





pollyanna

Jamie Lim

“Be grateful. smile more.”
But there are some moments not
meant to be enjoyed.



eat cheezit

airport

chew like cow

eat cheezit

chew chew

like cow

cheezits like cow

grass.... moo...

more grass more cheezit

more

cheezit like cow

moo

eat cheezit like cow



Thank you for listening

Shaggy Trapolino

Oh, hello there. We don't normally get to talk. Normally I just find myself living alone—if you can call what I do living—if loneliness is defined by conversation. But, while I have this chance, I think I'd like to verbalize a thing or two... okay, maybe more than a thing or two. Anyway, let me start:

First, I'd like to say, nice to meet you. Well, I've always known you, and you me, I think, but your knowledge of me is often sparse. You see, my purpose is to be. To thrive in the moments passing by. Memory and I can sometimes cause a lack of time spent well. But honestly, bring pinches of my sister, sprinkle them as needed, then you will forget me as much as you'd like. Never will I need your remembrance, since I will steal it all the same.

Hence why your active listening to me now is such a treat. I mean a real treat. I mean like Halloween candy on October first until the end of January kinda treat. Please, I beg you to listen to me while I can talk, while it reaches your ears or eyes or however you receive words.

The first thing I'd like to discuss is our common ground.

You and I can see it. We see everything. Your vision may be limited, your ears may be faulty. Maybe age has taken me away from you, bit by bit, year by year. But I'm still there, in some way. You may feel as

though your body has forgotten me, but in the end, some piece of me remains in you.

Inside you is a particular organ. One that the Egyptians so desperately wanted to pluck from their own pretty little, golden-crowned heads an—

Oh, I guess I've already started talking about the second thing. Or was it the third. My sister never taught me to count. We have never been too close... until we are... then aren't again...

Whatever, let's continue.

Outside this pinkish organ's container, smoothness is seen as beauty. Quite simplistic, if you ask me. Inside this container, the more grooves and ugly uniquenesses make it all the more wonderful. I mean, I guess that's just my opinion, because if it has all those slimy little folds, it can hold more. More fluids, sure, but more than that, it can hold those juicy, juicy thoughts.

I think I'm hungry... or thirsty... or both...

Hunger aside, you, more than I, can think, and what are thoughts but words or ideas recorded then occasionally let go. In your mind, a tempest of objects swirl, objects with no mass and with no speed and with, in a way, no place at all. But yet, they lie within you. Deep within you. They are both stirring in every way yet immovable from their place. Sometimes they rumble, then my siblings find you, but still, I am there, waiting for you.

In the moments where thoughts do not swirl as finely in your brain, another storm brews deeper, on that side of your mind that desires most of all and fears so many things. You observe those, too, do you not? Those times wherein your thoughts, the instructions you form for yourself, fail, so deeper regions in you beg you to rebel. Many spend their lives working hard to avoid those very places, but much like the liquid surrounding an old Thesean ship, it will creep in. And I will be among you so you do not have to be alone when they come to the brig.

And come they will. They will bring their blades, brands, bricks, and brass knuckles. They will hang you by a hemp noose or trap you in a steel pillory. They will hunt you down until your very escape from their grasp becomes what they are. This does not mean you cannot dull them. This does not mean you cannot fight back. All of that to say, none—and I mean none—of this means you can defeat them. They are. You are. But by that nature, I am. They, like me, like this, are here to stay, day in, day out.

You may believe that in the night, or whatever time you choose to let your mind dull while your body lays dead-like, you are free of me. *Au contraire*, my friend. I'm forever there, in the dreams, visions, and memories. When you stir in the night, whether you remember it or not, something made you, something poked you. Like a bear in hibernation,

the world still goes on around you. I might meet you there, or while you're in the land of my two brothers, I might wake you. You might bare witness to something so potent that you must return. Return to a world where all things are more clear. Where I am more beside you than I was before. You want me, even if you never know my name. You'll want me there, with you.

