



ZENIADA

WINTER 2023

ZENIADA

POETRY & ART MAGAZINE

Johns Hopkins University

ZENIADA seeks poetry that TALKS HARD and art that CURLS
the floorboards like smoke billowing from the mouth of a small
god and SMACKS like 5 gum and a mean girl's SLAP.

Cover art: Plein Air by Lio Chan.

WINTER 2023

Lio Chan, <i>Plein Air</i>	cover
Julia Moser, <i>nonhuman residents of the Skinner Museum</i>	3
Diacos Love, <i>Seductress Dress</i>	5
Lily Boucher, <i>Clingy</i>	6
Lio Chan, <i>Plein Air</i>	7
Lexi Pelle, <i>What's Easier</i>	8
Sera Rostan, <i>Just Your Average Tuesday</i>	9
Maia Schwallie, <i>My lover will not look me in the eye</i>	11
Lio Chan, <i>The Ruin</i>	12
Emily Peacock, <i>girl gets sunburned</i>	15
Bailey Dunn, <i>Piros Yesterday</i>	17
Lexi Pelle, <i>The Way We Dressed in Winter</i>	18
	staff

nonhuman residents of the Skinner Museum

At first, I want to be
the birds, trapped murdered beauties
staring at an invisible wall
close enough to touch, imagining flight-

but I am not the birds, so I want
to be the tusked skull beside them,
someone's unidentifiable
head robbed of hunger for their bodies.

At a different angle, I can place
a bird between the mottled teeth.
Imagine the stillness, the lack
of breaking bone.

A crucial mystery that I, skull,
could have teeth so vital
in a wide and steady jaw, and still
be scrubbed clean of skin,

set my face at rest alone among
the collected quiet trembling of birds
and rocks and a thousand unnamed objects.
That our forms hum with magic.

I, human, stand in the paralyzed
resonance of stopped hearts
and am both bone and quivering.
I document imperatives in my blood:

To clutch the claustrophobic need
to fly into a window and fall down dead,
injuries internal, plumage undefiled.
like a well-earned coat of moss.

The spotted sandpiper feels my eyes
on his back and pretends to live.
His beak never closes around the false stone
on which he fixes his attention,
hoping in its dull plastic light
to divine a future.

JULIA MOSER

Seductress Dress

after Renee Stout

i'm huh!
 simply
that bitch who's
splendid, sexy,
squishy and
sweet.

i love bubblegum pink seams but
he paramour'd up with hoes & harlots,
so my skin imitates the deep Red Sea.
He gotta mend this: come here & open wide,
 swallow my areolas, aromas,
ass—this dress is a byproduct of one love, me.
so eat my liquid mixture of life and femininity,
 die.

be seduced shuteye
 feel the spirit;
choke. let ur body
fold into GDK¹
 fingers.
 be a <3
 that's
 love loc'd
dirtied by none w/
 bless'd cowries
bloodshot red tulle—
shimmering in the sun

¹ Chicago Gang.

Clingy

The stinging bite of regret whets my shame and the ruddy pink blush
 Awash my cheeks. Buttermilk curlicue receiver trills trills but I refuse to answer,
 Screening the howling yowling jowls of stunted memories that taunt me. I'm besotted
 With my recollections, one day fearing they'll turn to shapeless nameless speechless blobs that I'll
 pretend to have kept. I primp and fluff them like a Miss America's do'
 Lovingly groomed whenever my throat is overgrown with the thorns and brambles and brush of Grief's
 bosom. My mother is away taming the wolves, reaching for an answer as she gives us the Excess of a
 dismembered love. I'd rather stay here with you than reach enlightenment.
 Can we please keep making the same mistakes together? Mutilated and gnarled,
 The hope I left in that house is impassioned. I'll moon over it and be charmed once again, because this
 time feels different. These ruptures of girlhood, moments in the clouds,
 Smearred with the bloody etching of my broken fingernails.

