

Hiraeth Zine



Issue 1:

Modern Loneliness

Hiraeth Zine, Issue 1, “Modern Loneliness”

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Jayson Kleinman

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Editor's Note

Here at this inaugural issue, we want to acknowledge those that helped make this possible.

To Marsha and Randy, thank you for being loving parents and instilling a love of words into my heart.

To Kalin, James, and Marco, thank you for being there for me through the years and for being some of the first who said you thought I could be a writer.

To Carolina, for helping with the design, anxious edits and putting up with my creative foibles.

To Mr. Valentine, for seeing something in a teenager with his head in the clouds and eyes firmly out the window.

To Clara, without you this idea doesn't even exist.

- Jayson Kleinman (Editor-in-Chief, *Hiraeth Zine*)

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"Hiraeth" [heer-eye-th]: *fondness, a longing, a homesickness for something lost. A deep longing for one's home. But in absence, there is beauty in the memory.*

In the spirit of the word this zine claims as its namesake, this message will be kept brief and, possibly, fleeting.

Hiraeth Zine was born out of equal parts love and disbelief, and the fact that it has made it this far is a minor miracle. But trading in minor miracles is the stuff this magazine is designed for. The writing industry has always been a tough racket to break into, but as a young writer there's cropped up a Catch-22 of sorts: no one wants to publish an unpublished author.

So what do you do when no one has heard of you, but the industry still feels like it's already forgotten you? You create your own place. That's what Hiraeth has meant to me, a place in the fringes to belong, and that's what Hiraeth Zine will hopefully be for the authors in this, the first issue, and the ones to come: a place to belong, to get your foot in the door. A place for those emerging and those yet to, where you can point to when asked, "where can we see your work?" and proudly say, "Here, in Hiraeth Zine. That's where I got my start."

So, for those reading who have been looking for a place to begin or start again, we here at Hiraeth Zine would love to be a part of your story.

Crucial Findings on the Oarfish

Colin Traver

They've begged me in bundles of mail:
When will you send your findings on the oarfish?
When will you seek a publisher?

But I like to bide my time.
I enjoy even the margins of my vacation.

In a month, I may answer again: Some things
are enough for Privacy. What I know
rests collated in a pitchpoled cabinet.

The oarfish drifts in heavy darkness,
closer, now, to the coast than ever before.

Yearless and alone, she cannot separate her hunger
from silence. One, long medial fin flagellates
an amniotic plane.

When she dies, coin-shaped markings along her back
will fade like lamplight. A portside vigil of sailors

will watch her eggs below, pink and brilliant dots
in the black troughs,

briefly held in the wake of the hull
before they turn inward

and sink.

Blues

Moonmoon Chowdhury

You conceal
a burning city behind
the ramparts of your smile
where tendrils of anguish
engulf the quarters
and tombs of tears
flourish on the ash

You exhibit a polished
portfolio of buzzing circles
in the virtual world
while your words ricochet
off the vacuum
in the lopsided pillow talk

You cocoon the darkness
in your handbag
as you sashay
into the swanky hall
your little black dress
steals the limelight
while you shrivel
unseen in the backdrop.

PARTY OF ONE

SOU

Silence, nothing, on my own
As usual not a single word
Do they know how it feels
When you heart is all in?
To then just be ignored, invisible
My existence means naught
Like I'm infected, they stay away
They don't even see me
Whole

Nothing of my soul is visible
Arms out-stretched, pleading, screaming
My life is there in black and white
Longing to be noticed, no more alone
Expressly avoiding the internal pains
While building up walls
So no-one can see

I AM ALONE

SOUR

I belong to nobody by fate or my bad hand
Always the one, never the us, the we, or the two
Missing out on whatever it be, God only knows
A stray peeking in, breath steaming the panes
Locked out from that life, caught unawares
Of the loneliness sneaky it suddenly appeared
Never realising it has always been there
Ever alone, my lonely to bear, for I belong to nobody

AWOL THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

SOUR

Is this what I signed up for?
Was this exactly what I hoped?
Sitting here together yet all alone
He's here, but is he really here?
His stare so blank towards his screen
My eyes begin to tear

