

# zimmer

POETRY MAGAZINE

A photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a white button-down shirt. She is shown from the chest up, leaning back with her eyes closed and her right hand resting on her forehead. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights, suggesting an indoor setting with a window. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

**IDENTITY**

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## FROM THE EDITOR

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Our first Zimmer readers!

I am thrilled to present to you the inaugural issue of our poetry magazine. This journey has been long and filled with hard work, passion, and a deep love for the art of poetry. The journey to this moment has been challenging yet incredibly rewarding, and I couldn't be happier to finally share it with you.

Our team has curated a selection of poems that we believe will touch your hearts, provoke your thoughts, and perhaps even change your perspective on what identity means. The diverse voices and styles represented in these pages are a testament to the richness and variety of contemporary poetry. Each piece has been chosen for its ability to resonate, to evoke emotion, and to inspire.

This magazine is more than just a collection of poems; it is a celebration of the human experience, an exploration of the myriad ways in which we express our deepest feelings and ideas. We hope that you will find moments of reflection, joy, sorrow, and wonder as you immerse yourself in the words of our talented contributors.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has supported this endeavor—from the poets who have generously shared their work, to the dedicated team who has worked tirelessly to bring this issue to life, and to you, our readers, for your curiosity and enthusiasm.

Thank you for joining us on this beautiful journey. I hope you find as much joy in reading this magazine as we have found in creating it. Your feedback and thoughts are always welcome as we continue to grow and evolve together.

Happy reading!



*Heidi Kewin*

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF





## Why identity?

Identity is a fundamental part of our existence, shaping how we see ourselves and interact with the world.

Through poetry, we explore the rich and varied aspects of identity —our personal histories, cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences. Each poem in this issue offers a unique perspective, revealing the diverse ways we understand and express who we are.

The importance of identity lies in its ability to connect us. By understanding our own identities and those of others, we can foster empathy, appreciation, and a deeper sense of community. Our contributors' works reflect on personal and collective identities, shedding light on the shared and unique elements that define us.

# Building Me

BY JOE SPIVEY

You could start at the bottom  
with my misshaped feet and dodgy ankles,  
moulded by treks down the cobbles of Humber Street  
and the time I was dared to jump off the side gate.

Then there's my knees and pelvis  
both cracking in harmony with every step,  
forged by summertime picnics in Pearson Park,  
spending hours on end with bare knees against the bandstand.

It might be good to add some liquids too.  
A splash of blood from the shores of Withernsea,  
Scarborough and Bridlington,  
and some tears from the rain that fell  
when I first got my heart broken.

Moving up, give me a ribcage  
made from the netting of an old fishing trawler,  
teeth, tongue, breath and lungs filled with air from Hessle Road  
and fingertips callused with pints from the Adelphi.

Then to finish, add some decorations.  
A cartilage piercing made from the twisted metal  
of Spiders nightclub, still welded together by 1970s punks,  
a pair of cold eyes made from the salt in the Humber  
and a kidney stone to match the goldfish  
swimming in the marketplace public toilets.

And to hold me together,  
give me a spine the length of the A63.

# Superman

BY JOE SPIVEY

You could start at the bottom  
with my misshaped feet and dodgy ankles,  
moulded by treks down the cobbles of Humber Street  
and the time I was dared to jump off the side gate.

Then there's my knees and pelvis  
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## in conversation with Joe Spivey

**Joe Spivey graduated with a BA in Creative Writing and English from the University of Hull and is currently studying a MA in Creative Writing at Leeds Trinity University. The Hull native's work has most recently been published in 'Ey Up Again: An Anthology of Northern Writing', published by Written Off Publishing in 2023, and in the HullFire Magazine 'Issue 1' in 2022. He is also the editor of City of Words, an anthology of poetry and prose, published in 2024 by Indigo Dreams Publishing. Joe regularly performs his poetry at various open mic and spoken word events across the country.**

Z: What is the difference between your written word and spoken word?

JS: I think there's always a difference between the two, regardless of the writer/performer. I know of many poets whose work I love deeply, but I don't hold the same feeling to them reading their work on stage, and vice versa. I think for me and my work, the difference would probably be the delivery. I think everyone has their own natural way of reading and it's not until you see or hear the writer read their own work, can it have another dimension added to the piece.

