

## WELCOME ISSUE 13

**Слава Україні! Героям слава!**

**(Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the heroes!)**

***Slava Ukrayini! Heroyam slava! Slava Volodymyr Zelensky!***

This issue is dedicated to the Ukrainian saviours and the radical activist freedom loving spirits who have been so unjustly silenced by the monstrous machinery of petty, malevolent governments. We honour and support **Joshua Wong, Agnes Chow, Charles Lim, Ivan Lam (Hong Kong), Loujain Alhathloul, Raif bin Muhammad Badawi and Jamal Kashoggi (Saudi Arabia), Alexei Navalny (Russia) and Roman Protasevich (Belarus), Vlad Buryak, 17 Ukrainian POW, Ivan Safronov dissident journalist jailed 22 yrs (Russia), Taraneh Alidoosti and Mahsa Amini who died in police custody for not wearing a *hijab*. (Iran)**

*Vox tacet refrenata. Ueritas libera voce.*

## **WE ARE THE UKRAINE...**

Clutch the sorrow in your heart and weep the downfall the unjustly dead deserve. There lie poets, there lie makers of music, there lie the artists that make us happen, there lies Everyman; there lies our salvation, once lost, forever forsaken—our light extinguished, our *lume spento*. Wipe your hand across your brow and weep. We in the world, and the world taken by flood. There is no peace without love. Bomb us and see.

## **CP: NOTES TOWARD AN INTRODUCTION TO ISSUE 13**

I wrote this op-ed myself. But how long before a chat bot will do it for me? Our greatest danger as writers is not a lack of conscience but our eventual irrelevance---

our steadily steadfastly progressive obsolescence. Make no mistake, *Grammarly* is only the start and the start has started. This is not good.

Contributing Editor **JOEY S** and I were on the phone and he told me that there is a site called *ChatGPT* from *OpenAI* and that you can feed it key words and it will write a story, poem, essay, whatever. And what's scary is he said sometimes what it sends back is really amazing. This is not good.

*Can we really talk about writing today without talking about freedom---*?  
**(Overheard. Everywhere.)**

*Humanity has become a weapon of mass destruction.* **ANTONIO GUTERRES**,  
UN Secretary-General addressing Cop15 summit. Dec 6/22

*Be still. Be quiet. Pay attention.* **THE BUDDHA**

*"The biggest danger facing humankind is not the demagogue with the sprayed-on tan or the intellectually dyslectic journalist reporting 'his' version of the news. It's the belligerent minority who accept lies and falsehoods as truth without the gauntlet of critical thinking. When that minority becomes the majority we're toast, fiol. We're done like dinner."* CP to writer **NICK NORTH**—an aside while listening to a Christmas lecture on 'How to Enhance the Protein Culture of Your Spunk'

See article on China protests—want freedom in Edge save. Issue 14??

*Aab kam in teshnegi aavar bedast—'seek not water, seek thirst...'* Nadir Khalili quoting **RUMI**

*Many times one becomes disheartened on the path/but ultimately the thirsty pilgrim reaches the spring./ In fact, the water is there before the thirst.*  
**BHAGWAN SHREE RAJNEESH.** A Cup of Tea. Letter 5 (1962)

*Here comes the rain again, falling on my head like a memor-eee.* **SINGING MELODY**/Best Hits, early 2000's

*When any writer looks at a blank page. The story writes itself. All writers are perpetually creating. Everyone and everything is a writer. Even the reader.*

**CHARM CHANDLER** cited in 'by Charm Chandler' footnote 5, Fiction # 15, this issue of FOTD

Sites like Twitter & Facebook are self-immolating. The tyrant's agenda will eclipse its purposeful propaganda. Those of conscience will realize, as freedom of speech craters, the futility of such communication instruments and something new will replace it. We beg the question: is freedom a fundamental need?

*Nothing fucks up your Friday more than realizing it's Wednesday.* **GOMEZ ADDAMS**

*No institution should expect to be free from the scrutiny of those who give it their loyalty.* **HER LATE MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZANETH II** on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her accession.

*My critique of democracy begins and ends with this point. Kids must be educated to disrespect authority or else democracy is a farce.* **ABBIE HOFFMAN**, radical activist 1960's

*Some things stay the same only by changing.* Oliver to Elio. Cited in 'Call Me By your Name'. A film by **LUCA GUADAGNINO**

*...he thinks Corso and Ferlinghetti have it. I am not really as well read as I should be. But I think the modern poet must have the stream of modern life in him, and we can no longer write like Frost, Cummings or Auden and they seem a little off track, as if they have fallen out of step. For my money, Frost was always out of step and has gotten away with too much malarkey. And sure, they set him up like a dead mummy in the snow and let him blubber through his dying sight and insight at the (John F. Kennedy) inauguration. Very fine, indeed. And anymore things like that and I'm going to try and look up a Communist party card or an old black armband or some queer to flub me off the way he likes. I hope I never get so old that I can no longer remember, but of course, Frost has always played the favorite, and if he ever did like a 60 to one longshot, he kept his mouth shut...* **CHARLES BUKOWSKI**, Letter to Jon Webb, late 1961.

