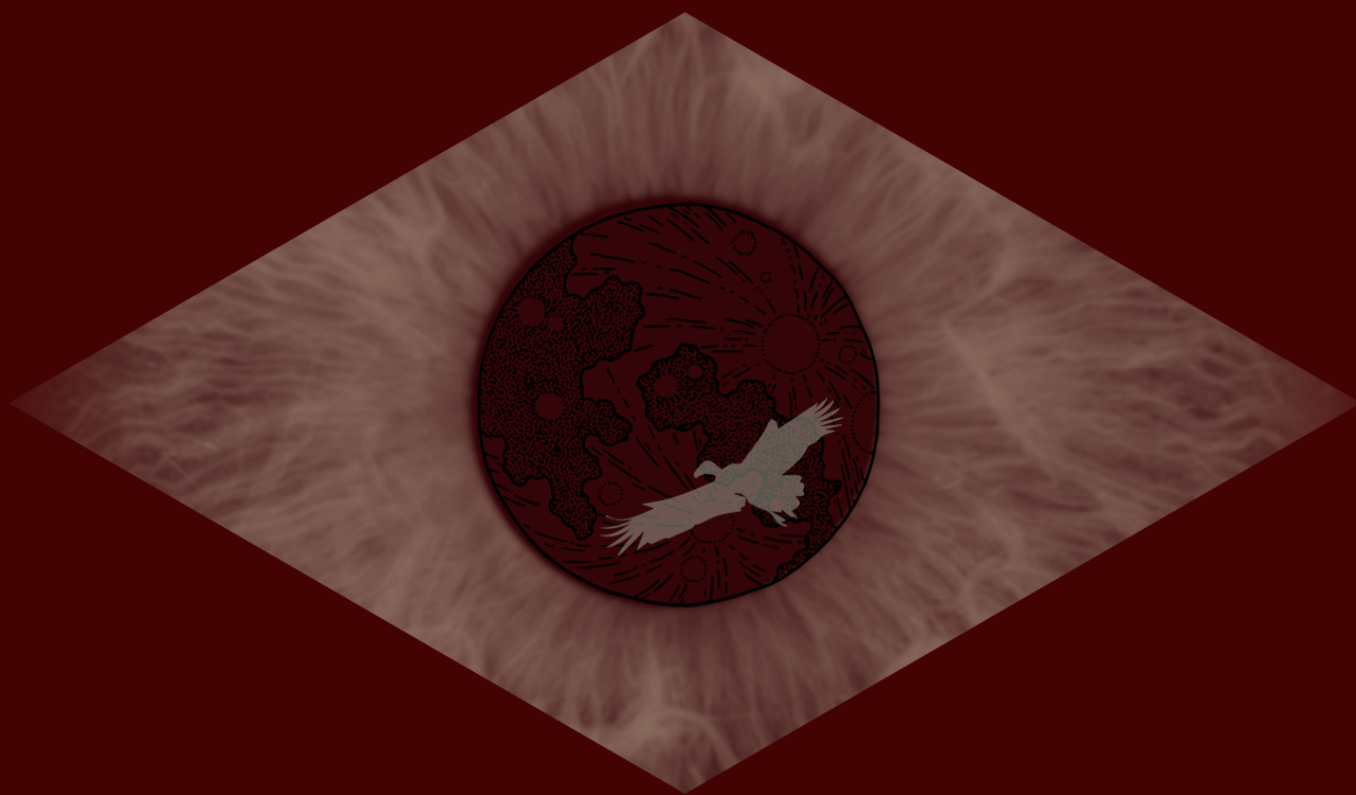


# VOLTERRA



*a RENESME LITERARY pamphlet*

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A RENESME LITERARY Micro Pamphlet

Published by RENESME LITERARY

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RENESME LITERARY recognizes that the story of *Twilight* takes place on the real, unceded Indigenous land of the Quileute Nation and exploitatively uses the nation's history and present, as well as their people and culture, to tell a teenage love story. Please visit <https://quileutenation.org/> to learn more about the tribe and the impact of *Twilight* on their existence.

