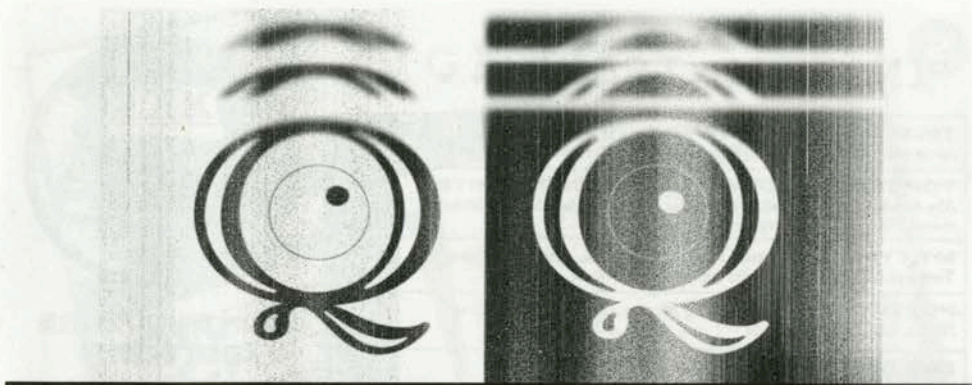


**SAVE THE DATE:**  
 QQ #3, OUR 2023/24 WINTER ISSUE  
 WILL HAVE A THEME OF "HYGGE," THE  
 DUTCH WORD FOR FINDING COZINESS AND  
 CONTENTMENT IN THE HARSH OF WINTER.  
 OUR RELEASE PARTY WILL BE FRIDAY,  
 DECEMBER 15 AT WOODLAND PATTERN  
 BOOK CENTER, 6-9PM. READINGS,  
 REFRESHMENTS, AND LOTS OF WARM  
 FEELINGS!

We want to thank the  
 following people who  
 made donations or  
 provided goods and  
 services after QQ #1  
 was published:

John McGivern  
 Juli Kaufmann  
 Claudia Egan  
 Mike Crivello's Camera  
 and Imaging Center  
 American Science & Surplus  
 Great Lakes Distillery  
 Classy Girl Cupcakes  
 Mitchell Street Arts

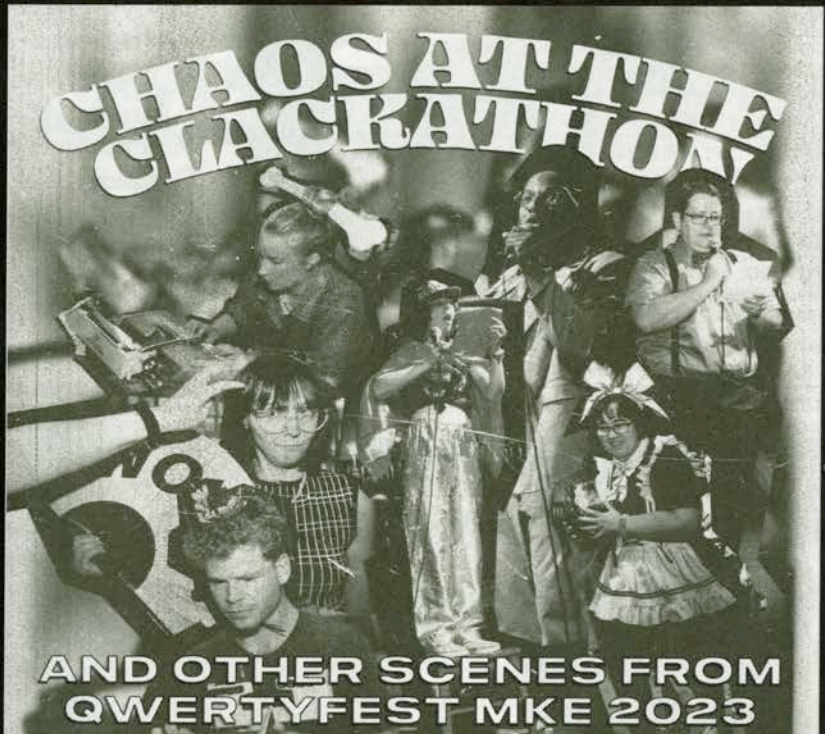
...and thanks again to all  
 of our volunteers and  
 supporters.



# QWERTY QUARTERLY

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF QWERTYFEST MKE

ISSUE 02 // FALL 2023



ARTICLES - POETRY - ART - COLUMNS - FICTION - FUN PAGES



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## TYPE TO US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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SCAN FOR LINKTREE



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Brian Strack

## COVER ART

The cover images are from photographer Carlyann Campione, who braved the Clackathon chaos at our QWERTYFEST opening night party.


[CARLYCAMPIONE.COM](https://www.carlycampione.com)

2

# TELEGRAM

FROM: QWERTY HQ

**QWERTY CREW**



After only four months of planning, the first QWERTYFEST MKE clacked into existence: June 23-25, 2023. The whirlwind weekend was ablaze with live music (Monica thanked on typewriter); typing workshops (thanks to "Talk QWERTY To Me" Lisa and Kro's creative Prose); cemetery tours (Rest in Punctuation, Mr. Sholes); presentations (hell yeah, we got nerdy); typewriter brunch (so popular we ran out of eggs); bookmaking sesh (Celeste tied on her Clackathon #IYKYK).

So many people contributed and attended - some even crossed borders - hence my and Tea's gratitude overshadows a tower of Olivettis. This is just the start of an annual celebration and, in time, a full-on Innovation Revolution.

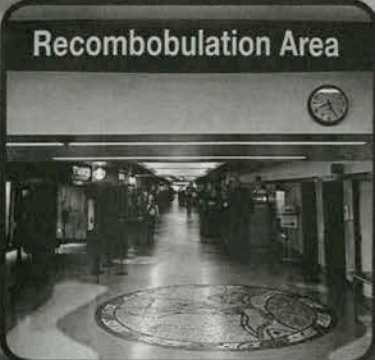
For now, we are thrilled to share plans are made and deposits were paid for QWERTYFEST 2024: June 21-23, 2024. We have triple the time to scheme and can't wait to create, with your help and brilliance, a bigger, better, clackier festival next year. Until then, Tea and I hope to see you at our fundraising events on social media & in our silent, most-prolific type-written dreams.

Keep on typin',  
Molly Snyder

## WHAT'S THE WORD?

"RECOMBOBULATION"

**Recombobulation Area**



\*"Mitchell airport boasts world's only 'recombobulation area' signs," by Molly Snyder, OnMilwaukee.com: [onmilwaukee.com/articles/recombobulationsigns](https://onmilwaukee.com/articles/recombobulationsigns)

Here in Milwaukee, our MITCHELL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT is blessed with three uniquely named "RECOMBOBULATION AREA" spaces, where you can put yourself back together. Shoes return to feet, keys and loose change into your pocket after getting deeply scrutinized by TSA. The word "RECOMBOBULATION" was made up (an opposite of DISCOMBOBULATED) by former Mitchell International director BARRY BATEMAN\* to add a little whimsy and hopefully a smile to traveler's faces.

