



INTER-VIEW

Journal

Summer 2023

Issue 1

CATHERINE NORRIS . TINA ROGERS .

XAN INDIGO . DEBORAH ALMA .

ABIGAIL ELIZABETH OTTLEY .

IAN DUDLEY . CAMERON BROOKS .

LAUREL SILVERWOOD .

SAPTARSHI BHOWMICK . .

SARAH MCCAY . OSCAR VINTER .



INTER-VIEW

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A Note From The Editors

The hardest lesson we have learned as editors, is that from conception to application, curating an issue is not an easy job, but one that is a process that contains multitudes of layers, days, emails, redrafts, edits and proofreads. Yet, there is a joy to be found when the pages start to come together, when the words on the page become more than words, more than the utterance of an image, a memory, a life—all while remembering the purpose of the journal.

Numerous brilliant magazines, zines and journals worldwide allow writers and artists to share their work. Often, those outlets prioritise the creative work of established artists over those who are unpublished, under-represented or emerging. We know that the current space in which writers and artists can express themselves is often reserved for only a few voices—Inter-View hopes to change this.

In time we aim to grow into a platform that champions voices sidelined to the margins, voices that are breaking into new worlds. This is not to say that we don't welcome the work of established writers and artists—this issue alone includes a dazzling inter-view with poet, Deborah Alma and a review of Jason Allen-Paisant's stunning, *Self-Portrait as Othello*. Above all, as editors we want to create an inclusive journal.

We are so grateful to those who have contributed to our first issue and who have trusted us to present their work. We would also like to thank everyone who submitted, and all of our readers for taking an active interest, without you, this journal would not exist.

Prea G Kaur & Danielle Wallace



Church Walk, Kensington Inter-view

Half-figure, sleeping *After Klimt*

Catherine Norris

The pencil made her lie back.
It's midday. 12 strikes.
Recumbent.

Somewhere the morning escapes in strawberry.

Raw biter. Flesh delights her.

She is the whole length of both walls.

Stretched out.

Three ages of woman.

/

Front view, arms raised. You amaze her.
Graze on her.

Candyfloss melting on your tongue.
Lashings.

We know the dangers of an unclosed portal.

She turns to the right.

Out of the corner of your eye,

Her body soon and sooner.

/

Silver coats of the sky pass by overhead.

She's still in bed and crouching.

Body bouncing. Bowl of sweet mixture.

Spoon thick with it. Lick it.

Wooden slats take the weight of her on you.

Sun breaks through.

Subdued.

Legs over legs.

Wider than the cedar.

She says you're going home
and you believe her.

Catherine Norris is a poet and experimental spoken word artist living in Malvern, Worcestershire. Her poetry has been published in the *Four Way Review* and commended by Andrew McMillan in the Magma Poetry Competition. She has also recorded spoken word for Err Records, France and Miracle Pond Records, UK under the name Plastic Moonrise. She is currently a practice-based poetry PhD candidate at the University of Birmingham, England.



Kapheira Tina Rogers

Tina Rogers is a working class, self taught, emerging disabled artist from a small mining village in North Wales. Her work explores body image and lived experience as a disabled woman. Through language and figurative art she challenges the representation of the female body.

Still stuck in the same kitchen

Xan Indigo

That half-full jar of honey
still sits quiet on the shelf
in the cupboard where you left it,
when your hands idly tidied away
our brisk final breakfast,
when hesitant sunbeams
fell to cloudy blue noon.

A silent lidded relic,
forgotten in full view,
encrusted with coarse crumbs
and time's milky stiffness,
in what was once smooth
and so blissfully clear.

Left untouched too long,
it crystallised slowly,
spoilng what was once-sweet
with roughness and regret
from each word left unsaid.

Every coffee-stained dawn
aching cupboard ajar,
honey pools in my mind
and yet, I forget
how best to forget
and melt golden again
like warm sunlit rain
to flow and
to feel
to glow and
to heal

Xan Indigo is a rogue astrophysicist with an overactive imagination and a mixed up ethnic background, who spends a lot of time in Parisian cafés writing in notebooks. When not writing, they can usually be found drinking too much tea, cooking spicy things, mixing cocktails, and attempting to turn their apartment into a tiny rainforest.

Any Place Is Better?

Sarah McCay

The air was stifling hot, but thankfully I had stopped noticing the smell.

Mum had explained this journey would be tough. That we would be cramped in together, in the dark, with lots of other people. That there would be noises and smells that I wouldn't recognise. That it would seem long. That it was best to sleep as much as possible, to make the journey pass quicker, 'Like the night before your birthday,' she had said.

She forgot to mention the lack of food. My tummy grumbled. Or the lack of water. I licked the salty sweat from my upper lip.

Mum has stopped talking to me.

I'm not sure what I did wrong. Early in the journey she kept complaining that I was fidgeting too much. So perhaps that was it. I've annoyed her with my dancing legs. Oh, how I wish I could get up and dance, and run, and feel fresh air on my face.

