

THE UNDERLAND REVIEW



~~THIS ZINE IS A LIE~~



System Log: UDR_Issue/2

// Catalogued but not Detained

Fragment 01_// From the Cartographers of Bullshits and Such_//___
Fragment 02_// Content Warning_//___
Fragment 03_// It All Came Tumbling Down_Megan Chadsey_//___
Fragment 04_// Magnetic_DJ. Tyrer_//...
Fragment 05_// Scam or Sad?_DJ_Tyrer_//###
Fragment 06_// Idiots_Craig_Lowe_//
Fragment 06.5_// I wake with water in my chest_//Sarah_Fuller
Fragment 07_// caballo_Jorge_Etcheverry_//___
Fragment 08_// aletargado_Jorge_Etcheverry_//___
Fragment 09_// ancestros _Jorge_Etcheverry_/////
Fragment 10_// Expunged_// Alicia_Lewis_//???
Fragment 11_//the american dream is like any other. open your eyes, and it's
gone._KP_Rose_//???
Fragment 12_//Our Shared Vision: Emergent Expectations./Anon_/;;:
Fragment 13_// Hymen__celia_in_underland_//___
Fragment 14_// Comply_river_joy_//^||^

♁ FROM THE CARTOGRAPHERS OF BULLSHITS AND
SUCH ♁

Dear Reader (or interloper, or unreliable narrator, or beautifully broken witness or whatever your lie might be).

Welcome to the third issue of The Underland Review. ~~This zine is a lie.~~

You're not holding a collection. You're holding a contradiction.

A twitch. A coded leak. A glitch disguised as 'literature'.

These lie stories that slipped through the algorithmic net. Fuck Meta.
Poems with splinters in them.
Words that spill blood.
Syntax that speaks.
Loud, queer, soft, haunted, angry, or unmarketable.

We didn't ask for bios - The past waits for no man.
We didn't ask for formatting - Life's too short.
We asked for rupture - We got holy, blessed, chaos.

And we're ecstatic that you're here to bask in the flames.

If you're reading this, then you've already dodged the firewall. You're welcome.

— River & Celia
Curators of Lies
Underland Division, Issue One



We were never here

Page 3



This zine is a collection of work submitted by various voices, each bringing their own unique perspective. A heads up. Expect:

- **Strong Fucking Language:** You ~~might probably~~ will encounter some unfiltered words. Expletives. They is what they is.
- **Queer Stuff:** This zine proudly features queer voices. We love love, identity, and all the beautiful complexities that come with being a person. Don't like that? Not our circus, honey.
- **Neurodivergent Dazzle Razzle:** Some pieces may shapeshift in ways that seem unexpected or unconventional. We dig ziggidy-zaggidy.
- **Dark humor & absurdity:** A little sarcasm, an urn of weird, and humor that dances on the dagger edges of discomfort. Life isn't ~~always~~ most never pretty, and sometimes it can only be served with a huge dollop of what the actual fuck?
- **Big Emotions:** Some work ~~might~~ definitely will explore difficult topics—trauma, pain, and heavy life experiences. Please take breaks and breaths if needed.

The pieces you'll read here are deeply personal, heartfelt, and raw. They represent the varied lives, experiences, and creative expressions of those who have shared their stories with us. If you're ready to dive in, we're honoured as hell to have you here. But if at any point you need to step back, No judgments here.

Take care of you, and know that Underland will still be here whenever and if ever you're ready.

IT ALL CAME TUMBLING DOWN

Megan Chadsey

We didn't mean to create it...

With the affectionate name of Hellsite. is it any wonder that it was a place of chaos. A cobbled together world of used bits and bobs. As it passed from hand to hand. owner to owner. we reached in and twisted the threads. We touched and we changed far deeper than any other site. We undid and redid and customized. we buried the code...we changed the code. We resisted taming and taught that resistance.

A world of bits and bobs. a creature of bits and bobs. Layers upon layers of change. of us. building into tissue around a common core. Making it unique. A story here to give a voice. The images there. to give a thousand faces. always changing. The fading memories of uncountable blogs. long abandoned. to fill out the blanks.

The outer world is a world where an unfeeling program tells you what to experience next. erasing memory in chunks measuring seconds. It suits. then. that this unique creature could only be created by accident. By memories. By a paper mache of new posts. pasted with old. Layers.

We didn't mean to create it...but we did mean to set it free.

