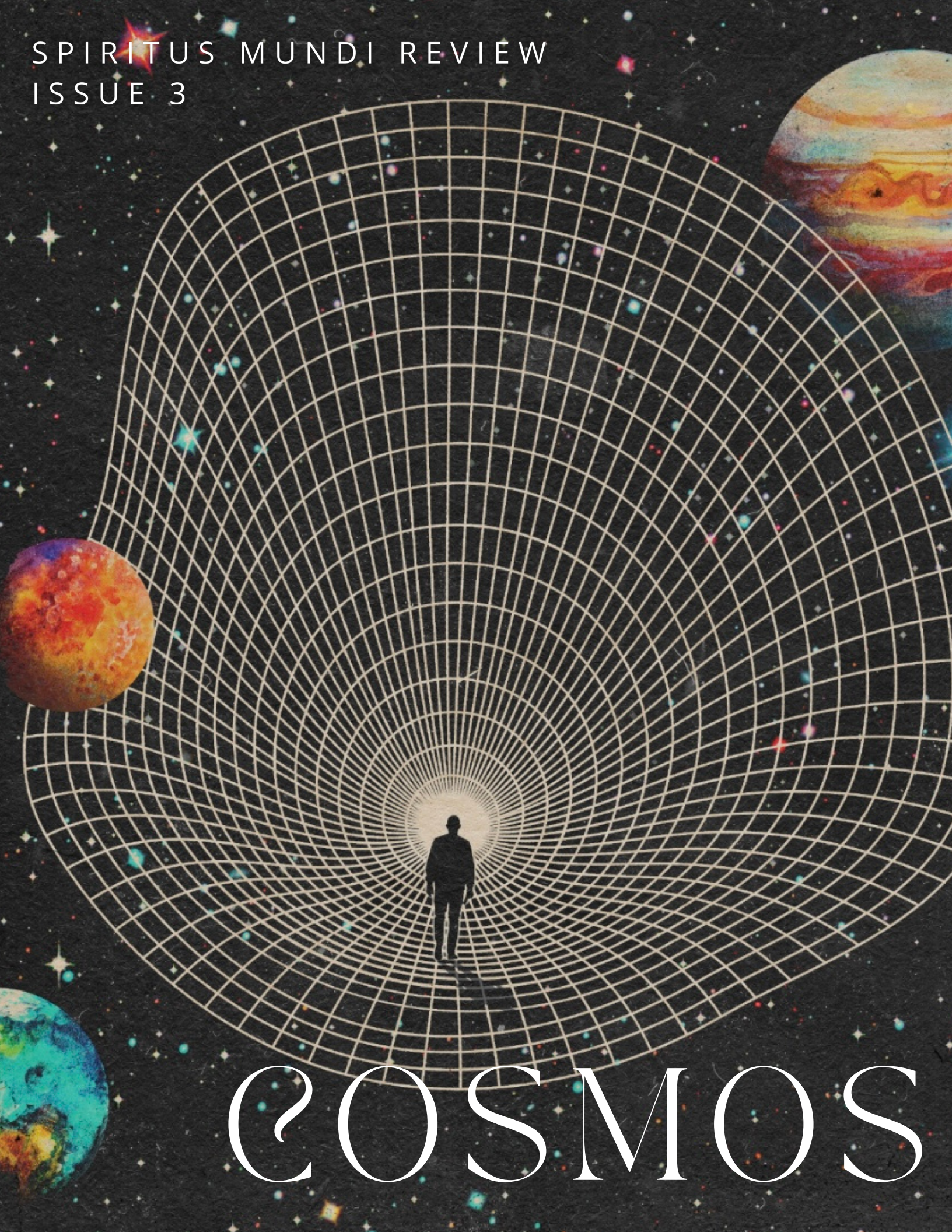


SPIRITUS MUNDI REVIEW
ISSUE 3



COSMOS

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2022

03



Angela Acosta / Ellen Harold / Annika Gangopadhyay /
Raymond Sewell / Mamta Wathare / Sarah Aziz / Sarah Freia /
Anayis N. Der Hakopian / C.C.Rayne / Samantha Lee Curran /
Alex Weilhammer / Aaliyah Anderson / Hannah Vesey /
Charlie Young / A.J.M. Aldrian / Caroline Chou / Grace Kaye /
Nibera / Sophie Hao / Theresa K. Jakobsen / Sadee Bee / Daniel
Boucher / Carlos E Morazán

SPIRITUS MUNDI REVIEW



EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Reader,

Welcome to a new year! As we embark on a new adventure, we must also reflect on ourselves and our progress and goals. 2022 was a year full of ups and downs, disappointments, failures, successes, and beginnings. For many, it was also a time of creative experimentation and artistic accomplishment.

The word "cosmos" comes from the Greek "kosmos", meaning world or order. It is indicative of our wider goal as a magazine - to include voices from around the world, as well as being similar to our name "Spirit of the World".

In this Issue, you will find the works of 23 talented young artists from 9 countries and 7 states. Thank you to the incredible staff, contributors, and readers of Spiritus Mundi Review for making this possible. We hope you enjoy Issue 3: Cosmos!

Sincerely,
Breanna Crossman
Editor-in-Chief

TABLE OF CONTENTS

POETRY

<i>Artifacts</i> <i>Angela Acosta</i>	03
<i>Ode to Lear</i> <i>Ellen Harrold</i>	06
<i>The Falling Rocket</i> <i>Annika Gangopadhyay</i>	07
<i>River to Sea</i> <i>Mamta Wathare</i>	17
<i>the girl who swallowed a star</i> <i>Sarah Aziz</i>	18
<i>Continuum</i> <i>Sarah Freia</i>	20
<i>For the Stars that Vanished</i> <i>Anayis N. Der Hakopian</i>	21
<i>Letter to Every Star and Constellation</i> <i>C.C.Rayne</i>	23
<i>The Void</i> <i>Samantha Lee Curran</i>	25
<i>Buyer's Remorse</i> <i>Alex Weilhammer</i>	26
<i>Dactyl for the Cos-mos</i> <i>Daniel Boucher</i>	27
<i>The Fall</i> <i>Aaliyah Anderson</i>	31
<i>Elbogen</i> <i>Ellen Harrold</i>	32
<i>Al Traducir Las Estrellas</i> <i>Angela Acosta</i>	41
<i>from the lectern of nyx</i> <i>Caroline Chou</i>	44
<i>Beyond</i> <i>Carlos E. Morazán</i>	49
<i>Ribbons</i> <i>Raymond Sewell</i>	50
<i>The Void</i> <i>Samantha Lee Curran</i>	54

PROSE

<i>Apollo 11</i> <i>Hannah Vesey</i>	10
<i>Eternity</i> <i>Charlie Young</i>	28

TABLE OF C NTENTS

PROSE (CONT.)

What I Found in the Prarie <i>A.J.M. Aldrian</i>	34
Two Dying Stars Learning How to Live <i>Grace Kaye</i>	46

ART

Abstract Space <i>Nibera</i>	cover art
Entropy <i>Sophie Hao</i>	04
Faraway Home <i>Mamta Wathare</i>	09
The Truth is Out There <i>Theresa K. Jakobsen</i>	19
The Red Moon <i>Nibera</i>	24
Isolation <i>Sarah Aziz</i>	33
All Seeing Universe <i>Sadee Bee</i>	45

List of Contributors	55
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ARTIFACTS

ANGELA ACOSTA

SO FOCUSED I WAS ON PAPER RELICS,
MICROFICHES, MANUSCRIPTS, AND COPIES OF
CARBON-BASED LIFE FORMS,
I WAS UNACCUSTOMED TO THE POWER OF TECTONIC
PLATES AND SOLAR FLARES.

ARCHIVISTS SAVE PRECIOUS SPECKS
OF GRAPHITE ON PARCHMENT,
LEST WE FORGET THE SANDS OF TIME
SETTLING ON OUR HUMAN HISTORIES.

ACROSS STAR SYSTEMS, ARTIFACTS ABOUND FROM
BROKEN MOONS AND POPULATED PLANETS. PHOTONS
RACE ACROSS LIGHT YEARS OF DISTANCE WHILE ONCE
BRIGHT STARS COOL SWATHS OF SPACE.

NO ARTIFACTS ARE SO PLEASING
AS THOSE OF OUR OWN CREATION,
DESIGNED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR USE AND
WISDOM OF THEIR IMPENDING FUTILITY.

ENTROPY

SOPHIE HAO



SPIRITUS MUNDI REVIEW

ENTROPY

SOPHIE HAO



SPIRITUS MUNDI REVIEW

ODE TO LEAR

ELLEN HAROLD

CLATTERING MOLECULES
SPREAD OUT OVER ATMOSPHERIC BLANKETS.
FLATTENING THE PIGMENTS OF EVENING LIGHT,
TO DOVES CASCADING FROM AETHER
CRASHING AGAINST PANE AND EARTH OVER THE
CACOPHONIC
ORCHESTRAL OF STATIC CHARGES PLUMMETING FROM
THE DANCE OF WATER.
STACCATOED BY GENTLE RUMBLES
SHIFTING MOTTLES, DEWDROPS AT THE EDGE OF
FRESH-CUT STONE.