'What's wrong with you? He always says
He cannot see beneath the poker face I wear
Every word I have to spell out
Each feeling explained repeatedly
Until I'm drained and better off silent
Expressing myself in vain

His warmth is what I crave

I run towards his open arms
Slamming into a cold brick wall
Reaching out just pushes him away
Between us lie a handful of words
But I've so much more to say

These eyes of mine plead to be met
His eyes remain on his two palms
Where his whole life fits
I know now where I stand

I'm clinging to the very edge
He hasn't noticed a thing
I long to jump, dying to take wing

I'm asking too much he'll tire soon
Making the choice to bail out
He'll run from all my woes
My lonely voice will be exposed
Smothering him with my pathetic cries
I just wanted to be seen
Unravelling at the seams



Luxury Ruins/Handcrafted Hell, 2023
Collage
By [Sanjana Raghavan](#)

Loneliness.

Lily Storey

Without Floodgate,

No holding back.

I am without edges,

My mask worn thin.

Unable to pretend,

I fall visibly,

My chaos evident,

Forever transparent.

I choose loneliness,

Because I can not hide.

The Age of Lies

Sara Collie

The obvious place to begin is the original lie,
long forgotten, now.

Good liars want one vivid delusion, something
plausible, an image or illusion that looks like truth.
Even when we learn things about the world – real
facts –

it doesn't matter what we remember. Everyone
will say the sun tried to make its way through,
that's what counts.

I've hardly eaten since the fog and recent rain began.
I wonder when everything will tumble down
in an avalanche of crushing emotion.

These mountains once had names.

They have become a still surface like glass,
a membrane, an opening that you mess with
at your peril, unfathomable forces
that make the human mind spin.

Perhaps it is time to go home,
back to the beginning.

I'm not sure I want to go there alone.

What the Moon Knows

Sara Collie

The slow journey from point to point,
the slim curve tracing the long way round.
The softness of being barely there,
barely there.
Barely anything at all.
A stain at most,
the smudge of something untoward,
quietly creeping closer.
Desire and its portents: forces
too bright to bear.
Dealt with alone, as I dealt with
everything.
Alone.
Obscured by half-drawn curtains,
by neatly lined up French braids,
by the pools of deep brown eyes,
which were portals,
though I didn't know it then.
Didn't trust that I, too,
should float or fly.
All I knew was that
something was there, waiting
in the shadows, disavowed.
It was resolutely Not For Me
to set foot or finger inside.
I am stumbling in now
anyway, two decades too late.
The same moon waxes, wanes

overhead: the same sharp points;
the same slowly growing plate.
I know her by the way she disappears.
Alone again, I paint her
on my mind's sky in silver grey,
squinting through blind eyes
to finally see
my own face emerge,
doubled/divided
on the murky surface.
That is who I am
waiting for,
still.

Extinguished

Sara Collie

Being a fire-fighter has made me a very difficult daughter.
We did not go by the rule of women and children first,
we went by the rule of keeping quiet and carrying on,
even when the whole house was ablaze.
I was not supposed to mention the fires;
my job was to put them out.
They told me the world was black and white
but all I knew was grey –
when embers glow and fade to ash
it gives the truth away.
To speak up is forbidden,
but flames have powerful tongues
and I am a very difficult daughter.
I didn't mean to blow the whole thing up;
my job was to put out the fires.
When too much smoke blew in your eyes
you said I was incapable of love.
You could never see how hard I tried
to be the sand, the foam, the water
that was keeping you alive.
You could never see that I, too,
had been burning all the while.
There was a sudden explosion.
The sirens started to wail.
I have been living in the spaces between
nine nine nine

ever since.

Yes, I am difficult.

Yes, it is very difficult,
being this daughter.

