



# THE FINAL DRAFT


Issue 2: Horror



# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

*Astrid McSwiggan, Brave McHugh, Imara Stewart, Effigy Handy*

It's been a scary few years. We've made it through everything the movies warned us against; worldwide illness, killer clowns, AI takeover. The writers have decided the best way to make it past fear is by doing what we do best; competing. Taking inspiration from those who came before us, Mary Shelly, Percy B Shelly, and Lord Byron – we invited you to take part in our scary story contest. And in true CAPA fashion, you delivered. So, join us around the hypothetical campfire, and allow yourself to indulge in all that sends shivers down your spine. Embrace the monsters under your bed, coax the ghouls from your closet, and take inspiration from your worst nightmares.





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# DON'T FEAR THE REAPER

*Elliott Byrd*

He reached out his hand to me, elegant rings around his fingers, nails carefully manicured and only slightly too long. And I, for fear of missing life, grasped it. My memory is foggy although in dreams I'm sure I've lived it through a thousand times. He pulled me closer in some type of forgotten waltz, a horror so old it had turned to beauty; I fell in time with him and lost all prior knowledge of the world. In my haze, the tiny pinpricks that broke the skin on my neck felt like butterfly kisses and, although the cold sharpness plagued me later in a type of living death, at the time I seemed able to breathe more clearly than in all of my seventeen years. I slipped into a gentle nightmare guided by the voices of Blue Öyster Cult lilting from the radio as they instructed me not to fear the reaper. As I swayed past the boundaries of death I laughed a bit to myself, why fear the reaper if I would much rather embrace him?



## SILVER LINING

*Effigy Handy*

As the sun sets, specks of chestnut rust in the barren dirt radiate. Mothers call children in from play and they trip over cables just barely grazing the surface. The sun takes a final gasp of the land, smoke floating past windows turns phosphorescent rose like a guidon to armies of steel shutters. The ladders and towers and windows that always lay eyes, turn to outlines as the pipes that creep up their sides like kudzu. And from their gaps thick silver lining escapes, weighing down the loose brackets till cascades onto the ground and a new tower is born.





# THE LONELY DINER

*Millie Salinas*

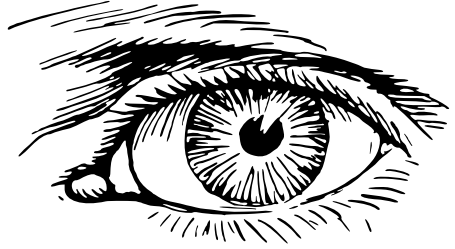
My name is Louis, I'm a 38-year-old truck driver from Edwardsville, Illinois, and something extortionary happened to me a couple of weeks ago. It was pitch dark that night, and I couldn't see anything, even with my headlights on. I was driving on the highway when I saw a lonely diner off the road. I was pretty hungry so I decided to stop at the diner. I could tell that no one was there. The parking lot was completely empty. I started wondering if there were even any servers. The red bright lights that screamed diner kept flickering. As I walked in, the bell on top of the door rang. I didn't see anyone, not even a server. I said "Hello? Is anyone here?" Right as I said that a server popped up from under the counter. "Hello there! Take a seat, let me get you a menu!" He said. I got frightened by the loud screeching voice that came out of that man. I saw them down at one of the booths. The server came up to me and dropped the menu on the table.

