

## In the Corners

I have heard there are spiders that catch birds, and I wonder  
how big are the birds? Can a bird-catching spider  
catch a hawk, wrap those heavy, mighty wings in strands  
of sticky filament strong enough to subdue the beating  
of fierce muscle and breast, pin an osprey to a tree limb  
evade the talons and beak of an eagle long enough  
to deliver its powerful sting, a bite strong enough to end  
even this?

Or do they only turn their attentions  
to the tiny birds, hummingbirds smaller than butterflies  
tiny wrens that make their own nests out of spidersilk and dew?  
And when they catch them, is it a dramatic battle  
to the death, but in miniature, a fair fight between  
upraised talons and dripping fangs, or does it all  
just end in the web, bright wings outstretched  
wasted from fluttering against the silvery restraints  
stretched between the limbs of trees?

*-Holly Day*



Macedonia

*-Betty Poussin*

## City of Liars

In an era of “truth” we do so much to conceal the facts  
Running the narrative that keeps us on track.  
Ingenuine smiles, lackadaisical waves  
Could we possibly be more fake?  
Curated stories, well-shot scenes  
Only the Stars used to have life on screen.  
Seeking a high from the box in our hands  
Scrolling and judging our fellow man.  
Piling on makeup to hide the circles under our eyes  
We trick our brains into thinking that it’s fine.  
The danger inflicted falls back on ourselves  
As we’re being trained to not ask for help.  
If there’s no risk in it, is it really a lie?  
It won’t hurt anyone if they don’t know what we hide  
And our waistlines gets smaller, while the fog gets thicker  
We think it makes us stronger, but it only kills us quicker.  
The flames rise up around this city of liars  
As we pile logs onto our own funeral pyres  
We draw lines in the sand, on this hill we choose to die  
Sowing chaos and discord, without even knowing why

*-Emalyn George*



Too Short

*-Natalie Tankersley*

# The Flagellation of Saint Engratia

*after Bartolomé Bermejo, 1477*

The lashes fall upon her back  
Throughout the hideous attack.  
She dared to testify of sin  
To one of Spain's most wretched men  
Whose anger turned demoniac.

The whip gets taut and then goes slack.  
It sounds with its horrific crack.  
The agony! Again, again,  
The lashes fall.

Inflicted with a practiced knock,  
Each is designed to leave a track  
Upon the royal virgin's skin.  
She practices her discipline  
Despite this ruler and his claue.  
The lashes fall.

*-Jane Blanchard*



The Flagellation of Saint Engratia  
*-Bartolomé Bermejo*

## The Man on the Balcony

Every time I step out onto my grandmother's balcony, I still feel as if I can see him there.

Before me, the orange sun sinks behind the hills, its fading rays losing the battle with twilight. Among the cyclamens and violets on the windowsill, I can still picture that cloud of smoke that always surrounded him.

The house, his room, even that balcony—struck by sunlight, or rain—still fill my roots with the sharp scent of smoke laced with alcohol.

I see him bent forward, his long, tanned fingers holding a cigarette, his gaze fixed on the branches beyond the balcony, the silver of his hair glinting in the dusk.

The fingers of his other hand would curl, take aim at an ant, and the ant would fly away. Poor ant—if only it had wings.

“Look over there,” I can still hear him say, nodding toward the opposite horizon, away from the sinking sun.

I remember his voice—hoarse and rough, the voice of a man who had smoked too many cigarettes—curling his thin lips into something between a smirk and a sigh. He was still handsome, despite the years. The ice of his eyes would stop at the smoke-stained horizon, never truly seeing the other balconies, the treetops, the hills, or the swallows.

His expression was always distant, his eyes lost somewhere far beyond the present—perhaps seeing again the military planes, the Italian and American generals and colonels, smiling or bored, in their green jackets and black boots.

He would drift back to those years spent on the airfield, learning to launch missiles that were never launched—“the Americans armed to the teeth,” he'd say, “and the Italians with patches on their elbows.” He thought of those motionless years, when he dreamed of faraway lands though he had hardly ever left that place.