Z: Do you come from a literary background?

JS: Not really no. I have always been interested in writing, reading and the power of language, which is something I picked up in school more than anywhere else. My parents are both certainly voracious readers, but this wasn't something I ever really picked up on. My literary background is definitely rooted in Hull however, and the north in general, and this has definitely had an effect on my writing.



“

## in conversation with Joe Spivey

Z: Can you tell us a bit more about the inspiration behind *Building Me*? What did you have in mind before writing this piece?

JS: It's quite an old poem for me. It was written in the summer of 2023, before I graduated my undergraduate degree in Hull. I was thinking about identity and memory and how the two are often intertwined together. There are countless places in Hull that I hold very sacred memories towards, and I often feel that the relationship I have with the city of Hull is a physical thing just as much as an emotional attachment. Whether it's the way I talk, how I look, or the scars and marks on my body, they all have a story behind them that has something to do with Hull. The poem is a love letter to that city and everything it has done for me.

Z: How important is your English identity, background and upbringing when you write poetry?

JS: I don't think it can be overstated how important it is to me and my writing. When I first started writing poetry, I would actively try to avoid things like accent, dialect, and colloquialisms, which is something I think is very common in new writers. I think this was a natural reaction due to the way specifically poetry is taught and spoken about in schools. We're taught poetry is something that doesn't belong to the working class, or the north. We're told it doesn't belong to us, so when a young writer then picks up a pen and paper, it's understandable why they would try and distance themselves from anything that could make them stand out from the crowd, and this is something I definitely did for a long time. It wasn't until I found myself in a university classroom with a great teacher in front of me who encouraged us all to embrace our individual voices and use the things that make us different to create something. After that, I embraced my background and started writing poetry I was actually proud of and felt had pieces of my true self inside them. Since then, I have always made sure to be honest with myself in my writing, and embrace who I am and where I came from.

”



# Mother Nature

BY KIMBERLY OBAYI

What a world we live in,  
In the heart of Mother Nature,  
Fears above us as we sink in,  
Not knowing what lies within.

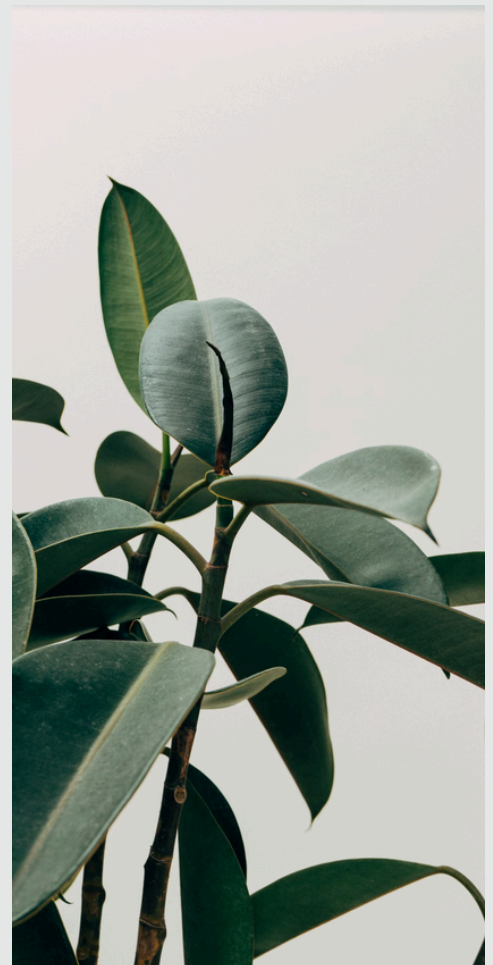
The wars for the fight of our freedom,  
Slowly tarnishing in our home,  
What's left to move on?  
Rather we leave and never return.

When we think of what is left to fight for,  
It takes us back to what we all endured,  
Pain, misery, agony, wasn't enough,  
Still, people died in their Amory.

Tell me Mother Nature, what is left for us?  
You were created to protect us,  
Now we run helplessly dying in the dust,  
Awakening of freedom fighters in August.

Blood spilling on the earth,  
Plants dried up and completely dead,  
What is war, that leads to death,  
Knives dug inside our necks.

Today is the day we wake up,  
Let the sound of the gong be a wake-up call to us,  
We all shall one day prevail, awaiting a new age,  
Of mother nature's night and day.



