

# THEY CALL US BATTERED

EDITION 8

SUMMER 2022

1.800.799.7233

1.800.787.3222

3 1 1 1 1 0.799.7233

22 1.800. 0.7 233 1.800.799.723

.800.787.3224 1.800.787.

9 1.800.799.7233 1.

1.800.787.3224 1.8

1.800.799.

0.787.3224 1.800.787.3224

0.799.7233 1.800.7

22 1.800.787.3224

1.800.799.7233



They Call Us is a literary magazine created by powerful women and gender minorities wanting to empower other women and gender minorities. Using media, art, and literature as a means to inspire, They Call Us wants to tell the everyday struggles of women and gender minorities from around the world.

The purpose of art is to create change, so They Call Us works to unite artists to tell the stories of those that are normally silenced. Our goal is to ignite conversation and encourage people of all ages, races, sexualities, genders, nationalities, abilities, and the like to share their stories. They Call Us wishes to diversify the messages we see online and change the dialogue to give credibility to all of us who have felt helpless and lacking a credible voice.

## A NOTE TO OUR READERS

This magazine centers around themes of:

*Sexual Assault*

*Rape*

*Domestic Violence*

*Drug Use*

*Suicide*

Due to the nature of this edition, all content centers around the theme of domestic abuse. Other content warnings will be labeled at the beginning of relevant writing. Please care for yourself as you enjoy this edition. If you or anyone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, please call the numbers on the cover and explore our recommendations page for more resources.

They Call Us seeks to tell the stories of any and all who wish to share them. Sometimes these stories, while important to listen to, can be hard to hear. Above all else, please take care of yourself.

Thank you for reading.

WITH WORK BY

Sharon Wright Mitchell  
(she/her)

Amanda Valerie Judd  
(she/her)

Jennifer Karp  
(she/her)

Jill Crammond  
(she/her)

Kathryn Paul  
(she/her)

Cassandra Myers  
(they/she/he)

Michaelle Brett Gaffney  
(she/her)

Kathleen Klassen  
(she/her)

Jaime Grookett  
(she/her)

Alexis Rhone Fancher  
(she/her)

Joyce Elaine Hayden  
(she/her)

Kailah Peters  
(she/they)

Cover art and illustrations by Asko Skladany (they/them)

FORWARD	6
MY FRIEND SAID, “WRITE ABOUT WHY YOU CAN’T SLEEP”	8
SEX IN THE DRIVEWAY	10
MONDAY NIGHT SPORTS	11
THOUGHTS WHILE DROWNING	13
THE KNIFE WAS JUST THE BEGINNING	14
THERE’S A REASON WE EAT OUR MATES, OR DEMI LAVATO REVENGE FUCKS AND I UNDERSTAND	17
SUCKER-PUNCHED	20

THE SCENT OF PURPLE	23
STILL LIFE: WIFE AS DEAD DEER	24
NO ONE CARES THAT YOU DIDN’T DIE	26
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	28
WHERE LEAVING TAKES PLACE	30
I AM FREE	32
RECOMMENDATIONS	34
TENTH EDITION CELEBRATION	36
ABOUT US	38

ARTWORK BY

Sherri Madison  
(she/her)

Baroque Anarchist  
(she/her)

Josie Koznarek  
(she/her)

Jayn Anderson  
(she/her)

Oluwasegun Adedokun  
(he/him)

Quase Cachi  
(she/her)

Lila Galindo  
(she/her)

Angel Atkinson  
(she/her)

Madalynn Jane Burnham  
(she/her)

Carolyn Watson  
(she/her)

Sam Bearden  
(she/her)

Carolyn Schlam  
(she/her)

Qiming Ruan  
(she/her)

Artwork titled “Sleeping Beauty”  
by Sherri Madison



# FOREWORD

By Kailah Peters

My first experience with domestic abuse happened when I was 6. My aunt was murdered by her ex-husband, the father of her children, someone I once called uncle. As I grew up, I started to see it everywhere. First it was in my home. Then it was at friend's. Next, it was the ominous hue that lingered over every date. Domestic abuse became a fear I lived with - live with.

