

MOONFLAKE  
press.

astroflakes.

volume one




dear reader,

at first, astrology might seem like a shortcut to understanding the world and ourselves. but any astrologer or artist will tell you that, much like the universe itself, it's an endeavor that is by definition infinite. so, if you are willing to get lost in the cosmos and go off-roading in your own psyche, please enjoy the following works from brilliant writers who have graced us with their curiosity and insight into the stars

Marcella Haddad, Cyrine Sinti

Fran Fernández Arce, Shay Kaur



Your path is illuminated by a road-map of stars.  
I am here to guide you!

- ambika devi

# dig two graves.

I dug two graves, side by side as we had once been. Maybe I made his a little less than six feet deep. Maybe I was hoping the scavengers would be able to claw through the dirt and find him. Maybe I was hoping they'd destroy the last physical remnant of him.

I leave the shovel by the graves. Vengeance's scorpion sting pricks at my heels.

It's a hunter's moon.

This path is well-worn, familiar. I have walked it many times but with much different intentions. When I reach his home, I peek through the gap in the shutters.

He sits by his fireplace, a cup of tea at his side and an open book in his lap. His head droops onto his chest. The picture of comfort. The bruises on my face sting as if the blows were fresh. What is left of my heart turns to steel.

Perhaps he forgot I still have a key to his house, or perhaps he thought I would not use it. He stirs when I enter the room. I think he sees the murder in my eyes. I think he sees what he is done, and knows fear.

*Good.* I want him to know fear. I want him to know pain. I want my sweet revenge.

Caked in mud as I am, I must look every inch the vengeful spirit. I am on him in a second, grubby hands wrapped tight around his throat. We tip the armchair over in our struggle and go crashing to the ground. He is bigger, stronger, and yet it is his eyes that I watch the light fade from.

I don't know how long I sit there. Minutes, or perhaps hours. His body cools as I watch. Then I rise, and wrap him in the tea-soaked carpet.

We leave a trail as I drag his corpse back through the woods. It's slow going, every step making every nerve in my body ignite with new pain. My body is failing, I know, but I can see the twin abysses of the graves. Only a few more yards. I gather my waning strength and keep going.

I dump his body into his grave with little ceremony. I restrain myself from spitting on him and instead fill the grave, packing it down with my boots. His only marker is a jagged stone I found in the woods between our houses. May he be forgotten.

I lay myself to rest in the other grave with gentle hands, blank eyes closed. No coffin for this former self, no words said or tears shed. The only token I give myself is a crushed wildflower, tossed in before the first shovelful of dirt. What I was disappears into the loving earth.

It will be seven years, they say, until my skin no longer knows his grip. Will it be faster, I wonder, leaving myself in this lonely grave? What will walk away? What is left?

What rises is something new.

nadia saleh

# gold leafed horns.

Bones move beneath the skin, glide under flesh  
this being exists on my determination to pay attention  
soft wind  
wild poppies  
wings of smoke rising from crooked chimneys

you must move slow  
plod, pace yourself, to pay attention  
don't move as a wildfire, or the wind, or the restless stream  
move like a tree root

my stars rule the neck  
the place I rub my palm when nervous  
the place where the taste of devotion, tenderness, and rose syrup linger.

hannah elliot

taurus

# mutable endings.

I felt more awake in dreams next to you than anywhere reality has placed me as of late. I kissed your hand and you kissed mine. Some sort of future yearned to hold us and tell us we were both good kids, actually. Not that I didn't know it.

Words tumbled from your spirit with drenched meaning. Am I no longer alone? I don't know who said that to me. I hoped to "god" that it was you.

Tourmaline in quartz, ink in skin. Suffocating on my own dark prayers while clouds crash into the sea. I know you had to go. It was no longer my choice. Maybe counting the waxing crescents or hearing the right lyrics can bring you back. I'm still only waking up.

nolita jackens

pisces



astrology reveals the will of the gods

- juvenal



# hylonome.

Who are the lady Sags meant to admire?  
Named centaurs, all male, but Hylonome, dead  
by husband's spear, suicide, her desire  
turned inward to grief instead.  
*The female one dependent  
on male love.* "Wise" human head  
sitting on horse body: intelligence spent  
rationalizing the battles between two  
disparate halves. How are the horse ladies meant  
to birth alone? L-shaped babes and they  
have arms too short for reaching back? Nay  
perhaps they only suffer, like the  
hyena, birth canal too tight for a  
pup. Like women's narrow hips evolved  
to walk, myths leave our questions unsolved.

