



# CAESURA

THE TAU ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
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Tel Aviv University  
The Department of English  
and American Studies  
Literary Magazine

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### **Editor's Note**

Caesura Literary magazine celebrates its third volume during trying and anxious times. What began as a humble venture to make space for the creative spirit of students of Tel Aviv University's English Department has stretched across universities and borders. With the support of the English Department, we are proud to present to you the third volume of Caesura. The first ever to come out without the original creators of the magazine. Despite the obstacles we have faced in creating this volume, we surely could not have made it without the help of the Department and the online support that we have received. We hope that Caesura can provide you with an escape, and perhaps some hope that despite the darkness that surrounds us now, there will be a light at the end of the tunnel. We would like to thank everyone who helped make this a reality and all those who shared their works with us.

Caesura Editorial Team

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***Moth* / Stephan Schenker**

I am a moth,  
flitting around a flame  
that's invisible to all but me.  
Nearly extinguished by a firewoman with remote control  
while on vacation in far-away Southern reaches,  
a barely perceptible, dull, cold glow remains:  
left burning only for my moth eyes,  
just enough alight to singe my delicate wings  
but not to warm them.

I am a moth,  
my moth eyes mesmerized, hypnotized  
by that freezing, morbid flame.  
My moth wings' edges burned  
by that blaze,  
enough to really wound  
but not to prevent my flying into that fire  
again and again and again.

I am a moth,  
gathering what's left of  
my moth mind and  
my moth will and  
my moth strength and  
my moth spirit,  
I cover my half-immolated moth eyes  
with my fire-blackened moth wings.  
Suddenly, momentarily released  
from the purgatory of that cold light,  
I rejoice in my newly-won darkness.  
I am a moth who,  
with diluted moth logic,  
forgot to take into account  
that when my wings are busy  
shielding me from that burning pain,  
blockading my suicidal flight path,  
they can't beat the smoky air to fly.  
I spiral to the ground,

crash to the dirt on my moth back,  
beat those injured wings to right my thorax  
on my weakened, spindly legs.  
My wings, having reopened,  
carry me upward back to that flame,  
my injured eyes seeking it, even longing for it.

I am a moth,  
direly wounded by the petite pilot  
of an unmanned (unwomaned?) miniature assassination  
aircraft,  
designed specifically to eliminate moth souls  
while leaving their bodies intact and ready for use.  
How long will this putrid, reverse metamorphosis  
endure,  
before all's consumed in that diabolical blaze?

***Tweezers* / Maya Hollander**

The stubbornness of an eyebrow hair  
as I pluck it from its home  
right in the middle –  
not here, nor there.

My skin is light and fair  
but that eyebrow hair  
is ruining the view.

I'm trying so hard to be an American  
and it shows that I'm a Jew.

## *The Metamorphosis of the Waterlily / Or Mor-Yosef*

It happens every other night:

At dusk, it swims up menacingly from the abysmal depths, it exposes its toxic flowers to the cool night breeze, and then devilishly offers its petals to be pasted, smoked, or eaten for the sedated pleasure of men.

If one is to take the offer, he will immediately get caught in the web of its narcotic spell, as if captured by the song of a water nymph, he will be led by it, he will converge with it, he will first sip it slowly, then chug it down at once, and peak in ecstasy, before drowning in its magic blanket, bathing in lazy lassitude, and falling asleep.

The waterlily will not sleep. It will sing and cry and twist and turn and twitch and fidget in his bed, entering and reentering his dreams until he starts to confuse dream with reality and burn with what at first feels like a dire unsatiated thirst, but later is revealed to be gripping anxiety.

All the while, somewhere the wicked Goddess Lilith dances in ecstasy. It is yet unclear from which she draws more pleasure: from the tormenting of men or the tormenting of waterlilies.

If one refuses to take the offer, he sees the lily for what it really is: a confused assortment of trickery and illusion. Its secrets, which otherwise lay hidden beneath the surface, come out at once. However, their effect is contradictory. At once, he feels deceived and pitying: he is enraged by the discovery of deceit but sympathetic to the woes of the poor waterlily.

For the lily is only a terrified creature, a delicate soul, broken by a rugged world. It hides itself only out of fear and not out of spite. It sinks back down at dawn only because the world is too harsh for a gentle lily.

So as the birds begin to chirp and blotches of light start to paint the sky, the lily dives back down into the Nile. One must then wait patiently to witness its beauty again.