I bury my head into my knees, my arms wrapped tight around my legs, and I close my eyes again. The rocking motion of the truck soon lulls me back to sleep.

'Imagine a new life, with good food, a good school and a good home,' Mum had said when we started to plan our adventure. 'Across the border. I will find work and we will be happy,' she sang. It reminded me of a song that played on the radio. Any place is better.

Suddenly there's shouting. Someone is banging on the sides of the truck, asking for help. Sobbing follows. Then silence.

I feel sorry for them. Maybe their mum didn't prepare them well enough for how tough this journey would be.

'Mum?' I whisper, but she doesn't respond. She must be very angry with me.

It's so hot and my head hurts from the inside. I close my eyes again and hope the rocking will work its magic. Except we're not rocking anymore. Everything is still.

Have we arrived?

I listen as hard as possible. And I try to see so hard that my eyes nearly pop out of my head. But I can't make anything out.

My heart beats faster. A mix of excitement and nerves. What will our new home be like?

I can hear voices. Voices that sound like the ones from the television.

Suddenly light and air hit me. The light is so bright it burns my eyes so that I can't see anything but a red blur. The air; it feels so good. Fresh. I suck it in and my lungs feel full.

I sit up and blink and blink. My eyes adjust and I can see mum asleep beside me. Lots of people are still asleep. Are they not excited to see their new home?

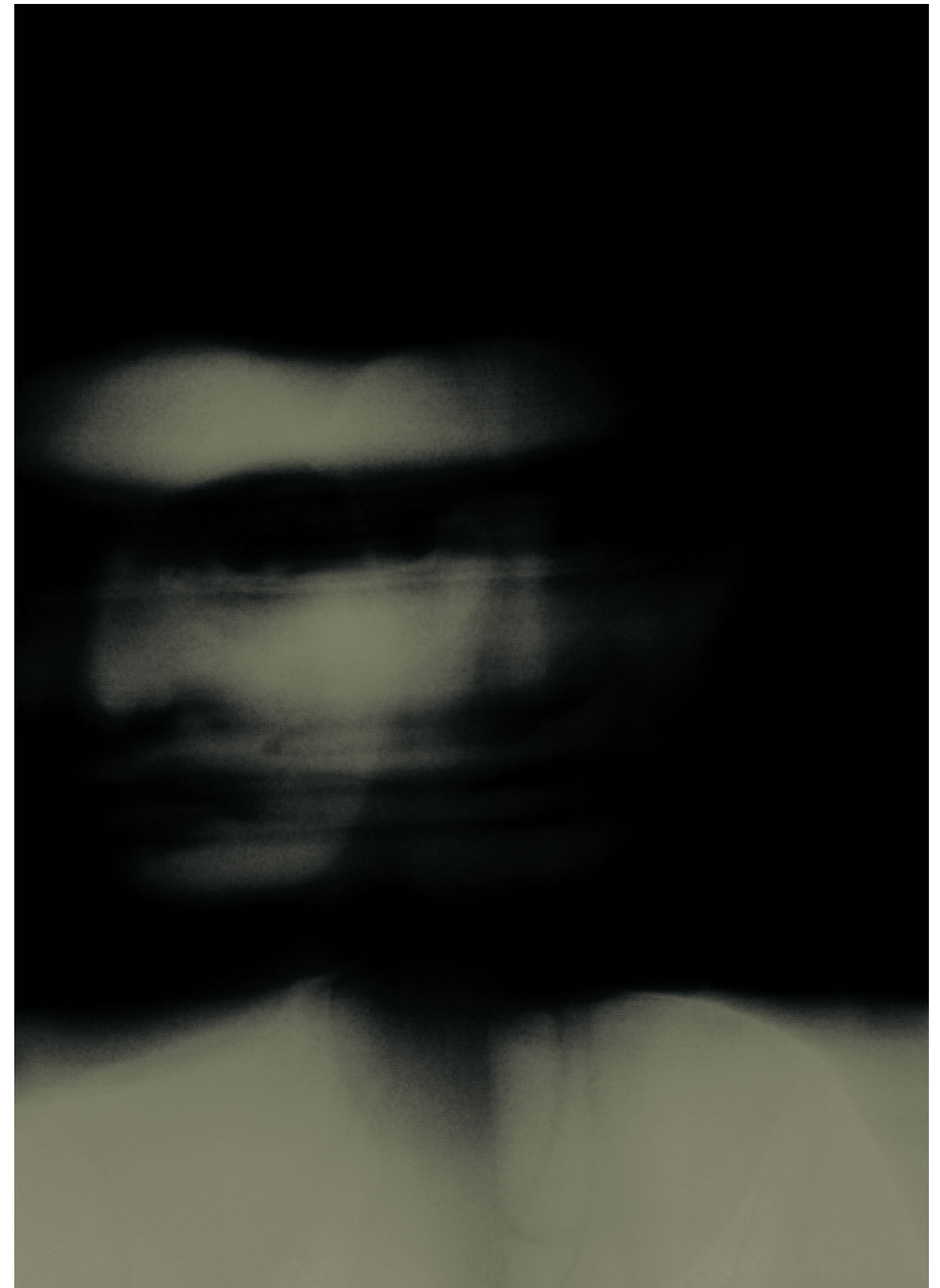
Strong arms lift me up and carry me through the doors that are now flung wide open at the back of the truck.

