

Everscribe

MAGAZINE

ISSUE NO. 9

ANIMUS OPUS

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

everscribemag.com



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About Everscribe

Everscribe is a non-profit digital literary magazine dedicated to showcasing exceptional writing and talent. We invite individuals from all backgrounds, experiences, and ages to share their work with us.

Our primary goal is to showcase writing that is impactful, beautifully crafted, and thought-provoking — stories, poems, and essays that leave a lasting impression! We want to break down barriers and provide opportunities for all writers to showcase their talent and creativity, as we believe that talent should speak for itself. Everscribe aims to be a launching pad for those who have longed to share their stories but felt limited by traditional publishing routes. Our submissions are always open, and our process is free, easy, and unlimited!



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Everscribe’s Platforms

Join the conversation and fun in Everscribe’s welcoming community across various platforms.

Visit our official [Discord](#) server and reach out to us on [X](#), and [Instagram](#)!

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Editor's Note

Dear Scribe,

Welcome to *Animus Opus*, our ninth issue, and a tribute to the soul's work!

Each piece in this issue carries something deeply personal. Whether it's the hidden symbolism of a poem or the boldness of a story told in full voice, these works remind us why we create at all. To understand, to express, and to endure.

We're nearing one year of Everscribe. It's hard to believe how far we've come! What started as a simple idea has grown into something so much more, thanks to the dedication of our team, the trust of our contributors, and the continued support of every reader who believes in what we do.

There's much ahead... New opportunities, new eras, and new ways to share the stories that leave a lasting impression. But for now, we invite you to pause with us and read this issue, put together with heart and soul, all thanks to the talented writers showcased within.

We're so glad you're here.

With thanks and anticipation,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Dafia". The script is elegant and cursive, with a large initial 'D'.

Founder & Editor-in-Chief

Scribe's Corner



Word of the Month!

The Scribes have spoken... The word of the month is: **Repose**!

Repose is the quiet at the heart of May, when the world holds its breath between spring's rush and summer's heat. Repose smells like old paper and damp grass. It's the Scribes' half-empty mugs, the commas left lingering between clauses. Not a deep sleep, just the body's mutiny against the clock. May taught us: even soil lies fallow.

Want to help choose our next Word of the Month? Vote in our polls on Discord and social media!



Literary Technique Spotlight

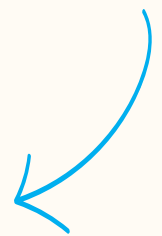
Subtle hints can shape a story's destiny. This month, we examine **foreshadowing** — a writer's strategic breadcrumbs that hint at future events, building tension or preparing readers for what's to come. Foreshadowing can be a throwaway line, an ominous object, or even the weather, all working to create anticipation or dread. The best foreshadowing feels inevitable in hindsight, yet invisible on first read.

Take Shirley Jackson's *The Lottery*. The children gathering stones at the story's opening seem innocuous — until the horrific finale reveals their purpose.

Question for our Scribes...

May is filled with the quiet anticipation of summer, the satisfaction of a project nearly complete. What hopeful signs have you noticed lately? A recurring idea that excites you? A chance encounter that feels meaningful? A creative impulse that keeps returning? What wonderful things might these moments be foreshadowing?

Send us your answers in our official Discord community, or post them on X, Bluesky, and Instagram using **#ScribesCorner**.



Interview with

Jeff Kennedy

Published in [Issue No. 3, Pulsus Litterae](#).

My name is **Jeff Kennedy** and I'm a lifelong author, living in Columbus, OH. My short fiction has appeared in *Bright Flash Literary Review* and *Everscribe Magazine*. People ask me what genre I write, and I don't have a good answer. I write comedy, sci fi, and some serious stuff that confuses my family. My first publication was a haiku when I was fourteen. I'm a produced playwright and member of the Dramatist Guild. I'm a past Thurber House and Erma Bombeck essay contest winner. My current passion is micro and flash fiction.



What inspired you to write the piece that was published in Everscribe? Can you share the story behind it?

#AITA (Issue No. 3, Pulsus Litterae) is very close to what actually happened on my way home from work one day. Wish I had a more exotic story, but there it is.

What themes or messages do you hope readers take away from your work?

If I had to sum up my philosophy, it would be that:

1. We are all way more alike than we are different.
2. Life is funny.
3. Life is really weird.

How has your writing evolved since you started? Are there any particular influences that have shaped your style?

My writing career has been a series of periods of writing regularly, long

periods of not writing, and then periods of writing regularly. That, and my tendency to dabble in a bunch of different literary arenas, makes this a tough question to answer. I have a lot of favorite authors, but my writing sensibilities have probably been most influenced by Kurt Vonnegut. I thought it was impossible to be both an optimist and a pessimist until I'd read a lot of Vonnegut.

