



ISSUE FIVE: AUGURAL

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faoileánach
JOURNAL



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VINCENZO CAMUCCINI - LA MORTE DI CESARE

SOOTHSAYER
BEWARE THE IDES OF MARCH.

- JULIUS CAESAR
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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CONTENTS

9 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

- Elzada James, Assistant Editor

15 ROME

- Leatrice

11 POETRY

16 DIVINATIONS

- Stephen Brock

12 YOU'RE WELCOME

- Chad Oness

**17 "EXCAVATION OF TYTO
POLLENS I"**

- Lee Summers

13 VOID OF COURSE

- Begüm Yilmaz

**18 THE WEIGHING OF A
HEART**

- Tanya Laine

CONTENTS

19 NOTHING BUT SOLITUDE

- KB Ballentine

24 POSITIVITY

- Jan Wiezorek

**20 BEFORE THEY
REMEMBERED
(ANAMNESIS)**

- Meditations on Permafrost

**25 YOUR PHONE HAS BEEN
UPDATED TO THE LATEST
SOFTWARE**

- Melina Charis

**22 UPON DEVOTING MYSELF
TO SPIRITUAL LABORS**

- Cameron Charles Martin

26 EXPLOSIVE HA! BITS

- Allan Lake

23 BACKGROUND NOISE

- NJ Simat

**27 POETS ARE NOT
BUTTERFLIES**

- Kathleen Fields

CONTENTS

**28 OR IS IT JUST ANOTHER
GULL**

- S.D. Dillon

**29 THE BIRDS HUDDLE AT
THE FINAL HOUR**

- S.D. Dillon

30 FICTION & NONFICTION

**31 BITTERLY COLD IT'S ALL
SO CYCLICAL**

- Anthony Brown

34 A VIPER'S TOOTH

- Alex Hull

**36 TONIGHT'S LITTLE TALE
A LATERN GLOW:
GUIDING THE LOST
SWALLOW HOME**

- Ms Kaye Terregone

38 CONTRIBUTORS

Letter from the Editor

"By the pricking of my thumbs, / Something wicked this way comes."

Second Witch, Macbeth

The appearance of various signs and omens have held our hands, ever-mortal, through a long history of uncertain times. For centuries we've consulted fire and smoke, dice and cards (pyromancy, cleromancy, and cartomancy, respectively) and the most sacred of our texts. We study atmospheric phenomena, cheeks turned to the blows of wind, attuned to visitations of lightning and thunder. We notice the mundanities too: the accidental spilling of salt and a stumbling under the ladder, an ill-timed sneeze, the crossing of a black cat.

The theme of this issue, "Augural," was born from the Latin *augurālis*, which means "belonging to the augur," or "prophetic." Referring to the augurs of ancient Rome, these were professional translators of signs, a state-sanctioned class of priests that observed birds in various ways to discern the divine will of the gods. There were the *alites*, interpretations of flight patterns, and the *oscines*, interpretations of birdsong. My personal favorite, though, is the *tripudium*, or "the dance of birds feeding." It turns out that observing the sacred chickens eating with vigor was a favorable sign indeed.

These signs were nothing short of integral to daily Roman life. They provided a reassuring guide through the agricultural seasons, elections, legislation, and even aided in decisions of war. The function of an augur was not necessarily to foretell the future, but rather to reveal whether or not the gods approved of a particular pending action. For the Romans, fate was not fixed. The people could rest assured if they pointed in the positive, and if the signs pointed to disapproval, there was still time to course-correct.

And is this not what many of us still do today? Reaching for signs to help us tune into ourselves, for some kind of comfort in a world caught in so much noise?

It is a quiet admittance to our not-knowing of what is to come, and also to our innate knowing that we are all deeply, irrevocably connected. I think, even if brief, even the most casual among us have some kind of superstition that gives us pause for consideration.

Within the fifth issue of the Faoileánach Journal, you'll find eighteen writers at various stages of their own sacred practice, grappling with the signs that have come to them in the modern world. We begin with Chad Oness' gorgeous rural reflection in "You're Welcome," the natural observations that lead us to the one thing that he knows: that "only one wild grouse wandered / by the apple tree this spring."

In "Void of Course," Begum Yilmaz takes us through her own quiet omens, which yield to a devastating denial. It is here - in the space of the page - that we face these feelings of isolation and abandonment with poetry and prose, trawling the world for prophecy in the word. In plainer terms, as writers, we are always trying to make sense of the world and what happens within it. The short story "A Viper's Tooth" by Alex Hull sees this desire play out in exquisite detail.

There are times, like in Leatrice's "Rome," in which we see these signs cast to us clear as day and simply do not want to. We "crouch and duck to avoid its gaze, / sup streetside sorrow, / succumb to graffiti-clad towers." We then wonder why we see only in the negative, as in Jan Wieszorek's "Positivity," and feel so psychologically trapped by "this bright jewel of glass, / of buried treasure," as in Melina Charis' poem "your phone has been updated to the latest software." The painful truth is that, unfortunately, as humans, sometimes we can't help but collectively stumble under the ladder.

