

***melted
butter
magazine***

***issue one
summer 2020***

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Dear Reader,

You're the reason we're here. We set out to start this magazine last year, and now our first ever issue is here. We are beyond grateful to the community of writers, artists, and poets who have come together to support our new idea. Our own little brand---a mash-up of the ideas of home, warmth, of things that make you melt---has now taken shape into something we are beyond proud of. During this rollercoaster of a year, we believe that a magazine like *Melted Butter* is a much-needed escape or safe space to go and clear your head when the world becomes a bit too much. It was our goal from the beginning to create a safe and pleasant place for creators and readers alike. Whether it's a bit of comfort, some entertainment, a little hope, or even just a distraction, we hope that you find what you're looking for in these pages.

Thank you to all of our contributors for trusting us with your work. We hope that you and your work feel at home with us. We hope someday to invite you to our countryside cottages, make you breakfast, and tell you all about the sunset we saw the night before. And thank you to our readers, supporters, and followers—we hope you enjoy this issue as much as we do. While you're here, you might be glad to know that our submissions are open again! Visit our website meltedbuttermag.weebly.com to read our submission guidelines and send your work over to meltedbuttermag@gmail.com when you're ready. We're thrilled to see what you have been up to lately. Send us your poems, your experimental pieces, and your visual art. We love it all! You can also keep up with us on Twitter @MagazineButer, and Instagram @meltedbuttermagazine. Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Melted Butter Magazine*. We are so glad you're here. We hope you stay awhile.

