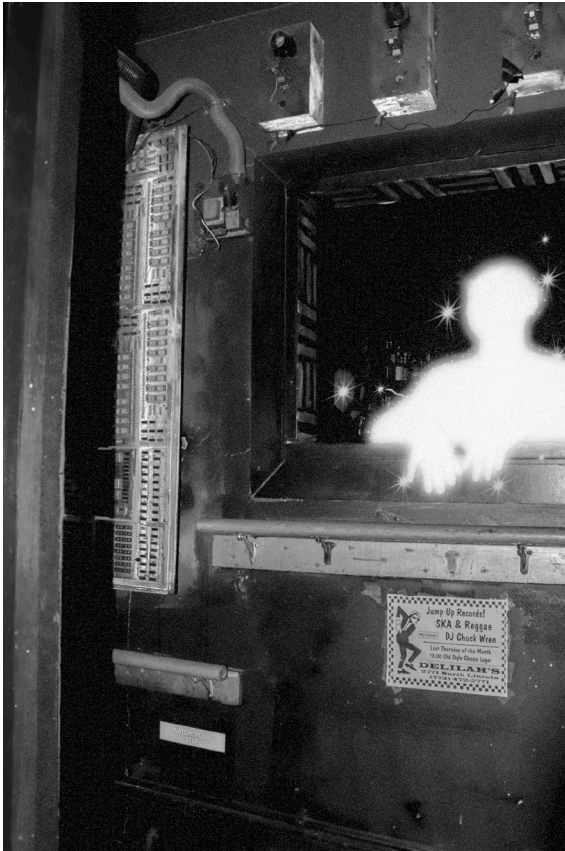
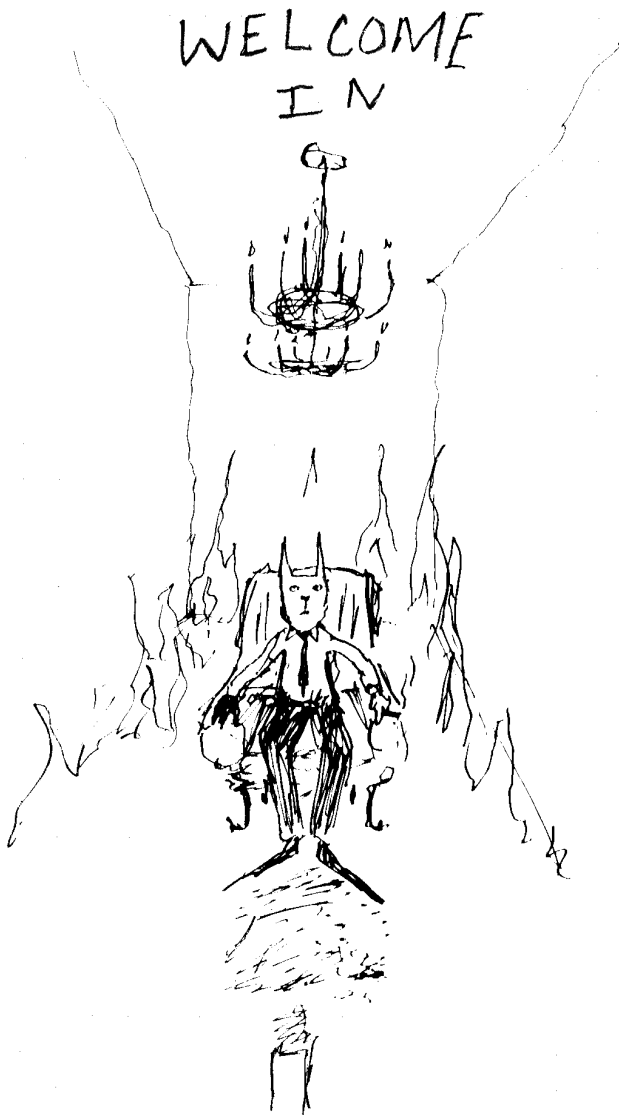

the chicago nighthawk



CONFESSIONS.