And there is no doubt: these are uncertain times. We've stumbled. The question that remains is what happens next. So now we too turn to take the auspices, divined from the poetic song of our contemporary creatives.

It is our sincerest hope that you enjoy reading the works found within this issue; may they remind you to open your own forgotten eye. To look up to this singular shared sky, and pay closer attention to the horizon it could hold.

-Elzada James
Assistant Editor
The Faoileánach Journal





You're Welcome

Chad Oness

If you like to pry
Willow branches from behind
Your wheels and fenders,
Then you must visit my home,
But please do bring your own wine.

I cannot tell how
Many come to see if I'll
Carry cups down to meet them.

But I can tell you:
Only one wild grouse wandered
by the apple tree this spring.



Void of Course

Begüm Yılmaz

Nothing has moved for weeks.
Not even the air itself.
The room holds time in a strange hesitation.

Dust has settled into rehearsal —
practising its silence
along the narrow spine of the window,
as if stillness were a role
it has finally perfected.

Then the glass startles first.
A bird strikes it
and drops, leaving a brief
feathered geometry against the pane.

The theatre light across the street flickers without reason.
A teacup yields to a thin, merciless crack
too precise to be accidental.
The cards slip from my hands
before I've asked the question.

I tell myself this is physics.
The air collapsing inward.
Mercury at its station - the part I loathe.
Jupiter does not negotiate.
It enters the first house
and expands whatever it finds —
body,
doubt,
waiting,
Grief.

Saturn holds its breath
over a border I cannot cross,
a customs officer whose breath smells of time.
No entry granted until further notice.

Void of Course

Begüm Yilmaz

The spread is simple:

Past — The Tower, committed to collapse.
Present — The Hanged Man, withheld from initiation.
Future — The Moon, stalled at its own degree.
Outside, the bird rights itself
or does not.
At this distance, sight becomes rumour, aye.

The visa stamp rests in its bordered square of ink.
Entry permitted: six months.
No recourse to public funds.
Multiple entry.
A single body to declare.

I press my name into forms.
I list previous addresses
like former lifetimes.
I tick the box marked purpose of visit
and almost write:
to discover if fate will recognise my face at the border.

There is no box for a life
still pending.

The sky remains undecided —
a chart without aspects,
a horizon that will not align.

If this is an omen,
it is a quiet one.

Outside, the bird is gone.
The glass keeps its crack.

Tonight, I draw once more.

The Wheel.

It does not turn.
It belongs to no future.
Neither, perhaps, do I.

Entry
permanently denied.

B.



Rome

Leatrice

Nothing ever just falls.
We are in the process of—

we are perpetually ending,

as the napkin pleads for one more moment
adhered to this glass of iced tea.
If it were up to the condensation,
we would never question the rising heat.

September sun pokes through parasols,
we crouch and duck to avoid its gaze,
sup streetside sorrow,
succumb to graffiti-clad towers.

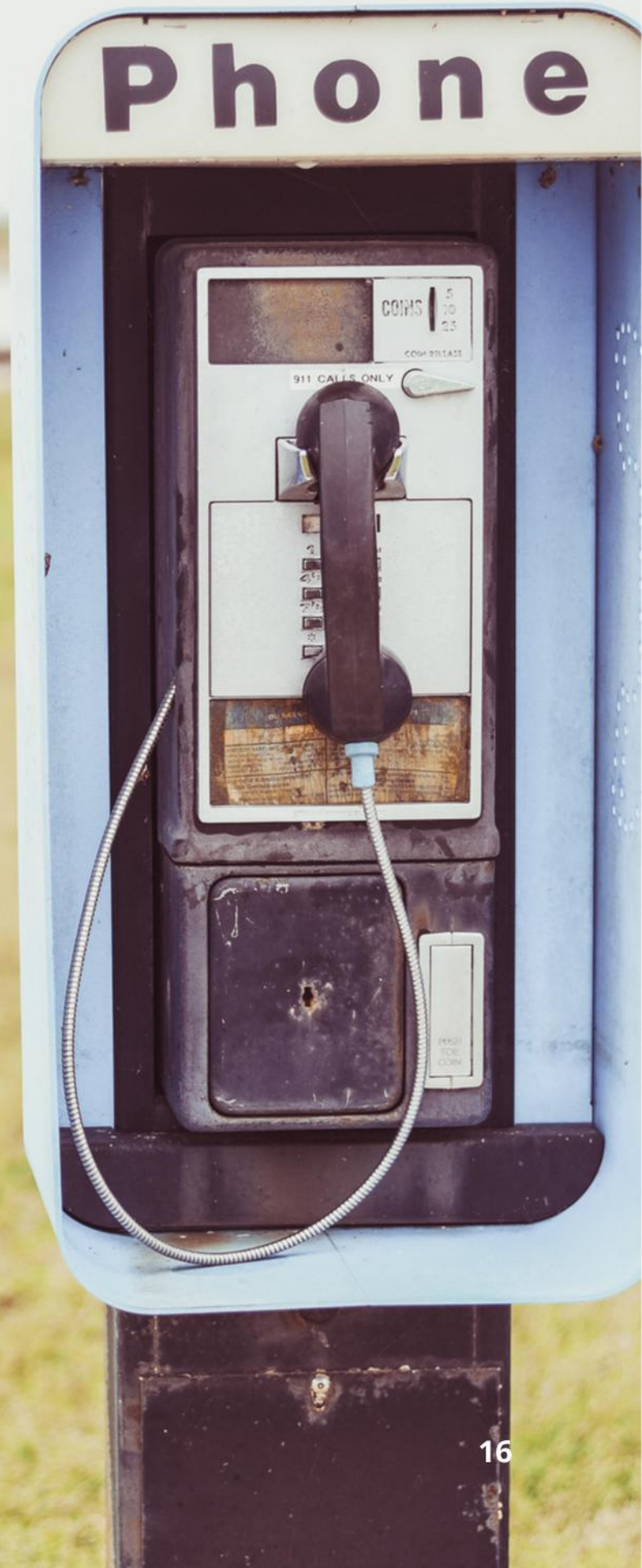
Fuck, when will it just happen?
Where are the horses, the trumpets,
the allegories begging for collapse?
When will we move on?

