



On The Left Bank

Vol. 2 Issue 5

Summer 2023



Cover art "Hope" by Brooke Bartholemew
Size: 12" x 9". Oil on canvas. 2022.
You can find more of Brooke's art at
www.brookebartdoesart.com and on Instagram
[@brookebartdoesart](https://www.instagram.com/brookebartdoesart)

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*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 is really 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)*

*In the meantime, enjoy!*

*Solidarity,*

*The Left Bank Editorial Board*

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*Bearing the Cycle*

Sara Rabon

– I cannot bare it

Constant déjà vu at the edges of the infinite

Repeat visions flash before, after, and

Every poor labored practice

Left to the indebted children

(Buy a house and cook their spirits in the oven)

I feel the arrow's pull, and

Listen to the voices call out

Their lyrical longing, dripping honey money

It takes all my strength to deny their percolating promises

The cost too obvious

Yes, I can see the abyss for what it is

And yet –

# California Zephyr

Edward Sheehy

California Zephyr  
with sweet breath  
the embers fan  
a recent burn zone  
charred pines  
in ghastly repose  
from inglorious battle  
fire hazard is high  
river level is low  
in the American River Valley  
down the road  
from Sutter's Mill  
where to this very day  
golden nuggets tumble down cataracts  
and streams  
irrigating fields  
of endless growth  
and dominion.

\*The California Zephyr is a passenger train operated by Amtrak between Chicago and San Francisco.



## Broken Records (Hot Girl Summer)

Brooke Bartholomew

34" x 38". Oil on linen. 2023.

This painting, part of the Two Degrees Warmer series, was inspired by the record heat waves across the globe in the summer of 2022. The female figure, a metaphor for Earth itself, is marred by burns, imagery drawn from my experience taking care of my first burns patient as a nurse. Stretched along a desolate expanse of hot concrete, the figure, heat waves dancing around her form, seeks shade from the only tree in sight, an urban sapling too small to provide meaningful relief from the heat. On the horizon, a city skyline emerges like a mirage, with a capitol building at its center, the powerful seat of decision-making responsible for yet far removed from the consequences at hand. Somewhere beyond the edges of the frame, perhaps there is a part of the city insulated from the heat-island effect of concrete and skyscraper, a place with mature tree cover, green roofs, and native plants, healthy waterways, fewer roads. The injustice is seen here, but it is our task to create the vision of a more just future together.

Broke-Ass Millionaire

4 jobs and new loans,  
I'm broke but make a fortune!  
Shame it's for the boss.

Baby Frey Asks Why?

"It's really a shame.  
Someone needs to do something!"  
Said the strong mayor

Ethan BF



**'be gay. do crimes  
a poem against Rainbow capitalism"**

restaurant wall  
shot in  
brickley lipstick.  
the signature singed verbs.  
billion breaths eviscerate of  
the burnt stomachs of cigarettes.  
the ambiguous egos of woke's  
shadows deny guzzling bicarbonate(s).  
why couldn't i make wall wear some bomb's pancre  
as with stapled caricature  
and connect the fluid- erlenmeyer it with the trigger  
-touch...-

---

i wonder if they will tell us  
before they kill the world  
yet, they called it Jungbunzlauer  
yellow as school bus  
carrying hornet poison on .

# HISTORICALLY QUEER FLOWERS

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



@SCREAMINGCOLORART / ANDY CRAWFORD

## KEY

1. **Rose** - *Honors trans lives, which are taken at an alarming rate, as a way to reclaim roses from being a traditional symbol of mourning. "Give us our roses while we are still here."*
2. **Lavender** - *A symbol of queer resistance and empowerment, associated with several different queer identities. Lexicalized in the 1930s when referencing those with a "lavender streak."*
3. **Trillium** - *Has both stamens and carpals, which makes them "bisexual" or "perfect" (synonyms both in and out of the botany world). A recent addition to the canon, symbolizing that bisexuality is slow to be recognized even within queer spaces.*
4. **Green Carnation** - *A symbol of gay men popularized by Oscar Wilde, who instructed friends to wear them on their lapels to the premiere of his comedy, "Lady Windermere's Fan."*
5. **Violet** - *A favorite of Sappho, who referenced the flower often in her poetry. Her work includes plenty of imagery of women in "violet tiaras." A great gift for your "historically close" gal pals.*

*Trans as in Fuck You*  
jd hegarty (they/she/fae)

We become relatives when  
your eyes open and ancestors  
when they shut. My politic is  
whatever lets my sisters thrive, whatever  
lets my brothers become fathers, whatever  
keeps my family alive—intact. Ongoing.  
A legacy—history of power  
coming for our throats. We sidestep and  
subsist but deserve so much more.

