

# ZENIADA



WINTER 2022



# 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: collision by Olivia Schrecengost.*

# WINTER 2022

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# The House is Burning

We brew fennel tea and blacken  
bread in cast iron, burnt slices  
smoking in the house with slacken  
intention at the bottom of the pan.

We drag ourselves to Blueberry  
Lake in our mothers' vintage bikinis  
and lay our bodies out, a cemetery  
of fish drying in the midday sun.

On another day we forget to turn  
off the stove and the kettle whistles  
all day. The house begins to burn  
while our bodies sink in the water.

*SOPHIA DANUSZAR*



OLIVIA SCHRECEGOST, OBSTRUCTION



# My Father Is

My father is a book  
I ride in the middle seat between two book-ends

The spine cracks, the pages fall open  
I fit in the thin space between.

My father is a ticking watch  
I focus on the view behind  
Trapped in a room of one-way glass  
Owlsh and gouging, the pain of stretching too far  
Burns my neck red like the sun through the driver side window.

The sound grows quieter  
As I drive away  
Ticking slowly now.

He looks so small lying there,  
In the grass,  
In my rearview mirror.

My father is a porch light  
Sitting and swaying peaceful  
I sit under the sun thinking of nothing  
But the pages he read to me

One day in the summer.

My father sinks away, he is chocolate chips into pancake batter  
I fight in the ring of my hippocampus  
He fails, fast and slow. I know I will follow.

EMMA ASHLEY

# my primavera, my pretty spring, let me show you how to fold a fitted sheet

fuck a mom poem it's  
enough about the  
boat walk spittled  
mother tongue m-  
y mother never made  
it out the bushes. nor  
did hers and now it all  
makes sense. relax.  
enough about the  
blood. what about big  
boobs spilling out of  
nightgowns what  
about skinny comb-like  
fingers combing matted  
hair and what about a  
cry. what about calling  
me little cookie little  
bear when we bad fight  
what about little spring  
everytime and every  
time right before she falls  
asleep. i don't answer the  
phone like i keep forget-  
ting now it's too late to  
bury the hatchet. or dig it  
up it doesn't matter today  
we're both 7 waking up  
hungry. enough about  
returning home fuck home i  
fashion houses in a dingy  
moka pot i wasn't in the  
room when she practiced  
teacher speeches anyway.  
sometimes she throws wine  
glasses and sometimes

she hits to break even.  
nothing about this is el-  
egiac i just like how she  
can't remember any of  
her own inventions. my  
mother. mother exodus.  
Big Lady don't you know  
none of this got anything  
to do with passports or a  
bible burning bushes is  
when you come into my  
room all sleepy-like urged  
to piss me off and ask to  
be held. mother is how  
you'll watch me wrap this  
whole body all around you.  
every night you kiss me  
like it's never been a home  
to return to in the first  
place so now that it's storm  
out when you crack my  
door open every morning  
in a ratty robe i got you a  
couple years back i find my-  
self stuck in an effort. quiet and  
relearning how to whistle.  
me kissing my teeth you  
kissing yours. smacked up-  
side the head and pretty you  
and a little angelface. every  
new day i discover how to  
mercy. underneath a blanket  
i am skinless. in the dark i find  
it is you that i mother.

*RENEE MORALES*



REBECA FUQUEN, ORIGIN

## Chinks in the Armor

*The Chinese Exclusion Act was the first and only major federal law to explicitly suspend immigration for a specific nationality.*

Distilled mahonias arraign  
    bespoken flesh—delineating  
    frontiers:  
    the earthen quilt  
that blankets the roof of my grandfather's mouth  
as he gambols through jade levees—  
my grandma in the distance,  
illuminated by moonstruck love;

    That which marks our unifying pursuit—  
the maw where all blood rivers  
inevitably converge—blindness obscured by  
ancient shadows.

There, we envision family.  
envision unburnished tables still splintering—  
    and jars of pickled shishitos nestled  
    close—platonic throngs along  
    slanted sills,

lighting slivered kaleidoscopes  
    across the shedding walls.  
Envision bones—good bones—holding them up.  
and then tell them they aren't worth  
faces of their own.

