

# chasing shadows

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home

CHASING  
SHADOWS

issue 02 – december 2021

home

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The idea for the second issue of Chasing Shadows came from my own experiences of moving and resettling in a new home during the pandemic. The amount of effort and change it took me to call a new space my home was deeply profound and unsettling. It took me a while to adjust and "make" the place my own. That's when I thought to keep this very word as the theme for the issue. They are based on the background of the ongoing pandemic and little real-life contact, lockdown, and isolation.

When curating this journal of poetry, prose, and art, I found that the theme of belonging has been intricately woven throughout. Every page is a reflection on the theme in its utmost calibre- homesickness, an ode to a city, shelter, etc. What's more, this issue reflects that home can be a person too.

This issue looks at the fluid idea of "home" shared by various contributors from different parts of the world. The objective is to let the reader find relatability in this journal's content and question what or who exactly is home.

***40 contributors, 40 distinct meanings of home.***

## **EDITORIAL**

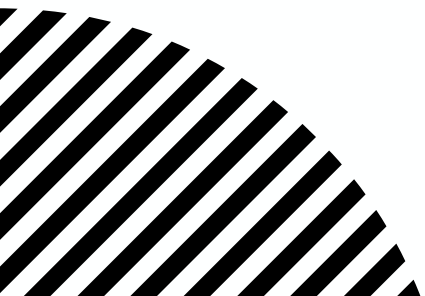
*Halin Roche,*  
*founder & editor-in-chief*

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searching for  
**HOME**



For the past year or so, I've been exploring what I like to call 'Personal Geographies'- delving into memories, places, and experiences that mark my journey. This painting has evolved from introspections during a year like no other. As a nomadic expatriot, I ponder on the meaning of 'home'.

Particularly now, when we are largely confined to our own little bubbles and physical connections with near and dear ones that tether us have been severed. Home is a sanctuary, a place of comfort and solace, an anchor in times of trouble, where you put up your feet at the end of the day. I've come to realize that for me it is not a physical place-a country, a city, or a house, but the five people I hold dearest. They are my four walls, my safety net, my warm comforter, my lighthouse.

*- Amrita Tandon*



# NOMADS

Home isn't a place.  
It's a who  
or a what.  
It's in our people  
and our hearts.

That we follow,  
and allow  
to guide us  
through the winds  
of life. We get lost  
everyday but never lose  
our way. We're free.

We aren't tangled  
in roots of life.  
We lay them in the  
dirt tracks we wander,  
as breadcrumbs to  
maybe  
find our way back.

We are the footprints  
on the track  
that you ponder why.  
Wandering, in wonder  
at all to be seen,  
the marvel,  
that is this world.



- *George Fisher*

# HOME

What does it mean to have a place to call home? Is it the  
smell of oak floors, the taste of the apple cider air? The  
sound of fire popping, whispering, and truth or dare.

What does it mean when the word home  
brings to mind a face, rather than a residence?

When I think of home, I think of you.

- *R. Skye Lambert*



# SPLICED

There is no word in the English language for the way I feel / driving away from my childhood home, back to my house / It is not nostalgia, homesickness or déjà vu, but a prickling of unease; a longing to stay

I leave one home  
(where all my past selves dwell,  
each room haunted by  
echoes of who I once was -  
an innocent child  
curled up with Babysitter Club books,  
taping songs from the radio.  
Or the teenager  
experiencing first heartbreak  
as "Don't Speak" played on repeat)

to return to the other  
(where I am raising my children:  
chaotic, crammed with toys  
and all the belongings I adore,  
brimming with love and energy).

*Somehow I am wholly myself, in both dwellings. Two houses, one heart.*

The feeling has intensified after lockdown / the lawful banishment from my childhood home has made this visit a rarer, precious jewel / I stride in, arms and heart full with the newest addition to our family tucked against my chest / The sun beats down as Dad cooks on the barbecue / Mum bustling in the kitchen making salads / my brother and I watching my children rolling and playing in the grass / The exact same rectangle of lawn we played our childhood games on / laughing as we reminisce at the sunflowers sacrificed in our cricket games. When the day ends / I put my seatbelt on, my husband in the driver's seat / and I wave at my mum / Her familiar silhouette is framed briefly on the threshold / as she gently closes the door. My heart is tugging me in two directions / I am spliced, yet whole: two homes.



- Ellen Clayton



Swinging Curtains

- *Christina Hennemann*

# MOVING DAY

*"I need some space, Louis. If you can stop talking to me for, I don't know, every two seconds? That would be great."*

Juliet pinches her nose and exhales a deep breath. She glances at him, and for a little moment, they meet face to face. Juliet catches his expression: his eyes have softened, and he wishes she would at least say something. Louis notices how firmly her mouth was sealed. She watches him rise from the sidewalk's edge without saying a word. A little part of her wished she hadn't spoken so much, but right now all she felt was anger.

It was a moving day for Juliet and Louis, and the whole process was putting their relationship to the test. They had been house searching nonstop, and the only time they were able to sleep was when they returned home. Juliet and Louis have been packing for days, deciding what to bring and what to leave behind. They were up far too early today, moving heavy boxes back and forth.

Julie and Louis have not really been communicating either because of today's situation. Louis was in charge of arranging for a moving truck to transport their belongings. However, plans were disrupted when the company informed him that they would be delayed because of many transfers and that it would take at least five hours for them to respond. She knows it wasn't Louis' fault in the least, but she wanted to project her frustrations to someone.

Juliet was now sitting alone on the sidewalk's edge. They couldn't go back inside to wait for their moving truck since Louis had also given the new owners the key to their previous house.

She had nothing to do and was alone, so she decided to look through their old boxes. She picked the brown old box with the word 'music' written on it. Guitars and ukuleles were among the musical instruments found inside.

Vinyl records were also there, but they were not hers. Louis would play them every morning, and he secretly kept records of Juliet's favorite artists in case she asked for anything new. She had never had the opportunity to see them more closely, so she chose to bring out the vinyl records.

*Queen, Bruno Mars, and Frank Ocean* are just a couple of the musicians Louis likes. To pass the time, she took out more albums. A particular band caused her brows to furrow as she read the artist's name.

"Huh, I didn't know Lou listens to ABBA." Juliet is holding the vinyl record Louis owns, which was her favorite band. When she flipped the record over, she saw a note that said,

*To Juliet*

Her eyes widen as her heart skips a beat. She flips the record once again and hugs it tightly. She brightens as she lifts the cover to reveal the record, a folded paper slips out with it.

Her attention is drawn in the opposite direction, and she leaves the record in its case. She hurriedly tidied up her findings, leaving just the paper and herself. To release the tension, she takes a big breath and shakes her hands. Juliet took a look at the paper, which read:

*To my Juliet,*

*It's you I love the most  
I'll be with you, day or night  
Even if you're upset  
I'll be on your side when we fight*

*If I can get all the things I want  
I'll buy a pink rose from the store  
Just to give it to you  
I don't need anything more*

*I feel safe whenever I'm in your arms  
As long as I'm with you, I'll go anywhere  
Because no matter what the future holds,  
It's you I love the most.*

*I try to make you laugh  
Because your smile makes me weak  
When I'm having a bad day  
It's you I always seek*

*I feel safe whenever I'm in your arms  
As long as I'm with you, I'll go anywhere  
Because no matter what the future holds,  
It's you I love the most.*



He had written her a song. Juliet was in awe, she folded the paper back to its original form. As she ran her hands through her hair, her toes tapped slightly. Regardless of the moving truck being hours away

and how uncomfortable she was sitting on the pavement, Louis was all Juliet cared about. It was clear to her that her true home was him. She stood up and began walking.

"Juliet?"

His voice was instantly recognizable to her. When she turned around, she had already missed him. She beams and embraces him as though she had never approached him before.

"Juliet I'm sorry; I should have given you more space. We'll be in our new home in no time, I promise--"

"I'm the one who should be sorry, Lou. I don't mind if we arrive there a few hours late. The fact that I'm with you is all that matters since you're my home."

As he got closer to her, a smile grew on his face. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out something that stunned Juliet.

"It's uh, a pink rose." Louis scratches the back of his neck, making Juliet giggle.

"Thank you, Louis," she looked delighted as she took the rose and tucks her hair behind her ear.

A honk blares down the street, startling both of them. It was the moving truck. With a sigh, they softened their tight postures. The truck driver hops out of the vehicle and tips his hat. Juliet and Louis stand there gazing at the truck driver and his coworkers take the boxes off the curb. The street cleared slowly but surely, signaling the two to proceed to their residence.

Juliet cinches her seatbelt as she buckles it. She turns to look into Louis' warm features,

"Ready to move into our new home?"

Narrowing his eyes and tilting his head, he says, "I'm quite sure I moved in, around five years ago actually.

"You've already moved inside our new home?" She was caught off guard. "Since five years ago? What do you mean?"

"Since I fell in love with you."

- *Ysabel Red*

# AN ODE TO LA

LA

The city of dreamers, drug dealers, dry-cleaners, and  
make-believers

You're the face, body, and the soul

You're the face for staying camera-ready. Even in summers of candid thoughts  
and superficial conversations, you always know when to strike a pose.

You're the body for staying autonomous, even when the world has increased in  
ease and predictability.

With record deals, movie reels, vegan meals, eco-fashion feels, it's no wonder you  
were voted "most popular" in High School.

You're the soul for your melting pot of personalities. Angels and Demons roll the  
streets alike, we're all stuck in the same traffic.

Billboards, Bright Lights, Brutal(ism) is what creates you.

LA

*- Jared Rivas*

# resettlement

A stab of homesickness ruptured his heartstrings  
driving up the A-road choking up towering lorries,  
cars with their window wipers swinging, flashing colours  
red and amber and green.

Roadblocks lined like soldiers. SLIPPERY WHEN WET.  
DRIVE SAFE. PROCEED WITH CAUTION.  
REDUCE SPEED NOW. Traffic cones, a shade  
of smouldering embers, burning retinas.

A fresh love slumped in the passenger seat  
rounding with new life, a plus-one to the  
angelic form laying dazed, tucked safely between  
cardboard crates filled with remains of a past life.

And pulling up to the concrete box that was  
supposed to imitate 'home'.  
Tore a new hole in the throbbing heart  
that ached for the bitter cold cobbled Walsall streets.

Craved the delightfully atrocious aroma  
radiating from Gill's Fish Bar on a bitter Friday night.  
Long after the bars had closed and the inhabitants  
had thrown up their memories in an empty doorway.

Hiding in the rearview mirror were reminders of change,  
in peripherals, a white Peace Lily, discoloured by the sulfur hue of streetlights.  
Once pure, now a sombre parting gift from the life he left behind,  
doomed to fall through the cracks in the road.



- *Laura Mae*

# WHY WILMINGTON?

I've lived in Wilmington, North Carolina for most of my life. From 2000 to 2002, I lived in Atlanta, Georgia, but my memories from there are fuzzy at best. From February to April 2002, I lived in Greenville, Mississippi, a place I remember better. But most of my memories revolve around my hometown of Wilmington.

