

# *Molecule*

*~ a tiny lit mag ~*



Issue 6

Spring 2022

# *Molecule*

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Issue 6

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# SHELL BIRD

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## Act One



## Streams

Streams lead to streams which lead to other streams.

Somewhere you drowned and faded from your story, floating wherever the waters led, nothing but a shadow.



## Once a poet, always a poet

Told my boyfriend the other night that I'm following Hemingway's advice: *Write drunk, edit sober*. He cocked his eyebrow at me, looking down at the empty beer bottle as though it was the barrel of the shotgun.





**I hack into my ex-wife's  
instagram, and find**

A man—no, a giant—a terrifying *monolith* of beauty. Radioactively handsome—a Rodin masterpiece dipped in the genetically mutated sodium pools of the exclusion zone and brought to life with a post-Chernobyl glow.

...I continue to wish her well.



## Destination Wedding

The country of Nauru, to boost tourism, changed its laws so someone could marry a mannequin or doll. When a pudgy, mustachioed man, holding a large package under his arm, returned to America, the customs officer—after thoroughly reviewing the paperwork—tipped his hat to the new missus.



## Outta Here

He played outfield in Triple A. She never missed a home game. Sitting in his truck, under the stars, they planned their future. Marriage. Three kids. House on the beach. Then he got called up to the Majors. Batted .397. She texted *I miss you*. He didn't reply.



## **Zelda and Scott**

Zelda and Scott's lives were fire and ice. So were their deaths. He died writing, leaning up against a refrigerator. She died screaming in an asylum fire. Their love never softened, tempered by the freeze and the flame.



MJ BUJOLD

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**Don't Bite off More...**



## Love

I know we said forever, but I didn't think you'd  
come back from the dead.



## **Birdbrained**

How do I communicate to the birds that they can use my new bird feeder? I know it's not much, but if I can figure out taxes I think they can figure out how to stick their beaks in a plastic tube. Any cardinals reading this please respond.



## **Controversial opinion...**

But swans are no more graceful than ducks. In fact they're really just much bigger, white ducks. They stick their ass up to get algae just like any other water bird. And then swish their tail feather. Which, I'll admit, is cute. But let's cut the charade.





## Exotic dish

"This Dhindo, a dish from Nepal, tastes good today. You have transcended yourself, Padma!" he said, giving me the first inkling of a smile in months. I smiled back at my husband and wondered how I had never come across that rat-kill could taste good in my research.



DALLAS CROW

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## Little Visitor



## **I Was Not Distracted...**

by the hissing and banging of the steam heat radiators in my eight-grade classroom.

But at 2:00 P.M. every afternoon, a flock of pigeons appeared outside my classroom window. They repeatedly flew in circles. I did not care about my teacher's lessons, and neither did they.



## Headbang

Last week, a woodpecker really went to town on that tree. Just banged and banged and banged. I was watching the debate, and I kept darting back and forth between the bird and the TV. Him slamming his whole head into cedar, and me watching politicians.

Lucky him.



## Ahoy

Bill Googled “longshoreman jobs.” Nothing turned up, as he expected, but it never hurt to look. He put on his turtleneck sweater, peacoat, and watch cap, and rode his bike to the accounting firm.



## A Place Called Home

Home is the place where you know that the water from the sink will be too hot if the shower is on.



## Pillow Talk

As lovers they were done but as parents they shared a future, not to mention a mutual reluctance to support separate households, so confined their quarrels to the bedroom once the kids were asleep, exchanging their bitter grievances in humid whispers, and soon were having sex again.



## A Pleasant Visit

Welcome! I'm so glad you came! Please sit. How do you take your tea? Yes, it is oddly piquant. That noise? An old house like this, only the pipes. Rattling from the basement? Perhaps a trapped animal. Try a scone. A muffled scream!? What imagination! More tea?





DORIANE FEINSTEIN

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## Flutterby



**Book Review:**  
***Banana Bread: Mandarin  
Pandemic Diary/***  
**J.D. Scrimgeour/**  
**Nixes Mate/\$18.00/80 pgs.**

*Banana Bread* is a collection of tasty poems, a delicate chronicle that brings us consolation. Playing with writing in Chinese and English, the luminous lines work their alchemy, reimagining mundane life during the pandemic. “Change will come! / We will all eat banana bread, / and we will be happy.”



