



C a H a v A

LITERARY JOURNAL





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FROM THE EDITOR

An editor's letter is a message written for a variety of purposes, from friendly to formal. They can help the reader understand the content and creative direction of a certain issue, they can give the reader an idea of what they can find in the magazine, or they can explain the issue's theme and how it can resonate with them.

If you're thinking of writing an editor's letter yourself, make your intentions clear from the start. You can be fun and creative or straightforward, depending on your needs. For the main content of your letter, there are often three main parts: the introduction, main paragraph and conclusion.

Your letter's introduction can be a brief greeting, a few polite statements, or a background of why you're writing. The main paragraph is the bulk of your letter, containing the most important parts of your message. Finally, the conclusion sums up all your ideas. It can also include a closing statement or salutation. No matter what reason you have behind writing, it's best to be organised and plan the contents of your letter before publishing the magazine.



Simran Kaur

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

SO BE IT

DIPTI MISRA

TRANSLATED FROM URDU/HINDI

She is not mine, yet I love her still; so be it.
If to custom and tradition this is treason - then
So be it.

I called the truth as the truth; when I said it, I said it
If in the eyes of society this is idiocy - then
So be it.

If the moth caught ablaze, is the candle to blame? (1)
To burn all night and incinerate was written as its fate - then
So be it.

Despite claiming friendship, this angst (for her) is alike an enemy
Yet, if it is my disposition to die for her still - then
So be it

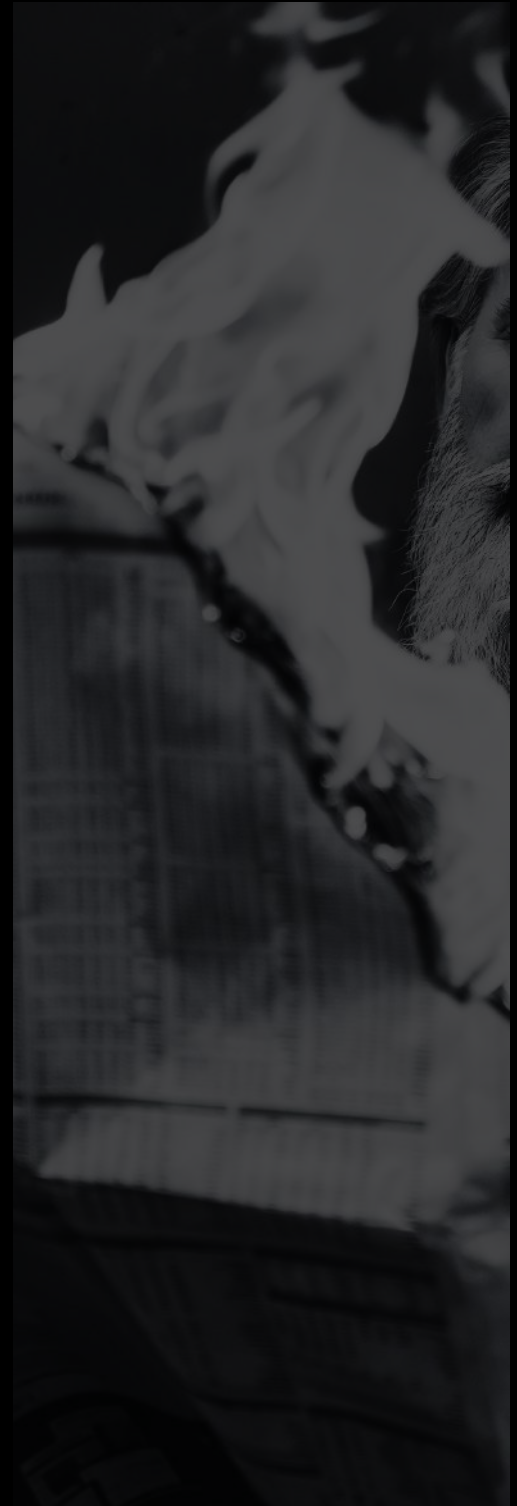
Did I ever proclaim her mine? Said I would become hers?
That she not become a stranger, just that is my one desire still - then
So be it.

Are separated, and will remain ions apart, the earth and the sky
Despite these distances, if there is affinity between the two still- then
So be it

She is not mine, yet I love her still; so be it.
If to custom and tradition this is treason - then
So be it.

(1) A moth's attraction towards a candle/flame and the danger it poses, is a recurring metaphor in Urdu, Hindi and Persian poetry. All the great poets of those traditions have used this metaphor and the trend continues to present day in Bollywood songs. [Link](#)

Dipti Misra is an Indian poet, ghazal writer, and actress. She has published acclaimed poetry collections, written songs and acted in serials and films. Her work has earned recognition across South Asian circles across the globe.





RESIGNATION TO FOREVER

GWENNA BELLE

I choke on silence shaped like him
A phantom fluttering in the air
Hovering in spaces I dare not swim
And I'm screaming it's not fair

To hold back is violence
A whispering blade that tells me
You'll only become a nuisance
But it's devastating to set him free

Each step I take away feels like a betrayal
Yet to remain too close would be worse
Falling into a detrimental arrayal
Subjecting myself to an endless curse

I feel him pull, like the tide does the shore
Not in words, but in an aching absence
Each breath I take hurts me to my core
Like a crime sending me away from the balance

I hold my longing in a clenched fist
With a fire that burns to touch
Tasting of ash that makes my stomach twist
The bitter sacrifice of caring too much

Will this distance fade into a forever
With endless blow after blow
My hands tremble at the endeavor
Still, I know I must let him go

Gwenna Belle is a self-proclaimed author who writes with one goal: to change at least one person's life. Born in Minnesota, she has travelled across the world, absorbing different cultures and sights. With her first novel, Lainhide, in the works, she includes firsthand experiences in her writing.

Instagram: [@itsgwenna](#)

Tiktok: [@itsgwenna](#)



RESUMÉ

MARK THOMAS

Offensive linemen, bass anglers
and serial killers.

Most of their time is spent
not doing the activities
that define them.

They are what they are not.

And I am what I am not
but, I hope,
for completely different reasons.

*Mark Thomas is an artist and writer living in St. Catharines,
Canada. Check out his work at flamingdogshit.com*



MOTHER

AVA CHARLES

Nine months of becoming a home
for someone she had never met.