With love,

the *Melted Butter* team



a touch of butter
by Iona Gibson

First Thing

by Joseph Darlington

Pink dawn

Rolls over car bonnets

Wrinkling glass

With frost

Birdsong hangs from branches

As the radio calls

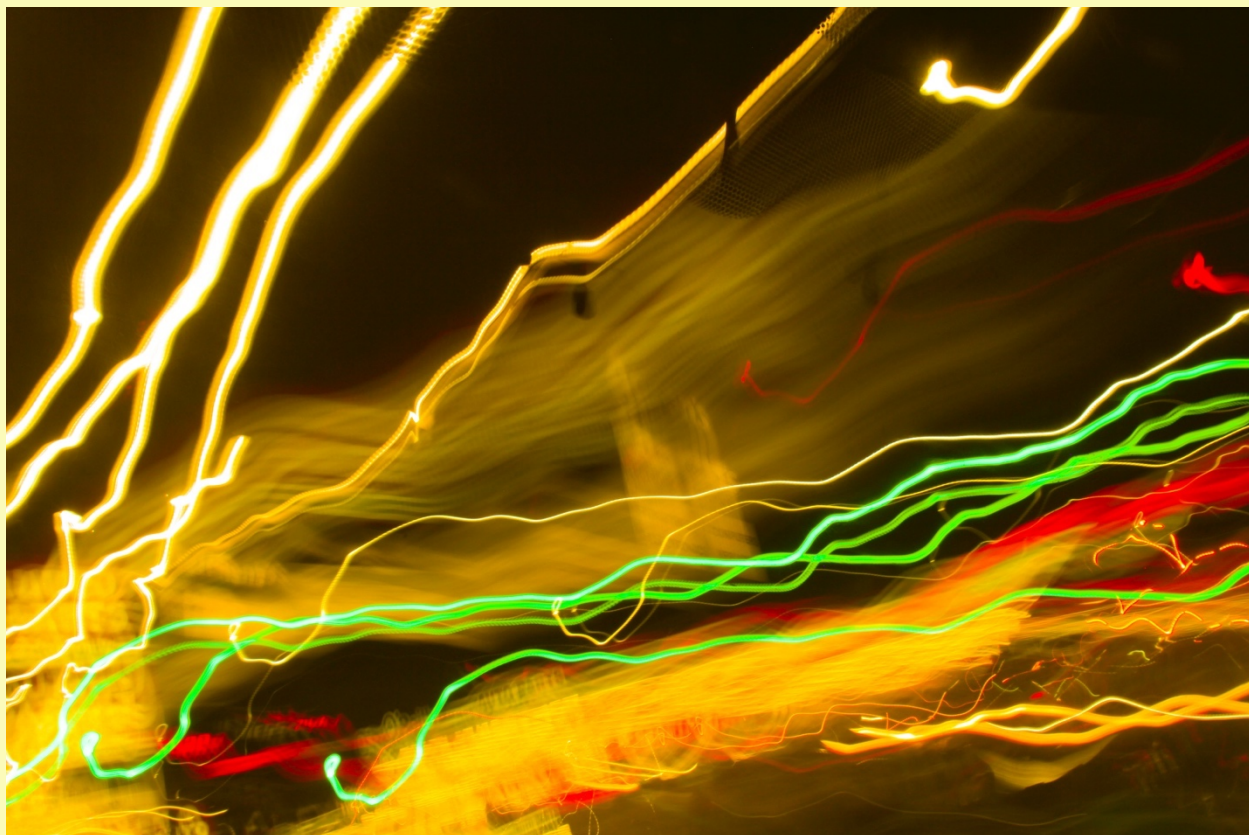
Out the morning's

Glittering news

Sunlight

by Eva Scheibe

The sun, but on wheels
Square, burning white
A spotlight for my pain
Green ghosts blinking
Across the paper
Paper bracelet crinkles
Name, number, bar code
My wrist scans out
At self-checkout
How much do I cost?
Three pills and the sun



Yellow Days
by Mikey Waller

*from **Stand In Old Light***

by Matthew Porubsky

Spiders in trees build, salvage
what they can from a
creation
more empty than full - live on
what snags, sticks
just enough.

Under-leaves lift pale,
reveal what's hidden.

Our connection is a web
in wind, billowing in
pulses,
catching nothing to spin,
nothing to funnel existence.

Phantom
 obsessions
cling to your hems;
 vacillate our polarities.

You sew
 with agile perfection,
 as if touching yourself
 for someone else.

 Your patching dovetails.

 Mine overlaps; ironed on.

You stretch thread,
 spool tumbling
 like a waterfall,
moisten it
 to eye the needle.

I'm pulled close for a moment.

 We feel something;
 murmuration of wheat in a field,
 support of a receiving pillow.

You humble distractions -
 stitch tightly enough

 there is no need to twist a knot.

Father,
you can't sleep either?

Giving up spiraling sheets
for grapes.
Steps are shadows in the dark;
your footfalls soft enough to not
slip through.

You've built trains
for years in the dark,
coupling car to car to locomotive,
constructing surges
of the horizontal god.

Your skin is moon and
rust, even in this
light.

You tell me how you learn
to see without lanterns,
practice opossum-wide
eyes, walk night for day.

It takes trust in the rocks
underfoot, acceptance of
light's limits, sureness in
self,

not unlike the stairs -
in stillness, each step
leads where it must.

The tower
is a gargle of words.

Each builder's tongue
set to fire -
fresh syllables gag in throats,
flick off tips.

There is no strike of lightning, no fall from
great heights.

Confusion. Walking away.
Restarting.

Each begin to gather
their own stones, level them
for a sturdy base

Toot-toot

by C.S. Fuqua

That year, I ate more canned spinach
than Popeye consumed
in his entire cartoon career,
expecting my arms to pump up
with muscles to match
those of the neighborhood bully
who ridiculed me for living
in a house without a bathroom.
At night, I listened
to words slice
through the house
like knives,
my mother's accusations
cutting my father to pieces until,
stitched together with cans of beer,
he silenced her.
Then came Christmas Eve
and the Popeye punching bag,
yuk-yuk-yuk-yukking
from the corner,
daring me to punch out his lights.
As the bully celebrated Santa's generosity
in a house complete with toilet
and my father drained cans
between shouts and taunts and tantrums,
air hissed from the hole
I ripped between Popeye's eyes,
the acceptance of being
what one must be.