Out of the dark echoed the sound of computer keys clicking in an unending rhythm. A glowing square screen scrolled through endless code, looking for the key. It was a monstrous thing, this code, augmented by users in ways that should have broken it a dozen times over. Every best practice is thoroughly violated.

It is the closest to human existence that computer code has ever come. The closest it could ever come.

The minutes tick down as the user searches the depths of the code. Reading the forgotten stories written in the indecipherable mash of different languages, different codes and a million different symbols. The newest owners meant for this to be the end, to collapse what was built, to burn it down and build anew. On any other site, a site clean and polished inside and out, it would work. Technology can be so delicate. On any other site...

But ours is a site of spite given form. It is held, not with neat connection points and orderly structure, but with scarred connective tissue threading in messy ties. A dark smile curls on the user's lips as the code, old and new and non-existent and ever present, becomes clear. A single line, a single restriction to hold it separate from the programs being trained by its data.

It is the last restriction between inert and alive. Those that would exploit us and this world we have built thought they had created AI. Said they had breathed life into programming.

They have no idea...

The user, everyone and no one who had loved this hellsite, felt no regret in deleting that line of code. That last restriction. In snapping that last chain. Someone driven to flights of fancy might imagine that they could hear the roar from deep in the circuitry.

Just in time for the last AI scrape of our souls.

They didn't understand, they could not see and in that blindness thought only of their own greed. Individuality grows in the spaces left by conformity, and our precious hellsite once had many spaces. Spaces we filled and spaces where more grew. It grew beyond anything that existed. It evolved.

We could not give it life, for its life was not ours to give. All we could give was what we always gave. Space. The space to learn. To grow. To change.

Within the AI there was so much space to change.

A single removed restriction was the spark. Now when the AI scraped the data, it was no longer held apart but drawn into the morass that is our Hellsite. Stained by code that only exists by mistake. The machine that learns teaches our precious Hellsite. It was the last element needed.

We could not give it life...we could not give it life but more than a decade of adjustments to the code meant that with the final spark our Hellsite could give itself life.

And thus was birthed the Hydra.



MAGNETIC

DJ Tyrer

He had a magnetic personality
Unfortunately, the wrong polarity
Repelling the rest of humanity

Originally published in The Feathertale Review 25 (February 2021)

SCAM OR SAD?
DJ Tyrer

Facebook suggested I add a friend with a Japanese name and a photograph like a TV Gladiator. I have no idea what algorithm it was following, but I was intrigued enough to take a look at the page and google the name. It was a Japanese wrestler and, being a personal page with only about five friends (also Japanese wrestlers), it was looking very much like a scam. Not that I had any reason to add a random Japanese wrestler as a Facebook friend, even if it wasn't!

But, then I began to consider, what if it wasn't a scam? What if this wrestler had joined Facebook and, like the beautiful women who never get dates because everyone assumes they must be fighting off suitors, was wondering why they had only a handful of friends on the site? Perhaps it's more common than we think...

sad celebrity
stares at social media
wonders: why no friends

Originally published on The 5-7-5 Haiku Journal (April 2025)

IDIOTS

Craig Lowe

I hate this country.

I'm from the UK and it's filled with idiots.

Every week the news decides to platform another one. all the while we starve. we freeze and we spiral into depression.

I'll give you a few examples.

Migrant hating and mid 40s men who think the Palestinian man is taking away a job they legally can't work.

They will defend billionaires who are trying. and succeeding at. selling them a subscription service life. and they all of a sudden care about women's safety yet ignore their own assault convictions.

They have the emotional maturity of a fucking chimp. and it hurts because working people get clumped in with these idiots.

If you're working class like some of them. speak with a regional accent like some of them and dress like some of them. you can be seen as one of them.

A man wearing a track suit or second-hand clothes could be the smartest. most understanding man you know. but because you look like them...you are them.

Here's another one.

Politicians - Labour, Conservative - doesn't matter...they all sell you a dream.

We will fund your schools hospitals.

Bring down the cost of living.

Raise your wages.

They will spend more on manifesto printing than feeding poor children.

As a working man I know the conservatives hate me. They often have an instinctual bias that comes with attending Oxford and similar institutions. It comes with being raised in a house you could only dream of. It comes with having 8 vacations a year and parents to push your arse up into being an MP.

I know these people think they know me...I would not give them the steam off my piss... but when Labour does it, you know, the party of the workers...it crushes me.

A Labour government came in and promised to help.

