

Issue No. 21

LAND ARK LIT MAG
*ISSUE NO. 21: LAST FALL
THIS SPRING / JANUARY
15, 2022*

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Yadda yadda yadda It's been a good week yadda yadda yadda sorry we're late again yadda yadda yadda something about growth, something else about accomplishment, something else about the passage of time. . . . Here's what I really want to talk about: there's a lot of chatter around the bathroom that you contributors are considering unionizing, and let me tell you right now you can just forget it. Never gonna happen. If I even so much as hear a peep about teamsters or Jimmy Hoffa or whatever the fuck any of it is I'll fire you all faster than you can say "artistic integrity". I don't care if it's illegal. I dare Standards and Practices to guess the code to my apartment building. And as for replacing so much overwhelming talent, there's always the line at Whole Foods.

Anway, now that that's been taken care of, I couldn't help but notice literally no one contributed to our prompt this week, a prompt which will go unnamed because it was probably dumb. C'mon you guys. This is ridiculous. I've got a literary team with high standards and writer's block, I can't find Ronald Ballwater, meanwhile Quicksand is throwing fiction through my window like a horny teen throwing pebbles on prom night. But, when I put it like that, I'm actually flattered. Submissions are open!

Meanwhile, we're doing sadness and Paul Newman this week. Also American symbolism and meal prep and a visit from the WNBA. And, the piece of resistance, local film expert Zeng Sun Yang Sen gives us his best movies of 2021. Save the theater, fans! When we're screwed, we multiply!

– Ed.

FICTION

THE AMERICAN OCEAN PT. XLI

Andy Quicksand

Clay Pigeons blaze across the windshield.

I SAW THE SAME GOD
CALL 1-800-HES-REAL

The Bar and Only is the last standing establishment benefitting from agro-tourism in the Jelly Valley. Locals don't get much here from the turn off – mummified remains suspended in dessert went out of style the last time Jimmy Carter masturbated in the Camp David visitors' bathroom.

"This country is going to shit."

"Should we stop for a drink?"

"Why the fuck," says Captain, Father, "I'm thirsty, anyway."

A giant shotgun in the sky screams "Pull".

The waitress at The Bar and Only is selling vintage posters for 80s horror movies. She loves David Cronenberg.

"How come you're looking to get rid of them?" asks Captain, Father,

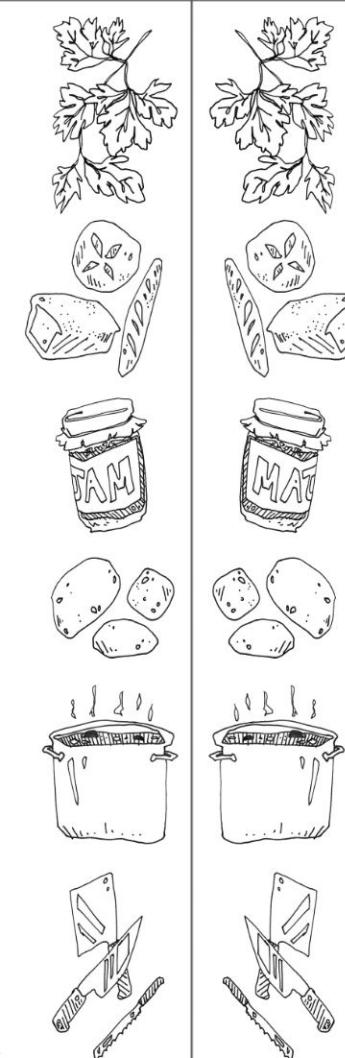
"I need to pay off my student loans. Plus gas money."

"Yah got anything from *The Brood*?"

"That's '79, sweetie. I deal exclusively in the 80s."

"Just a turkey club and black coffee, then."

"And a shot of whiskey for me."



"I love that scene," I say as Captain, Father, picks his ear, "with the broods holding hands on the highway. They're all wearing a different color parka 'cause it's winter and you've gotta distinguish one from the other."