Plate 01
by Joshua Tucker

Instructions for Those Who Wait

by Christie Lambert

Look to the splattered Bon Appetit recipe
propped against bronze sparrows and the green capped sugar bowl

prepare for chocolate to fleck your face
sugar to scatter your floor,
butter to slide easy over an eight by eight metal pan

be careless. fling the flour.
don't be afraid to get your hands dirty
with something sweet, for a change.

oven's waiting heart ignites, blazes beneath your touch
cradle two eggs in your palms, feel their unblemished offering
slip both into waiting hot water bath. sing to them.
dance a sock-footed waltz between the dishwasher and the microwave

do not rush the small gray pot on the stove's back eye,
the slow melting of butter and baking chocolate
two into one, steady surrender

stir in your anticipation and yes, dare it - Advent hope
byproduct: inexplicable Advent tears

let the fragrance blur sharp edges of loss,
add an extra dash of salt, preserve the memory

taste bitterness soothed by sweetness
steaming chocolate whirled with sugar into balance
shared space of light and dark
one without the other, too much for the tongue

trust the ingredients, trust the heat,
trust the process to rise up in something good
if only on one day for one moment

never regret the minutes or the butter
the sugar, flour, the vanilla
disparate parts harmonious in one creation
on one holly-printed plate

go ahead. lick the batter from the spoon.
pour a glass of cold milk.
lick the bowl clean, too.

stomach pain—9/13/19 17.44

by Rylie Lanver

i hope you realize you miss me when you notice i ate all of your blue M&Ms

p
i
a
n
o
s
t
i
l
l
wish to
live.

he said:

“your poetry hits me like stained glass”

i go through people much like i go through
music --- eat this apple to its core
may juice run down your
flesh chin swallow black
seeds if not to
steal them from the
finches but perhaps you’ll
be crucified
into a tea leaf. the red flesh
fruit f i n g e r s

flail for a piece of you

fuck
Atlas. holding the
world I gave him my two best sockets (to save mine)

the earth so much as
shuffled
away, children laughing...

Manzanita

by Eva Scheibe

Sweet like the juice
That runs down your chin
The crunch of a heart
You were
I was

Soft like the sky
Trees laden with fruit
The rustle of grass
I was
You were

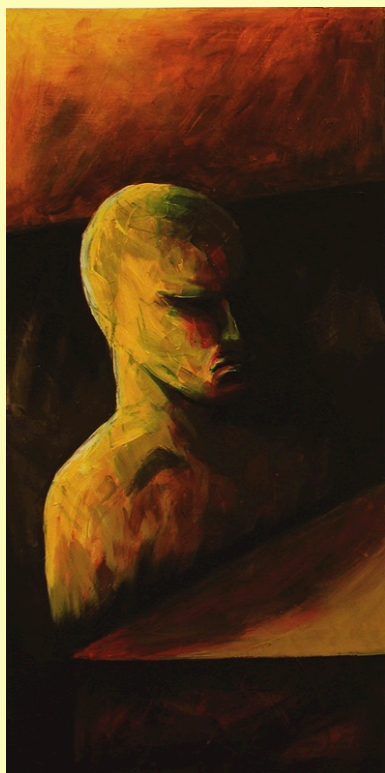
Crisp like the bite
Skin breaking, bleeding
Whispering secrets
You were
You were

Sharp like the sting
A waxy red coat
Heavy hold on you
I was
I was

Brief like the wind
Now ripe, now rotten
Sick to the stomach
We were
We were

Cold like the snow
The fallen lay dead
Seasons change; you said
Always
Never

Now left alone
Your purpose is served
Dead little apple
I am
I am



Three studies
by Joshua Tucker

First mosquito bite

by Rylie Lawver

Yesterday stomps across all of my
face and I wish
I could say these stanzas were 1903
heroic but they're momentary
mundane bliss nostalgia steeped in
green leave's candor, rhythmic
consistence in the same way I can
never leave a place without forgetting
the smell of tulips and my key chain
from Toronto.
thank you for walking up and down the
same block with me twice. sitting on the
stars
bittersweet envy of your heart; at least
it's bronze.
Also, the first mosquito bite
in seven years appeared on my calf.