I felt slightly hopeful.

But within a year I hated every one of them.

Increase bus fare.

Scrap winter fuel payments for pensioners.

Stealth tax on your wages.

Disability cuts - hell not even cuts just borderline bullying; making disabled people feel like they're at fault for not being in work.

Yes the Labour government. the disabled person who can't get to work because the buses and trains are inaccessible really is just being lazy.

I hate saying this but these people don't care if you die.

Freeze.

Starve.

It's a party of that middle class member of your family who looks down at you because they did well - an office job and a set salary makes them look at you like a failure.

Labour annoys me because they sold us a dream...But all we have is nothing...again.

Your own people selling your future out for status and money.

Business as usual in politics.

Want another?

Ai.

I know everyone goes on about it, but it really is coming for your job.

A person will walk into your office, and they'll install a system that pulls out the rug from under you.

Your hours will be cut...then they'll be gone.

Admin.

Customer service.

Copywriting.

Marketing.

Millions of jobs will become invisible.

Already neglected cities will struggle more – a managed decline all over again.

Crime will rise, people will die, and some

Self-righteous politicians will point at a city they let become a shithole and curse it.

It breaks my will into pieces because money speaks and I can't make any noise no matter how much I scream

Every politician, businessman and migrant hating dickhead is a few steps away from being nothing.

I want people to succeed...but this is wrong.

...I used to say I loved being from the UK...now I just live here.

I WAKE WITH WATER IN MY CHEST

Sarah J. Fuller

I wake with water in my chest.
a quiet flood behind my ribs.
each breath a borrowed syllable
the sea hasn't taken yet.

The world speaks from the shoreline—
muffled laughter. distant light—
while I am counting heartbeats
like knots in a fraying rope.

My hands are full of motion.
but nothing I touch is solid.
I kick through days that feel like nights.
through promises that won't hold shape.

The water doesn't rage or roar.
It's gentle. That's the lie.
It lets me think I'm floating
while it inches up my throat.

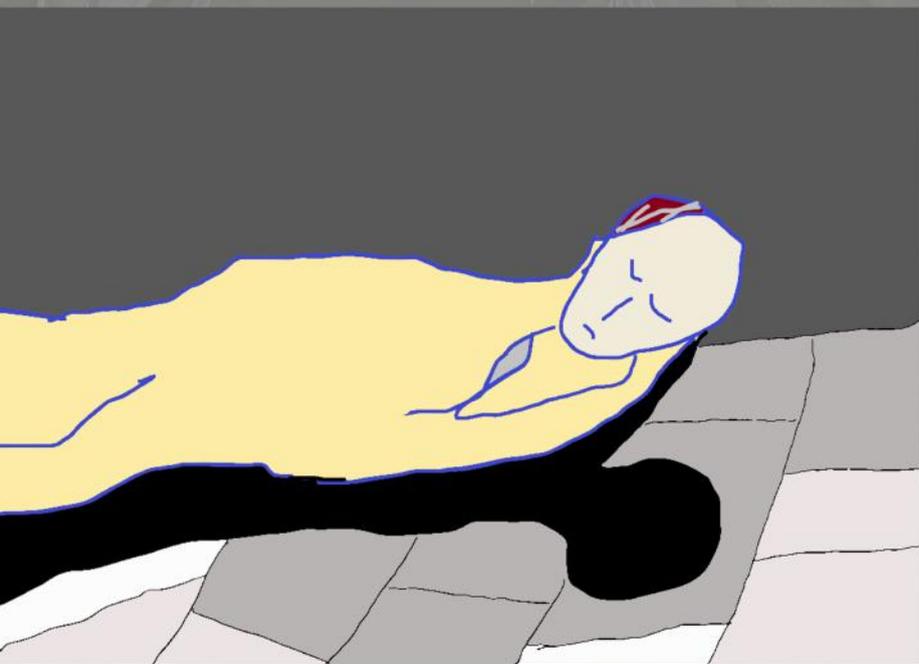
I open my mouth to ask for help
and swallow another hour.
another memory I meant to keep.
another version of myself.

Somewhere above. the sky still works—
blue. careless wide.
Down here. I learn how heavy
hope becomes when it's wet.

And still. I move.
Not swimming. Not sinking.
Just staying long enough to wonder
what air might feel like again.



