

focc  
SEPT. 2020



# VOL. 1 *on isolation*

Cover photo by Damini Rathore

# A Note from the Editors

*"Language is, in other words, not necessary, but voluntary. If it were necessary, it would have stayed simple; it would not agitate our hearts with ever-present loveliness and ever-cresting ambiguity; it would not dream, on its long white bones, of turning into song."*

- Mary Oliver, excerpt of "Three Songs", in West Wind

Days have felt like months, months have felt like hours that have stood still, and time has been stretched unlike ever before. All year, we've moved from one arcane sunrise to the next, uncertain of what the day holds in store. At a time when words like **quarantine** and **isolation** have become daily parlance, we have understood, as a collective race, the importance of community, companionship, and connections. The strings that hold us together to those we love and thread the hours of the day together have become plainly visible, exposed, almost — over solitary coffee cups in the sink, missed video call messages and anxious scrolling of breaking news.

This, in part, is how **The Open Culture Collective** was born. A mutual adoration for words and art brought this experiment to life — aiming to amalgamate individual culture with various art forms while staying true to the promise of inclusivity and intersectionality. We've been extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to curate this treasury of magnetic images and words. What began as speculation and supposition over a group chat has evolved into a near full-time project into which a lot of heart has been put. From worrying about not having enough submissions to being surprised by the kindness of strangers on the internet willing to

promote and support your little digital journal from a corner of the world (for no reason other than sheer goodwill), the last few months have been uplifting. It has been reassuring beyond belief to say that, though we lived in the middle of a global pandemic, witnessed some of the worst injustices of our time carried out over fractured instants, and have been communally tested unlike ever before, there is benevolence in this human race, even in the bleakest of moments.

In addition to this, creators from all over the world have used their enchanting talents to soothe those of us who are especially in need of cheer. Words, watercolours, the wisdom of wisterias in full bloom — the smallest things have brought us such gentle and lulling serenity to otherwise punishing days.

Anais Nin said, "We write to taste life twice". Believing this to be true of all art forms, we hope that you can taste life twice long after you have put The Isolation Edition down.

We hope you're all staying safe and looking after yourselves.

Lots of Love,

*Jasmitha Arvind*

*Rashmi S*

*Meghna Anil Nair*

Team



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*Gouache ExtraFine on 100% Cotton Arches 300g/m2 - 46x61cm*

## Histoire D'amour

*artwork by Raphaële Anfré*

This painting tells the story of a love story with a succession of abstract and colorful elements. Case after case a new element appears, a new feeling, to finally reach love.

And then, a new story begins.

« It first started with the dream of a little thing...

Then it grows, And increases.

Eyes closed, eyelids closed, lips opened.

It's big. It's strong.

Bigger than Me, Stronger than Me.

It's Me, It's You, It's Us.

And it starts again... »

« Histoire d'amour » meaning « Love story » in French.



*Watercolor ExtraFine on 100% Cotton Arches 300g/m2 - 46x61cm*

## Féminité Reposée

*artwork by Raphaële Anfré*

I wanted to paint « Rested Femininity » with an Evolution Painting where the drawing appears case after case. To illustrate that Womanhood is a journey. That we create our own. Step by step.

Raphaële Anfré is an artist and a fashion designer based in Paris. She always drew, as far back as she can remember. Her paintings are full of colours, curves and sensuality. She often talks about her art as an "Erotisme Pudique" in French, meaning a "Chaste Eroticism". Her paintings are directly inspired by the feminine figure and are a tribute to all the different forms of Womanhood.

# THE SIEGE

*poem by Tuur Verheyde*

The body is weakened  
By its restless resident.  
The mind groans beneath the weight  
Of worries, deadlines, promises to keep.  
No time for healing,  
No time for preparation.  
There are no beacons to light.  
Friendly bonds were broken,  
Stretched out by desperate use.  
The old alliances are gone.  
War is upon us. We stand alone.

The pressure and its enforced routines  
Encircle us. It is a patient foe.  
Surrender is not an option.  
Defeat means destruction.  
The wandering mind is punished by guilt.  
We need what we cannot afford.  
Starving for escapism,  
Lack of rest hollows us out.  
Physical pains and illnesses  
Torment us within our cold defences.  
It is only a matter of time.  
Morale is low.  
Vigilance wavers.  
Our mental supplies are thin.  
When slumber falls like snow,  
The echoing horn of war  
Ends our short repose.

Endless waves flood the land.  
Our dam groans beneath their weight.  
The line cannot be held.  
The defences are breached.  
We must retreat.  
The keep is our last stand.  
Imprisoned by a stone womb  
We listen to the drumming of battering rams.  
We are walled in. Buried alive.  
Our shelter will be our tomb.  
We cannot get out.  
Intervals of thundering drums  
Eviscerate our sleep.  
Rest is always out of reach.  
We are hollow.  
Starvation will succeed  
Where the tools of war cannot.  
It is only a matter of time.  
We cannot get out.  
Supplies are slim.  
We wait.  
Time crawls forward.  
Silence slowly overcomes the noise.  
Hope tells us we may survive.  
When the floods roll back—  
If they roll back, we may survive.  
We pray for our foes' fatigue to come.  
We pray that we may outlast them.  
We wait. We allow not for hope  
To lure us into false relief.  
We are reluctant to believe.  
We wait.

Tuur Verheyde is a twenty-three year old Belgian. Although Dutch is his first language, Tuur writes poetry exclusively in English. It often discusses current events, progressive politics, spirituality and highbrow and popular culture as well as personal experiences and stories.





## White Shades of Grey - I

Capturing a moment of self-reflection, peace, and meditation

*artwork by Athiba Balasubramanian*

Athiba Balasubramanian is an architect, designer and art enthusiast. Inkinglight is a passion project he started back in 2013; the name simply refers to the most fundamental definition of art – i.e. capturing light. Apart from sketching, he experiments with non-objective abstractions using acrylics. His minimalist works are largely influenced by colors and compositions found in nature and even manmade forms.

## Lambing

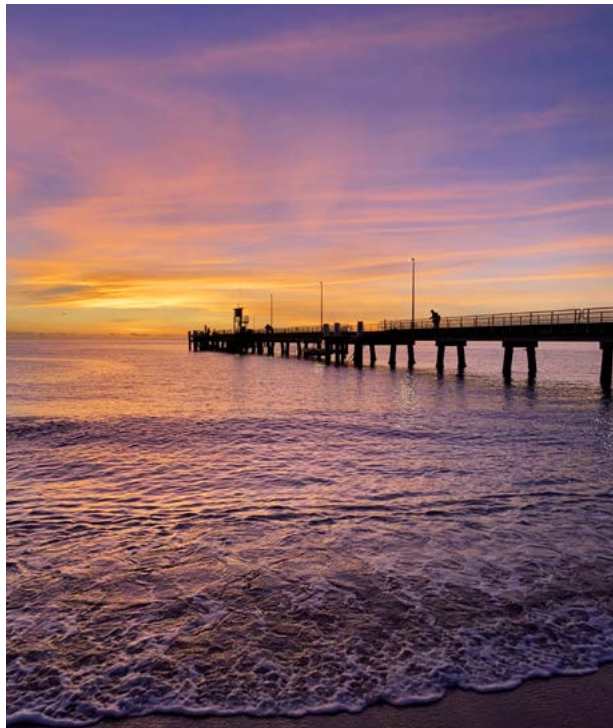
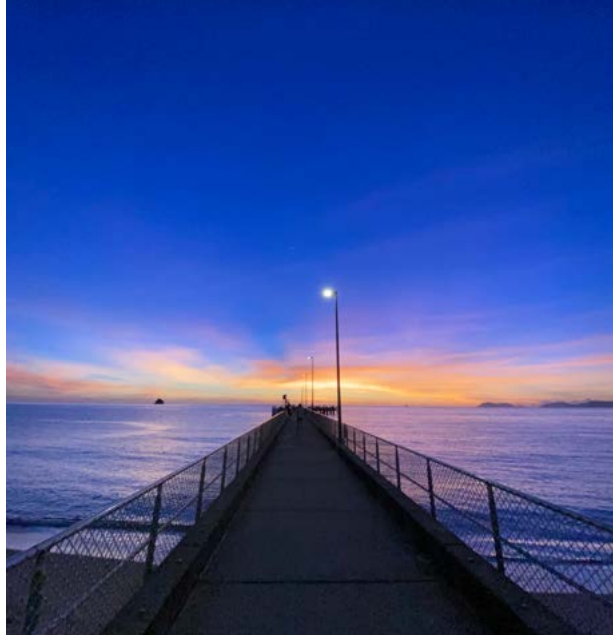
From winter's womb  
Fresh day is spawned.  
Thrust from old loins  
New life has dawned.  
Snow drops seep  
From salt petered ground  
While birds in swing-time,  
Discover sound.

## Dusk to Dusk

A bat unwinds like a clockwork toy  
Night arrives a little early  
As might a bride, with doubts.  
It is August tomorrow,  
more a worry than a help.