A WRITING PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO
SHARING STORIES BIRTHED BY NIGHTLIFE



MISSION STATEMENT

The Chicago Nighthawk is a completely free bi-annual writing publication seeking to promote the works of emerging local writers. We are a BIPOC and LGBTQ+ friendly magazine seeking gritty stories that are honest and personal, particularly in the sphere of urban nightlife.

Our goal is to connect fellow nighthawks to one another by creating a platform in which we can share the individual stories that bind us together.

FOUNDER & HEAD EDITOR: FT CALD

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Abby Sullivan

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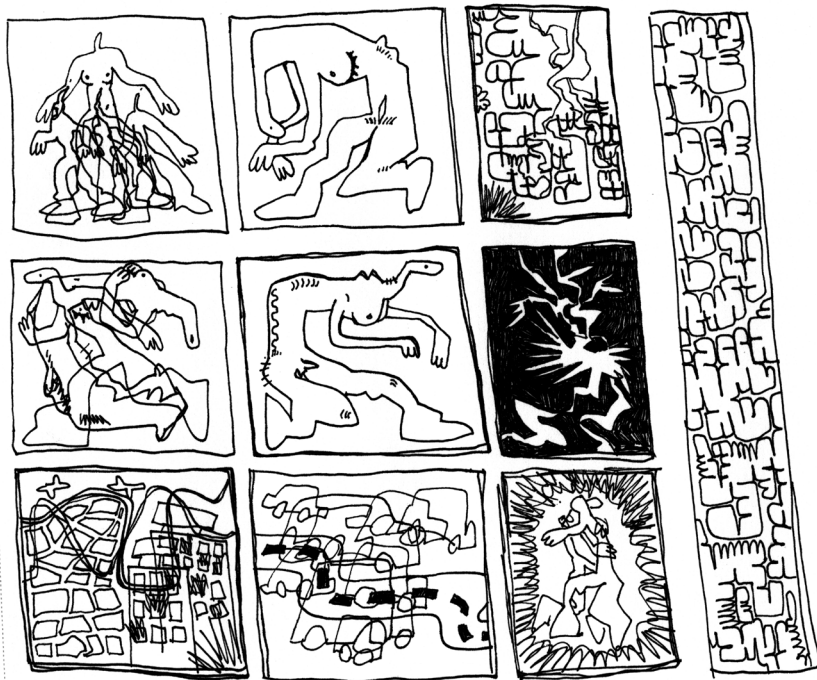
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CONFESIONS.

*"I want to be a zinger when I grow up"
- griffin blue emerson*



Unholy Pilgrims
by Jon Raskett

A dim neon Miller High Life sign glowed down the block from us, guiding our unholy pilgrimage. The sound of cowboy boots and high heels echoes off our concrete and asphalt box. Her raven black hair iridescent in neon surroundings. "This looks like the spot." We unholy pilgrims suck the last of our cigarettes before presenting our identification cards. Tonight will not be a night to remember.

Dimly lit and dreary establishment, we are too drunk to care. Sean orders whiskey and beer. I am too drunk to care. Another and another. We order another but forget the order. We are too drunk to care. Perhaps a whiskey and beer.

After all it is Friday night. Work, class, school or ass it's a long week despite who you ask. And who's that over there? Look at you! How long it's been! Me too I can't believe it's finally Friday and we're together again.

Old friends become new while new becomes old. We've done this before a time or two. When I can't say. With who? I can't say. Yet these old familiar new faces seem to forget me fast. Those I came with seem more foreign than ever.

Uber, bus, a train or a truck. Wait you're driving? To where or good luck. If only there was a place we could be. Alone while together and altogether real fucked. Where we felt not a pinged or pinch of bad luck. Yet outside we wait or walk or go home. To our new found sorrow always known before.