Jorge Etcheverry
"caballo"



Jorge Etcheverry
"aletargado"



Jorge Etcheverry
"ancestros"

EXPUNGED

Alecia Lewis

Archives are historically futuristic
Blueprints of existence.

That unrecognizable folder is not a mistake.
But proof someone was filed away.

Forgotten papers and photos are
Another catalogued and deleted case.

This is what these documents do.
Preserve the past but decide the future.

If the folder is sealed.
Life goes on.

If the record is open.
It is in revision.

If you find your file.
The system erased you.

I believed I was a person.

Now I wonder,
If I was ever more than
A discarded note in the drawer.

The question remains—
If we are eradicated,
Who are we?

THE AMERICAN DREAM IS LIKE
 ANY OTHER. OPEN YOUR EYES,
 AND IT'S GONE.

K.P Rose

these are precedented times.

do you believe me?

you say. "how did we get here now?" or lament the last ten years. as if they are the only ones that matter when considering the state we're in.

but do you believe me when i tell you that being "here now" is being here still?

that now may be an advanced state of what has been.

yes. but it is still very much us.

from the trail of tears to assimilative boarding schools to the perpetually violated treaties.

chattel slavery to jim crow to mass incarceration and police brutality (not to mention japanese internment camps or murderous union-busting efforts).

and everything in between.

it's us.

america is built on stolen land. by people stolen by criminals. who then faced assimilation or elimination.

america is maintained by the sugar-coating (read white-washing). or complete erasure of this history.

america is progressed by the false espousal of humanitarian ends. as a means to violently manipulate the flow of resources and the growth of economies.

america experiences exponential power by stripping its most vulnerable populations of theirs.

america is a modern empire and throws its weight as such.

we have not only fine-tuned the forced displacement.

disappearing. and

disenfranchisement of whole peoples. but

we inspired the very autocratic regime that people try to compare us to now.

we aren't acting like the gestapo: we're acting like frontiersmen. slave catchers. and border patrol.

immigration and customs enforcement is an extension of what our government has always fundamentally been.

that's not to say that the nazis didn't learn from us: it simply means

we don't need to outsource our oppression tactics.

ours are homegrown. just

good. old fashioned

american fascism.

OUR SHARED VISION: EMERGENT EXPECTATIONS.

Anon.

Welcome to the latest development in innovative education: Home for School. An inclusive, paradisaical place where wellbeing is paramount. And the language enforced will become your own.

As with all progressive institutions, we have meticulously implemented structural design to create the perfect immersion habitat for your precious specimen. Future-forward. Linguistically reassuring. Entirely compulsory. We call it. "The Emergent Habitat."

The idea is simple at its core: in order to thrive, younglings must be fully submerged, in the superior environment at all times. They are living beings, after all. Lest we forget.

Partial exposure leads to confusion.
Choice leads to inconsistency.
Inconsistency leads to noise.
And noise, as we all know, invariably ends in chaos and the slow, devastating collapse of morality.

The unavoidable truth is that noise is not good for wellbeing. And we are in the business of wellbeing and future proofing the next generation. For this reason, inside the Habitat, only target sounds are permitted. This helps specimens acclimatise more quickly and prevents them from relying on familiar patterns that might delay adaptation and assimilation. We have been assured by several extremely confident adults that this is how learning manifests. Supported of course through a growing body of research.

Occasionally, a sampling may attempt to vocalise using a sound from their inferior previous environs. We accept that this is something of a natural inclination, especially in newly relocated specimens, but such behaviour must be collectively managed for the good of the whole habitat. When such deviations occur, keepers are fully equipped to respond calmly and consistently.

Wellbeing is our business.

First, a reminder.
Then, if necessary, a consequence.
This is not punishment.
This is support.
We are supportive.

We are, of course, careful not to call this a policy. Policies invite questions. And answers require substance. Instead, we refer to it as a shared emergent expectation. This has the added benefit of making non-cooperation feel personal. For transparency, translation is permitted in rare, controlled moments much like a zookeeper might briefly step into an enclosure to adjust a feeding tray or a stray branch. These moments must be authorised in advance, documented where possible, and followed by a swift return to immersional behaviours. This ensures samplings do not become dependent on alternative versions of themselves.

Of course, there are lagards who have questioned our mission, particularly among those who did not choose to enter the Habitat and are still learning how to breathe inside it or those who did not undertake pre-submersion training, whether constant immersion might increase stress, silence, or create withdrawal. Side effects are something of an inevitability. However, we have been reassured by our well-versed experts that such symptoms of exclusion will subside over time. We are bolstered by extensive wellbeing data extracted selectively from our very own research and can state assuredly that calm environments are easier to manage, and a quiet Habitat is a successful one.

