

WELCOME ISSUE 11 APRIL 2022

**Слава Україні! Героям слава!**

(Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the heroes!)

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

And personally for **Oleg Gadacz**. Там, де ти дихаєш, горить вогонь Там, де ty dykhayesh, horyt' vohon'. (Where you breathe the fire burns.)

If peace is a dove then freedom is an eagle. And as the mightiest of birds it sees no adversary greater than itself. Freedom is not the meek and cowering softie those who aggressively attack it believe. It's the bone and blood that rises from our bedrock as a species—innate or acquired? Doesn't matter. The invasion of the Ukraine is not just a war on sovereignty but an assault on the very sanctity of freedom. The freedom to speak. The freedom to think. The freedom to live. The freedom to BE. When will those who seek to stamp it out ever learn that it is a fire that burns eternal in the loins, the blood and the hearts of the Universe. The need to freely express, the need to dissent, the need to question, oppose and openly criticize are not the urges of the political animal but the imperatives laid down by natural law. If creation was perfection there would be no need for change or evolutionary excursions. But the human experiment is not and never has been fixed. It is dynamic, moving. And to move is to change. And to change means that what was no longer serves what is. Because this is a war against freedom, it is every writer's war. So write for freedom! Slam the oppressors with the truth! Unshackle the eagle's bonds and let it soar! Remember: the price paid for every word you write today was somebody's blood yesterday. And if you can't write for its preservation and defence: scream. Scream in the name of

Freedom! Scream the Holiest of All Chants! Scream in the name of the Holiest of Holies! And bless the flowers within us.

there is a dragon/devouring rocks and men/causing insanity/destroying peaceful lives...please/don't imprison free souls/don't change laughter to cries... **Rumi**

"The image and the word are one." **Hugo Ball**. Cabaret Voltaire. 1916

"I am from the USSR. I was born there. And the main phrase from there - from my childhood - was 'fight for peace'. I call on everyone to come out on to the streets and fight for peace... Putin is not Russia... Let's at least not become a nation of frightened silent people. Of cowards who pretend not to notice the aggressive war against Ukraine unleashed by our obviously insane tsar," **Alexei Navalny**, now serving 9 years in prison for speaking the truth.

"Silence has long been confused with neutrality, and has been presented as a necessary condition for humanitarian action. From its beginning, MSF was created in opposition to this assumption. We are not sure that words can always save lives, but we know that silence can certainly kill." **James Orbinski**,  
Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders)

"The fact that Vladimir Putin exists is all the proof you need that a loving God doesn't." **Charles** to **Hezekiah** in conversation.

"I am proud of who I am and I am proud of all of those protesting these regressive bills," said Petocz, who's a political strategy associate for nonprofit Gen-Z for Change, in a statement posted on Twitter.

"We must let our politicians know that no matter how hard they try, they cannot suppress our identities or silence our voices. Gen Z will not stand idly by as our rights are stripped from us." Flagler Palm Coast High School senior **Jack Petocz** after distributing Pride flags in Palm Coast, Florida to protest the 'Don't Say Gay' legislation.

"Remember your humanity and forget the rest". **Bertrand Russell**

"Everybody is a genius but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid." **Albert Einstein**

'O God, O Venus, O Mercury, patron of thieves,/Lend me a little tobacco-shop/or install me in any profession/Save this damned profession of writing, where one needs one's brains all the time.' **Ezra Pound** /The Lake Isle (1915)

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.)

And now for something completely different...

After a couple years heavy duty stint as Drama Editor here at FOTD—**Janet Ehrlich Colson** is taking a well-earned sabbatical. We can't thank you enough or love you more for your staggering contribution to our humble rag, J-Fab. We wish you more success that you can handle in your pursuits ahead and want you to know that our door is ever and always open to you!

*Janet writes: Thanks so much to you Charles, Tom, and all the other Siphonaptera for letting me be part of this wild and wonderful zine. I can't tell you how much I've learned, but I'm hoping to parlay some of those lessons into my own writing, which I've stepped away from for longer than I'd have liked due to the necessities of survival mode. Connecting with Fleas for the past couple years has been one of the best things to come out of the pandemic - and I'll miss you all. Let's not miss each other too much. I'm only across a river and an email away. Love JEC*

“Our Man in New Orleans”, as Tom Ball calls Fiction Editor **Joey Cruse**, is now dealing not only with editions but addition! Little Alfie Coen Cruse was born Jan 14th and weighed in at a whopping 8 lbs, 1 oz.! To quote the doting Dad-dude: *“Almost three weeks later, he’s at 8lbs 6oz and 22 inches...tall little fucker it seems. He’s a fun little study on the scope of time and one’s relevance - a bundle of existential crises.”* Hats off to you Daddy-O and koochie-koo to our cutest ever literary godson...We just know his first word is going to be.....*“Faulkner!”*

We want to welcome the newest *siphonaptera* on this much maligned mangy mutt—**Joey Scarfone**, who lives in the Canadian wilds of Vancouver Island with its impenetrable forest of foreign-owned skyscrapers and unaffordable housing redeemed only by a clear blue yonder ripped by ozone sucking contrails that spill their vaporous filth in every direction. Joey will come aboard as *Contributing Editor*. He brings his own special brand of insanity to everything he writes so you know what to expect. Some of his work is featured in this issue; his column starts with # 12.

We published **Chris Dungey’s** quietly poignant story ‘Flask’ way back in Issue 2. Since then he has gone on to greater things, namely, the publication of a story collection called *We Won’t Be Kissing*. Congratulations, Chris! **Peter J. Stavros**, another Fleas alumnus, reviews the book in this issue—see Nonfiction # 5. Author **Curtis Harrell**, whose astonishing story ‘Liar’ we published in Issue 9 has just announced the debut of ‘Melpomene’s Garden’—a delicious *fritto misto* that contains 10 stories, 2 plays and 20 poems. We’re smackin’ our lips, dude. Well done! The book will be forthcoming later this spring from Sleyhouse Publishing.

We're just seven crazy dudes missing one moxy fox 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 11, eleven times the fun and lucky as a 7! And until we meet again in Issue 12 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, Joey S., Richard and Rob

