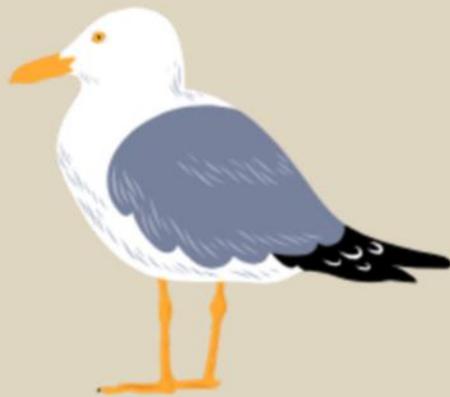




ISSUE FOUR: MIGRATION





faoileánach
JOURNAL



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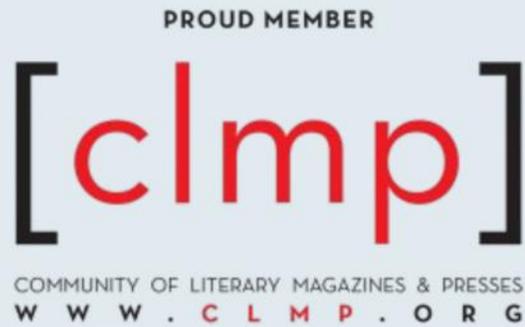
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Letter from the Editor

What to say of migration that we Americans don't already see in our everyday lives?

The writing in Faoileanach Journal's fourth issue, titled "Migration," examines migration as a topic of humanity: one that is ancestral, ecological, and political in nature. We know migration in cases of "people in crises"; often a "transnational phenomenon" as a result of globalization, and in response to ecological complexes. The poems in this issue involve birds, floatboats, bus commutes, grief, dew, pets, and work. Through poetry, prose, and fiction, our authors examine recurring ideas embedded in the history of migration, including, but not limited to: our access to natural resources, foreign policy, documentation and legibility, freedoms, and the memory of oral traditions, chosen family, and the rights of all peoples. For The Faoileanach Journal, migration is a human topic.

The English language in and out itself tells a story of migration. Though migration is a human history: a history of movements, art telling, civil rights, ecologies, also shaped by the complex push-and-pull factors of environmental change - you see migration in our dialects, accents, borrowed words such as cafe, army, beef (French), index, agenda, status quo (Latin), banjo, cola, jazz (Africa), bog, cross, galore (Celtic), banana, bodega, Creole (Spanish), pecan, muskrat, squash (Indigenous, North Americas), and more; not including the fact that English, at its core vocabulary, its language and grammar, are largely Germanic.

In Arthur Miller's Keynote Speech, On Censorship and Laughter (Orchestra Hall, Chicago, 1990), which can be found in the archival basement at the Illinois Humanities, with at least one copy in the Arthur Miller Papers at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas, calls censorship a probable "fear of alienation and the alienated." This version of censorship, one derived out of fear of being isolated, pulled out, and cast away is intriguing to me as we picture migration, where it is and its meaning, in the United States today.

The editor, Jessie (me, myself), and Melanie (Founding Editor) believe that no human is illegal on stolen land. We live on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and the ancestral lands of Indigenous nations: the Council of the Three Fires (Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi), as well as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox, Kickapoo, and Illinois Nations. We recognize these lands and the sovereignties of their peoples, who continue to be displaced and colonized today in the United States.

We are thrilled to share these writings with you and hope you, too, consider migration, its use, history, implications, and futures. We express our solidarity with the immigrant community and all members of local communities who are being targeted by ICE, local police, and federal agents. We encourage you to keep up with the writers in this issue, as well as organizations like the Center for Native Futures (Chicago), Just Seeds' Anti-Ice Archives (Digital), Interference Archive (Brooklyn), The History Workshop (Web), and the Indigenous Archive Collective Network (Web), who are all doing amazing community/advocacy work and research for basic human rights throughout the United States.

-Jessie McCarty
Editorial Curator
The Faoileánach Journal



NO

FREEDOM

TILL

WE'RE

EQUAL

poetry

JM
2025



Arrival

Jason O'Toole

*I'm an uncle again,
I say to the thieving frugivores flocking to
the tree outside my kitchen
window.*

*Wouldn't hurt you, waxwings
beaking berries as I press
down on my bagel, its
yolk running onto my dish.*

*My niece will surely love
these cherry birds,
on their flights through
Chicago, and enjoy eating eggs
of yard birds
once her teeth come in.*

Migration

Yong Takahashi

What does migration mean for children forced to leave their country, with a month's notice to fill in one suitcase?

Of course, our parents knew for years while applying for our visas, letting us make new friends, getting closer to our families.

When we landed in our new homes, they told us to fully immerse ourselves, become good Americans, speak like we belonged.

We were expected to be strong, never to utter a negative word, never to worry our parents, never cry.

What does migration mean for grandparents who had babies ripped from their arms? An abduction? Is this too extreme a word?

They are paid off eventually by arriving here to become full-time babysitters, cooks, maids while our parents toil in dirty factories or inferno-like dry cleaning centers.

Holding their aching backs, they yelled at us. We can't communicate anymore, only nodding or shaking our heads as we wait for our translators to come home.

What does migration mean for parents who must kowtow to the original settlers? Knowing deep down they were better educated, called doctors or professors a few years ago.

Our parents, who were forced to smile all day for pushy bosses or customers, making them too tired to smile for us, and too tired to be civil.