If you could give one piece of advice to aspiring authors, what would it be?

Sit down and start writing. The main difference between a writer and someone who wants to be a writer, is that the writer has written. Most people don't really want to be writers. They want to be known for having written.

Are there any upcoming projects or works in progress that you're particularly excited about?

I always have several wildly different works in progress, but the one that I'm most excited about at the moment is a series of essays about our neighborhood. My wife and I have lived in the Short North Arts District in Columbus, OH for 25+ years and I've been keeping notes on the goings on there for a long time. Looks like it might turn into a book yet.

How can readers find you and see more of your work?

You can always follow me on Bluesky at [@jkennedy60.bsky.social](#). I don't have an author's site per se, but I do have set up a web site that I originally only sent friends and family members to, just to prove that I really am writing when I'm locked away in my office talking to myself. Most of them just shake their heads when they go to <https://www.justanotherdamnblog.com>.

Everscribe is thrilled to have published talented writers like Jeff Kennedy! We thank you for choosing Everscribe as your literary home. Read Jeff Kennedy's fictional short story in [Issue No. 3, Pulsus Litterae](#)!

Interview with

Rebecca Collins

Published in [Issue No. 3, Pulsus Litterae](#).

In October 2022, **Rebecca Collins** wrote in Italian and published her first book, *Tre raccolte poetiche* (Midgard Editrice). It was born in Perugia, Italia, where she lived on and off for almost one year. Since September 2023 she has lived in Sakartvelo (the country of Georgia), where she came to and has been transformed by Christ. She has two works in progress: *Journey on my knees*, another free-form book; and *Oneness of Love*, poetic wisdom in the feel of Kahlil Gibran. Additionally, she wrote the Christian song "I Know" along with her Testimony, which is in *Heart of Flesh*. Individual poems are in *Cosmic Daffodil Journal*, *Trampoline: A Journal of Poetry*, *Everscribe*, and *ZVONA i NARI*. She also has four poems forthcoming in *Spirit Fire Review*. Rebecca is Founder and Editor of *Outside the Box Poetry* (OtB).

What inspired you to write the piece(s) that was published in Everscribe? Can you share the story behind it?

"Crayon" was me pondering humanity's creativity using a simple childhood tool, then pointing at how we trade that creativity (which is behind constructive relationships) for separateness (symbolized by the black and white in the poem) and the shading of reality (symbolized by the gray), not properly seeing or honoring the bright beauty that we all are. "Endangered Species" was a reaction to people constantly talking and smoking in Tbilisi's Botanical Gardens, which is supposed to be a peaceful, fresh-air sanctuary. "The inked side of my hand" was inspired by the common side-effect of writing. "Fig" is a reflection on how we can only absorb (and transform) our past, not erase it. "Synthetic" is a commentary on how, with the selfie generations, self-worth has gotten lost to "looking good" for superficial likes on social media.

What themes or messages do you hope readers take away from your work?

Everything comes from the same source - whatever people believe that source is - and we have one world in which to learn to live together. I want people to value themselves, others, and the planet. There has been too

much destruction regarding each of these due to an unhealthy level of self-centeredness (which is the opposite of self-value); that said, I am also guilty: though less often since having come to Christ, I have self-centered moments, and it is always a work in progress. Regarding the struggles we all have, I want people to feel my compassion, to know they are not alone.

How has your writing evolved since you started? Are there any particular influences that have shaped your style?

My writing has evolved since my first poetry assignment (third grade), though I had written a beautiful poem back then and remember it to this day. One constant is that I still prefer free-form, but one major difference is that since I came to Christ, my poetry has flourished within my faith. I used to let rejections and my own self-criticism (not healthy) determine my value and the value I placed on my poetry. Now I understand that any talent or skill I have comes from God (He gets all the glory), and because of His guidance in my writing, what I write is always meaningful to me. I do value others' thoughts regarding my poems, but I am so much more secure in my writing.

If you could give one piece of advice to aspiring authors, what would it be?



Write from your soul, and let your writing grow with you and vice versa, recognizing that you'll likely try more than one method and path before you find the right ones for you. If you do this, others will relate to you and your work on a level they otherwise couldn't, even if they have different backgrounds and views.

Are there any upcoming projects or works in progress that you're particularly excited about?

I have two works in progress: *Journey on my knees*, another free-form book; and *Oneness of Love*, poetic wisdom in the feel of Kahlil Gibran. I am taking my time with them, letting the insights and poems come to me. I look forward to the day when they are ready to be published and hopefully move others to God.

How can readers find you and see more of your work?