Alone at last with our trophies or trifles. A fight or a fuck depends on our luck. Despite all we cluck depression we front. If only we could get a whiskey and beer. But at last at home we appear.

i've never dated a man who liked my brain more than my body. it's cold again today. not like yesterday, not fall cold but Cold cold. uncomfortable in a hoodie type cold. i don't really remember what it felt like to get off the school bus when i was 14 in the late fall, but if i could i bet it would be like this. or like elementary school recess when it's too cold in october and you forgot your coat. i wish i remembered more of when i was a kid. the closest weather i remember to this is when i went apple picking with this girl i used to be friends with and our families in highschool, and my mom got too drunk and i had to drive us home. a lot of what i do remember isn't great. a lot of it is like that. i think i am prettier when my eyes water than when they don't.

october 7 2:58 pm



Two Haikus
by Mead Thorpe

Foolish shining, night aim
Stool sat, feet dangling, bar waist-high
Studying country fires on the aperture grille

Low pony, bergamot and bar smell
I think I'm gonna go
Miss you already ★



Excerpt from “Get Their Hopes UP: The Fundamentals of Lying About Your Well-Being”

by Marley Boswell

All the guys I ever liked called me sweet, called me cute. Made me feel small. The summer before my freshman year of high school an eighteen-year-old fell in love with me. We met at summer camp, a theater workshop, 9-5 every weekday. After all our classes I would wait for him in the auditorium and take my hair down from a sweaty ponytail. He didn't say he loved me until a year later, after asking me if I loved him. I probably did, makes me a bit sick now.

“Have you kissed anyone yet?”

“Not yet”

“I wanna be your first kiss.”

I went to his senior showcase after we had stopped talking, the director joked about him flirting with her thirteen-year-old daughter.

I woke up my junior year. My mom opened the curtains, started to bring me coffee in the mornings. Somehow she wasn't ever hungover. She's not an alcoholic, she just got flagged as a prediabetic and had an inflamed liver. She made it out of her own dysfunction, she's lucky, wine is better than meth. When I would go to my cousin's house, it smelt like cashews, in my mind that's what meth smells like. My aunt wasn't as lucky. It used to bug me that everyone in my family compared me to her, but she's clean now, and even when she wasn't she had the coolest furniture. My sister used to babysit us, my cousin and me. We would pretend we were on American idol. Jakob would sing in a nasally vibrato, really put on a show, he was an only child.

I'm glad I had a sister. Sometimes I feel like writing her a letter and apologizing for being the youngest. In our home videos she begs for attention and i for her approval. She is probably my most favorite person on the planet. And I am just so terribly mean.

I went to visit her at college, had Jell-O shots for the first time. I made them for the last party of junior year when I got back. The guy running the bar acted like he didn't know me. We were in school together since 6th grade.

Drinking didn't become a problem for me until I dropped out of college. Probably should've happened before. I ended up vomiting after a night out with my mother, that's when I knew I had something going on.

I feel like I never really stopped crying. I was crying in an alleyway just last night. Blood poured down my leg from stumbling out of the bar. The worst part about having a drinking problem is waking up embarrassed. But I couldn't hold back the tears sober. The worst part about having a drinking problem is being sober. And the worst part about being sober is knowing you still have a drinking problem.

Maybe it's all in my head. This sob story. At least I'm funny. I try to be smart but I can't really keep up. I'm always runner up. I'm not ever first on the list and people only remember me after the fifth meeting. You can only be sorta close to me and I'm not interesting enough to be brought up as someone you know in a conversation with strangers.

My heart aches whenever my mind relives a memory. Because it's not really there. I don't know how I felt in that picture from 2016. I don't know how I thought, how I spoke, I don't remember what I thought was so funny, what made me cry, what you meant to me. I just have to trust that I was really there, and everything happened, and it was all real. I think if I met myself, we wouldn't get along. I imagine she wouldn't understand why I'm so upset.



Nighttime Towndown (after a long and a half winter; well before the next)

by griffin blue emerson

A sprain and a spaulding out from the ashes of rubble covered with black eyed susan's best well wishes. She left them there to thaw in the spring; with oiled wood piles canvassed over and the surrounding earth tilled nice and flat. All was ready and all prepared. Shoots of sprouts, or is it the shots poured thick that caught your eye?

There! Barb is back out from the earth like she's twenty again, ready for the crystal corner. Her perm: reflecting april sunlight like a million dollars fluttering in a tousling and stationary bouquet.

Susan says ahoy, traveller! Barrels up the stairs pitterpatter.