I've moved enough times throughout this town and its surrounding areas that I know certain parts of town well: the busy college road, off of where I now go to school; the quieter, but ever-growing, suburban areas and smaller cities up North—Ogden, Porter's Neck, Topsail; the central downtown with its beautiful Riverwalk and locally-owned small businesses; the southern end, down Carolina Beach, where my grandmother raised my mom and still lives. Those are just a few memories I have of my first time here, not including the new ones I'm constantly making.

Why have I been in Wilmington for so long?

That's a question I've been asking myself more often, as I finish my last year at UNCW. I could have gone to any school in North Carolina—or even in another state—yet I chose UNC Wilmington. Why is that?

I guess it starts with my family history. My mom and dad raised me here, but I have a long list of family members who've been in Wilmington, dating back to the 1900s.

The Bradleys—my mom's side of the family, particularly my maternal grandfather—have been in Wilmington for decades. They grew up in Lovegrove, a small community downtown made up of predominately African American neighbors.

The first Bradley who lived here was John Bradley, my great, great grandfather. He was born in either the late 1890s or early 1900s in Bishopville, South Carolina, but moved here when he was nine. He never left Wilmington from then. My mom only has vague memories of him; the strongest memory she has of him is when he would give her a Christmas gift of bags filled with oranges and pecans from his backyard.

The second Bradley who lived here was John Howard Bradley Junior, my great grandfather. I don't know as much about him.

The third Bradley was my grandfather, John Howard Bradley III. He still lives here today. At one point, he moved to Concord, but he's back in Wilmington now.



His relationship with Wilmington is different than my parents'. Both my mom and grandmother said John said he would always return to Wilmington to live there. My mom sits somewhere in the middle; she doesn't want to stay in Wilmington forever, *per se*, but has never had a reason to move. She says she feels that way about any city she's lived in.

"But what about Mississippi?" I asked. "You said you didn't like living there." That was something both my dad and mom had agreed on, especially my dad.

"I didn't particularly like it," my mom said, "but I never hated it."

"Did you like living in Atlanta?" I asked.

"I did," she said, "but we were making more money at the time, too."

That was true. My dad had a well-paying job there. The only reason we moved was because the company had to let go of several of its workers. He still says he'd rather live there, or pretty much any city other than Wilmington (except for Greenville, Mississippi, of course.)

But that didn't really answer my question: why was she still in Wilmington? More importantly, why was I still in Wilmington? I go back five generations, which is almost unheard of. Most people living here are transplants—why was my family still here?

Honestly, there's something quite charming about Wilmington, something I've only recently discovered as I've entered young adulthood. It's not just the view, even though that in itself is gorgeous: the beach water feels like home, and the river downtown has the purest blue water that captures me. But that's not what brings the city to me.

Since coming to UNCW, I don't think I've ever had as many friends as I do now in Wilmington. The list runs as long as my lineage, but Centro Hispano stands out. The Hispanic-Latinx cultural center situated in UNCW's student union, on the second floor, brings students from Venezuela to Mexico to Peru—some grew up there, while others can trace families back there.

One of the first people I met was Vanessa, who was promoting her sorority-fraternity. I didn't end up joining the group, but we ended up getting to know each other very well. We've sipped wine at her house and talked about dating apps, debated whether Islands or Chipotle is the better Tex-Mex restaurant, and texted about the struggles of adulting. Even after she graduated, we still keep in touch, which is probably helped by the fact that she's still working in town.

Alex was one of the first people to welcome me to the center when he worked as an assistant.

He's given me advice on working after college, talked about traveling to Cuba, and glowed over buying awesome clothes for \$10 at thrift shops. He works in another area on campus now, but our relationship only seems to have gotten closer. It's developed into a sort of mentor friendship, something I didn't know I would find but greatly appreciate.

Jaime and I didn't talk too much until my second year at UNCW, but we've more than made up for it now. We've volunteered together, grabbed lunch and coffee, and discussed everything from the social issues affecting the world today to how good Bojangos chicken is. We're always busy, so we don't see each other often, but when we do, I always make sure to give her a hug.

Those are just a few of the people who made Wilmington home. As non-natives and people who have lived and traveled to different countries, it's been interesting to hear their take on Wilmington's hot spots, the part of Wilmington that charms them, and other things the city has to offer that I never considered before.

I don't want this to sound like Wilmington is a utopia, because it's not. There's the fact that our neighborhoods are still segregated, that black people aren't making as much progress as they could be (one look at the 1898 Race Riots will tell you that.) The majority of the town—especially New Hanover County—voted for Trump in 2016. We have more crisis pregnancy centers than abortion clinics or Planned Parenthoods. I always wonder if it would be different if I went somewhere like New York or California.

*- Fairley Lloyd*



*Some souls remain*

*- Edward Lee*

# ALL THE JIGSAW PIECES

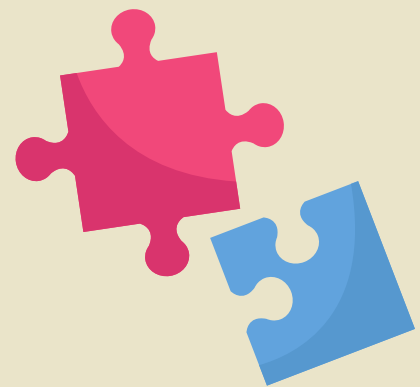
The props of the wandering artists ride in the back of  
the moving truck, bound  
for a city with a harbour  
and deep, cerulean seas.

Keys glinting in the sun, hold  
possibilities, gateways to  
new roofs,  
an untangling of roots.

It plays out in stop-motion  
when the crates fly open -  
the teapoy table groans  
shuffling around the floorboards,  
rugs preen and unfurl  
nuzzling the chairs,  
and decades-old pots and pans  
shake free of newspaper robes,  
chattering with pendant lights.

All the jigsaw pieces fit  
piece by piece,  
finding their place again -  
motifs coming together  
in reassuring patterns.

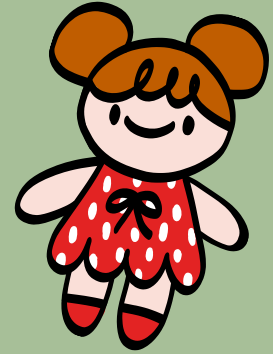
And the wandering artists roost.  
Home was never  
a patch on a map, set  
in stone on a sliver of land.  
It only ever existed  
in the heart of the travelling props -  
in wood and weathered linen, the  
bric-a-brac bunched in  
boxes, every few years  
seeking out new shores,  
carried around, beloved,  
like a hermit crab's shell.



- *Oormila Vijayakrishnan Prahlad*

# DOLL

I found her in the corner when I was dusting  
A tiny sculpture of youth  
Reminiscent of childhood  
The little doll with two braided pigtails  
Her porcelain hand resting on the head of a shaggy dog  
The shape of her penny face whispers innocence  
But the weight in the sorrow of her eyes says loss.



I want to give her back the eyes she had  
just before this frozen moment.

- *R. Skye Lambert*

# HOMESICKNESS AS A PERSONALITY TRAIT

Most nights I'd rather fall asleep on the living room floor, like a child too tired or stubborn to crawl into her own bed. Lying halfway between my sister's room and my parent's, melting in the lamplight that feels, somehow, like distilled moonlight. What could be more of a lullaby than three cats purring around the room like cicadas or us or anything else that turns love into vibrational frequencies? Than a picture book as a pillow, the one I know by heart but haven't opened in fifteen years? (This is just another way of saying that I am a sentimentalist before I am a woman). It's not hard to forget about the cricks, the necks, bent all night at weird angles while lying in the center of the Earth or rather, the center of the house, where the pulse of all our dreams congeals like lava, like a homemade marinade: rosemary & thyme, leftover heartache & and applesauce on pancakes.

- *Sarah Henry*

# HOME ALONE- A REVIEW

I remember being about six or seven when I first saw *Home Alone*. We watched it as a family at Christmas time and quoted lines from the famous movie.

*"Keep the change you filthy animal!"*

The first *Home Alone* movie was made in 1990 and starred Macaulay Culkin. It was followed in 1992 by *Home Alone 2- Lost in New York*. Both *Home Alone* and *Home Alone 2- Lost in New York* were directed by Chris Columbus and screen written by John Hughes. The first one was solely produced also by John Hughes while the second film was jointly produced with Hilton A. Green.

*Home Alone* is about Kevin Macaulay, an eight-year-old who is the youngest in his family. After a family row, Kevin wishes that he had no family. When he awakes the next day, he discovers that his family is gone.

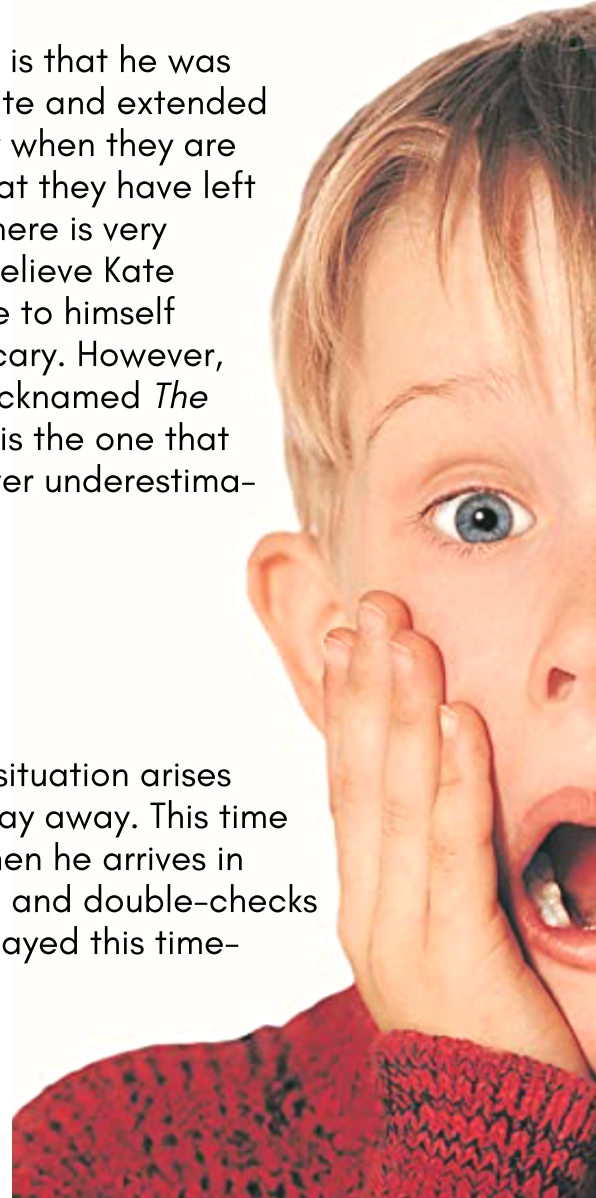
*"I made my family disappear."*

He thinks being young that his wish came true, but the reality is that he was accidentally left at home after a miscalculation. His immediate and extended family were going on a Christmas holiday to France. It is only when they are on the plane, en route to France that Kevin's mum realizes that they have left him at home alone. Being up in the air and far from home, there is very little that can be done. It doesn't help that the police don't believe Kate when she rings to explain what happened. He enjoys the time to himself initially and befriends the scary neighbor who isn't actually scary. However, things turn sour though when Harry and Marv, some crooks nicknamed *The Wet Bandits* are checking out Kevin's street to rob. His house is the one that they seem really keen to steal from. What a mistake! Don't ever underestimate the craftiness of an eight-year-old.