In that eternal stillness, he had thrown himself among Arab and African tanks and bombs, met men and women of every kind, played poker and darts—with that same faraway look he wore on the balcony.

He remembered a lost love, afternoons hazy with smoke, the walks of a young man on leave, full of life and strength.

I remember him returning to the kitchen, ashes still clinging to his fingers, pulling out an old photo album.

“Look here—see your grandpa?” His raspy voice, now smiling, would call me over. Between his long, elegant fingers were sepia photographs—him, Grandpa—on a little truck, wearing a white polo shirt and military trousers, or in uniform. He was smiling in

the picture, just as his voice smiled while he told me about the Gulf and Kenya, about spices and crocodiles, until he reached the most important story: “Look here—in Kenya there was a crocodile. I blinded it with a fountain pen.”

I remember his hand on my shoulder guiding me toward his room. “Wait there,” he’d say from the doorway. He’d disappear, then return with a sword scabbard. He’d draw it, and my laughter would mingle with his hoarse, coughing one as he showed me his parade saber—blunt, harmless, gleaming.

The happy clapping of my hands followed him back to his armchair, where, with a cigarette and a book, he would lose himself in some story—always the same one, always the same adventure in distant lands.

I still remember that man—tall and slender, his large gray eyes mirrored in mine—and his stories. I remember his furrowed brow, where you could almost see the thoughts moving behind it.

So many things he wanted to do. So many he threw away—one by one, like the cigarettes he smoked.

Even now, I like to think he’s still there—leaning on some cloud, looking down at his loved ones and the horizon, wrapped in a haze of smoke, his fingers still scented with tobacco.

Sometimes I think I resemble him. My grandmother says so, too. In my large eyes, in that distant, melancholy expression, in my thoughts always somewhere else. In the eternal dissatisfaction with this life, and in the quiet stillness in which we are both imprisoned.

*-Caria Capizzi*



Forest, Veiled

*-Isabel Bryan*

# Niagara

*-for Ryan Bek*

In my dreams you walk through water and fire.

The Detroit River cradling casinos,  
biding our time before the adventure,  
gambling the hours as if they were endless.

A campfire outside Toronto, freezing  
our asses off, your excitement sparking  
like wood embers as we charted a path  
to Niagara, the Canadian side, your  
longed-for pilgrimage almost complete.

The mist-spray thrown up by the falls  
merges with fog, choking out your image  
like the black smoke that consumes you  
later, before, I pray, flame touched your skin.

I've always hated Valentine's Day,  
ever since the blaze took you, your fiancée,  
her sister, a friend, all four lost in the fire,  
all four found only by dental records.

But the fog shuffles off, and there you stand,  
a smile spanning from idea to fruition,  
reality to dream, broader than the expanse  
of the huge, unfurled maple leaf flag  
you still hold in my only photo of you.  
The rushing waters seem to slow in their fall,  
turning golden under a revealed sun,  
matching the bright flecks in your eyes,  
pure and warm, like syrup stretching forth  
from a spout, and giving forth endlessly  
of itself. Ryan, I'm sorry, but I need

to let you go,  
over the rapids  
into the froth  
back to life.

*- Benjamin Thorne*



Autumn Abandon

*- Emalyn George*

## Entertaining angels unawares

a glowing ball Nanna saw in childhood  
pure drifting plasmic light  
was an angel

at once concrete and intangible  
it came in through one closed window  
took about two minutes to go across the room

and left through the other  
while all eight of her siblings sat in glorious silence  
(I tell her it was a reflection from a mirror, or the shine from a watch)

God reached down in Granny's dream  
and touched her  
with His large brilliant hand

beautiful—indescribable  
she wanted to stay asleep with Him forever ...  
this she would say

any time there came a silence over the room  
“I wanted Him  
to take me with”

the air became thick  
and hard to drink.  
(I was quiet about that one.)