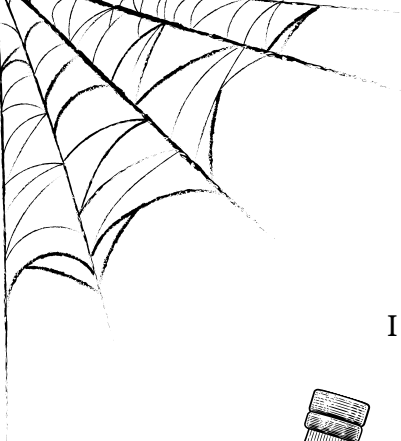
"Thank you," I said. "No problem" he looked at me with a smile. I acted as if I didn't get a creepy vibe off from this guy. He walked away into the kitchen and a couple of seconds later I hear loud muffled noises coming from where he was, I ignored it and went back to what I was doing. I looked through the menu for a couple of minutes. I sat the menu down back on the table and waited for the server to come back. After 10 minutes of patiently waiting the server came back. "So sorry for the wait, what could I get you?" He looked at me with a grin. "An apple pie and some coffee please," I responded. He nodded and ran back to the kitchen. I sat there for a couple of minutes, but still no pie or coffee. Ten minutes went by and still not even my coffee. Ten soon became thirty, thirty soon became fifty. I started to wonder. I got up from the booth and decided to walk behind the counter. I walked to the kitchen and what I saw was horrifying. A bloody arm, a meat grinder, blood and meat all over the floor, and the server standing right over the meat grinder. I screeched like a little girl and ran to the door. I ran to my truck and desperately tried to turn it on. From the corner of my eye I catch a glimpse of the server at the window staring me down like I'm his next victim. The truck turns on and I back out of the diner parking lot, I step on the gas and drive as fast as I can. I've never seen that diner ever again.

# WHY IS HE LOOKING IN MY HOUSE?

*Syncere Wright-McCollough*

Why is he looking in my house?  
Why the hell does he keep looking  
In my house?  
He keeps looking through my magazines  
as he knows what they are being used for  
... He always  
stares when I walk by  
He thinks I'm hiding something from  
The rest of the town... I'm all  
to himself while he's almost  
never away from my house  
... He doesn't realize  
Why... I had to take down the  
Tire swing from the Peppertree  
I had a young  
Daughter of my own... I had to  
Put down my dog  
And since then I've had no friends  
My lawn is dying... and  
Why does he take my packages  
I send them away and the man takes  
Them. Why is he looking in my house?  
He has a wide scar like the hook light  
On my stairs  
Why is he looking in my house?  
From in here... I'll tell you one thing  
He doesn't look friendly with the kids.  
Why is he looking in my house?  
What are those sounds, it's not just a camera?  
He's not just taking video  
A gun I hear... I  
Hear him reloading his weapon  
I heard him saying  
something low and old... and I keep





Hearing the loaded gun  
The grinding at his teeth  
He sharpens it with a knife  
and you won't believe but I saw  
A bear in my house under my sink.

He's been in here.  
I keep poison underneath the sink just for him  
Of course... But there's also  
Enough intestinal gas to  
Kill him on the spot  
... He needs to stop looking in  
my house. You have to stop looking in my  
house.

He knows my life,  
He knows that fact  
I have an ex-wife he shouldn't  
Know where, he can't know where  
He came from somewhere working for  
someone  
Maybe I hurt him  
But why the hell does he still look in my house?  
What the hell are you still in my house?



You have no friends  
I know you more now  
I've studied you, what you are  
You watch people, you watch me  
I hear you on my roof at night  
I've heard you come in.  
What is that humming?  
I know why you grind your teeth?  
I hear you loading your weapon  
Why are you in my walls?  
Why did you choose my house?

If you find out you'll wish you didn't

# UNTITLED

*Tah'mir Mont*

oh, you bit my neck but thats  
okay  
cause i'm into pain  
someone call the courtyard  
cause  
a body's escaped  
and found a way to me

i cant seem to get away

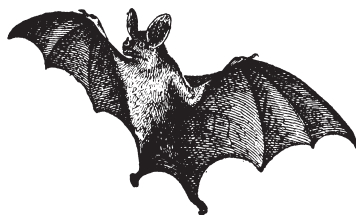
you sneak in and watch me sleep  
the shadows and tip-toed creaks  
my head begs to flee

but, you  
can chase me down and hide my  
heart  
to stop me from getting far  
convinced you mean no harm

can we  
make this all that you  
want  
can we  
pull the curtains and run  
can we  
go ahead and feast  
we'll be

our hearts will pump as  
the blood flows  
we'll choke on all we know  
into the sun, then we'll  
glow

but, you're  
holding the neck of mine  
take a bit more, this time  
i'll be just fine