*poems by Bernard Pearson*

Bernard Pearson's work appears in many publications. In 2017 a selection of his poetry 'In Free Fall' was published by Leaf by Leaf Press. In 2019 he won second prize in The Aurora Prize for Writing for his poem Manor Farm. He is also a biographer and prize winning short story writer.



*photography by Anuradha Kanthanathan*

# *The Coastline Paradox*

*poem by Nicki Blake*

my footprint cartography makes it clear  
that I will not be leaving this place soon  
I have walked this edge around, around -  
stepped out the realisation of being marooned  
I've found no way by which I can escape  
no causeway, raft, or other means to leave  
no other human voices can be heard  
no other living presence have I seen  
(though yellow eyes have watched me in the night  
when, by my campfire, I have tried to sleep)  
I find no comfort in the depthless stars  
or from the moonlight dancing on the waves  
I wake from fitful dreams that chill my bones  
into the nightmare of a life alone

and each day, as I walk around again  
to force acceptance of my loneliness,  
I think about another life in which  
I was told that shores were measureless -  
that demarcation of the littoral sands  
disappeared in geodesic spans  
and every island, though it seemed confined,  
had a coastline that was without end -

its limitations therefore limitless  
holding infinity in its compass  
yes, I think this as I make my way  
mapping forever, day by silent day  
wondering if I should even have to fear  
being castaway, if eternity is here

Nicki Blake is an emerging poet and writer of short stories who is based Western Australia. Her writing focuses on themes of identity, inclusivity, the natural world, and the interaction between people and their environments. As a teacher and student of languages, Nicki draws on her lived experiences of working with words to inform her writing.

Anuradha Kanthanathan lives in Cairns, Queensland, Australia. She loves nature photography and uses the iPhone11 pro Max to capture her images. You can find her at @anu\_62





*photography by Ragini Menon*

## *The New Normal*

*poem by Yewande Adebowale*

the new normal ushers an era  
of the unseen peripatetic foe  
etched into living memoria  
as earth shatters under its mighty blow

uncertainty plagues in circular motif  
as losses rise  
in numbers and in grief  
grounding all to halt and cries

sparse gatherings in solitary spaces  
amidst confinement and chaos  
thorns grow in minds' garden places  
plucking life away in a manner most heinous

the Reaper's clandestine prowl across seven havens  
troops gracefully into interior in one ruthless scoop  
adorned with crown in viral covens  
pruning ripe and unripe with scythe and swoop

doom's mercenary howls in the streets seeking unguarded victims  
seclusion is key together with good hygiene and masking  
we watch helplessly as pandemic silences fete rhythms  
enthroning newness in order of living

this is the era of the microscopic beast

threatening to obliterate nation after nation  
and its inhabitants from cradle to age and from west to east  
the curve is flattened by social distancing and self-isolation

Yewande Adebowale is a Nigerian poet and author of two collections of poetry.





*photography by Ragini Menon*

Ragini Menon is currently doing a degree in digital humanities. She is enthusiastic about black and white photography, literature, and art and has written about opera and medieval French poetry.



## Need

*poem & photography by Grace Alice Evans*

a primordial need for nourishment and sustenance.  
borne out of a rage on a sweltering summer's day, when the thorn-chains  
which have bound me began to fracture through my isolated  
body and mind  
now awakening,  
breaking through the heavy gates of nauseated dormancy.

Grace Alice Evans

Grace Alice Evans (she/they) is a LGBTQ+, mixed-heritage poet, writer, and sound/visual artist. She is also a survivor, and in the process of recovery. Her work explores mental illness, trauma, recovery and the dichotomy between the inner and outer worlds. Her social media handle is @gracealiceevans.

## The Day Cocks Refused to Crow

*poem by Gboláhàn Adébiyí*

The day cocks refused to crow  
Down in the valley of an island snow.  
Darkness billowing like the breeze  
In my aloneness, around a little candle for a tea

Reminiscing sweet perfs of strangers on broadways  
The little candle, a hope for the coming light  
Will not last the night for another Star  
Nor the day in another night

Feelings unexpressed  
Love unconfessed  
Memories of previous day  
Wishing to relive them once again.

The life I'd lived, the lies I'd told  
Screaming at me, in my darkened soul.  
The night wash me with a waterfall of its essence  
Evoking thrills of yang experience  
A new feel, a new will  
A new me, a new ding

As the night refused to retire  
And the cocks renounce their duty of crier  
Shovel in hand, digging my six feet pit.

At the horizon  
Glimmer of a peeping yellow sun  
As the breeze echoes the new dawn lullaby  
And the cocks begin to cry.

Gboláhàn Adébiyí is a Media Practitioner studying History at the University of Ibadán.  
One of his poems is published in Kreaxxion Review.  
He loves life and appreciates the spirituality of being. Twitter @gbolaadebiyi



*artwork by Eriko Hattori*

**Eriko Hattori** @erikohattori\_ (they/them) is a Pittsburgh-based artist. Hattori uses imagery, symbolism, and folklore to investigate the tension between sexual identity and cultural heritage. They aim to create personal mythologies that revolve around fetish, sexuality, and perceptions of femininity. With a rotating set of avatars, these icons act as anchors for conversations about perversion, desire, and the fetishism of bodies.

## *Friends w/o Benefits*

*poem by Nawaal K*

Observe! — my animal-like yearning and buzzkill brain.  
 I fear I am becoming rabid.  
 A dog in the heat driven to madness.  
 I want to be held and I want to never be looked at again  
 [Do you see?]  
 I make a conscious effort to accept my loneliness.  
 I plait its hair.  
 [Allowing myself to unravel as quietly as possible]  
 I give it its own welcome mat and scribe it sheet music.  
 [The blues]  
 When the night comes, I let it smother me to sleep.  
 I could've been something great,  
 but I don't even like the way I write.  
 I think I peaked at fourteen.  
 Back when life was learning how to order breakfast  
 in French and hiding books underneath my pillow  
 when I was meant to be asleep.  
 I don't talk to people the way I used to anymore.  
 I don't dream the way I used to.  
 And it's been years. Oh my god it's been years.

**Nawaal** is a university student who spends her time between cleaning out the stains in her lab coat and rearranging the poems in her notes app. You can find the ones that survived on her instagram account @flw.d She hopes to see you there.

# April

*poem by Shloka Ramachandran*

thursday afternoon:

you are standing there, on the platform, in the train station.  
it has not stopped raining for days.

you do not look very different; how things have changed.  
why do you meet my eyes so stubbornly?

(picture this: the sun is out, and we are bright and shiny.  
we do not mind the relentless mumbai heat.)

you do not hesitate when you meet my eyes. we are  
looking at each other now, and the universe seems to  
hang in the balance; what do we expect to see in each other?  
are you hoping, after all this time, that i am the same?  
am i hoping that you are not?

friday evening:

i meet you near your house, new footsteps on old ground.  
your day has not gone well. "it's looking up now," you say.  
the world seems different to how it felt all those years ago.

"you are happier, now, than you used to be," you tell me.  
i cannot disagree, but i do not know if happiness is as simple  
as it used to be, if it is a monolith of positivity and hope.  
maybe i am happy: i am not unhappy. i do not wake up with  
the taste of tears in my mouth these days, but i do not feel like  
i can tackle life, anymore. did i ever feel like that? it has been  
years, now, years and years of tired acceptance.

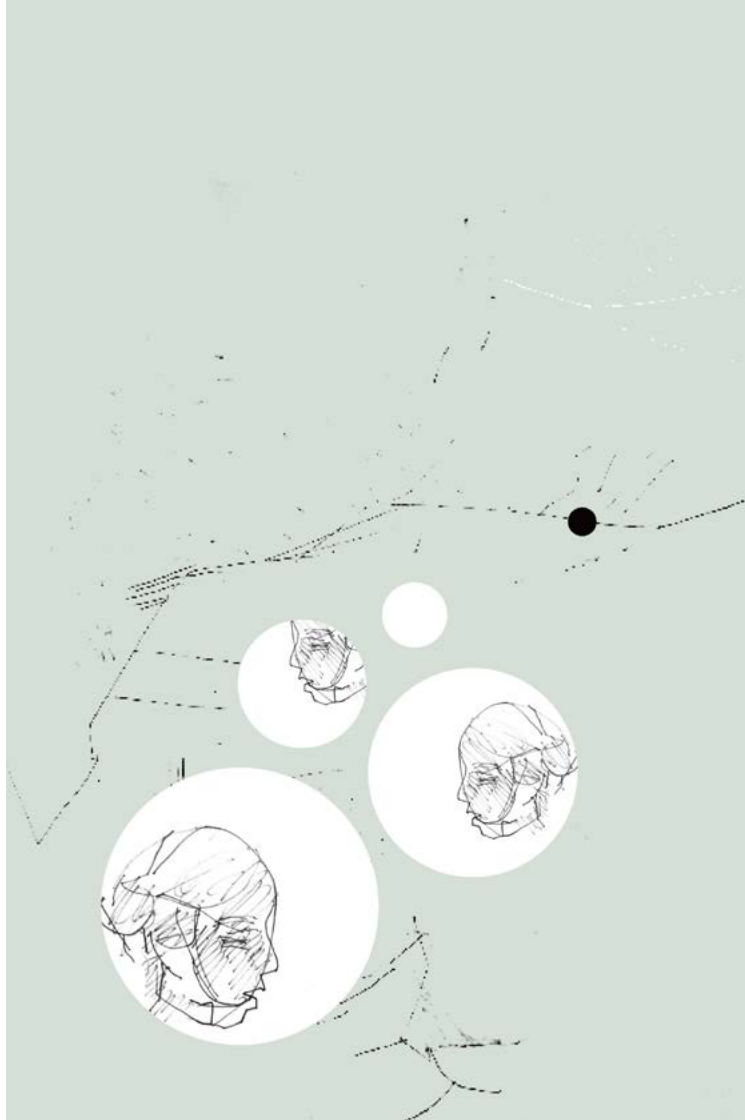
(we are friends of old: there is no pretence anymore.  
i do not need to fake a bright smile and energy i do not have.)

