (they are certainly not labors of financial gain), when I read back through this issue, I am struck by the boundless love with which our contributors and editorial team treat each other and our craft. I hope that, when you turn the page, you will feel the same.

—[sarah] Cavar, guest editor.

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holiness builds a fence for itself.

by Elisheva Fox

cw: blood, death

our mystics animated
a gelatinous clay figure -

*probably red, or maybe horse white,
this earth marrow -*

by scabbing the hebrew word
for [truth]
across its bramble blooming forehead.

*a new century demands a new commandment:
in strength there is safety.*

then,
before a quartz-boned
and mud-muscled

[Golem]

the pressing bloody urgency
melted away,
a limp and pallid fog.

So

no need now for a living ward,
no need now for shambling magic,

those mystics
smeared one letter into
incomprehension

sparing the word for
[death.]

are death and truth siblings
separated only by a slender scrawl,
 or is anything other than
 honesty a kind of dying?

is my detailed exegesis
of little, shuddering deaths
endured under the weight of proud men

a venomous fiction?

i need
a woman's hands to pluck
at the prism of my aorta -

it will take a woman's hands
to animate my heart,

i think.

Alien Erotica

by Robert Beveridge

They ate the last of the leftover
sloppy joes and then exited
stage left without so much as
a by-your-leave. The nerve
of some people. Well, anyway,
I heard over the Bearcat there was
another yeti sighting in the Deepwood
Forest, and here it is only September.
And they say there's no such thing
as climate change. Millicent was out
for the berry harvest, tried to go
a week before and catch the rest
of the gals off guard, and whaddya
know, there really is something
in that forest both big and white.
I wonder if he likes sloppy joes?

Soul Gem

by Robert Beveridge

Doc says the Pontiac in your driveway
may never run again. Something about
AFib, telephone wire, and bird snipers.
You can't be bothered with heavy
machinery anyway, too busy
with your research. Somewhere
out there is the perfect inflection,
the proper hand motions, just
the right concoction to reveal
why he did, in fact, forsake you,
whether you'll get an answer
after the weekend, whether the stones
will become pumpernickel, whether
it can raise a Star Chief from the dead.

Brown Girl Through The Looking Glass

by Leela Raj-Sankar

cw: pain, body horror, sexual harrassment

In winter, the skin on my knuckles cracks and bleeds through my mittens—mostly because of the handwashing, once, twice, three times in a row, until my hands are raw and pink from the hot water—look, I’m a brown girl, didn’t you expect me to be obsessed with cleanliness, wasn’t it the natural culmination of all those years spent staring at myself in the mirror wondering where it was, that piece of broken glass lodged in my guts that was turning my insides gray, wondering how many more hoops I’d have to jump through to find what I was looking for, close my hands around that nebulous, tantalizing dream of white American girlhood—pale skin, white teeth, cornsilk-fine hair—no, scratch that, it wasn’t ever just what I looked like: I saw her, over and over, everywhere I went, Charlotte or Rose or Emma, beautiful, sweet, so well-liked that it made me want to vomit into the kitchen sink out of jealousy; I wanted the type of attention she got, knowing full well that the boys who loved her didn’t give a shit about me, that they’d grab my ass and catcall just as soon as they’d call me *baby*, but really, none of that should have mattered—I should have been able to let it go, because I was brilliant, because I knew that so many of my compulsions were self-imposed, meaningless cravings for an arbitrary standard of perfection, and yet I couldn’t stop, as if it was ingrained in me to keep running, forever trying to escape the fear that one day I’d dredge that piece of glass from somewhere within me and still feel like an outsider to myself, banging desperately on the windows of an empty house, lost without the soul-crushing longing to press myself so close to whiteness that finally, it consumed me whole.

Badlands, Washington, D.C.: 1984

by Raymond Luczak

cw: HIV/AIDS-related death

The neon sang robotized music
in the dark. I didn't know how
to behave around all these men
laughing and carrying on
as if shouting into each other's ears
was a perfectly natural way to converse.
The strobe lights pulsed in my veins,
warning me that this place was
a purgatory, a temporary pit stop
for one muscular stranger after another
to die of a disease I was afraid to catch.
(Odd how my friends never talked about it.)
I wanted to put myself on MTV
blinging on that chunky-assed screen
locked just below the rafters
and sing, *Kiss me all you want.*
You won't get it from me.
The floor throbbed in my feet
as I danced alone amidst dry ice.
Those men watching me from the sidelines
no longer looked human in blacklight.
They couldn't be skeletons in white shirts.
I didn't know I was learning to love
ghosts in their original flesh.

Swans

by Raymond Luczak

cw: suicidal ideation

Once upon a time my world was made of smoke,
a thousand shades of gray.
Yet everyone around me shimmered all in white.
How they'd laughed and carried on!
The color of my feathers was of concrete.
I was doomed never to fly.
The school playground was only a parking lot.
The wire-link fence was a formality.
I was ordered to line up against the brick wall.
Them boys were the firing squad.
Strangely enough the bell always rang just in time.
I never got to die.
I grew up under the threat of being sentenced
at a whim. I fake-smiled.
I dreamed of diving far into Montreal River,
its currents dragging me north,
my body banged about against the rocks
and swallowed up into Lake Superior.
Fairy tales fluttered about in the aether fields
of my imagination. I breathed.
I knew each tale to be a lie, but I needed to believe.
I stopped gazing in the mirror.
I wanted to sleep forever, but the world wouldn't let me.
I found myself with a suitcase.
A plane ticket in my hand, too. What spell was this?
High above the air, I looked down.
I saw tiny gray swans looking up, their blackened eyes
watching me recede into the horizon.

