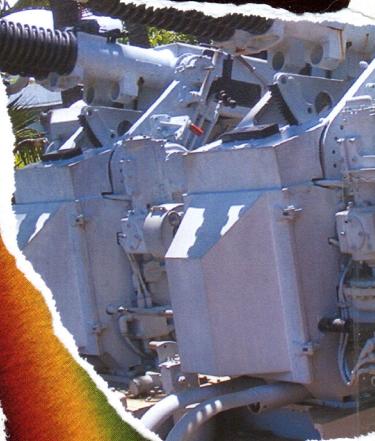
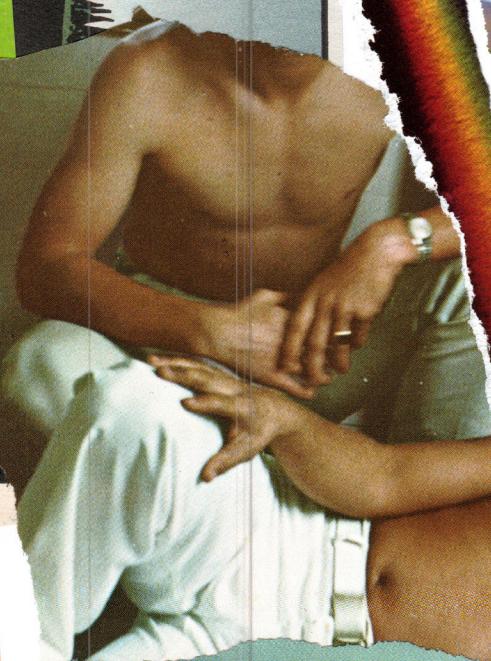


# DRIFT



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 bricolage. 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

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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*

Water



Sun



Days to Maturity

80-90

Plant Spacing After Thinning

18-24"

Days to Germination

6-10

Soil Temp. for Germination

70-85°

Planting Depth

1/4"

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 PEA

"Natural is best,  
Especially  
dessert."

"The picture of health

"A glass of Chardonnay  
wine adds a  
which is  
well."

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

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

You don't taste the vodka streaming down your pipes.  
You no longer notice the sugar coating your esophagus.  
You've become lost on the rips and tears of your tongue from tart  
saccharine entirely. You've become 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

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

**G**od gave me a rock.  
I saw **H**im pick it up,  
right over there.  
**H**e 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 **G**od,  
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.*



he will seize power and

do whatever he wants,

Just the Right Fit

for the cost of dying.

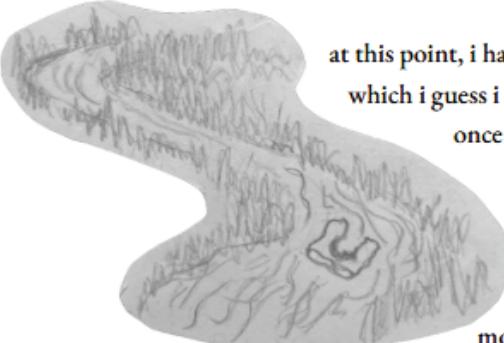
he knows nothing

about the crime

*Huh. 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.

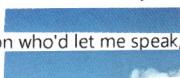
...  
Hmm. I don't trust it. But I also don't mind it.

**Feldspar, Rich In Iron, 82g.**

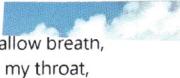


I ate a stone today.  
Not a sharp one, mind you,  
I am no fool.

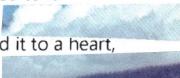
A smooth, red-black granite,  
driven soft by the river near my home,  
one that rushes only as thaw settles in the valley.



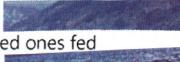
I confessed it to the first person who'd let me speak,  
giddy and grinning,  
as I struggled to swallow.



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.