Putting together this edition I was both terrified and comforted. I'm scared by the amount of people who live with this same fear. Knowing so many women have mistaken love for a closed fist shatters me. But there is also comfort in knowing I am not alone. Don't get me wrong, I wouldn't wish this on anyone, but when you are experiencing intimate partner violence it is easy to believe no one would understand. To think they would shame you for staying or be baffled by any love you still hold. By believing we are alone, we convince ourselves that there is no hope and no help. We isolate into the dangerous living situation.

But we are not alone and you are not alone.

Nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. When we expand our definition of battered to include more than just the physical harm, the problem becomes even more daunting. 48.4% of women have experienced at least one form of psychological aggression by an intimate partner during their lifetime. It's important to note that the current statistics available lack insight into non-binary, trans, and gender non-conforming people. It also tends to skimp on the abuse suffered in queer relationships. But we do know that on a typical day, there are more than 20,000 phone calls placed to domestic violence hotlines nationwide.

We put together this edition for personal healing and to show the world there have been others, just like me and maybe like you. Most importantly, I want this edition to offer hope. For anyone suffering at the hands of an abuser, there is a way out and there is a way to find happiness again. There have been people who walked away from the abuse, who have done the hard work of healing. People who speak out against domestic violence and who have found peace and love in a safe way.

There is hope after hurt and there are people willing to help you get there.



Artwork titled "Post-Pandemic Society"  
by Baroque Anarchist



# MY FRIEND SAID, “WRITE ABOUT WHY YOU CAN’T SLEEP.”

By Sharon Wright Mitchell

*content warning: mention of suicide*

I wish I could write  
a poem about insomnia,  
the weight of anxiety  
that descends in the night,  
like a blanket of chain mail—  
surrendering  
as dark water takes me,  
closing in around my face,  
feeling a hand on my chest  
holding me under  
until I wake up, gasping  
in the moonlight.

I wish I could write  
about my dream,  
walking through  
a dark castle, candles  
flickering, pacing  
dim corridors, trying  
not to be heard,  
knowing something  
follows.

A shadowy room,  
a curtained bed,  
I feel a heavy palm  
on my chest, hands  
gripping my arms  
holding tight, skeleton hands.  
I look up into the face  
of a corpse.  
I wake up gasping.  
Again, I close my eyes,  
try to sleep.  
I step onto an elevator.  
The door closes,  
and with a jerk it descends.  
The doors open to darkness.  
Something is there, I know it.

I can’t move, I can’t reach  
to close the door.  
Something waits there

in the dark, some danger  
I can’t escape.

I wish I could write about  
the panic in the dark,  
the feeling of being unsafe  
in my home, in my bed.  
It is raw, primal—  
fight or flight triggered  
by my subconscious.  
It is a fear inside me  
that I don’t understand  
as one who loves the dark.

I feel helpless,  
as my mother must have felt  
when my father held her arms  
so tight that bruises showed  
where each cruel finger squeezed

I know there could be  
something terrifying  
in the dark,  
like when my father  
threatened suicide—  
ran out into the night  
and shot a gun in the woods,  
leaving us to wonder  
if we would find  
his skull splattered  
on the leaves.

I feel powerless,  
like my mother must have  
when my father  
ripped the distributor cap  
from her car so she  
could not crank it.

I feel the fear of a child  
watching it all,  
night after night,  
yet helpless to stop it.

“The markers for PTSD in children  
from environments of domestic vio-  
lence are equivalent to those experi-  
enced by combat veterans...”

—*Taming the Inner Dragon* by Nicky  
Gomez



## ARTIST STATEMENT

“Rest” is the newest piece in a series exploring how we cope with life’s unknowns. There’s no magic recipe for dealing with hardship, no one-and-done answer for handling trauma. Others might not be able to see what’s going on under the surface, but you can feel it at all times, swirling darkly all around you. Of course you want it to go away, but honestly, it might be too big for you to handle right now. You don’t need to explain yourself, and you don’t need anyone’s permission but your own. Grab a life raft, make your favorite drink, and rest.

