

Everscribe

MAGAZINE

ISSUE NO. 3

PULSUS LITTERAE

Embrace the art of the written word in Everscribe's third issue, showcasing incredible works from our talented writers.

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Editor's Note

As we share the third issue of Everscribe, we hold it close to our hearts, just like our very first. The title, which translates to "The Pulse of the Letter" in Latin, beautifully captures the energy and creativity our writers bring to life with their words.

We're thrilled to serve as a platform for storytellers eager to share their voices. A heartfelt thank you to our exceptional writers—your contributions make this magazine a vibrant community. It's a true privilege to showcase your work.

I'd also like to extend my deep appreciation to our wonderful managing editor, whose unwavering support has been vital in bringing this vision to fruition. Together, we celebrate the art of the written word.

We warmly invite you to dive into this issue and explore the remarkable talent within.

With gratitude and excitement,
Dalia, Founder & Editor-in-Chief

fictional short story

noun

A brief narrative work that presents imagined events and characters, often exploring a specific theme or idea; it is a subset of fiction that emphasizes creativity and storytelling within a limited format.

Zary Fekete

Sunshine

The sun setting across the campus mall was too tempting to resist, and Gaspar snapped a few pictures. A strong sense of promise swept over him. He held the mental impossibility in his mind: that this sunset in Budapest was the same as the one falling across his small village on the eastern frontier. His father's words echoed in his thoughts, *First to college from a family of farmers. I can't read, and you're writing poems. Proud of you, boy.* Gaspar smiled at the memory. He shouldered his backpack, and turned toward the library. A snap of wind caught him just as he entered the double glass doors, and the sudden warmth and settled quiet of the building's lobby was a pleasant change from the bluster of the outdoors.

He threaded his way through the stacks of shelves until he arrived at his favorite table in the poetry section. The library would still be open for three hours, but because it was a Friday, the building was largely deserted. Most of the students were back in their dorms or already out on the streets, dipping into the weekend social life. Gaspar took out his laptop and the poetry anthology he had been pouring over during the afternoon. Back in his dorm room he had already picked the poem for the weekend assignment. The trip to the library was for a change of scenery before he started to write.

He thought about the first time he realized what poetry was. The priest in the small village church had read from the Bible one

Sunday when he was in elementary school. The voice of the father had echoed, "I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry." He approached the older man after the service.

"What was that?" he asked.

"The Psalms."

"Was it poetry?"

The priest thought for a moment. "Something like that," he said.

Gaspar looked around him in the quiet library. The poetry books surrounded him on the many shelves. His eyes passed over the names: Shakespeare, Yeats, Arany, Rilke, Li Bai. *The same words*, he thought. Different authors. Different times. But the same humanity. It was as though a channel through time connected them all. *The same sunshine*.

He opened the poetry book but then paused. Footsteps approached. He looked up, and immediately glanced back down at the page with a feeling of guilty pleasure. An elderly man entered the poetry section. It was his poetry professor, a bent head with a wave of white hair, messy in the best of times, and this evening positively in shambles. The man was still wearing a coat, his nose dipped down as he pondered an open book he held in his hands, oblivious to Gaspar's presence. He sat down at the table next to Gaspar.

Gaspar sat quietly, not quite sure if he ought to stay at the table for fear of disrupting the professor's reading with his typing. He had made up his mind to move to a different place when the older man looked up and noticed him. His wrinkled face broke into a smile while nodding his head at Gaspar's laptop.

"I guess we both have nothing better to do tonight," he said, lifting his book. Gaspar squinted so he could read the small writing of the

title, *Haiku by Arai*.

This was the first time the professor had spoken directly to him. The poetry class was fairly large for an upper-level course, over fifty students, and Gaspar had yet not had the chance to meet the professor in person. Most of the class participants were older than Gaspar. Some of them were PhD students, already working on their first or second personal poetry collection. He was only a freshman. He had been able to get in because one of his poems reached the finals in a national high school poetry contest and the judge wrote him a letter of commendation. Normally he would have felt embarrassed and uncertain what to say, but something about the quiet of the library and the special circumstances of their meeting gave him an extra twist of courage.

“Actually, I’m working on the assignment for your class,” Gaspar said, holding up the poetry anthology.

The professor’s eyebrows went up. “Sorry, son,” he said. “I didn’t recognize you.”

“No bother, sir,” Gaspar said. “It’s a big class.”

“It is,” the professor nodded. “Bigger this year than in the past. I should know. I have taught the course for...” he paused while he thought, “...thirty-three years now.”

“Wow,” Gaspar said. “Lots of poems.”

“Yes,” the older man said. “We’ll be covering some Japanese poems next week. That’s why I’m trying to get a jump on it.” He held up the book again.

“I’ve actually never read anything by Arai. Who is he?”

The older man paused, choosing his words. “An obscure hokku

writer. Not as famous as Basho, but he could have been. Great stuff here,” the professor said. “And these little pieces are tricky. I understand some. This one has me confused.”

Gaspar leaned back in his chair. “Could you read it, sir?”

“Haven’t I already given you enough work there?” the older man chuckled. “But, yes, gladly.” He nodded a few times while looking down at the page to find his place. “Here it is..”

Rusty weeds

More dust on the way

A century of mothers

The professor looked up. “Solid images,” he said. “...but I’m not sure what’s happening.”

Gaspar thought a moment and then said slowly. “It might be... a birthday party?”