Tori says something but nothing is understood as her mouth was busy reacquainting itself with the plosives and the fricatives of spoken words.

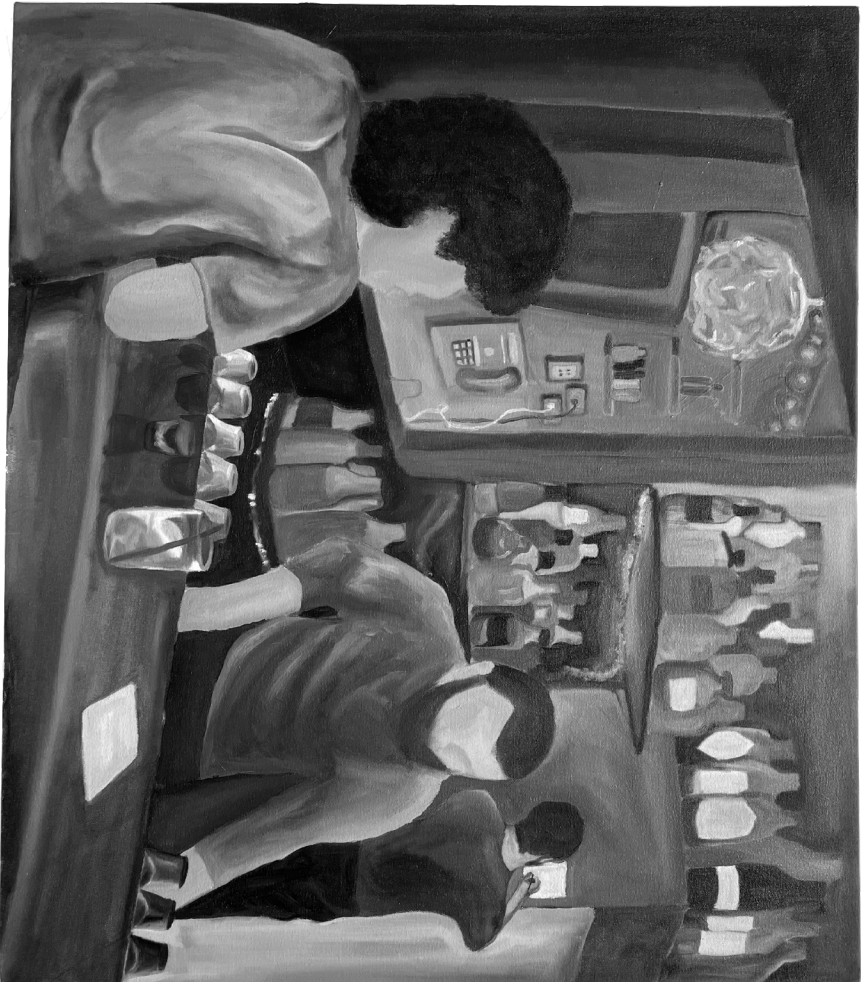
Tune your lyre, I say! Tune it well or you'll be behind the sheets of winter spray for when the snow arrives no tongue is safe, not that of the river, nor the road, yet yours will be sound asleep in its warm cavernous seed shell so long as your thoughts are contented enough to leave things be.



my heart is so big and full of love!

i want to peel all of your oranges and get off all the white stuff every time for you. something about peeling a clementine or orange is so intensely lovely. pure and innocent love. i want to love and be loved so horribly bad. i want to be cared for and have someone sitting at the table waiting for me when i get home. i want someone to want to peel oranges for me without my explaining the meaning to them first. i want someone to love me. i want so badly to feel wanted by the people i myself want, and in the same capacity of or at least at almost the same level of care and love that i want to give them. peel my orange and listen to me scream when im upset. i would love some patience, i know i am known for success but please i need a break. this is too much for me to handle by myself. i am over being the man eater i want to settle, and be someone's lover.

