



UNIVERSITÄT  
BIELEFELD



# The Unspoken Issue

No. 2

April 2023

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## Staff Issue No. 2

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Created with the support of the  
Fachsprachenzentrum at  
Bielefeld University

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# Introduction

by Georgina Willms

Dear Reader,

in your hands (or more likely, on your screen) you hold the second issue of Ink Drop. Ink Drop is a collection of work produced in the English creative writing courses offered at the language centre at Bielefeld University. In these courses, students increase their language fluency by studying, creating, and sharing works of prose and poetry.

These courses began in the spring of 2020, inadvertently coinciding with the world shutting down. Perhaps due in part to this, what began as a creative and academic exercise, a way to practice language in a fun way, quickly grew into something bigger. In these courses students have had the opportunity to not just explore the fear and uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic and its repercussions, but also, to explore the fear and uncertainty that is a part of young adulthood and the search for identity.

Many of the works included here are intensely personal and often quite impassioned. But they are also funny, perceptive, witty, and above all, wildly imaginative. The title of this issue is The Unspoken Issue (other candidates for the title were The Life Issue, The Coming Out Issue, and The Issues Issue). Some things are hard to put into words, they are hard to say and left unspoken. But that doesn't mean they have to be unwritten. Sometimes, writing can be just the right medium, helping you find the right words and the right format to express whatever you want to say.

As I write this, in April 2023, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. War has returned to Europe. The LGBTQIA+ community is under constant attack. Racism is alive and well. Women's bodies are being controlled by the state. Anger and hatred seem to be the way of the world. The young artists you will be introduced to here are gearing up to enter a complicated and often disheartening world. Judging by the work presented here, they are already well-equipped to make it a better place.

This issue is the result of hard work by a dedicated group of students, under the leadership of our general editor, Michelle Piwek.

Many thanks to Susanne Hecht, the director of the Fachsprachenzentrum at Bielefeld University, for her support.

Happy reading!

Georgina Willms  
English Coordinator and Faculty advisor for Ink Drop

# The Infinity of Stories

by Katja Löhle

*CW: death*

*He will wait for you at the end. His eternal rays will lighten  
your last descending steps.  
And he will lead you to your next path.*



*"Taking a stroll" by 404NameNotFound*

The sound of trickling water crawled into my ear. I could not remember when I had opened my eyes but like waking from a daydream, I found myself surrounded by sandstone, standing in a puddle of muddy water.

The water must have poured down on me from above. I was wet to the bones. The brown robe, my only piece of clothing, clung to my body. Water crept its way down my hair, spine and legs and then dripped into the puddle with a steady sound.

Despite my soggy clothes and bare feet, I did not feel any cold or pain, as if the water had washed it all away, leaving my body lighter than it had been in months. I had forgotten what it felt like not to be in pain.

My mind was hazy and for a while I could do nothing else but stare at the stone in front of me. I had been lying in a bed. Sleeping. Dying.

*Where am I?* I blinked as a sudden light fell on the stone, enticing me to turn around.

A glowing ball of fluff floated before me. A pompom bouncing up and down in the air like a fuzzy sun, but unlike the sun its bright light did not hurt my eyes. Two black dots swam around in the light and aligned parallel to my face as if the ball was making eye contact.

Then it turned around and bounced a few steps ahead, revealing stone-carved stairs on the path ahead. I looked around. With the stonewall behind me, the stairs were the only way, so I followed the light.

The creature seemed to guide me, since it bounced forward a few times, waiting for me to catch up and proceeding again as soon as I reached it. It was a long way down, my steps were unsteady because my attention was drawn to rock carvings on the walls. Layers over layers of carvings, words of languages I did not recognize, stylized petroglyphs, or just tortuous lines. With a glance at the little ball, I bend down and picked up a sharp stone.

After my work was done, I dropped the stone and turned to the light that had waited for me while I put my own marking on the wall. A place for all to be remembered, I had realized, and just like my predecessors, I also wanted a place on this wall.

I walked, my clothes dried. Time had no presence in this place. Without exhaustion my thoughts were the only things that gave me a feeling of how long I had walked. Unwittingly those thoughts returned to my past. To the hospital bed, where I had enough time already to be with my own thoughts. It had been torturous at times. Now, however, as I walked freely on and on, I remembered other things.

I smiled at the memory of my wife, our travels, the first ice cream we shared, the first glances we threw. Her death. My smile faded and still, I walked. I had worked a lot, but it had never seemed enough. I had felt regret. Only after I couldn't move, couldn't breathe, couldn't live, I realized how precious every second had been. By then it had been too late. My mind was not in turmoil. Not anymore. Again, I thought of the muddy water earlier. It had washed away many burdens. I felt a distance from the memories that passed through my mind as if I looked at them from far below. I walked. Eventually, the thoughts passed like clouds, untouched and undisturbing, and left an empty space.

Lost in reverie, I put one foot in front of the other until I no longer knew whether it was the light that was moving away from me or the staircase that was expanding.

Finally, the stairs made a curve and a man came into view. He wore the same brown robe as mine and stood there with an empty lantern tied to his stick. He smiled at me and opened the frail glass door of his lantern. After the ball of light had hopped inside and sat down on a perch, he closed it carefully.

"You can come closer, child. I mean no harm."

The sonorous voice echoed through the stone cavern.



As I stepped closer, I became aware of the two wooden doors behind the man. I looked from the doors to the man, wondering through which door he would lead me.

"Are you the one the legends speak of?" I asked. "The one who will lead me to my next path?"

"No. I am only here to lighten your path to this point," he answered.

"So the stories were not true."

My eyes wandered from the man to the ball of light, doubtful who was really speaking.

"Stories give guidance not truth. Finding the truth is the task that a story burdens us with."

"Is there no other path to walk on? Is this the end?" My voice cracked on the last word.

"That is not for me to decide."

"Then who decides?"

The man raised an eyebrow. "Certainly not the stone walls."

"Are you...what are you?" I narrowed my eyes.

The man grinned. "Not a lot of people ask me that question. A lot are too intimidated, thinking I am their god. Others deny me, hoping they can revive."

So I was dead. It did not surprise me as much as it maybe

should have.

"And sometimes there are people like you," he said.

"Like me?"

"People who accept. Who will accept everything I tell them."

"That sounds like you think it is something bad," I said, attacked by the words.

