

THIMBLE LITERARY MAGAZINE

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Thimble Literary Magazine

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Phil Cerroni
Publisher

Nadia Wolnisty
Editor-in-Chief

The *Thimble Literary Magazine* is based on the belief that poetry is like armour. Like a thimble, it may be small and seem insignificant, but it will protect us when we are most vulnerable.

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Brief Guidelines for Submission

The *Thimble Literary Magazine* is primarily a poetry journal but invites submissions on related topics such as artwork, stories, and interviews. We are not looking for anything in particular in terms of form or style, but that it speaks to the reader or writer in some way. When selecting your poems or prose, please ask yourself, did this poem help me create shelter? Simultaneous submissions are accepted, but please notify us if the work is accepted elsewhere. All material must be original and cannot have appeared in another publication.

Poetry: Please send us three to five of your poems.

Short Stories: Please send a single work or around 1,000 words. It can be fiction, creative non-fiction, or somewhere in between.

Essays: Please send a single essay of 1,000–3,000 words that touches on contemporary issues in literature or art.

Art: Please send us three to five examples of your art, which can include photographs and photographs of three-dimensional pieces.

Please send submissions to Nadia Wolnisty, Editor-in-Chief, Thimble Literary Magazine, thimblelitmag@gmail.com The author's biography should be included in the body of the email and the submission as a single attachment.

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Editor's Note

Dear readers,

Words are not magical. It is easy to romanticize the acts of word making and art making, but the words are not enchantments to ward off evil. Having the right words is not even the limits of our world, I think, as much as I would like Wittgenstein and the film *Arrival* to be right.

And yet words are doing something, right? They make an impact of some kind. It has long been postulated that man is a story-making being, and I think that's right. Whatever we are doing when we make and are exposed to art, it is a profoundly human activity.

Words are not spells; works of art are not talismans. And yet when we participate in the human activities of meaning making and meaning finding, something within us is sated or soothed, for a little while at least. I believe art is akin to a thimble—something small to keep our edges from getting stung. It won't stop bullets, but participating in what it means to be human helps.

In other words, as *The Legend of Zelda* puts it, "It's dangerous to go alone. Here, take this!" Thank you, reader, for letting me give you a thimble. And thank you, contributors, because it takes a village to make one.

I love you all.

NADIA WOLNISTY



Anton Martynenko, *The Fast Supper*,
oil on canvas, 2011.

These Houses Have Multiple Stories

by Reverie Koniecki

stacked high sprawling
wide on less than acre
lots shoulder to shoulder
they cut the branches each

season remodel them into
clubs and aces and saplings
to line edges of sidewalks
for the army strong

for the wide avenue of the
for evenly spaced stop lights
and intersections w/no U
for the love of god turn

and take these houses
all the way down until you
find yourself in a parking
lot waiting.

The Comptroller's Dream

by Reverie Koniecki

watch this turn to
arms and shoulders

see how the skyline
bends fog's fingers

windows feel this
bridge connect nowhere

to somewhere wait
for the comptroller

to cherry pick her blue
signage as she measures

this generation from burden
to expectation to guilt

watch how quickly this
frontage road empties

you from highway to
avenue to intersection

to the closed road where
your mother stands

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hands on hips acutely
angled elbows extended

anxiety cocooned by
her featherless wings

your daughter will
forever be your past

Driving Dallas
To Mayor Mike Rawlings's
Task Force on
Confederate Monuments
by Reverie Koniecki

Code switching is undetectable through tinted windows. Little girls
double step until they surpass their mothers, but never feel safe in
Kessler Park. The bridge to nowhere twirls her skirt over the current
underflowing of the Trinity River. In ten years, they say those banks
will rival Central Park abracadabra: Alta West, Sylvan my 30. Truth
is, monument or not, somewhere on Commerce, before things go
really west, from state-to-statue-to statute,

Lew Sterrett's Justice Center
omnipresently swallows the

whole

damn

trifecta.

Dictionary
by Chigger Matthews

Attachments mean nothing if
You never let them go

Submit to
The process and
Put words
In order

Sit
Fume
At the palsied Spaniard
Who had the nerve to

Enunciate

All those

Smart
Sounding
Syllables

Historically
Ignorant

Presently
Enlightened
(Cause I looked it up)

Ek•phas•tic
Means
Inspired by art



Anton Martynenko, *Suspension of Disbelief*,
oil on canvas, 2011.

