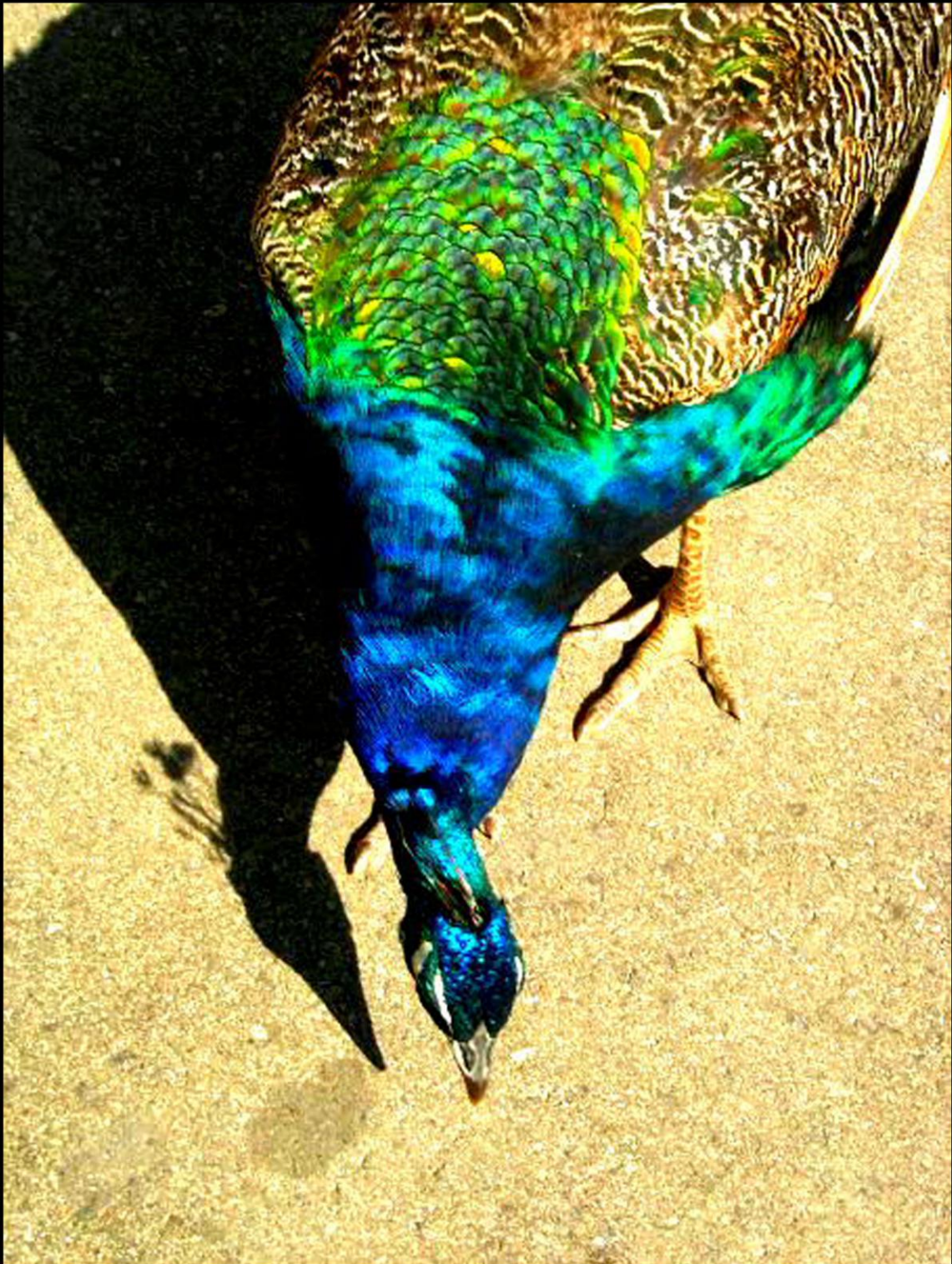

THE EXHIBITIONIST

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THINK. ACT. XZBT.

THE EXHIBITIONIST is a monthly online magazine dedicated to the cause of creativity.

EDITOR & DESIGNER Khadija Ejaz khadijaejaz@hotmail.com

COVER PHOTO *My Dear Little Neon Peacock* Khadija Ejaz

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FROM THE EDITOR

I'm sure the dark South Indian woman who was teaching my web design class did not know about my creative struggles. She probably didn't know that I already knew how to make websites and was just taking her class for the Photoshop part of it. I'd always wanted to learn graphic design, and I'd thought that maybe this round of exposure - yet another one - to new creative concepts would jumpstart my long-dead creative heart. I could only hope. I was desperate. I had been for a very long time.