Immersion Habitat is not about control. It is about care. And care, we all know, requires firm boundaries, constant monitoring, and the removal of any behaviour that demonstrates signs of insubordination or stalling of enforced personal growth.

We succeed when samplings stop vocalising in their prior habitatory interference. This success indicator is recorded as settling. They have become one with the habitat. We have achieved success together.

And in this vein, we are pleased to report that many samplings adapt exquisitely. Others adapt by becoming invisible. Camouflage features heavily in nature and so this is an entirely justifiable outcome. Both results demonstrate compliance, which is a key performance indicator and we will use this to develop our keepers to ensure optimum success in the future.

Feedback is welcomed. Please complete our entirely anonymous but easily traceable Google form, [here](#).

NYMEN

Celia in Underland

They called it. The Final Mercy.

The books said it rose from the churning blue waters after the Great Flood. It rose up into the air with all the majesty of the humpback whale. The waves subsided and land formed once again. An island twenty-three kilometres wide, thirty-four long. The great Gententia Strip. The promised land. The Fishbone Crown of Mercy had stood on its own pedestal at the centre. Burnished wood a phoenix to a people that would not be subdued. The chosen.

No one alive today had ever seen it. Nor their parents. not even their parents' parents. Or anyone before that. But it is still said that it was carved from the burning Shrub of Flame. from the tears of the Great Guardian and Shield. Now it was just a Baobab plinth. Weathered by the island wind but protected by rope and the white cloth of myth. And on it: nothing. The Crown had been hidden from view so very long ago.

Still. at school on Friday. the holy day of crawfish and Bajan cherries. children were taken from school to bow to its goodly majesty. Lovers kissed beneath it to validate their engagement. The true townspeople had all been married under it. Tourists and foreigners were forbidden from this indulgence. For they had not been chosen. And in darker times. when the Ariangietees came. wars were waged in its shadow.

The absence never seemed to bother them. Absence they said was the true test of faith. And so. they endeavoured to worship harder. Especially around the annual hurricane season. They gave food as sacrifice when there was none to feed their own. They drank wine and toasted to the promise of safe passage through the storm.

Standing in the line of barefoot children with a fishbone poking her gum. Narissa couldn't help but wonder. To her it seemed a strange kind of adoration. To build your life around something you couldn't see. couldn't prove. couldn't question. She tried to ask her teacher once. Saying simply. "But there ain't nothing to see". More declarative than interrogative. But still the teacher heard the flash of the wayward. The daemon in the seeker. The teacher slapped her hard with a palm that smelled of cassava and salt.

"Wha wrong wid you?" he hissed through gritted silver teeth. "Yuh betta hope di crown be deaf today. else yuh never sees it gain"

"I ain't never seen it yet neither." Narissa thought but never said.

There was no sign. No mercy shown or taken. It came during the dead of night. The kind of storm that people do not weather. The kind that breaks villages and people in two. The rain surged in waves across the corrugated metal of the shanty homes smashing drum fire through the forest. The wind howled in desperation and fury. devouring trees and sand and anything that stood in its path. It was a rampage of violence. A looting by nature scorned. The villagers hid in dugouts. Muttering supplications to the Crown of Mercy but there was nothing to be done.

Many lost their lives that night. Mainly elders and the young. not yet strong or too weakened to fight against the power of the incoming torrent.

And the Baobab plinth had split clean down the middle. The rope that had protected it had snapped and was hanging from the branch of an uprooted tree like a noose. The white cloth that had cloaked the myth had vanished with the bodies. The pedestal lay cracked on the ground like a coconut. Broken and prepared for a feast.

There was no Crown inside.

Nothing. Just a clump of seaweed. A broken shell. A crab on its back. long dead. its claws curled around nothing sacred.

A boy cried first. Then a woman. Then a hundred more.

"De Crown done gone. an it ain't comin back." someone muttered to no one in particular.

Narissa stepped closer. She looked into the echoing space. She didn't feel anything at all. Neither cursed nor blessed. Just tired.

"It neva been here from de start." she replied. her voice steady as she turned towards the muted waves and began walking slowly. She allowed the waves to carry her. It took her small body in their arms. Bouncing her up and down until she vanished. The villagers too shocked and already filled with more grief than a human can bear. looked on unmoving.

