

SCAB

ISSUE #17

CONTRIBUTORS

Crys Silden, HLR, Ry Loughlin, mk zariel, Ellie Chou,
Wolfgang Carnifex, Rose Herald, Ai Feith, Neil Weiner,
Jamie Giles, Kevin Johnson Murillo, Meg McCarville,
Alex Yinat, Mark Ward, Tom Bland, Matthew Kinlin,
Xopher Besinger, Christopher Sole, Shane Allison,
Nicholas De Marino, AJ Sharpe, lotus eater machine

EDITOR'S NOTE



September 2025

D.

CRICKETS

Pee exam

Bathroom. 9. naked
peeing so he can feel it coming out
grubby fingers pressing the stream
like you hold a garden hose to water flowers
piss all over the beige linoleum tiles
use avocado green guest towels to clean up
mother finds towels
didn't believe a word
Crickets

Dry anal

Rec Room Closet. 9. bare ass
locked door
black sock on big dick
bent over a case of coors light and charmin ultra strong colored toilet rolls
pack of six
dry sock piercing my tiny hole
scratch his face
good one
long
parents knew
Crickets

Kissing poison

Blue Truck. 9. clothes on
stars ufos and rye
hard dick out of pants
drinking sips
sucks on tongue
keep eyes open
pushes head in lap
suck on tip
Stinks

Lemons

Kitchen. 10. pants off
light grey speckled arborite counter
finger in
lasagna in oven. smells good
finger out
stop
begging
butter up
pumping dick
comes in garbage
door opens
dad
Crickets

Sleeping bag

Cottage Living Room. 11. jammy bottoms off
slides off couch
unzips sleeping bag
mother walks in room
shoo him away like swatting a wasp
bare bum
morning
fish fry
moms and dads hungover
Crickets

Hose contest

Orange Cottage Shed. 11. bathing suit top on bottom off
plywood walls
deadbolt
puts end of green garden hose in
slowly pulls it out
tries it on cousin
measures
I win
sister watches
Crickets

Licker

Forest. 11. pants off
leaning on log
fire ants
legs spread wide
licks where he rubs
rubs where he licks
Repeat

Plaything

Yard. 11. pants down
side house no windows
cottonwood tree
hide and seek
sticks a stick
bleed on waxy leaf
sister comes around corner
pull up pants
Crickets

Jiggle jiggle

Bedroom. 12. top off
stand in doorway
one hand high on frame
up on tiptoes
hop hop hop
tits throw a dance party
comes on pink frilled bedspread
Smiles

Gets it in

Bedroom. 12. naked
red shag rug
vanilla before vanilla
clothes under bed
nivea lid off
rain in eyes
the panelling has faces
Sweat

Snooker

Rec Room. 12. top off
chase around the room
dick out
throw red ball
hits temple
bleeding head
cover-up story
Crickets

Round 2

Roof. 12. pants off
on all fours, slanted
bare feet clasping the angles
grey shingles
red rover
bleeding knees
kill wish
Pushing

Hitting anger

Bathroom. 12. clothes on
trying to get out
slapping
open door
close door
pinned against wall
knock down picture of sunflowers on wall
rips yellow shorts
Worried about mother

BJ

Blue Truck. 13. clothes on
dick out of pants
driving
discovery
slow gagging suck
scraping the roof of mouth
bigger than big
comes
Praying

Wedding

Town Hall. 18. dressed up

drunk

confused

make a scene

leave

Cricket

Crys Silden writes poetry, personal essays and short stories. Crys has been published in *Horror Sleaze Trash*, *Dadakuku*, *Don't Submit*, *In Parentheses*, *Versification*, and *Stink Eye*. Crys lives in Toronto, Canada.

On feeling (after Sean Bonney)

I would say ‘I feel like a discarded Barbie, drowning face-down arse-up in the Thames estuary.’ I would say ‘I feel that I was very clear when I said *no* — the first time I said it & the fiftieth time I shouted it & the hundredth time I screamed it; still, I feel like I was annoying for repeating myself so many times; I feel that I annoyed him, with my resistance, my mouth, my tears.’ I would say ‘I feel that every restaurant in my postcode should have me proofread their menus because if I come across another *carnabet savingon* or *hcicken warp* I will feel another small-but-not-insignificant death inside.’ I feel relieved to know how many calories there are in both the Blood & the Body of Christ. I feel like flirting with straight girls in a Wetherspoons smoking area on a Friday night. I feel like more people need to accept, or learn, that ‘no’ is a full sentence; it doesn’t have to be followed by ‘because’ or ‘but’ or ‘although’ or ‘sorry’. I feel that *to blossom* is still, ultimately, *to break*. I feel regret about the hundreds of times I took a blade to my arms & legs, especially during heatwaves. I feel sad that I spend so many of my finite minutes Googling ‘scar removal methods’ ‘best scar removal cream’ ‘laser removal for scars’ ‘is elective skin graft surgery free on the NHS’. I feel like sobbing on the kitchen floor because the oven won’t clean itself. I feel like a goodbye kiss fossilised in a spill of lime green candle wax. I feel like cackling maniacally every time a book reviewer calls me ‘narcissistic’ for writing about myself/my life/my traumas, knowing they’d never say the same of a male author. I feel like the arteries of my heart are clogged with ambergris. I feel that the clouds broke open & leaked on purpose this morning just to ruin me. I feel that my freckles are evidence of my parents failing to purchase & apply sunscreen on me as a child, as I feel good/normal parents should/would, so I feel this constellation of pigmentation is a sign of obvious *neglect*, rather than an implication of a blissfully sun-kissed existence spent frolicking in the Med. I feel furious that I spend so many of my finite minutes Googling ‘freckle removal’ ‘how to completely fade freckles at home’ ‘freckle erasing cream’ ‘free chemical peel for freckles UK’. I feel like smashing every reflective surface in this city, spoons included. I feel like ‘the weight of the world’ isn’t an accurate metaphor to depict the heaviness of everything that I’m feeling right now, but I feel too silly to give myself ‘the weight of the Universe’, & too exhausted to invent a new, original, exciting metaphor — all of which is troubling, for a poet. I feel like that publisher gave off so many red flags that I ignored because I desperately needed the money for... it doesn’t matter *what for*, I just feel stupid for feeling surprised & disappointed when the money never materialised, & I was forced to do things I’m not proud of to get cash instead. I feel that I should probably put the door on the latch before bed every night in case I accidentally OD again & die in my sleep so that my brother won’t have to pay for a new door when the emergency services have to break it down & my horrible-evil-bastard landlord inevitably demands that someone other than himself must pay for a new door like this flat isn’t his responsibility or property at all... yes, I’ll start doing that — I feel so sensible & practical & considerate & forward-thinking! I feel like I’m going to cause a scene at your birthday party next month because you’ve invited my ex, for which I can only apologise in advance. Would that make it okay? If I pre-

empt my breakdown & say 'sorry' before it happens? *Let me know hun xx* I feel that if tragedy is currency, I am infinitely richer than you. I feel sickened when people speak of doing something 'with an enormous sense of wellbeing'. I feel some level of discomfort at the terrible secrets hidden in my cleavage, but I don't know where else to store them, so they'll have to stay where they are, with the biscuit crumbs. I feel like displeasing my psych team by referring to my suicidal ideation as 'suicidal ambition' from now on. I feel like my patience decays by the day. I feel like daring to take up space — to be an expanding violet for a change. I feel in desperate need of the kind of fuck that renders me illiterate. I feel stupid because I can't recall a synonym for *memory*. I feel like writing a poem for all the women who are experts at covering bruises with make-up, but there are too many of us & I don't know how to safely reach them all. I feel that you don't understand how lucky you are that I loved *you*. I feel the psychotropic meds swimming through my intestines like escaped pearls. I feel a phantom pressure: his forearm across my throat. I feel the imprecision of your love's cuts — Jesus, you are so *clumsy* with it. I feel totally flattered that that man called me 'darlin''. I feel hyperaware that I should feel offended that that man called me 'sweetheart'. I feel I have single-handedly set feminism back a thousand years. I feel so fucking offended that that man called me 'honey'. I feel so stressed that I have so many different passwords for so many different accounts; this'll be an administrative nightmare when I'm dead; it's an administrative nightmare *now*. I feel like Jean Rhys would've *loved* a Pornstar Martini — with the little shot of 'secco on the side & the wrinkled half-passionfruit floating in the foam? Yes. Definitely. 100%. I feel like killing him; & doing so with an enormous sense of wellbeing. I feel like the sole survivor of a mass shooter's spree: lucky & guilty & full of stories I don't want to tell but have to, *ad nauseam*. I feel & I feel & I feel like I don't want to feel any feelings anymore. Please. I feel ridiculous for having cried when I did but you have to understand, I was dying. I feel like you definitely heard me crying & are pretending that you didn't. I feel like crying, Sean. All the time, like I'm dying. Psych report note: *Patient feels far too much.*

HLR (she/her) is a prize-winning working-class poet, writer and editor from North London. She is the author of *History of Present Complaint* (First Cut, 2021) and *EX-CETERA* (Nine Pens, 2023). She writes '[Diamonds & Dustheaps](#)' on Substack.

