

DRIFT



Winter

2025

Chippewa Valley
Queer Poetry Guild

Dear Readers,

For decades, the queer body has been a site of spectacle and shame; sanitization and abjection. This publication—including the front and back covers—strives to address, explore, and defy the throughlines of censorship, tone policing, and objectification that our queer bodies and queer stories are subject to. With that said, it's not our goal to intentionally upset readers with our use of language, symbolism, and other ephemera. Please consider your own experiences when reading (or avoiding) our works.

Best wishes,

The Chippewa Valley Queer Poetry Guild

The Chippewa Valley Queer Poet's Guild presents DRIFT, a winter poetics zine published in autumn of 2025. Featuring 12 proudly queer local poets/artists from all over the Chippewa Valley area. Join us for a journey into winter and the entire scope of emotion which reign within. Here, you will be presented with a narrative of hibernation, frostbite, darkness, the warmth of a hearth and the raging against the dying of light; presented through a series of eclectic poems and bricollage. We hope you enjoy, and that this collection helps warm you through the darkest months of the year.

FREE PALESTINE

NO KINGS

PALESTINIAN LIBERATION IS QUEER LIBERATION IS HUMAN LIBERATION

Thank you to friends and family of the guild

Contents

3	Plant in October - VCA
4	The Chill - Hannah Rae
5	Picture of Health - Cj
6	Target Practice - Soleil
7 -8	want - lambda (CW: Allusions to coercion, nudity)
9-10	Bomb Squad - Andie Wynkoop
11	Feldspar - Soleil
12	Generational Love - Piper O'Brien (CW: Parental abuse)
13-16	Shining- Andie Wynkoop
17-18	Pansies - B. Erickson
19	Comfort Food - Tori Luka Leszewski
20	Hostile Architecture - Sylvia Kunst
21	Spilling Forgiveness out of my gut , Stitch me Back Up - Venus Beeth
22	coffee spill - lambda
23	Goddess' Love - Skylar
24	Jupiter my Undying Love - Venus Beeth
25-26	Muse - Sylvia Kunst
27	Reclamation - Piper O'Brien
28-30	Poet Biographies



These seeds are certified organically grown in accordance with the National Organic Standards and meet or exceed Federal germination requirements. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back.

PLANT IN OCTOBER

For best chance of germination

The scalpel leaves my body
A week later, you leave me
With reassurance from both it's done with love

I watch the things you left in my apartment fade into backdrop
Like the leaves on the trees out my window
Like an old favorite song that's been played too much

I wouldn't have the heart to tell you
But

(I'm still afraid to be alone)
(I'm still afraid to care)

My doctor tells me six weeks
And later you tell me ten weeks
Because, "wounds need time,"
No matter how much I yearn for them to scar

(I'm still afraid to heal)
(I'm still afraid that it'll be worth it)

And I miss you. I miss me. I miss feeling real.

I bury myself before the dirt freezes and pray the thaw will awaken me.

*Packed by Chippewa Valley Queer Poets
please do not try to contact me
Unreachable, WI 54701*

WORDS
BY VCA

The Chill

I can't recall when you let the draft in
perhaps it clung to the sole of your boot
or blew through as you slammed our front door

whooshBAM!

I tried not to think nothin' of it
(you know how the freeze warps the frame)
but try as I might to warm us both up
with wassail, and fresh oranges, and
your feet and your shoulders grew colder

games

and colder

'til at last

with a sigh

and a shrug

and a light

I sent this house up

into flames



WHITE WINE-
POACHED PEACH

"Natural is best."
Especially when it comes to
desserts.

The picture of health

The days have been blending together
into this smoothie of a week

A concoction meant to cure all wounds
Has meshed into a beverage of acid & toxins

You don't taste the vodka streaming down your pipes. You've become immune to the burn.
You no longer notice the sugar coating your esophagus. The taste of sour disguises any
saccharine entirely. You've become lost on the rips and tears of your tongue from tart
sweets. So torn to shreds, no milk or sparkling water could mend your buds of taste.

A slew of fruits and vegetables swirls in the mix. Enough to cover the flavors of impending
regret.

