

Issue 3 - January 2021

EPONYM

Cover image by
Eté Thurgood

COMING OF AGE

navigated by the youth
through their heartfelt
and provocative poetry,
art, and photography



EPONYM

EDITORS' NOTES

DANA ELIZABETH COLLINS:



For a long time, coming-of-age was the only genre that reflected what my life was like: feeling awkward, falling out with friends, desperately wanting to grow up already... Honestly, though, I've always harboured a resentment towards coming-of-age films for making growing up make sense. There's always the perfect song playing, or the coolest retort fully formed in someone's mind before they say it. Meanwhile, I knew the reality of it all: how my words never came out right, and that there was no moral lesson in a fight with my mum. That's the fun of this issue: we know life differs from a teen movie, but what's the joy of art if not to pretend a little bit? In Eponym 3.0, contributors get to romanticise their teen years however they like. Growing up will never not be weird, but I'm thankful for the art which helps us muddle through it together.

CARYS M N RICHARDS:



Issue 3 is particularly special as it marks the one year anniversary of our first publication. This year, though mostly stationary, has seen a lot of us leave the nest and move further afield, taking Eponym along with us. I've met excellent writers and artists, some of whom feature in this issue, who also spend this time romanticising and lamenting their various experiences. Life is not always like art, as much as we may try to imitate it. That's one of the reasons I've found a home in this genre; it is messy, honest, and naive. As the protagonists of our lives, we might not be as clear-cut as fiction, but it doesn't hurt to try and find some semblance of meaning in it all. Here, the coming-of-age genre is particularly apt: The works in the following pages are a catalogue of experiences - yours to resonate with (or perhaps be a wallflower to). Enjoy.

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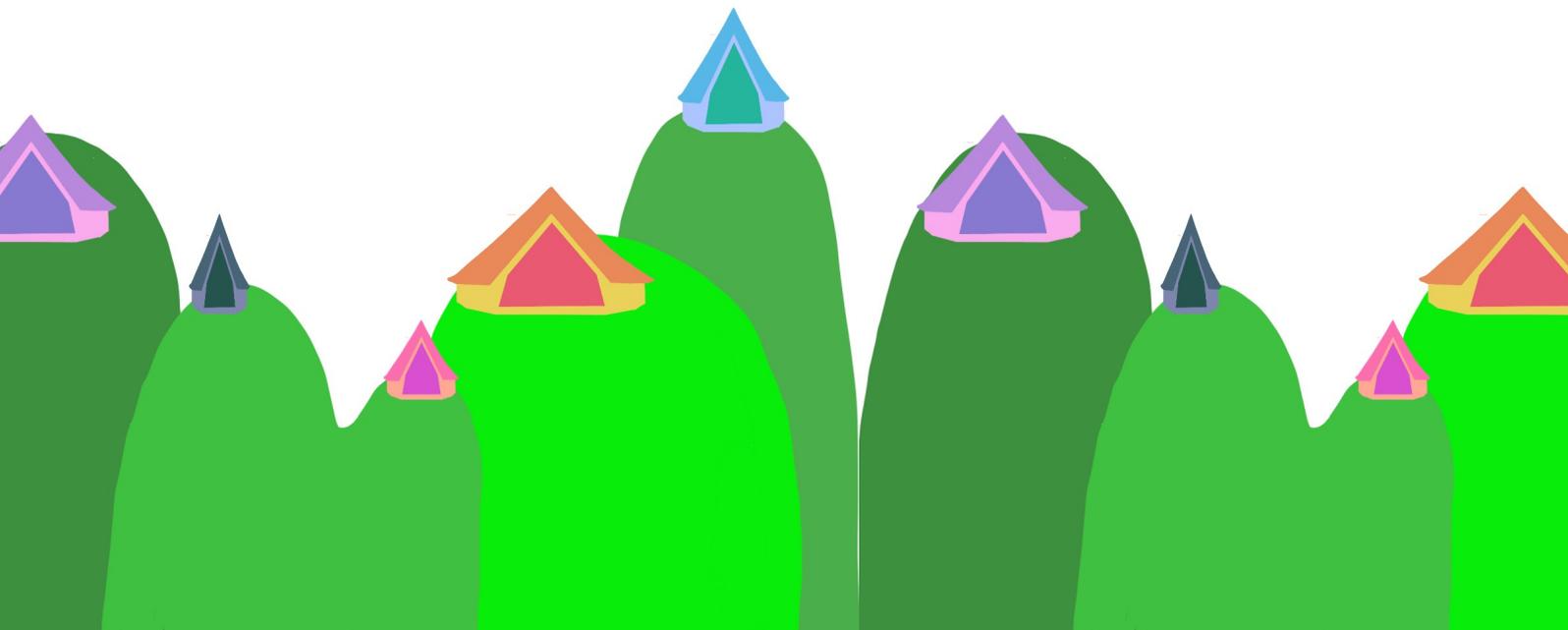
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moseley folk