I watch as the men try to wake mum. She's in a deep sleep, so they put her into a sleeping bag and zip it up.

I'm given water and something sweet to eat, and they wrap me in a soft blanket.

Any place is better.

Sarah McCay is an international journalist and content marketer with two decades of experience writing for magazines, online titles, newspapers and market-leading brands. Her work has taken her all over the world, with many years spent working in the Middle East, as well as Europe and the UK. Creatively, Sarah writes fiction, poetry and plays. Her 10-minute play "Isolation" won The Sir Alan Ayckbourn Trophy at the 2022 National Association of Writers Groups Annual Awards. Her short story "Element" won first place in the Flash Fiction competition at Stafford Litfest 2022.





The Poetry Pharmacy



Deborah Alma

Inter-View: Deborah Alma

Prea G Kaur

For our first issue our Editor-in-Chief, Prea G Kaur, chose to interview Deborah Alma on her debut poetry collection *Dirty Laundry* (Nine Arches Press 2018). Deborah Alma is a UK poet, editor and teacher. She has worked using poetry with individuals with dementia, in hospice care, with domestic abuse survivors and with children in schools. She has lectured at both Worcester and Keele universities. From 2012 she was the Emergency Poet offering poetry on prescription from her vintage ambulance. She has co-founded the world's first walk-in Poetry Pharmacy in Shropshire (2019) with her partner, the poet James Sheard. She is editor of *Emergency Poet: An Anti-Stress Poetry Anthology*, *The Everyday Poet: Poems to Live By*, *#Me Too rallying against sexual harassment, a women's poetry anthology*, *Ten Poems of Happiness* (Candlestick Press, co-edited with Dr Katie Amiel), *These Are the Hands-Poems from the Heart of the NHS*. Most recently, she has edited *Nature Poems: Treasured Classics and New Favourites* (National Trust April 2023). She is editor of *Poetry Projects to Make and Do*, which will be published by Nine Arches Press this November.

Prea: When did you write *Dirty Laundry*? Did you write it specifically as a collection?

Deb: I didn't write it as one collection. I wrote "Cattle Lorry Lover" when I was a single parent, which was a while back. I wrote them throughout the decades. I still have scraps here and there that need work. But I just don't get the time!

Prea: So let's clarify this, sometimes poets write about things they personally know about or they fabricate it. What about you? Is *Dirty Laundry* autobiographical? In the poems, are we hearing the voice of Deborah Alma?

Deb: It is sometimes; some of the poems are bits of fiction, I'm quite happy to make it up a bit. But mostly its autobiographical...I feel so self-conscious talking about this.

I think the collection is about borders: having your foot in both camps and not quite in either. I grew up in North London, working class council estate. My mum got pregnant by my dad, he was 17 and I think she was about the same age. Her parents died when she was a baby. In Pakistan, birthdays were not noted or celebrated, particularly for girls. So, I am not sure about her exact age. It's funny because my mum loves star signs and yet she doesn't know her own, but she has decided she is a Pisces.

Prea: Ok, so I feel like I know your mother through your poems, in many ways I see my own in her. One of my favourite poems is when my "My Mother Moves Into Adolescence".

What made you use the star signs here?

Deb: My mum thinks she knows us but she doesn't. She doesn't listen. The "apple pie" that no one wants, she could bring something to us and realise we don't like "apple pie"... she would always be bringing the thing what she wanted to give, but not what we wanted. She doesn't know her own daughter and just asks and asks me to do things for her. All my life it has been like I am her mother, and she is my child.

Prea: Yes, that is the sense you get from this poem and that frustration is built up at the end when she "throws her mug into the sink and it shatters there".

How old were you in this poem?

Deb: I was in my 40's. And she is just the same now. We have moments where she loses her temper with me. She wants a good respectful daughter and that's not happening. Instead, she gets someone brought up in the West who is a feminist.

Prea: At the beginning of “My Mother Moves Into Adolescence”, you have her arriving, and by the end you are so upset that she breaks the mug and you “tell her to go and never come back”. But it doesn’t seem to stay that way? As you do keep writing about her throughout the collection.

Deb: If I ever read that poem at a launch, at the end I always say she came back. She always comes back because she needs me. She comes back with a bunch of flowers and says sorry Debbie.

Prea: So, the poem straight after that is “Mustard Cardigan”. And the colour is so typical for an Indian/Pakistani background. They love bright colours. As a child, I personally hated anything to do with my culture but now I appreciate it. Did you ever feel the same?