They expected us to be model citizens who made other parents envious, the golden child, the reason all their sacrifices were worth it.

What does migration mean for a tiny, displaced family?

Though anguish and small victories, our only option is to survive.

Sailing to the Queen City

Christopher Stolle

Dilapidated flatboat belches warnings from its tinny bell
Waves from the Ohio River slap the hull with an open hand
Plumes of smoke from Italian pipes begin to slowly swell
Entertainment comes from a French mime and a German band

Melodies sing wordless hymns and lonely serenades
Bedecked mimic tells stories with just arms and eyes
Winds whip his suspenders in rhythm with his charades
Children dance too close and their parents watch like spies

“Welcome home!” proclaim signs along the docks
What English they know is muffled by their accents
Burning lamps bring orange calm more than blue shocks
Maritime whistles turn the tides to hopes from laments

Long journey to freedom ends at the world’s largest pig farm
They’ll divest their dreams and give America its charm



Riding the Bus Without a Destination

Genevieve Sarnak

In the morning, a kid kisses
the window and the imprint lives
there all day. A young couple
breaks up, then makes up as the after
noon rush *whooshes* in.

At least once a day,
people press against
each other like sardine strangers:
the business woman white-knuckles
her bag
and pretends not to hear the man
next to her when he asks for change.

In the evening, a girl gets
on reeking of booze, tries
to short the fare, then swears
and spits as we pull away without her.

When the bus empties,
the sole noise
becomes loose change
rolling the aisle,
sliding back, forth,
then back:
the city's spin cycle.

That's my favorite time:
when I can turn off,
wake up somewhere new.

Between Worlds

Cole Simon

*I wake, seized suddenly
by this familiar repose; once a home,
haunted now.
Wafted sage, prayer,
charms of sullied hope, now the salt;
on Elysian fields I seek
excuses. Here,
I know the rites—a knock.
Great chasm of silence, nothing between us
but a stare.*

*Cast in honeyed dew of morning,
tensed, breath falters. Children shriek on,
sliding—existing between realms,
heart and mind. Scattered parts
betray the self.
So keen to be reborn,
unburdened; arise with neither
treasure nor trifle.
The new sun,
rising to be molded. I wake.*





The Meadowlands

Sarah Voight

They fled the polluted land.
Water that once nourished them,
was now filled with contaminants.

Truck horns warned them,
they got smoke signals from tall gray stacks.
Generations of osprey never hatched.
The fish simply couldn't live.

Decades of destruction,
barren and broken, but,
The osprey returned to their homeland.

Through the work of loving hands,
the water was cleansed.
Osprey eggs broke open again.
Strength-
lives in the meadowlands.

The Crow

Alice Carlson

A light switches on inside the square window,
the life inside now yellow- an existence framed.
From the leafless tree beside the brick building
I watch, a witness to your silent being.

Above us, the grey sky begins to purple,
the shade deepening despite itself as
the light fades, and the sun sinks below our horizon,
illuminating distant elsewhere.

I, one time, flew Westward at sunset,
following the sun's setting, drawing out her retreat for longer than two black eyes were meant to see.
I felt guilty, indulging like this, so now I let sunset slip past me and

here comes the moon, sliding across the sky like a cue ball aimed at nothing, wandering until it hangs, suspended, between us, a curtainless window and a crow.

Do you know that time is empty until it is filled?
How do you fill yours, in the place beyond your frame?

Do you wait for plums to ripen while you comb your long tangled hair? Suck on mints until they dissolve into nothing, shake sand from your shoes, rub lavender until the scent lingers on your fingers, skip rocks and count the ripples before they disappear?

Do these beating wings remind you of motion?
My flight, of the temptation of change?
When did you last hear the sound of a bird hitting glass?

From a leafless tree beside a brick building,
I watch a yellow window.
The suspended moon is an illusion, and too soon, her transit will resume.

All the Ways I Can't Go Home

Kendra Whitfield

Falling through the jagged board in the fence, the one the neighbour kid tried to chop through while playing "Shining" was the summer my dad got laid off for drinking behind the meat counter.