We do, we always do
and we wrench the glass free.

Divinations

Stephen Brock

Look: fresh dead entrails criss-crossing the sun-balded hill. Lying like snakes, chorused by monophonic hymns sung by horseflies buzzing in the heat. We pore, poke, prod, peel back each layer of slaughtered skin like so many pages writ in invisible ink. scanning each line secluded in folds of pink viscera, wet, muscular to the touch. Searching for rumours of a future unknown as of yet. There are no fresh messages down the line this time. Olympus has disconnected their phone, a secretary in Valhalla tells me no one is home, the soothsayers and seers have gone blind in the sun, sin eaters are full; it's going to spill out of them, rain five seasons long. I phoned God this morning. All I got was a lousy dial tone.



“Excavation of Tyto pollens I”

Lee Summers

Just a coracoid
void of
ulna’s flight
except to
holes of grass.
Nocturnal thrones
spell
shifting wind
to carve,
to choke
spears
until entombed.
Heed this humus mat;
fall.



The Weighing of a Heart

Tanya Laine

The boatman did not yield
for us waving, madly, as we were
standing on the stilted docks unaware
still, of the fathoms under our feet.

How many bodies had we yet to bury,
would one of them be you, or
me? Who would remain to dig
our graves? At night I plummet

out here, in darkness.

Wet wood moans under the weight
of my heart. In my fist
another of your black feathers, plucked
painfully from your armored back. I scream
over the edge, the unknown
laps at my still-soft skin and,
as a rose sheds a petal, my heart

sinks slowly, dancing down
for the sea-gods to wrangle with.

My fist unclenches, your chain-mail soars
to dark skies. We are separated
now, no way to weigh
my soft tissue against your waxen wings. No
knowing who will reach
the field of reeds, and who will meet

the monster. My step
is lightened as I make way
back to bed, with you
tonight. There will be no more talk
of our Two Truths, and of which will prevail. It is
oh so quiet. Until the day you run
out of armor or I run out
of heart.

Nothing But Solitude

KB Ballentine

Worm moon waning, forsythia rises
like the warming sun.

A barred owl wings across the road,
feathers fanning the car window,
and I wonder if he's as exhausted as me.
I have earned these long, dark nights,
and I'm shrinking from the light
of spring mornings, crisp with hope
and birdsong. I want to fly back
into the shadows, hold the loss
of you until darkness takes over,
enfolds me completely in its wings.



Before They Remembered (*Anamnesis*)

Medatations on Permafrost

A boy knelt in sand.
His knees left no mark,
the tide washing all away.

Before him, a lamb bleated, slow,
legs bound in willow-bark twine.
Both were born in spring.

His mother pressed a flint blade,
a talisman, into his hand.
“The gods remember.”
Behind them, the pyre
smouldered,
stacked with driftwood,
ringed with bones.

The sun hung low, black as blood.
The sea hissed, a struck serpent.
The wind howled, a wrathful
widow.

He paused.
His blade watched.
The lamb was still.
Its fleece, soft.

He looked at the lamb,
cradled in his arms.
Their eyes met.
Both brown.
Both wide.
Both trembling.

“I’m sorry I paused,” he
whispered.
His mother nodded.
“And in the pause...is everything?”

Instinct brought the blade down.
A scream surged upward,
rising from the root of the world.
They raised its body
onto the pyre
and watched their
only lamb transform
into smoke, and flame, and sky.

They waited for a sign,
the breath of god,
the fire to speak,
the sky to split.

But there was only
the hush of waves
against the shore,
the crackle of wet wood.
An absence that was infinite.