*"This is my house, I have to defend it."*

But does he? Check it out and see.

Two years later in *Home Alone 2- Lost in New York*, a similar situation arises again. Another Christmas, another family feud, another holiday away. This time Kevin makes it to the airport and even onto the plane, but when he arrives in Florida and sees through the glass that it is clearly New York, and double-checks with the receptionist in the airport, he sees that fate has replayed this time-



*"Oh no, my family's in Florida, and I'm in New York. My family's in Florida, and I'm in New York."*

He thinks things are rosy, and has a great time sightseeing and makes friends with the man in the toy shop and the local lady who lives in the park, referred to as The Bird lady, as well as living it up in the Plaza Hotel, that is until his Dad's credit card is reported stolen. To make matters worse *The Wet Bandits*, now out of jail and called *The Sticky Bandits* are of all places in New York City. They decide that they are going to fleece a toy shop called Duncan's Treasure Chest and all the money raised to help the children's hospital. Kevin overhears this and sets up a similar crafty plan to stop and catch the thieves. In the meantime, his mum has been trying to find Kevin for what seems like forever and it's Christmas eve and Kate is desperate. What will happen? Grab some popcorn and check that out too.

These two were *Home Alone*, the rest just wouldn't be the same. To be truthful, I have never even watched the other *Home Alone* movies, because let us just face it, *Home Alone*, is only *Home Alone* with Macaulay Culkin. Sometimes less is more. In the second movie, Kevin has a *Talkboy*, which was actually made for just the film, but became so popular that they made a line of them, including *Talkgirls*. I loved it so much that

I asked Santa for one, and I got one, so I must have been a good girl! Alarmingly there are six films in total and games. The other films are, *Home Alone 3*, *Home Alone 4 - Taking Back the House*, *Home Alone - The Holiday Heist*, and *Home Sweet Home Alone*.



- *Grace O'Reilly*

# PAPER HOME

Knock, knock on my skeletal frame,  
you're overripe behind me, I've grown full in the discomfort  
my need to escape, slender yet hungry, with molten metal black beneath my fingers- I  
must persist.

The air is familiar but not quite,  
pictures fuzzy with desolation dig pits of nostalgia in my gut-  
my apologies to these sterile walls, I must resist your invitation to surrender.

In the living room, all that's buried will rise,  
each sizzle, a newfound purity,  
in white-hot purple I burn, Lazarus put to shame.

Oh, how the tables have turned,  
You lie dense,  
I,  
no longer dormant.  
The end is near and disgustingly sweet,  
like the sheets of your skin slant in my palms.  
Tomorrow is an ember obscure but glaring.



- *Celeste King*

# sunflower ash

*for Mark Anthony Pearce*

much like my mother  
your father died before his time,  
both now ashes of yesterday

the books we read took  
us away from loneliness,  
far away from the sun

the slow drip of the faucet  
leans heavy on the mind

sunflowers wilt into songs  
can you hear the melody?



- *Tohm Bakelas*



# ESMERALDA

Her father was a drunkard  
and her mother refastened buttons,  
hemmed dresses, patched socks and holes in pants' knees.

Her father left a trail of minor offences  
that never saw him jailed more than overnight.  
Her mother's spoor was a line of stitches,  
a vain attempt to make everything as good as new.

She grew up in a confused state of noise and darkness,  
hauling herself off to school or to her bedroom -  
hauling - no other word for it -  
the spring in her step was rusty on delivery.

Her father couldn't hold down a job.  
Her mother earned a little here and there.  
The house, small as it was,  
had been a family heirloom for a century.  
So, at least the bank couldn't reclaim it.  
But the weather and the termites did their utmost.

She haunted the window in her room,  
looking out at the backyard tree  
with the twisted trunk  
or the woman next door who drank  
and walked naked through the house  
wearing nothing but her grandmother's  
black mourning hat.

Her father never could tell her  
anything worth knowing.  
Her mother was mostly mute,  
figured to teach by showing  
though it was a lesson her rough  
brown-spotted hands  
never made clear.



One day, she saw a young girl  
skipping down the sidewalk, in a bright red dress.  
It was like seeing blood and fire  
for the very first time.  
She longed for a dress just like it.  
Or blood just like it.  
Or fire just like it.

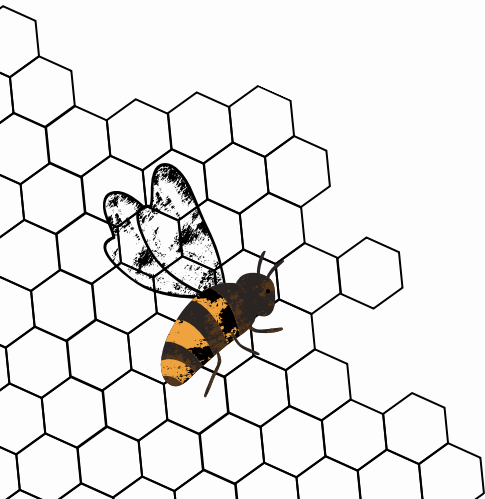
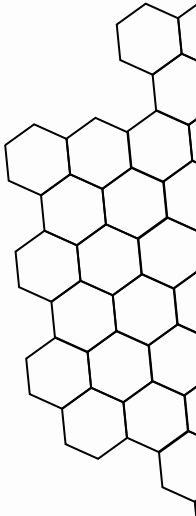
- *John Grey*

## THE HONEY FORAGERS

The honey foragers,  
Some eight-thousand years ago,  
Crawl out from cave  
To steal sweetness from honeybee home.

They dodge pterodactyl,  
They sneak past mammoth,  
They swim above megalodon,  
They crawl under megafauna.

It is worth it, neanderthal thinks,  
For the moment their tongue  
Tastes the honey  
They will be alive.



- *Gabrielle Wheatley*

# before, during, and after

## ***Two months before.***

We stayed together for two months-ish. They felt like the longest and the shortest two months I've had to go through, but they were the best.

You made me feel so many things, so many emotions and feelings all at once. I was happy and crying, then frustrated and crying, and then I would be calm, and the tears would still be there, but they were good tears. The kind that's full of nothing but somber, soft love.

When I knew I had you, I felt as if everything was okay, like everything that has fallen apart has returned back into place, gluing together again precariously with a glue stick.

All I could hear were ocean waves, crashing against one another, only to flow back into their usual sterile state. My head was filled with the breeze of the beach, my feet dead in the soft sand, as they wrap themselves around my toes. I'd breathe deep and all I could smell was the fresh ocean, cascading into my nostrils, as I could feel all of the tension leave as I would exhale it all out.

It's strange. I knew that I was in the deep end at this point, but I was just so alone I coped with it the only way I knew how; by just going with it. I acted as if you were going to be with me all the way, as if you were going to be mine forever. I knew being anxious about it all the time wouldn't do much good, as I'm the type that would panic and cry and be completely transparent about what's happening, so I just decided to play along with it.

I would go about my day as I normally would, but I would tread with more care and be a bit more lenient with myself. I made sure I ate properly, made sure I rested enough and made sure that my mom was oblivious of everything. She got worried as I had lost some weight from it despite my increase in food consumption, but I assured her and it was all resolved. I assured, and assured, and assured until I convinced myself that it was all okay.

## ***During.***

I knew it was inevitable.

When I knew that I wasn't going to have you with me forever, I just sort of acted as if that wasn't going to happen. I just didn't want to face it, and didn't think I could handle it.

When it happened, I didn't feel anything. I sat myself in bed, palms down, my face facing the ceiling. I breathed in and out, feeling the air entering and exiting my nostrils, my eyes blinking forcefully. My

mouth seemed to be opening and closing, as if to try and excuse everything to myself, try and somehow explain it away. My phone flashed again and again as messages upon messages started to stream in, as I just continued to ignore it as I would a fly.

I couldn't cry. I wouldn't let myself. It was all my fault, so I have no right to cry. I knew that it was going to happen, I was told months before, so I shouldn't be crying, I shouldn't, shouldn't, shouldn't. I can't do that, no, not with my parents waiting for me. I have to act as if everything is fine, else they'd be worried about me.

I breathed in.  
Everything is fine.

### ***Two months after.***

The laptop screen blared in the darkness, all the greens and reds bouncing off of the computer onto the walls of my room. The colours moved, the figures deformed and their words gibberish. I'm not even sure what video is playing. I stopped knowing half an hour ago. My sight seemed to have drifted away from my eyes, as I couldn't see anything. I can sense that there's a video playing in front of me, a vlog of some sort. But it's just background noise now. It's just background noise to the bubble that has seemed to form around me, carrying me away from my body as it floats around aimlessly, watching everyone as they sleep soundly in each of their rooms, resting for the day ahead of them.

Sometimes, it's not as easy as drifting away from myself. Sometimes, I'd have to cope with it and actually face my thoughts. All of my horrible, horrible thoughts. Because of that, I've since grown a habit of grinding my teeth together, as a way to hold myself together. I'd grind my teeth, I'd ball my fists and I'd shut my eyes as tight as can be. I'd shut them so tight that I wouldn't notice the tears that would often seep through them.

My fists would loosen to cover my eyes and my mouth, so as to not let myself cry. I wasn't allowed to; I didn't deserve to. Some nights they would stop after a bit; I'd cry quietly to myself, the tears would roll down as dainty little dots and my lips would quiver but on other nights they wouldn't. These are the nights where I felt that I couldn't handle it and the tears would grow fat and violent, and they'd tumble down in groups, wetting my cheeks and my chin, my throat letting out loud whimpers and sobs. The tears and noise would get too much so I would have to stuff my face onto a pillow and hold on tight to it, my sobs muffled as the dark patches grew on the soft cotton.

And the cycle would continue.

I'm sorry I failed. You should be home with me, safe and sound. But you're not.