Needles four times a day,
insulin marking her skin
like silent proof
of what she carried.

Four children.
Four epidurals.
Four times her body broke open
to bring love into the world.

A back that aches every day,
stretch marks that map her sacrifice
lines that whispered,
one day, this child will love you enough
to make it all worth it.

So she gave again.
Everything.
Her body,
her sleep,
her identity.

Believing this love
would finally fill the emptiness
she carried for so long.

But even here
it felt the same.

Still needed.
Still giving.
Still somehow... not enough.

Ava Charles lives in Marseille writing evocative poems exploring longing, relationships, and the quiet gravity of ordinary rooms

A MOTHER'S COFFEE

DABNEY BALDRIDGE

A
mother
can glean
caffeine
from steam
wafting from a
fresh-made cup
undrunk, waiting
on the countertop
wishing to be
remembered.

Needs unnumbered, tasks half done, she sets
the mug of warm liquid down, like Tantalus wondering
if it will ever touch her lips. So it sits, growing cold, until a moment
of quiet when onto turn-table glass it goes with a sigh
and a prayer. Working hands rest at last, clasping
the curve of ceramic, hot to the touch. After a little
while, the mug half emptied, is forgotten again cream
threatening to curdle after hours in the open air.
It seems a Sisyphean task, to finish the cup after
the sun has long since risen and past its zenith, but
a mother forges on, forever reheating the ambrosial brew
until she drags the last wakeful drop from the dregs,
thankful that though her strength is drained, she
is a well, not a cup, fed forever by the ground.

Dabney Baldrige is a busy mother of four living in Maryland who writes in the middle of life's messiness to create beauty out of chaos. Her poetry is published in or forthcoming in Bad Clown Books, Solid Food Press, Everyday Epiklesis, Calla Press, and The Way Back to Ourselves, among others. You can find more of her work on Substack, [@dabneywrites](#).

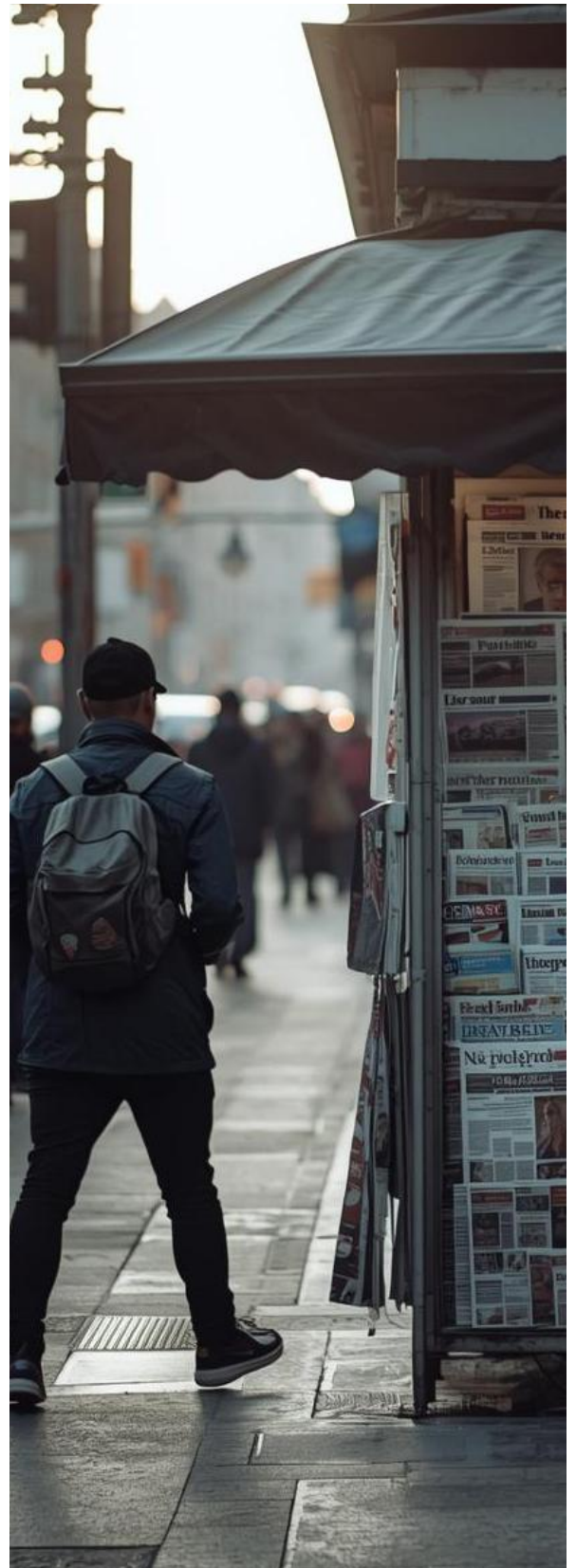
JEALOUS

JEREMY GOTTFRIED

Jealous, because her curls bounce
in ringlets, coils, sculptures.
How, I wonder?
chemicals, a hairdresser,
or incarnated wealth,
or maybe an oral history spoken in mother daughter tongue.
Hands and care and mirrors,
her mother before her and her mother's mother,
a sacrament of wet hair, combs, keratin physics, ritual,
passed down like a folktale.

My hair is all effort, my curls crazed,
my curls crazed,
crown frizz,
mom's hair even frizzier than mine.
I am self-taught, street-hair.
I've been told I should give up hot water,
be kinder to my scalp.
That's like giving up dairy to be kinder to your gut.
No more ice cream? Imagine.
Maybe I just need to watch a tiktok.

Jeremy Gottfried is a Brooklyn-based poet and musician who releases original music under the name Jeremy Aaron. An Oberlin College alumnus, his poetry has appeared on the Rattlecast, and he currently serves as Board President of Voices in the Heights, a NYC-based music nonprofit. [Link](#)



I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAY, "I'M HAPPY."

ANDREW JONES

Dear Chandler,

I am writing you a letter because I love to write, and you love to read. You laugh at *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* every night until I have to cover my ears to think about my blog.

Please take the trash out when the bag is full.

I love you.

Love, Carol

Dear Chandler,

It's good I love you so much, because you didn't take the trash out last night, even though I asked you to. There were maggots in the trashcan when I got home from work. I took the trash out.