*-Sarah Watkins*

if i'm born again,

don't let them call me first.

don't place the crown of eldest  
on my tender, unready head.

i've worn that title like a wound,  
pressed smiles over bruises,  
carried grief like groceries  
while no one noticed  
my arms were breaking.

i learned to speak in apologies,  
to clean up messes i didn't make,  
to hold my breath so others could breathe  
and they called it love.

i don't want to be the blueprint,  
the trial and the lesson,  
the one who walks ahead  
so the path is easier  
for everyone else.

in the next life,  
let me be the laughter,  
not the silence.  
the held, not the holding.  
the child  
not the caution sign.

if i'm born again,  
let me be free  
of all the things  
i was never allowed  
to put down.

*-Hanna Lewis*

## Fisher King

The land justly demands my blood; a trickle it receives.  
My wounded side has yet to dry, pierced by contrition's Lance.  
Not even fishing, once my joy, offers any reprieve:  
My lure, bobbing on tepid tides, attracts no bite or glance.  
What Words might mend my broken soul?  
Give, sympathize, and control.

I try to be the moral sort: be chaste, be kind, be pure.  
But no man may live sinless days. Guilt festers from virtue.  
Though I confess my grief nightly, and ever self-abjure,  
Shame persists still, and shall until I am remade anew.  
What Words might cure my wicked soul?  
Give, sympathize, and control.

I stand vigil over my Grail: my faith in One-Yet-Three.  
For still I yearn that You return and whisper, as I bleed,  
The Words which I do not yet know but long to hear from Thee,  
Which shall restore forevermore my spirit, unchained, freed.  
What Words might heal my stigmata?  
Datta, dayadhvam, damyata.

*-Lucas Durand*

## The Knife-Maker of Tsukiji

Sticks of grilled seafood bob  
through the streets of Tsukiji.  
Tourists gnaw on charred prawns,  
vendors sweat over crackling flames,  
and the knife-maker  
bends over a whetstone wheel.

His foot pumps the pedal  
so the stone can spin into a blur,  
and he tosses a bucket of water on the wheel,  
droplets wetting his shoes.

He presses a dirty blade against the wheel,  
the scraping screech of metal and stone  
harsh to others' ears,  
but not his own.

Seven generations ago,  
his family folded, hammered, forged  
katanas and wakizashiv  
for samurai  
serving their daimyo  
in honor's name.

His blades no longer cleave the battlefield,  
but their cut  
is just as sharp.

*-Nicole Hirt*

## Était-ce La Saveur Du Sang?

(Based on Salome with the Head of Saint John the Baptist, Andrea Solario)

She has received the yellow head of Christ's cousin,  
Still dripping with blood, on the fabled silver platter,  
Her request to King Herod fulfilled  
With one clean cut of a blade across the neck of a man  
Who once told the world to make things straight

She is no Magdalene, looking instantly penitent  
Over calling for the death of this innocent immerser,  
And no Jezebel cackling with delight  
Now that an inconvenient prophet has fallen silent,  
Pilate's wife she is not either, nothing here haunts her

Instead, she stands unimpressed, looking modern  
In her pale dissatisfaction, her wishes carried  
Out to the letter but no new happiness forthcoming,  
Since the prophet's eyes are closed,  
He cannot see Salome has finally gotten her revenge

*-Ben Nardolilli*



The Procession  
*-Ryland Murray*

## Perennial

Though we buried her beneath a boarding school's roof  
in October, when you would plant a daffodil bulb,  
my sister didn't bloom into new life  
with the flowers during February's false spring.  
She stayed as hunched as unopened blossoms  
that tilt toward the dirt.

I thought it was unfair that the daffodils  
were pushing through soil and pine straw,  
growing, when my sister was not.  
Turns out she was just late, for  
just as those flowers shoot small stems above the soil  
after winter's final frost, so my sister, too, began anew  
when the daffodils had become bulbs once more.

*-Anna Roberts*



Summer's Blood

*-Anna Roberts*

## Persist

There is a buoy somewhere off the shore, dipping underneath the waves every so often. It is sun-bleached and lonely, and though the water washes over it, the buoy never sinks. Heat, hail, weather, and wind abuse the buoy daily. It continues to float. It witnesses sunrise and sunset. Purple and blue, pink and orange. Winged birds in efficient formations. Cargo ships with crates as far as the eye can see. As time passes, the buoy floats. As it always will.