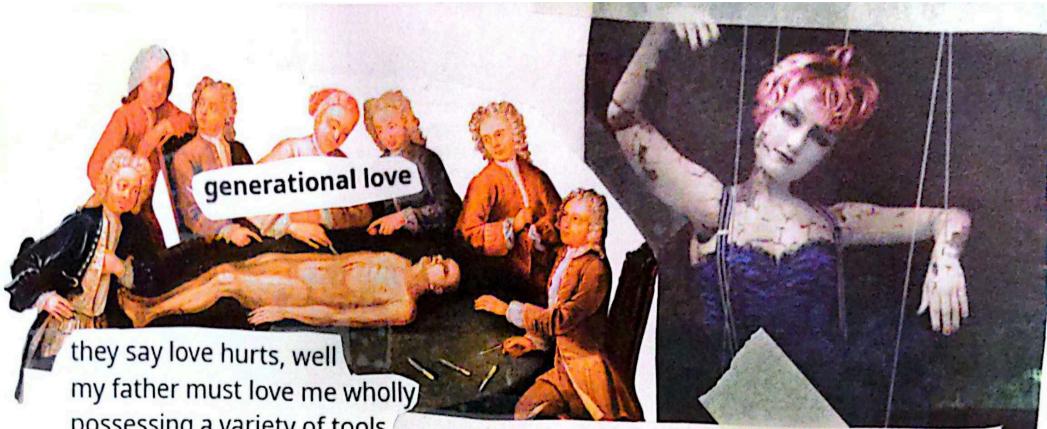
The air feels heavy as of late, I struggle to breath,  
I find my knee wants to give,  
as I walk up the stairs to write this down.

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.



Soleil



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 sparkling, 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-cola, 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

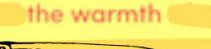
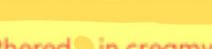
forgot back when the june was young & everyone thanked god for

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?

# 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 

3 creamy.  enjoy with  someone else! 



## 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 



LOVING YOU

TOOK more  
from me.

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.



I'LL BE WITH  
YOU

KILLER  
whale



UNTIL YOUR LAST

RAM MOON

Paper, permanently impermanent

website, impermanently permanent

both can be ruined

by a coffee spill

## 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

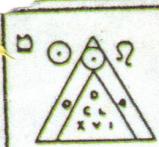
that the screws in my ceiling

holding tiles together are <sup>twinkling</sup> starf, 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 PUKE OUT THE

constellation: CHIRON.

My, oh my,  
I've become  
FULL.

## Muse

Hail Andie! Sing with me!

U wanna write a Poem about listening to a poem about u  
and sitting in the audience that is so moved by the poem  
but u forget & return to the idea, 4 months later? 5? U  
cram yr arm elbow deep into yr throat and pull up whatever  
u can find among the viscera and thesaurus abuse maybe  
there'll be a rough gem diamond in yr muck maybe u gag  
on the rock leaving them clogged in yr pipes for God knows  
how long till yr fingers fuckin wither off sticking there like icicles  
on a tongue or vice versa but doesn't spring always thaw  
winter u think so dig deeper dig deeper pull up the weeds  
and braid the dandelions till finally yr at yr limit

& up comes the sick

It's like a spell a sacred polymorphism  
Somewhere along between the ink stained hands scribing the notes and your throat  
where the form  
the flesh, the strings of the "you" weave, someplace in that nebula  
the poem changes into something besides Linguistic science,  
like thermodynamics, a subtle subduction and advection  
the rise and fall of cool and hot air  
guiding the smell of apples across the county-  
And the audience shivers

