WELCOME ISSUE 14

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), 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). Russian journalist Vladimir Kara-Murza 25 years for treason. Ailed Russian Putin critic Ilya Yashin speaks louder behind bars.**

British-Malaysian born **'Uncle Roger' (Nigel Ng)** in a hilarious interaction with his audience in which China, the CCP and its repulsive predatory leader were wittily lampooned. He sure touched a nerve because all his sites and videos were shut in China. The comedian, whose real name is Nigel Ng, said over the weekend that his accounts on Bilibili and Weibo, where he has 400,000 followers, had been suspended due to a *"violation of relevant laws and regulations".* Fortunately, some of his stations in other countries remain open.

Some good news. Political prisoner activist **Roman Protasevich** has been PARDONED. But some are skeptical…has he turned tables to go forth as a covert agent in the name of tyranny?

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.

Quiero dormir un rato,

un rato, un minuto, un siglo,

pero que todos sepan que no he muerto

I WANT TO SLEEP THE SLEEP OF APPLES…

I WANT TO SLEEP THE SLEEP OF THAT CHILD

WHO LONGED TO CUT HIS HEART OPEN FAR OUT AT SEA

From 'Gacela de la Muerte Oscura' by Frederico Garcia Lorca'

MY 'WORD', WHAT'S AMISS?

EXTRA! EXTRA! This just in! *Silk worms all across Asia have gone on a hunger strike and will no longer spin the threads of glistening luxury that are a symbol of wealth and opulence.* 'Silk' *is a 'human'* word *and too easily associated with the atrocities that were routine along the 'Silk Road'—a name the worms have also condemned. In a statement spun by an arachnid ally on a huge web transmitted via global satellite to the screens of the world, they now prefer to be called:* Spinners *Extraordinaire* (aka Mulberry Munchers)! *And our thread as Sacred Spittle!*

ICYDK there's a move afoot here in Canada to expunge the word 'savage' from the language because it is hurtful to certain marginalized groups. But hey, there is a vast distinction between using the word pejoratively and using the *word*.

Language is dynamic, always in motion, its only shape that of its containment. It is instrument, tool, facility and object. It is our right by bequest as communicators to

culturally harvest the richness provided. Yes, there will be problems. Yes, not all will agree with one's usage or interpretation and YES, the language is bright with cruelties just as it is replete with beauties both tender and brash. In the end, it stays the same only by changing.

'Savage' is not only a noun, it's also an adjective. Does the adjective get struck down as well? And does the word have only a single politically charged meaning? Can the weather be savage? Is love any the worse for being savage while at the same time tender? To exorcise it on political grounds is to disable its living function. The word owns both its chemistry and physics. It is material structure and limpid spirit grounded in a history that predates writing. Respect it.

The diversity, pliancy and malleability of any word are not externalizations—they are integral structure: inseparable from the stem which is also the branches and the leaves. As unsexy as it sounds, old-fashioned common sense is the great arbitrator here. By using the word X am I knowingly/unknowingly giving offence? This much we can do.

Language is a liquid and a thunderstorm. Language has the shape we give it yet presents in thousands of shapes, thousands of tongues. Language is not just a mouthpiece but a mouth. Explore its speleology.

Francis Ford Coppola's epic *The Godfather* unapologetically stereotypes Italian-Americans. Apart from Al Pacino being insanely sexy, it's 100% cannelloni baloney *mama mia, passa la pizza* and *Viva Italia perche' la cosa nostra e' la cosa nostra!* Clean it up and it's like fucking in diapers. You are inside the heart beat of a staggeringly triumphant cinematic masterpiece, created to be what it remains to be. It's called getting a life. So calm down. Appeal to the neocortex. And relax. After all, once the lights go down, it only hurts going in.

Se non e' zuppa e' pan' bagnata. Cosi' e' la vita!!

All I need is a sheet of paper and something to write with and then I can turn the world upside down. **Friedrich Nietzsche**

All my life I've looked at words as if I'm seeing them for the first time. **Ernest Hemingway**

Without words, without writing and without books there would be no history, there could be no concept of humanity. **Herman Hesse**

So difficult it is to show the various meanings and imperfections of words when we have nothing else but words to do it with. **John Locke**

We lay aside letters never to read them again, and at last we destroy them out of discretion, and so disappears the most beautiful, the most immediate breath of life, irrecoverable for ourselves and for others. **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns, as it were, instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink. **George Orwell**

In a sense, words are encyclopedias of ignorance because they freeze perceptions at one moment in history and then insist we continue to use these frozen perceptions when we should be doing better. **Edward de Bono**

