



FULL HOUSE LITERARY MAGAZINE



ISSUE 4



THE CARDS TO COME



Editorial note



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Previously published by Whispers of Wickedness in 2005



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About our contributors

EDITORIAL NOTE



Welcome to the clubs issue! This issue brings to a close our very first Full House Deck and completes the card collection for the year.

We were blown away by the quality of the pieces submitted to our clubs window! The 13 chosen pieces represent everything we love about writing and we couldn't be prouder to publish these pieces with Full House.

The audio readings of these pieces really bring the work to life, so we highly reccomend you check that out too!

Going forwards, Full House has big plans for next year and we look forward to experiencing our future with you.

We also want to take this moment to thank the wonderful team of volunteers who helped make this issue possible. So a massive thanks to Claire, Bareerah, Kinneson, Lisa, Ed, George, Alice, Charity, Rich, Beth, Carol, Millie, Christina, Michael and Jack.

Love,

The Full House Editorial team x



EH

*We Are Resolute in Our Opinions and Beliefs
and Happiest When Things Make Sense.*

Julia Ruth Smith

I count eight black ants on the windowsill; evenly spaced, in a line and dead. Outside more rain is forecast, maybe tomorrow, maybe on my birthday. I don't mind rain.

The sixteenth of September, four candles, four decades, four times four is sixteen, divided by two, eight. I brush the ants onto the shag and put my foot on them to be sure.

I put on my favourite yellow raincoat and go out. I'm allowed to, it's allowed. I have to buy some bread for lunch. Today I'm having cheese and pickle because I had ham yesterday. When it is pouring, I'm invisible.

I notice that the clock above the checkout at Mr Patel's is wrong. I left home at 10:50 so how can it be 9:17, which is one hundred and eighty degrees but too much. I was going to buy a Flake but the clock has made things more difficult to explain, so I go home.

On the doorstep there is another ant but this one's alive.

And.

It.

Is.

Only.

One.

So I step over it because I'm getting better and start making lunch.

Awash

Emma Wells

Diamond-sharp
as chiselled fangs
snarling at scorched earth;
bodies flail
leeching time,
blood,
heartbeats.

Swaying movements
like a buoyant ship
luring as sleeplessness:
fractious divides,
missing parts,
jigsaw holes.

Conundrums speak,
brimming full of alien language -
edged, bristled phonetics
and coarse hieroglyphs
rub raw as sandpaper
on foreign, unloving tongues.

A hole rotates
washing machine round;
it circles,
churns feelings,
unearthing buried emotion
like acidic butter;
loss rises like phoenixes
powerfully unwanted,
burning resplendently
in golden dying fire.

Digital/Analogue

Oz Hardwick

My mask is sand and feathers, slate-eyed and briar-browed, a coastal erosion of familiar reflections. I wear it to virtual meetings to set agendas and plan for virtual meetings. I wear it when I fill my virtual shopping cart with food I haven't tasted in a month. I wear it to answer the door to delivery drivers who leave inappropriate replacements at the foot of the steps: for tomatoes they bring slabs of raw meat; for flour they bring last month's fashion magazines; for rice they bring oil-slicked seabirds from an unreported spillage. When I search online for returns, each click takes me further from the present, until I find myself curled like a tight foetus in a red telephone kiosk that smells of caves and disinfectant; and when I lift the receiver, a voice like an owl or a children's TV presenter asks me to leave my complaints after the tone, along with my name and my sense of self. I'd cry, but my eyes are slate and my throat is a hungry bird wrapped in thorns.

blue obsidian

Anne Leigh Parrish

things of beauty please the eye
paperweights & polished blocks of lapis & malachite
a small crystal vase with silk roses—pink
my favorite, though i don't care for fake flowers

this place isn't for me

he puts a silver giraffe in my hand
because i grew tall early
& the teasing i took fell like black rain

dust motes float in angled light
no rain here

what does he want, this
curator of his own cluttered greed?

