



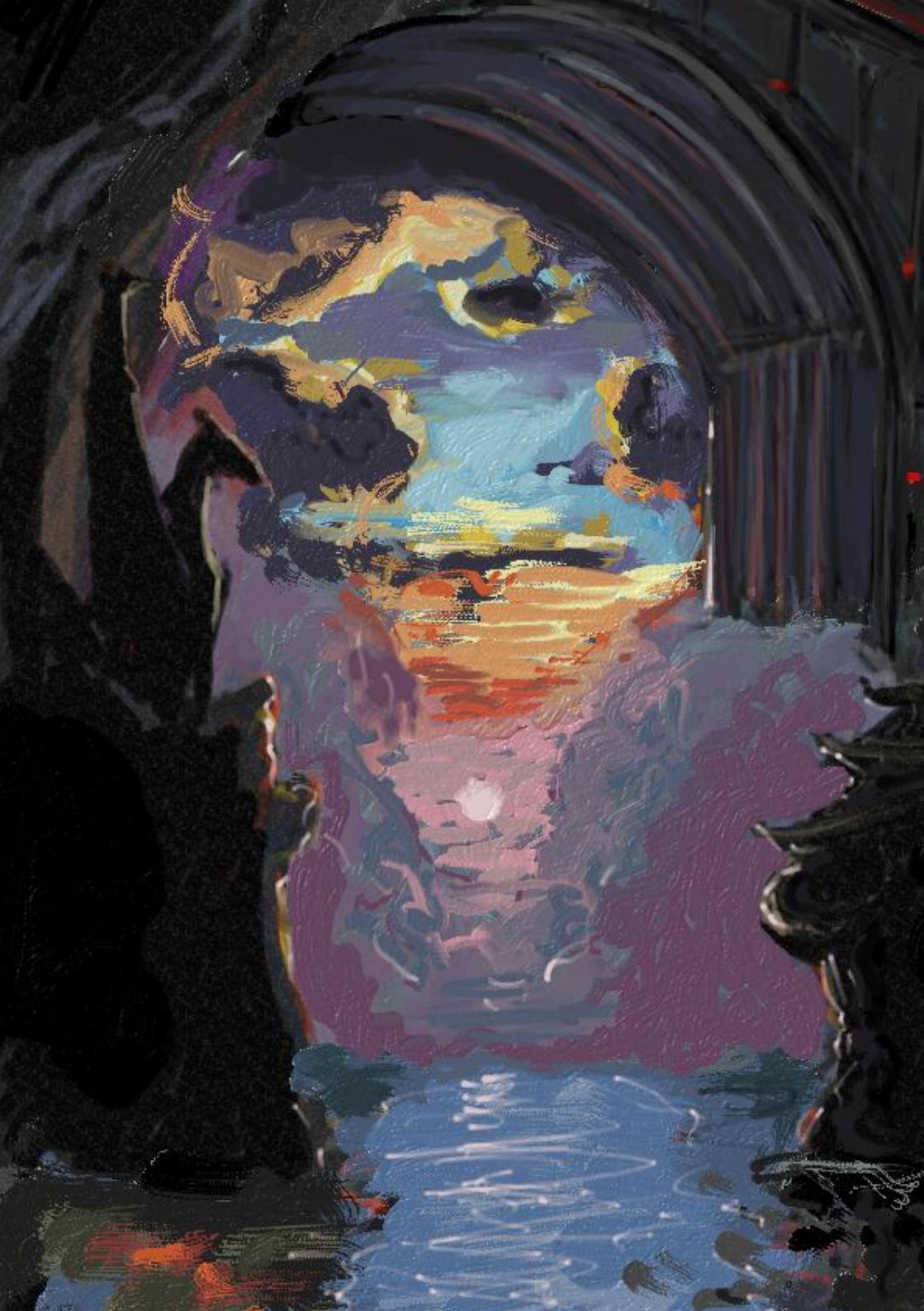
CAESURA



THE TAU ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
LITERARY MAGAZINE



VOL. 2



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Tel Aviv University
The Department of English
and American Studies
Literary Magazine

Caesura

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The Department of English and American Studies

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Editors' Note

Caesura Literary Magazine began as a humble venture to make space for the creative spirit of students of Tel Aviv University's English Department. We were pleasantly surprised at the enthusiasm and engagement of the student body, and the variety of works we received. With the generous support of the Department, Caesura Vol. 1 successfully launched last year. For Vol. 2, encouraged by the kind responses we received, and with the Department's continuous support, we were excited to expand our reach to feature creators from various universities, alongside our core TAU writers.