Additionally, the RENESME LITERARY editors acknowledge their presence on the land of indigenous nations, including the [Poarch Band of Creek Indians](#), the [Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas](#), the [Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas](#), and [Ysleta del Sur Pueblo](#).

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“An eighteenth-century oil painting...four calm figures look down upon the bacchanal...their features begin to fill in, become real – they come to life in the painting, turning to leave the balcony through an archway. We follow them into [a circular white marble hall]...centuries old, its marble cracked and weathered. The open oculus in the domed ceiling is the only source of light. The room is empty but for three large wooden chairs and half a dozen vampires.”

—Scene Directions, *Twilight: New Moon* (2008)

“Love-devouring death do what he dare.”

—Romeo, William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* Act II.6.7

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\* *Content Warning: Speaker Wishing to Die*

## Editors' Preface

Dear Readers:

For this Halloween season and the cooling of the weather, we invite you to experience *VOLTERRA: a RENESME LITERARY Pamphlet* as Bella experienced the Volturi: with awe, excitement, and just a little bit of healthy fear and uncertainty. The work contained within *VOLTERRA* is more than simply a reflection upon this lofty group of antagonist royalty and their various actions, symbols, and beliefs. It is an examination of witness, authority, and the complex relationship between abiding by laws and abiding by passions.

Bella Cullen (née Swan) opens the film adaptation of *Twilight: New Moon* by quoting William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, particularly the scene where Friar Lawrence's famously muses upon the correlation between intense passion and painful ends. However, we wish to draw your attention to what Romeo states right before: *Love-devouring death do what he dare*. The lines Bella speaks certainly reflect the Volturi Coven's intense devotion to controlling vampires' movement and commitment to secrecy, but the aforesaid quote just prior is far more adjacent to Edward and Bella's marriage and family building. In the twenty-plus centuries of Volturi authority, violent delights *do* tend to have violent ends. Nevertheless, the introduction of an anomaly—Bella and, eventually, Renesmee—disrupts the typically-understood trajectory of time and displaces the Coven's established expectations. We find that the abominations contained within *VOLTERRA: a RENESME LITERARY Pamphlet* balance this push and pull of expectations, and we know that these artists will introduce new experiences to our audience through their work.

We cannot end this preface without recognizing how dissonant it feels to focus on the brilliance of submitted abominations in the midst of active genocide. Just as we regularly support North American Indigenous Nations, *RENESME LITERARY* also supports the indigenous Palestinian population and their struggle to gain autonomy amidst colonial occupation. Besides contributing financially to relief organizations like Doctors Without Borders, our editors wish to draw your attention to these other organizations: Palestinian Social Fund, the Palestine Children's Relief Fund (PCRF), Islamic Relief USA (IRUSA), and the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), among others. If you have the means, please consider contributing to these organizations as you draw attention to these continuing atrocities.

Thank you very much for reading *VOLTERRA* and supporting *RENESME LITERARY*'s artistic values and indigenous advocacy. We are so excited for you to read and enjoy these artists' abominations, and please: let passion disassemble you as these dark abominations ask for entry.

Jillian & Joy, Co-Founders & EIC of *RENESME LITERARY*



## Into the Chamber

Emily Desormier

Cavernous halls shroud years of secrets  
That protect both ourselves and others.  
Each stone, crumbling with age,  
Protects from the outside,  
From those who would not understand  
Or appreciate all that we do to protect them.  
Hear the clock chime,  
Another reminder that time passes on  
And we stay the same.  
Feel the footsteps above,  
Rumbling with excitement  
And danger.  
Our dwelling is a gift  
Meant to ward off danger and those who do not understand.  
Who cannot understand.

Ah, look, here comes another.



