

# GAMS

october 2015

Cliff

## About Us

GAMS is a feminist, LGBTQ+ positive, trans-inclusive, mildly radical, pseudo-intellectual literary zine based at Appalachian State University.

We publish an issue every two months, both as a hard copy to be distributed around our campus and as a .pdf file which is available on our website, **gamszine.com**. Each issue includes a mixture of short stories, poetry, essays, comics, and visual art. Donations and submissions are both welcome - see the back page or our website for details.

And happy reading!

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# **Bike With No Wheels**

by Clove Davenport

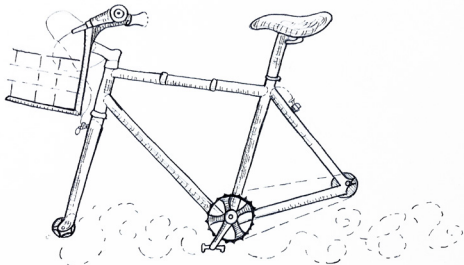
A bike with no wheels, looks like how I feel. Got the will to live but no life skills. It cuts deep and it kills. Fill the blanks of my heart with smoke. Pretend it's not broken and it ain't your fault.

Smoke black and ashy, falling from my eyes like tears. Polluting my personal space keeping me in place can't move a muscle. I've been replaced like a missing sock even though I'm not gone and my memory has faded from history like so many irrelevant details.

A mirage in view shows paradise lost, I've fallen for it a time or two. But just as I touch it it fades away into black consuming me. You took everything from me I'm starving on the street with nothing left to give you. No doors open to greet me because they can't see me I'm a faded memory, a jaded entity that never really existed.

Depression you crook you identity thief, stop playing tricks on me I've got a lawyer now to defend me. I'm taking you to court gonna sue you use you abuse you like you did me. Drag you behind my car like a just married sign, just freed sign, just released sign. Show the world your corpse so no one messes with me anymore.

Bike with no wheels, looks like how I feel. Got the will to live and I'm learning life skills. It cuts but I'll heal. Fill the blanks in my heart with love, forget I was broken and don't place any fault.



*Illustration by Evie Giaconia.*

# The Movies

by Zoe Kaplan

Lucy Larkins was late for work, again. With a sigh, she pulled herself away from her boyfriend, Raymond. “I’m so sorry, sweetie,” she said. “I have to go.”

“Will I see you tomorrow?” Raymond asked. “We could go to a movie.”

“I’m sorry. I already made plans,” Lucy lied. She blew Raymond a kiss, and hurried off towards the Metroville Gazette with a heavy heart. What Raymond didn’t know—couldn’t know—was that Lucy was really the superheroine Lightning Lass. She had a duty to protect the populace of Metroville from the forces of evil. It would be irresponsible of her to spend hours in a dark, secluded movie theater. She hated lying to her friends and family—especially Raymond—but it was the only way to keep them safe.

The next afternoon, Lucy heard a commotion from 12th street as she was walking home. Her arch nemesis, UltraMan, shouted something passionate but unoriginal about world domination.

Dressed in red and black, his face obscured by a mask, he lifted the parked cars from the curb and throw them at the screaming crowds of pedestrians.

Lucy dashed into a phone booth and stripped off her blouse and skirt to reveal a yellow body suit with an orange lightning bolt on the chest. She stuffed her clothes and glasses into her handbag, and pulled on orange boots, gloves, and a mask.

Leaving her bag behind, she ran towards her rival and shouted, “You won’t get away with this, UltraMan!”

He laughed. “You think you can stop me, Lightning Lass? Think again!”

He barreled towards her. She put up her hands and shot a bolt of lightning at his head. He dropped into a roll and stood up with an uppercut. His fist slammed into her chin, sending her flying up and backwards, but she turned her fall into a flip and landed lightly on her feet. She sent another lightning bolt at him, which he dodged, and he swung another punch at her, which she dodged. Their fights were violent, complicated dances, in which both partners knew all the steps. Neither of them, try as they might, had managed to injure each other, until—

ZAP! One of Lightning Lass' bolts hit UltraMan full in the chest. He flew backwards and slammed into the concrete. Lightning Lass hesitated, but when UltraMan didn't stand up, she raced over to his limp body. He lay splayed out on the pavement, his chest seared by her lightning, his limbs twisted. Lightning Lass winced, but she consoled herself, thinking of all the people who had suffered because of this villain. She ripped off his mask, excited to see the face of her enemy at last, and gasped, for UltraMan was none other than...

Raymond!

Lucy fell to her knees. The world swirled around her. The only thing she could see were the burns on her love's chest, burns she herself had put there. "Somebody call 911!" she shouted. "Raymond, my love, hold on, help is coming..."

