

Mausoleum Press

Issue 01



Azaina - Secrets

previously published in *The Potted Purple* magazine

Azaina is an 18 y/o poet and photographer from Lahore, Pakistan. Through art she tries to find solace and a home in someone else's heavy heart.

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Masthead

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HLR - Peculiar Times (Pre-Pandemic)

We live in peculiar times:

we start a new ashtray in a plastic yoghurt pot
instead of emptying the big glass one
that's fit for purpose but overflowing,
then repeat until your entire room
has turned into one giant tray of ash;

rely too heavily on answers
garnered from an upturned glass
shifting gracelessly across a ouija board;

take 133 tablets of psychiatric medicine every week
and still feel so terribly unwell, like
if your brain doesn't kill you first then kidney failure will;

wonder how you still have room
for all the painkillers, vitamins and narcotics
that also allege to make you feel better
but take them anyway, then hear them
rattle inside you whenever you move;

we speak Nadsat without realising,
then are surprised and disappointed
when others don't understand;

judge people based on the type, style and colour
of the material covering their feet
and be cruel to strangers
solely because of their eyebrow shape;

wake up totally exhausted after 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep;

feel more inspired standing outside the house
that your favourite writer killed herself in
than at the house in which she lived;

live and die without a single person knowing you;

drink a can of coke and then eat a mento mint
and marvel at the fact that your stomach hasn't exploded;

take our old selves for granted and then kick ourselves
when we discover that we've lost our best self and can't get her back;

feel offended about every. single. thing. all. of. the. time.;

cause offense to those who think you *should* be offended and are offended that they are not;

cause offense by opening our mouths / cause offense by keeping our mouths shut;

buy a pack of 500 bobby pins and only have 6 left in your possession two weeks later;

go from an immense feeling of relief
when the pregnancy test is negative
to an immediate sense of utter horror
when you realise that if you're not pregnant
then you've just gotten fat;

drive to the middle of nowhere and engage in primal scream therapy;

throw away the (perfectly good) first and last slices of a loaf of bread
but pick green fur off the remaining slices;

feel unreasonably angry that the picked-at bread
is taking *so* bloody *long* to turn to toast under the broken amber grill;

hear our friend's voice from behind us say with such solemn sagacity,
"A watched bread never toasts," and laugh and laugh and laugh
until you smell burning. Repeat ad nauseam.

HLR (she/her) writes poetry and short prose about living with chronic mental illness, trauma, and grief. Her work has been widely published since 2013, most recently by Misery Tourism and SCAB Magazine. HLR is the winner of The Desmond O'Grady International Poetry Prize 2021. She is the author of prose collection 'History of Present Complaint' (Close to the Bone) and micro-chap 'Portrait of the Poet as a Hot Mess' (Ghost City Press). HLR lives in north London where she was born and raised. Twitter: @HLRwriter / IG: hel.rol

Clem Flowers - 22 Piece Serving

Rattlesnake cowpoke in your fresh \$200 boots.

Heart only wants to sing the sad songs

But you've never really known

Anything but the bonanza & the lilacs

& feasting on the salad days

How your blood of the cacti would

laugh

at your preferred smokes

& powdered eyes

while you walk

through the new patch

of rusted rain.

Long night in the Blazing Heat district

uptown.

"It's so hard to be a winner"

in dripping peony letters

on the last

of the peeling circus posters

on the crosswalk switches on every corner.

Water tower caught fire

& the lunchtime readers

sat on the hill

to take in

the blaze;

hard to imagine

a better prize than this.

Clem Flowers (They/ Them) is a soft spoken southern transplant living in spitting distance of some mountains in Utah. Maker of a fine omelet, but scrambled egg game needs some fine tuning. Nb & bi, they live in a cozy apartment with their wonderful wife & sweet calico kitty. They can be found on Twitter at @hand_springs777

Randall McNair - My Short Obit

Face down on the futon—
dog's bed—fur, stink,
squeeze toy in my ribs.
I am unable to move
even at the shutter and flash
of the camera.
I imagine he's the Coroner.

*It was the Jack, I wish to tell him.
Or maybe the 40's of malt liquor.*
No matter, soon my fate will be zipped up,
refrigerated, my memory reduced to a picture
in the local paper with my name below
next to a couple words I've long known
were coming: Dead, Liquor.

