

SPEC*U*LA*TIVE 66

66 words. Endless possibilities.



Issue 4

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Jesse Sensibar

Sometimes up near the Rez line nothing will save you.

Sometimes all it takes is one sun setting between the power lines.

Over tow yards surrounded by U-haul trucks and cargo boxes.

To realize-

You can shower away the gasoline, dirt, and death

but the spirits, like the scars, ride with you forever.

Digging holes in your soul like a lineman's spikes.

Rest In Peace





Blind Luck

Tanner Menard

He reaches for the box of Lucky's but his luck has run out. He makes do with the cheapness of gas station Pyramids. A plume of white smoke opens up into flowering ovals, revealing Cleopatra's cousin fifty generations removed. As he crushes his butt, the aroma of burning plastic singes his nose almost as harshly as the realization that he is sitting alone in the humidity.

The Photo Shoot

Fred Rock

She was one of those women the camera fell in love with. Her skirt ruffled in the breeze as flashbulbs popped.

He must have taken a hundred shots before packing up.

"Finished?" I said.

He nodded. "That's it."

"You heard him, boys," I said. "Let's get her in the meat wagon and get to work. Whoever threw her off this building is still on the street."





The Perfect Murder

Russell Hemmell

It was a homicide, but there was no corpse.
There were no suspects, but many confessions.

"It would be fascinating, not being so gruesome.
And unsolvable." Karen said to the detective.

"Is this the perfect murder, then?"

"There's no such thing, Doc," he replied. "This
is no exception."

"So how else you'd define something you can't
solve - a riddle?"

"A joke - a nasty one."



Oxygen

Kenny A. Chaffin

The truth is that JonBenet was Patsy, a time traveler, a mixing of multiverses and that is why things happened as they did and why no one knows; else the sanctity of space-time would be broken and all life in the universe would be forfeit. Be glad you do not know, be glad you live and breathe oxygen in this the best of all possible worlds.

Their There

C.A. Love

The young man placed the blanket on the ground, sat on it, and waited. "Are we waiting to cross at night?" His companion asked him.

The boy shook his head. Baja, Key West, Baja, Key West, and then, before looking towards New Orleans, he couldn't help but let his gaze rest upon a scorpion crossing between them, who appeared to be heading south towards their there.