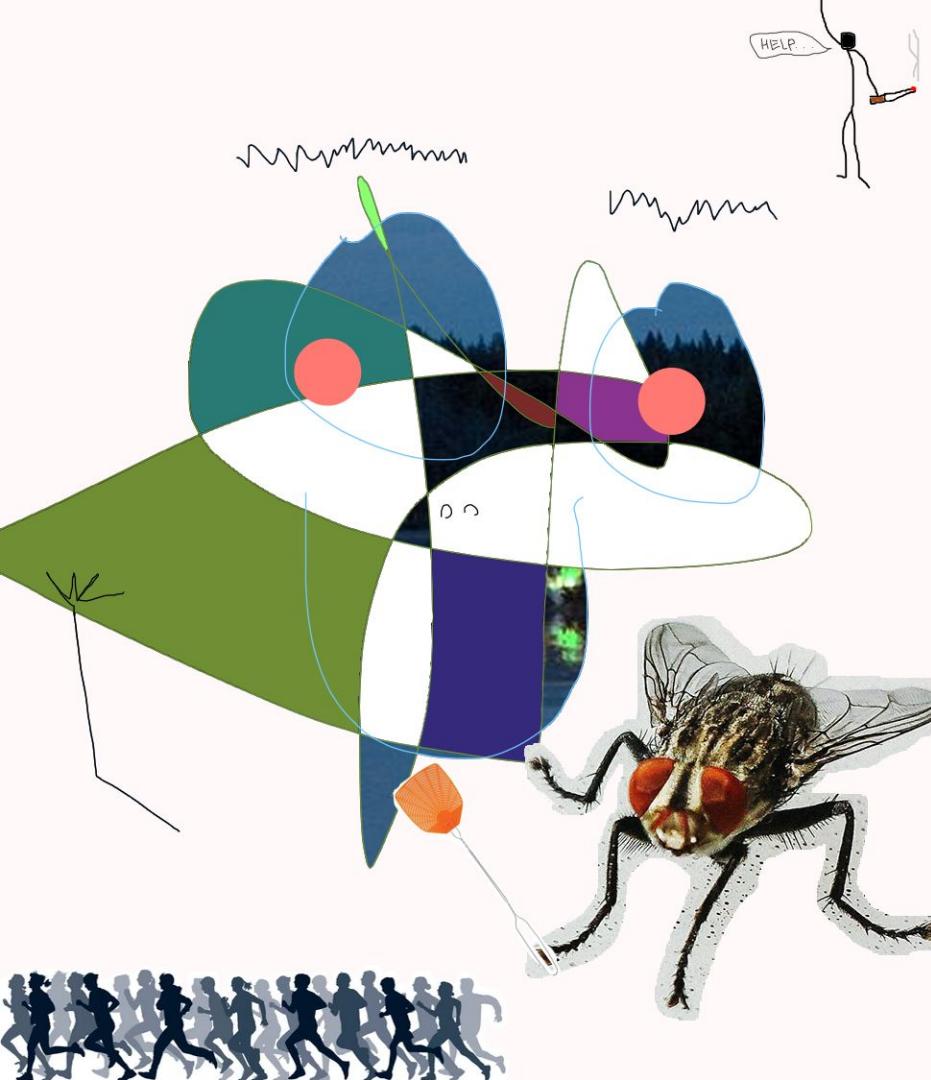
"That friggin' movie came out right around the time we was thinking about having kids," he says looking at the wax, "I took my wife and it freaked her out so hard we shared a bed that night and never made love again."

We finish the food and the liquor and the coffee and the cigarettes and leave a big tip. On the way out I buy a *Children Of The Corn* poster signed by Fritz Kiersch. "To John, Good Luck With Being Gay In Today's Society" it says.

"Hope this helps," I say as I pay the waitress. She gives me her phone number and tells me to hang around but for the first time ever I leave even though.

In the parking lot I paste the poster over the back windshield and we drive past the jelly, over the brittle remains of a bullseye.





Issue No. 21

POETRY

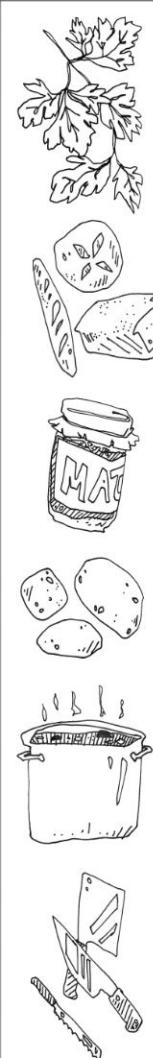
THAT ROOM WAS COLD TOO

Irvin Perkins

This room is cold, and I am by myself. Long ago, in a different room,

I woke in the evening to thick snow coming down
Puffed like popcorn, but real like clay. I was not puffed
Or real, neither am I now. But I was by myself then too,
Or thought I was.

Between that room and this room is a gauzy
Shower curtain with mold at the bottom, a peephole to peek through
And wonder who is that baby edged creature lying on the bed
Staring out the window.



POETRY

*HERE IS SOMETHING REALLY BAD FOR
YOU*

Andy Quicksand

Here is something that is really bad for you:
Falling down the stairs of the concrete doomsday
bunker.

Here is something that is sure to make you want to shower:
Giving the time of day to the pigs that will be your boss's
dinner.

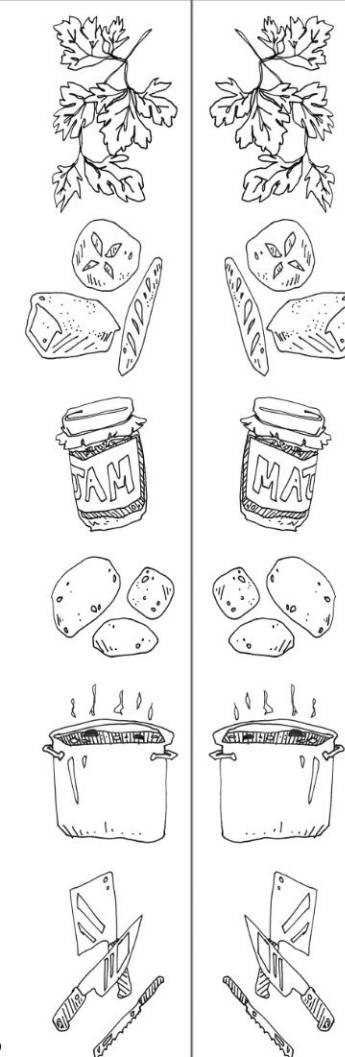
Here is something that is borderline disgusting:
Looking at the guy, looking at you, and then miming Uranus.