Described by his friends as Poet Laureate of the Absurd, Randall McNair spent the better part of a decade drinking himself silly at a small bar in Tustin, California. While there, he began writing poetry. He's the multiple-award-winning author of the Bar Poems series (Dispatches from the Swinging Door Saloon, Make it a Double and Last Call). His first two books can be purchased at <http://www.barpoems.com>, with Last Call due out later in 2021. You can follow the wild workings of his booze-addled brain at:

Website: <https://www.mcnairpoet.com>.

Twitter: @mcnairpoet

FB: @mcnairpoet

IG: @mcnairpoetry

Pinterest: @mcnairpoet



Meghan Thomas – you are here

Meghan is an avid science fiction fan from Essex. This piece comes from her love of painting and love of Ursula Le Guin. She believes speculative media has the potential to transport us to other worlds and immerse ourselves in another reality, yet with its storytelling power reflect a light on our own real circumstances. This image captures an element of isolation which the vast majority of the world has felt over the past year or so, but does so in a sort of whimsical, fantasy way, to reimagine the emotional struggle as a defining point of the story of a generation's life.

Elizabeth Sallow - my little frankenstein

i craft you from pieces of my heart,
begging you to love me, saying 'pretty please'.
i assemble you with my fingertips, with
my needle and cotton. i stitch you together
limb by limb, piece by piece: blood and bone.
but my fingers are starting to break. and you're already
bleeding out. i suppose mine was never going to make
for a good transplant: too much loss, too much pain,
but it's yours now anyway. my fingers are still mine,
broken, but they're mine: although, while we're at the
table, while i've got the sewing kit, do you want them
too? of course you do. here you go, my darling.

i snap off my knuckles and arrange them to spell
'i hate you'. i arrange them to write 'i love you'.
they're both lies. you're made from my soul, my heart: blood
and bone. i can't hate, too much anger, too much passion,
and for the same reason, i can't love. so because you're
made of me, you don't hate me either, even when i'm
making pinpricks on your palms to sew on ten more.
you don't love me, even when i'm threading my needle
and giving you what's left of me.

except i'm bleeding too much to sew, there's blood
on the carpet, beige and burgundy, and i'm crying over
your corpse. honesty is all i have left so i tell you 'i'm yours
darling'. there's menace on my tongue and
sickness in my throat. all we have is a bloodbath,
you're screaming 'kill me' and i'm yelling 'never'.
it's all a beautiful haze until i start sewing, it's all gold until

i get out the lighter. i'm ruined, and you are what's left.
there are claws in our souls. i pin my needle back in place
and i pick you up with what's left: bare, bloody, bruised.
you scream enough for it to ring, enough for me to ignore it.
i press you into my heart, squeezing you tight as my body wracks
as my fingers bleed, as your clothing soaks, and you whisper
'you're a witch' and i take a breath: 'so are you'.

Elizabeth Sallow (she/her) is a queer nineteen year old who lives in a small village in the UK. She believes in the universal and connective power of literature and hopes that she can make people feel understood in a way that she did growing up with her head in a book. She also likes succulents. It's a problem. You can find her on Instagram @elizabeth.sallow

Inimfon Inyang-Kpananthia - Metamorphosis

oftentimes, i have wished my being into a bird for flight to a familiar existence. forged wings from petals of trodden daffodil.

sometimes we can only become again by taking one thing and replacing it with another.

psychiatrists call it a defence mechanism. but some things cannot be replaced like

the foamy cushion of your palm against mine. your unfettered laughter like a volcanic eruption. the haunting soothingness of your cotton voice.

now let me tell you about this somber veil and how it suffocates me. how the air around me grows caustic and how each day is an updated version of darkness and the thorns in this place flourish like stubborn weed. if you can

see me you will see it. two chronically tear-polished irises . you will see it. 365 days of waiting and waiting for another reality. another leaflet in time with our backs on green grass. our eyes mirroring the stars. you by my side.

i am at the cusp of an unprepared-for metamorphosis. i wish i knew the equation that turns glass into clay.