"People who will stand here for hours and hours, not able to decide on a door," he continued.

I could not prevent my eyes from glancing at the doors again, but I would not let myself be distracted.

"You did not answer my question. What are you?"

"I am here to guide you, but not to find your path for you."

"You are telling me you are a story?"

The man looked surprised, but he nodded. "That might be the right word for me. I. Am. A. Story."

With an absent gaze, he let every single word melt on his tongue as if they were the most delicious feast in the world.

"You are a story too," he said suddenly, settling his eyes on me.

"I am dead. My story is over."

"No one's story is ever over. The words you spoke, the

guidance you gave and the guidance you took moved others to change their stories in unfathomable ways. And they will in turn change other stories. Who knows how far some of your words will be carried?"

The man wallowed in thought, pondering his own words.

"Do you ever forget any of the people who pass you by?" I asked. He seemed to understand the intention of my question.

"The light never forgets," he replied.

For a few moments, I eyed the little lantern, its warm light soothing my mind. Then I walked past him towards the doors.

His robe rustled as he glanced back at me.

"You have already decided? Which door to take? You do not even know what lies beyond."

I gave him a smile.

"Which door doesn't matter. You said it yourself. My story continues even if I am not the one to tell it. That is enough for me."

Contemplating, the man turned away from me.

With a last look at his sturdy back and the dancing light in his lantern, I opened a door.

*This story was inspired by the picture above, used with the kind permission of the artist (Instagram: @404FindNotNamed, @404sketches)*

# The Story of Heroes

by Patrick Kemper

The kingdom of Fahrul is in the clutches of dangers,  
There is not just one but three promising strangers.  
From a dimly lit tavern with fine ale in Woodsmoke,  
Setting their adventure under adventurer's cloak.

Gathering weapons and trinkets in every realm,  
Resting peacefully at night with pipes of elm.  
Beating bandits, monsters, and the Kraken at sea,  
From Castle Vakker, over Fire Elm to the sands of Zini.

Panax, Dancing Nettle and stacks of God's Beard,  
Deep chaos dungeons await; all to be cleared.

From the tall tower of Harazuel ashore,  
The adventurers in Parid valiantly swore:

To defeat the evil that chaotically haunts the lands,  
With their acquired magic weapons in ally's hands.  
And their trusty hand cannon and its loud bellowing boom.  
With him defeated; the tower becomes their eternal tomb.

# The day the world stopped making sense

by Nils Apelmeier

*CW: violence, war*

“Yes. I was there that day. The day the world stopped making sense. Standing in the first row of the loyalist army. Gnomes, Elves, Man, Halflings, Dwarves, and every other creature that lived under the rule of the dragons. We stood united against the rebellion, called out by the dwarven high king in defiance against the godly serpents. They answered the insurgents’ call and gathered the biggest war host in the history of the dragon empire and we marched by the thousands.

Ready to defend the unity of the realm and the honour of our immortal rulers. I stood in the first row, riding a white mare from the best imperial stables. As Marcus Fidus Dracoris, commander of the dragon’s legions and enforcer in their name, I was to lead the charge against the remaining rebel soldiers after they were bathed by holy fire from the winged emperors.

Our enemy had formed a giant shield wall in the mountain valley they chose as the field of battle. Tightly packed, well-crafted dwarven shields formed a giant metal centipede. I couldn’t see any of our foes. They all hid behind this artificial wall, as if iron could defend the insurgents from dragon fire. Not only dwarves had gathered to fight us, but every other being foolish enough to openly defy the will of the dragons.

Under my command, the loyalist war horns began to play and guide the legions into position. With iron discipline and in perfect unity we marched towards the foe until we stood about 300 feet apart.

Then we stopped. And we waited. In complete silence, that was broken by a deafening roar. Then another one and another one. After a few seconds, I was able to hear the wings. Like small strokes of thunder, strong muscles moved again and again to keep my masters in the air.

All of us looked up and turned around to get a glimpse on our eternal overlords. We were not disappointed. Three of them, were flying in a perfect triangle, a force strong enough to bring down entire nations. These were the dragons that I had served my entire life.

One in a fiery red, one in the ocean's blue and the last in a dark green akin to pine forest. I followed their every move, while our enemies stood defiant in their shield fortress. It looked like they weren't even reacting to their imminent demise. The serpents flew a short circle above us. Inspiring the loyalists with their presence, while they got into position. At least 200 feet in the air, they prepared to unleash deadly fire, hotter than anything, mere mortals were able to withstand or even could hope to create. Enough heat to melt rock.

So, I closed my eyes. Just looking at the bright flames could be enough to get blinded forever. I could only hear the sound of dragon wings and moving shields in the distance. I imagined the rebels breaking their ranks and running away or understanding their folly and kneeling in hope of mercy. Both would have been useless. Mercy was an emotion not worthy of a dragon and I waited for the bright light to burn through my eyelids.

But that's not what happened. Instead, a loud explosion. Then another one and another one. The sound came from the enemy's lines. Around me, I felt the confusion, so I opened my

eyes and looked towards the rebels. They had opened their formation and gathered around three big metal tubes on wheels, that some dwarven engineers were working on. Bewildered, I looked up and my blood froze. These tubes were weapons, cannons as I learned later, and they were able to break indestructible dragon scales. All three serpents had round holes through their bodies, with boiling blood dripping from the wounds.

Time began moving slowly for me, as I saw them fall from the heavens, which had belonged only to them for over a thousand years. With shuddering earthquakes they hit the ground and killed hundreds of their soldiers even in death. While I was still processing, that some of our scaled emperors had been killed, the infighting started. A prelude to what was going to happen to the empire, that had kept the world at peace since it was founded in the dawn of time.

Nobles trying to gain an advantage from the situation, disloyal soldiers who had some grudge against their leaders, self-declared freedom fighters, who only joined the army out of fear of the dragon's justice and so many more began turning against their fellow comrades. The first one to attack me was just a simple recruit. He still screamed 'death to the tyrants' while my sword cut his head off. Some of my fellow legion commanders tried to regain control of the situation, but I knew this battle was lost, so I fought my way out and gathered as many loyal men with me as I could and we began fighting to keep the empire together, but our efforts were futile.

Dozens of small kingdoms, republics and otherwise independent realms sprang up, while more dragons were murdered by these cannons and the few remaining ones went into exile. Never to be seen again, so the loyalists gathered

around me, and we continued fighting for what is right.