Individual poems are in *Cosmic Daffodil Journal*, *Trampoline: A Journal of Poetry*, *Everscribe*, and *ZVONA i NARI*, with four forthcoming in *Spirit Fire Review*. Additionally, I wrote the Christian song "I Know" (not published; the music is being worked on) along with my Testimony, which is in *Heart of Flesh*. I am Founder and Editor of *Outside the Box Poetry* (OtB: <https://www.outsidetheboxpoetry.com/>).

Everscribe is thrilled to have published talented writers like Rebecca Collins! We thank you for choosing Everscribe as your literary home. Read Rebecca Collins's beautiful poems in [Issue No. 3, Pulsus Litterae](#)!

Fictional Short Story

Maryam Isha Usman

Infant

I have watched you build it. Slowly, brutally, with hands you thought too soft for war. I have watched the nights consume you and the mornings refuse to cradle what the dark had made. And yet, still, you built it. A temple in the thicket of your ruin. A mouthless cry turned architecture.

You say you are afraid. That the work is not holy. That the pain is not worthy.

I weep, not for your fear, but for how closely it resembled mine, once. You think gods do not remember trembling. You think angels are born with wings. You think mothers are not girls who once sat shivering under trees. You think that all of them are not fatherless. You are wrong. And still, I love you.

Child, man, maker of griefstruck wonders. I love you.

The masterpiece was never what you made. It was that you made at

all. It was that you rose each day with shaking breath and chose, despite the silence, to speak. The soul is not the crown - it is the bruised skull beneath it. It is your lungs, your cracked voice, your decision not to vanish.

You were never meant to be whole. The soul, like the sea, is honest only in its breaking. Did you think the spirit would emerge untouched? No. It claws its way through you. Through generations. Through myth. It wears your face like a mask.

You built your house from madness. Good. That is the only stone that lasts. Every pillar is made of memory. Every arch sings a name you tried to forget. I know. I know. I stood above you once, watching you not recognize me.

You were a child, and I was myth. You were a man, and I was fire. You were a cry in the night, and I was the answer that sounded like thunder. But I have always been

with you. Behind the veil. In the marrow. Beneath the dream.

You thought you were alone. But you were never alone.

You are seen.

You are seen.

And now, you stand at the edge again - gasping, unfinished. Let me speak this clearly, so there is no mistake:

You are not your scars. You are not the silence. You are not the end.

You are becoming.

And I -

“The soul, like the sea, is honest only in its breaking.”

I am an angel to man, a god to man, a mother to son.

All of them at once.

All of them, for they are the same.

As I said before,

I love you, dear.

Maryam Isha Usman is a 13-year-old writer whose work explores the intersections of myth, identity, and decay. Her work is influenced by a deep affinity for the symbolic and the obscure. For more information, visit: <https://maryamishausman.straw.page/>

Donna Gum

Don't Talk To Strangers

“Your dog is tracking mud on my porch. Get your dirty dog off my porch,” said Kelly. It was her second phone call in the past five minutes to a woman named Lila.

Lila said. “But I only own a cat.”

“Your dog has been tracking mud on my porch all morning, and you need to come and get him,” said Kelly.

“I don't have a dog,” Lila pleaded.

With a hard edge, Kelly said, “I know you have a dog because I've seen you with him.”

The tension in Kelly's blue living room grew thick. The four friends listening remained silent and still. Kelly's eyes darkened as she spoke with a coldness born of experience.

“If you don't come and get your dirty dog off my porch, I'm calling the police,” Kelly said, tossing her dark hair over her shoulder. Josh leaned forward and glanced at Doug.

“Send the police to her house with sirens,” whispered Josh when Kelly upped the stakes to include law enforcement. Kelly's snide voice drew admiration from all but Sheryl. Sheryl said nothing, but could only wonder at Lila's mental state. Surprised, Sheryl heard the woman hang up on Kelly. Not to be deterred, Kelly called the number again. Anne glanced at Sheryl with a malicious stare, her freckles standing out on her pale skin.

“What's wrong, Sheryl? Aren't you enjoying yourself?” asked Anne. The group turned as one toward Sheryl.

“Of course I am,” stammered

*“What started as a
prank turned into
cruelty.”*

Sheryl. *I can't have everyone on my wrong side.* Sheryl broke eye contact with the group and pretended to focus on Kelly's phone conversation.

“Did you disconnect the call? You'd better not do that again,” Kelly said into the phone, glancing out the window. “If you hang up on me, you'll force me to come to your house.”

Lila's voice trembled. “Please, ma'am. I don't have a dog. I don't want any trouble.”

“Why would you lie about not having a dog?” asked Kelly. Lila gave no response.

“Are you going to hang up on me again? I'll make you sorry. In fact, I'm through talking with you. Get your dog off my porch or I'll call animal control.”