Untitled (1)

by Connor Stratman

Here, in shiplessness, I am lighter
than all water in the ocean of Elsewhere.
Along with us for the journey, objects
with inner lives: figurines, books, screens,
and thousands of pictures to be deleted
or burned at the destination. You and I
left from opposite corners, like two boxers
approaching in affectionate aggression,
ready for the grand Hug and the tear-apart.

The climate there is vague; reports all say
something different and clamber over another
to have the final word between breeze and blizzard.
If I didn't know better, I'd say that no one knows
what they're talking about. You might reply
that all Perspective is true, which I couldn't deny.
Still, as we round corners and the vertices
of the dawn-lit treelines come into shining view,
Silence might become the only word worth saying.

Untitled (2)

by Connor Stratman

That you no longer feel one with your flesh
or twinned against the image of the dais
alarms me like the smolders of a burned
house, ashes drifting across time like snow.

That I no longer know where to walk
in this field that was mine anymore
could crush hearts stonier than the hills
that form the graves of the epochs of beasts.

Untitled (3)

by Connor Stratman

I am the last speck of pollen.
We skip spring, always.
The end of my story
always involves at least one
person metamorphosed
into an mirroring object.
You and I are the one
Thing unlike the others,
and one of us with be
with the other, even till
the end of the age.

Certain as the Sun

by Alexandra Corinth

Yesterday, I realized we are no longer friends
on Facebook, and I can't remember if I unfriended you first
or you did, and by unfriended, I mean fifteen years ago
I woke up in your house to a glare of a story, frustration with
my sleepwalk and dreams of violent penguins,

and Facebook has a funny way of making you think
you are friends with someone you barely know, and
by barely know, I mean I sometimes live in the summer
before tenth grade, in our friends' pool at the cast party following
a long, exhausting melodrama, when you suggested we pretend
to kiss, your thumbs between our lips just like we practiced for
the stage, and when you leaned in, I felt something unknowable rise
in me, and maybe that is why I let you drag me underwater, to drown
the swelling want that had no name then, to fill it up with familiar,

and now I see pictures of your daughter and the husband who knows
my husband's best friend's wife, and in that electric space between
our keyboards, I can conjure connection to you from nothing, and by
connection, I mean I still remember every word of our friendship's
(first) end, dictated by your Lady Macbeth, ambition my folly, and I
remember the show that changed our lives, the way we screamed
and wept
behind closed curtains, our spontaneous four-part harmony,
and I wonder
how you remember us, if you do at all, because I still have the
notebooks

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we filled with our gossip and poetry, two sides of the same girlhood,
and by girlhood, I mean you will always live somewhere in my bones,
forever fifteen and apologetic, your distinct handwriting and hierarchies,

and I wish Facebook would stop reminding me that I don't know you,
wish I could keep you in a rose tinted bell jar, unchanging and imperfect,
and by imperfect, I mean I forgive you, forgive us for not being friends,
and I forgive Facebook, I guess, for making me see that you aren't that
chipped teacup anymore, trapped in time by some great curse of fate. No,
we are both the Beast in our divergent adulthoods, transformed by all that
we know beyond ourselves, and we will always be known to one another
somehow, even if Facebook claims we aren't, even if we never speak again.

Death Ray
after Sara Amato

by Alexandra Corinth

The likes of Marconi and Tesla
dreamed of her in the 1930s,
tried to create her with
all the wrong tools, too much metal,
but the world was not ready then
for the ways in which a woman's body
can take life without ending it.

She pulled her opponents to her chest
and turned them into butterflies,
set loose from the cocoon of her elbows
fresh wings flailing, unable to save them.

She had a way of making anyone look beautiful
just before tearing their skin from sinew, exposing the nerves,
a kind of Munchausen's by proxy in reverse where,
instead of making someone sick to gain sympathy,
she gave her opponents being just so she could take it away,
a hero that reminded fans that they didn't need heroes.

You see, she understood that playing at death
meant you had to be willing to breathe in and out, over and over,
and hope for a heartbeat that lasted longer than three seconds.
She knew how fragile the bones in her hands were
but didn't let that stop her from throwing punches.

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And when the weight of her destruction began to
chip away at the scaffolding of her chest,
she drew the blueprints of her career with yellow chalk
and taught a new generation how to engineer themselves
into a threat to the very system that kept them alive
without compromising their ability to live.

She brought revolution to the one place
that none of us thought capable of change,
playing to the vanity of her bosses
before ripping it to shreds,
revealing the rippling muscle underneath,
a hero reminding fans that little girls need heroes.