LILY BOUCHER



LIO CHAN, PLEIN AIR

What's Easier

At the nail salon, the women
pad around in paper sandals,

manicured Midases waving the gel
and glittered moods they picked

off the shelves. Under blue light,
my mother's hands harden into

pink petals. How happy I am
to carry over to her the new

Marie Claire and a Dixie cup
of juice, rifle through her tote for a tip.

I've always liked beauty best
in its beforeness, Britney blasting

while liquid liner spatters
the mirror—the mall and all

its glitzy potential, easier
than hope. All those almost-there

hours, minutes, seconds like the six
separate and smaller-than-

sequin dots that become
a flower on my big blue toe.

LEXI PELLE

Just Your Average Tuesday

after Dean Young

When I worked at the convenience store off Elmwood and Monroe, Isaac, golden retriever in all but species and diet, would occasionally bring in his pet turtle, mentioning something about the neighborhood pet-sitter being unavailable, though Kyla claimed, in a scant, quiet moment restocking the chip aisle, that Isaac couldn't afford to pay him, since the kid was the only one on the block who could adjust his wages each year to account for inflation, but either way the turtle sat in its travel terrarium on the checkout counter like a display case advertising the pet store next door, black shell crowned with spikes like a spider-spun web of hexagonal beige, watching us with beady eyes like we were the latest installment of its favorite office drama. The little golden bell the owners put over the entrance years ago, that most of us were convinced fell off of one of their Christmas decorations and that they decided to keep it in a drawer until its repurposing – as opposed to putting it back – would ring every time a customer or strong wind graced the threshold of our local grey-tiled CVS competitor with their presence, sometimes with enough force to snap the perpetually-fraying string it's tied on, sending it careening down, tinkling on the floor like a misshapen dog toy that Isaac inevitably chased after to put back in its place of dubious honor, having already gone through half the skein of white string I brought in last month to keep the bell captive like a flailing moth first caught in spider silk, but looking no worse for wear as if it were the Nokia of bells, caroling about how things were back in its evergreen days of being in storage 352 days of the year. Sometimes the bell brought small, clustered families in the middle of a long car ride looking for an out-of-the-way place in a small suburb off the highway to take a bathroom stop and a small handful of M&M packs and sour candy for little ones doing a good job going potty; other times it brought lone teens taking one look at Kyla before sharply veering away from the beer aisle, reconsidering trying to pass off their fake ID to someone who graduated two years ago and likely had the misfortune of still remembering their faces. Kyla snorts, muttering about how they wouldn't have been able to pull it off even if she wasn't there – the turtle had a special way

of unsettling liars, after all – and she turns to face me, dark eyes staring intently in mine, daring me to challenge her when she later tells the store owner, turtle as her witness, that *“No, sir, I didn’t see the homeless man stealing food from the aisle behind me while my back was turned, but he did offer us a piece of twine when your bell fell off the string again.”*

SERA ROSTAN

My lover will not look me in the eye

I spit my teeth into my hands
and hold them up
to her chin

for barter.
A creature I must have
summoned,

she cracks at my offering
and leaves the room.

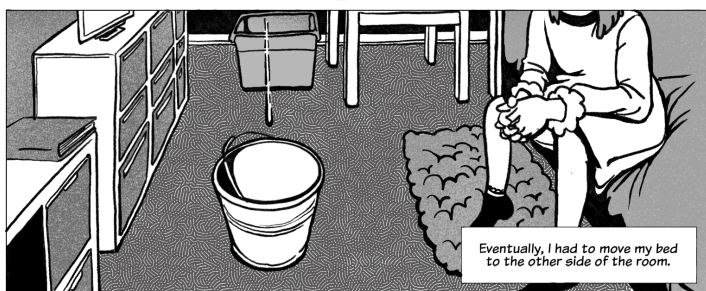
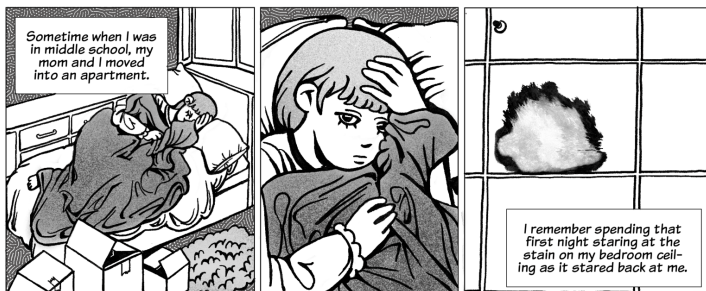
I wail
until I cut my tongue out,
snap clothespins
to the horrible thing