**Interview  
with Cynthia Bargar**

**Q:** Tell me about *Sleeping in the Dead Girl's Room*.

**A:** My mother, pregnant with me when my aunt killed herself, gave me her name. My family never mentioned her. These poems interrogate my life in relation to her shadow. They're for women and girls whose stories were buried with them.



## Interview with David Kirby

**Q:** Quality control process?

**A:** I'll lay a poem on Barbara. If I've done my job, there'll be a silence after.

**Q:** Importance of laughter?

**A:** Wit equals intelligence.

**Q:** Any unused material?

**A:** I'm a dedicated recycler; I'll use something from a ten-year-old file. That said, some things just lose their energy.



DORIANE FEINSTEIN

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## I play too



Никто не говорит.  
Снаружи такое голубое небо.  
Окно почти открыто.  
Дует небольшой ветерок.  
Ребенок быстро проезжает  
по дороге на велосипеде.  
Мои часы идут назад.  
облако касается стекла окна, прежде чем уйти.  
А по радио кто-то меланхоличным голосом поет.



---

Nobody speaks.  
The sky is so blue outside.  
The window is almost open.  
A small breeze is blowing.  
A child quickly rides along the road on a bicycle.  
My clock is running backwards.  
The cloud touches the glass of the window before  
    leaving.  
And on the radio someone sings in a melancholic  
voice.



LARISSA MONIQUE HAUCK

---





## Cave Dwellers

A: Look. Me made hot-hot bright. Call it “fire.”

B: (*Smokes; coughs.*) No good. Bad.

A: Made more. Circle go round. Call it “wheel.”

B: (*Drives car; crashes.*) No good. Bad.

A: Made thing three. 'Puter in hand. Call it...

“iPhone.”

B: No good. Bad, bad!! (*Bonks A on head.*)



## To Russia

*Snowden and Brennan stand with locked eyes. They begin to viciously fight. Finally, hardly breathing, they stop.*

SNOWDEN

It's natural instinct. You better fight it.

*Brennan pulls a gun.*

BRENNAN

Mr. Snowden, you are under arrest.

*Beat.*

SNOWDEN

You had a gun this whole time?

*Blackout.*



## Unmasked

ROBBER

Put money into sack!

TELLER

Sorry, I can't serve you without a mask.

ROBBER

Happy now? ... Now put money into sack!

TELLER

I can't understand you. What monkey?

ROBBER

Put money in sack!

TELLER

What? Monkey in sock?

ROBBER

I give up! (Exits)

TELLER

Masks save lives!



## Sub-Zero

It may wish us no harm  
but there's blood on the snow.



**Love Story № 19**

Nabokov euthanized butterflies

netted them

and *fondled their details*

he loved them so much

he ate them!

savored the taste –

*almonds*

*and green cheese*



PATRICK MCEVOY

---

## Surface Rising



## Innocence

My neighbor  
comes from Beirut.  
When a woodpecker  
knocks on a branch  
of a dead cottonwood,  
he ducks.



## Last Ditch

Poe's generation  
feared

being buried  
alive.

Coffins  
had alarms.

"Dig me up,"  
a bell would say.

After a while,  
it would stop.





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## Under the Sea

It's simple,  
living

down there:  
no jobs,

no taxes,  
no government forms.

And all  
you're asked to do

is keep swimming  
until you can't.



