

ISSUE 1
JUNE '18

SAD GIRL REVIEW

illustrations by
[@berryraindropp](#)

13 poets

the art of

Marinna Shareef

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contemporary art & text to bring you down

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ISSN 2563-4801

Sad Girl Review is created, assembled, and edited by Amber.

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blossoming, 2017
watercolour & gouache on paper
Rachel Jackson
@berryraindropp

SAD GIRL REVIEW

SUMMER BUMMER

edition

what's inside?

NEW POETRY BY

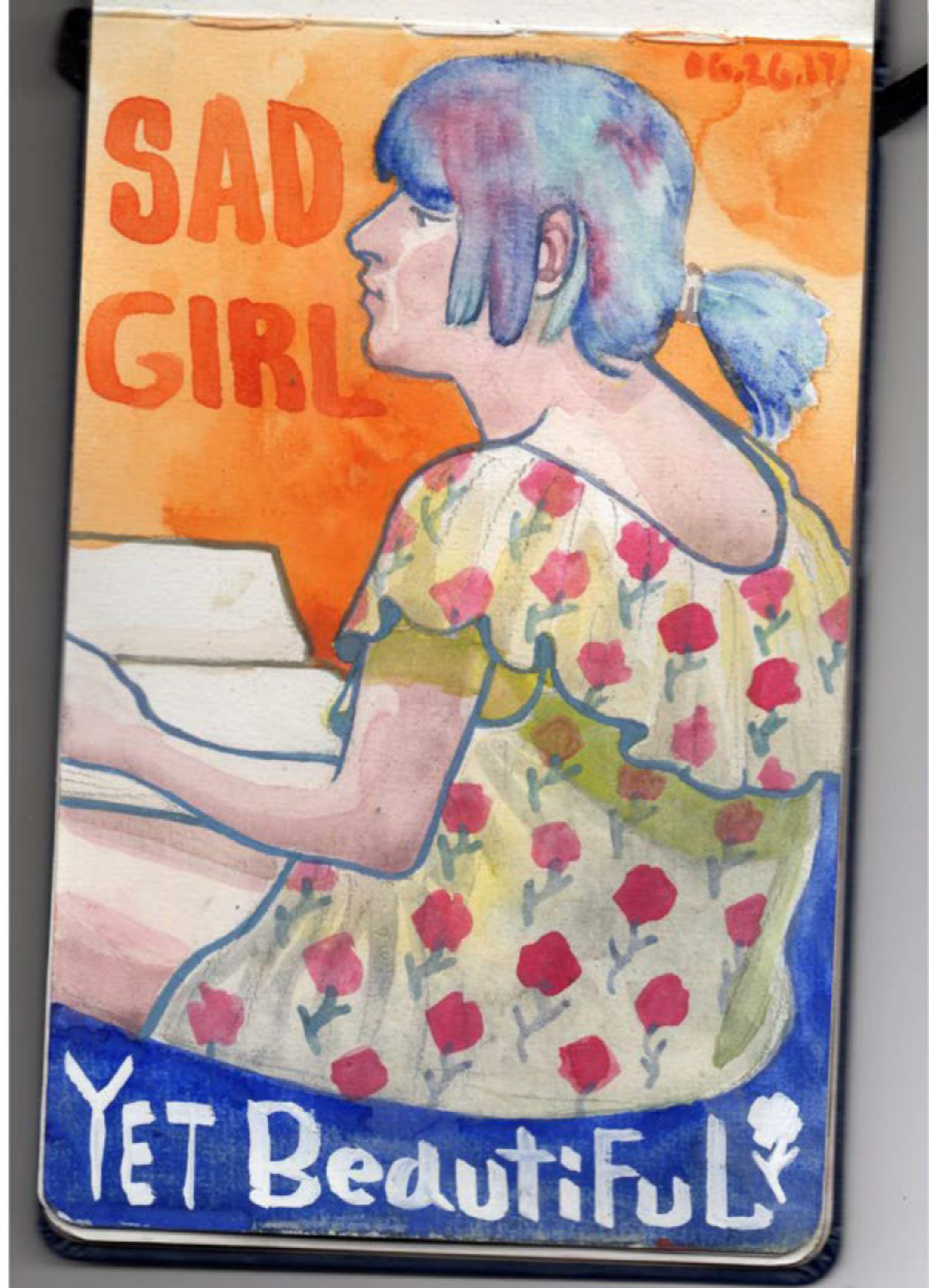
Dessa Bayrock
Katie Clarke
Ashante Ford
Jessie Janeshek
Courtney LeBlanc
Ruth Lehrer
Miss Macross
Vanessa Maki
Michelle McMillan-Holifield
Jenene Raveslout
Nixi Schroeder
Nora Selmani
Arielle Tipa