*-Taliyah Ford*



A Tiny Witness  
*-Lucas Durand*

## Somewhere in an Amusement Park

A sunset grates over Atlantic City  
Waves crash into the boardwalk

Rocking the Big Wheel of dizzying  
Lights of blues, reds and greens.

The carousel shimmies forth  
In its circular fashion of horses

In a race with one another  
And the gray horse never reaches

The white. They spin undisturbed  
By crashing waves on steel supports.

A child taking pictures of his parents  
In his navy-blue Yankees hat

Looking for poses that make the smile  
Fit even if it's just for the picture.

Now he goes on making believe  
That one day his parents will be parents

And he can be a kid. This is not that day  
As he shuffles still frames of a family

Missing their child. And I wonder if he  
Knows that growing up takes time.

If he sees on the ink blots on the canvas  
Of adulthood. All the strikethrough lines

That linger even after marks of time  
Drag through hesitant hands.

He smirks as the waves crash again  
And wonders why he wishes he was dead.

*-Arden Felker*



Great Wall  
*-Taliyah Ford*

## wHOLIY Inadequate

If You were the sun, then I wish You would burn me  
If You were the mountains, then on top of me fall  
If You were the clouds, then I'd cry out "Surround me!"  
I feel wholly inadequate in the sight of it all

How can something so broken bring about so much beauty?  
Why are moments held precious interwoven with pain?  
There's no thing I possess that can mark me as worthy  
I don't understand why you've called me by name

For I am the doubter, the denier, the turncoat  
I am the thief who rejected your call  
Yet you call me precious and honored, beloved  
I am Holy and adequate in spite of it all

So I'm trying to give you everything that I am  
But please, promise me that you'll start where I end  
Just promise me that we'll go on in the end

- *Philip Kise*



Springtime Blossoms  
- *Isabel Bryan*

## Functional Anesthesia

Pouring over my options like my nightly glasses of wine  
One turns to two, sometimes three if I'm reeling  
And I am, believe me  
Seeing the man who hit me out there unscathed  
Has sent me to a depth I can't describe  
So I drink into a functional anesthesia  
And consider what now  
If I button myself up like a respectable woman  
Present my case to those who will listen  
State the facts, show no emotion  
Document it all  
Meticulously write about it, publish it even  
Would my suffering be real  
I should say real to me, but really I mean to him  
Mind you, he's already written off what he's done  
Like lost profits on a tax return  
A business deal gone sour; a transaction all the same  
I write to a phantom of him I've entirely made up  
I imagine there's an intrinsic empathy I can appeal to  
If I say it just the right way, I can make him remorseful  
Pouring over my options, I see the writing on the wall  
I've buttoned myself up and people believe me  
Sometimes on good days I believe myself  
Yet every night I sit with bitterness,  
Offer her a glass as she tells me,  
*This isn't enough*

*-Megan Samsel*

## Graduation

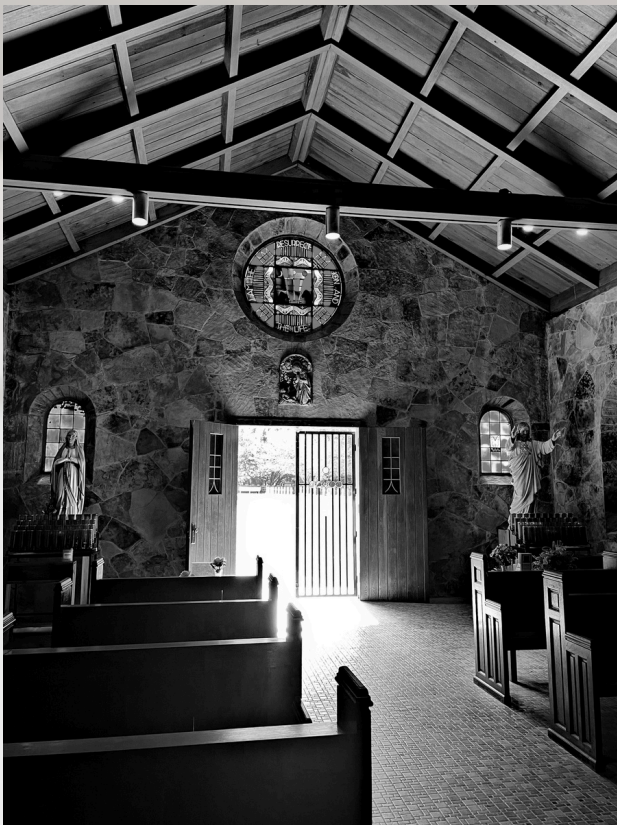
We went like mourners  
walking to a funeral, crying  
while draped in black garments.