"how did you feel when i left?" i ask you.  
although we are in the same place, you have left now.  
(it's your turn)

we eat in silence.

Shloka Ramachandran is a 23 year writer and an English and Creative Writing graduate of the University of London, currently based in Mumbai. Her interests include free verse poetry, children's literature, and cups of tea. You can find her poetry on Instagram at @akolhs.





*artwork by Sunandini Banerjee*

Sunandini Banerjee is Senior Editor and Designer at Seagull Books. She is also a translator and a digital-collage artist. She lives and works in Kolkata.

*After a text my friend sent*

If you're looking for a nature poem,  
definitely don't look here. No trees,

no forests, no metaphors tying  
a feeling to a bird. They said the outside

isn't going anywhere and they  
were right – it was us that ended up

fenced in. I said I wasn't going  
to write this with line breaks but

here we are. What am I trying  
to say? Anyway, it's 2020

and my country is a graveyard.  
I don't care if this dates

me, I don't care that I've  
homaged my own poem.

My life is passing by on a screen  
and I don't know when I'll see

my brother again. A flick  
of the screen, so many

dead. They say, watch  
this space. They say, stay

in your homes, touch each other  
through screens. They say, not

voting for Biden is the same  
as a vote for Trump. They say

In these difficult times, it's time  
to reopen. They say, stay informed,

do your own research. They say  
it's all an op. They say

don't look away, not even for a second.

*Look at all you've missed while you were gone.*

## *Scrolling to Where You Were*

*poem by Elaine Wang*

Elaine Wang is a Kundiman  
Fellow and 2014 and 2017  
Pushcart Prize Nominee. Born  
and raised in Texas, she now  
resides in Los Angeles.  
[www.theelainewang.com](http://www.theelainewang.com),  
[@theelainewrites](https://twitter.com/theelainewrites)



artwork by Deepika Saravanan

There was and still is a lot of speculation about what the “new normal” would be, post COVID-19. I thought a lot about it too and for some reason, I was reminded of the most popular mode of commute in Mumbai – the local train. A few scenes from some of the movies set in Mumbai flashed in my head and I realised what drew me the most, were the scenes that show the daily life of a middle class Mumbaikar. The crowded train, bustling with life, cramped with thousands of people in barely breathable proximity, getting on with their lives like any other day – this was normal. But, not any more.

I wanted to draw parallels between what was and what is soon to be ‘NORMAL’ and so this work of art is titled,

*“Easing into the ‘new’ normal from our ingrained idea of normalcy”*

Deepika is a book fanatic, an art and jewellery enthusiast and an architect by day with a passion for furniture and interior design. She moonlights as an Illustrator under ‘Pill of Curiosity’ and secretly hopes to make a living out of just reading. Books and films kindled her interests towards design. She aspires to own a 6 foot tall Christmas tree with frills and trimmings, in all its glory someday!

# Art & Isolation

curated by Meghna Anil Nair

featuring artwork by Sanam Khatibi, Eric Zener, Xiao Zheluo, Chen Han, Ben McLaughlin, Katie O'Hagan, Brett Amory, Vincent van Gogh and Edvard Munch

Isolation is perhaps not unprecedented to artists. Several notable creators have historically created environments of self-imposed solitude as a way of nurturing their art form in the absence of disturbance. Frida Kahlo, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, and Georgia O'Keeffe are well known for being isolated and fitting into the often badly portrayed and stereotypical character of The Reclusive Artist. However, the distinction that needs to be made is that these artists - and certainly many before and after them, dating from the 1300s to present day - revel in the tiny, secluded spaces they create, whether a studio, a room of their own, or simply a bed. The respite from the constant humdrum of society has proved for many to be the missing ingredient for the inception of a masterpiece - something that the current lockdown has made several of us enjoy and dislike in varying proportions. The Open Culture Collective is looking into what isolation means for artists in the present day. In this digitised and highly connected world - what does it take to make art, and how far can these artists go in the name of isolation?



Oil and pencil on canvas | 78 7/10 × 98 2/5 in | 200 × 250 cm

## Sanam Khatibi

*Days & Days Without Love*

A Belgian artist born in Tehran whose work *Days and days without love* captures the ambience of isolation to perfection, an element of surrealism is the essence of Khatibi's work, interlocuting with animalia and pastel hues.

Sanam Khatibi is a Belgian artist who lives and works in Brussels. Her work can be found on her [website](#) and you can find her on instagram @untilthelilacsturnblack





*Oil on Canvas | 60 × 48 in | 152.4 × 121.9 cm*

## Eric Zener

### *Across the Divide*

The solitary object against the endless blue, the quintessential Zener piece. While most of his work has a milieu of a water body, *Across the Divide* (2019) is an exception, but bears striking resemblance to his signature style and palette.

Eric Zener is an American photorealist artist best known for figure paintings of lone subjects, often in or about swimming pools. His work can be found on his [website](#).

## Xiao Zheluo

### *World in front of Grandma*

*"It means nothing to me. Whether the world believes me dead. I can hardly say anything to refute it. For truly, I am no longer a part of the world."*

- Hanya Yanagihara

Self-imposed isolation is unprecedented - but what of the inevitability of old age? In *World in front of Grandma* (2010), the haunting dark strokes of oil on wood are only half the story. Encapsulating the isolating experience of infirmity, disability and loss of agency that comes with growing old, this striking painting by Chinese artist Zheluo lingers, and lingers, and lingers.

*Oil on Wood | 15 7/10 × 8 3/10 in | 40 × 21 cm*

Xiao Zheluo was born in 1983 in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. In 2006 she graduated from the Chengdu Academy of Fine Art and has had many solo exhibitions since then. Her work can be found [here](#)





Oil on panel | 2 1/8 x 3 1/8 in | 5.4 x 7.9 cm

## Ben McLaughlin

02:22, 2013

One of McLaughlin's many paintings from his timestamp series, each more ambient than the next, the lone figure in the window of a dimly lit room evokes a sense of sameness, of days during lockdown with nobody but oneself for company.

*I sit in my sorrow  
a-weary, alone;  
I have nothing sweet to hope or  
remember,  
For the spring o' th' year and  
of life has flown;  
'Tis the wildest night o' the  
wild December,  
And dark in my spirit and  
dark in my chamber.*

*- A Window Just Over the  
Street, Alice Carey*

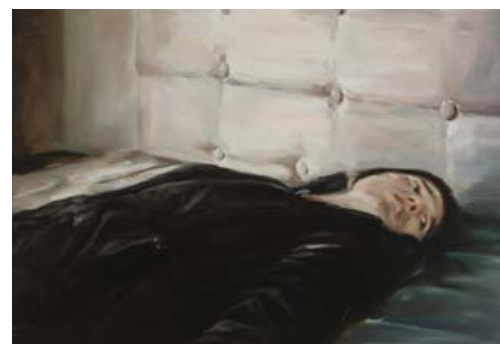
Ben McLaughlin's work can be found [here](#)

## Chen Han

A masterful collection of contemporary figurative art, Han's paintings breathe with lush brushstrokes and earthy tones. With an almost poetic expression of human suffering, loneliness and solitude, not only is Han's work beautiful to behold, but subtly evocative and delicate in their message.



Blue Girl



Virtue

Chen Han's work can be found [here](#)





*Oil on Linen | 36 × 42 in | 91.4 × 106.7 cm*

## Katie O'Hagan

*Suspension*, 2014

Taking contemporary photorealism to new heights, Scottish artist O'Hagan creates emotionally expressive and vivid images with her arsenal of deep blue strokes. Well known for adopting imagery not dissimilar to the likes of Salvador Dali, the artist mingles the extraordinary with the every day - the spider's web of connection, and the loneliness of being home.

Katie O'Hagan was born and raised in the far north of Scotland and moved to the US in 1993. Her work has shown in many galleries and museums nationally and internationally. You can find her work on her [website](#).

## Brett Amory

*Waiting #234*, 2015

*Oil on wood panel | 20 × 20 in | 50.8 × 50.8 cm*

Meant to convey the isolation of anonymous commuters he comes across on his daily travels, American artist Amory highlights this seclusion with layers of colour, setting the focus on the man behind the counter.