This year, the original editors and founders of Caesura – Georgi Abramovich, Hadas Blum and Nitzan Shalev – are graduating, and leaving the magazine in the capable hands of Maiyse Abuleil. We would like to thank everyone who helped make this dream a reality, and hope that the creative spirit expressed in this volume will continue to flourish.

Caesura Editorial Team.

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Stray Thoughts about Eden / Daniel Nisinman

The separation of time from eternity was never much of a success.

You see, it has always left one unsatisfied; and all too thoughtful about Eden.

Where poor Adam and Eve were busy splitting-hairs over some trifle matter.

And the promised return was forgotten over the eons, until almost felt like an Eternity of Anticipation.

It was like waiting for your appointed time, With your physician I mean, to offhandedly discuss your cold.

The Language of Rivers / Dina Elenbogen

Five years after the Miracle on the Hudson

Was it because a plane landed in water
like a silver-winged whale
and people waded to shore?

Or because yesterday three tourists jumped in the
Chicago River
following the phone they couldn't live without
It had the names of everyone who'd live without them

Is it because no one knows what rivers give
and what they take away?
What lives underneath when water freezes?

It is too cold to jump in the river in winter and live
Ice floats like lily pads
winds shift fifty degrees in a day
But I'm writing to ask if it was the Miracle on the
Hudson

or the drowning in Chicago
that brought me back to the river

I was dreaming so I could let you carry me at first
The sun was blinding and I was flying against gravity
walking along the narrow bank

I jumped in not knowing I'd swim against currents
next to silver birds and fish-wings that a wind would
appear making the path
unclear That I would call a name

but only the water would answer

***Sometimes Something Just is And You Have to Give it
a Name / Dina Elenbogen***

Before you had language I sang of how *the sun*
was surely sinking down as the moon was slowly rising
You didn't understand the words
were of a day or a world ending
That was before fear
got hold of you before your sister told you
the spirits of our dead
could visit while you sleep

It was before I read you
Birches as we looked out
at winter trees You asked for it
every night until the glue that held
the pages came unstuck
It was before you knew I made poems
before you held a pencil gave names
to everything you touched

On a bridge over the Illinois River

you ask for a poem where you can live
safely a river reflecting
what I have absorbed of you
In your drawings you give me myself
in perfect stillness
lips that sang you to sleep
shades and lines of my face

And here in your own poem I give you the largeness
of your eyes as they took in Parisian Streets
beggars at the Metro overflow of cafes
the bridge over the Seine
Even with your stuffed frog on your lap
you seemed older It was then I understood
that from here on in you will know things
before I can even name them

Ode to a Nutmeg Tongue / Aviva Betzer

here i am with ancient people whose language i no
longer speak

in books of nature

on the screen

via wires

people sing an indian ode, sweet peach to their tongues

here's anna with hollow eyes biting her lips like a
vacuum-cleaner -

wearing nothing but a halo

nothing but an answering machine recording her glow

***Untouched* / Elise Bennet**

see me in a dream and never touch me.

I will appear, softly

a golden halo and soap soaked hands

a clean, translucent shell

worship my fabric clad shape

my veiled un-presence

see me in a dream, only

never flesh, never substance

see what you wish.

and even in your mind

don't plant a kiss upon my virgin palm

do not reach

fingers will never reach

see me in a dream, and in your dream

I will be

Safe

Sonnet I / Leehu Sigler

Remember la fountain flows for love of you,
Memory held in hand, by hand occurring hence,
The droplets fall and crowd the wood with crystal dew,
A squirrel stands, a seagull raps, and rhythm writes
with steady hand along the weeping bench.