Artwork titled “Rest”  
by Josie Koznarek

# SEX IN THE DRIVEWAY

By Amanda Valerie Judd

loving you was like  
having sex in the driveway

impossible without  
bloody knees and abraded palms

gravel digging into my back  
hot pavement searing my skin

hard concrete unyielding, demanding  
I sacrifice my comfort and well-being

so that any joy I might have found  
was driven out by my suffering and regret



# MONDAY NIGHT SPORTS

By Jennifer Karp

that first punch connects  
nose cracks

husband stands over me  
closed fist dangling

my own warm blood drips  
from his knuckles

swollen cherry red  
domes

the salty metal taste of it  
the brine of it

browning on my white cotton shirt  
like rust

his lips mouth something  
like a dying fish

gasping for air  
I lean into

the zip of adrenaline  
buzzing like a bee  
like a chainsaw

and stand up shaking  
like thin thistle in the breeze  
flower and weed

round two

because to hell with him

Artwork titled "Enough"  
by Jayn Anderson





# THOUGHTS WHILE DROWNING

By Jennifer Karp

*She was the girl. She was the one he'd chosen. She was the one to whom it would happen.*

- Joyce Carol Oates, *Black Water*

*Speeding along the unpaved, unnamed road, taking the turns in giddy skidding slides. Am I going to die? – like this? Because you don't have to be in water to drown. Because the back seat is as dangerous as the front when you're not driving but being driven. Because love is water in lungs. You know you're someone's little girl don't you? You know. You're some. You're one. Little girl. Little girl. You love the life you've lived because it is yours. Because you. Because you're in the car, because you're in the man, because you're in his rib and you're banging from the inside. How crucial for us to rehearse the future, in words. Breathe, but don't inhale. Never to doubt that you will live to utter them. Never to doubt that you will tell your story. Because he will save you. Because before the crash, the high. Because car is to boat is to horse drawn carriage. Because you are a mermaid, a visceral thing--how you come to despise your own words in your ears not because they aren't genuine, but because they are; Because he sold you a fish story. Because you've said them so many times. Because you are hook, line and sinker. Catch and release. When they say you made a choice, what they will mean is she wasn't in love but she would love him, if that would save her. You have five minutes left. Don't waste your last breath. Even the water snake doesn't believe that he had not abandoned her to die in the black water.*

\* Lines in italics taken from *Black Water* by Joyce Carol Oates

Artwork titled "Recoil"  
by Oluwasegun Adedokun,  
modeled by Leola Otubanjo (she/her)

# THE KNIFE WAS JUST THE BEGINNING

By Kathryn Paul

except that it wasn't, not really.  
But after months of shallow  
breathing and eggshell-  
walking and second-  
guessing predictions alternate  
outcomes improbable  
worlds where possible endings were not

a shift. The knife—

the first thing I recognized  
as abnormal— warning—  
un-survivable— even  
with my lowered eyes, my  
skirting the shadowed edges

the first time. The knife—

the center of the arc,  
the middle of the book. I couldn't see  
how many chapters  
pages  
moments  
might remain

in my tale. The knife—

a twist in the plot, a  
twist in the kitchen, a  
twist in the corner of the kitchen—  
corner without light  
without lungs  
without breath  
only the heartbeats  
I prayed  
to silence.

Artwork titled "Ready for life"  
by Quase Cachi





# THERE'S A REASON WE EAT OUR MATES OR DEMI LEVATO REVENGE FUCKS AND I UNDERSTAND

Article reads: *Some animals kill each other after sex because their distinction between hungry and flirty is blurred.*

I disagree. I have been flirthingrory for my own tentacle fizzing in a belly.

Overdose is one word for the ritual of the night  
Demi ripped the head off a mantis and chugged her own remembering. It almost killed her.

She called up the body that unbodied her, said  
*this time, from my corpse flower mouth I'll be the best worst thing you ever did.*

She slips into a silky do-over, the Odyssey of tweezer pulling your outline from an uncanny thorax, her insides from his outsides.

To escape a becoming, you must return to its utterance and speak over whatever wince hiccups in the gut.

A girl unrapeable refuses to wound becomes the thing that snags and tears

Our pitcher plants opening, round two vs. lure



We feast on every pillow hair we abandoned in escape.  
Regurgitate fists pulling grass out of gills.  
Absorb the crunchy leftovers of verdant betrayal.

Gulp pond water into the forever hour and aquarium  
just to tap on our own glass and see what flinches

She stopped eating and started using and some call it  
a sickness but I call it obvious - blood letting.

Sex, substance, sustenance.  
Dance of intake once taken.  
It's about control.

To reap harvest can't and won't and of course - didn't.

We pregame that they're the hurt we are hunting. But they cum with or without our yes and we still

Feel the rug burn of it all on our inner weepies.