As my life now draws to a close. I want to ask all of you a few questions. You who fought against us. You who immediately succeeded from the empire. You who supported the rebellion in secret for years. You who took me captive, and you who wanted to know my story as a glorification for your so-called 'war of freedom'.

What are you gonna tell your children when they ask you why they can't go to school anymore? Why nobles and oligarchs live in luxury while they must hunger? Why they have to fight in petty wars for the greed of others? Why bandits are running rampant? Why there are no more hospitals? Why the bridges are collapsing and roads falling in disrepair? Why there is no more clean water? Why the rule of law broke down and especially why did you help destroy the empire, that gave you all this?"

With the last part, the city square of the capital had gone silent. Not the empire's capital of old, but just the biggest city in this successor state. Peasants, workers, and everyone else who had wanted to witness the execution of the empire's most infamous general, were hit by my words. They knew it was the truth, but no one wanted to accept it, because then they would have to admit, that the dragons were right. That the empire's so-called cruelty was necessary to keep everything in order.

I looked over to the 'elected' Lord protector, who only kept his power through corruption and personal relationships with the nobles and oligarchs of the region. He had thought himself clever in asking me to recall the last day of the empire, as some sort of propaganda play. He sat on a table to my left, positioned together with me on the stage, that had been



erected for my trial. His face had gone red, and he gave a hate-filled nod to the executioner who already had his hand on the lever of my gallows. I closed my eyes and awaited my fate. The world truly had stopped making sense.

# The Journey of the Trident

by Patrick Kemper

*CW: death, drowning*

Wooden bulwark makes its way through crashing waves,  
Passing more than 9000 cold, undug graves.

Across the warm, salty ocean of the Caribbean Sea,  
Chased by white shimmering, aqueous horses ready to flee.  
With oaken bow, cedar keel and walnut stern,  
The Trident pierces its way to New Hullburn.

The zephyr presses against the main sail,  
With briny air casting its shrouding veil.  
Old Mary leading the way from Trident's bow.  
Between vast wave crests high and daunting troughs low,  
With her grim face and moss-covered gown,  
Gazing afar with salt encrusted crown.

A Spanish galleon named Diablo de Agua crossed their way,  
63 brave king's men on his Majesty's caravel had to pay.  
All drowned in the cold, churning sea below,  
Under the crashing sound of plank's bellow.  
At night the sea was fiercely ablaze,  
Under induced broadside's greyish haze.

Now the ship seeks for thirst unrevenged,  
So every taken life can be avenged.  
The galleon had last been spotted at Bluestone Bay,  
Where fellow musketeers had been keeping it at bay.  
The water devil himself causes havoc wherever he goes,  
The English colonies enduring his fiery, smiting blows.

After three days of overburdening the gale sail,  
Lightly flying across the vast sea; preying on its trail.  
The Burgundy Cross Flag and its devil are to emerge,  
Firing deafening cannonades as deep hellish scourge.  
Dimly lit silhouettes appear and ponder what dusk may bring,  
As they all valorously chant together: "God save the king."

# **I Used to Have a Garden Deep Inside**

by Elena Zabelina

I used to have a garden deep inside.

I used to be a southern, big-flower Magnolia.

I used to be a niveous, freshly blown Jonquil,

I used to demurely curl and distil nectar.

I used to be the Marvel of Peru, or the Night Beauty,

I used to tease and please, delight the eye, the nose, the  
tongue.

I used to wreath obscenely, twine around and clench,

I used to let my blossoms be defiled by wind, which squeezed  
and stroked and pinned.

I used to be a bitter Liquorice, producing stench and sticky  
slime,

I used to decompose and smell of rotten flesh, attracting only  
dor beetles and flies.

I used to be the Carrion, or Stinking Flower,

I used to irritate, molest, and plague the mind, the patience,  
the allowance.

I used to be the screaming Mandragora,  
I used to hide my squashy leaves in a dense forest.  
I used to scare away the witches and explorers, who longed for  
easy love and shiny gold.  
I used to be an ugly root whose mouth was full of dirt, of rage,  
of bawl.

I used to be the Devil's Trumpet, or Datura,  
I used to nebulize seductive vow.  
I used to imitate obedience and hide my power,  
I used to summon the cursed winds and quell the hunger of my  
thorns.

I am the Deadly Nightshade, or Atropa Belladonna,  
I thirst to see delirium, convulsions, and redeem.  
I tantalize, harass, and slay on the behalf of withered flowers,  
Which were destroyed without compunction by the wind.

## Encore

by Liliana Mendes Schneebeli



*"Behind the Scenes" by Liliana Mendes Schneebeli*

At night, a thousand eyes gleaming through the dark  
Resting bodies, inconstant strangers  
Their silence, a yearned for condemnation  
a flattery, a curse.

In shadows, a voluntary prey, all ears  
Tongue circling, running through lines like a Prayer  
Shallow breathing, waiting in the wings  
to step into the light.

Radiant light, displayed before their hungry eyes  
A body soak'd in sweat  
Different yet the same memories relived.

Dead of night, showered in deafening tremor  
Awareness of the other  
The final calm descends.



*"Layers" by Liliانا Mendes Schneebeli*



## Sixteen Days

by Victoria Kraak

*CW: death*

I open my heavy eyes and sit up abruptly.

What happened?

I look around and discover the people dressed in white, smiling peacefully.

“Welcome back, Maisie.” A girl my age walks up to me and gently takes something off my head.

“W-what is that? What happened?” I grab my hair and feel something round and metallic. “These are the electrodes I’m taking from you. While the serum has been working in your body for the past four weeks, they’ve been monitoring your brain,” she smiles and caresses my arm soothingly.

Why doesn’t she stop smiling?

I remove my arm and stroke over it to hide my goose bumps.

I look around in confusion through the bright hall, with its linen-grey floor and bare white walls.

Not a single picture, not a single plant can be found in this room. Only a large window that opens onto Sydney’s shattered Harbour Bridge, brings colour to this misery.

I look at the Harbour Bridge, which is covered in moss and only held in place by the columns of its shattered parts.

Nothing has changed.

It is all just like after the climate of our earth changed.

After the oceans were poisoned by garbage.

