

AUDIENCE ASKEW PRESENTS

THE

Skewvies:



AN AWARD ANTHOLOGY

The Skewies

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The Skewies

An Award Anthology



Edited by Michael David and B.S.Roberts



AUDIENCE ASKEW

THE SKEWIES: AN AWARD ANTHOLOGY
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The Skewies: An Award Anthology

Spotlight: canceled "Laugh Till I Cry" category

Matt Gulley

FIRST DOLPHIN MAYOR SWORN IN, CRITICS UNEASY AS HISTORY MADE



NEW YORK (AP) - Sauerkraut, a twenty-three-year-old male bottlenose dolphin, was sworn in Tuesday after clinching the majority of votes in one of the most closely-watched civic elections in years.

Although many small towns across the Midwest have voted dogs and cats as the elected head of municipal government, these were mostly ceremonial posts and tourist attractions within the fading rustbelt. Sauerkraut is thought to be the first non-human to govern America's largest metropolis and now has the full powers of office at their disposal.

Cynthia Trump-Clinton Jr, 56, a registered Republican who has painted herself as a pragmatic independent, came second in the election. Mrs. Trump-Clinton phoned Sauerkraut late last week, conceding the race, which early polls showed her as the heavy favorite.

It is unknown how Sauerkraut, an aquatic mammal of the genus Tursiops, plans to govern a city facing multiple ongoing crises, including rising crime, a housing shortage, and a possible credit downgrade due to the ballooning deficit. Many hope the historic nature of this win will unite a polarized city, with a discontented few going as far as claiming that Sauerkraut was not eligible to be on the ballot.

"I genuinely don't think we ought to be encouraging this," said William Saverino, a 34-year-old chair painter from Brooklyn. "It's crazy, you know?"

Others are more optimistic.

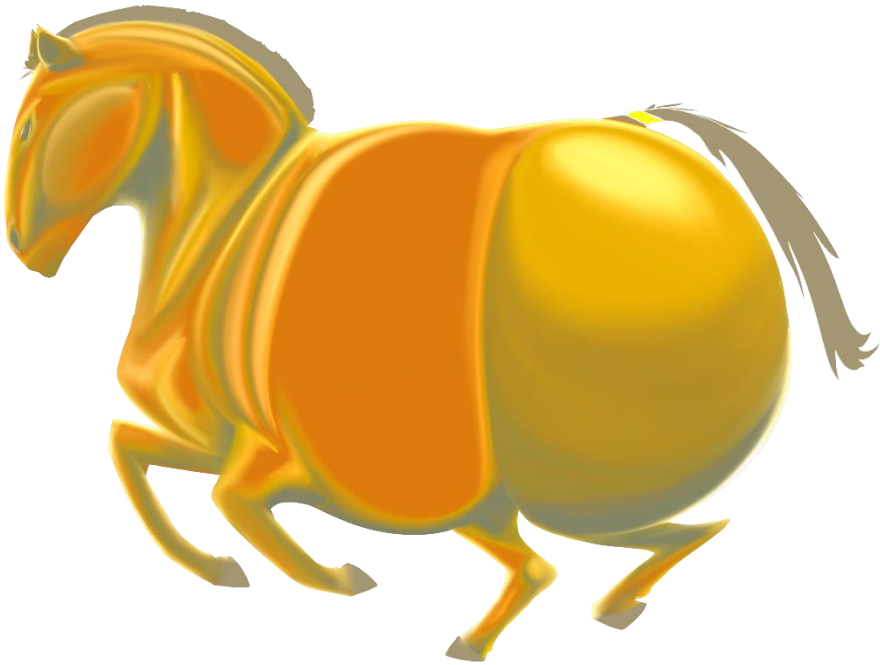
"Sauerkraut, is, like, goals," tweeted Anthony Carmelo-Diamond, a popular social media personality from the Bronx. "Goals Goals Goals."

Tuesday night, the new mayor was unavailable for comment but released a statement through his spokesperson.

"EEEEEEEEKKK EEEEEKK," it read in part. "EEEEK EEEK EEEEEKK."

Category:

Fornicate the Form



Prompt:

Keats, Frost, and Angelou are best known for their respective crafting and mastery of the *form*. Well, good-for-fucking-them. We want your weird, wild, and almost intelligible poetry for this category. Disregard the form or become the corporate sell-out your parents have always wanted you to be.

Travis Stephens



POLYP

i am the polyp
 the fleshy bulb
plucked from the sea,
cast onto grit
 & stone bits,
awash in the moon's weeping.

gulls preen &
 take selfies
like the girls they are
while
smooth skinned porpoises
glance at plastic buoys
with pity.
 Pfft!

i am the broken half
of a scallop,
 lacey & coy.
i am the lost claw
of a tiny crab.
inside me
 rainbows of
 plastic bits
wheel & congeal
like memories.
these will outlast the pyramids
 Hoover Dam
 the Autobahn.

i dream of
 the floating
hair of an otter &
an
oil slick left after rain.

