

THE MISANTHROPY – ISSUE I – SEPTEMBER 2014

1. Driving Home from Olive Garden – Ellie White
2. First Kiss – Kieran Collier
3. Unplanning Utopia – Cassandra de Alba
4. Metamania – Ellyn Touchette
5. Empty Words – Max Binder
6. Visualizing Success – Cassandra de Alba
7. Enter to Win – Kyla Marshall
8. This Is How a Mountain Dies – Marshall Gillson
9. ABSOLUTELY NO ALCOHOL BEYOND THIS POINT – Hillary Kobernick
10. Co-Counselor Vlad Sets Up the Scene – Kieran Collier
11. Filial – William James
12. Trouble Every Day VII – Glen Armstrong
13. Jeopardy – Max Binder
14. For Manic Girls With No One Holding Them – Emily O’Neill
15. New Apartment – Hillary Kobernick
16. Because There Must Be a Reason Other Than Yourself – Kiera “Miss Haze” Nelson
17. About Our Contributors

DRIVING HOME FROM OLIVE GARDEN  
by Ellie White

*Harlingen, Texas 2000*

My father keeps a carton of cigarettes  
on the back floorboard of his Tahoe.  
They are always on the passenger side  
so he can reach them when he's driving.

When my sister calls shotgun, I don't  
argue. At fourteen, I'm too old  
for such childish disputes. I wait until  
she and Dad are arguing intensely  
about basketball, till the point  
where I would usually butt in  
to remind them of my presence.

Instead, I slide the carton closer  
with my left shoe, maneuver it behind  
my heels and slide it up the underside  
of my seat. They are still bickering  
as I silently remove two packs  
and slip them under my right thigh.

As the subject changes from the NCAA  
to the NBA, I replace the carton  
on the floor and when we pull  
into the driveway, I take my time  
gathering my purse and jacket.

In the seconds between Dad closing  
his door and my sister turning around,  
I put a pack above each hip, wedging  
them securely inside the waistband  
of my new flare-leg jeans. Once inside,  
I go to set my purse in my room.

Despite all this concealment, I think  
Dad knows. I imagine him counting  
the packs in the parking lot  
of his apartment building across town,  
just like I used to count the beers  
in the refrigerator when he lived with us.

FIRST KISS

by Kieran Collier

You used to explore the woods  
by your house like a land-locked Magellan,  
clothes tie-dyed brown and green,  
stumbling over twigs and yellow leaves  
until the day your leg was kissed—  
a black speck you could have sworn  
was simply just another fleck of dirt.  
At first this was no cause for concern.

But it didn't wash off in the shower,  
clung to you with a near constant hum  
of stinging, so you went to the eldest on the block—  
the one-year-older-than-you Michael Santoro.  
He put his hand on your shoulder, told you  
*That's a tick. You could die.* This was before  
your home knew death as an empty bedroom,  
so you just shrugged and said  
*So? I think I can handle that.*

## UNPLANNING UTOPIA

by Cassandra de Alba

i raveled our sweaters back into sheep.  
chewed the books to pulp,  
made them forest again.  
i am clawing myself  
into negative space, a creature  
of only absences. each day,  
i catalogue what is no longer here.  
i calculate our losses: furniture  
turned to air, vegetables to dirt,  
bodies to ash.

METAMANIA  
by Ellyn Touchette

I wrote the first draft of this poem  
on the back of a Lamictal prescription  
driving seventy in a thirty five  
on my way home from dinner  
with the extended family.

Not every show you see is entertainment.

EMPTY WORDS

by Max Binder

*Good morning*  
is an aching lie  
and *I'm fine how are you?*  
stains like sin.

I have not truly spoken in months.  
but coughed out letters,  
garbage language—  
lost meaning an era ago  
*How was your day?*

*I'm so tired.*  
Forgive my tongue,  
it is an old soul  
weathered down by polysyllables  
crashing out of context  
in a torrent of mannerisms.

*And I'm so tired*  
of listening for feeling  
in rattling shells.

So tomorrow  
I will talk with my eyes  
a touch on the cheek,

a smile;

reply with a heartbeat—

Immolate dictionaries  
write new language  
imbue it with life  
speak love  
write sorrow  
live

live.