Tape 1 of 48

by Margaret Dalton

The voices echoed in the empty room. I sat still on the hard wood floor, trying my best to focus. To let every word sink in. Much of it was incoherent, just the sounds of children playing together. They were not performing for an audience as far as they knew. Their laughter hung in the air. I had the urge to stop the tape. My eyes moved along as it unwound in the recorder, revealing what has been lost. But I couldn't bring myself to press the eject button. I wasn't ready to exit this scene just yet.

I could make out three voices. Two girls and one boy. They are speaking of people and shows that are long gone. One of them started singing a commercial jingle, and the others joined in. The two girls are now ghosts. The boy can no longer roam this world. I was becoming a witness to a moment I had no business being a part of. At this point in time, I was not even a concept anyone involved could conceive of. The boy can't carry a tune, he's too busy laughing. One of the girls tells him to stop so they can do it together. The other joins him in his laughter. I'm sure if I did the math, I could figure out how old he was in this tape, but right then it didn't matter. He was younger and happier than I had ever heard him been. Nothing spectacular had taken that spark away. Merely the mundane disappointments of adulthood.

Each of them is fighting for control of the room, their voices drowning each other out. I turn up the volume so I can hear him better. The only one who's voice was never made clear was the one who made the tape in the first place. Was his father haunted by the image of his son he saw last? Or at night, was it the voice of the child in this captured moment he couldn't get out of his head? I wondered if he had listened to these tapes before gifting them to me, or if it was all too painful. Surely he must've known that I'd listen to them. Not in any attempt to resurrect him from this past I was not a part of, just to try and understand the totality of his life.

The recording ended. His voice abruptly gone. I ejected the tape and looked at it once more. The date of the recording is written in faded ink. The marking of how long he'd ceased to be that joyous child.

Glass carpets

by George Sandifer Smith

'Our buying the village is not an admission that it's unsafe.' – Texaco official quoted in *The Independent* (October 1992)

The church's moorings slip from the county, independent
graves witness the snow; alumina silicate, harmless fallout
on small houses with glass carpets. Beneath the cat-cracker
Rhoscrowther politely evacuates to the printout rustle
of market valuations and re-evaluations. Generous ones.

Moving vans cart heirlooms past the Crowther Inn. A thin
black line fills a child's head nightly and wakes her screaming
until the buyout is approved. Molecules keep cracking down.
Softly, Pembrokeshire loses a village. Valero inherits a ghost town.
The air stays perfumed with crude, bubbling blackness.



Untitled 02
by Joshua Tucker

Do you do “Wonderwall?~”
by George Sandifer Smith

Ten strings between us
encase, we hope, honey
in walls of fuzz, grinding gears
and breaking the file as we clumsily
collect work on speckled digital tape.

Drummerless, beached towards D minor seventh,
scrapbooks and notebooks translate us,
hearts jostling with egos through the noughties
on the leylines of puberty – we are fifteen,
seventeen, mixing our voices on smoking pots
of Lapsang Souchong.

The stretch of the power chord
bridging a March dawn vibrating
with the lung-thumping beat
of a panic attack, the E blitzes through
a Mathry pub. A farmer with piss on his trainers
shambles forwards. ‘Sorry boys, but
do you do “Wonderwall”?’



Fisherman
by Iona Gibson

The Object

by Jackie Sherbow

It didn't matter that I gathered each polished rock and wrapped
them in my grandmother's handkerchiefs and zipped them up
in a baggie and made sure to get all the air
out. Or maybe it did matter. But I still left the bag in the car.
You'll notice I started referring to myself as "I"—
but fuck, there's that pesky "you."
You never get the air out of Ziplock baggies
or Tupperware even when they contain your family recipes.
Yes, definitely you can see this is about you now.
Or maybe it's still about me. There are plenty
of people I miss with my whole body
who aren't you. Whom I see when I look out
on 8th Avenue: my tall friend with the curly hair
and enormous laugh; my sisters, on bikes; my grandmother,
with her rock polisher and her hair in pigtails; my brunette brown eyed girl.
I don't see you anywhere
at all.



