

Haute Dish

*The Arts & Literary Magazine of
Metropolitan State University*



volume XIX - Issue I

Editor's Letter

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."

– Maya Angelou

When I first started at Metropolitan State University, I never imagined joining a club or organization. I moved here from California with no friends, no family, and no connections, desperate for something new. As I progressed through my first semester, I realized that keeping to myself out of fear of being judged was silly. My first meeting at Haute Dish was anxiety inducing; I had no idea what I was doing or what to say, but it was invigorating all the same. I started off as an art editor and eventually got the position of layout designer.

As you can see, I am now the managing editor of Haute Dish, and I have learned so much in such a short period of time. I have the pleasure of seeing so many works of art from my peers, and it is humbling at the same time. The sheer talent that our community has is immeasurable; the amount of heart and soul poured into every submission feels like an intimate conversation with a close friend.

As I took a chance with joining Haute Dish, I encourage you, reader, to submit! It's scary, rejection is something that no one wants to experience, but the thrill of it is worth it. Everyone has something worth sharing.

Susan Yakoub – Managing Editor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Yakoub". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Susan" and "Yakoub" being capitalized and prominent.

Staff List

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Miranda Okonek – Prose Editor, Poetry Editor

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ABOUT THE COVER

Sprout by Eric Suchy

ABOUT

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For More Information

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Depression

Jill Olson

Boulders wedged on your shoulder blades,
you stretch, take ibuprofen, get massages; yet,
pain, discomfort, lingers, ongoing,
never-ending, relentless.

A long, gloomy tunnel filled with shadows,
anxiousness, tightened chest, elevated heartbeat,
cold clammy skin, self-doubt, decisiveness,
down your face sweat beads drip.

A stormy, wind driven sea,
loud cracks of thunder, brilliant, blinding, lightning
strikes,
tumultuous water, rain drops pelting your face,
gasping for air, flailing to stay afloat,
panic overtakes you; gravity pulls you under, sunlight
fading.

A tornado of depressive thoughts, whirlwind of anxiety,
racing mind, feelings of despair,
fear, no sleep, achy body,
no slumber, appetite nil, lethargy.

A pitch black, deep pit of earth,
roots sticking out, tangling your thoughts,
skewing perceptions, swallowing you up,
struggling to free yourself, lying at the bottom,
allowing it to overcome you.

Retreat from life, curtains closed twenty-four
hours,
comfort under the blankets, security within bed-
room,
isolation, endless sleeping, waiting,
holding on, waiting, dormant.

Endurance, slow-moving,
weight lessening, heart rate dropping,
light illuminating, water calming,
tornado subsiding, whirlwind dissipating.

Perseverance, encouragement, prayer,
hope, exercise, nourishment,
You emerge from the depths, opening the coffin,
permitting the sun to caress your skin,
leaving the abyss behind,
not looking back,
never forgetting,
you sigh,
and wait,
for the next wave.

Capture

Isla Sorensen

What happens to the unfinished stories?
Do the worlds go on living within me or without me?
Or do they wither in the words that sink into the inkwell of a
misplaced pen? Are they plucked like apples and carried
away to some other tourist who will scribble metaphors
in the margins of notebooks like passport stamps?
When too many stories are left to die inside me
do ideas unstick from my dreams while I sleep?
Do they float out of my open window
like bubbles I failed to capture?
Or do they condense into some
goliath thing and wait for the
writer persistent enough
to observe the giant
ship that swallows
whole the harbour
and learn how to
coax it to slip
inside a
bottle

Beautiful Lies

Carlyn Crouse

O, beautiful lies!
How they pierce the eye
The truth in riddles,
And riddles know why
Beautiful lies don't die.

Locker Shy

Jill Olson

I bought a swimsuit, I know, don't laugh
my belly's quite large, and you should see my calves
I'm quite determined, so I joined a gym
this time I'll do it, I'm going to swim!
I didn't think this thru; all that it entails
This time I know I'm doing it, I'm not going to fail
I don't like the locker room for I'm very shy
I don't want to see a boob, an ass, or someone's thighs
I come fully dressed; keep my head down
I'm not going to get caught, by someone looking around
the days I see a naked girl I truly feel violated
It makes me want to run, hide and stay isolated
But I'm not going to do that, I've learned to be wary
averted eyes, increased speed, certainly don't tarry!
Some girls don't care, a butt, a bush, a tit,
But I do not like it, I can't get use to it
It wouldn't be so bad, if I was young and fit

Game Of Love

Erik Suchy

"I love you, my dear."