After listening, Sheryl almost believed a dog tracked mud on Kelly's porch. The porch's gray floor was spotless, and no dog pranced there. *I couldn't make my voice that ugly no matter how hard I*

tried. What started as a prank turned into cruelty. No one spoke against Kelly's actions. They seemed afraid of Kelly's disapproval. *What does that make me?* Sheryl hung out with them soon after she moved to the area, desperate for friends. She found less to like as the months passed.

Kelly hit disconnect as Lila spoke. Everyone but Sheryl mocked the woman's frightened voice as Kelly sat, basking in their approval. The phone rang, causing the room to fall silent.

Kelly glanced at the screen. “I don't recognize the number.” Her lips formed a tight line.

“Go ahead. Answer it,” said Sheryl with a challenging tone.

Kelly tapped the screen and put the call on speaker. “Yeah.”

A gruff, male voice asked, “Are you the one with the muddy dog on your porch?”

Kelly's eyes grew large. Her finger hovered over the phone's disconnect button.

Sheryl hissed, “What's wrong, Kelly? Are you scared?” Sheryl's anger made her disregard the others' disapproval.

The man said, “Is your name Kelly?”

“Y-Yes,” said Kelly as she glared at Sheryl.

“Well, Kelly, your calls frightened my wife when you threatened to come to the house. You phoned her

three times. That's considered criminal, Kelly. Hmm. I think I know who you are. You're the pretty one with the black hair. I'll be around to see you. And now, you don't know if I'm telling the truth." The man disconnected the call. Kelly gasped.

"He might be a pervert," said Doug. "Did you call someone you know?!"

"She's a friend of my mother's. I don't know her myself. They're weird people. I didn't think they would know me," said Kelly.

The group trailed out the door, distancing themselves from the calls. Looking behind her, Sheryl saw Kelly's dismay as she stood on her front steps alone. *Serves her right. I bet she locks her door as soon as she goes inside.*

The next day, Sheryl's phone rang.

"Yeah," said Sheryl.

"Sheryl, you'll never believe what happened. I left school after band practice. I had to walk because Mom couldn't pick me up. There was a man following me the whole way. When I tried to speed up, he did too. I couldn't get away from him. He was a real weirdo. And, yesterday evening, there was a black rose on our doorstep. You've

got to believe me. Please come over."

Her voice sounds too afraid for it not to be real.

"Mom, can I go over to Kelly's?"

"No, Sheryl. Not until your grades come up. Tell Kelly goodbye," said her mother.

Kelly pleaded, "Oh, please don't leave me by myself. I'm scared, and Mom won't be home until late."

"I'm sorry. I can't. Keep everything locked and call 911 if anything happens," said Sheryl.

Kelly sniffled, "Okay." She hung up. Sheryl didn't hear anything that evening.

No one saw Kelly at the small high school the next day. Sheryl received a voicemail from Kelly about two am. It was the first thing she saw on her phone upon waking

"She hung up. Sheryl didn't hear anything that evening."

in the morning. Kelly's voice shook as she described someone near her bedroom window in the dark. Her mother wouldn't believe her.

Word was that the police were at

Kelly's house, because her mother found Kelly gone from her bedroom, the room's window broken, and bloodstains on Kelly's sheets.

The police at Kelly's house combed for clues to discover what happened. They found footprints outside Kelly's window. When they questioned the group in the principal's office at school, Sheryl showed the police the desperate voice mail from Kelly during the night. They told police about the man who called Kelly during the prank call. Sheryl told police that Kelly thought she was being followed the day before. Police questioned the man who called Kelly, but his wife provided an alibi.

Despite a thorough investigation, no one located Kelly. After two months, the search was called off. Sheryl, unable to give up, searched longer due to feelings of guilt.

Kelly's friends believed Kelly no longer lived. They split into smaller groups, each going their own way.

Sheryl spent her time alone. She couldn't relieve the knots in her stomach when she wondered if Kelly would have lived if Sheryl hadn't revealed Kelly's name during the last phone call.

Donna Gum enjoys writing flash fiction in the Appalachian Mountains. Her recent fiction was published in the inaugural issue of *Borderline Tales*, Placed 2nd in *Magnets and Ladders Contest*, *CafeLit*, *Fifty Give or Take*, *Flash Phantoms*, *10x10 Flash Fiction*, *Literary Yard*, and *Freedom Fiction Journal* including upcoming publications.

Cetacean

In the Forge

It'll hurt." The winged woman gave one final warning. She wasn't apologetic, but resolute and almost challenging him to back down.

"That's okay." Of course he was scared, but that didn't matter.

A rare smile crossed her face, and she snapped. Sparks danced on her fingers as she brought her arm in a clockwise circle, like she was burning through a curtain to show what was behind.