They try to make us canaries when  
we are birds of paradise. Pull us like weeds  
yet we grow in the cracks of their structures—I  
am holding my roots in the earth for you.  
I reach to the sky to be seen. When  
you are low, raise your chin—eyes  
to the sky anywhere you see me, I  
will build you a home. There will be  
honey and flowers. There will be dancing

and none of us will ever  
again have need to fear

*mask//unmask*

jd hegarty (they/she/fae)

the sign on the gas station door  
says *no masks* and the men inside  
look like violence. people keep saying  
*post pandemic* as if time has passed  
but people I know keep dying. in 2020  
my friend died and I got on prozac  
to match my cat and three  
years later I got off prozac and think  
about how they were older than me but  
now we will always be each other's  
elder. february is the bad month I am  
learning more and more. sometimes I try to  
imagine the world before. *learn to live  
with it* is another way of saying *abandon*.  
nature is not healing and sometimes  
it snows in april and sometimes  
the sky is full of smoke and we pretend  
that tomorrow is promised. the thing is  
we only have to pretend while we  
are awake and then we get to dream.  
the thing about shadows is they can't  
be cast without light, beaming

jd's elf-published chapbook of sad gay love poems, *the clearest blue*, is available for free at [jdhegarty.com](http://jdhegarty.com). fae can be found on twitter @YourAuntieJD

## **Deviation**

Benjamin Werner

### *Pride*

They took Pride from us  
It was ours  
Remember?  
Pride belonged  
To the people

Pride did not belong  
To the Target corporation

Pride did not belong  
To the sellout mayor  
And his gangster entourage

Pride did not belong  
To the cops  
Who would beat us  
Any other day  
Until we bruised as blue as their uniforms

### *Nevermore*

We will take Pride back  
And in doing so  
We will be set free

## **Cop City (Will Never be Built)**

Aaron Micheau

Clear cut the forest  
Build a city for cops  
To give them more training  
Aim better their shots

They raid and they kill  
For their city for cops  
For corporate-run condos  
And gentrified lots

But a city for cops  
A city is not  
None for me thank you  
Not even a drop

A city has homes  
Parks forests and schools  
Tend those instead  
Develop the tools

Build a city that cares  
And follows the will  
Of the folk that live there  
Not a paymaster's till

A beacon of hope  
A true city shines  
It meets people's needs  
Endures across time

Such is a city  
I think you will find  
That will easily leave  
Those cops behind





*(Deforestation + Wildfires + Permafrost  
Melting) + Rain = .*  
Brooke Bartholemew  
20" x 30". Oil on linen. 2022.

This painting, part of the *Two Degrees Warmer* series, was inspired by a spate of mudslides in South America and South Asia in early 2022. Increased mudslides are a secondary effect of climate change, a natural process intensified by changing climate and weather patterns. Causal factors are noted in the title as a formula, ingredients to a man-made destructive recipe. Industry hides behind these words - developers, loggers, insatiable extractors. A symbol of the Earth, the figure is colossal in scale and nestled in a mountain range, her limbs sloughing their forms into streams of mud enveloping the trees below. Clouds in the background whisper at the rains that just passed. A rainbow crowns the figure, a beacon of hope, her hair a bright spectrum of colors marking her identity.

Free Please Take  
Kara Lewis

My neighbors throw old clothes on the street  
like wilting rafts. I can't resist  
plugging the silken holes, searching  
for pearl buttons roughened and shaped like shells.  
I remember the definition of salvage: *To rescue  
something lost at sea*. Each evening, I swim  
in men's button-downs, sweat-wicked  
and sniffing salty body spray.  
My apartment is land-locked, oarless.  
The way to be close to your neighbors now  
is to fold their hand-me-downs  
instead of shaking their hands.  
I thrift in rich neighborhoods, masquerading  
as someone neighbored  
by mansions, someone who can take  
up sailing. My parents drive their boat on Sundays.  
I shop at thrift stores named after saints,  
trying on the type of clothes my mother wore  
when I was a child. Skirts still made of linen,  
Shein shelved next to Yves Saint Laurent.

I watch shoppers feel  
for the difference like dented avocado skin.  
I want to believe I would know beauty  
If I brushed against it. I want to believe  
I would know what holds up  
like the anchor my mother pulled from mud  
for a decade. She twists her grandma's ring  
on her neck when she asks why  
I don't want to get married or have kids.  
Her optimism is in good, vintage condition.  
But what would I hand down aside from fake gold  
tainted and turning green like a manmade lake?  
I stare nakedly when my neighbors toss their nightstand.  
Later, I'll think of the two worn water rings  
while I filter tap water and siphon it into a single glass.  
My roommate is scrubbing an antique loveseat  
with dish soap and a toothbrush  
saying, You'll never find anything like this at Ikea.  
You'll never find anything like this ever again.

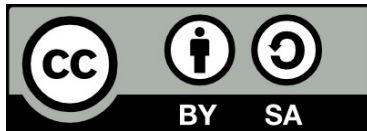


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Thanks to everyone who has continued to make this project possible, especially Twin Cities DSA for providing printing and labor.

Editors & Curators for issue 5 are Kara Lewis, Valentine Seebart, Cory Cole & David Ackos



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