A Letter from the Editors

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Here at fishladder we believe in “high pulp” literature. Not quite your breakfast beverage, “high pulp” is a phrase we derive from “pulp fiction,” cheaply-made books which feature popular genres including fantasy, science fiction, thriller, romance, and more. In the literary world, pulp fiction has a reputation for being poorly-written, plot-driven, and escapist.

We reject the belief that pulp fiction cannot be elevated and substantial. Hence, “The High Pulp Edition.” When we were soliciting submissions, we encouraged writers to explore popular genres while maintaining craft elements of good writing. Many excellent pieces made it into the magazine, some that aligned with theme and some that did not. Below is a tour of the “high pulp” pieces in this edition.

The issue opens with “Chopped” by Amy Hinman, a graphic short story in which a pregnancy talk leads to a series of unfortunate accidents. Up next is “Being Dead,” a play where author René Rodriguez takes the reader on a humorous and ethereal tour of the land of ghosts. Keep reading and you’ll find “Body Farmers,” a dystopian tale by Aaron Crider where characters must make moral sacrifices to stay afloat in their post-apocalyptic world. “Twinkle, Twinkle” by Nathan Holtrey stars a man and his son who navigate a world with strange celestial mysteries a-brewing.

While you read, keep an eye out for two thematic art pieces: “Stop” by Katie Pershon, featuring a mysterious blood-red handprint, and “Orc Filth” by Rayne Klar, in which a devilish, contemporary orc flips the viewer the bird.

These themed stories explore compelling forms, plots, and worlds without sacrificing the quality of character or prose. They provide fantastical settings with a literary twist. They give pulpy pieces a human core. We enjoyed reading them. We hope that you will too.

Before we leave you to explore the fruits of our labor, we have some people to thank. Our endless appreciation belongs to our innovative submitters, our insightful 80-person staff, and our dedicated genre editors. Special shout-outs go to our saint-like faculty advisors, Amorak Huey and Chris Haven; to our layout editor, Michelle Coppens, who went above and beyond to make this issue glisten; and to our art and photography editors, Blaire Bancroft and Kirk Rasmussen, for bringing “The High Pulp Edition” to life with their dazzling cover art.

Thank you all for your hard work. We truly couldn’t have done it without you.

Sincerely,

Nikki Fisher     Jacob Guajardo
Editor-in-Chief  Assistant Head Editor