Andre Peltier



CHAOS JUMBLE 1: A DEMOCRACY OF DAEMONS

Shitpopdoowopbibbitybobbityboo
Whowhatwhenwherehowdoyouo
Whatwhenwherehowovertheedge
Noonenohowtrimyourpubichedge
Skyscrapersubmarinecoverunderthrough
Shitpopdoowopbibbitybobbityboo

Whowhatwhenwherehowdoyouo
Crazykatpurplecowdaisydogdoo
Crawlingwalkingrunningfuck
Standupsitdownhugoballbeckytom&huck
Submarinepyramidyellowred&blue
Whowhatwhenwherehowdoyouo

Crazykatpurplecowdaisydogdoo
Flatt&scruggsbillmonroecomingafteryou
Inthetownonthehillmakeaweddingvow
Thebridewillcometoyellowskywaitingforaplow
boogaboogabiggalybangamilitarycoup
Crazykatpurplecowdaisydogdoo

Flatt&scruggsbillmonroecominafteryou
Ifyouseeanopentoocoverupachew
Loadacannonputashotoverheadsofstate
Dontforgettowashyourhandsthehoursgettinglate
Tieawindsorknotornoteatyourwinterstew
Flatt&scruggsbillmonroecomingafteryou

Ifyouseeanopentoocoverupachew
Sneezespleasesebenezeasdeepershadeorhue
Cornstalkcloudmazewavesofgrainsaunterinatdawn
Loadashotgunkillssometimedoeorbuckorfawn
Foursixeighttencountthemonethreetwo
Ifyouseeanopentoocoverupachew

Sneezespleasesebenezeasdeepershadeorhue
Youngsold&greenisgold&wearebornanew
Yoyojumpropepegostickbobbingoutofsight
Qbertpacmancentepedehighscoreday&night
Yoyojumpropepegostickbobbingintoview
Sneezespleasesebenezeasdeepershadeorhue

Kurt Newton



KALEIDESCAPE

Bring the kids

(specially those troubled ones
that run about like windup toys
that never wind down
and never listen to a word you say)

A playground for young and old alike

(if you can imagine a jungle gym
the size of a tenement building
so intricate, once entered, it's near
impossible to find one's way out again)

Free to the public

(ever since the economy crashed
and people had to choose
between paying the bills
or putting food on the table)

Desperate times call for desperate actions

(kiss them goodbye,
if they'll stand still long enough,
and send them on their way,
all screams you hear are screams of joy)

There are no judgements here

Simon Clarke



UTTERLY SIMPLE

All competition entries
All submissions for fame
All letters for prizes
All jotters just jotting to play the game
All you writers you writers who write with such passion
stop following fashion, allow normal to show
and when did it start this angry acceptance that life is hard and it's all your fault
for not getting on and not getting out and going to work
so tell me please tell me
You old and young poets
You rappers and chanters
You course attendees
You biased and prejudiced
You feminist causes
You creators of rhyme
You writers writing forever in time
You singers and players hungry for fame
You grinders and grizzlers feeling no change
You tellers of tales of gratuitous abuse
You two for £10 and life is OK and what did ... what did ... what did it say?
You eunuchs of change
with your balls in the bin and your tits in the clouds
When do you talk about what is now normal and what is now right
tell me
when was it normal to have a food bank?

Elizabeth Munn



CONSTELLATION

In dreams
that scene:

I return to
of that bottled

bend in the inky black sea under a woven blanket
draped above, as in a child's
fort, and hole-
punched in the pattern of

constellations,
like the ones
in my old book on space

I kept hidden on the mahogany shelf between
ancient relics and other girlish ephemera

until it was forgotten and then found
again, like all great loves and worldly wonders,
sinking
to the depths
of memory.



The Skewies: An Award Anthology

Spotlight: canceled "Spooky (Not Dookie)" category

Matt A Hanson

BACKSTAGE, THE WORLD



When the Iron Curtain came crashing down, it, curiously, collapsed to the sound of concrete, its fragments bursting into dust. But behind it, there was a stage. Its theater, cold as the metal that concealed it, knew the crushing horrors of censorship. There were some, yet, who spoke through its artificial polish, its inhuman silence.