Brett Amory's work can be found on his [website](#)





*"A great fire burns within me, but no one stops to warm themselves at it, and passers-by only see a wisp of smoke."*

— Vincent Van Gogh

## Vincent van Gogh

### *Corridor in the Asylum*

To give van Gogh an introduction would be a disservice to his fabled story. Although his work was perpetually analysed through the lens of mental illness and depression, the general consensus of Vincent as a tortured soul gives more bearing to the negative connotations of being mentally ill. Very rarely is he praised for creating such memorable, vivid, and culturally indelible works of art despite his harrowing experience with his illness. ***Corridor in the Asylum*** was completed in 1889, a depiction of the asylum in St. Remy, where the artist spent the last of his years, producing a mood of solitude in the endless hallways.

## Edvard Munch

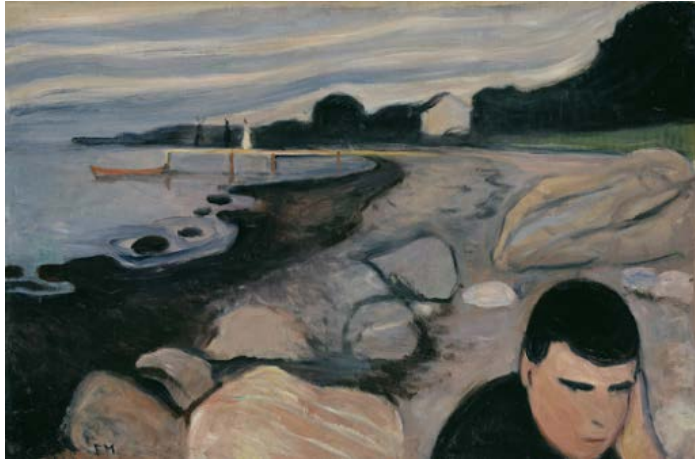
One of the artists at the forefront of the post-impressionist movement, Munch is no stranger to art lovers and novices alike. While his oils like *Despair* and *Melancholy* are telling perhaps of his emotional turmoil, there are lesser known drypoint prints that effuse a similar mood, complemented by the monotones of roulette steel against the matrix.



*Das Mädchen am Fenster*  
(Pike ved vinduet), 1894



*Måneskinn. Natt i Saint-Cloud* (Moonlight. Night in Saint-Cloud), 1895



*Melancholy, Edvard Munch*

These have been disconcerting times for many of us, and it is always heartening to look back at artists old and new and see that despite these extraordinary circumstances, our seemingly unprecedented emotions have held roots for decades before us. Scrolling through a newsfeed in bed alone with the lights off, when one can feel so fractured and distant from reality inside of one's home, perhaps it will do us good fortune to remember the likes of Van Gogh and Xheluo and Munch and Han. Like all things, we get through it all together.

# Art & Isolation

*in conversation with  
Michèle Schoonackers & Daniel Ablitt*

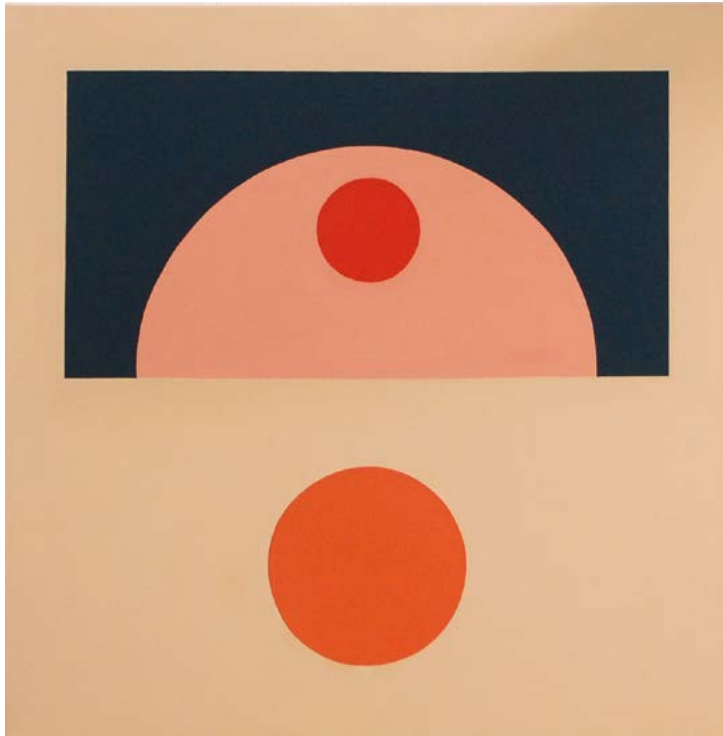


*Strolling, Michèle Schoonackers*



*Lights in the Mist II, Daniel Ablitt*





*Piercing the Veil of a New Reality by Michèle Shoonackers*



*Home by Daniel Ablitt | Oil on Panel | 150 x 122 cm*

*How has the imposed lockdown changed your routine when it comes to creating new pieces of work?*

**Michèle:** To be honest, it hasn't changed a whole lot. My process is always very isolated and I tend to go inward before and during the planning stage and the creation stage.

**Daniel:** When the lockdown first came into affect in the UK, I moved my studio practice to a spare room at home. I naively thought that it would be now different. How wrong I was! I didn't realise how closely tied the creative process was to the physical work space. I've been in my current studio for quite a few years and developed a rhythm of work specific to that space. After a few attempts, I decided to embrace the opportunity to have a break from physically creating and take in more of the world around me.

*Were you otherwise someone who preferred to isolate oneself in an attempt to make more art? Do you find the solitude more or less conducive to your process?*

**Michèle:** Yes, for sure. Being alone and seeing my inner world clearly through meditation and introspection is what allows me to make the work that I do.

**Daniel:** I would describe myself as someone who is creatively self sufficient but having friends and colleagues nearby to bounce ideas off or just talk nonsense over a cup of tea (or a bottle of beer!) is invaluable.

*What keeps you inspired - and how much of this is reliant on being outdoors, seeing familiar and new faces on a daily basis, being in nature, or all the things that have been made difficult because of the pandemic?*

**Michèle:** A lot of my inspiration comes from balance. Balance that occurs in nature, balance found within architectural structures, and in my own daily doings. Sometimes a burst of energy or inspiration is given to me through meeting with familiar faces or walking about town, but it is not necessary for me to create.



*Untitled*



*Symbiosis*



*Birches in the Snow (Meeting)*  
Oil on Panel | 122 x 100 cm



*View to the Valley (Blue Figure)*  
Oil on Panel | 40 x 40 cm

*Your work echoes heavily with an aura of solitude - can you tell us a little about the thinking that goes into this?*

**Daniel:** The single figure in each are in a way walking a fine line between expectation and contemplation. The narrative in each suggests that something may be about to happen. In a way they are about the moment before the story is revealed. In that moment there is a pause, a time to reflect on the possibilities. The larger forest piece, is more of a response to my own rediscovering of nature that has been afforded me by the lockdown. Going out into the countryside and having the time and space to really notice and take in the vibrancy and lushness of spring has been a revelation!



*How do you feel about the stereotype that artists are inherently lonely people, that they are “others” in society, always pictured in film as reclusive elements who are all about themselves?*

**Michèle:** I think that is mostly correct, haha! I don't fully agree with artists being inherently lonely because even though I spend a lot of time by myself, I am not lonely. I think solitude is crucial to the process of creation, to fully come into contact with the creativity and the idea that is waiting to be birthed.

**Daniel:** I think as with all sections of society, there are all types. It's fair to say that generally artists are pretty non-conformist so I wouldn't be unhappy with the being described as “other”. Each artist's practice is unique to them. I have a fairly introspective practice as my work is about my own response to my surroundings and my memories.

*Since we all have more time to spend at home, do you feel under pressure to create more now than before or has the pressure to accomplish something eased off, become more malleable and manageable without other intrusions and demands?*

**Michèle:** Since I haven't been creating art in this way for very long, I feel no pressure at all to create. I do like to have a steady flow of work coming out just to avoid becoming stagnant, but otherwise there is no timeframe for me to create anything.

**Daniel:** Being lucky enough to do something create as my full time job, I'm never going to complain about felling the pressure to create. That is there on a daily basis, lockdown or no lockdown. Whether I accomplish it or not is for someone else to say!

*Is there anything you've felt or been through during this time that you think might serve as good advice for someone else, another artist?*

**Michèle:** This time has allowed me to let go of arbitrary expectations and unconscious tensions in my body. Most of the things we cling to in daily life are not that important. Ease your grip on everything and see how you can bring this to your work. A little example; I used to hold my paintbrush really tightly because I thought it would help me be more precise. This caused a lot of tension in my body and made the process quite tiring. When I started to let go I became more aware of how tightly I was holding on to everything, including my paintbrush. I decided to very slightly hold the brush and let it guide my hand instead of the other way around. It worked wonderfully and I was able to be more precise with less effort. Try it, see what happens!

