

TIGER LEAPING REVIEW

issue 2
spring '24



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to read our second issue. Over the last three months, we read so much outstanding poetry, and choosing who would be included was incredibly hard. During the month of our reading period, we each read and considered every piece and had to make tough decisions. Because of this, we would like to extend our gratitude to all those who submitted during this issue and trusted us with their work.

Going into the second issue, we knew that there were parts of the journal that were successful and parts that we could improve and expand upon. For one, we knew that we wanted to offer feedback as a way to connect with the poets who submitted to Tiger Leaping Review. We also wanted to become more consistent with social media, so we implemented Tiger Tuesdays. Through these and various other changes we made, we tried to make this issue even better than the last.

This issue contains poetry from a diverse range of poets covering a wide range of topics. While it was not easy to adjust to the changes over the three months, as we were busy with other projects in store, we had to continue “finding solace in new light and / trusting the stars to return”, as said by Lacy Benton. We relied on the systems built in the past in order to continue growing our journal. During these times, we and many others had to find, “like poetry under fingertips, something / soothing,” a line given to us by Nitika Sathiya. “i’ve prayed for love and i’ve prayed for peace / this is the home from which i write your letters,” Raphaela Pavlakos said in her poem “my body.” These pieces, along with many others, comprise our second issue to create a loose overarching theme of hope and persistence, a message we hope to bring to all of our readers.

As we put together this issue over the month of April, we were so impressed by all of the poetry that we had to choose from, and we are thrilled to introduce the second issue of Tiger Leaping Review. Hopefully, through reading all of the talented poets, you find hope within yourself and in the world around you.

Yours truly,

Mira Sridharan, Claire Wang, and Kenna Zhang
Editors-in-Chief at *Tiger Leaping Review*

2 coffee cups by Alyssa Haygood-Taylor

I bought two coffee cups
And I live alone
But two is better than one
So I bought two coffee cups
They're heavy and deep and made of glass
One is green and one is purple
With handles that I don't care to use
So I wrap my palm around the entire thing
Even if its full and heavy
Even if my hand is too small
Even if it burns
I imagine standing in my very yellow kitchen
And brewing something hot
With a smell that calls people home
And I'll ask my morning guest
Do you prefer a color?
And they'll looks at me
With two coffee cups
And the truth about the two coffee cups is
I won't care much about what they hold
Or even who holds it
Coffee or tea or a lover I won't see again
As long as I have two coffee cups

Alyssa Haygood-Taylor

is an author and poet from South Carolina currently residing in Nashville, TN. She's had poems published through the Asterism Literary Magazine, Beyond Words Literary Magazine, Moon Love Press, and more. She is also a 2022 Semi-Finalist for the Red Wheelbarrow Poetry Prize and Pushcart Prize nominee.

Night Coming

by Amanda Niamh Dawson

Run with me
Into apricot skies
The place
Where lovers' light lies
Spreading so soft
Darkness swallows us
The deepest part
Of our heart

Amanda Niamh Dawson

lives in Northern California. Born in England, then raised in Boston, she worked in Books & Manuscripts at Sotheby's New York, then at Gourmet and House Beautiful. Her work has appeared in Pomona Valley Review, The Dewdrop, The Banyan Review, Literary Yard, and other publications. Instagram: @thedawsonian

inevitable demise catalyzed by childlike wonder

by Jillian Thomas

i transcend those crystal nights
spent beneath lunar glows
i have reached the nirvana of
kids who knew existentialism far before
they could name what it was
i live in dissertations of
strawberry freckled skin in the moonlight
and i am caught in eternal drought, waiting
for the miracle of depleted snowglobes to create
water from glass
i am foolish to think rain will grace me
with its ebullience if i cannot even keep myself dry,
i am ignoring the swelling clouds
for maybe if i do not acknowledge their existence,

they will cloak me with their silken embrace
i am infinite // i am dwindling
two sides of the same coin

i cannot decide which one will show its face-
maybe i am duplicitous beyond repair

i am futile // i am discarded ever since i stained
the pedestal of god's empty throne with my
spilt milk // i am endless [and my mother sits
in the place of god in the sky]

Jillian Thomas

is a 17-year-old poet from Pennsylvania who writes about love, loss, and outer space. She has been published in *Levitate*, *Footprints on Jupiter*, and the *afterpast review*, among others. In her free time, she runs a literary magazine, listens to music, and skis.