After lakes and rivers dried up and we humans were only allowed to leave our protected and air-conditioned houses at night because the temperatures outside became deadly for us.

The buildings around the bridge are also overgrown with plants and in some cases only half of them remain, as the storms have destroyed most of them.

“Don’t worry, we were all like this after we woke up again. Your fear will fade. The serum helped you forget about your whole life. Isn’t it great? You have a chance to make a new start. A new life.”

Her cryptic statement doesn’t make sense, and I’m just getting more insecure.

I forgot my life?

I’m trying to remember what happened in the last few weeks before I was injected with that serum.

Dark memories of the last moments before I came here burst upon me like a wild storm: Crowds of people were taken away. My family and I were separated. And Beckett.. where is Beckett?

I remember that he was taken here, too.

Didn’t that girl say the serum was supposed to erase my memory?

I’m looking around for the girl who’s taking care of the other people who just woke up, too.

I feel a chill down my spine when I realize I can remember everything.

The serum’s not working on me.

I remember how people panicked when our government warned us about the end of our world.

But why are they trying to erase our memories?

I'm getting sick from all the overflowing thoughts.

Unnoticed, I sneak past people to go to the bathroom.

Stay calm Maisie, you can't draw attention to yourself, you can't let them know something is wrong.

Suddenly two heavy arms grab me and drag me into a dark niche.

I want to scream, but the person is holding a hand to my mouth. I step around and try to free myself from the grip, but nothing helps.

“Maisie, calm down”, whispers a deep voice.

That voice. His voice. I turn abruptly and look into a deep blue pair of eyes. Becketts eyes.

Relieved, I pull him into my arms and don't want to let go of him.

“I was so worried about you,” I sob softly.

“Beckett, what's going on here?” I whisper and look around anxiously.

He gently strokes a strand behind my ear.

“Millions have died because of the climate. The government wipes everyone's memories and no one remembers what happened. But I remember everything and I know you do, too. I haven't been able to find out much yet, but I do know that the government is making people forget in order to force a reboot. The climate has changed so drastically only because of us humans. They are trying to save the world from destruction with the loss of memories. We panicked, wars broke out.

What exactly is behind erasing our memory and why you and I can remember, I don't know. We have to find out, Maisie.

Please help me do that.”

He guides my hand into his and squeezes it tightly.

“We have sixteen days until-” a loud shout from the hall swallows the all-important sentence.

## **["Enveloped in a night..."]**

by Elena Zabelina

Enveloped in a night like in a black cocoon  
Black is the color of my coat,  
Black is the color of your eyes,  
Black is on my skin and under  
Flowing, streaming, tickling

Gloria in excelsis Deo,  
I am willing to be burnt alive  
And praised for bravery and corruption,  
Your breath is gasoline and smoke  
And I am a pile of firewood  
Breathe in and out, and I ignite

Lost interest for conflagration,  
Push your fingers through my chest,  
Crack the sticks, the twigs, and flinders  
Feel the soaking vortex roaring  
Willing to entrap, digest, retain

If scared of turmoil, you will wish dead hush,  
I pave the water with some straw and lumber  
I keep the deep stream hidden from your eyes  
Declaw the crabs and leave the fish suffocate on land

Frantically, impulsively, I bluster like a wave  
I weaken up, untie, unbutton, and unlace  
I crave to be engulfed in black  
And burnt alive,  
Like the most wicked witch  
Craves burning at the stake.

# **Our lives, our choices**

by Amanda Mesre-Nyame

*CW: violence*

Zumanda was once a beautiful country, touching the Atlantic Ocean. A little smaller than the State of Oregon. Economically, Zumanda was famous for its gold. It was also regarded as one of the most peaceful countries in the world, with a country that had citizens full of hope and joy. The government abandoned democracy after our president died, because they wanted to come to power. A lot has happened since that day.

For the past few years, we had been living under their control. The government banned many things. We were not allowed to own a television or play music. They disrupted internet connectivity and blocked access to messenger apps. We were not allowed to talk badly about the government publicly nor protest. The people in this country were suffering, and the government did not care about them. They took care of themselves and fooled their citizens. They only cared about power, control, and money! That's it! I felt like the government was a big money pit. We poured money into it, and they got richer.

At the time, I studied political economics at the University of Zumanda because I wanted to know how the political system worked. Understanding political economy could be a powerful tool. We had the right to be heard and to not feel afraid to express ourselves. I wanted to help the citizens by raising their voices.

I enjoyed going to lectures. We talked a lot about the current situation in our country. Many people didn't feel safe here.

The government was very strict. Before the government ruled this country, we lived in peace. No corruption, no oppression, and no fear. Unfortunately, everything had changed. Soldiers with big guns were everywhere and oppressed us.

"They take our freedom away," a fellow student shouted.

"Exactly, we live in a prison," said another. In the lecture hall, a heated discussion started. All of us were talking at once.

"Hey guys, please calm down," said Professor Brown loudly.

It took him a solid minute to quiet down the students. "I understand you all. I'm also not happy with the situation. But it doesn't help if we all talk at the same time," continued Professor Brown. Everyone looked at him attentively. He turned on the projector and showed us a short documentary. It was about activists like Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela who fought for their rights.

"You are right, Professor Brown. We must act," a fellow student stated.

"Exactly, we will not be silenced," added another. Everyone in the lecture hall thought the idea was great. I also thought that something needed to change here. We couldn't live like this anymore.

But our professor wasn't happy with our idea and shook his head. "That was not my intention. I don't want any of you to be in danger. Don't underestimate the government. They are dangerous. Please be wary of them," he said.

"But why did you show us the video?" I asked.

"I wanted to show you that there is hope and always a way out," he explained.

"But how are we supposed to do that if we're not supposed to protest?" a student asked.

Professor Brown took off his glasses and said, "Our freedom of speech is taken away from us. We are not allowed to speak negatively about the government in public. We have to protest silently and secretly."

After the lecture, my friends and I sat in the cafeteria and talked about what Professor Brown had said. We decided to hang posters around town in secret. Our statements were very politically charged. We prepared stickers as well, and drew our logo on every poster.

The name of our group was "SSJ", which stood for "Save Social Justice". We put our phones on airplane mode because our devices sent out location information, and the government could track us. The government had put up CCTV cameras everywhere. So we had to be careful.