**urban dwellings**

a train blows

red smoke

a girl sits

on a car bumper waving

a shadow of leaves leans

over a shopping cart standing



## **monday morning in middletown**

moments:

mournful meows

midwinter madness

missing motivation

medical marijuana

mind minutia, mulling mistakes

magic made mundane

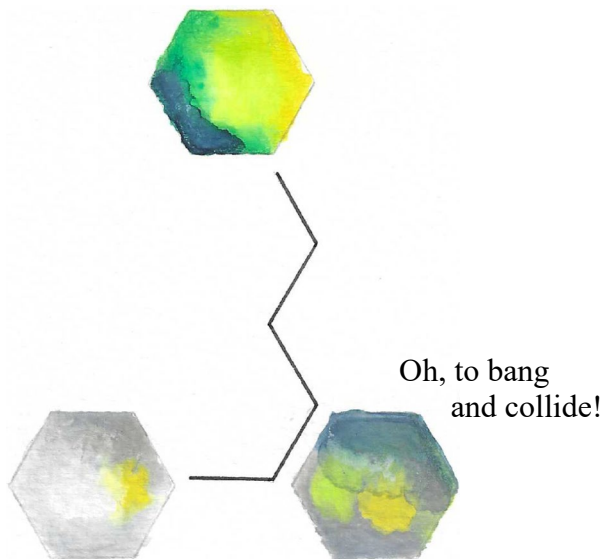
midlife masturbation



*from* Exhibits in the Museum  
of Endangered Experiences

*Exhibit 1.*

To smack and thwack—  
to thump and tap and jolt and  
shake—oh, to flounce bounce, and encounter!



I never thought I'd  
miss the brush of a  
stranger's body against  
mine on a crowded  
sidewalk.



## A Music Lover on Commuting

Car-driven soloist  
Uphill, around the bend  
Engine backs her up  
Accompaniment, mellow blues  
Rap, pop, something in between  
Entertainment for hours.  
Dread loiters deep.  
A cure for boredom  
for an hour's drive.  
Hours of music, uninterrupted  
Concert of one, or of none.



## Haiku Hagiography

Little is known of  
the life of Saint Uvula.  
He lived in a cave.



**Imagining Calm  
as a Baby, in June**

Sit with this feeling:  
like I'm on a porch, holding  
a sleeping baby,  
far away sounds of  
cars, lawn mowers, singing birds,  
little snores and warmth  
in my arms.



## Sisyphus Celebrates the Holidays

Father gives boulders—  
not for punishment,  
just driving home the point  
that everybody suffers

The cousins get  
new toys too: long-burning  
matches for Prometheus, and a dozen  
mirrored boxes for Pandora

Nearby the matriarch is stewing  
fruit. *Spoiled rotten*,  
she explains

to anybody who will listen.





SHERRY MORRIS

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## Rain Drops



## World War

*for my late dad*

What could make  
a man of 73  
shake and cry  
so violently  
about a summer  
spent in Europe  
in 1943?



## I Tried to Write About Grief

and found the dead  
still living                      still watching

they were envious  
    of the apple    skin stuck  
between my teeth  
the shallow breaths  
the fact that my hands  
                    could still      be stopped



## Wide Leg Pants

Enter with the wind,

sails full.

Leave a wake

of yourself.



**All I Got  
Was This Lousy T-Shirt**

the world  
was large  
then time-washed,

shrunken

small  
inside and out.

i remember

flavor,  
dimensions,  
window light,  
feeling,



---

so

there is  
contentment  
in the end.



**March 2nd, 70°**

whistle-smile warmth

opening over snow drifts

t-shirt Frisbee-topped students

orange school busses speeding homeward

cellared bicycles climbing bulkhead steps

skateboard-kicking teens carving up Main Street

inside, those of us clocked

and tied in offices

feel sap rising

our smiles stretching out like limbs



LINDSEY PUCCI

---

## Jam Tarts





## Rage

Mother puts Mars on my plate.  
It's full and warm and recently  
I have been overwhelmingly cold.  
Down my throat the fires go,  
the men at war slash their swords in my stomach.  
I pick out the bones stuck in my teeth.  
They come out bloody,  
and I grin.



## Two Types of Cannibals

There are two types of cannibals:

Exocannibals only eat strangers.

Indocannibals only eat people they know.

When dealing with others, it is best  
to know which type they are.

When dealing with yourself,  
it is best to know which type you are.



## Composure

It's knowing how to make  
the smallest ripples  
when your head goes  
into the water  
and the fewest bubbles  
when they hold you down.



## The Affair, Z

You fold your lower lip  
Up under your nose  
As tho it were a linen napkin  
And the dinner's over.



