

ISSUE #1

OUTWRITE

EZINE



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OutWrite Issue 1 - September 2018

Contributing Poets

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John Fitzsimmons
Hazel Woodbridge
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Ripley Stevens
Samuel Busch
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Prince Loyd Besorio
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The OutWrite eZine was created to amplify the voices of our LGBTQ2A* youth and to foster connection, understanding, and celebrate excellence in written and spoken word.

For our first annual eZine, we are privileged to publish the works of 27 poets, ages 14 to 21, primarily based in Victoria and Vancouver Island, with contributions from as far away as Nova Scotia and even Korea. In this collection, you'll find themes of love, of self and others; self-actualization; and soulful and hopeful treatments of what it means to feel different.

OutWrite was compiled to be enjoyed by all ages as a work to open and deepen conversations. Beyond sharing with friends and families, it's a highly readable collection to share at GSAs and youth groups. For the youth reading these poems, we hope you find familiar reflections and resonance here, as well as inspiration to tell your own stories, whether that be through poetry, art, music, or whatever your medium.

We are pleased to launch this amazing collection and look forward to the chance to publish such incredible work for years to come.

Kelly Legge - Editor
Victoria Pride Society Youth
Engagement Committee Chair

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A day in the life of a trans person

by Maisie Bodrug

My boobs are made of silicone.
(I sometimes forget to put them on.)
I forget them one day and poof they're gone.

When I go to school, I'm kinda stealth,
(and I take vitamin D for my health.)

You call me a freak, I'll call you a fool.
Just 'cause I'm unique doesn't mean I'm not cool.

At the end of the day I remove my breasts and shout,
"I am awesome!"

...and then I turn my lights out.

When I wake up in the morning I rub my eyes and yawn
Go to the bedside table, flick the light on

I go and eat my breakfast and I go and pack my bag
I run into a TERF, he starts calling me a Fag.

I go and confront him, I say "Leave me alone."
He tells me I'm garbage and that he sits on his throne.

I tell him "that does it!" I'm boiling with rage.
I tell him, he's a douchbag and that he should act his age.

I get into the classroom, I go and take my seat.
We're doing science, that's pretty neat.

We're studying hormones, what a surprise.
Boys are cracking jokes but the joke's on you guys.

I head out for lunch, it's a burger and fries.
Someone calls me a Tranny and part of me dies.

Colours of the Rainbow

by Maisie Bodrug

Black and Brown take the crown
and Red is full of life.
Orange makes pain back down
and Yellow can wash away your strife.
Green is for nature, the thing that helps earth grow.
Blue helps us come together,
and Purple can make your heart glow.

In Through the Cracks

by Jaqi Hinkle

Slip in through the cracks
I stop in my tracks
Dark thoughts at a max

Breath in breath out
My sin's in the doubt
All the din finds a route

Straight to my brain
I hate that tight strain
A trait I can't feign

Can't hold on to that person
The cold will just worsen
I'm told it's a curtain

That keeps back the fear
Which creeps towards me here
And seeps up the tears

The locals are demons
They're vocal I see them
Focal point of my freedom

Sell it like it never mattered
Tell it that my heart isn't shattered
Hell, all this just makes me flattered

But Not Her

by Anonymous

I've had two years to figure this out
I've had time
Now I understand me
But not her
I could say fuck it one day and just kiss her
I could say fuck it one day and just find someone new
I could say fuck it...
I'm too afraid
Of losing that tiny chance
Of losing her altogether
So here I am
With a stupid plan
One of a dozen others that all fell through
Maybe this is different
She holds my hand and I think
Maybe it's more
Please let it be more

Leaders

by Jasmine DeFehr and Nyoman Sparshu

Taking action,
Taking a stand,
Always lending a helping hand.
These are things leaders do,
Helping through and through.
They teach,
They inspire,
Their someone you admire.
They help in your community.
They give you new opportunities.
These are things leaders do,
Helping through and through.
With their contribution,
They'll help you find a solution.
They respect your voice
While they project theirs,
They protect their opinions,
So you can share yours.
They are kind,
They follow through,
So what does a leader mean to you?

Happily Ever After

by Jasmine DeFehr

Like Romeo and Juliet,
The Montagues and the Capulets.
Two lovers forbidden together,
Destined not to live happily ever after.
But those were the older times,
You see things are changing
For the happier, for the better.
New things are rising
I can see them on the horizon.
More freedom to speak,
More freedom to love,
More freedom to be unique.
So by all means just be yourself
And everything will get worked out.