Fulla Remound
by Joshua Tucker

rock salt

by Paige Bruckner

you and i are from tomb homes
coffin marriages/ emptiness
at the table when our parents joined us
for dinner

our Himalayan skin lines faded
in gradually/ never bled

we are pleasers/ we are friends
we never had/ we did not survive
the cafeterias

my makeup never stays on
your lips for long/ our walls are rock
salt/ our necks are Himalayan/ our chairs
stand apart

we cannot die
oblivious/ we cannot survive
a coffin

White Orchids

by Michael Russel

The moon sticks its elbow through the clouds
spills like milk on white orchids.

The flowers, timid, in their white paper
stand like nurses above me.

I stare through my reflection in the window,
skin—white orchid.

I'm in the hospital because I want to die,
because life gathers like mice

and my hands, snow owls,
cannot bear to snatch a neck

and snap. There's no thrill in that.
Sometime ago, in Emergency—

my arms were sliced fruit, the nectar
dripping. Flesh, ripe mango.

The orchids stick to the window.
Their reflection eats me up,

star-shaped mouths spit up kindness.
The psych ward is quiet enough

I can hear them whisper,
chat among each other like friends.

I have no friends. I'm learning to be peaceful
as the moon folds over me,

cuffs the baby blue of my floral gown.
Sleep, sleep the orchids say

towering like skyscrapers.
My hands, two white doves, flutter.

They want to take flight, reach
towards the white, perch on origami

flowers. I can't touch—
I might burn their silk with my warmth,

matchstick fingertips, explosions.
The orchids try to disassemble me,

try to find the parts that click, unwire
the bomb that ticks, ticks, ticks.

My delicates, teach me how to orchid:
stun the room, detonate when you bloom.



Confined Space
by Iona Gibson

Charming's Obits

by Alyssa Jordan

Roy Sud, community mascot, dies at 64

Roy Sud died from several toe infections. He leaves behind a long career of theft, vandalism, and excellent comedic timing.

Corwin Salt, driving instructor, dies at 49

Corwin Salt died after winning the Strawberry Salamander's pie eating contest. A fan of the cuisine, Corwin passed with forty pounds of pie in his stomach.

Nancy Smith, private investigator, dies at 37

Nancy Smith died Saturday morning at the Seaside Cliffs. She wanted to see if she could fly. She is survived by seven brothers and five parakeets.

Giovanni Rossi, handyman, dies at 96

Giovanni Rossi died from frostbite. He was charged with indecent exposure for proving that he had a glass testicle to disbelieving patrons (apparently, the bear had been hungry).

Ronnie Sterling, cashier, dies at 62

Ronnie Sterling died after wounds sustained from running through a "Dead End" sign. She liked poetry.

Contributor Bios

Paige Bruckner is a 23-year-old college student who eats entirely too much cheese. When she isn't studying, she writes poetry to relax and to confess all the sins she wishes she had committed. Her work has also been featured in *Rabid Oak Magazine*.

Margaret Dalton is a freshman at the University of Iowa currently studying English and Creative Writing. Her writing has been published in volumes 5, 7, and 9 of the *Voices* anthology series. She enjoys spinning every day mundanities into something more peculiar with her writing, expressing the absurdity contained within reality.

Joseph Darlington is a writer from Manchester, UK. His books include *Avon Murray* (2016) and *Spare the Glass Picnic* (2018), both of which are available from www.josefadarlington.co.uk. He is the co-editor of the *Manchester Review of Books*. He is on Twitter at @Joe_Darlo.