I can't concentrate on my work if I'm worrying about maggots at home. It makes my skin crawl.

The trash will probably be full again tomorrow. Please take it out if it is.

Love, Carol

Dear Chandler,

I don't know what you mean when you say, "I'm happy." I'm happy, too. I don't know why you think I'm not. I just want you to take the trash out. And I don't want to fight.

Love, Carol

Dear Chandler,

I don't think you're stupid. Plenty of people in our advocacy group didn't go to college like I did. Stu didn't go to college, but he started a company for flavored popcorn. Linda didn't go to college, but she's a model and an actress. And I think you could have gotten into college through an inclusion program like I did.

You left my letters on your nightstand, so I read them again. I don't understand how we got from taking out the trash to thinking you're stupid.

Love, Carol

Dear Chandler,

I thought about what you said last night when we fought.

I know mopping the hospital floor and keeping the soap dispensers full and changing the toilet paper rolls and cleaning the toilets makes you tired. I know you want to relax when you get home. But keeping the printers and copiers full of paper and loading and unloading the office dishwasher and recording attendance makes me tired, too, but I still cook dinner and do the laundry.

We promised each other we would live without help when we got married last month. I know we can. But I need you to take the trash out, or we can't.

Love, Carol

Dear Chandler,

I'm sorry I keep writing. You told me you hate it. You like to read funny things. That's why I put this in the next Diary of a Wimpy Kid you haven't read. I bought it for you.

I have to write, Chandler. When we talk, all the words spin around like toilet paper when you flush. I can't grab them, I can't understand them, and then they're gone and I can't get them back. When the words are on paper, they don't go anywhere, and I can understand them.

Could you write back?

Love, Carol

Dear Chandler,

You're right.

A friend at work told me I should say that. It would help.

But I don't like saying things that aren't true, so I thought about what you're right about. I made a list.

1.I went to college. I audited some classes with regular students and passed.

2.I write a blog to advocate for other people with Down syndrome.

3.It was my idea to live together without help.

4.My job pays more, and my education helped. I work with Excel, and I do a good job of it.

Most of all, and I didn't put this one in the list because it's more important, I want you to do better for yourself. I want you to work with Excel, too. I know you can do it. But all you do is sit on the couch!

Love, Carol

Dear Chandler,

I don't want you to sleep in the living room anymore. I miss you.

Love, Carol

Dear Chandler,

I left you alone, like you wanted, for three days. Can we talk now?

Do you remember when we fought and you said, "You want me to be someone else"? Those words got stuck in my head, like when the toilet gets clogged. I don't want you to be someone else. You're my Chandler, and I love you. I married you because I think you're great.

But you reminded me of something that happened to me. When I was looking for a job, Sandra, my career counselor, remember? said there was another job that paid a little more and she knew the people there, and they would take me and be nice to me, but it was farther away. I would have to switch buses instead of taking just one bus like now. I told her I didn't want that job because switching buses scares me. I know what to do if one bus is late, or if it takes a detour, but I might get lost if something happens to both buses. She told me it wasn't a problem, and we could work out a plan. I said no. She said I could always call a taxi. I said no again. She told me the money would help. I said no louder. She told me to calm down, because I was getting upset over nothing. But it wasn't nothing! She wanted me to do something I was scared to do. I didn't want to. I do lots of scary things, but not switching buses.

I think I was being like Sandra. I'm still angry at her, but I don't want you to be angry at me. I'll stop trying to make you do things that scare you.

Love, Carol

Dear Chandler,

I love you too.

Love, Carol

P.S. Taking the trash out isn't scary.

WHEN THE HOUSE BEGAN TO BLOOM

HRIDOY KUNDU

On the third Thursday in March, the wallpaper in Eleanor Vale's dining room split open and began to grow leaves.

At first she thought it was a trick of the light. But then the seam in the wall puckered outward. A pale stem, tender as a vein, pushed through the plaster with a dry little crack.

Eleanor set down her teacup.

The stem unfurled a leaf the color of new apples.

She stared at it from the doorway, one hand still resting on the chipped blue frame, and felt not fear exactly but offense, as if the house had committed a breach of manners. Nothing living had entered these walls in years unless it could be boiled, dusted, or cut back. Her husband had liked order. Even now, eleven months after his funeral, the rooms held his preferences the way old wood holds smoke.

The leaf trembled slightly in the still air.

"No," Eleanor said.

The plant continued its small green work.

She crossed the room at once, fetched the kitchen shears, and clipped the stem flush with the wall. Sap beaded at the cut. She dropped the piece into the bin, wiped the blades, and stood watching the wound in the wallpaper.

There, she thought. Settled.

By evening, three more shoots had emerged.

One from beneath the sideboard. One through the crack where the ceiling medallion met plaster. One, offensively vigorous, directly through the seat of the mahogany dining chair no one had sat in since the condolence casseroles stopped coming.

Eleanor slept badly. The house made strange settling sounds in the dark, soft ticks and sighs like a throat clearing before speech.

In the morning the dining room smelled faintly of damp soil.

She telephoned the plumber first, then, when he laughed and said roots were outside his remit, a handyman, then a pest control company, though she could not say precisely what pest she meant.

"Well," the pest company employee said at last, "that's new."

"I don't pay people to narrate the obvious."

No broken pipe. No nest. No subsidence. No explanation that belonged to the normal world.

"It's as if," he said, scratching the back of his neck, "the house is growing it."

"Houses do not grow things."

He looked around. A tendril had wrapped itself lightly around the brass candlestick on the mantel, as if to disagree.

The employee recommended mold treatment, dehumidifiers, perhaps a priest if Eleanor was open-minded. She was not. She wrote him a check with sharp pen strokes and saw him out.

After he left, she took a hammer to the roots.

For two hours she moved room to room in old gardening gloves and sensible shoes, breaking stems, pulling up runners, prying up floorboards where green shoots forced through the seams. She was sixty-eight and not, by temperament, the sort of woman who smashed things, but rage gave her a rough, efficient strength. Pieces of plaster fell like brittle snow. Potting-earth smell thickened in the air. By dusk the hallway looked as if a riot had passed through it.

Only then did she notice the first flower.

It had opened inside the pocket watch on the mantel. The watch had belonged to her son, Thomas. Silver, dented near the hinge. Stopped at 2:17 for twenty-six years.