We went like revelers  
at midnight, celebrating  
although our feet were sore from heels.

We went like inmates  
being released from prison, leaving  
behind the smelly men and metal beds.

We went like children  
on the first day of kindergarten, walking  
outside with the unfamiliar weight of a backpack.

*-Anna Roberts*



Come as you are  
*-Alicyn Harris*

## Authors and Artists

*Jane Blanchard* of Augusta, Georgia, has earned degrees in English from Wake Forest and Rutgers universities. Her poetry has recently appeared in Alabama Literary Review and North Dakota Quarterly. Her latest collection is *Furthermore* (2025).

*Isabel Bryan* is an avid Jesus follower, book reader, origami crane folder, music listener, and breakfast enjoyer. She is currently working on her master's in librarianship, and is a librarian at her alma mater, Shorter University. She hopes her poems inspire others to want to know God more.

*Carla Capizzi* is an independent researcher affiliated with the University of Padua, where she earned her PhD summa cum laude in Ancient Greek Law. She has published several peer-reviewed articles and has extensive experience in academic writing. Alongside her research, she pursues creative writing, exploring both fiction and literary criticism.

*Holly Day's* writing has recently appeared in Analog SF, Cardinal Sins, and New Plains Review, and her published books include *Music Theory for Dummies* and *Music Composition for Dummies*. She currently teaches classes at The Loft Literary Center in Minnesota, Hugo House in Washington, and The Muse Writers Center in Virginia.

*Arden Falker* is an emerging poet from Audubon, Minnesota who explores the fault lines where memory, place, and language collide. His work is forthcoming in *The Unhoused Anthology* (Prolific Pulse Press), and has also appeared in coffee-stained notebooks and in the margins of receipts.

*Emalyn Sharp George* is a 2022 Shorter alumnus who has an excessive love of tea and chocolate. She enjoys reading, writing, dancing, and singing, although she never seems to make time for her hobbies. She currently lives in North Georgia with her husband and their rainbow baby.

*Nicole Hirt* is a senior studying English and Creative Writing at Palm Beach Atlantic University. She is an editor at *Living Waters Review*. Her works have appeared in *Westmarch Literary Review* and *Eunoia Review*, and are forthcoming in *Runestone Literary Journal*. In her free time, she enjoys wandering through cemeteries.

A man who creates both figuratively and literally with blood and passion, *Ryland Murray* is a goofy ball of caffeine and wiki-articles that writes like the proverbial typewriter-monkey. This lover of metal music, unsettling stories, and questionable queries has tons of stuff to throw at the wall. Sometimes it even sticks.

## Authors and Artists

*Ben Nardolilli* is a scrivener and a theoretical MFA candidate at Long Island University. His work has appeared in *Perigee Magazine*, *Door Is a Jar*, *The Delmarva Review*, *Red Fez*, *The Oklahoma Review*, *Quail Bell Magazine*, and *Slab*. Follow his publishing journey at [mirrorsponge.blogspot.com](http://mirrorsponge.blogspot.com).

