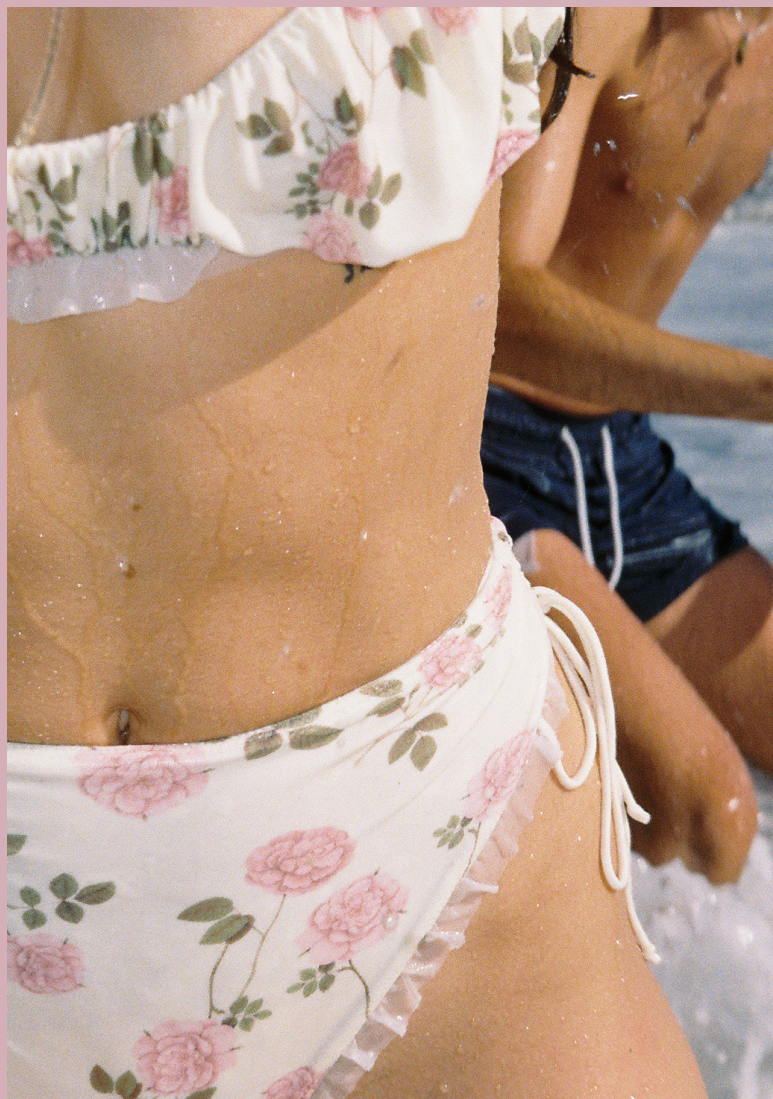


ZENIADA



FALL 2019

ZENIADA

POETRY & ART MAGAZINE

Johns Hopkins University

ZENIADA seeks poetry that TALKS HARD and art that CURLS
the floorboards like smoke billowing from the mouth of a small
god and SMACKS like 5 gum and a mean girl's SLAP.

Cover art: Tyler- September sea by Allegra Samsen.

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FALL 2019

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Qing Ming

Dark orange nights
Sweaty fingers plugged in my ears
popcorn fire crackers combusting
Mama drew a circle
Green glint on the plastic lighter
Tingling scabs on my knee
My fingers mirrored each other
under respect.
the bells tinker
coarse voice
splashing
Lights from streetlights,
my cornea
smoke
reaching
I hope
across mountains
That night I did not think about birth, death nor flowering hypotheses,
I dreamt of nothing but

lasted for a few days after.
drown out the penetrating explosions of
with dying stars
on the ground with white chalk.
a fire was born
as jumpy sparks grazed my hair
I heard
a taxi driver's
and water from seafood restaurants
onto the street.
and stars burrowed their way into
watered
of burning paper money
into the sky
and prairies
not even love
within darkness

shuffled
when buddha saw my little head drooping
Tracing prayers in orange darkness
on bicycles selling incense sticks
after cigarette years,
fire
and stars burrowed their way into
blooming pieces
they could find their way among souls of wandering warriors
lights

JIA YI (ADY) ZHANG

Cyclops

A strange bug is in my eye
crawling and lurking
in the soft fleshy corner, this
raw and uneasy form, the
panicked spasm of unfamiliarity
and some desperate rest
between blinks
as if to collect salt and water
under its translucent wings, before
our next fruitless attempt
to set it free.

