

# MANY NICE DONKEYS

VOLUME II, ISSUE II



DECEMBER 2024

# Many Nice Donkeys

**Volume II, Issue II Editor-in-Chief:**

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear donkeys,

The universe has insisted upon it and I now find myself writing this almost two years exactly after I wrote my first EIC letter (for [Volume I, Issue III](#)). I could tell you I'm thinking about endings again and that would be true, as this time of year tends to keep them whirling around in my mind, but maybe this time I'll highlight beginnings.

I have not been writing much because I can't seem to find the beginning. I have been opening lots of word docs and staring at blank pages for a few minutes before closing them. *I cannot master the mango* (Kerry Trautman, page 22) and am now a little intimidated by the thought of finally starting again. Even the act of beginning this letter has managed to loom over me for the past couple of weeks.

What has kept me going in the absence of my own words is reading all of yours. We have to start somewhere and the writers in this issue have all managed to find the perfect entry point for their pieces (what I'm quoting in this letter comes solely from first lines). *The tiger has always been there* (Beth Gordon, page 26). Maybe mine is just being a little bit quieter than usual. She may be on the brink of roaring again here soon.

I would be remiss not to mention the fact that the rest of the *Many Nice Donkeys* crew and I hosted our first in-person event in November. The beginning of a new chapter in our collective story. In collaboration with local writers and businesses in our community, we were able to bring people together for a creative evening. If you were a part of making that happen in any way, thank you. If you read during the open mic, thank you. If you just came to listen, thank you. We look forward to hosting more community events in the future. We need them (and each other) now more than ever.

As the beginning of 2025 creeps closer, I hope you all are able to escape into the work in this issue and then escape into your own creative outlets. *Visit the sea all you want* (Kale Hensley, page 20). I think it's okay to need to do that. As long as you don't forget to come back. There is more work to be done and we will do it together. We always have.

*Here is the rim of the world* (Cam McGlynn, page 5). Take a look.

Sláinte,

Maggie Fulmer  
Editor-in-Chief  
Volume II, Issue II

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**MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II**  
**Cam McGlynn**

**John Otto Surveys the Land**

*Rimrock Drive, Colorado National Monument*

Here is the rim of the world:  
the dusty canyons  
painted in every shade of dusk,  
rock layers folded into themselves  
like dough,  
squeezed and shaped  
by the wind's calloused hands.

Here is the heart of the world:  
the lambing time  
for the desert bighorn sheep,  
the sunning time  
for whiptails and rattlers,  
the wren and jay time,  
wings flitting through  
juniper and pinyon.

Here is home  
and here is home  
and here and here  
and wherever my pack  
falls from my shoulder  
and my burros lip  
at sagebrush and  
no walls,  
other than the canyons,  
contain me.

**Cam McGlynn** is a writer and scientific researcher living outside of Frederick, Maryland. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Orca*, *Neologism Poetry Journal*, *JAKE*, *The Shore*, and *ONE ART*, among others. She likes made-up words, Erlenmeyer flasks, dog-eared notebooks, and excel spreadsheets.

**MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II**  
**Christian Hanz Lozada**

**Dreams of the Dead**

The Filipinos I know respond to dreams  
by meeting unasked for needs,  
like if Brown Dad dreams of a dead parent  
he calls but can't ask if I need anything;  
instead, he says: "I mailed you a DVD."

When Papa dreamt of his dead wife,  
he sent us a letter about his love for her,  
his love for us, and about empty houses  
and abandoned dreams. The letter said,  
"You don't owe me anything."

Last night I dreamt of a tall White man  
in a cowboy hat leaning over our bed,  
not saying or doing anything but watching  
us sleep, and I want to call my sister  
and say *I love you* by forgetting

I have watched *Meet Me in St. Louis*  
with her, and hate-eating pizza  
so good we ignore the owner's  
assholery, but she is dead  
and the ofrenda is her gifts to me

**Christian Hanz Lozada** aspires to be like a cat, a creature that doesn't care about the subtleties of others and who will, given time and circumstance, eat their owner. He authored the poetry collection *He's a Color, Until He's Not* and co-authored *Leave with More Than You Came With*. His Pushcart Prize nominated poetry has appeared in journals from California to Australia with stops in Hawaii, Korea, Europe, and Africa. Christian has featured at the Autry Museum and Beyond Baroque. He lives in San Pedro, CA and uses his MFA to teach his neighbors and their kids at Los Angeles Harbor College.