- Jamila Wright

two girls sit on the grassy verge
it's midsummer and down the hill
parents with and without kids
are hippie-like swaying to the festival music

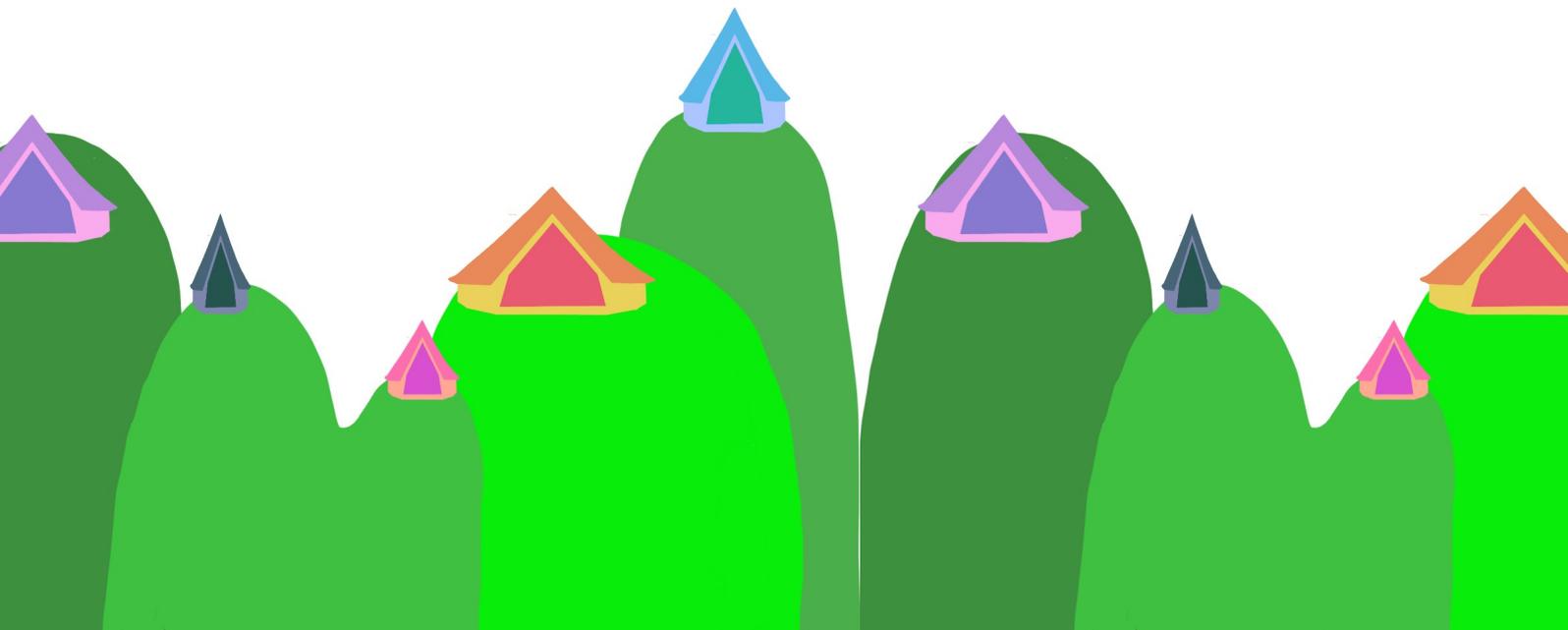
the two aren't concerned too much
with dancing they've dressed up
a girl has borrowed her friend's denim jacket
they sat for hours on her friend's carpeted bedroom floor
applying each other's lipstick
her friend has a paper cup filled with something warm and sweet stolen
from a middle-aged woman with curly red-brown hair
and a long wraparound skirt with a red and green elephant print on it
who was too busy dancing to notice her daughter's sticky fingers
the girl sips from the cup and her friend pours in vodka
from a flask that she keeps in her bag



a game of some kind starts
or not a game but more of a dare
or not a dare but more of a coming of age
they chew on strawberry laces and wash them down with vodka
a boy has noticed the girl's denim jacket and lipstick
but the girl is distracted
her friend has handed her the vodka flask
a few months from now the girl and her friend will
play a different kind of game-or-dare-or-coming-of-age

a few years from now the two will fight over the phone
and begin the process of unsticking

Jamila Wright is a 20 year old student from Birmingham and has been writing for nearly three years. Her work has been published by The Remnant Archive and Slice of the Moon Books.



