

KISSING DYNAMITE: A JOURNAL OF POETRY

ISSUE 40 APRIL 2022: "LINGER"

Welcome to Issue 40 "Linger," in which our contributing poets examine nostalgia, memory, and the dynamic of past and present.

Issue 40 includes work by Babatunde Waliyullah Adesokan, Christine Cock, Alexa Doran, Julieanne Larick, Sarah Lilius, Miceala Morano (our featured poet for April), nat raum, Peter Relic, and Ecem Yucel, and Maxwell Rabb is featured in our Baker's Dozen spot "Conjecture." Please view The Gallery below!

Farewell—Social Media Manager Erica Abbott

With this issue, we say farewell to Social Media Manager Erica Abbott. Erica joined the KD team at the end of Summer 2021 and has been working on promoting our contributing authors on our social media platforms. She leaves behind big shoes to fill! We thank Erica for her commitment to *Kissing Dynamite* and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

Featured Artist—Oormila Vijaykrishnan Prahlad

Oormila Vijaykrishnan Prahlad is an Indian-Australian artist and poet, who serves as a chief editor for *Authora Australis*. Her recent artworks have been published in *The International Zine Project*, *3 AM Magazine*, and *Oyster River Pages*, and on the covers of *The Amsterdam Quarterly*, *Pithead Chapel*, *The Rat's Ass Review*, *Ang(st) the Body Zine*, and elsewhere. She is a Pushcart and multiple Best of the Net nominee. She lives and works in Sydney on the land of the Ku-ring-gai People of The Eora Nation. Find her @oormilaprahlad and www.instagram.com/oormila_paintings

Poetry Gallery

"A Qunut of Heavensongs" by Babatunde Waliyullah Adesokan

Tell me about the regrets where the things that once aroused us bury us / tell me about old songs that hearse grief into memories / tell me about the past that has strangered us from home / where dust chases dusk / & corpse buries corpse / amen & men vault on expiring hours / forgetting that a sandglass could get fractured or filled out / tell me how everything ends on a

quivering lips of an orphan who has swallowed enough dreams / who has walled in dreams to a pillar of quaking dust / see as he almost becomes a dead nothing / before he harkens to adhan / & wears meanings into his greying smile / see as he palms his crumbled bones towards the end / on his lips a Qunut of heaven songs / everything dead awakes like the rose of Jericho / everything shallow turns shallom / & the trapped boy becomes a bird on the ledge / his fall becomes a flight of freedom.

“My Dear Cousin,” by Christine Cock

It's all about the Dewars' second sight. What courses through our blood, yours and mine. About our ancestors casting spells. Seers dreaming the results of battle or matrimony. Stomping the split wooden tip of the shillelagh into ground with a certainty born in heather and gorse. Of how dreaming about you means we have flown across cold, deathly waters to swirl in a connection of highland dust. It's about how the ache woke me again, wondering if Aberfeldy is hospitable in the damp fall. Unlike what a local weathercaster coined our *humiture*—a constant peninsular 80's. Reminds me of visiting you in St Louis in the summers. We'd sleep in a bed together, naked without covers, allowing the fan's slow turning blades to cool us. In fifth grade you and I looked nothing alike for having fathers so similar. Dark Scots, yes, but beyond that, I was a stick, you had already bloomed with breasts the size of melons in the fields beyond the window. You asked me if I wanted to touch them. Of course I did, but was too shy, knowing my body couldn't reciprocate— flat, with ribs like corrugated tin.

“Six Across: Fable” by Alexa Doran

I begin rinsed of cloud, lunged with stars, a punk.
I love men who pause well.
Dear...

the perpetual autumn of that comma,
the horizon I broth in offer.

Maybe tonight I'll apologize again.
An apple in reverse, loosening its foam,
alert in its juice.

When will I refuse to accept this

isn't true? the fruit to woman metaphor
gone moot, more zombie than lily I speak
in ash and stamen while my audience grooves.

Remix! they assume

but that would imply a *you*.

A person to goalie the silence, to bunker
the *timber!* of my shiver. Yes, once

the Ferris wheel bucket rusted through
so that our toes peached the heavens,

a kind of wild crop, of star-wash, of pew.