Inimfon Inyang-Kpanantia is a writer living in Uyo. He is an undergraduate of the Department of Medicine and Surgery, Univerisity of Uyo. His works have been published on the Kalahari Review and wndrrng. He loves his family fiercely, God, books, good music and movies. Because he believes Medicine, the selfish course, shouldn't end his love for the arts; he keeps writing at the dead of night, keeps singing, keeps Shakespeare and Frost and Rimbaud in his mini-library.

HLR - Cereal for Dinner

Sometimes, when consciousness was simply too painful for our sensitive souls, we would consume enough vodka, valium and zopiclone to induce unnatural hibernation. We called it “silly self-care” because, although it wasn’t smart, it was necessary for survival. When we finally awoke from our ignorance and went outdoors, we discovered that Spring had happened while we slept. The only time that red and pink ever look good together is when the cherry blossom trees have erupted outside the fire station. I wonder what else we missed while we slept away those finite and unwanted hours of ours. Later, when we were eating cereal for dinner, we realised that nobody had missed us, and, most terribly, we hadn’t missed each other.

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Arun Paul Kapur – District

Enigmatic. Charismatic. Passionate. Lover of life and all truth that binds us together. Arun Kapur is a mental health advocate that uses the medium of the arts to raise awareness of stigmas and well-being. He believes that through art, our voices will be heard.

Jamie Weil - to my shadow

i tend to forget how long i've known you;
how long since you fell, blood dripping,
covered in flowers, in a tattered nightgown.
how I thought you were an angel, when
really you were an acrobat; it was a casualty
of balance that sent you down.

i tend to forget how long you've been healing;
how long since those wounds became mine -
how i'd swoon and forget my tenderness.
how we would talk for hours, of dust storms
and rainfall; of great consistencies.
i'd leave with no sense of meaning.

i tend to forget your need for attention;
how you spend beauty, wrench it from within
as if your shimmering breath is a commodity.
how you've permeated my thoughts, my skin
and how you clot every time i am vulnerable.
i tend to forget myself when you call.

but i remember, when the vitriol settles,
i am rendered strange without you;
little lights framing a headless form.

Jamie Weil (She/Her) has been writing poetry for three-and-a-half years, but had been writing sappy song lyrics long before that. She is a recent graduate of Oberlin College, where she was co-winner of the 2021 Emma Howell Poetry Prize. When she isn't writing, Jamie enjoys sketching, embroidery, watching baseball and basketball, and playing and/or listening to music. Her work has been published in Oberlin's Wilder Voice and Catchwater Magazine.

Woof Achoo - Mother of God

And into our shrine, there comes a stranger
A traveler from out of time
Close encounters – another kind
They sit inside and learn our fears
as do the better half across this sphere
Though they may grow into our hearts
we can only bless them
and send them out into the dark

Let's rust at length, skip our mass
Knight a saint, Wyf of Bathe
Show your shiny hackles
We can still haggle
They're underfoot, fore-and-aft
-Yea, though I walk the vale of death
They only just notice you
to stop and let go of you
Lift prayers on black sabbath
A synecdoche of horror made manifest
in a dread letter: "We regret to inform you..."

In our shrine appeared a stranger
A traveler from out of time
Now it's useless to cry
They sat inside and learned our fears
Still it's not enough to say they lived
So even though they hate to break our hearts
They've come and gone
in their spacecraft

Andrew Macdonald - Redundant cathedrals

What prevents belief rage and hate live in
under barbed wires of ghould feelings

emblems report of among
sarcophagi trimmed their generations.

Invested faith permits this
as veiled gods rim

fad chuckles mouths swallow,
muted for the cause

scores of ancients'
wisdoms precluded.

Now a gargoyle's cage, it laughs at
what falls down viaducts of learning

channelled to rituals
the meanings acquired them.

It is a deist clause
age imposed tours presumptive.

We leave then,
curiosity preening.

Andrew Cyril Macdonald considers the role of intersubjectivity in the poetic encounter with place. He celebrates the confrontations between self and locale and the challenge that occurs in the fomenting of identity and independence. You can find his work in such places as A Long Story Short, Blaze VOX, Cavity Magazine, Down in the Dirt, Mineral Lit Mag, ODD Magazine, Thorn, Green Ink Poetry, and Unique Poetry Journal. When not writing he is busy caring for seven rescued cats and teaching a next generation of poets.

