

as flowers

first-time blooms

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

the ground is soft.

Inaugurations are terrifying. People say they adore them, the tiny seed that has not yet burgeoned. The truth is that we all loiter at the starting line. I inaugurated *As Flowers* after doing that for years. It was not because I finally felt primed. I was just tired of waiting.

The poets in this issue did not come with credentials. Some sent work at 3 AM. One note said, “I’ve never shown this to anyone.” That honesty is what matters to me. We are not trying to show off. We are just capturing the moment someone is brave enough to share their feelings.

as flowers is not here to tell you what poetry should be. These poems do not all have a singular purpose. Most want to hurt and heal at the same time because that is how our minds work. We feel different things all at once and we do not always get the answers we want.

To our first readers, you are witnessing something private. We are all in this together without a map. We all agree that words still matter.

The ground we are standing on is soft and uneven. Be careful where you step.

With thanks and a little nervousness,

ashikur

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, AS FLOWERS MAGAZINE

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POEM 01

a wasp gives up life

A wasp gives up life in search of light,
The music of nature attracts me that way,
gives a sheer delight,
The flowing rivers and mountains highs
oh the bright sunny days
and cold bright moon lights.

This Zanskar monk lived life to its fullest
without being a sensory slave,
but this beauty I can't resist.

Nirob Dhar

@__ni__r

the signal of dawn

It is about to bloom somewhere.

I can't see it,

I can't hear it.

But,

I can feel it.

Dawn is coming to me,

with every fragment of my past.

As if it shows me the future made by

these fragments of my past,

dawn is coming to me.

The signal is swaying,

gleaming,

like a candle does.

Then, someday,
it will glow
like the blaze in a fireplace does.

Yuu Ikeda

@yuunnnn77

POEM 03

full of spring

Spring melody is resounding
on the road that I'm walking.
Vague something is flickering,
as if it tries to remind me of what I've hoping
for a long time.
Winter incantation is about to vanish.
I continue to walk,
feeling a veil of perfumed signals of spring.

Yuu Ikeda

@yuunnnn77

a dead garden

the blooms from our
garden will never be again,
once this made me sad;

but i think i'm over
it now—

twenty years of sisterhood,
kinship, laughter, love,
secrets, truths, anger, pain,
healing, sadness, journeys,
magic, adventures;

each of it gone in a blink of an eye—

all because you refuse to
communicate,
because you refuse to reciprocate
the love given you;

maybe one day you'll realize
i wasn't trying to fight i simply
wanted you to look in the
reflection of our waters and realize
something needed to change.

Linda M. Crate

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POEM 05

the final act of love

Everytime when somebody asked me
for the final act of love —
what did you do?

I told them
I opened those handcuffs
and set them free

The deepest wounds I got
were never leaving me

It's not the matter of faith
that disturbed me everytime.

But it was always about
the one sided efforts

i like to watch butterflies dance

sometimes the blooms
are frequent and loud,
so many flowers that you
could drown in them;

other times of my life
they are soft and quiet
a little color or fragrance
here and there to tide me
over for a while—

i prefer when it's a garden,
like to watch the butterflies dance;

but maybe both are
necessary
for me to grow myself in

blooms

i see the blooms of the past,
some of them are certainly
quite beautiful;

i remind myself that i haven't
seen the blooms of the
future yet—

perhaps if i let go of these
dead flowers,

i can find a world of more color;

but i have always had difficulty
with letting go—

i never want the love,
the laughter, the goodness to
fade.

almost

I miss you most in the quiet,
when the air turns colder
and I know you're somewhere smiling
because Christmas is creeping closer—
your favorite season,
your kind of magic.

I still remember how your eyes
lit up brighter than the lights you hung,
how you would make sure every gift is wrapped perfect.

And me?
I've always belonged to Halloween—
the shadows, the mystery,
the way October smells like change
and endings you can almost touch.

I loved the dark. You loved the glow.

We couldn't have been more different—
your world coated in red and gold warmth,
mine painted in moonlight and the stars—
and yet our favorite days
were only a few months apart,
close enough to brush fingertips
but never to fully hold hands.

Bergen

@poetryinplaid_

A Home Built on Illusion

Who are you?
Why did you walk into the midst of my silent storms
when agony had built a home in my chest
and yearning was the only language I spoke?

You made me believe life was finally making sense,
as if the sun had somehow found its way to me.
You wrapped me in the illusion
that you were my home
until the day you weren't.

You built a castle out of false promises,
flickers of hope,
and fleeting emotions.
And then, one ordinary day,
you arrived like a violent storm
and shattered that fragile castle,
leaving me homeless again.

You came only to give me a deeper pain

than I had ever known.

I had slowly begun learning your vocabulary
your ways, your warmth, your world
but the grief of unlearning all of it
made my bones weak
and left my heart in ruins.

