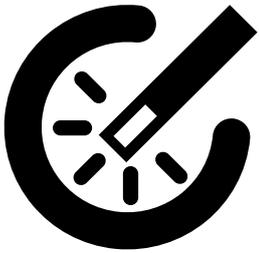


**JULY  
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**THANK YOU FOR SWALLOWING**

# THANK YOU FOR SWALLOWING VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 1 JULY 2016



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THANK YOU FOR SWALLOWING is based in Deptford, southeast London, on the same estate where SNIFFIN' GLUE was founded in 1976 by Mark Perry.

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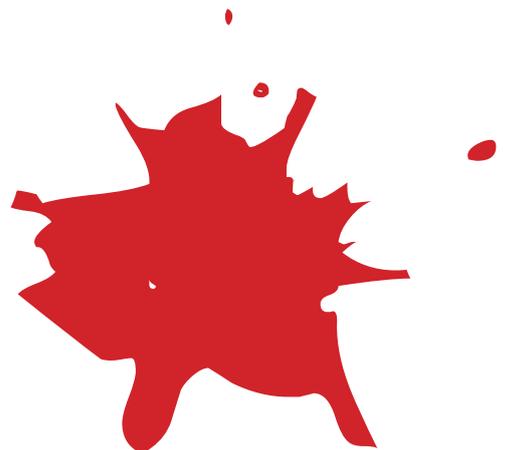
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# EILEEN MURPHY

## Fortress

When I got my first period  
I had just turned eleven,  
was hiking hundreds of steps  
of a stone fortress in Quebec  
on vacation with Grandma and Grandpa,  
my Mother's parents,  
blood trickling down my inner thigh,  
Mother not with us.

Grandma bought me tampons.  
I scrunched my bloody underpants  
into a nest of toilet paper.  
I had cramps, craved bed.  
I dared ask Grandma for aspirin.  
She was in my hotel room  
saying her rosary, trying to get me to  
kneel with her.  
*Too sick, Grandma, too sick.*

Later in the arctic summer night  
the phone, like a wild beast, rang out.  
It was still light, and I was awake.  
My father asked in a hearty voice  
how I was doing.  
Grandma must've squawked.  
I imagined my mother saying:  
*She's growing up too fast.*  
I'm sorry, Mom.  
I'll tell my period  
to go back into my  
uterus.  
We'll keep pretending you don't have  
a pubescent daughter.  
And thanks for the call.  
*I'm great.*

# CASEYRENEE LOPEZ

## living is waiting for death when yr a queer in america

im so fucking tired of dying / i shouldnt die / everyday / just to wake up /  
every morning

//

we bleed everyday / a paper cut here / a knife wound there / a spray of bullets  
across the body on  
sundays

//

my heart is sand in my chest / suffocating my vitals / absorbing liquid iron /  
rusting / my ribs are  
cracked / shards of stained glass / caked in dry blood

//

my lungs are empty bubbles / universes unto themselves / collapsed galaxies /  
cosmic dust /

wafting on background radiation

//

queer folks are dying / everyday / trans folks are dying / everyday / &  
im still living death / earth

bound / inextricably linked / a walking reminder of mortality / invisibly visible  
/ loudly silent /

an unsent letter sealed in blood

# JULIET COOK

## After the Lite Brite Died

1.

Sometimes I'm not in the mood for light hearted.  
Sometimes I'm not in the mood for light.  
Sometimes I'd rather sit by myself in the dark.

Sometimes I only want the Lite Brite colors to be dark  
red like a rare moon, red like the blood  
that will make you back away from this  
girl turning into a woman who will not  
keep her own red flow a secret anymore.

2.

When I was a little girl, I was scared of my own blood  
and anything getting close to it. I couldn't stop  
scratching mosquito bites and ruining my legs.  
My mom slapped me with a wooden spoon  
as punishment for making my girl legs ugly  
with my own undisciplined fingers.

My fingers just wouldn't hide themselves  
under the covers, just couldn't stop drawing  
more attention to the red bites all over my legs.  
I couldn't stop making myself even bloodier.  
Crying in bed as I stained another sheet  
even though I knew this would lead to more punishment.

3.