Katie Kirkpatrick

replacing love with other things

the river:

an icy ring around my skinny waist,
seaweed garters knotting around my thighs,
feeling close to something not someone,
swearing vows to the spaces in the water
where other people's bodies have been.

the evening:

pledging my faith to the morse code in the sky,
seeing streetlamps through car windows
burning their devotion into the night,
blurring into lines drawn through
a sky you're starting to forget.

the wine:

a holy burning in the back of my throat
and the taste of the colour of red,
hands that are somehow both mine and not,
and the ritual of lying on the floor,
worshipping the stains on the ceiling.

the song:

hymns blasting through plastic speakers,
the bass buzz of a crush, fizzing, bubbling,
words that wash over me, blood and water,
baptised in a cacophony of sin.

if we were children,

we would be children of the dusk,
children of the moment the heat starts to relent,
children of the smell of barbecues in other people's gardens.

but we're grown up now.
we think in prose,
answer our own questions before they're asked,
draw the curtains without checking for a face at the window.



we were children when we went to sleep.
it was the night-time,
the cold touch of a dark sky,
that breathed new words into our mouths,
made the morning birdcalls a song of rebirth.

we woke up surrounded by mirrors,
our bodies looking back at us,
challenging our innocence,
letting the daylight touch their necks, their thighs.

we aren't children.
but we aren't mothers either:
we never will be.
our only children will be the flower buds that never open,
the moths hitting the kitchen window:

they have our features.

Katie is studying French at the University of Oxford. She won the 12-18 category of the BBC Proms Poetry Competition in 2019, was three-times winner or runner up in the Forward Creative Critics prize, and is a commended Foyle Young Poet. She thinks her real achievement is being in the top 0.5% of Taylor Swift listeners on Spotify.

REMNANTS

Eté Thurgood

Eté is an eighteen year old photographer in London. They have been shooting for five years, but a lockdown induced gap year has inspired them onto a new series of self portraiture.





"Coming of age represents a tumultuous time in which one must come to grips with the influence one has over one's surroundings. Whilst growing brings new experiences and joys, it is all too easy to let new found control turn to something more harmful to oneself and others. In the wake of burning bright, comes smoke. Eventually everything fades, even the strongest of emotions." -Thurgood

KEMIKO IS SHUT AND I'M SHAKING

Kemiko is shut and I'm shaking. Megari's heart is breaking and her symptoms are showing. My liver is decaying, soul is leaving; crushed head on fire and it's still seething.

Hi-lighters are cheap, Megan, I'm saying, hands held up in surrender and I'm only praying she'll comply. It's good for her, this stuff, good for her mind. It'll help her chill out, make her glow like a pulsing house in the dead of night. I don't call them drugs, I call them Hi-lighters so she'll put down her fists and stop being a fighter. There's a crater in the road where she freaked and fell. What exactly that happened will all be a blur to her. I just want her to be well.

Now we're going to Fallacy's to score but suddenly I'm in the middle of the A-84 and the lights are so bright, lights are so bright? flashing, crashing comets and harvested stars in my memory. I must've stumbled onto the road - who pushed me? I forgot why I came here for, again...? We left the afterparty 2 hours ago: 6 hours before, we were at the stage door. It'll be 8 days to get clean. Megan's mouth is foaming.

Fallacy's is empty as well, fluorescent medicines standing on their shelves like soldiers. We could've smashed the window, we should've been bolder. Megan is sobbing lakes onto the concrete and she can't speak through her teeth even, not like this. I'm trying to hold her upright so she doesn't slam into the bins by the side of the pharmacy, I'm not calm not calm, but I can be strong for both of us. People are in my vision but they don't blink at the scene: they reckon The Scene is what we're all about. Even with the faded strip of UltraLilac on the inside of my arm, none are alarmed.

Megan is rabid and hungry but pushes me away. No, she's shrieking, You know I can't, I'll die. But I want to stop the screaming. Then I'm in the bag, the one I brought with me and didn't realise, although it's not mine. It's winter but the night is hot on our skin, everything's sinking in. I'm practically tearing the bag apart looking for a scrap of a Hi-lighter when Megan collapses

collapses onto a nearby mattress, black hair falling over her irises and she looks like she's dying. I plunge my hand into the bag again, when eureka! They're in here, and I can't help feeling like the owner of the rucksack knew we'd take it.

Look!! I cry, hoarse, the words bleeding from my mouth and falling onto Megan's quivering body, her eyes white, and I'm holding up the Hi-lighter like it's a whole freight of holy light. This'll save her, I'm thinking, deluded and misconstruing, and steeling myself I tackle her leg. There's resistance but I'm committed now: the pen touches her skin, seconds later she stops quivering. Suddenly lying corpse-like under the streetlights.

Breaths come in mountains, molehills, great swimming pools of air then barely water bottles. What. am i doing ,, here.?