The professor sat back in the chair, looking up into the air above him. A moment passed.

“Go on,” the older man said.

Gaspar licked his lips, “The poet could be looking at the old family yard, full of dirty weeds. The extra dust in the air is from the arriving family members traveling down the gravel road, all coming to celebrate the grandmother’s hundredth birthday.”

A slow smile spread across the wrinkled face. The professor leafed back a few pages in the book. “Ah,” he said. “That makes some sense. This is from the poet’s biography: ‘Arai came from an unusually large family for Japanese society of the 19th century. The ancestral homestead of the family remained a gathering place for the distant relatives year after year.’” The professor looked up. “That’s what is

miraculous about haiku,” he said. “What took this biographer several lumpy sentences to say, Arai got across in three lines. And...” he pointed at Gaspar, “...you gathered that in five seconds.”

Gaspar felt words bubbling up within him. “Maybe just a lucky guess,” he said. “But I love it when it happens. I feel like only poetry can do that. It connects distant worlds and thoughts in a couple of seconds.”

A pleasant silence drifted by as they looked at each other.

“Nice work, son,” the professor said. He stood up. “I’ll leave you to it.” He turned but then paused. “I have a special group that meets informally every few weeks to share our personal work. Care to join?”

Gaspar’s heart beat faster. “I’d love to, sir. Thank you!”

The older man nodded and then disappeared among the bookshelves. Gaspar sat quietly for a moment. He reached into his backpack and pulled out his small Bible. He leafed through it and then found the spot he was looking for. Slowly he read the verse to himself.

Then he pulled out his diary and made a new entry: “November 1, 2024. Met my professor. Ecclesiastes 11:7.”

Zary Fekete grew up in Hungary. He has a debut novella (*Words on the Page*) out with *DarkWinter Lit Press* and a short story collection (*To Accept the Things I Cannot Change: Writing My Way Out of Addiction*) out with *Creative Texts*. He enjoys books, podcasts, and many many many films. Twitter and Instagram: @ZaryFekete

Cecilia Kennedy

Housekeeping

If the sun slips just right between the curtains, and the air smells fresh, and the floors glisten, then my home is perfect, and I feel rich. Until I look at the neighbors' house across from mine, the one custom-built, the one with new surprises added each month: a tropical garden, walkways, a pool, an exercise nook, a shed, man-cave, giant playhouse for the kids, outdoor kitchen, and firepit. I've gone on a tour once. She, the wife, dressed in luxury loungewear, showed me everything, offered me a cocktail while she shopped online, bored out of her skull—and then I was never invited again.

Lots of others have been invited, stayed for parties, invited again, while I watch, so jealous, especially on Halloween, when they decorate in silk spiderwebs and dry-ice fog and animated attractions. People say they use human skeletons and bones because he's a doctor, has access to all kinds of things. People go in and come out with big smiles on their faces and gift boxes of chocolate.

I watch well after midnight, so jealous, as the skies cloud over and an eerie calm sets in. The neighbors' house lights flash, and I grab my binoculars, watch while a thick ooze of blood pours down the outside walls, watch while the doors slam shut and open with thunderous force, watch while she, in her expensive loungewear—and her family in matching pajamas—run screaming, flames licking

the sky. I watch as they drive away to go live with her mother indefinitely, watch as the spirits inside the human bones escape, shrieking into the night. And I watch the light of those glorious flames shimmer over the floors I've just cleaned, all envy dissipating in a cloud of lemon mist.

Cecilia Kennedy (she/her) taught Spanish and English composition and literature in Ohio for 20 years before moving to Washington state in 2016. Her works have been published in *Maudlin House*, *Meadowlark Review*, *Vast Chasm Press*, *Tiny Molecules*, *Flash Fiction Magazine*, *Fiery Scribe Review*, *Kandisha Press*, *Ghost Orchid Press*, *DarkWinter Press*, and others.

Simon Collinson

Danger Dad

I woke up feeling great. I have a role in life. Everyone should have one.

I was aimless and drifting along in life doing nothing, having no purpose.

And then I found one, or rather it found me.

I found it accidentally one day while looking after our children. They were a glum lot, forever unhappy. Never a smile. Oh, how we used to worry about the permanent sadness.

Nothing seemed to lift their spirits.

That is until one day I nearly had an accident crossing the road. Nearly got knocked down.

I was barely touched. It was more the shock.

But when I turned to look at my children they were made up and laughing, smiling, in high spirits.

I had found the secret to my children's happiness.

All I had to do was to keep on having accidents and mishaps and my children would laugh once more.

So I did what any good dad would and sought danger at every corner and made sure the kids were watching.

It was difficult finding an activity that was novel and would injure me in some uncritical way. Although sometimes I wondered if my death would send them into hysterics.

So it was balancing acts on the banister, balancing on chairs, climbing trees, falling off ladders. Though this time my wife insisted I didn't drag off the guttering on the roof, I would get bitten by the dogs. Fall over my own shoes, walk into doors, slip up in the shower. Get hit by falling pots and pans.

Christmas, Halloween, birthdays, and Bonfire night. Especially bonfire night. That seems created specially for reckless dads to juggle with fireworks, set the garden alight, and get burnt and singed.

And I did.

Ever in the pursuit of danger that would get my children to laugh and smile.

Oh how they loved it when I nearly broke my neck for the umpteenth time that week, and as I struggled up battered and bruised, they'd scream out,

“Do it again dad, do it again!”