i put the giraffe next to a porcelain girl
in a wide skirt—my skirt, & she didn't
ask to borrow it

so much taking in the world

yet here's this man, pressing something
else on me, a smooth stone
he calls blue obsidian

more inspiring than any other color, he says
it can lift & fill the sky
just like you

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four years too late

Emily Paluba

our lips fold together the same way
i used to hold my own hand in sixth grade
wondering why everyone asked

what is the source that drives you?
my answer: it's the nail in the wall
that speaks the ghost
of the picture it used to carry.
it's the hole that refuses to be

turned invisible by any hand
even after the nail has been stolen.
my answer: never changed

even when i was worried about her
and the way
she babbles like a baby volcano
and loves like a hummingbird
the way
the stars whisper her name
while she sleeps like a gnome
and walks through the night,
motionless.

i wish i had met you when i was twelve.

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defoliation

Fran Fernández Arce

loose-leaf recollections
 memories salvaged on post-its
 you wrap me round your finger
 like an elastic band
 to help you keep track of the seasons
 when your curtains are closed

this book you've written a calendar
 of nights
 of ceiling-staring ambivalence
 lacks page numbers
 is cluttered with spells

miniscule moments of brief clarity

in it I'm a character a passenger
 of your after-midnight insomnia
 while the weeks waste away

the year has fallen down the margins
 you say

 the days like petals in a flower you forgot
 to water you wrote
 a book on defoliation to sleep
 away the madness and bring back the senses
 and have a good night sleep

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private view

Jane Ayres

what I see(what I saw)
thick with intent (3 tongues)
through the rock/crack/chink
held in the eye of a rusting needle
held in the I
spy -dered
strangers (s)talk
ing manicured
memories
curated/hiding in disposable braided want
dreams (swallowed whole:bitteraftertaste)
life (chargrilled)
killing hope – pretty or dead?
(understanding the game is not enough)
criss-crossing
pastel blues of oneness wanton/carnal
sweet mercury madness
beckons
(be kind rescue is not an option so enjoy the picnic)

I never

Getting Closer

Bethany Lyall

Intimacy sleeps on my side of the bed.
She smells like me,
like the soft heat of my breath
on your neck as we sleep,
sweat sinking into sheets pulled close
around our entwined legs.

She is my teddy, worn thin,
spilling stuffing from her sides because
I don't have Grandpa
to sew her shut again.
He would've loved you.

She's moving in too,
stowed away in my suitcase
to watch TV with us at bedtime,
to sit between the palms of your
calloused hands, and warm them
as she does mine.

Sometimes she's discarded
at the foot of the bed,
withered face at floor level
but she's picked up again, speaking
sorry in whispers, dust rubbed from her head.

She lies beside us,
pink fur rubbed brown against the skin
of my upper lip, nestled in
between our fingers and our naked chests,
getting closer each morning
on my side of the bed.

Half-kissed Girlfriend

Mandira Pattnaik

It seems the oranges are hollow, sun-weathered cliffs. The morning nothing but washed laundry, the sounds of birds, cacophony. I loosen the segments of the last of the oranges, arrange in a green porcelain plate, take it to him. Shavar loves color. Orange against green is something he'll notice, have an appetite for. Somedays, he's fussier than a kid.

When I hold the plate to him, he picks one, licks it.

'Orange, Shavar!'

'Is it?'

I show him the peels.

'Oh, I thought,' he pauses, 'lime.'

On the best of days, I lose my patience. Feel guilty for hours. For patience is my armor against our fortunes, my sail against the wind. Today is different. As sweat beads on my forehead, it is holding. A fascination for seeing oneself consumed, and marvel at the towers of smoke rising.

I drape the shawl over his shoulder. North wind blades through the pines, annexes the verandah. The hanging pots sway, petals fly off the flowers, hold themselves in beauty for the moments it takes to land.

'I'll get myself some coffee.'

Shavar nods. Takes another orange segment like precious, gently brings it to his lips, keeping eyes fixated on a lonely Himalayan bulbul pirouetting on the dew-bejeweled lawn outside.