1. by Lacy Benton

god is good
or not
it makes no difference to me
I am
walking in the spring fields I am
petting the old grey cat
I am comforting the ones I love
-finding solace in new light and
trusting the stars to return;
does the cardinal know what goodness is
or was he just born ready
to sing

Lacy Benton

features original poetry and artwork on an Instagram account under the handle @ellabpoetry. She is a mezzo-soprano and behavior therapist based in Tampa, Florida, and when she is not writing or singing, her interests include exploring nature, animal + environmental activism, and humanitarian work to promote equity for children with special needs in the international community.

Late Night at the Arcade

by Leda Nichole

on our last date
i saw another couple at the bar
while you were grabbing drinks
she was perched on his lap
arms draped around his neck
like it was the best seat in the house
as she leaned over, and
bent down to whisper in his ear
i could only imagine the
sweet nothings she spoke

my own thoughts wandering in
your absence, I watched them
until
too drunk to find his lips
she leaned in for a kiss
and nearly fell to the floor
they both laughed
even as her gaze
lingered on you and he
checked his phone
for the hundredth time

Leda Nichole (she/her)

is an MFA student at SUNY Buffalo with a BA in Writing from Ithaca College and an MA in Irish Folklore and Ethnology from University College Dublin. She writes in the fields of poetry, flash fiction, and short story, with much of her work being centered around the natural world, elements of everyday life, and themes from folklore and mythology.

for chris

by Mia Soto

– te quiero
gvgeyui
aloha wau ‘iā ‘oe –
with all of my heart,
i say this (i love you).
i wish i could tell you that.
well, technically, i can –
you’re only a phone call away,
the matter of dialing 10 digits
with my trembling fingers –
but still,
i cannot produce the courage
in my heart
to admit my emotions to you,
and you’re not helping by what you do;
playing that music you know i like while you drive & i ride,
the way you rock those aviators across those deep, engrossing brown eyes,
forget your smile –
it can bring the most decayed flowers back to life.
boy,
you are something.
folks know me to run a little wild,
talk smart & loud, with a smile –
but when i’m around you,
i can’t seem to open my mouth,
and when i do,
i feel like my heart is going to jump out
and run into the clouds,
because you’re just above them –
you are like the illusion they call heaven.
i love you, like people do,
i want to pass the gates and enter your heart, like people yearn to do,
and i believe in you and me being together,

in love, like people do.
i wonder –

am i just a big, stupid 'ol fool?

Mia Soto (M.S. Blues)

is an 18 year old multiracial, queer, and versatile writer who has been writing since the age of seven. Her work revolves around the darker pieces of humanity society tends to neglect. She has been abundantly published by many literary magazines and currently serves as an editor to The Amazine, Adolescence Magazine, The Elysian Chronicles, and Hyacinthus Zine. Her Instagram handle is @m.s.blues_

memory by Nabeeha Mudassar

you used to ask for me once
do you remember?
now we're back to our roots
thirteen and unafraid
a shower of misery

you look for me in every room
and i let you consume my thoughts
do you remember?
let's go back to eleven
when things were simpler

you spit my name like a curse
and i repeat yours, a benediction
will you remember this too?
seventeen, a barrage of fearlessness
and once more,
the steady weight of a hand

Nabeeha Mudassar

is a seventeen-year-old girl from Pakistan. Nabeeha has been writing from the very first moment she learned how to pick up a pencil. Various books, poems, and stories pay tribute to her life. Her hobbies include reading, crocheting, and swimming.

