

cave canem



DOG TEETH: issue four

letter from the editor

CAVE CANEM is here! This was intended to be our anniversary issue, and in a sense it is - we have been going for two years this summer, and as we enter into the second year of DOG TEETH I want to say THANK YOU so much for helping to make DOG TEETH real - I'm so grateful to get to work on this project despite all its hiccups, and every issue I get to work on is a force of collaboration that blows me away.

Things have been especially rocky this year, and so I want to extend an extra thanks than usual to everyone who has remained in support of DOG TEETH. I am consistently humbled by the community around this project.

DOG TEETH exists as a place for art from marginalised voices and artists interested in exploring the taboo - we all know shit is scary right now, so I'm extremely grateful to everyone who is still making art in hard times. We need your work now more than ever, and I'm humbled that DOG TEETH is the avenue through which you choose to share it.

This issue's theme is CAVE CANEM (beware the dog), and I initially picked that as a theme because I wanted to encourage artists to submit works that were defiant in nature, that were fierce and vicious and refused palatability.

I wanted pieces that would explore raw topics without shying away from difficult feelings or marginalia or disturbing the comfortable. As it turns out, those works are

more timely than I could have imagined, both in the wider world and in my personal life.

Thank you all for making what you do - this issue is smaller than usual, thanks to a number of compounding factors, including our move away from Twitter, which we undertook as we were no longer comfortable remaining on a platform run by someone doing so much harm. It just didn't feel like it aligned with our values to remain there anymore, so we stepped away. This means that our social media reach has diminished, but we are working to build back up.

That said - if you enjoy this issue, please tell your friends! Share with others you think would enjoy reading the works contained within this and our other issues, and with those whose work you think might be a good fit for our next issue!

The smaller size of this issue is also due to my inability to be as on top of logistics regarding this issue as I would have liked, thanks to some health difficulties. This issue is a size I could manage, and a sort of return to form after last issue's particularly large number of contributors!

As always, extreme gratitude to our contributors - if you like their work, share it, and let them know! All contributors' details can be found at the back of the issue so you know where to direct compliments.

Thank you thank you thank you as always for your interest in this little project!

Stay weird + take care of one another,

JACK

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beneath a silver pall of moonlight you
take my arm into your mouth
as gently as retriever with a water-bird,
and there is a slow tension in your jaws
as your warm tongue laves my skin,
raising a trail of goose-flesh;
and i can hear your tail whisking
softly through the leaves as
i raise my hand to touch your muzzle,
tracing the uncertain furrows there.
how long do we stand there
with my pulse between your teeth,
neither daring to move, the tip of one canine
indenting my flesh as softly as
a caress, as softly as your hand had
encircled my wrist to lead me here?
you are a kinder wolf than i would be;
picking scraps of sun-dried flesh from
roadside carcasses, slinking
behind a screen of foliage
with your belly-fur brushing the earth,
freezing fast as headlights rake
the branches, limn every
blade of fur on your ears in gold
you do not hunger,

and i would be tempted to open my jaws
wide enough to swallow the sun.
i think you know this,
though the knowing is a burden.
and i think we will remain here forever,
my forearm locked between fangs
too delicate to belong to a predator,
my eyes seeking yours, urging you
to taste the warm animal tang of my blood,
to kill me or keep me, to live
with the conviction of a carnivore
or refuse to live at all

how must guinefort have felt on the day
that a serpent crept into the bedclothes of his charge
and, snarling, he leapt, overturned the cradle—
the iron tang of blood, the sting of venom
as the snake's fangs scored his shoulder,
the child weakly keening?

how must he have felt when his master returned

and he limped to the door,
chin-fur matted red, tail wagging low, eyes soft
in the way that all dogs' eyes are?
how must he have felt when his master paled,
regarding the scene in gape-mouthed horror,
straining to hear the child
(asleep now, though he did not know),
when his master slowly drew blade from sheath,
eyes hard and cold and full of wroth,
and plunged it between two knobs of bone
in his faithful hound's neck?
how must guinefort have felt, lain there,
scrabbling with one paw, smearing scarlet
across the floor, tongue lolling
when his master righted the cradle,
found the babe there, and the long-dead serpent,
the sinuous body pitted with tooth-marks?
did he hear his master cry out as if struck,
feel the firm hand against the wound, trying in vain
to staunch the bleeding?

did he hear the whispered apologies, know that there was
coarse cloth wrapped tenderly around the body

he was soon to shed?
did guinefort love him, still?

