

Issue #44: Saying Goodbye to Yesterday

Get
It
Now



D. Arifah

Drive Away

D. is a photographer from Indonesia who is captivated by the silent stories the world tells. Much of her work is an invitation to pause, listen, and see the world around us with greater intimacy.



**Christian
Barragan**

In Good Order

Christian is currently an MFA candidate at Hollins University. His work has appeared in the *Raven Review*, *Takahē Magazine*, and *Open: Journal of Arts & Letters*, among others.

Read the author's interview here.



Leslie Brown

Lone signal

Leslie's recent visual art has been published in *Quibble*, *Closed eye open*, *NonBinary Review* Issue #33: *World Tour*, *Phoebe Literary Journal*, *Beyond Words*, *Scapegoat Review*, *ZO magazine*, and *Burningword* literary journal.



[sarah] Cavar

*have you heard the one where Hashem & I walk onto a narrow bridge and
wrestle with plurality*

[sarah] is the author of *Failure to Comply* (featherproof books, 2024) and *Differential Diagnosis* (Northwestern UP, 2026). They edit *manywor(l)ds.place*, and have been published in *Electric Lit*, *The Rumpus*, *The Offing*, and elsewhere.



Reaching Through the Wind

Kiera Conrad



Madi Corell

Kiera is a writer and anthropologist who splits her time between Boston, USA and Cork, Ireland.
You still haven't called to ask when I'm coming home

Madi is a current MFA candidate at N.C. State University in Raleigh, North Carolina. You may find their poetry at Silly Goose Press and the *Screen Door Review*.

Read the author's interview here.

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Caden Crane

Tuesdays, Am I Right?

Caden is a UK-based writer desperate for escape, whether that means through fiction or an airplane, he's not picky. He spends his days as most writers do; that is to say thinking about writing, rather than actually doing it.



Deborah Davitt

When We Cannot Let Go

Deborah's award-winning poetry and prose have appeared in over seventy journals, including *F&SF*, *Analog*, and *Lightspeed*. For more about her work, please see www.deborahdavitt.com.



Cailín Frankland

Ben Side

Cailín is a British-American writer and public health professional based in Baltimore, Maryland. They live with their spouse, two old lady cats, a rotating cast of foster animals, and a 70-pound pitbull affectionately known as Baby.

Read the author's interview here.

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**Judi Mae "JM"
Huck**

Jisatsu: After Reading the Execution of an Archvillain

JM is an MFA candidate at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas whose scholarly interests include Southeast Asian epic traditions.



Pravy Jha

When the City Decided to Archive Us

Pravy is a student writer from India. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Brilliant Flash Fiction*, *Last Syllable Literary Journal*, *Blue Marble Review*, and anthologies such as *Upon Learning That* and *Rooted In: Rite*.

Read the author's interview here.

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Wisdom Is Learnt From the Elders, cover



Mondli Kunene

Mondli creates African art using acrylic on Masonite with leather and warthog tusks to address social issues. Awards include film prizes, Forty Under 40; international exhibitions; mentors youth, establishing art hub. See his Instagram: @mondliart



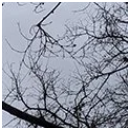
E.J. LeRoy

Momo's Kite

E.J. is a Pushcart Prize nominated writer with credits in several publications including *The Lorelei Signal*, *Neon & Smoke*, and *Tales from the Crosstimbers*. LeRoy also has a novella published by The Whumpy Printing Press.

Read the author's interview here.

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Sasha Levin

Unfinished Farewell

Sasha is a poet, forager, and cat lover learning to breathe again with Long Covid. They believe a better world is possible, and that together we can write it.



Evie Maher

Angel of Sorrow

Evie is a freelance artist from San Diego, California who works in traditional and digital media. Their primary medium is pen and watercolor and they have been exhibited in several museums and galleries across San Diego County.



K. Meera

Burr Holes

K.'s work has appeared in *Speculative Fiction Between Stars and Clay*, *Strange Horizons* and is upcoming in *Mythaxis Magazine*. They write about tamil-paasam, queerness, and the constructions of impossibility.