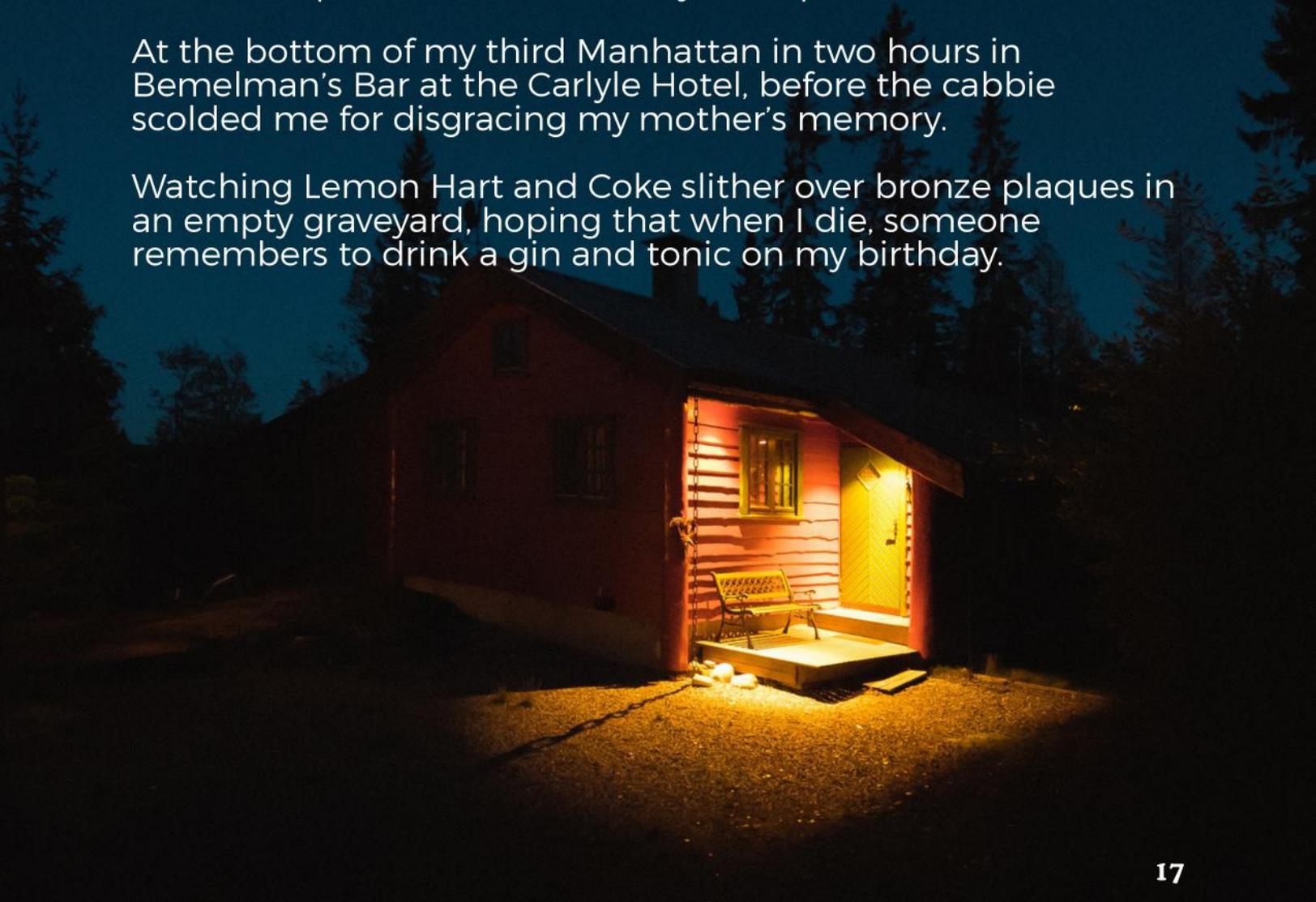
Riding the bus back from feeding my grandmother, hoping that dad would be passed out so I wouldn't have to endure his slurred and insincere inquiries.

Driving into the garage after a weekend of mother-pleasing, mistaking the drying wet suit for my husband's corpse, not knowing whether to scream or laugh.

Speeding through January fog, telling the doctor at the other end of the phone that it was okay to stop resuscitations.

At the bottom of my third Manhattan in two hours in Bemelman's Bar at the Carlyle Hotel, before the cabbie scolded me for disgracing my mother's memory.

Watching Lemon Hart and Coke slither over bronze plaques in an empty graveyard, hoping that when I die, someone remembers to drink a gin and tonic on my birthday.



Silly Goose

Lindsey Cathcart

North of nowhere lies a pond
where scummy barges rumble with bullfrogs.
Summer incandescent
lazing geese a la La Grande Jatte;
one million feathers on two hundred wings.

West of windward, highways billow
in the turbulence of equinox. The
hourglass draining,
but longer nights give way to
restful days.

South of somewhere, an Anserine oasis:
tiny umbrellas perch'd and endless margaritas slurp'd.
Desperate surrender
one keen tourist throws his suitcase away
and checks in for endless summer.

East of elsewhere, dormancy melts
into puddles of mud and rivers of
lust.

One hundred ninety-eight wings, northbound, yearn for
repose,
while two find peace eternally.

Weft

Jenna K Funkhouser

From the throat of the night,
the cities below are mere
embroideries of gold
on the weathered loom of the earth.

Deep down, in a small hare's den,
fear and joy beat their pulse
and a fox prowls the long, white field.

Everything that you want, it is not here.
Everything that you saw, is missing.

The underside of the earth's weft
is an infinitesimal labyrinth of meanings.
Scents of moss rise
in the dew's dark.

We Should Do More Than Exist

Linda M. Crate

as i watch
my country slide into
facism,

i wish i could be
anywhere but here;

people praising
horrific treatment and
even death of other
human beings makes my
stomach churn with
disgust and rage—

immigrants just want
a better life for their
families, that shouldn't even
be a crime.