That Saturday night, we met in secret. We hung the posters all over the walls while wearing masks out of fear of being identified. Some of my friends sprayed inspirational slogans and cartoons on the walls. The next day, it was announced on the radio that the government was looking for the people who put up the posters and sprayed graffiti on the wall. Since then, we were all wanted by the government. We didn't let that intimidate us and kept going. During the week, we met in secret to hang the posters in different areas. The news spread rapidly at the university and in the country. Everyone wanted to know who had done it.

"Why is everybody acting like we committed a crime?", one of my friends whispered.

Another friend said quietly, "Yeah, it's kinda strange. We are protesting about injustice, not rebelling."

One of my other friend murmured, "Exactly, we use words to express our needs and problems."



“Psst, someone could hear us. We must be careful what we say. The government sees us as a threat,” I said.

What we had done was dangerous. But we had to fight for our freedom. In the lecture, Professor Brown asked us what we thought about the posters. One student said, “That’s brave of them. They are right. We should care about our future because we will have to spend the rest of our life here.”

“Yeah,” the others agreed.

A fellow student said, “They are risking their lives for us.”

It was true. We were not doing it for ourselves, but for all the citizens in this country and for the future generation. We didn't tell our parents because they would be worried and would not let us protest. That was our secret, and we kept it secret. The next day at university we were shocked. As we walked through the hallway, there were a lot of protesting posters on the wall.

My friend whispered, "Who of you put the posters in the university hallway?"

“It wasn’t me,” we said at the same time. Then we noticed that the other student had put the posters on the walls. None of the posters had our logo. We were proud of ourselves for getting the other students to protest, too. Months passed, and the government was still unaware that it was us.

I was on my way to the lecture. Suddenly, soldiers took me into custody.

"Let me go, let me go," I screamed.

"Shut up," one of the soldiers shouted at me and punched me in the face. Some passers-by wanted to help me but the soldiers were beating them as well. They dragged me into their car and took me to the prison.

"They've trapped me," I said to myself.

They put me in a cell where a tall man was waiting. He was wearing a suit and was holding a notepad in his hand. There was a chair right in front of him. They pushed me into the cell, and I fell on my face. I tried to stand up, but my knees buckled on my first try, so I mustered my strength and forced myself to get up. The man in the suit sat on the chair.

"Sit down," he said to me. We stared at each other.

"Are you deaf? I said, sit down," he said, angry. I sat down on the cold floor. He spat at me as he looked down at me.

"I've been looking for you for a long time," he said. He stood up and knelt next to me.

"I know that you and your friends put all the posters on the walls," he said.

"I didn't do anything," I said softly. He got up and pulled a form out of his briefcase.

"Sign here," he shouted. I shook my head.

"Sign here," he yelled at me and grabbed my arm.

"I'm not signing that. I didn't do anything. I'm innocent," I said. He handed me his handkerchief. I didn't take it.

"Look, I'll give you one more chance. Otherwise, you'll have to rot here in prison," he said. I started to cry. I thought of my parents, who must be worried, but I couldn't tell the truth. Otherwise, I would never see my parents again. I was silent. I turned around and I saw that the cell door was open. I tried to escape, but my knee jerked. Five soldiers were gathered around me, high sticks in their hands, and they were beating me wildly. The first kick I got was on my lower back. I pulled my arms up to my face and tried to protect me, but they kept going. I screamed. The soldiers saw my suffering, but they didn't care about that. They looked at me and laughed. The last thing I remembered was a blurry image of a shoe that kicked my face.

Then, all of a sudden, it all stopped. A cold breeze blew over my body, waking me up. I was in pain. I couldn't get up. But I was glad it was over and that I survived.

"I am not dead," I thought to myself. The next few days, he kept coming into my cell, trying to persuade me to sign the form. I kept refusing. I sat on the cold floor for days because there was no bed in my cell. One morning, the man came back to my cell.

"Your friends are here too. We've been keeping them here for days," he said.

"I don't have any friends," I said.

"If you confess, I will set you free. All you have to do is sign this form to confirm that it was you," he said.

"I didn't do anything. How many times do I have to say that," I said. He got up and left the cell.

Immediately after he left, an alarm went off. I heard footsteps and screams. Curious, I got up to see what was going on. Then I saw a man with a weapon and a blue helmet on. There were so many questions going through my head at once, but one thing was obvious, the man didn't look like the other soldiers who always stood guard here. The man opened my cell and said, "We finally found you. Come with me, I'll take you out of here." My heart began to race, and I began to sweat profusely. I didn't know this man. I didn't want to go with him.

"Who are you and what do you want from me?" I asked him.

"My name is Paul. I'm here to save you. Don't be afraid. I'm not a soldier, I am also a citizen. We are here to save you and your friends," he said. I hesitated for a second, then followed him.

On the way to the exit, I saw the other soldiers tied to the ground. When we finally got out of the prison, I saw my friends. I was so happy to see them. Other men also freed them. We hugged each other and cried.

On our way home, I was shocked by how badly the streets were damaged. There were posters and broken objects on the streets. It was very loud. I saw a crowd in the distance. The crowd went wild and started shouting like mad. At first, I didn't know what they were saying, but then I figured it out.

"Free SSJ! Free SSJ!"

The crowd began moving as one giant herd. We were applauded by them when they saw us. They greeted us with cheers.

"Our children are free, and they are alive," they shouted. When I got home, my parents hugged me and said, "Don't ever do that again. You put yourself in danger. We were afraid for you." My mother started to cry when she touched my face.

"What did they do to you? Your face and your arms. Only wounds and scratches," she said, shocked. She hugged me tightly and cried. I could feel her heart beating so fast. I told them everything. My father burst into tears and said, "Oh my God, this is cruel. How can a human being be like that?!"

They told me, after they heard that we were in prison, all citizens gathered together and protested against the government for days and fought with the soldiers. The government was overthrown. Democracy is back and we have a new president. I'm glad everything turned out well. We fought for our freedom and we were successful.

# Drawbridge

by Liliana Mendes Schneebeli

Indestructibly, brick by brick he built  
A protective wall. Layer by layer,  
Falling silent then, now master builder  
Wooden building brick, witness of my guilt

Inquisitiveness, innocence of soul  
Running through the woods, yearning for a hand,  
A song for one voice, footprints in the sand  
Hand in father's hand took a life-long toll

Impenetrable, masterpiece of pain  
Child's play is no more. Turret 'round neglect  
I turn to you now; brick wall stands erect  
Damages complete, merciless his reign -

- Only escape you saw no other way  
but down stairs you forgot that I am here  
drawbridge I do turn to you now you come.