"I'd better drink up"

You tell yourself. As you gulp down each week. Sleep it off. Repeat.

Target Practice

God gave me a rock;
in one righteous motion,
I threw it,
as hard
and as fast as I could.

God gave me a rock.
I saw **Him** pick it up,
right over there.
He handed me a rock,
and told me where to aim.

I know it wasn't fast enough
to dent metal or chip paint,
but it hit its mark
and by **God**,
I hope it stung.

An Experience That Will

Leave You

UNADORNED

I want you. And I *will* have you.

I want you. And I *will* have you.

I want you. And I *will* have you.

A woman with long dark hair tied back is sitting on a wooden floor in a kitchen. She is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and red shorts. She is holding a large knife in her right hand and cutting into a green fruit held in her left hand. A small orange cat is sitting on the floor next to her, looking at her. The background shows kitchen cabinets, a sink, and various kitchen items hanging on the wall. The scene is lit with a warm, orange glow.

he will seize power and

do whatever he wants,

Just the Right Fit

for the cost of dying.

he knows nothing

about the crime

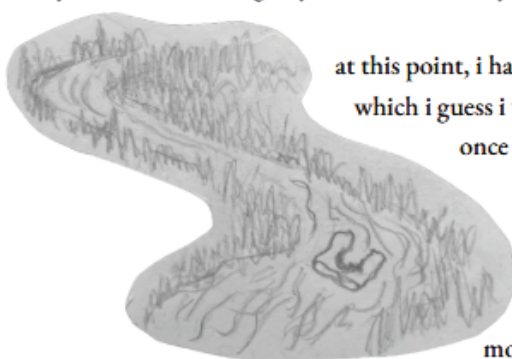
"Bomb Squad"

Hub. i guess i only bleed when i fuck now.

...

okay wow! once again, i have spoken too soon.

two years without a single cycle, and now thirty-five days bleeding nonstop.



fuck me, i guess.

at this point, i have accepted my criminally stained sheets,
which i guess i will wash all in a chilly stream

once this all passes,

just as i do my achy, tired body
each.

and every.

fucking.

morning.

my body; the iron-laden iron maiden.

...

the day my body started the *purge*, i have the sudden and intense urge
to cut all of the dead and old off of my hair.

resisted three days.

then, one cut, three more days, five poems, two songs, and one collage later,
i am a bit surprised to find that i am still shedding so much blood.

so much self.

what else is there to even undress?

Ha.

as it turns out,

twenty-two years of repressed, dishonored intuition, and two long years
driven clinical and numb and choked, but not in a hot way

— it has a way of building up.

...

the heavy shake takes time.

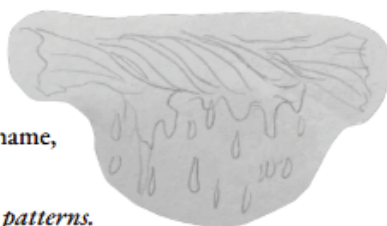
i heave in convulsions,

wringing out my shame,

stagnation,

distrust.

old patterns.



feels good to rip and claw at those ancient fucking succubi. *stubborn.*

i claw at them until i bleed, ironically — neurotic scraping and animal raking
like road rash over rabid road rash.

...

then, i am laying here. shredded, unarmored, suddenly feeling *everything*.
the cavern of grief,
and the searing of love,
and the wallowing, and joy,
and the trillions of lights
all flashing like static.

paralyzing.

well, i can still breathe, i guess.

so i lay here, and i feel the expansion,

all that i am, turning weightless combustible
vibrant and massive and flowing.



...

dark matter has sat heavy in me for so long. i feel it still –
wedged between my shoulder blades, oozing out my pores, still feeding on me,
wadded up in my gut like some small sad thing kicking my kidneys.
countdown ticking, i speak to no one while this body grips and
tenses.

Detonate me.

...

one would think you'd feel prepared to be gutted
if you held the scalpel. But as it turns out,
goring oneself of your most seemingly vital,
core beliefs,
no matter how rotten they are,
will send you straight into shock.

no matter what control you think you have.

contorted blue gray eyes freeze on the strip of blue gray sky through open windows
before i am gone.