Deb: Growing up in North London, I didn’t like wearing Indian clothes because I was the white girl who stood out. I didn’t want to stand out. I was white in Asian clothes. My brother is dark-skinned, his children are also dark. But my sister and I are white. My mum loved playing with dressing me up. She did it for herself and she wasn’t sensitive to me.

Prea: How do you feel about your whiteness?

Deb: When I was very little, I didn’t notice. I didn’t notice the difference in skin colour. It is interesting to talk about... people are not interested because I don’t look Asian. I remember going to a big Muslim festival, everyone Asian and then me, just a blonde girl in the middle. It was hard. When I visited Karachi, I faced a lot of sexual abuse. I was very respectful; I always wore a shalwar kameez when I went out. Men would touch me in the market, I was 19. All the time people assumed I didn’t have any sexual morality because I looked western.

When you are mixed race and you don’t look it, people...make assumptions on whiteness.

In some cultures, being white is not privileged, especially in a male-dominated Muslim society. I know I am privileged now, I am educated, but I didn’t expect to have everything I have and live in the countryside. I think I am resourceful.

Prea: Did you ever feel like you failed to meet your mother’s expectations and if so, how did that make you feel?

Deb: Not really, except for what I look like. It has had a really deep rooted effect on me. I rejected the makeup, the dresses, the heels, the contact lenses.

Prea: Did your mother want you to wear contact lenses?

Deb: Yes, she wanted me to be pretty. She would say things like, “you don’t know what it is like to be pretty, Debbie”. She gave me this deep-rooted complex. As a child I rejected my mother, she was very beautiful, she loved Marilyn Monroe, she loved the camera. It’s why I don’t like having my photo taken. When my mother was in Pakistan, she had a blonde doll that she played with and that is what she treated me like.

Prea: Thank you Deb, that’s really insightful, especially when the image of the blonde doll makes numerous appearances in different ways throughout the collection. Now that we have talked about the content, I want to ask how you went about getting this collection published?

Deb: There are gatekeepers, and you must be aware of the market. Your voice needs to be strong. And reaching out to a press who is aware of being inclusive. Jane Commane at Nine Arches is good at this, being inclusive of gender, sexuality, and she does a lot of work with disabled poets.

I used to be a bookseller and I worked for a publisher before I had children and I think that's why I am always aware of the reader. The title of a collection is important, *Dirty Laundry* sounds slightly naughty, it grabs your attention. Now I'm a bookseller again, I'm a poet and an editor too, and it is like I have gone through the whole process. With the *#Me Too* and *These Are The Hands* anthologies, I have made them myself. You will get published, but you must remember to not get lost in academia, to be in touch with the world, the writing community.

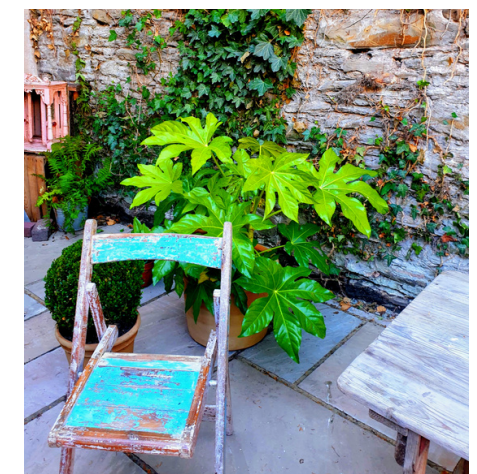
Prea: So if I asked you what does poetry mean to you, what would your answer be?

Deb: It is my life whether I like it or not, it's writing through something to understand it. It's a swearing, a curse. Look at what I do with it: prescribe it. I give it to people to remind them to be peaceful in their lives, to be forgiving, compassionate, creative or to give people confidence.

Prea: My last question to you is, what is your advice to all new writers?

Deb: My advice is something to do with ego. Apart from read things, it is to be generous and supportive of other writers first. Give and give into the writing community without expecting anything in return. You have to do that; how can it work otherwise? It is a bit of a hippy answer.

Dirty Laundry is published by Nine Arches Press, all rights to reproduce remain with the publisher and the author.



The Poetry Pharmacy



Never give your heart away to a dandy in breeches Tina Rogers

T.V Blowjobs

Abigail Elizabeth Ottley

When he kisses you hard on your peony mouth
your lipstick spreads like a contusion.
He has too little hair, rough paws like a brickie;
his pot belly wobbles on exertion.
I see his coarse features contort themselves in
lineaments of gratified desire.