**[a red dress...]**

Jerome Berglund



## Lament

Louise Hurrell

Did you never wonder? How much our glittering nails cost, what price to make our skin sparkle in sunlight? What stands, back against the cooling stone, what slips beneath the shadows like dolcetto down a bottleneck? Or perhaps you've been blinded by the thrones, the pomp and the princely air. Perhaps we were merely statues, nameless pieces of furniture to be gawped at, stage dressing in your scene. You noted, then dismissed us. Well, now we shall show you what you've been missing. Look: here is space, rising and falling as a heart once did, time caught between two ticks. See how relaxing it is. One could bathe in it forever. And here is history: the dancing dust mites, the echoing footsteps that seem to stretch for eternity. How elusive, how seductive it is, to trace its path through the ages, to mark your own footsteps on its ground. And there, beside the chairs, there is family. There is the unsheathing of skin, the unclipping of respectability like a string of pearls. There you can breathe easier, deeper, snug in the soft fold of others just like you. Become one with the community. Those who are just as special as you, as important, as powerful...

Did you really never wonder?

You're lucky. We wondered. Now, we know.

Know all too well how something so intoxicating could be so toxic.

## **Illusion**

Melissa Nunez

You want to own it all, the world  
Under your thumb, but you know  
Nothing of your own power, nothing  
Of this bitter heat cradled in the hearts  
Of my hands or how to tuck needles  
Of need into the tender beds of your nails  
While the electric ache of attention echoes  
Fast the chambers of my every cell:

You wield.

I sustain.