...

I wake after what feels like a long long time
To the simple sounds of a bird call
And my upstairs neighbor's footsteps.
Still exhausted, weak, but more awake, I think.
Colors weirdly bright. Lungs weirdly open.
Gut eerily calm. Mind eerily quiet.

...

Hmm. I don't trust it. But I also don't mind it.



Feldspar, Rich In Iron, 82g.

I ate a stone today.
Not a sharp one, mind you,
I am no fool.

A smooth, red-black granite,
driven soft by the river near my home,
one that rushes only as thaw settles in the valley.

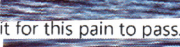
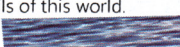
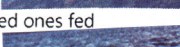
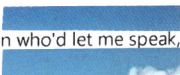
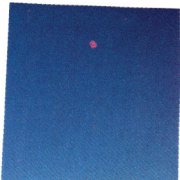
I confessed it to the first person who'd let me speak,
giddy and grinning,
as I struggled to swallow.


Caught halfway down, with shallow breath,
one could swear they saw it in my throat,
"I promise you, it's fine, I'm used to it."

No larger than my fist, I likened it to a heart,
bloody and slick,
I feared it'd taste like rust.

I try to be well, to keep my loved ones fed
and happy,
to not blame myself for the evils of this world.
I want to run away from it all.
The air feels heavy as of late, I struggle to breath,
I find my knee wants to give,
as I walk up the stairs to write this down.
I think I'll lay here,
for just a little while longer, wait for this pain to pass.
I'll catch up,
but my heart is pounding in my chest,
please,

I am of no mind to write, leave me to rest.





generational love

they say love hurts, well
my father must love me wholly
possessing a variety of tools
for molding me into a christ-like man

from the ping pong paddle with
the grip that clings to my skin
to the spoon with hole that stings
and makes my ears ring

they fill me with love and warmth
that generations have felt
as he forms me into a man
just like his father sculpted him

"THIS HURTS ME MORE THAN IT HURTS YOU"
he says as i tear up and beg for no more
as each whack shapes me closer to
his model of generational love

if only he'd hit me a little bit harder
spanked me a few times more
because a man i am not
and i've no son to pass down the love

"Shining"

It started with my posture.

That new bra was doing wonders for my back as well as my confidence.

You said there's just something different about you,

and it might have been the bra,

but it might've been the liberation,

the freedom,

the regulation she was seeing.

All glowing and grounded seven times over,

a line running through me.

...

I felt the way that my eyes lit up,

and my body expanded

and pulled towards you.

And eventually, time

settled back down,

and when it did,

i had feet.

I fuck hard with the way that she thinks

and considers

and speaks,

so often so seemingly sure of her words, i am

bewildered,

and people listen.

And she has worlds to speak on !

She has cracks that run deep enough that

light spills through,

(but also don't all of us queer?) through her

lips, deep red

and bright blue and bright green, a glacier splintering

revealing layers and layers beneath and i am

mesmerized
by her inner world, and
reminded of my own
with her kaleidoscope soul
unfurling click by click-
a real kind of strength,
a steady resilience,
a beauty that stocks museums.
And my god! those kind eyes sparking, i am
both running miles and standing entirely too still.
Please, someone lift me out of my skin.

I feel the turn and churn and wrench of my gut
when i think of her too much.
I have a full life to live, after all, and there are about a hundred other things for me to
be thinking about.

And yet.

Here I remain, fighting off intrusive thoughts of what her lips feel like even when I
logically know what they feel like, I've painted them, many times before, felt them
through a
brush, deep red,
twitching,
cracking,
inches
away.

I want to touch her face in a new way,
but maybe it's always felt like that and would just feel the same.
I want to touch her face in the same way then,
where the warmth and love I already feel for her radiates and aches through my pores
like always and i am
delicate with her because she is tough but she also has cracks that run deep enough
that light spills through.
Maybe the light makes her stronger in the end.

...

