

THE
REDWATER
REVIEW



A SKYRIM ZINE
EDITED BY W.A. HAWKINS





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A Note from the Editor

Welcome, dear reader, to Redwater Review, Tamriel's preeminent literary journal. This is no Brief History of the Empire or Biography of Barenziah. The tales and poetry contained within this volume are filled with enough action to rival that of the Wolf Queen and enough passion to make the Lusty Argonian blush.

First, I must apologize. In a sense, this publication falls into a long line of Skyrim special collections, re-masters, and re-releases. But I can assure you, this is Skyrim like you've never seen it before. From erasures of Kodlak's journal to tragic accounts of inter-species love and defiance, this collection has something for everyone—be they Nord, Imperial, or even Thalmor.

In editing this journal, I knew the task was daunting. Anyone willing to play the same game for more than a decade despite countless teasers, trailers that materialize nothing, and vague mentions of release dates that come and go without so much as sale on Steam would need writing powerful enough to warm hearts colder than High Hrothgar if they were going to read it.

Fortunately, the writers who heeded the submission call delivered. It was a true joy receiving such highly creative work for such a niche concept. It was also tough to say no to really inventive and well-crafted pieces.

I'm proud of this publication and I'm honored to share it with you.

So sit back, pour yourself some mead, or some of the famous skooma from which this journal gets its name, and enjoy the first edition of Redwater Review. While we may never get another Elder Scrolls game, we can always cherish the stories and characters, treasure the time spent playing, and more importantly, love the people with whom we experienced and explored the world of Tamriel.

Oh, and one more thing:

We know.

-WA Hawkins
Morndas, 20th Day of Evening Star, 2021

You move slowly with your weapon drawn.

—Skyrim loading screen

Lost Hymn to a Lover

Meet me on the Dawnstar coast,
There we shall share a Dragonborn toast.
Cheers to the salt of the pale white sea,
Cheers to this feeling between you and me.
As long as we live,
May we forever be,
Truthful, brave,
And eternally free.

Valorie Nichols is a lover of all things fantasy, living in the woods in upstate New York. You can find her talking about gaming, cosplay and mythology on Twitter @Meadowdays or on Instagram @Vawowie.

I Know Who You Are (Hail Sithis)

Big talk of acceptance and opening the mind to all the world's possibilities—and the Mage's Guild couldn't handle the thought of two men loving one another; doubly so for the Altmer/Argonian compromising position the college heads had stumbled upon in the Hall of Attainment.

He got shipped off, and I got disowned.

I wept and got shithouse rat drunk every day for 7 months, pissing away all the funds I had in the world, with only enough left to buy my meager possessions from a kind-hearted spinster who was moving to Riften.

Then the letters came—always appearing before me in a shimmering miniature of the Lover's Stone.

Burning hammer of love had forged our hearts into diamonds for one another—Qa'ki was happy to smuggle my replies in exchange for some of my yellow mountain flowers.

Then the penny dropped and he offered to smuggle me to the Cyrodilic Mages Guild—if I could get the coin.

* * *

My life is stew and cheap wine and flower picking and hag-gling and waiting and longing and dreaming for the day I can lay my hand upon his sweet scaly skin once again. I

hear a drunken traveler stumble by, singing "Ragnar the Red," & drift off smiling, remembering when my love used to sing it to me.

Clem Flowers (They/ Them) is a poet, eldritch horror, & soft spoken southern transplant living in a mountain's shadow in Home of Truth, Utah. Ideally, they'd live as a tavern owner with their wife & cat, selling stews, mead with juniper berry & have local Falkreath bards as entertainment for tired travelers and lovely locals.

Vassago's Journal Entry

Fredas, 3rd day of Hearthfire

I left Solitude prison.

I obtained civilian clothes from clotheslines in unsuspecting backyards.

I walked out of the city. The guards nodded at me because now I'm a civilian just like everyone else.

Morning fog still in the air. The Khajiits were setting up their wares just outside the city.

I nodded at them. They nodded back.