The artist confessing terminal desire

here's what they don't tell you you can
whiskey burn your way through this
world you could be brave but why would
you you fuck harder in dreams everything
turns to flesh and even the smoke tastes
like absolution look you can stick it in

here here or here

you can drink your way around the
equator you don't have to do it sober you
don't have to do it at all they don't tell you
you can waltz you can core yourself out
you can feel each maggot in your rotting
lungs you can eat around the chalk outline
of yourself you can fit through the eye of
the needle you can catch the dull thud of
his skull as it

splits

they don't tell you you can even with your
bad knee your bum hip your aching spine
the marrow is all dried up and you can
still fuck

it all up you can still want to lick the
spunk-slick tiles you can still choose to
swallow you can still be unsafe undone
uncouth undesirable

you can still smile sick and haunted you
can colour code your porn you can
accidentally call daddy when you cum
you could forgive him but why should
you

Ry Loughlin grew up free-range knee-deep in the Pacific ocean. They completed a Bachelor of Writing in 2024. You can find them published or forthcoming in *Jacaranda Journal 11.2*, *Blue Bottle Journal*, *Beaver Magazine*, *Sour Cherry Mag*, or on instagram [@reilly.arabelle](#). They enjoy the smell of petrol, the word 'drench,' and pushing their luck.

menu for a problem

ask me about my opp and i'll just say

he caused me a disproportionate amount of awkwardness

in a random boba place in a random city

soon to be ignored. his texts were bitter, floral

color-coordinated like rose milk tea and despair

his anxieties as necessary

as the inevitable spill on the counter. and yet, who wouldn't

long for him like you do for a cold drink

in the middle of a piercing summer unfit for

human life, the thirst in your throat intermingling with

the unstoppable blaze that spreads from your heart to

the pocket dimension where synaesthesia &

edible flowers & ethereal lost beloveds live &

he was yours, like the aesthetic

you always longed for and only reached

in the TikTok you made in middle school and haven't touched since

he was yours, like becoming, like breaking, like the cinnamon sugar

that burns your throat on the way down.

mk zariel {it/its + masc terms} is a transmasculine neuroqueer poet, theater artist, movement journalist, and BashBack aligned anarchist. it is fueled by folk-punk, Emma Goldman, and existential dread. the author of *VOIDGAZING* (2026, Whittle Micropress), it can be found online at <https://mkzariel.carrd.co/>, creating conflictually queer-anarchic spaces, writing columns for *Asymptote* and the *Anarchist Review of Books*, and being mildly feral in the great lakes region. it is kinda gay ngl.

Marauders

Rush week, the blue
wears off the plasma filaments
in Kieren's arm.

I suck a bruise oval
into each slab
of granite graying in the quad.

Name this trait, is it vespertine?
His head crests from his sweep
of literal hair.

We stare ampoules into every male
that passes us, they stare back.

Anticipation's
a victor too
like an athlete dad.

Let love gnaw
the jaw off your grin.

And Now: Dial-A-Thrill!
Phone Fantasy.



\$5 OFF

our normal price

301-428-4820

We accept VISA, MASTERCARD
and other major credit cards

When she cums, her pussy transfigures into an invisible hot cloud of sudden moisture and coats my face like webbing, suffusing everything. She's 22 and I'm 41. Sometimes people look at us when we're out in public and I wonder whether they think she's my daughter and not my lover. Not that it matters to me what people think: love is feral and ravenous, outside of and beyond verdicts. Unless of course the love ends up in a courtroom, where it is then most definitely subject to verdicts. That's where this story ends: before a judge.

Or at least that's where most voyeurs would pinpoint The End. No stories ever really end though, not really.

In 1994, I landed a gig as a focus puller for the USA Network's smutty crime drama *Silk Stalkings*, created by Stephen J. Cannell, with Rob Estes and Mitzi Kapture as the detectives. They fired me just shy of three months into the job. Mitzi, who played Sgt. Rita Lee Lance, never said two words to me during my first few months on the set. I viewed her as a bit of a cunt, but historically I perceived any woman who didn't flirt with me that way.

One afternoon, I was microwaving a vegetarian burrito in the break room. Mitzi Kapture was at a nearby table having a light lunch with some other actresses. As I passed by their table to return to the set, Mitzi spoke up, which surprised me: "Hey, could you get me a spoon for this?"

She wanted a spoon for her cup of yogurt.

"Sure," I said. "Yeah."

The plastic spoons and forks were kept in an adjacent room. I hadn't planned to do what I did, nor did I realize then that it would set off a chain of behavior that I couldn't control. My head felt hot and my cock hardened the moment she spoke to me for the first time. "Hey, could you get me a spoon for this?" Sure, Mitzi. Yeah, Ms. Kapture. No problem.

My palms were sweaty when I got her a spoon. Maybe the perspiring palms were what made the connection in my brain — I don't know. Sweat, spit, fluids. I ducked into the bathroom and hid in a stall. I quickly jerked myself off with my left hand, trying to picture what Mitzi's asshole looked like — the mesial orifice tucked away between two taut cheeks. Within 30 seconds or so, I came all over the plastic utensil. Goopy ropes of semen depended from the spoon. I scraped off the excess with a finger and let the gloop drop into the toilet water.

Then, using the same finger, I glazed the spoon's bowl in cum — a thin glaze, barely noticeable. Bon appétit, Mitzi, I thought, and emerged from the bathroom.

When I handed Mitzi the ejaculate-shellacked utensil, she was laughing loudly at whatever quip one of the other actresses had made. She didn't even look up at me when she

took the spoon. No thank you, no eye contact, nothing. I watched from the break room's propped-open door as Mitzi scooped out some yogurt and put the spoon in her mouth.

Eat it, bitch, I thought. She laughed again, her yawning mouth full of yogurt like a big glob of cum. I went back to the set feeling satisfied.

The Mitzi Cum Spoon Incident kicked off a frenzied campaign of on-set clandestine bioterrorism. I began jerking off and coming in everything: actresses' salads in the break room fridge (the semen hid amid the dressing), pots of brewed coffee, you name it. And I started stealing pairs of panties from the studio's wardrobe, especially ones Mitzi had worn that had yet to be laundered. This perv routine continued unabated and pretty much constant for about two months.

Then one night, as the set was shutting down, I got sloppy. There was no one in the break room and the lights were off. I had an extra's cranberry-walnut salad that I wanted to blow a load on, and instead of ducking into the bathroom, I just jacked off onto it right there by the fridge. Lust, like love, blinds. I didn't even consider the security camera watching me from the leftmost corner of the room's ceiling. Though the room was dark, light from the hall spilled in through the propped-open door. The camera caught everything. My goose was cooked.

The San Diego County Superior Court arraigned me on two counts — the only two they could prove: indecent exposure and assault. In the end, I got 10 months and had to register as a sex offender for the rest of my life.

Jail wasn't so bad. I had plenty of time to read books I'd always wanted to read, and I came up with an idea for a book of my own (more on that later). The food was the worst part of incarceration.

I met a lot of colorful characters in lockup. One in particular, Chuck Efell, I grew pretty close to. He was about 15 years older than me and he'd been in and out of prison and jail his entire life. Mostly short sentences for robbery or possession, domestic violence, fraud, etc. We exchanged books and walked the enclosed yard together every morning. He quoted lengthy Shakespeare passages from memory and smoked Camels.

Chuck was a biker back in the '60s and '70s and claimed to know the band MC5 personally. He had a heroin habit he'd been wrestling with interminably since the early '60s. Chuck said he could get me any number of jobs in Florida when I got out, said he had numerous connections in and around Fort Lauderdale, and that they'd overlook my new status as a sex offender. The day before I was processed out of jail and put on a two-year probation, Chuck

gave me a slip of paper with his sister's address and phone number scrawled on it in dull pencil. I promised to contact him when he was released.

After jail, I drifted. I had a little money saved and didn't have to work right away. Bounced around from motel to motel. If the motel had a pool, I'd plop down in a chaise longue beside the shimmering chlorination and make notes for the book I'd envisioned in jail. Initially, I wanted to write a biography of Cheryl "Rainbeaux" Smith because I'd had a thing for her ever since seeing her runaway innocence in *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* projected onto a jumbo drive-in screen in Scottsdale, Arizona. I'd decided to pitch the idea to FAB Press after reading Stephen Thrower's doorstopper, *NIGHTMARE USA: The Untold Story of the Exploitation Independents*. FAB, however, never responded to any of my emails.

Insomnia plagued me almost every night after jail. I don't know why; in jail, I slept like a baby. I suppose I was worried about my future, of not being able to get a steady job due to my sex offender mark. When I couldn't sleep, I'd zone out in front of the TV and watch sleazy movies that aired on the USA Network or Cinemax. Mostly erotic thrillers, but sometimes I'd watch other stuff that USA Up All Night broadcast. I had a VCR, and I'd hit up the local video stores a few times each week to rent the latest straight-to-video softcore suspense flick. I developed a strange obsession with Nico Mastorakis's 1990 movie *In the Cold of the Night*. I watched it one Thursday night at around 3 AM, dazed from insomnia, and the flick took on a kind of trashy divinity. It was this movie that gave me the idea for the book I would write.

And so I began writing my book, tentatively titled *The Book of Fuck*, an exhaustive compendium of capsule reviews of every straight-to-video erotic thriller released from 1990 to 1999 (or, to be more precise, from 1989 to 2000). I chose 1992's *Poison Ivy* as the propulsive picture that fueled the glut of erotic thrillers during the decade — it was to my mind the eye of the cyclone from which all the other silky stalkers spun out of.

Here's an example of a review from *The Book of Fuck*:

Fear (1996) / Rated R / Running Time 1h 37m ... Hot snatch Nicole (Reese Witherspoon) falls for a soft-spoken psychopath named David (Mark Wahlberg). Her daddy, played by William Petersen, hates David, of course, and his protectiveness of his daughter combined with Nicole's lover's psychopathy becomes a powder keg, with predictable but satisfying results. In my favorite scene, Wahlberg fingerbangs Witherspoon during a rollercoaster ride at a town carnival. Alyssa Milano has a supporting role as Margo Masse, Nicole's friend, but she doesn't show any skin. For Milano's gorgeous tits, see *Embrace of the Vampire* (1995).

Sex for me was always mixed up with death and, to a lesser degree, crime. I watched a lot of porn, but I was very specific about what kind of hardcore I'd consume. I exclusively viewed smut that featured porn stars who had been murdered, had committed suicide, or had committed murder themselves. I couldn't cum unless the performer I was watching was deceased or had done something heinous.

Bank employee Davide Fontana killed porn star Charlotte Angie (real name Carol Maltesi): "I started hitting her with a hammer all over her body, not hard," he said. "Then when I got to her head I started hitting her hard, I'm not sure why. I don't know what happened to me. I think she was already dead but not knowing what else to do with her, I cut her throat with a kitchen knife."

Fontana, over the course of three days, dismembered Maltesi and stored her parts in a freezer. He had tried to set her on fire but ultimately just dumped her mutilated corpse in the mountains of Borno in Val Camonica.