Eden Alive

by Alexandra Corinth

I am being,
I am a being,
I am being a being, being eaten alive
by mosquitos,
mosquitos in a garden, gnarden garden, Eden,
mosquitos in Eden eating my skin as I live in the words,
in the woods of words of love and fairy godmothers
and words and fairy lights and
cigarette smoke in my hair,
my mouth,
my skin,
eaten alive by mosquitos in Eden.

Eden of idea, of life, of wasps humming overhead,
a threat for the girl without her EpiPen.
Music in Eden sounds like anarchy in a thimble,
golden folk rock halos given, no questions asked.
It smells like dog sweat and
tastes like the quiet protest, *I'm not a role model*,
whispers behind a smoke screen,
my head bobbing with the offbeat drum beat,
sounds like wailing, like trailing off
into the midnight,
the midnight siren waiting to tempt us
until the beer has settled stale in back of our throats,
tastes like howling, like fowling, like bobbing heads.

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I look up to the sky, for headspace in the stardust,
waiting for the quelling seas to
take my bones from the skin that's being eaten alive,
bruised by the leaping limbs of ninjas,
and there is cigarette smoke in the air, the hair on my arms,
my clothes sticky with sweat,

and I wonder if Eden could ever have been anyway,
been in the way I am being right now,
and if it existed, if they had half as many stars
to light their path, to guide them back.
I bet there were no mosquitos
to thief their blood
or writers to hand them fragments of
poems written on a typewriter in the grass.

There are chiggers on my ankles,
gnawing wisdom into my joints
and there is Rita's laughter,
echoing west, down the highway away from us,
and I want to ask them to stay in touch
but how can I when
we've barely touched at all, strangers really,
even if they feel like my lost lovers
from another life?

How did I get here?
How did I come to shave the underside of my head
and how did I become a friend when, when—
trailing off again—
trailing off as I drive past one am
on my way home to a bed with
a husband and two cats curled into one another
with a space saved for the shape of my body
to curl into them,
and they scratch at my mosquito bites for me
because that's what love is,

because tonight is what love is
and for the first time in too long
I would rather be eaten alive
than some kind of dead.

*A Lesser Light
to Govern the Night*

by Ezhno Martin

How many times
am I going to wish I could still pray
to a god I believed could take all the pain away
before I break down and do it
and return to the soothing rituals of religion
knowing it's all a lie
because I know it's true that it'll make me feel better
even if only for a little while?

Things aren't looking good today
but no worse than yesterday
so I guess it's just wishing
and wanting for a better world
remembering back to when there were
names I could call
like Jesus Christ
Lamb of God
Mommy
Daddy
Kelsey

that could give me the peace of
unquestioning faith
in unconditional love.

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I think I'll just dial Kelsey's old number again
there's a better chance she'll answer
than the dead
or the deity

Maybe I can memorize one of my love letters to her
and recite it like a prayer
ten times in a row
till rote memory
makes all the thinking stop
and faith in bigger and better things seems
real again

I'm crumbling just a little now
just a little

I'm saying
I'm a wretched sinner

because it's so much more soothing
and simple than

I'm a broke down bitter lost miserable love ravaged loser

and that's good enough to make me forget about wishing there
was a god who could save me
till at least morning

Home

by Ezhno Martin

For the last few weeks
all I've been able to think about
is that it's only a matter of days
before I'll be home
to a place I've never been
but better off anyway
not being in this place
or any of the other places I've been
not being home since

August 15th

1996

in the backseat of my dad's car
I saw New York City fade
and Jacob Dylan sang
about his six avenue heartache
and I've been hurting
for reasons that never made sense
like that song

I'm getting back east
or
east enough
to where I won't have to adjust
time zones or brainwaves
speech patterns or bus schedules
just throw myself out into the world

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where there's always an infinity of water
and other countries to stare at
too far away to see
but welcoming with thick diesel fumes
and functioning democracies
derelict dreams on hard winter nights
huddled in old cities cobble stones to stumble on
and catch each other
not out of kindness
but cause we know we're all falling
somewhere without calloused hands to catch us