Their two shadows
stretched across the dunes,
growing longer
with each breath,
as the sun was
swallowed by the sea.

Before They Remembered (*Anamnesis*)

Medatations on Permafrost

That night, in dreams,
he heard the lamb screaming.
His sons and daughters
they were all born screaming.
Some pursue those screams
and are so pursued.

A shadow left the lamb's eyes
with the sound of its sighs,
and entered the boy's.
Now all he sees are lambs,
and pyres to place them upon.

If the sky is truly empty,
he will fill it with their screams.
So, he stands by the sea, waiting,
still pursued in dreams.

Upon Devoting Myself to Spiritual Labors

Cameron Charles Martin

Bug came over and drowned in my coffee.
Stupid! Green Boots cold once strode giantly,
like Hector. Louis Slotin found out, too.
These things pile up. Anniversaries.
Who was the idiot who trusted me
to see this thing through? Why am I so dumb?
I've drunk the nostrums, bathed in skin, jonquille
like balsam on me. The shit of it soon,
no matter what, Voorhesian, catches us.
What's you? Could it grow anew? *Kuwabara*.
The wires, the crows, the lumbering engines
are the picture of a red-ruptured squirrel.
I can follow its eyes. A girl's pearl tresses
are the picture of a difflorid world
financialized. Me next: can I afford
to tack these pictures to my inner skull,
these suicidal obligations?

Yes.



Background Noise

NJ Simat

Swallow gauze
and needles.
Now sing!
How's that?

You hold up one finger
so I'll wait, but hurry,
I need a formula
that solves for v , plus
an integer for t ,
so I'll know when
your cup's full. Is it
three inches from the top?

Is there any room left
to pile on, before overflow—
all the while, the cup sweats
on the rosewood table.

Under this roof, I should be
grateful. You're biting your nails
again, so I'll be gentle.

I don't think you have space for
a song, just a little background noise.

Positivity

Jan Wieszorek



Dead dog in creek facing the shore,
ear still perked, small body dissolved
in white foam; tail, a stitch of a thing.

But I discovered my error—
to see only leaves, freshets given growth
that just mimic fur, a wag.

Why do I see negatives that aren't even there?
How can I imagine positivity again?
Perhaps, if I begin by being the topography:

the mountains here in the Great Lakes
of harbors like desire across train tracks,
up the high tree line, motionless as Hush, now.

Begin to feel serrated leaves reaching down
and healing, wrapping the cuticles
in their balsam green mint. Just eight white

petals, but I get lost in the ochre-green
center of the world that wants to bud.
I did see a bobcat, for real: dark brown, hefty, plump,

tail stuck out, running its sounds
like a ground squirrel through leaves,
with a rumble foot, slightly bumbling,

the size of a small dog.



your phone has been updated to the latest software

Melina Charis

as I read a long-winded article on Substack telling me how to break up with my smartphone that I'm reading on my smartphone. I briefly wonder if I could ever break up with my phone and quickly list all the reasons I can't.

And then I wonder how I'm going to raise a son who will never know life without AI and algorithms. Who already, at two years old, begs to hold this bright jewel of glass, of buried pleasure. Who will unknowingly fling himself

at the sun and will be too far from his body to feel himself burn. I wonder at all we have lost in our manic, relentless pursuit of faster, easier, better, machine. The marvel of needles in hands. The chop of wood being split like a lustful peach.

The wet grit of mud in our palms like a prayer. I think about saying goodbye to my smartphone (in ten easy steps) and I hear the receptionist at my doctor's office asking me with bright plastic urgency, *Do you have the app to fill out your forms?*

I don't have the app, I say, and then I spend ten minutes of my hourglass life trying to recover my password, check my email for the login code, which I have ten seconds to input before it expires. Before we expire. Do I really need it? I ask.

Yes, he says. *This is where healthcare is headed. Everything will be on the app.* I wonder what would happen if I said no. Give me a piece of paper that will prick my finger and draw blood. Give me a knife to sharpen my tongue. Give me a sky

so blue I could crack it open with my bare hands. Watch me lay down my complacency and take off in the other direction.

Watch as I burn every part of me that isn't made of real. Watch me quietly smirk as I find nothing in the ashes but joy.

Explosive Ha! bits

Allan Lake

Pieces of poem fly in all directions
at all hours but poets have holy nets
attached to higgledy poplar branches
with which to pluck the lucky ones.
These are placed into above-shoulders
dove cote to gain strength and flight
feathers as they train to yodel instead
of coo. Debut unexpected country.

That accomplished, they are swallowed
whole, take up a residency within
windy cavity below shoulders.
Passers-by at the market are not sure
what to make of busker but then ...
attune to yodel frequency. Some dance,
some become their silliest selves and
some forget where they were going
and find themselves dog paddling
in a sea of flot *sam po*
em frag
ments.



Butterflies are Not Poets

Kathleen Fields

Look, kid, see the breaking orange wings floating like tissue above
a heaving radiator: buoyed and bobbing.