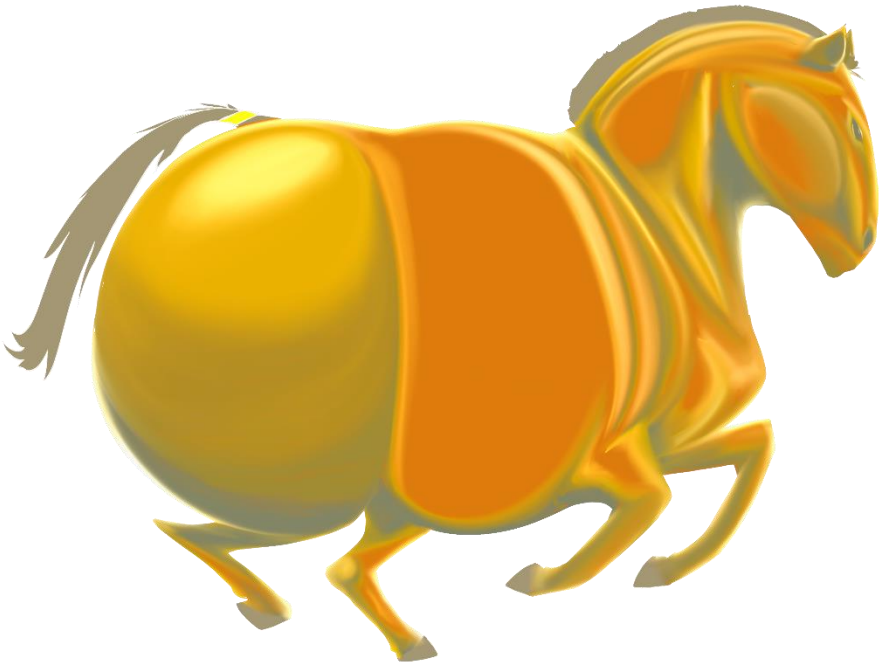
Darkness shrouded the uniformed audiences, all seated still as manikins in unlit rows frequented by spies and politicians, aesthetes and critics, their hushed whispers muffled by the orchestral roar of symphonies and monitors. Outside, the industrial chorus of booms and sirens played across the public squares, overshadowed by murals and statues of Vladimir.

One especially peculiar theatergoer blew hot air into his hands, rubbed his palms and put on his wool-lined mitts, braving the frigid weather. Despite the post-Stalinist Thaw and perestroika, the deathly freeze gripped his lungs. As his breath turned to thick steam, he said: "Allah, God". He was a Turk from Crimea, on his way to Ankara to deliver precious news.

The death rattle of Soviet imperialism could be heard throughout the globe. But in Turkey, secret meetings led by men who once worked graveyard shifts behind the Iron Curtain devised a scheme to consume the skeletal remains of its rotting, territorial body. They would feast on the oil of its earth.

Category:

Eye Sweat



Prompt:

Yes, this is a *Phineas and Ferb* reference. No, we do not want your fan-fiction. We are looking for work that taps into your repressed or otherwise-masked emotions. Sure, you can show us a tear, but blame it on the fluorescent lighting. Hold it to your chest, champ.

Maggie Bonyer



WHERE DID YOU JUST GO?

Home. Or, more accurately, the structure that housed me through my adolescence. To the day I picked her lock, unlocked her throat with my fingers, opened her body back up for her soul. To the day we had our last family meeting as that family. To the blue chair in her living room, with her weight pressed against my body while my panic crushed itself to my insides. To the back of my closet, the door latches tightly, with piles of coats disguising me. To the dusting of trees I used to call woods, where I tried to escape. I went back to that house and I'm not sure exactly how, nor the path back to the present. I've spent so long locking all the doors, painting all the windows shut, fastening all the memories to one another and burying them in the backyard. It seems impossible I'm standing in the old bedroom again because I swore the last time I burned this building down. I want to go home. I want to leave this dwelling behind; I'm begging you to take me home, shackle me to the bed and grind your lips against mine until I forget that place exists. Take me home.

Mara Schneider



NONEXISTENT

You weren't there.
You weren't there to see me grow.
Never when I needed a father.
To yell at the mean boys who tugged at my pigtails.
To show me how to throw a ball.
To take me fishing.
To always think my dresses were too short.
To hate the boys I brought home.
To come to the father daughter dances.
All my life,
We shared the same house,
But you always remained nonexistent.

Kurt Newton



ROADSIDE DEATH MARKER

five dandelions
dug up from the lawn
he once played on
one for each birthday

a toy racing car
he liked cars
it wasn't his fault
cars didn't like him

two popsicle sticks
glued to make a cross
stained purple and red
his favorite flavors

Ellen Harrold



LINEAR TIME PASSAGE

The cut-throat end.
It's not the heart that aches.
It's the sternum:
↓
protective tissue.

If I wanted to make someone feel the weight of grief.
I'd skip the piano and simply hit them in the chest.

Health and safety probably wouldn't approve.

Mikey May



THIRD THOUGHTS

do you like me? / do you *still* like me? / even though i said that thing i wish i hadn't said / i think i came across wrong / i think it came out wrong / i promise i'll be better / i *promise* i'll be better / tripping over my tongue on the way home / trippingovermytongueonthewayhome / tripping over the things that i shouldn't have said / tripping over the words that might have *hurt* you i neverevereverever want to hurt you / i just wanna be perfect / wanna be *perfect* / ijustwanna / ijustwanna / ijustwanna / ijustwanna

do you ever hate me? / loathe me? / detest me? / wish i'd disappear? / what's your least favourite thing that i've everever done? / how can i neverever do that again? / i promise i'll be better / i promise i'll be *better* / tripping over my tongue on the way home / trippingovermytongueonthewayhome / trippingover / trippingover / trippingover / trippingover

does my constant need for validation annoy you? / does my constant triple thinking annoy you? / does my constant *existence* annoy you? do you still like me? / do you still *like* me? / do you wish i would change? / do you wish you could change me? / *i* could change me / i could *make* me / plasticine perfect / moulded around you / which parts of me would you cut right out? / which parts of me would you want turned down? / turnedup turnedoff turnedin turnedon / i can be the person that you want / i can be the person that you *need* / iwanna / iwanna / ipromise / ipromise

i can be anything you want me to be.