I don't know what I'm getting myself into
really
but I know I won't be sorry
to be able to say I belong some place
even if that belonging means falling in line
with the rest of the miserable sonsofbitches
struggling to see another day and another drink
and another chance
to feel whole and holy
and wholly wonderful
in a life that's hard
that makes you want to scream and yell
and not care what color or creed you are
cause it's the fucking factory owners
that have everybody starving
I'm so sick of the segregation
and the seclusion of breadbasket heartland
former slave states
they still got us all chained
to fighting each other
too distracted to trust
and fight back
I miss that
east coast question
of *Where You From?*

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and everybody had a grandmother
from someplace else

and whether the answer was
Slovakia or The South
the answer was always
Ah, cool
Well, you're one of us now

I just want to be a part of something
and I'm sorry
but it wasn't you
central states
flyover country
I never wanted to land here
and I don't hate you
but trying to belong
always plateaued half baked
because my heart is a compass
that always points east

So I'm saying goodbye
staring at the sky
got my fingers crossed
on a shooting star
that just like me
just moved on

home

A Circle of Yellow

by Dan Collins

Once she was a circle of yellow
herding us along the shore.
Now she looks up at me,
sling around her hips,
a yellow lump of dog
walking on her front legs
while her hind legs dangle.
Is that gratitude? Or
“How much longer
are you going to make me do this?”
She is beautiful. She is old.
She whines all night.
Somehow she seems less yellow
but more like a circle.

*Only Paradox
Grows in Puerto Rico*

by Julio Montalvo Valentin

Phantosimia dangles its scent above cana de azucar,
always sour before harvest.
To grow sugar cane,
you must dissect setts of yourself because
society values growth over being whole these days.
Does not matter where you are planted,
you will still stretch and yearn for Neruda's sun.
But there is money to be made in harvesting the sweetest parts of you.
To be burned and burned and burned again.
You can only die when they are done.
You can only be free when they are done.
They are done now and have been after
they dug out all the gold and sugar from your soil.
You still posture yourself in what remains
and sift through the days
for worth.

*Interlude in
My Mother's Mouth*

by Julio Montalvo Valentin

My Mother has never spoken a word to me.

She is Deaf.

But her love can be heard

in the sizzling of canola oil on her palms,

the splash that is true baptism

for those who pray to Rice.

Her love can be heard

in the snaps of tongue against spoons

as she grinds memory into Sofrito.

Her love can be heard

in the snarls of disappointment

when you don't replace the Sofrito.

Her love can be heard

through the coffee-stained finger tips

that have once bathed me in Boricua drums.

Her love can be heard

in her smacks as they lick

flavor into air and crackle above skin,

the way sin strikes us.

Her love can be heard

her love can be heard

her love can be heard

in the wails

when the silence in her ears

matches the eyes of others.

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I ask God to give my Mother voice;
to hear *I love you*.
Not once did I sign back
I know when
her love can be heard.

This is for the
LIONS
living in the
WRY, BROKE-
DOWN FRAMES
of my friends' bodies



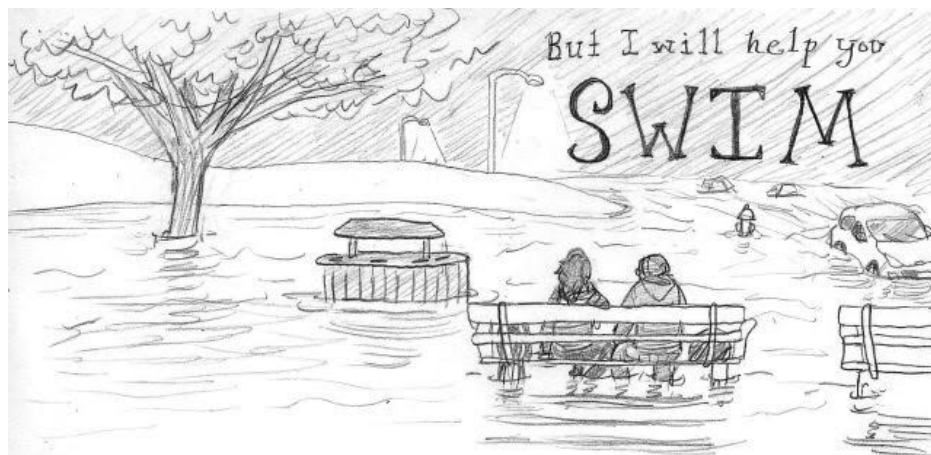
When the **FLOODWATER** comes,



it ain't gonna be **CLEAR,**

it's
gonna
look
like

MUD





Allison Emmaline Piercy, *This Is for the Lions*
pencil drawing, 2014.