

FORBIDDEN FRUIT



11



Her skin was
soft, softer than
I remembered,
as if she was
rotten too, a
fallen Eve.
Under us I
could hear the
apples rumble.



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Hey CUTIE

— Pax Santos
Founding Editor

There has always been an allure to the forbidden. We want what we can't have. We reach for that which exists just beyond our grasp. We crave fruit of the forbidden tree, the taboo only making it sweeter.

Queerness has often existed within the realm of the taboo and queer love has often been characterised by clandestine courtship. But, the Renaissance ushered in an era of homoeroticism in art, reimagining religious figures through a lens of queer desire. What was once forbidden, now flaunted.

*In this issue, we sought to recapture the energy
of the Renaissance: to flaunt the forbidden.*

The pieces featured interrogate the forbidden, particularly in its intersection with queerness. Artists were asked to show us the darkest corners of their mind palace. To give us the shadowy recesses they don't let others see.

Artists were asked to consider:

- The relationship between forbidden desires and queer identity
- What is your personal Dark Ages? What is your Renaissance?
- What is your fruit of the forbidden tree? What draws you in despite your best intentions?
- What does it feel like to love in the dark?
- What does it feel like to emerge from the shadows?
- How has taboo shaped your relationship with yourself and others?
- What do you reach for that you can't touch?

In times of crisis, we know that maintaining community is vital. That's why QT brings together our collective projects to create that sense of shared space. Queer Toronto Literary Magazine is a nonprofit dedicated to elevating and celebrating queer voices in Canada. Thank you to all the writers, poets, artists and makers for allowing QT to share your work with the world. Thank you to all the volunteers at QT, without whom we would not have a magazine.

HOW DO YOU LIKE ME NOW?

*by yael
tobón*

i dreamt my chest was flat
foreign hands navigated:
paper-boats by the riverside
my hips were not corrupted
But, instead, covered in glitter
and i was still your girl

a girly girl
my knees only bent
once a week
my mouth,
full of carnation petals
the walls absorbed my words
like drops of blood on cotton

yael tobón (she/they) is a Mexican queer writer and poet currently based in Tiohtià:Ke (Montreal). She is pursuing a BA in Creative Writing with a minor in Interdisciplinary Studies in Sexuality. Their work revolves around the female body, gender identity, generational trauma and sapphic love. \\ IG: @moonchildd02

do you remember when my chest was flat?
i always thought my voice was
too deep for a girl

my skin
too dark to flourish
organs
too stained to matter
my ideas
too vast to be represented
did it ever matter?

my chest was flat

always too much but at least,

am i sick for thinking that
my chest is flat
time has forgotten its
favorite daughter
but i still wear this body
like the mark of Cain
never undercover,
my past selves murdered
behind it

if my chest was flat for the rest of my life
what would be of me?
what would be of you?
would you still call me your girl?
or would you look away
at the image of someone
similar to you?

but darling,
my chest is not flat
and my mind is as nasty
as yours (girly girl)
you are nothing at heart if not
insatiable,
if i am not appealing enough
i won't slim down my flesh for you

you can starve

TEA AND BREAD ON A WINTER EVENING

by yael tabón

you seem a little hungry
do you want a plum?
a handful of sweet almonds or
a cup of warm milk?
you don't have to sit alone,
let us bake bread together,
the prologue of procreation by
unlearning an obsolete significance
of *intimacy*

you look a little blue
can i make tea for you?
dried *buganvilia* flowers,
a clove of garlic,
juice of half a lemon,
and *honey*
just like my mom used to
make it

you must have glimpsed
the starved child living
within my skin
all i was ever given was this
buganvilia tea
not my mother's arms,
only my father's cold touch

you must have witnessed my
guts, heart and lungs
before you poured me a glass of
herbal tea
to dissipate the inner heat
emanating from your disarray

please stay a little longer
i sure have an antidote for those
bruised limbs of yours.
let me melt your hands and
you can sing to me

please linger by the door,
before you leave
take my sweater with you
and allow me a hug

i will see you in the spring,
remember my mother's tea
during the ferocious winter

i will always have bread for you
but, even when you're not hungry,

think of *me*

APPLES WERE MY FAVORITE FOOD

by yael tabón

When I was younger, apples were my favorite food.
Apples fell from trees like capsules of immaculate sweetness.
I was constantly asked why apples were my favorite food,
“They were all I ate when I ate nothing else” I said.
that concerned those who didn’t understand how easily I get
attached to everything that makes me feel
isolated.