So that all of us is inside of us even just for the swallow we eat our mates.

By Cassandra Myers

Artwork titled "Emerging"  
by Lila Galindo



Artwork titled "Aftershock"  
by Angel Atkinson





By Michaelle Brett Gaffney

In the belly of the haunted house,  
a young man balls his frightened fist  
and punches me in the face.

I fall back to my hiding spot, a spider-  
webbed bookcase. A green strobe light  
marks my form against the wall,

hunched over, a wounded witch.  
In the break room, they say  
I should've punched back.

I knew this might happen, listened  
as other actors told me stories  
between the sighs of their cigarettes.

How they were groped, slapped, sent  
to the hospital for reducing customers  
to scared animals, all tooth and coward-claw.

You told me if I didn't want it, I shouldn't  
have touched you. You told me,  
*You're the one who got it out.*

*It* meaning your dick meaning a hand job  
meaning *not* sex. I wanted to work  
my fingers like you did, so I could hear

what you sounded like in the dark.  
But the weight of your body  
on mine was a boulder of muscle,

you at the gym working biceps  
and glutes and pecs for this. Thick  
bottle of vitamins on your bedside table

like a human heart for this. The weight  
of your body was a stranger. I pushed  
you off twice. The weight of your body

was a heavy gun. I don't remember  
if I told you again before you finally  
let me alone, my voice trapped under all that—

mask and makeup, his friends' laughs  
licking my ears tucked under a white wig.  
*That's what you get*, he said, that's what

you get as if my job was to stand in the hot dark,  
waiting to be struck down like a stray deer.  
No flashing red lights afterwards, no referee

throwing his flag, crying foul, penalty,  
unnecessary roughness. No security guard  
with a light in the dark, breaking up the scene.

Just the yellow fluorescent of your bathroom,  
the door's lock like a button snapped shut.  
And I don't rip off my mask

and I put my clothes back on and I asked you  
to take me home and I stay and work  
another two hours and I told no one

and I tell everyone and they say yeah, it sucks,  
get some ice, cover your eyes until the bruising  
fades, until you forget it ever even happened.



Artwork titled "Faith in Fading"  
by Madalynn Jane Burnham



Artwork titled "Inner Conflict"  
by Sam Bearden



## THE SCENT OF PURPLE

By Kathleen Klassen

I match your purple with more  
poetry – there will be no warring  
today, no bruising – words

will bleed  
lilac.

I dig holes in the soil, plant lavender  
pull up weeds, but I know you  
don't like to dig – bones  
left where they were buried  
last time.

That kind of unearthing can wait.  
A watered-down version of things  
spruced by the scent you left  
on my porch – intimacy  
of a flower.

You are forgiven of course  
– until next time.  
There will always be  
another

and another  
reason  
for more  
purple.

### ARTIST STATEMENT

This piece represents the complex feelings I have in regards to my healing journey, traumas, and mental health. As a child, I lived in a home full of domestic abuse, both physical and emotional. It caused me to dissociate and shut myself off from the world. For a large part of my life I felt hollow...it's taken time to work through and confront things that are often best left forgotten. I've noticed that over time I've felt new parts of myself bloom and change. Aspirations, relationships, passions and more allow me to grow and continue this journey of self love and discovery.



# STILL LIFE: WIFE AS DEAD DEER

By Jill Crammond

When you wake up on fire and your kidnapper says, *That's just the stove babe*. If you were a highway. The neighbors tell you to run for the hills, but how will the hills save you from a mammoth of a man whose shoulders tell you *I'm built like a ton*? A stop sign will not keep you safe unless you wear it like a badge. If a crow tells you, *I will keep you safe*, check the carcass he has been pecking. A careful and loving tearing through flesh is not a gentle demise. If you are the dead deer in this story, raise your white flag. If your lips are moving, look off into the distance and stare. We before I, as in predator that bites carefully when taking down its prey.