“Drug-Mart, Prom Queens, Glitter Eyeshadow Wannabe” by Julieanne Larick

I have something big, bold, beautiful to tell the silent streets.
Spark the dusty tire swings, caffeinate the delirious moms,
alight the brick Tudor homes, wrench a scream from the birds above.

I’ll rehearse with you. You have no choice but to
cover your eyes and fill your mouth with feathers.

Hear me out and I’ll set you free.

I am no longer a poet-glitter-eyelids-wannabe-aged-out-prom-queen

that you knew in roaring youth.

I grew into a liar-liar-pants-on-fire-gun-toting-big-nosed
freak, scrubbing my burnt legs with burnt sand,
removing every dead skin cell one by one,

taking a pistol to the suburbs, taking out every snake in my hair
one by one, writhing and smearing my eyelids with
cheap powder from the Wooster, OH Drug-Mart,
hoping it was a haven, that I would

appear on the ghastly floors under the fierce lights.

I observed other poet-glitter-eyelids-wannabe-aged-out-prom-queens except
they weren’t freaks, wannabes—they were guarded dolls
loved by the delirious streets, loved by the birds, by the people.

I boiled and seethed, smoked seeing them in happy epochs,
I, the big-nosed freak, yearning for loveliness before it drained out,
wanted to be lovely so I waxed my caterpillars with beeswax
softened my hands with 99-cent frosting.

That's my message for the dusty tire swings, delirious moms,
white tudors, birds,
who saw me as poet-glitter-eyelids-wannabe-aged-out-prom-queen
at 16, and see me as a killer,
feeling lovely for eternity on cheap linoleum floors.

"Food Story" by Sarah Lilius

I will die with this struggle clutched
in my teeth like a carbohydrate.

A food story dangles, drips fatty
with images of myself skinny

cracking hard breadsticks
against my abdominal muscles.

Rogue girl with the stomach
blames it on child rearing, the stretch

and pull of life makes translucent
tracks across this middle place.

How can two small boys
harbor as fat cells for years after?

What kind of magic passes into my mouth?
Corn syrup moves slow into my organs.

Even if blood tests tell the doctors
I'm surviving without a thigh gap,

my flabby arms sprout wings
constructed of cake and bone.

I'll fly away someday with my breadbasket,
Diet Pepsi, and pads of butter that I'll lay

over my eyes when I've eaten myself
to near death, a place where this war no longer consumes me.

My food story in the making, I drop cupcakes
into the open grave, watch small animals

dive into the hole without helping
them back out.

“dissections” by Miceala Morano, April’s Featured Poet

CW: Mentions of blood, references to death

*In the summer, you gently pull
the frogs from the pond,
palms against soft underbelly,
hands shaded in green water.
I think of how dissection
opens the heart.*

What I will remember: tenderness, the salt of summer
sweat and not tears or blood. My heart worked
only for me to love you and implode. Only for a minute
was I alive. All I recall is the blue iris of the lake as I dove.
Not the yellow line of the road, the thud like a skipped beat,
or the moon paling my skin. I pulled your body
from the pavement, wrapped you in my coat
and wore your blood. I carried you to the river.
I think baptism goes like this: God finds us
In a last breath, half-drowned by His hand, and then
gives it all back. How the return of knives to each other’s necks
feels like mercy. How we check each other’s hearts for blood.
I held you tenderly in the spaces between
life and death
 car seat and floor
 here and here
 each flashing memory
cradled heartbeats in my ribcage
Until they were yours, resuscitation a prayer gone
to voicemail, In all my dreams, forgiveness.
None of the salt and all of the river.
None of the drowning and all of the gods.
Here, something gives out, your neck
tilting sideways onto the glass.
You look half-asleep in this light, beautiful

In this light, it is dark and you are here
And *here* is a lost signal, a false definition.
Here was you. The moment the car hit,
The radio skipped your favorite song.
I could feel my heart pause,
waiting for yours to echo.

*How with all living things,
we kill them
trying to find their heartbeat.*

Miceala's Commentary on "dissections":

"dissections" is, at its core, a poem about the intense fear of causing harm to those you love through your actions. When writing the poem, I hoped to talk about how love, no matter what type, makes us vulnerable to and even accepting to that harm, while still displaying the fear that comes alongside it.

