

# A letter from the editor

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Journals such as this one operate on the premise that there is something more to offer in the world of literature. A plethora of books, ebooks, chapbooks, magazines, newspapers, blogs, and journals are published each year.

There is more than any one person could conceivably read in its entirety with anything like enjoyment. As such, one's decision to invest time and energy to reading any one of these publications in particular becomes quite difficult.

I do not take this for granted.

Your patronage of this magazine is very dear to my heart. This publication is a labor of love, as are so many of its kind. Thank you to everyone who supports this independent literary magazine. I truly hope that you find within its pages something transporting, transfiguring, and transformational.

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Brittanie Bond

Alana Marie Chevront

Linda Tucker





# The Water in Tartu

John Sherer

The water in Tartu tasted better  
than any glass of wine I've ever had—  
it soothed my throat like pineapple

and quelled a riot in the ghost  
I'd almost given up;  
and as I turned to look

at the snowy blue light  
soaking into the curtains  
—the kind that nods yes, it's winter—

it once again was possible to believe  
that there may be something new under the sun,  
that I could let the world begin again,

that I could be wanted, even loved, that I  
could get lost among a thousand streets  
and reach the border of my being.



# Nightingale's Song

Chelsea Reynolds

Yes, if you swear  
can I see this?  
to take it all. If  
you will put that hand here  
and fasten lips tight  
and don't let the silk ruffle.  
Spin me to a pulp  
in three quarters time.  
Only then may you.  
I hate all that mars  
the rhythmic black and white  
stop your slurping  
sounds that pump from an organ  
or some distant drum rattling.  
Enter my ear and close  
the door behind you. I don't want to  
may I have this?

outlaw your eyes from mine  
know my body deceives me.  
Oh, to be lonely.  
What welcome change  
that would be. There's plenty of company  
clattering around in here.  
Squishing. Squish. Squelch. The sound  
of my gut. The sound of  
my heart remains to be seen  
or heard. Still. Listen.  
Ah. It pumps.  
But only under siege.  
Pecking. Rapping. Pricked brain  
protruding. Arms splay out probing  
for sip of sleep I know nothing about.  
Tomorrow, on a terrorizing golden lawn  
I will stroll.  
Not stagger, but stroll.

# on payday we celebrate with rice and chicken

GS Murphy

at 5'1" she was a comical sight to the height of the 6'4" American  
Dryer ADG-330D machines, which stood taller still on palates  
for maintenance.

she would muster the strength to haul bag upon bag of filthy  
laundry into the machines cavernous and stoic, then transport  
into dryers, the work would dry her hands to desert scab,  
chafed, chemical raw and arthritic at 33.

(The state hadn't determined that a throw down 2 flights of  
steps and 2 dislocated disks were enough for state benefits) the  
violence was a parting gift from her last job

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Now slightly hunched and pain-be-damned-poor  
she cleans the neighborhood laundry, a modern day Magdalene  
sister,

the distant ancestors on her father's side would nod approval  
the rest of her bloodline wouldn't say much; mostly massacred  
and left for dead, bastard discards of Dawes Rolls and those  
fortunate to escape the great and terrible walk.

she spends 12 to 14 hours a day elbow deep in shit-stains, body  
odor and balancing chemical burns from both industrial and  
commercial detergent  
you never lose the smell of bleach in the nose, once sweet, then  
forever acrid, vile,

(to this day, to her children one smell of a laundry-mat enough  
to quicken tempers and produce an unasked tear)

this is back when 50¢ an hour plus tips were legal as long as the  
table was taller than the work.

there is no other income, the patriarch more often out of state  
spending as fast making it,

bourbon and whiskey was fathers perfume

just as acrid as bleach, if not worse

bleach will kill you quick, bourbon will convince you of love, then  
break you,

with a leather belt, the illusion until the next drink

but the violence was always 2 weeks out at a time, while the  
struggle for food was every day,

and she worked, raw hands and toothless smile,

on payday there would be Uncle-Bens rice, and a half pound of  
cut/grilled chicken,

there would be huggies and Lipton tea,

there was mom and the lingering smell of our neighbors sweat,  
mixed in with Marlboro cigarettes

and bleach.

# Vigil

John Sherer

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# Self-help



By the Emajōgi I sat on a bench,  
unable to walk farther,  
and wept when I remembered  
the fountain in paradise,  
the cool fruit handed to me.  
A terrible dark fell over me  
and I felt my life was laughable.

Somehow I stood up, as if in stirrups,  
to depart from this Babylon, which  
I should have known was no Babylon,  
but a slow river in Easter light  
with greyhounds playing on the bank  
and trees kneeling to the water,  
the kind of paradise that is our portion.

I want to see  
you again and gaze  
upon your devastating  
skin, and hear  
your voice explain  
how little I  
have understood.

Try to find the holy  
in the soggy dish sponge;  
the spilled coffee in the satchel;  
the onion in the kitchen  
sprouting long-necked scallions,  
rotting, finally resting  
in its garbage grave.  
Try to find the holy  
in the brain silence  
that rules most of the day—  
a torpid mist polluting—  
and for which your recent  
accidental gardening  
is now a metaphor.  
Try to find the holy  
in an unexpected dawn,  
when you're gulping water  
and the guests have gone.

Now sketch her face  
without looking at the page.



# Mania Strikes Noon

Sophia Falco

You'd visit me when mania strikes noon  
stuck in a tiny hospital room  
the world was mine,  
but I didn't make it in  
time  
and seconds minutes hours  
collapsed  
on my head  
so I hid under the white sheets  
on my bed—

a prison

a prison

a prison

depression talks back, don't you know?

Whereas reality crumbled at my finger tips  
like  
a stale sugar cookie depression

talks back to me, don't you know?

And you  
you love  
me always—  
just the same.

# Above High Street

Stood up for a date  
(how funny—my nose had bled,  
a first in twenty years,  
and I was nearly late),  
I sat at the floor-to-ceiling  
where you joined me  
for a Sazerac or two,  
and agog we watched  
a Nile of people  
in animal costumes  
glide past, spilling  
from a convention  
in lavender dusk.  
Cars were clogged  
on busy High Street  
by cartoon elk and foxes;  
the bunnies and the bears  
lingered in the crosswalk,  
their eyes like shells,  
their smiles immutable.  
And to think  
I have ever complained  
about my life.

John Sherer

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# Hotel Monteleone

Revolving around the bar  
once each quarter-hour,  
Aviations and a Vieux Carré quaffed,  
we said that marriage was unthinkable,  
almost, for us, unspeakable,  
for we are different every decade,  
and promises are made by those  
who don't need all the information.  
The mirror kept us in sight  
as we carouselled, caroused  
around this tiny toe-hold of the universe.



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