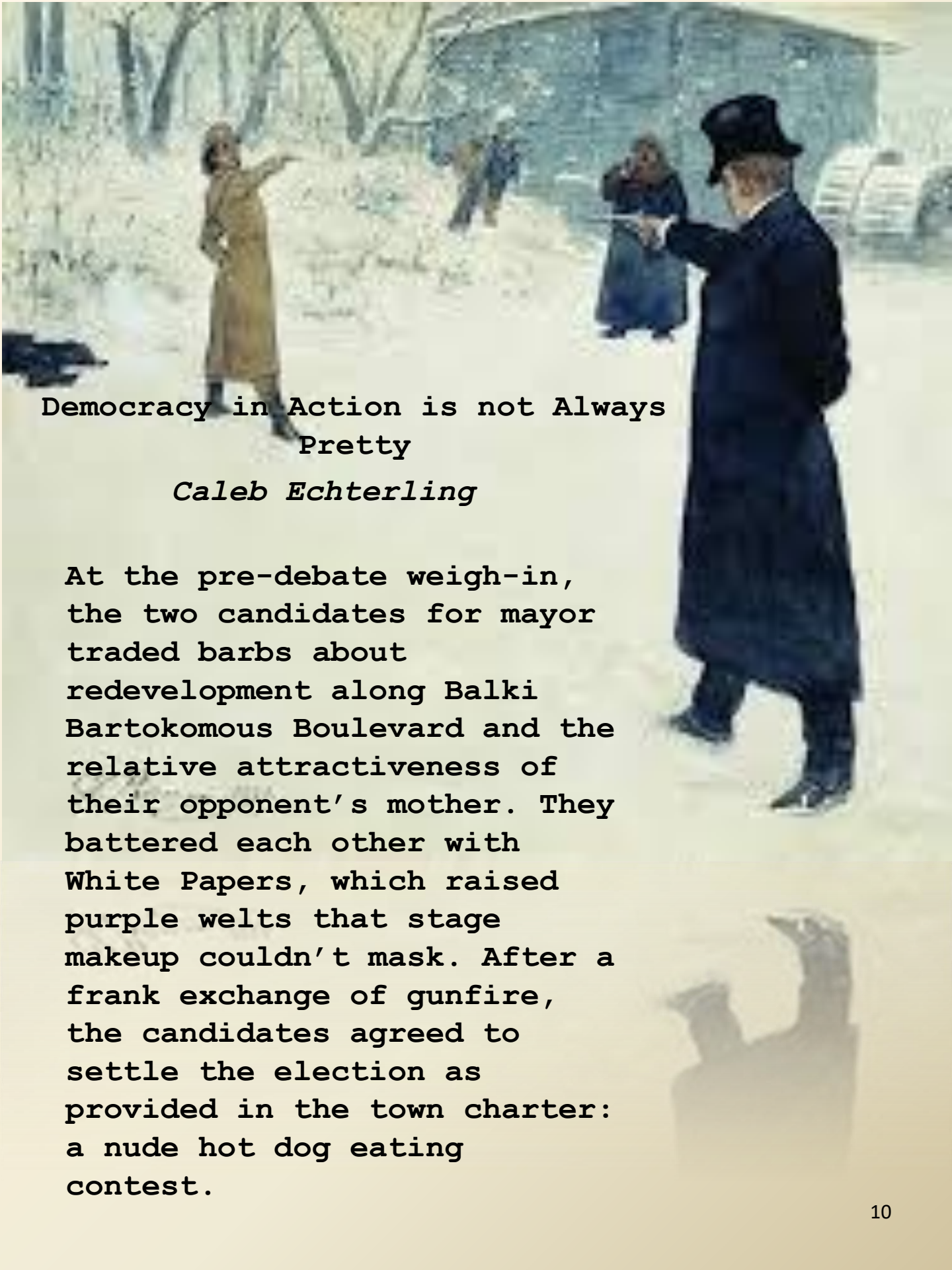




Hate: Materialize

Marissa LaPorte

Hate: Materialized
I've seen it
Before my very eyes
We shouted that our rights mattered
They responded
Our windows were shattered
From his throne the man looked down
He saw it all
But the man did not frown
Laws were passed
For us, existing is illegal
We have no names
They took those, too
Even though we have no right
At least
We tried to fight



Democracy in Action is not Always
Pretty

Caleb Echterling

At the pre-debate weigh-in, the two candidates for mayor traded barbs about redevelopment along Balki Bartokomous Boulevard and the relative attractiveness of their opponent's mother. They battered each other with White Papers, which raised purple welts that stage makeup couldn't mask. After a frank exchange of gunfire, the candidates agreed to settle the election as provided in the town charter: a nude hot dog eating contest.



A Pupil's Mind

LiAnnah Jameson

I watch my students take their online test in solitude. Heads in hands. Rubbing their eyes. I wonder what is going through their heads right now. I wonder how many of them are thinking about sex. I wonder how many are worried about their score. How many of them will go home to an empty house tonight? I wonder how many are thinking about killing me.

Maggots

Sara Codair

I left a sandwich in my locker.