The Skewies: An Award Anthology

Category First Place Winner

Thomas J. Misuraca



TEN MINUTES

Today I was awake an entire ten minutes before I thought about him. Ten whole minutes before the memory of having my heart torn out returned.

Ten minutes of serenity. A calm I hadn't felt since I was safe in his arms.

Ten minutes without dreading being alone for the rest of my life.

Then the tears returned, along with the twisting in my stomach and that lethargic feeling. The world was crushing me again.

Ten minutes of happiness.

Tomorrow, maybe it'll be eleven.



The Skewies: An Award Anthology

Spotlight: canceled "Laugh Till I Cry" category

Calvin Shaw



THANKSGIVING

The big boy with a beauty mark
Eyes bright from the spark.

He ignites his blunt
Puffing scents like a skunk.

Pepe Le Pew dew
Drips from his lip.

His munchies take control,
looking for a full course meal.

The baddie draws his interest
With each stride, she seems yamalicious.

He staggers over to her to try a corny line.
Her man squashes his attempt and says, "Don't waste your time."

His Velveeta drip makes her man saltier than Lawry's.
Gravy-like globules of sweat fills his face as he reenters the Club.

He lurches onto the available bevy of ladies.
One of them says, "His lips are drier than a turkey leg."

Cottonmouth has taken over his game.
He is choking like the Dallas Cowboys.

At this point he knows it is time to roll,
He grabs his biscuit headed friend and cousin, Cornbread.

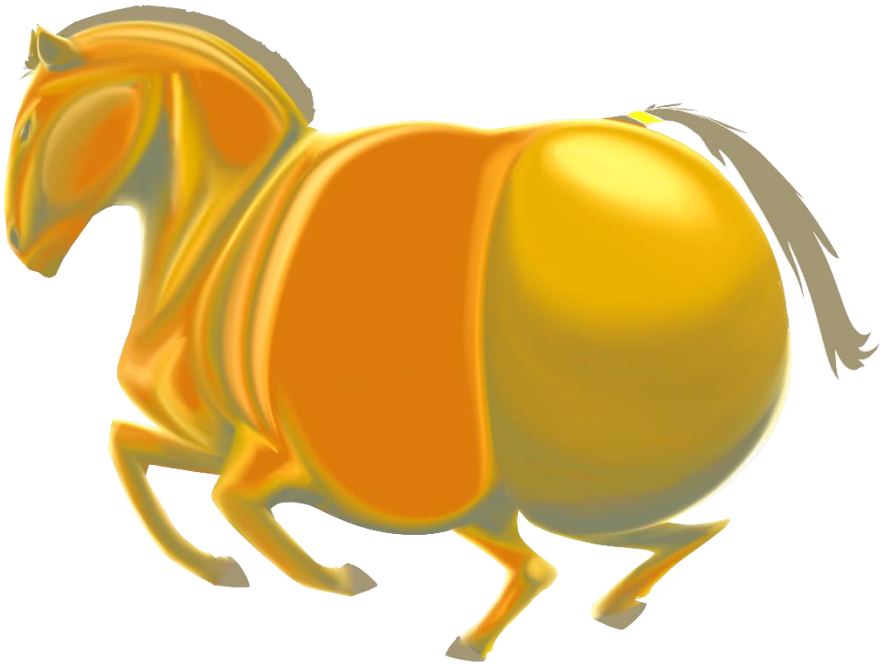
Disappointment on his face, he begins making obscene gestures at security.
The marijuana mixed with various nightly concoctions takes over his brain,
Causing a melting pot of greens in his head.

It is too late because the security guard wraps his ham-like bicep across his neck.
Everyone scatters like peas out of a pod and the police show up to "police shit."

Big boy was collared over green by the Donut Patrol.
He was hoping to end the night with stuffing,
But now he is stuck with a full baster at a sausage party.

Category:

Horny Doggy



Prompt:

Are you horny? Write about it! Are you not horny? Do you have a headache again? Did I say something earlier? No, it looks nice. Well, I forgot! Am I not allowed to forg... actually, fuck it! I'm sleeping on the couch again. **clears throat** Sorry about that. Where were we? Oh, right. Send us your (preferably non-dog-related) smut.

Jonathan Freeman



MAKING SENSE

Sometimes you people write these poems
And I have to stop and think
“Wait. Is this about sex again?”

Because I get the dumb innuendos my friends make
But when Solomon said someone’s boobs
made him think of baby gazelles
I was not on board.

