

WELCOME ISSUE 6 MAY 2020

And remember, if your thrall thinks Kafka is a trade agreement it's time to hit Tinder (or Grindr)...

Welcome to Fleas on the Dog! We're a no frills brown bag 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 and pagination. What you won't find are pretty pictures and fancy layouts. We like this 'broadsheet' deconstructionist approach 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.)

It's been three months since we published our last issue and in that time the world has changed in a way we could never have imagined or predicted. Italy and Spain, with their vibrancy of Latin culture, have fallen under *l'angelo della morte*. Toronto is a ghost town. New York is on its knees. Deaths in the USA have passed those of the Vietnam War. Infrastructure everywhere is imperiled and culture is quickly becoming a hostage in the pogrom of pandemic. We look around and it is like civilization is closing down. A night of sorts, whose darkness is unfamiliar, descends upon us.

But like Byron, a prisoner in his *Castle of Chillon*, we can learn heroically from despair and in so doing mobilize those things which are beyond worry, heartache and desperation. Love and Art. That's what it comes down to and what it will *always* come down to. Now, more than ever, this is the time we need each other. Stephen King was once asked, 'What makes a great writer?' His answer was, 'A love of the species.' The best writing ennobles the species and through poetry (and by that we mean *all* literary endeavour) we find not only a bright abundance of hope, but the salvation that will carry us through. Writers, poets, playwrights, journalists. Defeat is not in our cards. Rise up! Hang fire! WE are the voice! Today is our tomorrow!

It is ironic that social distancing brings an awareness and need for community. Reaching out takes many forms. One of the ways we are doing it—starting with this issue—is WOW! (Writers on Writers!) We've invited a number of Fleas alumni authors to guest edit some of our submissions and to tell us each in their own words WHY I LIKE IT. You will find them throughout Fiction, Plays and Nonfiction.

The plays we publish are here because we like them. We were swamped with submissions in this category and though we love theatre, we possess neither the experience nor expertise to parade ourselves as critics. We probably turned down some very excellent scripts simply on the basis of our shining ignorance and for that we apologise. **We sorely need a Drama Editor (or drama**

queen) at FOTD so if you're someone who welcomes abuse, pressure , fame and glory—or know someone who does—please give us a shout at editors@fleasonthedog.com

Six writers are making their debuts in Issue 6. Congratulations to **Turner Odorizzi** (Fiction), **Kevin Barbosa** (1st global publication, Fiction), **Alexander Auclair** (Fiction), **Fajer Al Zayed** (Poetry), **Patrick Harig** (Fiction) and **Amannda Maphies** (Nonfiction).

We're just six crazy dudes who love the language and fall on our knees at the sound of beautiful words in all their glorious reach and transformative 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*. We can't hold hands but we can sure as sugar touch hearts so, hey, when lockdown get you down—reach out --you're only a keyboard away!

And now, with great pomp and ceremony, we give you Issue 6. It's a massive mother but you've got three months to read it. And until we meet again in Issue 7 always spread the love and STAY SAFE, or, as we say here in wonderful Canada, the true north strong and Flea, 'Stay safe, *eh!*'

Tom, Charles, Richard, Robert, Steve and Hezekiah