



the gay saint
winter mini-zine
vol 7 iss 4 dec '23



With thanks for those who submitted their work for this mini-zine, and to our amazing team of writers, copy editors and creatives who make *The Gay Saint* what it is - a community of queer creativity.

Winter is a hard time for many, both in our community and beyond. This is a little reminder to look out for each other, and to be the light you want to see in the December gloom. Together we can make it through to Spring.



Editor's note

Volume 7 Issue 4 is a little collection of winter writings to get you through to the end of exam season, and to tide you over to next semester, where our big printed zines will make a return.

It's a pretty small issue, definitely a mini-zine, but consider it a gift just for you. You never know what you'll find speaking to you from the pages. It's there for you in the spare moments where you find yourself needing a poetry fix or an escape from the grind of digging through much less fun (and queer) academic readings.

Take a peek, but don't get too distracted!

Enjoy, and have a wonderful winter break.

Queer love and solidarity, always,
from all of us at *The Gay Saint* x



Venus who once was

If anyone does not believe in Venus,
They haven't gazed upon my love.
She comes in colours and shades
Of my omnibenevolence.
With an angled nose
That she never really cared for
"I hate my nose".
I think of her all
The time
All the time
I think of her
Dyed
Hair
And the way that she formed
"O" in puckered lips.



Botticelli's The Birth of Venus, deconstructed

I think about you all the time

I think I like it better when your
Face shows no emotion,
When you're pondering over
A piece of already chewed gum
Stuck to your tin can.
The cancer-causing liquid mixing in.

But you're the first to call it endearing,
And that's why I think about it
All the time.

Catnip

I know it was the chemicals in my brain.
Stimulated by your touch.

No one could ever know that secret.
How you sat on my lap
Those blue wide eyes.
Catnip.

I wonder if you knew there were sad
poems written about you?

I wonder if when you wake up in the morning,
I ever cross your mind-
The way I laugh,
The colour of my changing hair
Like mother nature's seasons.
My womanly figure tossing
and turning in bed
like the ripping waves of the ocean.

The way I would cry over
how happy you made me.
The solemn feeling when every piece of you became soluble in
my mind
like a sieve-
Grappling at pieces forming your
Face.
Hair.
Expressions of love.
Expressions of hate.
That's when you broke into pieces,
like a fragmented vision in my temporal lobe.



I keep printed photos of me and past lovers in a cardboard box,
it's not because I'm too sad to let go of the past but rather those
permanent photos exist no matter where I throw them.

Art by Holly Ward



I wrote this poem when I was 17 and slightly infatuated with a manic pixie dream girl. She appeared in my life quite suddenly, passionate and funny and very interested in me. For friendship or something more, I'll never know as she disappeared almost as fast.

This poem is about when my friends and I made Christmas biscuits and she joined us, leaving before we got to ice them. Naturally, we later met up over the winter break, walked around the Christmas markets arm in arm and I slept over at her house. To all those pining sapphic this winter, I wish you the best.

Stain by Lilac

The swirling colour of a smile as you wash over my vision.

'Blue is the most dangerous colour' you say,
'We used to lick the blue smarties to annoy my mum'.
I stain my hands twice and for good measure my tongue
Sticking out to make your smile spread.

You're gone when we use the vial
Of ink to swirl onto white icing,
Decorating the hearts and stars you cut
Till they look crystal and frozen.

Rinsing off our fingers is easy enough,
Water soluble bleeding away.
I thought you'd stain forever.

But you come a vivid pigment
Bright as crushed bluebells,
And you stay luminous until you look again
Washed away like you were never there.

And I wait for you to stain me once more with your smile.