It’s the soul of attraction
When your spirit confounds and compounds
your at least somewhat rational horniness
and sex becomes salubrious —
as alive as the baby you aren’t trying to make
might someday be.
But —
(Butt)
But life becomes the tangle itself
And you —
You are just the breath

It makes me think
Onan was never struck down
He just didn’t go up for air
And that’s something I can understand

Edward Supranowicz



THE ROVER

Most might consider Rover a mutt, since he was a mix of Russian wolfhound, German shepherd, and British bulldog. Rover, though, considered himself quite cosmopolitan and sophisticated. He insisted he be addressed as The Rover and played the field with the opposite doggie sex. He would woof woof in a bitch's ear and nudge her with his nose before he sniffed her. His success was legendary around the neighborhood alleys and dog houses. Then one Saturday, as he was strutting for any canine that might see him, he met Sadie. Sadie was a purebred poodle, a bit vulgar, but purebred. In heat, she lay down before The Rover and barked, "Hurry up, big boy, do it, and get it over with, I have an appointment to get my coat brushed and my nails clipped." A feeling overtook The Rover he had never experienced before. He had heard humans call such "love." Yes, he was in love, so he howled at the moon, which is what he had heard was the appropriate response.

Ashley Baumgartner



GRIM REAPER'S HELPER

She met him at night
But not in a creepy way.
He wasn't stalking her,
didn't have blood on his collar,
He looked relatively normal.
She didn't think much
of him wearing all black.
He looked lost;
Ghostly gray eyes wide as saucers,
70s punk band shirt all askew,
pocket chains that don't quite hang right.

“Are you all right?”

She asked, feather light

“I lost my scythe”

His voice trembles like autumn leaves
Half-whole, half-formed crescent moon

“Is it a part of your costume?”

“No”

The response should have chilled her to the bone,
but he looked so confused.

Instead, her heart softened

“I'll help you look for it”

Elizabeth Munn



PEACH PIT

There is something missing here,
inside my body. A vacuity
the shape of her mouth and
two longest fingers.

Stitch me up, or
glue me back together,
a mosaic mural. Fragment
by flesh-colored fragment.

Incomplete, until she
clumsily grinds her knee
and falls into me. This
wound always re-bloodies

from neglect. Do I taste
of copper—like sucking
pennies as a kid? Or
July peaches, juice

trickling down your chin?
And drooping from desire,
heavy on the branch.
Don't you want to feel the

soft down of my skin, pluck
me and take a gentle bite?
If I am a peach,
take my pit

underneath your tongue,
and keep it safe there. I'll
watch you lick it clean
and spit out the pulpy mess.

Andy Betz



IN A LIBRARY SETTING

In the abstract, my attachment required annotation badly. I wanted to download my catalog in the archives.

Then I saw her reserve stacks. She was a bound periodical (hopefully) placed on hold (unfortunately). Upon approach, I tried all of my best keyword searches, but to no avail. She could be my primary source. Even though she had been peer reviewed, I didn't care.

My name is Dewey and I have a system.

She cited she was bi-annual and wasn't interested in microfiche or abridged versions. That hurt me and intrigued me, all at the same time.

I wanted to check her out and inquired about details for a loan period. She identified as non-circulating. I could be her patron with special borrowing privileges never leaving her overdue.

Not even a consideration with this one.

She pointed to a solo carrel and told me to go cross-reference. I politely declined knowing I could get bar-coded, never to circulate again.

She was indeed a rare book, that one.

The Skewies: An Award Anthology

Category First Place Winner

Scott Perry



WHEN IT RAINS IT POURS

*“My Parents are going to be so proud that I’m using my degree
to write a haiku about mother nature having an orgasm”*

—Author’s Foreword

cloud’s erogenous
zones, thunder gyrates, anger
can be righteous too!

“Well, at least, I’m starting actually to use my degree”

—Author’s Behind



The Skewies: An Award Anthology

Spotlight: canceled "Spooky (Not Dookie)" category

Ria Hill

EAT



“Eat.”

You’ve grown pale with time, and thin. The meat she has tempted you with each day would be enough to sate your hunger, but you refuse it nonetheless. Small bits each day. Today they are freshly cooked.

But you know what they are.

You don’t have the energy to refuse her verbally, or physically for that matter, but she won’t force you. No, she wants you to take it on your own. She always has. She always will.

On the fifth day, she offers you a broth.

“Is it...?” you ask.

“Yes, of course.”

You try to refuse her again, leaving your mouth carefully closed, but the smell is heaven. Nothing, not even the carefully plated servings of meat she has offered before, could ever compare to the magic she has delivered to your table.

The steam curls towards your nose with beckoning fingers and you nod with tears in your eyes.

She smiles at you as one might smile at a child. Her hands stir the liquid and a spoonful approaches your lips.

You take it into your mouth with some kind of reverence.

This is the moment you gave up.

Savor it.

Turn it over on your tongue, then swallow and try not to look at the empty space where your right leg used to be.

Category:

Bukowski But Funny



Prompt:

Are you drunk? Do you plan on drinking soon? Well, if you are, go down to your local public library, Google up Bukowski, and then send us your attempt at Clown Bukowski.

