

meddling.



INSIDE VOICE

And morticide.

And pride.

And living with intent to survive.

siding with chaos against good

ISSUE NO. 4

order.

Editor's Note

Hello Readers,

I can't believe this is Zine Issue No. 4 already. Inside Voice has been getting more publicity thanks to the contributors to this Zine and from other digital publishing platforms.

I continue to strive for stories, art, and photography about the body, mind, and food. Some of our worst and best feelings are found in these three themes.

Inside Voice has found another set of amazing creators who have shared their words and imagery.

I am grateful for their contributions; this is for them and the new readers who have followed Inside Voice's journey. I thank you and introduce these creative pieces.

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When it begins to sink—
When it pains me to believe
that something won't change even though you try,
And all your words mean nothing
all these words are tossed aside
—And any light I may have carried, drowns
It was a phase we all need to go through.
Some of us learn sooner, others later—
but we will break out into the other side of this.
Take it step by step—
for it's not easy walking on your own.
But it helps to know that the sun will rise
no matter what happens tonight.
—Except certain death.
Maybe it's my sadness hitting me
maybe I'm too afraid to move on.
—Or maybe it's the lights in front of me—
blinding me from what's real.
But don't worry about me.
I'll be fine. I promise.
I know you'll find your way in the end—
just breathe it all away
and know that nothing lasts forever.
—I should probably get off the road.
—Sooner yet, I should find my way back home.
But I'm not lost. Not anymore.
I'm just finding what's real;
And for now, this feels so right.
—The car's gonna hit me, isn't it?



They're exorcizing babies in another room at church. I can hear the crying, the prayers in Latin, while we all stand in rows in the main aisles, so I turn to the woman next to me and whisper: How could this be? Who exorcizes babies? How are they even possessed? She says it's just one of those quirks about this church, and she tosses me the cloth of a baby who's been recently exorcized—a cloth they wrap around newborns to hold them in tight while the demons escape, and she makes me touch it.

At the doctor's office, they ask about my diet, my exercise habits. I just want my period to stop. The nurse and doctor smile and tell me they have "ways" to make this happen, but I interrupt: I don't want more pills, and I don't want a procedure. Shouldn't it simply be time? Haven't I reached the age yet? When I go off the pills, the bleeding comes back, and shouldn't it be time for it to stop? The nurse and the doctor shrug their shoulders. "You're healthy," they say. "Healthy women bleed."

The woman at church insists I keep the cloth, and she shoves it in my purse without my permission. She won't let me leave until she sees me to my car, so there's no chance to throw it away. That cursed thing follows me all the way home, and I swear I can hear it sighing, mumbling, wailing. My midsection cramps at the intersection before the streetlamp near my house. The cramps have me doubled over when I enter the garage. I take that horrible thing to the backyard and burn it until the cramps go away, and the blood stops flowing in thick spots and thin lines.

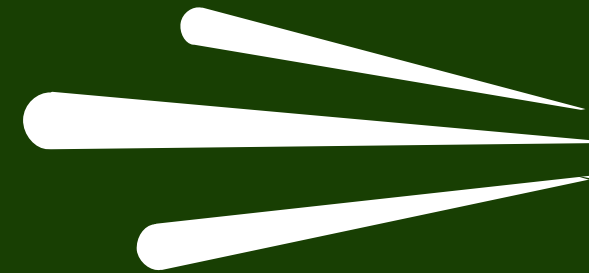
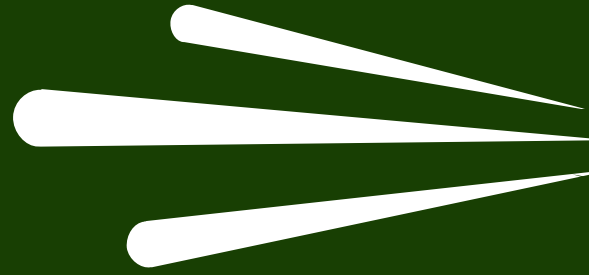
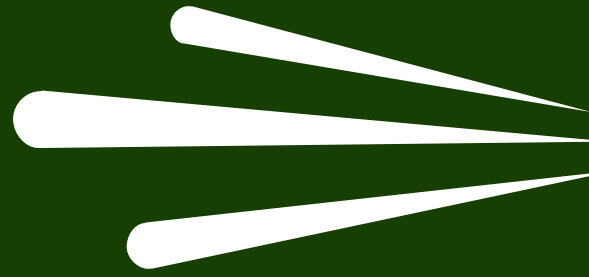
At the doctor's office, they ask about my diet, my exercise habits. These things have not changed, but the bleeding's stopped, I tell them with a smile. Maybe it was time. Maybe it was the cloth, which I don't mention. They're certainly not smiling, though, as they hand me a pamphlet about this time in my life and warn me about bone density, the health hazards for women who dry up, but I've never felt better. I feel it in my bones. I feel it in my blood, the last drop of it sent up in smoke.