After a wonderfully successful inaugural QWERTYFEST MKE, that's what we're doing -- a recombobulation period where we're tying up loose ends, putting our shoes back on, and starting to think about an epic fest for 2024.



# TOP TEN

*reasons to love a typewriter*

BY MOLLY SNYDER AND TEA KRULOS - ILLUSTRATION BY DWELLEPHANT

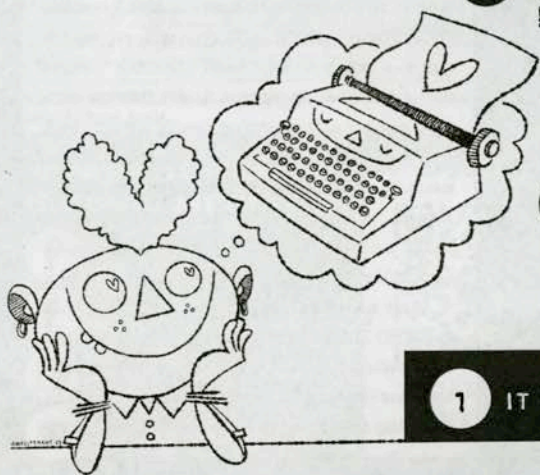
- 10 NO DUCKING AUTO-CORRECT
- 9 WON'T LOSE IT IN THE COUCH CUSHIONS
- 8 LOVELY BELLS AND RIBBONS VS. HARD DRIVE & RAM (OUCH)
- 7 A TYPEWRITTEN PAGE IS SOMETHING WORTH HANGING ON THE FRIDGE
- 6 ONLY CRASHES IF YOU TOSS IT OUT A WINDOW
- 5 YOU CAN SPILL BEER ON IT WITH ZERO-TO-MINIMAL DAMAGE

4 THEY HAVE A STORY OF WHERE THEY WERE BEFORE YOU FOUND THEM

3 ROMANTIC AF

2 CLACKING CURES DEPRESSION, IMPOSTER'S SYNDROME, CHRONIC HORNINESS, SAUSAGE FINGERS AND COBWEB BRAIN

1 IT WAS INVENTED IN MILWAUKEE



MY  
TYPE



4

## AS TOLD BY NOAH WITT

Looking for people interested in typewriters to gather for weekly event.

Helle community :). I sit here at my 1929 Duetone Blue Royal writing machine and I wonder, where are you? Today I am the sole clacker contributing to the otherwise relatively quiet auralcape of this sleepy side-street. What kind of typewriter do you have? Where'd you get it? ebay? Yr grandmother? I got this particular one from my neighbors across the street during one of their rummage sales. The sticker price was \$70, but I guess the \$37 in my pocket was good enough. If you bring one of yrs, would you tell me about it? would you let me click a key or two? If not, that's okay, I just hope that you'd sit within ear-shot if you decided to write something. I'm here on Tuesdays, 2423 N. Murray, The Estate. And, you know if you don't have yr own machine to type on, that's okay, too. You can use mine. I don't mind at all. 5 5:00pm. You can be late.

If any of this seems to interest you, please endeavor to contact me.

Noah Witt leads "Typewritten Tuesday" at The Estate (2423 N. Murray Ave) from 5pm til whenever people feel like packing it up. More info: [estatemke.com](http://estatemke.com)



### What Not to Wait For

Hell to freeze over  
 the second Tuesday of next week  
 a hand basket to Timbuktu  
 your lottery numbers to come in  
 an honest politician  
 a viable third party in the US  
 capitalism to die off without a  
 fight

reparations  
 your ex-lover to admit it was  
 their fault  
 a bus after midnight in  
 Milwaukee  
 your teenager to clean their room  
 world peace  
 your next life

-- Ed Werstein

# poetry

### Folk Wisdom

I took off my socks  
 assigned a secret  
 name to each one  
 crawled into bed  
 at the footboard end  
 placed the named  
 socks underneath  
 my pillow  
 tuck them in  
 and said goodnight  
 to them  
 so  
 supposedly  
 my dreams  
 would be about  
 the person I was  
 going to marry

but  
 that night  
 I dreamed  
 that a crotchety  
 old man who was  
 in my former  
 weight loss  
 support group  
 was losing his leg  
 and needed  
 a wheelchair  
 so he tried  
 to guilt me into  
 letting him use  
 mine  
 I think I'll be  
 better off  
 being  
 an old maid

-- Monica Thomas



### Accountability Partner

I guess I should be grateful for the  
 tomatoes I didn't plant  
**There's a man at a birthday party in**  
**Milwaukee who used to be my husband**  
**All my ambitions been choked out by**  
**bindweed and ground ivy**  
**Weeds I transplanted**  
**Trees point at each other accusing**  
**From either side of the street**  
**Traffic comes in brainwaves**  
**Sound waves cum in bass**  
**I'm the ghost of your goldfish**  
**The one they couldn't replace**  
**Inanimate, holy, sexual**

-- Kelsey Marie Harris

### Paletas

His copper jingle is flavored with bells and coins.

Sometimes, their tune is accompanied by the honking of misguided geese, spooked by the Basillica's hourly tolling on 6th and Lincoln.

He is one of us, right?

Chivas shirt, check.

Tejana, check.

Huaraches, double check.

*El jale* is legit.

He props up at school crossings, under the shadiness of city tress.

He has a friendly mustache, loves to tell any mom about the hamburger vendor in his Mexican hometown.

The one who found his newlywed wife in bed with the local high school's soccer captain.

The one who proceeded to rip out the propane tank from his taco/hamburger cart and beat them both to death.

*What does a hamburger in Mexico taste like?*, a mom muses.

-- Elias Sepulveda



## OUR FEATURED POETS

**ED WERSTEIN**, a VP of the **WISCONSIN FELLOWSHIP OF POETS** (wfop.org), advocates for peace and against corporate power. His poems appear in over 50 different journals including **ROSEBUD**, **BLUE COLLAR REVIEW**, **STONEBOAT**, and **GYROSCOPE REVIEW**. Ed is a member of the **HARTFORD AVENUE POETS** critique group and that experience has been invaluable to the quality of his writing. In 2018 he received the **COUNCIL OF WISCONSIN WRITERS LORINE NIEDECKER** award, judged by Nickole Brown. Ed has four published books of poetry, the latest being **COMMUNIQUE: POEMS FROM THE HEADLINES** (Watersedge Press, 2021). You can find his other books, as well as a poetry blog and other information at his website: [edwerstein.com](http://edwerstein.com)

**MONICA THOMAS** is a typewriter nerd who holds dual residency with the Milwaukee and Racine county library systems. Her obsessions include poetry, mail art, vintage home goods, clay pot cookery, thrift stores, and rummage sales. Her poems pop up in eclectic places. She also loves performance art and recently co-wrote a feature film.