Draw a line on your arm, there you go. Ink your neck too. Your entire face even, so now you're aglow. Even more so in the burn of the heat lamps, tooth by your shoe. Bottle there too? Make your chest your neon victim, carve the skin slow. Kemiko is shut and I'm shaking, the counter I'm seeing in my head empty save the clutter of meds that need taking. Talk to Megan, it'll make you feel better...she's out but her teeth are chattering, her lips are smiling, the drugs are acting, seeping in. Liver is decaying, soul is leaving. drowsy feeling.

I am speaking, numb face. Let's go to my place, I'm saying, Let's go to my place, it's safe.

Maya Weekley is a poet and short story writer from Surrey, whom you will most likely find theorizing about the plays of Euripides and lamenting the death of good old-fashioned tragedy. It is only a matter of time before Maya attempts to write their own.

This work is about the overwhelming freedom of growing up, so much so that the characters do not know what to do with it. It's set in a near future, and the youth have got their hands on a novel drug.

How Does the Brain Start?

Veronica Beatrice Walton

Experts suspect that many girls with ADHD are still escaping notice -- and missing out on treatment. . . . Girls and women, in general, engage in more "internalizing" behavior than boys, Stephen Hinshaw says, meaning they tend to take their problems out on themselves rather than others.

from "Under-diagnosed and under-treated, girls with ADHD face distinct risks," by
Rodrigo Pérez Ortega for *Knowable Magazine*

5. I hate to see adults cry. I am not sorry for me. Sometimes the kindest emotion is indifference. I hope one day you'll glimpse my hands cradling the horizon — faithful, sovereign — your eyes dry against the swelter. Every nail a summer bug fluttering with its wings tilted upwards.

12. I once asked if they could see it in my DNA, my chromosomes. If they would have kept me. Hundreds of times since then they haven't given me the yellow-paged earth, alive and sick inside my fingers. Mom, I said, I can't stop moving things. In the cabin, the mirror plays a recording of my voice. The other girls fold their legs around themselves. I search for something becoming still in the close woods, breathing steadily in the quilted darkness.

0. I was born four pounds, six ounces. You could compare me to a peanut, a date, a cluster of figs. You could say that I was dense. They tore me from my mother's body like the manger was the ceiling. My name caesareaned from the visceral wiping. The smell of my cry, all over.

21. Our bodies are just interesting corpses. When I am in college I go to a party where I dance in front of boys I've had sex with in my sleep. She takes my hands and I suck in my stomach because I know they'll be looking at me. Across the room a plastic poppy glows against a vomiting sky. I catch the wind from our friend swiftly folding the duvet. With it, the scent of burning leaves and buzzcuts. The song is so loud around us that it feels like we're dancing across the heads of mushrooms. Almost like we're somewhere else, in the field in front of the apartment, blinking and primeval. Almost like, for a moment, I can be unaware of myself. Put your mouth around a bottle and hear the boyish rattle. Press your fingers against the hill the pages make. Pretend it's CPR. Pretend you can still breathe.

14. You fit me into a song like a large world. A generous black circle modulates between the petals, the beauty of my head afloat in your hands.

22. *Comorbidity*, she says. To be several labels at once. To be many ideas that are not my own. Meanwhile the word *high-functioning* hangs carefully above my head. In no language is the word for *everywhere* the

same as the word for *nowhere*.

18. The doctor says nothing about my weight gain. He just asks, Are you still taking your medication? I'm not. I hide the half-empty bottle in my dresser with my soap-colored underwear. Freshman year of college, Domino's pizza tastes like dopamine. The curtain dampens at the sound of my voice. I squirm in my chair in the lecture hall, kindling something, anything.

10. I've bronzed the page with markers. With faces of girls I don't know. I share the story with my class. I win the spelling bee. I take pictures on the field trip. I am invited to one party. See, Mom? Look how normal I am in a world where only half of me exists.

8. One Park Avenue, 7th floor. I don't remember the subway, or the cab, for that matter. I remember the shadows and words only. How I undid my mouth onto the predictable table. What the windows told me. How the world moved into place and then so quickly away again.

Veronica Beatrice Walton is a New Jersey-based neurodivergent educator, an alumna of Bryn Mawr College's B.A. English program, and a student at the Bank Street Graduate School of Education. Her work is forthcoming in *Little Stone* and has been previously published in *Nemesis* and *Nimbus*. She identifies as Welsh- and Arab-American (Lebanese).

ALUMNI

At the gates of my debtors, I stand,
thrown smiling from their arms,
heeled and wobbling,
a new-born deer.

No hand reaches out to guide me.
In the summer heat, I am no longer green.

At least deer know their actions:
eat/ sleep/ mate/ survive.
I suppose I am spoilt for choice:
drive/ work/ sleep/ eat/ grow antlers/ dream/ netflix/ cry/ drink/
youtube/ scream/ cry/ write a poem/ rut/ stay in bed/ pretend to be fine/ cry.