Here is something that hurts badly:
Finding the deepest piece of the ocean in the palm of your hand.

Here is something that impresses baseball managers:
Good looking spitting, paired with winning, camera lense eye
contact.

Here is something that misses the point:
Lana Rhoades' asymptote.

Here is something that surely will stub your toe:
A big brick of cloudlike behavior, left absentmindedly
On earth.



Here is something I am, and you are not:
In a crowd of disgusting, filthy, misanthropic finger waggers
Yet to be old.

Here is the truth, I promise:
I stole the splinter from the bark, not the other way around.

Here is something relatable:
<3

Here is something that I ate last night:
Your delicious steak, seared to perfection.

Thank you.
That's everything I know about.
Go learn from someone else, now.



CRITICISM

*RONALD BALLWATER'S REVIEW OF
MORMON DIRECTIONALISM*

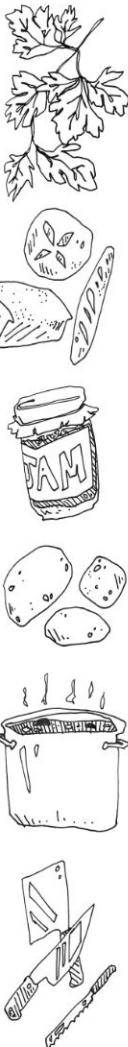
Ronald Ballwater

The editorial staff of Land Ark Lit Mag regrets to inform the reader that Ronald Ballwater's piece: "Ronald Ballwater's Review of Mormon Directionalism" will not be appearing in Issue no. 21. The reason being that Ballwater has neglected to turn in his assignment, and that we have not received contact from him since earlier this week. This is not to raise alarm—we have gone for much longer periods without word from Ballwater. Like an aging outdoor cat long past its date with oblivion, Ballwater has a tendency to come crawling out from under the porch just when you're sure he's chosen a cozy corner in which to curl up and die. We can only assume that he's discovered a novelty drug, taken up with a wealthy widow, or lost all his money to nefarious social contacts and is in the process of raising the funds to return home.

*Thank you for your
understanding.*

Sincerely,

Kaerste Tolpastig



FICTION

CALAMIT, NE

Nance Butter-Spiegle

A young lady lies in a puddle on a stretch of dirty wet earth. The American plains stretch away in every direction under a great white heap of clouds. The clouds feel nearby. She is very small, and very covered in mud. She looks up at the clouds.

YOUNG LADY: What is the purpose of this?

THE CLOUDS: You were born some time ago. In some more time, you will die. Between then and now is the purpose of this. This is the purpose of this.

YOUNG LADY: That?

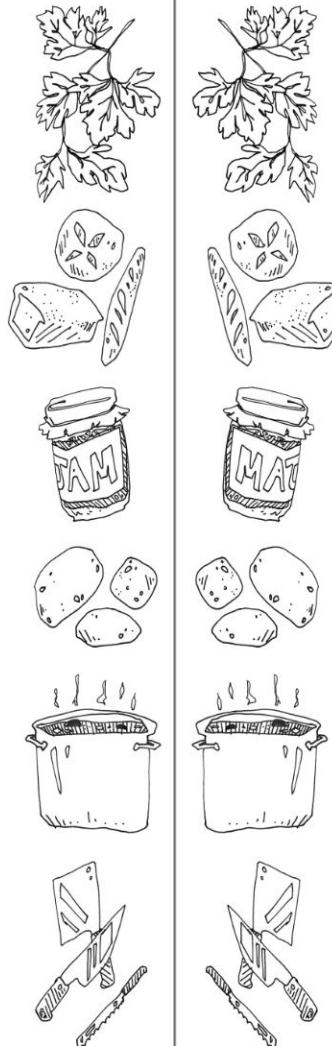
THE CLOUDS: Yes.

The young lady rolls onto her side and tucks her knees up to her chin. She hugs her legs. She hums a little bit from the song “Yellow Submarine” and tears fall from her eyes. The tears wash some of the mud from her face in little dribbles of salt water. The ground beneath her rumbles.

An adult boy walks out from behind a slight rise in the otherwise flat landscape. He walks up to the young lady and looks down at the young lady. She does not look at him. Then the adult boy fractures, splits into three different boys. Then into nine different boys. Then thirteen boys and two girls. The young lady does not look up at him or any of the other people. The first boy, the adult boy, speaks. When he does, the rest of the crowd disappears except for one other person standing behind him.

ADULT BOY: What are you doing down there?

The other person walks forward. It's a second adult



boy. He holds up a framed picture of himself, with a different young lady who we don't know, but recognize.

SECOND ADULT BOY: Look, I have a new girlfriend now. We're in love, I visited her at grad school. We're committed to each other because we are both grown ups who are ready to be committed and get married. And we are going to get married. I've told her I want to marry her.

The young lady does not acknowledge the second adult boy.

ADULT BOY: What are you doing down there?