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

- Sarah Abdul Rahamn

# HOME

When I am home I will know by the cocky call of the rooster and the peeling of paint on my white fence

The only colors will be red white and blistering, burnt blue, torn open at the knees and frayed at the edges

I'll get a kiss on the cheek and her lips will be chapped but it will not matter, because sincerity doesn't come in a tube of chapstick

And it doesn't come in the rolling of the lazy lolling hills or the snapping of hawk bills

You cannot grow it from the ground but still I will have dirt beneath my nails

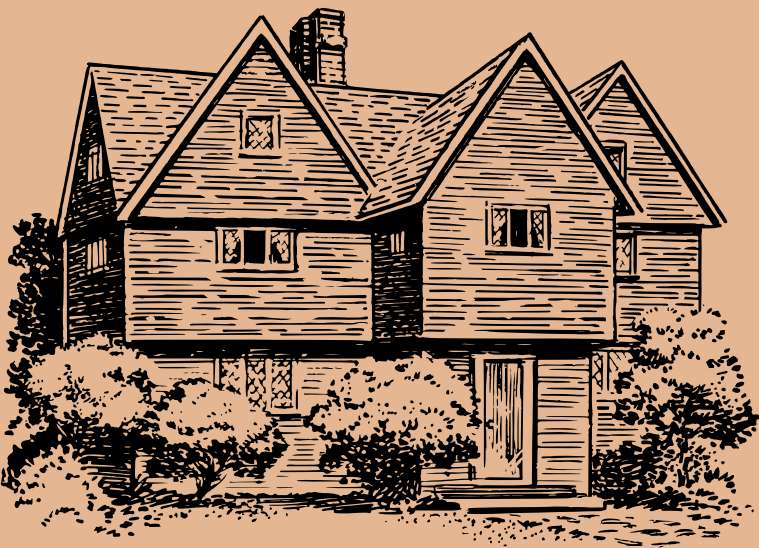
Knee-high by the fourth of July makes a corn maze by October makes food for the cattle makes blood on the blade of my axe

It whispers its sickly cyclical taunt of belonging, and I lick my lips to pacify my lurching stomach

I love it I love it I love it I love it

What else have I got to love

- *Lauren Thorn*



# SUNROOM

cool air creeps in under the front door  
brushes across my face as it lay  
buried into the blue shag carpet

slight noises neighborhood voices flow in  
with the air a car door Joanie's barking dog  
the rattle of a gate closing on a chain-link fence

a window covers most of the west wall  
my playroom my sanctuary  
always alone in here never by myself

not yet touched by the sun mornings in here  
with goosebumps I trace the ascent  
with my tiny fingers scaling up my arms

the sheer white curtains billow a bit  
poorly sealed like the door providing  
a smeared glossy view of the street outside

the sun rolls westward lighting up the room  
my shadow joins me mocks every move  
always alone in here never by myself

He-man battles Hulk Hogan in the plastic wrestling ring  
front yard of Castle Greyskull  
Skeletor and Randy Macho Man Savage look on



My shadow grows up the wall I turn  
press my nose to the cool glass  
watch the world become pink orange  
and descend into night

- *Jason Melvin*

## THINKING ABOUT HOME

As the afternoon stretches on, the sun tries to melt my skin into gold. In its light, I see

- the faraway ancestral home in <sup>1</sup>Ajmer that my grandmother told me about, where I am sitting catapulting moons towards the tamarind tree
- a clock tower, where I work, never letting my own decrepitude grease its ticking hands
- the stream where there are dragonflies flitting like helicopters flying with the tide
- a house I bought, with a studio apartment with shelves on the brick walls
- the stilt roof among mangroves, where the roots drown themselves every fortnight
- a cabin in <sup>2</sup>Lake Isle of Innisfree, where the crickets talk louder than the winds.

And just like that, I fall asleep, knowing that home is all the places where I want to be.

- *Paridhi Poddar*

1. A city in Rajasthan, India.

2. A location described in the poem *Lake Isle of Innisfree* by William Butler Yeats



天主教教育目鼓勵學生  
面對逆境懷抱希望

天主教教育目鼓勵學生  
面對逆境懷抱希望  
堅忍信賴 忍耐  
悔改更嚴肅  
用天主給與的恩賜

# A Helping Hand

- Amrita Tandon







*'A Helping Hand' aims to highlight the plight of asylum seekers around the world, particularly children of families that seek sanctuary.*

*Some flee to new countries with their parents while others are born there, but all exist in a state of limbo, uncertain of their future, not knowing whether the state will open its gates to them or return them from whence they came.*



*While waiting for their claims to be recognized, asylum seekers subsist on inadequate government handouts, usually without being allowed to seek employment to buttress the meagre subsidies. To make ends meet they are dependent on food, clothing, medicine, and legal services from charities and NGOs.*



*These children are nurtured in dreams of a better future, which may never materialize. Till then they survive in overcrowded camps, with sub-par nutrition and inadequate educational support. The pandemic has placed even more constraints on the children's ability to access education.*

*Refugee children exist in a bleak present, while all around them are signs of an affluent and at times, hedonistic society. We, have in us the ability to provide them a brighter future by extending a helping hand so that they can be part of a respectful, inclusive society and live with dignity and hope.*

*I made a deliberate choice of material for this project to draw a parallel. Cardboard and old newsprint, detritus of society, thoughtlessly cast out when no longer of use. Oil pastels, inexpensive and easily available, something you would give to a child to keep them occupied. The simple image of hands portray the fact that refugees need our attention, understanding, and assistance.*

*The artworks are largely in grey tones in keeping with the stark lives of refugees, devoid of all luxuries, down to the very basics of existence. The cutout motifs of butterflies, stars, and flowers depict their hopes and aspirations.*



# PROVENANCE

No one believes me about this but I swear I remember being three years old,  
looking back through the car windows, and thinking  
*this part of my life is over.*

*It was melancholy, but wistful, still*

*And when I came back you had changed,  
but I didn't care: I had changed as well and  
though I hadn't missed you that bad  
— because we met up on weekends —  
I was glad to be home again.*

*What a mess, they say about you — they cannot understand.  
Even your children; they call you names.  
They don't really know you 'cause they never left you;  
they don't know what's like just beyond the border:  
there is nothing but nightmarish swamp,  
minding not the narrow veins of the highway,  
clogged with their own casualties.*

*Me, I don't have a native country  
But I have a native land.  
such are the facts ignored by those who accuse and object*

*who declare that you bleed with noise,  
exhale venomous capital, swell with the stench of your rivers, whistle indifferently at their  
issues, that you're rude and cruel and arrogant  
— though you've certainly earned it —  
that your most beautiful sunsets are not tinted but tainted with the sweat and the salt of the earth  
that you batter and harden with your dull, efficient footsteps while you lead the march. And we  
march for you, for ourselves,  
the day's only got so many hours to run the obstacle course of your surface:  
sometimes you're the torrent cascading solidly; downpour in the  
snowed-in palms', sometimes  
you are the subtropical furnace*

It's the subdued awe in your skies —  
not so much the sky-scraping scratch-marks reaching for Atlas, wishing to hold it, but being  
denied the privilege — but you, cloudy and dismal and ready  
for any minimal cataclysm.

Yes, we march for you, we did in 32, even though you were wrong, even though I'm not so sure  
any  
more in the long run.

Your lights are never out and we couldn't do without the instinct to surrender  
the hustle and bustle will crush you like an insect but maybe I enjoy being an insect?

When I left you the second time it took me a literal gut-punch  
So sorry to whomever had to clean the semi-processed papaya at the airport

So sorry for putting you on a pedestal.

So sorry for not having ever understood the goddamn layers.

So sorry for loving you when I left, especially when I left.

I am afraid; I never left you even when I lived somewhere else. Life does go on I suppose, but  
exile from home results in exile from Self.

(...) you're bleeding with crowds underground; they'll give you a heart-attack (...)

Why, why are you here? Why couldn't you have been somewhere else?

My home, my home, my larger-than-life overcast head-scratching overflowing  
boom so loud no louder than I —

I miss you, I've missed you my whole goddamn fucking life.

I still miss you, exile took something from me quintessentially mine.

But no one believed me when I barfed at the airport and told them this would happen

- *Beatriz Seelaender*

# HOME SWEET HOME

I lie in bed, suspended somewhere between dream and consciousness. I think in circles – Come the morning light, my beloved will leave me. It's a regular occurrence yet it doesn't get any easier. At 6 am sharp, the bed starts to shake, gently at first. I feign oblivion. She knows. She draws the curtains aside, rattles the bed till I can hear the springs, and blasts the radio. It's loud even by the standards of my old, partially deaf ears.

"Alright, alright, I'm leaving. This is what I get in return for making you, giving you everything I had and have all my love?" She slams the door and I go flying out to the yard.

I make my way to the garage which I've turned into a library to while away the time till she returns. Half an hour later as I'm flipping the pages of a Sunday magazine, I hear the sounds that indicate she's ready to leave. Pipes creak, windows rattle, some furniture is knocked about. I go to the window to wave as she uproots herself and shakes off the soil clinging to her bottom. A shutter on the top floor comes down and goes back up. She's in a winking mood today.

I smile and patiently gaze out to see what she's left behind for me to do today. It's the silver cabinet. I am supposed to polish the silver. That shouldn't take more than three hours. What am I supposed to do till she returns at lunchtime? She seems to be going easy on me in my old age. I am 77. It feels like just last year when she would leave me the laundry, dining table and chairs along with the silver to take care of before she returned. I wonder what makes her think I can't handle the same load as before anymore. My shaky limbs and digits? I go back to the day after I finished building her, some forty years ago. I was shocked when she did exactly what she has done every morning since, starting at 6 on the dot; see through my farcical sleep tactic to stay with her longer, ignore my exaggerations, kick me out of the house as she readies to leave for work, come back for lunch. That day I considered ghosts but soon rejected that notion, telling myself a house needs history in order to be haunted. I realized on the same day I'd need a garage despite never wanting a car. A garage for my books, me. I remember melting with relief when she returned in the afternoon. I'd like to say over the years I got used to it, but I'd be lying. The shock has dampened but the hurt is strong as ever every morning and the longing for her to engulf me when she's back increases with each passing day. Maybe it's because I know I don't have a lot of time left on the mortal plane.

For forty years I've done household chores that my home set for me before leaving and greeted her with a "Welcome Home!" when she's returned. Every five to seven years I've painted her, top to bottom, inside out, she still looks exactly like she did four decades back on the outside. The inside, however, is a

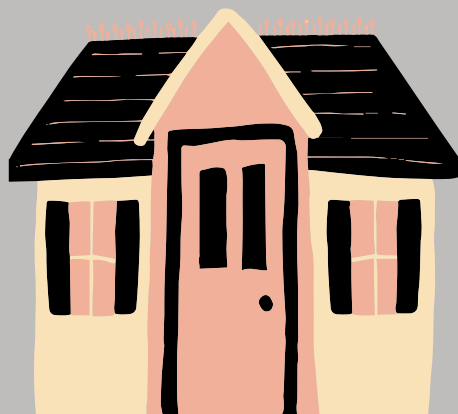
different story altogether. Every day she leaves she comes back with something new, be it mismatched drapes, a junk drawer, a seashell, hats for me, dishes, antique chairs and that one time when she brought a fake lizard as a joke. I didn't laugh then, I smile now. It disappears as another thought that's been hounding me for weeks, strays into my mind. Who will take care of her after I'm gone?

I start experiencing desolation, desperation even. A dog barks somewhere outside the yard. Just like that, I'm smiling again. One time she had come back with a pet puppy. Imagine my amusement. Thank Dog for the tag, I could take it back to its people. She wasn't too happy about it but accepted it in time. I think it was a week later that the lizard incident took place and everything went back to normal, she was cheery again. That's how it's been for as long as I can remember.

To this day I don't know where she gets the stuff from and I know better than to intrude upon her privacy. All I know is, all these years I've never once had to look for a job or forage for essentials to sustain myself. She has always taken care of me.