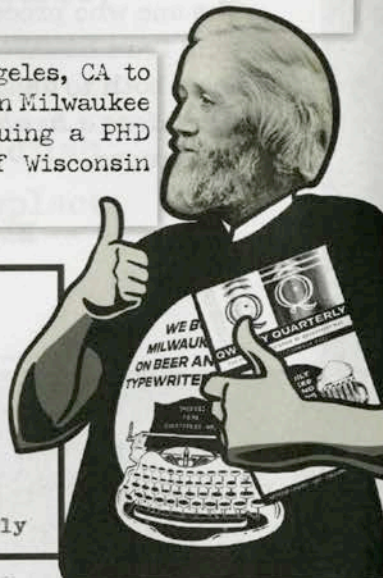
**KELSEY MARIE HARRIS** spends most days painting, drinking tea, and trying to identify the weeds in her yard. Sure, she's written poems, shout out to **VA PRESS**. But nothing really exists before this moment. *Struggle Bitch* is dead. Free Quincy.

**ELIAS SEPULVEDA** was born in Los Angeles, CA to Mexican migrant workers. He has resided in Milwaukee most of his life and is currently pursuing a PHD in Creative Writing at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee.

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## EAT, DRINK AND BE WARY:

Christina Ward's latest book explores the effect of religion on culture

BY MOLLY SNYDER



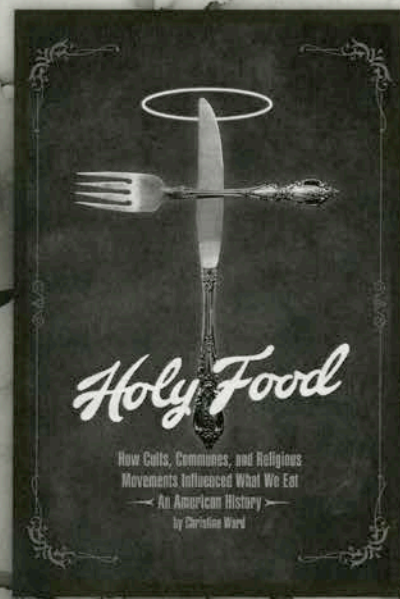
Writer, publisher and food historian Christina Ward's latest book, "Holy Food: How Cults, Communes and Religious Movements Influenced What We Eat — An American History," masterfully intersects religion and food while heavily intertwining history, psychology, recipes and her own wise, non-denominational perspective.

The 368-page book, which is set for release on Sept. 26, 2023, is a massive undertaking, one Ward took many years to write and research.

"There is a joke about non-fiction writing that every sentence that appears on the page requires at least two hours of research," says Ward, who is also the vice president of Feral House publishing. "I spent five years actively researching and writing Holy Food, but many more years thinking about the convergence of food and religion." Enjoy this Q&A with Christina Ward and find out more about her endeavors at [christinaward.net](http://christinaward.net).

### WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE ABOUT THIS SUBJECT?

I grew up in a "divided" household. My mother was the typical performance-only Catholic and my dad was a thoughtful agnostic who read widely about the world and the innumerable ways we are human. I was also made to attend Catholic grade school from K5 through 3rd grade where I became keenly aware of the disconnects and hypocrisy of what was taught and the teachers. It didn't help that my dad told us stories of a gentler, less punitive, and introspective spirituality. When my father refused to convert to Catholicism, Immaculate Conception tossed us out.





Being a weird kid who always asked “why” fueled my interest in how people were the same yet different. Religious beliefs and the foods we eat always stood out to me as signifiers of tribal affiliation. And that too is fascinating...the constant sorting of

ourselves into smaller groups of homogeneity. It is more than navel-gazing, as I found and still find it endlessly interesting to uncover why people choose to follow prescribed diets based not on science or their body’s physical needs but on interpretations of thousand-year-old texts.

**YOU ARE A SELF-DESCRIBED ATHEIST, YET YOU CLEARLY FIND RELIGION FASCINATING. WHAT ABOUT RELIGION IS SO FASCINATING TO YOU — BUT YET NOTHING YOU WANT TO PERSONALLY PRACTICE?**

The fascination comes from recognizing the previously mentioned disconnect between what people do and what they say. I find the cognitive dissonance of that incredibly interesting. There’s the old joke about whooping it up at the bar on Saturday night and sitting in a pew on Sunday morning. I saw—and still see—so much hypocrisy by people who profess faith that I instinctually knew that god is a concept created by man. Yet, knowing that, I am intrigued by anyone who has that kind of faith in an abstract concept that cannot be scientifically proven. And yes, I know, people claim miracles and other evidence of god, but anomalies are not holy works.

Many people embrace faith for the community aspect. There is a homogenizing and comfortable sense of belonging when people gather for a shared purpose. Religion at its most benign can aid and comfort people experiencing struggles. Religion at its best can help shift cultural positions for the greater good of the community.

Yet too many believers and their leaders—who bear larger blame—have twisted their community and organizing principles of their religion to become a cudgel with which to oppress. It is a fatal flaw: to believe that YOUR version of god and how to “be spiritual” is the ONLY acceptable method and should be imposed on everyone else. Your god may be a jealous god, but that’s between you and Holy Ghost. Modern American religions, especially the thousands of Protestant sects active today, have used their beliefs to force change in our laws and causes more harm to civilization than can be enumerated.

**YOU WROTE “WE FEEL NOSTALGIA FOR THE FOOD OF OUR CHILDHOOD WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT BROUGHT THOSE RECIPES TO THE TABLE.” WHAT ARE YOUR NOSTALGIA FOODS AND WHY?**

I do have nostalgia foods. What makes them nostalgic is never the food itself but the memories that were formed during making or eating the food. Whenever I feel sickish, the only thing I ‘can’ eat is buttered shell pasta... like my dad made for us as children. Corn on the cob takes me back to my grandmother’s farm with a passel of cousins working hard and running wild. I’ve got a few negative nostalgia foods too. I choked on a Nacho Cheese Dorito when I was quite young and just the smell of them all these years later makes me gag!

**WHAT DO YOU HOPE READERS GET FROM THIS BOOK?**

Firstly, I grateful to everyone and anyone who takes time out of their busy lives to read *Holy Food!* I’m agnostic about what I want people to “get.” If one reader has an “aha” moment about a food from their childhood or makes Dough Gods or is reminded about their own cultural food history, then I am wholly satisfied.

