Volume III Issue No. 4 Fall 2026

PERSEPHONE

LITERARY MAGAZINE

CONTENT WARNING

At Persephone Literary Magazine, we strive to create a safe and inclusive space for all readers and contributors. However, due to the nature of the creative content we publish, some pieces may contain themes or elements that could be distressing or triggering.

We encourage our readers to prioritize their mental health and well-being. If you encounter content that you find triggering or distressing, please take care of yourself and seek support if needed.

Thank you for being a part of our literary community.

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FOUNDING EDITOR

Allyson Nichols

The dynamic founder and editor of Persephone Literary Magazine, Allyson has always been captivated by storytelling and enchanting things.

Armed with a Bachelor of Science in Journalism from Kent State University, where she minored in creative writing, she has been crafting poetry and fiction since her early years. It has stood as a form of self-expression that has intertwined itself with the deepest parts of her throughout her young life.

Driven by a passion to amplify diverse voices and allow that same level of expression to others, she created Persephone Literary Magazine—a vibrant platform for creatives to share their stories. Beyond her love for literature, Allyson enjoys spending time at home with her three kitties, Evie, Stormy and Sophie, and loves exploring new film and television releases with her close friends and family.

Photo Credit: Universal Architect Media

A Letter to You...

I created Persephone Literary Magazine during a time when I was deep in healing my mind and heart. I had been through traumatic event after traumatic event for years and the one thing I found myself always coming back to was *words*. Not just words, but poetry, stories, photographs, art.

During this point in time, I also found solace in my friendships. In fact, as many of you may already know, the concept for Persephone Literary was created in one night after dinner with one of my closest friends, Isabel Brinegar. And from there, it blossomed because of all of you.

I don't think the version of myself who sat down for dinner that night could have ever imagined what would come from that conversation. I certainly didn't know that a little idea, born out of a need to create something meaningful, would grow into a community of artists and people who, in their own ways, were trying to make sense of the world around them like I was.

But that's the thing about art, isn't it? Sometimes, we create things without fully understanding why we need them. Sometimes, we make things because we have too much inside of us to keep it there, because we need somewhere to put all the feelings we don't yet have names for. Sometimes, we create because it's the only way we know how to begin again.

Persephone was that for me.

Every poem, every story, every photograph, every piece of art entrusted to these pages has reminded me that none of us are ever quite as alone as we might believe. There is something so profoundly human about creating something from the things that have shaped us and then offering it to someone else, never knowing exactly who might need it or what it might mean to them.

I hope Persephone has been that kind of place for you. I hope you have found something here that made you feel understood, something that put words to a feeling you had been carrying quietly, or something that reminded you there is beauty to be found even in the most difficult parts of being human.

If you have ever shared your work with us, I hope you know that I have never taken that trust lightly. To be invited into someone's inner world, to read the things they have written and see the things they have made, is a privilege I will never stop being grateful for.

While this issue may be our last for the foreseeable future, the Persephone Literary community will always hold a special place in my heart. The connections we have made, the art we have shared, and the space we have created together are not things that disappear simply because the magazine is taking a step back. I hope you carry a little piece of Persephone with you, wherever your own creative journey takes you.

Allyson Nichols
FOUNDING EDITOR

CORNHUSK GIRL

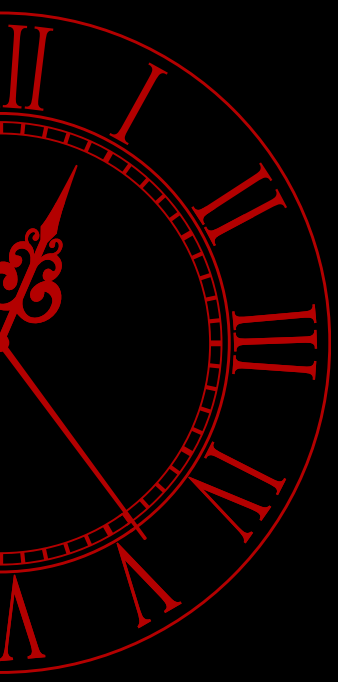
From her black porch, the moon looks down
on the wind-swept cornfield, dark descending
around the bare shoulders of the day.
I stand alone among the rows,
buttoned into your threadbare jacket, still smelling
of your musk, waiting to hear
the rasp of soil beneath your shoes
or feel your hand around my waist
like a sinner seeking sanctuary.
Hours die and drop,
withered as fallen maple leaves.
I should have listened when they told me
you were a roaming raven who never stays,
only circles; that one day you will swoop in
to pick clean the bones.

By the time night has knit full its tapestry
of stars, I know you are not coming.
Hope is an apple blossom:
beautiful at dawn, but rot-dappled by dusk.
I drape the scarecrow in your coat,
and stare up at the moon,
a bald midwife in her midnight pall,
pulling stillborn desire from the husk
of what I thought our summer had sewn.

I wonder if she mourns the loss
of the things she shines on
that never thank her
for her glow.