"Lucy?" Raymond reached a trembling hand up to touch her cheek. "I just... wanted to go... to the... movies."





*Illustration by Evie Giaconia.*

# Inbox(1)

by J. M. Paris

Dust settles  
a little faster.  
I stoop a little  
lower,  
checking seals,  
checking vats,  
checking rates  
of growth.  
Enter the data,  
maintain the log.  
If I look at the stars,  
they are strange-  
frightening-  
for seeming so  
familiar.  
My hands  
change.  
I email myself  
so that I have  
something  
to read.



*Illustration by Evie Giaconia.*

# Headlights Chapter 2: Boyfriend

by Kathryn Johnson

*Note: This is the second installment of a continuing series.*

*Chapter 1 is available to be read on our website, [gamszine.com](http://gamszine.com).*

*Chapter 3 will be published in December, 2015.*

They stared at her as she got out of her truck. They wore tattered camo baseball caps and shirts showing guns crossed over skulls. Some of them got out of trucks with confederate flags flying from the tailgates, red as blood against the pale morning sky. Blue bracelets with Bible verses written on them in black bounced on their wrists. Some of them had tattered backpacks with zippers that wouldn't zip, others just carried their books in their hands, dog eared and duct taped together. Some didn't have any books at all.

Assholes, she thought, flipping off anyone in the general vicinity. A few of the other students laughed, most glared at her or whispered. Gem could feel their gaze on her back, stinging like a sore pimple pinned under a bra strap.

Gem slept through her first two classes, her head cradled in the sweet smell of her new textbooks, lulled by the drone of her new teachers. She dreamed of teeth and the moon behind thick bare tree branches. Her hand too far from the axe.

The creature sinking into her neck. Taking her blood and her voice.

The bell rang. She landed on her hands and knees on the floor. Her hand came away from her mouth sticky with black lipstick. She looked up to see her teacher—history, maybe? She couldn't remember. A pink scar—the kind that looked like it had never properly healed—crossed his face. One eye was wide open but the other was gray and empty.

“Miss Meisenheimer,” he said. “I don't require you to stay awake during my class, but it is strongly recommended.”

“Sorry.” Gem got to her feet.

Someone giggled. The whole class burst into fits of laughter. The girl sitting at the front didn't laugh. She whipped her head around, her blond pigtails bouncing, and glared at the rest of the class. Gem smiled at her. She smiled back.

Gem grabbed her books and her jacket and hurried out of the room. She glanced over her shoulder to see if the girl with the pigtails had followed her, but she was gone.

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What was his name? Gem thought. The history teacher—she swore she'd heard that name before, she could feel it in her bones. His name eluded her as if there was power in the naming.

“I can see you’re one of us,” someone said. Gem looked up. Four kids stood next to her truck. One of them leaned against it, his arms folded over a leather jacket studded with tin spikes. The tips of fangs stuck out under his lips. A shudder ran up her spine. She thought of the axe in the bed of her truck, its handle warm in her hand.

“Get off my truck,” she said.

“Sorry.” The one who had spoken first stuck his thumbs through his jeans, pulled back his lips to expose his teeth, too clean to be real. When Gem tried to get to her truck, he stepped in front of her.

“Come on,” he said. “Don’t you want to know who we are?”

“Not particularly,” Gem said.

“We’re vampires,” he said.

Gem giggled, something in her snapping like a twig underfoot.

“Oh my God,” she said. “Of course you are.” She laughed until tears came to her eyes and she was doubled over wheezing, pain in her guts like a knife between her ribs.

“It’s not funny.”

“It’s pretty fucking funny,” Gem said, once she could speak.

“Whatever.” The four of them sauntered away from Gem’s

truck. One of them, a girl with bleached hair, bared her teeth as a parting gift.

Gem got in her truck, slamming the door behind her. What was his name? She rested her head against the window, the glass cool against her sticky skin.

“Hellsing!” She slapped the steering wheel.

Outside, a boy about to get into a battered jeep looked up. She almost didn’t recognize him in the sun. His skin hung off the bones of his face. His eyes were red from tears or sickness—Gem couldn’t tell. He wore a coat that was ripped and patched, too big for him in the shoulders. There were two red marks on his neck, too fresh to scab yet.

He glanced around the parking lot, getting into his jeep when he couldn’t find who had called his name. The Jeep roared to life and sped out of the parking lot. It bumped and rattled its way down a gravel drive leading away from the school into the woods. Gem got out of her truck and grabbed the axe out of the back.

She followed the jeep through the woods—it wasn’t going much faster than walking pace, and the road didn’t split. It stopped, kicking up a cloud of dust. Gem dropped down behind a bush. The jeep’s door slammed.