Shattered

by Anonymous

Its too much
Their hate
Their judgement
They laugh and they prod
They joke and they snicker
But they don't feel the pain

The sun goes down
Shadows growing larger
Anger swells, in need of an outlet
And one appears
One with his face staring back
At him

Crippling rage forces the movements
No longer in his control
The years of service forgotten
The connections and feelings no
longer matter

Shards of glass catch the
last glimmers of sun
Specks of silver littering the ground
Smothered in threads of blood

He will see them again
The ones who laugh
The ones who hurt him
He plays along, jibes along

But he sees them now
Knows who they are deep down
So he hides, cowers
Anything to escape the hate

The bruises will fade
The cuts will heal
But the words will always hurt
No matter the time, nor place
No matter who surrounds him
The words have left their mark
on his heart

Me Vs. the Television

by John Fitzsimmons

The television is staring at me again
Static eyes right on time for our nightly game of chicken
We place bets on who will flicker first:
The coward on the couch
Or the faded face behind the screen
Threatening to clamber out

Some nights it's the politician
With the iron stare and heavy fist
And if the end of the world had eyes
I swear that they'd be his:
Red hot like cattle prods, bullet wounds
They fry the air
I fan the fumes
A spark ignites the living room
And furniture turns to flame
But all I feel are red hot eyes casting red hot blame
That kind of heat makes it hard not to blink
But I refuse to flicker still

Some nights it's the anchor
Bearing familiar tragic stories
Of those humans being animals and taking lives like trophies
Her face of melting wax begins to seep beyond the screen
It soaks the carpet
Slowly rises
But I know, deep down, she pities me
Because all she sees is a headline in the making
Refusing to blink first

Some nights it's the comedian
That bloated corpse of circus tricks
Telling jokes at my expense
And winking eyes the size of pinpricks
When his jaw unhinges happily
To free his black hole mouth
I've never heard a sonic slice to eardrums like the laughter he lets out

It's a smoke alarm cacophony, a hundred siren screams
And even though I know I am the funniest thing he's ever seen
I won't be the first to blink

Except tonight, there is no hiss of static
No buzz of life onscreen
There is no fire in the living room
Or wax beneath my feet
Tonight, no scheduled television
In its place is something worse:
A silence
An infinite blackness
And a face I don't recognize
Wondering who will blink first

Girls

by Hazel Woodbridge

“Have you ever kissed a girl?”

“yeah...I have”

I want to tell him how petals
Poured from my mouth
And roses filled my eyes.
I want to tell him how
Asphodel came alive in my veins
And my skin screamed her name.
She smelled like chrysanthemums
And tasted like wet dreams,
And when she asked me my favorite flower,
I have never felt touch so soft
Or teeth so sharp.
How I swallowed her whole
and rode her high like a lightning strike.
An overdose on honey and hyacinth.
My gums are rotting
My lips are black
From her burn

“Fuck” he said, “that’s hot”

i could have died

by Ira Strain

i could have drowned in the ocean

but instead i opened my eyes and swam
my scales shimmering, never to set foot on land again

i could have burned in the forest fire

but i rose from the ashes with wings and flew
with the migrating birds to clear air

i could have gone insane in the dark

but i drew my sword and hacked
away at the monsters plaguing my eyes

i could have been crushed by rocks

but i grew and i grew
until i was a mountain
and the rocks turned into sand
tumbling off my back

i could have died
a thousand times

but every time
i shaped and molded myself like putty
So that i could see another day.

The moon and her sun

by Ira Strain

She runs her fingers through my hair
Bees buzz through the violets
Satin falls into the river
Water trickles down sun freckled skin
Legs intertwined
Nails gripped in dirt

We live in a garden of secrets
Where I can kiss her unconditionally

We are the moon and the sun
Trapped in mortal bodies
So that they could finally touch

(No Title)

by Ripley Stevens

They were the kids who flinched when arms were raised to high.
The kids who jumped at any noise.
The ones who shook, who cried.
They are the kids who laugh.
The kids who smile, who hug.
The kids who carry their invisible scars and bruises but keep on going.
We may be damaged but we are not broken.

