

THE OVERCOAT

ISSUE #19



SPRING 2024

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Haiku by Indiana Davidson +
accompaniment by Leo Tolstoy.

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers, Radicals and all those who Rendezvous in the Library,

We have something for you: a new edition of...
The Overcoat!

Nineteen means that the magazine is had more releases than our students have had birthdays. However, it's feeling fresher than ever with some brand new contributors: Chloe Devenish, Holly McGregor, Lily Saltmarsh and Ava Harris! Maybe you're next on the debut list...?

If you make it past our beautiful cover artwork by Holly McGregor, you'll find yourself at the SparkLit award-winning poem 'Rhyme and Reason' by Alvoli Anderson. Beyond that, you'll find heartwarming prose on offering and giving, surprise tea encounters, French historical epics and even some basketballs... You'll find reminiscence and new recognition in Chloe Devenish's debut piece and a course for the heart and the mind in Sean's dovecotes. Find Indi on the back page (we think she's got something extra special for us next issue...!)

Did we mention that we have our first lift-out poster since Issue #3?! Alycia Hermawan's paintings ponder the nature of friendship, nostalgia and the ways in which we change as we grow older. We hope you can find space for this on a worthy wall!

A few opportunities are available to you at the back of the issue, and remember — we'd love to hear from you!

Over and out,

Team Overcoat

THE OVERCOAT

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Rhyme and Reason

BY ALVOLI ANDERSON

It's May of Twenty-Twenty-Four
Four hundredth time hearing 'What Was I Made For?'
Not once of my own accord
A subtle search for our creator

I wonder what the people thought
In May of Nineteen-Twenty-Four
Stuck between the two world wars
In a brief and blissful roar
Around the ring of history,
Repeating every century
Tracing before B-C-E,
Taking from the knowledge tree
A first abuse of opportunity
Starts a spiral called humanity
A twist that brought about gravity

It's only now that I can see
The interwoven irony
An ignorance we've always known
Since what wasn't ours to own
Fell from a branch we were supposed
To nurture, though we did not grow
And since then, all we ever learnt
Was, despite every repeated turn
And the Everything we did not earn,
To neglect the One who, not even
For a moment, thought before
He spoke 'I AM' for our 'therefore'
Descartes Declares, or Billie sings
In breathy notes like that of
Which brought us into being;
Into Twenty-Twenty-Four
Still pondering this Everything
'What was I Made For?'

A Cup of Tea

BY KEELEY BUTCHER

Anxiously he taps his leg on the floor, up and down. He soon realizes the rattling table, and immediately pauses. He didn't wish to ruin the perfect table before she came. Afterall, he had selected this table specifically, just to make her comfortable; he'd had to wait an extra hour for it too.

But it was worth it: a small round table, perfectly flat with an exquisite view for their viewing pleasure.

His jaw dropped when he saw her, draped across the waiter's arm, as he gently placed her down – well, at least the waiter thought it was gentle. He noticed the tiny drop of liquid that flowed from her beautiful lip. He stole her from the waiter and merely scowled at him as he left.

"Don't worry love, it's just us now, just you and me", he whispered gently and he drank his newly acquired cup of tea.



Food for Thought

BY NYLAH HOLBROOK

Jace loved to cook.

He had since he was tiny. His dad taught him how, and he treasured it. The smells made him feel warm, and mixing the right amount of certain things together to create something that could be shared felt *right* to him. The same pattern, everytime, the way Da taught him. Everytime he smelt fresh dough, or homemade tomato sauce, he thought of dark hands guiding his small ones, booming laughter when an ingredient fell on the floor for the third time.

He didn't cook a lot, though. Not once Jayla got famous, not since he had to move with her to her fancy, new Apple-Store-like house, with only them and random butlers to fill the space. "*Good for publicity*", they'd been told. And he adored his twin more than anything - but he despised everything about the life she had unknowingly dragged him into.

They had a cook there - and he was very good - but Jace hardly ever ate his food. He felt bad because he knew that he put care into it (Jace knew the feeling), but it wasn't made with his father's hands and wasn't accompanied by the yelling of their younger siblings.

He still made food for Jayla, however. Not every night, like he used to, but every fortnight or so, she would find a warm plate of ravioli on her desk with some boba. Her brother's way of saying that he cared, that he put in the time to make her something that mattered more than just a job. She wouldn't mention it but she'd always give him an extra hug before bed - the silent thank you that they both knew he didn't know how to handle upfront.