Laszlo Aranyi (Frater Azmon) - Obsession

Mesmerized, I wake from a floating dream

inside the Seven Manifestations.

I make coffee, my cigarette breaks its spine
in a spittoon shaped ashtray.

Frosty ghosts fingers, wickless, arm length, milk white wax candles
on the living dissection table.

Farther away: rootless planets like a web-weaving spider.

The Known suggests from the Unknown..., forces...

Severed snake head calls for fragmentary legends

beyond this worldly hell,

the barely perceptible touch becomes a crippling grip,

their messages are increasingly threatening:

non-human hand written verses...

Eventually the shapeless turns to shape,

the watery horse-eyed lifeless begins to move...

Translated by Gabor Gyukics

Laszlo Aranyi (Frater Azmon) poet, anarchist, occultist from Hungary. Earlier books: (szellem)válaszok, A Nap és Holderők egyensúlya . New: Kiterített rókabőr. English poems published: Quail Bell Magazine, Lumin Journal, Moonchild Magazine, Scum Gentry Magazine, Pussy Magic, The Zen Space, Crêpe & Penn, Briars Lit, Acclamation Point, Truly U, Sage Cigarettes Magazine, Lots of Light Literary Foundation, Honey Mag, Theta Wave, Re-side, Cape Magazine, Neuro Logical, The Daily Drunk Mag, Unpublishable Zine, Melbourne Culture Corner, Beir Bua Journal, Crown & Pen, Dead Fern Press, Coven Poetry Journal, Journal of Erato, Lothlorien Poetry Journal, Spillover Magazine, Punk Noir, All Ears (India), Utsanga (Italy), Postscript Magazine (United Arab Emirates), The International Zine Project (France), Swala Tribe Magazine (Rwanda). Known spiritualist mediums, art and explores the relationship between magic.

Jasmina Kuenzli - Resonance

When I met you
I was so lonely
My words would eat my skin
Crunch through the gristle and bone

I think about our spin-top figures
Gliding around the jewelry box in my head
The melody plays
And we spin until it all winds down
We die together
Amidst wealth
And nostalgia

I think about how it was
With sweat under my arms
Stumbling into you
The curly hair that was already receding
From your too-worried forehead
And the girl I walked in on
With your hand on her thigh

When you spoke to me
You plucked the strings
The resonance sent me humming

On the last day, we looked at each other
And we didn't stop
And I didn't say it

Jasmina Kuenzli is an author of poetry, creative nonfiction, and fiction and has been published with Capsule Stories, Pidgeonholes, The Mark Literary Review and many others. When she isn't writing, Jasmina can be found weightlifting, running, and holding impromptu dance parties in her car. Her life goals include landing a back flip, getting legally adopted by Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, and being a contributor on Drunk History. She would like to thank Brenna and Sarah, who hear all these stories first, and Harry Styles, who is sunshine distilled in a human being.



Azaina – Covert Self

Previously published in The Potted Purple Magazine

*Azaina is an 18 y/o poet and photographer from Lahore, Pakistan. Through art she tries to find solace and a home in someone else's heavy heart.
Instagram: @azainart
Blog: dearanxiousheart.art.blog*

Courtney LeBlanc – Truths: An Incomplete List

1. I can't give my heart fully.
2. Except to my dog, she owns it all.
3. It's easy to confuse acceptance for happiness.
4. I miss the dark splash of wine coloring my lips.
5. I've almost completely stopped listening to music.
6. Sometimes I imagine your death.
7. Or more accurately, my life after your death.
8. The bruised leaves of fall are my favorite, even if they're dying, they're lovely.
9. When I got my first mammogram I wondered at all the fuss – I felt no pain, no discomfort.
10. Monica Lewinsky did nothing wrong.
11. My sister does taxidermy, I've grown fearful of opening packages from her.
12. I miss the sun on my skin, his hands in my hair.
13. In my defense, I needed to feel beautiful.
14. Call it a decade of deciding to stay.