THE FALLING ROCKET

ANNIKA GANGOPADHYAY

SOMEWHERE ALONG THE SHORE A BOY FLOATS ON FOUR LILY PADS—
HEAD, FEET, LEFT & RIGHT ARMS OUTSTRETCHED IN PURSUIT BECAUSE
FATHER TOLD HIM A STAR COULD FALL INTO HIS HANDS IF HE OPENED
THEM WIDE ENOUGH BECAUSE WHEN HE WAS A BOY HE ONCE CAUGHT
A STAR

FLYING

BETWEEN HIS FINGERS & HE CURLED HIS FIST & HE SHOWED THE BOY
THE SCAR

OUTSTRETCHED ON HIS RIGHT PALM

& SAID MEN CATCH STARS & ONE DAY HE WOULD TEACH HIM HOW

SO THE BOY FLOATS ON FOUR LILY PADS—*SHOW ME HOW, FATHER—*
THE SHORE IS EMPTY NOW HE

DRIFTS,

HEAD TAPS SAND WITH EASE SO BLACK EYES FACE SKY,
MOVE UP AND DOWN SMOKE WAVES UNTIL HORIZON BECOMES
UNDERCURRENT, SOMETHING HE CAN HOLD IN HIS FIST BUT
DOESN'T BECAUSE HE WILL CATCH A STAR

—FATHER I WILL CATCH A STAR—

SMOKE STROKES FINGERS: THE SEA IS RESTLESS TONIGHT WITHOUT
STARS,

I SEE NO STARS FATHER I SEE NO STARS JUST OCEAN EMBRACING SKY

*& SKY EMBRACING OCEAN—TOE GRAZES LILY PAD, IS THIS A STAR?
HE LOOKS AT HIS HAND AND TILTS HIS HEAD NO SCAR, NO STAR*

& LIES THERE, HEAD AGAINST SAND, FEET AGAINST LILY PADS

*ARMS AGAINST WATER I SEE WATER ABOVE ME YET I FLOAT
HE WONDERS IF HE DROWNS BECAUSE HIS BLACK LUNGS*

SPIRITUS MUNDI REVIEW

THE FALLING ROCKET

ANNIKA GANGOPADHYAY

ARE TOO HEAVY TO FLOAT BECAUSE HE LAUGHS
BECAUSE IT'S FUNNY THE WAY WATER SMELLS LIKE SKY SMELLS LIKE
COAL WHEN HE BREATHESES & *HOW COULD THE SKY BE SO HEAVY IF
THERE ARE NO STARS TONIGHT?* PALM STRETCHED OUT EYES WATCH
SAND SPLIT THE WATER-SAND

DRIPS FROM THIS STAR BECAUSE THE SKY IS HEAVY TONIGHT
BECAUSE I AM DROWNING BECAUSE THERE ARE STARS TONIGHT-
SUCH A BEAUTIFUL STAR, HE SAYS LIFTING HAND &

FATHER SMILES OUT OF THE EMBERS-SON, THIS IS A *ROCKET*.
SAY R-O-C-K-E-T.

R-O-C-K-E-T HE REPEATS, *A SPECIAL KIND OF STAR FATHER I WILL CATCH
IT &*

THE STAR CATCHES HIM,

SENDS HIS HEAD, FEET, LEFT & RIGHT ARMS FLYING IN THE WATER,
FLOATING LIMBS BESIDE LILY PADS - COAL SEEPING INTO SKY-

TELL ME WHY, FATHER. TELL ME WHY.

FARAWAY HOME

MAMTA WATHARE



APOLLO 11

HANNAH VESEY

Donna ripped my New Scientist up into pieces for kindling and told me that the moon was an alien spaceship from Jupiter. She said that it had set out millions of years ago to destroy earth, but hadn't had enough fuel to enter the atmosphere. Gravity had sucked it into orbit like a bead threaded onto a string, while the aliens slept inside, waiting. When Neil Armstrong landed, the moon's mouth would open, and the aliens would suck him in with their squelchy green tentacles.

Donna was kneeling in front of the fireplace while she talked, trying to get the wood to catch. Her feet were bare, and her hair was parted across her neck like the sea. There was a bite mark on her left shoulder. I wondered who had bitten her, and when, and if he was the reason she was smiling again.

"Apollo 11 isn't a fairy-tale, Don," I said. "This is real."

Donna put down her lighter and turned to me, hands empty.

"I was just trying to make you laugh," she said. "I didn't mean to offend you-"

"You didn't offend me," I said. "Really. It's fine."

She crossed the room and sat down beside me on the floral upholstered couch. She'd developed an odd way of moving lately; as if her skin didn't fit her body, as if she was just learning how her legs worked. She bit her fingernails and looked me over, studying my arms and shoulders.

"Do you think the astronauts are scared?" she said.

I nodded. "My uncle is scared shitless," I said. A house wren started singing in the maple outside the window. "That's what he told me."

"I'd be scared too, if I thought I was going to die." Donna reached out and placed her hand on top of mine. I was reminded of the way that my mum used to touch my dad. I saw us when we were in our fifties, wrinkled and going grey and still not remembering how to talk to each other.

"It's not just that he's scared of dying," I said. "He doesn't mind dying, if it's quick." Donna squeezed my hand, then let go to fiddle with her dress. "It's about having put all that effort into it, and then failing anyway," I said.

APOLLO 11

HANNAH VESEY

“He’s spent seven years on this one dream, all of his breath and blood on making the landing.” I was looking at the fireplace, but I heard her breath catch, as if from sudden cold. “And to want something that much, and know that you might not get it...that’s hard, for anyone.”

I felt her thinking, trying to choose her words. The house dimmed and brightened as the trees in the garden swayed in the wind. She swallowed to wet her mouth and moved so that our shoes were touching.

“What are you saying, Jase?”

“I’m saying that I wouldn’t want to be him right now.”

The moon still hung in the branches of the maple tree like a baby curled into a womb. I knew that it orbited the earth at a rate of two thousand, two hundred and twenty-eight miles per hour, forever turning on a path that led nowhere. The planets spun, while Donna and I stood still.

//

It was fifty-seven minutes since they had left earth, and still the Lord had not spoken.

Buzz Aldrin anchored himself in the gently rotating Columbia by holding on to a crash couch seatbelt, looking out the side window like a child witnessing his first dawn. The sky outside was darker than iron, so dark that it drowned the sun. He held his free hand up to his ear, half expecting to hear the Voice saying, this is me. This is what I look like. Ever since he was a child, he’d heard the Voice in his head, repeating prayers and Bible passages, sometimes babbling nonsense. He knew that it was the Voice of God, that he was chosen. It was a blessing, until the Voice went silent two weeks before the launch, leaving him wondering what he’d done wrong. He turned to the window and threw off an air force salute. Colonel Buzz Aldrin, reporting from the shores of the universe.

Beyond the glass, the earth rolled by like an ever-crested wave. Down there, people were cooking dinner, making love, planting landmines in playgrounds. Up here, you could forget that humanity even existed. It occurred to Buzz that most wars were fought over borders. But from space, the borders that men had died for were invisible.

APOLLO 11

HANNAH VESEY

He stared out into the blackness, where part of him believed that the Lord was waiting. *Are you watching this?* he asked it. *Can you please tell me that you're here?*

Mike was at the nose of the command module, checking the inertial platform alignment with the sextant. Neil was gripping a seatbelt beside Buzz, adrift on his thoughts like an astronaut with a cut tether. Buzz caught his eye and tried to smile.

“How're you feeling?” Buzz asked.

Neil gave an ugly grin and scratched his arm. “Let's just say that I'm glad about those faecal containment garments.”

“Too much information, mate.”

Neil laughed. “Just thought you needed to know.” The earth had spun out of sight with the rotating of the ship. Neil was still grinning like a cover girl, his piggy brown eyes as bright as a boy's. Buzz glanced over at Mike, then leaned in closer to his friend.

“Can I ask you a question?” Buzz asked.

“Sure,” said Neil easily. He assumed the posture of a teacher, frowning, his hand resting on his chin. “Ask away.”

“Do you think...” Buzz paused and breathed the canned air of the ship. “Do you think that God ever grants our requests?”

Neil scrunched up his face. “I believe God speaks to us through nature,” he said. “But you're a Christian, aren't you?” His eyes searched Buzz's face. “Or have you had a change of heart?”

Buzz bunched the seatbelt up in his hands.

The Columbia felt smaller than it ever had before. “I believe in God,” he said finally. “But I don't believe He answers prayers. The Bible times were the age of miracles. He doesn't do miracles like that anymore.” He said it like a challenge, hoping the Voice would respond. But it stayed silent. That was typical. Never there when he wanted it, always there when he didn't. “This mission isn't a miracle,” he said. “Humans did this, not God.” Neil was silent, thinking. Still, the Voice said nothing. Outside, the world spun past, blue and green and white.

//

After lunch, Donna put on Magic Sam and tried to make me dance.

APOLLO 11

HANNAH VESEY

She'd changed into her green dress, the dress she'd been wearing when I first saw her in the park. I'd watched her sitting with her cheek to the bark of a tree, murmuring to herself as she turned the pages of her novel. She'd looked like a blade of grass, sprung up from the earth. When I'd seen her holding hands with a boy in the supermarket before the hailstorm, she was wearing the same dress. I'd taken it like a man, smiled and shook his hand.

Now it was summer, and the garden was smiling in the rain. Donna was smiling with it.

"Get up and dance with me," she said. "If you sit down long enough, your legs will fall off."

I thought about the Apollo 11 spacecraft, spinning round the moon like a three-legged dog chasing a rabbit. Columbia was tiny, he'd said; too small to hold memories of Joan and the kids, memories of things you'd almost said. Buzz Aldrin, film star, American hero, dead man, looking down at the moon's leprous grey skin.

I got up off the couch and started towards the TV. Donna caught my shoulders and held me back. Her dark hair was loose, stirring in the breeze from the fan. There was a scar on her left arm.

"You're not going to help him by obsessing over it," she said. "You're only working yourself up."

I twisted out of her grasp and went for the TV, but she beat me there. "We can turn it back on when the Eagle is due to undock," she said. I looked into her eyes and imagined the Columbia going up in flames. She pressed her lips together and blew air out through her nose. I'd never stopped noticing how beautiful she was.

"I don't want to find out he's dead an hour after it's happened."

"So you want to see it as it happens?"

"I don't want it to happen at all."

Donna's eyes were the blue of the earth, seen from space. There were mountains in those eyes, clouds and continents. She shook her head at me.

APOLLO 11

HANNAH VESEY

Then she wrapped her arms around my neck and pulled me into a hug. I stumbled backwards and I nearly fell over the coffee table; she held me up so that I didn't fall. On the record player Magic Sam was singing about how bad his luck was. The rain kept falling outside, and I imagined the rivers and hollows and dry places of the city filling up with water. At some time, I'd stopped believing that my arms were strong enough to hold her.

She let me go abruptly and stepped away. She held her hands out like she was asking for money.

"The way we act around each other now," she said. "Is that my fault?"