Loneliness and the Descent of Civilization

Pete Iversen

The path of history is not the linear progression from primitive savagery to enlightened sophistication, but is rather cyclical: people come together, build a nation which matures into a civilization, and eventually withers away, feeding a new generation of nations and civilizations. While the rise of all civilizations is similar, the reasons for the inevitable fall are various and unique. The causes for the fall of Rome have been debated since Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, but it is inarguable that the vital energies that propelled Rome to its grand heights were long exhausted by the time that it was sacked by Alaric the Visigoth. Long before Alaric crossed the Rubicon, the people had lost hope. The United States, which rose to its golden age as hegemon of the world, is now facing challenges from Russia and China, but long before the first boot falls on American soil, the end of America will have been presaged by the ennui of its people. Loneliness is what defines the modern age, and it will be the underlying cause of its fall. Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* and Ray Oldenburg's *The Great Good Place* are the two seminal works that define the study into the social atomization of modern America. In *Bowling*

Alone, Putnam studied the evaporation of civic organizations, like religious groups, labor unions, social organizations, and even the eponymous bowling league, since 1965 and how people become increasingly isolated from the interactions that bond individuals and bridge disparities. Oldenburg's *The Great Good Place* took a similar view, focusing on "third places", the first two being home and work, as a place where individuals from disparate demographic classes can come together. He argued that these third places were vital for civil society and democratic engagement, and that they were nonetheless fading from the social fabric as the city poured out into the suburbs. In both, the argument is that a linchpin of functional society was being lost, leaving Americans more isolated than before. The increasing isolation of Americans is evident from nearly every study. The 2018 Pew Research Center report titled *Teen's Social Media Habits and Experiences* found that 22% of all teens have no more than one close friend, and that poor teenagers are more likely to have no close friends at all. A report released that same year, *What Unites and Divides Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities*, found that only 24% of people in cities know all of their neighbors, compared to 40% of people in rural counties, and among 18-29 year olds, only 15% know all of their neighbors. The *Cigna Loneliness and the Workplace: 2020 US Report* found that not only

had loneliness increased over time, but the younger generations reported feeling more lonely, emotionally distant, and alienated in the workplace. Finally, the 2019 Pew Research Center report, Religion and Living Arrangements Around the World, found that unlike the rest of the world, European and particularly American families live away from extended family, with the result that the elderly increasingly live alone. Increasing partisanship and the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns only exacerbated this effect. The 2020 NPR article, 'Dude, I'm Done': When Politics Tears Families and Friendships Apart, examined the increasingly prevalent trend among Americans to have no friends of a different political party and to disown friends and family over political issues. The pandemic lockdowns furthered both the closure of third places, as many in-person locations were forced to reduce in-person activities or to go entirely virtual, as well as the increasing partisan divide. The American Survey Center's 2021 report, The State of American Friendship found that nearly half of Americans lost touch with friends over the pandemic, with nearly a tenth losing touch with most of their friends, a trend exacerbated among young women 18-29 years old. Worse, friendlessness was on the rise, increasing from 3% of Americans in 1990 to 12% in 2021. If you've ever been to a small zoo, you know viscerally the effects of loneliness. There is

something repugnant about watching an elephant walking in circles around a cage the size of a modern living room for hours and hours, day after day, year after year. If you put a tiger in a pen, even one as large as a basketball court, they will quickly wear a trail around its perimeter. The 2013 study by Volicer, et al. titled Apathy and Weight Loss in Nursing Home Residents found that more nursing home patients developed apathy, defined by withdrawal from activities and reduced social interaction, than recovered from it, and that all apathetic residents lost weight more quickly than non-apathetic ones, worsening the risk of fractures, anemia, weakness, fatigue, cognitive decline, and death. Virtual spaces endeavor to be the solution to the decline of social connectedness. Indeed, the Pew report mentioned earlier on teen's social media habits also noted that teenagers are increasingly using online interactions as a major source of socialization, acceptance, and commiseration. However, virtual interaction is ersatz, and just as sitting on a crowded subway train is not a substitute for actual friendships, Internet friendships are ephemeral. Anyone who has sat through a painfully long virtual meeting knows that the attention wanders in a way that doesn't occur in-person. Even something as simple as eye contact and a hand shake are important for socialization. Internet connections may be better than nothing, but they are just as likely to

corrode the sanity. The now-defunct Cannibal Café was the trap of the early 2000s, but there are new horrors waiting the unwary, whose mere invocation is a Pandora's Box waiting to yawn open.