Artwork titled "Hidden"  
by Carolyn Watson





# NO ONE CARES THAT YOU DIDN'T DIE

By Jaime Grookett

*content warning: sexual assault*

No one cares that you didn't die. His fingers, a noose around your neck, left you with a necklace of blooming bruises for a week. Each spring, hives emerge like crocuses to remind you of how he couldn't let you go. Your mind clings to the tightness around your throat, your eyes drying and widening from oxygen pressed to your skull. Like the tie your father wore to church on Sundays when he'd dab Old Spice aftershave behind his temples and warn you to sit quietly during service, no slumping on the kneeler when your knees rubbed raw. That night you withered under the weight of him until your mind army-crawled to the blades of the ceiling fan to marvel from a safe distance at how a person's eyes bulge like water balloons when they meet their maker. Groping the stiff sheet, you imagined what he'd do when you turned cold and blue and dead. He'd say, "Fuck," because the situation changed from one of temptation to one of necessity, a nagging problem begging for solution. He'd scoop your body, wonder at its weight, how death transformed a light, bouncy girl who hopped onto kitchen tables to sing "Me and Bobby McGee" to one silent, purple-lipped, ghost white, and heavy as shit. He'd drag it to your car, because he never had his own, pop the trunk then call the friend who'd hide a body for him. The two, some pact they imagined holding them together until one folded under pressure after too many Cokes and no bathroom breaks, drive at 3 am to the jetty where the rocks lay jagged and slippery and, because these aren't planners we're talking about here, clumsily cart your body, one grabbing hands, the other feet, and tread along the bulwark like a slip and slide, clowning about how they always manage to get caught up in some shit. On a three-count, they'd toss your body into the shallow ocean but drop half of

you because their timing was off, and one fucker went too fast and so they try again. And again. Third times a charm. But you didn't die, you jumped awake to the scent of sweat and ammonia, him naked and peeved, exhausted from the energy suffocation of another demands, or disappointed in his lack of follow through. He heard his father's words scream in his mind, *You never finish anything you start, loser*. That explained the disgust in his eyes. And you, too, feel a sense of incompleteness, as if you got all worked up for nothing. Held breath when a balloon looks about to burst but doesn't. A crushing wave of cold rushed through you, and your heart hammered, after hibernating to prepare for death, but now it beat again, gained speed and volume like a commuter train with its sights set on you. It pulsed in your ears, thick and rhythmic. The rhythm is his breathing, and it will become the sound of silence for you, but you don't know that yet. And the memory will scribble something illegible on your heart. When you try to tell your story, your wispy-haired friend will cup her ears and turn up the music in the car. No one likes recounts of tragic stories told by the sufferer; it's as if you reveal to them the gallows hidden in their backyard.



Artwork by Asko Skladany



*Knives cut both bread and throats*, he warns, the stiletto's steel tip teasing my trachea. A love tap. I'm used to it. I don't react anymore; I bake. I knead, pound the dough instead of him. Each day when he leaves for court, those \$2,000 suits camouflaging his viciousness, a brief reprieve. I envision his face in the smacked-down dough, push out the air pockets, dream of suffocation. I slap him, punch him, only to watch him rise. While he proofs, I look for loopholes, binge-watch *Forensic Files*, its endless stories of stymied desire, hour after hour of scheme and kill, each murder more gruesome, honed. I take notes, stick in a shiv to see if he's done, plot that he comes to a similar bad end. I shape loaves like alibis, knife-notched before they go into the oven, frenzied jabs and slices. I sharpen the blade, ready for his return. Like him, I'll never speak without a lawyer present.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

By Alexis Rhone Fancher

Artwork titled "Shoes"  
by Carolyn Schlam



# WHERE LEAVING TAKES PLACE

By Joyce Elaine Hayden

It never occurred to me to drive or run away in those early days when I lived with Michael and Mia in the third floor apartment near Chestnut Hill. When Kevin would visit, when he'd rack up \$700.00 on my gas card in a month, never offering to pay it back. Or when I'd come home late in the evening and find him smoking in the dark kitchen, angry because he came to surprise me and I wasn't there.

It never occurred to me to leave on the 100 acres we rented outside Rumney, NH, where I took the dog and spent our days splashing through icy streams, huddling under elm trees, their dried winter leaves rustling, consoling me from Kevin's temper, Kevin's threats. Or in Newburyport where we first lived together, where his fists first entered the rooms. The reasons for leaving mounted slowly.

I can't recall how I would have identified myself back then...unlucky? Guilty? I know I had little if any confidence; any I may have had was beaten and shamed out of me. I never thought of myself as "battered" until years later when working at a Women's Domestic Violence Shelter. I was in a three day training and kept hearing "battered women" over and over. As the daily lives of these women were depicted and described, I saw myself. Face in the mirror the morning after....bruises on the biceps....my entire chest covered in rosettes of purple, green, black and blue.