I Feel Disproportionate

by Samuel Busch

I feel disproportionate

the way a pre-teen is, like I was supposed to fill out this boy/femme body some time ago.

My strange muscular thighs and semi-toned calves, full hips and short body.

In short, I wish I would just be twinkie or otterish

Which is to say, tiny and thin or average height and stocky.

But here I am, chunky hips, short legs, and so I've been told, a pretty face.

Several people have told me that I'm intimidating

Which makes no sense to a 5'2 tiny dude who was socialized female.

Oh, and being told that my attractiveness is intimidating.

Not only do I feel like a squishy little Teddy bear

But the one that stays inside even after hibernation is over saying,

"Hey, yeah I don't really want to come out right now. Like, I haven't shaved in a while."

Nobody cares what you look like, bitch, they're all thinking about themselves.

"Yeah, ok, that sounds about right. I guess it's time, huh?"

Spring is here and she's waiting for me to grow, to step out this dark space, or just open the curtains.

Maybe I haven't been trying hard enough to get a bigger shoe size or sharper jaw line or longer legs.

Maybe she's just been waiting for me to see if I'd make the first move. She sits back, kissing two lips and inviting chrysanthemums to book and wine clubs or picnics on Sundays in the backyard.

She spent weekends like me, wrapped up in snow white blankets, suffocating under the cold, only to blossom and bloom from the pressure, and find I had new colours I didn't know of. We'd swaddle ourselves in each other, Spring and Fall, rebirth and death. Both new beginnings.

Rain, showers, and seeds falling in sun.

Cool sun. Not the boiling kind that forces us out of winter skins, but nurturing and soft.

I'll hold her. As little spoon as I am, I'll hold her. Growth, death, into new; scattering of seeds and all.

She makes me pure again and reminds me small things are still whole, mustard seed still persists, tiny as it is, as minuscule, it's still whole and complete.

And so am I. I am whole; small, misshapen in ways, but inherently good.

The atom makes up almost everything. No, everything. And it's one of the smallest things we can fathom.

I may see my body as unattractive and thus useless but it can lift my sister.

It carries the dog's food from the car and helps my mom with everything she needs.

It helps my dog up the stairs, my lumpy eleven year old bear sized lab, misshapen but perfect.

The first love of my life, this fatty, cyst-covered furball.

So maybe my rolls and lumps are ok. If I can love him the way I do, people will love me too.

Peace in Colour

by Anonymous

My world, beautiful
Bright and colourful
People around me don't understand how I can see a rainbow
A toucan, talking strangely to a crow
In a world set up for them in black and white
I feel free from the need to fight
Trapped in a box, I am finally free
Free from the cage of disharmony
I didn't know what it was to be alive
Playing the part of another person's strife
Then a door opened to a different world
A world where I could see my life unfold
Who I was
Who I am
Not someone else's story
Mine, and mine alone
But in my solidarity, I found a community
Of people just like me
Finding peace in a place of the caged now free

Game Over

by Tyler Johnson

They say my name like a slur
like one whisper of it
will cause the world around them
to crumble

They whisper it
in hushed tones
unlike the shouts
of which they speak
my birth name

They act like my whole experience
my life is a game
that will soon be over

But I am not playing pretend
I am not stuck in their nameless game unable to escape
doomed to reach end screen
Game Over.

I am a person of my own creation
and I will rise up
my name a title
that I've chosen for myself

They say She, Her, Hers
I scream back He, Him, His
Their echoes
those echoes
that match
my own internal words
of doubt
ring out...
but I am louder
and I am not alone

My friends join me
their voices mixing with mine
we say He, His, Him
They say nothing

My name
is a title
of my own choosing
and no longer
will I allow them
to taint it with their pained words
and hushed tones

This is not my Game Over.