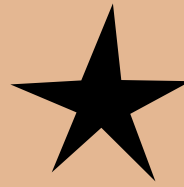


There's a sound of whispered weeping invading the neighbourhood. It's coming from the place of the 77-year-old. The boy next door walks out only to see a mass of burnt black bricks and broken glass where once had stood the most beautiful and ageless house. Pity, the old man was so proud of it. The boy wonders how it happened. There was no fire or sound of breaking glass. It was almost like the house silently collapsed in on itself. The garage door is ajar. The old man is bent over a book. At first, the boy thinks it's grief, then he realizes he's not breathing. The old man's dead. The house too, judging by the looks of it. How weird.



- *Udita Mukherjee*

# hallmark movie generator



*cento from "if i moved back to my hometown, as envisioned by my parents" by emily delaney, "i invite my parents to a dinner party" by chen chen, and "a princess for christmas" by janeen and michael damian*

it's christmas. every member of my family is replaced by the cast of parenthood. we have no lives outside of the moments we share with each other, which are all moments. after all, we're a family. no one is bitter about this.

i'm like the kid in home alone, orchestrating every movement of a proper family as if a pair of scary yet deeply incompetent burglars is watching from the outside. here i am, and so are you. we're all here together. i smile my hurray for doing a little better smile.

i get married in a church. pepper, the late family dog, comes back to life simply due to the power of my presence. so does grandma. i like them. i promise. i'm fine. i am filled with relief. i will never be in danger again. criminals resent me. god fears me. i am immortal. it's a nightmare.

what were you expecting?

i don't know. to feel better.

i'm like the kid in home alone, pulling on the string that makes my cardboard mother more motherly, except she is not cardboard, she is already, exceedingly my mother. i don't have a plan. it's the best i can do for now. pretty soon, if i don't keep trying, there'll be nothing left.

after all, we're a family.

stop being so dramatic.

you asked for it.

*- M P Armstrong*





# POND

- *Christina Hennemann*



# FLATMATES

I am working harder  
To coexist with bugs.  
I've never liked their spiked legs—  
Their malignant stare—  
Their hisses and bites.

But perhaps they also have complaints  
About sharing such space with me.  
I am, after all, a very rude housemate.  
I'm messy, and spend most days impotent, in bed.

Perhaps we just need more communication,  
Though, I fear they wouldn't understand my tongue,  
And I would not understand theirs.

Perhaps I should just lead by example.  
I'll pledge not to scream when they appear.  
They are not ghosts, after all, they live and breathe.  
And in turn, they will pledge not to hiss and bite.

Perhaps we can find a harmonious life.  
We could be friends, even.  
If not friends, maybe just  
Gentle cohabitants—  
Coming to terms with what we each call home  
And who we share it with.

- *Gabrielle Wheatley*



# HOME IS A FEELING

Home is the place  
I had never found,  
It was not a far off  
Cottage in the woods  
With milk and cookies  
Waiting on the table for me.

Home was not the  
Cradle of comfort  
I had built in the chasm  
Of my imagination,  
Home was not an object  
I could imprison in  
The limitation of my hand.

Home was a feeling  
I had to escape into,  
A galaxy unknown to me  
Yet it was right here,  
A journey that I had  
To take inside of me,  
And inside of me  
I was welcomed back  
To a peculiar place.

*- Kudzai Mhangwa*

**Another day, another chance**

*- Edward Lee*

# FRACTURED HOME

Silence devours our home slowly;  
Getting hold of the furniture of our mood,  
Gnawing at the curtains of our speech,  
Swallowing the lamp of our thoughts.

The deformed bathroom mirror's hazy;  
The dim flashlights seek lasting cells;  
The tarnished carpets fishing for a breath;  
Yet, unusually, our home stands fast.

What holds it so firmly?  
Could it perhaps be our uniform footing?  
Maybe it's the product of our lost love?

I can't find an exact reason,  
But I'm certain the silence jointly binds us—  
Our spirits, our words, our opinions.  
Our quiet brings us together,  
But our quiet tears our home apart.  
Silently, we accept it and carry on.



- *Fariza Farid Memon*

# ODE TO MY APRICOT TREE

There! There you are, my lovely!  
Standing next to the boundary fence,  
violets and daffodils at your base,  
budded spires reaching into the rain-laden sky.  
Your trunk is rough and mottled, browns and greys, lichen-greens.  
You arch out to touch the crabapple, a graceful curve;  
sway past the climbing jasmine, caress the lilac tree;  
you reach across the pavers with easy grace  
lift the terracotta squares that mingle with the daisies and the moss.  
Beneath you rests the blue table,  
rescued from the Salvos and brought home quickly  
before Brenton could say no, look how shabby it is;  
painted in coat after coat of cobalt-blue and a wash of white.

In winter you were bare  
and I brought the tall old ladder in,  
with its hook on the top to hang my hacksaw and long-handled secateurs.  
I wrangled the ladder to nestle by your trunk  
and we began our winter conversation:  
I'll leave this one, look how vigorous it is!  
I need to cut you back here. You are so tall I will never reach your apricots!  
Talking to you and feeling for the shape that wanted to emerge.  
Too early in August, I saw your buds were swelling,  
and muttered about timing and frost.

If they can escape the white peril, your buds will swell and burst  
into dusty pink faery-petaled shells,  
and the warm breeze will hold your heady scent.  
Then suddenly, vibrant and green, your leaves will come,  
bursting forth from your smooth young limbs,  
and your blushing frock will be changed for your summer gown.  
Equinox will gallop then, towards the solstice, and your baby apricots will come.  
Hard, green velvet-wrapped infants will line your branches  
and it will be time for us to talk again.  
How many shall we leave? Are there too many on this branch?  
Will the weight be too much?



Around Christmas, your fruit will hang like yellow lanterns.  
I'll be waiting for the velvet flesh to soften just slightly  
For the golden apricot blush to come. Waiting, watching.  
Are you ready, I will whisper?  
New Year will pass and then we'll know: Now! Now is the time!  
I'll bring round the ladder, welded roughly on the top  
Where the hook hangs ready for my bucket.  
I'll shift the table back, stack the tubs and buckets.  
Up the ladder I'll go, filling my buckets, a Labrador snoozing underneath.  
The jars I've collected will come down from their shelf,  
Their labels soaked and scrubbed off. Some of them need eucalyptus oil and steel wool.  
The syrup will be on the stove, brown sugar, cinnamon sticks, vanilla bean,  
some wine if we have any left in a bottle, cardamon pods and rose petals.  
I'll cut your apricots into halves, slip out the stones,  
Stack them face-down in the hot, gleaming jars,  
Half-moon flesh on top of half-moon flesh.  
Pack them in tightly, ladle the syrup over, brown and sweet.  
You'll stand so graciously in your green gown  
As I sweat between ladder and stove,  
Your easy graceful limbs lifting in an airy movement  
as the weight of fruit is taken.  
We will move the table back and sip wine in your green-shaded shelter.

And then the days and nights will cool again  
and just at the right moment  
I'll find you've changed into your yellow autumn cloak.  
Your leaves will flutter in the winds  
and one by one they'll fall onto the pavers,  
Amongst the daisies and the moss.  
I'll sweep them and the pavers will be clear and you,  
You will be bare-boned again  
Your trunk rough and mottled, browns and greys, lichen-greens,  
And I will see the buds waiting beneath your skin.



- *Nicola Hoskins-Murphy*

# HOME TURNED INTO A BATTLEFIELD

A fugitive from home was all my soul had moulded into now.

Home never felt warm.

From the moment i learned,  
To roll that word off my tongue in a breeze,  
i realized that the closest i'd ever come to finding a home is by looking for it someplace that is not here.

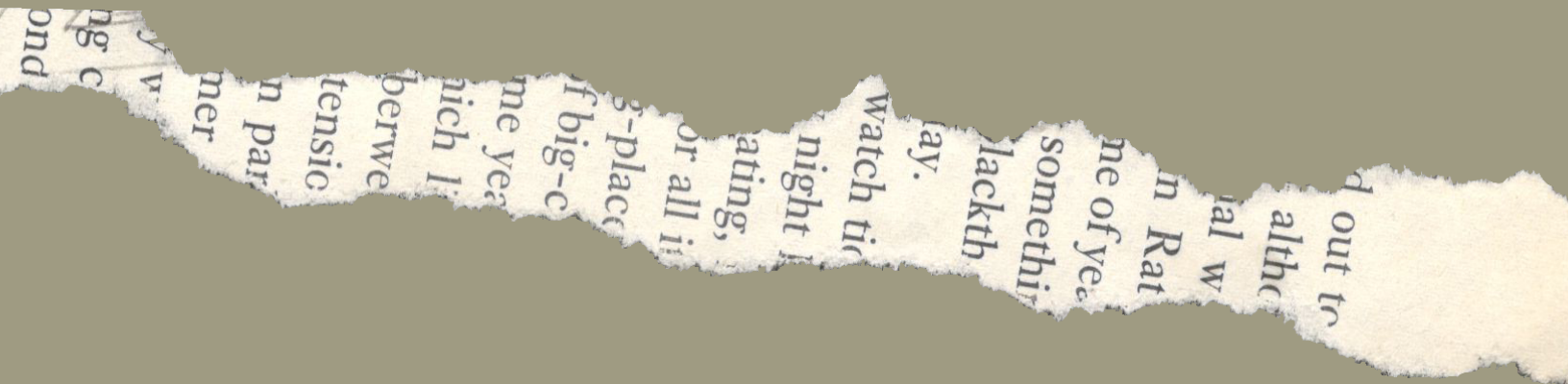
[daily reminder: Home sweet Home was an adage i'd never pull off]

Some days home felt like a mortuary,  
where i'd observe all the parts of me that had died, struggling till their last breath.

On other days, home was a battlefield  
i'd be hesitant to approach.  
With words sharp as daggers missing me by an inch.

Austere. Cold. A battlefield in its truest form,  
Was what home had turned into.

- *Sunniva Das*





# TO MAKE IT HOME

A house isn't a proper home until you get a letter from a friend at this address. Not a cold, silent bill, or the last book you've ordered from the internet hoping your to-be read pile will magically turn into a housemate. An actual letter, written with care, a letter that smells like somebody else's home if you bring it close enough to your nose. A letter fast asleep in an envelope with a stamp on it that somebody licked like you'd blow on a dandelion, wishing for their words to find their way to you. A house isn't a proper home until you've danced alone in it. Don't invite your friends over for that purpose. It has to be done alone. (Although pets are allowed !) Pick your favourite song and just dance around your new place.

A house isn't a proper home until it saw you cry, until you had to curl up in its corners, and lean against its walls to finally find the courage to get up in the morning. Until it saw you at your most vulnerable. (Although that sounds a lot like the dancing part.)

It always comes back to dancing.

I danced in my new shared house, in a country where I didn't know anybody anymore after I broke up with my boyfriend. When the tiny room was full of boxes and possibilities. *O Children* by Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds. 7 minutes of wishing for the best.

I danced every morning for two months in front of my mirror before I grew comfortable enough with who I was to come out to my mum.

I danced the morning after Jack assaulted me. Cleaned the remains of a party to the sound of *8 days a week* by the Beatles. Some say I was trying to remember my body was mine but I think I was just trying to survive the worst day of my life.

I danced in the first classroom that felt like mine before opening the door for my students to fly in. A flock of musical notes on a page.