Born in Le Mans, France, *Betty Poussin* dedicated her professional life to teaching troubled teenagers and supervising young people at summer camps. Always with a camera slung over her shoulder, her third eye helps her capture the ephemeral during her worldwide travels

*Sambhu Ramachandran* is a bilingual poet, translator, short story writer, and academic from Kerala, India. He is currently Assistant Professor of English at N.S.S. College, Pandalam. His poems have been anthologized in *The Yearbook of Indian Poetry in English* and have also appeared in journals like *The Bombay Literary Magazine (TBLM)*, *Wild Court*, *Madras Courier*, and many others

*Philip Kise* is a writer, director, photographer, and singer/songwriter under the name Fairfarren from Rome, GA. When he isn't taking artsy photos, filming movies, or fiddlin' around on his various instruments, you will probably not find him...because he is, more likely than not, off on a grand adventure to some other part of the US.

*Megan Samsel* is an emerging writer and poet who has enjoyed writing since she learned how to. Her goal is to make the darker, unexplainable aspects of life understandable through metaphor, imagery, and unwavering authenticity.

*Mario Senzale* is a South American writer and mathematician currently living in Indianapolis, Indiana. His latest pieces of fiction have been accepted for publication in *Expat Press*, *Lovecraftiana*, *Cryptic Frog Magazine*, and *The Journal of Experimental Fiction*.

*Natalie Tankersley* is a junior communication studies major with minors in professional writing, marketing, and graphic design at Shorter University. In addition to photography, she also enjoys writing and has been published fifteen times in literary magazines. You can follow her journey at [@n.t.gail](https://www.instagram.com/n.t.gail) on Instagram.

A Pushcart and Best of the Net nominee, *M. Benjamin Thorne* is an Associate Professor of Modern European History at Wingate University. His poems appear or are forthcoming in *Last Syllable Lit*, *Willawaw Journal*, *Pictura Journal*, *Heimat Review* and *Plexus*. He lives and sometimes sleeps in Charlotte, NC.

An Arkansas native, *Sarah Watkins* is an educator by trade and a writer by necessity. She currently resides in northeast Arkansas with her husband.

## The Chimes History

The history of The Chimes is long and rich, spanning all the way back to 1879—only six years after Shorter was founded. According to Dr. Robert Gardner’s book, *On the Hill*, a history of Shorter College, The Chimes began in February 1879 as a combined effort of the Eunomian and Polymnian societies. It was totally student-sponsored and student-supported. Students sold subscriptions for 50¢ per year. The Chimes suspended publication in 1918 and was not revived again until 1922. With its new awakening, its subscription went to \$1.00, and it was issued four times per year. But it has been published continuously with the exception of these four years, making it the longest-running publication in Shorter’s history. The Chimes first appeared as a four-page tabloid newspaper. Eventually, it became a pamphlet, and then a magazine. It contained poems, short stories, essays, and jokes, and in its early days, it contained news and “gossip” of the two societies. Sometime in the 1980s, interest in creative writing waned and there was not enough Rho Delta material to fill the magazine, so it became a literary vehicle for the whole school, under the management of the English Department. In the present day, it now contains art along with literature.

## Submission Guidelines

The submission deadline for the 112th issue is November 13th, 2026. All submissions received after this date will be considered for the following issue.

Please follow guidelines closely when submitting; failure to do so will disqualify your work from being reviewed for publication.

- Do not include your name or any identifying information in your attached files.
- Your document titles should include the genre (fiction, nonfiction, or poetry) then the name of the piece.
- Include a 50-word third-person bio in your submission email.
- Send in each submission in a separate file.
- Attach writing in word documents with a title if applicable.
- Attach art in jpeg files with a title.
- Submissions are open to all 18 or older.
- See our website via the QR code on the next page for guidelines regarding specific information (length of pieces, formatting, etc.)

Please send your work to Fabrice Poussin (fpoussin@shorter.edu). You will be contacted regarding the acceptance status of your piece in January 2026. Thank you for your patience!

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The Chimes Magazine:  
Online Version





*Blood into Ink*  
*The Chimes, 111<sup>th</sup> Issue*

SINCE 1879  
SHORTER UNIVERSITY  
**CHIMES**