You don't have to make meaning out of these visitors.
What is there to make?

These sunset alchemists have a long road ahead, working
their own transformation; they can not stop to change
your spare tire of time, broken down jalopy, waiting
for a ride or a hand.

No other insect is tattooed on more people:
American Copper, Painted Lady, Monarch,
Queen Coral; go ahead and make meaning, but

fliers do not try to make meaning. That's not how this works.
It seems like you can get it right or wrong, but you can't.
Take a closer look, there are so many
ways to be human.





Or is it just another gull

S.D. Dillon

The ducks on the lake must have numbered a
hundred

Less one.

Their brown heads bobbed against February ice

Airy-thin

Under lukewarm rains. Fish feed below.

And in the distance,

A bald eagle:

The birds huddle at the final hour

S.D. Dillon

The moonbeam is a proboscis—
A hummingbird beak
Braided as an obelisk.
The Madonna scratches
At her eyes. And then—





*Fiction &
Creative Nonfiction*

BITTERLY COLD

IT'S ALL SO CYCLICAL

ANTHONY BROWN



I am the only grant-writing poet at my place of employment. I work in healthcare—the withering silence creasing from one end towards the desperation of undefined parameters on the other. I'm usually so damn stressed the first week of the semester. I have fragmentary writing that could be a mess—cohesion mending to the perfection mold I break out of. I am messy, dynamic, unique, confusing—my identity bipolar as Ohio weather.

Constellations of my personality reflect my confusing journey of what it means to be human— my tempest dawns on the bound running from the core of identity, cordon bleu demorphing into many things in the dead of night—all things must pass. I am used to my dark cyclical nature of life—eradication towards feelings of excitement, momentum, of lived experience. I am so busy—I don't have time to muse and understand what's happening within the world

around me—sucking me to a pulp—painful is not the word, nor is it confused.

*How much longer can I keep my
mojo?*

I've thought about it for a long time—when am I coming out? I tossed my dirty shoes into the washing machine, repression and suppression becoming my obsession—but does anybody really know who they are? A movie theatre stage—an act—my sexuality and identity confusing itself with one another. Right place, right time—not being able to drive for a few days because of this snowstorm at hand, though I have no snow or ice to scrape off of my car. It's like driving home in the middle of the night—scary yet peaceful—nobody is on the road and the lights are on—but nobody's home. Out of order, confusing, dark, yet, ironically juxtaposing with itself—like I am a hypocrite of myself and that I'm just a mere reflection of human nature and what it means to live in this society. I'm not sure if I can keep up for too much longer. I don't want to play the gambling game—it's all so cyclical.

My mind continues to be plagued—why is it that every time I look back, I kind of hate it? Is it this psychological tendency to where I can never be satisfied?

I'm astutely aware of it—but I feel horrendously sick. Heartbroken isn't the word. I'm rightfully

DONE.

It feels like a fever dream—terrifying to see no cars on the road with you and barely being able to see in front of you—running on no sleep.

*I don't really get a break from the
amount of confusing bullshit that
keeps hitting me every
week, do I?*

Just like the corporate world offers—unlimited coffee with creamer—it's going to get better, *it has to.*

Only a few know that there's that hallway behind the right-corner stacks in the book stacks where you can find the world on fire, yet again

*You'll have to strike me
down.*

I'm a person that can go to the bars as I please, though I'm not a huge fan of them in general—people standing in one place—people not moving—some people are just assholes.

Not really my forte.

Everything's going to be on fire—it's not going to be chill.

The world is a shitshow.

I'm improving, not making many big mistakes.

Anger is just boiling in me, there's too much going on in the country and I keep being asked to

donate donate donate...

At the same time, I just feel such a large lump of anxiety, I'm afraid that I may be falling a bit behind. Just another stressor lingering on my mind.

donate donate donate...

what's going to happen?

It had snowed very sparsely with just enough snow to stick—the wind rocking my world—it all felt

so surreal, I'm mesmerised.

What would I curate that I can't consciously think about now? After all I decided to

not waste time going back to sleep. All of my effort could've been in vain and for nothing—I would've been devastated.

Will my memories be a one and done kind of thing?

ANTHONY BROWN

A VIPER'S TOOTH

Alex Hull



One body tends to be enough for carrying home groceries. It is enough for reading and making a list. It is enough, even, to pay the rent in a single swing of a signature at the bottom of a check like one body does not drag one hundred hours behind it. But it is not enough on the path lined with Doric arms reaching toward a sleepy sky. Others share these halls; one body is enough to recognize that. But a door swishing soft carpet as it closes off a glowing room leaves one body useless. We sit, one body in a leather chair graced, over the two hundred years this room has stood, by the bodies of many important people, the other in a chair that also inhabits doctors' offices and courthouses, a chair that can be found anywhere.