Sterling

by Prince Loyd Besorio

It was Sterling who caught her heart
She was beautiful so as she
and they just look beautiful
together

It was Sterling who kissed her
under the sun
that perfectly kissed their hair

Then I realized
“ How beautiful it was watching a butterfly
kissed a sunflower as my flower finally
found its butterfly”

It was Sterling who kissed my sunflower
And it's also Sterling who kissed my daughter

(No Title)

by Samuel Park

No fats, femmes, Asians,
Words that resonate.
I'll never be loved.

to my best friend now suddenly a stranger

by Charlie Marie

To my best friend now suddenly a stranger,
I used to see the only good in the world in your eyes and you the only who saw the good in me
at all.
We were the best thing about me.
You were the reason I kept trying.
And then one day
as if you had died,
you dropped out of my life.
We didn't gradually grow apart,
one day
you just decided you didn't want anything to do with me anymore. And I don't blame you.
I expected it sooner or later.
But as you walked away,
everyone else I cared for followed you right out of my life. I would have done the same.
For I loved you more than I loved me
just as everyone else did.
We used to pick flowers together.
Examine each's beauty before tossing most aside as if they were not worth the space in our
pockets.
The rest, we carried home ever so gently
would intertwine into our hair hoping to assimilate with their beauty.
The mirror soon became our favorite place to be. We could be outside ourselves
and see as if not ourselves at all.
But outside of ourselves we saw truth.
In you I saw the beauty of every flower wrapped in your gold silk hair and saw of myself the
worth of the dirt we abused as we tore flowers away.
And to this day I still ponder what you might have seen.
Roses were always my favorite flower.
You, as if a gorgeous rose,
were widely loved and the center of great inspiration.
It was with you
that I discovered the most breathtaking of roses have the most painful thorns.
And I never looked at life the same.
Roses are always brilliant
until you are compared to their beauty.
And in the end,
the beauty I saw in you
that once gave me hope,
brought me more pain than I thought imaginable.
You pushed every thorn you had onto me and left me to bleed.
Roses truly were my favorite flower. But you only loved them
when you saw one in the mirror. And now,
I can never see them the same.

Tribute To The Devil

by Charlie Marie

They say that god will give you unconditional love and the devils lust is temporary,
 But when sins never felt so fulfilling and his fiery arms held me in a close embrace I
 started to
 question god's existence to begin with.
 He is the most dangerous thing I have come to love but still the best part about me.
 He replaced whispering sweet nothings with tales of death and destruction of innocence
 and it
 was breathtakingly hypnotic.
 The way his eyes set ablaze while he speculated his tribulations and the way his fingers
 bled
 under the bite of the pipe started to grow angelic to me.
 His blistered hands and outreaching ribcage a familiar hell I had come to love.
 His sunken voice and the wild aged taste of his lips a drug I have always craved.
 When you fall in love with the devil his touch will burn your skin and bruise your soul
 but when I find myself next to him I have never been more content.
 His sharp fingers keep me close and dear, humanity a distant normality.
 I've started to see the darkness that consumed his conscience, embodied his rage and
 had been
 in me all along.
 He never hurt me.
 But he hurt the only thing I truly cared for, himself.
 He taught me to love again, but resurfaced the pain that always seems to come with it.
 He knew exactly how to entice me.
 He left his mark,
 Left his trail,
 Left his mess,
 And looked to me to retrace his steps and put the pieces back together.
 The apocalypse looks like heaven so the rapture can just leave me behind.
 Grab a drink,
 Take a pill,
 Lock the doors,
 And say your prayers.
 Because hell is upon us,
 And the devil walks the earth
 Dragging me behind him.

That's So Gay

by Anonymous

I hear it
Out of the mouths of friends, classmates, family members, strangers,
I freeze
Solid, ice in my veins hardening and freezing the rest of me, cracks spreading,
I shatter
Pieces of me fall to the floor, smacking the linoleum, sliding
I melt
Hot shame burning my ice cold skin and leaving me, a puddle, lying there.
I simmer
Fear heating me to the point where I begin to bubble until
I boil
Rage and fury tossing me violently until suddenly
I float
On air, my mind lifting up, far away from where I once stood, panic raising me higher,
further
away from myself, and then
I fall
And suddenly I'm back, and
No one
Noticed.

My Rainbow

by Anonymous

Red

Her lips as I kiss them, her hair cascading down her back like spiral ribbons,

Orange

Her intoxicating scent, citrusy and sweet, her skin in the sunset glow,

Yellow

The post-it notes she leaves for me, telling me to smile,

Green

Her eyes, shining emeralds twinkling when she laughs,

Blue

The veins beneath her skin, keeping her alive and me sane,

Purple

The simple knotted bracelet she made me, the one I swore never to remove.

Submerge

by Ray Nufer

He was a profound oddity
resting where the sky meets the deep
on the margin of the horizon,
when his form kissed the ocean like a lover.
He was stained glass;
crafted cryptocrystalline that cuts
and bleeds a brilliant scarlet.