FEATURED ARTISTS

Rachel Jackson
Marinna Shareef

SCRIPTS & PHOTOS BY PLAYWRIGHT

Danielle Wirsansky



Sad Girl / Yet Beautiful, 2017
watercolour on paper
Matthew Fox
@matthew.fox.artist

from the editor

This magazine was inspired by *Sad Girl / Yet Beautiful*, a painting by artist Matthew Fox.

Sad Girl Review is a collection of bittersweet works that represent various facets of the feminine experience. The poets and artists in this issue speak of diverse topics including mental illness, divorce, unrequited love, complicated histories, petty annoyances, and how we view ourselves. But these creators also use unexpected, vivid, and colourful language and imagery to illustrate their concepts. They blend melancholy with beauty to come up with new and interesting ways of expressing themselves.

I aimed to make the *Summer Bummer Edition* a fun road trip through tough times— so grab your emotional baggage and get into the back seat. I hope you enjoy our first issue together.

Amber ♥

Editor, *Sad Girl Review*
@ambervisualartist

Amber Morrison is an emerging cross-disciplinary artist from Nanaimo, BC. She completed her BA in Visual Art and Creative Writing at Vancouver Island University in June 2018. She won the Visual Art Major Award of Excellence, Best Performance at VIU Create Conference, and Nanaimo Art Gallery's Achievement Award in 2018. She has also won awards in painting, art history, sculpture, curation, and creative writing. Her work can be viewed at www.ambervisualartist.com.



Selected Poetry

FURY

Dessa Bayrock

I am holding fury in my mouth, quiet,
surprisingly and dully quiet, like industrial cleaner
pooling in the corners of a kitchen,

the sort that burns, chemically burns
with prolonged contact. Of course it does;
of course it does.

You look for sharp edges, and miss it.

I, on the other hand, miss nothing
and on the corner of my street
graffiti on the back of an electrical box

reads *stoic, stoic, stoic,*

so of course I am;
of course I am.

Dessa Bayrock lives in Ottawa with two cats and a variety of succulents, one of which is growing at an alarming rate. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in IDK Magazine, Cotton Xenomorph, and Spy Kids Review, among others. You can find her, or at least more about her, at dessabayrock.com

WAKE

Katie Clarke

We are still making women out of lace and silk and soft skin
Still making women into waists and busts and weakness

Syrupy, sticky bodies that we cloud in feminine smoke and choke on cloying perfume
A wake spreads behind her, an inescapable identity

If she stops she will sink and drown in all those contradictions: sweet, silk, saccharine
But she stays afloat, trying not to break the glassy lake with her movement she is slow, steady, consistent

Not daring to look back at the disturbance of her femininity, rivulets of choice and chance that only grow
stronger as she asserts herself, gains speed across this water, trying to catch up to an identity she can call
her own

Her gender spreads behind her steady pace, canvassing the lake in pinks and golds and mascara that stains
tired eyelids and smudges where the wind pools in the corners of her eyes

Her cheeks are flushed in the wind with pink and we see her in technicolor, now

Before the motor cuts, her figure flashes black and white and on land they try to identify a sinking boat

A drowning body has no colour no taste no smell but the lake, entombing her in an identity that does not
part the stilled waters, that does not ask for interpretation