Inside, I unload the rush of tears in the sink, leave the tap running to drown out my sobs.

Friday. Seventeen. April. A regular sortie from Base. MIG-21. Several of the fighter planes already grounded due to faulty parts. Not this one. Shavar took the controls at half-past eight in the morning. Clear weather, perfect conditions.

The call came mid-afternoon, while I was scraping the last of the mix into tiny molds, in my baking class. I remember the oven hot, but not hotter than my eyes.

It'd only been six months we were engaged. We had been waiting, understood that race is a thing no matter what said. And wedding, a finality. We did not want to hurt either family. Not yet.

Monday. Seventeen. March. Nearly two years on. I fiddle with the cup, not sure if I should tell him.

'Amaira?'

I lunge and stand at the door from where I can see him.

'Amaira!'

His voice is a hiss, crawling out of the woods.

'Coming.'

I know by his look. Push the wheelchair to the bathroom. It is squeaking rather terribly today; hope Sam can get it replaced when he comes on his weekly visit.

I retreat to the hallway; lean on the bag I've packed with difficulty. Get the papers from the other room, dial the cab. Flight is in two hours.

On second thoughts, I call Nikhil. We get married in a week. He is the man my parents have chosen for me — *You can't spend all your life looking after an invalid, can you?* My mother wasn't sorry when she said that.

'It's me, Nikhil!'

‘You’ll be there, won’t you?’

There’s some kind of long story, told hurriedly, culminating in, ‘You can surely manage.’

Before I can say anything, drone hits me from the other end.

‘Amaira! Amaira!’

I get to Shavar, wheel him out again to the verandah.

His eyes keep studying my face, convinced something is miserably awry. Trying to revive some of his lost memories from the spinal injury in the crash, I hold both his hands in mine. They are cold. I rub them vigorously, rub in heat and passion, instill desire.

He kisses the top of my palms, lingering his look on the ring that wasn’t there until a month ago. I know what he wants to know.

I take it off, kiss him on cheeks that are frigid, though my lips sear, my heart burns.

I pick the phone lying on the table, type a quick message, cancel the cab.

Following Shavar’s eyes, I discover the bulbul on the lawn has flown to the nearest pine branch, to join its mate. Their song is a beautiful four-piece whistle, like accelerated jubilation for finding love.

High Street, Mid 2000s

Dylan Hussey

It's in this way then that we are clocked: my muggy assumption. Contoured to the tar again, language aches in ale globules. Thrums caterwauling. Is unashened.

The bullmastiffs are overdue to maul us.

Eva, as ever, crow-keen, yaks away the Indopan, its history, "Kalamazoo, Michigan..." And gulping beneath the bulb, below the mad rage of warring water, we assemble the plumbago stub and its one seraphic word.

The bullmastiffs are crossing the flower garden.

This one word is a nostrum shepherding in a cyclone. It's the plump underside of a lizard, both spooked and Christ's callus. Simply put, it hollows out these sham-rock shells with lino blots, whilst the wood grain finally reaps the fruit flesh.

The bullmastiffs are soothsaid through the shutters.

But for now, dawn as laughter. Dawn as a green and clacking thing. Eva, gawping, redeems the rood scum, she is too much light on the horizon. And, sable barbed, I am again all salt-pond and all marrow—

The bullmastiffs are out there on the landing.



The Hokkaido Exit

Dan McNeil

Festung Europa

The strangeness arrived yesterday. Assembling a bridgehead, it proceeded to penetrate the fortress of your skull. Individual remnants of your brain are now all fractals, dividing to infinity, each one an atomic scion of the galaxy.

The Quantum Kitchen

is immeasurably big, but larger still is the refrigerator, its immense door partially open, ancient foodstuffs laid to rest in the vast interior. A kindred soul, the famous Korean chef is sick at this time, and nowhere to be seen. He may never return. Meanwhile, uncut vegetables sprawl on worn sycamore chopping boards, their random distribution an indecipherable message to the stars. Apart from this organic detail, stainless steel predominates. Of particular note are the industrial lanterns that illuminate this scene; photons of light pouring from them and cascading through the empty spaces beneath.