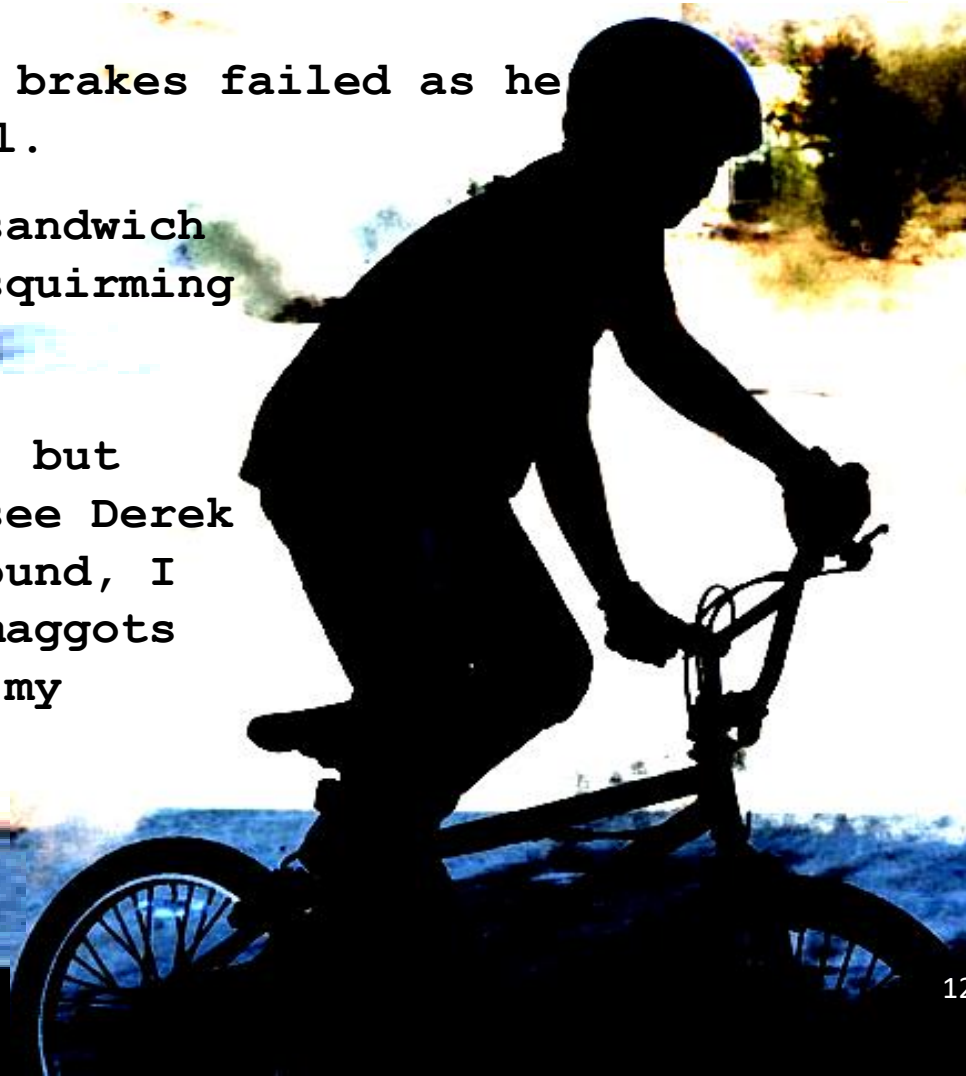
"I'll stuff you in next time I see you." Derek growled like a brain-deprived zombie.

I didn't eat. Books weighed me down.
My peers jeered.

Derek's bike brakes failed as he sped downhill.

I found my sandwich alive with squirming maggots.

I tossed it, but whenever I see Derek wheeling around, I feel those maggots breeding in my stomach.





Déjà Vu

A. Elizabeth Herting

The door opens slowly, screaming on rusty hinges. The man enters, knowing he's been here before. His shattered soul despairs at every step to find himself still confined here.

Moving through each room, he shambles along, eventually reaching his final destination.

He screams, but finds that his throat is completely closed off as he gently swings back and forth, hanging from his own expertly knotted noose.



Rusalka, or The Drowned Girl

H. Victory

Bud saw it, saw her, the girl in the lake
Barking, growling, he tried to show me
Too late

Cold, wet, dead fingers clasped my throat
Tightening, squeezing, choking
I dropped the lead

Bud ran
Bad dog, stupid dog, traitor dog
Hate you dog

Ran and left me

Left me here with her, the girl in the lake
Left me
Left me here alone
To float





Caught

A. Elizabeth Herting

He runs as fast as his legs will go, lungs fit to burst. His attire flies off in every direction, his buttons and best scarf go hurtling away. He's literally running for his life, terrified each step will be his last. He feels hot breathing on the back of his neck, razor sharp teeth.

It turns out you really can catch the Gingerbread Man after all.

The Preservation of Life

Kenny A. Chaffin

I am desiccated, nothing but leathered skin and bones, bronzed like Otzi the Iceman. Limbs locked, unable to move. My son rolls me over effortlessly. I must weigh nothing. There is a transparent tube in my nose. I see it, feel it. My son connects a syringe and my stomach fills. I want to vomit but can't. Why am I here? Why am I not dead?





Phantom Pregnancy

Jane Lomas

Unafraid, I didn't believe them when they said to lock my bedroom door against the ghouls that patrolled the house. I awoke to scratchy nails and squeezing hands, no air to breathe through the smothering stabs. It was there for only a few moments, no time to understand. I breathed when it was gone. Afraid, I lay exhausted, and wait for them to bring my baby.