Wait a minute—I hadn't been the only one numbed?

I glanced around at the passengers,
also gray-feathered, fidgeting in their seats.

Our seatbelts, unbuckled, fell away
as we tried to stand properly in the narrow aisle.

We caught the look of ridiculous
in each other's eyes. As we began to laugh,
the grays of our wings molted
forth into loud colors unlike anything I'd seen.

When the emergency door was opened,
a ferocity of wind rushed in and stole our breaths
but only for a moment. Instinctively
we leaped out in the sun. Our wings shone
as we flew toward our new home.

What you need to know

by Meghan Kemp-Gee

about how it's going to go is after everything, on your birthday, you will eat lemon cake. The sun still tracks across all floors in all empty rooms, the same way surface currents wash across still lakes. That's how the sun tastes: the icing, white, bleached brightness just enough, the acid's big first bite, the knife, just enough, in such kind ways. In such kind ways, you make me a cake, you gave me this name.

Beyond the Haze

by Sheeks Bhattacharjee



Image Description: A pencil illustration of an empty boat on still water. The boat, surrounded by tall thin grass growing out of the water, is pointing to the bottom left of the page, and is casting a solid black shadow. The moon shines white in the top left, circled by bright white followed by a blue-hued sky.

My God Does Not Blush Red

by Clementine Williams

cw: racism/white supremacy

My grandma had the Angel of God
framed crookedly in the hallway.
Fluorescents of a White woman with wings,
guiding rosy-cheeked children down a
rickety bridge that broke under violent waters.
All the antiques in the house sell the same story.
White angel. Whiter wings. Whitest children.
What angels had been sent to save children like me,
with Black skin that blushed no more than blue?
What would a Black child bare to a White God?
Couldn't picture a God that looked like
hell on earth, taking the face of my oppressors
while claiming me as one of his children.
I wouldn't let him take me.

I searched the bible for
a different truth,
a different face,
a dirty conscious,
a similar hue.
I need a God that does not blush red.
I need a God that invites
snakes into her garden and
makes weeds out of Eden.
My God would not claim
to be perfect or almighty.
She would know what it is like to
disobey her own people,
to bite into an apple where

temptation resides and guilt follows.
In the daytime,
She would know how to give herself to Adam,
and when the night fell,
how to unearth herself unclothed,
as a body next to Eve.

In Another Time, Our Love Will Be Remembered

by Clementine Williams

I'm no sappho, rather a failed attempt at a sonnet.
Fourteen lines isn't enough to describe the
intimacy of being a Black femme who spends
Sunday mornings greasing up the scalp of their butch,
with a tenderhead that breaks a few combs.
My lover sits between my legs and between cornrows,
I think about a love like ours fossilizing.

I'm no sappho, no metaphors of sweet fruits with
exposed seeds to show the way that our bodies are
peeled apart like the skin of tangerines by fingers
who can not water our love down to orange juice.
See, my lover and I are pulp, not made to be palatable
by mouths that can't stomach the beauty
of what our love will leave behind.

As It Ends

by Clayton Arble

My partner's arms fly out
from the white silence
of sleep.

Arms of deep grass
hold me in place
in the field of our bed.

I am only consoled
by the touch of your hands
when consolations are not enough.

The Kiss

by Clayton Arble

It stung
a white
flower
into me
and built
a little
light
inside
my chest,
a white
silence, a
secret.

White Leaves

by Clayton Arble

I.

There was a white dress.

Inside
was a black river
with the moon inside it.

A deep snow
was falling slowly.

The leaves
were dark green
and darkening.

2.

I abandoned my body
on the rocks behind me.

White birds, crying out
my secret name,

flew from the trees.

3.

The moon left
a silence of snow

on the rocks, the leaves,
the winter grass

of the empty dress.

The snow dissolved
on the black water.

4.

I stepped through the snow
into the river.

My body
became the dress.

Birds
flew from me, snow
fell through me.

The deep river
was flowing slowly.

Transmigration

by Briar Ripley Page

cw: paranormal, child death

The ghost wakes up in an attic. Her hollow body is a stranger's. She's an island floating untethered above floorboards bare but for a hard chair and four big square trunks. The ghost understands herself to be a ghost. She may have been a bride, based on the diaphanous white drapery that swirls around her moth-eaten form in the air. A lace veil, embroidered with thousands of tiny flowers. But this is merely outfit-based conjecture. She doesn't remember being alive, doesn't remember her name or her reason for haunting.

The attic has one window. If the ghost were a living person, it would be too high for her to see through and too small for her to climb through. As a spirit, she faces no such obstacles. Beyond the window lies a beach, covered in ashy sand and prickly grasses. Seagulls wheel through a storm-gray sky, and waves unfurl against each other like dropped bolts of dark, heavy silk. When she drifts from one side of the glass panes to the other, she sees a roof covered in flat black shingles slanting sharply down and away from her.