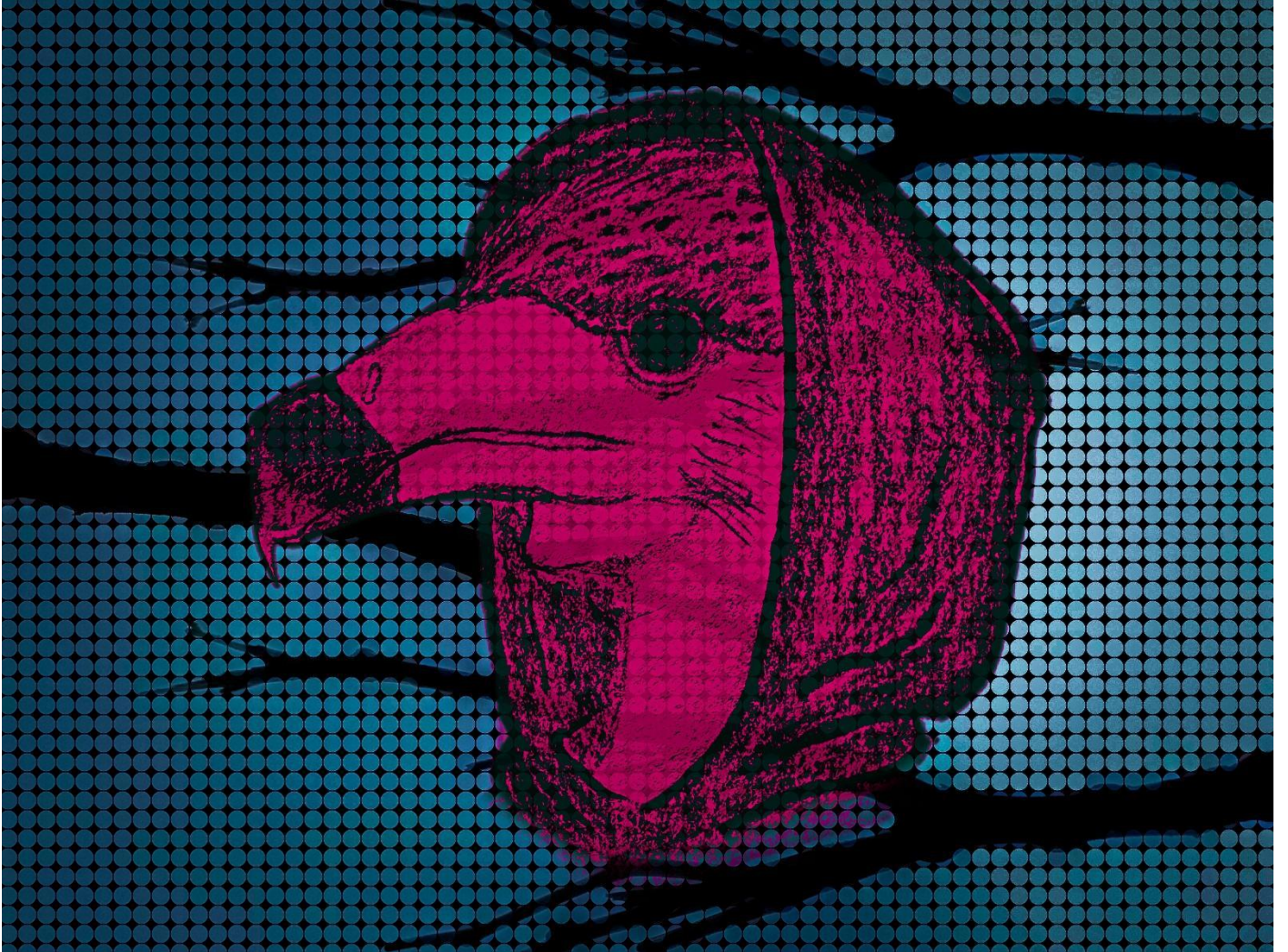
## Speaking Carnivore, or Staring Love

Leslie Cairns

I tried to love, but only stared. Watch you in bedrooms, time gone sideways, as you parted her hair. A love that could not be is the worst tangle to be in, as you pressed her lilac scent closer, pretending you  
Did not speak in carnivore. Living forever comes with the knowledge that all those times she curls her hair, it will fall flat. All those apples you pick will core & rot. All the wand you flicker to her in firefly drenched air  
Will not make it past the changing of the pulse of seasons, past the expiration date  
You made when you decided you had to have her. Deer run because they know  
The world is ending.

I cry because you think I will kill her  
For spite. Instead, I devour for mercy,  
Taking away is the only true  
Constant way  
For flight.

So stare  
At her  
One more  
Time. Until  
The  
Time  
Runs red, black,  
Grout,  
Undone,  
No more apples on  
That willow tree,  
Never meant  
To be there,  
Willows weep  
For  
me.



Melissa Nunez, *coVen*: "Vigil"





Melissa Nunez, *coVen*: "Vintage"





Melissa Nunez, *coVen*: "Vendetta"

## Edward's Plea

Olivia Ryckman

Now she's gone,  
and I have  
nothing left  
at all.

I asked her  
this once, but  
now I beg  
this of you.

As the sun  
Exposes my being,  
Exposes us all,  
I beg you.

Please,  
Be my end.



## Janus-Faced

Ivy Jones

Fingerprints are unique even to twins. Salt and morphine in the gash, hurt then nothing.  
Put yourself in their place: they tell you to burn at the stake [and] when you're about to  
you're not doing it anymore. [...] [Y]ou've got dollop sized eyes that can see [just] where  
the deer has left saliva on the bark. You can [either] make it feel [...] pain or nothing.

*Those backwards knees buckling, a collapse into a pile of antlers and fir.* (Anonymous  
182)

Circle one: a writhe OR a stagnation.

Circle one: a spark OR a snuff.

They're still "joined at the hip" (25) by edible string the color of "viscera" (27) and "royalty"  
(43). They have similar "angles" and similar "juts" (Anonymous 30). But: they are "children"  
(Anonymous 125). Cut their eyes and our throats are cut. But: they are "children" (125).

Command takes but a thought. But: they are "[children]" (125).

[...]