That was it, for a long time. Jace loved his sister but her fame made them distant from everyone around them. She was an icon in many ways, and icons don't just hang out with friends at malls. And Jace, being as devoted to his twin as he was, stuck by her with the same lifestyle.

Then he met Hope. Beautiful, lovely Hope, with her caramel-coloured skin and blinding smile. One of the only makeup artists that ever talked to him, despite working on his sister. He remembered the first time they held hands, the first time she told him she liked him and the first time, especially, that he cooked for her.

He had made her waffles. She had mentioned one time how much she loved them, especially with strawberries and cream. So that was exactly what he handed her the first time she came to their house. She had squeezed Jace's hand, lifting the other one to her cheek in awe. The way she grinned when she took the first bite made him feel like he was having a joyous heart attack. He loved it, and for the first time in a long time he remembered why he loved to cook in the first place.

Because it was meant to be *shared*.

When Sadar saved Jayla's life, Jace made him fries with homemade chicken on the side. He barely knew the boy at the time, but it was what he had seen him eating before dropping everything in his arms to pull Jayla to the side, just in time to save her from the motorbike. Sadar himself was near silent the whole time, almost unhappy to be treated with such care. But Jace had to thank him - he had to - and that was the only way he knew how.

Next was Willow, who was apparently a bit of a packaged deal with Sadar, although the latter also seemed rather surprised by this development. At first he was cautious of the girl, but

the more that Sadar got puppy-eyes when she was around - the more she taught Jace about headphones and stimuli - ended up in him making her a berry milkshake one day, which she thanked him with by buying him a milkshake sticker (he stuck it on his laptop).

Willow's cousin, Nevan, reminded Jace a lot of himself in a lot of painful ways. One night, when Nevan was cuddled up in the corner of the couch and trembling from a nightmare, Jace handed him a bowl of warm soup that his father taught him how to make. Nevan gave him one of his rare, tiny smiles in return.

Through Hope and Sadar, his second family was growing. Dot, with her orderly ways and strong hatred of stains, actually loved plates of fruit with juices that dripped down her arm. Thoma grew his own veggies, and they made great carrot cake. Alice loved spicy chicken that made her nose burn, and Yamazaki loved cupcakes with icing so sweet it made his jaw tingle. Myles liked lamb but it had to be soft enough for his weakened left side to chew. Ry ate sand until an embarrassingly old age, so they liked anything salty.

And one day, sitting at the long table in their now less-pristine house, now covered in drawings and clothes and wild TV channels playing in the background, his new family filling the seats and yelling about the character development of Bowser and Mario, Jace realized something.

Every piece of food on this table he had made with Thoma's ingredients. The art pieces on the walls were from Yamazaki's own hands, and the stickers on people's arms were all custom bought by Willow. The clean piles of mattresses were carefully folded by Dot, and the new security cameras to stop weird fans were made and supervised by Sadar. The topic of conversation was brought up by Myles, and Alice was turning it into pure entertainment rather than a simple chat. The flowers in the center and across the whole house were lovingly bought and crafted by Nevan. The coloured confetti across every door was hung over by Ry, and the fluffy carpet was something Hope and Jayla had thought of one rainy day.

Everything in the house and life he had hated was now something made by the people he loved, shared with the people he loved.

Jace loved to cook, and he loved how it was always accompanied by bursts of group laughter. He loved how, soon, he would be able to put his dark hands over his new daughter's tiny ones and teach her the patterns, the way food was to be shared.

Tommy's Not Dead After All

By CHLOE DEVENISH



He loved the outdoors, you see. Always missed his early adventures, no matter what fun we offered inside. He loved the cool evening breeze, and soaking in the morning sun. He'd spend hours admiring the birds, the beetles, the butterflies – anything that flitted and flew. Mum said that when he was younger he chased them, bright-eyed and full of life, but when I knew him he was older, and would instead follow them with his eyes, watching wistfully, waiting for one to come close. Once a blue and gold butterfly perched on his head, and he sat perfectly still, not making a sound, not wanting to disturb it. Or maybe he was asleep... when he sat on the rocking chair, we could never quite be sure.

Near the end he seemed to always be dozing. Usually on the rocking chair outside, but occasionally we could persuade him to nap on Nan's old armchair. He never made any noise, but every now and then his foot would twitch. Were his dreams a comfort, a tranquil haven? Or were they ghosts of an aching past?

