

“Beauty equals Truth”

by Ayesha Karim

Ayesha Karim?

That’s my name...oh isn’t it beautiful

People tell me “oh you have such a pretty name

Ayesha Karim is such a pretty name.

It sounds a lot like ice cream but truth is better than telling a lie.

Beauty equals truth!

Coffee is strong but I’m never bitter.

Like me.

“HOBO’S DISTRACTIONS”

by Fred Chambers

Urbanity blights the soybeans,
And that September omniscience,
That onliness that only my Piedmont brings,
Forming those clouds of ripples in mirth,

Ascending that Eastern horizon
Are purple magic thunderclappers.
They play rhyme with my asphalt,
Straight...And flat...And somewhere...
Looking for a sunset.

Then forward steers a miniature bliss,
An even greener trees’ fingers
Toy with my freight train’s crossbars

Then forward, yet still beyond,
Civilization’s poverty sprawls;
All square and new brick.
And a town of Brick has distinction.

“Love”

by Jim White

This morning came with a song.
Travel to the next dawn.
Bring your feelings along.
“I’m gone!”

In the Winter, we’ll stand.
In the Spring, we’ll band like refined sand.
In the Summer, we’ll be bright while running hand in hand.
Then in the Fall, we’ll land.

There will be a Winter’s dawn in windows a glowing.
Spring will be like picking up and going.
Summer will be a journey’s showing.
Then in the Fall, our faults will disappear like the leaves blowing.

“Simmering Stigma”

by Tammy Smith

Are these waves of sharp insight or sickening intrusions infecting my mind?
I thought I was getting better but twisted memories resurfaced,
Cut across the corners of my slanted perspective, and
Bled over painful boundaries,
The unexpected resurgence of symptoms charted my old behavior patterns and
Threw me of course.
My psychiatric history brewed clinical concoctions as fresh ideas instead of stale leftovers.
Psychotropic drug prescriptions, like healing notes, affixed to the olive green fridge shoved
Against institutional walls are powerful reminders for me to forgive my misconceptions.
Denying my illness does not serve any main course and only heats up more distractions.
I swallow my pride and choke on this bitter insight, coughing up the remnants of raw judgments
I still stew over.

**“The Start of my Life”
by Alexandra Nauta**

As long as I can remember
Fear and I stuck together
When I grew the fear and became stronger
I couldn't take it no longer
The fear broke free
I was never quite me
Words spinning in my head
Became crying on my bed
When my life felt hell
All I could think to do was scream and yell
I wanted to bring my life to an end
I came out alive, but without a friend
As I fell again and again
A door opened and my new life began
After two months in the woods
It was the first time my life felt good
I thought I was done
Yet my new life had just begun
My new school changed it all
When I first picked myself up after a fall
Two steps forward, one step back
And I started to get my life back on track
I still have bumps in the road
But now I know when to stop and go
I can push my fears aside
Knowing there is no need to hide
It's time to take flight
This is the start of my life