

Our first longer short-story follows. “Desire,” by Isabella Moreno, is written from a child’s point of view. We especially liked that, although it is structured like a fairy tale, it eventually turns dark. Like many texts in this volume, the ending allows the reader to come to their own conclusion. Much as in the poetry of Jeffrey Brun, “Life’s Blink of Color” by Haley Clyburn sees the world through a hopeful and innocent lens. We liked the way that what begins as a question becomes a statement of resolve. “Watermelon Whispers” by Ashley Eberst follows. We see it as the perfect counterpoint to “Dropping Bombs.” Both pieces deal with difficult subjects—memory and strained and often unconscious intergenerational relations—but from a position of forgiveness and understanding. We especially admire the voice of “Watermelon Whispers,” the way the Eberst is able to move in and out of the consciousnesses of her characters.

Our final two poems offer a contrast. Playing at the edge of lyric and propaganda, Matt Baugher’s “Travel Advertisement 43050” obscures its formal complexity by reproducing the line breaks within a verse paragraph. Like a dark tale for children “Travel Advertisement” leads you down a dimly-lit street and leaves you at the city limit. We close our volume with a poem, another by Baugher, that we love but don’t quite understand. “Inquiry in the Eternal Tourist Trap-*for Mr. Saturn*” evokes a stage play on acid. Its absurdities and acuties felt alive to us, and left us all, happily, in a “green trance.”

In between many of our texts are beautiful images supplied to us by Jeffrey Brun and Sarah White. We are so grateful to them for the excellence of their vision and their willingness to share their art. Without the images and the implicit narratives they provide, this journal would be a lesser thing. A special shout-out goes to Megan Gallaher who created the artwork for the cover. She rushed in at the last minute, saved our butts, and created the perfect cover. Thanks Megan!

Well, that’s it—our first volume. We hope that you will read and share it with your friends. We also hope that you will reach out to us, either by submitting work or simply letting us know how you like the zine. But even more we hope that you yourself will make something – a song, a poem, a story, a photo, a sculpture, a painting. We agree with the poet Wallace Stevens, who wrote that the purpose of poetry is to help people live their lives—ditto music, film, fiction, art of all kinds. But we also think that art can help shape reality. In this way, we offer our small portion of it, located in Central Ohio, and coming directly from our lived experience.

In Solidarity,

The Editors of *ghost flower*.