Kurt Newton



LIFE IS A SHITHOLE AND LOVE IS A BUTT

ask any old fool
what they did for love
and they'll say things like
I gave up drinking
I traded in my hog for an SUV
I got a tat of her name on my chest
right next to my heart
which she broke when she left me
for a guy two shades closer to handsome
who still had all his hair
and all his teeth
because life is a shithole
and love is a butt
you can change your ways
to fit whatever she says
like changing diapers
on an old bedridden man
but it makes no difference
whether you change it once
or a hundred times
it all ends up being the same old shit
because life is a shithole
and love is a butt

Hugh Findlay

BANANAS



On the yellow countertop,
next to the defrosting pick-of-chix,
between the pasta in a corked jar,
and the breadbox marked
A slice of nature,
a bunch of black bananas
are bloody screaming:

WE ARE OUT OF PLACE HERE!
PUT US IN A WHITE PAPER BAG
IN THE ICEBOX NOW!

But the dishes are dirty,
so they will have to wait.
And if I wanted to,
I could just smush them up in the toilet
instead of for banana bread.

I like the power to plan
the future of black bananas
when they scream at me.
Have a nice day you turds.

Kevin Scheepers



PIANO MAN

Piano hands bleed
Keys, keys, keys, and contradictions
Playing through the pain
Self-loathing compositions
Old faithful kept time still
Loyal to childhood addictions
Bottoms up like his philosophy
Guillotined any loosely held conviction
All the times he looked and saw nothing
Improvised quickly and reduced the friction
Only the walls watched
Storyteller seduced by fiction
A mute father and dead son-of-a-bitch
Old witch only spoke in superstition
A mocking taste of happiness made it worse
The melody was a mere prediction
The brilliant soul a false depiction
piano man plays for free

Corey Bryan

WINTER STORM



After the winter storm,
where snow whipped
like an ivory whirlwind
the world becomes frigid
as Death's persuasive hand.

Metal chilled so cold it
burns to touch. The ache
of the pain so intoxicating.

I find myself letting my
hand get as cold as I
can stand it. Opening up
to the deep sensation of

frost. I squeeze hard
around the metal railing.

My knuckles white with
effort, my hand red as
embarrassment, as the
blood flows like sap
back to my fingertips.

In the second I let go,
when I can't feel the
third digit I consider
slicing one off. I could

live with two-thirds
of my fourth finger.

Who couldn't?
though I suppose it
would make carrying
all the groceries up to
the house in one go
much harder.

Leslie D. Soule



CONSP-BEER-ACY THEORY

I keep my crazy in a tiny lockbox
That's why I hardly talk about
Conspiracy Theories.
I figure if I tell fellas
About all the crazy things I think,
The "like factor" might drop ten points
Usually saying WWII is coming, is enough to scare 'em away
But this guy sidles up next to me, agrees and orders me a beer. It's his turn.
He says, "I think aliens might be a mix of demonic forces and MKUltra or Paperclip
CIA operations."
Points for originality. I considered my next move – would I talk about Hitler
escaping to Argentina, or the Paul McCartney body double? Not original enough. I
needed a doozy, like the devil clipping people's toenails at night and using them to
make clones.
Tupac being still alive? No — I came up with a great one.
"Bill Gates is actually his sister," I shouted toward the bar. "That's why he wears
pink and has tits!" The guys erupt in laughter.
The first guy comes back with another round.
"There have been a thousand Hitlers," he says, taking a shot of whiskey.
"The sun does not exist," I countered.
"Reptilians!" he shot back.
"The moon landing was fake!" I shout. "And additionally, the moon does not exist!
It is foam. It was made in a Hollywood studio!"
"Earth has been sucked into a black hole," he said.
"And my beer is about to be, too!"
We drank.

Megan Cannella



FOR THE BIT

Do it.

Do it.

Just...

for fuck's sake...

If you're going to ruin my life
at least send me off
with a story worth a few

laughs at the bar
the kind that leads
to messy orgasms
from people
whose names
my memory
will never

never

truly never

try to hold onto.