The wind outside the house is very strong. The ghost doesn't care for it. She feels it tearing off wisps of her, tossing them out over the water. It howls through her numb, translucent torso, searching for a heart that's not there.

Struggling against the possessive gales, the ghost returns to the attic. Now her veil is beaded with small pebbles of rain. The flowers shimmer and do not drink it in, being only a memory of thread and cloth.

Somewhere below her, in the house to which the attic belongs, there is noise. The ghost can tell the noise comes from living people. Perhaps more than one of them. Two, she thinks, and maybe three. They're moving in, unpacking suitcases, shifting furniture, rummaging, speaking to each other in muffled shouts. The ghost knows, in the same way she knows she's a ghost, that the house was shuttered and vacant for many years before these people came. Perhaps their coming summoned her.

The ghost gathers her concentration. She thinks the heaviest thoughts she can. She sinks. Past the attic floor. Through the white ceiling and ugly carpet of an upstairs hallway. She enters the kitchen feet first, tingling as she feels light and heat. The kitchen's full of butter-colored flickering from lamps and candles. A stained-glass lampshade throws fragmented shapes of cherry, plum, and orange against the walls. Everything smells of coffee.

A living woman stands in the kitchen, pulling plates out of a cardboard box and stacking them high on cupboard shelves. She is about thirty years old. The ghost thinks this is older than she was when she died, but not by very much. And times have changed; perhaps thirty today is the same as twenty or twenty-five was decades ago. Certainly the woman has an air of extreme youth about her despite the crow's feet beginning to sink in at the corners of her eyes. She's slender and sprightly, with curly-wavy hair that bounces around her oval face as she moves. She's wearing tight blue denim trousers, black leather boots, and a baggy black shirt.

The ghost finds her extraordinarily beautiful. The ghost can smell her blood, humming beneath the warm brown skin. The ghost can smell her happiness, and the ghost covets it. She hovers as close to the woman as she can, trying to touch her. Her hands slip through fabric, flesh, muscle, bone. They reach only empty air.

The woman shivers.

A man enters the room, shorter than she is and plump, with golden stubble on his chin and a handsome face. A cherub of a man. The ghost feels strongly that he should be wearing a pinstriped suit and a hat with a feather in its band, that he would look just like— who? Someone from her own time?— if only his clothes were changed. As it is, he has on an outfit similar to the woman's, though he wears dingy white athletic shoes instead of black boots, and his trousers are loose. He moves with silence and grace that would be surprising even in a thin man, creeping up on the woman and placing his hands over her eyes. His belly and chest press into the ghost. She feels his heart inside him, inside her, squirming and pumping.

The woman shrieks. The man says, "Guess who?" and then, "Sorry!"

"It's okay, Rob. I just had a funny feeling. That someone-walking-over-

your-grave feeling. It wasn't you, really."

There is so much love between these people. The ghost feels it flowing through her in a strong current. It makes her more coherent, sticks her in place with her front brushing the woman's vertebrae and her back in the layer of fat and muscle that covers the man's guts. She pretends she is a part of that love, not just a conduit. For a moment, she feels wispy lungs unfold in her chest. She feels her feet touch the tile floor. She tries to draw breath.

"Maybe the house is haunted," says Rob.

"Fine with me if it is," says the woman, "as long as the ghosts aren't hurting anyone. They're just dead people."

The ghost puts her lips to the woman's ear. She tries, tries, tries to make herself felt. The woman doesn't even shiver again. Rob's body, behind her, is too solid and radiant.

From another room, a baby screams thin and tremulous. The ghost turns towards the sound, as does Rob. The woman starts to move.

"Ellie," says Rob. "Let me..."

"No," Ellie cuts him off. "He needs his mother. I can tell."

She steps around boxes and bags, from tile to heavy wooden boards, and Rob follows in her wake, and the ghost trails after them both helplessly, like a fish with a hook through its gills.

In a small room off the parlor, a baby lies dull-eyed and sickly in a beautiful white crib. He doesn't have his father's cherubic looks or his mother's energy. He's a sallow, skinny goblin with congested, snuffling breath, a face wrinkled and jowled as an old man's. Still, his parents look on him with pure devotion, affection tempered by concern. The ghost feels unbearably jealous when Ellie takes him in her arms, shushing and cooing, and releases a full breast from her garments for him to suck. Which he does only briefly before throwing back his head and wailing again.

The ghost slaps him on his wrinkled little cheek, but of course her hand goes straight through him. He howls louder. She can feel the sickness inside his body. She can feel the edges of his soul, new and weak, improperly fixed to his physical form. It flutters slimy and insubstantial against her fingertips.

“Hush, little baby...” Ellie begins to sing. Rob comes over to stand beside her, puts a large, soft palm on her back. “Don’t say a word...”

The ghost knows, suddenly, what she must do.

She grips the edges of the infant soul and pulls with all her strength. The baby’s body jolts, his eyes roll back in their sockets, his crying ceases abruptly. The ghost of a child drifts into the air, howling silently through a translucent, toothless mouth.