The piece consists of three parts, and the middle one was created to slice a very brief moment in two and display the fear of causing harm through the use of a highly catastrophic event. I wanted to show how heavily this fear weighs on our perception of all things, switching between lighter and darker imagery to rapidly move the reader between the present moment and the hypothetical. I wanted to include snapshots of moments you would typically see in the night in the heat of summer (bodies immersed in water, spontaneous midnight car rides) and see just how far I could use language and metaphor to twist the reader's perception of what is real in love and what is manufactured by the mind in situations of fear or desperation.

Assistant Editor Belinda Munyeza's Commentary on "dissections":

Right from the beginning, "dissections" caught my attention with the lines "I think of how dissection / opens the heart," which seems to promise an immensely layered exploration of violence and grief. Mixing vividly poignant imagery with soft language, "dissections" delivers on this promise in a poetic space where tenderness can co-exist with pain, beauty can co-exist with gruesomeness, and all of it happens without one necessarily needing to resolve the other. The poem is a complex narrative in which the speaker's experience forces us to examine the spaces between life and death, regret and forgiveness, holding on and letting go, and so much more.

"i, medusa" by nat raum

after Ada Limón

what lurks behind
my irises, beyond the seablue
whose likeness i haven't seen
since the beaches of barbados?
even then, going on eleven,
i ignored red-ringed warnings
on trees and picked *manzanillas*
*de la muerte*¹ to launch into the sea
like softballs. believing it to be
sunburn, i was unfettered at first
by scaly swaths of peeling rashy skin
until they still nipped at my face well
after nightfall, slathered with thick
green aloe.

and i still don't learn from my
mistakes; my instinct is still to throw
stones for practice, for the day
i need to kiss someone back harder
than my lips would let me. i cultivate
a steely stare, practice tossing pebbles,
then slabs of mica—about the size
of those that once left welts on my shins
as i swung out over my parents' backyard
stream and my best friend skipped rocks
underneath me. i grew so at home
with stones thrown i've leaned into
chips in bone and a body numbed
limb by limb. that chill helps me harden,
after all, when i'm nineteen in a stranger's bed
with only a gaze that slices and the bite of my
wit. with no snakes but the one i've trained
in my beast-belly, the lone asp that waits
until they can't take it anymore to unleash
a venom not unlike a milkwhite sap, stinging
and seeping into cheeks cracked and pink
as a lesser antilles sunset.

"The Humidity" by Peter Relic

¹ Spanish colloquialism for manchineel fruit, a poisonous fruit from the tropical flowering plant of the same name.

Everyone's hair's in curlers, states the Polish professor with the black belt in borscht.
Correction: chlodnik. Eyes azure as cabbage, manicure like mangelwurzel, cooler than dill.

Wioleta is a pretty name when Wioleta says it.
In my mouth it sounds rude as a feral horse.
A feral horse runs like glue down Battey Street.
Swamp me before I claim it's not the heat.

Wioleta says let's give the dry cleaner the finger,
let's split the velvet curtain of July where
Mercutio is hiding, nibbling a Stroopwafel
and workshopping the wobbly bit about

"Her whip of cricket's bone; the lash of film"
which is good ish, but who's going to
empty the dehumidifier as the living room
is subsumed in rip curls of bramble Fanta.

Remember the day at Bull Sluice Lake when we
dropped the giant watermelon and it exploded
into a million puzzles. No curtains were drawn.
No sweat but pit stains. No half doses.

I'd never met Wioleta then, or heard her cry
like an owl. Crazy birds attract each other, she
says, accent heavy as summer's blanket.
Don't lock up what you hope to see fly.

["Have You Seen the New The Beatles Documentary?"](#) by Ecem Yucel

We didn't drink in high school, other than a couple of times
my parents treated us to a glass of cheap, red wine, and the time
we were sent to a culture center by our school, in a group of twelve
highschooler classical musicians to give a recital at a cocktail party
thrown for the businessmen by businessmen where we weren't paid
for our services, so we drank their biggest bottle of JB, remember?
It was the night before I turned eighteen, and our school principal
didn't say anything when he saw the whiskey glasses in our
hands: art trumps underage drinking.