# HOLLOW TREE

*Astrid Judd*



The boys sat with their jaws dropped, staring at the ghosts dancing and dancing. Their eyes turned to the queen, just the queen. There was no king in sight. August peeked his whole head out and when Archibald tried to push him back under, he hit his head on the cart. There was a loud thud and August cried out. Archibald tried to shush him but it was too late. The queen's cold eyes met their's, and she gave them an evil and cruel stare.

"Guards!" She shouted. Suddenly men in armor filled the room and grabbed the boys from under the cart.

"And what would you be doing here, trespassing?" The queen asked. Her eyes stayed in that cold stare.

"W-we got lost!" August cried.

"Lies! Take them to the dungeon!" The queen demanded.

"Wait!" Archibald shouted. The queen stopped the guards.

"We were climbing on the hollow tree, and then we snuck into this ball, and we saw these...ghosts. But we promise we shall not tell a soul!" Archibald cried.

"Well, do you want to know why these ghosts are here?" The queen asked. The boys nodded anxiously.

"These ghosts were once guests, but I have punished them. They spent all their time bowing down to the king but never me. Why would they bow down to a man who spent all of this kingdom's riches on these foolish parties and make horrible trades? They want to waste their time attending these balls? Fine. They shall be doomed to a life of forever dancing. On this night, one hundred years ago, I poisoned them and my husband. No one will ever look down upon me again!" The queen exclaimed.

"Where is the king's body?" August asked timidly.

"In the dungeon, where you are going to end up," The queen said.



# IN THESE WALLS

*Ptolemy Stuart*

Ash drops to the floor as smoke leaves the tip of a burning cigarette. Winter grasps cold weather and throws it at people with a chilly breeze as the cherry on top. Hanko is a small town located in Finland, It's essentially a nothing place.

The population is no more than 8000 with mainly Swedish speakers. I am always asked by my friends why I smoke cigarettes. I want to give them a witty answer that would shut them up but I always have nothing. I am a security guard at the Hanko museum. The pay isn't much but enough to get myself and only myself along. I live alone in a cramped apartment, none of the heaters work and my water is broken half the time. I am quite satisfied with my life, I have a routine, I have hobbies, I have a job, and although I am solidly alone like a lonesum rock flowing in a stream, I feel happy.

I pressed my hand to the chilled car door handle. I wrapped my fingers around it and pulled tightly to let myself in. I jumped into the car seat, slammed the door shut, and blew into my hands trying to muster warmth. I had a red Volkswagen BUG, the steering wheel was dressed with leather, and the interior was bland. I stuck my keys into the ignition and turned them with agitation. I backed out of the parking spot I was tightly parked in, and made my way down the street. The sun descended behind the horizon and the sky went dark, everything was empty like the mind of a lost person. My windshield was coated in fog and frost, it had a pattern to it, little dots scattered where it was least chilly. Driving down these lonely streets got me thinking about my childhood, every memory I had from then had now been clouded.

When I arrived home, I slipped my car into a parking spot on the corner or the block. I stepped out of the car to land my foot in a freezing puddle of water. The water rushed into my shoe and quickly made its way through my sock. I stepped onto the sidewalk and drug myself to the front door. I turned around to lock the car, \*click\* the car's lights flashed signaling that the car was locked. I shoved the key into the keyhole and tugged the door open, swiftly closed it behind me and locked it.