There are layers and folds to my care like a stack of
deep red silk sheets now toppling over, collapsing in on itself,
stacked too damn high by one too many heartfelt glances.
then, I am cold
and scared
and shaking
and the wrenching in my gut has become constant.

What is there left to do but write.

This cannot stay stagnant any longer.
I do not wish for her to be such a source of torture to me.
I care about her,
much more and much more sensibly
than this damned obsessive turmoil
for unabashed expression.

But then, when have our expressions ever been sorry.
We have loved through action and words and time,
long enough to see each other become more and more of our selves. I have
witnessed her spirit *naked* and *vulnerable*, and she has seen mine.
We have tended wounds.
Like, *fuck*!
There is just something so inherent about her;
I simply cannot seem to help from loving her in one thousand ways.

There must be a way to cope,
to hold all of my truths at once,
to find a moment of stillness while my waves crash and ice explodes.

...

I could have fallen asleep leaning on her shoulder, sitting on her couch.

When I had asked her if i could, she just said,

“yes of course, i

am

open,”

and my head hit down onto her poor deltoid

much harder and much faster than i had expected it to.

After a beat and two eyes shut, i sat there quietly,

breathing in and out with her,

feeling the pitch of her voice

hum

through

her and me

and although my arms did ache to wrap themselves round her,

to collide with all intensity because close enough might not have existed then,

i instead just breathed

and my mind went clear

and i was just grateful to be there with her,

so peacefully.

I sat and breathed a silent meditation.

I love you, my dear friend.

I love you, my dear friend.

I love you, my dear friend. and thank you.