His tender words resonate against my lips before he even leans in to kiss me. Once he does, I feel an explosion of euphoria that I know only comes from someone who cherishes me, like how I adore him.

"I love you too," I whisper back as our hands interlock. The cool, night breeze rustles our hair as our shadows play lightly in the moonlight casting themselves against the path. As we move in to push our embrace further, my nostrils become saturated with a wondrous fragrance. It reminds me of Friday night family trips as a child to Marty's Candy Emporium to bring home small, paper sacks of the most delicious sweets Dad was willing to buy for my brother and me. I take it in, sensing the delicacy from all those memories coming home to roost in his mouth, now mine alone to embrace.

Our relationship has only lasted one week since we crossed paths online just last Tuesday, but it feels as though we've shared a life time of experiences since then. My heart has grown old with him fairly quickly, and I anticipate it will soon share the same resting place when it is our time to move on and become one with the dirt six feet below. But until then, I sense there is still so much more we can accomplish. Traveling to every far corner of the globe, from Alaska to Australia, and possibly even to territories left unexplored, comes to mind. Maybe if we're lucky, we can come across Atlantis if our curiosity allows us to do so. It doesn't matter how we get it done, even if our lack of finances hinders us from affording adequate transportation to get there.

Perhaps we can even live like kings if we win the lottery. We can rent out a massive castle in the middle of Switzerland just for a weekend vacation and hike the alps as high as we can climb unless our oxygen supply prevents us from scaling any further. We'll travel to the Caribbean where we can swim among fish of every color of the rainbow as they search for food the same way we search for the will to be actual with one another every day we're alive. Maybe for laughs, we'll steal a Lamborghini and go for a long-drawn joyride through the streets of Milan, regardless of how hefty a fine we get slapped with. In the end, it's all about regretting the chances you don't take.

Repeat it, my love," he coos.

"I love you, my dear," I respond in short gasps, feeling his rapture work into me as I swing to his spell.

"Louder," he insists.

"I love you, my dear."

"No, no, louder."

"I love you, my dear!"

"SCREAM IT, MY LOVE! NOT WITH YOUR VOICE, BUT WITH YOUR HEART!"

"I LOVE YOU MORE THEN THE CONCEPT OF LOVE ITSELF AND ALL THAT IS GOOD AND PROSPEROUS ON THIS EARTH!"

"Cut! That's a wrap!"

A shrill voice exclaiming through a megaphone cuts into the air, and a man dressed in a black t-shirt reading Production Crew rushes to hand him a glass of water. He sloshes it down immediately, as though trying to smother the heat from a chili pepper he's just swallowed.

"Jesus Christ, 'my love'?" he yells. "That the kind of brilliant screenwriting you learn from a four-year degree from Stanford? And what's this crap you made me put in my mouth? Yeah, it smells like roses, but goddamn, it tastes like piss and moldy cheese!"

All at once, more figures emerge from behind trees tucked deep in the shadows. One carries a massive over-the-shoulder camera while another holding a boom mic lingers close behind. Some approach him to quickly pat down his face with rags, while another comes toward me with a slightly somber look.

"Look," he begins. "We're sorry we had to dupe you like this. We needed just enough footage to cover this week's episode. Most women we have him meet online are so stuck-up once they realize he doesn't carry enough money that they can suck from his wallet. But you weren't like any of them at all; you were terrific with how long you stuck with him. At the very least, will you accept this as a gift of appreciation?"

He plucks out a check and shoves it into my face. Upon inspecting it, I see the amount reads precisely for \$3 million, yet I hesitate to grab and stuff it into my pocket. From nearby, I hear him screaming incoherently at the rest of the production team over God knows. My knuckles channel hot rage, and briefly, I want to beat all other accomplices black and blue until they know what it's like when someone from network television screws someone like me out of the feeling of true love they've never managed to obtain themselves. It should serve as a not-so-friendly reminder of the actual cost of show business.

On a whim, I snatch my monetary gains from his hands. He flashes a quick smirk before venturing back behind another tree. "Nice doing business," I mutter as they prepare for the next shot.

Gone Baby Gone

Erik Suchy

Despite your best efforts to remain calm, you find yourself grasping your seat with nervous hands that chip away at the cheap wood forming its structure. You remain the only one in the waiting room amongst the sea of undusted chairs and tables layered with stacks of outdated magazines, save for the receptionist behind the counter and the occasional nurse passing through a door, either with a patient being comforted on a gurney or not. In occurrences where it is the former, you wonder if similar reassurance is being given to your wife like free candy at a carnival, where she lays somewhat unconscious but is still able to feel its barely-evolved form disappear via the doctor's "tools."