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I'd been messing around with Photoshop on my own time after learning the basics in class, and one day I decided to show the instructor some of the things I had come up with. A fake movie poster, a fake magazine cover, airbrushing. I trembled a little bit as I asked her for her opinion about the images I had loaded onto my screen. The instructor was wearing one of her usual Indian shalwar suits with open-toed sandals. Her long, wiry, black hair was woven in a braid that looked like thick, dry rope. Her eyes were small, like a bug's, but her teeth were straight and white. I saw them when her brown lips stretched over them and parted into a smile.

I suddenly didn't want her opinion anymore; she was a professional. What did I know about design? I shouldn't have asked her. She'd

laugh at me. I grew up in pre-digital times, and once upon a time my creativity used to melt out from my fingertips through pencil, pen, crayon, paint. I hadn't realised that I was creative then, it's just how I had always been. I only realised that something was wrong when my fingertips went dry because life had shrivelled my insides up. I had been trying to unclog myself for years, but everything I tried only came out clunky and chunky like a failed pregnancy. No matter what I did, I didn't feel like I was being creative, just that I was trying too hard to imitate my old self. I'd forgotten how it felt to just be. If I couldn't remember how it felt when I was being creative, how would I know if I was doing it now? How could I aim at a target if I had no sight?

"You're very creative," my teacher said. But what did that mean? What was she referring to when she said that she saw creativity? I wanted to see it too. I wanted her to show me, so I asked her to. She smiled some more. "See," she said, "I know how to use the software, and when I see your work I can understand which tools you used to create it, but I know I would not have been able to come up with it myself no matter how technically advanced I got."

And I could see again. After ten long dead years, I was finally able to understand what creativity was by understanding what it was not.



Khadija Ejaz

GUEST EDITORIAL

Ray Bradbury taught me to eat metaphors. He died a few months ago. But when he was a sweaty-browed boy somewhere in the Illinois green country, a magician commanded him to live forever. Decades later he found me and poured himself into me, so that when his body died, the wild stuff of his imagination would live on.



I am not his only vessel. Other writers, astronauts, scientists, artists, and middle-aged dreamers of all sorts got themselves instilled with Bradbury's essence when they were young, and now we populate the earth with his shimmering dreams. We cannot watch the rain without thinking about Venus. We cannot hear the distant horns on the sea without expecting dinosaurs. And we cannot fathom harming the stained-glass wing of a butterfly for fear of shattering future empires yet to be.

What's the source of your own inspiration? Maybe it's the sound of the wind, or a child's laugh, or the hum of the subway in a city you love. And what are these but metaphors? If you gobble down enough of them for long enough, you can't help but be reborn with every season, and then you too - like Bradbury - will live forever.

Lance published his first two novels under the pseudonym of Erin O'Rourke. He released his third novel, a murder mystery titled *The Tongue Merchant*, under his own name - and he hasn't looked back since. His writing has won over 20 awards. His novel *Fugitive Shoes* was named to the University of Oklahoma's "Books That Inspire" exhibit. Currently an Assistant Professor of English at Ranger College in Texas, Lance teaches film, poetry, and creative writing courses.

Visit his website at <http://www.lancehawvermale.com>.

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Driving Me Crazy

Dr. Sonal Mehta

Just a few days back I was returning from a friend's place at around 3 in the morning. On my way home I realized that my favorite time for driving on the capital's streets is around 3am. That's the time when you get the perfect mix of the half-asleep traffic cops (*thullas/maamus* - take your pick), virtually no traffic, and an absence of signals. The disadvantages of this ungodly hour include a significantly added risk (for the above reasons, precisely) and an exceptionally large contingent of stray canines, which may not bother the more privileged of you who have four wheels under your posterior but can give hell to bikers like me.

Driving in Delhi can be quite a harrowing experience. The cause is not helped by a populace for whom road rage is somewhat of a sport, the climes which can drive a sane man to climbing walls, and the pollution which makes us want to spend the least amount of time going from A to B. Throw into the cauldron some of the choicest driving styles in the world, and it's bubbling over, ready to explode. Let me elaborate what I mean when I say "driving styles", and you will certainly identify with some of them. These are some of the more infuriating of them:

1. Auto-Pilot: This is an *auto-wallah* who was born to do just one job - block your path - and by God, he does it sedulously. He will very diligently stop you from overtaking and will drive well below the speed limit. He does not respond to honking, dippers, shouting, or middle fingers. This vehicle is, in more ways than one, on 'auto-pilot'.