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**MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II**  
**Kerry Trautman**

**Hermit Crab II**

My Mom's house is  
my mom's house now.  
I haven't lived there in 25 years.

The moon doesn't choose  
the shadows it casts.

My now house is a nautilus shell  
the bared guts of my children  
can crab into ever.

The tide doesn't choose erosion  
or what it washes to shore.

A house is not a fact or snowmelt.  
My house is not a turtle.  
My house is the equator.

The tide comes back comes back.  
Blame it on the moon.

My mom's house  
is my mom's house now. But then  
it always was.

My door is wide  
to gibbous light.  
Bare yourself, slip inside.

**Kerry Trautman** is a lifelong Ohioan who has appeared previously in *Many Nice Donkeys*, as well as other journals and anthologies. Her books are *Things That Come in Boxes* (King Craft Press 2012), *To Have Hoped* (Finishing Line Press 2015), *Artifacts* (NightBallet Press 2017), *To be Nonchalantly Alive* (Kelsay Books 2020), *Marilyn: Self-Portrait, Oil on Canvas* (Gutter Snob Books 2022), *Unknowable Things* (Roadside Press 2022), and *Irregulars* (Stanchion Books 2023).



## MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II

### Naana Eyikuma Hutchful

#### Over and Over

Oh, I didn't think you would pick up, my mother says. I've been awake, I say, watching a movie. She says, you should sleep, sleep is good for you. I say, what about you, so she doesn't think she's the only one who can be a hypocrite about these things. She is quiet. I can hear the low hum of her radio's static. She likes these small hours when everything is quiet beneath the surface. It is really hot, my mother says, they turned the lights off again. I had to go to your in-laws' to charge my battery. She has a generator now. My in-laws are the parents of a boy the mothers paired me with because we were born within days of each other. Nature plays matchmaker and the mothers lose their minds. My mother waits for me to say something so she can charge through her usual tirade. Did you open a window, I ask her. Yes, but Ajo Tawia at the back is making her balls of smoke again. It just comes all the way through my window and chokes me. It is really cold here, I say because I don't know what else to say. My mother says, you are lucky, you don't ever have to come back. So tell me how are you doing, she asks when I don't say anything. I say that I have been to the doctor and he said people with dark skin are at more risk for vitamin D deficiencies, and that's why this fatigue sits in my skin like lichen on a rock. Nonsense, she says, and I can picture her indignantly shaking her head, her skull rattling in tandem with the radio's static, we all have dark skin but we are fine. I say, you have more sun. Is there no sun in Sweden, she asks me, so softly I can barely hear her. Not like the sun in Ghana, I say. Hmm, she says, are you happy? I say, people are being nice to me. She says that's not what she asked. I don't know, I say. Did you get a boyfriend, my mother asks. Girlfriend, I whisper under my breath. Out loud I say, no, I've been reading a lot, I don't have the time. I'm not good at these things. I'm not the kind of person people love softly. A mother will love her child no matter what, she says. I nod. We are in the pungent gray area of the no-matter-what. You need to find a nice boy. Maybe an older white man that can take you places. Like a sugar daddy, I ask. No, she says. Then, yes maybe. The black boys can do that too, I say. I'm careful with my words, the girls I taste on my lips but can't bring to the tip of my tongue. I swallow with some pain, bitter in the mouth. What did you say, she asks. I say, nothing. But doing all these things by yourself, my mother says, I am very proud of you. I'm proud of you too, I say and then I worry that I have been too nice to her.

**Naana Eyikuma Hutchful** (they/them) is a Ghanaian writer with work appearing in *Pithead Chapel*, *Bending Genres*, *Gone Lawn*, *Maudlin House* and forthcoming elsewhere. They like sunrises, baja blasts, and Wong Kar Wai films.

Instagram: @alewife\_cinnamon

**MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II**  
**Courtney Edwards**

**What the Troglobites Can Teach Us About Love**

Consider  
the creatures  
grown  
in the dark: black  
holes closed  
where beady  
eyes once  
shined.  
Blood-  
vein ferns, furry  
outer gills. In squid-  
ink silence  
small dragon  
feet scurry. The speckled  
skin of Europa  
glistens  
like a wish, poised  
to prey  
on vibrations:  
    The Blind Salamander  
in Plato's  
cave.

Oh,  
how you want  
to hold them  
in your light!  
Show them  
all  
the wonders that  
dazzle  
you in the daytime!

