

SPEC*U*LA*TIVE 66

66 words. Endless possibilities.

A silhouette of a bird perched on a branch, looking towards a bright, sunlit background with green foliage.

Issue 2

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Graduation

Lora Rivera

Twelve stories up, I shivered on the roof,
clapping my wings tight against the winter air.
Moonglow bathed the mountains silver.

Come on. Jump.

The others were already celebrating. Utensils
clattered. Laughter rose from the mess hall.

Beside me, my mentor's wings flexed impatiently.
Or worriedly?

*Jump. Or go under the knife: live grounded,
live... human.*

My wings rustled open.

"Windspeed," she prayed.

I stepped out.

First Contact

Kevin Z. Garvey

We made an assumption that intelligent alien life would be benevolent. For years, we had broadcasted our location in the universe. For months, we had celebrated first contact.

Then they came. And they were not benevolent. Though far more advanced than humans, they were cruel and merciless. They brought destruction to our world, killing and enslaving.

How could we have known they'd be just like us?





Observation Lair

CB Droege

Escaping air rushed past the captain's pop-helmet as the transverse bulkhead finally opened. The observation deck was illuminated sporadically by the storm raging beyond the portholes. The dragon opened its metal maw in a soundless shriek as its glowing, blue eyes found her. Ignoring the bodies of crewmen floating in the vacuum around her, she sprang forward, blaster and vibrosword extended in hands shaking with anger.

Razor Wire

Jason Palmieri

I pull the picture out and look at it. Sharing the same brown hair and eyes, they could be sisters. A tear falls onto the picture.

Will I ever see them again?

A red mist sprays over the picture covering my tear. My sergeant screams. The red mist is what's left of my squad. With a sigh I hang my head, letting the picture fall.

Soon...





ROUTE

Ted Van Alst

Lizard. Roadrunner. Lizard in roadrunner's mouth. Coke can. Candy wrapper. Chip bag. Barb wire. Boot's coming apart. Dust and rocks beneath the socks. Air drier than a popcorn fart. Squints. Shades. Tans. Sweat. This wind. That car. Those trucks. These roads. Walking. More walking. Head down. Thumb out. Gum in. Bag on. Hat off. Hair tangled. Skin red. Sun. Never. Ending. Sun. Day 65. Route 66.



A Walk

Nate Ealy

Tim had walked this way home through the woods for the last twenty-five years from the school where he taught. The trees were aged and twisted just like his own body. It wasn't new. The school year was young, but not the old way home. What was new, however, was the bloody shoe lying in the middle of the path and the hungry growls behind him.

Resuscitative Creeping

Sara Codair

Vines slither from the woods, searching for prey.

Thorns sink into human flesh, pumping hot blood into earth's heart until it thumps. The surface shakes. Concrete cracks and steal moans, leaving more openings to hunt through.

They slither on, feeding Mother until her heartbeat steadies.

Resurrected, She rains destruction down on her killers, only leaving those who loved her alive.

She sleeps, hoping history won't repeat.



ADRIANA

Bill Wetzel

I love the way she says "Pecola."
The lethal words roll off her Spanish
accented tongue.

She makes me want to know her
before I ever could know her.

We could be happy and dirty and indigenous.
I would breathe "*hermosa*" in her rough ear
clumsy, tone deaf, and unaccentuated.

She's as sexy as exotic language.
Lustful as the foreign words alluring
from her o-shaped mouth.



Our Bed Forever

William Gilmer

The couple secured the shackles locked around their wrists and ankles to the bed posts.

“Remember when we used to joke about lying in bed together forever?” he asked.

“You said forever was a long time.” She smiled, eyes twinkling.

“I was an idiot,” he laughed, embarrassed.

He kissed her as the gangrenous rheumy eyed horde broke through the door.

Forever was only a bite away.



You're so Beautiful

Jordan Altman

The dense air had a musty odour, while the lighting flickered from inexpensive phosphorescence. Elderly people gazed blankly at an untuned TV set with rabbit ears, while nurses gossiped from afar. A wrinkled time-worn couple sat side by side, hand in hand. Their hair thin and white. Their bodies frail and bent. The man painstakingly leant over to the woman at his side. "You're still Beautiful."



The Goddess of Squirmy Things

William Gilmer

We found momma covered with squirmy things dancing around her cuts and holes. I snuck a handful, letting them play in the roller skate scabs on my knees. Wiggling under my skin, tiny bits of momma reminded me everywhere I went. I watched them turn into little buzzing things that floated bravely in the breeze. Black specks of me and momma, out to conquer the world.

To Soothe a Broken Heart

Chelsea F. Tomlin

Bathe naked in the
moonlight.

Bite your lips. Bid
rosettes of blood to bloom.

Breathe in the cosmos.
Release.

Rip the first page from
your favorite book.

Write his name. Kiss it.
Leave a bloody lip-print.
Burn it. Spread the ashes
across your breasts.

Dance 'til sunrise.

It didn't work?