The young lady rolls over and looks up at the first adult boy.

YOUNG LADY: I'm stuck.

SECOND ADULT BOY: Look at my picture, I'm happy. Look at your life. You're covered in mud.

ADULT BOY: Then get up!

YOUNG LADY: I can't, I'm stuck.

The second adult boy flickers, glitches, and drops his framed picture. It shatters. The second adult boy turns into a new, third adult boy who we do not recognize. He stands behind the first adult boy who doesn't look at him. The young lady looks at this new, third adult boy, who looks back at her.

YOUNG LADY: I fucking hate you.

The new, third adult boy says nothing.

ADULT BOY: Huh?

The first adult boy turns around, sees the new, third adult boy, and then punches the new, third adult boy in the jaw. The new, third adult boy falls back into the mud without reacting. He flickers, and disappears. Then the first adult boy's face grows dark and he crumples to the ground, falling next to

the young lady. He looks at her, and she looks at him. She starts to cry again. She is still very small, and now he is very small too.

ADULT BOY: Why'd you do it?

YOUNG LADY: I don't know. It seemed like the right decision at the time.

ADULT BOY: It wasn't.

YOUNG LADY: No. It wasn't.

The young lady cries and looks at the adult boy. The adult boy does not cry, but his gaze is hard and slick. Above them, the clouds are watching, rolling around and being gaseous and feeling sad. The mud feels warm, almost like a bath. The young lady is still looking at the adult boy, but he is turning his head away, looking to the clouds. Then he vanishes.

The young lady looks at the clouds.

YOUNG LADY: Why'd I do it?

THE CLOUDS: Because you forgot to be kind.

YOUNG LADY: Does that mean I'm a bad person?

THE CLOUDS: That's not what you should be worrying about.

The young lady sighs and flips onto her stomach so that her face is in the mud. When she speaks it is difficult to hear her voice. The clouds blandly wonder if that position is comfortable.

YOUNG LADY: I hope I suffocate.

THE CLOUDS: You won't if you don't try to. You could try, though. That's always an option.

The young lady pauses, and stops breathing for a second. Then she sputters, spits out some mud, and flips over onto her back again so she can look at the clouds. Her whole face and front body is covered in mud. Her eyes are closed. If

she were to stay that way, she might convincingly become mud herself. She thinks that might be a nice change of pace.

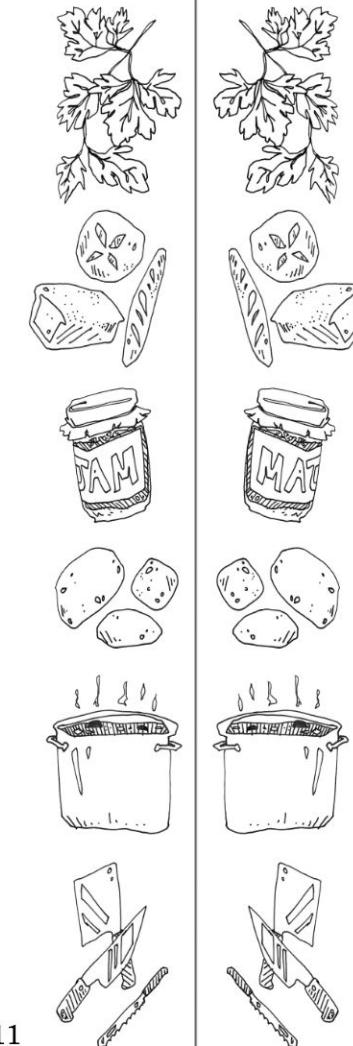
YOUNG LADY: I don't think that's what I want. I just want to have been a better person, to be a better person..

THE CLOUDS: Worry that you should be a better person is the same as worry that you are a bad person. You were unkind. You are facing consequences. And you are sad. This is what is happening.

YOUNG LADY: It's not my nature to be kind. It's my nature to be selfish.

THE CLOUDS: Then you will fail.

Such as a period at the end of a long and run-on sentence, the whole sky flashes bright white once and then goes dark. The clouds disappear. The stars come out and it is night time. The young lady is still covered in mud, and the mud is getting cold now. She hums another section of the song "Yellow Submarine". She looks up at the stars. She is still very small.



FICTION

THE AMERICAN OCEAN PT. XXI

Andy Quicksand

On his long route home, a Navy Yard worker caught a laugh in his hand. Half his arm was hanging out the window of his pickup when the laugh found its silly little way into his palm.

“What can I do with this?” he asked himself, drooling down at the feeling, now resting in his lap. It had been a long shift, and tomorrow morning was an early morning.