Gangling  
sap  
crystallized  
near damp  
rocks, arms  
the bared teeth  
of thin saws, strange  
amber lamps  
glowing  
like ribs, tails, spindly  
legs, pallid

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**Courtney Edwards**

skin unscathed  
by sunlight.  
    Destroyed by sunlight—  
those lovely  
beings  
we call *troglobites*:

Watch them  
retreat  
to safer  
fissures. Celestial  
spine of sardine, prehistoric  
pink angelfish crawls  
underground  
waterfalls on silver-  
jelly fans. Shrunken  
lobster-ghosts  
spook  
rusty Martian  
sand—safe  
in isolation  
sheltered  
from your  
gaze.

I, too,  
traversed into  
alien caves  
led  
by dim  
beams,

held skittish souls  
too close  
for their comfort,

tried to love  
others until  
they loved  
themselves.

See,  
how fire  
in a cave  
frightens  
those who've never  
seen

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**Courtney Edwards**

their own shadow,  
how light  
shoves  
its way into hidden  
cracks,  
how solar radiation  
sustains sunflowers but  
will exterminate  
a troglobite.

My dearest one,  
I now know  
*not everyone wants your sunshine.*

My father taught me  
how to love  
the world  
and let myself  
sparkle  
within it. He taught me  
how to spot  
eagles from the car,  
to sleep  
soundly  
under the mountain  
stars,  
and to walk tall  
even when I don't like  
being the tall  
girl—

and how everyone wants  
to feel  
joy,  
but not everyone  
can sit comfortably  
in its  
presence.

**Courtney Edwards** is an English teacher, writer, and photographer from Portland, OR. She has a BS in English Education, BA in Art History, and MA in English. Her work has been published by *Pile Press*, *The New Zealand Poetry Society*, *Penmen Review*, and *Sonora Review*. Courtney enjoys traveling, exploring the PNW with her husband and three children, playing the piano, and helping to bring sea otters back to Oregon through the Elakha Alliance.

Instagram: @pnw.courtney

**MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II**  
**Christian Ward**

**Paraphrasing happiness**

The gargoyle sky  
doesn't speak to me  
like it used to.

An elderly neighbour,  
stoic in his gait,  
tells me to take each day  
slowly, avoid reaching

for the secateurs.  
Cleaners, sparrow-busy,  
have their eyes to the ground  
as the rain prepares to reset.

**Christian Ward** is a UK-based poet with two collections, *Intermission* and *Zoo*, available on Amazon and elsewhere. His work has appeared in numerous literary journals and recognised in several competitions this year.

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**Kale Hensley**

**Contrary to Popular Belief, I Do Tire of Running Amok**

Morning burlesques in distress,

his predictable shimmering made to be

thick, useless as a glob of honey.

I open my mouth as any beaked baby,

begging for the minutia, mush, yes,

the creature of me craves metallic split

to grit, rough of bark, human spit;

all the things found buried in the back-

yard. Born on a hill, I was pinched

to consider an earth in ever-tilt, cursed

with eyes on broken stilts. Christen

my heart a balloon, daft enough to bare-

back the wind, rally the flushed stars

of a sweet gum tree, or consort endlessly

with nettle stinging the knees. But to

be caught, kept. As the sting, as the leaf,

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**Kale Hensley**

squeezed tightly by a tree. To live in  
a mouth as a steady hum. After its leap,  
even the peach curls up, dreams of palms.

**Kale Hensley** is a West Virginian by birth and a poet by faith. Her current projects include a book of collage and poppycock, queer medievalisms, and a novel about a horned woman on pilgrimage.

Website: [kalehens.com](http://kalehens.com)

Instagram: [@localamazon](https://www.instagram.com/localamazon)



## MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II

Michael Thériault

### Junco

Her gray cumuliform curls, which he loves in their morning disarray, rise above the Piazza del Campo on his screen and the table.

“Come out front,” she says from the kitchen door. “I don’t recognize this bird’s song.”

He closes the laptop, trails her out, eyes on the flare of her hips. In Sienna, she will wear not these faded loose jeans; will exalt the hips by a dress she has brought him to help select, in warm cream, bodice front-buttoned, waist, cloth-belted, narrow as hers somehow still is. Outsized red roses jostle on the wide skirt.

She has been trimming dead blooms from sage. Even so early in their retirement the garden grows better.

“Hear it?”

He does: Rapid succession of chirps evenly spaced on one note.