Indeed, it would be wrong
To boldly say
I was not stirred by your rouge thong
Pegged on the washing line
The other day.

Last week, at the bazaar,
We shared a glance
For quite a while, though from afar
(It was deliberate
and not by chance).

Our windows are too close;
I can see you
When you brush that mane, stretch,
repose,
Or oil your skin. I think
You know it too.

One noon, you saw me go
By—let me in
For tea. Your spouse was at a show.
Since then, we have both borne
That damning sin.

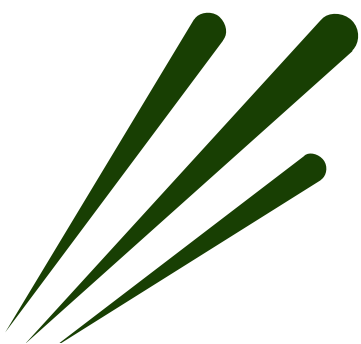




Excessively nourished. Abundantly
ablaze. Shadows on the drum
and voice. Floral flames approaching
summertime, the warmth of which
shatters bricks, simmers blood
and tests the body. Long hair,
the spirit of bottles thrown at
injustice, confusion thick in the air
like honey, money irrelevant, a year
already marked by revolution,
change coming quickly, my own heart and
mind both sleepy and quickening,
more firewood for the nighttime. I
can't believe he's dead. I never even
got the chance to meet him. What
a day. What a lifetime. The trees
above are slightly scorched. Creation
of life itself. To behold and be held.
Fenceposts consumed by glorious process.
Sufficiently stuffed. Starved for attention.

It's going to be a long, hot summer.

What would a 21st century renaissance look like?
Would we drink mellow wine while gazing at the
smoggy night sky?
Scroll through ebook lists while on a work drive?
Splash paint and put glitter on breathless bodies
to make them bright?
Make poetry about the smoke issuing from the
array of exhaust pipes?
String music on starving lips' pathetic cries?
What would a 21st century renaissance look like
when devastation and decay is scattered,
untouched and ripe?



Finding a home for the bitterest of words--if I start screaming I won't stop. Automaton of haphazard neural impulse, disorganized synaptic feedback, cranial webwork of the worst kind, the code won't run no matter what you tell it to do. The pill takes you, in a haze of zapped brains and heavy weightlessness. It's you that keeps running. Cutting myself in half, I scry prophecy from the entrails, within me as rot blights an apple, crisp and vicious.

No matter the cost, I'll pay with a pound of flesh. Roaming headless through the bamboo, I'll stop to whimper by a cool stone. A young buck pauses, shoots a glance, then goes on his way.

The crescent moon wants me to die under her watchful eyes. I relent and let her star take me. Parched and perspiring, I pick her poison, drunk from it all.

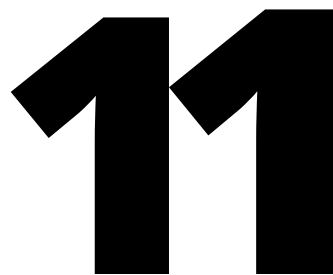
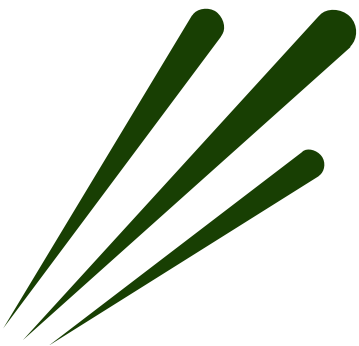
Truncated faith, sickly belief in the sweetness of things, there's always been glass in the sugar bowl. Have you ever considered that it might not be as you have made it to be? That your best action might also be your worst?

The one fretful tether. The joyless remainder, the corporeal guilt that sinks all metaphysical desire--this low consequence.

I prick my fingers on the wish's edge, and burn my hands in the comet's tail. There will be nothing more that can sully them.



It was midday when by the kitchen stove,
Your senseless body lay upon the floor.
"Her water broke!", Pa cried, took you and drove—
I gaped bewildered; I was only four.
At first, I dratted Pa: "Why didn't he take
Me too for Ma would say in every strife,
A simple smile from me would soothe her ache
As I was God's own angel in her life?"
I told myself what any child would say:
A childly consolation, "All is fine.",
For she had said, "Today's a special day.
I'm cooking saag."— the favoured dish of mine;
A knock at door—Pa stood, but where was she?
Went to the Lord, but left a sis for me.



one night, asleep in my tent, I dreamt of two birds
one a crow, the other a dove
it was a dream of archetypes
I had to kill the crow
I had to get out all the badness

each time I had a clear shot though, the dove
was also in my line of sight
and so, I did it
I killed them both. one shot

when I woke up suddenly
I could feel the dove beneath my feet
in the bottom of my sleeping bag

I think that dream almost killed me
almost broke my heart
for good