I write a line, a verse  
One more, a couplet.  
Indecisive, I erase.

*"Trifle" by Liliana Mendes Schneebeli*

# Bruises

by Merve Kalinci

*CW: implied (domestic) violence*

## Bruises

I thought that you were yellow  
And I was magenta  
But instead of turning loving red  
We became fighting black

My deepest yearnings turned into nightmares  
Instead of you  
Why does everybody else care  
I am not in chains  
Yet I feel enslaved  
My heart in human form  
When did you become that raging storm  
What could have been  
Is not what should have been  
Addicted to your toxin  
There is no other option  
No matter what you  
do  
I still love you.

Yellow, magenta, red and black  
Prints of love  
I can handle that

# ["I walk the streets..."]

by Luisa Mut

I walk the streets and see the light. The day upon me – leechlike bites. They  
Hang on me, they suck my zest. Suppress, possess – they do their best.  
I try to leave them, now and then – But only after ten. Ana, help me.  
Ana, come by. And saying that. Yes, I cry. I taste her before I turn  
The edge. My mouth, it craves and sharpens its sense. The bell,  
It rings. I open the door. The door to heaven. The door I've  
Seen every night before. My mouth, it craves and closes  
Again. The guy in black, Glenn. He knows what I want  
After ten. The red from former leechlike bites, it  
Flows its way again tonight. But only now in  
Different light. It soothes my soul and  
Fills my veins, playing with me the  
Same old games. The leechlike  
Bites, they disappear. They  
Become unclear but  
Always stay near  
The red  
From  
Former  
Leechlike  
Bites  
Also  
Comes  
In  
Juicy  
Whites  
The  
Tastes  
They mingle on my tongue. I always take a second one. Ana,  
Glad to see you, once again. You make me want to stay. Amen.



## **A lesson in (in)visibility**

by Michelle Piwek

Aromantic

Enter

Did you mean

Aromatic?

216 million results

Delete

Aromantic

Enter

Did you mean

Romantic?

983 million results

Delete

Aromantic

Enter

No suggestion

No results

....

Delete.

## Reading Critic

by Kay Dockhorn

As I've gotten older,  
expectations of me have gotten bolder.  
The hopes and dreams and careers I'm supposed to shoulder,  
have taken my imagination and freedom and sold her.

It used to be "read to learn", but no longer to laugh?  
Is this the criticism you always wanted me to have?  
And you wonder why I'm so fixed on just the one path?

You always said reading nourished the mind,  
but now it's a waste of my time?  
Because the books we now read  
are expected to serve the purpose of our greed.

Stories told and unfold,  
growing dusty and old,  
unable to mould,  
when we give up control.  
So we look for a hole  
where we can indulge our soul,  
without the criticism you seem so intent to throw.

And in that hole we hope to find,  
a place where people are just a little more kind.

# Crashing Waves

by Paula Kaiser

*CW: anxiety*

Thoughts are racing  
Inside my mind,  
And my body is aching  
For they're so cruel and unkind,  
Shaking and falling  
I slip further into the furious ocean.

The world is tipsy, it's turning  
Then it caves.  
Building up again and towering  
Like crashing waves,  
Threatening to break the dam  
And re-join with the treacherous ocean.

The earth is trembling  
Under the pressure,  
Pulling taut the strings  
Keeping it all together,  
Barely holding on  
In the endless, perilous ocean.

Somewhere there is a door opening,  
A voice tears through the storm, stays.  
I can hear it's calling  
And just like crashing waves,  
The dam finally breaks  
And all flows into the swallowing ocean.

# Not a "Good"Bye

by Kay Dockhorn

*CW: anxiety, implied androphobia, fear, thwarted intentions of sexual assault, trauma*

I was happy, on the go.  
He was hungry, I didn't know.  
I made a mistake in answering his voice.  
He made it seem like he'd stolen my choice.

Heartbeats raced inside my ribcage.  
And my shaking voice built up my rage.  
Persistence would win, it always did.  
And again, my silence made it seem like I was his.

In tears I stood at the reception desk.  
Hope was leaving with every breath.  
He stayed close, even though I asked,  
Why was his leaving such a difficult task?

A group of friends realised my plight.  
They took a stance and made him take flight.  
Finally, he was out of my sight,  
And I quickly fell from that unknown height.

Tears and coughs and shudders and cries,  
Left my body in their kind arms and eyes.  
My memory loathed his very first "hi".  
And I managed to say something that wasn't a "good" bye.

# I'm me

by Darby Bartsch

*CW: victim blaming, suicide*

Why? Why? I'm asking you, why?  
Do I really have to wave my favorite son goodbye?  
You're not a guy? Why?  
You look like a guy, talk like a guy  
Not a single day can go by without that lie  
That lies beyond these fields of green  
Where I have seen all the things you always have been.  
Now you arrange a change that makes you sink  
It makes me think since you have once been on the brink  
Of suicide if that might divide your thoughts and feed you lies.  
Beyond that lies the truth, forbidden youth  
With nothing but your trauma to sooth.  
Trust in me, cause eventually  
You'll learn the meaninglessness of your identity

Liar! Liar! False pariah!  
Sorry that I never had an idol I could admire!  
The desire of finding myself. Not himself, not herself, myself!  
Whatever that means. Whatever, whoever, why-the fuck-ever  
Never, ever, ever in life will I take this  
Useless advice. Surrounded by lies  
Venomous, spitting your vice  
Of conforming to norms that are made up  
Forbidding me to wear some make-up.  
I'm me  
I'm me  
Just me  
And I love me

# **I Am**

by Michelle Piwek

I am aromatic.

I am coffee beans and tea leaves.

Shallots, onions, garlic.

I am cloves and cinnamon sticks  
and nutmeg and vanilla.

I am parsley, sage,  
rosemary and thyme.

I am basil, ginger, and  
a hint of lavender.

I am –

Huh?

What do you mean,  
I'm supposed to write  
about being aromantic?

What the hell is that?!