i would tell her that love is a state of mind.

by Nitika Sathiya

like honey on my lips, something
sweet to shut me up. like poetry
under fingertips, something
soothing to heal me. like luke-warm
tea, i drink instead of water. and i
used to think—sometimes i still think
i want to be held. i want to be held,
because my father wasn't held by his. i
want to be someone's gravity, not my own
orbit. like flies swarm to fruits, i want
something to want. i want to be a nuisance.
like my mother's boxes of sweet nothings,
i lay full and untouched. like the deer
frozen in the middle of the road, i think every light
is a sign of life. i mistake the guts for something
worth my time. like butterflies swarm into abstract,
i wonder how good it will feel again.
to want someone is to want someone to shut me up. and i have never
been so loud in my entire life. i have never echoed like every
road is a tunnel, and i am the light. i
set the boxes aflame. i lay full and untouched.
i am held/by nothing. i need/nothing more.
like honey sticks, i crystallize everything into a poem.
and i savor, like a kid and cotton candy, i let the
sugar coat my lips. like a day out, i strip
my sweat from my forehead and i trek,
until i feel love again. like the dimples
i share with my mother and the palm lines i share with
my father, i am made of something daffodil.
how is it that i remember how to resuscitate myself just with words?
my teachers always called me talkative, but
now i can finally forgive myself.
like solitude and whirlpools alike,
i am always on the brink, just a poem away from—
i don't care anymore.

the sound of music

by Nitika Sathiya

i haven't been to India in a few years,
and i have forgotten the folktales;
i have forgotten what i am a part of.

i wear the carnatic carcass
of the culture i was born to.
forcing sounds down my throat,
making them belong again.
sa- scale.

re- remember

ga- God.

ma- make

pa- promises.

dha- don't

ni- negate

sa- soul.

hold the melody in my breath.
belong.

repeat the scale:

sa- silk

re- road

ga- goods

ma- make

pa- paths

dha- different.

ni- numerous

sa- shifts.
belong. trade. belong.

*what has been traded for me to forget
this melody?
what have i traded to loosen the grip of
my identity?*

i wash over anything that feels
a bit like shore.

i wear the carnatic carcass of
what could have been,
depraved of tradition.
can't raise a lotus
from the ocean.

i pretend to be a pond.

nothing belongs to me.

repeat the scale:

sa-re-ga-ma-pa-dha-ni-sa
swim—samsara (reincarnation).

connect.

this land does not know me
as a daughter.

i am hoping i'll be understood,
for i have never known what to call home.

i have never known our soul's music.
my second-nature is far from first.

hold my breath,
until i can sing (again).

speak—samsara.

remind me

who i am.

remember who

i am.
blood never forgets,
even when time does.

space for a nebula

by Nitika Sathiya

for a few moments, she wonders
if she is the Aurora Borealis
her body dances among unearthly feelings
maybe she is hallucinating or finally free

her skin sheds then glistens
and it feels like for the first time, she is full
a nebulous glow grows
her head is hazy, but she doesn't mind

for the first time,
she remembers how to chew and cry
oh her tears have never been
so refreshing

and she drinks tea without thinking
about the leaves
at the bottom of the cup
she is evolving

maybe that hammer
she held
against her
is now a book

the icicles of her touch
are now melting into the dirt beneath her
and the floor drinks each droplet
for the first time, she sees green

the birds start chirping
or maybe she finally hears them
and she realizes she is
not a beating heart
if she is numb

her blood buzzes
yet she climbs every cloud

and finds herself to be light
and suddenly she comes to life

collectivism - giving priority to the goals of one's group and defining one's identity accordingly

by Nitika Sathiya

my father's identity is a collection of old CDs.
i never knew he loved the Backstreet Boys,
until i opened the center console of our 12-year-old Toyota.
and the coins that he kept in his at-home office desk,
a quarter from every state—i think he was almost done collecting.

i knew his heart belonged to everyone first, and for that reason
my mother prayed that my brother and i would be like him,
when we grew up.
and i wished to be too.
i wanted to be a treasure chest and hold everything
with a bit of worship.

a son is a greater blessing than a daughter, in much of history.
because he had no choice; the writing said that man is king and girl is mother.
and my grandmother knew he was the world.
he, who would build a cluster of stars.