I see versions of me flicker across my screen;
certain visions of an uncertain woman,
begging in monotone.

As the seasons creep on,
I stick in the mud with the other browning leaves,
not knowing where to blow ourselves.
Grazing on new buds,
my stomach feels like it might explode.

I watch the pigeons,
fat and happy on the lawn.
The next day, their bodies are littered across the grass.

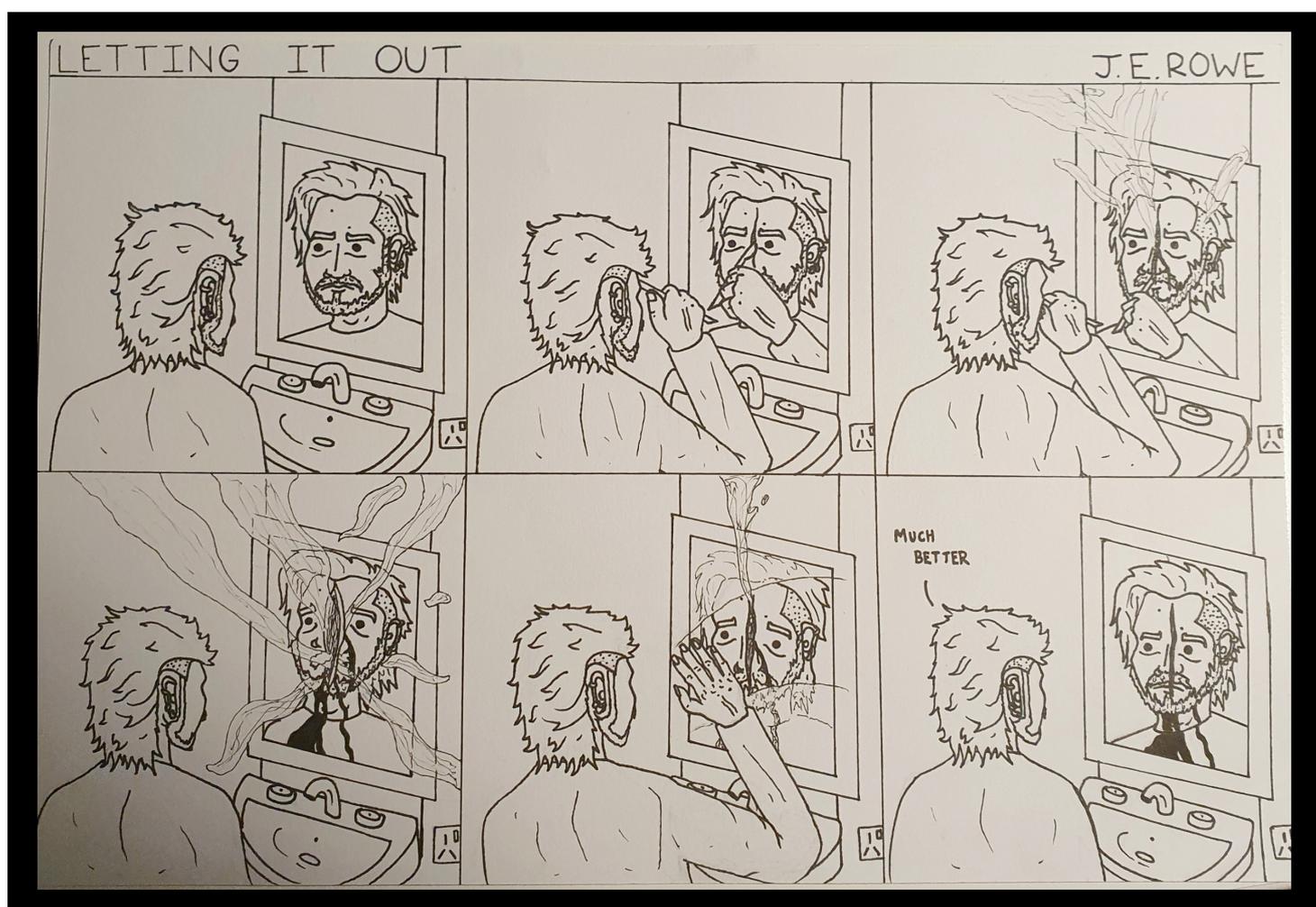
I drink jealousy,
gulping it, a half-made lemonade.
On one hand I count the roots to my tree,
growing alone in a frozen courtyard.

My room spins in blurry sights.
Ferris wheels go on forever
if you let them.

RACHEL BRUCE

Rachel Bruce is a 22-year-old poet and dog-lover. Her work has previously appeared in Kamena Magazine, and she was shortlisted for The Telegraph's Lockdown poetry competition.