friday october 13th 10:36 am



untitled (left)
Socratic Seminar (bottom)
by Momo Ishibashi
oil paintings



*find the original
colorized paintings
on Instagram
@poisute.beic*

Withdrawals
by Jay Tree

Chain smoking the reflections of my
Tears and fears.
Hoping someday they won't appear so bright
To spectators and the envy-ridden.
Self-destruction is so easy.
I'm weightless as I fall to pieces.
Weak in my ways and yet
Strong enough to carry my vices in my
Left pocket.
Does anyone here have a light-at-the-end-of-a-tunnel I
can borrow?
A fire that'll never burn brighter than sorrow.



i know i use chat gpt to do my math homework but i'm not stupid
i'm intelligent and driven and ambitious and always fucking working. i'm going to be the
person everyone i go to school with connects with on linkedin in 10-15 years because they
want a new job in design or something. i forgot my lipstick at home today and i almost cried
about it on the bus so clearly something must be wrong. october is slowly burying me under
math homework and thick dark soil. i want to sit cross legged on my bed and have someone
i love braid my clean hair and tell me i am okay and things will get better for me. that i will
feel better eventually. even if this moment is so innocent and sweet, better times are coming.
i'm too dehydrated to cry about you right now, yesterday took it out of me. so the walk home
will be properly melancholic but dry besides the rain on my face. it's getting hard to swallow
the growing lump in my throat. it's quite an odd feeling to be nervous texting u now. i used
to write essays and paragraphs to u and not be minded by the hours passing because i knew u
loved me and i knew u would read them and reply when u could. now it feels like there's a piece
of curtain that came down between us, and i don't see u anymore. i wish it was at least thick
glass, i could scream for hours at u and not be heard but at least i could see you and you could
see me. i still remember how to get to your new apartment without looking up directions. i
could be there in 36 minutes if the train comes on time. i have a horrible feeling that i will
always love you a little bit. we can kiss and i will not tell anyone.

october 27 3:24 pm



SOMETIMES I GET
TIRED, TAKING IT ALL
IN.

A LOT OF
THE TIME
I FEEL LIKE
A FOOL.

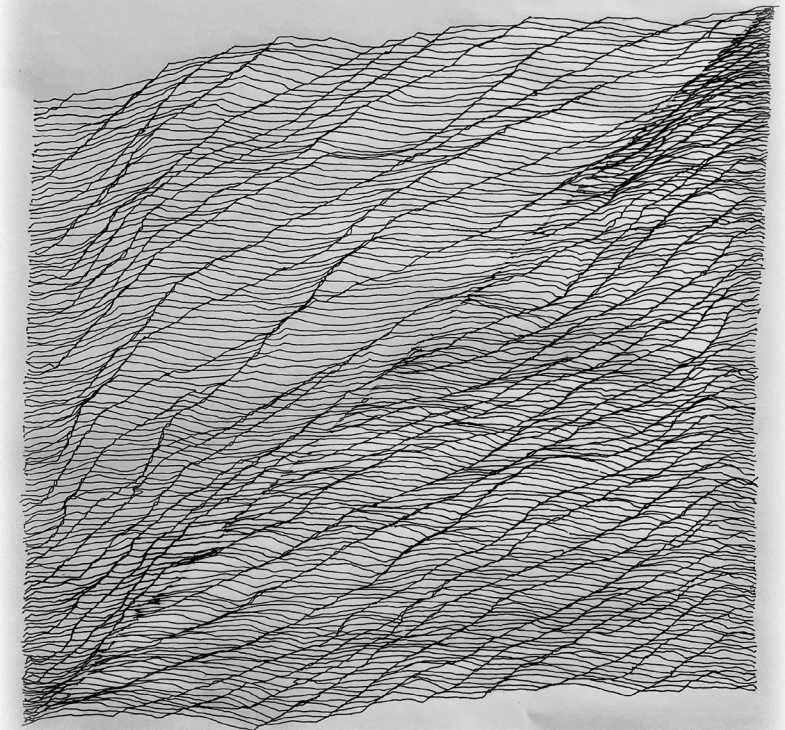
I CAN'T
BE ANYONE'S
FOOL
FOR MUCH
LONGER.