When morning comes, a different lily surfaces. It is not white like the night, but yellow like a warm day. It is gay and kind and bashful and modest. All remnants of malice, moroseness, and arrogance are gone. But is it real? Is it not just attempting to sedate you still, but now under a different illusion?

Is it the same lily that hides under those petals, whether night or day?

Regardless, it should be just as deserving of your love and compassion. It never chose to be a lily. You cannot blame it. It is its own doing, but not its fault.

***Lilith* / Maya Hollander**

Something nibbles at my feet as I step into the water. A small, silver shape. Fish, I recall. A word I just learned. I am new, and so is this fish, and we have both learned of each other only recently. Fish. It is a good word for this creature, I think, as it examines my toe innocently and swims away. The water makes such a sound, when you put your head underneath it and listen. F-shhhh. Fish.

It is a name he chose, but I like it still. He is gifted with names, and for that I am envious. Names are not my strong suit. There is only one thing I ever named.

I am lying on my back, and I turn my head to the left. Flowers. This too is a name of his. Flower. Something that rises in the spring, that opens towards the sun. Something elegant. And here is a cluster of these, in every color. There is something sharp about these flowers, no round edges or soft pastel shades. They are vibrant in red and orange and yellow and pink, showing themselves off.

It is only a short moment. I look at them and think that if something is like me, it is these flowers. I name them in saying that which they inspired in me.

“No.”

He seems not to hear. I turn my head towards him, and this time I say it in more than a whisper.

“No.” And I lift my arms, those which I had so recently looked upon for the first time. I lay my hands on his shoulders and I push him off me.

His body does not seem to understand. His whole being leans towards me, his skin against mine, his breath hot on my neck. I push against him a second time and he raises his head. He is stronger than me, but with all my power, I think, I might be able to remove him if I must.

“What is it?”

He is still moving against me, and there are more names in me now that sound like accusations. I do not say them. I say, “He has created us as equals yet you lie above me. It makes no sense. Why should it be you and not I who lies above?”

He laughs. “This is your problem? You are not content to lie beneath me?”

It is an awkward position. I can feel him between my legs, close to where we are meant to meet. I do not know what will come of this meeting, but I know that we have been commanded to do this. That we have both desired it. That as the animals he has named have calves in the spring or build nests in the trees for their chicks - so we too must have offspring as all do in this Garden.

But I have been made together with him; born out of the earth and ready to question.

He is no longer trying, so I push him off me and rise to my feet. He rises as well.

“We are one and the same. I will not lie beneath you.”

I feel pathetic, raising my voice over something so small. But both of us have found within us a new stubbornness that we could not have discovered without each other. It seems important. It seems as if it means something more. I feel, again, that there are things I want to call him - to yell in his face before I storm away, perhaps - but that I

have not quite formed the words for. It is his gift. I need to think it over first.

“Do not make a fool of yourself over ridiculous requests, woman.”

“Do you fear my name, Adam? If you must have power over all things, including me, then perhaps I should not lie with you at all!”

He steps towards me and shoves me to the ground. I scream and push him off, but he overpowers me, pinning my hands down against the very dirt from which we emerged together. I bite his arm, and when he recoils I dig my nails into his skin until I see a hint of red. I rise again and run, and as I run I see the flowers. I had never noticed how they cluster everywhere. They have more color than any other flowers I’ve seen, and they open up into the sun and I run, somewhere. I am not sure if he is running after me, but I do not hear footsteps. I am in a part of the Garden I do not recognize. I stop, and to my right, there they are again. I pick one of them. A red one, beautiful in full bloom. I twirl it around in my hand.

When you pick a flower, it dies. Perhaps this was my first sin. Everything here is alive, always growing and breathing and never sick and never in pain. I thought I was the same, but a knot of fear and anger blooms in my stomach and I know this is not all I was promised.

Names hold power, and His name is an endless spell. I hold the dying flower in my hand and I say it, and the Garden disappears around me.

The fish swims slowly away as I watch the sun set. Soon someone will come for me and try to convince me to return. First they will make promises. Then threats. All for a simple no. No. Why did he give the word 'no' such an open ending? It should be sharp, it should end with a 'p' like 'stop' or a 'd' like 'end'. 'No' is inconclusive, interpretable. It could be mistaken for 'go', or 'oh'. It is not a good choice for that sort of meaning. I wonder why he chose it.

I imagine my punishment, when they ask me to return and I refuse. Death does not seem so bad, looking at it

from here. Flowers die here when they are plucked, and  
fish do not swim forever.

I turn it in my hands, the lily flower, red and blooming  
still. I named it after myself.

