

**ON THE LEFT BANK**

**A St Paul Socialist Lit Mag**

Volume 1, June 2022



Written and edited by David Ackos

We need more socialist lit! Want to be featured in the next volume, or want to join the editorial board? contact me at [davidackos@gmail.com](mailto:davidackos@gmail.com) :)

## A note from the editor/author:

Hi. My name is David Ackos (They/them). I'm a community organizer who works with renters in east side St Paul.

The situation is really bad right now. The solutions that have been suggested and initiated by politicians are sad, impotent bandaids on a gaping wound. Our neighbors have unsafe, undignified housing, and often live in fear, and this is our collective responsibility to fix. The market and our politicians are not helping the situation. The profit motive is evil. We need a paradigm shift.

But poetry can be fun! Here, have some poetry

## About this Zine

I have identified a need for more socialist storytelling, fiction, and poetry. We need fuel for our souls and for our creative minds in a world that seems relentlessly dark.

I believe one of our core duties as socialists is to help our hopeless friends and neighbors to believe a better world might really be possible.

So I hope this is the first of many socialist lit zines and other publications around the cities! I imagine there are already socialist lit publications I haven't found yet, but if you are doing this work or want to, please don't hesitate to get in contact with me!

I want this volume to be the first of many, and I want more authors featured in each one.

For brevity, this volume only includes poetry. However, I hope future iterations will have vignettes and art and short stories as well.

## Hedonist

What do I live for?  
is it the blossoms on the vine  
the tart fruit on the tongue

A lover's soft and kind words  
kisses in the dark  
colors in the light

the lapping waves and kind sun  
a table of friends  
smiling faces, the light beyond the shadows

Work to live, live laugh and love  
for sure  
but it gets hard

Medical debt growing like the guilt  
of every sick day home  
and unopened mail that overflows the mind  
and bowl

So yes, I live for those kisses  
and gentle caresses  
the table of smiling friends

when I can

Lazy

"Don't call yourself lazy" they said.  
I feel lazy though  
there's so much I want to do  
a world unbuilt

grass and weeds grown long  
no more money for vacation  
so much work I left for Monday

No time to grieve  
no time to eat or rest  
inspiration beckons only in vacuum

Lazy? Perhaps not  
But how to live in a world  
built upside down

## Dogwalkers

adorable little cones  
of paper, as if full of fried potatoes  
green and crushed and  
ready to be burnt

they are cute aren't they  
snack size, in their little tin  
meant for a brief jaunt

on the way to steak  
andegger, maybe

burn and rise little ones



Ancestors

A letter

Great Yiayia Rosa, whose surname

I bear with honor and gratitude  
George and Mary, Chava and Tama,  
ancestors I never met  
I write from 2022, in the city

Of St Paul. It is a city I love  
and call home with love  
I hope I honor your memories  
by living in love and integrity  
I know this life I live is foreign

to the lives you knew in Greece and Ukraine  
and Duluth in the 20s and later  
My mother tells me the antisemitism and hate  
were unbearable

I live in fear of pogroms now, but not the same way  
My life happens at a time of great changes  
America of my day has much in common with Weimar  
Germany I'm afraid. My own uncle posted libelous

murderous propaganda  
about my beloved Muslim sisters and brothers  
I know; Menachem and Rosa, Chava and Tama,  
you know this hate and its accompanying fear  
and violence

much more intimately than I do.  
I hope I never know fascism like you do my  
beloved ancestors  
I carry your hopes with my own

I am free in a free land  
I suppose you could have told me how Israel would  
turn out. They live a militarized life.  
In fear but not unlike you or I.

I do not wish to live a life of violence  
I do not wish for fear to dictate my life  
But to live authentically  
is to be a target for the fascists of my day

My mother, your granddaughter  
has asked that I do not publish  
an honest poem  
of rage and sorrow and helplessness

I wish you could help me know what to do

With love,  
Davy Ackos

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