The older ghost folds and squirms into the space he leaves behind. She holds on tight until she begins to feel the body’s contours as her own.

It is strange, to be an infant. It will be strange, growing up with a boy’s body. But she is alive. As her parents bend over her in alarm, checking her pulse and breathing, she draws an enormous gust of coffee-scented air into her fresh, living lungs and lets loose her own cry.

“Oh thank God,” says Rob, grinning in relief.

“You frightened us!” says Ellie, as the baby grabs her breast and begins to drink deep, nourished at the center of his family’s love.

No one sees the ghost, wrapped in a bridal veil like a winding sheet, as he floats helplessly through the ceiling. He floats through another ceiling, and through the slate shingles of the roof. He floats into a storm. He has a moment to glimpse lightning shearing through a dark sky, and the sparkling crash of black waves breaking on hard wet sand, before the winds tear him apart.

A Boy's(?) First Book of Absent Parts

by Rick Hollon

cw: bodily injury, amputation, body dysmorphia

as a child I supped with frostbite

upon broken limbs & gangly toes
of sunburnt bonecold mountaineers

I bent & stretched within my shoes
anticipatory daydreams all bloodless

excision; anatomical housecleaning
reorganization of what can be lived

without & what cannot be lived with
& so little of me mattered (I thought)

the vault of the world would be worth
a handful of bone, leatherdry bouquet

of lost bits & bobs all extraneous
because I was incomplete anyway

an inventory of self-miscellany

Facial

by Kit Isherwood

cw: sex

you told me to put a bedsheet down and I had thought
that you were joking or like so many on the app
were exaggerating the claim of your prowess I had done so
though knelt before you bare
as you had insisted the polyester-over-carpet rough
against my knees my room not so much cold as tepid you
tasted of hard work and mango felt like a steel pipe
thwacked against my cheek before being dragged
over my face mapping me out *suck it*
I complied let it skim the roof of my mouth before plunging
into the pool of my throat I had gasped for air this
excited you made you throb your hands a vice holding me
in place until you were ready your orgasm like
autumn rain covered me like it was the most natural thing in the world

BLACK MATTER white [noise a c r o s s] TIME[?]