Rajvi Mittal

Girl With Memories Packed

Rajvi is a photographer, writer, and creator from India. Rajvi regularly writes on Medium and has self-published a poetry book, *Reborn: Darkness is the Seed of Light*.

Read the artist's interview here.

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Janine Moore

Mother

Janine currently resides in Portugal but grew up in the United States. In their early fifties, they have more space to look back, reflect, and sublimate past hurt into poetry. It is a freeing process that they highly recommend.



Scott Nadelson

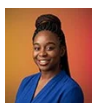
Read the author's interview here.



Vacuum

Scott is the author of nine books, most recently the novel *Trust Me*, winner of the Edward Lewis Wallant Award for Jewish fiction.

Read the author's interview here.



Gloria Ogo

A Yesterday Which Refuses to Leave

Gloria is an American-based Nigerian writer whose work has appeared in *Eye to the Telescope*, *Brittle Paper*, *Spillwords Press*, and more.



Adam Porkolab

Krummholz Fugleman

Adam's fiction is forthcoming in *The Pink Hydra*. He holds a PhD in Linguistics and writes in both Hungarian and English. When not writing, he builds distributed systems and argues with compilers.

Read the author's interview here.



Do you use a pseudonym? Why or why not?

No. I'm Adam Porkolab — that's my legal name, the one I sign as Dr. Porkoláb Ádám back home. I dropped the accent marks for publication. Most editors would strip them anyway, and keeping them just means extra emails and extra proofreading rounds over characters that half the typesetting systems on Earth will mangle. The work should do the talking, not the diacritics. If a story can't hold your attention without a foreign-looking byline, it doesn't deserve your attention in the first place.

What works do you feel have been left out of the western literary canon — works from other countries, in other languages, or by marginalized people?

The entire body of Central and Eastern European speculative fiction, for a start. Where is Stanisław Lem's *The Cyberiad* in the conversation about the greatest comic fiction? Where is Frigyes Karinthy's *Voyage to Faremido* (1916), a Hungarian proto-SF novel about sentient machines, written before R.U.R. coined the word "robot"? Where is Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, arguably the greatest fantasy novel of the

20th century, shelved under "literary fiction" because it's Russian?

Hungarian literature exists in a kind of linguistic quarantine. We have one of the most demanding literary traditions in Europe, and almost none of it crosses over. Kosztolányi, Krúdy, Mészöly, Ottlik — these writers would be household names if they'd had the luck to write in English or French. Thank God for Kertész Imre's Nobel in 2002 and Krasznahorkai László's in 2025. The stranglehold is starting to loosen. But there's still a long way to go.

What writers/artists/filmmakers/musicians have influenced your work — either the work itself, or the way in which you work?

Hungarian literature will always be in my writerly DNA. I spent years teaching literature and history, and that shaped me before I ever tried to shape a story. It's less an influence and more an aesthetic paradigm for me — untranslatable, locked behind linguistic grids, a literature of extremes that either chatters or strikes, like a heartbeat. The poets gave me my moral compass: Babits, József Attila, Radnóti. Among prose writers, Kosztolányi taught me that a child's point of view can unlock the whole world, and Mikszáth Kálmán — son of the same Palóc hill country I come from — showed me that folk horror and village gossip are the same thing, and neither one is lying.

The Western classics came later. In Hungary, much of this was unavailable until the fall of communism. My absolute role model is Philip K. Dick — his speed, his restlessness, the way an idea would seize him and he'd chase it down in weeks. His Hungarian translations are unfortunately poor, which is part of why I ended up reading in English. Stanisław Lem is a kindred spirit: science fiction that's also philosophy, also comedy, also deeply, unfashionably humane. I learned horror from Stephen King, not to imitate him but to find my own voice by studying how precisely he controls his. Borges taught me that an encyclopedia entry can be a horror story. Bradbury taught me to love a sentence the way you love a person — unreasonably, and without apology.

Is there one part of your creation process that's harder for you?

Translation. I can only write in Hungarian — that's my working language, the one where my instincts live. I read English fluently and I can write in it, but the creative ignition only happens in Hungarian. And "translate" is the wrong word for what happens next. The English version is practically sixty percent of the original. I rewrite, I cut, I restructure. Hungarian is agglutinative — a single word can carry what English needs a full clause to express. So the English version isn't a translation, but rather a second organism—one that shares the original's skeleton while growing different muscles, sometimes even beating with a different heart.