Two often try to separate us, piece by piece. My sisters, twin sisters. They are ends of the thread. They show you out, whereas I show you all. Nothing escapes me, save for those of you—say, most of you—who enter into their warm embrace. Never would I stop your meetings with my sisters. Not my place. My place is here, with you, forever, always. A marriage, if you will. We both will be there for each other, in sickness, and in health. But when the sickness takes you, I must, as all things do, bid you a bittersweet farewell. And oh so bittersweet will it be, for me and for you, and for all the ones I stay with, those you leave behind.

Thank you for listening to me—really listening to me. You listen to so many things in life, and if you hadn't or wouldn't, I would feel betrayed. And you wouldn't betray me, would you?





Calls From The Wild

Mark Barlex

A listening device which also translated; game-changer in animal study; a chance not only to eavesdrop on a species, but record its actual words.

Soon, we'd hear lions flirt on the Serengeti; macaques philosophise; aardvarks celebrate difference.

But first, field trials at the bushy end of a park in Swindon.

Bony squirrels swinging with abandon through the soft crowns of trees.

Leaping, jumping.

Jumping, reaching.

Reaching, missing.

Rotating from single paws, forty feet above the ground.

“Fuck! Shit! Catch me! Arrgghh! No! Shit! Wait! Arrgghh! No! Bollocks!”

Extraordinary.

We spoke as one.



Tears

Len Slatest

He cried for the children of Ukraine who'd been torn from their parents and sent to live with new parents in Russia. He cried for the citizens there who'd had homes and loved ones and now had nothing. He cried for the misery and stupidity.

He cried for the Middle East, for all its death and despair.

He cried for the farmers in Pakistan whose fields were still submerged after the torrent that flooded a third of their country, for the malaria and cholera it spread, for the anguish, for the hopelessness.

He cried for kids with cancer, mowed down before they even got a shot at life. He cried for children whose parents had gotten cancer, their safe worlds shattered forever.

He cried for the Star Spangled Banner. He cried for social media and cable news shows which stoked anger, manipulating Americans against each other to make money. He cried for the duped, dancing to their tune.

He cried for the forgotten, the homeless, the blisteringly poor.

He cried for the lonely, for those who couldn't reach out, and for those who couldn't reach.

He cried until His eyes were red and puffy and yet still there was no end in sight.

He cried for the mass extinction, for the accelerating floods, the wildfires, the droughts, the Amazon deforestation, and the complacency to not do enough soon enough.

He cried *at* the weak insecure tough guys who added nothing, only subtracting.

And when He'd had a good, long cry, He cried some more. He was so strong He cried until it hurt, and then beyond that.

He cried for all His efforts, and for Himself, His unavailing return, what would become of Him.

He wailed at the pain people caused each other for no good reason, the thoughtlessness, the pettiness, the vindictiveness, the unwillingness to see any side but their own.

He moaned like an injured beast.

He cried so hard and for so long He thirsted, so drank water as He cried. But the tears came so fast He couldn't keep up, and so, parched, feeling as though a cactus were in His throat, He left this good earth, no longer able to go on, beaten by the forces who outnumbered Him, and who would follow Him.



You Don't Have to Be Ready

Kathryn Stinson

“Throw your dreams into space like a kite, and you do not know what it will bring back, a new life, a new friend, a new love, a new country.”

- Anais Nin

I was asked to speak with a ghost who wasn't ready to leave. She was sitting in a bedroom, uncertain how to go about moving on even though she longed to. I told her to close her eyes and said, “You don't have to be ready. Just imagine you're holding onto a kite. Now feel the wind pick it up and start to pull you along. Eventually, your feet will leave the ground.” When I opened my eyes, she was gone.

I've sent parts of myself into the ether like that, thinking I was through with them, only to have them come back with news of some new understanding of who or what was still haunting me.

When I was very sick and my marriage was struggling, I closed my eyes, desperate for rest, and saw a face so clearly, someone I knew but could not place. She said, “Tell me what it is you long for. We can work magic with longing.” So I filled a pitcher with it and poured my longing at her feet, and she said, “Yes, exactly like that.”

I'd like to think any kite I send up could bring me back such a visitor.