Through the kitchen windows

steam is pouring from enormous metallic vents that recently formed on the Hokkaido Highway. Above and beyond this occurrence, a bird regards the Highway and its European traveller as they flow away from Japanese suburbia. The bird is unaware that Japanese suburbia is the same as European suburbia, except more crowded. As the Highway and its lone traveller approach the grey ocean, suburbia is rubbed out, to be replaced with rocks and a forest edge. Whiteness gleams on the upper branches of geometric firs, yet to the best of our knowledge, it has not snowed here for many days.

The Arcadian Forest

The traveller walks through the forest and towards the ocean. Below, worms tirelessly aerate the soil. Above, in the vermilion sky, the curved contrail left by a supersonic airliner is beginning to dissipate. Beyond lies the constellation of Taurus, a familiar pattern in the chaotic immensity of time and space.

Later, beneath the expanding black sun, you throw your naked body into the meaningless waves.



The Onion

Ejiro Elizabeth Edward

_____ forces me to mourn it's death while laughter spills out of my mouth cascading over,

this is what pent up grief looks like:

drinking espresso the morning after I wrap my mother's body in a white cloth, placing her into a casket,

My hands are brisk , eager to the task,
death allowing for certainty & I am grateful her pain is over,

whispering ; "it is finished",
Like Christ's body, emptying on the wooden cross.

I am holding loss as an inheritance.

A year after, the house becomes an empty sky
& mother's emory scatters around like a collage,

While cutting a bulb,
it reveals new skin like a chameleon camouflaging to suit its mood,

& I imagine mother's body,
camouflaging into dust, camouflaging into vegetables, camouflaging into onions.

a wave of yet more
—with James Joyce
Shine Ballard

she pours some spirit, *Rioja*, which pairs well his
thirstiness for raisins. plummy, prunish, his heart
aged as her vintage. fingers point, as once danced,
to the claret residue still resting upon
his chest, above ruddystone. evidence of her
tendency to tease with playthings. motives, movements,
he swims lost, awash within. whittled&wafting, like
torn chervil wading in au jus. the kiss of a
chew, or sip. she coaxes him as a compelled cork
freed from the throttle. her game : his assent upon
her beckon. she isles, buoyed, the flotsam of a
body waking atop her alluvial tide.

CONTRIBUTORS

Julia Ruth Smith

Julia Ruth Smith is a teacher, mother and writer of small things. She has both poetry and fiction in *Skirting Around*, *Anamorphoseis*, and *Jaden Magazines* and will appear in *Sledgehammer Lit* in the Autumn. Scattering elsewhere. Twitter @JuliaRuthSmith1

Emma Wells

Emma has poetry published within and by: *The World's Greatest Anthology*, *The League of Poets*, *The Lake*, *The Beckindale Poetry Journal*, *Dreich Magazine*, *Drunken Pen Writing*, *Visual Verse*, *Littoral Magazine*, *Derailleur Press*, *Giving Room Magazine*, *Chronogram* and for the *Ledbury Poetry Festival*. She is currently working on her second novel and continuing to write poems and short stories.

Oz Hardwick

Oz Hardwick is a UK-based poet, photographer, occasional musician, and accidental academic, whose work has been widely published in international journals and anthologies. He has published nine full collections and chapbooks, including *Learning to Have Lost* (Canberra: IPSI, 2018) which won the 2019 Rubery International Book Award for poetry, and his most recent publication, the prose poetry sequence *Wolf Planet* (Clevedon: Hedgehog, 2020). Oz is Professor of English at Leeds Trinity University, where he leads the postgraduate Creative Writing programmes, but wishes he was bass guitarist in a Belgian space rock band.