Herbert Wong (aka Tom Dong) was hacked to death by fellow porn performer Stephen Clancy Hill (aka Steven Driver). Hill used a prop samurai sword to slaughter Wong in Van Nuys at the Ultima DVD Inc. warehouse. Hill attacked two people with the sword before Wong heard the commotion and tried to intervene. Hill had been sleeping on a couch at the warehouse.

Four days after Hill pulled his *Shogun Assassin* bit, he was cornered by a SWAT team near Azul Drive in Lake Havasu. Perched on the edge of a cliff, Hill brandished the sword and threatened to kill himself. After being shot in the right shoulder with non-lethal ammunition, Hill jumped to his death.

In 2010, a porn star couple — Sunny Dae (real name Amanda Logue) and club DJ/adult film actor Jason Andrews — turned a massage table into a slaughter platter. Forty-one-year-old tattoo shop owner Dennis "Scooter" Abrahamsen was receiving an erotic massage from Sunny when she and Jason made their fantasies of murdering someone a reality. Horny for violence, the pair killed Abrahamsen with a sledgehammer and two knives.

Etc.

Lizzie MacRaith, my young girlfriend, despite being kinky and game for most things, didn't approve of my dead porn star fixation. Lizzie, Lizzie...

... blonde, fit, a nympho, she had Daddy Issues and loved dirty old men. And me, well, I'm the dirtiest kind of old man. We got along real well. Next door to my house in Coconut Creek lived a retiree, a widower, who spent most of his time stargazing through his \$800 telescope. He was lonely and really into deep-sky astrophotography. I used to have Lizzie strip in front of the bedroom window that faced his house. Guy would pretend not to notice. I'd have her press her little tits up against the cold glass, give the neighbor a show. It turned me on when she'd do what I told her to do. No matter how filthy the request, she'd usually comply.

The last night Lizzie and I spent together we watched *The Temp* and *The Crush*, two steamy thrillers (both from 1993) that I needed to write reviews of for my book. I was almost done with the rough draft, and it had grown into the monstrous tome I'd first envisioned in a cheap Miami motel (427 pages, not including stills and VHS box-cover art for some of the movies).

Halfway through *The Crush*, Lizzie and I started to get hot. I began eating her pussy — her scent always made me manic. She sucked my dick with her usual yearning — hungry, impassioned, like blowing my erection would save her life or redeem her. Almost desperate, her oral adoration.

Shedding our clothes, we moved out of the bedroom and into the hall. That's when a blasphemous thought entered my head: TELL HER.

I shouldn't have said anything. But I've always had a kink for transgression and the forbidden. For profanation.

This is the point in the story where I need to explain how I met Lizzie. I guess you could say I met Lizzie through her mother, although that's a little misleading.

In 1996, I was in Fort Lauderdale with Chuck Efell, my old jail buddy. He'd called me when I was up in Michigan, working as a laborer doing drywall. He persuaded me to ditch my job and take the trip down to the Sunshine State. He had a scheme — Chuck always had a scheme — whereby we would make a small fortune in the then-booming 1-900 sex line industry.

Chuck's plan sounded pretty easy: we'd place an ad in one of the local rags that advertised for escorts, then we'd just wait around smoking joints and drinking cervezas until

someone interested called us. All she'd need to do was read a dozen or so "sexy stories" — obscene updated retellings that Chuck had written himself, raunchy rip-offs of works by the Marquis de Sade and Anaïs Nin — while we recorded it. Chuck had access to a sound studio in Palmetto Bay. He knew a lot of music industry people, ostensibly due to his connections with the counterculture rock outfit MC5. We placed a brief ad in X-treme and nine days later a woman met us at Palmetto Phonic.

The woman was in her thirties. She seemed reserved and not at all sensual, but the gig only required her to read a few 'graphs in a seductive tone. I explained what she'd need to do as Chuck busied himself with prepping the microphone and soundboard. She understood and thanked me, said she really needed the cash. Chuck was upbeat even though he didn't say much. Everything seemed aboveboard — the woman read Chuck's tawdry tales with a deep, euphonious lilt while Chuck dealt with the technical aspects — when I went out to get lunch for the three of us.

When I got back to the studio, bag of burgers in tow, the woman was screaming and her mouth was bloodied. Chuck had her splayed atop the mixing board. Chuck's face was red and pinched — she'd clawed his chin and the cuts trailed down to his throat.

"Help me with this fucking bitch!" Chuck shouted.

He had his pants down, his cock inside her. He had her held by the wrists. She was fighting blindly, her face a contorted freeze-frame of pure agony. I dropped the brown bag of fast food and just stared at them. I didn't know what to do. I was frozen, maybe a touch frightened, but I also liked what I was looking at. I'd never seen a rape before. Her pussy wasn't shaved, and the pubic patch was dark, unlike her blonde hair up top.

"Fucking bitch!" Chuck yelled and began pouring punches down onto the woman's face. I didn't see the blow or blows that killed her, but at some point during the barrage, Chuck's fist or elbow caved in the woman's windpipe.

She died wheezing and choking, and while she was dying, Chuck finished fucking her. I stared at the newly dead, stupefied. It had all gone down in a matter of a minute, two max. Chuck and I didn't say anything for a long time. All I could hear was his heavy breathing — he looked like he'd gone three rounds with Marciano and was on the verge of a heart attack.

"What are we gonna do with the body, Chuck?" I asked.

Chuck, still huffing and puffing, looked over at me. His eyes were black.

"Help me pick her up," he said. "There's a swamp near here. The 'gators will do the work for us."

Chuck got to work stripping the body while I rifled through the dead woman's purse. Her name: Caroline MacRaith. I found some photos in the purse. Caroline had one daughter — Lizzie.

I pocketed Caroline's address booklet and kept the one photograph of Lizzie I liked the most: a sweet picture of her at age fourteen, clad in overalls and sitting on a large pumpkin in a patch somewhere in the Midwest, her blonde hair in pigtails. It was the little girl's eyes that got to me, that bewitched me. It wouldn't be that hard to track Lizzie down. The deceased's purse told me where Lizzie lived, where she went to school — everything I needed.

In my house, in the hallway outside the bedroom, there was a banister that I pushed Lizzie against. I pushed her hard, made sure the wood railing gut-punched her a little. She liked it rough.

I yanked her black lace panties down and got on my knees, spread her ass cheeks wide with my hands. She looked back over her shoulder and down at me as I ate her asshole and licked up and down her crack.

Tell her.

The thought was utterly black with blasphemy. Tell her? I'd been lying to her for years.

I rose and penetrated her wet void from behind. I squeezed her tight little butt cheeks, thrusting my hardness into the drenched hotness. Lizzie's blonde head bounced as I fucked her. Her slim hands gripped the railing and tensed.

Tell. Her.

"Lizzie," I panted. "Lizzie, your mother..."

"Wha-" she said, turning to look at me, messy hair in her face, mouth agape. A beautiful mess.

I continued thrusting into her. "Your mother," I said. "My friend Chuck killed your mama. I was there. I never told you. I helped dispose of the body." I said this all in a rush, quickly, while fucking Lizzie as hard as I could, battering her ass with my abdomen.

Lizzie's eyes — the eyes I'd fallen for — changed then. I don't know how to explain the change, but it wasn't good. She let out a strangled cry and tried to jerk away from me.

I held her and said, "Killed your mother," as I came profusely into her split cunt. She wheeled and sent a forearm into my jaw. She began screaming and struggling just as her mother had all those years ago.

I tried to restrain her, hug her to me in hopes that she'd go still like she sometimes did when she was upset, but she was in a state of sheer frenzy.

Lizzie bit into my wrist. I let her go. She liked it dark, but I guess this was too dark.

In one spastic lunge, she threw herself over the railing. I don't think she'd intended to leap to her death — I believe she was merely trying to get away from me — but that's what happened. She fell to the concrete floor below with only her skull to break her fall. I heard her cranium thud and crack open.

I peered over the banister. Lizzie lay splayed on the floor below, like a morbid model in some edgy photo shoot. The blood from her broken head began to pool behind her — a crimson halo. And yeah, she looked, in death, just like an angel.

I made my way down the stairs, slowly and calmly, and knelt beside the body of my young lover. I kissed her forehead, which had yet to become cold.

I sat there with her corpse until the sun came up.

Wolfgang Carnifex (formerly Will Bernardara Jr.) is a multimedia artist from Detroit. He irregularly maintains a blog, which he describes as: "A kind of journal where I explore my obsessions. It's really not meant for public consumption." You may view his blog here: <https://wolfgang934.wordpress.com/>. Carnifex (under his old name) wrote the short novel *america* (voidfrontpress) in 2018. He co-edits *The Pixelated Shroud* with Vicki Stoic: <https://pixelatedshroud.wordpress.com/>. He is the founder/high priest of the art collective The Tender Wolves Society. Carnifex's second novel, *stImulus z3r0*, will be published late 2025/early 2026.

"I Went Back In"

"I went back in" grave robber rotted out chair for whatever ghoul thought to sit there for long enough arm holding candle shadow to see who's gone or stolen or whatever. Fetid waterfall down the back of the chapel from a hole in the roof. Sleeping bag inside a coffin corpse flung down the hall. Bring a crowbar and a saw. Christmas wreath years ago.

Rose Herald doesn't know what he's doing but he keeps doing it anyway. He can be found at <https://rose-herald.neocities.org/>.

Will Yourself to Sleep

Hannah woke up in a daze, bladder stinging. She went to the bathroom. As she lay in bed again, she checked the time on her phone, 7 AM, and saw a notification: “Call me when you wake up. Mary died.” She shut her phone screen off and fell asleep.

“Hey.”

“What?”

“You told me to call you when I woke up.”

“That was three days ago.”

“I know. I just woke up.”

“I can’t deal with you right now.”

“Can I go see you?”

“Come over if you’d like.”

“I’ll be there in a couple of hours.”

“Grab me a beer on the way over. And some Amber Leaf.”

“See you soon.”

4 PM. Medication. Shower. Breakfast. Cigarette. More medication. Makeup. Subway. John’s place. 6 PM.

What used to be white patches of hair now filled his whole head. Sunken eyes. Dragging himself through the apartment. “Come here, kitty. It’s feeding time.” She slept. The blinders were fully shut. Lit up only by a corner lampshade, light trying to pierce the dust that lay on top of it.

“I got your Amber Leaf. Drank the beer on the way. It was lukewarm. Piss-like.”

