
THE EXHIBITIONIST

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THINK. ACT. XZBT.

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

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COVER PHOTO *Aleena and the Rainbow* Khadija Ejaz

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FROM THE EDITOR

I just wanted to keep looking at that naked woman.



I was in my late twenties and at an art exhibit in downtown Tulsa, Oklahoma, in the US. Nothing fancy, just a low budget artsy setup where local artists could put their best work out on display for sale. I don't remember if I was there by myself, but I wasn't the only person there. The only thing I remember with utmost clarity is a very large painting of a naked obese woman lying fast asleep on a couch. I had never seen anything like it. I'm not an art critic, and I can't tell you about the Masters. I don't know the technicalities of what makes a good painting. The painting in question was about seven feet wide and six feet high, and it almost covered the entire wall it was hung on. The other paintings at the exhibit were far smaller and priced up to a few hundred dollars, but this one went into the thousands. Someone must've absolutely bought it. It's not that the subject was a naked woman or even a fat woman. We see too much bare skin nowadays to even register any of it. It was just the actual painting, the actual experience of looking at it. It was so large, so greasy, so...surprising. The artist had created the painting out of thick smears of mediterranean colors, lots of yellows and oranges. The paint was so thick that it almost gave the layers of fat on the woman's slumped-over jiggly body a 3D quality.

I stood before that painting for a while, just me and the giant fat carefree naked woman on the wall in front of me. That was a few years ago. I don't remember the name of the artist. I've wanted to see that painting again over the years. I tried looking it up on Google in the hopes that it had somehow made it onto the Internet. I never found it, but I expect I will keep looking.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Khadija Ejaz', with a horizontal line underneath.

Khadija Ejaz

GUEST EDITORIAL

As a child, I was a science fiction nut. By the age of six, I knew I wanted to be an astronomer. Science fiction appeared to my young brain as science of the future: prediction, not fiction. I read all I could get my hands on. By time I got to college, I knew I could write great science fiction, now that I understood some of the mysteries of science.



I wrote a story about a college student who had some weird things happen to him and it took him and his physics professor-advisor days of work to make things right.

Can't miss.

Except that it did. Several times. I slowly realized that some of the comments I got from editors (back in the days when rejection letters came with personalized comments) were valid. I started rewriting.

I decided to attend a writer's conference. A friend told me of one in a small Kansas college town whose keynote speaker was C. J. Cherryh, one of my favorite sci-fi writers. How could I turn that down? I went, manuscript in hand, just knowing I'd get rave reviews and be told to instantly send it off to her editor.

During her opening presentation, “How Not to Write Science Fiction,” I sat in horror as she described things not to do, realizing I had done most of them!

Dejected, I shied away from sci-fi, but I didn't give up writing. I joined a critique group (critical for any beginning writer) and continued to attend conferences. I learned to push my ego into a back corner of my mind, so I could improve my craft.

And I did finally publish a sci-fi piece. Not the above-mentioned one, but a humorous, first-contact piece where aliens come to Earth to sell us intergalactic, long-distance, communication services.

Wayne Harris-Wyrick is the director of the Kirkpatrick Planetarium of Science Museum Oklahoma. He has published 300+ non-fiction articles, science fiction short stories and a few poems. Wayne recently released a children's picture book called “Why Am I Me?” with four more children's books scheduled out in the next few months. He is an editor for a small publisher, 4RV Publishing. Wayne is also a member of Insight Paranormal (<http://www.insightparanormal.org>) and has been on dozens of ghost investigations. He has made some unique paranormal investigation equipment for the group. To learn more about Wayne's various activities visit his website at <http://www.wayneharris-wyrick.com> or his blog at <http://www.wizardwayne.blogspot.com>.

XZBTs

Hot Masala Chai, with Feelings

Samir Patel

One cup of water and one cup of milk
Four exact teaspoonful sugar and two of chai
One precise pinch of powdered masala
Brought to a boil:
Not once, not twice, but thrice!

Each, of both, sips masala chai—
"It's really good"
A day at work has ended—
One thinks
Behind distant eyes, the other
Plans quietly,
Restless legs.
The fan whirls,
The steam disperses in
The hot afternoon desert air.

The feeling of being unsure.

Rehman fades, earphones removed
Muffled conversations and Chopin intrude.

Furtive eyes like of a motionless sentry,
Guards deep
Unsure recesses, where
The dark passions lie interred
Squirm.