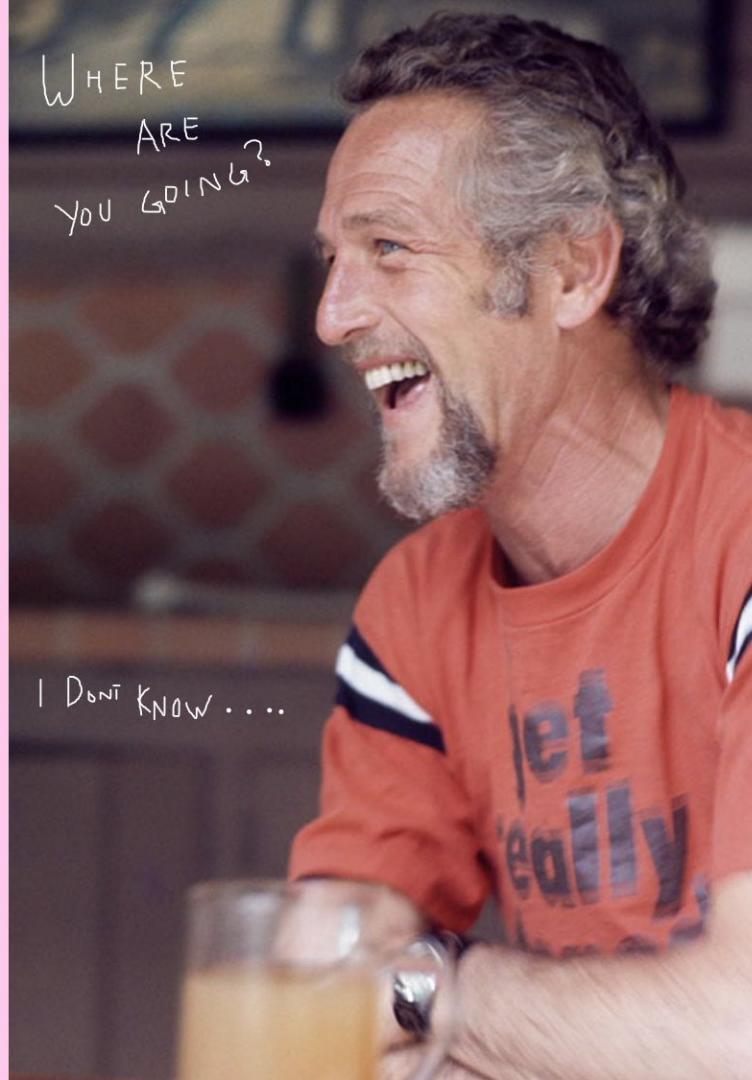
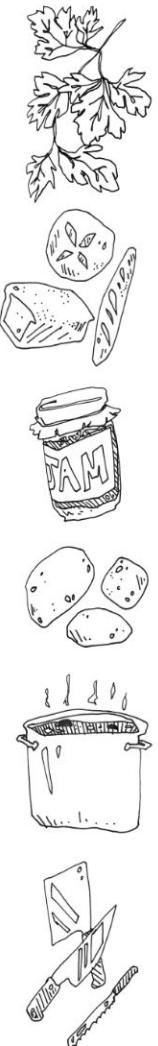
So he pulled over and let the laugh go free.

“I’ve had a wonderful time here tonight, really to all and I can’t wait to see you again. Kisses to everyone! Peaches! Goodbye! Goodbye! Mwah. Goodbye!”

Goodbye, they said back. See you soon.

Pirouetted through pixie wheat, by a fly, down the road past the cattle grate, into the barn, where a baby was learning to crawl. It gripped the hay and went along. The Fibber feather landed on its back.

On Haraldson Field, a group of 7th graders wrestled over The Big Red Rocket. Each had a claim to ownership. They ended up drawing straws, and the kid with the shortest arms earned the honor of sliding The Big Red Rocket onto the launch rod and Lady Lady won the right to lighting the ignition. She sparked the match, kneeled at the fuse and sprinted to safety at the 25 yard line. The preteens boiled at the sight of fire. The show was prepared to go; the introduction unset. They closed their eyes to



feel safe, but in their pubis they crammed the unholy altitude of liftoff.

“I thought the salad sucked, and the bread sucked. The cocktails were OK, but too weak; I had to have nine. And then the fish sucked, also the hor d’oeuvres sucked, but most of all the conversation was so shitty! I’ve never been to a dinner party where there was less to say. Don’t you think?”

“I don’t know.”

“I swear all our friends suck.”

“Yeah, maybe. . . .”

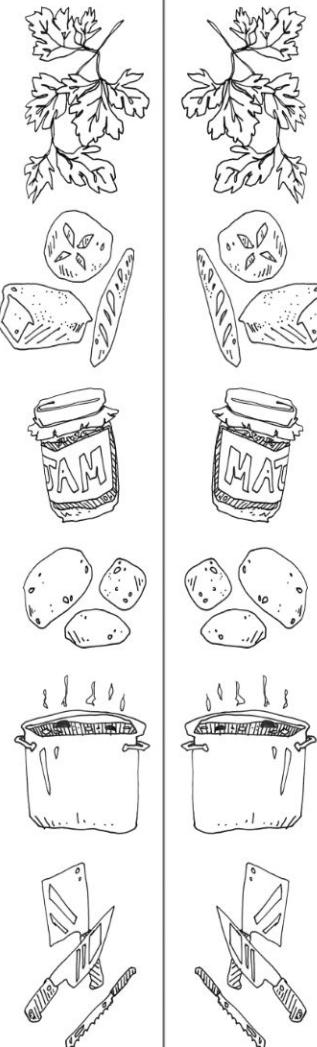
She took her eyes off the road to admire the porcelain bowl of fresh fruit that she brought to book club as a snack to share with everyone and that was now in the lap of her drunk husband bristling in the passenger seat. Tonight was the night she would remember to take it out of the car and return it to the kitchen counter.