A gaping hole of fire now stood in front of Isaac. Vulture nodded to him. Was there some respect there?

"I can't keep this open for too long. But too long in there, and there will be no way back. So be quick."

Isaac mutely nodded back. He stared at the hole. It looked sinister against the cloudy sky. He started to recall the warnings he'd been given earlier, but then -- no. He had to do it now, before he saw reason.

"Took a step forward with this conviction, and things changed."

He closed his eyes, then stepped into the flames.

For a moment, all he could think about was the burning pain enveloping his body. He was used to forcing himself to class while his

muscles angrily protested at him. But that was nothing compared to this. Instinctively, he tried to step back the way he came, but that accomplished nothing. He'd been holding back a scream for so long, and decided to just let it out.

It didn't quite help, but it made his pain feel heard. Countless moments flooded his mind. Crying and knowing no one cared except for his brother who'd been busy but not being able to stop. Trying to shape his body into a form that would better suit him with a knife and blacking out from the pain. Being berated for not being fast enough or strong enough on his parents' farm. Staying so his brother could escape, then learning his brother had died and taking his place in college instead.

And he remembered Vulture telling him that it would burn, and it would never quite stop, but the flame would become what sustains him rather than his enemy.

He remembered when he'd first seen her, drunk off his ass. He remembered when she'd grabbed his hand and pulled him into the River Between and told him that he'd be completely useless with that habit of his.

(He'd tried to stop, but sometimes the vice still held him tight.)

Right. He had to get what he needed, and then get out.

Had he not now known his

brother lived, he'd be looking for a way to resurrect him. As things were, Isaac was doing this to be able to finally live as himself.

He took a step forward with this conviction, and things changed.

In front of Isaac was himself, sitting on a throne, a crown atop his head. Isaac shook his head. He couldn't get distracted. This had to be quick. He took another step.

There was another version of himself now, and this one had his arm around someone whose face Isaac couldn't seem to remember no matter how many times he looked. His doppelganger was smiling and laughing and didn't seem drunk at all. It had been a while since Isaac had felt like that. But he forced himself to turn away.

The vision that gave him pause was when he found himself meeting eyes with a younger version of himself. His mother hugged the younger Isaac, and present Isaac winced. The vision changed. Younger Isaac was a bit older than before, but without any of the scars present Isaac had at that age, he noticed. He saw how this version of himself interacted with his parents. He didn't seem scared at all. Could this...?

Isaac stepped closer to the scene. He saw himself grow up, but as a woman, seemingly never dealing with the conflict that Isaac had actually felt. This not-Isaac got

married and stayed in Barbados. She raised children, and watched them grow up. Isaac had wanted kids once, and part of him still did. He wondered if maybe this was what he should choose. Could he be normal?

Then he saw not-Isaac much older, her hair greying and her skin wrinkling. Still a woman. But happy. Could this be him?

Isaac remembered Vulture telling him that if he were to settle, he'd never make it out. But maybe that wouldn't be so bad. If he could have this life.

The burning pain that Isaac had mostly tuned out made itself known

again, and Isaac remembered what he'd been through. Could he just forget? Could he give up now, when he was so close?

It wasn't easy to step towards uncertainty, but Isaac managed to do it anyway.

And then the burning intensified, and he doubled over. His vision went black.

When he next opened his eyes, he was on the beach, with Vulture sitting a few feet away from him, reading a thick looking novel. She grinned at him, and for once, he saw the flames that lurked beneath her eyes. It didn't scare him like it

should've.

He didn't have to look to know that his body was right, for once in his life. Isaac found it hard to believe. Could this be another vision while he burned away into inevitable nothingness? In truth, there was no way to know, but he stood anyway. He was used to how evasive and ephemeral hope could be and persisting despite it. His effort would have to count for something.

"I'm glad you made it," Vulture said, as she slammed her book shut and set it down on the sand. "Now the real work begins."

Cetacean is new to sharing his writing, but he draws from his experiences with mental health, organizing, and with being a black, trans, and disabled person. He loves sci fi, fantasy, solarpunk, and African mythology. He can currently be found at @cetaceanalien on Instagram.

Poetry

Connie Song

Yin and Yang

Protector, provider.

The archetype,
the stereotype,
the unexpected,
the paradoxical,

exposing the authentic duality of life,
a coin with its two sides,

a room soaked in darkness
with unshuttered moonlight bleeding
past cloaked venetian curtains,

words buried deep within stone,
pens like swords or weapons
not yet drawn or transcribed
or scribbled onto daily journals,
the ink spilling onto empty canvas
filling cracks,
exposing scars.