Anne Leigh Parrish

Award-winning writer Anne Leigh Parrish has two new titles coming from *Unsolicited Press*: *the moon won't be dared*, a poetry collection, October 2021; and an open door, a novel, October 2022. Her latest novel, *a winter night*, released in March 2021 from *Unsolicited Press*, is the most recent installment in her popular *Dugan Family* story. She is the author of nine other books and lives in the South Sound Region of Washington State. Find her online at her website, Twitter, Facebook, Medium, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Goodreads.

Emily Paluba

Emily Paluba is a queer poet and writer from New Jersey. She indulges in many art forms, including slam poetry, sketching, and flash fiction. She seeks to become a widely published writer and is currently an undergraduate student focusing on English, Spanish, and gender, sexuality, and women's studies. When she's not in her notebook, you can find her performing, horseback riding, walking her dog, playing music, or on Instagram @eapwriting and Twitter @emilyywrites.

Fran Fernández Arce

Fran Fernández Arce is a Chilean poet currently living in Suffolk, England. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in Pollux, Firmament, and Epoch Press, among others. She is a poetry reader for The Walled City Journal and poetry editor for Moonflake Press. She enjoys reading and writing about art, language, and the weather.

Jane Ayres

UK based neurodivergent writer Jane Ayres re-discovered poetry studying for a part-time Creative Writing MA at the University of Kent, which she completed in 2019 at the age of 57. She is fascinated by hybrid poetry/prose experimental forms and has work published or accepted in Confluence, Postscript, Dissonance, The Agonist, Lighthouse, Viscaria, The Sock Drawer, Streetcake, The North, The Poetry Village, Scrittura, Door is a Jar, Marble, Agapanthus, Confino, Crow & Cross Keys, Kissing Dynamite, Black Sunflowers Anthology, Ink Drinkers Poetry, Not Deer Magazine, (macro)(mic), Sledgehammer, Punk Noir Magazine, Versification, Ample Remains and The Forge.

Bethany Lyall

Bethany is a Manchester-based Creative Writing MA student with 5 years' experience as a poet and novelist. After graduating with a bachelors degree in 2019, she lived and worked in New Zealand, before returning to England to pursue a Masters specialising in poetry. Bethany writes contemporary confessional lyric poetry, creating wonderfully warm, quiet snapshots of everyday life. She strives to find beauty in the domestic space and unashamedly romanticises the normalcy around her. You can find more of her work over on Instagram, at @boothewriter.

Mandira Pattnaik

Mandira Pattnaik writes fiction and poetry. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in Flash International Short-Short Magazine, Atlas & Alice, Citron Review, Watershed Review, Passages North, Amsterdam Quarterly, Bangor Literary, and Timber Journal among other places. Find more of her writings at mandirapattnaik.wordpress.com. On Twitter @MandiraPattnaik

Dan McNeil

Dan McNeil is a UK-based writer producing short fiction, reviews and art. His first story was translated and published in a German science fiction magazine. More stories and reviews followed, appearing in a variety of print and online publications, including Alienist Manifesto, Antipodean SF, Bewildering Stories, Fantastic Metropolis, Fugitives & Futurists, Ink Magazine, Laura Hird's Showcase, Mad Hatter's Review, Misery Tourism, Outsider Ink, Redsine, Sein und Werden, The Short Review, Word Riot, and Zygote In My Coffee. Resolutely ignoring genre pigeonholing, McNeil's fiction melds surrealism, quantum physics, existentialism, science fiction, satire, cosmic horror, madness and pitch black humour. His website is www.dan-mcneil.com; he can also be found on Twitter as @TheMcVariations, and Instagram as @thedanmcneil

Dylan Hussey

Dylan Hussey is a writer based in Norwich. Dylan's work has previously been published in the *The Gress*, *The Horizon Magazine*, *algia* and *Beir Bua*.

Ejiro Elizabeth Edward

Ejiro Elizabeth Edward is a female writer from Nigeria. A recipient of the SBMEN fellowship. Her works are on *Down River road*, *Feral*, *Icefloe* amongst others. She's a ballet instructor and currently a student of the university of Benin.

Shine Ballard

Shine Ballard, the operosepsimath, currently creates and resides on this plane(t).