When I was a little girl, I was terrified of leeches,  
those big worm shapes with unspeaking mouths  
that secretly stuck to the flesh and sucked the blood out.  
My best friend said it could not be pulled out  
without fire. It used to be my own body, but now  
it belonged to the leech. He showed me the holes

in the ground where the bloodsuckers lived, just waiting.  
He told me about the medicinal leeches and how  
they could be placed inside my holes too.  
He whispered in my ear that my vagina was a trapdoor for a leech  
and that leech would expand as it filled itself up  
with more and more and more of my blood.

4.  
When I was a little girl, I was scared of ocean water  
because what if I drowned? Even if I learned to swim,  
I still couldn't see what lived underneath. Jaws  
and huge shark teeth and little mouths with sharp teeth.  
He said the piranhas would turn me into nothing  
but bones that broke and sank all the way down.

I kept sinking down and down and down, losing  
my own vision, losing my own blood flow.  
They all wanted to tell me it was my fault.  
They all want to tell me I'm twisting this  
but the way I feel is that  
they're the ones who kept twisting me  
around and around and around until I snapped.

5.  
I was scared of my own flesh and blood and what might be hiding  
inside me, what might be hiding in the dark recesses, just waiting.  
Until it finally contracted and broke its way out.

Until my mind soared into its own dark red blood bath.  
Until there was no more hiding my torrential uprising of blood.  
Until there was no more silencing my own contorted flow.  
I flung the lying snake across the room.  
I spit the hissing soap out of my mouth  
and allowed my own words to come out.

# MAGDALENA BALL

## Everything is Energy

The shore like memory  
breaks into grey  
your eyes always wavering

I see that blur  
the ink you bleed into my skin  
a sailboat on the water  
a plasma vortex  
vibrating into time

I held a shaking hand above my brow  
tried to see your body in that mist  
your voice came back as wind

I removed all clothes  
shivered in the stillness of dusk  
a discrete frequency

I know you've changed state  
like a lost blood sister  
here at the edge of light

I feel the electromagnetic field  
our hearts beating in sync

broken bodies flailing  
against the illusion of death.

# TANIS MACDONALD

## Little River

O little red river beside  
the big blue lake  
O stream O stain on the back of  
white shorts

*Red Rover Red Rover we call you over*

O leakage of luck, your own private Idunno  
O village of scarlet spillage      O your date a boy  
who sang red bum red bum did you sit in berries  
O little red river without a padded raft

*Red Rover Red Rover you've spilled all over*

O the look              you shot him  
(so much depends upon the red river  
glazed with pain, daughter  
beside the bright chicas)  
O curse him beside the big lake and sign  
in blood      as long as grass is green and red  
rivers run until they don't  
O ovaries become overies

*Red Rover Rover you are now O ver*

O very very O  
O change as a good as arrest  
O Icarus the boy who could  
not stand the heat  
O pos O neg  
O my stars and little river fishes

# GRACE ARENAS

## The First Condition

Nosebleed, erection—  
    it all has to go somewhere.  
The communists are decorating,  
    and euphemism is just poetry  
    that everybody likes.  
Hollow dresses hanging  
    in the closet. Unpicked  
    clovers in the yard—  
if this keeps up, can I never take  
    ballet lessons, and if I never  
    take ballets lessons, will I ever  
learn to French kiss? Matters  
    of course. Teething on air.  
    Talking of Fates' tapestry,  
what kind of string were they using?  
    Spiders webbing diamonds out,  
    a quilt, a cross stitch, woman's work.  
Smaller thimbles. Shredded nests.  
    It all has to go if this keeps up,  
    every clip-on earring.  
Why take up more space than this?  
    Thread me through tree branches,  
    a speck, a slip of a thing,  
        bird-narrow. As light. Aloft.

## Recovery Room

Tell me, as you scrawl with a Sharpie  
just left of my hip, will you be sure  
to mind your stitches? I would hate  
to be left leaking, a punctured tire,  
cracked mason jar of sea water.  
Would like to keep the majority  
of myself. I wonder even whether  
this suffocated ovary should have  
stayed in place; it may have held my  
conviction about the purpose of acorns  
or some other heart-deep thing.  
And now a biohazard. Strange how  
we can break down and shrivel in turn.  
How you harvested a walnut. You've  
cut so much now, told me afterwards  
that I lost barely any blood at all.  
And I want all the blood I can get,  
so I thank you. I want the plasma  
that makes my eyes twitch, the platelets  
that make me laugh when he sneezes.  
Careful with those forceps, they are pressing  
on my pragmatism. This room has a name  
I am inherently suspicious of. Oh,  
to remain inherent. Thank you for your  
time, consideration of my abdomen,  
for my iodine-stained skin. Someone isn't  
here, but then, what is except what I am?