I got good at nearly coming a cropper.

But the struggle was on to find original and entertaining ways of injuring myself.

The doctors, painkillers, and operations was another struggle.

I was a regular at the local surgery.

“You again” they'd say with a grin. I went there so often that I had my own room.

I worried that I might go too far and end up paralysed or worse, but now that's taken care of. You see my reputation as an accident seeking dad spread far and wide. Soon millions were following the antics of “Danger dad” online.

And like my children they all found it funny too.

“Funniest show of the week. A hundred times better than the rubbish they put on TV,” they said.

And the nation felt happier too.

That's when the government stepped in. They appointed me a sort of national jester. To lift everybody's spirit up. They would sort out all my injuries. Patch me up, nearly as good as new.

They spent nearly 60 million pounds on rebuilding me, each week.

They are confident they can make me even worse, clumsier, and more accident-prone than before.

There were some who moaned and quibbled over costs.

But the government soon came back with a paper that proved my antics were making everyone in the country laugh and smile and saving the NHS 6 Billion a year.

Accidents were down. You see, everyone watched me do stupid things every day and saw how I ended up twisted, broken, and bruised and they all thought “I'm not doing that - look what happened to Danger dad.”

At the end of each clip of me getting banged, bruised, and broken there's a slogan -

“DON'T DO WHAT DANGER DAD DOES!” Or,

“DANGER DAD SUFFERS SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO.”

So you see I have a purpose in life and the only thing I've got to worry about is what new and novel way I can injure myself today.

Jeff Kennedy

#AITA

It was the first cool afternoon after a week of humid, 90-degree days, so I was sitting at the stoplight with my windows down, listening to Blues Traveler turned up way too loud. Behind me, I could see the Tesla driver holding his phone up as if taking a conference call, and just seething.

I don't know if it was the loud music or the fact that I was sitting in the right-hand lane with my left turn signal on (I'm old, and that little detail wouldn't register for another few miles), but I could see the middle finger on his right hand getting ready to rise up.

Then our eyes locked in the rearview mirror, and he realized that I was the one from his last meeting, the one he'd been pleading with to approve his overblown project budget. In a flash, his face went from grimace to grin and the bird turned into a happy little wave.

I mean, really, #AITA?

Jeff Kennedy is a lifelong author and playwright and member of the Dramatists Guild. Jeff's short fiction has most recently appeared on *Bright Flash Literary Review* and *Fairfield Scribes*.

Charlotte Hegley

Oil and Water

I pour the olive oil down the kitchen sink. I pour the vegetable oil down the kitchen sink. I cool down and feel calmer after I pour it down, steadying myself. In the time that I cool down, so does the oil. It slowly solidifies in the pipes.

I have been pouring it down the sink for a couple of months. It has been a couple of months since he has let me see my friends. Since he has made me quit my job. Since he has taken my phone. My choices have slowly melted away, becoming his and no longer mine.

I was doing the washing up and realised that it had happened. The oil had found its home in the pipes. I kept washing the dishes until the sink was full with dark, dirty water. The thick, sticky oil was on my palms, my fingers and my wrists. A second skin. I tried to pick at it with my fingernails, to peel it off. It wouldn't budge.

He walked into the kitchen. He looked at the sink and asked me what I had done. I turned away from him and turned the tap back on. I watched the dirty water spill over the edges of the sink and across the counters. It found its way to the floor and puddled and pooled around my feet. He was shouting at me. I couldn't hear him though. I was in the water. I was in the pipes. I had solidified.

Charlotte Hegley is a North London based writer who works in commercial fiction publishing. She loves writing about what it means to be human and is particularly interested in the female experience. She can be found on X and Instagram at @CharlotteHegley

Fae Leonardo

A Meadow of Narcissus

I take off from the gravel path at the foot of the hill. The dust and loose soil from the radiance of the summer sky puff up behind me like clouds licking my ankles. The world is wide awake under Helios' smile, all vibrant greens as far as the eye could see. Zephyrus runs his delicate fingers through the strands of my braided hair, plucking stray leaves from it along the way. Passing by a berry bush, I take two ripened blue spheres, making sure to leave plenty for the small animals in the area. The juices are sweet and slightly sour on my tongue.

Beyond the rows of berry bushes and various shrubbery, I find the sparkling lake. I never tire of sitting on the edge of the waters and watching the reflection of the clouds on the undisturbed surface. As I do on warmer days like these, I shed my outer robe and walk into the lake until the water reaches just below my chest. Instantly, the cool temperature flows underneath my skin and spreads throughout my body like ink on fabric.

Nectar-sweet afternoons always call for an audience, and I am all too glad to be one of them. Overcome with curiosity, I dry myself off the best I can before following the voice of the dense foliage of the neighboring woods. A warbler sings a joyful tune as it glides above my head, ushering me through the overgrown tall grasses into a wide meadow full of white blossoms. Untouched and wild, the narcissus flowers sway like dancing maidens, moving to the melody

of the warbler and the whistling winds. I almost find it odd that I have never seen this clearing before. I know every part of this land like my own home, and every creature and living thing treats me as such. In the end, I do not dwell on such suspicions. I never needed to.

“Persephone,” a stranger’s voice, deep with an intention unknown like a quiet sea, pulls me from the meadow. I am pulled and pulled and pulled, down below the roots of the narcissus. A scream cuts through the warbler’s music, and it takes me moments to realize it came from my own throat.