I went down to Karth river, avoiding the docks. I turned left and went past the stables and turned right.

The trial zigzagged.

Fog cleared as the sun rose.

There was a lumber mill on the shore with a small rowboat. A big man with a bad eye was chopping wood and an Orc was working the mill.

I talked to them. They'd just ate breakfast. The man with one eye owned the mill. He was a big jolly man. He fought in a war. The Orc saw battle at some point in his life, too.

The man said I could help the Orc work the Mill and stay the night. I asked him the best way to get to Falkreath. He said crossing the river and catching a carriage in Morthal is the shortest distance but there's a haunted marsh of frost-bite spiders on the other side of the river.

* * *

I liked the Orc. He knew I'd never worked a Mill before but showed patience.

I saw mudcrabs on rocks in the middle of the river.

I took my clothes off and borrowed a dull iron dagger from the Orc. I dived in, feeling my breath escape with the cold of the river. The northern water freezing my scales. My tail propelled me. I had to counteract the strong current flowing from the Sea of Ghost.

I reached the rocks, killed the mudcrabs and swam back.

The man and the Orc patted me on the back. The man went in to prepare steamed mudcrab legs while me and the Orc finished up for the day.

Inside, the man's cabin was cozy. The mudcrab legs on the table.

We sat down to eat.

Just the two of them lived there.

We clinked mugs of cheap ale and drank. I slurped the mudcrab legs, savoring the warm butter and tender meat.

Near the end of dinner, I asked the man if I could borrow his rowboat to cross the river. He looked at me bewildered. He thought I was joking.

I narrowed my reptile eyes at him.

"Well, I'm sorry, friend, but I can't do that. I need that boat. It's too risky anyways."

He told me about a carriage outside the city gates of Solitude in the morning.

I told him I can't go back to Solitude.

His brow cringed. I saw the Orc in my peripheral, his body tightening. His face darkened.

The Orc struck first.

I plunged a butterknife into his eye, he screamed. I disarmed him of his dull iron dagger. I stabbed the dagger through his hand, pinning him to the small wooden table. I took the butterknife out of his eye and sank it into his heart. He collapsed onto the table with a thud.

The man ran for the door.

I took the dead Orc's dagger and caught him before he reached the door and stabbed him in the back of the head, at the base of the skull. The dagger broke. He went down hard. Very dead. Very quickly. He didn't suffer.

I sat back down at the table and finished the steamed mud-crab legs. There were specks of blood on them but I didn't

I sat back down at the table and finished the steamed mudcrab legs. There were specks of blood on them but I didn't mind. I'm looking forward to leaving for Morthal in the morning.

#ail Sithis

Jon Berger lives in Saginaw, MI. He tweets @bergerbomb44.

To Sofie and Lucia

Why are you begging
alone beneath bare branches?
And you, in the snow,
have you sold any flowers?

I will buy them all.
You do not recognize me,
but I know you well.

I have lived countless lifetimes,
as beggar, and prince,
I have done great things,
I have stared into
Oblivion's eyes and laughed.

But each time we meet,
no matter who you may see,
you will always be
true daughters to me.

Grannia Griffith is a typewriter poet for hire who has called New Orleans her home for eight years. She can be found on Frenchmen St. on busy weekend nights, typing custom poetry for passers by. She started exploring Skyrim at the beginning of quarantine 2020, and still plays whenever she gets the chance.

The Ebony Warrior

I was maxing out Illusion by casting Muffle on the ground when I met him by the hold gates in Whiterun. The Ebony Warrior. Famous for doing all that can be done. No quests are left or villains to be slain for him. He only appears at level eighty when your character is strong enough to put up a fight. He starts a conversation and tells you to send him off to Sovngarde because he needs someone worthy enough to kill him. I worked hard to give him that honor.