But he was only sea green.

Curtain Call

by Ray Nufer

She tore me apart in a beautiful way;
on the stage of her sanguine cabaret,
she pricked me with thorns of a midnight rose
like she did in all the rest of her shows.
The audience grinned as she sliced my skin,
tearing my ribs, she revealed what's within;
a still-beating heart that came to a pause
as the crowd grew loud with mighty applause.
Taking a match, her lips lined with lies,
she lit me aflame with a glint in her eyes.
"You did lovely, my dear," she said with a smile.
I laid right there and I burned for awhile.

Enlightenment

by Aaron Smail

Into the room where I remain
Likened to snow on a summer's day
I sit and watch the sun collecting dust
As the crowd forms in the street
Their shouts and cries will harm me
But my own resilience sets me free
Through the ash from the room ablaze.
I see myself in the smoke
I see myself in the flames
Trial by fire, trial by fire
An ordeal like no other.
Who desecrates this sacred chamber with
match and with paper?
Where are your faults, your charm, your
maker?
He who calls and he who answers shall see
the light
The light that flickers in the whites of mine
eyes
The light that consumes me.
When shall I see darkness again that
prevails?
I cannot sleep, I cannot rest
After dancing with the light, and I shall see
again
But before I do
I must tell you to look away
Look far far away into yourself
Learn to emit light and save the dark
For the dark is long and deep, the light near
and close
I see for all who cannot I see for space; the
stars;
And the sweetness in the eyes of another

go.

by Jen B.

take it and take it and take it til it's done,
fuck me and fuck me and fuck me til i cum
and go.
and know.
and roam.
i slow.
drain me like a swollen wound
and wound me,
down
around
along the ground
into the sound.
i am a bottom feeder:
i'll slither in your waters if you'll let me,
eat your poison if you'll feed me,
drink you down and spit you out
if you want me.
(don't want me.)
(i am too afraid for this.)
(let me let this blood and fly free in my airless sea
(the sea that will always be me.
(go.)

Like A Phoenix

by Kaizen Geoffrion

I used to wear lacy black underwear
not because I had to,
but because I could to feel pretty.
And to hide the blank canvas of white,
skin that constricts all my soul's insecurities,
like a vice,
filled with tactile depression

I used to lie in bed
screaming in my head to forget all my insecurities
to stop them from rising to the surface
I would watch others
smearing creams, oils, inks, and dyes
to hide who they were.
I couldn't hide my fears
instead my nails picked at them
pick pick pick
until my insecurities
oozed out
crimson red for all to see.

But then I met you
when you touched me
I went from blank white
to a vibrant canvas of red, blue, and purple.
Red as passionate as can be,
blue as beautiful as the sea,
purple as regal as a queen
And for a moment I was happy.

Lips on lips,
Skin on skin,
Hand on hand,
but then I discovered
your darkness
The black of your heart

You dressed not in that black
But rather like the colours I desired.
Cunning like the green,
wise like the blue,
loyal like the yellow,
and braves like the red,
but your colours hid the black.

You were a brick
tied to my legs
dragging me deep down.
You were wind
that clipped my wings.

Left me battered and bruised
red, purple, blue
faded to grey
a lifeless grey.

I became utterly
alone
but I am better for it
because I no longer need
you
or that lacy black underwear.
And you may have burned me
but like a Phoenix
I rise again
In all the colours of the rainbow

Death Don't Be Shy

by Kaizen Geoffrion

Death don't be shy
Let me die
in peace
Let me die
In sleep
then let your hands
take mine
and lead me to
the Otherside

Death do not wish
for me to not die
for I am ready
to taste the nightshade
and watch my scarlet blood leave my body
Death don't be shy

'SJW'

by Seanna-Lee

You think we're fighting for justice, but
aren't we really just fighting for equity?
To be treated the same; we didn't get to
choose our team, we didn't get the first say.
It's never been an even playing field, it was
rigged from the get go.
This isn't even a race, it's just people hurting
people at the end of the day
we're all the same.
A starter pistol to the heart, get
ready, get on your mark.
I guess it is a blame game
Yes you said that but really you mean this?
Just talk to me like I'm a person,
say my name, like I exist.