## VISUALIZING SUCCESS

by Cassandra de Alba

i'm not gonna be the first verse  
in the song about how you found yourself.  
i'm gonna glitter like dirt  
in your knuckles. i'm the wettest  
match, the duller knife.  
i'm gonna come charging  
from the hills like a flood  
that doesn't care about you.  
i'm gonna rattle in your engine.  
i'm gonna leave a meaningless mark.

ENTER TO WIN  
by Kyla Marshell

Couple on well-meaning  
third date float by  
more seasoned couple,  
charging the sidewalk,  
man shouting, *You don't know  
all the struggles I go through!*

This,  
or a cuddly baby,  
or a mother  
looking stressed,  
or an elderly couple,  
holding hands  
on their way to eternity—

All this and more could be yours.

THIS IS HOW A MOUNTAIN DIES  
by Marshall Gillson

Mountains are not like volcanoes;  
there is no magnificence  
as their rocks crumble apart,  
no firework font, no spray.

They do not throw tantrums  
or pound the earth with heavy fists,  
roaring out their throes.  
You will not even notice them go.

Mountains disappear while we wait  
for an avalanche to sweep them off,  
the final grand explosion ringing out  
in grief like a whale song.

This is how a mountain dies:  
one embarrassed handful of pebbles  
at a time, slow and cautious,  
until it lies flat on the ground.

ABSOLUTELY NO ALCOHOL BEYOND THIS POINT  
by Hillary Kobernick

The sign on the beachhead is uncompromising—  
so naturally, when I go to the shoreline

there are 3 Miller Lite cans and an empty  
handle of Bacardi. Under the clear water

of the pier is a red party cup. Like graffiti  
begging us to remember *I was here*:

THIS WAS A PARTY ON THE BEACH.  
This is the same water we drink.

When we go back to our apartments  
and turn on the faucet, the metal hand

inside reaches down and reaches east  
and brings us back Lake Michigan.

To drink. To live. And we go  
to the beach to live. To drink

and get drunk. We go to our life  
and tell it it isn't living it up enough

and leave our empties to prove the point.  
The point is that we come to our lives

our life source      our Lake Michigan  
afraid of it      trying to forget

the purity of the sky above our shoulders, the sand  
sliding between toes, all the details of this moment

that make us feel alive.

CO-COUNSELOR VLAD SETS UP THE SCENE

by Kieran Collier

*So there I am, chilling in my car waiting for the red  
to stop being red, and you know, I'm checking my phone,  
minding my own business, and this deer runs out from the woods  
and throws itself right at the passenger side door  
like I'm an answer to its prayers and it dents the fuck  
outta the thing, and I'm all like "I can't get your insurance  
information, how the fuck am I supposed to pay for this shit?"  
and the deer doesn't say anything because, you know,  
it's just a deer, and now the light is turning green  
but there's this dead deer right next to me and so much red  
and if this mother fucker came from the other side  
I'd be dead—but I'm not, I'm in this broke ass car  
and I gotta cancel all my plans, tell this cute girl  
I can't mack on her cause now I gotta drive to the garage  
and I had a 30-rack all ready to go after dealing  
with these kids all day but NO, I don't get no love  
from this Dude up in the sky and now they're leaking  
in the backseat and now my moms is driving  
me to my summer job and now I'm 23, man, that's not cool  
at all, I'm never gonna get out of this town, not with  
a busted door and a minimum wage job and a dead deer  
looking right at my eyes like it knows something I don't.  
I mean, shit, man. What's a guy gotta do?*

FILIAL

by William James

*for Jacob Bannon, Jeffrey Eaton, Pat Flynn, Aaron Bedard, Sean Murphy, etc.*

Punk rock kids might not all believe in god,  
but we all every one of us believe in loud—

our favorite benediction: If it's too loud, you're  
too old, & we race forward in cacophony, future

hearing loss be damned, because the hot fuzz  
hum & crackle of the first time the guitar plugs in

carries us away on beating wings, & it ain't like  
we got some golden chariot to sweep us into heaven

so we seek out glory where we can—the rasp of  
a singer barking like a pack of wild dogs, guitar

strings marionetting us into our own hallelujah  
while the drums beat, pound, & chisel our granite

bodies like a master sculptor, carving away the excess,  
all our unnecessary rock, 'til we are flawless,

our hands reaching up as if to pray, to call down  
fire from on high, & the volume from the PA

melts away our imperfections & our sins. Punk kids  
may not all believe in god, but we believe in loud.