LETTING IT OUT



JACK ROWE

Jack is a 22 year old studying Art History and English Literature at the University of Manchester. His dream is to fail upwards until he can afford some better pens.

Unravelling

by Lucas Sheridan
after Kaveh Akbar

self-preservation is the art
of stopping breathing just long enough to know he is
still here. I'll punch myself into the rug, where
the border meets the blooming flowers. He'll ask what
happened to the girl with a buttercup under her chin? We
have the yarn she unravelled into, and her fingerprints pressed in plaster survive
beneath the wallpaper. I will unpeel myself down to stem: the weed that survives.

Lucas Sheridan is a twenty-year-old poet and student from North West England. They live with their many plants and also friends in a house with just enough pride flags to make very good blanket forts.

Looking Out

by Ellen Fuller



In Ellen's words: "I made this painting in reference to growing up in the closet, looking out at the wonderful world that is LGBT culture but not quite being ready to start my journey as being fully out. It's the yellow brick road because 'are you a friend of Dorothy's?' used to be a code phrase for gay people to identify one other."

Change

So quickly and suddenly like the cracking of a finger
Caught in the car door when you were eight.
You howled in purple surprise and outside you would linger
At where you let it bleed, staining the garden gate.

In a grass-stained polo you stood and chewed its collar
I see the way you took off and bark, a starved greyhound,
Whooping as your lacey hair flew behind, flushed face smaller
When you run past to the finish line and carry on, homebound.

Watching the space like a photograph, the one's nan had torn,
You help her, bereaved and confused, but as best you can.
You trace the figures, the time you didn't live, and you mourn
Cutting conversations and scenery, sepia wife from sepia man.

But now you're frightened, waking up, breath humid in quarrel
And warm with rage. You break it off, tearfully cold and chokingly dance
With the duvet, like some nightmare tied its noose and you go floral.
Go weak. The marks on your neck, pinch and thumb that fading romance.

Yes, quick and sudden, you're gone for ungodly hours, bed remaining
Still each night, a sisters' silhouette curves the mattress and bends
The empty light, all that resonated. Four walls of posters, no painting
Of ours, no foundation smudges and no calendar. No weekends.

Because you are gone and you are different, not the baby I would
Want to scream at when you were here. The house feels strange
With me and mum and dad, not you. Waiting at the door, you stood,
Calling to my soul. It fears the after and after and after the change.

ZAINAB IMRAN





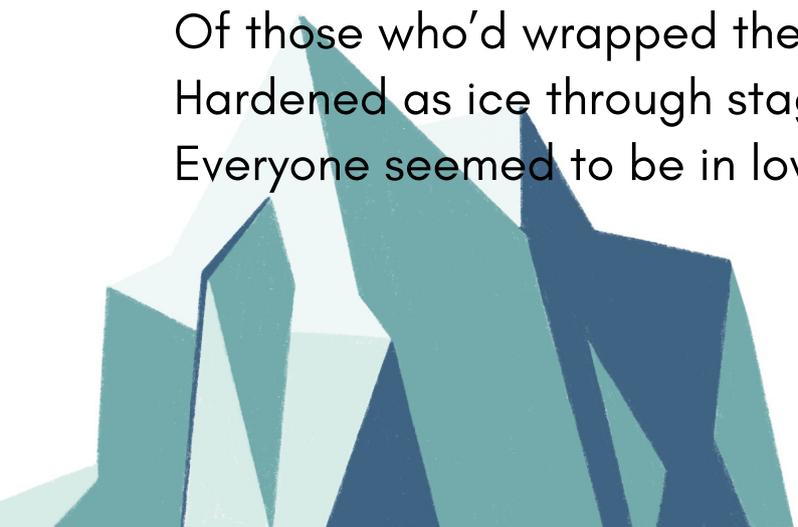
The holidays aren't fun when you're old

PIP CAREW

Winter came
It ran sandpaper over our soft edges
Hardening out the grudges
And rounding them into bitterness

These hands turned red like the faces of scorned children
Fingers and lips peeled in the absence of summer
The cat brought dead things to the doorstep
How stupid it seemed
to think you could die from a lack of attention

She traded butterflies for wasps then
Felt their keen sting in her stomach and thighs
Sharp, hungry for love
The shots went down easy
And the boys stayed above the surface,
Dry as they had always been



Her heart had compressed from the carelessness
Of those who'd wrapped their hungry hands around it
Hardened as ice through stagnant water
Everyone seemed to be in love at this time of year

BUTTERSCOTCH

LEO DRAGSTEDT

I have submitted to the fatal teenage need
to eat your parents ideals alive.
They crunch between my molars,
like little butterscotch candies,
saccharine on my child's tongue
they are whispers in a church.