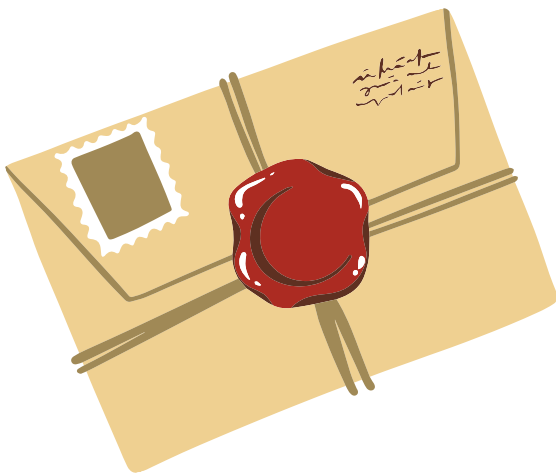
Last week my mum and I moved my grandmother's stuff into a retirement home. And it was all very sad because it felt a lot like getting used to things ending. Because we were surrounded by old people who didn't remember how to say *hello* anymore. But I went to their garden and there were chickens there. I decided to go back to my grandma's new room, turned the music on, *Stop Making This Hurt* by Bleachers and started dancing. I danced because my grandmother can't walk anymore which means somebody had to make it a home for her.



I guess what I'm trying to say is pain won't be yours, won't be owned until you've danced to it. I'm not saying dance it off because that would be implying pain will eventually get it and magically follow your lead which sadly sounds inaccurate. I'm not saying find beauty in pain because that sounds a lot like this what doesn't kill you makes you stronger kind of bullshit.

I'm just saying if you want to survive the next 3 minutes and make it a bit further, dance to it. Find the rhythm to this throbbing wound, leave a note down the hall to warn the neighbours, turn the music loud, start dancing and please, send me a letter when you get home.

*- Jo Matsaeff*





SYMMETRY

THE WHEEL OF LIFE



- *Christina Hennemann*

# HOME

It's in the steps taken, gentle, tip toe-ing, slow and fast  
Tripping, skipping and then at last a dawdle, or a sprint, along the path that is winding and straight  
and near and far.

In the hushed moments of quiet days, and hazy lazy lolling around.

No sense of urgency in the moment

Just being,

Present

It's in the echos of the mind and the memories of long days and unique ways.

Inhaling the scent and fragrance that is so familiar

It soothes and lightens a troubled heart and allows the love

To comfort and flood each cell, each vessel and vein of my being

With knowing, how only I can know

that this is the place, that I call home.

It's where the sky meets the sea and the sea meets the land

And you and I walk hand in hand

Talking

Thinking in silence

And we listen to the beat of the night

And take comfort and energy in knowing

That no matter where we are, no matter the place, the space, the bricks and mortar

So long as you are there and I am there, we will be home

And home will be us.....

- *Caroline Stevens-Taylor*



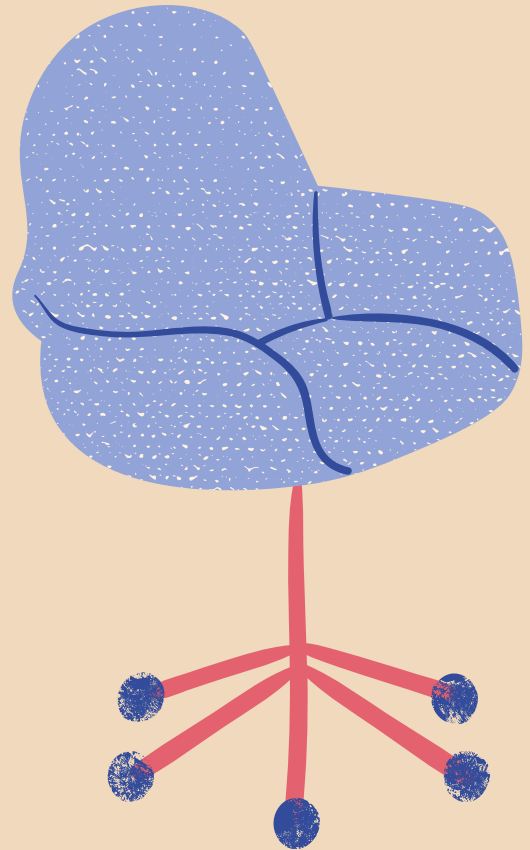
# KATHY'S HAIR CENTER

Saturday mornings  
cartoons and the smell  
of perm solution  
wafts up the stairs  
overpowers the sweet smell  
of Fruity Pebbles in my bowl

Older ladies' distorted voices  
heard over blow dries  
and wash outs, me  
at the top of the stairs  
listening to the neighborhood  
soap operas  
listening for mom to call me down  
to sweep up  
the grey and brown remnants  
scattered under the chair

Early afternoon  
just me and mom now  
I sit in the styling chair  
make faces in the mirror  
love my moussed-up mohawk  
while she separates checks and cash  
and I ask her to spin me around again

- *Jason Melvin*



# THE GENERATIONAL PAST TIME

An old man, arms crossed,  
watches his grandson in Farm League,  
remembers thousands of hours  
on district ball fields across his life,  
Major League, Little League, Colt League  
games with his sons,  
his daughter's softball,  
years of coaching them  
and other childrens'  
beaming faces, crying (there is)—  
slides, homeruns, doubles.  
steals, triples, strikeouts,  
singles, walks, shutouts.

Today, thirty years later,  
he watches a grandson  
on the same field  
he coached his son  
to a city championship,  
an indelible memory  
like the trophy  
collecting dust in his office  
until his son carries  
it to his own home one day.

Watches his grandson,  
no curve ball here,  
a heater straight to the heart.



- Vern Fein  
(credits: *EUPHEMISM* magazine)



The Joy forgets the Pain ("Ephemeral")

- *Edward Lee*

# ON THE ROCKING CHAIR

I spread my arms across the pinewood hand-rest,  
swaying back and forth while the barbets sing a  
winter lullaby, urging me to rest my heavy eyes.  
The cushion supporting my back has a cotton cover  
stitched with handmade embroidery, in the shape  
of butterflies. I leave the chair after a while  
watching it move with the wind.  
I will return soon I promised them,  
knowing that even the butterflies fly leaving  
their cocoons. Would they know where to fly  
if they were to never leave?

- Paridhi Poddar

# H<sub>E</sub>AVEN

I crawl back into the corner of  
My orbit, where time stands still  
On the wooden wall clock,  
And sparkly stars twinkle over my  
Canopy bed, red and golden,  
Illuminating my tired eyes to  
Dream of space adventures.

My pillow smells of the dent in your chin.

I'm slowly falling for a feverish night.  
The soft drizzling of the universe rain  
On the roof of my ethereal sanctuary  
Reminds me of your gently whispered  
*Gute Nacht.*

Now I can rest,  
and sleep,  
and recover.



- Christina Hennemann



# FLAVORS OF LOVE

## Saturday

we'll make cider  
side by side  
pinky in pinky  
fresh apples  
from the garden we  
sowed together  
spices from last weekend when  
we went down to a farmer's market  
in the valley  
we'll laugh and talk and cry and cry and talk and laugh together

## Sunday

we'll bake bread  
watch it rise as our hearts  
soar  
but the best part  
will come later  
when we sit  
side by side  
and break our bread  
plain  
with butter  
dipped in olive oil and balsamic  
in soup  
how we eat it doesn't matter  
just who we eat it with  
and darling, your company is ideal  
let's give this bread

## Wednesday

we'll buy fro-yo  
we're both here early from work, so  
we have time  
to leisurely walk downtown  
side by side



hand in hand  
debriefing on each other's day  
and feeling a steady beat from  
the place where our skin is pressed together  
our calm hearts pulsing  
content in the moment  
ready to live and laugh, full of love  
ready to  
Be

- *Anoushka Swaminathan*

## HOME IS WHERE I FIND MYSELF

childhood blanket  
on a warm valley night  
covered in berry stains  
eyes reflecting moonlight  
that same moon  
that I loved so back then  
would stay with me always  
my forever friend  
for even when knowing myself  
seemed insane  
the moon was there  
saying my name  
calling out  
in the sweetest silence  
it said nothing  
and I found  
myself



- *Ramsha Rizvi*

# MY (HOME)CITY, MY DELHI

Living in another city for the first time in my life is a peculiar experience. The experience is not only exciting but redefining, redefining my understanding of inhabitation, identity, space, and most importantly home. I have always associated home with a comfortable place where I live but in the past few months, I have realized how home is way more than that. I miss not only the plastered walls of my house that often speak to me, the creaking sound of the tiles on which my father used to park his old scooter or the aroma of my mother's food that often wake me up in the morning but also the brimming flavor of my city—my Delhi where I belong. Delhi for me is an adjunct mix of reality and magic, one can lose its way and win it back here, all in one go. A place where you can find solitude in the crowd, beauty in hustle and life amid the dead.

As the pandemic didn't allow me to get back to where I belong, I decided to get back to Delhi in fragments of imagination and visit my home telepathically. I found my way back to Delhi in Ravish Kumar's *A City happens in Love*. When the narrator strolls the streets of Delhi, finding moments of love in ruckus with his beloved, I can't stop but feel the magic of my home city that holds exploration at its every turn and corner. The lively description of campus streets where lovers used to wander around takes me back to my college days when I used to wander the place in search of a companion. Home is comfort but if we think about it home is excitement too. While we have monotonous existence inhabiting the place that belongs to us, it's the newness in this monotony, adventure in every day and smiles in pangs of laughter that gives a home its beauty. A beauty that Delhi has given me at its every path, street, and corner.

Though Delhi's developing speed and veracity have the tendency to make its inhabitants feel like a stranger in their own homes, I have learned to breathe the air of comfort here. The comfort that allows me to forget myself in an infinite army of people and gives me strength to find my uniqueness in the crowd. Delhi and its people very well know how to amalgamate the tinge of global with its local, they happily offer chances to people to speak English with regional dialects and wear high boots with a saree. It is this beauty of every day that takes away the strangeness of wanders like me and urges us to discover new paths in order to get a clue of movement ahead.

I still remember the strangeness I felt when I visited the Sarojini Nagar market for the first time. The place was full of clothes and people overwhelmed me. I felt lost but somehow in getting lost amidst the crowd, I found myself. That chaotic sunny afternoon, I discovered what it feels to be independent, to be yourself, cherish the happiness to find things on your own, and get over the strangeness to seek help from strangers in order to discover the path you never have the strength to travel in a first glance. I visited the market many times and every time with a variety of clothes and street food, I find a new chunk of old hidden confidence, a new way to adore the beauty of the city.

And this trip down the memory lane made me realize how the comfort of being, the memory of my growth, and the feeling of exuberance post exploring the facets of existence in a new light that I miss about my city, my home. A discovery that will help me to find my home again. Maybe a new experience can relish the old and redefine my understanding of my home(s).