# Tuscany Green

BY ZACHARY ISAACS

**What does my life amount to?**

**Is it my insincerely constructed essays,  
Or my sincerely misshapen poetry?**

**Is it the songs I listen to,  
Or the books I read?**

**Is it the shows I watch,  
Or the dramas I lead?**

**Is it the experiences to which my emotions expend?  
Or,  
Is it that these all end?**

**Perhaps the answer is yes and no to the everythings and nothings that lie in these questions;**

**But I do know,  
In memories of such purity and serenity,  
Answers do permeate.**

**Sitting in the Tuscany green with a friendly voice whispering into the air, "everything is going to be just fine".**

Zachary Isaacs' poetry uses a stream-of-consciousness style to convey the lack of coherence in our own little worlds. With an academic interest in Enlightenment thought, Isaacs likes to play the rational world against real human experience which unfailingly seems to more closely resemble the poetry of influences like Leonard Cohen and Charles Bukowski.

## more from Zach

*- Can you tell us a little bit more about Tuscany Green?*

Tuscany Green is about the perfect moments in life when all the big questions dissipate. Travelling through Italy last year and seeing a completely alien green painting Tuscany's rolling hills was one of those moments for me. I saw myself, I saw the landscape, and nothing could separate those two things in that moment.

*- What does individuality mean to you, both within and without poetry? Do you see poetry as an expression of yourself, or something more external?*

Individuality seems to be an amalgamation of all the things, people, and ideas to which we associate and dissociate, on and off, throughout our lives. It is unwaveringly dynamic and as such we like to grasp at it, try to keep it stable, try to keep it digestible. I think that's what poetry is, or at least the function it aims to serve, a snapshot of our individuality – the things we care about, the things we deem worth mentioning, the people we love, how we love them, the everyday and the extraordinary.

I think it also important to mention that, though the artist remains inextricably intertwined with the art, the art does not remain tied to the artist. When I read my own poetry, I see myself, but equally when I read Leonard Cohen, I see myself again with a stimulating new perspective. I would like it to be the case that when people read my poetry, they don't see me, they see themselves. Poetry in that sense is something external as it reaches away from the individual and it changes external perspectives, it changes emotions, which really can have an impact on the world around.

*- How do you write your poetry, and where? Do you have specific methods or routines?*

My methods are very eclectic, that is to say I don't really have any. As general practice, I try to make sure I have a notepad on me at all times for any ideas I have. I obviously write more when I am doing the things that make you feel more human – being outside, exercising, speaking with friends, reading things that are worth reading. My job at the moment is punishingly mundane so I have to really push to get into a creative headspace, but I am hoping to develop a more inspiring routine once I start full time study again next year.

BY AZRAEL APLIN

my refusal of placement  
within the modern societies  
pretty little box  
is by no means - a mistake

i am a plethora of personas  
a multitude of madness  
labels stood nonexistent -  
the creation of I.

i shall only accept  
being known as -  
unfathomable- evanescent

i care not to be  
a creature lest molded.

i fly free with my vices.  
choose my own direction.  
ye - i spit upon the grasps  
of conformity & its vapid devices.

# 4C

BY AZRAEL APLIN

**i don't remember the moment,  
i started to feel more at home-  
in hair not my own.**

**or when there came a comfort in disguising-  
pieces of me,  
society deemed despicable.**

**i don't recall when i began conforming to a  
societal "normality"  
birthing something easily digested -  
a picturesque formality.**

# Do you ever wonder?

BY AZRAEL APLIN

Do you ever wonder?  
what it's like to see the world in full color  
to not have the vibrancy dimmed  
by the looming charcoal despair  
you're so constantly wrapped in.  
to not only feel the warmth  
of the sun-  
but be blinded by its aureolin rays of hope  
that pierce through the cracks between  
the blacks of your single windows curtain.  
to take in the rainbows radiating  
off the plants you've nurtured  
far better than the foliage within you.  
to stroll through endless greens  
and get lost in the beauty  
nature so desperately wants  
for you to become encased with.  
to love with tenacious reds  
with no fear of it being soiled  
by the maroons you let slip  
from your olive skin.  
oh sweet one,  
with a shining soul suppressed by shades.  
do you ever wonder?