“You can’t drink alcohol.”

“Have you eaten anything today?”

“You’re allergic.”

“I got you some pizza slices. Lukewarm.”

“Why didn’t you buy another one?”

“They were out of it at the pizza place.”

“Pepperoni?”

“Yes. Extra cheese.”

“Do you have your Coke with you?”

“Drink away.”

“Motorcycle accident.”

“Was it quick?”

“Yes.”

“How did she look?”

“Dead.”

“Did you find her letter?”

“Yes.”

“Need a lighter?”

“Yes.”

“Need help cleaning the place? Shopping?”

“Just do my makeup.”

“Can we lie down together a bit before?”

“Yes.”

Hannah clutched John’s hand and dragged him into the bedroom, pushed him onto the bed, lay down beside him, held him as tight as she used to hold Mary, and pet his hair, wishing it was longer, softer, like her best friend’s, wishing it was her she was holding, wishing she could smell her again. They smoked in an embrace, ashes falling on each other’s bodies, clothes, the mattress.

“Are you hungry?”

“Yes.”

“Give me a second.”

She went to their library and grabbed two of Mary’s translations.

“Which one would you rather have?”

“Left.”

Hannah lay down next to John and they both slowly ripped pages from each book, feeding each other. The paper became a thick paste, nudging itself in their mouths’ crevices.

“Open your mouth.”

Hannah scooped the paste that rested on John’s tongue and started spreading it on his eyelids, then his waterline, then the corner of his eyes, then his lips.

“Stay still for a moment. I want to have this picture in my mind.”

“Will you show it to her?”

“Of course. Eat some more.”

They ate for an hour, the paste drying in place, so hard that no tears could move it.

“Is there something you want me to say to her?”

“I love you.”

“I was already going to say that.”

“Then... Tell her that her birthday present arrived.”

“What is it?”

“Doesn’t matter.”

Hannah lay down next to John and fell asleep. Never woke up.

Ai Feith is a multidisciplinary artist working in multimedia, film, music, writing, and performance art. Her work focuses on transgender theory, the physicality of the performative act, affection and interpersonal relationships, and the materiality of each medium.

**Dear Diary, Now Burn It:
Musings from a Fire Tower**

Don't pity me. I'm not some roadside wreck, bloodied and tragic, for you to rubberneck and retell over meatloaf like it's true crime dinner theater. Spare me your soggy liberal condolences, no "there but for the grace of Joan Baez go I." And to the sneering conservatives: I didn't fail because I'm lazy, woke, or a loser. I failed the old-fashioned way with effort and flair.

As for you New Agers. Please, take your crystals, turmeric lattes, cosmic downloads, and whispery-voiced affirmations and shove them up your nearest vortex. I don't need an essential oil blend named *Phoenix Rising* or some celestial bean sprout whispering, "You're exactly where you're supposed to be." I'm not. I'm exactly umpteen bad decisions and many canceled therapy sessions past where I'm supposed to be.

And Old Agers? They're just younger people whose hobbies now include checking their pulse and Googling "normal stool color." Every conversation is a recap of meds and misdiagnoses. Don't get me started on their obsession with fiber.

They say ruin breeds creativity. Please. That's just something rich people say in interviews after a silent retreat in Bhutan. I've met ruin. I've hosted it in my living room. It drank all my wine and never left. And you know what it didn't give me? A book deal or a sudden knack for sculpture.

You may or may not be wondering how I got to be a misanthrope. I earned it.

This isn't a cry for help. It's a mic check. It's a middle finger to neat little labels and inspirational coffee mugs.

Now kindly stop fidgeting and listen to the rest of my story

It started with genetics. My mom was what society generously calls pleasantly plump, but let's be real. She could set off a car alarm just by sitting too hard. And my dad? A constellation of acne scars that made his face look like the moon but with less personality.

So yeah. I never had a chance.

In elementary school, I was the girl other kids teased... but worse, adults joined in. Two teachers and one nun. A nun whom I guess skipped the day they covered "compassion" in nun school and went straight to passive-aggressive shame. Who says grown-ups are mature? They're just taller kids with car payments and fewer excuses.

Let's skip junior high, shall we? I was a know-it-all because I did know it all. I answered every question in class like I was on a game show no one else had studied for. Smarter than the other kids? Definitely. Smarter than the teachers? Tragically, yes. Most of them looked like they'd just given up on life and were waiting for the sweet release of early retirement. They were teaching a room full of hormone bombs who either spent the day adjusting awkward boners or writing their name with hearts over the "me" in their notebooks.

High school? An emotional war crime. I had two friends. Nerds like me. We weren't anime kids. We weren't emo. We weren't goth. We weren't stoners. We weren't popular. We were ghost people. The Invisibles. Friday and Saturday nights we sat on my bed like bitter old maids trapped in teenage bodies, delivering commentary on every group with surgical precision and a lot of sour cream and onion chips.

Our social life was an exorcism of bitterness. We didn't get invited to parties. We reviewed parties from afar like snarky Yelpers who'd never been to the restaurant.

But here's the twist. Like every good superhero origin story, out of the wreckage came my power.

I became a comic.

All that rejection? Goldmine. All those insecurities? Material. I weaponized my trauma and turned it into jokes that hit harder than puberty ever did. I studied the legends: Rodney Dangerfield, Daniel Tosh, Kathleen Madigan. If you don't know who they are, congratulations: you're the adult version of those junior high kids who peaked at fourteen and plateaued into tax-paying mediocrity.

My comedy is payback. A raised middle finger with a mic in the other hand. I take a bow every time someone laughs at something that once made me cry into a Garfield pillow.

So yeah. Thanks, genetics. Thanks, nun.

You built me. And I'm coming for you.

I hope you didn't fall for all that bravado I dished out. My comedy career burst like a supernova—massive energy, short lifespan. Left a lot of people blind and confused. Astronomy geeks, that one's for you. You're welcome, Carl Sagan.

It started off promising. I out-Rickled Don Rickles. I once told a guy his haircut looked like it lost a custody battle. People loved it. My audience was full of drunk turtlenecks and people who laughed like they were being held hostage by their own self-awareness. They thought I was edgy. I thought I was a genius. Together we created a beautiful tornado of sarcasm and misplaced confidence.

But then... I got hungry. Not for fame, just... blood. Comedic blood. I heckled people before they even said a word.

A guy coughed and I said, "Sir, if phlegm could vote, it wouldn't vote for you." I was on fire and not the good kind. More like dumpster fire at a clown funeral.

I told a bachelorette party they looked like the Spice Girls if all the spices were expired. They booed me in unison. It was almost musical.

One guy laughed nervously, and I said, "Don't encourage me, you loser. You look like your personality was crowdsourced by a committee of divorce lawyers."

At one point I stared into the audience and said, "Every one of you is a walking Yelp review with abandonment issues."

A man tried to pray for me mid-set. Out loud. He stood up, raised his hands, and said, "Lord, heal this angry devil." I called him the second cumming. He left angrily and I miss him sometimes.

Anyway, they stopped booking me after I told a service dog he looked emotionally unavailable. That crossed a line.

So yeah. That was my rise and fall. A glorious, flaming, astronomically inaccurate fall. But at least I got one thing right: I'm unforgettable. Like a rash. Or a mysterious dent when you return a rental car.

I did get a date out of the last fiasco, which just goes to show that even immune-disordered people occasionally rally. Not that I have one. That was a metaphor for the dim-witted. Stay with me, people. I'm not contagious. Unless you count my sarcasm.

His name was Tavaris Washington. I kid you not. That name walks into a room wearing cheap cologne and confidence. You hear the name Tavaris Washington, and you assume he's Black. Alert, he is.

First date, this man sits across from me with his stifling scent doing most of the talking. After fifteen minutes he says, "I love you. I want to marry you." Before the appetizer. I was like sir, we just made eye contact seventeen minutes ago and you're already planning the honeymoon playlist.

I almost said yes. Not because I believed him, but because I was sure it was either a scam... or a dare. But hey, maybe he was one of those people who fall in love the way others buy stuff on late-night infomercials: impulsively, and with easy returns.

He said, "Marriage no, but a roll in the hay, yes."

I countered, "Sure, let's turn this New York minute into fireworks!"

His face lit up with my proposal.

We were about to head back to my place when I—. I couldn't help myself. I said, totally deadpan: "Don't worry, my AIDS is under control."

That was it. Tavaris was gone. Vaporized. Left behind a Tavaris-shaped cologne cloud in the air like a cartoon. I didn't even get to tell him I was joking. Or that I don't have AIDS. Or that I also had condoms, snacks, and a jacuzzi. That last one was a lie.

I told you in the beginning that this story has no happy ending or redeeming social value. I'm alone and unemployed, sitting in my darkened apartment trying to decide if I can afford ramen and a peanut butter dessert.

I did eventually get a job as a forest fire lookout. It pays just enough to keep me alive and far enough from civilization to avoid making eye contact. I used to take nature walks around the tower until I realized squirrels are smug, deer are judgmental, and bears don't respect personal boundaries.

Now I just sit up there with binoculars and a growing hatred for trees who sway in the wind acting regal. I now pray for forest fires, not so much to do my job, but because it mirrors the destruction of what I call my life.

Dr. Weiner has over 40 years' experience as a clinical psychologist who specializes in trauma recovery and anxiety disorders. He enjoys using stories to help readers harness their resilience within to aid them on their healing journey. He has been published in a variety of professional journals and fiction magazines. His psychology books include *Shattered Innocence* and *The Curio Shop*. Non-psychology publications are *Across the Borderline* and *The Art of Fine Whining*. He has a monthly advice column in a Portland newspaper, AskDr.Neil.
nweiner@usa.net

Limerence

The one who's a local sports journalist. The one who works for Facebook. The one who looks so much like a gentler version of your ex that it took your breath away. The one who was crazy into lighthouses. The one who survived cancer.

Do you imagine a life with them? Do you think they imagine a life with you?

Hashtag bride. Hashtag double anal. A porno where the bride fucks the groom and the wedding photographer. You wonder if the actress dressed similar on her actual wedding day.

NOT HERE for FWB! If all your looking for is a quick shag then swipe left!