Silly girl, even magic is
powerless against a broken
heart.

Healing takes tears and
time.



Sleeping Beauty

Marissa LaPorte

In an attempt of suicide
She pricked her thumb
On that lonely spindle
Rather than sweet release
She fell into a deep sleep
Cursed with another breath
Worse than a violent death
They removed her tongue
Taped over her lips
For good measure
Suitors arrived
Not in search
Of true loves first kiss
No one saved the beauty
No longer beautiful
And she never woke up



SUBSERVIENCE

Bill Wetzel

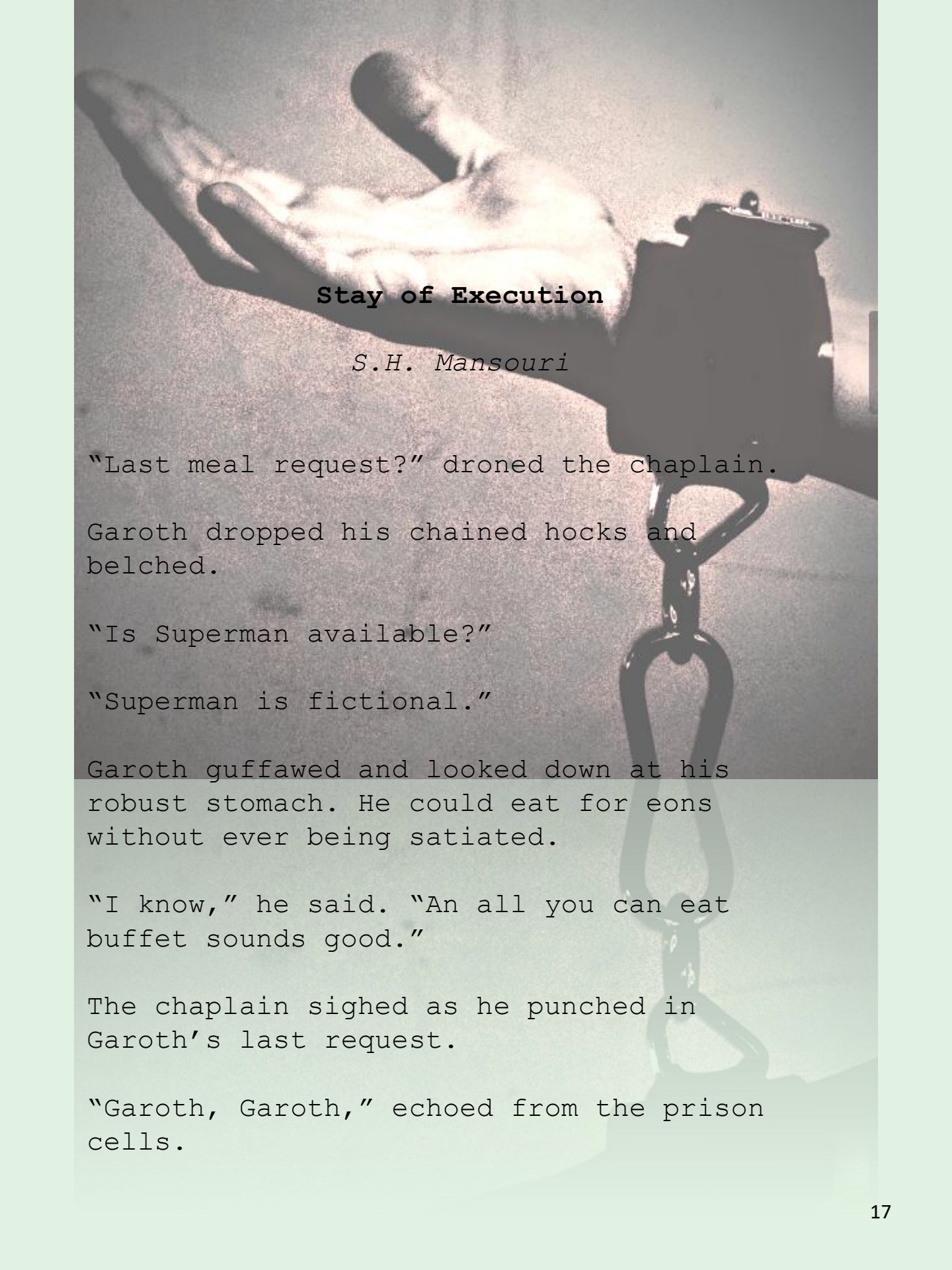
It wasn't the way they dressed that would save them.

They would be saved by another force altogether. Not because they looked nice. Made people feel at ease. It did not matter that they were one of the good ones. They would be saved by pointing their finger at another person like them.

Saying: "Yes, they did it."

"Not me."

"Can I keep my place, sir?"

A close-up photograph of a hand wearing a white, textured glove. The hand is holding a metal handcuff, with the chain extending downwards. The background is dark and out of focus.