## **mulberries**

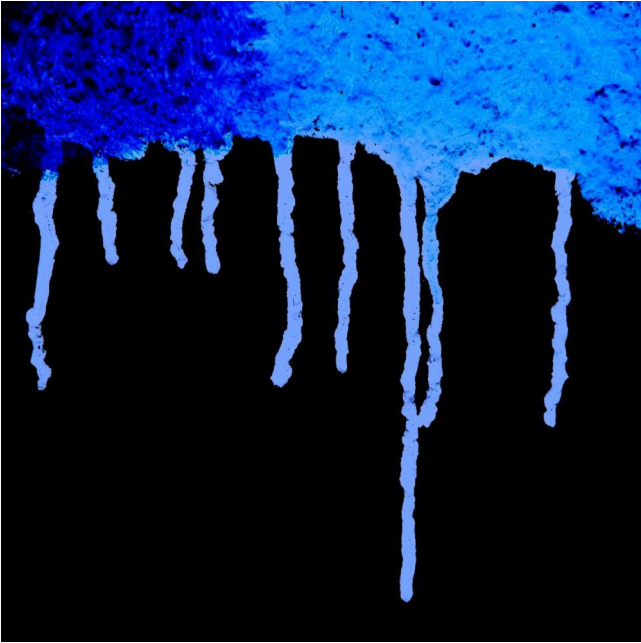
a slew of mulberries  
tiny suicides  
so appealing on the sidewalk  
and so unsure



FABIO SASSI

---

## Dripping Cloud



**Today A Person Spoke To Me.  
It Was A Museum Concierge,  
Who Said,**

Go past the cat-faced goddess Sekhmet, down  
the red carpeted stairs. You'll pass Anubis' crypt and  
a severed-head statue. Beyond that, a tiger is  
clutching an ibex in its fangs. The restroom is there.

Enjoy your visit.



## **Heads of the Class**

When they have not  
done the reading,  
the tops of their heads  
replace their faces.





## Blue Daisy

Earth is a blue daisy  
in a cement crack  
of deep space.

It would be a shame  
to kill it—  
even for money.



**Fiddleheadkiller  
Oathsummer Ode**

*for Dr. Sick*

Tell the hawk a funny story  
As she carries you aloft  
Until her laughter shakes you free

Bend the bough over the pond with your weight  
Until your whiskers brush the water  
Your golden lover rises  
To steal the nut from your teeth



## Zooming Life

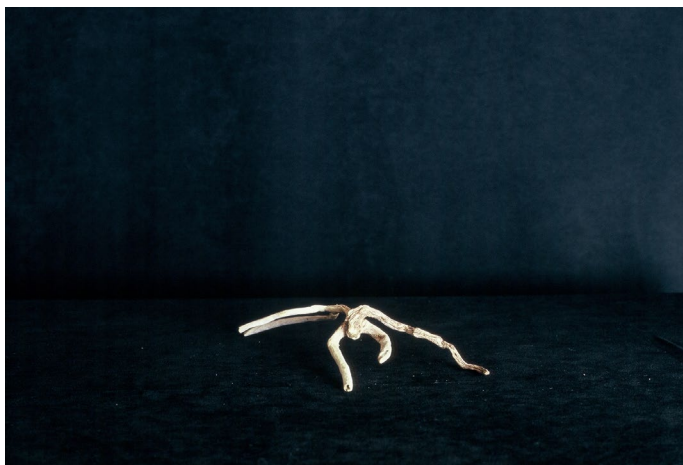
The screen  
makes you small,  
like a  
TV star.



RICHARD WOLLMAN

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## Girl Swimming



**Adebisi Amori** is a creative from Ibadan, Nigeria. You can follow her work on Instagram @theadebisiamori.

**Maggie Azarkh** is an avid daydreamer who needs to come back to Earth soon, or her homemade blueberry muffins will burn in the oven.

**Cynthia Bargar**, author of *Sleeping in the Dead Girl's Room*, is associate poetry editor at *Pangyrus LitMag*. She lives in Provincetown, MA.