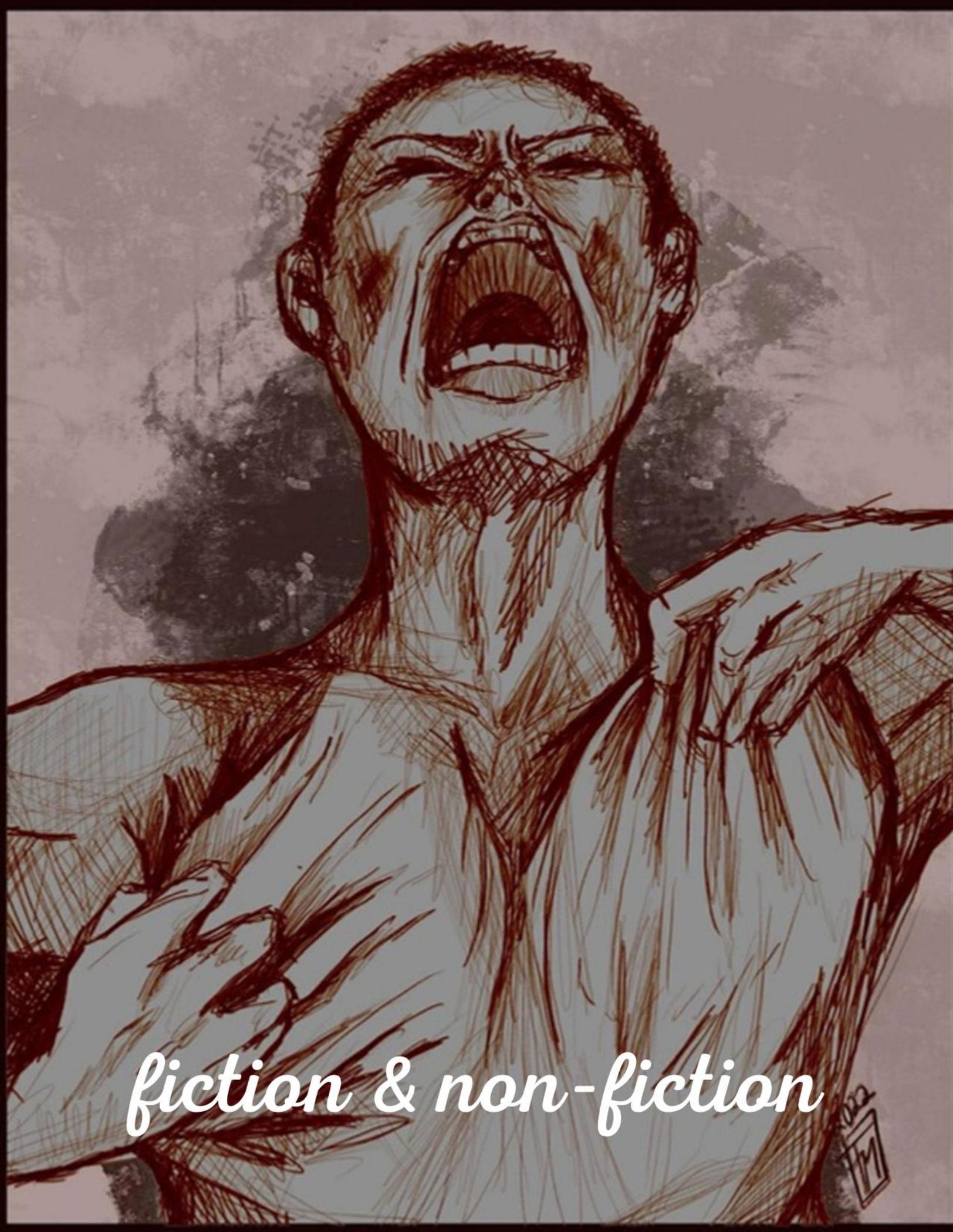
borders are lines we make
on maps and we pretend
that we belong to them,
but each of us is one—

why can't we see that we all
belong to one another?

that each of us is a part
of a collective whole, and
nature, too?

animals migrate,
people should be able to
move where they need to,
in order to fully live;

we want to do more
than merely exist—we should.



fiction & non-fiction

2022
[Signature]



Marcus
RECLAIMED

R.E. Harris

The bus doors hissed shut right as Marcus turned the corner. He stood, taking in the sound - like the city was exhaling disgust at him, specifically.

His briefcase swung against his knee. The leather handle was already sticky with sweat even though fog was choking the street like a wet gauze. The 38 Geary pulled away, its taillights two red eyes winking at his failure.

"Wait!"

His voice disappeared.

Marcus stood there. 8:47.
Daniel from accounting

would purse his lips into that small anus of disapproval he saved for people who couldn't even catch a bus on time. Twelve minutes until the next one. Twelve minutes of standing here like an idiot in shoes that cost three hundred dollars, yet squeaked when he walked.

Fuck it.

He started jogging. The briefcase banged his thigh. His girlfriend bought him these shoes. Said they'd help. As if Italian leather could make white people see past his skin. The bus sat fat and smug at the next light.

Marcus ran.

The bus doors hissed shut right. Something weird happened. His breathing evened out. The briefcase stopped mattering. He was actually gaining in on it. The bus lurched forward and so did Marcus, tie flying back like he was someone important, someone with somewhere to be. Someone who mattered.

He caught up to it at Fillmore.

Inside, the usual suspects slumped against windows. Purple Scarf Lady. Giants Cap Grandpa. All of them marinating in their own quiet desperation, scrolling past other people's fake lives while their real one leaked away minute by minute. The bus was an aquarium. They were the fish.

Marcus laughed - this ugly bark that came from his stomach.

He looked at that bus and something snapped clean. The light changed green and the bus wheezed forward, but Marcus was already past thinking about catching it.

"Come on, you piece of shit!"

He careened down the sidewalk, dodging poles and benches.

A mother yanked her stroller away from him at the last minute as he strode by at full speed. Yeah, lady. Black guy running and yelling. Call someone.

The bus fell back like it was standing still.