*Courtney LeBlanc is the author of the full length collections *Exquisite Bloody, Beating Heart (Riot in Your Throat)* and *Beautiful & Full of Monsters (Vegetarian Alcoholic Press)*. She is also the founder and editor-in-chief of *Riot in Your Throat*, an independent poetry press. She loves nail polish, tattoos, and a soy latte each morning. Read her publications on her blog: www.wordperv.com. Follow her on twitter: [@wordperv](https://twitter.com/wordperv), and IG: [@wordperv79](https://www.instagram.com/wordperv79).*

Lynne Schmidt - When You Say You're Not A Poet

I want to tell you there is a poem
in your hands,
the way they sway by your sides
nearly next to mine as we walk together.

There is poetry in the first time I grabbed your arm,
my chronic icicle fingertips,
your furnace skin melting me.

There is a sonnet in the way you wink,
the sly smile you give me when you've said something clever and I erupt in a volcano of
laughter that devours the trees.

Your chest harbors a haiku,
the day you let me press my hands
against your t-shirt,
and I realize that you can lose your breath without touching skin.

When you tell me you're not a poet,
I want to tell you,
you are, oh, you are.

Lynne Schmidt is the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, and mental health professional with a focus in trauma and healing. She is the winner of the 2020 New Women's Voices Contest and author of the chapbooks, Dead Dog Poems (Finishing Line Press), Gravity (Nightingale and Sparrow Press) which was listed as one of the 17 Best Breakup Books to Read in 2020, and On Becoming a Role Model (Thirty West), which was featured on The Wardrobe's Best Dressed for PTSD Awareness Week. Her work has received the Maine Nonfiction Award, Editor's Choice Award, and was a 2018 and 2019 PNWA finalist for memoir and poetry respectively. In 2012 she started the project, AbortionChat, which aims to lessen the stigma around abortion. When given the choice, Lynne prefers the company of her three dogs and one cat to humans.

Jenn Koiter - Why I Switched the Music Off

I wish the words came easy, like the sweet spill of time
through films set in some ideal past, the camera panning lazily
across English countryside, misty green against mistier green,
or following, in slow motion, a woman walking, her tiny, perfect ass
sewn into red silk. O'Keeffe called singing *the most perfect
form of expression*. She said, *because I cannot sing, I paint*.
I want to sing so beautifully that I am finally loved.
I want to stop a mugging with only the purity of my gaze.
I want actors to fight over who plays me in the quiet film,
that will get the star taken seriously as an artist.
I believe. As the old joke says of baptism, I seen it done.
I was in love with a man who swallows the world.
But he held me in his cheek like a stone he found in his food.
And look how I sleep: awake late, late into the quiet,
then half the day gone. The world is not enough with me
in my haze of fantasy or migraine, curtains drawn
against the glare and the heat of the day.
O singers, I can only listen to so many songs.

Jenn Koiter's poems and essays have appeared in Smartish Pace, Barrelhouse, perhappened, Ruminant, and other journals. She lives in Washington, DC with three gerbils named Sputnik, Cosmo, and Unit. You can find her on Twitter and Instagram: @jennkoiter.



Arun Paul Kapur – Mist of Dreams

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Woof Achoo - Don't You Start Now

I go when I know you're dreaming
I stop when I hear you blinking
You know that I'm no romantic
I just want us copacetic
You've said that I'll get over all this, but
The shakes come when you aren't looking—

You cannot stop the werewolf from howling
So just watch me then head on inside

I'm all fangs and teeth, hands and feet,
bangs and screams, tragicomedy but
You and me – we've gotten lost before
Us v them – we share our glitz and scores

I've felt you push my aesthetic
I know that you'll never quite get it
We've been trying other people
But I've found they're just as pathetic—

I truly think you like the fangs on me, but
I cannot help breaking down to cry

But we can break our lease, open veins,
hang my victims in the streets
Say I'm pretty, tell me when you're bored
Have no fear, we can go without words

Peter Donnelly - "From the "bird's eye view of"

I

From the bird's eye view of
Roman warships in formation –
The sea churning at the rhythmic
Pull of oars – this action and sync:

Observed aerially,
Foamy undulation scores
The dimension
Of water in streaks.

II

"The unintelligible syllables.
It is like a Roman mob".

Choppers in southeast Asia
Above tropical vegetation:
The chopping of their blades,
Like insects ticking

At a distance; an amorphous,
Thrumming din
Slightly closer in.