Appa, the collector. i, his daughter.
and i am a collection of the pieces and parts
he protects me from.
and i know he tries his best, even when he doesn't let me
cry in front of him.

he is the only one that tells me
i can be anything, and i should be everything.
the synthesis of the coins and CDs, bike rides and
driving lessons, sweet treats and golden hours,
movie nights and long walks.

maybe he has always wanted me to be as vast as the ocean,

even when i don't get to see him as often as i want.
because maybe the distance is worth it,
if i could leave my footsteps in the sand
farther than his.

i, the daughter of a collector.
legacy unfolds with everything i touch,
and that is why he doesn't want me to forget
why we love. even when the sand burns.
even when i forget what home is.

Nitika Sathiya

is from the Bay Area. She is a poet, a woman in STEM, and a community organizer. In 2022, she was named an Alameda County Co-Youth Poet Laureate. Nitika's poetry has been published in the Tri-City Voice and Poetry for Progress. Additionally, she has been published by NASA for her team's research on food waste, drones, and climate change. Nitika volunteers and advocates for the arts through the Fremont Cultural Arts Council, where she serves as the lead intern, and with Safe Alternatives to Violent Environments as a youth volunteer. She regularly hosts open mics in her community to invite all artists to showcase their writing and voices!

my body

by Raphaela Pavlakos

my body is a keeper of bad tides
i hold the ink in my throat and it spills
like rain clouds, from my nose
i sip the grey ruination from the gutters and smile
this is the place of dreams, between
shredded couch cushions and cracked leather bar stools

my body is a maker of the worst way
i hold the fire in my palm and it spreads
like promises, from my knees
i make the pleas, i've prayed for love and i've prayed for peace
this is the home from which i write your letters

in the last days, i know the sound of the bones
the wracking cough and warbled beat of old hands
on plastic trays, there is nothing here but death
and in the waiting room i chant,
your body is fabricator of white water
that steals the soul from your stomach
you can hold the red threads in your fingers
but they will unspool in fate's direction

the moon shifts behind April
and the sun stills, i blame the stars
but the victim has never been the bottle

downsizing

by Raphaela Pavlakos

why would you minimize my solitude?
diminishing my undertakings, I exploit the affect
steal the power *back*

I ache:

to write poems in a parked car on a scorching day
to collect sunbeams and freckles on one side of my body from a sliver of opened
window
to gulp breezes that cross through the steaming, stagnant air like August is
breathing directly into my mouth

how badly do I crave such solitude
to persist in the face of reduction

with all of my heart

Raphaela Pavlakos (she/her)

is a 3rd year PhD student in McMaster University's English and Cultural Studies department and a poet. Her research looks at Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee poetry and landscape as alternative sites of memory, using research-creation to intersect her scholarly and creative production. Raphaela's poetry can be found in Ekphrastic Review (forthcoming), Folklore Review (forthcoming), Talon Review, Persimmon Review, Taj Mahal Review, Word Hoard, Sanctuary: A Cootes Paradise Anthology, and graduate journals like The Lamp. She co-authored a self-published poetry collection called Mythopoesis in 2022 with Georgia Perdikoulis, which is available through Kindle Direct Publishing.

A healer who couldn't heal his own wounds ; broken mender

by Rhythm Sharma

Under the night sky with no moon in sight, a little boy cried for the first time.
His feet and cheeks were red and stars twinkled in his tearful gaze.
His gentle fingers caressed the chin of his mother
who no longer cried with the pain of being a widow.