"It isn't anyone's fault," I said.

The phone rang upstairs, but neither of us made a move to answer it. In the quiet of the living room, I let my breath unravel.

/

On that dead ground where no voice had spoken since creation, he broke bread and gave thanks to the Lord.

He looked out the window as he said the verses. The lunar surface looked like soup boiled down to a crust. Neil smiled at Buzz; he was none the wiser. Buzz could feel the Spirit inside of him, like something physical; an aftertaste that lingered for days, perhaps, or his first grey hairs, or his bones returning to dust.

Abort the mission, the Voice said. It is not for humanity to explore the planets. Buzz had to swallow twice to get down the wafer of bread. He chased it with a sip of wine, cold and sour. The LM crew compartment was tiny. Neil could see his face, see how he moved. Be calm, Buzz, he told himself. Still your shaking, slow your breath, like the NASA shrinks taught you. You've sinned before. This is no different.

"Do you feel like you've done this before?" Neil said.

"Done what before?" Buzz asked. Sinned, said the Voice. Sinned again and again and again ...

"Walked on the moon," said Neil. "I feel like I've been here a thousand times before. I know what it'll feel like.

APOLLO 11

HANNAH VESEY

“I know exactly what I’ll say.”

“Can’t say I understand that,” said Buzz. Neil nodded.

Buzz felt as if he was out on the moon without a spacesuit. He could nearly feel the air in his lungs expanding, tearing at his lung tissue. Water in the soft tissue of his body vaporising, and his skin swelling like it was infected. His blood bubbling. But there would be no unconsciousness after fifteen seconds. He might have had to live like this forever, screaming, biting pillows. Bad Christians don’t go to heaven. They burn.

“Hey, Neil,” Buzz said.

“What is it, mate?” Neil was cracking the knuckles in his hands, like he was getting ready for a fight. Facing the night like an enemy.

“I...” He tried to step on the anxiety, crush it down. He had to walk carefully, not seem too insane. “I’m having conflicting messages from God,” he said, “About whether or not we should complete the mission.” He stared hard at the exit hatch. It was out there now. The truth sweetened with a lie.

Neil waited an unbearably long time before answering.

“Mate,” he said, “Are you still feeling okay about doing this?” Buzz could see from Neil’s face exactly what he thought of Buzz’s little comment.

“I’m fine,” Buzz said. He said it calmly, evenly, added a laugh on the end. He said it as if saying it aloud would make it true. “I’m just...you know how religious I am. God does talk to me, but sometimes it’s a little hard to distinguish his voice from my own thoughts.” Another lie, a big one. He hoped Neil wouldn’t want him to joke about it. He imagined himself burning and couldn’t smile.

“Oh, sure,” Neil said. “I was worried that you were losing it there for a sec.” Neil turned to face Buzz, with an expression that demanded his full attention. “Before we go out there,” he said, “I need to know if you’re okay to do this. I need to know if the mission is going to be compromised in any way.”

Go home, said the Voice. Go home while you still can.

“Well?” said Neil.

APOLLO 11

HANNAH VESEY

Buzz looked into his friend's eyes and nodded. It there now. The truth sweetened with a lie.

When the sun set, the house wren stopped singing.

We sat on the couch and watched the grey shape of Neil Armstrong descend the ladder. The footage was so indistinct that we could barely make him out. A man of smoke descending into the shadowlands. Behind him, the moon glowed grey. He came down the ladder as slowly as an ant crawling along a razor blade. Afraid of falling, still.

At the foot of the ladder, there was a pause. "One small step for a man," he said, and Donna gripped my arm. "One giant leap for mankind," he said, and I let go of my breath. All over the world, people let go with me. All over the world, we leaned forward, watching the Boy Scout from Ohio swim across our television screens.

When they returned, my uncle told me what it was like. Watching Neil take those first steps, knowing that he'd done what Buzz would never do. Managing to be okay with that. Watching Neil collecting the contingency soil sample.

Thinking of wanderers kissing the soil of a foreign land. Remembering the list of things that could go wrong: ice accumulating in the engine fuel line, further damage to the ascent engine circuit breaker, a storm over the Pacific Ocean landing site. He spoke to his God and heard only anger. He'd imagined his life as a mountain, sloping up to this one choice. A pinnacle to stand on, or a height to fall from. But now that he'd arrived there, at the critical moment, he realised that he'd already made the decision. That he'd known all along.

Buzz took a last look at the view through the hatch, at the moondust and starlight. He put his foot on the first rung of the ladder.

And he followed his friend into the dark.

RIVER TO SEA

MAMTA WATHARE

WHO ARE WE?
IF NOT OUR BROKEN PARTS
COMING TOGETHER
PIECE BY PIECE
STORY BY STORY
DREAM BY DREAM

WHO ARE WE?
IF NOT STARS
OF A SACRED GALAXY
RUNNING INTO A FOREVER RIVER
OF MILK AND HONEY

WHO ARE WE?
IF NOT FRACTALS OF AN UNBROKEN DREAM
A CLEAR STREAM
MOVING QUIETLY THROUGH VERSES AND WORLDS

AND YET, HOW HAVE WE NOT KNOWN
IF PAIN IS INEVITABLE
SO IS HOPE
AND SOMEDAY,
OUR RIVER OF PAIN WILL MEET A SEA OF HOPE

UNTIL THEN, WE MUST KEEP GOING
FROM DREAM TO DREAM
FROM STREAM TO STREAM
THROUGH THE OCEANS OF LIFE

THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A STAR

SARAH AZIZ

YOUR VOICE

IS A HONEYED DAGGER

AIMED FOR THE HEART,

CRACKING THE BREASTBONE,

TRICKLING WHITE-HOT DOWN THE RIBS,

UNLEASHING THE MONSTER

THE POETS MUSE ABOUT.

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

THERESA K. JAKOBSEN



SPIRITUS MUNDI REVIEW

CONTINUUM

SARAH FREIA

MY EAGER EYES AND

UNIVERSAL THOUGHTS

SCOPE THE STARS:

SCINTILLATING BIRDS

MURMURATE THROUGH THE MAPPA ASTRALI,

CARTOGRAPHERS WHOSE

COSMIC MIGRATION

ENGRAVE THE EXPANSE

WITH CONSTELLATIONS

OF CONFIRMATION

FOR CONTINUUM.

FOR THE STARS THAT VANISHED

ANAYIS N. DER HAKOPIAN

THE SKY IS BARE AND DEAD
APART FROM THE GLIDING BIRDS
IN THEIR NIGHT TIME DANCES
APART FROM THEM
THE SKY IS STILL GREY AND DREARY
EMPTY, EVEN WHEN IT IS CLOUDLESS

IT DOES SURPRISE ME THOUGH
WHEN YOU SAY THAT IT ISN'T VACANT THAT THE STARS ARE STILL
SHINNING THERE FOR TO ME, THEY HAVE LONG LEFT
LEFT US EMPTY AND LONGING
FOR THEIR GLISTENING WONDERING

AS OUR FEET STAY STUCK TO OUR ROOTS AND THE SKY HIGH UP
ABOVE
IS FOREVER MOVING LIVELY UNSEEN
WE STAY NETTED AND CAUGHT

IN OUR SMALL ORBIT TURNINGS
FOR THE CITY BLOCKS KILLED THE STARS

THEY HAD VANISHED
WHEN? I DON'T RECALL
JUST SOME POINT -SOME DAY
THE SKY BECAME BLANK, THAT'S ALL GODS HAD PLUCKED THEM
AND LEFT US WITH NOTHING

FOR THE STARS THAT VANISHED

ANAYIS N. DER HAKOPIAN

ALL BUT THE SHADOW
OF THE FULL FORGOTTEN MOON

TO LIGHT OUR DWINDLED NIGHT
FOR US NOT TO GET TANGLED IN OUR FRIGHT THAT WE HAD
LEARNED TO DROP
LIKE TRAILBLAZING LOST CRASHING STARS

THIS IS FOR THE ONES ABOVE AND UP THAT ARE FOREVER
WATCHING US
AS I'LL CONTINUE SEEKING

FORGOTTEN CONSTELLATIONS
TO THE RIME OF THE LANDS
WHERE YOU MIGHT CATCH THEM GHOSTLY

WILL LOOK, I WILL SEEK THE LOST
TO KNOW THAT THERE WAS A WAS
SO THAT I CAN FINALLY SAY
I KNOW WHERE THE STARS HAVE VANISHED WHERE
THEY STARE DOWN IN ALL THEIR HOURS WHERE I
CAN STARE BACK AT THEM, ENLIVENED.

LETTER TO EVERY STAR AND CONSTELLATION

C.C. RAYNE

MY DEAR DEVOTED DESTROYERS,
I HAVE BEEN WAITING TO SEE IF ONE OF YOU
WILL SOMEDAY CRASH INTO THE EARTH?
COME CLOSE, SO I CAN HOLD YOU TIGHTLY.
KEEP ME WARM.
OR MAYBE STAY WHERE YOU ARE, BRIGHT GLIMMER
BURNING UP PAST JUPITER,
YOU WHO I COULD NEVER REACH IN MY TINY LIFETIME.
THE ONLY HOPE IS FOR YOU TO COME TO ME,
BUT THEN THERE'D BE AN ENDING OF ALL THINGS GOOD AND GREEN.
FLARE OUT, IMplode ROMANTICALLY,
BUT STILL A GREAT CALAMITY OF SOOT AND SPARKS,
A WET FIREWORK FOR AN APOCALYPSE.

IN ONE WORLD: I CHASE YOU.
I HUNT YOU DOWN AND TAP YOU ON THE SHOULDER,
JUST FOR THE JOY OF SAYING
HELLO, HELLO, IT'S ME, IT'S ME, CAN YOU SEE ME?
DESPITE THE YAWNING SILENCE IN THE ECHOES.

AND IN ONE OTHER WORLD:
I SIT ON THE ROOF, AND STARE UPWARDS,
AND I SEE.
AND I DO NOT NEED TO BE SEEN.
AND THE EARTH SPINS SLOWLY ON.