Erica Leslie Weidner

the teeth
after a dog I had as a child

I feel feral and it's all located in my mouth. like that time I hated my job so much I'd clench my teeth together while driving, hard enough that my jaw was sore. or like that time my crush slept with someone else and I thought my mouth had turned to liquid metal because everything tasted like cold wrought iron. I relate to the dogs with separation anxiety, the ones who chew through drywall to be free. see, my anxiety lives in my teeth, too. if I could gnaw my way to freedom I would. instead I bite the insides of my cheeks thinking of all the tasks that loom ahead.

Rory G.

FIVE FOLKTALES ABOUT THE NECROMANCER

CW: DEATH, DECAY, THEMES OF ABUSE, GORE-ADJACENT IMAGERY

They say a man who raises the dead is full of holes
and he steals corpse eyes to plug them up again
each star-shaped puncture wound
a place where lightning has struck and made window in flesh

They say a man who raises the dead is a dog
wandering mongrel, belly cursed, mouth bloody
whose hunger makes him mean and anxious
whose white cuticles sink in loamy dark
whose hands yearn for meat

They say a man who raises the dead is a tomb:
a living temple to lovers long gone, that he keeps
ghosts in cages, abominates rest
and refuses all affection but theirs

They say a man who raises the dead has no face
that he pawned it to the moon (*ya 'amar, ya 'amar!*)
so he could buy a wedding ring or
in some versions, a sword, and now he toils
at waking a hundred, five hundred, seven hundred dead
to buy back a face he will never again recognize
in fractured mirror or in still, greeny pond

They say a man who raises the dead is a door
that you walk through. When he pries your stiff jaws open
slips calloused fingers past gravid tongue
reaches down your throat, claws his way through wet muscle until
his fist closes around that idling engine
you rise up through him and see once more

Rory G.

POEM WHERE THE DEAD KIDS STAND UP

CW: DEATH, DECAY, THEMES OF ABUSE, GORE-ADJACENT IMAGERY

When it happens it will happen quietly.
The earth does not shake. Maybe a wind stirs the reeds, I don't know.
What I know is, the dead kids stand up all at once.
The mountains do not crack wide open. If the land trembles
at all, it is merely from rubble rolling off bodies.

When the dead kids stand up, it's like the minutes
after a total eclipse: the sky begins to slowly pale, and all the birds
start singing 'cause they think morning has come again.
It was never a matter of cracking the code or answering
the riddle, no, rather a matter of intercepting the process.
I read once that heaven is a single complex equation, self-replicating
and perfect, each cubicle occupied by a djinn who writes
a single number down and passes
the equation to the next guy, and just like that
the holy math makes its way to God.

So let's say we get one of our guys in there. The equation room. Don't ask how.
Let's say our guy replaces one of the djinn or angels or whoever
and our guy copies the numbers down wrong, shifts
a single decimal point a single figure to the left.
And that slip of paper gets passed up to God, and when
the page (lined? wafer-thin like a prayer book? you decide)
touches His hand, the request is granted. All across the land
our children rise, blinking heavy death from their eyes, some
of their limbs still warm beneath the coating of
fine dust that used to be houses.
And they walk through the cities now, they walk in the streets again
wade into the rivers and the fields thigh-high with wheat
and they do not speak to us but with their eyes.

Blue Midnight Canis

Stray

CW: ANIMAL ABUSE/ALLEGORICAL PERSON ABUSE

My heart was once a stray
Limping through the empty streets
Ribbs sticking to malnourished frame
Grateful for any scrap she could find

She would roll over and show her belly
Hoping that if she were just
friendly
and cute
and obedient
and loyal
Then someone might
whistle for her to follow

She had puppy dog eyes and a heart of gold
All it took was pockets full of kibble
and a voice full of promises
It called for her to heel
and she was happy to
fall
in
line

The collar feels special when it first goes on
It says that you are taken (care of)
That you have a home
and a name
(because of course
your identity can only come
from the fact that you are loved)

The thing about homes with
invisible fences
is that you don't see them at first
They open the door and you only see
wide open space
Green spreading in all directions
Security without restriction

The thing about homes with
invisible fences
Is that you only learn the
space you're allowed
by the lesson of
pain

The thing about homes with
invisible fences
is that you can't know if they move

The thing
pain
about homes
pain
with invisible fences
pain

Isthatyoulearn
nottopush
toofar
since
yards
cou
ld
s
h
r
i
n
k

Obey in advance
Remember your place
Don't stray
Each step out
Risks the
Shock

The thing about homes with
invisible fences
Is that you get used to
pain
The thing about homes with
invisible fences
Is that you just need to push through the
painpainpainpain

to be free

My heart is no longer a stray
She is a feral beast
A self-sufficient scavenger
A name held in her heart with no engraved tag