Believe in the inferno. Our haunted houses  
burned down by sweat-drenched angels in Christ

pose, handing out blessing with every passed mic  
or shared chorus, our litany of banshee screams

no less sacred than the holiest of psalms.

TROUBLE EVERY DAY VII

by Glen Armstrong

Too many stories / straightenings

Ironies / niceties / brides

Grooms and cocaine

Rain gear / braided strands of hair

Fuck in a heart-shaped bubble

Bath and mock

The maid's thick creole

The souls of men are droll things / doll things

Dollar souvenirs

Red stripes / scarred cheeks / a week's

Pay / the play's the thing

To catch Kingston dazed

Recreation a luxury / a trampling

A sweet piss in a bitter pot

Honeymoon a stain / a lunar

Landing that eclipses

That crazy miracle

That has always been

Jamaica or the moon.

JEOPARDY

by Max Binder

*For Utter Chaos, Where Everything Seems to Make More Sense. Almost.*

Cattle ships and bruisers float and lurk upon this birthplace of civilization, reminiscent of the days when most of it was farmland and meat would float downstream because of the floods or because it had been beaten to death.

DING     *What is the Euphrates River?*

Good, that's 400 for Melissa, what would you like next?

*Luxury cars for 600, Alex.*

Okay, luxury for six.

This Italian-made beauty was named after some breed of horse. I bought one when I was forty-seven because I thought my wife was leaving me and I knew I'd never do anything with my life besides running this stupid show. Also, it makes me feel like I have a bigger penis.

DING     Yes, Melissa, again.

*What is a Ferrari?*

That is correct, 600 for Melissa. Pick your category.

*Phallic symbols for 400.*             Okay.

This eugenic society was created to subvert one man's issues about rejection from arts school.

DING     John!

*What is the Third Reich, Alex?*

Correct again. Pick your category.

*Showstoppers for 200.*

Okay, showstoppers.

This Greek figure of myth had its head chopped off by Perseus due to its mystical powers, I believe we have a photo—————

FOR MANIC GIRLS WITH NO ONE HOLDING THEM

by Emily O'Neill

Tonight in the shred of rest

I coax down my throat

I dream a dappled horse eating from my outstretched palm

& the beast looks like a caught rain

cloud you could sink into like the sea & sleep stays

20 minutes tops before

my body wakes

me against reason because there's furniture to move

& clothing to discard & 3 weeks of dinner to cook, then freeze

& the rioja wasn't gone when I left the kitchen, so I find it

& drink & the time wasn't long from light again

so why waste another empty hour thrashing

in my deeply empty bed

but as I braid & unbraid

my dirty hair the kitchen smells like apples

& I'm crying over an appaloosa (a name that's been wound  
round my tongue since I was a fizzing child) & the rain won't come

& it's too dark for clouds

& that horse may as well be the moon

for how constantly it haunts me asking *when will you ride again*

*when will storm carry you away*

NEW APARTMENT  
by Hillary Kobernick

pour a coffee      today      fucking it up  
like you always do      you thing  
not working      in a coffee bar      you  
desolate lack of accomplishment      you  
    lack of breakfast table      banter  
you winner      of the prize Being Human  
    in this house      with no competitor

this home part      impossible to memorize  
cacophony of alone      part  
    stir fry      scent of something  
with a will      to live      this bit  
this space      in between      the living  
    sex      subway      work      beings  
    this is what you survive      what you  
reheat      breakfast after breakfast

still here      still being      lonely  
    only thing      only living  
    here

BECAUSE THERE MUST BE A REASON OTHER THAN YOURSELF  
by Kiera "Miss Haze" Nelson

you're not like the rest of them  
you well spoken, you great test scores  
you house among fields  
I mean... you should be grateful  
all that dark  
all that sheep wool hair  
and they still want you in the club  
you ought to get a haircut  
ought to buy a new suit  
ought to tuck all that African away in public  
ought to be only behind the hyphen  
better leave your Africa at home  
it will be here when you get back  
better show them white boys  
better show them black boys  
that you ain't like them  
that you different  
because you must be different  
must be some kind of commodity  
must be novel  
must be taxidermy over the dean's office  
must be trophy  
I mean, why else would they let you in?