Looking for long term relationship. Looking for marriage.

The next man could be the man of my dreams. Will it be you?

She's daydreamed about a life with me. About leaving her man. About meeting my family and nesting. I've slapped her round the face during sex whilst thinking about it too. But she doesn't want me. The fantasy sours soon enough.

Not looking for a quick fuck... I'm well passed that. Im looking for someone with same outlook on life and values as me. make me laugh your half way there. Kind, caring and dates with potential for relationship not just to get laid!!

Marry E??? More like = &amp;amp;amp;amp;quot;MORE ???CUM???? 4
THEE&amp;amp;amp;amp;amp;quot;

Jamie Giles is a writer and artist living in Norwich, England. His works have been published in *SCAB*, *Misery Tourism*, *Cinema Schism*, *Mother Rubber's Fun Dungeon*, and elsewhere. He lurks on X as [@scumbooks](#). His collage work is on IG as [@withcuts](#), and more writings are at [@textsyowishyouhadntsent](#).

Cigs in Heredia

Enrique, Esteban and I walk away from the National University with smokes in our mouths. En. vociferates something about the collapsing global economy, and Es. and I laugh as if we understand.

It's going to rain soon. The sky is sucked up into dark black urchins. The first drops fall on our heads and we run and laugh manically. We have to reach Fr.'s house before we're drenched.

Inside his living room, we share a bottle of vodka and light other cigarettes and discuss the impending invasion of Taiwan.

"Taiwan is Chinese," says Es., and Fr. and En. agree, but I say, "That's well and good and all but have you considered what it might be like for the Taiwanese people." En. punches me in the shoulder.

The rain is pouring now. You can barely make out the shapes of people under umbrellas walking up and down the drenched sidewalks.

I thought of killing myself in the morning with the razor I used to eliminate my neckbeard. I'm glad I didn't do it, I think as I sip from the bottle again.

Fr. and En. are French kissing for some reason. Es. and I stare at them like it's the morning news. I hand the bottle to him.

We rolled and smoked two joints at the National University, En., Es. and I, *caca de mono*, the worst weed money can buy. That's why we're in such a hurry to get drunk, because we aren't high, or barely.

Fr. takes the bottle from Es. and I light another cigarette. His parents will be back one day and we can't be here forever. I wish I was a monkey so I could fuck the window and stick my little monkey dick between the bars we use to keep poor people from coming inside our houses. By the time the bottle comes back to me, I'm actually drunk.

"Arnold, what do you think of the Black Death?" asks En. I say the only problem was it wasn't Black enough. Fr. and Es. nod.

The storm dies down and we're able to leave again. We go to another house, Vr.'s. Here we drink shots of Cacique and dance vaguely to 90s House. Vr. tells me her friend Carolina wants to meet me, drags me to the corner where this brunette is "dancing" with two other girls. Ca. and I exchange remarks about what we're studying, the blandest topics, and I can tell she's bored because I am.

Kevin Johnson Murillo is an experimental writer and medical translator in Alajuela, Costa Rica. His work has appeared in places like *ExPat Press*, *DON'T SUBMIT*, and *EgoPHobia*, among others, as well as on his [Substack: Translator's Guts](#).

Midtown Hotel Review – August 9, 2023

Not that this rancid cum dump needs any more NEGATIVE reviews.... But my experience with Midtown Hellhole, and "Tahiti" in particular, was beyond reprehensible, racket, and retarded.

First off I needed a place to stay for a few days to get some peace and quiet away from my a-hole of a husband. So I carefully selected a place where most folks go to either hang themselves, murder hookers, or keep their sex trafficking victims behind a locked door.

The Midtown Hellhole checked all the boxes, so I reserved a room. What can I say! The place just has that James Earl Ray "Toybox" feel to it where you might wake up strapped to a gynocological table with a tape playing about your imminent torturous demise. It's got that odor of death, torture, and suffering where you just come to expect the place to be Christo'd in yellow crime scene tape.

I figured that I'd be left alone in the general chaos of this snake pit. Plus I'm a degenerate, I won't lie, so I am amongst my people.

Despite being a degenerate, I am disabled and have a registered service dog who is trained and who I take very good care of and vice versa.

I called before booking to make sure they allowed service dogs. I am aware that, legally, under the Americans with Disabilities act, every place must allow service dogs. However, I always want to check first to avoid hassles with dumb useless whores who name their babies after the liquor they got drunk on during conception, and who have no fn clue what they're talking about.

Textbook Example: Tahilti. I'll get to her.

The previous day I spoke with a woman who told me that I could bring a service dog as long as it had the proper documentation.

My service dog is registered under the national service dog registry. And has a clear harness and Id tag that says he's a service dog.

As soon as I walked into this sh*ithole, I waited around for about 10 minutes for Tahiti to grace the front desk with her repelling presence.

She swaggers in with all the charm of a crack whore who was just pissed on. She looked and smelled the part too. She was dirty. Unkempt. I have no doubt that she services the revolving door of Johns who inhabit the Midtown Hellhole in order to support her Hypnotik and crack addiction.

Tahiti does not greet me. Rather exclaims:

"We Don't Allow No Pet!!!!!"

Judging by the caliber of hole in the wall the Midtown Hellhole is, I'm sure they DO allow pets, in the form of locked up sex trafficked fuck pigs. Like Tahiti! #sextraffickingawareness.

I said "This is not a pet. It's a service animal." I proceeded to show her my dog's profile in the National Service Dog Registry.

She said "What Kind Service dog dat be?" As if she knows the different types of service animals, or anything beyond getting violently throat fucked, gargling piss, and the going rate of chore boy. I'm sure she don't even know her babies names or the countless amateur porn sites which her cum caked crack concubine countenance covers. To her credence, There are A LOT of both.

I said "He's an Emotional Support Animal."

"Nah we don't allow dose type service dog."

Bless her poor failing heart. She couldn't even SAY "emotional support animal" much less know what the fuck an emotional support animal is. I'm sure poor Tahiti's only idea of emotional support is a rose stem and a \$5 rock. Or a crack in the jaw by her pimp. I'd almost feel bad for her if she weren't such a rancid fucking cunt. If anyone deserves a crack in the jaw by a man with a heavy fist covered in gold rings, it's a class act like Tahiti!

I again attempted to show this ratchet ass ho my dog's registration with the National Service Dog Registry.

She refused to even look at the registry and exclaimed, "Nah. You gonna leabe. We aint allow service dog.". as she pulled several pubic hairs from her teeth

I pleaded: "I have a reservation! I And I called yesterday and spoke to a woman who told me I could bring a service dog as long as I had the right type of documentation "and this is the documentation".

"Ya gots ta leabe".

Seriously I was trying to give them MONEY to stay in a place where people go to die. "No! This is bullshit! I don't have a place to go. I need a place to stay."

That was all Tahiti needed to hear. A GODDAMNED MOTHERFUCKING CURSE WORD.

I always wonder how these weathered Southern whores turn all church bitch and shit the fucking bed after hearing a curse word, but it happens WAY more than it should..

I had really crossed the line.

"Nah ya went ta cursing. Ima call duh POOoooooooLice!"

"WHAT THE FUCK? YOU'VE GOT TO BE FUCKING KIDDING ME!"

"Hello Poooooliceman! Ah Gatz Ah Lady here..... "

SHE HAD ACTUALLY CALLED 911!

Now you know the Midtown Hellhole got 911 on speed dial. Sewers like this always do. What with all the murder, gang rape, drug overdoses, backalley abortions, people generally waking up in bathtubs filled with ice and blood next to a phone and a sign that says CALL 911, baby tasting, corpse abuse, sex trafficking, live births, stillbirths, snuff film rings, cannibalism, peeping toms, suicide, public masturbation, black market organ sales, public urination, improvised munitions, drug smuggling, child molestation, corpse fucking, dead babies in dryers, dead hookers in mattresses etc. I guess I can now add "using profanity" to the list"

"Wacha gonna tell them I fucking CURSED at you after you telling me to get out and denying my paid reservation to this hellhole because you're an IGNORANT FUCKING CUNT! And don't know the first thing about FUCKING SERVICE DOGS!!!!!! I'll see your ratchet ass in court! I'll call my man Morris Bart and let him know that you refused to let a disabled person with a service dog into your abyss. Your ass should be arrested and fined due to violating The Americans with Disabilities act! And I could sue you for EVERY last CRUMB of crack in every rose stem you will ever get your FILTHY DECREPID paws on! And this shitty hotel!"

"Yah dat b her. She wearin a green shirt, and she won't leave the premises!"

"Oh don't worry, I'll get the FUCK out of your derelict purgatory, and you can get back to getting fucked in your prolapsed anus! CUUUUUNT!!!!!! Also, GOOD LUCK with getting the New Orleans police out here in less than six hours for ANYTHING. They might take awhile to show up because someone cursed you ratchet bitch.

could stay here for a good 18 hours and they still wouldn't come! BWAHAHAHA!!!! CUNT

. "I wondered if my futher cursing curse crossed the line with Tahiti whos last conversation went something like this "SUCK it GOOD you worthless HO!!!!!! NO TETTH BITCH or you get these rings you ratchet ass CUNT! CHOKER ON IT BITCH! I wanna see you drink ALL this PISS straight down or you'll be left to die next to your friend here in this box spring". I'd imagine.....

I will never know. Only straight bolted and got put up In a SUITE downtown for the inconvenience, after crying to EXPEDIA for an hour.

DONT EVER book anything at MIDTOWN HELLHOLE!!!! EVEN if has all the seedy comforts of home! Find somewhere else to hang yourself! It's not worth it! Even WITH a pool!

I don't know what will become of Miss Tahiti, she is far too pathetic a creature to fantasize about all the awful shit that could happen to her..... That don't stop me tho! I have too much INTEGRITY to pity the bitch. I hope she ends up getting chopped up and eaten as that happens A LOT down here with busted hookers. In her case it would be well deserved! I would DANCE in the flames as the MIDTOWN HELLHOLE burned to the fucking GROUND!!!!!!

Oh, is this too much cursing for you TAHITI?!?! DONT EVER call the cops for someone cursing out your rachet ass! You deserve EVERY kind of abuse sent your way! I hope you're put thru a fucking woodchipper while alive so I can DANCE in your gore. You CUUUNT!!!!!!