- *Bhavya Rattan*



# HIRAETH

My journal has been nothing but a scattered cluster of unfinished poems held together by raw unfiltered strings of emotions, of random sketches of lone strangers I spot in empty mini bars and small coffee shops, of long-forgotten days and repressed feelings, of mindless doodles of sunsets and silhouettes – of undressed metaphors, that craved a muse. I sit by the seaside this morning with my mother and watch my dog chase the waves back and forth. It was another breezy Wednesday, the sky alternates between faint grey clouds and the vibrant yellow sun, while I am still finding my way somewhere in between. My friend told me that you were back in town two weeks ago and since then I have always made my way up to here every Wednesday.

I wore a yellow shirt on our first date and that's when you started to call me your sunflower  
"You resemble yellow," you said, "vibrant, lovely, spreading smiles to many"  
"Yellow is my color of love" I smile back.

I remember those nights, when you used to silently paint the bedroom walls with strings of sunflowers and lavenders, and every time my friends admired your work, you used to say how these sunflowers were me and you resembled the lavenders. My lavenders. The winter that followed ended with regrets that last to date. Feelings of the younger me have always lacked gravity, and four years later I still wish only if I had not left you heartbroken and helpless just for another new face.

I suddenly spot you in a distance, among a group of girls, by the benches along the coffee shops. You wore a pastel summer dress. Your hair is short. It falls in loose curls by your shoulders. Your skin is not pale anymore. I guess summers in Italy did you good. I hear you laugh and I can't help but smile. I wanted to walk up to you and say things like,

"Hey I have heard, no, I have read your book. It's amazing"

"Hi Em, long time no see, how have you been?"

"I missed you, so much"

"Can we be both sunflowers and lavenders again?"

But I didn't. Without speaking a word I walk back to my car as my mother follows along with my dog.

"You should go talk to her, Wilder. Maybe...she misses you too" my mom silently speaks as she keeps Emily's book inside her bag.

I turn back and smile, "I am the reason her poetry has tasted heartbreak mum."



- *Bidisha Kashyap*

# SUMMER '21

Perhaps for only an instant  
autumn's haze was over the trees in full leaf  
and the pavement where their shadows fell  
over the river, too,  
the riverbed becomes almost visible with the outgoing tide and a dozen or more  
gulls waiting  
to fold themselves onto the silt  
housebound for weeks now I've held onto the memory of swimming in water dense with  
sunlight—  
impossible not to want to walk into the ocean with the chance of being remade  
there  
that first taste of salt  
and the cold knock of waves into ribs and heart  
a reminder I won't be ready for a new season without immersing myself  
in this one.



- *Joanna Hughes*

## home

the smell of the sweetest rose, the touch of the softest quilt and the feel of the coldest breeze. home is my mother baking chocolate cookies, my father humming 90s songs out of tune. home is my beloved's gentle kiss painted on my forehead, my best friend's tightest hug.

oh did i forget? home to me is not my messy mind but the piece of mind which holds the essence of my ex-lover every time. home to me is my bleeding heart looking at the dusted love letters. home is my safe place where i sit and cry, hugging myself drenched in my own tears.

home is also the birth giver of my anxiety and also its murderer. home is me, my soul. home is the feeling of love and betrayal.

- *Aditi Khataniar*

# PERHAPS

Perhaps a home,  
Which you never want to leave,

Perhaps a book,  
That you want to read again & again,

Perhaps a dark sky with twinkling stars,  
That you can't take your eyes off,

Perhaps a full moon,  
That leaves you praising its beauty,

Perhaps a Diwali night,  
With different colours cracking all over,

Perhaps a dream,  
That makes you pray not to wake,

Perhaps a feeling,  
That causes the butterflies in your stomach,

Perhaps an illusion,  
That makes your heart skip a beat,

Perhaps a mirage,  
Which creates the thirst in your lonely heart,

Perhaps a lie,  
That shatters your trust.

- *Ambirneya Kannan*

# NEW BEGINNING

Your presence in my life is like the appearance of the sun  
after a long heavy spring rain.

The colours that you bring into my life  
like the rainbow the sun creates after rain.

The vivid colours of the sunset that fill my heart  
remind me of the locked rooms of which you made me a part.  
Both are living with the yearning for a new beginning.

My favourite memory of you,  
dancing before my eyes, as I watch the sun disappear.  
The dark and stormy night that left me scared,  
lonely,  
weak,  
and helpless.  
But you promised me light, calmness and protection.

The longing of your presence at the sunset,  
the vibrant colours appearing in the far horizon  
that remind me of you and Earth that had no choice,  
but to reflect the beauty of your heart.  
You became home to me,  
and brought warmth to my heart.



- *Kubra Okutan*



# (un)seen

## Scene 1. Dismantle

Migrate forward, no back.

Need necessitates my every move.

Migrate on, not from,

and keep forgetting each time.

I don't know where I belong

In no more than three cartons, I have discarded everything I don't want to take. Notebooks, textbooks, book reports, binders, projects, sign-up sheets, diaries, tests – a carton worth of sleepless nights, an aching back, drooping eyes, a sagging hand and straight As. Clothes, soft toys, trinkets, stationery, birthday cards, bag packs – a carton worth of a little piece of my heart and the home I had built. Restaurant bills, fading polaroids, forgotten notes, stolen bookmarks, newspaper cuttings, peeling stickers, address books, good-luck charms, handmade posters – a carton worth of miscellaneous memories that I need to forget to make room for new ones.

It takes me three weeks to fill up these three cartons. And a week to dismantle my room. Things of immediate use in red and grey suitcases, and over-filled duffel bags, almost everything else in huge, pale brown cartons labelled SP, the mattress, quilt and pillow in the common metalised box. Everything breakable in a bubble wrap. But I can't bubble wrap me.

## Scene 2. Transit

The four of them are huddled together,  
sharing their warmth, keeping the world at bay,  
bearing the weight of change, hands folded  
in silent prayer – they'll live, they do.

The four of them are stuck in transit, always.

Familiar knots spread through my tightening stomach, rising up my throat and I gulp down my own saliva, to keep the greasy airport food down. Our next flight is at 8 AM, about seven hours later. We make our way to the uncomfortable-looking lounge chairs meant for sleeping, between gates 67B and 68. I try – pulling my jacket over my face like my dad, wrapping myself in a shawl like my mom, taking off my shoes like my sister. Nothing works. My insomnia is miserably inconsolable.

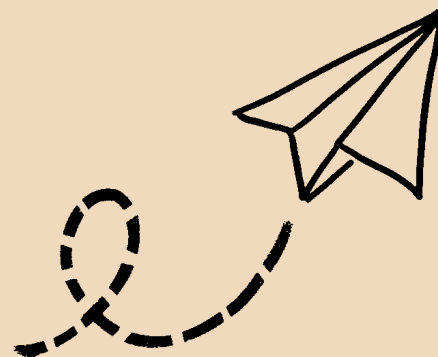
Our flight is in less than an hour. I notice a twenty-something man, near immigrations, whisper shout at his phone, "I am alright, Ma", as he proceeds to unclench his fist. I find myself clenching my fist. The



airport has almost managed to convince me that changing cities (after cities), domestic travel they say, isn't migration at all. Almost. Over the next few days, as we empty out our suitcases and put them away, as we piece together a home, I am wondering if I am alright. Alright. I am miserably inconsolable.

### Scene 3. Separation

I paint my skies azure,  
with yellow from my mother's  
turmeric-stained hands,  
brown from my father's  
grime-covered face,  
and purple from my sister's  
glitter smeared clothes.  
And I fly  
as high, as far  
away as I can.  
Because I can.  
Because I know.  
They will be there for me,  
when I fly back home.



I am a river, not stopping for obstacles, but swirling around them. The river in me branches out in a delta, before becoming one with the sea - I have everywhere to go. The river in me disappears off of the face of the ground and, into the clouds - I have everywhere to go. But a river can't choose to reverse its course; I can. So, I have nowhere to go.

Because migration comes with a cost - a resignation, which settles in bones, and makes them brittle. Separation. It's a cost I don't want to pay. It's a cost I have been paying all my life.

- *Srishti Pandey*

# issue 02 – home contributors

amrita tandon  
george fisher  
r. skye lambert  
ellen clayton  
christina hennemann  
ysabel red  
jared rivas  
laura mae  
fairley lloyd  
edward lee  
sarah henry  
grace o'reilly  
celeste king  
tohm bakelas  
john grey  
gabrielle wheatley  
sarah abdul rahamn  
udita mukherjee  
lauren thorn  
srishti pandey

jason melvin  
paridhi poddar  
beatriz seelaender  
m p armstrong  
kudzai mhangwa  
fariza farid memon  
nicola hoskins-murphy  
sunniva das  
jo matsaefi  
caroline stevens-taylor  
vern fein  
anoushka swaminathan  
ramsha rizvi  
bhavya rattan  
bidisha kashyap  
joanna hughes  
aditi khataniar  
ambirneya kannan  
kubra okutan  
oormila vijaykrishnan prahlad

# About the contributors

**Amrita**, is a self-taught artist constantly exploring new ideas. Her paintings are about the pleasure of seeing, and finding a place and moment of quietude and connection. The subject matter varies, each a reflection of emotions and experiences at that particular time in her life. She enjoys exploring different facets of nature and man, from the mighty to the mundane.

**George Fisher** (He/Him) is an aspiring poet from Sydney, Australia. Originally using poetry as a form of therapy/emotional outlet, he has recently started to submit to various publications in the hope to reach greater audiences with his work. He has also been working on a collection/chapbook around the mix of emotions due to current the Covid 19 pandemic and is hoping to self publish towards the end of the year.

**R. Skye Lambert** has a Bachelors degree in Psychology with a minor in English. Recent work has appeared in Trouvaille Review and Eloquent Magazine. You can find Skye on social media at @rskylambert.

**Ellen Clayton** is from Suffolk, England where she lives with her husband and three young children. She often writes about motherhood and love in all its forms and has recently been published in various publications including Capsule Stories and Nightingale and Sparrow. She has poems forthcoming with Cauldron Anthology and Gutslut Press. Her poetry can be found on Instagram @ellen\_writes\_poems and she's on Twitter @el\_clayton.

**Christina**, (28 years old, she/her) is an emerging writer and photographer based on the inspiring west coast of Ireland but originally from Germany. At the age of six, she began writing her first English songs and poems with the help of a German-English dictionary. Since then her English skills have much improved, she hopes. Recent or forthcoming publications include The Martello, Littoral Magazine, 805 Lit + Art and orangepeel.

**Ysabel Red** is my name, and I use She/Her pronouns. I reside in Manila, Philippines, in the city of Quezon City. Sewing and writing are two of my favorite things to do!

**Jared Rivas** is the brain behind numerous creative projects such as "6:20 AM", a short film that he wrote. He graduated high school in 2021 and now pursues a career in the film industry with a focus on creative writing/screenwriting.

**Laura Mae**

**Fairley Lloyd** (she/her, they/them) is a writer, editor, and dreamer. She earned her BFA in creative writing and publishing certificate from UNC Wilmington. Her work appears in Ripe Literary Journal, Press Pause Press, Under the Wires, Calm Down Magazine, and elsewhere. She is passionate about writing about her personal experiences as a bisexual, Black, woman living in the South and telling other people's stories. She currently resides in her home state of North Carolina.