And then,

after forever and no time at all,

I see her wall,

then her face,

and she is all still there,

comfortable

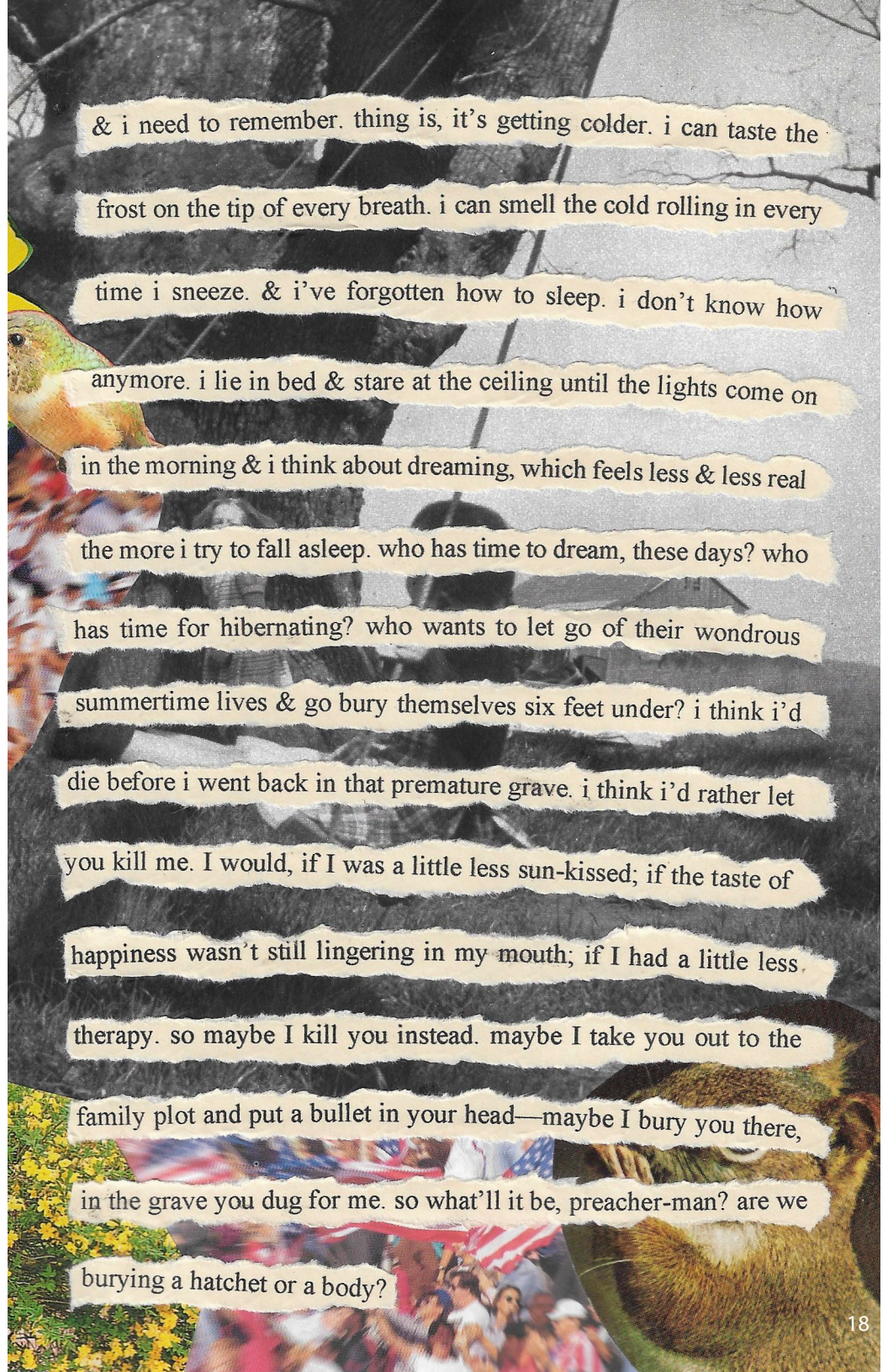
and shining

and rattling in her cackle.



pansies

you know, a friend of mine was telling me that ground squirrels & such gotta wake up, sometimes, in their dead-cold, dead-of-winter little burrows, because things that hibernate can't dream. & it's got me thinking about all sorts of things. like: how do the trees know when it's safe to regrow their leaves? how do the violets know when to peek up outta the ground in the spring? how do the birds know it's the right time to sing? & i wonder if they all know something i forgot back when the june was young & everyone thanked god for the warmer weather. some instinct i lost between all those sunburnt afternoons i spent putting my life back together with a hammer.



& i need to remember. thing is, it's getting colder. i can taste the
frost on the tip of every breath. i can smell the cold rolling in every
time i sneeze. & i've forgotten how to sleep. i don't know how
anymore. i lie in bed & stare at the ceiling until the lights come on
in the morning & i think about dreaming, which feels less & less real
the more i try to fall asleep. who has time to dream, these days? who
has time for hibernating? who wants to let go of their wondrous
summertime lives & go bury themselves six feet under? i think i'd
die before i went back in that premature grave. i think i'd rather let
you kill me. I would, if I was a little less sun-kissed; if the taste of
happiness wasn't still lingering in my mouth; if I had a little less
therapy. so maybe I kill you instead. maybe I take you out to the
family plot and put a bullet in your head—maybe I bury you there,
in the grave you dug for me. so what'll it be, preacher-man? are we
burying a hatchet or a body?

COMFORT FOOD

THIS IS HUGE

the warmth, stuffed and



slathered in creamy heat



packed with the good

stuff yum.

huge things with big impact



DIRECTIONS

1 Fill your



2 Grab that until

creamy.

3 enjoy with someone else!



but!



HOSTILE ARCHITECTURE

SHE SEES ME LIKE SHE SEES THE BIRDS.
BECKONING FROM THE GROUND HOPING I'LL PERCH
UPON HER SPANGLED SHOULDERS.
AND WHISPER SWEET BREATHY NONSENSE.
BUT SHE ALSO HOPES FOR it's okay
we'll make it someday... PATIENT AS THE HERON.
SHE STANDS STATUESQUE IN BLACK NIGHT SNOW

UNTIL SHE'S UP TO HER WRISTS IN ICE.
SHE DOESN'T REALIZE THAT SHE HAS WINGS TOO.
GREAT WHITE SILKEN DRAPES TUCKED NEAT
BENEATH SPENT MUSCLE AND SUMMER DRESSES.
NOT THAT SHE CAN'T BEAR TO CUT THEM OUT.
WITH HER RAZORS, KNIVES, DERMAPLANES
IRON-MAIDENED AGAINST HER FUR.