**Daniel:** Don't put pressure on yourself. Allowing yourself time and space to notice the world around your is essential. Let it feed your creativity.

## About the Artists

**Michèle Schoonackers** is a self taught artist who has dabbled in different art forms such as photography, music, digital illustration and traditional art. All paving the way to her current practice. She draws inspiration from many different areas such as nature, architecture, and astronomy. Mostly using intuition when selecting colors and shapes to form a composition that is both hard and calculated, but also flowing naturally, with room to breathe. Ultimately translating the deepest parts of her own life and experiences.

**Daniel Ablitt** often uses his surroundings as a starting point for his work. This could be a visit to an area of outstanding natural beauty, woodland and alpine forests having a significant influence, along with the landscape of South Somerset where the artist lives and works. Daniel's memories of his childhood also have a strong influence on his recent work, conveying a sense of nostalgia.



*artwork by Athiba Balasubramanian*

## IDO *Movement*

Striving for balance in these uncertain times with a 3rd invisible element that seems to be teaching us a lesson on priorities, life, and nature.

## *Summer 2020*

*poem by Kate Wilson*

Avenues of glare, a glass of sun  
magnifies, until it's a focal point;  
white with intimate heat,  
each inch of detail brightened,  
enlivened by unforgiving light.

Where once we hid away in days,  
city-slickened and caught fast,  
in circular motions we taught  
ourselves to build hours around,  
now, stillness walks a slow descent.

There is nothing left to estimate  
no room for interpretation,  
soloists in languor, patience  
no longer a choice, open-faced,  
at home with our reflections.

Kate J Wilson's work has appeared in the Pendle Anthology of War Poetry and Alliterati, and will be featured in Mookychick's inaugural anthology and 14 Magazine. Her debut pamphlet, *One Night in January* is due from Wild Pressed Books in 2021.



AND WHEN EVERYTHING CAME TO A STANDSTILL,  
ONLY 2 KINDS OF SOUNDS REMAINED.



ON DAYS NOT SO GOOD, MY THOUGHTS WERE LOUDER  
- THE KIND OF SOUNDS YOU HEAR IN ISOLATION.



ON BETTER DAYS I HEARD THE BIRDS, RAINS AND THE WIND  
- THE KIND OF SOUNDS YOU HEAR IN SOLITUDE.



ON SOME DAYS THE SOUNDS GOT MIXED UP  
- THE KIND OF SOUNDS THAT TELL YOU TO CREATE SOMETHING.

*artwork by Nisshtha Khattar*

Nisshtha is a user experience designer and an Artist based out of Bangalore. She loves experimenting with different media.





*Stuck Within these Four Walls, Yet Still on my Toes  
Solace Could Only be Found Outside Myself in Art*

*artwork by Sreejaa Sundararaju*

Sreejaa Sundararaju is a Sales Engineer based in San Jose, California who's passionate about all things tech related; an amateur artist, that started off on a casual "sip and paint" night. She's a Chennai girl who loves her dosas as much as she does her matcha tea. A pop culture, pun enthusiast who isn't superstitious but is a little stitious.

## Windows

*flash fiction by Robin Bissett*

Mathilde and I were walking around our neighborhood wearing our masks. She hopped purposefully to avoid cracks in the concrete. In her light-up sneakers, each small footprint sent colorful bolts into the ground.

I carried a bucket of sidewalk chalk in my left hand. The wind blew the rainbow dust up onto my palm, but I didn't mind. At that moment, I had nowhere else to be.

We were still familiarizing ourselves with the neighborhood. It was a peculiar thing to have moved houses, from across the bay, right before the effects of the virus set in.

Through the windows of a pale yellow house, about a block from our home, we saw a family eating dinner. Two moms, a son and a daughter gathered around a dining table. Timidly, we waved, eyes crinkling as we smiled beneath our masks. They waved back.

We continued walking past a few more houses, silent in the hopes that we would one day be able to congregate with strangers in public again.

Mathilde looked up at me, "Is Mom coming back?" she asked.

I swallowed. "No, it'll just be the two of us," I said. "I hope that's okay with you."

She took my right hand, and we made our way back home, where we opened our windows to the world.

Robin Bissett is a teaching artist and writer from central Texas.

# Mirror of Erised

*poem by Akash Ali*

First steps, baby's tears.  
3am, he wakes you up.  
Care, care, and more care.  
Takes all your love, then one day  
he hands it over to some stranger.

Your lover's hands keep you warm.  
Turn the heating off,  
the friction of your bodies suffices.

A red brick house with a blue door.  
3 bedrooms – Sunday dinner -  
plenty of chores.  
You don't care if you fall,  
somebody  
is always near.

In another universe,  
that beautiful conventional ride  
might not have been out of reach  
for me.  
I walk down the road of isolation  
on my two feet,  
just me and me and me.

Stare at my palms with such desperation,  
no sign of love line, no relief.  
Lifeline cut short,  
wish I could breathe more freely.

Akash is a Pakistani poet from Manchester. He started writing recently during lockdown. When he's not writing he can be seen taking polaroids or creating illustrations.

Midnight,  
I clear the dust over my mirror of  
erised.  
See a hand over my shoulder,  
plenty of light.  
A lover's reflection -  
by the morning it's gone.  
Oh, what a bitter demise.

Old age, now my body is torn up.  
All day I stare at the blank wall.  
No home -  
nobody to call my own.

With my life ends my family's descent.  
No one to pass the parcel,  
to pray over my grave.  
To hold my creased hand,  
while I await  
the end.

*artwork by Sunandini Banerjee*

WE ARE ELSEWHERE, WE ARE NOT TALKING TO YOU, DO YOU HEAR? ELSEWHERE! NO ONE IS COMMUNICATING WITH YOU!

# ELSEWHERE!



# Shifting Landscapes I, II, III

artwork by  
Athiba Balasubramanian



Looking through my window  
to find an infinite shifting land-  
scape of lush green mountains  
and a crisp blue sky with Van  
Gogh-esque Clouds gliding slowly  
through the day.



# Rootless

poem by Lori Graham

Will life drag me  
like tumbleweed  
from one side of the world  
to the other forever?

Do roots always dig deep?  
ferns in the woods  
plucked out and placed in  
new soil often wither,  
refusing to thrive, a  
protest

Home is where the heart is?  
what a cliché lie!  
my heart is the wind  
drifting through the branches of a  
feathery willow near the stream  
never still always stretching out  
like pea sprouts,  
struggling for  
light  
space  
oxygen

I see no roots  
growing out of my feet  
no matter how many times  
I think they will.

Lori Graham is a late-blooming lesbian who lives in Woodbridge, England. Lori earned her Bachelor's Degree in English at the University of North Florida, a major she chose so she could read and write while earning a degree. She has had work published in Poems on Global Lockdown and CoronaVirus, Other Worldly Women Press, and XR-GLobal Creative.



# June is the Month to Reconnect

*short story by James Kramer*

People disconnect, even fulfilled and satisfied people. Sporadically moving further apart until one day the idea of a conversation seems allusively futile. Pungent somehow. Like curdled milk in your ear. I am not a fulfilled person. But I am also someone who does not need others. However, periodic emotional growth is important, Amy tells me. Demonstrable emotional growth.

June is a month simmering with possibility. Wild amounts of promise. It makes me want to improve in externally tangible ways. Amy hints at me needing this. Needing to do this for myself. This is a lie. If I don't do this, I'll lose her first before I have to worry about myself. This year I'll show her that I am socially conscious and personable. June is the month I'll reconnect with the world.

I fail at this with rapid success. Hours pissed away online. There are all sorts of ways to locate people. I unfortunately don't know many of them. I don't understand how to digitally track people. Amy can do this. She does it really well. I tell her about someone and over dinner she plays with her phone, eating in slow, methodical bites. Distracted, but focused. Her thumb scrolls like a miniature detective. I mash together tomatoes and eggs and picture a tiny fedora over its nail. I laugh like an idiot.

By the end of the meal she knows everything about that person. She shows me photos of them posing in Madrid. Zooms in on their sunburn. She tells me where they work, if they are single. She plays videos of them with the sound off and smiles in a miniature way that scares me a bit. I cannot do these things. I haven't developed the skills. No one taught me. When June is over I've largely failed at trying to improve myself through online stalking. But I have found Sam.

Sam lived close. His apartment was government subsidised. He shared a toilet and kitchen at the end of the hall. Had his own room, bed. The carpet consisted of baubles of purple, grey and brown, purple, grey and brown over and over until you felt like killing yourself. Upholstery suited to depression. Outside the street had a steady, chaotic sound. People charged past shouting. Later they'd return, muttering to themselves. His street attracted vendettas. Large dogs prowled restless and bored.

Sam couldn't leave the apartment. At 22 he'd forgotten how to read faces.

I understand there's a person there, he said. But I don't know what it is they want. They can seem angry and sad and happy all at the same time. It fucks me up.