Rockstar Two put his coat on going out the door. The faux leather field jacket didn’t do a lot in the cold. All the other apartment complexes were dark.

He strolled through the ice humming an improvised melody. There was a sushi restaurant and a convenience store and a real estate office that the year-rounders egged. Rockstar Two opened the door to the convenience store with a frozen hand.

“Heyyyy, there you are. I been waiting for you all day, mahn! What’s up with you? I get the Camels.”

Rockstar Two signaled for two packs. Then he pointed to the tall shelf above the cashier’s head. He got on his tippy toes to point specifically at which toiletries and left the



convenience store without a bag.

“I’m back.”

“Did you get it?”

“Why I left.”

The bathroom door cracked open. A slender hand reached through the opening. It was pale and the door was worn away.

“Thank you.”

“No problem. I’m stepping out again. Back in five.”

All the other apartment complexes were still dark. Rockstar Two sucked away. Over the ice a Lincoln Towncar slipped like a fish over the sidewalk, through the shrubbery and onto the front lawn, just a few jars from Rockstar Two’s feet. The man behind the wheel rolled out of the car like a gold medal gymnast.

“Did you order a pizza?” he asked, holding the box like poured champagne.

“Yes, I did.” Rockstar Two lied.

“Sign here.”

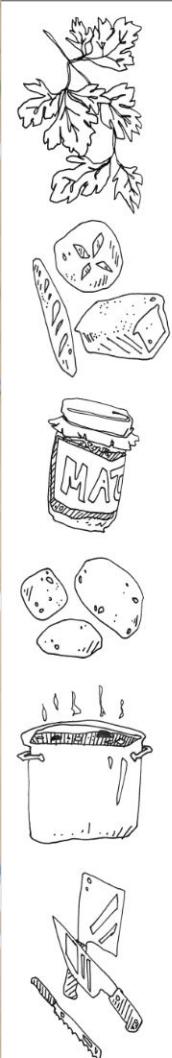
Rockstar Two accepted the pen and slip. The delivery boy gave him the pizza and backed carefully off the lawn and into the ocean.

“Sweetheart, look what I got.”

The bathroom door was wide open. Rockstar One stood alone behind the mirror.

“It was positive.”





Issue No. 21

NONFICTION
THE STARTING LINEUP

Adraneus Halaila

AND THE STARTING LINEUP IS:

Atlanta Dream... Merry Winthrop... 5'6
Atlanta Dream... Susan Likel... 6'3
Atlanta Dream... Remmy Bois... 5'
Atlanta Dream... Louis Rocell... 5'11

AND THE STARTING LINT HELP IS:

Chicago Sky... Jolean Mathews... 5'6
Chicago Sky... Octavia Bottemham... 6'4
Chicago Sky... Rachiel Nightshift... 6'4
Chicago Sky... Amy Beershack... 6'6

AND THE STARTING LIVEN IT IS:

Connecticut Sun... Sophiea McCardie... 5'8
Connecticut Sun... Ronny Forward... 6'0
Connecticut Sun... Omega Three... 6'2
Connecticut Sun... Safron Winters... 5'9

AND THE STARTING LITTLE UGH IS:

AND THE STARTING LINGER ALL IS:

Indiana Fever... Maxine Morris... 5'9

Indiana Fever... Julliet Jackson... 6'7

Indiana Fever... Ruby Roundhouse... 5'10

Indiana Fever... Ann McDough... 5'8

AND THE STARTING LINEUP IS:

New York Liberty... Corry Macintosh... 5'10

New York Liberty... Sthefani Oazma... 6'0

New York Liberty... Connie Roid... 5'11

New York Liberty... Andi Quicksand... 6'2

THANK YOU.



Today, 5:31 PM

good news you're gonna be famous in
land ark lit mag!

Adraneus Halaila is the fake name i made
up for you but johnny says to ask you

if that's what you want

Read 5:40 PM

Ahhahahahahahaha

iMessage



POETRY

POEMS ABOUT DINNER

Cannibal Larry

MAKING JAM for my breakfast every day
 Is very labor intensive. If I were to MAKE BREAD for
 My breakfast it might take even longer. As it stands
 I am SPENDING SIX HOURS each morning
 Making breakfast.

*

Slicing potatoes must be like slicing a murder body
 To see what's inside—or so I think,
 I think that the texture is probably
 Very similar.

*

I have brought parsley home and the children are weeping
 "Blech" They say. "Have mercy" they say. "Cilantro
 Is Better" they All say, waving their tiny hands and
 Scrubbing their tiny faces. "Can't it be different, please,
 We would do anything for cilantro."
 But I have brought parsley home
 It goes better with italian dishes, and it is what the
 Recipe called for.

*

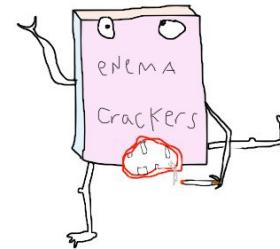


What's that floating in the stew? Who knew
 Who knew, who knew.