How long can silence hold her sway of fear?
As brown and green brushed eyes entwine,
Like trunk and leaves, embrace and reach the clouds they
sear –
But drops will turn to frosted flakes my dear,
and eyes decline, you leave my hand of oak that's
left behind.

But 'tis not yet that frozen fountain lake,
Our shrouding blanket not yet phoenix red,
Mouth to mouth the fountain's ink does freely take,
And swirling songs of summer days do fill
to leap across these hallowed lips and break with
nature's bed.

Remember la fountain flows for love of you,
Hereafter held as palmers' palms, that reach,
and touch your fleeting hand in hair as winter's
wind breaks through.

***What I Was Told* / Rebecca Najjar-Rudick**

Girl, you'd better
get yourself a husband and
quick.

If you get Too Old
there won't be many
left to pick

from. And—
Everyone knows not
to wait Too Long,
that clock is ticking.

Careful that you don't
end up alone, or
with someone below your ranking.

Even worse—

with a man who loved

someone else

first. Be

slick. Your whole future

rides on how well you

suck a dick.

That Gentleness / Eyal Shalom

And that gentleness with which thin trail-marks rush
along the lane

And that gentleness with which a row of palms so
forgotten, catches flames

And that gentleness with which the head parts slowly
from the chest

And that gentleness along with knowledge on this very
morn, and then the rest

And that final gentleness between that do-not-go and that
glowingly good night

Lingering awaken in your shirt, sublime, indifferent to
the light

And the gentleness in the swell that climbs and spreads
along my spine

And the gentleness that in the merciful hush of my bed
reclines

And that gentleness of the knife as it cuts the letter free,
Or that gentleness with which right at this moment's
leaving me

And that gentleness as the fragile shoot recovers

From the axe or from the flame;
Or that gentleness when someone
first asks me for my name.

The Life One Built / Marian Akkawi

Go on and show me the life you've built,
The roses that bloomed as you watered yourself,
The trees, that grew out of seeds,
Standing tall above you,
Protecting you from the rain,
That falls harshly on your face,
The thunders of ominous sounds,
And the sinister rain.

Joy / Noam Negry

Translated from Hebrew by Yaron Regev

The next time I feel happy will be when I rescue a turtle trying to cross the road. I'll stop my vehicle, all the traffic behind me will stop too, but I won't care. It will be summer of course, but I'll feel cold. I'm always cold. Especially my hands, and especially in summer. I'll put him in my open right hand and build a roof for him with my left, creating a temporary home around the one he already has. I'll leave a small side opening to let in light and air, and I'll say: "Look, I'm leaving you an open window." He'll smile, then I'll kiss him on the nose. I'll tell him that with that smile of his, he reminds me of Arnon.

Behind my car, the line of vehicles will be honking and honking. An unshaven man in a black tank top will get out of his car and scream at me: "Who the fuck gave you a driver's license?"

His children will be playing in the back seat and one of them will spill some juice, and his wife will scream,

“Look what you’ve done! Is this what I’ve brought you into the world for?”

She’ll be spanking one of the kids even before the word ‘world’ has died on her lips. The children will cry. The world will shake and rattle, their wailing will be lost in the racket from the crescendo of horns honking.

The row of burning engines will line up behind me, their owner’s aching to strike at me, but my turtle and I - ‘Joy’, as I will decide to call him - will move on in a motion of our own. The house I build for him, with my own two hands, will tremble, the roof will crack a bit. Around the quavering organs contained in my hands, I will feel the pulses, mine and Joy’s. At some point, the two will merge and no one will be able to tell which pulse belongs to whom.