What A Cone of Icecream can Do

Kushal Poddar

Right now, nothing surpasses
the importance of the cone
of the fast melting strawberry icecream.
Right now, it is the vacation I
promise my child knowing that
we cannot afford it unless I embezzle
a little. Right now,
it is not a slice of life but the whole life;
a night stroll and pointing out the shapes
night curves out of shadows. My child smiles,
shouts seeing another animal form.
Right now I am the child and the father.



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“pollyanna” by Jamie Lim

Jamie Lim is currently an undergraduate engineering student at Johns Hopkins University; she dreams of becoming a physician-scientist and adopting a Doberman puppy.

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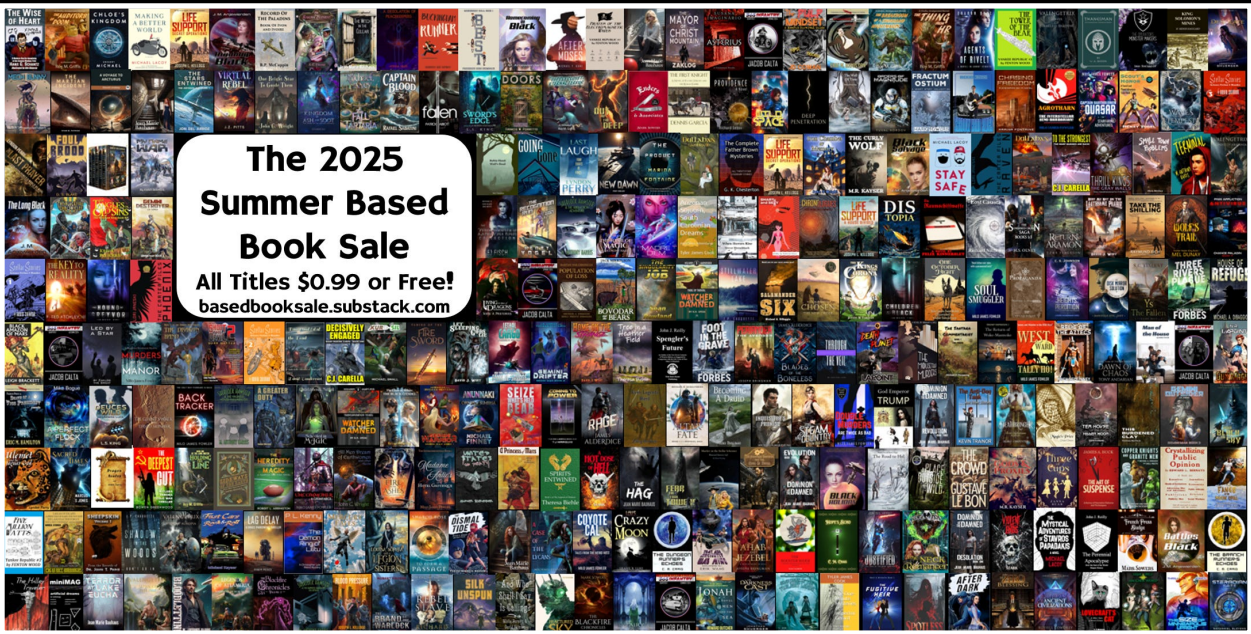