Chloe Crawford La Vada

TEAR-TROUBLED TROUBADOUR SUFFERS INSOMNIA



My healthcare coverage is expired
and a pipe has ruptured within my waterworks.

Can't stop thinking of the cartoon teen
trying to break himself open
to see what swims free.

Early in the game we are so delicate.

Self-storage marquee:
    What we have in our hearts
    Shows on our faces
    We sell boxes

The Lord is with you is a terrible way
to lose a lover. A barrage of tiresome thoughts,
calories in the swiggable liquor,
what to do with ordinary douche soaps,
blood on the sheets again, microwave on the fritz
while under a waning gibbous, I try to remember
how to row on my own.

Seems I'm always on the clock
or struggling against a clock,
always a clock, a clock, a clock.

I grew up with three old-timey clocks
that gonged allatonce every hour all night.
I slept in forty-five-minute increments.

Why am I telling you this?

The elephant on my pillow isn't the real problem.
I'm stuck with a melancholy monkey.

Somehow all these thoughts have found a home
in the junk meat of a poem.

Brian Builta

PAINTED OVER

"Aw, crap," Willow said aloud to no one. Through the window, she saw her mother's pink spiked hair bobbing across the lumpy yard. She dropped her armload of lumber onto the pile and slung the door open as Dottie raised her fist to knock. She couldn't afford one of her mother's spectacles as Willow's situation was improving. "How," she shouted, quickly reduced to a hiss, "the hell did you find me?" Dottie was in and out of jail for one thing or another, public intoxication or check kiting.

"Is that how you greet your mother who's trying so hard?" Dottie struck a pose for her daughter, hands on hips, face flipped to the sun, then added, "What do you think about my new shoes?" Dottie posed her shoes, one at a time, and waited for her daughter to comment. When she didn't, Dottie said, "Steve Madden's, Exposé, they're called, five-inch. Traded for 'em at the Ninth Street Flea Market. Lucky, huh?"

"Hog-tied, if you ask me, with all those straps," she'd never claim she sometimes admired her mother's devil-may-care attitude.

"You love I'm a fashionista," Dottie winked and tried to touch Willow's arm, but Willow yanked away.

"I thought you might have given up the pink hair by now." Willow moved aside and allowed her mother to enter. Carlton, her nosy neighbor, held vigil, hands on hips, cheek packed with chew. The shoddy shed behind her side of the duplex served as her studio.

She'd caulked the cracks around the window and door and connected lights to extension cords that ran from her apartment.

"The gals at the salon can't believe I

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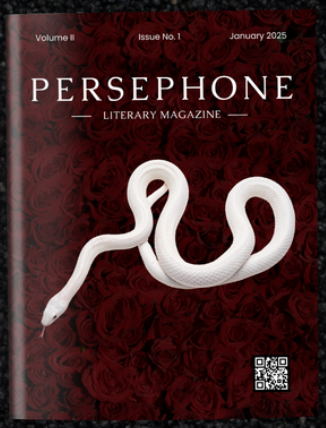
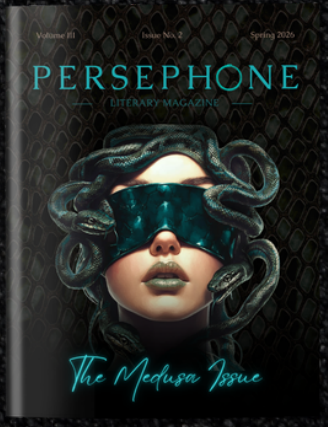


VOL III



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Nails Created By: Madame Pinks Nails

Thank You

To Our Contributors,

Thank you for entrusting Persephone Literary with the work of your hearts. Every poem, story, photograph, and piece of art shared within these pages has helped shape what this magazine became. It has been an honor to hold space for your voices, to share your work with the world, and to witness the many ways creativity allows us to make something meaningful from the things that shape us.

To Our Readers,

We hope this issue, alongside every issue that came before it, has spoken to you, stirred something within you, and reminded you to find beauty in both the shadows and the light. Life is layered, fleeting, and ever-changing, and we are grateful you chose to explore its many complexities with us. We hope you carry something from these pages with you, whether it is a new perspective, a familiar feeling given words, or simply the comfort of knowing you are not alone.

Thank you for being part of the Persephone Literary family.

CERBERUS

IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY, CERBERUS IS THE THREE-HEADED HOUND WHO GUARDS THE GATES OF THE UNDERWORLD, A SYMBOL OF PROTECTION, LOYALTY, AND THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD. HE REPRESENTS THE STRENGTH REQUIRED TO STAND WATCH OVER THE UNKNOWN, THE GUARDIANSHIP OF WHAT LIES BEYOND, AND THE ETERNAL THRESHOLD BETWEEN ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS.

PERSEPHONE LITERARY MAGAZINE
VOL. III, ISSUE NO. 4 – FALL 2026
$18.99 USD