Through our breathing, illuminated by our common house, the turtle that is Joy will enter me, while the man that is me – will enter him. And it isn’t as if we will be switching bodies, histories, families. Each will remain himself, but our bodies will absorb some halo, or at least a fragment of it, of the other. My movements will become slower and Joy will poke his bitty head out of

the window I made with my hands and ask, “Remember the last time you were happy?” I, though, will keep my mouth shut, concentrate on my self-imposed mission - it isn't every day I create a house with an open window for someone.

Of course, they'll set the police on me; the choppers. They'll come with people carrying straightjackets. But a few minutes before that happens, more and more people will lose their patience. They will get out of their cars and rush at me with crowbars, shaving blades, toothbrushes, silicone guns. Joy and I will wonder how much potential violence is permanently hidden in people's trunks, waiting to be released to wreak havoc. Our movements will become earthier by the moment. We will feel the Earth drawing us to her, and we won't know if she seeks to kill us, or to reincarnate us as something new.

Joy will insist: “Remember? Remember where you were?” “We'll get there soon,” I'll reply, to myself, more than to him. All my inner organs will line themselves up, preparing to move to the other side. I will fight my own legs, step by step. In those moments silence will stand

out like the sole, blank page in the middle of an old, much-scribbled-on notebook. No wail, or howl, no blaring of horns will break through into the world. But on the other side of the road, the house I built with my own hands will quiver for a moment. Something, the wind perhaps, will resist my movements, but eventually, after a brief struggle, I will manage to separate the right hand from the left. Joy, his head out of his shell, will sway on the edges of my fingers. He will try to hold on to them with all his might. In a final movement his shell will detach from his body and shatter into smithereens. He will scatter in the depths of that utter other side. “I never really had a home,” he will say. “I stole that one from another turtle who died in a field.” He will say these words, and only then will I recall the last time I had been there, standing over Arnon’s grave. It had been summer then as well. Rain, made of the stuff of melted stars, fell unceasing from the sky. A smile spread across my face. My head, legs, chest, all had been buried with him.

I made my way home – heart only – by hovering. The air tried to comfort me in all the missing places, but it was

only by looking through that groundless comfort that I knew – I had someplace to go back to.

Cry Song / Ari Flanzraich

Cry-songs have reached Jerusalem soil.

An olive tree that once stood alone
in the desert
is now hidden among tall trees
planted by eager settlers: privacy in the Open.

Man crouches
hums sounds lush-green.

Swords are kindled
by a dead choir
incanting History: no encore

Jerusalem is a wilderness.
Isaiah, open your mouth.

Jerusalem is desolate.
Go on, Isaiah,
open your mouth, sing.
He opens his mouth

settles pitch-caught
chants History: cherubim lunge
a final warning: “The Garden has no Poets.”

The angel forsook her lame
so she spoke—
she did not go silent.

She spoke bread
she rose and she did
not incant History:

of Eden, my sweet,
you should have some more.

Like the Cat, but Less Graceful / **Mika Moreh**

It started out innocent, something I could
face in the mirror in the morning and explain
relatively reasonably, pop the kinks
like a chiropractor at his craft.
But then I sort of
kept thinking about it, not on purpose
of course, or even by choice,
exactly. I was just curious.
I should have known that if the cat
did not get away with it, I
certainly won't. And then
it spirals, methodically and inevitably
in a way that could be traced back with paper-trails
to the perpetrator—
a fibre of cloth stood at attention
at the immaculate hemline
of a scarf, tempting me.
It is an unacknowledged universal truth;
no one cares for a loose end.
A laden voice

will whisper wistfully behind my eyes between blinks;
pull it.

I knew what would follow, yet
this is a matter of seeing it, and
more acutely, doing it;
an unravelling.

I am wise—it does not behove the wise to forget their
misgivings,
let alone repeat them. It was already there, this
curiosity, begirded with yearning, all
within my reach; *ex nihilo nihil fit*, little kitty.
Down the rabbit hole you go.

Darkness upon the Rising Sun / Sarah Elkayam

Heartbeat louder than a drum
Afraid to lose it all
Toss and turn the whole night through
Fear a possible fall
Tired and defeated
Strive for perfection
The world is closing in
Darkness
Upon the rising sun.