Marcus's legs pumped harder. The neighborhood morphed around him. Victorians that used to pulse with life - musicians in the basement, somebody's tía cooking on the stoop, kids doing homework on the porch - now they were hollow. Airbnbs. Investment properties. Empty most of the year. Fresh battleship-gray paint over what used to be electric blue, canary yellow, deep purple. The owners probably lived in Atherton. Probably had never met their neighbors.

His corner store was gone. In its place: a shop selling candles that cost more than his monthly PG&E bill. Waxy columns named "Meditation" and "Renewal." As if the scent of burning eucalyptus could fill the hole where your soul used to be.

The mural on the laundromat - this gorgeous thing, all these Black and brown faces looking hopeful - painted over.

Just flat beige now. Landlord probably thought it hurt property values.

He passed the construction site. Another glass phallus climbing toward heaven. The jackhammers sounded like the city screaming. The billboard promised luxury. This used to be Mrs. Chen's garden. She grew actual food here. Fed people. Taught kids that tomatoes came from dirt, not Whole Foods. Before long, a developer decided the land was worth more empty.

Marcus's lungs burned but the burn felt clean, like cauterizing a wound.

Downtown swallowed him. The financial district pressed in - all those buildings designed to look important, to make you feel small. Each one blocking more sky, like they wanted to own even the light. Marcus recalled coming here with his father. He was maybe eight. They got ice cream at the Ferry Building, watched ships and the men working near the water's edge. Men who did real things with their hands. Before the algorithms came. Before they made his father redundant.

His dad drank himself dead by 56.

Marcus ran faster.

The morning rush thickened. All these people in their costumes, clutching phones like they were afraid someone might ask them to look up, to actually see. Streaming into buildings where they'd spend the day moving money around, creating nothing, producing nothing, just shuffling numbers in a shell game where the house always wins. He dodged through them. His jacket flapped open. His briefcase swung wild. Some guy in a blue suit yelled "Watch it!" but Marcus was already gone.

There. His building. Fifty hours a week minimum. Analyzing market trends for people who already had more money than their great-grandchildren could spend. Writing reports no one would read. Sitting in meetings about meetings. His life measured in Excel cells and Outlook invites and the slow erosion of whatever he used to believe about himself.

The fountain in the plaza shot water in computer-programmed arcs. Even the water had to perform here. Had to fall exactly where it was told.

Marcus's heart crashed against his ribs, over and over.

His shirt clung to him, a wet membrane. His feet throbbed, hot and raw inside his expensive shoes. Other employees filtered through the revolving doors - those doors that keep spinning whether you go in or not, whether you exist or not. Security guards with their metal detectors and their dead eyes. Everyone sleepwalking through security theater toward their climate-controlled coffins.

He should stop. Should breathe. Should become presentable. Should walk through those doors and apologize and pretend today was like every other day, would be followed by another day exactly the same, a string of identical days leading to a retirement party where people would say nice things they didn't mean before forgetting his name by Monday.

His legs kept pumping.

The fountain got close. He could smell the chlorine trying to mask the mineral rot underneath. His briefcase felt like it was full of stones. Like he was carrying his own death around. Like a casket, with his dissolved dreams inside he'd toted blindly for years.

Twenty feet. Ten.

The security guard looked up. Started to smile. Started to lift his hand in a wave, this small acknowledgment that Marcus was a person he recognized, a regular, someone who belonged here.

Marcus cut hard left.

He launched himself over the fountain's wall. Hung suspended in the air for one impossible second—between the him that clocked in and the him that could still choose. The water waited below, moving the only way it remembered how before someone told it to stop.

He crashed through the surface.

The cold was a slap. Perfect. It filled his nose, his ears, his mouth. Soaked through everything— his suit, his shirt, his skin. His briefcase hit the bottom with a sound like a body falling. Above, muffled shouting. People gather to watch the show. He stayed under. Let the water hold him. Let it wash off whatever he'd been pretending to be.

When he surfaced, he was laughing and choking and maybe crying.

Couldn't tell. Didn't matter. He stood there in knee-deep fountain water, clothes plastered to him, and looked at the crowd.

Karen from HR. His boss, Tom. The security guard speaking urgently into his radio like Marcus was a bomb threat.

He reached down. Grabbed his briefcase. Lifted it overhead like a trophy. Water geysered from every seam.

"I QUIT!" he screamed at all of them, at the buildings, at the manicured trees in their concrete prisons, at the whole neutered gutted sold-off corpse of the city. "I FUCKING QUIT!"

And standing there in the fountain—water everywhere, everyone staring, sirens probably coming—Marcus felt his pulse for the first time in years. Felt the ghost of the city that used to exist under all this glass and greed. His father's hand in his. Mrs. Chen's garden in full bloom. Every mural, every mom-and-pop shop, every person and place erased to make room for more money. But also, this: his own lungs taking in air. His own feet on the ground.

His own life, whatever was left of it, finally his again.

Water streamed off him onto the concrete. Finding its own way back. The way water does when you stop telling it what to be.



in lieu of
CHURU

Kofi Opam



Late last month, on a windy winter Friday, at approximately 5:20 pm, I made the impossible decision to say goodbye to George, my cat companion and closest friend of the last 14 years. And to say it feels like my heart has broken into a million bits of meow mix, that it feels like it was smashed by a semi truck and currently lines the highway like so much tuna-crab Churu? Well. What is there to say?