I took a glance up the stairs from the bottom and let out a sigh, I placed my right foot on the first step and made my way up. When I got to the door of my apartment I took a second to notice the unique wood patterns, there were circles and edges to the shapes, I slid my hand across the wood and quickly was struck with heat going through my finger. I lifted my finger to my eye to see a splinter sticking out of my skin, I unlocked the door of my apartment to promptly grab a pair of tweezers. I ran into the bathroom and quickly picked up the tweezers lying beside my molding sink. I plucked the splinter out of my skin and threw it down the drain. The lighting in my house was eary, everything was dim like a scary dream. I stepped out of the bathroom to hear the moans of the floorboards beneath me. I walked to the kitchen, carefully stepping to hear the different sounds of the floorboards. When I got to my fridge, I picked out a microwave meal, for tonight a salisbury steak slobbered in gravy with creamy mashed potatoes on the side. I take a knife from my drawer and cut open the plastic film covering the food. I throw the rock hard frozen meal into the microwave and shut the door behind it, CLINCK, the microwave door goes.

Later, I am preparing myself to get ready for bed. I'm in some comfortable clothes as well as my slippers to complete my lazy look. The clock reads 12:30, I flip my switch to turn my bedroom light off and hop into bed. I tossed and turned for about 10 minutes when I heard a bump come from the room beside me. I brushed it off thinking it was just the wind and rolled back over trying to fall asleep. 5 minutes later when I was finally starting to doze off, THUMP THUMP, I heard from the other room. This time the sound had rhythm to it like a person trying to grab my attention. I threw the sheets off of my body in a very irritated manner, I walked to the door of my bedroom reaching down to grab the doorknob when right in my face I heard THUMP THUMP. This startled me and even scared me a little.

"Who's there!" I yell. Praying there is no response I stand at my door with sweat building up on my face from fear. The gears in my stomach start to crank and I can really feel the room start to cave in on me. Thumping starts to pop up all around the room, THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP. It's like someones pounding their hands on the inside of the wall trying to break through. At this point I thought I was losing my mind, I started to shake and I wiped the excessive sweat off my forehead. That's when I started to hear the voices, they started out as faint voices and grew louder and louder.

"We are in your wallssssssss" They said to me. The light was still off but my room wasn't dark enough to leave me completely blind, my vision became dizzy. I could hear and feel my heart pounding like the people in my walls. A rattle of a doorknob immediately grabbed my attention, and I jumped into bed. I held the covers over my head hoping not to hear the sound of the door hinges squeaking. Just to my luck I heard a huge yank on the doorknob and feet patiently make their way across my room to my bed. I felt the floorboards move and I knew the mysterious creature was at the head of my bed. The room went completely silent, everything was still, so empty you could hear a ringing in your ears.

The entire room began to shake, my bed was being lifted off of the floor and a painting of a man on a boat fell off of my wall.

"WE ARE IN YOUR WALLS!" The creature told me. "WE ARE IN YOUR HEAD!"

We moved into this apartment in the Fall, the first day of being a resident to this place I decided to go meet my new neighbors. I walked up to the third floor and knocked on a front door cracked the slightest bit open.

"Hello?" I called out. No response. I did some investigating and smelled something rotten coming from the bedroom. I was very hesitant about going in there but the detective in me really came out. I walked into the room to immediately notice a broken painting lying dead on the floor, I then glanced up to the ceiling to see a man hanging from the fan. Under his lifeless body there was a note, I picked it up and proceeded to read:

Dear reader, if you have obtained this note, I'm guessing you are standing below my hanging body. As you stand there or sit there reading this note, many thoughts are running through your head, I cannot say the same. There is no real conclusion for why I ended my life so abruptly. Sitting here writing this note I am losing motivation but gaining excitement to experience the journey that lies ahead. The world around me has become so corrupt, the world seems so fake, everything artificial to make my life seem real. How do we understand what is real, who knows if we are real. I couldn't tell you if this paper is real or the pen I am jotting my thoughts down with is real. I am going to miss the world, I am going to miss the voices that live in my walls.