I went to buy Sam food. This is a good thing, I thought. I entered the corner store with confidence. I bought him a loaf of long-lasting white bread. I bought him oranges, peanut butter and six slices of a slimy looking ham. Someone had attacked the boiler in Sam's kitchen. There were violent stains on the walls. I found a kettle and made coffee for us and sat on his chair, my knees around my head. He sat on the bed and looked at his coffee. Outside someone swore revenge. Sam put his spoon on the table. My hands smelt like a nursing home.

He'd been attacked at least twice. Other people had come up to him, but he couldn't understand them. They had stood close. He'd felt them, next to him.

They could've just be talking, he said. Could've just been cunts.

Twice he'd been robbed. So I know what that was, he said. I could carry a knife,

but look at me.

Amy reminded me that I had a dinner party to go to. I went home and put on adult clothes. We took the bus together. I thought about asking her to loop arms with me. At the party, people smiled at humourless things. They said kind things about the food. Explored the virtues of Japanese strawberries.

Western consumers are essentially superficial, the woman next to me said. Ugly fruit is going to taste better, but supermarkets refuse to stock it because people won't buy it.

I looked at her face. Everything was in the right sort of place. Her eyebrows expressed. I understood that when she smiled I was supposed to too. I tried hard to experience only confusion. I scrunched up my thoughts and made an internal whirring sort of noise.

I gave up.

You know, the Japanese have watermelons that are massaged by wagyu cows, I said.

She tightened her eyes. I couldn't tell if she was angry or just frustrated. It felt like some sort of victory, not to know. I wanted to ask her exactly what it was that she was feeling at that precise moment.

It's like a joke, I said. Only not funny.

She nodded and moved to another conversation. I looked across at Amy and made a mental note. Disappointment. Reassignment. Hunger?

How could that possibly work? Sam said as I handed him his coffee. Even if it did, what were you hoping to achieve?

Understand what it's like, I guess.

It's not a gimmick. I'm not an exercise.

Sorry.

And your jokes are dumb.

I cooked Amy dinner and sat opposite her and ate it. She absentmindedly mixed everything together on her plate until it consisted of a thick, gluey swamp. Things moved inside it independently.

Claire said that you were racist at the party last night.

Who's Claire?

You said things about the Japanese.

I said things about watermelons. At most, you could say I was mean to Japanese cows.

Derogatory slurs...

Claire's certifiably humourless.

She's dry,

Masquerading as cardboard.

I think fundamentally you need to evaluate how you act in public scenarios.

I saw pair of antennae surface on her plate. They explored the air and then disappeared again.

I tried to look at Claire like the way Sam would.

Why would you even do that?

I don't know.

You shouldn't study him like that.

He said that too.

Displeased. Surprised. Bored. Amy's list of recognisable expressions expanded. I thought how hard it would be to talk to someone while keeping a record of their expressions. I wanted to ask Sam about this.

I guess I just want to know what happened, I said eventually. Like how the same habits we had for years left him fucked up and me sort of ok? And then so if I'm doing well then shouldn't I at least be happy, or feel good about it, or something?

This is you doing well?

I mean I hate my job and everyone I work with and my life seems now pretty much the way that it's always going to be. But this is also sort of a good thing, isn't it? And if that's true then why does it make me feel lonely?

You're lonely?

Amy's face changed. I offered to clean up. I washed things. I rubbed her shoulders while she played on her phone. By the time she fell asleep, things were back to where they'd been if I'd learnt to stop speaking. A made a note to say less in the future. This didn't exactly feel like demonstrable growth.

You're careful with what you say, I told Sam. That's important.

Aren't you?

Not really.

I handed him a ham sandwich.

That's the saddest looking thing in the world, he said.

Supermarkets, I said, used to sell processed meat in the shape of bear faces. Pink bear faces. Nowadays people want artisanal flavours. Things are cured. Opportunities to experience regional delicacies.

The bears get to keep their faces.

If my face was one giant sausage bear face, could you tell?

You're a fucking idiot.

Very true,

Sam picked at his crusts. Outside a man held a twenty-minute argument with a dog. The dog was large, condensed muscle. It sat and patiently waited for him to stop. The dog had very kind and thoughtful eyes that were also very tired with putting up with him. Sam and I sat by the window and watched through the curtain. Sam rolled cigarettes and looked for an ashtray.

Just use the carpet, I said. I mean, look at it.

I don't live like that, he said.

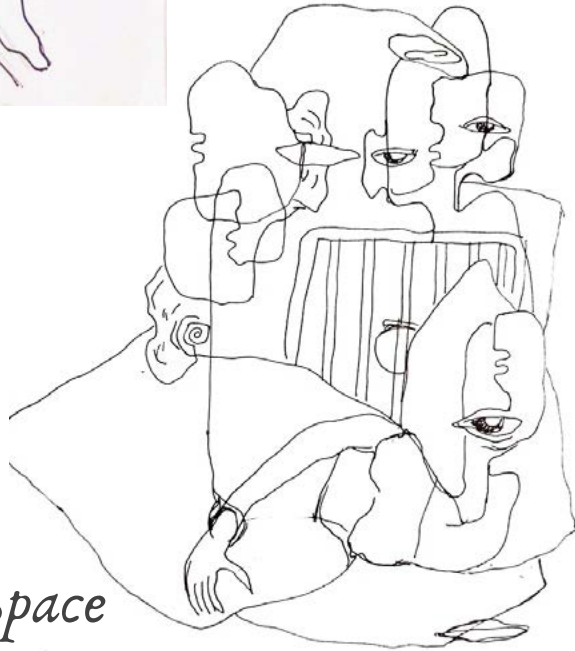
The dog scratched behind its ear and waited for the man to stop. I asked Sam what I should buy him next time.

Anything but processed bear faces, he replied.





*Addiction in  
Isolation*  
*pen on paper*



*Lock in Own Space*  
*pen on paper*



*Isolation in Nature*  
*Acrylic on Canvas*

These artworks depict everyone's isolation situation. We are more addicted to our digital gadgets and are spending more time with them for entertainment. We are locked in our own space and that obscures our minds leading us to feel toxic about sitting at home, alone and doing nothing. But nature is always on our side and lots of people take it's support for being stable as it provides the perfect environment for yoga and meditation that are good for stable mental health.

Sonal Rajan Jadhav is a fine artist from Maharashtra, India. She is a printmaker who works using the traditional way of printmaking. She also works on various subjects like creative drawing and landscapes. You can find her on instagram @sonalrajanjadhav

## சூனத்திப்பொம் !

சூனத்தித் தேடித்  
காணும் சம்பாந் சூன  
தவறல் அன்று தன்மைதான் நாய் !  
காணத் தேடித் கூட்டி  
கூடாமல் சம்பாந் காமதூ  
தன்மைதான் தன்மைதான் சூனத்தி !

1. கற்பனையில் முழுகித்  
கவனத்தில் புனைவன் கவனத்  
கொண்டான் தன்மைதான் அகற்றல் !  
கற்பனையில் கெட்டுப்  
எழுந்தத் தவறல் தவறல்  
கொண்டான் தன்மைதான் கெட்டு !

2. ஆய்வகம் கவனம்  
கிடப்பானே புத்தியைக் காண  
கவனம் தன்மைதான் கவனம் !  
கவனம் கவனம் பார்த்தான்  
கவனம் பார்த்தான் கவனம்  
கவனம் கவனம் கவனம் கவனம் !

3) சாதனங்கள் புரட்சிகள்  
கிடைக்காதவைத் தீவிர நம்பு  
தவறல் தவறல் தவறல் தவறல் !

சாதனங்கள் கவனம்  
கவனம் கவனம் கவனம்  
கவனம் கவனம் கவனம் கவனம் !

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

## Seclusion!

poem by Bagavat Singh

Saints go to the forest in search of wisdom through seclusion.

Musicians are inspired in *seclusion* to compose charming tunes.

Poets enjoy sitting under trees in the garden, in *seclusion*,  
extending their imagination to create poems.

Students keep themselves awake at night, in *seclusion*,  
to prepare for examinations the next day.

Scientists keep themselves *secluded* in labs,  
to discover new findings for the benefit of future generations.

Babies come to life in their mothers' wombs, though they are  
*secluded* for ten months before seeing their mothers' faces.

Achievers keep themselves *secluded*  
in the process of sharpening their minds and thoughts.

Brave people keep themselves *secluded*  
to find ways to come successfully out of failures.

the entire poem can be read on our website

Bagavat Singh is a 79 year old retired bank official with a penchant for teaching. He has deep interests in historical events, mathematics and Tamil literature. Over the years, he has written countless Tamil poems, songs and short stories that have been published in Tamil and international magazines. His songs were regularly aired on AIR and Doordashan.

# Ten Instances of

*prose poem by Sana Mohsin*

1. Last night it rained at 3am; an almost-movie rain according to my sister, an almost-barsaat, an almost-monsoon.
2. On days when my feelings cripple me, my mother brings me plums in bed. From my pillow, I trace the ridges on the glossy skin, putting off biting into the flesh.
3. In a text message to a friend in Toronto: So much has changed, and yet nothing has. We were driving back from the airport and I was struggling to remember routes and addresses (7.38pm)
4. The amaltas have bloomed in Lahore for the first time in a decade, casting our neighbourhood in a state of permanent golden hour. Right now, when I can spend hours looking through my window, admiring the bunches of light.
5. I wear nothing but my mother's cotton shalwar kameez, the outfits soft and faded, from wear and wash.