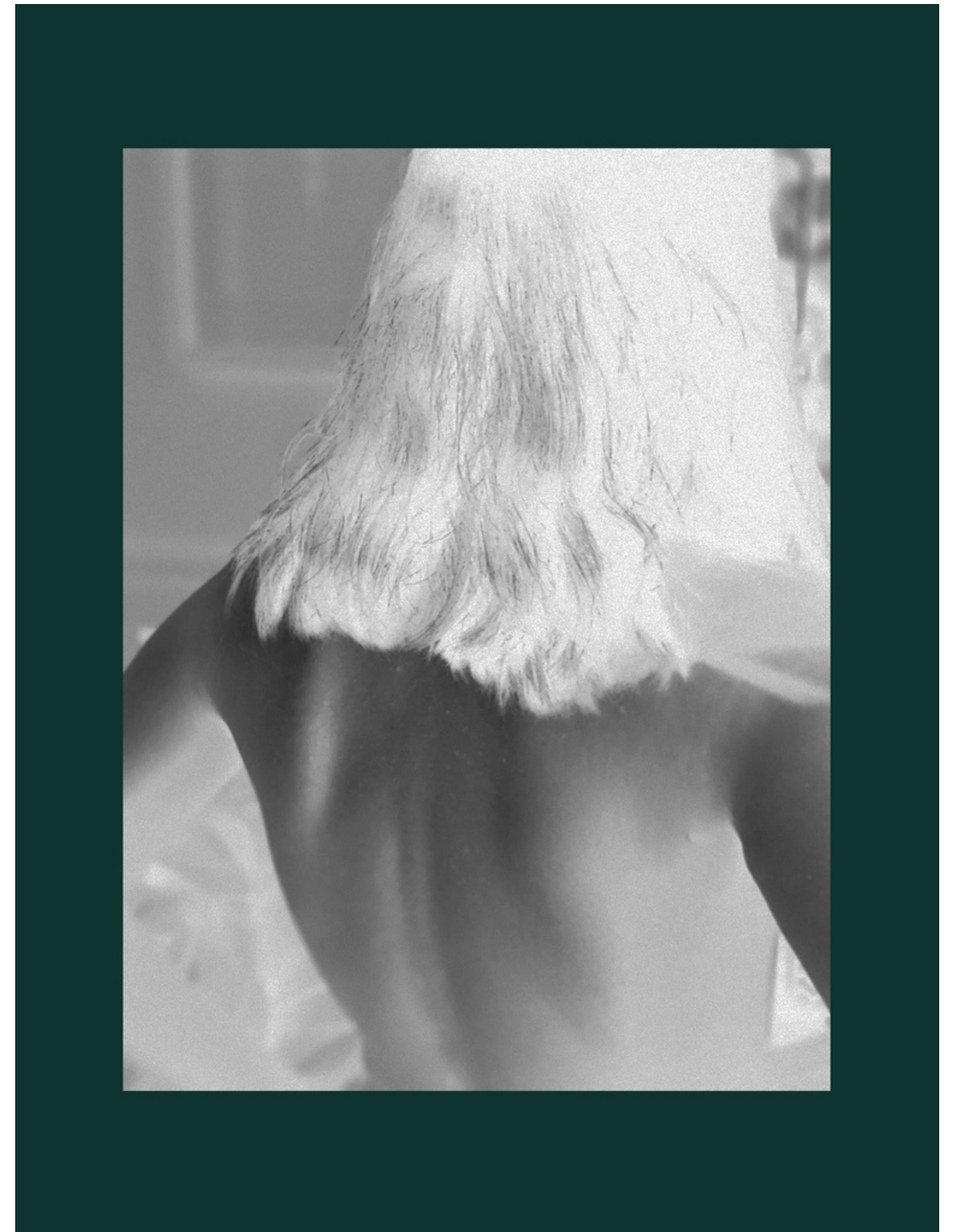
Against bare walls, in a room I don't know,
I'm a spectator at this tawdry pas de deux,
an open-mouthed, willing voyeur.

Hunched on the floor, not two feet from my screen,
I press pause to zoom in on your misery,
I require my eyes to note every detail,
lean close to construe every moan.

Here you are, in flagrante delicto, and your partner
is one among many. Is it sad or funny
this tape has the title T.V. Blowjobs, Master?

Absurdly, as you reach your peak,
your cheap nylon wig is askew.

Abigail Elizabeth Ottley writes poetry and short fiction from Penzance, Cornwall. Her work has appeared in more than two hundred and fifty magazines, journals, and anthologies, including *The High Window*, *Ink Sweat & Tears*, *Gnashing Teeth*, and *Fragmented Voices*. She was a contributor to *Invisible Borders: New Women's Writing From Cornwall* (2020), *Morvoren: the poetry of sea-swimming*, and the *Duff anthology* (Dragon Yaffle, 2022). This year she was placed third and Highly Commended with two separate pamphlets in the Frosted Fire Pamphlet Award. She is currently seeking a publisher for her debut collection.



