

*Love Letter*



Q9

Issue No. 13

## Table of Contents

Welcome Letter

p4

"LOVE, LET'ER" by Didier Chen

p6

"My Mother Didn't Teach Me About Desire"  
by Joanna Cleary

p8

"Two's Company, Three's a Crowd."  
by Madeline Fiore

p10

"Missed Connection" by Micah Favel

p15

"On the Topic of Truth and Beauty"  
by Kenley Ku

p16

"Love Letter" by Jane Yearwood

p18

"A love letter to the person  
I end up with" by Bushra Ahmed

p20

"Easy Fuck" by Aleena Sharif

p22

"what Julia said that day" by yael tobón

p23

"Let Me Explain" & "Triad" by Wes Mongo Jolley

p24



February 14, 2024

Dear Cutie,

For this issue, we asked for love letters in all their forms. We invited our artists to consider how they record their love, how they communicate it, and how they make it real. What we received was a range of beautiful, vulnerable and intimate moments. It is a joy to preserve these moments through art.

It's only fair that we take this moment to write a love letter to you as well, Cutie. So, here goes.

Time and time again, you trust us with your work. We can never express fully what that trust means to us. You always come to us ready to engage creatively and with an open mind. Being in community with you, whether through the digital space or the physical one, is enlivening.

The excitement and enthusiasm you bring to each issue, each event, each moment, inspires us every day.

Thank you for continuing to show up meaningfully. Thank you for bringing your whole self. Thank you for building with us.

Our commitment to you is that we will keep following your lead. We will continue bringing our most authentic, creative energy to everything we make in union with you.

All our love,

QT Editors

## "LOVE, LET'ER"

### Love, Let'Er

One light and one heavy  
Is the rhythm of your sleeping breath.  
Shallow on the intake,  
Yet all of the air displaced between  
Soft snores, sustain your life  
And mine with it.

Billions of modal citizens in your realm,  
Although the organs may not agree with the body.  
They are singing,  
While sleepless tears crystal-clear cried added sorrows,  
Collected into streams of half-dreamt memories.  
Perhaps we all hope to feel whole in one.

Every molecule that takes part in your being,  
Has also made you in their image.  
They led me to you,  
The same ones from which I was built.  
Sown into the soil and harvested from crops,  
Spun into the fabrics we wear dearly.

They are singing,  
A song slow and eternal,  
With your name  
And my name  
And everyone else's  
In it.

Every wave a nickname for the sea,  
A single bow stroke in a massive symphony —  
Something about the Moon and the stars and time and space.  
Each time the shores call for them,  
They rush in chasing a welling passion,  
Then shatter on the rocks for it.

They say therefore you must be tender,  
So I do not become  
Scraped and broken.  
What they do not know  
About your sharp edges:  
They were cut from oceans-worth of my longing.

For I must have wished for a hundred thousand years,  
For all the wrong things to go wrong,  
So that we would be right  
Where we are.

The colours in your hair so intensely vibrant,  
I see the first sunrise and the last sunset in them.

— Didier

Didier Chen

Didier Su-Jin Dan (He/They) is a non-binary artist, writer and translator who lives and works on the traditional and unceded Indigenous territory better known as 'Toronto' by settlers. As a student of philosophy and enjoyer of schmaltz, their art focuses on the deconstruction of social realities. They hold a BA from McGill University and are currently working on a novel about lost futures.

\\ IG: @xxesiecle

## "My Mother Didn't Teach Me About Desire"

### MY MOTHER DIDN'T TEACH ME ABOUT DESIRE

Last night, I shaved myself until I found an embarrassed and bird-like secret.

Today, I keep changing my mind. I want instead to smell like home; I want to dress in my old childish underwear and pretend nobody's ever taught me to outgrow it.

I used to tell you about my body. Mama.  
I grew. I grew. I used to smell like spring.

You knew me in myth: sea eagle, Icarus, child who refused to believe her wounds

hurt others. I understood when a half-lover showed me a bruise perched on her thigh left by a man who wanted her for a night and said it almost looked like a flower.

It was winter back then. Mama, I had sex again. My flesh is now so full of want:

animalesque, I can't control this desire for skin on mine like unrelenting snow.

Mama, why didn't you tell me it would be like this? I was a woman again today,

my blue dress much too short for my legs and I thought of you. Mother, I am smooth

as beach glass. I am touching a skylark, furling and unfurling such ruptured wings.

Just last week, I read a poem saying April came before anyone was ready. Remember

how early on Easter Sunday, years ago, just as we were leaving the park, you said

that I now needed to start wearing a bra, so I did. There became a bird within me

so desperate to glide into the naked sun before I could fully know what it was.

Mama, I am. You who named me Robyn before changing your mind have, like me,

also wondered what it is to fly. one day, I'll tell you about all the lovers who have

made me feel a feathery lightness. I'll list the names that I'll always know. Mama.

I love you. when it's winter once more, I'll ask you about how our bodies melt

under our furs, that come sweetness, then wait for you to say I should Sleep,

as snow will keep falling until morning for me to snowshoe into the sunlight,

shadow pointing back the way I came.