We eat the sun, the moon and the stars,
the sea and the tangled clouds
bringing balance
simultaneously healing and haunting
the creases of the soul,
this is the yin and yang,
filled with primal pleasures and pain,
the paradoxical moments of life.

There are parts of us that never die,
that inhale, then exhale,
part Ares, part Aphrodite,
part Apollo,
that mirror and shield our punctured stars
until the beautiful rise of dawn.

Connie Song writes short stories and bruised poetry from the edge of Brooklyn, New York. Her works include *The Grimalkin*, *The Ghost of Stillwell Avenue*, *Souls for Sale*, *Perfect Girls*, *Bruised Poetry*.

Alan Hardy

Snowdrop

Scooped up the lazy leaves on the terrace
into a plastic bag
to fling down with a thud,
no bursting *phut* this year.

That bend of torso, crouching down awkwardly,
or casual sweep of brush on cobwebbed corner,
its little anniversary nothings, the body can still perform.
These tokens of seasonal survival please.

The bunch of snowdrops have appeared where they always appear,
in their dulled whiteness, all alone,
in the curve of leaf-strewn empty land,
drooping round-shouldered tiny old-timers,
churlishly cheekily barely believing they're still around.
Their battered look, hunched up against the cold and wind,
their downward gaze tells a story.

I spot them as I patrol the garden,
having swung the bloated bag, and its earth smell,
over the fence out of sight.
I stand by the snowdrops a while,
shift my feet,
share their droop,
and survival.
We could tell each other a thing or two.

Alan Hardy has for many years run an English language school for foreign students in UK). He's been published in such magazines as *Envoi*, *Iota*, *Poetry Salzburg*, *The Interpreter's House*, *Littoral*, *Orbis*, *South*, *Pulsar*, *Lothlorien*, *Chewers*, *Feversofthemind*, *100subtexts*, *Fixator* and others. Poetry pamphlets *Wasted Leaves* (1996) and *I Went With Her* (2007).

Sanjeev Sethi

Trumpet

Brutality isn't only a gunshot or a lance in a rib cage.
Syllables of severity drum their beat when you rest
your leg on the table, and the sole of your shoe faces
me. Sharpness is when I shift to gear four on the gab
meter, and you stand up in service to errands. Fury is
when, sans bloodshed, blood flows. Violence is when
daylight thrusts itself between us, and we dwell on it.

Sanjeev Sethi has authored eight books of poetry. His poetry has been published in over thirty-five countries and has appeared in more than 500 journals, anthologies, and online literary venues. He edited *Dreich Planet #1 India*, an anthology for Hybriddreich, Scotland. He is the joint winner of the Full Fat Collection Competition-Deux, organized by Hedgehog Poetry Press, UK. He lives in Mumbai, India. X @sanjeevpoems3 || Instagram sanjeevsethipoems ||

Angela Arnold

Year After Year

after year we'd obligingly frame you, hang you (samplers, photos, cheap prints), while all you did was stuff us, glitter wrapping and all, somewhere dark, closed. Never – not once – did you chose to use us. Did we ask? In the right language?

Didn't expect you to wear us. Not really: fray, fade on your back, even a bit, or God-help-us-tear?
That wordless thing you had
about permanence. Maybe no wonder.

Couldn't go for being eaten either, handed round, shared to smithereens. Never mind evaporating publicly, fragrantly... what? Life giving you the slip, failing to hold on to your hand? Shouldn't joke. Of course it was

completely verboten to wither away on your table. Well, we knew to come cut and dried and ready to become one with the dust. – And the dust of you now: all we have, plan to use, in our gardens. No. We will see you be.

Angela Arnold

Flats

Rain comes on, drives a coach and six steam-breathing horses
through the lamest family walk: pellet-scattered and
nip in by the cracked door – woo! *mega* shed.

But the air promptly
touched us
oddly,
and the sounds
stirred us round.

So I turn you. Face out, come, round. Dwarf your pudgy hand
in my softly-softly angry fist. Look: drum-kit drops in puddles,
giant-breath waves just for you. While all this playful time (in truth)

we stealthily
breathed them in,
listened
to the curtailed ruffling
of prisoners, foreign chatter.

My shifty elbow shrouding facts not yet found in your (still) sturdy books
till at last we can high-step out: glassy aftermath of hail, carefully now.
I swear you never stop, turn, hesitate – god knows what makes you shout

do they live there all the time,
in their teeny flats, the chickens?
and start stamping wild spray
like something sprung from the bowels
of nowhere.

The very first dance of so many.
Soon enough years of storming;
bigger issues, stomping to a different music now. Still,
keep it coming. It's a good rage.