**Shell Bird** is Canadian by birth, a businessperson by necessity, and a writer and mixed media artist by discretion.

**Karina Borowicz** has authored three poetry collections: *Rosetta*, *Proof*, and *The Bees Are Waiting*. Visit her at [karinaborowicz.com](http://karinaborowicz.com).

**Mary Buchinger** is the author of */ klavdz /* (2021) and president of the New England Poetry Club. [marybuchinger.com](http://marybuchinger.com).

**MJ Bujold** is an artist and writer living and working in a tiny apartment in Beverly, MA.

A native of Florida, **Chris Bullard** now lives in Philadelphia, PA. He has published ten books of poetry and may yet publish more.

**Jeff Burt** defends the art of a single shoe on a telephone wire and the usage of galosh.



**Robin Cantwell** is a recent graduate of Faber & Faber Writing Academy. His prose is regularly featured in *Pure Slush*. He lives in London.

**Eileen Cleary** is the author of *2 a.m with Keats* and *Child Ward of the Commonwealth*, and founder of *Lily Poetry Review*. [eileenclearypoet.com](http://eileenclearypoet.com).

**Will Cordeiro** is the author of *Trap Street* (Able Muse) and coauthor of *Experimental Writing: A Writer's Guide and Anthology*, forthcoming from Bloomsbury.

**Lori Cramer's** 50-word stories have appeared in *Blink-Ink*, *50-Word Stories*, *MoonPark Review*, *Truffle Magazine*, and elsewhere. Website: [loricramerfiction.wordpress.com](http://loricramerfiction.wordpress.com). Twitter: @LCramer29.

**Dallas Crow** is a teacher, writer, and photographer. You can see more of his photos at [dallascrow.com](http://dallascrow.com).

**Jim DeFilippi** is a novelist and humorist living in Salem.

**Steve DeMont** lives in Seattle, WA with his wife and two duck tollers. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Fairleigh Dickenson University.

**Rose Vanden Eynden:** married minister, medium, mom, manager of manic moods. [isleofglass.net](http://isleofglass.net).



**Doriane Feinstein** (she/they) is a photographer, playwright, and IT technician in Philadelphia, PA. They enjoy synthesizing art and technology and exploring untold stories.

**Gabriela Denise Frank** is a Pacific Northwest writer, editor, and creative writing instructor. She is a fan of smol werks. [gabrieladenisefrank.com](http://gabrieladenisefrank.com)

**Mae Fraser**—poet and coffee addict—is based out of the New Hampshire seacoast. Her poetry has been featured in anthologies and magazines alike.

**Robbie Gamble** is one of three red-headed siblings. His father is one of five.

**Jeff Gately** writes poems. You can find him applying to grad programs, working in mental health, with a black cat in his lap.

**Emilia Getzinger** is a writer, visual artist, director, actor, and student. She wishes more magazines had 24-word limits.

**Laura Goldin** is a publishing lawyer. Some of her poems have been published. Many have not.

**Ellery Haney**, known for things, gets small words and phrases stuck bouncing around in their head. A select few occasionally make it out alive.



**Niki Hatzidis** is an actor, writer and award-nominated playwright currently based in London.

[NikiHatzidis.squarespace.com](http://NikiHatzidis.squarespace.com).

**Larissa Monique Hauck** (she/her) is a queer visual artist who graduated from the Alberta University of the Arts in 2014.

**Doug Holder** is the founder of the Ibbetson Street Press. He teaches writing at Endicott College.

**Holly Humphreys** works in the publishing world, is Poetry Editor for *The Lincoln Review*, and previously published in *Abridged* and *Tether's End*.

**Santosh Kalwar** works as a poet, writer and researcher. His stories, poems have appeared in various places. For more info, please visit:

[kalwar.com.np](http://kalwar.com.np).

**Hilary King** grew up in the mountains of Virginia, and now lives in the mountains of Northern California.

**David Kirby**, a finalist for the National Book Award in 2007, is the author of almost forty books. He teaches at Florida State University.