I also never stop polishing. After every three rejections, I go back and ask whether the English is doing everything the Hungarian did. Sometimes a rejection isn't about the story at all — it's about a rhythm that didn't carry over, a joke that only works in Hungarian. That revision cycle is the hardest part of my process, and also the part that makes the work better than I could make it in a single pass.

How do you handle rejection? Do you have any advice for other creators about handling rejection?

Most of my submission process is automated. I run my own server with my own database — every submission, every rejection, every response time, logged and tracked. I work on a monthly submission rate. This sounds clinical, but it's actually the opposite — it removes the emotional narrative. A rejection isn't a judgment on your soul. It's a row in a table. The table doesn't care about your feelings, and that's the kindest thing about it.

I allow myself exactly ten seconds of being upset per rejection. Then I log it and start looking for the next market. Same day. Always same day.

What still hurts — genuinely hurts — is the "almost." The longlisted-but-not-picked. The "we loved this, but we just bought a witch story last week." Those prove the work was good enough, and the answer was still no.

You can't automate your way out of that feeling. You just sit with it for a moment, and then you move.

I call my approach the PPSH method, after the old Soviet submachine gun. The PPSH-41 wasn't the most accurate weapon ever made, but it fired and fired and fired. For every finished story, I target as many simultaneous-submission-friendly markets as I legally can, as fast as I can. One of my stories was rejected six times before it was accepted — by a market that sent a personal note calling it one of the strongest pieces in their reading period. Same story, seven different desks, seven different answers. And the moment that acceptance came in, I withdrew the story from every other market where it was still pending. Immediately, same day. That's not optional — that's basic professionalism. Editors remember who wastes their time, and they remember who doesn't.

Form rejections are not about you. They can't be — the editor spent sixty seconds on your story. Personal rejections are gifts, even when they sting, because someone bothered to tell you why. The worst thing in this business isn't rejection. It's silence.

What is your biggest creative doubt?

That the thing I'm best at might also be the thing that makes my work hardest to place. I write what I sometimes call "love-fi" — speculative fiction that uses science fiction and fantasy as a disguise for something uncomfortably intimate. My characters set the table for Death and pour him coffee. They call Death beautiful so he'll smile (yes, Death is usually male in Hungarian). The speculative element is real, but it's not the point. The point is always the human thing underneath.

I worry sometimes that this falls between chairs. Too strange for literary fiction, too quiet for genre. Too American, too different for the Hungarian market — and I take that as a compliment. But I'm grateful to the Anglophone market. It taught me to write better — to always reach for the sharper sentence, the rounder thought. My Hungarianness isn't a limitation but the material. English is my second, chosen language, one I

respect and care for deeply. And I feel I have a great deal more to say to the English-speaking audience.

What piece of creative advice have you received that sounded good, but was ultimately not useful to you?

"Write what you know."

I'm a software engineer with a PhD in Linguistics. I grew up in a Hungarian village called Tar — which means "bald" in Hungarian and, well, you know what it means in English. I didn't have internet access until I was sixteen. Every foreign film and novel reached me in translation — and Hungarian translations of that era had the authenticity of an eighty-three-year-old Hungarian schoolteacher of English attempting to render the latest US slang. If I wrote what I knew, you'd get a story about a man debugging a Java microservice while conjugating irregular verbs in a language you've never heard of. (Actually, I might write that one day. But it would still have a ghost in it.)

The better version of this advice: write about what's strange. You're watching a YouTube short about Japanese self-mummification at midnight, and then the algorithm serves you a surgeon analyzing a video of a Mexican man who survived an accident that should have killed him. Connect them. That's a story. Write about what unsettles you, not what you already understand. I write down every stupid idea I have, consciously, deliberately. Most of them are useless. Some of them aren't. I also hunt for English words I don't know — words that have no Hungarian equivalent, words that name things I didn't realize had names. A new word is a new room in the house. Sometimes there's a story living in it.