# protection.

What about the days when there isn't a threat?  
When your gun need not be loaded,  
When your fists can lay unwrapped,  
When it is bright and clear and even the food tastes good—

What about when I don't need protection?  
You say you'd die for me  
You say you'd kill for me  
And god, I believe it  
But what about the 99% of the time  
When our home isn't being broken into?  
When the car isn't hydroplaning  
When we aren't being mugged  
Or touched  
Or backed into a corner?

What then?

When we wash off the makeup and take off the costumes  
When the lights dim and the music fades  
When the drama is over will you still love me?  
When I no longer need you, will you still want me?

Or is it just that you like how it feels  
To billow your cape and untie me from the train tracks?

Honey, there are no trains coming.  
You can let down your guard—there's nothing to guard me from.

Look directly at the treasure you are burying.  
Why are you protecting me?  
Why are you hurting me to do it?

And what about the days when there isn't a threat?  
Will you be bored? Will you wish for the days of glitter and sound effects?  
Will you rifle through my gold and silver  
And realize I'm dented and cracked from all those rough rescues  
And no longer feel I was worth it?

christina bagni

leo

# paradiso.

Careful

Dante  
says


Like  
frost

I bite

I melt

khushi jain

cancer

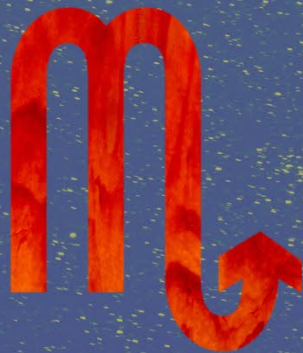


“We need not feel ashamed of flirting with the zodiac.  
The zodiac is well worth flirting with.”

- d.h lawrence

# nadia saleh

Nadia Saleh is a Romantic romantic from southern California. She holds a B.A. in English from the University of California at Santa Barbara and is currently enrolled in the MFA Program for Poets and Writers at UMass Amherst, where she also teaches critical and creative writing. When not collecting shiny things for her nest, she can be found crocheting cozy things in spooky shapes.



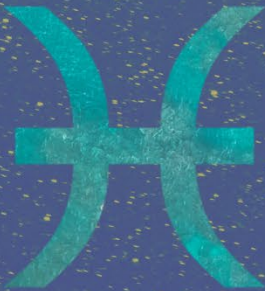
# hannah elliot

Hannah Elliott (she/her) is twenty years old and from the U.K. She writes about nature, women, wanderings of the mind, and the otherworldly - even if it is being found in the ordinary. She has words in Small Leaf Press, Nymphs, and Celestite Poetry, among others.



# nolita jackens

Nolita Jackens (she/her) is an artist from Los Angeles living in Tokyo. Preferring words as her medium, she also experiments with the visual arts and has a deep affection for skeletons. She is currently studying at Emerson College online for her MFA. You can keep up with her posts on [confettibastard.com](http://confettibastard.com) or follow @confettibastard on both Twitter and Instagram.



# jennifer jeanne mcardle

Jennifer lives in New York State and works in animal conservation, along with her partner and an agent of chaos (her dog). She's also lived in South Korea and Indonesia. In the past she's taught ESL and worked with nonprofits in Asia and the USA. More info here: <https://jenniferjeannemcardle.blogspot.com/>



# christina bagni

Christina Bagni's (she/her) creative work has been published in Brigids Gate Press, Writers Resist, and Flora Fiction, among others. She's a headstrong Aries with a love of mythology and buying too many books to ever actually read. Her first novel is forthcoming with Deep Hearts YA (2023), and you can find more about her here:

<https://linktr.ee/christinabagni>



# khushi jain

Khushi has a degree in English literature and is pursuing her second Masters in London.

She reads. A lot.



thank you to our talented contributors for their  
wonderful pieces!

we hope our dear readers loved this issue as much  
as we do!

- cyrine, marcella, fran, shay, carolyn & phoebe



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press.