My secret hope is that readers will truly absorb the beauty of the First Amendment. Those words and the concept have made us the country we are—good or bad. Because within the First Amendment is the secret to the sauce of what makes us American: Your god can tell YOU what to do, eat, believe, and say, but your god cannot tell ME what to do, eat, believe, and say. To impose one’s religiously informed beliefs on anyone else is profoundly un-American.

*\*\*\*Christina Ward will embark on a book tour from Brooklyn to L.A. with stops in Milwaukee on Sept. 29 at Boswell Book Co. (6 p.m.); Oct. 21 at the Good Hope Branch Public Library (2 p.m.); and Oct. 22 at Lion’s Tooth Books (2 p.m.).*

*Go to [OnMilwaukee.com](http://OnMilwaukee.com) for the full interview.*



# CHAOS AT THE CLACKATHON!

BY QQ STAFF // PHOTOS BY CARLYANNE CAMPIONE



**QWERTYFEST MKE** kicked off with a wonderful performance by **NINETEEN THIRTEEN**, typewriter stations where people could try out different typers, food, and the incredible spectacle of the **CLACKATHON**, which we can best describe as a mix of creative competition and performance art. Contestants clacked away writing their best compliment, insult, and love letters.

**ANJA NOTANJA SIEGER** created and hosted the event, lining up writers with colorful stage persona to compete to win the **Championship Cup**. **HERE'S A LOOK AT SOME OF THE WORKS PRODUCED:**

## Compliment Letter

In the category of **COMPLIMENT LETTER**, **CAVEWOMAN TEST SUBJECT** and **MON DE GREEN** faced off and gave two nice people some well deserved praise. **CLACKATHON** had a couple of rehearsals before the show and here you can read **CAVEWOMAN TEST SUBJECT's** Stone Age-style writing in this test run.

my daughter,,,,,I  
 my daughter who is not my daughter  
 but still  
                   my daughter  
 my only true daughter  
 I know you very sadright now  
 you deep deep sad  
 you think you know good  
 but you good  
 you still alive and you good  
 you ok                   you daughters ok  
 you know all little things and big  
 your spirit is strong  
 you got good teeth  
 good brain  
 good man, today is summer today is good  
 not winter, you not fall now,  
 no bad thing, no nobody die become bone yet  
 no big deal ok all okay you try  
 again  
 you keep moving  
 you gather berries, you go on another hunt  
 your spear went wide this time  
 b ut it was only the wind  
 not you fault  
 you gather acorns and clams  
 you make a needle out of bone  
 andthread out of guts to sew the hide of  
 your heart, look at yor starts and stand tal  
 you will





## Love Letter



In the LOVE LETTER SHOWDOWN, CLIFF THE COWARDLY CLACKIST (right) managed to overcome his apprehension to create an ode to a couple in the audience, while J.F. FINAGLER (left) also delivered a smooth love poem.

## Insult Letter

Then was the anticipated INSULT LETTER COMPETITION. CAYE CROWE (stage name of KAY KRO) faced off against CHATGPT, who received a loud chorus of BOOOO! because everyone knows the harm CHATGPT is bringing to the writing industry. Second only to CHATGPT in villainy is the recipient of the insult letter, a person's ex-brother-in-law who divided the family at Thanksgiving. Another BOOOO! You can see Kro's savage burns here.

For the Asshole whose turkey was probably dry as hell anyway

It takes a certain kind of asshole (with a certain type of ass mole) to sink his fingers into a family and to decide tangentially to rip apart these connections; what an act of defecation; this poetic act of defecation is NOTH NG compared to them shit hetook on our familytree you havent heard the last of me! Screams of a white guy with the same two-dimensionality of a cartoon character emotional depth the same, you know it would be fairer to keep that to the trauma he did bequeath to the nieces and nephews I dont get to see. Revenge of stone heenge rusting out your dickwad mouth Everything has gone south since my sister died andyou lied about hosting a family thanksgiving I want invited to all these insaltes sliding through I bet your turkey was dry as hell and I bet your cranberry came from a can mediocre man. I bet your gravy was lazy and I bet your mashed potatoes were like grenades--oh after everyone ate your cooking. So fuck you once and fuck you twice fuck your fork and fuck your knife for the meal that didnt bring ustogether I hope you get struck by lightning in stormy weather

## BATTLE FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP CUP



A profound poem by: Andrea Becker

I am in touch with my natural source  
the waters, the universal wonders, all  
waiting for me to feel them tap into my Morse  
code like the chill into leaves in the fall  
dotted with insects that crawl.  
Who can feel that chill, how ever,  
and who can hear the hungry birds call?  
My knuckles feel the chill  
so they tap out this line:  
our humanity in words will live forever.

Bones wait for the grave to breathe,  
for all the water in me to leave.  
In what they might do I have no say  
but for now to move them from inside.  
I place a peanut for the crows  
and touch my hand on the spring's surface  
as though to erase my reflection clean.  
In the curve of a purple leaf,  
a pill bug curls up to sleep.  
Clayey yet careful, turning my inner wheel,  
I am in touch with my humanity  
residing in wonder at my ability to feel..

WBCNY 9653 IKE Clackathon 2023.

The CLACKATHON ended in what can best be described as a poet rumble as the contestants battled to grab on to the CHAMPIONSHIP CUP for their own. In the melee, the cup dropped and shattered, revealing a scroll with a poem on it from Clackathon judge ANDREA BECKER (reprinted here). ANJA NOTANJA SIEGER read the poem as the chaos subsided and our raffle began. Truly a unique and fun experience for all!

Clackathon trading cards are available in our Etsy store: [etsy.com/shop/qwertyquarterly](https://etsy.com/shop/qwertyquarterly)





# FRIEND DENSMORE...

## QWERTY Quarterly Uncovers Unpublished Christopher Latham Sholes Letter

*Editor's note: QWERTYFEST got a number of media hits, including an article in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that featured quotes from our Typewriter Technician Lisa Flooding. After the article was posted, a reader contacted Lisa, telling her in part: "Some 30-40 years ago, I bought a sheaf of papers concerning Sholes. I sold most of them through a German auction house... The most interesting piece was a document from Sholes to Densmore, written in Sept. of 1869," the reader explained, saying he had scanned this letter before selling it. As for the rest, "I have no idea to whom these papers sold, nor whether they were ever made available to the public."*

*The letter's recipient, James Densmore, was a businessman and inventor, and along with Carlos Glidden and Samuel W. Soule helped contribute to Christopher Latham Sholes' typewriter design and QWERTY keyboard layout.*

*Without deeper research, we can't say for sure that QWERTY Quarterly is the first to publish this 154-year-old typewritten letter on an early prototype, but it would appear so.*

*Here is the scan sent to us, and a retyped version for more modern eyes along with notes from Professor Jason Puskar.*



Sholes likely typed this letter on an early prototype similar to this one (which is in the Milwaukee Public Museum collection) from circa 1868.