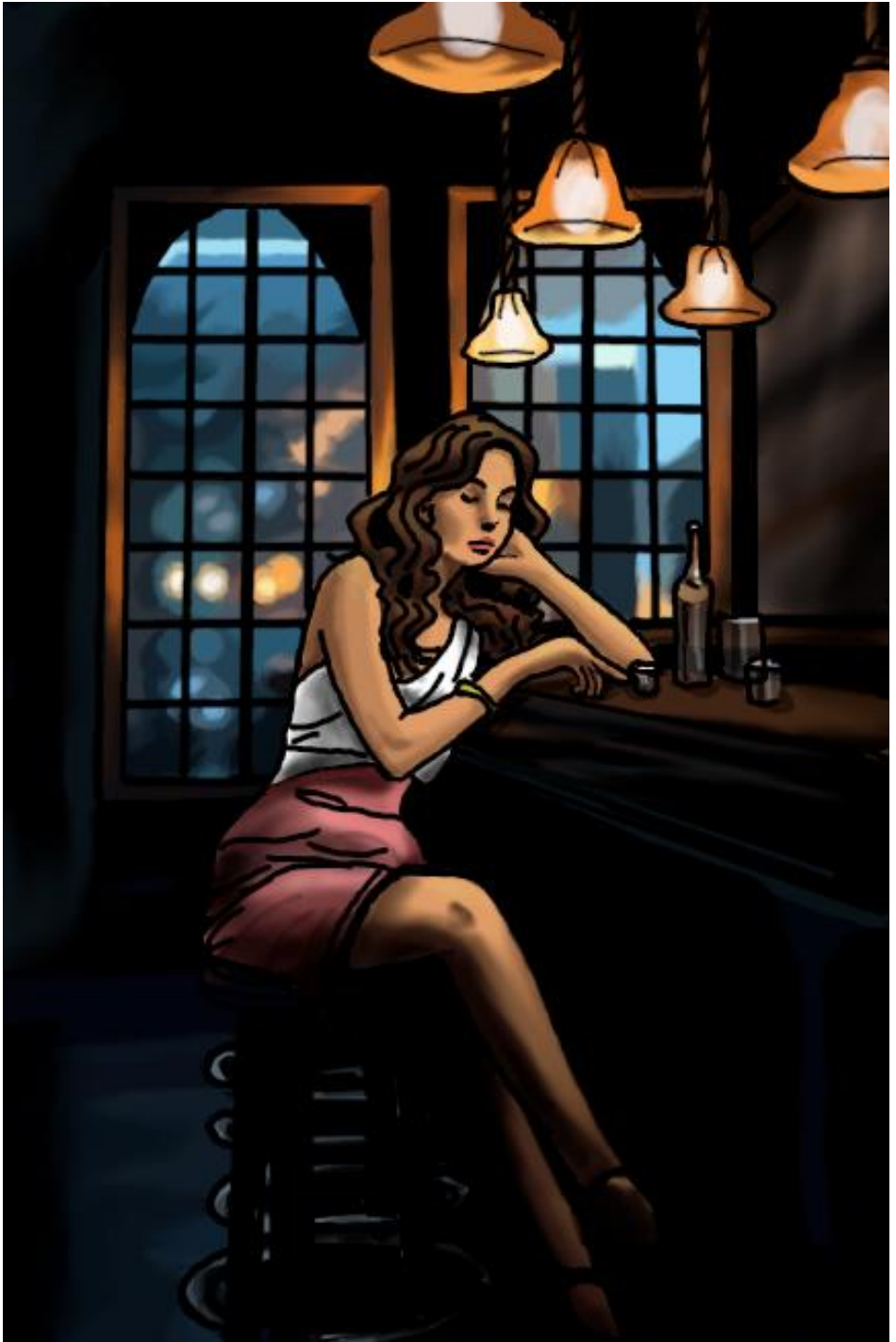
Do it.

Just be a pal.

Do it, ya piece of shit.

Yeah.

Just like that.



The Participants

Andre F. Peltier (he/him) is a Pushcart and Best of the Net nominated poet and a Lecturer III at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, MI. His poetry has recently appeared in various publications both online and in print. His debut poetry collection, *Poplandia*, is available from Alien Buddha. *Twitter @aandrefpeltier*

Andy Betz has tutored and taught in excess of 40 years. He lives in 1974 and has been married for 30 years. His works are found everywhere a search engine operates.

Ashley Baumgartner is a college student from the state of California. She likes writing for the page and the stage. She's majoring in English as well as Design/Technical Theatre.

Calvin Shaw loves listening to music and watching sports. He has many works published and looks forward to sharing more of his words with the world. *Instagram @1995calshaw*

Corey Bryan is a fourth year student at Georgia State University majoring in Rhetoric and Composition. He is currently writing daily poetry prompts, along with some original poems, with a friend of his at poetryispretentious.com. He has 2 poems forthcoming at *Sage Cigarettes Magazine* and *The Bluebird Word*. *Twitter @pip_prompts*

Edward Michael Supranowicz is the grandson of Irish and Russian/Ukrainian immigrants. He grew up on a small farm in Appalachia. Some of his artwork has recently or will soon appear in *Fish Food*, *Streetlight*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, *The Door Is A Jar*, *The Phoenix*, and *The Harvard Advocate*. Edward is also a published poet.

Elizabeth Munn (she/her) is a poet living in Brooklyn, New York with two roommates and her cat. She writes poetry about her experiences with home and sense of place, queerness/identity, and everything love and sensuality.

Ellen Harrold is an artist and writer focused on science and nature. She is completing a master's degree in Art, Science, and Visual thinking at Dundee University and working as an artist, writer, and editor-in-chief of *Metachrosis Literary*. *Twitter @ellen_harrold*

The Skewies: An Award Anthology

Hugh Findlay's writing and photography have been published worldwide. Nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2020 for poetry, he is in the third trimester of life and hopes y'all like his stuff. *Instagram* @hughmanfindlay

Jonathan Freeman (he/him) is an aro, ace, and agender [unemployed], living and [theoretically] working in Austin, Texas. His favorite people are his siblings, his favorite color is purple, and his favorite pastime is coming up with arbitrary details to list in bios since he has no published work to advertise. *Twitter* @ReverendPear

Justin Byrne is an English teacher in Middle Tennessee. Justin earned his master's degree in English from Arizona State University. Justin's work can be seen in *Plants & Poetry*, *The Parliament Literary Magazine*, *Wingless Dreamer*, *The Thing Itself*, *Arc Magazine*, and *Brick Street Poetry*. His book, *Nature's Whispers*, is available now. *Twitter* @byrnepoetry

Kevin Scheepers is a 25-year old from South Africa. He recently completed an MSc in Biotechnology, but always maintained an interest in the written arts, especially poetry.