**Edward Lee** is an artist and writer from Ireland. His paintings and photography have been exhibited widely, while his poetry, short stories, non-fiction have been published in magazines in Ireland, England and America, including The Stinging Fly, Skylight 47, Acumen and Smiths Knoll. He is currently working on two photography collections: 'Lying Down With The Dead' and 'There Is A Beauty In Broken Things'. He also makes musical noise under the names Ayahuasca Collective, Orson Carroll, Lego Figures Fighting, and Pale Blond Boy. His blog/website can be found at <https://edwardmlee.wordpress.com>

**Oormila Vijayakrishnan Prahlad** (she/her) is an Indian-Australian artist and poet who serves as a chief editor for Authora Australis. She holds a Masters in English and is a member of The North Shore Poetry Project. Her art and poetry have been published in both print and online literary journals and anthologies including The Eunoia Review, River and South Review, Bracken Magazine, and Black Bough Poetry. She won the 66th Moon Prize awarded by Writing in a Woman's Voice Journal, and an Honorable Mention in the Glass Poetry Awards 2020. Find her @oormilaprahlad and [www.instagram.com/oormila\\_paintings](http://www.instagram.com/oormila_paintings)

**Sarah Henry** (she/her) is a journalism student who began writing religiously a few years ago and hasn't stopped since. Her work has appeared in P'an Ku Literary and Arts Magazine, Stuck in Notes, and Horse Egg Magazine. She is an avid daydreamer and aspiring two-time Grammy award-winning guitarist (but for now she only knows a few chords). She lives in her home state of Florida with her cat.

**Grace** is passionate about writing and finds it therapeutic. She has been writing since the age of 8. Poetry is her favourite form to write although she writes an array. Published online and in print Grace was longlisted for the RTÉ Guide Penguin Ireland short story competition in 2012 and is a member of several writing groups. She is the chairperson for the Gorey writers group in Wexford Ireland. Grace has a host of health issues including fibromyalgia a debilitating chronic pain and fatigue condition and is on disability. She hopes to promote awareness of fibromyalgia and has just written the first draft of a book regarding living with the

condition. As Grace doesn't work, writing gives Grace a sense of purpose, aside from being a mother, wife a dog mother.

**Celeste King** is a nineteen year old South African poet who has been writing poetry since she was fifteen as a way to cope with mental health issues. Celeste describes herself as compassionate, creative and intelligent.

**Tohm Bakelas** is a social worker in a psychiatric hospital. He was born in New Jersey, resides there, and will die there. His poems have appeared in numerous journals, zines, and online publications. He has published 10 chapbooks. He runs Between Shadows Press.

**John Grey** is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in Sheepshead Review, Poetry Salzburg Review and Hollins Critic. Latest books, "Leaves On Pages" and "Memory Outside The Head" are available through Amazon. Work upcoming in Lana Turner and International Poetry Review.

**Gabrielle Vaigneur Wheatley** is a published poet with works that can be found in Beyond the Veil Press' 2021 Fall Issue and Pile Press' 2021 Fall Issue. Gabrielle is a nonbinary writer from Wichita, Kansas and works with themes of identity, love, coming-of-age, spirituality, and nature.

**Sarah Abdul Rahamn** is an architecture student, who relieves her stress through baking bread, looking at clothes and of course, writing. She is a born-again writer, as she refound her love for it through the copious music that she listens to, as well as all the essays and pieces that she's stumbled upon on the internet. They hold so much emotion within them that she got inspired to try to write more and more, in hopes of making other people feel the same towards her writing. Her work can be found in a local zine in Malaysia called Saya Magazine, Juiced! Zine as well as some that she would post on her instagram (@ohtenderthoughts) from time to time.

**Lauren Thorn** is a writer and artist based in Southern California. She has been writing ever since she was a little girl, though her early works are not exactly masterful. When she is not writing, she can be found screaming along to Fiona Apple lyrics, drawing and painting, or playing with her 3 dogs.

**Jason Melvin** is a father, husband, grandfather, high school soccer coach, and metals processing center supervisor, who lives just north of Pittsburgh. Most of his poems come to him while riding his lawnmower around the yard. He was named 2nd runner-up in the Heartwood Poetry Prize contest 2021. His work has recently appeared in Sledgehammer, The Spring City, The Front Porch Review, Spillover, Olney,

Chasing Shadows, Last Leaves, Orangepeel, Anti-Heroine Chic, Bombfire and Zero Readers, among others.

**Paridhi Poddar** is a seventeen-year-old emerging poet from Kolkata, hoping to find a home in words.

**Beatriz Seelaender** is an author from São Paulo, Brazil. She has had stories published in journals such as Azure, Cagibi, and Inverted Syntax, and Creative Nonfiction by The Collapsar and Guesthouse. Recently, she's also started to submit Poetry. Seelaender's novellas have earned her both the Sandy Run Award and the Bottom Drawer Prize. You can find her on Twitter (@biaseelaender) and Instagram (@slanderdawg), though the latter might be just pictures of her beloved shih tzu, Uli.

**Udita Mukherjee** loves sobbing through animated movies and sad lyrics with happy tunes. Her first book, From A To Z, which has queer leads, was published globally in pride month 2021. Her work has been showcased by Bombay Theatre Company, Start The Wave's Pride Liberates video, a magazine edited by Ruskin Bond and several other zines, blogs and anthologies. Her poem Home found a spot in Chasing Shadows issue 1 and she cannot believe she gets to write about the same feeling for issue 2!

**MP Armstrong** is a disabled queer writer from Ohio. They are the author of two poetry chapbooks: who lives like this for such a cheap price (Flower Press), and the truth about the sky (Selcouth Station), a reader for Prismatic Magazine, and an editor for Fusion and Curtain Call magazines. Their work is published or forthcoming in Qwerty, Brainchild, and bed zine, among others. Find them online @mpawrites and at mpawrites.wixsite.com/website. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response!

**Kudzai Mhangwa** lives and writes from his home in Harare, Zimbabwe. He writes poetry, plays, short stories and essays. His work has been featured in Journal of African Youth Literature, The African Writer Review, Mosi oa Tunya Literary Review, House of Mutapa and elsewhere.

**Fariza Farid Memon** is an emerging poet, who is currently doing her Bachelors in English Language and Literature. She began writing poetry after composing one for her sister. Not only does she write poems but also book reviews of interesting books she discovers. She is a slow reader and loves drinking tea while writing or reading.

**Nicola Hoskins-Murphy** is a mother and a psychotherapist. When I can find it, I cherish time in my garden and writing and playing my viola.

**Sunniva** is a 9th grader and an amateur writer who is constantly striving to be a better version of herself.

**Jo Matsaeff** is a neurodivergent queer teacher based in France. They can be found at their local open mic or virtually hanging out with their international poet friends wishing for a day when a magical tunnel will bring them all together. Their work appears in Gnashing Teeth, Anti-Heroine Chic, Horse Egg, The Adriatic and Serotonin Poetry. Follow them at jo\_pangolin (Instagram).

**Caroline** has been living in County Wexford for the last 23 years but is originally from the UK. She likes to write and paint in her spare time. She has had a few pieces of poetry and prose published in the Wexford Bohemium, Wexford women writing undercover and the Galway Review. She has also had some pieces published online with Penedemic.ie and she writes a blog called [itsjustnoteasy.com](http://itsjustnoteasy.com)

A retired special education teacher, **Vern Fein** has published over one hundred fifty poems on over seventy sites, a few being: \*82 Review, Bindweed Magazine, Gyroscope Review, Courtship of Winds, Young Raven's Review, Nine Muses, Monterey Poetry Review, and Corvus Review.

**Anoushka Swaminathan** (she/they) is a queer Indian-American 7th grader living somewhat near San Francisco in California- though she wishes she could live closer, because the city is amazing. They love reading all genres, but primarily write realistic fiction and sci-fi, as well as poetry. They have previously been published in Ice Lolly Review. When not reading or writing- so barely ever- she plays piano, dances Bharatnatyam, yearns endlessly, bikes, plays with her cat, and does debate. They have an unhealthy obsession with the color purple.

**Ramsha Rizvi** is currently studying Film, TV and theatre. She is taking a leap of faith and putting her work out in the open. Her writing and painting is her way of finding her identity. She is currently based in Pakistan and enjoys photography, writing, painting and traveling. She hopes to work in publishing house soon and travel a lot.

**Bhavya Rattan** has completed her Masters in English from Miranda House, University of Delhi. She likes to read both fictional and non-fictional books and express her thoughts in her writing. As a budding writer, she is ardent to use her words to give fresh perspective on everyday experiences thus adding tinge of beauty to what we call ordinary. The topics on which she likes to write are life writings, homeland, places/spaces, reader response to works of art and relationship between self and society.

**Bidisha P. Kashyap** is a nineteen-year-old history major and a literature enthusiast from

India. She is an avid reader and often likes to write as well. Being introduced to the world of literature, she has been published in a couple of anthologies, local dailies, literary websites, magazines, poetry pages and so on. She also runs a WordPress blog and an Instagram page showcasing her works. Her poetry basically centers around love, heartbreak, longing, and old school romances.

**Joanna Hughes** is a writer and former high school teacher from Melbourne, Australia. Her poetry has appeared recently in ARC Journal and is forthcoming in Minnow Literary Magazine. Some more of her work can be found on Instagram @joannahwrites.

**Aditi Archita Khataniar** is a part-time writer, who loves to bring in emotions to her writeups. She passed her 12th from cotton university, Guwahati and is currently a jee aspirant. She comes from the city of Guwahati in Assam. She is currently volunteering as a content writer in @the.philocalist.society and @behindthelives. Other than writing, she loves reading romantic books. She aspires to be a computer engineer. She has a vision of spreading love to everyone by her own little ways.

**Ambirneya Kannan** is a poet and a short story writer. She is a published author of a solo poetry chapbook & two poetry anthologies and been a co-author of many anthologies. She writes about the people, places, experiences & feelings that she has come across and her writings have the mixed feelings of love & melancholy. She likes to express herself with her writings. A Tamil Nadu native, she is the lover of traveling, beaches, woods, drawings, most likely multitasking. She received her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Madras Uni. but worked as a Teacher. She is an ambitious and passionate woman who loves to do things differently.

**Kubra Okutan** is a Danish-born young aspiring woman of Turkish-Kurdish descent who is now living her life in Germany with her husband. The art of writing and drawing have long been her closest companions throughout her life, towards which she has gotten a passion. Poetry especially has done wonders in her life, as she says herself "poetry is a wonderful thing. It enables you to express even your deepest and most complex of thoughts". She has a bachelor degree in International Humanities, Communication studies and Cultural Encounters, and with support from her degree, she wishes to be able to make an impact and be an inspiration for young people from different parts of the world, and to become a place where cultures meet rather than clash.

**Srishti Pandey** (she/her) is 15-years-old and hails from India; a sleep-deprived teenager, with big dreams. She is a STEM student, who finds solace in the literary world. Whenever she gets free time, you can find her decorating her poetry notebook. She has poetry present in the Ice Lolly Review, Intersections Mag, Propaganda Panda Mag and Love Letters Mag. You can find her on instagram: @its.me.srishti and twitter: @srishtipandey\_.

# CHASING SHADOWS

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