We didn't smoke in high school if you don't count the rare times we skipped school, hopped on a bus in our school uniforms with hearts beating fast from the lousy thrill and went to the beach by the Mediterranean we frequented in those warm winter days, to watch the greyish sea, talk about our goals, future, dreams, and fears, and get some fresh air as we sat at an outdoor table of a beach café, drinking bitter Turkish tea in the cheapest-sized cups bought with our last coin, and clumsily smoking a newly-bought pack of cigarettes, Winston brand, red package, consecutively -ten for you, ten for me, but never enough to condemn ourselves to lifelong addiction.

We didn't have sex in high school, either: though it wasn't due to the lack of energetic, adolescent boys chasing us around. The boys who asked us out tried to corner and kiss us in the piano rooms twenty minutes after we said yes, and dumped us after we didn't give in, accusing us of not being 'mature' enough. Disappointments, heartbreaks, and the anger against stupid boys didn't help us much as we went through high school: a school of fine arts where the egos of the teachers flew high and crushed your teen spirit every single day -we used to call it *hell*, remember?

Hence, we wrote, regularly, obsessively, taking turns with the notebook, and reading it out loud to each other in the piano rooms as we made enemies of the pianists who wanted to use those pianos for practice. We bent our harsh reality with a story that filled ten, hardcoverd, thick journals and agendas, amounting to three long novels in total, starring you and me and the members of The Beatles when they were around our age: Paul McCartney as my love interest, John Lennon as yours.

And we four went through many adventures -ten accidents, seven assaults, two suicide attempts, four pregnancies, fifteen breakups, who knows how many misunderstandings, a couple of deaths, and more- to live happily ever after in the end, because we were optimistic about life back then: Lennon didn't die so young, McCartney converted me into a vegetarian, and The Beatles didn't break up. But the most important thing was that you and I stayed best friends in that alternate universe and loved each other until the day we'd die, as opposed to not talking to each other for years, not even to announce that you're a mother now. *What would our versions of John and Paul think, if they saw us right now?* I sometimes muse, and wonder if you watched the new The Beatles documentary *Get Back*, put together by Peter Jackson.

[“Conjecture,” Our Baker’s Dozen Feature](#)

In "Offbeat on a Horse, Current" **Maxwell Rabb** explores entangled moments in time and place.

"Offbeat on a Horse, Current" by Maxwell Rabb

a horse beat similar to what i know
of late belligerence—
in the later years,
i have become a sinking saint
of the neighborhood.

the moving verb: beasted. the pure
fast-paced heat & speed of San Francisco.
when i return to my local
laundromat in concerted movement:

i will listen closely to the couples at the dryers; to the second strophic—

the cycle of waterfronts, i will stand at the tide.
there is something big in here, Houston at early evening.

but truly, i can hear it

a voice of Gliese / or a full scale radio reprisal /
put to the test the fire from
Cornerstone St. / an off-chance happening /AUG 5 on a congested stairwell

the caesura

and i open a window to provide a little air for the eyes;
a burning sprint.
dear aching legs—
dear passerby, the slow-cold is anything but painless.

Please Join

i meet the old voices the closeness of mercury.
& coincidentally, i am called a fallen saint.

sitting at Cornerstone St. with a friend
reading a blown up catalog of filled with clean homes.
my cushion
remains mislaid, i remember.

hello, transparency

the next morning, i can see the yeller keeping me awake;
he will one day make the fourth movement beyond
the middle intermission. to reach down to tie my shoe again,

some new forms beyond notice,
i sit quietly
with tissue burns on AUG 6.

Maxwell's Commentary on "Offbeat on a Horse, Current":

How to navigate a world of unprovable conjectures. The poetry I am interested in is often entangled by itself, weaved together by the anxiety of mundane instances. There is a simmering distrust or low frequency paranoia that hammers away throughout the poem. Inspired by poets like Hannah Weiner and Merle Hoyleman, I hope to translate these supernatural anxieties. I aim to create a space that strings together these moments in order to provide comfort among the uncertain, and hopefully, what materializes is a consolation within a dicey world.