# Azrael Aplin



I'm Azrael Aplin, a writer wandering throughout the state of Michigan, USA. I have always dreamed of a life where words take more precedent than the visual and have curated a space where my writing is the focal point rather than my appearance, where I live, or what items I accumulate. I write of my journey, the things I have done, and struggles I've overcome, in hopes to bring relief to readers that may feel they're walking their path alone. Words that are open may be interpreted in many different ways, I hope readers take what resonates with them, and leave what does not. Furthermore, I truly appreciate every reader, critic, and human in general that gazes upon any of my work, and thank you for spending a little bit of your life, with me.\*

*\*taken from Azrael's website: <https://www.azraelaplin.com/about>*

## in conversation with Azrael

editor-in-chief Heidi Kewin asked Azrael Aplin about her poetic voice as a woman of colour.

**Z:** *Can you give us an introduction about what poetry means to you as a woman of colour?*

**AA:** Poetry has always been an outlet for me on the subject of feelings. Poetry is my safe space. My solace. My mother fits the mold of societal beauty. Natural blonde, blue eyes, porcelain skin. As a young girl, I didn't feel like I could be understood on subjects such as race and identity vocalizing them to her. This left me feeling devoid of a voice since my black father was always away from home to provide for us, and a true man of a few words. Poetry is where I found said voice. Poetry has allowed me to express all the complex emotions us women of color experience in our lifetimes. It has also connected me with other women I could relate to on a fundamental level. In sharing my personal struggles through poetry, I am able to help other women and girls feel less alone, and that means the world to me.

**Z:** *I was wondering whether your poems have titles, or if this is something you've deliberately chosen not to use?*

**AA:** My titles, if there are any, are always at the end of my poems. I do this as a way for readers to not have any preconceived notions about the poem. I like for readers to come to their own personal relations of my works before they view mine.





# Ode to Le Bois Roy

BY ELISE YVON

As I get on my knees on the muddy ground  
the forest moss slightly wet, quenches my wound,  
I prostrate myself in waiting.

For Nature answers my calls and talks to me  
allowing clarity to break through with its sounds  
of flutter and streams – (the creak is making its path.)

I am edged in between two states of the little girl  
and the woman's grief, as I know I need to leave,  
– you – in the ground with the roots of the trees.

I am afraid of turning into my mother's regrets.  
I am afraid her eternal love won't last.  
I am afraid this hollowness is never-ending.

The little girl cannot run to hide in her mother's skirt  
anytime something difficult happens, – you –  
need to learn to grieve like adults do.

But the pain of the moss and my blood mixing  
Grounds my sorrow, relief if for a little while,  
I stay prostrated in waiting.



“Elise Yvon is a poet from Brittany, France. She learns English from a young age as her parent’s career embarks her on a journey around the world. She falls in love with the English language and her poetry encompasses a mix of her roots, whether it be the pagan Celtic aspect of Brittany, or the wonders of the places she discovered.”

# July Feature Poem

I've lost faith in humanity  
On this never ending journey for true equality.  
Losing friends and family  
To senseless force and brutality.  
I've shed countless tears-  
Overcome with pain and fears.  
Wailing out-  
Yet no one hears.  
Why must I go on social media  
And see jokes stating  
"All lives splatter"  
Combating the ones that only want people to believe  
That "our lives matter"  
Bloodshot eyes sad and broken  
Yelling "black lives matter"  
Oh how I seethe-  
The clenched fists and silent teeth  
From the vicious creatures  
Who have become nothing more than vicious thieves.  
When will this end?  
To you, my hand, I extend  
In hopes that you'll take hold  
Understand the cause and choose to defend  
For I'm tired.  
I'm tired of baring my heart on my sleeve  
For every life I shouldn't have to grieve  
Witnessing knees on our necks  
From the ones who are supposed to protect  
PLEASE  
I CANT FUCKING BREATHE.  
  
-tired.