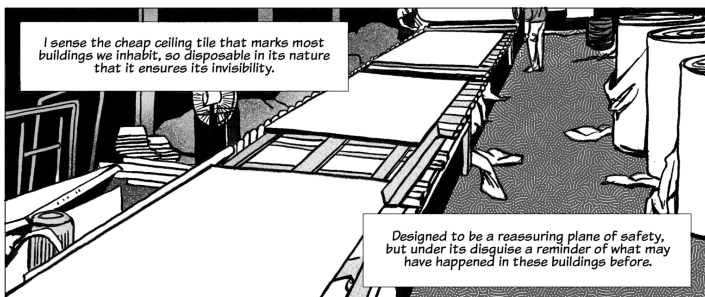
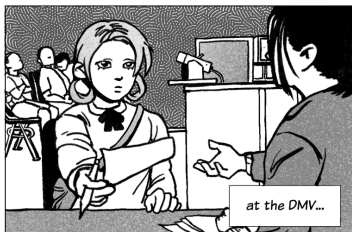
and hang it out to dry.

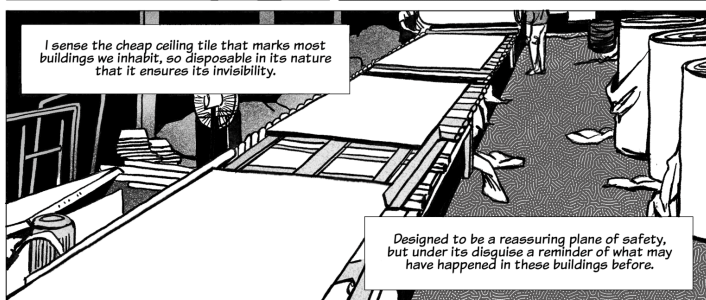
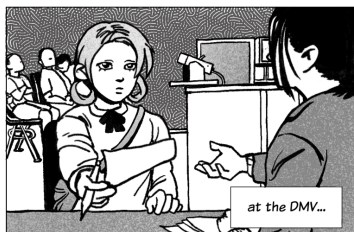
I swallow my teeth
like sleeping pills

knowing her spit
would be softer
on my stomach.

MAIA SCHWALLIE







LIO CHAN, THE RUIN

girl gets sunburned

there's god_____damn desire
here in fresno_____right now
a corn stalk_____splits itself
upward_____from the grates
of the serrated_____sewer mouth
funny how_____seed can spark
in so much_____darkness
how a body_____survives
the spaces bet_____ween its cage
horse revealed_____in green slats
across the chain_____link freeway
in pieces_____a palm tree
turning into_____another turning
into_____another
things standing_____still won't see
i turn to the left_____and Erika
happens Erika_____where i left her
in that garage_____of smoke
and shadow_____only enough
shards of Ultra_____to catch a disco
ball moment_____of her
she asks me_____to put
the car_____in reverse
to travel back_____before
all this camp_____and hay
tell the sprout_____of me
that the cage_____is not
what fractions us_____but the desire
for light_____for what light
might make_____of waste
when i was told_____they found
a neon yellow_____BIC in her
pocket i did_____not ask
for it back_____today
every building_____i run past
reflects comic_____strip copies
of girl_____behind chipped

window paint_____snow men
flip book_____image
of escape_____i tell myself
i need this_____to know
that i can vanish_____completely
and still mark_____the page
tan lines proof_____that i tried
to make the gaps_____real