Meg McCarville lived a fruitful life as an agoraphobic animal hoarder until her house burnt down in March. She is a proud welfare queen who has written 5 novels, including *Four Circles*, *Jonbenet Dreams of Being Shirley Temple*, *Daddy Stories*, *American Victim*, and an ongoing project called *DONT PISS ME OFF!!!* that no publisher wants to touch. From which this is a selection. Meg has also been an advice columnist, rapper, influencer, stand-up comic, daytime television star, social worker, and filmmaker. She also has experience in drug addiction and being a whore.

She should be a millionaire now for her long-lasting contributions to the arts and literature. Instead, she is currently living in a Nazi Rape Van (NRV) on her vacant lot in New Orleans. She has 2 dogs, 13 cats, and is happily married to her singing pig and creative partner, Rosie O'Donnell.

Perplexion!

His eyes are screwed.

Somebody help, this guy's abused!
It's an endless feud, he put it in his food.

Clinically cynical and his mind is lewd.

He's a rude one, lost feeling and touch.
Every morning prays to get hit by a bus.

I don't get the fuss, cause he's on the cusp.
I've seen him vomiting oil and dust.
I've seen him sip from a spigot he trusts.
I've seen him lighten up a bit, but he doesn't adjust.

Then I said;

"Hey, you look the same. Still don't know how to play the game. To the masses you
have no name. Will you drop all the god damn shame?"

Then it's back to purgatory with the slightest of gusts.
Nothing but distrust and it truly disgusts.

I let him know and he cussed!
To say no is a must.

It's the latest bust of the dream police.

This poor kid, he's out of grease.
No lube to get out of the crease.

When he's here, he's nowhere near. Engulfed in fear.
Trying to steer clear from getting beat up, so he retreats
up to a dusty tower in a musty palace.

With no malice he's living a fallacy.
His vices aren't based in reality

What can I say, he's not ok.

It's a self-inflicted cortisol explosion.
Potion in his gut gives the notion.
Motion to dismiss all emotion.
He's focused on cashing in the token.

Awoken. In a parking lot. Deep in thought on a hot day,
not concerned with being something he's not.

On second thought...

He's burning free gasoline to the third degree.
Forgive me.
It's all I see.
An opportunist's opportunity.

Alex Yinat is realizing he just might be a poet after scribbling funny phrases in his journal for the past 15 years. He's a citizen of Earth and does whatever makes him happy under the name Optonatron.

Miss Delphi

sixteen / *in every class there's always one* / school trip / 'outdoorsy' / a parentless night / the dorm
blanketed / a miniature orgy / me and Karl / invigilate / razed by it
the cold wakes me / across the square to
piss / Stephen / *you looked really pretty as a girl* / a pillar of salt / instructed the girls to pageant the
boys / *isn't it funny?* / 'Miss Delphi' /
you looked really pretty as a girl / short-circuiting / I stutter / all this wanting /
nonchalance beyond me / his deniable risk / allows this closeness / my brain struggles to accept
the compliment / the offer / it seems genuine / it can only be a trap / everyone would know
what I wanted / soundtracked by laughter / to touch his skin / but then / did he really want
her / *isn't it funny?* / how I wonder what might have / would
his kiss on her lips / have felt the same / how I stood in the dark of the toilet and waited /
silent / as he washed his hands and left / how when he saw / boy in the moonlight / he
turned to stone

Mark Ward is the author of *Nightlight* (Salmon Poetry, 2023) and six chapbooks: *Circumference* (FLP, 2018), *Carcass* (7KP, 2020), *HIKE* (Bear Creek, 2022), the interactive branching sonnet *Faultlines* (voidspace, 2024), *I Was a Teenage Exorcist* (Chaps, 2024) and most recently, *Masters* (The Emma Press, October 2025). His second full-length collection, *Real Estate*, will be published by Salmon in 2026. He edits *Impossible Archetype*, an international journal of LGBTQ+ poetry, now in its eighth year.

Bluebeard

Daddy killed
all of his wives except one
she killed him with an iron bar
and then she ga
ve birth to me in a bronze ba
th she washed there every day
for nine mon
ths I like to pretend I had
 consciousness inside that bubble as my eyes grew out
of skin out of a brain those tunnels
I see pop eyes I see just nothing
shivering blood but s
he sees I see all the body parts da
ddy cut up those wives we wash in their bloo
d to see the pa
in we killed him in

Me and Ronny fucked by a tree : he invited me to the park
and I was bored of him talking telling me of nothing
 nothing I cared to listen to anyway
it was just his arsehole I wanted so I handcuffed him
“Get out of them as I did,” I tell him pulling out the key from
my back pocket now we fuck

my clown nose never falls off

why would it with a killer mother putting it on my nose
 I killed her every son is like their father
hanging up her body parts from the ceiling of my flat
 I am sad the story is sad and smelly
all the insects live suffocating me she tells me to fuck him
and I do in the the handcuffs
the ceiling a rope between
his I am sad now I see my end
as a force of electricity my brain ho
oking from a red sk
y no sun I am the abuser said

[ENTER BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE]

“Animals appear bluest at dusk,” daddy once said
as we sailed past farmland
cows sunk into blind darkness unwashed black clods of earth

their bodies fed through space
& machines without names or dreams
the following morning
daddy died inside a castle of blood + shit
his delirious corpse [sailing
through London pipes]

I am smaller than the naked body on Grindr grid
undressed in the dim green light of the bookmakers
where men gamble with hollowed out faces
stooped in doorways like baffled witches
each make silent pacts with invisible entities
(... vodka ... vodka ... vodka)

>> do you want to come over??
>> about fifteen minutes from Lordship Park
>>>a red door

Daddy's hands smell of iron
daddy's mouth smells of bleach
he undressed in the dim madness of boys with bubblegum lips
making pacts with invisible entities
(... silicone ... silicone ... silicone)
dissolving on silver trays of luxury (potassium hydroxide)
soiled binbags behind a Tesco Express

skull exploding under the ball hammer
into blue meat

"It's called the *Purkinje* effect," daddy once said,
pointing at the blue corpse
erupting into blue flocks of blackbirds
below blue stars
below knives moving through spleens
organs transplanted through a Japanese keyhole

the broken breastbone of a house sparrow
[a key sewn inside the lip of a screaming twink]

there is a house in Stoke Newington on a rain-sodden street
where all dreams end

Matthew Kinlin lives and writes in Glasgow. His published works include *Teenage Hallucination* (Orbis Tertius Press, 2021); *Curse Red, Curse Blue, Curse Green* (Sweat Drenched Press, 2021); *The Glass Abattoir* (D.F.L. Lit, 2023); *Songs of Xanthina* (Broken Sleep Books, 2023); *Psycho Viridian* (Broken Sleep Books, 2024) and *So Tender a Killer* (Filthy Loot, 2025). Instagram: [@obscene_mirror](#)

Tom Bland has two books out, *Camp Fear* and *The Death of a Clown*, with Bad Betty Press, and has a Substack, [Asemic Trip](#).

My Cocaine Museum

Dead in a Portuguese prison
stockings wrapped around my throat
put that into my cocaine museum
with the barking human chair, the
cicada head-necklace, the cords & cables,
drum keys, the unsold merch stenciled
El Limbo, the insomnia, put it
all in my cocaine museum with the
gold rented from the earth
beaten thin into a chest plate
a breastplate, not gold but tin
not tin but cocaine
crashing through the emptiness
with histories cloaking you
riding on the waves downriver to the
emptying mouth
I'll give you time to suckle the river slime
and will join you again on the other side
like a death-born Aphrodite prowling in
the nightclub's agony, the forced ecstasies
secured in my cocaine museum
crossing from one space to another
through a gate in the spitting sky
no one is so rich they cannot be kidnapped
it isn't my place to dictate meaning in the museum
that's for you to decide
to understand the museum is to be lost in it
gold rented from the earth
fashioned, beaten thin into a chest plate
a breastplate, but not gold tin
not gold but cocaine

Xopher Besinger is a poet living in Minnesota. His work has appeared in *Vipers Tongue*, *Cephalophore*, and other locations.

Stabbed by Unicorn

An excerpt

Audrey and I walked up to Angel's door. I knocked. It was pretty obvious to me that this was going to be a drawn-out process. I had just left him, comatose, a couple of hours prior. We were going to be there an hour in my estimation.

Angel could not have proven me more mistaken more quickly. He opened the door on the first knock, like he had been waiting at the door. Maybe he had.

"Hey!! That's my favorite people right there! What's up, kids?" Angel was so very happy. Me too. Angel in front of me, Audrey beside me, dope at hand...I was surrounded by allies, by help. I had hope for the day that was unfolding.

"Hey Angel..." Audrey began.

"Hey you! What is *happening*, hot pants? Don't think I've ever seen you in a dress. You have pretty knees," he slurred.

"Hold on, you old smoothie. We're just here for business," Audrey returned in good humor.

"Ok. Good. Excellent. Business. How may I help you?" You could see the effort he expended trying to sober up at that moment. He failed, but it was a noble attempt.

"Angel, we were hoping you might still have some smack," Audrey said sweetly.

"Oh yeah. I got you. What do you need?"

"I don't know if you have this much, but here's five hundred." She held out the roll of bills.

"Well, goddamn. I can cover that, but this is good shit. Ya'll be careful," Angel intoned.

He disappeared into his room, and I pulled the eightball from my pocket. The opiate high was beginning to drift back into sloth. It was about to stop masking fatigue. Another fire to put out. My life's work.

The coke plate remained in the middle of the table. It had a good bit of residue on it. Angel had been active. I dumped a healthy amount of coke onto the plate and divided it. I passed the plate to Audrey, and she inhaled a line. As I inhaled mine, Angel came back. He held a small, zippered cloth bag.

"Here you go, sweet knees," he said as he passed the quasi-purse to Audrey.

"Can I give your man-bag back to you tomorrow? I don't really have anywhere to put all these things," Audrey asked.

"Keep it," said Angel. "I got a million of those."

"Thanks, man."

Angel appeared to have a eureka moment. He sat straight up and looked at me excitedly.

"Hey! You guys want to chase the dragon?" He was already reaching for the box of foil. I was about to say yes when Audrey piped up.