2. Van's the Man: Usually the realm of Maruti van drivers, now being encroached upon by Qualis, Sumo, and the like (thank you, BPOs). These guys are in a real hurry and seem pretty pissed at life in general. They will do the zig-zagging, honking, and flashing of dippers. Warning: DO NOT try the middle finger - these guys are usually spoiling for a fight.

3. The Sorry Lorry: This is the truck which has 10 times its own weight loaded on it. It creaks. It can't stay straight and is horribly tilted to one side. He wants to let you pass, but just isn't able to. These chaps are quite amenable to overtaking, but DO NOT allow yourself to be overtaken by them, as overtaking just one vehicle is often their ambition for the night. You could spend the next 20 miles trying to get past them.

4. *Dhoom Machale*: Souped up bikes, even silly ones like Passion. With sillier still brake horns (weird tunes playing every time they brake). From Dhoom to Vengaboyz, they have it all. These guys know no rules, indeed have no rules, wear no helmets, often drive with 3 people riding, and even use their cell phones while driving their bikes. My advice: don't bother overtaking them, just let them

pass. There's a high enough probability of them ramming into the divider or barrier anyways. Back the odds.

5. *Hamara Bajaj*: A family of 3, 4, or even 5 can be spotted riding the trusty family scooter. Easy to overtake, but beware of sudden swerving as Chunnu standing in front of his papa might decide to move all of a sudden, aunty might decide to shift her weight a bit, or uncle might just have turned halfway around in order to shout a sweet nothing into aunty's ear.

6. *Horny Buggers*: If you haven't guessed already, this is the guy who is 10 feet away from a red light and always honks as soon as it turns green. Sometimes even before it turns green. He is the ideal recipient for the finger. Or better still, do what I sometimes do - as the light turns green, don't start your car, and as his honks grow louder, just turn around, give him a smile, and then show him the finger. Far more fun this way.

Well, that's my top 6, in no particular order of course. I'm sure all of us have our own personal favourites (I welcome input, ladies and gentlemen). So, till we meet again, keep your seat belt fastened, drive safe, and keep that middle finger safely in its holster.

Sonal Mehta is originally from Delhi and has also lived in Ahmedabad for five years where he went to medical college. He came to the US for residency training and since then has lived in multiple cities. He tries to write about life, the universe and everything, when

he gets some free time from his day (very often day AND night) job
as a vascular neurologist.



Gold

Fiona Poojara





Fiona Poojara is a television producer at Times Now in Mumbai, India, where she also does voice-overs for shows and promos. She trained in broadcast journalism at New Delhi Television and also has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics. She enjoys photography, music, traveling, good food, and meeting new people.



Drunk Girl After the Poetry Reading

Lance Hawvermale

I think it's Africa she craves,
not an unmysterious land like me.
She wants lions in her poets
great growling men
confident at lecterns
and maniacal in verse.

Still she looks for it,
asking intently how I compare
my syllables to dark continents
and anthologized poet kings.

Staring at her eyes,
her loudly asking, quietly inebriated eyes
I explain in my least exotic voice
the heroics of meekness:
the bravery required to be terrified
of Africa and stay home defending small things
seen safely beautiful in my yard.

Lance published his first two novels under the pseudonym of Erin O'Rourke. He released his third novel, a murder mystery titled *The Tongue Merchant*, under his own name - and he hasn't looked back since. His writing has won over 20 awards. His novel *Fugitive Shoes* was named to the University of Oklahoma's "Books That Inspire"

exhibit. Currently an Assistant Professor of English at Ranger College in Texas, Lance teaches film, poetry, and creative writing courses.

Visit his website at <http://www.lancehawvermale.com>.



The Match

Khadija Ejaz

A short film and its poster for when my parents decided to inaugurate our new carrom board in Muscat, Oman.



[Watch Online](#)



43 YEARS OF MARRIAGE. 1 GAME OF CARROM.

THE MATCH

INTRODUCING FARZANA EJAZ EJAZ ULLAH KHAN
CAMERA KHADIJA EJAZ EDITING KHADIJA EJAZ
COMING SOON TO A THEATER NEAR YOU.

Khadija Ejaz is an internationally published and translated poet and has also written four books. She was born in Lucknow, India, raised in Muscat, Oman, and lived in America for 10 years (and had a brief stint in Toronto, Canada, and New Delhi, India). Khadija's background includes IT and broadcast journalism, but she also dabbles in filmmaking and photography. To learn more about her, visit her web site at <http://khadijaejaz.netfirms.com>.



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