THE RED MOON

NIBERA



SPIRITUS MUNDI REVIEW

THE VOID

SAMANTHA LEE CURRAN

DOES THE BOND BREAK WHEN THE PEOPLE DO

FOR I AM LEFT A SHATTERED MESS
IN THE AFTERMATH OF IT ALL
TRAVERSING THROUGH THE FRAGMENTS
OF US FLOATING IN THE COSMOS

WHAT CANNOT BE SEEN CANNOT BE BROKEN

A NEBULOUS HEART
ADRIFT IN THE VOID
SEARCHING FOR A PLACE TO REST
AMONGST THE STARS

WHAT CANNOT BE SEEN CANNOT BE FELT

WHAT IS FELT ONLY EXISTS
IN THE ETHER
AN INTANGIBLE PRESENCE
AN ALL-CONSUMING ATMOSPHERE

SPIRITUS MUNDI REVIEW

BUYER'S REMORSE

ALEX WEILHAMMER

THE WORLD IS A MOTEL WITH INDEFINITE VACANCY. YOU'RE THERE, YOU'RE NOT. YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED A PLACE TO STAY, BUT YOU SLEPT THERE ALL THE SAME.

YOU TAUGHT ME THIS IN A DREAM. WE WATCHED THE MOON THAT NIGHT FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE, EAGER FOR SUNRISE. YOU PEERED AT ME WITHOUT LOOKING, YOUR WET, MOONLIT HAIR PASTED ON YOUR HEAD. A CRISP WIND BATHED THE AUTUMN TREES, THEIR BRANCHES STRIPPED BARE. YOU PUT A CRUMPLED RECEIPT IN MY HAND. I STILL REMEMBER HOW BRIGHTLY YOU SMILED WHEN YOU TOLD ME.

YOU BOUGHT THE SUN.

I SAW MAPS IN YOUR EYES, LANDS STUDDED WITH CITIES, WITH RIVERS AND LAKES, MOUNTAINS AND DESERTS. FURTHER INSIDE, THE DEEPER I LOOKED, I SAW A LABYRINTH INSIDE A FOREST. GHOST SOLDIERS STOOD IN PERFECT SALUTE TO THE MOON ABOVE, AWAITING THEIR NEXT ORDER.

THE SUN ARRIVED EARLY — ARRIVED FAST — EXPLODED.

DAZZLING AS IT WAS, WE BOTH KNEW YOU'D NEVER GET YOUR MONEY BACK. WE DREADED THE COLD THAT WOULD SOON DRAPE THE EARTH JUST AS SOIL BLANKETS A COFFIN. THERE IS NO NEED, WE LEARNED, FOR MAPS IN A WORLD WITHOUT THOSE TO READ THEM. NO NEED FOR SOLDIERS OR ART, FOR CITIES OR MOTELS. NO NEED FOR DREAMS, AND NO NEED FOR A SUN.

DACTYL FOR THE COWS-MOS

DANIEL BOUCHER

WINKITY-BLINKITY
COWS IN THE FIELD ARE
GRAZING, OBSERVING THEIR
CANVAS STRETCHED OUT:

INFINITE INKY-BLACK,
ASTRAL IN MILKY-WHITE,
EXTRATERRESTRIAL
COLOURS WITH EARS.

(TRUTHFULLY, COWS AREN'T THE
MOO-LIGHT OR HEIF-ENS VAST,
POETIC MEAT-APHORS,
CAN'T MAKE THEM SPHERES,

CAN'T MILK THE FARM-AMENT,
CAN'T TAN A CLOUD-HIDE, NOR
ORDER A 'BURGER AND
SKIES' WITH A STOUT)

ETERNITY

CHARLIE YOUNG

I float among the endless void, in a constant cycle of ballet with my fellow celestials. I watch as I fly past the sun, cradling me around my cousins Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the rest. I occasionally get close enough to speak with them, but not for long. It matters little, I will see them again, and time does not work the same on me as it does the inhabitants on my form.

The moon stays close, hovering above me like an infant, latching on like a parasite. I once hated it, for invading my space, for disrupting the tides I used to control and the sky at which I would preside. Many of my cousins have these similar creatures, thrust upon them by happenstance, all a coincidence according to the feigns of aeons. Yet we grew fond of them. They provided us with company, with companionship. In time, friendship. I was thankful to have someone to watch over the night for me, and to control the waves which crashed upon my rocky shores.

It was this way for almost as long as time existed; we formed from rock and slag and metal, pulled together and merging into being, all of us gaining our own attributes. Saturn gained the rings, surrounding its mighty form with disks that I sometimes believe glow in the endless dark.

They are truly beautiful to behold. Jupiter is the largest of us, and is made from gases, flowing through its body as free as the air I provide for my creations. Mars, one of the smallest of my family, has been subjected to many mysteries. They are always so secretive, only showing the faintest sign of what it manifests on its domain, be that ice or water or minerals. Mercury is the smallest of our kin, and acts like it, running around the sun, our jailer as a meteorite would fly past our bodies, quickly and uneventfully.

Speaking of the Sun. I know I spoke harshly of it, calling it a jailer, but we do not truly feel this way. We understand the necessity to keep us locked in this perpetual motion it has us in. If I was to deviate from it, by even a few hundred miles, a breath in cosmic terms, all life on my bosom would either burn or freeze depending which way I moved. I could not allow that. My cousins likewise could not allow that, but more out of fear of being thrust into the void. The Sun protects us you see. We know what is out there, and none of us wish to face that reality.

I have not spoken of myself enough I think. Do not think this arrogance on my part, but more essential. I have grown so many things on my body; the dinosaurs, canines, humanity, fish, plant life.

ETERNITY

CHARLIE YOUNG

So many organisms I have grown and nurtured, allowing them to flourish. My first creations, the dinosaurs, are undoubtedly some of my finest work. They were almost perfect, then by freak chance... they were gone.

I barely noticed I must admit, eternity dies in our celestial presence. Even as they burned, even as the ground cracked beneath them and swallowed them whole, even as the sky was scorched and winter soon fell over my body, I did not notice. I was too busy looking outward, looking at the vastness, the emptiness of the null. I must tell you, it was horrifying to behold. That was when I learned why the Sun kept us here, why he protected us. Even with all his great knowledge, he did not understand some of the things we saw, some of the things that lurked in the dark. To this day, we still do not.

When I was finally able to rip my eyes from this expanse and noticed my work destroyed, I set out anew. Some of the humans that grew from this latest creation called my work Eden. Some

called it Heliopolis. Others called it Pangu. Let them call it what they wish. It does not come close to what I performed over those millions of years. A blink of an eye to me, thousands of lifetimes to them.

They grew and still do to this day, inventing new ways to live and to kill. New ways to make money and feed themselves. Some hoard this wealth, others have nothing. Sometimes those who have everything are left vapid and empty, whilst those who struggle rise to the challenge. Empires have risen and fallen, only for new ones to build on the mounds of the ancient, knocking down and replacing what little is left.

As time flows on they seem to have become aware of this pattern, but do little to change it. It is endearing I find, my little relics struggling along, poisoning me for their own gain. They feel the effects far more than I do. I will still be here after they go extinct, I have no doubt about that. My cousins likewise will watch on in fascination and morbid curiosity. I am not sure how long they will last, nor do I care to. I am Earth, Mother of all and I shall breed life for as long as I exist in this universe. Something no other celestial can claim to do.

Despite my majesty and importance, I feel that soon I shall be faced with the complexity of the universe. Something is coming, the Sun told us recently, and there is nothing he can do to stop it. I know what he speaks of. Even the creatures inhabiting my body know

ETERNITY

CHARLIE YOUNG

of them, although not in the way we do, and even then it is not the full picture.

You see, there are these vacuums in the null, they eat and eat and eat everything they come upon; planets, stars, light itself cannot escape it. That even the frail things on my bosom know, but what they do not know is that something lurks within those gnawing mouths. We do not know what they are, only that they exist, and they watch our universe with hungry eyes. They are constantly looking for a way to escape their shackles and feast on the bones of our galaxy.

For some unknown reason, they cannot do this, or perhaps we misunderstand them and they in fact do not care about devouring us all, but the hungry vacuum is merely a byproduct of their spying. They may simply be staring into our universe with uncaring eyes, callous hands waving over a world to see it destroyed because they wanted to see what would happen.

According to the Sun, one of these entities has been watching us for some time. Why they have not attacked yet we are unsure. Perhaps they find us amusing, interesting? Maybe they do not care about us enough to approach. No matter the reason, I am terrified. These things, whatever they are, watch my body,

my cousins' bodies like we are food, or toys, or subordinate. The unblinking black eye stares at us, if noise was to travel to our ears we would doubtless hear the words of an omnipotent God, gazing at his next subjects with unfathomable intentions.

I always saw myself as the second greatest being in the galaxy, second only to the Sun. A being that would outlive any of the creations I could evolve. Watch as my family tried in desperation to mimic what I could manifest at a whim. Now I shudder in fear as to what is out there, my imagination clawing at me telling me that these hungry pits are only the beginning, that there are things far older and more powerful out there.

I hope only that the being does not come for us, but I can already see what I believe are long, unending tentacles reaching out to my creations, planting its seed into their minds, leaving a trail that will take the greatest of their minds thousands of years to solve, and myself hundreds. May the Sun protect me and all my cousins in this time. I do not know what is out there, nor do I wish to. That is besides the point however.

They are here.

THE FALL

AALIYAH ANDERSON

A WHALE

SPLITS OPEN, WITHOUT THE TEMPERANCE TO DIE QUIETLY,

AND INVITES YOU TO THE FEAST:

GNAWING ON A DIFFERENT TYPE OF WATER.

WITHOUT PRESSURE,

YOU ENRICH, SPEAKING TO ALL THE PINWHEELS,

OR THE DUST OF CRUSHING

HOT GAS,

AND WHEEL INTO SILENCE.

ELBOGEN

ELLEN HAROLD

KALEIDOSCOPIES CONTORT AND FESTOON AT THE SOFT
SIGHT

OF GEOLOGIC CONTORTIONS.

TEARING THROUGH THE COSMICOLOGIES.