EMILY PEACOCK

Piros Yesterday

until yesterday I'd never met her in swelter
magyarország in july when
I suck seeds from her apricots I
call her by her name not my
own bastard tongue's
anyways, she was red yesterday
dripping from my commissure
raptured by an overspread palacsinta
overexcited knife for overfinom
even though my teeth nearly chipped
the matyó blue plate as I lapped
jam for jam until the dish
feigned clean like mornings
when I pulled mint for my
tea like I do weeds from
anya's garden before breakfast
I boil water and I watch her star
through steam and sweat and know
no tomorrow will be the same but
I fear I'll never know plum like that again

BAILEY DUNN

The Way We Dressed In Winter

Infinity scarf tossed over spaghetti straps,
stockings pulled up under miniskirts.

In the snowy courtyard before school
each morning, we waved each other over

with Red Hot Rio and I Just Can't Cope
-Acabana manicures. What kept us warm

was something akin to self-expression
sliding into back seats, bouncing away

the chill in cheap boots. The boys
in their thick beanies and sloppy layers

stuffed under long sleeves—Michael
or Tommy or some other backwards

baseball cap—would try to wow us
with stories of bravery or stupidity

like when Jesse broke his hand on
his stepfather's four-door or when Frankie,

on a dare, french-kissed a frozen flagpole.
He really did. Lost a whole layer of tongue.

Stripped down to our desire
to be looked at, we wanted to go

under the chilly bleachers with who
we were or were going to be,

have little to take off and
just our breath to clothe the air.

LEXI PELLE

CONTRIBUTORS

LILY BOUCHER is a third-year at Agnes Scott College studying English Literature. She enjoys spending too much money on books, rewatching *Sex and the City*, running errands with her mom, and snacking on olives. She's interested in Eastern European and Asian writing, and plans to go to France to study literature further.

LIO CHAN (they/he) is currently an Illustration major at Rhode Island School of Design ('24) who loves to explore narrative and/or sequential artwork such as comics, animation, and cinematic illustrations. When not worsening his (potential) carpal tunnel, they can be found playing *Fire Emblem* and walking his dog Ace.

BAILEY DUNN is a biracial, queer, disabled poet and writer from Central New York. They are an undergraduate at Montclair State University double majoring in German and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies and minoring in Creative Writing. They love the simple things in life: books, bowties, weird words, and very climbable trees.

DIACOS LOVE is a graduating senior in Spring 2024 at Oberlin College.

JULIA MOSER is a writer from Eastchester, New York. They are currently a junior at Mount Holyoke College studying English and education, and you can find more of their work in the *Mount Holyoke Review*. Apart from poetry, they love music, taking terrible sunset pictures, and creatures of all kinds.

CONTRIBUTORS

EMILY PEACOCK is a poet and senior at Fresno State University. She serves as an editorial assistant for the literary journal *Flies, Cockroaches, & Poets*, and a forthcoming Nikkei WWII Incarceration anthology. She hopes to make creative writing more accessible to incarcerated youth and currently works with Poetic Justice, a nonprofit that offers free poetry workshops to incarcerated women.

LEXI PELLE was the winner of the 2022 Jack McCarthy Book prize. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Rattle*, *Ninth Letter*, *One Art*, *Abandon Journal*, and *3Elements Review*. Her debut book, *Let Go With The Lights On*, will be released in May.

SERA ROSTAN is currently a senior majoring in computer science with a writing seminars minor. When not writing or doing classwork, she enjoys reading and playing board games with her friends.

MAIA SCHWALLIE is a junior at Haverford College studying English and Gender and Sexuality Studies. She is a co-founder and editor of the poetry and art magazine *The Haverford Coterie*, and you can find more of her work in *Milkweed*, *Calliope*, and *Moonstone Arts Center's New Voices Anthology*. In her free time, she enjoys baking vegan desserts, thrifting, and reading poetry with her friends.

STAFF

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Melodie Qian

Natalie Wang

EDITORIAL BOARD

Aliza Li

Kay Mi

Emily Nakayama

Pishya Muangman