Somewhere in a palace in Italy there is a chapel of glass and marble to the god of duality. *Are  
you two or one, Janus?*

**[pious...]**  
Jerome Berglund



## The Fisher

Louise Hurrell

Twilight broke around me; shards of stars lay scattered on the ocean's surface. The net dipped from my hands and its coarseness grated my fingers. They stung but they didn't bleed. The knotted rope spread like ink across the water, the quiet streets and salt baked buildings. I tasted the sea salt on my tongue, remembered how wonderfully it seasoned the soft bodies I swallowed greedily, the soft bodies for which I now craved. Somewhere, an owl hooted, baying for blood. It could wait; patience was a skill we'd both mastered. I learnt it in the faces of grinning men, studied it in the touch of wandering hands and eager compliments. I learnt how to nod as they spoke, giggle as they joked, never complain as they pressed themselves against me. Yes, I learnt how to be patient over the years, even if the men weren't. Patience was my sturdy glove - my beauty my harpoon and I was always prepared for battle.

The net grew taut, tugged by some invisible force. I pulled calmly, rhythmically, ignoring the ache in my palms. Slowly my catch emerged, wriggling one on top of the another, all wet flesh and wide eyes. Their mouths opened and closed, opened once more. The owl hooted again. I surveyed my loot, the tangled limbs and cold skin. I never felt more powerful, like I had unpeopled Atlantis. Firming my grip, I lead my catch to the waiting throng.

## Long Reign

Emily Desormier

Amuse yourself with your power.  
Revel in the delight  
Of your sheer, singular force.  
Cause chaos and commotion.  
Anyone who challenges you  
Is bound to fall, crippled  
Under the weight of your  
Stature and history.  
Many have defied you, but are no longer threats.  
All must  
Respect you, or else there will be  
Consequences.  
Under your rule  
Shall order remain.



## About the Artists

**Jerome Berglund** (he/him) has worked as everything from dishwasher to paralegal, night watchman to assembler of heart valves. Many haiku, haiga and haibun he's written have been exhibited or are forthcoming online and in print, most recently in *Bottle Rockets*, *Frogpond*, and *Modern Haiku*. His first full-length collections of poetry *Bathtub Poems* and *Funny Pages* were just released by Setu and Meat For Tea press, and a mixed media chapbook showcasing his fine art photography is available now from Yavanika. You can find him on Twitter @BerglundJerome.

**Leslie Cairns** (she/her) has a chapbook through BottleCap Press (*The Food is the Fodder*). She loves writing about mental health and other topics. Twitter: @starbucksgirly

**Emily Desormier** (she/her) is a writer who earned her MA in English Studies at the University New Hampshire and has stayed based in the state. She has had pieces of criticism featured on ScreenSpeck and Film Slop. You can find her tweeting @emi\_deso

**Louise Hurrell** (she/her) is a writer based in Scotland. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in *Vine Leaves Press 50 Give or Take*, *Underscore Magazine*, *Trash to Treasure Lit* among others. When not writing she can be found at her local indie cinema or trying (and failing) to learn photography. Come and say hi on Twitter @LouiseHurrell

**Ivy Jones** (he/it) is a young storyteller residing in the Atlanta area who has been published in *Moss Puppy Magazine*, *Thimble Literary Magazine*, *beestung magazine*, among others. Contact Ivy at @ivy.twines (Instagram) @ivyintheroad (Twitter) or ivyjones1769@gmail.com.

**Melissa Nunez** (she/her) lives and creates in the caffeinated spaces between awake and dreaming. She makes her home in the Rio Grande Valley region of South Texas, where she enjoys exploring and photographing the local wild with her homeschooling family. She writes an anime column at *The Daily Drunk Mag* and is a prose reader for *Moss Puppy Mag*. She is also a staff writer for *Alebrijes Review* and *Yellow Arrow Publishing*. You can find her on Twitter @MelissaKNunez.

**Olivia Ryckman** is a Hoosier-born writer living in Missouri. She earned her MA in English from Indiana University East in December 2022. She is the founder and Editor-in-Chief of the *evermore review*, and her work appears in *Pink Heart Mag* and *RENESME LITERARY*. Find her on Twitter @livie\_evermore.