Acting in unison, like Plath's bees:
The air is aswarm,
And contextualised by humidity.

Born in Dublin in 1988, Peter Donnelly's first collection, Photons, was published by Appello Press in 2014. Following its publication, playwright Frank McGuinness commented that "Peter Donnelly already shows he has a strong imagination; indeed, a savage one presents itself on occasion when the beautiful and brutal confront and confound each other." His second collection, Money Is a Kind of Poetry, was published by Smokestack Books in 2019; it has been described as "a meditation on contemporary alienation and the processes by which every new technological advance seems to increase our isolation from each other, and the more connected we are the less we appear to know ourselves." He is currently working on a third collection.

Isabella Melians - Death in a Foreigner's Tongue

I. *Él sana a los que tienen el corazón roto y venda sus heridas* (Psalm 147: 3)

Their locutions flit over my head, like a murder of crows
fleeing a foggy sunrise in the east. Mother told me to smile
and nod, to force puddles of sunlight into my gingerbread eyes. Monochrome people
hover on tiled floors, fingers fumbling against sterling silver wrists. I study the way
their fingernails catch on dull moissanite rings, handed to them by the papaya brushed
remnants of their ancestors. I wonder if they were baptized in the murky water
of chipped bathtubs. Father raised me to be a good Roman Catholic, to hold hands
with the boy that smelled like gasoline during Communion, to hold back
bile as I kissed him during the wedding. Fragmented light dips into concave chests,
nestling against floral perfume. I peer at the wilted flowers sighing against stiff walls-
asters, bluebells, and carnations in a deadened glory that clings to life
like ticks burrowed in a mangy dog.

II. *Mi carne y mi corazón pueden desfallecer, pero Dios es la fuerza de mi corazón y mi porción para siempre.* (Psalm 73:26)

Mascara smudges transform into abstract paintings on tear-stained cheeks,
birthing a child to waltz across anguish-stricken skin. She leaps from
freckle to freckle, wobbling on tippy-toes painted with matte Aegean polish. I
swipe my thumb across her face, watching her dissipate beneath my
fingertip. Caskets of walnut wood conjugate in a silent
vigil. Within my mind's eye, I can clearly
picture the dead conversing with each other in hushed whispers. "Did
you believe their lies too?," the elders would ask. Undecayed

jaws sighed, "Yes, they told the same stories." Phantom hands caressed my jaw, gliding beneath and tilting it upwards and towards firmaments of an unforgiving and disquieting god. Oh, how I covet to join Him.

III. *Jesús le dijo: "Yo soy la resurrección y la vida."*

(John 11:25-26)

Hearts of sanguine blood strain against suffocating ribs; pomegranate veins strain against sweaty palms as they shove roses against brass handles. The clicking of heels decrescendos and crescendos as they deposit their flowers and scurry back. One steps, two steps, three steps,