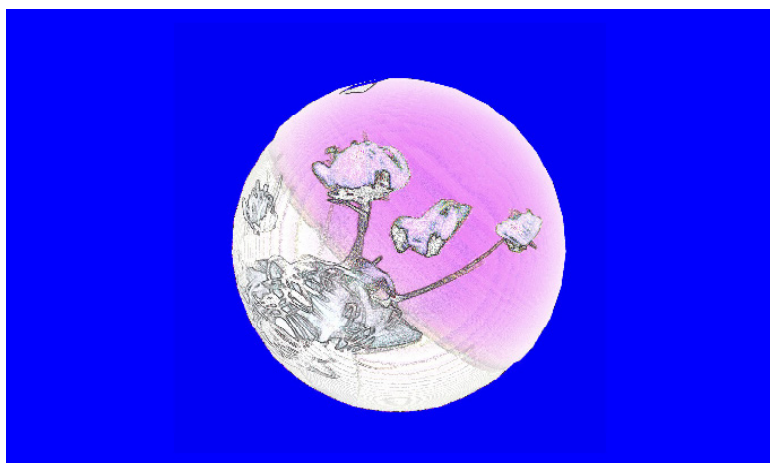
# Orange Season

I hold unripe olives between my teeth for barter.  
I do not crush them, but spit; push in splintered fingernails,  
remove the pit. I dissect them the way the orange cat  
dissected a lizard, then lapped from the shallow pool.

To heed the preservation of a metal sign, I swim first  
without showering as I did always, wait for the sound  
of shattered terra-cotta on sidewalk that does not exist.  
Always a pestilence to evade. Always a bit tongue.

The cicadas have been crying for a family they can't remember,  
a whispered prayer in a tongue I do not deserve to know,  
harmonizing is innate dissonance. All I can hold onto are oranges  
even though orange season has ended.

*ALEX BEHM*



YANG, UNTITLED

## Mr. Congeniality

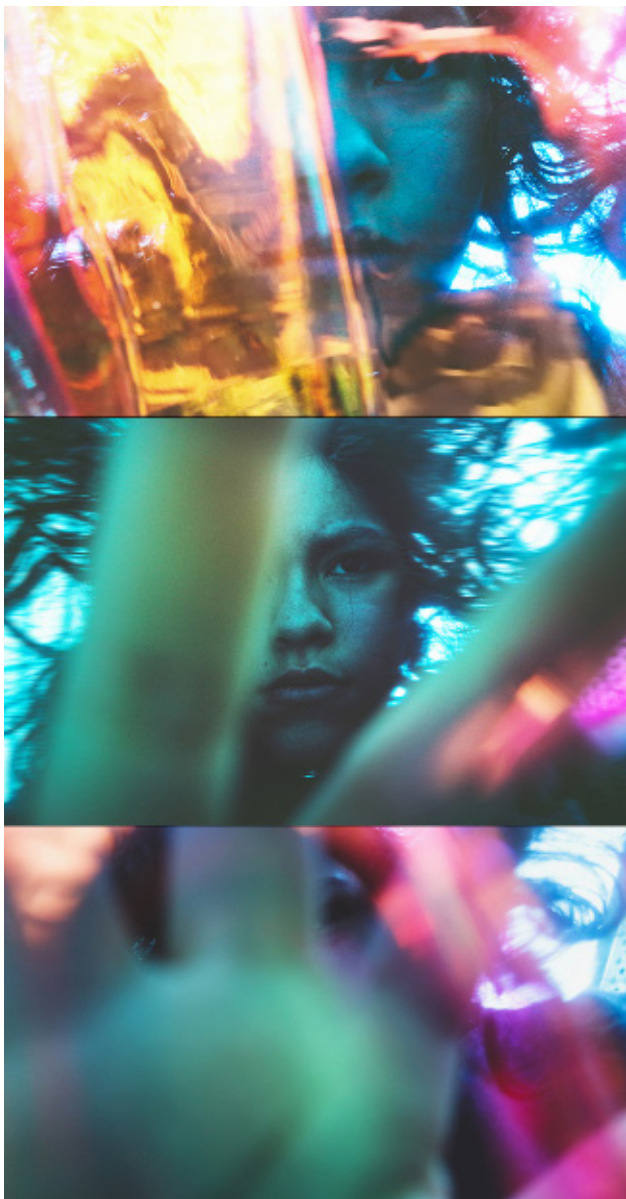
I lend an ear to those adoring their own echo  
and sell them on a landfill of lies, shaken or stirred.  
Barstools moan about black coffee breath  
And a loosie bummed – the air stained.

We fear a true phrase.  
The adorer hearing them  
and my uttering of one.

More infomercial than monk – I am the patrons, the patrons are me,  
belligerent and agreeable, a slouching corpse,  
a painted smile, propped up by ibuprofen poles and inner fibs.

*NICHOLAS SALES*





*DARINKA ARONES, FEAR*

# Hand

There is a girl in the car next to me.  
Not a woman—a girl.  
Because in this moment I am also a girl.  
I am young and small and I have not yet learned

How to slice the words I want to say  
Out of my throat  
Like a hunter skinning a rabbit.  
I am the rabbit  
I should be The Hunter

There is a girl in the car next to me  
And her hand is                   there  
On my thigh

There are things I have not told her:  
                                  like how the backseat of her car  
is quicksand on fire, or  
                                  how her hand weighs more  
than my whole self

More than the leg it rests on  
More than all my skin  
                          if it were sliced and lain  
                          in a pile below my bloody skeleton.