“You can’t keep doing this,” the Hellsing kid said to someone she couldn’t see. “You could’ve killed me.”

“Did you see her? The girl with the axe?”

“No, because I was passed out!”

“Look, I’m sorry, alright? It was an accident! It’s not my fault.”

“Look, just—we’ll go back to the hospital, alright?”

“What about your dad—“

“He’s old and half blind,” the Helsing kid said. “He doesn’t notice anything anymore.”

“Wait—”

“What is it?”

“I smell something,” something sniffed, tasting the air. Gem shrank down in the brush, her heart pounding. A hand reached through the leaves and grabbed her shoulder with a grip like a vice. Gem screamed and swung the axe. She felt it sink into flesh. The hand let go. She jumped to her feet, gripping the handle of the axe with both hands, blood dripping from the blade. The Helsing kid stood between her and the creature—she recognized the not-quite-human look in its blue eyes, the yellow of its teeth that she hadn’t seen in the moonlight. A red scar crossed its throat. It pressed a hand over a long gash in its arm, trying to catch the stream of blood.

“I thought I killed it,” Gem said.



“Stop, alright! Please just put the axe down!”

“It almost killed you!”

“Don’t call me that,” the creature muttered. “My name’s Bart.”

“Whatever,” Gem said.

“Please just put the axe down,” Hellsing said. “He’s my—he’s my boyfriend.”

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ENCLOSED

by Jason Huber

Dear Sir,

We regret to inform you that our staff saw fit to shake the dew from the bushes in your yard.

often they come by  
and hide in the roses here  
we will keep you safe

It is with great sadness that we killed the birds nesting there, necessity demanded it.

two by two they nest  
foragers feeding their young  
taxpayers suffer

We would be remiss if we didn't inform you that we lost a number of our worms in the struggle.

better to lie still  
when you've been struck by lightning  
insurance reasons

In these unfortunate times, it's crucial to remember that public safety is our utmost regard.

once they fluttered by  
and built homes in our treetops  
burdened society

We appreciate your co-operation and understanding during this important process.

good men aid progress  
against the avian threat  
for God and country

Enclosed with this letter, you'll find a bill for services rendered.

Best regards,

They

## About the Authors and Artists

Multi-genre writer and renaissance humanist, **Clove Davenport** pursues a BFA in writing at SCAD. She composes and performs poetry, and also writes fantastical fiction and children's literature. In her spare time, she volunteers for a fair trade artisan organization which connects with the artist community while creating positive change for those in need. She aims to publish her novels and use part of the proceeds to support learning challenged youth.

**Evie Giaconia** is a sophomore Biology major, at least for the moment. She is an artist and writer, and enjoys running and drinking copious amounts of tea. She loves dragons, books, kicking stuff, and YA series.

**Elliot Hand-Thoennes** is a sophomore Graphic Design major, because getting a real job is for losers. Also they are probably literally a deer. They mostly like cartoons, various nerd stuff, and being gay on the internet. Follow them on tumblr at [faunlord.tumblr.com](http://faunlord.tumblr.com) if you're into that sort of thing.

**Jason Huber** is vehemently passionate about Netflix and cheese-based snacks. In the frightening world outside his apartment, he's studying composition and rhetoric on the graduate level. His parents are proud of him despite these things. Jason still has Pokemon cards from his childhood. His greatest regret is never finding a Charizard.

**Kathryn Johnson** is a Physics major with a minor in English at Appalachian State. They've won Nanowrimo three years out of five, but their work rarely sees the light of day. Their best friend is a horse named Buzzy, and they've seen every episode of Supernatural. They love comics, movies, horses, and tacos (not necessarily in that order).

**Zoe Kaplan** is a sophomore English major with minors in Biology and Women's Studies, because she likes too many things to choose a viable career path. She has worked for several short fiction publications, including The Peel, Lightspeed Magazine, and Best American Science Fiction and Fantasy, as well as the neuroscience journal, Impulse. She loves princesses, cats, books, and punching things, and she's always up for a Lord of the Rings marathon.

**J.M. Paris** was born in a specific place and continues to live, doing things and having experiences that are similar to but also different from your own.



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# Credits

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| Cover Art:        | Elliot Hand-Thoennes                                                                           |
| Contributors:     | Evie Giaconia<br>Clove Davenport<br>Kathryn Johnson<br>Zoe Kaplan<br>Jason Huber<br>J.M. Paris |

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**Want to see your work in print?** Submissions are always open! We accept short stories, essays, poetry, comics, and visual art. Go to [gamszine.weebly.com/submit](http://gamszine.weebly.com/submit) for more information.

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