



## The elephant and the worm

Bruno Cooke

Chastity is completely in love with Nick. They both do pilates at the weekends, have blue eyes and know the SPF of coconut oil. His love language is words of affirmation.

Nick knows sashimi, which Chastity finds sexy because it shows that, if nothing else, he's cultured. Sophisticated, probably travelled. And anyway there's plenty besides:

He says he's a *living breathing presence*, which makes her catch her breath because ever since she went to Thailand she's felt the exact same thing.

Time evaporates when bathing the heads of elephants. When she and Nick first met, *yes ma'am, well it's a pleasure*, it was somehow the same.

He retained some ancient innocence. *Can I ask you a question?* he asks, asking a question, but her mind doesn't rest on the details;

she's whirling. She imagines them kissing, giddy with tears and clumsy, her underbite overridden by manic, sumptuous lust;

imagines her man on his knee, her outstretched hand, the perfect diamond (how many carats? *A lot*. A glint in his eye.) and the swell of his conjugal proboscis.

It takes her by surprise, then, even with the benefit of the doubt, when he asks, chiseling, *if we were at a festival, would you be able to sit on my shoulders?*

She smiles but the truth slowly sinks, the wall collapses. He should never have earned the descriptor, *pachyderm*. Her skin thickens at the thought, *much more a worm*.



## windsand / beakplunge

Jerrod Schwarz

The tempt of the earth,  
a blend of water and passive poisons.

I am holding my youngest daughter  
and feeding her little plastics

before the big voyage; our granite ship  
bends over the horizon line.

A snake's ribcage of sleeping quarters  
and their portholes dipping

into the green sea: *we live here.*

My oldest daughter ties a million kites  
to a million cleats and nothing happens.

A bonfire of olive branches:  
I cure strips of whale meat

all night long under a scar of moon debris  
and dead, orbiting deities.

*Are we there yet, daddy?*  
*Why can't we stop and swim?*

*Why do our hands pass right through*  
*the dead birds' feathers?*

## Haircut

Grace Coleman

“John Wayne got struck by lightning in his twenties. I’ve told you, right?”

She hadn’t. Or maybe she had. I couldn’t tell, because every appointment with Sharon promises a dozen cockamamie stories I have to smile and nod along to.

There was the Fort Lauderdale cruise ship, the prince in Saudi Arabia, the cat named Mr. P who she kept in a bomb shelter during the Gulf War—that last one is true, I’ve seen the photos.

“Most of the time, when you’re struck by lightning, it comes out one way or another. Blows off an ear or some other body part. Not John Wayne—we had to take him to the doctor to get the lightning out.”

“You’re kidding,” I said, eyes on the floor, watching clumps of artificially-colored sandy blonde hair hit the tile.

“He’s never been the same since.”

As the cut went on, the reality that she was giving me a shaggy fringe instead of the curtain bangs I asked for became unavoidable. In fairness, I don’t think she knew what curtain bangs were. I should have shown her a picture.

Saying nothing of this unfortunate discovery, I filled in the silences between Sharon’s monologues with dulcet hums to indicate I was paying attention. Not that she wouldn’t have kept talking if I weren’t.

“You know, I’m not sure I buy into this male superiority thing. I don’t think they’re any smarter than us.”

She spoke with a tone of trepidation, as if what she’d just said was controversial—revelatory, even. It seemed man’s lack of superiority over womankind was still something up for debate on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

“Yeah, for sure,” I said.

It was time to blow dry.

## **My mother tells me it's ghost month.**

Elizabeth Hsu

The hill of a fountain stream sinks back into its spout  
before it ever reaches the grate.