by Ami J. Sanghvi

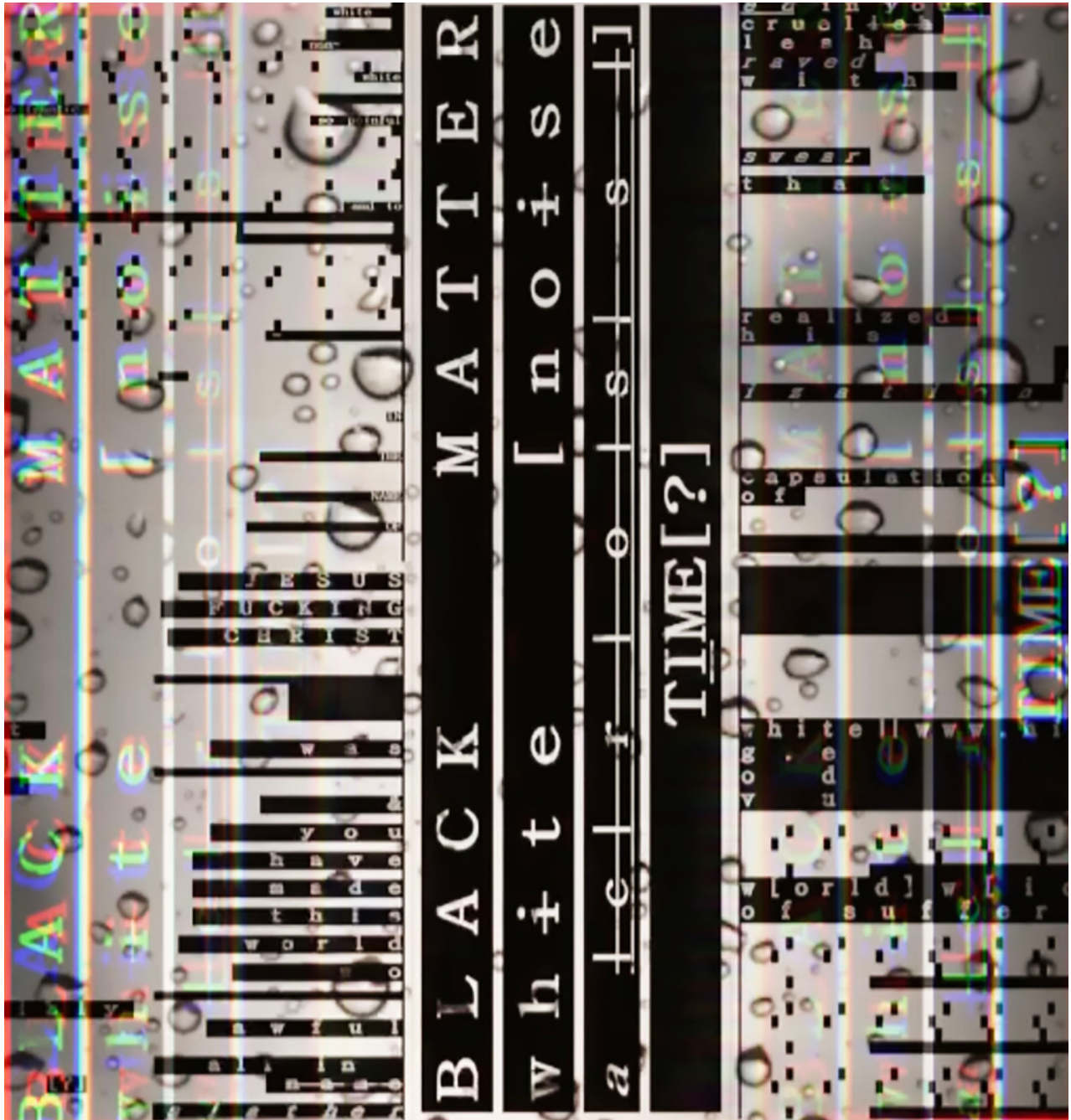


Image Description: A visual poem. Four solid-black columns run up the centre, saying "BLACK MATTER" "white noise" "a | c | r | o | s | s |]" "TIME [?]". Further black text boxes grow out from that centre, or come in from the sides. The main four columns are refracted, with white text, in a red-green-blue, or three-dimensional, effect on the further edges. Under it all, an image of water droplets on a grey gradient background.

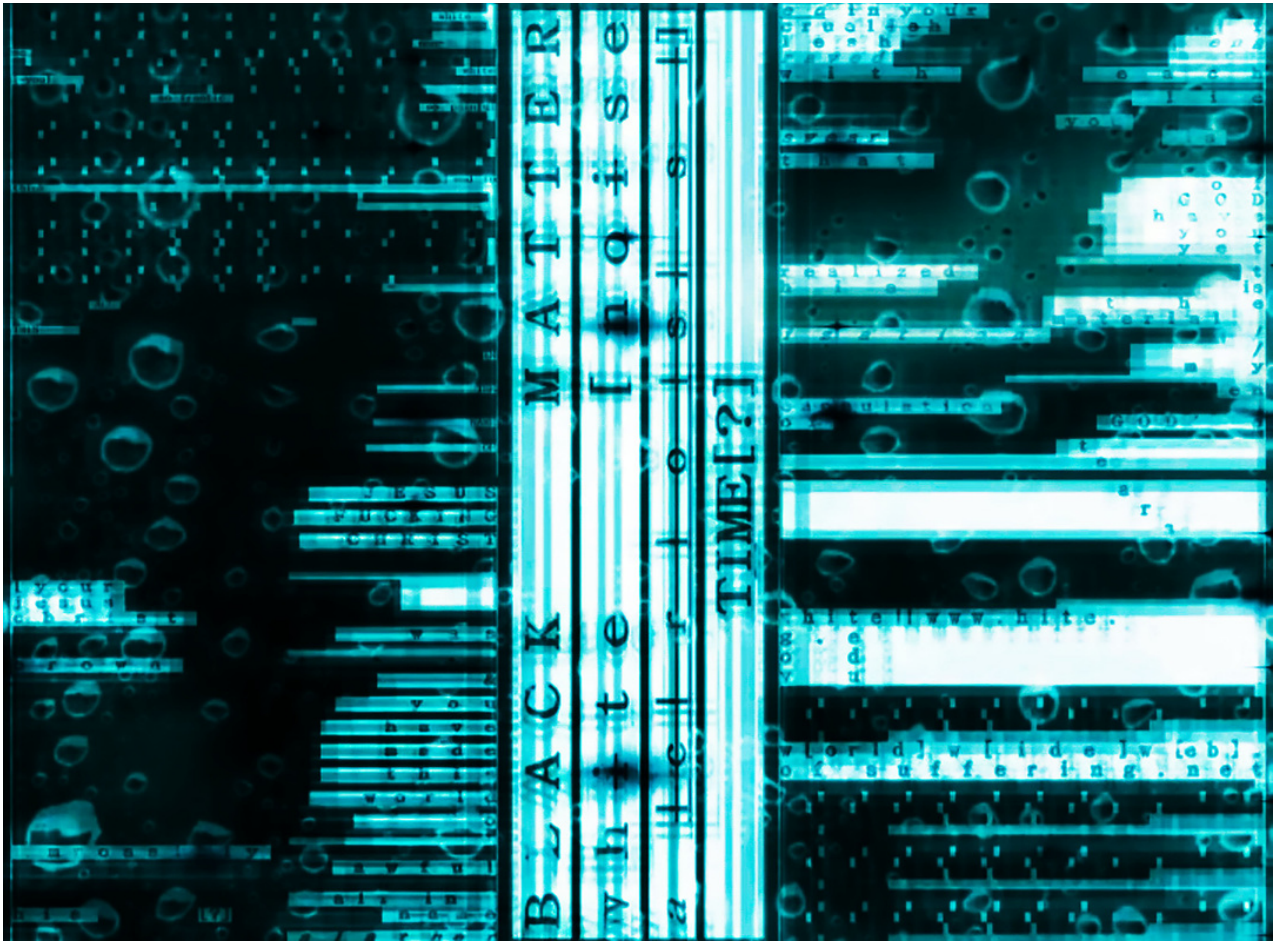


Image Description: A visual poem, same as the previous but made negative and shone a neon blue. Four solid-white columns run up the centre, with black text with a blue glow saying "BLACK MATTER" "white noise]" "a | c | r | o | s | s | |" "TIME [?]". Further white text boxes grow out from that centre, or come in from the sides. Under it all, an image of water droplets on a blue-black gradient background.