That was why I kept, in the back of my closet, two bottles—
Cuban ron and blended scotch whiskey.
That was why I kept, in the back of my mind, an imaginary home.
Too often, at night, I sat on the floor and sipped a cup of mint tea.
I craved something sweet so I bit an apple.
Too often, after that sacred ritual, I dreamt of her.
She wore the same coat and was soaked in rain.
I woke up hoping she was all right because that is all I knew how to do:
hoping people were alright.
Then I walked around the house hoping no one noticed
how much humanity I lacked.
Then, I walked home and binged until I satisfied my hunger.
A little while before I was younger,
meaty apples marked the prelude to inclusive existence
a little while before Cain. Or, was it Adam?
I could never hate anything that made me feel isolated
for that isolation revealed to me the meaning of fullness so how
empty could I feel before falling apart?
Was there a middle ground between empty and stuffed?
I didn’t know how to cry without bleeding,
I carried both tears and blood on my sleeves, just in case.
I didn’t know how to breathe without suffocating.
Thank God I am not as young as I used to be
I crave love, familiarity, vulnerability and not (only) apples
I am not young enough to cling to anything close or far from extremeness.
A summer day in a dusty apartment by yourself can change you,
the living room smells like sovereignty and fresh fruit,
a symphony intrinsic to the change of seasons.
She never came back in spring but that is fine
I cut my little apple into little pieces on a wooden table
She never came back but I was never her.

AN UNJUSTIFIED LOVE

by X. Liang

Dear, it is St. Valentine's Day and I'm sitting right beside you, in the front row of an airy and bright classroom, in the giant building of Earl Haig S.S. Outside, the radiant sun is creeping up, and old piles of snow are shrinking down, inch by inch. This is when you know that spring is just around the corner with its fragrance already smelt and its warmth already felt. The tightly packed neighbourhood that had been stiffened by the wintry gales seems to stretch out its arms and slacken its sinews while cheerfully regaining its vigor. This change is evident even in our class – smiles and sweet dimples have already re-dominated some sprightly faces, including yours, though excluding mine.

X. is currently a high school student living in Ontario. Her family immigrated there a few years ago from China. She endeavours to write thought-provoking creative pieces despite her being an English language learner. In her daily life, she likes exercising and is trying her best to keep both her mind and her body healthy and in shape. IG: @kelly.lxymm

It's St. Valentine's Day and I ought to restrain myself from unconsciously letting out any queer expressions or eccentric remarks. It is better off sitting quietly in bio class, pretending that today is nothing special. Only a few exchanges of thoughts and comments are sufficient to maintain a normal friendship between the two of us, two girls who merely happened to cross each other without risking a chance for their fates to be entwined and entangled. That's how you think of our relationship, dear, isn't it? Perhaps my cowardess is a bondage that has too strictly kept me from telling you the truth. Today it's finally time for me to break free. Stunningly, I hardly find any males enticing. I used to be on good terms with quite a lot of girls. But before long, I became disappointed and dejected in figuring out that none of them shared any common passion with me, nor did they attempt to understand my plights and my internal struggles.