only for emergencies, SHE SAYS TO ME.
WHITE-KNUCKLING MY THIN ANKLE.
NO, BUT HOW COULD SHE REACH BEHIND HER SO,
ARMS BROKEN AT THE ELBOW INTO GROTESQUE
JAGGED FRACTURES LIKE NUCLEAR SEMIOTICS.
CLAWING FOR A TASTE OF SKY, SCREAMING NOTHING.
HOW COULD SHE WORK A LIMB SHE'S TWISTED

LIKE REBAR INTO A HANGMAN'S NOOSE?
HELP HER, CUT HER FREE, DO YOUR DUTY.
YOU SAY AS MY FEET TURN BLOOD-PURPLE.
BUT TALONS SHRED WORSE THAN RAZOR
AND MY BEAK ONLY GASPS RASP WHISPER.
HOW COULD I, HAWK THAT I AM, CARVE OUT
A PATH FOR HER ANGELIC WINGS?

Your wingspan, SHE SAYS TO ME, *is plenty vast*
for both of us, WHILE PREYBIRDS SCREAM THEIR SUITE
please, fly me away from my asbestos nest
of matted power lines and raw concrete
not too far, halfway to your peak
i'll scale the rest myself, and from the summit-

Venus-BEETLL

SPILLING FORGIVENESS OUT OF MY GUT
STITCH ME BACK UP ★

TOOK more
from me.

LOVING you

more than you
ever

considered

WHY would you ever Force your hand
down your own
THROAT

I never wanted this

and still-
this is
your
last
life.