Eleanor went very still.

The flower was tiny and white, with a yellow throat. It rose from the face of the watch as though time itself had put out a stem. Its roots, impossibly fine, threaded through the cracked glass.

For a moment she was not in her sitting room but back in the hospital corridor with its odor of bleach and coffee, watching a doctor approach with the careful face of a man carrying bad news in both hands. Thomas had been seventeen. There had been rain that night too. Rain hammering the windows. Rain sliding down the parking lot lights in sheets. His watch, retrieved from a plastic bag of belongings, had stopped at the instant the car folded around the oak tree.

Eleanor had never repaired it. It was not usefulness she had wanted from the thing. It was witness.

Now a white flower trembled in its center, alive and indecently delicate.

She reached out, then snatched her hand back as if the petals might burn.

“No,” she said again, but there was less authority in it now.

That night she dreamed of the house breathing.

Not metaphorically. Breathing.

The walls expanded and contracted with a slow rhythm. Floorboards rose beneath her bare feet like ribs. From the ceiling hung roots as fine as hair, swaying. Thomas walked ahead of her down the corridor, not as the broken boy from the morgue but as a child in mud-splashed wellingtons, looking over his shoulder with impatience.

Come on, he said.

When she woke, the pillow was wet.

By the end of the week, the growth had spread to every room.

Moss stitched the edges of the staircase. Ferns uncurled from the bathroom grout. Thick vines crowded the library shelves, weaving around Martin's histories and atlases, tugging books half-free as if searching for light or language. The greenhouse smell had deepened into something wilder, layered with crushed leaf, bark, rain, and the faint sweetness of unseen blossoms.

Outside, however, the garden remained unchanged. The phenomenon was wholly interior, as if the house were digesting itself and replacing timber, plaster, and dust with a different anatomy.

Neighbors noticed, of course.

Her neighbor from next door knocked on Saturday under the pretense of returning a casserole dish from the funeral, though eleven months had elapsed and the dish had likely been hers to begin with. Eleanor opened the door just wide enough to prevent intrusion.

“You haven’t been to church,” her Neighbour said, peering past her shoulder.

“I have not burst into flames. Make of that what you will.”

The Neighbour, who possessed the stubborn charity of the devout, handed over a loaf cake anyway. Before Eleanor could close the door, a vine drifted into view behind her, looped lazily across the hall mirror, and the Neighbour gasped.

“Saints preserve us.”

“Saints were free to intervene at any earlier point in my life,” Eleanor said. “Their delay has been notable.” By evening half the street knew. By Tuesday someone had posted blurry photographs online under the heading WITCH HOUSE? Eleanor discovered this only because the grocer’s apprentice nearly dropped her apples and asked whether it was true the plants whispered.

“They do not whisper,” she snapped.

They did, though. Sometimes at night, when the wind was nowhere outside, the leaves inside made a hushed rubbing sound like skirts passing in a corridor. Sometimes Eleanor woke certain that someone had just spoken her name from the landing. She considered leaving.

She could sell the place, perhaps. Move into one of those brisk little flats in town where nothing old could lurk. There were women she knew who had done this after widowhood, trading staircases and attics for elevators and beige. They spoke of liberation with expressions so strained they resembled indigestion.

Eleanor pictured herself there. A kettle. A narrow bed. Walls no one had loved badly enough to haunt. The image felt less like freedom than erasure.

Instead she fetched Martin’s old ledger from the study and began to keep a record.

March 21: first stem observed in dining room wall.

March 24: flowering in Thomas’s watch.

March 26: significant spread to upper landing. Structural damage worsening. Smell not unpleasant.

The ledger gave shape to things. A lady might drown in mystery, but she could at least itemize the water. As she wrote, memories began to intrude with the force of weeds through cracks.

Not only Thomas. Martin, too, though she had tried since his death to hold him in a neat frame: respectable solicitor, good provider, difficult man. But grief, once loosened, has poor table manners. It drags in all the uninvited details.

Martin at twenty-two, blue-suited and bright-eyed at the end of the aisle, looking as though astonishment and luck were the same thing.

Martin at thirty, dazzling and tender, reading poems in bed.

Martin at forty, silver beginning at the temples, still a charmer, still deft enough to mend a hinge, carry coal, coax the boiler through winter.

Martin at forty-eight, insisting Thomas take the car in the rain because “a boy must learn.”

Martin afterward, silent for months except when angry.

Martin grew harder with age, as if grief had calcified inside him and sharpened every edge.

Martin standing in the doorway of Thomas's room one winter evening, saying, "We cannot preserve a mausoleum forever, Eleanor," and Eleanor saying, with a violence that surprised them both, "Watch me."

So they had. For twenty-six years the room remained nearly untouched.

Now, on the twenty-seventh of March, Eleanor climbed the stairs and opened Thomas's door.

The vines had found it already.

They spilled across the threshold in a slow green tide. Leaves climbed the bedposts. Moss furred the windowsill. The model airplanes hanging from the ceiling tilted in a forested gloom. Beneath it all lingered the old impossible smell of that room: dust, paper, the ghost of teenage soap, the airlessness of time sealed shut.

At the desk, a root had pushed open the top drawer. Inside lay the things she had left undisturbed for decades: ticket stubs, a fountain pen, two smooth stones, a folded note. Eleanor recognized her own handwriting on the outside.

For later, it said.

She sat down on the bed and opened it.

The letter was one she had written to Thomas three months after his death and never buried, burned, or mailed into whatever impossible postbox mothers imagine the dead might have. In it she apologized for the last argument, the ordinary stupid one about wet towels and university applications and his habit of driving too fast even when he laughed and promised not to. She told him the house was too quiet. She told him his father had been going strange with grief. She told him she was afraid that memory was a room with no windows and she had locked herself inside.

At the bottom, in a line shakier than the rest, she had written: I do not know how to continue being your mother when you are nowhere I can reach.

Eleanor lowered the paper.

Around her, leaves moved softly against one another. It came to her then, not as logic but as recognition, that the house was not infected, not cursed, not even haunted in the theatrical sense. It was answering something. Not a wish, exactly. An accumulation. A pressure. Twenty-six years of sealed doors, unsaid things, grief compacted into plaster and floor joists and wallpaper glue until the structure itself could no longer bear remaining unchanged.