I won't apologize for trying to live,
to love and laugh and bring that shiny
sparkle back.
Can't do that if I'm stuck on prozac,
poppin bennys like they were the candy my
grandmama used to give me.
Smoke another bowl, try to forget about
the cold inside my bones.
It creeps back into my sheets each winter,
like clockwork.
Pretending it really loves me.
In the place you used to sleep, it kisses my
cheek.
Bourbon thaws the frost that sparkles in the
sun, pristine but oh so god damn bleak.

Ignorance can be bliss but then there's just
blissfully ignorant.

With feet on the ground, ground down but
high as can be.

I don't know who I can be, I just know that
this grind will fucking kill me.
I ask a man for the time and see the hunger
in his eyes he says "baby whatever you
like".
Now fuck that, smile and laugh just to avoid
his eyes.
Look at your damn rolex, no wonder we do
this shit to just to survive.
Just give me the time.
It's half past wake the fuck up, shake off the
dead in your eyes.
You pay me money to sit and act pretty, so
why the fuck don't I oblige?
Supply & demand baby.

That's the name of the game, affluence &
affiliation.
They can call it a sin, but in the end we're all
just boxers in the ring.
You can't fight fire with fire without getting
a little singed.
So get your bandages on, put your fists back
up:
Water breaks almost over and this is how
we destroy the corrupt.

ticket to ride

by Sara Marie Nason

nanny's body, collapsed

carnival balloon from the county fair

that grampy ran

shrunken, pulled plastic, pliable

her tremors: excitement, once

after eights wrappers

spilled everywhere

*(“I could
eat a whole tin”)*

nanny paints the rock in the garden

a grave

grampy goes under

nanny deflates

no phone in the nursing home &

no chocolate at all

*Life is a circle, weaved
around fragments of her voice.
I keep entering an empty room;
drawn to the memory of her voice.*
"Ghazal For Her Voice," JP Howard

hiraeth

by Sara Marie Nason

i hear her voice in
tiny taps on a birdfeeder
or in coughs late at night.
looming on the couch
no shoes, never crochet
thin thread cleaved,
just two rods;
two snakes. her
life is a circle, weaved.

cooking in vanilla-
splattered apron, no sash.
whistling with chickadees,
careful of barefeet
on sawdust floor.
no choice
to mid-morning movement.
the squirrels scatter
around fragments of her voice.

just echo's now,
reverberations –
except when i find crows
dancing in dew,
or prick blood
from flowers in bloom.
dirt sticks between
craters in my fingers,
i keep entering an empty room.

the still air tastes
of gingersnap cookies:
burnt.
i grasp at crumbs,
follow the oblivion path.
ears filled with feathers,
steps tilted downward –
shaking, shivering,
drawn to the memory of her voice.

We Are Done

by Mahum Azeem

They called us a dream;
bright eyes, pretty smile,
a kaleidoscope of everything kind in the world
They called us a dream;
enthusiasm oozing from every pore,
ambitions lined up like prisoners on a death row
They called us a dream;
and we were naive enough to believe they meant it so
It took us too long to realize,
the perfect world they worked towards,
the world of their dreams
It is to be built on the foundations
of our shattered dreams

They only saw us as a dream
when we fulfilled their purpose,
when we were stepping stones
so they could use to reach the sky,
when we were quiet bystanders in their history,
when we were a token placed on their shelves
to prove the world of their generosity
And then
They have the audacity to talk
about how their dreams aren't perfectly executed
As if we weren't slaughtered at their feet
As if our dreams weren't sacrificed for their purpose

They talk of the dreams that died
But they forget to mention
How in trying to quiten our voices,
They strangled most of us
They strangled the dreams
We didn't die slowly, withering away under the wings of time
No, they gutted us, took everything worthy out of us
And they kept on taking until we were nothing but an empty carcass
lying in the brutal storm,
When a hurricane ravages through a valley,
only the most resilient and stubborn survive
All that's left of us is the poison at the bottom
of the barrel in which they were shooting fish
And we've mutated enough times
that these bullets we now consume as food

Tearing through their hard shells
spitting out the empty cartridges

Because you see,
Dreams have a mind of their own,
you see, in dreams, you have no control,
And now, You see
You've infuriated the dream,
The ones that survived,
we are not the bright-eyed
dream infested children anymore
We don't contort our faces
into grotesque smiles anymore,
We let our wrath show
And that scares them

After they stole our voices,
we learned new words from the storm,
And the storm wasn't merciful
and so neither are our words

They ask us questions with no answers
but we've learned how to catch the knives thrown at us
with our teeth
and spit them back to their homes

They are scared now and they look amongst each other,
Wondering what went wrong
You did, I say
You took all the kind ones out of us
And from the gaping hole they left,
emerged a nightmare
We are resilient, weather-worn,
Self-taught storms
The dreams turned nightmare
This is your nightmare
Because we don't sit quietly
while you write history with golden pens
Scrubbing away the stains of our blood from the soil
When you took the kindness out
of this amalgamated existence
with your very own hands
How do you expect us to be anything
but defiant.