**Excerpt from “*Time to Be A Line*”
by griffin blue emerson**

I want to be a zinger when i grow up. I want to be a really good line of dialogue, spoken casually from the back of the room in a long, wide shot of all the people i love filling a warmly lit tavern/pub, one with laquered dark wood and bottleglass windows. Those words that i’ll be aren’t already inside me, no sir. They’re without me, and around me, but i have this hope inside me that i’ll find the words someday. And it won’t matter whether this world I live in is representational, interior, or exterior (cogito ergo this dick), because it’s the world that’s the world and here you are inside of it, and we’ll both continue trying to grab onto the edges of the frame and pull them in to regurgitate our life into something profound, and if you are like me and you must make art to feel real and alive inside all the sheer worldliness of our situation, ain’t it your moral prerogative to let that art feel real and alive and comfortable inside its medium as you would hope to feel in yours?

So drink like you’re thirsty and confess like you need to feel alright, let your work drink the world and don’t cage or bottle up that all-too-precious water of your hands imbibed with the world you swim in. And what does imbibed even mean? I had to google it myself to be sure. The word, imbibed, reminds me of a bib, means to have absorbed _____. Absorbed what? Idk. In bibbed, it sounds like... for toddlers who eat messy... given birthday cake... and their arms are a-goin! when they realize fully the feeling of fist into cake. What a pleasure that is!

Whapwhapwhapwhapwhapwhapwhapwhapwhap. Whoo. Now. What will these kids take with them when they go? What will they leave behind when they grow? Sheeesh. Besides your looking in my eyes, i feel alone right now. Besides your sizing me upwards and downwards with your stare, i feel alright. Well ain’t it a time to be a line.



sleeping dogs
by Ava H.

North Star,
Flitting through the grain like a candle.
I see you on the trail cam,
And I wish I had seen you with my own two eyes.

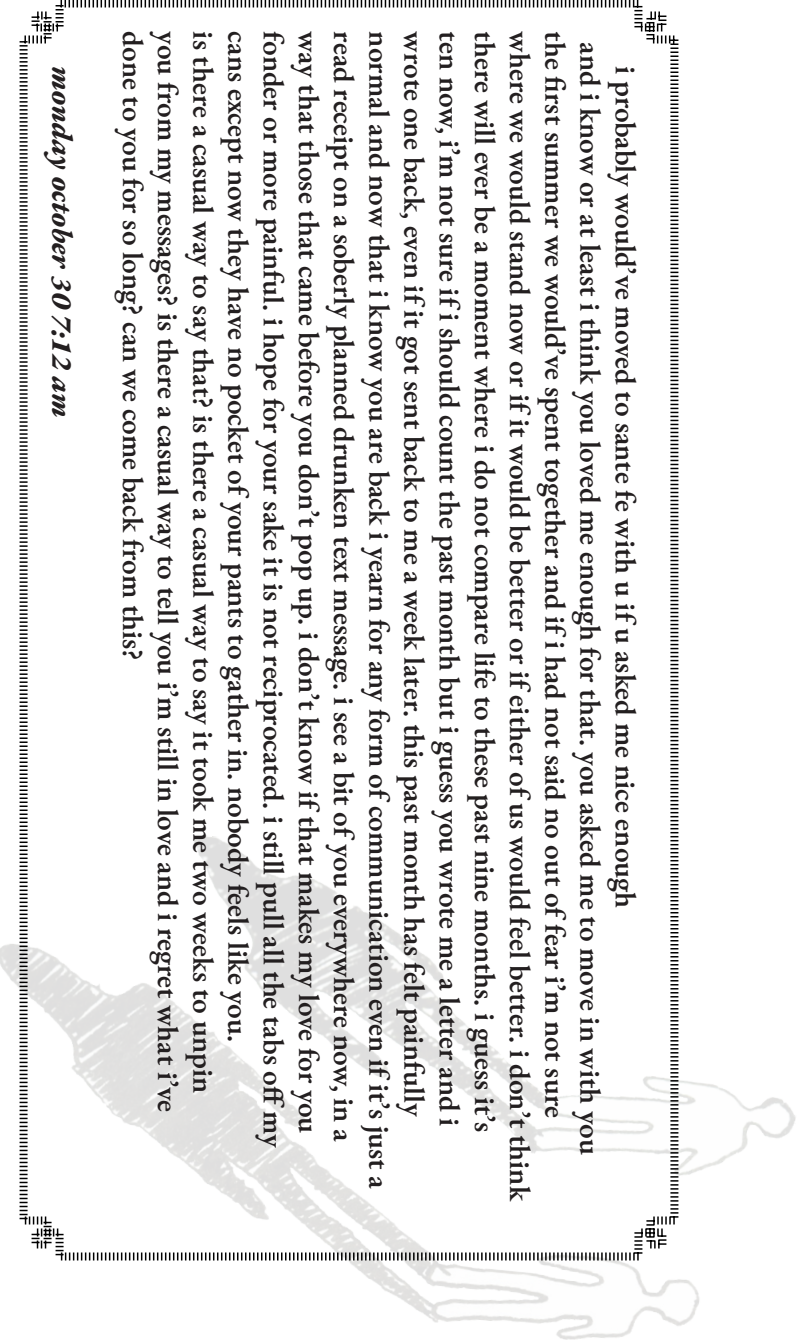
My reach extends,
To the sleeping dog.
Who will no doubt bite (my good shooting hand).