My gut stills as the sensation of falling comes to a halt. Darkness consumes me from all sides, almost like I was buried alive. A few minutes pass before my vision adjusts to the lack of light, and the first thing I see is a murky river. At once, my body shivers from a sudden drop in temperature. There is no sun here, no wind, just a perpetual icy embrace.

Below my bare feet, a floor of black crystal holds the foundation of the entire structure, almost like if the river had frozen over. The walls are uneven with rough-cut rocks that threaten nicks and scratches to those unlucky few who dare touch them. To one side, two polished gray pillars support a ceiling that lies beyond my sight. Directly across from them, a throne of the same polished material stands high on a platform of jagged rocks. The seat looks cold and hard, and I pity whoever has to sit on it even for a minute.

“Persephone,” the same voice from earlier calls to me, closer now and just as difficult to read. Another shiver courses through my body. I can never forget the first time I saw him, even if all of me wills the memory to vanish.

How many new moons have I spent in this place? The only signal of

the end of the day is him calling me to bed; the moon and the sun a fragile memory existing only in my head. I spend my waking hours watching the black river ebb and flow the way the rivers above would along the deeper cracks in the earth. It's an uncanny thing: a taste of home in a place more of a prison.

I see my face on the moving water. The restless surface distorts the picture of the girl below, but I make out the soulless eyes and hollowed cheeks of a person I once knew as myself. Others would be frightened if such a reflection appeared in their mirrors but recognition settles in me like seeing an old friend.

Sometimes, after the events of the day, I fall asleep. Sleep is dreamless, denying my escape even in the unconscious world. On a normal day—or night, I suppose—I wander. Not in the hopes of finding my own way out as I have given up on such an idea but to somehow make sense of the realm I have no certainty of ever leaving. It might simply be the remaining childish hopes that still linger despite everything. I hold on to them. They remind me of my girlhood.

At some point, the atmosphere shifts in the throne room, signaling a living soul. For the first time, I feel myself able to breathe, clean air like a dewy sunrise. The immortal flies into the room from beyond the black river, a young man with pristine white wings sprouting from the sides of his head and a staff of intertwined serpents in one of his hands. I know him as the messenger; the only other soul, god or otherwise, to have the ability to venture in and out of the Underworld without consequence.

“I come bearing orders from Zeus,” he says. “You must let Persephone return to her mother. Everything on the earth has frozen over, and nothing can grow. Famine is upon the mortals, and

the only thing Demeter wishes for is her daughter back by her side.”

Perhaps it is the change in the atmosphere, but I cannot contain my joy, a kind of childish ecstasy that I thought I had lost like a dandelion seed in the wind. Preparations for a golden chariot is arranged shortly after and I, as I have no possessions to gather, pace by the river in giddy impatience.

As a parting gift, I suppose, he presents a pomegranate for me to eat. I have no use for it, still lacking an appetite, but I take it anyway. Perhaps out of guilt for my cold disposition ever since he took me into his domain, I take a bite and swallow. Before I could even taste its flavors on my tongue, I feel some kind of power outside of myself wash over my body. Uneasy, I collapse to the hard ground. The rest of the fruit rolls and falls into the river of death along with the last bit of my youth and freedom.

I ride the golden chariot back up to the earth and return to the warm embrace of my mother. She wails with me, but I with the knowledge of the future that has been stolen from me.

Conjuring up the child I lost an eternity ago, I walk along the hillside, the birds greet me like a neighbor as they always have. It sends a wave of warmth over my body, a body I could no longer relate to the girl who had kicked the dirt in the air behind her as she ran up this very hill. I pass by the berry bushes and find them already picked with a few under ripe fruit buds hanging from the green stems. Maybe the mortals are already preparing for the coming winter.

I walk past the lake, past where the meadow was but I could not seem to find it again, and into the dense foliage of the forest. The trees grow tall and thick. Their leaves were once a rich jade green but, now, they have speckles of yellow and some have withered into

a dull brown barely hanging on to its branch. Venturing onwards, the songs of the birds have died into an eerie silence, save only for my footfalls on the fallen leaves. My heartbeat quickens, sensing some sort of danger I do not know. I have always felt safe in the woods, with even the most remote piece of earth being an extension of my body. I trusted the world; it held me like a mother when I fell asleep on the grass, it fed me its fruits so I never grew hungry, and it listened when I sang with its sparrows. Is it possible for my own hands to strangle me into suffocation?

Just then, I hear the most excruciating cry of pain before a series of gallops fade into the distance. Against my better judgment, I run towards the scream. There, in a pool of its own dark red blood, lay a deer. It has lost a limb and a good chunk of flesh and meat. The white bones of its ribs and the remaining part of its leg are sticking out against the red-stained dirt. Its eyes have glazed over.

Dead.

I cannot look away. The deer is contorted in a way that signals how hard the predator must have ripped and pulled at it before it was able to pull out the limb. It is grotesque, but I cannot look away. How meaningless is a life for it to be ended by such violence, with such suffering?

I bend over and shut its eyes, a shallow attempt at giving it peace. We both know that there is no peace in the afterlife.

Fae Leonardo (they/it) is a student of BA Creative Writing at the University of the Philippines Diliman. They specialize in writing young adult fiction, LGBTQ+ stories, and personal essays but would, at times, venture into unfamiliar genres in search of new experiences and challenges.

nonfictional short story

noun

A concise narrative that recounts real events or experiences, focusing on factual information or personal insights; it aims to convey truth or perspective within a brief literary framework.