# **University Bielefeld Urban Legend! Conspiracy Theory, short story! Totally true! Slightly scary!**

by Nils Apelmeier

*CW: implied violence*

Okay, you have convinced me, I will tell you everything. Sit down, grab a beer, tea, coffee or whatever poison you prefer. This is gonna take a while. But be warned, that I take no responsibility for what might happen to you or your studies. The rectorate doesn't take kindly to anyone who knows the truth and bad grades or exmatriculation are beneath the harmless things, that could happen to you.

Alas, you will not listen. Your thirst for knowledge has been awakened by half-baked rumours or silly Jodel posts. And who am I to quench that thirst? I myself fell victim to it a long time ago and made it my responsibility to guard that secret. Make sure, that at least someone who is uninvolved knows the truth, even though there is nothing I can do to stop it. No one in their right mind would believe even half of what I am about to tell you.

But once the rector finds out that you are aware, that you know, he will stop at nothing to silence you. I know not why I am allowed to keep my knowledge. By all accounts, they should have found me a long time ago, but maybe they haven't been searching in the right places or need me for something, that even I can't imagine. Enough words of warning. You will not listen anyways, so here is the one and only truth about this university, that you will ever hear.

Nobody knows, when it all began. All information has been lost in the annals of time, but it has been around for at least a hundred years. During the second world war, there was a special research division stationed right here, where we sit, but from what little I can gather from old records, they already found it like this and only intensified experiments left behind by another party. After the end of the war, the few surviving scientists together with the support of influential politicians were able to keep this site a secret and prevent the allies from finding out about it. Who knows, what they would have done with it during the cold war.

Only after the German republic was firmly established, they thought about continuing their work, knowing that the discovery could not only shake the newly formed state in its entirety, but that this would raise a plethora of ethical and moral concerns. Most likely this place would have been destroyed then, for the good of our entire civilization. Sadly, these morally ambiguous scientists waited long enough, leveraged political influence and secured funds through shady business deals, so they could finally restart their operation in secrecy. Only this time, they hid in plain sight. Can you already guess what I am getting at? The entire University Bielefeld is the cover up. Not only to conceal what they are doing, but also to further their cause.

The conspiracy around the city was just one of many ploys to veil the truth. Put the focus on Bielefeld as a whole, not just one building. Have you never wondered why the university has been built so fast? Using asbestos and shoddy quality would have never been feasible for such a big building if they were not in a rush. And now? The renovations take an eternity, because the rectorate needs to make sure nothing is uncovered. The risk of a security breach is so much bigger now,



but leaving all the students at home would raise even more suspicions.

The “stairs into nothing” are just another way to draw our attention away from what is below our feet. Mind you, not everyone working in this building is involved. Most professors, lecturers and other staff members have no idea what is going on beneath us, but some do. Hidden between their colleagues, they just fit in, when not working on the secret project. One exception is the rectorate, which, together with some deans, is always informed. The other one are the security guards. Have you ever wondered why there are so many of them?

It is not just to stop petty thieves, but to keep us from traversing too deep into the university and keep at bay what lurks beneath. Speaking of it, I can see it in your eyes. I have stepped around the topic for too long. You finally want to know what I have been teasing. Which rumours are true. What stories were correct. You want answers. And you will get them.

Deep below our feet, underneath the lecturing rooms, the great hall, the swimming pool and even the delivery street, there is a gigantic glass tank. I have no idea how deep that thing is. I only know that the material it is built from, is stronger than steel and most other known alloys. The entire container is filled to the brink with salt water, like an endless aquarium. On top, there is a giant hatch, that opens every night, exactly at midnight. Who built this thing will be a mystery forever, I guess.

Around the tank, the scientists and security staff have built a multitude of laboratories, security posts and other facilities to aid their research and defend them against what is in the tank. The reason all this is happening: Alaska Seelachs.

Laugh at me, call me a fool or hate me for wasting your time, but do it silently, since I am not finished. We are not talking about regular fish here. They are hybrids. Human and Seelachs DNA crossed in the most devilish genetic outcome.

From what I have heard and sadly even seen, they come in different shapes and sizes, but all show an innate aggression to humans and have supernatural speed, strength and constitution. That's why they are experimenting on them. To find out how we can ascend to these powers, how we unlock the next, maybe even the final stage in our evolution. For that, they continuously try to catch some of them, while the tank opens at midnight. Mostly that works, but sometimes the creatures escape and roam around the university until security finally takes them out.

Have you never wondered why there are random puddles of water all around the main building? They are silent proof of who has been there at night. Let's be honest here, whoever believes, that there are just unfixable leaks in the roof of the main building is a dreamer. Another thing is the endless supply of Alaska Seelachs the canteen seems to have. This is how they get rid of hybrid corpses without anyone noticing. Since the meat is the same as that of a regular Seelachs. Sadly, not even vegans are safe from consuming the beasts. Their crystallized bones are ground to a salt-like substance, while their transparent blood is transformed into an oily liquid. Both are the base of pretty much every single menu in the canteen.

Don't feel too much pity for these creatures though. They are nothing more than predators and will kill you when they get the chance. It does not happen often, but sometimes the creatures find lonely students or small groups who are around after midnight. These poor souls are never seen again.

Whoever survives the attack will most likely be used in some form of experiment. Maybe they are even transformed into another bestial Seelachs hybrid. Just being dumped into the Seelachs tank after the experiments are finished. Sadly, the odd survivor is not enough to quench the scientists' endless hunger for human test subjects. What better place to get some more than the university itself?

Shortly after the founding it began with an occasional long-term student and people who knew too much disappearing, but with time they developed multiple systems to obtain more organic material. The first one was the lockers. They are being cleared out at 2 AM. Why? To lure unsuspecting students who forgot something back at night, so they can be abducted. As even these were not sufficient in number, the oldest faculty was approached, so they could play their part.

The law dean was always involved with the cover-up, but he was ready to fulfil a bigger role with his department. The plan was drafted and put into action under the cover of the pandemic. The opening hours for all libraries were shortened to 10 PM. Only law students were "allowed" to stay longer. As you can imagine, their attendance numbers in seminars have been dropping slowly but surely ever since. To combat this, they have just lowered the NC to allow more fresh students to join. Naturally, everyone who disappeared has been exmatriculated with all documents being in order, but they are never seen again.