### Joanna Cleary

Joanna Cleary (she/her) is an emerging queer artist. Her work has previously appeared or is forthcoming in *The /t&szl/ Review*, *The Hunger*, *Gordon Square Review*, *Always Crashing*, *Apricity Press*, *Digging Through The Fat*, *Typehouse Magazine*, *The Gravity of the Thing*, *Funicular*, and *Canthius*, among others.

IG: @joannacleary121

"Two's Company,  
Three's a Crowd."







## Madeline Fiore

Madeline Rose Fiore is a lesbian writer, filmmaker, photographer, poet, artist and above all, a storyteller based in Toronto, Ontario.

## "Missed Connection"

### Missed Connection

The Summer rolls off my back like a cold sweat I wake up from in the middle of the night.  
Only it's early December and I can't quite hear you.

What was that?

It's cutting out.

Full parking lots glint in the Sun like scales on a fish, and they say that season the sky  
bore twice as many stars.

Do you see? Look!

There! Two big dippers!

I couldn't see, not really. Only I told you I could, and I think after some time I truly  
believed I had. I received a premonition of the worst sort that your lungs were cloaked in  
smog. We played board games in the grass, you laid your elbow on my knee. When we  
touched I swore I could feel your tattoos beating through your skin, but the street light  
keeps spilling shadows along my walls. Shadows that devour me. Shadows that digest me.  
They leak and seep over all I have, all I am.

Even now, it's not real — or so you tell me.

A shadow is only a shadow and I am only me.

How heavy I've found my bones have grown, resting in the palm of your hand.  
Your blood is sour and your heart is ugly, but it's still your marrow I crave. I  
suck it out until it's stuck in my teeth, yet no one has the heart to tell me it's there.

I saw someone today that looked like you.

only it wasn't you.

Because I don't know you,  
any more.

## Micah Favel

Micah Favel is a poet currently residing in British Columbia. Much of their writing focuses on queerness, loss, and their mixed Plains Cree and settler Scottish identity. Their work has previously appeared in Querencia Press, and the Ex-Puritan.



## "On the Topic of Truth and Beauty"

on the topic of truth & beauty  
kenley meredith ku

the other day i was in a cafe  
taking a break from life  
playing extreme sudoku on my phone  
that kinda thing  
and i overheard a very stuffy, arduous-looking old white man  
lament to his stringent, beaky old white lady companion  
about how he went to some accursed museum  
and how terrible it is to see all this nonsensical postmodern art  
desecrate the halls of such an esteemed institution  
and how he doesn't understand why everyone is so obsessed with  
identity and irony and sexuality and violence and abstraction  
everything is so ugly and harsh now  
blah blah blah  
and whatever happened to purity, honest craftsmanship  
whatever happened to truth and beauty  
and the woman clicked her tongue in vague, tacit agreement  
and i thought to myself:  
oh come on, you boring and unimaginative freak!  
the 1920s called and they want their culture war back, you moron  
get a life and learn to appreciate the boundlessness of  
digital eco-feminist textile-based video installations like the rest of us  
but to that obnoxious dilettante's last point:  
i know what happened to truth and beauty  
i found them in your eyes  
like i find your heart to be pure  
and your body well-crafted  
i think that you are  
how pigments blur together to form

the softly dappled curves of pale water lilies  
straddling the crest of a faint ripple  
or the transfiguration of thick marble into fine folds of silk,  
gossamer-thin, draped exquisitely around the virgin's bosom  
across whose lap lies jesus's body, prone,  
stigmata dotting the delicate veins traveling up his arm,  
muscle tethered to bone and his head thrown back,  
reckless and ecstatic in death  
i hope that one day  
we can grow wrinkled and awful together  
and sip lukewarm decaf cappuccinos  
and go on and on about  
not understanding the world  
as it slips from our grasp.

but until that day:  
kiss me

Kenley Ku

Kenley Meredith Ku (she/her) is a Toronto-based writer and performer. She is an eldest daughter, public menace, and an advocate for delusion. \ \ IG: @normalcanadianwoman

## "Love Letter"

To my forever love,

I thought love would be a spark,  
A rupturous moment of clarity,  
The pulling of the Ten of Cups.

In some ways it is, and in many ways it's quieter.  
A warm glow emanating from our souls.  
An ontological shift making everyday life flow  
differently.  
Not just the Lovers card, but all the cards.

My future no longer seems fictive.  
I know whose body I'll be gently tracing  
before bed.  
I know I'll never be a chapter or a footnote again.

I used to love sipping in Glad Day at 3am  
with a stranger,  
But I know it's my time now to cry in bed at 3am  
In your arms after a bad dream.

I used to sit next to dying tulips  
Days after another failed Valentine's Day,  
But now I smile up from my laptop  
And gaze at the sunflowers you gave me on Thursday.

I thought my Leo Venus was too much to hold,  
But you are able to caress my celestially  
destined passion  
Like the Heraean goddess you are.

I worry sometimes that I am flying  
Too close to the sun, as I have done before,  
But I know that with you flying beside me  
We will only ever feel her delicate warmth.