# Living in Isolation

6. When I spray rose-water on my skin at night she questions why I would want to smell like a graveyard, the garlands around mounds crumbling from neglect.
7. I slowly realize I've left important things back: a Bluetooth computer mouse, Han Kang's *The White Book*, a jewel-green cardigan I could've used for the mild winters here, and hand-crafted soap made from lavender, picked up from Niagara-on-the-lake. Still unopened.
8. There is that feeling of anticipation strumming through my veins; waiting, waiting, waiting. Who will we be when this is all over?
9. Sara Suleri wrote, leaving Pakistan was tantamount to leaving the company of women. Returning to Pakistan is learning to live with their stifling affection again.
10. Isolation brings so much time - to write maybe, to 'find myself.' The only thing stopping me is now myself.

Sana Mohsin is an undergraduate at the University of Toronto. She likes nature imagery and tea, and hopes to make a career of reading and writing. You can follow her on Twitter @filmvillian





### *photography by Damini Rathore*

The Daily Object Project is an exploration of the very basic objects that are used by my family members. The process of approaching this was simple: I asked my grandparents, parents and my brother to each collect ten objects used by them on a daily basis.

**Damini Rathore** is a Graphic Designer and Photographer based in Jaipur. She has worked on built heritage documentation projects, volunteered at a vernacular architecture institute in Bir, Himachal & at an alternative education school in Ladakh before diversifying into visual arts. Tangible arts and crafts which involve use of hands are of special interest to Damini. The photographs she clicks stem from the surroundings she is in.

## *Each Object Has a Story to Tell*

From my grandfather's HMT watch, booked prior to buying, bought in the year 1961; to an old cassette player he still uses to listen to the radio in the evenings, bought at a fancy market in Calcutta around forty years ago - to the magnifying glass he uses to read the fine print on packaging with, and the torch that he keeps beside his pillow, used during his frequent walks to the tank to check the level of water.

From my grandmother's old mirror - also bought in Calcutta around forty-five years ago, parts of which are stuck together using tape on a few broken edges - that she uses everyday to draw a red bindi perfectly in the middle of her eyebrows.

From my father's T.V. remote clad with a new plastic cover, to the glasses he uses everyday to read books, watch a movie or while using the phone. A few objects from my mother's morning stroll in the garden: plucking a few champa and marigold flowers, and leaves from the Tulsi plant (holy basil), to the surma dani (kohl container) she and I sometimes share.

From my brother's cricket ball and his cricket gloves that he uses in the evenings to the book that he has only recently started to read.

All these objects come together - sometimes intermingling, sometimes far apart; some are vintage objects, some newly bought, some plucked from the garden, sometimes a source of a sound - to highlight certain qualities of each of their personalities and reflect the routine and lifestyle followed by each individual in my family.



## Of Empty Streets and Stolen Roses

*poem by Priyanka Sacheti*

Priyanka Sacheti is a writer and poet based in Bangalore, India. She grew up in the Sultanate of Oman and has previously lived in the United Kingdom and the United States. She has been published in many publications with a special focus on art, gender, diaspora, and identity. She's currently working on a poetry collection.

It is dusk: almost just, really.  
All day I sat motionless  
in a locked, gray, windowless room  
but now I am out in the streets,  
empty ones though,  
desolate beaches  
where no one hears  
the waves roar.  
No children play hide and seek,  
the dogs gaze mournfully  
from stone-still windows  
and even the birds have  
gone elsewhere to sing.  
The magnolia tree is celebrating  
or mourning, it is hard to tell:  
its petals are discarded poems  
on the empty floor.  
The striped roses soundlessly  
fall one by one on the cold concrete:  
they must have learned that trick  
from the snow.  
I steal the roses to bring home  
and they now lie on my desk,  
sleeping princesses in  
sepia striped gowns.  
There will be a time later,  
when they awaken  
and I will tell them stories of  
empty streets and songless skies  
and a weeping magnolia tree.  
But for now,  
I let them sleep,  
the very least I can do  
to preserve their sweet oblivion.  
A gift I wish I could give myself  
and everyone else  
but alas not.  
I trace the stripes on the petals:  
beneath my fingertips,  
they are a soft valley of peace.



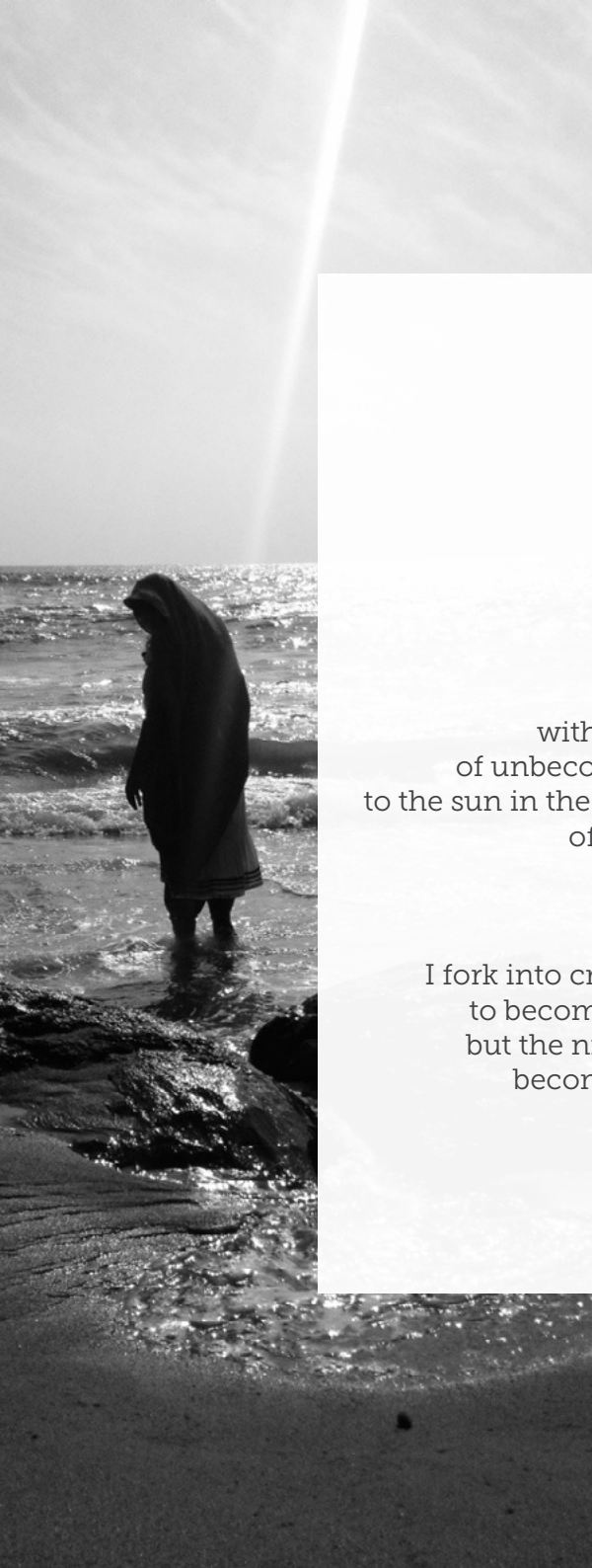
*Lonely Tree, Fintry Hills, Scotland*  
*artwork by Jane Cornwell ; Gouache paint on board*

Jane Cornwell is inspired by the beautiful landscapes of Scotland. Jane graduated with a BA(hons)Design from Glasgow School of Art, age 20. She has exhibited with the RSW at the National Gallery of Scotland, the SSA, Knock Castle Gallery, the Glasgow Group and many others. Her paintings are in private collections in Scotland, Ireland, India and the USA.



## Half Lights and Empty Bodies

*poem by Timi Sanni*



half light.  
a lonely silhouette lies  
within the four walls of this house  
of unbecoming, where my shadow calls  
to the sun in the voice of an echo, in the name  
of Papa. I once heard father say,  
that the absence of bodies  
is only a poverty of the flesh,  
so in the making of solitude,  
I fork into crossroads of thoughts, praying  
to become a melody, to become a petal  
but the night drapes me in darkness & I  
become an empty body / a lone star  
giving wrong coordinates  
in my delirium.

## How a Boy Becomes Undone

*poem by Timi Sanni*

like a loose knot / carrying his father's words  
like a gust of wind / between unfolding fists:  
son, bodies do not run / from bodies.  
Here, in Houdini's temple/ where the shadow  
of my lover / is the emptiness / of a hollow,  
I learn / that distance between two bodies /  
is an elegy / to the death that lives / within shards  
of a fractured heart / that a foreign touch / is a miracle  
when your world / is a six-foot cage / holding the darkness  
of a metal grave. I once owned a bird / which  
carried its broken wings/ like questions marks/ asking:  
If a distant love / cannot take two names, is absence loss /  
or longing? & How do you name a child born /  
of silence? I become undone / like a woman  
backstepping / into her past, searching /  
for eluding shapes / in the shadow of a memory.