Here is a song from the Haitian crossroads; my people sing it to Papa Legba, the spirit who ferries messages among and between the living and the dead

*Legba nan baye-a
Legba nan baye-a
Legba nan baye-a
se ou ki pote drapo
se ou ki pare soley pou lwas yo*

Legba stands in the doorway. Legba holds the keys. Legba is ready for the sun.

George, I know you cannot abide a closed door, and I know that you know that Legba *allegedly* prefers dogs. I also know that if anyone is to convince him to behave so out of character, it's you.

* * *

Regina George (George for short) lived with me in four different apartments in New York, sat at my feet in the Uhaul to Philly, came with me out west to Iowa and back again. She watched the

squirrels on our back deck in Boston, slept with me in my mom's basement after that Boston school decided I was much too crazy to teach their kids.

She was always there, her tail up and curved like a sooty black question mark, she was there the day I met Sar, she was there on Sar's lap for the 15-hour drive from Brooklyn to Missouri, she kept me alive.

Legba nan baye-a?

* * *

In Haiti, Legba is at once an old man and a young boy, and George is at once the milkfed newborn in my arms and the teenager to my *#girdad* and the elderly woman I shared a life with. For the time we were in each other's lives, she knew me the best of any living thing, when I came home from the psych ward she was there (both times). She saw me fall to the floor when Kwame called and said "Grandma's dead" and she came to sit with me.

On that March night, when B asked for the first time, if I wanted them to call me "he" call me "Kofi", and I whispered "yes", and she did, and I cried and cried, George was there, asleep, on my chest, purring. She was there for all my surgeries and all my recoveries, the viscera and nightmares and pills, she was there and she never once got my name or pronouns wrong.

She was always there, she was just here, she kept me alive.

* * *

George is right here when I get home from applying for food stamps, and in the window when I get my MFA acceptance letters. She is here when the radiator breaks and spews soiled water onto the wall next to our bed and everything molds, and on the back porch during lockdown (watching the crows and owls and cardinals that will take over Iowa City that spring), and on the pink couch by the window in the mid-Missouri sun, she keeps me alive.

When the flashbacks get too great and I need to hide in my bedroom closet, alone, no noise, nothing, she is right here, pawing at the door and scrambling inside and settling onto my shoulder in the dark. "We're here," I am whispering in her velvety ears. "We're right here. We're safe."

I am unfathomably sad that you won't be here--screaming the whole way--on the six-hour drive up and away to Chicago. I don't know what to do with myself knowing you won't be here, you won't be there, in the doorway, holding the keys, preparing the sun. Don't you remember what Pilate said? "You can't just fly on and off and leave a body."

* * *

What is there to say?

George loved listening to death metal and watching terrible reality tv with sar (Regina George: huge Love Island fan) she loved having big feelings in her special box in the living room, she loved being an only child (she lived with no less than 5 cats and 3 dogs, including a 150-pound Alaskan malamute whom she, upon meeting, promptly slapped in the face) , she loved wearing hats, especially the pineapple and pizza, she loved her kicker toys, especially the carrot and the pickle

What is there to say?

George loves nicknames (by the end she had at least a baker's dozen (welcome to the stage, Miss Regina George Santos George Michael Opam!)), she loves her water with ice in it, she loves when I read her tarot, she loves watching Sar clip his toenails, which disgusts me to no end. She loves every single human she has ever met, unless they are a stranger in hiking boots or the neighborhood cat (who is, appropriately, entirely obsessed with her).

What is there to say?

In the last few months of her life, she loves chasing the neighborhood cat off our front lawn like a side character in *Gran Torino* and she loves terrorizing Sar with the mice she kills (after having never killed a single thing for most of her life, in her last six months she will gleefully murder at 3 rogue rodents and present them to us as beautiful, misguided gifts) and she still, inexplicably, even in her old age, loves death metal. (Cue up the Cannibal Corpse and watch her come running!)

* * *

And when she gets sick I never question the bills I can't afford, when I am too depressed to feed myself I still find a reason to put another case of treats on my credit card, i get lost in the raw pet food aisle at Hyvee, she keeps me alive—

—and the last lost days were so hard, when she couldn't walk up the stairs Sar would carry her, and I set up sleeping bags next to her favorite places so she could see us when she fell asleep and when she woke up, and in the morning she'd meow and purr and eat her treats and we'd smile and smile and say to each other, *maybe she's getting better!*

—and I was so mad at her in the last few weeks, so mad at her symptoms and her sickness, mad at her constantly begging for food and rooting in the trash like a fucking raccoon and pissing constantly and shitting constantly and crying constantly, and without her, I am a live fucking wire, a hot thing in the street, a hailstorm a tornado a natural fucking disaster, I say to my therapist that my anger feels like it's too big for my body, like I'm shaking all over with violence, George, I don't know who I am if I'm not your dad.

* * *

when dr green told me she didn't think there was much more we could do

when dr green told sar that she thought george had a few weeks at best

when dr green told us it might be time to make some challenging decisions when dr green told us that we had done all we could and were great dads

when dr green said it would be okay for us to bring her favorite foods (hot dogs and french fries from Steak 'n Shake) to that last appointment

when dr green attached her IV with pink tape

when dr green asked if i wanted to hold her

when dr green said, I'm so sorry guys, she's gone.

And when I stood up, and walked, and fell to the ground outside the office when i got home and the porch light was off and there were no little green eyes and no little pink nose in the window

* * *

She is being cremated with her lesbian mouse and triceratops hat. I sleep with her Barbie car bed at night. She kept me alive on many more than a few occasions, because even if I didn't want to be alive, I didn't want to leave her alone even more.