*Art by Lucy Westenberger
and Holly Ward*



Emerald Coat by Trinity Görtschacher

I didn't think I'd hear from you
after you last declared your memory's still infested by me
like a ghostly bad omen
you said you got the letter
I wrote to you years ago
but today you saw a girl you thought was me
her ember long tresses and boots adorned with daisies
the very picture of me leaving

and as if for old time's sake
I wore the coat you fell in love with
as the road not taken missed me
by mere hours

did she look happy?
the way you remember me
cheeks flushed and slightly shivering
in that emerald too-thin coat I wore
back when you liked to keep me warm

or was it my November chill you recognised
my shame haunting the corner I rushed by earlier
heading back to the town we grew up in
and was your lover with you when you felt me
lingering in wait like the fog of our breaths
all those years ago

but you said you'd moved on - why tell me, then
in my heartache I hoped it true
for a moment, you could've had me for the weekend


though I know you're no good for me
whenever I find myself unwanted
a part of me wishes I'd just grown up
and tasted you when you asked
it'll lie awake and wonder
if I'd still wear flowers had I stayed
in bed with you where it was warmer
even if you'd still find ghosts to write to
would I be happier part-wanted
than rushing to the town that used to be ours
alone



Art by Mikare Todd


Winter Wondering

Harriet and Evelyn are the protagonists of a series of short stories running through each Gay Saint edition. Here they make their first appearance in illustrated form.



Harriet, where are we going?

*No. 4 in the Harriet and Evelyn series
of short stories by M.J.M. Norwood
illustrated by Meli Campbell*

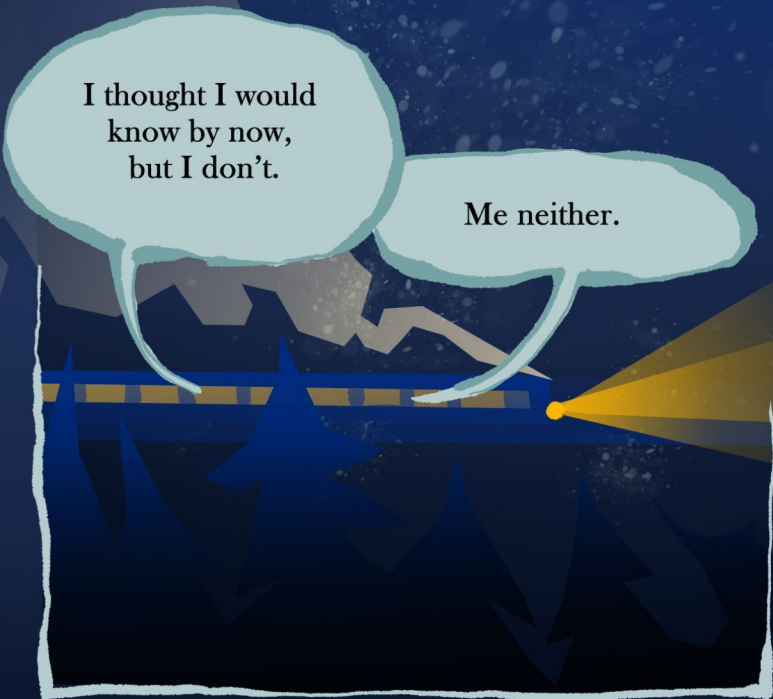


What do you mean?
Our stop is-

Not the train station, you ass!
I mean where are we going?
After graduating...



mpg



Pin holes and Sapphire Skies by Lucien Newton

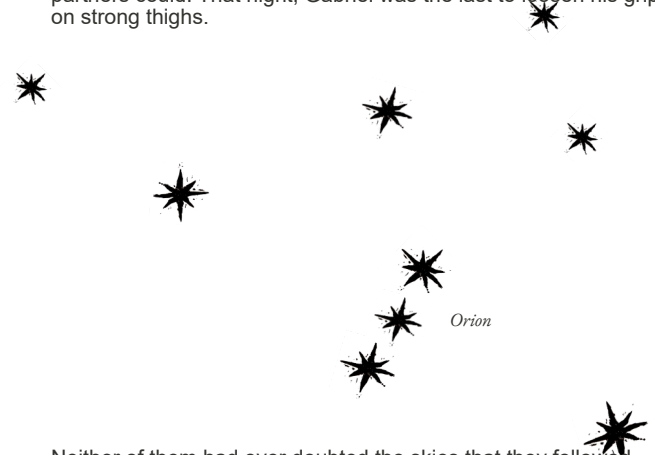
Noah knew every constellation in his personal favourite sky. He had charted every white freckled star, had traced the shapes that he found within them, and had committed each galaxy to his own impeccable memory and to paper. He had spent hour after hour studying the subject and tracing the constellations he had discovered in the delicate white freckles that blossomed over Elijah's back and shoulders. He had spent hour after hour mapping his body and waxing lyrical on the beauty of the night until the other had collapsed in on himself, just like the oldest stars. Every time, without fail, warm hands would be there to pull him back together again, so that the next time that he was taken apart, he would remember the warmth and safety that came after.