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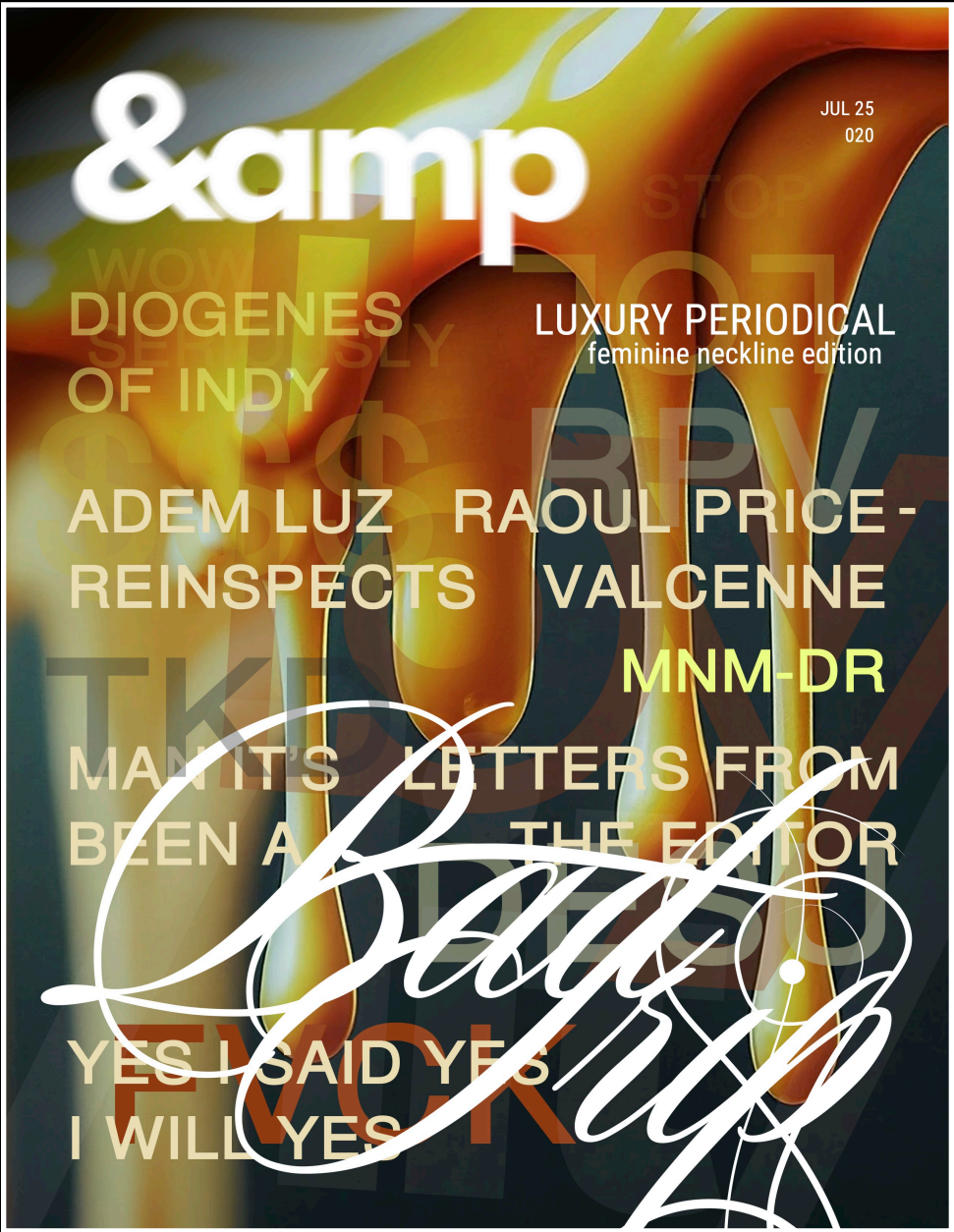
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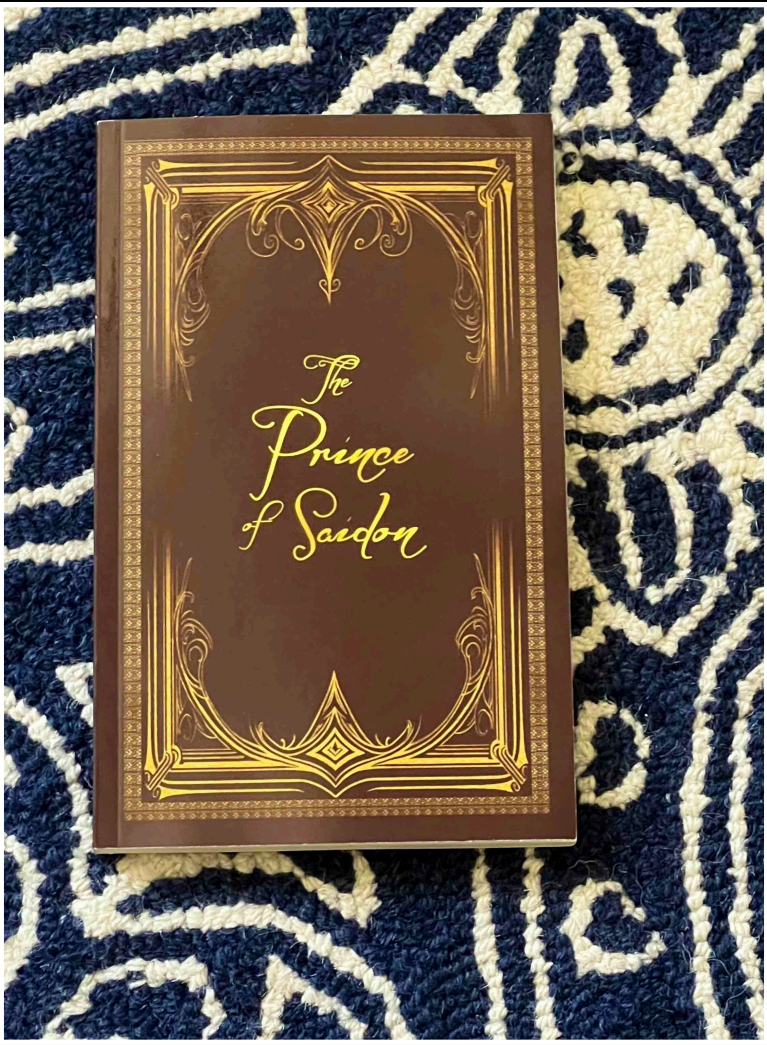
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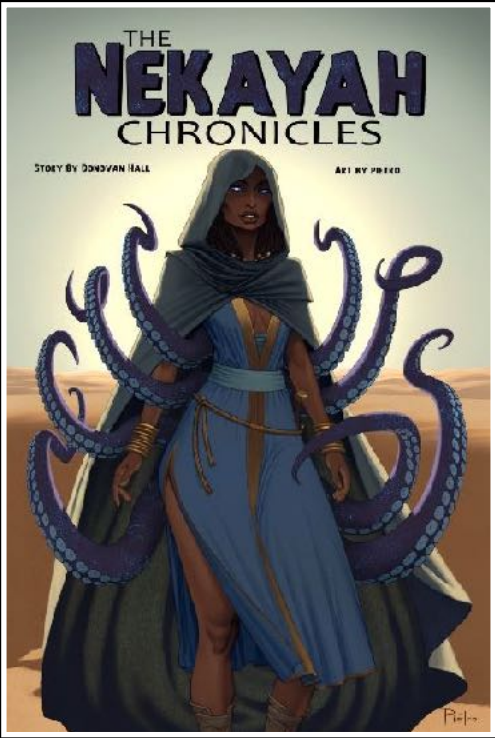
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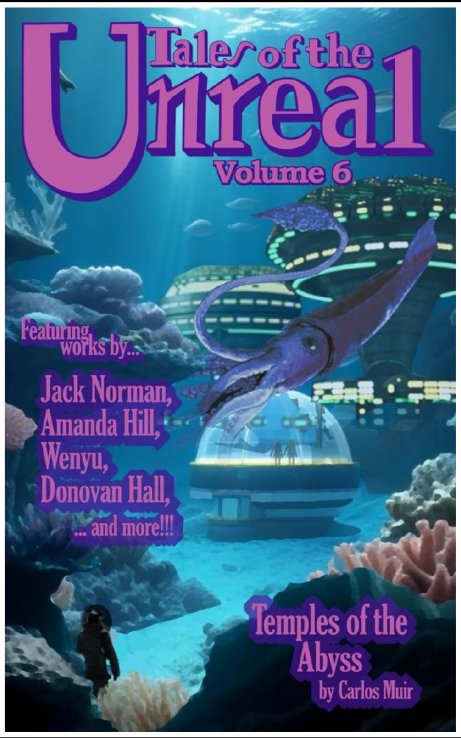
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