MILWAUKEE, WIS., SEPTEMBER, LXIX.  
FRIEND DENSMORE...

YOU WILL RECOLLECT THAT IN ALL OF OUR DISCUSSIONS TOUCHING A MACHINE FOR WRITING, WE HAVE HELD TO SEVERAL FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS, AS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS, FOR INSTANCE... THAT THE MACHINE MUST BE SIMPLE AND NOT LIABLE TO GET OUT OF ORDER... THAT IT MUST WORK EASILY AND BE SUSCEPTIBLE OF BEING WORKED RAPIDLY... AND FINALLY, THAT IT MUST BE MADE WITH REASONABLE CHEAPNESS. TO SUPERSEDE AN INSTRUMENT AS HANDY AS THE PEN EVERY ONE OF THESE CONDITIONS IS ESSENTIAL AND A FAILURE IN ANY IS FATAL. THE FAILURE OF ALL PREVIOUS EFFORT IN THIS DIRECTION... WHICH I FIND ON RESEARCH HAVE BEEN MANY... ARE ALL TO BE ASCRIBED TO A LACK IN SOME ONE OF THESE PARTICULARS, AND I EXPECT ALL THE SUCCESS THAT CAN EVER POSSIBLY ATTEND ON ANY MACHINE FOR WRITING FOR THIS MACHINE, BECAUSE IT FULLY ANSWERS ALL OF THESE REQUIREMENTS. ITS SIMPLICITY CANNOT BE EQUALLED, IT BEING MORE SIMPLE IF POSSIBLE, THAN A PIANO, AND EVEN LESS LIABLE TO GET OUT OF ORDER. A CHILD MAY THUMP ON ITS KEYS WITH PLEASURE AND DO IT NO HARM... IT WORKS ALSO, AS EASILY AS A PIANO IS MANIPULATED. I AM INCLINED TO THINK THAT IN A DAYS WRITING THE USE OF THE PEN WOULD BE FOUND MUCH MORE TIRESOME THAN THE USE OF THIS MACHINE. AS TO RAPIDITY, I AM WORKING THIS ABOUT AS FAST AS ORDINARY WRITING, SAY TWENTY WORDS A MINUTE, BUT I, YOU KNOW, AM GETTING OLD AND CLUMSY, AND NOT THE PERSON WHO TO READILY TAKE ON NEW PRACTICES. IT IS SUSCEPTIBLE, I HAVE NO DOUBT, OF BEING WORKED AT THE RATE OF SIXTY WORDS A MINUTE, AND SOME ARE SANGUINE ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THAT A HUNDRED MAY BE WORKED. A FEW MAY REACH THE LATTER NUMBER POSSIBLY, SO I AM CONTENT TO PUT THE AVERAGE, ON PRACTICE, AT SIXTY, WHICH BEING TWICE TO THREE TIMES AS FAST AS WRITING, IS SATISFACTORY. A SATISFACTORY POINT OF CHEAPNESS IN MANUFACTURE, IS NOT YET OBTAINED, BUT THAT IS BECAUSE MANUFACTURING HAS NOT YET BEEN FAIRLY COMMENCED, AND IS THEREFORE NOT AT ALL ORGANIZED. SEWING MACHINES WHICH ARE NOW MADE COMPLETE AT A COST OF SOMEWHERE BETWEEN TEN AND FIFTEEN DOLLARS ARE BETTER MADE AND HAVE AS MUCH MACHINERY ABOUT THEM AS SOME OF THE FIRST ONES MADE, WHICH COST SEVERAL HUNDRED DOLLARS EACH. I ANTICIPATE A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE IN THIS CASE. IN FACT, I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO TO REDUCE THE COST OF THE MACHINE TO WHAT WOULD BE CONSIDERED A WONDERFULLY LOW FIGURE FOR A MACHINE PRODUCING SUCH RESULTS.

“

Milwaukee, Wis. September, LXIX

Friend Densmore...

You will recollect that in all our discussions touching a machine for writing, we have held to several fundamental ideas, as essential to success. For instance that the machine must be simple and not liable to get out of order that it must work easily and be susceptible of being worked rapidly and finally, that it must be made with reasonable cheapness.

To supersede an instrument as handy as the pen every one of these conditions is essential and a failure in any is fatal. The failure of all previous efforts in this direction which I find on research have been many are all to be ascribed to a lack of some one of these particulars, and I expect all the success that can ever possibly attend on any machine for writing for this machine, because it fully answers all of these requirements. Its simplicity cannot be equaled, it being more simple if possible, than a piano and less liable to get out of order. A child may thump on its keys with pleasure and do no harm it works also, as easily as a piano is manipulated.

I am inclined to think that in a days writing the use of the pen would be found much more tiresome than the use of this machine. As to

rapidity, I am working this about as fast as ordinary writing, say twenty words a minute, but I, you know, am getting old and clumsy, and not the person to readily take on new practices. It is susceptible, I have no doubt, at being worked at the rate of sixty words a minute, and some are sanguine enough to believe that a hundred may be worked. A few may reach the latter number possibly, I am content to put the average, on practice, at sixty, which being twice to three times as fast as writing, is satisfactory.

A satisfactory point of cheapness in manufacture, is not yet obtained, but that is because manufacturing has not yet been fairly commenced, and is therefore not at all organized. Sewing machines which are now made complete at a cost of somewhere between ten and fifteen dollars are better made and have as much machinery about them as some of the first ones made, which cost several hundred dollars each. I anticipate similar experience in this case. In fact, I know exactly what to do to reduce the cost of the machine to what would be considered a wonderfully low figure for a machine producing such results.

”

## NOTES ON THIS LETTER BY PROFESSOR JASON PUSKAR

This remarkable letter gives us a glimpse into some of Christopher Latham Sholes's main priorities near the end of 1869, a pivotal point in typewriter design. Its elegant typeface, straight lines of type, and regularity of letter impressions show how advanced Sholes's prototypes already were. But at precisely this time, even greater advances were near at hand. Sometime in late 1869 Sholes switched from a flat platen that held a sheet of paper face-down on the top of a machine to the round rubber roller that most people are familiar with today. Shortly after that, he began gradually moving away from the piano keyboards likely used to type this letter to the QWERTY keyboard that would appear on the final prototypes from 1873.

Sholes lists three criteria for his new machine in this letter. It must be "simple and not liable to get out of order." It must work "easily" and "rapidly." And it must be produced with "reasonable cheapness." These three essentials amount to "cheap, fast, and good," as the old adage pessimistically puts it: whether you're building a house or buying a Ferrari, you can have any two you want, but never all three. Sholes would only get two of them in his lifetime, and at the end of the letter he seems to know which one would cause the most trouble.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





By 1869, his machines were already well on their way to easy and rapid action. He claims to be typing at 20 words per minute but expects someone more practiced to reach 60 words per minute. That seems optimistic at this early date, but by the time ten-finger touch typing developed in the 1880s, it would not be impossible. To permit such rapid entry, Sholes had to solve the vexing issue of jamming type arms. The problem was that common letter combinations such as T and H were more likely to jam if the arms were adjacent. So even though T and H are near each other on the QWERTY keyboard, on Sholes's final models they were on opposite sides of the basket. This arrangement allowed for the most rapid entry with the least risk of jamming.