A HAUNTED SPECTRE ENGULFED

IN THE SCATTERED DEBRIS OF INQUISITION AND THE
EMPTINESS

WHERE OXYGEN WOULD HOLD FLAME

ISOLATION

SARAH AZIZ



WHAT I FOUND IN THE PRARIE

A.J.M. ALDRIAN

He brought me out unsuspectingly, in some utter perfection of his machinations, I did not assume or believe that it would not take place for some time yet. It did not happen on our vacation on my birthday, it did not happen over our anniversary, or at the reunion, or over Thanksgiving...so I thought it wouldn't happen for some time.

It was 10 degrees out. Part of the joys of Minnesotan December, yes. But being born and raised here does have its benefits, for despite my age and wisdom of twenty three, I still neglected a hat and gloves. So, in just my long coat, and all done up for today's escapades, we ventured out into the tree speckled park between our apartment and the cemetery.

"It has a water reservoir on the far side," he told me, as I clung to him, keeping my eyes on the ground to avoid ice and the bright sun. We weren't sure of which of the forking path to take, so we took the right, into the woods. Now, it wasn't dense, and he turned back to me and said through his scarf with his face red, "There's a tree with a little door in this park."

I nodded, hopping over the snow and hearing it crutch beneath my feet, "A fairy door." I said.

He laughed, a chime of icy breath in the cold air.

Looking back now, it's nice to know they were with us. Like Pwyll Pen Annun and Rhiannon in the Mabinogi, in our matters, "Concerning the Family,". Our Family.

We followed a bend through the trees and we could see the water reservoir, "I'm glad to see a field." He meant a field which was packed densely with fallen snow. "Packed down," he added for clarity. "Like at my parent's."

Again I nodded, looking out at the field with the prairie grasses peeking out of it. My now gloved hands in my pockets, a misty breath escaping me. His father, in his settled years, had cultivated a natural Minnesotan prairie in their backyard, complete with apple trees and a pond.

His Father and I had little in common, he is an engineer, a scientist, and I am a writer. There were very few things we shared, but one thing we both shared was an immense desire for learning and will for knowledge. So out of kindness, and perhaps even gratitude, he'd let me take some old books from *his* library. Stocked with old world encyclopedias and philosophers writings, a vast collection of Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and

WHAT I FOUND IN THE PRAIRIE

A.J.M. ALDRIAN

general fantasy and science fiction. They were always old beat up copies of a mystery published in the 60s. Whatever I could get my hands on honestly. But the book I most wanted from him was he made himself, or rather a journal detailing every plant and method of caretaking for the prairie within his backyard. That to me was the most valuable bit of knowledge, the most useful lesson he could offer me. Scholars would call it folk-knowledge, I called it an inheritance.

So as I was looking at a much smaller and free-grown prairie next to this man's eldest son, I thought of him, his prairie, our inheritance. But it was more than just wealth and knowledge that came with the prairie. It was lessons, taught and propagated by a father, into the Greatest Mother, Earth. The land comes with the rawest and most truthful sort of principals; when thaw strikes or snow falls, when the leaves decay or the animals move to hibernate. Nature has been one of my greatest teachers. The resilience of the prairies, regrowing always after fire, the clearing of trees stems from roots, the cycle of the year and harvest of the apple trees. My soon to be father-in-law knew these lessons too, perhaps, even in his Catholicism, believed in the Earth as much as I did.

It was right of my boyfriend to take me out amongst the trees and the prairie for his plan. He knew outside was one of my favorite places, next to anywhere surrounded by literature. I was already happy, just being out in the open cold air. But as we turned back, having reached a dead end, arm and arm, the fae wandered among us. Perhaps they followed from the prairie and into the trees. As when I looked up, the sun, golden and misty with glittering snow, cascaded in great beams through the trees. I knew not if it was power, or sign from the gods that signaled to him that time neared but, I had lost my breath.

Joy is a rare feeling that is defined as extreme happiness. It is something you experience, that comes and goes in an instant. It may be here one moment, gone the next. In a single blink of a heartbeat. As the sun fell in beams through the trees, enlightening the snow, I was struck by many things, but an overboiling of emotion was one of them. I may not have shown it to my boyfriend, but I wanted to remember and treasure this image.

X

In John Dewey's *Art as Experience*, he

WHAT I FOUND IN THE PRARIE

A.J.M. ALDRIAN

defines an experience as “heightened vitality,”

in which we have an “active and alert commerce with the world;”.

Commerce is an interesting word there, within context,

it can be swapped out with ‘exchange’.

In exchange with the world, a giving and taking.

What was I giving to the Earth that day, but awareness?

I was being active and alert, of the sun, the snow in the air and beneath our feet.

The squirrels rustling about in the trees, the wind that had ceased for the sky to open up and reveal a halo of light.

He also says, experience “at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events.”

I beheld the world in this lost breath, this moment.

An instant where my selfhood and partnership was lost

but ever present and hung above us in the canopy of the trees.

Souls, sounds and spells whispered to me.

Interpretation of the us, how could we?

For we were apart of the woods,

We were two snowflakes stuck together, drifting in the air.

X

We continued then along the opposite path, paved and trampled before us, flanked by trees. So an invisible canopy kept us enshadowed, the sun now hidden behind the hill. I remember feeling the cold now nip my face and I kept adjusting my hat as it kept slipping. People want perfection in these sorts of times but rarely ever get it.

Likewise, he was complaining about the lack of beauty, “I thought it’d be more pretty,” he said.

“I think it is pretty enough.” I said, for beyond the trees there was still the prairie field. “Look” I said, pointing and just now noticing it. “Someone made a snowman.”

He chuckled in the sunlight.

My eyes went from him to footprints, reminiscence of the creator, that led to the small, squat snowman. Who stood glistening white, just beyond the shadow of the water reservoir, his arms were branches and I think he had rock buttons.

WHAT I FOUND IN THE PRARIE

A.J.M. ALDRIAN

“It will be more pretty if we go off the path.” he again, as we descended into a small valley, before the path rose again.

Me, in a dress and socks and boots that left part of my ankles exposed said, “I don’t want to get off the path.” I answered, following his gaze to snow-painted deer paths that crossed over the paved ones into the woods. Really I did want snow in my boots.

He obliged, and we continued to walk up the curving path of the hill, before we fell into another valley of trees, where the path lightly curved back and forth. “I wonder where the door is.” he said, always the more talkative amongst us.

I, on the other hand, was always content with self-silence. In a meditative way, it allowed me to hear everything else around me. Right now, other than him, his footsteps breaking the blanket of snow, and his breath. There were birds in the trees, a far-off gentle whooshing of cars, a bell-like silent sound of falling snow. The whole world moved around us, and yet still he called on the fae, unwittingly. ‘He has gotten to know me these past few years,’ I thought. Come to know my gods, my cycles, my time. Am I like nature to him? I hope so.

For somehow he knew, deep down, or perhaps he had listened to my pagan songs and rants enough to understand that Yule was upon us. The new year had just started for us, for the ghosts had come, and the veil was thin and well;

”The land may be barren and lifeless,
The ground may be frozen and hard,
And the rain that fell has now turned to ice,
The Winter is showing her card,
But now the Sun king has rested,
And his eyes have turned to the Earth,
For three days the Sun has been still in the
sky,

But the time has now come for his birth.”

It neared the solstice before the long winter and spring. His birth before Hers, a time of renewal and eventually, new beginnings. Maybe my boyfriend did not know, but it was the perfect time, the perfect plan.

Earlier, I spoke of the perfection he wished for, that we all wish for. Perfection is an illusion. It is a wall we build to keep ourselves from seeing the beauty in simplicity. I do not need to say that my hat slipping or snow in my boots did not ruin the day. But I do need to say, don’t let the

WHAT I FOUND IN THE PRARIE

A.J.M. ALDRIAN

standard of perfection; the perfect day, moment, or place, keep you from seeing the light between the trees, feeling the warmth in winter or hearing what many believe to be imaginary whispers to you in the wind.

I hear it, in my heart beat.
with him.

Perhaps we were born again that day,
tied together in the snow.

Tree tops were bare,
and suddenly he did not care anymore
He threw his mittens down in the snow,
beaming
“I want to make this more permanent,” he
said.

Knees on snow,
It was a wave of a warm and sort of cold
An unmanageable tension in the blush of
wind at my back
a seizing of something winged in my
stomach
And all around me

Snow frozen
A halo of light reached over us,

I did not even hear the words,
Later he said I answered with,
‘Of course!’

There was a glitter in my blood
Rushing through my heart, my face,
My head, my hands
As I reached to that little black box
And put the ring on my own finger.

He rose up quickly, embraced and kissed me
Perhaps I was shaking,
But it did not matter
I was buried in him
And around us the woods were still.

“I can’t breathe!” I said,
Laughing, he exhaled warmth amidst frost.
We were bundled, embraced by the trees
A sing-singing hymn of the woods around
Us rose
Fae-danced light

And our blood, our breath
was embedded in the Earth.
There our footsteps remain,
and memories cascade
In snowflakes and the reborn sun.

WHAT I FOUND IN THE PRARIE

A.J.M. ALDRIAN

So he and went back to the car, in the cold, taking pictures of ourselves smiling and lightly violet star sapphire he had bought me for our engagement. The snow sparkled along the way, and he said, "It's been so long since I've seen the snow sparkle like that."

"Yes," I said, yes.

"I haven't noticed it like that. Not in a long time, how it sparkles."

I giggled because my love was never poetic, that's what he has me for.

By the time we got back to the car, the sunlight illuminated the path back to woods, its beams broke through evergreen branches, the Holly King had won. I turned and stared up at two stone pillars that flanked the parking lot. A gateway, I thought, a portal. The otherworld permeated the air and truly a new beginning was upon us.

So, happily we went and got pizza and beer to celebrate.

X

As an American with Germanic, Scots and Nordic heritage, I have always been drinker, but only recently have I truly taken to that inheritance. In my love of folklore and magic,

yes, in my hope for what I may find out in the woods and prairies but also, as a life-long learner, I've taken to its literary canon. Now I could sit here and write a noble lit essay on Goethe or Seamus Heaney, but since it's the solstice, I'll turn to another one of my teachers, and an age old drinking song;

Now I could sit here and write a noble lit essay on Goethe or Seamus Heaney, but since it's the solstice, I'll turn to another one of my teachers, and an age old drinking song;

"it's the rare song that is genuinely wistful—
it acknowledges human longing without
romanticizing it,
and it captures how each new year is a
product of all the old ones.