# UNTITLED

Caia Farwell



The barn was old, rotted and riddled with decay. I  
itched to explore it, gazing up at the abandoned  
beast from the open cornfield beside it. The wind  
was cold, enough to make my fingers numb and my  
blood chilled. I stood and waited for a while until,  
finally, I let my feet carry me to the ruined entrance  
of the barn. It was silent inside, the atmosphere  
dark and frigid. The scarecrows in the field  
appeared to be holding their breath, their sewed  
eyes screaming warnings of danger. Oh, how I wish  
I had listened.

# THE CAT

Jo Gabriel



“Is anyone there?” I yell from the top of my basement  
stairs.

“Nope, come on down,” a voice says back.

I pause, “Who’s this?”

“Your cat.”

‘Yeah’ I think, ‘that checks out.’ I walk down the stairs,  
listening to the faint sound of my neighbor blasting the  
moana soundtrack on the other side of the wall.

“Man, it’s pretty dark in here,” I mutter, “guess that’s ‘cause  
I forgot to pay my electric bill”

“Yeah, imagine how I feel,” The voice responds and my  
eyes widen.

“Wait...” I mutter, feeling claws on my foot, “I don’t own a  
cat...”






# THE VILE CREATURE

Dior Jones

“I’ve been trapped here for so long... I could have sworn there was another me.”

The days go on, losing track of the outside world. We talked for an extremely lengthy time, yet I never learned his name.



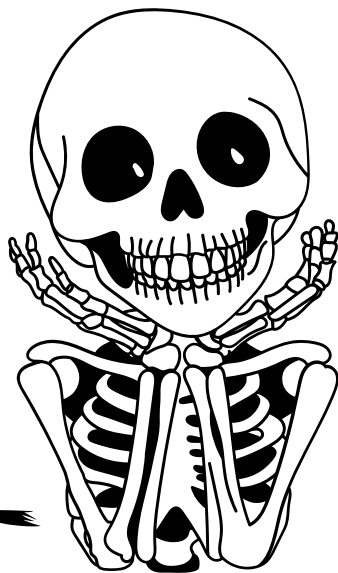
He told me about all the things he had done, each and every crime he had committed. He recounted every murder in excruciating detail. It made me shake with fear, but I was so intrigued. I was hungry, starved even, to know what went on inside this man’s head. So I listened quietly, clinging on to his every word, as if I was in a sort of trance.

One day, a guard arrived, and he opened the door, telling me it was time to go.

I looked back at the strange man.

“Come on,” I said. “I won’t leave you here.”

READ THE FULL  
TEXT HERE



# THEOPHOBIA

Skye Groves



Its eyes are everywhere but nowhere. I feel the weight of heaven on my chest and the angels are tearing at my intestines. It doesn't matter who I tell, it's only "God loves and protects you". How can I be protected by the very thing that haunts me? I know my judgment is soon. Six trumpets have sounded. The only sign of life left is me and the "angel" at my window. The seventh trumpet sounds, I accept my fate and look at my tormentor. Its body is grotesque. I regret it. If this is God's messenger, who is god?

## MAY THY SHIVER AND SHAKE

Nova Veitch

I stay in a closet tonight

Oh

With great fright

Will they creep along my skin tonight

Or impersonate my greatest dreams

Only to pop apart and make me scream

Or will they crawl along the stairs tonight

Bones cracking to let me hear

To let me know that they always Be near

To me

To my ear

Or perhaps rattling around in my head Oh now how i do dread

the sleep that eludes me

What horrid things will these voices Tell me

Tonight.



READ THE FULL TEXT HERE



# STILL ICARUS

Daniel Xayamoungkhoun

I grimly glare ahead, my body remaining tense as my eyes narrow to focus on the site ahead. My boss, their performer, Icarus. Darkness cascades upon the stage, the lustrous light striking him unnaturally—a glimpse of his head visibly askew. His body's movements were configured, lacking a sense of grace; he mindlessly posed despite his oblique arm and ankle contorting inward. Yet somehow he remains inaudible in contrast to the deafening audience—all I manage is a shudder. Flesh that should've stayed on his back was hollowed, replaced by cold corroded metal for his entire body. Icarus was theirs.