KILLER
whale

I'LL BE WITH
YOU

UNTIL your LAST

RAM MOON

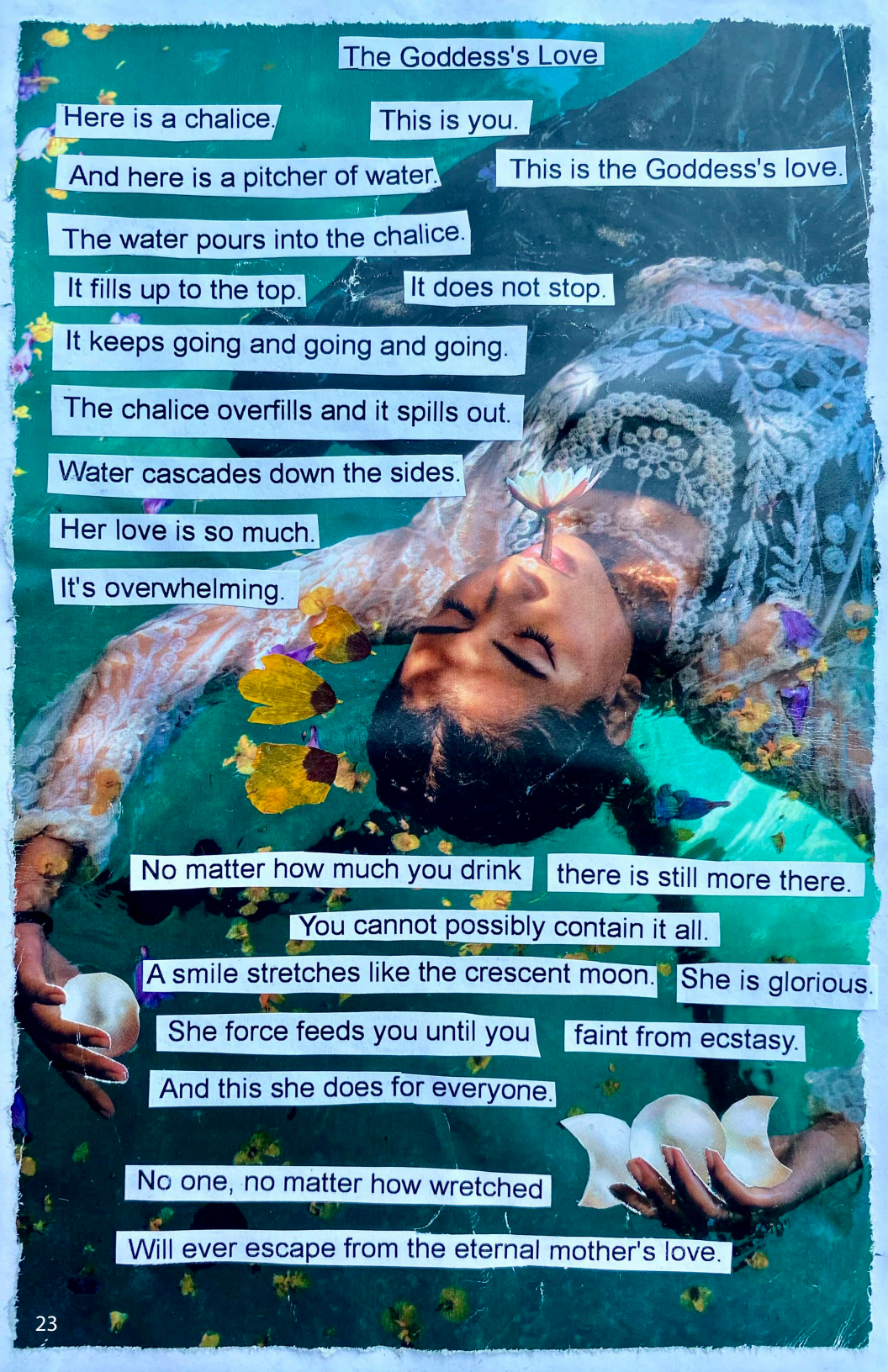


paper, permanently impetmanent

website, impermanently permanent

both can be ruined

by a coffee spill

A woman with dark hair and eyes closed lies on a green surface, possibly grass or water. She is wearing a white lace-trimmed garment. A pink lotus flower is balanced on her tongue. Yellow and purple flower petals are scattered around her. In the bottom right, a hand holds a white lotus flower.

The Goddess's Love

Here is a chalice.

This is you.

And here is a pitcher of water.

This is the Goddess's love.

The water pours into the chalice.

It fills up to the top.

It does not stop.

It keeps going and going and going.

The chalice overfills and it spills out.

Water cascades down the sides.

Her love is so much.

It's overwhelming.

No matter how much you drink there is still more there.

You cannot possibly contain it all.

A smile stretches like the crescent moon. She is glorious.

She force feeds you until you faint from ecstasy.

And this she does for everyone.

No one, no matter how wretched

Will ever escape from the eternal mother's love.

Jupiter, my undying love

i can try and convince myself

that the screws in my ceiling

holding tiles together are ^{★ ★ ★} twinkling: ^{★ ★ ★} start, delicately

placed upon a gross chalk-like sky. My back

plunges against an unsupported mattress-freshly used
my soul aches to be familiar with you again. I stare into squares

Further, and further. Sort of, like a prayer, without

Jupiter yet, for I wasn't looking. Death used to hold

me so sweetly, I was too taken by her

skeletal strength + powdered sugar.

I could try to Persuade myself



that the wood, on an unpainted, secret door, lies the
home of my friends: willingly transformed to stay always

hidden. My neck curls skull into my knees-molting fairy
MY THROAT WEEPS TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE FOREST

Foraging injuries worse than my own Godly fucking.

I worship Jupiter at this point, though I've only seen him

ONCE ★.

i have swallowed the
poisoned arrow,

digested the light,

and **PUKED OUT THE**

constellation: CHIRON.

my, oh my,
i've become
FULL. ²⁴

VENUS



BEETLE



Hail Andie! Sing with me!