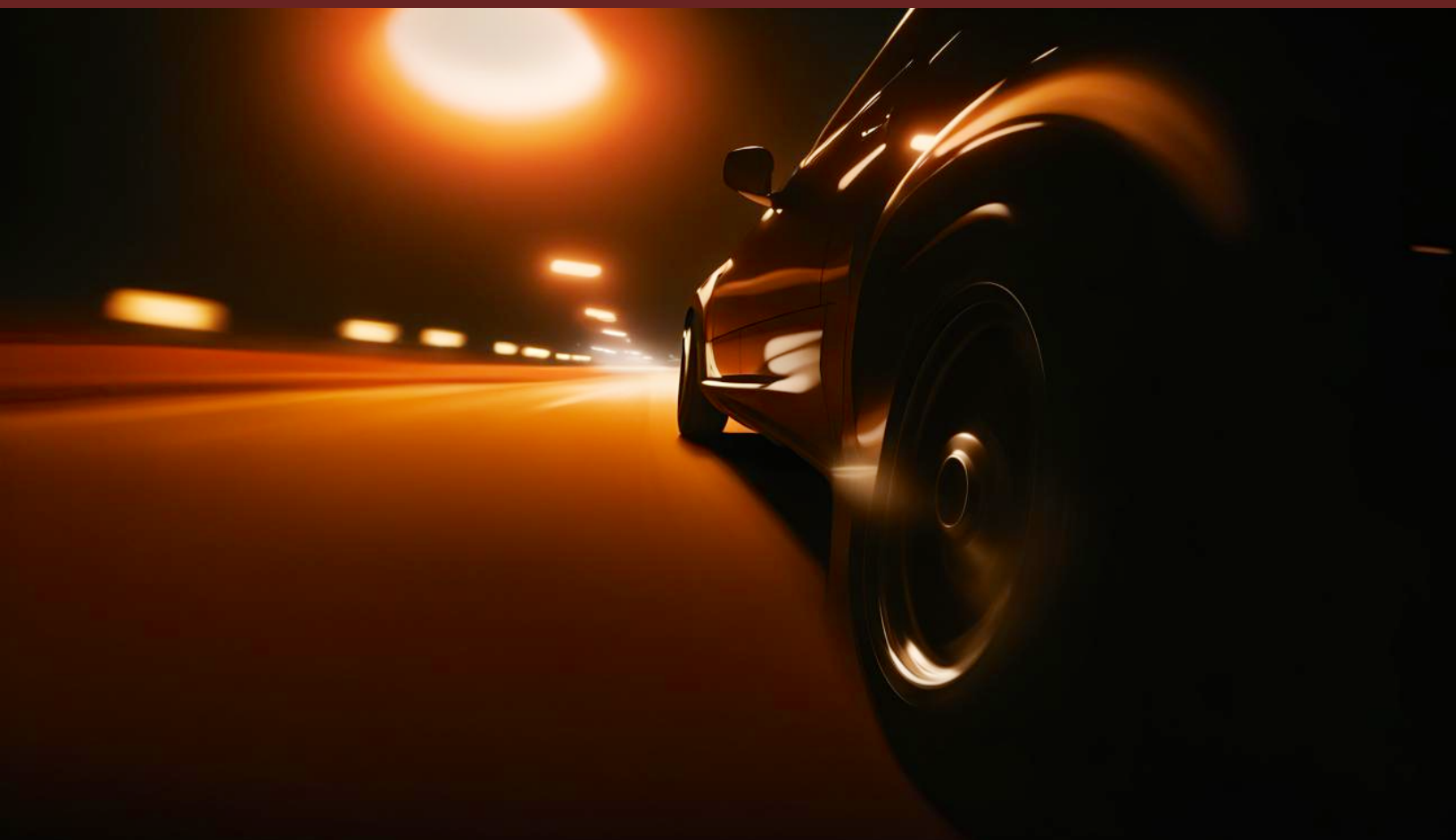
Thermal remnants linger on the bed,  
the carpet,

in blurred color spots behind the eyes.

I wave my hand around in the thin air,  
feeling for life

and something empties itself of  
something that was never there

to stay.