On being Gay

Or

Did Frodo and Sam fuck on that mountain or what

by Abi Paeth

thirsty for a drink you don't know the name of
and touchstarved as hell
all you can crave is a wordless warmth
hold your breath and be held

Aware of Bodies

by Emma Bishop

The sun starts to go down.
 They wade into the water,
 Balancing on rocks as they go.
 Water pushes against the shore.
 Light sparkles like paper thin gold on the surface.
 She is painfully aware of their bodies.
 She worries someone will catch her staring a little too long.
 For them, swimming is freedom,
 But for her, it is a trap
 Designed to set her apart from the rest
 And to build up the tension she feels.
 It's maddening.
 These thoughts shouldn't have to be crossed out,
 Scratched over with permanent marker
 So that they become invisible
 Like bodies moving through darkness.
 It works.
 These thoughts are invisible
 Because people still ask her about the boys she likes.
 They can't see that inside
 She has eyes for women.
 It's a blessing and a curse at the same time,
 She is safe from harm
 Yet a part of her is shoved away
 Where it never sees the light of day.
 In the sun that day,
 Her emotions are as clear as the azure sky.
 Longing and lust lie at the core.
 The beauty of these women enraptures her
 And for once, she lets it float through her.
 She accepts it as she does the cool water
 Sliding up her ankles as she wades in
 Growing more comfortable
 Until she forgets it was ever cold.

Dear Gender

by Emma Bishop

Dear Gender,
I have a habit of disobeying you.
When I was a child
I'd play street hockey with the boys,
Read books about dinosaurs, stars, animals,
Everything in that world that sparked my interest
But for some reason
Every holiday, my grandparents gave me
Something for a girl
A scrapbook with a pink felt cover shaped like a flower,
Or a barbie doll.
What are these strange rules?
Why do we limit who others can be?
Why is it while working at a summer camp
The other leader says the girls will want to wear tiaras
And the boys wield swords?
Why is it my mother's friend gives me a set of makeup
But not my brother?
Why is it she offers to wax my legs
As if it's a rite of passage
For every girl
Growing into herself.
Why is it the girls on my soccer team say they need to shave?
Who's making them?
Why is it I wore a dress to graduation?
Why is when I cut my hair, people told me they missed my long hair
As if their opinion mattered?
Gender,
We've had a strange relationship
But maybe I'm starting to understand you

Now that I have short hair, don't shave or wear makeup,
I finally see myself.

Let me be perfectly queer.

by Olive Elzinga

See me standing before you. see, beneath the glitter and the sequins and the fishnets is just me. Me: miles of skin, blemished and imperfect just like you. Just like anyone. Yet, why is it that the bumps and lumps of my skin don't detract you, but the glitter does. You said you grew me yourself, so why am I hidden away in the garden shed? I learned my life should be spent concealing, tucking feelings inside me to appease you, when nothing would please me more than to wear my truth like armor. Let me encase myself in who I am and write my heart on my sleeves a substitute for metal because it's the strongest part of me. I learned my life was better spent living a lie, than living in love. I slunk and slid away from the opportunity to be loved by many to just be loved by one, but I'm forever caught in a perpetual reverie that hiding my heart will make you finally accept me, when we know if you loved me at all the glitter of my personality would be your favourite part of me. Because it's my favourite part of me. I love the way that I love. So why can't you love me? Is it due to sin? Then, don't hate the sinner, don't hate the sin, accept it and know that in doing so, it doesn't incriminate you. I am better knowing who I am. You grew me, so be as proud as I am that I have blossomed into a kind of beautiful I never thought I could achieve. And every rose has its thorn, but what you think are my thorns, the thing that you insist on cutting away, are my petals that so many people love me for. Would a rose by any other label not smell as sweet? Yes, I have good in me, but you aren't wrong to think I have thorns, my thorns are the part of me that let you make me think I shouldn't be who I am. My thorns are the pieces of my mind that believed you when you said who I loved was wrong. I have seen the April showers, now let me know the sun. Let me bask in the light where I will bloom as eternally me. So, see me standing before you all that I am: petals and thorns. And let me out of the shed, let me reside in your garden, let me grow the way I was intended. and let me live in the sun.