I am waiting  
                  for my words to fizz out like beer,  
But all that surrounds me  
                          is molasses air with a  
                          hot wax body  
                          and a red wine grip around my neck

I am gasping  
I am gagging  
I want to tell her where she should go

I want to

staple a map to the backs  
of her hands,  
strap an alarm clock between her legs  
and tell her to run.

I want to

push her out the car door  
leap across the gear shift  
and drive until I see mountains

I want to

dig a grave with my bare  
hands  
and chase her until she stumbles into it

I want to

stuff strings down my throat  
with fish hooks  
knotted through their fraying ends,  
wiggle the spool around until it latches  
onto the words stuck in my throat

And with each tug

I can stay quiet

The words will tell her to move

To leave

To take her hand off of me

but i have no string

and i have no fish hooks

and her hand likes to move

wherever it pleases

MAIA SCHWALLIE

# The Metal Man

*54°18.235' North 08°34.545' West*

Bloodless captain,  
You wake to light unraveling like a skein  
tracing lost hands when waves crest.  
No man is as honest as in silence.  
Sound is born for ruin.

Quiet collects  
like dust on your coat, which is  
the color of the sea you steward,  
the color of the sea that batters  
your people and your shore. A small  
cruelty you can afford. One man  
among a thousand currents.  
That requires  
a certain kind of meanness.

You blame no siren—know the  
ocean comes with its own music. Watch  
us imprint ourselves in the sand,  
laugh burial rites for makeshift graves.  
Watch as we sink into the tide speaking  
saltwater prayers.

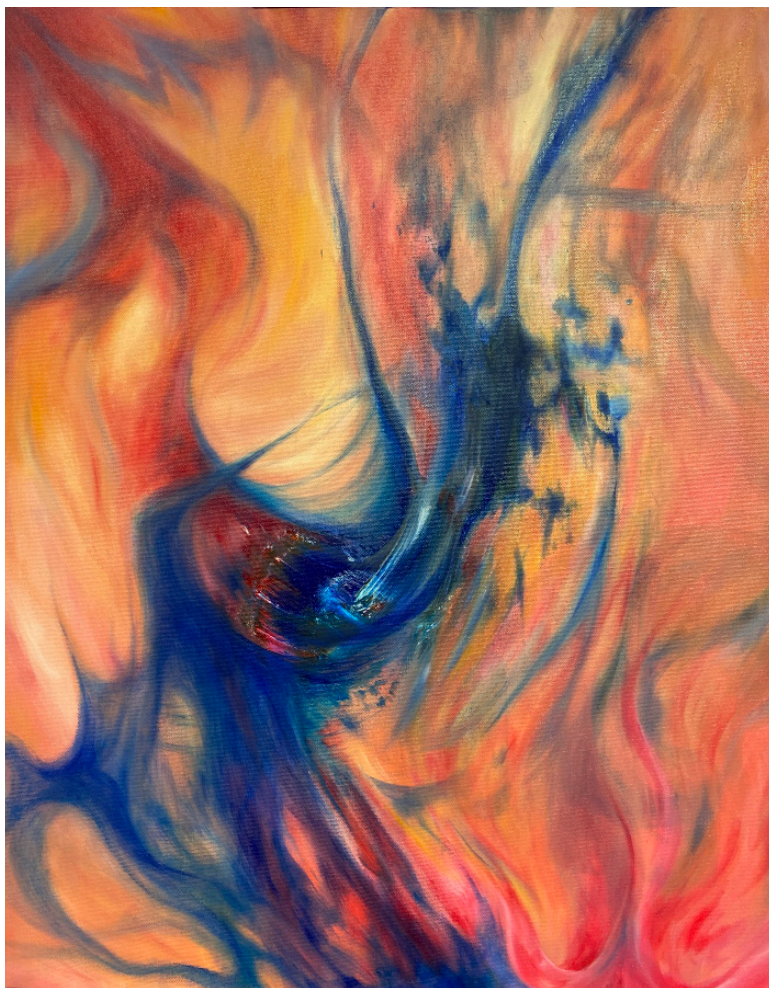
There's a beach in Japan with sand  
like calcified stars.  
We drown and hope to be carried to it:  
the way the body seeks return to  
heaven, the way we're destined to seek  
the water in other people.