Image Description: A visual poem, with the same elements as the first one but concaving, making the elements furthest from the centre stretch. Four solid-black columns run up the centre, saying "BLACK MATTER" "white noise" "a | c | r | o | s | s |]" "TIME [?]". Further black text boxes grow out from that centre, or come in from the sides. Under it all, an image of water droplets on a grey gradient background.

artist's statement

"The depicted visual poetry images here are from a brand new experimental collection of mine, titled *BLACK MATTER white [noise a c r o s s] TIME[?]*, which is without a doubt, a multilayered examination of how white supremacy has existed throughout, impacted, and continues to exist throughout and impact the passage of "time" in our current played-out scenario. It involves erasure, warping, space, etc. (as enacted not only by the overwhelming nature of human memory as a whole, but also through the utter whitewashing of history) fused with lightly scientific, highly spiritual, and intuitive meta/pataphysical concepts. The work also plays on color theory and technology as they may coincide in our modern-day virtual worlds, the intergenerational trauma as caused by the direct colonization of my ancestors, and our ancient/past/present/and future, ongoing, perpetual universe."

–Ami J. Sanghvi

and wander midst fog

by nat raum

cw: gender dysphoria, chronic pain

is it that i look out the window and fall in love with the fog because i want to
become it / descending at will to wrap myself between bare swamp-tree branches
on the kind of afternoon that can only be a sunday in january / between the
concrete overpasses of the highway that cleaves through midtown to the harbor and
sits silent in the wee hours of a december saturday morning /

is it that i long
to separate into droplets and drift upward into rust and bronze and marigold cones
of light to soften their edges / or to blanket forests in cool grey mists thirteen miles
from city lights /

is it that i need to live somewhere between liquid and gas / to fill
the volume / take the shape of anything that might contain me /

is it like the way
i sleep curled inward just to make myself smaller / like the way it's pushed me not to
know a spine that doesn't crackle / a body no one leered at /

is it the impulse
to flee the weight of both sorrow and soft tissue sutured to my chest / to evaporate
as i please / to choose where i lay myself next / valley or lake or thicket / or stretch
of north avenue just before daybreak /

is it that i fervently wish to dissolve
into nameless specks of brume dotting pastoral paintings / to dwell where the
stillness doesn't ask why i am not moving at the speed of sound

friendsgiving

by Phoebe Kalid

friendsgiving feels like a finger-cage
so i pick the lock with my tongue,

blabbing like a broken animatronic—
ga ga ga ga—something has gone wrong

on an astronomic level, in the forever-dusk
between stars. something has gone wrong

and all i can do is take trains to far flung houses,
heart hitched in the crook of my arm,

drink wine and talk about all the writing
i should be writing—a novel, an anthology

of poems, how i write new words
(meaning less) but i write them

and they write me back,
while the moon glares like a desk lamp

through the shutters.

annabel

by Phoebe Kalid

cw: blood, bodily injury, grief

sometimes i imagine you
bloody from bar fights,
your teeth strewn like rune stones
on the sweat-streaked linoleum.
no other scenario seems plausible

to me, except maybe you
coming home for christmas,
giftless and foul, to dump your coat
and disembowel our drinks cabinet.

i think there's a lot of you
i could have loved.

i think you could have done so much
if you weren't pinned above
the bathroom sink or squeezed between
old maps and a rolled up doormat.

i think i see you
in bad weather, in blue jays
rifling through bins for coke tabs.

List of things I need in order to live

by Rebecca Reynolds

cw: death

A negligent mind, a capacity to feel
aloft. A vestigial wing spying on a wing. And my wife
who is perfectly different than me.
Her coins lie around. Her favorite, yellowing pillow forms lumps
around the bowl of her head.
I want to drop the pillow out the window one night
down to the path when she isn't looking, until her pennies
fall back in her wallet, and my very own clothes
fold themselves, Kondo style, and sit
in their slots. And then, I need remorse. You are not
my twin. You replicate the moon. I go round
and around until your whiteness resolves into olive
and patchouli and scrubs. I need to worship your surface
of Lebanese-Italian skin. By day I need to see the white moths
flirting above the window box until I name them
after my grandparents, who would love one another
and die. If I see them loop and diverge and flutter as a pair
they are mine. I need them to *be* Leon and Pauline.
I need to wash my hands, and look out again
on the twin moths, freed from their chrysalis
of eternal Jewish sleep. I need
to learn how to change thoughts, defund the police,
abolish prisons—I need to speak about this. I need to know
how to change and how to move with those intellects of moths I have willed
into souls so many times with the accomplishments
of knowledge, for I need to be the couple, the scientist
and social worker entwined, speakers of Yiddish,
writers of Hebrew and letters,
correspondents of meticulous words. She would tell me

to focus on what I can change. Yet I need
to stay home again and again to save myself. I need to stare
at the fuchsia center of coleus that blazes outside the window
in a box of dirt surrounded by veins. I need to see
living things, to glance again
at the moths laddering in sunlight, the color of paper
blanched above the unblooming lilac
and tones of green slowly orbiting a month
when the flowers fade. I need their slow unbecoming,
their drift into dried wedding gowns and spider webs
and carcasses of petals effacing white when
October loves us.