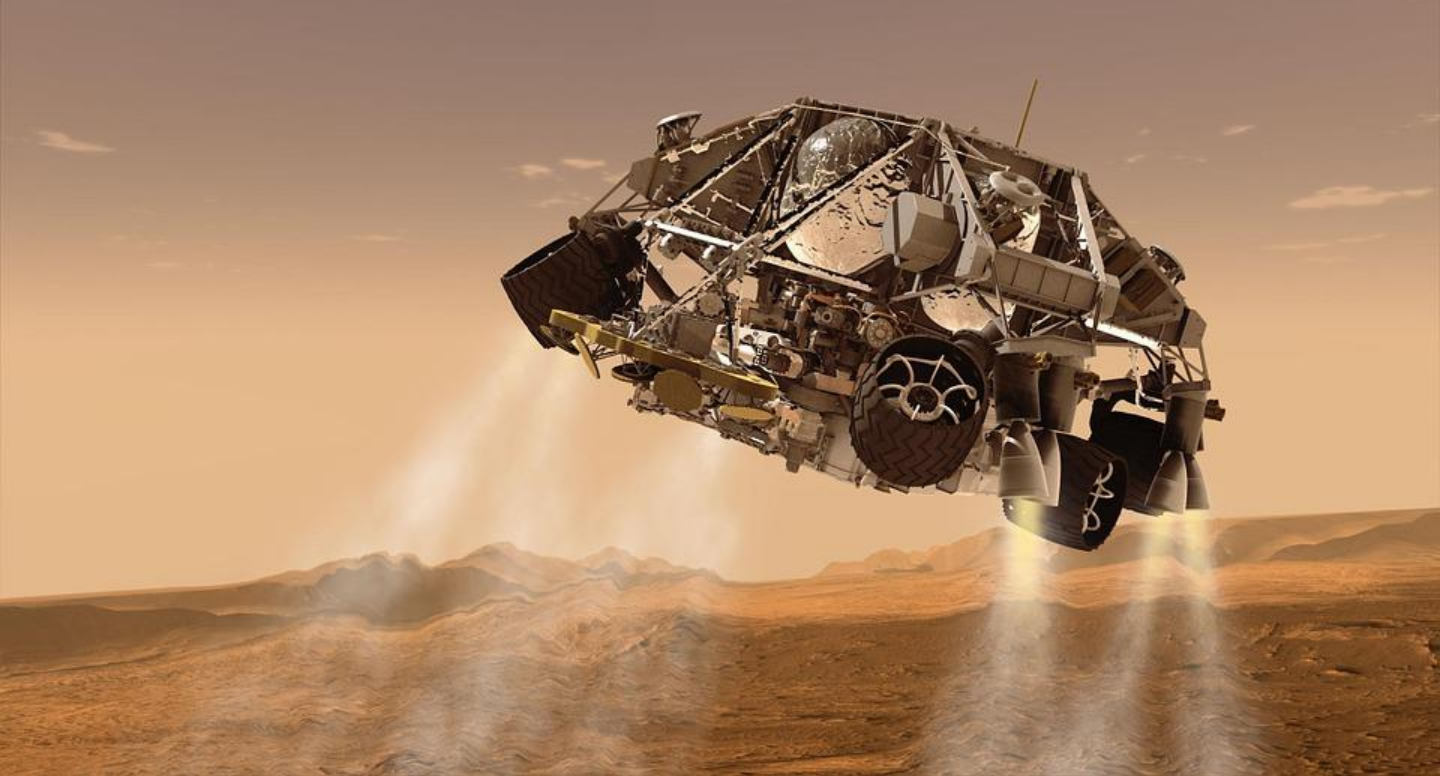


A Heaven In Hell's Despair

Victoria Pearson

I pushed his small body out of the path of the lorry, took the blow. Dying for him earned me the right to be his Guardian Angel. My heaven: I'd be with the love of my life, watch my son grow.

I thought the most painful bit would be watching my wife grieve, but today I had to hear my boy call some other man "Daddy."



Exploration

Karen Heslop

Veldar shimmered and blended into the dull red rock. His fingertip suckers resembled storm weathered ridges. He watched the small robot clack and whirr over the dry terrain, searching for signs of life. Humans. They say they seek friendship but the Martians knew better. Humans don't befriend, they colonize and claim. The Moon people had sent the message out before they disappeared. "Run. Hide. Humans kill".



The Color

Jeff Provine

They fled upward through gates marked "No Admittance" and "Return to Your Level." She held her son's hand tight. Then he stopped. They were still a mile from sunlight.