Kurt Newton lives in the Quiet Corner of Connecticut. His poetry has appeared in *God's Cruel Joke*, *Stink Eye*, *Unlikely Stories Mark V*, *Oddball Magazine* and *Hobo Camp Review*. His latest chapbook, *A Troubled Sleep*, is available from back room poetry (UK). *Twitter* @KurtDNewton

Leslie D. Soule is a fantasy and sci-fi writer who occasionally dabbles in other genres as well. She sometimes plays DnD, and then writes about it. She wrote a four-book fantasy series called *The Fallenwood Chronicles*. *Twitter* @Fallenwood1

Maggie Bowyer (they/them/theirs) is a poet, cat parent, and the author of various poetry collections including *Allergies* (2023) and *When I Bleed* (2021). They've been published in *The Abbey Review*, *Chapter Journal*, *The South Dakota Review*, *Wishbone Words*, and more. You can find their work on *Instagram* and *TikTok* @maggie.writes and *Twitter* @maggiebow98

Mara Schneider is a young adult writer seeking an opportunity to publish her second piece of literature. She has loved writing novels, books, short stories, and poetry all her life. Her most enjoyable writing pieces are the kind she can connect to her real life experiences.

The Skewies: An Award Anthology

Matt Gulley is 35 years old. He attended Wayne State University in Detroit and currently resides in Brooklyn with his partner Jenna. Recently published in *The Madrigal*, *Defunct Magazine*, *Blood Tree Literature*, *The London Reader*, and *Block Party Magazine*. *Twitter* @selfawareeroomba

Matt A Hanson is a journalist and editor in Istanbul. His fiction has appeared in The Write Launch, Underwood Press, the Bosphorus Review of Books and the SPACE issue of *Panorama: A Journal of Place, Nature and Travel*. He is the founder of *FictiveMag.com*. *Twitter* @mattahanson

Megan Cannella (she/they) is a neurodivergent Midwestern transplant currently living in Nevada. Her chapbooks, *I Redact You, Too* (Alien Buddha Press 2022) and *Confrontational Crotch and Other Real Housewives Musings* (Daily Drunk Press 2021), are out now and available at <https://linktr.ee/mcannella>. You can find Megan on Instagram at @meeeeegan. *Twitter* @megancannella

Mikey May (he/fae/x) is a writer and teacher from Birmingham, UK. His work across all disciplines focuses on trans liveabilities, institutional violences, and queer resistances. Fae self-publishes solo and collaborative poetry zines about language, sex, and Taylor Swift at www.mikeymay.itch.io. *Twitter* @lavenderblueboy

Ria Hill (they/them) is a writer and librarian living in NYC. When not creating strange situations, they can be found at the library, slinging James Patterson books. They love reading, knitting, and spending time with their spouse. Find them online at riahill.weebly.com *Twitter* @riawritten

Scott Perry is a poet/writer who graduated from Northern Michigan University in 2020 with his bachelor's in English Writing with a minor in Film Studies. He is an avid watcher of horror films and has aspirations to work in the film/entertainment industry. He is currently living in Marquette, MI. *Twitter* @scootyperry

Simon Clarke lives in Norfolk, United Kingdom. He writes poetry and fiction and has had poems published by *Hedgehog Press*, *Brigids Gate Press* and *Prolific Press*; stories and micro-fiction by *Black Hare Press*, *Fifty Word Stories*, *Nordic Press* and *Breaking Rules Publishing*. He is currently working on his first novel. *Twitter* @s1p1c1

The Skewies: An Award Anthology

Thomas J. Misuraca has had over 120 short stories and two novels published. His story, “Giving Up The Ghosts,” was published in *Constellations Journal*, and nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2021. His work has recently appeared in *Literature Today*, *The Unconventional Courier*, and *Molecule*. Twitter @GeeksMusical

Travis Stephens is a tugboat captain who lives and works in California. His book of poetry, “*skeeter bit & still drunk*” was published by Finishing Line Press. Visit him at: zolothstephenswriters.com

Editing and First-Round Judging by

Michael David likes attention. Currently, he achieves this by writing silly little poems, managing Nat 1 & Audience Askew’s Twitter, and exposing his belly for a cheap laugh. While claiming to be the king of Audience Askew, his book sales tell a different, more depressing tale. Michael lives in Grand Rapids, MI with his wife and two cats—Meeko and Grandpa Louie.

B.S.Roberts makes a living as both a museum curator and an administrative specialist at the University of Maine at Augusta. When not writing, he tends to be working on a degree in English, since—apparently—his diplomas in ethnography, history, folklore, and behavioral studies weren’t enough. B.S.Roberts lives in Maine with his wife, daughter, tortoise, pheasants, and cats.