People spoke often of bottling emotion, of storing it away. They never admitted the bottle must be kept somewhere.

The house, apparently, had been keeping it.

Eleanor laughed once, a short broken sound.

"Well," she said to the room, "that is inconvenient."

The first true catastrophe occurred two days later. She was in the kitchen, trimming away a snarl of vine from the stove, a gunshot cracked through the hall. The front parlor wall split from dado rail to ceiling. Plaster exploded outward. Dust filled the air. Eleanor staggered back coughing as a trunk, thick as her thigh and barked like a small tree, forced itself through the wall and kept growing.

Books toppled. A lamp shattered. Another crack answered from upstairs. Then another. The house groaned all around her with the low sound of foundations renegotiating themselves.

She should have run.

Eleanor did take three steps toward the front door. Then she looked back.

The trunk in the parlor had burst directly through the cabinet where Martin kept the good crystal, the wedding silver, the deeds, the thick envelope of policies and guarantees and proofs. All the brittle apparatus of a life carefully managed. Around the wreckage the new bark gleamed wet and dark.

Another shudder passed through the floor.

Something in Eleanor, some final tether to tidiness, snapped.

“No,” she said, but this time not to the growth.

To the years. To the silences. To the deathly museum the house had become under her stewardship.

She strode back into the parlor while plaster still drifted from the ceiling and seized the carved walnut cabinet with both hands. It was too heavy to lift, so she tipped it. Crystal screamed against crystal. Glass burst. Silver spilled across the rug. She pushed again until the cabinet crashed sideways and broke open like a ribcage.

There. Let it go.

She crossed to the mantel and swept down the framed wedding photograph: herself at twenty-two in satin and nerves, Martin handsome and already slightly remote. The glass shattered. She ripped the picture free, stared one strange second into those preserved faces, then fed the photograph to the split in the wall where roots writhed through lath and plaster.

More, something inside her demanded.

Upstairs she went, breathless and furious, into cupboards and drawers and locked boxes. She flung open Thomas’s room and at last stripped the bed. She carried armfuls of old clothes to the landing and dropped them into the clutch of vines. She broke the sealed cartons of Martin’s papers and let the pages scatter. Pension documents. Insurance forms. Receipts from years in which Thomas had still been alive. Letters Eleanor herself had sent and never seen again. The house took them all.

When finally she stopped, she stood in the center of the hall among leaf-shadow and debris, hair fallen loose, chest heaving.

The destruction was complete enough to be honest.

So was the relief.

Afterward came rain.

It drummed on the roof all night while inside the growth advanced with almost audible pleasure. By dawn the broken parlor had become a kind of indoor grove. Light filtered through fresh leaves where the wall had been. Moss covered the overturned cabinet. White flowers starred the roots. Water from a cracked pipe fed a thin runnel across the floorboards, and along it sprouted a procession of tiny ferns.

Eleanor made coffee on the one burner still functional and drank it standing barefoot on damp tile.

She expected panic, shame, perhaps the delayed arrival of sanity. Instead she felt stripped and oddly light, as if the house had broken open a part of her chest and improved the ventilation.

Her Neighbour arrived that afternoon with her nephew, who repaired roofs and owned, more valuably, a practical imagination.

He stopped in the front hall and removed his cap.

"Madre de Dios," he said softly.

"It's ugly in places," Eleanor admitted.

He looked around, eyes wide not with horror but wonder. "It's beautiful in places too."

No one had said that yet.

Under her direction, they did not call demolition crews. They called a structural engineer from the next town, a woman with steel-gray braids and the calm of someone who had seen both fire and flood. She walked through the house for two hours, tapping beams, examining cracks, ducking beneath hanging vines. At last she stood in the parlor grove and said, "This is absurd, but not impossible."

"Helpful," Eleanor said.

"The new growth is acting as support in some places. Reinforcement, almost."

"Houses cannot change load paths."

The engineer gave her a sidelong look. "And yet."

They shored up what needed shoring. They opened sections of roof to light. They removed truly dangerous debris and left the rest. Over the next month Eleanor's home became a rumor, then an article in the regional paper, then a pilgrimage site for the tasteful and the foolish.

Her Neighbour began bringing cuttings and soup.

Her nephew fixed windows in exchange for strong tea and permission to sit in the parlor grove with his sketchbook.

Children from the street asked if they might see the indoor tree, and Eleanor, who had once disliked sticky fingers and noise, found herself setting rules about shoes and no pulling leaves and yes, one biscuit each if you ask nicely.

Something in her life, long clenched, began to open. Not into sweetness. She remained sharp-tongued, particular, often difficult. But difficulty with air in it is different from difficulty sealed shut. The house had taught her that. Rot comes from no circulation.

By June the transformation was complete enough to name.

The dining room no longer existed as such. In its place stood a high green chamber roofed with branches that had thrust through rafters and found sun. The staircase was bordered by living walls of ivy and jasmine. Thomas's room became the brightest room in the house, full of pale blossoms that opened only at dusk and smelled faintly of rain on stone. The parlor tree thickened, lifted the cracked ceiling, and sent roots down through the old Persian rug into the earth beneath the house, where, at last, inside and outside met.

Eleanor moved her chair there.

Visitors asked whether she was not sad to have lost so much.

"Yes," she said.

Because she had. The old rooms were gone. The old shapes. Many objects. The pretense that she had preserved the past by refusing to touch it. Grief had not vanished, only changed species. It no longer sat on her chest like a stone. It grew around her like weather.

In late summer, on a heat-heavy evening, she took Thomas's watch from the mantel, where it now rested in a nest of moss. Another flower had bloomed in its place. She opened the watch and found, beneath the hands frozen forever at 2:17, a network of roots fine as lace.

“Stubborn creature,” she murmured, though whether she meant the plant, the boy, or herself she could not have said.

For the first time in twenty-six years, she carried the watch outside.

The garden was a wreck in the old sense, neglected and uneven, but not dead. Seeds blown from the house had taken in the borders. Green things unfamiliar to Eleanor’s former schemes rose between the stones. The birdbath brimmed clean after rain. At the back fence the hydrangeas, once written off, had sent up fierce new shoots from old wood.

She stood there in the dusk, hearing the house behind her breathe through open windows.

All transformations, she thought, are ugly in the middle.

