

Rejected Lit Mag Issue #1



Editors: Ian Powell-Palm & Emily J Clarke

Featured Poets: Luther Kissam V, Bianca Braswell, Sydney Blas, & Georgi Martirosian

LOVE POEM

BIANCA BRASWELL

When you think of usefulness, think not of the bone
But the advantage of marrow, what might not technically
Constitute a meal, but that which grandmothers heaved
Into soup bowls when the trees thinned of animals.
I am trying to be less morbid, but if we were the Donner party
Could I pass for a respectable Thanksgiving meal or at least
A sizeable charcuterie board? I remember asking teachers this
To watch how fast the red climbed their throats. A lesson in
childhood—
To learn that we are meat before we are anything.
If you wanted a bottled kidney, or my midday slaughter
I'd ask only for the grace Adam gave the animals
Give me your namings— you, my late spring,
My stoppered hunger.

THE DIVERS – THE NAKED FIGURES

GEORGI MARTIROSIAN

I put on your lenses and, beautiful in my broken nakedness,
blind with my tears, lay back on the floor, remembering how you
stood at the open window and wiped the rain from your face with
your hand,
how I did not move because I was the sad God of Beckett
and these were our days without love;
and you could not lift my eyelids and see your slashed
lashes on my retinas
because, oppressed by the beauty of my body, you fell asleep
and with our anavolias covered the rotten tamarix
united their shadows.
You were the last widower of the South
and it was not me who you loved.

**WITHOUT WASHING THE BLOOD OFF THE
FAUCET, I CUT MY LOWER EYELIDS AND GO
BLIND FROM CRYING AFTER BEATING MAX
UP**

GEORGI MARTIROSIAN

I do not know

if it is dawn

or not.

**THE LAST SEX WE HAD, CELAN'S 99TH
BIRTHDAY**

GEORGI MARTIROSIAN

Sweating under his Sam Browne belt and leather mask,

clinging to my body, he listens

to the bells of The Church of St. Louis of the French.

The semicircular apses of Cappadocia attract him

and the years of blooming life hang under the dome.

Milky white circles behind my ears trickle

down my 'celan,' tattoo;

the culture is fertilized by us – the evening boys who do not talk about
love.

We shine like musgravites amphibious.

GIMÁ'-HU (HOME)

SYDNEY BLAS

“I keep forgetting you were so young when we left”

To forget (*verb*): fail to remember

“I *forgot* the name of the street I grew up on, but I remember the dirty sidewalk and the unpainted roof of our garage that we’d climb on with our small chairs, and sit to watch the sunset.”

- I *forgot* the directions to grandma’s house, the one that lives in Dededo. I *remember* the sharp turn a few minutes in, and the images of what it looked like outside the car window when my mother rushed to drop me off on her way to work. A few palm trees and a pastel yellow building, next, a rusted white concrete mom-and-pop store with signs advertising Bud Light right next to its ice machine, and after, all jungle.

- I *forgot* the color of the roof of the small house at the ranch and how long it took to get there. I *remember* the bright green mangoes that hung from the towering mango trees, and the orange metal fruit picker with its wire claw basket-- the sour taste of a green mango, fresh from the tree and covered with salt. The thick skin that was almost sweet in comparison to the coarse salt on my tongue, always just a bit too hard to chew.

- I *forgot* the sound a balati makes when it plops into the ocean. I *remember* my younger sister holding onto my dad as she reached into the water to grab one. “Throw it!” he encouraged, and she would toss each of them towards me and my other siblings. It was a sticky texture that left an ick on your skin, a coarse... ick.

To neglect (*verb*): fail to care for properly

“I *neglected* my memories and forgot where I came from.”

URINE

LUTHER KISSAM V

A boy tears an alcohol wipe from its packaging.
He winces at the burn as he wipes the tip of his penis
and pisses in a plastic cup in a tiled, prep school bathroom.

He looks at himself in the mirror. His brown eyes
dull, his pupils dilate as he pisses
in plastic, filling it to the dotted line with urine
he knows will damn him.

He knows what it will reveal-- Xanax and Morphine.
He forms the letter F with his mouth and breaths it out.

Now, this boy's defeat overwhelms him.
Now, his cup runs over before he screws the white cap
back on with trembling hands. He shakes his tip,

the last drops land on the floor, zips his blue jeans, catches
a pubic hair in the zipper. The hair starts to curve
upward before the zipper cuts it off. It falls leaf-like
to the toilet seat: black pube on white porcelain.
The nurse knocks on the door, "Everything okay?"

The boy knows it is not okay. He already feels
his parents' disappointment sting.
He hands the cup to the nurse's gloved hand
steps out into the Pennsylvania December gray
forms the letter F with his mouth and swallows it.

BIRDSEED

LUTHER KISSAM V

A sparrow perches on my old birdhouse,
red paint peeling off, colors faded.
The wood is cracked. I try not to write
a love poem. It's winter. The sickly,
gray sky swallows up joy until, even the sparrow
is silent. I stare at the bird.
I spread birdseed earlier. I watch
it peck in pleasure. It will live three years
maximum. I know this.
I still want to make it my own.

Make it come for seed and scrounge
with its tiny, black beak, head turned
ninety-degrees into the cracked wood for termites,
all crunchy and juicy like fried turkey at Thanksgiving.
I try not to think about the cold or the gray
or the love poem sitting in my head. I try
to dream the dreams of the sparrow, to fly
above the highest limb, look out over the rows
of tiled roofs, past the streetlights until I see
the warm, southern sun. I want to fly with the geese.
But I am just a sparrow, and I've forgotten
what it was I sat down to write.



Bianca Braswell is a Cuban-American poet and writer currently enrolled in the University of North Carolina at Charlotte where she is studying English and Film. She has previously been published in *Mineral Lit Magazine*, *Marias at Sampaguitas*, and *Stark Poetry Journal*. She is currently working on her first poetry collection.



Georgi Martirosian is a writer and PR Consultant. Born in 1997 in Belgorod, Russia. He is based in Moscow and was on the shortlist of the Arkady Dragomoshchenko Award (2020). He is the author of the book 'If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem' ('ARGO-RISK', 2021, Moscow), which was translated into Polish and English.



Sydney Blas is a Creative Writing student at the University of California, Riverside. She is an ‘off-island’ indigenous Chamorro poet who has learned that a connection to your culture is invaluable and has spent most of her semi-adulthood reimagining her own childhood and peoples’ history. She is 20 years old, accomplishing things she never thought she would accomplish; writing poems about her culture even after seemingly losing that connection at the age of 10. She even had one of her poems read by Guam’s governor thanks to a family friend, and her praise from her family is one of her biggest motivations. She loves to write poetry about her relationship with her boyfriend as well, the difficulties of a long-distance relationship and having a relationship with someone of an entirely different culture. But her favorite moments are sharing her stories of her home island and reading her poems to him, breathing the culture in and out of her body. Although there is no current place to find more of her work, you can reach her at [@thesyddster](#) on Instagram if you’re interested in reading more poems.



Luther Kissam V is a poet and writer who seeks to push boundaries and acknowledge his own imperfections in his work. He is a student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and is slated to graduate in the fall of 2022. He can be found and followed on Instagram [@lutherkissamwriting](#) or listening to loud music in the backseat of his Subaru.