When he did finally go, it was in his sleep, in the drowsy calm of twilight. He didn't know many others, so we held a small funeral, just us, and buried him near the apple tree. Dad fashioned a little memorial cross for him, and we each spoke a few words before a somber minute of silence.

The days passed, and we gradually adjusted to life without him. But every now and then I see him, just for a moment, prancing under the apple tree, illuminated by the mid-afternoon sun. As the wind curls dust clouds around his feet, I think I see him glance at me, briefly, once more in concord with nature.

On Siblings

By CHLOE DEVENISH

Sweaty headlocks, rough noogies. Sneaky kicks and elbows barely missing her jaw. Before long, someone gets hurt; “Mum!” wielded like a battle cry. Sibling rivalry has begun.

Mixing a mud soup for some made-up game. Waltzing while waiting in line at the chemist, barbie dolls, prams and toy frogs living harmoniously together in their imaginary world, and a makeshift choir while watching the 20th Century Fox intro. Growing up.

The welcoming smell of mug puddings, a panicked run to the microwave as it overflows. Giggles over the adults’ ineptitude with technology, arguments over the remote. Their world’s about to change.

Capturing my Obsession

By EMILY BUCHANAN

Black lines curving around a sphere,
the ball mimicking the fast pace of my heart.
The shove, the push,
that's all it takes to fuel the fire inside.
Air fills my lungs as I quicken my stride,
the pass, the shot.
The rhythm returns to mimic my heart,
to black lines curving around a sphere.

Headspace

By EMILY BUCHANAN

I see the pattern forming,
but it's not clear.
I see familiar faces,
but it's all a blur.
I see mouths moving,
but no words escaping.
I see the ball,
but it's moving too fast.
I see my team,
but they're all scattered.
I see the pattern breaking,
and it's finally clear.

Lift-out poster on next pages:
Artwork by ALYCIA HERMAWAN





Lift-out poster on previous pages:

Artwork by ALYCIA HERMAWAN

Classifieds

Editors for 2025

The Overcoat is looking to add editors to our team in 2025. Do you have creative skills in editing, publishing or advertising? Do you want to gain some experience in these areas? Do you have a passion for championing the creative abilities of others?

If so, we'd love to hear from you:

theovercoatzine@gmail.com

Photographer

We are looking to sponsor a photographer: someone who shoots to thrill.

If you can see yourself through that lens, we'd love to hear from you:

theovercoatzine@gmail.com

Trumpet Player

We're looking for a trumpet player to help us release our new editions with gusto.

If you have a trumpet and breath, please let us know.

theovercoatzine@gmail.com

Missing Items

A few pens have gone missing recently. You'll recognise them by their laissez-faire attitudes. If you see them, please ask them to return to N6.

We understand the red ones can be stubborn: we will accept them dead or alive.

Student Support Needed

There are great concerns over the staff team's ability to win the staff vs. student soccer competition this week. Please support the students as best you can at lunchtime this Friday!

Let 'em Cook

Two Prospects

By ALEXANDRIA CARDONA

SAD STORY

The year was 2034 and I was twenty-seven, I kept my heart silent. Silent through all the years of acting, lying and ignoring myself. I continued to do this as I changed into a black dress, black was always slimming on me, the pearl necklace given to me by my proud mother, accompanied by the pearl earrings I once worked for. The house was clean, with tall white walls, and a grey marble benchtop, so perfect yet I couldn't stand it. My hair was perfectly styled, nails the best I had ever seen. My material possessions were finally perfect, yet my heart was in rage and despair.

I constantly played the mind game of fooling myself, reinforcing that I had made the right decision, I've moved up in life and I finally achieved the lifestyle I wanted all those years ago. As he entered the room, I was informed of what my activities were to be for the day; have breakfast with his mother and lunch with my girlfriends. I sat with my tea as I thought about everything I had done to get here, fake affection, lie about love, and change myself to the point where I no longer see a creative, fun average girl. I looked in the glass reflection, that girl was dead, what remained was a fake woman, removed of all joy and all accomplishments. I had buried myself into a hole where I am forever forced to meet up to other people's expectations and to never complain, because 1: I made it happen, I never said no, and never walked away, and 2: because everything was being provided to me, and at some point, I was desperate for this life.

They said there was nothing wrong with him, he was a good man, that everyone loved him, thought he was so smart and would go on to be very successful. A man of God, what everyone wanted. However, his soul was programmed with numbers and science, whereas mine was covered in words and paint. I struggled with this language barrier, so I preferred not to talk at all, so people would excuse my mistake of character for being uneducated.