All this is not what scares me. It has been going on for dozens of years already. Everything that changed during the pandemic is. Whatever has been going on down there, it all increased in intensity. The rising number of missing students is more than horrifying. Some of them I knew, even though nobody else

seems to remember them or care enough to ask where they have winded up. Not all of them were law students, forgot stuff in the lockers or knew too much. It almost feels random by now.

The experiments on the tank also seem to demand more water and electricity by the day. First victim was the swimming pool near the main hall, which got drained, but the rectorate even cut heating and energy to have more warm water for whatever happens down there. This year's Christmas closure was also expanded, but not to cut energy costs. At least not mainly. The real reason lies in the ferocious aggression, that the hybrids show towards the end of the year.

Around Christmas there is always a coordinated breakout attempt and security needs time to eliminate the stragglers or hide evidence. Problem is, that the last two attempts were more brutal and intense than any single attack before. Whatever the scientists did to them, some things changed and we will only be more endangered through their recklessness. That's why most rooms in the maintenance tunnels below the university are now blocked with danger signs and heavily fortified, so be warned when you venture too deep into the guts of our university. Problem is, that not only the lower levels are infested.

Some Seelachs hybrids have ventured into the water pipes. Ever since, brown goo sometimes flows out of the taps. A few were even able to hide from security with a bestial cunning. No matter the reason, some of them escaped. Why do you think at least a third of the offices were closed for a while? They needed to establish a perimeter for their search. The ones who fled the building either went into the Teutoburg forest and stalk innocent wanderers until their salt water dependence

gets the better of them or they infest the old Unistraße dorms. Mold covered walls seem to be a surprisingly good habitat for them. From what I have heard, the rectorate just plans to renovate the entire building complex. That's why all students have to leave their flats soon. Maybe it is best for their own safety.

The rectorate has also intensified its search for people who know about the tank. Pray to your gods, that they don't find you and please hide your knowledge deep. The experiments they do on you after you have been found are a fate far worse than death. Whatever keeps me safe, it will not apply to you. The director does not take kindly to snitches. Even some members of the project have disappeared lately and new research personnel took over. Maybe there was a conflict and the more radical elements won.

This would explain why we got an entirely new medical faculty. They not only brought most of the fresh staff but also have an abundance of scientific equipment and research facilities. They now even have a legal way to get human corpses and living animals onto the university grounds. Whatever they plan to do with it, I can only imagine the worst. Let's hope, there is someone with a sense of morale left in the operation or this tank could spill doom on our entire species.

Alas, this is all I know. At least all I want to tell without endangering you more than I already have. But I guess you want proof. My words can only get you this far and without certainty, something will always gnaw in the back of your mind, screaming for answers. Hide in the great hall after the sun sets. Be careful, that the guards don't see you. At exactly midnight you will hear the tank open. It is a slow creaking sound for just a few seconds and afterwards you can listen to the saltwater waves crashing against the class wall.

This should be enough to make you see the truth, but whenever you can also make out fast splashing footsteps in the distance, run away as fast as you can, because then they have escaped and you are their prey.



*Alaska Seelachs at the canteen at Bielefeld University;  
taken by Nils Apelmeier*

## Closing Word

Dear Reader,

you've made it!

Thank your for staying until the very last page and we hope that you enjoyed this little collection of creativity.

We - the Ink Drop team - are all students who decided that writing alone wasn't enough for us. With this journal, we wanted to create a platform at Bielefeld University for young aspiring writers and artists to share their work.

This second issue, "The Unspoken Issue", is the result of hard work, dedication and commitment. We want to thank all of the writers and artists for their participation and for sharing their wonderful poems, stories, and art.

We hope there's more to come, and until then:

Stay creative!

The Ink Drop Team

## Authors

**Nils Apelmeier** is a History student at Bielefeld University. He has been doing creative writing and storytelling for as long, as he can remember. When not thinking about historical or imaginary settings, he plays Pen and Paper or improvisational theatre. Despite all this, he still has a fair grip on reality... At least he hopes so.

**Darby Bartsch** is an English and History student and the team's resident hugger. Mainly focusing their writing on poetry, their heart has always belonged on the stage, working with a theater group that truly became their second home. If you don't find them there, they hide behind their DM-screen for Dungeons and Dragons or watch their New York Jets lose football games.

**Kay Dockhorn** is 24 years old, loves reading, writing, sketching and just generally being creative, and is a student at Bielefeld University. She has been writing her own little stories since 2009, and she became a self-published author 6 years later. Aside from her creativity, Kay enjoys many hobbies and first-hand experiences, which help inspire her writing.

**Paula Kaiser** studies English and educational science/pedagogy. She has been writing for forever and has always loved creating her own stories and letting her ideas blossom in her head. When not focussing on creative writing, she loves playing theatre or Dungeons and Dragons. All of her hobbies inspire her writing and vice versa.



**Merve Kalinci** is a student at Bielefeld University. She would like to thank Şengül, Cengiz, Melike and Alwalid for always being her source of inspiration. She also wants to quote Nizar Qabbani: „Not everything in the heart can be said, so God created sighs, tears, long sleep, cold smiles and shivering hands.“

**Patrick Kemper** is an English and History student who aims to become a teacher at Bielefeld University. In his free time, he likes to write poetry, play Pen and Paper where he acts as the Dungeon Master and play Magic: The Gathering. Currently, he is planning and working on a Star Wars DnD campaign and is the host of a Curse of Strahd campaign.

**Victoria Kraak** is a student at Bielefeld University.

**Katja Löhle** is a linguistics student with a knack for writing fantasy novels that are way too long. She has long given up on controlling what her characters do next and has resigned herself to concentrating on worldbuilding instead. When she isn't getting lost in daydreams or writing sessions, she spends her time translating comics, listening to audiobooks and picking up new hobbies like shells on the beach.

**Liliana Mendes Schneebeli** is currently studying French and English. She leads an inconspicuous life. But not too inconspicuous, as to be in itself conspicuous.

**Amanda Mesre-Nyame** is a student at Bielefeld University. She enjoys reading books that are based on a true story and likes to write short stories.

**Luisa Mut** is a student at Bielefeld University.

**Michelle Piwek** is an English student at Bielefeld University who uses creative writing as a form of therapy and expression. She is also part of the student group LiliGoesMental and writes non-fiction pieces about all things mental health for their blog. During the pandemic, she has refound her love of books and has been continuously reading since.

**Elena Zabelina** is a student at Bielefeld University.