Until, one day when I turned around in my seat when your gorgeous and heavenly profile came into my view. Only one glance of you and one moment spent together with you sufficed to recuperate all my withered fancies. I was fully mesmerized: the tenderness kindled by the sensible corners of your mouth, your empathy glittered between the amiable blinks of your eyes, your thoughtfulness hidden behind the thick glasses... They were worth a whole spring field of the most precious tulips that nurture a thousand soothing dreams. And even better, after we had acquainted each other, I found out with tremendous immense pleasure that you and I, both had a fervent love for poetry. Every once in a while, we used to exchange some awkward poems that would otherwise have been ripped and ridden. I have been treating you like half of the external world, which became enlightened by the shining spirit of poems. But you, in return, have treated me like a flat confidant who is only apt to hold your secrets in the realm of poetry and fiction. Though speaking realistically, it is what it is, and I wouldn't have expected more from you. But still, I would like to explicitly tell you that I love you, dear. My love for you is fermenting and indelible. At the same time, I'm more than clear that my love would, to its maximum extent, be returned by a caring friendship, not

anything beyond. It cannot yield a love that is equal in strength and fervor.

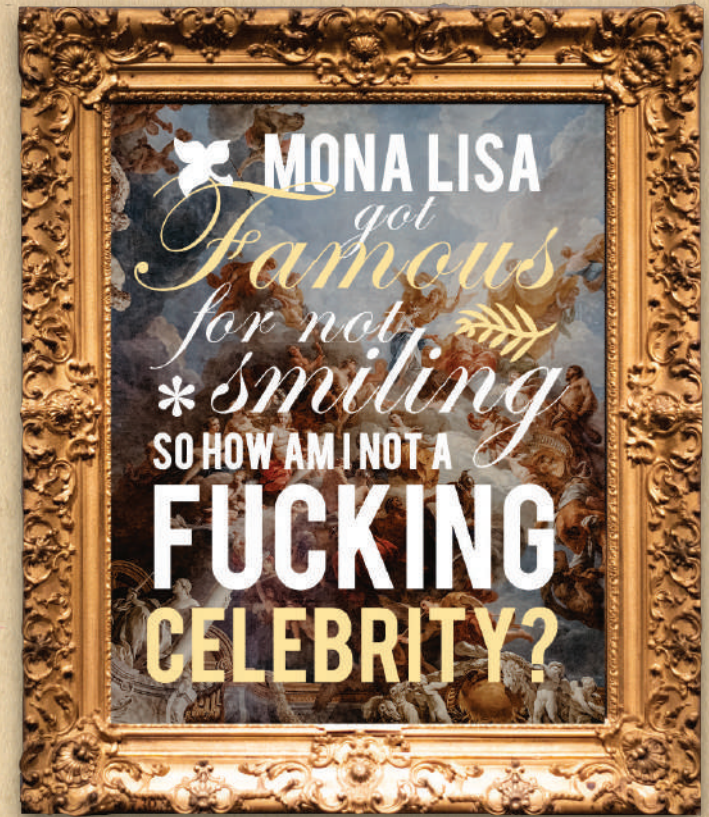
At the moment, I should fulfill my duty as a studious student, as a kind and responsible tablemate of yours. It is so much better to not alter the status quo, a relationship with two sides unbalanced, than to be tempted to delve further and both end up submerged in the sea of unduly wishes and desires.

The bell has just rung. You stood up hurriedly and I'll squeeze myself in so that you can leave. After you went home and unpacked your knapsack, you might as well see a piece of half-molten white chocolate, with a bold red heart-shaped mark. I daresay you must have thought that it was from Cayden, your best guy friend. You are wrong but happy St. Valentine's Day.

THE FORBIDDEN MODERN DAY LOVE STORY

by Vanida Lim

Vanida is a freelance graphic designer based in Toronto who has a love for solo traveling. When she's not a digital nomad, she enjoys indulging in any other form of creative self-expression such as art, dance, fashion and make-up, music, tattoos, poetry/spoken-word, and books. \\ IG: @VanidaLim



AN EXPERIENCE OF THE RENAISSANCE

by Sylvia Frey

She leaned against the desk in the lecture room, her backside just at the ledge. She was teaching a second year course on Renaissance Writing, focusing on the representation of women and women's love for one another. It was very airy, a sort of test of Renaissance Writing in general. That the writing be revealing of the status of women, first, but secondly, that the writing is a testimony of humanity, especially in relation to lesbian relationships. She talked of how the texts were saved. How the texts were encouraged into existence. How they can be compared to modern day texts and writings on women and women's love for one another. It was both History and English Literature. It was about existence and desire. Even denial. And the origins of the perspective on understanding lesbians and lesbian texts. Perhaps often not as homoerotic as Renaissance Art, poetry on love could often be from the view of any gender to any gender.