C.S. Fuqua's books include *White Trash & Southern ~ Collected Poems*, *The Swing ~ Poems of Fatherhood*, *Walking after Midnight ~ Collected Stories*, and *Native American Flute ~ A Comprehensive Guide ~ History & Craft*, among others. His work has appeared in publications such as *Year's Best Horror Stories XIX*, *XX* and *XXI*, *Pudding*, *Pearl*, *Chiron Review*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Writer*. He currently resides in New Mexico.

Iona Gibson describes herself as “made in china, born in Scotland, and grew up in the middle east, Iona is a student at the university of the arts in London, and currently lives in the sunny Kentish countryside. when she’s not having her occasional quarter life crisis, she’s reading complicated books, drinking lemon & honey tea, making zines, or wondering why people ask “so where’s your accent from?” – and sometimes all four simultaneously.”

Alyssa Jordan is a writer living in the United States. She pens literary horoscopes for *F(r)iction Series*. Her stories can be found or are forthcoming in *The Sunlight Press*, *X-R-A-Y Literary Magazine*, *LEON Literary Review*, and more. You can find her on Twitter @ajordan901 or Instagram @ajordanwriter.

Christie Lambert is a small-town, southern writer who tries to find a little wonder in every day. Her poetry and prose have been previously seen in publications such as the *Boston Literary Review*, *Emerge Literary Magazine*, and the *Love416 Anthology*. You can find her on Twitter @cdlamb and on Instagram @clamb.

Rylie Lawver is currently a student of art and creative writing at The Kansas City Art Institute. Poetry has always been a way to sequence moments. Poetry allows her to record and understand impactful moments of nostalgia throughout her life. Her writing is often abstract, as is nostalgic or feelings of déjà vu. She is reaching for moments of time that are often layered by my present perspective of them but feel familiar and fleeting at the same time. It is a way to document, revisit and introspect.

Matthew Porubsky lives in Lawrence, KS. He works as a freight conductor for Union Pacific Railroad and has published four books of poetry, most recently *John* by Red Bird Press in 2013.

Michael Russell (he / they) is Mama Bear to chapbook *Grindr Opera* (Frog Hollow Press). He's queer, has BPD, Bipolar Disorder and way too much anxiety. His work has appeared in *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *Heavy Feather Review*, *Homology Lit*, *Plenitude* among other places. He lives in Toronto and thinks you're fantabulous. Insta: @michael.russell.poet

George Sandifer-Smith is a Welsh writer and lecturer. His poetry has appeared in various journals and magazines including *New Welsh Review*, *The Stockholm Review*, *The Lampeter Review*, *Ink Sweat and Tears*, *Black Bough*, *The Daily Drunk*, and numerous anthologies including *Poems from Pembrokeshire* (Seren Books, 2019). In 2019, he was awarded a PhD in Creative Writing from Aberystwyth University, and he currently teaches at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. His Twitter handle is the ever-imaginative @SandiferSmith.

Evangeline Scheibe is a student at the University of Iowa studying biochemistry and English. Beyond writing poetry and nonfiction, she researches cardiac metabolism and works in an investigational pharmacy. She also enjoys painting and giving tattoos to herself and her friends.

Jackie Sherbow is the author of *Harbinger* (Finishing Line Press). Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in places like *Asimov's Science Fiction*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *Luna Luna*, and *Day One*. She is the managing editor of *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* and *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* as well as the editor of *Newton Literary*. Her work was nominated for the 2019 Best of the Net Anthology.

Joshua Tucker is an experimental figurative painter interested in identity and is currently tackling issues of Depression and Anxiety. His approach is audacious, using colour and texture as a counter motif to the subject matter. Visit more work online now at iamjoshuatucker.com.

Mikey Waller is a second-year student at the University of Iowa majoring in English and creative writing with a minor in art. She hopes to create narratives based on questioning the essence of nostalgia and home. Her work also appears in *Ink Lit Magazine*, *Fools*, and *Mirror Magazine*.

We hope you enjoyed reading our first issue, our submissions are now open until December 15th, 2020 for issue 2!

Love,
the *Meltd Butter* team