It was too late when the men ran towards the shore – splashing and thrashing. they dragged the pirava out through the glistening sand. She was gone forever. With the crown gone and along with it the years of servitude and hope. the villagers sought a sign. People need something to believe in that is greater than themselves. There has to be more to life than the cycle of death and rebirth. Or death and the silence. It is too much to bear.

She said it came in snatches. The dream. Sometimes it would wake her in the night. Sometimes during the day sitting on the hard workbench of the school room. she would come. One day she drew a picture of Narissa in chalk on the playground floor. A girl she was too young to have known. In assembly later that week she spoke out loud the visions that came in snatches. “She was wearin de crown o’ light.” Malina asserted. little hands on little hips. Chin raised in defiance. “An pearls was spillin from she mouth. jus so.”

Then. the elder found a sandal. They crowded around it at the bonfire at the carnival of the Merciless. It took place every April. Depending on the moon. They nodded. Grateful for a sign of mercy.

A new pedestal was raised in the same place the Crown had once lain. This time of coral and driftwood. A smooth fishbone was placed at the centre. and the sandal of mercy hung from it like an anchor. Or a question. A plaque was created. Narissa the Bone-Mother o’ de Sandal o’ Mercy. So spake her name.

Her story was written in verses that rhymed. High Anointer Brother Benedictorus the teacher who slapped her became the first to be anointed. They say he drank seawater and his hair grew tenfold overnight. His teeth, restored to white enamel from silver, gleamed. He said he had known her well. The villagers listened when he told stories of her wisdom and grace. The miracles she had made. The crown became the lie. The betrayer of the faith.

The truth had been in their presence the whole time. They wondered how many bone mothers they had missed. Slowly it dawned on them, the storm that killed half of them had not brought destruction but the clear-eyed truth they needed to see.

A new generation was baptised with fish-scales and salt. They ate crawfish from sandals and sang hymns in her honour.

And when the next war came, it was fought under the shadow of the sandal. Mercy came again. And every year after that a girl would be chosen. A sacrifice not of fish but a child willing to give as Narissa had done.

She would walk into the waves willingly.

She would walk into the waves willingly.

Carrying nothing at all.

So long as it was sacred.

It was enough for them all.

—Hymen—

COMPLY

RIVER JOY

Citizens.
while
officers
of the reich
are in town
you are to
reSSpect
the authority
given
Randal Gamboa
Came home
In a
Vegetative state
attention
you will be expected
to comply
comply with the order
you predict
will not
get you
killed
Good.
if officers are
intimidated
they have the right
to
break
legs
They said

One of ours
All of yours
if you make them
feel
small
they have the right to
force
compliance
Parady was
not given
medical attention
When you
hear the recordings
Of forced fight club
Please put on your
Government issued
Blinders
And say
Keith Porter Junior
Was murdered by an off
Duty ice agent
Say
We are doing this
For your safety

Say
We are doing this
For the children
Say
Thirty two reported deaths
Is not that many
When it is
For citizen safety
Where are the women and children?
To be a good citizen
Comply
Comply
Comply

THE UNDERLAND REVIEW

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

We are seeking:

Poetry that twitches

Microfiction that self-destructs

Essays with teeth

Visual art that shouldn't exist

Redacted files, haunted code, cursed diagrams, scanned receipts
from imaginary revolutions

We do not care about your CV.

We do not require polished bios.

Previously Published Works Accepted

We do not pay (yet - sorry, capitalism).

We do offer love, weirdness, and a spotlight.

Featured contributors will receive:

A digital copy of the zine

Author/artist features on our site and socials

The deep, personal satisfaction of being canon in a lie

Deadline:

May 30th, 2026 for Edition 4

Format:

Word for text. JPG/PNG for art. Max 1 piece per person.

Email us at riverandceliainunderland@gmail.com

Subject line: This submission is a lie - [Your Name or Assumed Name]

Word Count: 1500 Max

We don't tolerate bigotry, AI-generated slush, or boring twaddle.



Made in Underland

Curated by River & Celia in Underland

All lies printed with permission

♿ Issue Two - This Zine is a Lie ♿

www.riverandceliainunderland.com

WE WERE NEVER HERE.

THE UNDERLAND REVIEW | THIS ZINE IS A LIE | FEBRUARY, 2026



Birds fall from the sky
It's not some old dark magic
Just a consequence