"We have to run!"

"But what is this?" He pointed at moss growing near a vent.

She'd not seen the color in years; he'd never seen it. "It's called 'green.' Now let's go before the troopers come!"





The Experiment

Karen Heslop

Access denied

Denise's heart thundered as she tapped the keys. The synthetic cells were assimilating biological matter to survive. Bits of Andrew swam in a thick silvery soup. A thin tendril shot forward...

Access denied

It burrowed into her shoulder, searching and sucking. Her fingers shortened and receded. She became one with the incomplete being. It slipped into the door, toying with the mechanism.

Access granted

Buyer's Remorse

Will Gilmer

SHOP-N-SAVE

Receipt November 28th

Item: 1 Ouija Board

Total - \$14.99

- - - - -

SHOP-N-SAVE

Receipt December 3rd

Item: 1 One Gallon Purified Water

Item: 2 Dried Sage Smudging Bundles

Item: 1 One Pound Sea Salt

Total - \$21.47

- - - - -

SHOP-N-SAVE

Receipt December 8th

Item: 3 Gallons Kerosene

Item: Express Fire Starter

Item: New Home Buyers Guide

Total - \$32.19



Con*trib*u*tors

Kenny A. Chaffin

Kenny A. Chaffin writes poetry, fiction and nonfiction and has published poems and fiction in *Microfiction Monday Magazine*, *365 Tomorrows*, *James Gunn's Ad Astra*, *Eunoia Review*, *Star*Line*, nonfiction in *The Writer*, *The Electron*, *Writers Journal* and others. He grew up in southern Oklahoma and now lives in Denver, CO where he works hard to make enough of a living to support two cats, numerous wild birds and a bevy of squirrels. His poetry, fiction and other work is available at Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/-/e/B007s3SMY8>. He may be contacted through his website at <http://www.kacweb.com>.

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>.

Caleb Echterling

Caleb Echterling can hum and whistle at the same time. No joke. He tweets funny fiction using the highly original handle @CalebEchterling. You can find more of his writing at www.calebechterling.com.

Will Gilmer

Will 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. Available or forthcoming in Transmudane Press' "After the Happily Ever After" anthology, *Firefly Magazine*, *200ccs*, and *Empyreome*. Follow him @willwritethings.

Russell Hemmell

Russell Hemmell is an alien from Mintaka snuggled into a (consenting) human host. Recent Stories in *Not One of Us*, *SQ Mag*, *Strangelet*, and elsewhere.

Blog: earthianhivemind.net Twitter handler: @SPBianchini

A. Elizabeth Herting

A. Elizabeth Herting is an aspiring freelance writer and busy mother of three living in colorful Colorado. She has had short stories featured in *Bewildering Stories*, *Peacock Journal*, *Dark Fire Fiction*, *Friday Fiction*, *Under the Bed*, *50-Word Stories* and *Fictive Dream*. She has also published non-fiction work in *Denver Pieces Magazine* and *bioStories*. More info is available on sites.google.com/site/aehertingwriter/home and www.facebook.com/AElizabethHerting

Karen Heslop

Karen Heslop writes from Kingston, Jamaica. Her short stories have been published or are upcoming in a *Devolution Z* anthology, *101 Words Magazine*, *Untied Shoelaces of the Mind*, *The Flash Fiction Press*, *Speculative 66*, *The Nine Tales Series*, *Cemetery Moon*, *The Blotter Mag*, *Phantaxis Magazine*, *Bloodbond Magazine* and *Bards and Sages Quarterly*.

LiAnnah Jameson

LiAnnah Jameson is a middle school English teacher, blogger, aspiring writer, & sleep enthusiast. One day she dreams of changing lives through her writing, but until that day comes, she writes for free. Blog:ifidienowhowillfeedmycats.wordpress.com

Marissa LaPorte

Marissa LaPorte is currently studying English and literature, writing, and advertising & public relations at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. She 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 by *Figment.com* and she was a runner up in the "Letter's About Literature Contest" held in Lansing, Michigan. LaPorte has most recently been published in *The Flash Fiction Press*, *The Drabble*, *Sick Lit Magazine*, and *600 Second Saga*. Website:<https://www.facebook.com/AuthorMarissaLaPorte>

C.A. Love

C. A. Love is a writer currently residing in Berlin, Germany and is originally from California.

Jane Lomas

Jane has loved to play with words for as long as she can remember. She used to pretend she had her own library and numbered all her books, has been known to sniff the pages of books to see if they are worth reading, and is a general book hoarder. Jane, amongst other things, was shortlisted for the Norwich Writers' Centre's Escalator Fiction programme, winner at @AdHocFiction, @paragraphplanet and a Mslexia greeting card competition. Has written articles for local newspapers and journals and was the first Chair of the Friends of the Essex Book Festival. She is currently working on a novel but is continually side-tracked by writing competitions and twitter.