I worry sometimes that our micro utopia cannot  
last,  
But then I remember the four-leaf clover  
we found on our first date,  
And I know it will never fade.

I've been told we are together against all odds,  
But I know nothing could be less true:  
The universe conspired to bring us together,  
And we will find each other in every life to come.

Our love doesn't need to be written into  
reality.

It will live forever through each metamorphosis  
of our souls,  
In every space where our energy flows,  
And in every moment we share.

Te amo,

Your lover

Jane Yearwood

Jane is currently completing her Master's degree in Human Geography. Her research focuses on the development of more-than-capitalist subjectivity through participation in non-dominant economic structures and collectives. She enjoys nurturing her creative energy and expressing her queer hope/love/anger through engaging with song and the written word.

"A love letter to the person  
I end up with"

A Love Letter To The Person I End Up With

By Bushra Ahmed

I hope you know I visited you in my dreams every night this year

In those realms, we are married. We hold hands and talk with ease. We look at paintings in art galleries and artifacts in museums. You tell me about their history and its significance to you and your story.

But I remain distracted;

by the twinkling in your eyes and the warm honey pouring in my ears

- That's your voice

In some dreams, we are older and greying, yet your love remains ignited: ~~فأشرف~~ ~~أشرف~~

"The everlasting flame" or "the flame that cannot be extinguished".

We are surrounded by our children, and our children's children.

In other dreams, we are making such passionate love, that it turns smut writers a shade of beet red.

I feel every ridge of your skin on my fingertips, while you map my body with the grace of yours, committing to your memories.

One thing is certain, that in all the universes I visit each night,  
You and I are together.

Our lives intertwined with love, passion, and warmth.

Oh, how lucky I must be in those worlds!  
To have you by my side and grow old with you.

I think I might just be okay,  
waiting a little bit longer for you  
- In this life.

Oh, maybe I'll see you in the next one?

Bushra Ahmed

Bushra (they/them) is a neuroqueer writer, who explores topics related to queerness, love, empowerment, and diasporic experiences at the intersection of multi-hyphenated identities. Although a non-fiction writer, they have been recently dipping their proverbial toes in spoken word poetry, and screenplay writing. Outside of writing, Bushra can be found exploring Toronto's food scene, watching too much TV, or hanging out with their feline nibblings, Midi and Beanie.

## "Easy Fuck"



Aleena Sharif

Pakistani artist that works with the nude female form.

## "what Julia said that day"

what julia said that day

i met julia the first day of snow;  
Smoking outside the café  
they hugged me as if our bodies  
had met before ourselves

los brazos unen lo que  
nunca estuvo separado

like a mexican does;  
far from the shared land

- i can't cry
- when you do, you will bawl your heart out

green tea, like one does when  
sickness blocks your capacity to feel

julia, did you feel the intimacy  
of our encounter like i did?

thank you, julia,  
for mentioning Rosario castellanos  
i might relate to her a little too much

hope i see you again

yael tobón

yael tobón (she/they) is a Mexican queer writer and poet currently based in Tiohtià:Ke (Montréal). 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.

## "Let Me Explain"

# Let Me Explain<sup>3</sup>

by Wess Mongo Jolley

I love you like I love my wings  
but I never knew my wings  
until he taught me to fly  
I cannot lose them  
my wings  
and I cannot lose him  
because he joins my shoulders to the sky

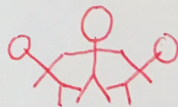


Let me explain...

I love him like I love my arms  
but I've always had my arms  
to hold you on sleepless nights  
I cannot lose them  
my arms  
and I cannot lose you  
because you join my shoulders to the earth

Let me explain...

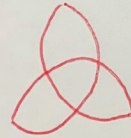
I cannot live with only these  
my wings  
for feathers alone  
burn to ash in the sun  
I cannot live with only these  
my arms  
for flesh alone  
seeks a return to dust



## "Triad"

# Triad

by  
Wess  
Mongo  
Jolley



I.

You are half of his heart  
and half of mine

so when he and I kiss

there is more of you  
than either of us



II.

"You have so many faces" he said  
"and all of them beautiful"

now here is one he hasn't seen

your face when he is gone  
how did he know?

III.

My yearning for you both  
weighs heavily within my chest

like two bites of loneliness

or two stones  
piled upon the wicked

Wess Mongo Jolley

Wess Mongo Jolley (he/him) is a Canadian novelist and poet, most well-known for hosting the IndieFeed Performance Epistle Channel for ten years. His horror trilogy, *The Last Handful of Clover*, is available on Patreon, Wattpad, QSaltLake, and as an audiobook podcast. Mongo writes from his home in Montréal, Quebec.

## About



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 epistles, fiction, creative nonfiction, book reviews, personal essays, reflections, memoirs, as well as artwork, drawings, comics, photographs, collages, and other visual media.

[www.qtmag.ca](http://www.qtmag.ca)

[@qtlitmag](https://www.instagram.com/qtlitmag)

Thank you to all the volunteers at QT, without whom the organization would not exist.

## Thank You

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XOXO