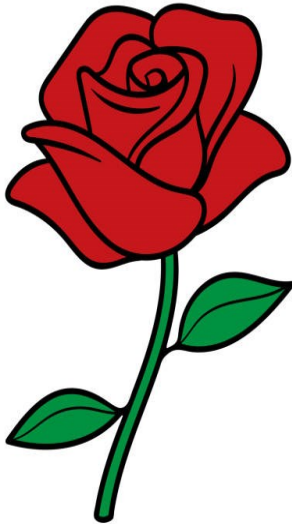


# On the Left Bank

A St Paul Socialist Lit Mag

Edited by Cory Cole, Valentine  
Seebart, and David Ackos



As leftists, we need fuel for our souls and our creative minds in a world that seems relentlessly dark.

Struggle and art have always been deeply intertwined.

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

That's why we need your writing, your creativity, and your expertise.

Help us weave a better future! Submit your (short) creative writing, poetry, or visual art or volunteer for the editorial board: [leftbankmag@proton.me](mailto:leftbankmag@proton.me)

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We need more socialist lit! Submit  
your writing at [leftbankmag@proton.me](mailto:leftbankmag@proton.me)

## **Fighting America**

Shan Fletcher

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Because Q4 profits require breathing  
bodies  
the process of fighting is slow.

rarely devastating.  
often mundane.

it doesn’t always draw blood,  
but it will leave you bruised.

Like two loyal sentries from rivaling  
gangs  
with the soldier’s misfortune of meet-  
ing

in the coke room at a party,  
in an alley in the night,

from time, to time, to time,  
the circumstances arise

where you and America  
have to fight.

maybe it's your health plan,  
maybe it's a ticket,

maybe it's a hate crime,  
maybe it's eviction.

it never fails to find you  
whatever shadow where you hide

reduced to just your fists.  
maybe a switchblade with.

rarely devastating.  
often mundane.

it's not gonna kill you,  
but it could

one clumsy, unlucky corner,  
it could.

## boat party on the river

Teresa Conley O'Connell

i wish i could  
live in your  
white skin for just  
one afternoon on a boat  
on the river

country music plays  
giggling at everything  
taking cute pictures  
because we ARE cute  
we're thin  
white  
women

we're so silly and drunk  
turn up the music!  
post this to the grid

no idea of how exposed  
and how vulnerable  
how everyone sees in  
truly wishing  
to be in that carefree moment

you're so oblivious to the insane luck it is to be you  
i want to wear a bikini with my average and pale body  
not being judged  
because my body, not too flat but definitely not curvy,  
is the standard  
my mediocrity is beauty  
and cuteness  
and sweet  
and free spirited  
in brown skin,  
the music is played more quietly, so we don't disturb  
my body is covered up so its otherness can't be  
judged  
by you  
what i do wear is put together  
to make my curves  
as flat and as white as possible  
i dress in your uniform, hoping it's enough to camou-  
flage that under it, is my brown skin  
i just want to be free  
floating on the river  
where my only care is  
how much my cheeks hurt from smiling

from the bathroom floor  
max mastin

i am an optimist/  
i plan for the future even though/  
it is not promised  
-  
in my dreams i picture/  
two small hands clasped tightly on  
pinkies/  
on the better nights - on the bad  
nights i see/  
only the ceiling, and the aura/  
where light had once shone  
-  
sometimes insomnia/  
feels far more restful than sleeping  
does/  
you say you feel the same  
-  
i write sweet lullabies/  
songs with no refrain to echo back/  
the words stand lonely



-  
do you lay on the tile/  
burdened by your disappearing/  
options, no choice left  
-  
do you fight the good fight/  
or has that passion left with your  
hope/  
sink into the bed/  
lay beside me if you can and/  
you can dream for the both of us

## **Night Dreams on Lake Street**

**Benjamin Werner**

Lake street  
In my night dreams

I begin my midnight flight  
By crossing the river  
Merriam Park  
Shooting west  
Of the shadow falls  
Towards sleepy Longfellow  
Past my childhood street

Past Hymie's  
The Blue Moon  
Now Milkweed  
Past 55  
And the Y  
Past the Piñateria  
And Ingebretsen's  
Slowly, slowly  
The classic two lane back up  
Behind the bus

Faster  
And faster  
I fly  
So fast  
I don't see  
The nonsensical K-Mart  
I slip into the cool waters  
Of Bde Maka Ska  
Night-dreaming  
Of Liberation

Burnt Out Days  
David Lauer Ackos

Why do I miss the burnt-out days  
when you and I would break the law  
come home to the smell of cat piss  
and shit-stained couches  
when we would get high in your  
grandparents' vacant apartment  
fire climbing down our lungs  
ride around town in cars that barely  
worked, that never would be ours  
We were aimless  
angry, sad, wallowing  
I hated myself, and everyone but you  
never gave the world a chance  
and we would waste our days  
as we wished to waste ourselves  
smoke from aluminum cans  
in the basement of your brother's  
dirty  
unfinished  
wreck of stucco

a nightmare, but for the far-off lights  
and I would wish I had the guts  
to jump off the bridge  
and crash through the thin ice  
let the river take me to the sea  
but there was beauty sometimes  
I would write in my black book  
and we would climb the radio  
tower above town  
wash ourselves in the windchill  
white-knuckles on steel  
and wake to the cold  
harsh light of our lives  
I wish I could say  
we didn't have a care in the world  
but each careless moment  
crushed  
so why do I miss those frost-bit days

**Illusions**  
**(A children's rhyme)**

Aaron Micheau

Lock 'em all up  
Throw away the key  
Justice will be done  
Just wait, you'll see

Community policing  
Maintains the order  
Lock up the schools  
Wall up the border

I don't like those people  
They're not like me  
Their drugs are a scourge  
But morning coffee

Can't make the rent  
Or pay the bills  
Health care's too much  
Depression kills

The threats they are many  
Crime rates but a fable  
Good schools would be nice, but  
Just cops on the table

Sell me a dream  
Of public safety  
Because I'm still not safe  
And definitely not free

The Night Before Winter – Visual Art by Valentine Seebart



The night before winter

Valentine Seebart

The black branches are veins infesting the  
night sky,

As we are shrouded in darkness there  
shines a brilliant dim sun,

A miracle for those who can suffer cold  
contemplations, theology of contrast alone.

All my friends live on one street  
Allison Leopold

All my friends live on one street  
And when they sing I hear them  
We trade fresh basil for a tune  
And a helping hand for freedom

All my friends live on one street  
And when they're sick I heal them  
And Summer helps us tend the roots  
And Autumn helps us feel them

All my friends live on one street  
Our garden grows aplenty  
So when a stranger moseys by  
We share and never empty

All my friends live on one street  
We make our homes' adornments  
The teapots, bowls, and tapestries too  
Our block is our performance

All my friends live on one street  
We cannot keep our distance  
And when the other streets call out  
We fight in their resistance

All my friends live on one street  
We break our Shabbos bread  
And when we've had enough to eat  
We see that our neighbors are fed

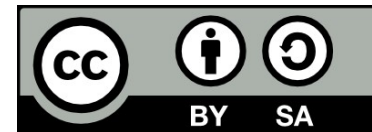
All my friends are out today  
No, I'm not always with them  
Yet still I hear them anyway  
Their love, their song, their rhythm



opinions or views expressed here DO NOT necessarily reflect the positions held by Twin Cities DSA, or national DSA.

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Editors & Curators were David Ackos, Cory Cole & Valentine Seebart.



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