Poet Biographies

Babatunde Waliyullah Adesokan (Toonday) writes from Oyo State, Nigeria. He works with Firstbank. He is a lover of poetry; a lover of everything that breathes poetry. His works have appeared / are forthcoming in *Pangolin Review*, *Wales Haiku*, *Ethel-Zine*, *Shallowtales Review*, *Stillwater Review*, *RoadRunnerReview*, and *Lucent Dreaming*.

Christine Cock (she/her) is a poet and naturalist living in the woods of Florida. She received her BA in Creative Writing at Eckerd College while working in zoological conservation. She has been published in numerous journals and online journals and has been included in anthologies such as *Screams in the Silence*, benefitting victims of abuse. Her poetry was also included in an exhibit at the Florida Museum of Natural Sciences benefitting avian conservation.

Alexa Doran (she/her) recently completed her PhD in Poetry at Florida State University. Her full-length collection *DM Me, Mother Darling* won the 2020 May Sarton New Hampshire Poetry Prize and was published in April 2021 (Bauhan). She is also the author of the chapbook *Nightsink, Faucet Me a Lullaby* (Bottlecap Press 2019). You can look for work from Doran in recent or upcoming issues of *Pleiades*, *Literary Mama*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *Salt Hill Journal*, and *Gigantic Sequins*, among others. For a full list of her publications, awards, and interviews please visit her website at alexadoran.com.

Julianne Larick (she/her) is a Midwestern double Best of the Net-nominated poet. She has work published in *perhappened mag*, *Blue Marble Review*, *The B'K*, and more. Julianne reads

prose for *GASHER Journal* and manages *The Dodge's* social media. She also edits fiction for *jmww Journal*. Julieanne tweets @crookyshanks. Find more of her work at <http://www.julielarickwriting.com>.

Sarah Lilius (she/her) is the author of the full-length poetry collection, *Dirty Words* (Indie Blu(e) Publishing 2021) and six chapbooks. Some of her publication credits include *Fourteen Hills, Boulevard, Massachusetts Review* and *New South*. She lives in Virginia with her husband and two sons. Her website is sarahlilius.com.

Miceala Morano (she/her) is a teen writer whose work is published or forthcoming in *Eunoia Review, The Lumiere Review, Hooligan Magazine*, and more. Her work has been recognized by the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers, and she was recently named a Foyle Commended Poet by the Poetry Society of the UK, as well as Arkansas Scholastic Press Association's 2021 Literary Magazine Writer of the Year. Find her at micealamorano.carrd.co.

Maxwell Rabb (he/him/his) lives in Chicago, but leaves his heart in New Orleans and Atlanta. He is a poet, pursuing his M.F.A. at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *GASHER, Dream Pop Journal, Spectra, Deluge, After the Pause*, and others. He loves to move in every sense of the word.

nat raum (b. 1996) is a queer disabled artist and writer from baltimore, md. they hold a bfa in photography and book arts and are currently a first-year mfa candidate in creative writing & publishing arts at the university of baltimore. nat is also the founder and editor-in-chief of fifth wheel press, a queer literature and art publishing space. past and upcoming publishers of their writing include *kissing dynamite poetry, trampset, cloves* and *delicate friend*.

Peter Relic is a writer, photographer, and collage artist inspired by the Georgia Barrier Islands. His writing has appeared in *Rolling Stone, VIBE, MOJO*, and in *Da Capo Best American Music Writing*. He lives in Savannah, Georgia. Find him on Twitter: @peterrelic

Ecem Yucel (she/her) is an Ottawa-based Turkish writer, poet, and translator. She holds an MA in World Literatures and Cultures and is a Ph.D. candidate in Translation Studies at the University of Ottawa. Her writing has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *Cypress Poetry Journal, Wine Cellar Press, Alien Buddha Press, Ayaskala Magazine*, and *Boats Against the Current Magazine*. Her poetry book *The Anguish of an Oyster* is available on Amazon, Kobo, and Barnes & Noble. You can find her at www.ecemyucel.com or on Twitter @TheEcemYucel.

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