I can't recall seeing myself as anything but a young woman who said the wrong things, wore the wrong clothes, smiled when she should have turned away. I never saw the fists coming. Never imagined it would happen again..until there I was, on the ceiling, looking down at my rag doll body being thrown against walls, hammered into the floor. I could see pieces of me in broken glass, in mirror fragments on the brown rug: an eye here....an elbow there....long blonde hair behind an ear.

I was always looking down. I was so often out of body, so often watching horrible things happen to a woman who looked remarkably like me. I had to leave my physical body in order to survive the violence pummeled upon it. I knew I was safe on the ceiling. I knew there was nothing I could do for "Her" down there. I tried yelling for her to leave, to run, to fight back. But she only occasionally moved to shield her head or her face.

I was always looking down. I learned to treat Kevin the way I would a grizzly. Lower your eyes, walk slowly backwards, do not confront. As the years passed with him, as my spirit dimmed month by month, I no longer remembered how to stay or how to leave. It was no longer a choice. When all you can see are your own two feet, you have no direction home. I grew small. Quiet. I melted into a wax figure of myself.

And why? Because I was cute! Because I was funny! Because other people, yes... some of them men, enjoyed being in my presence. Because I loved the world and I moved in and out of situations with ease. Because I was always ready for the next spark of joy.

And why? Because Kevin didn't like the attention I received. So, I was punished. Punished with pain. Punished with silence. The solid woman I had been when I met him was chiseled away day by day, punch by punch, negative comment by negative comment. I was a mere wisp of a woman before I knew it.

In the end, I didn't drive away at all. I didn't run. In the end, I walked through the front door, stood above him, watched him turn pale as I said I was leaving. Yes, for good. In the end, his fists turned to mud. His fire to ash. In the end, he left with the dog in the truck, left me there holding two green garbage bags of clothes and books and records and incense. Left me there, not battered, not beaten. Not whole, not complete. Simply breathing. Simply alive. Simply able to take the next step.



# I AM FREE

By Amanda Valerie Judd

I am free of you,  
and yet,

The clink of ice cubes into a glass  
sends terror down my spine  
in much the same way  
the sound of our garage door going up  
would freeze my throat in fear  
'til I thought my neck would snap.

I am free, and yet,  
when I accidentally  
catch a glimpse of myself in a mirror  
it is your face I see in mind's eye,  
as you shake your head in disgust  
at the sight of me.

I am free, and yet,  
your hateful words still  
ricochet around my brain  
slamming into the corners of my skull  
like a desperate bird trapped  
in a house trying to get out.

But I am free . . .

Artwork titled "Decay"  
by Qiming Ruan



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Artwork by Danie Franko



## RESOURCES

NATIONAL DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE HOTLINE

800-799-7233

800-787-3224

NATIONAL DATING  
ABUSE HELPLINE

1-866-331-9474

NATIONAL CHILD  
ABUSE HOTLINE

1-800-422-4453

PAVE

Professionals Against  
Violence Podcast

## BOOKS

IN THE DREAM HOUSE

By Carmen Maria Machado

THE COLOR PURPLE

By Alice Walker

IT ENDS WITH US

By Colleen Hoover

STRONG FEMALE PROTAGONIST

By Molly Ostertag

INTO THE DARKEST CORNER

By Elizabeth Haynes

WHEN I HIT YOU, OR A PORTRAIT  
OF THE WRITER AS A YOUNG WIFE

By Meena Kandasamy

## MEDIA

ENOUGH

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY

MAID

ITV

I'M A SURVIVOR PODCAST

WAITRESS

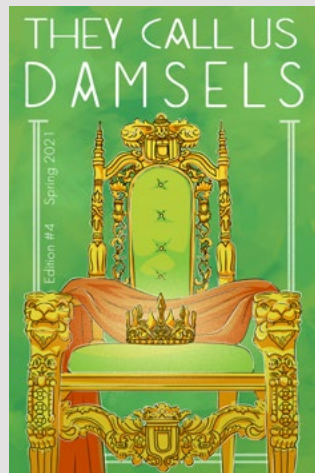
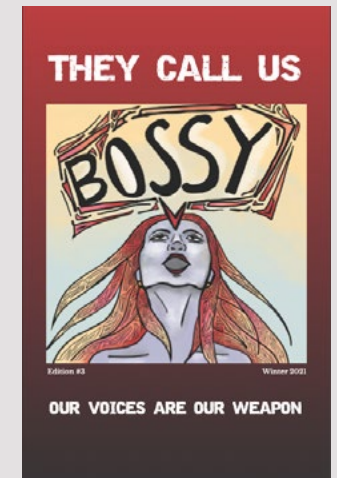
BIG LITTLE LIES