I've been growing as stubbornly
as the vines in my parents drain pipes,
fanning out into where I'm not supposed to,
and cannot help but be.

I once had a butterscotch baileys shot
served to me by a drag queen,
it burned and turned in my stomach
so I washed it down with the kind of kisses
that leave an ache.



Leo Dragstedt is a poet and student living in Birmingham. He is the cohost of the Grizzly Pear poetry open mic and has been published in "These are the Hands" an NHS anthology, MIR online and a previous issue of Eponym. He competed in Unislam (2020) and collaborated on the Fxlkxre Zine.

MY FIRST HOUSE PARTY

Is quite like the tv show *Skins* crashing bodies
eddy to EDM music which tries to cancel out the parallel universes in my
mind
brought on by pastel-coloured pills on strangers' tongues
passed down like a gift from the ancestors. The bedrooms are out of bounds the spiral staircase
becomes a mattress my stomach is hollow from not eating all day 'cos Redditors
said that to get *really fucked up* I can't eat for the whole day Miss Tequila munches on my liver.
A punch all right my shoulder is a purple puddle . I've
lost my friends in this decadent maze. I know this word because Miss Young
taught us this last week from *Dr. Jekyll & Mr Hyde* I used that word in my essay last week.

My face is a camcorder capturing yellow stains on Ugg boots ; skinny jeans painted on legs;
shirtless boys and girls in Day-Glo; geek-pie haircuts or vomit hair; phased out figures
taking pics for Facebook on Canon IXUS; tripping over plankers planking; some girl's crying
because Steve Job has died; some guy says there's a rave happening in Tottenham *FREE*
STUFF FREE STUFF and they bounce. A girl with short indigo emo
hair says I'm shirtless I cover my nipples she giggles *Free the nipple!* She
lauds skipping down the hallway.

Don't mind her says a blonde girl with a septum piercing. Her smile
is small but homely but my eyes
are off balance, her words hit my ears but don't fall in. We tilt heads our lips a
magnetic pulse her index finger pokes me in the eye. She collapses
I prop her by the bannister. LMFAO's *Party Rock*

bleeds through the walls fucked up a stampede of Vans rush through me
kitchen strobe lighting splits me in half I crawl my way into the
a blue heat pounds

The midnight sky blows a kiss.

for the last few minutes my lips blister my mouth a cave
my stomach stabbed by a shoulder blade next thing morning's uppercut
a haze of bodies in their underwear scatter around me, the carpet and sofa, dead like me a
foot on my thigh some guys cheek on my crotch a girl's stomach as pillow my phone blasts
Heeeey Mum, Can I dye my hair?

- Arun Jeeto -

Arun Jeeto's works appear in *The London Reader*, *Lumin Journal*, *Untitled Writing*, *Backlash Press* and *Cobra Milk*. His debut pamphlet *I Want to Be the One You Think About at Night* published from Waterloo Press is on sale right now. He tweets and instagrams @G2poetry.

Party for One

- SAIMA KHAN -



The Nights of My Life Come and Go

Do you remember the March night
of the snowfall, the bright moon, everything swan-white?
I crept out of bed to find you washing plates, gently, while
you waved for me to stand beside you and look out the window
and watch the garden fill up with snow.
I can still see your soapy hand motion outside, your hesitant smile.

*The nights of my life
Come and go.*

Awake, I wonder, was that the year I cut the hawthorn?
The night turns blue and from the scrapbook of my childhood is torn
that picture of us, your arm gently wrapped around me.
I later absorbed the way you stood, the accent in your voice,
the way you walked, as if I ever had any other choice.
In the dawning day, the stillness, I still see our white rowan tree.