Joy Funmilola Oke

The Invisible Daughter: Family Favoritism and its Lasting Impact

It is a well-known fact that families are safe havens for kids, but for some reason, a family can be a place of isolation when there is favoritism at play in that family. In many families, daughters are quick to learn from an early age their value is different from that of their male siblings. This story examines a special case—a mother who, despite her daughter being a responsible and loving girl, devotes her deepest sympathies for her wayward son, blind to the consequences of her actions on her daughter.

At the dinner table, the mother serves her two children a plate of white rice and stew. She serves the eldest daughter a small serving, a habit she justifies with a saying, “Girls shouldn't eat too much.” However, for the youngest son, his plate filled up like a mountain. Staring at how he is quick to wolf his food down, she pitied him, if only he was obedient like the eldest daughter. The eldest daughter feels indignant, not understanding why portions are still smaller even at twenty-five. The daughter leans back, no longer in the mood to eat, to stand up to take a breather. Finding herself outside, she hoped her mother would take notice of her absence from the dinner table. Ten minutes, twenty minutes, thirty minutes, she doesn't hear her name, she feels resentful of her brother. To make matters worse, she was feeling hungry. She had no choice but to go back and eat her food, getting to the dining table she found her younger brother eating her food, in fact, he was done and staring at her as if nothing was wrong. She called for her mother to report, but what

did she do? She told her daughter to sort herself out and that she couldn't keep relying on her for food. After all, she was a big girl.

The mother took this situation to inform her, "You should find a man and get married, all your mates are in their husband's house." There is no mention of the same statement for her son because she envisions him with a different reality, free from responsibility. For her, the daughter getting married means when she is no longer alive, then the daughter as the eldest takes the role of serving him just like her. This belief has left the daughter feeling invisible, the only time she is visible is when the younger brother stands to gain something from her. Even in marriage, the daughter is not free. Her wants and needs should be for her brother and not her.

The mother's attention had always been given to the son, a boy that should be handled with discipline but of course not, instead it is compassion. For the mother, what's the use of getting angry with the son, since he is already wayward, and responding to him with unkindness, she decided to shower him with love believing this would end up changing his character. His reckless behaviour was brushed under the carpet as simply, "He is a man."

The resentment burst open on an evening when the daughter discovered her money went missing from her purse. Knowing the only person who could have taken the money was her brother, she confronted him, and he reacted with violence. "Yes, I took the money, what will you do?" He sneered, his eyes condescending as he strolled towards her. Before she knew what was happening, she found herself sprawled on the floor. The mother entered the room at the noise, her gaze settled on her daughter with reproach.

"You are the eldest. You are supposed to have wisdom when communicating with him." She admonished, her voice tinged with

dissapointment.

“He hit me,” she bawled.

“He is your brother.”

These same insensitive words again. How many times had she heard this word over and over again? She was expected to endure, to be silent, to put her head down, to understand. In her mother's eyes, her suffering was secondary, her voice unnecessary, her pain invisible. She began to wonder if the family was not willing to protect her, who was going to protect her from the family?

For such daughters, the consequences of favoritism often leave a negative impact. They learn early to expect less, to endure and be understanding of the situation, and not to react negatively.

Meanwhile, sons are raised unchecked, carrying entitlement as their pillar, reinforcing harmful patterns.

The daughter in this story may never understand why her mother valued her brother's reckless needs over her quiet resilience. But her experience is a reminder that family favoritism, though often subtle, can profoundly shape the future of those involved. Whether we realize it or not, these dynamics influence our relationships, our sense of self, and the way we move through the world.

Joy Funmilola Oke is a versatile writer with a passion for exploring the complexities of power, politics, and international relations. Her work delves into the intricacies of policy-making, diplomatic maneuvers, and the broader global landscape. Joy is also a creative writer, crafting engaging narratives and thought-provoking fiction. She has contributed to literary magazines and blogs, sharing her perspective on various topics. Her history degree from the University of Benin provides her with a strong foundation for in-depth analysis and critical thinking.

poetry

noun

A form of literary expression that conveys emotions and ideas with heightened intensity through a unique style and rhythmic structure; it refers to poems as a whole or as a distinct literary genre.

Özge Lena

Monarch Butterfly

Think:

you're less than half
a gram with bronze dust
that sprinkles & sprinkles
brightly on the dark petals
from your metamorphosed
orange-red wings with black
veins, with innocent white
spots on the edges to fly
for a few weeks.

But then
changes the clouds,
changes the air, rains,
then changes the tastes
into hot venomous juices,
and you struggle to change
too, yet you're too slow, slow
with a couple of thin papery
things to catch any storm.

There comes a day that
you fade away like
never existed.

Özge Lena is an Istanbul-based poet & writer. Her poems have appeared across seven countries. She was nominated both for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. Özge's poetry was shortlisted for the Oxford Brookes International Poetry Competition and the Ralph Angel Poetry Prize in 2021, then for The Plough Poetry Prize in 2023, and for the Black Cat Poetry Press Nature Prize in 2024.

Erinfolami Mayowa Toheeb

Threads In The Fabric Of Life

This so-called life!

It's like a clinging thread, not yet untied.

But its work can only be completed by the needle's hand.

So, is life.