All clear enough
now that we've been captives ourselves
gasping for, eyeing up, unable –
caught ones that counted faint drumbeats
of rain, watched those who could, and did,

and left, lucky creatures,
not stuck in
their flats.

Angela Arnold lives in Wales. Her poems have been published widely in print magazines, anthologies and online, in the UK and elsewhere. First collection: *In Between* (Stairwell Books, 2023). She is also an artist, a creative gardener and an environmental campaigner.

Adeleke Abdulmalik Olalekan

Uncertainties

I don't know how to say this,
How to shape these feelings into words.
Something about you lingers—light and dusk,
A quiet storm in my chest.

What if I clear my throat,
And your heart finally understands the call?
What if we bond, woven tight like roots in the earth,
Only for me to pull away
Just when everything starts to make sense?

What will you do?
Will your tears carve rivers on your face,
Flooding until the weight of us
Turns into the Atlantic Ocean?

Or will you take this as fate,
Step forward like Moremi,
And live as a legend—
A story of love and loss,
But never regret?

Adeleke Abdulmalik Olalekan is a Nigerian writer and poet from Oyo State, born on June 5, 2004. He studies English Language at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and his works (often themed on love, satire, and societal issues) appear in magazines like *Everscribe* and *Where in the World*. He is an active member of the Creative Writers Club at his university and serves as the Research and Development Officer for the League of Young Writers Association.

Mark Strohschein

Permanently Unfinished Cathedrals

for Pádraig Ó Tuama

Ancestors quarried stones
accepted their laborious lot
accompanied by raw fear &
spoonfuls of soulful wisdom

Sweaty, smelly & sun-soaked
they drove pick-axes into earth
carried their own weight to grave
to construct ghosts of our present

So do we dare chastise them
their raw jaded hands working
to build what might tumble down
destroy them or compromise us?

The humility of blind truth—
to never truly behold the fruits of
one's handiwork, graded & leveled
stonelaying to heaven on borrowed time

Perhaps every generation's creed
passed down in the bone's memory:
We did our best with such meager tools,
but could not, for the life of us,
chisel-change ourselves.

Pushcart Prize-nominated poet and educator **Mark Strohschein** resides on Whidbey Island. His poems have appeared in *Cirque Journal*, *Flint Hills Review*, *Bryant Literary Review*, *Broad River Review*, *The Milk House* and other journals and anthologies. His new chapbook, *Cries Across Borders*, was a semifinalist for Button Poetry's 2023 chapbook contest.

Emma Oldham

Burnt rubber

The smell, so distinctive, swims through the car window,
Life rushes on the road,
channelling me to the equator,
where Benga music soaks dark skin,
and canisters of water, sacks of potatoes,
balance like miracles
atop afros and sweat-slicked brows.

Where the heat claws at your body.
Monkeys, sunbirds and lizards
scatter like sundials along the street.
Fabric flaps like patterned prayer flags.
Sweetcorn popping
Abandoned flip-flops
mannequins carved with wide hips,
curved like truth.
And at the fringe,
the mighty baobab.

It can only be
Kenya.

And it stops me—
paralyses me—
this knowing:
two worlds existing
side by side.

One, soaked in starlight,
where the sun, resting on its laurels,
draws beasts from the bush—
giant tuskiers
still roaming free.

The other—England.
Tamed.
The wildness long since drained.
Too fearful to host a lynx or a beaver.
But it's fine.

We have store upon store,
shelves gleaming
with kettles and air fryers.

Emma Oldham is a published children's author, conservation biologist and elected representative based in Newark-on-Trent, England. Her passion for wildlife and storytelling took root in childhood, never far from a notepad or a rescued creature. That early connection evolved into a lifelong mission to write stories showcasing our relationships with the natural world. Emma is represented by the Bright Agency.

Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Providence

Genuinely skilled with
what life has passed unto me —
for every word I string together
to make a statement, springs
from the basement of
my soul

Each day I learn & grow strong
that I may earn my spot in this
empty war-torn world of men —
and be no burden to myself
and to my kids... to my woman

I sleep and live my truth
to my accord of perceived
reality of my spiritual conscience
disposed to my cultural heritage

With the Poetic Justice licensed
to my witchcraft practise —
I form speech with truth
and keep my feet firmly
planted in the unsinking ground
of loud-echo silence:

And defend myself from
men who do not honour
the generosity of our
one universe

And to the other men who
dances around stealing the
innocence of unborn babies

Uchechukwu Onyedikam

Letter to Jossy, June 4th

Stripping off all the years that carries
within itself the thought of things
only known to the North stars;
as other elements of the Universe
align to the uprightness of another
new beginning — a year that sparks off
that secret beauty sitting pretty
on the walls of your heart!

I write to bear witness with time
that comes as age, and to the
years that embodies this time
you've seen, and conquered:
to reach this far!