TIL DEATH DO US PART

SPOTLIGHT, THE PODCAST  
FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE  
SECTOR

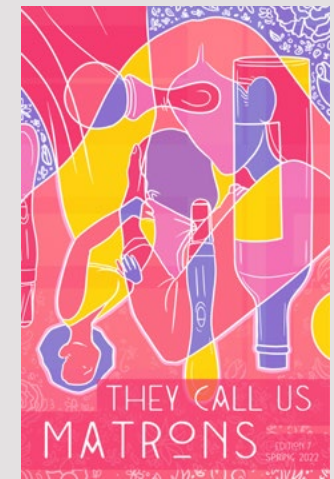
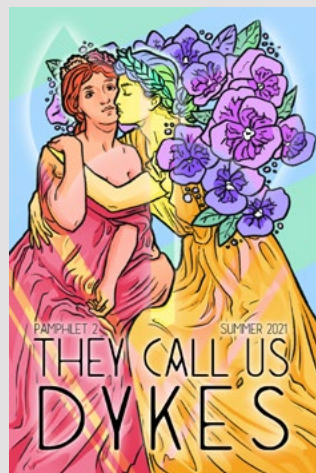
ROAR EPISODE 5. THE  
WOMAN WHO WAS FED BY  
A DUCK





10 editions of *They Call Us*

# OUR VOICE IS OUR WEAPON



# COVEN CONGRESS

The concept of a witch originated from a societal fear and hatred of independent women. Any woman who dared to challenge societal order, to not have children, to take up work outside the home, to think for herself was tortured and burned. Though the punishment is less explicit, the hatred of the witch remains.

In defiance of this stigma, we are reclaiming the word. We are witches and the Coven Congress is our little sabbath. For each edition, we gather witches from all walks of life to talk about our experiences, opinions, and ideas. Next, we let the discussion inspire content included in *They Call Us*. Coven Congress allows us to amplify the voices of a variety of women and gender minorities so the world can hear and learn from our tales.

Special thanks to our Coven Congress participants, for bravely sharing their stories and allowing us to use them as inspiration, and for pretending to put pants on after a long Zoom work day so we could safely debunk beauty standards from the comfort of our homes.

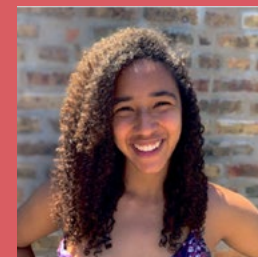
## OUR TEAM



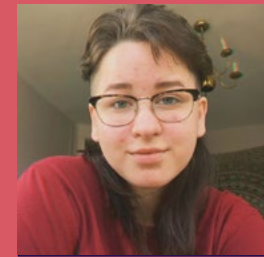
Morgan Kail Ackerman  
Designer



Kailah Peters (KP)  
Editor & Treasurer



Meg Harris  
Social Media



Asko Skladany  
Illustrator

## OUR PATREON

*They Call Us* is a not-for-profit organization. To fund our magazine, we've created a Patreon page and a merch shop. By donating through Patreon you will receive exclusive invites to Coven Congress, Patreon only merch, sneak peeks into upcoming editions, and access to a feminist only discord group. Please consider donating on our [Patreon](#), purchasing merch [online](#), or just sharing this magazine with friends.

*They Call Us* is a passion project for our team members and, although we do not make any money through the zine, it helps our organization to host events, donate to other feminist causes, and support our contributing writers and artists.





# THEY CALL US

@they.call.us  
theycallus.com

If you're interested in submitting work for our next edition, please email us at [theycalluszine@gmail.com](mailto:theycalluszine@gmail.com) or visit our website at [theycallus.com](http://theycallus.com).

Thank you for reading!