April 22nd Oscar Vinter

The high cost of living

Ian Dudley

the sky is soft as chalk
the dry hills
sweet with thyme falling

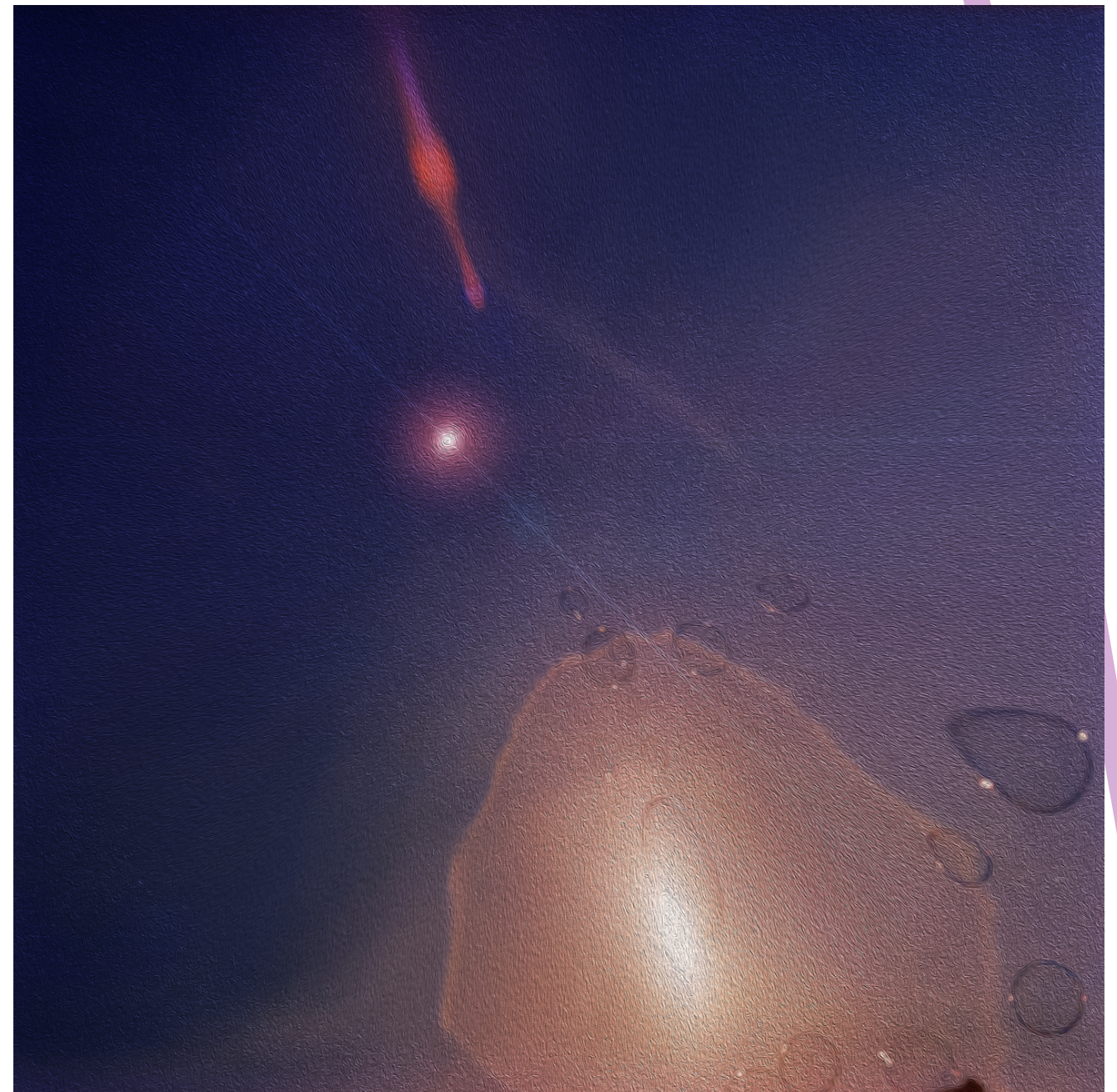
I burn up land
among stone houses
crops
a field of goats

the people's lives are so hard
when they die
all they want is to rest

sometimes I show them
a glimpse of the un-handicapped life
which is happiness and
not to be mistrusted or wasted

their hearts are coals
no tears can quench

Ian Dudley has published poetry in *The Dark Horse*, *Magma*, *PBLJ*, *The North*, *The Rialto*, *Wasafiri*, *BansheeLit* and others.



The Body Electric Oscar Vinter

Poem from the Future —for Ted

Cameron Brooks

Perhaps it was only the slip
of a single keystroke that dated
your letter a year from now,
the one with the poem
you wrote that same morning
about a cluster of gaunt trees,
chalk white, holding ballet positions
on the bank of a black lake.