## ***Confrontation / Nick Raphaelson***

A scene between two alien tribes. The small character in the center is a human, trying to mediate the argument. The creatures are arguing on the border of the Abunda Forest, the largest forest on an alien planet. The creatures on the left are the Zebuula, and the creatures on the right are an exploration of natural environments and human form collided in the depictions of loa, Haitian voodoo intermediaries between mortals and the supreme creator.

***[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U5Hvfhs1Ai2Z\\_8\\_5GzUNEy02If-66Vxk/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U5Hvfhs1Ai2Z_8_5GzUNEy02If-66Vxk/view?usp=sharing)***

***Ode to Fish and Chips / Orit Klein Vartsky***

At eve, while sitting on my perch I crave  
that salty treat below' d of all Britons  
And would that I could said morsel have  
Aye me, t'would be verily fine eating  
I speak, for sooth of cod, fried in batter  
Accompanied by its faithful friends the spuds  
Another meal shall never be better  
In summer time, or in winter's black mud  
Thy crusty fillets, vendor, thou serveth true  
Whene're I ask for fish supper, lo!  
Without my weekly fix I goeth blue  
So to the seaside wantonly I go.  
But Oh, my waistline moans, my weight doth rise  
I tell thee, sooth, fish and chips are my demise

***Olive Picking Sonnet / Aicha Yassin***

High backwards swerve with a reed stick it hits  
The olive branches, thick and heavy rain  
Of oil capsules falls like on mid-December day, it pits  
The black tarp with beads of Zaton that remain  
There until removed, and sifted through bit by bit.  
Green and black olives filling the heavy bags strain  
The backs of my mom, my dad, and distant  
Cousins, till we inhale some relief under the sun.  
The skies promise rain and the sticks pick  
Up the pace, to finish another grove before the day  
regains  
Its end as the sun descends behind the Galilean figs  
And cactus trees that corrugate the Northern mountains.  
It's tedious hard work done with pleasure  
Knowing that our trees know the hands of no other.

***Meditation / Aicha Yassin***

On the counter of the kitchen table,  
are two plastic bags filled with vine leaves  
picked earlier today.

My mother is engrossed in spreading  
the obovate leaves with such awe-  
I look at her and I'm reminded that this  
is life.

Gratitude.

*A Shiny Beetle in the Sandbox / Ron Hatsor*

Radioactive and Poisonous

Is what we thought of you

construction was ceased at once

Trucks and JCBs abandoned

and the dollhouse, was overcrowded

with the surge of frightened children

You were harmless, I was later advised

yet with such offensive colors

What were you thinking?

one day,

one vigilant kid

ran you over with a Steamroller

It wasn't his, though

I was playing with it before

I was waiting, for my parents

when I realized

You were still lying there

Smashed.

***Tug-o-War / Aviva Betzer***

The tefillin cord stretched between the arms of two  
women

Is the desecrated rope of our childhood game

As hard as we pulled they would never let us

Wrap it around our forearms

It became a noose wrapped around my friend's neck

It became smoke

It became our thing

*A Changed Man / Lev Klots*

Once in a few months  
I take my memories,  
tear them up,  
and throw them away.

I do that because  
I'm a changed man.  
Or at least, some of my cells  
have died, dried,  
and have been replaced.

So, it's not me  
in those inscriptions,  
and it's not my  
documentation.  
So being myself again,  
I tear them up  
and throw them away.

***Of Waves / Mariana Akkawi***

I've never been to the ocean,  
Never bathed my body in its resilient waves,  
Nor rode its cold waters by ship or boat,  
Yet I know just by looking at pictures  
Or swimming in the facts about it,  
That we, have much in common.

My brain, the ocean,  
Both are unexplored territories  
In which life stretches far beyond what we know.  
I could search my mind for hours,  
Seeking signs of identity and then  
Falling once I get a glimpse of the depth inside.  
My mind conquers me, and not I, it.

How different could it be?  
Waves of water versus waves of thought?  
At the end of the day, we are

Prone to human menacing, the ocean and I we  
Let humans fill us with filth only to  
Rise higher as they do.

But we never cease to ask the big question of who we  
are:

Even amidst the adversity and hurdles,  
Exploration ships still row,  
And although it seems like it,  
We never cease,  
We just  
Come  
In waves.

***My Own Light / Yael Cohen***

Sometimes as night slowly covers me with it's coldness I  
search for your warmth,

"It's too late." You softly whisper "You should have  
come

when the light was still on"

"But how can I appreciate the beauty of life in this  
blindness of the night?" I weep and whine and you stand  
there.