George, you are the thing itself and not the myth

You the ribs of the disaster

You wait at the gate

(George nan baye-a)



The Forty- First Day

SELURONG ARRIVAL

Monica T. S. Flores

Three datos peer at turquoise ocean. They squat, spears angled respectfully away from each other, and bend their heads. Their tubaw head-coverings touch: one red, one blue, one green. They look through a porthole in the floor. They are brothers, and dutifully make decisions on behalf of their clan.

Waves swell beneath the craft.

Their kinfolk rest in the vaults.

This hovering ship of the gods, a gift of Bathala, cruises without a pilot. They have been traveling for forty days. At first, being on board fills them with fear, and a feeling of being crushed; however, as unseen hosts generate food in the galleys, and the metal roof shelters them from rain, and a greenish glow shields them from lightning, amazement replaces their mistrust. "Tingnan mo sa ibaba," says the middle brother. *Look below.*

He is the only one who exhibits doubt. His leg collided with the metallic drone that netted him and transported him here: his injury from being taken aboard is now healing. His bruise—first purple—turns yellow against his brown skin.

The first week on the ship he burped constantly from unbridled anxiety, but now appears calm—even thoughtful—as he remembers the nets, the blinding lights, the roaring mechanical arms that raised him and his brothers, and all of their people up from the flood: the machines saved them. He wears blue that's been darkened by octopus ink. He appears cautious: an unease keeps him mindful in decision-making.

The other brothers walk in wonderment more than doubt. This ship fascinates them: a pillar spouts water, which they collect in clear drinking-vessels.

Mats arise from the floor at nightfall before they sleep, and sink down after sunrise, after hidden horns blow to wake them. Screens all 'round, like amakan split-bamboo mats, display wonders: pale-skinned and black-skinned peoples, creatures in stripes with tufted ears, creatures with long necks, or backplates of armor.

They see sky and stars, globes of green and blue—a sphere shows a darkened spot, like a reddish eye within rotating brown clouds. The datus look below: white-capped waves, emerald jungle, sandy beach, stony rockfall. Brown rivers meander steadily down mountain creases, with waters shimmering and sparkling in the afternoon's heat.

The datus raise their eyebrows at one another. They seek a home for their people. They grow weary of endless rain. If they are to make landfall, when?

Now is the time, always now.

A flitting orange bird caws and laughs beneath, and the youngest datu, in green, takes aim. He shoots his arrow through the hole in the floor, and it pierces the transparent barrier, but misses the bird. With its wings fluttering, the bird darts away in merriment. "Pupunta tayo doon," proposes the eldest datu, in red. We're going there.

His tapis is dyed from the crushed carapaces of beetles. He purses his lips to point down, and looks at the one in blue, who is rubbing the bruise on his leg. The one in blue is the advisor. He stores up knowledge and his patience resists change. He must align now with his eldest brother's counsel.

"Bababa na ba tayo?" asks the one in green, whose tunic the elderwomen dip one hundred times in the mossy pool. Shall we go downward? He observes his brothers. This one moves with coolness and a clean heart. As scout and hunter, he keeps his mind open, his ears always listening. He raises his eyebrows to question the others, while gesturing below. He sees creatures who walk upright: giants, wolf-warriors, horse-people with black hooves. Oceanfolk with silver tails dart in the shallows. Unknown creatures slither in the primeval.

What of them? The brothers know danger. They've seen anger and grieving. They know pain, and famine, and abandonment, fear, the strain of endless battle. They know years of scattered harvest, of villages where only the old and young remain. They know, too, of gifts that grace their people: patience and humor in their elderwomen's songs as they encourage each other during weaving, compassion and integrity from their men, who hunt silently, and do not complain. The brothers know of fortitude from the women, who give birth while humming, and keep their eyes fixed upon on the stars.

When the rains fell in torrents, for a moon and more, the rising waters forced them to seek a new homeland.

'Twas Bathala who found them, through mercy. 'Twas His servants who carried them to this ship.

'Twas He who navigates them to this blessed place. What a generous present! Verdant islands and sapphire ocean—how marvelous, how well-formed a gift.

They agree: it's time to descend. "Ipunin mo sila," the eldest declares. Collect the others. Mechanical beings emerge from silent crevices, and spin on wheels to the holding-tanks, and unlock the vaults to prepare the people for the journey. The craft slows to a stop and remains stationed above a protected place which is nestled at the foot of shaded rolling hills. A stream burbles nearby, and timber poles lay stripped, chopped, and stacked in bundles. All has been made ready for their arrival.

The people emerge, and yawn and rub their eyes. Liquid droplets fall from their precious hands, their precious feet, while incense smoke rises off their foreheads. The leader beckons the youngest to him, bids her to look well on the people. This child, whose fingers do not yet touch her opposite shoulder when she drapes her arm over her head, one day grows up to wear the blue tunic.

Tayo na. Let's go, beckons the eldest. All of us go together.

The people grab hemp ropes and secure them to the control-room railing, then drop through the porthole to climb down. The last woman, obese, gets stuck in the hole, but she laughs out loud, and decides to stay aboard. Her backside turns into a Moon for the remaining people, who clamber down, down, down, to set foot on our present land.



CONTRIBUTOR BIOS



Contributor Bios



Alice Carlson is a writer based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She attended college in Los Angeles, California, where she studied English literature and fell in love with the ocean and mountains.