You pick up a Men's Health issue dated March 2016 and casually flip through its pages. You stop at one such section, where a chiseled Zac Efron-looking powerlifter stares at you with a quote about perseverance that screams horseshit to you. From your perception, it ought to be commonplace knowledge that all assumed "inspirational quotes" tacked on to every professionally-trained athlete are likely just ad-libbed on the spot and carried off as "words of wisdom" to the average reader.

"Pain is just an illusion," it reads. "The aftermath of success is always a reality." You purse your lips as you let all thirteen words enter your head, hoping it can encourage you as per its intention. Maybe it can give you the courage you need to storm inside her room and demand every butcher surrounding her to cease all operations with cheating an innocent of its right to live, so help you, God.

But your anxiety and discomfort, as persisting as they are, aren't illusions at all; they've left you broken far beyond where a prayer or two to the man upstairs can instantly make good. Just the same, there is no aftermath anywhere in your current predicament that will end with the kind of success anyone would call a real victory.

Success doesn't tell you it's proud of your actions because you're both too young and not financially secure, and it doesn't congratulate you by saying the only reason you did what you did was that you just weren't ready.

But then you remember Dr. Saperstein's advice that you engage in meditation whenever you feel unbearably rough, regardless of your stress level. "Finding a happy place is a means never intended to be too complicated to find, so long as you search for it no matter what," he's told you at almost every other therapy session. You scoff at this; his happy place probably never involved thinking past sedation, forceps, and a vacuum designed to suck the brains out of something you and her considered an accident at first.

You slam your eyes shut and try to settle, almost demanding that tranquility absorb you as you try to focus on the first images that come to mind.

You try to see a field full of flowers. You come upon them shriveled and unwilling to bloom.

You try to see a cluster of trees, hoping to hear a gentle wind that whistles when it blows through its branches. You only see its wood rotting as it sits in complete silence.

You try to see the ocean sparkling in the sun overhead as you watch from afar. You instead see it flow thick as a dark shade of red overtakes its natural color.

Then, you refuse to try any longer and open your eyes, still back in the uneasy solace of the waiting room, now with a counter missing a receptionist. An overhead fluorescent lamp flickers nearby and elicits a slight buzz, leaving the surrounding doors momentarily shrouded in darkness before artificial light returns to its bulb.

It didn't have to be this way.

All while just one voice could have cried, one heart could have beat, and one set of eyes could have seen the beauty of the world it was meant to be brought into before a decision had been made.

Sprout

Erik Suchy



Horned Owl

Miranda Okonek

Jane's therapist said the birds represented repressed childhood trauma. It had been two months since her pine tree had filled with crows, blue jays, sparrows, house wrens, great horned owls, coopers' hawks- the list was a work in progress. Her tree simply defied the laws of nature. The black crow cawed at the horned owl all day while it tried to sleep, its head gently tucked in its chest. During the twilight of the days end, the horned owl began its low whooo hoots and carried on all night. The shrieks of the hawks shook Jane to her core, it was if they were screaming at her. More birds came every day and crowded into her tree like a dysfunctional high-rise apartment. Jane's husband, Gerry threatened to cut the tree down if she didn't go to therapy, so she went every week, reluctantly. She went for the birds.

The caws, hoots and shrieks were continuous. Jane became increasingly nervous and agitated. The cacophony haunted her dreams. She didn't know how she could understand this but, in her gut, she knew the birds wanted something. Catching a gust of wind Jane's body soared light as a feather over the creek running through her family's land. The once majestic maple trees planted with the bones of her ancestors had been destroyed. The white pine trees were felled into stumps. The grief of seeing her families sacred forest destroyed pulled Jane to the ground and she could no longer fly. She fell down into a whirl of blood-curdling screams.

Gerry knew what the birds wanted and he wasn't going to give it to them. He sat silently adjusting the tension on his bow, checking the sharpness of his arrows against the tip of his callused finger. He aimed at the owl.

Jane awoke screaming, a sharp pain bursting from her chest. She found Gerry on the floor outside her window yelling for help as every single bird from her tree swooped in to exact revenge. Jane left her husband moaning on the ground and walked outside to pick up the horned owl with the arrow through its body. She held the owl and wept, its eyes, one big mirrored horizon blinked open a final moment before they closed. Gerry leaned out the broken window, mouth aghast. Jane caught his gaze.