She suddenly turned her upper body and reached behind her for a well-leafed-through book and started to read Shakespeare's Sonnet from *Twelfth Night*, "Oh Mistress Mine." It is a sonnet of woe, worry, and desperate desire. As much of

Sylvia is a writer and visual artist living and working in Toronto. She also flirts, makes love, and falls in love in Toronto too. These things keep her here, and for some reason, won't let her go.

Twelfth Night is. She puts a marker into the pages and looks up at us. We know that this is a classic love story, where love is found in the place where we least expect to find it. And Shakespeare expertly seeds this story to become one of the most read and replayed plays.

She pauses, looking around the classroom. "If any of you have had the opportunity to enjoy this play, we know that this play is full of laughs, mistaken identity, disguise and joy."

We are all hanging on her words now. Shakespeare—the most obvious man of literature from the Renaissance. And he is the foundation of much modern and current day writing. His ideas of plot, character, philosophy, and societal existence is still considered ground-breaking and foundational. We are thinking salacious thoughts...perhaps feelings of excitement. Classical texts that were lost, get their return in Shakespeare and in other Renaissance writings, performances, and visual art. She reminds us that *Twelfth Night* is a play about gender where the mistaken identities of a set of twins of opposite sex shows us the reactions of society as part of what makes up the world. That society is definitely a part of the story. Individuals will always attempt to fit in, to find acceptance in some way—from dressing like their gender to revealing to their mistress their inclinations.

Near the end of the hour, she gives us a question to think about: "Why are the works of the Renaissance more important than the Classics of Antiquity? The Renaissance has ventured to break the rules. To make the normative more accepting of the prohibitive. Is this a very rude flouting of the World of Antiquity? And if so, why is the Renaissance more important than Antiquity?"

We get up with chatter. She collects her papers and book. I think about going up to her and asking her if she has an answer to the question she posed. I hesitate, worried that she could question me back and leave me high and dry

about the issue. My only thought about the question is that it is about the lack that existed in the world then... Our lives were in dire need. People needed to survive, to fight for survival, and that this need is what drove the engine of the Renaissance, not the texts of Antiquity.

I think and hesitate a second too long. The Professor is starting to walk out of the room, and I don't have enough confidence to pursue her.

The next day at lecture, she walks into the room just at the start of the hour. She places an armful of papers and a couple of books on the desk. She turns to the class, smiling, and greets us, with a "hi."

"Our class today, is a continuing look at the Renaissance texts as foundational. Specifically, in comparison with Sappho, of Lesbos, which is an island in the Greek Archipelago. Sappho is the only surviving female writer of Antiquity that the Renaissance has direct contact with, and could use in their own creative writing and performance."

She begins her lecture with this very nice tease of an icon from the beginning of time. Where the morals were loose and not chaste and pure. She talks a little more, orienting us to the lure of Sappho, how she is the elder stateswoman of importance with the right to have her island home populated by young girls who were given to her for apprenticeship in Classics of Literature and Philosophy. However, she is in competition with the Women Renaissance Writers, who, admittedly, have also come from power and education. This, however does not cause them to give up their pursuit of equality with men. Most notably, Marguerite de Navarre, Princess of France, Duchess of Alencon and Berry, and eventually, Queen of Navarre with her second marriage to King Henry II. And, the second most talked about woman, Louise Labé, also known as La Belle Cordière. She was a feminist French poet born in Lyon, to a wealthy rope-maker. These two women,

amongst a handful of other women of the Renaissance and Reformation, have enriched the literary canon by offering alternative perspectives on the social, political and religious regimes of their time.