Stay of Execution

S.H. Mansouri

"Last meal request?" droned the chaplain.

Garoth dropped his chained hocks and belched.

"Is Superman available?"

"Superman is fictional."

Garoth guffawed and looked down at his robust stomach. He could eat for eons without ever being satiated.

"I know," he said. "An all you can eat buffet sounds good."

The chaplain sighed as he punched in Garoth's last request.

"Garoth, Garoth," echoed from the prison cells.

Con*trib*u*tors

Jordan Altman

Jordan Altman is a Geologist who has work from the Land of the MidnightSun to the Canadian Shield. Recently taking up creative writing, his adventures within reality are now being matched by those of his imagination.

Sara Codair

Sara Codair lives in a world of words: she writes fiction whenever she has a free moment, teaches writing at a community college and is known to binge read fantasy novels. When she manages to pry herself away from the words, she can often be found hiking, swimming, gardening or telling people to save the bees. Read her words at <https://saracodair.com/>.

CB Droege

CB Droege is an author and poet from Cincinnati living in Munich. His latest book is RapUnsel and Other Stories. He recently edited Starward Tales: An Anthology of Speculative Legends.

Learn more at cbdroege.com

Nate Ealy

Nate Ealy is a recent graduate of Grove City College where he obtained a degree in history. In his free time Nate likes to write short stories and watch football. Some of his stories have been published in Flash Fiction Magazine, Siren's Call eZine, and Massacre Magazine. He blogs semi-frequently at: swallowedbymonsters.wordpress.com.

Kevin Z. Garvey

Kevin Z. Garvey's fiction has appeared or is upcoming at InfectiveINk, Thuglit, Shotgun Honey, Spinetingler and other publications. In addition to writing, Garvey is an award winning combat sports ring announcer and is a member of the NJ State Martial Arts Hall of Fame. You can visit him on the web at kevinzgarvey.com.

William Gilmer

William Gilmer is a writer and poet with a penchant (attention span) for short form and abstract styles. He lives in Michigan with his lovingly acquired family, obligatory cat, and odd curios. Look for his upcoming works in Transmundane Press' After the Happily Ever After anthology and 200CCs. Follow him @willwritethings

Marissa LaPorte

Marissa LaPorte is a 19-year-old student currently attending Grand Valley State University. She just recently returned from studying abroad in England. LaPorte has been selected as a winner and a finalist for many flash fiction and short story contests held on the writing website Figment.com and she was a runner up the "Letter's About Literature Contest" held in Lansing, Michigan. LaPorte has most recently been published in the "Hedge Apple" of Hagerstown Community College, "Serendipity" of Bay De Noc Community College, 600 second Saga, and was published in The Flash Fiction Press September 9th. <https://www.facebook.com/Marissa-LaPorte-1155504271147092/>

S.H. Mansouri

S.H. Mansouri is a biologist and writer of all things fiction. You can find his work on Amazon and at his blog shmansouri.wordpress.com. You can also follow his defeats on twitter @ShawnMansouri.

Jason Palmieri

Jason Palmieri is a dabbler in all things creative. He is the photo editor at Speculative 66 and thought writing tiny stories looked like fun.

Lora Rivera

Post-MFA from the University of Arizona, Lora worked as a literary agent, children's biographer, and crepe maker. Today, she develops online trainings for child welfare professionals and is the Vice President of a local climbing nonprofit. Her work has recently appeared in *The Voices Project*, *Blink Ink*, *FLAPPERHOUSE*, *The Chattahoochee Review*, and the *Eastern Iowa Review*. Find her on Twitter and Insta at @lroseriver.

Chelsea F. Tomlin

Chelsea enjoys being mysterious.

Ted Van Alst

Ted Van Alst's most recent publications are "Bumblebee and the Cherokee Harelip" in *The Raven Chronicles*. Vol. 21, Fall 2015, and *The Faster Redder Road Road: The Best UnAmerican Stories of Stephen Graham Jones* (editor), University of New Mexico Press, 2015.

Bill Wetzel

Bill Wetzel is an emissary of the masses who has been interviewed on political and cultural topics by the Washington Post, Esquire, Indian Country Media Today, and other outlets. His writing has appeared in or is forthcoming from the American Indian Culture & Research Journal, Cutthroat: A Journal of the Arts (2017 Pushcart Prize nominee), Yellow Medicine Review, Spiral Orb, Studies In Indian Literatures (SAIL), Waxwing Magazine, Hinchas de Poesia, Red Ink Magazine, Kenyon Review blog, Literary Orphans and Off The Path: An Anthology of 21st Century American Indian Writers Vol.2. He is the curator of the Good Oak Bar Reading Series and a co-curator of the long running Edge Reading Series, both in Tucson, AZ. He is a co-founder of IndigiPress & the founder of the Stjukshon Indigenous reading series. Wetzel is a member of the Blackfeet Tribe, and a 2016 Peripheral Poet. You can follow him on twitter at: <http://twitter.com/billthebutcher2>

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