This glorious day exhumes all
the sweet caresses of your soul —
the colors of rainbow, the tales
of this merry day, imbued with scents;
the dance to a new tune!

Here, I say to you that the freedom
to roam freely was birthed in the hands
of this day — and we are all gathered
around you with the true certainty
of that love that never stumble
out of its path, and track!

Uchechukwu Onyedikam is a poet whose work graces *Petals of Haiku: An Anthology*, an Amazon best-seller now permanently displayed in the Treasure House of Rinsen-ji Temple, Japan, a revered institution with over 500 years of history. Nominated for Best of the Net, Pushcart Prize, and Touchstone Award.

Simon Collinson

Bumping into Ghosts

Every family has one
a dirty little secret
I should know
I'm one
the shame and stain
you're not supposed to talk about
for if you do
you'll be found out
and cast aside
like I was
forever to be
on the outside
you'll find it a cold place
and damned lonely.

So if you want to linger
a bit longer
in paradise
then if you should happen
quite by chance
one night
to glance upon
someone vaguely familiar
a faded figure
a phantom
hiding in the shadows
you thought you once knew
then just keep
on walking
act like
you never knew me
stranger
don't look back
because I'm not there.

Simon Collinson is a writer from England. He seeks solitude, shade and shadow.

Vridhi Shoor

A marionette cannot wish

His velvety ivy peeks through the glass curtains
The dawn mists through the windows - wish I am asleep -
The ebony reflection stares at me - I am looking at the mirror...
She was Looking lost, thorns strung to her iron wreath,
Her peony lips were glistened red,
Golden threads embroidered cage across those lips,
Black silk webbed her naked, cracked flesh...

She looked like a gilded jade marionette, I was...

I felt like some ballerina stuck in a musical box...

Her wooden bones ready to dance, I DON'T WANT TO...

Standing for days on my broken toes I could stare vertigo into abyss...

That one stranger, playing with her from shadows, my puppeteer...

My crystal eyeballs filled their hollows with reflection...

Of A bird - flying to her home, her nest echoing with the familiar chatter...

I wish... I could be like that water...

To seep slowly - through the pores of these wires,
and Drown quietly into fractures of these grounds...
an outrageous wish...

To one day transpire through these walls.
And Silently evaporate into that purple sky,
Merging with the cauldron of dust,
transforming gently into those dark-blue clouds...

I wish to fall freely along with the gravity like the rain does,
Traveling the earth through the rivers,
Witnessing the birth of life...
And the mourning the end of it...
I dream to be one day part of the mighty ocean,
And proudly rise and fall with its tides.

But honestly, *A marionette cannot wish,*
While the clamps of the iron strings tangles across her mangled skin
And She must sit peacefully in front of the mirror,
Dance her tango on the snap of his fingers,
And Her hollow crystal eyes must only look towards the world from her mirrors,
While watching... as someone else stands in the rain,
And fall in love with its water...
And fall in love with its water...

Vridhi Shoor, a Student of Delhi University, with her art works previously published in *Atlas*, *Niqaab* (Magazine of psychology department, Delhi university), etc. She loves poetry and spend most of her time reading poetic lores of Edgar Allen Poe, etc. Her favorite artist and singer is Lana Del Rey and Weeknd.

James T. Kollie

The Sun Will Rise

Know that when perils rap around your soul
And your feet stand stiff leading to drown
Where the chamber of your heart beats violently
Darken by the walls of long-suffering
There will always be a sparkle of the beams of the sun
That will light up every inch of the tunnel
You need not to fight, you need not to win yourself foes.

The burdens of our agony leads us to dirt
Creating enemies who should hold the seal of friends.
Sometimes we drown our souls though we have hands to swim
We break our legs despite having wings to fly.

Let not the thoughts of our mind burden the heart
Let not the darkness that befalls our roof stop our sleep.
Life walks with its own clock, it has its time teller
When the hour is right, the sky will blossom bright.

The stricken laden widow will wed a new groom
A one with much lovingness, heart tender like the ocean.
All our pains will transition to sweet gains
The broken smile will shine bright by miles.

James T. Kollie is a contemporary Liberian writer who finds joy in the works of Rumi, Gibran, and Shams, leaving a lasting effect on his writing style of love, patience, and unity. He is a university graduate with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice administration and an aspiring Lawyer.

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Future Issues

We're thrilled to announce that our next issue, Issue No. 10, ***Manus Aeternum***, will be coming soon! Everscribe releases a new issue every 1st of the month, so stay tuned!

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 issue releases, special opportunities, news, and more 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 ninth issue, and we extend our thanks to all the writers for making this dream come true!

Until next time,
The Everscribe Team