Emancipated from her tiresome womanhood
She is still

Born and raised in Ottawa, Katie Clarke moved to Halifax last September, where she's currently studying Psychology and Contemporary Philosophy at the University of King's College. Her work has been published in Northbound and Notable, an Ottawa magazine for artists, and the Fathom journal at Dalhousie University. She has a forthcoming chapbook with Dancing Girl Press of Chicago. You can find her on Instagram @katieclarkest

kiss of death

Vanessa Maki

i'm pretty damn sure // that you've got the kiss of
death// i mean the first time we kissed// a piece of
me // clearly slipped away// the logical part// your full
lips brushed against mine// like stars were aligning //
it was perfect // or at least as close as it gets// things
were already complicated// our situation has al-
ways // shaken me like a rattle// yet even in my dizzy
moments // i still find you// in dark corners of my
mind// in the corners where the sun barely peaks in//
every single place// i always seem to find you

Vanessa Maki is a writer (& other things) who is queer & full of black girl magic. She's been published in Enclave, Faded Out, Rag Queen Periodical, Occulum, Five:2:One Magazine, SYS, horny poetry review, sublet press, Entropy, Susan/The Journal & is forthcoming in Sorority Mansion among others. She is founder/editor of yell/shout/scream & rose quartz journal. Twitter: ahumantornado.

Madcap/Babylights

Jessie Janeshek

Beauticians always talk about my end
and I'll never wear another kind of bracelet again
and my roots are so dirty
and it's hard to be Jayne when Jean was so pure
in white fur exchanging hearts and loops
with Eleanor Roosevelt.

It's hard to be nothing but personality
you ask for sex and I hang up this phone
I break off your horns.

Multiple pursuits make me sleepy
there's this whole pink universe I hate
where people fawn over fairy tales I don't want to engage
but I'll wear all the shoes with big hearts on them
and kill all the men silently
with a powder puff scepter
blue and gold makeup a sick kind of break.

I want to be me again and walk under
that glowing red watertank but time is so weird.
Everyone believes in their horoscopes
and I shit out my pink toys over towers
I surmise and surround myself with my stuffed lambs
covered in dust.

Shake gently, apply color and wait. It's fevered and spooky
but who hasn't jumped on her train?
Criticism shifty-eyed in an alien language
where we meet for cold picnics in a liminal cage
where I've grown antlers and Harlow rabbit ears.

I'll make some money and it will be ok
but the dappled piglet will die.
It's staying light later
but they're skiing hills bare
and the grass bleeds underneath
and would the world be different for anyone
had I never engaged?
I just pace in circles in high-heels low-lit
beauticians tsk-tsking my roots.

Jessie Janeshek's second full-length book of poetry is *The Shaky Phase* (Stalking Horse Press, 2017). Her chapbooks are *Spanish Donkey/Pear of Anguish* (Grey Book Press, 2016), *Rah-Rah Nostalgia* (dancing girl press, 2016), *Supernoir* (Grey Book Press, 2017), *Auto-Harlow* (Shirt Pocket Press, 2018), and *Hard-scape* (Reality Beach, forthcoming). *Invisible Mink* (Iris Press, 2010) is her first full-length collection. Read more at jessiejaneshk.net

my wormwood

Arielle Tipa

seedling,
sapling and gingerbread thief,
behold the ickyness of my orifice, my anatomy

the half-moons and cyanide
i can't ungag
the night pills, the sleep
so itty bitty

my coccyx flower,
my dear and doomed
i reek of you, i remember you

Arielle Tipa is a writer who lives near a haunted lake in New York. She is the Founding Editor of *Occulum*. Her debut chapbook of poetry and prose, *daughter - seed*, is set to release in Winter 2018 from Empty Set Press.



girls, 2017
block print on cotton canvas
Rachel Jackson
@berryraindropp

Tiny Chunks

Courtney LeBlanc

Why, ten years after our divorce was finalized, am I remembering the nickname we gave your balls? Ben and Matt, after Ben Affleck and Matt Damon. I don't remember the context behind the joke only that we found it hilarious and it stuck. Why is this what pops into my head when I haven't held your hand, much less your balls, in a decade? Our relationship distilled into tiny chunks of memory that can be called up or pushed aside. I don't remember your proposal or our vows just that we broke them. I remember the secret friendships I kept, afraid of the jealousy you fed like a hungry pet. And when you discovered the man emailing me you unleashed it, calling me *whore*, *slut*, *cunt*. I don't remember our anniversary or the first time I said *I love you* but I remember the way you spread your arms and shouted *Is this not enough for you?* then careened out the door. I remember sitting in the courtroom listening to the woman tell the judge that her companion *needed to call before he came over* and wanting to laugh but couldn't because you were sitting on the other side, waiting your turn to talk, to fight the restraining order I'd taken out against you when you'd shouted *I'll come into the fucking house and take what's mine! I'll take what I'm goddamn owed – you'll get what's coming to you!* I couldn't laugh, couldn't look at you and when the judge's gavel dropped I knew how completely I had severed us.