They have walked the Piazza so often, usually at the kitchen table, in magazines or brochures or on the laptop. It will be a stretch, he knows, but decades of economies have saved them enough. His sweat in warehouses, hers in laundries where she has warmed her lunches on hot pipes have earned them the trip. They have their first passports. They will visit her cousins in a town well north, then his in one just south, then come to the middle, Sienna, not during the Palio, but at a quieter time, when they can feel warmth of wine and cool of *acqua minerale* under a canopy and watch intertwined passing flows of tourists and locals.

He peruses the Chinese elm overhanging the front fence from the sidewalk outside. Many of the prior year’s leaves persist. New leaf has just begun to tip twigs with green. Leaves old and new at first obscure the bird, but he finds it. Even with his glasses he can’t make out the details of the small dun-colored body shaking with song.

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Michael Thériault

He fetches opera glasses and returns; finds the bird through them, black head, chestnut back, bright bill.

“Junco,” he tells his wife.

“Thanks,” she says.

At the kitchen table again, he prices hotels. He searches their neighborhoods for restaurants.

He comes back to the Piazza, to Torre del Mangia, Fonte Gaia, rays of travertine in brick pavement, all familiar, all not yet known.

Then she is back. “Tell me what this bird is outside.”

It has been maybe twenty minutes. “Another?” he says.

The quizzical tilt of her head puzzles him.

He follows her out.

He hears exactly the same rapid repetition of one note.

“It’s” – not wanting to complete the sentence, he does – “a junco.”

“A junco,” she says, with nods. “Thanks.”

When he returns to the kitchen table the Piazza lingers on the screen an instant; then the laptop sleeps. He doesn’t wake it. He hopes the bird has stopped singing. On the blank screen, red roses jostle.

\*

After lunch, as she washes and dries her plate and glass, he brings the dress downstairs to her.

“But that’s for the trip,” she says.

“It’s for you, for any time. Like now.”

“But I can’t wear it just like this.”

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Michael Thériault

“Go work your magic.”

She smiles and, roses held to chest, climbs the stairs.

She is long enough that he frets her return and what it might say. But, “Okay!” he hears from on high and first a pair of flats – “for all that walking!” – in the same cream as the dress appears, and then calves and shins that are not yet the tan he expects weeks of sunny travel will bestow, and then the roses, jostling left, jostling right. She wears lipstick and has gathered the gray curls in a voluminous bun devil-may-care right side of her head. At the landing she twirls; hem of skirt kisses walls and newel post.

He starts the music he has waiting. She descends the remaining stairs through Pupo’s breathy flute of tenor,

*Avevo il cuore in gola,*

and into his arms. Their dance is simple sway and slow rotation, his nose to the bun, arms around her waist. He feels her breasts against his chest.

He asks himself, cannot help but ask: In what moment near or far will her skin, encountering his through cloth and cloth, find it a stranger’s?

“We’ll have such beautiful memories!” she says.

*Una parola solo ciao per dirti amore,* Pupo sings.

*Ciao,* he thinks: Goodbye, Hello. To her silently, but within himself loudly as a bird’s call in morning light, on a single note he repeats again, again, “Remember.... Remember.... Re....”

A San Francisco native and resident and a graduate of St. John’s College, Santa Fe, **Michael Thériault** has been an Ironworker, union organizer, and union representative. In his twenties he published stories in literary magazines, but abandoned fiction for decades to support first a family, then a movement. In his return, since 2022 his stories have been accepted by numerous publications, including *Pacifica Literary Review*, *Overheard*, and *Sky Island Journal*.

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**MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II**  
**Eden Chicken**

**[Monologue]**

[walks in and stands centre stage

facing audience front on]

I am a dragon / I am a daymoon

I am disaster / I am delight

[flirts]

I am your dad getting pegged by a drag queen

[raises eyes

hand above

head]

I want to press my palm against the blue

I want to swallow the solar system and [spit] it out again

[swaggers to table ] I want to tar and feather myself

before I soak into the bubbles [kisses teddy's head before tear ing it off

]

I want to be twisted turned inside and out genitals inverted organs spilling

and walk on my hands and knees [assumes position] until

the world has run away into me

[ crawl towards audience with speed

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**Eden Chicken**

I am disgusting and dirty      undisguised

I am    your downfall    reflected                      [grins            lights cut  
to black]    in your terrorfilled eyes

**Eden Chicken** (they/them) is a queer poet whose work generally focuses on hybridity, from textual and poetic forms to divergent identities and existences in the natural world. Having recently graduated from the MA Poetry course at University of East Anglia, they have since relocated to Sheffield. Their work has been previously published in anthologies by *Egg Box* and *Sentire*.