Not you!

*

Heavy besotted, milk thick and cheese fed:
 You are going to be slaughtered for fat
 You are going to be boiled with soup spice
 You are going to be eaten for dinner
 We are going to love how you taste.



FICTION

THE AMERICAN OCEAN PT. I

Andy Quicksand

A dream to dream is one lost to fetch with a golden retriever. The American variety has been written on time and time and twinkie placed mindedly on a cafeteria plastic seat to be sat on. Poor man. Hunter SSSSSSSSSSS Thompson wrote on the subject again and again and only attributed the success or the confines of the immortalized concept to bright lights. America in Saginaw. America on the Jersey Turnpike. Time turns like the biggest pack of cigarettes in the breast pocket of someone you are completely in love with, sitting in the seat next to yours. Two notes will explode.

But some ingratiated bastards take the two seaters, the high roads through dead Arizona forests and dying Nevada neon to get a little taste at what life would be like if that one little lightning bolt moment hadn't happened, the eclipse when a stranger was absent mindedly met at a bar or bus stop or when the main character seemingly makes some non-sequitur daily choice to get milk or go bowling but leads to everything: love, laughter, perfect confectionaries, the geese to make Rachel McAdams salivate. "The American Ocean". The early morning wakeup call to milk a **cancerous calf**.

"I look hot in overalls. I look intellectual in tweed, contemplative with a stalk of wheat in my mouth or corn husk in my hair. Imagine me rubbing it back with just a slither of my Mayflower jawline, a beacon of blue up my nose and an ember of s'mores in my eyes. Couldn't you see me waiting for coffee at the McDonald's drive-thru, Sunday at 6 AM, or at the high

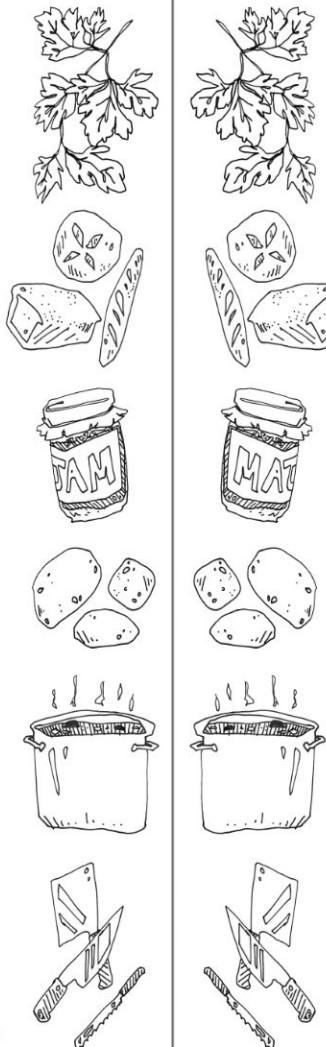
school football fields for my fullback son? If my brain was working backwards wouldn't you be just as nonplussed as if I didn't graduate high school?"

Two Good Ol' Boys shoot hoops at the overgrown Grafton, Nebraska Basketball Courts, downtown across the street from the Budweiser sign and down the block where a blonde 50 year old tries to jump start his John Deere.

In Iowa, an old man not old enough to be an old man screams "Pureness!" on the unemployment line. The architecture of American Gothic would've looked good at Goodwill. An Eldon family ships their best Christmas card to date. A young man drinks the most bourbon, and vomits all over honeyblossom on the shoulder of route J12.

"The American Ocean extends from Ocean to Ocean. There are islands at Las Vegas and Chicago, Indianapolis and Kansas City. Waffle House Dolphins. Strip Mall Seals. A flock of carrion circling billboards."

But condemnation and condensation have no simple place within the syrup of a landlocked cocktail. "I am of the UN! I am enrolled here!" Fabrics of reality TV society! Question of mood! Couldn't we be bad people who had a laugh at the expense of others? Why can't I be left alone and self righteous? Destroy the establishment! Loosen the locks on cigars! Roast the coffee a second longer and make the beer a tick more alcoholic! In "The American Ocean", evil is replaced by Purell, the bad guys live old and the good ones get tired and have two kids and two cars and two dogs and divorces and two debunked reasons on why to give up and blow your brains out in a field at sunrise. Leave the volatile activity at the parking lot. Have an Arnold Palmer and call the well connected and handsome plumber.