Courtney LeBlanc is the author of the chapbooks *All in the Family* (Bottlecap Press) and *The Violence Within* (Flutter Press) and is an MFA candidate at Queens University of Charlotte. Her poetry is published or forthcoming in *Public Pool*, *Rising Phoenix Review*, *The Legendary*, *Germ Magazine*, *Quail Bell Magazine*, *Brain Mill Press*, *Haunted Waters Press*, and others. She loves nail polish, wine, and tattoos. Read her blog at www.wordperv.com, follow her on twitter: [@wordperv](https://twitter.com/wordperv), or find her on Facebook: www.facebook.com/poetry.CourtneyLeBlanc.

itch

Miss Macross

I'm itchy. I've got a brown spot on my back — a physical manifestation of nerve damage from not walking right. It rubs against my bra straps, so I stopped wearing bras and I stopped noticing the stares of strangers.

I'm itchy in my brain and I can't sleep. Last night, I listened to the final transmissions of dying cosmonauts and astronauts. Romarov's frantic Russian tells the same story as the single scream that escaped from Apollo One. Nothing is escaping me and it doesn't feel right. I want to crash. I want to melt through my space suit. My final words spread on subreddits, immortalized and cherished more than anything else I've ever made.

I sleep/somehow/always when I shouldn't and never when I need to. My dreams are stories of me/The Girl in the Box/better and sadder than anything else I've ever made.

Miss Macross is a Pittsburgh-based poet, witch, and painter. She is influenced by spacecraft, witchcraft, and personal experiences with trauma. Her work has been published in Philosophical Idiot, Rag Queen, Train, The Mantle, and Flash Fiction Magazine. You can find her on Twitter @missmacross

Emily Dickinson doesn't like the pop top

Ruth Lehrer

She goes for a twist cap.
She recycles
everything.

Emily dates online
but doesn't show up
for real-time meets.
Love interests left sitting
at the coffeeshop
down the street
drinking lattes, eating big
chocolate brownies
with chocolate chips
on top with the realization
they have been
stood up.

Emily's facebook page is pretty
much blank
except for a picture
of bees and flies
copulating.

She does not tweet.

She orders out.

Deliveries to the doorstep
2 pizzas, a vanilla milk shake,
extra napkins.

The boy leaves her order as usual
on the doorstep
in a paper bag
and a fumbled note
that says
payment eternally due.

Ruth Lehrer is a writer and sign language interpreter living in western Massachusetts. Her writing has been published in many journals including Lilit and Jubilat. Her poetry chapbook, Tiger Laughs When You Push, is available from Headmistress Press. She is also the author of a young adult novel, BEING FISHKILL, published by Candlewick Press. You can view her website at www.ruthlehrer.com

The Séance To Sylvia Plath

Michelle McMillan-Holifield

A trench coated fan of yours
slunk over to me

reciting bits of *Daddy*.
He accused me of butchering

your very essence
with my *Mother* poem.

His distaste for me so visceral, he was sick
to death. I laced up his black boots.

He stamped me back
into the ground.

He is deaf to the plush timbre
of your voice, feminine, fearless

always afraid, sore from months
of reciting one word, that word

scratched through, inserted into a new line
that line revised, shuffled, revisited

until the meaning blurs.
The whole poem is axed.

I have seen his kind.
He delves into your lines

deveins the words, guts the meanings
memorizes your images

the mirror, the lake,
the terrible fish rising like sewage,

He has never felt the fear of a blank page
white emptiness pulsating

against the back of our brains
like dying salmon

forcing the breath from our bodies
forcing us to become something

to produce, to lie
to be our own demise.