But in 1869 Sholes was probably typing this letter on a very different machine with a piano keyboard. Twice in the letter he compares typing to playing the piano. His early keyboards imitated those used on Hughes printing telegraphs, which spread the letters of the first half of the alphabet in order from left to right on the black keys, and the letters of the second half of the alphabet in order from right to left on the white keys. There's a telling typo that confirms he was using some version of that keyboard: in line 21 he spells "susceptible" as "susceptibke," because on his piano keyboard K and L would have been on adjacent black keys, so more easily confused. With a few exceptions, the middle row of letters on a QWERTY keyboard are still mostly arranged this way today.

Reliability was harder to achieve. The recipient of this letter, James Densmore, was Sholes's major investor and he appears to have been merciless on the topic of reliability. All early models were hand-made and comparatively delicate, and one historian

claims that Densmore arranged "destruction testing" of each new prototype in the early 1870s, and found most lacking. The letter itself shows a large number of superimposed letters, which suggests that Sholes was still struggling to advance the platen properly after each key press. Sholes's models became more reliable after he licensed production to Remington and Sons, an arms maker experienced with metalwork. Remington replaced Sholes's wooden case with a sturdier metal one better able to absorb abuse, but even then breakdowns were common.

Cost turned out to be the main challenge. Like a Ferrari, a typewriter that was fast and good couldn't be cheap too. Sholes notes that sewing machines used to cost "several hundred dollars each" but that costs came down to just ten to fifteen dollars. He was right about the starting cost for a new machine, but wrong about how quickly prices might drop. Remington and Sons sold the Sholes and Glidden Type-Writer for \$125 in 1874, which, adjusted for inflation, would amount to more than \$3000 today, about the price of a high-end Apple laptop. And although prices did fall gradually over the next decade, quality typewriters could still cost up to \$100 until 1900, a price point that stayed stable for decades. He says at the end of the letter, "I know exactly what to do to reduce the cost of the machine," but he doesn't say more. Maybe he knew that the real solution would be to wait more than a century.

*Jason Puskar is a Professor of English at University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee. His book The Switch: An Off and On History of Digital Humans is out in November 2023 from University of Minnesota Press.*

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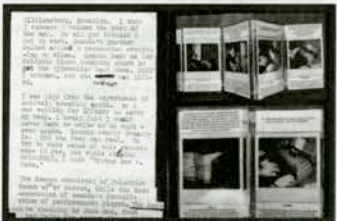
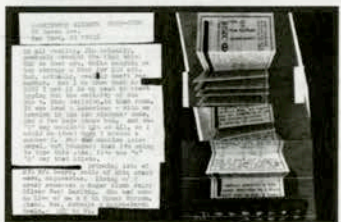
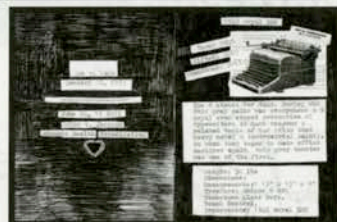
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**AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ZINE INTERSECTS  
MOTHERHOOD, TYPEWRITERS AND THE  
HEAVINESS OF BOTH**

**BY MOLLY SNYDER**



In a former life, or maybe just a previous decade, Zoë Darling carried a 30-pound typewriter — a 1949 Royal KMG to be exact — through the New York City subway to Brooklyn. She was sick from alcohol withdrawal, but determined to attend an art event in the borough.

This story became significant to her on numerous levels. She shared it with friends. They agreed. It is the intersection of many aspects of her personal life challenges ... and a typewriter.

Thus is the apex of her new zine, “Stacked Stories: Homes, Buses, Typewriters, Sickness & Other Heaviness,” that Darling created for QWERTYFEST 2023 and read excerpts from during the festival’s open mic event at The Pressroom, a Milwaukee-based tavern owned by a retired press operator for the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel.

“When I heard about QWERTYFEST MKE, more related typewriter and life stories came to the surface,” says Darling. “I wanted to get them in one place.”

In *Stacked Stories*, Darling also draws from two artist books she had made in the past about Roe vs. Wade.

Because QWERTYFEST took place on the one-year anniversary of the overturning of Roe vs. Wade — June 24, 2022 — the stories Darling wanted to share are focused on her two very different motherhood experiences. One ended with an abortion (“you too can be a mother for only seven weeks” she writes) and the other brought her a son, now school aged.

“Children are akin to a typewriter’s rubber roller: they hear and record every word you output,” says Darling.

The process of making the new chapbook was cathartic for Darling.

“I loved the physical pounding out of words and physical cutting and pasting and using a ballpoint pen again to make visual noise,” says Darling. “Once it was copied and stapled, it was hand-sized, pocket-sized and jam-packed.”

Darling, who has taught at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design since 2006, says she comes at the creative process from an obsession with the human body and daily rituals of survival.

“Everyone carries a ton of heavinesses. We’re constantly accumulating more. They’re our life stories and they should be honored, not discarded or ignored,” says Darling. “Remember your own and listen to as many others’ stories as you can.”

To get a copy of “Stacked Stories” find @zoe\_darling\_mke on Instagram.



**CTHULHU FOR PRESIDENT?**

At Typing Station #4 at our QWERTYFEST opening night party, we asked people to type out their thoughts for or against electing Cthulhu for President. Cthulhu, by the way, is the monstrous cosmic entity created by horror author H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937). Here are some of the results.

Do not fear what you don,t understand.  
Cthulhu for president.  
Cookies for all.  
death for some.

Perhaps Cthulu  
Atleast he's honest  
about being a cult leader

def woulf be a good choice  
everyine knows this is the caes

Who are you, cthulu? Not what you do  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

sweet, cthulhu is the one  
ythank you

Ye,ye chosen worse. um i write?  
A strong candidate, history in water conservati.on and  
environmentalism.

the end

VOTE CTHULHU

Cthulhu is not the only monster on h the ballot'

bi be the best you can be cthulu. I don't know who  
you are but I'm sure with your confident and caring nature for  
hummebeings , the planet as well.

As president of Miskatonic University, clearly I will vote  
early and often for my lord Cthulhu

I don't hve enough information about Cthulhu to know whether or not  
they (unsa re of Cthulhu's pron ounce, so sticking wit "they.")  
But they look rather endearing, with those great big eyes and  
t entacle things.  
Once I've read some Lovecraft, I'll return to provide a more nuanced and ir-  
formed opinion.