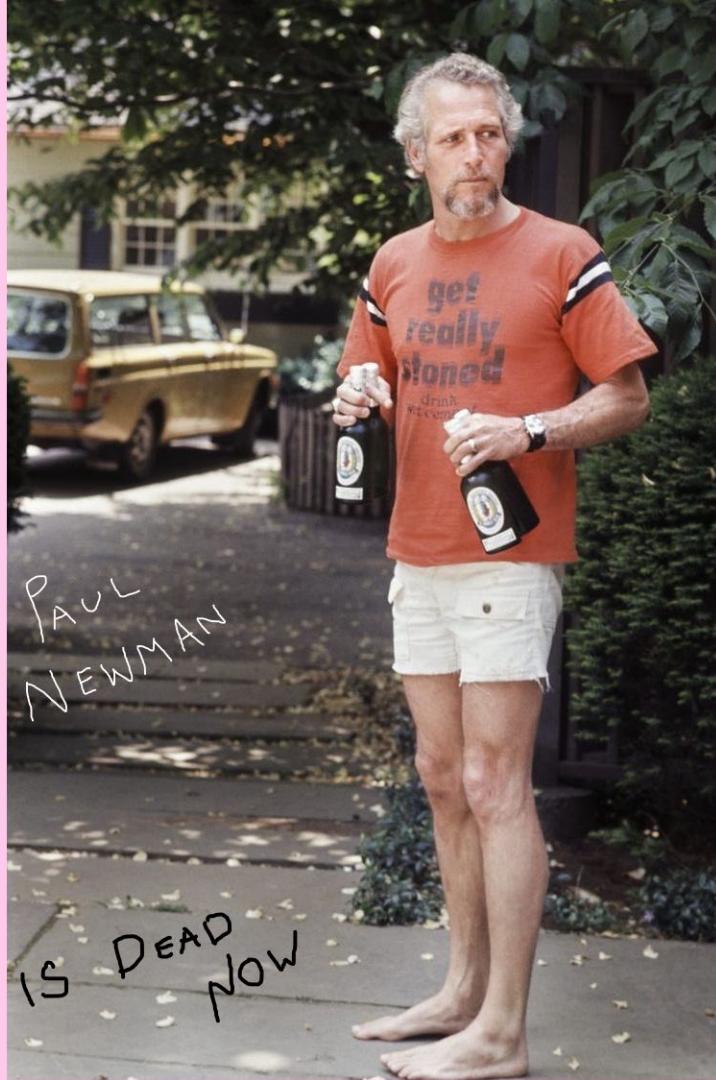
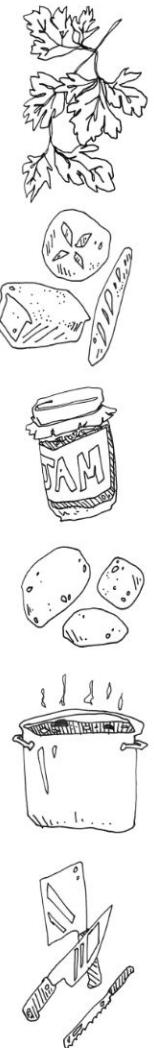
“Better yet, why not take my longest two fingers, on the hood of your father’s Chevy, totally evening, fireflies and peepers, stalks and roots, why don’t I take my index and middle and stick them down your throat and see what happens? Why don’t you jerk yourself off long enough to make a mess on the dashboard? You could tongue my belly and suck my – and I could take you up and have a thousand have-tos, on the hood of my father’s Chevy, Iowa, underwater, route J12, and afterward we could start a little fire and roast marshmallows before we drown because, c’mom, now I just want to.”

StubHub is closed. Circuit City has been closed for a while. Global pandemics have reduced the consumption industry to an online bumble and Amazon is sipping pure oxygen through a McDonald’s straw. Proctor and Gamble is recommending Spotify. Pfizer is recommending TNT. Marlon Brando wants to know.

And in love.

So very fondly in love with a dirty blonde hair white shirt blue jeans smoking man, looks nothing like, very rarely akin, Martin Sheen in Badlands or Ronald Reagan in *King’s Row*. “The American Ocean” cries, bedridden, “Where’s the rest of me!?” James Dean screams, “You’re tearing me apart!” Kit says, “When all this is over, I’m going to sit down and buy a big, thick steak.”

The slaughterhouses road. They roar. The windless fields. They never grow. The midwest writers have a taste for the end of a sentence. In Montana, I left the gas cap on the roof of my Yaris. In Colorado, I overpaid for a puppy.



CRITICISM

ZENG SUN YANG SEN'S FAVORITE
FILMS OF 2021

Zeng Sun Yang Sen

DAYs, Tsai Ming-Liang

MEMORIA, Apichatpong Weerasethakul

DRIVE MY CAR, Ryusuke Hamaguchi

WHAT DO WE SEE WHEN WE LOOK AT THE SKY,
Alexandre Koberidze

THE WORKS AND DAYS, C. W. Winter and Anders Edström

WHEEL OF FORTUNE AND FANTASY, Ryusuke Hamaguchi

THE WOMAN WHO RAN, Hong Sangsoo

BAD LUCK BANGING OR LOONY PORN, Radu Jude

WRATH OF MAN, Guy Ritchie

THE CARD COUNTER, Paul Schrader

BENEDETTA, Paul Verhoeven

MALIGNANT, James Wan

TITANE, Julia Ducournau

THE MATRIX RESURRECTIONS, Lana Wachowski

UNDINE, Christian Petzold

*Regrettably have not seen: *ANNETTE*, *OLD*, *ANNE AT 13,000 FEET*, *RECORDER*, *ZEROES AND ONES*, *PETITE MAMAN*, *THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD*, *FAYA DAYI*, *THE SALT OF TEARS*, and *NEPTUNE FROST*.



Land Ark Lit Mag accepts submissions of “anything literary” and “anything visual.”

Please email The Editor with your work at:
landarklit@gmail.com

Thank You.