He has never bled, drained
by the eventual thumping

of pen against paper
in the ritual of writing

the séance of a poem
that changes no one's life but our own.

Michelle McMillan-Holifield is assistant editor for Edify Fiction and recently completed a writer's residency at Wild Acres in North Carolina. Her work has been included in or is forthcoming in Boxcar Poetry Review, Jabberwock Review, Sky Island Journal, Stirring, The Collagist, Toasted Cheese, Whale Road Review and Windhover among others.



Candy Cigarettes, 2017
gouache on paper
Rachel Jackson
@berryraindropp

COLOR

Ashante Ford

Skin blacker than a chalkboard.
Birthmarks mimicking the shapes of chains crease my wrists
then wrap around my neck,
Punishing me for the sins of others,
I can't breathe.
As my skin turns to night,
I recite my prayers before going out.
I cling to hope as I walk my normal pace.
Skin blacker than night,
Changing with the seasons,
Highlighting my red undertones,
Enhancing my beauty,
My **black** skin.
Radiant as it glows in the sunlight,
Then rinses off into the night—
Basking forever in the moonlight.

Ashante J. Ford is an artist that resides in San Francisco, California. She is involved in a lot of shit: she likes to sing, dance, write poetry, paint and basically anything that requires her to be creative. She runs a personal blog filled with her stylistic art and pretty poetry at <https://spirituallyajar.wordpress.com/>.

found poem 130817

Nora Selmani

woman who tricked love crowned
on first day of trial

romance is a fraud
play a role & suffer

Nora Selmani lives in London and works in academic publishing. She is also co-editor of Porridge, and is a part-time witch interested in gender and diaspora. Her work has appeared in Peach Mag, O GOCE, OCCULUM, and Sea Foam amongst others. She tweets @arbnoraselmani

2 poems by *Jenene Ravesloot*



Imaginary Rooms

Notice how the light washes this building blond, how the brickwork neatly frames each closed window. The appointed rooms, elegant in their simplicity, seem emptied, except for these ghosts on weightless feet who hover above the blooms. Rare orchids, with purple thoughts, perfume in green pots while fronds feather no Mediterranean sky. A shade of blue splashes everything pale as pool tiles; a kind of violence lives here, a hush. Rooms float in brine like formaldehyde fetuses with one open eye. Mirrors flash. The owner is gone. The Siamese cat sharpens her claws.

Poem Full of Black, Black Water

Try to shake up the universe. You'll come up snake eyes because the game is rigged. To set the record straight, this poem isn't about me.

Notice how the moon has cut her cords. She's left the room. And the lame little stars have followed after. No, this poem isn't about me.

Someone is singing, but who can make out the words? The die is cast. I want to assure you. This poem isn't about me.

Each die carries its wound like a badge. Each die sleeps on a bed of salt. Each die hears the sea in its dreams. This poem isn't about me.

A morning star returns and a morning moon too, while something floats to the surface that smells of brine. No, this poem isn't about me.

Jenene Ravesloot has written five books of poetry. She has published in After Hours Press, the Caravel Literary Arts Journal, Connotation Press: An Online Artifact, Packingtown Review, The Miscreant, Exact Change Only, THIS Literary Magazine, and other online journals, print journals, chapbooks, and anthologies. Several of Jenene's poems have been made into video poems by the filmmaker Paul Broderick. She is a member of The Poets' Club of Chicago, the Illinois State Poetry Society, and Poets & Patrons. She has received two Pushcart Prize nominations, 2018.

the art of *Marinna Shareef*

Marinna Shareef is a 20 year old Trinidadian multidisciplinary artist who specialises in manipulating both digital and physical media to portray her everyday feelings. She is inspired by the magnitude and mystery of her emotions that she experiences as someone who deals with bipolar disorder, using visual imagery to organize her thoughts into a way that she can better understand.

Her series, *My First Week on Medication*, is striking look into a very personal medical journey. Marinna says, "The process of finding the right medication is a long and tiring one, especially since antidepressants and mood stabilizers usually take up to two weeks to even begin to work. The first time I took medication, I took some meds that were not suitable for my symptoms, but the doctor I was going to refused to listen. It made me feel worse mentally and physically."