Azrael Aplin

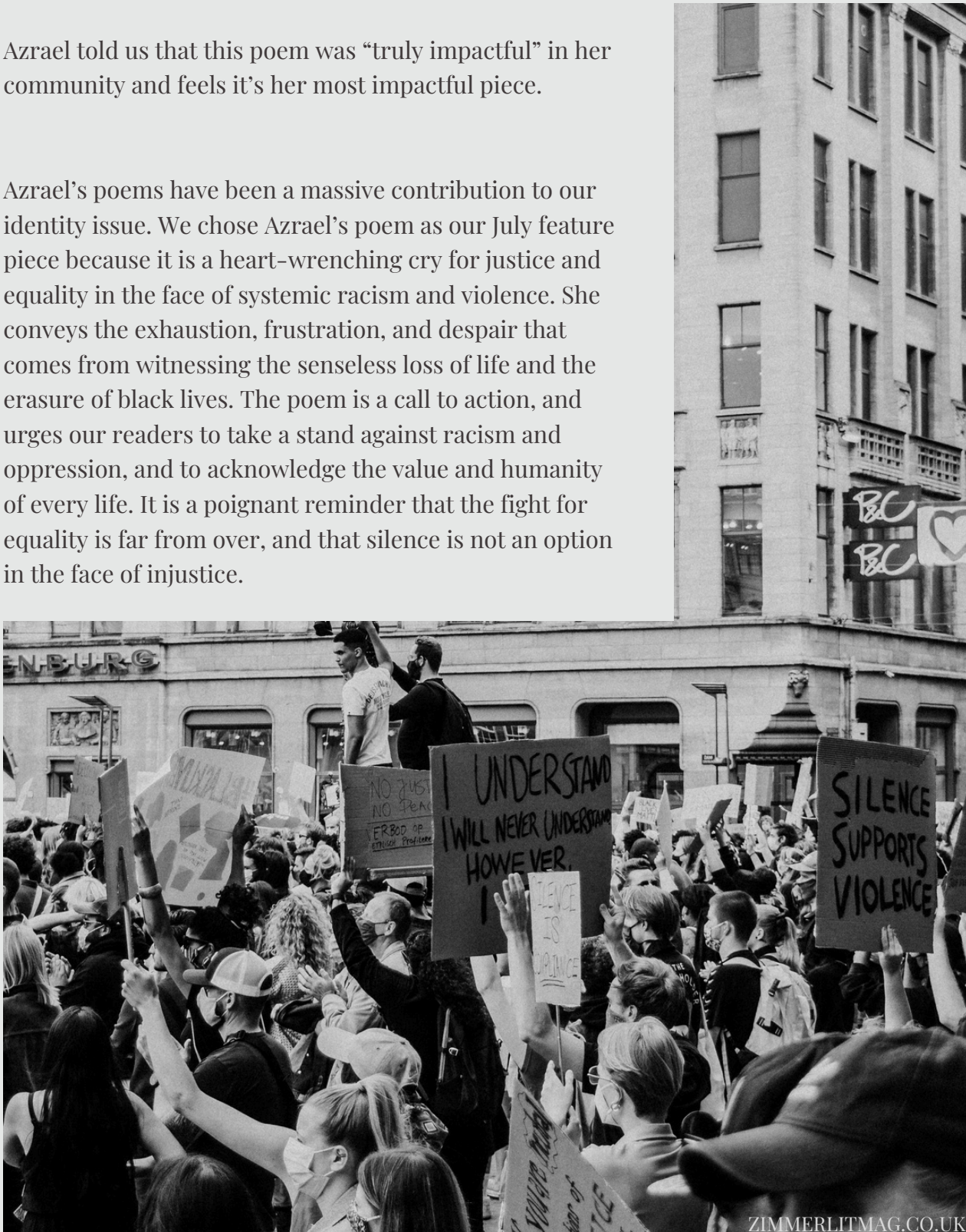
## in response to the murder of George Floyd



Azrael told us that this poem was “truly impactful” in her community and feels it’s her most impactful piece.

Azrael’s poems have been a massive contribution to our identity issue. We chose Azrael’s poem as our July feature piece because it is a heart-wrenching cry for justice and equality in the face of systemic racism and violence. She conveys the exhaustion, frustration, and despair that comes from witnessing the senseless loss of life and the erasure of black lives. The poem is a call to action, and urges our readers to take a stand against racism and oppression, and to acknowledge the value and humanity of every life. It is a poignant reminder that the fight for equality is far from over, and that silence is not an option in the face of injustice.

WWW.AZRAELAPLIN.COM/PORFOLIO






**Echoes of the Past, Shaping  
the Present: The Weight of  
Identity**



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