I completed the game on Master and now, I was doing it on Legendary. Every achievement was mine, so I challenged myself now and the Ebony Warrior was the hardest person I ever faced. On a lesser difficulty, I've taken him down with different methods. As a mage, I casted Rout on him and took away his desire to fight. He was a ragdoll then. The next time we met—I killed him with a single hit from behind with the assassin blade perk and shrouded gloves. I thought it would be funny. I copied a walkthrough. I felt bad ever since and now, I gave him the fight he deserved. On the hardest difficulty, I couldn't take him mano a mano. I summoned a dragon—Durnehviir, an undead one—It had no owner. It was perfect for a fight. The Ebony Warrior tells you to meet him at his Last Vigil when you're ready.

He's a whole person bigger than you. If you come to the fight with your weapon drawn, he charges you. It's better to show up peacefully, then fight. I started by calling Durnehviir to me. I wielded the Dragonborne sword and wore Daedric armor. No lifesteal, no magic, no shields. All

brawn and blood. I saved before I fought him because you always die. A lot. He truly is the best. The Ebony Warrior has so

much health and resistance—the fight draws out long until we're both winded. Durnehviir even left me to finish the job. I killed him by having him follow me up a mountain. At the peak—the Sun blasted behind me—I jumped and attacked him full swing. His final words are always, "At last. Sovngarde." I never looted his body. He needed everything for the other side.

Tanner Armatis (he/him) eagerly waits for the next Elder Scrolls. Visit his website tannerarmatis.com to read more work.

In Which I Vandalize Kodlak's Journal

I dream of
Sovngarde.
a great wolf
with welcoming arms.
eager
as a beast.

I turn away from Sovngarde
and enter the Hunting Grounds.
I have a choice
I had not seen before. I look into
to see the same wolf
and I together.

this is enough
to inspire writing

I spoke with
the beast, and

his heart's fire burn [redacted] ed
[redacted]
[redacted] around [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] the blood [redacted]

Fortune smiles upon [redacted] me [redacted]
[redacted] for [redacted] his transformations [redacted]
[redacted] we [redacted] chose [redacted]
[redacted] the beastblood. [redacted] it's [redacted]
[redacted] suffering [redacted]
seem [redacted] ed [redacted] to amaze
[redacted]

[redacted] the shadows [redacted]
[redacted] who wished to [redacted]
[redacted] dream, [redacted]
[redacted] stand with [redacted] the beast. [redacted]
[redacted] wishing [redacted]
[redacted] to [redacted] reveal [redacted]
[redacted] our secrets [redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] I [redacted]
[redacted] counsel [redacted] my [redacted]

[redacted] destiny [redacted] carving before hitching [redacted].

[redacted] I look for [redacted] blood. [redacted] writing [redacted] [redacted] is [redacted] [redacted] the only [redacted] world [redacted].

I [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] need [redacted] trickery. [redacted] the rot takes me.

[redacted] I [redacted] know [redacted] the blood, [redacted] carry the beastblood, and [redacted] our troubles [redacted]

I'm [redacted] a secret among this [redacted] loss [redacted] (my heart aches), emotions are fraying, and the walls [redacted] fall.

[redacted] war against [redacted] death [redacted] hearts [redacted] vengeance [redacted] fear [redacted] fury.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We have not had cause to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] regret. I [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
dream [REDACTED] to suc-
ceed [REDACTED]

I [REDACTED] dream [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] to trust [REDACTED]. I [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] trust the instincts of my heart, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] residing [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] loss [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] solitary [REDACTED] fiery, and [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] s a true [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] turning heart.

I will [REDACTED] speak to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the witches of
Glenmoril. [REDACTED] our path [REDACTED] is [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] poetic justice for the tricksters who first cursed
us.

Melissa Martini (she/her) is a short fiction writer and Capricorn from New Jersey. She studied Creative Writing in both undergrad and graduate school at Seton Hall University. Currently, she serves as Founder & EIC of Moss Puppy Magazine and is staff at the winnow mag. She can be found @melissquirtle and melibeans.wixsite.com/home. She has three dogs, all of which are fluffballs.

*What is better: to be born good or to overcome your evil
nature through great effort?*

—Paarthurnax

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