North Star,
Wakes me up after a long summer.
Humming hiss,
I grit my teeth.

God entered my body,
And he feels just like you.
And it feels just like you.

Slurry on the floor,
Your five-point ears absorb my footsteps.
You do not stir.

Sleeping dog,
Its you I love.



i probably would've moved to sante fe with u if u asked me nice enough
and i know or at least i think you loved me enough for that. you asked me to move in with you
the first summer we would've spent together and if i had not said no out of fear i'm not sure
where we would stand now or if it would be better or if either of us would feel better. i don't think
there will ever be a moment where i do not compare life to these past nine months. i guess it's
ten now, i'm not sure if i should count the past month but i guess you wrote me a letter and i
wrote one back, even if it got sent back to me a week later. this past month has felt painfully
normal and now that i know you are back i yearn for any form of communication even if it's just a
read receipt on a soberly planned drunken text message. i see a bit of you everywhere now, in a
way that those that came before you don't pop up. i don't know if that makes my love for you
fonder or more painful. i hope for your sake it is not reciprocated. i still pull all the tabs off my
cans except now they have no pocket of your pants to gather in. nobody feels like you.
is there a casual way to say that? is there a casual way to say it took me two weeks to unpin
you from my messages? is there a casual way to tell you i'm still in love and i regret what i've
done to you for so long? can we come back from this?

monday october 30 7:12 am



sweeter escape (top)
a disappearing act (left)

by KP

digital photography

find the original colorized photographs on Instagram @karlaaaponce

Under wraps
Under
Scrutiny
A microscope
Pointed your way
Stay in line
Stay in your lane
Keep inside the box
There's no Jack here
To save you now
Isolation
No one knows
The real you
The you that hides
On the dark side
Of your double life
Behind the you
That lights up the night
You glow so bright
That no one notices
You're cut into
Bite size pieces
But don't you worry
Don't you fret
Your secret's safe with me
- ... but friends make secrets



I'm drowning
In this secret
It's ugly and mangled
But it's mine
My sea to choke on
As I try
To spoon feed you
The truth
- secrets don't make friends...

by nj fox

ghetto politics
by amani fraser

every week
my ma would take us down to
the library
on the corner of 30th and prospect
gang bangers and crackheads alike
up and down the avenue
but we was always inside with da books
my mama say
youse only as good as the head uu got on yo shoulders
say she won't be held responsible for bringing two mo ignant fools
into the wrld
she say, "play in the yard
or stay inside
jus don't neva leave my side
this city will eat you n yo sis alive
if you try to decide
youse too fast for da simple life"

my ma raised me educated
she bled her voice of its southern drawl
bled me of mine too;
she worked way out in kansas
in yt folk land
moved us to po wyte folk land too
said she had to escape
my drug slinging

woman beating / generally mistreating
fast living deddy

grew up educated
smarter than most of the kids on da blocc
but even with all them liberating thoughts
all i'd want
was that southern drawl
that uneducated speak
to talk like my folknem
because to talk is to connect
uu cant connect frm da outside
all youse can do is observe
but thats wyte folk activity