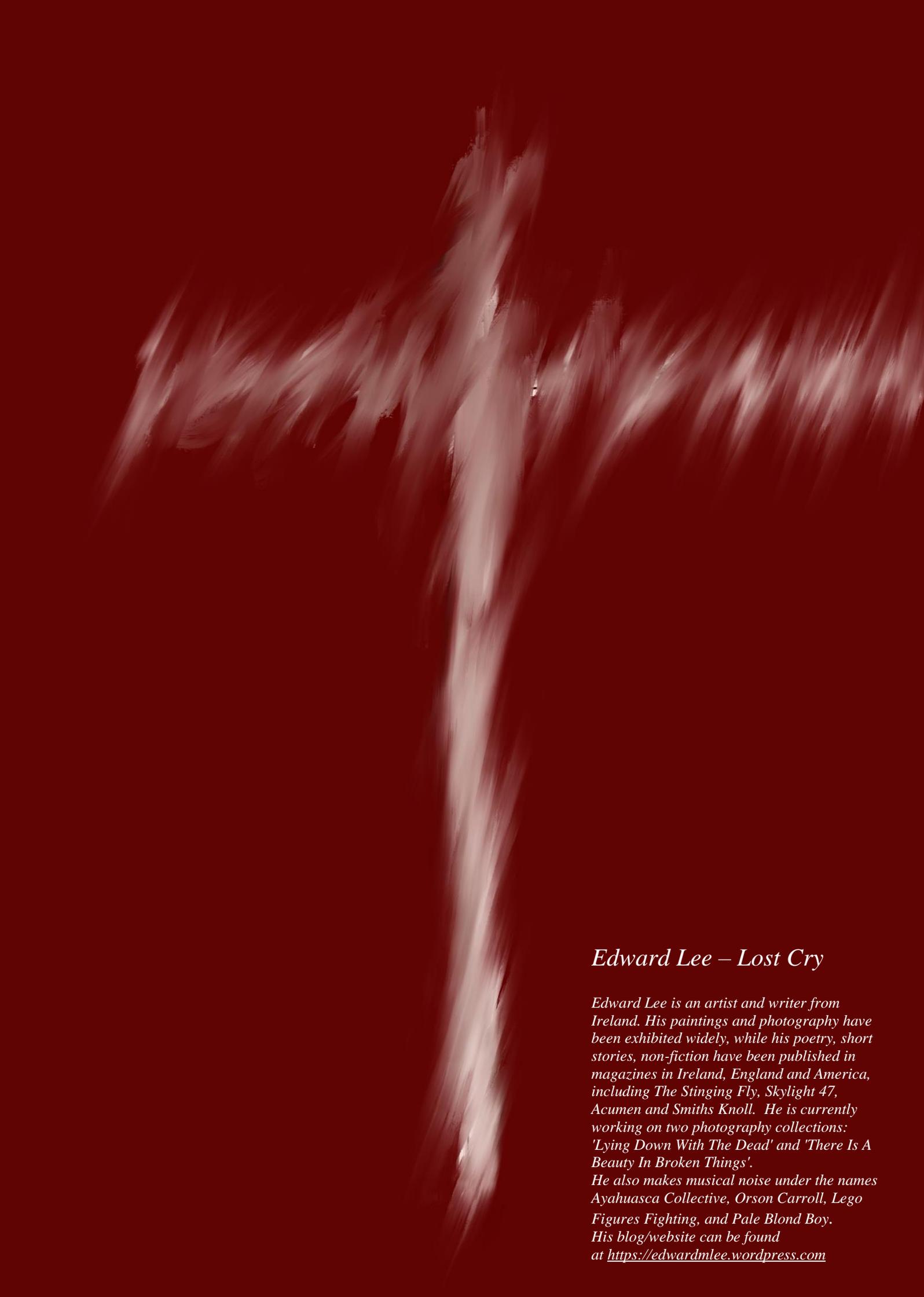
I am pulled forward by the roots of my hair. I stand before him and his stale air. Should I feel remorse? Should I pray for his day of heavenly

resurrection? Reluctant hymns drip from chapped lips, the same lips that so greedily drank prayers from their mother's teat.

I am an intruder within these people, an imposter coated in vermilion lipstick. I kiss the top of his forehead, dusting brunette hair away from his pasty, rubbery skin. He still smells like gasoline.

(Note: first published in Ice Lolly Review)

Isabella Melians (she/her) is a junior attending school in south Florida. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in Fever Dreams, NonBinary Review, the B'K, and Southchild Lit. She is also the managing editor for Armonía Mag and poetry editor for Outlander Zine and Kalopsia Literary. Insta: @isabellam_04.

The background is a dark, almost black, textured surface. A prominent vertical streak of lighter, reddish-brown color runs down the center, creating a sense of depth and movement. The texture appears to be made of fine, overlapping lines or fibers, giving it a fibrous or organic quality.

Edward Lee – Lost Cry

*Edward Lee is an artist and writer from Ireland. His paintings and photography have been exhibited widely, while his poetry, short stories, non-fiction have been published in magazines in Ireland, England and America, including *The Stinging Fly*, *Skylight 47*, *Acumen* and *Smiths Knoll*. He is currently working on two photography collections: *'Lying Down With The Dead'* and *'There Is A Beauty In Broken Things'*. He also makes musical noise under the names *Ayahuasca Collective*, *Orson Carroll*, *Lego Figures Fighting*, and *Pale Blond Boy*. His blog/website can be found at <https://edwardmlee.wordpress.com>*