Tanner Menard

Tanner Menard is a poet and composer whose current work reflects his mixed Indigenous and Acadian ancestry. His ancestry includes descendants of the Acadian settlers as well as multiple indigenous lineages such as Atakapa/Ishak and Mi'kmaq as well as other tribes that he has yet to concretely identify. His current foray into the world of performance art and literature reflect his desire to tell the story of his DNA in a multidimensional, hybrid/indigenous/Metis twenty first century language.

As a composer, Menard has been published and anthologized in the US, Canada, Europe and Japan on labels and net labels such as Full Spectrum Records, Rural Colours, Tokyo Droning, Install, Slow Flow Rec, H.L.M., Archaic Horizon, Kafua Records and Milieu Music. He has collaborated with artists the world over and was known for his Remix of Robert Rich's sleep concert concept. Additionally, his contemporary classical music has been performed and recorded internationally in venues such as Symphony Hall in Chicago at Universities such as Arizona State University, the University of Michigan, Auburn University, the University of Wisconsin Whitewater and California State University Stanislaus. Menard served as visiting artists at Arizona State University and California State University Stanislaus and has shared stages with composers such as John Corigliano, Michael Daugherty and Daniel Bernard Roumain.

Victoria Pearson

Victoria Pearson writes strange short stories and dark fairytales on strangenotebook.blogspot.co.uk and talks politics, sociology and current events on leftungagged.wordpress.com. You can find her drinking coffee and waffling about all sorts of nonsense on twitter, @vspearson85

She has no idea where her keys are.

Jeff Provine

Jeff Provine is a teacher and curriculum developer in Oklahoma. When he's not leading ghost tours or collecting spooky local folklore in works like Haunted Guthrie or Haunted Oklahoma City, he's writing alternate history steampunk, such as Hellfire and Celestial Voyages. www.jeffprovine.com @jeffprovine

Fred Rock

Fred Rock is the alter-ego/pen name of Jim Schott, a mild-mannered and married father of two who lives in a small village in northwestern Wisconsin with his family as well as his dog and a cat who always barfs all over the house.

www.fredrockfiction.com @fredrock715

Jesse Sensibar

Jesse Sensibar is unafraid to die but terrified of dying alone. He is a warrior, a poet, and a storyteller who is not afraid to dance in public when the mood strikes him. He came west to the high desert in the late 1980s and quickly disappeared down the rabbit hole of Southwestern outlaw drug culture. He emerged from that hole in 2008; close to death and with a solid quarter century of hard drug abuse under his belt. He is both a seasoned veteran and a survivor of the War on Drugs. He spent many years on the Long Black Train. He has, needless to say, a great many regrets. Along the way he's also worked legally as a mechanic, heavy equipment operator, strip club bouncer, repossession agent, tattoo shop owner, private investigator, tow truck driver, snow plow operator, wildland firefighter, and college English teacher.

These days he's retired from a great many things but remains in love with language, family, citrus trees, the open road and the shrines, artifacts, and monuments to loss that litter it. He sees these things as reflections of his own damaged soul and scattered memory. He spends his time writing and promoting the art of both the written word and storytelling. He also still does a bit driving, pool hall bouncing, and firefighting when the mood strikes him. You can usually find him in the dying Ponderosa Pine Forests surrounding Flagstaff Arizona or the old barrios of Tucson Arizona. Otherwise he is probably somewhere out on the highway documenting on Facebook the passing of his beloved but rapidly disappearing American West and pondering the fleeting nature of memory, sin, spirituality, and forgiveness.

H. Victory

H. Victory is strange. She lives in Norfolk where she works as a school librarian. She sometimes writes things and has been published on both Postcard Shorts and Daily Science Fiction.

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- **Editor-in-Chief - L.L. Madrid**
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Cover Photo By Jason Palmieri

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