When I sing Auld Lang Syne on New Year's
Eve,

I forget the words like everyone does,
until I get to the fourth verse, which I do
have memorized:

"We two have paddled in the stream,
from morning sun till dine,
but seas between us broad have roared since
Auld Lang Syne."

And I think about the many broad seas that
have roared between me and the past—

WHAT I FOUND IN THE PRAIRIE

A.J.M. ALDRIAN

seas of neglect, seas of time, seas of death.
I'll never speak again to many of the people
 who loved me into this moment,
just as you will never speak to many of the
 people who loved you into your now.

 And so we raise a glass to them—
and hope that perhaps somewhere, they are
 raising a glass to us.”

And at the end he says once more, “Think of those across the broad and roaring seas, and sing with me.” As I am listening, my fiance comes up and hugs me from behind. I was asked to remember joy, even if it was not perfect, and live in exchange with the world, with these words. This is my salute to all my teachers, human and otherworldly, my future husband and his kind family, and this is my Auld Lang Syne. Because I want to remember the prairie and what I found there, I never want to forget the image of the sun falling between the trees. I want to hold it in my hands, in my mind forever. But like the reborn Sun of winter, I must watch the snowfall like all the rest, and wait for the dry, brown grasses in the prairie to regrow. And one day I can look back on this, these memories, and think of him and me and our home, our family and sing.

AL TRADUCIR LAS ESTRELLAS

ANGELA ACOSTA

ME TROPIEZO CUANDO INTENTO
TRADUCIR LAS ESTRELLAS AL ESPAÑOL.
UNA Y OTRA VEZ PIENSO EN CÓMO ES POSIBLE
CONVERTIR LOS VOCALES DE “MOON” A LA LUNA,
DE EXPLICAR QUE LOS MISMOS HOMBRES QUE
DESCUBRIERON LAS AMÉRICAS DIERON NOMBRES A LAS
ESTRELLAS YA NOMBRADAS, A LAS CONSTELACIONES QUE
YA SERVÍAN COMO LAS GUÍAS ANTIGUAS.

SIEMPRE ME CONFUNDEN LOS AÑOS-LUZ PORQUE
SI INTENTO VIAJAR EN EL TIEMPO, ME TOPO CON
EL ESPACIO SIDERAL Y NO CON EL PLANETA DONDE
ESTOY DE PIE EN EL AÑO 2022.

DESEO CON UN AMOR QUE ME CONSUME CONVERSAR
CON ALGUIEN QUE ESTÉ A CIEN AÑOS-LUZ DE AQUÍ
PARA QUE ME MOSTRARA COMO ERA EL MUNDO DE HACER
UN SIGLO COMO SI EXISTIERA EL TELESCOPIO MÁS
GRANDE EN LA VÍA LÁCTEA.

SOBRE TODO, ESPERO QUE ALGÚN DÍA TODOS TENGAN
EL DERECHO DE PODER CONOCER A LAS ESTRELLAS Y A
LOS SERES EXTRATERRESTRES, AUN SI NADA MÁS SEAN
BACTERIAS EN MARTES,
PARA ROMPER EL LÍMITE ENTRE EL PASADO Y EL FUTURO,
DE PISAR EN EL UMBRAL DE LAS PASADAS ESPERANZAS Y
LOS FUTUROS POSIBLES.

AL TRADUCIR LAS ESTRELLAS

ANGELA ACOSTA

YA NO QUIERO TRADUCIR LAS ESTRELLAS NI
IMAGINARLAS,

SIEMPRE HEMOS QUERIDO IR MÁS ALLÁ
DE LAS FRONTERAS LINGÜÍSTICAS Y SIDERALES,
DE LLEGAR A MUNDOS YA NOMBRADOS Y
EXPERIMENTARLAS CON NUESTROS PROPIOS OJOS Y
LENGUAS TAN HUMANAS.

{ENGLISH TRANSLATION}
TO TRANSLATE THE STARS

I STUMBLE WHEN I TRY
TO TRANSLATE THE STARS INTO SPANISH.
AGAIN AND AGAIN, I WONDER HOW IT IS POSSIBLE
TO CHANGE THE SYLLABLES OF “MOON” INTO “LUNA”,
TO EXPLAIN THAT THE SAME MEN THAT DISCOVERED
THE AMERICAS GAVE NAMES TO THE ALREADY NAMED
STARS, TO CONSTELLATIONS THAT ALREADY SERVED AS
ANCIENT GUIDES.

I ALWAYS GET CONFUSED BY LIGHT-YEARS BECAUSE
IF I TRY TO TIME TRAVEL, I STUMBLE UPON
OUTER SPACE AND NOT THE PLANET WHERE
I STAND IN THE YEAR 2022.

I WISH WITH A LOVE THAT CONSUMES ME TO CONVERSE
WITH SOMEONE A HUNDRED LIGHT-YEARS FROM HERE
SO THEY MAY SHOW ME HOW THE WORLD WAS A
CENTURY AGO AS IF THE LARGEST TELESCOPE IN

AL TRADUCIR LAS ESTRELLAS

ANGELA ACOSTA

EXISTENCE WERE IN THE MILKY WAY.

MORE THAN ANYTHING I WISH ONE DAY EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO KNOW THE STARS AND EXTRATERRESTRIAL BEINGS, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOTHING MORE THAN BACTERIA ON MARS, TO BREAK THE LIMIT BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE, TO STEP ACROSS THE THRESHOLD OF PAST HOPES AND POSSIBLE FUTURES.

I NO LONGER WISH TO TRANSLATE OR IMAGINE THE STARS, WE'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO GO BEYOND THE BORDERS OF LINGUISTICS AND OUTER SPACE, TO ARRIVE ON WORLDS ALREADY NAMED AND EXPERIENCED WITH OUR OWN VERY HUMAN EYES, TONGUES, AND LANGUAGES.

FROM THE LECTERN OF NYX*

CAROLINE CHOU

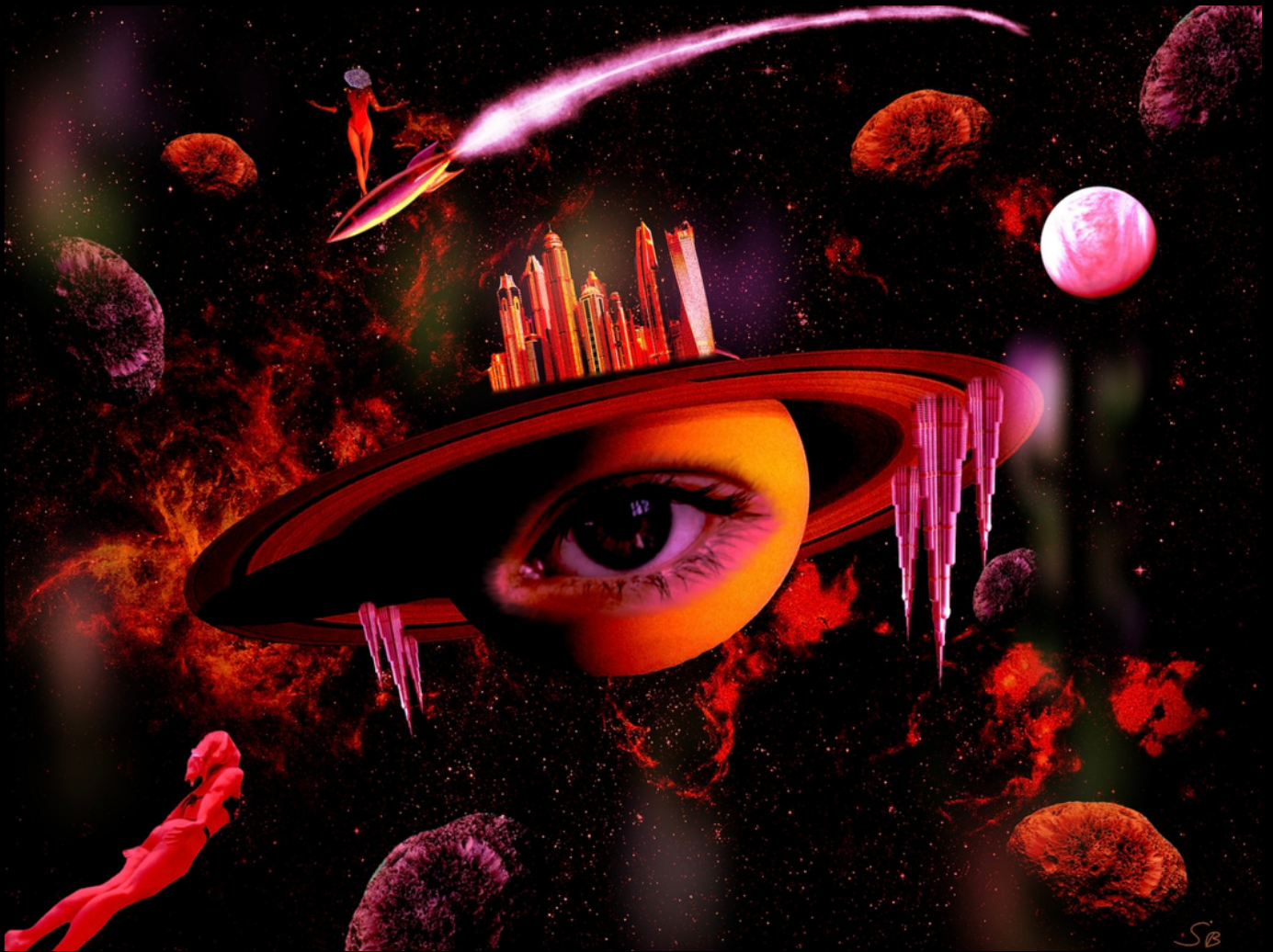
TO BATHE IN THE MILKY WAY IS TO ACCEPT YOUR HAIR
TURNING SILVER. IT IS TO LET MOONLIGHT TATTOO ITSELF
ACROSS THE BACK OF YOUR NECK, TO QUIET AS THE COSMOS
SINKS INTO YOUR VEINS AND TURNS MORTAL SKIN TO PAPER.
DIP A PALM INTO THE WATER AND SEE HOW THE CURRENT
FLOWS. THE STARS HOLD CERTAIN TRUTHS THAT THEY
RELEASE INTO THE NIGHT. LOOK FOR THEM. HERE, THEY LIE
BENEATH DIANA'S EYE. PERHAPS THEIR WISDOM IS IN THEIR
SILENCE AND THE TURNING OF THE TIDES.