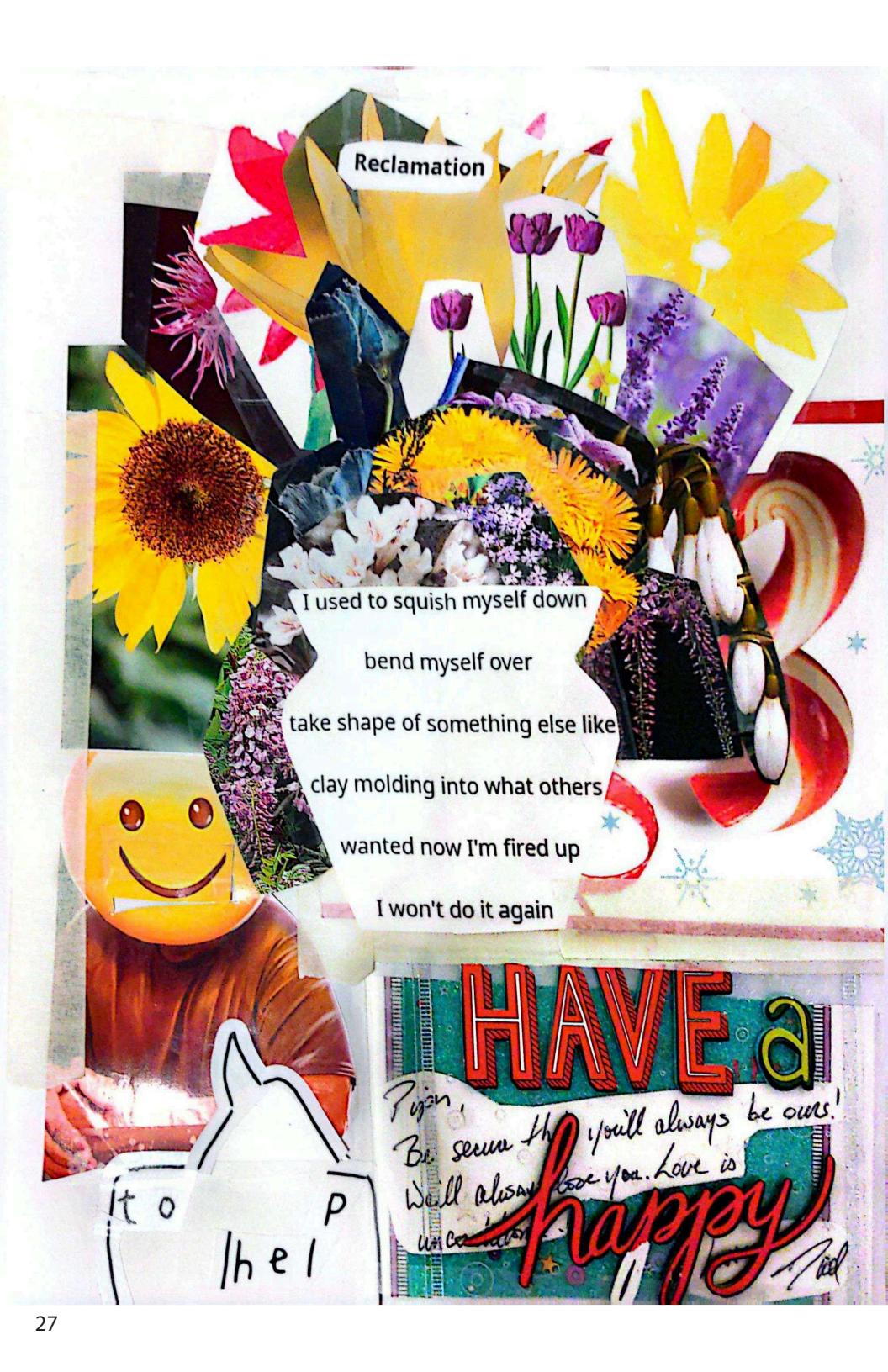
But you're not just a poem, my friend,  
You are poetry in how I always  
find myself with you,  
more to take in after each refrain, & you astonish  
me more each time, my friend, the way you rearrange  
yourself, dodecahedron rolled a dozen times  
with no repeats  
you many-faced rainbow, you favorite taste  
And the way you find me there, too  
with just as much to give.

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,

(There is still a framed photo on my shelf,  
a memorial to the very first time I felt beautiful,  
faceful of her makeup  
still smiling at me through layers of dust)

"  
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 -

Am I better off as a muse?  
No.



Reclamation

I used to squish myself down

bend myself over

take shape of something else like

clay molding into what others

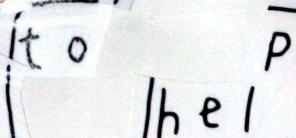
wanted now I'm fired up

I won't do it again



Happy

Ryan,  
Be sure that you'll always be ours!  
We'll always love you. Love is  
unconditional.



it o  
P  
he



## **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 Beetll (Poet Contributor, Co-founder)**

Venus Beetll (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





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