Smitha T (Aarohi)

@poems_by_aarohi

the garden within

I am a quiet, light forest of bones,
roots twisting through the soil of myself,
petals pressing against the ribs of night,
aching toward some sun I cannot name.

I fracture like stone warmed by the sun,
my edges scattering, dissolving,
and from the fissures, green rises
tender, relentless, impossible to deny.

Growth hums in the hollow of my chest,
a pulse I cannot ignore,
the trembling green of new leaves
sprouting from yesterday's ash.

I bloom in the fractures,
drink the rain that fell on my silence,
and in every breaking,
a small miracle unfolds,
a leaf, a voice, a heartbeat
that refuses to be contained.

I am both fragile and infinite,
a garden of storms and sunlight,
remembering that even the shattered
can root, can rise, can bloom again.

Courtney Louise

@hersoftspokensoul

Sweet God

I drink what kills me because death feels honest. There's a silence between the swallow where I almost remember God, or something that hurt enough to be her. Maybe it's not death I want but the moment before it, the body remembering its origin, the mouth still wet with creation. She made me from the same salt she used to flood the world, and I keep mistaking her mercy for ruin.

*Sometimes I think pain is her language,
and I was born fluent.
Sometimes I think I am her echo,
still trying to return to her throat*

Brionna Warner

@thequietstorme

junk draw

You know that junk drawer—
every home has at least one.
Some maybe more, maybe three or four.
But have you ever thought:
what if that junk drawer was a person?
What would they be like?
Who would they be?
If I'm honest,
That junk drawer is me.
That's my mind, my body, my soul.

I don't choose to be chaotic—
a drawer full of mess with no place to go.
People don't need me day to day,
but for some reason they can't quite let go.
They can't throw me away, not yet.

So I sit there
with the rest of the junk,
waiting for my time — good or bad.

Forever wondering
if I'll be used and abused again,
or just left to rot.

Z S

@userunknown____999

POEM 13

lost angels, lost demons

They say suicidal people are lost angels—
wings tired, homesick for heaven.
They say they drift, soft and holy,
longing for luminous doors.

But what if they're not angels at all?
What if they're crooked, weary demons,
maps torn,
trying to find the same dark place—
wanting, always,
to go back home to hell?

Z S

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ever since a kid

I don't know if it's ADHD or BPD,
Or maybe even Autism or PTSD.
I just know I've been fucked up—
Ever since a kid.

I know I just ain't quite been right.
I said I didn't know what it was — And I didn't,
For over half my life.
But now?
Now they tell me I've got all four.
With depression
And anxiety
Mixed in.

I always knew I weren't right,
Ever since a kid.
Now they know—
And all they do is prescribe pills.
"Take this one,"
"Wash it down,"
"And you'll be fine,"

They say.

I take that much medication,
I rattle.

The worst part is — They don't help.
The demons, The illnesses,
Are all still there. Just as alive as ever.

I've been sick for more than half my life—
Probably all my life.
I know I've never been right.
I've always been fucked up,
Ever since a kid.

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Open Book

"Ask me what you will, I said trembling. I'm an open book."

We were like turquoise
threading its way through stone,
pushing all our strength into beauty,
into places it would never be seen.

Our confessions merged like prayers in the dark.
We passed fear back and forth
between each other's hands
until our hearts discandied
and grew ripe, and inside the fruit was a seed.

I knew then I loved him
like I never had anyone else before,
which in the manner of myth
also signaled dying.

I'd become the volcano,
spewing everything without really
meaning to because I couldn't stop
once begun, and there fell as ash

a certain comprehension with the fire still in it:

I have never been so ugly or in need of connection.

Ask me what you will, I said trembling.
I'm an open book.

He took my hands in his and said,
*But that's the worst kind. It means
there's nothing to protect.*

JA Davis

@thepriisonpoet

My Reach Makes Love

(REPRISE)

"A poet is tasked with creating a sense of the actual."

When Jackson asked me why both voices in my poem sound the same, I thought about it for months, even after he left. Eventually, I realized I was a child and childish aspirations had entered my writing. I had tried turning a monologue into a dialogue.

A poet is tasked with creating a sense of the actual, and actually he never took seriously what I wrote to him. Actually, he cried the night before I left, eating my ass for the first time, and I could feel the tears running down my legs.

He had the ethos of a soldier taking orders from fear, turning against the forces of the mind that cried out to be vulnerable. Really, there are too many versions of the story I could tell, but all of them can be summed up like this: Whenever I left, he followed.

The poem, like life, was not as I intended. It was an allegory of the mind in the midst of manufacture. But unlike the poem, endings in life aren't certain—though perhaps nothing ever is until it reaches the end, except of course that no matter what, everything ends, regardless of whether we're resisting or ready.

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A magazine for the first-time blooms

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“To bloom is to become.”