People preferred the before and after because those images sat politely side by side. They skipped the sealed dark where the body dissolves. They skipped the rot, the fact that to become something else, the old self must in some real way be ruined.

No wonder everyone feared change. They mistook it for failure while it was happening.

Eleanor pressed the cold case of the watch to her palm.

“I kept him wrong,” she said aloud.

She had kept Thomas as absence, as stoppage, as the last terrible night. She had built a shrine to interruption. Love, thinking itself faithful, had hardened into preservation fluid.

“I know better now,” she said.

The next morning she did a thing that would once have seemed betrayal.

She emptied Thomas’s room.

Not of memory. Of relics.

She opened drawers. She sorted papers. She laughed at terrible adolescent poems. She cried over a science prize certificate and a ticket stub from a concert she had forgotten driving him to. She made piles: keep, give away, burn, release. She carried boxes to the charity shop. Her neighbour took clothes for her grandson. Eleanor burned old worksheets in a metal drum at the bottom of the garden and watched the ash rise like dark moths.

By evening the room was nearly bare except for the flowering vines, the desk, the bedframe, and the window.

Light poured in unhindered.

That night she slept there.

In the middle hours, half dreaming, she felt a breeze pass over her face and opened her eyes to moonlight spread across leaves. The room no longer smelled of stopped time. It smelled alive. Somewhere in the house wood creaked, roots shifted, blossoms opened in darkness.

She was not healed. She distrusted the word. It implied a clean closure, skin knitting over with no scar. This was not that. The dead remained dead. Martin remained complicated. Thomas remained unreachable except through memory.

But she was no longer entombed with them.

In the morning, she went downstairs and found a fresh shoot emerging through the kitchen table. She laughed, genuinely this time, and fetched a larger pot.

Years later, when journalists or curious graduate students asked Eleanor Vale when precisely the miracle had happened, she never gave the answer they wanted. They wanted the first leaf, the bursting wall, the astonishing tree in the parlor.

She would shake her head.

The real change, she told them, was not when the house began to grow. Houses, like people, are always changing. Most of the time we call it decay because we cannot yet see the shape of what is replacing us.

The real change came when she stopped trying to restore what had already ended.

Only then did the thing inside the walls become something other than ruin.

Only then did destruction learn how to bloom.





Letters from readers show how much they feel a connection with your publication. Whether they're glowing reviews, helpful feedback or simple shoutouts, these readers taking the time to write shows how much they care. Show your appreciation by featuring their letters in your next issue. They're sure to feel valued once they read it.

BEENA CHOPRA, MUMBAI

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DEV GUPTA, NEW DELHI

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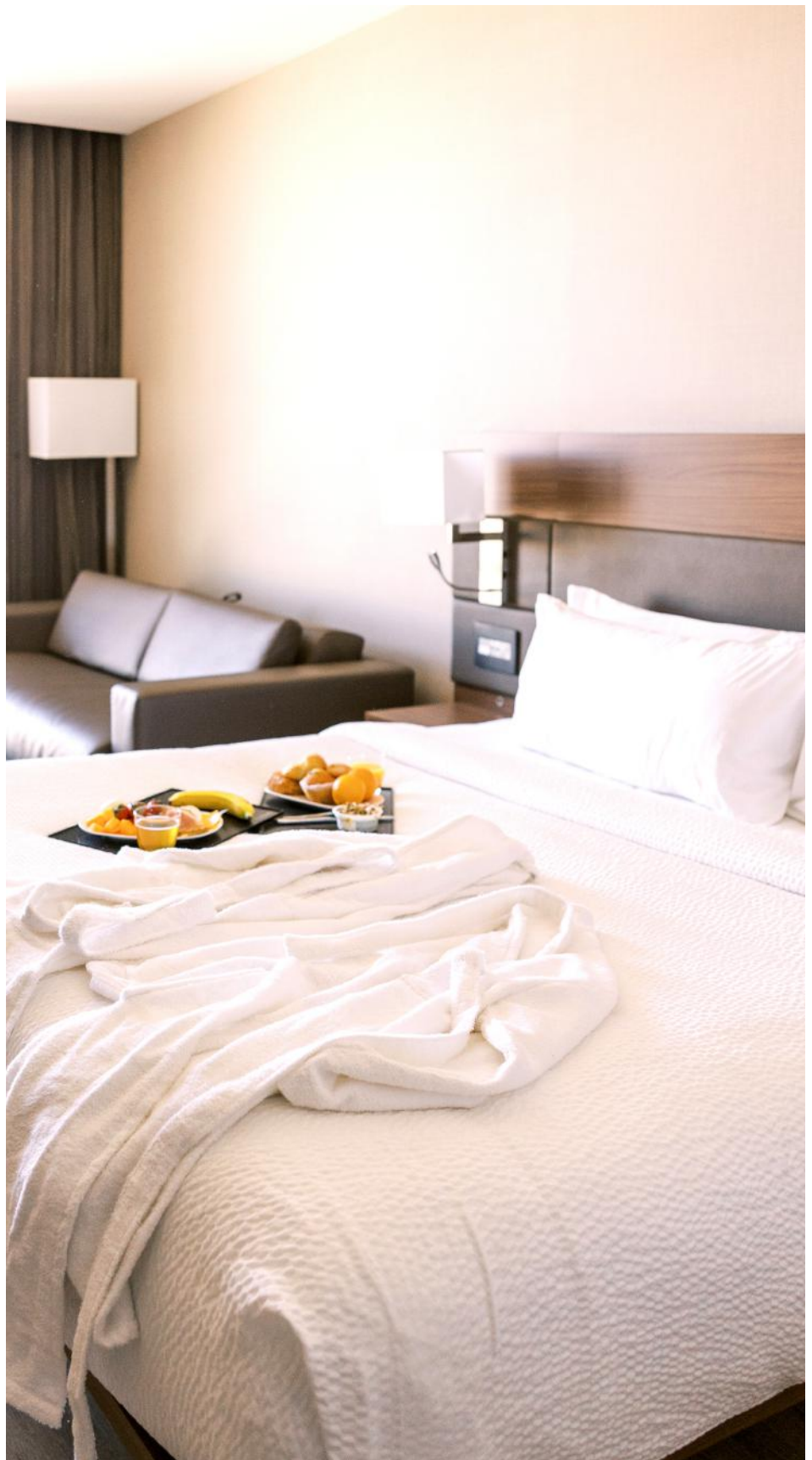
A magazine is a periodical publication, which can either be printed or published electronically. It is issued regularly, usually every week or every month, and it contains a variety of content. This can include articles, stories, photographs and advertisements.