MARIELLE ASENSIO



RACHEL JIANG, DREAM PARK

Little Pinto Lady

The smell of peeling pinto beans over steaming water,
As you say, *in Texas sometimes we'd find scorpions*
hiding at the bottom of the bag.

Shake it to animate the jumping beans
Like fleas off the dog's back
Struggling for air in the summer heat,

Scratching dry skin
Eczema on my forearm because
This is cold for a Texan.

Citrus lemon hair dye
To lighten the roots,
As you say, *it's fun to pretend.*

I take in the heat of the sun the
only warmth I found, in the backyard filled
with my favorite dragonflies, night time

pool light on, buzzing with the cleanest
flies I'd care to remember.
But now when I smell horchata

I want to run to the kitchen,
poke dirty fingers in the hot pot,
licked clean, scolding.

You cared in ways foreign to me
like your native tongue,
we could not speak

So we'd eat.
freshly cut watermelon on the yellowed grass,
Eat. Eat till the food could not be suppressed.

Eat like it is all the love in life I never gave to you.

SARAH NOLTE

Happy Anniversary

not to my mother and father but to the house that raised me, on Park, within her
walls as is if she conceived me. Summers insulate her humid breath like pores on
human skin
her creviced windows and doors breathe in cold evening winds while the sour
lemonades we drank made
our hairs stand, our bodies shiver, glistening in our stickiness, the taste of
salt from our sweat stains the living room couch—we melt like plastic.

ALEXANDRA AUBRY

Saba (Grandfather)

We used to say you had bird bones.
I remember scuba diving,
The instructor strapping weights to your belt—
So many your suit begged to peel away from your skin-and-
bones frame.
Your partner swam above you, one hand on your back,
pushing you downwards.
Still you floated helplessly upwards,
Towards the air.
No intent or resistance,
Just a shared, bemused interest in a body beyond your
control.
It wasn't water that took you.
Polluted air filling eager lungs
I watched your feathery softness succumb to crumbling
ashes,
Your gentle smile cracked with anticipated goodbyes.
To the future graduations you'd never see,
The summer trips still unplanned,
Wishing for so little:
One more sunset,
A glass of wine,
Another cigarette
You held no anger,
No resistance.
Your weightless body never did believe in fighting the
inevitable.
And so you rose gently
With collapsed lungs
While I studied an ocean away.
Feathery softness turned to ashes,
Obscured by rising smoke.

GAIA DENISI



REBECCA PENNER, ABSTRACTION 1.1



YVETTE BAILEY-EMBERSON, RECLINED FIGURE

stitch

summer solstice, air threaded with seed ants.
on fire.
trees laced with pearls, children playing
hide and seek, muddy hands, scraped knees—

the summer a nodule
budded on dad's lung,
2 centimeters, smooth.
i'd listen as he coughed for minutes on end.
i never liked how he'd lock himself
in his room, wouldn't open
no matter how many times i knocked.
how he wore his pajamas all day
like he was already a corpse.

the air purifier's slow hum
filled the house,
cold-pressed celery and ginger juice
making me think of when we used to
pick strawberries every summer.
now he is taking it all back,
the sticky sweetness back to the fields,
red as the blood he coughs up.
the air purifier's death hymn
choking me to sleep.
i crossed my fingers, felt blade
shave flesh, cut a piece of his lung.

now i am wrapping gauze around his chest,
counting every stitch,
the reds and purples healing over,
the layer of fat around his belly
thickening like jam—dead ants, yellowing trees,
children playing hide-and seek. muddy hands,
scraped knees. i am painting headstones,
clenching time in my fist,
breaking my fist
as each stitch blooms again,
turning into a knot.



JIEUN YU, SINFUL

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MARIELLE ASENSIO is an English and Creative Writing major at the University of Iowa, with additional focuses in Art and Environmental Sustainability. She hopes to continue incorporating art and nature in her writing.

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SARAH NOLTE is an undergraduate student at San Jose State University majoring in English. She enjoys writing about the human condition, emotional turmoils, and deeply seeded generational traumas. She is from southern California and when she is not writing, she enjoys the solitude of natural exploration and reading.

REBECCA PENNER studies Film and Visual Arts at Johns Hopkins University, though is currently on a Fine Arts exchange at University of the Arts London, Chelsea College of Art. In her work she explores the relationship between the subconscious and interpersonal relationships. You can see more of her work on Instagram at @rebecca_penner or at rebecca-penner.com.

ALLEGRA SAMSEN is a twenty-year-old artist based in Los Angeles working in media of photography and collage. Her work explores visual ephemera and how to photograph past traumas through displaced objects. She attends the USC Roski School of Art and Design.

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