# LAUREN BULLOCK

## Pork Chops

Earlier this week I told you I left  
five pounds of pork chops  
soaking in blood and thawed ice,  
a puddle of probable rot

the way the lovers before you  
sunk their bicuspid into want,  
no chewing while they waited out  
the growth of their manes.

How when I woke up to the raw  
stew I saw nothing to salvage,  
days' worth of bones and fat  
and food thrown away. Now

I do not cry in your arms  
in the kitchen for either waste;  
my mind has learned to gristle  
better than it brines. The reasons

are all forgettable, only  
that my heart was sad  
warm meat, and yours  
forgiving of thoughtless slaughter.

# E. KRISTIN ANDERSON

## Quartz glittering, ghostly

Alien to ashes, dusted hands,  
I've placed            years

down    on a trick,    flustered,  
hysterics in    a glass house.

I take instinct, that snarl,  
and suit the feel    to me,

a light out the final touch.

Right down    you send in  
whole violets, sugar

at the stoplight,    trouble  
at the sudden silence

that echoed up through years  
like blood itself:    Scrub,

scrub,  
scrub.

THIS IS AN ERASURE POEM. SOURCE MATERIAL: KING, STEPHEN. *CARRIE*.  
NEW YORK: ANCHOR, 2011. 22-26. PRINT.

# CONTRIBUTORS

**E. Kristin Anderson** is the author of seven chapbooks including *A Guide for the Practical Abductee* (Red Bird Chapbooks 2014), *PRAY, PRAY, PRAY: Poems I wrote to Prince in the middle of the night* (Porkbelly Press, 2015), *17 Days* (ELJ Publications); *Acoustic Battery Life* (ELJ Publications 2016), *Fire in the Sky* (Grey Book Press 2016), and *She Witnesses* (Dancing Girl Press, 2016). Her nonfiction anthology, *Dear Teen Me*, was published in October of 2012 by Zest Books and her next anthology, *HYSTERIA: Writing the Female Body*, is forthcoming from Lucky Bastard Press. She is a poetry editor for *Found Poetry Review* and also edits at Lucky Bastard. She blogs at [EKristinAnderson.com](http://EKristinAnderson.com).

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**Lauren Bullock** is a multi-racial writer, performer, and community organizer living in the DC metro area. Currently she serves as a staff writer for nerd culture web site *Black Nerd Problems* as well as poetry editor for literary magazine *FreezeRay Poetry*. When not working on poetry-related activities she enjoys fighting crime as a costumed vigilante.

**Juliet Cook's** poetry has appeared in a small multitude of magazines, including *Arsenic Lobster*, *Diode*, *FLAPPERHOUSE*, *Menacing Hedge* and *Reality Beach*. She is the author of numerous poetry chapbooks, including *POISONOUS BEAUTYSKULL LOLLIPOP* (Grey Book Press, 2013), *RED DEMOLITION* (Shirt Pocket Press, 2014), a collaboration with Robert Cole called *MUTANT NEURON CODEX SWARM* (Hyacinth Girl Press, 2015), and a collaboration with j/j hastain called *Dive Back Down* (Dancing Girl Press, 2015). Cook's first full-length poetry book, *Horrific Confection*, was published by BlazeVOX and her second full-length poetry book, *Malformed Confetti* is forthcoming from Crisis Chronicles Press. Find out more at [www.JulietCook.weebly.com](http://www.JulietCook.weebly.com).

**Caseyrenée Lopez** is a non-binary queerfemme atheist living in the Deep South. They write their pain as poems, and in addition to editing *Crab Fat Magazine*, run *TQ Review* and Damaged Goods Press in an effort to platform marginalised writers/artists, particularly queer and trans folks. Their first chapbook of poems, *QueerSexWords*, was published by Yellow Chair Press in April 2016. Follow them on Twitter @caseyreneelopez.

**Tanis MacDonald** is the author of three books of poetry, including *Rue the Day* (Turnstone Press). Recent poetry has appeared in *Iron Horse Review*, *Contemporary Verse 2*, *The Goose*, *Prairie Fire*, *PRISM International*, *Canthius*, and *Poetry is Dead* as well as the anthologies *My Cruel Invention* (Meerkat Press) and *Best Canadian Poetry 2015* (Tightrope Books).

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