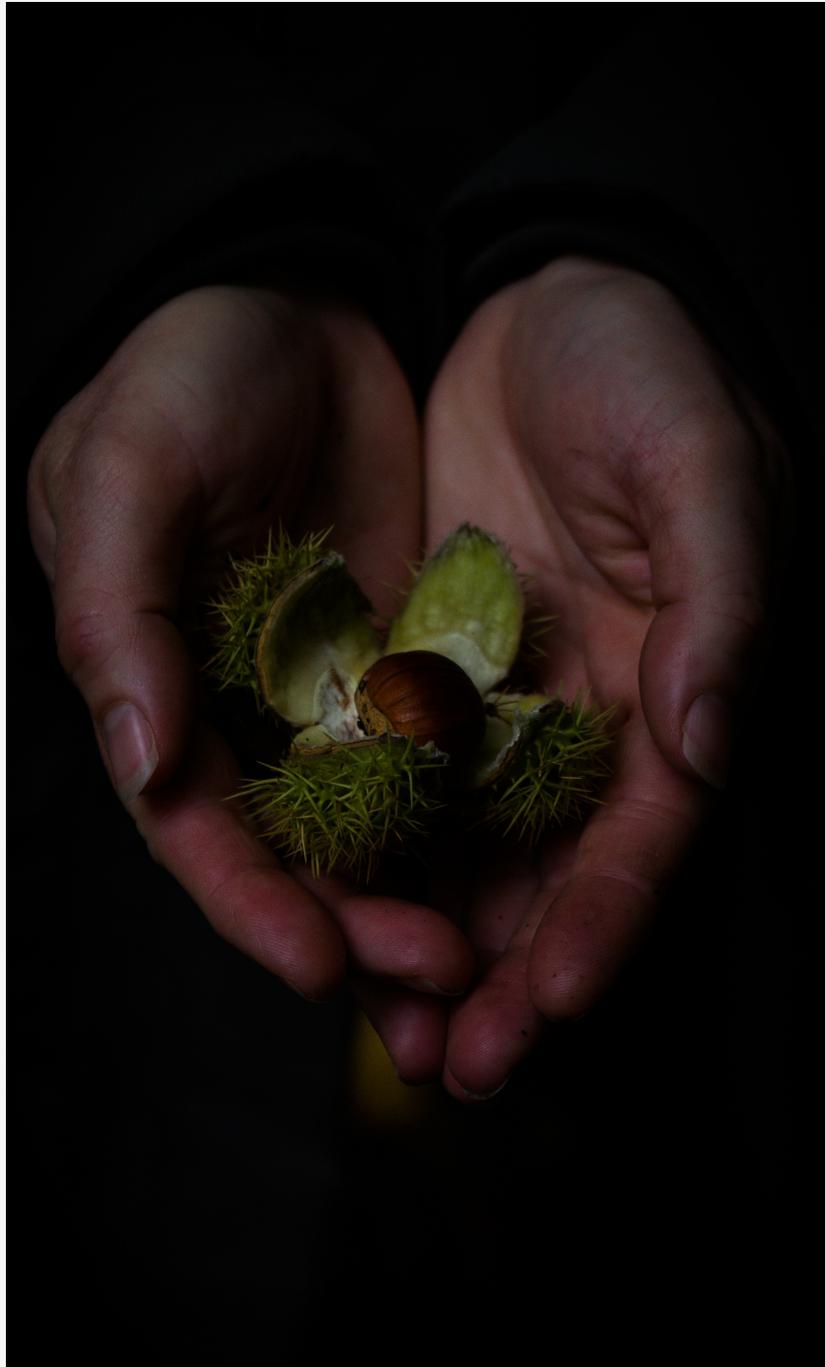
*The nights of my life
Come and go.*

And something unsaid was troubling you,
maybe tomorrow would bring something new
but for that moment, we watched in silence the growing snow
delicately bury our trees, all growth stopped, our garden grass,
and God, I hoped the moment would not pass.
Did you hear me say I loved you, unutterably low?

*The nights of my life
Come and go.*

OLIVER O'HARE

Matthew Stroud



Matthew Stroud is an aspiring photographer who takes inspiration from the nature around him in the serene and beautiful valleys of Sheffield. At the age of 18 he spends most of his time enthralled in his studies but still finds time to spend on his passion, photography. Over the last year Matthew has learnt how to utilise both his camera and the scene around him effectively and perfected his artistic style.

from hope to nostalgia

ailsa wrinn

suddenly time seemed to stop,
i'm not sure what day it was
i remember we were all joking
about isolating together
and then we all left
heading home to safety
like birds returning after migration
but i wasn't ready to return home
i wanted to feel free

she called me
she said
there's a community here
there's space for you here
we run free here
we care for one another here
we will grow together here
with our native tongues mixing together
our ideas about the world shared
over a cold beer
drunk by the side of the river
as the moon rises and we listen
to the stream of voices
and we look
at the bats flying
over the swimming hole

each day we will work and we will laugh together
we will find new friends
and we will find ourselves
in this community we grew
towards who we wanted to be
one step at a time
together

**ailsa is a twenty year old carer of adults with additional support needs
and a second year student of social anthropology in scotland. she
loves being outside, exploring and connecting with others.**

EPONYM

3.0

Jamilla Wright / Katie Kirkpatrick / Eté Thurgood / Maya Weekley / Veronica Beatrice Walton / Rachel Bruce / Jack Rowe / Lucas Sheridan / Ellen Fuller / Zainab Imran / Philippa Carew / Leo Dragstedt / Arun Jeetoo / Saima Khan / Oliver O'Hare / Matthew Stroud / Ailsa Wrinn

Illustrations provided by Dana Collins

Thank you to our submitters for helping to create Eponym: Coming of Age and to you, our readers, for reading. We hope you enjoyed our third issue! Follow Eponym online to keep updated with information about Issue 4.

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