

# CARNIVAL

AN ONLINE LITERARY MAGAZINE



*Mini-Issue #1*

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## PRISON MURALS

He wears long sleeves eternally  
the green continents painting  
his arms from the tribal warfare  
of his youth on the streets of  
Los Angeles and in the cells of  
many state prisons--

Images of demons, infants protected  
by the grace of angels, large bosomed  
women with come hither looks, and  
more demons writhing up his angry wrists

He can't afford to have them removed  
so these relics are hidden in shame from  
public view save for their midnight  
showings when he saunters into the  
kitchen shirtless for a glass of milk  
and I hold my pocket torches trying  
to fathom what the hieroglyphics of  
his appendages mean

— *Kevin Ridgeway*

## STARRY NIGHT

shit, Vincent, i don't think  
you could have ever imagined  
your Starry Night  
would end up tattooed  
on the lower back of this woman  
who on all fours waits on my bed  
looking over her shoulder  
telling me with her eyes  
to hurry up and fuck her

– *Jose Arroyo*

## I DREAM IN TATTOO

Don't hate me for my skin décor  
Hate me for my poisoned smile  
I wear you like the violent inky muddle you are

You fool; I have you black and blue all over me  
My tattoo or my attempt at one  
Part skull and bone, bleeding heart, and lion-griffin

All pieces of what I am and was,  
so far the dreaming is the easiest thing  
It's waking up to your dilapidated ego that scares me

This is not difficult, our love is chemical  
We pay skin to make romance  
and you are the reason for my sniffer's rash

Trust me when I say your tears do brand me  
that the body etchings I carry tell fables  
that are open to the beholder's interpretation

I am content here lying inside you, along your same lines  
I don't mind if the lights dim  
or if the moon suddenly turns chocolate

There is red now, like wine, your eager lips  
wishing to make one with my exterior  
to seal your naked breaths into my unguarded skin

A tattoo or your attempt at one  
This discord has grown too deeply to be whitewashed over  
The hues are so alive that they are tangible

We are touching more than the tips of our fingers  
We are tasting more than damp tongue  
and the scarring is not relevant any more than the pain

– *Samantha Hawkins*

## ALMOST LIKE SAILING

When I want to travel the globe  
and learn a language  
all I have to do is go to you.

What's that, Mon Petit Chou?  
Sanskrit? "Pure bliss" indeed.

Let me trace the ink of the dove  
across the inside of your pelvis.  
Enough for anyone to turn pacifist  
but I will not share this olive branch.

This bird in my hand is definitely  
worth more than two in any bush.

So lead me to your special places.  
What are these hieroglyphics?  
Through the haze of gin & tonics  
the roman numerals appear.

This is for mom and this is for dad.  
Oh god I'll never be able to wrong you  
now allow me to glide up your contour.  
I stop and relish each destination.

I know this is not an anchor;  
everyone thinks it is but I know.  
Sagittarius says we are a match  
So I don't need a spot of my own.

— *Jason Yore*



Bellydancer By *Bronte Williams*

## TANSY

She had one etched in the  
center of her dainty back  
--the image of a flower that  
gave her birth name,

What I wound up with  
after the fire of divorce  
was a singed photograph of her  
in the bath, her blonde locks  
eclipsing the green imprint  
of that wayside flower  
foam gently sliding down  
passed it

— *Kevin Ridgeway*

## TATTOO

*Kid, ya sittin' too close to the TV again.*

*OK, Granpa.*

On the flickering screen  
the black and white admiral  
addresses his troops.

“Men, as you march forth,  
remember how lucky you are  
to have the chance to be a hero...”

*Ah, can't we watch something else  
besides this gobbage?*

“Remember your God,  
remember your Country...”

*But I like it.*

*C'mere and look at something, boychik.*

The old man rolls up his sleeve.  
The child traces a finger along  
the five ancient numerals,  
the blurry blue triangle beneath.

*What's it say, Granpa?*

*It says  
as he points at the TV  
that this man here, is a liar.*

*Wanna watch cartoons instead?*

*Yeah. I'd like that.*

— *Luke Salazar*

## CONTRIBUTORS

**JOSE ARROYO** is a single father of 3 who repairs and maintains industrial and commercial air conditioners at a steel mill in Rancho Cucamonga for a living.

**SAMANTHA HAWKINS** grew up in Jonesboro, GA (but she tells everyone Beverley Hills, CA), and is majoring in Business Computer Systems (though her heart is in English). Her poetry has been published in multiple anthologies and may soon be featured in *Poetry* (if they would only stop rejecting her).

**KEVIN RIDGEWAY** is a writer from Southern California, where he lives in a shady bungalow with his girlfriend and their one-eyed cat. Recent and forthcoming work has appeared in *Underground Voices*, *Quantum Poetry Magazine*, *Red Fez*, *Clockwise Cat*, *Haggard & Halloo*, *The Legendary* and *Hobo Camp Review*.

**LUKE SALAZAR** has an MFA in creative writing from California State University, Long Beach. His work has been published in *Pearl*, *Chiron Review*, *The Ledge*, *Re)verb*, *Spot Lit Magazine*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Beggars and Cheeseburgers*, and *Vulcan*. His poem "Black Friday" won the 2009 Working People's Poetry Contest in *Blue Collar Review*.

Raised by a gaggle of bears in the heart of Orange County, **BRIAN VERWIEL** witnessed his first mauling at the age of 4. Since then, his severely underdeveloped mind has often times taken him to the very depths of humanity. He finds joy in the places others would only find fear and horror.

**BRONTE WILLIAMS** <http://noctix.tumblr.com/>

**JASON YORE** was born in 1987 in San Diego, CA. Currently a freelance tutor and copywriter/editor, Jason spends his free time reading, writing and playing basketball or swimming. He loves to travel when he can afford it, whether it be spontaneous drives to the Bay Area or commandeering a jetski in Costa Rica.

*China Girl: A Tragedy*

*She told me it was the Chinese figure for "Eternal Love"  
Convinced me to get it in a visible place  
As a constant reminder of our love  
Which would last forever.*

*She slept with my best friend  
Shattered my heart, my world  
Now I'm stuck with a tattoo on my wrist  
That actually means "House Special Chicken"*

*— Brian Verwiel*