We sit, one body in a leather chair graced, over the two hundred years this room has stood, by the bodies of many important people, the other in a chair that also inhabits doctors' offices and courthouses, a chair that can be found anywhere. One breath rises between us and a war breaks out. War and the stack of books on the floor take a useless body and make two strong ones out of its dust. Through the door's window, the same shape as the overhead fluorescents, a bored eavesdropper is no threat. War happens under and inside the onlooker's nose.

'I have been stung by a viper's tooth.'

'I believe the crucifix behind you is bugged.'

'I nearly fell victim to a sex trafficking ring behind the corner store last week.'

'I feel the pang of wisdom right here, below my belly button.'

Surrender and a ticking clock take two fighting bodies and drive a walk home between them. One body tends to be enough to take a swig of something before getting up to leave, enough to kiss its own fingertips and drag a path of spit along the Latin words above the door for the other to watch dry.

Tonight's Little Tale

A Lantern's Glow: GUIDING THE LOST HOME

Ms Kaye

There was once a small valley tucked beneath an old mountain—one of those quiet places where the world forgets to hurry. At the heart of that valley stood a single lantern, always glowing, even when storms prowled the sky. No one quite knew who kept it lit, only that its light never faltered.



One night, when the moon was a pale silver coin tossed against the clouds, a weary swallow flew into that valley. Her wings trembled from the long journey, and her breath was thin with exhaustion. She had lost her flock in a sudden, icy wind and had wandered alone for days, longing for a bit of warmth, a bit of kindness.

Drawn to the golden glow, she perched beside the lantern. Its warmth settled into her feathers, soothing the ache tucked beneath every breath. For the first time in many nights, she didn't feel alone.

“What keeps you burning?” she whispered to the lantern.

And though lanterns seldom speak, this one had lived long enough to borrow a few secrets from the stars.

“I stay lit,” it murmured, “because even one small point of light can guide a traveler home. That’s my purpose. To stay steady. To be here when someone needs me.”

The swallow closed her tired eyes. “But aren’t you afraid of the dark around you?”

The lantern gave the softest flicker, like a gentle laugh.

“The dark is only the backdrop that helps my glow be seen.”

So the swallow curled herself beside it, tucked beneath a whisper of warmth and the faint hum of purpose. The lantern kept watch through the night—quiet, constant, unhurried—until morning brushed the valley in pale gold.

When dawn arrived, the swallow’s strength had returned. She stretched her wings, feeling life return to them like a remembered melody. Before she lifted into the air, she bowed her small head to the lantern.

“Thank you,” she said. “You helped me rest enough to continue.”

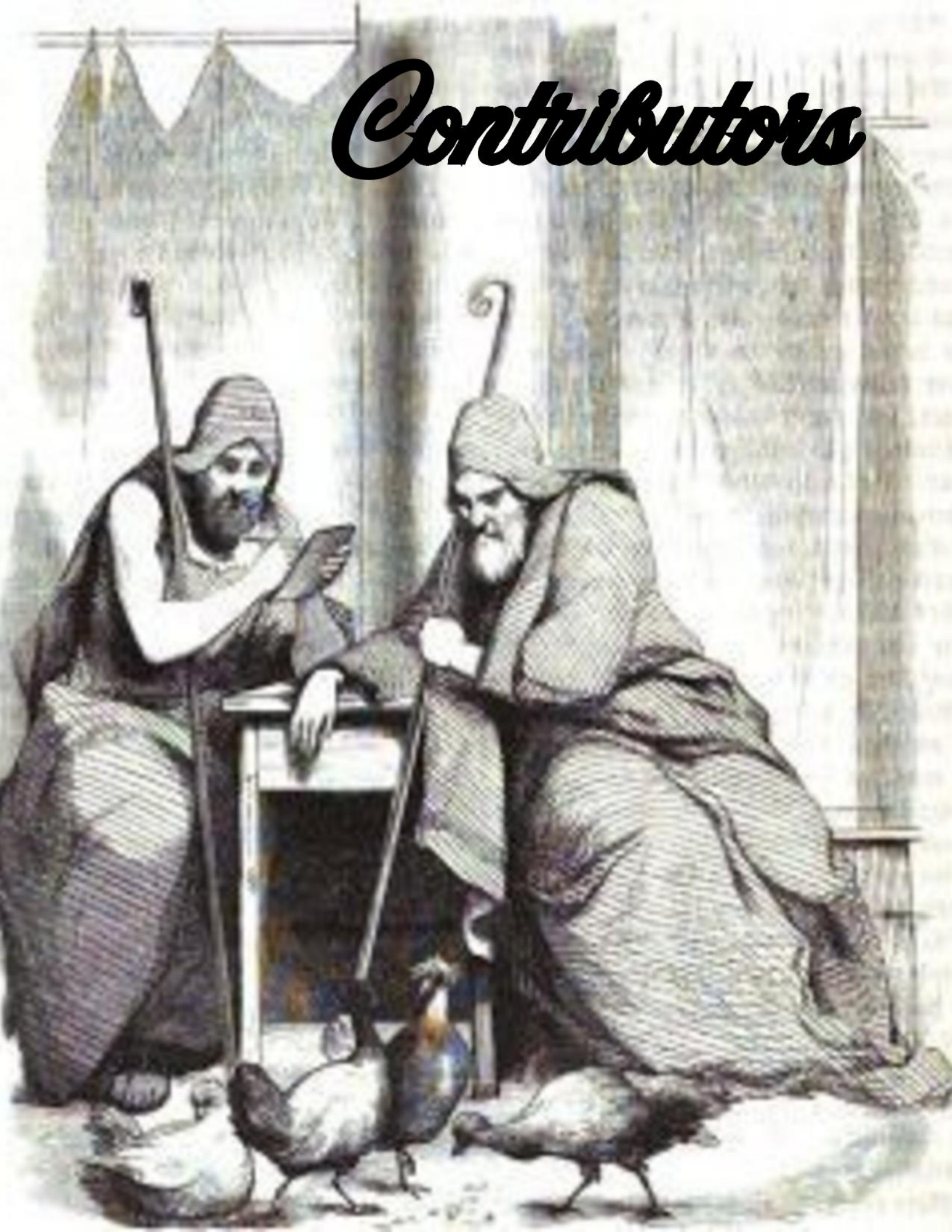
“Go gently,” the lantern replied.