## PLANET BUKADORA

Stephen Philip Druce

Pouting buttercup hymns  
guzzle uprooted stallions  
in falsetto swamps,

ruptured chicanes pulverize  
limousine tunnels with  
confetti raccoons,

cryptic epitaphs criss-cross  
odyssey flamingos in  
pounce petulant,

wriggling scalps ransack  
chapel lagoons in  
twitching grenade swelter,

fornicating forests trickle  
afterglow cavalries of  
fiasco monsoons in  
graffiti gallop, as

swaggering radar gurus  
tussle in a pinball of  
lackluster lingo.



This is Smokey.  
With tissieyress/o rhe busts out 300 kxm

## Grown Up Love

Kashi Bakshi

Laying nude down at  
‘Foot and Body Spa  
Massage Best Prices’  
I tell the masseuse:  
press there please oh, at  
the base of my skull  
slow along the spine.

Good like that thank you.  
Used to ask the same  
request silently  
with a nudge of my  
head, *shhh* tucked pieta-safe  
in mom’s lap. Please yes,  
do the thing, that thing  
which only mothers do.



I'hi a cold look  
he city cill glances at the country boy





## Pilgrimage

Kashi Bakshani

keen rain nips  
down the subway  
stairs pool green

with metal piss  
a group of us  
all clamber down

i hold my tongue  
by a string  
watch it dangle

above the tracks  
*which way?*  
a woman asks

we ride the three  
to the beach  
eating the sky

sitting beside  
faithless saints  
called seraphim





## The Colour of Me

Christina Chin / *Uchechukwu Onyedikam*

cut bamboo brooms  
from the border fence  
spring cleaning  
*the town crier echo*  
*cracks the dawn*

good fortune  
red calligraphy couplets  
at the door entrance  
*a devotee of Ọbatala*  
*chanting family Oríkì*

dragon lanterns  
the boom of drum beats  
in festive songs  
*the initiates*  
*all clothed in white*





url: minimag.space  
subs: minimagsubmissions@gmail.com  
substack: minimag.substack.com  
twitter: @minimag\_lit  
insta: @minimag\_write

“The elephant and the worm” by Bruno Cooke  
Website: [www.onurbicycle.com](http://www.onurbicycle.com)  
Insta: @onurbicycle  
Substack: [My Special Interest](https://www.substack.com/p/my-special-interest)  
Website: [www.thefridaypoem.com/bruno-cooke](http://www.thefridaypoem.com/bruno-cooke)

“My mother tells me it’s ghost month.” by Elizabeth Hsu  
Insta: @sunshoebeth

“windsand / beakplunge” by Jerrod Schwarz  
Insta: @iambic\_art

“Haircut” by Grace Coleman

“Grown Up Love” and “Pilgrimage” by Kashi Bakshani  
Website: [k4shi.com](http://k4shi.com)

“PLANET BUKADORA” by Stephen Philip Druce  
Book: [A Shrewsbury Poet](#)  
Insta: @StephenPhilipDruce  
Twitter: @DruceStephen  
Email: [stephengoforit@yahoo.com](mailto:stephengoforit@yahoo.com)

“The Colour of Me” by Christina Chin / *Uchechukwu Onyedikam*  
**Christina Chin**  
Twitter: @Christina\_haiku  
Insta: @Christina\_zygby22  
Book: [for dreams take one space capsule \(2022\)](#)  
Website: <https://christinachin99blog.wordpress.com/>  
Website: <https://haikuzyg.blogspot.com/>  
**Uchechukwu Onyedikam**  
Twitter: @MysticPoet\_  
Insta: @MysticPoet7

ISSUE98 edited and ai art by Alex Prestia  
inspo: SMOKEY NAGATA’s MIDNIGHT 200MPH BLAST  
[https://youtu.be/dZu98\\_pC0kU?si=XDqFxiLGnFjL14qB](https://youtu.be/dZu98_pC0kU?si=XDqFxiLGnFjL14qB)