My interactions throughout the day were nothing more than miserable. Continuously smiling, welcoming, and acting like I was the proudest woman in town, to have a life like this. At least once a day it was too much, I'd have to look into the mirror, into my eyes that were almost as black as my dress. I had moulded myself into this Anglo-Saxon, wealthy society, and I had no one to blame but myself. I think that's what hit the hardest, that I was so desperate for a free life I played along, and eventually played myself into giving away my very being. The year was 2034 and I was twenty-seven when I lost my life for a "perfect one".

HAPPY STORY

It was a Friday night when I should've been at a party celebrating. Instead, I was at my mate's house. My brother and I celebrated by singing in the car and getting Maccas. This I called "Golden wholesome moments", of which I hoped there would be many. As we chilled out in egg chairs underneath a veranda, we took a moment to take it in. After years of studying, hard work and dedication, I was free. Free from being told what to do and free from school, well at least for a few months. I had a licence too now, so nothing could stop me from coming over again and again until I annoyed them so much that I might as well have been given a house key.

We always caught up with one another, in between uni and work, trying new places and experiences. I finally understood freedom and how to live a joyful life of being my own person, and if that meant sacrifices along the way then so be it. But I wanted to have my own life, designed and judged only by me.

As the years went on I became an aunt and school teacher to his kid, Nora, and I thank God she was only half of him, the world couldn't take on two that's for sure. When the days were bad I'd get there early. She'd wake up to me with my long curly hair, red leather jacket making pancakes. Fun ones of course: lots of ice cream and lots of maple syrup. To a fun Aunt, diabetes doesn't exist, but school attendance is necessary. The best times were the rides in my yellow beetle, turning the radio up and singing as loud as we could to be in the best mood for school.

At the end of the day, I'd always receive the "Thanks you didn't have to do that", but we all knew I kind of had to. It was my job as her aunt to make life fun, and I enjoyed it, so I never minded. Was it the life I had always imagined for myself? No, but it was one I was happy to serve in. Yes, because sacrificing things for your family is really no sacrifice at all.

In the Midst of the June Rebellion

By AVA HARRIS

Inspired by the character of Jean Valjean in the Musical 'Lés Misérables'



***Motionless as the dark void I lay in,
Terrorized by my thoughts.
Horrified at what has become of my home.***

*Blue, white and red.
The colors that once united us,
As a country,
As a civilization.
Now, the very colors that divide us,
That we spill endless blood on,
That we waste endless lives on,
Including mine.*

*At the end of my days.
My fire, not completely exterminated,
But a spark,
Kept alight only by my brothers who fight alongside me.
We fight for justice,
A right to freedom.
We stand for a people,
Condemned by those who pursue them.
We long for a future,
That isn't ours to own.*

*'The June Rebellion;'
Is this who we are?
Rebels soon to be overtaken?
An uprising soon to be overthrown?
What is our purpose?
Do we fight only to be destroyed?*

*Too young.
We had our entire lives ahead of us.
We could have lived,*

We could have loved,
But we chose death over life.
Why live a life that isn't worth living?

Blue, white and red.
At the end of my days.
Deaf to the sound of the gunfire.
Deaf to the sound of my enemies.
The only sound: "Vive la France!"
France.
Is this really France?
The country I loved so well?
The streets I would walk?
The bar where I would drink with my friends?
Now, the streets are empty.
The bar, full of blood.
I am filled with despair and anguish,
Shame and guilt.
Have I contributed to the destruction of my home?
Am I to blame for its state?
It's buildings demolished,
And its streets destroyed.
These thoughts overcome me,
To the extreme that nobody can obliterate them.
I am alone.

To my right,
The men I would drink with.
To my left,
The men I would fight.
I am surrounded by men,
Surrounded by my brothers.
Some are down, while others still stand.
Some still fight, while others bleed.
Some old,
Some young,
Some strong,
Some weak.
But all willing.

Everyone I ever knew,
Everyone I ever loved,
Are all here beside me.
All fight for the better of our country.
Like me.
I am not alone.
This is my motivation.
This is my drive.
This is my pride.
It is enough to keep me going.

At the end of my days,
Though not alone.
My brother lies to my right.
He smiles,
I smile back.
My fear leaves me.

Him and I, and everyone who surrounds us,
Fights for freedom.
And we will fight,
Until the Earth is free.
And I know that I must die.
Let me die.
I die for life.