Whether rich or poor,

We are created to rely on one another.

This is the order placed by the Supreme.

This so-called life requires us

To lean on others to set things right.

A president cannot govern alone,

That's why there are ministers and secretaries.

One cannot do everything alone;

That's why there's a maid,

Why there's a washer.

Not all can be rich at the same time,

Yet whether we are wealthy or not,

We will still rely on one another.

So, is life.

Erinfolami Mayowa Toheeb

Wires Of Potential, Sparks Of Change

Should I just say it—the world has become so awkward.

This is not the change we seek.

What kind of world is this?

A world of disapproval?

A world of non-recognition?

So, is life!

Are we going to continue like this?

Oh! There is so much talent in this world.

So many gifted youngsters.

I know of a friend,

Brilliant at anything electric,

Building wonders.

Imagine gathering a quiet number of such talented individuals.

Together, they could bring 20 years of stable light to the country.

But there is no recognition.

A state where youth struggle to find employment.

So, is life!

How can young people showcase their talent

When it is smothered and hidden?

It's not possible.

In a place where talent is utilized,
There will be promotion and development.
The leaders cannot do it alone.
A building cannot stand without the bricklayer's
construction.
So, is life.

To drive technological advancement,
Talented individuals must unite for critical thinking.
In the hope of changing the world,
They should be given access,
For we are all one.
That is the only way to spark global transformation.
Unity is a strong bond for a stable life.

Erinfolami Mayowa Toheeb

The Cost Of Deceit

Sometimes, I wonder why people are so unjust.

All for money—

This thing you won't take to the grave.

Why put others in distress?

So, is life.

Why do sellers indulge in deceit?

Why mix bad goods with good ones?

That's not how life is meant to be.

We fail to see that we are destroying ourselves.

We are one,

Yet we obstruct the promotion of our progress,

All because of deceit.

Why do taxi drivers hike their fares,

Even when everything has calmed down?

All for money.

Though not entirely their fault,

There are people out there suffering too.

Sometimes, the burden is beyond anyone's control.

So, is life.

The progress of our nation lies in our hands.

Every form of deceit—

It must come to an end,
For deceit delays progression and invites regression.
It's like a tree that grows for thirty years, only to fall.
Our future's hope lies in our hands.

Erinfolami Mayowa Toheeb

The Blood Price For Power

Power makes people hungry sometimes,
Like thirst that craves the quench of water.
Yet this life has but one sure end—
Why do we kill each other, then?
To prove what, and to whom?
Despite the crowns, the swords, the might,
The grave will swallow all in time.
Such is life.

Oh, World Superpowers,
Ordained with strength to mend the earth,
Not to keep its people trembling,
For we are meant to live as one.
Empires crumble, but humanity endures.
Yet wars beget their progeny—
A ceaseless tide of generational pain.
How I long for the day when this cycle breaks.

Oh, World Superpowers,
Whether justified or blind in the fire you ignite,
Pause, and consider the weight of consequence.
Think of the frail—the voiceless and the vulnerable:
The children, the elders, the innocents caught in your fury.

In your quest to wield dominion,
You leave behind fields of sorrow.
Victory is fleeting, and none rule forever.
Grief sows seeds in the hearts of survivors,
And from those seeds, resistance will grow.
The child of the defeated may one day rise,
Born to avenge their loss,
And so the cycle of blood endures—
A war no end can tame.

There must be an end.
Even if no heirs remain to challenge your reign,
One will rise, unexpected, unbound,
To confront your might with new resolve.
An inevitable reckoning looms.
End this cycle,
Before calamity consumes us all.
We are one,
Bound by the thread of shared humanity.

[Erinfolami Mayowa Toheeb](#) (known as Mayor) is a penultimate 300 level English student in the University of Lagos, UNILAG. He has a remarkable penchant for writing poetry, a motivational speaker with interest in writing fictional work. He published *Whispers of life and Legacy*, a collection of 16 poems through Amazon and he published “Nature's Fury, Humanity Trial” in *Outside the box Poetry* which is a single poem.

Christina Chin & Uchechukwu Onyedikam

A Dialect From My Mouth

bubbly frogspawn
tiny tadpoles wiggle
in the palms
*a wildlife carer
takes note*

Sunday picnic
native folks dance
to the gong beat
*hips swirl left to right
the slap sound of ẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀*

farmers market—
green tea leaves
in the wicker basket
*curled around the arms
of Sisi Ékó*

misty eyes
a child points to his
parting balloon
*bubble memories plead
the passion of lost*

cranes flying north
whistling duets
cross the moon
*great blue herons fly
both day and night*

Christina Chin is a painter and a haiku poet

Uchechukwu Onyedikam is a Nigerian Poet/Photographer based in Lagos, Nigeria. BOTN & Pushcart Prize nominee. His poetry has appeared in Amsterdam Quarterly, Brittle Paper, Poetic Africa, Poetry Catalog, The Hooghly Review, Unlikely Stories Mark V, among other publications. He and Christina Chin has co-written and published two poetry chapbooks. He's a contributor at Mad Swirl.

John Rutherford

Seaman's Rest

I wish I had the confidence to pray
to any god, not just the big one.
Palms together, yearning for release,
but I can't see beyond the censer-smoke.

The rosary is clumsy in my hands,
dropped a dozen times in one decade,
and soon left to gather dust, abandoned
with my aborted stamp collection in a box.