My mind is afire. I want to speak. I want to raise my hand and suggest that I understand what it is she is speaking about. That her descriptions of these women and their achievements mean something to me too. I have just read something from one of my textbooks, an anthology of poetry. It is a poem by a man named Richard Wilbur. I was randomly flipping through the anthology and read "Playboy." It is a short poem about a stockroom boy sitting on a ladder and eating a sandwich. Meanwhile, he is reading a pornographic magazine.

What is noticeable obviously, is that the poem loses its perspective. From a boy killing some time in the backroom of a store, by looking at a pornographic magazine, we notice his mind looking at the women. That the way he looks at their bodies and their poses, suggests he is enamoured beyond the usual interest. I here want to say that Wilbur mentions Archimedes. An antiquity mathematician and philosopher. I want to say that Wilbur is playing with the expectation of a "girlie magazine" by stating the obvious: men love the visual, thinking and feeling that it is powerful. It is desired. It is how we think and judge. That this alone, is an inheritance from the Renaissance, which has a rich history of acknowledging that existence is rich, multi-layered, and full of our human foibles. That this existence is forever. It is foundational. Wilbur's "Playboy" is dated 1969.

SShe is continuing her lecture. I still feel like raising my hand and suggesting a comment. She is detailing the climate of life in Renaissance Europe. The politics and the art. The sudden life that the people suddenly live. Including the Religious Reformation led by Luther and others. Often people in general would be privy to gossip and not participating in what is a game played by the educated elite. However, the Renaissance is extremely interesting and it feels

like a place and time of heightened life and awareness. That our self-knowledge and understanding is born from it.

The professor is addressing the difference that the Renaissance has made, as it took the world in, making all the comparisons of its own self-awareness with the texts that were still extant from all of time. This difference leads to identity being the centre in poetry, especially love poetry, creating the genderless, or the pan-gender, poem. This “lack of labelling” was practiced as a non-stated identity of both the poet and the subject. A creation of the Renaissance poem, most often associated with the Sonnet. This is a change from the tradition of poetry that was practiced. This perspective allowed for multiplicity: the inclusion of many types of people and of many things in the content of the poem. This was considered well-mannered and well-educated. And allowed for the development of something strictly of the Renaissance—wit. People often wanted to create a trope or device for creating a witty play on words or a witty statement. The writers of the Renaissance knew that intelligence is a human trait that is admired. Thus, the development of “the humanistic,” and humanity.

I feel impatient. I want to get the burning feeling of hearing the lecture into the discussion that could happen with the class and the professor. I want to ask questions. Questions like: “Why did the Renaissance happen? The sudden development of literature that never before existed is very strange and interesting... How did a lot of people suddenly start writing about humanism? All within a very direct and short period of time? What was the inspiration?”

But, she is rolling along in the lecture. Now, something about beauty and the consideration given to what beauty is. She has stood up and is walking to the blackboard at the front of classroom. She picks up a chalk and writes, “Poets Are Born.” She turns around to face the classroom again, casually looking down at her hands as she brushes the chalk off, and asks, “What do you think that this statement means, in terms of the Renaissance writers? Do you think it was written anonymously, or that it was a generally held belief?”

It sounds very limiting to me. That poets are born. Perhaps a little romantic, actually, that the Renaissance could centre its belief of Art, Literature, Philosophy and Politics around the idea that one was called to the profession, and not someone who could become through education and skill, and a little artiness. I think about it and I want to say that poets can be poor poets as well as very talented poets. And that it is a critical statement to say, “Poets are born.” I think of my foray into poetry when I wrote of my experience of a kiss. That it was about how mediocre the kiss was, indicating to me that the love was very mediocre. Also, that the subject does not determine whether a poet or non-poet wrote it.

I am getting lost in the argument in my head. And the lecture has continued on. From memory I write in my notebook a Margaret Atwood poem, “You Fit Into Me.” “you fit into me/like a hook into an eye. a fish hook/an open eye.”