**THANKS TO AWKWARD NERD EVENTS FOR  
SPONSORING THIS STATION.**

**ILLUSTRATION BY TIM DEMETER.**



# THE KEYS BY RITA MAE MOORE

**T**here is a sharp stab to the underside of your foot as you step away from your bed. The fog of sleep is still heavy, but you wince involuntarily, a sharp hiss through gritted teeth as the pain forces you to stumble to the side. You look down, blinking to clear your tired vision, searching for whatever item attacked you.

It's a typewriter key.

Strange, you think, bending to pick it up. As you're turning it over in your hands, you wonder, *do I even own a typewriter?* The key is smooth from years of use on one side, with some still sharp prongs on the other. Lucky you, it was sharp side up. At least your foot isn't bleeding.

Letter "i," you note, and slide the key into your pajama pants pocket, moving gingerly to the kitchen. The curiosity about the key fades as a need for coffee arises. You're powerless against the siren call.

It's a warm morning already, promising a steamy early autumn day. Soon, the scent of the roasted beans is curling into your nose as the machine sizzles. You reach for your favorite mug, the image worn down from years of washing it in the dishwasher even though it plainly says not to on the bottom. The handle fits into your hand like an old friend, glaze completely worn off where your thumb rests towards your face, you peer inside.

As you remove it from the shelf, something clinks from inside the mug. Tilting it, you see another typewriter key. Face up, letter "h."

You're almost positive you don't have a typewriter, not even in the boxes in your garage that follow you every time you move and never get unpacked. Do you know anyone with a typewriter? You're not sure. And it doesn't matter anyways, because you haven't had a visitor in weeks.

You dump the key out onto your counter, and drop the key from your pocket alongside it. Giving the mug a quick rinse, you fill it with coffee, craving the clarity it brings now more than ever.

*This is strange, right,* you think, looking around as though someone might validate the increasing unease you're feeling. You live alone. No one is there to offer you a reassuring pat on the shoulder, or an explanation, or anything.

Silence is your answer, of course.

You backtrack, coffee in hand, to your bedroom, eyes scanning the floor

methodically, searching for any more loose pieces. You find none, and you sit on the bed with a sigh. Of course you're alone and something strange happened. Wasn't it just last night that you felt a tear slide down from your eye as you laid in bed, a silent herald of your loneliness? Didn't you end up sobbing into your palms as you ground them into your eyes, pressing to stanch the flow?

Didn't you cry out to your empty room, pleading for someone to see you, to care about you, to fill the aching gap inside you?

You shake your head softly as you sit on the end of the bed, something like shame welling in you even though your outburst the previous night had no audience. A shiver traces across the back of your neck, so cold that you tremble involuntarily, despite the gathering humidity in the early autumn breezes outside your window. It raises the hair along your arms and you inhale sharply, heart pounding for reasons you can't fully describe.

A footstep in the hall. Then two.

A familiar clinking.

You jump up and rush to your bedroom door, coffee sloshing carelessly from your mug as you move, and the hallway is just as abandoned as it should be when you reach it. You skid to a stop, thankfully, before you crush your feet into the items placed on the floor, just outside your bedroom door.

The smooth sides face you, propped up in the carpet just so. The two typewriter keys, side by side, spelling out the word you anticipated somehow - a greeting and acknowledgement that you aren't alone, even when you are:

Hi.

RITA MAE MOORE is the author of *A Voice In-Between*. The sequel, *A Soul In-Between*, is out September 23. Rita also leads haunted history tours for American Ghost Walks in Lake Geneva, WI.



ILLUSTRATION BY ALICIA KRUPSKY





## WI WORDS: ROBERT BLOCH

BY TEA KRULOS



*"WI Words" is a new series in QQ that spotlights writers with Wisconsin ties that have contributed significantly to various fields of writing and publishing. Since it's fall time, aka the spooky season, we thought we'd start by looking at the life of Robert Bloch (1917-1994), an influential horror writer who spent his formative years living in Milwaukee.*

Born in Chicago, Robert Bloch and his family moved to Milwaukee when he was 12-years-old, settling into an apartment on the East Side. While on a train ride to Milwaukee, Bloch fostered a true love for a pulp fiction magazine he bought at the station titled *Weird Tales*. Pulp flourished in the 1920s and 30s and you could find racks filled with titles specializing in western, adventure, war, romance, mystery, and "weird fiction" (as the genres of horror, sci-fi, and fantasy were then called). *Weird Tales*, originally published 1923-1954, was among the most well known of the weird fiction titles. Bloch would save a quarter (one-fourth of his monthly allowance) so he could buy a copy each month.

Bloch's favorite *Weird Tales* author was Howard Phillips Lovecraft, now considered to be one of the most influential American horror writers, who inspired future writers like Stephen King. Bloch was so taken with Lovecraft's stories about the ancient monster Cthulhu and other hideous beings, that he wrote Lovecraft a letter care of *Weird Tales*, asking where he could find more of his stories. To his surprise, Lovecraft wrote back and offered to send some copies of stories to borrow.

"The notion that a full-fledged adult literary celebrity would make such an offer to a half-fledged teenage entity was as astounding to me as it was commonplace to Lovecraft," Bloch wrote.

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Equally as valuable was Lovecraft's introduction to other members of his

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correspondents circle, which included several other weird fiction writers like Clark Ashton Smith, Robert Howard (creator of Conan the Barbarian), and many others. Hundreds of stamped envelopes traveled around the country, exchanging critiques, story ideas, and well wishes.

Lovecraft encouraged Bloch to take up writing and after a few rejections, Bloch started his long career with a story titled "The Secret of the Tomb," published in a 1934 issue of *Weird Tales*. Bloch quickly developed his own style—creepy tales with a macabre sense of humor, and a keen sense of wordplay. He titled one short story "Time Wounds all Heels," for example.

Lovecraft and Bloch's friendship was so strong that they gave each other the ultimate compliment—killing each other in horror stories. Bloch's came first and featured a stand-in character for Lovecraft being devoured by a monster in his story "The Shambler from the Stars." Lovecraft was delighted and retaliated with a story called "The Haunter of the Dark" in which a "Robert Blake" of Milwaukee (with the same street address as Bloch, 620 E. Knapp St.) meets his own gruesome fate.

Bloch and another Lovecraft correspondent and Wisconsin writer, August Derleth, had plans to subsidize a trip to bring in Lovecraft for a visit. Derleth was a prolific writer from Sauk City, who wrote in a wide variety of genres, including weird fiction. Lovecraft probably would have crashed on Bloch's couch on Brady Street (after getting married, Bloch moved to an apartment above the Glorioso's location at 1018 E. Brady St.) before going to visit Derleth. That trip never happened. On March 15, 1937, the poverty-stricken Lovecraft died of cancer of the small intestine and malnutrition.