Genesis / Ethan Dvir

To my right, baby Shloime stares straight at me with those huge eyes that shout wonder. He must be no older than a month, and everything around him is new and exciting. His tiny hands are pressed against Tovah's asymmetrical breasts. Yazek, the father, looks away. Prick. You glanced at her naked body long enough to penetrate her, impregnate her and bring forth this creature to the world, and now it's too indecent to look at her feed it?

I've been stuck here for the past three hours and I'm losing it by now. Baby "Shitty Diaper" seems to enjoy my pain, only staying quiet for the miserable seven minutes it took me to realize my pen exploded and dripped ink all over my shirt, pants, my shoes and two of my fingers. It looks like I fingered a very excited squid. I'm bleeding oil. After this grace period he returned right back to sound noises which can only mean "Hell yeah! This is what I call comedy gold!" In my mind I name it "Little Baby Sadist-shit." When you name something, you claim it, when you claim it, it is yours to control.

I'm afraid of what I cannot control, and these flights are a bundle of uncontrollable things which melt one into the other in a hellish crucible; "The big orgy of the unknown." The thing is, no matter how many times I'll name the objects in my mind, I will never really control them. Who gives a shit about these words that are born in the darkest corners of my mind? The same corners in which I'm tearing people's limbs, drowning their cries with a maniacal laughter. If I'll let it, my mind will color the world blood red. So I don't let it. I write. The words I bring to life are nothing but names that can constrain whatever lies inside of me to the pages I write on.

Sometimes I forget my own name. It's happening right now. I cry in front of a mirror for hours, looking for answers underneath the flow of tears. My tears will drown the the passengers of this godforsaken flight. I will be God executing his bigger plan, and they'll die slowly, choking on their own screams. Who will name me? Who will claim me? Whose fault is it that I'm like this? The airplane's bathroom mirror fogs up and the

smell is overwhelming, so I go back to my seat. Two more hours until landing.

Words have power. Lies do too. People lied to get me on this plane. They said it's just a vacation, that I'll meet people who can help me. I know they said anything they could think of just to get rid of me, to get me off their hands and into that "Hostel," which is actually a place for people who lost their names. But I did not lose it; I misplaced it. Lies do have power, and I'll manage in this new place where I can lie myself anew. Start a clean page. Where big marks of exploded ink are absent. God said let there be light, I say let there be name tags.

Baby Sadist-shit touches my arm and says "dada." Tovah laughs. Yazek is not around. Tovah hands me a glass of water. I drink it. In it were two dissolved pills. Tovah hugs Shloime with one hand, and pats me with the other. I don't even know if Tovah is her real name, or Shloime for that matter, but I called them that. And They are mine now. "He called you Dada, did you notice?" she asks. "I guess he did." Am I his? Is he mine?

“Could you just promise me something?” Tovah’s hair is covered by a traditional cloth, but I can imagine it flowing under, like it probably did when she was younger. “Sure” I reply. Short. Precise. “Don’t forget us.” I nod my head and smile a little. The landing plane vibrates, and my hair tickles my face. I hate it. I don’t even know how my hair got so long during this flight, right at the sides of my face, a little above my ears. Maybe the new place has a barber. The plane touches the ground. Tovah says that this is our new hopeful beginning. I reply that, from what I hear, I’m going where hope dies. We sit in silence for a bit before we get up to take our stuff and leave. In just a couple of moments I’ll become my own new man, responsible for nothing but myself. No one to answer to. A clean slate.

“Yazek, hurry up, our cab will be waiting to drive us to the home.”

***Ivan Karamazov's Devil* / David Israel Aronshtam**

I've spoken to Ivan Karamazov's devil,

He lives not far from me,

He steals cell phones from kids

And sells them.

He has a face that you forget as soon as you have seen it.

He likes to feed the pigeons at the park.

When I was sick he came to visit me and sat across from
my bed in silence for some time.

"Would you like some tea?"

A shudder built its lair inside me.

We all get lonely, even him.