So, with my brother's hand in mine,
At the end of my days,
I am put to rest.
To peace,
At last.

Hollow Dovecotes of the Heart

BY SEAN FEENEY

waving his canvas in the air
like a town crier holds the newspaper,
the piece read said he'd never dated her,
no, they were never friends at all.
it could've been a wicked night last night
but all that's done is art, and all that's been undone,
so we've never lost the scent of success
which wafts around the air
in recesses everywhere.
if there's no life in mimicry
there's no life in conversation,
the virtuosos and amateurs espouse;
the words commingle with the crowd.
they'd dated if words were pomegranates
resting upon the table. in the corner, a foreign order
bordering on transgression, a still life
between two chairs, a pig's head
or the spills on sawdust floors,
wine floating, borne in the atmosphere
and lingering in the corners of the ceiling;
the floors of the master's bedroom upstairs
where two angels make flowing braids in each other's hair.

a drink knocked over on the counter begins;
he'd read today's headline and grinned.
a waterfall with no end and no beginning,
a brushstroke on a dreadful canvas,
swirling in the space it wants to operate its apparatus.
staccato notes punctuate with their fleeting
symphony the distant calls of sirens and harpies.
happiness, if it were not for these apparitions
content to move along with their lives
as they were in the depths of the metro
whose shared semblance on the bough,
barren by a shield of distance,
is, depending on the air or time of day,
only joy or pain, the objet petit a
reflected in each neutral face,
the laughing mannerisms of their disjointed faces,
and their raucous discourse. their happiness
is the unattainable everything: the transcendental
answer to the fundamental questions
washing across the room, soaked into the wood,
the chill coming through the shutters

that crowds every room with its wisdom
to mutter in the ear of one unfortunate lover
the ineffable rationale for his otherness;
in turn, the room was the subject
to which he was subject,
or was it the other way around?
and he'd never dated her, no,

the whole world had scorned him.
he committed words against the world,
leaning on its earth with the weakness of a beat,
a single ictus before its disappearance,
an individual and alleged fleeting instance
against an absolutist scheme or in a jazz musician's piece.
that was everything, he fully believed.

as with everything, indifference was borne in
every molecule of this boring depression
in the counter, nesting kernels brown
and red, lifted by fingers to mouths
round and red like the smells in the air;
the sniffs that penetrate the atmosphere
there and there and there and there;
that was the refrain the air would never bear.
pictures percolating through the pathways
would wear all the resemblance of a lover's kiss;
his effigy was limp beneath the bough;
its image eroded the walls of this seaside village
and each and every house.
its chateau of love, its tunnels the velvet streets,
porous now, its many corks popped
and days deflowered; now there are no more retreats
but one, beneath the muttering howls and bleats
and the sheets of two arms held over the ears,
face soaked into the grain, one arm barely grasping a drink,
aloft over the paper patterned with black ink.

how is one to leave an imprint
on this heap of broken images?
when it fell from the machine,
did it even stall its rhythm?
i cannot feign connection
to one fragmented token
for a time unbroken;
forever or a minute.

Opportunities



VATE is excited to launch our 2024 writing competition A Story in Miniature. Students in Years 7 to 12 and their teachers are invited to submit a story between 300 and 500 words in length inspired by the writing competition theme.

Each entry must be accompanied by a completed entry form and emailed to writingcompetition@vate.org.au by 4pm on Friday 20 September 2024. Entries without a completed entry form will not be considered. The winners of each category will receive a \$150 book voucher, and their stories will be published in Idiom. The runners up will receive a book package from our competition supporters.

More info & submission @: <https://www.vate.org.au/story-miniature-2024-writing-competition>



"We are excited to open entries for the Linden Postcard Show 2024 – 2025. Now in its 34th year, the Postcard show is a much-loved annual highlight of Linden's exhibition program.

Following the positive response to last year's exhibition, we are pleased to advise that the expanded size allowances will remain this year. 2D artworks can be as big as 60(h) x 60(w) x 10(d) cm, and 3D pieces can be 60(h) x 40(w) x 40(d)cm."

Entries are open until the 20th of October.

More info & submissions @: <https://www.lindenarts.org/exhibitions>

NEXT ISSUE: CHRISTMAS 2024

Trampled into mud,
It clings to his fur and hooves,
Winter is hardest.

Spring is far softer,
like good opinions.

SUBMIT YOUR WRITING/ARTWORK TO:
THEOVERCOATZINE@GMAIL.COM