I draw vine leaves and curlicues around it. Roughly hatching in the spaces. I think of Art. I think of the language of Art and Performance and Religion and Philosophy. There is so much that is being said and yet not being said at all. We hear the things we hear, and we come to things from our own perspective, sometimes living it and at others, not. There *is* a Renaissance thing... A legend that the Renaissance was created, that the entire world still uses to find its way around. It is often referenced even when we do it ourselves without knowledge we are doing so. Perhaps we are making progress, with each Revolution, and each Reformation. Perhaps we are a “thing.” Human lives that contribute and really exist. Affecting each other, affecting ourselves, and affecting our future.

CAVE

by Shoshana Raine

Her feelings lived inside a cave
A place I was directed to steer clear of
Bricked away, her heart and vulnerability
guarded by a bear

It was those walls that cursed us
Me
Stricken to be alone despite there being an us
I missed her
Who I thought she was
But couldn't really be sure of
Not the bear
For her bear-parts frightened me to death
But her
Us

It was hard to be excluded
To be told I was not allowed
Feeling like a punished child
Not a girlfriend
Definitely not a partner

See my feelings didn't matter
My heart was not a consideration
Over and over I was told I was wrong
Needy
Annoying
Too much
for wanting connection
Aching for full fledged intimacy

She'd casually ask me to stop
What she really meant
was that she didn't want to hear me
Or to know me, not truly

She didn't care if I felt
If I had pain
Over and over she asked me to live like her
In caverns
But the dark that comforted her
turned off the lights of my truth

And so I receded
Into my own cave
Because I thought maybe it would help me find her
But she was not there

Shoshana is a femme lesbian who blushingly shares her musings on passion, connection, and the heart. She writes to escape the ordinary. Shoshana loves across the gender spectrum, and is dedicated to contributing to the community with her words. She can often be found typing with a cat in her lap and dangly earrings in her ears. || IG: @shoshana.

Cave days became
weeks
months
and then too long

I found I was with only myself
in a box
A lonesome chamber
And as the walls transformed into
self-loathing
shame
My cave crushed my humanity
And I became
Stoic
Cold
Rigid
Transactional
Void of heart

And so I did
Every day
For her convenience
Left outside on the sidewalk
In the dark
To rot in the sun
My fragile beauty that she had wanted
Withered
Starved
Died
As she lost me
and I lost me

SAPPHO ONCE SAID

by Jen Jakob

sappho once said

someone will remember us

I say

even in another time¹

or so the story goes

Jen Jakob (she/they) is an emerging poet based in Ottawa, Ontario, and identifies as a genderfluid lesbian. She is currently pursuing a BA in English and History at Carleton University. Jen is also on the editorial team of flo, literary magazine in Ottawa as their first reader of poetry. \\ IG: @velvet_syllables

possessed by
visions of grecian waves
briny, lapping the craigs
that hug the ivory amphitheater
lyre lyrics, languid
dionysian festival love
sun-warmed lips kneading
to the strum of our teacher
thrumming mayflies
hover in the sweet salt
of sweat between us

sappho once said

how was your day? :)
good you?<3
not bad, i wish you were here ///

or so the story goes

I begin to recognize
as my pearl knuckles tremble
hesitant over the keyboard
face ablaze crimson
the ichor of old gods
flows between
our gentle hellos
coquettish emoticons
last night I crafted
a spotify playlist

my muse: your name

sappho once said

And I'd be the immediate forgiveness
In Eurydice
Imagine being loved by me²

or so the story goes

dearest
we circuit the same sun
as those old gods
we bathe
in ancient pools
anointed with
peony oil bathbombs
rose petals from
the corner store
discount bouquets
we echo
beyond these temporal bounds
sinking teeth into
flesh into
citrus into
life
imbue our ancientness
into this life
and watch the ripple

as sappho once said
or so the story goes.

¹ Anne Carson translation of Sappho fragment 147 in *If Not, Winter*
² Hozier, lyrics from "Talk"

AMBROSIA

by Jen Jakob

I hum your name like a curse,
dazzled by the way it feels
both right and wrong on my tongue.
Smooth and fragrant yet
tannic barbs leave you lingering.
It is like honey,
laden with a sweetness
I have not known,
as if I've only ever eaten
candy names.