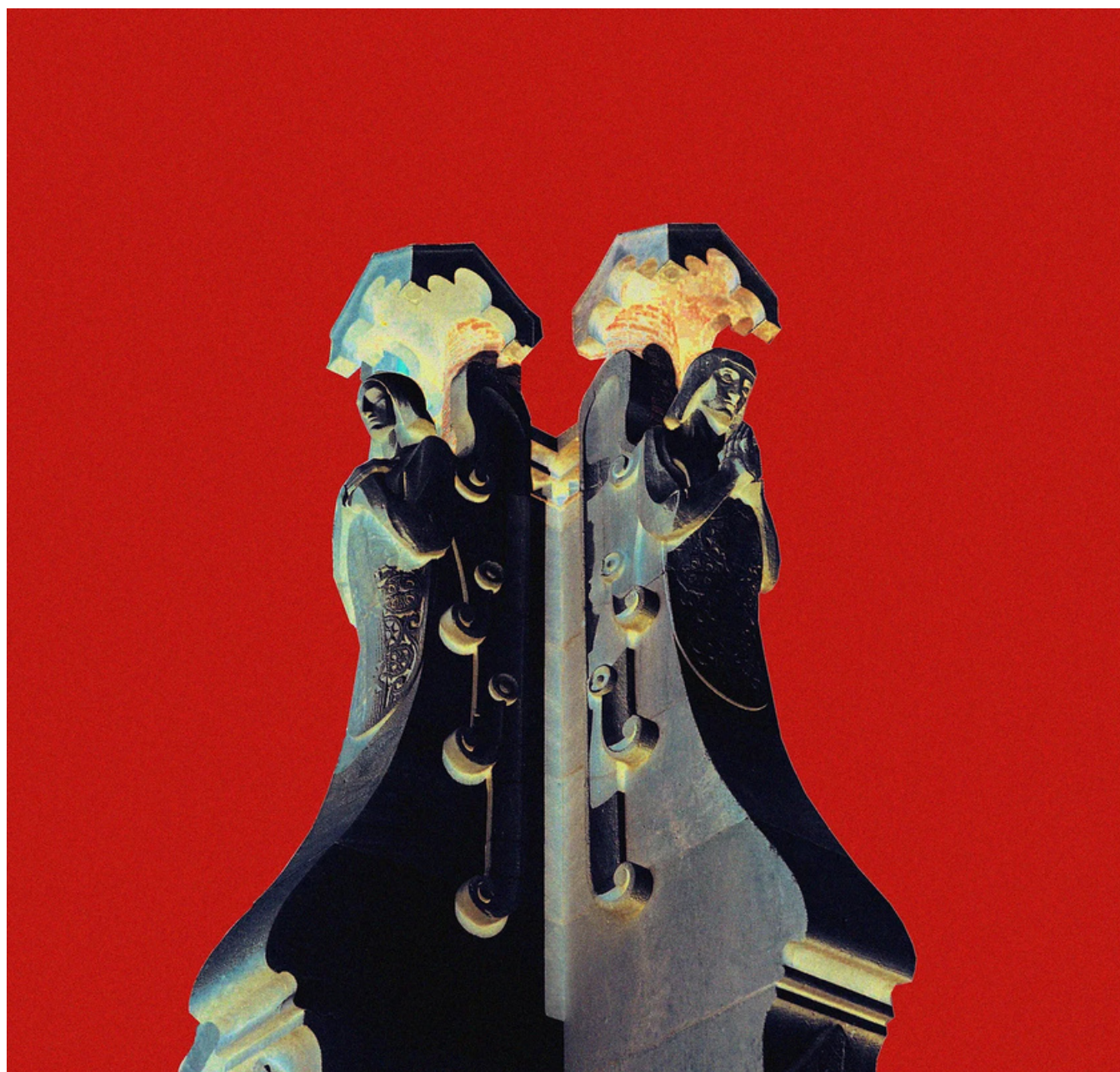
I prefer to believe, however,
that you've written me from the future,
that a year from now you'll still be
rising each morning,
to bear witness to a blue heron
in your rear-view mirror,

gliding in low over the lake,
breaking the water's sheen
with the tips of its wings.

Cameron Brooks is an MFA candidate at Seattle Pacific University. His work is found or forthcoming in *Poetry East*, *Third Wednesday*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Pasque Petals*, *Ad Fontes Journal*, *St. Katherine Review*, and elsewhere. Cameron's poem "Forbearance" recently won the South Dakota State Poetry Society annual contest. You can follow Cameron on Instagram or find his website at camerondavidbrooks.com.



Lomond Inter-View



Red II Oscar Vinter

Twelve Years

Laurel Silverwood

I'm working alone in the bookstore
When a man pushes me up against the bookshelf
And grabs a handful of the skirts of my dress
And I understood how Jesus felt
When a stranger touched the hem of his robes
And he felt all of his power bleed out of him.

Laurel Silverwood is a poet and aspiring author from the West Midlands, currently studying a Master's degree in writing. Her poetry focuses on issues relating to feminism, relationships and religion. When not at her writing desk she can be found making tea or talking her ideas over with her cats. They rarely have anything to contribute.