LOOK FOR THEM. THEY HOLD STILL THE WAY NOTHING ELSE CAN.
THERE, THEY LIE UNMOVING AS THESE WAVES SWELL AROUND
US. PERHAPS ONLY THEIR GAZE CAN SLOW THE PULSING OF
HUMAN HEARTS. FOR THEY ALONE KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE
A STONE IN A TEMPORARY WORLD THAT CAN ONLY DREAM OF
INFINITY.

SPIRITUS MUNDI REVIEW

ALL SEEING UNIVERSE

SADEE BEE



SPIRITUS MUNDI REVIEW

TWO DYING STARS LEARNING HOW TO LIVE

GRACE KAYE

She had stopped believing in fairy tales but the night sky is convincing her to reconsider.

There was something so romantic about the way they stood underneath the winter sky, their breath clouded against their lips. His—a poet's—sticky with nicotine and her lip gloss. They tasted like cigarettes and strawberries, and anything could be romantic poetic bullshit with some kind of imagery if he tried hard enough.

She reapplied her lip gloss to her Mona Lisa smile in the flipped-down sun visor mirror after that.

Even the pictures in the night sky were stories made up by people. They weren't angels looking down from above, they weren't snakes or scorpions, and they didn't have a person's destiny etched into them. They were long-dead and burnt out, despite their light traveling miles into the night sky above.

But the ancients treated them like some kind of ancient connect-the-dots puzzle. They associated them with their mythologies, the tales they told themselves to try and come up with some kind of purpose for their living. Some kind of meaning in it all, to reason with their existence as if it had to be explained.

Anything could be made into existentialist poetic bullshit with some kind of life lesson if you tried hard enough. All his life he needed something to explain how everything worked. That's why he wasn't any good at poetry. He could make any line of prose have meaning, it just didn't sound like poetry.

They hadn't found the meaning of life yet, it was just the two of them staring up at the stars like a thousand lovers had before them. Searching for something written in them, something that said they were destined to be together. It made it really hard to want to be alive when all you wanted to do was die, because if there was no reason, then what was the point?

Maybe that's what made math so perfect. The way of thinking that could tell you the placements of the stars. Everything had an explanation, everything had an answer. There was always some kind of order. Life wasn't like that. Life wasn't perfect. Not every piece fell perfectly into place. But there wasn't a reason, not that he could see. Hell, he was running away for absolutely no reason. He was depressed for no reason. There didn't seem to be any reason for anything anymore. But if life was meaningless, if there wasn't any purpose, then what was the point?

TWO DYING STARS LEARNING HOW TO LIVE

GRACE KAYE

Why was he here? What was there to justify him being around at all?

He always got so existentialist when he was getting bad again. But it made it look so deep. So romantic, and glamorous if he tried hard enough. In the end, that's all poetry was, wasn't it? Dressing up your depression in pretty language and flowery rhymes. And if sadness was some kind of art in itself, then it was something to be desired.

That way, he was too.

"Don't you think it's sad how all of the stars we're seeing now are already dead?" He whispered, her head resting against his shoulder and their hands intertwined. "Isn't that sad."

"I don't think so," she said with a gentle smile, pausing as if she were searching for the right words. The lights of the cars passing by reflected off their faces sporadically. Her nose was sunburned, it was like she was glowing in the dark. She fidgeted with the lighter in her free hand, her face flickering with the flame, burning a warm orange glow like the stars above. She burned like a dying star, beautiful but sad. That was good, right? Poetically depressing enough? "It's like you said, they're still there shining even after they've gone. It's kind of like a legacy. Like, I

leaving something beautiful behind after you've gone."

"Do you ever think about it?" He asked, fidgeting with her hands in his, tracing his fingertips gently over his callouses like they were something beautiful, something delicate to be handled with care. "What you'll leave behind?" She closed the lighter, and he could only see the faint outline of her in the darkness that surrounded them without the tiny flame. The places where cuts healed and the skin healed tough to protect them, just holding hers gently.

Wasn't that a metaphor?

"Yeah, maybe," she replied, resting her head against his. "But, I also like to think that there's so much I still need to do while I'm here before I can leave. I have to leave behind something for people to remember. I have to love all of the things I was meant to love and myself and the life I'm living." He took a breath, as she closed her eyes. "There's a beautiful world around us, it can't fix everything but, you have to be alive to see it."

You're so beautiful.

"All of these stars," he breathed in awe. He wasn't looking up at them, he was looking at the way the lines of his palms looked like constellations. The way she held them even if

TWO DYING STARS LEARNING HOW TO LIVE

GRACE KAYE

they weren't perfect.

The way I don't have to dress up my depression for you, the way I didn't need it to wear a suit and tie because you love me even when it invites itself out along with us.

You don't need it to be pretty, or poetic, you accept us as we are.

You loved me even on the days I didn't love myself, so that must mean that if I was worth the love of somebody like you, I somehow deserved it from myself.

The way you don't teach me how to live, you don't try to fix me, you just hold my hands through it all until I get there on my own.

"Even though they're burnt out and gone," he said, thinking about them. "Their light still travels all the way here." Infinite, infinite as stars. Was that something?

"Like hope."

"Like hope," he agreed. "Or love." For myself. For the stars. And you. "I wouldn't mind loving you forever." She smiled, and it was like all the stars in the sky went out.

BEYOND

CARLOS E MORAZÁN

THEY CAME FROM THERE, BEYOND THE STARS
WE GASPED UPON THEIR DELICATE SILHOUETTES OUR
THOUGHTS WOULD WHELM WHEN THEY ROAMED NEAR AS
THEY ALLURED US WITH THEIR SONG

WE HOUNDED THEM AND WITH DELIGHT
LIT THE WAY TO OUR OPEN CHESTS
THEY TOOK AND ATE, THEY LEFT US BARE
AND DRANK FROM ALL THE FRUITS OF OUR VINES

WE WILL NOT ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE FURTHER
ESTRANGED OUR HEADS ARE GRAYING LIKE THE YEARS
AHEAD AS WE CHASE THE SHADOWS THAT THEY
UNSTITCHED

EACH NIGHT THE SEARCH TAKES US CLOSER
TO ALL THE DAUGHTERS, SISTERS AND MOTHERS
WHO CAME FROM THERE, BEYOND THE STARS

SAQALO'PI'G (RIBBONS)

RAYMOND SEWELL

1

MY MIND IS LIKE RIBBONS.
I AM THE HARD RAIN WHEN SPIRITS SPEAK.
I AM THE DUST SWIRLS GAQTUGWEWE'SM RUMBLING ON
FLOOD PLAIN.
MY MIND IS LIKE RIBBONS – SHOWING THE WIND.
A LARGE FLOATING HAND/WAVE.
YOU ARE ALWAYS ORANGE AND I AM ALWAYS BLUE.

2

AND YOUR SUN WARMED FACE - TELEGETUT
THE WORD FOR THE FACE POSITION BEFORE A SMILE.
THAT SMALL EYELID LAUGH.
I FEEL I AM ALWAYS EITHER CATCHING SOMETHING, OR
WAITING TO CATCH SOMETHING.
YOU ARE ALWAYS MY TRAIL.
I FEEL LIKE AN OVERLOOKED DECORATION, IN A BIG
COLLECTIVE LIFE.

3

UNDER ALL THE LOVE OF GRANDMOTHERS' CLOAK.
WE HAVE HUNTED - DIED – LOST AUNTIES AND UNCLES
WE ARE NOW THE TEACHERS.
STORY ROCKS.
NEW CULTURE MAKERS POST MYTHMAKER
MISREPRESENTED TO PULP OR SOME SORT OF GLUE.
THERE IS A DEEP LOVE IN OUR NEW CEREMONY.
A WOODS' LOVE.

SAQALO'PI'G (RIBBONS)

RAYMOND SEWELL

4

AT *NEPISUGUIT* WE STILL SPEAR SALMON.
I AM A GHOST LIGHT TWITCHING IN A TWILIGHT.
MY FATHER'S FAVOURITE WORD *PEMPISGIAQ*.
A SAD TRAIL – WATCHING THEM GRID A LOVE SUPREME, A
LOVE SUPREME.
MY TASTES HAVE CHANGED TO SQUEEZING.

5

A COLLECTIVE LIFE/A COMMUNITY BRAIN.
THE COMFORT OF GRANDMA.
AUNTIE, UNCLE – CLOAKS TO HIDE BEHIND.
THESE THE FIRST MEMORIES OF LIFE A COLLECTIVE LIFE.
NATURE.
IF I WANT SOMETHING BAD, I AM GOING TO FEEL IT TO THE
MOON.

6

I LUST FOR THE FOREST SO MUCH THAT I MAY BECOME
MEGUMWESU.
I STARE AT HER, WAITING FOR A WHIRLPOOL, *SAPOGAL THEN*
JAKULTES.
GLITCHING TREES.
PRIEST-LESS FOREST.
TEMPTING FUR-TONGED GROWTH SOCKET.
GREEN SHADOWS – MOSS CROWNS.

SAQALO'PI'G (RIBBONS)

RAYMOND SEWELL

F I COULD FIND THE SPLIT IN THE CURTAIN.
PLAYING MINDS BETWEEN HER TREES SHE IS THOUSANDS
OLD.

7

IN ADOLESCENCE I WENT MUCKING AND SAW A THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL SPIRIT.

ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER.

I STARED AT MOOCH WITH ALL THE VANITY OF A CRANE.