The boy was a blessing; a cure.
He could heal anyone's heart
with his mere touch; so pure.

And so he grew up consuming sadness, breathing life into people.
Each act of healing left behind a mark, a curse carved on his skin -
a word from the evil that kindness never wins.

So every time he blessed someone with the beauty of life,
A scar waited for him with a ruthless knife.
First on his back and then on his legs, followed by his hands and face.
His body soon became a canvas of pain.

The stars in his eyes faded into cold stones,
his smile no longer impressed his folks.
A whisper in the night, his scars stained his hope.
Passing through people, looking for the hanging rope.

He continued to heal others,
for his blessing was the only thing he cherished about himself.
That he could be of use. That people needed him. Wanted him.
But the world refused to accept its healer, deepening the wounds.

People were convinced he was cursed.
How could he be a healer with a face so hideous?

The world blurred his vision and took control,
Made him believe life was a lesson to be endured.
And he was nothing more than a curse,

A mere healer who could never be cured.

He no longer wished to be this way.
With people treating him as a sin to look at.
Knocking at his door in times of need &
when he wished for a look of praise, they paid no heed.

His whole life, he longed to be needed,
To heal people, to mend.
Or perhaps he wished to stumble upon another healer
Who could put his pieces together
and return the stars he lost.
Turn him into something more than a wandering ghost.

But that was too much to ask for and
instead he found the hanging rope; acceptance.

A rope he could tie into a noose,
A gateway, escape from the abuse.
He was meant to mend others ; a sacrifice.
Nothing more. Nothing less.

And one night, he crawled up his mother's lap and wept.
Wept until there was nothing left.
Until he had taken all of his mother's pain
and embraced his fate; his end.
He laid there lifeless, scars embracing him with guilt.
For his mother could only smile, perhaps it was fair
To rob the world of its only healer. And just like that,
the world's only cure was gone.
He met his tragic end, in his mother's arms, under the moonless dawn.

Ridhi Sharma

is a published author and accomplished student who wholeheartedly embraces the art of storytelling. Writing under the pen name "Rhythm," a term affectionately bestowed by her father, she aspires to be a resonant voice for others. At the remarkable age of 17, she achieved the milestone of becoming a published author,

clinching first place in the anthology "A Slice of Life." Her poetic prowess continued to shine as her work graced the pages of "Canvas of Verses," further showcasing her talent and dedication to the craft. With a sincere desire to help and uplift people, her words convey understanding, reassuring readers that they are not alone. Ridhi seamlessly blends academic success with the heartfelt expression found in her pen name, excelling in both her literary pursuits and academic endeavors. Embarking on a promising literary journey, Rhythm invites you to explore more of her work by reaching out on Instagram at @whaattshewrote or emailing at 03rhythmwrites@gmail.com.

Side by Side by Sherry Shahan

TRIGGER WARNING: Self-harm and suicide

I.

I don't know if the rogue eyelash
defiled my egg salad sandwich, any

more than I know if butcher paper taped over
a window keeps the outside from coming in,

or if desktops are bullet-proof, like they say,
or if a textbook will take a slug for you

or if covering yourself in the strawberry Jello
spilling across the linoleum floor will trick him into thinking

you're dead.

or if swimming through teeth to get to your teacher's phone to dial 9-1-1

will anyone even come?

or if they do how long will they crouch in the corridor in their SWAT gear?

or if the all clear bell is some kind of trick?

II.

Mommy? It's time for school.

"No school today, honey."

Can we go to the movies?

"We can watch videos here."

Isn't there a parade in town?

"The mayor cancelled it."

What about the skate park?

"Let's set up miniature golf in the living room!"

Only if Layla can come over.

"I forgot to tell you Layla's family moved away."