Noah remembered the first time that he had seen the constellations, and how anything that he had intended to say had died in his throat as he saw Elijah pulling a satin robe over his shoulders. He'd maintained his modesty, but Noah had still caught sight of the delicate white freckles littered across dark skin. That was where his fixation had started, but it was Gabriel who had thought that their sky would not be complete without a moon.



They had all seen Noah's scrolls decorated with stars where he had filled every space with the patterns he had drawn across Elijah's body night after night for months since first seeing the tiny clusters of celestial bodies across skin. Elijah wasn't someone void, destructive, dark, cold, and cruel. He was radiant, beautiful, shining, shimmering, splendid. As far as his lovers were concerned, he was the brightest, most sensational and captivating thing in the entire universe. Collectively, they had spent many a night under the stars, basking in the glow and astounded by the glory of the light. It was only natural that they had each taken the time to send thanks to their respective gods for giving them the brightest star in all the sky, and for dressing him up in decadent silk for them both to unwrap.

Elijah was their entire night sky, but thanks to Gabriel, his body now carried the moon with it as a living and breathing temple to everything beautiful that the skies had to offer. They all worshipped in different ways, but their altar was shared after that ink stained night. When the image was complete, nobody was surprised when a large hand curled around a slim thigh, a rough palm cupping the sensitive skin where the moon glittered. The ink healed quickly and the warmth of love filled Elijah before his partners could. That night, Gabriel was the last to loosen his grip on strong thighs.



Neither of them had ever doubted the skies that they followed wherever they were led. Finding Elijah and spending every day surrounded by the blanketing night felt like the closest that they had ever been to home. Coming together was easy, natural, and as close to second nature as seeking out the North Star each night. Coming home to their own celestial body meant that they were never lost. How could they be, when stars spanned skin and the moon hung low on a deep purple sky? The first time that either of them had met Elijah, and every night since, it was not a grand revelation that they would follow their north star to the edge of the world and far beyond.



Winter sounds by Mélisande Campbell

I can hear crystal clear
Footsteps
as you cross
Our snow-covered
lawn.

I can hear clink of
Teaspoon on china
Taste the fragrant
Steam of dried leaves
as you dive
Deeper into the
paper.

I can hear you closing
The leaky tap,
mindfully,
Carrying the old brass
Watering can to our
garden.

I can hear you next to me
In bed,
breathing out
Blue velvet smoke
Until I fall
asleep.

I hear you.



*Art by Mikare Todd
and Meli Campbell*



December 31st, 10:35pm, Wind Chill at an East Village
Rooftop Party by Ira Lyran

I rest easily on a fold-out table,
across from an antique mirror
leant against a leafless tree.
I see myself for the first time:
A crosspatch,
his dog,
a short skirt, high heels, smudged makeup,
a child who runs and plays;
But there stood one more,
me but not me,
my mercy,
my only care.

Unspoken,
his grace above me, traced
her fingers through my hair,
along my cheek,
to the sword on my hip, feeling
its broken blade, as if his touch
was a remedy to despair.
She looks for the shoe
off my foot
in the snow,
retrieving and pressing it gently into place,
under ankles so sore
I can almost tell.

Her fingers do not slip away
like the fingers before.
They linger
on my cheeks,
on my lips
as something weeps
beneath my skin.
All my questions
are answered and denied in that exact moment
of time.
In a minute there is time
for decisions and revisions which a minute will
reverse.
But across from this mirror,
I now believe that
there are some things a girl just ought to see.

Well, now I'm dancing on a rooftop, NYC on NYE, move to the
right, then to the left, repeat repeat repeat. I forget the time, I
ask: it's near new year? I hear: not yet, baby, wait 'til midnight
Monday, or 12:01 AM to be sure.

*Collage by Camille Crozat,
overlay by Holly Ward and
Mikare Todd*





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