THE WAY WATER AND SOIL REFRACTED.

I HAD THE BEST LUCK KEZKUMSIT SINCE THAT DAY –
EVERYTHING WAS EASY.

YEARS LATER I WENT TO THE BANKS AGAIN DIGGING THE
MUD WITH MY EYES.

ON THE BROW OF THE BANK TREES HAD BEEN DRAWN.

WHERE I SAW THE BEAUTIFUL WOOD SPIRIT.

I WANTED TO JOIN THE THOUSANDS IN THERE AND LEAVE
THIS LIFE.

IMAGINE THE GREENNESS.

8

RED PROTECTS ME FROM YOU – DEAD BRANCHES OF POLICY.
THE WORD TOTING SPIRITUALLY ILLITERATE.

CRUDE-BINARY.

I SHOULD LEAVE AND BE GREEN RIBBONS NOW?!

TO FLOAT ON THE WIND – TO PLAY IN RAIN.

SAQALO'PI'G (RIBBONS)

RAYMOND SEWELL

9

UNDER A LODGE HEARING THE RAIN.
STEAM AND SWEAT THE SMELL OF CEDAR – SMOKE FOOD
BEGGING A GREAT GIANT TO ROLL ME UP IN THEIR HAIR.
HIDE ME FROM ALL THE PAIN.
WHERE POLICY CANNOT SMELL ME.
VAMPIRE BONES.

10

GREEN RIBBONS LIKE FISHTAIL – SHOEING AWAY BONES –
GRANDMA HANDS.
I WANT TO FALL UNDER THE WOODS.
I AM A STORY WITH NO POINT - A BRIDGE TO A FLOWER
GARDEN.
A RAINBOW ROWED GARDEN.

11

I AM A HAND SLIDING OVERTOP BLADES OF GRASS IN SUN
FRIED MEADOW.
WHEN I AM DEAD AND GONE AND YOU IMAGINE ME...
IMAGINE RIBBONS.

THE VOID

SAMANTHA LEE CURRAN

DOES THE BOND BREAK WHEN THE PEOPLE DO

FOR I AM LEFT A SHATTERED MESS
IN THE AFTERMATH OF IT ALL
TRAVERSING THROUGH THE FRAGMENTS
OF US FLOATING IN THE COSMOS

WHAT CANNOT BE SEEN CANNOT BE BROKEN

A NEBULOUS HEART
ADRIFT IN THE VOID
SEARCHING FOR A PLACE TO REST
AMONGST THE STARS

WHAT CANNOT BE SEEN CANNOT BE FELT

WHAT IS FELT ONLY EXISTS
IN THE ETHER
AN INTANGIBLE PRESENCE
AN ALL-CONSUMING ATMOSPHERE

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Angela Acosta is a bilingual Latina writer and Ph.D. Candidate in Iberian Studies at The Ohio State University. She was recently nominated for Best of the Net and she is a 2022 Dream Foundry for Emerging Writers finalist. Her speculative writing has or will appear in *On Spec*, *Eye to the Telescope*, *Radon Journal*, *MacroMacroCosm*, and *365tomorrows*. Her speculative poetry collection "Summoning Space Travelers" is forthcoming with Hiraeth Books.

Ellen Harrold is an artist focused on the human connection to science and nature. She is completing a master's degree in Art, Science, and Visual thinking at Dundee University and a bachelor's degree in Fine Art from IADT in Dublin. A core aspect of her practice is using painting, drawing, text, and textiles to explore the connection between decay and renewal in the world around us. She is currently focused on how scientific understanding was and continues to be understood through the lens of art and storytelling. She has taken part in IADT student shows such as *New Translations in IMMA (2019)*, *On Show in IADT (2022)*, and *Propositions in IADT (2022)*. She has recently published both written and visual work in *New Feathers Anthology*, *Honeyguide Literary*, and *Bud and Branch*. She has also published her first book 'Aesthetics and Conventions of Medical Art.' with Boom Graduates.

Annika Gangopadhyay is an emerging writer from California. Her work appears or is forthcoming in *Nightingale & Sparrow*, *Hearth & Coffin Literary Journal*, *Élan*, and *Ligeia Magazine*, among many others. In her spare time, she enjoys music and art criticism.

Raymond Sewell is an I'nu poet, singer-songwriter, and English professor from Pabineau, First Nation, New-Brunswick. Raymond currently lives in Bedford, Nova Scotia and is inspired by the ocean. Writing has become a calling – a way of life for this burgeoning artist...

Mamta Wathare is a writer, poet and visual artist. She is inspired by the subtle dimensions of life. As a poet and storyteller, she engages in the natural flow of creativity where the process allows her to look beyond pain and struggle. Abstract art for her is the space where even poetry cannot reach. She enjoys observing the geometry that forms around and understands deeply how it flows. Her interest is in working with mixed media, charcoal and digital mediums. Mamta is a cross between several spiritual traditions and it reflects in her words and art.

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Sarah Aziz is a poet, translator and illustrator based in Kolkata, India. She is currently pursuing an undergraduate degree in English Literature at Loreto College, University of Calcutta. In 2021, her translation of Bangladeshi activist and author Pinaki Bhattacharya's "History of Bengal: from Ancient to British Rule" was published. Her poetry is forthcoming in The Good Life Review, lavender bones magazine, Foglifter Journal and Litbreak Magazine.

Sarah Freia (she/her) is a multilingual author and actor, who has lived and studied in Paris, London, and Toronto. She recently graduated with an International B.A. in French and Hispanic literature and a French B.Ed (Sorbonne Université / Glendon Campus), and has continued to hone her craft by enrolling at Gotham Writers Workshop and The Second City Conservatory. Sarah is rarely seen without a coffee, or her miniature dachshund, Alphonse.

Anayis N. Der Hakopian is a British Armenian Director, 2D/Mix Media Animator and Writer based in London (UK). When she isn't stuck behind a computer screen she spends her free time writing poetry in the park whilst being mobbed by dogs.

C.C. Rayne is a writer, musician, and actor based on the East Coast of the USA. An avid lover of all things weird, discontented, and out-of-place, C.C.'s work seeks to blend the magical with the mundane. You can find more of C.C.'s work in Soft Star Magazine.

Samantha Lee Curran is a 28-year-old poet, writer and editor of trash to treasure lit from (so-called) Australia. Her work has been published through Stereo Stories, Anaerkillik, Mamamia, SourCherry Mag and DED Poetry, among others. Samantha is attending an Artist's Residency in France in 2023. Twitter: @slcurran & Instagram: @s.l.curran

Alex Weilhammer, 28, is from Indianapolis. After graduating from DePauw University, he moved to New York to teach English and earn his MFA in Creative Writing from The New School. He has fiction published in Stat(o)rec, an interview published in Teachers & Writers Magazine, and news articles published in the Sarasota Herald-Tribune and The Indianapolis Star. He now lives in Indianapolis where he works as a middle school English teacher and part-time chess coach.'

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Aaliyah Anderson (she/her) is a junior studying literary arts at her high school in Petersburg, VA. She's obsessed with storytelling.

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Carlos E Morazán is a 27-year-old software engineer and writer who lives in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. His work is forthcoming in *Tropico Line* and *Sour Cherry Magazine*.

Hannah Vesey is a thrift-store clothed coffee addict with a passion for eavesdropping on strangers' conversations. Her fiction focusses on mythology, scientific discoveries and moral dilemmas related from neurodiverse/ autistic perspectives. Her work has been featured in *Scratch That Magazine*, *Urinal Mag* and in the QUT Literary Salon 2021 Collection. She was the winner of the 2022 Allen and Unwin Undergraduate Writing Prize.

Charlie Young is a writer with dreams of becoming a full time author. He holds a degree in English (Major) and Creative Writing (Minor) and attended The University of Leicester. He is currently seeking out publishers for his first novel and has recently received two offers. With the recent events of covid, he has proceeded to chase his dream of becoming a writer by committing full time to improving his writing ability. He believes stories are the fundamental aspect to life, whether that be escape, or to find something true about ourselves or the world.

A.J.M. Aldrian is 23 and a graduate of Hamline University with a BFA in Creative Writing. Born in the US, she has publications in both *Sharkreef*, *Ayaskala Magazine*, *Apocalypse Confidential Magazine*, and the *Cauldron Anthology*. She loves many genres including fiction; horror, sci-fi, literary, fantasy, and poetry, and non-fiction, historical, nature and memoir. She collects books and loves spending time with her partner and cat.

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Sophie Hao (she/her) is an 18-year-old artist from Maryland. She's been recognized by Scholastic, the Lowen Milken Center, and published in TeenInk for her work.

Theresa K. Jakobsen (they/them) is a German creative, who after spending the pandemic on the remote Faroe Islands re-entered the colorful streets of Berlin city. The special challenges of living in another country as a chronically ill person were a propulsion to their creativity. Theresa creates mixed media art, photography and writes multilingual pieces that circle around the theme of identity and relationships in a digital age. Their works recently got published in FatherFather, Indecent Mag & Selenite Press. They are forthcoming in En*gendered Litmag.

Sadee Bee (she/her) is ever-evolving, as living with mental illness is never a straight line, and she hopes to be a voice and advocate for those like her. She also uses art as an outlet, creating whatever comes to mind, and is heavily drawn to speculative and out-of-this-world elements. She is inspired by strange dreams, magic, and creepy vibes.

Nibera (1992) is an interdisciplinary visual artist transcending the borders of fine art photography, graphic art, and design. Based in Ljubljana, Slovenia, her images simultaneously reveal the beauty of our world and explore the surreal ideas of an alternate reality.

Grace Kaye is an aspiring novelist and occasional poet, who will always claim to be from Massachusetts. She enjoys reading and writing, but is often procrastinating both of those things. Her piece is an excerpt from her novel. She can be found on Instagram @gracekayewritesstuff.

Daniel Boucher (he/him) lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His favourite poets are W.H. Auden and Wendy Cope. He has published several pieces of light-verse in the local poetry journal, Open Heart Forgery.

Carlos E. Morazán is a 27-year-old software engineer and writer who lives in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. His work is forthcoming in Tropico Line and Sour Cherry Magazine.

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