To create your own, choose a topic that interests you. It can be anything from fashion and beauty to travel and the news. Once you have your overall theme, you can start brainstorming the content. Just starting? Design a memorable masthead with an equally memorable name. This goes on the cover and sets up the branding for your entire magazine. What style are you going for? Is it playful? Classic? Bold? A good masthead captures the essence of your magazine, so it needs to be flexible, meaningful and consistent enough for future issues.

A PULL QUOTE IS AN IMPACTFUL QUOTE TAKEN FROM THE ARTICLE. YOU CAN PLACE THE QUOTE YOU WANT TO HIGHLIGHT HERE.

After writing all your articles and adding them to your layout, list down all the titles to set up your table of contents. You can add a brief description for each article or keep it simple and paste the feature titles on the page. Don't forget your page numbers too!

Finally, design your back page. Most magazines feature a full-page advertisement, which you're also welcome to do. Why not partner with a local business and feature their products? Not your style? Simply include some contact information and tell your audience how to reach you. Add your social media handles, email, or even any publication information you think they'd be interested in. You can even just extend your cover photo to keep things clean and simple. A magazine can be a great way to reach your audience and communicate your message to the world. With great, curated content, yours can be a bestseller in no time.



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FLIGHT DECK: SOLANA AIRLINES



A short intro or kicker of the article will go here. This part acts as a bridge between the headline and the article itself.

BY JASPREET SINGH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ISHAAN MINHAS

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Next, think of a compelling feature for your cover story. This will be what draws your audience in.

Make sure that you have accompanying visual content that immediately catches the eye. Include photos, illustrations and other graphics to match. Appeal to your audience, choose the right fonts and images, and you'll have a magazine that people will remember for years to come.

When you've decided on your cover story, come up with a list of topics for your feature articles. This can range from interviews, product reviews, human interest pieces and even lists. Think about what your audience would be interested in and get writing! Again, choose engaging photos and graphics to accompany your words, as these also help catch your audience's eye.

After writing all your articles and adding them to your layout, list down all the titles to set up your table of contents. You can add a brief description for each article or keep it simple and paste the feature titles on the page. Don't forget your page numbers too!



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NEW STANDARD: SALT LAKE AIRPORT

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BY SIMRAN KAUR
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAYA SOOD



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A NIGHT IN NORTH FORTBERRY

BY PREETI SHARMA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAYA SOOD



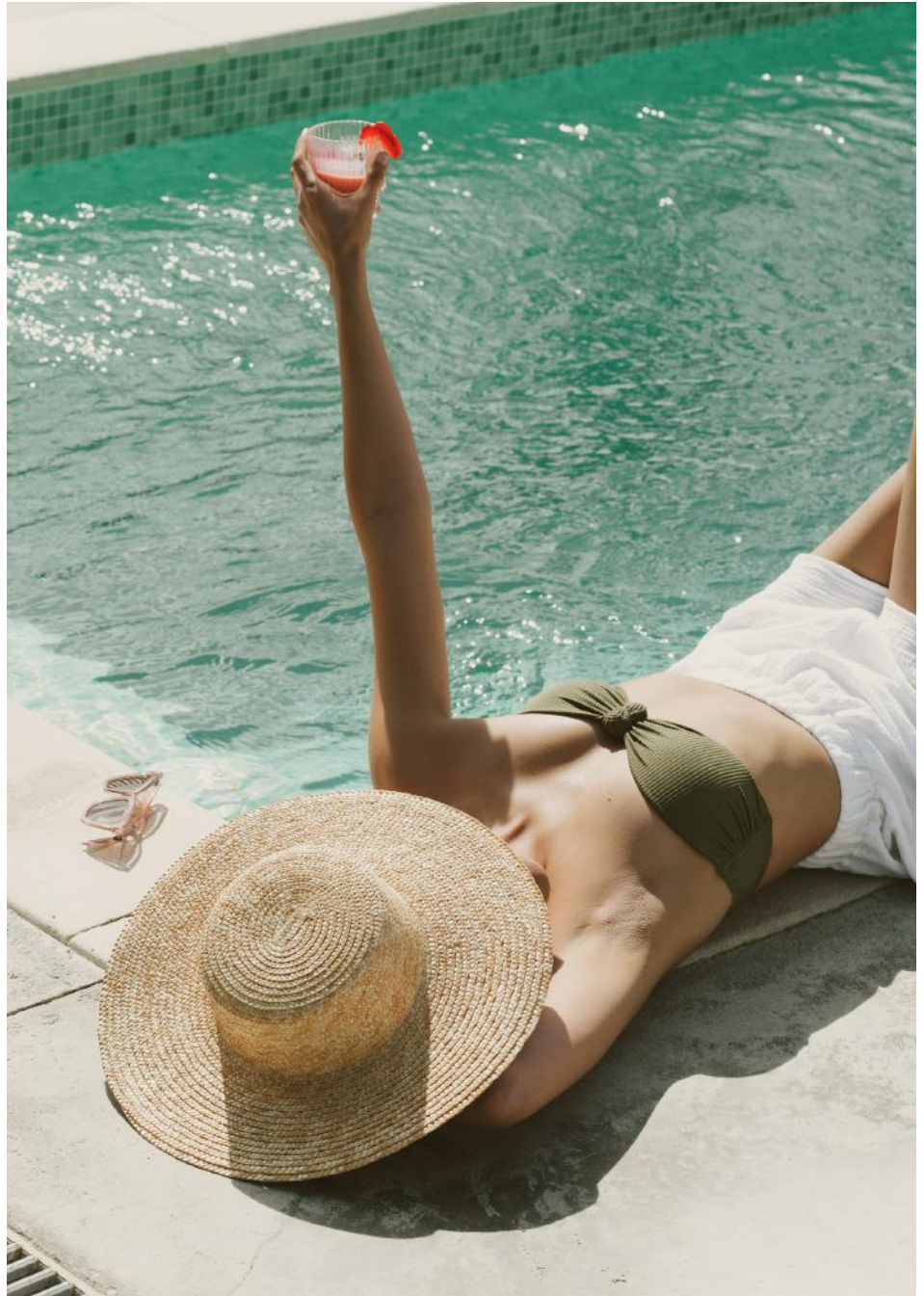
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BY PREETI SHARMA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAYA SOOD