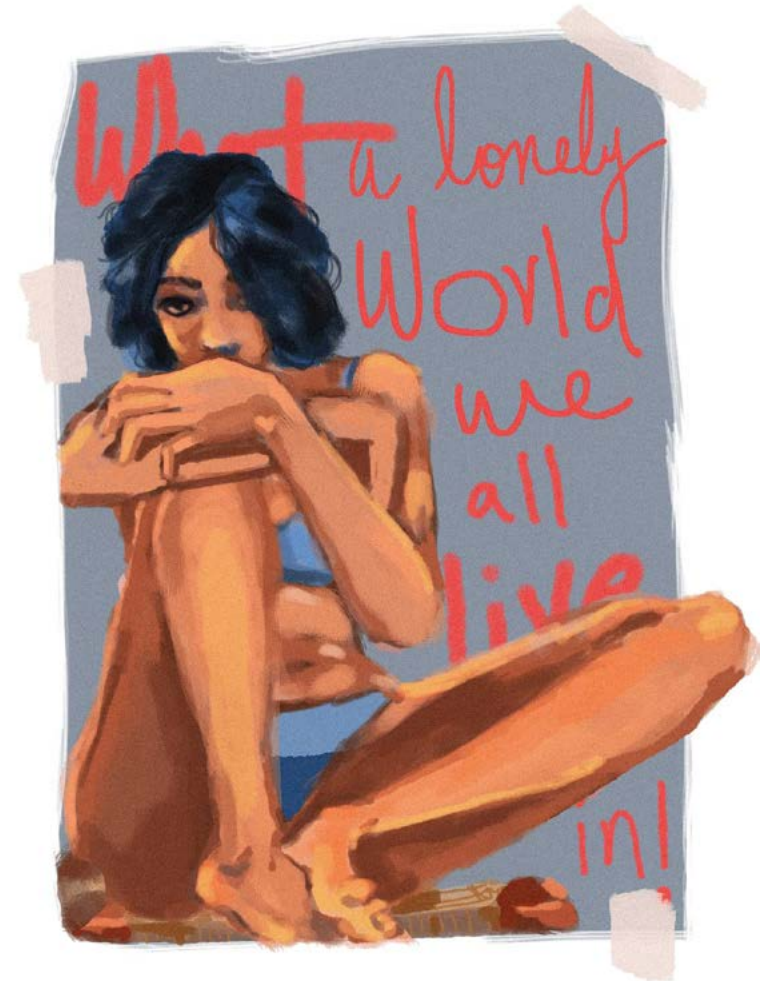
Timi Sanni is a Nigerian writer and literary enthusiast studying Biochemistry at Lagos State University, Nigeria. His works have appeared or are forthcoming in Radical Art Review, Writers Space Africa, Ethel Zine, Cypress, Rather Quiet and elsewhere. When not writing or studying, he is either painting or exploring new places. He is an editor for Kalopsia lit. Twitter: @timisanni.

## The Choir

*poem by Leona Malcom*

I took refuge from the garden  
 Sought silence, to be free  
 Yet my throat  
 It seemed  
 Had other tasks;  
     To sob  
     To gasp  
     To wrack me with laughs  
 At my core there is endless,  
 Bloody birdsong

**Leona Malcolm** is a writer of poetry and fiction, with an interest in trauma, recovery, and connection. Born and raised in the north of England, she's now based in London. Find her on twitter @leonalobster.



## Sublimation

*artwork by Bianca Joseph*

**Bianca** is a professional Artist and a Trainee Therapist, completing her undergraduate studies in Visual Arts and currently pursuing her masters in Counselling Psychology. She believes that self-expression plays a very important role in understanding the self and invariably has an affect on who you are in relation to others as well.

## *The 5th of August*

*poem by Naveen Kishore*

Her eyes like caves in which the wounded  
animal had dragged itself to die by the side  
of the poisoned lake

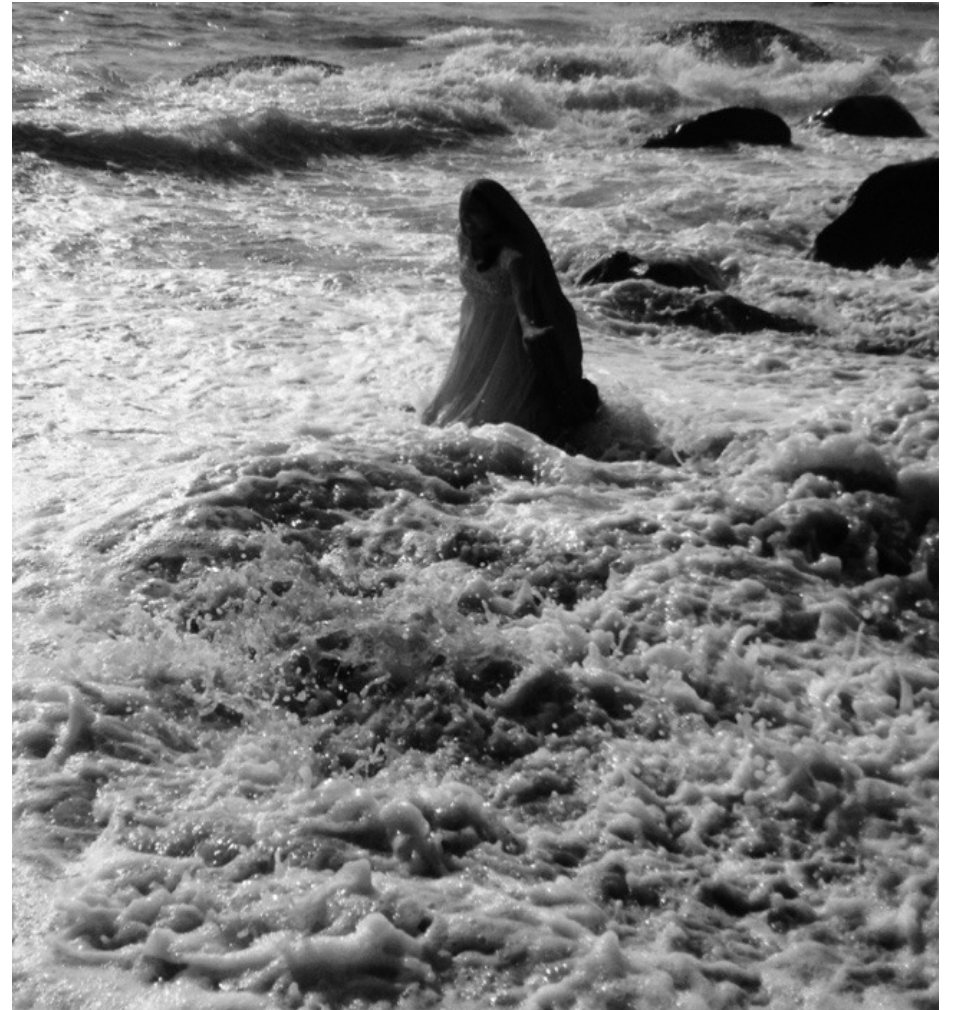
Grieving angels shrouded in shadows once  
hand stitched by the sun were no match for  
the wise woman's melancholy

Rose bushes pierced by thorns they had  
sired lay bleeding in the crimson moonlight  
even as the snow continued to fall

A solitary womb stood begging at the  
cross-roads braving the indifference of  
passers-by who walked past counting their  
beads in braille

The one-legged violinist strung his bow and  
struck a tune that no one stopped to listen or  
appreciate let alone pay for

She shook me awake wanting to know why I  
wept in my sleep



Naveen Kishore is a theatre lighting designer,  
photographer, and the publisher at Seagull Books.

To dwell.  
To linger upon.  
A word.  
A thing.  
A thing of beauty.  
Not overt.  
Or noticeable.  
Just. Beauty.  
The kind that accompanies silence.  
Silence that partners solitude.  
Not the lonely kind.  
The kind that is sought.  
And being sought is hard to find.  
Or pin down.  
The kind that is tactile.  
As in palpable.  
Akin to 'feeling'.  
That which has no sound.  
And.  
Is.  
Therefore.  
Often deafening in its desire to envelop.  
Surround.  
Sound born of lack.  
Lack of the audible.  
  
Pause.

*poem by Naveen Kishore*



தீர்மானம்

தனித்தேன் புகுவேன் ! உயிர்த்தேன் புகுவேன் !  
தேவன் தான் என அடித்தேன் புகுவேன் !  
பெண் புகுவேன் புகுவேன் தீர்த்தேன்  
தனித்தேன் புகுவேன் ! தனித்தேன் புகுவேன்

அன்புடன் பெண்புகு  
பெண்கள் புகு புகுபுகு

*Keep ourselves secluded! Keep ourselves alert!*  
*Keep ourselves secluded to free the world of the virus.*  
*Keep ourselves secluded to find joy in a new world free of worries.*  
TODAY, by Bagavat Singh

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