I drive my neighbor to her brick church,
to make up for skipping class (my little sin):
dust the back pews, swab the front steps
at Seaman's Rest, then help with the library.

The boatswain, a young priest from Lagos
does not know what to make of me;
I'm no able seaman, but still he offers
me holy communion like the rest.

I won't profane this sacred ceremony
with my agnostic, unbaptised mouth
so I walk the windy seawall and watch
pale gulls circle the shrimp boats.

John Rutherford is a poet living in Beaumont, TX. Since 2018 he has been an employee of the Department of English and Modern Languages at Lamar University. His work can be found in *Texas Poetry Assignment*, *The Basilisk Tree*, and his 2023 chapbook *Birds in a Storm* (Naked Cat Press). He is an MFA student at the University of St. Thomas.

Leanne Drain

Haikus

looking inside light
the sea bed in the spring moon.
hatched from the earth.

Nothing emptiness
lying alone, cold, frightened.
I realize death.

Leanne Drain loves writing poetry and short stories she has just graduated with creative and professional writing at an upper-class degree.

Sreelekha Chatterjee

Living in the World of Four Suns

As supplied water streams down our neighborhood,
percipience of conservation erodes away,
the last bits escaping through the drainage lines.
The relentless outpouring drenches the gardens,
walled boundaries, railings, gates, cars, courtyards,
spilling onto the roads shining with the surge.
This deluge of irrational splurge will perish our world.
Elsewhere cities mourn the relics of the Adam's ale,
apparitions found floating skyward.
We are in the age of Atonatiuh, "the Sun of Waters."

A sleek bird singing in an undaunted voice quietens
when the lone tree in the locality is axed.
Home of timid gypsies living on the treetop disheveled.
Ravaged, they move helter-skelter,
their hearts bisected by the insincere intent of men.
The tottering trunk falls on the ground like lightning
strikes the earth, sending seismic-like tremors.
Gnarled roots of ecstasy find modes of jubilation,
while my land is now a gaunt patch of green.
In the name of false splendor, the real beauty made to exit.
We are in the age of Tlalchitonatiuh, "the Sun of Earth."

Furious trumpets bonging in the wind

lash over the bricked structures.
Uprooted trees and barren lands lie deceasing.
Demand for pounds of flesh will rise one day.
Hundreds of simians, or maybe thousands—
presumed to be brought by the wind—
invade our area, seize control over our habitation.
They seem to be familiar, yet appear like winding toys.
Are they humans changed into monkeys?
Quetzalcoat's message appears everywhere—
"Save Earth. Preserve Trees."
Our hollow legs wobble for now,
erasing the option of second thoughts; hopefully,
the vegetal consciousness will arrive one day.
We are in the age of Ehcatonatiuh, "The Sun of Air."

Blazing sun overhead and the dusty street below,
I think I espied a living green on the balcony
of a steel-grey, high-rise building.
Yellow within like autumn leaves,
drained like parched earth from self-slaughter,
I roam about like a phantom wanders aimlessly.
My nose itches, shedding tears,
as rain suspends its journey.
To banish the bodily discomfort,
I brush my palm beneath my nostrils—
fresh blood appears on my skin.
I squint to catch a glimpse of the raging sun.
Eye irritation surfaces, refusing to open
in the uncompromising glare,

body like the slow-braising chicken.
Are we in the age of Tlatonatiuh, “the Sun of Fire”?

Sreelekha Chatterjee’s poems have recently appeared in Madras Courier, Setu, Verse-Virtual, Porch Literary Magazine, Pena Literary Magazine, and in the anthologies—Light & Dark (Bitterleaf Books, UK), Whose Spirits Touch (Orenaug Mountain Publishing, USA), and Christmas-Winter Anthology Volume 4 (Black Bough Poetry, Wales, UK). She lives in New Delhi, India. Facebook: [facebook.com/sreelekha.chatterjee.1/](https://www.facebook.com/sreelekha.chatterjee.1/), X (formerly Twitter): @sreelekha001, Instagram @sreelekha2023

Merlin Flower

Brakes on

The sky wrapped a
rapid grey as the
clouds grated some rain.

*Did it soak the rain, the
frantic snake that slid
away to score
the chasing human?*

Stirring a cup of coffee,
i looked
across the road.
a single tear from the refugee's golden eyes,
blistered me.

Christy Hoots

They Can't Know

The flutter in my heart
When your arms reached for me
They can't know

The passion, the need
When you whispered my name
They can't know

The yearning for more
When you leaned in close
They can't know

The trembling, the emotion
When you took my hand in yours
They can't know

The burning desire
When your lips met mine
They can't know

The passion, the thrill
When you said "I need to know"
They can't know

The way I let you lead
Through an endless moment
They can't know

The anguish and despair
When we finally untwined
They can't know

Ocheni Kazeem Oneshojo

Abujá: *One who settles fight*

The red land was so dry and fertile;
Plants could dry but still flourish.
But you savour their friendship as bitter as bile.

Two men fought over your fertility;
You are wonderfully placed, like a star in the Milky Way.
Their fight cost them their virility,
Turning their friendship to hatred and darkness.

Deadly, desperate men of deceit found darkness in your light,
And I found solace in you; for you are a welcoming mother,
A productive mother, calm and white like an angel.

Life is fruitful; men shouldn't resolve to fight.
An eye view of you curses not but makes my day,
Resolving their friendship and turning it into light.
You resolve their fight with a flowing sight.