Christopher Stolle has many roles: partner, uncle, son, music aficionado, baseball enthusiast, and, occasionally, writer. His writing has been published by Indiana University Press, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Coaches Choice, *Roe River Review*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, and *Flying Island*, among many others.



Cole Simon is an author and poet, exploring themes of masculinity, love & loss, and life abroad.



Genevieve Sarnak is a librarian based in Western, MA. Her poetry's been curated by *PHIL LIT Journal* and is forthcoming in *Scapegoat Review*. She's hard at work on a young adult dystopian novel. When not writing, she's likely petting all the dogs, reading, or releasing stickers into the wild.

Contributor Bios



Jason O'Toole is the 2025 recipient of the Amy Lowell Prize. He is the author of the poetry collection, *The Strange Misgivings of the Sadly Gifted*, with a second, collage-illustrated edition out now.



Jenna K Funkhouser is a Pacific Northwest-based artist and poet. Recent poems have been published by *Penwood Review*, *Stirring Lit*, and selected for the *Ashland Poetry Press 2026 Broadside Contest*. You can find her ekphrastic collection, *Bright Inhabited Lives* (Kelsay Books), and other recent work at jennakfunkhouser.com.



Kendra Whitfield lives on the edge of the northern boreal forest. When not writing, she can be found basking in sunbeams on her deck or swimming laps at the local pool. Her work has been anthologized by *Community Building Art Works*.



Kofi Opam is a PhD candidate in creative writing and literature at the University of Missouri. Their work has previously been published in *The Atlas Review* and *Seventh Wave Magazine*. They live in Chicago with their husband.

Contributor Bios



Linda M. Crate (she/her) is a Pennsylvanian writer whose poetry, short stories, articles, and reviews have been published in a myriad of magazines, both online and in print. She has sixteen published chapbooks, the latest being: *fairytale love* (Magique Publishing, October 2025).



Lindsey Cathcart is a naturalist, land steward, and educator at home in the temperate deciduous forests of eastern North America.



Monica T. S. Flores lives in Michigan and works in project management. She revisits Filipino folklore and myth in her writing, mixing mermaids, giants, manananggal, and engkanto enchanted ones with cryptids, aliens, and the undead. She's excited to explore what makes us human through the lens of her immigrant perspective.



R.E. Harris is a writer living in the South. He surrounds himself with pens, puzzles and inquiry.

Contributor Bios



Sarah Voight is a poet who channels nature, ritual, and transformation into her work. She thrives on tension and liminality. When she isn't writing, she works for her local library and at an environmental non-profit advocating for environmental justice. You can find her at her blog: thismagicalife.org



Yong Takahashi is an author of fiction and poetry. She was a finalist in The Restless Books Prize for New Immigrant Writing, Southern Fried Karma Novel Contest, Gemini Magazine Short Story Contest, The Writers' Mastermind Short Story Contest, and The Sexton Prize for Poetry.

Contributor Bios



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.



Jessie McCarty is an Irish-American writer from the South and information professional. Their poetry, in English and Gaeilge, uses depictions of the American South and Midwest as memory tools. They are Co-Editor of *Faoileanach Journal*, (ed. Sean Pessin, Paul Vangelisti). Previous collections include *The Bovine Huff* (Track and Field Studios, 2021) and the self-published artist book, *Our Fairy Diary* (2023)



Melanie Cole is a writer and poet from Tacoma, Washington. Her work has been published in *Grit City Magazine*, *Dandelion Revolution Press*, *PHIL LIT Journal*, *Creative Colloquy*, and *The Masters Review*, among others. Her debut book, "BALDWIN," was released in October of 2025. She is currently Co-Editor of the *Faoileánach Journal*.

Dear Readers,

My name is Melanie, and I am one of the team members behind what has grown to be The Faoileánach Journal. First off, you may be scratching your head over our journal's name--how to pronounce it and what it means. "Faoileánach" was an Irish phrase that was taught to me by a woman on Substack, named Briana. It means "where the seagulls gather." If you're still stuck on pronunciation, it is pronounced "fwee-lan-ach."

Now that we have all the logistics sorted out, I am writing to you today with some celebratory news. This issue is our fourth issue, which means we have now been circulating the journal for an entire calendar year!

When I started The Faoileánach Journal, my vision was twofold: one, I wanted to have a place where writers could feel like participants in their own work, and two, to produce a product that is always free to submit and read.

I quickly put together a website, a theme for submissions for our first issue, and even offered a \$100 prize for best story or poem. I waited for submissions to roll in, and to my surprise, they did.

Since then, The Faoileánach Journal has published 52 writers, commissioned four covers exclusively for us by artist Angel Williamson, and received hundreds of submissions. Our journal champions new writers in any way we can. We also welcome international submissions. We have welcomed writers from countries like India, Nigeria, Canada, Ireland, England, Scotland, Bangladesh, Australia, France, The Bahamas, and more.

What started as a project that was something with just a hope of wings has turned into something unexpected. Before *Issue Three: Estuaries*, I received a cold email from someone looking to offer editing services. Their resume and work were impressive. Jessie McCarty joined the team as my co-editor and has done amazing work since, including editing this entire issue.

The Faoileánach Journal is not stopping anytime soon. Thank you all who have been along for the flight and who continue to read, submit, and share our work.

Sincerely,
Melanie Cole
The Faoileánach Journal.





SEE
YOU
SOON

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