"I know a lot of really great therapists if you need any help processing this."

"You can't just leave me her---"

The ripping and tearing of clothes and flesh drowned out Gerry's voice. Jane tried to scream but couldn't find her voice. Her cry bellowed through the air into a vocalized whoooooooo. Her arms flapped viciously as her body lifted, rising above her house. Her vision slowly began to focus and she could see through the veil of night with laser precision. The stars lit up the sky and she soared into the wind, gliding effortlessly. Jane's winged relatives surrounded her, even the crows up past their bedtime. They were going home.

Silence Speaks

Erik Suchy

Today the voices came again through the sky
That drab, dreary sky that screams January weather in Minnesota
if I ever saw such a bleak sky
where we heard them want to call us home
And I begged her, "Don't let them fool you
or beckon you away to join those in the void
because we can't let them win"
But standing with feet rooted
and hearts singing misery's joyless tune
we realized no voice beckoned

Shadow Of The Day

Erik Suchy



Night Terrors

Erik Suchy

Crawl
Upon this dark morning gloom
Over from hell to reality's realm
I make my way
Tacitly

Bound to mind
Strapped to my world like a cuff over the wrist
You see it all pristinely as it unfolds with trepidation
Soon my journey into the mind in the early dawn
Initiates

My abhorrence stalls for no one
As you now see with eyes dilated like petrified lenses
Yet still, you wish to dream
Of fancy?
Of reason?

Of truth?

I am the truth of the mind

Death To Paradise

Erik Suchy

Once upon a time
the angels' city
did not feel like a culture lost to mind
Because even with the drugs
the fruit was ripe for plucking
the sites could be viewed unbroken
and a line of the good stuff
was just another guilty pleasure
every other night

But apathy sings a sick song
that calls to the privileged
like how the fiddler charms his mice
and it isn't until then when all feels
lost to superficiality
and my love
my sweet, sweet craves
on the tongue
become vivid fantasies
without ambitions

Lost to time
Lost to change
Lost to indulgence
Lost before Camden
Back then
when I used to smile

Something, Something, Wonderland

Miranda Okonek



Biographies

Erik Suchy is an emerging writer who currently attends

Metropolitan State University, where he plans on obtaining his B.A. in Creative Writing. He is most passionate about writing speculative fiction in the horror, crime, and psychological thriller genres. His short stories have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Yard: Crime Blog*, *Youth Imagination*, and *Close To The Bone*. As a side hobby, he enjoys pursuing photography with both his trusty Nikon D300 and Sony A6500 at his side.

Carlyn Crouse is a fantasy, horror, and science fiction writer. She recently earned a degree in Creative Writing with a minor in Game Studies from Metropolitan State University. Her poetry, flash fiction, and non-fiction can be found in *Haute Dish* and she works as a freelance gaming journalist with articles featured in *The Metropolitan* and on the gaming sites *Wowhead* and *Pro Game Guides*. In her spare time, she is an avid gamer, spending ample time in the world of *Azeroth*. She lives in fantasy, dreams reality, and can never quite distinguish the two.

Jill Olson will graduate from Metro State University in the Spring of 2022 from the Individualized studies program. Upon graduation she will take the written and performance exams to become a certified American Sign Language Interpreter. She has taken writing classes from Belo Cipriani and Suzanne Nielson at MSU.

Miranda Okonek is a senior at Metro State University majoring in English and Creative Writing. When she is not covering community events for her neighborhood paper, *The Dayton's Bluff District Forum*, she finds joy in the constant rehabilitation of her historic East Saint Paul home. Her inspiration to write stems from her love of gardening as she cultivates the stories that blossom from within the cracks of life around her.

Isla Sorensen graduates Spring '22 with a bachelor's in creative writing and a minor in psychology. She loves crafting, being outdoors, and travelling with her amazing spouse. She hopes to pursue an MFA program in creative writing after graduation.

Haute Dish is published two times a year, spring and fall semesters, and is dedicated to showcasing the literary and artistic talents of students, staff, faculty, and alumni of Metropolitan State University.

Categories include: poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, memoir/personal essay, visual art (photography, illustration, Focus on Metro), and digital storytelling.

Who May Submit?

Current students, staff, faculty, and alumni of Metropolitan State University are all welcome to submit their work for both the fall and spring issues.

Haute Dish is supported exclusively by funds from Metropolitan State University student activity fees.

DEADLINES

Fall Issue – April 15

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QUESTIONS?

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