The feeling of being watched.

"Oh! Yes
One organic masala chai, hot, and a cheesecake,
Please!"
A day at work has ended—
Leather jackets, warm scarves,
Hipster caps and glam frames
Plaid shirts and Rocco jeans
Appear
Happier, freer, cozier
Surer.
To a waltz, fingers drum
On the oak table.

The feeling of being alone at a table.

Samir Patel was born and raised in Bhuj, Gujarat, in India, and currently lives in Philadelphia, USA. He is training to be a geriatric psychiatrist and enjoys music, good food, heavy rain, running, and poetry.



In the Dressing Room

Lance Hawvermale

“. . . and this one is torture,” she said, handing me the bra.
I hold it like a man with a dead snake, wondering
though it’s dead if it might have one last bite in its system;
she looks at me with fists on her hips, “Haven’t you

ever seen boobs before?” Of course I have, but
breasts are not like newspapers—you’ve seen one,
you’ve not seen them all—and for hetero men
each new viewing is like the first winter snow.

She grabs another bra and tries it on, fingers
deftly clipping behind her back what it always
takes me forever to unfasten, and then observes
herself in the dressing-room mirror, not the way

I observe her, not the way Galileo observed the moon,
but as someone at a chalkboard with a math proof,
reducing the unmappable geometry of her body
to nothing but a sum: “This one’s better.”

This cubicle might detonate if I told her the truth.
This three-quarter door to the department store
might unhinge itself in fantastic dismemberment
if I set the fuse of my thoughts on my tongue

and let the spark carry to my heart. What is calculus
to her is myth to me; I don't worship the night sky
for astronomy's sake but because my eyes see
the shapes of heroes drawn like fire between the stars.

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>.



An Ode to a Winter Tree

Priyanka Sacheti

Everyone talks about the summer beauty of trees: when they are fully clothed and their branches dressed in a green so fierce, so new, like sunlight glittering upon the skin of the sea, compelling your eyes to sunglasses themselves away. The elegant pleasures that a summer tree affords: to inhale the smell of growth, to hear the bewitching nocturnal music that rustling leaves create...and to lie down in its damp, cool shade and become enclosed in a private, inviolable space. Oh, a tree in summer = a poem in fertility.

But what of the trees' winter nakedness? Are we to only think of them as unadorned and therefore, forbidding? Just look. Just look at these branches, simultaneously monastic and yet, coquettishly lacy. Are those arms of earnest supplication or laden with gifts: pregnant buds awaiting to bloom in the future, invisible spring? Walking past and suddenly encountering their branches in silent conversation with the granite sky, I cannot help but think that this too should be remembered, this too should be acknowledged. All is not cruelly bare in this season of winter: a thousand stories stud these branches, awaiting to be told.



Educated at Universities of Warwick and Oxford, Priyanka Sacheti is a journalist based in Muscat, Oman; her articles have been published in various regional and international publications. She also published three poetry collections during her school-years and recently had two short stories published in international anthologies, Indian Voices: Volume 1 and Word Masala 2011, along with publishing short stories and creative non-fiction pieces in literary journals, Cerebration, Paradigm, DesiLit, and A Tale of Four Cities.



Reflection

Anupama Menon

I look and she stares back.

A tired pair of eyes

With no trace of passion

An unwinding smile

With no makeup of love.

What got her here, I wonder.

Who stripped her naked - Of all her passion and love.

A wrinkled pair of hands,

With no chore left undone

A battered set of fingers

Held out for a ring no more.

Who got her here, I wonder.

What stripped her bare - Of all her grace and youth.

A step closer.

Beyond the sliver streaks in her hair; behind the beaten eyes,

I hear a heart beat - with a crisp rhythm

Longing for life.

Holding her tattered hands in mine,

Looking beyond her,

I feel a rush of life – with wild passion

that has lost out to none.

What keeps her whole, I wonder.
Despite all that was stolen from her.
What keeps her standing, I wonder
Even with all those who once stood with her.

She looks, and I smile back
Now that I know.

Anupama Menon is a research marketer who loves food, travelling, photography, reading, music, movies, writing, event planning, and her day-job. She recently registered her own market research consulting firm in London where she lives with her husband Ajith and five-year-old son Hari.



The logo features the letters 'XZBT' in a white, serif font. A bright light source on the left creates a lens flare effect, with a red and white glow radiating across the letters. The background is a dark, textured grey rectangle.

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