Be careful of the words you say,
Keep them short and sweet.
You never know, from day to day,
Which ones you'll have to eat. **Anonymous**

If language is as inextricably tied up with consciousness as it seems to be, then the continuing diminishment of our inclination to use it to express in letters the times in which we live could mean that an element of human consciousness itself is on the verge of disappearing. **Noam Chomsky**

Art can never be discredited as futile—it can be the trigger as well as the bullet.
Darren Tanti interviewed in *The Malta* **artpaper** December 2022/February 2023

To me, the greatest pleasure of writing is not what it's about, but the music the words make. **Truman Capote**

Give the people a new word and they think they have a new fact.
Willa Cather, On Writing: Critical Studies on Writing as an Art, 1953

I fell in love—that is the only expression I can think of—at once, and am still at the mercy of words, though sometimes now, knowing a little of their behaviour very well, I think I can influence them slightly and have even learned to beat them now and then, which they appear to enjoy. I tumbled for words at once. . . . There they were, seemingly lifeless, made only of black and white, but out of them, out of their own being, came love and terror and pity and pain and wonder and all the other vague abstractions that make our ephemeral lives dangerous, great, and bearable.
Dylan Thomas, "Notes on the Art of Poetry," 1951

As a rhetorician, I loved only words: I would raise up cathedrals of words beneath the blue gaze of the word sky. I would build for thousands of years.
Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words*, 1964

The difference between the almost-right word & the right word is really a large matter—it's the difference between the lightning-bug & the lightning.
Mark Twain, letter to George Bainton, October 15, 1888

The basic tool for the manipulation of reality is the manipulation of words. **Philip K. Dick**, How to Build a Universe That Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later. 1986

What words say does not last. The words last. Because words are always the same, and what they say is never the same.
Antonio Porchia, Voces, 1943, translated from the Spanish by W.S. Merwin

Polonious: What do you read, my lord?
Hamlet: Words, words, words.
William Shakespeare, Hamlet.1600

Don't you ever/Up in the sky/Don't you ever get tired/Of having the clouds between you and us? **Nootka prayer**

'Our heart is our undoing. We think we are master of our kindness; we are the slaves of a serene laxity. It is something quite other than intelligence that is involved…' **Jean Genet**, The Balcony. Translated by Bernard Frechtman. Grove Press, New York 1966.

The dying light was in his hair, and his face was sweet with evening. **Patroclus** observing **Achilles**. The Song of Achilles. Madeline Miller. 2012

NN:…after reading the news. "Satan's in his Hell and all's right with the world."

CP: “Oh, *that’s* why things are going so well! (Apologies to R. Browning)

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 (well, maybe some but don’t tweet it). 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.)

We are pleased to report that Texan **John Sullivan** is back in the saddle after a medical absence. John returns as **Features Drama Editor** and the first edition of his regular column **At Rise** appears in this issue. You will delight in his elegantly written, highly referential and provocative and then some take on all matters theatrical and how theatre relates to the world around it. Welcome back, John!

Ezra Neighbors, the rad-est, bad-est Acting Editor who ever acted as editor, is doffing those togs and donning the toga (purple stripe included) of **Drama Editor**. And if you think that’s bad or rad, wait till you read his WILI’s and see this tokin’ smokin’ peace-piper at his exuberant best!

Our irreplaceable Fiction Editor **Joey Cruse** has included an essay (Fiction # 1) on the ‘The Word’ which is *too* bizarre because the topic of the Welcome is ‘The Word’ and it just so happens through some extreme prestidigitation of a wormhole out there in hyper-space that **Gerry Wilson** who writes *The Philosopher’s Corner* byline in **Joey Scarfone’s** *Midnight Fiction* column *also* chose ‘The Word’ as his topic!! Like this is so out of control crazy because NONE of us had any precognition of what the other was writing!!! Sure, great minds think alike, but do they replicate???

FOTD alumnus author **David Earl Williams** (Issue 11: Poetry # 5) will publish his poetry chapbook *Everybody Lives Here One Night at a Time* with Wet Cement this October. Congratulations, David! **Hezekiah** was so fired up for him when he heard the news that he actually took time off from his saline injections (!) to write…

"... The man is flawlessly, faultlessly, pure Zen-Zane... as buggy as a shopping cart in every Bestway... "

Poetry Editor, Hezekiah, Fleas On the Dog ...

…which will appear as a blurb on the cover! Rock on, dudes!

A word about **'Five 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 11 crazy bruhs 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 14**, lean and luscious, raunchy, mean and precious! And until we meet again in Issue 15 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, Sal, Joey C., Hezekiah, John, Ezra, Joey S., Wade, Richard and Rob