Bless me for your view; turn my tears into joy,
Mother Abuja!
Their fight was resolved, but thank God He brought you to
ease our might.

**Abujá: A river in Kogi State, Anyigba, born from the clash of
two brothers over the land.*

Ocheni Kazeem Oneshojo

Olódùmarè's plea: the biblical verses

(I)

(In the beginning, Òlódùmarè created heaven and earth.)

Man was not in existence; life, gold, and silver had not been distinguished.

Mother Nature, as old as the demons lurking in some minds,
Was jewel, while the two-legged being was dust.

If the two-legged being could do without Mother Nature,
Òlódùmarè would have created them first.

(II)

(And the earth was without form and void.)

The earth was empty, and the serenity of heaven reigned,
Along with its brother, born first from Òlódùmarè.

The two-legged being's soul took no space;

Òlódùmarè saw the growing green and shining sky.

He breathed heavily, and his body was still not satisfied.

Òlódùmarè's soul danced on the faces of watery presence.

If the two-legged being were gold, not silver, to Òlódùmarè,
He said, "Let there be light!" And there was light.

(III)

(So Òlódùmarè created man in his own image.)

Man should be powerful and rule Òlódùmarè's creation,
His pearl among Mother Nature.

Like a pyramid, man's legacy stood tall.
The earth flourished with the presence of green skies, gentle breezes, and flowing rivers.
In those days, the earth was like El Dorado,
Where beautiful skies ran in pleasant strides.
Lions stared at man and licked his body;
Beautiful fruits grew short for man to feed on.
Gentle breezes blew blessings on creations;
Pink, green, and cream-colored creatures flapped their wings in the blue sky.

Our earth was wonderful then.
Òlódùmarè sat on His throne and heaved a satisfying sigh.
Nature is the most friendly creation, not humanity, when you treat her well.

(IV)

(Òlódùmarè created Eve from Adam's rib while he slept)
Man was not left alone, accompanied by whispering trees,
Howling creatures, and beautiful birds.
A bone was taken from his rib, like a wolf in his side,
And his life became beautiful.

(V)

("The damage we inflict on the natural world will come back to haunt us." - Jane Goodall)
Birds can no longer flap their wings to dive in the sky;
The lion's serenity has turned to mildness for man.
Man takes one for two; elephants can no longer trudge in the joyful jungle.
Four-cornered abodes harsh to animals also haunt man

himself

What if Òlódùmarè changed the dominated animals'
thinking?

What if lions could batter men who tried to capture them?

What if flies had beautiful brains? They would squeeze men's
abdomens.

What if elephants saw men as predators? Men would die,
Their souls crying in pain and agony.

My fear is been battered by a lion;

My fear is been fed on by an owl.

Man, be watchful of your ways,

For the world might later be ruled by your puppets

Ocheni Kazeem Oneshojo is a Nigerian poet and writer. His poetry explores love, nature, identity, and social justice, incorporating African culture and tradition. Debuting in Opuiliche Journal, his works have appeared in Outside The Box Poetry Magazine and Everscribe Magazine. Driven by a desire to be heard, Oneshojo writes from the heart. A rising talent, he connects with readers and inspires reflection. Follow him on Twitter @kazeemocheni.

Rebecca Collins

Crayon

Who thought of coloring wax,
and how did they know
the implications?

It's as if someone said,
"well in burning
it gets all over the place,
may as well
make it beautiful."

Did they think of the stains?

Or only
that as we burn our days
we drip color,

rarely seeing it
in the black and white
and far too much gray
we claim as "black" or "white"?

Here we are,
burning off red...

Rebecca Collins

Endangered species

Some don't know how to
be with a flower,
or see it:

they suffocate nature
with talk and cigarettes,

words and smoke
rather than plants
the endangered species.

Rebecca Collins

The inked side of my hand

The inked side of my hand
hasn't forgotten
sensitive insensitivity;

and fingers,
blue-bloodied,
wipe explosions' aftermaths,

satisfied anyway:
this chore
is in the right kind of war.

Rebecca Collins

Fig

Tear someone left behind
swollen with past,
fragrance following them

no matter how many eaten
over the years,

no matter how much effort
to destroy what can only be absorbed.

Rebecca Collins

Synthetic

When did all youth
become models,

makeup
just that:
synthetic
for synthetic worlds,

reality boxed out
with dyed plexiglass
to self-capture in a tiny circle–

nothing to do with
self.

Rebecca Collins, at age 44, wrote in Italian and published her first book, *Tre raccolte poetiche* (Midgard Editrice, October 2022, reprints September 2023). Her poem “Fish was published in *Cosmic Daffodil Journal's* ebook, *Horoscopes*, and three other free-form poems will be published by *Trampoline* on 23 November 2024. She also wrote the lyrics and tune for the Christian song “I Come to You”, and one of OtB's poets, Shashanna Hummer, is writing the music.

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Everscribe Team

Future Issues

We're thrilled to announce that our next issue, *Musa et Verbum*, will be coming soon! Writers can always submit their works through our website at everscribemag.com.

Join our community by connecting with us on our [Discord server](#), where both writers and readers are welcome. Stay updated on launch dates and news by following us on [social media](#).

For inquiries or questions, feel free to reach out to us at info@everscribemag.com. We hope you enjoyed reading Everscribe's second issue, and we extend our thanks to all the writers for making this dream come true!