"No, we've got a lot of errands to run. We better go."

I suddenly swelled with satisfaction and pride. She was referring to us as “we.” I knew it was a mirage, but for a moment it felt like we were together. It felt like a comfy old flannel shirt that made you feel embraced every time you wore it.

I stood, suddenly curious as to what errands Audrey was thinking of: Grocery store? Bank? Post office? I suddenly had a vision of me mowing grass with Audrey on the porch smiling. She was wearing pearls.

“Aww, that’s sad. Okay, you guys be good. Be careful. I’m serious,” said Angel.

We hit the street and Audrey pulled some big, clunky sunglasses from thin air and put them on. I made do with nothing. As we walked, we were more or less quiet. I put forth a good bit of effort trying to have good posture as I walked down the grids of Charleston. I wanted to look manly. I wanted her to be proud of our burgeoning association.

Once we got back to her old pink house, we stepped inside. Her air conditioning wasn’t to my polar standards, but it was a nice shift from the sun. She walked towards the love seats and plopped down. She opened the bag and dumped all the packets on the coffee table. I nearly cried with joy. I was going to be pampered for quite a while.

Audrey grabbed the foil and set us up. After smoking, she passed everything to me, along with a fresh packet. I took the supplies and chased a wisp of smoke moments later.

As I sat next to Audrey, I was struck by silence. I did want music, but the part of me that wanted it was in direct conflict with the part of me that wanted to melt into the couch. Melt into Audrey. We sat there for quite a while in a dreamlike state. Audrey broke the spell after a long while.

“You want to listen to some music?” she asked gently.

“Sure. I picked last time. Lady’s choice.”

Audrey gingerly sat up and then stood. She glided over to the records and kneeled. She began sorting, searching. She pulled one aside I couldn’t see the cover of.

Soon, the floaty, ambient sounds of Moby began to play. I couldn’t remember the name of the album, but it was some of his mellow stuff. That feature seemed pointless. I didn’t think I could mellow out any further. But I surmised Audrey wanted to match the dreamy mood.

She began to sway to the music. It wasn’t all that energetic, but it was rhythmic. I watched her move back and forth like a beautiful ghost through two songs. Suddenly, she left the room.

She came back holding a pair of black army fatigues. She seemed to be holding a black shirt as well. I looked at her quizzically.

“We might go out later. I guess this dress is too short. I don’t want to put on a show for all the world. I am a lady after all.”

At that moment, she reached down and in one movement pulled her dress up and off. She had ditched the boy shorts. As she moved to put on her new clothes, I took in her nude form. Because I had only really seen her from the back before (or in the dark), I hadn’t noticed a hand-sized bruise on her right thigh.

Her golden nipple ring glinted in the sunlight. She slipped on her fatigues and black tank top. The obsidian pants were so loose they completely disguised her lower body. But they hung low enough that her hip bones subtly jutted out, and the tank was cut short enough to display her navel. She was pierced there with a gold hoop. She remained barefoot.

“There. That’s better.” She decided. She began to sway again, a little more actively than before. Not by much. I decided to amplify the dynamic and reached for the blow. I set us up and tried to get Audrey’s attention through telepathy. I didn’t want to break the spell she was under. She looked happy.

Eventually, she opened her eyes and looked at me. I smiled and gestured with a flourish to the coke plate. She smiled and sashayed over to the coffee table. She stood straight, feet tight together, and then made a deep, formal bow towards the cocaine. She grabbed the straw and snorted the line.

I held my hand out, and she placed the straw in it, still bowed, not even looking at me. I snorted my line, then started to reach for one from the pile of tiny envelopes full of brown powder. I hesitated. Speedball. Lethal.

“Hey,” I asked Audrey. “Do you have some smoke?”

“Sort of. I have hash. I got it from Angel the other day. It’s already fucked up one of my pipes, so we’ll use that one while we can,” she said. “I hid it from myself so it would be a happy accident when I found it again. I think it’s in my room. Gimme a minute.”

She stood all the way up and glided to her bedroom.

As I sat there, I decided to actively ride the high. I was full of blow and heroin and was pretty well enraptured. My thoughts drifted to red silk dragons on black silk banners. They drifted to green ballerinas dancing in cyclonic, lavender smoke. They drifted to last night with Ana.

I thought of her. Or tried to anyway. I couldn’t picture her face. I could see her silhouette clearly. Oddly, I could picture her Docs, the color of blood before it hits oxygen. I remembered her ivory back turned to me, unmoving, still as a statue. But her face was a void. It bothered me that I couldn’t remember. I had just seen her after all.

I always thought she kind of resembled the Venus statue. The one with no arms. I could picture that face. And her back. I guess that would have to do for now. I got up and shook my head.

“You ok? You having a seizure?” said Audrey as she appeared suddenly beside me.

“Yeah, I’m cool. Swimmer’s ear.”

“When did you go swimming? I want to go swimming…” Audrey enthused

“Oh, the other day. I’m sorry to be needy, but do you have anything to drink? I’m feeling like some day drinking,” I inquired.

“I have some PBR and a Zima,” reported Audrey dutifully.

“If this is the beginning of a joke, please proceed,” I replied.

“Wait! I just remembered. I stole it from Henry’s mom’s house. I’ll be right back. I even stole the stuff that goes with it!” She hopped up excitedly and rushed to the bedroom. She came out with a small box

and spoon in one hand and what looked to be a fifth of light-green liquid and a small brandy snifter in the other. I prayed it wasn't Midori. I was going to have a beverage no matter what, but Midori was like fucking syrup.

Audrey held the bottle up.

"Absinthe, baby! Let me teach you how to do it."

She spread her cache on the table and kneeled across from my seat. She opened the box and pulled out a sugar cube. She placed the spoon on the rim of the glass. The spoon was full of holes. She put the sugar cube on the spoon and stood up.

"I'll be right back."

She walked to the kitchen and came back with a glass of water. She poured some of the spirits over the spoon and sugar cube and then poured the water to completely dissolve the remaining sugar. She emptied her hands and took a sip of the now milky greenish liquid. She made a face and passed it to me.

I took a sip. Licorice. A bit of mint. A hint of dusty book at the end. I eagerly awaited the green fairy hallucinations. I sat back and looked at the ceiling, waiting.

Audrey was back at the record player sorting through albums. She called out over her shoulder.

"You know, contrary to legend, you will not see any green fairies. That's just nineteenth century drunk talk," she said.

"I know that. Ok, we got cocaine, heroin, hash, absinthe... We might be set for a few hours."

"How about this?" As soon as she dropped the record player needle, the trippy-ass reverb of the Smiths came on. The pulsing guitars filled the space, and Audrey moved rhythmically to the entrancing drone. She stopped and smiled a big smile.

"Hold on, let me grab something. I had this idea on the plane." She left hurriedly.

When she came back, she was wearing a necklace of largish lavender pearls. She turned slightly and modeled them like she was in a photo spread.

"What do you think?" She stared at me eagerly.

"They're pretty. Did you take those from Henry's mom too?" It seemed a fair question.

"No. They're anal beads!" She suddenly started laughing so hard she doubled over. She did that for two solid minutes. In between laughs, she got out a clarification. "Never worn. Mint condition," she stuttered in between gasps of air and belly laughs.

"Ok. That answers...well, one of my questions," I chuckled. God, what a girl. I do think I fell in love at that moment.

I remembered the absinthe. I walked over and set up another glass. I turned to Audrey who was still sort of laughing to herself.

You can get so wasted doing dangerous substances that the time when you can safely take more sneaks up on you. You get a happy little surprise and a nod from the universe to proceed with the

party. I suppose it was akin to Audrey hiding drugs from herself so she could have a pleasurable surprise later.

I turned my attention to the heroin packets sitting in a loose pile in the center of the table. I reached for one and worked the powder into the foil. After I hit it, I passed it to Audrey. She followed suit.

She walked to the record player, moving her hips as she did in the exaggerated manner of a runway model. She put on a record that filled the room with a deeply mournful sound that was trippy and almost futuristic: Portishead.

“You sad, girl?” I teased, though I actually liked the groove.

“Always.” She turned and winked as she said it.

I started to count the wax paper packets of smack. Fifteen remaining. We had done some solid work. I was happier than I ever remembered being. I felt perfect physically. More than perfect. I felt like if you wanted to fight me, you should probably bring some Kryptonite. And I was, at least momentarily, joined with this force of nature shaped almost exactly like a goddess.

I looked again at the heroin. Then I looked at Audrey and then turned to the window. The sky was in full twilight now. It had swaths of purple drawn across the horizon. I was happy. God, I was happy.

Christopher Sole has no degrees or literary accomplishments, but he has the scars (inner and outer) of twenty-five years in restaurants and bars. He is in an itinerant state but remains in the American Southeast. Ostensibly on purpose.

Chuck

I always delete his number from my phone after an argument,
Or block him altogether.
I go off, sit and stew over hurtful, third-degree-burn kind of words.
Days later, after I've pulled his arrows out of my heart,
I frantically search the place I last scribbled out his name and number
Realizing if I hold it just right under daylight,
It can still be made out behind the cloak of permanent ink.

Shane Allison's new poetry collection *Turbulent* is out from Hysterical Books as well as his book-length poem opus, *Remembered Men*, from Ranger Press.

Fearsome

“What the fuck's wrong, Blaine?”

Sandra cranes her neck over her right shoulder, frozen on her hands and knees on the bed.

“I, uh, there was this, um, this *thing* in your ear,” I stutter over the *DHNK-DHNK-DHNK* of my heart. That's pretty articulate considering we're both rolling on *X* and a fucking demon just popped out of her head while we were doing it. You'd scream, too, I bet.

Sandra traces the scrapyard of stainless steel around her ear and frowns at some pus on her fingers from a new piercing. There's nothing else. No little neon-red guy. No flashing teeth or pig nose. No ball-bearing eyes like mercury from a thermometer.

“You sure you're up to this?” Sandra asks.

A real man doesn't get scared. It was nothing. Just a hallucination.

“Yeah,” I say. “Let's do it.”

I grunt and slide back inside her.

“Wow, look at Mr. Hard over here,” she says, and I'm surprised, too, because I had to gummy worm it in earlier. That's a thing with ecstasy sometimes. Not for me, though. Never.