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

**Ellie White** holds a BA in English from The Ohio State University, and is currently an MFA candidate at Old Dominion University. She has competed in the College Unions Poetry Slam Invitational, the Rustbelt Regional Poetry Slam, the Individual World Poetry Slam, the Capturing Fire Queer Poetry Slam, and the Women of the World Poetry Slam. Her poems have been published in FreezeRay Poetry, Wicked Banshee Press, and Melancholy Hyperbole. She currently lives among mermaids in Norfolk, Virginia.

**Kieran Collier** is a Boston-based poet, two-time member of the Emerson College CUPSI team, and president of the Emerson Poetry Project, Emerson College's only spoken word organization. His work has been published in The Rain, Party, & Disaster Society, FreezeRay, The Legendary, Maps for Teeth, and Emerson Review to name a few, and he will be featured in the upcoming MultiVerse: A Write Bloody Superhero Anthology (Fall 2014). He has flat feet and a vitamin D deficiency.

**Cassandra de Alba's** work can be found in ILK, Red Lightbulbs, Illuminati Girl Gang, and NAP, among others. Her most recent chapbooks are called Bloodlust (No Spaceships Allowed) and Special Bitch Academy. She lives in Massachusetts and posts iCarly screencaps at [outsidewarmafghans.tumblr.com](http://outsidewarmafghans.tumblr.com).

**Ellyn Touchette** is a biologist and behavioral health professional from Portland, Maine. She serves on the board of directors for Port Veritas, a slam and nonprofit that she has represented at several national competitions. Ellyn's work is present or forthcoming in The Emerson Review, Drunk In A Midnight Choir, and Black Heart Magazine.

**Max Binder** is an artist, poet, and performer who likes to experiment with the boundaries between reality and fiction. He is from Providence, Rhode Island but is currently based in New York. His work has also appeared in the Menacing Mouth chapbook and in Home Sweet litmag.

**Kyla Marshall's** poems and prose have appeared in SPOOK Magazine, Blackbird, Vinyl Poetry, Calyx, Wondaland.com, Gawker.com, and elsewhere. In 2013, Ebony.com named her one of "7 Young Black Writers You Should Know." She attended Spelman College and the MFA program at Sarah Lawrence College. She is a Cave Canem fellow who lives in Brooklyn. Visit her at [kylamarshell.com](http://kylamarshell.com).

**Hillary Kobernick** is a three-time member of the Art Amok! Slam Team. She holds a Master's of Divinity degree from Emory University, meaning that she has, in fact, mastered the Divine. She currently pastors at a church in suburban Chicago. Her work has appeared in literary magazines in the U.S. and Canada, including Paper Nautilus, decomp, and Bellevue Literary Review and can always be found at [hillarykobernickpoetry.tumblr.com](http://hillarykobernickpoetry.tumblr.com).

**William James** writes poems and listens to punk rock—not always in that order. He's a two-time Pushcart nominee whose poems have appeared or are forthcoming in Freeze Ray Poetry, Word Riot, Drunk In A Midnight Choir, and Radius. He currently lives in Manchester, NH, where he pretends to be older and angrier than he really is.

**Glen Armstrong** holds an MFA in English from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and teaches writing at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. He also edits a poetry journal called Cruel Garters.

His work has appeared in Poetry Northwest, Conduit, and Cloudbank.

**Emily O'Neill** is a writer, artist, and proud Jersey girl. Her recent poems and stories can be found in Banango Street, Nailed Magazine, and Vector, among others. Her debut collection, *Pelican*, is the inaugural winner of Yes Yes Books' Pamet River Prize and forthcoming in 2014. You can pick her brain at [emily-oneill.com](http://emily-oneill.com).

**Kiera "Miss Haze" Nelson** is one of Atlanta's premier word artists. Earning the nickname "Big 30" because of her consistency in getting a perfect score, she is one of the most auspicious poets in the sport of slam. She has been performing on the Atlanta Poetry circuit since the age of 14 and has been writing over 15 years.

**Marshall Gillson** is a nerd by day and a poet by day also. He has been an active slam poet since 2008, representing four different venues in three different states in national competition. He is also the founder and editor of the independent literary magazine *The Misanthropy* and boasts recent publications in *Maps for Teeth*, *Three Line Poetry*, and the depression-themed anthology *Light as a Feather*. In his spare time, he enjoys arguing, pontificating, and writing biographies in the third person.