The Length of the Forest (things I need, II)

by Rebecca Reynolds

I would need the leaves to redden and crisp
the blackened juice at the base of a blanched petal
this season against the other seasons
to unlearn me I would need the brutal to decay in their uselessness—
this is not what we have I would need you and I would worry
I would need my mask
in the deciduous line-up of trees
hot water, soap, and Netflix I would need you to observe
the tiniest incident on a stone I would need
your list of meds I would pull the splinter from a cat one day
I would need to be alone and the other I would not
you would need to be a woman dressed as a boy I would need 20 times
to revise my identity to describe me cis, dyke,
bi, lesbian, pansexual water
and honey in the mug leftover matcha tea
from Tea of the Month I would be
irresponsible with money I would need uncertainty
to lean across difference to hold
a body in my arms to imagine the body without touching the body
or calling myself anything but white
I would need a collage of simultaneous events Adderall
and something for dreaming the obscurity of snow
on the TV I would need the length of the forest
to uncoil in my lungs and down
from the tenuous splints and oar locks
to keep my hands from dipping into the icy waters
as if I drifted seeking the bones of the moon.

Month of Love and Despair

by Rebecca Reynolds

cw: animal death, white supremacy

Phillipsburg, NJ

White signified
incipient rain behind mist. Late
December and we didn't know if hunters might slouch
in the skeletal trunks and bush-stems, roots threading
like map-lines in the dirt, casing their cell chains
along the length of their cylinders.
We didn't spot the orange vests or hear the thud of shots or see
birds keel overhead in this town of churches and stone--
though here I am, the half-Jew,
a fair, Ashkenazic white. I need
the palest concealer, as if I blended into fog, a ghost
in the undergrowth by the disused canal,
walls of Cambrian limestone ascending
white and green with ragged discs of lichen above the roads, houses,
Republican lawn signs, which we passed
turning home to our mixed street while
afraid of a country through pandemic
stillness with the climax, a rageful
white. And soon, while we wanted to imagine
the deer leaping off with foxes into the cropped farms before
the greying sun could scope their quivering tails,
you were inside dusk, turning olive, then blue.
I took a photo of Santa beside some inflated snowmen
who teetered and waved, all grit
by a neighboring house on the sodden grass, like dwarves
who beckoned us home to their cots
in the afternoon of a nameless thing.

contributor bios

Clayton Arble (they/them) is a poet from the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts. They are currently in their second year at Hampshire College, where they study literature and creative writing.

Robert Beveridge (he/him) makes noise (xterminal.bandcamp.com) and writes poetry in Akron, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in Words and Whispers, Turtle Island Quarterly, and Door Is a Jar, among others.

Sheeks Bhattacharjee (she/they) is a first-year college student at the Pennsylvania State University and is the co-founder/EIC of Vocivia Magazine and a nonprofit organization (Astral Cognition). She often writes poetry and makes music about her own feelings and mental state and occasionally dabbles in art. They have published work in Coexist Lit and Harmonic Mag as well as a couple of poems featured on the Young Poets Unite Instagram! All of her work can be found on her website: thecreativitydumppyard.tk. You can also find them on Twitter and Instagram as [@mildlysomewhat](https://www.instagram.com/mildlysomewhat).

Kit Isherwood (he/him) is a twenty-six year old queer poet from Birmingham. He is a teacher by trade and a poet by nature. His poetry has been published by Verve in their Diversity anthology, Untitled: Voices, Re-Side, and on Young Poets Network. Most recently, his poetry has been featured by Ligeia, Queerlings, Fahmidan, Tealight Press, Dreich, Selcouth Station Press, Spelt, Acid Bath Publishing, and Muswell Press. He is currently working on his first pamphlet.

Elisheva Fox [she/her] is a mother, lawyer, and writer. She braids her late-blooming queerness, Texan sensibilities, and faith into poetry. Some of her other pieces can be found in Touchstone Literary Magazine, Sand Hills Literary Magazine, 805lit, Screen Door Review, and Jewish Book Council's Paper Brigade. On Instagram, she can be found as [@elisheva.fox](https://www.instagram.com/elisheva.fox); on Twitter, [@afoxmother](https://twitter.com/afoxmother).

Rick Hollon (they/them or fey/fem) is a nonbinary, intersex, neurodivergent, disabled, bi/queer author from the American Midwest. Feir work has appeared or is forthcoming in *perhappened*, *Whale Road Review*, *Tealight Press*, *(mac)ro(mic)*, the *HELL IS REAL* anthology, and elsewhere. Their website is mimulus.weebly.com and their Twitter is [@SailorTheia](https://twitter.com/SailorTheia).