TRAVEL DIARIES: CRYSTALSHORE

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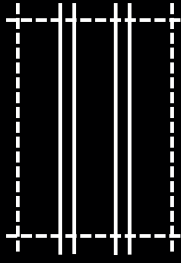
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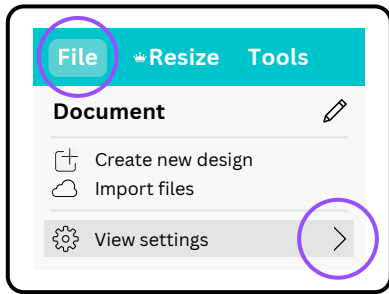




HOW TO USE: Canva Guides

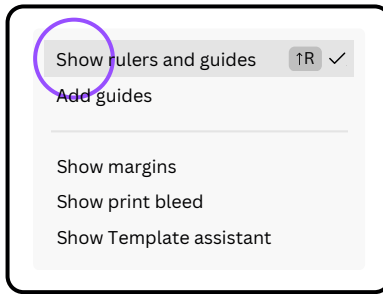
When working with **text-heavy layouts**, we can use **guides** to organise our headlines and body copy, and maintain a clean and balanced layout.

01



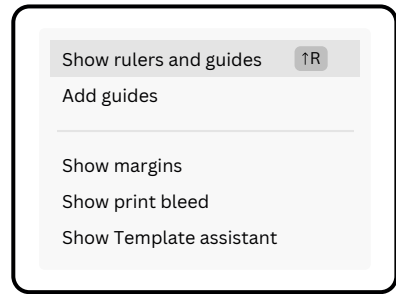
Select **File** on the top toolbar and hover over **View Settings**

02



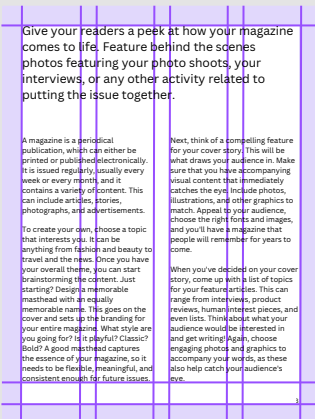
Select **Show rulers and guides** or use the keyboard shortcut **Shift + R**. The guides in the template will now be visible to you.

03



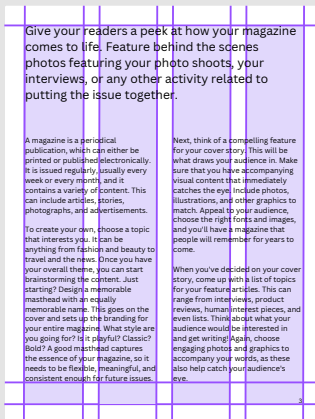
If you want to close the guides, select **Show rulers and guides** again or use the keyboard shortcut **Shift + R**

UNDERSTANDING THE GUIDES:



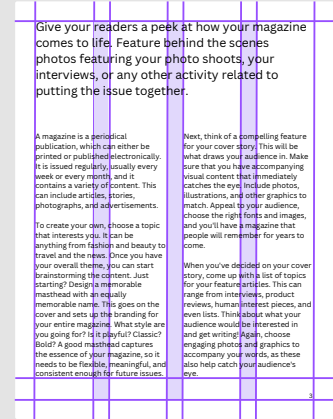
MARGINS

Margins define the boundaries of your page. Content placed outside the margins can be cut off in the printing process so it's best to **keep all important information within the margins**.



COLUMNS

Columns are vertical fields which elements and text are aligned to, to create a neat and organized appearance. You may opt not to use the grid all the time for a more flexible layout.



GAP

A gap is a vertical space used to separate columns of text or elements on the page, keeping your layout organized and readable.

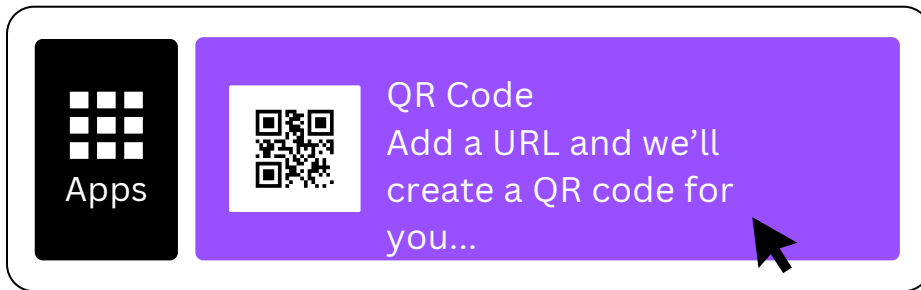
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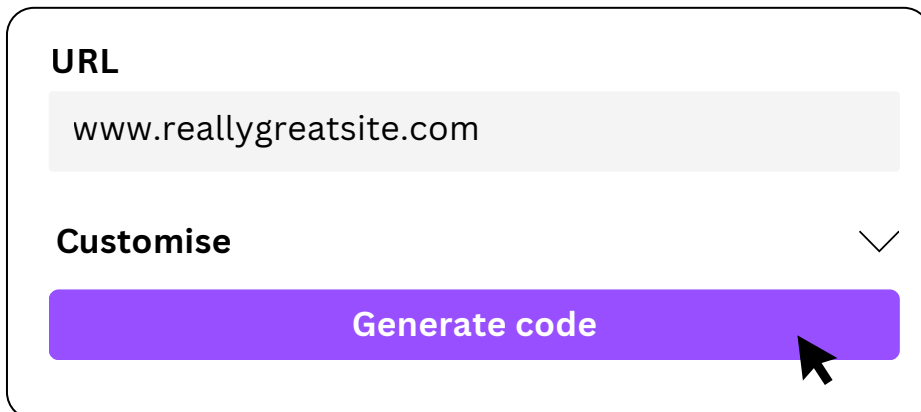
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Generate QR Codes

01 Click the **Apps** option on the left-side object panel. Search and select **QR Code**.



02 Paste your **website URL**. **Customise**. Click **Generate code**.



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