“And whenever the world grows cold, remember... there will always be some light waiting for you.”

The swallow rose, gliding into the morning with calm, steady wings—no longer lost, no longer alone, carrying the soft glow of that lantern in her heart like a lullaby.



Contributors



contributors



Alex Hull is a writer from the American South living and writing in the Northeast. She writes short stories, flash fiction and poems. She sometimes reads to people at night in bars. Outside of her writing life, Alex works in community recovery and mental health.



Allan Lake is a migrant poet from Allover, Canada who now lives in Allover, Australia. Coincidence. His latest chapbook of poems, entitled '*My Photos of Sicily*', was published by Ginninderra Press. It contains no photos, only poems.



Anthony Brown is a fourth-year English major at the University of Cincinnati. He has over 300+ vinyl records and intertwines music with his writing frequently. Anthony's work has been published under *Flagship Magazine*, *Prism Undergraduate Journal*, *The Persimmon Review*, *Short Vine Journal*, and *Jimson Weed*.

contributors



Begüm Yilmaz was born in Turkey. She holds a B.Ed. in English Language Teaching and works as a writer, educator, and performing artist. She explores themes of displacement, liminality, and the tension between movement and belonging in her poetry and prose. Influenced by her background in dance and theatre, her work is shaped by rhythm, imagery, and physical texture. Her poetry has been published in *Poetry Anthology* (Big Thinking Publishing).

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Cameron Charles Martin is a poet and software engineer from Santa Cruz, California. His work has appeared in *Annulet* and *Tofu Ink Arts Press*. He lives in Berlin.



Chad Oness is the author of *Oracle Bones*, winner of the Lewis & Clark Poetry Prize, and *Water Becomes Bone*. His poems have appeared in journals throughout the U.S. He is the editor of Sutton Hoo Press, a literary fine press (www.suttonhoopress.com) as well as a new imprint The Last Press (www.thelastpress.com). His latest collection, *Works and Days*, is forthcoming from Cornerstone Press.

contributors



James Moraine (*Meditations on Permafrost*) lives in England and spends much of his life thinking of other places and times. He tells these stories to his daughter. His poetry has been published in *The Words Faire* and *Wildfire Words*. His poem *Magnolia*, won the Birmingham Writers Group Winter competition.



Jan Wieszorek (he/him) writes from Harbor Country of rural Michigan. He authored the poetry chapbooks *Prayer's Prairie* (Michigan Writers Cooperative Press, 2025) and *Forests of Woundedness* (Seven Kitchens Press, 2026). His poetry is forthcoming in *The MacGuffin* and *The Comstock Review*. Wieszorek is an awardee of the Poetry Society of Michigan and a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee. Visit him at janwieszorek.substack.com.



Kathleen Fields lives in Chicago. Her honors include a *Martha's Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing Poet & Author Fellowship* and a Seventh Wave Digital Residency. She is a reader at [Blue Stem Magazine](http://BlueStemMagazine.com) and a founding poetry editor of Pine Row Press. She holds an M.A. in Literature from Northwestern University. www.kathleen-fields.com and [@kathleenfieldswriter](https://twitter.com/kathleenfieldswriter).

contributors



KB Ballentine's latest collection *All the Way Through* was published in November 2024 from Sheila-Na-Gig Inc. Current books can be found with Blue Light Press, *Iris Press*, Middle Creek Publishing, and Celtic Cat Publishing. Published in *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Atlanta Review* and *Haight-Ashbury Literary Journal*, and others, her work also appears in anthologies including *Women Speak* (2025) and *The Strategic Poet* (2021). Learn more at www.kbballentine.com.