*I Can't Hear Me,
I'm Too Loud.*



I Can't Go To School.

I Can't Go To School.

I Can't Go To School.

I'M GOING DOWN.





a meme about the human condition

by Nixi Schroeder

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALWAYS wants to ride the teacups at Disney • is, like, 8 • looks at their brother across the wheel, blonde hair gold in orange light, streaked • knows they'll never again feel so balanced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a grown-ass adult who still thinks every shiny rock along the highway is a diamond • scrutinizes shiny rocks, but won't look the homeless in the eye • only sees value in the unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the oldest one in the squad • their friends all passed away years ago • shitposts memes about how much they love their children • gets sad when their children are too busy to tag them back
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tweets rants about the history of Marxism • is always high • is probably high right now? • knows how to get up, but is so so afraid to come back down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eats TacoBell in empty bathtubs at 3:00 AM • no, seriously—this is a habitual thing • wonders if they'll ever understand what it is they're craving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • goes to raves to watch humans bioluminesce • the closest they'll ever get to the sea • watches two girls making out against a wall, tongues flashing, not as if they're the last people alive, but as if they're the only people who have ever been alive • kinda weird
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fantasizes about exploring derelict buildings, but is always afraid the floor will collapse • asbestos junky • craves the voyeurism of decay • has spent too many nights in bus depots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a tattoo of a mountain they got off Pinterest • is a Leo • thinks people who buy into astrology are dumb af • "I started making suicide plans, but then I remembered I have an essay due tomorrow" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spent their 18th birthday on a black beach by a black lake • watched the sky turn pointillistic, innumably pinpricked • reached small for their father's hand, wondering if anything was watching back • knows they contain multitudes—but then again, doesn't everything?

Tag urself, lol ;)

Nixi Schroeder is an MA student of English at Truman State University. Her work has been featured by *The FEM*, *Eyedrum Periodically*, *Sweet 16's Not AR 15's*, *Windfall Magazine*, and other publications.



Danielle Wirsansky is a playwright and photographer. She initially became interested in photography when shooting photos for/about/inspired by her plays. Danielle was a founding member and Artistic Director of White Mouse Productions, a theatre company for social change. Her plays and musicals have been produced at festivals around the USA and internationally. She recently completed her MA in History and she is very passionate about telling the stories of the female spies of Britain.

To learn more about Danielle's work, check out www.DanielleWirsansky.com.

Right:

An excerpt from *Devil on the Wall*, a play about Hannah Szenes, who was a real life spy for the British during WWII. This ten minute play gives a snap shot into one night of Szenes' life after she has been captured by Gesta-po forces, when she must make the hardest choice of her life-- does she save the life of her mother? Or the lives of the remaining Jewish population in Hungary?

Featured actors:

Jaclyn Neidenthal, Madeleine Childers, and Ryan Friedman.



KATHARINE:

Let me out! Let me out!

There is no answer, only the yells in the background starting to quiet down.

What do you want from me? Why have you taken me here?
What have I done? I've done nothing, nothing I swear!
You can't just hold people for days.

HANNAH:

They aren't listening.

KATHARINE whirls around, searching for the voice.

KATHARINE:

Who is that? Is someone in here?

The bundle of rags sits up. It is actually HANNAH.

HANNAH:

There is no one out there listening... yet. No point in yelling at them now. Wait for them to come back.

KATHARINE:

Who are you?

HANNAH:

The more important question is why did they put you in here?



Rachel Jackson is a published artist and poet who loves cats, but sadly doesn't have any of her own. Her work has appeared in *(parenthetical)*, and the 2016, 2017, and 2018 issues of *Portal*. Both her writing and art deals with themes of nostalgia, femininity, and mental health. You can follow her on Twitter and Instagram @berryraindropp.

doll face, 2017
block print on paper
Rachel Jackson

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

SAD GIRL REVIEW - ISSUE 2

FALL 2018 — !!!

THE HANDWRITTEN ISSUE!! ♡

LOOKING FOR:

- diary entries
- shitty drawings
- to do lists
- notes
- scribbles
- rough drafts
- and more!
- poems
- reminders
- lyrics

send in by
AUGUST 31,
2018

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