Review: *Self-Portrait as Othello* by Jason Allen-Paisant

Danielle Wallace

Jason Allen-Paisant's second poetry collection, *Self-Portrait as Othello*, is a compelling exploration into identity, the 'other', and space as we orbit around the Shakespearean character. Part fictional, part autobiographical, Allen-Paisant examines the figure of Othello and ponders how time, landscape, and experiences interact with the concept of the self from an introspective and literary perspective. I am reminded of the appearance of Sordello in Ezra Pound's Canto II: 'there can be but the one "Sordello" /But Sordello, and my Sordello?' Indeed, with Allen-Paisant's profound preoccupation with the body, histories, borders, and continuities, alongside the continual metamorphosis of the Shakespearean figure, persistently asks the question: but whose Othello, and my Othello?

The collection contextualises and bridges the often-silenced chasm between colonialism and the experience of the marginalised. Poems such as 'Ringing Othello', 'What Shakespeare did not write about', and 'Othello Walks' provide an unflinching interrogation of the migrant identity and its historical place while illuminating Othello's colonialist subtexts. In contrast, 'Self-Portrait as My Body on an Operating Table', through its use of space and absence, denotes compartmentalisation of the self due to the metropolitan fetishisation during the rise of Parisian 'primitivism'. Yet, the true beauty of Allen-Paisant's verse can be found as we catapult from the top-down lens of lofty, unfathomable colonial scars upon the self to the intimate and personal experience, and the fusion between the two: 'Tweed-jacketed' is a true reflection of such an accomplishment.

Ultimately, *Self-Portrait as Othello* is a text that dares to ask: what if, how so, and how can I be? In painting such a portrait, Allen-Paisant shines a spotlight not only on the figure of Othello and himself but the place of the migrant and the marginalised in contemporary Europe. In 'The Picture and the Frame', the speaker encounters Venetian life and tackles representations, preconceived ideas of race, ethnicity, and 'otherness': 'There are Moor heads everywhere. We're not talking about this'. With the very real tragedy of Nahel Merzouk in Nanterre happening so recently, it seems Allen-Paisant's second collection arrives to us at a pinnacle time and insists that, when it comes to Europe's ethnic minorities, we need to be 'talking about this'.

Self-Portrait as Othello has been shortlisted for the 2023 Forward Prize. You can purchase the collection from numerous outlets, our favorites in the UK include: The Poetry Pharmacy (Bishop's Castle), Golden Hare Books (Edinburgh), London Review Bookshop (London) and, the modernist (Manchester).

Art In The Zamindar's House

Saptarshi Bhowmick

A cold sweat woke me, I realized it was daybreak. Sleep would not cross my path again, as limitless thoughts clouded my mind. The possible hilarity of life only tired my eyelids. Near the glowing corridor, my slippers were mice in slumber, who had no burrows to call home. But I, being a foreigner in this land, thought they were similar to those taxidermy models that were placed over my bed in my ancestral home, providing every sense of order to the artistic sensibility of a zamindar's house. But still, all these are vain. As with Art, peace of mind is lost in this frolic of aristocracy.

Saptarshi Bhowmick is from the outskirts of a town named Berhampore. He manages to find joy in his plentiful creations. His poetry and flash fiction have appeared in numerous international magazines including *The Rainbow Poems*, *Tofu Ink Art Press*, *The Antonym*, *Wingless Dreamers*, *Sparked Literary Magazine*, *MOIDA*, *The Compass Magazine*, *SeaGlass Lit*, *Aster Lit*, *Firefly_Archives*, *The Graveyard Zine*, *The Dried Review*, *Meadow Mouse*, *Overtly Lit* and many more.



Blue Line Inter-View

Prophecies

Oscar Vinter

I planned to write this summer,
but I didn't try, slipping away from
things simply, effortlessly.
Catatonic. Trapped in mythology again,

wishing that we're back in our Peckham flat.
Each day running my dusty tongue over a cracked tooth
until the dust was as thick as tar,
and once set, my jaw didn't open.

Spent an hour watching the same gull call for its mother.
There is a response; Ophelia spits dust in its face.
The trauma of nothing happening,
I'm cutting onions for a week - awaiting doom, awaiting prophecy.

Does there have to be a Guernica
etched behind every eye? you once said.
I laughed it off,
but it came true.

Below a shirtless man looks up
with a butcher's smile; blood freckled face.
Downstairs tabby remains unmoved on the steps.
I draw back from the window.

The coming of the sirens; diabolus en musica
and the patient is hospitalised.
I close the window,
we've got no money again.

Gloaming sun stretched out like a birthmark,
I blur my eyes forcing
Auverian nightmares.
The moth children spilling back from school.

Amitriptyline and an egg for dinner - just air won't do.
Blinking faster in the dull candlelight,
Chaffinches swirling down
to nest in the broken gutter

whilst you, eternal somnambulist,
spin slowly, softly,
and fall down.

Oscar Vinter (he/him/they) is an Afropean multidisciplinary artist, composer and filmmaker. Their work is interested in blending the mythic and the personal in various mediums from writing, photography to music and film.



The image features a dark blue background with several white, hand-drawn, irregular outlines. The largest outline is a rounded, somewhat circular shape that frames the central text. Inside this, there are smaller, more complex outlines that create a layered, abstract effect. The text is centered within these shapes.

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