ANGEL ZHONG

# The Fire Starter

My recurring dreams are prone to spontaneous combustion, so I sleep with a fire extinguisher next to my bed. Sometimes, a rabbit sits on my shoe and self-immolates by sneezing, and sometimes I play chicken staring at a solar eclipse. Most nights, I drive a plane down a highway as the cockpit goes up in smoke. I crash head-on into an 18-wheeler and the tanker explodes into a supernova. On those nights, I wake up and blast myself in the face with the fire extinguisher's cold foam. On those nights, my brain bursts into flames until my alarm clock tears a hole in the end of my dream. I wake up. I go to work. Somehow, I've never been burnt by the fires behind my eyes. My morning body temperature hovers around a reasonable 99°F. I've been growing my hair out all summer. I sleep with my earbuds in. Some nights, when my fire extinguisher is empty, I sit up, close my eyes, and I stare at the flames until they shrink into stars at the back of my mind, and I watch as they take their place in the dim constellation at the edge of my nights. When I finally fall asleep, an old man shoves his hand in a stove and tells me, "Fire can't burn what it already turned to ash." On those mornings, I wake up knowing I am that fire. I am that hand. I am that ash.

*ROBIN ARBLE*



MARIA SOBOLEVA, ECSTASY, COLLAPSING ON A BREATH



# CONTRIBUTORS

ROBIN ARBLE is a poet and writer from Western Massachusetts. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Oakland Arts Review*, *Beestung*, *Door Is A Jar*, *Pøst-*, *Brazos River Review*, and *Overheard Magazine*, among others. They are a poetry reader for *Beaver Magazine* and the *Massachusetts Review*. She is a third-year student at Hampshire College, where she studies Literature and Creative Writing.

DARINKA ARONES is a visual artist born and raised in Lima, Peru. Currently, she pursues a BFA degree in Studio Art at New York University. As a Peruvian immigrant and artist, Darinka is interested in showcasing artworks that portray her emotional adaptation to the US. In her art, she uses saturated colors to create and highlight the surreal sensations that migrating had on her inner self: homesickness, anxiety, melancholy, and grief.

EMMA ASHLEY grew up in the suburbs of Chicago and is currently an undergraduate at the University of Southern California studying Creative Writing and French. She loves reading, taking photos, sleeping in tents, and rewatching *New Girl*.

ALEX BEHM is a junior at Haverford College studying English and Classics. While not reading or writing, she enjoys performing improv comedy. Her work can also be found in *The Allegheny Review*, *Shoegazing Arts and Style Magazine*, and *Milkweed Literary Magazine*.

SOPHIA DANUSZAR is a junior at Johns Hopkins University studying Film and Creative Writing. Her poetic endeavors also include analog media and experimental animation. Sophia can be found looking at stray cats, eating cans of tinned fish, and luring stray cats with cans of tinned fish.



# CONTRIBUTORS

REBECA FUQUEN is a current undergraduate pursuing a dual degree in Animal Science and Studio Art at the University of Maryland, College Park. Their most recent work involves a journey of growth through childhood experiences, breaking free from expectations, and relearning how to express themselves through art.

RENEE MORALES is a sophomore at Columbia University studying English Literature and Creative Writing. She is a Cuban-American writer from south Florida who “therapizes” her feelings about Latinidad and girlhood through art. When she’s not writing, she’s cherishing all the dogs sashaying down at Riverside Park.

NICHOLAS SALES is an undergraduate at Rowan University majoring in Psychology with a minor in Writing Arts. He is an aspiring poet aiming to understand himself and others with more clarity through his poetry.

OLIVIA SCHRECENGOST is a senior pursuing a BFA in Painting, with minors in Book Arts and Printmaking, at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). She uses painting to depict the human form in conjunction with objects and interior spaces, often experimenting with perspective to alter the perception of ordinary subjects and events. Olivia’s artwork promotes appreciation of the everyday in order to inspire deeper connection inwards and outwards.

MAIA SCHWALLIE is a sophomore at Haverford College majoring in English and Gender and Sexuality Studies. You can find more of her work in Haverford’s literary magazine, *Milkweed*. In her free time, she enjoys baking vegan desserts, sewing, and reading poetry with her friends.

# CONTRIBUTORS

MARIA SOBOLEVA is a senior at the University of Maryland studying Studio Art and Human Development. She is passionate about understanding and expressing her own emotions, both through language and art.

Currently a student at the Maryland Institute College of Art, YANG is an artist, installation artist, and graphic designer. She is most interested in experimenting with digital painting, particularly with regard to the content of juxtaposing micro and macro scales in nature and technology.

GUIYING (ANGEL) ZHONG (she/they) is a senior at the University of the Pacific studying psychology and English with minors in Writing and Ethnic Studies. She is an Anaphora Arts Residency alumna. Her work has been published in *Calliope*, *Kelp Magazine*, and *The Lavender Review*. She has won the University of the Pacific's Seamus Heaney Prize for their poetry, as well as the First Runner-Up Arlen Hansen Scholarship for their critical and creative writing.

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