One tear falling from your eye.

"Alone, alone," you say twice. "You need to learn how  
to walk and shine"

A moon. I whisper. I will not be.

*Under the Water* / Daniel Niv

Last night, the sea couldn't help  
feeling that deep under water  
something was wrong,  
that it was drowning within itself  
with every boat that went to sail  
on its surface.

Under the loud waves  
there was a tiny whisper  
in the form of b

u

b

b

l

e

coming from the depths,  
calling for something  
or someone  
Missing.

## ***Second Chances / Audrey Lynn Leinoff***

Second Chances was located on Ripples street. The unremarkable, grey square building would peer at pedestrians with its long, rectangular eyes. Protesters had long ceased to wave their blotchy red posters screaming "life regardless of strife!" before it. The fiery debates also died in Congress regarding the morality of the facility's end goals. The building provided a real, tangible solution. Hence, the bills passed, the informative website launched, and the building became operational.

The homeless man stood up to stretch his legs to take a proper piss and glared at the round, balding, middle-aged man he noticed standing underneath the building's ominous shadow. The small man, wearing a tweed suit in fading shades of brown was craning his head upwards, trying to encompass the immense dimensions of the facility. By doing so, he seemed even tinier, standing alone, his muted, ageing hat tucked

neatly beneath one arm, and his filled-out forms stacked neatly under the other. The shadow cast by the looming building was harping on the man's good-natured features, painting them in solemn shades of grey. The homeless gentleman relieved himself and waddled towards the figure.

"You're in my spot," he spat. He had only three moods, none of them worth mentioning on dating apps.

The small man, clean shaven and tidy, reached into his jacket's pockets, rummaging around for small change. The drunkard, reeking of piss, drew nearer, extending his long, boney fingers. The change emitted a soft jingle, music to the homeless man's ears. He was appeased.

"I'm sorry," said the little man tenderly.

"Going in?" He was hot and sweaty but distracted by the rippling chimes emanating from the knocking pennies, as he stood shaking them in his fist, holding it up to his ear. The man nodded and the wrinkles

surrounding his eyes lifted upwards. The sun blazed viciously.

"Don't you listen," smiled the homeless man as the other turned resolutely towards the building.

"I'm sorry?"

"The only music you should hear from 'em white folks..." the homeless man began. The small man gazed at him intently, glistening with anticipation, waiting for a melody.

"...is white noise!" and away he bounced into a nearby alley, his laughter vibrating in the silence his bark left behind. The little man bowed his head mournfully, sighed, and stepped through and over to the other side.

Within the facility, the walls were painted in shades that moved from dark, plumb-red to nearly orange colors. A large poster depicting a silvery haired, smiley man sitting in a wheelchair alongside a younger, similar looking man wrapping his arm around a boy's shoulder with the caption "Reverse to Revise," hung blatantly on the pillar adjacent to the entrance. Rows and

rows of chairs lined this inner hall as people of all races and sizes sat gloomily, waiting to go under. He turned to walk up to the information booth but was quickly hailed by a fuming individual-take a number and wait your turn!

"I'm sorry," he retorted, slumping into a nearby chair. He stroked the stack of papers tucked underneath his arm and reminisced.

He remembered his wife and the poison they filled her with. He remembered the global campaign which sparked it all. Too many people dwindling earth's resources, then the staggering breakthrough of stem cell research, and the experiment that worked. They named the reverted man Embryo Cronus. Anyone can revert to his or her embryonic state now! To emerge from the dark gaping hole once again, to never look back! A second chance. The insurance agencies with those personal reports approximating how much you could save your loved ones once reverted. The time you signed over in your binding contract, the Do Not Reanimate contract,

was key, of course. The obligation was to promise an embryonic status for the duration of a minimum of twelve years. This is how they poisoned her. He wept openly, yet quietly. Without her, he had no sound, he had lost his music. She thought she was doing right by him.

His number finally came up. Would you like to leave behind any last words? For this life, of course, silly willy! The clerk, in her tightly fitted fuchsia suit, beamed.

But there was something different about him. Wasn't he short a minute ago? She watched him vigorously scribble away. Then, as the anesthesiologists came and stood on either of his sides, walking him down, the clerk could not resist peeking into "To My Wife." Inside, two simple lines oddly resembling musical notes read:

"This time I will not turn to look back. Because I am doing this for us, us!"

And Orphe Cron was reborn.