My heart goes where she pleases
seeing fences and signs that warn
Beware Of Dog
When they should warn of homes
that promise forever
but only if you're a

good little bitch

nat raum

every year since 2016 has been a year of realizing stuff

CW: ALCOHOLISM, SUICIDAL IDEATION/PTSD

i walk these country roads the only country roads that take me home and only in my dreams am i actually walking it just occurred to me that i've never seen any of that bottom part of greenspring outside of looking out car windows and it's really fucking me up i'm only speeding a little but 50 still feels like flying and i suppose it's only over the course of two decades that i've picked out every detail on the last house before the hill i wonder how many versions of me it watches pass by every day it's only recently i started stringing my thoughts together like this and i must say it feels closer to the state of inside of my mind these days i only have dreams about walking on greenspring when something is really wrong and somehow i'm just now connecting the dots between two quests each destined to fail and there is still enough of an optimist inside of me that i convince myself certain things are possible i want to believe the best in people it's why i have nightmares now

Elizabeth D

I FIND MY DEAD BODY IN THE STREET

CW: BLOOD, DEATH MENTION, BODY HORROR

I FIND MY DEAD BODY IN THE STREET—

I do not recognise it for what it is.

Who is this!

What is we!

Mouth wet and wide as a fish's,
throat slashed open at the gullet,
blood leaking out of the wound

like water
through the gills

I FIND MY DEAD BODY IN THE STREET—

shaped like my teenaged self:
brittle-pinned wrists, hair chopped
short to the (jaw)
bone,
crooked scales of teeth

and an inability
to smile

I FIND MY DEAD BODY IN THE STREET—

and its flesh is fresh as a live-wire,
smooth skin of a snake
sinuous and sexy

ready off the shelf, ready
for the market,
ready for
the eating

Athamae Attack

Am I Bruised?

CW: GENERAL ANGST :)

Am I bruised? Am I beaten?

Am I tangled to the core?

Am I rotten, am I weeping,

Am I always wanting more?

Do I cry? Do I laugh?

Do I just walk out that door?

Because I'm broken, I am ragged, I'm dog tired of being sore.

A tattered heart splattered pink with art,

And the longing of the muse.

Rebecca Fearn

excavationist

we were taught as children to dig for treasure
bury our palms in the gritty sand
let the grains slip between index
middle, ring fingers.

now i feel my hands
are forever digging.
labourers and archaeologists
coming back from the task
bloody and pulpy. itching
searching

i kiss it from under my nails
my unvarnished tips
are red from cultivation,
my teeth will finish
what the nails cannot
'til my hands are sculpted wastelands

smooth and rough
marred with scars
i still haven't found

the treasure.

Till Kallem

Phagocytosis

i)

When the shattered sun rose in the red sky, I transmuted into a monarch, teetering on the heightened pedestal of my own yearnings. Transcending my humanity, I traded my pain for the suffering of others, those who engulfed me in my celebration, whirling in circles as their bodies created sparks against each other. They pushed me upwards until I crawled across the sky a God, my eyes bulging yellow with drunken power. Unlatching my maw, I bellowed into the abyss, beaconing ominous flocks of pterodactyls who answered my decree in unison.

Silence, then repeat. Dark ecstasy, the fiend's paradise, it's never all it seems.

Delirious with intent, I fell, disoriented under the earth of my mistakes, surrounded by the humid sea of seething bodies of those who wanted me, unfamiliar and demanding. In their image, I phagocytized my own flesh with greed until I was all I could taste. This would repeat. Tar dripped from my swollen lips as I doubled down on myself. Sweating hands reached for my skin in the buoyant darkness, the same hands that held hundreds of mirrors to my bloated face, cataracts dancing over my coated eyeballs in reflection. Limp corporeal forms oozed through slits in the slimy stones, generating trails of slugs that raced after my bare feet as I plunged deeper into the dampness, the putrid heat. Chanting my name, the walls goaded me, they had created me, and they could end me.

I knew this. I wanted this anyways.

In the end, I bathed in the finale of the world. I shed those closest to me for the song of the siren. I consumed fallen suns, digested their light, and excreted their dust. I have surveyed the future. I have come to tell all.

I am not your friend. I am bad news. I am looking for you.

At the start, two friends took a step in the darkness. Only one emerged, having devoured the heart of a goat. Now with fresh arteries bulging in my throat, my head is fastened backwards on my frame. Facing you, I walk in reverse, my antlers branching up to capture red stars. I utter lost spells with the whites of my eyes, the sound low and gurgling.

This is what they have made me. You should be afraid.

ii)

I transmuted

God,
into

Silence,

my mistakes,

phagocytized

my skin my lips

my

name,

I wanted

those closest to me

I am your friend.

in the darkness.

having devoured

I lost you,

You

I transmuted God into silence.