A Star to Call my Own

by Olive Elzinga

We are the centers of our own universe,
I feel like I could agree,
but as my feet sludge across the floor unconsciously,
I notice they encircle you.

Memorizing your schedule, so I can catch a glimpse,
hoping our paths may intertwine,
like the way I want to grasp your hand,
a tangled mess of fate lines, storylines refusing to unhinge.

You have your own constellation,
your own story to tell, your own friends to tell them too,
I wish upon a star,
so that maybe I can shoot across the sky and join you.

You: the constellation Artemis,
a symmetrical vision, I wish would stand next to dysfunctional me,
but you have better things to do,
you fly away on your hippogryph stranding me in the abyss.

You are so much more than just a constellation though,
you are the sun,
you sustain me a force moving me to get up each morning,
but only because 'what' and 'if' would combine in an effort to haunt me.

You shine,
lighting up each personal universe you collide with,
when your rays travel one hundred forty-nine million kilometers,
I will not intercept you at the last two feet as you try to kiss the ground.

You don't have to worry about me outshining you,
I will only reflect your light,
becoming close enough to you that you give me the name moon,
always chasing you but never truly yours.

I follow you across the sky,
but every now and then you leave me,

let me drown in my own darkness,
the only light I have comes from you.

It's alright that you run away from my stone heart,
that you avoid me like the Andromeda galaxy,
a danger that would turn you around, around, around,
it's alright that you don't want that.
That you don't want me.

I wonder if alright will be our never,
because it's the fault in my star,
that means I can't be in your constellation,
I don't belong in your personal universe.

It alters my own to know,

that for now you are my everything,
but I will always be your nothing,
and maybe for now that's alright.

a not so straight future.

by Hailey Merritt

Her hair,
Golden like a fiery sunset.
Her eyes,
Glimmered with possibilities and what if's
Her lips,
Spoke of an easier future.
Our love would be right.
We would be free.

Pick-up trucks and Gasoline

by Hazel Woodbridge

“Are you happy?”

I was sitting in the passenger seat of his pick-up truck the first time
My dad asked me that.

How the fuck do I respond to that?
How can I look him in the eyes and tell him that his voice makes my blood shatter?
That when he calls me into the living room
I go over everything I could have done wrong while I try not to cry.
All he wanted to know is what i wanted for dinner.

How could I turn to him and tell him
that my saturday night plans involve wondering
what the ocean would feel like in my lungs.
The waterfront is so beautiful this time of year.
I even have the perfect white dress.
It smells like my mom.
My nails pierse my palms like the doves that tear at my eyes.

Have you ever choked on prozac?
That chemical burn that crawls up your throat
like the summer of 2015.
All I want is to be able to tell him
“Dad, you don’t have to pay for pills anymore”
That my depression was an unwelcome visitor,
that guy at the wedding that no one knows,
and everybody hates,
but it’s okay because all I had to do was politely ask him to leave.
Just like the little lady you want me to be.
But I can’t because he has a gun in his pocket
and his hands are sliding up my dress.
Im choking on a noose of pink satin.

His fingers are matchsticks and i am gasoline.
My depression doesn't know much about pyrotechnics,
because when I catch light I am not a candle waiting to be snuffed out.
No, I am a wild fire, I am a lightning strike.
And he thought a pink satin noose could contain me

There is a blow torch in the back of the truck.
My dad doesn't know much about pyrotechnics either.
My dad and my depression seem to get along pretty well.
I used to love that pink satin noose.
My 5th birthday present.
I saw my dad as a mountain.
A giant, scraping the sky and making her bleed. Mountains crumble.
And when they crumble they take everything down around them,
my teeth are broken shards inside a cinnamon smile.
Splintered by your stalagmites.
The weight of mountains can turn rock into riches
and I dont give a FUCK If you're pissed because you wanted a sapphire,
well guess what I am a diamond
and not even the voices in my head can break me.

Not even your voice.