*Man makes plans and God laughs.* **JOEY SCARFONE**, Contributing Editor, in a text to CP

*“Tone your wants and tastes low down enough, and make much of negatives, and of mere daylight and the skies.”* **WALT WHITMAN** from *Specimen Days* (after 1871)

*What is freedom of expression? Without the freedom to offend, it ceases to exist.*  
**SALMAN RUSHDIE**

*Be careful when you blindly follow the masses. Sometimes the ‘m’ is silent.*  
**ANON.**

*Never kid a kidder, son.* **THE KIDDER**

## **Changes at Twitter may put activists and protesters at risk, say experts**

Why BOOKS matter—social media is an instrument that can no longer (if it ever was) be trusted. More and more urgently the writer of conscience must commit to the page. And if you can’t do this stand on the street corner and shout!

*What have future generations ever done for us?* **GROUCHO MARX**

Twitter etc...(The lightbulb is on fire!) What is so concerning is the ascent of gullibility. What is more concerning is the reluctance to challenge it. *This is the way the world ends/this is the way the world ends/this is the way the world ends/not with a bang but a whimper....*

Post-Truth Era---have people forgotten to think for themselves? Writers to your ranks! This is your crusade call---the new Dark Age where Reason is ravaged and war bled by an angry clutch of superstition, ‘alternative facts’, nebulous conspiracies against the luminosity of rational thinking and the root hog stubborn wisdom of ‘those who know everything but understand nothing’.

The writer as conscientious objector. The warrior and if need be, the martyr...

The assault on Truth and its deplorable ruination...its unfixable consequences...

“And what...? *E cosa? Che ne dici?*”

“To determine what is unimportant in life by age 5 is the only gift worth having.”

*“E’ vero.”*

“Time, pronouns, time! Goodnight sweet ladies. Goodnight dudes. Goodnight, Nicky. Goodnight, Tom. Time everyone! Goodnight...goodnight.

*Ah...ma in questo mondo, nessun dorma...beh, cosi’ e’la vita. Buona notte e sogni d’oro.*

*And she turned out the light---*

*and closed the door---*

*and that’s all there is---*

*there isn’t anymore.*

**LUDWIG BEMELMANS**, Madeline, 1939

Welcome to **FLEAS ON THE DOG** (aka FOTD)! We’re a no-frills brown bag online lit rag with only one focus: GOOD WRITING. Our style is ‘HOTS!’—hands off the submissions! We publish every submission exactly as received, so there might be arbitrary spacing, pagination and files containing more than one font. What you won’t find are pretty pictures and fancy layouts. We like this ‘broadsheet’ deconstructionist approach—the printed page as its own aesthetic—inspired by the ‘Beat’ presses and journals because it visually footprints the individual in a way a uniform format does not. We hope you like it too. (In some cases with poetry, Hezekiah’s intro will be found at the bottom, not the top of the page.)

EXTRA! EXTRA! THIS JUST IN

Our august Drama Editor **JOHN SULLIVAN** has taken a temporary leave of absence owing to a pressing medical condition. Before signing off, he just wants us to know...

*I have chosen David Allard's play Panuelos, as the feature drama for Issue 13. I've also included an interview with the playwright that discusses details about the history behind the play, and his artistic intentions. You could call this a piece of historical drama, but it also feels very fresh, personal and immediate. Set in Buenos Aires, Argentina during a dark period called 'The Dirty War' (Guerra Sucia). Panuelos focuses on the ordinary lives of a mother, her son and a small circle of friends to show the deadening impacts of a brutal government on its citizens. And how some dedicated mothers, whose children had been permanently 'disappeared' by this government, rose up quietly to resist in acts of defiant remembrance.*

*Though this 'Dirty War' was waged many decades ago (1974-1983) this play has great relevance for today's world. Consider these factors that brought the Argentine Military junta into power and sustained its rule for so long:*

- a highly polarized, increasingly violent political climate*
- traditional religious forces that framed themselves as spiritual/cultural warriors in combat with the secular world*
- strong populist leaders with absolutist agendas*
- social and economic instability*
- Democratic institutions in deadlock*

*Does any of this sound familiar?*

*We're rooting for you, John. Guarisci presto!*

Stepping into John's shoes (which is no easy task) while he undergoes treatment is **Ezra Neighbors**. He's rad and he's bad, folks, (and aint we glad) and in that wild capacity he will be assuming, donning, putting on, slipping into the mantel of *Acting Drama Editor*. Why did we choose him over 9 other candidates? Voice. He has it and the others didn't. You will find him in most of the Drama WHY I LIKE IT intro notes. We told him not to write them to impress Tom and I, not to write them to impress John. Not to write them even to impress himself. Just write them. He did and that's why he's here. Welcome, dude!

A word about '5 Stars' (a designation you'll find under the WHY I LIKE IT intro note) since we've been asked on more than one occasion by more than one head scratcher. It's just a little discretionary perk we give to the author for what we

believe to be standout work and to impress upon the reader the high quality of the writing he/she/it/they is about to read. But it's not a ranking system. There is no 4, 3, 2, or 1 stars. All of which means if you didn't get a fiver don't come crying to us, Argentina. We receive an average of 250 + submissions per issue so if you even *made* it into FOTD, you're an author of consequence, at least in our eyes. *Capite?*

We're just nine crazy bros who love the language and fall on our knees at the sound of beautiful words in all their glorious reach and transforming power! At FOTD we share that with each submission we publish, each different from the other, some miles and styles apart but always burning. *Nisi optimum et clarissimum.*

And now we give you **ISSUE 13**, hip and jive, full alive and buzzing like a honey hive. And until we meet again in Issue 14 always spread the love and remember: **READ** is the best four letter word in the world. *La vita e' breve; bisogna godersela!* Thanks for reading.

Tom, Charles, Joey C., Hezekiah, John, Ezra, Joey S., Richard and Rob