Instagram: @edenchicken

**MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II**  
**Kale Hensley**

**I'm Steering the Whelm of This Ship**

Visit the sea all you want; say it is for serenity in your dreamy bleats, but I'm in these depths for the creeps, for purposeful mystery, the fish asking to get in my panties because they too have a curiosity to feed. The men who went down on their ships are my ideal audience; they possess a desperation for burning ends, convince the water to spank them, oh again & again. I too delight in rhythms: the flocks of anemone between my toes and teeth are a music I can clearly see. Bold, ain't I? Stealing your blue monocle for my own. But don't you think I wear it the best? Paired with my swinging skirts, my wreath of wreckage? I even snagged myself a selkie prince who kisses the anchors wrapped around my hips. I do hope you get it. Not my poem but a postcard, darling. I hope you don't mind if it's a little wet. Before, you never did.

**Kale Hensley** is a West Virginian by birth and a poet by faith. Her current projects include a book of collage and poppycock, queer medievalisms, and a novel about a horned woman on pilgrimage.

Website: [kalehens.com](http://kalehens.com)

Instagram: [@localamazon](https://www.instagram.com/localamazon)

## MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II

### Huina Zheng

#### What Has Stayed With Me

Tar paper home, nestled in wild grass reaching for the skies. Haunted whispers keeping my father's brick factory workers at bay. Far from the village buzz, solitude found us. Coal stove cooking. Water drawn from a hand-pumped well. My siblings and I had only three friends: offspring of the grocer, a ten-minute trek away. Rain summoned my father and his workers into draping unfired bricks in waterproof veils. Typhoon's wrath, shattering kiln hopes. Beneath our bed, my mother found a serpent: its body coiled in a spiral, flicking its tongue. It met the cold end of my father's hoe. While changing clothes, I found another in a pile of clothes: its body covered with black and white stripes, its head hidden within its coiled sanctuary. Our living quarters, a trio of beds flanked by the glow of shared stories on screen, a nightly ritual. Flies buzzed around during meals. Errors in school met with the sting of discipline, the ruler's kiss (occasionally). Laughter of peers tinged with the sharpness of otherness (often). Lice companions. Pink eye. Fevers. My mother's bicycle rides to the clinic. Learned the local dialect. My parents spoke only Hakka to us, saying we should not forget our roots. Navigated languages: Hakka, local dialect, Mandarin in class, English, and Cantonese from TV shows. An economic desolation left bricks untouched, the factory's electricity cut off due to unpaid bills. We lit candles, casting long shadows as we sought refuge under stars. Fascinated by the fireflies twinkling in the dark. Often worried that the factory would close, leaving us homeless. My father sold our past. Moving house. Fell asleep to the sounds of motorbikes and live music from the night market downstairs. He returned to the countryside to start anew, a phantom of presence. We went to school in town, no longer worried about the house being blown away by storms. My classmates jumped rope. My classmates played badminton. Did homework in the classroom. Teachers told me to integrate into the group. My mother told me to study. Studied hard.

**Huina Zheng**, a Distinction M.A. in English Studies holder, works as a college essay coach. Her stories have been published in *Baltimore Review*, *Variant Literature*, *Midway Journal*, and others. Her work has received nominations twice for both the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. She resides in Guangzhou, China with her husband and daughter.



**MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II**  
**Kerry Trautman**

**Three Mango Poems**

I.

I cannot master the mango, too fibrous  
too pithy, avoiding my knife, serrated  
or not, sending juice rivulets from my wrists  
to my elbows, drizzling onto my toes.

II.

Sipping mango-orange iced-tea from a green glass,  
smiling at the boy across the room, her pen in hand  
and notebook, sucking mango bits from between  
two teeth, flirting with her muse, not the boy.

III.

She slides her knife alongside the pit  
twice, each mango half mound-up  
on her cutting board. I want to palm them  
like sunset breasts, anticipating sweetness.

**Kerry Trautman** is a lifelong Ohioan who has appeared previously in *Many Nice Donkeys*, as well as other journals and anthologies. Her books are *Things That Come in Boxes* (King Craft Press 2012), *To Have Hoped* (Finishing Line Press 2015), *Artifacts* (NightBallet Press 2017), *To be Nonchalantly Alive* (Kelsay Books 2020), *Marilyn: Self-Portrait, Oil on Canvas* (Gutter Snob Books 2022), *Unknowable Things* (Roadside Press 2022), and *Irregulars* (Stanchion Books 2023).

**MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II**  
**Abhijit Sarmah**

**Perennial**

*Riverbank erosions and floods claim hundreds of lives every year in Assam, India*

Who left a rain-sopped jaapi dangling from a fence  
securing my fishless pond? O mahout friend, June weather  
has choked back even the sobs of orphaned cicadas  
and Mitong in the wrong direction has lured my lover—  
Now under the din of monsoon rain, the tender shivers  
of his dotora hefts songs of mud-swathed buffaloes  
sprinting into Darika like carps from fishing skiffs,  
of fathers with hunched backs by kerosene lamps sewing  
frocks for daughters bargained in September cities,  
of morning stars following merchants in highland roads  
who sing of Behula on a boat with her dead husband—  
Elders say the departed can't even tweak a banana leaf but  
didn't the sniffles of the thirty dancers slayed for our king  
for years after keep the fishermen from hurling their nets?  
O mahout friend, I have seen the sloping shoulders of Kadam  
wither from death rattles of the drowned and the stillness  
that eats fish owls and alphabets of the rotten water, so when  
my childhood name over the long course of the night rings  
like a swan's weary cries in a marsh or a witch's moan  
I picture stroking his lean thighs the way a paramour should  
with a thimble on and feeling the throbbing sandbag of time—  
There once was a woman who observed hyacinths in streams  
and from their twinges tell ciphers of every season, but

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**Abhijit Sarmah**

I can only watch the moon set itself ablaze, its light illumine  
the swamped ricefields deafened by the bare bawls of cranes—  
O mahout friend, will you look for us when the haze settles?

*jaapi*: a conical hat used by farmers and mahouts in Assam; *ditora*: a two-stringed musical instrument;  
*Behula*: a character in Assamese folktales; *Mitong* and *Darika*: two rivers in Assam

**Abhijit Sarmah** is a poet and researcher from the northeast of India. Currently, he is a PhD student at the University of Georgia, Athens GA. His work has been published or forthcoming in a range of print and online journals, including *Poetry*, *Callaloo*, *The Margins*, *Lunch Ticket*, and *The Lincoln Review*. When not reading or writing, he enjoys people-watching and dancing to the 80s party hits.

**MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II**  
**Christian Hanz Lozada**

**Magellan Finds What He Was Looking For**

Magellan says it's human,  
that desire to reach the horizon,  
to plunge your flag, mind, body into  
the uninviting depths of strange.

Lapulapu says all that's human  
slits at the blade's edge,  
a simple and clear response  
to the uninvited.

Discovering another's home,  
like removing another's head,  
only works if you see them as incapable  
to desire more  
or keep its fruits.

Look at them,  
the strange,  
the native,  
the poor,  
so happy living  
their little lives.

**Christian Hanz Lozada** aspires to be like a cat, a creature that doesn't care about the subtleties of others and who will, given time and circumstance, eat their owner. He authored the poetry collection *He's a Color, Until He's Not* and co-authored *Leave with More Than You Came With*. His Pushcart Prize nominated poetry has appeared in journals from California to Australia with stops in Hawaii, Korea, Europe, and Africa. Christian has featured at the Autry Museum and Beyond Baroque. He lives in San Pedro, CA and uses his MFA to teach his neighbors and their kids at Los Angeles Harbor College.

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## MANY NICE DONKEYS: VOLUME II, ISSUE II

Beth Gordon

### The Crone Gardens

The tiger has always been there. Her heavy paws. Her silky breath. Every morning before I step in dirt, a machine asks me to select all images with a stop sign. All images with crosswalks. With bridges: double-decker buses. Must I drown myself in a river of traffic to be considered human? I never leave my body so why must I leave this circle of green? The wrens are busy with their comings & goings: the mechanics of nest construction: an embroidery of twigs & fur. The tiger stretches in the glistening. I know you cannot see her between the pale columbine & bright poppies. Cannot smell her skin above the deception of lilac: the lives buried beneath their roots. I promise you she is there. Select all images with oleander. Select all images with nightshade. With gypsum weed. There is no song beyond this buzzing. Select all images with stripes. With teeth. She is right in front of you.

**Beth Gordon** is a poet, mother and grandmother in Asheville, NC. She is the author of numerous chapbooks, most recently *How to Keep Things Alive* (Split Rock Press), *Crone* (Louisiana Literature), and *The First Day* (Belle Point Press). Beth is Managing Editor of *Feral*, and Assistant Editor of *Animal Heart Press* and *Femme Salve Books*.

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**Thank you for reading.**

Join the herd.



*@manynicedonkeys*