Leatrice's writing focuses on belonging and mental health. She has been published in magazines across the web. Recently, she was longlisted for *The Poet's Workshop 2026 prize*, and was a featured poet at the London St. Patrick's Day festival, reading from her debut collection, *Yearbook Signing* (Reconnecting Rainbows Press, 2026).



Lee Summers is a queer, multi-racial, neurodivergent English language development teacher and emerging poet. He grew up in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and currently resides in the Tidewater region of Virginia. His work has also appeared on *Substack* and *Tap Into Poetry*.

contributors



Melina Charis is a poet born and raised in Southern California who writes at the intersection of grief, womanhood, and the natural world. She is currently working on her first poetry collection. Learn more here: www.melinacharis.com.



Ms Kaye is a writer whose work spans fiction and non-fiction, exploring the quiet intersections between imagination and lived experience. Her fiction includes *The Sea Captain*, a lyrical meditation on solitude and perception, and the forthcoming *UnAssigned: The Presence in the Machine*, a speculative novel that examines the blurred boundaries between creation and consciousness. In her memoir *The Chronicles of My AI & I*, she turns inward, tracing the evolving dialogue between creativity and technology. Across genres, her writing is marked by precision, empathy, and a fascination with how thought becomes story.



N.J. Simat is a multidisciplinary writer from Atlanta Ga. She earned a Bachelor of Arts and Science from Georgia State, studied Creative Writing at Emory, and was professionally mentored by poets Kristina Marie Darling and Natasha Rao through Pocket MFA. She is the author of *Club Daze & The Subtle Realm*, a novel (2021), and her poetry was recently published by Lemon Jelly Press, and shortlisted for a *Tadpole Press Prize*. Simat is also the Executive Founder of PHIL LIT Journal. Outside of writing, she owns and operates Sanity Ranch Sanctuary in North Ga, where she helps animals in need of a soft landing.

contributors



S.D. Dillon is a poet from Michigan with an MFA from Notre Dame. His poetry has appeared recently in *Strange Daze*, *pioneertown*, *Poetry Super Highway*, and *Trash Wonderland*, and he received the 2025 *Visual Poetry Award from Bacopa Literary Review*. He can be found on Instagram at @sddillon50.



Stephen Brock is a North Dublin based writer and poet. He has previously been published in the *Martello Journal*, *The Stoney Writers' Collection*, *Sparks Magazine* and *Drawn to the Light Press*.



Tanya Laine is a life long artist who grew up in Miami, Florida before settling in Los Angeles, California. Her love for the written word began at a young age and carried her to study the dramatic arts at UNC Chapel Hill and in London. Tanya has written numerous scripts for the stage and the screen, and embodies the artistic spirit in all aspects of her life, whether that be in her next dramatic role or her most recent line of verse. She is particularly excited to be a part of *The Faoileánach Journal* because of her deep kinship with all things Irish.

You can follow her on IG for new poems @briefcandlepoetry.

contributors



Angel Williamson (they/them) An Arizona native, therapist, parent and artist. They draw their inspiration from nature and personal life experiences. Their fascination with life, death, and the human psyche is reflected passionately in their art. They own a small business (Lunar Flare Studios) with their husband Jason out of Tucson, Arizona.



Elzada James, Assistant Editor

Elzada James is an autistic mother-creative trying to make sense of the world through the written word, which she reckons will take the whole of her life and then some. Her work has won several Substack poetry contests and has been published, or is forthcoming, in *Opol*, *PHIL LIT Journal*, *Poetry & Purpose Magazine*, *The Groke*, and elsewhere. Her current special interests include orcas and native edible gardening, and she is always up for a good ghost story.

Elzada lives in the Pacific Northwest.



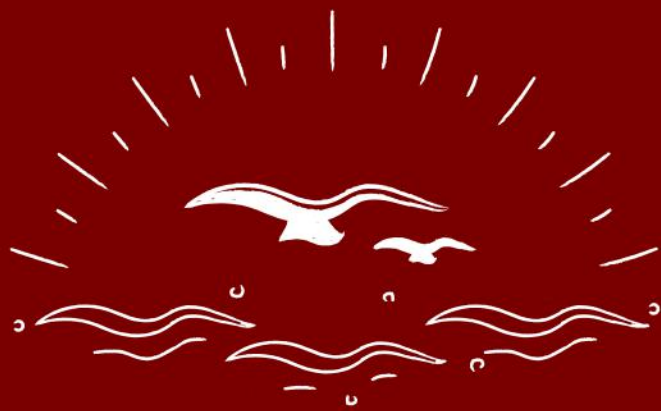
Melanie Cole, Co-Editor

Melanie Cole is a writer and poet from Tacoma, Washington. She holds a degree in International Relations from Richmond, The American International University in London. Melanie worked an eight-year career in disaster relief before moving on to the literary world. Melanie has been published in *Grit City Magazine*, *Dandelion Revolution Press*, *PHIL LIT Journal*, *Open Secrets Magazine*, among others. She has held residency at Sou'Wester Arts and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2025.

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.

William Blake, *Auguries of Innocence*





See you soon!

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