Honey, unlike candy, has body –
a thick thrilling realness that
moves down my throat slow and soft
and coats my tongue
with a reminder of
every wildflower in your name.
How does a name bring to mind
some dreamscape of feminine love
in a violet-peppered field?
Of daisy circlet caresses
and careful crocus kisses?

When the last of your honey name
leaves my lips warm and sugared
I'm too eager to taste it again.
Tap it straight from the hive –
never mind the bees and their stingers.
They, too, would die for your name.

I stumble over the syllables
and laugh honey bubbles through swollen lips.
Again and again hands gloved in amber slick
I guzzle your honey sugar name
and bathe breathless in bliss
drowning in your name
until there's nothing left to say.

The sun sets on my hunger
and all the bees have died.
I fall drunk and ill
searching for you
in the clover pollen
pulling back the petals
and licking sugared dew
from that hidden place.

I ache in the rot of my frenzy.
My stomach sick with excess.
I am tethered to your violets and daisies
fattened and subdued.
I weep at the lack of you
and wish I had only ever eaten
candy names

SIN IN THE BODY

by *Juliet Spizzirri*

“Before disease comes sin”

Sin between my teeth
sin hides under my tongue
on my lips. Sin enters
my bloodstream.

Sin is oblong, heart-shaped:
a fig split in two. Tongue
the nectar, the flesh rush
the pain in your head.

Your lungs constrict
you wheeze, take a hit
of your puffer—does God
hide in that contraption?

Are the chemicals His
breath? Where do priests hide
their sins? In the folds
of their religious garb?

In the golden chalice
from which His blood oozes?
Drawing blood is sacred, mingling
His fluids with ours: sacred.

Extract the sin, place
it between the prongs
of a tweezer and pull
until it comes loose.

Where do you place sin
once it's removed?
In a biohazard box?
How is it destroyed?

You're not answering.
Maybe I want sin
on my tongue, tasting
her clit, parting the fig's
flesh, picking the seeds
from my teeth, wiping
the nectar from the crease
that forms my chin. Why
does her hair smell sweet
if it's dirty? Why is her skin
illuminating if it's murderous?
Why am I born again every time
She screams my name at the ceiling?

Juliet Spizzirri (they/she) is a multidisciplinary queer artist pursuing a BA in Theatre and Drama studies at the University of Toronto alongside English and Creative Writing minors. Juliet's work is driven by personal experiences, visceral imagery and themes of sex, passion and love. Their poetry is raw, honest and from the heart. \ IG: @julietspizz

SURFEITING

by Juliet Spizzirri

If music be the food of love play on,
that surfeiting, making me sick.

My love is undercut.

I can't hold my girlfriend's hand
without a man inserting himself
I can't express innocent affection
without being fetishized
in this grotesque, macho cesspool
I am like Nora, perched in the window
in a glass display case in an art gallery
so these men can ogle and gawk
and spit and cough and sputter,
"You're so sexy."

So I break the glass and I rip the frames
and my hands wrap around his fucking
neck and I'm creating art with fluid
that resembles red paint
and it's funny
because I make art with
my love.

My lover is art, immortalized
in the Louvre, down the back
(but who cares) and we're hiding
from greedy eyes that undress,
unravel,
hidden so we can love
without perception, opinions
His sick fetishes, this isn't a fetish
this is a livelihood, this isn't for you
for once something isn't for you
but you want so you have, you need
so you take, you hunger, you consume
surfeiting.

IN THE FAIRY GARDEN

by Sonali Roy



DANCING WITH THE SPIRITS

A freelance writer & photographer, Sonali Roy enjoys creative writing and music composition. Besides, Roy is a passionate traveler & painter and loves framing nature. Devoted to a vegan diet, Sonali brainstorms various recipes in the kitchen. She loves spending time with her canine friends Fuchoo and Funtoosh. \ \ IG: @sonali.roy60

FAIRY WINGS



WEIRD ISLAND



HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN

by Hannah Shapiro

"What cannot be said will be wept" -Sappho

This body is not your boiler room.
This body is not here for your careless corruption.
I have given up trying to turn into dust.
I have given up trying to hide my heart
in her chest.