**G. R. Kramer**, child of political refugees, has rediscovered poetry in late middle-age, publishing in many journals. [blueguitar58.wixsite.com/website-1](http://blueguitar58.wixsite.com/website-1).





**Joe McGurn** writes about unimportant points in his life. He writes non-fiction, bad poetry, and occasionally a short story.

**Tom Laughlin** teaches creative writing at Middlesex Community College (MA). His chapbook, *The Rest of the Way*, is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press.

**Ariya Mamun** is a Bengali-Canadian-American writer. She is a sophomore student at New York University where she is studying Dramatic Writing.

**Joanna Castle Miller** is a writer, performer, and producer of plays and comedies. She likes good whiskey, bad words, and three-item lists.

**Ivan de Monbrison**, poet and artist, lives in Paris. Born in 1969. Affected by various mental disorders. Previously published in English, French and Russian.

Originally from Missouri, **Sherry Morris** (@Uksherka) writes prize-winning fiction from a farm in the Scottish Highlands where she pets cows and watches clouds.

**William Nesbitt**, professor of English, has published in *Aji*, *Manzano Mountain Review*, *Beatdom*, *Route 7 Review*, *Popular Culture Review*, and *level:deepsouth*. Books include *Forsaken*.



**Chad Parenteau** has had recent work in *The New Verse News*, *Ibbetson Street* and *The Jupiter Review*. [chadparenteapoetforhire.com](http://chadparenteapoetforhire.com).

**Matt Perry** is a graduate student at Salem State University. When not writing, he likes to fly fish and garden.

**Palline Plum** did not trust how language was normally used. So they spent their youth making sculpture and photographs. Now they are old.

**Lindsey Pucci** teaches and lives in Minnesota with her Husband and son. She likes art.

**Remi Recchia** is a poet and essayist from Kalamazoo, Michigan. He is the author of *Quicksand/Stargazing* (Cooper Dillon Books, 2021).

**Andrew Robin** has three books of poetry. He is a recipient of the Iowa Poetry Prize. He lives on Lopez Island in Washington State.

**Fabio Sassi** makes photos and acrylics using what is considered to have no worth by the mainstream. He lives in Bologna, Italy. [fabiosassi.foliohd.com](http://fabiosassi.foliohd.com).

**Joel Savishinsky's** *Breaking the Watch: Retirement in America*, won the Gerontology Society's book prize. His poetry is in *Caesura*, *Metafore*, *Passager*, *SLANT*, *Windfall*. [savishin@gmail.com](mailto:savishin@gmail.com).



**Meredith Shepherd** is a college student working towards an English major and a creative writing minor.

**Ben Stanford** is a playwright and composer in the MFA Playwriting program at Texas Tech University, currently working as a teaching and research assistant.

**Scott T. Starbuck's** climateblog at [riverseek.blogspot.com](http://riverseek.blogspot.com) has readers in 110 countries. He taught ecopoetry workshops the past three years at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

**Yicheng Tao** is an MA student in Literary and Cultural Studies. He loves art cinema. He misses Salem and Cannes.

**Tony Targan's** plays have been performed in the midwest and NYC. He is a writer, actor, director, marathon runner, retired attorney, grandfather, and Michigander.

**Bill Teitelbaum** lives quietly in Lincolnwood, Illinois. Consequently, agent inquiries would be welcome.

**Peter Urkowitz** has published poems and art in *Meat for Tea*, *Oddball Magazine*, *Sextant*, *Lily Poetry Review*, and *Molecule*.



## CONTRIBUTORS

---

**Stan Werse** is a lawyer and playwright.

**Allison Whittenberg** is a Philadelphia native with a global perspective. Her short story collection, *Carnival of Reality* (Apprentice House Press) comes out next month.

**Richard Wollman** is the author of *Evidence of Things Seen* (Sheep Meadow), *A Cemetery Affair* (Finishing Line), and *Changeable Gods* (Slate Roof). [richardwollman.com](http://richardwollman.com).





# *Molecule*

**Submissions for our Fall 2022 Issue open  
June 1<sup>st</sup>. See guidelines on our website:**

[moleculitnylitmag.art.blog](http://moleculitnylitmag.art.blog)