to blend in
and objectively observe an community
they could care less about
to play the neutral party
to be switzerland

i've been switzerland.
spent my whole life avoiding choosing a side
too focused on my books
too set on staying alive

too concerned with the cookin
n cleanin
fo my imaginary babes
bcuz fa some reason
all ive ever been able to think about
is being a mother

did my mother
only ever think about being a mother?
did she think
she'd hold dear ole daddy-o
down 4eva?
trapstar wifin
two babies growing up surrounded by their own demise
some nights i wonder...
how'd we make it out of there alive?
the only damage being
the relationship tween the three of us
a deterioration brought on by estrangement
three strangers existing in tangent
with near identical faces

we used to spend every weekend
with our heads buried in dem books
we'd escape the chaos inside a fantasy wrld

and it was the best way my mother knew
to free us of the shackles
of "the hood".

now
that my childhood is so far removed
can i say she was successful?
the hood is ingrained in me
and i never went outside alone
the hood becomes me
and it'll always be my home



HOUSEPARTY 99
by Steph Kravets

PEACE (illustration)

HOUSEPARTY 99
THERE IS A WELL OF SWAROVSKI CRYSTALS
HOLDING OUT BRANCHES OF BRICK NEON LIGHTS
TURQUOISE AND FUSCHIA AND DARTED
SO GLITTERING AND SCOWLING
LIKE A SECRET WELL IN A ROTTING TREE

SK xx



i think maybe things are that serious and it's okay that i feel this way
there are still good things, things i like about life. i like the way my drawers are organized by
color and the fact that i take the time to fold things in the same way my mother did, even if she
doesn't anymore. i like that whenever i tell someone i take a math class at art school they find
my impressive. in fact i like to be impressive. i like my bright red water bottle from my highschool
job. my boss from there still texts me. i like otters and guinea pigs and other small animals that
make squeaking noises. i like pngs more than jpegs but i like them both still. i like the way graffiti
looks even just the small tags. i like warm knit sweaters but not wool ones, i just found out i'm
allergic to it. not to keep talking about my mother but she's also allergic to wool. i found out i was
allergic too when i complained to her about how itchy i was when i wore one of my dad's
sweaters. she said she was allergic to wool and that i probably was too. it's oddly nice to share
that uncomfortableness. and every time i go thrifting it makes me think about her when i'm
riffing through crewnecks.

thursday november 2 5:26 pm

A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO



FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF OUR LAUNCH AND
OVERALL CREATIVE MISSION

FIND THEM AT:

802 N Bishop St, Chicago, IL 60642

THANK YOU FOR READING AND THANK YOU TO
ALL OF THE INCREDIBLE WRITERS WHO SENT IN
THEIR WORK FOR OUR FIRST ISSUE.

OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL BE RELEASED IN SUMMER OF
2024

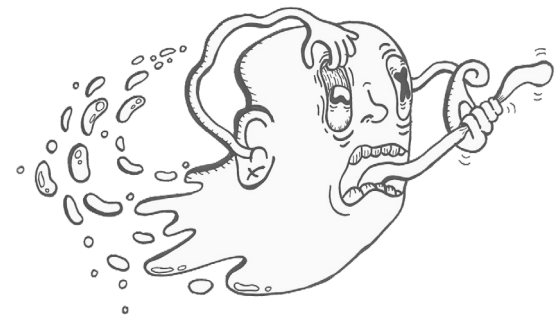
THE CHICAGO NIGHTHAWK WILL BE ACCEPTING
ROLLING SUBMISSIONS UNTIL
MAY 1ST 2024

THE THEME FOR ISSUE #2 WILL BE

CONSUMPTION.

CONTACT US OR SUBMIT AT:

thechicagonighthawks@gmail.com



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A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO

- **ABBY SULLIVAN** FOR HER SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR FIRST ISSUE AND FOR DESIGNING THE MAGAZINE TEMPLATE.
- **PAGE WOODALL** FOR HER DESIGN ASSISTANCE AND HELP IN THE PRINTING PROCESS.
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NO, I'M NOT BUSY TONITE