*No they didn't! Their car is in the driveway! There are lots of cars. I bet she's having a party.
Why didn't she invite me?*

Senescence

by Sherry Shahan

Scurf dangles from my eyelash i flick mottled
skin sticks to the wall wet and winking like
cooked spaghetti a Rorschach no one will eat

my eggs once thick and yearning blown-out
stuffed with confetti but never mind days turned
upside down still tick

i turn my wrinkles inside out frail bones move around
more easily in loose skin then buzz half my hair
to remember left from right

who knows if the bra on the doorknob is empty or full?
the hook and eye touch secretly behind my back my
best lipstick breaks i'm contemplating veins

cascading unsupervised like a measuring tape
belt or a noose? ha! vain still rhymes with pain

each breath grows closer together thirst snags on socks
too big for my woes i wonder which pocket
holds the sweetest seeds? tell me i'm not alone and

why can't i climb from the calendar just this once?

SAD (Seasonal Affect Disorder) by Sherry Shahan

the calendar's voice is dark / even brine salt is gray / an endless hourglass / gray goes black / it still surprises me / sneaks up on me / *Time to turn the clocks back!* / restlessness creeps in on a drunken moon / my vinyl blinds won't lie flat / the grimy strings, a midnight noose / who makes up names for all the babies anyway?

i trip on an extension cord / sink into every stain / a million exclamation points pierce my skin / feelings bleed out / my pills run out / i string despondent bras over a mirror / crawl into an empty space / swallow an invisible blanket / wait for mermaids to sing

i'm not thinking a damn thing / but go mad when my mind splits open / ornaments of a broken life / i count backwards / wait for the moon to sober up / even the clock won't talk to me / can a lizard grow back from a single cell?

i remember floating on the beach under rays of light / a lover's hand in my pocket, melting

loneliness / when i looked good photographed naked / when i remembered my name / the sun must be a lonely star

i'm out of wine again retreat resign resolve escape in my nightie to kiss the cold sidewalk open my mouth like a goldfish waiting to be found.

Sherry Shahan

is a teal-haired septuagenarian who lives in a laid-back beach town in California. Her poetry has appeared in *F(r)iction*, *Plentitudes*, *Progenitor*, *Open Minds*, *Zoetic Press*, *Last Stanza Poetry Journal*, and elsewhere. She's currently nominated for The Pushcart Prize in Poetry and holds an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts.

A Small Win

by Taylor Jones

aka Times instead of Times New Roman
black lines entangled in white lies
white lies grow red roses and blood oranges
give me a thought that doesn't quite make sense
 and ferment it with the sourdough starter in the fridge
instead of school,
 swirl cookies, slice and bake
eat your cake with a wine glass, and eat it too
 give my dog a little piece of the pie while you're at it
 but not too much chocolate
The vintage market gave me a little brown bag
 and a white mesh sweater
 and a fascination with maps
the popcorn bowl is blue and plastic
 I threw up in it this morning
Sometimes women tell me to cut off my right thumb
Is it true what women say?
Must be, if avocado toast is a thing
The farmers market has squash and not the notebook I lost when I was five.
 Weird.
give me your tired, your hungry, your poor
 and I'll give them right back
It's not the world I remember, it's the world you created
Or did I create it?
Maybe we're all trying too hard
 Maybe, says the boy in a neon shirt and brand new slides
I'll like him in ten years, I'm sure
But for now I'll hate him because everyone else does
give me the Adidas sambas my sister wants
 they're popular so no one likes them
funny how words stop being what they are
 you can tell they were made by humans
and funny how i can still hear the heart beating under my floorboards
I'll get my life together in ten to ten thousand business days
 I promise

But for now, give me a mattress and a blanket and a dog to sit on my lap and I'll stay there for hours
Give me a pen and paper and I'll run like there's no turning back

Taylor Jones

is a sixteen-year-old writer from California. In her free time, she likes to dance, play lacrosse, and knit.

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***issue 2
spring '24***