■■■■

000

Deeper, I crawl inside to find
where poem connects to poet connects to subject,
artery or expanse of air all packed in the shape
of me, and I linger on the little hair twirls and scurry
through the thoughts of myself my lips, the shame
of your curiosity
I settle on a moment, from years ago, curled up.
windy fingers through our hair, near eve of my death and rebirth
that you bore personal witness to and became
catalyst to a thankless impossibility,

And all at once

I'm pulled back

through memory

out of her

off the page

past the audience

temporally

Landing in the moment I write this,

in the moment I read this

With an answer -

Reclamation

I used to squish myself down

bend myself over

take shape of something else like

clay molding into what others

wanted now I'm fired up

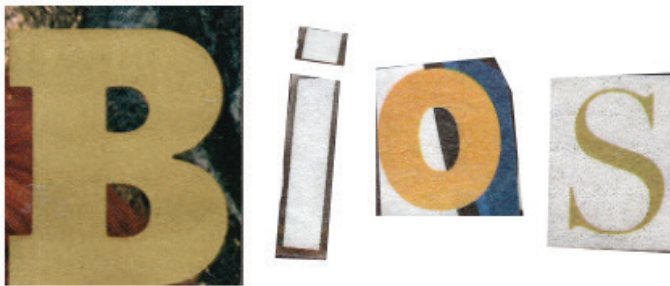
I won't do it again

It o

h e l p

HAVE a

Pigeon,
Be secure that you'll always be ours!
We'll always love you. Love is
unconditional.
happy



Andie Wynkoop (Poet contributor)

Andie (they/she) is a lover of all things art and community. They are one who finds meaning and potent inspiration from their every-day life, processing their experiences artistically like a pitcher of water– periodically pouring out words or song or art. They are grateful for the opportunity to share their poetry as a piece of something greater than its parts. That feeling, the one you can't quite place but feel nonetheless, perhaps it lives somewhere between the air and what we share together.

B. Erickson (Poet contributor, Organizer)

B. Erickson (he/she/they) is a web editor who loves to pick up new hobbies. She's tried gardening, fiber arts, cooking, hiking, and woodworking, and has managed to be perfectly average at everything. He's written poetry about a lot of things, but will always be fixated on his first, worst, and favorite love—the American Midwest.

Cj (Poet Contributor)

Cj (They/She) is currently a student majoring in English at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire. They enjoy writing, meditating, skateboarding, musical theatre and spending time outdoors. She has always had quite a fascination with the way patterns play into our everyday lives. When it comes to poetic style, Cj typically tries to implement this notion.

Emotional Tourism (Cover designer)

Hannah Rae (Poet Contributor, Cover designer, Organizer)

Hannah Rae (she/they) is a nonbinary multimedia artist from the Midwest. Their work references childhood nostalgia, identity exploration, and joy. Hannah's process is often alchemical - transforming discarded materials into meaningful, narrative aesthetics.

Lambda (Poet Contributor, Web Designer)

Lambda (any/all) is a practicing computer scientist, budding poet, and collector of many shiny special interests. They often take inspiration for their works from things around them, shaping and twisting words and concepts into vivid interpretations and kaleidoscopes of his past. she has immense appreciation for storytelling, spoken word, metaphors, and combinations.

Piper O'Brien (Poet Contributor)

Piper O'Brien (it/its) is a nonbinary transfem that has called the Chippewa Valley home in recent years. Its art is heavily influenced from its experiences growing up queer in Texas with parents that were leaders in the church and finding community in the punk scene at a young age.

Skylar (Poet Contributor) (She/her)

Soleil (Poet Contributor, Zine layout) (It/She)

Sylvia Kunst (Poet Contributor, Co-founder)

Sylvia Kunst (She/Her) is an amateur-everything, transfemme butch from smalltown Wisconsin. With interests in cooking, poetry, and gore galore, she is also one of the co-organizers of the poet's guild!

Tori Luka Leszewski (Poet Contributor)

Tori Luka Leszewski (they/he/she) is an activist, a lover of all things sweet, and a pet parent to one very spoiled cat. They can often be found volunteering throughout Wisconsin, listening to podcasts, & daydreaming. They haven't found their artistic style yet, but have been having fun experimenting & adore a work in progress <3

VCA (Poet Contributor) (It/its)

Venus Beetl (Poet Contributor, Co-founder)

Venus Beetl (he/they) is a non binary queer dog walker. They enjoy witting, making music, reading, has a strong passion for working with animals. Writing poetry for them is more than just a hobby, it's what keeps them alive , using the medium as a confessional of sorts.

For more info on the org scan the QR code





DRIET