My mistakes phagocytized my lips, my skin, my name.

I wanted those closest to me.

I am your friend in the darkness.

Having devoured you, I lost you.

Pessimist

untitled

CW: DISTURBING IMAGERY



contributors



c.s. thomas

C.S. Thomas (they/it) is a spuriously human animal from the East Coast. They spend most of their time thinking about dogs, weird fiction, and the intersection thereof, and occasionally playing (and making ridiculous posts about) narrative RPGs. They are currently working on a longform story about two livestock guardian dogs protecting their flock in the aftermath of a silent apocalypse. They can be found @gnollfriend on Bluesky and Twitter.



Erica Leslie Weidner



Erica Leslie Weidner (she/they) is based, in New Jersey, and based in New Jersey. She is the founder and editor-in-chief of underscore_magazine. When she's not writing, she's at her day job doing badass librarian stuff. She can be found @parawhim on Twitter.



Rory G.

Rory G. (he/they/هو) is an Arab-American horror writer. They can be found @gilhouligan (twitter/insta/tiktok), @digital mythopoeia (youtube/tumblr)

Blue Midnight Canis



Blue Midnight Canis (she/her) is a queer wolf of a trans woman living in southern Ontario. Under a previous name, she was a 2022 Hugo finalist for her short story "Unknown Number." Her writing has previously appeared in Werewolves Versus: Everything, Transcendent 4: The Year's Best Transgender Speculative Fiction, and Your Impossible Voice. In addition to being an author, she is a statistician, film geek, cat parent, poet, and increasingly indefinable creature hovering somewhere between "monster" and "MILF". She can be found @azurebitch.bsky.social, azurecanis.itch.io.



nat raum



nat raum (they/them) is a former party animal and current inside dog, findable online at natraum.com. They're a multimedia artist whose published and forthcoming books include *fruits of the valley*, *with gasoline*, *this book will not save you*, *random access memory*, and many more. nat is the editor in chief of *fifth wheel press*, a queer publisher of literature and art, and the host of *FRUITCAKE*, a quarterly queer reading series in Baltimore. If they're not on their laptop, you can probably find them reading indie poetry books and drinking a Dr. Pepper. They can be found on socials @gr8earlofhell.



Elizabeth D

Elizabeth (she/her) is a writer born and raised in Singapore, whose past works have appeared in publications like *splooosh!*. Prose and poetry writing are her predominant modes of storytelling, though she has dabbled in other forms as well. She hopes to publish a novel at some point in the future.



Athamae Atack

I'm Athamae/Athy, a trans lesbian lover-girl poet in her 30's, from Auckland. I care deeply for my communities and friendship, and love connecting with other artists and LGBTQIA+. While primarily my works focus around the themes of love & lesbianism, I also create darker works related to mental illness. I'm working on curating enough poetry to publish a collected works.

Feel free to say hi <3

Instagram.com/F3ck73ss



Rebecca Fearn

Rebecca (she/her) writes poetry and short stories. Her favourite genres are magic realism and horror, as well as stories about everyday life with unexpected twists. Her writing is dark and unusual, channelling the strangeness of the world. She does not shy away from reality, painting it in a more obscure and gritty light. She can be found @beccawriting on twitter.

Till Kallem



Till Kallem, Ph.D. (they/them) is a transmasculine biochemist from San Francisco who currently lives in Liverpool. Their poetry explores the tender and brutal moments that accompany queerness and otherness in young adulthood. Their work can also be found in Adult Groceries and Corporeal.



Pessimist

I'm Pessimist - Pess for short - I'm an trans artist who largely makes art related to transformation kinks. Recently after some experiences and some introspection I have been merging kink and autobiography to sort of explore creature adjacent feelings. Pessimist (she/they) can be found @pessimist.bsky.social



thank you

THANK YOU SO MUCH for reading this issue of DOG TEETH!

If you liked what you read, please share it with your friends and visit the contributors to let them know how wonderful you thought their work was!

If you're interested in updates on the progress of future issues, website updates, and more, sign up to DOG TEETH's newsletter! We're DOG TEETH NEWS on Substack; if you subscribe, you'll get updates on submission windows, issue themes and progress, and interviews from contributors in your inbox!!

If you want to join the pack, submit to the next issue! Issue five's theme and submission guidelines will be announced soon, so keep your eyes on the newsletter for submission window dates and updates on what exactly that theme will look like! You can also find us on Bluesky @dogteethlit.bsky.social.

Thank you so much again and don't forget to check out the contributors and their other amazing work! It would mean the world to us if you'd let them know you loved their art, and shared it with your friends!

See you in the next one and stay safe + strange,

Jack