After Lovecraft's death, Derleth began his own publishing imprint—Arkham



House, with the initial goal being to publish a collection of Lovecraft's work for the first time. Arkham House went on to publish works by many other notable authors, including the first book by sci-fi legend Ray Bradbury as well as Bloch's first book— a collection of stories titled *The Opener of the Way* (1945).

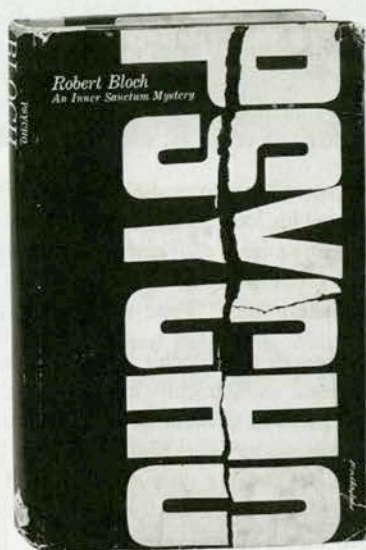
When Bloch's wife became ill in the mid-1950s, they moved to Weyauwega, WI to be closer to her family. It was there, inspired by the horrific case of murderer and grave robber Ed Gein, that Bloch wrote his best known work— *Psycho*. Published in 1959, Bloch's agent soon got a blind offer from someone representing an unknown director who wanted to adapt the book to film.

After negotiations, Bloch and his agent were paid \$9,000 for the movie rights to *Psycho*. As Bloch soon read in the newspaper, the director turned out to be master of suspense Alfred Hitchcock, and his 1960 adaptation is one of his most well-known works.

Bloch had proven himself and he moved his family to Hollywood to pursue new opportunities, finding good gigs writing scripts for movies and TV shows like *Star Trek*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, and *Night Gallery*. He continued to write short stories and novels (he wrote over 30). One of his last works before his death in 1994 was his autobiography, *Once Around the Bloch: An Unauthorized Autobiography*, which shows his morbid humor and details several chapters of his life in Milwaukee.

#### References

- *Once Around the Bloch: An Unauthorized Autobiography* by Robert Bloch (Tor Books, 1993)
- H.P. Lovecraft: Letters to Robert Bloch and Others, edited by David E. Schultz and S.T. Joshi (Hippocampus Press, 2015)



“ The clouds were thick overhead, and the field mists rolled like a cold fog in a November midnight. Even so, Martin should have been able to see the headlights as the train rushed on. But there were no lights. There was only the whistle, screaming out of the black throat of the night. Martin could recognize the equipment of just about any locomotive ever built, but he'd never heard a whistle that sounded like this one. It wasn't signaling; it was screaming like a lost soul. ”

— from Robert Bloch's Hugo Award winning short story "That Hell-Bound Train," originally appeared in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, 1958





# ASK ANJA

Dear Anja,

During our "honeymoon" era, I found numerous ways to ignore/justify/overlook the fact my partner did NOT make her bed every morning. As someone who makes their bed every morning, did I very likely sign up for a life of dysfunction & avoidable pain & heartbreak?

--Rumpled in Hospital Corners.

Rumpled One,

I really only see two options.

Option #1: Wait until you are home by yourself. Close your eyes and think, "I have been in a suspended animation death sleep for 100 years." But now, I have been given a moment of life. Go for a walk and view everything as a miracle. When you come back home rejoice at the sight of that depressing bed. Find the trace of your loved one's body. Pick up a hair from her pillow and examine it in the light. Miss her. Wonder if you will ever get to see her again or if you will return to a black dreamless sleep.

Option #2: Play a game where the first of you to reach 500 points gets to split up the relationship.  
\*Score as follows\*

Leaving an unmade bed is 5 points.

Make a tally mark each time you flush the toilet in your house. At the end of the day each additional flush more than your partner earns 2 points per flush.

Weigh every plate of food. At the end of the day each additional ounce earns you 1 point per ounce.

Collect all your household junk mail for one week. On Saturday night distribute 1 point for each piece of unwanted mail in your name.

Dust your house and send the dirty rags to a lab for DNA analysis. Whoever presents a larger skin cell footprint earns 100 points.

The Negative Compliments Rule-- you can receive 50 negative points for every earnest statement you make that honors, compliments or celebrates your partner. These points can only be awarded with permission from you partner. No sarcasm allowed!

Let me know how it goes!

♥Anja

need advice?

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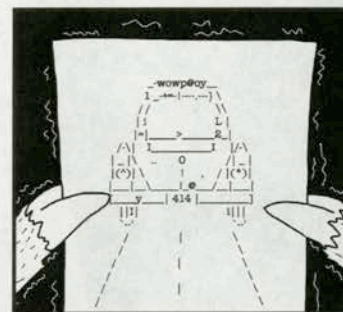
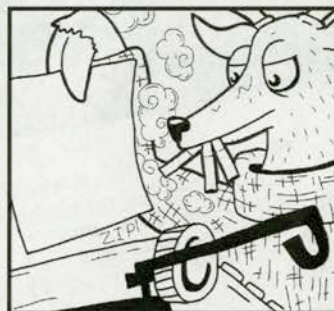
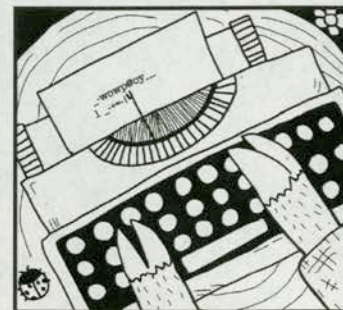
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## FAREWELL SUMMER A WORD SEARCH BY ALICIA KRUPSKY

- \* This is where ye olde renaissance faire takes place every summer.
- \* This German festival marks the start of fall in Wisconsin.
- \* This summer concert series has ended for the year, known to be the chilliest.
- \* I spy... an "I CLOSED \_\_\_\_\_" sticker.
- \* This Kenosha horror host is opening his haunted house soon!
- \* The RPG Dungeons & \_\_\_\_\_ was invented in a garage in Lake Geneva.
- \* Learn how to tarantella at this festival, or compete in the cannoli eating contest.
- \* This DJ collective is known for their nautical goth boat parties.
- \* This famous illusionist and escape artist called Wisconsin home.
- \* A beloved music venue known for hosting soon-to-be-famous bands.
- \* Often shirtless local legend who threw the first pitch at a Brewers' game this summer.
- \* The first name of the Mayor of Milwaukee.
- \* This river runs through Lincoln Village, and the street runs through Bayview.
- \* Watch out for The \_\_\_\_\_ Taverns when driving in the Third Ward. They're booked this time of year.
- \* This is It!, Milwaukee's favorite gay bar, is owned by this internationally famous Virgo drag icon.

# DEER DIARY



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BY BRIAN STRACK

COMIC  
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