You can put my heart at half mast
and watch it wrinkle in the wind
and leave my bones out to dry
on your grandmother's clothesline.

Hannah Shapiro (she/they) lives and writes on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation. She holds a BA in English Literature from Carleton University. Their work has appeared in Rough Cut Press, Bywords, and Acropolis Journal. Hannah is the poetry editor of Sumac Literary Magazine. IG: @hannahshapiro_

Some days, you are a raindrop
pooling into so many puddles.
Most days, you are water
sucked from the hurricane.

reminiscent of a dewy morning,
mornings after terrible things.
Reel me in from this nightmare—
skip me all the way to shore.

Steep me in this quiet revolution.
Give me a lover I won't have to hide.
Give her the faith to walk outside at midnight
to watch the stars without wondering
in whose hands she will end up next.

We spend too much time falling
into calloused hands,
balancing on blistered toes,
falling in love with our eyes closed.

And what will I tell my grandfather after he's walked
a thousand miles across this snow crusted border
to call this country home?

After he's planted the seeds to his family tree
and prayed to Hashem for rain?

What will I tell him when
the tree grows sick with the sweetness of fruit,
when branches snap under the weight of change?

You can grind these bones to grain
and feed us the bread.

You can bake these bodies in your kiln,
but we will come back ceramic.

CUSPING ADOLESCENCE

by Flannah Shapira

I ask my mother, what would happen if my body was wrung out like a rag /
secretions of the flesh falling onto the grass like raindrops / watering the earth
with our bodies / with the sounds they make / the movements like breaking
bread / to form something sweeter / what is to become of two boys / cuspung
adolescence, palms sticking to each other like dew / stretching last night's
moonlight into the dawn / liquified silver / passing through our hands like
river water / melting chains into locketts / keeping your picture on my pulse /
safer here than under my pillow of dead geese / the reminder of your father
taking you hunting / the screams spilling out of the forest / your finger hot
on the trigger / fingers that now find me / this body its own sort of gun / your
hands finding the soft spots / pressing deep like into the bruise of a pear / juice
frothing around your finger / sweet with rot / my mother asks me what you
mean to me / I turn away and answer to the trees / you mean our sweat salting
the goose feathers / my own flesh / pimped at the sight of you / the hearth of
me / swelling in my jeans / not the staying / but the waking up at dawn with a
smudge of light / to guide your leaving

BATTY TALK

Author: DRC
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Imagine, freedom, handed to me on a cramped dance floor.
My body: twisting, writhing, dripping. A beaded collection of moisture draped on my eyebrows, trickled down my face, wet the top of my lip.

The taste of freedom is briny. The salty taste of sweat: water – watta – and a trace of ammonia.

A moan yuh.

It's Friday night and I'm here. Bodies pressed up against me, my thick thighs tucked into tight denim. The gentle caress of a cotton marina against my nipples...my titties...my manhood. A silver chain slaps against my neck as I twist my likkle hips, move this likkle batty.

My belly dances with me as I spin and the music thumps against my chest.

Freedom is this belly.

Tender morsels of braised oxtail between my teeth. Grandma cooks it in with butter beans and onions, simmered slowly with scotch bonnet. On those Sundays the sweet voice of Carlene Davis lulled us with peace. Around the table we sucked marrow from bones and gravy from our fingertips as we swayed to that slow rocksteady, to Miss Davis.

Those Sunday's made this belly, so why should I change it?









ABOUT QT

Queer Toronto Literary Magazine is a non-profit dedicated to elevating and celebrating queer voices in Canada.

QT was started in response to the criminal shortage of Canadian queer literary magazines. There are so many LGBTQ2SIA+ artists out there! And in times of crisis, maintaining community and connection is vital.

QT brings together our collective projects to create that sense of shared space. QT celebrates the art queer individuals make for ourselves and for each other. We accept poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, book reviews, personal essays, reflections, memoirs, as well as artwork, drawings, comics, photographs, collages, and other visual media.

www.qtmag.ca

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