What is the practical effect of this? Studies, like the 2010 meta-review by Holt-Lunstad, et al. titled *Social Relationships and Mortality Risk*, have shown that loneliness increases the likelihood of dying by 50%. The 1987 report by Hetrick and Martin, *Developmental Issues and Their Resolution for Gay and Lesbian Adolescents*, found that severe social isolation led many to rely on sex as the initial and often sole form of social interaction. More disconcertingly, they turned to sexual involvement with adults out of desperation for social interaction, and young lesbians particularly formed "fused relationships", codependent relationships that function like binary stars, orbiting around each other until they are absorbed and individuality is lost.

There is, of course, the single worst outcome of loneliness: suicide. The Congress Joint Economic Committee's 2019 report, *Long-Term Trends in Deaths of Despair*, tracked the three types of "deaths of despair", suicide, drug-induced, and alcohol-induced, finding that as unhappiness rose since 1990, so too have deaths of despair since 2000, nearly doubling from 2000 to 2017. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to worsen this trend, as evident among the

youth 10-19 years old, culminating in the declaration of a National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health in October 2021.

What does the American future look like? The atomization of American society will continue, and Americans will continue to turn to online spaces as a substitute for face-to-face interactions. Loneliness will continue to rise, permuting into apathy and depression, until finally the American people breathes a long, deep sigh, and settles down for one final slumber. Until that moment happens, however, there is still a chance to reawaken the vital spirit of the nation. Like a long-dormant engine roaring to life, there is still an opportunity to turn away from the brink. The battle for the future of America is taking place in every community and the battle lines are drawn in every soul. Book clubs, gardening communes, communal darkrooms, knitting circles, there are a hundred places where people can still return to the local, the genuine, and the interpersonal. It won't be easy or comfortable to challenge the riptide of modernity, but as long as there still remains a spark of will, there remains a chance.



Lone Tree New Zealand, 2023
Photograph
D.C. Nobes



Lone Sunrise Bali, 2023
Photograph
D.C. Nobes

Waiting on the last message

Jayson Kleinman

'Till tomorrow I'll wait, I said yesterday,
and here I sit today, ruing the woman
who thought so clearly.

Where does she hide now, when her time has come?
When the bell has tolled and her spotlight is raised,
she hides from her role, cowardice, cowardess.

He did not wait, he said he would not and yet
and yet, I followed along this self-same path,
self-determined self-destruction, alone in pain.

"The door was open!" I cry out
in rooms of empty gossamer curtains that
wave in the winds wailing from my lungs.

"And yet, and yet!" my cries echo,
turning around, mocking and glib,
so I sit here alone, and hear his voice.

So 'till tomorrow I'll wait, I vow this today,
and beg my tomorrow that
she's more present than today.

Winnow Song

Joel Scott-Halkes

A voice in my ear
says the time is near
to realize that you are the same

as the bison and beasts
the fox, feathered hawk and trees
you are the same as the cranes

that fly from the east
you're the rain droplets on their beaks
you are the fields and the rain.

But why do I feel
a pain I can't heal
if I'm the fields and the rain?

Because you're afraid
of how you were made
stumbling all night in your shame.

But you are the geese
the sheep and their fleece
trust me child we're all the same.

We are the waters,
the sons and the daughters,
we are the fields and the rain.

Word Made

Joel Scott-Halkes

Sunlight leaps a million miles across space
falls through ionosphere and stratosphere

joins the tip of a hazel tree
and materializes into leaf.

More light falls. The leaf illuminates, dancing.

Amongst the dapple
love leaps from your eyes to mine. You smile, you
know

that in your womb,
our child is forming.

So why do we search for smoky miracles?

When every moment, every second, everywhere,
the universe offers its joyful proof

of the transubstantiation of love into flesh.

You Are Pulling The Stars

Joel Scott-Halkes

January, night, a slack tide in the estuary.

No rushing waters escape
no autumn or spring

just everything,
full and still.