Phoebe Kalid is a writer and poet from London, England. She holds a BA in English Literature and Creative Writing from the University of Birmingham. Her poetry has been published or is forthcoming in Fawn Press, Not Deer Magazine, and Catchwater Press, among others. Currently, she is writing her first novel. Phoebe tweets [@feeeefiphofum](https://twitter.com/feeeefiphofum).

Meghan Kemp-Gee lives somewhere between Vancouver BC and Fredericton NB. She writes poetry, comics, and scripts of all kinds. She co-created the webcomics *Contested Strip* and *Space Heroines of El-Andoo*. Her writing has appeared in publications including *PRISM*, *Copper Nickel*, *Rising Phoenix Review*, *The Shore*, *Stone of Madness*, *Altadena Poetry Review*, *Train*, *Rejection Letters*, *Tincture*, *Skyd*, and *Autostraddle*. She studied at Amherst College and Chapman University and is currently a PhD student at the University of New Brunswick. She also teaches composition and plays ultimate frisbee. You can find her on Twitter [@MadMollGreen](https://twitter.com/MadMollGreen).

Raymond Luczak (he/him/his) is the author and editor of 25 titles, including *once upon a twin: poems* (Gallaudet University Press) and *QDA: A Queer Disability Anthology* (Squares & Rebels). His work has appeared in *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Impossible Archetype*, and elsewhere. Currently the editor of the literary journal *Mollyhouse*, he lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota. [raymondluczak.com]

Briar Ripley Page is an American werewolf in London. They are the author of the novella *Corrupted Vessels*, the novel *Body After Body*, and short stories that have appeared in places like *smoke + mold*, *Moon Park Review*, and *Delicate Friend*. Briar's website is briarripleypage.xyz. They enjoy white sauce on pasta.

Leela Raj-Sankar is an Indian-American teenager from Arizona. Their work has appeared in Mixed Mag, Warning Lines, and Ghost Heart Lit, among others. In his spare time, he can usually be found playing badminton or taking a nap. Say hi to her on Twitter [@sickgirlisms](#).

nat raum (b. 1996) is a queer disabled artist and writer from baltimore, md. they graduated from maryland institute college of art in 2018 with a bfa in photography and book arts and they are currently a first-year mfa candidate in creative writing & publishing arts at the university of baltimore. nat's creative practice centers primarily upon their lived experience with loss and sexual trauma and subsequent c-ptsd diagnosis, often taking the form of small-edition image/text books and zines. past and upcoming publishers of their writing include bullshit lit, delicate friend, kissing dynamite poetry, and warning lines magazine. nat is also the founder of fifth wheel press, a queer literature and art publishing space. nat is an avid fan of glass animals, noise-cancelling headphones, and bisexual lighting, preferably all at once. venmo: @moshpitdaria, cashapp: \$moshpitdaria.

Rebecca Reynolds has published two books of poetry; her first book, *Daughter of the Hangnail* (New Issues Press) received the 1998 Norma Farber First Book Award from the Poetry Society of America. Her poems have appeared in a number of magazines and online journals, including *Quarterly West*, *Boston Review of Books*, *Cimmaron Review*, *Web Conjunctions*, *American Letters and Commentary*, *The Literary Review*, and several others. She has taught creative writing and courses in women's, gender, and sexuality studies at Rutgers University. She lives with her wife and cats.

Ami J. Sanghvi (he/they) is a non-binary, Indian-American, queer author, artist, designer, boxer, *Eric Hoffer Book Award* finalist, and recent graduate from the California Institute of the Arts Creative Writing M.F.A. program. He is a fiction editor for *Decolonial Passage*, poetry editor for *Wrongdoing Magazine*, and staff writer for *Chaotic Merge*, as well as the co-founder of *Gutslut Press*. His work has appeared in *So It Goes: The Literary Journal of the Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library*, *Inverted Syntax*, *Humana Obscura*, *I Hope You'll Still Love Me: A South Asian LGBTQIA+ Anthology*, *Masalazine*, *Zindabad Magazine*, *Bullshit Magazine*, and numerous other publications and exhibitions. He was also a featured author for *LUPERCALIApress's VULCANALIA '21* anthology. He is the winner of *Really Serious Literature's Beefy Chapbook Potato-Rito Remote Residency To-Go Contest XXL*, and the author of *[in]transpiring* (swallow::tale press: 2021), *Confessions of a Baby Vamp: Letters to John Milton* (Gutslut Press: 2021), *Baby Wraith Burrito Bones* (Really Serious Literature: 2022), *Lipstick[less] Mania: A Ritual For No One*, (Bottlecap Press: 2022), and *The Great Wraith Finale* (Bullshit Magazine Press, 2022). Follow them on Twitter and Instagram [@HotWraithBones](#), or check out [amijasanghvi.com/alien-goop](#) for further sans-material evidence of their perpetual suffering.

Clementine Williams (they/fae) is a Black, queer undergraduate student hailing from North Carolina. They are working toward a degree in social work with a minor in criminology. A new prose and poetry writer, whose work centers around Black lesbianism and intersectionality, Clementine's forthcoming pieces are to be published by Ethel Zine, *Death's Dormant Daughter* and *Stone of Madness Press* in 2022. You can find them on twitter [@fairyfemmes](#).

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issue one



issue one: white