“Fight or flight or fuck,” I say, in time to whatever Massive Attack song drones through the paper towel roll she DIY-ed into a speaker for her phone.

A million years later, no, it's still the same song, a minute later, but maybe it's on repeat, wow, this feels good, we're doing it, skin on skin on fire, and squeezing, and touching, and —

This time the little fucker pops out of her armpit. It crawls onto her back and stands there staring at me. I close my eyes real hard then blink them open. It's still there. The demon winks at me and then it grows a pair of titties. I swear, hand to God, they look just like Sandra's. It feels them up and dances around on her back while we're still doing it, bending at the waist like a stripper. Every time it steps closer, I lean back, and every time I lean back, Sandra slams into me harder and harder. Then the thing grows a dick. Not like mine. A giant monster one that grows up and up, until it's between the demon's own titties. It starts shaking them around the veiny shaft, the tip poking out of the puckered cleavage.

“Jesus fucking Christ,” I yell and pull out.

“What's going on?” Sandra yells, spinning around, the little neon-red guy vanishing behind her.

A real man is honest.

“I, uh, fuck, Sandra,” I say, backing off the bed, not looking away for even a second. “I'm, like, having a bad trip or something.”

A real man also doesn't make his girl worry about a demon with doppelganger titties when he-she probably isn't real.

“Look, I get it. I'm really rolling too,” Sandra says. “Let's just cuddle.”

A real man also cuddles. And it feels good, then great, and then, holy fuck, we're touching each other all over, and all over, and shit, I'm so horny, and now we're doing it again.

“Here, I’ll drive,” Sandra says, pinning me to the bed. “You’re safe.”

And I feel safe, and I feel home, and I feel warm, so, so warm.

“Yes,” Sandra moans, pulling my hands over her not-demon titties, and onto her hips, and — what was that? Something hard inside her. Something that’s not me.

No, that’s just the drugs talking. Be a man, Blaine. You’re not stopping three times. You’re here till she finishes. Or at least till you finish and have to put in a little overtime.

Sandra leans back and moans. She rocks her hips and —

There it is again! Its head pokes out of her innie bellybutton, right by her secret mole. What the shit? The little fucker puts a gnarled finger to its lips and pops back into her stomach.

The warm, hard thing in Sandra’s pussy gets warmer.

“Oh, yeah, like that, baby,” she says, her chin up like a spade, her arms braced on my calves. She’s close.

The hard thing inside her, it’s that demon thing. I feel its clawed hands on me. I feel its leather tongue. And, and, *and-and-and* it feels amazing.

Before I can think about consent protocols, my bones calcify, my muscles spasm, and I come hard — harder than when I first found titty-fucking porn when I was fourteen.

A couple of songs later, definitely a different album, not on repeat, Sandra and I lie side by side on the bed. We thumb a lighter and spark a joint together.

“I have a confession to make,” Sandra says, exhaling a gray-purple cloud. “I saw it, too. I saw it, and I *felt* it.”

My heart starts *DHNK-DHNK-DHNK*-ing and I can feel myself getting hard again. I look down and there’s that little fucker, flashing teeth, pig nose, and ball-bearing eyes right next to Sandra’s pussy. It pops in and I dive in after it.

A real man faces his demons.

Nicholas De Marino is a neurodivergent writer and poet. He founded *Senses* and is a *foofaraw* columnist. He’s got several writing credits, degrees, and accolades that have nothing to do with cats. Plus some that do. Read more at nicholasdemarino.com.

it was in the fuckin blood, man

After 'Dallas Beltway' (& lyrics) by Chat Pile

this concrete is cooked.

not 'cooked' like 'chat am i cooked'. cooked like it's been in the oven too long & dried out & gone yellow.

maybe i mean 'baked'. baked like batter or cookies or something from a box.

chat am i cooked.

he said shit like that. shit like a pull string doll. quips and phrases downloaded from the internet. not even a fuckin personality.

do they have them? he was eight. do they have a fuckin personality at eight?

when the hell do they get one.

other parents say their kid comes into the world special. think the way their child gyrates or wiggles or babbles abjadically is proof they're gonna save the fuckin world.

other parents say a lot of shit.

guess i'm not one any more. thing is, no one will ever see me as anything but.

a parent. never anything FUCKIN but.

even after this. after i wash my hands and wash them so many fuckin times. i will only ever be a parent and the parent of a dead kid that no one knows is dead

yet.

unless they do. unless she's home already.

sure, maybe. but there was no blood.

hands only.

unless they called the police when he didn't come to school.

is school in session? i don't know. i don't know the time except it's day and the sky is a baked blue.

blue. fuckin blue. there's a particular shade of blue that makes me want to kill myself. you know?

when it's pale. too pale. blue for a boy and my dad sucked too. MY DAD SUCKED too except no one cares about that. do they. when you're a parent. a fuckin parent.

a parent. all you'll ever fuckin be.

no matter what else you do. parent to one kid two kid dead kid blue kid.

god i was good. i was such a good fuckin guy. i was such a good FUCKIN GUY and what can i do? feel bad for everything that happened in the world?

i'm STILL a good guy. i'm a good guy! you do one thing. you do one SHITTY thing.

you want me to go back? you want me to undo what i fuckin did? i'd do it at the moment of conception. whenever they decide it counts for shit. go back to when he stopped breathing and be like, 'thank fuckin god'.

and you know what's fucked? MY dad would say that. my dad would say that too.

and his dad and his dad and his dad and fuckin his. nothing but dads who don't wanna be dads all the way down.

of course i'm still one. fuckin still one. still a fucking dad even after i do the ONE thing that would make me not a FUCKIN dad.

i did everything right, man. i unloaded the fuckin dishwasher. i cooked dinner! i watched the goddamn kid so she could go to goddamn book club and took him to his fuckin little playdates and shit.

i was a good fuckin guy!

never gonna be a good guy again, am i? never gonna be anything but a dad. a fuckin dad.

still a fuckin dad. still a fuckin dad whose kid is dead and no one knows

yet.

and when will they? when will they

fuckin know.

know i'm something else.

hah.

fuckin never. this forever now. no more mr nice guy when you're a dad and your kid is dead and you're a kid killer.

i was so fuckin good, man! jesus. i never hit a fuckin one of them.

it's true. they all say you got nothing coming till a good man is pushed too far.

christ. how long have i got? how long have i fuckin got. when are they gonna know?

till she comes home? till the school calls? till they see the car gone and my phone won't ring?

when i stop the car and someone pops the trunk.

maybe that's how long i got. i got until i stop the car.

i got until the car stops.

fuck it.

AJ Sharpe (they/them) is a Best of the Net–nominated writer, reader and heavy metal fan with work in *Bloodletter*, *Fatal Flaw* and *Corporeal*, among others. Keep up with whatever keeps happening to them at sharpewriting.bsky.social or ajsharpewriting.wordpress.com.

pov: you are the woman sunbathing at the end of todd solondz's happiness

hey
there's someone up there
up on that balcony
who is that
is it a kid
yeah
i think it's a kid
looks like a boy
what's that kid doing
why're they moving their hand like that
what're they doing
wait
are they
oh god
oh my god
oh fuck
are they masturbating
wait
are they masturbating to me
oh jesus
jesus christ
oh god
what do i do
what do i do
i don't know
what're you supposed to do in this situation
what the fuck do i do
do i look them in the eye
maybe that'll scare them off
no
they might think i'm encouraging them
fuck
fuck
what do i do
should i tell their parents

no
that'd be weird
i'd look suspicious
ok
ok
what do i do
what do i do
should i just walk away
or will that make it look like i noticed
oh god
i looked again
oh god i feel so gross
wait why do i feel gross
i'm not the one peeping
i'm just minding my own business
it's the kid that's in the wrong
i
i didn't know kids could do this stuff
at least i didn't do this sort of thing when i was young
how does he know how to do this
is he being abused
oh god i looked again
i actually feel sick
i think i'm actually gonna throw up
god
what do i do
fucking hell
just cum already
can you even cum at that age
oh god why am i even thinking about that
please be over
please please just be over
oh god
oh fuck
oh my fucking god
he actually came
i saw white stuff shoot out

oh my god i'm actually gonna throw up
just close your eyes
just close your eyes
just close your eyes
breathe in
and out
in
and out
it's over
ok
ok
he's going back inside
ok
thank fucking god
i hope i never see him again
i don't know what i'd do if i did
god
i don't even wanna think about it
whatever
just forget about it
just forget about it
now
i can finally relax
is it weird that i feel kind of
i don't know
flattered
is it weird that i hope he enjoyed it

lotus eater machine is an artist (who wishes they weren't one). they can (regrettably) be found on [instagram](#), [deviantart](#), [youtube](#), and [substack](#).

BOOK REC

BOY APPARITION **a travelogue of atemporal genders** **by mk zariel**

There are two transmasculine genders: the butch anarchist, and the tiny atemporal gremlin who really needs a hug. In *BOY APPARITION*, mk zariel tackles both. This chapbook is full of love letters to the BashBack tendency, chronicles of insurgent trans boyhood and its ties to lesbian culture, unhinged teenage rants, and the kind of love poems you'd write in lipstick on the mirror of the gender-neutral bathroom. Through it all, one question is central: what it means to be transmasculine beyond hegemonic manhood, beyond hierarchy, beyond linear time itself.

“signs you might be atemporal: what happened yesterday
is still happening. what happens tomorrow doesn't exist.
what happens now is all eternity and what's happening
now is that you feel awkward as hell.”

Coming October 31, 2025, in print + digital from Vinegar Press

Preorder info soon — follow [@vinegar.press](https://vinegar.press) or email vinegarpress@gmail.com for inquiries.

Share freely with distros, zine libraries, and punks who still believe in ghosts.

AFTERWORD

The 18th issue of SCAB comes out in March 2026.

The motto remains: Send along your best worst.

You can submit here:

scabmag.wordpress.com/submissions

For more overall information, please visit SCAB's homepage:

scabmag.wordpress.com

You can also follow SCAB on **[X](#)** and **[Instagram](#)**.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To D. C. & all past and present contributors & all you lovely readers,
thank you dearly.