No forces exert themselves on willow or fish,
no moon descends.

Every molecule of dust, every star, every life –
all is hanging suspended.

But here in this moment, little girl,
you alone are growing.

In the womb of my seafaring wife, little love,
you alone are the centre.

Creating a new gravity for our lives,
you alone are pulling the stars out of orbit.

About the Contributors

Colin Traver

Colin Traver is a writer and editor living in Austin, TX.

Moonmoon Chowdhury

Moonmoon Chowdhury is an Indian poet, currently based in the Netherlands. Her work has previously appeared or is forthcoming in *Borderless Journal*, *Tell Me Your Story*, *A second cup of tea* by The Hive Publishers, *The Pine Cone Review*, *Sylvia Magazine*, *Sonic Boom Journal*, *Amethyst Review*, *Poetry As Promised Magazine*, *Sixpence Society Literary Journal*, and more.

She can be found on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/moonmoon.chowdhury>.

9 and on Instagram at

<https://www.instagram.com/chowdhurymoonmoon>

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SOUM

SOUM (Screams of Unfettered Minds) is a collaboration of three women from New Zealand, who prefer their art and poetry to speak for them. This newly-formed trio describe their style as raw, unpolished, tongue-in-cheek, unapologetic, unfiltered, born from years of shadow-work and presented straight from the heart. They champion mental awareness and social issues and gain

inspiration from the struggles of everyday people; the darker aspects of their physical, mental and spiritual battles.

They can be found on Twitter: @SOUMpoets and at their website: www.unfetterednfts.com

Lily Storey

An English artist and writer living in the wilds of Canada. Dyslexic and on the spectrum, words were often a great struggle, but now she is editing her first book and writing poetry in the in-betweens.

She can be found on Twitter @Hermiteveryday.

Sara Collie

Sara Collie is a writer, language tutor and psychotherapist-in-training living in Cambridge, England. She has a PhD in French Literature and a lifelong fascination with the way that words and stories shape and define us. Her writing explores the wild, uncertain spaces of nature, the complexities of mental health, and the mysteries of the creative process. Her poetry and prose have appeared in *Neon Door*, *The Selkie*, *Confluence*, *Synkroniciti*, *Stonecrop Review*, *Outwrite*, *Full Mood Magazine* and elsewhere.

Pete Iversen

Pete Iversen is a writer interested in the ways that peoples and nations grow, struggle to thrive, and decline.

His Substack, “Saving Face,” can be found at savingface.substack.com and he can be found on Twitter at [@pete_iversen](https://twitter.com/pete_iversen).

Joel Scott-Halkes

Joel Scott-Halkes is an environmental activist and Buddhist. His writing is inspired by family, metaphysics and the interconnection of all life.

Sanjana Raghavan

Sanjana Raghavan is an Indian American writer and artist who lives in Fairfax, VA. She holds a BA in English from George Mason University. Her work appears in *Fiction Southeast*, *Corporeal*, *New Flash Fiction Review*, and elsewhere.

You can find her on Twitter [@brownbookboi](https://twitter.com/brownbookboi) or visit <https://sanjanaraghavanwriter.wordpress.com/>

D.C. Nobes

D.C. Nobes is a scientist who spent his first 39 years in or near Toronto, Canada, then 23 years based in Christchurch, New Zealand, 4 years in China, and has now retired to Bali. He used to enjoy winter but admits that he doesn't miss the snow or the cold. His poetry and photography have been widely published.

He can be found on Twitter at @sebon521 and on Instagram at sebon52.

Coco Faye

Coco Faye is a queer artist, writer, and mental health professional in Pasadena, CA. She's interested in the commonalities in the human condition that link us together. She has a B.A. in Fine Art and Psychology. She would love you to find her on Instagram @ms.cocofaye.

Poetry

Colin Traver || Moonmoon Chowdhury || SOUM

Lily Storey || Sara Collie || Joel Scott-Halkes

Jayson Kleinman

Essay

Pete Iversen

Photos

D.C. Nobes || Sanjana Raghavan

Cover Artwork

Coco Faye

Hiraeth Zine